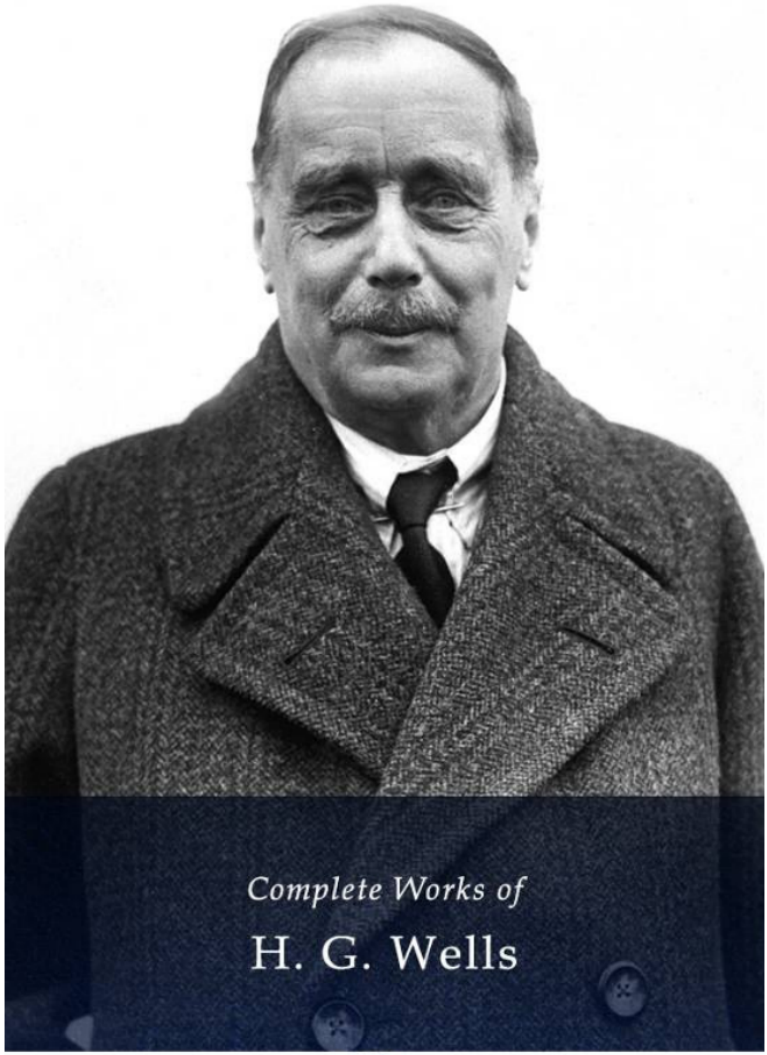

Complete Works of

H. G. Wells

DELPHI CLASSICS

Series One

The Complete Works of

H. G. WELLS

(1886-1946)

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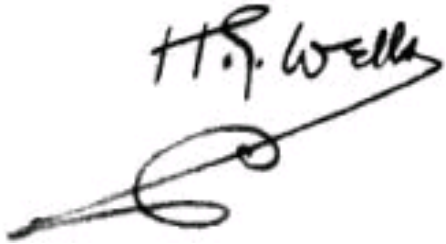

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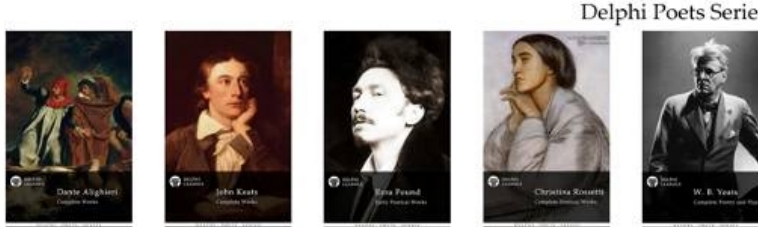

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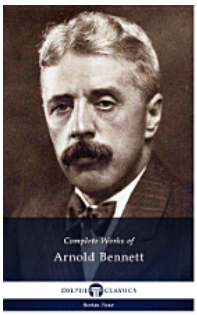

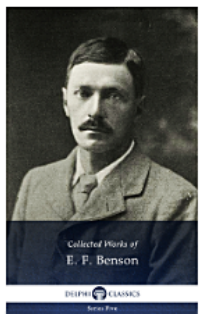

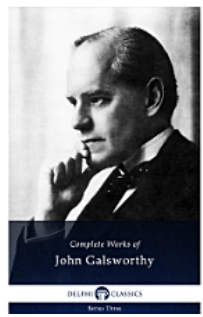

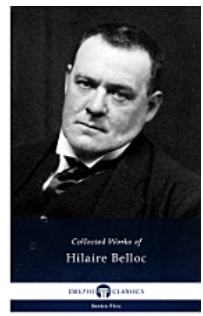

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The Novels

Bromley, where Wells was born in 1866 – Wells' birthplace was in Atlas House, 46 High Street (on the left in the picture above), which has since been demolished

Plaque commemorating Wells' birthplace

THE TIME MACHINE

Published in 1895, Wells' first novel is also his most famous and one of his most successful. In part an expansion of an earlier short story, 'The Chronic Argonauts' (1888), The novel involves an unnamed 'Time Traveller' who claims to have invented a machine for transcending the fourth dimension. He tells his enthralled (but sceptical) listeners how he has used his machine to travel to the year A.D. 802, 701. There, in the ruins of London, he meets the Eloi, a benign race that inhabit what appears to be a utopian, almost child-like society. Soon, however, he discovers that the Eloi are actually at the mercy of the bestial Morlocks – ape-like creatures, who live underground.

Critics have read the plight of the Eloi as a metaphor for the idea of racial degeneration – a very topical issue during the late-Victorian period. Arising out of a contemporary understanding of Darwin's theory of evolution, the idea of 'degeneration' posited that a race was quite as capable of regressing down the evolutionary ladder into less sophisticated forms of biological life, as it was of progressing into more sophisticated forms. Wells had expressed his endorsement of this theory in his essay 'Zoological Retrogression' (1891). In the novel, the Time Traveller suspects that the Morlocks are the descendants of the oppressed working classes of his own time, who similarly live in horrendous conditions in London's dark slums. Similarly, he hypothesises, the Eloi are the degenerate relatives of the rich capitalists and aristocrats of his own day. The novel thus uses Victorian science to make a social point about the potentially bloody consequences of capitalist oppression (albeit one that arguably fails to present the oppressed worker in a favourable light!)

The novel also grapples memorably with the notion of 'deep time' (also known as 'geological time'). Although a commonplace enough idea today, the notion that the Earth was an ancient planet in an even more impossibly ancient universe was one that had received widespread endorsement only relatively recently at the time of the

novel's publication. Wells' portentous prose makes full dramatic use of the pessimistic implications of the idea and of the insignificance of the Earth and of human life in the grand scheme of things. This is most obvious in the novel's memorable final section, where the Time Traveller travels forwards in time to witness the very last days of the planet, underneath a cooling sun; a hypothesis derived from a contemporary understanding of thermodynamics, which conjectured that the Earth's final destruction would come about through the inevitable depletion of all energy in the universe.

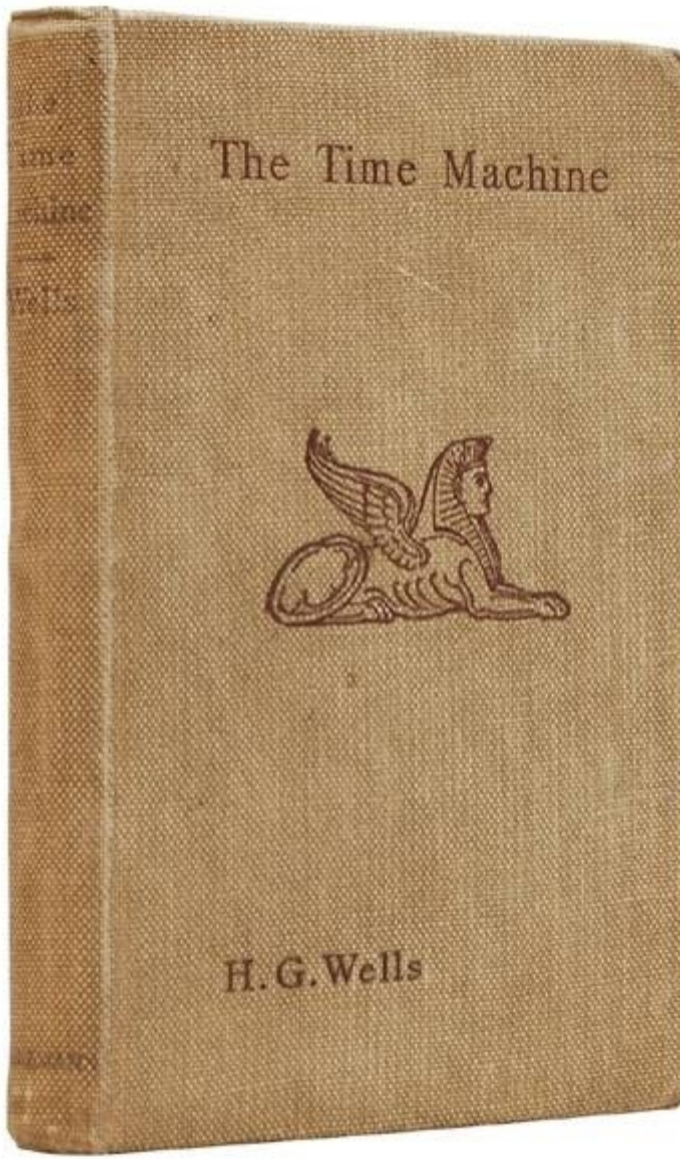

The first edition

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Poster for the 1960 film adaptation by George Pal – probably the most famous screen adaptation of the novel

I

The Time Traveller (for so it will be convenient to speak of him) was expounding a recondite matter to us. His grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated. The fire burned brightly, and the soft radiance of the incandescent lights in the lilies of silver caught the bubbles that flashed and passed in our glasses. Our chairs, being his patents, embraced and caressed us rather than submitted to be sat upon, and there was that luxurious after-dinner atmosphere when thought roams gracefully free of the trammels of precision. And he put it to us in this way — marking the points with a lean forefinger — as we sat and lazily admired his earnestness over this new paradox (as we thought it) and his fecundity.

'You must follow me carefully. I shall have to controvert one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted. The geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception.'

'Is not that rather a large thing to expect us to begin upon?' said Filby, an argumentative person with red hair.

'I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. You will soon admit as much as I need from you. You know of course that a mathematical line, a line of thickness *nil*, has no real existence. They taught you that? Neither has a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions.'

'That is all right,' said the Psychologist.

'Nor, having only length, breadth, and thickness, can a cube have a real existence.'

'There I object,' said Filby. 'Of course a solid body may exist. All real things—'

'So most people think. But wait a moment. Can an *instantaneous* cube exist?'

'Don't follow you,' said Filby.

'Can a cube that does not last for any time at all, have a real existence?'

Filby became pensive. 'Clearly,' the Time Traveller proceeded, 'any real body must have extension in *four* directions: it must have

Length, Breadth, Thickness, and — Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook this fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives.'

'That,' said a very young man, making spasmodic efforts to relight his cigar over the lamp; 'that … very clear indeed.'

'Now, it is very remarkable that this is so extensively overlooked,' continued the Time Traveller, with a slight accession of cheerfulness. 'Really this is what is meant by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimension do not know they mean it. It is only another way of looking at Time. *There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except that our consciousness moves along it*. But some foolish people have got hold of the wrong side of that idea. You have all heard what they have to say about this Fourth Dimension?'

'*I* have not,' said the Provincial Mayor.

'It is simply this. That Space, as our mathematicians have it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to three planes, each at right angles to the others. But some philosophical people have been asking why *three* dimensions particularly — why not another direction at right angles to the other three? — and have even tried to construct a Four-Dimension geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York Mathematical Society only a month or so ago. You know how on a flat surface, which has only two dimensions, we can represent a figure of a three-dimensional solid, and similarly they think that by models of three dimensions they could represent one of four — if they could master the perspective of the thing. See?'

'I think so,' murmured the Provincial Mayor; and, knitting his brows, he lapsed into an introspective state, his lips moving as one who repeats mystic words. 'Yes, I think I see it now,' he said after some time, brightening in a quite transitory manner.

‘Well, I do not mind telling you I have been at work upon this geometry of Four Dimensions for some time. Some of my results are curious. For instance, here is a portrait of a man at eight years old, another at fifteen, another at seventeen, another at twenty-three, and so on. All these are evidently sections, as it were, Three-Dimensional representations of his Four-Dimensioned being, which is a fixed and unalterable thing.

‘Scientific people,’ proceeded the Time Traveller, after the pause required for the proper assimilation of this, ‘know very well that Time is only a kind of Space. Here is a popular scientific diagram, a weather record. This line I trace with my finger shows the movement of the barometer. Yesterday it was so high, yesterday night it fell, then this morning it rose again, and so gently upward to here. Surely the mercury did not trace this line in any of the dimensions of Space generally recognized? But certainly it traced such a line, and that line, therefore, we must conclude was along the Time-Dimension.’

‘But,’ said the Medical Man, staring hard at a coal in the fire, ‘if Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?’

The Time Traveller smiled. ‘Are you sure we can move freely in Space? Right and left we can go, backward and forward freely enough, and men always have done so. I admit we move freely in two dimensions. But how about up and down? Gravitation limits us there.’

‘Not exactly,’ said the Medical Man. ‘There are balloons.’

‘But before the balloons, save for spasmodic jumping and the inequalities of the surface, man had no freedom of vertical movement.’

‘Still they could move a little up and down,’ said the Medical Man.

‘Easier, far easier down than up.’

‘And you cannot move at all in Time, you cannot get away from the present moment.’

‘My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. That is just where the whole world has gone wrong. We are always getting away from

the present moment. Our mental existences, which are immaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the Time-Dimension with a uniform velocity from the cradle to the grave. Just as we should travel *down* if we began our existence fifty miles above the earth's surface.'

'But the great difficulty is this,' interrupted the Psychologist. 'You *can* move about in all directions of Space, but you cannot move about in Time.'

'That is the germ of my great discovery. But you are wrong to say that we cannot move about in Time. For instance, if I am recalling an incident very vividly I go back to the instant of its occurrence: I become absent-minded, as you say. I jump back for a moment. Of course we have no means of staying back for any length of Time, any more than a savage or an animal has of staying six feet above the ground. But a civilized man is better off than the savage in this respect. He can go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should he not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time-Dimension, or even turn about and travel the other way?'

'Oh, *this*,' began Filby, 'is all—'

'Why not?' said the Time Traveller.

'It's against reason,' said Filby.

'What reason?' said the Time Traveller.

'You can show black is white by argument,' said Filby, 'but you will never convince me.'

'Possibly not,' said the Time Traveller. 'But now you begin to see the object of my investigations into the geometry of Four Dimensions. Long ago I had a vague inkling of a machine—'

'To travel through Time!' exclaimed the Very Young Man.

'That shall travel indifferently in any direction of Space and Time, as the driver determines.'

Filby contented himself with laughter.

'But I have experimental verification,' said the Time Traveller.

'It would be remarkably convenient for the historian,' the Psychologist suggested. 'One might travel back and verify the accepted account of the Battle of Hastings, for instance!'

‘Don’t you think you would attract attention?’ said the Medical Man. ‘Our ancestors had no great tolerance for anachronisms.’

‘One might get one’s Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato,’ the Very Young Man thought.

‘In which case they would certainly plough you for the Little-go. The German scholars have improved Greek so much.’

‘Then there is the future,’ said the Very Young Man. ‘Just think! One might invest all one’s money, leave it to accumulate at interest, and hurry on ahead!’

‘To discover a society,’ said I, ‘erected on a strictly communistic basis.’

‘Of all the wild extravagant theories!’ began the Psychologist.

‘Yes, so it seemed to me, and so I never talked of it until—’

‘Experimental verification!’ cried I. ‘You are going to verify *that*?’

‘The experiment!’ cried Filby, who was getting brain-weary.

‘Let’s see your experiment anyhow,’ said the Psychologist, ‘though it’s all humbug, you know.’

The Time Traveller smiled round at us. Then, still smiling faintly, and with his hands deep in his trousers pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, and we heard his slippers shuffling down the long passage to his laboratory.

The Psychologist looked at us. ‘I wonder what he’s got?’

‘Some sleight-of-hand trick or other,’ said the Medical Man, and Filby tried to tell us about a conjurer he had seen at Burslem; but before he had finished his preface the Time Traveller came back, and Filby’s anecdote collapsed.

The thing the Time Traveller held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance. And now I must be explicit, for this that follows — unless his explanation is to be accepted — is an

absolutely unaccountable thing. He took one of the small octagonal tables that were scattered about the room, and set it in front of the fire, with two legs on the hearthrug. On this table he placed the mechanism. Then he drew up a chair, and sat down. The only other object on the table was a small shaded lamp, the bright light of which fell upon the model. There were also perhaps a dozen candles about, two in brass candlesticks upon the mantel and several in sconces, so that the room was brilliantly illuminated. I sat in a low arm-chair nearest the fire, and I drew this forward so as to be almost between the Time Traveller and the fireplace. Filby sat behind him, looking over his shoulder. The Medical Man and the Provincial Mayor watched him in profile from the right, the Psychologist from the left. The Very Young Man stood behind the Psychologist. We were all on the alert. It appears incredible to me that any kind of trick, however subtly conceived and however adroitly done, could have been played upon us under these conditions.

The Time Traveller looked at us, and then at the mechanism. 'Well?' said the Psychologist.

'This little affair,' said the Time Traveller, resting his elbows upon the table and pressing his hands together above the apparatus, 'is only a model. It is my plan for a machine to travel through time. You will notice that it looks singularly askew, and that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal.' He pointed to the part with his finger. 'Also, here is one little white lever, and here is another.'

The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing.
'It's beautifully made,' he said.

'It took two years to make,' retorted the Time Traveller. Then, when we had all imitated the action of the Medical Man, he said: 'Now I want you clearly to understand that this lever, being pressed over, sends the machine gliding into the future, and this other reverses the motion. This saddle represents the seat of a time traveller. Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future Time, and disappear. Have a good look at the thing. Look at the table too, and satisfy yourselves

there is no trickery. I don't want to waste this model, and then be told I'm a quack.'

There was a minute's pause perhaps. The Psychologist seemed about to speak to me, but changed his mind. Then the Time Traveller put forth his finger towards the lever. 'No,' he said suddenly. 'Lend me your hand.' And turning to the Psychologist, he took that individual's hand in his own and told him to put out his forefinger. So that it was the Psychologist himself who sent forth the model Time Machine on its interminable voyage. We all saw the lever turn. I am absolutely certain there was no trickery. There was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone — vanished! Save for the lamp the table was bare.

Everyone was silent for a minute. Then Filby said he was damned.

The Psychologist recovered from his stupor, and suddenly looked under the table. At that the Time Traveller laughed cheerfully. 'Well?' he said, with a reminiscence of the Psychologist. Then, getting up, he went to the tobacco jar on the mantel, and with his back to us began to fill his pipe.

We stared at each other. 'Look here,' said the Medical Man, 'are you in earnest about this? Do you seriously believe that that machine has travelled into time?'

'Certainly,' said the Time Traveller, stooping to light a spill at the fire. Then he turned, lighting his pipe, to look at the Psychologist's face. (The Psychologist, to show that he was not unhinged, helped himself to a cigar and tried to light it uncut.) 'What is more, I have a big machine nearly finished in there' — he indicated the laboratory — 'and when that is put together I mean to have a journey on my own account.'

'You mean to say that that machine has travelled into the future?' said Filby.

'Into the future or the past — I don't, for certain, know which.'

After an interval the Psychologist had an inspiration. 'It must have gone into the past if it has gone anywhere,' he said.

'Why?' said the Time Traveller.

‘Because I presume that it has not moved in space, and if it travelled into the future it would still be here all this time, since it must have travelled through this time.’

‘But,’ I said, ‘If it travelled into the past it would have been visible when we came first into this room; and last Thursday when we were here; and the Thursday before that; and so forth!’

‘Serious objections,’ remarked the Provincial Mayor, with an air of impartiality, turning towards the Time Traveller.

‘Not a bit,’ said the Time Traveller, and, to the Psychologist: ‘You think. You can explain that. It’s presentation below the threshold, you know, diluted presentation.’

‘Of course,’ said the Psychologist, and reassured us. ‘That’s a simple point of psychology. I should have thought of it. It’s plain enough, and helps the paradox delightfully. We cannot see it, nor can we appreciate this machine, any more than we can the spoke of a wheel spinning, or a bullet flying through the air. If it is travelling through time fifty times or a hundred times faster than we are, if it gets through a minute while we get through a second, the impression it creates will of course be only one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of what it would make if it were not travelling in time. That’s plain enough.’ He passed his hand through the space in which the machine had been. ‘You see?’ he said, laughing.

We sat and stared at the vacant table for a minute or so. Then the Time Traveller asked us what we thought of it all.

‘It sounds plausible enough to-night,’ said the Medical Man; ‘but wait until to-morrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning.’

‘Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?’ asked the Time Traveller. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hand, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism which we had seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was

generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

‘Look here,’ said the Medical Man, ‘are you perfectly serious?
Or is this a trick — like that ghost you showed us last Christmas?’

‘Upon that machine,’ said the Time Traveller, holding the lamp aloft, ‘I intend to explore time. Is that plain? I was never more serious in my life.’

None of us quite knew how to take it.

I caught Filby’s eye over the shoulder of the Medical Man, and he winked at me solemnly.

II

I think that at that time none of us quite believed in the Time Machine. The fact is, the Time Traveller was one of those men who are too clever to be believed: you never felt that you saw all round him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness. Had Filby shown the model and explained the matter in the Time Traveller's words, we should have shown *him* far less scepticism. For we should have perceived his motives; a pork butcher could understand Filby. But the Time Traveller had more than a touch of whim among his elements, and we distrusted him. Things that would have made the frame of a less clever man seemed tricks in his hands. It is a mistake to do things too easily. The serious people who took him seriously never felt quite sure of his deportment; they were somehow aware that trusting their reputations for judgment with him was like furnishing a nursery with egg-shell china. So I don't think any of us said very much about time travelling in the interval between that Thursday and the next, though its odd potentialities ran, no doubt, in most of our minds: its plausibility, that is, its practical incredibleness, the curious possibilities of anachronism and of utter confusion it suggested. For my own part, I was particularly preoccupied with the trick of the model. That I remember discussing with the Medical Man, whom I met on Friday at the Linnaean. He said he had seen a similar thing at Tubingen, and laid considerable stress on the blowing out of the candle. But how the trick was done he could not explain.

The next Thursday I went again to Richmond — I suppose I was one of the Time Traveller's most constant guests — and, arriving late, found four or five men already assembled in his drawing-room. The Medical Man was standing before the fire with a sheet of paper in one hand and his watch in the other. I looked round for the Time Traveller, and— 'It's half-past seven now,' said the Medical Man. 'I suppose we'd better have dinner?'

'Where's —— ?' said I, naming our host.

'You've just come? It's rather odd. He's unavoidably detained. He asks me in this note to lead off with dinner at seven if he's not

back. Says he'll explain when he comes.'

'It seems a pity to let the dinner spoil,' said the Editor of a well-known daily paper; and thereupon the Doctor rang the bell.

The Psychologist was the only person besides the Doctor and myself who had attended the previous dinner. The other men were Blank, the Editor aforementioned, a certain journalist, and another — a quiet, shy man with a beard — whom I didn't know, and who, as far as my observation went, never opened his mouth all the evening. There was some speculation at the dinner-table about the Time Traveller's absence, and I suggested time travelling, in a half-jocular spirit. The Editor wanted that explained to him, and the Psychologist volunteered a wooden account of the 'ingenious paradox and trick' we had witnessed that day week. He was in the midst of his exposition when the door from the corridor opened slowly and without noise. I was facing the door, and saw it first. 'Hallo!' I said. 'At last!' And the door opened wider, and the Time Traveller stood before us. I gave a cry of surprise. 'Good heavens! man, what's the matter?' cried the Medical Man, who saw him next. And the whole tableful turned towards the door.

He was in an amazing plight. His coat was dusty and dirty, and smeared with green down the sleeves; his hair disordered, and as it seemed to me greyer — either with dust and dirt or because its colour had actually faded. His face was ghastly pale; his chin had a brown cut on it — a cut half healed; his expression was haggard and drawn, as by intense suffering. For a moment he hesitated in the doorway, as if he had been dazzled by the light. Then he came into the room. He walked with just such a limp as I have seen in footsore tramps. We stared at him in silence, expecting him to speak.

He said not a word, but came painfully to the table, and made a motion towards the wine. The Editor filled a glass of champagne, and pushed it towards him. He drained it, and it seemed to do him good: for he looked round the table, and the ghost of his old smile flickered across his face. 'What on earth have you been up to, man?' said the Doctor. The Time Traveller did not seem to hear. 'Don't let me disturb you,' he said, with a certain faltering articulation. 'I'm all right.' He stopped, held out his glass for more, and took it off at a draught. 'That's good,' he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a faint

colour came into his cheeks. His glance flickered over our faces with a certain dull approval, and then went round the warm and comfortable room. Then he spoke again, still as it were feeling his way among his words. 'I'm going to wash and dress, and then I'll come down and explain things … Save me some of that mutton. I'm starving for a bit of meat.'

He looked across at the Editor, who was a rare visitor, and hoped he was all right. The Editor began a question. 'Tell you presently,' said the Time Traveller. 'I'm — funny! Be all right in a minute.'

He put down his glass, and walked towards the staircase door. Again I remarked his lameness and the soft padding sound of his footfall, and standing up in my place, I saw his feet as he went out. He had nothing on them but a pair of tattered, blood-stained socks. Then the door closed upon him. I had half a mind to follow, till I remembered how he detested any fuss about himself. For a minute, perhaps, my mind was wool-gathering. Then, 'Remarkable Behaviour of an Eminent Scientist,' I heard the Editor say, thinking (after his wont) in headlines. And this brought my attention back to the bright dinner-table.

'What's the game?' said the Journalist. 'Has he been doing the Amateur Cadger? I don't follow.' I met the eye of the Psychologist, and read my own interpretation in his face. I thought of the Time Traveller limping painfully upstairs. I don't think any one else had noticed his lameness.

The first to recover completely from this surprise was the Medical Man, who rang the bell — the Time Traveller hated to have servants waiting at dinner — for a hot plate. At that the Editor turned to his knife and fork with a grunt, and the Silent Man followed suit. The dinner was resumed. Conversation was exclamatory for a little while, with gaps of wonderment; and then the Editor got fervent in his curiosity. 'Does our friend eke out his modest income with a crossing? or has he his Nebuchadnezzar phases?' he inquired. 'I feel assured it's this business of the Time Machine,' I said, and took up the Psychologist's account of our previous meeting. The new guests were frankly incredulous. The Editor raised objections. 'What *was* this time travelling? A man couldn't cover himself with dust by rolling in a paradox, could he?' And then, as the idea came home to

him, he resorted to caricature. Hadn't they any clothes-brushes in the Future? The Journalist too, would not believe at any price, and joined the Editor in the easy work of heaping ridicule on the whole thing. They were both the new kind of journalist — very joyous, irreverent young men. 'Our Special Correspondent in the Day after To-morrow reports,' the Journalist was saying — or rather shouting — when the Time Traveller came back. He was dressed in ordinary evening clothes, and nothing save his haggard look remained of the change that had startled me.

'I say,' said the Editor hilariously, 'these chaps here say you have been travelling into the middle of next week! Tell us all about little Rosebery, will you? What will you take for the lot?'

The Time Traveller came to the place reserved for him without a word. He smiled quietly, in his old way. 'Where's my mutton?' he said. 'What a treat it is to stick a fork into meat again!'

'Story!' cried the Editor.

'Story be damned!' said the Time Traveller. 'I want something to eat. I won't say a word until I get some peptone into my arteries. Thanks. And the salt.'

'One word,' said I. 'Have you been time travelling?'

'Yes,' said the Time Traveller, with his mouth full, nodding his head.

'I'd give a shilling a line for a verbatim note,' said the Editor. The Time Traveller pushed his glass towards the Silent Man and rang it with his fingernail; at which the Silent Man, who had been staring at his face, started convulsively, and poured him wine. The rest of the dinner was uncomfortable. For my own part, sudden questions kept on rising to my lips, and I dare say it was the same with the others. The Journalist tried to relieve the tension by telling anecdotes of Hettie Potter. The Time Traveller devoted his attention to his dinner, and displayed the appetite of a tramp. The Medical Man smoked a cigarette, and watched the Time Traveller through his eyelashes. The Silent Man seemed even more clumsy than usual, and drank champagne with regularity and determination out of sheer nervousness. At last the Time Traveller pushed his plate away, and looked round us. 'I suppose I must apologize,' he said. 'I was simply starving. I've had a most amazing time.' He reached out his hand for

a cigar, and cut the end. ‘But come into the smoking-room. It’s too long a story to tell over greasy plates.’ And ringing the bell in passing, he led the way into the adjoining room.

‘You have told Blank, and Dash, and Chose about the machine?’ he said to me, leaning back in his easy-chair and naming the three new guests.

‘But the thing’s a mere paradox,’ said the Editor.

‘I can’t argue to-night. I don’t mind telling you the story, but I can’t argue. I will,’ he went on, ‘tell you the story of what has happened to me, if you like, but you must refrain from interruptions. I want to tell it. Badly. Most of it will sound like lying. So be it! It’s true — every word of it, all the same. I was in my laboratory at four o’clock, and since then … I’ve lived eight days … such days as no human being ever lived before! I’m nearly worn out, but I shan’t sleep till I’ve told this thing over to you. Then I shall go to bed. But no interruptions! Is it agreed?’

‘Agreed,’ said the Editor, and the rest of us echoed ‘Agreed.’ And with that the Time Traveller began his story as I have set it forth. He sat back in his chair at first, and spoke like a weary man. Afterwards he got more animated. In writing it down I feel with only too much keenness the inadequacy of pen and ink — and, above all, my own inadequacy — to express its quality. You read, I will suppose, attentively enough; but you cannot see the speaker’s white, sincere face in the bright circle of the little lamp, nor hear the intonation of his voice. You cannot know how his expression followed the turns of his story! Most of us hearers were in shadow, for the candles in the smoking-room had not been lighted, and only the face of the Journalist and the legs of the Silent Man from the knees downward were illuminated. At first we glanced now and again at each other. After a time we ceased to do that, and looked only at the Time Traveller’s face.

III

‘I told some of you last Thursday of the principles of the Time Machine, and showed you the actual thing itself, incomplete in the workshop. There it is now, a little travel-worn, truly; and one of the ivory bars is cracked, and a brass rail bent; but the rest of it’s sound enough. I expected to finish it on Friday, but on Friday, when the putting together was nearly done, I found that one of the nickel bars was exactly one inch too short, and this I had to get remade; so that the thing was not complete until this morning. It was at ten o’clock to-day that the first of all Time Machines began its career. I gave it a last tap, tried all the screws again, put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and sat myself in the saddle. I suppose a suicide who holds a pistol to his skull feels much the same wonder at what will come next as I felt then. I took the starting lever in one hand and the stopping one in the other, pressed the first, and almost immediately the second. I seemed to reel; I felt a nightmare sensation of falling; and, looking round, I saw the laboratory exactly as before. Had anything happened? For a moment I suspected that my intellect had tricked me. Then I noted the clock. A moment before, as it seemed, it had stood at a minute or so past ten; now it was nearly half-past three!

‘I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hands, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs. Watchett came in and walked, apparently without seeing me, towards the garden door. I suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came to-morrow. The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. To-morrow night came black, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur filled my ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.

‘I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback — of a helpless headlong

motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darknesses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous color like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

'The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hill-side upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me grey and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapour, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changed — melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the dials that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.

'The unpleasant sensations of the start were less poignant now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked indeed a clumsy swaying of the machine, for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me, I flung myself into futurity. At first I

scarce thought of stopping, scarce thought of anything but these new sensations. But presently a fresh series of impressions grew up in my mind — a certain curiosity and therewith a certain dread — until at last they took complete possession of me. What strange developments of humanity, what wonderful advances upon our rudimentary civilization, I thought, might not appear when I came to look nearly into the dim elusive world that raced and fluctuated before my eyes! I saw great and splendid architecture rising about me, more massive than any buildings of our own time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist. I saw a richer green flow up the hill-side, and remain there, without any wintry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed very fair. And so my mind came round to the business of stopping.

'The peculiar risk lay in the possibility of my finding some substance in the space which I, or the machine, occupied. So long as I travelled at a high velocity through time, this scarcely mattered; I was, so to speak, attenuated — was slipping like a vapour through the interstices of intervening substances! But to come to a stop involved the jamming of myself, molecule by molecule, into whatever lay in my way; meant bringing my atoms into such intimate contact with those of the obstacle that a profound chemical reaction — possibly a far-reaching explosion — would result, and blow myself and my apparatus out of all possible dimensions — into the Unknown. This possibility had occurred to me again and again while I was making the machine; but then I had cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk — one of the risks a man has got to take! Now the risk was inevitable, I no longer saw it in the same cheerful light. The fact is that, insensibly, the absolute strangeness of everything, the sickly jarring and swaying of the machine, above all, the feeling of prolonged falling, had absolutely upset my nerve. I told myself that I could never stop, and with a gust of petulance I resolved to stop forthwith. Like an impatient fool, I lugged over the lever, and incontinently the thing went reeling over, and I was flung headlong through the air.

'There was the sound of a clap of thunder in my ears. I may have been stunned for a moment. A pitiless hail was hissing round me, and I was sitting on soft turf in front of the overset machine. Everything

still seemed grey, but presently I remarked that the confusion in my ears was gone. I looked round me. I was on what seemed to be a little lawn in a garden, surrounded by rhododendron bushes, and I noticed that their mauve and purple blossoms were dropping in a shower under the beating of the hail-stones. The rebounding, dancing hail hung in a cloud over the machine, and drove along the ground like smoke. In a moment I was wet to the skin. “Fine hospitality,” said I, “to a man who has travelled innumerable years to see you.”

‘Presently I thought what a fool I was to get wet. I stood up and looked round me. A colossal figure, carved apparently in some white stone, loomed indistinctly beyond the rhododendrons through the hazy downpour. But all else of the world was invisible.

‘My sensations would be hard to describe. As the columns of hail grew thinner, I saw the white figure more distinctly. It was very large, for a silver birch-tree touched its shoulder. It was of white marble, in shape something like a winged sphinx, but the wings, instead of being carried vertically at the sides, were spread so that it seemed to hover. The pedestal, it appeared to me, was of bronze, and was thick with verdigris. It chanced that the face was towards me; the sightless eyes seemed to watch me; there was the faint shadow of a smile on the lips. It was greatly weather-worn, and that imparted an unpleasant suggestion of disease. I stood looking at it for a little space — half a minute, perhaps, or half an hour. It seemed to advance and to recede as the hail drove before it denser or thinner. At last I tore my eyes from it for a moment and saw that the hail curtain had worn threadbare, and that the sky was lightening with the promise of the sun.

‘I looked up again at the crouching white shape, and the full temerity of my voyage came suddenly upon me. What might appear when that hazy curtain was altogether withdrawn? What might not have happened to men? What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might seem some old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness — a foul creature to be incontinently slain.

‘Already I saw other vast shapes — huge buildings with intricate

parapets and tall columns, with a wooded hill-side dimly creeping in upon me through the lessening storm. I was seized with a panic fear. I turned frantically to the Time Machine, and strove hard to readjust it. As I did so the shafts of the sun smote through the thunderstorm. The grey downpour was swept aside and vanished like the trailing garments of a ghost. Above me, in the intense blue of the summer sky, some faint brown shreds of cloud whirled into nothingness. The great buildings about me stood out clear and distinct, shining with the wet of the thunderstorm, and picked out in white by the unmelted hailstones piled along their courses. I felt naked in a strange world. I felt as perhaps a bird may feel in the clear air, knowing the hawk wings above and will swoop. My fear grew to frenzy. I took a breathing space, set my teeth, and again grappled fiercely, wrist and knee, with the machine. It gave under my desperate onset and turned over. It struck my chin violently. One hand on the saddle, the other on the lever, I stood panting heavily in attitude to mount again.

'But with this recovery of a prompt retreat my courage recovered. I looked more curiously and less fearfully at this world of the remote future. In a circular opening, high up in the wall of the nearer house, I saw a group of figures clad in rich soft robes. They had seen me, and their faces were directed towards me.

'Then I heard voices approaching me. Coming through the bushes by the White Sphinx were the heads and shoulders of men running. One of these emerged in a pathway leading straight to the little lawn upon which I stood with my machine. He was a slight creature — perhaps four feet high — clad in a purple tunic, girdled at the waist with a leather belt. Sandals or buskins — I could not clearly distinguish which — were on his feet; his legs were bare to the knees, and his head was bare. Noticing that, I noticed for the first time how warm the air was.

'He struck me as being a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail. His flushed face reminded me of the more beautiful kind of consumptive — that hectic beauty of which we used to hear so much. At the sight of him I suddenly regained confidence. I took my hands from the machine.

IV

‘In another moment we were standing face to face, I and this fragile thing out of futurity. He came straight up to me and laughed into my eyes. The absence from his bearing of any sign of fear struck me at once. Then he turned to the two others who were following him and spoke to them in a strange and very sweet and liquid tongue.

‘There were others coming, and presently a little group of perhaps eight or ten of these exquisite creatures were about me. One of them addressed me. It came into my head, oddly enough, that my voice was too harsh and deep for them. So I shook my head, and, pointing to my ears, shook it again. He came a step forward, hesitated, and then touched my hand. Then I felt other soft little tentacles upon my back and shoulders. They wanted to make sure I was real. There was nothing in this at all alarming. Indeed, there was something in these pretty little people that inspired confidence — a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease. And besides, they looked so frail that I could fancy myself flinging the whole dozen of them about like nine-pins. But I made a sudden motion to warn them when I saw their little pink hands feeling at the Time Machine. Happily then, when it was not too late, I thought of a danger I had hitherto forgotten, and reaching over the bars of the machine I unscrewed the little levers that would set it in motion, and put these in my pocket. Then I turned again to see what I could do in the way of communication.

‘And then, looking more nearly into their features, I saw some further peculiarities in their Dresden-china type of prettiness. Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest suggestion of it on the face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips, and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and — this may seem egotism on my part — I fancied even that there was a certain lack of the interest I might have expected in them.

‘As they made no effort to communicate with me, but simply stood round me smiling and speaking in soft cooing notes to each other, I began the conversation. I pointed to the Time Machine and to

myself. Then hesitating for a moment how to express time, I pointed to the sun. At once a quaintly pretty little figure in chequered purple and white followed my gesture, and then astonished me by imitating the sound of thunder.

'For a moment I was staggered, though the import of his gesture was plain enough. The question had come into my mind abruptly: were these creatures fools? You may hardly understand how it took me. You see I had always anticipated that the people of the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand odd would be incredibly in front of us in knowledge, art, everything. Then one of them suddenly asked me a question that showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children — asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunderstorm! It let loose the judgment I had suspended upon their clothes, their frail light limbs, and fragile features. A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine in vain.

'I nodded, pointed to the sun, and gave them such a vivid rendering of a thunderclap as startled them. They all withdrew a pace or so and bowed. Then came one laughing towards me, carrying a chain of beautiful flowers altogether new to me, and put it about my neck. The idea was received with melodious applause; and presently they were all running to and fro for flowers, and laughingly flinging them upon me until I was almost smothered with blossom. You who have never seen the like can scarcely imagine what delicate and wonderful flowers countless years of culture had created. Then someone suggested that their plaything should be exhibited in the nearest building, and so I was led past the sphinx of white marble, which had seemed to watch me all the while with a smile at my astonishment, towards a vast grey edifice of fretted stone. As I went with them the memory of my confident anticipations of a profoundly grave and intellectual posterity came, with irresistible merriment, to my mind.

'The building had a huge entry, and was altogether of colossal dimensions. I was naturally most occupied with the growing crowd of little people, and with the big open portals that yawned before me shadowy and mysterious. My general impression of the world I saw over their heads was a tangled waste of beautiful bushes and flowers,

a long neglected and yet weedless garden. I saw a number of tall spikes of strange white flowers, measuring a foot perhaps across the spread of the waxen petals. They grew scattered, as if wild, among the variegated shrubs, but, as I say, I did not examine them closely at this time. The Time Machine was left deserted on the turf among the rhododendrons.

'The arch of the doorway was richly carved, but naturally I did not observe the carving very narrowly, though I fancied I saw suggestions of old Phoenician decorations as I passed through, and it struck me that they were very badly broken and weather-worn. Several more brightly clad people met me in the doorway, and so we entered, I, dressed in dingy nineteenth-century garments, looking grotesque enough, garlanded with flowers, and surrounded by an eddying mass of bright, soft-colored robes and shining white limbs, in a melodious whirl of laughter and laughing speech.

'The big doorway opened into a proportionately great hall hung with brown. The roof was in shadow, and the windows, partially glazed with coloured glass and partially unglazed, admitted a tempered light. The floor was made up of huge blocks of some very hard white metal, not plates nor slabs — blocks, and it was so much worn, as I judged by the going to and fro of past generations, as to be deeply channelled along the more frequented ways. Transverse to the length were innumerable tables made of slabs of polished stone, raised perhaps a foot from the floor, and upon these were heaps of fruits. Some I recognized as a kind of hypertrophied raspberry and orange, but for the most part they were strange.

'Between the tables was scattered a great number of cushions. Upon these my conductors seated themselves, signing for me to do likewise. With a pretty absence of ceremony they began to eat the fruit with their hands, flinging peel and stalks, and so forth, into the round openings in the sides of the tables. I was not loath to follow their example, for I felt thirsty and hungry. As I did so I surveyed the hall at my leisure.

'And perhaps the thing that struck me most was its dilapidated look. The stained-glass windows, which displayed only a geometrical pattern, were broken in many places, and the curtains that hung across the lower end were thick with dust. And it caught my eye that

the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. Nevertheless, the general effect was extremely rich and picturesque. There were, perhaps, a couple of hundred people dining in the hall, and most of them, seated as near to me as they could come, were watching me with interest, their little eyes shining over the fruit they were eating. All were clad in the same soft and yet strong, silky material.

'Fruit, by the by, was all their diet. These people of the remote future were strict vegetarians, and while I was with them, in spite of some carnal cravings, I had to be frugivorous also. Indeed, I found afterwards that horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, had followed the Ichthyosaurus into extinction. But the fruits were very delightful; one, in particular, that seemed to be in season all the time I was there — a floury thing in a three-sided husk — was especially good, and I made it my staple. At first I was puzzled by all these strange fruits, and by the strange flowers I saw, but later I began to perceive their import.

'However, I am telling you of my fruit dinner in the distant future now. So soon as my appetite was a little checked, I determined to make a resolute attempt to learn the speech of these new men of mine. Clearly that was the next thing to do. The fruits seemed a convenient thing to begin upon, and holding one of these up I began a series of interrogative sounds and gestures. I had some considerable difficulty in conveying my meaning. At first my efforts met with a stare of surprise or inextinguishable laughter, but presently a fair-haired little creature seemed to grasp my intention and repeated a name. They had to chatter and explain the business at great length to each other, and my first attempts to make the exquisite little sounds of their language caused an immense amount of amusement. However, I felt like a schoolmaster amidst children, and persisted, and presently I had a score of noun substantives at least at my command; and then I got to demonstrative pronouns, and even the verb "to eat." But it was slow work, and the little people soon tired and wanted to get away from my interrogations, so I determined, rather of necessity, to let them give their lessons in little doses when they felt inclined. And very little doses I found they were before long, for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued.

'A queer thing I soon discovered about my little hosts, and that

was their lack of interest. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishment, like children, but like children they would soon stop examining me and wander away after some other toy. The dinner and my conversational beginnings ended, I noted for the first time that almost all those who had surrounded me at first were gone. It is odd, too, how speedily I came to disregard these little people. I went out through the portal into the sunlit world again as soon as my hunger was satisfied. I was continually meeting more of these men of the future, who would follow me a little distance, chatter and laugh about me, and, having smiled and gesticulated in a friendly way, leave me again to my own devices.

'The calm of evening was upon the world as I emerged from the great hall, and the scene was lit by the warm glow of the setting sun. At first things were very confusing. Everything was so entirely different from the world I had known — even the flowers. The big building I had left was situated on the slope of a broad river valley, but the Thames had shifted perhaps a mile from its present position. I resolved to mount to the summit of a crest, perhaps a mile and a half away, from which I could get a wider view of this our planet in the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One A.D. For that, I should explain, was the date the little dials of my machine recorded.

'As I walked I was watching for every impression that could possibly help to explain the condition of ruinous splendour in which I found the world — for ruinous it was. A little way up the hill, for instance, was a great heap of granite, bound together by masses of aluminium, a vast labyrinth of precipitous walls and crumpled heaps, amidst which were thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants — nettles possibly — but wonderfully tinted with brown about the leaves, and incapable of stinging. It was evidently the derelict remains of some vast structure, to what end built I could not determine. It was here that I was destined, at a later date, to have a very strange experience — the first intimation of a still stranger discovery — but of that I will speak in its proper place.

'Looking round with a sudden thought, from a terrace on which I rested for a while, I realized that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently the single house, and possibly even the household,

had vanished. Here and there among the greenery were palace-like buildings, but the house and the cottage, which form such characteristic features of our own English landscape, had disappeared.

'"Communism," said I to myself.

'And on the heels of that came another thought. I looked at the half-dozen little figures that were following me. Then, in a flash, I perceived that all had the same form of costume, the same soft hairless visage, and the same girlish rotundity of limb. It may seem strange, perhaps, that I had not noticed this before. But everything was so strange. Now, I saw the fact plainly enough. In costume, and in all the differences of texture and bearing that now mark off the sexes from each other, these people of the future were alike. And the children seemed to my eyes to be but the miniatures of their parents. I judged, then, that the children of that time were extremely precocious, physically at least, and I found afterwards abundant verification of my opinion.

'Seeing the ease and security in which these people were living, I felt that this close resemblance of the sexes was after all what one would expect; for the strength of a man and the softness of a woman, the institution of the family, and the differentiation of occupations are mere militant necessities of an age of physical force; where population is balanced and abundant, much childbearing becomes an evil rather than a blessing to the State; where violence comes but rarely and off-spring are secure, there is less necessity — indeed there is no necessity — for an efficient family, and the specialization of the sexes with reference to their children's needs disappears. We see some beginnings of this even in our own time, and in this future age it was complete. This, I must remind you, was my speculation at the time. Later, I was to appreciate how far it fell short of the reality.

'While I was musing upon these things, my attention was attracted by a pretty little structure, like a well under a cupola. I thought in a transitory way of the oddness of wells still existing, and then resumed the thread of my speculations. There were no large buildings towards the top of the hill, and as my walking powers were evidently miraculous, I was presently left alone for the first time. With a strange sense of freedom and adventure I pushed on up to the

crest.

‘There I found a seat of some yellow metal that I did not recognize, corroded in places with a kind of pinkish rust and half smothered in soft moss, the arm-rests cast and filed into the resemblance of griffins’ heads. I sat down on it, and I surveyed the broad view of our old world under the sunset of that long day. It was as sweet and fair a view as I have ever seen. The sun had already gone below the horizon and the west was flaming gold, touched with some horizontal bars of purple and crimson. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay like a band of burnished steel. I have already spoken of the great palaces dotted about among the variegated greenery, some in ruins and some still occupied. Here and there rose a white or silvery figure in the waste garden of the earth, here and there came the sharp vertical line of some cupola or obelisk. There were no hedges, no signs of proprietary rights, no evidences of agriculture; the whole earth had become a garden.

‘So watching, I began to put my interpretation upon the things I had seen, and as it shaped itself to me that evening, my interpretation was something in this way. (Afterwards I found I had got only a half-truth — or only a glimpse of one facet of the truth.)

‘It seemed to me that I had happened upon humanity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first time I began to realize an odd consequence of the social effort in which we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life — the true civilizing process that makes life more and more secure — had gone steadily on to a climax. One triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed another. Things that are now mere dreams had become projects deliberately put in hand and carried forward. And the harvest was what I saw!

‘After all, the sanitation and the agriculture of to-day are still in the rudimentary stage. The science of our time has attacked but a little department of the field of human disease, but even so, it spreads its operations very steadily and persistently. Our agriculture and horticulture destroy a weed just here and there and cultivate perhaps a score or so of wholesome plants, leaving the greater number to

fight out a balance as they can. We improve our favourite plants and animals — and how few they are — gradually by selective breeding; now a new and better peach, now a seedless grape, now a sweeter and larger flower, now a more convenient breed of cattle. We improve them gradually, because our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hands. Some day all this will be better organized, and still better. That is the drift of the current in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated, and co-operating; things will move faster and faster towards the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs.

'This adjustment, I say, must have been done, and done well; done indeed for all Time, in the space of Time across which my machine had leaped. The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventive medicine was attained. Diseases had been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And I shall have to tell you later that even the processes of putrefaction and decay had been profoundly affected by these changes.

'Social triumphs, too, had been effected. I saw mankind housed in splendid shelters, gloriously clothed, and as yet I had found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle. The shop, the advertisement, traffic, all that commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone. It was natural on that golden evening that I should jump at the idea of a social paradise. The difficulty of increasing population had been met, I guessed, and population had ceased to increase.

'But with this change in condition comes inevitably adaptations to the change. What, unless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human intelligence and vigour? Hardship and freedom: conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall; conditions that put a premium upon the loyal alliance of capable men, upon self-restraint, patience, and decision. And the institution of the family, and the emotions that arise therein, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness for offspring, parental self-

devotion, all found their justification and support in the imminent dangers of the young. *Now*, where are these imminent dangers? There is a sentiment arising, and it will grow, against connubial jealousy, against fierce maternity, against passion of all sorts; unnecessary things now, and things that make us uncomfortable, savage survivals, discords in a refined and pleasant life.

'I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of intelligence, and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity had been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions.

'Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security, that restless energy, that with us is strength, would become weakness. Even in our own time certain tendencies and desires, once necessary to survival, are a constant source of failure. Physical courage and the love of battle, for instance, are no great help — may even be hindrances — to a civilized man. And in a state of physical balance and security, power, intellectual as well as physical, would be out of place. For countless years I judged there had been no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from wild beasts, no wasting disease to require strength of constitution, no need of toil. For such a life, what we should call the weak are as well equipped as the strong, are indeed no longer weak. Better equipped indeed they are, for the strong would be fretted by an energy for which there was no outlet. No doubt the exquisite beauty of the buildings I saw was the outcome of the last surgings of the now purposeless energy of mankind before it settled down into perfect harmony with the conditions under which it lived — the flourish of that triumph which began the last great peace. This has ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then come languor and decay.

'Even this artistic impetus would at last die away — had almost died in the Time I saw. To adorn themselves with flowers, to dance, to sing in the sunlight: so much was left of the artistic spirit, and no more. Even that would fade in the end into a contented inactivity. We are kept keen on the grindstone of pain and necessity, and, it seemed

to me, that here was that hateful grindstone broken at last!

‘As I stood there in the gathering dark I thought that in this simple explanation I had mastered the problem of the world — mastered the whole secret of these delicious people. Possibly the checks they had devised for the increase of population had succeeded too well, and their numbers had rather diminished than kept stationary. That would account for the abandoned ruins. Very simple was my explanation, and plausible enough — as most wrong theories are!

V

‘As I stood there musing over this too perfect triumph of man, the full moon, yellow and gibbous, came up out of an overflow of silver light in the north-east. The bright little figures ceased to move about below, a noiseless owl flitted by, and I shivered with the chill of the night. I determined to descend and find where I could sleep.

‘I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye travelled along to the figure of the White Sphinx upon the pedestal of bronze, growing distinct as the light of the rising moon grew brighter. I could see the silver birch against it. There was the tangle of rhododendron bushes, black in the pale light, and there was the little lawn. I looked at the lawn again. A queer doubt chilled my complacency. “No,” said I stoutly to myself, “that was not the lawn.”

‘But it *was* the lawn. For the white leprous face of the sphinx was towards it. Can you imagine what I felt as this conviction came home to me? But you cannot. The Time Machine was gone!

‘At once, like a lash across the face, came the possibility of losing my own age, of being left helpless in this strange new world. The bare thought of it was an actual physical sensation. I could feel it grip me at the throat and stop my breathing. In another moment I was in a passion of fear and running with great leaping strides down the slope. Once I fell headlong and cut my face; I lost no time in stanching the blood, but jumped up and ran on, with a warm trickle down my cheek and chin. All the time I ran I was saying to myself: “They have moved it a little, pushed it under the bushes out of the way.” Nevertheless, I ran with all my might. All the time, with the certainty that sometimes comes with excessive dread, I knew that such assurance was folly, knew instinctively that the machine was removed out of my reach. My breath came with pain. I suppose I covered the whole distance from the hill crest to the little lawn, two miles perhaps, in ten minutes. And I am not a young man. I cursed aloud, as I ran, at my confident folly in leaving the machine, wasting good breath thereby. I cried aloud, and none answered. Not a creature seemed to be stirring in that moonlit world.

‘When I reached the lawn my worst fears were realized. Not a

trace of the thing was to be seen. I felt faint and cold when I faced the empty space among the black tangle of bushes. I ran round it furiously, as if the thing might be hidden in a corner, and then stopped abruptly, with my hands clutching my hair. Above me towered the sphinx, upon the bronze pedestal, white, shining, leprous, in the light of the rising moon. It seemed to smile in mockery of my dismay.

'I might have consoled myself by imagining the little people had put the mechanism in some shelter for me, had I not felt assured of their physical and intellectual inadequacy. That is what dismayed me: the sense of some hitherto unsuspected power, through whose intervention my invention had vanished. Yet, for one thing I felt assured: unless some other age had produced its exact duplicate, the machine could not have moved in time. The attachment of the levers — I will show you the method later — prevented any one from tampering with it in that way when they were removed. It had moved, and was hid, only in space. But then, where could it be?

'I think I must have had a kind of frenzy. I remember running violently in and out among the moonlit bushes all round the sphinx, and startling some white animal that, in the dim light, I took for a small deer. I remember, too, late that night, beating the bushes with my clenched fist until my knuckles were gashed and bleeding from the broken twigs. Then, sobbing and raving in my anguish of mind, I went down to the great building of stone. The big hall was dark, silent, and deserted. I slipped on the uneven floor, and fell over one of the malachite tables, almost breaking my shin. I lit a match and went on past the dusty curtains, of which I have told you.

'There I found a second great hall covered with cushions, upon which, perhaps, a score or so of the little people were sleeping. I have no doubt they found my second appearance strange enough, coming suddenly out of the quiet darkness with inarticulate noises and the splutter and flare of a match. For they had forgotten about matches. "Where is my Time Machine?" I began, bawling like an angry child, laying hands upon them and shaking them up together. It must have been very queer to them. Some laughed, most of them looked sorely frightened. When I saw them standing round me, it came into my head that I was doing as foolish a thing as it was

possible for me to do under the circumstances, in trying to revive the sensation of fear. For, reasoning from their daylight behaviour, I thought that fear must be forgotten.

'Abruptly, I dashed down the match, and, knocking one of the people over in my course, went blundering across the big dining-hall again, out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running and stumbling this way and that. I do not remember all I did as the moon crept up the sky. I suppose it was the unexpected nature of my loss that maddened me. I felt hopelessly cut off from my own kind — a strange animal in an unknown world. I must have raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate. I have a memory of horrible fatigue, as the long night of despair wore away; of looking in this impossible place and that; of groping among moon-lit ruins and touching strange creatures in the black shadows; at last, of lying on the ground near the sphinx and weeping with absolute wretchedness. I had nothing left but misery. Then I slept, and when I woke again it was full day, and a couple of sparrows were hopping round me on the turf within reach of my arm.

'I sat up in the freshness of the morning, trying to remember how I had got there, and why I had such a profound sense of desertion and despair. Then things came clear in my mind. With the plain, reasonable daylight, I could look my circumstances fairly in the face. I saw the wild folly of my frenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself. "Suppose the worst?" I said. "Suppose the machine altogether lost — perhaps destroyed? It behoves me to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the people, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss, and the means of getting materials and tools; so that in the end, perhaps, I may make another." That would be my only hope, perhaps, but better than despair. And, after all, it was a beautiful and curious world.

'But probably, the machine had only been taken away. Still, I must be calm and patient, find its hiding-place, and recover it by force or cunning. And with that I scrambled to my feet and looked about me, wondering where I could bathe. I felt weary, stiff, and travel-soiled. The freshness of the morning made me desire an equal freshness. I had exhausted my emotion. Indeed, as I went about my business, I found myself wondering at my intense excitement

overnight. I made a careful examination of the ground about the little lawn. I wasted some time in futile questionings, conveyed, as well as I was able, to such of the little people as came by. They all failed to understand my gestures; some were simply stolid, some thought it was a jest and laughed at me. I had the hardest task in the world to keep my hands off their pretty laughing faces. It was a foolish impulse, but the devil begotten of fear and blind anger was ill curbed and still eager to take advantage of my perplexity. The turf gave better counsel. I found a groove ripped in it, about midway between the pedestal of the sphinx and the marks of my feet where, on arrival, I had struggled with the overturned machine. There were other signs of removal about, with queer narrow footprints like those I could imagine made by a sloth. This directed my closer attention to the pedestal. It was, as I think I have said, of bronze. It was not a mere block, but highly decorated with deep framed panels on either side. I went and rapped at these. The pedestal was hollow. Examining the panels with care I found them discontinuous with the frames. There were no handles or keyholes, but possibly the panels, if they were doors, as I supposed, opened from within. One thing was clear enough to my mind. It took no very great mental effort to infer that my Time Machine was inside that pedestal. But how it got there was a different problem.

'I saw the heads of two orange-clad people coming through the bushes and under some blossom-covered apple-trees towards me. I turned smiling to them and beckoned them to me. They came, and then, pointing to the bronze pedestal, I tried to intimate my wish to open it. But at my first gesture towards this they behaved very oddly. I don't know how to convey their expression to you. Suppose you were to use a grossly improper gesture to a delicate-minded woman — it is how she would look. They went off as if they had received the last possible insult. I tried a sweet-looking little chap in white next, with exactly the same result. Somehow, his manner made me feel ashamed of myself. But, as you know, I wanted the Time Machine, and I tried him once more. As he turned off, like the others, my temper got the better of me. In three strides I was after him, had him by the loose part of his robe round the neck, and began dragging him towards the sphinx. Then I saw the horror and repugnance of his

face, and all of a sudden I let him go.

‘But I was not beaten yet. I banged with my fist at the bronze panels. I thought I heard something stir inside — to be explicit, I thought I heard a sound like a chuckle — but I must have been mistaken. Then I got a big pebble from the river, and came and hammered till I had flattened a coil in the decorations, and the verdigris came off in powdery flakes. The delicate little people must have heard me hammering in gusty outbreaks a mile away on either hand, but nothing came of it. I saw a crowd of them upon the slopes, looking furtively at me. At last, hot and tired, I sat down to watch the place. But I was too restless to watch long; I am too Occidental for a long vigil. I could work at a problem for years, but to wait inactive for twenty-four hours — that is another matter.

‘I got up after a time, and began walking aimlessly through the bushes towards the hill again. “Patience,” said I to myself. “If you want your machine again you must leave that sphinx alone. If they mean to take your machine away, it’s little good your wrecking their bronze panels, and if they don’t, you will get it back as soon as you can ask for it. To sit among all those unknown things before a puzzle like that is hopeless. That way lies monomania. Face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of too hasty guesses at its meaning. In the end you will find clues to it all.” Then suddenly the humour of the situation came into my mind: the thought of the years I had spent in study and toil to get into the future age, and now my passion of anxiety to get out of it. I had made myself the most complicated and the most hopeless trap that ever a man devised. Although it was at my own expense, I could not help myself. I laughed aloud.

‘Going through the big palace, it seemed to me that the little people avoided me. It may have been my fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze. Yet I felt tolerably sure of the avoidance. I was careful, however, to show no concern and to abstain from any pursuit of them, and in the course of a day or two things got back to the old footing. I made what progress I could in the language, and in addition I pushed my explorations here and there. Either I missed some subtle point or their language was excessively simple — almost exclusively composed of concrete

substantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if any, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to convey or understand any but the simplest propositions. I determined to put the thought of my Time Machine and the mystery of the bronze doors under the sphinx as much as possible in a corner of memory, until my growing knowledge would lead me back to them in a natural way. Yet a certain feeling, you may understand, tethered me in a circle of a few miles round the point of my arrival.

'So far as I could see, all the world displayed the same exuberant richness as the Thames valley. From every hill I climbed I saw the same abundance of splendid buildings, endlessly varied in material and style, the same clustering thickets of evergreens, the same blossom-laden trees and tree-ferns. Here and there water shone like silver, and beyond, the land rose into blue undulating hills, and so faded into the serenity of the sky. A peculiar feature, which presently attracted my attention, was the presence of certain circular wells, several, as it seemed to me, of a very great depth. One lay by the path up the hill, which I had followed during my first walk. Like the others, it was rimmed with bronze, curiously wrought, and protected by a little cupola from the rain. Sitting by the side of these wells, and peering down into the shafted darkness, I could see no gleam of water, nor could I start any reflection with a lighted match. But in all of them I heard a certain sound: a thud — thud — thud, like the beating of some big engine; and I discovered, from the flaring of my matches, that a steady current of air set down the shafts. Further, I threw a scrap of paper into the throat of one, and, instead of fluttering slowly down, it was at once sucked swiftly out of sight.

'After a time, too, I came to connect these wells with tall towers standing here and there upon the slopes; for above them there was often just such a flicker in the air as one sees on a hot day above a sun-scorched beach. Putting things together, I reached a strong suggestion of an extensive system of subterranean ventilation, whose true import it was difficult to imagine. I was at first inclined to associate it with the sanitary apparatus of these people. It was an obvious conclusion, but it was absolutely wrong.

'And here I must admit that I learned very little of drains and bells

and modes of conveyance, and the like conveniences, during my time in this real future. In some of these visions of Utopias and coming times which I have read, there is a vast amount of detail about building, and social arrangements, and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whole world is contained in one's imagination, they are altogether inaccessible to a real traveller amid such realities as I found here. Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Africa, would take back to his tribe! What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and telegraph wires, of the Parcels Delivery Company, and postal orders and the like? Yet we, at least, should be willing enough to explain these things to him! And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untravelled friend either apprehend or believe? Then, think how narrow the gap between a negro and a white man of our own times, and how wide the interval between myself and these of the Golden Age! I was sensible of much which was unseen, and which contributed to my comfort; but save for a general impression of automatic organization, I fear I can convey very little of the difference to your mind.

'In the matter of sepulture, for instance, I could see no signs of crematoria nor anything suggestive of tombs. But it occurred to me that, possibly, there might be cemeteries (or crematoria) somewhere beyond the range of my explorings. This, again, was a question I deliberately put to myself, and my curiosity was at first entirely defeated upon the point. The thing puzzled me, and I was led to make a further remark, which puzzled me still more: that aged and infirm among this people there were none.

'I must confess that my satisfaction with my first theories of an automatic civilization and a decadent humanity did not long endure. Yet I could think of no other. Let me put my difficulties. The several big palaces I had explored were mere living places, great dining-halls and sleeping apartments. I could find no machinery, no appliances of any kind. Yet these people were clothed in pleasant fabrics that must at times need renewal, and their sandals, though undecorated, were fairly complex specimens of metalwork. Somehow such things must be made. And the little people displayed no vestige of a creative tendency. There were no shops, no workshops, no sign of

importations among them. They spent all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half-playful fashion, in eating fruit and sleeping. I could not see how things were kept going.

'Then, again, about the Time Machine: something, I knew not what, had taken it into the hollow pedestal of the White Sphinx. Why? For the life of me I could not imagine. Those waterless wells, too, those flickering pillars. I felt I lacked a clue. I felt — how shall I put it? Suppose you found an inscription, with sentences here and there in excellent plain English, and interpolated therewith, others made up of words, of letters even, absolutely unknown to you? Well, on the third day of my visit, that was how the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One presented itself to me!

'That day, too, I made a friend — of a sort. It happened that, as I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow, one of them was seized with cramp and began drifting downstream. The main current ran rather swiftly, but not too strongly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes. When I realized this, I hurriedly slipped off my clothes, and, wading in at a point lower down, I caught the poor mite and drew her safe to land. A little rubbing of the limbs soon brought her round, and I had the satisfaction of seeing she was all right before I left her. I had got to such a low estimate of her kind that I did not expect any gratitude from her. In that, however, I was wrong.

'This happened in the morning. In the afternoon I met my little woman, as I believe it was, as I was returning towards my centre from an exploration, and she received me with cries of delight and presented me with a big garland of flowers — evidently made for me and me alone. The thing took my imagination. Very possibly I had been feeling desolate. At any rate I did my best to display my appreciation of the gift. We were soon seated together in a little stone arbour, engaged in conversation, chiefly of smiles. The creature's friendliness affected me exactly as a child's might have done. We passed each other flowers, and she kissed my hands. I did the same to

hers. Then I tried talk, and found that her name was Weena, which, though I don't know what it meant, somehow seemed appropriate enough. That was the beginning of a queer friendship which lasted a week, and ended — as I will tell you!

'She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always. She tried to follow me everywhere, and on my next journey out and about it went to my heart to tire her down, and leave her at last, exhausted and calling after me rather plaintively. But the problems of the world had to be mastered. I had not, I said to myself, come into the future to carry on a miniature flirtation. Yet her distress when I left her was very great, her expostulations at the parting were sometimes frantic, and I think, altogether, I had as much trouble as comfort from her devotion. Nevertheless she was, somehow, a very great comfort. I thought it was mere childish affection that made her cling to me. Until it was too late, I did not clearly know what I had inflicted upon her when I left her. Nor until it was too late did I clearly understand what she was to me. For, by merely seeming fond of me, and showing in her weak, futile way that she cared for me, the little doll of a creature presently gave my return to the neighbourhood of the White Sphinx almost the feeling of coming home; and I would watch for her tiny figure of white and gold so soon as I came over the hill.

'It was from her, too, that I learned that fear had not yet left the world. She was fearless enough in the daylight, and she had the oddest confidence in me; for once, in a foolish moment, I made threatening grimaces at her, and she simply laughed at them. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was the one thing dreadful. It was a singularly passionate emotion, and it set me thinking and observing. I discovered then, among other things, that these little people gathered into the great houses after dark, and slept in droves. To enter upon them without a light was to put them into a tumult of apprehension. I never found one out of doors, or one sleeping alone within doors, after dark. Yet I was still such a blockhead that I missed the lesson of that fear, and in spite of Weena's distress I insisted upon sleeping away from these slumbering multitudes.

'It troubled her greatly, but in the end her odd affection for me

triumphed, and for five of the nights of our acquaintance, including the last night of all, she slept with her head pillowed on my arm. But my story slips away from me as I speak of her. It must have been the night before her rescue that I was awakened about dawn. I had been restless, dreaming most disagreeably that I was drowned, and that sea anemones were feeling over my face with their soft palps. I woke with a start, and with an odd fancy that some greyish animal had just rushed out of the chamber. I tried to get to sleep again, but I felt restless and uncomfortable. It was that dim grey hour when things are just creeping out of darkness, when everything is colourless and clear cut, and yet unreal. I got up, and went down into the great hall, and so out upon the flagstones in front of the palace. I thought I would make a virtue of necessity, and see the sunrise.

'The moon was setting, and the dying moonlight and the first pallor of dawn were mingled in a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inky black, the ground a sombre grey, the sky colourless and cheerless. And up the hill I thought I could see ghosts. There several times, as I scanned the slope, I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white, ape-like creature running rather quickly up the hill, and once near the ruins I saw a leash of them carrying some dark body. They moved hastily. I did not see what became of them. It seemed that they vanished among the bushes. The dawn was still indistinct, you must understand. I was feeling that chill, uncertain, early-morning feeling you may have known. I doubted my eyes.

'As the eastern sky grew brighter, and the light of the day came on and its vivid colouring returned upon the world once more, I scanned the view keenly. But I saw no vestige of my white figures. They were mere creatures of the half light. "They must have been ghosts," I said; "I wonder whence they dated." For a queer notion of Grant Allen's came into my head, and amused me. If each generation die and leave ghosts, he argued, the world at last will get overcrowded with them. On that theory they would have grown innumerable some Eight Hundred Thousand Years hence, and it was no great wonder to see four at once. But the jest was unsatisfying, and I was thinking of these figures all the morning, until Weena's rescue drove them out of my head. I associated them in some indefinite way with the white animal I had startled in my first

passionate search for the Time Machine. But Weena was a pleasant substitute. Yet all the same, they were soon destined to take far deadlier possession of my mind.

'I think I have said how much hotter than our own was the weather of this Golden Age. I cannot account for it. It may be that the sun was hotter, or the earth nearer the sun. It is usual to assume that the sun will go on cooling steadily in the future. But people, unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin, forget that the planets must ultimately fall back one by one into the parent body. As these catastrophes occur, the sun will blaze with renewed energy; and it may be that some inner planet had suffered this fate. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the sun was very much hotter than we know it.

'Well, one very hot morning — my fourth, I think — as I was seeking shelter from the heat and glare in a colossal ruin near the great house where I slept and fed, there happened this strange thing: Clambering among these heaps of masonry, I found a narrow gallery, whose end and side windows were blocked by fallen masses of stone. By contrast with the brilliancy outside, it seemed at first impenetrably dark to me. I entered it groping, for the change from light to blackness made spots of colour swim before me. Suddenly I halted spellbound. A pair of eyes, luminous by reflection against the daylight without, was watching me out of the darkness.

'The old instinctive dread of wild beasts came upon me. I clenched my hands and steadfastly looked into the glaring eyeballs. I was afraid to turn. Then the thought of the absolute security in which humanity appeared to be living came to my mind. And then I remembered that strange terror of the dark. Overcoming my fear to some extent, I advanced a step and spoke. I will admit that my voice was harsh and ill-controlled. I put out my hand and touched something soft. At once the eyes darted sideways, and something white ran past me. I turned with my heart in my mouth, and saw a queer little ape-like figure, its head held down in a peculiar manner, running across the sunlit space behind me. It blundered against a block of granite, staggered aside, and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow beneath another pile of ruined masonry.

'My impression of it is, of course, imperfect; but I know it was a

dull white, and had strange large greyish-red eyes; also that there was flaxen hair on its head and down its back. But, as I say, it went too fast for me to see distinctly. I cannot even say whether it ran on all-fours, or only with its forearms held very low. After an instant's pause I followed it into the second heap of ruins. I could not find it at first; but, after a time in the profound obscurity, I came upon one of those round well-like openings of which I have told you, half closed by a fallen pillar. A sudden thought came to me. Could this Thing have vanished down the shaft? I lit a match, and, looking down, I saw a small, white, moving creature, with large bright eyes which regarded me steadfastly as it retreated. It made me shudder. It was so like a human spider! It was clambering down the wall, and now I saw for the first time a number of metal foot and hand rests forming a kind of ladder down the shaft. Then the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped, and when I had lit another the little monster had disappeared.

'I do not know how long I sat peering down that well. It was not for some time that I could succeed in persuading myself that the thing I had seen was human. But, gradually, the truth dawned on me: that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals: that my graceful children of the Upper-world were not the sole descendants of our generation, but that this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which had flashed before me, was also heir to all the ages.

'I thought of the flickering pillars and of my theory of an underground ventilation. I began to suspect their true import. And what, I wondered, was this Lemur doing in my scheme of a perfectly balanced organization? How was it related to the indolent serenity of the beautiful Upper-worlders? And what was hidden down there, at the foot of that shaft? I sat upon the edge of the well telling myself that, at any rate, there was nothing to fear, and that there I must descend for the solution of my difficulties. And withal I was absolutely afraid to go! As I hesitated, two of the beautiful Upper-world people came running in their amorous sport across the daylight in the shadow. The male pursued the female, flinging flowers at her as he ran.

'They seemed distressed to find me, my arm against the

overturned pillar, peering down the well. Apparently it was considered bad form to remark these apertures; for when I pointed to this one, and tried to frame a question about it in their tongue, they were still more visibly distressed and turned away. But they were interested by my matches, and I struck some to amuse them. I tried them again about the well, and again I failed. So presently I left them, meaning to go back to Weena, and see what I could get from her. But my mind was already in revolution; my guesses and impressions were slipping and sliding to a new adjustment. I had now a clue to the import of these wells, to the ventilating towers, to the mystery of the ghosts; to say nothing of a hint at the meaning of the bronze gates and the fate of the Time Machine! And very vaguely there came a suggestion towards the solution of the economic problem that had puzzled me.

'Here was the new view. Plainly, this second species of Man was subterranean. There were three circumstances in particular which made me think that its rare emergence above ground was the outcome of a long-continued underground habit. In the first place, there was the bleached look common in most animals that live largely in the dark — the white fish of the Kentucky caves, for instance. Then, those large eyes, with that capacity for reflecting light, are common features of nocturnal things — witness the owl and the cat. And last of all, that evident confusion in the sunshine, that hasty yet fumbling awkward flight towards dark shadow, and that peculiar carriage of the head while in the light — all reinforced the theory of an extreme sensitiveness of the retina.

'Beneath my feet, then, the earth must be tunnelled enormously, and these tunnellings were the habitat of the new race. The presence of ventilating shafts and wells along the hill slopes — everywhere, in fact, except along the river valley — showed how universal were its ramifications. What so natural, then, as to assume that it was in this artificial Underworld that such work as was necessary to the comfort of the daylight race was done? The notion was so plausible that I at once accepted it, and went on to assume the *how* of this splitting of the human species. I dare say you will anticipate the shape of my theory; though, for myself, I very soon felt that it fell far short of the truth.

‘At first, proceeding from the problems of our own age, it seemed clear as daylight to me that the gradual widening of the present merely temporary and social difference between the Capitalist and the Labourer, was the key to the whole position. No doubt it will seem grotesque enough to you — and wildly incredible! — and yet even now there are existing circumstances to point that way. There is a tendency to utilize underground space for the less ornamental purposes of civilization; there is the Metropolitan Railway in London, for instance, there are new electric railways, there are subways, there are underground workrooms and restaurants, and they increase and multiply. Evidently, I thought, this tendency had increased till Industry had gradually lost its birthright in the sky. I mean that it had gone deeper and deeper into larger and ever larger underground factories, spending a still-increasing amount of its time therein, till, in the end — ! Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?

‘Again, the exclusive tendency of richer people — due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education, and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor — is already leading to the closing, in their interest, of considerable portions of the surface of the land. About London, for instance, perhaps half the prettier country is shut in against intrusion. And this same widening gulf — which is due to the length and expense of the higher educational process and the increased facilities for and temptations towards refined habits on the part of the rich — will make that exchange between class and class, that promotion by intermarriage which at present retards the splitting of our species along lines of social stratification, less and less frequent. So, in the end, above ground you must have the Haves, pursuing pleasure and comfort and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots, the Workers getting continually adapted to the conditions of their labour. Once they were there, they would no doubt have to pay rent, and not a little of it, for the ventilation of their caverns; and if they refused, they would starve or be suffocated for arrears. Such of them as were so constituted as to be miserable and rebellious would die; and, in the end, the balance being permanent, the survivors would become as well adapted to the

conditions of underground life, and as happy in their way, as the Upper-world people were to theirs. As it seemed to me, the refined beauty and the etiolated pallor followed naturally enough.

'The great triumph of Humanity I had dreamed of took a different shape in my mind. It had been no such triumph of moral education and general co-operation as I had imagined. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. Its triumph had not been simply a triumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-man. This, I must warn you, was my theory at the time. I had no convenient cicerone in the pattern of the Utopian books. My explanation may be absolutely wrong. I still think it is the most plausible one. But even on this supposition the balanced civilization that was at last attained must have long since passed its zenith, and was now far fallen into decay. The too-perfect security of the Upper-worlders had led them to a slow movement of degeneration, to a general dwindling in size, strength, and intelligence. That I could see clearly enough already. What had happened to the Under-grounders I did not yet suspect; but from what I had seen of the Morlocks — that, by the by, was the name by which these creatures were called — I could imagine that the modification of the human type was even far more profound than among the "Eloi," the beautiful race that I already knew.

'Then came troublesome doubts. Why had the Morlocks taken my Time Machine? For I felt sure it was they who had taken it. Why, too, if the Eloi were masters, could they not restore the machine to me? And why were they so terribly afraid of the dark? I proceeded, as I have said, to question Weena about this Under-world, but here again I was disappointed. At first she would not understand my questions, and presently she refused to answer them. She shivered as though the topic was unendurable. And when I pressed her, perhaps a little harshly, she burst into tears. They were the only tears, except my own, I ever saw in that Golden Age. When I saw them I ceased abruptly to trouble about the Morlocks, and was only concerned in banishing these signs of the human inheritance from Weena's eyes. And very soon she was smiling and clapping her hands, while I solemnly burned a match.

VI

‘It may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could follow up the new-found clue in what was manifestly the proper way. I felt a peculiar shrinking from those pallid bodies. They were just the half-bleached colour of the worms and things one sees preserved in spirit in a zoological museum. And they were filthily cold to the touch. Probably my shrinking was largely due to the sympathetic influence of the Eloi, whose disgust of the Morlocks I now began to appreciate.

‘The next night I did not sleep well. Probably my health was a little disordered. I was oppressed with perplexity and doubt. Once or twice I had a feeling of intense fear for which I could perceive no definite reason. I remember creeping noiselessly into the great hall where the little people were sleeping in the moonlight — that night Weena was among them — and feeling reassured by their presence. It occurred to me even then, that in the course of a few days the moon must pass through its last quarter, and the nights grow dark, when the appearances of these unpleasant creatures from below, these whitened Lemurs, this new vermin that had replaced the old, might be more abundant. And on both these days I had the restless feeling of one who shirks an inevitable duty. I felt assured that the Time Machine was only to be recovered by boldly penetrating these underground mysteries. Yet I could not face the mystery. If only I had had a companion it would have been different. But I was so horribly alone, and even to clamber down into the darkness of the well appalled me. I don’t know if you will understand my feeling, but I never felt quite safe at my back.

‘It was this restlessness, this insecurity, perhaps, that drove me further and further afield in my exploring expeditions. Going to the south-westward towards the rising country that is now called Combe Wood, I observed far off, in the direction of nineteenth-century Banstead, a vast green structure, different in character from any I had hitherto seen. It was larger than the largest of the palaces or ruins I knew, and the facade had an Oriental look: the face of it having the lustre, as well as the pale-green tint, a kind of bluish-green, of a certain type of Chinese porcelain. This difference in aspect suggested

a difference in use, and I was minded to push on and explore. But the day was growing late, and I had come upon the sight of the place after a long and tiring circuit; so I resolved to hold over the adventure for the following day, and I returned to the welcome and the caresses of little Weena. But next morning I perceived clearly enough that my curiosity regarding the Palace of Green Porcelain was a piece of self-deception, to enable me to shirk, by another day, an experience I dreaded. I resolved I would make the descent without further waste of time, and started out in the early morning towards a well near the ruins of granite and aluminium.

'Little Weena ran with me. She danced beside me to the well, but when she saw me lean over the mouth and look downward, she seemed strangely disconcerted. "Good-bye, little Weena," I said, kissing her; and then putting her down, I began to feel over the parapet for the climbing hooks. Rather hastily, I may as well confess, for I feared my courage might leak away! At first she watched me in amazement. Then she gave a most piteous cry, and running to me, she began to pull at me with her little hands. I think her opposition nerved me rather to proceed. I shook her off, perhaps a little roughly, and in another moment I was in the throat of the well. I saw her agonized face over the parapet, and smiled to reassure her. Then I had to look down at the unstable hooks to which I clung.

'I had to clamber down a shaft of perhaps two hundred yards. The descent was effected by means of metallic bars projecting from the sides of the well, and these being adapted to the needs of a creature much smaller and lighter than myself, I was speedily cramped and fatigued by the descent. And not simply fatigued! One of the bars bent suddenly under my weight, and almost swung me off into the blackness beneath. For a moment I hung by one hand, and after that experience I did not dare to rest again. Though my arms and back were presently acutely painful, I went on clambering down the sheer descent with as quick a motion as possible. Glancing upward, I saw the aperture, a small blue disk, in which a star was visible, while little Weena's head showed as a round black projection. The thudding sound of a machine below grew louder and more oppressive. Everything save that little disk above was profoundly dark, and when I looked up again Weena had disappeared.

‘I was in an agony of discomfort. I had some thought of trying to go up the shaft again, and leave the Under-world alone. But even while I turned this over in my mind I continued to descend. At last, with intense relief, I saw dimly coming up, a foot to the right of me, a slender loophole in the wall. Swinging myself in, I found it was the aperture of a narrow horizontal tunnel in which I could lie down and rest. It was not too soon. My arms ached, my back was cramped, and I was trembling with the prolonged terror of a fall. Besides this, the unbroken darkness had had a distressing effect upon my eyes. The air was full of the throb and hum of machinery pumping air down the shaft.

‘I do not know how long I lay. I was roused by a soft hand touching my face. Starting up in the darkness I snatched at my matches and, hastily striking one, I saw three stooping white creatures similar to the one I had seen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the light. Living, as they did, in what appeared to me impenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the pupils of the abysmal fishes, and they reflected the light in the same way. I have no doubt they could see me in that rayless obscurity, and they did not seem to have any fear of me apart from the light. But, so soon as I struck a match in order to see them, they fled incontinently, vanishing into dark gutters and tunnels, from which their eyes glared at me in the strangest fashion.

‘I tried to call to them, but the language they had was apparently different from that of the Over-world people; so that I was needs left to my own unaided efforts, and the thought of flight before exploration was even then in my mind. But I said to myself, “You are in for it now,” and, feeling my way along the tunnel, I found the noise of machinery grow louder. Presently the walls fell away from me, and I came to a large open space, and striking another match, saw that I had entered a vast arched cavern, which stretched into utter darkness beyond the range of my light. The view I had of it was as much as one could see in the burning of a match.

‘Necessarily my memory is vague. Great shapes like big machines rose out of the dimness, and cast grotesque black shadows, in which dim spectral Morlocks sheltered from the glare. The place, by the by,

was very stuffy and oppressive, and the faint halitus of freshly shed blood was in the air. Some way down the central vista was a little table of white metal, laid with what seemed a meal. The Morlocks at any rate were carnivorous! Even at the time, I remember wondering what large animal could have survived to furnish the red joint I saw. It was all very indistinct: the heavy smell, the big unmeaning shapes, the obscene figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiting for the darkness to come at me again! Then the match burned down, and stung my fingers, and fell, a wriggling red spot in the blackness.

'I have thought since how particularly ill-equipped I was for such an experience. When I had started with the Time Machine, I had started with the absurd assumption that the men of the Future would certainly be infinitely ahead of ourselves in all their appliances. I had come without arms, without medicine, without anything to smoke — at times I missed tobacco frightfully — even without enough matches. If only I had thought of a Kodak! I could have flashed that glimpse of the Underworld in a second, and examined it at leisure. But, as it was, I stood there with only the weapons and the powers that Nature had endowed me with — hands, feet, and teeth; these, and four safety-matches that still remained to me.

'I was afraid to push my way in among all this machinery in the dark, and it was only with my last glimpse of light I discovered that my store of matches had run low. It had never occurred to me until that moment that there was any need to economize them, and I had wasted almost half the box in astonishing the Upper-worlders, to whom fire was a novelty. Now, as I say, I had four left, and while I stood in the dark, a hand touched mine, lank fingers came feeling over my face, and I was sensible of a peculiar unpleasant odour. I fancied I heard the breathing of a crowd of those dreadful little beings about me. I felt the box of matches in my hand being gently disengaged, and other hands behind me plucking at my clothing. The sense of these unseen creatures examining me was indescribably unpleasant. The sudden realization of my ignorance of their ways of thinking and doing came home to me very vividly in the darkness. I shouted at them as loudly as I could. They started away, and then I could feel them approaching me again. They clutched at me more boldly, whispering odd sounds to each other. I shivered violently,

and shouted again — rather discordantly. This time they were not so seriously alarmed, and they made a queer laughing noise as they came back at me. I will confess I was horribly frightened. I determined to strike another match and escape under the protection of its glare. I did so, and eking out the flicker with a scrap of paper from my pocket, I made good my retreat to the narrow tunnel. But I had scarce entered this when my light was blown out and in the blackness I could hear the Morlocks rustling like wind among leaves, and pattering like the rain, as they hurried after me.

'In a moment I was clutched by several hands, and there was no mistaking that they were trying to haul me back. I struck another light, and waved it in their dazzled faces. You can scarce imagine how nauseatingly inhuman they looked — those pale, chinless faces and great, lidless, pinkish-grey eyes! — as they stared in their blindness and bewilderment. But I did not stay to look, I promise you: I retreated again, and when my second match had ended, I struck my third. It had almost burned through when I reached the opening into the shaft. I lay down on the edge, for the throb of the great pump below made me giddy. Then I felt sideways for the projecting hooks, and, as I did so, my feet were grasped from behind, and I was violently tugged backward. I lit my last match … and it incontinently went out. But I had my hand on the climbing bars now, and, kicking violently, I disengaged myself from the clutches of the Morlocks and was speedily clambering up the shaft, while they stayed peering and blinking up at me: all but one little wretch who followed me for some way, and well-nigh secured my boot as a trophy.

'That climb seemed interminable to me. With the last twenty or thirty feet of it a deadly nausea came upon me. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping my hold. The last few yards was a frightful struggle against this faintness. Several times my head swam, and I felt all the sensations of falling. At last, however, I got over the well-mouth somehow, and staggered out of the ruin into the blinding sunlight. I fell upon my face. Even the soil smelt sweet and clean. Then I remember Weena kissing my hands and ears, and the voices of others among the Eloi. Then, for a time, I was insensible.

VII

‘Now, indeed, I seemed in a worse case than before. Hitherto, except during my night’s anguish at the loss of the Time Machine, I had felt a sustaining hope of ultimate escape, but that hope was staggered by these new discoveries. Hitherto I had merely thought myself impeded by the childish simplicity of the little people, and by some unknown forces which I had only to understand to overcome; but there was an altogether new element in the sickening quality of the Morlocks — a something inhuman and malign. Instinctively I loathed them. Before, I had felt as a man might feel who had fallen into a pit: my concern was with the pit and how to get out of it. Now I felt like a beast in a trap, whose enemy would come upon him soon.

‘The enemy I dreaded may surprise you. It was the darkness of the new moon. Weena had put this into my head by some at first incomprehensible remarks about the Dark Nights. It was not now such a very difficult problem to guess what the coming Dark Nights might mean. The moon was on the wane: each night there was a longer interval of darkness. And I now understood to some slight degree at least the reason of the fear of the little Upper-world people for the dark. I wondered vaguely what foul villainy it might be that the Morlocks did under the new moon. I felt pretty sure now that my second hypothesis was all wrong. The Upper-world people might once have been the favoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their mechanical servants: but that had long since passed away. The two species that had resulted from the evolution of man were sliding down towards, or had already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carolingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on sufferance: since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the daylit surface intolerable. And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and maintained them in their habitual needs, perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service. They did it as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a man enjoys killing animals in sport: because ancient and departed necessities had impressed it on the organism. But, clearly, the old

order was already in part reversed. The Nemesis of the delicate ones was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousands of generations ago, man had thrust his brother man out of the ease and the sunshine. And now that brother was coming back changed! Already the Eloi had begun to learn one old lesson anew. They were becoming reacquainted with Fear. And suddenly there came into my head the memory of the meat I had seen in the Under-world. It seemed odd how it floated into my mind: not stirred up as it were by the current of my meditations, but coming in almost like a question from outside. I tried to recall the form of it. I had a vague sense of something familiar, but I could not tell what it was at the time.

'Still, however helpless the little people in the presence of their mysterious Fear, I was differently constituted. I came out of this age of ours, this ripe prime of the human race, when Fear does not paralyse and mystery has lost its terrors. I at least would defend myself. Without further delay I determined to make myself arms and a fastness where I might sleep. With that refuge as a base, I could face this strange world with some of that confidence I had lost in realizing to what creatures night by night I lay exposed. I felt I could never sleep again until my bed was secure from them. I shuddered with horror to think how they must already have examined me.

'I wandered during the afternoon along the valley of the Thames, but found nothing that commended itself to my mind as inaccessible. All the buildings and trees seemed easily practicable to such dexterous climbers as the Morlocks, to judge by their wells, must be. Then the tall pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain and the polished gleam of its walls came back to my memory; and in the evening, taking Weena like a child upon my shoulder, I went up the hills towards the south-west. The distance, I had reckoned, was seven or eight miles, but it must have been nearer eighteen. I had first seen the place on a moist afternoon when distances are deceptively diminished. In addition, the heel of one of my shoes was loose, and a nail was working through the sole — they were comfortable old shoes I wore about indoors — so that I was lame. And it was already long past sunset when I came in sight of the palace, silhouetted black against the pale yellow of the sky.

'Weena had been hugely delighted when I began to carry her, but

after a while she desired me to let her down, and ran along by the side of me, occasionally darting off on either hand to pick flowers to stick in my pockets. My pockets had always puzzled Weena, but at the last she had concluded that they were an eccentric kind of vase for floral decoration. At least she utilized them for that purpose. And that reminds me! In changing my jacket I found…'

The Time Traveller paused, put his hand into his pocket, and silently placed two withered flowers, not unlike very large white mallows, upon the little table. Then he resumed his narrative.

'As the hush of evening crept over the world and we proceeded over the hill crest towards Wimbledon, Weena grew tired and wanted to return to the house of grey stone. But I pointed out the distant pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain to her, and contrived to make her understand that we were seeking a refuge there from her Fear. You know that great pause that comes upon things before the dusk? Even the breeze stops in the trees. To me there is always an air of expectation about that evening stillness. The sky was clear, remote, and empty save for a few horizontal bars far down in the sunset. Well, that night the expectation took the colour of my fears. In that darkling calm my senses seemed preternaturally sharpened. I fancied I could even feel the hollowness of the ground beneath my feet: could, indeed, almost see through it the Morlocks on their ant-hill going hither and thither and waiting for the dark. In my excitement I fancied that they would receive my invasion of their burrows as a declaration of war. And why had they taken my Time Machine?

'So we went on in the quiet, and the twilight deepened into night. The clear blue of the distance faded, and one star after another came out. The ground grew dim and the trees black. Weena's fears and her fatigue grew upon her. I took her in my arms and talked to her and caressed her. Then, as the darkness grew deeper, she put her arms round my neck, and, closing her eyes, tightly pressed her face against my shoulder. So we went down a long slope into a valley, and there in the dimness I almost walked into a little river. This I waded, and went up the opposite side of the valley, past a number of sleeping houses, and by a statue — a Faun, or some such figure, *minus* the head. Here too were acacias. So far I had seen nothing of the

Morlocks, but it was yet early in the night, and the darker hours before the old moon rose were still to come.

‘From the brow of the next hill I saw a thick wood spreading wide and black before me. I hesitated at this. I could see no end to it, either to the right or the left. Feeling tired — my feet, in particular, were very sore — I carefully lowered Weena from my shoulder as I halted, and sat down upon the turf. I could no longer see the Palace of Green Porcelain, and I was in doubt of my direction. I looked into the thickness of the wood and thought of what it might hide. Under that dense tangle of branches one would be out of sight of the stars. Even were there no other lurking danger — a danger I did not care to let my imagination loose upon — there would still be all the roots to stumble over and the tree-boles to strike against.

‘I was very tired, too, after the excitements of the day; so I decided that I would not face it, but would pass the night upon the open hill.

‘Weena, I was glad to find, was fast asleep. I carefully wrapped her in my jacket, and sat down beside her to wait for the moonrise. The hill-side was quiet and deserted, but from the black of the wood there came now and then a stir of living things. Above me shone the stars, for the night was very clear. I felt a certain sense of friendly comfort in their twinkling. All the old constellations had gone from the sky, however: that slow movement which is imperceptible in a hundred human lifetimes, had long since rearranged them in unfamiliar groupings. But the Milky Way, it seemed to me, was still the same tattered streamer of star-dust as of yore. Southward (as I judged it) was a very bright red star that was new to me; it was even more splendid than our own green Sirius. And amid all these scintillating points of light one bright planet shone kindly and steadily like the face of an old friend.

‘Looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of their unfathomable distance, and the slow inevitable drift of their movements out of the unknown past into the unknown future. I thought of the great precessional cycle that the pole of the earth describes. Only forty times had that silent revolution occurred during all the years that I had traversed. And during these few revolutions all the activity, all

the traditions, the complex organizations, the nations, languages, literatures, aspirations, even the mere memory of Man as I knew him, had been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who had forgotten their high ancestry, and the white Things of which I went in terror. Then I thought of the Great Fear that was between the two species, and for the first time, with a sudden shiver, came the clear knowledge of what the meat I had seen might be. Yet it was too horrible! I looked at little Weena sleeping beside me, her face white and starlike under the stars, and forthwith dismissed the thought.

'Through that long night I held my mind off the Morlocks as well as I could, and whiled away the time by trying to fancy I could find signs of the old constellations in the new confusion. The sky kept very clear, except for a hazy cloud or so. No doubt I dozed at times. Then, as my vigil wore on, came a faintness in the eastward sky, like the reflection of some colourless fire, and the old moon rose, thin and peaked and white. And close behind, and overtaking it, and overflowing it, the dawn came, pale at first, and then growing pink and warm. No Morlocks had approached us. Indeed, I had seen none upon the hill that night. And in the confidence of renewed day it almost seemed to me that my fear had been unreasonable. I stood up and found my foot with the loose heel swollen at the ankle and painful under the heel; so I sat down again, took off my shoes, and flung them away.

'I awakened Weena, and we went down into the wood, now green and pleasant instead of black and forbidding. We found some fruit wherewith to break our fast. We soon met others of the dainty ones, laughing and dancing in the sunlight as though there was no such thing in nature as the night. And then I thought once more of the meat that I had seen. I felt assured now of what it was, and from the bottom of my heart I pitied this last feeble rill from the great flood of humanity. Clearly, at some time in the Long-Ago of human decay the Morlocks' food had run short. Possibly they had lived on rats and such-like vermin. Even now man is far less discriminating and exclusive in his food than he was — far less than any monkey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct. And so these inhuman sons of men —— ! I tried to look at the thing in a scientific spirit. After all, they were less human and more remote

than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the intelligence that would have made this state of things a torment had gone. Why should I trouble myself? These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon — probably saw to the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing at my side!

'Then I tried to preserve myself from the horror that was coming upon me, by regarding it as a rigorous punishment of human selfishness. Man had been content to live in ease and delight upon the labours of his fellow-man, had taken Necessity as his watchword and excuse, and in the fullness of time Necessity had come home to him. I even tried a Carlyle-like scorn of this wretched aristocracy in decay. But this attitude of mind was impossible. However great their intellectual degradation, the Eloi had kept too much of the human form not to claim my sympathy, and to make me perforce a sharer in their degradation and their Fear.

'I had at that time very vague ideas as to the course I should pursue. My first was to secure some safe place of refuge, and to make myself such arms of metal or stone as I could contrive. That necessity was immediate. In the next place, I hoped to procure some means of fire, so that I should have the weapon of a torch at hand, for nothing, I knew, would be more efficient against these Morlocks. Then I wanted to arrange some contrivance to break open the doors of bronze under the White Sphinx. I had in mind a battering ram. I had a persuasion that if I could enter those doors and carry a blaze of light before me I should discover the Time Machine and escape. I could not imagine the Morlocks were strong enough to move it far away. Weena I had resolved to bring with me to our own time. And turning such schemes over in my mind I pursued our way towards the building which my fancy had chosen as our dwelling.

VIII

‘I found the Palace of Green Porcelain, when we approached it about noon, deserted and falling into ruin. Only ragged vestiges of glass remained in its windows, and great sheets of the green facing had fallen away from the corroded metallic framework. It lay very high upon a turfy down, and looking north-eastward before I entered it, I was surprised to see a large estuary, or even creek, where I judged Wandsworth and Battersea must once have been. I thought then — though I never followed up the thought — of what might have happened, or might be happening, to the living things in the sea.

‘The material of the Palace proved on examination to be indeed porcelain, and along the face of it I saw an inscription in some unknown character. I thought, rather foolishly, that Weena might help me to interpret this, but I only learned that the bare idea of writing had never entered her head. She always seemed to me, I fancy, more human than she was, perhaps because her affection was so human.

‘Within the big valves of the door — which were open and broken — we found, instead of the customary hall, a long gallery lit by many side windows. At the first glance I was reminded of a museum. The tiled floor was thick with dust, and a remarkable array of miscellaneous objects was shrouded in the same grey covering. Then I perceived, standing strange and gaunt in the centre of the hall, what was clearly the lower part of a huge skeleton. I recognized by the oblique feet that it was some extinct creature after the fashion of the Megatherium. The skull and the upper bones lay beside it in the thick dust, and in one place, where rain-water had dropped through a leak in the roof, the thing itself had been worn away. Further in the gallery was the huge skeleton barrel of a Brontosaurus. My museum hypothesis was confirmed. Going towards the side I found what appeared to be sloping shelves, and clearing away the thick dust, I found the old familiar glass cases of our own time. But they must have been air-tight to judge from the fair preservation of some of their contents.

‘Clearly we stood among the ruins of some latter-day South

Kensington! Here, apparently, was the Palaeontological Section, and a very splendid array of fossils it must have been, though the inevitable process of decay that had been staved off for a time, and had, through the extinction of bacteria and fungi, lost ninety-nine hundredths of its force, was nevertheless, with extreme sureness if with extreme slowness at work again upon all its treasures. Here and there I found traces of the little people in the shape of rare fossils broken to pieces or threaded in strings upon reeds. And the cases had in some instances been bodily removed — by the Morlocks as I judged. The place was very silent. The thick dust deadened our footsteps. Weena, who had been rolling a sea urchin down the sloping glass of a case, presently came, as I stared about me, and very quietly took my hand and stood beside me.

'And at first I was so much surprised by this ancient monument of an intellectual age, that I gave no thought to the possibilities it presented. Even my preoccupation about the Time Machine receded a little from my mind.

'To judge from the size of the place, this Palace of Green Porcelain had a great deal more in it than a Gallery of Palaeontology; possibly historical galleries; it might be, even a library! To me, at least in my present circumstances, these would be vastly more interesting than this spectacle of oldtime geology in decay. Exploring, I found another short gallery running transversely to the first. This appeared to be devoted to minerals, and the sight of a block of sulphur set my mind running on gunpowder. But I could find no saltpeter; indeed, no nitrates of any kind. Doubtless they had deliquesced ages ago. Yet the sulphur hung in my mind, and set up a train of thinking. As for the rest of the contents of that gallery, though on the whole they were the best preserved of all I saw, I had little interest. I am no specialist in mineralogy, and I went on down a very ruinous aisle running parallel to the first hall I had entered. Apparently this section had been devoted to natural history, but everything had long since passed out of recognition. A few shrivelled and blackened vestiges of what had once been stuffed animals, desiccated mummies in jars that had once held spirit, a brown dust of departed plants: that was all! I was sorry for that, because I should have been glad to trace the patent readjustments by which the

conquest of animated nature had been attained. Then we came to a gallery of simply colossal proportions, but singularly ill-lit, the floor of it running downward at a slight angle from the end at which I entered. At intervals white globes hung from the ceiling — many of them cracked and smashed — which suggested that originally the place had been artificially lit. Here I was more in my element, for rising on either side of me were the huge bulks of big machines, all greatly corroded and many broken down, but some still fairly complete. You know I have a certain weakness for mechanism, and I was inclined to linger among these; the more so as for the most part they had the interest of puzzles, and I could make only the vaguest guesses at what they were for. I fancied that if I could solve their puzzles I should find myself in possession of powers that might be of use against the Morlocks.

'Suddenly Weena came very close to my side. So suddenly that she startled me. Had it not been for her I do not think I should have noticed that the floor of the gallery sloped at all. [Footnote: It may be, of course, that the floor did not slope, but that the museum was built into the side of a hill. — ED.] The end I had come in at was quite above ground, and was lit by rare slit-like windows. As you went down the length, the ground came up against these windows, until at last there was a pit like the "area" of a London house before each, and only a narrow line of daylight at the top. I went slowly along, puzzling about the machines, and had been too intent upon them to notice the gradual diminution of the light, until Weena's increasing apprehensions drew my attention. Then I saw that the gallery ran down at last into a thick darkness. I hesitated, and then, as I looked round me, I saw that the dust was less abundant and its surface less even. Further away towards the dimness, it appeared to be broken by a number of small narrow footprints. My sense of the immediate presence of the Morlocks revived at that. I felt that I was wasting my time in the academic examination of machinery. I called to mind that it was already far advanced in the afternoon, and that I had still no weapon, no refuge, and no means of making a fire. And then down in the remote blackness of the gallery I heard a peculiar pattering, and the same odd noises I had heard down the well.

'I took Weena's hand. Then, struck with a sudden idea, I left her

and turned to a machine from which projected a lever not unlike those in a signal-box. Clambering upon the stand, and grasping this lever in my hands, I put all my weight upon it sideways. Suddenly Weena, deserted in the central aisle, began to whimper. I had judged the strength of the lever pretty correctly, for it snapped after a minute's strain, and I rejoined her with a mace in my hand more than sufficient, I judged, for any Morlock skull I might encounter. And I longed very much to kill a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one's own descendants! But it was impossible, somehow, to feel any humanity in the things. Only my disinclination to leave Weena, and a persuasion that if I began to slake my thirst for murder my Time Machine might suffer, restrained me from going straight down the gallery and killing the brutes I heard.

'Well, mace in one hand and Weena in the other, I went out of that gallery and into another and still larger one, which at the first glance reminded me of a military chapel hung with tattered flags. The brown and charred rags that hung from the sides of it, I presently recognized as the decaying vestiges of books. They had long since dropped to pieces, and every semblance of print had left them. But here and there were warped boards and cracked metallic clasps that told the tale well enough. Had I been a literary man I might, perhaps, have moralized upon the futility of all ambition. But as it was, the thing that struck me with keenest force was the enormous waste of labour to which this sombre wilderness of rotting paper testified. At the time I will confess that I thought chiefly of the *Philosophical Transactions* and my own seventeen papers upon physical optics.

'Then, going up a broad staircase, we came to what may once have been a gallery of technical chemistry. And here I had not a little hope of useful discoveries. Except at one end where the roof had collapsed, this gallery was well preserved. I went eagerly to every unbroken case. And at last, in one of the really air-tight cases, I found a box of matches. Very eagerly I tried them. They were perfectly good. They were not even damp. I turned to Weena. "Dance," I cried to her in her own tongue. For now I had a weapon indeed against the horrible creatures we feared. And so, in that derelict museum, upon the thick soft carpeting of dust, to Weena's

huge delight, I solemnly performed a kind of composite dance, whistling *The Land of the Leal* as cheerfully as I could. In part it was a modest *cancan*, in part a step dance, in part a skirt-dance (so far as my tail-coat permitted), and in part original. For I am naturally inventive, as you know.

'Now, I still think that for this box of matches to have escaped the wear of time for immemorial years was a most strange, as for me it was a most fortunate thing. Yet, oddly enough, I found a far unlikelier substance, and that was camphor. I found it in a sealed jar, that by chance, I suppose, had been really hermetically sealed. I fancied at first that it was paraffin wax, and smashed the glass accordingly. But the odour of camphor was unmistakable. In the universal decay this volatile substance had chanced to survive, perhaps through many thousands of centuries. It reminded me of a sepia painting I had once seen done from the ink of a fossil Belemnite that must have perished and become fossilized millions of years ago. I was about to throw it away, but I remembered that it was inflammable and burned with a good bright flame — was, in fact, an excellent candle — and I put it in my pocket. I found no explosives, however, nor any means of breaking down the bronze doors. As yet my iron crowbar was the most helpful thing I had chanced upon. Nevertheless I left that gallery greatly elated.

'I cannot tell you all the story of that long afternoon. It would require a great effort of memory to recall my explorations in at all the proper order. I remember a long gallery of rusting stands of arms, and how I hesitated between my crowbar and a hatchet or a sword. I could not carry both, however, and my bar of iron promised best against the bronze gates. There were numbers of guns, pistols, and rifles. The most were masses of rust, but many were of some new metal, and still fairly sound. But any cartridges or powder there may once have been had rotted into dust. One corner I saw was charred and shattered; perhaps, I thought, by an explosion among the specimens. In another place was a vast array of idols — Polynesian, Mexican, Grecian, Phoenician, every country on earth I should think. And here, yielding to an irresistible impulse, I wrote my name upon the nose of a steatite monster from South America that particularly took my fancy.

‘As the evening drew on, my interest waned. I went through gallery after gallery, dusty, silent, often ruinous, the exhibits sometimes mere heaps of rust and lignite, sometimes fresher. In one place I suddenly found myself near the model of a tin-mine, and then by the merest accident I discovered, in an air-tight case, two dynamite cartridges! I shouted “Eureka!” and smashed the case with joy. Then came a doubt. I hesitated. Then, selecting a little side gallery, I made my essay. I never felt such a disappointment as I did in waiting five, ten, fifteen minutes for an explosion that never came. Of course the things were dummies, as I might have guessed from their presence. I really believe that had they not been so, I should have rushed off incontinently and blown Sphinx, bronze doors, and (as it proved) my chances of finding the Time Machine, all together into non-existence.

‘It was after that, I think, that we came to a little open court within the palace. It was turfed, and had three fruit-trees. So we rested and refreshed ourselves. Towards sunset I began to consider our position. Night was creeping upon us, and my inaccessible hiding-place had still to be found. But that troubled me very little now. I had in my possession a thing that was, perhaps, the best of all defences against the Morlocks — I had matches! I had the camphor in my pocket, too, if a blaze were needed. It seemed to me that the best thing we could do would be to pass the night in the open, protected by a fire. In the morning there was the getting of the Time Machine. Towards that, as yet, I had only my iron mace. But now, with my growing knowledge, I felt very differently towards those bronze doors. Up to this, I had refrained from forcing them, largely because of the mystery on the other side. They had never impressed me as being very strong, and I hoped to find my bar of iron not altogether inadequate for the work.

IX

‘We emerged from the palace while the sun was still in part above the horizon. I was determined to reach the White Sphinx early the next morning, and ere the dusk I purposed pushing through the woods that had stopped me on the previous journey. My plan was to go as far as possible that night, and then, building a fire, to sleep in the protection of its glare. Accordingly, as we went along I gathered any sticks or dried grass I saw, and presently had my arms full of such litter. Thus loaded, our progress was slower than I had anticipated, and besides Weena was tired. And I began to suffer from sleepiness too; so that it was full night before we reached the wood. Upon the shrubby hill of its edge Weena would have stopped, fearing the darkness before us; but a singular sense of impending calamity, that should indeed have served me as a warning, drove me onward. I had been without sleep for a night and two days, and I was feverish and irritable. I felt sleep coming upon me, and the Morlocks with it.

‘While we hesitated, among the black bushes behind us, and dim against their blackness, I saw three crouching figures. There was scrub and long grass all about us, and I did not feel safe from their insidious approach. The forest, I calculated, was rather less than a mile across. If we could get through it to the bare hill-side, there, as it seemed to me, was an altogether safer resting-place; I thought that with my matches and my camphor I could contrive to keep my path illuminated through the woods. Yet it was evident that if I was to flourish matches with my hands I should have to abandon my firewood; so, rather reluctantly, I put it down. And then it came into my head that I would amaze our friends behind by lighting it. I was to discover the atrocious folly of this proceeding, but it came to my mind as an ingenious move for covering our retreat.

‘I don’t know if you have ever thought what a rare thing flame must be in the absence of man and in a temperate climate. The sun’s heat is rarely strong enough to burn, even when it is focused by dewdrops, as is sometimes the case in more tropical districts. Lightning may blast and blacken, but it rarely gives rise to widespread fire. Decaying vegetation may occasionally smoulder

with the heat of its fermentation, but this rarely results in flame. In this decadence, too, the art of fire-making had been forgotten on the earth. The red tongues that went licking up my heap of wood were an altogether new and strange thing to Weena.

'She wanted to run to it and play with it. I believe she would have cast herself into it had I not restrained her. But I caught her up, and in spite of her struggles, plunged boldly before me into the wood. For a little way the glare of my fire lit the path. Looking back presently, I could see, through the crowded stems, that from my heap of sticks the blaze had spread to some bushes adjacent, and a curved line of fire was creeping up the grass of the hill. I laughed at that, and turned again to the dark trees before me. It was very black, and Weena clung to me convulsively, but there was still, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, sufficient light for me to avoid the stems. Overhead it was simply black, except where a gap of remote blue sky shone down upon us here and there. I struck none of my matches because I had no hand free. Upon my left arm I carried my little one, in my right hand I had my iron bar.

'For some way I heard nothing but the crackling twigs under my feet, the faint rustle of the breeze above, and my own breathing and the throb of the blood-vessels in my ears. Then I seemed to know of a pattering about me. I pushed on grimly. The pattering grew more distinct, and then I caught the same queer sound and voices I had heard in the Under-world. There were evidently several of the Morlocks, and they were closing in upon me. Indeed, in another minute I felt a tug at my coat, then something at my arm. And Weena shivered violently, and became quite still.

'It was time for a match. But to get one I must put her down. I did so, and, as I fumbled with my pocket, a struggle began in the darkness about my knees, perfectly silent on her part and with the same peculiar cooing sounds from the Morlocks. Soft little hands, too, were creeping over my coat and back, touching even my neck. Then the match scratched and fizzed. I held it flaring, and saw the white backs of the Morlocks in flight amid the trees. I hastily took a lump of camphor from my pocket, and prepared to light it as soon as the match should wane. Then I looked at Weena. She was lying clutching my feet and quite motionless, with her face to the ground.

With a sudden fright I stooped to her. She seemed scarcely to breathe. I lit the block of camphor and flung it to the ground, and as it split and flared up and drove back the Morlocks and the shadows, I knelt down and lifted her. The wood behind seemed full of the stir and murmur of a great company!

'She seemed to have fainted. I put her carefully upon my shoulder and rose to push on, and then there came a horrible realization. In manoeuvring with my matches and Weena, I had turned myself about several times, and now I had not the faintest idea in what direction lay my path. For all I knew, I might be facing back towards the Palace of Green Porcelain. I found myself in a cold sweat. I had to think rapidly what to do. I determined to build a fire and encamp where we were. I put Weena, still motionless, down upon a turfy bole, and very hastily, as my first lump of camphor waned, I began collecting sticks and leaves. Here and there out of the darkness round me the Morlocks' eyes shone like carbuncles.

'The camphor flickered and went out. I lit a match, and as I did so, two white forms that had been approaching Weena dashed hastily away. One was so blinded by the light that he came straight for me, and I felt his bones grind under the blow of my fist. He gave a whoop of dismay, staggered a little way, and fell down. I lit another piece of camphor, and went on gathering my bonfire. Presently I noticed how dry was some of the foliage above me, for since my arrival on the Time Machine, a matter of a week, no rain had fallen. So, instead of casting about among the trees for fallen twigs, I began leaping up and dragging down branches. Very soon I had a choking smoky fire of green wood and dry sticks, and could economize my camphor. Then I turned to where Weena lay beside my iron mace. I tried what I could to revive her, but she lay like one dead. I could not even satisfy myself whether or not she breathed.

'Now, the smoke of the fire beat over towards me, and it must have made me heavy of a sudden. Moreover, the vapour of camphor was in the air. My fire would not need replenishing for an hour or so. I felt very weary after my exertion, and sat down. The wood, too, was full of a slumbrous murmur that I did not understand. I seemed just to nod and open my eyes. But all was dark, and the Morlocks had their hands upon me. Flinging off their clinging fingers I hastily

felt in my pocket for the match-box, and — it had gone! Then they gripped and closed with me again. In a moment I knew what had happened. I had slept, and my fire had gone out, and the bitterness of death came over my soul. The forest seemed full of the smell of burning wood. I was caught by the neck, by the hair, by the arms, and pulled down. It was indescribably horrible in the darkness to feel all these soft creatures heaped upon me. I felt as if I was in a monstrous spider's web. I was overpowered, and went down. I felt little teeth nipping at my neck. I rolled over, and as I did so my hand came against my iron lever. It gave me strength. I struggled up, shaking the human rats from me, and, holding the bar short, I thrust where I judged their faces might be. I could feel the succulent giving of flesh and bone under my blows, and for a moment I was free.

'The strange exultation that so often seems to accompany hard fighting came upon me. I knew that both I and Weena were lost, but I determined to make the Morlocks pay for their meat. I stood with my back to a tree, swinging the iron bar before me. The whole wood was full of the stir and cries of them. A minute passed. Their voices seemed to rise to a higher pitch of excitement, and their movements grew faster. Yet none came within reach. I stood glaring at the blackness. Then suddenly came hope. What if the Morlocks were afraid? And close on the heels of that came a strange thing. The darkness seemed to grow luminous. Very dimly I began to see the Morlocks about me — three battered at my feet — and then I recognized, with incredulous surprise, that the others were running, in an incessant stream, as it seemed, from behind me, and away through the wood in front. And their backs seemed no longer white, but reddish. As I stood agape, I saw a little red spark go drifting across a gap of starlight between the branches, and vanish. And at that I understood the smell of burning wood, the slumbrous murmur that was growing now into a gusty roar, the red glow, and the Morlocks' flight.

'Stepping out from behind my tree and looking back, I saw, through the black pillars of the nearer trees, the flames of the burning forest. It was my first fire coming after me. With that I looked for Weena, but she was gone. The hissing and crackling behind me, the explosive thud as each fresh tree burst into flame, left little time for

reflection. My iron bar still gripped, I followed in the Morlocks' path. It was a close race. Once the flames crept forward so swiftly on my right as I ran that I was outflanked and had to strike off to the left. But at last I emerged upon a small open space, and as I did so, a Morlock came blundering towards me, and past me, and went on straight into the fire!

'And now I was to see the most weird and horrible thing, I think, of all that I beheld in that future age. This whole space was as bright as day with the reflection of the fire. In the centre was a hillock or tumulus, surmounted by a scorched hawthorn. Beyond this was another arm of the burning forest, with yellow tongues already writhing from it, completely encircling the space with a fence of fire. Upon the hill-side were some thirty or forty Morlocks, dazzled by the light and heat, and blundering hither and thither against each other in their bewilderment. At first I did not realize their blindness, and struck furiously at them with my bar, in a frenzy of fear, as they approached me, killing one and crippling several more. But when I had watched the gestures of one of them groping under the hawthorn against the red sky, and heard their moans, I was assured of their absolute helplessness and misery in the glare, and I struck no more of them.

'Yet every now and then one would come straight towards me, setting loose a quivering horror that made me quick to elude him. At one time the flames died down somewhat, and I feared the foul creatures would presently be able to see me. I was thinking of beginning the fight by killing some of them before this should happen; but the fire burst out again brightly, and I stayed my hand. I walked about the hill among them and avoided them, looking for some trace of Weena. But Weena was gone.

'At last I sat down on the summit of the hillock, and watched this strange incredible company of blind things groping to and fro, and making uncanny noises to each other, as the glare of the fire beat on them. The coiling uprush of smoke streamed across the sky, and through the rare tatters of that red canopy, remote as though they belonged to another universe, shone the little stars. Two or three Morlocks came blundering into me, and I drove them off with blows of my fists, trembling as I did so.

‘For the most part of that night I was persuaded it was a nightmare. I bit myself and screamed in a passionate desire to awake. I beat the ground with my hands, and got up and sat down again, and wandered here and there, and again sat down. Then I would fall to rubbing my eyes and calling upon God to let me awake. Thrice I saw Morlocks put their heads down in a kind of agony and rush into the flames. But, at last, above the subsiding red of the fire, above the streaming masses of black smoke and the whitening and blackening tree stumps, and the diminishing numbers of these dim creatures, came the white light of the day.

‘I searched again for traces of Weena, but there were none. It was plain that they had left her poor little body in the forest. I cannot describe how it relieved me to think that it had escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined. As I thought of that, I was almost moved to begin a massacre of the helpless abominations about me, but I contained myself. The hillock, as I have said, was a kind of island in the forest. From its summit I could now make out through a haze of smoke the Palace of Green Porcelain, and from that I could get my bearings for the White Sphinx. And so, leaving the remnant of these damned souls still going hither and thither and moaning, as the day grew clearer, I tied some grass about my feet and limped on across smoking ashes and among black stems, that still pulsated internally with fire, towards the hiding-place of the Time Machine. I walked slowly, for I was almost exhausted, as well as lame, and I felt the intensest wretchedness for the horrible death of little Weena. It seemed an overwhelming calamity. Now, in this old familiar room, it is more like the sorrow of a dream than an actual loss. But that morning it left me absolutely lonely again — terribly alone. I began to think of this house of mine, of this fireside, of some of you, and with such thoughts came a longing that was pain.

‘But as I walked over the smoking ashes under the bright morning sky, I made a discovery. In my trouser pocket were still some loose matches. The box must have leaked before it was lost.

X

‘About eight or nine in the morning I came to the same seat of yellow metal from which I had viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon that evening and could not refrain from laughing bitterly at my confidence. Here was the same beautiful scene, the same abundant foliage, the same splendid palaces and magnificent ruins, the same silver river running between its fertile banks. The gay robes of the beautiful people moved hither and thither among the trees. Some were bathing in exactly the place where I had saved Weena, and that suddenly gave me a keen stab of pain. And like blots upon the landscape rose the cupolas above the ways to the Under-world. I understood now what all the beauty of the Over-world people covered. Very pleasant was their day, as pleasant as the day of the cattle in the field. Like the cattle, they knew of no enemies and provided against no needs. And their end was the same.

‘I grieved to think how brief the dream of the human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had set itself steadfastly towards comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword, it had attained its hopes — to come to this at last. Once, life and property must have reached almost absolute safety. The rich had been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work. No doubt in that perfect world there had been no unemployed problem, no social question left unsolved. And a great quiet had followed.

‘It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change. Only those animals partake of intelligence that have to meet a huge variety of needs and dangers.

‘So, as I see it, the Upper-world man had drifted towards his feeble prettiness, and the Under-world to mere mechanical industry. But that perfect state had lacked one thing even for mechanical

perfection — absolute permanency. Apparently as time went on, the feeding of the Under-world, however it was effected, had become disjointed. Mother Necessity, who had been staved off for a few thousand years, came back again, and she began below. The Under-world being in contact with machinery, which, however perfect, still needs some little thought outside habit, had probably retained perforce rather more initiative, if less of every other human character, than the Upper. And when other meat failed them, they turned to what old habit had hitherto forbidden. So I say I saw it in my last view of the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One. It may be as wrong an explanation as mortal wit could invent. It is how the thing shaped itself to me, and as that I give it to you.

'After the fatigues, excitements, and terrors of the past days, and in spite of my grief, this seat and the tranquil view and the warm sunlight were very pleasant. I was very tired and sleepy, and soon my theorizing passed into dozing. Catching myself at that, I took my own hint, and spreading myself out upon the turf I had a long and refreshing sleep.

'I awoke a little before sunsetting. I now felt safe against being caught napping by the Morlocks, and, stretching myself, I came on down the hill towards the White Sphinx. I had my crowbar in one hand, and the other hand played with the matches in my pocket.

'And now came a most unexpected thing. As I approached the pedestal of the sphinx I found the bronze valves were open. They had slid down into grooves.

'At that I stopped short before them, hesitating to enter.

'Within was a small apartment, and on a raised place in the corner of this was the Time Machine. I had the small levers in my pocket. So here, after all my elaborate preparations for the siege of the White Sphinx, was a meek surrender. I threw my iron bar away, almost sorry not to use it.

'A sudden thought came into my head as I stooped towards the portal. For once, at least, I grasped the mental operations of the Morlocks. Suppressing a strong inclination to laugh, I stepped through the bronze frame and up to the Time Machine. I was surprised to find it had been carefully oiled and cleaned. I have

suspected since that the Morlocks had even partially taken it to pieces while trying in their dim way to grasp its purpose.

‘Now as I stood and examined it, finding a pleasure in the mere touch of the contrivance, the thing I had expected happened. The bronze panels suddenly slid up and struck the frame with a clang. I was in the dark — trapped. So the Morlocks thought. At that I chuckled gleefully.

‘I could already hear their murmuring laughter as they came towards me. Very calmly I tried to strike the match. I had only to fix on the levers and depart then like a ghost. But I had overlooked one little thing. The matches were of that abominable kind that light only on the box.

‘You may imagine how all my calm vanished. The little brutes were close upon me. One touched me. I made a sweeping blow in the dark at them with the levers, and began to scramble into the saddle of the machine. Then came one hand upon me and then another. Then I had simply to fight against their persistent fingers for my levers, and at the same time feel for the studs over which these fitted. One, indeed, they almost got away from me. As it slipped from my hand, I had to butt in the dark with my head — I could hear the Morlock’s skull ring — to recover it. It was a nearer thing than the fight in the forest, I think, this last scramble.

‘But at last the lever was fitted and pulled over. The clinging hands slipped from me. The darkness presently fell from my eyes. I found myself in the same grey light and tumult I have already described.

XI

‘I have already told you of the sickness and confusion that comes with time travelling. And this time I was not seated properly in the saddle, but sideways and in an unstable fashion. For an indefinite time I clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I had arrived. One dial records days, and another thousands of days, another millions of days, and another thousands of millions. Now, instead of reversing the levers, I had pulled them over so as to go forward with them, and when I came to look at these indicators I found that the thousands hand was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hand of a watch — into futurity.

‘As I drove on, a peculiar change crept over the appearance of things. The palpitating greyness grew darker; then — though I was still travelling with prodigious velocity — the blinking succession of day and night, which was usually indicative of a slower pace, returned, and grew more and more marked. This puzzled me very much at first. The alternations of night and day grew slower and slower, and so did the passage of the sun across the sky, until they seemed to stretch through centuries. At last a steady twilight brooded over the earth, a twilight only broken now and then when a comet glared across the darkling sky. The band of light that had indicated the sun had long since disappeared; for the sun had ceased to set — it simply rose and fell in the west, and grew ever broader and more red. All trace of the moon had vanished. The circling of the stars, growing slower and slower, had given place to creeping points of light. At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat, and now and then suffering a momentary extinction. At one time it had for a little while glowed more brilliantly again, but it speedily reverted to its sullen red heat. I perceived by this slowing down of its rising and setting that the work of the tidal drag was done. The earth had come to rest with one face to the sun, even as in our own time the moon faces the earth. Very cautiously, for I

remembered my former headlong fall, I began to reverse my motion. Slower and slower went the circling hands until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale. Still slower, until the dim outlines of a desolate beach grew visible.

'I stopped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine, looking round. The sky was no longer blue. North-eastward it was inky black, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale white stars. Overhead it was a deep Indian red and starless, and south-eastward it grew brighter to a glowing scarlet where, cut by the horizon, lay the huge hull of the sun, red and motionless. The rocks about me were of a harsh reddish colour, and all the trace of life that I could see at first was the intensely green vegetation that covered every projecting point on their south-eastern face. It was the same rich green that one sees on forest moss or on the lichen in caves: plants which like these grow in a perpetual twilight.

'The machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the south-west, to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt — pink under the lurid sky. There was a sense of oppression in my head, and I noticed that I was breathing very fast. The sensation reminded me of my only experience of mountaineering, and from that I judged the air to be more rarefied than it is now.

'Far away up the desolate slope I heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was so dismal that I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine. Looking round me again, I saw that, quite near, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly towards me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its many legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennae, like carters' whips, waving and feeling,

and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the many palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it moved.

'As I stared at this sinister apparition crawling towards me, I felt a tickling on my cheek as though a fly had lighted there. I tried to brush it away with my hand, but in a moment it returned, and almost immediately came another by my ear. I struck at this, and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiftly out of my hand. With a frightful qualm, I turned, and I saw that I had grasped the antenna of another monster crab that stood just behind me. Its evil eyes were wriggling on their stalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with an algal slime, were descending upon me. In a moment my hand was on the lever, and I had placed a month between myself and these monsters. But I was still on the same beach, and I saw them distinctly now as soon as I stopped. Dozens of them seemed to be crawling here and there, in the sombre light, among the foliated sheets of intense green.

'I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurts one's lungs: all contributed to an appalling effect. I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun — a little larger, a little duller — the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthy crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks. And in the westward sky, I saw a curved pale line like a vast new moon.

'So I travelled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth's fate, watching with a strange fascination the sun grow larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebb away. At last, more than thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the sun had come to obscure nearly a tenth part of the darkling heavens. Then I stopped once more, for the crawling multitude of crabs had disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and

lichens, seemed lifeless. And now it was flecked with white. A bitter cold assailed me. Rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the north-eastward, the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky and I could see an undulating crest of hillocks pinkish white. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, with drifting masses further out; but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal sunset, was still unfrozen.

'I looked about me to see if any traces of animal life remained. A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of the machine. But I saw nothing moving, in earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks alone testified that life was not extinct. A shallow sandbank had appeared in the sea and the water had receded from the beach. I fancied I saw some black object flopping about upon this bank, but it became motionless as I looked at it, and I judged that my eye had been deceived, and that the black object was merely a rock. The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.

'Suddenly I noticed that the circular westward outline of the sun had changed; that a concavity, a bay, had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute perhaps I stared aghast at this blackness that was creeping over the day, and then I realized that an eclipse was beginning. Either the moon or the planet Mercury was passing across the sun's disk. Naturally, at first I took it to be the moon, but there is much to incline me to believe that what I really saw was the transit of an inner planet passing very near to the earth.

'The darkness grew apace; a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering white flakes in the air increased in number. From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives — all that was over. As the darkness thickened, the eddying flakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the eclipse sweeping towards me. In

another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely black.

‘A horror of this great darkness came on me. The cold, that smote to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing, overcame me. I shivered, and a deadly nausea seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sky appeared the edge of the sun. I got off the machine to recover myself. I felt giddy and incapable of facing the return journey. As I stood sick and confused I saw again the moving thing upon the shoal — there was no mistake now that it was a moving thing — against the red water of the sea. It was a round thing, the size of a football perhaps, or, it may be, bigger, and tentacles trailed down from it; it seemed black against the weltering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about. Then I felt I was fainting. But a terrible dread of lying helpless in that remote and awful twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.

XII

‘So I came back. For a long time I must have been insensible upon the machine. The blinking succession of the days and nights was resumed, the sun got golden again, the sky blue. I breathed with greater freedom. The fluctuating contours of the land ebbed and flowed. The hands spun backward upon the dials. At last I saw again the dim shadows of houses, the evidences of decadent humanity. These, too, changed and passed, and others came. Presently, when the million dial was at zero, I slackened speed. I began to recognize our own pretty and familiar architecture, the thousands hand ran back to the starting-point, the night and day flapped slower and slower. Then the old walls of the laboratory came round me. Very gently, now, I slowed the mechanism down.

‘I saw one little thing that seemed odd to me. I think I have told you that when I set out, before my velocity became very high, Mrs. Watchett had walked across the room, travelling, as it seemed to me, like a rocket. As I returned, I passed again across that minute when she traversed the laboratory. But now her every motion appeared to be the exact inversion of her previous ones. The door at the lower end opened, and she glided quietly up the laboratory, back foremost, and disappeared behind the door by which she had previously entered. Just before that I seemed to see Hillyer for a moment; but he passed like a flash.

‘Then I stopped the machine, and saw about me again the old familiar laboratory, my tools, my appliances just as I had left them. I got off the thing very shakily, and sat down upon my bench. For several minutes I trembled violently. Then I became calmer. Around me was my old workshop again, exactly as it had been. I might have slept there, and the whole thing have been a dream.

‘And yet, not exactly! The thing had started from the south-east corner of the laboratory. It had come to rest again in the north-west, against the wall where you saw it. That gives you the exact distance from my little lawn to the pedestal of the White Sphinx, into which the Morlocks had carried my machine.

‘For a time my brain went stagnant. Presently I got up and came

through the passage here, limping, because my heel was still painful, and feeling sorely begrimed. I saw the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the table by the door. I found the date was indeed to-day, and looking at the timepiece, saw the hour was almost eight o'clock. I heard your voices and the clatter of plates. I hesitated — I felt so sick and weak. Then I sniffed good wholesome meat, and opened the door on you. You know the rest. I washed, and dined, and now I am telling you the story.

'I know,' he said, after a pause, 'that all this will be absolutely incredible to you. To me the one incredible thing is that I am here to-night in this old familiar room looking into your friendly faces and telling you these strange adventures.'

He looked at the Medical Man. 'No. I cannot expect you to believe it. Take it as a lie — or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race until I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest. And taking it as a story, what do you think of it?'

He took up his pipe, and began, in his old accustomed manner, to tap with it nervously upon the bars of the grate. There was a momentary stillness. Then chairs began to creak and shoes to scrape upon the carpet. I took my eyes off the Time Traveller's face, and looked round at his audience. They were in the dark, and little spots of colour swam before them. The Medical Man seemed absorbed in the contemplation of our host. The Editor was looking hard at the end of his cigar — the sixth. The Journalist fumbled for his watch. The others, as far as I remember, were motionless.

The Editor stood up with a sigh. 'What a pity it is you're not a writer of stories!' he said, putting his hand on the Time Traveller's shoulder.

'You don't believe it?'

'Well — —'

'I thought not.'

The Time Traveller turned to us. 'Where are the matches?' he said. He lit one and spoke over his pipe, puffing. 'To tell you the truth … I hardly believe it myself…. And yet…'

His eye fell with a mute inquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the little table. Then he turned over the hand holding his pipe, and I saw he was looking at some half-healed scars on his knuckles.

The Medical Man rose, came to the lamp, and examined the flowers. 'The gynaeceum's odd,' he said. The Psychologist leant forward to see, holding out his hand for a specimen.

'I'm hanged if it isn't a quarter to one,' said the Journalist.
'How shall we get home?'

'Plenty of cabs at the station,' said the Psychologist.

'It's a curious thing,' said the Medical Man; 'but I certainly don't know the natural order of these flowers. May I have them?'

The Time Traveller hesitated. Then suddenly: 'Certainly not.'

'Where did you really get them?' said the Medical Man.

The Time Traveller put his hand to his head. He spoke like one who was trying to keep hold of an idea that eluded him. 'They were put into my pocket by Weena, when I travelled into Time.' He stared round the room. 'I'm damned if it isn't all going. This room and you and the atmosphere of every day is too much for my memory. Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a model of a Time Machine? Or is it all only a dream? They say life is a dream, a precious poor dream at times — but I can't stand another that won't fit. It's madness. And where did the dream come from? … I must look at that machine. If there is one!'

He caught up the lamp swiftly, and carried it, flaring red, through the door into the corridor. We followed him. There in the flickering light of the lamp was the machine sure enough, squat, ugly, and askew; a thing of brass, ebony, ivory, and translucent glimmering quartz. Solid to the touch — for I put out my hand and felt the rail of it — and with brown spots and smears upon the ivory, and bits of grass and moss upon the lower parts, and one rail bent awry.

The Time Traveller put the lamp down on the bench, and ran his hand along the damaged rail. 'It's all right now,' he said. 'The story I told you was true. I'm sorry to have brought you out here in the cold.' He took up the lamp, and, in an absolute silence, we returned to the smoking-room.

He came into the hall with us and helped the Editor on with his coat. The Medical Man looked into his face and, with a certain hesitation, told him he was suffering from overwork, at which he laughed hugely. I remember him standing in the open doorway, bawling good night.

I shared a cab with the Editor. He thought the tale a 'gaudy lie.' For my own part I was unable to come to a conclusion. The story was so fantastic and incredible, the telling so credible and sober. I lay awake most of the night thinking about it. I determined to go next day and see the Time Traveller again. I was told he was in the laboratory, and being on easy terms in the house, I went up to him. The laboratory, however, was empty. I stared for a minute at the Time Machine and put out my hand and touched the lever. At that the squat substantial-looking mass swayed like a bough shaken by the wind. Its instability startled me extremely, and I had a queer reminiscence of the childish days when I used to be forbidden to meddle. I came back through the corridor. The Time Traveller met me in the smoking-room. He was coming from the house. He had a small camera under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He laughed when he saw me, and gave me an elbow to shake. 'I'm frightfully busy,' said he, 'with that thing in there.'

'But is it not some hoax?' I said. 'Do you really travel through time?'

'Really and truly I do.' And he looked frankly into my eyes. He hesitated. His eye wandered about the room. 'I only want half an hour,' he said. 'I know why you came, and it's awfully good of you. There's some magazines here. If you'll stop to lunch I'll prove you this time travelling up to the hilt, specimen and all. If you'll forgive my leaving you now?'

I consented, hardly comprehending then the full import of his words, and he nodded and went on down the corridor. I heard the door of the laboratory slam, seated myself in a chair, and took up a daily paper. What was he going to do before lunch-time? Then suddenly I was reminded by an advertisement that I had promised to meet Richardson, the publisher, at two. I looked at my watch, and saw that I could barely save that engagement. I got up and went down the passage to tell the Time Traveller.

As I took hold of the handle of the door I heard an exclamation, oddly truncated at the end, and a click and a thud. A gust of air whirled round me as I opened the door, and from within came the sound of broken glass falling on the floor. The Time Traveller was not there. I seemed to see a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass for a moment — a figure so transparent that the bench behind with its sheets of drawings was absolutely distinct; but this phantasm vanished as I rubbed my eyes. The Time Machine had gone. Save for a subsiding stir of dust, the further end of the laboratory was empty. A pane of the skylight had, apparently, just been blown in.

I felt an unreasonable amazement. I knew that something strange had happened, and for the moment could not distinguish what the strange thing might be. As I stood staring, the door into the garden opened, and the man-servant appeared.

We looked at each other. Then ideas began to come. 'Has Mr. —— gone out that way?' said I.

'No, sir. No one has come out this way. I was expecting to find him here.'

At that I understood. At the risk of disappointing Richardson I stayed on, waiting for the Time Traveller; waiting for the second, perhaps still stranger story, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him. But I am beginning now to fear that I must wait a lifetime. The Time Traveller vanished three years ago. And, as everybody knows now, he has never returned.

EPILOGUE

One cannot choose but wonder. Will he ever return? It may be that he swept back into the past, and fell among the blood-drinking, hairy savages of the Age of Unpolished Stone; into the abysses of the Cretaceous Sea; or among the grotesque saurians, the huge reptilian brutes of the Jurassic times. He may even now — if I may use the phrase — be wandering on some plesiosaurus-haunted Oolitic coral reef, or beside the lonely saline lakes of the Triassic Age. Or did he go forward, into one of the nearer ages, in which men are still men, but with the riddles of our own time answered and its wearisome problems solved? Into the manhood of the race: for I, for my own part, cannot think that these latter days of weak experiment, fragmentary theory, and mutual discord are indeed man's culminating time! I say, for my own part. He, I know — for the question had been discussed among us long before the Time Machine was made — thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilization only a foolish heaping that must inevitably fall back upon and destroy its makers in the end. If that is so, it remains for us to live as though it were not so. But to me the future is still black and blank — is a vast ignorance, lit at a few casual places by the memory of his story. And I have by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers — shrivelled now, and brown and flat and brittle — to witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man.

THE WONDERFUL VISIT

Published in 1895, Wells' second novel is a fantasy story with an undercurrent of social criticism. The author took his inspiration for *The Wonderful Visit* from a remark by noted art critic and social commentator John Ruskin, who had famously posited that if an angel were to appear in contemporary England it would be shot on sight. In Wells' novel, an angel does indeed appear and his ignorance of Victorian social mores leads to him being denounced as a socialist — and to criticism of the well-intentioned clergyman that takes the being into his home.

Interestingly, the novel treats the angel as a visitor from an ambiguously-described 'Land of Dreams', rather than any theologically-recognisable Heaven. This is in keeping with Wells' own religious views – although nominally Christian, he openly acknowledged his very broad interpretation of Christian doctrine and professed instead a deeply personal interpretation of God, which he attempted to reconcile with his own scientific and moral values.

1895 was a watershed year for Wells. After a stint as a teacher, he had taken up writing professionally and was turning out around 7,000 words a day – as well as this novel and *The Time Machine*, 1895 also saw publication of *Select Conversations with an Uncle* and *The Stolen Bacillus and Other Incidents*. It also saw Wells' marriage to his second wife, a former student named Amy Catherine Robbins, after his first marriage to his cousin had ended by mutual consent in 1894.

THE WONDERFUL VISIT

THE WONDERFUL VISIT.

H.G.WELLS.

J.M.DENT & Co

The first edition

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H. G. Wells with his second wife, Amy Catherine Robbins (later known as Jane) in 1895

The Night of the Strange Bird. I.

On the Night of the Strange Bird, many people at Sidderton (and some nearer) saw a Glare on the Sidderford moor. But no one in Sidderford saw it, for most of Sidderford was abed.

All day the wind had been rising, so that the larks on the moor chirruped fitfully near the ground, or rose only to be driven like leaves before the wind. The sun set in a bloody welter of clouds, and the moon was hidden. The glare, they say, was golden like a beam shining out of the sky, not a uniform blaze, but broken all over by curving flashes like the waving of swords. It lasted but a moment and left the night dark and obscure. There were letters about it in *Nature*, and a rough drawing that no one thought very like. (You may see it for yourself — the drawing that was unlike the glare — on page 42 of Vol. cclx. of that publication.)

None in Sidderford saw the light, but Annie, Hooker Durgan's wife, was lying awake, and she saw the reflection of it — a flickering tongue of gold — dancing on the wall.

She, too, was one of those who heard the sound. The others who heard the sound were Lumpy Durgan, the half-wit, and Amory's mother. They said it was a sound like children singing and a throbbing of harp strings, carried on a rush of notes like that which sometimes comes from an organ. It began and ended like the opening and shutting of a door, and before and after they heard nothing but the night wind howling over the moor and the noise of the caves under Sidderford cliff. Amory's mother said she wanted to cry when she heard it, but Lumpy was only sorry he could hear no more.

That is as much as anyone can tell you of the glare upon Sidderford Moor and the alleged music therewith. And whether these had any real connexion with the Strange Bird whose history follows, is more than I can say. But I set it down here for reasons that will be more apparent as the story proceeds.

The Coming of the Strange Bird. II.

Sandy Bright was coming down the road from Spinner's carrying a side of bacon he had taken in exchange for a clock. He saw nothing of the light but he heard and saw the Strange Bird. He suddenly heard a flapping and a voice like a woman wailing, and being a nervous man and all alone, he was alarmed forthwith, and turning (all a-tremble) saw something large and black against the dim darkness of the cedars up the hill. It seemed to be coming right down upon him, and incontinently he dropped his bacon and set off running, only to fall headlong.

He tried in vain — such was his state of mind — to remember the beginning of the Lord's Prayer. The strange bird flapped over him, something larger than himself, with a vast spread of wings, and, as he thought, black. He screamed and gave himself up for lost. Then it went past him, sailing down the hill, and, soaring over the vicarage, vanished into the hazy valley towards Sidderford.

And Sandy Bright lay upon his stomach there, for ever so long, staring into the darkness after the strange bird. At last he got upon his knees and began to thank Heaven for his merciful deliverance, with his eyes downhill. He went on down into the village, talking aloud and confessing his sins as he went, lest the strange bird should come back. All who heard him thought him drunk. But from that night he was a changed man, and had done with drunkenness and defrauding the revenue by selling silver ornaments without a licence. And the side of bacon lay upon the hillside until the tallyman from Portburdock found it in the morning.

The next who saw the Strange Bird was a solicitor's clerk at Iping Hanger, who was climbing the hill before breakfast, to see the sunrise. Save for a few dissolving wisps of cloud the sky had been blown clear in the night. At first he thought it was an eagle he saw. It was near the zenith, and incredibly remote, a mere bright speck above the pink cirri, and it seemed as if it fluttered and beat itself against the sky, as an imprisoned swallow might do against a window pane. Then down it came into the shadow of the earth, sweeping in a great curve towards Portburdock and round over the

Hanger, and so vanishing behind the woods of Siddermorton Park. It seemed larger than a man. Just before it was hidden, the light of the rising sun smote over the edge of the downs and touched its wings, and they flashed with the brightness of flames and the colour of precious stones, and so passed, leaving the witness agape.

A ploughman going to his work, along under the stone wall of Siddermorton Park, saw the Strange Bird flash over him for a moment and vanish among the hazy interstices of the beech trees. But he saw little of the colour of the wings, witnessing only that its legs, which were long, seemed pink and bare like naked flesh, and its body mottled white. It smote like an arrow through the air and was gone.

These were the first three eye-witnesses of the Strange Bird.

Now in these days one does not cower before the devil and one's own sinfulness, or see strange iridiscent wings in the light of dawn, and say nothing of it afterwards. The young solicitor's clerk told his mother and sisters at breakfast, and, afterwards, on his way to the office at Portburdock, spoke of it to the blacksmith of Hammerpond, and spent the morning with his fellow clerks marvelling instead of copying deeds. And Sandy Bright went to talk the matter over with Mr Jekyll, the "Primitive" minister, and the ploughman told old Hugh and afterwards the vicar of Siddermorton.

"They are not an imaginative race about here," said the Vicar of Siddermorton, "I wonder how much of that was true. Barring that he thinks the wings were brown it sounds uncommonly like a Flamingo."

The Hunting of the Strange Bird. III.

The Vicar of Siddermorton (which is nine miles inland from Siddermouth as the crow flies) was an ornithologist. Some such pursuit, botany, antiquity, folk-lore, is almost inevitable for a single man in his position. He was given to geometry also, propounding occasionally impossible problems in the *Educational Times*, but ornithology was his *forte*. He had already added two visitors to the list of occasional British birds. His name was well-known in the columns of the *Zoologist* (I am afraid it may be forgotten by now, for the world moves apace). And on the day after the coming of the Strange Bird, came first one and then another to confirm the ploughman's story and tell him, not that it had any connection, of the Glare upon Sidderford moor.

Now, the Vicar of Siddermorton had two rivals in his scientific pursuits; Gully of Sidderton, who had actually seen the glare, and who it was sent the drawing to *Nature*, and Borland the natural history dealer, who kept the marine laboratory at Portburdock. Borland, the Vicar thought, should have stuck to his copepods, but instead he kept a taxidermist, and took advantage of his littoral position to pick up rare sea birds. It was evident to anyone who knew anything of collecting that both these men would be scouring the country after the strange visitant, before twenty-four hours were out.

The Vicar's eye rested on the back of Saunders' British Birds, for he was in his study at the time. Already in two places there was entered: "the only known British specimen was secured by the Rev. K. Hilyer, Vicar of Siddermorton." A third such entry. He doubted if any other collector had that.

He looked at his watch — *two*. He had just lunched, and usually he "rested" in the afternoon. He knew it would make him feel very disagreeable if he went out into the hot sunshine — both on the top of his head and generally. Yet Gully perhaps was out, prowling observant. Suppose it was something very good and Gully got it!

His gun stood in the corner. (The thing had iridiscent wings and pink legs! The chromatic conflict was certainly exceedingly stimulating). He took his gun.

He would have gone out by the glass doors and verandah, and down the garden into the hill road, in order to avoid his housekeeper's eye. He knew his gun expeditions were not approved of. But advancing towards him up the garden, he saw the curate's wife and her two daughters, carrying tennis rackets. His curate's wife was a young woman of immense will, who used to play tennis on his lawn, and cut his roses, differ from him on doctrinal points, and criticise his personal behaviour all over the parish. He went in abject fear of her, was always trying to propitiate her. But so far he had clung to his ornithology....

However, he went out by the front door.

IV.

If it were not for collectors England would be full, so to speak, of rare birds and wonderful butterflies, strange flowers and a thousand interesting things. But happily the collector prevents all that, either killing with his own hands or, by buying extravagantly, procuring people of the lower classes to kill such eccentricities as appear. It makes work for people, even though Acts of Parliament interfere. In this way, for instance, he is killing off the chough in Cornwall, the Bath white butterfly, the Queen of Spain Fritillary; and can plume himself upon the extermination of the Great Auk, and a hundred other rare birds and plants and insects. All that is the work of the collector and his glory alone. In the name of Science. And this is right and as it should be; eccentricity, in fact, is immorality — think over it again if you do not think so now — just as eccentricity in one's way of thinking is madness (I defy you to find another definition that will fit all the cases of either); and if a species is rare it follows that it is not Fitted to Survive. The collector is after all merely like the foot soldier in the days of heavy armour — he leaves the combatants alone and cuts the throats of those who are overthrown. So one may go through England from end to end in the summer time and see only eight or ten commonplace wild flowers, and the commoner butterflies, and a dozen or so common birds, and never be offended by any breach of the monotony, any splash of strange blossom or flutter of unknown wing. All the rest have been "collected" years ago. For which cause we should all love Collectors, and bear in mind what we owe them when their little collections are displayed. These camphorated little drawers of theirs, their glass cases and blotting-paper books, are the graves of the Rare and the Beautiful, the symbols of the Triumph of Leisure (morally spent) over the Delights of Life. (All of which, as you very properly remark, has nothing whatever to do with the Strange Bird.)

V.

There is a place on the moor where the black water shines among the succulent moss, and the hairy sundew, eater of careless insects, spreads its red-stained hungry hands to the God who gives his creatures — one to feed another. On a ridge thereby grow birches with a silvery bark, and the soft green of the larch mingles with the dark green fir. Thither through the honey humming heather came the Vicar, in the heat of the day, carrying a gun under his arm, a gun loaded with swanshot for the Strange Bird. And over his disengaged hand he carried a pocket handkerchief wherewith, ever and again, he wiped his beady face.

He went by and on past the big pond and the pool full of brown leaves where the Sidder arises, and so by the road (which is at first sandy and then chalky) to the little gate that goes into the park. There are seven steps up to the gate and on the further side six down again — lest the deer escape — so that when the Vicar stood in the gateway his head was ten feet or more above the ground. And looking where a tumult of bracken fronds filled the hollow between two groups of beech, his eye caught something parti-coloured that wavered and went. Suddenly his face gleamed and his muscles grew tense; he ducked his head, clutched his gun with both hands, and stood still. Then watching keenly, he came on down the steps into the park, and still holding his gun in both hands, crept rather than walked towards the jungle of bracken.

Nothing stirred, and he almost feared that his eyes had played him false, until he reached the ferns and had gone rustling breast high into them. Then suddenly rose something full of wavering colours, twenty yards or less in front of his face, and beating the air. In another moment it had fluttered above the bracken and spread its pinions wide. He saw what it was, his heart was in his mouth, and he fired out of pure surprise and habit.

There was a scream of superhuman agony, the wings beat the air twice, and the victim came slanting swiftly downward and struck the ground — a struggling heap of writhing body, broken wing and

flying bloodstained plumes — upon the turfy slope behind.

The Vicar stood aghast, with his smoking gun in his hand. It was no bird at all, but a youth with an extremely beautiful face, clad in a robe of saffron and with iridescent wings, across whose pinions great waves of colour, flushes of purple and crimson, golden green and intense blue, pursued one another as he writhed in his agony. Never had the Vicar seen such gorgeous floods of colour, not stained glass windows, not the wings of butterflies, not even the glories of crystals seen between prisms, no colours on earth could compare with them. Twice the Angel raised himself, only to fall over sideways again. Then the beating of the wings diminished, the terrified face grew pale, the floods of colour abated, and suddenly with a sob he lay prone, and the changing hues of the broken wings faded swiftly into one uniform dull grey hue.

"Oh! *what* has happened to me?" cried the Angel (for such it was), shuddering violently, hands outstretched and clutching the ground, and then lying still.

"Dear me!" said the Vicar. "I had no idea." He came forward cautiously. "Excuse me," he said, "I am afraid I have shot you."

It was the obvious remark.

The Angel seemed to become aware of his presence for the first time. He raised himself by one hand, his brown eyes stared into the Vicar's. Then, with a gasp, and biting his nether lip, he struggled into a sitting position and surveyed the Vicar from top to toe.

"A man!" said the Angel, clasping his forehead; "a man in the maddest black clothes and without a feather upon him. Then I was not deceived. I am indeed in the Land of Dreams!"

The Vicar and the Angel. VI.

Now there are some things frankly impossible. The weakest intellect will admit this situation is impossible. The *Athenæum* will probably say as much should it venture to review this. Sunbespattered ferns, spreading beech trees, the Vicar and the gun are acceptable enough. But this Angel is a different matter. Plain sensible people will scarcely go on with such an extravagant book. And the Vicar fully appreciated this impossibility. But he lacked decision. Consequently he went on with it, as you shall immediately hear. He was hot, it was after dinner, he was in no mood for mental subtleties. The Angel had him at a disadvantage, and further distracted him from the main issue by irrelevant iridescence and a violent fluttering. For the moment it never occurred to the Vicar to ask whether the Angel was possible or not. He accepted him in the confusion of the moment, and the mischief was done. Put yourself in his place, my dear *Athenæum*. You go out shooting. You hit something. That alone would disconcert you. You find you have hit an Angel, and he writhes about for a minute and then sits up and addresses you. He makes no apology for his own impossibility. Indeed, he carries the charge clean into your camp. “A man!” he says, pointing. “A man in the maddest black clothes and without a feather upon him. Then I was not deceived. I am indeed in the Land of Dreams!” You *must* answer him. Unless you take to your heels. Or blow his brains out with your second barrel as an escape from the controversy.

“The Land of Dreams! Pardon me if I suggest you have just come out of it,” was the Vicar’s remark.

“How can that be?” said the Angel.

“Your wing,” said the Vicar, “is bleeding. Before we talk, may I have the pleasure — the melancholy pleasure — of tying it up? I am really most sincerely sorry....” The Angel put his hand behind his back and winced.

The Vicar assisted his victim to stand up. The Angel turned gravely and the Vicar, with numberless insignificant panting parentheses, carefully examined the injured wings. (They articulated, he observed with interest, to a kind of second glenoid on the outer

and upper edge of the shoulder blade. The left wing had suffered little except the loss of some of the primary wing-quills, and a shot or so in the *ala spuria*, but the humerus bone of the right was evidently smashed.) The Vicar stanched the bleeding as well as he could and tied up the bone with his pocket handkerchief and the neck wrap his housekeeper made him carry in all weathers.

"I'm afraid you will not be able to fly for some time," said he, feeling the bone.

"I don't like this new sensation," said the Angel.

"The Pain when I feel your bone?"

"The *what*?" said the Angel.

"The Pain."

"'Pain' — you call it. No, I certainly don't like the Pain. Do you have much of this Pain in the Land of Dreams?"

"A very fair share," said the Vicar. "Is it new to you?"

"Quite," said the Angel. "I don't like it."

"How curious!" said the Vicar, and bit at the end of a strip of linen to tie a knot. "I think this bandaging must serve for the present," he said. "I've studied ambulance work before, but never the bandaging up of wing wounds. Is your Pain any better?"

"It glows now instead of flashing," said the Angel.

"I am afraid you will find it glow for some time," said the Vicar, still intent on the wound.

The Angel gave a shrug of the wing and turned round to look at the Vicar again. He had been trying to keep an eye on the Vicar over his shoulder during all their interview. He looked at him from top to toe with raised eyebrows and a growing smile on his beautiful soft-featured face. "It seems so odd," he said with a sweet little laugh, "to be talking to a Man!"

"Do you know," said the Vicar, "now that I come to think of it, it is equally odd to me that I should be talking to an Angel. I am a somewhat matter-of-fact person. A Vicar has to be. Angels I have always regarded as — artistic conceptions — —"

"Exactly what we think of men."

"But surely you have seen so many men — —"

"Never before to-day. In pictures and books, times enough of course. But I have seen several since the sunrise, solid real men,

besides a horse or so — those Unicorn things you know, without horns — and quite a number of those grotesque knobby things called 'cows.' I was naturally a little frightened at so many mythical monsters, and came to hide here until it was dark. I suppose it will be dark again presently like it was at first. *Phew!* This Pain of yours is poor fun. I hope I shall wake up directly."

"I don't understand quite," said the Vicar, knitting his brows and tapping his forehead with his flat hand. "Mythical monster!" The worst thing he had been called for years hitherto was a 'mediaeval anachronism' (by an advocate of Disestablishment). "Do I understand that you consider me as — as something in a dream?"

"Of course," said the Angel smiling.

"And this world about me, these rugged trees and spreading fronds — —"

"Is all so *very* dream like," said the Angel. "Just exactly what one dreams of — or artists imagine."

"You have artists then among the Angels?"

"All kinds of artists, Angels with wonderful imaginations, who invent men and cows and eagles and a thousand impossible creatures."

"Impossible creatures!" said the Vicar.

"Impossible creatures," said the Angel. "Myths."

"But I'm real!" said the Vicar. "I assure you I'm real."

The Angel shrugged his wings and winced and smiled. "I can always tell when I am dreaming," he said.

"*You* — dreaming," said the Vicar. He looked round him.

"*You* dreaming!" he repeated. His mind worked diffusely.

He held out his hand with all his fingers moving. "I have it!" he said. "I begin to see." A really brilliant idea was dawning upon his mind. He had not studied mathematics at Cambridge for nothing, after all. "Tell me please. Some animals of *your* world ... of the Real World, real animals you know."

"Real animals!" said the Angel smiling. "Why — there's Griffins and Dragons — and Jabberwocks — and Cherubim — and Sphinxes — and the Hippogriff — and Mermaids — and Satyrs — and...."

"Thank you," said the Vicar as the Angel appeared to be warming

to his work; “thank you. That is *quite* enough. I begin to understand.”

He paused for a moment, his face pursed up. “Yes ... I begin to see it.”

“See what?” asked the Angel.

“The Griffins and Satyrs and so forth. It’s as clear....”

“I don’t see them,” said the Angel.

“No, the whole point is they are not to be seen in this world. But our men with imaginations have told us all about them, you know. And even I at times ... there are places in this village where you must simply take what they set before you, or give offence — I, I say, have seen in my dreams Jabberwocks, Bogle brutes, Mandrakes.... From our point of view, you know, they are Dream Creatures....”

“Dream Creatures!” said the Angel. “How singular! This is a very curious dream. A kind of topsy-turvey one. You call men real and angels a myth. It almost makes one think that in some odd way there must be two worlds as it were....”

“At least Two,” said the Vicar.

“Lying somewhere close together, and yet scarcely suspecting....”

“As near as page to page of a book.”

“Penetrating each other, living each its own life. This is really a delicious dream!”

“And never dreaming of each other.”

“Except when people go a dreaming!”

“Yes,” said the Angel thoughtfully. “It must be something of the sort. And that reminds me. Sometimes when I have been dropping asleep, or drowsing under the noon-tide sun, I have seen strange corrugated faces just like yours, going by me, and trees with green leaves upon them, and such queer uneven ground as this.... It must be so. I have fallen into another world.”

“Sometimes,” began the Vicar, “at bedtime, when I have been just on the edge of consciousness, I have seen faces as beautiful as yours, and the strange dazzling vistas of a wonderful scene, that flowed past me, winged shapes soaring over it, and wonderful — sometimes terrible — forms going to and fro. I have even heard sweet music too in my ears.... It may be that as we withdraw our attention from the world of sense, the pressing world about us, as we pass into the twilight of repose, other worlds.... Just as we see the stars, those

other worlds in space, when the glare of day recedes.... And the artistic dreamers who see such things most clearly....”

They looked at one another.

“And in some incomprehensible manner I have fallen into this world of yours out of my own!” said the Angel, “into the world of my dreams, grown real.”

He looked about him. “Into the world of my dreams.”

“It is confusing,” said the Vicar. “It almost makes one think there may be (ahem) Four Dimensions after all. In which case, of course,” he went on hurriedly — for he loved geometrical speculations and took a certain pride in his knowledge of them— “there may be any number of three dimensional universes packed side by side, and all dimly dreaming of one another. There may be world upon world, universe upon universe. It’s perfectly possible. There’s nothing so incredible as the absolutely possible. But I wonder how you came to fall out of your world into mine....”

“Dear me!” said the Angel; “There’s deer and a stag! Just as they draw them on the coats of arms. How grotesque it all seems! Can I really be awake?”

He rubbed his knuckles into his eyes.

The half-dozen of dappled deer came in Indian file obliquely through the trees and halted, watching. “It’s no dream — I am really a solid concrete Angel, in Dream Land,” said the Angel. He laughed. The Vicar stood surveying him. The Reverend gentleman was pulling his mouth askew after a habit he had, and slowly stroking his chin. He was asking himself whether he too was not in the Land of Dreams.

VII.

Now in the land of the Angels, so the Vicar learnt in the course of many conversations, there is neither pain nor trouble nor death, marrying nor giving in marriage, birth nor forgetting. Only at times new things begin. It is a land without hill or dale, a wonderfully level land, glittering with strange buildings, with incessant sunlight or full moon, and with incessant breezes blowing through the Æolian traceries of the trees. It is Wonderland, with glittering seas hanging in the sky, across which strange fleets go sailing, none know whither. There the flowers glow in Heaven and the stars shine about one's feet and the breath of life is a delight. The land goes on for ever — there is no solar system nor interstellar space such as there is in our universe — and the air goes upward past the sun into the uttermost abyss of their sky. And there is nothing but Beauty there — all the beauty in our art is but feeble rendering of faint glimpses of that wonderful world, and our composers, our original composers, are those who hear, however faintly, the dust of melody that drives before its winds. And the Angels, and wonderful monsters of bronze and marble and living fire, go to and fro therein.

It is a land of Law — for whatever is, is under the law — but its laws all, in some strange way, differ from ours. Their geometry is different because their space has a curve in it so that all their planes are cylinders; and their law of Gravitation is not according to the law of inverse squares, and there are four-and-twenty primary colours instead of only three. Most of the fantastic things of our science are commonplaces there, and all our earthly science would seem to them the maddest dreaming. There are no flowers upon their plants, for instance, but jets of coloured fire. That, of course, will seem mere nonsense to you because you do not understand Most of what the Angel told the Vicar, indeed the Vicar could not realise, because his own experiences, being only of this world of matter, warred against his understanding. It was too strange to imagine.

What had jolted these twin universes together so that the Angel had fallen suddenly into Sidderford, neither the Angel nor the Vicar could tell. Nor for the matter of that could the author of this story.

The author is concerned with the facts of the case, and has neither the desire nor the confidence to explain them. Explanations are the fallacy of a scientific age. And the cardinal fact of the case is this, that out in Siddermorton Park, with the glory of some wonderful world where there is neither sorrow nor sighing, still clinging to him, on the 4th of August 1895, stood an Angel, bright and beautiful, talking to the Vicar of Siddermorton about the plurality of worlds. The author will swear to the Angel, if need be; and there he draws the line.

VIII.

"I have," said the Angel, "a most unusual feeling — *here*. Have had since sunrise. I don't remember ever having any feeling — *here* before."

"Not pain, I hope," said the Vicar.

"Oh no! It is quite different from that — a kind of vacuous feeling."

"The atmospheric pressure, perhaps, is a little different," the Vicar began, feeling his chin.

"And do you know, I have also the most curious sensations in my mouth — almost as if — it's so absurd! — as if I wanted to stuff things into it."

"Bless me!" said the Vicar. "Of course! You're hungry!"

"Hungry!" said the Angel. "What's that?"

"Don't you eat?"

"Eat! The word's quite new to me."

"Put food into your mouth, you know. One has to here. You will soon learn. If you don't, you get thin and miserable, and suffer a great deal — *pain*, you know — and finally you die."

"Die!" said the Angel. "That's another strange word!"

"It's not strange here. It means leaving off, you know," said the Vicar.

"We never leave off," said the Angel.

"You don't know what may happen to you in this world," said the Vicar, thinking him over. "Possibly if you are feeling hungry, and can feel pain and have your wings broken, you may even have to die before you get out of it again. At anyrate you had better try eating. For my own part — ahem! — there are many more disagreeable things."

"I suppose I *had* better Eat," said the Angel. "If it's not too difficult. I don't like this 'Pain' of yours, and I don't like this 'Hungry.' If your 'Die' is anything like it, I would prefer to Eat. What a very odd world this is!"

"To Die," said the Vicar, "is generally considered worse than either pain or hunger.... It depends."

“You must explain all that to me later,” said the Angel. “Unless I wake up. At present, please show me how to eat. If you will. I feel a kind of urgency....”

“Pardon me,” said the Vicar, and offered an elbow. “If I may have the pleasure of entertaining you. My house lies yonder — not a couple of miles from here.”

“*Your* House!” said the Angel a little puzzled; but he took the Vicar’s arm affectionately, and the two, conversing as they went, waded slowly through the luxuriant bracken, sun mottled under the trees, and on over the stile in the park palings, and so across the bee-swarming heather for a mile or more, down the hillside, home.

You would have been charmed at the couple could you have seen them. The Angel, slight of figure, scarcely five feet high, and with a beautiful, almost effeminate face, such as an Italian old Master might have painted. (Indeed, there is one in the National Gallery [*Tobias and the Angel*, by some artist unknown] not at all unlike him so far as face and spirit go.) He was robed simply in a purple-wrought saffron blouse, bare kneed and bare-footed, with his wings (broken now, and a leaden grey) folded behind him. The Vicar was a short, rather stout figure, rubicund, red-haired, clean-shaven, and with bright ruddy brown eyes. He wore a piebald straw hat with a black ribbon, a very neat white tie, and a fine gold watch-chain. He was so greatly interested in his companion that it only occurred to him when he was in sight of the Vicarage that he had left his gun lying just where he had dropped it amongst the bracken.

He was rejoiced to hear that the pain of the bandaged wing fell rapidly in intensity.

Parenthesis on Angels. IX.

Let us be plain. The Angel of this story is the Angel of Art, not the Angel that one must be irreverent to touch — neither the Angel of religious feeling nor the Angel of popular belief. The last we all know. She is alone among the angelic hosts in being distinctly feminine: she wears a robe of immaculate, unmitigated white with sleeves, is fair, with long golden tresses, and has eyes of the blue of Heaven. Just a pure woman she is, pure maiden or pure matron, in her *robe de nuit*, and with wings attached to her shoulder blades. Her callings are domestic and sympathetic, she watches over a cradle or assists a sister soul heavenward. Often she bears a palm leaf, but one would not be surprised if one met her carrying a warming-pan softly to some poor chilly sinner. She it was who came down in a bevy to Marguerite in prison, in the amended last scene in *Faust* at the Lyceum, and the interesting and improving little children that are to die young, have visions of such angels in the novels of Mrs Henry Wood. This white womanliness with her indescribable charm of lavender-like holiness, her aroma of clean, methodical lives, is, it would seem after all, a purely Teutonic invention. Latin thought knows her not; the old masters have none of her. She is of a piece with that gentle innocent ladylike school of art whereof the greatest triumph is "a lump in one's throat," and where wit and passion, scorn and pomp, have no place. The white angel was made in Germany, in the land of blonde women and the domestic sentiments. She comes to us cool and worshipful, pure and tranquil, as silently soothing as the breadth and calmness of the starlit sky, which also is so unspeakably dear to the Teutonic soul.... We do her reverence. And to the angels of the Hebrews, those spirits of power and mystery, to Raphael, Zadkiel, and Michael, of whom only Watts has caught the shadow, of whom only Blake has seen the splendour, to them too, do we do reverence.

But this Angel the Vicar shot is, we say, no such angel at all, but the Angel of Italian art, polychromatic and gay. He comes from the land of beautiful dreams and not from any holier place. At best he is

a popish creature. Bear patiently, therefore, with his scattered remiges, and be not hasty with your charge of irreverence before the story is read.

At the Vicarage. X.

The Curate's wife and her two daughters and Mrs Jehoram were still playing at tennis on the lawn behind the Vicar's study, playing keenly and talking in gasps about paper patterns for blouses. But the Vicar forgot and came in that way.

They saw the Vicar's hat above the rhododendrons, and a bare curly head beside him. "I must ask him about Susan Wiggin," said the Curate's wife. She was about to serve, and stood with a racket in one hand and a ball between the fingers of the other. "*He* really ought to have gone to see her — being the Vicar. Not George. I —— *Ah!*"

For the two figures suddenly turned the corner and were visible. The Vicar, arm in arm with ——

You see, it came on the Curate's wife suddenly. The Angel's face being towards her she saw nothing of the wings. Only a face of unearthly beauty in a halo of chestnut hair, and a graceful figure clothed in a saffron garment that barely reached the knees. The thought of those knees flashed upon the Vicar at once. He too was horrorstruck. So were the two girls and Mrs Jehoram. All horrorstruck. The Angel stared in astonishment at the horrorstruck group. You see, he had never seen anyone horrorstruck before.

"Mis — ter Hilyer!" said the Curate's wife. "This is *too* much!" She stood speechless for a moment. "*Oh!*"

She swept round upon the rigid girls. "Come!" The Vicar opened and shut his voiceless mouth. The world hummed and spun about him. There was a whirling of zephyr skirts, four impassioned faces sweeping towards the open door of the passage that ran through the vicarage. He felt his position went with them.

"Mrs Mendham," said the Vicar, stepping forward. "Mrs Mendham. You don't understand — —"

"*Oh!*" they all said again.

One, two, three, four skirts vanished in the doorway. The Vicar staggered half way across the lawn and stopped, aghast. "This comes," he heard the Curate's wife say, out of the depth of the

passage, “of having an unmarried vicar —— .” The umbrella stand wobbled. The front door of the vicarage slammed like a minute gun. There was silence for a space.

“I might have thought,” he said. “She is always so hasty.”

He put his hand to his chin — a habit with him. Then turned his face to his companion. The Angel was evidently well bred. He was holding up Mrs Jehoram’s sunshade — she had left it on one of the cane chairs — and examining it with extraordinary interest. He opened it. “What a curious little mechanism!” he said. “What can it be for?”

The Vicar did not answer. The angelic costume certainly was — the Vicar knew it was a case for a French phrase — but he could scarcely remember it. He so rarely used French. It was not *de trop*, he knew. Anything but *de trop*. The Angel was *de trop*, but certainly not his costume. Ah! *Sans culotte!*

The Vicar examined his visitor critically — for the first time. “He *will* be difficult to explain,” he said to himself softly.

The Angel stuck the sunshade into the turf and went to smell the sweet briar. The sunshine fell upon his brown hair and gave it almost the appearance of a halo. He pricked his finger. “Odd!” he said. “Pain again.”

“Yes,” said the Vicar, thinking aloud. “He’s very beautiful and curious as he is. I should like him best so. But I am afraid I must.”

He approached the Angel with a nervous cough.

XI.

"Those," said the Vicar, "were ladies."

"How grotesque," said the Angel, smiling and smelling the sweet briar. "And such quaint shapes!"

"Possibly," said the Vicar. "Did you, *ahem*, notice how they behaved?"

"They went away. Seemed, indeed, to run away. Frightened? I, of course, was frightened at things without wings. I hope —— they were not frightened at my wings?"

"At your appearance generally," said the Vicar, glancing involuntarily at the pink feet.

"Dear me! It never occurred to me. I suppose I seemed as odd to them as you did to me." He glanced down. "And my feet. *You* have hoofs like a hippogriff."

"Boots," corrected the Vicar.

"Boots, you call them! But anyhow, I am sorry I alarmed — —"

"You see," said the Vicar, stroking his chin, "our ladies, *ahem*, have peculiar views — rather inartistic views — about, *ahem*, clothing. Dressed as you are, I am afraid, I am really afraid that — beautiful as your costume certainly is — you will find yourself somewhat, *ahem*, somewhat isolated in society. We have a little proverb, 'When in Rome, *ahem*, one must do as the Romans do.' I can assure you that, assuming you are desirous to, *ahem*, associate with us — during your involuntary stay — —"

The Angel retreated a step or so as the Vicar came nearer and nearer in his attempt to be diplomatic and confidential. The beautiful face grew perplexed. "I don't quite understand. Why do you keep making these noises in your throat? Is it Die or Eat, or any of those...."

"As your host," interrupted the Vicar, and stopped.

"As my host," said the Angel.

"*Would* you object, pending more permanent arrangements, to invest yourself, *ahem*, in a suit, an entirely new suit I may say, like this I have on?"

“Oh!” said the Angel. He retreated so as to take in the Vicar from top to toe. “Wear clothes like yours!” he said. He was puzzled but amused. His eyes grew round and bright, his mouth puckered at the corners.

“Delightful!” he said, clapping his hands together. “What a mad, quaint dream this is! Where are they?” He caught at the neck of the saffron robe.

“Indoors!” said the Vicar. “This way. We will change — indoors!”

XII.

So the Angel was invested in a pair of nether garments of the Vicar's, a shirt, ripped down the back (to accommodate the wings), socks, shoes — the Vicar's dress shoes — collar, tie, and light overcoat. But putting on the latter was painful, and reminded the Vicar that the bandaging was temporary. "I will ring for tea at once, and send Grummet down for Crump," said the Vicar. "And dinner shall be earlier." While the Vicar shouted his orders on the landing rails, the Angel surveyed himself in the cheval glass with immense delight. If he was a stranger to pain, he was evidently no stranger — thanks perhaps to dreaming — to the pleasure of incongruity.

They had tea in the drawing-room. The Angel sat on the music stool (music stool because of his wings). At first he wanted to lie on the hearthrug. He looked much less radiant in the Vicar's clothes, than he had done upon the moor when dressed in saffron. His face shone still, the colour of his hair and cheeks was strangely bright, and there was a superhuman light in his eyes, but his wings under the overcoat gave him the appearance of a hunchback. The garments, indeed, made quite a terrestrial thing of him, the trousers were puckered transversely, and the shoes a size or so too large.

He was charmingly affable and quite ignorant of the most elementary facts of civilization. Eating came without much difficulty, and the Vicar had an entertaining time teaching him how to take tea. "What a mess it is! What a dear grotesque ugly world you live in!" said the Angel. "Fancy stuffing things into your mouth! We use our mouths just to talk and sing with. Our world, you know, is almost incurably beautiful. We get so very little ugliness, that I find all this ... delightful."

Mrs Hinijer, the Vicar's housekeeper, looked at the Angel suspiciously when she brought in the tea. She thought him rather a "queer customer." What she would have thought had she seen him in saffron no one can tell.

The Angel shuffled about the room with his cup of tea in one hand, and the bread and butter in the other, and examined the Vicar's

furniture. Outside the French windows, the lawn with its array of dahlias and sunflowers glowed in the warm sunlight, and Mrs Jehoram's sunshade stood thereon like a triangle of fire. He thought the Vicar's portrait over the mantel very curious indeed, could not understand what it was there for. "You have yourself round," he said, *apropos* of the portrait, "Why want yourself flat?" and he was vastly amused at the glass fire screen. He found the oak chairs odd— "You're not square, are you?" he said, when the Vicar explained their use. "*We* never double ourselves up. We lie about on the asphodel when we want to rest."

"The chair," said the Vicar, "to tell you the truth, has always puzzled *me*. It dates, I think, from the days when the floors were cold and very dirty. I suppose we have kept up the habit. It's become a kind of instinct with us to sit on chairs. Anyhow, if I went to see one of my parishioners, and suddenly spread myself out on the floor — the natural way of it — I don't know what she would do. It would be all over the parish in no time. Yet it seems the natural method of reposing, to recline. The Greeks and Romans — —"

"What is this?" said the Angel abruptly.

"That's a stuffed kingfisher. I killed it."

"Killed it!"

"Shot it," said the Vicar, "with a gun."

"Shot! As you did me?"

"I didn't kill you, you see. Fortunately."

"Is killing making like that?"

"In a way."

"Dear me! And you wanted to make me like that — wanted to put glass eyes in me and string me up in a glass case full of ugly green and brown stuff?"

"You see," began the Vicar, "I scarcely understood — —"

"Is that 'die'?" asked the Angel suddenly.

"That is dead; it died."

"Poor little thing. I must eat a lot. But you say you killed it. *Why?*"

"You see," said the Vicar, "I take an interest in birds, and I (*ahem*) collect them. I wanted the specimen — —"

The Angel stared at him for a moment with puzzled eyes. "A

beautiful bird like that!" he said with a shiver. "Because the fancy took you. You wanted the specimen!"

He thought for a minute. "Do you often kill?" he asked the Vicar.

The Man of Science. XIII.

Then Doctor Crump arrived. Grummet had met him not a hundred yards from the vicarage gate. He was a large, rather heavy-looking man, with a clean-shaven face and a double chin. He was dressed in a grey morning coat (he always affected grey), with a chequered black and white tie. “What’s the trouble?” he said, entering and staring without a shadow of surprise at the Angel’s radiant face.

“This — *ahem* — gentleman,” said the Vicar, “or — *ah* — Angel” — the Angel bowed— “is suffering from a gunshot wound.”

“Gunshot wound!” said Doctor Crump. “In July! May I look at it, Mr — Angel, I think you said?”

“He will probably be able to assuage your pain,” said the Vicar. “Let me assist you to remove your coat?”

The Angel turned obediently.

“Spinal curvature?” muttered Doctor Crump quite audibly, walking round behind the Angel. “No! abnormal growth. Hullo! This is odd!” He clutched the left wing. “Curious,” he said. “Reduplication of the anterior limb — bifid coracoid. Possible, of course, but I’ve never seen it before.” The angel winced under his hands. “Humerus. Radius and Ulna. All there. Congenital, of course. Humerus broken. Curious integumentary simulation of feathers. Dear me. Almost avian. Probably of considerable interest in comparative anatomy. I never did! —— How did this gunshot happen, Mr Angel?”

The Vicar was amazed at the Doctor’s matter-of-fact manner.

“Our friend,” said the Angel, moving his head at the Vicar.

“Unhappily it is my doing,” said the Vicar, stepping forward, explanatory. “I mistook the gentleman — the Angel (*ahem*) — for a large bird — —”

“Mistook him for a large bird! What next? Your eyes want seeing to,” said Doctor Crump. “I’ve told you so before.” He went on patting and feeling, keeping time with a series of grunts and inarticulate mutterings.... “But this is really a very good bit of amateur bandaging,” said he. “I think I shall leave it. Curious

malformation this is! Don't you find it inconvenient, Mr Angel?"

He suddenly walked round so as to look in the Angel's face.

The Angel thought he referred to the wound. "It is rather," he said.

"If it wasn't for the bones I should say paint with iodine night and morning. Nothing like iodine. You could paint your face flat with it. But the osseous outgrowth, the bones, you know, complicate things. I could saw them off, of course. It's not a thing one should have done in a hurry — —"

"Do you mean my wings?" said the Angel in alarm.

"Wings!" said the Doctor. "Eigh? Call 'em wings! Yes — what else should I mean?"

"Saw them off!" said the Angel.

"Don't you think so? It's of course your affair. I am only advising — —"

"Saw them off! What a funny creature you are!" said the Angel, beginning to laugh.

"As you will," said the Doctor. He detested people who laughed. "The things are curious," he said, turning to the Vicar. "If inconvenient" — to the Angel. "I never heard of such complete reduplication before — at least among animals. In plants it's common enough. Were you the only one in your family?" He did not wait for a reply. "Partial cases of the fission of limbs are not at all uncommon, of course, Vicar — six-fingered children, calves with six feet, and cats with double toes, you know. May I assist you?" he said, turning to the Angel who was struggling with the coat. "But such a complete reduplication, and so avian, too! It would be much less remarkable if it was simply another pair of arms."

The coat was got on and he and the Angel stared at one another.

"Really," said the Doctor, "one begins to understand how that beautiful myth of the angels arose. You look a little hectic, Mr Angel — feverish. Excessive brilliance is almost worse as a symptom than excessive pallor. Curious your name should be Angel. I must send you a cooling draught, if you should feel thirsty in the night...."

He made a memorandum on his shirt cuff. The Angel watched him thoughtfully, with the dawn of a smile in his eyes.

“One minute, Crump,” said the Vicar, taking the Doctor’s arm and leading him towards the door.

The Angel’s smile grew brighter. He looked down at his black-clad legs. “He positively thinks I am a man!” said the Angel. “What he makes of the wings beats me altogether. What a queer creature he must be! This is really a most extraordinary Dream!”

XIV.

"That *is* an Angel," whispered the Vicar. "You don't understand."

"*What?*" said the Doctor in a quick, sharp voice. His eyebrows went up and he smiled.

"But the wings?"

"Quite natural, quite ... if a little abnormal."

"Are you sure they are natural?"

"My dear fellow, everything that is, is natural. There is nothing unnatural in the world. If I thought there was I should give up practice and go into *Le Grand Chartreuse*. There are abnormal phenomena, of course. And — —"

"But the way I came upon him," said the Vicar.

"Yes, tell me where you picked him up," said the Doctor. He sat down on the hall table.

The Vicar began rather hesitatingly — he was not very good at story telling — with the rumours of a strange great bird. He told the story in clumsy sentences — for, knowing the Bishop as he did, with that awful example always before him he dreaded getting his pulpit style into his daily conversation — and at every third sentence or so, the Doctor made a downward movement of his head — the corners of his mouth tucked away, so to speak — as though he ticked off the phases of the story and so far found it just as it ought to be. "Self-hypnotism," he murmured once.

"I beg your pardon?" said the Vicar.

"Nothing," said the Doctor. "Nothing, I assure you. Go on. This is extremely interesting."

The Vicar told him he went out with his gun.

"*After* lunch, I think you said?" interrupted the Doctor.

"Immediately after," said the Vicar.

"You should not do such things, you know. But go on, please."

He came to the glimpse of the Angel from the gate.

"In the full glare," said the Doctor, in parenthesis. "It was seventy-nine in the shade."

When the Vicar had finished, the Doctor pressed his lips together tighter than ever, smiled faintly, and looked significantly into the

Vicar's eyes.

"You don't ..." began the Vicar, falteringly.

The Doctor shook his head. "Forgive me," he said, putting his hand on the Vicar's arm.

"You go out," he said, "on a hot lunch and on a hot afternoon. Probably over eighty. Your mind, what there is of it, is whirling with avian expectations. I say, 'what there is of it,' because most of your nervous energy is down there, digesting your dinner. A man who has been lying in the bracken stands up before you and you blaze away. Over he goes — and as it happens — as it happens — he has reduplicate fore-limbs, one pair being not unlike wings. It's a coincidence certainly. And as for his iridescent colours and so forth —— . Have you never had patches of colour swim before your eyes before, on a brilliant sunlight day?... Are you sure they were confined to the wings? Think."

"But he says he *is* an Angel!" said the Vicar, staring out of his little round eyes, his plump hands in his pockets.

"*Ah!*" said the Doctor with his eye on the Vicar. "I expected as much." He paused.

"But don't you think ..." began the Vicar.

"That man," said the Doctor in a low, earnest voice, "is a mattoid."

"A what?" said the Vicar.

"A mattoid. An abnormal man. Did you notice the effeminate delicacy of his face? His tendency to quite unmeaning laughter? His neglected hair? Then consider his singular dress...."

The Vicar's hand went up to his chin.

"Marks of mental weakness," said the Doctor. "Many of this type of degenerate show this same disposition to assume some vast mysterious credentials. One will call himself the Prince of Wales, another the Archangel Gabriel, another the Deity even. Ibsen thinks he is a Great Teacher, and Maeterlink a new Shakespeare. I've just been reading all about it — in Nordau. No doubt his odd deformity gave him an idea...."

"But really," began the Vicar.

“No doubt he’s slipped away from confinement.”

“I do not altogether accept....”

“You will. If not, there’s the police, and failing that, advertisement; but, of course, his people may want to hush it up. It’s a sad thing in a family....”

“He seems so altogether....”

“Probably you’ll hear from his friends in a day or so,” said the Doctor, feeling for his watch. “He can’t live far from here, I should think. He seems harmless enough. I must come along and see that wing again to-morrow.” He slid off the hall table and stood up.

“Those old wives’ tales still have their hold on you,” he said, patting the Vicar on the shoulder. “But an angel, you know — Ha, ha!”

“I certainly *did* think....” said the Vicar dubiously.

“Weigh the evidence,” said the Doctor, still fumbling at his watch. “Weigh the evidence with our instruments of precision. What does it leave you? Splashes of colour, spots of fancy — *muscae volantes*.”

“And yet,” said the Vicar, “I could almost swear to the glory on his wings....”

“Think it over,” said the Doctor (watch out); “hot afternoon — brilliant sunshine — boiling down on your head.... But really I *must* be going. It is a quarter to five. I’ll see your — angel (ha, ha!) to-morrow again, if no one has been to fetch him in the meanwhile. Your bandaging was really very good. I flatter *myself* on that score. Our ambulance classes *were* a success you see.... Good afternoon.”

The Curate. XV.

The Vicar opened the door half mechanically to let out Crump, and saw Mendham, his curate, coming up the pathway by the hedge of purple vetch and meadowsweet. At that his hand went up to his chin and his eyes grew perplexed. Suppose he *was* deceived. The Doctor passed the Curate with a sweep of his hand from his hat brim. Crump was an extraordinarily clever fellow, the Vicar thought, and knew far more of anyone's brain than one did oneself. The Vicar felt that so acutely. It made the coming explanation difficult. Suppose he were to go back into the drawing-room, and find just a tramp asleep on the hearthrug.

Mendham was a cadaverous man with a magnificent beard. He looked, indeed, as though he had run to beard as a mustard plant does to seed. But when he spoke you found he had a voice as well.

"My wife came home in a dreadful state," he brayed out at long range.

"Come in," said the Vicar; "come in. Most remarkable occurrence. Please come in. Come into the study. I'm really dreadfully sorry. But when I explain...."

"And apologise, I hope," brayed the Curate.

"And apologise. No, not that way. This way. The study."

"Now what *was* that woman?" said the Curate, turning on the Vicar as the latter closed the study door.

"What woman?"

"Pah!"

"But really!"

"The painted creature in light attire — disgustingly light attire, to speak freely — with whom you were promenading the garden."

"My dear Mendham — that was an Angel!"

"A very pretty Angel?"

"The world is getting so matter-of-fact," said the Vicar.

"The world," roared the Curate, "grows blacker every day. But to find a man in your position, shamelessly, openly...."

"*Bother!*" said the Vicar aside. He rarely swore. "Look here,

Mendham, you really misunderstand. I can assure you....”

“Very well,” said the Curate. “Explain!” He stood with his lank legs apart, his arms folded, scowling at his Vicar over his big beard.

(Explanations, I repeat, I have always considered the peculiar fallacy of this scientific age.)

The Vicar looked about him helplessly. The world had all gone dull and dead. Had he been dreaming all the afternoon? Was there really an angel in the drawing-room? Or was he the sport of a complicated hallucination?

“Well?” said Mendham, at the end of a minute.

The Vicar’s hand fluttered about his chin. “It’s such a round-about story,” he said.

“No doubt it will be,” said Mendham harshly.

The Vicar restrained a movement of impatience.

“I went out to look for a strange bird this afternoon.... Do you believe in angels, Mendham, real angels?”

“I’m not here to discuss theology. I am the husband of an insulted woman.”

“But I tell you it’s not a figure of speech; this *is* an angel, a real angel with wings. He’s in the next room now. You do misunderstand me, so....”

“Really, Hilyer—”

“It is true I tell you, Mendham. I swear it is true.” The Vicar’s voice grew impassioned. “What sin I have done that I should entertain and clothe angelic visitants, I don’t know. I only know that — inconvenient as it undoubtedly will be — I have an angel now in the drawing-room, wearing my new suit and finishing his tea. And he’s stopping with me, indefinitely, at my invitation. No doubt it was rash of me. But I can’t turn him out, you know, because Mrs Mendham —— I may be a weakling, but I am still a gentleman.”

“Really, Hilyer—”

“I can assure you it is true.” There was a note of hysterical desperation in the Vicar’s voice. “I fired at him, taking him for a flamingo, and hit him in the wing.”

“I thought this was a case for the Bishop. I find it is a case for the Lunacy Commissioners.”

“Come and see him, Mendham!”

“But there *are* no angels.”

“We teach the people differently,” said the Vicar.

“Not as material bodies,” said the Curate.

“Anyhow, come and see him.”

“I don’t want to see your hallucinations,” began the Curate.

“I can’t explain anything unless you come and see him,” said the Vicar. “A man who’s more like an angel than anything else in heaven or earth. You simply must see if you wish to understand.”

“I don’t wish to understand,” said the Curate. “I don’t wish to lend myself to any imposture. Surely, Hilyer, if this is not an imposition, you can tell me yourself.... Flamingo, indeed!”

XVI.

The Angel had finished his tea and was standing looking pensively out of the window. He thought the old church down the valley lit by the light of the setting sun was very beautiful, but he could not understand the serried ranks of tombstones that lay up the hillside beyond. He turned as Mendham and the Vicar came in.

Now Mendham could bully his Vicar cheerfully enough, just as he could bully his congregation; but he was not the sort of man to bully a stranger. He looked at the Angel, and the "strange woman" theory was disposed of. The Angel's beauty was too clearly the beauty of the youth.

"Mr Hilyer tells me," Mendham began, in an almost apologetic tone, "that you — ah — it's so curious — claim to be an Angel."

"*Are* an Angel," said the Vicar.

The Angel bowed.

"Naturally," said Mendham, "we are curious."

"Very," said the Angel. "The blackness and the shape."

"I beg your pardon?" said Mendham.

"The blackness and the flaps," repeated the Angel; "and no wings."

"Precisely," said Mendham, who was altogether at a loss. "We are, of course, curious to know something of how you came into the village in such a peculiar costume."

The Angel looked at the Vicar. The Vicar touched his chin.

"You see," began the Vicar.

"Let *him* explain," said Mendham; "I beg."

"I wanted to suggest," began the Vicar.

"And I don't want you to suggest."

"*Bother!*" said the Vicar.

The Angel looked from one to the other. "Such rugose expressions flit across your faces!" he said.

"You see, Mr — Mr — I don't know your name," said Mendham, with a certain diminution of suavity. "The case stands thus: My wife — four ladies, I might say — are playing lawn tennis, when you

suddenly rush out on them, sir; you rush out on them from among the rhododendra in a very defective costume. You and Mr Hilyer."

"But I—" said the Vicar.

"I know. It was this gentleman's costume was defective. Naturally — it is my place in fact — to demand an explanation." His voice was growing in volume. "And I *must* demand an explanation."

The Angel smiled faintly at his note of anger and his sudden attitude of determination — arms tightly folded.

"I am rather new to the world," the Angel began.

"Nineteen at least," said Mendham. "Old enough to know better. That's a poor excuse."

"May I ask one question first?" said the Angel.

"Well?"

"Do you think I am a Man — like yourself? As the chequered man did."

"If you are not a man—"

"One other question. Have you *never* heard of an Angel?"

"I warn you not to try that story upon me," said Mendham, now back at his familiar crescendo.

The Vicar interrupted: "But Mendham — he has wings!"

"*Please* let me talk to him," said Mendham.

"You are so quaint," said the Angel; "you interrupt everything I have to say."

"But what *have* you to say?" said Mendham.

"That I really *am* an Angel...."

"Pshaw!"

"There you go!"

"But tell me, honestly, how you came to be in the shrubbery of Siddermorton Vicarage — in the state in which you were. And in the Vicar's company. Cannot you abandon this ridiculous story of yours?..."

The Angel shrugged his wings. "What is the matter with this man?" he said to the Vicar.

"My dear Mendham," said the Vicar, "a few words from me...."

"Surely my question is straightforward enough!"

"But you won't tell me the answer you want, and it's no good my

telling you any other."

"*Pshaw!*" said the Curate again. And then turning suddenly on the Vicar, "Where does he come from?"

The Vicar was in a dreadful state of doubt by this time.

"He *says* he is an Angel!" said the Vicar. "Why don't you listen to him?"

"No angel would alarm four ladies...."

"Is *that* what it is all about?" said the Angel.

"Enough cause too, I should think!" said the Curate.

"But I really did not know," said the Angel.

"This is altogether too much!"

"I am sincerely sorry I alarmed these ladies."

"You ought to be. But I see I shall get nothing out of you two." Mendham went towards the door. "I am convinced there is something discreditable at the bottom of this business. Or why not tell a simple straightforward story? I will confess you puzzle me. Why, in this enlightened age, you should tell this fantastic, this far-fetched story of an Angel, altogether beats me. What good *can* it do?..."

"But stop and look at his wings!" said the Vicar. "I can assure you he has wings!"

Mendham had his fingers on the door-handle. "I have seen quite enough," he said. "It may be this is simply a foolish attempt at a hoax, Hilyer."

"But Mendham!" said the Vicar.

The Curate halted in the doorway and looked at the Vicar over his shoulder. The accumulating judgment of months found vent. "I cannot understand, Hilyer, why you are in the Church. For the life of me I cannot. The air is full of Social Movements, of Economic change, the Woman Movement, Rational Dress, The Reunion of Christendom, Socialism, Individualism — all the great and moving Questions of the Hour! Surely, we who follow the Great Reformer.... And here you are stuffing birds, and startling ladies with your callous disregard...."

"But Mendham," began the Vicar.

The Curate would not hear him. “You shame the Apostles with your levity.... But this is only a preliminary enquiry,” he said, with a threatening note in his sonorous voice, and so vanished abruptly (with a violent slam) from the room.

XVII.

"Are *all* men so odd as this?" said the Angel.

"I'm in such a difficult position," said the Vicar. "You see," he said, and stopped, searching his chin for an idea.

"I'm beginning to see," said the Angel.

"They won't believe it."

"I see that."

"They will think I tell lies."

"And?"

"That will be extremely painful to me."

"Painful!... Pain," said the Angel. "I hope not."

The Vicar shook his head. The good report of the village had been the breath of his life, so far. "You see," he said, "it would look so much more plausible if you said you were just a man."

"But I'm not," said the Angel.

"No, you're not," said the Vicar. "So that's no good."

"Nobody here, you know, has ever seen an Angel, or heard of one — except in church. If you had made your *debut* in the chancel — on Sunday — it might have been different. But that's too late now.... (*Bother!*) Nobody, absolutely nobody, will believe in you."

"I hope I am not inconveniencing you?"

"Not at all," said the Vicar; "not at all. Only —— . Naturally it may be inconvenient if you tell a too incredible story. If I might suggest (*ahem*) —— ."

"Well?"

"You see, people in the world, being men themselves, will almost certainly regard you as a man. If you say you are not, they will simply say you do not tell the truth. Only exceptional people appreciate the exceptional. When in Rome one must — well, respect Roman prejudices a little — talk Latin. You will find it better — —"

"You propose I should feign to become a man?"

"You have my meaning at once."

The Angel stared at the Vicar's hollyhocks and thought.

“Possibly, after all,” he said slowly, “I *shall* become a man. I may have been too hasty in saying I was not. You say there are no angels in this world. Who am I to set myself up against your experience? A mere thing of a day — so far as this world goes. If you say there are no angels — clearly I must be something else. I eat — angels do not eat. I *may* be a man already.”

“A convenient view, at any rate,” said the Vicar.

“If it is convenient to you — —”

“It is. And then to account for your presence here.”

“*If*,” said the Vicar, after a hesitating moment of reflection, “if, for instance, you had been an ordinary man with a weakness for wading, and you had gone wading in the Sidder, and your clothes had been stolen, for instance, and I had come upon you in that position of inconvenience; the explanation I shall have to make to Mrs Mendham —— would be shorn at least of the supernatural element. There is such a feeling against the supernatural element nowadays — even in the pulpit. You would hardly believe — —”

“It’s a pity that was not the case,” said the Angel.

“Of course,” said the Vicar. “It is a great pity that was not the case. But at anyrate you will oblige me if you do not obtrude your angelic nature. You will oblige everyone, in fact. There is a settled opinion that angels do not do this kind of thing. And nothing is more painful — as I can testify — than a decaying settled opinion.... Settled opinions are mental teeth in more ways than one. For my own part,” — the Vicar’s hand passed over his eyes for a moment— “I cannot but believe you are an angel.... Surely I can believe my own eyes.”

“We always do ours,” said the Angel.

“And so do we, within limits.”

Then the clock upon the mantel chimed seven, and almost simultaneously Mrs Hinijer announced dinner.

After Dinner. XVIII.

The Angel and the Vicar sat at dinner. The Vicar, with his napkin tucked in at his neck, watched the Angel struggling with his soup. "You will soon get into the way of it," said the Vicar. The knife and fork business was done awkwardly but with effect. The Angel looked furtively at Delia, the little waiting maid. When presently they sat cracking nuts — which the Angel found congenial enough — and the girl had gone, the Angel asked: "Was that a lady, too?"

"Well," said the Vicar (*crack*). "No — she is not a lady. She is a servant."

"Yes," said the Angel; "she *had* rather a nicer shape."

"You mustn't tell Mrs Mendham that," said the Vicar, covertly satisfied.

"She didn't stick out so much at the shoulders and hips, and there was more of her in between. And the colour of her robes was not discordant — simply neutral. And her face — —"

"Mrs Mendham and her daughters had been playing tennis," said the Vicar, feeling he ought not to listen to detraction even of his mortal enemy. "Do you like these things — these nuts?"

"Very much," said the Angel. *Crack.*

"You see," said the Vicar (*Chum, chum, chum*). "For my own part I entirely believe you are an angel."

"Yes!" said the Angel.

"I shot you — I saw you flutter. It's beyond dispute. In my own mind. I admit it's curious and against my preconceptions, but — practically — I'm assured, perfectly assured in fact, that I saw what I certainly did see. But after the behaviour of these people. (*Crack*). I really don't see how we are to persuade people. Nowadays people are so very particular about evidence. So that I think there is a great deal to be said for the attitude you assume. Temporarily at least I think it would be best of you to do as you propose to do, and behave as a man as far as possible. Of course there is no knowing how or when you may go back. After what has happened (*Gluck*, *gluck*, *gluck* — as the Vicar refills his glass) — after what has happened I should not be surprised to see the side of the room fall away, and the

hosts of heaven appear to take you away again — take us both away even. You have so far enlarged my imagination. All these years I have been forgetting Wonderland. But still —— . It will certainly be wiser to break the thing gently to them."

"This life of yours," said the Angel. "I'm still in the dark about it. How do you begin?"

"Dear me!" said the Vicar. "Fancy having to explain that! We begin existence here, you know, as babies, silly pink helpless things wrapped in white, with goggling eyes, that yelp dismally at the Font. Then these babies grow larger and become even beautiful — when their faces are washed. And they continue to grow to a certain size. They become children, boys and girls, youths and maidens (*Crack*), young men and young women. That is the finest time in life, according to many — certainly the most beautiful. Full of great hopes and dreams, vague emotions and unexpected dangers."

"*That* was a maiden?" said the Angel, indicating the door through which Delia had disappeared.

"Yes," said the Vicar, "that was a maiden." And paused thoughtfully.

"And then?"

"Then," said the Vicar, "the glamour fades and life begins in earnest. The young men and young women pair off — most of them. They come to me shy and bashful, in smart ugly dresses, and I marry them. And then little pink babies come to them, and some of the youths and maidens that were, grow fat and vulgar, and some grow thin and shrewish, and their pretty complexions go, and they get a queer delusion of superiority over the younger people, and all the delight and glory goes out of their lives. So they call the delight and glory of the younger ones, Illusion. And then they begin to drop to pieces."

"Drop to pieces!" said the Angel. "How grotesque!"

"Their hair comes off and gets dull coloured or ashen grey," said the Vicar. "*I*, for instance." He bowed his head forward to show a circular shining patch the size of a florin. "And their teeth come out. Their faces collapse and become as wrinkled and dry as a shrivelled apple. 'Corrugated' you called mine. They care more and more for

what they have to eat and to drink, and less and less for any of the other delights of life. Their limbs get loose in the joints, and their hearts slack, or little pieces from their lungs come coughing up. Pain....”

“Ah!” said the Angel.

“Pain comes into their lives more and more. And then they go. They do not like to go, but they have to — out of this world, very reluctantly, clutching its pain at last in their eagerness to stop....”

“Where do they go?”

“Once I thought I knew. But now I am older I know I do not know. We have a Legend — perhaps it is not a legend. One may be a churchman and disbelieve. Stokes says there is nothing in it....” The Vicar shook his head at the bananas.

“And you?” said the Angel. “Were you a little pink baby?”

“A little while ago I was a little pink baby.”

“Were you robed then as you are now?”

“Oh no! Dear me! What a queer idea! Had long white clothes, I suppose, like the rest of them.”

“And then you were a little boy?”

“A little boy.”

“And then a glorious youth?”

“I was not a very glorious youth, I am afraid. I was sickly, and too poor to be radiant, and with a timid heart. I studied hard and pored over the dying thoughts of men long dead. So I lost the glory, and no maiden came to me, and the dulness of life began too soon.”

“And you have your little pink babies?”

“None,” said the Vicar with a scarce perceptible pause. “Yet all the same, as you see, I am beginning to drop to pieces. Presently my back will droop like a wilting flowerstalk. And then, in a few thousand days more I shall be done with, and I shall go out of this world of mine.... Whither I do not know.”

“And you have to eat like this every day?”

“Eat, and get clothes and keep this roof above me. There are some very disagreeable things in this world called Cold and Rain. And the other people here — how and why is too long a story — have made

me a kind of chorus to their lives. They bring their little pink babies to me and I have to say a name and some other things over each new pink baby. And when the children have grown to be youths and maidens, they come again and are confirmed. You will understand that better later. Then before they may join in couples and have pink babies of their own, they must come again and hear me read out of a book. They would be outcast, and no other maiden would speak to the maiden who had a little pink baby without I had read over her for twenty minutes out of my book. It's a necessary thing, as you will see. Odd as it may seem to you. And afterwards when they are falling to pieces, I try and persuade them of a strange world in which I scarcely believe myself, where life is altogether different from what they have had — or desire. And in the end, I bury them, and read out of my book to those who will presently follow into the unknown land. I stand at the beginning, and at the zenith, and at the setting of their lives. And on every seventh day, I who am a man myself, I who see no further than they do, talk to them of the Life to Come — the life of which we know nothing. If such a life there be. And slowly I drop to pieces amidst my prophesying."

"What a strange life!" said the Angel.

"Yes," said the Vicar. "What a strange life! But the thing that makes it strange to me is new. I had taken it as a matter of course until you came into my life."

"This life of ours is so insistent," said the Vicar. "It, and its petty needs, its temporary pleasures (*Crack*) swathe our souls about. While I am preaching to these people of mine of another life, some are ministering to one appetite and eating sweets, others — the old men — are slumbering, the youths glance at the maidens, the grown men protrude white waistcoats and gold chains, pomp and vanity on a substratum of carnal substance, their wives flaunt garish bonnets at one another. And I go on droning away of the things unseen and unrealised— 'Eye hath not seen,' I read, 'nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the imagination of man to conceive,' and I look up to catch an adult male immortal admiring the fit of a pair of three and sixpenny gloves. It is damping year after year. When I was ailing in my youth I felt almost the assurance of vision that beneath this temporary phantasm world was the real world — the enduring world

of the Life Everlasting. But now — —”

He glanced at his chubby white hand, fingering the stem of his glass. “I have put on flesh since then,” he said. [*Pause*].

“I have changed and developed very much. The battle of the Flesh and Spirit does not trouble me as it did. Every day I feel less confidence in my beliefs, and more in God. I live, I am afraid, a quiescent life, duties fairly done, a little ornithology and a little chess, a trifle of mathematical trifling. My times are in His hands — —”

The Vicar sighed and became pensive. The Angel watched him, and the Angel’s eyes were troubled with the puzzle of him. “Gluck, gluck, gluck,” went the decanter as the Vicar refilled his glass.

XIX.

So the Angel dined and talked to the Vicar, and presently the night came and he was overtaken by yawning.

"Yah —— oh!" said the Angel suddenly. "Dear me! A higher power seemed suddenly to stretch my mouth open and a great breath of air went rushing down my throat."

"You yawned," said the Vicar. "Do you never yawn in the angelic country?"

"Never," said the Angel.

"And yet you are immortal! —— I suppose you want to go to bed."

"Bed!" said the Angel. "Where's that?"

So the Vicar explained darkness to him and the art of going to bed. (The Angels, it seems sleep only in order to dream, and dream, like primitive man, with their foreheads on their knees. And they sleep among the white poppy meadows in the heat of the day.) The Angel found the bedroom arrangements quaint enough.

"Why is everything raised up on big wooden legs?" he said. "You have the floor, and then you put everything you have upon a wooden quadruped. Why do you do it?" The Vicar explained with philosophical vagueness. The Angel burnt his finger in the candle-flame — and displayed an absolute ignorance of the elementary principles of combustion. He was merely charmed when a line of fire ran up the curtains. The Vicar had to deliver a lecture on fire so soon as the flame was extinguished. He had all kinds of explanations to make — even the soap needed explaining. It was an hour or more before the Angel was safely tucked in for the night.

"He's very beautiful," said the Vicar, descending the staircase, quite tired out; "and he's a real angel no doubt. But I am afraid he will be a dreadful anxiety, all the same, before he gets into our earthly way with things."

He seemed quite worried. He helped himself to an extra glass of sherry before he put away the wine in the cellaret.

XX.

The Curate stood in front of the looking-glass and solemnly divested himself of his collar.

"I never heard a more fantastic story," said Mrs Mendham from the basket chair. "The man must be mad. Are you sure —— ."

"Perfectly, my dear. I've told you every word, every incident —— ."

"*Well!*" said Mrs Mendham, and spread her hands. "There's no sense in it."

"Precisely, my dear."

"The Vicar," said Mrs Mendham, "must be mad."

"This hunchback is certainly one of the strangest creatures I've seen for a long time. Foreign looking, with a big bright coloured face and long brown hair.... It can't have been cut for months!" The Curate put his studs carefully upon the shelf of the dressing-table. "And a kind of staring look about his eyes, and a simpering smile. Quite a silly looking person. Effeminate."

"But who *can* he be?" said Mrs Mendham.

"I can't imagine, my dear. Nor where he came from. He might be a chorister or something of that sort."

"But *why* should he be about the shrubbery ... in that dreadful costume?"

"I don't know. The Vicar gave me no explanation. He simply said, 'Mendham, this is an Angel.'"

"I wonder if he drinks.... They may have been bathing near the spring, of course," reflected Mrs Mendham. "But I noticed no other clothes on his arm."

The Curate sat down on his bed and unlaced his boots.

"It's a perfect mystery to me, my dear." (Flick, flick of laces.) "Hallucination is the only charitable — —"

"You are sure, George, that it was *not* a woman."

"Perfectly," said the Curate.

"I know what men are, of course."

"It was a young man of nineteen or twenty," said the Curate.

“I can’t understand it,” said Mrs Mendham. “You say the creature is staying at the Vicarage?”

“Hilyer is simply mad,” said the Curate. He got up and went padding round the room to the door to put out his boots. “To judge by his manner you would really think he believed this cripple was an Angel.” (“Are your shoes out, dear?”)

(“They’re just by the wardrobe”), said Mrs Mendham. “He always was a little queer, you know. There was always something childish about him.... An Angel!”

The Curate came and stood by the fire, fumbling with his braces. Mrs Mendham liked a fire even in the summer. “He shirks all the serious problems in life and is always trifling with some new foolishness,” said the Curate. “Angel indeed!” He laughed suddenly. “Hilyer *must* be mad,” he said.

Mrs Mendham laughed too. “Even that doesn’t explain the hunchback,” she said.

“The hunchback must be mad too,” said the Curate.

“It’s the only way of explaining it in a sensible way,” said Mrs Mendham. [*Pause.*]

“Angel or no angel,” said Mrs Mendham, “I know what is due to me. Even supposing the man thought he *was* in the company of an angel, that is no reason why he should not behave like a gentleman.”

“That is perfectly true.”

“You will write to the Bishop, of course?”

Mendham coughed. “No, I shan’t write to the Bishop,” said Mendham. “I think it seems a little disloyal.... And he took no notice of the last, you know.”

“But surely — —”

“I shall write to Austin. In confidence. He will be sure to tell the Bishop, you know. And you must remember, my dear — —”

“That Hilyer can dismiss you, you were going to say. My dear, the man’s much too weak! *I* should have a word to say about that. And besides, you do all his work for him. Practically, we manage the parish from end to end. I do not know what would become of the poor if it was not for me. They’d have free quarters in the Vicarage to-morrow. There is that Goody Ansell — —”

“I know, my dear,” said the Curate, turning away and proceeding with his undressing. “You were telling me about her only this afternoon.”

XXI.

And thus in the little bedroom over the gable we reach a first resting place in this story. And as we have been hard at it, getting our story spread out before you, it may be perhaps well to recapitulate a little.

Looking back you will see that much has been done; we began with a blaze of light "not uniform but broken all over by curving flashes like the waving of swords," and the sound of a mighty harping, and the advent of an Angel with polychromatic wings.

Swiftly, dexterously, as the reader must admit, wings have been clipped, halo handled off, the glory clapped into coat and trousers, and the Angel made for all practical purposes a man, under a suspicion of being either a lunatic or an impostor. You have heard too, or at least been able to judge, what the Vicar and the Doctor and the Curate's wife thought of the strange arrival. And further remarkable opinions are to follow.

The afterglow of the summer sunset in the north-west darkens into night and the Angel sleeps, dreaming himself back in the wonderful world where it is always light, and everyone is happy, where fire does not burn and ice does not chill; where rivulets of starlight go streaming through the amaranthine meadows, out to the seas of Peace. He dreams, and it seems to him that once more his wings glow with a thousand colours and flash through the crystal air of the world from which he has come.

So he dreams. But the Vicar lies awake, too perplexed for dreaming. Chiefly he is troubled by the possibilities of Mrs Mendham; but the evening's talk has opened strange vistas in his mind, and he is stimulated by a sense as of something seen darkly by the indistinct vision of a hitherto unsuspected wonderland lying about his world. For twenty years now he has held his village living and lived his daily life, protected by his familiar creed, by the clamour of the details of life, from any mystical dreaming. But now interweaving with the familiar bother of his persecuting neighbour, is an altogether unfamiliar sense of strange new things.

There was something ominous in the feeling. Once, indeed, it rose above all other considerations, and in a kind of terror he blundered

out of bed, bruised his shins very convincingly, found the matches at last, and lit a candle to assure himself of the reality of his own customary world again. But on the whole the more tangible trouble was the Mendham avalanche. Her tongue seemed to be hanging above him like the sword of Damocles. What might she not say of this business, before her indignant imagination came to rest?

And while the successful captor of the Strange Bird was sleeping thus uneasily, Gully of Sidderton was carefully unloading his gun after a wearisome blank day, and Sandy Bright was on his knees in prayer, with the window carefully fastened. Annie Durgan was sleeping hard with her mouth open, and Amory's mother was dreaming of washing, and both of them had long since exhausted the topics of the Sound and the Glare. Lumpy Durgan was sitting up in his bed, now crooning the fragment of a tune and now listening intently for a sound he had heard once and longed to hear again. As for the solicitor's clerk at Iping Hanger, he was trying to write poetry about a confectioner's girl at Portburdock, and the Strange Bird was quite out of his head. But the ploughman who had seen it on the confines of Siddermorton Park had a black eye. That had been one of the more tangible consequences of a little argument about birds' legs in the "Ship." It is worthy of this passing mention, since it is probably the only known instance of an Angel causing anything of the kind.

Morning. XXII.

The Vicar going to call the Angel, found him dressed and leaning out of his window. It was a glorious morning, still dewy, and the rising sunlight slanting round the corner of the house, struck warm and yellow upon the hillside. The birds were astir in the hedges and shrubbery. Up the hillside — for it was late in August — a plough drove slowly. The Angel's chin rested upon his hands and he did not turn as the Vicar came up to him.

"How's the wing?" said the Vicar.

"I'd forgotten it," said the Angel. "Is that yonder a man?"

The Vicar looked. "That's a ploughman."

"Why does he go to and fro like that? Does it amuse him?"

"He's ploughing. That's his work."

"Work! Why does he do it? It seems a monotonous thing to do."

"It is," admitted the Vicar. "But he has to do it to get a living, you know. To get food to eat and all that kind of thing."

"How curious!" said the Angel. "Do all men have to do that? Do you?"

"Oh, no. He does it for me; does my share."

"Why?" asked the Angel.

"Oh! in return for things I do for him, you know. We go in for division of labour in this world. Exchange is no robbery."

"I see," said the Angel, with his eyes still on the ploughman's heavy movements.

"What do you do for him?"

"That seems an easy question to you," said the Vicar, "but really! — it's difficult. Our social arrangements are rather complicated. It's impossible to explain these things all at once, before breakfast. Don't you feel hungry?"

"I think I do," said the Angel slowly, still at the window; and then abruptly, "Somehow I can't help thinking that ploughing must be far from enjoyable."

"Possibly," said the Vicar, "very possibly. But breakfast is ready.

Won't you come down?"

The Angel left the window reluctantly.

"Our society," explained the Vicar on the staircase, "is a complicated organisation."

"Yes?"

"And it is so arranged that some do one thing and some another."

"And that lean, bent old man trudges after that heavy blade of iron pulled by a couple of horses while we go down to eat?"

"Yes. You will find it is perfectly just. Ah! mushrooms and poached eggs! It's the Social System. Pray be seated. Possibly it strikes you as unfair?"

"I'm puzzled," said the Angel.

"The drink I'm sending you is called coffee," said the Vicar. "I daresay you are. When I was a young man I was puzzled in the same way. But afterwards comes a Broader View of Things. (These black things are called mushrooms; they look beautiful.) Other Considerations. All men are brothers, of course, but some are younger brothers, so to speak. There is work that requires culture and refinement, and work in which culture and refinement would be an impediment. And the rights of property must not be forgotten. One must render unto Cæsar.... Do you know, instead of explaining this matter now (this is yours), I think I will lend you a little book to read (*chum*, *chum*, *chum* — these mushrooms are well up to their appearance), which sets the whole thing out very clearly."

The Violin. XXIII.

After breakfast the Vicar went into the little room next his study to find a book on Political Economy for the Angel to read. For the Angel's social ignorances were clearly beyond any verbal explanations. The door stood ajar.

"What is that?" said the Angel, following him. "A violin!" He took it down.

"You play?" said the Vicar.

The Angel had the bow in his hand, and by way of answer drove it across the strings. The quality of the note made the Vicar turn suddenly.

The Angel's hand tightened on the instrument. The bow flew back and flickered, and an air the Vicar had never heard before danced in his ears. The Angel shifted the fiddle under his dainty chin and went on playing, and as he played his eyes grew bright and his lips smiled. At first he looked at the Vicar, then his expression became abstracted. He seemed no longer to look at the Vicar, but through him, at something beyond, something in his memory or his imagination, something infinitely remote, undreamt of hitherto....

The Vicar tried to follow the music. The air reminded him of a flame, it rushed up, shone, flickered and danced, passed and reappeared. No! — it did not reappear! Another air — like it and unlike it, shot up after it, wavered, vanished. Then another, the same and not the same. It reminded him of the flaring tongues that palpitate and change above a newly lit fire. There are two airs — or *motifs*, which is it? — thought the Vicar. He knew remarkably little of musical technique. They go dancing up, one pursuing the other, out of the fire of the incantation, pursuing, fluctuating, turning, up into the sky. There below was the fire burning, a flame without fuel upon a level space, and there two flirting butterflies of sound, dancing away from it, up, one over another, swift, abrupt, uncertain.

"Flirting butterflies were they!" What was the Vicar thinking of? Where was he? In the little room next to his study, of course! And the Angel standing in front of him smiling into his face, playing the violin, and looking through him as though he was only a window

—— . That *motif* again, a yellow flare, spread fanlike by a gust, and now one, then with a swift eddying upward flight the other, the two things of fire and light pursuing one another again up into that clear immensity.

The study and the realities of life suddenly faded out of the Vicar's eyes, grew thinner and thinner like a mist that dissolves into air, and he and the Angel stood together on a pinnacle of wrought music, about which glittering melodies circled, and vanished, and reappeared. He was in the land of Beauty, and once more the glory of heaven was upon the Angel's face, and the glowing delights of colour pulsated in his wings. Himself the Vicar could not see. But I cannot tell you of the vision of that great and spacious land, of its incredible openness, and height, and nobility. For there is no space there like ours, no time as we know it; one must needs speak by bungling metaphors and own in bitterness after all that one has failed. And it was only a vision. The wonderful creatures flying through the æther saw them not as they stood there, flew through them as one might pass through a whisp of mist. The Vicar lost all sense of duration, all sense of necessity ——

"Ah!" said the Angel, suddenly putting down the fiddle.

The Vicar had forgotten the book on Political Economy, had forgotten everything until the Angel had done. For a minute he sat quite still. Then he woke up with a start. He was sitting on the old iron-bound chest.

"Really," he said slowly, "you are very clever."

He looked about him in a puzzled way. "I had a kind of vision while you were playing. I seemed to see —— . What did I see? It has gone."

He stood up with a dazzled expression upon his face. "I shall never play the violin again," he said. "I wish you would take it to your room — and keep it —— . And play to me again. I did not know anything of music until I heard you play. I do not feel as though I had ever heard any music before."

He stared at the Angel, then about him at the room. "I have never felt anything of this kind with music before," he said. He shook his head. "I shall never play again."

The Angel Explores the Village. XXIV.

Very unwisely, as I think, the Vicar allowed the Angel to go down into the village by himself, to enlarge his ideas of humanity. Unwisely, because how was he to imagine the reception the Angel would receive? Not thoughtlessly, I am afraid. He had always carried himself with decorum in the village, and the idea of a slow procession through the little street with all the inevitable curious remarks, explanations, pointings, was too much for him. The Angel might do the strangest things, the village was certain to think them. Peering faces. "Who's *he* got now?" Besides, was it not his duty to prepare his sermon in good time? The Angel, duly directed, went down cheerfully by himself — still innocent of most of the peculiarities of the human as distinguished from the angelic turn of mind.

The Angel walked slowly, his white hands folded behind his hunched back, his sweet face looking this way and that. He peered curiously into the eyes of the people he met. A little child picking a bunch of vetch and honeysuckle looked in his face, and forthwith came and put them in his hand. It was about the only kindness he had from a human being (saving only the Vicar and one other). He heard Mother Gustick scolding that granddaughter of hers as he passed the door. "You *Brazen* Faggit — you!" said Mother Gustick. "You Trumpery Baggage!"

The Angel stopped, startled at the strange sounds of Mother Gustick's voice. "Put yer best clo'es on, and yer feather in yer 'at, and off you goes to meet en, fal lal, and me at 'ome slaving for ye. 'Tis a Fancy Lady you'll be wantin' to be, my gal, a walkin' Touch and Go, with yer idleness and finery — —"

The voice ceased abruptly, and a great peace came upon the battered air. "Most grotesque and strange!" said the Angel, still surveying this wonderful box of discords. "Walking Touch and Go!" He did not know that Mrs Gustick had suddenly become aware of his existence, and was scrutinizing his appearance through the window-blind. Abruptly the door flew open, and she stared out into the

Angel's face. A strange apparition, grey and dusty hair, and the dirty pink dress unhooked to show the stringy throat, a discoloured gargoyle, presently to begin spouting incomprehensible abuse.

"Now, then, Mister," began Mrs Gustick. "Have ye nothin' better to do than listen at people's doors for what you can pick up?"

The Angel stared at her in astonishment.

"D'year!" said Mrs Gustick, evidently very angry indeed. "Listenin'."

"Have you any objection to my hearing...."

"Object to my hearing! Course I have! Whad yer think? You aint such a Ninny...."

"But if ye didn't want me to hear, why did you cry out so loud? I thought...."

"*You thought!* Softie — that's what *you* are! You silly girt staring Gaby, what don't know any better than to come holding yer girt mouth wide open for all that you can catch holt on? And then off up there to tell! You great Fat-Faced, Tale-Bearin' Silly-Billy! I'd be ashamed to come poking and peering round quiet people's houses...."

The Angel was surprised to find that some inexplicable quality in her voice excited the most disagreeable sensations in him and a strong desire to withdraw. But, resisting this, he stood listening politely (as the custom is in the Angelic Land, so long as anyone is speaking). The entire eruption was beyond his comprehension. He could not perceive any reason for the sudden projection of this vituperative head, out of infinity, so to speak. And questions without a break for an answer were outside his experience altogether.

Mrs Gustick proceeded with her characteristic fluency, assured him he was no gentleman, enquired if he called himself one, remarked that every tramp did as much nowadays, compared him to a Stuck Pig, marvelled at his impudence, asked him if he wasn't ashamed of himself standing there, enquired if he was rooted to the ground, was curious to be told what he meant by it, wanted to know whether he robbed a scarecrow for his clothes, suggested that an abnormal vanity prompted his behaviour, enquired if his mother knew he was out, and finally remarking, "I got somethin'll move you, my gentleman," disappeared with a ferocious slamming of the door.

The interval struck the Angel as singularly peaceful. His whirling mind had time to analyse his sensations. He ceased bowing and smiling, and stood merely astonished.

"This is a curious painful feeling," said the Angel. "Almost worse than Hungry, and quite different. When one is hungry one wants to eat. I suppose she was a woman. Here one wants to get away. I suppose I might just as well go."

He turned slowly and went down the road meditating. He heard the cottage door re-open, and turning his head, saw through intervening scarlet runners Mrs Gustick with a steaming saucepan full of boiling cabbage water in her hand.

"'Tis well you went, Mister Stolen Breeches," came the voice of Mrs Gustick floating down through the vermilion blossoms. "Don't you come peeping and prying round this yer cottage again or I'll learn ye manners, I will!"

The Angel stood in a state of considerable perplexity. He had no desire to come within earshot of the cottage again — ever. He did not understand the precise import of the black pot, but his general impression was entirely disagreeable. There was no explaining it.

"I *mean* it!" said Mrs Gustick, crescendo. "Drat it! — I *mean* it."

The Angel turned and went on, a dazzled look in his eyes.

"She was very grotesque!" said the Angel. "*Very.* Much more than the little man in black. And she means it. —— But what she means I don't know!..." He became silent. "I suppose they all mean something,", he said, presently, still perplexed.

XXV.

Then the Angel came in sight of the forge, where Sandy Bright's brother was shoeing a horse for the carter from Upmorton. Two hobbledehoys were standing by the forge staring in a bovine way at the proceedings. As the Angel approached these two and then the carter turned slowly through an angle of thirty degrees and watched his approach, staring quietly and steadily at him. The expression on their faces was one of abstract interest.

The Angel became self-conscious for the first time in his life. He drew nearer, trying to maintain an amiable expression on his face, an expression that beat in vain against their granitic stare. His hands were behind him. He smiled pleasantly, looking curiously at the (to him) incomprehensible employment of the smith. But the battery of eyes seemed to angle for his regard. Trying to meet the three pairs at once, the Angel lost his alertness and stumbled over a stone. One of the yokels gave a sarcastic cough, and was immediately covered with confusion at the Angel's enquiring gaze, nudging his companion with his elbow to cover his disorder. None spoke, and the Angel did not speak.

So soon as the Angel had passed, one of the three hummed this tune in an aggressive tone.

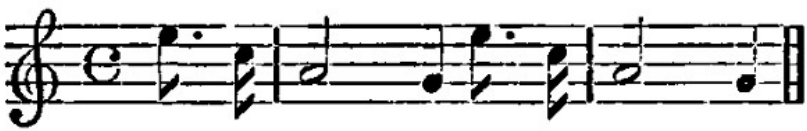

Then all three of them laughed. One tried to sing something and found his throat contained phlegm. The Angel proceeded on his way.

"Who's *e* then?" said the second hobbledehoy.

"Ping, ping, ping," went the blacksmith's hammer.

"Spose he's one of these here foweners," said the carter from Upmorton. "Däamned silly fool he do look to be sure."

"Tas the way with them foweners," said the first hobbledehoy sagely.

"Got something very like the 'ump," said the carter from Upmorton. "Dää-ä-ämned if 'E ent."

Then the silence healed again, and they resumed their quiet expressionless consideration of the Angel's retreating figure.

"Very like the 'ump et is," said the carter after an enormous pause.

XXVI.

The Angel went on through the village, finding it all wonderful enough. “They begin, and just a little while and then they end,” he said to himself in a puzzled voice. “But what are they doing meanwhile?” Once he heard some invisible mouth chant inaudible words to the tune the man at the forge had hummed.

“That’s the poor creature the Vicar shot with that great gun of his,” said Sarah Glue (of 1, Church Cottages) peering over the blind.

“He looks Frenchified,” said Susan Hopper, peering through the interstices of that convenient veil on curiosity.

“He has sweet eyes,” said Sarah Glue, who had met them for a moment.

The Angel sauntered on. The postman passed him and touched his hat to him; further down was a dog asleep in the sun. He went on and saw Mendham, who nodded distantly and hurried past. (The Curate did not care to be seen talking to an angel in the village, until more was known about him). There came from one of the houses the sound of a child screaming in a passion, that brought a puzzled look to the angelic face. Then the Angel reached the bridge below the last of the houses, and stood leaning over the parapet watching the glittering little cascade from the mill.

“They begin, and just a little while, and then they end,” said the weir from the mill. The water raced under the bridge, green and dark, and streaked with foam.

Beyond the mill rose the square tower of the church, with the churchyard behind it, a spray of tombstones and wooden headboards splashed up the hillside. A half dozen of beech trees framed the picture.

Then the Angel heard a shuffling of feet and the gride of wheels behind him, and turning his head saw a man dressed in dirty brown rags and a felt hat grey with dust, who was standing with a slight swaying motion and fixedly regarding the Angelic back. Beyond him was another almost equally dirty, pushing a knife grinder’s barrow over the bridge.

“Mornin’,” said the first person smiling weakly. “Goomorn’.” He

arrested an escaping hiccough.

The Angel stared at him. He had never seen a really fatuous smile before. “Who are you?” said the Angel.

The fatuous smile faded. “No your business whoaaam. Wishergoomorn.”

“Carm on:” said the man with the grindstone, passing on his way.

“Wishergoomorn,” said the dirty man, in a tone of extreme aggravation. “Carncher Answerme?”

“Carm *on* you fool!” said the man with the grindstone — receding.

“I don’t understand,” said the Angel.

“Donunderstan’. Sim’l enough. Wishergoomorn’. Willyanswerme? Wontchr? gemwishergem goomorn. Cusom answer goomorn. No gem. Haverteachyer.”

The Angel was puzzled. The drunken man stood swaying for a moment, then he made an unsteady snatch at his hat and threw it down at the Angel’s feet. “Ver well,” he said, as one who decides great issues.

“*Carm* on!” said the voice of the man with the grindstone — stopping perhaps twenty yards off.

“You *wan* fight, you — —” the Angel failed to catch the word. “I’ll show yer, not answer gem’s goomorn.”

He began to struggle with his jacket. “Think I’m drun,” he said, “I show yer.” The man with the grindstone sat down on the shaft to watch. “Carm on,” he said. The jacket was intricate, and the drunken man began to struggle about the road, in his attempts to extricate himself, breathing threatenings and slaughter. Slowly the Angel began to suspect, remotely enough, that these demonstrations were hostile. “Mur wun know yer when I done wi’ yer,” said the drunken man, coat almost over his head.

At last the garment lay on the ground, and through the frequent interstices of his reminiscences of a waistcoat, the drunken tinker displayed a fine hairy and muscular body to the Angel’s observant eyes. He squared up in masterly fashion.

“Take the paint off yer,” he remarked, advancing and receding, fists up and elbows out.

“Carm on,” floated down the road.

The Angel’s attention was concentrated on two huge hairy black fists, that swayed and advanced and retreated. “Come on d’yer say? I’ll show yer,” said the gentleman in rags, and then with extraordinary ferocity; “My crikey! I’ll show yer.”

Suddenly he lurched forward, and with a newborn instinct and raising a defensive arm as he did so, the Angel stepped aside to avoid him. The fist missed the Angelic shoulder by a hairsbreadth, and the tinker collapsed in a heap with his face against the parapet of the bridge. The Angel hesitated over the writhing dusty heap of blasphemy for a moment, and then turned towards the man’s companion up the road. “Lemmeget up,” said the man on the bridge: “Lemmeget up, you swine. I’ll show yer.”

A strange disgust, a quivering repulsion came upon the Angel. He walked slowly away from the drunkard towards the man with the grindstone.

“What does it all mean?” said the Angel. “I don’t understand it.”

“Dam fool!... say’s it’s ‘is silver weddin’,” answered the man with the grindstone, evidently much annoyed; and then, in a tone of growing impatience, he called down the road once more; “Carm on!”

“Silver wedding!” said the Angel. “What is a silver wedding?”

“Jest is rot,” said the man on the barrow. “But ‘E’s always avin’ some ‘scuse like that. Fair sickenin it is. Lars week it wus ‘is bloomin’ birthday, and *then* ‘e ad’nt ardly got sober orf a comlimentary drunk to my noo barrer. (*Carm* on, you fool.)”

“But I don’t understand,” said the Angel. “Why does he sway about so? Why does he keep on trying to pick up his hat like that — and missing it?”

“*Why!*” said the tinker. “Well this *is* a blasted innocent country! *Why!* Because ‘E’s blind! Wot else? (Carm on — *Dam* yer). Because ‘E’s just as full as ‘E can ‘old. That’s *why*!”

The Angel noticing the tone of the second tinker’s voice, judged it wiser not to question him further. But he stood by the grindstone and continued to watch the mysterious evolutions on the bridge.

“Carm on! I shall ‘ave to go and pick up that ‘at I suppose.... ‘E’s

always at it. I ne'er 'ad such a blooming pard before. *Always* at it, 'e is."

The man with the barrow meditated. "Taint as if 'e was a gentleman and 'adnt no livin' to get. An' 'e's such a reckless fool when 'e gets a bit on. Goes offerin out everyone 'e meets. (*There* you go!) I'm blessed if 'e didn't offer out a 'ole bloomin' Salvation Army. No judgment in it. (Oh! *Carm* on! *Carm* on!). 'Ave to go and pick this bloomin' 'at up now I s'pose. 'E don't care, *wot* trouble 'e gives."

The Angel watched the second tinker walk back, and, with affectionate blasphemy, assist the first to his hat and his coat. Then he turned, absolutely mystified, towards the village again.

XXVII.

After that incident the Angel walked along past the mill and round behind the church, to examine the tombstones.

"This seems to be the place where they put the broken pieces," said the Angel — reading the inscriptions. "Curious word — relict! Resurgam! Then they are not done with quite. What a huge pile it requires to keep her down.... It is spirited of her."

"Hawkins?" said the Angel softly,.... "*Hawkins?* The name is strange to me.... He did not die then.... It is plain enough, — Joined the Angelic Hosts, May 17, 1863. He must have felt as much out of place as I do down here. But I wonder why they put that little pot thing on the top of this monument. Curious! There are several others about — little stone pots with a rag of stiff stone drapery over them."

Just then the boys came pouring out of the National School, and first one and then several stopped agape at the Angel's crooked black figure among the white tombs. "Ent 'e gart a bääk on en!" remarked one critic.

"'E's got 'air like a girl!" said another.

The Angel turned towards them. He was struck by the queer little heads sticking up over the lichenous wall. He smiled faintly at their staring faces, and then turned to marvel at the iron railings that enclosed the Fitz-Jarvis tomb. "A queer air of uncertainty," he said. "Slabs, piles of stone, these railings.... Are they afraid?... Do these Dead ever try and get up again? There's an air of repression — fortification — —"

"Gét yer *'air* cut, Gét yer *'air* cut," sang three little boys together.

"Curious these Human Beings are!" said the Angel. "That man yesterday wanted to cut off my wings, now these little creatures want me to cut off my hair! And the man on the bridge offered to take the 'paint' off me. They will leave nothing of me soon."

"Where did you get that *'at*?" sang another little boy. "Where did you get them clo'es?"

"They ask questions that they evidently do not want answered," said the Angel. "I can tell from the tone." He looked thoughtfully at

the little boys. “I don’t understand the methods of Human intercourse. These are probably friendly advances, a kind of ritual. But I don’t know the responses. I think I will go back to the little fat man in black, with the gold chain across his stomach, and ask him to explain. It is difficult.”

He turned towards the lych gate. “*Oh!*” said one of the little boys, in a shrill falsetto, and threw a beech-nut husk. It came bounding across the churchyard path. The Angel stopped in surprise.

This made all the little boys laugh. A second imitating the first, said “*Oh!*” and hit the Angel. His astonishment was really delicious. They all began crying “*Oh!*” and throwing beechnut husks. One hit the Angel’s hand, another stung him smartly by the ear. The Angel made ungainly movements towards them. He spluttered some expostulation and made for the roadway. The little boys were amazed and shocked at his discomfiture and cowardice. Such sawney behaviour could not be encouraged. The pelting grew vigorously. You may perhaps be able to imagine those vivid moments, daring small boys running in close and delivering shots, milder small boys rushing round behind with flying discharges. Milton Screever’s mongrel dog was roused to yelping ecstacy at the sight, and danced (full of wild imaginings) nearer and nearer to the angelic legs.

“Hi, hi!” said a vigorous voice. “I never did! Where’s Mr Jarvis? Manners, manners! you young rascals.”

The youngsters scattered right and left, some over the wall into the playground, some down the street.

“Frightful pest these boys are getting!” said Crump, coming up. “I’m sorry they have been annoying you.”

The Angel seemed quite upset. “I don’t understand,” he said. “These Human ways....”

“Yes, of course. Unusual to you. How’s your excrescence?”

“My what?” said the Angel.

“Bifid limb, you know. How is it? Now you’re down this way, come in. Come in and let me have a look at it again. You young roughs! And meanwhile these little louts of ours will be getting off home. They’re all alike in these villages. *Can’t* understand anything abnormal. See an odd-looking stranger. Chuck a stone. No imagination beyond the parish.... (I’ll give you physic if I catch you

annoying strangers again.) ... I suppose it's what one might expect.... Come along this way."

So the Angel, horribly perplexed still, was hurried into the surgery to have his wound re-dressed.

Lady Hammergallow's View. XXVIII.

In Siddermorton Park is Siddermorton House, where old Lady Hammergallow lives, chiefly upon Burgundy and the little scandals of the village, a dear old lady with a ropy neck, a ruddled countenance and spasmodic gusts of odd temper, whose three remedies for all human trouble among her dependents are, a bottle of gin, a pair of charity blankets, or a new crown piece. The House is a mile-and-a-half out of Siddermorton. Almost all the village is hers, saving a fringe to the south which belongs to Sir John Gotch, and she rules it with an autocratic rule, refreshing in these days of divided government. She orders and forbids marriages, drives objectionable people out of the village by the simple expedient of raising their rent, dismisses labourers, obliges heretics to go to church, and made Susan Dangett, who wanted to call her little girl 'Euphemia,' have the infant christened 'Mary-Anne.' She is a sturdy Broad Protestant and disapproves of the Vicar's going bald like a tonsure. She is on the Village Council, which obsequiously trudges up the hill and over the moor to her, and (as she is a trifle deaf) speaks all its speeches into her speaking trumpet instead of a rostrum. She takes no interest now in politics, but until last year she was an active enemy of "that Gladstone." She has parlour maids instead of footmen to do her waiting, because of Hockley, the American stockbroker, and his four Titans in plush.

She exercises what is almost a fascination upon the village. If in the bar-parlour of the Cat and Cornucopia you swear by God no one would be shocked, but if you swore by Lady Hammergallow they would probably be shocked enough to turn you out of the room. When she drives through Siddermorton she always calls upon Bessy Flump, the post-mistress, to hear all that has happened, and then upon Miss Finch, the dressmaker, to check back Bessy Flump. Sometimes she calls upon the Vicar, sometimes upon Mrs Mendham whom she snubs, and even sometimes on Crump. Her sparkling pair of greys almost ran over the Angel as he was walking down to the village.

"So *that's* the genius!" said Lady Hammergallow, and turned and

looked at him through the gilt glasses on a stick that she always carried in her shrivelled and shaky hand. “Lunatic indeed! The poor creature has rather a pretty face. I’m sorry I’ve missed him.”

But she went on to the vicarage nevertheless, and demanded news of it all. The conflicting accounts of Miss Flump, Miss Finch, Mrs Mendham, Crump, and Mrs Jehoram had puzzled her immensely. The Vicar, hard pressed, did all he could to say into her speaking trumpet what had really happened. He toned down the wings and the saffron robe. But he felt the case was hopeless. He spoke of his protégé as “Mr” Angel. He addressed pathetic asides to the kingfisher. The old lady noticed his confusion. Her queer old head went jerking backwards and forwards, now the speaking trumpet in his face when he had nothing to say, then the shrunken eyes peering at him, oblivious of the explanation that was coming from his lips. A great many Ohs! and Ahs! She caught some fragments certainly.

“You have asked him to stop with you — indefinitely?” said Lady Hammergallow with a Great Idea taking shape rapidly in her mind.

“I did — perhaps inadvertently — make such—”

“And you don’t know where he comes from?”

“Not at all.”

“Nor who his father is, I suppose?” said Lady Hammergallow mysteriously.

“No,” said the Vicar.

“*Now!*” said Lady Hammergallow archly, and keeping her glasses to her eye, she suddenly dug at his ribs with her trumpet.

“My *dear* Lady Hammergallow!”

“I thought so. Don’t think *I* would blame you, Mr Hilyer.” She gave a corrupt laugh that she delighted in. “The world is the world, and men are men. And the poor boy’s a cripple, eh? A kind of judgment. In mourning, I noticed. It reminds me of the *Scarlet Letter*. The mother’s dead, I suppose. It’s just as well. Really — I’m not a *narrow* woman — I *respect* you for having him. Really I do.”

“But, *Lady* Hammergallow!”

“Don’t spoil everything by denying it. It is so very, very plain, to a woman of the world. That Mrs Mendham! She amuses me with her suspicions. Such odd ideas! In a Curate’s wife. But I hope it didn’t happen when you were in orders.”

“Lady Hammergallow, I protest. Upon my word.”

“Mr Hilyer, I protest. I *know*. Not anything you can say will alter my opinion one jot. Don’t try. I never suspected you were nearly such an interesting man.”

“But this suspicion is unendurable!”

“We will help him together, Mr Hilyer. You may rely upon me. It is most romantic.” She beamed benevolence.

“But, Lady Hammergallow, I *must* speak!”

She gripped her ear-trumpet resolutely, and held it before her and shook her head.

“He has quite a genius for music, Vicar, so I hear?”

“I can assure you most solemnly—”

“I thought so. And being a cripple—”

“You are under a most cruel—”

“I thought that if his gift is really what that Jehoram woman says.”

“An unjustifiable suspicion that ever a man—”

(“I don’t think much of her judgment, of course.”)

“Consider my position. Have I gained *no* character?”

“It might be possible to do something for him as a performer.”

“Have I — (*Bother! It’s no good!*)”

“And so, dear Vicar, I propose to give him an opportunity of showing us what he can do. I have been thinking it all over as I drove here. On Tuesday next, I will invite just a few people of taste, and he shall bring his violin. Eigh? And if that goes well, I will see if I can get some introductions and really *push* him.”

“But *Lady*, Lady Hammergallow.”

“Not another word!” said Lady Hammergallow, still resolutely holding her speaking trumpet before her and clutching her eyeglasses. “I really must not leave those horses. Cutler is so annoyed if I keep them too long. He finds waiting tedious, poor man, unless there is a public-house near.” She made for the door.

“*Damn!*” said the Vicar, under his breath. He had never used the word since he had taken orders. It shows you how an Angel’s visit may disorganize a man.

He stood under the verandah watching the carriage drive away. The world seemed coming to pieces about him. Had he lived a

virtuous celibate life for thirty odd years in vain? The things of which these people thought him capable! He stood and stared at the green cornfield opposite, and down at the straggling village. It seemed real enough. And yet for the first time in his life there was a queer doubt of its reality. He rubbed his chin, then turned and went slowly upstairs to his dressing-room, and sat for a long time staring at a garment of some yellow texture. “Know his father!” he said. “And he is immortal, and was fluttering about his heaven when my ancestors were marsupials.... I wish he was there now.”

He got up and began to feel the robe.

“I wonder how they get such things,” said the Vicar. Then he went and stared out of the window. “I suppose everything is wonderful, even the rising and setting of the sun. I suppose there is no adamantine ground for any belief. But one gets into a regular way of taking things. This disturbs it. I seem to be waking up to the Invisible. It is the strangest of uncertainties. I have not felt so stirred and unsettled since my adolescence.”

Further Adventures of the Angel in the Village. XXIX.

"That's all right," said Crump when the bandaging was replaced. "It's a trick of memory, no doubt, but these excrescences of yours don't seem nearly so large as they did yesterday. I suppose they struck me rather forcibly. Stop and have lunch with me now you're down here. Midday meal, you know. The youngsters will be swallowed up by school again in the afternoon."

"I never saw anything heal so well in my life," he said, as they walked into the dining-room. "Your blood and flesh must be as clean and free from bacteria as they make 'em. Whatever stuff there is in your head," he added *sotto voce*.

At lunch he watched the Angel narrowly, and talked to draw him out.

"Journey tire you yesterday?" he said suddenly.

"Journey!" said the Angel. "Oh! my wings felt a little stiff."

("Not to be had,") said Crump to himself. ("Suppose I must enter into it.")

"So you flew all the way, eigh? No conveyance?"

"There wasn't any way," explained the Angel, taking mustard. "I was flying up a symphony with some Griffins and Fiery Cherubim, and suddenly everything went dark and I was in this world of yours."

"Dear me!" said Crump. "And that's why you haven't any luggage." He drew his serviette across his mouth, and a smile flickered in his eyes.

"I suppose you know this world of ours pretty well? Watching us over the adamantine walls and all that kind of thing. Eigh?"

"Not very well. We dream of it sometimes. In the moonlight, when the Nightmares have fanned us to sleep with their wings."

"Ah, yes — of course," said Crump. "Very poetical way of putting it. Won't you take some Burgundy? It's just beside you."

"There's a persuasion in this world, you know, that Angels' Visits are by no means infrequent. Perhaps some of your — friends have

travelled? They are supposed to come down to deserving persons in prisons, and do refined Nautches and that kind of thing. Faust business, you know."

"I've never heard of anything of the kind," said the Angel.

"Only the other day a lady whose baby was my patient for the time being — indigestion — assured me that certain facial contortions the little creature made indicated that it was Dreaming of Angels. In the novels of Mrs Henry Wood that is spoken of as an infallible symptom of an early departure. I suppose you can't throw any light on that obscure pathological manifestation?"

"I don't understand it at all," said the Angel, puzzled, and not clearly apprehending the Doctor's drift.

("Getting huffy,") said Crump to himself. ("Sees I'm poking fun at him.") "There's one thing I'm curious about. Do the new arrivals complain much about their medical attendants? I've always fancied there must be a good deal of hydropathic talk just at first. I was looking at that picture in the Academy only this June...."

"New Arrivals!" said the Angel. "I really don't follow you."

The Doctor stared. "Don't they come?"

"Come!" said the Angel. "Who?"

"The people who die here."

"After they've gone to pieces here?"

"That's the general belief, you know."

"People, like the woman who screamed out of the door, and the blackfaced man and his volutations and the horrible little things that threw husks! — certainly not. *I* never saw such creatures before I fell into this world."

"Oh! but come!" said the Doctor. "You'll tell me next your official robes are not white and that you can't play the harp."

"There's no such thing as white in the Angelic Land," said the Angel. "It's that queer blank colour you get by mixing up all the others."

"Why, my dear Sir!" said the doctor, suddenly altering his tone, "you positively know nothing about the Land you come from. White's the very essence of it."

The Angel stared at him. Was the man jesting? He looked

perfectly serious.

"Look here," said Crump, and getting up, he went to the sideboard on which a copy of the Parish Magazine was lying. He brought it round to the Angel and opened it at the coloured supplement. "Here's some *real* angels," he said. "You see it's not simply the wings make the Angel. White you see, with a curly whisp of robe, sailing up into the sky with their wings furled. Those are angels on the best authority. Hydroxyl kind of hair. One has a bit of a harp, you see, and the other is helping this wingless lady — kind of larval Angel, you know — upward."

"Oh! but really!" said the Angel, "those are not angels at all."

"But they *are*," said Crump, putting the magazine back on the sideboard and resuming his seat with an air of intense satisfaction. "I can assure you I have the *best* authority...."

"I can assure you...."

Crump tucked in the corners of his mouth and shook his head from side to side even as he had done to the Vicar. "No good," he said, "can't alter our ideas just because an irresponsible visitor...."

"If these are angels," said the Angel, "then I have never been in the Angelic Land."

"Precisely," said Crump, ineffably self-satisfied; "that was just what I was getting at."

The Angel stared at him for a minute round-eyed, and then was seized for the second time by the human disorder of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Crump, joining in. "I *thought* you were not quite so mad as you seemed. Ha, ha, ha!"

And for the rest of the lunch they were both very merry, for entirely different reasons, and Crump insisted upon treating the Angel as a "dorg" of the highest degree.

XXX.

After the Angel had left Crump's house he went up the hill again towards the Vicarage. But — possibly moved by the desire to avoid Mrs Gustick — he turned aside at the stile and made a detour by the Lark's Field and Bradley's Farm.

He came upon the Respectable Tramp slumbering peacefully among the wild-flowers. He stopped to look, struck by the celestial tranquillity of that individual's face. And even as he did so the Respectable Tramp awoke with a start and sat up. He was a pallid creature, dressed in rusty black, with a broken-spirited crush hat cocked over one eye. "Good afternoon," he said affably. "How are you?"

"Very well, thank you," said the Angel, who had mastered the phrase.

The Respectable Tramp eyed the Angel critically. "Padding the Hoof, matey?" he said. "Like me."

The Angel was puzzled by him. "Why," asked the Angel, "do you sleep like this instead of sleeping up in the air on a Bed?"

"Well I'm blowed!" said the Respectable Tramp. "Why don't I sleep in a bed? Well, it's like this. Sandringham's got the painters in, there's the drains up in Windsor Castle, and I 'aven't no other 'ouse to go to. You 'aven't the price of a arf pint in your pocket, 'ave yer?"

"I have nothing in my pocket," said the Angel.

"Is this here village called Siddermorton?" said the Tramp, rising creakily to his feet and pointing to the clustering roofs down the hill.

"Yes," said the Angel, "they call it Siddermorton."

"I know it, I know it," said the Tramp. "And a very pretty little village it is too." He stretched and yawned, and stood regarding the place. "'Ouses," he said reflectively; "Projuce" — waving his hand at the cornfields and orchards. "Looks cosy, don't it?"

"It has a quaint beauty of its own," said the Angel.

"It *'as* a quaint beauty of its own — yes.... Lord! I'd like to sack the blooming place.... I was born there."

"Dear me," said the Angel.

“Yes, I was born there. Ever heard of a pithed frog?”

“Pithed frog,” said the Angel. “No!”

“It’s a thing these here vivisectionists do. They takes a frog and they cuts out his brains and they shoves a bit of pith in the place of ‘em. That’s a pithed frog. Well — that there village is full of pithed human beings.”

The Angel took it quite seriously. “Is that so?” he said.

“That’s so — you take my word for it. Everyone of them ‘as ‘ad their brains cut out and chunks of rotten touchwood put in the place of it. And you see that little red place there?”

“That’s called the national school,” said the Angel.

“Yes — that’s where they piths ‘em,” said the Tramp, quite in love with his conceit.

“Really! That’s very interesting.”

“It stands to reason,” said the Tramp. “If they ‘ad brains they’d ‘ave ideas, and if they ‘ad ideas they’d think for themselves. And you can go through that village from end to end and never meet anybody doing as much. Pithed human beings they are. I know that village. I was born there, and I might be there now, a toilin’ for my betters, if I ‘adnt struck against the pithin’.”

“Is it a painful operation?” asked the Angel.

“In parts. Though it aint the heads gets hurt. And it lasts a long time. They take ’em young into that school, and they says to them, ‘come in ‘ere and we’ll improve your minds,’ they says, and in the little kiddies go as good as gold. And they begins shovin’ it into them. Bit by bit and ‘ard and dry, shovin’ out the nice juicy brains. Dates and lists and things. Out they comes, no brains in their ‘eads, and wound up nice and tight, ready to touch their ‘ats to anyone who looks at them. Why! One touched ‘is ‘at to me yesterday. And they runs about spry and does all the dirty work, and feels thankful they’re allowed to live. They take a positive pride in ‘ard work for its own sake. Arter they bin pithed. See that chap ploughin’?”

“Yes,” said the Angel; “is *he* pithed?”

“Rather. Else he’d be paddin’ the hoof this pleasant weather — like me and the blessed Apostles.”

“I begin to understand,” said the Angel, rather dubiously.

“I knew you would,” said the Philosophical Tramp. “I thought you was the right sort. But speaking serious, aint it ridiculous? — centuries and centuries of civilization, and look at that poor swine there, sweatin’ ‘isself empty and trudging up that ‘ill-side. ‘E’s English, ‘e is. ‘E belongs to the top race in creation, ‘e does. ‘E’s one of the rulers of Indjer. It’s enough to make a nigger laugh. The flag that’s braved a thousand years the battle an’ the breeze — that’s *‘is* flag. There never was a country was as great and glorious as this. Never. And that’s wot it makes of us. I’ll tell you a little story about them parts as you seems to be a bit of a stranger. There’s a chap called Gotch, Sir John Gotch they calls ‘im, and when *‘e* was a young gent from Oxford, I was a little chap of eight and my sister was a girl of seventeen. Their servant she was. But Lord! everybody’s ‘eard that story — it’s common enough, of ‘im or the likes of ‘im.”

“I haven’t,” said the Angel.

“All that’s pretty and lively of the gals they chucks into the gutters, and all the men with a pennorth of spunk or adventure, all who won’t drink what the Curate’s wife sends ’em instead of beer, and touch their hats promiscous, and leave the rabbits and birds alone for their betters, gets drove out of the villages as rough characters. Patriotism! Talk about improvin’ the race! Wot’s left aint fit to look a nigger in the face, a Chinaman ‘ud be ashamed of ‘em....”

“But I don’t understand,” said the Angel. “I don’t follow you.”

At that the Philosophic Tramp became more explicit, and told the Angel the simple story of Sir John Gotch and the kitchen-maid. It’s scarcely necessary to repeat it. You may understand that it left the Angel puzzled. It was full of words he did not understand, for the only vehicle of emotion the Tramp possessed was blasphemy. Yet, though their tongues differed so, he could still convey to the Angel some of his own (probably unfounded) persuasion of the injustice and cruelty of life, and of the utter detestableness of Sir John Gotch.

The last the Angel saw of him was his dusty black back receding down the lane towards Iping Hanger. A pheasant appeared by the roadside, and the Philosophical Tramp immediately caught up a stone and sent the bird clucking with a viciously accurate shot. Then he disappeared round the corner.

Mrs Jehoram's Breadth of View. XXXI.

"I heard some one playing the fiddle in the Vicarage, as I came by," said Mrs Jehoram, taking her cup of tea from Mrs Mendham.

"The Vicar plays," said Mrs Mendham. "I have spoken to George about it, but it's no good. I do not think a Vicar should be allowed to do such things. It's so foreign. But there, *he* ...."

"I know, dear," said Mrs Jehoram. "But I heard the Vicar once at the schoolroom. I don't think this *was* the Vicar. It was quite clever, some of it, quite smart, you know. And new. I was telling dear Lady Hammergallow this morning. I fancy—"

"The lunatic! Very likely. These half-witted people.... My dear, I don't think I shall ever forget that dreadful encounter. Yesterday."

"Nor I."

"My poor girls! They are too shocked to say a word about it. I was telling dear Lady Ham — —"

"Quite proper of them. It was *dreadful*, dear. For them."

"And now, dear, I want you to tell me frankly — Do you really believe that creature was a man?"

"You should have heard the violin."

"I still more than half suspect, Jessie — —" Mrs Mendham leant forward as if to whisper.

Mrs Jehoram helped herself to cake. "I'm sure no woman could play the violin quite like I heard it played this morning."

"Of course, if you say so that settles the matter," said Mrs Mendham. Mrs Jehoram was the autocratic authority in Siddermorton upon all questions of art, music and belles-lettres. Her late husband had been a minor poet. Then Mrs Mendham added a judicial "Still—"

"Do you know," said Mrs Jehoram, "I'm half inclined to believe the dear Vicar's story."

"How *good* of you, Jessie," said Mrs Mendham.

"But really, I don't think he *could* have had any one in the Vicarage before that afternoon. I feel sure we should have heard of it. I don't see how a strange cat could come within four miles of

Siddermorton without the report coming round to us. The people here gossip so....”

“I always distrust the Vicar,” said Mrs Mendham. “I know him.”

“Yes. But the story is plausible. If this Mr Angel were someone very clever and eccentric—”

“He would have to be *very* eccentric to dress as he did. There are degrees and limits, dear.”

“But kilts,” said Mrs Jehoram.

“Are all very well in the Highlands....”

Mrs Jehoram’s eyes had rested upon a black speck creeping slowly across a patch of yellowish-green up the hill.

“There he goes,” said Mrs Jehoram, rising, “across the cornfield. I’m sure that’s him. I can see the hump. Unless it’s a man with a sack. Bless me, Minnie! here’s an opera glass. How convenient for peeping at the Vicarage!... Yes, it’s the man. He is a man. With *such* a sweet face.”

Very unselfishly she allowed her hostess to share the opera glass. For a minute there was a rustling silence.

“His dress,” said Mrs Mendham, “is *quite* respectable now.”

“Quite,” said Mrs Jehoram.

Pause.

“He looks cross!”

“And his coat is dusty.”

“He walks steadily enough,” said Mrs Mendham, “or one might think.... This hot weather....”

Another pause.

“You see, dear,” said Mrs Jehoram, putting down the lorgnette. “What I was going to say was, that possibly he might be a genius in disguise.”

“If you can call next door to nothing a disguise.”

“No doubt it was eccentric. But I’ve seen children in little blouses, not at all unlike him. So many clever people *are* peculiar in their dress and manners. A genius may steal a horse where a bank-clerk may not look over the hedge. Very possibly he’s quite well known and laughing at our Arcadian simplicity. And really it wasn’t so improper as some of these New Women bicycling costumes. I saw one in one of the Illustrated Papers only a few days ago — the *New*

Budget I think — quite tights, you know, dear. No — I cling to the genius theory. Especially after the playing. I'm sure the creature is original. Perhaps very amusing. In fact, I intend to ask the Vicar to introduce me."

"My dear!" cried Mrs Mendham.

"I'm resolute," said Mrs Jehoram.

"I'm afraid you're rash," said Mrs Mendham. "Geniuses and people of that kind are all very well in London. But here — at the Vicarage."

"We are going to educate the folks. I love originality. At any rate I mean to see him."

"Take care you don't see too much of him," said Mrs Mendham. "I've heard the fashion is quite changing. I understand that some of the very best people have decided that genius is not to be encouraged any more. These recent scandals...."

"Only in literature, I can assure you, dear. In music...."

"Nothing you can say, my dear," said Mrs Mendham, going off at a tangent, "will convince me that that person's costume was not extremely suggestive and improper."

A Trivial Incident. XXXII.

The Angel came thoughtfully by the hedge across the field towards the Vicarage. The rays of the setting sun shone on his shoulders, and touched the Vicarage with gold, and blazed like fire in all the windows. By the gate, bathed in the sunlight, stood little Delia, the waiting maid. She stood watching him under her hand. It suddenly came into the Angel's mind that she, at least, was beautiful, and not only beautiful but alive and warm.

She opened the gate for him and stood aside. She was sorry for him, for her elder sister was a cripple. He bowed to her, as he would have done to any woman, and for just one moment looked into her face. She looked back at him and something leapt within her.

The Angel made an irresolute movement. "Your eyes are very beautiful," he said quietly, with a remote wonder in his voice.

"Oh, sir!" she said, starting back. The Angel's expression changed to perplexity. He went on up the pathway between the Vicar's flower-beds, and she stood with the gate held open in her hand, staring after him. Just under the rose-twined verandah he turned and looked at her.

She still stared at him for a moment, and then with a queer gesture turned round with her back to him, shutting the gate as she did so, and seemed to be looking down the valley towards the church tower.

The Warp and the Woof of Things. XXXIII.

At the dinner table the Angel told the Vicar the more striking of his day's adventures.

"The strange thing," said the Angel, "is the readiness of you Human Beings — the zest, with which you inflict pain. Those boys pelting me this morning — —"

"Seemed to enjoy it," said the Vicar. "I know."

"Yet they don't like pain," said the Angel.

"No," said the Vicar; "*they* don't like it."

"Then," said the Angel, "I saw some beautiful plants rising with a spike of leaves, two this way and two that, and when I caressed one it caused the most uncomfortable — —"

"Stinging nettle!" said the Vicar.

"At any rate a new sort of pain. And another plant with a head like a coronet, and richly decorated leaves, spiked and jagged — —"

"A thistle, possibly."

"And in your garden, the beautiful, sweet-smelling plant — —"

"The sweet briar," said the Vicar. "I remember."

"And that pink flower that sprang out of the box — —"

"Out of the box?" said the Vicar.

"Last night," said the Angel, "that went climbing up the curtains —— Flame!"

"Oh! — the matches and the candles! Yes," said the Vicar.

"Then the animals. A dog to-day behaved most disagreeably —— . And these boys, and the way in which people speak —— . Everyone seems anxious — willing at any rate — to give this Pain. Every one seems busy giving pain — —"

"Or avoiding it," said the Vicar, pushing his dinner away before him. "Yes — of course. It's fighting everywhere. The whole living world is a battle-field — the whole world. We are driven by Pain. Here. How it lies on the surface! This Angel sees it in a day!"

"But why does everyone — everything — want to give pain?" asked the Angel.

"It is not so in the Angelic Land?" said the Vicar.

"No," said the Angel. "Why is it so here?"

The Vicar wiped his lips with his napkin slowly. “It *is* so,” he said. “Pain,” said he still more slowly, “is the warp and the woof of this life. Do you know,” he said, after a pause, “it is almost impossible for me to imagine ... a world without pain.... And yet, as you played this morning ——

“But this world is different. It is the very reverse of an Angelic world. Indeed, a number of people — excellent religious people — have been so impressed by the universality of pain that they think, after death, things will be even worse for a great many of us. It seems to me an excessive view. But it’s a deep question. Almost beyond one’s power of discussion — —”

And incontinently the Vicar plumped into an impromptu dissertation upon “Necessity,” how things were so because they were so, how one *had* to do this and that. “Even our food,” said the Vicar. “What?” said the Angel. “Is not obtained without inflicting Pain,” said the Vicar.

The Angel’s face went so white that the Vicar checked himself suddenly. Or he was just on the very verge of a concise explanation of the antecedents of a leg of lamb. There was a pause.

“By-the-bye,” said the Angel, suddenly. “Have you been pithed? Like the common people.”

The Angel's Debut. XXXIV.

When Lady Hammergallow made up her mind, things happened as she resolved. And though the Vicar made a spasmodic protest, she carried out her purpose and got audience, Angel, and violin together, at Siddermorton House before the week was out. "A genius the Vicar has discovered," she said; so with eminent foresight putting any possibility of blame for a failure on the Vicar's shoulders. "The dear Vicar tells me," she would say, and proceed to marvellous anecdotes of the Angel's cleverness with his instrument. But she was quite in love with her idea — she had always had a secret desire to play the patroness to obscure talent. Hitherto it had not turned out to be talent when it came to the test.

"It would be such a good thing for him," she said. "His hair is long already, and with that high colour he would be beautiful, simply beautiful on a platform. The Vicar's clothes fitting him so badly makes him look quite like a fashionable pianist already. And the scandal of his birth — not told, of course, but whispered — would be — quite an Inducement —— when he gets to London, that is."

The Vicar had the most horrible sensations as the day approached. He spent hours trying to explain the situation to the Angel, other hours trying to imagine what people would think, still worse hours trying to anticipate the Angel's behaviour. Hitherto the Angel had always played for his own satisfaction. The Vicar would startle him every now and then by rushing upon him with some new point of etiquette that had just occurred to him. As for instance: "It's very important where you put your hat, you know. Don't put it on a chair, whatever you do. Hold it until you get your tea, you know, and then — let me see — then put it down somewhere, you know." The journey to Siddermorton House was accomplished without misadventure, but at the moment of introduction the Vicar had a spasm of horrible misgivings. He had forgotten to explain introductions. The Angel's naïve amusement was evident, but nothing very terrible happened.

"Rummy looking greaser," said Mr Rathbone Slater, who devoted considerable attention to costume. "Wants grooming. No manners.

Grinned when he saw me shaking hands. Did it *chic* enough, I thought."

One trivial misadventure occurred. When Lady Hammergallow welcomed the Angel she looked at him through her glasses. The apparent size of her eyes startled him. His surprise and his quick attempt to peer over the brims was only too evident. But the Vicar had warned him of the ear trumpet.

The Angel's incapacity to sit on anything but a music stool appeared to excite some interest among the ladies, but led to no remarks. They regarded it perhaps as the affectation of a budding professional. He was remiss with the teacups and scattered the crumbs of his cake abroad. (You must remember he was quite an amateur at eating.) He crossed his legs. He fumbled over the hat business after vainly trying to catch the Vicar's eye. The eldest Miss Papaver tried to talk to him about continental watering places and cigarettes, and formed a low opinion of his intelligence.

The Angel was surprised by the production of an easel and several books of music, and a little unnerved at first by the sight of Lady Hammergallow sitting with her head on one side, watching him with those magnified eyes through her gilt glasses.

Mrs Jehoram came up to him before he began to play and asked him the Name of the Charming Piece he was playing the other afternoon. The Angel said it had no name, and Mrs Jehoram thought music ought never to have any names and wanted to know who it was by, and when the Angel told her he played it out of his head, she said he must be Quite a Genius and looked open (and indisputably fascinating) admiration at him. The Curate from Iping Hanger (who was professionally a Kelt and who played the piano and talked colour and music with an air of racial superiority) watched him jealously.

The Vicar, who was presently captured and set down next to Lady Hammergallow, kept an anxious eye ever Angelward while she told him particulars of the incomes made by violinists — particulars which, for the most part, she invented as she went along. She had been a little ruffled by the incident of the glasses, but had decided that it came within the limits of permissible originality.

So figure to yourself the Green Saloon at Siddermorton Park; an Angel thinly disguised in clerical vestments and with a violin in his

hands, standing by the grand piano, and a respectable gathering of quiet nice people, nicely dressed, grouped about the room. Anticipatory gabble — one hears scattered fragments of conversation.

"He is *incog.*"; said the very eldest Miss Papaver to Mrs Pirbright. "Isn't it quaint and delicious. Jessica Jehoram says she saw him at Vienna, but she can't remember the name. The Vicar knows all about him, but he is so close — —"

"How hot and uncomfortable the dear Vicar is looking," said Mrs Pirbright. "I've noticed it before when he sits next to Lady Hammergallow. She simply will *not* respect his cloth. She goes on — —"

"His tie is all askew," said the very eldest Miss Papaver, "and his hair! It really hardly looks as though he had brushed it all day."

"Seems a foreign sort of chap. Affected. All very well in a drawing-room," said George Harringay, sitting apart with the younger Miss Pirbright. "But for my part give me a masculine man and a feminine woman. What do you think?"

"Oh! — I think so too," said the younger Miss Pirbright.

"Guineas and guineas," said Lady Hammergallow. "I've heard that some of them keep quite stylish establishments. You would scarcely credit it — —"

"I love music, Mr Angel, I adore it. It stirs something in me. I can scarcely describe it," said Mrs Jehoram. "Who is it says that delicious antithesis: Life without music is brutality; music without life is —— Dear me! perhaps you remember? Music without life —— it's Ruskin I think?"

"I'm sorry that I do not," said the Angel. "I have read very few books."

"How charming of you!" said Mrs Jehoram. "I wish I didn't. I sympathise with you profoundly. I would do the same, only we poor women —— I suppose it's originality we lack —— And down here one is driven to the most desperate proceedings — —"

"He's certainly very *pretty*. But the ultimate test of a man is his strength," said George Harringay. "What do you think?"

"Oh! — I think so too," said the younger Miss Pirbright.

"It's the effeminate man who makes the masculine woman. When the glory of a man is his hair, what's a woman to do? And when men go running about with beautiful hectic dabs — —"

"Oh George! You are so dreadfully satirical to-day," said the younger Miss Pirbright. "I'm *sure* it isn't paint."

"I'm really not his guardian, my dear Lady Hammergallow. Of course it's very kind indeed of you to take such an interest — —"

"Are you really going to improvise?" said Mrs Jehoram in a state of cooing delight.

"*SSsh!*" said the curate from Iping Hanger.

Then the Angel began to play, looking straight before him as he did so, thinking of the wonderful things of the Angelic Land, and yet insensibly letting the sadness he was beginning to feel, steal over the fantasia he was playing. When he forgot his company the music was strange and sweet; when the sense of his surroundings floated into his mind the music grew capricious and grotesque. But so great was the hold of the Angelic music upon the Vicar that his anxieties fell from him at once, so soon as the Angel began to play. Mrs Jehoram sat and looked rapt and sympathetic as hard as she could (though the music was puzzling at times) and tried to catch the Angel's eye. He really had a wonderfully mobile face, and the tenderest shades of expression! And Mrs Jehoram was a judge. George Harringay looked bored, until the younger Miss Pirbright, who adored him, put out her mousy little shoe to touch his manly boot, and then he turned his face to catch the feminine delicacy of her coquettish eye, and was comforted. The very eldest Miss Papaver and Mrs Pirbright sat quite still and looked churchy for nearly four minutes.

Then said the eldest Miss Papaver in a whisper, "I always Enjoy violin music so much." And Mrs Pirbright answered, "We get so little Nice music down here." And Miss Papaver said, "He plays Very nicely." And Mrs Pirbright, "Such a Delicate Touch!" And Miss Papaver, "Does Willie keep up his lessons?" and so to a whispered conversation.

The Curate from Iping Hanger sat (he felt) in full view of the company. He had one hand curled round his ear, and his eyes hard and staring fixedly at the pedestal of the Hammergallow Sèvres vase. He supplied, by the movements of his mouth, a kind of critical guide

to any of the company who were disposed to avail themselves of it. It was a generous way he had. His aspect was severely judicial, tempered by starts of evident disapproval and guarded appreciation. The Vicar leaned back in his chair and stared at the Angel's face, and was presently rapt away in a wonderful dream. Lady Hammergallow, with quick jerky movements of the head and a low but insistent rustling, surveyed and tried to judge of the effect of the Angelic playing. Mr Rathbone-Slater stared very solemnly into his hat and looked very miserable, and Mrs Rathbone-Slater made mental memoranda of Mrs Jehoram's sleeves. And the air about them all was heavy with exquisite music — for all that had ears to hear.

"Scarcely affected enough," whispered Lady Hammergallow hoarsely, suddenly poking the Vicar in the ribs. The Vicar came out of Dreamland suddenly. "Eigh?" shouted the Vicar, startled, coming up with a jump. "Sssh!" said the Curate from Iping Hanger, and everyone looked shocked at the brutal insensibility of Hilyer. "So unusual of the Vicar," said the very eldest Miss Papaver, "to do things like that!" The Angel went on playing.

The Curate from Iping Hanger began making mesmeric movements with his index finger, and as the thing proceeded Mr Rathbone-Slater got amazingly limp. He solemnly turned his hat round and altered his view. The Vicar lapsed from an uneasy discomfort into dreamland again. Lady Hammergallow rustled a great deal, and presently found a way of making her chair creak. And at last the thing came to an end. Lady Hammergallow exclaimed "De — licious!" though she had never heard a note, and began clapping her hands. At that everyone clapped except Mr Rathbone-Slater, who rapped his hat brim instead. The Curate from Iping Hanger clapped with a judicial air.

"So I said (*clap, clap, clap*), if you cannot cook the food my way (*clap, clap, clap*) you must *go*," said Mrs Pirbright, clapping vigorously. "(This music is a delightful treat.)"

"(It is. I always *revel* in music,)" said the very eldest Miss Papaver. "And did she improve after that?"

"Not a bit of it," said Mrs Pirbright.

The Vicar woke up again and stared round the saloon. Did other people see these visions, or were they confined to him alone? Surely

they must all see ... and have a wonderful command of their feelings. It was incredible that such music should not affect them. “He’s a trifle *gauche*,” said Lady Hammergallow, jumping upon the Vicar’s attention. “He neither bows nor smiles. He must cultivate oddities like that. Every successful executant is more or less *gauche*.”

“Did you really make that up yourself?” said Mrs Jehoram, sparkling her eyes at him, “as you went along. Really, it is *wonderful*! Nothing less than wonderful.”

“A little amateurish,” said the Curate from Iping Hanger to Mr Rathbone-Slater. “A great gift, undoubtedly, but a certain lack of sustained training. There were one or two little things ... I would like to talk to him.”

“His trousers look like concertinas,” said Mr Rathbone-Slater. “He ought to be told *that*. It’s scarcely decent.”

“Can you do Imitations, Mr Angel?” said Lady Hammergallow.

“Oh *do*, do some Imitations!” said Mrs Jehoram. “I adore Imitations.”

“It was a fantastic thing,” said the Curate of Iping Hanger to the Vicar of Siddermorton, waving his long indisputably musical hands as he spoke; “a little involved, to my mind. I have heard it before somewhere — I forget where. He has genius undoubtedly, but occasionally he is — loose. There is a certain deadly precision wanting. There are years of discipline yet.”

“I *don’t* admire these complicated pieces of music,” said George Harringay. “I have simple tastes, I’m afraid. There seems to me no *tune* in it. There’s nothing I like so much as simple music. Tune, simplicity is the need of the age, in my opinion. We are so over subtle. Everything is far-fetched. Home grown thoughts and ‘Home, Sweet Home’ for me. What do you think?”

“Oh! I think so — *quite*,” said the younger Miss Pirbright.

“Well, Amy, chattering to George as usual?” said Mrs Pirbright, across the room.

“As usual, Ma!” said the younger Miss Pirbright, glancing round with a bright smile at Miss Papaver, and turning again so as not to lose the next utterance from George.

“I wonder if you and Mr Angel could manage a duet?” said Lady

Hammergallow to the Curate from Iping Hanger, who was looking preternaturally gloomy.

"I'm sure I should be delighted," said the Curate from Iping Hanger, brightening up.

"Duets!" said the Angel; "the two of us. Then he can play. I understood — the Vicar told me—"

"Mr Wilmerdings is an accomplished pianist," interrupted the Vicar.

"But the Imitations?" said Mrs Jehoram, who detested Wilmerdings.

"Imitations!" said the Angel.

"A pig squeaking, a cock crowing, you know," said Mr Rathbone-Slater, and added lower, "Best fun you can get out of a fiddle — *my* opinion."

"I really don't understand," said the Angel. "A pig crowing!"

"You don't like Imitations," said Mrs Jehoram. "Nor do I — really. I accept the snub. I think they degrade...."

"Perhaps afterwards Mr Angel will Relent," said Lady Hammergallow, when Mrs Pirbright had explained the matter to her. She could scarcely credit her ear-trumpet. When she asked for Imitations she was accustomed to get Imitations.

Mr Wilmerdings had seated himself at the piano, and had turned to a familiar pile of music in the recess. "What do you think of that Barcarole thing of Spohr's?" he said over his shoulder. "I suppose you know it?" The Angel looked bewildered.

He opened the folio before the Angel.

"What an odd kind of book!" said the Angel. "What do all those crazy dots mean?" (At that the Vicar's blood ran cold.)

"What dots?" said the Curate.

"There!" said the Angel with incriminating finger.

"Oh *come*!" said the Curate.

There was one of those swift, short silences that mean so much in a social gathering.

Then the eldest Miss Papaver turned upon the Vicar. "Does not Mr Angel play from ordinary.... Music — from the ordinary notation?"

"I have never heard," said the Vicar, getting red now after the first

shock of horror. “I have really never seen....”

The Angel felt the situation was strained, though what was straining it he could not understand. He became aware of a doubtful, an unfriendly look upon the faces that regarded him. “Impossible!” he heard Mrs Pirbright say; “after that *beautiful* music.” The eldest Miss Papaver went to Lady Hammergallow at once, and began to explain into her ear-trumpet that Mr Angel did not wish to play with Mr Wilmerdings, and alleged an ignorance of written music.

“He cannot play from Notes!” said Lady Hammergallow in a voice of measured horror. “Non — sense!”

“Notes!” said the Angel perplexed. “Are these notes?”

“It’s carrying the joke too far — simply because he doesn’t want to play with Wilmerdings,” said Mr Rathbone-Slater to George Harringay.

There was an expectant pause. The Angel perceived he had to be ashamed of himself. He was ashamed of himself.

“Then,” said Lady Hammergallow, throwing her head back and speaking with deliberate indignation, as she rustled forward, “if you cannot play with Mr Wilmerdings I am afraid I cannot ask you to play again.” She made it sound like an ultimatum. Her glasses in her hand quivered violently with indignation. The Angel was now human enough to appreciate the fact that he was crushed.

“What is it?” said little Lucy Rustchuck in the further bay.

“He’s refused to play with old Wilmerdings,” said Tommy Rathbone-Slater. “What a lark! The old girl’s purple. She thinks heaps of that ass, Wilmerdings.”

“Perhaps, Mr Wilmerdings, you will favour us with that delicious Polonaise of Chopin’s,” said Lady Hammergallow. Everybody else was hushed. The indignation of Lady Hammergallow inspired much the same silence as a coming earthquake or an eclipse. Mr Wilmerdings perceived he would be doing a real social service to begin at once, and (be it entered to his credit now that his account draws near its settlement) he did.

“If a man pretend to practise an Art,” said George Harringay, “he ought at least to have the conscience to study the elements of it. What do you....”

“Oh! I think so too,” said the younger Miss Pirbright.

The Vicar felt that the heavens had fallen. He sat crumpled up in his chair, a shattered man. Lady Hammergallow sat down next to him without appearing to see him. She was breathing heavily, but her face was terribly calm. Everyone sat down. Was the Angel grossly ignorant or only grossly impertinent? The Angel was vaguely aware of some frightful offence, aware that in some mysterious way he had ceased to be the centre of the gathering. He saw reproachful despair in the Vicar's eye. He drifted slowly towards the window in the recess and sat down on the little octagonal Moorish stool by the side of Mrs Jehoram. And under the circumstances he appreciated at more than its proper value Mrs Jehoram's kindly smile. He put down the violin in the window seat.

XXXV.

Mrs Jehoram and the Angel (apart) — Mr Wilmerdings playing.

"I have so longed for a quiet word with you," said Mrs Jehoram in a low tone. "To tell you how delightful I found your playing."

"I am glad it pleased you," said the Angel.

"Pleased is scarcely the word," said Mrs Jehoram. "I was moved — profoundly. These others did not understand.... I was glad you did not play with him."

The Angel looked at the mechanism called Wilmerdings, and felt glad too. (The Angelic conception of duets is a kind of conversation upon violins.) But he said nothing.

"I worship music," said Mrs Jehoram. "I know nothing about it technically, but there is something in it — a longing, a wish...."

The Angel stared at her face. She met his eyes.

"You understand," she said. "I see you understand." He was certainly a very nice boy, sentimentally precocious perhaps, and with deliciously liquid eyes.

There was an interval of Chopin (O) played with immense precision.

Mrs Jehoram had a sweet face still, in shadow, with the light falling round her golden hair, and a curious theory flashed across the Angel's mind. The perceptible powder only supported his view of something infinitely bright and lovable caught, tarnished, coarsened, coated over.

"Do you," said the Angel in a low tone. "Are you ... separated from ... *your* world?"

"As you are?" whispered Mrs Jehoram.

"This is so — cold," said the Angel. "So harsh!" He meant the whole world.

"I feel it too," said Mrs Jehoram, referring to Siddermorton Home.

"There are those who cannot live without sympathy," she said after a sympathetic pause. "And times when one feels alone in the world. Fighting a battle against it all. Laughing, flirting, hiding the pain of it...."

“And hoping,” said the Angel with a wonderful glance.— “Yes.”

Mrs Jehoram (who was an epicure of flirtations) felt the Angel was more than redeeming the promise of his appearance. (Indisputably he worshipped her.) “Do *you* look for sympathy?” she said. “Or have you found it?”

“I think,” said the Angel, very softly, leaning forward, “I think I have found it.”

Interval of Chopin O. The very eldest Miss Papaver and Mrs Pirbright whispering. Lady Hammergallow (glasses up) looking down the saloon with an unfriendly expression at the Angel. Mrs Jehoram and the Angel exchanging deep and significant glances.

“Her name,” said the Angel (Mrs Jehoram made a movement) “is Delia. She is....”

“Delia!” said Mrs Jehoram sharply, slowly realising a terrible misunderstanding. “A fanciful name.... Why!... No! Not that little housemaid at the Vicarage — ?...”

The Polonaise terminated with a flourish. The Angel was quite surprised at the change in Mrs Jehoram’s expression.

“*I never* did!” said Mrs Jehoram recovering. “To make me your confidant in an intrigue with a servant. Really Mr Angel it’s possible to be too original....”

Then suddenly their colloquy was interrupted.

XXXVI.

This section is (so far as my memory goes) the shortest in the book.

But the enormity of the offence necessitates the separation of this section from all other sections.

The Vicar, you must understand, had done his best to inculcate the recognised differentiae of a gentleman. “Never allow a lady to carry anything,” said the Vicar. “Say, ‘permit me’ and relieve her.” “Always stand until every lady is seated.” “Always rise and open a door for a lady....” and so forth. (All men who have elder sisters know that code.)

And the Angel (who had failed to relieve Lady Hammergallow of her teacup) danced forward with astonishing dexterity (leaving Mrs Jehoram in the window seat) and with an elegant “permit me” rescued the tea-tray from Lady Hammergallow’s pretty parlour-maid and vanished officiously in front of her. The Vicar rose to his feet with an inarticulate cry.

XXXVII.

“He’s drunk!” said Mr Rathbone-Slater, breaking a terrific silence. “That’s the matter with *him*.”

Mrs Jehoram laughed hysterically.

The Vicar stood up, motionless, staring. “Oh! I *forgot* to explain servants to him!” said the Vicar to himself in a swift outbreak of remorse. “I thought he *did* understand servants.”

“Really, Mr Hilyer!” said Lady Hammergallow, evidently exercising enormous self-control and speaking in panting spasms. “Really, Mr Hilyer! — Your genius is *too* terrible. I must, I really *must*, ask you to take him home.”

So to the dialogue in the corridor of alarmed maid-servant and well-meaning (but shockingly *gauche*) Angel — appears the Vicar, his botryoidal little face crimson, gaunt despair in his eyes, and his necktie under his left ear.

“Come,” he said — struggling with emotion. “Come away.... I.... I am disgraced for ever.”

And the Angel stared for a second at him and obeyed — meekly, perceiving himself in the presence of unknown but evidently terrible forces.

And so began and ended the Angel’s social career.

In the informal indignation meeting that followed, Lady Hammergallow took the (informal) chair. “I feel humiliated,” she said. “The Vicar assured me he was an exquisite player. I never imagined....”

“He was drunk,” said Mr Rathbone-Slater. “You could tell it from the way he fumbled with his tea.”

“Such a *fiasco*!” said Mrs Mergle.

“The Vicar assured me,” said Lady Hammergallow. “‘The man I have staying with me is a musical genius,’ he said. His very words.”

“His ears must be burning anyhow,” said Tommy Rathbone-Slater.

“I was trying to keep him Quiet,” said Mrs Jehoram. “By humouring him. And do you know the things he said to me — there!”

“The thing he played,” said Mr Wilmerdings,” — I must confess I did not like to charge him to his face. But really! It was merely *drifting*.”

“Just fooling with a fiddle, eigh?” said George Harringay. “Well I thought it was beyond me. So much of your fine music is—”

“Oh, *George*!” said the younger Miss Pirbright.

“The Vicar was a bit on too — to judge by his tie,” said Mr Rathbone-Slater. “It’s a dashed rummy go. Did you notice how he fussed after the genius?”

“One has to be so very careful,” said the very eldest Miss Papaver.

“He told me he is in love with the Vicar’s housemaid!” said Mrs Jehoram. “I almost laughed in his face.”

“The Vicar ought *never* to have brought him here,” said Mrs Rathbone-Slater with decision.

The Trouble of the Barbed Wire. XXXVIII.

So, ingloriously, ended the Angel's first and last appearance in Society. Vicar and Angel returned to the Vicarage; crestfallen black figures in the bright sunlight, going dejectedly. The Angel, deeply pained that the Vicar was pained. The Vicar, dishevelled and desperate, intercalating spasmodic remorse and apprehension with broken explanations of the Theory of Etiquette. "They do *not* understand," said the Vicar over and over again. "They will all be so very much aggrieved. I do not know what to say to them. It is all so confused, so perplexing." And at the gate of the Vicarage, at the very spot where Delia had first seemed beautiful, stood Horrocks the village constable, awaiting them. He held coiled up about his hand certain short lengths of barbed wire.

"Good evening, Horrocks," said the Vicar as the constable held the gate open.

"Evenin', Sir," said Horrocks, and added in a kind of mysterious undertone, "*Could* I speak to you a minute, Sir?"

"Certainly," said the Vicar. The Angel walked on thoughtfully to the house, and meeting Delia in the hall stopped her and cross-examined her at length over differences between Servants and Ladies.

"You'll excuse my taking the liberty, Sir," said Horrocks, "but there's trouble brewin' for that crippled gent you got stayin' here."

"Bless me!" said the Vicar. "You don't say so!"

"Sir John Gotch, Sir. He's very angry indeed, Sir. His language, Sir —— . But I felt bound to tell you, Sir. He's certain set on taking out a summons on account of that there barbed wire. Certain set, Sir, he is."

"Sir John Gotch!" said the Vicar. "Wire! I don't understand."

"He asked me to find out who did it. Course I've had to do my duty, Sir. Naturally a disagreeable one."

"Barbed wire! Duty! I don't understand you, Horrocks."

"I'm afraid, Sir, there's no denying the evidence. I've made

careful enquiries, Sir." And forthwith the constable began telling the Vicar of a new and terrible outrage committed by the Angelic visitor.

But we need not follow that explanation in detail — or the subsequent confession. (For my own part I think there is nothing more tedious than dialogue). It gave the Vicar a new view of the Angelic character, a vignette of the Angelic indignation. A shady lane, sun-mottled, sweet hedges full of honeysuckle and vetch on either side, and a little girl gathering flowers, forgetful of the barbed wire which, all along the Sidderford Road, fenced in the dignity of Sir John Gotch from "bounders" and the detested "million." Then suddenly a gashed hand, a bitter outcry, and the Angel sympathetic, comforting, inquisitive. Explanations sob-set, and then — altogether novel phenomenon in the Angelic career — *passion*. A furious onslaught upon the barbed wire of Sir John Gotch, barbed wire recklessly handled, slashed, bent and broken. Yet the Angel acted without personal malice — saw in the thing only an ugly and vicious plant that trailed insidiously among its fellows. Finally the Angel's explanations gave the Vicar a picture of the Angel alone amidst his destruction, trembling and amazed at the sudden force, not himself, that had sprung up within him, and set him striking and cutting. Amazed, too, at the crimson blood that trickled down his fingers.

"It is still more horrible," said the Angel when the Vicar explained the artificial nature of the thing. "If I had seen the man who put this silly-cruel stuff there to hurt little children, I know I should have tried to inflict pain upon him. I have never felt like this before. I am indeed becoming tainted and coloured altogether by the wickedness of this world."

"To think, too, that you men should be so foolish as to uphold the laws that let a man do such spiteful things. Yes — I know; you will say it has to be so. For some remoter reason. That is a thing that only makes me angrier. Why cannot an act rest on its own merits?... As it does in the Angelic Land."

That was the incident the history of which the Vicar now gradually learnt, getting the bare outline from Horrocks, the colour and emotion subsequently from the Angel. The thing had happened the day before the musical festival at Siddermorton House.

“Have you told Sir John who did it?” asked the Vicar. “And are you sure?”

“Quite sure, Sir. There can be no doubting it was your gentleman, Sir. I’ve not told Sir John yet, Sir. But I shall have to tell Sir John this evening. Meaning no offence to you, Sir, as I hopes you’ll see. It’s my duty, Sir. Besides which—”

“Of course,” said the Vicar, hastily. “Certainly it’s your duty. And what will Sir John do?”

“He’s dreadful set against the person who did it — destroying property like that — and sort of slapping his arrangements in the face.”

Pause. Horrocks made a movement. The Vicar, tie almost at the back of his neck now, a most unusual thing for him, stared blankly at his toes.

“I thought I’d tell you, Sir,” said Horrocks.

“Yes,” said the Vicar. “Thanks, Horrocks, thanks!” He scratched the back of his head. “You might perhaps ... I think it’s the best way ... Quite sure Mr Angel did it?”

“Sherlock ‘Omes, Sir, couldn’t be cocksurer.”

“Then I’d better give you a little note to the Squire.”

XXXIX.

The Vicar's table-talk at dinner that night, after the Angel had stated his case, was full of grim explanations, prisons, madness.

"It's too late to tell the truth about you now," said the Vicar. "Besides, that's impossible. I really do not know what to say. We must face our circumstances, I suppose. I am so undecided — so torn. It's the two worlds. If your Angelic world were only a dream, or if *this* world were only a dream — or if I could believe either or both dreams, it would be all right with me. But here is a real Angel and a real summons — how to reconcile them I do not know. I must talk to Gotch.... But he won't understand. Nobody will understand...."

"I am putting you to terrible inconvenience, I am afraid. My appalling unworldliness—"

"It's not you," said the Vicar. "It's not you. I perceive you have brought something strange and beautiful into my life. It's not you. It's myself. If I had more faith either way. If I could believe entirely in this world, and call you an Abnormal Phenomenon, as Crump does. But no. Terrestrial Angelic, Angelic Terrestrial.... See-Saw."

"Still, Gotch is certain to be disagreeable, *most* disagreeable. He always is. It puts me into his hands. He is a bad moral influence, I know. Drinking. Gambling. Worse. Still, one must render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. And he is against Disestablishment...."

Then the Vicar would revert to the social collapse of the afternoon. "You are so very fundamental, you know," he said — several times.

The Angel went to his own room puzzled but very depressed. Every day the world had frowned darker upon him and his angelic ways. He could see how the trouble affected the Vicar, yet he could not imagine how he could avert it. It was all so strange and unreasonable. Twice again, too, he had been pelted out of the village.

He found the violin lying on his bed where he had laid it before dinner. And taking it up he began to play to comfort himself. But now he played no delicious vision of the Angelic Land. The iron of the world was entering into his soul. For a week now he had known

pain and rejection, suspicion and hatred; a strange new spirit of revolt was growing up in his heart. He played a melody, still sweet and tender as those of the Angelic Land, but charged with a new note, the note of human sorrow and effort, now swelling into something like defiance, dying now into a plaintive sadness. He played softly, playing to himself to comfort himself, but the Vicar heard, and all his finite bothers were swallowed up in a hazy melancholy, a melancholy that was quite remote from sorrow. And besides the Vicar, the Angel had another hearer of whom neither Angel nor Vicar was thinking.

Delia. XL.

She was only four or five yards away from the Angel in the westward gable. The diamond-paned window of her little white room was open. She knelt on her box of japanned tin, and rested her chin on her hands, her elbows on the window-sill. The young moon hung over the pine trees, and its light, cool and colourless, lay softly upon the silent-sleeping world. Its light fell upon her white face, and discovered new depths in her dreaming eyes. Her soft lips fell apart and showed the little white teeth.

Delia was thinking, vaguely, wonderfully, as girls will think. It was feeling rather than thinking; clouds of beautiful translucent emotion drove across the clear sky of her mind, taking shape that changed and vanished. She had all that wonderful emotional tenderness, that subtle exquisite desire for self-sacrifice, which exists so inexplicably in a girl's heart, exists it seems only to be presently trampled under foot by the grim and gross humours of daily life, to be ploughed in again roughly and remorselessly, as the farmer ploughs in the clover that has sprung up in the soil. She had been looking out at the tranquillity of the moonlight long before the Angel began to play, — waiting; then suddenly the quiet, motionless beauty of silver and shadow was suffused with tender music.

She did not move, but her lips closed and her eyes grew even softer. She had been thinking before of the strange glory that had suddenly flashed out about the stooping hunchback when he spoke to her in the sunset; of that and of a dozen other glances, chance turns, even once the touching of her hand. That afternoon he had spoken to her, asking strange questions. Now the music seemed to bring his very face before her, his look of half curious solicitude, peering into her face, into her eyes, into her and through her, deep down into her soul. He seemed now to be speaking directly to her, telling her of his solitude and trouble. Oh! that regret, that longing! For he was in trouble. And how could a servant-girl help him, this soft-spoken gentleman who carried himself so kindly, who played so sweetly. The music was so sweet and keen, it came so near to the thought of her heart, that presently one hand tightened on the other, and the

tears came streaming down her face.

As Crump would tell you, people do not do that kind of thing unless there is something wrong with the nervous system. But then, from the scientific point of view, being in love is a pathological condition.

I am painfully aware of the objectionable nature of my story here. I have even thought of wilfully perverting the truth to propitiate the Lady Reader. But I could not. The story has been too much for me. I do the thing with my eyes open. Delia must remain what she really was — a servant girl. I know that to give a mere servant girl, or at least an English servant girl, the refined feelings of a human being, to present her as speaking with anything but an intolerable confusion of aspirates, places me outside the pale of respectable writers. Association with servants, even in thought, is dangerous in these days. I can only plead (pleading vainly, I know), that Delia was a very exceptional servant girl. Possibly, if one enquired, it might be found that her parentage was upper middle-class — that she was made of the finer upper middle-class clay. And (this perhaps may avail me better) I will promise that in some future work I will redress the balance, and the patient reader shall have the recognised article, enormous feet and hands, systematic aspiration of vowels and elimination of aspirates, no figure (only middle-class girls have figures — the thing is beyond a servant-girl's means), a fringe (by agreement), and a cheerful readiness to dispose of her self-respect for half-a-crown. That is the accepted English servant, the typical English woman (when stripped of money and accomplishments) as she appears in the works of contemporary writers. But Delia somehow was different. I can only regret the circumstance — it was altogether beyond my control.

Doctor Crump Acts. XLI.

Early the next morning the Angel went down through the village, and climbing the fence, waded through the waist-high reeds that fringe the Sidder. He was going to Bandram Bay to take a nearer view of the sea, which one could just see on a clear day from the higher parts of Siddermorton Park. And suddenly he came upon Crump sitting on a log and smoking. (Crump always smoked exactly two ounces per week — and he always smoked it in the open air.)

"Hullo!" said Crump, in his healthiest tone. "How's the wing?"

"Very well," said the Angel. "The pain's gone."

"I suppose you know you are trespassing?"

"Trespassing!" said the Angel.

"I suppose you don't know what that means," said Crump.

"I don't," said the Angel.

"I must congratulate you. I don't know how long you will last, but you are keeping it up remarkably well. I thought at first you were a mattoid, but you're so amazingly consistent. Your attitude of entire ignorance of the elementary facts of Life is really a very amusing pose. You make slips of course, but very few. But surely we two understand one another."

He smiled at the Angel. "You would beat Sherlock Holmes. I wonder who you really are."

The Angel smiled back, with eyebrows raised and hands extended. "It's impossible for you to know who I am. Your eyes are blind, your ears deaf, your soul dark, to all that is wonderful about me. It's no good my telling that I fell into your world."

The Doctor waved his pipe. "Not that, please. I don't want to pry if you have your reasons for keeping quiet. Only I would like you to think of Hilyer's mental health. He really believes this story."

The Angel shrugged his dwindling wings.

"You did not know him before this affair. He's changed tremendously. He used to be neat and comfortable. For the last fortnight he's been hazy, with a far-away look in his eyes. He

preached last Sunday without his cuff links, and something wrong with his tie, and he took for his text, 'Eye hath not seen nor ear heard.' He really believes all this nonsense about the Angel-land. The man is verging on monomania!"

"You *will* see things from your own standpoint," said the Angel.

"Everyone must. At any rate, I think it jolly regrettable to see this poor old fellow hypnotized, as you certainly have hypnotized him. I don't know where you come from nor who you are, but I warn you I'm not going to see the old boy made a fool of much longer."

"But he's not being made a fool of. He's simply beginning to dream of a world outside his knowledge — —"

"It won't do," said Crump. "I'm not one of the dupe class. You are either of two things — a lunatic at large (which I don't believe), or a knave. Nothing else is possible. I think I know a little of this world, whatever I do of yours. Very well. If you don't leave Hilyer alone I shall communicate with the police, and either clap you into a prison, if you go back on your story, or into a madhouse if you don't. It's stretching a point, but I swear I'd certify you insane to-morrow to get you out of the village. It's not only the Vicar. As you know. I hope that's plain. Now what have you to say?"

With an affectation of great calm, the Doctor took out his penknife and began to dig the blade into his pipe bowl. His pipe had gone out during this last speech.

For a moment neither spoke. The Angel looked about him with a face that grew pale. The Doctor extracted a plug of tobacco from his pipe and flung it away, shut his penknife and put it in his waistcoat pocket. He had not meant to speak quite so emphatically, but speech always warmed him.

"Prison," said the Angel. "Madhouse! Let me see." Then he remembered the Vicar's explanation. "Not that!" he said. He approached Crump with eyes dilated and hands outstretched.

"I knew *you* would know what those things meant — at any rate. Sit down," said Crump, indicating the tree trunk beside him by a movement of the head.

The Angel, shivering, sat down on the tree trunk and stared at the Doctor.

Crump was getting out his pouch. "You are a strange man," said

the Angel. “Your beliefs are like — a steel trap.”

“They are,” said Crump — flattered.

“But I tell you — I assure you the thing is so — I know nothing, or at least remember nothing of anything I knew of this world before I found myself in the darkness of night on the moorland above Sidderford.”

“Where did you learn the language then?”

“I don’t know. Only I tell you — But I haven’t an atom of the sort of proof that would convince you.”

“And you really,” said Crump, suddenly coming round upon him and looking into his eyes; “You really believe you were eternally in a kind of glorious heaven before then?”

“I do,” said the Angel.

“Pshaw!” said Crump, and lit his pipe. He sat smoking, elbow on knee, for some time, and the Angel sat and watched him. Then his face grew less troubled.

“It is just possible,” he said to himself rather than to the Angel, and began another piece of silence.

“You see;” he said, when that was finished. “There is such a thing as double personality.... A man sometimes forgets who he is and thinks he is someone else. Leaves home, friends, and everything, and leads a double life. There was a case in *Nature* only a month or so ago. The man was sometimes English and right-handed, and sometimes Welsh and left-handed. When he was English he knew no Welsh, when he was Welsh he knew no English.... H’m.”

He turned suddenly on the Angel and said “Home!” He fancied he might revive in the Angel some latent memory of his lost youth. He went on “Dadda, Pappa, Daddy, Mammy, Pappy, Father, Dad, Governor, Old Boy, Mother, dear Mother, Ma, Mumsy.... No good? What are you laughing at?”

“Nothing,” said the Angel. “You surprised me a little, — that is all. A week ago I should have been puzzled by that vocabulary.”

For a minute Crump rebuked the Angel silently out of the corner of his eye.

“You have such an ingenuous face. You almost force me to believe you. You are certainly not an ordinary lunatic. Your mind — except for your isolation from the past — seems balanced enough. I

wish Nordau or Lombroso or some of these *Saltpetriere* men could have a look at you. Down here one gets no practice worth speaking about in mental cases. There's one idiot — and he's just a damned idiot of an idiot — ; all the rest are thoroughly sane people."

"Possibly that accounts for their behaviour," said the Angel thoughtfully.

"But to consider your general position here," said Crump, ignoring his comment, "I really regard you as a bad influence here. These fancies are contagious. It is not simply the Vicar. There is a man named Shine has caught the fad, and he has been in the drink for a week, off and on, and offering to fight anyone who says you are not an Angel. Then a man over at Sidderford is, I hear, affected with a kind of religious mania on the same tack. These things spread. There ought to be a quarantine in mischievous ideas. And I have heard another story...."

"But what can I do?" said the Angel. "Suppose I am (quite unintentionally) doing mischief...."

"You can leave the village," said Crump.

"Then I shall only go into another village."

"That's not my affair," said Crump. "Go where you like. Only go. Leave these three people, the Vicar, Shine, the little servant girl, whose heads are all spinning with galaxies of Angels...."

"But," said the Angel. "Face your world! I tell you I can't. And leave Delia! I don't understand.... I do not know how to set about getting Work and Food and Shelter. And I am growing afraid of human beings...."

"Fancies, fancies," said Crump, watching him, "mania."

"It's no good my persisting in worrying you," he said suddenly, "but certainly the situation is impossible as it stands." He stood up with a jerk.

"Good-morning, Mr — Angel," he said, "the long and the short of it is — I say it as the medical adviser of this parish — you are an unhealthy influence. We can't have you. You must go."

He turned, and went striding through the grass towards the roadway, leaving the Angel sitting disconsolately on the tree trunk. "An unhealthy influence," said the Angel slowly, staring blankly in front of him, and trying to realise what it meant.

Sir John Gotch Acts. XLII.

Sir John Gotch was a little man with scrubby hair, a small, thin nose sticking out of a face crackled with wrinkles, tight brown gaiters, and a riding whip. “I’ve come, you see,” he said, as Mrs Hinijer closed the door.

“Thank you,” said the Vicar, “I’m obliged to you. I’m really obliged to you.”

“Glad to be of any service to you,” said Sir John Gotch. (Angular attitude.)

“This business,” said the Vicar, “this unfortunate business of the barbed wire — is really, you know, a most unfortunate business.”

Sir John Gotch became decidedly more angular in his attitude. “It is,” he said.

“This Mr Angel being my guest—”

“No reason why he should cut my wire,” said Sir John Gotch, briefly.

“None whatever.”

“May I ask *who* this Mr Angel is?” asked Sir John Gotch with the abruptness of long premeditation.

The Vicar’s fingers jumped to his chin. What *was* the good of talking to a man like Sir John Gotch about Angels?

“To tell you the exact truth,” said the Vicar, “there is a little secret —”

“Lady Hammergallow told me as much.”

The Vicar’s face suddenly became bright red.

“Do you know,” said Sir John, with scarcely a pause, “he’s been going about this village preaching Socialism?”

“Good heavens!” said the Vicar, “*No!*”

“He has. He has been buttonholing every yokel he came across, and asking them why they had to work, while we — I and you, you know — did nothing. He has been saying we ought to educate every man up to your level and mine — out of the rates, I suppose, as usual. He has been suggesting that we — I and you, you know — keep these people down — pith ‘em.”

"*Dear* me!" said the Vicar, "I had no idea."

"He has done this wire-cutting as a demonstration, I tell you, as a Socialistic demonstration. If we don't come down on him pretty sharply, I tell you, we shall have the palings down in Flinders Lane next, and the next thing will be ricks afire, and every damned (I beg your pardon, Vicar. I know I'm too fond of that word), every blessed pheasant's egg in the parish smashed. I know these—"

"A Socialist," said the Vicar, quite put out, "I had *no* idea."

"You see why I am inclined to push matters against our gentleman though he *is* your guest. It seems to me he has been taking advantage of your paternal—"

"Oh, *not* paternal!" said the Vicar. "Really—"

"(I beg your pardon, Vicar — it was a slip.) Of your kindness, to go mischief-making everywhere, setting class against class, and the poor man against his bread and butter."

The Vicar's fingers were at his chin again.

"So there's one of two things," said Sir John Gotch. "Either that Guest of yours leaves the parish, or — I take proceedings. That's final."

The Vicar's mouth was all askew.

"That's the position," said Sir John, jumping to his feet, "if it were not for you, I should take proceedings at once. As it is — am I to take proceedings or no?"

"You see," said the Vicar in horrible perplexity.

"Well?"

"Arrangements have to be made."

"He's a mischief-making idler.... I know the breed. But I'll give you a week — —"

"Thank you," said the Vicar. "I understand your position. I perceive the situation is getting intolerable...."

"Sorry to give you this bother, of course," said Sir John.

"A week," said the Vicar.

"A week," said Sir John, leaving.

The Vicar returned, after accompanying Gotch out, and for a long

time he remained sitting before the desk in his study, plunged in thought. “A week!” he said, after an immense silence. “Here is an Angel, a glorious Angel, who has quickened my soul to beauty and delight, who has opened my eyes to Wonderland, and something more than Wonderland, ... and I have promised to get rid of him in a week! What are we men made of?... How *can* I tell him?”

He began to walk up and down the room, then he went into the dining-room, and stood staring blankly out at the cornfield. The table was already laid for lunch. Presently he turned, still dreaming, and almost mechanically helped himself to a glass of sherry.

The Sea Cliff. XLIII.

The Angel lay upon the summit of the cliff above Bandram Bay, and stared out at the glittering sea. Sheer from under his elbows fell the cliff, five hundred and seven feet of it down to the datum line, and the sea-birds eddied and soared below him. The upper part of the cliff was a greenish chalky rock, the lower two-thirds a warm red, marbled with gypsum bands, and from half-a-dozen places spurted jets of water, to fall in long cascades down its face. The swell frothed white on the flinty beach, and the water beyond where the shadows of an outstanding rock lay, was green and purple in a thousand tints and marked with streaks and flakes of foam. The air was full of sunlight and the tinkling of the little waterfalls and the slow soughing of the seas below. Now and then a butterfly flickered over the face of the cliff, and a multitude of sea birds perched and flew hither and thither.

The Angel lay with his crippled, shrivelled wings humped upon his back, watching the gulls and jackdaws and rooks, circling in the sunlight, soaring, eddying, sweeping down to the water or upward into the dazzling blue of the sky. Long the Angel lay there and watched them going to and fro on outspread wings. He watched, and as he watched them he remembered with infinite longing the rivers of starlight and the sweetness of the land from which he came. And a gull came gliding overhead, swiftly and easily, with its broad wings spreading white and fair against the blue. And suddenly a shadow came into the Angel's eyes, the sunlight left them, he thought of his own crippled pinions, and put his face upon his arm and wept.

A woman who was walking along the footpath across the Cliff Field saw only a twisted hunchback dressed in the Vicar of Siddermorton's cast-off clothes, sprawling foolishly at the edge of the cliff and with his forehead on his arm. She looked at him and looked again. "The silly creature has gone to sleep," she said, and though she had a heavy basket to carry, came towards him with an idea of waking him up. But as she drew near she saw his shoulders heave and heard the sound of his sobbing.

She stood still a minute, and her features twitched into a kind of

grin. Then treading softly she turned and went back towards the pathway. "'Tis so hard to think of anything to say," she said. "Poor afflicted soul!"

Presently the Angel ceased sobbing, and stared with a tear-stained face at the beach below him.

"This world," he said, "wraps me round and swallows me up. My wings grow shrivelled and useless. Soon I shall be nothing more than a crippled man, and I shall age, and bow myself to pain, and die.... I am miserable. And I am alone."

Then he rested his chin on his hands upon the edge of the cliff, and began to think of Delia's face with the light in her eyes. The Angel felt a curious desire to go to her and tell her of his withered wings. To place his arms about her and weep for the land he had lost. "Delia!" he said to himself very softly. And presently a cloud drove in front of the sun.

Mrs Hinijer Acts. XLIV.

Mrs Hinijer surprised the Vicar by tapping at his study door after tea. “Begging your pardon, Sir,” said Mrs Hinijer. “But might I make so bold as to speak to you for a moment?”

“Certainly, Mrs Hinijer,” said the Vicar, little dreaming of the blow that was coming. He held a letter in his hand, a very strange and disagreeable letter from his bishop, a letter that irritated and distressed him, criticising in the strongest language the guests he chose to entertain in his own house. Only a popular bishop living in a democratic age, a bishop who was still half a pedagogue, could have written such a letter.

Mrs Hinijer coughed behind her hand and struggled with some respiratory disorganisation. The Vicar felt apprehensive. Usually in their interviews he was the most disconcerted. Invariably so when the interview ended.

“Well?” he said.

“May I make so bold, sir, as to arst when Mr Angel is a-going?” (Cough.)

The Vicar started. “To ask when Mr Angel is going?” he repeated slowly to gain time. “*Another!*”

“I’m sorry, sir. But I’ve been used to waitin’ on gentlefolks, sir; and you’d hardly imagine how it feels quite to wait on such as ‘im.”

“Such as ... *‘im*! Do I understand you, Mrs Hinijer, that you don’t like Mr Angel?”

“You see, sir, before I came to you, sir, I was at Lord Dundoller’s seventeen years, and you, sir — if you will excuse me — are a perfect gentleman yourself, sir — though in the Church. And then....”

“Dear, dear!” said the Vicar. “And don’t you regard Mr Angel as a gentleman?”

“I’m sorry to ‘ave to say it, sir.”

“But what...? Dear me! Surely!”

“I’m sorry to ‘ave to say it, sir. But when a party goes turning vegetarian suddenly and putting out all the cooking, and hasn’t no proper luggage of his own, and borry’s shirts and socks from his ‘ost, and don’t know no better than to try his knife at peas (as I seed my

very self), and goes talking in odd corners to the housemaids, and folds up his napkin after meals, and eats with his fingers at minced veal, and plays the fiddle in the middle of the night keeping everybody awake, and stares and grins at his elders a-getting upstairs, and generally misconducts himself with things that I can scarcely tell you all, one can't help thinking, sir. Thought is free, sir, and one can't help coming to one's own conclusions. Besides which, there is talk all over the village about him — what with one thing and another. I know a gentleman when I sees a gentleman, and I know a gentleman when I don't see a gentleman, and me, and Susan, and George, we've talked it over, being the upper servants, so to speak, and experienced, and leaving out that girl Delia, who I only hope won't come to any harm through him, and depend upon it, sir, that Mr Angel ain't what you think he is, sir, and the sooner he leaves this house the better."

Mrs Hinijer ceased abruptly and stood panting but stern, and with her eyes grimly fixed on the Vicar's face.

"*Really*, Mrs Hinijer!" said the Vicar, and then, "Oh *Lord*!"

"What *have* I done?" said the Vicar, suddenly starting up and appealing to the inexorable fates. "What HAVE I done?"

"There's no knowing," said Mrs Hinijer. "Though a deal of talk in the village."

"*Bother!*" said the Vicar, going and staring out of the window. Then he turned. "Look here, Mrs Hinijer! Mr Angel will be leaving this house in the course of a week. Is that enough?"

"Quite," said Mrs Hinijer. "And I feel sure, sir...."

The Vicar's eyes fell with unwonted eloquence upon the door.

The Angel in Trouble. XLV.

"The fact is," said the Vicar, "this is no world for Angels."

The blinds had not been drawn, and the twilight outer world under an overcast sky seemed unspeakably grey and cold. The Angel sat at table in dejected silence. His inevitable departure had been proclaimed. Since his presence hurt people and made the Vicar wretched he acquiesced in the justice of the decision, but what would happen to him after his plunge he could not imagine. Something very disagreeable certainly.

"There is the violin," said the Vicar. "Only after our experience — —"

"I must get you clothes — a general outfit. —— Dear me! you don't understand railway travelling! And coinage! Taking lodgings! Eating-houses! —— I must come up at least and see you settled. Get work for you. But an Angel in London! Working for his living! That grey cold wilderness of people! What *will* become of you? —— If I had one friend in the world I could trust to believe me!"

"I ought not to be sending you away — —"

"Do not trouble overmuch for me, my friend," said the Angel. "At least this life of yours ends. And there are things in it. There is something in this life of yours —— Your care for me! I thought there was nothing beautiful at all in life — —"

"And I have betrayed you!" said the Vicar, with a sudden wave of remorse. "Why did I not face them all — say, 'This is the best of life'? What do these everyday things matter?"

He stopped suddenly. "What *do* they matter?" he said.

"I have only come into your life to trouble it," said the Angel.

"Don't say that," said the Vicar. "You have come into my life to awaken me. I have been dreaming — dreaming. Dreaming this was necessary and that. Dreaming that this narrow prison was the world. And the dream still hangs about me and troubles me. That is all. Even your departure —— . Am I not dreaming that you must go?"

When he was in bed that night the mystical aspect of the case came still more forcibly before the Vicar. He lay awake and had the most horrible visions of his sweet and delicate visitor drifting

through this unsympathetic world and happening upon the cruellest misadventures. His guest *was* an Angel assuredly. He tried to go over the whole story of the past eight days again. He thought of the hot afternoon, the shot fired out of sheer surprise, the fluttering iridescent wings, the beautiful saffron-robed figure upon the ground. How wonderful that had seemed to him! Then his mind turned to the things he had heard of the other world, to the dreams the violin had conjured up, to the vague, fluctuating, wonderful cities of the Angelic Land. He tried to recall the forms of the buildings, the shapes of the fruits upon the trees, the aspect of the winged shapes that traversed its ways. They grew from a memory into a present reality, grew every moment just a little more vivid and his troubles a little less immediate; and so, softly and quietly, the Vicar slipped out of his troubles and perplexities into the Land of Dreams.

XLVI.

Delia sat with her window open, hoping to hear the Angel play. But that night there was to be no playing. The sky was overcast, yet not so thickly but that the moon was visible. High up a broken cloud-lace drove across the sky, and now the moon was a hazy patch of light, and now it was darkened, and now rode clear and bright and sharply outlined against the blue gulf of night. And presently she heard the door into the garden opening, and a figure came out under the drifting pallor of the moonlight.

It was the Angel. But he wore once more the saffron robe in the place of his formless overcoat. In the uncertain light this garment had only a colourless shimmer, and his wings behind him seemed a leaden grey. He began taking short runs, flapping his wings and leaping, going to and fro amidst the drifting patches of light and the shadows of the trees. Delia watched him in amazement. He gave a despondent cry, leaping higher. His shrivelled wings flashed and fell. A thicker patch in the cloud-film made everything obscure. He seemed to spring five or six feet from the ground and fall clumsily. She saw him in the dimness crouching on the ground and then she heard him sobbing.

"He's hurt!" said Delia, pressing her lips together hard and staring. "I ought to help him."

She hesitated, then stood up and flitted swiftly towards the door, went slipping quietly downstairs and out into the moonlight. The Angel still lay upon the lawn, and sobbed for utter wretchedness.

"Oh! what is the matter?" said Delia, stooping over him and touching his head timidly.

The Angel ceased sobbing, sat up abruptly, and stared at her. He saw her face, moonlit, and soft with pity. "What is the matter?" she whispered. "Are you hurt?"

The Angel stared about him, and his eyes came to rest on her face. "Delia!" he whispered.

"Are you hurt?" said Delia.

"My wings," said the Angel. "I cannot use my wings."

Delia did not understand, but she realised that it was something very dreadful. “It is dark, it is cold,” whispered the Angel; “I cannot use my wings.”

It hurt her unaccountably to see the tears on his face. She did not know what to do.

“Pity me, Delia,” said the Angel, suddenly extending his arms towards her; “pity me.”

Impulsively she knelt down and took his face between her hands. “I do not know,” she said; “but I am sorry. I am sorry for you, with all my heart.”

The Angel said not a word. He was looking at her little face in the bright moonlight, with an expression of uncomprehending wonder in his eyes. “This strange world!” he said.

She suddenly withdrew her hands. A cloud drove over the moon. “What can I do to help you?” she whispered. “I would do anything to help you.”

He still held her at arm’s length, perplexity replacing misery in his face. “This strange world!” he repeated.

Both whispered, she kneeling, he sitting, in the fluctuating moonlight and darkness of the lawn.

“Delia!” said Mrs Hinijer, suddenly projecting from her window; “Delia, is that you?”

They both looked up at her in consternation.

“Come in at once, Delia,” said Mrs Hinijer. “If that Mr Angel was a gentleman (which he isn’t), he’d feel ashamed of hisself. And you an orphan too!”

The Last Day of the Visit. XLVII.

On the morning of the next day the Angel, after he had breakfasted, went out towards the moor, and Mrs Hinijer had an interview with the Vicar. What happened need not concern us now. The Vicar was visibly disconcerted. "He *must* go," he said; "certainly he must go," and straightway he forgot the particular accusation in the general trouble. He spent the morning in hazy meditation, interspersed by a spasmodic study of Skiff and Waterlow's price list, and the catalogue of the Medical, Scholastic, and Clerical Stores. A schedule grew slowly on a sheet of paper that lay on the desk before him. He cut out a self-measurement form from the tailoring department of the Stores and pinned it to the study curtains. This was the kind of document he was making:

"*1 Black Melton Frock Coat, patts? £3, 10s.*

"*? Trousers. 2 pairs or one.*

"*1 Cheviot Tweed Suit (write for patterns. Self-meas.?)*"

The Vicar spent some time studying a pleasing array of model gentlemen. They were all very nice-looking, but he found it hard to imagine the Angel so transfigured. For, although six days had passed, the Angel remained without any suit of his own. The Vicar had vacillated between a project of driving the Angel into Portbroddock and getting him measured for a suit, and his absolute horror of the insinuating manners of the tailor he employed. He knew that tailor would demand an exhaustive explanation. Besides which, one never knew when the Angel might leave. So the six days had passed, and the Angel had grown steadily in the wisdom of this world and shrouded his brightness still in the ample retirement of the Vicar's newest clothes.

"*1 Soft Felt Hat, No. G. 7 (say), 8s 6d.*

"*1 Silk Hat, 14s 6d. Hatbox?*"

("I suppose he ought to have a silk hat," said the Vicar; "it's the correct thing up there. Shape No. 3 seems best suited to his style. But it's dreadful to think of him all alone in that great city. Everyone will misunderstand him, and he will misunderstand everybody. However,

I suppose it *must* be. Where was I?)"

"*1 Toothbrush. 1 Brush and Comb. Razor?*

"*½ doz. Shirts (? measure his neck), 6s ea.*

"*Socks? Pants?*

"*2 suits Pyjamas. Price? Say 15s.*

"*1 doz. Collars ('The Life Guardsman'), 8s.*

"*Braces. Oxon Patent Versatile, 1s 11½d.*"

("But how will he get them on?" said the Vicar.)

"*1 Rubber Stamp, T. Angel, and Marking Ink in box complete, 9d.*

("Those washerwomen are certain to steal all his things.")

"*1 Single-bladed Penknife with Corkscrew, say 1s 6d.*

"*N.B. — Don't forget Cuff Links, Collar Stud, &c.*" (The Vicar loved "&c.", it gave things such a precise and business-like air.)

"*1 Leather Portmanteau (had better see these).*"

And so forth — meanderingly. It kept the Vicar busy until lunch time, though his heart ached.

The Angel did not return to lunch. This was not so very remarkable — once before he had missed the midday meal. Yet, considering how short was the time they would have together now, he might perhaps have come back. Doubtless he had excellent reasons, though, for his absence. The Vicar made an indifferent lunch. In the afternoon he rested in his usual manner, and did a little more to the list of requirements. He did not begin to feel nervous about the Angel till tea-time. He waited, perhaps, half an hour before he took tea. "Odd," said the Vicar, feeling still more lonely as he drank his tea.

As the time for dinner crept on and no Angel appeared the Vicar's imagination began to trouble him. "He will come in to dinner, surely," said the Vicar, caressing his chin, and beginning to fret about the house upon inconsiderable errands, as his habit was when anything occurred to break his routine. The sun set, a gorgeous spectacle, amidst tumbled masses of purple cloud. The gold and red faded into twilight; the evening star gathered her robe of light together from out the brightness of the sky in the West. Breaking the silence of evening that crept over the outer world, a corncrake began his whirring chant. The Vicar's face grew troubled; twice he went and stared at the darkening hillside, and then fretted back to the

house again. Mrs Hinijer served dinner. “Your dinner’s ready,” she announced for the second time, with a reproachful intonation. “Yes, yes,” said the Vicar, fussing off upstairs.

He came down and went into his study and lit his reading lamp, a patent affair with an incandescent wick, dropping the match into his waste-paper basket without stopping to see if it was extinguished. Then he fretted into the dining-room and began a desultory attack on the cooling dinner....

(Dear Reader, the time is almost ripe to say farewell to this little Vicar of ours.)

XLVIII.

Sir John Gotch (still smarting over the business of the barbed wire) was riding along one of the grassy ways through the preserves by the Sidder, when he saw, strolling slowly through the trees beyond the undergrowth, the one particular human being he did not want to see.

"I'm damned," said Sir John Gotch, with immense emphasis; "if this isn't altogether too much."

He raised himself in the stirrups. "Hi!" he shouted. "You there!"

The Angel turned smiling.

"Get out of this wood!" said Sir John Gotch.

"*Why?*" said the Angel.

"I'm —— — ," said Sir John Gotch, meditating some cataclysmal expletive. But he could think of nothing more than "damned." "Get out of this wood," he said.

The Angel's smile vanished. "Why should I get out of this wood?" he said, and stood still.

Neither spoke for a full half minute perhaps, and then Sir John Gotch dropped out of his saddle and stood by the horse.

(Now you must remember — lest the Angelic Hosts be discredited hereby — that this Angel had been breathing the poisonous air of this Struggle for Existence of ours for more than a week. It was not only his wings and the brightness of his face that suffered. He had eaten and slept and learnt the lesson of pain — had travelled so far on the road to humanity. All the length of his Visit he had been meeting more and more of the harshness and conflict of this world, and losing touch with the glorious altitudes of his own.)

"You won't go, eigh!" said Gotch, and began to lead his horse through the bushes towards the Angel. The Angel stood, all his muscles tight and his nerves quivering, watching his antagonist approach.

"Get out of this wood," said Gotch, stopping three yards away, his face white with rage, his bridle in one hand and his riding whip in the other.

Strange floods of emotion were running through the Angel. "Who

are you," he said, in a low quivering voice; "who am I — that you should order me out of this place? What has the World done that men like you...."

"You're the fool who cut my barbed wire," said Gotch, threatening, "If you want to know!"

"*Your* barbed wire," said the Angel. "Was that your barbed wire? Are you the man who put down that barbed wire? What right have you...."

"Don't you go talking Socialist rot," said Gotch in short gasps. "This wood's mine, and I've a right to protect it how I can. I know your kind of muck. Talking rot and stirring up discontent. And if you don't get out of it jolly sharp...."

"*Well!*" said the Angel, a brimming reservoir of unaccountable energy.

"Get out of this damned wood!" said Gotch, flashing into the bully out of sheer alarm at the light in the Angel's face.

He made one step towards him, with the whip raised, and then something happened that neither he nor the Angel properly understood. The Angel seemed to leap into the air, a pair of grey wings flashed out at the Squire, he saw a face bearing down upon him, full of the wild beauty of passionate anger. His riding whip was torn out of his hand. His horse reared behind him, pulled him over, gained his bridle and fled.

The whip cut across his face as he fell back, stung across his face again as he sat on the ground. He saw the Angel, radiant with anger, in the act to strike again. Gotch flung up his hands, pitched himself forward to save his eyes, and rolled on the ground under the pitiless fury of the blows that rained down upon him.

"You brute," cried the Angel, striking wherever he saw flesh to feel. "You bestial thing of pride and lies! You who have overshadowed the souls of other men. You shallow fool with your horses and dogs! To lift your face against any living thing! Learn! Learn! Learn!"

Gotch began screaming for help. Twice he tried to clamber to his feet, got to his knees, and went headlong again under the ferocious anger of the Angel. Presently he made a strange noise in his throat, and ceased even to writhe under his punishment.

Then suddenly the Angel awakened from his wrath, and found himself standing, panting and trembling, one foot on a motionless figure, under the green stillness of the sunlit woods.

He stared about him, then down at his feet where, among the tangled dead leaves, the hair was matted with blood. The whip dropped from his hands, the hot colour fled from his face. "*Pain!*" he said. "Why does he lie so still?"

He took his foot off Gotch's shoulder, bent down towards the prostrate figure, stood listening, knelt — shook him. "Awake!" said the Angel. Then still more softly, "*Awake!*"

He remained listening some minutes or more, stood up sharply, and looked round him at the silent trees. A feeling of profound horror descended upon him, wrapped him round about. With an abrupt gesture he turned. "What has happened to me?" he said, in an awe-stricken whisper.

He started back from the motionless figure. "*Dead!*" he said suddenly, and turning, panic stricken, fled headlong through the wood.

XLIX.

It was some minutes after the footsteps of the Angel had died away in the distance that Gotch raised himself on his hand. “By Jove!” he said. “Crump’s right.”

“Cut at the head, too!”

He put his hand to his face and felt the two weals running across it, hot and fat. “I’ll think twice before I lift my hand against a lunatic again,” said Sir John Gotch.

“He may be a person of weak intellect, but I’m damned if he hasn’t a pretty strong arm. *Phew!* He’s cut a bit clean off the top of my ear with that infernal lash.”

“That infernal horse will go galloping to the house in the approved dramatic style. Little Madam’ll be scared out of her wits. And I ... I shall have to explain how it all happened. While she vivisects me with questions.

“I’m a jolly good mind to have spring guns and man-traps put in this preserve. Confound the Law!”

L.

But the Angel, thinking that Gotch was dead, went wandering off in a passion of remorse and fear through the brakes and copses along the Sidder. You can scarcely imagine how appalled he was at this last and overwhelming proof of his encroaching humanity. All the darkness, passion and pain of life seemed closing in upon him, inexorably, becoming part of him, chaining him to all that a week ago he had found strange and pitiful in men.

"Truly, this is no world for an Angel!" said the Angel. "It is a World of War, a World of Pain, a World of Death. Anger comes upon one ... I who knew not pain and anger, stand here with blood stains on my hands. I have fallen. To come into this world is to fall. One must hunger and thirst and be tormented with a thousand desires. One must fight for foothold, be angry and strike — —"

He lifted up his hands to Heaven, the ultimate bitterness of helpless remorse in his face, and then flung them down with a gesture of despair. The prison walls of this narrow passionate life seemed creeping in upon him, certainly and steadily, to crush him presently altogether. He felt what all we poor mortals have to feel sooner or later — the pitiless force of the Things that Must Be, not only without us but (where the real trouble lies) within, all the inevitable tormenting of one's high resolves, those inevitable seasons when the better self is forgotten. But with us it is a gentle descent, made by imperceptible degrees over a long space of years; with him it was the horrible discovery of one short week. He felt he was being crippled, caked over, blinded, stupefied in the wrappings of this life, he felt as a man might feel who has taken some horrible poison, and feels destruction spreading within him.

He took no account of hunger or fatigue or the flight of time. On and on he went, avoiding houses and roads, turning away from the sight and sound of a human being in a wordless desperate argument with Fate. His thoughts did not flow but stood banked back in inarticulate remonstrance against his degradation. Chance directed his footsteps homeward and, at last, after nightfall, he found himself

faint and weary and wretched, stumbling along over the moor at the back of Siddermorton. He heard the rats run and squeal in the heather, and once a noiseless big bird came out of the darkness, passed, and vanished again. And he saw without noticing it a dull red glow in the sky before him.

LI.

But when he came over the brow of the moor, a vivid light sprang up before him and refused to be ignored. He came on down the hill and speedily saw more distinctly what the glare was. It came from darting and trembling tongues of fire, golden and red, that shot from the windows and a hole in the roof of the Vicarage. A cluster of black heads, all the village in fact, except the fire-brigade — who were down at Aylmer's Cottage trying to find the key of the machine-house — came out in silhouette against the blaze. There was a roaring sound, and a humming of voices, and presently a furious outcry. There was a shouting of "No! No!"— "Come back!" and an inarticulate roar.

He began to run towards the burning house. He stumbled and almost fell, but he ran on. He found black figures running about him. The flaring fire blew gustily this way and that, and he smelt the smell of burning.

"She went in," said one voice, "she went in."

"The mad girl!" said another.

"Stand back! Stand back!" cried others.

He found himself thrusting through an excited, swaying crowd, all staring at the flames, and with the red reflection in their eyes.

"Stand back!" said a labourer, clutching him.

"What is it?" said the Angel. "What does this mean?"

"There's a girl in the house, and she can't get out!"

"Went in after a fiddle," said another.

"'Tas hopeless," he heard someone else say.

"I was standing near her. I heerd her. Says she: 'I *can* get his fiddle.' I heerd her — Just like that! 'I *can* get his fiddle.'"

For a moment the Angel stood staring. Then in a flash he saw it all, saw this grim little world of battle and cruelty, transfigured in a splendour that outshone the Angelic Land, suffused suddenly and insupportably glorious with the wonderful light of Love and Self-Sacrifice. He gave a strange cry, and before anyone could stop him, was running towards the burning building. There were cries of "The Hunchback! The Fowener!"

The Vicar, whose scalded hand was being tied up, turned his head, and he and Crump saw the Angel, a black outline against the intense, red glare of the doorway. It was the sensation of the tenth of a second, yet both men could not have remembered that transitory attitude more vividly had it been a picture they had studied for hours together. Then the Angel was hidden by something massive (no one knew what) that fell, incandescent, across the doorway.

LII.

There was a cry of “Delia” and no more. But suddenly the flames spurted out in a blinding glare that shot upward to an immense height, a blinding brilliance broken by a thousand flickering gleams like the waving of swords. And a gust of sparks, flashing in a thousand colours, whirled up and vanished. Just then, and for a moment by some strange accident, a rush of music, like the swell of an organ, wove into the roaring of the flames.

The whole village standing in black knots heard the sound, except Gaffer Siddons who is deaf — strange and beautiful it was, and then gone again. Lumpy Durgan, the idiot boy from Sidderford, said it began and ended like the opening and shutting of a door.

But little Hetty Penzance had a pretty fancy of two figures with wings, that flashed up and vanished among the flames.

(And after that it was she began to pine for the things she saw in her dreams, and was abstracted and strange. It grieved her mother sorely at the time. She grew fragile, as though she was fading out of the world, and her eyes had a strange, far-away look. She talked of angels and rainbow colours and golden wings, and was for ever singing an unmeaning fragment of an air that nobody knew. Until Crump took her in hand and cured her with fattening dietary, syrup of hypophosphites and cod liver oil.)

The Epilogue.

And there the story of the Wonderful Visit ends. The Epilogue is in the mouth of Mrs Mendham. There stand two little white crosses in the Siddermorton churchyard, near together, where the brambles come clambering over the stone wall. One is inscribed Thomas Angel and the other Delia Hardy, and the dates of the deaths are the same. Really there is nothing beneath them but the ashes of the Vicar's stuffed ostrich. (You will remember the Vicar had his ornithological side.) I noticed them when Mrs Mendham was showing me the new De la Beche monument. (Mendham has been Vicar since Hilyer died.) "The granite came from somewhere in Scotland," said Mrs Mendham, "and cost ever so much — I forget how much — but a wonderful lot! It's quite the talk of the village."

"Mother," said Cissie Mendham, "you are stepping on a grave."

"Dear me!" said Mrs Mendham, "How heedless of me! And the cripple's grave too. But really you've no idea how much this monument cost them."

"These two people, by the bye," said Mrs Mendham, "were killed when the old Vicarage was burnt. It's rather a strange story. He was a curious person, a hunchbacked fiddler, who came from nobody knows where, and imposed upon the late Vicar to a frightful extent. He played in a pretentious way by ear, and we found out afterwards that he did not know a note of music — not a note. He was exposed before quite a lot of people. Among other things, he seems to have been 'carrying on,' as people say, with one of the servants, a sly little drab.... But Mendham had better tell you all about it. The man was half-witted and curiously deformed. It's strange the fancies girls have."

She looked sharply at Cissie, and Cissie blushed to the eyes.

"She was left in the house and he rushed into the flames in an attempt to save her. Quite romantic — isn't it? He was rather clever with the fiddle in his uneducated way.

"All the poor Vicar's stuffed skins were burned at the same time. It was almost all he cared for. He never really got over the blow. He

came to stop with us — for there wasn't another house available in the village. But he never seemed happy. He seemed all shaken. I never saw a man so changed. I tried to stir him up, but it was no good — no good at all. He had the queerest delusions about angels and that kind of thing. It made him odd company at times. He would say he heard music, and stare quite stupidly at nothing for hours together. He got quite careless about his dress.... He died within a twelvemonth of the fire."

THE END

THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU

This horror novel was first published in 1896 and, together with *The Time Machine*, secured Wells' position as a professional writer that could command a wide readership. The novel tells the story of a shipwreck survivor, who comes ashore on an island inhabited by the scientist Dr. Moreau and his unholy band of 'beast folk' – half-human, half-animal creatures created by Moreau's experiments in vivisection. At the time of writing, vivisection (the dissection of living organisms for medical research purposes) was a much-debated topic and Wells' novel uses the figure of the amoral scientist Moreau to denounce the irresponsible lengths to which science can travel in a relentless pursuit of knowledge ungoverned by moral concerns.

Like *The Time Machine*, the novel also plays unsettlingly with the distinction between man and beast. Prendick, the novel's narrator, like the Time Traveller, finds that his horrendous experiences lend him a new perspective on the instability of human identity within a world where scientific discoveries about the nature of life and the cosmos threatened to dethrone mankind from its previously assumed role at the centre of creation – and, in particular, the idea that Victorian Britain represented the pinnacle of human evolution. The Time Traveller discovers that the process of evolution means that the biological nature of mankind is constantly in flux, and that man is just as likely to devolve into beast-like creatures as to evolve into more perfect forms of life. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Prendick discovers a society of man-like animals, whose customs and rituals (diligently learned) only barley separate them from the brutes from which they evolve. Human society, it is implied, is similarly illusory – a thin surface veneer hiding mankind's bestial nature. In a deeply disturbing coda, the point is strongly emphasised as Prendick returns to London and finds himself unable to detect much difference between the customs of society and those of the 'beasts' he has escaped…

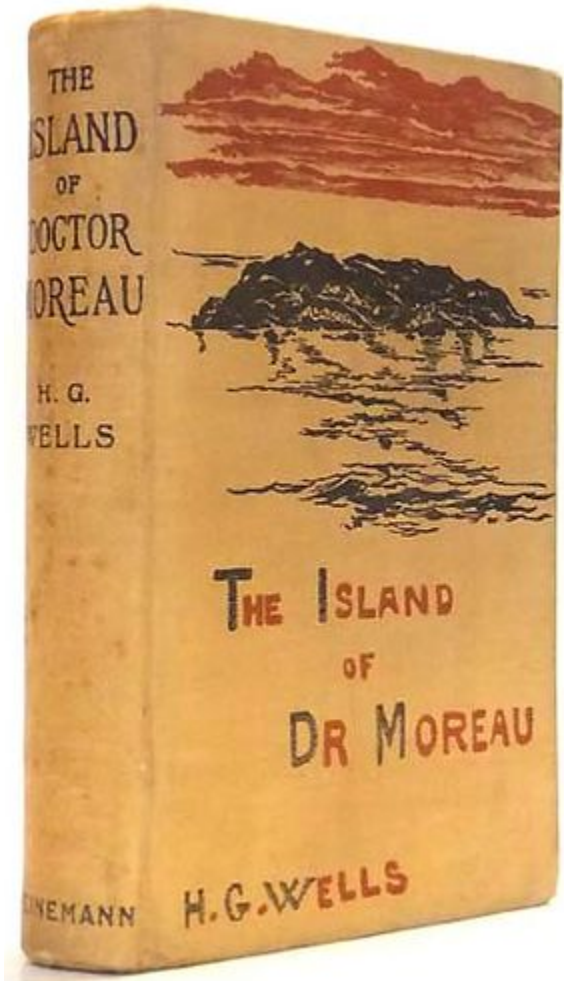

The first edition

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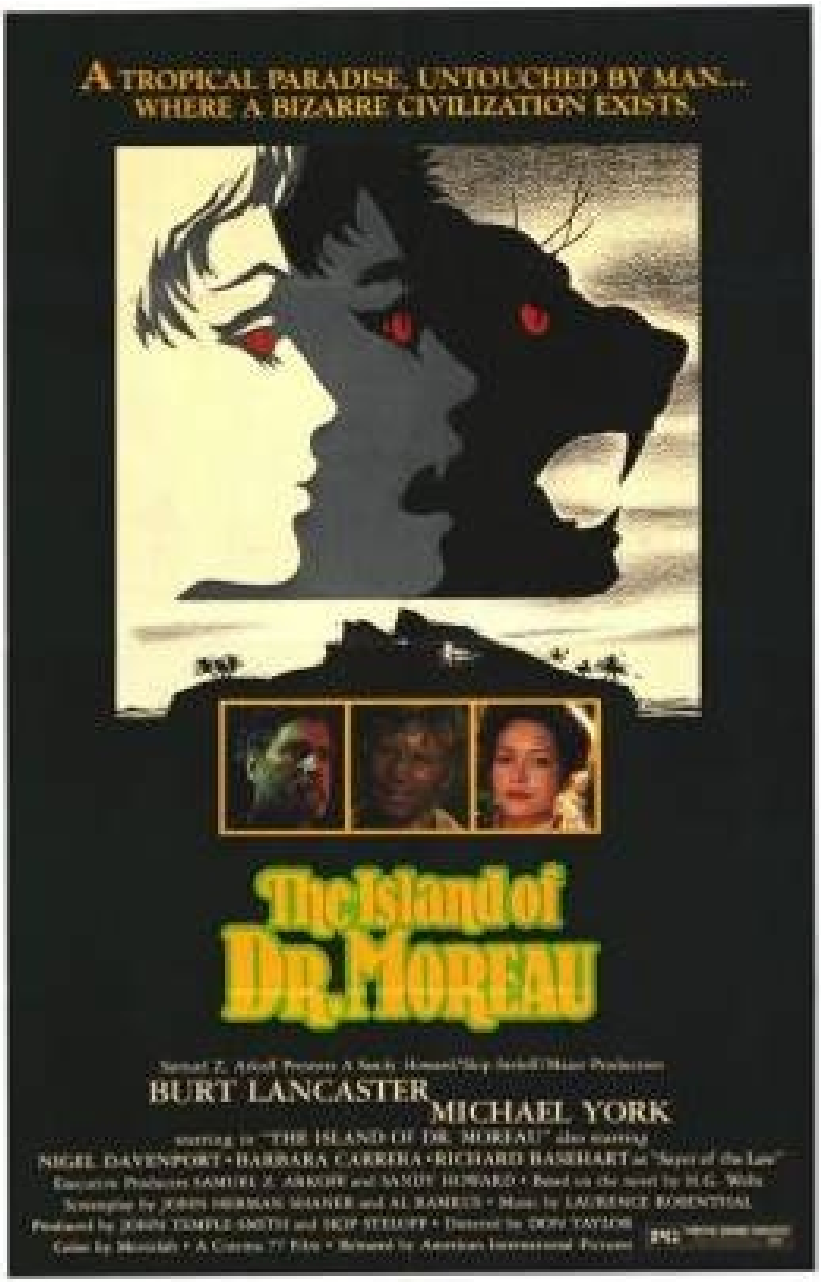

Theatrical poster for the 1977 film adaptation

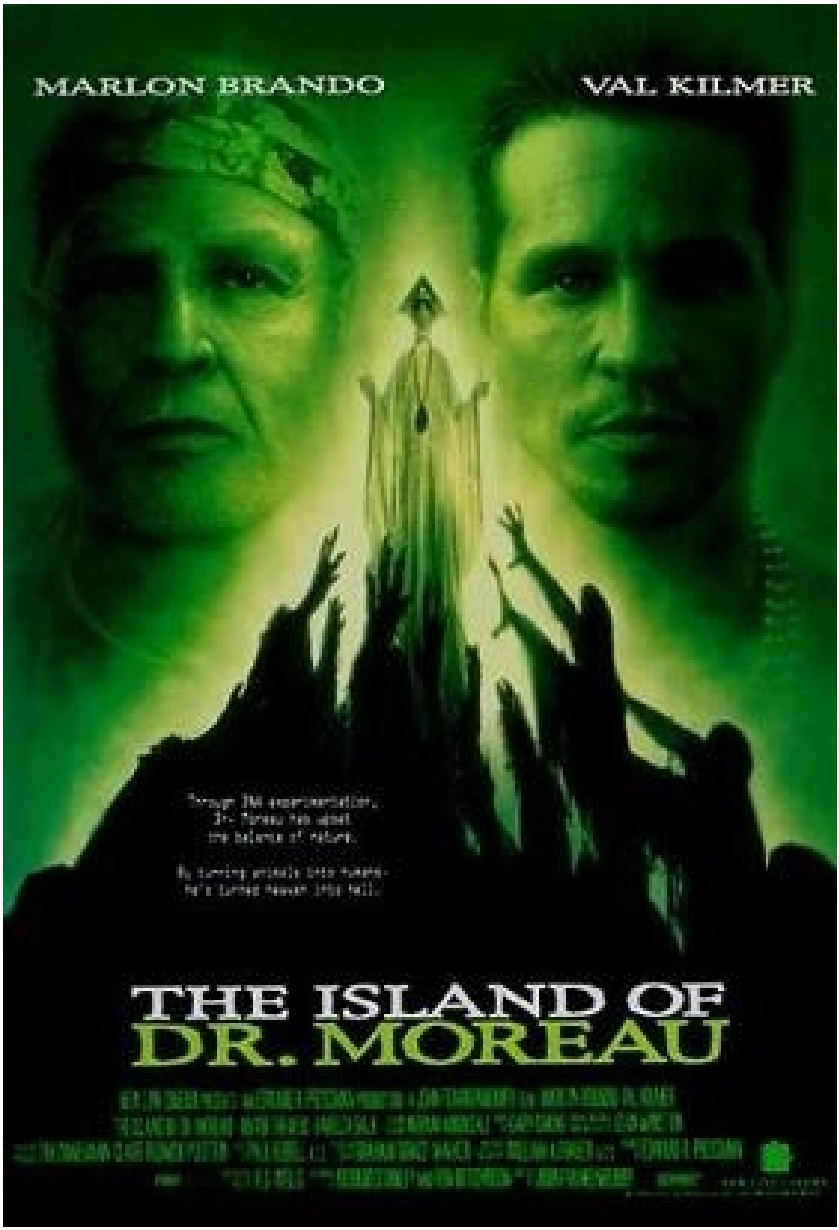

Theatrical poster for the 1996 film adaptation

INTRODUCTION.

ON February the First 1887, the *Lady Vain* was lost by collision with a derelict when about the latitude 1° S. and longitude 107° W.

On January the Fifth, 1888 — that is eleven months and four days after — my uncle, Edward Prendick, a private gentleman, who certainly went aboard the *Lady Vain* at Callao, and who had been considered drowned, was picked up in latitude 5° 3′ S. and longitude 101° W. in a small open boat of which the name was illegible, but which is supposed to have belonged to the missing schooner *Ipecacuanha*. He gave such a strange account of himself that he was supposed demented. Subsequently he alleged that his mind was a blank from the moment of his escape from the *Lady Vain*. His case was discussed among psychologists at the time as a curious instance of the lapse of memory consequent upon physical and mental stress. The following narrative was found among his papers by the undersigned, his nephew and heir, but unaccompanied by any definite request for publication.

The only island known to exist in the region in which my uncle was picked up is Noble's Isle, a small volcanic islet and uninhabited. It was visited in 1891 by *H. M. S. Scorpion*. A party of sailors then landed, but found nothing living thereon except certain curious white moths, some hogs and rabbits, and some rather peculiar rats. So that this narrative is without confirmation in its most essential particular. With that understood, there seems no harm in putting this strange story before the public in accordance, as I believe, with my uncle's intentions. There is at least this much in its behalf: my uncle passed out of human knowledge about latitude 5° S. and longitude 105° E., and reappeared in the same part of the ocean after a space of eleven months. In some way he must have lived during the interval. And it seems that a schooner called the *Ipecacuanha* with a drunken captain, John Davies, did start from Africa with a puma and certain other animals aboard in January, 1887, that the vessel was well known at several ports in the South Pacific, and that it finally disappeared from those seas (with a considerable amount of copra aboard), sailing to its unknown fate from Bayna in December, 1887,

a date that tallies entirely with my uncle's story.

CHARLES EDWARD PRENDICK.

(The Story written by Edward Prendick.)

I. IN THE DINGEY OF THE "LADY VAIN."

I DO not propose to add anything to what has already been written concerning the loss of the *Lady Vain*. As everyone knows, she collided with a derelict when ten days out from Callao. The longboat, with seven of the crew, was picked up eighteen days after by H. M. gunboat *Myrtle*, and the story of their terrible privations has become quite as well known as the far more horrible *Medusa* case. But I have to add to the published story of the *Lady Vain* another, possibly as horrible and far stranger. It has hitherto been supposed that the four men who were in the dingey perished, but this is incorrect. I have the best of evidence for this assertion: I was one of the four men.

But in the first place I must state that there never were four men in the dingey, — the number was three. Constans, who was "seen by the captain to jump into the gig," luckily for us and unluckily for himself did not reach us. He came down out of the tangle of ropes under the stays of the smashed bowsprit, some small rope caught his heel as he let go, and he hung for a moment head downward, and then fell and struck a block or spar floating in the water. We pulled towards him, but he never came up.

Daily News, March 17, 1887.

I say luckily for us he did not reach us, and I might almost say luckily for himself; for we had only a small beaker of water and some soddened ship's biscuits with us, so sudden had been the alarm, so unprepared the ship for any disaster. We thought the people on the launch would be better provisioned (though it seems they were not), and we tried to hail them. They could not have heard us, and the next morning when the drizzle cleared, — which was not until past midday, — we could see nothing of them. We could not stand up to look about us, because of the pitching of the boat. The two other men who had escaped so far with me were a man named Helmar, a passenger like myself, and a seaman whose name I don't know, — a short sturdy man, with a stammer.

We drifted famishing, and, after our water had come to an end, tormented by an intolerable thirst, for eight days altogether. After the second day the sea subsided slowly to a glassy calm. It is quite

impossible for the ordinary reader to imagine those eight days. He has not, luckily for himself, anything in his memory to imagine with. After the first day we said little to one another, and lay in our places in the boat and stared at the horizon, or watched, with eyes that grew larger and more haggard every day, the misery and weakness gaining upon our companions. The sun became pitiless. The water ended on the fourth day, and we were already thinking strange things and saying them with our eyes; but it was, I think, the sixth before Helmar gave voice to the thing we had all been thinking. I remember our voices were dry and thin, so that we bent towards one another and spared our words. I stood out against it with all my might, was rather for scuttling the boat and perishing together among the sharks that followed us; but when Helmar said that if his proposal was accepted we should have drink, the sailor came round to him.

I would not draw lots however, and in the night the sailor whispered to Helmar again and again, and I sat in the bows with my clasp-knife in my hand, though I doubt if I had the stuff in me to fight; and in the morning I agreed to Helmar's proposal, and we handed halfpence to find the odd man. The lot fell upon the sailor; but he was the strongest of us and would not abide by it, and attacked Helmar with his hands. They grappled together and almost stood up. I crawled along the boat to them, intending to help Helmar by grasping the sailor's leg; but the sailor stumbled with the swaying of the boat, and the two fell upon the gunwale and rolled overboard together. They sank like stones. I remember laughing at that, and wondering why I laughed. The laugh caught me suddenly like a thing from without.

I lay across one of the thwarts for I know not how long, thinking that if I had the strength I would drink sea-water and madden myself to die quickly. And even as I lay there I saw, with no more interest than if it had been a picture, a sail come up towards me over the sky-line. My mind must have been wandering, and yet I remember all that happened, quite distinctly. I remember how my head swayed with the seas, and the horizon with the sail above it danced up and down; but I also remember as distinctly that I had a persuasion that I was dead, and that I thought what a jest it was that they should come too late by such a little to catch me in my body.

For an endless period, as it seemed to me, I lay with my head on the thwart watching the schooner (she was a little ship, schooner-rigged fore and aft) come up out of the sea. She kept tacking to and fro in a widening compass, for she was sailing dead into the wind. It never entered my head to attempt to attract attention, and I do not remember anything distinctly after the sight of her side until I found myself in a little cabin aft. There's a dim half-memory of being lifted up to the gangway, and of a big round countenance covered with freckles and surrounded with red hair staring at me over the bulwarks. I also had a disconnected impression of a dark face, with extraordinary eyes, close to mine; but that I thought was a nightmare, until I met it again. I fancy I recollect some stuff being poured in between my teeth; and that is all.

II. THE MAN WHO WAS GOING NOWHERE.

THE cabin in which I found myself was small and rather untidy. A youngish man with flaxen hair, a bristly straw-coloured moustache, and a dropping nether lip, was sitting and holding my wrist. For a minute we stared at each other without speaking. He had watery grey eyes, oddly void of expression. Then just overhead came a sound like an iron bedstead being knocked about, and the low angry growling of some large animal. At the same time the man spoke. He repeated his question,— "How do you feel now?"

I think I said I felt all right. I could not recollect how I had got there. He must have seen the question in my face, for my voice was inaccessible to me.

"You were picked up in a boat, starving. The name on the boat was the *Lady Vain*, and there were spots of blood on the gunwale."

At the same time my eye caught my hand, so thin that it looked like a dirty skin-purse full of loose bones, and all the business of the boat came back to me.

"Have some of this," said he, and gave me a dose of some scarlet stuff, iced.

It tasted like blood, and made me feel stronger.

"You were in luck," said he, "to get picked up by a ship with a medical man aboard." He spoke with a slobbering articulation, with the ghost of a lisp.

"What ship is this?" I said slowly, hoarse from my long silence.

"It's a little trader from Arica and Callao. I never asked where she came from in the beginning, — out of the land of born fools, I guess. I'm a passenger myself, from Arica. The silly ass who owns her, — he's captain too, named Davies, — he's lost his certificate, or something. You know the kind of man, — calls the thing the *Ipecacuanha*, of all silly, infernal names; though when there's much of a sea without any wind, she certainly acts according."

(Then the noise overhead began again, a snarling growl and the voice of a human being together. Then another voice, telling some "Heaven-forsaken idiot" to desist.)

"You were nearly dead," said my interlocutor. "It was a very near

thing, indeed. But I've put some stuff into you now. Notice your arm's sore? Injections. You've been insensible for nearly thirty hours."

I thought slowly. (I was distracted now by the yelping of a number of dogs.) "Am I eligible for solid food?" I asked.

"Thanks to me," he said. "Even now the mutton is boiling."

"Yes," I said with assurance; "I could eat some mutton."

"But," said he with a momentary hesitation, "you know I'm dying to hear of how you came to be alone in that boat. *Damn that howling*!" I thought I detected a certain suspicion in his eyes.

He suddenly left the cabin, and I heard him in violent controversy with some one, who seemed to me to talk gibberish in response to him. The matter sounded as though it ended in blows, but in that I thought my ears were mistaken. Then he shouted at the dogs, and returned to the cabin.

"Well?" said he in the doorway. "You were just beginning to tell me."

I told him my name, Edward Prendick, and how I had taken to Natural History as a relief from the dulness of my comfortable independence.

He seemed interested in this. "I've done some science myself. I did my Biology at University College, — getting out the ovary of the earthworm and the radula of the snail, and all that. Lord! It's ten years ago. But go on! go on! tell me about the boat."

He was evidently satisfied with the frankness of my story, which I told in concise sentences enough, for I felt horribly weak; and when it was finished he reverted at once to the topic of Natural History and his own biological studies. He began to question me closely about Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street. "Is Caplatzi still flourishing? What a shop that was!" He had evidently been a very ordinary medical student, and drifted incontinently to the topic of the music halls. He told me some anecdotes.

"Left it all," he said, "ten years ago. How jolly it all used to be! But I made a young ass of myself, — played myself out before I was twenty-one. I daresay it's all different now. But I must look up that ass of a cook, and see what he's done to your mutton."

The growling overhead was renewed, so suddenly and with so

much savage anger that it startled me. “What’s that?” I called after him, but the door had closed. He came back again with the boiled mutton, and I was so excited by the appetising smell of it that I forgot the noise of the beast that had troubled me.

After a day of alternate sleep and feeding I was so far recovered as to be able to get from my bunk to the scuttle, and see the green seas trying to keep pace with us. I judged the schooner was running before the wind. Montgomery — that was the name of the flaxen-haired man — came in again as I stood there, and I asked him for some clothes. He lent me some duck things of his own, for those I had worn in the boat had been thrown overboard. They were rather loose for me, for he was large and long in his limbs. He told me casually that the captain was three-parts drunk in his own cabin. As I assumed the clothes, I began asking him some questions about the destination of the ship. He said the ship was bound to Hawaii, but that it had to land him first.

“Where?” said I.

“It’s an island, where I live. So far as I know, it hasn’t got a name.”

He stared at me with his nether lip dropping, and looked so wilfully stupid of a sudden that it came into my head that he desired to avoid my questions. I had the discretion to ask no more.

III. THE STRANGE FACE.

WE left the cabin and found a man at the companion obstructing our way. He was standing on the ladder with his back to us, peering over the combing of the hatchway. He was, I could see, a misshapen man, short, broad, and clumsy, with a crooked back, a hairy neck, and a head sunk between his shoulders. He was dressed in dark-blue serge, and had peculiarly thick, coarse, black hair. I heard the unseen dogs growl furiously, and forthwith he ducked back, — coming into contact with the hand I put out to fend him off from myself. He turned with animal swiftness.

In some indefinable way the black face thus flashed upon me shocked me profoundly. It was a singularly deformed one. The facial part projected, forming something dimly suggestive of a muzzle, and the huge half-open mouth showed as big white teeth as I had ever seen in a human mouth. His eyes were blood-shot at the edges, with scarcely a rim of white round the hazel pupils. There was a curious glow of excitement in his face.

"Confound you!" said Montgomery. "Why the devil don't you get out of the way?"

The black-faced man started aside without a word. I went on up the companion, staring at him instinctively as I did so. Montgomery stayed at the foot for a moment. "You have no business here, you know," he said in a deliberate tone. "Your place is forward."

The black-faced man cowered. "They — won't have me forward." He spoke slowly, with a queer, hoarse quality in his voice.

"Won't have you forward!" said Montgomery, in a menacing voice. "But I tell you to go!" He was on the brink of saying something further, then looked up at me suddenly and followed me up the ladder.

I had paused half way through the hatchway, looking back, still astonished beyond measure at the grotesque ugliness of this black-faced creature. I had never beheld such a repulsive and extraordinary face before, and yet — if the contradiction is credible — I experienced at the same time an odd feeling that in some way I *had* already encountered exactly the features and gestures that now

amazed me. Afterwards it occurred to me that probably I had seen him as I was lifted aboard; and yet that scarcely satisfied my suspicion of a previous acquaintance. Yet how one could have set eyes on so singular a face and yet have forgotten the precise occasion, passed my imagination.

Montgomery's movement to follow me released my attention, and I turned and looked about me at the flush deck of the little schooner. I was already half prepared by the sounds I had heard for what I saw. Certainly I never beheld a deck so dirty. It was littered with scraps of carrot, shreds of green stuff, and indescribable filth. Fastened by chains to the mainmast were a number of grisly staghounds, who now began leaping and barking at me, and by the mizzen a huge puma was cramped in a little iron cage far too small even to give it turning room. Farther under the starboard bulwark were some big hutches containing a number of rabbits, and a solitary llama was squeezed in a mere box of a cage forward. The dogs were muzzled by leather straps. The only human being on deck was a gaunt and silent sailor at the wheel.

The patched and dirty spankers were tense before the wind, and up aloft the little ship seemed carrying every sail she had. The sky was clear, the sun midway down the western sky; long waves, capped by the breeze with froth, were running with us. We went past the steersman to the taffrail, and saw the water come foaming under the stern and the bubbles go dancing and vanishing in her wake. I turned and surveyed the unsavoury length of the ship.

"Is this an ocean menagerie?" said I.

"Looks like it," said Montgomery.

"What are these beasts for? Merchandise, curios? Does the captain think he is going to sell them somewhere in the South Seas?"

"It looks like it, doesn't it?" said Montgomery, and turned towards the wake again.

Suddenly we heard a yelp and a volley of furious blasphemy from the companion hatchway, and the deformed man with the black face came up hurriedly. He was immediately followed by a heavy red-haired man in a white cap. At the sight of the former the staghounds, who had all tired of barking at me by this time, became furiously excited, howling and leaping against their chains. The black hesitated

before them, and this gave the red-haired man time to come up with him and deliver a tremendous blow between the shoulder-blades. The poor devil went down like a felled ox, and rolled in the dirt among the furiously excited dogs. It was lucky for him that they were muzzled. The red-haired man gave a yawp of exultation and stood staggering, and as it seemed to me in serious danger of either going backwards down the companion hatchway or forwards upon his victim.

So soon as the second man had appeared, Montgomery had started forward. “Steady on there!” he cried, in a tone of remonstrance. A couple of sailors appeared on the forecastle. The black-faced man, howling in a singular voice rolled about under the feet of the dogs. No one attempted to help him. The brutes did their best to worry him, butting their muzzles at him. There was a quick dance of their lithe grey-figured bodies over the clumsy, prostrate figure. The sailors forward shouted, as though it was admirable sport. Montgomery gave an angry exclamation, and went striding down the deck, and I followed him. The black-faced man scrambled up and staggered forward, going and leaning over the bulwark by the main shrouds, where he remained, panting and glaring over his shoulder at the dogs. The red-haired man laughed a satisfied laugh.

“Look here, Captain,” said Montgomery, with his lisp a little accentuated, gripping the elbows of the red-haired man, “this won’t do!”

I stood behind Montgomery. The captain came half round, and regarded him with the dull and solemn eyes of a drunken man. “Wha’ won’t do?” he said, and added, after looking sleepily into Montgomery’s face for a minute, “Blasted Sawbones!”

With a sudden movement he shook his arms free, and after two ineffectual attempts stuck his freckled fists into his side pockets.

“That man’s a passenger,” said Montgomery. “I’d advise you to keep your hands off him.”

“Go to hell!” said the captain, loudly. He suddenly turned and staggered towards the side. “Do what I like on my own ship,” he said.

I think Montgomery might have left him then, seeing the brute was drunk; but he only turned a shade paler, and followed the captain

to the bulwarks.

"Look you here, Captain," he said; "that man of mine is not to be ill-treated. He has been hazed ever since he came aboard."

For a minute, alcoholic fumes kept the captain speechless. "Blasted Sawbones!" was all he considered necessary.

I could see that Montgomery had one of those slow, pertinacious tempers that will warm day after day to a white heat, and never again cool to forgiveness; and I saw too that this quarrel had been some time growing. "The man's drunk," said I, perhaps officiously; "you'll do no good."

Montgomery gave an ugly twist to his dropping lip. "He's always drunk. Do you think that excuses his assaulting his passengers?"

"My ship," began the captain, waving his hand unsteadily towards the cages, "was a clean ship. Look at it now!" It was certainly anything but clean. "Crew," continued the captain, "clean, respectable crew."

"You agreed to take the beasts."

"I wish I'd never set eyes on your infernal island. What the devil — want beasts for on an island like that? Then, that man of yours — understood he was a man. He's a lunatic; and he hadn't no business aft. Do you think the whole damned ship belongs to you?"

"Your sailors began to haze the poor devil as soon as he came aboard."

"That's just what he is — he's a devil! an ugly devil! My men can't stand him. *I* can't stand him. None of us can't stand him. Nor *you* either!"

Montgomery turned away. "*You* leave that man alone, anyhow," he said, nodding his head as he spoke.

But the captain meant to quarrel now. He raised his voice. "If he comes this end of the ship again I'll cut his insides out, I tell you. Cut out his blasted insides! Who are you, to tell me what I'm to do? I tell you I'm captain of this ship, — captain and owner. I'm the law here, I tell you, — the law and the prophets. I bargained to take a man and his attendant to and from Arica, and bring back some animals. I never bargained to carry a mad devil and a silly Sawbones, a—"

Well, never mind what he called Montgomery. I saw the latter take a step forward, and interposed. "He's drunk," said I. The captain

began some abuse even fouler than the last. “Shut up!” I said, turning on him sharply, for I had seen danger in Montgomery’s white face. With that I brought the downpour on myself.

However, I was glad to avert what was uncommonly near a scuffle, even at the price of the captain’s drunken ill-will. I do not think I have ever heard quite so much vile language come in a continuous stream from any man’s lips before, though I have frequented eccentric company enough. I found some of it hard to endure, though I am a mild-tempered man; but, certainly, when I told the captain to “shut up” I had forgotten that I was merely a bit of human flotsam, cut off from my resources and with my fare unpaid; a mere casual dependant on the bounty, or speculative enterprise, of the ship. He reminded me of it with considerable vigour; but at any rate I prevented a fight.

IV. AT THE SCHOONER'S RAIL.

THAT night land was sighted after sundown, and the schooner hove to. Montgomery intimated that was his destination. It was too far to see any details; it seemed to me then simply a low-lying patch of dim blue in the uncertain blue-grey sea. An almost vertical streak of smoke went up from it into the sky. The captain was not on deck when it was sighted. After he had vented his wrath on me he had staggered below, and I understand he went to sleep on the floor of his own cabin. The mate practically assumed the command. He was the gaunt, taciturn individual we had seen at the wheel. Apparently he was in an evil temper with Montgomery. He took not the slightest notice of either of us. We dined with him in a sulky silence, after a few ineffectual efforts on my part to talk. It struck me too that the men regarded my companion and his animals in a singularly unfriendly manner. I found Montgomery very reticent about his purpose with these creatures, and about his destination; and though I was sensible of a growing curiosity as to both, I did not press him.

We remained talking on the quarter deck until the sky was thick with stars. Except for an occasional sound in the yellow-lit forecastle and a movement of the animals now and then, the night was very still. The puma lay crouched together, watching us with shining eyes, a black heap in the corner of its cage. Montgomery produced some cigars. He talked to me of London in a tone of half-painful reminiscence, asking all kinds of questions about changes that had taken place. He spoke like a man who had loved his life there, and had been suddenly and irrevocably cut off from it. I gossiped as well as I could of this and that. All the time the strangeness of him was shaping itself in my mind; and as I talked I peered at his odd, pallid face in the dim light of the binnacle lantern behind me. Then I looked out at the darkling sea, where in the dimness his little island was hidden.

This man, it seemed to me, had come out of Immensity merely to save my life. To-morrow he would drop over the side, and vanish again out of my existence. Even had it been under commonplace circumstances, it would have made me a trifle thoughtful; but in the

first place was the singularity of an educated man living on this unknown little island, and coupled with that the extraordinary nature of his luggage. I found myself repeating the captain's question. What did he want with the beasts? Why, too, had he pretended they were not his when I had remarked about them at first? Then, again, in his personal attendant there was a bizarre quality which had impressed me profoundly. These circumstances threw a haze of mystery round the man. They laid hold of my imagination, and hampered my tongue.

Towards midnight our talk of London died away, and we stood side by side leaning over the bulwarks and staring dreamily over the silent, starlit sea, each pursuing his own thoughts. It was the atmosphere for sentiment, and I began upon my gratitude.

"If I may say it," said I, after a time, "you have saved my life."

"Chance," he answered. "Just chance."

"I prefer to make my thanks to the accessible agent."

"Thank no one. You had the need, and I had the knowledge; and I injected and fed you much as I might have collected a specimen. I was bored and wanted something to do. If I'd been jaded that day, or hadn't liked your face, well — it's a curious question where you would have been now!"

This damped my mood a little. "At any rate," I began.

"It's a chance, I tell you," he interrupted, "as everything is in a man's life. Only the asses won't see it! Why am I here now, an outcast from civilisation, instead of being a happy man enjoying all the pleasures of London? Simply because eleven years ago — I lost my head for ten minutes on a foggy night."

He stopped. "Yes?" said I.

"That's all."

We relapsed into silence. Presently he laughed. "There's something in this starlight that loosens one's tongue. I'm an ass, and yet somehow I would like to tell you."

"Whatever you tell me, you may rely upon my keeping to myself — if that's it."

He was on the point of beginning, and then shook his head, doubtfully.

"Don't," said I. "It is all the same to me. After all, it is better to

keep your secret. There's nothing gained but a little relief if I respect your confidence. If I don't — well?"

He grunted undecidedly. I felt I had him at a disadvantage, had caught him in the mood of indiscretion; and to tell the truth I was not curious to learn what might have driven a young medical student out of London. I have an imagination. I shrugged my shoulders and turned away. Over the taffrail leant a silent black figure, watching the stars. It was Montgomery's strange attendant. It looked over its shoulder quickly with my movement, then looked away again.

It may seem a little thing to you, perhaps, but it came like a sudden blow to me. The only light near us was a lantern at the wheel. The creature's face was turned for one brief instant out of the dimness of the stern towards this illumination, and I saw that the eyes that glanced at me shone with a pale-green light. I did not know then that a reddish luminosity, at least, is not uncommon in human eyes. The thing came to me as stark inhumanity. That black figure with its eyes of fire struck down through all my adult thoughts and feelings, and for a moment the forgotten horrors of childhood came back to my mind. Then the effect passed as it had come. An uncouth black figure of a man, a figure of no particular import, hung over the taffrail against the starlight, and I found Montgomery was speaking to me.

"I'm thinking of turning in, then," said he, "if you've had enough of this."

I answered him incongruously. We went below, and he wished me good-night at the door of my cabin.

That night I had some very unpleasant dreams. The waning moon rose late. Its light struck a ghostly white beam across my cabin, and made an ominous shape on the planking by my bunk. Then the staghounds woke, and began howling and baying; so that I dreamt fitfully, and scarcely slept until the approach of dawn.

V. THE MAN WHO HAD NOWHERE TO GO.

IN the early morning (it was the second morning after my recovery, and I believe the fourth after I was picked up), I awoke through an avenue of tumultuous dreams, — dreams of guns and howling mobs, — and became sensible of a hoarse shouting above me. I rubbed my eyes and lay listening to the noise, doubtful for a little while of my whereabouts. Then came a sudden pattering of bare feet, the sound of heavy objects being thrown about, a violent creaking and the rattling of chains. I heard the swish of the water as the ship was suddenly brought round, and a foamy yellow-green wave flew across the little round window and left it streaming. I jumped into my clothes and went on deck.

As I came up the ladder I saw against the flushed sky — for the sun was just rising — the broad back and red hair of the captain, and over his shoulder the puma spinning from a tackle rigged on to the mizzen spanker-boom.

The poor brute seemed horribly scared, and crouched in the bottom of its little cage.

"Overboard with 'em!" bawled the captain. "Overboard with 'em! We'll have a clean ship soon of the whole bilin' of 'em."

He stood in my way, so that I had perforce to tap his shoulder to come on deck. He came round with a start, and staggered back a few paces to stare at me. It needed no expert eye to tell that the man was still drunk.

"Hullo!" said he, stupidly; and then with a light coming into his eyes, "Why, it's Mister — Mister?"

"Prendick," said I.

"Prendick be damned!" said he. "Shut-up, — that's your name. Mister Shut-up."

It was no good answering the brute; but I certainly did not expect his next move. He held out his hand to the gangway by which Montgomery stood talking to a massive grey-haired man in dirty-blue flannels, who had apparently just come aboard.

"That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up! that way!" roared the captain.

Montgomery and his companion turned as he spoke.

“What do you mean?” I said.

“That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up, — that’s what I mean! Overboard, Mister Shut-up, — and sharp! We’re cleaning the ship out, — cleaning the whole blessed ship out; and overboard you go!”

I stared at him dumfounded. Then it occurred to me that it was exactly the thing I wanted. The lost prospect of a journey as sole passenger with this quarrelsome sot was not one to mourn over. I turned towards Montgomery.

“Can’t have you,” said Montgomery’s companion, concisely.

“You can’t have me!” said I, aghast. He had the squarest and most resolute face I ever set eyes upon.

“Look here,” I began, turning to the captain.

“Overboard!” said the captain. “This ship aint for beasts and cannibals and worse than beasts, any more. Overboard you go, Mister Shut-up. If they can’t have you, you goes overboard. But, anyhow, you go — with your friends. I’ve done with this blessed island for evermore, amen! I’ve had enough of it.”

“But, Montgomery,” I appealed.

He distorted his lower lip, and nodded his head hopelessly at the grey-haired man beside him, to indicate his powerlessness to help me.

“I’ll see to *you*, presently,” said the captain.

Then began a curious three-cornered altercation. Alternately I appealed to one and another of the three men, — first to the grey-haired man to let me land, and then to the drunken captain to keep me aboard. I even bawled entreaties to the sailors. Montgomery said never a word, only shook his head. “You’re going overboard, I tell you,” was the captain’s refrain. “Law be damned! I’m king here.” At last I must confess my voice suddenly broke in the middle of a vigorous threat. I felt a gust of hysterical petulance, and went aft and stared dismally at nothing.

Meanwhile the sailors progressed rapidly with the task of unshipping the packages and caged animals. A large launch, with two standing lugs, lay under the lee of the schooner; and into this the strange assortment of goods were swung. I did not then see the hands from the island that were receiving the packages, for the hull of the launch was hidden from me by the side of the schooner. Neither

Montgomery nor his companion took the slightest notice of me, but busied themselves in assisting and directing the four or five sailors who were unloading the goods. The captain went forward interfering rather than assisting. I was alternately despairful and desperate. Once or twice as I stood waiting there for things to accomplish themselves, I could not resist an impulse to laugh at my miserable quandary. I felt all the wretcheder for the lack of a breakfast. Hunger and a lack of blood-corpuscles take all the manhood from a man. I perceived pretty clearly that I had not the stamina either to resist what the captain chose to do to expel me, or to force myself upon Montgomery and his companion. So I waited passively upon fate; and the work of transferring Montgomery's possessions to the launch went on as if I did not exist.

Presently that work was finished, and then came a struggle. I was hauled, resisting weakly enough, to the gangway. Even then I noticed the oddness of the brown faces of the men who were with Montgomery in the launch; but the launch was now fully laden, and was shoved off hastily. A broadening gap of green water appeared under me, and I pushed back with all my strength to avoid falling headlong. The hands in the launch shouted derisively, and I heard Montgomery curse at them; and then the captain, the mate, and one of the seamen helping him, ran me aft towards the stern.

The dingey of the *Lady Vain* had been towing behind; it was half full of water, had no oars, and was quite unvictualled. I refused to go aboard her, and flung myself full length on the deck. In the end, they swung me into her by a rope (for they had no stern ladder), and then they cut me adrift. I drifted slowly from the schooner. In a kind of stupor I watched all hands take to the rigging, and slowly but surely she came round to the wind; the sails fluttered, and then bellied out as the wind came into them. I stared at her weather-beaten side heeling steeply towards me; and then she passed out of my range of view.

I did not turn my head to follow her. At first I could scarcely believe what had happened. I crouched in the bottom of the dingey, stunned, and staring blankly at the vacant, oily sea. Then I realised that I was in that little hell of mine again, now half swamped; and looking back over the gunwale, I saw the schooner standing away

from me, with the red-haired captain mocking at me over the taffrail, and turning towards the island saw the launch growing smaller as she approached the beach.

Abruptly the cruelty of this desertion became clear to me. I had no means of reaching the land unless I should chance to drift there. I was still weak, you must remember, from my exposure in the boat; I was empty and very faint, or I should have had more heart. But as it was I suddenly began to sob and weep, as I had never done since I was a little child. The tears ran down my face. In a passion of despair I struck with my fists at the water in the bottom of the boat, and kicked savagely at the gunwale. I prayed aloud for God to let me die.

VI. THE EVIL-LOOKING BOATMEN.

BUT the islanders, seeing that I was really adrift, took pity on me. I drifted very slowly to the eastward, approaching the island slantingly; and presently I saw, with hysterical relief, the launch come round and return towards me. She was heavily laden, and I could make out as she drew nearer Montgomery's white-haired, broad-shouldered companion sitting cramped up with the dogs and several packing-cases in the stern sheets. This individual stared fixedly at me without moving or speaking. The black-faced cripple was glaring at me as fixedly in the bows near the puma. There were three other men besides, — three strange brutish-looking fellows, at whom the staghounds were snarling savagely. Montgomery, who was steering, brought the boat by me, and rising, caught and fastened my painter to the tiller to tow me, for there was no room aboard.

I had recovered from my hysterical phase by this time and answered his hail, as he approached, bravely enough. I told him the dingey was nearly swamped, and he reached me a piggin. I was jerked back as the rope tightened between the boats. For some time I was busy baling.

It was not until I had got the water under (for the water in the dingey had been shipped; the boat was perfectly sound) that I had leisure to look at the people in the launch again.

The white-haired man I found was still regarding me steadfastly, but with an expression, as I now fancied, of some perplexity. When my eyes met his, he looked down at the staghound that sat between his knees. He was a powerfully-built man, as I have said, with a fine forehead and rather heavy features; but his eyes had that odd drooping of the skin above the lids which often comes with advancing years, and the fall of his heavy mouth at the corners gave him an expression of pugnacious resolution. He talked to Montgomery in a tone too low for me to hear.

From him my eyes travelled to his three men; and a strange crew they were. I saw only their faces, yet there was something in their faces — I knew not what — that gave me a queer spasm of disgust. I looked steadily at them, and the impression did not pass, though I

failed to see what had occasioned it. They seemed to me then to be brown men; but their limbs were oddly swathed in some thin, dirty, white stuff down even to the fingers and feet: I have never seen men so wrapped up before, and women so only in the East. They wore turbans too, and thereunder peered out their elfin faces at me, — faces with protruding lower-jaws and bright eyes. They had lank black hair, almost like horsehair, and seemed as they sat to exceed in stature any race of men I have seen. The white-haired man, who I knew was a good six feet in height, sat a head below any one of the three. I found afterwards that really none were taller than myself; but their bodies were abnormally long, and the thigh-part of the leg short and curiously twisted. At any rate, they were an amazingly ugly gang, and over the heads of them under the forward lug peered the black face of the man whose eyes were luminous in the dark. As I stared at them, they met my gaze; and then first one and then another turned away from my direct stare, and looked at me in an odd, furtive manner. It occurred to me that I was perhaps annoying them, and I turned my attention to the island we were approaching.

It was low, and covered with thick vegetation, — chiefly a kind of palm, that was new to me. From one point a thin white thread of vapour rose slantingly to an immense height, and then frayed out like a down feather. We were now within the embrace of a broad bay flanked on either hand by a low promontory. The beach was of dull-grey sand, and sloped steeply up to a ridge, perhaps sixty or seventy feet above the sea-level, and irregularly set with trees and undergrowth. Half way up was a square enclosure of some greyish stone, which I found subsequently was built partly of coral and partly of pumiceous lava. Two thatched roofs peeped from within this enclosure. A man stood awaiting us at the water's edge. I fancied while we were still far off that I saw some other and very grotesque-looking creatures scuttle into the bushes upon the slope; but I saw nothing of these as we drew nearer. This man was of a moderate size, and with a black negroid face. He had a large, almost lipless, mouth, extraordinary lank arms, long thin feet, and bow-legs, and stood with his heavy face thrust forward staring at us. He was dressed like Montgomery and his white-haired companion, in jacket and trousers of blue serge. As we came still nearer, this individual began to run to

and fro on the beach, making the most grotesque movements.

At a word of command from Montgomery, the four men in the launch sprang up, and with singularly awkward gestures struck the lugs. Montgomery steered us round and into a narrow little dock excavated in the beach. Then the man on the beach hastened towards us. This dock, as I call it, was really a mere ditch just long enough at this phase of the tide to take the longboat. I heard the bows ground in the sand, staved the dingey off the rudder of the big boat with my piggin, and freeing the painter, landed. The three muffled men, with the clumsiest movements, scrambled out upon the sand, and forthwith set to landing the cargo, assisted by the man on the beach. I was struck especially by the curious movements of the legs of the three swathed and bandaged boatmen, — not stiff they were, but distorted in some odd way, almost as if they were jointed in the wrong place. The dogs were still snarling, and strained at their chains after these men, as the white-haired man landed with them. The three big fellows spoke to one another in odd guttural tones, and the man who had waited for us on the beach began chattering to them excitedly — a foreign language, as I fancied — as they laid hands on some bales piled near the stern. Somewhere I had heard such a voice before, and I could not think where. The white-haired man stood, holding in a tumult of six dogs, and bawling orders over their din. Montgomery, having unshipped the rudder, landed likewise, and all set to work at unloading. I was too faint, what with my long fast and the sun beating down on my bare head, to offer any assistance.

Presently the white-haired man seemed to recollect my presence, and came up to me.

"You look," said he, "as though you had scarcely breakfasted." His little eyes were a brilliant black under his heavy brows. "I must apologise for that. Now you are our guest, we must make you comfortable, — though you are uninvited, you know." He looked keenly into my face. "Montgomery says you are an educated man, Mr. Prendick; says you know something of science. May I ask what that signifies?"

I told him I had spent some years at the Royal College of Science, and had done some researches in biology under Huxley. He raised his eyebrows slightly at that.

“That alters the case a little, Mr. Prendick,” he said, with a trifle more respect in his manner. “As it happens, we are biologists here. This is a biological station — of a sort.” His eye rested on the men in white who were busily hauling the puma, on rollers, towards the walled yard. “I and Montgomery, at least,” he added. Then, “When you will be able to get away, I can’t say. We’re off the track to anywhere. We see a ship once in a twelve-month or so.”

He left me abruptly, and went up the beach past this group, and I think entered the enclosure. The other two men were with Montgomery, erecting a pile of smaller packages on a low-wheeled truck. The llama was still on the launch with the rabbit hutches; the staghounds were still lashed to the thwarts. The pile of things completed, all three men laid hold of the truck and began shoving the ton-weight or so upon it after the puma. Presently Montgomery left them, and coming back to me held out his hand.

“I’m glad,” said he, “for my own part. That captain was a silly ass. He’d have made things lively for you.”

“It was you,” said I, “that saved me again.”

“That depends. You’ll find this island an infernally rum place, I promise you. I’d watch my goings carefully, if I were you. *He*—” He hesitated, and seemed to alter his mind about what was on his lips. “I wish you’d help me with these rabbits,” he said.

His procedure with the rabbits was singular. I waded in with him, and helped him lug one of the hutches ashore. No sooner was that done than he opened the door of it, and tilting the thing on one end turned its living contents out on the ground. They fell in a struggling heap one on the top of the other. He clapped his hands, and forthwith they went off with that hopping run of theirs, fifteen or twenty of them I should think, up the beach.

“Increase and multiply, my friends,” said Montgomery. “Replenish the island. Hitherto we’ve had a certain lack of meat here.”

As I watched them disappearing, the white-haired man returned with a brandy-flask and some biscuits. “Something to go on with, Prendick,” said he, in a far more familiar tone than before. I made no ado, but set to work on the biscuits at once, while the white-haired man helped Montgomery to release about a score more of the rabbits.

Three big hutches, however, went up to the house with the puma. The brandy I did not touch, for I have been an abstainer from my birth.

VII. THE LOCKED DOOR.

THE reader will perhaps understand that at first everything was so strange about me, and my position was the outcome of such unexpected adventures, that I had no discernment of the relative strangeness of this or that thing. I followed the llama up the beach, and was overtaken by Montgomery, who asked me not to enter the stone enclosure. I noticed then that the puma in its cage and the pile of packages had been placed outside the entrance to this quadrangle.

I turned and saw that the launch had now been unloaded, run out again, and was being beached, and the white-haired man was walking towards us. He addressed Montgomery.

"And now comes the problem of this uninvited guest. What are we to do with him?"

"He knows something of science," said Montgomery.

"I'm itching to get to work again — with this new stuff," said the white-haired man, nodding towards the enclosure. His eyes grew brighter.

"I daresay you are," said Montgomery, in anything but a cordial tone.

"We can't send him over there, and we can't spare the time to build him a new shanty; and we certainly can't take him into our confidence just yet."

"I'm in your hands," said I. I had no idea of what he meant by "over there."

"I've been thinking of the same things," Montgomery answered. "There's my room with the outer door—"

"That's it," said the elder man, promptly, looking at Montgomery; and all three of us went towards the enclosure. "I'm sorry to make a mystery, Mr. Prendick; but you'll remember you're uninvited. Our little establishment here contains a secret or so, is a kind of Blue-Beard's chamber, in fact. Nothing very dreadful, really, to a sane man; but just now, as we don't know you—"

"Decidedly," said I, "I should be a fool to take offence at any want of confidence."

He twisted his heavy mouth into a faint smile — he was one of

those saturnine people who smile with the corners of the mouth down, — and bowed his acknowledgment of my complaisance. The main entrance to the enclosure was passed; it was a heavy wooden gate, framed in iron and locked, with the cargo of the launch piled outside it, and at the corner we came to a small doorway I had not previously observed. The white-haired man produced a bundle of keys from the pocket of his greasy blue jacket, opened this door, and entered. His keys, and the elaborate locking-up of the place even while it was still under his eye, struck me as peculiar. I followed him, and found myself in a small apartment, plainly but not uncomfortably furnished and with its inner door, which was slightly ajar, opening into a paved courtyard. This inner door Montgomery at once closed. A hammock was slung across the darker corner of the room, and a small unglazed window defended by an iron bar looked out towards the sea.

This the white-haired man told me was to be my apartment; and the inner door, which "for fear of accidents," he said, he would lock on the other side, was my limit inward. He called my attention to a convenient deck-chair before the window, and to an array of old books, chiefly, I found, surgical works and editions of the Latin and Greek classics (languages I cannot read with any comfort), on a shelf near the hammock. He left the room by the outer door, as if to avoid opening the inner one again.

"We usually have our meals in here," said Montgomery, and then, as if in doubt, went out after the other. "Moreau!" I heard him call, and for the moment I do not think I noticed. Then as I handled the books on the shelf it came up in consciousness: Where had I heard the name of Moreau before? I sat down before the window, took out the biscuits that still remained to me, and ate them with an excellent appetite. Moreau!

Through the window I saw one of those unaccountable men in white, lugging a packing-case along the beach. Presently the window-frame hid him. Then I heard a key inserted and turned in the lock behind me. After a little while I heard through the locked door the noise of the staghounds, that had now been brought up from the beach. They were not barking, but sniffing and growling in a curious fashion. I could hear the rapid patter of their feet, and Montgomery's

voice soothing them.

I was very much impressed by the elaborate secrecy of these two men regarding the contents of the place, and for some time I was thinking of that and of the unaccountable familiarity of the name of Moreau; but so odd is the human memory that I could not then recall that well-known name in its proper connection. From that my thoughts went to the indefinable queerness of the deformed man on the beach. I never saw such a gait, such odd motions as he pulled at the box. I recalled that none of these men had spoken to me, though most of them I had found looking at me at one time or another in a peculiarly furtive manner, quite unlike the frank stare of your unsophisticated savage. Indeed, they had all seemed remarkably taciturn, and when they did speak, endowed with very uncanny voices. What was wrong with them? Then I recalled the eyes of Montgomery's ungainly attendant.

Just as I was thinking of him he came in. He was now dressed in white, and carried a little tray with some coffee and boiled vegetables thereon. I could hardly repress a shuddering recoil as he came, bending amiably, and placed the tray before me on the table. Then astonishment paralysed me. Under his stringy black locks I saw his ear; it jumped upon me suddenly close to my face. The man had pointed ears, covered with a fine brown fur!

"Your breakfast, sair," he said.

I stared at his face without attempting to answer him. He turned and went towards the door, regarding me oddly over his shoulder. I followed him out with my eyes; and as I did so, by some odd trick of unconscious cerebration, there came surging into my head the phrase, "The Moreau Hollows" — was it? "The Moreau—" Ah! It sent my memory back ten years. "The Moreau Horrors!" The phrase drifted loose in my mind for a moment, and then I saw it in red lettering on a little buff-coloured pamphlet, to read which made one shiver and creep. Then I remembered distinctly all about it. That long-forgotten pamphlet came back with startling vividness to my mind. I had been a mere lad then, and Moreau was, I suppose, about fifty, — a prominent and masterful physiologist, well-known in scientific circles for his extraordinary imagination and his brutal directness in discussion.

Was this the same Moreau? He had published some very astonishing facts in connection with the transfusion of blood, and in addition was known to be doing valuable work on morbid growths. Then suddenly his career was closed. He had to leave England. A journalist obtained access to his laboratory in the capacity of laboratory-assistant, with the deliberate intention of making sensational exposures; and by the help of a shocking accident (if it was an accident), his gruesome pamphlet became notorious. On the day of its publication a wretched dog, flayed and otherwise mutilated, escaped from Moreau's house. It was in the silly season, and a prominent editor, a cousin of the temporary laboratory-assistant, appealed to the conscience of the nation. It was not the first time that conscience has turned against the methods of research. The doctor was simply howled out of the country. It may be that he deserved to be; but I still think that the tepid support of his fellow-investigators and his desertion by the great body of scientific workers was a shameful thing. Yet some of his experiments, by the journalist's account, were wantonly cruel. He might perhaps have purchased his social peace by abandoning his investigations; but he apparently preferred the latter, as most men would who have once fallen under the overmastering spell of research. He was unmarried, and had indeed nothing but his own interest to consider.

I felt convinced that this must be the same man. Everything pointed to it. It dawned upon me to what end the puma and the other animals — which had now been brought with other luggage into the enclosure behind the house — were destined; and a curious faint odour, the halitus of something familiar, an odour that had been in the background of my consciousness hitherto, suddenly came forward into the forefront of my thoughts. It was the antiseptic odour of the dissecting-room. I heard the puma growling through the wall, and one of the dogs yelped as though it had been struck.

Yet surely, and especially to another scientific man, there was nothing so horrible in vivisection as to account for this secrecy; and by some odd leap in my thoughts the pointed ears and luminous eyes of Montgomery's attendant came back again before me with the sharpest definition. I stared before me out at the green sea, frothing under a freshening breeze, and let these and other strange memories

of the last few days chase one another through my mind.

What could it all mean? A locked enclosure on a lonely island, a notorious vivisector, and these crippled and distorted men?

VIII. THE CRYING OF THE PUMA.

MONTGOMERY interrupted my tangle of mystification and suspicion about one o'clock, and his grotesque attendant followed him with a tray bearing bread, some herbs and other eatables, a flask of whiskey, a jug of water, and three glasses and knives. I glanced askance at this strange creature, and found him watching me with his queer, restless eyes. Montgomery said he would lunch with me, but that Moreau was too preoccupied with some work to come.

"Moreau!" said I. "I know that name."

"The devil you do!" said he. "What an ass I was to mention it to you! I might have thought. Anyhow, it will give you an inkling of our — mysteries. Whiskey?"

"No, thanks; I'm an abstainer."

"I wish I'd been. But it's no use locking the door after the steed is stolen. It was that infernal stuff which led to my coming here, — that, and a foggy night. I thought myself in luck at the time, when Moreau offered to get me off. It's queer—"

"Montgomery," said I, suddenly, as the outer door closed, "why has your man pointed ears?"

"Damn!" he said, over his first mouthful of food. He stared at me for a moment, and then repeated, "Pointed ears?"

"Little points to them," said I, as calmly as possible, with a catch in my breath; "and a fine black fur at the edges?"

He helped himself to whiskey and water with great deliberation. "I was under the impression — that his hair covered his ears."

"I saw them as he stooped by me to put that coffee you sent to me on the table. And his eyes shine in the dark."

By this time Montgomery had recovered from the surprise of my question. "I always thought," he said deliberately, with a certain accentuation of his flavouring of lisp, "that there *was* something the matter with his ears, from the way he covered them. What were they like?"

I was persuaded from his manner that this ignorance was a pretence. Still, I could hardly tell the man that I thought him a liar. "Pointed," I said; "rather small and furry, — distinctly furry. But the

whole man is one of the strangest beings I ever set eyes on."

A sharp, hoarse cry of animal pain came from the enclosure behind us. Its depth and volume testified to the puma. I saw Montgomery wince.

"Yes?" he said.

"Where did you pick up the creature?"

"San Francisco. He's an ugly brute, I admit. Half-witted, you know. Can't remember where he came from. But I'm used to him, you know. We both are. How does he strike you?"

"He's unnatural," I said. "There's something about him — don't think me fanciful, but it gives me a nasty little sensation, a tightening of my muscles, when he comes near me. It's a touch — of the diabolical, in fact."

Montgomery had stopped eating while I told him this. "Rum!" he said. "I can't see it." He resumed his meal. "I had no idea of it," he said, and masticated. "The crew of the schooner must have felt it the same. Made a dead set at the poor devil. You saw the captain?"

Suddenly the puma howled again, this time more painfully. Montgomery swore under his breath. I had half a mind to attack him about the men on the beach. Then the poor brute within gave vent to a series of short, sharp cries.

"Your men on the beach," said I; "what race are they?"

"Excellent fellows, aren't they?" said he, absentmindedly, knitting his brows as the animal yelled out sharply.

I said no more. There was another outcry worse than the former. He looked at me with his dull grey eyes, and then took some more whiskey. He tried to draw me into a discussion about alcohol, professing to have saved my life with it. He seemed anxious to lay stress on the fact that I owed my life to him. I answered him distractedly.

Presently our meal came to an end; the misshapen monster with the pointed ears cleared the remains away, and Montgomery left me alone in the room again. All the time he had been in a state of ill-concealed irritation at the noise of the vivisected puma. He had spoken of his odd want of nerve, and left me to the obvious application.

I found myself that the cries were singularly irritating, and they

grew in depth and intensity as the afternoon wore on. They were painful at first, but their constant resurgence at last altogether upset my balance. I flung aside a crib of Horace I had been reading, and began to clench my fists, to bite my lips, and to pace the room. Presently I got to stopping my ears with my fingers.

The emotional appeal of those yells grew upon me steadily, grew at last to such an exquisite expression of suffering that I could stand it in that confined room no longer. I stepped out of the door into the slumberous heat of the late afternoon, and walking past the main entrance — locked again, I noticed — turned the corner of the wall.

The crying sounded even louder out of doors. It was as if all the pain in the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe — I have thought since — I could have stood it well enough. It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us. But in spite of the brilliant sunlight and the green fans of the trees waving in the soothing sea-breeze, the world was a confusion, blurred with drifting black and red phantasms, until I was out of earshot of the house in the chequered wall.

IX. THE THING IN THE FOREST.

I STRODE through the undergrowth that clothed the ridge behind the house, scarcely heeding whither I went; passed on through the shadow of a thick cluster of straight-stemmed trees beyond it, and so presently found myself some way on the other side of the ridge, and descending towards a streamlet that ran through a narrow valley. I paused and listened. The distance I had come, or the intervening masses of thicket, deadened any sound that might be coming from the enclosure. The air was still. Then with a rustle a rabbit emerged, and went scampering up the slope before me. I hesitated, and sat down in the edge of the shade.

The place was a pleasant one. The rivulet was hidden by the luxuriant vegetation of the banks save at one point, where I caught a triangular patch of its glittering water. On the farther side I saw through a bluish haze a tangle of trees and creepers, and above these again the luminous blue of the sky. Here and there a splash of white or crimson marked the blooming of some trailing epiphyte. I let my eyes wander over this scene for a while, and then began to turn over in my mind again the strange peculiarities of Montgomery's man. But it was too hot to think elaborately, and presently I fell into a tranquil state midway between dozing and waking.

From this I was aroused, after I know not how long, by a rustling amidst the greenery on the other side of the stream. For a moment I could see nothing but the waving summits of the ferns and reeds. Then suddenly upon the bank of the stream appeared something — at first I could not distinguish what it was. It bowed its round head to the water, and began to drink. Then I saw it was a man, going on all-fours like a beast. He was clothed in bluish cloth, and was of a copper-coloured hue, with black hair. It seemed that grotesque ugliness was an invariable character of these islanders. I could hear the suck of the water at his lips as he drank.

I leant forward to see him better, and a piece of lava, detached by my hand, went pattering down the slope. He looked up guiltily, and his eyes met mine. Forthwith he scrambled to his feet, and stood wiping his clumsy hand across his mouth and regarding me. His legs

were scarcely half the length of his body. So, staring one another out of countenance, we remained for perhaps the space of a minute. Then, stopping to look back once or twice, he slunk off among the bushes to the right of me, and I heard the swish of the fronds grow faint in the distance and die away. Long after he had disappeared, I remained sitting up staring in the direction of his retreat. My drowsy tranquillity had gone.

I was startled by a noise behind me, and turning suddenly saw the flapping white tail of a rabbit vanishing up the slope. I jumped to my feet. The apparition of this grotesque, half-bestial creature had suddenly populated the stillness of the afternoon for me. I looked around me rather nervously, and regretted that I was unarmed. Then I thought that the man I had just seen had been clothed in bluish cloth, had not been naked as a savage would have been; and I tried to persuade myself from that fact that he was after all probably a peaceful character, that the dull ferocity of his countenance belied him.

Yet I was greatly disturbed at the apparition. I walked to the left along the slope, turning my head about and peering this way and that among the straight stems of the trees. Why should a man go on all-fours and drink with his lips? Presently I heard an animal wailing again, and taking it to be the puma, I turned about and walked in a direction diametrically opposite to the sound. This led me down to the stream, across which I stepped and pushed my way up through the undergrowth beyond.

I was startled by a great patch of vivid scarlet on the ground, and going up to it found it to be a peculiar fungus, branched and corrugated like a foliaceous lichen, but deliquescing into slime at the touch; and then in the shadow of some luxuriant ferns I came upon an unpleasant thing, — the dead body of a rabbit covered with shining flies, but still warm and with the head torn off. I stopped aghast at the sight of the scattered blood. Here at least was one visitor to the island disposed of! There were no traces of other violence about it. It looked as though it had been suddenly snatched up and killed; and as I stared at the little furry body came the difficulty of how the thing had been done. The vague dread that had been in my mind since I had seen the inhuman face of the man at the

stream grew distincter as I stood there. I began to realise the hardihood of my expedition among these unknown people. The thicket about me became altered to my imagination. Every shadow became something more than a shadow, — became an ambush; every rustle became a threat. Invisible things seemed watching me. I resolved to go back to the enclosure on the beach. I suddenly turned away and thrust myself violently, possibly even frantically, through the bushes, anxious to get a clear space about me again.

I stopped just in time to prevent myself emerging upon an open space. It was a kind of glade in the forest, made by a fall; seedlings were already starting up to struggle for the vacant space; and beyond, the dense growth of stems and twining vines and splashes of fungus and flowers closed in again. Before me, squatting together upon the fungoid ruins of a huge fallen tree and still unaware of my approach, were three grotesque human figures. One was evidently a female; the other two were men. They were naked, save for swathings of scarlet cloth about the middle; and their skins were of a dull pinkish-drab colour, such as I had seen in no savages before. They had fat, heavy, chinless faces, retreating foreheads, and a scant bristly hair upon their heads. I never saw such bestial-looking creatures.

They were talking, or at least one of the men was talking to the other two, and all three had been too closely interested to heed the rustling of my approach. They swayed their heads and shoulders from side to side. The speaker's words came thick and sloppy, and though I could hear them distinctly I could not distinguish what he said. He seemed to me to be reciting some complicated gibberish. Presently his articulation became shriller, and spreading his hands he rose to his feet. At that the others began to gibber in unison, also rising to their feet, spreading their hands and swaying their bodies in rhythm with their chant. I noticed then the abnormal shortness of their legs, and their lank, clumsy feet. All three began slowly to circle round, raising and stamping their feet and waving their arms; a kind of tune crept into their rhythmic recitation, and a refrain,— "Aloola," or "Balloola," it sounded like. Their eyes began to sparkle, and their ugly faces to brighten, with an expression of strange pleasure. Saliva dripped from their lipless mouths.

Suddenly, as I watched their grotesque and unaccountable

gestures, I perceived clearly for the first time what it was that had offended me, what had given me the two inconsistent and conflicting impressions of utter strangeness and yet of the strangest familiarity. The three creatures engaged in this mysterious rite were human in shape, and yet human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal. Each of these creatures, despite its human form, its rag of clothing, and the rough humanity of its bodily form, had woven into it — into its movements, into the expression of its countenance, into its whole presence — some now irresistible suggestion of a hog, a swinish taint, the unmistakable mark of the beast.

I stood overcome by this amazing realisation and then the most horrible questionings came rushing into my mind. They began leaping in the air, first one and then the other, whooping and grunting. Then one slipped, and for a moment was on all-fours, — to recover, indeed, forthwith. But that transitory gleam of the true animalism of these monsters was enough.

I turned as noiselessly as possible, and becoming every now and then rigid with the fear of being discovered, as a branch cracked or a leaf rustled, I pushed back into the bushes. It was long before I grew bolder, and dared to move freely. My only idea for the moment was to get away from these foul beings, and I scarcely noticed that I had emerged upon a faint pathway amidst the trees. Then suddenly traversing a little glade, I saw with an unpleasant start two clumsy legs among the trees, walking with noiseless footsteps parallel with my course, and perhaps thirty yards away from me. The head and upper part of the body were hidden by a tangle of creeper. I stopped abruptly, hoping the creature did not see me. The feet stopped as I did. So nervous was I that I controlled an impulse to headlong flight with the utmost difficulty. Then looking hard, I distinguished through the interlacing network the head and body of the brute I had seen drinking. He moved his head. There was an emerald flash in his eyes as he glanced at me from the shadow of the trees, a half-luminous colour that vanished as he turned his head again. He was motionless for a moment, and then with a noiseless tread began running through the green confusion. In another moment he had vanished behind some bushes. I could not see him, but I felt that he had stopped and

was watching me again.

What on earth was he, — man or beast? What did he want with me? I had no weapon, not even a stick. Flight would be madness. At any rate the Thing, whatever it was, lacked the courage to attack me. Setting my teeth hard, I walked straight towards him. I was anxious not to show the fear that seemed chilling my backbone. I pushed through a tangle of tall white-flowered bushes, and saw him twenty paces beyond, looking over his shoulder at me and hesitating. I advanced a step or two, looking steadfastly into his eyes.

"Who are you?" said I.

He tried to meet my gaze. "No!" he said suddenly, and turning went bounding away from me through the undergrowth. Then he turned and stared at me again. His eyes shone brightly out of the dusk under the trees.

My heart was in my mouth; but I felt my only chance was bluff, and walked steadily towards him. He turned again, and vanished into the dusk. Once more I thought I caught the glint of his eyes, and that was all.

For the first time I realised how the lateness of the hour might affect me. The sun had set some minutes since, the swift dusk of the tropics was already fading out of the eastern sky, and a pioneer moth fluttered silently by my head. Unless I would spend the night among the unknown dangers of the mysterious forest, I must hasten back to the enclosure. The thought of a return to that pain-haunted refuge was extremely disagreeable, but still more so was the idea of being overtaken in the open by darkness and all that darkness might conceal. I gave one more look into the blue shadows that had swallowed up this odd creature, and then retraced my way down the slope towards the stream, going as I judged in the direction from which I had come.

I walked eagerly, my mind confused with many things, and presently found myself in a level place among scattered trees. The colourless clearness that comes after the sunset flush was darkling; the blue sky above grew momentarily deeper, and the little stars one by one pierced the attenuated light; the interspaces of the trees, the gaps in the further vegetation, that had been hazy blue in the daylight, grew black and mysterious. I pushed on. The colour

vanished from the world. The tree-tops rose against the luminous blue sky in inky silhouette, and all below that outline melted into one formless blackness. Presently the trees grew thinner, and the shrubby undergrowth more abundant. Then there was a desolate space covered with a white sand, and then another expanse of tangled bushes. I did not remember crossing the sand-opening before. I began to be tormented by a faint rustling upon my right hand. I thought at first it was fancy, for whenever I stopped there was silence, save for the evening breeze in the tree-tops. Then when I turned to hurry on again there was an echo to my footsteps.

I turned away from the thickets, keeping to the more open ground, and endeavouring by sudden turns now and then to surprise something in the act of creeping upon me. I saw nothing, and nevertheless my sense of another presence grew steadily. I increased my pace, and after some time came to a slight ridge, crossed it, and turned sharply, regarding it steadfastly from the further side. It came out black and clear-cut against the darkling sky; and presently a shapeless lump heaved up momentarily against the sky-line and vanished again. I felt assured now that my tawny-faced antagonist was stalking me once more; and coupled with that was another unpleasant realisation, that I had lost my way.

For a time I hurried on hopelessly perplexed, and pursued by that stealthy approach. Whatever it was, the Thing either lacked the courage to attack me, or it was waiting to take me at some disadvantage. I kept studiously to the open. At times I would turn and listen; and presently I had half persuaded myself that my pursuer had abandoned the chase, or was a mere creation of my disordered imagination. Then I heard the sound of the sea. I quickened my footsteps almost into a run, and immediately there was a stumble in my rear.

I turned suddenly, and stared at the uncertain trees behind me. One black shadow seemed to leap into another. I listened, rigid, and heard nothing but the creep of the blood in my ears. I thought that my nerves were unstrung, and that my imagination was tricking me, and turned resolutely towards the sound of the sea again.

In a minute or so the trees grew thinner, and I emerged upon a bare, low headland running out into the sombre water. The night was

calm and clear, and the reflection of the growing multitude of the stars shivered in the tranquil heaving of the sea. Some way out, the wash upon an irregular band of reef shone with a pallid light of its own. Westward I saw the zodiacal light mingling with the yellow brilliance of the evening star. The coast fell away from me to the east, and westward it was hidden by the shoulder of the cape. Then I recalled the fact that Moreau's beach lay to the west.

A twig snapped behind me, and there was a rustle. I turned, and stood facing the dark trees. I could see nothing — or else I could see too much. Every dark form in the dimness had its ominous quality, its peculiar suggestion of alert watchfulness. So I stood for perhaps a minute, and then, with an eye to the trees still, turned westward to cross the headland; and as I moved, one among the lurking shadows moved to follow me.

My heart beat quickly. Presently the broad sweep of a bay to the westward became visible, and I halted again. The noiseless shadow halted a dozen yards from me. A little point of light shone on the further bend of the curve, and the grey sweep of the sandy beach lay faint under the starlight. Perhaps two miles away was that little point of light. To get to the beach I should have to go through the trees where the shadows lurked, and down a bushy slope.

I could see the Thing rather more distinctly now. It was no animal, for it stood erect. At that I opened my mouth to speak, and found a hoarse phlegm choked my voice. I tried again, and shouted, "Who is there?" There was no answer. I advanced a step. The Thing did not move, only gathered itself together. My foot struck a stone. That gave me an idea. Without taking my eyes off the black form before me, I stooped and picked up this lump of rock; but at my motion the Thing turned abruptly as a dog might have done, and slunk obliquely into the further darkness. Then I recalled a schoolboy expedient against big dogs, and twisted the rock into my handkerchief, and gave this a turn round my wrist. I heard a movement further off among the shadows, as if the Thing was in retreat. Then suddenly my tense excitement gave way; I broke into a profuse perspiration and fell a-trembling, with my adversary routed and this weapon in my hand.

It was some time before I could summon resolution to go down

through the trees and bushes upon the flank of the headland to the beach. At last I did it at a run; and as I emerged from the thicket upon the sand, I heard some other body come crashing after me. At that I completely lost my head with fear, and began running along the sand. Forthwith there came the swift patter of soft feet in pursuit. I gave a wild cry, and redoubled my pace. Some dim, black things about three or four times the size of rabbits went running or hopping up from the beach towards the bushes as I passed.

So long as I live, I shall remember the terror of that chase. I ran near the water's edge, and heard every now and then the splash of the feet that gained upon me. Far away, hopelessly far, was the yellow light. All the night about us was black and still. Splash, splash, came the pursuing feet, nearer and nearer. I felt my breath going, for I was quite out of training; it whooped as I drew it, and I felt a pain like a knife at my side. I perceived the Thing would come up with me long before I reached the enclosure, and, desperate and sobbing for my breath, I wheeled round upon it and struck at it as it came up to me, — struck with all my strength. The stone came out of the sling of the handkerchief as I did so. As I turned, the Thing, which had been running on all-fours, rose to its feet, and the missile fell fair on its left temple. The skull rang loud, and the animal-man blundered into me, thrust me back with its hands, and went staggering past me to fall headlong upon the sand with its face in the water; and there it lay still.

I could not bring myself to approach that black heap. I left it there, with the water rippling round it, under the still stars, and giving it a wide berth pursued my way towards the yellow glow of the house; and presently, with a positive effect of relief, came the pitiful moaning of the puma, the sound that had originally driven me out to explore this mysterious island. At that, though I was faint and horribly fatigued, I gathered together all my strength, and began running again towards the light. I thought I heard a voice calling me.

X. THE CRYING OF THE MAN.

AS I drew near the house I saw that the light shone from the open door of my room; and then I heard coming from out of the darkness at the side of that orange oblong of light, the voice of Montgomery shouting, “Prendick!” I continued running. Presently I heard him again. I replied by a feeble “Hullo!” and in another moment had staggered up to him.

“Where have you been?” said he, holding me at arm’s length, so that the light from the door fell on my face. “We have both been so busy that we forgot you until about half an hour ago.” He led me into the room and sat me down in the deck chair. For awhile I was blinded by the light. “We did not think you would start to explore this island of ours without telling us,” he said; and then, “I was afraid — But — what — Hullo!”

My last remaining strength slipped from me, and my head fell forward on my chest. I think he found a certain satisfaction in giving me brandy.

“For God’s sake,” said I, “fasten that door.”

“You’ve been meeting some of our curiosities, eh?” said he.

He locked the door and turned to me again. He asked me no questions, but gave me some more brandy and water and pressed me to eat. I was in a state of collapse. He said something vague about his forgetting to warn me, and asked me briefly when I left the house and what I had seen.

I answered him as briefly, in fragmentary sentences. “Tell me what it all means,” said I, in a state bordering on hysterics.

“It’s nothing so very dreadful,” said he. “But I think you have had about enough for one day.” The puma suddenly gave a sharp yell of pain. At that he swore under his breath. “I’m damned,” said he, “if this place is not as bad as Gower Street, with its cats.”

“Montgomery,” said I, “what was that thing that came after me? Was it a beast or was it a man?”

“If you don’t sleep to-night,” he said, “you’ll be off your head to-morrow.”

I stood up in front of him. “What was that thing that came after

me?" I asked.

He looked me squarely in the eyes, and twisted his mouth askew. His eyes, which had seemed animated a minute before, went dull. "From your account," said he, "I'm thinking it was a bogle."

I felt a gust of intense irritation, which passed as quickly as it came. I flung myself into the chair again, and pressed my hands on my forehead. The puma began once more.

Montgomery came round behind me and put his hand on my shoulder. "Look here, Prendick," he said, "I had no business to let you drift out into this silly island of ours. But it's not so bad as you feel, man. Your nerves are worked to rags. Let me give you something that will make you sleep. *That* — will keep on for hours yet. You must simply get to sleep, or I won't answer for it."

I did not reply. I bowed forward, and covered my face with my hands. Presently he returned with a small measure containing a dark liquid. This he gave me. I took it unresistingly, and he helped me into the hammock.

When I awoke, it was broad day. For a little while I lay flat, staring at the roof above me. The rafters, I observed, were made out of the timbers of a ship. Then I turned my head, and saw a meal prepared for me on the table. I perceived that I was hungry, and prepared to clamber out of the hammock, which, very politely anticipating my intention, twisted round and deposited me upon all-fours on the floor.

I got up and sat down before the food. I had a heavy feeling in my head, and only the vaguest memory at first of the things that had happened over night. The morning breeze blew very pleasantly through the unglazed window, and that and the food contributed to the sense of animal comfort which I experienced. Presently the door behind me — the door inward towards the yard of the enclosure — opened. I turned and saw Montgomery's face.

"All right," said he. "I'm frightfully busy." And he shut the door.

Afterwards I discovered that he forgot to re-lock it. Then I recalled the expression of his face the previous night, and with that the memory of all I had experienced reconstructed itself before me. Even as that fear came back to me came a cry from within; but this time it was not the cry of a puma. I put down the mouthful that

hesitated upon my lips, and listened. Silence, save for the whisper of the morning breeze. I began to think my ears had deceived me.

After a long pause I resumed my meal, but with my ears still vigilant. Presently I heard something else, very faint and low. I sat as if frozen in my attitude. Though it was faint and low, it moved me more profoundly than all that I had hitherto heard of the abominations behind the wall. There was no mistake this time in the quality of the dim, broken sounds; no doubt at all of their source. For it was groaning, broken by sobs and gasps of anguish. It was no brute this time; it was a human being in torment!

As I realised this I rose, and in three steps had crossed the room, seized the handle of the door into the yard, and flung it open before me.

"Prendick, man! Stop!" cried Montgomery, intervening.

A startled deerhound yelped and snarled. There was blood, I saw, in the sink, — brown, and some scarlet — and I smelt the peculiar smell of carbolic acid. Then through an open doorway beyond, in the dim light of the shadow, I saw something bound painfully upon a framework, scarred, red, and bandaged; and then blotting this out appeared the face of old Moreau, white and terrible. In a moment he had gripped me by the shoulder with a hand that was smeared red, had twisted me off my feet, and flung me headlong back into my own room. He lifted me as though I was a little child. I fell at full length upon the floor, and the door slammed and shut out the passionate intensity of his face. Then I heard the key turn in the lock, and Montgomery's voice in expostulation.

"Ruin the work of a lifetime," I heard Moreau say.

"He does not understand," said Montgomery. and other things that were inaudible.

"I can't spare the time yet," said Moreau.

The rest I did not hear. I picked myself up and stood trembling, my mind a chaos of the most horrible misgivings. Could it be possible, I thought, that such a thing as the vivisection of men was carried on here? The question shot like lightning across a tumultuous sky; and suddenly the clouded horror of my mind condensed into a vivid realisation of my own danger.

XI. THE HUNTING OF THE MAN.

IT came before my mind with an unreasonable hope of escape that the outer door of my room was still open to me. I was convinced now, absolutely assured, that Moreau had been vivisecting a human being. All the time since I had heard his name, I had been trying to link in my mind in some way the grotesque animalism of the islanders with his abominations; and now I thought I saw it all. The memory of his work on the transfusion of blood recurred to me. These creatures I had seen were the victims of some hideous experiment. These sickening scoundrels had merely intended to keep me back, to fool me with their display of confidence, and presently to fall upon me with a fate more horrible than death, — with torture; and after torture the most hideous degradation it is possible to conceive, — to send me off a lost soul, a beast, to the rest of their Comus rout.

I looked round for some weapon. Nothing. Then with an inspiration I turned over the deck chair, put my foot on the side of it, and tore away the side rail. It happened that a nail came away with the wood, and projecting, gave a touch of danger to an otherwise petty weapon. I heard a step outside, and incontinently flung open the door and found Montgomery within a yard of it. He meant to lock the outer door! I raised this nailed stick of mine and cut at his face; but he sprang back. I hesitated a moment, then turned and fled, round the corner of the house. “Prendick, man!” I heard his astonished cry, “don’t be a silly ass, man!”

Another minute, thought I, and he would have had me locked in, and as ready as a hospital rabbit for my fate. He emerged behind the corner, for I heard him shout, “Prendick!” Then he began to run after me, shouting things as he ran. This time running blindly, I went northeastward in a direction at right angles to my previous expedition. Once, as I went running headlong up the beach, I glanced over my shoulder and saw his attendant with him. I ran furiously up the slope, over it, then turning eastward along a rocky valley fringed on either side with jungle I ran for perhaps a mile altogether, my chest straining, my heart beating in my ears; and then hearing

nothing of Montgomery or his man, and feeling upon the verge of exhaustion, I doubled sharply back towards the beach as I judged, and lay down in the shelter of a canebrake. There I remained for a long time, too fearful to move, and indeed too fearful even to plan a course of action. The wild scene about me lay sleeping silently under the sun, and the only sound near me was the thin hum of some small gnats that had discovered me. Presently I became aware of a drowsy breathing sound, the soughing of the sea upon the beach.

After about an hour I heard Montgomery shouting my name, far away to the north. That set me thinking of my plan of action. As I interpreted it then, this island was inhabited only by these two vivisectors and their animalised victims. Some of these no doubt they could press into their service against me if need arose. I knew both Moreau and Montgomery carried revolvers; and, save for a feeble bar of deal spiked with a small nail, the merest mockery of a mace, I was unarmed.

So I lay still there, until I began to think of food and drink; and at that thought the real hopelessness of my position came home to me. I knew no way of getting anything to eat. I was too ignorant of botany to discover any resort of root or fruit that might lie about me; I had no means of trapping the few rabbits upon the island. It grew blanker the more I turned the prospect over. At last in the desperation of my position, my mind turned to the animal men I had encountered. I tried to find some hope in what I remembered of them. In turn I recalled each one I had seen, and tried to draw some augury of assistance from my memory.

Then suddenly I heard a staghound bay, and at that realised a new danger. I took little time to think, or they would have caught me then, but snatching up my nailed stick, rushed headlong from my hiding-place towards the sound of the sea. I remember a growth of thorny plants, with spines that stabbed like pen-knives. I emerged bleeding and with torn clothes upon the lip of a long creek opening northward. I went straight into the water without a minute's hesitation, wading up the creek, and presently finding myself kneedeep in a little stream. I scrambled out at last on the westward bank, and with my heart beating loudly in my ears, crept into a tangle of ferns to await the issue. I heard the dog (there was only one) draw nearer, and yelp

when it came to the thorns. Then I heard no more, and presently began to think I had escaped.

The minutes passed; the silence lengthened out, and at last after an hour of security my courage began to return to me. By this time I was no longer very much terrified or very miserable. I had, as it were, passed the limit of terror and despair. I felt now that my life was practically lost, and that persuasion made me capable of daring anything. I had even a certain wish to encounter Moreau face to face; and as I had waded into the water, I remembered that if I were too hard pressed at least one path of escape from torment still lay open to me, — they could not very well prevent my drowning myself. I had half a mind to drown myself then; but an odd wish to see the whole adventure out, a queer, impersonal, spectacular interest in myself, restrained me. I stretched my limbs, sore and painful from the pricks of the spiny plants, and stared around me at the trees; and, so suddenly that it seemed to jump out of the green tracery about it, my eyes lit upon a black face watching me. I saw that it was the simian creature who had met the launch upon the beach. He was clinging to the oblique stem of a palm-tree. I gripped my stick, and stood up facing him. He began chattering. "You, you, you," was all I could distinguish at first. Suddenly he dropped from the tree, and in another moment was holding the fronds apart and staring curiously at me.

I did not feel the same repugnance towards this creature which I had experienced in my encounters with the other Beast Men. "You," he said, "in the boat." He was a man, then, — at least as much of a man as Montgomery's attendant, — for he could talk.

"Yes," I said, "I came in the boat. From the ship."

"Oh!" he said, and his bright, restless eyes travelled over me, to my hands, to the stick I carried, to my feet, to the tattered places in my coat, and the cuts and scratches I had received from the thorns. He seemed puzzled at something. His eyes came back to my hands. He held his own hand out and counted his digits slowly, "One, two, three, four, five — eigh?"

I did not grasp his meaning then; afterwards I was to find that a great proportion of these Beast People had malformed hands, lacking sometimes even three digits. But guessing this was in some way a greeting, I did the same thing by way of reply. He grinned with

immense satisfaction. Then his swift roving glance went round again; he made a swift movement — and vanished. The fern fronds he had stood between came swishing together.

I pushed out of the brake after him, and was astonished to find him swinging cheerfully by one lank arm from a rope of creepers that looped down from the foliage overhead. His back was to me.

"Hullo!" said I.

He came down with a twisting jump, and stood facing me.

"I say," said I, "where can I get something to eat?"

"Eat!" he said. "Eat Man's food, now." And his eye went back to the swing of ropes. "At the huts."

"But where are the huts?"

"Oh!"

"I'm new, you know."

At that he swung round, and set off at a quick walk. All his motions were curiously rapid. "Come along," said he.

I went with him to see the adventure out. I guessed the huts were some rough shelter where he and some more of these Beast People lived. I might perhaps find them friendly, find some handle in their minds to take hold of. I did not know how far they had forgotten their human heritage.

My ape-like companion trotted along by my side, with his hands hanging down and his jaw thrust forward. I wondered what memory he might have in him. "How long have you been on this island?" said I.

"How long?" he asked; and after having the question repeated, he held up three fingers.

The creature was little better than an idiot. I tried to make out what he meant by that, and it seems I bored him. After another question or two he suddenly left my side and went leaping at some fruit that hung from a tree. He pulled down a handful of prickly husks and went on eating the contents. I noted this with satisfaction, for here at least was a hint for feeding. I tried him with some other questions, but his chattering, prompt responses were as often as not quite at cross purposes with my question. Some few were appropriate, others quite parrot-like.

I was so intent upon these peculiarities that I scarcely noticed the

path we followed. Presently we came to trees, all charred and brown, and so to a bare place covered with a yellow-white incrustation, across which a drifting smoke, pungent in whiffs to nose and eyes, went drifting. On our right, over a shoulder of bare rock, I saw the level blue of the sea. The path coiled down abruptly into a narrow ravine between two tumbled and knotty masses of blackish scoriae. Into this we plunged.

It was extremely dark, this passage, after the blinding sunlight reflected from the sulphurous ground. Its walls grew steep, and approached each other. Blotches of green and crimson drifted across my eyes. My conductor stopped suddenly. “Home!” said he, and I stood in a floor of a chasm that was at first absolutely dark to me. I heard some strange noises, and thrust the knuckles of my left hand into my eyes. I became aware of a disagreeable odor, like that of a monkey’s cage ill-cleaned. Beyond, the rock opened again upon a gradual slope of sunlit greenery, and on either hand the light smote down through narrow ways into the central gloom.

XII. THE SAYERS OF THE LAW.

THEN something cold touched my hand. I started violently, and saw close to me a dim pinkish thing, looking more like a flayed child than anything else in the world. The creature had exactly the mild but repulsive features of a sloth, the same low forehead and slow gestures.

As the first shock of the change of light passed, I saw about me more distinctly. The little sloth-like creature was standing and staring at me. My conductor had vanished. The place was a narrow passage between high walls of lava, a crack in the knotted rock, and on either side interwoven heaps of sea-mat, palm-fans, and reeds leaning against the rock formed rough and impenetrably dark dens. The winding way up the ravine between these was scarcely three yards wide, and was disfigured by lumps of decaying fruit-pulp and other refuse, which accounted for the disagreeable stench of the place.

The little pink sloth-creature was still blinking at me when my Ape-man reappeared at the aperture of the nearest of these dens, and beckoned me in. As he did so a slouching monster wriggled out of one of the places, further up this strange street, and stood up in featureless silhouette against the bright green beyond, staring at me. I hesitated, having half a mind to bolt the way I had come; and then, determined to go through with the adventure, I gripped my nailed stick about the middle and crawled into the little evil-smelling lean-to after my conductor.

It was a semi-circular space, shaped like the half of a bee-hive; and against the rocky wall that formed the inner side of it was a pile of variegated fruits, cocoa-nuts among others. Some rough vessels of lava and wood stood about the floor, and one on a rough stool. There was no fire. In the darkest corner of the hut sat a shapeless mass of darkness that grunted “Hey!” as I came in, and my Ape-man stood in the dim light of the doorway and held out a split cocoa-nut to me as I crawled into the other corner and squatted down. I took it, and began gnawing it, as serenely as possible, in spite of a certain trepidation and the nearly intolerable closeness of the den. The little pink sloth-creature stood in the aperture of the hut, and something else with a

drab face and bright eyes came staring over its shoulder.

"Hey!" came out of the lump of mystery opposite. "It is a man."

"It is a man," gabbled my conductor, "a man, a man, a five-man, like me."

"Shut up!" said the voice from the dark, and grunted. I gnawed my cocoa-nut amid an impressive stillness.

I peered hard into the blackness, but could distinguish nothing.

"It is a man," the voice repeated. "He comes to live with us?"

It was a thick voice, with something in it — a kind of whistling overtone — that struck me as peculiar; but the English accent was strangely good.

The Ape-man looked at me as though he expected something. I perceived the pause was interrogative. "He comes to live with you," I said.

"It is a man. He must learn the Law."

I began to distinguish now a deeper blackness in the black, a vague outline of a hunched-up figure. Then I noticed the opening of the place was darkened by two more black heads. My hand tightened on my stick.

The thing in the dark repeated in a louder tone, "Say the words." I had missed its last remark. "Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law," it repeated in a kind of sing-song.

I was puzzled.

"Say the words," said the Ape-man, repeating, and the figures in the doorway echoed this, with a threat in the tone of their voices.

I realised that I had to repeat this idiotic formula; and then began the insanest ceremony. The voice in the dark began intoning a mad litany, line by line, and I and the rest to repeat it. As they did so, they swayed from side to side in the oddest way, and beat their hands upon their knees; and I followed their example. I could have imagined I was already dead and in another world. That dark hut, these grotesque dim figures, just flecked here and there by a glimmer of light, and all of them swaying in unison and chanting,

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to eat Fish or Flesh; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to claw the Bark of Trees; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

“Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men?”

And so from the prohibition of these acts of folly, on to the prohibition of what I thought then were the maddest, most impossible, and most indecent things one could well imagine. A kind of rhythmic fervour fell on all of us; we gabbled and swayed faster and faster, repeating this amazing Law. Superficially the contagion of these brutes was upon me, but deep down within me the laughter and disgust struggled together. We ran through a long list of prohibitions, and then the chant swung round to a new formula.

“*His* is the House of Pain.

“*His* is the Hand that makes.

“*His* is the Hand that wounds.

“*His* is the Hand that heals.”

And so on for another long series, mostly quite incomprehensible gibberish to me about *Him*, whoever he might be. I could have fancied it was a dream, but never before have I heard chanting in a dream.

“*His* is the lightning flash,” we sang. “*His* is the deep, salt sea.”

A horrible fancy came into my head that Moreau, after animalising these men, had infected their dwarfed brains with a kind of deification of himself. However, I was too keenly aware of white teeth and strong claws about me to stop my chanting on that account.

“*His* are the stars in the sky.”

At last that song ended. I saw the Ape-man’s face shining with perspiration; and my eyes being now accustomed to the darkness, I saw more distinctly the figure in the corner from which the voice came. It was the size of a man, but it seemed covered with a dull grey hair almost like a Skye-terrier. What was it? What were they all? Imagine yourself surrounded by all the most horrible cripples and maniacs it is possible to conceive, and you may understand a little of my feelings with these grotesque caricatures of humanity about me.

“He is a five-man, a five-man, a five-man — like me,” said the Ape-man.

I held out my hands. The grey creature in the corner leant forward.

“Not to run on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?” he said.

He put out a strangely distorted talon and gripped my fingers. The thing was almost like the hoof of a deer produced into claws. I could have yelled with surprise and pain. His face came forward and peered at my nails, came forward into the light of the opening of the hut and I saw with a quivering disgust that it was like the face of neither man nor beast, but a mere shock of grey hair, with three shadowy over-archings to mark the eyes and mouth.

"He has little nails," said this grisly creature in his hairy beard. "It is well."

He threw my hand down, and instinctively I gripped my stick.

"Eat roots and herbs; it is His will," said the Ape-man.

"I am the Sayer of the Law," said the grey figure. "Here come all that be new to learn the Law. I sit in the darkness and say the Law."

"It is even so," said one of the beasts in the doorway.

"Evil are the punishments of those who break the Law. None escape."

"None escape," said the Beast Folk, glancing furtively at one another.

"None, none," said the Ape-man,— "none escape. See! I did a little thing, a wrong thing, once. I jabbered, jabbered, stopped talking. None could understand. I am burnt, branded in the hand. He is great. He is good!"

"None escape," said the grey creature in the corner.

"None escape," said the Beast People, looking askance at one another.

"For every one the want that is bad," said the grey Sayer of the Law. "What you will want we do not know; we shall know. Some want to follow things that move, to watch and slink and wait and spring; to kill and bite, bite deep and rich, sucking the blood. It is bad. 'Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men? Not to eat Flesh or Fish; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'"

"None escape," said a dappled brute standing in the doorway.

"For every one the want is bad," said the grey Sayer of the Law. "Some want to go tearing with teeth and hands into the roots of things, snuffing into the earth. It is bad."

"None escape," said the men in the door.

"Some go clawing trees; some go scratching at the graves of the

dead; some go fighting with foreheads or feet or claws; some bite suddenly, none giving occasion; some love uncleanness."

"None escape," said the Ape-man, scratching his calf.

"None escape," said the little pink sloth-creature.

"Punishment is sharp and sure. Therefore learn the Law. Say the words."

And incontinently he began again the strange litany of the Law, and again I and all these creatures began singing and swaying. My head reeled with this jabbering and the close stench of the place; but I kept on, trusting to find presently some chance of a new development.

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?"

We were making such a noise that I noticed nothing of a tumult outside, until some one, who I think was one of the two Swine Men I had seen, thrust his head over the little pink sloth-creature and shouted something excitedly, something that I did not catch. Incontinently those at the opening of the hut vanished; my Ape-man rushed out; the thing that had sat in the dark followed him (I only observed that it was big and clumsy, and covered with silvery hair), and I was left alone. Then before I reached the aperture I heard the yelp of a staghound.

In another moment I was standing outside the hovel, my chair-rail in my hand, every muscle of me quivering. Before me were the clumsy backs of perhaps a score of these Beast People, their misshapen heads half hidden by their shoulder-blades. They were gesticulating excitedly. Other half-animal faces glared interrogation out of the hovels. Looking in the direction in which they faced, I saw coming through the haze under the trees beyond the end of the passage of dens the dark figure and awful white face of Moreau. He was holding the leaping staghound back, and close behind him came Montgomery revolver in hand.

For a moment I stood horror-struck. I turned and saw the passage behind me blocked by another heavy brute, with a huge grey face and twinkling little eyes, advancing towards me. I looked round and saw to the right of me and a half-dozen yards in front of me a narrow gap in the wall of rock through which a ray of light slanted into the shadows.

“Stop!” cried Moreau as I strode towards this, and then, “Hold him!”

At that, first one face turned towards me and then others. Their bestial minds were happily slow. I dashed my shoulder into a clumsy monster who was turning to see what Moreau meant, and flung him forward into another. I felt his hands fly round, clutching at me and missing me. The little pink sloth-creature dashed at me, and I gashed down its ugly face with the nail in my stick and in another minute was scrambling up a steep side pathway, a kind of sloping chimney, out of the ravine. I heard a howl behind me, and cries of “Catch him!” “Hold him!” and the grey-faced creature appeared behind me and jammed his huge bulk into the cleft. “Go on! go on!” they howled. I clambered up the narrow cleft in the rock and came out upon the sulphur on the westward side of the village of the Beast Men.

That gap was altogether fortunate for me, for the narrow chimney, slanting obliquely upward, must have impeded the nearer pursuers. I ran over the white space and down a steep slope, through a scattered growth of trees, and came to a low-lying stretch of tall reeds, through which I pushed into a dark, thick undergrowth that was black and succulent under foot. As I plunged into the reeds, my foremost pursuers emerged from the gap. I broke my way through this undergrowth for some minutes. The air behind me and about me was soon full of threatening cries. I heard the tumult of my pursuers in the gap up the slope, then the crashing of the reeds, and every now and then the crackling crash of a branch. Some of the creatures roared like excited beasts of prey. The staghound yelped to the left. I heard Moreau and Montgomery shouting in the same direction. I turned sharply to the right. It seemed to me even then that I heard Montgomery shouting for me to run for my life.

Presently the ground gave rich and oozy under my feet; but I was desperate and went headlong into it, struggled through kneedeep, and so came to a winding path among tall canes. The noise of my pursuers passed away to my left. In one place three strange, pink, hopping animals, about the size of cats, bolted before my footsteps. This pathway ran up hill, across another open space covered with white incrustation, and plunged into a canebrake again. Then

suddenly it turned parallel with the edge of a steep-walled gap, which came without warning, like the ha-ha of an English park, — turned with an unexpected abruptness. I was still running with all my might, and I never saw this drop until I was flying headlong through the air.

I fell on my forearms and head, among thorns, and rose with a torn ear and bleeding face. I had fallen into a precipitous ravine, rocky and thorny, full of a hazy mist which drifted about me in wisps, and with a narrow streamlet from which this mist came meandering down the centre. I was astonished at this thin fog in the full blaze of daylight; but I had no time to stand wondering then. I turned to my right, down-stream, hoping to come to the sea in that direction, and so have my way open to drown myself. It was only later I found that I had dropped my nailed stick in my fall.

Presently the ravine grew narrower for a space, and carelessly I stepped into the stream. I jumped out again pretty quickly, for the water was almost boiling. I noticed too there was a thin sulphurous scum drifting upon its coiling water. Almost immediately came a turn in the ravine, and the indistinct blue horizon. The nearer sea was flashing the sun from a myriad facets. I saw my death before me; but I was hot and panting, with the warm blood oozing out on my face and running pleasantly through my veins. I felt more than a touch of exultation too, at having distanced my pursuers. It was not in me then to go out and drown myself yet. I stared back the way I had come.

I listened. Save for the hum of the gnats and the chirp of some small insects that hopped among the thorns, the air was absolutely still. Then came the yelp of a dog, very faint, and a chattering and gibbering, the snap of a whip, and voices. They grew louder, then fainter again. The noise receded up the stream and faded away. For a while the chase was over; but I knew now how much hope of help for me lay in the Beast People.

XIII. A PARLEY.

I TURNED again and went on down towards the sea. I found the hot stream broadened out to a shallow, weedy sand, in which an abundance of crabs and long-bodied, many-legged creatures started from my footfall. I walked to the very edge of the salt water, and then I felt I was safe. I turned and stared, arms akimbo, at the thick green behind me, into which the steamy ravine cut like a smoking gash. But, as I say, I was too full of excitement and (a true saying, though those who have never known danger may doubt it) too desperate to die.

Then it came into my head that there was one chance before me yet. While Moreau and Montgomery and their bestial rabble chased me through the island, might I not go round the beach until I came to their enclosure, — make a flank march upon them, in fact, and then with a rock lugged out of their loosely-built wall, perhaps, smash in the lock of the smaller door and see what I could find (knife, pistol, or what not) to fight them with when they returned? It was at any rate something to try.

So I turned to the westward and walked along by the water's edge. The setting sun flashed his blinding heat into my eyes. The slight Pacific tide was running in with a gentle ripple. Presently the shore fell away southward, and the sun came round upon my right hand. Then suddenly, far in front of me, I saw first one and then several figures emerging from the bushes, — Moreau, with his grey staghound, then Montgomery, and two others. At that I stopped.

They saw me, and began gesticulating and advancing. I stood watching them approach. The two Beast Men came running forward to cut me off from the undergrowth, inland. Montgomery came, running also, but straight towards me. Moreau followed slower with the dog.

At last I roused myself from my inaction, and turning seaward walked straight into the water. The water was very shallow at first. I was thirty yards out before the waves reached to my waist. Dimly I could see the intertidal creatures darting away from my feet.

"What are you doing, man?" cried Montgomery.

I turned, standing waist deep, and stared at them. Montgomery stood panting at the margin of the water. His face was bright-red with exertion, his long flaxen hair blown about his head, and his dropping nether lip showed his irregular teeth. Moreau was just coming up, his face pale and firm, and the dog at his hand barked at me. Both men had heavy whips. Farther up the beach stared the Beast Men.

"What am I doing? I am going to drown myself," said I.

Montgomery and Moreau looked at each other. "Why?" asked Moreau.

"Because that is better than being tortured by you."

"I told you so," said Montgomery, and Moreau said something in a low tone.

"What makes you think I shall torture you?" asked Moreau.

"What I saw," I said. "And those — yonder."

"Hush!" said Moreau, and held up his hand.

"I will not," said I. "They were men: what are they now? I at least will not be like them."

I looked past my interlocutors. Up the beach were M'ling, Montgomery's attendant, and one of the white-swathed brutes from the boat. Farther up, in the shadow of the trees, I saw my little Ape-man, and behind him some other dim figures.

"Who are these creatures?" said I, pointing to them and raising my voice more and more that it might reach them. "They were men, men like yourselves, whom you have infected with some bestial taint, — men whom you have enslaved, and whom you still fear.

"You who listen," I cried, pointing now to Moreau and shouting past him to the Beast Men,— "You who listen! Do you not see these men still fear you, go in dread of you? Why, then, do you fear them? You are many—"

"For God's sake," cried Montgomery, "stop that, Prendick!"

"Prendick!" cried Moreau.

They both shouted together, as if to drown my voice; and behind them lowered the staring faces of the Beast Men, wondering, their deformed hands hanging down, their shoulders hunched up. They seemed, as I fancied, to be trying to understand me, to remember, I thought, something of their human past.

I went on shouting, I scarcely remember what, — that Moreau and

Montgomery could be killed, that they were not to be feared: that was the burden of what I put into the heads of the Beast People. I saw the green-eyed man in the dark rags, who had met me on the evening of my arrival, come out from among the trees, and others followed him, to hear me better. At last for want of breath I paused.

"Listen to me for a moment," said the steady voice of Moreau; "and then say what you will."

"Well?" said I.

He coughed, thought, then shouted: "Latin, Prendick! bad Latin, schoolboy Latin; but try and understand. *Hi non sunt homines; sunt animalia qui nos habemus* — vivisected. A humanising process. I will explain. Come ashore."

I laughed. "A pretty story," said I. "They talk, build houses. They were men. It's likely I'll come ashore."

"The water just beyond where you stand is deep — and full of sharks."

"That's my way," said I. "Short and sharp. Presently."

"Wait a minute." He took something out of his pocket that flashed back the sun, and dropped the object at his feet. "That's a loaded revolver," said he. "Montgomery here will do the same. Now we are going up the beach until you are satisfied the distance is safe. Then come and take the revolvers."

"Not I! You have a third between you."

"I want you to think over things, Prendick. In the first place, I never asked you to come upon this island. If we vivisected men, we should import men, not beasts. In the next, we had you drugged last night, had we wanted to work you any mischief; and in the next, now your first panic is over and you can think a little, is Montgomery here quite up to the character you give him? We have chased you for your good. Because this island is full of inimical phenomena. Besides, why should we want to shoot you when you have just offered to drown yourself?"

"Why did you set — your people onto me when I was in the hut?"

"We felt sure of catching you, and bringing you out of danger. Afterwards we drew away from the scent, for your good."

I mused. It seemed just possible. Then I remembered something again. "But I saw," said I, "in the enclosure—"

“That was the puma.”

“Look here, Prendick,” said Montgomery, “you’re a silly ass! Come out of the water and take these revolvers, and talk. We can’t do anything more than we could do now.”

I will confess that then, and indeed always, I distrusted and dreaded Moreau; but Montgomery was a man I felt I understood.

“Go up the beach,” said I, after thinking, and added, “holding your hands up.”

“Can’t do that,” said Montgomery, with an explanatory nod over his shoulder. “Undignified.”

“Go up to the trees, then,” said I, “as you please.”

“It’s a damned silly ceremony,” said Montgomery.

Both turned and faced the six or seven grotesque creatures, who stood there in the sunlight, solid, casting shadows, moving, and yet so incredibly unreal. Montgomery cracked his whip at them, and forthwith they all turned and fled helter-skelter into the trees; and when Montgomery and Moreau were at a distance I judged sufficient, I waded ashore, and picked up and examined the revolvers. To satisfy myself against the subtlest trickery, I discharged one at a round lump of lava, and had the satisfaction of seeing the stone pulverised and the beach splashed with lead. Still I hesitated for a moment.

“I’ll take the risk,” said I, at last; and with a revolver in each hand I walked up the beach towards them.

“That’s better,” said Moreau, without affectation. “As it is, you have wasted the best part of my day with your confounded imagination.” And with a touch of contempt which humiliated me, he and Montgomery turned and went on in silence before me.

The knot of Beast Men, still wondering, stood back among the trees. I passed them as serenely as possible. One started to follow me, but retreated again when Montgomery cracked his whip. The rest stood silent — watching. They may once have been animals; but I never before saw an animal trying to think.

XIV. DOCTOR MOREAU EXPLAINS.

"AND now, Prendick, I will explain," said Doctor Moreau, so soon as we had eaten and drunk. "I must confess that you are the most dictatorial guest I ever entertained. I warn you that this is the last I shall do to oblige you. The next thing you threaten to commit suicide about, I shan't do, — even at some personal inconvenience."

He sat in my deck chair, a cigar half consumed in his white, dexterous-looking fingers. The light of the swinging lamp fell on his white hair; he stared through the little window out at the starlight. I sat as far away from him as possible, the table between us and the revolvers to hand. Montgomery was not present. I did not care to be with the two of them in such a little room.

"You admit that the vivisected human being, as you called it, is, after all, only the puma?" said Moreau. He had made me visit that horror in the inner room, to assure myself of its inhumanity.

"It is the puma," I said, "still alive, but so cut and mutilated as I pray I may never see living flesh again. Of all vile—"

"Never mind that," said Moreau; "at least, spare me those youthful horrors. Montgomery used to be just the same. You admit that it is the puma. Now be quiet, while I reel off my physiological lecture to you."

And forthwith, beginning in the tone of a man supremely bored, but presently warming a little, he explained his work to me. He was very simple and convincing. Now and then there was a touch of sarcasm in his voice. Presently I found myself hot with shame at our mutual positions.

The creatures I had seen were not men, had never been men. They were animals, humanised animals, — triumphs of vivisection.

"You forget all that a skilled vivisector can do with living things," said Moreau. "For my own part, I'm puzzled why the things I have done here have not been done before. Small efforts, of course, have been made, — amputation, tongue-cutting, excisions. Of course you know a squint may be induced or cured by surgery? Then in the case of excisions you have all kinds of secondary changes, pigmentary disturbances, modifications of the passions, alterations in the

secretion of fatty tissue. I have no doubt you have heard of these things?"

"Of course," said I. "But these foul creatures of yours—"

"All in good time," said he, waving his hand at me; "I am only beginning. Those are trivial cases of alteration. Surgery can do better things than that. There is building up as well as breaking down and changing. You have heard, perhaps, of a common surgical operation resorted to in cases where the nose has been destroyed: a flap of skin is cut from the forehead, turned down on the nose, and heals in the new position. This is a kind of grafting in a new position of part of an animal upon itself. Grafting of freshly obtained material from another animal is also possible, — the case of teeth, for example. The grafting of skin and bone is done to facilitate healing: the surgeon places in the middle of the wound pieces of skin snipped from another animal, or fragments of bone from a victim freshly killed. Hunter's cock-spur — possibly you have heard of that — flourished on the bull's neck; and the rhinoceros rats of the Algerian zouaves are also to be thought of, — monsters manufactured by transferring a slip from the tail of an ordinary rat to its snout, and allowing it to heal in that position."

"Monsters manufactured!" said I. "Then you mean to tell me—"

"Yes. These creatures you have seen are animals carven and wrought into new shapes. To that, to the study of the plasticity of living forms, my life has been devoted. I have studied for years, gaining in knowledge as I go. I see you look horrified, and yet I am telling you nothing new. It all lay in the surface of practical anatomy years ago, but no one had the temerity to touch it. It is not simply the outward form of an animal which I can change. The physiology, the chemical rhythm of the creature, may also be made to undergo an enduring modification, — of which vaccination and other methods of inoculation with living or dead matter are examples that will, no doubt, be familiar to you. A similar operation is the transfusion of blood, — with which subject, indeed, I began. These are all familiar cases. Less so, and probably far more extensive, were the operations of those mediaeval practitioners who made dwarfs and beggar-cripples, show-monsters, — some vestiges of whose art still remain in the preliminary manipulation of the young mountebank or

contortionist. Victor Hugo gives an account of them in 'L'Homme qui Rit.' — But perhaps my meaning grows plain now. You begin to see that it is a possible thing to transplant tissue from one part of an animal to another, or from one animal to another; to alter its chemical reactions and methods of growth; to modify the articulations of its limbs; and, indeed, to change it in its most intimate structure.

"And yet this extraordinary branch of knowledge has never been sought as an end, and systematically, by modern investigators until I took it up! Some such things have been hit upon in the last resort of surgery; most of the kindred evidence that will recur to your mind has been demonstrated as it were by accident, — by tyrants, by criminals, by the breeders of horses and dogs, by all kinds of untrained clumsy-handed men working for their own immediate ends. I was the first man to take up this question armed with antiseptic surgery, and with a really scientific knowledge of the laws of growth. Yet one would imagine it must have been practised in secret before. Such creatures as the Siamese Twins — And in the vaults of the Inquisition. No doubt their chief aim was artistic torture, but some at least of the inquisitors must have had a touch of scientific curiosity."

"But," said I, "these things — these animals talk!"

He said that was so, and proceeded to point out that the possibility of vivisection does not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis. A pig may be educated. The mental structure is even less determinate than the bodily. In our growing science of hypnotism we find the promise of a possibility of superseding old inherent instincts by new suggestions, grafting upon or replacing the inherited fixed ideas. Very much indeed of what we call moral education, he said, is such an artificial modification and perversion of instinct; pugnacity is trained into courageous self-sacrifice, and suppressed sexuality into religious emotion. And the great difference between man and monkey is in the larynx, he continued, — in the incapacity to frame delicately different sound-symbols by which thought could be sustained. In this I failed to agree with him, but with a certain incivility he declined to notice my objection. He repeated that the thing was so, and continued his account of his work.

I asked him why he had taken the human form as a model. There seemed to me then, and there still seems to me now, a strange wickedness for that choice.

He confessed that he had chosen that form by chance. “I might just as well have worked to form sheep into llamas and llamas into sheep. I suppose there is something in the human form that appeals to the artistic turn of mind more powerfully than any animal shape can. But I’ve not confined myself to man-making. Once or twice—” He was silent, for a minute perhaps. “These years! How they have slipped by! And here I have wasted a day saving your life, and am now wasting an hour explaining myself!”

“But,” said I, “I still do not understand. Where is your justification for inflicting all this pain? The only thing that could excuse vivisection to me would be some application—”

“Precisely,” said he. “But, you see, I am differently constituted. We are on different platforms. You are a materialist.”

“I am *not* a materialist,” I began hotly.

“In my view — in my view. For it is just this question of pain that parts us. So long as visible or audible pain turns you sick; so long as your own pains drive you; so long as pain underlies your propositions about sin, — so long, I tell you, you are an animal, thinking a little less obscurely what an animal feels. This pain—”

I gave an impatient shrug at such sophistry.

“Oh, but it is such a little thing! A mind truly opened to what science has to teach must see that it is a little thing. It may be that save in this little planet, this speck of cosmic dust, invisible long before the nearest star could be attained — it may be, I say, that nowhere else does this thing called pain occur. But the laws we feel our way towards — Why, even on this earth, even among living things, what pain is there?”

As he spoke he drew a little penknife from his pocket, opened the smaller blade, and moved his chair so that I could see his thigh. Then, choosing the place deliberately, he drove the blade into his leg and withdrew it.

“No doubt,” he said, “you have seen that before. It does not hurt a pin-prick. But what does it show? The capacity for pain is not needed in the muscle, and it is not placed there, — is but little needed in the

skin, and only here and there over the thigh is a spot capable of feeling pain. Pain is simply our intrinsic medical adviser to warn us and stimulate us. Not all living flesh is painful; nor is all nerve, not even all sensory nerve. There's no taint of pain, real pain, in the sensations of the optic nerve. If you wound the optic nerve, you merely see flashes of light, — just as disease of the auditory nerve merely means a humming in our ears. Plants do not feel pain, nor the lower animals; it's possible that such animals as the starfish and crayfish do not feel pain at all. Then with men, the more intelligent they become, the more intelligently they will see after their own welfare, and the less they will need the goad to keep them out of danger. I never yet heard of a useless thing that was not ground out of existence by evolution sooner or later. Did you? And pain gets needless.

"Then I am a religious man, Prendick, as every sane man must be. It may be, I fancy, that I have seen more of the ways of this world's Maker than you, — for I have sought his laws, in *my* way, all my life, while you, I understand, have been collecting butterflies. And I tell you, pleasure and pain have nothing to do with heaven or hell. Pleasure and pain — bah! What is your theologian's ecstasy but Mahomet's houri in the dark? This store which men and women set on pleasure and pain, Prendick, is the mark of the beast upon them, — the mark of the beast from which they came! Pain, pain and pleasure, they are for us only so long as we wriggle in the dust.

"You see, I went on with this research just the way it led me. That is the only way I ever heard of true research going. I asked a question, devised some method of obtaining an answer, and got a fresh question. Was this possible or that possible? You cannot imagine what this means to an investigator, what an intellectual passion grows upon him! You cannot imagine the strange, colourless delight of these intellectual desires! The thing before you is no longer an animal, a fellow-creature, but a problem! Sympathetic pain, — all I know of it I remember as a thing I used to suffer from years ago. I wanted — it was the one thing I wanted — to find out the extreme limit of plasticity in a living shape."

"But," said I, "the thing is an abomination—"

"To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter,"

he continued. “The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature. I have gone on, not heeding anything but the question I was pursuing; and the material has — dripped into the huts yonder. It is nearly eleven years since we came here, I and Montgomery and six Kanakas. I remember the green stillness of the island and the empty ocean about us, as though it was yesterday. The place seemed waiting for me.

“The stores were landed and the house was built. The Kanakas founded some huts near the ravine. I went to work here upon what I had brought with me. There were some disagreeable things happened at first. I began with a sheep, and killed it after a day and a half by a slip of the scalpel. I took another sheep, and made a thing of pain and fear and left it bound up to heal. It looked quite human to me when I had finished it; but when I went to it I was discontented with it. It remembered me, and was terrified beyond imagination; and it had no more than the wits of a sheep. The more I looked at it the clumsier it seemed, until at last I put the monster out of its misery. These animals without courage, these fear-haunted, pain-driven things, without a spark of pugnacious energy to face torment, — they are no good for man-making.

“Then I took a gorilla I had; and upon that, working with infinite care and mastering difficulty after difficulty, I made my first man. All the week, night and day, I moulded him. With him it was chiefly the brain that needed moulding; much had to be added, much changed. I thought him a fair specimen of the negroid type when I had finished him, and he lay bandaged, bound, and motionless before me. It was only when his life was assured that I left him and came into this room again, and found Montgomery much as you are. He had heard some of the cries as the thing grew human, — cries like those that disturbed *you* so. I didn’t take him completely into my confidence at first. And the Kanakas too, had realised something of it. They were scared out of their wits by the sight of me. I got Montgomery over to me — in a way; but I and he had the hardest job to prevent the Kanakas deserting. Finally they did; and so we lost the yacht. I spent many days educating the brute, — altogether I had him for three or four months. I taught him the rudiments of English; gave him ideas of counting; even made the thing read the alphabet. But at that he

was slow, though I've met with idiots slower. He began with a clean sheet, mentally; had no memories left in his mind of what he had been. When his scars were quite healed, and he was no longer anything but painful and stiff, and able to converse a little, I took him yonder and introduced him to the Kanakas as an interesting stowaway.

"They were horribly afraid of him at first, somehow, — which offended me rather, for I was conceited about him; but his ways seemed so mild, and he was so abject, that after a time they received him and took his education in hand. He was quick to learn, very imitative and adaptive, and built himself a hovel rather better, it seemed to me, than their own shanties. There was one among the boys a bit of a missionary, and he taught the thing to read, or at least to pick out letters, and gave him some rudimentary ideas of morality; but it seems the beast's habits were not all that is desirable.

"I rested from work for some days after this, and was in a mind to write an account of the whole affair to wake up English physiology. Then I came upon the creature squatting up in a tree and gibbering at two of the Kanakas who had been teasing him. I threatened him, told him the inhumanity of such a proceeding, aroused his sense of shame, and came home resolved to do better before I took my work back to England. I have been doing better. But somehow the things drift back again: the stubborn beast-flesh grows day by day back again. But I mean to do better things still. I mean to conquer that. This puma —

"But that's the story. All the Kanaka boys are dead now; one fell overboard of the launch, and one died of a wounded heel that he poisoned in some way with plant-juice. Three went away in the yacht, and I suppose and hope were drowned. The other one — was killed. Well, I have replaced them. Montgomery went on much as you are disposed to do at first, and then —

"What became of the other one?" said I, sharply,— "the other Kanaka who was killed?"

"The fact is, after I had made a number of human creatures I made a Thing—" He hesitated.

"Yes?" said I.

"It was killed."

“I don’t understand,” said I; “do you mean to say—”

“It killed the Kanaka — yes. It killed several other things that it caught. We chased it for a couple of days. It only got loose by accident — I never meant it to get away. It wasn’t finished. It was purely an experiment. It was a limbless thing, with a horrible face, that writhed along the ground in a serpentine fashion. It was immensely strong, and in infuriating pain. It lurked in the woods for some days, until we hunted it; and then it wriggled into the northern part of the island, and we divided the party to close in upon it. Montgomery insisted upon coming with me. The man had a rifle; and when his body was found, one of the barrels was curved into the shape of an S and very nearly bitten through. Montgomery shot the thing. After that I stuck to the ideal of humanity — except for little things.”

He became silent. I sat in silence watching his face.

“So for twenty years altogether — counting nine years in England — I have been going on; and there is still something in everything I do that defeats me, makes me dissatisfied, challenges me to further effort. Sometimes I rise above my level, sometimes I fall below it; but always I fall short of the things I dream. The human shape I can get now, almost with ease, so that it is lithe and graceful, or thick and strong; but often there is trouble with the hands and the claws, — painful things, that I dare not shape too freely. But it is in the subtle grafting and reshaping one must needs do to the brain that my trouble lies. The intelligence is often oddly low, with unaccountable blank ends, unexpected gaps. And least satisfactory of all is something that I cannot touch, somewhere — I cannot determine where — in the seat of the emotions. Cravings, instincts, desires that harm humanity, a strange hidden reservoir to burst forth suddenly and inundate the whole being of the creature with anger, hate, or fear. These creatures of mine seemed strange and uncanny to you so soon as you began to observe them; but to me, just after I make them, they seem to be indisputably human beings. It’s afterwards, as I observe them, that the persuasion fades. First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me. But I will conquer yet! Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, ‘This time I will burn out all the animal; this time I will make a rational creature

of my own!' After all, what is ten years? Men have been a hundred thousand in the making." He thought darkly. "But I am drawing near the fastness. This puma of mine—" After a silence, "And they revert. As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again." Another long silence.

"Then you take the things you make into those dens?" said I.

"They go. I turn them out when I begin to feel the beast in them, and presently they wander there. They all dread this house and me. There is a kind of travesty of humanity over there. Montgomery knows about it, for he interferes in their affairs. He has trained one or two of them to our service. He's ashamed of it, but I believe he half likes some of those beasts. It's his business, not mine. They only sicken me with a sense of failure. I take no interest in them. I fancy they follow in the lines the Kanaka missionary marked out, and have a kind of mockery of a rational life, poor beasts! There's something they call the Law. Sing hymns about 'all thine.' They build themselves their dens, gather fruit, and pull herbs — marry even. But I can see through it all, see into their very souls, and see there nothing but the souls of beasts, beasts that perish, anger and the lusts to live and gratify themselves. — Yet they're odd; complex, like everything else alive. There is a kind of upward striving in them, part vanity, part waste sexual emotion, part waste curiosity. It only mocks me. I have some hope of this puma. I have worked hard at her head and brain —

"And now," said he, standing up after a long gap of silence, during which we had each pursued our own thoughts, "what do you think? Are you in fear of me still?"

I looked at him, and saw but a white-faced, white-haired man, with calm eyes. Save for his serenity, the touch almost of beauty that resulted from his set tranquillity and his magnificent build, he might have passed muster among a hundred other comfortable old gentlemen. Then I shivered. By way of answer to his second question, I handed him a revolver with either hand.

"Keep them," he said, and snatched at a yawn. He stood up, stared at me for a moment, and smiled. "You have had two eventful days," said he. "I should advise some sleep. I'm glad it's all clear. Good-night." He thought me over for a moment, then went out by the inner

door.

I immediately turned the key in the outer one. I sat down again; sat for a time in a kind of stagnant mood, so weary, emotionally, mentally, and physically, that I could not think beyond the point at which he had left me. The black window stared at me like an eye. At last with an effort I put out the light and got into the hammock. Very soon I was asleep.

XV. CONCERNING THE BEAST FOLK.

I WOKE early. Moreau's explanation stood before my mind, clear and definite, from the moment of my awakening. I got out of the hammock and went to the door to assure myself that the key was turned. Then I tried the window-bar, and found it firmly fixed. That these man-like creatures were in truth only bestial monsters, mere grotesque travesties of men, filled me with a vague uncertainty of their possibilities which was far worse than any definite fear.

A tapping came at the door, and I heard the glutinous accents of M'ling speaking. I pocketed one of the revolvers (keeping one hand upon it), and opened to him.

"Good-morning, sair," he said, bringing in, in addition to the customary herb-breakfast, an ill-cooked rabbit. Montgomery followed him. His roving eye caught the position of my arm and he smiled askew.

The puma was resting to heal that day; but Moreau, who was singularly solitary in his habits, did not join us. I talked with Montgomery to clear my ideas of the way in which the Beast Folk lived. In particular, I was urgent to know how these inhuman monsters were kept from falling upon Moreau and Montgomery and from rending one another. He explained to me that the comparative safety of Moreau and himself was due to the limited mental scope of these monsters. In spite of their increased intelligence and the tendency of their animal instincts to reawaken, they had certain fixed ideas implanted by Moreau in their minds, which absolutely bounded their imaginations. They were really hypnotised; had been told that certain things were impossible, and that certain things were not to be done, and these prohibitions were woven into the texture of their minds beyond any possibility of disobedience or dispute.

Certain matters, however, in which old instinct was at war with Moreau's convenience, were in a less stable condition. A series of propositions called the Law (I had already heard them recited) battled in their minds with the deep-seated, ever-rebellious cravings of their animal natures. This Law they were ever repeating, I found, and ever breaking. Both Montgomery and Moreau displayed

particular solicitude to keep them ignorant of the taste of blood; they feared the inevitable suggestions of that flavour. Montgomery told me that the Law, especially among the feline Beast People, became oddly weakened about nightfall; that then the animal was at its strongest; that a spirit of adventure sprang up in them at the dusk, when they would dare things they never seemed to dream about by day. To that I owed my stalking by the Leopard-man, on the night of my arrival. But during these earlier days of my stay they broke the Law only furtively and after dark; in the daylight there was a general atmosphere of respect for its multifarious prohibitions.

And here perhaps I may give a few general facts about the island and the Beast People. The island, which was of irregular outline and lay low upon the wide sea, had a total area, I suppose, of seven or eight square miles. It was volcanic in origin, and was now fringed on three sides by coral reefs; some fumaroles to the northward, and a hot spring, were the only vestiges of the forces that had long since originated it. Now and then a faint quiver of earthquake would be sensible, and sometimes the ascent of the spire of smoke would be rendered tumultuous by gusts of steam; but that was all. The population of the island, Montgomery informed me, now numbered rather more than sixty of these strange creations of Moreau's art, not counting the smaller monstrosities which lived in the undergrowth and were without human form. Altogether he had made nearly a hundred and twenty; but many had died, and others — like the writhing Footless Thing of which he had told me — had come by violent ends. In answer to my question, Montgomery said that they actually bore offspring, but that these generally died. When they lived, Moreau took them and stamped the human form upon them. There was no evidence of the inheritance of their acquired human characteristics. The females were less numerous than the males, and liable to much furtive persecution in spite of the monogamy the Law enjoined.

This description corresponds in every respect to Noble's Isle. — C. E. P.

It would be impossible for me to describe these Beast People in detail; my eye has had no training in details, and unhappily I cannot sketch. Most striking, perhaps, in their general appearance was the

disproportion between the legs of these creatures and the length of their bodies; and yet — so relative is our idea of grace — my eye became habituated to their forms, and at last I even fell in with their persuasion that my own long thighs were ungainly. Another point was the forward carriage of the head and the clumsy and inhuman curvature of the spine. Even the Ape-man lacked that inward sinuous curve of the back which makes the human figure so graceful. Most had their shoulders hunched clumsily, and their short forearms hung weakly at their sides. Few of them were conspicuously hairy, at least until the end of my time upon the island.

The next most obvious deformity was in their faces, almost all of which were prognathous, malformed about the ears, with large and protuberant noses, very furry or very bristly hair, and often strangely-coloured or strangely-placed eyes. None could laugh, though the Ape-man had a chattering titter. Beyond these general characters their heads had little in common; each preserved the quality of its particular species: the human mark distorted but did not hide the leopard, the ox, or the sow, or other animal or animals, from which the creature had been moulded. The voices, too, varied exceedingly. The hands were always malformed; and though some surprised me by their unexpected human appearance, almost all were deficient in the number of the digits, clumsy about the finger-nails, and lacking any tactile sensibility.

The two most formidable Animal Men were my Leopard-man and a creature made of hyena and swine. Larger than these were the three bull-creatures who pulled in the boat. Then came the silvery-hairy-man, who was also the Sayer of the Law, M'ling, and a satyr-like creature of ape and goat. There were three Swine-men and a Swine-woman, a mare-rhinoceros-creature, and several other females whose sources I did not ascertain. There were several wolf-creatures, a bear-bull, and a Saint-Bernard-man. I have already described the Ape-man, and there was a particularly hateful (and evil-smelling) old woman made of vixen and bear, whom I hated from the beginning. She was said to be a passionate votary of the Law. Smaller creatures were certain dappled youths and my little sloth-creature. But enough of this catalogue.

At first I had a shivering horror of the brutes, felt all too keenly

that they were still brutes; but insensibly I became a little habituated to the idea of them, and moreover I was affected by Montgomery's attitude towards them. He had been with them so long that he had come to regard them as almost normal human beings. His London days seemed a glorious, impossible past to him. Only once in a year or so did he go to Arica to deal with Moreau's agent, a trader in animals there. He hardly met the finest type of mankind in that seafaring village of Spanish mongrels. The men aboard-ship, he told me, seemed at first just as strange to him as the Beast Men seemed to me, — unnaturally long in the leg, flat in the face, prominent in the forehead, suspicious, dangerous, and cold-hearted. In fact, he did not like men: his heart had warmed to me, he thought, because he had saved my life. I fancied even then that he had a sneaking kindness for some of these metamorphosed brutes, a vicious sympathy with some of their ways, but that he attempted to veil it from me at first.

M'ling, the black-faced man, Montgomery's attendant, the first of the Beast Folk I had encountered, did not live with the others across the island, but in a small kennel at the back of the enclosure. The creature was scarcely so intelligent as the Ape-man, but far more docile, and the most human-looking of all the Beast Folk; and Montgomery had trained it to prepare food, and indeed to discharge all the trivial domestic offices that were required. It was a complex trophy of Moreau's horrible skill, — a bear, tainted with dog and ox, and one of the most elaborately made of all his creatures. It treated Montgomery with a strange tenderness and devotion. Sometimes he would notice it, pat it, call it half-mocking, half-jocular names, and so make it caper with extraordinary delight; sometimes he would ill-treat it, especially after he had been at the whiskey, kicking it, beating it, pelting it with stones or lighted fusees. But whether he treated it well or ill, it loved nothing so much as to be near him.

I say I became habituated to the Beast People, that a thousand things which had seemed unnatural and repulsive speedily became natural and ordinary to me. I suppose everything in existence takes its colour from the average hue of our surroundings. Montgomery and Moreau were too peculiar and individual to keep my general impressions of humanity well defined. I would see one of the clumsy bovine-creatures who worked the launch treading heavily through the

undergrowth, and find myself asking, trying hard to recall, how he differed from some really human yokel trudging home from his mechanical labours; or I would meet the Fox-bear woman's vulpine, shifty face, strangely human in its speculative cunning, and even imagine I had met it before in some city byway.

Yet every now and then the beast would flash out upon me beyond doubt or denial. An ugly-looking man, a hunch-backed human savage to all appearance, squatting in the aperture of one of the dens, would stretch his arms and yawn, showing with startling suddenness scissor-edged incisors and sabre-like canines, keen and brilliant as knives. Or in some narrow pathway, glancing with a transitory daring into the eyes of some lithe, white-swathed female figure, I would suddenly see (with a spasmodic revulsion) that she had slit-like pupils, or glancing down note the curving nail with which she held her shapeless wrap about her. It is a curious thing, by the bye, for which I am quite unable to account, that these weird creatures — the females, I mean — had in the earlier days of my stay an instinctive sense of their own repulsive clumsiness, and displayed in consequence a more than human regard for the decency and decorum of extensive costume.

XVI. HOW THE BEAST FOLK TASTE BLOOD.

MY inexperience as a writer betrays me, and I wander from the thread of my story.

After I had breakfasted with Montgomery, he took me across the island to see the fumarole and the source of the hot spring into whose scalding waters I had blundered on the previous day. Both of us carried whips and loaded revolvers. While going through a leafy jungle on our road thither, we heard a rabbit squealing. We stopped and listened, but we heard no more; and presently we went on our way, and the incident dropped out of our minds. Montgomery called my attention to certain little pink animals with long hind-legs, that went leaping through the undergrowth. He told me they were creatures made of the offspring of the Beast People, that Moreau had invented. He had fancied they might serve for meat, but a rabbit-like habit of devouring their young had defeated this intention. I had already encountered some of these creatures, — once during my moonlight flight from the Leopard-man, and once during my pursuit by Moreau on the previous day. By chance, one hopping to avoid us leapt into the hole caused by the uprooting of a wind-blown tree; before it could extricate itself we managed to catch it. It spat like a cat, scratched and kicked vigorously with its hind-legs, and made an attempt to bite; but its teeth were too feeble to inflict more than a painless pinch. It seemed to me rather a pretty little creature; and as Montgomery stated that it never destroyed the turf by burrowing, and was very cleanly in its habits, I should imagine it might prove a convenient substitute for the common rabbit in gentlemen's parks.

We also saw on our way the trunk of a tree barked in long strips and splintered deeply. Montgomery called my attention to this. "Not to claw bark of trees, *that* is the Law," he said. "Much some of them care for it!" It was after this, I think, that we met the Satyr and the Ape-man. The Satyr was a gleam of classical memory on the part of Moreau, — his face ovine in expression, like the coarser Hebrew type; his voice a harsh bleat, his nether extremities Satanic. He was

gnawing the husk of a pod-like fruit as he passed us. Both of them saluted Montgomery.

"Hail," said they, "to the Other with the Whip!"

"There's a Third with a Whip now," said Montgomery. "So you'd better mind!"

"Was he not made?" said the Ape-man. "He said — he said he was made."

The Satyr-man looked curiously at me. "The Third with the Whip, he that walks weeping into the sea, has a thin white face."

"He has a thin long whip," said Montgomery.

"Yesterday he bled and wept," said the Satyr. "You never bleed nor weep. The Master does not bleed or weep."

"Ollendorffian beggar!" said Montgomery, "you'll bleed and weep if you don't look out!"

"He has five fingers, he is a five-man like me," said the Ape-man.

"Come along, Prendick," said Montgomery, taking my arm; and I went on with him.

The Satyr and the Ape-man stood watching us and making other remarks to each other.

"He says nothing," said the Satyr. "Men have voices."

"Yesterday he asked me of things to eat," said the Ape-man. "He did not know."

Then they spoke inaudible things, and I heard the Satyr laughing.

It was on our way back that we came upon the dead rabbit. The red body of the wretched little beast was rent to pieces, many of the ribs stripped white, and the backbone indisputably gnawed.

At that Montgomery stopped. "Good God!" said he, stooping down, and picking up some of the crushed vertebrae to examine them more closely. "Good God!" he repeated, "what can this mean?"

"Some carnivore of yours has remembered its old habits," I said after a pause. "This backbone has been bitten through."

He stood staring, with his face white and his lip pulled askew. "I don't like this," he said slowly.

"I saw something of the same kind," said I, "the first day I came here."

"The devil you did! What was it?"

"A rabbit with its head twisted off."

“The day you came here?”

“The day I came here. In the undergrowth at the back of the enclosure, when I went out in the evening. The head was completely wrung off.”

He gave a long, low whistle.

“And what is more, I have an idea which of your brutes did the thing. It’s only a suspicion, you know. Before I came on the rabbit I saw one of your monsters drinking in the stream.”

“Sucking his drink?”

“Yes.”

“‘Not to suck your drink; that is the Law.’ Much the brutes care for the Law, eh? when Moreau’s not about!”

“It was the brute who chased me.”

“Of course,” said Montgomery; “it’s just the way with carnivores. After a kill, they drink. It’s the taste of blood, you know. — What was the brute like?” he continued. “Would you know him again?” He glanced about us, standing astride over the mess of dead rabbit, his eyes roving among the shadows and screens of greenery, the lurking-places and ambuscades of the forest that bounded us in. “The taste of blood,” he said again.

He took out his revolver, examined the cartridges in it and replaced it. Then he began to pull at his dropping lip.

“I think I should know the brute again,” I said. “I stunned him. He ought to have a handsome bruise on the forehead of him.”

“But then we have to *prove* that he killed the rabbit,” said Montgomery. “I wish I’d never brought the things here.”

I should have gone on, but he stayed there thinking over the mangled rabbit in a puzzle-headed way. As it was, I went to such a distance that the rabbit’s remains were hidden.

“Come on!” I said.

Presently he woke up and came towards me. “You see,” he said, almost in a whisper, “they are all supposed to have a fixed idea against eating anything that runs on land. If some brute has by any accident tasted blood—”

We went on some way in silence. “I wonder what can have happened,” he said to himself. Then, after a pause again: “I did a foolish thing the other day. That servant of mine — I showed him

how to skin and cook a rabbit. It's odd — I saw him licking his hands — It never occurred to me."

Then: "We must put a stop to this. I must tell Moreau."

He could think of nothing else on our homeward journey.

Moreau took the matter even more seriously than Montgomery, and I need scarcely say that I was affected by their evident consternation.

"We must make an example," said Moreau. "I've no doubt in my own mind that the Leopard-man was the sinner. But how can we prove it? I wish, Montgomery, you had kept your taste for meat in hand, and gone without these exciting novelties. We may find ourselves in a mess yet, through it."

"I was a silly ass," said Montgomery. "But the thing's done now; and you said I might have them, you know."

"We must see to the thing at once," said Moreau. "I suppose if anything should turn up, M'ling can take care of himself?"

"I'm not so sure of M'ling," said Montgomery. "I think I ought to know him."

In the afternoon, Moreau, Montgomery, myself, and M'ling went across the island to the huts in the ravine. We three were armed; M'ling carried the little hatchet he used in chopping firewood, and some coils of wire. Moreau had a huge cowherd's horn slung over his shoulder.

"You will see a gathering of the Beast People," said Montgomery. "It is a pretty sight!"

Moreau said not a word on the way, but the expression of his heavy, white-fringed face was grimly set.

We crossed the ravine down which smoked the stream of hot water, and followed the winding pathway through the canebrakes until we reached a wide area covered over with a thick, powdery yellow substance which I believe was sulphur. Above the shoulder of a weedy bank the sea glittered. We came to a kind of shallow natural amphitheatre, and here the four of us halted. Then Moreau sounded the horn, and broke the sleeping stillness of the tropical afternoon. He must have had strong lungs. The hooting note rose and rose amidst its echoes, to at last an ear-penetrating intensity.

"Ah!" said Moreau, letting the curved instrument fall to his side

again.

Immediately there was a crashing through the yellow canes, and a sound of voices from the dense green jungle that marked the morass through which I had run on the previous day. Then at three or four points on the edge of the sulphurous area appeared the grotesque forms of the Beast People hurrying towards us. I could not help a creeping horror, as I perceived first one and then another trot out from the trees or reeds and come shambling along over the hot dust. But Moreau and Montgomery stood calmly enough; and, perforce, I stuck beside them.

First to arrive was the Satyr, strangely unreal for all that he cast a shadow and tossed the dust with his hoofs. After him from the brake came a monstrous lout, a thing of horse and rhinoceros, chewing a straw as it came; then appeared the Swine-woman and two Wolf-women; then the Fox-bear witch, with her red eyes in her peaked red face, and then others, — all hurrying eagerly. As they came forward they began to cringe towards Moreau and chant, quite regardless of one another, fragments of the latter half of the litany of the Law,— "His is the Hand that wounds; His is the Hand that heals," and so forth. As soon as they had approached within a distance of perhaps thirty yards they halted, and bowing on knees and elbows began flinging the white dust upon their heads.

Imagine the scene if you can! We three blue-clad men, with our misshapen black-faced attendant, standing in a wide expanse of sunlit yellow dust under the blazing blue sky, and surrounded by this circle of crouching and gesticulating monstrosities, — some almost human save in their subtle expression and gestures, some like cripples, some so strangely distorted as to resemble nothing but the denizens of our wildest dreams; and, beyond, the reedy lines of a canebrake in one direction, a dense tangle of palm-trees on the other, separating us from the ravine with the huts, and to the north the hazy horizon of the Pacific Ocean.

"Sixty-two, sixty-three," counted Moreau. "There are four more."

"I do not see the Leopard-man," said I.

Presently Moreau sounded the great horn again, and at the sound of it all the Beast People writhed and grovelled in the dust. Then, slinking out of the canebrake, stooping near the ground and trying to

join the dust-throwing circle behind Moreau's back, came the Leopard-man. The last of the Beast People to arrive was the little Ape-man. The earlier animals, hot and weary with their grovelling, shot vicious glances at him.

"Cease!" said Moreau, in his firm, loud voice; and the Beast People sat back upon their hams and rested from their worshipping.

"Where is the Sayer of the Law?" said Moreau, and the hairy-grey monster bowed his face in the dust.

"Say the words!" said Moreau.

Forthwith all in the kneeling assembly, swaying from side to side and dashing up the sulphur with their hands, — first the right hand and a puff of dust, and then the left, — began once more to chant their strange litany. When they reached, "Not to eat Flesh or Fish, that is the Law," Moreau held up his lank white hand.

"Stop!" he cried, and there fell absolute silence upon them all.

I think they all knew and dreaded what was coming. I looked round at their strange faces. When I saw their wincing attitudes and the furtive dread in their bright eyes, I wondered that I had ever believed them to be men.

"That Law has been broken!" said Moreau.

"None escape," from the faceless creature with the silvery hair. "None escape," repeated the kneeling circle of Beast People.

"Who is he?" cried Moreau, and looked round at their faces, cracking his whip. I fancied the Hyena-swine looked dejected, so too did the Leopard-man. Moreau stopped, facing this creature, who cringed towards him with the memory and dread of infinite torment.

"Who is he?" repeated Moreau, in a voice of thunder.

"Evil is he who breaks the Law," chanted the Sayer of the Law.

Moreau looked into the eyes of the Leopard-man, and seemed to be dragging the very soul out of the creature.

"Who breaks the Law—" said Moreau, taking his eyes off his victim, and turning towards us (it seemed to me there was a touch of exultation in his voice).

"Goes back to the House of Pain," they all clamoured,— "goes back to the House of Pain, O Master!"

"Back to the House of Pain, — back to the House of Pain," gabbled the Ape-man, as though the idea was sweet to him.

“Do you hear?” said Moreau, turning back to the criminal, “my friend — Hullo!”

For the Leopard-man, released from Moreau’s eye, had risen straight from his knees, and now, with eyes aflame and his huge feline tusks flashing out from under his curling lips, leapt towards his tormentor. I am convinced that only the madness of unendurable fear could have prompted this attack. The whole circle of threescore monsters seemed to rise about us. I drew my revolver. The two figures collided. I saw Moreau reeling back from the Leopard-man’s blow. There was a furious yelling and howling all about us. Every one was moving rapidly. For a moment I thought it was a general revolt. The furious face of the Leopard-man flashed by mine, with M’ling close in pursuit. I saw the yellow eyes of the Hyena-swine blazing with excitement, his attitude as if he were half resolved to attack me. The Satyr, too, glared at me over the Hyena-swine’s hunched shoulders. I heard the crack of Moreau’s pistol, and saw the pink flash dart across the tumult. The whole crowd seemed to swing round in the direction of the glint of fire, and I too was swung round by the magnetism of the movement. In another second I was running, one of a tumultuous shouting crowd, in pursuit of the escaping Leopard-man.

That is all I can tell definitely. I saw the Leopard-man strike Moreau, and then everything spun about me until I was running headlong. M’ling was ahead, close in pursuit of the fugitive. Behind, their tongues already lolling out, ran the Wolf-women in great leaping strides. The Swine folk followed, squealing with excitement, and the two Bull-men in their swathings of white. Then came Moreau in a cluster of the Beast People, his wide-brimmed straw hat blown off, his revolver in hand, and his lank white hair streaming out. The Hyena-swine ran beside me, keeping pace with me and glancing furtively at me out of his feline eyes, and the others came pattering and shouting behind us.

The Leopard-man went bursting his way through the long canes, which sprang back as he passed, and rattled in M’ling’s face. We others in the rear found a trampled path for us when we reached the brake. The chase lay through the brake for perhaps a quarter of a mile, and then plunged into a dense thicket, which retarded our

movements exceedingly, though we went through it in a crowd together, — fronds flicking into our faces, ropy creepers catching us under the chin or gripping our ankles, thorny plants hooking into and tearing cloth and flesh together.

"He has gone on all-fours through this," panted Moreau, now just ahead of me.

"None escape," said the Wolf-bear, laughing into my face with the exultation of hunting. We burst out again among rocks, and saw the quarry ahead running lightly on all-fours and snarling at us over his shoulder. At that the Wolf Folk howled with delight. The Thing was still clothed, and at a distance its face still seemed human; but the carriage of its four limbs was feline, and the furtive droop of its shoulder was distinctly that of a hunted animal. It leapt over some thorny yellow-flowering bushes, and was hidden. M'ling was halfway across the space.

Most of us now had lost the first speed of the chase, and had fallen into a longer and steadier stride. I saw as we traversed the open that the pursuit was now spreading from a column into a line. The Hyena-swine still ran close to me, watching me as it ran, every now and then puckering its muzzle with a snarling laugh. At the edge of the rocks the Leopard-man, realising that he was making for the projecting cape upon which he had stalked me on the night of my arrival, had doubled in the undergrowth; but Montgomery had seen the manoeuvre, and turned him again. So, panting, tumbling against rocks, torn by brambles, impeded by ferns and reeds, I helped to pursue the Leopard-man who had broken the Law, and the Hyena-swine ran, laughing savagely, by my side. I staggered on, my head reeling and my heart beating against my ribs, tired almost to death, and yet not daring to lose sight of the chase lest I should be left alone with this horrible companion. I staggered on in spite of infinite fatigue and the dense heat of the tropical afternoon.

At last the fury of the hunt slackened. We had pinned the wretched brute into a corner of the island. Moreau, whip in hand, marshalled us all into an irregular line, and we advanced now slowly, shouting to one another as we advanced and tightening the cordon about our victim. He lurked noiseless and invisible in the bushes through which I had run from him during that midnight pursuit.

“Steady!” cried Moreau, “steady!” as the ends of the line crept round the tangle of undergrowth and hemmed the brute in.

“Ware a rush!” came the voice of Montgomery from beyond the thicket.

I was on the slope above the bushes; Montgomery and Moreau beat along the beach beneath. Slowly we pushed in among the fretted network of branches and leaves. The quarry was silent.

“Back to the House of Pain, the House of Pain, the House of Pain!” yelped the voice of the Ape-man, some twenty yards to the right.

When I heard that, I forgave the poor wretch all the fear he had inspired in me. I heard the twigs snap and the boughs swish aside before the heavy tread of the Horse-rhinoceros upon my right. Then suddenly through a polygon of green, in the half darkness under the luxuriant growth, I saw the creature we were hunting. I halted. He was crouched together into the smallest possible compass, his luminous green eyes turned over his shoulder regarding me.

It may seem a strange contradiction in me, — I cannot explain the fact, — but now, seeing the creature there in a perfectly animal attitude, with the light gleaming in its eyes and its imperfectly human face distorted with terror, I realised again the fact of its humanity. In another moment other of its pursuers would see it, and it would be overpowered and captured, to experience once more the horrible tortures of the enclosure. Abruptly I slipped out my revolver, aimed between its terror-struck eyes, and fired. As I did so, the Hyena-swine saw the Thing, and flung itself upon it with an eager cry, thrusting thirsty teeth into its neck. All about me the green masses of the thicket were swaying and cracking as the Beast People came rushing together. One face and then another appeared.

“Don’t kill it, Prendick!” cried Moreau. “Don’t kill it!” and I saw him stooping as he pushed through under the fronds of the big ferns.

In another moment he had beaten off the Hyena-swine with the handle of his whip, and he and Montgomery were keeping away the excited carnivorous Beast People, and particularly M’ling, from the still quivering body. The hairy-grey Thing came sniffing at the corpse under my arm. The other animals, in their animal ardour, jostled me to get a nearer view.

“Confound you, Prendick!” said Moreau. “I wanted him.”

“I’m sorry,” said I, though I was not. “It was the impulse of the moment.” I felt sick with exertion and excitement. Turning, I pushed my way out of the crowding Beast People and went on alone up the slope towards the higher part of the headland. Under the shouted directions of Moreau I heard the three white-swathed Bull-men begin dragging the victim down towards the water.

It was easy now for me to be alone. The Beast People manifested a quite human curiosity about the dead body, and followed it in a thick knot, sniffing and growling at it as the Bull-men dragged it down the beach. I went to the headland and watched the bull-men, black against the evening sky as they carried the weighted dead body out to sea; and like a wave across my mind came the realisation of the unspeakable aimlessness of things upon the island. Upon the beach among the rocks beneath me were the Ape-man, the Hyena-swine, and several other of the Beast People, standing about Montgomery and Moreau. They were all still intensely excited, and all overflowing with noisy expressions of their loyalty to the Law; yet I felt an absolute assurance in my own mind that the Hyena-swine was implicated in the rabbit-killing. A strange persuasion came upon me, that, save for the grossness of the line, the grotesqueness of the forms, I had here before me the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason, and fate in its simplest form. The Leopard-man had happened to go under: that was all the difference. Poor brute!

Poor brutes! I began to see the viler aspect of Moreau’s cruelty. I had not thought before of the pain and trouble that came to these poor victims after they had passed from Moreau’s hands. I had shivered only at the days of actual torment in the enclosure. But now that seemed to me the lesser part. Before, they had been beasts, their instincts fitly adapted to their surroundings, and happy as living things may be. Now they stumbled in the shackles of humanity, lived in a fear that never died, fretted by a law they could not understand; their mock-human existence, begun in an agony, was one long internal struggle, one long dread of Moreau — and for what? It was the wantonness of it that stirred me.

Had Moreau had any intelligible object, I could have sympathised

at least a little with him. I am not so squeamish about pain as that. I could have forgiven him a little even, had his motive been only hate. But he was so irresponsible, so utterly careless! His curiosity, his mad, aimless investigations, drove him on; and the Things were thrown out to live a year or so, to struggle and blunder and suffer, and at last to die painfully. They were wretched in themselves; the old animal hate moved them to trouble one another; the Law held them back from a brief hot struggle and a decisive end to their natural animosities.

In those days my fear of the Beast People went the way of my personal fear for Moreau. I fell indeed into a morbid state, deep and enduring, and alien to fear, which has left permanent scars upon my mind. I must confess that I lost faith in the sanity of the world when I saw it suffering the painful disorder of this island. A blind Fate, a vast pitiless mechanism, seemed to cut and shape the fabric of existence and I, Moreau (by his passion for research), Montgomery (by his passion for drink), the Beast People with their instincts and mental restrictions, were torn and crushed, ruthlessly, inevitably, amid the infinite complexity of its incessant wheels. But this condition did not come all at once: I think indeed that I anticipate a little in speaking of it now.

XVII. A CATASTROPHE.

SCARCELY six weeks passed before I had lost every feeling but dislike and abhorrence for this infamous experiment of Moreau's. My one idea was to get away from these horrible caricatures of my Maker's image, back to the sweet and wholesome intercourse of men. My fellow-creatures, from whom I was thus separated, began to assume idyllic virtue and beauty in my memory. My first friendship with Montgomery did not increase. His long separation from humanity, his secret vice of drunkenness, his evident sympathy with the Beast People, tainted him to me. Several times I let him go alone among them. I avoided intercourse with them in every possible way. I spent an increasing proportion of my time upon the beach, looking for some liberating sail that never appeared, — until one day there fell upon us an appalling disaster, which put an altogether different aspect upon my strange surroundings.

It was about seven or eight weeks after my landing, — rather more, I think, though I had not troubled to keep account of the time, — when this catastrophe occurred. It happened in the early morning — I should think about six. I had risen and breakfasted early, having been aroused by the noise of three Beast Men carrying wood into the enclosure.

After breakfast I went to the open gateway of the enclosure, and stood there smoking a cigarette and enjoying the freshness of the early morning. Moreau presently came round the corner of the enclosure and greeted me. He passed by me, and I heard him behind me unlock and enter his laboratory. So indurated was I at that time to the abomination of the place, that I heard without a touch of emotion the puma victim begin another day of torture. It met its persecutor with a shriek, almost exactly like that of an angry virago.

Then suddenly something happened, — I do not know what, to this day. I heard a short, sharp cry behind me, a fall, and turning saw an awful face rushing upon me, — not human, not animal, but hellish, brown, seamed with red branching scars, red drops starting out upon it, and the lidless eyes ablaze. I threw up my arm to defend myself from the blow that flung me headlong with a broken forearm;

and the great monster, swathed in lint and with red-stained bandages fluttering about it, leapt over me and passed. I rolled over and over down the beach, tried to sit up, and collapsed upon my broken arm. Then Moreau appeared, his massive white face all the more terrible for the blood that trickled from his forehead. He carried a revolver in one hand. He scarcely glanced at me, but rushed off at once in pursuit of the puma.

I tried the other arm and sat up. The muffled figure in front ran in great striding leaps along the beach, and Moreau followed her. She turned her head and saw him, then doubling abruptly made for the bushes. She gained upon him at every stride. I saw her plunge into them, and Moreau, running slantingly to intercept her, fired and missed as she disappeared. Then he too vanished in the green confusion. I stared after them, and then the pain in my arm flamed up, and with a groan I staggered to my feet. Montgomery appeared in the doorway, dressed, and with his revolver in his hand.

"Great God, Prendick!" he said, not noticing that I was hurt, "that brute's loose! Tore the fetter out of the wall! Have you seen them?" Then sharply, seeing I gripped my arm, "What's the matter?"

"I was standing in the doorway," said I.

He came forward and took my arm. "Blood on the sleeve," said he, and rolled back the flannel. He pocketed his weapon, felt my arm about painfully, and led me inside. "Your arm is broken," he said, and then, "Tell me exactly how it happened — what happened?"

I told him what I had seen; told him in broken sentences, with gasps of pain between them, and very dexterously and swiftly he bound my arm meanwhile. He slung it from my shoulder, stood back and looked at me.

"You'll do," he said. "And now?"

He thought. Then he went out and locked the gates of the enclosure. He was absent some time.

I was chiefly concerned about my arm. The incident seemed merely one more of many horrible things. I sat down in the deck chair, and I must admit swore heartily at the island. The first dull feeling of injury in my arm had already given way to a burning pain when Montgomery reappeared. His face was rather pale, and he showed more of his lower gums than ever.

“I can neither see nor hear anything of him,” he said. “I’ve been thinking he may want my help.” He stared at me with his expressionless eyes. “That was a strong brute,” he said. “It simply wrenched its fetter out of the wall.” He went to the window, then to the door, and there turned to me. “I shall go after him,” he said. “There’s another revolver I can leave with you. To tell you the truth, I feel anxious somehow.”

He obtained the weapon, and put it ready to my hand on the table; then went out, leaving a restless contagion in the air. I did not sit long after he left, but took the revolver in hand and went to the doorway.

The morning was as still as death. Not a whisper of wind was stirring; the sea was like polished glass, the sky empty, the beach desolate. In my half-excited, half-feverish state, this stillness of things oppressed me. I tried to whistle, and the tune died away. I swore again, — the second time that morning. Then I went to the corner of the enclosure and stared inland at the green bush that had swallowed up Moreau and Montgomery. When would they return, and how? Then far away up the beach a little grey Beast Man appeared, ran down to the water’s edge and began splashing about. I strolled back to the doorway, then to the corner again, and so began pacing to and fro like a sentinel upon duty. Once I was arrested by the distant voice of Montgomery bawling, “Coo-ee — Moreau!” My arm became less painful, but very hot. I got feverish and thirsty. My shadow grew shorter. I watched the distant figure until it went away again. Would Moreau and Montgomery never return? Three sea-birds began fighting for some stranded treasure.

Then from far away behind the enclosure I heard a pistol-shot. A long silence, and then came another. Then a yelling cry nearer, and another dismal gap of silence. My unfortunate imagination set to work to torment me. Then suddenly a shot close by. I went to the corner, startled, and saw Montgomery, — his face scarlet, his hair disordered, and the knee of his trousers torn. His face expressed profound consternation. Behind him slouched the Beast Man, M’ling, and round M’ling’s jaws were some queer dark stains.

“Has he come?” said Montgomery.

“Moreau?” said I. “No.”

“My God!” The man was panting, almost sobbing. “Go back in,” he said, taking my arm. “They’re mad. They’re all rushing about mad. What can have happened? I don’t know. I’ll tell you, when my breath comes. Where’s some brandy?”

Montgomery limped before me into the room and sat down in the deck chair. M’ling flung himself down just outside the doorway and began panting like a dog. I got Montgomery some brandy-and-water. He sat staring in front of him at nothing, recovering his breath. After some minutes he began to tell me what had happened.

He had followed their track for some way. It was plain enough at first on account of the crushed and broken bushes, white rags torn from the puma’s bandages, and occasional smears of blood on the leaves of the shrubs and undergrowth. He lost the track, however, on the stony ground beyond the stream where I had seen the Beast Man drinking, and went wandering aimlessly westward shouting Moreau’s name. Then M’ling had come to him carrying a light hatchet. M’ling had seen nothing of the puma affair; had been felling wood, and heard him calling. They went on shouting together. Two Beast Men came crouching and peering at them through the undergrowth, with gestures and a furtive carriage that alarmed Montgomery by their strangeness. He hailed them, and they fled guiltily. He stopped shouting after that, and after wandering some time farther in an undecided way, determined to visit the huts.

He found the ravine deserted.

Growing more alarmed every minute, he began to retrace his steps. Then it was he encountered the two Swine-men I had seen dancing on the night of my arrival; blood-stained they were about the mouth, and intensely excited. They came crashing through the ferns, and stopped with fierce faces when they saw him. He cracked his whip in some trepidation, and forthwith they rushed at him. Never before had a Beast Man dared to do that. One he shot through the head; M’ling flung himself upon the other, and the two rolled grappling. M’ling got his brute under and with his teeth in its throat, and Montgomery shot that too as it struggled in M’ling’s grip. He had some difficulty in inducing M’ling to come on with him. Thence they had hurried back to me. On the way, M’ling had suddenly rushed into a thicket and driven out an under-sized Ocelot-man, also

blood-stained, and lame through a wound in the foot. This brute had run a little way and then turned savagely at bay, and Montgomery — with a certain wantonness, I thought — had shot him.

“What does it all mean?” said I.

He shook his head, and turned once more to the brandy.

XVIII. THE FINDING OF MOREAU.

WHEN I saw Montgomery swallow a third dose of brandy, I took it upon myself to interfere. He was already more than half fuddled. I told him that some serious thing must have happened to Moreau by this time, or he would have returned before this, and that it behoved us to ascertain what that catastrophe was. Montgomery raised some feeble objections, and at last agreed. We had some food, and then all three of us started.

It is possibly due to the tension of my mind, at the time, but even now that start into the hot stillness of the tropical afternoon is a singularly vivid impression. M'ling went first, his shoulder hunched, his strange black head moving with quick starts as he peered first on this side of the way and then on that. He was unarmed; his axe he had dropped when he encountered the Swine-man. Teeth were *his* weapons, when it came to fighting. Montgomery followed with stumbling footsteps, his hands in his pockets, his face downcast; he was in a state of muddled sullenness with me on account of the brandy. My left arm was in a sling (it was lucky it was my left), and I carried my revolver in my right. Soon we traced a narrow path through the wild luxuriance of the island, going northwestward; and presently M'ling stopped, and became rigid with watchfulness. Montgomery almost staggered into him, and then stopped too. Then, listening intently, we heard coming through the trees the sound of voices and footsteps approaching us.

"He is dead," said a deep, vibrating voice.

"He is not dead; he is not dead," jabbered another.

"We saw, we saw," said several voices.

"Hullo!" suddenly shouted Montgomery, "Hullo, there!"

"Confound you!" said I, and gripped my pistol.

There was a silence, then a crashing among the interlacing vegetation, first here, then there, and then half-a-dozen faces appeared, — strange faces, lit by a strange light. M'ling made a growling noise in his throat. I recognised the Ape-man: I had indeed already identified his voice, and two of the white-swathed brown-featured creatures I had seen in Montgomery's boat. With these were

the two dappled brutes and that grey, horribly crooked creature who said the Law, with grey hair streaming down its cheeks, heavy grey eyebrows, and grey locks pouring off from a central parting upon its sloping forehead, — a heavy, faceless thing, with strange red eyes, looking at us curiously from amidst the green.

For a space no one spoke. Then Montgomery hiccoughed, "Who — said he was dead?"

The Monkey-man looked guiltily at the hairy-grey Thing. "He is dead," said this monster. "They saw."

There was nothing threatening about this detachment, at any rate. They seemed awestricken and puzzled.

"Where is he?" said Montgomery.

"Beyond," and the grey creature pointed.

"Is there a Law now?" asked the Monkey-man. "Is it still to be this and that? Is he dead indeed?"

"Is there a Law?" repeated the man in white. "Is there a Law, thou Other with the Whip?"

"He is dead," said the hairy-grey Thing. And they all stood watching us.

"Prendick," said Montgomery, turning his dull eyes to me. "He's dead, evidently."

I had been standing behind him during this colloquy. I began to see how things lay with them. I suddenly stepped in front of Montgomery and lifted up my voice:— "Children of the Law," I said, "he is *not* dead!" M'ling turned his sharp eyes on me. "He has changed his shape; he has changed his body," I went on. "For a time you will not see him. He is — there," I pointed upward, "where he can watch you. You cannot see him, but he can see you. Fear the Law!"

I looked at them squarely. They flinched.

"He is great, he is good," said the Ape-man, peering fearfully upward among the dense trees.

"And the other Thing?" I demanded.

"The Thing that bled, and ran screaming and sobbing, — that is dead too," said the grey Thing, still regarding me.

"That's well," grunted Montgomery.

"The Other with the Whip—" began the grey Thing.

“Well?” said I.

“Said he was dead.”

But Montgomery was still sober enough to understand my motive in denying Moreau’s death. “He is not dead,” he said slowly, “not dead at all. No more dead than I am.”

“Some,” said I, “have broken the Law: they will die. Some have died. Show us now where his old body lies, — the body he cast away because he had no more need of it.”

“It is this way, Man who walked in the Sea,” said the grey Thing.

And with these six creatures guiding us, we went through the tumult of ferns and creepers and tree-stems towards the northwest. Then came a yelling, a crashing among the branches, and a little pink homunculus rushed by us shrieking. Immediately after appeared a monster in headlong pursuit, blood-bedabbled, who was amongst us almost before he could stop his career. The grey Thing leapt aside. M’ling, with a snarl, flew at it, and was struck aside. Montgomery fired and missed, bowed his head, threw up his arm, and turned to run. I fired, and the Thing still came on; fired again, point-blank, into its ugly face. I saw its features vanish in a flash: its face was driven in. Yet it passed me, gripped Montgomery, and holding him, fell headlong beside him and pulled him sprawling upon itself in its death-agony.

I found myself alone with M’ling, the dead brute, and the prostrate man. Montgomery raised himself slowly and stared in a muddled way at the shattered Beast Man beside him. It more than half sobered him. He scrambled to his feet. Then I saw the grey Thing returning cautiously through the trees.

“See,” said I, pointing to the dead brute, “is the Law not alive? This came of breaking the Law.”

He peered at the body. “He sends the Fire that kills,” said he, in his deep voice, repeating part of the Ritual. The others gathered round and stared for a space.

At last we drew near the westward extremity of the island. We came upon the gnawed and mutilated body of the puma, its shoulder-bone smashed by a bullet, and perhaps twenty yards farther found at last what we sought. Moreau lay face downward in a trampled space in a canebrake. One hand was almost severed at the wrist and his

silvery hair was dabbled in blood. His head had been battered in by the fetters of the puma. The broken canes beneath him were smeared with blood. His revolver we could not find. Montgomery turned him over. Resting at intervals, and with the help of the seven Beast People (for he was a heavy man), we carried Moreau back to the enclosure. The night was darkling. Twice we heard unseen creatures howling and shrieking past our little band, and once the little pink sloth-creature appeared and stared at us, and vanished again. But we were not attacked again. At the gates of the enclosure our company of Beast People left us, M'ling going with the rest. We locked ourselves in, and then took Moreau's mangled body into the yard and laid it upon a pile of brushwood. Then we went into the laboratory and put an end to all we found living there.

XIX. MONTGOMERY'S "BANK HOLIDAY."

WHEN this was accomplished, and we had washed and eaten, Montgomery and I went into my little room and seriously discussed our position for the first time. It was then near midnight. He was almost sober, but greatly disturbed in his mind. He had been strangely under the influence of Moreau's personality: I do not think it had ever occurred to him that Moreau could die. This disaster was the sudden collapse of the habits that had become part of his nature in the ten or more monotonous years he had spent on the island. He talked vaguely, answered my questions crookedly, wandered into general questions.

"This silly ass of a world," he said; "what a muddle it all is! I haven't had any life. I wonder when it's going to begin. Sixteen years being bullied by nurses and schoolmasters at their own sweet will; five in London grinding hard at medicine, bad food, shabby lodgings, shabby clothes, shabby vice, a blunder, — I didn't know any better, — and hustled off to this beastly island. Ten years here! What's it all for, Prendick? Are we bubbles blown by a baby?"

It was hard to deal with such ravings. "The thing we have to think of now," said I, "is how to get away from this island."

"What's the good of getting away? I'm an outcast. Where am *I* to join on? It's all very well for *you*, Prendick. Poor old Moreau! We can't leave him here to have his bones picked. As it is — And besides, what will become of the decent part of the Beast Folk?"

"Well," said I, "that will do to-morrow. I've been thinking we might make the brushwood into a pyre and burn his body — and those other things. Then what will happen with the Beast Folk?"

"*I* don't know. I suppose those that were made of beasts of prey will make silly asses of themselves sooner or later. We can't massacre the lot — can we? I suppose that's what *your* humanity would suggest? But they'll change. They are sure to change."

He talked thus inconclusively until at last I felt my temper going.

"Damnation!" he exclaimed at some petulance of mine; "can't you see I'm in a worse hole than you are?" And he got up, and went for the brandy. "Drink!" he said returning, "you logic-chopping,

chalky-faced saint of an atheist, drink!"

"Not I," said I, and sat grimly watching his face under the yellow paraffine flare, as he drank himself into a garrulous misery.

I have a memory of infinite tedium. He wandered into a maudlin defence of the Beast People and of M'ling. M'ling, he said, was the only thing that had ever really cared for him. And suddenly an idea came to him.

"I'm damned!" said he, staggering to his feet and clutching the brandy bottle.

By some flash of intuition I knew what it was he intended. "You don't give drink to that beast!" I said, rising and facing him.

"Beast!" said he. "You're the beast. He takes his liquor like a Christian. Come out of the way, Prendick!"

"For God's sake," said I.

"Get — out of the way!" he roared, and suddenly whipped out his revolver.

"Very well," said I, and stood aside, half-minded to fall upon him as he put his hand upon the latch, but deterred by the thought of my useless arm. "You've made a beast of yourself, — to the beasts you may go."

He flung the doorway open, and stood half facing me between the yellow lamp-light and the pallid glare of the moon; his eye-sockets were blotches of black under his stubbly eyebrows.

"You're a solemn prig, Prendick, a silly ass! You're always fearing and fancying. We're on the edge of things. I'm bound to cut my throat to-morrow. I'm going to have a damned Bank Holiday to-night." He turned and went out into the moonlight. "M'ling!" he cried; "M'ling, old friend!"

Three dim creatures in the silvery light came along the edge of the wan beach, — one a white-wrapped creature, the other two blotches of blackness following it. They halted, staring. Then I saw M'ling's hunched shoulders as he came round the corner of the house.

"Drink!" cried Montgomery, "drink, you brutes! Drink and be men! Damme, I'm the cleverest. Moreau forgot this; this is the last touch. Drink, I tell you!" And waving the bottle in his hand he started off at a kind of quick trot to the westward, M'ling ranging himself between him and the three dim creatures who followed.

I went to the doorway. They were already indistinct in the mist of the moonlight before Montgomery halted. I saw him administer a dose of the raw brandy to M'ling, and saw the five figures melt into one vague patch.

"Sing!" I heard Montgomery shout,— "sing all together, 'Confound old Prendick!' That's right; now again, 'Confound old Prendick!'"

The black group broke up into five separate figures, and wound slowly away from me along the band of shining beach. Each went howling at his own sweet will, yelping insults at me, or giving whatever other vent this new inspiration of brandy demanded. Presently I heard Montgomery's voice shouting, "Right turn!" and they passed with their shouts and howls into the blackness of the landward trees. Slowly, very slowly, they receded into silence.

The peaceful splendour of the night healed again. The moon was now past the meridian and travelling down the west. It was at its full, and very bright riding through the empty blue sky. The shadow of the wall lay, a yard wide and of inky blackness, at my feet. The eastward sea was a featureless grey, dark and mysterious; and between the sea and the shadow the grey sands (of volcanic glass and crystals) flashed and shone like a beach of diamonds. Behind me the paraffine lamp flared hot and ruddy.

Then I shut the door, locked it, and went into the enclosure where Moreau lay beside his latest victims, — the staghounds and the llama and some other wretched brutes, — with his massive face calm even after his terrible death, and with the hard eyes open, staring at the dead white moon above. I sat down upon the edge of the sink, and with my eyes upon that ghastly pile of silvery light and ominous shadows began to turn over my plans. In the morning I would gather some provisions in the dingey, and after setting fire to the pyre before me, push out into the desolation of the high sea once more. I felt that for Montgomery there was no help; that he was, in truth, half akin to these Beast Folk, unfitted for human kindred.

I do not know how long I sat there scheming. It must have been an hour or so. Then my planning was interrupted by the return of Montgomery to my neighbourhood. I heard a yelling from many throats, a tumult of exultant cries passing down towards the beach,

whooping and howling, and excited shrieks that seemed to come to a stop near the water's edge. The riot rose and fell; I heard heavy blows and the splintering smash of wood, but it did not trouble me then. A discordant chanting began.

My thoughts went back to my means of escape. I got up, brought the lamp, and went into a shed to look at some kegs I had seen there. Then I became interested in the contents of some biscuit-tins, and opened one. I saw something out of the tail of my eye, — a red figure, — and turned sharply.

Behind me lay the yard, vividly black-and-white in the moonlight, and the pile of wood and faggots on which Moreau and his mutilated victims lay, one over another. They seemed to be gripping one another in one last revengeful grapple. His wounds gaped, black as night, and the blood that had dripped lay in black patches upon the sand. Then I saw, without understanding, the cause of my phantom, — a ruddy glow that came and danced and went upon the wall opposite. I misinterpreted this, fancied it was a reflection of my flickering lamp, and turned again to the stores in the shed. I went on rummaging among them, as well as a one-armed man could, finding this convenient thing and that, and putting them aside for to-morrow's launch. My movements were slow, and the time passed quickly. Insensibly the daylight crept upon me.

The chanting died down, giving place to a clamour; then it began again, and suddenly broke into a tumult. I heard cries of, "More! more!" a sound like quarrelling, and a sudden wild shriek. The quality of the sounds changed so greatly that it arrested my attention. I went out into the yard and listened. Then cutting like a knife across the confusion came the crack of a revolver.

I rushed at once through my room to the little doorway. As I did so I heard some of the packing-cases behind me go sliding down and smash together with a clatter of glass on the floor of the shed. But I did not heed these. I flung the door open and looked out.

Up the beach by the boathouse a bonfire was burning, raining up sparks into the indistinctness of the dawn. Around this struggled a mass of black figures. I heard Montgomery call my name. I began to run at once towards this fire, revolver in hand. I saw the pink tongue of Montgomery's pistol lick out once, close to the ground. He was

down. I shouted with all my strength and fired into the air. I heard some one cry, “The Master!” The knotted black struggle broke into scattering units, the fire leapt and sank down. The crowd of Beast People fled in sudden panic before me, up the beach. In my excitement I fired at their retreating backs as they disappeared among the bushes. Then I turned to the black heaps upon the ground.

Montgomery lay on his back, with the hairy-grey Beast-man sprawling across his body. The brute was dead, but still gripping Montgomery’s throat with its curving claws. Near by lay M’ling on his face and quite still, his neck bitten open and the upper part of the smashed brandy-bottle in his hand. Two other figures lay near the fire, — the one motionless, the other groaning fitfully, every now and then raising its head slowly, then dropping it again.

I caught hold of the grey man and pulled him off Montgomery’s body; his claws drew down the torn coat reluctantly as I dragged him away. Montgomery was dark in the face and scarcely breathing. I splashed sea-water on his face and pillowed his head on my rolled-up coat. M’ling was dead. The wounded creature by the fire — it was a Wolf-brute with a bearded grey face — lay, I found, with the fore part of its body upon the still glowing timber. The wretched thing was injured so dreadfully that in mercy I blew its brains out at once. The other brute was one of the Bull-men swathed in white. He too was dead. The rest of the Beast People had vanished from the beach.

I went to Montgomery again and knelt beside him, cursing my ignorance of medicine. The fire beside me had sunk down, and only charred beams of timber glowing at the central ends and mixed with a grey ash of brushwood remained. I wondered casually where Montgomery had got his wood. Then I saw that the dawn was upon us. The sky had grown brighter, the setting moon was becoming pale and opaque in the luminous blue of the day. The sky to the eastward was rimmed with red.

Suddenly I heard a thud and a hissing behind me, and, looking round, sprang to my feet with a cry of horror. Against the warm dawn great tumultuous masses of black smoke were boiling up out of the enclosure, and through their stormy darkness shot flickering threads of blood-red flame. Then the thatched roof caught. I saw the curving charge of the flames across the sloping straw. A spurt of fire

jetted from the window of my room.

I knew at once what had happened. I remembered the crash I had heard. When I had rushed out to Montgomery's assistance, I had overturned the lamp.

The hopelessness of saving any of the contents of the enclosure stared me in the face. My mind came back to my plan of flight, and turning swiftly I looked to see where the two boats lay upon the beach. They were gone! Two axes lay upon the sands beside me; chips and splinters were scattered broadcast, and the ashes of the bonfire were blackening and smoking under the dawn. Montgomery had burnt the boats to revenge himself upon me and prevent our return to mankind!

A sudden convulsion of rage shook me. I was almost moved to batter his foolish head in, as he lay there helpless at my feet. Then suddenly his hand moved, so feebly, so pitifully, that my wrath vanished. He groaned, and opened his eyes for a minute. I knelt down beside him and raised his head. He opened his eyes again, staring silently at the dawn, and then they met mine. The lids fell.

"Sorry," he said presently, with an effort. He seemed trying to think. "The last," he murmured, "the last of this silly universe. What a mess—"

I listened. His head fell helplessly to one side. I thought some drink might revive him; but there was neither drink nor vessel in which to bring drink at hand. He seemed suddenly heavier. My heart went cold. I bent down to his face, put my hand through the rent in his blouse. He was dead; and even as he died a line of white heat, the limb of the sun, rose eastward beyond the projection of the bay, splashing its radiance across the sky and turning the dark sea into a weltering tumult of dazzling light. It fell like a glory upon his death-shrunken face.

I let his head fall gently upon the rough pillow I had made for him, and stood up. Before me was the glittering desolation of the sea, the awful solitude upon which I had already suffered so much; behind me the island, hushed under the dawn, its Beast People silent and unseen. The enclosure, with all its provisions and ammunition, burnt noisily, with sudden gusts of flame, a fitful crackling, and now and then a crash. The heavy smoke drove up the beach away from

me, rolling low over the distant tree-tops towards the huts in the ravine. Beside me were the charred vestiges of the boats and these five dead bodies.

Then out of the bushes came three Beast People, with hunched shoulders, protruding heads, misshapen hands awkwardly held, and inquisitive, unfriendly eyes and advanced towards me with hesitating gestures.

XX. ALONE WITH THE BEAST FOLK.

I FACED these people, facing my fate in them, single-handed now, — literally single-handed, for I had a broken arm. In my pocket was a revolver with two empty chambers. Among the chips scattered about the beach lay the two axes that had been used to chop up the boats. The tide was creeping in behind me. There was nothing for it but courage. I looked squarely into the faces of the advancing monsters. They avoided my eyes, and their quivering nostrils investigated the bodies that lay beyond me on the beach. I took half-a-dozen steps, picked up the blood-stained whip that lay beneath the body of the Wolf-man, and cracked it. They stopped and stared at me.

"Salute!" said I. "Bow down!"

They hesitated. One bent his knees. I repeated my command, with my heart in my mouth, and advanced upon them. One knelt, then the other two.

I turned and walked towards the dead bodies, keeping my face towards the three kneeling Beast Men, very much as an actor passing up the stage faces the audience.

"They broke the Law," said I, putting my foot on the Sayer of the Law. "They have been slain, — even the Sayer of the Law; even the Other with the Whip. Great is the Law! Come and see."

"None escape," said one of them, advancing and peering.

"None escape," said I. "Therefore hear and do as I command." They stood up, looking questioningly at one another.

"Stand there," said I.

I picked up the hatchets and swung them by their heads from the sling of my arm; turned Montgomery over; picked up his revolver still loaded in two chambers, and bending down to rummage, found half-a-dozen cartridges in his pocket.

"Take him," said I, standing up again and pointing with the whip; "take him, and carry him out and cast him into the sea."

They came forward, evidently still afraid of Montgomery, but still more afraid of my cracking red whip-lash; and after some fumbling and hesitation, some whip-cracking and shouting, they lifted him

gingerly, carried him down to the beach, and went splashing into the dazzling welter of the sea.

"On!" said I, "on! Carry him far."

They went in up to their armpits and stood regarding me.

"Let go," said I; and the body of Montgomery vanished with a splash. Something seemed to tighten across my chest.

"Good!" said I, with a break in my voice; and they came back, hurrying and fearful, to the margin of the water, leaving long wakes of black in the silver. At the water's edge they stopped, turning and glaring into the sea as though they presently expected Montgomery to arise therefrom and exact vengeance.

"Now these," said I, pointing to the other bodies.

They took care not to approach the place where they had thrown Montgomery into the water, but instead, carried the four dead Beast People slantingly along the beach for perhaps a hundred yards before they waded out and cast them away.

As I watched them disposing of the mangled remains of M'ling, I heard a light footfall behind me, and turning quickly saw the big Hyena-swine perhaps a dozen yards away. His head was bent down, his bright eyes were fixed upon me, his stumpy hands clenched and held close by his side. He stopped in this crouching attitude when I turned, his eyes a little averted.

For a moment we stood eye to eye. I dropped the whip and snatched at the pistol in my pocket; for I meant to kill this brute, the most formidable of any left now upon the island, at the first excuse. It may seem treacherous, but so I was resolved. I was far more afraid of him than of any other two of the Beast Folk. His continued life was I knew a threat against mine.

I was perhaps a dozen seconds collecting myself. Then cried I, "Salute! Bow down!"

His teeth flashed upon me in a snarl. "Who are *you* that I should __"

Perhaps a little too spasmodically I drew my revolver, aimed quickly and fired. I heard him yelp, saw him run sideways and turn, knew I had missed, and clicked back the cock with my thumb for the next shot. But he was already running headlong, jumping from side to side, and I dared not risk another miss. Every now and then he

looked back at me over his shoulder. He went slanting along the beach, and vanished beneath the driving masses of dense smoke that were still pouring out from the burning enclosure. For some time I stood staring after him. I turned to my three obedient Beast Folk again and signalled them to drop the body they still carried. Then I went back to the place by the fire where the bodies had fallen and kicked the sand until all the brown blood-stains were absorbed and hidden.

I dismissed my three serfs with a wave of the hand, and went up the beach into the thickets. I carried my pistol in my hand, my whip thrust with the hatchets in the sling of my arm. I was anxious to be alone, to think out the position in which I was now placed. A dreadful thing that I was only beginning to realise was, that over all this island there was now no safe place where I could be alone and secure to rest or sleep. I had recovered strength amazingly since my landing, but I was still inclined to be nervous and to break down under any great stress. I felt that I ought to cross the island and establish myself with the Beast People, and make myself secure in their confidence. But my heart failed me. I went back to the beach, and turning eastward past the burning enclosure, made for a point where a shallow spit of coral sand ran out towards the reef. Here I could sit down and think, my back to the sea and my face against any surprise. And there I sat, chin on knees, the sun beating down upon my head and unspeakable dread in my mind, plotting how I could live on against the hour of my rescue (if ever rescue came). I tried to review the whole situation as calmly as I could, but it was difficult to clear the thing of emotion.

I began turning over in my mind the reason of Montgomery's despair. "They will change," he said; "they are sure to change." And Moreau, what was it that Moreau had said? "The stubborn beast-flesh grows day by day back again." Then I came round to the Hyena-swine. I felt sure that if I did not kill that brute, he would kill me. The Sayer of the Law was dead: worse luck. They knew now that we of the Whips could be killed even as they themselves were killed. Were they peering at me already out of the green masses of ferns and palms over yonder, watching until I came within their spring? Were they plotting against me? What was the Hyena-swine telling them?

My imagination was running away with me into a morass of unsubstantial fears.

My thoughts were disturbed by a crying of sea-birds hurrying towards some black object that had been stranded by the waves on the beach near the enclosure. I knew what that object was, but I had not the heart to go back and drive them off. I began walking along the beach in the opposite direction, designing to come round the eastward corner of the island and so approach the ravine of the huts, without traversing the possible ambuscades of the thickets.

Perhaps half a mile along the beach I became aware of one of my three Beast Folk advancing out of the landward bushes towards me. I was now so nervous with my own imaginings that I immediately drew my revolver. Even the propitiatory gestures of the creature failed to disarm me. He hesitated as he approached.

"Go away!" cried I.

There was something very suggestive of a dog in the cringing attitude of the creature. It retreated a little way, very like a dog being sent home, and stopped, looking at me imploringly with canine brown eyes.

"Go away," said I. "Do not come near me."

"May I not come near you?" it said.

"No; go away," I insisted, and snapped my whip. Then putting my whip in my teeth, I stooped for a stone, and with that threat drove the creature away.

So in solitude I came round by the ravine of the Beast People, and hiding among the weeds and reeds that separated this crevice from the sea I watched such of them as appeared, trying to judge from their gestures and appearance how the death of Moreau and Montgomery and the destruction of the House of Pain had affected them. I know now the folly of my cowardice. Had I kept my courage up to the level of the dawn, had I not allowed it to ebb away in solitary thought, I might have grasped the vacant sceptre of Moreau and ruled over the Beast People. As it was I lost the opportunity, and sank to the position of a mere leader among my fellows.

Towards noon certain of them came and squatted basking in the hot sand. The imperious voices of hunger and thirst prevailed over my dread. I came out of the bushes, and, revolver in hand, walked

down towards these seated figures. One, a Wolf-woman, turned her head and stared at me, and then the others. None attempted to rise or salute me. I felt too faint and weary to insist, and I let the moment pass.

"I want food," said I, almost apologetically, and drawing near.

"There is food in the huts," said an Ox-boar-man, drowsily, and looking away from me.

I passed them, and went down into the shadow and odours of the almost deserted ravine. In an empty hut I feasted on some specked and half-decayed fruit; and then after I had propped some branches and sticks about the opening, and placed myself with my face towards it and my hand upon my revolver, the exhaustion of the last thirty hours claimed its own, and I fell into a light slumber, hoping that the flimsy barricade I had erected would cause sufficient noise in its removal to save me from surprise.

XXI. THE REVERSION OF THE BEAST FOLK.

IN this way I became one among the Beast People in the Island of Doctor Moreau. When I awoke, it was dark about me. My arm ached in its bandages. I sat up, wondering at first where I might be. I heard coarse voices talking outside. Then I saw that my barricade had gone, and that the opening of the hut stood clear. My revolver was still in my hand.

I heard something breathing, saw something crouched together close beside me. I held my breath, trying to see what it was. It began to move slowly, interminably. Then something soft and warm and moist passed across my hand. All my muscles contracted. I snatched my hand away. A cry of alarm began and was stifled in my throat. Then I just realised what had happened sufficiently to stay my fingers on the revolver.

"Who is that?" I said in a hoarse whisper, the revolver still pointed.

"I — Master."

"Who are you?"

"They say there is no Master now. But I know, I know. I carried the bodies into the sea, O Walker in the Sea! the bodies of those you slew. I am your slave, Master."

"Are you the one I met on the beach?" I asked.

"The same, Master."

The Thing was evidently faithful enough, for it might have fallen upon me as I slept. "It is well," I said, extending my hand for another licking kiss. I began to realise what its presence meant, and the tide of my courage flowed. "Where are the others?" I asked.

"They are mad; they are fools," said the Dog-man. "Even now they talk together beyond there. They say, 'The Master is dead. The Other with the Whip is dead. That Other who walked in the Sea is as we are. We have no Master, no Whips, no House of Pain, any more. There is an end. We love the Law, and will keep it; but there is no Pain, no Master, no Whips for ever again.' So they say. But I know,

Master, I know."

I felt in the darkness, and patted the Dog-man's head. "It is well," I said again.

"Presently you will slay them all," said the Dog-man.

"Presently," I answered, "I will slay them all, — after certain days and certain things have come to pass. Every one of them save those you spare, every one of them shall be slain."

"What the Master wishes to kill, the Master kills," said the Dog-man with a certain satisfaction in his voice.

"And that their sins may grow," I said, "let them live in their folly until their time is ripe. Let them not know that I am the Master."

"The Master's will is sweet," said the Dog-man, with the ready tact of his canine blood.

"But one has sinned," said I. "Him I will kill, whenever I may meet him. When I say to you, '*That is he*,' see that you fall upon him. And now I will go to the men and women who are assembled together."

For a moment the opening of the hut was blackened by the exit of the Dog-man. Then I followed and stood up, almost in the exact spot where I had been when I had heard Moreau and his staghound pursuing me. But now it was night, and all the miasmatic ravine about me was black; and beyond, instead of a green, sunlit slope, I saw a red fire, before which hunched, grotesque figures moved to and fro. Farther were the thick trees, a bank of darkness, fringed above with the black lace of the upper branches. The moon was just riding up on the edge of the ravine, and like a bar across its face drove the spire of vapour that was for ever streaming from the fumaroles of the island.

"Walk by me," said I, nerving myself; and side by side we walked down the narrow way, taking little heed of the dim Things that peered at us out of the huts.

None about the fire attempted to salute me. Most of them disregarded me, ostentatiously. I looked round for the Hyena-swine, but he was not there. Altogether, perhaps twenty of the Beast Folk squatted, staring into the fire or talking to one another.

"He is dead, he is dead! the Master is dead!" said the voice of the Ape-man to the right of me. "The House of Pain — there is no House

of Pain!”

“He is not dead,” said I, in a loud voice. “Even now he watches us!”

This startled them. Twenty pairs of eyes regarded me.

“The House of Pain is gone,” said I. “It will come again. The Master you cannot see; yet even now he listens among you.”

“True, true!” said the Dog-man.

They were staggered at my assurance. An animal may be ferocious and cunning enough, but it takes a real man to tell a lie.

“The Man with the Bandaged Arm speaks a strange thing,” said one of the Beast Folk.

“I tell you it is so,” I said. “The Master and the House of Pain will come again. Woe be to him who breaks the Law!”

They looked curiously at one another. With an affectation of indifference I began to chop idly at the ground in front of me with my hatchet. They looked, I noticed, at the deep cuts I made in the turf.

Then the Satyr raised a doubt. I answered him. Then one of the dappled things objected, and an animated discussion sprang up round the fire. Every moment I began to feel more convinced of my present security. I talked now without the catching in my breath, due to the intensity of my excitement, that had troubled me at first. In the course of about an hour I had really convinced several of the Beast Folk of the truth of my assertions, and talked most of the others into a dubious state. I kept a sharp eye for my enemy the Hyena-swine, but he never appeared. Every now and then a suspicious movement would startle me, but my confidence grew rapidly. Then as the moon crept down from the zenith, one by one the listeners began to yawn (showing the oddest teeth in the light of the sinking fire), and first one and then another retired towards the dens in the ravine; and I, dreading the silence and darkness, went with them, knowing I was safer with several of them than with one alone.

In this manner began the longer part of my sojourn upon this Island of Doctor Moreau. But from that night until the end came, there was but one thing happened to tell save a series of innumerable small unpleasant details and the fretting of an incessant uneasiness. So that I prefer to make no chronicle for that gap of time, to tell only

one cardinal incident of the ten months I spent as an intimate of these half-humanised brutes. There is much that sticks in my memory that I could write, — things that I would cheerfully give my right hand to forget; but they do not help the telling of the story.

In the retrospect it is strange to remember how soon I fell in with these monsters' ways, and gained my confidence again. I had my quarrels with them of course, and could show some of their teeth-marks still; but they soon gained a wholesome respect for my trick of throwing stones and for the bite of my hatchet. And my Saint-Bernard-man's loyalty was of infinite service to me. I found their simple scale of honour was based mainly on the capacity for inflicting trenchant wounds. Indeed, I may say — without vanity, I hope — that I held something like pre-eminence among them. One or two, whom in a rare access of high spirits I had scarred rather badly, bore me a grudge; but it vented itself chiefly behind my back, and at a safe distance from my missiles, in grimaces.

The Hyena-swine avoided me, and I was always on the alert for him. My inseparable Dog-man hated and dreaded him intensely. I really believe that was at the root of the brute's attachment to me. It was soon evident to me that the former monster had tasted blood, and gone the way of the Leopard-man. He formed a lair somewhere in the forest, and became solitary. Once I tried to induce the Beast Folk to hunt him, but I lacked the authority to make them co-operate for one end. Again and again I tried to approach his den and come upon him unaware; but always he was too acute for me, and saw or winded me and got away. He too made every forest pathway dangerous to me and my ally with his lurking ambuscades. The Dog-man scarcely dared to leave my side.

In the first month or so the Beast Folk, compared with their latter condition, were human enough, and for one or two besides my canine friend I even conceived a friendly tolerance. The little pink sloth-creature displayed an odd affection for me, and took to following me about. The Monkey-man bored me, however; he assumed, on the strength of his five digits, that he was my equal, and was for ever jabbering at me, — jabbering the most arrant nonsense. One thing about him entertained me a little: he had a fantastic trick of coining new words. He had an idea, I believe, that to gabble about names that

meant nothing was the proper use of speech. He called it "Big Thinks" to distinguish it from "Little Thinks," the sane every-day interests of life. If ever I made a remark he did not understand, he would praise it very much, ask me to say it again, learn it by heart, and go off repeating it, with a word wrong here or there, to all the milder of the Beast People. He thought nothing of what was plain and comprehensible. I invented some very curious "Big Thinks" for his especial use. I think now that he was the silliest creature I ever met; he had developed in the most wonderful way the distinctive silliness of man without losing one jot of the natural folly of a monkey.

This, I say, was in the earlier weeks of my solitude among these brutes. During that time they respected the usage established by the Law, and behaved with general decorum. Once I found another rabbit torn to pieces, — by the Hyena-swine, I am assured, — but that was all. It was about May when I first distinctly perceived a growing difference in their speech and carriage, a growing coarseness of articulation, a growing disinclination to talk. My Monkey-man's jabber multiplied in volume but grew less and less comprehensible, more and more simian. Some of the others seemed altogether slipping their hold upon speech, though they still understood what I said to them at that time. (Can you imagine language, once clear-cut and exact, softening and guttering, losing shape and import, becoming mere lumps of sound again?) And they walked erect with an increasing difficulty. Though they evidently felt ashamed of themselves, every now and then I would come upon one or another running on toes and finger-tips, and quite unable to recover the vertical attitude. They held things more clumsily; drinking by suction, feeding by gnawing, grew commoner every day. I realised more keenly than ever what Moreau had told me about the "stubborn beast-flesh." They were reverting, and reverting very rapidly.

Some of them — the pioneers in this, I noticed with some surprise, were all females — began to disregard the injunction of decency, deliberately for the most part. Others even attempted public outrages upon the institution of monogamy. The tradition of the Law was clearly losing its force. I cannot pursue this disagreeable subject.

My Dog-man imperceptibly slipped back to the dog again; day by day he became dumb, quadrupedal, hairy. I scarcely noticed the transition from the companion on my right hand to the lurching dog at my side.

As the carelessness and disorganisation increased from day to day, the lane of dwelling places, at no time very sweet, became so loathsome that I left it, and going across the island made myself a hovel of boughs amid the black ruins of Moreau's enclosure. Some memory of pain, I found, still made that place the safest from the Beast Folk.

It would be impossible to detail every step of the lapsing of these monsters, — to tell how, day by day, the human semblance left them; how they gave up bandagings and wrappings, abandoned at last every stitch of clothing; how the hair began to spread over the exposed limbs; how their foreheads fell away and their faces projected; how the quasi-human intimacy I had permitted myself with some of them in the first month of my loneliness became a shuddering horror to recall.

The change was slow and inevitable. For them and for me it came without any definite shock. I still went among them in safety, because no jolt in the downward glide had released the increasing charge of explosive animalism that ousted the human day by day. But I began to fear that soon now that shock must come. My Saint-Bernard-brute followed me to the enclosure every night, and his vigilance enabled me to sleep at times in something like peace. The little pink sloth-thing became shy and left me, to crawl back to its natural life once more among the tree-branches. We were in just the state of equilibrium that would remain in one of those "Happy Family" cages which animal-tamers exhibit, if the tamer were to leave it for ever.

Of course these creatures did not decline into such beasts as the reader has seen in zoological gardens, — into ordinary bears, wolves, tigers, oxen, swine, and apes. There was still something strange about each; in each Moreau had blended this animal with that. One perhaps was ursine chiefly, another feline chiefly, another bovine chiefly; but each was tainted with other creatures, — a kind of generalised animalism appearing through the specific dispositions.

And the dwindling shreds of the humanity still startled me every now and then, — a momentary recrudescence of speech perhaps, an unexpected dexterity of the fore-feet, a pitiful attempt to walk erect.

I too must have undergone strange changes. My clothes hung about me as yellow rags, through whose rents showed the tanned skin. My hair grew long, and became matted together. I am told that even now my eyes have a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement.

At first I spent the daylight hours on the southward beach watching for a ship, hoping and praying for a ship. I counted on the *Ipecacuanha* returning as the year wore on; but she never came. Five times I saw sails, and thrice smoke; but nothing ever touched the island. I always had a bonfire ready, but no doubt the volcanic reputation of the island was taken to account for that.

It was only about September or October that I began to think of making a raft. By that time my arm had healed, and both my hands were at my service again. At first, I found my helplessness appalling. I had never done any carpentry or such-like work in my life, and I spent day after day in experimental chopping and binding among the trees. I had no ropes, and could hit on nothing wherewith to make ropes; none of the abundant creepers seemed limber or strong enough, and with all my litter of scientific education I could not devise any way of making them so. I spent more than a fortnight grubbing among the black ruins of the enclosure and on the beach where the boats had been burnt, looking for nails and other stray pieces of metal that might prove of service. Now and then some Beast-creature would watch me, and go leaping off when I called to it. There came a season of thunder-storms and heavy rain, which greatly retarded my work; but at last the raft was completed.

I was delighted with it. But with a certain lack of practical sense which has always been my bane, I had made it a mile or more from the sea; and before I had dragged it down to the beach the thing had fallen to pieces. Perhaps it is as well that I was saved from launching it; but at the time my misery at my failure was so acute that for some days I simply moped on the beach, and stared at the water and thought of death.

I did not, however, mean to die, and an incident occurred that

warned me unmistakably of the folly of letting the days pass so, — for each fresh day was fraught with increasing danger from the Beast People.

I was lying in the shade of the enclosure wall, staring out to sea, when I was startled by something cold touching the skin of my heel, and starting round found the little pink sloth-creature blinking into my face. He had long since lost speech and active movement, and the lank hair of the little brute grew thicker every day and his stumpy claws more askew. He made a moaning noise when he saw he had attracted my attention, went a little way towards the bushes and looked back at me.

At first I did not understand, but presently it occurred to me that he wished me to follow him; and this I did at last, — slowly, for the day was hot. When we reached the trees he clambered into them, for he could travel better among their swinging creepers than on the ground. And suddenly in a trampled space I came upon a ghastly group. My Saint-Bernard-creature lay on the ground, dead; and near his body crouched the Hyena-swine, gripping the quivering flesh with its misshapen claws, gnawing at it, and snarling with delight. As I approached, the monster lifted its glaring eyes to mine, its lips went trembling back from its red-stained teeth, and it growled menacingly. It was not afraid and not ashamed; the last vestige of the human taint had vanished. I advanced a step farther, stopped, and pulled out my revolver. At last I had him face to face.

The brute made no sign of retreat; but its ears went back, its hair bristled, and its body crouched together. I aimed between the eyes and fired. As I did so, the Thing rose straight at me in a leap, and I was knocked over like a ninepin. It clutched at me with its crippled hand, and struck me in the face. Its spring carried it over me. I fell under the hind part of its body; but luckily I had hit as I meant, and it had died even as it leapt. I crawled out from under its unclean weight and stood up trembling, staring at its quivering body. That danger at least was over; but this, I knew was only the first of the series of relapses that must come.

I burnt both of the bodies on a pyre of brushwood; but after that I saw that unless I left the island my death was only a question of time. The Beast People by that time had, with one or two exceptions, left

the ravine and made themselves lairs according to their taste among the thickets of the island. Few prowled by day, most of them slept, and the island might have seemed deserted to a new-comer; but at night the air was hideous with their calls and howling. I had half a mind to make a massacre of them; to build traps, or fight them with my knife. Had I possessed sufficient cartridges, I should not have hesitated to begin the killing. There could now be scarcely a score left of the dangerous carnivores; the braver of these were already dead. After the death of this poor dog of mine, my last friend, I too adopted to some extent the practice of slumbering in the daytime in order to be on my guard at night. I rebuilt my den in the walls of the enclosure, with such a narrow opening that anything attempting to enter must necessarily make a considerable noise. The creatures had lost the art of fire too, and recovered their fear of it. I turned once more, almost passionately now, to hammering together stakes and branches to form a raft for my escape.

I found a thousand difficulties. I am an extremely unhandy man (my schooling was over before the days of Slöjd); but most of the requirements of a raft I met at last in some clumsy, circuitous way or other, and this time I took care of the strength. The only insurmountable obstacle was that I had no vessel to contain the water I should need if I floated forth upon these untravelled seas. I would have even tried pottery, but the island contained no clay. I used to go moping about the island trying with all my might to solve this one last difficulty. Sometimes I would give way to wild outbursts of rage, and hack and splinter some unlucky tree in my intolerable vexation. But I could think of nothing.

And then came a day, a wonderful day, which I spent in ecstasy. I saw a sail to the southwest, a small sail like that of a little schooner; and forthwith I lit a great pile of brushwood, and stood by it in the heat of it, and the heat of the midday sun, watching. All day I watched that sail, eating or drinking nothing, so that my head reeled; and the Beasts came and glared at me, and seemed to wonder, and went away. It was still distant when night came and swallowed it up; and all night I toiled to keep my blaze bright and high, and the eyes of the Beasts shone out of the darkness, marvelling. In the dawn the sail was nearer, and I saw it was the dirty lug-sail of a small boat.

But it sailed strangely. My eyes were weary with watching, and I peered and could not believe them. Two men were in the boat, sitting low down, — one by the bows, the other at the rudder. The head was not kept to the wind; it yawed and fell away.

As the day grew brighter, I began waving the last rag of my jacket to them; but they did not notice me, and sat still, facing each other. I went to the lowest point of the low headland, and gesticulated and shouted. There was no response, and the boat kept on her aimless course, making slowly, very slowly, for the bay. Suddenly a great white bird flew up out of the boat, and neither of the men stirred nor noticed it; it circled round, and then came sweeping overhead with its strong wings outspread.

Then I stopped shouting, and sat down on the headland and rested my chin on my hands and stared. Slowly, slowly, the boat drove past towards the west. I would have swum out to it, but something — a cold, vague fear — kept me back. In the afternoon the tide stranded the boat, and left it a hundred yards or so to the westward of the ruins of the enclosure. The men in it were dead, had been dead so long that they fell to pieces when I tilted the boat on its side and dragged them out. One had a shock of red hair, like the captain of the *Ipecacuanha*, and a dirty white cap lay in the bottom of the boat.

As I stood beside the boat, three of the Beasts came slinking out of the bushes and sniffing towards me. One of my spasms of disgust came upon me. I thrust the little boat down the beach and clambered on board her. Two of the brutes were Wolf-beasts, and came forward with quivering nostrils and glittering eyes; the third was the horrible nondescript of bear and bull. When I saw them approaching those wretched remains, heard them snarling at one another and caught the gleam of their teeth, a frantic horror succeeded my repulsion. I turned my back upon them, struck the lug and began paddling out to sea. I could not bring myself to look behind me.

I lay, however, between the reef and the island that night, and the next morning went round to the stream and filled the empty keg aboard with water. Then, with such patience as I could command, I collected a quantity of fruit, and waylaid and killed two rabbits with my last three cartridges. While I was doing this I left the boat moored to an inward projection of the reef, for fear of the Beast People.

XXII. THE MAN ALONE.

IN the evening I started, and drove out to sea before a gentle wind from the southwest, slowly, steadily; and the island grew smaller and smaller, and the lank spire of smoke dwindled to a finer and finer line against the hot sunset. The ocean rose up around me, hiding that low, dark patch from my eyes. The daylight, the trailing glory of the sun, went streaming out of the sky, was drawn aside like some luminous curtain, and at last I looked into the blue gulf of immensity which the sunshine hides, and saw the floating hosts of the stars. The sea was silent, the sky was silent. I was alone with the night and silence.

So I drifted for three days, eating and drinking sparingly, and meditating upon all that had happened to me, — not desiring very greatly then to see men again. One unclean rag was about me, my hair a black tangle: no doubt my discoverers thought me a madman.

It is strange, but I felt no desire to return to mankind. I was only glad to be quit of the foulness of the Beast People. And on the third day I was picked up by a brig from Apia to San Francisco. Neither the captain nor the mate would believe my story, judging that solitude and danger had made me mad; and fearing their opinion might be that of others, I refrained from telling my adventure further, and professed to recall nothing that had happened to me between the loss of the *Lady Vain* and the time when I was picked up again, — the space of a year.

I had to act with the utmost circumspection to save myself from the suspicion of insanity. My memory of the Law, of the two dead sailors, of the ambuscades of the darkness, of the body in the canebrake, haunted me; and, unnatural as it seems, with my return to mankind came, instead of that confidence and sympathy I had expected, a strange enhancement of the uncertainty and dread I had experienced during my stay upon the island. No one would believe me; I was almost as queer to men as I had been to the Beast People. I may have caught something of the natural wildness of my companions. They say that terror is a disease, and anyhow I can witness that for several years now a restless fear has dwelt in my mind, — such a restless fear as a half-tamed lion cub may feel.

My trouble took the strangest form. I could not persuade myself that the men and women I met were not also another Beast People, animals half wrought into the outward image of human souls, and that they would presently begin to revert, — to show first this bestial mark and then that. But I have confided my case to a strangely able man, — a man who had known Moreau, and seemed half to credit my story; a mental specialist, — and he has helped me mightily, though I do not expect that the terror of that island will ever altogether leave me. At most times it lies far in the back of my mind, a mere distant cloud, a memory, and a faint distrust; but there are times when the little cloud spreads until it obscures the whole sky. Then I look about me at my fellow-men; and I go in fear. I see faces, keen and bright; others dull or dangerous; others, unsteady, insincere, — none that have the calm authority of a reasonable soul. I feel as though the animal was surging up through them; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale. I know this is an illusion; that these seeming men and women about me are indeed men and women, — men and women for ever, perfectly reasonable creatures, full of human desires and tender solicitude, emancipated from instinct and the slaves of no fantastic Law, — beings altogether different from the Beast Folk. Yet I shrink from them, from their curious glances, their inquiries and assistance, and long to be away from them and alone. For that reason I live near the broad free downland, and can escape thither when this shadow is over my soul; and very sweet is the empty downland then, under the wind-swept sky.

When I lived in London the horror was well-nigh insupportable. I could not get away from men: their voices came through windows; locked doors were flimsy safeguards. I would go out into the streets to fight with my delusion, and prowling women would mew after me; furtive, craving men glance jealously at me; weary, pale workers go coughing by me with tired eyes and eager paces, like wounded deer dripping blood; old people, bent and dull, pass murmuring to themselves; and, all unheeding, a ragged tail of gibing children. Then I would turn aside into some chapel, — and even there, such was my disturbance, it seemed that the preacher gibbered “Big Thinks,” even as the Ape-man had done; or into some library, and there the intent

faces over the books seemed but patient creatures waiting for prey. Particularly nauseous were the blank, expressionless faces of people in trains and omnibuses; they seemed no more my fellow-creatures than dead bodies would be, so that I did not dare to travel unless I was assured of being alone. And even it seemed that I too was not a reasonable creature, but only an animal tormented with some strange disorder in its brain which sent it to wander alone, like a sheep stricken with gid.

This is a mood, however, that comes to me now, I thank God, more rarely. I have withdrawn myself from the confusion of cities and multitudes, and spend my days surrounded by wise books, — bright windows in this life of ours, lit by the shining souls of men. I see few strangers, and have but a small household. My days I devote to reading and to experiments in chemistry, and I spend many of the clear nights in the study of astronomy. There is — though I do not know how there is or why there is — a sense of infinite peace and protection in the glittering hosts of heaven. There it must be, I think, in the vast and eternal laws of matter, and not in the daily cares and sins and troubles of men, that whatever is more than animal within us must find its solace and its hope. I hope, or I could not live.

And so, in hope and solitude, my story ends.

EDWARD PRENDICK.

NOTE. The substance of the chapter entitled "Doctor Moreau explains," which contains the essential idea of the story, appeared as a middle article in the *Saturday Review* in January, 1895. This is the only portion of this story that has been previously published, and it has been entirely recast to adapt it to the narrative form.

THE WHEELS OF CHANCE

A BICYCLING IDYLL

The Wheels of Chance was written at the peak of what has been called the Golden Age of the bicycle — the years of 1890-1905, when practical, comfortable bicycles first became widely and cheaply available, and before the rise of the automobile. The advent of the bicycle stirred sudden and profound changes in the social life of England. It was unprecedented that a person of modest means could travel substantial distances, quickly, cheaply and without being limited to railway schedules. The very idea of travelling for pleasure became a possibility for thousands of people for the first time. This new freedom affected many. It began to weaken the rigid English class structure and it gave an especially powerful boost to the existing movement toward female emancipation.

These are the social changes Wells explores in *The Wheels of Chance*. His hero, Mr. Hoopdriver, is a draper's assistant, a badly-paid, grinding position on the bottom fringes of the middle-class — and yet he owns a bicycle and is just setting out on a bicycling tour for his annual ten-days holiday. Wells pokes fun at Hoopdriver's pretenses. To Wells and his contemporary readers, a draper's assistant on a bicycle tour was incongruous, only a bit less risible than a chimpanzee in a top hat.

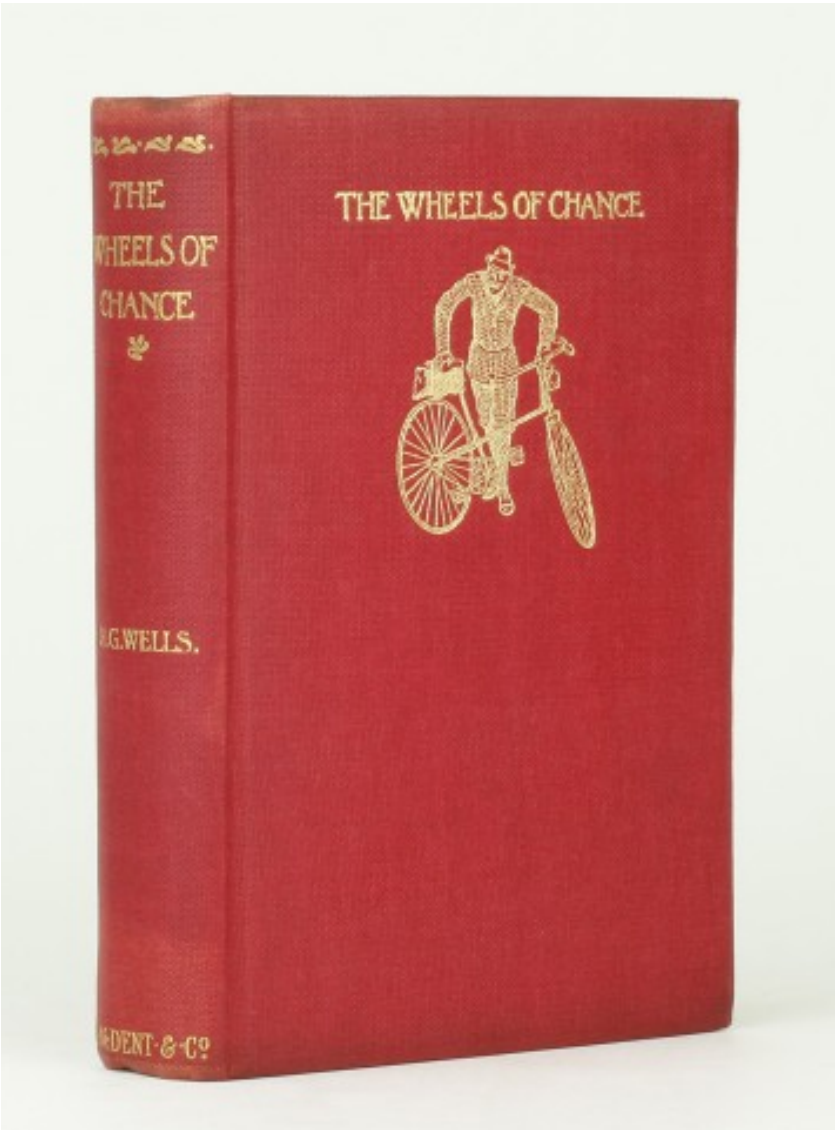

The first edition

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I. THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTER IN THE STORY

If you (presuming you are of the sex that does such things) — if you had gone into the Drapery Emporium — which is really only magnificent for shop — of Messrs. Antrobus & Co. — a perfectly fictitious "Co.," by the bye — of Putney, on the 14th of August, 1895, had turned to the right-hand side, where the blocks of white linen and piles of blankets rise up to the rail from which the pink and blue prints depend, you might have been served by the central figure of this story that is now beginning. He would have come forward, bowing and swaying, he would have extended two hands with largish knuckles and enormous cuffs over the counter, and he would have asked you, protruding a pointed chin and without the slightest anticipation of pleasure in his manner, what he might have the pleasure of showing you. Under certain circumstances — as, for instance, hats, baby linen, gloves, silks, lace, or curtains — he would simply have bowed politely, and with a drooping expression, and making a kind of circular sweep, invited you to "step this way," and so led you beyond his ken; but under other and happier conditions, — huckaback, blankets, dimity, cretonne, linen, calico, are cases in point, — he would have requested you to take a seat, emphasising the hospitality by leaning over the counter and gripping a chair back in a spasmodic manner, and so proceeded to obtain, unfold, and exhibit his goods for your consideration. Under which happier circumstances you might — if of an observing turn of mind and not too much of a housewife to be inhuman — have given the central figure of this story less cursory attention.

Now if you had noticed anything about him, it would have been chiefly to notice how little he was noticeable. He wore the black morning coat, the black tie, and the speckled grey nether parts (descending into shadow and mystery below the counter) of his craft. He was of a pallid complexion, hair of a kind of dirty fairness, greyish eyes, and a skimpy, immature moustache under his peaked indeterminate nose. His features were all small, but none ill-shaped.

A rosette of pins decorated the lappel of his coat. His remarks, you would observe, were entirely what people used to call cliche, formulae not organic to the occasion, but stereotyped ages ago and learnt years since by heart. “This, madam,” he would say, “is selling very well.” “We are doing a very good article at four three a yard.” “We could show you something better, of course.” “No trouble, madam, I assure you.” Such were the simple counters of his intercourse. So, I say, he would have presented himself to your superficial observation. He would have danced about behind the counter, have neatly refolded the goods he had shown you, have put on one side those you selected, extracted a little book with a carbon leaf and a tinfoil sheet from a fixture, made you out a little bill in that weak flourishing hand peculiar to drapers, and have bawled “Sayn!” Then a puffy little shop-walker would have come into view, looked at the bill for a second, very hard (showing you a parting down the middle of his head meanwhile), have scribbled a still more flourishing J. M. all over the document, have asked you if there was nothing more, have stood by you — supposing that you were paying cash — until the central figure of this story reappeared with the change. One glance more at him, and the puffy little shop-walker would have been bowing you out, with fountains of civilities at work all about you. And so the interview would have terminated.

But real literature, as distinguished from anecdote, does not concern itself with superficial appearances alone. Literature is revelation. Modern literature is indecorous revelation. It is the duty of the earnest author to tell you what you would not have seen — even at the cost of some blushes. And the thing that you would not have seen about this young man, and the thing of the greatest moment to this story, the thing that must be told if the book is to be written, was — let us face it bravely — the Remarkable Condition of this Young Man’s Legs.

Let us approach the business with dispassionate explicitness. Let us assume something of the scientific spirit, the hard, almost professorial tone of the conscientious realist. Let us treat this young man’s legs as a mere diagram, and indicate the points of interest with the unemotional precision of a lecturer’s pointer. And so to our revelation. On the internal aspect of the right ankle of this young

man you would have observed, ladies and gentlemen, a contusion and an abrasion; on the internal aspect of the left ankle a contusion also; on its external aspect a large yellowish bruise. On his left shin there were two bruises, one a leaden yellow graduating here and there into purple, and another, obviously of more recent date, of a blotchy red — tumid and threatening. Proceeding up the left leg in a spiral manner, an unnatural hardness and redness would have been discovered on the upper aspect of the calf, and above the knee and on the inner side, an extraordinary expanse of bruised surface, a kind of closely stippled shading of contused points. The right leg would be found to be bruised in a marvellous manner all about and under the knee, and particularly on the interior aspect of the knee. So far we may proceed with our details. Fired by these discoveries, an investigator might perhaps have pursued his inquiries further — to bruises on the shoulders, elbows, and even the finger joints, of the central figure of our story. He had indeed been bumped and battered at an extraordinary number of points. But enough of realistic description is as good as a feast, and we have exhibited enough for our purpose. Even in literature one must know where to draw the line.

Now the reader may be inclined to wonder how a respectable young shopman should have got his legs, and indeed himself generally, into such a dreadful condition. One might fancy that he had been sitting with his nether extremities in some complicated machinery, a threshing-machine, say, or one of those hay-making furies. But Sherlock Holmes (now happily dead) would have fancied nothing of the kind. He would have recognised at once that the bruises on the internal aspect of the left leg, considered in the light of the distribution of the other abrasions and contusions, pointed unmistakably to the violent impact of the Mounting Beginner upon the bicycling saddle, and that the ruinous state of the right knee was equally eloquent of the concussions attendant on that person's hasty, frequently causeless, and invariably ill-conceived descents. One large bruise on the shin is even more characteristic of the 'prentice cyclist, for upon every one of them waits the jest of the unexpected treadle. You try at least to walk your machine in an easy manner, and whack! — you are rubbing your shin. So out of innocence we ripen. Two

bruises on that place mark a certain want of aptitude in learning, such as one might expect in a person unused to muscular exercise. Blisters on the hands are eloquent of the nervous clutch of the wavering rider. And so forth, until Sherlock is presently explaining, by the help of the minor injuries, that the machine ridden is an old-fashioned affair with a fork instead of the diamond frame, a cushioned tire, well worn on the hind wheel, and a gross weight all on of perhaps three-and-forty pounds.

The revelation is made. Behind the decorous figure of the attentive shopman that I had the honour of showing you at first, rises a vision of a nightly struggle, of two dark figures and a machine in a dark road, — the road, to be explicit, from Roehampton to Putney Hill, — and with this vision is the sound of a heel spurning the gravel, a gasping and grunting, a shouting of "Steer, man, steer!" a wavering unsteady flight, a spasmodic turning of the missile edifice of man and machine, and a collapse. Then you descry dimly through the dusk the central figure of this story sitting by the roadside and rubbing his leg at some new place, and his friend, sympathetic (but by no means depressed), repairing the displacement of the handle-bar.

Thus even in a shop assistant does the warmth of manhood assert itself, and drive him against all the conditions of his calling, against the counsels of prudence and the restrictions of his means, to seek the wholesome delights of exertion and danger and pain. And our first examination of the draper reveals beneath his draperies — the man! To which initial fact (among others) we shall come again in the end.

II

But enough of these revelations. The central figure of our story is now going along behind the counter, a draper indeed, with your purchases in his arms, to the warehouse, where the various articles you have selected will presently be packed by the senior porter and sent to you. Returning thence to his particular place, he lays hands on a folded piece of gingham, and gripping the corners of the folds in his hands, begins to straighten them punctiliously. Near him is an apprentice, apprenticed to the same high calling of draper's assistant,

a ruddy, red-haired lad in a very short tailless black coat and a very high collar, who is deliberately unfolding and refolding some patterns of cretonne. By twenty-one he too may hope to be a full-blown assistant, even as Mr. Hoopdriver. Prints depend from the brass rails above them, behind are fixtures full of white packages containing, as inscriptions testify, Lino, Hd Bk, and Mull. You might imagine to see them that the two were both intent upon nothing but smoothness of textile and rectitude of fold. But to tell the truth, neither is thinking of the mechanical duties in hand. The assistant is dreaming of the delicious time — only four hours off now — when he will resume the tale of his bruises and abrasions. The apprentice is nearer the long long thoughts of boyhood, and his imagination rides cap-a-pie through the chambers of his brain, seeking some knightly quest in honour of that Fair Lady, the last but one of the girl apprentices to the dress-making upstairs. He inclines rather to street fighting against revolutionaries — because then she could see him from the window.

Jerking them back to the present comes the puffy little shop-walker, with a paper in his hand. The apprentice becomes extremely active. The shopwalker eyes the goods in hand. “Hoopdriver,” he says, “how’s that line of g-sez-x ginghams?”

Hoopdriver returns from an imaginary triumph over the uncertainties of dismounting. “They’re going fairly well, sir. But the larger checks seem hanging.”

The shop-walker brings up parallel to the counter. “Any particular time when you want your holidays?” he asks.

Hoopdriver pulls at his skimpy moustache. “No — Don’t want them too late, sir, of course.”

“How about this day week?”

Hoopdriver becomes rigidly meditative, gripping the corners of the gingham folds in his hands. His face is eloquent of conflicting considerations. Can he learn it in a week? That’s the question. Otherwise Briggs will get next week, and he will have to wait until September — when the weather is often uncertain. He is naturally of a sanguine disposition. All drapers have to be, or else they could never have the faith they show in the beauty, washability, and unfading excellence of the goods they sell you. The decision comes

at last. “That’ll do me very well,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, terminating the pause.

The die is cast.

The shop-walker makes a note of it and goes on to Briggs in the “dresses,” the next in the strict scale of precedence of the Drapery Emporium. Mr. Hoopdriver in alternating spasms anon straightens his gingham and anon becomes meditative, with his tongue in the hollow of his decaying wisdom tooth.

III

At supper that night, holiday talk held undisputed sway. Mr. Pritchard spoke of “Scotland,” Miss Isaacs clamoured of Bettws-y-Coed, Mr. Judson displayed a proprietary interest in the Norfolk Broads. “I?” said Hoopdriver when the question came to him. “Why, cycling, of course.”

“You’re never going to ride that dreadful machine of yours, day after day?” said Miss Howe of the Costume Department.

“I am,” said Hoopdriver as calmly as possible, pulling at the insufficient moustache. “I’m going for a Cycling Tour. Along the South Coast.”

“Well, all I hope, Mr. Hoopdriver, is that you’ll get fine weather,” said Miss Howe. “And not come any nasty croppers.”

“And done forget some tinscher of arnica in yer bag,” said the junior apprentice in the very high collar. (He had witnessed one of the lessons at the top of Putney Hill.)

“You stow it,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, looking hard and threateningly at the junior apprentice, and suddenly adding in a tone of bitter contempt,— “Jampot.”

“I’m getting fairly safe upon it now,” he told Miss Howe.

At other times Hoopdriver might have further resented the satirical efforts of the apprentice, but his mind was too full of the projected Tour to admit any petty delicacies of dignity. He left the supper table early, so that he might put in a good hour at the desperate gymnastics up the Roehampton Road before it would be time to come back for locking up. When the gas was turned off for the night he was sitting on the edge of his bed, rubbing arnica into

his knee — a new and very big place — and studying a Road Map of the South of England. Briggs of the "dresses," who shared the room with him, was sitting up in bed and trying to smoke in the dark. Briggs had never been on a cycle in his life, but he felt Hoopdriver's inexperience and offered such advice as occurred to him.

"Have the machine thoroughly well oiled," said Briggs, "carry one or two lemons with you, don't tear yourself to death the first day, and sit upright. Never lose control of the machine, and always sound the bell on every possible opportunity. You mind those things, and nothing very much can't happen to you, Hoopdriver — you take my word."

He would lapse into silence for a minute, save perhaps for a curse or so at his pipe, and then break out with an entirely different set of tips.

"Avoid running over dogs, Hoopdriver, whatever you do. It's one of the worst things you can do to run over a dog. Never let the machine buckle — there was a man killed only the other day through his wheel buckling — don't scorch, don't ride on the foot-path, keep your own side of the road, and if you see a tramline, go round the corner at once, and hurry off into the next county — and always light up before dark. You mind just a few little things like that, Hoopdriver, and nothing much can't happen to you — you take my word."

"Right you are!" said Hoopdriver. "Good-night, old man."

"Good-night," said Briggs, and there was silence for a space, save for the succulent respiration of the pipe. Hoopdriver rode off into Dreamland on his machine, and was scarcely there before he was pitched back into the world of sense again. — Something — what was it?

"Never oil the steering. It's fatal," a voice that came from round a fitful glow of light, was saying. "And clean the chain daily with black-lead. You mind just a few little things like that—"

"Lord LOVE us!" said Hoopdriver, and pulled the bedclothes over his ears.

IV. THE RIDING FORTH OF MR. HOOPDRIVER

Only those who toil six long days out of the seven, and all the year round, save for one brief glorious fortnight or ten days in the summer time, know the exquisite sensations of the First Holiday Morning. All the dreary, uninteresting routine drops from you suddenly, your chains fall about your feet. All at once you are Lord of yourself, Lord of every hour in the long, vacant day; you may go where you please, call none Sir or Madame, have a lappel free of pins, doff your black morning coat, and wear the colour of your heart, and be a Man. You grudge sleep, you grudge eating, and drinking even, their intrusion on those exquisite moments. There will be no more rising before breakfast in casual old clothing, to go dusting and getting ready in a cheerless, shutter-darkened, wrappered-up shop, no more imperious cries of, "Forward, Hoopdriver," no more hasty meals, and weary attendance on fitful old women, for ten blessed days. The first morning is by far the most glorious, for you hold your whole fortune in your hands. Thereafter, every night, comes a pang, a spectre, that will not be exorcised — the premonition of the return. The shadow of going back, of being put in the cage again for another twelve months, lies blacker and blacker across the sunlight. But on the first morning of the ten the holiday has no past, and ten days seems as good as infinity.

And it was fine, full of a promise of glorious days, a deep blue sky with dazzling piles of white cloud here and there, as though celestial haymakers had been piling the swathes of last night's clouds into cocks for a coming cartage. There were thrushes in the Richmond Road, and a lark on Putney Heath. The freshness of dew was in the air; dew or the relics of an overnight shower glittered on the leaves and grass. Hoopdriver had breakfasted early by Mrs. Gunn's complaisance. He wheeled his machine up Putney Hill, and his heart sang within him. Halfway up, a dissipated-looking black cat rushed home across the road and vanished under a gate. All the big red-brick houses behind the variegated shrubs and trees had their blinds down

still, and he would not have changed places with a soul in any one of them for a hundred pounds.

He had on his new brown cycling suit — a handsome Norfolk jacket thing for 30/(sp.) — and his legs — those martyr legs — were more than consoled by thick chequered stockings, “thin in the foot, thick in the leg,” for all they had endured. A neat packet of American cloth behind the saddle contained his change of raiment, and the bell and the handle-bar and the hubs and lamp, albeit a trifle freckled by wear, glittered blindingly in the rising sunlight. And at the top of the hill, after only one unsuccessful attempt, which, somehow, terminated on the green, Hoopdriver mounted, and with a stately and cautious restraint in his pace, and a dignified curvature of path, began his great Cycling Tour along the Southern Coast.

There is only one phrase to describe his course at this stage, and that is — voluptuous curves. He did not ride fast, he did not ride straight, an exacting critic might say he did not ride well — but he rode generously, opulently, using the whole road and even nibbling at the footpath. The excitement never flagged. So far he had never passed or been passed by anything, but as yet the day was young and the road was clear. He doubted his steering so much that, for the present, he had resolved to dismount at the approach of anything else upon wheels. The shadows of the trees lay very long and blue across the road, the morning sunlight was like amber fire.

At the cross-roads at the top of West Hill, where the cattle trough stands, he turned towards Kingston and set himself to scale the little bit of ascent. An early heath-keeper, in his velveteen jacket, marvelled at his efforts. And while he yet struggled, the head of a carter rose over the brow.

At the sight of him Mr. Hoopdriver, according to his previous determination, resolved to dismount. He tightened the brake, and the machine stopped dead. He was trying to think what he did with his right leg whilst getting off. He gripped the handles and released the brake, standing on the left pedal and waving his right foot in the air. Then — these things take so long in the telling — he found the machine was falling over to the right. While he was deciding upon a plan of action, gravitation appears to have been busy. He was still irresolute when he found the machine on the ground, himself

kneeling upon it, and a vague feeling in his mind that again Providence had dealt harshly with his shin. This happened when he was just level with the heathkeeper. The man in the approaching cart stood up to see the ruins better.

"THAT ain't the way to get off," said the heathkeeper.

Mr. Hoopdriver picked up the machine. The handle was twisted askew again He said something under his breath. He would have to unscrew the beastly thing.

"THAT ain't the way to get off," repeated the heathkeeper, after a silence.

"*I* know that," said Mr. Hoopdriver, testily, determined to overlook the new specimen on his shin at any cost. He unbuckled the wallet behind the saddle, to get out a screw hammer.

"If you know it ain't the way to get off — whaddyer do it for?" said the heath-keeper, in a tone of friendly controversy.

Mr. Hoopdriver got out his screw hammer and went to the handle. He was annoyed. "That's my business, I suppose," he said, fumbling with the screw. The unusual exertion had made his hands shake frightfully.

The heath-keeper became meditative, and twisted his stick in his hands behind his back. "You've broken yer 'andle, ain't yer?" he said presently. Just then the screw hammer slipped off the nut. Mr. Hoopdriver used a nasty, low word.

"They're trying things, them bicycles," said the heath-keeper, charitably. "Very trying." Mr. Hoopdriver gave the nut a vicious turn and suddenly stood up — he was holding the front wheel between his knees. "I wish," said he, with a catch in his voice, "I wish you'd leave off staring at me."

Then with the air of one who has delivered an ultimatum, he began replacing the screw hammer in the wallet.

The heath-keeper never moved. Possibly he raised his eyebrows, and certainly he stared harder than he did before. "You're pretty unsociable," he said slowly, as Mr. Hoopdriver seized the handles and stood ready to mount as soon as the cart had passed.

The indignation gathered slowly but surely. "Why don't you ride on a private road of your own if no one ain't to speak to you?" asked the heath-keeper, perceiving more and more clearly the bearing of

the matter. “Can’t no one make a passin’ remark to you, Touchy? Ain’t I good enough to speak to you? Been struck wooden all of a sudden?”

Mr. Hoopdriver stared into the Immensity of the Future. He was rigid with emotion. It was like abusing the Lions in Trafalgar Square. But the heathkeeper felt his honour was at stake.

“Don’t you make no remarks to ‘IM,” said the keeper as the carter came up broadside to them. “‘E’s a bloomin’ dook, ‘e is. ‘E don’t converse with no one under a earl. ‘E’s off to Windsor, ‘e is; that’s why ‘e’s stickin’ his be’ind out so haughty. Pride! Why, ‘e’s got so much of it, ‘e has to carry some of it in that there bundle there, for fear ‘e’d bust if ‘e didn’t ease hisself a bit— ‘E—”

But Mr. Hoopdriver heard no more. He was hopping vigorously along the road, in a spasmodic attempt to remount. He missed the treadle once and swore viciously, to the keeper’s immense delight. “Nar! Nar!” said the heath-keeper.

In another moment Mr. Hoopdriver was up, and after one terrific lurch of the machine, the heathkeeper dropped out of earshot. Mr. Hoopdriver would have liked to look back at his enemy, but he usually twisted round and upset if he tried that. He had to imagine the indignant heath-keeper telling the carter all about it. He tried to infuse as much disdain aspossible into his retreating aspect.

He drove on his sinuous way down the dip by the new mere and up the little rise to the crest of the hill that drops into Kingston Vale; and so remarkable is the psychology of cycling, that he rode all the straighter and easier because the emotions the heathkeeper had aroused relieved his mind of the constant expectation of collapse that had previously unnerved him. To ride a bicycle properly is very like a love affair — chiefly it is a matter of faith. Believe you do it, and the thing is done; doubt, and, for the life of you, you cannot.

Now you may perhaps imagine that as he rode on, his feelings towards the heath-keeper were either vindictive or remorseful, — vindictive for the aggravation or remorseful for his own injudicious display of ill temper. As a matter of fact, they were nothing of the sort. A sudden, a wonderful gratitude, possessed him. The Glory of the Holidays had resumed its sway with a sudden accession of splendour. At the crest of the hill he put his feet upon the footrests,

and now riding moderately straight, went, with a palpitating brake, down that excellent descent. A new delight was in his eyes, quite over and above the pleasure of rushing through the keen, sweet, morning air. He reached out his thumb and twanged his bell out of sheer happiness.

"'He's a bloomin' Dook — he is!'" said Mr. Hoopdriver to himself, in a soft undertone, as he went soaring down the hill, and again, "'He's a bloomin' Dook!'" He opened his mouth in a silent laugh. It was having a decent cut did it. His social superiority had been so evident that even a man like that noticed it. No more Manchester Department for ten days! Out of Manchester, a Man. The draper Hoopdriver, the Hand, had vanished from existence. Instead was a gentleman, a man of pleasure, with a five-pound note, two sovereigns, and some silver at various convenient points of his person. At any rate as good as a Dook, if not precisely in the peerage. Involuntarily at the thought of his funds Hoopdriver's right hand left the handle and sought his breast pocket, to be immediately recalled by a violent swoop of the machine towards the cemetery. Whirroo! Just missed that half-brick! Mischievous brutes there were in the world to put such a thing in the road. Some blooming 'Arry or other! Ought to prosecute a few of these roughs, and the rest would know better. That must be the buckle of the wallet was rattling on the mud-guard. How cheerfully the wheels buzzed!

The cemetery was very silent and peaceful, but the Vale was waking, and windows rattled and squeaked up, and a white dog came out of one of the houses and yelped at him. He got off, rather breathless, at the foot of Kingston Hill, and pushed up. Halfway up, an early milk chariot rattled by him; two dirty men with bundles came hurrying down. Hoopdriver felt sure they were burglars, carrying home the swag.

It was up Kingston Hill that he first noticed a peculiar feeling, a slight tightness at his knees; but he noticed, too, at the top that he rode straighter than he did before. The pleasure of riding straight blotted out these first intimations of fatigue. A man on horseback appeared; Hoopdriver, in a tumult of soul at his own temerity, passed him. Then down the hill into Kingston, with the screw hammer, behind in the wallet, rattling against the oil can. He passed, without

misadventure, a fruiterer's van and a sluggish cartload of bricks. And in Kingston Hoopdriver, with the most exquisite sensations, saw the shutters half removed from a draper's shop, and two yawning youths, in dusty old black jackets and with dirty white comforters about their necks, clearing up the planks and boxes and wrappers in the window, preparatory to dressing it out. Even so had Hoopdriver been on the previous day. But now, was he not a bloomin' Dook, palpably in the sight of common men? Then round the corner to the right — bell banged furiously — and so along the road to Surbiton.

Whoop for Freedom and Adventure! Every now and then a house with an expression of sleepy surprise would open its eye as he passed, and to the right of him for a mile or so the weltering Thames flashed and glittered. Talk of your joie de vivre. Albeit with a certain cramping sensation about the knees and calves slowly forcing itself upon his attention.

V. THE SHAMEFUL EPISODE OF THE YOUNG LADY IN GREY

Now you must understand that Mr. Hoopdriver was not one of your fast young men. If he had been King Lemuel, he could not have profited more by his mother's instructions. He regarded the feminine sex as something to bow to and smirk at from a safe distance. Years of the intimate remoteness of a counter leave their mark upon a man. It was an adventure for him to take one of the Young Ladies of the establishment to church on a Sunday. Few modern young men could have merited less the epithet "Dorg." But I have thought at times that his machine may have had something of the blade in its metal. Decidedly it was a machine with a past. Mr. Hoopdriver had bought it second-hand from Hare's in Putney, and Hare said it had had several owners. Second-hand was scarcely the word for it, and Hare was mildly puzzled that he should be selling such an antiquity. He said it was perfectly sound, if a little old-fashioned, but he was absolutely silent about its moral character. It may even have begun its career with a poet, say, in his glorious youth. It may have been the bicycle of a Really Bad Man. No one who has ever ridden a cycle of any kind but will witness that the things are unaccountably prone to pick up bad habits — and keep them.

It is undeniable that it became convulsed with the most violent emotions directly the Young Lady in Grey appeared. It began an absolutely unprecedented Wabble — unprecedented so far as Hoopdriver's experience went. It "showed off" — the most decadent sinuosity. It left a track like one of Beardsley's feathers. He suddenly realised, too, that his cap was loose on his head and his breath a mere remnant.

The Young Lady in Grey was also riding a bicycle. She was dressed in a beautiful bluish-gray, and the sun behind her drew her outline in gold and left the rest in shadow. Hoopdriver was dimly aware that she was young, rather slender, dark, and with a bright colour and bright eyes. Strange doubts possessed him as to the nature of her nether costume. He had heard of such things of course. French,

perhaps. Her handles glittered; a jet of sunlight splashed off her bell blindingly. She was approaching the high road along an affluent from the villas of Surbiton. fee roads converged slantingly. She was travelling at about the same pace as Mr. Hoopdriver. The appearances pointed to a meeting at the fork of the roads.

Hoopdriver was seized with a horrible conflict of doubts. By contrast with her he rode disgracefully. Had he not better get off at once and pretend something was wrong with his treadle? Yet even the end of getting off was an uncertainty. That last occasion on Putney Heath! On the other hand, what would happen if he kept on? To go very slow seemed the abnegation of his manhood. To crawl after a mere schoolgirl! Besides, she was not riding very fast. On the other hand, to thrust himself in front of her, consuming the road in his tendril-like advance, seemed an incivility — greed. He would leave her such a very little. His business training made him prone to bow and step aside. If only one could take one's hands off the handles, one might pass with a silent elevation of the hat, of course. But even that was a little suggestive of a funeral.

Meanwhile the roads converged. She was looking at him. She was flushed, a little thin, and had very bright eyes. Her red lips fell apart. She may have been riding hard, but it looked uncommonly like a faint smile. And the things were — yes! — RATIONALS! Suddenly an impulse to bolt from the situation became clamorous. Mr. Hoopdriver pedalled convulsively, intending to pass her. He jerked against some tin thing on the road, and it flew up between front wheel and mud-guard. He twisted round towards her. Had the machine a devil?

At that supreme moment it came across him that he would have done wiser to dismount. He gave a frantic 'whoop' and tried to get round, then, as he seemed falling over, he pulled the handles straight again and to the left by an instinctive motion, and shot behind her hind wheel, missing her by a hair's breadth. The pavement kerb awaited him. He tried to recover, and found himself jumped up on the pavement and riding squarely at a neat wooden paling. He struck this with a terrific impact and shot forward off his saddle into a clumsy entanglement. Then he began to tumble over sideways, and completed the entire figure in a sitting position on the gravel, with

his feet between the fork and the stay of the machine. The concussion on the gravel shook his entire being. He remained in that position, wishing that he had broken his neck, wishing even more heartily that he had never been born. The glory of life had departed. Bloomin' Dook, indeed! These unwomanly women!

There was a soft whirr, the click of a brake, two footfalls, and the Young Lady in Grey stood holding her machine. She had turned round and come back to him. The warm sunlight now was in her face. "Are you hurt?" she said. She had a pretty, clear, girlish voice. She was really very young — quite a girl, in fact. And rode so well! It was a bitter draught.

Mr. Hoopdriver stood up at once. "Not a bit," he said, a little ruefully. He became painfully aware that large patches of gravel scarcely improve the appearance of a Norfolk suit. "I'm very sorry indeed—"

"It's my fault," she said, interrupting and so saving him on the very verge of calling her 'Miss.' (He knew 'Miss' was wrong, but it was deep-seated habit with him.) "I tried to pass you on the wrong side." Her face and eyes seemed all alive. "It's my place to be sorry."

"But it was my steering—"

"I ought to have seen you were a Novice" — with a touch of superiority. "But you rode so straight coming along there!"

She really was — dashed pretty. Mr. Hoopdriver's feelings passed the nadir. When he spoke again there was the faintest flavour of the aristocratic in his voice.

"It's my first ride, as a matter of fact. But that's no excuse for my ah! blundering—"

"Your finger's bleeding," she said, abruptly.

He saw his knuckle was barked. "I didn't feel it," he said, feeling manly.

"You don't at first. Have you any sticking-plaster? If not—" She balanced her machine against herself. She had a little side pocket, and she whipped out a small packet of sticking-plaster with a pair of scissors in a sheath at the side, and cut off a generous portion. He had a wild impulse to ask her to stick it on for him. Controlled. "Thank you," he said.

"Machine all right?" she asked, looking past him at the prostrate

vehicle, her hands on her handle-bar. For the first time Hoopdriver did not feel proud of his machine.

He turned and began to pick up the fallen fabric. He looked over his shoulder, and she was gone, turned his head over the other shoulder down the road, and she was riding off. “ORF!” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “Well, I’m blowed! — Talk about Slap Up!” (His aristocratic refinement rarely adorned his speech in his private soliloquies.) His mind was whirling. One fact was clear. A most delightful and novel human being had flashed across his horizon and was going out of his life again. The Holiday madness was in his blood. She looked round!

At that he rushed his machine into the road, and began a hasty ascent. Unsuccessful. Try again. Confound it, will he NEVER be able to get up on the thing again? She will be round the corner in a minute. Once more. Ah! Pedal! Wabble! No! Right this time! He gripped the handles and put his head down. He would overtake her.

The situation was primordial. The Man beneath prevailed for a moment over the civilised superstructure, the Draper. He pushed at the pedals with archaic violence. So Palaeolithic man may have ridden his simple bicycle of chipped flint in pursuit of his exogamous affinity. She vanished round the corner. His effort was Titanic. What should he say when he overtook her? That scarcely disturbed him at first. How fine she had looked, flushed with the exertion of riding, breathing a little fast, but elastic and active! Talk about your ladylike, homekeeping girls with complexions like cold veal! But what should he say to her? That was a bother. And he could not lift his cap without risking a repetition of his previous ignominy. She was a real Young Lady. No mistake about that! None of your blooming shop girls. (There is no greater contempt in the world than that of shop men for shop girls, unless it be that of shop girls for shop men.) Phew! This was work. A certain numbness came and went at his knees.

“May I ask to whom I am indebted?” he panted to himself, trying it over. That might do. Lucky he had a card case! A hundred a shilling — while you wait. He was getting winded. The road was certainly a bit uphill. He turned the corner and saw a long stretch of road, and a grey dress vanishing. He set his teeth. Had he gained on

her at all? “Monkey on a gridiron!” yelped a small boy. Hoopdriver redoubled his efforts. His breath became audible, his steering unsteady, his pedalling positively ferocious. A drop of perspiration ran into his eye, irritant as acid. The road really was uphill beyond dispute. All his physiology began to cry out at him. A last tremendous effort brought him to the corner and showed yet another extent of shady roadway, empty save for a baker’s van. His front wheel suddenly shrieked aloud. “Oh Lord!” said Hoopdriver, relaxing.

Anyhow she was not in sight. He got off unsteadily, and for a moment his legs felt like wisps of cotton. He balanced his machine against the grassy edge of the path and sat down panting. His hands were gnarled with swollen veins and shaking palpably, his breath came viscid.

“I’m hardly in training yet,” he remarked. His legs had gone leaden. “I don’t feel as though I’d had a mouthful of breakfast.” Presently he slapped his side pocket and produced therefrom a brand-new cigarette case and a packet of Vansittart’s Red Herring cigarettes. He filled the case. Then his eye fell with a sudden approval on the ornamental chequering of his new stockings. The expression in his eyes faded slowly to abstract meditation.

“She WAS a stunning girl,” he said. “I wonder if I shall ever set eyes on her again. And she knew how to ride, too! Wonder what she thought of me.”

The phrase ‘bloomin’ Dook’ floated into his mind with a certain flavour of comfort.

He lit a cigarette, and sat smoking and meditating. He did not even look up when vehicles passed. It was perhaps ten minutes before he roused himself. “What rot it is! What’s the good of thinking such things,” he said. “I’m only a blessed draper’s assistant.” (To be exact, he did not say blessed. The service of a shop may polish a man’s exterior ways, but the ‘prentices’ dormitory is an indifferent school for either manners or morals.) He stood up and began wheeling his machine towards Esher. It was going to be a beautiful day, and the hedges and trees and the open country were all glorious to his town-tired eyes. But it was a little different from the elation of his start.

“Look at the gentleman wizzer bicitle,” said a nursemaid on the path to a personage in a perambulator. That healed him a little. “‘Gentleman wizzer bicitle,’— ‘bloomin’ Dook’ — I can’t look so very seedy,” he said to himself.

“I WONDER — I should just like to know—”

There was something very comforting in the track of HER pneumatic running straight and steady along the road before him. It must be hers. No other pneumatic had been along the road that morning. It was just possible, of course, that he might see her once more — coming back. Should he try and say something smart? He speculated what manner of girl she might be. Probably she was one of these here New Women. He had a persuasion the cult had been maligned. Anyhow she was a Lady. And rich people, too! Her machine couldn’t have cost much under twenty pounds. His mind came round and dwelt some time on her visible self. Rational dress didn’t look a bit unwomanly. However, he disdained to be one of your fortune-hunters. Then his thoughts drove off at a tangent. He would certainly have to get something to eat at the next public house.

VI. ON THE ROAD TO RIPLEY

In the fulness of time, Mr. Hoopdriver drew near the Marquis of Granby at Esher, and as he came under the railway arch and saw the inn in front of him, he mounted his machine again and rode bravely up to the doorway. Burton and biscuit and cheese he had, which, indeed, is Burton in its proper company; and as he was eating there came a middleaged man in a drab cycling suit, very red and moist and angry in the face, and asked bitterly for a lemon squash. And he sat down upon the seat in the bar and mopped his face. But scarcely had he sat down before he got up again and stared out of the doorway.

"Damn!" said he. Then, "Damned Fool!"

"Eigh?" said Mr. Hoopdriver, looking round suddenly with a piece of cheese in his cheek.

The man in drab faced him. "I called myself a Damned Fool, sir. Have you any objections?"

"Oh! — None. None," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "I thought you spoke to me. I didn't hear what you said."

"To have a contemplative disposition and an energetic temperament, sir, is hell. Hell, I tell you. A contemplative disposition and a phlegmatic temperament, all very well. But energy and philosophy — !"

Mr. Hoopdriver looked as intelligent as he could, but said nothing.

"There's no hurry, sir, none whatever. I came out for exercise, gentle exercise, and to notice the scenery and to botanise. And no sooner do I get on the accursed machine, than off I go hammer and tongs; I never look to right or left, never notice a flower, never see a view, get hot, juicy, red, — like a grilled chop. Here I am, sir. Come from Guildford in something under the hour. WHY, sir?"

Mr. Hoopdriver shook his head.

"Because I'm a damned fool, sir. Because I've reservoirs and reservoirs of muscular energy, and one or other of them is always leaking. It's a most interesting road, birds and trees, I've no doubt, and wayside flowers, and there's nothing I should enjoy more than watching them. But I can't. Get me on that machine, and I have to

go. Get me on anything, and I have to go. And I don't want to go a bit. WHY should a man rush about like a rocket, all pace and fizzle? Why? It makes me furious. I can assure you, sir, I go scorching along the road, and cursing aloud at myself for doing it. A quiet, dignified, philosophical man, that's what I am — at bottom; and here I am dancing with rage and swearing like a drunken tinker at a perfect stranger —

"But my day's wasted. I've lost all that country road, and now I'm on the fringe of London. And I might have loitered all the morning! Ugh! Thank Heaven, sir, you have not the irritable temperament, that you are not goaded to madness by your endogenous sneers, by the eternal wrangling of an uncomfortable soul and body. I tell you, I lead a cat and dog life — But what IS the use of talking? — It's all of a piece!"

He tossed his head with unspeakable self-disgust, pitched the lemon squash into his mouth, paid for it, and without any further remark strode to the door. Mr. Hoopdriver was still wondering what to say when his interlocutor vanished. There was a noise of a foot spurning the gravel, and when Mr. Hoopdriver reached the doorway, the man in drab was a score of yards Londonward. He had already gathered pace. He pedalled with ill-suppressed anger, and his head was going down. In another moment he flew swiftly out of sight under the railway arch, and Mr. Hoopdriver saw him no more.

VII.

After this whirlwind Mr. Hoopdriver paid his reckoning and — being now a little rested about the muscles of the knees — resumed his saddle and rode on in the direction of Ripley, along an excellent but undulating road. He was pleased to find his command over his machine already sensibly increased. He set himself little exercises as he went along and performed them with variable success. There was, for instance, steering in between a couple of stones, say a foot apart, a deed of little difficulty as far as the front wheel is concerned. But the back wheel, not being under the sway of the human eye, is apt to take a vicious jump over the obstacle, which sends a violent concussion all along the spine to the skull, and will even jerk a

loosely fastened hat over the eyes, and so lead to much confusion. And again, there was taking the hand or hands off the handlebar, a thing simple in itself, but complex in its consequences. This particularly was a feat Mr. Hoopdriver desired to do, for several divergent reasons; but at present it simply led to convulsive balancings and novel and inelegant modes of dismounting.

The human nose is, at its best, a needless excrescence. There are those who consider it ornamental, and would regard a face deprived of its assistance with pity or derision; but it is doubtful whether our esteem is dictated so much by a sense of its absolute beauty as by the vitiating effect of a universally prevalent fashion. In the case of bicycle students, as in the young of both sexes, its inutility is aggravated by its persistent annoyance — it requires constant attention. Until one can ride with one hand, and search for, secure, and use a pocket handkerchief with the other, cycling is necessarily a constant series of descents. Nothing can be further from the author's ambition than a wanton realism, but Mr. Hoopdriver's nose is a plain and salient fact, and face it we must. And, in addition to this inconvenience, there are flies. Until the cyclist can steer with one hand, his face is given over to Beelzebub. Contemplative flies stroll over it, and trifle absently with its most sensitive surfaces. The only way to dislodge them is to shake the head forcibly and to writhe one's features violently. This is not only a lengthy and frequently ineffectual method, but one exceedingly terrifying to foot passengers. And again, sometimes the beginner rides for a space with one eye closed by perspiration, giving him a waggish air foreign to his mood and ill calculated to overawe the impertinent. However, you will appreciate now the motive of Mr. Hoopdriver's experiments. He presently attained sufficient dexterity to slap himself smartly and violently in the face with his right hand, without certainly overturning the machine; but his pocket handkerchief might have been in California for any good it was to him while he was in the saddle.

Yet you must not think that because Mr. Hoopdriver was a little uncomfortable, he was unhappy in the slightest degree. In the background of his consciousness was the sense that about this time Briggs would be half-way through his window dressing, and

Gosling, the apprentice, busy, with a chair turned down over the counter and his ears very red, trying to roll a piece of huckaback — only those who have rolled pieces of huckaback know quite how detestable huckaback is to roll — and the shop would be dusty and, perhaps, the governor about and snappy. And here was quiet and greenery, and one mucked about as the desire took one, without a soul to see, and here was no wailing of "Sayn," no folding of remnants, no voice to shout, "Hoopdriver, forward!" And once he almost ran over something wonderful, a little, low, red beast with a yellowish tail, that went rushing across the road before him. It was the first weasel he had ever seen in his cockney life. There were miles of this, scores of miles of this before him, pinewood and oak forest, purple, heathery moorland and grassy down, lush meadows, where shining rivers wound their lazy way, villages with square-towered, flint churches, and rambling, cheap, and hearty inns, clean, white, country towns, long downhill stretches, where one might ride at one's ease (overlooking a jolt or so), and far away, at the end of it all, — the sea.

What mattered a fly or so in the dawn of these delights? Perhaps he had been dashed a minute by the shameful episode of the Young Lady in Grey, and perhaps the memory of it was making itself a little lair in a corner of his brain from which it could distress him in the retrospect by suggesting that he looked like a fool; but for the present that trouble was altogether in abeyance. The man in drab — evidently a swell — had spoken to him as his equal, and the knees of his brown suit and the chequered stockings were ever before his eyes. (Or, rather, you could see the stockings by carrying the head a little to one side.) And to feel, little by little, his mastery over this delightful, treacherous machine, growing and growing! Every half-mile or so his knees reasserted themselves, and he dismounted and sat awhile by the roadside.

It was at a charming little place between Esher and Cobham, where a bridge crosses a stream, that Mr. Hoopdriver came across the other cyclist in brown. It is well to notice the fact here, although the interview was of the slightest, because it happened that subsequently Hoopdriver saw a great deal more of this other man in brown. The other cyclist in brown had a machine of dazzling newness, and a

punctured pneumatic lay across his knees. He was a man of thirty or more, with a whitish face, an aquiline nose, a lank, flaxen moustache, and very fair hair, and he scowled at the job before him. At the sight of him Mr. Hoopdriver pulled himself together, and rode by with the air of one born to the wheel. “A splendid morning,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, “and a fine surface.”

“The morning and you and the surface be everlastingly damned!” said the other man in brown as Hoopdriver receded. Hoopdriver heard the mumble and did not distinguish the words, and he felt a pleasing sense of having duly asserted the wide sympathy that binds all cyclists together, of having behaved himself as becomes one of the brotherhood of the wheel. The other man in brown watched his receding aspect. “Greasy proletarian,” said the other man in brown, feeling a prophetic dislike. “Got a suit of brown, the very picture of this. One would think his sole aim in life had been to caricature me. It’s Fortune’s way with me. Look at his insteps on the treadles! Why does Heaven make such men?”

And having lit a cigarette, the other man in brown returned to the business in hand.

Mr. Hoopdriver worked up the hill towards Cobham to a point that he felt sure was out of sight of the other man in brown, and then he dismounted and pushed his machine; until the proximity of the village and a proper pride drove him into the saddle again.

VIII.

Beyond Cobham came a delightful incident, delightful, that is, in its beginning if a trifle indeterminate in the retrospect. It was perhaps half-way between Cobham and Ripley. Mr. Hoopdriver dropped down a little hill, where, unfenced from the road, fine mossy trees and bracken lay on either side; and looking up he saw an open country before him, covered with heather and set with pines, and a yellow road running across it, and half a mile away perhaps, a little grey figure by the wayside waving something white. “Never!” said Mr. Hoopdriver with his hands tightening on the handles.

He resumed the treadles, staring away before him, jolted over a stone, wabbled, recovered, and began riding faster at once, with his

eyes ahead. “It can’t be,” said Hoopdriver.

He rode his straightest, and kept his pedals spinning, albeit a limp numbness had resumed possession of his legs. “It CAN’T be,” he repeated, feeling every moment more assured that it WAS. “Lord! I don’t know even now,” said Mr. Hoopdriver (legs awhirling), and then, “Blow my legs!”

But he kept on and drew nearer and nearer, breathing hard and gathering flies like a flypaper. In the valley he was hidden. Then the road began to rise, and the resistance of the pedals grew. As he crested the hill he saw her, not a hundred yards away from him. “It’s her!” he said. “It’s her — right enough. It’s the suit’s done it,” — which was truer even than Mr. Hoopdriver thought. But now she was not waving her handkerchief, she was not even looking at him. She was wheeling her machine slowly along the road towards him, and admiring the pretty wooded hills towards Weybridge. She might have been unaware of his existence for all the recognition he got.

For a moment horrible doubts troubled Mr. Hoopdriver. Had that handkerchief been a dream? Besides which he was deliquescent and scarlet, and felt so. It must be her coquetry — the handkerchief was indisputable. Should he ride up to her and get off, or get off and ride up to her? It was as well she didn’t look, because he would certainly capsize if he lifted his cap. Perhaps that was her consideration. Even as he hesitated he was upon her. She must have heard his breathing. He gripped the brake. Steady! His right leg waved in the air, and he came down heavily and staggering, but erect. She turned her eyes upon him with admirable surprise.

Mr. Hoopdriver tried to smile pleasantly, hold up his machine, raise his cap, and bow gracefully. Indeed, he felt that he did as much. He was a man singularly devoid of the minutiae of self-consciousness, and he was quite unaware of a tail of damp hair lying across his forehead, and just clearing his eyes, and of the general disorder of his coiffure. There was an interrogative pause.

“What can I have the pleasure—” began Mr. Haopdriver, insinuatingly. “I mean” (remembering his emancipation and abruptly assuming his most aristocratic intonation), “can I be of any assistance to you?”

The Young Lady in Grey bit her lower lip and said very prettily,

“None, thank you.” She glanced away from him and made as if she would proceed.

“Oh!” said Mr. Hoopdriver, taken aback and suddenly crestfallen again. It was so unexpected. He tried to grasp the situation. Was she coquetting? Or had he — ?

“Excuse me, one minute,” he said, as she began to wheel her machine again.

“Yes?” she said, stopping and staring a little, with the colour in her cheeks deepening.

“I should not have alighted if I had not — imagined that you — er, waved something white—” He paused.

She looked at him doubtfully. He HAD seen it! She decided that he was not an unredeemed rough taking advantage of a mistake, but an innocent soul meaning well while seeking happiness. “I DID wave my handkerchief,” she said. “I’m very sorry. I am expecting — a friend, a gentleman,” — she seemed to flush pink for a minute. “He is riding a bicycle and dressed in — in brown; and at a distance, you know—”

“Oh, quite!” said Mr. Hoopdriver, bearing up in manly fashion against his bitter disappointment. “Certainly.”

“I’m awfully sorry, you know. Troubling you to dismount, and all that.”

“No trouble. ‘Ssure you,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, mechanically and bowing over his saddle as if it was a counter. Somehow he could not find it in his heart to tell her that the man was beyond there with a punctured pneumatic. He looked back along the road and tried to think of something else to say. But the gulf in the conversation widened rapidly and hopelessly. “There’s nothing further,” began Mr. Hoopdriver desperately, recurring to his stock of cliches.

“Nothing, thank you,” she said decisively. And immediately, “This IS the Ripley road?”

“Certainly,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “Ripley is about two miles from here. According to the mile-stones.”

“Thank you,” she said warmly. “Thank you so much. I felt sure there was no mistake. And I really am awfully sorry—”

“Don’t mention it,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “Don’t mention it.” He hesitated and gripped his handles to mount. “It’s me,” he said, “ought

to be sorry.” Should he say it? Was it an impertinence? Anyhow!—“Not being the other gentleman, you know.”

He tried a quietly insinuating smile that he knew for a grin even as he smiled it; felt she disapproved — that she despised him, was overcome with shame at her expression, turned his back upon her, and began (very clumsily) to mount. He did so with a horrible swerve, and went pedalling off, riding very badly, as he was only too painfully aware. Nevertheless, thank Heaven for the mounting! He could not see her because it was so dangerous for him to look round, but he could imagine her indignant and pitiless. He felt an unspeakable idiot. One had to be so careful what one said to Young Ladies, and he’d gone and treated her just as though she was only a Larky Girl. It was unforgivable. He always WAS a fool. You could tell from her manner she didn’t think him a gentleman. One glance, and she seemed to look clear through him and all his presence. What rot it was venturing to speak to a girl like that! With her education she was bound to see through him at once.

How nicely she spoke too! nice clear-cut words! She made him feel what slush his own accent was. And that last silly remark. What was it? ‘Not being the other gentleman, you know!’ No point in it. And ‘GENTLEMAN!’ What COULD she be thinking of him?

But really the Young Lady in Grey had dismissed Hoopdriver from her thoughts almost before he had vanished round the corner. She had thought no ill of him. His manifest awe and admiration of her had given her not an atom of offence. But for her just now there were weightier things to think about, things that would affect all the rest of her life. She continued slowly walking her machine Londonward. Presently she stopped. “Oh! Why DOESN’T he come?” she said, and stamped her foot petulantly. Then, as if in answer, coming down the hill among the trees, appeared the other man in brown, dismounted and wheeling his machine.

IX. HOW MR. HOOPDRIVER WAS HAUNTED

As Mr. Hoopdriver rode swaggering along the Ripley road, it came to him, with an unwarrantable sense of comfort, that he had seen the last of the Young Lady in Grey. But the ill-concealed bladery of the machine, the present machinery of Fate, the deus ex machina, so to speak, was against him. The bicycle, torn from this attractive young woman, grew heavier and heavier, and continually more unsteady. It seemed a choice between stopping at Ripley or dying in the flower of his days. He went into the Unicorn, after propping his machine outside the door, and, as he cooled down and smoked his Red Herring cigarette while the cold meat was getting ready, he saw from the window the Young Lady in Grey and the other man in brown, entering Ripley.

They filled him with apprehension by looking at the house which sheltered him, but the sight of his bicycle, propped in a drunk and incapable attitude against the doorway, humping its rackety mud-guard and leering at them with its darkened lantern eye, drove them away — so it seemed to Mr. Hoopdriver — to the spacious swallow of the Golden Dragon. The young lady was riding very slowly, but the other man in brown had a bad puncture and was wheeling his machine. Mr. Hoopdriver noted his flaxen moustache, his aquiline nose, his rather bent shoulders, with a sudden, vivid dislike.

The maid at the Unicorn is naturally a pleasant girl, but she is jaded by the incessant incidence of cyclists, and Hoopdriver's mind, even as he conversed with her in that cultivated voice of his — of the weather, of the distance from London, and of the excellence of the Ripley road — wandered to the incomparable freshness and brilliance of the Young Lady in Grey. As he sat at meat he kept turning his head to the window to see what signs there were of that person, but the face of the Golden Dragon displayed no appreciation of the delightful morsel it had swallowed. As an incidental consequence of this distraction, Mr. Hoopdriver was for a minute greatly inconvenienced by a mouthful of mustard. After he had called for his reckoning he went, his courage being high with meat and mustard, to the door, intending to stand, with his legs wide apart and

his hands deep in his pockets, and stare boldly across the road. But just then the other man in brown appeared in the gateway of the Golden Dragon yard — it is one of those delightful inns that date from the coaching days — wheeling his punctured machine. He was taking it to Flambeau's, the repairer's. He looked up and saw Hoopdriver, stared for a minute, and then scowled darkly.

But Hoopdriver remained stoutly in the doorway until the other man in brown had disappeared into Flambeau's. Then he glanced momentarily at the Golden Dragon, puckered his mouth into a whistle of unconcern, and proceeded to wheel his machine into the road until a sufficient margin for mounting was secured.

Now, at that time, I say, Hoopdriver was rather desirous than not of seeing no more of the Young Lady in Grey. The other man in brown he guessed was her brother, albeit that person was of a pallid fairness, differing essentially from her rich colouring; and, besides, he felt he had made a hopeless fool of himself. But the afternoon was against him, intolerably hot, especially on the top of his head, and the virtue had gone out of his legs to digest his cold meat, and altogether his ride to Guildford was exceedingly intermittent. At times he would walk, at times lounge by the wayside, and every public house, in spite of Briggs and a sentiment of economy, meant a lemonade and a dash of bitter. (For that is the experience of all those who go on wheels, that drinking begets thirst, even more than thirst begets drinking, until at last the man who yields becomes a hell unto himself, a hell in which the fire dieth not, and the thirst is not quenched.) Until a pennyworth of acrid green apples turned the current that threatened to carry him away. Ever and again a cycle, or a party of cyclists, would go by, with glittering wheels and softly running chains, and on each occasion, to save his self-respect, Mr. Hoopdriver descended and feigned some trouble with his saddle. Each time he descended with less trepidation.

He did not reach Guildford until nearly four o'clock, and then he was so much exhausted that he decided to put up there for the night, at the Yellow Hammer Coffee Tavern. And after he had cooled a space and refreshed himself with tea and bread and butter and jam, — the tea he drank noisily out of the saucer, — he went out to loiter away the rest of the afternoon. Guildford is an altogether charming

old town, famous, so he learnt from a Guide Book, as the scene of Master Tupper's great historical novel of Stephen Langton, and it has a delightful castle, all set about with geraniums and brass plates commemorating the gentlemen who put them up, and its Guildhall is a Tudor building, very pleasant to see, and in the afternoon the shops are busy and the people going to and fro make the pavements look bright and prosperous. It was nice to peep in the windows and see the heads of the men and girls in the drapers' shops, busy as busy, serving away. The High Street runs down at an angle of seventy degrees to the horizon (so it seemed to Mr. Hoopdriver, whose feeling for gradients was unnaturally exalted), and it brought his heart into his mouth to see a cyclist ride down it, like a fly crawling down a window pane. The man hadn't even a brake. He visited the castle early in the evening and paid his twopence to ascend the Keep.

At the top, from the cage, he looked down over the clustering red roofs of the town and the tower of the church, and then going to the southern side sat down and lit a Red Herring cigarette, and stared away south over the old bramble-bearing, fern-beset ruin, at the waves of blue upland that rose, one behind another, across the Weald, to the lazy altitudes of Hindhead and Butser. His pale grey eyes were full of complacency and pleasurable anticipation. Tomorrow he would go riding across that wide valley.

He did not notice any one else had come up the Keep after him until he heard a soft voice behind him saying: "Well, MISS BEAUMONT, here's the view." Something in the accent pointed to a jest in the name.

"It's a dear old town, brother George," answered another voice that sounded familiar enough, and turning his head, Mr. Hoopdriver saw the other man in brown and the Young Lady in Grey, with their backs towards him. She turned her smiling profile towards Hoopdriver. "Only, you know, brothers don't call their sisters—"

She glanced over her shoulder and saw Hoopdriver. "Damn!" said the other man in brown, quite audibly, starting as he followed her glance.

Mr. Hoopdriver, with a fine air of indifference, resumed the Weald. "Beautiful old town, isn't it?" said the other man in brown, after a quite perceptible pause.

“Isn’t it?” said the Young Lady in Grey.

Another pause began.

“Can’t get alone anywhere,” said the other man in brown, looking round.

Then Mr. Hoopdriver perceived clearly that he was in the way, and decided to retreat. It was just his luck of course that he should stumble at the head of the steps and vanish with indignity. This was the third time that he’d seen HIM, and the fourth time her. And of course he was too big a fat-head to raise his cap to HER! He thought of that at the foot of the Keep. Apparently they aimed at the South Coast just as he did, He’d get up betimes the next day and hurry off to avoid her — them, that is. It never occurred to Mr. Hoopdriver that Miss Beaumont and her brother might do exactly the same thing, and that evening, at least, the peculiarity of a brother calling his sister “Miss Beaumont” did not recur to him. He was much too preoccupied with an analysis of his own share of these encounters. He found it hard to be altogether satisfied about the figure he had cut, revise his memories as he would.

Once more quite unintentionally he stumbled upon these two people. It was about seven o’clock. He stopped outside a linen draper’s and peered over the goods in the window at the assistants in torment. He could have spent a whole day happily at that. He told himself that he was trying to see how they dressed out the brass lines over their counters, in a purely professional spirit, but down at the very bottom of his heart he knew better. The customers were a secondary consideration, and it was only after the lapse of perhaps a minute that he perceived that among them was — the Young Lady in Grey! He turned away from the window at once, and saw the other man in brown standing at the edge of the pavement and regarding him with a very curious expression of face.

There came into Mr. Hoopdriver’s head the curious problem whether he was to be regarded as a nuisance haunting these people, or whether they were to be regarded as a nuisance haunting him. He abandoned the solution at last in despair, quite unable to decide upon the course he should take at the next encounter, whether he should scowl savagely at the couple or assume an attitude eloquent of apology and propitiation.

X. THE IMAGININGS OF MR. HOOPDRIVER'S HEART

Mr. Hoopdriver was (in the days of this story) a poet, though he had never written a line of verse. Or perhaps romancer will describe him better. Like I know not how many of those who do the fetching and carrying of life, — a great number of them certainly, — his real life was absolutely uninteresting, and if he had faced it as realistically as such people do in Mr. Gissing's novels, he would probably have come by way of drink to suicide in the course of a year. But that was just what he had the natural wisdom not to do. On the contrary, he was always decorating his existence with imaginative tags, hopes, and poses, deliberate and yet quite effectual self-deceptions; his experiences were mere material for a romantic superstructure. If some power had given Hoopdriver the 'giftie' Burns invoked, 'to see oursels as ithers see us,' he would probably have given it away to some one else at the very earliest opportunity. His entire life, you must understand, was not a continuous romance, but a series of short stories linked only by the general resemblance of their hero, a brown-haired young fellow commonly, with blue eyes and a fair moustache, graceful rather than strong, sharp and resolute rather than clever (cp., as the scientific books say,). Invariably this person possessed an iron will. The stories fluctuated indefinitely. The smoking of a cigarette converted Hoopdriver's hero into something entirely worldly, subtly rakish, with a humorous twinkle in the eye and some gallant sinning in the background. You should have seen Mr. Hoopdriver promenading the brilliant gardens at Earl's Court on an early-closing night. His meaning glances! (I dare not give the meaning.) Such an influence as the eloquence of a revivalist preacher would suffice to divert the story into absolutely different channels, make him a white-soured hero, a man still pure, walking untainted and brave and helpful through miry ways. The appearance of some daintily gloved frockcoated gentleman with buttonhole and eyeglass complete, gallantly attendant in the rear of customers, served again to start visions of a simplicity essentially Cromwell-like, of sturdy plainness,

of a strong, silent man going righteously through the world. This day there had predominated a fine leisurely person immaculately clothed, and riding on an unexceptional machine, a mysterious person — quite unostentatious, but with accidental self-revelation of something over the common, even a "bloomin' Dook," it might be incognito, on the tour of the South Coast.

You must not think that there was any TELLING of these stories of this life-long series by Mr. Hoopdriver. He never dreamt that they were known to a soul. If it were not for the trouble, I would, I think, go back and rewrite this section from the beginning, expunging the statements that Hoopdriver was a poet and a romancer, and saying instead that he was a playwright and acted his own plays. He was not only the sole performer, but the entire audience, and the entertainment kept him almost continuously happy. Yet even that playwright comparison scarcely expresses all the facts of the case. After all, very many of his dreams never got acted at all, possibly indeed, most of them, the dreams of a solitary walk for instance, or of a tramcar ride, the dreams dreamt behind the counter while trade was slack and mechanical foldings and rollings occupied his muscles. Most of them were little dramatic situations, crucial dialogues, the return of Mr. Hoopdriver to his native village, for instance, in a well-cut holiday suit and natty gloves, the unheard asides of the rival neighbours, the delight of the old 'mater,' the intelligence— "A ten-pound rise all at once from Antrobus, mater. Whad d'yer think of that?" or again, the first whispering of love, dainty and witty and tender, to the girl he served a few days ago with sateen, or a gallant rescue of generalised beauty in distress from truculent insult or ravening dog.

So many people do this — and you never suspect it. You see a tattered lad selling matches in the street, and you think there is nothing between him and the bleakness of immensity, between him and utter abasement, but a few tattered rags and a feeble musculature. And all unseen by you a host of heaven-sent fatuities swathes him about, even, maybe, as they swathe you about. Many men have never seen their own profiles or the backs of their heads, and for the back of your own mind no mirror has been invented. They swathe him about so thickly that the pricks of fate scarce penetrate to him, or

become but a pleasant titillation. And so, indeed, it is with all of us who go on living. Self-deception is the anaesthetic of life, while God is carving out our beings.

But to return from this general vivisection to Mr. Hoopdriver's imaginings. You see now how external our view has been; we have had but the slightest transitory glimpses of the drama within, of how the things looked in the magic mirror of Mr. Hoopdriver's mind. On the road to Guildford and during his encounters with his haunting fellow-cyclists the drama had presented chiefly the quiet gentleman to whom we have alluded, but at Guildford, under more varied stimuli, he burgeoned out more variously. There was the house agent's window, for instance, set him upon a charming little comedy. He would go in, make inquires about that thirty-pound house, get the key possibly and go over it — the thing would stimulate the clerk's curiosity immensely. He searched his mind for a reason for this proceeding and discovered that he was a dynamiter needing privacy. Upon that theory he procured the key, explored the house carefully, said darkly that it might suit his special needs, but that there were OTHERS to consult. The clerk, however, did not understand the allusion, and merely pitied him as one who had married young and paired himself to a stronger mind than his own.

This proceeding in some occult way led to the purchase of a note-book and pencil, and that started the conception of an artist taking notes. That was a little game Mr. Hoopdriver had, in congenial company, played in his still younger days — to the infinite annoyance of quite a number of respectable excursionists at Hastings. In early days Mr. Hoopdriver had been, as his mother proudly boasted, a 'bit of a drawer,' but a conscientious and normally stupid schoolmaster perceived the incipient talent and had nipped it in the bud by a series of lessons in art. However, our principal character figured about quite happily in old corners of Guildford, and once the other man in brown, looking out of the bay window of the Earl of Kent, saw him standing in a corner by a gateway, note-book in hand, busily sketching the Earl's imposing features. At which sight the other man in brown started back from the centre of the window, so as to be hidden from him, and crouching slightly, watched him intently through the interstices of the lace curtains.

XI. OMISSIONS

Now the rest of the acts of Mr. Hoopdriver in Guildford, on the great opening day of his holidays, are not to be detailed here. How he wandered about the old town in the dusk, and up to the Hogsback to see the little lamps below and the little stars above come out one after another; how he returned through the yellow-lit streets to the Yellow Hammer Coffee Tavern and supped bravely in the commercial room — a Man among Men; how he joined in the talk about flying-machines and the possibilities of electricity, witnessing that flying-machines were "dead certain to come," and that electricity was "wonderful, wonderful"; how he went and watched the billiard playing and said, "Left 'em" several times with an oracular air; how he fell a-yawning; and how he got out his cycling map and studied it intently, — are things that find no mention here. Nor will I enlarge upon his going into the writing-room, and marking the road from London to Guildford with a fine, bright line of the reddest of red ink. In his little cyclist hand-book there is a diary, and in the diary there is an entry of these things — it is there to this day, and I cannot do better than reproduce it here to witness that this book is indeed a true one, and no lying fable written to while away an hour.

At last he fell a-yawning so much that very reluctantly indeed he set about finishing this great and splendid day. (Alas! that all days must end at last!) He got his candle in the hall from a friendly waiting-maid, and passed upward — whither a modest novelist, who writes for the family circle, dare not follow. Yet I may tell you that he knelt down at his bedside, happy and drowsy, and said, "Our Father 'chartin' heaven," even as he had learnt it by rote from his mother nearly twenty years ago. And anon when his breathing had become deep and regular, we may creep into his bedroom and catch him at his dreams. He is lying upon his left side, with his arm under the pillow. It is dark, and he is hidden; but if you could have seen his face, sleeping there in the darkness, I think you would have perceived, in spite of that treasured, thin, and straggling moustache, in spite of your memory of the coarse words he had used that day, that the man before you was, after all, only a little child asleep.

XII. THE DREAMS OF MR. HOOPDRIVER

In spite of the drawn blinds and the darkness, you have just seen Mr. Hoopdriver's face peaceful in its beauty sleep in the little, plain bedroom at the very top of the Yellow Hammer Coffee Tavern at Guildford. That was before midnight. As the night progressed he was disturbed by dreams.

After your first day of cycling one dream is inevitable. A memory of motion lingers in the muscles of your legs, and round and round they seem to go. You ride through Dreamland on wonderful dream bicycles that change and grow; you ride down steeples and staircases and over precipices; you hover in horrible suspense over inhabited towns, vainly seeking for a brake your hand cannot find, to save you from a headlong fall; you plunge into weltering rivers, and rush helplessly at monstrous obstacles. Anon Mr. Hoopdriver found himself riding out of the darkness of non-existence, pedalling Ezekiel's Wheels across the Weald of Surrey, jolting over the hills and smashing villages in his course, while the other man in brown cursed and swore at him and shouted to stop his career. There was the Putney heath-keeper, too, and the man in drab raging at him. He felt an awful fool, a — what was it? — a juggins, ah! — a Juggernaut. The villages went off one after another with a soft, squashing noise. He did not see the Young Lady in Grey, but he knew she was looking at his back. He dared not look round. Where the devil was the brake? It must have fallen off. And the bell? Right in front of him was Guildford. He tried to shout and warn the town to get out of the way, but his voice was gone as well. Nearer, nearer! it was fearful! and in another moment the houses were cracking like nuts and the blood of the inhabitants squirting this way and that. The streets were black with people running. Right under his wheels he saw the Young Lady in Grey. A feeling of horror came upon Mr. Hoopdriver; he flung himself sideways to descend, forgetting how high he was, and forthwith he began falling; falling, falling.

He woke up, turned over, saw the new moon on the window, wondered a little, and went to sleep again.

This second dream went back into the first somehow, and the

other man in brown came threatening and shouting towards him. He grew uglier and uglier as he approached, and his expression was intolerably evil. He came and looked close into Mr. Hoopdriver's eyes and then receded to an incredible distance. His face seemed to be luminous. "MISS BEAUMONT," he said, and splashed up a spray of suspicion. Some one began letting off fireworks, chiefly Catherine wheels, down the shop, though Mr. Hoopdriver knew it was against the rules. For it seemed that the place they were in was a vast shop, and then Mr. Hoopdriver perceived that the other man in brown was the shop-walker, differing from most shop-walkers in the fact that he was lit from within as a Chinese lantern might be. And the customer Mr. Hoopdriver was going to serve was the Young Lady in Grey. Curious he hadn't noticed it before. She was in grey as usual, — rationals, — and she had her bicycle leaning against the counter. She smiled quite frankly at him, just as she had done when she had apologised for stopping him. And her form, as she leant towards him, was full of a sinuous grace he had never noticed before. "What can I have the pleasure?" said Mr. Hoopdriver at once, and she said, "The Ripley road." So he got out the Ripley road and unrolled it and showed it to her, and she said that would do very nicely, and kept on looking at him and smiling, and he began measuring off eight miles by means of the yard measure on the counter, eight miles being a dress length, a rational dress length, that is; and then the other man in brown came up and wanted to interfere, and said Mr. Hoopdriver was a cad, besides measuring it off too slowly. And as Mr. Hoopdriver began to measure faster, the other man in brown said the Young Lady in Grey had been there long enough, and that he WAS her brother, or else she would not be travelling with him, and he suddenly whipped his arm about her waist and made off with her. It occurred to Mr. Hoopdriver even at the moment that this was scarcely brotherly behaviour. Of course it wasn't! The sight of the other man gripping her so familiarly enraged him frightfully; he leapt over the counter forthwith and gave chase. They ran round the shop and up an iron staircase into the Keep, and so out upon the Ripley road. For some time they kept dodging in and out of a wayside hotel with two front doors and an inn yard. The other man could not run very fast because he had hold of the Young

Lady in Grey, but Mr. Hoopdriver was hampered by the absurd behaviour of his legs. They would not stretch out; they would keep going round and round as if they were on the treadles of a wheel, so that he made the smallest steps conceivable. This dream came to no crisis. The chase seemed to last an interminable time, and all kinds of people, heathkeepers, shopmen, policemen, the old man in the Keep, the angry man in drab, the barmaid at the Unicorn, men with flying-machines, people playing billiards in the doorways, silly, headless figures, stupid cocks and hens encumbered with parcels and umbrellas and waterproofs, people carrying bedroom candles, and such-like riffraff, kept getting in his way and annoying him, although he sounded his electric bell, and said, “Wonderful, wonderful!” at every corner....

XIII. HOW MR. HOOPDRIVER WENT TO HASLEMERE

There was some little delay in getting Mr. Hoopdriver's breakfast, so that after all he was not free to start out of Guildford until just upon the stroke of nine. He wheeled his machine from the High Street in some perplexity. He did not know whether this young lady, who had seized hold of his imagination so strongly, and her unfriendly and possibly menacing brother, were ahead of him or even now breakfasting somewhere in Guildford. In the former case he might loiter as he chose; in the latter he must hurry, and possibly take refuge in branch roads.

It occurred to him as being in some obscure way strategic, that he would leave Guildford not by the obvious Portsmouth road, but by the road running through Shalford. Along this pleasant shady way he felt sufficiently secure to resume his exercises in riding with one hand off the handles, and in staring over his shoulder. He came over once or twice, but fell on his foot each time, and perceived that he was improving. Before he got to Bramley a specious byway snapped him up, ran with him for half a mile or more, and dropped him as a terrier drops a walkingstick, upon the Portsmouth again, a couple of miles from Godalming. He entered Godalming on his feet, for the road through that delightful town is beyond dispute the vilest in the world, a mere tumult of road metal, a way of peaks and precipices, and, after a successful experiment with cider at the Woolpack, he pushed on to Milford.

All this time he was acutely aware of the existence of the Young Lady in Grey and her companion in brown, as a child in the dark is of Bogies. Sometimes he could hear their pneumatics stealing upon him from behind, and looking round saw a long stretch of vacant road. Once he saw far ahead of him a glittering wheel, but it proved to be a workingman riding to destruction on a very tall ordinary. And he felt a curious, vague uneasiness about that Young Lady in Grey, for which he was altogether unable to account. Now that he was awake he had forgotten that accentuated Miss Beaumont that had

been quite clear in his dream. But the curious dream conviction, that the girl was not really the man's sister, would not let itself be forgotten. Why, for instance, should a man want to be alone with his sister on the top of a tower? At Milford his bicycle made, so to speak, an ass of itself. A finger-post suddenly jumped out at him, vainly indicating an abrupt turn to the right, and Mr. Hoopdriver would have slowed up and read the inscription, but no! — the bicycle would not let him. The road dropped a little into Milford, and the thing shied, put down its head and bolted, and Mr. Hoopdriver only thought of the brake when the fingerpost was passed. Then to have recovered the point of intersection would have meant dismounting. For as yet there was no road wide enough for Mr. Hoopdriver to turn in. So he went on his way — or to be precise, he did exactly the opposite thing. The road to the right was the Portsmouth road, and this he was on went to Haslemere and Midhurst. By that error it came about that he once more came upon his fellow travellers of yesterday, coming on them suddenly, without the slightest preliminary announcement and when they least expected it, under the Southwestern Railway arch. "It's horrible," said a girlish voice; "it's brutal — cowardly—" And stopped.

His expression, as he shot out from the archway at them, may have been something between a grin of recognition and a scowl of annoyance at himself for the unintentional intrusion. But disconcerted as he was, he was yet able to appreciate something of the peculiarity of their mutual attitudes. The bicycles were lying by the roadside, and the two riders stood face to face. The other man in brown's attitude, as it flashed upon Hoopdriver, was a deliberate pose; he twirled his moustache and smiled faintly, and he was conscientiously looking amused. And the girl stood rigid, her arms straight by her side, her handkerchief clenched in her hand, and her face was flushed, with the faintest touch of red upon her eyelids. She seemed to Mr. Hoopdriver's sense to be indignant. But that was the impression of a second. A mask of surprised recognition fell across this revelation of emotion as she turned her head towards him, and the pose of the other man in brown vanished too in a momentary astonishment. And then he had passed them, and was riding on towards Haslemere to make what he could of the swift picture that

had photographed itself on his brain.

"Rum," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "It's DASHED rum!"

"They were having a row."

"Smirking—" What he called the other man in brown need not trouble us.

"Annoying her!" That any human being should do that!

"WHY?"

The impulse to interfere leapt suddenly into Mr. Hoopdriver's mind. He grasped his brake, descended, and stood looking hesitatingly back. They still stood by the railway bridge, and it seemed to Mr. Hoopdriver's fancy that she was stamping her foot. He hesitated, then turned his bicycle round, mounted, and rode back towards them, gripping his courage firmly lest it should slip away and leave him ridiculous. "I'll offer 'im a screw 'ammer," said Mr. Hoopdriver. Then, with a wave of fierce emotion, he saw that the girl was crying. In another moment they heard him and turned in surprise. Certainly she had been crying; her eyes were swimming in tears, and the other man in brown looked exceedingly disconcerted. Mr. Hoopdriver descended and stood over his machine.

"Nothing wrong, I hope?" he said, looking the other man in brown squarely in the face. "No accident?"

"Nothing," said the other man in brown shortly. "Nothing at all, thanks."

"But," said Mr. Hoopdriver, with a great effort, "the young lady is crying. I thought perhaps—"

The Young Lady in Grey started, gave Hoopdriver one swift glance, and covered one eye with her handkerchief. "It's this speck," she said. "This speck of dust in my eye."

"This lady," said the other man in brown, explaining, "has a gnat in her eye."

There was a pause. The young lady busied herself with her eye. "I believe it's out," she said. The other man in brown made movements indicating commiserating curiosity concerning the alleged fly. Mr. Hoopdriver — the word is his own — stood flabber-gastered. He had all the intuition of the simple-minded. He knew there was no fly. But the ground was suddenly cut from his feet. There is a limit to knighterrantry — dragons and false knights are all very well, but

flies! Fictitious flies! Whatever the trouble was, it was evidently not his affair. He felt he had made a fool of himself again. He would have mumbled some sort of apology; but the other man in brown gave him no time, turned on him abruptly, even fiercely. “I hope,” he said, “that your curiosity is satisfied?”

“Certainly,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“Then we won’t detain you.”

And, ignominiously, Mr. Hoopdriver turned his machine about, struggled upon it, and resumed the road southward. And when he learnt that he was not on the Portsmouth road, it was impossible to turn and go back, for that would be to face his shame again, and so he had to ride on by Brook Street up the hill to Haslemere. And away to the right the Portsmouth road mocked at him and made off to its fastnesses amid the sunlit green and purple masses of Hindhead, where Mr. Grant Allen writes his Hill Top Novels day by day.

The sun shone, and the wide blue hill views and pleasant valleys one saw on either hand from the sandscarred roadway, even the sides of the road itself set about with grey heather scrub and prickly masses of gorse, and pine trees with their year’s growth still bright green, against the darkened needles of the previous years, were fresh and delightful to Mr. Hoopdriver’s eyes But the brightness of the day and the day-old sense of freedom fought an uphill fight against his intolerable vexation at that abominable encounter, and had still to win it when he reached Haslemere. A great brown shadow, a monstrous hatred of the other man in brown, possessed him. He had conceived the brilliant idea of abandoning Portsmouth, or at least giving up the straight way to his fellow-wayfarers, and of striking out boldly to the left, eastward. He did not dare to stop at any of the inviting public-houses in the main street of Haslemere, but turned up a side way and found a little beer-shop, the Good Hope, wherein to refresh himself. And there he ate and gossipped condescendingly with an aged labourer, assuming the while for his own private enjoyment the attributes of a Lost Heir, and afterwards mounted and rode on towards Northchapel, a place which a number of finger-posts conspired to boom, but which some insidious turning prevented him from attaining.

XIV. HOW MR. HOOPDRIVER REACHED MIDHURST

It was one of my uncle's profoundest remarks that human beings are the only unreasonable creatures. This observation was so far justified by Mr. Hoopdriver that, after spending the morning tortuously avoiding the other man in brown and the Young Lady in Grey, he spent a considerable part of the afternoon in thinking about the Young Lady in Grey, and contemplating in an optimistic spirit the possibilities of seeing her again. Memory and imagination played round her, so that his course was largely determined by the windings of the road he traversed. Of one general proposition he was absolutely convinced. "There's something Juicy wrong with 'em," said he — once even aloud. But what it was he could not imagine. He recapitulated the facts. "Miss Beaumont — brother and sister — and the stoppage to quarrel and weep—" it was perplexing material for a young man of small experience. There was no exertion he hated so much as inference, and after a time he gave up any attempt to get at the realities of the case, and let his imagination go free. Should he ever see her again? Suppose he did — with that other chap not about. The vision he found pleasantest was an encounter with her, an unexpected encounter at the annual Dancing Class 'Do' at the Putney Assembly Rooms. Somehow they would drift together, and he would dance with her again and again. It was a pleasant vision, for you must understand that Mr. Hoopdriver danced uncommonly well. Or again, in the shop, a sudden radiance in the doorway, and she is bowed towards the Manchester counter. And then to lean over that counter and murmur, seemingly apropos of the goods under discussion, "I have not forgotten that morning on the Portsmouth road," and lower, "I never shall forget."

At Northchapel Mr. Hoopdriver consulted his map and took counsel and weighed his course of action. Petworth seemed a possible resting-place, or Pullborough; Midhurst seemed too near, and any place over the Downs beyond, too far, and so he meandered towards Petworth, posing himself perpetually and loitering, gathering

wild flowers and wondering why they had no names — for he had never heard of any — dropping them furtively at the sight of a stranger, and generally 'mucking about.' There were purple vetches in the hedges, meadowsweet, honeysuckle, belated brambles — but the dog-roses had already gone; there were green and red blackberries, stellarias, and dandelions, and in another place white dead nettles, traveller's-joy, clinging bedstraw, grasses flowering, white campions, and ragged robins. One cornfield was glorious with poppies, bright scarlet and purple white, and the blue corn-flowers were beginning. In the lanes the trees met overhead, and the wisps of hay still hung to the straggling hedges. Iri one of the main roads he steered a perilous passage through a dozen surly dun oxen. Here and there were little cottages, and picturesque beer-houses with the vivid brewers' boards of blue and scarlet, and once a broad green and a church, and an expanse of some hundred houses or so. Then he came to a pebbly rivulet that emerged between clumps of sedge loosestrife and forget-me-nots under an arch of trees, and rippled across the road, and there he dismounted, longing to take off shoes and stockings — those stylish chequered stockings were now all dimmed with dust — and paddle his lean legs in the chuckling cheerful water. But instead he sat in a manly attitude, smoking a cigarette, for fear lest the Young Lady in Grey should come glittering round the corner. For the flavour of the Young Lady in Grey was present through it all, mixing with the flowers and all the delight of it, a touch that made this second day quite different from the first, an undertone of expectation, anxiety, and something like regret that would not be ignored.

It was only late in the long evening that, quite abruptly, he began to repent, vividly and decidedly, having fled these two people. He was getting hungry, and that has a curious effect upon the emotional colouring of our minds. The man was a sinister brute, Hoopdriver saw in a flash of inspiration, and the girl — she was in some serious trouble. And he who might have helped her had taken his first impulse as decisive — and bolted. This new view of it depressed him dreadfully. What might not be happening to her now? He thought again of her tears. Surely it was merely his duty, seeing the trouble afoot, to keep his eye upon it.

He began riding fast to get quit of such selfreproaches. He found himself in a tortuous tangle of roads, and as the dusk was coming on, emerged, not at Petworth but at Easebourne, a mile from Midhurst. “I’m getting hungry,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, inquiring of a gamekeeper in Easebourne village. “Midhurst a mile, and Petworth five! — Thenks, I’ll take Midhurst.”

He came into Midhurst by the bridge at the watermill, and up the North Street, and a little shop flourishing cheerfully, the cheerful sign of a teapot, and exhibiting a brilliant array of tobaccos, sweets, and children’s toys in the window, struck his fancy. A neat, bright-eyed little old lady made him welcome, and he was presently supping sumptuously on sausages and tea, with a visitors’ book full of the most humorous and flattering remarks about the little old lady, in verse and prose, propped up against his teapot as he ate. Regular good some of the jokes were, and rhymes that read well — even with your mouth full of sausage. Mr. Hoopdriver formed a vague idea of drawing “something” — for his judgment on the little old lady was already formed. He pictured the little old lady discovering it afterwards— “My gracious! One of them Punch men,” she would say. The room had a curtained recess and a chest of drawers, for presently it was to be his bedroom, and the day part of it was decorated with framed Oddfellows’ certificates and giltbacked books and portraits, and kettle-holders, and all kinds of beautiful things made out of wool; very comfortable it was indeed. The window was lead framed and diamond paned, and through it one saw the corner of the vicarage and a pleasant hill crest, in dusky silhouette against the twilight sky. And after the sausages had ceased to be, he lit a Red Herring cigarette and went swaggering out into the twilight street. All shadowy blue between its dark brick houses, was the street, with a bright yellow window here and there and splashes of green and red where the chemist’s illumination fell across the road.

XV. AN INTERLUDE

And now let us for a space leave Mr. Hoopdriver in the dusky Midhurst North Street, and return to the two folks beside the railway bridge between Milford and Haslemere. She was a girl of eighteen, dark, fine featured, with bright eyes, and a rich, swift colour under her warm-tinted skin. Her eyes were all the brighter for the tears that swam in them. The man was thirty three or four, fair, with a longish nose overhanging his sandy flaxen moustache, pale blue eyes, and a head that struck out above and behind. He stood with his feet wide apart, his hand on his hip, in an attitude that was equally suggestive of defiance and aggression. They had watched Hoopdriver out of sight. The unexpected interruption had stopped the flood of her tears. He tugged his abundant moustache and regarded her calmly. She stood with face averted, obstinately resolved not to speak first. "Your behaviour," he said at last, "makes you conspicuous."

She turned upon him, her eyes and cheeks glowing, her hands clenched. "You unspeakable CAD," she said, and choked, stamped her little foot, and stood panting.

"Unspeakable cad! My dear girl! Possible I AM an unspeakable cad. Who wouldn't be — for you?"

"'Dear girl!' How DARE you speak to me like that? YOU—"

"I would do anything—"

"OH!"

There was a moment's pause. She looked squarely into his face, her eyes alight with anger and contempt, and perhaps he flushed a little. He stroked his moustache, and by an effort maintained his cynical calm. "Let us be reasonable," he said.

"Reasonable! That means all that is mean and cowardly and sensual in the world."

"You have always had it so — in your generalising way. But let us look at the facts of the case — if that pleases you better."

With an impatient gesture she motioned him to go on.

"Well," he said,— "you've eloped."

"I've left my home," she corrected, with dignity. "I left my home because it was unendurable. Because that woman—"

“Yes, yes. But the point is, you have eloped with me.”

“You came with me. You pretended to be my friend. Promised to help me to earn a living by writing. It was you who said, why shouldn’t a man and woman be friends? And now you dare — you dare—”

“Really, Jessie, this pose of yours, this injured innocence—”

“I will go back. I forbid you — I forbid you to stand in the way —”

“One moment. I have always thought that my little pupil was at least clear-headed. You don’t know everything yet, you know. Listen to me for a moment.”

“Haven’t I been listening? And you have only insulted me. You who dared only to talk of friendship, who scarcely dared hint at anything beyond.”

“But you took the hints, nevertheless. You knew. You KNEW. And you did not mind. MIND! You liked it. It was the fun of the whole thing for you. That I loved you, and could not speak to you. You played with it—”

“You have said all that before. Do you think that justifies you?”

“That isn’t all. I made up my mind — Well, to make the game more even. And so I suggested to you and joined with you in this expedition of yours, invented a sister at Midhurst — I tell you, I HAVEN’T a sister! For one object—”

“Well?”

“To compromise you.”

She started. That was a new way of putting it. For half a minute neither spoke. Then she began half defiantly: “Much I am compromised. Of course — I have made a fool of myself—”

“My dear girl, you are still on the sunny side of eighteen, and you know very little of this world. Less than you think. But you will learn. Before you write all those novels we have talked about, you will have to learn. And that’s one point—” He hesitated. “You started and blushed when the man at breakfast called you Ma’am. You thought it a funny mistake, but you did not say anything because he was young and nervous — and besides, the thought of being my wife offended your modesty. You didn’t care to notice it. But — you see; I gave your name as MRS. Beaumont.” He looked almost

apologetic, in spite of his cynical pose. “MRS. Beaumont,” he repeated, pulling his flaxen moustache and watching the effect.

She looked into his eyes speechless. “I am learning fast,” she said slowly, at last.

He thought the time had come for an emotional attack. “Jessie,” he said, with a sudden change of voice, “I know all this is mean, isvillanous. But do you think that I have done all this scheming, all this subterfuge, for any other object—”

She did not seem to listen to his words. “I shall ride home,” she said abruptly.

“To her?”

She winced.

“Just think,” said he, “what she could say to you after this.”

“Anyhow, I shall leave you now.”

“Yes? And go—”

“Go somewhere to earn my living, to be a free woman, to live without conventionality—”

“My dear girl, do let us be cynical. You haven’t money and you haven’t credit. No one would take you in. It’s one of two things: go back to your stepmother, or — trust to me.”

“How CAN I?”

“Then you must go back to her.” He paused momentarily, to let this consideration have its proper weight. “Jessie, I did not mean to say the things I did. Upon my honour, I lost my head when I spoke so. If you will, forgive me. I am a man. I could not help myself. Forgive me, and I promise you—”

“How can I trust you?”

“Try me. I can assure you—”

She regarded him distrustfully.

“At any rate, ride on with me now. Surely we have been in the shadow of this horrible bridge long enough.”

“Oh! let me think,” she said, half turning from him and pressing her hand to her brow.

“THINK! Look here, Jessie. It is ten o’clock. Shall we call a truce until one?”

She hesitated, demanded a definition of the truce, and at last agreed.

They mounted, and rode on in silence, through the sunlight and the heather. Both were extremely uncomfortable and disappointed. She was pale, divided between fear and anger. She perceived she was in a scrape, and tried in vain to think of a way of escape. Only one tangible thing would keep in her mind, try as she would to ignore it. That was the quite irrelevant fact that his head was singularly like an albino cocoanut. He, too, felt thwarted. He felt that this romantic business of seduction was, after all, unexpectedly tame. But this was only the beginning. At any rate, every day she spent with him was a day gained. Perhaps things looked worse than they were; that was some consolation.

XVI. OF THE ARTIFICIAL IN MAN, AND OF THE ZEITGEIST

You have seen these two young people — Bechamel, by-the-bye, is the man's name, and the girl's is Jessie Milton — from the outside; you have heard them talking; they ride now side by side (but not too close together, and in an uneasy silence) towards Haslemere; and this chapter will concern itself with those curious little council chambers inside their skulls, where their motives are in session and their acts are considered and passed.

But first a word concerning wigs and false teeth. Some jester, enlarging upon the increase of bald heads and purblind people, has deduced a wonderful future for the children of men. Man, he said, was nowadays a hairless creature by forty or fifty, and for hair we gave him a wig; shrivelled, and we padded him; toothless, and lo! false teeth set in gold. Did he lose a limb, and a fine, new, artificial one was at his disposal; get indigestion, and to hand was artificial digestive fluid or bile or pancreatine, as the case might be. Complexions, too, were replaceable, spectacles superseded an inefficient eye-lens, and imperceptible false diaphragms were thrust into the failing ear. So he went over our anatomies, until, at last, he had conjured up a weird thing of shreds and patches, a simulacrum, an artificial body of a man, with but a doubtful germ of living flesh lurking somewhere in his recesses. To that, he held, we were coming.

How far such odd substitution for the body is possible need not concern us now. But the devil, speaking by the lips of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, hath it that in the case of one Tomlinson, the thing, so far as the soul is concerned, has already been accomplished. Time was when men had simple souls, desires as natural as their eyes, a little reasonable philanthropy, a little reasonable philoprogenitiveness, hunger, and a taste for good living, a decent, personal vanity, a healthy, satisfying pugnacity, and so forth. But now we are taught and disciplined for years and years, and thereafter we read and read for all the time some strenuous, nerve-destroying business permits. Pedagogic hypnotists, pulpit and platform hypnotists, book-writing

hypnotists, newspaper-writing hypnotists, are at us all. This sugar you are eating, they tell us, is ink, and forthwith we reject it with infinite disgust. This black draught of unrequited toil is True Happiness, and down it goes with every symptom of pleasure. This Ibsen, they say, is dull past believing, and we yawn and stretch beyond endurance. Pardon! they interrupt, but this Ibsen is deep and delightful, and we vie with one another in an excess of entertainment. And when we open the heads of these two young people, we find, not a straightforward motive on the surface anywhere; we find, indeed, not a soul so much as an oversoul, a zeitgeist, a congestion of acquired ideas, a highway's feast of fine, confused thinking. The girl is resolute to Live Her Own Life, a phrase you may have heard before, and the man has a pretty perverted ambition to be a cynical artistic person of the very calmest description. He is hoping for the awakening of Passion in her, among other things. He knows Passion ought to awaken, from the text-books he has studied. He knows she admires his genius, but he is unaware that she does not admire his head. He is quite a distinguished art critic in London, and he met her at that celebrated lady novelist's, her stepmother, and here you have them well embarked upon the Adventure. Both are in the first stage of repentance, which consists, as you have probably found for yourself, in setting your teeth hard and saying' "I WILL go on."

Things, you see, have jarred a little, and they ride on their way together with a certain aloofness of manner that promises ill for the orthodox development of the Adventure. He perceives he was too precipitate. But he feels his honour is involved, and meditates the development of a new attack. And the girl? She is unawakened. Her motives are bookish, written by a haphazard syndicate of authors, novelists, and biographers, on her white inexperience. An artificial oversoul she is, that may presently break down and reveal a human being beneath it. She is still in that schoolgirl phase when a talkative old man is more interesting than a tongue-tied young one, and when to be an eminent mathematician, say, or to edit a daily paper, seems as fine an ambition as any girl need aspire to. Bechaniel was to have helped her to attain that in the most expeditious manner, and here he is beside her, talking enigmatical phrases about passion, looking at her with the oddest expression, and once, and that was his gravest

offence, offering to kiss her. At any rate he has apologised. She still scarcely realises, you see, the scrape she has got into.

XVII. THE ENCOUNTER AT MIDHURST

We left Mr. Hoopdriver at the door of the little tea, toy, and tobacco shop. You must not think that a strain is put on coincidence when I tell you that next door to Mrs. Wardor's — that was the name of the bright-eyed, little old lady with whom Mr. Hoopdriver had stopped — is the Angel Hotel, and in the Angel Hotel, on the night that Mr. Hoopdriver reached Midhurst, were 'Mr.' and 'Miss' Beaumont, our Bechamel and Jessie Milton. Indeed, it was a highly probable thing; for if one goes through Guildford, the choice of southward roads is limited; you may go by Petersfield to Portsmouth, or by Midhurst to Chichester, in addition to which highways there is nothing for it but minor roadways to Petworth or Pulborough, and cross-cuts Brightonward. And coming to Midhurst from the north, the Angel's entrance lies yawning to engulf your highly respectable cyclists, while Mrs. Wardor's genial teapot is equally attractive to those who weigh their means in little scales. But to people unfamiliar with the Sussex roads — and such were the three persons of this story — the convergence did not appear to be so inevitable.

Bechamel, tightening his chain in the Angel yard after dinner, was the first to be aware of their reunion. He saw Hoopdriver walk slowly across the gateway, his head enhaloed in cigarette smoke, and pass out of sight up the street. Incontinently a mass of cloudy uneasiness, that had been partly dispelled during the day, reappeared and concentrated rapidly into definite suspicion. He put his screw hammer into his pocket and walked through the archway into the street, to settle the business forthwith, for he prided himself on his decision. Hoopdriver was merely promenading, and they met face to face.

At the sight of his adversary, something between disgust and laughter seized Mr. Hoopdriver and for a moment destroyed his animosity. "'Ere we are again!" he said, laughing insincerely in a sudden outbreak at the perversity of chance.

The other man in brown stopped short in Mr. Hoopdriver's way, staring. Then his face assumed an expression of dangerous civility. "Is it any information to you," he said, with immense politeness,

“when I remark that you are following us?”

Mr. Hoopdriver, for some occult reason, resisted his characteristic impulse to apologise. He wanted to annoy the other man in brown, and a sentence that had come into his head in a previous rehearsal cropped up appropriately. “Since when,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, catching his breath, yet bringing the question out valiantly, nevertheless,— “since when ‘ave you purchased the county of Sussex?”

“May I point out,” said the other man in brown, “that I object — we object not only to your proximity to us. To be frank — you appear to be following us — with an object.”

“You can always,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, “turn round if you don’t like it, and go back the way you came.”

“Oh-o!” said the other man in brown. “THAT’S it! I thought as much.”

“Did you?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, quite at sea, but rising pluckily to the unknown occasion. What was the man driving at?

“I see,” said the other man. “I see. I half suspected—” His manner changed abruptly to a quality suspiciously friendly. “Yes — a word with you. You will, I hope, give me ten minutes.”

Wonderful things were dawning on Mr. Hoopdriver. What did the other man take him for? Here at last was reality! He hesitated. Then he thought of an admirable phrase. “You ‘ave some communication —”

“We’ll call it a communication,” said the other man.

“I can spare you the ten minutes,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, with dignity.

“This way, then,” said the other man in brown, and they walked slowly down the North Street towards the Grammar School. There was, perhaps, thirty seconds’ silence. The other man stroked his moustache nervously. Mr. Hoopdriver’s dramatic instincts were now fully awake. He did not quite understand in what role he was cast, but it was evidently something dark and mysterious. Doctor Conan Doyle, Victor Hugo, and Alexander Dumas were well within Mr. Hoopdriver’s range of reading, and he had not read them for nothing.

“I will be perfectly frank with you,” said the other man in brown.

“Frankness is always the best course,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“Well, then — who the devil set you on this business?”

“Set me ON this business?”

“Don’t pretend to be stupid. Who’s your employer? Who engaged you for this job?”

“Well,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, confused. “No — I can’t say.”

“Quite sure?” The other man in brown glanced meaningly down at his hand, and Mr. Hoopdriver, following him mechanically, saw a yellow milled edge glittering in the twilight. Now your shop assistant is just above the tip-receiving class, and only just above it — so that he is acutely sensitive on the point.

Mr. Hoopdriver flushed hotly, and his eyes were angry as he met those of the other man in brown. “Stow it!” said Mr. Hoopdriver, stopping and facing the tempter.

“What!” said the other man in brown, surprised. “Eigh?” And so saying he stowed it in his breeches pocket.

“D’yer think I’m to be bribed?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, whose imagination was rapidly expanding the situation. “By Gosh! I’d follow you now—”

“My dear sir,” said the other man in brown, “I beg your pardon. I misunderstood you. I really beg your pardon. Let us walk on. In your profession—”

“What have you got to say against my profession?”

“Well, really, you know. There are detectives of an inferior description — watchers. The whole class. Private Inquiry — I did not realise — I really trust you will overlook what was, after all — you must admit — a natural indiscretion. Men of honour are not so common in the world — in any profession.”

It was lucky for Mr. Hoopdriver that in Midhurst they do not light the lamps in the summer time, or the one they were passing had betrayed him. As it was, he had to snatch suddenly at his moustache and tug fiercely at it, to conceal the furious tumult of exultation, the passion of laughter, that came boiling up. Detective! Even in the shadow Bechamel saw that a laugh was stifled, but he put it down to the fact that the phrase “men of honour” amused his interlocutor. “He’ll come round yet,” said Bechamel to himself. “He’s simply holding out for a fiver.” He coughed.

“I don’t see that it hurts you to tell me who your employer is.”

“Don’t you? I do.”

“Prompt,” said Bechamel, appreciatively. “Now here’s the thing I want to put to you — the kernel of the whole business. You need not answer if you don’t want to. There’s no harm done in my telling you what I want to know. Are you employed to watch me — or Miss Milton?”

“I’m not the leaky sort,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, keeping the secret he did not know with immense enjoyment. Miss Milton! That was her name. Perhaps he’d tell some more. “It’s no good pumping. Is that all you’re after?” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

Bechamel respected himself for his diplomatic gifts. He tried to catch a remark by throwing out a confidence. “I take it there are two people concerned in watching this affair.”

“Who’s the other?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, calmly, but controlling with enormous internal tension his self-appreciation. “Who’s the other?” was really brilliant, he thought.

“There’s my wife and HER stepmother.”

“And you want to know which it is?”

“Yes,” said Bechamel.

“Well — arst ‘em!” said Mr. Hoopdriver, his exultation getting the better of him, and with a pretty consciousness of repartee. “Arst ’em both.”

Bechamel turned impatiently. Then he made a last effort. “I’d give a five-pound note to know just the precise state of affairs,” he said.

“I told you to stow that,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, in a threatening tone. And added with perfect truth and a magnificent mystery, “You don’t quite understand who you’re dealing with. But you will!” He spoke with such conviction that he half believed that that defective office of his in London — Baker Street, in fact — really existed.

With that the interview terminated. Bechamel went back to the Angel, perturbed. “Hang detectives!” It wasn’t the kind of thing he had anticipated at all. Hoopdriver, with round eyes and a wondering smile, walked down to where the mill waters glittered in the moonlight, and after meditating over the parapet of the bridge for a space, with occasional murmurs of, “Private Inquiry” and the like, returned, with mystery even in his paces, towards the town.

XVIII.

That glee which finds expression in raised eyebrows and long, low whistling noises was upon Mr. Hoopdriver. For a space he forgot the tears of the Young Lady in Grey. Here was a new game! — and a real one. Mr. Hoopdriver as a Private Inquiry Agent, a Sherlock Holmes in fact, keeping these two people 'under observation.' He walked slowly back from the bridge until he was opposite the Angel, and stood for ten minutes, perhaps, contemplating that establishment and enjoying all the strange sensations of being this wonderful, this mysterious and terrible thing. Everything fell into place in his scheme. He had, of course, by a kind of instinct, assumed the disguise of a cyclist, picked up the first old crock he came across as a means of pursuit. 'No expense was to be spared.'

Then he tried to understand what it was in particular that he was observing. "My wife"— "HER stepmother!" Then he remembered her swimming eyes. Abruptly came a wave of anger that surprised him, washed away the detective superstructure, and left him plain Mr. Hoopdriver. This man in brown, with his confident manner, and his proffered half sovereign (damn him!) was up to no good, else why should he object to being watched? He was married! She was not his sister. He began to understand. A horrible suspicion of the state of affairs came into Mr. Hoopdriver's head. Surely it had not come to THAT. He was a detective! — he would find out. How was it to be done? He began to submit sketches on approval to himself. It required an effort before he could walk into the Angel bar. "A lemonade and bitter, please," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

He cleared his throat. "Are Mr. and Mrs. Bowlong stopping here?"

"What, a gentleman and a young lady — on bicycles?"

"Fairly young — a married couple."

"No," said the barmaid, a talkative person of ample dimensions. "There's no married couples stopping here. But there's a Mr. and Miss BEAUMONT." She spelt it for precision. "Sure you've got the name right, young man?"

"Quite," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

"Beaumont there is, but no one of the name of — What was the

name you gave?”

“Bowlong,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“No, there ain’t no Bowlong,” said the barmaid, taking up a glasscloth and a drying tumbler and beginning to polish the latter. “First off, I thought you might be asking for Beaumont — the names being similar. Were you expecting them on bicycles?”

“Yes — they said they MIGHT be in Midhurst tonight.”

“P’raps they’ll come presently. Beaumont’s here, but no Bowlong. Sure that Beaumont ain’t the name?”

“Certain,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“It’s curious the names being so alike. I thought p’raps—”

And so they conversed at some length, Mr. Hoopdriver delighted to find his horrible suspicion disposed of. The barmaid having listened awhile at the staircase volunteered some particulars of the young couple upstairs. Her modesty was much impressed by the young lady’s costume, so she intimated, and Mr. Hoopdriver whispered the badinage natural to the occasion, at which she was coquettishly shocked. “There’ll be no knowing which is which, in a year or two,” said the barmaid. “And her manner too! She got off her machine and give it ‘im to stick up against the kerb, and in she marched. ‘I and my brother,’ says she, ‘want to stop here to-night. My brother doesn’t mind what kind of room ‘e ‘as, but I want a room with a good view, if there’s one to be got,’ says she. He comes hurrying in after and looks at her. ‘I’ve settled the rooms,’ she says, and ‘e says ‘damn!’ just like that. I can fancy my brother letting me boss the show like that.”

“I dessay you do,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, “if the truth was known.”

The barmaid looked down, smiled and shook her head, put down the tumbler, polished, and took up another that had been draining, and shook the drops of water into her little zinc sink.

“She’ll be a nice little lot to marry,” said the barmaid. “She’ll be wearing the — well, b-dashes, as the sayin’ is. I can’t think what girls is comin’ to.”

This depreciation of the Young Lady in Grey was hardly to Hoopdriver’s taste.

“Fashion,” said he, taking up his change. “Fashion is all the go with you ladies — and always was. You’ll be wearing ’em yourself

before a couple of years is out."

"Nice they'd look on my figger," said the barmaid, with a titter. "No — I ain't one of your fashionable sort. Gracious no! I shouldn't feel as if I'd anything on me, not more than if I'd forgot — Well, there! I'm talking." She put down the glass abruptly. "I dessay I'm old fashioned," she said, and walked humming down the bar.

"Not you," said Mr. Hoopdriver. He waited until he caught her eye, then with his native courtesy smiled, raised his cap, and wished her good evening.

XIX.

Then Mr. Hoopdriver returned to the little room with the lead-framed windows where he had dined, and where the bed was now comfortably made, sat down on the box under the window, stared at the moon rising on the shining vicarage roof, and tried to collect his thoughts. How they whirled at first! It was past ten, and most of Midhurst was tucked away in bed, some one up the street was learning the violin, at rare intervals a belated inhabitant hurried home and woke the echoes, and a corncrake kept up a busy churning in the vicarage garden. The sky was deep blue, with a still luminous afterglow along the black edge of the hill, and the white moon overhead, save for a couple of yellow stars, had the sky to herself.

At first his thoughts were kinetic, of deeds and not relationships. There was this malefactor, and his victim, and it had fallen on Mr. Hoopdriver to take a hand in the game. HE was married. Did she know he was married? Never for a moment did a thought of evil concerning her cross Hoopdriver's mind. Simple-minded people see questions of morals so much better than superior persons — who have read and thought themselves complex to impotence. He had heard her voice, seen the frank light in her eyes, and she had been weeping — that sufficed. The rights of the case he hadn't properly grasped. But he would. And that smirking — well, swine was the mildest for him. He recalled the exceedingly unpleasant incident of the railway bridge. "Thin we won't detain yer, thenks," said Mr. Hoopdriver, aloud, in a strange, unnatural, contemptible voice, supposed to represent that of Bechamel. "Oh, the BEGGAR! I'll be

level with him yet. He's afraid of us detectives — that I'll SWEAR." (If Mrs. Wardor should chance to be on the other side of the door within earshot, well and good.)

For a space he meditated chastisements and revenges, physical impossibilities for the most part, — Bechamel staggering headlong from the impact of Mr. Hoopdriver's large, but, to tell the truth, ill supported fist, Bechamel's five feet nine of height lifted from the ground and quivering under a vigorously applied horsewhip. So pleasant was such dreaming, that Mr. Hoopdriver's peaked face under the moonlight was transfigured. One might have paired him with that well-known and universally admired triumph, 'The Soul's Awakening,' so sweet was his ecstasy. And presently with his thirst for revenge glutted by six or seven violent assaults, a duel and two vigorous murders, his mind came round to the Young Lady in Grey again.

She was a plucky one too. He went over the incident the barmaid at the Angel had described to him. His thoughts ceased to be a torrent, smoothed down to a mirror in which she was reflected with infinite clearness and detail. He'd never met anything like her before. Fancy that bolster of a barmaid being dressed in that way! He whuffed a contemptuous laugh. He compared her colour, her vigour, her voice, with the Young Ladies in Business with whom his lot had been cast. Even in tears she was beautiful, more beautiful indeed to him, for it made her seem softer and weaker, more accessible. And such weeping as he had seen before had been so much a matter of damp white faces, red noses, and hair coming out of curl. Your draper's assistant becomes something of a judge of weeping, because weeping is the custom of all Young Ladies in Business, when for any reason their services are dispensed with. She could weep — and (by Gosh!) she could smile. HE knew that, and reverting to acting abruptly, he smiled confidentially at the puckered pallor of the moon.

It is difficult to say how long Mr. Hoopdriver's pensiveness lasted. It seemed a long time before his thoughts of action returned. Then he remembered he was a 'watcher'; that to-morrow he must be busy. It would be in character to make notes, and he pulled out his little note-book. With that in hand he fell a-thinking again. Would that chap tell her the 'tecks were after them? If so, would she be as

anxious to get away as HE was? He must be on the alert. If possible he must speak to her. Just a significant word, “Your friend — trust me!” — It occurred to him that to-morrow these fugitives might rise early to escape. At that he thought of the time and found it was half-past eleven. “Lord!” said he, “I must see that I wake.” He yawned and rose. The blind was up, and he pulled back the little chintz curtains to let the sunlight strike across to the bed, hung his watch within good view of his pillow, on a nail that supported a kettle-holder, and sat down on his bed to undress. He lay awake for a little while thinking of the wonderful possibilities of the morrow, and thence he passed gloriously into the wonderland of dreams.

XX. THE PURSUIT

And now to tell of Mr. Hoopdriver, rising with the sun, vigilant, active, wonderful, the practicable half of the lead-framed window stuck open, ears alert, an eye flickering incessantly in the corner panes, in oblique glances at the Angel front. Mrs. Wardor wanted him to have his breakfast downstairs in her kitchen, but that would have meant abandoning the watch, and he held out strongly. The bicycle, cap-a-pie, occupied, under protest, a strategic position in the shop. He was expectant by six in the morning. By nine horrible fears oppressed him that his quest had escaped him, and he had to reconnoitre the Angel yard in order to satisfy himself. There he found the ostler (How are the mighty fallen in these decadent days!) brushing down the bicycles of the chase, and he returned relieved to Mrs. Wardor's premises. And about ten they emerged, and rode quietly up the North Street. He watched them until they turned the corner of the post office, and then out into the road and up after them in fine style! They went by the engine-house where the old stocks and the whipping posts are, and on to the Chichester road, and he followed gallantly. So this great chase began.

They did not look round, and he kept them just within sight, getting down if he chanced to draw closely upon them round a corner. By riding vigorously he kept quite conveniently near them, for they made but little hurry. He grew hot indeed, and his knees were a little stiff to begin with, but that was all. There was little danger of losing them, for a thin chalky dust lay upon the road, and the track of her tire was milled like a shilling, and his was a chequered ribbon along the way. So they rode by Cobden's monument and through the prettiest of villages, until at last the downs rose steeply ahead. There they stopped awhile at the only inn in the place, and Mr. Hoopdriver took up a position which commanded the inn door, and mopped his face and thirsted and smoked a Red Herring cigarette. They remained in the inn for some time. A number of chubby innocents returning home from school, stopped and formed a line in front of him, and watched him quietly but firmly for the space of ten minutes or so. "Go away," said he, and

they only seemed quietly interested. He asked them all their names then, and they answered indistinct murmurs. He gave it up at last and became passive on his gate, and so at length they tired of him.

The couple under observation occupied the inn so long that Mr. Hoopdriver at the thought of their possible employment hungered as well as thirsted. Clearly, they were lunching. It was a cloudless day, and the sun at the meridian beat down upon the top of Mr. Hoopdriver's head, a shower bath of sunshine, a huge jet of hot light. It made his head swim. At last they emerged, and the other man in brown looked back and saw him. They rode on to the foot of the down, and dismounting began to push tediously up that long nearly vertical ascent of blinding white road, Mr. Hoopdriver hesitated. It might take them twenty minutes to mount that. Beyond was empty downland perhaps for miles. He decided to return to the inn and snatch a hasty meal.

At the inn they gave him biscuits and cheese and a misleading pewter measure of sturdy ale, pleasant under the palate, cool in the throat, but leaden in the legs, of a hot afternoon. He felt a man of substance as he emerged in the blinding sunshine, but even by the foot of the down the sun was insisting again that his skull was too small for his brains. The hill had gone steeper, the chalky road blazed like a magnesium light, and his front wheel began an apparently incurable squeaking. He felt as a man from Mars would feel if he were suddenly transferred to this planet, about three times as heavy as he was wont to feel. The two little black figures had vanished over the forehead of the hill. "The tracks'll be all right," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

That was a comforting reflection. It not only justified a slow progress up the hill, but at the crest a sprawl on the turf beside the road, to contemplate the Weald from the south. In a matter of two days he had crossed that spacious valley, with its frozen surge of green hills, its little villages and townships here and there, its copses and cornfields, its ponds and streams like jewelery of diamonds and silver glittering in the sun. The North Downs were hidden, far away beyond the Wealden Heights. Down below was the little village of Cocking, and half-way up the hill, a mile perhaps to the right, hung a flock of sheep grazing together. Overhead an anxious peewit circled

against the blue, and every now and then emitted its feeble cry. Up here the heat was tempered by a pleasant breeze. Mr. Hoopdriver was possessed by unreasonable contentment; he lit himself a cigarette and lounged more comfortably. Surely the Sussex ale is made of the waters of Lethe, of poppies and pleasant dreams. Drowsiness coiled insidiously about him.

He awoke with a guilty start, to find himself sprawling prone on the turf with his cap over one eye. He sat up, rubbed his eyes, and realised that he had slept. His head was still a trifle heavy. And the chase? He jumped to his feet and stooped to pick up his overturned machine. He whipped out his watch and saw that it was past two o'clock. "Lord love us, fancy that! — But the tracks'll be all right," said Mr. Hoopdriver, wheeling his machine back to the chalky road. "I must scorch till I overtake them."

He mounted and rode as rapidly as the heat and a lingering lassitude permitted. Now and then he had to dismount to examine the surface where the road forked. He enjoyed that rather. "Trackin'," he said aloud, and decided in the privacy of his own mind that he had a wonderful instinct for 'spoor.' So he came past Goodwood station and Lavant, and approached Chichester towards four o'clock. And then came a terrible thing. In places the road became hard, in places were the crowded indentations of a recent flock of sheep, and at last in the throat of the town cobbles and the stony streets branching east, west, north, and south, at a stone cross under the shadow of the cathedral the tracks vanished. "O Cricky!" said Mr. Hoopdriver, dismounting in dismay and standing agape. "Dropped anything?" said an inhabitant at the kerb. "Yes," said Mr. Hoopdriver, "I've lost the spoor," and walked upon his way, leaving the inhabitant marvelling what part of a bicycle a spoor might be. Mr. Hoopdriver, abandoning tracking, began asking people if they had seen a Young Lady in Grey on a bicycle. Six casual people hadn't, and he began to feel the inquiry was conspicuous, and desisted. But what was to be done?

Hoopdriver was hot, tired, and hungry, and full of the first gnawings of a monstrous remorse. He decided to get himself some tea and meat, and in the Royal George he meditated over the business in a melancholy frame enough. They had passed out of his world —

vanished, and all his wonderful dreams of some vague, crucial interference collapsed like a castle of cards. What a fool he had been not to stick to them like a leech! He might have thought! But there! — what WAS the good of that sort of thing now? He thought of her tears, of her helplessness, of the bearing of the other man in brown, and his wrath and disappointment surged higher. “What CAN I do?” said Mr. Hoopdriver aloud, bringing his fist down beside the teapot.

What would Sherlock Holmes have done? Perhaps, after all, there might be such things as clues in the world, albeit the age of miracles was past. But to look for a clue in this intricate network of cobbled streets, to examine every muddy interstice! There was a chance by looking about and inquiry at the various inns. Upon that he began. But of course they might have ridden straight through and scarcely a soul have marked them. And then came a positively brilliant idea. “‘Ow many ways are there out of Chichester?” said Mr. Hoopdriver. It was really equal to Sherlock Holmes — that. “If they’ve made tracks, I shall find those tracks. If not — they’re in the town.” He was then in East Street, and he started at once to make the circuit of the place, discovering incidentally that Chichester is a walled city. In passing, he made inquiries at the Black Swan, the Crown, and the Red Lion Hotel. At six o’clock in the evening, he was walking downcast, intent, as one who had dropped money, along the road towards Bognor, kicking up the dust with his shoes and fretting with disappointed pugnacity. A thwarted, crestfallen Hoopdriver it was, as you may well imagine. And then suddenly there jumped upon his attention — a broad line ribbed like a shilling, and close beside it one chequered, that ever and again split into two. “Found!” said Mr. Hoopdriver and swung round on his heel at once, and back to the Royal George, helter skelter, for the bicycle they were minding for him. The ostler thought he was confoundedly imperious, considering his machine.

XXI. AT BOGNOR

That seductive gentleman, Bechamel, had been working up to a crisis. He had started upon this elopement in a vein of fine romance, immensely proud of his wickedness, and really as much in love as an artificial oversoul can be, with Jessie. But either she was the profoundest of coquettes or she had not the slightest element of Passion (with a large P) in her composition. It warred with all his ideas of himself and the feminine mind to think that under their flattering circumstances she really could be so vitally deficient. He found her persistent coolness, her more or less evident contempt for himself, exasperating in the highest degree. He put it to himself that she was enough to provoke a saint, and tried to think that was piquant and enjoyable, but the blisters on his vanity asserted themselves. The fact is, he was, under this standing irritation, getting down to the natural man in himself for once, and the natural man in himself, in spite of Oxford and the junior Reviewers' Club, was a Palaeolithic creature of simple tastes and violent methods. "I'll be level with you yet," ran like a plough through the soil of his thoughts.

Then there was this infernal detective. Bechamel had told his wife he was going to Davos to see Carter. To that he had fancied she was reconciled, but how she would take this exploit was entirely problematical. She was a woman of peculiar moral views, and she measured marital infidelity largely by its proximity to herself. Out of her sight, and more particularly out of the sight of the other women of her set, vice of the recognised description was, perhaps, permissible to those contemptible weaklings, men, but this was Evil on the High Roads. She was bound to make a fuss, and these fusses invariably took the final form of a tightness of money for Bechamel. Albeit, and he felt it was heroic of him to resolve so, it was worth doing if it was to be done. His imagination worked on a kind of matronly Valkyrie, and the noise of pursuit and vengeance was in the air. The idyll still had the front of the stage. That accursed detective, it seemed, had been thrown off the scent, and that, at any rate, gave a night's respite. But things must be brought to an issue forthwith.

By eight o'clock in the evening, in a little dining-room in the Vicuna Hotel, Bognor, the crisis had come, and Jessie, flushed and angry in the face and with her heart sinking, faced him again for her last struggle with him. He had tricked her this time, effectually, and luck had been on his side. She was booked as Mrs. Beaumont. Save for her refusal to enter their room, and her eccentricity of eating with unwashed hands, she had so far kept up the appearances of things before the waiter. But the dinner was grim enough. Now in turn she appealed to his better nature and made extravagant statements of her plans to fool him.

He was white and vicious by this time, and his anger quivered through his pose of brilliant wickedness.

"I will go to the station," she said. "I will go back—"

"The last train for anywhere leaves at 7.42."

"I will appeal to the police—"

"You don't know them."

"I will tell these hotel people."

"They will turn you out of doors. You're in such a thoroughly false position now. They don't understand unconventionality, down here."

She stamped her foot. "If I wander about the streets all night—" she said.

"You who have never been out alone after dusk? Do you know what the streets of a charming little holiday resort are like—"

"I don't care," she said. "I can go to the clergyman here."

"He's a charming man. Unmarried. And men are really more alike than you think. And anyhow—"

"Well?"

"How CAN you explain the last two nights to anyone now? The mischief is done, Jessie."

"You CUR," she said, and suddenly put her hand to her breast. He thought she meant to faint, but she stood, with the colour gone from her face.

"No," he said. "I love you."

"Love!" said she.

"Yes — love."

"There are ways yet," she said, after a pause.

“Not for you. You are too full of life and hope yet for, what is it? — not the dark arch nor the black flowing river. Don’t you think of it. You’ll only shirk it when the moment comes, and turn it all into comedy.”

She turned round abruptly from him and stood looking out across the parade at the shining sea over which the afterglow of day fled before the rising moon. He maintained his attitude. The blinds were still up, for she had told the waiter not to draw them. There was silence for some moments.

At last he spoke in as persuasive a voice as he could summon. “Take it sensibly, Jessie. Why should we, who have so much in common, quarrel into melodrama? I swear I love you. You are all that is bright and desirable to me. I am stronger than you, older; man to your woman. To find YOU too — conventional!”

She looked at him over her shoulder, and he noticed with a twinge of delight how her little chin came out beneath the curve of her cheek.

“MAN!” she said. “Man to MY woman! Do MEN lie? Would a MAN use his five and thirty years’ experience to outwit a girl of seventeen? Man to my woman indeed! That surely is the last insult!”

“Your repartee is admirable, Jessie. I should say they do, though — all that and more also when their hearts were set on such a girl as yourself. For God’s sake drop this shrewishness! Why should you be so — difficult to me? Here am I with MY reputation, MY career, at your feet. Look here, Jessie — on my honour, I will marry you—”

“God forbid,” she said, so promptly that she never learnt he had a wife, even then. It occurred to him then for the first time, in the flash of her retort, that she did not know he was married.

“’Tis only a pre-nuptial settlement,” he said, following that hint.

He paused.

“You must be sensible. The thing’s your own doing. Come out on the beach now the beach here is splendid, and the moon will soon be high.”

“*I* WON’T” she said, stamping her foot.

“Well, well—”

“Oh! leave me alone. Let me think—”

“Think,” he said, “if you want to. It’s your cry always. But you

can't save yourself by thinking, my dear girl. You can't save yourself in any way now. If saving it is — this parsimony—"

"Oh, go — go."

"Very well. I will go. I will go and smoke a cigar. And think of you, dear.... But do you think I should do all this if I did not care?"

"Go," she whispered, without glancing round. She continued to stare out of the window. He stood looking at her for a moment, with a strange light in his eyes. He made a step towards her. "I HAVE you,", he said. "You are mine. Netted — caught. But mine." He would have gone up to her and laid his hand upon her, but he did not dare to do that yet. "I have you in my hand," he said, "in my power. Do you hear — POWER!"

She remained impassive. He stared at her for half a minute, and then, with a superb gesture that was lost upon her, went to the door. Surely the instinctive abasement of her sex before Strength was upon his side. He told himself that his battle was won. She heard the handle move and the catch click as the door closed behind him.

XXII.

And now without in the twilight behold Mr. Hoopdriver, his cheeks hot, his eye bright! His brain is in a tumult. The nervous, obsequious Hoopdriver, to whom I introduced you some days since, has undergone a wonderful change. Ever since he lost that 'spoor' in Chichester, he has been tormented by the most horrible visions of the shameful insults that may be happening. The strangeness of new surroundings has been working to strip off the habitual servile from him. Here was moonlight rising over the memory of a red sunset, dark shadows and glowing orange lamps, beauty somewhere mysteriously rapt away from him, tangible wrong in a brown suit and an unpleasant face, flouting him. Mr. Hoopdriver for the time, was in the world of Romance and Knight-errantry, divinely forgetful of his social position or hers; forgetting, too, for the time any of the wretched timidities that had tied him long since behind the counter in his proper place. He was angry and adventurous. It was all about him, this vivid drama he had fallen into, and it was eluding him. He was far too grimly in earnest to pick up that lost thread and make a

play of it now. The man was living. He did not pose when he alighted at the coffee tavern even, nor when he made his hasty meal.

As Bechamel crossed from the Vicuna towards the esplanade, Hoopdriver, disappointed and exasperated, came hurrying round the corner from the Temperance Hotel. At the sight of Bechamel, his heart jumped, and the tension of his angry suspense exploded into, rather than gave place to, an excited activity of mind. They were at the Vicuna, and she was there now alone. It was the occasion he sought. But he would give Chance no chance against him. He went back round the corner, sat down on the seat, and watched Bechamel recede into the dimness up the esplanade, before he got up and walked into the hotel entrance. "A lady cyclist in grey," he asked for, and followed boldly on the waiter's heels. The door of the dining-room was opening before he felt a qualm. And then suddenly he was nearly minded to turn and run for it, and his features seemed to him to be convulsed.

She turned with a start, and looked at him with something between terror and hope in her eyes.

"Can I — have a few words — with you, alone?" said Mr. Hoopdriver, controlling his breath with difficulty. She hesitated, and then motioned the waiter to withdraw.

Mr. Hoopdriver watched the door shut. He had intended to step out into the middle of the room, fold his arms and say, "You are in trouble. I am a Friend. Trust me." Instead of which he stood panting and then spoke with sudden familiarity, hastily, guiltily: "Look here. I don't know what the juice is up, but I think there's something wrong. Excuse my intruding — if it isn't so. I'll do anything you like to help you out of the scrape — if you're in one. That's my meaning, I believe. What can I do? I would do anything to help you."

Her brow puckered, as she watched him make, with infinite emotion, this remarkable speech. "YOU!" she said. She was tumultuously weighing possibilities in her mind, and he had scarcely ceased when she had made her resolve.

She stepped a pace forward. "You are a gentleman," she said.

"Yes," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

"Can I trust you?"

She did not wait for his assurance. "I must leave this hotel at once.

Come here."

She took his arm and led him to the window.

"You can just see the gate. It is still open. Through that are our bicycles. Go down, get them out, and I will come down to you. Dare you?

"Get your bicycle out in the road?"

"Both. Mine alone is no good. At once. Dare you?"

"Which way?"

"Go out by the front door and round. I will follow in one minute."

"Right!" said Mr. Hoopdriver, and went.

He had to get those bicycles. Had he been told to go out and kill Bechamel he would have done it. His head was a maelstrom now. He walked out of the hotel, along the front, and into the big, black-shadowed coach yard. He looked round. There were no bicycles visible. Then a man emerged from the dark, a short man in a short, black, shiny jacket. Hoopdriver was caught. He made no attempt to turn and run for it. "I've been giving your machines a wipe over, sir," said the man, recognising the suit, and touching his cap. Hoopdriver's intelligence now was a soaring eagle; he swooped on the situation at once. "That's right," he said, and added, before the pause became marked, "Where is mine? I want to look at the chain."

The man led him into an open shed, and went fumbling for a lantern. Hoopdriver moved the lady's machine out of his way to the door, and then laid hands on the man's machine and wheeled it out of the shed into the yard. The gate stood open and beyond was the pale road and a clump of trees black in the twilight. He stooped and examined the chain with trembling fingers. How was it to be done? Something behind the gate seemed to flutter. The man must be got rid of anyhow.

"I say," said Hoopdriver, with an inspiration, "can you get me a screwdriver?"

The man simply walked across the shed, opened and shut a box, and came up to the kneeling Hoopdriver with a screwdriver in his hand. Hoopdriver felt himself a lost man. He took the screwdriver with a tepid "Thanks," and incontinently had another inspiration.

"I say," he said again.

"Well?"

“This is miles too big.”

The man lit the lantern, brought it up to Hoopdriver and put it down on the ground. “Want a smaller screwdriver?” he said.

Hoopdriver had his handkerchief out and sneezed a prompt ATICHEW. It is the orthodox thing when you wish to avoid recognition. “As small as you have,” he said, out of his pocket handkerchief.

“I ain’t got none smaller than that,” said the ostler.

“Won’t do, really,” said Hoopdriver, still wallowing in his handkerchief.

“I’ll see wot they got in the ‘ouse, if you like, sir,” said the man. “If you would,” said Hoopdriver. And as the man’s heavily nailed boots went clattering down the yard, Hoopdriver stood up, took a noiseless step to the lady’s machine, laid trembling hands on its handle and saddle, and prepared for a rush.

The scullery door opened momentarily and sent a beam of warm, yellow light up the road, shut again behind the man, and forthwith Hoopdriver rushed the machines towards the gate. A dark grey form came fluttering to meet him. “Give me this,” she said, “and bring yours.”

He passed the thing to her, touched her hand in the darkness, ran back, seized Bechamel’s machine, and followed.

The yellow light of the scullery door suddenly flashed upon the cobbles again. It was too late now to do anything but escape. He heard the ostler shout behind him, and came into the road. She was up and dim already. He got into the saddle without a blunder. In a moment the ostler was in the gateway with a full-throated “HI! sir! That ain’t allowed;” and Hoopdriver was overtaking the Young Lady in Grey. For some moments the earth seemed alive with shouts of, “Stop ‘em!” and the shadows with ambuscades of police. The road swept round, and they were riding out of sight of the hotel, and behind dark hedges, side by side.

She was weeping with excitement as he overtook her. “Brave,” she said, “brave!” and he ceased to feel like a hunted thief. He looked over his shoulder and about him, and saw that they were already out of Bognor — for the Vicuna stands at the very westernmost extremity of the sea front — and riding on a fair wide road.

XXIII.

The ostler (being a fool) rushed violently down the road vociferating after them. Then he returned panting to the Vicuna Hotel, and finding a group of men outside the entrance, who wanted to know what was UP, stopped to give them the cream of the adventure. That gave the fugitives five minutes. Then pushing breathlessly into the bar, he had to make it clear to the barmaid what the matter was, and the 'gov'nor' being out, they spent some more precious time wondering 'what — EVER' was to be done! in which the two customers returning from outside joined with animation. There were also moral remarks and other irrelevant contributions. There were conflicting ideas of telling the police and pursuing the flying couple on a horse. That made ten minutes. Then Stephen, the waiter, who had shown Hoopdriver up, came down and lit wonderful lights and started quite a fresh discussion by the simple question "WHICH?" That turned ten minutes into a quarter of an hour. And in the midst of this discussion, making a sudden and awestricken silence, appeared Bechamel in the hall beyond the bar, walked with a resolute air to the foot of the staircase, and passed out of sight. You conceive the backward pitch of that exceptionally shaped cranium? Incredulous eyes stared into one another's in the bar, as his paces, muffled by the stair carpet, went up to the landing, turned, reached the passage and walked into the dining-room overhead.

"It wasn't that one at all, miss," said the ostler, "I'd SWEAR"

"Well, that's Mr. Beaumont," said the barmaid, " — anyhow."

Their conversation hung comatose in the air, switched up by Bechamel. They listened together. His feet stopped. Turned. Went out of the diningroom. Down the passage to the bedroom. Stopped again.

"Poor chap!" said the barmaid. "She's a wicked woman!"

"Sssh!" said Stephen.

After a pause Bechamel went back to the dining-room. They heard a chair creak under him. Interlude of conversational eyebrows.

"I'm going up," said Stephen, "to break the melancholy news to him."

Bechamel looked up from a week-old newspaper as, without

knocking, Stephen entered. Bechamel's face suggested a different expectation. "Beg pardon, sir," said Stephen, with a diplomatic cough.

"Well?" said Bechamel, wondering suddenly if Jessie had kept some of her threats. If so, he was in for an explanation. But he had it ready. She was a monomaniac. "Leave me alone with her," he would say; "I know how to calm her."

"Mrs. Beaumont," said Stephen.

"WELL?"

"Has gone."

He rose with a fine surprise. "Gone!" he said with a half laugh.

"Gone, sir. On her bicycle."

"On her bicycle! Why?"

"She went, sir, with Another Gentleman."

This time Bechamel was really startled. "An — other Gentlemen! WHO?"

"Another gentleman in brown, sir. Went into the yard, sir, got out the two bicycles, sir, and went off, sir — about twenty minutes ago."

Bechamel stood with his eyes round and his knuckle on his hips. Stephen, watching him with immense enjoyment, speculated whether this abandoned husband would weep or curse, or rush off at once in furious pursuit. But as yet he seemed merely stunned.

"Brown clothes?" he said. "And fairish?"

"A little like yourself, sir — in the dark. The ostler, sir, Jim Duke —"

Bechamel laughed awry. Then, with infinite fervour, he said — But let us put in blank cartridge — he said, " —— — !"

"I might have thought!"

He flung himself into the armchair.

"Damn her," said Bechamel, for all the world like a common man. "I'll chuck this infernal business! They've gone, eigh?"

"Yessir."

"Well, let 'em GO," said Bechamel, making a memorable saying. "Let 'em GO. Who cares? And I wish him luck. And bring me some Bourbon as fast as you can, there's a good chap. I'll take that, and then I'll have another look round Bognor before I turn in."

Stephen was too surprised to say anything but "Bourbon, sir?"

“Go on,” said Bechamel. “Damn you!”

Stephen’s sympathies changed at once. “Yessir,” he murmured, fumbling for the door handle, and left the room, marvelling. Bechamel, having in this way satisfied his sense of appearances, and comported himself as a Pagan should, so soon as the waiter’s footsteps had passed, vented the cream of his feelings in a stream of blasphemous indecency. Whether his wife or HER stepmother had sent the detective, SHE had evidently gone off with him, and that little business was over. And he was here, stranded and sold, an ass, and as it were, the son of many generations of asses. And his only ray of hope was that it seemed more probable, after all, that the girl had escaped through her stepmother. In which case the business might be hushed up yet, and the evil hour of explanation with his wife indefinitely postponed. Then abruptly the image of that lithe figure in grey knickerbockers went frisking across his mind again, and he reverted to his blasphemies. He started up in a gusty frenzy with a vague idea of pursuit, and incontinently sat down again with a concussion that stirred the bar below to its depths. He banged the arms of the chair with his fist, and swore again. “Of all the accursed fools that were ever spawned,” he was chanting, “I, Bechamel—” when with an abrupt tap and prompt opening of the door, Stephen entered with the Bourbon.

XXIV. THE MOONLIGHT RIDE

And so the twenty minutes' law passed into an infinity. We leave the wicked Bechamel clothing himself with cursing as with a garment, — the wretched creature has already sufficiently sullied our modest but truthful pages, — we leave the eager little group in the bar of the Vicuna Hotel, we leave all Bognor as we have left all Chichester and Midhurst and Haslemere and Guildford and Ripley and Putney, and follow this dear fool of a Hoopdriver of ours and his Young Lady in Grey out upon the moonlight road. How they rode! How their hearts beat together and their breath came fast, and how every shadow was anticipation and every noise pursuit! For all that flight Mr. Hoopdriver was in the world of Romance. Had a policeman intervened because their lamps were not lit, Hoopdriver had cut him down and ridden on, after the fashion of a hero born. Had Bechamel arisen in the way with rapiers for a duel, Hoopdriver had fought as one to whom Agincourt was a reality and drapery a dream. It was Rescue, Elopement, Glory! And she by the side of him! He had seen her face in shadow, with the morning sunlight tangled in her hair, he had seen her sympathetic with that warm light in her face, he had seen her troubled and her eyes bright with tears. But what light is there lighting a face like hers, to compare with the soft glamour of the midsummer moon?

The road turned northward, going round through the outskirts of Bognor, in one place dark and heavy under a thick growth of trees, then amidst villas again, some warm and lamplit, some white and sleeping in the moonlight; then between hedges, over which they saw broad wan meadows shrouded in a low-lying mist. They scarcely heeded whither they rode at first, being only anxious to get away, turning once westward when the spire of Chichester cathedral rose suddenly near them out of the dewy night, pale and intricate and high. They rode, speaking little, just a rare word now and then, at a turning, at a footfall, at a roughness in the road.

She seemed to be too intent upon escape to give much thought to him, but after the first tumult of the adventure, as flight passed into mere steady ridin@@ his mind became an enormous appreciation of

the position. The night was a warm white silence save for the subtile running of their chains. He looked sideways at her as she sat beside him with her ankles gracefully ruling the treadles. Now the road turned westward, and she was a dark grey outline against the shimmer of the moon; and now they faced northwards, and the soft cold light passed caressingly over her hair and touched her brow and cheek.

There is a magic quality in moonshine; it touches all that is sweet and beautiful, and the rest of the night is hidden. It has created the fairies, whom the sunlight kills, and fairyland rises again in our hearts at the sight of it, the voices of the filmy route, and their faint, soul-piercing melodies. By the moonlight every man, dull clod though he be by day, tastes something of Endymion, takes something of the youth and strength of Enidymion, and sees the dear white goddess shining at him from his Lady's eyes. The firm substantial daylight things become ghostly and elusive, the hills beyond are a sea of unsubstantial texture, the world a visible spirit, the spiritual within us rises out of its darkness, loses something of its weight and body, and swims up towards heaven. This road that was a mere rutted white dust, hot underfoot, blinding to the eye, is now a soft grey silence, with the glitter of a crystal grain set starlike in its silver here and there. Overhead, riding serenely through the spacious blue, is the mother of the silence, she who has spiritualised the world, alone save for two attendant steady shining stars. And in silence under her benign influence, under the benediction of her light, rode our two wanderers side by side through the transfigured and transfiguring night.

Nowhere was the moon shining quite so brightly as in Mr. Hoopdriver's skull. At the turnings of the road he made his decisions with an air of profound promptitude (and quite haphazard). "The Right," he would say. Or again "The Left," as one who knew. So it was that in the space of an hour they came abruptly down a little lane, full tilt upon the sea. Grey beach to the right of them and to the left, and a little white cottage fast asleep inland of a sleeping fishing-boat. "Hullo!" said Mr. Hoopdriver, sotto voce. They dismounted abruptly. Stunted oaks and thorns rose out of the haze of moonlight that was tangled in the hedge on either side.

“You are safe,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, sweeping off his cap with an air and bowing courtly.

“Where are we?”

“SAFE.”

“But WHERE?”

“Chichester Harbour.” He waved his arm seaward as though it was a goal.

“Do you think they will follow us?”

“We have turned and turned again.”

It seemed to Hoopdriver that he heard her sob. She stood dimly there, holding her machine, and he, holding his, could go no nearer to her to see if she sobbed for weeping or for want of breath. “What are we to do now?” her voice asked.

“Are you tired?” he asked.

“I will do what has to be done.”

The two black figures in the broken light were silent for a space. “Do you know,” she said, “I am not afraid of you. I am sure you are honest to me. And I do not even know your name!”

He was taken with a sudden shame of his homely patronymic. “It’s an ugly name,” he said. “But you are right in trusting me. I would — I would do anything for you.... This is nothing.”

She caught at her breath. She did not care to ask why. But compared with Bechamel!— “We take each other on trust,” she said. “Do you want to know — how things are with me?”

“That man,” she went on, after the assent of his listening silence, “promised to help and protect me. I was unhappy at home — never mind why. A stepmother — Idle, unoccupied, hindered, cramped, that is enough, perhaps. Then he came into my life, and talked to me of art and literature, and set my brain on fire. I wanted to come out into the world, to be a human being — not a thing in a hutch. And he —”

“I know,” said Hoopdriver.

“And now here I am—”

“I will do anything,” said Hoopdriver.

She thought. “You cannot imagine my stepmother. No! I could not describe her—”

“I am entirely at your service. I will help you with all my power.”

“I have lost an Illusion and found a Knight-errant.” She spoke of Bechamel as the Illusion.

Mr. Hoopdriver felt flattered. But he had no adequate answer.

“I’m thinking,” he said, full of a rapture of protective responsibility, “what we had best be doing. You are tired, you know. And we can’t wander all night — after the day we’ve had.”

“That was Chichester we were near?” she asked.

“If,” he meditated, with a tremble in his voice, “you would make ME your brother, MISS BEAUMONT.”

“Yes?”

“We could stop there together—”

She took a minute to answer. “I am going to light these lamps,” said Hoopdriver. He bent down to his own, and struck a match on his shoe. She looked at his face in its light, grave and intent. How could she ever have thought him common or absurd?

“But you must tell me your name — brother,” she said,

“Er — Carrington,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, after a momentary pause. Who would be Hoopdriver on a night like this?

“But the Christian name?”

“Christian name? MY Christian name. Well — Chris.” He snapped his lamp and stood up. “If you will hold my machine, I will light yours,” he said.

She came round obediently and took his machine, and for a moment they stood face to face. “My name, brother Chris,” she said, “is Jessie.”

He looked into her eyes, and his excitement seemed arrested. “JESSIE,” he repeated slowly. The mute emotion of his face affected her strangely. She had to speak. “It’s not such a very wonderful name, is it?” she said, with a laugh to break the intensity.

He opened his mouth and shut it again, and, with a sudden wincing of his features, abruptly turned and bent down to open the lantern in front of her machine. She looked down at him, almost kneeling in front of her, with an unreasonable approbation in her eyes. It was, as I have indicated, the hour and season of the full moon.

XXV.

Mr. Hoopdriver conducted the rest of that night's journey with the same confident dignity as before, and it was chiefly by good luck and the fact that most roads about a town converge thereupon, that Chichester was at last attained. It seemed at first as though everyone had gone to bed, but the Red Hotel still glowed yellow and warm. It was the first time Hoopdriver had dared the mysteries of a 'first-class' hotel.' But that night he was in the mood to dare anything.

"So you found your Young Lady at last," said the ostler of the Red Hotel; for it chanced he was one of those of whom Hoopdriver had made inquiries in the afternoon.

"Quite a misunderstanding," said Hoopdriver, with splendid readiness. "My sister had gone to Bognor But I brought her back here. I've took a fancy to this place. And the moonlight's simply dee-vine."

"We've had supper, thenks, and we're tired," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "I suppose you won't take anything, — Jessie?"

The glory of having her, even as a sister! and to call her Jessie like that! But he carried it off splendidly, as he felt himself bound to admit. "Good-night, Sis," he said, "and pleasant dreams. I'll just 'ave a look at this paper before I turn in." But this was living indeed! he told himself.

So gallantly did Mr. Hoopdriver comport himself up to the very edge of the Most Wonderful Day of all. It had begun early, you will remember, with a vigil in a little sweetstuff shop next door to the Angel at Midhurst. But to think of all the things that had happened since then! He caught himself in the middle of a yawn, pulled out his watch, saw the time was halfpast eleven, and marched off, with a fine sense of heroism, bedward.

XXVI. THE SURBITON INTERLUDE

And here, thanks to the glorious institution of sleep, comes a break in the narrative again. These absurd young people are safely tucked away now, their heads full of glowing nonsense, indeed, but the course of events at any rate is safe from any fresh developments through their activities for the next eight hours or more. They are both sleeping healthily you will perhaps be astonished to hear. Here is the girl — what girls are coming to nowadays only Mrs. Lynn Linton can tell! — in company with an absolute stranger, of low extraction and uncertain accent, unchaperoned and unabashed; indeed, now she fancies she is safe, she is, if anything, a little proud of her own share in these transactions. Then this Mr. Hoopdriver of yours, roseate idiot that he is! is in illegal possession of a stolen bicycle, a stolen young lady, and two stolen names, established with them in an hotel that is quite beyond his means, and immensely proud of himself in a somnolent way for these incomparable follies. There are occasions when a moralising novelist can merely wring his hands and leave matters to take their course. For all Hoopdriver knows or cares he may be locked up the very first thing to-morrow morning for the rape of the cycle. Then in Bognor, let alone that melancholy vestige, Bechamel (with whom our dealings are, thank Goodness! over), there is a Coffee Tavern with a steak Mr. Hoopdriver ordered, done to a cinder long ago, his American-cloth parcel in a bedroom, and his own proper bicycle, by way of guarantee, carefully locked up in the hayloft. To-morrow he will be a Mystery, and they will be looking for his body along the sea front. And so far we have never given a glance at the desolate home in Surbiton, familiar to you no doubt through the medium of illustrated interviews, where the unhappy stepmother —

That stepmother, it must be explained, is quite well known to you. That is a little surprise I have prepared for you. She is 'Thomas Plantagenet,' the gifted authoress of that witty and daring book, "A Soul Untrammelled," and quite an excellent woman in her way, — only it is such a crooked way. Her real name is Milton. She is a widow and a charming one, only ten years older than Jessie, and she

is always careful to dedicate her more daring works to the 'sacred memory of my husband' to show that there's nothing personal, you know, in the matter. Considering her literary reputation (she was always speaking of herself as one I martyred for truth,' because the critics advertised her written indecorums in column long 'slates'), — considering her literary reputation, I say, she was one of the most respectable women it is possible to imagine. She furnished correctly, dressed correctly, had severe notions of whom she might meet, went to church, and even at times took the sacrament in some esoteric spirit. And Jessie she brought up so carefully that she never even let her read "A Soul Untrammelled." Which, therefore, naturally enough, Jessie did, and went on from that to a feast of advanced literature. Mrs. Milton not only brought up Jessie carefully, but very slowly, so that at seventeen she was still a clever schoolgirl (as you have seen her) and quite in the background of the little literary circle of unimportant celebrities which 'Thomas Plantagenet' adorned. Mrs. Milton knew Bechamel's reputation of being a dangerous man; but then bad men are not bad women, and she let him come to her house to show she was not afraid — she took no account of Jessie. When the elopement came, therefore, it was a double disappointment to her, for she perceived his hand by a kind of instinct. She did the correct thing. The correct thing, as you know, is to take hansom cabs, regardless of expense, and weep and say you do not know WHAT to do, round the circle of your confidential friends. She could not have ridden nor wept more had Jessie been her own daughter — she showed the properest spirit. And she not only showed it, but felt it.

Mrs. Milton, as a successful little authoress and still more successful widow of thirty-two,— "Thomas Plantagenet is a charming woman," her reviewers used to write invariably, even if they spoke ill of her, — found the steady growth of Jessie into womanhood an unmitigated nuisance and had been willing enough to keep her in the background. And Jessie — who had started this intercourse at fourteen with abstract objections to stepmothers — had been active enough in resenting this. Increasing rivalry and antagonism had sprung up between them, until they could engender quite a vivid hatred from a dropped hairpin or the cutting of a book with a sharpened knife. There is very little deliberate wickedness in

the world. The stupidity of our selfishness gives much the same results indeed, but in the ethical laboratory it shows a different nature. And when the disaster came, Mrs. Milton's remorse for their gradual loss of sympathy and her share in the losing of it, was genuine enough.

You may imagine the comfort she got from her friends, and how West Kensington and Notting Hill and Hampstead, the literary suburbs, those decent penitentiaries of a once Bohemian calling, hummed with the business, Her 'Men' — as a charming literary lady she had, of course, an organised corps — were immensely excited, and were sympathetic; helpfully energetic, suggestive, alert, as their ideals of their various dispositions required them to be. "Any news of Jessie?" was the pathetic opening of a dozen melancholy but interesting conversations. To her Men she was not perhaps so damp as she was to her women friends, but in a quiet way she was even more touching. For three days, Wednesday that is, Thursday, and Friday, nothing was heard of the fugitives. It was known that Jessie, wearing a patent costume with buttonup skirts, and mounted on a diamond frame safety with Dunlops, and a loofah covered saddle, had ridden forth early in the morning, taking with her about two pounds seven shillings in money, and a grey touring case packed, and there, save for a brief note to her stepmother, — a declaration of independence, it was said, an assertion of her Ego containing extensive and very annoying quotations from "A Soul Untrammelled," and giving no definite intimation of her plans — knowledge ceased. That note was shown to few, and then only in the strictest confidence.

But on Friday evening late came a breathless Man Friend, Widgery, a correspondent of hers, who had heard of her trouble among the first. He had been touring in Sussex, — his knapsack was still on his back, — and he testified hurriedly that at a place called Midhurst, in the bar of an hotel called the Angel, he had heard from a barmaid a vivid account of a Young Lady in Grey. Descriptions tallied. But who was the man in brown? "The poor, misguided girl! I must go to her at once," she said, choking, and rising with her hand to her heart.

"It's impossible to-night. There are no more trains. I looked on

my way."

"A mother's love," she said. "I bear her THAT."

"I know you do." He spoke with feeling, for no one admired his photographs of scenery more than Mrs. Milton. "It's more than she deserves."

"Oh, don't speak unkindly of her! She has been misled."

It was really very friendly of him. He declared he was only sorry his news ended there. Should he follow them, and bring her back? He had come to her because he knew of her anxiety. "It is GOOD of you," she said, and quite instinctively took and pressed his hand. "And to think of that poor girl — tonight! It's dreadful." She looked into the fire that she had lit when he came in, the warm light fell upon her dark purple dress, and left her features in a warm shadow. She looked such a slight, frail thing to be troubled so. "We must follow her." Her resolution seemed magnificent. "I have no one to go with me."

"He must marry her," said the man.

"She has no friends. We have no one. After all — Two women. — So helpless."

And this fair-haired little figure was the woman that people who knew her only from her books, called bold, prurient even! Simply because she was great-hearted — intellectual. He was overcome by the unspeakable pathos of her position.

"Mrs. Milton," he said. "Hetty!"

She glanced at him. The overflow was imminent. "Not now," she said, "not now. I must find her first."

"Yes," he said with intense emotion. (He was one of those big, fat men who feel deeply.) "But let me help you. At least let me help you."

"But can you spare time?" she said. "For ME."

"For you—"

"But what can I do? what can WE do?"

"Go to Midhurst. Follow her on. Trace her. She was there on Thursday night, last night. She cycled out of the town. Courage!" he said. "We will save her yet!"

She put out her hand and pressed his again.

"Courage!" he repeated, finding it so well received.

There were alarms and excursions without. She turned her back to the fire, and he sat down suddenly in the big armchair, which suited his dimensions admirably. Then the door opened, and the girl showed in Dangle, who looked curiously from one to the other. There was emotion here, he had heard the armchair creaking, and Mrs. Milton, whose face was flushed, displayed a suspicious alacrity to explain. “You, too,” she said, “are one of my good friends. And we have news of her at last.”

It was decidedly an advantage to Widgery, but Dangle determined to show himself a man of resource. In the end he, too, was accepted for the Midhurst Expedition, to the intense disgust of Widgery; and young Phipps, a callow youth of few words, faultless collars, and fervent devotion, was also enrolled before the evening was out. They would scour the country, all three of them. She appeared to brighten up a little, but it was evident she was profoundly touched. She did not know what she had done to merit such friends. Her voice broke a little, she moved towards the door, and young Phipps, who was a youth of action rather than of words, sprang and opened it — proud to be first.

“She is sorely troubled,” said Dangle to Widgery. “We must do what we can for her.”

“She is a wonderful woman,” said Dangle. “So subtle, so intricate, so many faceted. She feels this deeply.”

Young Phipps said nothing, but he felt the more.

And yet they say the age of chivalry is dead!

But this is only an Interlude, introduced to give our wanderers time to refresh themselves by good, honest sleeping. For the present, therefore, we will not concern ourselves with the starting of the Rescue Party, nor with Mrs. Milton’s simple but becoming grey dress, with the healthy Widgery’s Norfolk jacket and thick boots, with the slender Dangle’s energetic bearing, nor with the wonderful chequerings that set off the legs of the golf-suited Phipps. They are after us. In a little while they will be upon us. You must imagine as you best can the competitive raidings at Midhurst of Widgery, Dangle, and Phipps. How Widgery was great at questions, and Dangle good at inference, and Phipps so conspicuously inferior in everything that he felt it, and sulked with Mrs. Milton most of the

day, after the manner of your callow youth the whole world over. Mrs. Milton stopped at the Angel and was very sad and charming and intelligent, and Widgery paid the bill in the afternoon of Saturday, Chichester was attained. But by that time our fugitives — As you shall immediately hear.

XXVII. THE AWAKENING OF MR. HOOPDRIVER

Mr. Hoopdriver stirred on his pillow, opened his eyes, and, staring unmeaningly, yawned. The bedclothes were soft and pleasant. He turned the peaked nose that overrides the insufficient moustache, up to the ceiling, a pinkish projection over the billow of white. You might see it wrinkle as he yawned again, and then became quiet. So matters remained for a space. Very slowly recollection returned to him. Then a shock of indeterminate brown hair appeared, and first one watery grey eye a-wondering, and then two; the bed upheaved, and you had him, his thin neck projecting abruptly from the clothes he held about him, his face staring about the room. He held the clothes about him, I hope I may explain, because his night-shirt was at Bognor in an American-cloth packet, derelict. He yawned a third time, rubbed his eyes, smacked his lips. He was recalling almost everything now. The pursuit, the hotel, the tremulous daring of his entry, the swift adventure of the inn yard, the moonlight — Abruptly he threw the clothes back and rose into a sitting position on the edge of the bed. Without was the noise of shutters being unfastened and doors unlocked, and the passing of hoofs and wheels in the street. He looked at his watch. Half-past six. He surveyed the sumptuous room again.

"Lord!" said Mr. Hoopdriver. "It wasn't a dream, after all."

"I wonder what they charge for these Juiced rooms!" said Mr. Hoopdriver, nursing one rosy foot.

He became meditative, tugging at his insufficient moustache. Suddenly he gave vent to a noiseless laugh. "What a rush it was! Rushed in and off with his girl right under his nose. Planned it well too. Talk of highway robbery! Talk of brigands Up and off! How juiced SOLD he must be feeling It was a shave too — in the coach yard!"

Suddenly he became silent. Abruptly his eyebrows rose and his jaw fell. "I sa-a-ay!" said Mr. Hoopdriver.

He had never thought of it before. Perhaps you will understand

the whirl he had been in overnight. But one sees things clearer in the daylight. “I’m hanged if I haven’t been and stolen a blessed bicycle.”

“Who cares?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, presently, and his face supplied the answer.

Then he thought of the Young Lady in Grey again, and tried to put a more heroic complexion on the business. But of an early morning, on an empty stomach (as with characteristic coarseness, medical men put it) heroics are of a more difficult growth than by moonlight. Everything had seemed exceptionally fine and brilliant, but quite natural, the evening before.

Mr. Hoopdriver reached out his hand, took his Norfolk jacket, laid it over his knees, and took out the money from the little ticket pocket. “Fourteen and six-half,” he said, holding the coins in his left hand and stroking his chin with his right. He verified, by patting, the presence of a pocketbook in the breast pocket. “Five, fourteen, six-half,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “Left.”

With the Norfolk jacket still on his knees, he plunged into another silent meditation. “That wouldn’t matter,” he said. “It’s the bike’s the bother.

“No good going back to Bognor.

“Might send it back by carrier, of course. Thanking him for the loan. Having no further use—” Mr. Hoopdriver chuckled and lapsed into the silent concoction of a delightfully impudent letter. “Mr. J. Hoopdriver presents his compliments.” But the grave note reasserted itself.

“Might trundle back there in an hour, of course, and exchange them. MY old crock’s so blessed shabby. He’s sure to be spiteful too. Have me run in, perhaps. Then she’d be in just the same old fix, only worse. You see, I’m her Knight-errant. It complicates things so.”

His eye, wandering loosely, rested on the sponge bath. “What the juice do they want with cream pans in a bedroom?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, en passant.

“Best thing we can do is to set out of here as soon as possible, anyhow. I suppose she’ll go home to her friends. That bicycle is a juicy nuisance, anyhow. Juicy nuisance!”

He jumped to his feet with a sudden awakening of energy, to proceed with his toilet. Then with a certain horror he remembered

that the simple necessaries of that process were at Bognor! “Lord!” he remarked, and whistled silently for a space. “Rummy go! profit and loss; profit, one sister with bicycle complete, wot offers? — cheap for tooth and ‘air brush, vests, night-shirt, stockings, and sundries.

“Make the best of it,” and presently, when it came to hair-brushing, he had to smooth his troubled locks with his hands. It was a poor result. “Sneak out and get a shave, I suppose, and buy a brush and so on. Chink again! Beard don’t show much.”

He ran his hand over his chin, looked at himself steadfastly for some time, and curled his insufficient moustache up with some care. Then he fell a-meditating on his beauty. He considered himself, three-quarter face, left and right. An expression of distaste crept over his features. “Looking won’t alter it, Hoopdriver,” he remarked. “You’re a weedy customer, my man. Shoulders narrow. Skimpy, anyhow.”

He put his knuckles on the toilet table and regarded himself with his chin lifted in the air. “Good Lord!” he said. “WHAT a neck! Wonder why I got such a thundering lump there.”

He sat down on the bed, his eye still on the glass. “If I’d been exercised properly, if I’d been fed reasonable, if I hadn’t been shoved out of a silly school into a silly shop — But there! the old folks didn’t know no better. The schoolmaster ought to have. But he didn’t, poor old fool! — Still, when it comes to meeting a girl like this — It’s ‘ARD.

“I wonder what Adam’d think of me — as a specimen. Civilisation, eigh? Heir of the ages! I’m nothing. I know nothing. I can’t do anything — sketch a bit. Why wasn’t I made an artist?

“Beastly cheap, after all, this suit does look, in the sunshine.”

“No good, Hoopdriver. Anyhow, you don’t tell yourself any lies about it. Lovers ain’t your game, — anyway. But there’s other things yet. You can help the young lady, and you will — I suppose she’ll be going home — And that business of the bicycle’s to see to, too, my man. FORWARD, Hoopdriver! If you ain’t a beauty, that’s no reason why you should stop and be copped, is it?”

And having got back in this way to a gloomy kind of self-satisfaction, he had another attempt at his hair preparatory to leaving

his room and hurrying on breakfast, for an early departure. While breakfast was preparing he wandered out into South Street and refurnished himself with the elements of luggage again. “No expense to be spared,” he murmured, disgorging the half-sovereign.

XXVIII. THE DEPARTURE FROM CHICHESTER

He caused his ‘sister’ to be called repeatedly, and when she came down, explained with a humorous smile his legal relationship to the bicycle in the yard. “Might be disagreeable, y’ know.” His anxiety was obvious enough. “Very well,” she said (quite friendly); “hurry breakfast, and we’ll ride out. I want to talk things over with you.” The girl seemed more beautiful than ever after the night’s sleep; her hair in comely dark waves from her forehead, her ungauntleted finger-tips pink and cool. And how decided she was! Breakfast was a nervous ceremony, conversation fraternal but thin; the waiter overawed him, and he was cowed by a multiplicity of forks. But she called him “Chris.” They discussed their route over his sixpenny county map for the sake of talking, but avoided a decision in the presence of the attendant. The five-pound note was changed for the bill, and through Hoopdriver’s determination to be quite the gentleman, the waiter and chambermaid got half a crown each and the ostler a florin. “‘Olidays,” said the ostler to himself, without gratitude. The public mounting of the bicycles in the street was a moment of trepidation. A policeman actually stopped and watched them from the opposite kerb. Suppose him to come across and ask: “Is that your bicycle, sir?” Fight? Or drop it and run? It was a time of bewildering apprehension, too, going through the streets of the town, so that a milk cart barely escaped destruction under Mr. Hoopdriver’s chancy wheel. That recalled him to a sense of erratic steering, and he pulled himself together. In the lanes he breathed freer, and a less formal conversation presently began.

“You’ve ridden out of Chichester in a great hurry,” said Jessie.

“Well, the fact of it is, I’m worried, just a little bit. About this machine.”

“Of course,” she said. “I had forgotten that. But where are we going?”

“Jest a turning or two more, if you don’t mind,” said Hoopdriver.

“Jest a mile or so. I have to think of you, you know. I should feel

more easy. If we was locked up, you know — Not that I should mind on my own account—"

They rode with a streaky, grey sea coming and going on their left hand. Every mile they put between themselves and Chichester Mr. Hoopdriver felt a little less conscience-stricken, and a little more of the gallant desperado. Here he was riding on a splendid machine with a Slap-up girl beside him. What would they think of it in the Emporium if any of them were to see him? He imagined in detail the astonishment of Miss Isaacs and of Miss Howe. "Why! It's Mr. Hoopdriver," Miss Isaacs would say. "Never!" emphatically from Miss Howe. Then he played with Briggs, and then tried the 'G.V.' in a shay. "Fancy introducing 'em to her — My sister pro tem." He was her brother Chris — Chris what? — Confound it! Harringon, Hartington — something like that. Have to keep off that topic until he could remember. Wish he'd told her the truth now — almost. He glanced at her. She was riding with her eyes straight ahead of her. Thinking. A little perplexed, perhaps, she seemed. He noticed how well she rode and that she rode with her lips closed — a thing he could never manage.

Mr. Hoopdriver's mind came round to the future. What was she going to do? What were they both going to do? His thoughts took a graver colour. He had rescued her. This was fine, manly rescue work he was engaged upon. She ought to go home, in spite of that stepmother. He must insist gravely but firmly upon that. She was the spirited sort, of course, but still — Wonder if she had any money? Wonder what the second-class fare from Havant to London is? Of course he would have to pay that — it was the regular thing, he being a gentleman. Then should he take her home? He began to rough in a moving sketch of the return. The stepmother, repentant of her indescribable cruelties, would be present, — even these rich people have their troubles, — probably an uncle or two. The footman would announce, Mr. — (bother that name!) and Miss Milton. Then two women weeping together, and a knightly figure in the background dressed in a handsome Norfolk jacket, still conspicuously new. He would conceal his feeling until the very end. Then, leaving, he would pause in the doorway in such an attitude as Mr. George Alexander might assume, and say, slowly and dwindlingly: "Be kind to her —

BE kind to her," and so depart, heartbroken to the meanest intelligence. But that was a matter for the future. He would have to begin discussing the return soon. There was no traffic along the road, and he came up beside her (he had fallen behind in his musing). She began to talk. "Mr. Denison," she began, and then, doubtfully, "That is your name? I'm very stupid—"

"It is," said Mr. Hoopdriver. (Denison, was it? Denison, Denison, Denison. What was she saying?)

"I wonder how far you are willing to help me?" Confoundedly hard to answer a question like that on the spur of the moment, without steering wildly. "You may rely—" said Mr. Hoopdriver, recovering from a violent wabble. "I can assure you — I want to help you very much. Don't consider me at all. Leastways, consider me entirely at your service." (Nuisance not to be able to say this kind of thing right.)

"You see, I am so awkwardly situated."

"If I can only help you — you will make me very happy—" There was a pause. Round a bend in the road they came upon a grassy space between hedge and road, set with yarrow and meadowsweet, where a felled tree lay among the green. There she dismounted, and propping her machine against a stone, sat down. "Here, we can talk," she said.

"Yes," said Mr. Hoopdriver, expectant.

She answered after a little while, sitting, elbow on knee, with her chin in her hand, and looking straight in front of her. "I don't know — I am resolved to Live my Own Life."

"Of course," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "Naturally."

"I want to Live, and I want to see what life means. I want to learn. Everyone is hurrying me, everything is hurrying me; I want time to think."

Mr. Hoopdriver was puzzled, but admiring. It was wonderful how clear and ready her words were. But then one might speak well with a throat and lips like that. He knew he was inadequate, but he tried to meet the occasion. "If you let them rush you into anything you might repent of, of course you'd be very silly."

"Don't YOU want to learn?" she asked.

"I was wondering only this morning," he began, and stopped.

She was too intent upon her own thoughts to notice this insufficiency. “I find myself in life, and it terrifies me. I seem to be like a little speck, whirling on a wheel, suddenly caught up. ‘What am I here for?’ I ask. Simply to be here at a time — I asked it a week ago, I asked it yesterday, and I ask it to-day. And little things happen and the days pass. My stepmother takes me shopping, people come to tea, there is a new play to pass the time, or a concert, or a novel. The wheels of the world go on turning, turning. It is horrible. I want to do a miracle like Joshua and stop the whirl until I have fought it out. At home — It’s impossible.”

Mr. Hoopdriver stroked his moustache. “It IS so,” he said in a meditative tone. “Things WILL go on,” he said. The faint breath of summer stirred the trees, and a bunch of dandelion puff lifted among the meadowsweet and struck and broke into a dozen separate threads against his knee. They flew on apart, and sank, as the breeze fell, among the grass: some to germinate, some to perish. His eye followed them until they had vanished.

“I can’t go back to Surbiton,” said the Young Lady in Grey.

“EIGH?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, catching at his moustache. This was an unexpected development.

“I want to write, you see,” said the Young Lady in Grey, “to write Books and alter things. To do Good. I want to lead a Free Life and Own myself. I can’t go back. I want to obtain a position as a journalist. I have been told — But I know no one to help me at once. No one that I could go to. There is one person — She was a mistress at my school. If I could write to her — But then, how could I get her answer?”

“H’mp,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, very grave.

“I can’t trouble you much more. You have come — you have risked things—”

“That don’t count,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “It’s double pay to let me do it, so to speak.”

“It is good of you to say that. Surbiton is so Conventional. I am resolved to be Unconventional — at any cost. But we are so hampered. If I could only burgeon out of all that hinders me! I want to struggle, to take my place in the world. I want to be my own mistress, to shape my own career. But my stepmother objects so. She

does as she likes herself, and is strict with me to ease her conscience. And if I go back now, go back owning myself beaten—" She left the rest to his imagination.

"I see that," agreed Mr. Hoopdriver. He MUST help her. Within his skull he was doing some intricate arithmetic with five pounds six and twopence. In some vague way he inferred from all this that Jessie was trying to escape from an undesirable marriage, but was saying these things out of modesty. His circle of ideas was so limited.

"You know, Mr. — I've forgotten your name again."

Mr. Hoopdriver seemed lost in abstraction. "You can't go back of course, quite like that," he said thoughtfully. His ears waxed suddenly red and his cheeks flushed.

"But what IS your name?"

"Name!" said Mr. Hoopdriver. "Why! — Benson, of course."

"Mr. Benson — yes it's really very stupid of me. But I can never remember names. I must make a note on my cuff." She clicked a little silver pencil and wrote the name down. "If I could write to my friend. I believe she would be able to help me to an independent life. I could write to her — or telegraph. Write, I think. I could scarcely explain in a telegram. I know she would help me."

Clearly there was only one course open to a gentleman under the circumstances. "In that case," said Mr. Hoopdriver, "if you don't mind trusting yourself to a stranger, we might continue as we are perhaps. For a day or so. Until you heard." (Suppose thirty shillings a day, that gives four days, say four thirties is hun' and twenty, six quid, — well, three days, say; four ten.)

"You are very good to me."

His expression was eloquent.

"Very well, then, and thank you. It's wonderful — it's more than I deserve that you—" She dropped the theme abruptly. "What was our bill at Chichester?"

"Eigh?" said Mr. Hoopdriver, feigning a certain stupidity. There was a brief discussion. Secretly he was delighted at her insistence in paying. She carried her point. Their talk came round to their immediate plans for the day. They decided to ride easily, through Havant, and stop, perhaps, at Fareham or Southampton. For the previous day had tried them both. Holding the map extended on his

knee, Mr. Hoopdriver's eye fell by chance on the bicycle at his feet. "That bicycle," he remarked, quite irrelevantly, "wouldn't look the same machine if I got a big, double Elarum instead of that little bell."

"Why?"

"Jest a thought." A pause.

"Very well, then, — Havant and lunch," said Jessie, rising.

"I wish, somehow, we could have managed it without stealing that machine," said Hoopdriver. "Because it IS stealing it, you know, come to think of it."

"Nonsense. If Mr. Bechamel troubles you — I will tell the whole world — if need be."

"I believe you would," said Mr. Hoopdriver, admiring her. "You're plucky enough — goodness knows."

Discovering suddenly that she was standing, he, too, rose and picked up her machine. She took it and wheeled it into the road. Then he took his own. He paused, regarding it. "I say!" said he. "How'd this bike look, now, if it was enamelled grey?" She looked over her shoulder at his grave face. "Why try and hide it in that way?"

"It was jest a passing thought," said Mr. Hoopdriver, airily. "Didn't MEAN anything, you know."

As they were riding on to Havant it occurred to Mr. Hoopdriver in a transitory manner that the interview had been quite other than his expectation. But that was the way with everything in Mr. Hoopdriver's experience. And though his Wisdom looked grave within him, and Caution was chinking coins, and an ancient prejudice in favour of Property shook her head, something else was there too, shouting in his mind to drown all these saner considerations, the intoxicating thought of riding beside Her all to-day, all to-morrow, perhaps for other days after that. Of talking to her familiarly, being brother of all her slender strength and freshness, of having a golden, real, and wonderful time beyond all his imaginings. His old familiar fancyings gave place to anticipations as impalpable and fluctuating and beautiful as the sunset of a summer day.

At Havant he took an opportunity to purchase, at small hairdresser's in the main street, a toothbrush, a pair of nail scissors, and a little bottle of stuff to darken the moustache, an article the

shopman introduced to his attention, recommended highly, and sold in the excitement of the occasion.

XXIX. THE UNEXPECTED ANECDOTE OF THE LION

They rode on to Cosham and lunched lightly but expensively there. Jessie went out and posted her letter to her school friend. Then the green height of Portsdown Hill tempted them, and leaving their machines in the village they clambered up the slope to the silent red-brick fort that crowned it. Thence they had a view of Portsmouth and its cluster of sister towns, the crowded narrows of the harbour, the Solent and the Isle of Wight like a blue cloud through the hot haze. Jessie by some miracle had become a skirted woman in the Cosham inn. Mr. Hoopdriver lounged gracefully on the turf, smoked a Red Herring cigarette, and lazily regarded the fortified towns that spread like a map away there, the inner line of defence like toy fortifications, a mile off perhaps; and beyond that a few little fields and then the beginnings of Landport suburb and the smoky cluster of the multitudinous houses. To the right at the head of the harbour shallows the town of Porchester rose among the trees. Mr. Hoopdriver's anxiety receded to some remote corner of his brain and that florid half-voluntary imagination of his shared the stage with the image of Jessie. He began to speculate on the impression he was creating. He took stock of his suit in a more optimistic spirit, and reviewed, with some complacency, his actions for the last four and twenty hours. Then he was dashed at the thought of her infinite perfections.

She had been observing him quietly, rather more closely during the last hour or so. She did not look at him directly because he seemed always looking at her. Her own troubles had quieted down a little, and her curiosity about the chivalrous, worshipping, but singular gentleman in brown, was awakening. She had recalled, too, the curious incident of their first encounter. She found him hard to explain to herself. You must understand that her knowledge of the world was rather less than nothing, having been obtained entirely from books. You must not take a certain ignorance for foolishness.

She had begun with a few experiments. He did not know French

except ‘sivver play,’ a phrase he seemed to regard as a very good light table joke in itself. His English was uncertain, but not such as books informed her distinguished the lower classes. His manners seemed to her good on the whole, but a trifle over-respectful and out of fashion. He called her I Madam’ once. He seemed a person of means and leisure, but he knew nothing of recent concerts, theatres, or books. How did he spend his time? He was certainly chivalrous, and a trifle simpleminded. She fancied (so much is there in a change of costume) that she had never met with such a man before. What COULD he be?

“Mr. Benson,” she said, breaking a silence devoted to landscape.

He rolled over and regarded her, chin on knuckles.

“At your service.”

“Do you paint? Are you an artist?”

“Well.” Judicious pause. “I should hardly call myself a Nartist, you know. I DO paint a little. And sketch, you know — skitty kind of things.”

He plucked and began to nibble a blade of grass. It was really not so much lying as his quick imagination that prompted him to add, “In Papers, you know, and all that.”

“I see,” said Jessie, looking at him thoughtfully. Artists were a very heterogeneous class certainly, and geniuses had a trick of being a little odd. He avoided her eye and bit his grass. “I don’t do MUCH, you know.”

“It’s not your profession?

“Oh, no,” said Hoopdriver, anxious now to hedge. “I don’t make a regular thing of it, you know. Jest now and then something comes into my head and down it goes. No — I’m not a regular artist.”

“Then you don’t practise any regular profession?” Mr. Hoopdriver looked into her eyes and saw their quiet unsuspicious regard. He had vague ideas of resuming the detective role. “It’s like this,” he said, to gain time. “I have a sort of profession. Only there’s a kind of reason — nothing much, you know.”

“I beg your pardon for cross-examining you.”

“No trouble,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “Only I can’t very well — I leave it to you, you know. I don’t want to make any mystery of it, so far as that goes.” Should he plunge boldly and be a barrister? That

anyhow was something pretty good. But she might know about barristry.

"I think I could guess what you are."

"Well — guess," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

"You come from one of the colonies?"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Hoopdriver, veering round to the new wind. "How did you find out THAT?" (the man was born in a London suburb, dear Reader.)

"I guessed," she said.

He lifted his eyebrows as one astonished, and clutched a new piece of grass.

"You were educated up country."

"Good again," said Hoopdriver, rolling over again into her elbow. "You're a CLAIRVOY ant." He bit at the grass, smiling. "Which colony was it?"

"That I don't know."

"You must guess," said Hoopdriver.

"South Africa," she said. "I strongly incline to South Africa."

"South Africa's quite a large place," he said.

"But South Africa is right?"

"You're warm," said Hoopdriver, "anyhow," and the while his imagination was eagerly exploring this new province.

"South Africa IS right?" she insisted.

He turned over again and nodded, smiling reassuringly into her eyes.

"What made me think of South Africa was that novel of Olive Schreiner's, you know— 'The Story of an African Farm.' Gregory Rose is so like you."

"I never read 'The Story of an African Farm,'" said Hoopdriver. "I must. What's he like?"

"You must read the book. But it's a wonderful place, with its mixture of races, and its brand-new civilisation jostling the old savagery. Were you near Khama?"

"He was a long way off from our place," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "We had a little ostrich farm, you know — Just a few hundred of 'em, out Johannesburg way."

"On the Karroo — was it called?"

“That’s the term. Some of it was freehold though. Luckily. We got along very well in the old days. — But there’s no ostriches on that farm now.” He had a diamond mine in his head, just at the moment, but he stopped and left a little to the girl’s imagination. Besides which it had occurred to him with a kind of shock that he was lying.

“What became of the ostriches?”

“We sold ’em off, when we parted with the farm. Do you mind if I have another cigarette? That was when I was quite a little chap, you know, that we had this ostrich farm.”

“Did you have Blacks and Boers about you?”

“Lots,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, striking a match on his instep and beginning to feel hot at the new responsibility he had brought upon himself.

“How interesting! Do you know, I’ve never been out of England except to Paris and Mentone and Switzerland.”

“One gets tired of travelling (puff) after a bit, of course.”

“You must tell me about your farm in South Africa. It always stimulates my imagination to think of these places. I can fancy all the tall ostriches being driven out by a black herd — to graze, I suppose. How do ostriches feed?”

“Well,” said Hoopdriver. “That’s rather various. They have their fancies, you know. There’s fruit, of course, and that kind of thing. And chicken food, and so forth. You have to use judgment.”

“Did you ever see a lion?” “They weren’t very common in our district,” said Hoopdriver, quite modestly. “But I’ve seen them, of course. Once or twice.”

“Fancy seeing a lion! Weren’t you frightened?”

Mr. Hoopdriver was now thoroughly sorry he had accepted that offer of South Africa. He puffed his cigarette and regarded the Solent languidly as he settled the fate on that lion in his mind. “I scarcely had time,” he said. “It all happened in a minute.”

“Go on,” she said.

“I was going across the inner paddock where the fatted ostriches were.”

“Did you EAT ostriches, then? I did not know—”

“Eat them! — often. Very nice they ARE too, properly stuffed.

Well, we — I, rather — was going across this paddock, and I saw something standing up in the moonlight and looking at me." Mr. Hoopdriver was in a hot perspiration now. His invention seemed to have gone limp. "Luckily I had my father's gun with me. I was scared, though, I can tell you. (Puff.) I just aimed at the end that I thought was the head. And let fly. (Puff.) And over it went, you know."

"Dead?"

"AS dead. It was one of the luckiest shots I ever fired. And I wasn't much over nine at the time, neither."

"*I* should have screamed and run away."

"There's some things you can't run away from," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "To run would have been Death."

"I don't think I ever met a lion-killer before," she remarked, evidently with a heightened opinion of him.

There was a pause. She seemed meditating further questions. Mr. Hoopdriver drew his watch hastily. "I say," said Mr. Hoopdriver, showing it to her, "don't you think we ought to be getting on?"

His face was flushed, his ears bright red. She ascribed his confusion to modesty. He rose with a lion added to the burthens of his conscience, and held out his hand to assist her. They walked down into Cosham again, resumed their machines, and went on at a leisurely pace along the northern shore of the big harbour. But Mr. Hoopdriver was no longer happy. This horrible, this fulsome lie, stuck in his memory. Why HAD he done it? She did not ask for any more South African stories, happily — at least until Porchester was reached — but talked instead of Living One's Own Life, and how custom hung on people like chains. She talked wonderfully, and set Hoopdriver's mind fermenting. By the Castle, Mr. Hoopdriver caught several crabs in little shore pools. At Fareham they stopped for a second tea, and left the place towards the hour of sunset, under such invigorating circumstances as you shall in due course hear.

XXX. THE RESCUE EXPEDITION

And now to tell of those energetic chevaliers, Widgery, Dangle, and Phipps, and of that distressed beauty, 'Thomas Plantagenet,' well known in society, so the paragraphs said, as Mrs. Milton. We left them at Midhurst station, if I remember rightly, waiting, in a state of fine emotion, for the Chichester train. It was clearly understood by the entire Rescue Party that Mrs. Milton was bearing up bravely against almost overwhelming grief. The three gentlemen outdid one another in sympathetic expedients; they watched her gravely almost tenderly. The substantial Widgery tugged at his moustache, and looked his unspeakable feelings at her with those dog-like, brown eyes of his; the slender Dangle tugged at HIS moustache, and did what he could with unsympathetic grey ones. Phipps, unhappily, had no moustache to run any risks with, so he folded his arms and talked in a brave, indifferent, bearing-up tone about the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway, just to cheer the poor woman up a little. And even Mrs. Milton really felt that exalted melancholy to the very bottom of her heart, and tried to show it in a dozen little, delicate, feminine ways.

"There is nothing to do until we get to Chichester," said Dangle. "Nothing."

"Nothing," said Widgery, and aside in her ear: "You really ate scarcely anything, you know."

"Their trains are always late," said Phipps, with his fingers along the edge of his collar. Dangle, you must understand, was a sub-editor and reviewer, and his pride was to be Thomas Plantagenet's intellectual companion. Widgery, the big man, was manager of a bank and a mighty golfer, and his conception of his relations to her never came into his mind without those charming oldlines, "Douglas, Douglas, tender and true," falling hard upon its heels. His name was Douglas-Douglas Widgery. And Phipps, Phipps was a medical student still, and he felt that he laid his heart at her feet, the heart of a man of the world. She was kind to them all in her way, and insisted on their being friends together, in spite of a disposition to reciprocal criticism they displayed. Dangle thought Widgery a Philistine,

appreciating but coarsely the merits of “A Soul Untrammelled,” and Widgery thought Dangle lacked, humanity — would talk insincerely to say a clever thing. Both Dangle and Widgery thought Phipps a bit of a cub, and Phipps thought both Dangle and Widgery a couple of Thundering Bounders.

“They would have got to Chichester in time for lunch,” said Dangle, in the train. “After, perhaps. And there’s no sufficient place in the road. So soon as we get there, Phipps must inquire at the chief hotels to see if any one answering to her description has lunched there.”

“Oh, I’LL inquire,” said Phipps. “Willingly. I suppose you and Widgery will just hang about—”

He saw an expression of pain on Mrs. Milton’s gentle face, and stopped abruptly.

“No,” said Dangle, “we shan’t HANG ABOUT, as you put it. There are two places in Chichester where tourists might go — the cathedral and a remarkably fine museum. I shall go to the cathedral and make an inquiry or so, while Widgery—”

“The museum. Very well. And after that there’s a little thing or two I’ve thought of myself,” said Widgery.

To begin with they took Mrs. Milton in a kind of procession to the Red Hotel and established her there with some tea. “You are so kind to me,” she said. “All of you.” They signified that it was nothing, and dispersed to their inquiries. By six they returned, their zeal a little damped, without news. Widgery came back with Dangle. Phipps was the last to return. “You’re quite sure,” said Widgery, “that there isn’t any flaw in that inference of yours?”

“Quite,” said Dangle, rather shortly.

“Of course,” said Widgery, “their starting from Midhurst on the Chichester road doesn’t absolutely bind them not to change their minds.”

“My dear fellow! — It does. Really it does. You must allow me to have enough intelligence to think of cross-roads. Really you must. There aren’t any cross-roads to tempt them. Would they turn aside here? No. Would they turn there? Many more things are inevitable than you fancy.”

“We shall see at once,” said Widgery, at the window. “Here

comes Phipps. For my own part—"

"Phipps!" said Mrs. Milton. "Is he hurrying? Does he look—" She rose in her eagerness, biting her trembling lip, and went towards the window.

"No news," said Phipps, entering.

"Ah!" said Widgery.

"None?" said Dangle.

"Well," said Phipps. "One fellow had got hold of a queer story of a man in bicycling clothes, who was asking the same question about this time yesterday."

"What question?" said Mrs. Milton, in the shadow of the window. She spoke in a low voice, almost a whisper.

"Why — Have you seen a young lady in a grey bicycling costume?"

Dangle caught at his lower lip. "What's that?" he said. "Yesterday! A man asking after her then! What can THAT mean?"

"Heaven knows," said Phipps, sitting down wearily. "You'd better infer."

"What kind of man?" said Dangle.

"How should I know? — in bicycling costume, the fellow said."

"But what height? — What complexion?"

"Didn't ask," said Phipps. "DIDN'T ASK! Nonsense," said Dangle.

"Ask him yourself," said Phipps. "He's an ostler chap in the White Hart, — short, thick-set fellow, with a red face and a crusty manner. Leaning up against the stable door. Smells of whiskey. Go and ask him."

"Of course," said Dangle, taking his straw hat from the shade over the stuffed bird on the chiffonier and turning towards the door. "I might have known."

Phipps' mouth opened and shut.

"You're tired, I'm sure, Mr. Phipps," said the lady, soothingly. "Let me ring for some tea for you." It suddenly occurred to Phipps that he had lapsed a little from his chivalry. "I was a little annoyed at the way he rushed me to do all this business," he said. "But I'd do a hundred times as much if it would bring you any nearer to her." Pause. "I WOULD like a little tea."

“I don’t want to raise any false hopes,” said Widgery. “But I do NOT believe they even came to Chichester. Dangle’s a very clever fellow, of course, but sometimes these Inferences of his—”

“Tchak!” said Phipps, suddenly.

“What is it?” said Mrs. Milton.

“Something I’ve forgotten. I went right out from here, went to every other hotel in the place, and never thought — But never mind. I’ll ask when the waiter comes.”

“You don’t mean—” A tap, and the door opened. “Tea, m’m? yes, m’m,” said the waiter.

“One minute,” said Phipps. “Was a lady in grey, a cycling lady —”

“Stopped here yesterday? Yessir. Stopped the night. With her brother, sir — a young gent.”

“Brother!” said Mrs. Milton, in a low tone. “Thank God!”

The waiter glanced at her and understood everything. “A young gent, sir,” he said, “very free with his money. Give the name of Beaumont.” He proceeded to some rambling particulars, and was cross-examined by Widgery on the plans of the young couple.

“Havant! Where’s Havant?” said Phipps. “I seem to remember it somewhere.”

“Was the man tall?” said Mrs. Milton, intently, “distinguished looking? with a long, flaxen moustache? and spoke with a drawl?”

“Well,” said the waiter, and thought. “His moustache, m’m, was scarcely long — scrubby more, and young looking.”

“About thirty-five, he was?”

“No, m’m. More like five and twenty. Not that.”

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Milton, speaking in a curious, hollow voice, fumbling for her salts, and showing the finest self-control. “It must have been her YOUNGER brother — must have been.”

“That will do, thank you,” said Widgery, officiously, feeling that she would be easier under this new surprise if the man were dismissed. The waiter turned to go, and almost collided with Dangle, who was entering the room, panting excitedly and with a pocket handkerchief held to his right eye. “Hullo!” said dangle. “What’s up?”

“What’s up with YOU?” said Phipps.

“Nothing — an altercation merely with that drunken ostler of yours. He thought it was a plot to annoy him — that the Young Lady in Grey was mythical. Judged from your manner. I’ve got a piece of raw meat to keep over it. You have some news, I see?”

“Did the man hit you?” asked Widgery.

Mrs. Milton rose and approached Dangle. “Cannot I do anything?”

Dangle was heroic. “Only tell me your news,” he said, round the corner of the handkerchief.

“It was in this way,” said Phipps, and explained rather sheepishly. While he was doing so, with a running fire of commentary from Widgery, the waiter brought in a tray of tea. “A time table,” said Dangle, promptly, “for Havant.” Mrs. Milton poured two cups, and Phipps and Dangle partook in passover form. They caught the train by a hair’s breadth. So to Havant and inquiries.

Dangle was puffed up to find that his guess of Havant was right. In view of the fact that beyond Havant the Southampton road has a steep hill continuously on the right-hand side, and the sea on the left, he hit upon a magnificent scheme for heading the young folks off. He and Mrs. Milton would go to Fareham, Widgery and Phipps should alight one each at the intermediate stations of Cosham and Porchester, and come on by the next train if they had no news. If they did not come on, a wire to the Fareham post office was to explain why. It was Napoleonic, and more than consoled Dangle for the open derision of the Havant street boys at the handkerchief which still protected his damaged eye.

Moreover, the scheme answered to perfection. The fugitives escaped by a hair’s breadth. They were outside the Golden Anchor at Fareham, and preparing to mount, as Mrs. Milton and Dangle came round the corner from the station. “It’s her!” said Mrs. Milton, and would have screamed. “Hist!” said Dangle, gripping the lady’s arm, removing his handkerchief in his excitement, and leaving the piece of meat over his eye, an extraordinary appearance which seemed unexpectedly to calm her. “Be cool!” said Dangle, glaring under the meat. “They must not see us. They will get away else. Were there flys at the station?” The young couple mounted and vanished round the corner of the Winchester road. Had it not been for the publicity of

the business, Mrs. Milton would have fainted. “SAVE HER!” she said.

“Ah! A conveyance,” said Dangle. “One minute.”

He left her in a most pathetic attitude, with her hand pressed to her heart, and rushed into the Golden Anchor. Dog cart in ten minutes. Emerged. The meat had gone now, and one saw the cooling puffiness over his eye. “I will conduct you back to the station,” said Dangle; “hurry back here, and pursue them. You will meet Widgery and Phipps and tell them I am in pursuit.”

She was whirled back to the railway station and left there, on a hard, blistered, wooden seat in the sun. She felt tired and dreadfully ruffled and agitated and dusty. Dangle was, no doubt, most energetic and devoted; but for a kindly, helpful manner commend her to Douglas Widgery.

Meanwhile Dangle, his face golden in the evening sun, was driving (as well as he could) a large, black horse harnessed into a thing called a gig, northwestward towards Winchester. Dangle, barring his swollen eye, was a refined-looking little man, and he wore a deerstalker cap and was dressed in dark grey. His neck was long and slender. Perhaps you know what gigs are, — huge, big, wooden things and very high and the horse, too, was huge and big and high, with knobby legs, a long face, a hard mouth, and a whacking trick of pacing. Smack, smack, smack, smack it went along the road, and hard by the church it shied vigorously at a hooded perambulator.

The history of the Rescue Expedition now becomes confused. It appears that Widgery was extremely indignant to find Mrs. Milton left about upon the Fareham platform. The day had irritated him somehow, though he had started with the noblest intentions, and he seemed glad to find an outlet for justifiable indignation. “He’s such a spasmodic creature,” said Widgery. “Rushing off! And I suppose we’re to wait here until he comes back! It’s likely. He’s so egotistical, is Dangle. Always wants to mismanage everything himself.”

“He means to help me,” said Mrs. Milton, a little reproachfully, touching his arm. Widgery was hardly in the mood to be mollified all at once. “He need not prevent ME,” he said, and stopped. “It’s no

good talking, you know, and you are tired."

"I can go on," she said brightly, "if only we find her." "While I was cooling my heels in Cosham I bought a county map." He produced and opened it. "Here, you see, is the road out of Fareham." He proceeded with the calm deliberation of a business man to develop a proposal of taking train forthwith to Winchester. "They MUST be going to Winchester," he explained. It was inevitable. To-morrow Sunday, Winchester a cathedral town, road going nowhere else of the slightest importance.

"But Mr. Dangle?"

"He will simply go on until he has to pass something, and then he will break his neck. I have seen Dangle drive before. It's scarcely likely a dog-cart, especially a hired dog-cart, will overtake bicycles in the cool of the evening. Rely upon me, Mrs. Milton—"

"I am in your hands," she said, with pathetic littleness, looking up at him, and for the moment he forgot the exasperation of the day.

Phipps, during this conversation, had stood in a somewhat depressed attitude, leaning on his stick, feeling his collar, and looking from one speaker to the other. The idea of leaving Dangle behind seemed to him an excellent one. "We might leave a message at the place where he got the dog-cart," he suggested, when he saw their eyes meeting. There was a cheerful alacrity about all three at the proposal.

But they never got beyond Botley. For even as their train ran into the station, a mighty rumbling was heard, there was a shouting overhead, the guard stood astonished on the platform, and Phipps, thrusting his head out of the window, cried, "There he goes!" and sprang out of the carriage. Mrs. Milton, following in alarm, just saw it. From Widgery it was hidden. Botley station lies in a cutting, overhead was the roadway, and across the lemon yellows and flushed pinks of the sunset, there whirled a great black mass, a horse like a long-nosed chess knight, the upper works of a gig, and Dangle in transit from front to back. A monstrous shadow aped him across the cutting. It was the event of a second. Dangle seemed to jump, hang in the air momentarily, and vanish, and after a moment's pause came a heart-rending smash. Then two black heads running swiftly.

"Better get out," said Phipps to Mrs. Milton, who stood fascinated

in the doorway.

In another moment all three were hurrying up the steps. They found Dangle, hatless, standing up with cut hands extended, having his hands brushed by an officious small boy. A broad, ugly road ran downhill in a long vista, and in the distance was a little group of Botley inhabitants holding the big, black horse. Even at that distance they could see the expression of conscious pride on the monster's visage. It was as wooden-faced a horse as you can imagine. The beasts in the Tower of London, on which the men in armour are perched, are the only horses I have ever seen at all like it. However, we are not concerned now with the horse, but with Dangle. "Hurt?" asked Phipps, eagerly, leading.

"Mr. Dangle!" cried Mrs. Milton, clasping her hands.

"Hullo!" said Dangle, not surprised in the slightest. "Glad you've come. I may want you. Bit of a mess I'm in — eigh? But I've caught 'em. At the very place I expected, too."

"Caught them!" said Widgery. "Where are they?"

"Up there," he said, with a backward motion of his head. "About a mile up the hill. I left 'em. I HAD to."

"I don't understand," said Mrs. Milton, with that rapt, painful look again. "Have you found Jessie?"

"I have. I wish I could wash the gravel out of my hands somewhere. It was like this, you know. Came on them suddenly round a corner. Horse shied at the bicycles. They were sitting by the roadside botanising flowers. I just had time to shout, 'Jessie Milton, we've been looking for you,' and then that confounded brute bolted. I didn't dare turn round. I had all my work to do to save myself being turned over, as it was — so long as I did, I mean. I just shouted, 'Return to your friends. All will be forgiven.' And off I came, clatter, clatter. Whether they heard—"

"TAKE ME TO HER," said Mrs. Milton, with intensity, turning towards Widgery.

"Certainly," said Widgery, suddenly becoming active. "How far is it, Dangle?"

"Mile and a half or two miles. I was determined to find them, you know. I say though — Look at my hands! But I beg your pardon, Mrs. Milton." He turned to Phipps. "Phipps, I say, where shall I wash

the gravel out? And have a look at my knee?"

"There's the station," said Phipps, becoming helpful. Dangle made a step, and a damaged knee became evident. "Take my arm," said Phipps.

"Where can we get a conveyance?" asked Widgery of two small boys.

The two small boys failed to understand. They looked at one another.

"There's not a cab, not a go-cart, in sight," said Widgery. "It's a case of a horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse."

"There's a harse all right," said one of the small boys with a movement of the head.

"Don't you know where we can hire traps?" asked Widgery. "Or a cart or — anything?" asked Mrs. Milton.

"John Ooker's gart a cart, but no one can't 'ire'n," said the larger of the small boys, partially averting his face and staring down the road and making a song of it. "And so's my feyther, for's leg us broke."

"Not a cart even! Evidently. What shall we do?"

It occurred to Mrs. Milton that if Widgery was the man for courtly devotion, Dangle was infinitely readier of resource. "I suppose—" she said, timidly. "Perhaps if you were to ask Mr. Dangle—"

And then all the gilt came off Widgery. He answered quite rudely. "Confound Dangle! Hasn't he messed us up enough? He must needs drive after them in a trap to tell them we're coming, and now you want me to ask him—"

Her beautiful blue eyes were filled with tears. He stopped abruptly. "I'll go and ask Dangle," he said, shortly. "If you wish it." And went striding into the station and down the steps, leaving her in the road under the quiet inspection of the two little boys, and with a kind of ballad refrain running through her head, "Where are the Knights of the Olden Time?" and feeling tired to death and hungry and dusty and out of curl, and, in short, a martyr woman.

XXXI.

It goes to my heart to tell of the end of that day, how the fugitives

vanished into Immensity; how there were no more trains how Botley stared unsympathetically with a palpable disposition to derision, denying conveyances how the landlord of the Heron was suspicious, how the next day was Sunday, and the hot summer's day had crumpled the collar of Phipps and stained the skirts of Mrs. Milton, and dimmed the radiant emotions of the whole party. Dangle, with sticking-plaster and a black eye, felt the absurdity of the pose of the Wounded Knight, and abandoned it after the faintest efforts. Recriminations never, perhaps, held the foreground of the talk, but they played like summer lightning on the edge of the conversation. And deep in the hearts of all was a galling sense of the ridiculous. Jessie, they thought, was most to blame. Apparently, too, the worst, which would have made the whole business tragic, was not happening. Here was a young woman — young woman do I say? a mere girl! — had chosen to leave a comfortable home in Surbiton, and all the delights of a refined and intellectual circle, and had rushed off, trailing us after her, posing hard, mutually jealous, and now tired and weather-worn, to flick us off at last, mere mud from her wheel, into this detestable village beer-house on a Saturday night! And she had done it, not for Love and Passion, which are serious excuses one may recognise even if one must reprobate, but just for a Freak, just for a fantastic Idea; for nothing, in fact, but the outraging of Common Sense. Yet withal, such was our restraint, that we talked of her still as one much misguided, as one who burthened us with anxiety, as a lamb astray, and Mrs. Milton having eaten, continued to show the finest feelings on the matter.

She sat, I may mention, in the cushioned basket-chair, the only comfortable chair in the room, and we sat on incredibly hard, horsehair things having antimacassars tied to their backs by means of lemon-coloured bows. It was different from those dear old talks at Surbiton, somehow. She sat facing the window, which was open (the night was so tranquil and warm), and the dim light — for we did not use the lamp — suited her admirably. She talked in a voice that told you she was tired, and she seemed inclined to state a case against herself in the matter of "A Soul Untrammelled." It was such an evening as might live in a sympathetic memoir, but it was a little dull while it lasted.

“I feel,” she said, “that I am to blame. I have Developed. That first book of mine — I do not go back upon a word of it, mind, but it has been misunderstood, misapplied.”

“It has,” said Widgery, trying to look so deeply sympathetic as to be visible in the dark. “Deliberately misunderstood.”

“Don’t say that,” said the lady. “Not deliberately. I try and think that critics are honest. After their lights. I was not thinking of critics. But she — I mean—” She paused, an interrogation.

“It is possible,” said Dangle, scrutinising his sticking-plaster.

“I write a book and state a case. I want people to THINK as I recommend, not to DO as I recommend. It is just Teaching. Only I make it into a story. I want to Teach new Ideas, new Lessons, to promulgate Ideas. Then when the Ideas have been spread abroad — Things will come about. Only now it is madness to fly in the face of the established order. Bernard Shaw, you know, has explained that with regard to Socialism. We all know that to earn all you consume is right, and that living on invested capital is wrong. Only we cannot begin while we are so few. It is Those Others.”

“Precisely,” said Widgery. “It is Those Others. They must begin first.”

“And meanwhile you go on banking—”

“If I didn’t, some one else would.”

“And I live on Mr. Milton’s Lotion while I try to gain a footing in Literature.”

“TRY!” said Phipps. “You HAVE done so.” And, “That’s different,” said Dangle, at the same time.

“You are so kind to me. But in this matter. Of course Georgina Griffiths in my book lived alone in a flat in Paris and went to life classes and had men visitors, but then she was over twenty-one.”

“Jessica is only seventeen, and girlish for that,” said Dangle.

“It alters everything. That child! It is different with a woman. And Georgina Griffiths never flaunted her freedom — on a bicycle, in country places. In this country. Where every one is so particular. Fancy, SLEEPING away from home. It’s dreadful — If it gets about it spells ruin for her.”

“Ruin,” said Widgery.

“No man would marry a girl like that,” said Phipps.

“It must be hushed up,” said Dangle.

“It always seems to me that life is made up of individuals, of individual cases. We must weigh each person against his or her circumstances. General rules don’t apply—”

“I often feel the force of that,” said Widgery. “Those are my rules. Of course my books—”

“It’s different, altogether different,” said Dangle. “A novel deals with typical cases.”

“And life is not typical,” said Widgery, with immense profundity.

Then suddenly, unintentionally, being himself most surprised and shocked of any in the room, Phipps yawned. The failing was infectious, and the gathering having, as you can easily understand, talked itself weary, dispersed on trivial pretences. But not to sleep immediately. Directly Dangle was alone he began, with infinite disgust, to scrutinise his darkling eye, for he was a neat-minded little man in spite of his energy. The whole business — so near a capture — was horribly vexatious. Phipps sat on his bed for some time examining, with equal disgust, a collar he would have thought incredible for Sunday twenty-four hours before. Mrs. Milton fell a-musing on the mortality of even big, fat men with dog-like eyes, and Widgery was unhappy because he had been so cross to her at the station, and because so far he did not feel that he had scored over Dangle. Also he was angry with Dangle. And all four of them, being souls living very much upon the appearances of things, had a painful, mental middle distance of Botley derisive and suspicious, and a remoter background of London humorous, and Surbiton speculative. Were they really, after all, behaving absurdly?

XXXII. MR. HOOPDRIVER, KNIGHT ERRANT

As Mr. Dangle bad witnessed, the fugitives had been left by him by the side of the road about two miles from Botley. Before Mr. Dangle's appearance, Mr. Hoopdriver had been learning with great interest that mere roadside flowers had names, — star-flowers, wind-stars, St. John's wort, willow herb, lords and ladies, bachelor's buttons, — most curious names, some of them. "The flowers are all different in South Africa, y'know," he was explaining with a happy fluke of his imagination to account for his ignorance. Then suddenly, heralded by clattering sounds and a gride of wheels, Dangle had flared and thundered across the tranquillity of the summer evening; Dangle, swaying and gesticulating behind a corybantic black horse, had hailed Jessie by her name, had backed towards the hedge for no ostensible reason, and vanished to the accomplishment of the Fate that had been written down for him from the very beginning of things. Jessie and Hoopdriver had scarcely time to stand up and seize their machines, before this tumultuous, this swift and wonderful passing of Dangle was achieved. He went from side to side of the road, — worse even than the riding forth of Mr. Hoopdriver it was, — and vanished round the corner.

"He knew my name," said Jessie. "Yes — it was Mr. Dangle."

"That was our bicycles did that," said Mr. Hoopdriver simultaneously, and speaking with a certain complacent concern. "I hope he won't get hurt."

"That was Mr. Dangle," repeated Jessie, and Mr. Hoopdriver heard this time, with a violent start. His eyebrows went up spasmodically.

"What! someone you know?"

"Yes."

"Lord!"

"He was looking for me," said Jessie. "I could see. He began to call to me before the horse shied. My stepmother has sent him."

Mr. Hoopdriver wished he had returned the bicycle after all, for

his ideas were still a little hazy about Bechamel and Mrs. Milton. Honesty IS the best policy — often, he thought. He turned his head this way and that. He became active. “After us, eigh? Then he’ll come back. He’s gone down that hill, and he won’t be able to pull up for a bit, I’m certain.”

Jessie, he saw, had wheeled her machine into the road and was mounting. Still staring at the corner that had swallowed up Dangle, Hoopdriver followed suit. And so, just as the sun was setting, they began another flight together, — riding now towards Bishops Waltham, with Mr. Hoopdriver in the post of danger — the rear — ever and again looking over his shoulder and swerving dangerously as he did so. Occasionally Jessie had to slacken her pace. He breathed heavily, and hated himself because his mouth fell open, After nearly an hour’s hard riding, they found themselves uncaught at Winchester. Not a trace of Dangle nor any other danger was visible as they rode into the dusky, yellow-lit street. Though the bats had been fluttering behind the hedges and the evening star was bright while they were still two miles from Winchester, Mr. Hoopdriver pointed out the dangers of stopping in such an obvious abiding-place, and gently but firmly insisted upon replenishing the lamps and riding on towards Salisbury. From Winchester, roads branch in every direction, and to turn abruptly westward was clearly the way to throw off the chase. As Hoopdriver saw the moon rising broad and yellow through the twilight, he thought he should revive the effect of that ride out of Bognor; but somehow, albeit the moon and all the atmospheric effects were the same, the emotions were different. They rode in absolute silence, and slowly after they had cleared the outskirts of Winchester. Both of them were now nearly tired out, — the level was tedious, and even a little hill a burden; and so it came about that in the hamlet of Wallenstock they were beguiled to stop and ask for accommodation in an exceptionally prosperous-looking village inn. A plausible landlady rose to the occasion.

Now, as they passed into the room where their suppers were prepared, Mr. Hoopdriver caught a glimpse through a door ajar and floating in a reek of smoke, of three and a half faces — for the edge of the door cut one down — and an American cloth-covered table with several glasses and a tankard. And he also heard a remark. In

the second before he heard that remark, Mr. Hoopdriver had been a proud and happy man, to particularize, a baronet's heir incognito. He had surrendered their bicycles to the odd man of the place with infinite easy dignity, and had bowingly opened the door for Jessie. "Who's that, then?" he imagined people saying; and then, "Some'n pretty well orf — judge by the bicycles." Then the imaginary spectators would fall a-talking of the fashionableness of bicycling, — how judges And stockbrokers and actresses and, in fact, all the best people rode, and how that it was often the fancy of such great folk to shun the big hotels, the adulation of urban crowds, and seek, incognito, the cosy quaintnesses of village life. Then, maybe, they would think of a certain nameless air of distinction about the lady who had stepped across the doorway, and about the handsome, flaxen-moustached, blue-eyed Cavalier who had followed her in, and they would look one to another. "Tell you what it is," one of the village elders would say — just as they do in novels — voicing the thought of all, in a low, impressive tone: "There's such a thin' as entertaining barranets unawares — not to mention no higher things —"

Such, I say, had been the filmy, delightful stuff in Mr. Hoopdriver's head the moment before he heard that remark. But the remark toppled him headlong. What the precise remark was need not concern us. It was a casual piece of such satire as Strephon delights in. Should you be curious, dear lady, as to its nature, you have merely to dress yourself in a really modern cycling costume, get one of the feeblest-looking of your men to escort you, and ride out, next Saturday evening, to any public house where healthy, homely people gather together. Then you will hear quite a lot of the kind of thing Mr. Hoopdriver heard. More, possibly, than you will desire.

The remark, I must add, implicated Mr. Hoopdriver. It indicated an entire disbelief in his social standing. At a blow, it shattered all the gorgeous imaginative fabric his mind had been rejoicing in. All that foolish happiness vanished like a dream. And there was nothing to show for it, as there is nothing to show for any spiteful remark that has ever been made. Perhaps the man who said the thing had a gleam of satisfaction at the idea of taking a complacent-looking fool down a peg, but it is just as possible he did not know at the time that his stray

shot had hit. He had thrown it as a boy throws a stone at a bird. And it not only demolished a foolish, happy conceit, but it wounded. It touched Jessie grossly.

She did not hear it, he concluded from her subsequent bearing; but during the supper they had in the little private dining-room, though she talked cheerfully, he was preoccupied. Whiffs of indistinct conversation, and now and then laughter, came in from the inn parlor through the pelargoniums in the open window. Hoopdriver felt it must all be in the same strain, — at her expense and his. He answered her abstractedly. She was tired, she said, and presently went to her room. Mr. Hoopdriver, in his courtly way, opened the door for her and bowed her out. He stood listening and fearing some new offence as she went upstairs, and round the bend where the barometer hung beneath the stuffed birds. Then he went back to the room, and stood on the hearthrug before the paper fireplace ornament. "Cads!" he said in a scathing undertone, as a fresh burst of laughter came floating in. All through supper he had been composing stinging repartee, a blistering speech of denunciation to be presently delivered. He would rate them as a nobleman should: "Call themselves Englishmen, indeed, and insult a woman!" he would say; take the names and addresses perhaps, threaten to speak to the Lord of the Manor, promise to let them hear from him again, and so out with consternation in his wake. It really ought to be done.

"Teach 'em better," he said fiercely, and tweaked his moustache painfully. What was it? He revived the objectionable remark for his own exasperation, and then went over the heads of his speech again.

He coughed, made three steps towards the door, then stopped and went back to the hearthrug. He wouldn't — after all. Yet was he not a Knight Errant? Should such men go unreproved, unchecked, by wandering baronets incognito? Magnanimity? Look at it in that way? Churls beneath one's notice? No; merely a cowardly subterfuge. He WOULD after all.

Something within him protested that he was a hot-headed ass even as he went towards the door again. But he only went on the more resolutely. He crossed the hall, by the bar, and entered the room from which the remark had proceeded. He opened the door abruptly and stood scowling on them in the doorway. "You'll only make a mess of

it," remarked the internal sceptic. There were five men in the room altogether: a fat person, with a long pipe and a great number of chins, in an armchair by the fireplace, who wished Mr. Hoopdriver a good evening very affably; a young fellow smoking a cutty and displaying crossed legs with gaiters; a little, bearded man with a toothless laugh; a middle-aged, comfortable man with bright eyes, who wore a velveteen jacket; and a fair young man, very genteel in a yellowish-brown ready-made suit and a white tie.

"H'm," said Mr. Hoopdriver, looking very stern and harsh. And then in a forbidding tone, as one who consented to no liberties, "Good evening."

"Very pleasant day we've been 'aving," said the fair young man with the white tie.

"Very," said Mr. Hoopdriver, slowly; and taking a brown armchair, he planted it with great deliberation where he faced the fireplace, and sat down. Let's see — how did that speech begin?

"Very pleasant roads about here," said the fair young man with the white tie.

"Very," said Mr. Hoopdriver, eyeing him darkly. Have to begin somehow. "The roads about here are all right, and the weather about here is all right, but what I've come in here to say is — there's some damned unpleasant people — damned unpleasant people!"

"Oh!" said the young man with the gaiters, apparently making a mental inventory of his pearl buttons as he spoke. "How's that?"

Mr. Hoopdriver put his hands on his knees and stuck out his elbows with extreme angularity. In his heart he was raving at his idiotic folly at thus bearding these lions, — indisputably they WERE lions, — but he had to go through with it now. Heaven send, his breath, which was already getting a trifle spasmodic, did not suddenly give out. He fixed his eye on the face of the fat man with the chins, and spoke in a low, impressive voice. "I came here, sir," said Mr. Hoopdriver, and paused to inflate his cheeks, "with a lady."

"Very nice lady," said the man with the gaiters, putting his head on one side to admire a pearl button that had been hiding behind the curvature of his calf. "Very nice lady indeed."

"I came here," said Mr. Hoopdriver, "with a lady."

"We saw you did, bless you," said the fat man with the chins, in a

curious wheezy voice. “I don’t see there’s anything so very extraordinary in that. One ‘ud think we hadn’t eyes.”

Mr. Hoopdriver coughed. “I came, here, sir—”

“We’ve ‘eard that,” said the little man with the beard, sharply and went off into an amiable chuckle. “We know it by ‘art,” said the little man, elaborating the point.

Mr. Hoopdriver temporarily lost his thread. He glared malignantly at the little man with the beard, and tried to recover his discourse. A pause.

“You were saying,” said the fair young man with the white tie, speaking very politely, “that you came here with a lady.”

“A lady,” meditated the gaiter gazer.

The man in velveteen, who was looking from one speaker to another with keen, bright eyes, now laughed as though a point had been scored, and stimulated Mr. Hoopdriver to speak, by fixing him with an expectant regard.

“Some dirty cad,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, proceeding with his discourse, and suddenly growing extremely fierce, “made a remark as we went by this door.”

“Steady on!” said the old gentleman with many chins. “Steady on! Don’t you go a-calling us names, please.”

“One minute!” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “It wasn’t I began calling names.” (“Who did?” said the man with the chins.) “I’m not calling any of you dirty cads. Don’t run away with that impression. Only some person in this room made a remark that showed he wasn’t fit to wipe boots on, and, with all due deference to such gentlemen as ARE gentlemen” (Mr. Hoopdriver looked round for moral support), “I want to know which it was.”

“Meanin’?” said the fair young man in the white tie.

“That I’m going to wipe my boots on ‘im straight away,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, reverting to anger, if with a slight catch in his throat — than which threat of personal violence nothing had been further from his thoughts on entering the room. He said this because he could think of nothing else to say, and stuck out his elbows truculently to hide the sinking of his heart. It is curious how situations run away with us.

“‘Ullo, Charlie!” said the little man, and “My eye!” said the

owner of the chins. “You’re going to wipe your boots on ‘im?” said the fair young man, in a tone of mild surprise.

“I am,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, with emphatic resolution, and glared in the young man’s face.

“That’s fair and reasonable,” said the man in the velveteen jacket; “if you can.”

The interest of the meeting seemed transferred to the young man in the white tic. “Of course, if you can’t find out which it is, I suppose you’re prepared to wipe your boots in a liberal way on everybody in the room,” said this young man, in the same tone of impersonal question. “This gentleman, the champion lightweight—”

“Own up, Charlie,” said the young man with the gaiters, looking up for a moment. “And don’t go a-dragging in your betters. It’s fair and square. You can’t get out of it.”

“Was it this — gent?” began Mr. Hoopdriver.

“Of course,” said the young man in the white tie, “when it comes to talking of wiping boots—”

“I’m not talking; I’m going to do it,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

He looked round at the meeting. They were no longer antagonists; they were spectators. He would have to go through with it now. But this tone of personal aggression on the maker of the remark had somehow got rid of the oppressive feeling of Hoopdriver contra mundum. Apparently, he would have to fight someone. Would he get a black eye? Would he get very much hurt? Pray goodness it wasn’t that sturdy chap in the gaiters! Should he rise and begin? What would she think if he brought a black eye to breakfast to-morrow? “Is this the man?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, with a business-like calm, and arms more angular than ever.

“Eat ‘im!” said the little man with the beard; “eat ‘im straight orf.”

“Steady on!” said the young man in the white tie. “Steady on a minute. If I did happen to say—”

“You did, did you?” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“Backing out of it, Charlie?” said the young man with the gaiters.

“Not a bit,” said Charlie. “Surely we can pass a bit of a joke—”

“I’m going to teach you to keep your jokes to yourself,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“Bray-vo!” said the shepherd of the flock of chins.

“Charlie IS a bit too free with his jokes,” said the little man with the beard.

“It’s downright disgusting,” said Hoopdriver, falling back upon his speech. “A lady can’t ride a bicycle in a country road, or wear a dress a little out of the ordinary, but every dirty little greaser must needs go shouting insults—”

“*I* didn’t know the young lady would hear what I said,” said Charlie. “Surely one can speak friendly to one’s friends. How was I to know the door was open—”

Hoopdriver began to suspect that his antagonist was, if possible, more seriously alarmed at the prospect of violence than himself, and his spirits rose again. These chaps ought to have a thorough lesson. “Of COURSE you knew the door was open,” he retorted indignantly. “Of COURSE you thought we should hear what you said. Don’t go telling lies about it. It’s no good your saying things like that. You’ve had your fun, and you meant to have your fun. And I mean to make an example of you, Sir.”

“Ginger beer,” said the little man with the beard, in a confidential tone to the velveteen jacket, “is regular up this ‘ot weather. Bustin’ its bottles it is everywhere.”

“What’s the good of scrapping about in a public-house?” said Charlie, appealing to the company. “A fair fight without interruptions, now, I WOULDN’T mind, if the gentleman’s so disposed.”

Evidently the man was horribly afraid. Mr. Hoopdriver grew truculent.

“Where you like,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, “jest wherever you like.”

“You insulted the gent,” said the man in velveteen.

“Don’t be a bloomin’ funk, Charlie,” said the man in gaiters. “Why, you got a stone of him, if you got an ounce.”

“What I say, is this,” said the gentleman with the excessive chins, trying to get a hearing by banging his chair arms. “If Charlie goes saying things, he ought to back ’em up. That’s what I say. I don’t mind his sayin’ such things ‘t all, but he ought to be prepared to back ’em up.”

“I’ll BACK ’em up all right,” said Charlie, with extremely bitter

emphasis on ‘back.’ “If the gentleman likes to come Toosday week —”

“Rot!” chopped in Hoopdriver. “Now.”

“‘Ear, ‘ear,” said the owner of the chins.

“Never put off till to-morrow, Charlie, what you can do to-day,” said the man in the velveteen coat.

“You got to do it, Charlie,” said the man in gaiters. “It’s no good.”

“It’s like this,” said Charlie, appealing to everyone except Hoopdriver. “Here’s me, got to take in her ladyship’s dinner to-morrow night. How should I look with a black eye? And going round with the carriage with a split lip?”

“If you don’t want your face sp’iled, Charlie, why don’t you keep your mouth shut?” said the person in gaiters.

“Exactly,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, driving it home with great fierceness. “Why don’t you shut your ugly mouth?”

“It’s as much as my situation’s worth,” protested Charlie.

“You should have thought of that before,” said Hoopdriver.

“There’s no occasion to be so thunderin’ ‘ot about it. I only meant the thing joking,” said Charlie. “AS one gentleman to another, I’m very sorry if the gentleman’s annoyed—”

Everybody began to speak at once. Mr. Hoopdriver twirled his moustache. He felt that Charlie’s recognition of his gentlemanliness was at any rate a redeeming feature. But it became his pose to ride hard and heavy over the routed foe. He shouted some insulting phrase over the tumult.

“You’re regular abject,” the man in gaiters was saying to Charlie.

More confusion.

“Only don’t think I’m afraid, — not of a spindle-legged cuss like him,” shouted Charlie. “Because I ain’t.”

“Change of front,” thought Hoopdriver, a little startled. “Where are we going?”

“Don’t sit there and be abusive,” said the man in velveteen. “He’s offered to hit you, and if I was him, I’d hit you now.”

“All right, then,” said Charlie, with a sudden change of front and springing to his feet. “If I must, I must. Now, then!” At that, Hoopdriver, the child of Fate, rose too, with a horrible sense that his internal monitor was right. Things had taken a turn. He had made a

mess of it, and now there was nothing for it, so far as he could see, but to hit the man at once. He and Charlie stood six feet apart, with a table between, both very breathless and fierce. A vulgar fight in a public-house, and with what was only too palpably a footman! Good Heavens! And this was the dignified, scornful remonstrance! How the juice had it all happened? Go round the table at him, I suppose. But before the brawl could achieve itself, the man in gaiters intervened. "Not here," he said, stepping between the antagonists. Everyone was standing up.

"Charlie's artful," said the little man with the beard.

"Buller's yard," said the man with the gaiters, taking the control of the entire affair with the easy readiness of an accomplished practitioner. "If the gentleman DON'T mind." Buller's yard, it seemed, was the very place. "We'll do the thing regular and decent, if you please." And before he completely realized what was happening, Hoopdriver was being marched out through the back premises of the inn, to the first and only fight with fists that was ever to glorify his life.

Outwardly, so far as the intermittent moonlight showed, Mr. Hoopdriver was quietly but eagerly prepared to fight. But inwardly he was a chaos of conflicting purposes. It was extraordinary how things happened. One remark had trod so closely on the heels of another, that he had had the greatest difficulty in following the development of the business. He distinctly remembered himself walking across from one room to the other, — a dignified, even an aristocratic figure, primed with considered eloquence, intent upon a scathing remonstrance to these wretched yokels, regarding their manners. Then incident had flickered into incident until here he was out in a moonlit lane, — a slight, dark figure in a group of larger, indistinct figures, — marching in a quiet, business-like way towards some unknown horror at Buller's yard. Fists! It was astonishing. It was terrible! In front of him was the pallid figure of Charles, and he saw that the man in gaiters held Charles kindly but firmly by the arm.

"It's blasted rot," Charles was saying, "getting up a fight just for a thing like that; all very well for 'im. 'E's got 'is 'olidays; 'e 'asn't no blessed dinner to take up to-morrow night like I 'ave. — No need to numb my arm, IS there?"

They went into Buller's yard through gates. There were sheds in Buller's yard — sheds of mystery that the moonlight could not solve — a smell of cows, and a pump stood out clear and black, throwing a clear black shadow on the whitewashed wall. And here it was his face was to be battered to a pulp. He knew this was the uttermost folly, to stand up here and be pounded, but the way out of it was beyond his imagining. Yet afterwards — ? Could he ever face her again? He patted his Norfolk jacket and took his ground with his back to the gate. How did one square? So? Suppose one were to turn and run even now, run straight back to the inn and lock himself into his bedroom? They couldn't make, him come out — anyhow. He could prosecute them for assault if they did. How did one set about prosecuting for assault? He saw Charles, with his face ghastly white under the moon, squaring in front of him.

He caught a blow on the arm and gave ground. Charles pressed him. Then he hit with his right and with the violence of despair. It was a hit of his own devising, — an impromptu, — but it chanced to coincide with the regulation hook hit at the head. He perceived with a leap of exultation that the thing his fist had met was the jawbone of Charles. It was the sole gleam of pleasure he experienced during the fight, and it was quite momentary. He had hardly got home upon Charles before he was struck in the chest and whirled backward. He had the greatest difficulty in keeping his feet. He felt that his heart was smashed flat. "Gord darm!" said somebody, dancing toe in hand somewhere behind him. As Mr. Hoopdriver staggered, Charles gave a loud and fear-compelling cry. He seemed to tower over Hoopdriver in the moonlight. Both his fists were whirling. It was annihilation coming — no less. Mr. Hoopdriver ducked perhaps and certainly gave ground to the right, hit, and missed. Charles swept round to the left, missing generously. A blow glanced over Mr. Hoopdriver's left ear, and the flanking movement was completed. Another blow behind the ear. Heaven and earth spun furiously round Mr. Hoopdriver, and then he became aware of a figure in a light suit shooting violently through an open gate into the night. The man in gaiters sprang forward past Mr. Hoopdriver, but too late to intercept the fugitive. There were shouts, laughter, and Mr. Hoopdriver, still solemnly squaring, realized the great and wonderful truth — Charles

had fled. He, Hoopdriver, had fought and, by all the rules of war, had won.

“That was a pretty cut under the jaw you gave him,” the toothless little man with the beard was remarking in an unexpectedly friendly manner.

“The fact of it is,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, sitting beside the road to Salisbury, and with the sound of distant church bells in his cars, “I had to give the fellow a lesson; simply had to.”

“It seems so dreadful that you should have to knock people about,” said Jessie.

“These louts get unbearable,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “If now and then we didn’t give them a lesson, — well, a lady cyclist in the roads would be an impossibility.”

“I suppose every woman shrinks from violence,” said Jessie. “I suppose men ARE braver — in a way — than women. It seems to me-I can’t imagine — how one could bring oneself to face a roomful of rough characters, pick out the bravest, and give him an exemplary thrashing. I quail at the idea. I thought only Ouida’s guardsmen did things like that.”

“It was nothing more than my juty — as a gentleman,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“But to walk straight into the face of danger!”

“It’s habit,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, quite modestly, flicking off a particle of cigarette ash that had settled on his knee.

XXXIII. THE ABASEMENT OF MR. HOOPDRIVER

On Monday morning the two fugitives found themselves breakfasting at the Golden Pheasant in Blandford. They were in the course of an elaborate doubling movement through Dorsetshire towards Ringwood, where Jessie anticipated an answer from her schoolmistress friend. By this time they had been nearly sixty hours together, and you will understand that Mr. Hoopdriver's feelings had undergone a considerable intensification and development. At first Jessie had been only an impressionist sketch upon his mind, something feminine, active, and dazzling, something emphatically "above" him, cast into his company by a kindly fate. His chief idea, at the outset, as you know, had been to live up to her level, by pretending to be more exceptional, more wealthy, better educated, and, above all, better born than he was. His knowledge of the feminine mind was almost entirely derived from the young ladies he had met in business, and in that class (as in military society and among gentlemen's servants) the good old tradition of a brutal social exclusiveness is still religiously preserved. He had an almost intolerable dread of her thinking him a I bounder.' Later he began to perceive the distinction of her idiosyncracies. Coupled with a magnificent want of experience was a splendid enthusiasm for abstract views of the most advanced description, and her strength of conviction completely carried Hoopdriver away. She was going to Live her Own Life, with emphasis, and Mr. Hoopdriver was profoundly stirred to similar resolves. So soon as he grasped the tenor of her views, he perceived that he himself had thought as much from his earliest years. "Of course," he remarked, in a flash of sexual pride, "a man is freer than a woman. End in the Colonies, y'know, there isn't half the Conventionality you find in society in this country."

He made one or two essays in the display of unconventionality, and was quite unaware that he impressed her as a narrow-minded person. He suppressed the habits of years and made no proposal to go

to church. He discussed church-going in a liberal spirit. “It’s jest a habit,” he said, “jest a custom. I don’t see what good it does you at all, really.” And he made a lot of excellent jokes at the chimney-pot hat, jokes he had read in the Globe ‘turnovers’ on that subject. But he showed his gentle breeding by keeping his gloves on all through the Sunday’s ride, and ostentatiously throwing away more than half a cigarette when they passed a church whose congregation was gathering for afternoon service. He cautiously avoided literary topics, except by way of compliment, seeing that she was presently to be writing books.

It was on Jessie’s initiative that they attended service in the old-fashioned gallery of Blandford church. Jessie’s conscience, I may perhaps tell you, was now suffering the severest twinges. She perceived clearly that things were not working out quite along the lines she had designed-. She had read her Olive Schreiner and George Egerton, and so forth, with all the want of perfect comprehension of one who is still emotionally a girl. She knew the thing to do was to have a flat and to go to the British Museum and write leading articles for the daily papers until something better came along. If Bechamel (detestable person) had kept his promises, instead of behaving with unspeakable horridness, all would have been well. Now her only hope was that liberal-minded woman, Miss Mergle, who, a year ago, had sent her out, highly educated, into the world. Miss Mergle had told her at parting to live fearlessly and truly, and had further given her a volume of Emerson’s Essays and Motley’s “Dutch Republic,” to help her through the rapids of adolescence.

Jessie’s feelings for her stepmother’s household at Surbiton amounted to an active detestation. There are no graver or more solemn women in the world than these clever girls whose scholastic advancement has retarded their feminine coquetry. In spite of the advanced tone of ‘Thomas Plantagenet’s’ antimarital novel, Jessie had speedily seen through that amiable woman’s amiable defences. The variety of pose necessitated by the corps of ‘Men’ annoyed her to an altogether unreasonable degree. To return to this life of ridiculous unreality — unconditional capitulation to ‘Conventionality’ was an exasperating prospect. Yet what else was there to do? You will understand, therefore, that at times she was

moody (and Mr. Hoopdriver respectfully silent and attentive) and at times inclined to eloquent denunciation of the existing order of things. She was a Socialist, Hoopdriver learnt, and he gave a vague intimation that he went further, intending, thereby, no less than the horrors of anarchism. He would have owned up to the destruction of the Winter Palace indeed, had he had the faintest idea where the Winter Palace was, and had his assurance amounted to certainty that the Winter Palace was destroyed. He agreed with her cordially that the position of women was intolerable, but checked himself on the' verge of the proposition that a girl ought not to expect a fellow to hand down boxes for her when he was getting the 'swap' from a customer. It was Jessie's preoccupation with her own perplexities, no doubt, that delayed the unveiling of Mr. Hoopdriver all through Saturday and Sunday. Once or twice, however, there were incidents that put him about terribly — even questions that savoured of suspicion.

On Sunday night, for no conceivable reason, an unwonted wakefulness came upon him. Unaccountably he realised he was a contemptible liar, All through the small hours of Monday he reviewed the tale of his falsehoods, and when he tried to turn his mind from that, the financial problem suddenly rose upon him. He heard two o'clock strike, and three. It is odd how unhappy some of us are at times, when we are at our happiest.

XXXIV.

"Good morning, Madam," said Hoopdriver, as Jessie came into the breakfast room of the Golden Pheasant on Monday morning, and he smiled, bowed, rubbed his hands together, and pulled out a chair for her, and rubbed his hands again.

She stopped abruptly, with a puzzled expression on her face. "Where HAVE I seen that before?" she said.

"The chair?" said Hoopdriver, flushing.

"No — the attitude."

She came forward and shook hands with him, looking the while curiously into his face. "And — Madam?"

"It's a habit," said Mr. Hoopdriver, guiltily. "A bad habit. Calling

ladies Madam. You must put it down to our colonial roughness. Out there up country — y'know — the ladies — so rare — we call 'em all Madam."

"You HAVE some funny habits, brother Chris," said Jessie. "Before you sell your diamond shares and go into society, as you say, and stand for Parliament — What a fine thing it is to be a man! — you must cure yourself. That habit of bowing as you do, and rubbing your hands, and looking expectant."

"It's a habit."

"I know. But I don't think it a good one. You don't mind my telling you?"

"Not a bit. I'm grateful."

"I'm blessed or afflicted with a trick of observation," said Jessie, looking at the breakfast table. Mr. Hoopdriver put his hand to his moustache and then, thinking this might be another habit, checked his arm and stuck his hand into his pocket. He felt juiced awkward, to use his private formula. Jessie's eye wandered to the armchair, where a piece of binding was loose, and, possibly to carry out her theory of an observant disposition, she turned and asked him for a pin.

Mr. Hoopdriver's hand fluttered instinctively to his lappel, and there, planted by habit, were a couple of stray pins he had impounded.

"What an odd place to put pins!" exclaimed Jessie, taking it.

"It's 'andy," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "I saw a chap in a shop do it once."

"You must have a careful disposition," she said, over her shoulder, kneeling down to the chair.

"In the centre of Africa — up country, that is — one learns to value pins," said Mr. Hoopdriver, after a perceptible pause. "There weren't over many pins in Africa. They don't lie about on the ground there." His face was now in a fine, red glow. Where would the draper break out next? He thrust his hands into his coat pockets, then took one out again, furtively removed the second pin and dropped it behind him gently. It fell with a loud 'ping' on the fender. Happily she made no remark, being preoccupied with the binding of the chair.

Mr. Hoopdriver, instead of sitting down, went up to the table and

stood against it, with his finger-tips upon the cloth. They were keeping breakfast a tremendous time. He took up his rolled serviette looked closely and scrutinisingly at the ring, then put his hand under the fold of the napkin and examined the texture, and put the thing down again. Then he had a vague impulse to finger his hollow wisdom tooth — happily checked. He suddenly discovered he was standing as if the table was a counter, and sat down forthwith. He drummed with his hand on the table. He felt dreadfully hot and self-conscious.

"Breakfast is late," said Jessie, standing up.

"Isn't it?"

Conversation was slack. Jessie wanted to know the distance to Ringwood. Then silence fell again.

Mr. Hoopdriver, very uncomfortable and studying an easy bearing, looked again at the breakfast things and then idly lifted the corner of the tablecloth on the ends of his fingers, and regarded it. "Fifteen three," he thought, privately.

"Why do you do that?" said Jessie.

"WHAT?" said Hoopdriver, dropping the tablecloth convulsively.

"Look at the cloth like that. I saw you do it yesterday, too."

Mr. Hoopdriver's face became quite a bright red. He began pulling his moustache nervously. "I know," he said. "I know. It's a queer habit, I know. But out there, you know, there's native servants, you know, and — it's a queer thing to talk about — but one has to look at things to see, don't y'know, whether they're quite clean or not. It's got to be a habit."

"How odd!" said Jessie.

"Isn't it?" mumbled Hoopdriver.

"If I were a Sherlock Holmes," said Jessie, "I suppose I could have told you were a colonial from little things like that. But anyhow, I guessed it, didn't I?"

"Yes," said Hoopdriver, in a melancholy tone, "you guessed it."

Why not seize the opportunity for a neat confession, and add, "unhappily in this case you guessed wrong." Did she suspect? Then, at the psychological moment, the girl bumped the door open with her tray and brought in the coffee and scrambled eggs.

"I am rather lucky with my intuitions, sometimes," said Jessie.

Remorse that had been accumulating in his mind for two days surged to the top of his mind. What a shabby liar he was!

And, besides, he must sooner or later, inevitably, give himself away.

XXXV.

Mr. Hoopdriver helped the eggs and then, instead of beginning, sat with his cheek on his hand, watching Jessie pour out the coffee. His ears were a bright red, and his eyes bright. He took his coffee cup clumsily, cleared his throat, suddenly leant back in his chair, and thrust his hands deep into his pockets. "I'll do it," he said aloud.

"Do what?" said Jessie, looking up in surprise over the coffee pot. She was just beginning her scrambled egg.

"Own up."

"Own what?"

"Miss Milton — I'm a liar." He put his head on one side and regarded her with a frown of tremendous resolution. Then in measured accents, and moving his head slowly from side to side, he announced, "Ay'm a deraper."

"You're a draper? I thought—"

"You thought wrong. But it's bound to come up. Pins, attitude, habits — It's plain enough.

"I'm a draper's assistant let out for a ten-days holiday. Jest a draper's assistant. Not much, is it? A counter-jumper."

"A draper's assistant isn't a position to be ashamed of," she said, recovering, and not quite understanding yet what this all meant.

"Yes, it is," he said, "for a man, in this country now. To be just another man's hand, as I am. To have to wear what clothes you are told, and go to church to please customers, and work — There's no other kind of men stand such hours. A drunken bricklayer's a king to it."

"But why are you telling me this now?"

"It's important you should know at once."

"But, Mr. Benson—"

"That isn't all. If you don't mind my speaking about myself a bit, there's a few things I'd like to tell you. I can't go on deceiving you.

My name's not Benson. WHY I told you Benson, I DON'T know. Except that I'm a kind of fool. Well — I wanted somehow to seem more than I was. My name's Hoopdriver."

"Yes?"

"And that about South Africa — and that lion."

"Well?"

"Lies."

"Lies!"

"And the discovery of diamonds on the ostrich farm. Lies too. And all the reminiscences of the giraffes — lies too. I never rode on no giraffes. I'd be afraid."

He looked at her with a kind of sullen satisfaction. He had eased his conscience, anyhow. She regarded him in infinite perplexity. This was a new side altogether to the man. "But WHY," she began.

"Why did I tell you such things? *I* don't know. Silly sort of chap, I expect. I suppose I wanted to impress you. But somehow, now, I want you to know the truth."

Silence. Breakfast untouched. "I thought I'd tell you," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "I suppose it's snobbishness and all that kind of thing, as much as anything. I lay awake pretty near all last night thinking about myself; thinking what a got-up imitation of a man I was, and all that."

"And you haven't any diamond shares, and you are not going into Parliament, and you're not—"

"All Lies," said Hoopdriver, in a sepulchral voice. "Lies from beginning to end. 'Ow I came to tell 'em I DON'T know."

She stared at him blankly.

"I never set eyes on Africa in my life," said Mr. Hoopdriver, completing the confession. Then he pulled his right hand from his pocket, and with the nonchalance of one to whom the bitterness of death is passed, began to drink his coffee.

"It's a little surprising," began Jessie, vaguely.

"Think it over," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "I'm sorry from the bottom of my heart."

And then breakfast proceeded in silence. Jessie ate very little, and seemed lost in thought. Mr. Hoopdriver was so overcome by contrition and anxiety that he consumed an extraordinarily large

breakfast out of pure nervousness, and ate his scrambled eggs for the most part with the spoon that belonged properly to the marmalade. His eyes were gloomily downcast. She glanced at him through her eyelashes. Once or twice she struggled with laughter, once or twice she seemed to be indignant.

"I don't know what to think," she said at last. "I don't know what to make of you — brother Chris. I thought, do you know? that you were perfectly honest. And somehow—"

"Well?"

"I think so still."

"Honest — with all those lies!"

"I wonder."

"I don't," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "I'm fair ashamed of myself. But anyhow — I've stopped deceiving you."

"I THOUGHT," said the Young Lady in Grey, "that story of the lion—"

"Lord!" said Mr. Hoopdriver. "Don't remind me of THAT."

"I thought, somehow, I FELT, that the things you said didn't ring quite true." She suddenly broke out in laughter, at the expression of his face. "Of COURSE you are honest," she said. "How could I ever doubt it? As if *I* had never pretended! I see it all now."

Abruptly she rose, and extended her hand across the breakfast things. He looked at her doubtfully, and saw the dancing friendliness in her eyes. He scarcely understood at first. He rose, holding the marmalade spoon, and took her proffered hand with abject humility. "Lord," he broke out, "if you aren't enough — but there!"

"I see it all now." A brilliant inspiration had suddenly obscured her humour. She sat down suddenly, and he sat down too. "You did it," she said, "because you wanted to help me. And you thought I was too Conventional to take help from one I might think my social inferior."

"That was partly it," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

"How you misunderstood me!" she said.

"You don't mind?"

"It was noble of you. But I am sorry," she said, "you should think me likely to be ashamed of you because you follow a decent trade."

"I didn't know at first, you see," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

And he submitted meekly to a restoration of his self-respect. He was as useful a citizen as could be, — it was proposed and carried, — and his lying was of the noblest. And so the breakfast concluded much more happily than his brightest expectation, and they rode out of ruddy little Blandford as though no shadow of any sort had come between them.

XXXVI.

As they were sitting by the roadside among the pine trees half-way up a stretch of hill between Wimborne and Ringwood, however, Mr. Hoopdriver reopened the question of his worldly position.

"Ju think," he began abruptly, removing a meditative cigarette from his mouth, "that a draper's shopman IS a decent citizen?"

"Why not?"

"When he puts people off with what they don't quite want, for instance?"

"Need he do that?"

"Salesmanship," said Hoopdriver. "Wouldn't get a crib if he didn't. — It's no good your arguing. It's not a particularly honest nor a particularly useful trade; it's not very high up; there's no freedom and no leisure — seven to eight-thirty every day in the week; don't leave much edge to live on, does it? — real workmen laugh at us and educated chaps like bank clerks and solicitors' clerks look down on us. You look respectable outside, and inside you are packed in dormitories like convicts, fed on bread and butter and bullied like slaves. You're just superior enough to feel that you're not superior. Without capital there's no prospects; one draper in a hundred don't even earn enough to marry on; and if he DOES marry, his G.V. can just use him to black boots if he likes, and he daren't put his back up. That's drapery! And you tell me to be contented. Would YOU be contented if you was a shop girl?"

She did not answer. She looked at him with distress in her brown eyes, and he remained gloomily in possession of the field.

Presently he spoke. "I've been thinking," he said, and stopped.

She turned her face, resting her cheek on the palm of her hand. There was a light in her eyes that made the expression of them

tender. Mr. Hoopdriver had not looked in her face while he had talked. He had regarded the grass, and pointed his remarks with redknuckled hands held open and palms upwards. Now they hung limply over his knees.

"Well?" she said.

"I was thinking it this morning," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

"Yes?"

"Of course it's silly." "Well?"

"It's like this. I'm twenty-three, about. I had my schooling all right to fifteen, say. Well, that leaves me eight years behind. — Is it too late? I wasn't so backward. I did algebra, and Latin up to auxiliary verbs, and French genders. I got a kind of grounding."

"And now you mean, should you go on working?"

"Yes," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "That's it. You can't do much at drapery without capital, you know. But if I could get really educated. I've thought sometimes..."

"Why not?" said the Young Lady in Grey.

Mr. Hoopdriver was surprised to see it in that light. "You think?" he said. "Of course. You are a Man. You are free—" She warmed. "I wish I were you to have the chance of that struggle."

"Am I Man ENOUGH?" said Mr. Hoopdriver aloud, but addressing himself. "There's that eight years," he said to her.

"You can make it up. What you call educated men — They're not going on. You can catch them. They are quite satisfied. Playing golf, and thinking of clever things to say to women like my stepmother, and dining out. You're in front of them already in one thing. They think they know everything. You don't. And they know such little things."

"Lord!" said Mr. Hoopdriver. "How you encourage a fellow!"

"If I could only help you," she said, and left an eloquent hiatus. He became pensive again.

"It's pretty evident you don't think much of a draper," he said abruptly.

Another interval. "Hundreds of men," she said, "have come from the very lowest ranks of life. There was Burns, a ploughman; and Hugh Miller, a stonemason; and plenty of others. Dodsley was a footman—"

“But drapers! We’re too sort of shabby genteel to rise. Our coats and cuffs might get crumpled—”

“Wasn’t there a Clarke who wrote theology? He was a draper.”

“There was one started a sewing cotton, the only one I ever heard tell of.”

“Have you ever read ‘Hearts Insurgent’?”

“Never,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. He did not wait for her context, but suddenly broke out with an account of his literary requirements. “The fact is — I’ve read precious little. One don’t get much of a chance, situated as I am. We have a library at business, and I’ve gone through that. Most Besant I’ve read, and a lot of Mrs. Braddon’s and Rider Haggard and Marie Corelli — and, well — a Ouida or so. They’re good stories, of course, and first-class writers, but they didn’t seem to have much to do with me. But there’s heaps of books one hears talked about, I HAVEN’T read.”

“Don’t you read any other books but novels?”

“Scarcely ever. One gets tired after business, and you can’t get the books. I have been to some extension lectures, of course, ‘Lizabethan Dramatists,’ it was, but it seemed a little high-flown, you know. And I went and did wood-carving at the same place. But it didn’t seem leading nowhere, and I cut my thumb and chucked it.”

He made a depressing spectacle, with his face anxious and his hands limp. “It makes me sick,” he said, “to think how I’ve been fooled with. My old schoolmaster ought to have a juiced HIDING. He’s a thief. He pretended to undertake to make a man of me, and be’s stole twenty-three years of my life, filled me up with scraps and sweepings. Here I am! I don’t KNOW anything, and I can’t DO anything, and all the learning time is over.”

“Is it?” she said; but he did not seem to hear her. “My o’ people didn’t know any better, and went and paid thirty pounds premium — thirty pounds down to have me made THIS. The G.V. promised to teach me the trade, and he never taught me anything but to be a Hand. It’s the way they do with draper’s apprentices. If every swindler was locked up — well, you’d have nowhere to buy tape and cotton. It’s all very well to bring up Burns and those chaps, but I’m not that make. Yet I’m not such muck that I might not have been better — with teaching. I wonder what the chaps who sneer and

laugh at such as me would be if they'd been fooled about as I've been. At twenty-three — it's a long start."

He looked up with a wintry smile, a sadder and wiser Hoopdriver indeed than him of the glorious imaginings. "It's YOU done this," he said. "You're real. And it sets me thinking what I really am, and what I might have been. Suppose it was all different—"

"MAKE it different."

"How?"

"WORK. Stop playing at life. Face it like a man."

"Ah!" said Hoopdriver, glancing at her out of the corners of his eyes. "And even then—"

"No! It's not much good. I'm beginning too late."

And there, in blankly thoughtful silence, that conversation ended.

XXXVII. IN THE NEW FOREST

At Ringwood they lunched, and Jessie met with a disappointment. There was no letter for her at the post office. Opposite the hotel, The Chequered Career, was a machine shop with a conspicuously second-hand Marlborough Club tandem tricycle displayed in the window, together with the announcement that bicycles and tricycles were on hire within. The establishment was impressed on Mr. Hoopdriver's mind by the proprietor's action in coming across the road and narrowly inspecting their machines. His action revived a number of disagreeable impressions, but, happily, came to nothing. While they were still lunching, a tall clergyman, with a heated face, entered the room and sat down at the table next to theirs. He was in a kind of holiday costume; that is to say, he had a more than usually high collar, fastened behind and rather the worse for the weather, and his long-tail coat had been replaced by a black jacket of quite remarkable brevity. He had faded brown shoes on his feet, his trouser legs were grey with dust, and he wore a hat of piebald straw in the place of the customary soft felt. He was evidently socially inclined.

"A most charming day, sir," he said, in a ringing tenor.

"Charming," said Mr. Hoopdriver, over a portion of pie.

"You are, I perceive, cycling through this delightful country," said the clergyman.

"Touring," explained Mr. Hoopdriver. "I can imagine that, with a properly oiled machine, there can be no easier nor pleasanter way of seeing the country."

"No," said Mr. Hoopdriver; "it isn't half a bad way of getting about."

"For a young and newly married couple, a tandem bicycle must be, I should imagine, a delightful bond."

"Quite so," said Mr. Hoopdriver, reddening a little.

"Do you ride a tandem?"

"No — we're separate," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

"The motion through the air is indisputably of a very exhilarating description." With that decision, the clergyman turned to give his orders to the attendant, in a firm, authoritative voice, for a cup of tea,

two gelatine lozenges, bread and butter, salad, and pie to follow. “The gelatine lozenges I must have. I require them to precipitate the tannin in my tea,” he remarked to the room at large, and folding his hands, remained for some time with his chin thereon, staring fixedly at a little picture over Mr. Hoopdriver’s head.

“I myself am a cyclist,” said the clergyman, descending suddenly upon Mr. Hoopdriver.

“Indeed!” said Mr. Hoopdriver, attacking the moustache. “What machine, may I ask?”

“I have recently become possessed of a tricycle. A bicycle is, I regret to say, considered too — how shall I put it? — flippant by my parishioners. So I have a tricycle. I have just been hauling it hither.”

“Hauling!” said Jessie, surprised.

“With a shoe lace. And partly carrying it on my back.”

The pause was unexpected. Jessie had some trouble with a crumb. Mr. Hoopdriver’s face passed through several phases of surprise. Then he saw the explanation. “Had an accident?”

“I can hardly call it an accident. The wheels suddenly refused to go round. I found myself about five miles from here with an absolutely immobile machine.”

“Ow!” said Mr. Hoopdriver, trying to seem intelligent, and Jessie glanced at this insane person.

“It appears,” said the clergyman, satisfied with the effect he had created, “that my man carefully washed out the bearings with paraffin, and let the machine dry without oiling it again. The consequence was that they became heated to a considerable temperature and jammed. Even at the outset the machine ran stiffly as well as noisily, and I, being inclined to ascribe this stiffness to my own lassitude, merely redoubled my exertions.”

“‘Ot work all round,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“You could scarcely put it more appropriately. It is my rule of life to do whatever I find to do with all my might. I believe, indeed, that the bearings became red hot. Finally one of the wheels jammed together. A side wheel it was, so that its stoppage necessitated an inversion of the entire apparatus, — an inversion in which I participated.”

“Meaning, that you went over?” said Mr. Hoopdriver, suddenly

much amused.

"Precisely. And not brooking my defeat, I suffered repeatedly. You may understand, perhaps, a natural impatience. I expostulated — playfully, of course. Happily the road was not overlooked. Finally, the entire apparatus became rigid, and I abandoned the unequal contest. For all practical purposes the tricycle was no better than a heavy chair without castors. It was a case of hauling or carrying."

The clergyman's nutriment appeared in the doorway.

"Five miles," said the clergyman. He began at once to eat bread and butter vigorously. "Happily," he said, "I am an eupeptic, energetic sort of person on principle. I would all men were likewise."

"It's the best way," agreed Mr. Hoopdriver, and the conversation gave precedence to bread and butter.

"Gelatine," said the clergyman, presently, stirring his tea thoughtfully, "precipitates the tannin in one's tea and renders it easy of digestion."

"That's a useful sort of thing to know," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

"You are altogether welcome," said the clergyman, biting generously at two pieces of bread and butter folded together.

In the afternoon our two wanderers rode on at an easy pace towards Stoney Cross. Conversation languished, the topic of South Africa being in abeyance. Mr. Hoopdriver was silenced by disagreeable thoughts. He had changed the last sovereign at Ringwood. The fact had come upon him suddenly. Now too late he was reflecting upon his resources. There was twenty pounds or more in the post office savings bank in Putney, but his book was locked up in his box at the Antrobus establishment. Else this infatuated man would certainly have surreptitiously withdrawn the entire sum in order to prolong these journeyings even for a few days. As it was, the shadow of the end fell across his happiness. Strangely enough, in spite of his anxiety and the morning's collapse, he was still in a curious emotional state that was certainly not misery. He was forgetting his imaginings and posings, forgetting himself altogether in his growing appreciation of his companion. The most tangible trouble in his mind was the necessity of breaking the matter to her.

A long stretch up hill tired them long before Stoney Cross was

reached, and they dismounted and sat under the shade of a little oak tree. Near the crest the road looped on itself, so that, looking back, it sloped below them up to the right and then came towards them. About them grew a rich heather with stunted oaks on the edge of a deep ditch along the roadside, and this road was sandy; below the steepness of the hill, however, it was grey and barred with shadows, for there the trees clustered thick and tall. Mr. Hoopdriver fumbled clumsily with his cigarettes.

"There's a thing I got to tell you," he said, trying to be perfectly calm.

"Yes?" she said.

"I'd like to jest discuss your plans a bit, y'know."

"I'm very unsettled," said Jessie. "You are thinking of writing Books?"

"Or doing journalism, or teaching, or something like that."

"And keeping yourself independent of your stepmother?"

"Yes."

"How long'd it take now, to get anything of that sort to do?"

"I don't know at all. I believe there are a great many women journalists and sanitary inspectors, and black-and-white artists. But I suppose it takes time. Women, you know, edit most papers nowadays, George Egerton says. I ought, I suppose, to communicate with a literary agent."

"Of course," said Hoopdriver, "it's very suitable work. Not being heavy like the drapery."

"There's heavy brain labour, you must remember."

"That wouldn't hurt YOU," said Mr. Hoopdriver, turning a compliment.

"It's like this," he said, ending a pause. "It's a juiced nuisance alluding to these matters, but — we got very little more money."

He perceived that Jessie started, though he did not look at her. "I was counting, of course, on your friend's writing and your being able to take some action to-day." 'Take some action' was a phrase he had learnt at his last 'swop.'

"Money," said Jessie. "I didn't think of money."

"Hullo! Here's a tandem bicycle," said Mr. Hoopdriver, abruptly, and pointing with his cigarette.

She looked, and saw two little figures emerging from among the trees at the foot of the slope. The riders were bowed sternly over their work and made a gallant but unsuccessful attempt to take the rise. The machine was evidently too highly geared for hill climbing, and presently the rearmost rider rose on his saddle and hopped off, leaving his companion to any fate he found proper. The foremost rider was a man unused to such machines and apparently undecided how to dismount. He wabbled a few yards up the hill with a long tail of machine wabbling behind him. Finally, he made an attempt to jump off as one does off a single bicycle, hit his boot against the backbone, and collapsed heavily, falling on his shoulder.

She stood up. "Dear me!" she said. "I hope he isn't hurt."

The second rider went to the assistance of the fallen man.

Hoopdriver stood up, too. The lank, shaky machine was lifted up and wheeled out of the way, and then the fallen rider, being assisted, got up slowly and stood rubbing his arm. No serious injury seemed to be done to the man, and the couple presently turned their attention to the machine by the roadside. They were not in cycling clothes Hoopdriver observed. One wore the grotesque raiment for which the Cockney discovery of the game of golf seems indirectly blamable. Even at this distance the flopping flatness of his cap, the bright brown leather at the top of his calves, and the chequering of his stockings were perceptible. The other, the rear rider, was a slender little man in grey.

"Amatoors," said Mr. Hoopdriver.

Jessie stood staring, and a veil of thought dropped over her eyes. She no longer regarded the two men who were now tinkering at the machine down below there.

"How much have you?" she said.

He thrust his right hand into his pocket and produced six coins, counted them with his left index finger, and held them out to her. "Thirteen four half," said Mr. Hoopdriver. "Every penny."

"I have half a sovereign," she said. "Our bill wherever we stop—" The hiatus was more eloquent than many words.

"I never thought of money coming in to stop us like this," said Jessie.

"It's a juiced nuisance."

“Money,” said Jessie. “Is it possible — Surely! Conventionality! May only people of means — Live their own Lives? I never thought ...”

Pause.

“Here’s some more cyclists coming,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

The two men were both busy with their bicycle still, but now from among the trees emerged the massive bulk of a ‘Marlborough Club’ tandem, ridden by a slender woman in grey and a burly man in a Norfolk jacket. Following close upon this came lank black figure in a piebald straw hat, riding a tricycle of antiquated pattern with two large wheels in front. The man in grey remained bowed over the bicycle, with his stomach resting on the saddle, but his companion stood up and addressed some remark to the tricycle riders. Then it seemed as if he pointed up hill to where Mr. Hoopdriver and his companion stood side by side. A still odder thing followed; the lady in grey took out her handkerchief, appeared to wave it for a moment, and then at a hasty motion from her companion the white signal vanished.

“Surely,” said Jessie, peering under her hand. “It’s never—”

The tandem tricycle began to ascend the hill, quartering elaborately from side to side to ease the ascent. It was evident, from his heaving shoulders and depressed head, that the burly gentleman was exerting himself. The clerical person on the tricycle assumed the shape of a note of interrogation. Then on the heels of this procession came a dogcart driven by a man in a billycock hat and containing a lady in dark green.

“Looks like some sort of excursion,” said Hoopdriver.

Jessie did not answer. She was still peering under her hand. “Surely,” she said.

The clergyman’s efforts were becoming convulsive. With a curious jerking motion, the tricycle he rode twisted round upon itself, and he partly dismounted and partly fell off. He turned his machine up hill again immediately and began to wheel it. Then the burly gentleman dismounted, and with a courtly attentiveness assisted the lady in grey to alight. There was some little difference of opinion as to assistance, she so clearly wished to help push. Finally she gave in, and the burly gentleman began impelling the machine up hill by his

own unaided strength. His face made a dot of brilliant colour among the greys and greens at the foot of the hill. The tandem bicycle was now, it seems, repaired, and this joined the tail of the procession, its riders walking behind the dogcart, from which the lady in green and the driver had now descended.

"Mr. Hoopdriver," said Jessie. "Those people — I'm almost sure —"

"Lord!" said Mr. Hoopdriver, reading the rest in her face, and he turned to pick up his machine at once. Then he dropped it and assisted her to mount.

At the sight of Jessie mounting against the sky line the people coming up the hill suddenly became excited and ended Jessie's doubts at once. Two handkerchiefs waved, and some one shouted. The riders of the tandem bicycle began to run it up hill, past the other vehicles. But our young people did not wait for further developments of the pursuit. In another moment they were out of sight, riding hard down a steady incline towards Stoney Cross.

Before they had dropped among the trees out of sight of the hill brow, Jessie looked back and saw the tandem rising over the crest, with its rear rider just tumbling into the saddle. "They're coming," she said, and bent her head over her handles in true professional style.

They whirled down into the valley, over a white bridge, and saw ahead of them a number of shaggy little ponies frisking in the roadway. Involuntarily they slackened. "Shoo!" said Mr. Hoopdriver, and the ponies kicked up their heels derisively. At that Mr. Hoopdriver lost his temper and charged at them, narrowly missed one, and sent them jumping the ditch into the bracken under the trees, leaving the way clear for Jessie.

Then the road rose quietly but persistently; the treadles grew heavy, and Mr. Hoopdriver's breath sounded like a saw. The tandem appeared, making frightful exertions, at the foot, while the chase was still climbing. Then, thank Heaven! a crest and a stretch of up and down road, whose only disadvantage was its pitiless exposure to the afternoon sun. The tandem apparently dismounted at the hill, and did not appear against the hot blue sky until they were already near some trees and a good mile away.

“We’re gaining,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, with a little Niagara of perspiration dropping from brow to cheek. “That hill—”

But that was their only gleam of success. They were both nearly spent. Hoopdriver, indeed, was quite spent, and only a feeling of shame prolonged the liquidation of his bankrupt physique. From that point the tandem grained upon them steadily. At the Rufus Stone, it was scarcely a hundred yards behind. Then one desperate spurt, and they found themselves upon a steady downhill stretch among thick pine woods. Downhill nothing can beat a highly geared tandem bicycle. Automatically Mr. Hoopdriver put up his feet, and Jessie slackened her pace. In another moment they heard the swish of the fat pneumatics behind them, and the tandem passed Hoopdriver and drew alongside Jessie. Hoopdriver felt a mad impulse to collide with this abominable machine as it passed him. His only consolation was to notice that its riders, riding violently, were quite as dishevelled as himself and smothered in sandy white dust.

Abruptly Jessie stopped and dismounted, and the tandem riders shot panting past them downhill. “Brake,” said Dangle, who was riding behind, and stood up on the pedals. For a moment the velocity of the thing increased, and then they saw the dust fly from the brake, as it came down on the front tire. Dangle’s right leg floundered in the air as he came off in the road. The tandem wobbled. “Hold it!” cried Phipps over his shoulder, going on downhill. “I can’t get off if you don’t hold it.” He put on the brake until the machine stopped almost dead, and then feeling unstable began to pedal again. Dangle shouted after him. “Put out your foot, man,” said Dangle.

In this way the tandem riders were carried a good hundred yards or more beyond their quarry. Then Phipps realized his possibilities, slacked up with the brake, and let the thing go over sideways, dropping on to his right foot. With his left leg still over the saddle, and still holding the handles, he looked over his shoulder and began addressing uncomplimentary remarks to Dangle. “You only think of yourself,” said Phipps, with a florid face.

“They have forgotten us,” said Jessie, turning her machine.

“There was a road at the top of the hill — to Lyndhurst,” said Hoopdriver, following her example.

“It’s no good. There’s the money. We must give it up. But let us

go back to that hotel at Rufus Stone. I don't see why we should be led captive."

So to the consternation of the tandem riders, Jessie and her companion mounted and rode quietly back up the hill again. As they dismounted at the hotel entrance, the tandem overtook them, and immediately afterwards the dogcart came into view in pursuit. Dangle jumped off.

"Miss Milton, I believe," said Dangle, panting and raising a damp cap from his wet and matted hair.

"I SAY," said Phipps, receding involuntarily. "Don't go doing it again, Dangle. HELP a chap."

"One minute," said Dangle, and ran after his colleague.

Jessie leant her machine against the wall, and went into the hotel entrance. Hoopdriver remained in the hotel entrance, limp but defiant.

XXXVIII. AT THE RUFUS STONE

He folded his arms as Dangle and Phipps returned towards him. Phipps was abashed by his inability to cope with the tandem, which he was now wheeling, but Dangle was inclined to be quarrelsome. “Miss Milton?” he said briefly.

Mr. Hoopdriver bowed over his folded arms.

“Miss Milton within?” said Dangle.

“AND not to be disturved,” said Mr. Hoopdriver.

“You are a scoundrel, sir,” said Mr. Dangle.

“Et your service,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “She awaits ‘er stepmother, sir.”

Mr. Dangle hesitated. “She will be here immediately,” he said. “Here is her friend, Miss Mergle.”

Mr. Hoopdriver unfolded his arms slowly, and, with an air of immense calm, thrust his hands into his breeches pockets. Then with one of those fatal hesitations of his, it occurred to him that this attitude was merely vulgarly defiant he withdrew both, returned one and pulled at the insufficient moustache with the other. Miss Mergle caught him in confusion. “Is this the man?” she said to Dangle, and forthwith, “How DARE you, sir? How dare you face me? That poor girl!”

“You will permit me to observe,” began Mr. Hoopdriver, with a splendid drawl, seeing himself, for the first time in all this business, as a romantic villain.

“Ugh,” said Miss Mergle, unexpectedly striking him about the midriff with her extended palms, and sending him staggering backward into the hall of the hotel.

“Let me pass,” said Miss Mergle, in towering indignation. “How dare you resist my passage?” and so swept by him and into the dining-room, wherein Jessie had sought refuge.

As Mr. Hoopdriver struggled for equilibrium with the umbrella-stand, Dangle and Phipps, roused from their inertia by Miss Mergle’s activity, came in upon her heels, Phipps leading. “How dare you prevent that lady passing?” said Phipps.

Mr. Hoopdriver looked obstinate, and, to Dangle’s sense,

dangerous, but he made no answer. A waiter in full bloom appeared at the end of the passage, guardant. “It is men of your stamp, sir,” said Phipps, “who discredit manhood.”

Mr. Hoopdriver thrust his hands into his pockets. “Who the juice are you?” shouted Mr. Hoopdriver, fiercely.

“Who are YOU, sir?” retorted Phipps. “Who are you? That’s the question. What are YOU, and what are you doing, wandering at large with a young lady under age?”

“Don’t speak to him,” said Dangle.

“I’m not a-going to tell all my secrets to any one who comes at me,” said Hoopdriver. “Not Likely.” And added fiercely, “And that I tell you, sir.”

He and Phipps stood, legs apart and both looking exceedingly fierce at one another, and Heaven alone knows what might not have happened, if the long clergyman had not appeared in the doorway, heated but deliberate. “Petticoated anachronism,” said the long clergyman in the doorway, apparently still suffering from the antiquated prejudice that demanded a third wheel and a black coat from a clerical rider. He looked at Phipps and Hoopdriver for a moment, then extending his hand towards the latter, he waved it up and down three times, saying, “Tchak, tchak, tchak,” very deliberately as he did so. Then with a concluding “Ugh!” and a gesture of repugnance he passed on into the dining-room from which the voice of Miss Mergle was distinctly audible remarking that the weather was extremely hot even for the time of year.

This expression of extreme disapprobation had a very demoralizing effect upon Hoopdriver, a demoralization that was immediately completed by the advent of the massive Widgery.

“Is this the man?” said Widgery very grimly, and producing a special voice for the occasion from somewhere deep in his neck.

“Don’t hurt him!” said Mrs. Milton, with clasped hands. “However much wrong he has done her — No violence!”

“‘Ow many more of you?” said Hoopdriver, at bay before the umbrella stand. “Where is she? What has he done with her?” said Mrs. Milton.

“I’m not going to stand here and be insulted by a lot of strangers,” said Mr. Hoopdriver. “So you needn’t think it.”

“Please don’t worry, Mr. Hoopdriver,” said Jessie, suddenly appearing in the door of the dining-room. “I’m here, mother.” Her face was white.

Mrs. Milton said something about her child, and made an emotional charge at Jessie. The embrace vanished into the dining-room. Widgery moved as if to follow, and hesitated. “You’d better make yourself scarce,” he said to Mr. Hoopdriver.

“I shan’t do anything of the kind,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, with a catching of the breath. “I’m here defending that young lady.”

“You’ve done her enough mischief, I should think,” said Widgery, suddenly walking towards the dining-room, and closing the door behind him, leaving Dangle and Phipps with Hoopdriver.

“Clear!” said Phipps, threateningly.

“I shall go and sit out in the garden,” said Mr. Hoopdriver, with dignity. “There I shall remain.”

“Don’t make a row with him,” said Dangle.

And Mr. Hoopdriver retired, unassaulted, in almost sobbing dignity.

XXXIX.

So here is the world with us again, and our sentimental excursion is over. In the front of the Rufus Stone Hotel conceive a remarkable collection of wheeled instruments, watched over by Dangle and Phipps in grave and stately attitudes, and by the driver of a stylish dogcart from Ringwood. In the garden behind, in an attitude of nervous prostration, Mr. Hoopdriver was seated on a rustic seat. Through the open window of a private sitting-room came a murmur of voices, as of men and women in conference. Occasionally something that might have been a girlish sob.

“I fail to see what status Widgery has,” says Dangle, “thrusting himself in there.”

“He takes too much upon himself,” said Phipps.

“I’ve been noticing little things, yesterday and to-day,” said Dangle, and stopped.

“They went to the cathedral together in the afternoon.”

“Financially it would be a good thing for her, of course,” said

Dangle, with a gloomy magnanimity.

He felt drawn to Phipps now by the common trouble, in spite of the man's chequered legs. "Financially it wouldn't be half bad."

"He's so dull and heavy," said Phipps.

Meanwhile, within, the clergyman had, by promptitude and dexterity, taken the chair and was opening the case against the unfortunate Jessie. I regret to have to say that my heroine had been appalled by the visible array of public opinion against her excursion, to the pitch of tears. She was sitting with flushed cheeks and swimming eyes at the end of the table opposite to the clergyman. She held her handkerchief crumpled up in her extended hand. Mrs. Milton sat as near to her as possible, and occasionally made little dabs with her hand at Jessie's hand, to indicate forgiveness. These advances were not reciprocated, which touched Widgery very much. The lady in green, Miss Mergle (B. A.), sat on the opposite side near the clergyman. She was the strong-minded schoolmistress to whom Jessie had written, and who had immediately precipitated the pursuit upon her. She had picked up the clergyman in Ringwood, and had told him everything forthwith, having met him once at a British Association meeting. He had immediately constituted himself administrator of the entire business. Widgery, having been foiled in an attempt to conduct the proceedings, stood with his legs wide apart in front of the fireplace ornament, and looked profound and sympathetic. Jessie's account of her adventures was a chary one and given amidst frequent interruptions. She surprised herself by skilfully omitting any allusion to the Bechamel episode. She completely exonerated Hoopdriver from the charge of being more than an accessory to her escapade. But public feeling was heavy against Hoopdriver. Her narrative was inaccurate and sketchy, but happily the others were too anxious to pass opinions to pin her down to particulars. At last they had all the facts they would permit.

"My dear young lady," said the clergyman, "I can only ascribe this extravagant and regrettable expedition of yours to the wildest misconceptions of your place in the world and of your duties and responsibilities. Even now, it seems to me, your present emotion is due not so much to a real and sincere penitence for your disobedience and folly as to a positive annoyance at our most

fortunate interference—"

"Not that," said Mrs. Milton, in a low tone. "Not that."

"But WHY did she go off like this?" said Widgery. "That's what *I* want to know."

Jessie made an attempt to speak, but Mrs. Milton said "Hush!" and the ringing tenor of the clergyman rode triumphantly over the meeting. "I cannot understand this spirit of unrest that has seized upon the more intelligent portion of the feminine community. You had a pleasant home, a most refined and intelligent lady in the position of your mother, to cherish and protect you—"

"If I HAD a mother," gulped Jessie, succumbing to the obvious snare of self-pity, and sobbing.

"To cherish, protect, and advise you. And you must needs go out of it all alone into a strange world of unknown dangers-"

"I wanted to learn," said Jessie.

"You wanted to learn. May you never have anything to UNlearn."

"AH!" from Mrs. Milton, very sadly.

"It isn't fair for all of you to argue at me at once," submitted Jessie, irrelevantly.

"A world full of unknown dangers," resumed the clergyman. "Your proper place was surely the natural surroundings that are part of you. You have been unduly influenced, it is only too apparent, by a class of literature which, with all due respect to distinguished authoress that shall be nameless, I must call the New Woman Literature. In that deleterious ingredient of our book boxes—"

"I don't altogether agree with you there," said Miss Mergle, throwing her head back and regarding him firmly through her spectacles, and Mr. Widgery coughed.

"What HAS all this to do with me?" asked Jessie, availing herself of the interruption.

"The point is," said Mrs. Milton, on her defence, "that in my books—"

"All I want to do," said Jessie, "is to go about freely by myself. Girls do so in America. Why not here?"

"Social conditions are entirely different in America," said Miss Mergle. "Here we respect Class Distinctions."

"It's very unfortunate. What I want to know is, why I cannot go

away for a holiday if I want to."

"With a strange young man, socially your inferior," said Widgery, and made her flush by his tone.

"Why not?" she said. "With anybody."

"They don't do that, even in America," said Miss Mergle.

"My dear young lady," said the clergyman, "the most elementary principles of decorum — A day will come when you will better understand how entirely subservient your ideas are to the very fundamentals of our present civilisation, when you will better understand the harrowing anxiety you have given Mrs. Milton by this inexplicable flight of yours. We can only put things down at present, in charity, to your ignorance—"

"You have to consider the general body of opinion, too," said Widgery.

"Precisely," said Miss Mergle. "There is no such thing as conduct in the absolute." "If once this most unfortunate business gets about," said the clergyman, "it will do you infinite harm."

"But I'VE done nothing wrong. Why should I be responsible for other people's—"

"The world has no charity," said Mrs. Milton.

"For a girl," said Jessie. "No."

"Now do let us stop arguing, my dear young lady, and let us listen to reason. Never mind how or why, this conduct of yours will do you infinite harm, if once it is generally known. And not only that, it will cause infinite pain to those who care for you. But if you will return at once to your home, causing it to be understood that you have been with friends for these last few days—"

"Tell lies," said Jessie. "Certainly not. Most certainly not. But I understand that is how your absence is understood at present, and there is no reason—"

Jessie's grip tightened on her handkerchief. "I won't go back," she said, "to have it as I did before. I want a room of my own, what books I need to read, to be free to go out by myself alone, Teaching —"

"Anything," said Mrs. Milton, "anything in reason."

"But will you keep your promise?" said Jessie.

"Surely you won't dictate to your mother!" said Widgery.

“My stepmother! I don’t want to dictate. I want definite promises now.”

“This is most unreasonable,” said the clergyman. “Very well,” said Jessie, swallowing a sob but with unusual resolution. “Then I won’t go back. My life is being frittered away—”

“LET her have her way,” said Widgery.

“A room then. All your Men. I’m not to come down and talk away half my days—”

“My dear child, if only to save you,” said Mrs. Milton. “If you don’t keep your promise—”

“Then I take it the matter is practically concluded,” said the clergyman. “And that you very properly submit to return to your proper home. And now, if I may offer a suggestion, it is that we take tea. Freed of its tannin, nothing, I think, is more refreshing and stimulating.”

“There’s a train from Lyndhurst at thirteen minutes to six,” said Widgery, unfolding a time table. “That gives us about half an hour or three-quarters here — if a conveyance is obtainable, that is.”

“A gelatine lozenge dropped into the tea cup precipitates the tannin in the form of tannate of gelatine,” said the clergyman to Miss Mergle, in a confidential bray.

Jessie stood up, and saw through the window a depressed head and shoulders over the top of the back of a garden seat. She moved towards the door. “While you have tea, mother,” she said, “I must tell Mr. Hoopdriver of our arrangements.”

“Don’t you think I—” began the clergyman.

“No,” said Jessie, very rudely; “I don’t.”

“But, Jessie, haven’t you already—”

“You are already breaking the capitulation,” said Jessie.

“Will you want the whole half hour?” said Widgery, at the bell.

“Every minute,” said Jessie, in the doorway. “He’s behaved very nobly to me.”

“There’s tea,” said Widgery.

“I’ve had tea.”

“He may not have behaved badly,” said the clergyman. “But he’s certainly an astonishingly weak person to let a wrong-headed young girl—”

Jessie closed the door into the garden.

Meanwhile Mr. Hoopdriver made a sad figure in the sunlight outside. It was over, this wonderful excursion of his, so far as she was concerned, and with the swift blow that separated them, he realised all that those days had done for him. He tried to grasp the bearings of their position. Of course, they would take her away to those social altitudes of hers. She would become an inaccessible young lady again. Would they let him say good-bye to her?

How extraordinary it had all been! He recalled the moment when he had first seen her riding, with the sunlight behind her, along the riverside road; he recalled that wonderful night at Bognor, remembering it as if everything had been done of his own initiative. “Brave, brave!” she had called him. And afterwards, when she came down to him in the morning, kindly, quiet. But ought he to have persuaded her then to return to her home? He remembered some intention of the sort. Now these people snatched her away from him as though he was scarcely fit to live in the same world with her. No more he was! He felt he had presumed upon her worldly ignorance in travelling with her day after day. She was so dainty, so delightful, so serene. He began to recapitulate her expressions, the light of her eyes, the turn of her face.. .

He wasn’t good enough to walk in the same road with her. Nobody was. Suppose they let him say good-bye to her; what could he say? That? But they were sure not to let her talk to him alone; her mother would be there as — what was it? Chaperone. He’d never once had a chance of saying what he felt; indeed, it was only now he was beginning to realise what he felt. Love I he wouldn’t presume. It was worship. If only he could have one more chance. He must have one more chance, somewhere, somehow. Then he would pour out his soul to her eloquently. He felt eloquently, and words would come. He was dust under her feet...

His meditation was interrupted by the click of a door handle, and Jessie appeared in the sunlight under the verandah. “Come away from here,” she said to Hoopdriver, as he rose to meet her. “I’m going home with them. We have to say good-bye.”

Mr. Hoopdriver winced, opened and shut his mouth, and rose without a word.

XL.

At first Jessie Milton and Mr. Hoopdriver walked away from the hotel in silence. He heard a catching in her breath and glanced at her and saw her lips pressed tight and a tear on her cheek. Her face was hot and bright. She was looking straight before her. He could think of nothing to say, and thrust his hands in his pockets and looked away from her intentionally. After a while she began to talk. They dealt disjointedly with scenery first, and then with the means of self-education. She took his address at Antrobus's and promised to send him some books. But even with that it was spiritless, aching talk, Hoopdriver felt, for the fighting mood was over. She seemed, to him, preoccupied with the memories of her late battle, and that appearance hurt him.

"It's the end," he whispered to himself. "It's the end."

They went into a hollow and up a gentle wooded slope, and came at last to a high and open space overlooking a wide expanse of country. There, by a common impulse, they stopped. She looked at her watch — a little ostentatiously. They stared at the billows of forest rolling away beneath them, crest beyond crest, of leafy trees, fading at last into blue.

"The end" ran through his mind, to the exclusion of all speakable thoughts.

"And so," she said, presently, breaking the silence, "it comes to good-bye."

For half a minute he did not answer. Then he gathered his resolution. "There is one thing I MUST say."

"Well?" she said, surprised and abruptly forgetting the recent argument. "I ask no return. But—"

Then he stopped. "I won't say it. It's no good. It would be rot from me — now. I wasn't going to say anything. Good-bye."

She looked at him with a startled expression in her eyes. "No," she said. "But don't forget you are going to work. Remember, brother Chris, you are my friend. You will work. You are not a very strong man, you know, now — you will forgive me — nor do you know all you should. But what will you be in six years' time?"

He stared hard in front of him still, and the lines about his weak

mouth seemed to strengthen. He knew she understood what he could not say.

“I’ll work,” he said, concisely. They stood side by side for a moment. Then he said, with a motion of his head, “I won’t come back to THEM. Do you mind? Going back alone?”

She took ten seconds to think. “No.” she said, and held out her hand, biting her nether lip. “GOOD-BYE,” she whispered.

He turned, with a white face, looked into her eyes, took her hand limply, and then with a sudden impulse, lifted it to his lips. She would have snatched it away, but his grip tightened to her movement. She felt the touch of his lips, and then he had dropped her fingers and turned from her and was striding down the slope. A dozen paces away his foot turned in the lip of a rabbit hole, and he stumbled forward and almost fell. He recovered his balance and went on, not looking back. He never once looked back. She stared at his receding figure until it was small and far below her, and then, the tears running over her eyelids now, turned slowly, and walked with her hands gripped hard together behind her, towards Stoney Cross again.

“I did not know,” she whispered to herself. “I did not understand. Even now — No, I do not understand.”

XLI. THE ENVOY

So the story ends, dear Reader. Mr. Hoopdriver, sprawling down there among the bracken, must sprawl without our prying, I think, or listening to what chances to his breathing. And of what came of it all, of the six years and afterwards, this is no place to tell. In truth, there is no telling it, for the years have still to run. But if you see how a mere counter-jumper, a cad on castors, and a fool to boot, may come to feel the little insufficiencies of life, and if he has to any extent won your sympathies, my end is attained. (If it is not attained, may Heaven forgive us both!) Nor will we follow this adventurous young lady of ours back to her home at Surbiton, to her new struggle against Widgery and Mrs. Milton combined. For, as she will presently hear, that devoted man has got his reward. For her, also, your sympathies are invited.

The rest of this great holiday, too — five days there are left of it — is beyond the limits of our design. You see fitfully a slender figure in a dusty brown suit and heather mixture stockings, and brown shoes not intended to be cycled in, flitting Londonward through Hampshire and Berkshire and Surrey, going economically — for excellent reasons. Day by day he goes on, riding fitfully and for the most part through bye-roads, but getting a few miles to the north-eastward every day. He is a narrow-chested person, with a nose hot and tanned at the bridge with unwonted exposure, and brown, red-knuckled fists. A musing expression sits upon the face of this rider, you observe. Sometimes he whistles noiselessly to himself, sometimes he speaks aloud, “a juiced good try, anyhow!” you hear; and sometimes, and that too often for my liking, he looks irritable and hopeless. “I know,” he says, “I know. It’s over and done. It isn’t IN me. You ain’t man enough, Hoopdriver. Look at yer silly hands!... Oh, my God!” and a gust of passion comes upon him and he rides furiously for a space.

Sometimes again his face softens. “Anyhow, if I’m not to see her — she’s going to lend me books,” he thinks, and gets such comfort as he can. Then again; “Books! What’s books?” Once or twice triumphant memories of the earlier incidents nerve his face for a

while. “I put the ky-bosh on HIS little game,” he remarks. “I DID that,” and one might even call him happy in these phases. And, by-the-bye, the machine, you notice, has been enamel-painted grey and carries a sonorous gong.

This figure passes through Basingstoke and Bagshot, Staines, Hampton, and Richmond. At last, in Putney High Street, glowing with the warmth of an August sunset and with all the ‘prentice boys busy shutting up shop, and the work girls going home, and the shop folks peeping abroad, and the white ‘buses full of late clerks and city folk rumbling home to their dinners, we part from him. He is back. To-morrow, the early rising, the dusting, and drudgery, begin again — but with a difference, with wonderful memories and still more wonderful desires and ambitions replacing those discrepant dreams.

He turns out of the High Street at the corner, dismounts with a sigh, and pushes his machine through the gates of the Antrobus stable yard, as the apprentice with the high collar holds them open. There are words of greeting. “South Coast,” you hear; and “splendid weather — splendid.” He sighs. “Yes — swapped him off for a couple of sovs. It’s a juiced good machine.”

The gate closes upon him with a slam, and he vanishes from our ken.

THE INVISIBLE MAN

A GROTESQUE ROMANCE

First published in 1897, this novel tells the story of Griffin, a scientist that develops a means of changing his body's refractive index so that it absorbs and reflects light, thus rendering him invisible to the human eye. Like Doctor Moreau, Griffin is a 'mad scientist' figure that uses his knowledge to gain personal power.

Unlike Wells' previous 'scientific romances', in which the action is related by a third person narrator, Wells employs a third person, omniscient narrative viewpoint here. As a result, the novel takes on aspects of the crime or mystery genre, as the mysterious events in the village of Iping are unfolded before the solution (Griffin's invisibility) is revealed to the reader.

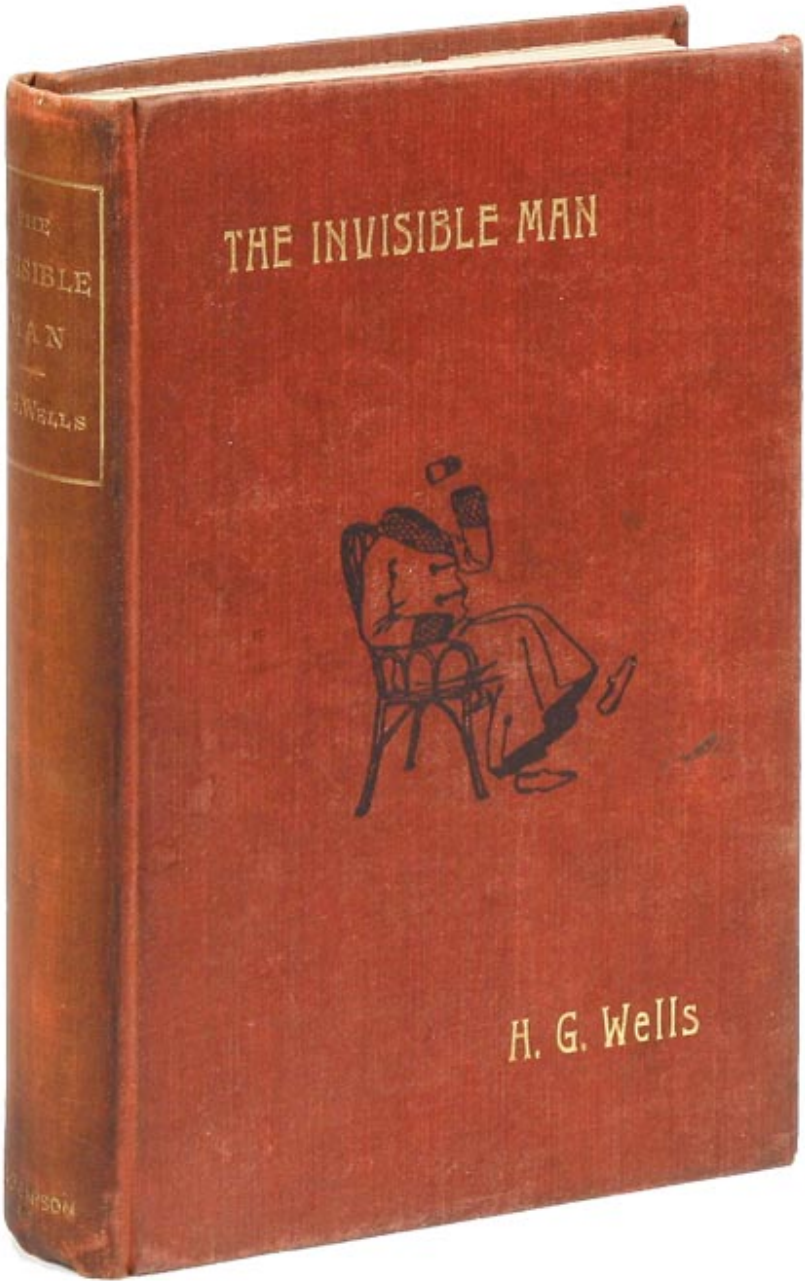

The first edition

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Claude Rains as Griffin in James Whale's 1933 film adaptation

CHAPTER I

THE STRANGE MAN'S ARRIVAL

The stranger came early in February, one wintry day, through a biting wind and a driving snow, the last snowfall of the year, over the down, walking from Bramblehurst railway station, and carrying a little black portmanteau in his thickly gloved hand. He was wrapped up from head to foot, and the brim of his soft felt hat hid every inch of his face but the shiny tip of his nose; the snow had piled itself against his shoulders and chest, and added a white crest to the burden he carried. He staggered into the "Coach and Horses" more dead than alive, and flung his portmanteau down. "A fire," he cried, "in the name of human charity! A room and a fire!" He stamped and shook the snow from off himself in the bar, and followed Mrs. Hall into her guest parlour to strike his bargain. And with that much introduction, that and a couple of sovereigns flung upon the table, he took up his quarters in the inn.

Mrs. Hall lit the fire and left him there while she went to prepare him a meal with her own hands. A guest to stop at Iping in the wintertime was an unheard-of piece of luck, let alone a guest who was no "haggler," and she was resolved to show herself worthy of her good fortune. As soon as the bacon was well under way, and Millie, her lymphatic maid, had been brisked up a bit by a few deftly chosen expressions of contempt, she carried the cloth, plates, and glasses into the parlour and began to lay them with the utmost *éclat*. Although the fire was burning up briskly, she was surprised to see that her visitor still wore his hat and coat, standing with his back to her and staring out of the window at the falling snow in the yard. His gloved hands were clasped behind him, and he seemed to be lost in thought. She noticed that the melting snow that still sprinkled his shoulders dripped upon her carpet. "Can I take your hat and coat, sir?" she said, "and give them a good dry in the kitchen?"

"No," he said without turning.

She was not sure she had heard him, and was about to repeat her question.

He turned his head and looked at her over his shoulder. “I prefer to keep them on,” he said with emphasis, and she noticed that he wore big blue spectacles with sidelights, and had a bush side-whisker over his coat-collar that completely hid his cheeks and face.

“Very well, sir,” she said. “*As* you like. In a bit the room will be warmer.”

He made no answer, and had turned his face away from her again, and Mrs. Hall, feeling that her conversational advances were ill-timed, laid the rest of the table things in a quick staccato and whisked out of the room. When she returned he was still standing there, like a man of stone, his back hunched, his collar turned up, his dripping hat-brim turned down, hiding his face and ears completely. She put down the eggs and bacon with considerable emphasis, and called rather than said to him, “Your lunch is served, sir.”

“Thank you,” he said at the same time, and did not stir until she was closing the door. Then he swung round and approached the table with a certain eager quickness.

As she went behind the bar to the kitchen she heard a sound repeated at regular intervals. Chirk, chirk, chirk, it went, the sound of a spoon being rapidly whisked round a basin. “That girl!” she said. “There! I clean forgot it. It’s her being so long!” And while she herself finished mixing the mustard, she gave Millie a few verbal stabs for her excessive slowness. She had cooked the ham and eggs, laid the table, and done everything, while Millie (help indeed!) had only succeeded in delaying the mustard. And him a new guest and wanting to stay! Then she filled the mustard pot, and, putting it with a certain stateliness upon a gold and black tea-tray, carried it into the parlour.

She rapped and entered promptly. As she did so her visitor moved quickly, so that she got but a glimpse of a white object disappearing behind the table. It would seem he was picking something from the floor. She rapped down the mustard pot on the table, and then she noticed the overcoat and hat had been taken off and put over a chair in front of the fire, and a pair of wet boots threatened rust to her steel fender. She went to these things resolutely. “I suppose I may have them to dry now,” she said in a voice that brooked no denial.

“Leave the hat,” said her visitor, in a muffled voice, and turning

she saw he had raised his head and was sitting and looking at her.

For a moment she stood gaping at him, too surprised to speak.

He held a white cloth — it was a serviette he had brought with him — over the lower part of his face, so that his mouth and jaws were completely hidden, and that was the reason of his muffled voice. But it was not that which startled Mrs. Hall. It was the fact that all his forehead above his blue glasses was covered by a white bandage, and that another covered his ears, leaving not a scrap of his face exposed excepting only his pink, peaked nose. It was bright, pink, and shiny just as it had been at first. He wore a dark-brown velvet jacket with a high, black, linen-lined collar turned up about his neck. The thick black hair, escaping as it could below and between the cross bandages, projected in curious tails and horns, giving him the strangest appearance conceivable. This muffled and bandaged head was so unlike what she had anticipated, that for a moment she was rigid.

He did not remove the serviette, but remained holding it, as she saw now, with a brown gloved hand, and regarding her with his inscrutable blue glasses. “Leave the hat,” he said, speaking very distinctly through the white cloth.

Her nerves began to recover from the shock they had received. She placed the hat on the chair again by the fire. “I didn’t know, sir,” she began, “that—” and she stopped embarrassed.

“Thank you,” he said drily, glancing from her to the door and then at her again.

“I’ll have them nicely dried, sir, at once,” she said, and carried his clothes out of the room. She glanced at his white-swathed head and blue goggles again as she was going out of the door; but his napkin was still in front of his face. She shivered a little as she closed the door behind her, and her face was eloquent of her surprise and perplexity. “I *never*,” she whispered. “There!” She went quite softly to the kitchen, and was too preoccupied to ask Millie what she was messing about with *now*, when she got there.

The visitor sat and listened to her retreating feet. He glanced inquiringly at the window before he removed his serviette, and resumed his meal. He took a mouthful, glanced suspiciously at the window, took another mouthful, then rose and, taking the serviette in

his hand, walked across the room and pulled the blind down to the top of the white muslin that obscured the lower panes. This left the room in a twilight. This done, he returned with an easier air to the table and his meal.

"The poor soul's had an accident or an op'ration or somethin'," said Mrs. Hall. "What a turn them bandages did give me, to be sure!"

She put on some more coal, unfolded the clothes-horse, and extended the traveller's coat upon this. "And they goggles! Why, he looked more like a divin' helmet than a human man!" She hung his muffler on a corner of the horse. "And holding that handkerchief over his mouth all the time. Talkin' through it! ... Perhaps his mouth was hurt too — maybe."

She turned round, as one who suddenly remembers. "Bless my soul alive!" she said, going off at a tangent; "ain't you done them taters *yet*, Millie?"

When Mrs. Hall went to clear away the stranger's lunch, her idea that his mouth must also have been cut or disfigured in the accident she supposed him to have suffered, was confirmed, for he was smoking a pipe, and all the time that she was in the room he never loosened the silk muffler he had wrapped round the lower part of his face to put the mouthpiece to his lips. Yet it was not forgetfulness, for she saw he glanced at it as it smouldered out. He sat in the corner with his back to the window-blind and spoke now, having eaten and drunk and being comfortably warmed through, with less aggressive brevity than before. The reflection of the fire lent a kind of red animation to his big spectacles they had lacked hitherto.

"I have some luggage," he said, "at Bramblehurst station," and he asked her how he could have it sent. He bowed his bandaged head quite politely in acknowledgment of her explanation. "To-morrow?" he said. "There is no speedier delivery?" and seemed quite disappointed when she answered, "No." Was she quite sure? No man with a trap who would go over?

Mrs. Hall, nothing loath, answered his questions and developed a conversation. "It's a steep road by the down, sir," she said in answer to the question about a trap; and then, snatching at an opening, said, "It was there a carriage was upsettled, a year ago and more. A gentleman killed, besides his coachman. Accidents, sir, happen in a

moment, don't they?"

But the visitor was not to be drawn so easily. "They do," he said through his muffler, eyeing her quietly through his impenetrable glasses.

"But they take long enough to get well, don't they? ... There was my sister's son, Tom, jest cut his arm with a scythe, tumbled on it in the 'ayfield, and, bless me! he was three months tied up sir. You'd hardly believe it. It's regular given me a dread of a scythe, sir."

"I can quite understand that," said the visitor.

"He was afraid, one time, that he'd have to have an op'ration — he was that bad, sir."

The visitor laughed abruptly, a bark of a laugh that he seemed to bite and kill in his mouth. "*Was* he?" he said.

"He was, sir. And no laughing matter to them as had the doing for him, as I had — my sister being took up with her little ones so much. There was bandages to do, sir, and bandages to undo. So that if I may make so bold as to say it, sir—"

"Will you get me some matches?" said the visitor, quite abruptly. "My pipe is out."

Mrs. Hall was pulled up suddenly. It was certainly rude of him, after telling him all she had done. She gasped at him for a moment, and remembered the two sovereigns. She went for the matches.

"Thanks," he said concisely, as she put them down, and turned his shoulder upon her and stared out of the window again. It was altogether too discouraging. Evidently he was sensitive on the topic of operations and bandages. She did not "make so bold as to say," however, after all. But his snubbing way had irritated her, and Millie had a hot time of it that afternoon.

The visitor remained in the parlour until four o'clock, without giving the ghost of an excuse for an intrusion. For the most part he was quite still during that time; it would seem he sat in the growing darkness smoking in the firelight — perhaps dozing.

Once or twice a curious listener might have heard him at the coals, and for the space of five minutes he was audible pacing the room. He seemed to be talking to himself. Then the armchair creaked as he sat down again.

CHAPTER II

MR. TEDDY HENFREY'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS

At four o'clock, when it was fairly dark and Mrs. Hall was screwing up her courage to go in and ask her visitor if he would take some tea, Teddy Henfrey, the clock-jobber, came into the bar. "My sakes! Mrs. Hall," said he, "but this is terrible weather for thin boots!" The snow outside was falling faster.

Mrs. Hall agreed, and then noticed he had his bag with him. "Now you're here, Mr. Teddy," said she, "I'd be glad if you'd give th' old clock in the parlour a bit of a look. 'Tis going, and it strikes well and hearty; but the hour-hand won't do nuthin' but point at six."

And leading the way, she went across to the parlour door and rapped and entered.

Her visitor, she saw as she opened the door, was seated in the armchair before the fire, dozing it would seem, with his bandaged head drooping on one side. The only light in the room was the red glow from the fire — which lit his eyes like adverse railway signals, but left his downcast face in darkness — and the scanty vestiges of the day that came in through the open door. Everything was ruddy, shadowy, and indistinct to her, the more so since she had just been lighting the bar lamp, and her eyes were dazzled. But for a second it seemed to her that the man she looked at had an enormous mouth wide open — a vast and incredible mouth that swallowed the whole of the lower portion of his face. It was the sensation of a moment: the white-bound head, the monstrous goggle eyes, and this huge yawn below it. Then he stirred, started up in his chair, put up his hand. She opened the door wide, so that the room was lighter, and she saw him more clearly, with the muffler held up to his face just as she had seen him hold the serviette before. The shadows, she fancied, had tricked her.

"Would you mind, sir, this man a-coming to look at the clock, sir?" she said, recovering from the momentary shock.

"Look at the clock?" he said, staring round in a drowsy manner, and speaking over his hand, and then, getting more fully awake,

“certainly.”

Mrs. Hall went away to get a lamp, and he rose and stretched himself. Then came the light, and Mr. Teddy Henfrey, entering, was confronted by this bandaged person. He was, he says, “taken aback.”

“Good afternoon,” said the stranger, regarding him — as Mr. Henfrey says, with a vivid sense of the dark spectacles— “like a lobster.”

“I hope,” said Mr. Henfrey, “that it’s no intrusion.”

“None whatever,” said the stranger. “Though, I understand,” he said turning to Mrs. Hall, “that this room is really to be mine for my own private use.”

“I thought, sir,” said Mrs. Hall, “you’d prefer the clock—”

“Certainly,” said the stranger, “certainly — but, as a rule, I like to be alone and undisturbed.

“But I’m really glad to have the clock seen to,” he said, seeing a certain hesitation in Mr. Henfrey’s manner. “Very glad.” Mr. Henfrey had intended to apologise and withdraw, but this anticipation reassured him. The stranger turned round with his back to the fireplace and put his hands behind his back. “And presently,” he said, “when the clock-mending is over, I think I should like to have some tea. But not till the clock-mending is over.”

Mrs. Hall was about to leave the room — she made no conversational advances this time, because she did not want to be snubbed in front of Mr. Henfrey — when her visitor asked her if she had made any arrangements about his boxes at Bramblehurst. She told him she had mentioned the matter to the postman, and that the carrier could bring them over on the morrow. “You are certain that is the earliest?” he said.

She was certain, with a marked coldness.

“I should explain,” he added, “what I was really too cold and fatigued to do before, that I am an experimental investigator.”

“Indeed, sir,” said Mrs. Hall, much impressed.

“And my baggage contains apparatus and appliances.”

“Very useful things indeed they are, sir,” said Mrs. Hall.

“And I’m very naturally anxious to get on with my inquiries.”

“Of course, sir.”

“My reason for coming to Iping,” he proceeded, with a certain

deliberation of manner, “was ... a desire for solitude. I do not wish to be disturbed in my work. In addition to my work, an accident—”

“I thought as much,” said Mrs. Hall to herself.

“ — necessitates a certain retirement. My eyes — are sometimes so weak and painful that I have to shut myself up in the dark for hours together. Lock myself up. Sometimes — now and then. Not at present, certainly. At such times the slightest disturbance, the entry of a stranger into the room, is a source of excruciating annoyance to me — it is well these things should be understood.”

“Certainly, sir,” said Mrs. Hall. “And if I might make so bold as to ask—”

“That I think, is all,” said the stranger, with that quietly irresistible air of finality he could assume at will. Mrs. Hall reserved her question and sympathy for a better occasion.

After Mrs. Hall had left the room, he remained standing in front of the fire, glaring, so Mr. Henfrey puts it, at the clock-mending. Mr. Henfrey not only took off the hands of the clock, and the face, but extracted the works; and he tried to work in as slow and quiet and unassuming a manner as possible. He worked with the lamp close to him, and the green shade threw a brilliant light upon his hands, and upon the frame and wheels, and left the rest of the room shadowy. When he looked up, coloured patches swam in his eyes. Being constitutionally of a curious nature, he had removed the works — a quite unnecessary proceeding — with the idea of delaying his departure and perhaps falling into conversation with the stranger. But the stranger stood there, perfectly silent and still. So still, it got on Henfrey’s nerves. He felt alone in the room and looked up, and there, grey and dim, was the bandaged head and huge blue lenses staring fixedly, with a mist of green spots drifting in front of them. It was so uncanny to Henfrey that for a minute they remained staring blankly at one another. Then Henfrey looked down again. Very uncomfortable position! One would like to say something. Should he remark that the weather was very cold for the time of year?

He looked up as if to take aim with that introductory shot. “The weather—” he began.

“Why don’t you finish and go?” said the rigid figure, evidently in a state of painfully suppressed rage. “All you’ve got to do is to fix

the hour-hand on its axle. You're simply humbugging—"

"Certainly, sir — one minute more. I overlooked—" and Mr. Henfrey finished and went.

But he went feeling excessively annoyed. "Damn it!" said Mr. Henfrey to himself, trudging down the village through the thawing snow; "a man must do a clock at times, surely."

And again, "Can't a man look at you? — Ugly!"

And yet again, "Seemingly not. If the police was wanting you you couldn't be more wropped and bandaged."

At Gleeson's corner he saw Hall, who had recently married the stranger's hostess at the "Coach and Horses," and who now drove the Iping conveyance, when occasional people required it, to Sidderbridge Junction, coming towards him on his return from that place. Hall had evidently been "stopping a bit" at Sidderbridge, to judge by his driving. "'Ow do, Teddy?" he said, passing.

"You got a rum un up home!" said Teddy.

Hall very sociably pulled up. "What's that?" he asked.

"Rum-looking customer stopping at the 'Coach and Horses,'" said Teddy. "My sakes!"

And he proceeded to give Hall a vivid description of his grotesque guest. "Looks a bit like a disguise, don't it? I'd like to see a man's face if I had him stopping in *my* place," said Henfrey. "But women are that trustful — where strangers are concerned. He's took your rooms and he ain't even given a name, Hall."

"You don't say so!" said Hall, who was a man of sluggish apprehension.

"Yes," said Teddy. "By the week. Whatever he is, you can't get rid of him under the week. And he's got a lot of luggage coming to-morrow, so he says. Let's hope it won't be stones in boxes, Hall."

He told Hall how his aunt at Hastings had been swindled by a stranger with empty portmanteaux. Altogether he left Hall vaguely suspicious. "Get up, old girl," said Hall. "I s'pose I must see 'bout this."

Teddy trudged on his way with his mind considerably relieved.

Instead of "seeing 'bout it," however, Hall on his return was severely rated by his wife on the length of time he had spent in Sidderbridge, and his mild inquiries were answered snappishly and in

a manner not to the point. But the seed of suspicion Teddy had sown germinated in the mind of Mr. Hall in spite of these discouragements. “You wim’ don’t know everything,” said Mr. Hall, resolved to ascertain more about the personality of his guest at the earliest possible opportunity. And after the stranger had gone to bed, which he did about half-past nine, Mr. Hall went very aggressively into the parlour and looked very hard at his wife’s furniture, just to show that the stranger wasn’t master there, and scrutinised closely and a little contemptuously a sheet of mathematical computations the stranger had left. When retiring for the night he instructed Mrs. Hall to look very closely at the stranger’s luggage when it came next day.

“You mind your own business, Hall,” said Mrs. Hall, “and I’ll mind mine.”

She was all the more inclined to snap at Hall because the stranger was undoubtedly an unusually strange sort of stranger, and she was by no means assured about him in her own mind. In the middle of the night she woke up dreaming of huge white heads like turnips, that came trailing after her, at the end of interminable necks, and with vast black eyes. But being a sensible woman, she subdued her terrors and turned over and went to sleep again.

CHAPTER III

THE THOUSAND AND ONE BOTTLES

So it was that on the twenty-ninth day of February, at the beginning of the thaw, this singular person fell out of infinity into Iping village. Next day his luggage arrived through the slush — and very remarkable luggage it was. There were a couple of trunks indeed, such as a rational man might need, but in addition there were a box of books — big, fat books, of which some were just in an incomprehensible handwriting — and a dozen or more crates, boxes, and cases, containing objects packed in straw, as it seemed to Hall, tugging with a casual curiosity at the straw — glass bottles. The stranger, muffled in hat, coat, gloves, and wrapper, came out impatiently to meet Fearenside's cart, while Hall was having a word or so of gossip preparatory to helping bring them in. Out he came, not noticing Fearenside's dog, who was sniffing in a *dilettante* spirit at Hall's legs. "Come along with those boxes," he said. "I've been waiting long enough."

And he came down the steps towards the tail of the cart as if to lay hands on the smaller crate.

No sooner had Fearenside's dog caught sight of him, however, than it began to bristle and growl savagely, and when he rushed down the steps it gave an undecided hop, and then sprang straight at his hand. "Whup!" cried Hall, jumping back, for he was no hero with dogs, and Fearenside howled, "Lie down!" and snatched his whip.

They saw the dog's teeth had slipped the hand, heard a kick, saw the dog execute a flanking jump and get home on the stranger's leg, and heard the rip of his trousering. Then the finer end of Fearenside's whip reached his property, and the dog, yelping with dismay, retreated under the wheels of the waggon. It was all the business of a swift half-minute. No one spoke, everyone shouted. The stranger glanced swiftly at his torn glove and at his leg, made as if he would stoop to the latter, then turned and rushed swiftly up the steps into the inn. They heard him go headlong across the passage and up the uncarpeted stairs to his bedroom.

“You brute, you!” said Fearenside, climbing off the waggon with his whip in his hand, while the dog watched him through the wheel. “Come here,” said Fearenside— “You’d better.”

Hall had stood gaping. “He wuz bit,” said Hall. “I’d better go and see to en,” and he trotted after the stranger. He met Mrs. Hall in the passage. “Carrier’s darg,” he said “bit en.”

He went straight upstairs, and the stranger’s door being ajar, he pushed it open and was entering without any ceremony, being of a naturally sympathetic turn of mind.

The blind was down and the room dim. He caught a glimpse of a most singular thing, what seemed a handless arm waving towards him, and a face of three huge indeterminate spots on white, very like the face of a pale pansy. Then he was struck violently in the chest, hurled back, and the door slammed in his face and locked. It was so rapid that it gave him no time to observe. A waving of indecipherable shapes, a blow, and a concussion. There he stood on the dark little landing, wondering what it might be that he had seen.

A couple of minutes after, he rejoined the little group that had formed outside the “Coach and Horses.” There was Fearenside telling about it all over again for the second time; there was Mrs. Hall saying his dog didn’t have no business to bite her guests; there was Huxter, the general dealer from over the road, interrogative; and Sandy Wadgers from the forge, judicial; besides women and children, all of them saying fatuities: “Wouldn’t let en bite *me*, I knows”; “‘Tasn’t right *have* such dargs”; “Whad ‘*e* bite ‘n for, then?” and so forth.

Mr. Hall, staring at them from the steps and listening, found it incredible that he had seen anything so very remarkable happen upstairs. Besides, his vocabulary was altogether too limited to express his impressions.

“He don’t want no help, he says,” he said in answer to his wife’s inquiry. “We’d better be a-takin’ of his luggage in.”

“He ought to have it cauterised at once,” said Mr. Huxter; “especially if it’s at all inflamed.”

“I’d shoot en, that’s what I’d do,” said a lady in the group.

Suddenly the dog began growling again.

“Come along,” cried an angry voice in the doorway, and there

stood the muffled stranger with his collar turned up, and his hat-brim bent down. “The sooner you get those things in the better I’ll be pleased.” It is stated by an anonymous bystander that his trousers and gloves had been changed.

“Was you hurt, sir?” said Fearenside. “I’m rare sorry the darg—”

“Not a bit,” said the stranger. “Never broke the skin. Hurry up with those things.”

He then swore to himself, so Mr. Hall asserts.

Directly the first crate was, in accordance with his directions, carried into the parlour, the stranger flung himself upon it with extraordinary eagerness, and began to unpack it, scattering the straw with an utter disregard of Mrs. Hall’s carpet. And from it he began to produce bottles — little fat bottles containing powders, small and slender bottles containing coloured and white fluids, fluted blue bottles labeled Poison, bottles with round bodies and slender necks, large green-glass bottles, large white-glass bottles, bottles with glass stoppers and frosted labels, bottles with fine corks, bottles with bungs, bottles with wooden caps, wine bottles, salad-oil bottles — putting them in rows on the chiffonnier, on the mantel, on the table under the window, round the floor, on the bookshelf — everywhere. The chemist’s shop in Bramblehurst could not boast half so many. Quite a sight it was. Crate after crate yielded bottles, until all six were empty and the table high with straw; the only things that came out of these crates besides the bottles were a number of test-tubes and a carefully packed balance.

And directly the crates were unpacked, the stranger went to the window and set to work, not troubling in the least about the litter of straw, the fire which had gone out, the box of books outside, nor for the trunks and other luggage that had gone upstairs.

When Mrs. Hall took his dinner in to him, he was already so absorbed in his work, pouring little drops out of the bottles into test-tubes, that he did not hear her until she had swept away the bulk of the straw and put the tray on the table, with some little emphasis perhaps, seeing the state that the floor was in. Then he half turned his head and immediately turned it away again. But she saw he had removed his glasses; they were beside him on the table, and it seemed to her that his eye sockets were extraordinarily hollow. He

put on his spectacles again, and then turned and faced her. She was about to complain of the straw on the floor when he anticipated her.

"I wish you wouldn't come in without knocking," he said in the tone of abnormal exasperation that seemed so characteristic of him.

"I knocked, but seemingly—"

"Perhaps you did. But in my investigations — my really very urgent and necessary investigations — the slightest disturbance, the jar of a door — I must ask you—"

"Certainly, sir. You can turn the lock if you're like that, you know. Any time."

"A very good idea," said the stranger.

"This stror, sir, if I might make so bold as to remark—"

"Don't. If the straw makes trouble put it down in the bill." And he mumbled at her — words suspiciously like curses.

He was so odd, standing there, so aggressive and explosive, bottle in one hand and test-tube in the other, that Mrs. Hall was quite alarmed. But she was a resolute woman. "In which case, I should like to know, sir, what you consider—"

"A shilling — put down a shilling. Surely a shilling's enough?"

"So be it," said Mrs. Hall, taking up the table-cloth and beginning to spread it over the table. "If you're satisfied, of course—"

He turned and sat down, with his coat-collar toward her.

All the afternoon he worked with the door locked and, as Mrs. Hall testifies, for the most part in silence. But once there was a concussion and a sound of bottles ringing together as though the table had been hit, and the smash of a bottle flung violently down, and then a rapid pacing athwart the room. Fearing "something was the matter," she went to the door and listened, not caring to knock.

"I can't go on," he was raving. "I *can't* go on. Three hundred thousand, four hundred thousand! The huge multitude! Cheated! All my life it may take me! ... Patience! Patience indeed! ... Fool! fool!"

There was a noise of hobnails on the bricks in the bar, and Mrs. Hall had very reluctantly to leave the rest of his soliloquy. When she returned the room was silent again, save for the faint crepitation of his chair and the occasional clink of a bottle. It was all over; the stranger had resumed work.

When she took in his tea she saw broken glass in the corner of the

room under the concave mirror, and a golden stain that had been carelessly wiped. She called attention to it.

“Put it down in the bill,” snapped her visitor. “For God’s sake don’t worry me. If there’s damage done, put it down in the bill,” and he went on ticking a list in the exercise book before him.

“I’ll tell you something,” said Fearenside, mysteriously. It was late in the afternoon, and they were in the little beer-shop of Iping Hanger.

“Well?” said Teddy Henfrey.

“This chap you’re speaking of, what my dog bit. Well — he’s black. Leastways, his legs are. I seed through the tear of his trousers and the tear of his glove. You’d have expected a sort of pinky to show, wouldn’t you? Well — there wasn’t none. Just blackness. I tell you, he’s as black as my hat.”

“My sakes!” said Henfrey. “It’s a rummy case altogether. Why, his nose is as pink as paint!”

“That’s true,” said Fearenside. “I knows that. And I tell ‘ee what I’m thinking. That marn’s a piebald, Teddy. Black here and white there — in patches. And he’s ashamed of it. He’s a kind of half-breed, and the colour’s come off patchy instead of mixing. I’ve heard of such things before. And it’s the common way with horses, as any one can see.”

CHAPTER IV

MR. CUSS INTERVIEWS THE STRANGER

I have told the circumstances of the stranger's arrival in Iping with a certain fulness of detail, in order that the curious impression he created may be understood by the reader. But excepting two odd incidents, the circumstances of his stay until the extraordinary day of the club festival may be passed over very cursorily. There were a number of skirmishes with Mrs. Hall on matters of domestic discipline, but in every case until late April, when the first signs of penury began, he over-rode her by the easy expedient of an extra payment. Hall did not like him, and whenever he dared he talked of the advisability of getting rid of him; but he showed his dislike chiefly by concealing it ostentatiously, and avoiding his visitor as much as possible. "Wait till the summer," said Mrs. Hall sagely, "when the artisks are beginning to come. Then we'll see. He may be a bit overbearing, but bills settled punctual is bills settled punctual, whatever you'd like to say."

The stranger did not go to church, and indeed made no difference between Sunday and the irreligious days, even in costume. He worked, as Mrs. Hall thought, very fitfully. Some days he would come down early and be continuously busy. On others he would rise late, pace his room, fretting audibly for hours together, smoke, sleep in the armchair by the fire. Communication with the world beyond the village he had none. His temper continued very uncertain; for the most part his manner was that of a man suffering under almost unendurable provocation, and once or twice things were snapped, torn, crushed, or broken in spasmodic gusts of violence. He seemed under a chronic irritation of the greatest intensity. His habit of talking to himself in a low voice grew steadily upon him, but though Mrs. Hall listened conscientiously she could make neither head nor tail of what she heard.

He rarely went abroad by daylight, but at twilight he would go out muffled up invisibly, whether the weather were cold or not, and he chose the loneliest paths and those most overshadowed by trees and

banks. His goggling spectacles and ghastly bandaged face under the penthouse of his hat, came with a disagreeable suddenness out of the darkness upon one or two home-going labourers, and Teddy Henfrey, tumbling out of the "Scarlet Coat" one night, at half-past nine, was scared shamefully by the stranger's skull-like head (he was walking hat in hand) lit by the sudden light of the opened inn door. Such children as saw him at nightfall dreamt of bogies, and it seemed doubtful whether he disliked boys more than they disliked him, or the reverse; but there was certainly a vivid enough dislike on either side.

It was inevitable that a person of so remarkable an appearance and bearing should form a frequent topic in such a village as Iping. Opinion was greatly divided about his occupation. Mrs. Hall was sensitive on the point. When questioned, she explained very carefully that he was an "experimental investigator," going gingerly over the syllables as one who dreads pitfalls. When asked what an experimental investigator was, she would say with a touch of superiority that most educated people knew such things as that, and would thus explain that he "discovered things." Her visitor had had an accident, she said, which temporarily discoloured his face and hands, and being of a sensitive disposition, he was averse to any public notice of the fact.

Out of her hearing there was a view largely entertained that he was a criminal trying to escape from justice by wrapping himself up so as to conceal himself altogether from the eye of the police. This idea sprang from the brain of Mr. Teddy Henfrey. No crime of any magnitude dating from the middle or end of February was known to have occurred. Elaborated in the imagination of Mr. Gould, the probationary assistant in the National School, this theory took the form that the stranger was an Anarchist in disguise, preparing explosives, and he resolved to undertake such detective operations as his time permitted. These consisted for the most part in looking very hard at the stranger whenever they met, or in asking people who had never seen the stranger, leading questions about him. But he detected nothing.

Another school of opinion followed Mr. Fearenside, and either accepted the piebald view or some modification of it; as, for instance,

Silas Durgan, who was heard to assert that "if he chooses to show enself at fairs he'd make his fortune in no time," and being a bit of a theologian, compared the stranger to the man with the one talent. Yet another view explained the entire matter by regarding the stranger as a harmless lunatic. That had the advantage of accounting for everything straight away.

Between these main groups there were waverers and compromisers. Sussex folk have few superstitions, and it was only after the events of early April that the thought of the supernatural was first whispered in the village. Even then it was only credited among the women folk.

But whatever they thought of him, people in Iping, on the whole, agreed in disliking him. His irritability, though it might have been comprehensible to an urban brain-worker, was an amazing thing to these quiet Sussex villagers. The frantic gesticulations they surprised now and then, the headlong pace after nightfall that swept him upon them round quiet corners, the inhuman bludgeoning of all tentative advances of curiosity, the taste for twilight that led to the closing of doors, the pulling down of blinds, the extinction of candles and lamps — who could agree with such goings on? They drew aside as he passed down the village, and when he had gone by, young humourists would up with coat-collars and down with hat-brims, and go pacing nervously after him in imitation of his occult bearing. There was a song popular at that time called "The Bogey Man". Miss Statchell sang it at the schoolroom concert (in aid of the church lamps), and thereafter whenever one or two of the villagers were gathered together and the stranger appeared, a bar or so of this tune, more or less sharp or flat, was whistled in the midst of them. Also belated little children would call "Bogey Man!" after him, and make off tremulously elated.

Cuss, the general practitioner, was devoured by curiosity. The bandages excited his professional interest, the report of the thousand and one bottles aroused his jealous regard. All through April and May he coveted an opportunity of talking to the stranger, and at last, towards Whitsuntide, he could stand it no longer, but hit upon the subscription-list for a village nurse as an excuse. He was surprised to find that Mr. Hall did not know his guest's name. "He give a name,"

said Mrs. Hall — an assertion which was quite unfounded— “but I didn’t rightly hear it.” She thought it seemed so silly not to know the man’s name.

Cuss rapped at the parlour door and entered. There was a fairly audible imprecation from within. “Pardon my intrusion,” said Cuss, and then the door closed and cut Mrs. Hall off from the rest of the conversation.

She could hear the murmur of voices for the next ten minutes, then a cry of surprise, a stirring of feet, a chair flung aside, a bark of laughter, quick steps to the door, and Cuss appeared, his face white, his eyes staring over his shoulder. He left the door open behind him, and without looking at her strode across the hall and went down the steps, and she heard his feet hurrying along the road. He carried his hat in his hand. She stood behind the door, looking at the open door of the parlour. Then she heard the stranger laughing quietly, and then his footsteps came across the room. She could not see his face where she stood. The parlour door slammed, and the place was silent again.

Cuss went straight up the village to Bunting the vicar. “Am I mad?” Cuss began abruptly, as he entered the shabby little study. “Do I look like an insane person?”

“What’s happened?” said the vicar, putting the ammonite on the loose sheets of his forth-coming sermon.

“That chap at the inn—”

“Well?”

“Give me something to drink,” said Cuss, and he sat down.

When his nerves had been steadied by a glass of cheap sherry — the only drink the good vicar had available — he told him of the interview he had just had. “Went in,” he gasped, “and began to demand a subscription for that Nurse Fund. He’d stuck his hands in his pockets as I came in, and he sat down lumpily in his chair. Sniffed. I told him I’d heard he took an interest in scientific things. He said yes. Sniffed again. Kept on sniffing all the time; evidently recently caught an infernal cold. No wonder, wrapped up like that! I developed the nurse idea, and all the while kept my eyes open. Bottles — chemicals — everywhere. Balance, test-tubes in stands, and a smell of — evening primrose. Would he subscribe? Said he’d consider it. Asked him, point-blank, was he researching. Said he was.

A long research? Got quite cross. ‘A damnable long research,’ said he, blowing the cork out, so to speak. ‘Oh,’ said I. And out came the grievance. The man was just on the boil, and my question boiled him over. He had been given a prescription, most valuable prescription — what for he wouldn’t say. Was it medical? ‘Damn you! What are you fishing after?’ I apologised. Dignified sniff and cough. He resumed. He’d read it. Five ingredients. Put it down; turned his head. Draught of air from window lifted the paper. Swish, rustle. He was working in a room with an open fireplace, he said. Saw a flicker, and there was the prescription burning and lifting chimneyward. Rushed towards it just as it whisked up the chimney. So! Just at that point, to illustrate his story, out came his arm.”

“Well?”

“No hand — just an empty sleeve. Lord! I thought, *that’s* a deformity! Got a cork arm, I suppose, and has taken it off. Then, I thought, there’s something odd in that. What the devil keeps that sleeve up and open, if there’s nothing in it? There was nothing in it, I tell you. Nothing down it, right down to the joint. I could see right down it to the elbow, and there was a glimmer of light shining through a tear of the cloth. ‘Good God!’ I said. Then he stopped. Stared at me with those black goggles of his, and then at his sleeve.”

“Well?”

“That’s all. He never said a word; just glared, and put his sleeve back in his pocket quickly. ‘I was saying,’ said he, ‘that there was the prescription burning, wasn’t I?’ Interrogative cough. ‘How the devil,’ said I, ‘can you move an empty sleeve like that?’ ‘Empty sleeve?’ ‘Yes,’ said I, ‘an empty sleeve.’

“‘It’s an empty sleeve, is it? You saw it was an empty sleeve?’ He stood up right away. I stood up too. He came towards me in three very slow steps, and stood quite close. Sniffed venomously. I didn’t flinch, though I’m hanged if that bandaged knob of his, and those blinkers, aren’t enough to unnerve any one, coming quietly up to you.

“‘You said it was an empty sleeve?’ he said. ‘Certainly,’ I said. At staring and saying nothing a barefaced man, unspectacled, starts scratch. Then very quietly he pulled his sleeve out of his pocket again, and raised his arm towards me as though he would show it to

me again. He did it very, very slowly. I looked at it. Seemed an age. ‘Well?’ said I, clearing my throat, ‘there’s nothing in it.’

“Had to say something. I was beginning to feel frightened. I could see right down it. He extended it straight towards me, slowly, slowly — just like that — until the cuff was six inches from my face. Queer thing to see an empty sleeve come at you like that! And then—”

“Well?”

“Something — exactly like a finger and thumb it felt — nipped my nose.”

Bunting began to laugh.

“There wasn’t anything there!” said Cuss, his voice running up into a shriek at the “there.” “It’s all very well for you to laugh, but I tell you I was so startled, I hit his cuff hard, and turned around, and cut out of the room — I left him—”

Cuss stopped. There was no mistaking the sincerity of his panic. He turned round in a helpless way and took a second glass of the excellent vicar’s very inferior sherry. “When I hit his cuff,” said Cuss, “I tell you, it felt exactly like hitting an arm. And there wasn’t an arm! There wasn’t the ghost of an arm!”

Mr. Bunting thought it over. He looked suspiciously at Cuss. “It’s a most remarkable story,” he said. He looked very wise and grave indeed. “It’s really,” said Mr. Bunting with judicial emphasis, “a most remarkable story.”

CHAPTER V

THE BURGLARY AT THE VICARAGE

The facts of the burglary at the vicarage came to us chiefly through the medium of the vicar and his wife. It occurred in the small hours of Whit Monday, the day devoted in Iping to the Club festivities. Mrs. Bunting, it seems, woke up suddenly in the stillness that comes before the dawn, with the strong impression that the door of their bedroom had opened and closed. She did not arouse her husband at first, but sat up in bed listening. She then distinctly heard the pad, pad, pad of bare feet coming out of the adjoining dressing-room and walking along the passage towards the staircase. As soon as she felt assured of this, she aroused the Rev. Mr. Bunting as quietly as possible. He did not strike a light, but putting on his spectacles, her dressing-gown and his bath slippers, he went out on the landing to listen. He heard quite distinctly a fumbling going on at his study desk down-stairs, and then a violent sneeze.

At that he returned to his bedroom, armed himself with the most obvious weapon, the poker, and descended the staircase as noiselessly as possible. Mrs. Bunting came out on the landing.

The hour was about four, and the ultimate darkness of the night was past. There was a faint shimmer of light in the hall, but the study doorway yawned impenetrably black. Everything was still except the faint creaking of the stairs under Mr. Bunting's tread, and the slight movements in the study. Then something snapped, the drawer was opened, and there was a rustle of papers. Then came an imprecation, and a match was struck and the study was flooded with yellow light. Mr. Bunting was now in the hall, and through the crack of the door he could see the desk and the open drawer and a candle burning on the desk. But the robber he could not see. He stood there in the hall undecided what to do, and Mrs. Bunting, her face white and intent, crept slowly downstairs after him. One thing kept Mr. Bunting's courage; the persuasion that this burglar was a resident in the village.

They heard the chink of money, and realised that the robber had found the housekeeping reserve of gold — two pounds ten in half

sovereigns altogether. At that sound Mr. Bunting was nerved to abrupt action. Gripping the poker firmly, he rushed into the room, closely followed by Mrs. Bunting. “Surrender!” cried Mr. Bunting, fiercely, and then stooped amazed. Apparently the room was perfectly empty.

Yet their conviction that they had, that very moment, heard somebody moving in the room had amounted to a certainty. For half a minute, perhaps, they stood gaping, then Mrs. Bunting went across the room and looked behind the screen, while Mr. Bunting, by a kindred impulse, peered under the desk. Then Mrs. Bunting turned back the window-curtains, and Mr. Bunting looked up the chimney and probed it with the poker. Then Mrs. Bunting scrutinised the waste-paper basket and Mr. Bunting opened the lid of the coal-scuttle. Then they came to a stop and stood with eyes interrogating each other.

“I could have sworn—” said Mr. Bunting.

“The candle!” said Mr. Bunting. “Who lit the candle?”

“The drawer!” said Mrs. Bunting. “And the money’s gone!”

She went hastily to the doorway.

“Of all the strange occurrences—”

There was a violent sneeze in the passage. They rushed out, and as they did so the kitchen door slammed. “Bring the candle,” said Mr. Bunting, and led the way. They both heard a sound of bolts being hastily shot back.

As he opened the kitchen door he saw through the scullery that the back door was just opening, and the faint light of early dawn displayed the dark masses of the garden beyond. He is certain that nothing went out of the door. It opened, stood open for a moment, and then closed with a slam. As it did so, the candle Mrs. Bunting was carrying from the study flickered and flared. It was a minute or more before they entered the kitchen.

The place was empty. They refastened the back door, examined the kitchen, pantry, and scullery thoroughly, and at last went down into the cellar. There was not a soul to be found in the house, search as they would.

Daylight found the vicar and his wife, a quaintly-costumed little couple, still marvelling about on their own ground floor by the

unnecessary light of a guttering candle.

CHAPTER VI

THE FURNITURE THAT WENT MAD

Now it happened that in the early hours of Whit Monday, before Millie was hunted out for the day, Mr. Hall and Mrs. Hall both rose and went noiselessly down into the cellar. Their business there was of a private nature, and had something to do with the specific gravity of their beer. They had hardly entered the cellar when Mrs. Hall found she had forgotten to bring down a bottle of sarsaparilla from their joint-room. As she was the expert and principal operator in this affair, Hall very properly went upstairs for it.

On the landing he was surprised to see that the stranger's door was ajar. He went on into his own room and found the bottle as he had been directed.

But returning with the bottle, he noticed that the bolts of the front door had been shot back, that the door was in fact simply on the latch. And with a flash of inspiration he connected this with the stranger's room upstairs and the suggestions of Mr. Teddy Henfrey. He distinctly remembered holding the candle while Mrs. Hall shot these bolts overnight. At the sight he stopped, gaping, then with the bottle still in his hand went upstairs again. He rapped at the stranger's door. There was no answer. He rapped again; then pushed the door wide open and entered.

It was as he expected. The bed, the room also, was empty. And what was stranger, even to his heavy intelligence, on the bedroom chair and along the rail of the bed were scattered the garments, the only garments so far as he knew, and the bandages of their guest. His big slouch hat even was cocked jauntily over the bed-post.

As Hall stood there he heard his wife's voice coming out of the depth of the cellar, with that rapid telescoping of the syllables and interrogative cocking up of the final words to a high note, by which the West Sussex villager is wont to indicate a brisk impatience. "George! You gart whad a wand?"

At that he turned and hurried down to her. "Janny," he said, over the rail of the cellar steps, "'tas the truth what Henfrey sez. 'E's not

in uz room, ‘e en’t. And the front door’s onbolted.”

At first Mrs. Hall did not understand, and as soon as she did she resolved to see the empty room for herself. Hall, still holding the bottle, went first. “If ‘e en’t there,” he said, “‘is close are. And what’s ‘e doin’ ‘ithout ‘is close, then? ‘Tas a most curious business.”

As they came up the cellar steps they both, it was afterwards ascertained, fancied they heard the front door open and shut, but seeing it closed and nothing there, neither said a word to the other about it at the time. Mrs. Hall passed her husband in the passage and ran on first upstairs. Someone sneezed on the staircase. Hall, following six steps behind, thought that he heard her sneeze. She, going on first, was under the impression that Hall was sneezing. She flung open the door and stood regarding the room. “Of all the curious!” she said.

She heard a sniff close behind her head as it seemed, and turning, was surprised to see Hall a dozen feet off on the topmost stair. But in another moment he was beside her. She bent forward and put her hand on the pillow and then under the clothes.

“Cold,” she said. “He’s been up this hour or more.”

As she did so, a most extraordinary thing happened. The bed-clothes gathered themselves together, leapt up suddenly into a sort of peak, and then jumped headlong over the bottom rail. It was exactly as if a hand had clutched them in the centre and flung them aside. Immediately after, the stranger’s hat hopped off the bed-post, described a whirling flight in the air through the better part of a circle, and then dashed straight at Mrs. Hall’s face. Then as swiftly came the sponge from the washstand; and then the chair, flinging the stranger’s coat and trousers carelessly aside, and laughing drily in a voice singularly like the stranger’s, turned itself up with its four legs at Mrs. Hall, seemed to take aim at her for a moment, and charged at her. She screamed and turned, and then the chair legs came gently but firmly against her back and impelled her and Hall out of the room. The door slammed violently and was locked. The chair and bed seemed to be executing a dance of triumph for a moment, and then abruptly everything was still.

Mrs. Hall was left almost in a fainting condition in Mr. Hall’s arms on the landing. It was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Hall

and Millie, who had been roused by her scream of alarm, succeeded in getting her downstairs, and applying the restoratives customary in such cases.

"'Tas sperits," said Mrs. Hall. "I know 'tas sperits. I've read in papers of en. Tables and chairs leaping and dancing..."

"Take a drop more, Janny," said Hall. "'Twill steady ye."

"Lock him out," said Mrs. Hall. "Don't let him come in again. I half guessed — I might ha' known. With them goggling eyes and bandaged head, and never going to church of a Sunday. And all they bottles — more'n it's right for any one to have. He's put the sperits into the furniture.... My good old furniture! 'Twas in that very chair my poor dear mother used to sit when I was a little girl. To think it should rise up against me now!"

"Just a drop more, Janny," said Hall. "Your nerves is all upset."

They sent Millie across the street through the golden five o'clock sunshine to rouse up Mr. Sandy Wadgers, the blacksmith. Mr. Hall's compliments and the furniture upstairs was behaving most extraordinary. Would Mr. Wadgers come round? He was a knowing man, was Mr. Wadgers, and very resourceful. He took quite a grave view of the case. "Arm darmed if thet ent witchcraft," was the view of Mr. Sandy Wadgers. "You warnt horseshoes for such gentry as he."

He came round greatly concerned. They wanted him to lead the way upstairs to the room, but he didn't seem to be in any hurry. He preferred to talk in the passage. Over the way Huxter's apprentice came out and began taking down the shutters of the tobacco window. He was called over to join the discussion. Mr. Huxter naturally followed over in the course of a few minutes. The Anglo-Saxon genius for parliamentary government asserted itself; there was a great deal of talk and no decisive action. "Let's have the facts first," insisted Mr. Sandy Wadgers. "Let's be sure we'd be acting perfectly right in bustin' that there door open. A door onbust is always open to bustin', but ye can't onbust a door once you've busted en."

And suddenly and most wonderfully the door of the room upstairs opened of its own accord, and as they looked up in amazement, they saw descending the stairs the muffled figure of the stranger staring more blackly and blankly than ever with those unreasonably large

blue glass eyes of his. He came down stiffly and slowly, staring all the time; he walked across the passage staring, then stopped.

"Look there!" he said, and their eyes followed the direction of his gloved finger and saw a bottle of sarsaparilla hard by the cellar door. Then he entered the parlour, and suddenly, swiftly, viciously, slammed the door in their faces.

Not a word was spoken until the last echoes of the slam had died away. They stared at one another. "Well, if that don't lick everything!" said Mr. Wadgers, and left the alternative unsaid.

"I'd go in and ask'n 'bout it," said Wadgers, to Mr. Hall. "I'd d'mand an explanation."

It took some time to bring the landlady's husband up to that pitch. At last he rapped, opened the door, and got as far as, "Excuse me—"

"Go to the devil!" said the stranger in a tremendous voice, and "Shut that door after you." So that brief interview terminated.

CHAPTER VII

THE UNVEILING OF THE STRANGER

The stranger went into the little parlour of the "Coach and Horses" about half-past five in the morning, and there he remained until near midday, the blinds down, the door shut, and none, after Hall's repulse, venturing near him.

All that time he must have fasted. Thrice he rang his bell, the third time furiously and continuously, but no one answered him. "Him and his 'go to the devil' indeed!" said Mrs. Hall. Presently came an imperfect rumour of the burglary at the vicarage, and two and two were put together. Hall, assisted by Wadgers, went off to find Mr. Shuckleforth, the magistrate, and take his advice. No one ventured upstairs. How the stranger occupied himself is unknown. Now and then he would stride violently up and down, and twice came an outburst of curses, a tearing of paper, and a violent smashing of bottles.

The little group of scared but curious people increased. Mrs. Huxter came over; some gay young fellows resplendent in black ready-made jackets and *piqué* paper ties — for it was Whit Monday — joined the group with confused interrogations. Young Archie Harker distinguished himself by going up the yard and trying to peep under the window-blinds. He could see nothing, but gave reason for supposing that he did, and others of the Iping youth presently joined him.

It was the finest of all possible Whit Mondays, and down the village street stood a row of nearly a dozen booths, a shooting gallery, and on the grass by the forge were three yellow and chocolate waggons and some picturesque strangers of both sexes putting up a cocoanut shy. The gentlemen wore blue jerseys, the ladies white aprons and quite fashionable hats with heavy plumes. Wodger, of the "Purple Fawn," and Mr. Jaggers, the cobbler, who also sold old second-hand ordinary bicycles, were stretching a string of union-jacks and royal ensigns (which had originally celebrated the first Victorian Jubilee) across the road.

And inside, in the artificial darkness of the parlour, into which only one thin jet of sunlight penetrated, the stranger, hungry we must suppose, and fearful, hidden in his uncomfortable hot wrappings, pored through his dark glasses upon his paper or chinked his dirty little bottles, and occasionally swore savagely at the boys, audible if invisible, outside the windows. In the corner by the fireplace lay the fragments of half a dozen smashed bottles, and a pungent twang of chlorine tainted the air. So much we know from what was heard at the time and from what was subsequently seen in the room.

About noon he suddenly opened his parlour door and stood glaring fixedly at the three or four people in the bar. "Mrs. Hall," he said. Somebody went sheepishly and called for Mrs. Hall.

Mrs. Hall appeared after an interval, a little short of breath, but all the fiercer for that. Hall was still out. She had deliberated over this scene, and she came holding a little tray with an unsettled bill upon it. "Is it your bill you're wanting, sir?" she said.

"Why wasn't my breakfast laid? Why haven't you prepared my meals and answered my bell? Do you think I live without eating?"

"Why isn't my bill paid?" said Mrs. Hall. "That's what I want to know."

"I told you three days ago I was awaiting a remittance—"

"I told you two days ago I wasn't going to await no remittances. You can't grumble if your breakfast waits a bit, if my bill's been waiting these five days, can you?"

The stranger swore briefly but vividly.

"Nar, nar!" from the bar.

"And I'd thank you kindly, sir, if you'd keep your swearing to yourself, sir," said Mrs. Hall.

The stranger stood looking more like an angry diving-helmet than ever. It was universally felt in the bar that Mrs. Hall had the better of him. His next words showed as much.

"Look here, my good woman—" he began.

"Don't 'good woman' *me*," said Mrs. Hall.

"I've told you my remittance hasn't come."

"Remittance indeed!" said Mrs. Hall.

"Still, I daresay in my pocket—"

"You told me three days ago that you hadn't anything but a

sovereign's worth of silver upon you."

"Well, I've found some more—"

"'Ul-lo!" from the bar.

"I wonder where you found it," said Mrs. Hall.

That seemed to annoy the stranger very much. He stamped his foot. "What do you mean?" he said.

"That I wonder where you found it," said Mrs. Hall. "And before I take any bills or get any breakfasts, or do any such things whatsoever, you got to tell me one or two things I don't understand, and what nobody don't understand, and what everybody is very anxious to understand. I want to know what you been doing t'my chair upstairs, and I want to know how 'tis your room was empty, and how you got in again. Them as stops in this house comes in by the doors — that's the rule of the house, and that you *didn't* do, and what I want to know is how you *did* come in. And I want to know—"

Suddenly the stranger raised his gloved hands clenched, stamped his foot, and said, "Stop!" with such extraordinary violence that he silenced her instantly.

"You don't understand," he said, "who I am or what I am. I'll show you. By Heaven! I'll show you." Then he put his open palm over his face and withdrew it. The centre of his face became a black cavity. "Here," he said. He stepped forward and handed Mrs. Hall something which she, staring at his metamorphosed face, accepted automatically. Then, when she saw what it was, she screamed loudly, dropped it, and staggered back. The nose — it was the stranger's nose! pink and shining — rolled on the floor.

Then he removed his spectacles, and everyone in the bar gasped. He took off his hat, and with a violent gesture tore at his whiskers and bandages. For a moment they resisted him. A flash of horrible anticipation passed through the bar. "Oh, my Gard!" said some one. Then off they came.

It was worse than anything. Mrs. Hall, standing open-mouthed and horror-struck, shrieked at what she saw, and made for the door of the house. Everyone began to move. They were prepared for scars, disfigurements, tangible horrors, but nothing! The bandages and false hair flew across the passage into the bar, making a hobbledehoy jump to avoid them. Everyone tumbled on everyone else down the steps.

For the man who stood there shouting some incoherent explanation, was a solid gesticulating figure up to the coat-collar of him, and then — nothingness, no visible thing at all!

People down the village heard shouts and shrieks, and looking up the street saw the "Coach and Horses" violently firing out its humanity. They saw Mrs. Hall fall down and Mr. Teddy Henfrey jump to avoid tumbling over her, and then they heard the frightful screams of Millie, who, emerging suddenly from the kitchen at the noise of the tumult, had come upon the headless stranger from behind. These increased suddenly.

Forthwith everyone all down the street, the sweetstuff seller, cocoanut shy proprietor and his assistant, the swing man, little boys and girls, rustic dandies, smart wenches, smocked elders and aproned gipsies — began running towards the inn, and in a miraculously short space of time a crowd of perhaps forty people, and rapidly increasing, swayed and hooted and inquired and exclaimed and suggested, in front of Mrs. Hall's establishment. Everyone seemed eager to talk at once, and the result was Babel. A small group supported Mrs. Hall, who was picked up in a state of collapse. There was a conference, and the incredible evidence of a vociferous eye-witness. "O Bogey!" "What's he been doin', then?" "Ain't hurt the girl, 'as 'e?" "Run at en with a knife, I believe." "No 'ed, I tell ye. I don't mean no manner of speaking. I mean *marn 'ithout a 'ed*!" "Narnsense! 'tis some conjuring trick." "Fetched off 'is wrapping, 'e did—"

In its struggles to see in through the open door, the crowd formed itself into a straggling wedge, with the more adventurous apex nearest the inn. "He stood for a moment, I heerd the gal scream, and he turned. I saw her skirts whisk, and he went after her. Didn't take ten seconds. Back he comes with a knife in uz hand and a loaf; stood just as if he was staring. Not a moment ago. Went in that there door. I tell 'e, 'e ain't gart no 'ed at all. You just missed en—"

There was a disturbance behind, and the speaker stopped to step aside for a little procession that was marching very resolutely towards the house; first Mr. Hall, very red and determined, then Mr. Bobby Jaffers, the village constable, and then the wary Mr. Wadgers. They had come now armed with a warrant.

People shouted conflicting information of the recent circumstances. "'Ed or no 'ed," said Jaffers, "I got to 'rest en, and 'rest en I *will*."

Mr. Hall marched up the steps, marched straight to the door of the parlour and flung it open. "Constable," he said, "do your duty."

Jaffers marched in. Hall next, Wadgers last. They saw in the dim light the headless figure facing them, with a gnawed crust of bread in one gloved hand and a chunk of cheese in the other.

"That's him!" said Hall.

"What the devil's this?" came in a tone of angry expostulation from above the collar of the figure.

"You're a damned rum customer, mister," said Mr. Jaffers. "But 'ed or no 'ed, the warrant says 'body,' and duty's duty—"

"Keep off!" said the figure, starting back.

Abruptly he whipped down the bread and cheese, and Mr. Hall just grasped the knife on the table in time to save it. Off came the stranger's left glove and was slapped in Jaffers' face. In another moment Jaffers, cutting short some statement concerning a warrant, had gripped him by the handless wrist and caught his invisible throat. He got a sounding kick on the shin that made him shout, but he kept his grip. Hall sent the knife sliding along the table to Wadgers, who acted as goal-keeper for the offensive, so to speak, and then stepped forward as Jaffers and the stranger swayed and staggered towards him, clutching and hitting in. A chair stood in the way, and went aside with a crash as they came down together.

"Get the feet," said Jaffers between his teeth.

Mr. Hall, endeavouring to act on instructions, received a sounding kick in the ribs that disposed of him for a moment, and Mr. Wadgers, seeing the decapitated stranger had rolled over and got the upper side of Jaffers, retreated towards the door, knife in hand, and so collided with Mr. Huxter and the Sidderbridge carter coming to the rescue of law and order. At the same moment down came three or four bottles from the chiffonnier and shot a web of pungency into the air of the room.

"I'll surrender," cried the stranger, though he had Jaffers down, and in another moment he stood up panting, a strange figure, headless and handless — for he had pulled off his right glove now as

well as his left. “It’s no good,” he said, as if sobbing for breath.

It was the strangest thing in the world to hear that voice coming as if out of empty space, but the Sussex peasants are perhaps the most matter-of-fact people under the sun. Jaffers got up also and produced a pair of handcuffs. Then he stared.

“I say!” said Jaffers, brought up short by a dim realization of the incongruity of the whole business, “Darn it! Can’t use ’em as I can see.”

The stranger ran his arm down his waistcoat, and as if by a miracle the buttons to which his empty sleeve pointed became undone. Then he said something about his shin, and stooped down. He seemed to be fumbling with his shoes and socks.

“Why!” said Huxter, suddenly, “that’s not a man at all. It’s just empty clothes. Look! You can see down his collar and the linings of his clothes. I could put my arm—”

He extended his hand; it seemed to meet something in mid-air, and he drew it back with a sharp exclamation. “I wish you’d keep your fingers out of my eye,” said the aerial voice, in a tone of savage expostulation. “The fact is, I’m all here — head, hands, legs, and all the rest of it, but it happens I’m invisible. It’s a confounded nuisance, but I am. That’s no reason why I should be poked to pieces by every stupid bumpkin in Iping, is it?”

The suit of clothes, now all unbuttoned and hanging loosely upon its unseen supports, stood up, arms akimbo.

Several other of the men folks had now entered the room, so that it was closely crowded. “Invisible, eh?” said Huxter, ignoring the stranger’s abuse. “Who ever heard the likes of that?”

“It’s strange, perhaps, but it’s not a crime. Why am I assaulted by a policeman in this fashion?”

“Ah! that’s a different matter,” said Jaffers. “No doubt you are a bit difficult to see in this light, but I got a warrant and it’s all correct. What I’m after ain’t no invisibility, — it’s burglary. There’s a house been broke into and money took.”

“Well?”

“And circumstances certainly point—”

“Stuff and nonsense!” said the Invisible Man.

“I hope so, sir; but I’ve got my instructions.”

“Well,” said the stranger, “I’ll come. I’ll *come*. But no handcuffs.”

“It’s the regular thing,” said Jaffers.

“No handcuffs,” stipulated the stranger.

“Pardon me,” said Jaffers.

Abruptly the figure sat down, and before any one could realise was was being done, the slippers, socks, and trousers had been kicked off under the table. Then he sprang up again and flung off his coat.

“Here, stop that,” said Jaffers, suddenly realising what was happening. He gripped at the waistcoat; it struggled, and the shirt slipped out of it and left it limp and empty in his hand. “Hold him!” said Jaffers, loudly. “Once he gets the things off—”

“Hold him!” cried everyone, and there was a rush at the fluttering white shirt which was now all that was visible of the stranger.

The shirt-sleeve planted a shrewd blow in Hall’s face that stopped his open-armed advance, and sent him backward into old Toothsome the sexton, and in another moment the garment was lifted up and became convulsed and vacantly flapping about the arms, even as a shirt that is being thrust over a man’s head. Jaffers clutched at it, and only helped to pull it off; he was struck in the mouth out of the air, and incontinently threw his truncheon and smote Teddy Henfrey savagely upon the crown of his head.

“Look out!” said everybody, fencing at random and hitting at nothing. “Hold him! Shut the door! Don’t let him loose! I got something! Here he is!” A perfect Babel of noises they made. Everybody, it seemed, was being hit all at once, and Sandy Wadgers, knowing as ever and his wits sharpened by a frightful blow in the nose, reopened the door and led the rout. The others, following incontinently, were jammed for a moment in the corner by the doorway. The hitting continued. Phipps, the Unitarian, had a front tooth broken, and Henfrey was injured in the cartilage of his ear. Jaffers was struck under the jaw, and, turning, caught at something that intervened between him and Huxter in the mêlée, and prevented their coming together. He felt a muscular chest, and in another moment the whole mass of struggling, excited men shot out into the crowded hall.

“I got him!” shouted Jaffers, choking and reeling through them

all, and wrestling with purple face and swelling veins against his unseen enemy.

Men staggered right and left as the extraordinary conflict swayed swiftly towards the house door, and went spinning down the half-dozen steps of the inn. Jaffers cried in a strangled voice — holding tight, nevertheless, and making play with his knee — spun around, and fell heavily undermost with his head on the gravel. Only then did his fingers relax.

There were excited cries of “Hold him!” “Invisible!” and so forth, and a young fellow, a stranger in the place whose name did not come to light, rushed in at once, caught something, missed his hold, and fell over the constable’s prostrate body. Half-way across the road a woman screamed as something pushed by her; a dog, kicked apparently, yelped and ran howling into Huxter’s yard, and with that the transit of the Invisible Man was accomplished. For a space people stood amazed and gesticulating, and then came panic, and scattered them abroad through the village as a gust scatters dead leaves.

But Jaffers lay quite still, face upward and knees bent, at the foot of the steps of the inn.

CHAPTER VIII

IN TRANSIT

The eighth chapter is exceedingly brief, and relates that Gibbons, the amateur naturalist of the district, while lying out on the spacious open downs without a soul within a couple of miles of him, as he thought, and almost dozing, heard close to him the sound as of a man coughing, sneezing, and then swearing savagely to himself; and looking, beheld nothing. Yet the voice was indisputable. It continued to swear with that breadth and variety that distinguishes the swearing of a cultivated man. It grew to a climax, diminished again, and died away in the distance, going as it seemed to him in the direction of Adderdean. It lifted to a spasmodic sneeze and ended. Gibbons had heard nothing of the morning's occurrences, but the phenomenon was so striking and disturbing that his philosophical tranquillity vanished; he got up hastily, and hurried down the steepness of the hill towards the village, as fast as he could go.

CHAPTER IX

MR. THOMAS MARVEL

You must picture Mr. Thomas Marvel as a person of copious, flexible visage, a nose of cylindrical protrusion, a liquorish, ample, fluctuating mouth, and a beard of bristling eccentricity. His figure inclined to embonpoint; his short limbs accentuated this inclination. He wore a furry silk hat, and the frequent substitution of twine and shoe-laces for buttons, apparent at critical points of his costume, marked a man essentially bachelor.

Mr. Thomas Marvel was sitting with his feet in a ditch by the roadside over the down towards Adderdean, about a mile and a half out of Iping. His feet, save for socks of irregular open-work, were bare, his big toes were broad, and pricked like the ears of a watchful dog. In a leisurely manner — he did everything in a leisurely manner — he was contemplating trying on a pair of boots. They were the soundest boots he had come across for a long time, but too large for him; whereas the ones he had were, in dry weather, a very comfortable fit, but too thin-soled for damp. Mr. Thomas Marvel hated roomy shoes, but then he hated damp. He had never properly thought out which he hated most, and it was a pleasant day, and there was nothing better to do. So he put the four shoes in a graceful group on the turf and looked at them. And seeing them there among the grass and springing agrimony, it suddenly occurred to him that both pairs were exceedingly ugly to see. He was not at all startled by a voice behind him.

"They're boots, anyhow," said the Voice.

"They are — charity boots," said Mr. Thomas Marvel, with his head on one side regarding them distastefully; "and which is the ugliest pair in the whole blessed universe, I'm darned if I know!"

"H'm," said the Voice.

"I've worn worse — in fact, I've worn none. But none so owdacious ugly — if you'll allow the expression. I've been cadging boots — in particular — for days. Because I was sick of *them*. They're sound enough, of course. But a gentleman on tramp sees

such a thundering lot of his boots. And if you'll believe me, I've raised nothing in the whole blessed country, try as I would, but *them*. Look at 'em! And a good country for boots, too, in a general way. But it's just my promiscuous luck. I've got my boots in this country ten years or more. And then they treat you like this."

"It's a beast of a country," said the Voice. "And pigs for people."

"Ain't it?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "Lord! But them boots! It beats it."

He turned his head over his shoulder to the right, to look at the boots of his interlocutor with a view to comparisons, and lo! where the boots of his interlocutor should have been were neither legs nor boots. He was irradiated by the dawn of a great amazement. "Where *are* yer?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel over his shoulder and coming on all fours. He saw a stretch of empty downs with the wind swaying the remote green-pointed furze bushes.

"Am I drunk?" said Mr. Marvel. "Have I had visions? Was I talking to myself? What the—"

"Don't be alarmed," said a Voice.

"None of your ventriloquising *me*," said Mr. Thomas Marvel, rising sharply to his feet. "Where *are* yer? Alarmed, indeed!"

"Don't be alarmed," repeated the Voice.

"*You'll* be alarmed in a minute, you silly fool," said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "Where *are* yer? Lemme get my mark on yer...

"Are yer *buried*?" said Mr. Thomas Marvel, after an interval.

There was no answer. Mr. Thomas Marvel stood bootless and amazed, his jacket nearly thrown off.

"Peewit," said a peewit, very remote.

"Peewit, indeed!" said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "This ain't no time for foolery." The down was desolate, east and west, north and south; the road with its shallow ditches and white bordering stakes, ran smooth and empty north and south, and, save for that peewit, the blue sky was empty too. "So help me," said Mr. Thomas Marvel, shuffling his coat on to his shoulders again. "It's the drink! I might ha' known."

"It's not the drink," said the Voice. "You keep your nerves steady."

"Ow!" said Mr. Marvel, and his face grew white amidst its

patches. “It’s the drink!” his lips repeated noiselessly. He remained staring about him, rotating slowly backwards. “I could have *swore* I heard a voice,” he whispered.

“Of course you did.”

“It’s there again,” said Mr. Marvel, closing his eyes and clasping his hand on his brow with a tragic gesture. He was suddenly taken by the collar and shaken violently, and left more dazed than ever. “Don’t be a fool,” said the Voice.

“I’m — off — my — blooming — chump,” said Mr. Marvel. “It’s no good. It’s fretting about them blarsted boots. I’m off my blessed blooming chump. Or it’s spirits.”

“Neither one thing nor the other,” said the Voice. “Listen!”

“Chump,” said Mr. Marvel.

“One minute,” said the Voice, penetratingly, tremulous with self-control.

“Well?” said Mr. Thomas Marvel, with a strange feeling of having been dug in the chest by a finger.

“You think I’m just imagination? Just imagination?”

“What else *can* you be?” said Mr. Thomas Marvel, rubbing the back of his neck.

“Very well,” said the Voice, in a tone of relief. “Then I’m going to throw flints at you till you think differently.”

“But where *are* yer?”

The Voice made no answer. Whizz came a flint, apparently out of the air, and missed Mr. Marvel’s shoulder by a hair’s-breadth. Mr. Marvel, turning, saw a flint jerk up into the air, trace a complicated path, hang for a moment, and then fling at his feet with almost invisible rapidity. He was too amazed to dodge. Whizz it came, and ricochetted from a bare toe into the ditch. Mr. Thomas Marvel jumped a foot and howled aloud. Then he started to run, tripped over an unseen obstacle, and came head over heels into a sitting position.

“*Now*,” said the Voice, as a third stone curved upward and hung in the air above the tramp. “Am I imagination?”

Mr. Marvel by way of reply struggled to his feet, and was immediately rolled over again. He lay quiet for a moment. “If you struggle any more,” said the Voice, “I shall throw the flint at your head.”

“It’s a fair do,” said Mr. Thomas Marvel, sitting up, taking his wounded toe in hand and fixing his eye on the third missile. “I don’t understand it. Stones flinging themselves. Stones talking. Put yourself down. Rot away. I’m done.”

The third flint fell.

“It’s very simple,” said the Voice. “I’m an invisible man.”

“Tell us something I don’t know,” said Mr. Marvel, gasping with pain. “Where you’ve hid — how you do it — I *don’t* know. I’m beat.”

“That’s all,” said the Voice. “I’m invisible. That’s what I want you to understand.”

“Anyone could see that. There is no need for you to be so confounded impatient, mister. *Now* then. Give us a notion. How are you hid?”

“I’m invisible. That’s the great point. And what I want you to understand is this—”

“But whereabouts?” interrupted Mr. Marvel.

“Here! Six yards in front of you.”

“Oh, *come*! I ain’t blind. You’ll be telling me next you’re just thin air. I’m not one of your ignorant tramps—”

“Yes, I am — thin air. You’re looking through me.”

“What! Ain’t there any stuff to you. *Vox et* — what is it? — jabber. Is it that?”

“I am just a human being — solid, needing food and drink, needing covering too — But I’m invisible. You see? Invisible. Simple idea. Invisible.”

“What, real like?”

“Yes, real.”

“Let’s have a hand of you,” said Marvel, “if you *are* real. It won’t be so darn out-of-the-way like, then — *Lord*!” he said, “how you made me jump! — gripping me like that!”

He felt the hand that had closed round his wrist with his disengaged fingers, and his fingers went timorously up the arm, patted a muscular chest, and explored a bearded face. Marvel’s face was astonishment.

“I’m dashed!” he said. “If this don’t beat cock-fighting! Most remarkable! — And there I can see a rabbit clean through you, ‘arf a

mile away! Not a bit of you visible — except—"

He scrutinised the apparently empty space keenly. "You 'aven't been eatin' bread and cheese?" he asked, holding the invisible arm.

"You're quite right, and it's not quite assimilated into the system."

"Ah!" said Mr. Marvel. "Sort of ghostly, though."

"Of course, all this isn't half so wonderful as you think."

"It's quite wonderful enough for *my* modest wants," said Mr. Thomas Marvel. "Howjer manage it! How the dooce is it done?"

"It's too long a story. And besides—"

"I tell you, the whole business fairly beats me," said Mr. Marvel.

"What I want to say at present is this: I need help. I have come to that — I came upon you suddenly. I was wandering, mad with rage, naked, impotent. I could have murdered. And I saw you—"

"*Lord*!" said Mr. Marvel.

"I came up behind you — hesitated — went on—"

Mr. Marvel's expression was eloquent.

" — then stopped. 'Here,' I said, 'is an outcast like myself. This is the man for me.' So I turned back and came to you — you. And—"

"*Lord*!" said Mr. Marvel. "But I'm all in a tizzy. May I ask — How is it? And what you may be requiring in the way of help? — Invisible!"

"I want you to help me get clothes — and shelter — and then, with other things. I've left them long enough. If you won't — well! But you *will — must*."

"Look here," said Mr. Marvel. "I'm too flabbergasted. Don't knock me about any more. And leave me go. I must get steady a bit. And you've pretty near broken my toe. It's all so unreasonable. Empty downs, empty sky. Nothing visible for miles except the bosom of Nature. And then comes a voice. A voice out of heaven! And stones! And a fist — Lord!"

"Pull yourself together," said the Voice, "for you have to do the job I've chosen for you."

Mr. Marvel blew out his cheeks, and his eyes were round.

"I've chosen you," said the Voice. "You are the only man except some of those fools down there, who knows there is such a thing as an invisible man. You have to be my helper. Help me — and I will

do great things for you. An invisible man is a man of power." He stopped for a moment to sneeze violently.

"But if you betray me," he said, "if you fail to do as I direct you —" He paused and tapped Mr. Marvel's shoulder smartly. Mr. Marvel gave a yelp of terror at the touch. "I don't want to betray you," said Mr. Marvel, edging away from the direction of the fingers. "Don't you go a-thinking that, whatever you do. All I want to do is to help you — just tell me what I got to do. (Lord!) Whatever you want done, that I'm most willing to do."

CHAPTER X

MR. MARVEL'S VISIT TO IPING

After the first gusty panic had spent itself Iping became argumentative. Scepticism suddenly reared its head — rather nervous scepticism, not at all assured of its back, but scepticism nevertheless. It is so much easier not to believe in an invisible man; and those who had actually seen him dissolve into air, or felt the strength of his arm, could be counted on the fingers of two hands. And of these witnesses Mr. Wadgers was presently missing, having retired impregnably behind the bolts and bars of his own house, and Jaffers was lying stunned in the parlour of the "Coach and Horses." Great and strange ideas transcending experience often have less effect upon men and women than smaller, more tangible considerations. Iping was gay with bunting, and everybody was in gala dress. Whit Monday had been looked forward to for a month or more. By the afternoon even those who believed in the Unseen were beginning to resume their little amusements in a tentative fashion, on the supposition that he had quite gone away, and with the sceptics he was already a jest. But people, sceptics and believers alike, were remarkably sociable all that day.

Haysman's meadow was gay with a tent, in which Mrs. Bunting and other ladies were preparing tea, while, without, the Sunday-school children ran races and played games under the noisy guidance of the curate and the Misses Cuss and Sackbut. No doubt there was a slight uneasiness in the air, but people for the most part had the sense to conceal whatever imaginative qualms they experienced. On the village green an inclined strong [rope?], down which, clinging the while to a pulley-swung handle, one could be hurled violently against a sack at the other end, came in for considerable favour among the adolescents, as also did the swings and the cocoanut shies. There was also promenading, and the steam organ attached to a small roundabout filled the air with a pungent flavour of oil and with equally pungent music. Members of the club, who had attended church in the morning, were splendid in badges of pink and green,

and some of the gayer-minded had also adorned their bowler hats with brilliant-coloured favours of ribbon. Old Fletcher, whose conceptions of holiday-making were severe, was visible through the jasmine about his window or through the open door (whichever way you chose to look), poised delicately on a plank supported on two chairs, and whitewashing the ceiling of his front room.

About four o'clock a stranger entered the village from the direction of the downs. He was a short, stout person in an extraordinarily shabby top hat, and he appeared to be very much out of breath. His cheeks were alternately limp and tightly puffed. His mottled face was apprehensive, and he moved with a sort of reluctant alacrity. He turned the corner of the church, and directed his way to the "Coach and Horses." Among others old Fletcher remembers seeing him, and indeed the old gentleman was so struck by his peculiar agitation that he inadvertently allowed a quantity of whitewash to run down the brush into the sleeve of his coat while regarding him.

This stranger, to the perceptions of the proprietor of the cocoanut shy, appeared to be talking to himself, and Mr. Huxter remarked the same thing. He stopped at the foot of the "Coach and Horses" steps, and, according to Mr. Huxter, appeared to undergo a severe internal struggle before he could induce himself to enter the house. Finally he marched up the steps, and was seen by Mr. Huxter to turn to the left and open the door of the parlour. Mr. Huxter heard voices from within the room and from the bar apprising the man of his error. "That room's private!" said Hall, and the stranger shut the door clumsily and went into the bar.

In the course of a few minutes he reappeared, wiping his lips with the back of his hand with an air of quiet satisfaction that somehow impressed Mr. Huxter as assumed. He stood looking about him for some moments, and then Mr. Huxter saw him walk in an oddly furtive manner towards the gates of the yard, upon which the parlour window opened. The stranger, after some hesitation, leant against one of the gate-posts, produced a short clay pipe, and prepared to fill it. His fingers trembled while doing so. He lit it clumsily, and folding his arms began to smoke in a languid attitude, an attitude which his occasional glances up the yard altogether belied.

All this Mr. Huxter saw over the canisters of the tobacco window, and the singularity of the man's behaviour prompted him to maintain his observation.

Presently the stranger stood up abruptly and put his pipe in his pocket. Then he vanished into the yard. Forthwith Mr. Huxter, conceiving he was witness of some petty larceny, leapt round his counter and ran out into the road to intercept the thief. As he did so, Mr. Marvel reappeared, his hat askew, a big bundle in a blue table-cloth in one hand, and three books tied together — as it proved afterwards with the Vicar's braces — in the other. Directly he saw Huxter he gave a sort of gasp, and turning sharply to the left, began to run. "Stop, thief!" cried Huxter, and set off after him. Mr. Huxter's sensations were vivid but brief. He saw the man just before him and spurting briskly for the church corner and the hill road. He saw the village flags and festivities beyond, and a face or so turned towards him. He bawled, "Stop!" again. He had hardly gone ten strides before his shin was caught in some mysterious fashion, and he was no longer running, but flying with inconceivable rapidity through the air. He saw the ground suddenly close to his face. The world seemed to splash into a million whirling specks of light, and subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE "COACH AND HORSES"

Now in order clearly to understand what had happened in the inn, it is necessary to go back to the moment when Mr. Marvel first came into view of Mr. Huxter's window.

At that precise moment Mr. Cuss and Mr. Bunting were in the parlour. They were seriously investigating the strange occurrences of the morning, and were, with Mr. Hall's permission, making a thorough examination of the Invisible Man's belongings. Jaffers had partially recovered from his fall and had gone home in the charge of his sympathetic friends. The stranger's scattered garments had been removed by Mrs. Hall and the room tidied up. And on the table under the window where the stranger had been wont to work, Cuss had hit almost at once on three big books in manuscript labelled "Diary."

"Diary!" said Cuss, putting the three books on the table. "Now, at any rate, we shall learn something." The Vicar stood with his hands on the table.

"Diary," repeated Cuss, sitting down, putting two volumes to support the third, and opening it. "H'm — no name on the fly-leaf. Bother! — cypher. And figures."

The vicar came round to look over his shoulder.

Cuss turned the pages over with a face suddenly disappointed. "I'm — dear me! It's all cypher, Bunting."

"There are no diagrams?" asked Mr. Bunting. "No illustrations throwing light—"

"See for yourself," said Mr. Cuss. "Some of it's mathematical and some of it's Russian or some such language (to judge by the letters), and some of it's Greek. Now the Greek I thought *you*—"

"Of course," said Mr. Bunting, taking out and wiping his spectacles and feeling suddenly very uncomfortable — for he had no Greek left in his mind worth talking about; "yes — the Greek, of course, may furnish a clue."

"I'll find you a place."

"I'd rather glance through the volumes first," said Mr. Bunting,

still wiping. “A general impression first, Cuss, and *then*, you know, we can go looking for clues.”

He coughed, put on his glasses, arranged them fastidiously, coughed again, and wished something would happen to avert the seemingly inevitable exposure. Then he took the volume Cuss handed him in a leisurely manner. And then something did happen.

The door opened suddenly.

Both gentlemen started violently, looked round, and were relieved to see a sporadically rosy face beneath a furry silk hat. “Tap?” asked the face, and stood staring.

“No,” said both gentlemen at once.

“Over the other side, my man,” said Mr. Bunting. And “Please shut that door,” said Mr. Cuss, irritably.

“All right,” said the intruder, as it seemed in a low voice curiously different from the huskiness of its first inquiry. “Right you are,” said the intruder in the former voice. “Stand clear!” and he vanished and closed the door.

“A sailor, I should judge,” said Mr. Bunting. “Amusing fellows, they are. Stand clear! indeed. A nautical term, referring to his getting back out of the room, I suppose.”

“I daresay so,” said Cuss. “My nerves are all loose to-day. It quite made me jump — the door opening like that.”

Mr. Bunting smiled as if he had not jumped. “And now,” he said with a sigh, “these books.”

Someone sniffed as he did so.

“One thing is indisputable,” said Bunting, drawing up a chair next to that of Cuss. “There certainly have been very strange things happen in Iping during the last few days — very strange. I cannot of course believe in this absurd invisibility story—”

“It’s incredible,” said Cuss— “incredible. But the fact remains that I saw — I certainly saw right down his sleeve—”

“But did you — are you sure? Suppose a mirror, for instance — hallucinations are so easily produced. I don’t know if you have ever seen a really good conjuror—”

“I won’t argue again,” said Cuss. “We’ve thrashed that out, Bunting. And just now there’s these books — Ah! here’s some of what I take to be Greek! Greek letters certainly.”

He pointed to the middle of the page. Mr. Bunting flushed slightly and brought his face nearer, apparently finding some difficulty with his glasses. Suddenly he became aware of a strange feeling at the nape of his neck. He tried to raise his head, and encountered an immovable resistance. The feeling was a curious pressure, the grip of a heavy, firm hand, and it bore his chin irresistibly to the table. "Don't move, little men," whispered a voice, "or I'll brain you both!" He looked into the face of Cuss, close to his own, and each saw a horrified reflection of his own sickly astonishment.

"I'm sorry to handle you so roughly," said the Voice, "but it's unavoidable."

"Since when did you learn to pry into an investigator's private memoranda," said the Voice; and two chins struck the table simultaneously, and two sets of teeth rattled.

"Since when did you learn to invade the private rooms of a man in misfortune?" and the concussion was repeated.

"Where have they put my clothes?"

"Listen," said the Voice. "The windows are fastened and I've taken the key out of the door. I am a fairly strong man, and I have the poker handy — besides being invisible. There's not the slightest doubt that I could kill you both and get away quite easily if I wanted to — do you understand? Very well. If I let you go will you promise not to try any nonsense and do what I tell you?"

The vicar and the doctor looked at one another, and the doctor pulled a face. "Yes," said Mr. Bunting, and the doctor repeated it. Then the pressure on the necks relaxed, and the doctor and the vicar sat up, both very red in the face and wriggling their heads.

"Please keep sitting where you are," said the Invisible Man. "Here's the poker, you see."

"When I came into this room," continued the Invisible Man, after presenting the poker to the tip of the nose of each of his visitors, "I did not expect to find it occupied, and I expected to find, in addition to my books of memoranda, an outfit of clothing. Where is it? No — don't rise. I can see it's gone. Now, just at present, though the days are quite warm enough for an invisible man to run about stark, the evenings are quite chilly. I want clothing — and other accommodation; and I must also have those three books."

CHAPTER XII

THE INVISIBLE MAN LOSES HIS TEMPER

It is unavoidable that at this point the narrative should break off again, for a certain very painful reason that will presently be apparent. While these things were going on in the parlour, and while Mr. Huxter was watching Mr. Marvel smoking his pipe against the gate, not a dozen yards away were Mr. Hall and Teddy Henfrey discussing in a state of cloudy puzzlement the one Iping topic.

Suddenly there came a violent thud against the door of the parlour, a sharp cry, and then — silence.

"Hul-lo!" said Teddy Henfrey.

"Hul-lo!" from the Tap.

Mr. Hall took things in slowly but surely. "That ain't right," he said, and came round from behind the bar towards the parlour door.

He and Teddy approached the door together, with intent faces. Their eyes considered. "Summat wrong," said Hall, and Henfrey nodded agreement. Whiffs of an unpleasant chemical odour met them, and there was a muffled sound of conversation, very rapid and subdued.

"You all right thur?" asked Hall, rapping.

The muttered conversation ceased abruptly, for a moment silence, then the conversation was resumed, in hissing whispers, then a sharp cry of "No! no, you don't!" There came a sudden motion and the oversetting of a chair, a brief struggle. Silence again.

"What the dooce?" exclaimed Henfrey, *sotto voce*.

"You — all — right thur?" asked Mr. Hall, sharply, again.

The Vicar's voice answered with a curious jerking intonation: "Quite ri-right. Please don't — interrupt."

"Odd!" said Mr. Henfrey.

"Odd!" said Mr. Hall.

"Says, 'Don't interrupt,'" said Henfrey.

"I heerd'n," said Hall.

"And a sniff," said Henfrey.

They remained listening. The conversation was rapid and

subdued. “I *can’t*,” said Mr. Bunting, his voice rising; “I tell you, sir, I *will* not.”

“What was that?” asked Henfrey.

“Says he wi’ nart,” said Hall. “Warn’t speaking to us, wuz he?”

“Disgraceful!” said Mr. Bunting, within.

“‘Disgraceful,’” said Mr. Henfrey. “I heard it — distinct.”

“Who’s that speaking now?” asked Henfrey.

“Mr. Cuss, I s’pose,” said Hall. “Can you hear — anything?”

Silence. The sounds within indistinct and perplexing.

“Sounds like throwing the table-cloth about,” said Hall.

Mrs. Hall appeared behind the bar. Hall made gestures of silence and invitation. This aroused Mrs. Hall’s wifely opposition. “What yer listenin’ there for, Hall?” she asked. “Ain’t you nothin’ better to do — busy day like this?”

Hall tried to convey everything by grimaces and dumb show, but Mrs. Hall was obdurate. She raised her voice. So Hall and Henfrey, rather crestfallen, tiptoed back to the bar, gesticulating to explain to her.

At first she refused to see anything in what they had heard at all. Then she insisted on Hall keeping silence, while Henfrey told her his story. She was inclined to think the whole business nonsense — perhaps they were just moving the furniture about. “I heerd’n say ‘disgraceful’; *that* I did,” said Hall.

“*I* heerd that, Mrs. Hall,” said Henfrey.

“Like as not—” began Mrs. Hall.

“Hsh!” said Mr. Teddy Henfrey. “Didn’t I hear the window?”

“What window?” asked Mrs. Hall.

“Parlour window,” said Henfrey.

Everyone stood listening intently. Mrs. Hall’s eyes, directed straight before her, saw without seeing the brilliant oblong of the inn door, the road white and vivid, and Huxter’s shop-front blistering in the June sun. Abruptly Huxter’s door opened and Huxter appeared, eyes staring with excitement, arms gesticulating. “Yap!” cried Huxter. “Stop thief!” and he ran obliquely across the oblong towards the yard gates, and vanished.

Simultaneously came a tumult from the parlour, and a sound of windows being closed.

Hall, Henfrey, and the human contents of the tap rushed out at once pell-mell into the street. They saw someone whisk round the corner towards the road, and Mr. Huxter executing a complicated leap in the air that ended on his face and shoulder. Down the street people were standing astonished or running towards them.

Mr. Huxter was stunned. Henfrey stopped to discover this, but Hall and the two labourers from the Tap rushed at once to the corner, shouting incoherent things, and saw Mr. Marvel vanishing by the corner of the church wall. They appear to have jumped to the impossible conclusion that this was the Invisible Man suddenly become visible, and set off at once along the lane in pursuit. But Hall had hardly run a dozen yards before he gave a loud shout of astonishment and went flying headlong sideways, clutching one of the labourers and bringing him to the ground. He had been charged just as one charges a man at football. The second labourer came round in a circle, stared, and conceiving that Hall had tumbled over of his own accord, turned to resume the pursuit, only to be tripped by the ankle just as Huxter had been. Then, as the first labourer struggled to his feet, he was kicked sideways by a blow that might have felled an ox.

As he went down, the rush from the direction of the village green came round the corner. The first to appear was the proprietor of the cocoanut shy, a burly man in a blue jersey. He was astonished to see the lane empty save for three men sprawling absurdly on the ground. And then something happened to his rear-most foot, and he went headlong and rolled sideways just in time to graze the feet of his brother and partner, following headlong. The two were then kicked, knelt on, fallen over, and cursed by quite a number of over-hasty people.

Now when Hall and Henfrey and the labourers ran out of the house, Mrs. Hall, who had been disciplined by years of experience, remained in the bar next the till. And suddenly the parlour door was opened, and Mr. Cuss appeared, and without glancing at her rushed at once down the steps toward the corner. “Hold him!” he cried. “Don’t let him drop that parcel.”

He knew nothing of the existence of Marvel. For the Invisible Man had handed over the books and bundle in the yard. The face of

Mr. Cuss was angry and resolute, but his costume was defective, a sort of limp white kilt that could only have passed muster in Greece. "Hold him!" he bawled. "He's got my trousers! And every stitch of the Vicar's clothes!"

"'Tend to him in a minute!" he cried to Henfrey as he passed the prostrate Huxter, and, coming round the corner to join the tumult, was promptly knocked off his feet into an indecorous sprawl. Somebody in full flight trod heavily on his finger. He yelled, struggled to regain his feet, was knocked against and thrown on all fours again, and became aware that he was involved not in a capture, but a rout. Everyone was running back to the village. He rose again and was hit severely behind the ear. He staggered and set off back to the "Coach and Horses" forthwith, leaping over the deserted Huxter, who was now sitting up, on his way.

Behind him as he was halfway up the inn steps he heard a sudden yell of rage, rising sharply out of the confusion of cries, and a sounding smack in someone's face. He recognised the voice as that of the Invisible Man, and the note was that of a man suddenly infuriated by a painful blow.

In another moment Mr. Cuss was back in the parlour. "He's coming back, Bunting!" he said, rushing in. "Save yourself!"

Mr. Bunting was standing in the window engaged in an attempt to clothe himself in the hearth-rug and a *West Surrey Gazette*. "Who's coming?" he said, so startled that his costume narrowly escaped disintegration.

"Invisible Man," said Cuss, and rushed on to the window. "We'd better clear out from here! He's fighting mad! Mad!"

In another moment he was out in the yard.

"Good heavens!" said Mr. Bunting, hesitating between two horrible alternatives. He heard a frightful struggle in the passage of the inn, and his decision was made. He clambered out of the window, adjusted his costume hastily, and fled up the village as fast as his fat little legs would carry him.

From the moment when the Invisible Man screamed with rage and Mr. Bunting made his memorable flight up the village, it became impossible to give a consecutive account of affairs in Iping. Possibly the Invisible Man's original intention was simply to cover Marvel's

retreat with the clothes and books. But his temper, at no time very good, seems to have gone completely at some chance blow, and forthwith he set to smiting and overthrowing, for the mere satisfaction of hurting.

You must figure the street full of running figures, of doors slamming and fights for hiding-places. You must figure the tumult suddenly striking on the unstable equilibrium of old Fletcher's planks and two chairs — with cataclysmic results. You must figure an appalled couple caught dismally in a swing. And then the whole tumultuous rush has passed and the Iping street with its gauds and flags is deserted save for the still raging unseen, and littered with cocoanuts, overthrown canvas screens, and the scattered stock in trade of a sweetstuff stall. Everywhere there is a sound of closing shutters and shoving bolts, and the only visible humanity is an occasional flitting eye under a raised eyebrow in the corner of a window pane.

The Invisible Man amused himself for a little while by breaking all the windows in the "Coach and Horses," and then he thrust a street lamp through the parlour window of Mrs. Gribble. He it must have been who cut the telegraph wire to Adderdean just beyond Higgins' cottage on the Adderdean road. And after that, as his peculiar qualities allowed, he passed out of human perceptions altogether, and he was neither heard, seen, nor felt in Iping any more. He vanished absolutely.

But it was the best part of two hours before any human being ventured out again into the desolation of Iping street.

CHAPTER XIII

MR. MARVEL DISCUSSES HIS RESIGNATION

When the dusk was gathering and Iping was just beginning to peep timorously forth again upon the shattered wreckage of its Bank Holiday, a short, thick-set man in a shabby silk hat was marching painfully through the twilight behind the beechwoods on the road to Bramblehurst. He carried three books bound together by some sort of ornamental elastic ligature, and a bundle wrapped in a blue table-cloth. His rubicund face expressed consternation and fatigue; he appeared to be in a spasmodic sort of hurry. He was accompanied by a voice other than his own, and ever and again he winced under the touch of unseen hands.

"If you give me the slip again," said the Voice, "if you attempt to give me the slip again—"

"Lord!" said Mr. Marvel. "That shoulder's a mass of bruises as it is."

"On my honour," said the Voice, "I will kill you."

"I didn't try to give you the slip," said Marvel, in a voice that was not far remote from tears. "I swear I didn't. I didn't know the blessed turning, that was all! How the devil was I to know the blessed turning? As it is, I've been knocked about—"

"You'll get knocked about a great deal more if you don't mind," said the Voice, and Mr. Marvel abruptly became silent. He blew out his cheeks, and his eyes were eloquent of despair.

"It's bad enough to let these floundering yokels explode my little secret, without *your* cutting off with my books. It's lucky for some of them they cut and ran when they did! Here am I ... No one knew I was invisible! And now what am I to do?"

"What am *I* to do?" asked Marvel, *sotto voce*.

"It's all about. It will be in the papers! Everybody will be looking for me; everyone on their guard—" The Voice broke off into vivid curses and ceased.

The despair of Mr. Marvel's face deepened, and his pace slackened.

“Go on!” said the Voice.

Mr. Marvel’s face assumed a greyish tint between the ruddier patches.

“Don’t drop those books, stupid,” said the Voice, sharply — overtaking him.

“The fact is,” said the Voice, “I shall have to make use of you.... You’re a poor tool, but I must.”

“I’m a *miserable* tool,” said Marvel.

“You are,” said the Voice.

“I’m the worst possible tool you could have,” said Marvel.

“I’m not strong,” he said after a discouraging silence.

“I’m not over strong,” he repeated.

“No?”

“And my heart’s weak. That little business — I pulled it through, of course — but bless you! I could have dropped.”

“Well?”

“I haven’t the nerve and strength for the sort of thing you want.”

“*I’ll* stimulate you.”

“I wish you wouldn’t. I wouldn’t like to mess up your plans, you know. But I might — out of sheer funk and misery.”

“You’d better not,” said the Voice, with quiet emphasis.

“I wish I was dead,” said Marvel.

“It ain’t justice,” he said; “you must admit.... It seems to me I’ve a perfect right—”

“*Get* on!” said the Voice.

Mr. Marvel mended his pace, and for a time they went in silence again.

“It’s devilish hard,” said Mr. Marvel.

This was quite ineffectual. He tried another tack.

“What do I make by it?” he began again in a tone of unendurable wrong.

“Oh! *shut up*!” said the Voice, with sudden amazing vigour. “I’ll see to you all right. You do what you’re told. You’ll do it all right. You’re a fool and all that, but you’ll do—”

“I tell you, sir, I’m not the man for it. Respectfully — but it *is* so —”

“If you don’t shut up I shall twist your wrist again,” said the

Invisible Man. “I want to think.”

Presently two oblongs of yellow light appeared through the trees, and the square tower of a church loomed through the gloaming. “I shall keep my hand on your shoulder,” said the Voice, “all through the village. Go straight through and try no foolery. It will be the worse for you if you do.”

“I know that,” sighed Mr. Marvel, “I know all that.”

The unhappy-looking figure in the obsolete silk hat passed up the street of the little village with his burdens, and vanished into the gathering darkness beyond the lights of the windows.

CHAPTER XIV

AT PORT STOWE

Ten o'clock the next morning found Mr. Marvel, unshaven, dirty, and travel-stained, sitting with the books beside him and his hands deep in his pockets, looking very weary, nervous, and uncomfortable, and inflating his cheeks at infrequent intervals, on the bench outside a little inn on the outskirts of Port Stowe. Beside him were the books, but now they were tied with string. The bundle had been abandoned in the pine-woods beyond Bramblehurst, in accordance with a change in the plans of the Invisible Man. Mr. Marvel sat on the bench, and although no one took the slightest notice of him, his agitation remained at fever heat. His hands would go ever and again to his various pockets with a curious nervous fumbling.

When he had been sitting for the best part of an hour, however, an elderly mariner, carrying a newspaper, came out of the inn and sat down beside him. "Pleasant day," said the mariner.

Mr. Marvel glanced about him with something very like terror. "Very," he said.

"Just seasonable weather for the time of year," said the mariner, taking no denial.

"Quite," said Mr. Marvel.

The mariner produced a toothpick, and (saving his regard) was engrossed thereby for some minutes. His eyes meanwhile were at liberty to examine Mr. Marvel's dusty figure, and the books beside him. As he had approached Mr. Marvel he had heard a sound like the dropping of coins into a pocket. He was struck by the contrast of Mr. Marvel's appearance with this suggestion of opulence. Thence his mind wandered back again to a topic that had taken a curiously firm hold of his imagination.

"Books?" he said suddenly, noisily finishing with the toothpick.

Mr. Marvel started and looked at them. "Oh, yes," he said. "Yes, they're books."

"There's some extra-ordinary things in books," said the mariner.

"I believe you," said Mr. Marvel.

“And some extra-ordinary things out of ‘em,” said the mariner.

“True likewise,” said Mr. Marvel. He eyed his interlocutor, and then glanced about him.

“There’s some extra-ordinary things in newspapers, for example,” said the mariner.

“There are.”

“In *this* newspaper,” said the mariner.

“Ah!” said Mr. Marvel.

“There’s a story,” said the mariner, fixing Mr. Marvel with an eye that was firm and deliberate; “there’s a story about an Invisible Man, for instance.”

Mr. Marvel pulled his mouth askew and scratched his cheek and felt his ears glowing. “What will they be writing next?” he asked faintly. “Ostria, or America?”

“Neither,” said the mariner. “*Here*.”

“Lord!” said Mr. Marvel, starting.

“When I say *here*,” said the mariner, to Mr. Marvel’s intense relief, “I don’t of course mean here in this place, I mean hereabouts.”

“An Invisible Man!” said Mr. Marvel. “And what’s *he* been up to?”

“Everything,” said the mariner, controlling Marvel with his eye, and then amplifying, “every — blessed — thing.”

“I ain’t seen a paper these four days,” said Marvel.

“Iping’s the place he started at,” said the mariner.

“In-*deed*!” said Mr. Marvel.

“He started there. And where he came from, nobody don’t seem to know. Here it is: ‘Pe-culiar Story from Iping.’ And it says in this paper that the evidence is extra-ordinary strong — extra-ordinary.”

“Lord!” said Mr. Marvel.

“But then, it’s an extra-ordinary story. There is a clergyman and a medical gent witnesses — saw ‘im all right and proper — or leastways didn’t see ‘im. He was staying, it says, at the ‘Coach an’ Horses,’ and no one don’t seem to have been aware of his misfortune, it says, aware of his misfortune, until in an Altercation in the inn, it says, his bandages on his head was torn off. It was then observed that his head was invisible. Attempts were At Once made to secure him, but casting off his garments, it says, he succeeded in

escaping, but not until after a desperate struggle, in which he had inflicted serious injuries, it says, on our worthy and able constable, Mr. J. A. Jaffers. Pretty straight story, eh? Names and everything."

"Lord!" said Mr. Marvel, looking nervously about him, trying to count the money in his pockets by his unaided sense of touch, and full of a strange and novel idea. "It sounds most astonishing."

"Don't it? Extra-ordinary, *I* call it. Never heard tell of Invisible Men before, I haven't, but nowadays one hears such a lot of extra-ordinary things — that—"

"That all he did?" asked Marvel, trying to seem at his ease.

"It's enough, ain't it?" said the mariner.

"Didn't go Back by any chance?" asked Marvel. "Just escaped and that's all, eh?"

"All!" said the mariner. "Why! — ain't it enough?"

"Quite enough," said Marvel.

"I should think it was enough," said the mariner. "I should think it was enough."

"He didn't have any pals — it don't say he had any pals, does it?" asked Mr. Marvel, anxious.

"Ain't one of a sort enough for you?" asked the mariner. "No, thank Heaven, as one might say, he didn't."

He nodded his head slowly. "It makes me regular uncomfortable, the bare thought of that chap running about the country! He is at present At Large, and from certain evidence it is supposed that he has — taken — *took*, I suppose they mean — the road to Port Stowe. You see we're right *in* it! None of your American wonders, this time. And just think of the things he might do! Where'd you be, if he took a drop over and above, and had a fancy to go for you? Suppose he wants to rob — who can prevent him? He can trespass, he can burgle, he could walk through a cordon of policemen as easy as me or you could give the slip to a blind man! Easier! For these here blind chaps hear uncommon sharp, I'm told. And wherever there was liquor he fancied—"

"He's got a tremenjous advantage, certainly," said Mr. Marvel. "And — well..."

"You're right," said the mariner. "He *has*."

All this time Mr. Marvel had been glancing about him intently,

listening for faint footfalls, trying to detect imperceptible movements. He seemed on the point of some great resolution. He coughed behind his hand.

He looked about him again, listened, bent towards the mariner, and lowered his voice: “The fact of it is — I happen — to know just a thing or two about this Invisible Man. From private sources.”

“Oh!” said the mariner, interested. “*You*?”

“Yes,” said Mr. Marvel. “Me.”

“Indeed!” said the mariner. “And may I ask—”

“You’ll be astonished,” said Mr. Marvel behind his hand. “It’s tremenjous.”

“Indeed!” said the mariner.

“The fact is,” began Mr. Marvel eagerly in a confidential undertone. Suddenly his expression changed marvellously. “Ow!” he said. He rose stiffly in his seat. His face was eloquent of physical suffering. “Wow!” he said.

“What’s up?” said the mariner, concerned.

“Toothache,” said Mr. Marvel, and put his hand to his ear. He caught hold of his books. “I must be getting on, I think,” he said. He edged in a curious way along the seat away from his interlocutor. “But you was just a-going to tell me about this here Invisible Man!” protested the mariner. Mr. Marvel seemed to consult with himself. “Hoax,” said a Voice. “It’s a hoax,” said Mr. Marvel.

“But it’s in the paper,” said the mariner.

“Hoax all the same,” said Marvel. “I know the chap that started the lie. There ain’t no Invisible Man whatsoever — Blimey.”

“But how ‘bout this paper? D’you mean to say — ?”

“Not a word of it,” said Marvel, stoutly.

The mariner stared, paper in hand. Mr. Marvel jerkily faced about. “Wait a bit,” said the mariner, rising and speaking slowly, “D’you mean to say — ?”

“I do,” said Mr. Marvel.

“Then why did you let me go on and tell you all this blarsted stuff, then? What d’yer mean by letting a man make a fool of himself like that for? Eh?”

Mr. Marvel blew out his cheeks. The mariner was suddenly very red indeed; he clenched his hands. “I been talking here this ten

minutes," he said; "and you, you little pot-bellied, leathery-faced son of an old boot, couldn't have the elementary manners—"

"Don't you come bandying words with *me*," said Mr. Marvel.

"Bandying words! I'm a jolly good mind—"

"Come up," said a Voice, and Mr. Marvel was suddenly whirled about and started marching off in a curious spasmodic manner. "You'd better move on," said the mariner. "Who's moving on?" said Mr. Marvel. He was receding obliquely with a curious hurrying gait, with occasional violent jerks forward. Some way along the road he began a muttered monologue, protests and recriminations.

"Silly devil!" said the mariner, legs wide apart, elbows akimbo, watching the receding figure. "I'll show you, you silly ass — hoaxing *me*! It's here — on the paper!"

Mr. Marvel retorted incoherently and, receding, was hidden by a bend in the road, but the mariner still stood magnificent in the midst of the way, until the approach of a butcher's cart dislodged him. Then he turned himself towards Port Stowe. "Full of extra-ordinary asses," he said softly to himself. "Just to take me down a bit — that was his silly game — It's on the paper!"

And there was another extraordinary thing he was presently to hear, that had happened quite close to him. And that was a vision of a "fist full of money" (no less) travelling without visible agency, along by the wall at the corner of St. Michael's Lane. A brother mariner had seen this wonderful sight that very morning. He had snatched at the money forthwith and had been knocked headlong, and when he had got to his feet the butterfly money had vanished. Our mariner was in the mood to believe anything, he declared, but that was a bit *too* stiff. Afterwards, however, he began to think things over.

The story of the flying money was true. And all about that neighbourhood, even from the august London and Country Banking Company, from the tills of shops and inns — doors standing that sunny weather entirely open — money had been quietly and dexterously making off that day in handfuls and rouleaux, floating quietly along by walls and shady places, dodging quickly from the approaching eyes of men. And it had, though no man had traced it, invariably ended its mysterious flight in the pocket of that agitated gentleman in the obsolete silk hat, sitting outside the little inn on the

outskirts of Port Stowe.

It was ten days after — and indeed only when the Burdock story was already old — that the mariner collated these facts and began to understand how near he had been to the wonderful Invisible Man.

CHAPTER XV

THE MAN WHO WAS RUNNING

In the early evening time Dr. Kemp was sitting in his study in the belvedere on the hill overlooking Burdock. It was a pleasant little room, with three windows — north, west, and south — and bookshelves covered with books and scientific publications, and a broad writing-table, and, under the north window, a microscope, glass slips, minute instruments, some cultures, and scattered bottles of reagents. Dr. Kemp's solar lamp was lit, albeit the sky was still bright with the sunset light, and his blinds were up because there was no offence of peering outsiders to require them pulled down. Dr. Kemp was a tall and slender young man, with flaxen hair and a moustache almost white, and the work he was upon would earn him, he hoped, the fellowship of the Royal Society, so highly did he think of it.

And his eye, presently wandering from his work, caught the sunset blazing at the back of the hill that is over against his own. For a minute perhaps he sat, pen in mouth, admiring the rich golden colour above the crest, and then his attention was attracted by the little figure of a man, inky black, running over the hill-brow towards him. He was a shortish little man, and he wore a high hat, and he was running so fast that his legs verily twinkled.

"Another of those fools," said Dr. Kemp. "Like that ass who ran into me this morning round a corner, with the ''Visible Man a-coming, sir!' I can't imagine what possesses people. One might think we were in the thirteenth century."

He got up, went to the window, and stared at the dusky hillside, and the dark little figure tearing down it. "He seems in a confounded hurry," said Dr. Kemp, "but he doesn't seem to be getting on. If his pockets were full of lead, he couldn't run heavier."

"Spurted, sir," said Dr. Kemp.

In another moment the higher of the villas that had clambered up the hill from Burdock had occulted the running figure. He was visible again for a moment, and again, and then again, three times between

the three detached houses that came next, and then the terrace hid him.

"Asses!" said Dr. Kemp, swinging round on his heel and walking back to his writing-table.

But those who saw the fugitive nearer, and perceived the abject terror on his perspiring face, being themselves in the open roadway, did not share in the doctor's contempt. By the man pounded, and as he ran he chinked like a well-filled purse that is tossed to and fro. He looked neither to the right nor the left, but his dilated eyes stared straight downhill to where the lamps were being lit, and the people were crowded in the street. And his ill-shaped mouth fell apart, and a glairy foam lay on his lips, and his breath came hoarse and noisy. All he passed stopped and began staring up the road and down, and interrogating one another with an inkling of discomfort for the reason of his haste.

And then presently, far up the hill, a dog playing in the road yelped and ran under a gate, and as they still wondered something — a wind — a pad, pad, pad, — a sound like a panting breathing, rushed by.

People screamed. People sprang off the pavement: It passed in shouts, it passed by instinct down the hill. They were shouting in the street before Marvel was halfway there. They were bolting into houses and slamming the doors behind them, with the news. He heard it and made one last desperate spurt. Fear came striding by, rushed ahead of him, and in a moment had seized the town.

"The Invisible Man is coming! The Invisible Man!"

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE "JOLLY CRICKETERS"

The "Jolly Cricketers" is just at the bottom of the hill, where the tram-lines begin. The barman leant his fat red arms on the counter and talked of horses with an anaemic cabman, while a black-bearded man in grey snapped up biscuit and cheese, drank Burton, and conversed in American with a policeman off duty.

"What's the shouting about!" said the anaemic cabman, going off at a tangent, trying to see up the hill over the dirty yellow blind in the low window of the inn. Somebody ran by outside. "Fire, perhaps," said the barman.

Footsteps approached, running heavily, the door was pushed open violently, and Marvel, weeping and dishevelled, his hat gone, the neck of his coat torn open, rushed in, made a convulsive turn, and attempted to shut the door. It was held half open by a strap.

"Coming!" he bawled, his voice shrieking with terror. "He's coming. The 'Visible Man! After me! For Gawd's sake! 'Elp! 'Elp! 'Elp!"

"Shut the doors," said the policeman. "Who's coming? What's the row?" He went to the door, released the strap, and it slammed. The American closed the other door.

"Lemme go inside," said Marvel, staggering and weeping, but still clutching the books. "Lemme go inside. Lock me in — somewhere. I tell you he's after me. I give him the slip. He said he'd kill me and he will."

"*You're* safe," said the man with the black beard. "The door's shut. What's it all about?"

"Lemme go inside," said Marvel, and shrieked aloud as a blow suddenly made the fastened door shiver and was followed by a hurried rapping and a shouting outside. "Hullo," cried the policeman, "who's there?" Mr. Marvel began to make frantic dives at panels that looked like doors. "He'll kill me — he's got a knife or something. For Gawd's sake — !"

"Here you are," said the barman. "Come in here." And he held up

the flap of the bar.

Mr. Marvel rushed behind the bar as the summons outside was repeated. “Don’t open the door,” he screamed. “*Please* don’t open the door. *Where* shall I hide?”

“This, this Invisible Man, then?” asked the man with the black beard, with one hand behind him. “I guess it’s about time we saw him.”

The window of the inn was suddenly smashed in, and there was a screaming and running to and fro in the street. The policeman had been standing on the settee staring out, craning to see who was at the door. He got down with raised eyebrows. “It’s that,” he said. The barman stood in front of the bar-parlour door which was now locked on Mr. Marvel, stared at the smashed window, and came round to the two other men.

Everything was suddenly quiet. “I wish I had my truncheon,” said the policeman, going irresolutely to the door. “Once we open, in he comes. There’s no stopping him.”

“Don’t you be in too much hurry about that door,” said the anaemic cabman, anxiously.

“Draw the bolts,” said the man with the black beard, “and if he comes—” He showed a revolver in his hand.

“That won’t do,” said the policeman; “that’s murder.”

“I know what country I’m in,” said the man with the beard. “I’m going to let off at his legs. Draw the bolts.”

“Not with that blinking thing going off behind me,” said the barman, craning over the blind.

“Very well,” said the man with the black beard, and stooping down, revolver ready, drew them himself. Barman, cabman, and policeman faced about.

“Come in,” said the bearded man in an undertone, standing back and facing the unbolted doors with his pistol behind him. No one came in, the door remained closed. Five minutes afterwards when a second cabman pushed his head in cautiously, they were still waiting, and an anxious face peered out of the bar-parlour and supplied information. “Are all the doors of the house shut?” asked Marvel. “He’s going round — prowling round. He’s as artful as the devil.”

“Good Lord!” said the burly barman. “There’s the back! Just

watch them doors! I say — !" He looked about him helplessly. The bar-parlour door slammed and they heard the key turn. "There's the yard door and the private door. The yard door—"

He rushed out of the bar.

In a minute he reappeared with a carving-knife in his hand. "The yard door was open!" he said, and his fat underlip dropped. "He may be in the house now!" said the first cabman.

"He's not in the kitchen," said the barman. "There's two women there, and I've stabbed every inch of it with this little beef slicer. And they don't think he's come in. They haven't noticed—"

"Have you fastened it?" asked the first cabman.

"I'm out of frocks," said the barman.

The man with the beard replaced his revolver. And even as he did so the flap of the bar was shut down and the bolt clicked, and then with a tremendous thud the catch of the door snapped and the bar-parlour door burst open. They heard Marvel squeal like a caught leveret, and forthwith they were clambering over the bar to his rescue. The bearded man's revolver cracked and the looking-glass at the back of the parlour starred and came smashing and tinkling down.

As the barman entered the room he saw Marvel, curiously crumpled up and struggling against the door that led to the yard and kitchen. The door flew open while the barman hesitated, and Marvel was dragged into the kitchen. There was a scream and a clatter of pans. Marvel, head down, and lugging back obstinately, was forced to the kitchen door, and the bolts were drawn.

Then the policeman, who had been trying to pass the barman, rushed in, followed by one of the cabmen, gripped the wrist of the invisible hand that collared Marvel, was hit in the face and went reeling back. The door opened, and Marvel made a frantic effort to obtain a lodgment behind it. Then the cabman collared something. "I got him," said the cabman. The barman's red hands came clawing at the unseen. "Here he is!" said the barman.

Mr. Marvel, released, suddenly dropped to the ground and made an attempt to crawl behind the legs of the fighting men. The struggle blundered round the edge of the door. The voice of the Invisible Man was heard for the first time, yelling out sharply, as the policeman trod

on his foot. Then he cried out passionately and his fists flew round like flails. The cabman suddenly whooped and doubled up, kicked under the diaphragm. The door into the bar-parlour from the kitchen slammed and covered Mr. Marvel's retreat. The men in the kitchen found themselves clutching at and struggling with empty air.

"Where's he gone?" cried the man with the beard. "Out?"

"This way," said the policeman, stepping into the yard and stopping.

A piece of tile whizzed by his head and smashed among the crockery on the kitchen table.

"I'll show him," shouted the man with the black beard, and suddenly a steel barrel shone over the policeman's shoulder, and five bullets had followed one another into the twilight whence the missile had come. As he fired, the man with the beard moved his hand in a horizontal curve, so that his shots radiated out into the narrow yard like spokes from a wheel.

A silence followed. "Five cartridges," said the man with the black beard. "That's the best of all. Four aces and a joker. Get a lantern, someone, and come and feel about for his body."

CHAPTER XVII

DR. KEMP'S VISITOR

Dr. Kemp had continued writing in his study until the shots aroused him. Crack, crack, crack, they came one after the other.

"Hullo!" said Dr. Kemp, putting his pen into his mouth again and listening. "Who's letting off revolvers in Burdock? What are the asses at now?"

He went to the south window, threw it up, and leaning out stared down on the network of windows, beaded gas-lamps and shops, with its black interstices of roof and yard that made up the town at night. "Looks like a crowd down the hill," he said, "by 'The Cricketers,'" and remained watching. Thence his eyes wandered over the town to far away where the ships' lights shone, and the pier glowed — a little illuminated, facetted pavilion like a gem of yellow light. The moon in its first quarter hung over the westward hill, and the stars were clear and almost tropically bright.

After five minutes, during which his mind had travelled into a remote speculation of social conditions of the future, and lost itself at last over the time dimension, Dr. Kemp roused himself with a sigh, pulled down the window again, and returned to his writing desk.

It must have been about an hour after this that the front-door bell rang. He had been writing slackly, and with intervals of abstraction, since the shots. He sat listening. He heard the servant answer the door, and waited for her feet on the staircase, but she did not come. "Wonder what that was," said Dr. Kemp.

He tried to resume his work, failed, got up, went downstairs from his study to the landing, rang, and called over the balustrade to the housemaid as she appeared in the hall below. "Was that a letter?" he asked.

"Only a runaway ring, sir," she answered.

"I'm restless to-night," he said to himself. He went back to his study, and this time attacked his work resolutely. In a little while he was hard at work again, and the only sounds in the room were the ticking of the clock and the subdued shrillness of his quill, hurrying

in the very centre of the circle of light his lampshade threw on his table.

It was two o'clock before Dr. Kemp had finished his work for the night. He rose, yawned, and went downstairs to bed. He had already removed his coat and vest, when he noticed that he was thirsty. He took a candle and went down to the dining-room in search of a syphon and whiskey.

Dr. Kemp's scientific pursuits have made him a very observant man, and as he recrossed the hall, he noticed a dark spot on the linoleum near the mat at the foot of the stairs. He went on upstairs, and then it suddenly occurred to him to ask himself what the spot on the linoleum might be. Apparently some subconscious element was at work. At any rate, he turned with his burden, went back to the hall, put down the syphon and whiskey, and bending down, touched the spot. Without any great surprise he found it had the stickiness and colour of drying blood.

He took up his burden again, and returned upstairs, looking about him and trying to account for the blood-spot. On the landing he saw something and stopped astonished. The door-handle of his own room was blood-stained.

He looked at his own hand. It was quite clean, and then he remembered that the door of his room had been open when he came down from his study, and that consequently he had not touched the handle at all. He went straight into his room, his face quite calm — perhaps a trifle more resolute than usual. His glance, wandering inquisitively, fell on the bed. On the counterpane was a mess of blood, and the sheet had been torn. He had not noticed this before because he had walked straight to the dressing-table. On the further side the bedclothes were depressed as if someone had been recently sitting there.

Then he had an odd impression that he had heard a low voice say, "Good Heavens! — Kemp!" But Dr. Kemp was no believer in voices.

He stood staring at the tumbled sheets. Was that really a voice? He looked about again, but noticed nothing further than the disordered and blood-stained bed. Then he distinctly heard a movement across the room, near the wash-hand stand. All men,

however highly educated, retain some superstitious inklings. The feeling that is called "eerie" came upon him. He closed the door of the room, came forward to the dressing-table, and put down his burdens. Suddenly, with a start, he perceived a coiled and blood-stained bandage of linen rag hanging in mid-air, between him and the wash-hand stand.

He stared at this in amazement. It was an empty bandage, a bandage properly tied but quite empty. He would have advanced to grasp it, but a touch arrested him, and a voice speaking quite close to him.

"Kemp!" said the Voice.

"Eh?" said Kemp, with his mouth open.

"Keep your nerve," said the Voice. "I'm an Invisible Man."

Kemp made no answer for a space, simply stared at the bandage. "Invisible Man," he said.

"I am an Invisible Man," repeated the Voice.

The story he had been active to ridicule only that morning rushed through Kemp's brain. He does not appear to have been either very much frightened or very greatly surprised at the moment. Realisation came later.

"I thought it was all a lie," he said. The thought uppermost in his mind was the reiterated arguments of the morning. "Have you a bandage on?" he asked.

"Yes," said the Invisible Man.

"Oh!" said Kemp, and then roused himself. "I say!" he said. "But this is nonsense. It's some trick." He stepped forward suddenly, and his hand, extended towards the bandage, met invisible fingers.

He recoiled at the touch and his colour changed.

"Keep steady, Kemp, for God's sake! I want help badly. Stop!"

The hand gripped his arm. He struck at it.

"Kemp!" cried the Voice. "Kemp! Keep steady!" and the grip tightened.

A frantic desire to free himself took possession of Kemp. The hand of the bandaged arm gripped his shoulder, and he was suddenly tripped and flung backwards upon the bed. He opened his mouth to shout, and the corner of the sheet was thrust between his teeth. The Invisible Man had him down grimly, but his arms were free and he

struck and tried to kick savagely.

"Listen to reason, will you?" said the Invisible Man, sticking to him in spite of a pounding in the ribs. "By Heaven! you'll madden me in a minute!

"Lie still, you fool!" bawled the Invisible Man in Kemp's ear.

Kemp struggled for another moment and then lay still.

"If you shout, I'll smash your face," said the Invisible Man, relieving his mouth.

"I'm an Invisible Man. It's no foolishness, and no magic. I really am an Invisible Man. And I want your help. I don't want to hurt you, but if you behave like a frantic rustic, I must. Don't you remember me, Kemp? Griffin, of University College?"

"Let me get up," said Kemp. "I'll stop where I am. And let me sit quiet for a minute."

He sat up and felt his neck.

"I am Griffin, of University College, and I have made myself invisible. I am just an ordinary man — a man you have known — made invisible."

"Griffin?" said Kemp.

"Griffin," answered the Voice. A younger student than you were, almost an albino, six feet high, and broad, with a pink and white face and red eyes, who won the medal for chemistry."

"I am confused," said Kemp. "My brain is rioting. What has this to do with Griffin?"

"I *am* Griffin."

Kemp thought. "It's horrible," he said. "But what devilry must happen to make a man invisible?"

"It's no devilry. It's a process, sane and intelligible enough—"

"It's horrible!" said Kemp. "How on earth — ?"

"It's horrible enough. But I'm wounded and in pain, and tired ... Great God! Kemp, you are a man. Take it steady. Give me some food and drink, and let me sit down here."

Kemp stared at the bandage as it moved across the room, then saw a basket chair dragged across the floor and come to rest near the bed. It creaked, and the seat was depressed the quarter of an inch or so. He rubbed his eyes and felt his neck again. "This beats ghosts," he said, and laughed stupidly.

“That’s better. Thank Heaven, you’re getting sensible!”

“Or silly,” said Kemp, and knuckled his eyes.

“Give me some whiskey. I’m near dead.”

“It didn’t feel so. Where are you? If I get up shall I run into you? *There*! all right. Whiskey? Here. Where shall I give it to you?”

The chair creaked and Kemp felt the glass drawn away from him. He let go by an effort; his instinct was all against it. It came to rest poised twenty inches above the front edge of the seat of the chair. He stared at it in infinite perplexity. “This is — this must be — hypnotism. You have suggested you are invisible.”

“Nonsense,” said the Voice.

“It’s frantic.”

“Listen to me.”

“I demonstrated conclusively this morning,” began Kemp, “that invisibility—”

“Never mind what you’ve demonstrated! — I’m starving,” said the Voice, “and the night is chilly to a man without clothes.”

“Food?” said Kemp.

The tumbler of whiskey tilted itself. “Yes,” said the Invisible Man rapping it down. “Have you a dressing-gown?”

Kemp made some exclamation in an undertone. He walked to a wardrobe and produced a robe of dingy scarlet. “This do?” he asked. It was taken from him. It hung limp for a moment in mid-air, fluttered weirdly, stood full and decorous buttoning itself, and sat down in his chair. “Drawers, socks, slippers would be a comfort,” said the Unseen, curtly. “And food.”

“Anything. But this is the insanest thing I ever was in, in my life!”

He turned out his drawers for the articles, and then went downstairs to ransack his larder. He came back with some cold cutlets and bread, pulled up a light table, and placed them before his guest. “Never mind knives,” said his visitor, and a cutlet hung in mid-air, with a sound of gnawing.

“Invisible!” said Kemp, and sat down on a bedroom chair.

“I always like to get something about me before I eat,” said the Invisible Man, with a full mouth, eating greedily. “Queer fancy!”

“I suppose that wrist is all right,” said Kemp.

“Trust me,” said the Invisible Man.

“Of all the strange and wonderful—”

“Exactly. But it’s odd I should blunder into *your* house to get my bandaging. My first stroke of luck! Anyhow I meant to sleep in this house to-night. You must stand that! It’s a filthy nuisance, my blood showing, isn’t it? Quite a clot over there. Gets visible as it coagulates, I see. It’s only the living tissue I’ve changed, and only for as long as I’m alive.... I’ve been in the house three hours.”

“But how’s it done?” began Kemp, in a tone of exasperation. “Confound it! The whole business — it’s unreasonable from beginning to end.”

“Quite reasonable,” said the Invisible Man. “Perfectly reasonable.”

He reached over and secured the whiskey bottle. Kemp stared at the devouring dressing gown. A ray of candle-light penetrating a torn patch in the right shoulder, made a triangle of light under the left ribs. “What were the shots?” he asked. “How did the shooting begin?”

“There was a real fool of a man — a sort of confederate of mine — curse him! — who tried to steal my money. *Has* done so.”

“Is *he* invisible too?”

“No.”

“Well?”

“Can’t I have some more to eat before I tell you all that? I’m hungry — in pain. And you want me to tell stories!”

Kemp got up. “*You* didn’t do any shooting?” he asked.

“Not me,” said his visitor. “Some fool I’d never seen fired at random. A lot of them got scared. They all got scared at me. Curse them! — I say — I want more to eat than this, Kemp.”

“I’ll see what there is to eat downstairs,” said Kemp. “Not much, I’m afraid.”

After he had done eating, and he made a heavy meal, the Invisible Man demanded a cigar. He bit the end savagely before Kemp could find a knife, and cursed when the outer leaf loosened. It was strange to see him smoking; his mouth, and throat, pharynx and nares, became visible as a sort of whirling smoke cast.

“This blessed gift of smoking!” he said, and puffed vigorously. “I’m lucky to have fallen upon you, Kemp. You must help me. Fancy

tumbling on you just now! I'm in a devilish scrape — I've been mad, I think. The things I have been through! But we will do things yet. Let me tell you—"

He helped himself to more whiskey and soda. Kemp got up, looked about him, and fetched a glass from his spare room. "It's wild — but I suppose I may drink."

"You haven't changed much, Kemp, these dozen years. You fair men don't. Cool and methodical — after the first collapse. I must tell you. We will work together!"

"But how was it all done?" said Kemp, "and how did you get like this?"

"For God's sake, let me smoke in peace for a little while! And then I will begin to tell you."

But the story was not told that night. The Invisible Man's wrist was growing painful; he was feverish, exhausted, and his mind came round to brood upon his chase down the hill and the struggle about the inn. He spoke in fragments of Marvel, he smoked faster, his voice grew angry. Kemp tried to gather what he could.

"He was afraid of me, I could see that he was afraid of me," said the Invisible Man many times over. "He meant to give me the slip — he was always casting about! What a fool I was!

"The cur!

"I should have killed him!"

"Where did you get the money?" asked Kemp, abruptly.

The Invisible Man was silent for a space. "I can't tell you to-night," he said.

He groaned suddenly and leant forward, supporting his invisible head on invisible hands. "Kemp," he said, "I've had no sleep for near three days, except a couple of dozes of an hour or so. I must sleep soon."

"Well, have my room — have this room."

"But how can I sleep? If I sleep — he will get away. Ugh! What does it matter?"

"What's the shot wound?" asked Kemp, abruptly.

"Nothing — scratch and blood. Oh, God! How I want sleep!"

"Why not?"

The Invisible Man appeared to be regarding Kemp. "Because I've

a particular objection to being caught by my fellow-men," he said slowly.

Kemp started.

"Fool that I am!" said the Invisible Man, striking the table smartly. "I've put the idea into your head."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE INVISIBLE MAN SLEEPS

Exhausted and wounded as the Invisible Man was, he refused to accept Kemp's word that his freedom should be respected. He examined the two windows of the bedroom, drew up the blinds and opened the sashes, to confirm Kemp's statement that a retreat by them would be possible. Outside the night was very quiet and still, and the new moon was setting over the down. Then he examined the keys of the bedroom and the two dressing-room doors, to satisfy himself that these also could be made an assurance of freedom. Finally he expressed himself satisfied. He stood on the hearth rug and Kemp heard the sound of a yawn.

"I'm sorry," said the Invisible Man, "if I cannot tell you all that I have done to-night. But I am worn out. It's grotesque, no doubt. It's horrible! But believe me, Kemp, in spite of your arguments of this morning, it is quite a possible thing. I have made a discovery. I meant to keep it to myself. I can't. I must have a partner. And you.... We can do such things ... But to-morrow. Now, Kemp, I feel as though I must sleep or perish."

Kemp stood in the middle of the room staring at the headless garment. "I suppose I must leave you," he said. "It's — incredible. Three things happening like this, overturning all my preconceptions — would make me insane. But it's real! Is there anything more that I can get you?"

"Only bid me good-night," said Griffin.

"Good-night," said Kemp, and shook an invisible hand. He walked sideways to the door. Suddenly the dressing-gown walked quickly towards him. "Understand me!" said the dressing-gown. "No attempts to hamper me, or capture me! Or—"

Kemp's face changed a little. "I thought I gave you my word," he said.

Kemp closed the door softly behind him, and the key was turned upon him forthwith. Then, as he stood with an expression of passive amazement on his face, the rapid feet came to the door of the

dressing-room and that too was locked. Kemp slapped his brow with his hand. “Am I dreaming? Has the world gone mad — or have I?”

He laughed, and put his hand to the locked door. “Barred out of my own bedroom, by a flagrant absurdity!” he said.

He walked to the head of the staircase, turned, and stared at the locked doors. “It’s fact,” he said. He put his fingers to his slightly bruised neck. “Undeniable fact!

“But—”

He shook his head hopelessly, turned, and went downstairs.

He lit the dining-room lamp, got out a cigar, and began pacing the room, ejaculating. Now and then he would argue with himself.

“Invisible!” he said.

“Is there such a thing as an invisible animal? ... In the sea, yes. Thousands — millions. All the larvae, all the little nauplii and tornarias, all the microscopic things, the jelly-fish. In the sea there are more things invisible than visible! I never thought of that before. And in the ponds too! All those little pond-life things — specks of colourless translucent jelly! But in air? No!

“It can’t be.

“But after all — why not?

“If a man was made of glass he would still be visible.”

His meditation became profound. The bulk of three cigars had passed into the invisible or diffused as a white ash over the carpet before he spoke again. Then it was merely an exclamation. He turned aside, walked out of the room, and went into his little consulting-room and lit the gas there. It was a little room, because Dr. Kemp did not live by practice, and in it were the day’s newspapers. The morning’s paper lay carelessly opened and thrown aside. He caught it up, turned it over, and read the account of a “Strange Story from Iping” that the mariner at Port Stowe had spelt over so painfully to Mr. Marvel. Kemp read it swiftly.

“Wrapped up!” said Kemp. “Disguised! Hiding it! ‘No one seems to have been aware of his misfortune.’ What the devil *is* his game?”

He dropped the paper, and his eye went seeking. “Ah!” he said, and caught up the *St. James’ Gazette*, lying folded up as it arrived. “Now we shall get at the truth,” said Dr. Kemp. He rent the paper open; a couple of columns confronted him. “An Entire Village in

Sussex goes Mad" was the heading.

"Good Heavens!" said Kemp, reading eagerly an incredulous account of the events in Iping, of the previous afternoon, that have already been described. Over the leaf the report in the morning paper had been reprinted.

He re-read it. "Ran through the streets striking right and left. Jaffers insensible. Mr. Huxter in great pain — still unable to describe what he saw. Painful humiliation — vicar. Woman ill with terror! Windows smashed. This extraordinary story probably a fabrication. Too good not to print — *cum grano*!"

He dropped the paper and stared blankly in front of him. "Probably a fabrication!"

He caught up the paper again, and re-read the whole business. "But when does the Tramp come in? Why the deuce was he chasing a tramp?"

He sat down abruptly on the surgical bench. "He's not only invisible," he said, "but he's mad! Homicidal!"

When dawn came to mingle its pallor with the lamp-light and cigar smoke of the dining-room, Kemp was still pacing up and down, trying to grasp the incredible.

He was altogether too excited to sleep. His servants, descending sleepily, discovered him, and were inclined to think that over-study had worked this ill on him. He gave them extraordinary but quite explicit instructions to lay breakfast for two in the belvedere study — and then to confine themselves to the basement and ground-floor. Then he continued to pace the dining-room until the morning's paper came. That had much to say and little to tell, beyond the confirmation of the evening before, and a very badly written account of another remarkable tale from Port Burdock. This gave Kemp the essence of the happenings at the "Jolly Cricketers," and the name of Marvel. "He has made me keep with him twenty-four hours," Marvel testified. Certain minor facts were added to the Iping story, notably the cutting of the village telegraph-wire. But there was nothing to throw light on the connexion between the Invisible Man and the Tramp; for Mr. Marvel had supplied no information about the three books, or the money with which he was lined. The incredulous tone had vanished and a shoal of reporters and inquirers were already at

work elaborating the matter.

Kemp read every scrap of the report and sent his housemaid out to get every one of the morning papers she could. These also he devoured.

“He is invisible!” he said. “And it reads like rage growing to mania! The things he may do! The things he may do! And he’s upstairs free as the air. What on earth ought I to do?”

“For instance, would it be a breach of faith if — ? No.”

He went to a little untidy desk in the corner, and began a note. He tore this up half written, and wrote another. He read it over and considered it. Then he took an envelope and addressed it to “Colonel Adye, Port Burdock.”

The Invisible Man awoke even as Kemp was doing this. He awoke in an evil temper, and Kemp, alert for every sound, heard his pattering feet rush suddenly across the bedroom overhead. Then a chair was flung over and the wash-hand stand tumbler smashed. Kemp hurried upstairs and rapped eagerly.

CHAPTER XIX

CERTAIN FIRST PRINCIPLES

"What's the matter?" asked Kemp, when the Invisible Man admitted him.

"Nothing," was the answer.

"But, confound it! The smash?"

"Fit of temper," said the Invisible Man. "Forgot this arm; and it's sore."

"You're rather liable to that sort of thing."

"I am."

Kemp walked across the room and picked up the fragments of broken glass. "All the facts are out about you," said Kemp, standing up with the glass in his hand; "all that happened in Iping, and down the hill. The world has become aware of its invisible citizen. But no one knows you are here."

The Invisible Man swore.

"The secret's out. I gather it was a secret. I don't know what your plans are, but of course I'm anxious to help you."

The Invisible Man sat down on the bed.

"There's breakfast upstairs," said Kemp, speaking as easily as possible, and he was delighted to find his strange guest rose willingly. Kemp led the way up the narrow staircase to the belvedere.

"Before we can do anything else," said Kemp, "I must understand a little more about this invisibility of yours." He had sat down, after one nervous glance out of the window, with the air of a man who has talking to do. His doubts of the sanity of the entire business flashed and vanished again as he looked across to where Griffin sat at the breakfast-table — a headless, handless dressing-gown, wiping unseen lips on a miraculously held serviette.

"It's simple enough — and credible enough," said Griffin, putting the serviette aside and leaning the invisible head on an invisible hand.

"No doubt, to you, but—" Kemp laughed.

"Well, yes; to me it seemed wonderful at first, no doubt. But now,

great God! ... But we will do great things yet! I came on the stuff first at Chesilstowe."

"Chesilstowe?"

"I went there after I left London. You know I dropped medicine and took up physics? No; well, I did. *Light* fascinated me."

"Ah!"

"Optical density! The whole subject is a network of riddles — a network with solutions glimmering elusively through. And being but two-and-twenty and full of enthusiasm, I said, 'I will devote my life to this. This is worth while.' You know what fools we are at two-and-twenty?"

"Fools then or fools now," said Kemp.

"As though knowing could be any satisfaction to a man!

"But I went to work — like a slave. And I had hardly worked and thought about the matter six months before light came through one of the meshes suddenly — blindingly! I found a general principle of pigments and refraction — a formula, a geometrical expression involving four dimensions. Fools, common men, even common mathematicians, do not know anything of what some general expression may mean to the student of molecular physics. In the books — the books that tramp has hidden — there are marvels, miracles! But this was not a method, it was an idea, that might lead to a method by which it would be possible, without changing any other property of matter — except, in some instances colours — to lower the refractive index of a substance, solid or liquid, to that of air — so far as all practical purposes are concerned."

"Phew!" said Kemp. "That's odd! But still I don't see quite ... I can understand that thereby you could spoil a valuable stone, but personal invisibility is a far cry."

"Precisely," said Griffin. "But consider, visibility depends on the action of the visible bodies on light. Either a body absorbs light, or it reflects or refracts it, or does all these things. If it neither reflects nor refracts nor absorbs light, it cannot of itself be visible. You see an opaque red box, for instance, because the colour absorbs some of the light and reflects the rest, all the red part of the light, to you. If it did not absorb any particular part of the light, but reflected it all, then it would be a shining white box. Silver! A diamond box would neither

absorb much of the light nor reflect much from the general surface, but just here and there where the surfaces were favourable the light would be reflected and refracted, so that you would get a brilliant appearance of flashing reflections and translucencies — a sort of skeleton of light. A glass box would not be so brilliant, nor so clearly visible, as a diamond box, because there would be less refraction and reflection. See that? From certain points of view you would see quite clearly through it. Some kinds of glass would be more visible than others, a box of flint glass would be brighter than a box of ordinary window glass. A box of very thin common glass would be hard to see in a bad light, because it would absorb hardly any light and refract and reflect very little. And if you put a sheet of common white glass in water, still more if you put it in some denser liquid than water, it would vanish almost altogether, because light passing from water to glass is only slightly refracted or reflected or indeed affected in any way. It is almost as invisible as a jet of coal gas or hydrogen is in air. And for precisely the same reason!"

"Yes," said Kemp, "that is pretty plain sailing."

"And here is another fact you will know to be true. If a sheet of glass is smashed, Kemp, and beaten into a powder, it becomes much more visible while it is in the air; it becomes at last an opaque white powder. This is because the powdering multiplies the surfaces of the glass at which refraction and reflection occur. In the sheet of glass there are only two surfaces; in the powder the light is reflected or refracted by each grain it passes through, and very little gets right through the powder. But if the white powdered glass is put into water, it forthwith vanishes. The powdered glass and water have much the same refractive index; that is, the light undergoes very little refraction or reflection in passing from one to the other.

"You make the glass invisible by putting it into a liquid of nearly the same refractive index; a transparent thing becomes invisible if it is put in any medium of almost the same refractive index. And if you will consider only a second, you will see also that the powder of glass might be made to vanish in air, if its refractive index could be made the same as that of air; for then there would be no refraction or reflection as the light passed from glass to air."

"Yes, yes," said Kemp. "But a man's not powdered glass!"

“No,” said Griffin. “He’s more transparent!”

“Nonsense!”

“That from a doctor! How one forgets! Have you already forgotten your physics, in ten years? Just think of all the things that are transparent and seem not to be so. Paper, for instance, is made up of transparent fibres, and it is white and opaque only for the same reason that a powder of glass is white and opaque. Oil white paper, fill up the interstices between the particles with oil so that there is no longer refraction or reflection except at the surfaces, and it becomes as transparent as glass. And not only paper, but cotton fibre, linen fibre, wool fibre, woody fibre, and *bone*, Kemp, *flesh*, Kemp, *hair*, Kemp, *nails* and *nerves*, Kemp, in fact the whole fabric of a man except the red of his blood and the black pigment of hair, are all made up of transparent, colourless tissue. So little suffices to make us visible one to the other. For the most part the fibres of a living creature are no more opaque than water.”

“Great Heavens!” cried Kemp. “Of course, of course! I was thinking only last night of the sea larvae and all jelly-fish!”

“*Now* you have me! And all that I knew and had in mind a year after I left London — six years ago. But I kept it to myself. I had to do my work under frightful disadvantages. Oliver, my professor, was a scientific bounder, a journalist by instinct, a thief of ideas — he was always prying! And you know the knavish system of the scientific world. I simply would not publish, and let him share my credit. I went on working; I got nearer and nearer making my formula into an experiment, a reality. I told no living soul, because I meant to flash my work upon the world with crushing effect and become famous at a blow. I took up the question of pigments to fill up certain gaps. And suddenly, not by design but by accident, I made a discovery in physiology.”

“Yes?”

“You know the red colouring matter of blood; it can be made white — colourless — and remain with all the functions it has now!”

Kemp gave a cry of incredulous amazement.

The Invisible Man rose and began pacing the little study. “You may well exclaim. I remember that night. It was late at night — in the daytime one was bothered with the gaping, silly students — and I

worked then sometimes till dawn. It came suddenly, splendid and complete in my mind. I was alone; the laboratory was still, with the tall lights burning brightly and silently. In all my great moments I have been alone. ‘One could make an animal — a tissue — transparent! One could make it invisible! All except the pigments — I could be invisible!’ I said, suddenly realising what it meant to be an albino with such knowledge. It was overwhelming. I left the filtering I was doing, and went and stared out of the great window at the stars. ‘I could be invisible!’ I repeated.

“To do such a thing would be to transcend magic. And I beheld, unclouded by doubt, a magnificent vision of all that invisibility might mean to a man — the mystery, the power, the freedom. Drawbacks I saw none. You have only to think! And I, a shabby, poverty-struck, hemmed-in demonstrator, teaching fools in a provincial college, might suddenly become — this. I ask you, Kemp if *you* ... Anyone, I tell you, would have flung himself upon that research. And I worked three years, and every mountain of difficulty I toiled over showed another from its summit. The infinite details! And the exasperation! A professor, a provincial professor, always prying. ‘When are you going to publish this work of yours?’ was his everlasting question. And the students, the cramped means! Three years I had of it —

“And after three years of secrecy and exasperation, I found that to complete it was impossible — impossible.”

“How?” asked Kemp.

“Money,” said the Invisible Man, and went again to stare out of the window.

He turned around abruptly. “I robbed the old man — robbed my father.

“The money was not his, and he shot himself.”

CHAPTER XX

AT THE HOUSE IN GREAT PORTLAND STREET

For a moment Kemp sat in silence, staring at the back of the headless figure at the window. Then he started, struck by a thought, rose, took the Invisible Man's arm, and turned him away from the outlook.

"You are tired," he said, "and while I sit, you walk about. Have my chair."

He placed himself between Griffin and the nearest window.

For a space Griffin sat silent, and then he resumed abruptly:

"I had left the Chesilstowe cottage already," he said, "when that happened. It was last December. I had taken a room in London, a large unfurnished room in a big ill-managed lodging-house in a slum near Great Portland Street. The room was soon full of the appliances I had bought with his money; the work was going on steadily, successfully, drawing near an end. I was like a man emerging from a thicket, and suddenly coming on some unmeaning tragedy. I went to bury him. My mind was still on this research, and I did not lift a finger to save his character. I remember the funeral, the cheap hearse, the scant ceremony, the windy frost-bitten hillside, and the old college friend of his who read the service over him — a shabby, black, bent old man with a snivelling cold.

"I remember walking back to the empty house, through the place that had once been a village and was now patched and tinkered by the jerry builders into the ugly likeness of a town. Every way the roads ran out at last into the desecrated fields and ended in rubble heaps and rank wet weeds. I remember myself as a gaunt black figure, going along the slippery, shiny pavement, and the strange sense of detachment I felt from the squalid respectability, the sordid commercialism of the place.

"I did not feel a bit sorry for my father. He seemed to me to be the victim of his own foolish sentimentality. The current cant required my attendance at his funeral, but it was really not my affair.

"But going along the High Street, my old life came back to me for a space, for I met the girl I had known ten years since. Our eyes met.

“Something moved me to turn back and talk to her. She was a very ordinary person.

“It was all like a dream, that visit to the old places. I did not feel then that I was lonely, that I had come out from the world into a desolate place. I appreciated my loss of sympathy, but I put it down to the general inanity of things. Re-entering my room seemed like the recovery of reality. There were the things I knew and loved. There stood the apparatus, the experiments arranged and waiting. And now there was scarcely a difficulty left, beyond the planning of details.

“I will tell you, Kemp, sooner or later, all the complicated processes. We need not go into that now. For the most part, saving certain gaps I chose to remember, they are written in cypher in those books that tramp has hidden. We must hunt him down. We must get those books again. But the essential phase was to place the transparent object whose refractive index was to be lowered between two radiating centres of a sort of ethereal vibration, of which I will tell you more fully later. No, not those Röntgen vibrations — I don’t know that these others of mine have been described. Yet they are obvious enough. I needed two little dynamos, and these I worked with a cheap gas engine. My first experiment was with a bit of white wool fabric. It was the strangest thing in the world to see it in the flicker of the flashes soft and white, and then to watch it fade like a wreath of smoke and vanish.

“I could scarcely believe I had done it. I put my hand into the emptiness, and there was the thing as solid as ever. I felt it awkwardly, and threw it on the floor. I had a little trouble finding it again.

“And then came a curious experience. I heard a miaow behind me, and turning, saw a lean white cat, very dirty, on the cistern cover outside the window. A thought came into my head. ‘Everything ready for you,’ I said, and went to the window, opened it, and called softly. She came in, purring — the poor beast was starving — and I gave her some milk. All my food was in a cupboard in the corner of the room. After that she went smelling round the room, evidently with the idea of making herself at home. The invisible rag upset her a bit; you should have seen her spit at it! But I made her comfortable on the pillow of my truckle-bed. And I gave her butter to get her to

wash."

"And you processed her?"

"I processed her. But giving drugs to a cat is no joke, Kemp! And the process failed."

"Failed!"

"In two particulars. These were the claws and the pigment stuff, what is it? — at the back of the eye in a cat. You know?"

"*Tapetum*."

"Yes, the *tapetum*. It didn't go. After I'd given the stuff to bleach the blood and done certain other things to her, I gave the beast opium, and put her and the pillow she was sleeping on, on the apparatus. And after all the rest had faded and vanished, there remained two little ghosts of her eyes."

"Odd!"

"I can't explain it. She was bandaged and clamped, of course — so I had her safe; but she woke while she was still misty, and miaowed dismally, and someone came knocking. It was an old woman from downstairs, who suspected me of vivisecting — a drink-sodden old creature, with only a white cat to care for in all the world. I whipped out some chloroform, applied it, and answered the door. 'Did I hear a cat?' she asked. 'My cat?' 'Not here,' said I, very politely. She was a little doubtful and tried to peer past me into the room; strange enough to her no doubt — bare walls, uncurtained windows, truckle-bed, with the gas engine vibrating, and the seethe of the radiant points, and that faint ghastly stinging of chloroform in the air. She had to be satisfied at last and went away again."

"How long did it take?" asked Kemp.

"Three or four hours — the cat. The bones and sinews and the fat were the last to go, and the tips of the coloured hairs. And, as I say, the back part of the eye, tough, iridescent stuff it is, wouldn't go at all.

"It was night outside long before the business was over, and nothing was to be seen but the dim eyes and the claws. I stopped the gas engine, felt for and stroked the beast, which was still insensible, and then, being tired, left it sleeping on the invisible pillow and went to bed. I found it hard to sleep. I lay awake thinking weak aimless stuff, going over the experiment over and over again, or dreaming

feverishly of things growing misty and vanishing about me, until everything, the ground I stood on, vanished, and so I came to that sickly falling nightmare one gets. About two, the cat began miaowing about the room. I tried to hush it by talking to it, and then I decided to turn it out. I remember the shock I had when striking a light — there were just the round eyes shining green — and nothing round them. I would have given it milk, but I hadn't any. It wouldn't be quiet, it just sat down and miaowed at the door. I tried to catch it, with an idea of putting it out of the window, but it wouldn't be caught, it vanished. Then it began miaowing in different parts of the room. At last I opened the window and made a bustle. I suppose it went out at last. I never saw any more of it.

"Then — Heaven knows why — I fell thinking of my father's funeral again, and the dismal windy hillside, until the day had come. I found sleeping was hopeless, and, locking my door after me, wandered out into the morning streets."

"You don't mean to say there's an invisible cat at large!" said Kemp.

"If it hasn't been killed," said the Invisible Man. "Why not?"

"Why not?" said Kemp. "I didn't mean to interrupt."

"It's very probably been killed," said the Invisible Man. "It was alive four days after, I know, and down a grating in Great Titchfield Street; because I saw a crowd round the place, trying to see whence the miaowing came."

He was silent for the best part of a minute. Then he resumed abruptly:

"I remember that morning before the change very vividly. I must have gone up Great Portland Street. I remember the barracks in Albany Street, and the horse soldiers coming out, and at last I found the summit of Primrose Hill. It was a sunny day in January — one of those sunny, frosty days that came before the snow this year. My weary brain tried to formulate the position, to plot out a plan of action.

"I was surprised to find, now that my prize was within my grasp, how inconclusive its attainment seemed. As a matter of fact I was worked out; the intense stress of nearly four years' continuous work left me incapable of any strength of feeling. I was apathetic, and I

tried in vain to recover the enthusiasm of my first inquiries, the passion of discovery that had enabled me to compass even the downfall of my father's grey hairs. Nothing seemed to matter. I saw pretty clearly this was a transient mood, due to overwork and want of sleep, and that either by drugs or rest it would be possible to recover my energies.

"All I could think clearly was that the thing had to be carried through; the fixed idea still ruled me. And soon, for the money I had was almost exhausted. I looked about me at the hillside, with children playing and girls watching them, and tried to think of all the fantastic advantages an invisible man would have in the world. After a time I crawled home, took some food and a strong dose of strychnine, and went to sleep in my clothes on my unmade bed. Strychnine is a grand tonic, Kemp, to take the flabbiness out of a man."

"It's the devil," said Kemp. "It's the palaeolithic in a bottle."

"I awoke vastly invigorated and rather irritable. You know?"

"I know the stuff."

"And there was someone rapping at the door. It was my landlord with threats and inquiries, an old Polish Jew in a long grey coat and greasy slippers. I had been tormenting a cat in the night, he was sure — the old woman's tongue had been busy. He insisted on knowing all about it. The laws in this country against vivisection were very severe — he might be liable. I denied the cat. Then the vibration of the little gas engine could be felt all over the house, he said. That was true, certainly. He edged round me into the room, peering about over his German-silver spectacles, and a sudden dread came into my mind that he might carry away something of my secret. I tried to keep between him and the concentrating apparatus I had arranged, and that only made him more curious. What was I doing? Why was I always alone and secretive? Was it legal? Was it dangerous? I paid nothing but the usual rent. His had always been a most respectable house — in a disreputable neighbourhood. Suddenly my temper gave way. I told him to get out. He began to protest, to jabber of his right of entry. In a moment I had him by the collar; something ripped, and he went spinning out into his own passage. I slammed and locked the door and sat down quivering.

“He made a fuss outside, which I disregarded, and after a time he went away.

“But this brought matters to a crisis. I did not know what he would do, nor even what he had the power to do. To move to fresh apartments would have meant delay; altogether I had barely twenty pounds left in the world, for the most part in a bank — and I could not afford that. Vanish! It was irresistible. Then there would be an inquiry, the sacking of my room.

“At the thought of the possibility of my work being exposed or interrupted at its very climax, I became very angry and active. I hurried out with my three books of notes, my cheque-book — the tramp has them now — and directed them from the nearest Post Office to a house of call for letters and parcels in Great Portland Street. I tried to go out noiselessly. Coming in, I found my landlord going quietly upstairs; he had heard the door close, I suppose. You would have laughed to see him jump aside on the landing as I came tearing after him. He glared at me as I went by him, and I made the house quiver with the slamming of my door. I heard him come shuffling up to my floor, hesitate, and go down. I set to work upon my preparations forthwith.

“It was all done that evening and night. While I was still sitting under the sickly, drowsy influence of the drugs that decolourise blood, there came a repeated knocking at the door. It ceased, footsteps went away and returned, and the knocking was resumed. There was an attempt to push something under the door — a blue paper. Then in a fit of irritation I rose and went and flung the door wide open. ‘Now then?’ said I.

“It was my landlord, with a notice of ejectment or something. He held it out to me, saw something odd about my hands, I expect, and lifted his eyes to my face.

“For a moment he gaped. Then he gave a sort of inarticulate cry, dropped candle and writ together, and went blundering down the dark passage to the stairs. I shut the door, locked it, and went to the looking-glass. Then I understood his terror.... My face was white — like white stone.

“But it was all horrible. I had not expected the suffering. A night of racking anguish, sickness and fainting. I set my teeth, though my

skin was presently afire, all my body afire; but I lay there like grim death. I understood now how it was the cat had howled until I chloroformed it. Lucky it was I lived alone and untended in my room. There were times when I sobbed and groaned and talked. But I stuck to it.... I became insensible and woke languid in the darkness.

"The pain had passed. I thought I was killing myself and I did not care. I shall never forget that dawn, and the strange horror of seeing that my hands had become as clouded glass, and watching them grow clearer and thinner as the day went by, until at last I could see the sickly disorder of my room through them, though I closed my transparent eyelids. My limbs became glassy, the bones and arteries faded, vanished, and the little white nerves went last. I gritted my teeth and stayed there to the end. At last only the dead tips of the fingernails remained, pallid and white, and the brown stain of some acid upon my fingers.

"I struggled up. At first I was as incapable as a swathed infant — stepping with limbs I could not see. I was weak and very hungry. I went and stared at nothing in my shaving-glass, at nothing save where an attenuated pigment still remained behind the retina of my eyes, fainter than mist. I had to hang on to the table and press my forehead against the glass.

"It was only by a frantic effort of will that I dragged myself back to the apparatus and completed the process.

"I slept during the forenoon, pulling the sheet over my eyes to shut out the light, and about midday I was awakened again by a knocking. My strength had returned. I sat up and listened and heard a whispering. I sprang to my feet and as noiselessly as possible began to detach the connections of my apparatus, and to distribute it about the room, so as to destroy the suggestions of its arrangement. Presently the knocking was renewed and voices called, first my landlord's, and then two others. To gain time I answered them. The invisible rag and pillow came to hand and I opened the window and pitched them out on to the cistern cover. As the window opened, a heavy crash came at the door. Someone had charged it with the idea of smashing the lock. But the stout bolts I had screwed up some days before stopped him. That startled me, made me angry. I began to tremble and do things hurriedly.

“I tossed together some loose paper, straw, packing paper and so forth, in the middle of the room, and turned on the gas. Heavy blows began to rain upon the door. I could not find the matches. I beat my hands on the wall with rage. I turned down the gas again, stepped out of the window on the cistern cover, very softly lowered the sash, and sat down, secure and invisible, but quivering with anger, to watch events. They split a panel, I saw, and in another moment they had broken away the staples of the bolts and stood in the open doorway. It was the landlord and his two step-sons, sturdy young men of three or four and twenty. Behind them fluttered the old hag of a woman from downstairs.

“You may imagine their astonishment to find the room empty. One of the younger men rushed to the window at once, flung it up and stared out. His staring eyes and thick-lipped bearded face came a foot from my face. I was half minded to hit his silly countenance, but I arrested my doubled fist. He stared right through me. So did the others as they joined him. The old man went and peered under the bed, and then they all made a rush for the cupboard. They had to argue about it at length in Yiddish and Cockney English. They concluded I had not answered them, that their imagination had deceived them. A feeling of extraordinary elation took the place of my anger as I sat outside the window and watched these four people — for the old lady came in, glancing suspiciously about her like a cat, trying to understand the riddle of my behaviour.

“The old man, so far as I could understand his *patois*, agreed with the old lady that I was a vivisectionist. The sons protested in garbled English that I was an electrician, and appealed to the dynamos and radiators. They were all nervous about my arrival, although I found subsequently that they had bolted the front door. The old lady peered into the cupboard and under the bed, and one of the young men pushed up the register and stared up the chimney. One of my fellow lodgers, a coster-monger who shared the opposite room with a butcher, appeared on the landing, and he was called in and told incoherent things.

“It occurred to me that the radiators, if they fell into the hands of some acute well-educated person, would give me away too much, and watching my opportunity, I came into the room and tilted one of

the little dynamos off its fellow on which it was standing, and smashed both apparatus. Then, while they were trying to explain the smash, I dodged out of the room and went softly downstairs.

"I went into one of the sitting-rooms and waited until they came down, still speculating and argumentative, all a little disappointed at finding no 'horrors,' and all a little puzzled how they stood legally towards me. Then I slipped up again with a box of matches, fired my heap of paper and rubbish, put the chairs and bedding thereby, led the gas to the affair, by means of an india-rubber tube, and waving a farewell to the room left it for the last time."

"You fired the house!" exclaimed Kemp.

"Fired the house. It was the only way to cover my trail — and no doubt it was insured. I slipped the bolts of the front door quietly and went out into the street. I was invisible, and I was only just beginning to realise the extraordinary advantage my invisibility gave me. My head was already teeming with plans of all the wild and wonderful things I had now impunity to do."

CHAPTER XXI

IN OXFORD STREET

"In going downstairs the first time I found an unexpected difficulty because I could not see my feet; indeed I stumbled twice, and there was an unaccustomed clumsiness in gripping the bolt. By not looking down, however, I managed to walk on the level passably well.

"My mood, I say, was one of exaltation. I felt as a seeing man might do, with padded feet and noiseless clothes, in a city of the blind. I experienced a wild impulse to jest, to startle people, to clap men on the back, fling people's hats astray, and generally revel in my extraordinary advantage.

"But hardly had I emerged upon Great Portland Street, however (my lodging was close to the big draper's shop there), when I heard a clashing concussion and was hit violently behind, and turning saw a man carrying a basket of soda-water syphons, and looking in amazement at his burden. Although the blow had really hurt me, I found something so irresistible in his astonishment that I laughed aloud. 'The devil's in the basket,' I said, and suddenly twisted it out of his hand. He let go incontinently, and I swung the whole weight into the air.

"But a fool of a cabman, standing outside a public house, made a sudden rush for this, and his extending fingers took me with excruciating violence under the ear. I let the whole down with a smash on the cabman, and then, with shouts and the clatter of feet about me, people coming out of shops, vehicles pulling up, I realised what I had done for myself, and cursing my folly, backed against a shop window and prepared to dodge out of the confusion. In a moment I should be wedged into a crowd and inevitably discovered. I pushed by a butcher boy, who luckily did not turn to see the nothingness that shoved him aside, and dodged behind the cab-man's four-wheeler. I do not know how they settled the business. I hurried straight across the road, which was happily clear, and hardly heeding which way I went, in the fright of detection the incident had given me, plunged into the afternoon throng of Oxford Street.

“I tried to get into the stream of people, but they were too thick for me, and in a moment my heels were being trodden upon. I took to the gutter, the roughness of which I found painful to my feet, and forthwith the shaft of a crawling hansom dug me forcibly under the shoulder blade, reminding me that I was already bruised severely. I staggered out of the way of the cab, avoided a perambulator by a convulsive movement, and found myself behind the hansom. A happy thought saved me, and as this drove slowly along I followed in its immediate wake, trembling and astonished at the turn of my adventure. And not only trembling, but shivering. It was a bright day in January and I was stark naked and the thin slime of mud that covered the road was freezing. Foolish as it seems to me now, I had not reckoned that, transparent or not, I was still amenable to the weather and all its consequences.

“Then suddenly a bright idea came into my head. I ran round and got into the cab. And so, shivering, scared, and sniffing with the first intimations of a cold, and with the bruises in the small of my back growing upon my attention, I drove slowly along Oxford Street and past Tottenham Court Road. My mood was as different from that in which I had sallied forth ten minutes ago as it is possible to imagine. This invisibility indeed! The one thought that possessed me was — how was I to get out of the scrape I was in.

“We crawled past Mudie’s, and there a tall woman with five or six yellow-labelled books hailed my cab, and I sprang out just in time to escape her, shaving a railway van narrowly in my flight. I made off up the roadway to Bloomsbury Square, intending to strike north past the Museum and so get into the quiet district. I was now cruelly chilled, and the strangeness of my situation so unnerved me that I whimpered as I ran. At the northward corner of the Square a little white dog ran out of the Pharmaceutical Society’s offices, and incontinently made for me, nose down.

“I had never realised it before, but the nose is to the mind of a dog what the eye is to the mind of a seeing man. Dogs perceive the scent of a man moving as men perceive his vision. This brute began barking and leaping, showing, as it seemed to me, only too plainly that he was aware of me. I crossed Great Russell Street, glancing over my shoulder as I did so, and went some way along Montague

Street before I realised what I was running towards.

"Then I became aware of a blare of music, and looking along the street saw a number of people advancing out of Russell Square, red shirts, and the banner of the Salvation Army to the fore. Such a crowd, chanting in the roadway and scoffing on the pavement, I could not hope to penetrate, and dreading to go back and farther from home again, and deciding on the spur of the moment, I ran up the white steps of a house facing the museum railings, and stood there until the crowd should have passed. Happily the dog stopped at the noise of the band too, hesitated, and turned tail, running back to Bloomsbury Square again.

"On came the band, bawling with unconscious irony some hymn about 'When shall we see His face?' and it seemed an interminable time to me before the tide of the crowd washed along the pavement by me. Thud, thud, thud, came the drum with a vibrating resonance, and for the moment I did not notice two urchins stopping at the railings by me. 'See 'em,' said one. 'See what?' said the other. 'Why — them footmarks — bare. Like what you makes in mud.'

"I looked down and saw the youngsters had stopped and were gaping at the muddy footmarks I had left behind me up the newly whitened steps. The passing people elbowed and jostled them, but their confounded intelligence was arrested. 'Thud, thud, thud, when, thud, shall we see, thud, his face, thud, thud.' 'There's a barefoot man gone up them steps, or I don't know nothing,' said one. 'And he ain't never come down again. And his foot was a-bleeding.'

"The thick of the crowd had already passed. 'Looky there, Ted,' quoth the younger of the detectives, with the sharpness of surprise in his voice, and pointed straight to my feet. I looked down and saw at once the dim suggestion of their outline sketched in splashes of mud. For a moment I was paralysed.

"'Why, that's rum,' said the elder. 'Dashed rum! It's just like the ghost of a foot, ain't it?' He hesitated and advanced with outstretched hand. A man pulled up short to see what he was catching, and then a girl. In another moment he would have touched me. Then I saw what to do. I made a step, the boy started back with an exclamation, and with a rapid movement I swung myself over into the portico of the next house. But the smaller boy was sharp-eyed enough to follow the

movement, and before I was well down the steps and upon the pavement, he had recovered from his momentary astonishment and was shouting out that the feet had gone over the wall.

"They rushed round and saw my new footmarks flash into being on the lower step and upon the pavement. 'What's up?' asked someone. 'Feet! Look! Feet running!'

"Everybody in the road, except my three pursuers, was pouring along after the Salvation Army, and this blow not only impeded me but them. There was an eddy of surprise and interrogation. At the cost of bowling over one young fellow I got through, and in another moment I was rushing headlong round the circuit of Russell Square, with six or seven astonished people following my footmarks. There was no time for explanation, or else the whole host would have been after me.

"Twice I doubled round corners, thrice I crossed the road and came back upon my tracks, and then, as my feet grew hot and dry, the damp impressions began to fade. At last I had a breathing space and rubbed my feet clean with my hands, and so got away altogether. The last I saw of the chase was a little group of a dozen people perhaps, studying with infinite perplexity a slowly drying footprint that had resulted from a puddle in Tavistock Square, a footprint as isolated and incomprehensible to them as Crusoe's solitary discovery.

"This running warmed me to a certain extent, and I went on with a better courage through the maze of less frequented roads that runs hereabouts. My back had now become very stiff and sore, my tonsils were painful from the cabman's fingers, and the skin of my neck had been scratched by his nails; my feet hurt exceedingly and I was lame from a little cut on one foot. I saw in time a blind man approaching me, and fled limping, for I feared his subtle intuitions. Once or twice accidental collisions occurred and I left people amazed, with unaccountable curses ringing in their ears. Then came something silent and quiet against my face, and across the Square fell a thin veil of slowly falling flakes of snow. I had caught a cold, and do as I would I could not avoid an occasional sneeze. And every dog that came in sight, with its pointing nose and curious sniffing, was a terror to me.

“Then came men and boys running, first one and then others, and shouting as they ran. It was a fire. They ran in the direction of my lodging, and looking back down a street I saw a mass of black smoke streaming up above the roofs and telephone wires. It was my lodging burning; my clothes, my apparatus, all my resources indeed, except my cheque-book and the three volumes of memoranda that awaited me in Great Portland Street, were there. Burning! I had burnt my boats — if ever a man did! The place was blazing.”

The Invisible Man paused and thought. Kemp glanced nervously out of the window. “Yes?” he said. “Go on.”

CHAPTER XXII

IN THE EMPORIUM

"So last January, with the beginning of a snowstorm in the air about me — and if it settled on me it would betray me! — weary, cold, painful, inexpressibly wretched, and still but half convinced of my invisible quality, I began this new life to which I am committed. I had no refuge, no appliances, no human being in the world in whom I could confide. To have told my secret would have given me away — made a mere show and rarity of me. Nevertheless, I was half-minded to accost some passer-by and throw myself upon his mercy. But I knew too clearly the terror and brutal cruelty my advances would evoke. I made no plans in the street. My sole object was to get shelter from the snow, to get myself covered and warm; then I might hope to plan. But even to me, an Invisible Man, the rows of London houses stood latched, barred, and bolted impregnably.

"Only one thing could I see clearly before me — the cold exposure and misery of the snowstorm and the night.

"And then I had a brilliant idea. I turned down one of the roads leading from Gower Street to Tottenham Court Road, and found myself outside Omniums, the big establishment where everything is to be bought — you know the place: meat, grocery, linen, furniture, clothing, oil paintings even — a huge meandering collection of shops rather than a shop. I had thought I should find the doors open, but they were closed, and as I stood in the wide entrance a carriage stopped outside, and a man in uniform — you know the kind of personage with 'Omnium' on his cap — flung open the door. I contrived to enter, and walking down the shop — it was a department where they were selling ribbons and gloves and stockings and that kind of thing — came to a more spacious region devoted to picnic baskets and wicker furniture.

"I did not feel safe there, however; people were going to and fro, and I prowled restlessly about until I came upon a huge section in an upper floor containing multitudes of bedsteads, and over these I clambered, and found a resting-place at last among a huge pile of

folded flock mattresses. The place was already lit up and agreeably warm, and I decided to remain where I was, keeping a cautious eye on the two or three sets of shopmen and customers who were meandering through the place, until closing time came. Then I should be able, I thought, to rob the place for food and clothing, and disguised, prowl through it and examine its resources, perhaps sleep on some of the bedding. That seemed an acceptable plan. My idea was to procure clothing to make myself a muffled but acceptable figure, to get money, and then to recover my books and parcels where they awaited me, take a lodging somewhere and elaborate plans for the complete realisation of the advantages my invisibility gave me (as I still imagined) over my fellow-men.

"Closing time arrived quickly enough. It could not have been more than an hour after I took up my position on the mattresses before I noticed the blinds of the windows being drawn, and customers being marched doorward. And then a number of brisk young men began with remarkable alacrity to tidy up the goods that remained disturbed. I left my lair as the crowds diminished, and prowled cautiously out into the less desolate parts of the shop. I was really surprised to observe how rapidly the young men and women whipped away the goods displayed for sale during the day. All the boxes of goods, the hanging fabrics, the festoons of lace, the boxes of sweets in the grocery section, the displays of this and that, were being whipped down, folded up, slapped into tidy receptacles, and everything that could not be taken down and put away had sheets of some coarse stuff like sacking flung over them. Finally all the chairs were turned up on to the counters, leaving the floor clear. Directly each of these young people had done, he or she made promptly for the door with such an expression of animation as I have rarely observed in a shop assistant before. Then came a lot of youngsters scattering sawdust and carrying pails and brooms. I had to dodge to get out of the way, and as it was, my ankle got stung with the sawdust. For some time, wandering through the swathed and darkened departments, I could hear the brooms at work. And at last a good hour or more after the shop had been closed, came a noise of locking doors. Silence came upon the place, and I found myself wandering through the vast and intricate shops, galleries, show-

rooms of the place, alone. It was very still; in one place I remember passing near one of the Tottenham Court Road entrances and listening to the tapping of boot-heels of the passers-by.

"My first visit was to the place where I had seen stockings and gloves for sale. It was dark, and I had the devil of a hunt after matches, which I found at last in the drawer of the little cash desk. Then I had to get a candle. I had to tear down wrappings and ransack a number of boxes and drawers, but at last I managed to turn out what I sought; the box label called them lambswool pants, and lambswool vests. Then socks, a thick comforter, and then I went to the clothing place and got trousers, a lounge jacket, an overcoat and a slouch hat — a clerical sort of hat with the brim turned down. I began to feel a human being again, and my next thought was food.

"Upstairs was a refreshment department, and there I got cold meat. There was coffee still in the urn, and I lit the gas and warmed it up again, and altogether I did not do badly. Afterwards, prowling through the place in search of blankets — I had to put up at last with a heap of down quilts — I came upon a grocery section with a lot of chocolate and candied fruits, more than was good for me indeed — and some white burgundy. And near that was a toy department, and I had a brilliant idea. I found some artificial noses — dummy noses, you know, and I thought of dark spectacles. But Omniums had no optical department. My nose had been a difficulty indeed — I had thought of paint. But the discovery set my mind running on wigs and masks and the like. Finally I went to sleep in a heap of down quilts, very warm and comfortable.

"My last thoughts before sleeping were the most agreeable I had had since the change. I was in a state of physical serenity, and that was reflected in my mind. I thought that I should be able to slip out unobserved in the morning with my clothes upon me, muffling my face with a white wrapper I had taken, purchase, with the money I had taken, spectacles and so forth, and so complete my disguise. I lapsed into disorderly dreams of all the fantastic things that had happened during the last few days. I saw the ugly little Jew of a landlord vociferating in his rooms; I saw his two sons marvelling, and the wrinkled old woman's gnarled face as she asked for her cat. I experienced again the strange sensation of seeing the cloth disappear,

and so I came round to the windy hillside and the sniffing old clergyman mumbling ‘Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,’ at my father’s open grave.

“‘You also,’ said a voice, and suddenly I was being forced towards the grave. I struggled, shouted, appealed to the mourners, but they continued stonily following the service; the old clergyman, too, never faltered droning and sniffing through the ritual. I realised I was invisible and inaudible, that overwhelming forces had their grip on me. I struggled in vain, I was forced over the brink, the coffin rang hollow as I fell upon it, and the gravel came flying after me in spadefuls. Nobody heeded me, nobody was aware of me. I made convulsive struggles and awoke.

“The pale London dawn had come, the place was full of a chilly grey light that filtered round the edges of the window blinds. I sat up, and for a time I could not think where this ample apartment, with its counters, its piles of rolled stuff, its heap of quilts and cushions, its iron pillars, might be. Then, as recollection came back to me, I heard voices in conversation.

“Then far down the place, in the brighter light of some department which had already raised its blinds, I saw two men approaching. I scrambled to my feet, looking about me for some way of escape, and even as I did so the sound of my movement made them aware of me. I suppose they saw merely a figure moving quietly and quickly away. ‘Who’s that?’ cried one, and ‘Stop there!’ shouted the other. I dashed around a corner and came full tilt — a faceless figure, mind you! — on a lanky lad of fifteen. He yelled and I bowled him over, rushed past him, turned another corner, and by a happy inspiration threw myself behind a counter. In another moment feet went running past and I heard voices shouting, ‘All hands to the doors!’ asking what was ‘up,’ and giving one another advice how to catch me.

“Lying on the ground, I felt scared out of my wits. But — odd as it may seem — it did not occur to me at the moment to take off my clothes as I should have done. I had made up my mind, I suppose, to get away in them, and that ruled me. And then down the vista of the counters came a bawling of ‘Here he is!’

“I sprang to my feet, whipped a chair off the counter, and sent it whirling at the fool who had shouted, turned, came into another

round a corner, sent him spinning, and rushed up the stairs. He kept his footing, gave a view hallo, and came up the staircase hot after me. Up the staircase were piled a multitude of those bright-coloured pot things — what are they?"

"Art pots," suggested Kemp.

"That's it! Art pots. Well, I turned at the top step and swung round, plucked one out of a pile and smashed it on his silly head as he came at me. The whole pile of pots went headlong, and I heard shouting and footsteps running from all parts. I made a mad rush for the refreshment place, and there was a man in white like a man cook, who took up the chase. I made one last desperate turn and found myself among lamps and ironmongery. I went behind the counter of this, and waited for my cook, and as he bolted in at the head of the chase, I doubled him up with a lamp. Down he went, and I crouched down behind the counter and began whipping off my clothes as fast as I could. Coat, jacket, trousers, shoes were all right, but a lambswool vest fits a man like a skin. I heard more men coming, my cook was lying quiet on the other side of the counter, stunned or scared speechless, and I had to make another dash for it, like a rabbit hunted out of a wood-pile.

"'This way, policeman!' I heard someone shouting. I found myself in my bedstead storeroom again, and at the end of a wilderness of wardrobes. I rushed among them, went flat, got rid of my vest after infinite wriggling, and stood a free man again, panting and scared, as the policeman and three of the shopmen came round the corner. They made a rush for the vest and pants, and collared the trousers. 'He's dropping his plunder,' said one of the young men. 'He *must* be somewhere here.'

"But they did not find me all the same.

"I stood watching them hunt for me for a time, and cursing my ill-luck in losing the clothes. Then I went into the refreshment-room, drank a little milk I found there, and sat down by the fire to consider my position.

"In a little while two assistants came in and began to talk over the business very excitedly and like the fools they were. I heard a magnified account of my depredations, and other speculations as to my whereabouts. Then I fell to scheming again. The insurmountable

difficulty of the place, especially now it was alarmed, was to get any plunder out of it. I went down into the warehouse to see if there was any chance of packing and addressing a parcel, but I could not understand the system of checking. About eleven o'clock, the snow having thawed as it fell, and the day being finer and a little warmer than the previous one, I decided that the Emporium was hopeless, and went out again, exasperated at my want of success, with only the vaguest plans of action in my mind."

CHAPTER XXIII

IN DRURY LANE

"But you begin now to realise," said the Invisible Man, "the full disadvantage of my condition. I had no shelter — no covering — to get clothing was to forego all my advantage, to make myself a strange and terrible thing. I was fasting; for to eat, to fill myself with unassimilated matter, would be to become grotesquely visible again."

"I never thought of that," said Kemp.

"Nor had I. And the snow had warned me of other dangers. I could not go abroad in snow — it would settle on me and expose me. Rain, too, would make me a watery outline, a glistening surface of a man — a bubble. And fog — I should be like a fainter bubble in a fog, a surface, a greasy glimmer of humanity. Moreover, as I went abroad — in the London air — I gathered dirt about my ankles, floating smuts and dust upon my skin. I did not know how long it would be before I should become visible from that cause also. But I saw clearly it could not be for long.

"Not in London at any rate.

"I went into the slums towards Great Portland Street, and found myself at the end of the street in which I had lodged. I did not go that way, because of the crowd halfway down it opposite to the still smoking ruins of the house I had fired. My most immediate problem was to get clothing. What to do with my face puzzled me. Then I saw in one of those little miscellaneous shops — news, sweets, toys, stationery, belated Christmas tomfoolery, and so forth — an array of masks and noses. I realised that problem was solved. In a flash I saw my course. I turned about, no longer aimless, and went — circuitously in order to avoid the busy ways, towards the back streets north of the Strand; for I remembered, though not very distinctly where, that some theatrical costumiers had shops in that district.

"The day was cold, with a nipping wind down the northward running streets. I walked fast to avoid being overtaken. Every crossing was a danger, every passenger a thing to watch alertly. One man as I was about to pass him at the top of Bedford Street, turned

upon me abruptly and came into me, sending me into the road and almost under the wheel of a passing hansom. The verdict of the cab-rank was that he had had some sort of stroke. I was so unnerved by this encounter that I went into Covent Garden Market and sat down for some time in a quiet corner by a stall of violets, panting and trembling. I found I had caught a fresh cold, and had to turn out after a time lest my sneezes should attract attention.

"At last I reached the object of my quest, a dirty, fly-blown little shop in a by-way near Drury Lane, with a window full of tinsel robes, sham jewels, wigs, slippers, dominoes and theatrical photographs. The shop was old-fashioned and low and dark, and the house rose above it for four storeys, dark and dismal. I peered through the window and, seeing no one within, entered. The opening of the door set a clanking bell ringing. I left it open, and walked round a bare costume stand, into a corner behind a cheval glass. For a minute or so no one came. Then I heard heavy feet striding across a room, and a man appeared down the shop.

"My plans were now perfectly definite. I proposed to make my way into the house, secrete myself upstairs, watch my opportunity, and when everything was quiet, rummage out a wig, mask, spectacles, and costume, and go into the world, perhaps a grotesque but still a credible figure. And incidentally of course I could rob the house of any available money.

"The man who had just entered the shop was a short, slight, hunched, beetle-browed man, with long arms and very short bandy legs. Apparently I had interrupted a meal. He stared about the shop with an expression of expectation. This gave way to surprise, and then to anger, as he saw the shop empty. 'Damn the boys!' he said. He went to stare up and down the street. He came in again in a minute, kicked the door to with his foot spitefully, and went muttering back to the house door.

"I came forward to follow him, and at the noise of my movement he stopped dead. I did so too, startled by his quickness of ear. He slammed the house door in my face.

"I stood hesitating. Suddenly I heard his quick footsteps returning, and the door reopened. He stood looking about the shop like one who was still not satisfied. Then, murmuring to himself, he examined the

back of the counter and peered behind some fixtures. Then he stood doubtful. He had left the house door open and I slipped into the inner room.

"It was a queer little room, poorly furnished and with a number of big masks in the corner. On the table was his belated breakfast, and it was a confoundedly exasperating thing for me, Kemp, to have to sniff his coffee and stand watching while he came in and resumed his meal. And his table manners were irritating. Three doors opened into the little room, one going upstairs and one down, but they were all shut. I could not get out of the room while he was there; I could scarcely move because of his alertness, and there was a draught down my back. Twice I strangled a sneeze just in time.

"The spectacular quality of my sensations was curious and novel, but for all that I was heartily tired and angry long before he had done his eating. But at last he made an end and putting his beggarly crockery on the black tin tray upon which he had had his teapot, and gathering all the crumbs up on the mustard stained cloth, he took the whole lot of things after him. His burden prevented his shutting the door behind him — as he would have done; I never saw such a man for shutting doors — and I followed him into a very dirty underground kitchen and scullery. I had the pleasure of seeing him begin to wash up, and then, finding no good in keeping down there, and the brick floor being cold on my feet, I returned upstairs and sat in his chair by the fire. It was burning low, and scarcely thinking, I put on a little coal. The noise of this brought him up at once, and he stood aglare. He peered about the room and was within an ace of touching me. Even after that examination, he scarcely seemed satisfied. He stopped in the doorway and took a final inspection before he went down.

"I waited in the little parlour for an age, and at last he came up and opened the upstairs door. I just managed to get by him.

"On the staircase he stopped suddenly, so that I very nearly blundered into him. He stood looking back right into my face and listening. 'I could have sworn,' he said. His long hairy hand pulled at his lower lip. His eye went up and down the staircase. Then he grunted and went on up again.

"His hand was on the handle of a door, and then he stopped again

with the same puzzled anger on his face. He was becoming aware of the faint sounds of my movements about him. The man must have had diabolically acute hearing. He suddenly flashed into rage. 'If there's anyone in this house—' he cried with an oath, and left the threat unfinished. He put his hand in his pocket, failed to find what he wanted, and rushing past me went blundering noisily and pugnaciously downstairs. But I did not follow him. I sat on the head of the staircase until his return.

"Presently he came up again, still muttering. He opened the door of the room, and before I could enter, slammed it in my face.

"I resolved to explore the house, and spent some time in doing so as noiselessly as possible. The house was very old and tumble-down, damp so that the paper in the attics was peeling from the walls, and rat infested. Some of the door handles were stiff and I was afraid to turn them. Several rooms I did inspect were unfurnished, and others were littered with theatrical lumber, bought second-hand, I judged, from its appearance. In one room next to his I found a lot of old clothes. I began routing among these, and in my eagerness forgot again the evident sharpness of his ears. I heard a stealthy footstep and, looking up just in time, saw him peering in at the tumbled heap and holding an old-fashioned revolver in his hand. I stood perfectly still while he stared about open-mouthed and suspicious. 'It must have been her,' he said slowly. 'Damn her!'

"He shut the door quietly, and immediately I heard the key turn in the lock. Then his footsteps retreated. I realised abruptly that I was locked in. For a minute I did not know what to do. I walked from door to window and back, and stood perplexed. A gust of anger came upon me. But I decided to inspect the clothes before I did anything further, and my first attempt brought down a pile from an upper shelf. This brought him back, more sinister than ever. That time he actually touched me, jumped back with amazement and stood astonished in the middle of the room.

"Presently he calmed a little. 'Rats,' he said in an undertone, fingers on lips. He was evidently a little scared. I edged quietly out of the room, but a plank creaked. Then the infernal little brute started going all over the house, revolver in hand and locking door after door and pocketing the keys. When I realised what he was up to I had a fit

of rage — I could hardly control myself sufficiently to watch my opportunity. By this time I knew he was alone in the house, and so I made no more ado, but knocked him on the head."

"Knocked him on the head?" exclaimed Kemp.

"Yes — stunned him — as he was going downstairs. Hit him from behind with a stool that stood on the landing. He went downstairs like a bag of old boots."

"But — I say! The common conventions of humanity—"

"Are all very well for common people. But the point was, Kemp, that I had to get out of that house in a disguise without his seeing me. I couldn't think of any other way of doing it. And then I gagged him with a Louis Quatorze vest and tied him up in a sheet."

"Tied him up in a sheet!"

"Made a sort of bag of it. It was rather a good idea to keep the idiot scared and quiet, and a devilish hard thing to get out of — head away from the string. My dear Kemp, it's no good your sitting glaring as though I was a murderer. It had to be done. He had his revolver. If once he saw me he would be able to describe me—"

"But still," said Kemp, "in England — to-day. And the man was in his own house, and you were — well, robbing."

"Robbing! Confound it! You'll call me a thief next! Surely, Kemp, you're not fool enough to dance on the old strings. Can't you see my position?"

"And his too," said Kemp.

The Invisible Man stood up sharply. "What do you mean to say?"

Kemp's face grew a trifle hard. He was about to speak and checked himself. "I suppose, after all," he said with a sudden change of manner, "the thing had to be done. You were in a fix. But still—"

"Of course I was in a fix — an infernal fix. And he made me wild too — hunting me about the house, fooling about with his revolver, locking and unlocking doors. He was simply exasperating. You don't blame me, do you? You don't blame me?"

"I never blame anyone," said Kemp. "It's quite out of fashion. What did you do next?"

"I was hungry. Downstairs I found a loaf and some rank cheese — more than sufficient to satisfy my hunger. I took some brandy and water, and then went up past my impromptu bag — he was lying

quite still — to the room containing the old clothes. This looked out upon the street, two lace curtains brown with dirt guarding the window. I went and peered out through their interstices. Outside the day was bright — by contrast with the brown shadows of the dismal house in which I found myself, dazzlingly bright. A brisk traffic was going by, fruit carts, a hansom, a four-wheeler with a pile of boxes, a fishmonger's cart. I turned with spots of colour swimming before my eyes to the shadowy fixtures behind me. My excitement was giving place to a clear apprehension of my position again. The room was full of a faint scent of benzoline, used, I suppose, in cleaning the garments.

"I began a systematic search of the place. I should judge the hunchback had been alone in the house for some time. He was a curious person. Everything that could possibly be of service to me I collected in the clothes storeroom, and then I made a deliberate selection. I found a handbag I thought a suitable possession, and some powder, rouge, and sticking-plaster.

"I had thought of painting and powdering my face and all that there was to show of me, in order to render myself visible, but the disadvantage of this lay in the fact that I should require turpentine and other appliances and a considerable amount of time before I could vanish again. Finally I chose a mask of the better type, slightly grotesque but not more so than many human beings, dark glasses, greyish whiskers, and a wig. I could find no underclothing, but that I could buy subsequently, and for the time I swathed myself in calico dominoes and some white cashmere scarfs. I could find no socks, but the hunchback's boots were rather a loose fit and sufficed. In a desk in the shop were three sovereigns and about thirty shillings' worth of silver, and in a locked cupboard I burst in the inner room were eight pounds in gold. I could go forth into the world again, equipped.

"Then came a curious hesitation. Was my appearance really credible? I tried myself with a little bedroom looking-glass, inspecting myself from every point of view to discover any forgotten chink, but it all seemed sound. I was grotesque to the theatrical pitch, a stage miser, but I was certainly not a physical impossibility. Gathering confidence, I took my looking-glass down into the shop, pulled down the shop blinds, and surveyed myself from every point

of view with the help of the cheval glass in the corner.

"I spent some minutes screwing up my courage and then unlocked the shop door and marched out into the street, leaving the little man to get out of his sheet again when he liked. In five minutes a dozen turnings intervened between me and the costumier's shop. No one appeared to notice me very pointedly. My last difficulty seemed overcome."

He stopped again.

"And you troubled no more about the hunchback?" said Kemp.

"No," said the Invisible Man. "Nor have I heard what became of him. I suppose he untied himself or kicked himself out. The knots were pretty tight."

He became silent and went to the window and stared out.

"What happened when you went out into the Strand?"

"Oh! — disillusionment again. I thought my troubles were over. Practically I thought I had impunity to do whatever I chose, everything — save to give away my secret. So I thought. Whatever I did, whatever the consequences might be, was nothing to me. I had merely to fling aside my garments and vanish. No person could hold me. I could take my money where I found it. I decided to treat myself to a sumptuous feast, and then put up at a good hotel, and accumulate a new outfit of property. I felt amazingly confident; it's not particularly pleasant recalling that I was an ass. I went into a place and was already ordering lunch, when it occurred to me that I could not eat unless I exposed my invisible face. I finished ordering the lunch, told the man I should be back in ten minutes, and went out exasperated. I don't know if you have ever been disappointed in your appetite."

"Not quite so badly," said Kemp, "but I can imagine it."

"I could have smashed the silly devils. At last, faint with the desire for tasteful food, I went into another place and demanded a private room. 'I am disfigured,' I said. 'Badly.' They looked at me curiously, but of course it was not their affair — and so at last I got my lunch. It was not particularly well served, but it sufficed; and when I had had it, I sat over a cigar, trying to plan my line of action. And outside a snowstorm was beginning.

"The more I thought it over, Kemp, the more I realised what a

helpless absurdity an Invisible Man was — in a cold and dirty climate and a crowded civilised city. Before I made this mad experiment I had dreamt of a thousand advantages. That afternoon it seemed all disappointment. I went over the heads of the things a man reckons desirable. No doubt invisibility made it possible to get them, but it made it impossible to enjoy them when they are got. Ambition — what is the good of pride of place when you cannot appear there? What is the good of the love of woman when her name must needs be Delilah? I have no taste for politics, for the blackguardisms of fame, for philanthropy, for sport. What was I to do? And for this I had become a wrapped-up mystery, a swathed and bandaged caricature of a man!"

He paused, and his attitude suggested a roving glance at the window.

"But how did you get to Iping?" said Kemp, anxious to keep his guest busy talking.

"I went there to work. I had one hope. It was a half idea! I have it still. It is a full blown idea now. A way of getting back! Of restoring what I have done. When I choose. When I have done all I mean to do invisibly. And that is what I chiefly want to talk to you about now."

"You went straight to Iping?"

"Yes. I had simply to get my three volumes of memoranda and my cheque-book, my luggage and underclothing, order a quantity of chemicals to work out this idea of mine — I will show you the calculations as soon as I get my books — and then I started. Jove! I remember the snowstorm now, and the accursed bother it was to keep the snow from damping my pasteboard nose."

"At the end," said Kemp, "the day before yesterday, when they found you out, you rather — to judge by the papers—"

"I did. Rather. Did I kill that fool of a constable?"

"No," said Kemp. "He's expected to recover."

"That's his luck, then. I clean lost my temper, the fools! Why couldn't they leave me alone? And that grocer lout?"

"There are no deaths expected," said Kemp.

"I don't know about that tramp of mine," said the Invisible Man, with an unpleasant laugh.

"By Heaven, Kemp, you don't know what rage *is*! ... To have

worked for years, to have planned and plotted, and then to get some fumbling purblind idiot messing across your course! ... Every conceivable sort of silly creature that has ever been created has been sent to cross me.

"If I have much more of it, I shall go wild — I shall start mowing 'em.

"As it is, they've made things a thousand times more difficult."

"No doubt it's exasperating," said Kemp, drily.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PLAN THAT FAILED

"But now," said Kemp, with a side glance out of the window, "what are we to do?"

He moved nearer his guest as he spoke in such a manner as to prevent the possibility of a sudden glimpse of the three men who were advancing up the hill road — with an intolerable slowness, as it seemed to Kemp.

"What were you planning to do when you were heading for Port Burdock? *Had* you any plan?"

"I was going to clear out of the country. But I have altered that plan rather since seeing you. I thought it would be wise, now the weather is hot and invisibility possible, to make for the South. Especially as my secret was known, and everyone would be on the lookout for a masked and muffled man. You have a line of steamers from here to France. My idea was to get aboard one and run the risks of the passage. Thence I could go by train into Spain, or else get to Algiers. It would not be difficult. There a man might always be invisible — and yet live. And do things. I was using that tramp as a money box and luggage carrier, until I decided how to get my books and things sent over to meet me."

"That's clear."

"And then the filthy brute must needs try and rob me! He *has* hidden my books, Kemp. Hidden my books! If I can lay my hands on him!"

"Best plan to get the books out of him first."

"But where is he? Do you know?"

"He's in the town police station, locked up, by his own request, in the strongest cell in the place."

"Cur!" said the Invisible Man.

"But that hangs up your plans a little."

"We must get those books; those books are vital."

"Certainly," said Kemp, a little nervously, wondering if he heard footsteps outside. "Certainly we must get those books. But that won't

be difficult, if he doesn't know they're for you."

"No," said the Invisible Man, and thought.

Kemp tried to think of something to keep the talk going, but the Invisible Man resumed of his own accord.

"Blundering into your house, Kemp," he said, "changes all my plans. For you are a man that can understand. In spite of all that has happened, in spite of this publicity, of the loss of my books, of what I have suffered, there still remain great possibilities, huge possibilities —"

"You have told no one I am here?" he asked abruptly.

Kemp hesitated. "That was implied," he said.

"No one?" insisted Griffin.

"Not a soul."

"Ah! Now—" The Invisible Man stood up, and sticking his arms akimbo began to pace the study.

"I made a mistake, Kemp, a huge mistake, in carrying this thing through alone. I have wasted strength, time, opportunities. Alone — it is wonderful how little a man can do alone! To rob a little, to hurt a little, and there is the end.

"What I want, Kemp, is a goal-keeper, a helper, and a hiding-place, an arrangement whereby I can sleep and eat and rest in peace, and unsuspected. I must have a confederate. With a confederate, with food and rest — a thousand things are possible.

"Hitherto I have gone on vague lines. We have to consider all that invisibility means, all that it does not mean. It means little advantage for eavesdropping and so forth — one makes sounds. It's of little help — a little help perhaps — in housebreaking and so forth. Once you've caught me you could easily imprison me. But on the other hand I am hard to catch. This invisibility, in fact, is only good in two cases: It's useful in getting away, it's useful in approaching. It's particularly useful, therefore, in killing. I can walk round a man, whatever weapon he has, choose my point, strike as I like. Dodge as I like. Escape as I like."

Kemp's hand went to his moustache. Was that a movement downstairs?

"And it is killing we must do, Kemp."

"It is killing we must do," repeated Kemp. "I'm listening to your

plan, Griffin, but I'm not agreeing, mind. *Why* killing?"

"Not wanton killing, but a judicious slaying. The point is, they know there is an Invisible Man — as well as we know there is an Invisible Man. And that Invisible Man, Kemp, must now establish a Reign of Terror. Yes; no doubt it's startling. But I mean it. A Reign of Terror. He must take some town like your Burdock and terrify and dominate it. He must issue his orders. He can do that in a thousand ways — scraps of paper thrust under doors would suffice. And all who disobey his orders he must kill, and kill all who would defend them."

"Humph!" said Kemp, no longer listening to Griffin but to the sound of his front door opening and closing.

"It seems to me, Griffin," he said, to cover his wandering attention, "that your confederate would be in a difficult position."

"No one would know he was a confederate," said the Invisible Man, eagerly. And then suddenly, "Hush! What's that downstairs?"

"Nothing," said Kemp, and suddenly began to speak loud and fast. "I don't agree to this, Griffin," he said. "Understand me, I don't agree to this. Why dream of playing a game against the race? How can you hope to gain happiness? Don't be a lone wolf. Publish your results; take the world — take the nation at least — into your confidence. Think what you might do with a million helpers—"

The Invisible Man interrupted — arm extended. "There are footsteps coming upstairs," he said in a low voice.

"Nonsense," said Kemp.

"Let me see," said the Invisible Man, and advanced, arm extended, to the door.

And then things happened very swiftly. Kemp hesitated for a second and then moved to intercept him. The Invisible Man started and stood still. "Traitor!" cried the Voice, and suddenly the dressing-gown opened, and sitting down the Unseen began to disrobe. Kemp made three swift steps to the door, and forthwith the Invisible Man — his legs had vanished — sprang to his feet with a shout. Kemp flung the door open.

As it opened, there came a sound of hurrying feet downstairs and voices.

With a quick movement Kemp thrust the Invisible Man back,

sprang aside, and slammed the door. The key was outside and ready. In another moment Griffin would have been alone in the belvedere study, a prisoner. Save for one little thing. The key had been slipped in hastily that morning. As Kemp slammed the door it fell noisily upon the carpet.

Kemp's face became white. He tried to grip the door handle with both hands. For a moment he stood lugging. Then the door gave six inches. But he got it closed again. The second time it was jerked a foot wide, and the dressing-gown came wedging itself into the opening. His throat was gripped by invisible fingers, and he left his hold on the handle to defend himself. He was forced back, tripped and pitched heavily into the corner of the landing. The empty dressing-gown was flung on the top of him.

Halfway up the staircase was Colonel Adye, the recipient of Kemp's letter, the chief of the Burdock police. He was staring aghast at the sudden appearance of Kemp, followed by the extraordinary sight of clothing tossing empty in the air. He saw Kemp felled, and struggling to his feet. He saw him rush forward, and go down again, felled like an ox.

Then suddenly he was struck violently. By nothing! A vast weight, it seemed, leapt upon him, and he was hurled headlong down the staircase, with a grip on his throat and a knee in his groin. An invisible foot trod on his back, a ghostly patter passed downstairs, he heard the two police officers in the hall shout and run, and the front door of the house slammed violently.

He rolled over and sat up staring. He saw, staggering down the staircase, Kemp, dusty and disheveled, one side of his face white from a blow, his lip bleeding, and a pink dressing-gown and some underclothing held in his arms.

"My God!" cried Kemp, "the game's up! He's gone!"

CHAPTER XXV

THE HUNTING OF THE INVISIBLE MAN

For a space Kemp was too inarticulate to make Adye understand the swift things that had just happened. They stood on the landing, Kemp speaking swiftly, the grotesque swathings of Griffin still on his arm. But presently Adye began to grasp something of the situation.

"He is mad," said Kemp; "inhuman. He is pure selfishness. He thinks of nothing but his own advantage, his own safety. I have listened to such a story this morning of brutal self-seeking.... He has wounded men. He will kill them unless we can prevent him. He will create a panic. Nothing can stop him. He is going out now — furious!"

"He must be caught," said Adye. "That is certain."

"But how?" cried Kemp, and suddenly became full of ideas. "You must begin at once. You must set every available man to work; you must prevent his leaving this district. Once he gets away, he may go through the countryside as he wills, killing and maiming. He dreams of a reign of terror! A reign of terror, I tell you. You must set a watch on trains and roads and shipping. The garrison must help. You must wire for help. The only thing that may keep him here is the thought of recovering some books of notes he counts of value. I will tell you of that! There is a man in your police station — Marvel."

"I know," said Adye, "I know. Those books — yes. But the tramp...."

"Says he hasn't them. But he thinks the tramp has. And you must prevent him from eating or sleeping; day and night the country must be astir for him. Food must be locked up and secured, all food, so that he will have to break his way to it. The houses everywhere must be barred against him. Heaven send us cold nights and rain! The whole country-side must begin hunting and keep hunting. I tell you, Adye, he is a danger, a disaster; unless he is pinned and secured, it is frightful to think of the things that may happen."

"What else can we do?" said Adye. "I must go down at once and begin organising. But why not come? Yes — you come too! Come,

and we must hold a sort of council of war — get Hopps to help — and the railway managers. By Jove! it's urgent. Come along — tell me as we go. What else is there we can do? Put that stuff down."

In another moment Adye was leading the way downstairs. They found the front door open and the policemen standing outside staring at empty air. "He's got away, sir," said one.

"We must go to the central station at once," said Adye. "One of you go on down and get a cab to come up and meet us — quickly. And now, Kemp, what else?"

"Dogs," said Kemp. "Get dogs. They don't see him, but they wind him. Get dogs."

"Good," said Adye. "It's not generally known, but the prison officials over at Halstead know a man with bloodhounds. Dogs. What else?"

"Bear in mind," said Kemp, "his food shows. After eating, his food shows until it is assimilated. So that he has to hide after eating. You must keep on beating. Every thicket, every quiet corner. And put all weapons — all implements that might be weapons, away. He can't carry such things for long. And what he can snatch up and strike men with must be hidden away."

"Good again," said Adye. "We shall have him yet!"

"And on the roads," said Kemp, and hesitated.

"Yes?" said Adye.

"Powdered glass," said Kemp. "It's cruel, I know. But think of what he may do!"

Adye drew the air in sharply between his teeth. "It's unsportsmanlike. I don't know. But I'll have powdered glass got ready. If he goes too far...."

"The man's become inhuman, I tell you," said Kemp. "I am as sure he will establish a reign of terror — so soon as he has got over the emotions of this escape — as I am sure I am talking to you. Our only chance is to be ahead. He has cut himself off from his kind. His blood be upon his own head."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WICKSTEED MURDER

The Invisible Man seems to have rushed out of Kemp's house in a state of blind fury. A little child playing near Kemp's gateway was violently caught up and thrown aside, so that its ankle was broken, and thereafter for some hours the Invisible Man passed out of human perceptions. No one knows where he went nor what he did. But one can imagine him hurrying through the hot June forenoon, up the hill and on to the open downland behind Port Burdock, raging and despairing at his intolerable fate, and sheltering at last, heated and weary, amid the thickets of Hintondean, to piece together again his shattered schemes against his species. That seems the most probable refuge for him, for there it was he re-asserted himself in a grimly tragical manner about two in the afternoon.

One wonders what his state of mind may have been during that time, and what plans he devised. No doubt he was almost ecstatically exasperated by Kemp's treachery, and though we may be able to understand the motives that led to that deceit, we may still imagine and even sympathise a little with the fury the attempted surprise must have occasioned. Perhaps something of the stunned astonishment of his Oxford Street experiences may have returned to him, for he had evidently counted on Kemp's co-operation in his brutal dream of a terrorised world. At any rate he vanished from human ken about midday, and no living witness can tell what he did until about half-past two. It was a fortunate thing, perhaps, for humanity, but for him it was a fatal inaction.

During that time a growing multitude of men scattered over the countryside were busy. In the morning he had still been simply a legend, a terror; in the afternoon, by virtue chiefly of Kemp's drily worded proclamation, he was presented as a tangible antagonist, to be wounded, captured, or overcome, and the countryside began organising itself with inconceivable rapidity. By two o'clock even he might still have removed himself out of the district by getting aboard a train, but after two that became impossible. Every passenger train

along the lines on a great parallelogram between Southampton, Manchester, Brighton and Horsham, travelled with locked doors, and the goods traffic was almost entirely suspended. And in a great circle of twenty miles round Port Burdock, men armed with guns and bludgeons were presently setting out in groups of three and four, with dogs, to beat the roads and fields.

Mounted policemen rode along the country lanes, stopping at every cottage and warning the people to lock up their houses, and keep indoors unless they were armed, and all the elementary schools had broken up by three o'clock, and the children, scared and keeping together in groups, were hurrying home. Kemp's proclamation — signed indeed by Adye — was posted over almost the whole district by four or five o'clock in the afternoon. It gave briefly but clearly all the conditions of the struggle, the necessity of keeping the Invisible Man from food and sleep, the necessity for incessant watchfulness and for a prompt attention to any evidence of his movements. And so swift and decided was the action of the authorities, so prompt and universal was the belief in this strange being, that before nightfall an area of several hundred square miles was in a stringent state of siege. And before nightfall, too, a thrill of horror went through the whole watching nervous countryside. Going from whispering mouth to mouth, swift and certain over the length and breadth of the country, passed the story of the murder of Mr. Wicksteed.

If our supposition that the Invisible Man's refuge was the Hintondean thickets, then we must suppose that in the early afternoon he sallied out again bent upon some project that involved the use of a weapon. We cannot know what the project was, but the evidence that he had the iron rod in hand before he met Wicksteed is to me at least overwhelming.

Of course we can know nothing of the details of that encounter. It occurred on the edge of a gravel pit, not two hundred yards from Lord Burdock's lodge gate. Everything points to a desperate struggle — the trampled ground, the numerous wounds Mr. Wicksteed received, his splintered walking-stick; but why the attack was made, save in a murderous frenzy, it is impossible to imagine. Indeed the theory of madness is almost unavoidable. Mr. Wicksteed was a man of forty-five or forty-six, steward to Lord Burdock, of inoffensive

habits and appearance, the very last person in the world to provoke such a terrible antagonist. Against him it would seem the Invisible Man used an iron rod dragged from a broken piece of fence. He stopped this quiet man, going quietly home to his midday meal, attacked him, beat down his feeble defences, broke his arm, felled him, and smashed his head to a jelly.

Of course, he must have dragged this rod out of the fencing before he met his victim — he must have been carrying it ready in his hand. Only two details beyond what has already been stated seem to bear on the matter. One is the circumstance that the gravel pit was not in Mr. Wicksteed's direct path home, but nearly a couple of hundred yards out of his way. The other is the assertion of a little girl to the effect that, going to her afternoon school, she saw the murdered man "trotting" in a peculiar manner across a field towards the gravel pit. Her pantomime of his action suggests a man pursuing something on the ground before him and striking at it ever and again with his walking-stick. She was the last person to see him alive. He passed out of her sight to his death, the struggle being hidden from her only by a clump of beech trees and a slight depression in the ground.

Now this, to the present writer's mind at least, lifts the murder out of the realm of the absolutely wanton. We may imagine that Griffin had taken the rod as a weapon indeed, but without any deliberate intention of using it in murder. Wicksteed may then have come by and noticed this rod inexplicably moving through the air. Without any thought of the Invisible Man — for Port Burdock is ten miles away — he may have pursued it. It is quite conceivable that he may not even have heard of the Invisible Man. One can then imagine the Invisible Man making off — quietly in order to avoid discovering his presence in the neighbourhood, and Wicksteed, excited and curious, pursuing this unaccountably locomotive object — finally striking at it.

No doubt the Invisible Man could easily have distanced his middle-aged pursuer under ordinary circumstances, but the position in which Wicksteed's body was found suggests that he had the ill luck to drive his quarry into a corner between a drift of stinging nettles and the gravel pit. To those who appreciate the extraordinary irascibility of the Invisible Man, the rest of the encounter will be

easy to imagine.

But this is pure hypothesis. The only undeniable facts — for stories of children are often unreliable — are the discovery of Wicksteed's body, done to death, and of the blood-stained iron rod flung among the nettles. The abandonment of the rod by Griffin, suggests that in the emotional excitement of the affair, the purpose for which he took it — if he had a purpose — was abandoned. He was certainly an intensely egotistical and unfeeling man, but the sight of his victim, his first victim, bloody and pitiful at his feet, may have released some long pent fountain of remorse which for a time may have flooded whatever scheme of action he had contrived.

After the murder of Mr. Wicksteed, he would seem to have struck across the country towards the downland. There is a story of a voice heard about sunset by a couple of men in a field near Fern Bottom. It was wailing and laughing, sobbing and groaning, and ever and again it shouted. It must have been queer hearing. It drove up across the middle of a clover field and died away towards the hills.

That afternoon the Invisible Man must have learnt something of the rapid use Kemp had made of his confidences. He must have found houses locked and secured; he may have loitered about railway stations and prowled about inns, and no doubt he read the proclamations and realised something of the nature of the campaign against him. And as the evening advanced, the fields became dotted here and there with groups of three or four men, and noisy with the yelping of dogs. These men-hunters had particular instructions in the case of an encounter as to the way they should support one another. But he avoided them all. We may understand something of his exasperation, and it could have been none the less because he himself had supplied the information that was being used so remorselessly against him. For that day at least he lost heart; for nearly twenty-four hours, save when he turned on Wicksteed, he was a hunted man. In the night, he must have eaten and slept; for in the morning he was himself again, active, powerful, angry, and malignant, prepared for his last great struggle against the world.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SIEGE OF KEMP'S HOUSE

Kemp read a strange missive, written in pencil on a greasy sheet of paper.

"You have been amazingly energetic and clever," this letter ran, "though what you stand to gain by it I cannot imagine. You are against me. For a whole day you have chased me; you have tried to rob me of a night's rest. But I have had food in spite of you, I have slept in spite of you, and the game is only beginning. The game is only beginning. There is nothing for it, but to start the Terror. This announces the first day of the Terror. Port Burdock is no longer under the Queen, tell your Colonel of Police, and the rest of them; it is under me — the Terror! This is day one of year one of the new epoch — the Epoch of the Invisible Man. I am Invisible Man the First. To begin with the rule will be easy. The first day there will be one execution for the sake of example — a man named Kemp. Death starts for him to-day. He may lock himself away, hide himself away, get guards about him, put on armour if he likes — Death, the unseen Death, is coming. Let him take precautions; it will impress my people. Death starts from the pillar box by midday. The letter will fall in as the postman comes along, then off! The game begins. Death starts. Help him not, my people, lest Death fall upon you also. To-day Kemp is to die."

Kemp read this letter twice, "It's no hoax," he said. "That's his voice! And he means it."

He turned the folded sheet over and saw on the addressed side of it the postmark Hintondean, and the prosaic detail "2d. to pay."

He got up slowly, leaving his lunch unfinished — the letter had come by the one o'clock post — and went into his study. He rang for his housekeeper, and told her to go round the house at once, examine all the fastenings of the windows, and close all the shutters. He closed the shutters of his study himself. From a locked drawer in his bedroom he took a little revolver, examined it carefully, and put it into the pocket of his lounge jacket. He wrote a number of brief

notes, one to Colonel Adye, gave them to his servant to take, with explicit instructions as to her way of leaving the house. “There is no danger,” he said, and added a mental reservation, “to you.” He remained meditative for a space after doing this, and then returned to his cooling lunch.

He ate with gaps of thought. Finally he struck the table sharply. “We will have him!” he said; “and I am the bait. He will come too far.”

He went up to the belvedere, carefully shutting every door after him. “It’s a game,” he said, “an odd game — but the chances are all for me, Mr. Griffin, in spite of your invisibility. Griffin *contra mundum* ... with a vengeance.”

He stood at the window staring at the hot hillside. “He must get food every day — and I don’t envy him. Did he really sleep last night? Out in the open somewhere — secure from collisions. I wish we could get some good cold wet weather instead of the heat.

“He may be watching me now.”

He went close to the window. Something rapped smartly against the brickwork over the frame, and made him start violently back.

“I’m getting nervous,” said Kemp. But it was five minutes before he went to the window again. “It must have been a sparrow,” he said.

Presently he heard the front-door bell ringing, and hurried downstairs. He unbolted and unlocked the door, examined the chain, put it up, and opened cautiously without showing himself. A familiar voice hailed him. It was Adye.

“Your servant’s been assaulted, Kemp,” he said round the door.

“What!” exclaimed Kemp.

“Had that note of yours taken away from her. He’s close about here. Let me in.”

Kemp released the chain, and Adye entered through as narrow an opening as possible. He stood in the hall, looking with infinite relief at Kemp refastening the door. “Note was snatched out of her hand. Scared her horribly. She’s down at the station. Hysterics. He’s close here. What was it about?”

Kemp swore.

“What a fool I was,” said Kemp. “I might have known. It’s not an hour’s walk from Hintondean. Already?”

“What’s up?” said Adye.

“Look here!” said Kemp, and led the way into his study. He handed Adye the Invisible Man’s letter. Adye read it and whistled softly. “And you — ?” said Adye.

“Proposed a trap — like a fool,” said Kemp, “and sent my proposal out by a maid servant. To him.”

Adye followed Kemp’s profanity.

“He’ll clear out,” said Adye.

“Not he,” said Kemp.

A resounding smash of glass came from upstairs. Adye had a silvery glimpse of a little revolver half out of Kemp’s pocket. “It’s a window, upstairs!” said Kemp, and led the way up. There came a second smash while they were still on the staircase. When they reached the study they found two of the three windows smashed, half the room littered with splintered glass, and one big flint lying on the writing table. The two men stopped in the doorway, contemplating the wreckage. Kemp swore again, and as he did so the third window went with a snap like a pistol, hung starred for a moment, and collapsed in jagged, shivering triangles into the room.

“What’s this for?” said Adye.

“It’s a beginning,” said Kemp.

“There’s no way of climbing up here?”

“Not for a cat,” said Kemp.

“No shutters?”

“Not here. All the downstairs rooms — Hullo!”

Smash, and then whack of boards hit hard came from downstairs. “Confound him!” said Kemp. “That must be — yes — it’s one of the bedrooms. He’s going to do all the house. But he’s a fool. The shutters are up, and the glass will fall outside. He’ll cut his feet.”

Another window proclaimed its destruction. The two men stood on the landing perplexed. “I have it!” said Adye. “Let me have a stick or something, and I’ll go down to the station and get the bloodhounds put on. That ought to settle him! They’re hard by — not ten minutes—”

Another window went the way of its fellows.

“You haven’t a revolver?” asked Adye.

Kemp’s hand went to his pocket. Then he hesitated. “I haven’t

one — at least to spare."

"I'll bring it back," said Adye, "you'll be safe here."

Kemp, ashamed of his momentary lapse from truthfulness, handed him the weapon.

"Now for the door," said Adye.

As they stood hesitating in the hall, they heard one of the first-floor bedroom windows crack and clash. Kemp went to the door and began to slip the bolts as silently as possible. His face was a little paler than usual. "You must step straight out," said Kemp. In another moment Adye was on the doorstep and the bolts were dropping back into the staples. He hesitated for a moment, feeling more comfortable with his back against the door. Then he marched, upright and square, down the steps. He crossed the lawn and approached the gate. A little breeze seemed to ripple over the grass. Something moved near him. "Stop a bit," said a Voice, and Adye stopped dead and his hand tightened on the revolver.

"Well?" said Adye, white and grim, and every nerve tense.

"Oblige me by going back to the house," said the Voice, as tense and grim as Adye's.

"Sorry," said Adye a little hoarsely, and moistened his lips with his tongue. The Voice was on his left front, he thought. Suppose he were to take his luck with a shot?

"What are you going for?" said the Voice, and there was a quick movement of the two, and a flash of sunlight from the open lip of Adye's pocket.

Adye desisted and thought. "Where I go," he said slowly, "is my own business." The words were still on his lips, when an arm came round his neck, his back felt a knee, and he was sprawling backward. He drew clumsily and fired absurdly, and in another moment he was struck in the mouth and the revolver wrested from his grip. He made a vain clutch at a slippery limb, tried to struggle up and fell back. "Damn!" said Adye. The Voice laughed. "I'd kill you now if it wasn't the waste of a bullet," it said. He saw the revolver in mid-air, six feet off, covering him.

"Well?" said Adye, sitting up.

"Get up," said the Voice.

Adye stood up.

“Attention,” said the Voice, and then fiercely, “Don’t try any games. Remember I can see your face if you can’t see mine. You’ve got to go back to the house.”

“He won’t let me in,” said Adye.

“That’s a pity,” said the Invisible Man. “I’ve got no quarrel with you.”

Adye moistened his lips again. He glanced away from the barrel of the revolver and saw the sea far off very blue and dark under the midday sun, the smooth green down, the white cliff of the Head, and the multitudinous town, and suddenly he knew that life was very sweet. His eyes came back to this little metal thing hanging between heaven and earth, six yards away. “What am I to do?” he said sullenly.

“What am *I* to do?” asked the Invisible Man. “You will get help. The only thing is for you to go back.”

“I will try. If he lets me in will you promise not to rush the door?”

“I’ve got no quarrel with you,” said the Voice.

Kemp had hurried upstairs after letting Adye out, and now crouching among the broken glass and peering cautiously over the edge of the study window sill, he saw Adye stand parleying with the Unseen. “Why doesn’t he fire?” whispered Kemp to himself. Then the revolver moved a little and the glint of the sunlight flashed in Kemp’s eyes. He shaded his eyes and tried to see the source of the blinding beam.

“Surely!” he said, “Adye has given up the revolver.”

“Promise not to rush the door,” Adye was saying. “Don’t push a winning game too far. Give a man a chance.”

“You go back to the house. I tell you flatly I will not promise anything.”

Adye’s decision seemed suddenly made. He turned towards the house, walking slowly with his hands behind him. Kemp watched him — puzzled. The revolver vanished, flashed again into sight, vanished again, and became evident on a closer scrutiny as a little dark object following Adye. Then things happened very quickly. Adye leapt backwards, swung around, clutched at this little object, missed it, threw up his hands and fell forward on his face, leaving a little puff of blue in the air. Kemp did not hear the sound of the shot.

Adye writhed, raised himself on one arm, fell forward, and lay still.

For a space Kemp remained staring at the quiet carelessness of Adye's attitude. The afternoon was very hot and still, nothing seemed stirring in all the world save a couple of yellow butterflies chasing each other through the shrubbery between the house and the road gate. Adye lay on the lawn near the gate. The blinds of all the villas down the hill-road were drawn, but in one little green summer-house was a white figure, apparently an old man asleep. Kemp scrutinised the surroundings of the house for a glimpse of the revolver, but it had vanished. His eyes came back to Adye. The game was opening well.

Then came a ringing and knocking at the front door, that grew at last tumultuous, but pursuant to Kemp's instructions the servants had locked themselves into their rooms. This was followed by a silence. Kemp sat listening and then began peering cautiously out of the three windows, one after another. He went to the staircase head and stood listening uneasily. He armed himself with his bedroom poker, and went to examine the interior fastenings of the ground-floor windows again. Everything was safe and quiet. He returned to the belvedere. Adye lay motionless over the edge of the gravel just as he had fallen. Coming along the road by the villas were the housemaid and two policemen.

Everything was deadly still. The three people seemed very slow in approaching. He wondered what his antagonist was doing.

He started. There was a smash from below. He hesitated and went downstairs again. Suddenly the house resounded with heavy blows and the splintering of wood. He heard a smash and the destructive clang of the iron fastenings of the shutters. He turned the key and opened the kitchen door. As he did so, the shutters, split and splintering, came flying inward. He stood aghast. The window frame, save for one crossbar, was still intact, but only little teeth of glass remained in the frame. The shutters had been driven in with an axe, and now the axe was descending in sweeping blows upon the window frame and the iron bars defending it. Then suddenly it leapt aside and vanished. He saw the revolver lying on the path outside, and then the little weapon sprang into the air. He dodged back. The revolver cracked just too late, and a splinter from the edge of the

closing door flashed over his head. He slammed and locked the door, and as he stood outside he heard Griffin shouting and laughing. Then the blows of the axe with its splitting and smashing consequences, were resumed.

Kemp stood in the passage trying to think. In a moment the Invisible Man would be in the kitchen. This door would not keep him a moment, and then —

A ringing came at the front door again. It would be the policemen. He ran into the hall, put up the chain, and drew the bolts. He made the girl speak before he dropped the chain, and the three people blundered into the house in a heap, and Kemp slammed the door again.

"The Invisible Man!" said Kemp. "He has a revolver, with two shots — left. He's killed Adye. Shot him anyhow. Didn't you see him on the lawn? He's lying there."

"Who?" said one of the policemen.

"Adye," said Kemp.

"We came in the back way," said the girl.

"What's that smashing?" asked one of the policemen.

"He's in the kitchen — or will be. He has found an axe—"

Suddenly the house was full of the Invisible Man's resounding blows on the kitchen door. The girl stared towards the kitchen, shuddered, and retreated into the dining-room. Kemp tried to explain in broken sentences. They heard the kitchen door give.

"This way," said Kemp, starting into activity, and bundled the policemen into the dining-room doorway.

"Poker," said Kemp, and rushed to the fender. He handed the poker he had carried to the policeman and the dining-room one to the other. He suddenly flung himself backward.

"Whup!" said one policeman, ducked, and caught the axe on his poker. The pistol snapped its penultimate shot and ripped a valuable Sidney Cooper. The second policeman brought his poker down on the little weapon, as one might knock down a wasp, and sent it rattling to the floor.

At the first clash the girl screamed, stood screaming for a moment by the fireplace, and then ran to open the shutters — possibly with an idea of escaping by the shattered window.

The axe receded into the passage, and fell to a position about two feet from the ground. They could hear the Invisible Man breathing. “Stand away, you two,” he said. “I want that man Kemp.”

“We want you,” said the first policeman, making a quick step forward and wiping with his poker at the Voice. The Invisible Man must have started back, and he blundered into the umbrella stand.

Then, as the policeman staggered with the swing of the blow he had aimed, the Invisible Man countered with the axe, the helmet crumpled like paper, and the blow sent the man spinning to the floor at the head of the kitchen stairs. But the second policeman, aiming behind the axe with his poker, hit something soft that snapped. There was a sharp exclamation of pain and then the axe fell to the ground. The policeman wiped again at vacancy and hit nothing; he put his foot on the axe, and struck again. Then he stood, poker clubbed, listening intent for the slightest movement.

He heard the dining-room window open, and a quick rush of feet within. His companion rolled over and sat up, with the blood running down between his eye and ear. “Where is he?” asked the man on the floor.

“Don’t know. I’ve hit him. He’s standing somewhere in the hall. Unless he’s slipped past you. Doctor Kemp — sir.”

Pause.

“Doctor Kemp,” cried the policeman again.

The second policeman began struggling to his feet. He stood up. Suddenly the faint pad of bare feet on the kitchen stairs could be heard. “Yap!” cried the first policeman, and incontinently flung his poker. It smashed a little gas bracket.

He made as if he would pursue the Invisible Man downstairs. Then he thought better of it and stepped into the dining-room.

“Doctor Kemp—” he began, and stopped short.

“Doctor Kemp’s a hero,” he said, as his companion looked over his shoulder.

The dining-room window was wide open, and neither housemaid nor Kemp was to be seen.

The second policeman’s opinion of Kemp was terse and vivid.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE HUNTER HUNTED

Mr. Heelas, Mr. Kemp's nearest neighbour among the villa holders, was asleep in his summer house when the siege of Kemp's house began. Mr. Heelas was one of the sturdy minority who refused to believe "in all this nonsense" about an Invisible Man. His wife, however, as he was subsequently to be reminded, did. He insisted upon walking about his garden just as if nothing was the matter, and he went to sleep in the afternoon in accordance with the custom of years. He slept through the smashing of the windows, and then woke up suddenly with a curious persuasion of something wrong. He looked across at Kemp's house, rubbed his eyes and looked again. Then he put his feet to the ground, and sat listening. He said he was damned, but still the strange thing was visible. The house looked as though it had been deserted for weeks — after a violent riot. Every window was broken, and every window, save those of the belvedere study, was blinded by the internal shutters.

"I could have sworn it was all right" — he looked at his watch— "twenty minutes ago."

He became aware of a measured concussion and the clash of glass, far away in the distance. And then, as he sat open-mouthed, came a still more wonderful thing. The shutters of the drawing-room window were flung open violently, and the housemaid in her outdoor hat and garments, appeared struggling in a frantic manner to throw up the sash. Suddenly a man appeared beside her, helping her — Dr. Kemp! In another moment the window was open, and the housemaid was struggling out; she pitched forward and vanished among the shrubs. Mr. Heelas stood up, exclaiming vaguely and vehemently at all these wonderful things. He saw Kemp stand on the sill, spring from the window, and reappear almost instantaneously running along a path in the shrubbery and stooping as he ran, like a man who evades observation. He vanished behind a laburnum, and appeared again clambering over a fence that abutted on the open down. In a second he had tumbled over and was running at a tremendous pace

down the slope towards Mr. Heelas.

"Lord!" cried Mr. Heelas, struck with an idea; "it's that Invisible Man brute! It's right, after all!"

With Mr. Heelas to think things like that was to act, and his cook watching him from the top window was amazed to see him come pelting towards the house at a good nine miles an hour. There was a slamming of doors, a ringing of bells, and the voice of Mr. Heelas bellowing like a bull. "Shut the doors, shut the windows, shut everything! — the Invisible Man is coming!" Instantly the house was full of screams and directions, and scurrying feet. He ran himself to shut the French windows that opened on the veranda; as he did so Kemp's head and shoulders and knee appeared over the edge of the garden fence. In another moment Kemp had ploughed through the asparagus, and was running across the tennis lawn to the house.

"You can't come in," said Mr. Heelas, shutting the bolts. "I'm very sorry if he's after you, but you can't come in!"

Kemp appeared with a face of terror close to the glass, rapping and then shaking frantically at the French window. Then, seeing his efforts were useless, he ran along the veranda, vaulted the end, and went to hammer at the side door. Then he ran round by the side gate to the front of the house, and so into the hill-road. And Mr. Heelas staring from his window — a face of horror — had scarcely witnessed Kemp vanish, ere the asparagus was being trampled this way and that by feet unseen. At that Mr. Heelas fled precipitately upstairs, and the rest of the chase is beyond his purview. But as he passed the staircase window, he heard the side gate slam.

Emerging into the hill-road, Kemp naturally took the downward direction, and so it was he came to run in his own person the very race he had watched with such a critical eye from the belvedere study only four days ago. He ran it well, for a man out of training, and though his face was white and wet, his wits were cool to the last. He ran with wide strides, and wherever a patch of rough ground intervened, wherever there came a patch of raw flints, or a bit of broken glass shone dazzling, he crossed it and left the bare invisible feet that followed to take what line they would.

For the first time in his life Kemp discovered that the hill-road was indescribably vast and desolate, and that the beginnings of the

town far below at the hill foot were strangely remote. Never had there been a slower or more painful method of progression than running. All the gaunt villas, sleeping in the afternoon sun, looked locked and barred; no doubt they were locked and barred — by his own orders. But at any rate they might have kept a lookout for an eventuality like this! The town was rising up now, the sea had dropped out of sight behind it, and people down below were stirring. A tram was just arriving at the hill foot. Beyond that was the police station. Was that footsteps he heard behind him? Spurt.

The people below were staring at him, one or two were running, and his breath was beginning to saw in his throat. The tram was quite near now, and the "Jolly Cricketers" was noisily barring its doors. Beyond the tram were posts and heaps of gravel — the drainage works. He had a transitory idea of jumping into the tram and slamming the doors, and then he resolved to go for the police station. In another moment he had passed the door of the "Jolly Cricketers," and was in the blistering fag end of the street, with human beings about him. The tram driver and his helper — arrested by the sight of his furious haste — stood staring with the tram horses unhitched. Further on the astonished features of navvies appeared above the mounds of gravel.

His pace broke a little, and then he heard the swift pad of his pursuer, and leapt forward again. "The Invisible Man!" he cried to the navvies, with a vague indicative gesture, and by an inspiration leapt the excavation and placed a burly group between him and the chase. Then abandoning the idea of the police station he turned into a little side street, rushed by a greengrocer's cart, hesitated for the tenth of a second at the door of a sweetstuff shop, and then made for the mouth of an alley that ran back into the main Hill Street again. Two or three little children were playing here, and shrieked and scattered at his apparition, and forthwith doors and windows opened and excited mothers revealed their hearts. Out he shot into Hill Street again, three hundred yards from the tram-line end, and immediately he became aware of a tumultuous vociferation and running people.

He glanced up the street towards the hill. Hardly a dozen yards off ran a huge navvy, cursing in fragments and slashing viciously with a spade, and hard behind him came the tram conductor with his fists

clenched. Up the street others followed these two, striking and shouting. Down towards the town, men and women were running, and he noticed clearly one man coming out of a shop-door with a stick in his hand. “Spread out! Spread out!” cried some one. Kemp suddenly grasped the altered condition of the chase. He stopped, and looked round, panting. “He’s close here!” he cried. “Form a line across—”

He was hit hard under the ear, and went reeling, trying to face round towards his unseen antagonist. He just managed to keep his feet, and he struck a vain counter in the air. Then he was hit again under the jaw, and sprawled headlong on the ground. In another moment a knee compressed his diaphragm, and a couple of eager hands gripped his throat, but the grip of one was weaker than the other; he grasped the wrists, heard a cry of pain from his assailant, and then the spade of the navvy came whirling through the air above him, and struck something with a dull thud. He felt a drop of moisture on his face. The grip at his throat suddenly relaxed, and with a convulsive effort, Kemp loosed himself, grasped a limp shoulder, and rolled uppermost. He gripped the unseen elbows near the ground. “I’ve got him!” screamed Kemp. “Help! Help — hold! He’s down! Hold his feet!”

In another second there was a simultaneous rush upon the struggle, and a stranger coming into the road suddenly might have thought an exceptionally savage game of Rugby football was in progress. And there was no shouting after Kemp’s cry — only a sound of blows and feet and heavy breathing.

Then came a mighty effort, and the Invisible Man threw off a couple of his antagonists and rose to his knees. Kemp clung to him in front like a hound to a stag, and a dozen hands gripped, clutched, and tore at the Unseen. The tram conductor suddenly got the neck and shoulders and lugged him back.

Down went the heap of struggling men again and rolled over. There was, I am afraid, some savage kicking. Then suddenly a wild scream of “Mercy! Mercy!” that died down swiftly to a sound like choking.

“Get back, you fools!” cried the muffled voice of Kemp, and there was a vigorous shoving back of stalwart forms. “He’s hurt, I tell you.

Stand back!”

There was a brief struggle to clear a space, and then the circle of eager faces saw the doctor kneeling, as it seemed, fifteen inches in the air, and holding invisible arms to the ground. Behind him a constable gripped invisible ankles.

“Don’t you leave go of en,” cried the big navvy, holding a blood-stained spade; “he’s shamming.”

“He’s not shamming,” said the doctor, cautiously raising his knee; “and I’ll hold him.” His face was bruised and already going red; he spoke thickly because of a bleeding lip. He released one hand and seemed to be feeling at the face. “The mouth’s all wet,” he said. And then, “Good God!”

He stood up abruptly and then knelt down on the ground by the side of the thing unseen. There was a pushing and shuffling, a sound of heavy feet as fresh people turned up to increase the pressure of the crowd. People now were coming out of the houses. The doors of the “Jolly Cricketers” stood suddenly wide open. Very little was said.

Kemp felt about, his hand seeming to pass through empty air. “He’s not breathing,” he said, and then, “I can’t feel his heart. His side — ugh!”

Suddenly an old woman, peering under the arm of the big navvy, screamed sharply. “Looky there!” she said, and thrust out a wrinkled finger.

And looking where she pointed, everyone saw, faint and transparent as though it was made of glass, so that veins and arteries and bones and nerves could be distinguished, the outline of a hand, a hand limp and prone. It grew clouded and opaque even as they stared.

“Hullo!” cried the constable. “Here’s his feet a-showing!”

And so, slowly, beginning at his hands and feet and creeping along his limbs to the vital centres of his body, that strange change continued. It was like the slow spreading of a poison. First came the little white nerves, a hazy grey sketch of a limb, then the glassy bones and intricate arteries, then the flesh and skin, first a faint fogginess, and then growing rapidly dense and opaque. Presently they could see his crushed chest and his shoulders, and the dim outline of his drawn and battered features.

When at last the crowd made way for Kemp to stand erect, there lay, naked and pitiful on the ground, the bruised and broken body of a young man about thirty. His hair and brow were white — not grey with age, but white with the whiteness of albinism — and his eyes were like garnets. His hands were clenched, his eyes wide open, and his expression was one of anger and dismay.

"Cover his face!" said a man. "For Gawd's sake, cover that face!" and three little children, pushing forward through the crowd, were suddenly twisted round and sent packing off again.

Someone brought a sheet from the "Jolly Cricketers," and having covered him, they carried him into that house. And there it was, on a shabby bed in a tawdry, ill-lighted bedroom, surrounded by a crowd of ignorant and excited people, broken and wounded, betrayed and unpitied, that Griffin, the first of all men to make himself invisible, Griffin, the most gifted physicist the world has ever seen, ended in infinite disaster his strange and terrible career.

THE EPILOGUE

So ends the story of the strange and evil experiments of the Invisible Man. And if you would learn more of him you must go to a little inn near Port Stowe and talk to the landlord. The sign of the inn is an empty board save for a hat and boots, and the name is the title of this story. The landlord is a short and corpulent little man with a nose of cylindrical proportions, wiry hair, and a sporadic rosiness of visage. Drink generously, and he will tell you generously of all the things that happened to him after that time, and of how the lawyers tried to do him out of the treasure found upon him.

"When they found they couldn't prove whose money was which, I'm blessed," he says, "if they didn't try to make me out a blooming treasure trove! Do I *look* like a Treasure Trove? And then a gentleman gave me a guinea a night to tell the story at the Empire Music 'All — just to tell 'em in my own words — barring one."

And if you want to cut off the flow of his reminiscences abruptly, you can always do so by asking if there weren't three manuscript books in the story. He admits there were and proceeds to explain, with asseverations that everybody thinks *he* has 'em! But bless you!

he hasn't. "The Invisible Man it was took 'em off to hide 'em when I cut and ran for Port Stowe. It's that Mr. Kemp put people on with the idea of *my* having 'em."

And then he subsides into a pensive state, watches you furtively, bustles nervously with glasses, and presently leaves the bar.

He is a bachelor man — his tastes were ever bachelor, and there are no women folk in the house. Outwardly he buttons — it is expected of him — but in his more vital privacies, in the matter of braces for example, he still turns to string. He conducts his house without enterprise, but with eminent decorum. His movements are slow, and he is a great thinker. But he has a reputation for wisdom and for a respectable parsimony in the village, and his knowledge of the roads of the South of England would beat Cobbett.

And on Sunday mornings, every Sunday morning, all the year round, while he is closed to the outer world, and every night after ten, he goes into his bar parlour, bearing a glass of gin faintly tinged with water, and having placed this down, he locks the door and examines the blinds, and even looks under the table. And then, being satisfied of his solitude, he unlocks the cupboard and a box in the cupboard and a drawer in that box, and produces three volumes bound in brown leather, and places them solemnly in the middle of the table. The covers are weather-worn and tinged with an algal green — for once they sojourned in a ditch and some of the pages have been washed blank by dirty water. The landlord sits down in an armchair, fills a long clay pipe slowly — gloating over the books the while. Then he pulls one towards him and opens it, and begins to study it — turning over the leaves backwards and forwards.

His brows are knit and his lips move painfully. "Hex, little two up in the air, cross and a fiddle-de-dee. Lord! what a one he was for intellect!"

Presently he relaxes and leans back, and blinks through his smoke across the room at things invisible to other eyes. "Full of secrets," he says. "Wonderful secrets!"

"Once I get the haul of them — *Lord*!"

"I wouldn't do what *he* did; I'd just — well!" He pulls at his pipe.

So he lapses into a dream, the undying wonderful dream of his life. And though Kemp has fished unceasingly, no human being save

the landlord knows those books are there, with the subtle secret of invisibility and a dozen other strange secrets written therein. And none other will know of them until he dies.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

One of Wells' best known novels, *The War of the Worlds* was first published in 1898. It tells the story of an alien invasion of Earth, told from the point of view of an unnamed male narrator, who describes how Martian invaders come to Earth, striding the south of England in machines that exude a deadly 'heat ray', obliterating everything in their path. The second part of the novel goes on to describe the plight of the survivors, once humanity has been comprehensibly defeated.

Although it helped to originate the now-familiar genre of the alien invasion story, the novel is also intensely grounded in the concerns and, indeed, the literature of its time. At this point, the British Empire was at its height and its dominance was predicated on a widespread sense of Britain's cultural (and racial) supremacy compared to those it had conquered – Wells' novel undermines this feeling of security by presenting a scenario in which Britain is bested by a force immeasurably more advanced. This also plays on the theme of a mistaken hubris in nineteenth-century humanity's own security as the pinnacle of biological evolution, which Wells also exploits in *The Time Machine* and *The Island of Doctor Moreau.* At the same time, however, the novel could also be seen as part of a range of 'invasion' stories (involving more terrestrial antagonists) popular during the late-Victorian and Edwardian period, which played on fears about national supremacy and security during the years leading up to the First World War.

The novel has been adapted numerous times for cinema (most famously by Bryan Haskin in 1953 and by Steven Spielberg in 2005), radio and even as a musical concept album. Orson Welles's 1938 radio version was one of the earliest adaptations and notoriously caused panic in parts of the United States, where the play was mistaken for a broadcast announcement of a real alien invasion!

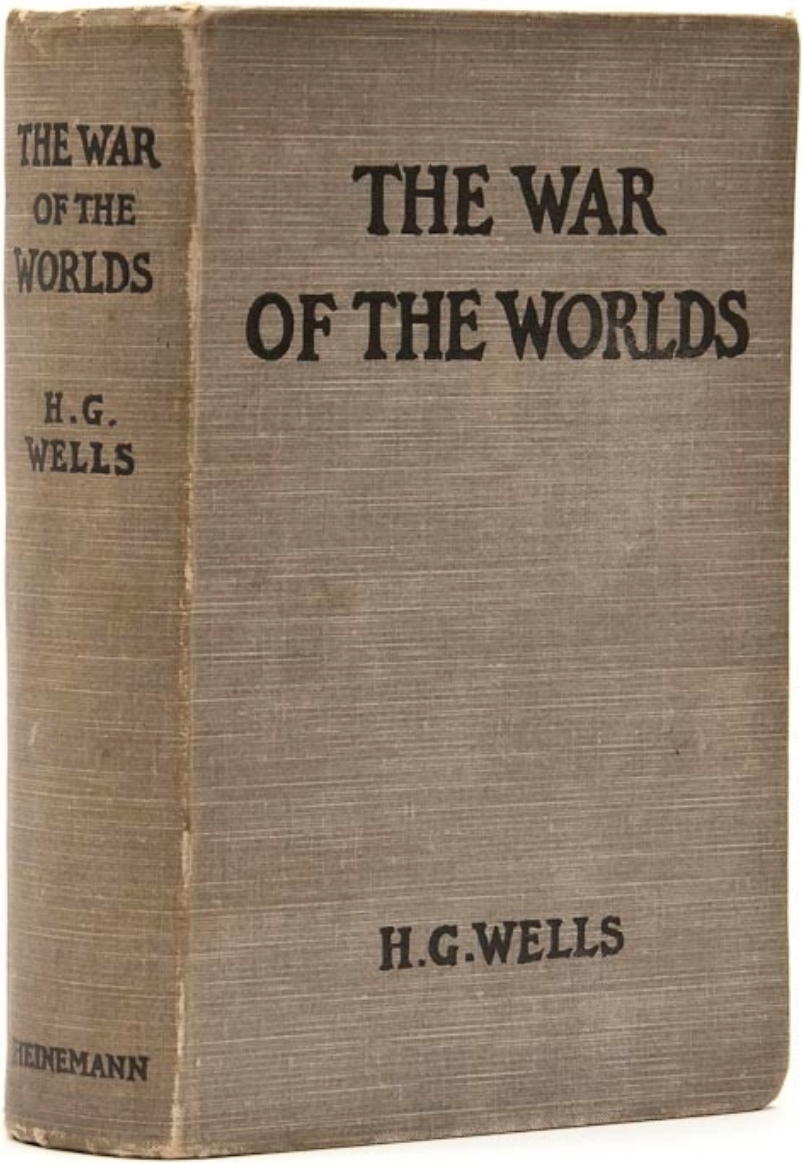

The first edition

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AT THIS VERY MOMENT SPACE SHIPS FROM THE BEYOND MAY BE ON THEIR WAY TO DESTROY OUR PLANET!
H. G. WELLS'
The
War of the Worlds
STARRING
GENE BARRY · ANN ROBINSON
PRODUCED BY GEORGE PAL DIRECTED BY BYRON HASKIN SCREENPLAY BY BARRÉ LYNDON
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY H. G. WELLS
TECHNICOLOR

The theatrical poster for the Bryan Haskin 1953 film adaptation

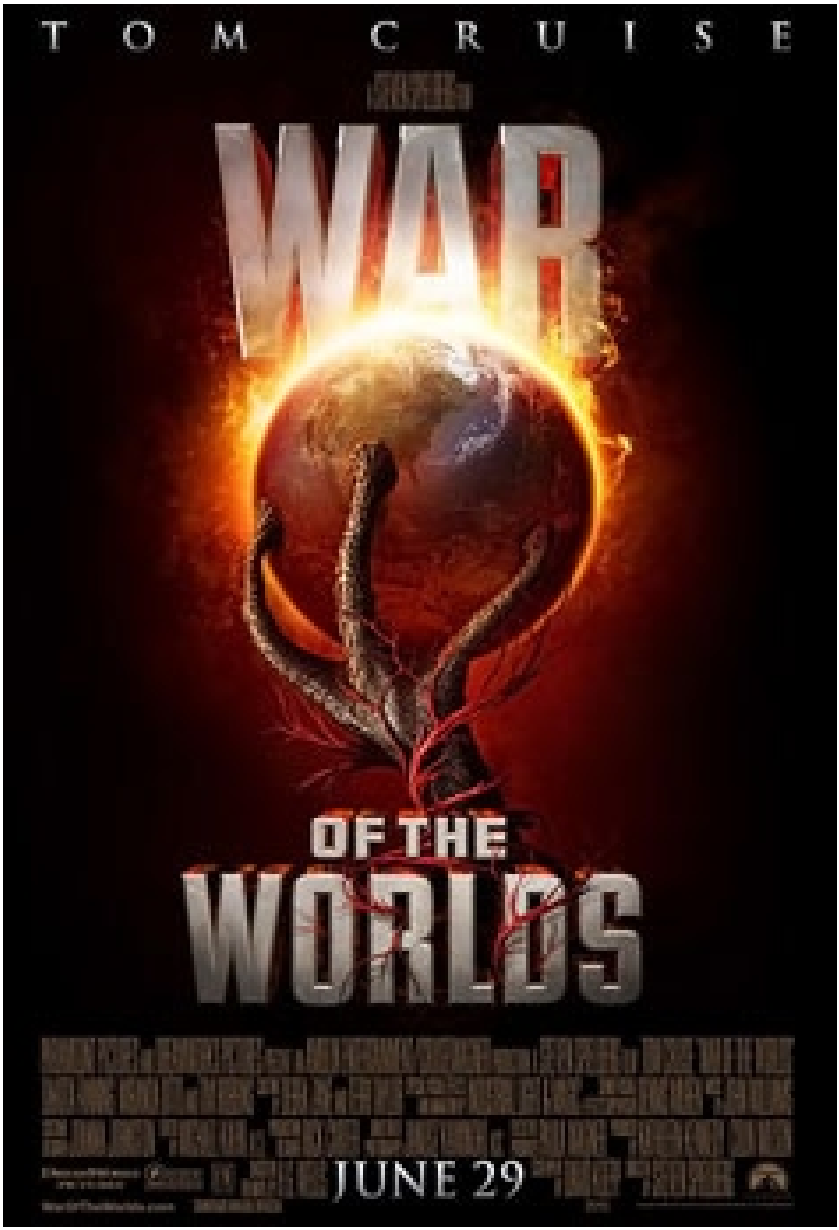

The theatrical poster for the Steven Spielberg 2005 film adaptation

A statue of one of the Martian tripods, erected as a memorial to Wells in the centre of Woking, England — where the author lived during the 1890's

But who shall dwell in these worlds if they be
inhabited? . . . Are we or they Lords of the
World? . . . And how are all things made for man? —
KEPLER (quoted in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*)

BOOK ONE. THE COMING OF THE MARTIANS

CHAPTER ONE

THE EVE OF THE WAR

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affairs, serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human danger, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable. It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days. At most terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment.

The planet Mars, I scarcely need remind the reader, revolves about the sun at a mean distance of 140,000,000 miles, and the light and heat it receives from the sun is barely half of that received by this world. It must be, if the nebular hypothesis has any truth, older than our world; and long before this earth ceased to be molten, life upon its surface must have begun its course. The fact that it is scarcely one seventh of the volume of the earth must have accelerated its cooling to the temperature at which life could begin. It has air and water and all that is necessary for the support of animated existence.

Yet so vain is man, and so blinded by his vanity, that no writer, up to the very end of the nineteenth century, expressed any idea that

intelligent life might have developed there far, or indeed at all, beyond its earthly level. Nor was it generally understood that since Mars is older than our earth, with scarcely a quarter of the superficial area and remoter from the sun, it necessarily follows that it is not only more distant from time's beginning but nearer its end.

The secular cooling that must someday overtake our planet has already gone far indeed with our neighbour. Its physical condition is still largely a mystery, but we know now that even in its equatorial region the midday temperature barely approaches that of our coldest winter. Its air is much more attenuated than ours, its oceans have shrunk until they cover but a third of its surface, and as its slow seasons change huge snowcaps gather and melt about either pole and periodically inundate its temperate zones. That last stage of exhaustion, which to us is still incredibly remote, has become a present-day problem for the inhabitants of Mars. The immediate pressure of necessity has brightened their intellects, enlarged their powers, and hardened their hearts. And looking across space with instruments, and intelligences such as we have scarcely dreamed of, they see, at its nearest distance only 35,000,000 of miles sunward of them, a morning star of hope, our own warmer planet, green with vegetation and grey with water, with a cloudy atmosphere eloquent of fertility, with glimpses through its drifting cloud wisps of broad stretches of populous country and narrow, navy-crowded seas.

And we men, the creatures who inhabit this earth, must be to them at least as alien and lowly as are the monkeys and lemurs to us. The intellectual side of man already admits that life is an incessant struggle for existence, and it would seem that this too is the belief of the minds upon Mars. Their world is far gone in its cooling and this world is still crowded with life, but crowded only with what they regard as inferior animals. To carry warfare sunward is, indeed, their only escape from the destruction that, generation after generation, creeps upon them.

And before we judge of them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by

European immigrants, in the space of fifty years. Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?

The Martians seem to have calculated their descent with amazing subtlety — their mathematical learning is evidently far in excess of ours — and to have carried out their preparations with a well-nigh perfect unanimity. Had our instruments permitted it, we might have seen the gathering trouble far back in the nineteenth century. Men like Schiaparelli watched the red planet — it is odd, by-the-bye, that for countless centuries Mars has been the star of war — but failed to interpret the fluctuating appearances of the markings they mapped so well. All that time the Martians must have been getting ready.

During the opposition of 1894 a great light was seen on the illuminated part of the disk, first at the Lick Observatory, then by Perrotin of Nice, and then by other observers. English readers heard of it first in the issue of *Nature* dated August 2. I am inclined to think that this blaze may have been the casting of the huge gun, in the vast pit sunk into their planet, from which their shots were fired at us. Peculiar markings, as yet unexplained, were seen near the site of that outbreak during the next two oppositions.

The storm burst upon us six years ago now. As Mars approached opposition, Lavelle of Java set the wires of the astronomical exchange palpitating with the amazing intelligence of a huge outbreak of incandescent gas upon the planet. It had occurred towards midnight of the twelfth; and the spectroscope, to which he had at once resorted, indicated a mass of flaming gas, chiefly hydrogen, moving with an enormous velocity towards this earth. This jet of fire had become invisible about a quarter past twelve. He compared it to a colossal puff of flame suddenly and violently squirted out of the planet, “as flaming gases rushed out of a gun.”

A singularly appropriate phrase it proved. Yet the next day there was nothing of this in the papers except a little note in the *Daily Telegraph*, and the world went in ignorance of one of the gravest dangers that ever threatened the human race. I might not have heard of the eruption at all had I not met Ogilvy, the well-known astronomer, at Ottershaw. He was immensely excited at the news, and in the excess of his feelings invited me up to take a turn with him

that night in a scrutiny of the red planet.

In spite of all that has happened since, I still remember that vigil very distinctly: the black and silent observatory, the shadowed lantern throwing a feeble glow upon the floor in the corner, the steady ticking of the clockwork of the telescope, the little slit in the roof — an oblong profundity with the stardust streaked across it. Ogilvy moved about, invisible but audible. Looking through the telescope, one saw a circle of deep blue and the little round planet swimming in the field. It seemed such a little thing, so bright and small and still, faintly marked with transverse stripes, and slightly flattened from the perfect round. But so little it was, so silvery warm — a pin's-head of light! It was as if it quivered, but really this was the telescope vibrating with the activity of the clockwork that kept the planet in view.

As I watched, the planet seemed to grow larger and smaller and to advance and recede, but that was simply that my eye was tired. Forty millions of miles it was from us — more than forty millions of miles of void. Few people realise the immensity of vacancy in which the dust of the material universe swims.

Near it in the field, I remember, were three faint points of light, three telescopic stars infinitely remote, and all around it was the unfathomable darkness of empty space. You know how that blackness looks on a frosty starlight night. In a telescope it seems far profounder. And invisible to me because it was so remote and small, flying swiftly and steadily towards me across that incredible distance, drawing nearer every minute by so many thousands of miles, came the Thing they were sending us, the Thing that was to bring so much struggle and calamity and death to the earth. I never dreamed of it then as I watched; no one on earth dreamed of that unerring missile.

That night, too, there was another jetting out of gas from the distant planet. I saw it. A reddish flash at the edge, the slightest projection of the outline just as the chronometer struck midnight; and at that I told Ogilvy and he took my place. The night was warm and I was thirsty, and I went stretching my legs clumsily and feeling my way in the darkness, to the little table where the siphon stood, while Ogilvy exclaimed at the streamer of gas that came out towards us.

That night another invisible missile started on its way to the earth

from Mars, just a second or so under twenty-four hours after the first one. I remember how I sat on the table there in the blackness, with patches of green and crimson swimming before my eyes. I wished I had a light to smoke by, little suspecting the meaning of the minute gleam I had seen and all that it would presently bring me. Ogilvy watched till one, and then gave it up; and we lit the lantern and walked over to his house. Down below in the darkness were Ottershaw and Chertsey and all their hundreds of people, sleeping in peace.

He was full of speculation that night about the condition of Mars, and scoffed at the vulgar idea of its having inhabitants who were signalling us. His idea was that meteorites might be falling in a heavy shower upon the planet, or that a huge volcanic explosion was in progress. He pointed out to me how unlikely it was that organic evolution had taken the same direction in the two adjacent planets.

"The chances against anything manlike on Mars are a million to one," he said.

Hundreds of observers saw the flame that night and the night after about midnight, and again the night after; and so for ten nights, a flame each night. Why the shots ceased after the tenth no one on earth has attempted to explain. It may be the gases of the firing caused the Martians inconvenience. Dense clouds of smoke or dust, visible through a powerful telescope on earth as little grey, fluctuating patches, spread through the clearness of the planet's atmosphere and obscured its more familiar features.

Even the daily papers woke up to the disturbances at last, and popular notes appeared here, there, and everywhere concerning the volcanoes upon Mars. The seriocomic periodical *Punch*, I remember, made a happy use of it in the political cartoon. And, all unsuspected, those missiles the Martians had fired at us drew earthward, rushing now at a pace of many miles a second through the empty gulf of space, hour by hour and day by day, nearer and nearer. It seems to me now almost incredibly wonderful that, with that swift fate hanging over us, men could go about their petty concerns as they did. I remember how jubilant Markham was at securing a new photograph of the planet for the illustrated paper he edited in those days. People in these latter times scarcely realise the abundance and

enterprise of our nineteenth-century papers. For my own part, I was much occupied in learning to ride the bicycle, and busy upon a series of papers discussing the probable developments of moral ideas as civilisation progressed.

One night (the first missile then could scarcely have been 10,000,000 miles away) I went for a walk with my wife. It was starlight and I explained the Signs of the Zodiac to her, and pointed out Mars, a bright dot of light creeping zenithward, towards which so many telescopes were pointed. It was a warm night. Coming home, a party of excursionists from Chertsey or Isleworth passed us singing and playing music. There were lights in the upper windows of the houses as the people went to bed. From the railway station in the distance came the sound of shunting trains, ringing and rumbling, softened almost into melody by the distance. My wife pointed out to me the brightness of the red, green, and yellow signal lights hanging in a framework against the sky. It seemed so safe and tranquil.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FALLING STAR

Then came the night of the first falling star. It was seen early in the morning, rushing over Winchester eastward, a line of flame high in the atmosphere. Hundreds must have seen it, and taken it for an ordinary falling star. Albin described it as leaving a greenish streak behind it that glowed for some seconds. Denning, our greatest authority on meteorites, stated that the height of its first appearance was about ninety or one hundred miles. It seemed to him that it fell to earth about one hundred miles east of him.

I was at home at that hour and writing in my study; and although my French windows face towards Ottershaw and the blind was up (for I loved in those days to look up at the night sky), I saw nothing of it. Yet this strangest of all things that ever came to earth from outer space must have fallen while I was sitting there, visible to me had I only looked up as it passed. Some of those who saw its flight say it travelled with a hissing sound. I myself heard nothing of that. Many people in Berkshire, Surrey, and Middlesex must have seen the fall of it, and, at most, have thought that another meteorite had descended. No one seems to have troubled to look for the fallen mass that night.

But very early in the morning poor Ogilvy, who had seen the shooting star and who was persuaded that a meteorite lay somewhere on the common between Horsell, Ottershaw, and Woking, rose early with the idea of finding it. Find it he did, soon after dawn, and not far from the sand pits. An enormous hole had been made by the impact of the projectile, and the sand and gravel had been flung violently in every direction over the heath, forming heaps visible a mile and a half away. The heather was on fire eastward, and a thin blue smoke rose against the dawn.

The Thing itself lay almost entirely buried in sand, amidst the scattered splinters of a fir tree it had shivered to fragments in its descent. The uncovered part had the appearance of a huge cylinder, caked over and its outline softened by a thick scaly dun-coloured

incrustation. It had a diameter of about thirty yards. He approached the mass, surprised at the size and more so at the shape, since most meteorites are rounded more or less completely. It was, however, still so hot from its flight through the air as to forbid his near approach. A stirring noise within its cylinder he ascribed to the unequal cooling of its surface; for at that time it had not occurred to him that it might be hollow.

He remained standing at the edge of the pit that the Thing had made for itself, staring at its strange appearance, astonished chiefly at its unusual shape and colour, and dimly perceiving even then some evidence of design in its arrival. The early morning was wonderfully still, and the sun, just clearing the pine trees towards Weybridge, was already warm. He did not remember hearing any birds that morning, there was certainly no breeze stirring, and the only sounds were the faint movements from within the cindery cylinder. He was all alone on the common.

Then suddenly he noticed with a start that some of the grey clinker, the ashy incrustation that covered the meteorite, was falling off the circular edge of the end. It was dropping off in flakes and raining down upon the sand. A large piece suddenly came off and fell with a sharp noise that brought his heart into his mouth.

For a minute he scarcely realised what this meant, and, although the heat was excessive, he clambered down into the pit close to the bulk to see the Thing more clearly. He fancied even then that the cooling of the body might account for this, but what disturbed that idea was the fact that the ash was falling only from the end of the cylinder.

And then he perceived that, very slowly, the circular top of the cylinder was rotating on its body. It was such a gradual movement that he discovered it only through noticing that a black mark that had been near him five minutes ago was now at the other side of the circumference. Even then he scarcely understood what this indicated, until he heard a muffled grating sound and saw the black mark jerk forward an inch or so. Then the thing came upon him in a flash. The cylinder was artificial — hollow — with an end that screwed out! Something within the cylinder was unscrewing the top!

“Good heavens!” said Ogilvy. “There’s a man in it — men in it!

Half roasted to death! Trying to escape!”

At once, with a quick mental leap, he linked the Thing with the flash upon Mars.

The thought of the confined creature was so dreadful to him that he forgot the heat and went forward to the cylinder to help turn. But luckily the dull radiation arrested him before he could burn his hands on the still-glowing metal. At that he stood irresolute for a moment, then turned, scrambled out of the pit, and set off running wildly into Woking. The time then must have been somewhere about six o’clock. He met a waggoner and tried to make him understand, but the tale he told and his appearance were so wild — his hat had fallen off in the pit — that the man simply drove on. He was equally unsuccessful with the potman who was just unlocking the doors of the public-house by Horsell Bridge. The fellow thought he was a lunatic at large and made an unsuccessful attempt to shut him into the taproom. That sobered him a little; and when he saw Henderson, the London journalist, in his garden, he called over the palings and made himself understood.

“Henderson,” he called, “you saw that shooting star last night?”

“Well?” said Henderson.

“It’s out on Horsell Common now.”

“Good Lord!” said Henderson. “Fallen meteorite! That’s good.”

“But it’s something more than a meteorite. It’s a cylinder — an artificial cylinder, man! And there’s something inside.”

Henderson stood up with his spade in his hand.

“What’s that?” he said. He was deaf in one ear.

Ogilvy told him all that he had seen. Henderson was a minute or so taking it in. Then he dropped his spade, snatched up his jacket, and came out into the road. The two men hurried back at once to the common, and found the cylinder still lying in the same position. But now the sounds inside had ceased, and a thin circle of bright metal showed between the top and the body of the cylinder. Air was either entering or escaping at the rim with a thin, sizzling sound.

They listened, rapped on the scaly burnt metal with a stick, and, meeting with no response, they both concluded the man or men inside must be insensible or dead.

Of course the two were quite unable to do anything. They shouted

consolation and promises, and went off back to the town again to get help. One can imagine them, covered with sand, excited and disordered, running up the little street in the bright sunlight just as the shop folks were taking down their shutters and people were opening their bedroom windows. Henderson went into the railway station at once, in order to telegraph the news to London. The newspaper articles had prepared men's minds for the reception of the idea.

By eight o'clock a number of boys and unemployed men had already started for the common to see the "dead men from Mars." That was the form the story took. I heard of it first from my newspaper boy about a quarter to nine when I went out to get my *Daily Chronicle*. I was naturally startled, and lost no time in going out and across the Ottershaw bridge to the sand pits.

CHAPTER THREE

ON HORSELL COMMON

I found a little crowd of perhaps twenty people surrounding the huge hole in which the cylinder lay. I have already described the appearance of that colossal bulk, embedded in the ground. The turf and gravel about it seemed charred as if by a sudden explosion. No doubt its impact had caused a flash of fire. Henderson and Ogilvy were not there. I think they perceived that nothing was to be done for the present, and had gone away to breakfast at Henderson's house.

There were four or five boys sitting on the edge of the Pit, with their feet dangling, and amusing themselves — until I stopped them — by throwing stones at the giant mass. After I had spoken to them about it, they began playing at "touch" in and out of the group of bystanders.

Among these were a couple of cyclists, a jobbing gardener I employed sometimes, a girl carrying a baby, Gregg the butcher and his little boy, and two or three loafers and golf caddies who were accustomed to hang about the railway station. There was very little talking. Few of the common people in England had anything but the vaguest astronomical ideas in those days. Most of them were staring quietly at the big table like end of the cylinder, which was still as Ogilvy and Henderson had left it. I fancy the popular expectation of a heap of charred corpses was disappointed at this inanimate bulk. Some went away while I was there, and other people came. I clambered into the pit and fancied I heard a faint movement under my feet. The top had certainly ceased to rotate.

It was only when I got thus close to it that the strangeness of this object was at all evident to me. At the first glance it was really no more exciting than an overturned carriage or a tree blown across the road. Not so much so, indeed. It looked like a rusty gas float. It required a certain amount of scientific education to perceive that the grey scale of the Thing was no common oxide, that the yellowish-white metal that gleamed in the crack between the lid and the cylinder had an unfamiliar hue. "Extra-terrestrial" had no meaning

for most of the onlookers.

At that time it was quite clear in my own mind that the Thing had come from the planet Mars, but I judged it improbable that it contained any living creature. I thought the unscrewing might be automatic. In spite of Ogilvy, I still believed that there were men in Mars. My mind ran fancifully on the possibilities of its containing manuscript, on the difficulties in translation that might arise, whether we should find coins and models in it, and so forth. Yet it was a little too large for assurance on this idea. I felt an impatience to see it opened. About eleven, as nothing seemed happening, I walked back, full of such thought, to my home in Maybury. But I found it difficult to get to work upon my abstract investigations.

In the afternoon the appearance of the common had altered very much. The early editions of the evening papers had startled London with enormous headlines:

"A MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM MARS."

"REMARKABLE STORY FROM WOKING,"

and so forth. In addition, Ogilvy's wire to the Astronomical Exchange had roused every observatory in the three kingdoms.

There were half a dozen flies or more from the Woking station standing in the road by the sand pits, a basket-chaise from Chobham, and a rather lordly carriage. Besides that, there was quite a heap of bicycles. In addition, a large number of people must have walked, in spite of the heat of the day, from Woking and Chertsey, so that there was altogether quite a considerable crowd — one or two gaily dressed ladies among the others.

It was glaringly hot, not a cloud in the sky nor a breath of wind, and the only shadow was that of the few scattered pine trees. The burning heather had been extinguished, but the level ground towards Ottershaw was blackened as far as one could see, and still giving off vertical streamers of smoke. An enterprising sweet-stuff dealer in the Chobham Road had sent up his son with a barrow-load of green apples and ginger beer.

Going to the edge of the pit, I found it occupied by a group of about half a dozen men — Henderson, Ogilvy, and a tall, fair-haired man that I afterwards learned was Stent, the Astronomer Royal, with several workmen wielding spades and pickaxes. Stent was giving

directions in a clear, high-pitched voice. He was standing on the cylinder, which was now evidently much cooler; his face was crimson and streaming with perspiration, and something seemed to have irritated him.

A large portion of the cylinder had been uncovered, though its lower end was still embedded. As soon as Ogilvy saw me among the staring crowd on the edge of the pit he called to me to come down, and asked me if I would mind going over to see Lord Hilton, the lord of the manor.

The growing crowd, he said, was becoming a serious impediment to their excavations, especially the boys. They wanted a light railing put up, and help to keep the people back. He told me that a faint stirring was occasionally still audible within the case, but that the workmen had failed to unscrew the top, as it afforded no grip to them. The case appeared to be enormously thick, and it was possible that the faint sounds we heard represented a noisy tumult in the interior.

I was very glad to do as he asked, and so become one of the privileged spectators within the contemplated enclosure. I failed to find Lord Hilton at his house, but I was told he was expected from London by the six o'clock train from Waterloo; and as it was then about a quarter past five, I went home, had some tea, and walked up to the station to waylay him.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CYLINDER OPENS

When I returned to the common the sun was setting. Scattered groups were hurrying from the direction of Woking, and one or two persons were returning. The crowd about the pit had increased, and stood out black against the lemon yellow of the sky — a couple of hundred people, perhaps. There were raised voices, and some sort of struggle appeared to be going on about the pit. Strange imaginings passed through my mind. As I drew nearer I heard Stent's voice:

"Keep back! Keep back!"

A boy came running towards me.

"It's a-movin'," he said to me as he passed; "a-screwin' and a-screwin' out. I don't like it. I'm a-goin' 'ome, I am."

I went on to the crowd. There were really, I should think, two or three hundred people elbowing and jostling one another, the one or two ladies there being by no means the least active.

"He's fallen in the pit!" cried some one.

"Keep back!" said several.

The crowd swayed a little, and I elbowed my way through. Every one seemed greatly excited. I heard a peculiar humming sound from the pit.

"I say!" said Ogilvy; "help keep these idiots back. We don't know what's in the confounded thing, you know!"

I saw a young man, a shop assistant in Woking I believe he was, standing on the cylinder and trying to scramble out of the hole again. The crowd had pushed him in.

The end of the cylinder was being screwed out from within. Nearly two feet of shining screw projected. Somebody blundered against me, and I narrowly missed being pitched onto the top of the screw. I turned, and as I did so the screw must have come out, for the lid of the cylinder fell upon the gravel with a ringing concussion. I stuck my elbow into the person behind me, and turned my head towards the Thing again. For a moment that circular cavity seemed perfectly black. I had the sunset in my eyes.

I think everyone expected to see a man emerge — possibly something a little unlike us terrestrial men, but in all essentials a man. I know I did. But, looking, I presently saw something stirring within the shadow: greyish billowy movements, one above another, and then two luminous disks — like eyes. Then something resembling a little grey snake, about the thickness of a walking stick, coiled up out of the writhing middle, and wriggled in the air towards me — and then another.

A sudden chill came over me. There was a loud shriek from a woman behind. I half turned, keeping my eyes fixed upon the cylinder still, from which other tentacles were now projecting, and began pushing my way back from the edge of the pit. I saw astonishment giving place to horror on the faces of the people about me. I heard inarticulate exclamations on all sides. There was a general movement backwards. I saw the shopman struggling still on the edge of the pit. I found myself alone, and saw the people on the other side of the pit running off, Stent among them. I looked again at the cylinder, and ungovernable terror gripped me. I stood petrified and staring.

A big greyish rounded bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear, was rising slowly and painfully out of the cylinder. As it bulged up and caught the light, it glistened like wet leather.

Two large dark-coloured eyes were regarding me steadfastly. The mass that framed them, the head of the thing, was rounded, and had, one might say, a face. There was a mouth under the eyes, the lipless brim of which quivered and panted, and dropped saliva. The whole creature heaved and pulsated convulsively. A lank tentacular appendage gripped the edge of the cylinder, another swayed in the air.

Those who have never seen a living Martian can scarcely imagine the strange horror of its appearance. The peculiar V-shaped mouth with its pointed upper lip, the absence of brow ridges, the absence of a chin beneath the wedgelike lower lip, the incessant quivering of this mouth, the Gorgon groups of tentacles, the tumultuous breathing of the lungs in a strange atmosphere, the evident heaviness and painfulness of movement due to the greater gravitational energy of the earth — above all, the extraordinary intensity of the immense

eyes — were at once vital, intense, inhuman, crippled and monstrous. There was something fungoid in the oily brown skin, something in the clumsy deliberation of the tedious movements unspeakably nasty. Even at this first encounter, this first glimpse, I was overcome with disgust and dread.

Suddenly the monster vanished. It had toppled over the brim of the cylinder and fallen into the pit, with a thud like the fall of a great mass of leather. I heard it give a peculiar thick cry, and forthwith another of these creatures appeared darkly in the deep shadow of the aperture.

I turned and, running madly, made for the first group of trees, perhaps a hundred yards away; but I ran slantingly and stumbling, for I could not avert my face from these things.

There, among some young pine trees and furze bushes, I stopped, panting, and waited further developments. The common round the sand pits was dotted with people, standing like myself in a half-fascinated terror, staring at these creatures, or rather at the heaped gravel at the edge of the pit in which they lay. And then, with a renewed horror, I saw a round, black object bobbing up and down on the edge of the pit. It was the head of the shopman who had fallen in, but showing as a little black object against the hot western sun. Now he got his shoulder and knee up, and again he seemed to slip back until only his head was visible. Suddenly he vanished, and I could have fancied a faint shriek had reached me. I had a momentary impulse to go back and help him that my fears overruled.

Everything was then quite invisible, hidden by the deep pit and the heap of sand that the fall of the cylinder had made. Anyone coming along the road from Chobham or Woking would have been amazed at the sight — a dwindling multitude of perhaps a hundred people or more standing in a great irregular circle, in ditches, behind bushes, behind gates and hedges, saying little to one another and that in short, excited shouts, and staring, staring hard at a few heaps of sand. The barrow of ginger beer stood, a queer derelict, black against the burning sky, and in the sand pits was a row of deserted vehicles with their horses feeding out of nosebags or pawing the ground.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HEAT-RAY

After the glimpse I had had of the Martians emerging from the cylinder in which they had come to the earth from their planet, a kind of fascination paralysed my actions. I remained standing knee-deep in the heather, staring at the mound that hid them. I was a battleground of fear and curiosity.

I did not dare to go back towards the pit, but I felt a passionate longing to peer into it. I began walking, therefore, in a big curve, seeking some point of vantage and continually looking at the sand heaps that hid these new-comers to our earth. Once a leash of thin black whips, like the arms of an octopus, flashed across the sunset and was immediately withdrawn, and afterwards a thin rod rose up, joint by joint, bearing at its apex a circular disk that spun with a wobbling motion. What could be going on there?

Most of the spectators had gathered in one or two groups — one a little crowd towards Woking, the other a knot of people in the direction of Chobham. Evidently they shared my mental conflict. There were few near me. One man I approached — he was, I perceived, a neighbour of mine, though I did not know his name — and accosted. But it was scarcely a time for articulate conversation.

"What ugly *brutes*!" he said. "Good God! What ugly brutes!" He repeated this over and over again.

"Did you see a man in the pit?" I said; but he made no answer to that. We became silent, and stood watching for a time side by side, deriving, I fancy, a certain comfort in one another's company. Then I shifted my position to a little knoll that gave me the advantage of a yard or more of elevation and when I looked for him presently he was walking towards Woking.

The sunset faded to twilight before anything further happened. The crowd far away on the left, towards Woking, seemed to grow, and I heard now a faint murmur from it. The little knot of people towards Chobham dispersed. There was scarcely an intimation of movement from the pit.

It was this, as much as anything, that gave people courage, and I suppose the new arrivals from Woking also helped to restore confidence. At any rate, as the dusk came on a slow, intermittent movement upon the sand pits began, a movement that seemed to gather force as the stillness of the evening about the cylinder remained unbroken. Vertical black figures in twos and threes would advance, stop, watch, and advance again, spreading out as they did so in a thin irregular crescent that promised to enclose the pit in its attenuated horns. I, too, on my side began to move towards the pit.

Then I saw some cabmen and others had walked boldly into the sand pits, and heard the clatter of hoofs and the gride of wheels. I saw a lad trundling off the barrow of apples. And then, within thirty yards of the pit, advancing from the direction of Horsell, I noted a little black knot of men, the foremost of whom was waving a white flag.

This was the Deputation. There had been a hasty consultation, and since the Martians were evidently, in spite of their repulsive forms, intelligent creatures, it had been resolved to show them, by approaching them with signals, that we too were intelligent.

Flutter, flutter, went the flag, first to the right, then to the left. It was too far for me to recognise anyone there, but afterwards I learned that Ogilvy, Stent, and Henderson were with others in this attempt at communication. This little group had in its advance dragged inward, so to speak, the circumference of the now almost complete circle of people, and a number of dim black figures followed it at discreet distances.

Suddenly there was a flash of light, and a quantity of luminous greenish smoke came out of the pit in three distinct puffs, which drove up, one after the other, straight into the still air.

This smoke (or flame, perhaps, would be the better word for it) was so bright that the deep blue sky overhead and the hazy stretches of brown common towards Chertsey, set with black pine trees, seemed to darken abruptly as these puffs arose, and to remain the darker after their dispersal. At the same time a faint hissing sound became audible.

Beyond the pit stood the little wedge of people with the white flag at its apex, arrested by these phenomena, a little knot of small

vertical black shapes upon the black ground. As the green smoke arose, their faces flashed out pallid green, and faded again as it vanished. Then slowly the hissing passed into a humming, into a long, loud, droning noise. Slowly a humped shape rose out of the pit, and the ghost of a beam of light seemed to flicker out from it.

Forthwith flashes of actual flame, a bright glare leaping from one to another, sprang from the scattered group of men. It was as if some invisible jet impinged upon them and flashed into white flame. It was as if each man were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire.

Then, by the light of their own destruction, I saw them staggering and falling, and their supporters turning to run.

I stood staring, not as yet realising that this was death leaping from man to man in that little distant crowd. All I felt was that it was something very strange. An almost noiseless and blinding flash of light, and a man fell headlong and lay still; and as the unseen shaft of heat passed over them, pine trees burst into fire, and every dry furze bush became with one dull thud a mass of flames. And far away towards Knaphill I saw the flashes of trees and hedges and wooden buildings suddenly set alight.

It was sweeping round swiftly and steadily, this flaming death, this invisible, inevitable sword of heat. I perceived it coming towards me by the flashing bushes it touched, and was too astounded and stupefied to stir. I heard the crackle of fire in the sand pits and the sudden squeal of a horse that was as suddenly stilled. Then it was as if an invisible yet intensely heated finger were drawn through the heather between me and the Martians, and all along a curving line beyond the sand pits the dark ground smoked and crackled. Something fell with a crash far away to the left where the road from Woking station opens out on the common. Forth-with the hissing and humming ceased, and the black, dome-like object sank slowly out of sight into the pit.

All this had happened with such swiftness that I had stood motionless, dumbfounded and dazzled by the flashes of light. Had that death swept through a full circle, it must inevitably have slain me in my surprise. But it passed and spared me, and left the night about me suddenly dark and unfamiliar.

The undulating common seemed now dark almost to blackness,

except where its roadways lay grey and pale under the deep blue sky of the early night. It was dark, and suddenly void of men. Overhead the stars were mustering, and in the west the sky was still a pale, bright, almost greenish blue. The tops of the pine trees and the roofs of Horsell came out sharp and black against the western afterglow. The Martians and their appliances were altogether invisible, save for that thin mast upon which their restless mirror wobbled. Patches of bush and isolated trees here and there smoked and glowed still, and the houses towards Woking station were sending up spires of flame into the stillness of the evening air.

Nothing was changed save for that and a terrible astonishment. The little group of black specks with the flag of white had been swept out of existence, and the stillness of the evening, so it seemed to me, had scarcely been broken.

It came to me that I was upon this dark common, helpless, unprotected, and alone. Suddenly, like a thing falling upon me from without, came — fear.

With an effort I turned and began a stumbling run through the heather.

The fear I felt was no rational fear, but a panic terror not only of the Martians, but of the dusk and stillness all about me. Such an extraordinary effect in unmanning me it had that I ran weeping silently as a child might do. Once I had turned, I did not dare to look back.

I remember I felt an extraordinary persuasion that I was being played with, that presently, when I was upon the very verge of safety, this mysterious death — as swift as the passage of light — would leap after me from the pit about the cylinder and strike me down.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HEAT-RAY IN THE CHOBHAM ROAD

It is still a matter of wonder how the Martians are able to slay men so swiftly and so silently. Many think that in some way they are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber of practically absolute non-conductivity. This intense heat they project in a parallel beam against any object they choose, by means of a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition, much as the parabolic mirror of a lighthouse projects a beam of light. But no one has absolutely proved these details. However it is done, it is certain that a beam of heat is the essence of the matter. Heat, and invisible, instead of visible, light. Whatever is combustible flashes into flame at its touch, lead runs like water, it softens iron, cracks and melts glass, and when it falls upon water, incontinently that explodes into steam.

That night nearly forty people lay under the starlight about the pit, charred and distorted beyond recognition, and all night long the common from Horsell to Maybury was deserted and brightly ablaze.

The news of the massacre probably reached Chobham, Woking, and Ottershaw about the same time. In Woking the shops had closed when the tragedy happened, and a number of people, shop people and so forth, attracted by the stories they had heard, were walking over the Horsell Bridge and along the road between the hedges that runs out at last upon the common. You may imagine the young people brushed up after the labours of the day, and making this novelty, as they would make any novelty, the excuse for walking together and enjoying a trivial flirtation. You may figure to yourself the hum of voices along the road in the gloaming. . . .

As yet, of course, few people in Woking even knew that the cylinder had opened, though poor Henderson had sent a messenger on a bicycle to the post office with a special wire to an evening paper.

As these folks came out by twos and threes upon the open, they found little knots of people talking excitedly and peering at the spinning mirror over the sand pits, and the newcomers were, no

doubt, soon infected by the excitement of the occasion.

By half past eight, when the Deputation was destroyed, there may have been a crowd of three hundred people or more at this place, besides those who had left the road to approach the Martians nearer. There were three policemen too, one of whom was mounted, doing their best, under instructions from Stent, to keep the people back and deter them from approaching the cylinder. There was some booing from those more thoughtless and excitable souls to whom a crowd is always an occasion for noise and horse-play.

Stent and Ogilvy, anticipating some possibilities of a collision, had telegraphed from Horsell to the barracks as soon as the Martians emerged, for the help of a company of soldiers to protect these strange creatures from violence. After that they returned to lead that ill-fated advance. The description of their death, as it was seen by the crowd, tallies very closely with my own impressions: the three puffs of green smoke, the deep humming note, and the flashes of flame.

But that crowd of people had a far narrower escape than mine. Only the fact that a hummock of heathery sand intercepted the lower part of the Heat-Ray saved them. Had the elevation of the parabolic mirror been a few yards higher, none could have lived to tell the tale. They saw the flashes and the men falling and an invisible hand, as it were, lit the bushes as it hurried towards them through the twilight. Then, with a whistling note that rose above the droning of the pit, the beam swung close over their heads, lighting the tops of the beech trees that line the road, and splitting the bricks, smashing the windows, firing the window frames, and bringing down in crumbling ruin a portion of the gable of the house nearest the corner.

In the sudden thud, hiss, and glare of the igniting trees, the panic-stricken crowd seems to have swayed hesitatingly for some moments. Sparks and burning twigs began to fall into the road, and single leaves like puffs of flame. Hats and dresses caught fire. Then came a crying from the common. There were shrieks and shouts, and suddenly a mounted policeman came galloping through the confusion with his hands clasped over his head, screaming.

“They’re coming!” a woman shrieked, and incontinently everyone was turning and pushing at those behind, in order to clear their way to Woking again. They must have bolted as blindly as a flock of

sheep. Where the road grows narrow and black between the high banks the crowd jammed, and a desperate struggle occurred. All that crowd did not escape; three persons at least, two women and a little boy, were crushed and trampled there, and left to die amid the terror and the darkness.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW I REACHED HOME

For my own part, I remember nothing of my flight except the stress of blundering against trees and stumbling through the heather. All about me gathered the invisible terrors of the Martians; that pitiless sword of heat seemed whirling to and fro, flourishing overhead before it descended and smote me out of life. I came into the road between the crossroads and Horsell, and ran along this to the crossroads.

At last I could go no further; I was exhausted with the violence of my emotion and of my flight, and I staggered and fell by the wayside. That was near the bridge that crosses the canal by the gasworks. I fell and lay still.

I must have remained there some time.

I sat up, strangely perplexed. For a moment, perhaps, I could not clearly understand how I came there. My terror had fallen from me like a garment. My hat had gone, and my collar had burst away from its fastener. A few minutes before, there had only been three real things before me — the immensity of the night and space and nature, my own feebleness and anguish, and the near approach of death. Now it was as if something turned over, and the point of view altered abruptly. There was no sensible transition from one state of mind to the other. I was immediately the self of every day again — a decent, ordinary citizen. The silent common, the impulse of my flight, the starting flames, were as if they had been in a dream. I asked myself had these latter things indeed happened? I could not credit it.

I rose and walked unsteadily up the steep incline of the bridge. My mind was blank wonder. My muscles and nerves seemed drained of their strength. I dare say I staggered drunkenly. A head rose over the arch, and the figure of a workman carrying a basket appeared. Beside him ran a little boy. He passed me, wishing me good night. I was minded to speak to him, but did not. I answered his greeting with a meaningless mumble and went on over the bridge.

Over the Maybury arch a train, a billowing tumult of white, firelit

smoke, and a long caterpillar of lighted windows, went flying south — clatter, clatter, clap, rap, and it had gone. A dim group of people talked in the gate of one of the houses in the pretty little row of gables that was called Oriental Terrace. It was all so real and so familiar. And that behind me! It was frantic, fantastic! Such things, I told myself, could not be.

Perhaps I am a man of exceptional moods. I do not know how far my experience is common. At times I suffer from the strangest sense of detachment from myself and the world about me; I seem to watch it all from the outside, from somewhere inconceivably remote, out of time, out of space, out of the stress and tragedy of it all. This feeling was very strong upon me that night. Here was another side to my dream.

But the trouble was the blank incongruity of this serenity and the swift death flying yonder, not two miles away. There was a noise of business from the gasworks, and the electric lamps were all alight. I stopped at the group of people.

"What news from the common?" said I.

There were two men and a woman at the gate.

"Eh?" said one of the men, turning.

"What news from the common?" I said.

"'Ain't yer just *been* there?" asked the men.

"People seem fair silly about the common," said the woman over the gate. "What's it all abart?"

"Haven't you heard of the men from Mars?" said I; "the creatures from Mars?"

"Quite enough," said the woman over the gate. "Thenks"; and all three of them laughed.

I felt foolish and angry. I tried and found I could not tell them what I had seen. They laughed again at my broken sentences.

"You'll hear more yet," I said, and went on to my home.

I startled my wife at the doorway, so haggard was I. I went into the dining room, sat down, drank some wine, and so soon as I could collect myself sufficiently I told her the things I had seen. The dinner, which was a cold one, had already been served, and remained neglected on the table while I told my story.

"There is one thing," I said, to allay the fears I had aroused; "they

are the most sluggish things I ever saw crawl. They may keep the pit and kill people who come near them, but they cannot get out of it. . . . But the horror of them!"

"Don't, dear!" said my wife, knitting her brows and putting her hand on mine.

"Poor Ogilvy!" I said. "To think he may be lying dead there!"

My wife at least did not find my experience incredible. When I saw how deadly white her face was, I ceased abruptly.

"They may come here," she said again and again.

I pressed her to take wine, and tried to reassure her.

"They can scarcely move," I said.

I began to comfort her and myself by repeating all that Ogilvy had told me of the impossibility of the Martians establishing themselves on the earth. In particular I laid stress on the gravitational difficulty. On the surface of the earth the force of gravity is three times what it is on the surface of Mars. A Martian, therefore, would weigh three times more than on Mars, albeit his muscular strength would be the same. His own body would be a cope of lead to him. That, indeed, was the general opinion. Both *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, insisted on it the next morning, and both overlooked, just as I did, two obvious modifying influences.

The atmosphere of the earth, we now know, contains far more oxygen or far less argon (whichever way one likes to put it) than does Mars. The invigorating influences of this excess of oxygen upon the Martians indisputably did much to counterbalance the increased weight of their bodies. And, in the second place, we all overlooked the fact that such mechanical intelligence as the Martian possessed was quite able to dispense with muscular exertion at a pinch.

But I did not consider these points at the time, and so my reasoning was dead against the chances of the invaders. With wine and food, the confidence of my own table, and the necessity of reassuring my wife, I grew by insensible degrees courageous and secure.

"They have done a foolish thing," said I, fingering my wineglass. "They are dangerous because, no doubt, they are mad with terror. Perhaps they expected to find no living things — certainly no intelligent living things."

“A shell in the pit” said I, “if the worst comes to the worst will kill them all.”

The intense excitement of the events had no doubt left my perceptive powers in a state of erethism. I remember that dinner table with extraordinary vividness even now. My dear wife’s sweet anxious face peering at me from under the pink lamp shade, the white cloth with its silver and glass table furniture — for in those days even philosophical writers had many little luxuries — the crimson-purple wine in my glass, are photographically distinct. At the end of it I sat, tempering nuts with a cigarette, regretting Ogilvy’s rashness, and denouncing the shortsighted timidity of the Martians.

So some respectable dodo in the Mauritius might have lorded it in his nest, and discussed the arrival of that shipful of pitiless sailors in want of animal food. “We will peck them to death tomorrow, my dear.”

I did not know it, but that was the last civilised dinner I was to eat for very many strange and terrible days.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FRIDAY NIGHT

The most extraordinary thing to my mind, of all the strange and wonderful things that happened upon that Friday, was the dovetailing of the commonplace habits of our social order with the first beginnings of the series of events that was to topple that social order headlong. If on Friday night you had taken a pair of compasses and drawn a circle with a radius of five miles round the Woking sand pits, I doubt if you would have had one human being outside it, unless it were some relation of Stent or of the three or four cyclists or London people lying dead on the common, whose emotions or habits were at all affected by the new-comers. Many people had heard of the cylinder, of course, and talked about it in their leisure, but it certainly did not make the sensation that an ultimatum to Germany would have done.

In London that night poor Henderson's telegram describing the gradual unscrewing of the shot was judged to be a canard, and his evening paper, after wiring for authentication from him and receiving no reply — the man was killed — decided not to print a special edition.

Even within the five-mile circle the great majority of people were inert. I have already described the behaviour of the men and women to whom I spoke. All over the district people were dining and supping; working men were gardening after the labours of the day, children were being put to bed, young people were wandering through the lanes love-making, students sat over their books.

Maybe there was a murmur in the village streets, a novel and dominant topic in the public-houses, and here and there a messenger, or even an eye-witness of the later occurrences, caused a whirl of excitement, a shouting, and a running to and fro; but for the most part the daily routine of working, eating, drinking, sleeping, went on as it had done for countless years — as though no planet Mars existed in the sky. Even at Woking station and Horsell and Chobham that was the case.

In Woking junction, until a late hour, trains were stopping and going on, others were shunting on the sidings, passengers were alighting and waiting, and everything was proceeding in the most ordinary way. A boy from the town, trenching on Smith's monopoly, was selling papers with the afternoon's news. The ringing impact of trucks, the sharp whistle of the engines from the junction, mingled with their shouts of "Men from Mars!" Excited men came into the station about nine o'clock with incredible tidings, and caused no more disturbance than drunkards might have done. People rattling Londonwards peered into the darkness outside the carriage windows, and saw only a rare, flickering, vanishing spark dance up from the direction of Horsell, a red glow and a thin veil of smoke driving across the stars, and thought that nothing more serious than a heath fire was happening. It was only round the edge of the common that any disturbance was perceptible. There were half a dozen villas burning on the Woking border. There were lights in all the houses on the common side of the three villages, and the people there kept awake till dawn.

A curious crowd lingered restlessly, people coming and going but the crowd remaining, both on the Chobham and Horsell bridges. One or two adventurous souls, it was afterwards found, went into the darkness and crawled quite near the Martians; but they never returned, for now and again a light-ray, like the beam of a warship's searchlight swept the common, and the Heat-Ray was ready to follow. Save for such, that big area of common was silent and desolate, and the charred bodies lay about on it all night under the stars, and all the next day. A noise of hammering from the pit was heard by many people.

So you have the state of things on Friday night. In the centre, sticking into the skin of our old planet Earth like a poisoned dart, was this cylinder. But the poison was scarcely working yet. Around it was a patch of silent common, smouldering in places, and with a few dark, dimly seen objects lying in contorted attitudes here and there. Here and there was a burning bush or tree. Beyond was a fringe of excitement, and farther than that fringe the inflammation had not crept as yet. In the rest of the world the stream of life still flowed as it had flowed for immemorial years. The fever of war that would

presently clog vein and artery, deaden nerve and destroy brain, had still to develop.

All night long the Martians were hammering and stirring, sleepless, indefatigable, at work upon the machines they were making ready, and ever and again a puff of greenish-white smoke whirled up to the starlit sky.

About eleven a company of soldiers came through Horsell, and deployed along the edge of the common to form a cordon. Later a second company marched through Chobham to deploy on the north side of the common. Several officers from the Inkerman barracks had been on the common earlier in the day, and one, Major Eden, was reported to be missing. The colonel of the regiment came to the Chobham bridge and was busy questioning the crowd at midnight. The military authorities were certainly alive to the seriousness of the business. About eleven, the next morning's papers were able to say, a squadron of hussars, two Maxims, and about four hundred men of the Cardigan regiment started from Aldershot.

A few seconds after midnight the crowd in the Chertsey road, Woking, saw a star fall from heaven into the pine woods to the northwest. It had a greenish colour, and caused a silent brightness like summer lightning. This was the second cylinder.

CHAPTER NINE

THE FIGHTING BEGINS

Saturday lives in my memory as a day of suspense. It was a day of lassitude too, hot and close, with, I am told, a rapidly fluctuating barometer. I had slept but little, though my wife had succeeded in sleeping, and I rose early. I went into my garden before breakfast and stood listening, but towards the common there was nothing stirring but a lark.

The milkman came as usual. I heard the rattle of his chariot and I went round to the side gate to ask the latest news. He told me that during the night the Martians had been surrounded by troops, and that guns were expected. Then — a familiar, reassuring note — I heard a train running towards Woking.

"They aren't to be killed," said the milkman, "if that can possibly be avoided."

I saw my neighbour gardening, chatted with him for a time, and then strolled in to breakfast. It was a most unexceptional morning. My neighbour was of opinion that the troops would be able to capture or to destroy the Martians during the day.

"It's a pity they make themselves so unapproachable," he said. "It would be curious to know how they live on another planet; we might learn a thing or two."

He came up to the fence and extended a handful of strawberries, for his gardening was as generous as it was enthusiastic. At the same time he told me of the burning of the pine woods about the Byfleet Golf Links.

"They say," said he, "that there's another of those blessed things fallen there — number two. But one's enough, surely. This lot'll cost the insurance people a pretty penny before everything's settled." He laughed with an air of the greatest good humour as he said this. The woods, he said, were still burning, and pointed out a haze of smoke to me. "They will be hot under foot for days, on account of the thick soil of pine needles and turf," he said, and then grew serious over "poor Ogilvy."

After breakfast, instead of working, I decided to walk down towards the common. Under the railway bridge I found a group of soldiers — sappers, I think, men in small round caps, dirty red jackets unbuttoned, and showing their blue shirts, dark trousers, and boots coming to the calf. They told me no one was allowed over the canal, and, looking along the road towards the bridge, I saw one of the Cardigan men standing sentinel there. I talked with these soldiers for a time; I told them of my sight of the Martians on the previous evening. None of them had seen the Martians, and they had but the vaguest ideas of them, so that they plied me with questions. They said that they did not know who had authorised the movements of the troops; their idea was that a dispute had arisen at the Horse Guards. The ordinary sapper is a great deal better educated than the common soldier, and they discussed the peculiar conditions of the possible fight with some acuteness. I described the Heat-Ray to them, and they began to argue among themselves.

"Crawl up under cover and rush 'em, say I," said one.

"Get aht!" said another. "What's cover against this 'ere 'eat? Sticks to cook yer! What we got to do is to go as near as the ground'll let us, and then drive a trench."

"Blow yer trenches! You always want trenches; you ought to ha' been born a rabbit Snippy."

"Ain't they got any necks, then?" said a third, abruptly — a little, contemplative, dark man, smoking a pipe.

I repeated my description.

"Octopuses," said he, "that's what I calls 'em. Talk about fishers of men — fighters of fish it is this time!"

"It ain't no murder killing beasts like that," said the first speaker.

"Why not shell the darned things strite off and finish 'em?" said the little dark man. "You carn tell what they might do."

"Where's your shells?" said the first speaker. "There ain't no time. Do it in a rush, that's my tip, and do it at once."

So they discussed it. After a while I left them, and went on to the railway station to get as many morning papers as I could.

But I will not weary the reader with a description of that long morning and of the longer afternoon. I did not succeed in getting a glimpse of the common, for even Horsell and Chobham church

towers were in the hands of the military authorities. The soldiers I addressed didn't know anything; the officers were mysterious as well as busy. I found people in the town quite secure again in the presence of the military, and I heard for the first time from Marshall, the tobacconist, that his son was among the dead on the common. The soldiers had made the people on the outskirts of Horsell lock up and leave their houses.

I got back to lunch about two, very tired for, as I have said, the day was extremely hot and dull; and in order to refresh myself I took a cold bath in the afternoon. About half past four I went up to the railway station to get an evening paper, for the morning papers had contained only a very inaccurate description of the killing of Stent, Henderson, Ogilvy, and the others. But there was little I didn't know. The Martians did not show an inch of themselves. They seemed busy in their pit, and there was a sound of hammering and an almost continuous streamer of smoke. Apparently they were busy getting ready for a struggle. "Fresh attempts have been made to signal, but without success," was the stereotyped formula of the papers. A sapper told me it was done by a man in a ditch with a flag on a long pole. The Martians took as much notice of such advances as we should of the lowing of a cow.

I must confess the sight of all this armament, all this preparation, greatly excited me. My imagination became belligerent, and defeated the invaders in a dozen striking ways; something of my schoolboy dreams of battle and heroism came back. It hardly seemed a fair fight to me at that time. They seemed very helpless in that pit of theirs.

About three o'clock there began the thud of a gun at measured intervals from Chertsey or Addlestone. I learned that the smouldering pine wood into which the second cylinder had fallen was being shelled, in the hope of destroying that object before it opened. It was only about five, however, that a field gun reached Chobham for use against the first body of Martians.

About six in the evening, as I sat at tea with my wife in the summerhouse talking vigorously about the battle that was lowering upon us, I heard a muffled detonation from the common, and immediately after a gust of firing. Close on the heels of that came a violent rattling crash, quite close to us, that shook the ground; and,

starting out upon the lawn, I saw the tops of the trees about the Oriental College burst into smoky red flame, and the tower of the little church beside it slide down into ruin. The pinnacle of the mosque had vanished, and the roof line of the college itself looked as if a hundred-ton gun had been at work upon it. One of our chimneys cracked as if a shot had hit it, flew, and a piece of it came clattering down the tiles and made a heap of broken red fragments upon the flower bed by my study window.

I and my wife stood amazed. Then I realised that the crest of Maybury Hill must be within range of the Martians' Heat-Ray now that the college was cleared out of the way.

At that I gripped my wife's arm, and without ceremony ran her out into the road. Then I fetched out the servant, telling her I would go upstairs myself for the box she was clamouring for.

"We can't possibly stay here," I said; and as I spoke the firing reopened for a moment upon the common.

"But where are we to go?" said my wife in terror.

I thought perplexed. Then I remembered her cousins at Leatherhead.

"Leatherhead!" I shouted above the sudden noise.

She looked away from me downhill. The people were coming out of their houses, astonished.

"How are we to get to Leatherhead?" she said.

Down the hill I saw a bevy of hussars ride under the railway bridge; three galloped through the open gates of the Oriental College; two others dismounted, and began running from house to house. The sun, shining through the smoke that drove up from the tops of the trees, seemed blood red, and threw an unfamiliar lurid light upon everything.

"Stop here," said I; "you are safe here"; and I started off at once for the Spotted Dog, for I knew the landlord had a horse and dog cart. I ran, for I perceived that in a moment everyone upon this side of the hill would be moving. I found him in his bar, quite unaware of what was going on behind his house. A man stood with his back to me, talking to him.

"I must have a pound," said the landlord, "and I've no one to drive it."

“I’ll give you two,” said I, over the stranger’s shoulder.

“What for?”

“And I’ll bring it back by midnight,” I said.

“Lord!” said the landlord; “what’s the hurry? I’m selling my bit of a pig. Two pounds, and you bring it back? What’s going on now?”

I explained hastily that I had to leave my home, and so secured the dog cart. At the time it did not seem to me nearly so urgent that the landlord should leave his. I took care to have the cart there and then, drove it off down the road, and, leaving it in charge of my wife and servant, rushed into my house and packed a few valuables, such plate as we had, and so forth. The beech trees below the house were burning while I did this, and the palings up the road glowed red. While I was occupied in this way, one of the dismounted hussars came running up. He was going from house to house, warning people to leave. He was going on as I came out of my front door, lugging my treasures, done up in a tablecloth. I shouted after him:

“What news?”

He turned, stared, bawled something about “crawling out in a thing like a dish cover,” and ran on to the gate of the house at the crest. A sudden whirl of black smoke driving across the road hid him for a moment. I ran to my neighbour’s door and rapped to satisfy myself of what I already knew, that his wife had gone to London with him and had locked up their house. I went in again, according to my promise, to get my servant’s box, lugged it out, clapped it beside her on the tail of the dog cart, and then caught the reins and jumped up into the driver’s seat beside my wife. In another moment we were clear of the smoke and noise, and spanking down the opposite slope of Maybury Hill towards Old Woking.

In front was a quiet sunny landscape, a wheat field ahead on either side of the road, and the Maybury Inn with its swinging sign. I saw the doctor’s cart ahead of me. At the bottom of the hill I turned my head to look at the hillside I was leaving. Thick streamers of black smoke shot with threads of red fire were driving up into the still air, and throwing dark shadows upon the green treetops eastward. The smoke already extended far away to the east and west — to the Byfleet pine woods eastward, and to Woking on the west. The road was dotted with people running towards us. And very faint now, but

very distinct through the hot, quiet air, one heard the whirr of a machine-gun that was presently stilled, and an intermittent cracking of rifles. Apparently the Martians were setting fire to everything within range of their Heat-Ray.

I am not an expert driver, and I had immediately to turn my attention to the horse. When I looked back again the second hill had hidden the black smoke. I slashed the horse with the whip, and gave him a loose rein until Woking and Send lay between us and that quivering tumult. I overtook and passed the doctor between Woking and Send.

CHAPTER TEN

IN THE STORM

Leatherhead is about twelve miles from Maybury Hill. The scent of hay was in the air through the lush meadows beyond Pyrford, and the hedges on either side were sweet and gay with multitudes of dog-roses. The heavy firing that had broken out while we were driving down Maybury Hill ceased as abruptly as it began, leaving the evening very peaceful and still. We got to Leatherhead without misadventure about nine o'clock, and the horse had an hour's rest while I took supper with my cousins and commended my wife to their care.

My wife was curiously silent throughout the drive, and seemed oppressed with forebodings of evil. I talked to her reassuringly, pointing out that the Martians were tied to the Pit by sheer heaviness, and at the utmost could but crawl a little out of it; but she answered only in monosyllables. Had it not been for my promise to the innkeeper, she would, I think, have urged me to stay in Leatherhead that night. Would that I had! Her face, I remember, was very white as we parted.

For my own part, I had been feverishly excited all day. Something very like the war fever that occasionally runs through a civilised community had got into my blood, and in my heart I was not so very sorry that I had to return to Maybury that night. I was even afraid that that last fusillade I had heard might mean the extermination of our invaders from Mars. I can best express my state of mind by saying that I wanted to be in at the death.

It was nearly eleven when I started to return. The night was unexpectedly dark; to me, walking out of the lighted passage of my cousins' house, it seemed indeed black, and it was as hot and close as the day. Overhead the clouds were driving fast, albeit not a breath stirred the shrubs about us. My cousins' man lit both lamps. Happily, I knew the road intimately. My wife stood in the light of the doorway, and watched me until I jumped up into the dog cart. Then abruptly she turned and went in, leaving my cousins side by side

wishing me good hap.

I was a little depressed at first with the contagion of my wife's fears, but very soon my thoughts reverted to the Martians. At that time I was absolutely in the dark as to the course of the evening's fighting. I did not know even the circumstances that had precipitated the conflict. As I came through Ockham (for that was the way I returned, and not through Send and Old Woking) I saw along the western horizon a blood-red glow, which as I drew nearer, crept slowly up the sky. The driving clouds of the gathering thunderstorm mingled there with masses of black and red smoke.

Ripley Street was deserted, and except for a lighted window or so the village showed not a sign of life; but I narrowly escaped an accident at the corner of the road to Pyrford, where a knot of people stood with their backs to me. They said nothing to me as I passed. I do not know what they knew of the things happening beyond the hill, nor do I know if the silent houses I passed on my way were sleeping securely, or deserted and empty, or harassed and watching against the terror of the night.

From Ripley until I came through Pyrford I was in the valley of the Wey, and the red glare was hidden from me. As I ascended the little hill beyond Pyrford Church the glare came into view again, and the trees about me shivered with the first intimation of the storm that was upon me. Then I heard midnight pealing out from Pyrford Church behind me, and then came the silhouette of Maybury Hill, with its tree-tops and roofs black and sharp against the red.

Even as I beheld this a lurid green glare lit the road about me and showed the distant woods towards Addlestone. I felt a tug at the reins. I saw that the driving clouds had been pierced as it were by a thread of green fire, suddenly lighting their confusion and falling into the field to my left. It was the third falling star!

Close on its apparition, and blindingly violet by contrast, danced out the first lightning of the gathering storm, and the thunder burst like a rocket overhead. The horse took the bit between his teeth and bolted.

A moderate incline runs towards the foot of Maybury Hill, and down this we clattered. Once the lightning had begun, it went on in as rapid a succession of flashes as I have ever seen. The

thunderclaps, treading one on the heels of another and with a strange crackling accompaniment, sounded more like the working of a gigantic electric machine than the usual detonating reverberations. The flickering light was blinding and confusing, and a thin hail smote gustily at my face as I drove down the slope.

At first I regarded little but the road before me, and then abruptly my attention was arrested by something that was moving rapidly down the opposite slope of Maybury Hill. At first I took it for the wet roof of a house, but one flash following another showed it to be in swift rolling movement. It was an elusive vision — a moment of bewildering darkness, and then, in a flash like daylight, the red masses of the Orphanage near the crest of the hill, the green tops of the pine trees, and this problematical object came out clear and sharp and bright.

And this Thing I saw! How can I describe it? A monstrous tripod, higher than many houses, striding over the young pine trees, and smashing them aside in its career; a walking engine of glittering metal, striding now across the heather; articulate ropes of steel dangling from it, and the clattering tumult of its passage mingling with the riot of the thunder. A flash, and it came out vividly, heeling over one way with two feet in the air, to vanish and reappear almost instantly as it seemed, with the next flash, a hundred yards nearer. Can you imagine a milking stool tilted and bowled violently along the ground? That was the impression those instant flashes gave. But instead of a milking stool imagine it a great body of machinery on a tripod stand.

Then suddenly the trees in the pine wood ahead of me were parted, as brittle reeds are parted by a man thrusting through them; they were snapped off and driven headlong, and a second huge tripod appeared, rushing, as it seemed, headlong towards me. And I was galloping hard to meet it! At the sight of the second monster my nerve went altogether. Not stopping to look again, I wrenched the horse's head hard round to the right and in another moment the dog cart had heeled over upon the horse; the shafts smashed noisily, and I was flung sideways and fell heavily into a shallow pool of water.

I crawled out almost immediately, and crouched, my feet still in the water, under a clump of furze. The horse lay motionless (his neck

was broken, poor brute!) and by the lightning flashes I saw the black bulk of the overturned dog cart and the silhouette of the wheel still spinning slowly. In another moment the colossal mechanism went striding by me, and passed uphill towards Pyrford.

Seen nearer, the Thing was incredibly strange, for it was no mere insensate machine driving on its way. Machine it was, with a ringing metallic pace, and long, flexible, glittering tentacles (one of which gripped a young pine tree) swinging and rattling about its strange body. It picked its road as it went striding along, and the brazen hood that surmounted it moved to and fro with the inevitable suggestion of a head looking about. Behind the main body was a huge mass of white metal like a gigantic fisherman's basket, and puffs of green smoke squirted out from the joints of the limbs as the monster swept by me. And in an instant it was gone.

So much I saw then, all vaguely for the flickering of the lightning, in blinding highlights and dense black shadows.

As it passed it set up an exultant deafening howl that drowned the thunder— "Aloo! Aloo!" — and in another minute it was with its companion, half a mile away, stooping over something in the field. I have no doubt this Thing in the field was the third of the ten cylinders they had fired at us from Mars.

For some minutes I lay there in the rain and darkness watching, by the intermittent light, these monstrous beings of metal moving about in the distance over the hedge tops. A thin hail was now beginning, and as it came and went their figures grew misty and then flashed into clearness again. Now and then came a gap in the lightning, and the night swallowed them up.

I was soaked with hail above and puddle water below. It was some time before my blank astonishment would let me struggle up the bank to a drier position, or think at all of my imminent peril.

Not far from me was a little one-roomed squatter's hut of wood, surrounded by a patch of potato garden. I struggled to my feet at last, and, crouching and making use of every chance of cover, I made a run for this. I hammered at the door, but I could not make the people hear (if there were any people inside), and after a time I desisted, and, availing myself of a ditch for the greater part of the way, succeeded in crawling, unobserved by these monstrous machines,

into the pine woods towards Maybury.

Under cover of this I pushed on, wet and shivering now, towards my own house. I walked among the trees trying to find the footpath. It was very dark indeed in the wood, for the lightning was now becoming infrequent, and the hail, which was pouring down in a torrent, fell in columns through the gaps in the heavy foliage.

If I had fully realised the meaning of all the things I had seen I should have immediately worked my way round through Byfleet to Street Cobham, and so gone back to rejoin my wife at Leatherhead. But that night the strangeness of things about me, and my physical wretchedness, prevented me, for I was bruised, weary, wet to the skin, deafened and blinded by the storm.

I had a vague idea of going on to my own house, and that was as much motive as I had. I staggered through the trees, fell into a ditch and bruised my knees against a plank, and finally splashed out into the lane that ran down from the College Arms. I say splashed, for the storm water was sweeping the sand down the hill in a muddy torrent. There in the darkness a man blundered into me and sent me reeling back.

He gave a cry of terror, sprang sideways, and rushed on before I could gather my wits sufficiently to speak to him. So heavy was the stress of the storm just at this place that I had the hardest task to win my way up the hill. I went close up to the fence on the left and worked my way along its palings.

Near the top I stumbled upon something soft, and, by a flash of lightning, saw between my feet a heap of black broadcloth and a pair of boots. Before I could distinguish clearly how the man lay, the flicker of light had passed. I stood over him waiting for the next flash. When it came, I saw that he was a sturdy man, cheaply but not shabbily dressed; his head was bent under his body, and he lay crumpled up close to the fence, as though he had been flung violently against it.

Overcoming the repugnance natural to one who had never before touched a dead body, I stooped and turned him over to feel for his heart. He was quite dead. Apparently his neck had been broken. The lightning flashed for a third time, and his face leaped upon me. I sprang to my feet. It was the landlord of the Spotted Dog, whose

conveyance I had taken.

I stepped over him gingerly and pushed on up the hill. I made my way by the police station and the College Arms towards my own house. Nothing was burning on the hillside, though from the common there still came a red glare and a rolling tumult of ruddy smoke beating up against the drenching hail. So far as I could see by the flashes, the houses about me were mostly uninjured. By the College Arms a dark heap lay in the road.

Down the road towards Maybury Bridge there were voices and the sound of feet, but I had not the courage to shout or to go to them. I let myself in with my latchkey, closed, locked and bolted the door, staggered to the foot of the staircase, and sat down. My imagination was full of those striding metallic monsters, and of the dead body smashed against the fence.

I crouched at the foot of the staircase with my back to the wall, shivering violently.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AT THE WINDOW

I have already said that my storms of emotion have a trick of exhausting themselves. After a time I discovered that I was cold and wet, and with little pools of water about me on the stair carpet. I got up almost mechanically, went into the dining room and drank some whiskey, and then I was moved to change my clothes.

After I had done that I went upstairs to my study, but why I did so I do not know. The window of my study looks over the trees and the railway towards Horsell Common. In the hurry of our departure this window had been left open. The passage was dark, and, by contrast with the picture the window frame enclosed, the side of the room seemed impenetrably dark. I stopped short in the doorway.

The thunderstorm had passed. The towers of the Oriental College and the pine trees about it had gone, and very far away, lit by a vivid red glare, the common about the sand pits was visible. Across the light huge black shapes, grotesque and strange, moved busily to and fro.

It seemed indeed as if the whole country in that direction was on fire — a broad hillside set with minute tongues of flame, swaying and writhing with the gusts of the dying storm, and throwing a red reflection upon the cloud-scud above. Every now and then a haze of smoke from some nearer conflagration drove across the window and hid the Martian shapes. I could not see what they were doing, nor the clear form of them, nor recognise the black objects they were busied upon. Neither could I see the nearer fire, though the reflections of it danced on the wall and ceiling of the study. A sharp, resinous tang of burning was in the air.

I closed the door noiselessly and crept towards the window. As I did so, the view opened out until, on the one hand, it reached to the houses about Woking station, and on the other to the charred and blackened pine woods of Byfleet. There was a light down below the hill, on the railway, near the arch, and several of the houses along the Maybury road and the streets near the station were glowing ruins.

The light upon the railway puzzled me at first; there were a black heap and a vivid glare, and to the right of that a row of yellow oblongs. Then I perceived this was a wrecked train, the fore part smashed and on fire, the hinder carriages still upon the rails.

Between these three main centres of light — the houses, the train, and the burning county towards Chobham — stretched irregular patches of dark country, broken here and there by intervals of dimly glowing and smoking ground. It was the strangest spectacle, that black expanse set with fire. It reminded me, more than anything else, of the Potteries at night. At first I could distinguish no people at all, though I peered intently for them. Later I saw against the light of Woking station a number of black figures hurrying one after the other across the line.

And this was the little world in which I had been living securely for years, this fiery chaos! What had happened in the last seven hours I still did not know; nor did I know, though I was beginning to guess, the relation between these mechanical colossi and the sluggish lumps I had seen disgorged from the cylinder. With a queer feeling of impersonal interest I turned my desk chair to the window, sat down, and stared at the blackened country, and particularly at the three gigantic black things that were going to and fro in the glare about the sand pits.

They seemed amazingly busy. I began to ask myself what they could be. Were they intelligent mechanisms? Such a thing I felt was impossible. Or did a Martian sit within each, ruling, directing, using, much as a man's brain sits and rules in his body? I began to compare the things to human machines, to ask myself for the first time in my life how an ironclad or a steam engine would seem to an intelligent lower animal.

The storm had left the sky clear, and over the smoke of the burning land the little fading pinpoint of Mars was dropping into the west, when a soldier came into my garden. I heard a slight scraping at the fence, and rousing myself from the lethargy that had fallen upon me, I looked down and saw him dimly, clambering over the palings. At the sight of another human being my torpor passed, and I leaned out of the window eagerly.

"Hist!" said I, in a whisper.

He stopped astride of the fence in doubt. Then he came over and across the lawn to the corner of the house. He bent down and stepped softly.

"Who's there?" he said, also whispering, standing under the window and peering up.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"God knows."

"Are you trying to hide?"

"That's it."

"Come into the house," I said.

I went down, unfastened the door, and let him in, and locked the door again. I could not see his face. He was hatless, and his coat was unbuttoned.

"My God!" he said, as I drew him in.

"What has happened?" I asked.

"What hasn't?" In the obscurity I could see he made a gesture of despair. "They wiped us out — simply wiped us out," he repeated again and again.

He followed me, almost mechanically, into the dining room.

"Take some whiskey," I said, pouring out a stiff dose.

He drank it. Then abruptly he sat down before the table, put his head on his arms, and began to sob and weep like a little boy, in a perfect passion of emotion, while I, with a curious forgetfulness of my own recent despair, stood beside him, wondering.

It was a long time before he could steady his nerves to answer my questions, and then he answered perplexingly and brokenly. He was a driver in the artillery, and had only come into action about seven. At that time firing was going on across the common, and it was said the first party of Martians were crawling slowly towards their second cylinder under cover of a metal shield.

Later this shield staggered up on tripod legs and became the first of the fighting-machines I had seen. The gun he drove had been unlimbered near Horsell, in order to command the sand pits, and its arrival it was that had precipitated the action. As the limber gunners went to the rear, his horse trod in a rabbit hole and came down, throwing him into a depression of the ground. At the same moment the gun exploded behind him, the ammunition blew up, there was fire

all about him, and he found himself lying under a heap of charred dead men and dead horses.

"I lay still," he said, "scared out of my wits, with the fore quarter of a horse atop of me. We'd been wiped out. And the smell — good God! Like burnt meat! I was hurt across the back by the fall of the horse, and there I had to lie until I felt better. Just like parade it had been a minute before — then stumble, bang, swish!"

"Wiped out!" he said.

He had hid under the dead horse for a long time, peeping out furtively across the common. The Cardigan men had tried a rush, in skirmishing order, at the pit, simply to be swept out of existence. Then the monster had risen to its feet and had begun to walk leisurely to and fro across the common among the few fugitives, with its headlike hood turning about exactly like the head of a cowled human being. A kind of arm carried a complicated metallic case, about which green flashes scintillated, and out of the funnel of this there smoked the Heat-Ray.

In a few minutes there was, so far as the soldier could see, not a living thing left upon the common, and every bush and tree upon it that was not already a blackened skeleton was burning. The hussars had been on the road beyond the curvature of the ground, and he saw nothing of them. He heard the Martians rattle for a time and then become still. The giant saved Woking station and its cluster of houses until the last; then in a moment the Heat-Ray was brought to bear, and the town became a heap of fiery ruins. Then the Thing shut off the Heat-Ray, and turning its back upon the artilleryman, began to waddle away towards the smouldering pine woods that sheltered the second cylinder. As it did so a second glittering Titan built itself up out of the pit.

The second monster followed the first, and at that the artilleryman began to crawl very cautiously across the hot heather ash towards Horsell. He managed to get alive into the ditch by the side of the road, and so escaped to Woking. There his story became ejaculatory. The place was impassable. It seems there were a few people alive there, frantic for the most part and many burned and scalded. He was turned aside by the fire, and hid among some almost scorching heaps of broken wall as one of the Martian giants returned. He saw this one

pursue a man, catch him up in one of its steely tentacles, and knock his head against the trunk of a pine tree. At last, after nightfall, the artilleryman made a rush for it and got over the railway embankment.

Since then he had been skulking along towards Maybury, in the hope of getting out of danger Londonward. People were hiding in trenches and cellars, and many of the survivors had made off towards Woking village and Send. He had been consumed with thirst until he found one of the water mains near the railway arch smashed, and the water bubbling out like a spring upon the road.

That was the story I got from him, bit by bit. He grew calmer telling me and trying to make me see the things he had seen. He had eaten no food since midday, he told me early in his narrative, and I found some mutton and bread in the pantry and brought it into the room. We lit no lamp for fear of attracting the Martians, and ever and again our hands would touch upon bread or meat. As he talked, things about us came darkly out of the darkness, and the trampled bushes and broken rose trees outside the window grew distinct. It would seem that a number of men or animals had rushed across the lawn. I began to see his face, blackened and haggard, as no doubt mine was also.

When we had finished eating we went softly upstairs to my study, and I looked again out of the open window. In one night the valley had become a valley of ashes. The fires had dwindled now. Where flames had been there were now streamers of smoke; but the countless ruins of shattered and gutted houses and blasted and blackened trees that the night had hidden stood out now gaunt and terrible in the pitiless light of dawn. Yet here and there some object had had the luck to escape — a white railway signal here, the end of a greenhouse there, white and fresh amid the wreckage. Never before in the history of warfare had destruction been so indiscriminate and so universal. And shining with the growing light of the east, three of the metallic giants stood about the pit, their cowls rotating as though they were surveying the desolation they had made.

It seemed to me that the pit had been enlarged, and ever and again puffs of vivid green vapour streamed up and out of it towards the brightening dawn — streamed up, whirled, broke, and vanished.

Beyond were the pillars of fire about Chobham. They became

pillars of bloodshot smoke at the first touch of day.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WHAT I SAW OF THE DESTRUCTION OF WEYBRIDGE AND SHEPPERTON

As the dawn grew brighter we withdrew from the window from which we had watched the Martians, and went very quietly downstairs.

The artilleryman agreed with me that the house was no place to stay in. He proposed, he said, to make his way Londonward, and thence rejoin his battery — No. 12, of the Horse Artillery. My plan was to return at once to Leatherhead; and so greatly had the strength of the Martians impressed me that I had determined to take my wife to Newhaven, and go with her out of the country forthwith. For I already perceived clearly that the country about London must inevitably be the scene of a disastrous struggle before such creatures as these could be destroyed.

Between us and Leatherhead, however, lay the third cylinder, with its guarding giants. Had I been alone, I think I should have taken my chance and struck across country. But the artilleryman dissuaded me: "It's no kindness to the right sort of wife," he said, "to make her a widow"; and in the end I agreed to go with him, under cover of the woods, northward as far as Street Cobham before I parted with him. Thence I would make a big detour by Epsom to reach Leatherhead.

I should have started at once, but my companion had been in active service and he knew better than that. He made me ransack the house for a flask, which he filled with whiskey; and we lined every available pocket with packets of biscuits and slices of meat. Then we crept out of the house, and ran as quickly as we could down the ill-made road by which I had come overnight. The houses seemed deserted. In the road lay a group of three charred bodies close together, struck dead by the Heat-Ray; and here and there were things that people had dropped — a clock, a slipper, a silver spoon, and the like poor valuables. At the corner turning up towards the post office a little cart, filled with boxes and furniture, and horseless, heeled over on a broken wheel. A cash box had been hastily smashed

open and thrown under the debris.

Except the lodge at the Orphanage, which was still on fire, none of the houses had suffered very greatly here. The Heat-Ray had shaved the chimney tops and passed. Yet, save ourselves, there did not seem to be a living soul on Maybury Hill. The majority of the inhabitants had escaped, I suppose, by way of the Old Woking road — the road I had taken when I drove to Leatherhead — or they had hidden.

We went down the lane, by the body of the man in black, sodden now from the overnight hail, and broke into the woods at the foot of the hill. We pushed through these towards the railway without meeting a soul. The woods across the line were but the scarred and blackened ruins of woods; for the most part the trees had fallen, but a certain proportion still stood, dismal grey stems, with dark brown foliage instead of green.

On our side the fire had done no more than scorch the nearer trees; it had failed to secure its footing. In one place the woodmen had been at work on Saturday; trees, felled and freshly trimmed, lay in a clearing, with heaps of sawdust by the sawing-machine and its engine. Hard by was a temporary hut, deserted. There was not a breath of wind this morning, and everything was strangely still. Even the birds were hushed, and as we hurried along I and the artilleryman talked in whispers and looked now and again over our shoulders. Once or twice we stopped to listen.

After a time we drew near the road, and as we did so we heard the clatter of hoofs and saw through the tree stems three cavalry soldiers riding slowly towards Woking. We hailed them, and they halted while we hurried towards them. It was a lieutenant and a couple of privates of the 8th Hussars, with a stand like a theodolite, which the artilleryman told me was a heliograph.

“You are the first men I’ve seen coming this way this morning,” said the lieutenant. “What’s brewing?”

His voice and face were eager. The men behind him stared curiously. The artilleryman jumped down the bank into the road and saluted.

“Gun destroyed last night, sir. Have been hiding. Trying to rejoin battery, sir. You’ll come in sight of the Martians, I expect, about half

a mile along this road."

"What the dickens are they like?" asked the lieutenant.

"Giants in armour, sir. Hundred feet high. Three legs and a body like 'luminium, with a mighty great head in a hood, sir."

"Get out!" said the lieutenant. "What confounded nonsense!"

"You'll see, sir. They carry a kind of box, sir, that shoots fire and strikes you dead."

"What d'ye mean — a gun?"

"No, sir," and the artilleryman began a vivid account of the Heat-Ray. Halfway through, the lieutenant interrupted him and looked up at me. I was still standing on the bank by the side of the road.

"It's perfectly true," I said.

"Well," said the lieutenant, "I suppose it's my business to see it too. Look here" — to the artilleryman— "we're detailed here clearing people out of their houses. You'd better go along and report yourself to Brigadier-General Marvin, and tell him all you know. He's at Weybridge. Know the way?"

"I do," I said; and he turned his horse southward again.

"Half a mile, you say?" said he.

"At most," I answered, and pointed over the treetops southward. He thanked me and rode on, and we saw them no more.

Farther along we came upon a group of three women and two children in the road, busy clearing out a labourer's cottage. They had got hold of a little hand truck, and were piling it up with unclean-looking bundles and shabby furniture. They were all too assiduously engaged to talk to us as we passed.

By Byfleet station we emerged from the pine trees, and found the country calm and peaceful under the morning sunlight. We were far beyond the range of the Heat-Ray there, and had it not been for the silent desertion of some of the houses, the stirring movement of packing in others, and the knot of soldiers standing on the bridge over the railway and staring down the line towards Woking, the day would have seemed very like any other Sunday.

Several farm waggons and carts were moving creakily along the road to Addlestone, and suddenly through the gate of a field we saw, across a stretch of flat meadow, six twelve-pounders standing neatly at equal distances pointing towards Woking. The gunners stood by

the guns waiting, and the ammunition waggons were at a business-like distance. The men stood almost as if under inspection.

"That's good!" said I. "They will get one fair shot, at any rate."

The artilleryman hesitated at the gate.

"I shall go on," he said.

Farther on towards Weybridge, just over the bridge, there were a number of men in white fatigue jackets throwing up a long rampart, and more guns behind.

"It's bows and arrows against the lightning, anyhow," said the artilleryman. "They 'aven't seen that fire-beam yet."

The officers who were not actively engaged stood and stared over the treetops southwestward, and the men digging would stop every now and again to stare in the same direction.

Byfleet was in a tumult; people packing, and a score of hussars, some of them dismounted, some on horseback, were hunting them about. Three or four black government waggons, with crosses in white circles, and an old omnibus, among other vehicles, were being loaded in the village street. There were scores of people, most of them sufficiently sabbatical to have assumed their best clothes. The soldiers were having the greatest difficulty in making them realise the gravity of their position. We saw one shrivelled old fellow with a huge box and a score or more of flower pots containing orchids, angrily expostulating with the corporal who would leave them behind. I stopped and gripped his arm.

"Do you know what's over there?" I said, pointing at the pine tops that hid the Martians.

"Eh?" said he, turning. "I was explainin' these is vallyble."

"Death!" I shouted. "Death is coming! Death!" and leaving him to digest that if he could, I hurried on after the artillery-man. At the corner I looked back. The soldier had left him, and he was still standing by his box, with the pots of orchids on the lid of it, and staring vaguely over the trees.

No one in Weybridge could tell us where the headquarters were established; the whole place was in such confusion as I had never seen in any town before. Carts, carriages everywhere, the most astonishing miscellany of conveyances and horseflesh. The respectable inhabitants of the place, men in golf and boating

costumes, wives prettily dressed, were packing, river-side loafers energetically helping, children excited, and, for the most part, highly delighted at this astonishing variation of their Sunday experiences. In the midst of it all the worthy vicar was very pluckily holding an early celebration, and his bell was jangling out above the excitement.

I and the artilleryman, seated on the step of the drinking fountain, made a very passable meal upon what we had brought with us. Patrols of soldiers — here no longer hussars, but grenadiers in white — were warning people to move now or to take refuge in their cellars as soon as the firing began. We saw as we crossed the railway bridge that a growing crowd of people had assembled in and about the railway station, and the swarming platform was piled with boxes and packages. The ordinary traffic had been stopped, I believe, in order to allow of the passage of troops and guns to Chertsey, and I have heard since that a savage struggle occurred for places in the special trains that were put on at a later hour.

We remained at Weybridge until midday, and at that hour we found ourselves at the place near Shepperton Lock where the Wey and Thames join. Part of the time we spent helping two old women to pack a little cart. The Wey has a treble mouth, and at this point boats are to be hired, and there was a ferry across the river. On the Shepperton side was an inn with a lawn, and beyond that the tower of Shepperton Church — it has been replaced by a spire — rose above the trees.

Here we found an excited and noisy crowd of fugitives. As yet the flight had not grown to a panic, but there were already far more people than all the boats going to and fro could enable to cross. People came panting along under heavy burdens; one husband and wife were even carrying a small outhouse door between them, with some of their household goods piled thereon. One man told us he meant to try to get away from Shepperton station.

There was a lot of shouting, and one man was even jesting. The idea people seemed to have here was that the Martians were simply formidable human beings, who might attack and sack the town, to be certainly destroyed in the end. Every now and then people would glance nervously across the Wey, at the meadows towards Chertsey, but everything over there was still.

Across the Thames, except just where the boats landed, everything was quiet, in vivid contrast with the Surrey side. The people who landed there from the boats went tramping off down the lane. The big ferryboat had just made a journey. Three or four soldiers stood on the lawn of the inn, staring and jesting at the fugitives, without offering to help. The inn was closed, as it was now within prohibited hours.

"What's that?" cried a boatman, and "Shut up, you fool!" said a man near me to a yelping dog. Then the sound came again, this time from the direction of Chertsey, a muffled thud — the sound of a gun.

The fighting was beginning. Almost immediately unseen batteries across the river to our right, unseen because of the trees, took up the chorus, firing heavily one after the other. A woman screamed. Everyone stood arrested by the sudden stir of battle, near us and yet invisible to us. Nothing was to be seen save flat meadows, cows feeding unconcernedly for the most part, and silvery pollard willows motionless in the warm sunlight.

"The sojers'll stop 'em," said a woman beside me, doubtfully. A haziness rose over the treetops.

Then suddenly we saw a rush of smoke far away up the river, a puff of smoke that jerked up into the air and hung; and forthwith the ground heaved under foot and a heavy explosion shook the air, smashing two or three windows in the houses near, and leaving us astonished.

"Here they are!" shouted a man in a blue jersey. "Yonder! D'yer see them? Yonder!"

Quickly, one after the other, one, two, three, four of the armoured Martians appeared, far away over the little trees, across the flat meadows that stretched towards Chertsey, and striding hurriedly towards the river. Little cowled figures they seemed at first, going with a rolling motion and as fast as flying birds.

Then, advancing obliquely towards us, came a fifth. Their armoured bodies glittered in the sun as they swept swiftly forward upon the guns, growing rapidly larger as they drew nearer. One on the extreme left, the remotest that is, flourished a huge case high in the air, and the ghostly, terrible Heat-Ray I had already seen on Friday night smote towards Chertsey, and struck the town.

At sight of these strange, swift, and terrible creatures the crowd near the water's edge seemed to me to be for a moment horror-struck. There was no screaming or shouting, but a silence. Then a hoarse murmur and a movement of feet — a splashing from the water. A man, too frightened to drop the portmanteau he carried on his shoulder, swung round and sent me staggering with a blow from the corner of his burden. A woman thrust at me with her hand and rushed past me. I turned with the rush of the people, but I was not too terrified for thought. The terrible Heat-Ray was in my mind. To get under water! That was it!

"Get under water!" I shouted, unheeded.

I faced about again, and rushed towards the approaching Martian, rushed right down the gravelly beach and headlong into the water. Others did the same. A boatload of people putting back came leaping out as I rushed past. The stones under my feet were muddy and slippery, and the river was so low that I ran perhaps twenty feet scarcely waist-deep. Then, as the Martian towered overhead scarcely a couple of hundred yards away, I flung myself forward under the surface. The splashes of the people in the boats leaping into the river sounded like thunderclaps in my ears. People were landing hastily on both sides of the river. But the Martian machine took no more notice for the moment of the people running this way and that than a man would of the confusion of ants in a nest against which his foot has kicked. When, half suffocated, I raised my head above water, the Martian's hood pointed at the batteries that were still firing across the river, and as it advanced it swung loose what must have been the generator of the Heat-Ray.

In another moment it was on the bank, and in a stride wading halfway across. The knees of its foremost legs bent at the farther bank, and in another moment it had raised itself to its full height again, close to the village of Shepperton. Forthwith the six guns which, unknown to anyone on the right bank, had been hidden behind the outskirts of that village, fired simultaneously. The sudden near concussion, the last close upon the first, made my heart jump. The monster was already raising the case generating the Heat-Ray as the first shell burst six yards above the hood.

I gave a cry of astonishment. I saw and thought nothing of the

other four Martian monsters; my attention was riveted upon the nearer incident. Simultaneously two other shells burst in the air near the body as the hood twisted round in time to receive, but not in time to dodge, the fourth shell.

The shell burst clean in the face of the Thing. The hood bulged, flashed, was whirled off in a dozen tattered fragments of red flesh and glittering metal.

"Hit!" shouted I, with something between a scream and a cheer.

I heard answering shouts from the people in the water about me. I could have leaped out of the water with that momentary exultation.

The decapitated colossus reeled like a drunken giant; but it did not fall over. It recovered its balance by a miracle, and, no longer heeding its steps and with the camera that fired the Heat-Ray now rigidly upheld, it reeled swiftly upon Shepperton. The living intelligence, the Martian within the hood, was slain and splashed to the four winds of heaven, and the Thing was now but a mere intricate device of metal whirling to destruction. It drove along in a straight line, incapable of guidance. It struck the tower of Shepperton Church, smashing it down as the impact of a battering ram might have done, swerved aside, blundered on and collapsed with tremendous force into the river out of my sight.

A violent explosion shook the air, and a spout of water, steam, mud, and shattered metal shot far up into the sky. As the camera of the Heat-Ray hit the water, the latter had immediately flashed into steam. In another moment a huge wave, like a muddy tidal bore but almost scaldingly hot, came sweeping round the bend upstream. I saw people struggling shorewards, and heard their screaming and shouting faintly above the seething and roar of the Martian's collapse.

For a moment I heeded nothing of the heat, forgot the patent need of self-preservation. I splashed through the tumultuous water, pushing aside a man in black to do so, until I could see round the bend. Half a dozen deserted boats pitched aimlessly upon the confusion of the waves. The fallen Martian came into sight downstream, lying across the river, and for the most part submerged.

Thick clouds of steam were pouring off the wreckage, and through the tumultuously whirling wisps I could see, intermittently and

vaguely, the gigantic limbs churning the water and flinging a splash and spray of mud and froth into the air. The tentacles swayed and struck like living arms, and, save for the helpless purposelessness of these movements, it was as if some wounded thing were struggling for its life amid the waves. Enormous quantities of a ruddy-brown fluid were spurting up in noisy jets out of the machine.

My attention was diverted from this death flurry by a furious yelling, like that of the thing called a siren in our manufacturing towns. A man, knee-deep near the towing path, shouted inaudibly to me and pointed. Looking back, I saw the other Martians advancing with gigantic strides down the riverbank from the direction of Chertsey. The Shepperton guns spoke this time unavailingly.

At that I ducked at once under water, and, holding my breath until movement was an agony, blundered painfully ahead under the surface as long as I could. The water was in a tumult about me, and rapidly growing hotter.

When for a moment I raised my head to take breath and throw the hair and water from my eyes, the steam was rising in a whirling white fog that at first hid the Martians altogether. The noise was deafening. Then I saw them dimly, colossal figures of grey, magnified by the mist. They had passed by me, and two were stooping over the frothing, tumultuous ruins of their comrade.

The third and fourth stood beside him in the water, one perhaps two hundred yards from me, the other towards Laleham. The generators of the Heat-Rays waved high, and the hissing beams smote down this way and that.

The air was full of sound, a deafening and confusing conflict of noises — the clangorous din of the Martians, the crash of falling houses, the thud of trees, fences, sheds flashing into flame, and the crackling and roaring of fire. Dense black smoke was leaping up to mingle with the steam from the river, and as the Heat-Ray went to and fro over Weybridge its impact was marked by flashes of incandescent white, that gave place at once to a smoky dance of lurid flames. The nearer houses still stood intact, awaiting their fate, shadowy, faint and pallid in the steam, with the fire behind them going to and fro.

For a moment perhaps I stood there, breast-high in the almost

boiling water, dumbfounded at my position, hopeless of escape. Through the reek I could see the people who had been with me in the river scrambling out of the water through the reeds, like little frogs hurrying through grass from the advance of a man, or running to and fro in utter dismay on the towing path.

Then suddenly the white flashes of the Heat-Ray came leaping towards me. The houses caved in as they dissolved at its touch, and darted out flames; the trees changed to fire with a roar. The Ray flickered up and down the towing path, licking off the people who ran this way and that, and came down to the water's edge not fifty yards from where I stood. It swept across the river to Shepperton, and the water in its track rose in a boiling weal crested with steam. I turned shoreward.

In another moment the huge wave, well-nigh at the boiling-point had rushed upon me. I screamed aloud, and scalded, half blinded, agonised, I staggered through the leaping, hissing water towards the shore. Had my foot stumbled, it would have been the end. I fell helplessly, in full sight of the Martians, upon the broad, bare gravelly spit that runs down to mark the angle of the Wey and Thames. I expected nothing but death.

I have a dim memory of the foot of a Martian coming down within a score of yards of my head, driving straight into the loose gravel, whirling it this way and that and lifting again; of a long suspense, and then of the four carrying the debris of their comrade between them, now clear and then presently faint through a veil of smoke, receding interminably, as it seemed to me, across a vast space of river and meadow. And then, very slowly, I realised that by a miracle I had escaped.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HOW I FELL IN WITH THE CURATE

After getting this sudden lesson in the power of terrestrial weapons, the Martians retreated to their original position upon Horsell Common; and in their haste, and encumbered with the debris of their smashed companion, they no doubt overlooked many such a stray and negligible victim as myself. Had they left their comrade and pushed on forthwith, there was nothing at that time between them and London but batteries of twelve-pounder guns, and they would certainly have reached the capital in advance of the tidings of their approach; as sudden, dreadful, and destructive their advent would have been as the earthquake that destroyed Lisbon a century ago.

But they were in no hurry. Cylinder followed cylinder on its interplanetary flight; every twenty-four hours brought them reinforcement. And meanwhile the military and naval authorities, now fully alive to the tremendous power of their antagonists, worked with furious energy. Every minute a fresh gun came into position until, before twilight, every copse, every row of suburban villas on the hilly slopes about Kingston and Richmond, masked an expectant black muzzle. And through the charred and desolated area — perhaps twenty square miles altogether — that encircled the Martian encampment on Horsell Common, through charred and ruined villages among the green trees, through the blackened and smoking arcades that had been but a day ago pine spinneys, crawled the devoted scouts with the heliographs that were presently to warn the gunners of the Martian approach. But the Martians now understood our command of artillery and the danger of human proximity, and not a man ventured within a mile of either cylinder, save at the price of his life.

It would seem that these giants spent the earlier part of the afternoon in going to and fro, transferring everything from the second and third cylinders — the second in Addlestone Golf Links and the third at Pyrford — to their original pit on Horsell Common. Over that, above the blackened heather and ruined buildings that

stretched far and wide, stood one as sentinel, while the rest abandoned their vast fighting-machines and descended into the pit. They were hard at work there far into the night, and the towering pillar of dense green smoke that rose therefrom could be seen from the hills about Merrow, and even, it is said, from Banstead and Epsom Downs.

And while the Martians behind me were thus preparing for their next sally, and in front of me Humanity gathered for the battle, I made my way with infinite pains and labour from the fire and smoke of burning Weybridge towards London.

I saw an abandoned boat, very small and remote, drifting downstream; and throwing off the most of my sodden clothes, I went after it, gained it, and so escaped out of that destruction. There were no oars in the boat, but I contrived to paddle, as well as my parboiled hands would allow, down the river towards Halliford and Walton, going very tediously and continually looking behind me, as you may well understand. I followed the river, because I considered that the water gave me my best chance of escape should these giants return.

The hot water from the Martian's overthrow drifted downstream with me, so that for the best part of a mile I could see little of either bank. Once, however, I made out a string of black figures hurrying across the meadows from the direction of Weybridge. Halliford, it seemed, was deserted, and several of the houses facing the river were on fire. It was strange to see the place quite tranquil, quite desolate under the hot blue sky, with the smoke and little threads of flame going straight up into the heat of the afternoon. Never before had I seen houses burning without the accompaniment of an obstructive crowd. A little farther on the dry reeds up the bank were smoking and glowing, and a line of fire inland was marching steadily across a late field of hay.

For a long time I drifted, so painful and weary was I after the violence I had been through, and so intense the heat upon the water. Then my fears got the better of me again, and I resumed my paddling. The sun scorched my bare back. At last, as the bridge at Walton was coming into sight round the bend, my fever and faintness overcame my fears, and I landed on the Middlesex bank and lay down, deadly sick, amid the long grass. I suppose the time was then

about four or five o'clock. I got up presently, walked perhaps half a mile without meeting a soul, and then lay down again in the shadow of a hedge. I seem to remember talking, wanderingly, to myself during that last spurt. I was also very thirsty, and bitterly regretful I had drunk no more water. It is a curious thing that I felt angry with my wife; I cannot account for it, but my impotent desire to reach Leatherhead worried me excessively.

I do not clearly remember the arrival of the curate, so that probably I dozed. I became aware of him as a seated figure in soot-smudged shirt sleeves, and with his upturned, clean-shaven face staring at a faint flickering that danced over the sky. The sky was what is called a mackerel sky — rows and rows of faint down-plumes of cloud, just tinted with the midsummer sunset.

I sat up, and at the rustle of my motion he looked at me quickly.

"Have you any water?" I asked abruptly.

He shook his head.

"You have been asking for water for the last hour," he said.

For a moment we were silent, taking stock of each other. I dare say he found me a strange enough figure, naked, save for my water-soaked trousers and socks, scalded, and my face and shoulders blackened by the smoke. His face was a fair weakness, his chin retreated, and his hair lay in crisp, almost flaxen curls on his low forehead; his eyes were rather large, pale blue, and blankly staring. He spoke abruptly, looking vacantly away from me.

"What does it mean?" he said. "What do these things mean?"

I stared at him and made no answer.

He extended a thin white hand and spoke in almost a complaining tone.

"Why are these things permitted? What sins have we done? The morning service was over, I was walking through the roads to clear my brain for the afternoon, and then — fire, earthquake, death! As if it were Sodom and Gomorrah! All our work undone, all the work —— What are these Martians?"

"What are we?" I answered, clearing my throat.

He gripped his knees and turned to look at me again. For half a minute, perhaps, he stared silently.

"I was walking through the roads to clear my brain," he said.

“And suddenly — fire, earthquake, death!”

He relapsed into silence, with his chin now sunken almost to his knees.

Presently he began waving his hand.

“All the work — all the Sunday schools — What have we done — what has Weybridge done? Everything gone — everything destroyed. The church! We rebuilt it only three years ago. Gone! Swept out of existence! Why?”

Another pause, and he broke out again like one demented.

“The smoke of her burning goeth up for ever and ever!” he shouted.

His eyes flamed, and he pointed a lean finger in the direction of Weybridge.

By this time I was beginning to take his measure. The tremendous tragedy in which he had been involved — it was evident he was a fugitive from Weybridge — had driven him to the very verge of his reason.

“Are we far from Sunbury?” I said, in a matter-of-fact tone.

“What are we to do?” he asked. “Are these creatures everywhere? Has the earth been given over to them?”

“Are we far from Sunbury?”

“Only this morning I officiated at early celebration — —”

“Things have changed,” I said, quietly. “You must keep your head. There is still hope.”

“Hope!”

“Yes. Plentiful hope — for all this destruction!”

I began to explain my view of our position. He listened at first, but as I went on the interest dawning in his eyes gave place to their former stare, and his regard wandered from me.

“This must be the beginning of the end,” he said, interrupting me. “The end! The great and terrible day of the Lord! When men shall call upon the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them and hide them — hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne!”

I began to understand the position. I ceased my laboured reasoning, struggled to my feet, and, standing over him, laid my hand on his shoulder.

“Be a man!” said I. “You are scared out of your wits! What good is religion if it collapses under calamity? Think of what earthquakes and floods, wars and volcanoes, have done before to men! Did you think God had exempted Weybridge? He is not an insurance agent.”

For a time he sat in blank silence.

“But how can we escape?” he asked, suddenly. “They are invulnerable, they are pitiless.”

“Neither the one nor, perhaps, the other,” I answered. “And the mightier they are the more sane and wary should we be. One of them was killed yonder not three hours ago.”

“Killed!” he said, staring about him. “How can God’s ministers be killed?”

“I saw it happen.” I proceeded to tell him. “We have chanced to come in for the thick of it,” said I, “and that is all.”

“What is that flicker in the sky?” he asked abruptly.

I told him it was the heliograph signalling — that it was the sign of human help and effort in the sky.

“We are in the midst of it,” I said, “quiet as it is. That flicker in the sky tells of the gathering storm. Yonder, I take it are the Martians, and Londonward, where those hills rise about Richmond and Kingston and the trees give cover, earthworks are being thrown up and guns are being placed. Presently the Martians will be coming this way again.”

And even as I spoke he sprang to his feet and stopped me by a gesture.

“Listen!” he said.

From beyond the low hills across the water came the dull resonance of distant guns and a remote weird crying. Then everything was still. A cockchafer came droning over the hedge and past us. High in the west the crescent moon hung faint and pale above the smoke of Weybridge and Shepperton and the hot, still splendour of the sunset.

“We had better follow this path,” I said, “northward.”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

IN LONDON

My younger brother was in London when the Martians fell at Woking. He was a medical student working for an imminent examination, and he heard nothing of the arrival until Saturday morning. The morning papers on Saturday contained, in addition to lengthy special articles on the planet Mars, on life in the planets, and so forth, a brief and vaguely worded telegram, all the more striking for its brevity.

The Martians, alarmed by the approach of a crowd, had killed a number of people with a quick-firing gun, so the story ran. The telegram concluded with the words: "Formidable as they seem to be, the Martians have not moved from the pit into which they have fallen, and, indeed, seem incapable of doing so. Probably this is due to the relative strength of the earth's gravitational energy." On that last text their leader-writer expanded very comfortingly.

Of course all the students in the crammer's biology class, to which my brother went that day, were intensely interested, but there were no signs of any unusual excitement in the streets. The afternoon papers puffed scraps of news under big headlines. They had nothing to tell beyond the movements of troops about the common, and the burning of the pine woods between Woking and Weybridge, until eight. Then the *St. James's Gazette*, in an extra-special edition, announced the bare fact of the interruption of telegraphic communication. This was thought to be due to the falling of burning pine trees across the line. Nothing more of the fighting was known that night, the night of my drive to Leatherhead and back.

My brother felt no anxiety about us, as he knew from the description in the papers that the cylinder was a good two miles from my house. He made up his mind to run down that night to me, in order, as he says, to see the Things before they were killed. He dispatched a telegram, which never reached me, about four o'clock, and spent the evening at a music hall.

In London, also, on Saturday night there was a thunderstorm, and

my brother reached Waterloo in a cab. On the platform from which the midnight train usually starts he learned, after some waiting, that an accident prevented trains from reaching Woking that night. The nature of the accident he could not ascertain; indeed, the railway authorities did not clearly know at that time. There was very little excitement in the station, as the officials, failing to realise that anything further than a breakdown between Byfleet and Woking junction had occurred, were running the theatre trains which usually passed through Woking round by Virginia Water or Guildford. They were busy making the necessary arrangements to alter the route of the Southampton and Portsmouth Sunday League excursions. A nocturnal newspaper reporter, mistaking my brother for the traffic manager, to whom he bears a slight resemblance, waylaid and tried to interview him. Few people, excepting the railway officials, connected the breakdown with the Martians.

I have read, in another account of these events, that on Sunday morning "all London was electrified by the news from Woking." As a matter of fact, there was nothing to justify that very extravagant phrase. Plenty of Londoners did not hear of the Martians until the panic of Monday morning. Those who did took some time to realise all that the hastily worded telegrams in the Sunday papers conveyed. The majority of people in London do not read Sunday papers.

The habit of personal security, moreover, is so deeply fixed in the Londoner's mind, and startling intelligence so much a matter of course in the papers, that they could read without any personal tremors: "About seven o'clock last night the Martians came out of the cylinder, and, moving about under an armour of metallic shields, have completely wrecked Woking station with the adjacent houses, and massacred an entire battalion of the Cardigan Regiment. No details are known. Maxims have been absolutely useless against their armour; the field guns have been disabled by them. Flying hussars have been galloping into Chertsey. The Martians appear to be moving slowly towards Chertsey or Windsor. Great anxiety prevails in West Surrey, and earthworks are being thrown up to check the advance Londonward." That was how the Sunday *Sun* put it, and a clever and remarkably prompt "handbook" article in the *Referee* compared the affair to a menagerie suddenly let loose in a village.

No one in London knew positively of the nature of the armoured Martians, and there was still a fixed idea that these monsters must be sluggish: "crawling," "creeping painfully" — such expressions occurred in almost all the earlier reports. None of the telegrams could have been written by an eyewitness of their advance. The Sunday papers printed separate editions as further news came to hand, some even in default of it. But there was practically nothing more to tell people until late in the afternoon, when the authorities gave the press agencies the news in their possession. It was stated that the people of Walton and Weybridge, and all the district were pouring along the roads Londonward, and that was all.

My brother went to church at the Foundling Hospital in the morning, still in ignorance of what had happened on the previous night. There he heard allusions made to the invasion, and a special prayer for peace. Coming out, he bought a *Referee*. He became alarmed at the news in this, and went again to Waterloo station to find out if communication were restored. The omnibuses, carriages, cyclists, and innumerable people walking in their best clothes seemed scarcely affected by the strange intelligence that the news venders were disseminating. People were interested, or, if alarmed, alarmed only on account of the local residents. At the station he heard for the first time that the Windsor and Chertsey lines were now interrupted. The porters told him that several remarkable telegrams had been received in the morning from Byfleet and Chertsey stations, but that these had abruptly ceased. My brother could get very little precise detail out of them.

"There's fighting going on about Weybridge" was the extent of their information.

The train service was now very much disorganised. Quite a number of people who had been expecting friends from places on the South-Western network were standing about the station. One grey-headed old gentleman came and abused the South-Western Company bitterly to my brother. "It wants showing up," he said.

One or two trains came in from Richmond, Putney, and Kingston, containing people who had gone out for a day's boating and found the locks closed and a feeling of panic in the air. A man in a blue and white blazer addressed my brother, full of strange tidings.

“There’s hosts of people driving into Kingston in traps and carts and things, with boxes of valuables and all that,” he said. “They come from Molesey and Weybridge and Walton, and they say there’s been guns heard at Chertsey, heavy firing, and that mounted soldiers have told them to get off at once because the Martians are coming. We heard guns firing at Hampton Court station, but we thought it was thunder. What the dickens does it all mean? The Martians can’t get out of their pit, can they?”

My brother could not tell him.

Afterwards he found that the vague feeling of alarm had spread to the clients of the underground railway, and that the Sunday excursionists began to return from all over the South-Western “lung” — Barnes, Wimbledon, Richmond Park, Kew, and so forth — at unnaturally early hours; but not a soul had anything more than vague hearsay to tell of. Everyone connected with the terminus seemed ill-tempered.

About five o’clock the gathering crowd in the station was immensely excited by the opening of the line of communication, which is almost invariably closed, between the South-Eastern and the South-Western stations, and the passage of carriage trucks bearing huge guns and carriages crammed with soldiers. These were the guns that were brought up from Woolwich and Chatham to cover Kingston. There was an exchange of pleasantries: “You’ll get eaten!” “We’re the beast-tamers!” and so forth. A little while after that a squad of police came into the station and began to clear the public off the platforms, and my brother went out into the street again.

The church bells were ringing for evensong, and a squad of Salvation Army lassies came singing down Waterloo Road. On the bridge a number of loafers were watching a curious brown scum that came drifting down the stream in patches. The sun was just setting, and the Clock Tower and the Houses of Parliament rose against one of the most peaceful skies it is possible to imagine, a sky of gold, barred with long transverse stripes of reddish-purple cloud. There was talk of a floating body. One of the men there, a reservist he said he was, told my brother he had seen the heliograph flickering in the west.

In Wellington Street my brother met a couple of sturdy roughs

who had just been rushed out of Fleet Street with still-wet newspapers and staring placards. “Dreadful catastrophe!” they bawled one to the other down Wellington Street. “Fighting at Weybridge! Full description! Repulse of the Martians! London in Danger!” He had to give threepence for a copy of that paper.

Then it was, and then only, that he realised something of the full power and terror of these monsters. He learned that they were not merely a handful of small sluggish creatures, but that they were minds swaying vast mechanical bodies; and that they could move swiftly and smite with such power that even the mightiest guns could not stand against them.

They were described as “vast spiderlike machines, nearly a hundred feet high, capable of the speed of an express train, and able to shoot out a beam of intense heat.” Masked batteries, chiefly of field guns, had been planted in the country about Horsell Common, and especially between the Woking district and London. Five of the machines had been seen moving towards the Thames, and one, by a happy chance, had been destroyed. In the other cases the shells had missed, and the batteries had been at once annihilated by the Heat-Rays. Heavy losses of soldiers were mentioned, but the tone of the dispatch was optimistic.

The Martians had been repulsed; they were not invulnerable. They had retreated to their triangle of cylinders again, in the circle about Woking. Signallers with heliographs were pushing forward upon them from all sides. Guns were in rapid transit from Windsor, Portsmouth, Aldershot, Woolwich — even from the north; among others, long wire-guns of ninety-five tons from Woolwich. Altogether one hundred and sixteen were in position or being hastily placed, chiefly covering London. Never before in England had there been such a vast or rapid concentration of military material.

Any further cylinders that fell, it was hoped, could be destroyed at once by high explosives, which were being rapidly manufactured and distributed. No doubt, ran the report, the situation was of the strangest and gravest description, but the public was exhorted to avoid and discourage panic. No doubt the Martians were strange and terrible in the extreme, but at the outside there could not be more than twenty of them against our millions.

The authorities had reason to suppose, from the size of the cylinders, that at the outside there could not be more than five in each cylinder — fifteen altogether. And one at least was disposed of — perhaps more. The public would be fairly warned of the approach of danger, and elaborate measures were being taken for the protection of the people in the threatened southwestern suburbs. And so, with reiterated assurances of the safety of London and the ability of the authorities to cope with the difficulty, this quasi-proclamation closed.

This was printed in enormous type on paper so fresh that it was still wet, and there had been no time to add a word of comment. It was curious, my brother said, to see how ruthlessly the usual contents of the paper had been hacked and taken out to give this place.

All down Wellington Street people could be seen fluttering out the pink sheets and reading, and the Strand was suddenly noisy with the voices of an army of hawkers following these pioneers. Men came scrambling off buses to secure copies. Certainly this news excited people intensely, whatever their previous apathy. The shutters of a map shop in the Strand were being taken down, my brother said, and a man in his Sunday raiment, lemon-yellow gloves even, was visible inside the window hastily fastening maps of Surrey to the glass.

Going on along the Strand to Trafalgar Square, the paper in his hand, my brother saw some of the fugitives from West Surrey. There was a man with his wife and two boys and some articles of furniture in a cart such as greengrocers use. He was driving from the direction of Westminster Bridge; and close behind him came a hay waggon with five or six respectable-looking people in it, and some boxes and bundles. The faces of these people were haggard, and their entire appearance contrasted conspicuously with the Sabbath-best appearance of the people on the omnibuses. People in fashionable clothing peeped at them out of cabs. They stopped at the Square as if undecided which way to take, and finally turned eastward along the Strand. Some way behind these came a man in workday clothes, riding one of those old-fashioned tricycles with a small front wheel. He was dirty and white in the face.

My brother turned down towards Victoria, and met a number of such people. He had a vague idea that he might see something of me.

He noticed an unusual number of police regulating the traffic. Some of the refugees were exchanging news with the people on the omnibuses. One was professing to have seen the Martians. “Boilers on stilts, I tell you, striding along like men.” Most of them were excited and animated by their strange experience.

Beyond Victoria the public-houses were doing a lively trade with these arrivals. At all the street corners groups of people were reading papers, talking excitedly, or staring at these unusual Sunday visitors. They seemed to increase as night drew on, until at last the roads, my brother said, were like Epsom High Street on a Derby Day. My brother addressed several of these fugitives and got unsatisfactory answers from most.

None of them could tell him any news of Woking except one man, who assured him that Woking had been entirely destroyed on the previous night.

“I come from Byfleet,” he said; “man on a bicycle came through the place in the early morning, and ran from door to door warning us to come away. Then came soldiers. We went out to look, and there were clouds of smoke to the south — nothing but smoke, and not a soul coming that way. Then we heard the guns at Chertsey, and folks coming from Weybridge. So I’ve locked up my house and come on.”

At the time there was a strong feeling in the streets that the authorities were to blame for their incapacity to dispose of the invaders without all this inconvenience.

About eight o’clock a noise of heavy firing was distinctly audible all over the south of London. My brother could not hear it for the traffic in the main thoroughfares, but by striking through the quiet back streets to the river he was able to distinguish it quite plainly.

He walked from Westminster to his apartments near Regent’s Park, about two. He was now very anxious on my account, and disturbed at the evident magnitude of the trouble. His mind was inclined to run, even as mine had run on Saturday, on military details. He thought of all those silent, expectant guns, of the suddenly nomadic countryside; he tried to imagine “boilers on stilts” a hundred feet high.

There were one or two cartloads of refugees passing along Oxford Street, and several in the Marylebone Road, but so slowly was the

news spreading that Regent Street and Portland Place were full of their usual Sunday-night promenaders, albeit they talked in groups, and along the edge of Regent's Park there were as many silent couples "walking out" together under the scattered gas lamps as ever there had been. The night was warm and still, and a little oppressive; the sound of guns continued intermittently, and after midnight there seemed to be sheet lightning in the south.

He read and re-read the paper, fearing the worst had happened to me. He was restless, and after supper prowled out again aimlessly. He returned and tried in vain to divert his attention to his examination notes. He went to bed a little after midnight, and was awakened from lurid dreams in the small hours of Monday by the sound of door knockers, feet running in the street, distant drumming, and a clamour of bells. Red reflections danced on the ceiling. For a moment he lay astonished, wondering whether day had come or the world gone mad. Then he jumped out of bed and ran to the window.

His room was an attic and as he thrust his head out, up and down the street there were a dozen echoes to the noise of his window sash, and heads in every kind of night disarray appeared. Enquiries were being shouted. "They are coming!" bawled a policeman, hammering at the door; "the Martians are coming!" and hurried to the next door.

The sound of drumming and trumpeting came from the Albany Street Barracks, and every church within earshot was hard at work killing sleep with a vehement disorderly tocsin. There was a noise of doors opening, and window after window in the houses opposite flashed from darkness into yellow illumination.

Up the street came galloping a closed carriage, bursting abruptly into noise at the corner, rising to a clattering climax under the window, and dying away slowly in the distance. Close on the rear of this came a couple of cabs, the forerunners of a long procession of flying vehicles, going for the most part to Chalk Farm station, where the North-Western special trains were loading up, instead of coming down the gradient into Euston.

For a long time my brother stared out of the window in blank astonishment, watching the policemen hammering at door after door, and delivering their incomprehensible message. Then the door behind him opened, and the man who lodged across the landing came

in, dressed only in shirt, trousers, and slippers, his braces loose about his waist, his hair disordered from his pillow.

"What the devil is it?" he asked. "A fire? What a devil of a row!"

They both craned their heads out of the window, straining to hear what the policemen were shouting. People were coming out of the side streets, and standing in groups at the corners talking.

"What the devil is it all about?" said my brother's fellow lodger.

My brother answered him vaguely and began to dress, running with each garment to the window in order to miss nothing of the growing excitement. And presently men selling unnaturally early newspapers came bawling into the street:

"London in danger of suffocation! The Kingston and Richmond defences forced! Fearful massacres in the Thames Valley!"

And all about him — in the rooms below, in the houses on each side and across the road, and behind in the Park Terraces and in the hundred other streets of that part of Marylebone, and the Westbourne Park district and St. Pancras, and westward and northward in Kilburn and St. John's Wood and Hampstead, and eastward in Shoreditch and Highbury and Haggerston and Hoxton, and, indeed, through all the vastness of London from Ealing to East Ham — people were rubbing their eyes, and opening windows to stare out and ask aimless questions, dressing hastily as the first breath of the coming storm of Fear blew through the streets. It was the dawn of the great panic. London, which had gone to bed on Sunday night oblivious and inert, was awakened, in the small hours of Monday morning, to a vivid sense of danger.

Unable from his window to learn what was happening, my brother went down and out into the street, just as the sky between the parapets of the houses grew pink with the early dawn. The flying people on foot and in vehicles grew more numerous every moment. "Black Smoke!" he heard people crying, and again "Black Smoke!" The contagion of such a unanimous fear was inevitable. As my brother hesitated on the door-step, he saw another news vender approaching, and got a paper forthwith. The man was running away with the rest, and selling his papers for a shilling each as he ran — a grotesque mingling of profit and panic.

And from this paper my brother read that catastrophic dispatch of

the Commander-in-Chief:

"The Martians are able to discharge enormous clouds of a black and poisonous vapour by means of rockets. They have smothered our batteries, destroyed Richmond, Kingston, and Wimbledon, and are advancing slowly towards London, destroying everything on the way. It is impossible to stop them. There is no safety from the Black Smoke but in instant flight."

That was all, but it was enough. The whole population of the great six-million city was stirring, slipping, running; presently it would be pouring *en masse* northward.

"Black Smoke!" the voices cried. "Fire!"

The bells of the neighbouring church made a jangling tumult, a cart carelessly driven smashed, amid shrieks and curses, against the water trough up the street. Sickly yellow lights went to and fro in the houses, and some of the passing cabs flaunted unextinguished lamps. And overhead the dawn was growing brighter, clear and steady and calm.

He heard footsteps running to and fro in the rooms, and up and down stairs behind him. His landlady came to the door, loosely wrapped in dressing gown and shawl; her husband followed ejaculating.

As my brother began to realise the import of all these things, he turned hastily to his own room, put all his available money — some ten pounds altogether — into his pockets, and went out again into the streets.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN SURREY

It was while the curate had sat and talked so wildly to me under the hedge in the flat meadows near Halliford, and while my brother was watching the fugitives stream over Westminster Bridge, that the Martians had resumed the offensive. So far as one can ascertain from the conflicting accounts that have been put forth, the majority of them remained busied with preparations in the Horsell pit until nine that night, hurrying on some operation that disengaged huge volumes of green smoke.

But three certainly came out about eight o'clock and, advancing slowly and cautiously, made their way through Byfleet and Pyrford towards Ripley and Weybridge, and so came in sight of the expectant batteries against the setting sun. These Martians did not advance in a body, but in a line, each perhaps a mile and a half from his nearest fellow. They communicated with one another by means of sirenlike howls, running up and down the scale from one note to another.

It was this howling and firing of the guns at Ripley and St. George's Hill that we had heard at Upper Halliford. The Ripley gunners, unseasoned artillery volunteers who ought never to have been placed in such a position, fired one wild, premature, ineffectual volley, and bolted on horse and foot through the deserted village, while the Martian, without using his Heat-Ray, walked serenely over their guns, stepped gingerly among them, passed in front of them, and so came unexpectedly upon the guns in Painshill Park, which he destroyed.

The St. George's Hill men, however, were better led or of a better mettle. Hidden by a pine wood as they were, they seem to have been quite unsuspected by the Martian nearest to them. They laid their guns as deliberately as if they had been on parade, and fired at about a thousand yards' range.

The shells flashed all round him, and he was seen to advance a few paces, stagger, and go down. Everybody yelled together, and the guns were reloaded in frantic haste. The overthrown Martian set up a

prolonged ululation, and immediately a second glittering giant, answering him, appeared over the trees to the south. It would seem that a leg of the tripod had been smashed by one of the shells. The whole of the second volley flew wide of the Martian on the ground, and, simultaneously, both his companions brought their Heat-Rays to bear on the battery. The ammunition blew up, the pine trees all about the guns flashed into fire, and only one or two of the men who were already running over the crest of the hill escaped.

After this it would seem that the three took counsel together and halted, and the scouts who were watching them report that they remained absolutely stationary for the next half hour. The Martian who had been overthrown crawled tediously out of his hood, a small brown figure, oddly suggestive from that distance of a speck of blight, and apparently engaged in the repair of his support. About nine he had finished, for his cowl was then seen above the trees again.

It was a few minutes past nine that night when these three sentinels were joined by four other Martians, each carrying a thick black tube. A similar tube was handed to each of the three, and the seven proceeded to distribute themselves at equal distances along a curved line between St. George's Hill, Weybridge, and the village of Send, southwest of Ripley.

A dozen rockets sprang out of the hills before them so soon as they began to move, and warned the waiting batteries about Ditton and Esher. At the same time four of their fighting machines, similarly armed with tubes, crossed the river, and two of them, black against the western sky, came into sight of myself and the curate as we hurried wearily and painfully along the road that runs northward out of Halliford. They moved, as it seemed to us, upon a cloud, for a milky mist covered the fields and rose to a third of their height.

At this sight the curate cried faintly in his throat, and began running; but I knew it was no good running from a Martian, and I turned aside and crawled through dewy nettles and brambles into the broad ditch by the side of the road. He looked back, saw what I was doing, and turned to join me.

The two halted, the nearer to us standing and facing Sunbury, the remoter being a grey indistinctness towards the evening star, away

towards Staines.

The occasional howling of the Martians had ceased; they took up their positions in the huge crescent about their cylinders in absolute silence. It was a crescent with twelve miles between its horns. Never since the devising of gunpowder was the beginning of a battle so still. To us and to an observer about Ripley it would have had precisely the same effect — the Martians seemed in solitary possession of the darkling night, lit only as it was by the slender moon, the stars, the afterglow of the daylight, and the ruddy glare from St. George's Hill and the woods of Painshill.

But facing that crescent everywhere — at Staines, Hounslow, Ditton, Esher, Ockham, behind hills and woods south of the river, and across the flat grass meadows to the north of it, wherever a cluster of trees or village houses gave sufficient cover — the guns were waiting. The signal rockets burst and rained their sparks through the night and vanished, and the spirit of all those watching batteries rose to a tense expectation. The Martians had but to advance into the line of fire, and instantly those motionless black forms of men, those guns glittering so darkly in the early night, would explode into a thunderous fury of battle.

No doubt the thought that was uppermost in a thousand of those vigilant minds, even as it was uppermost in mine, was the riddle — how much they understood of us. Did they grasp that we in our millions were organized, disciplined, working together? Or did they interpret our spurts of fire, the sudden stinging of our shells, our steady investment of their encampment, as we should the furious unanimity of onslaught in a disturbed hive of bees? Did they dream they might exterminate us? (At that time no one knew what food they needed.) A hundred such questions struggled together in my mind as I watched that vast sentinel shape. And in the back of my mind was the sense of all the huge unknown and hidden forces Londonward. Had they prepared pitfalls? Were the powder mills at Hounslow ready as a snare? Would the Londoners have the heart and courage to make a greater Moscow of their mighty province of houses?

Then, after an interminable time, as it seemed to us, crouching and peering through the hedge, came a sound like the distant concussion of a gun. Another nearer, and then another. And then the

Martian beside us raised his tube on high and discharged it, gunwise, with a heavy report that made the ground heave. The one towards Staines answered him. There was no flash, no smoke, simply that loaded detonation.

I was so excited by these heavy minute-guns following one another that I so far forgot my personal safety and my scalded hands as to clamber up into the hedge and stare towards Sunbury. As I did so a second report followed, and a big projectile hurtled overhead towards Hounslow. I expected at least to see smoke or fire, or some such evidence of its work. But all I saw was the deep blue sky above, with one solitary star, and the white mist spreading wide and low beneath. And there had been no crash, no answering explosion. The silence was restored; the minute lengthened to three.

"What has happened?" said the curate, standing up beside me.

"Heaven knows!" said I.

A bat flickered by and vanished. A distant tumult of shouting began and ceased. I looked again at the Martian, and saw he was now moving eastward along the riverbank, with a swift, rolling motion.

Every moment I expected the fire of some hidden battery to spring upon him; but the evening calm was unbroken. The figure of the Martian grew smaller as he receded, and presently the mist and the gathering night had swallowed him up. By a common impulse we clambered higher. Towards Sunbury was a dark appearance, as though a conical hill had suddenly come into being there, hiding our view of the farther country; and then, remoter across the river, over Walton, we saw another such summit. These hill-like forms grew lower and broader even as we stared.

Moved by a sudden thought, I looked northward, and there I perceived a third of these cloudy black kopjes had risen.

Everything had suddenly become very still. Far away to the southeast, marking the quiet, we heard the Martians hooting to one another, and then the air quivered again with the distant thud of their guns. But the earthly artillery made no reply.

Now at the time we could not understand these things, but later I was to learn the meaning of these ominous kopjes that gathered in the twilight. Each of the Martians, standing in the great crescent I have described, had discharged, by means of the gunlike tube he

carried, a huge canister over whatever hill, copse, cluster of houses, or other possible cover for guns, chanced to be in front of him. Some fired only one of these, some two — as in the case of the one we had seen; the one at Ripley is said to have discharged no fewer than five at that time. These canisters smashed on striking the ground — they did not explode — and incontinently disengaged an enormous volume of heavy, inky vapour, coiling and pouring upward in a huge and ebony cumulus cloud, a gaseous hill that sank and spread itself slowly over the surrounding country. And the touch of that vapour, the inhaling of its pungent wisps, was death to all that breathes.

It was heavy, this vapour, heavier than the densest smoke, so that, after the first tumultuous uprush and outflow of its impact, it sank down through the air and poured over the ground in a manner rather liquid than gaseous, abandoning the hills, and streaming into the valleys and ditches and watercourses even as I have heard the carbonic-acid gas that pours from volcanic clefts is wont to do. And where it came upon water some chemical action occurred, and the surface would be instantly covered with a powdery scum that sank slowly and made way for more. The scum was absolutely insoluble, and it is a strange thing, seeing the instant effect of the gas, that one could drink without hurt the water from which it had been strained. The vapour did not diffuse as a true gas would do. It hung together in banks, flowing sluggishly down the slope of the land and driving reluctantly before the wind, and very slowly it combined with the mist and moisture of the air, and sank to the earth in the form of dust. Save that an unknown element giving a group of four lines in the blue of the spectrum is concerned, we are still entirely ignorant of the nature of this substance.

Once the tumultuous upheaval of its dispersion was over, the black smoke clung so closely to the ground, even before its precipitation, that fifty feet up in the air, on the roofs and upper stories of high houses and on great trees, there was a chance of escaping its poison altogether, as was proved even that night at Street Cobham and Ditton.

The man who escaped at the former place tells a wonderful story of the strangeness of its coiling flow, and how he looked down from the church spire and saw the houses of the village rising like ghosts

out of its inky nothingness. For a day and a half he remained there, weary, starving and sun-scorched, the earth under the blue sky and against the prospect of the distant hills a velvet-black expanse, with red roofs, green trees, and, later, black-veiled shrubs and gates, barns, outhouses, and walls, rising here and there into the sunlight.

But that was at Street Cobham, where the black vapour was allowed to remain until it sank of its own accord into the ground. As a rule the Martians, when it had served its purpose, cleared the air of it again by wading into it and directing a jet of steam upon it.

This they did with the vapour banks near us, as we saw in the starlight from the window of a deserted house at Upper Halliford, whither we had returned. From there we could see the searchlights on Richmond Hill and Kingston Hill going to and fro, and about eleven the windows rattled, and we heard the sound of the huge siege guns that had been put in position there. These continued intermittently for the space of a quarter of an hour, sending chance shots at the invisible Martians at Hampton and Ditton, and then the pale beams of the electric light vanished, and were replaced by a bright red glow.

Then the fourth cylinder fell — a brilliant green meteor — as I learned afterwards, in Bushey Park. Before the guns on the Richmond and Kingston line of hills began, there was a fitful cannonade far away in the southwest, due, I believe, to guns being fired haphazard before the black vapour could overwhelm the gunners.

So, setting about it as methodically as men might smoke out a wasps' nest, the Martians spread this strange stifling vapour over the Londonward country. The horns of the crescent slowly moved apart, until at last they formed a line from Hanwell to Coombe and Malden. All night through their destructive tubes advanced. Never once, after the Martian at St. George's Hill was brought down, did they give the artillery the ghost of a chance against them. Wherever there was a possibility of guns being laid for them unseen, a fresh canister of the black vapour was discharged, and where the guns were openly displayed the Heat-Ray was brought to bear.

By midnight the blazing trees along the slopes of Richmond Park and the glare of Kingston Hill threw their light upon a network of black smoke, blotting out the whole valley of the Thames and

extending as far as the eye could reach. And through this two Martians slowly waded, and turned their hissing steam jets this way and that.

They were sparing of the Heat-Ray that night, either because they had but a limited supply of material for its production or because they did not wish to destroy the country but only to crush and overawe the opposition they had aroused. In the latter aim they certainly succeeded. Sunday night was the end of the organised opposition to their movements. After that no body of men would stand against them, so hopeless was the enterprise. Even the crews of the torpedo-boats and destroyers that had brought their quick-firers up the Thames refused to stop, mutinied, and went down again. The only offensive operation men ventured upon after that night was the preparation of mines and pitfalls, and even in that their energies were frantic and spasmodic.

One has to imagine, as well as one may, the fate of those batteries towards Esher, waiting so tensely in the twilight. Survivors there were none. One may picture the orderly expectation, the officers alert and watchful, the gunners ready, the ammunition piled to hand, the limber gunners with their horses and waggons, the groups of civilian spectators standing as near as they were permitted, the evening stillness, the ambulances and hospital tents with the burned and wounded from Weybridge; then the dull resonance of the shots the Martians fired, and the clumsy projectile whirling over the trees and houses and smashing amid the neighbouring fields.

One may picture, too, the sudden shifting of the attention, the swiftly spreading coils and bellyings of that blackness advancing headlong, towering heavenward, turning the twilight to a palpable darkness, a strange and horrible antagonist of vapour striding upon its victims, men and horses near it seen dimly, running, shrieking, falling headlong, shouts of dismay, the guns suddenly abandoned, men choking and writhing on the ground, and the swift broadening-out of the opaque cone of smoke. And then night and extinction — nothing but a silent mass of impenetrable vapour hiding its dead.

Before dawn the black vapour was pouring through the streets of Richmond, and the disintegrating organism of government was, with a last expiring effort, rousing the population of London to the

necessity of flight.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE EXODUS FROM LONDON

So you understand the roaring wave of fear that swept through the greatest city in the world just as Monday was dawning — the stream of flight rising swiftly to a torrent, lashing in a foaming tumult round the railway stations, banked up into a horrible struggle about the shipping in the Thames, and hurrying by every available channel northward and eastward. By ten o'clock the police organisation, and by midday even the railway organisations, were losing coherency, losing shape and efficiency, guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body.

All the railway lines north of the Thames and the South-Eastern people at Cannon Street had been warned by midnight on Sunday, and trains were being filled. People were fighting savagely for standing-room in the carriages even at two o'clock. By three, people were being trampled and crushed even in Bishopsgate Street, a couple of hundred yards or more from Liverpool Street station; revolvers were fired, people stabbed, and the policemen who had been sent to direct the traffic, exhausted and infuriated, were breaking the heads of the people they were called out to protect.

And as the day advanced and the engine drivers and stokers refused to return to London, the pressure of the flight drove the people in an ever-thickening multitude away from the stations and along the northward-running roads. By midday a Martian had been seen at Barnes, and a cloud of slowly sinking black vapour drove along the Thames and across the flats of Lambeth, cutting off all escape over the bridges in its sluggish advance. Another bank drove over Ealing, and surrounded a little island of survivors on Castle Hill, alive, but unable to escape.

After a fruitless struggle to get aboard a North-Western train at Chalk Farm — the engines of the trains that had loaded in the goods yard there *ploughed* through shrieking people, and a dozen stalwart men fought to keep the crowd from crushing the driver against his furnace — my brother emerged upon the Chalk Farm road, dodged

across through a hurrying swarm of vehicles, and had the luck to be foremost in the sack of a cycle shop. The front tire of the machine he got was punctured in dragging it through the window, but he got up and off, notwithstanding, with no further injury than a cut wrist. The steep foot of Haverstock Hill was impassable owing to several overturned horses, and my brother struck into Belsize Road.

So he got out of the fury of the panic, and, skirting the Edgware Road, reached Edgware about seven, fasting and wearied, but well ahead of the crowd. Along the road people were standing in the roadway, curious, wondering. He was passed by a number of cyclists, some horsemen, and two motor cars. A mile from Edgware the rim of the wheel broke, and the machine became unridable. He left it by the roadside and trudged through the village. There were shops half opened in the main street of the place, and people crowded on the pavement and in the doorways and windows, staring astonished at this extraordinary procession of fugitives that was beginning. He succeeded in getting some food at an inn.

For a time he remained in Edgware not knowing what next to do. The flying people increased in number. Many of them, like my brother, seemed inclined to loiter in the place. There was no fresh news of the invaders from Mars.

At that time the road was crowded, but as yet far from congested. Most of the fugitives at that hour were mounted on cycles, but there were soon motor cars, hansom cabs, and carriages hurrying along, and the dust hung in heavy clouds along the road to St. Albans.

It was perhaps a vague idea of making his way to Chelmsford, where some friends of his lived, that at last induced my brother to strike into a quiet lane running eastward. Presently he came upon a stile, and, crossing it, followed a footpath northeastward. He passed near several farmhouses and some little places whose names he did not learn. He saw few fugitives until, in a grass lane towards High Barnet, he happened upon two ladies who became his fellow travellers. He came upon them just in time to save them.

He heard their screams, and, hurrying round the corner, saw a couple of men struggling to drag them out of the little pony-chaise in which they had been driving, while a third with difficulty held the frightened pony's head. One of the ladies, a short woman dressed in

white, was simply screaming; the other, a dark, slender figure, slashed at the man who gripped her arm with a whip she held in her disengaged hand.

My brother immediately grasped the situation, shouted, and hurried towards the struggle. One of the men desisted and turned towards him, and my brother, realising from his antagonist's face that a fight was unavoidable, and being an expert boxer, went into him forthwith and sent him down against the wheel of the chaise.

It was no time for pugilistic chivalry and my brother laid him quiet with a kick, and gripped the collar of the man who pulled at the slender lady's arm. He heard the clatter of hoofs, the whip stung across his face, a third antagonist struck him between the eyes, and the man he held wrenched himself free and made off down the lane in the direction from which he had come.

Partly stunned, he found himself facing the man who had held the horse's head, and became aware of the chaise receding from him down the lane, swaying from side to side, and with the women in it looking back. The man before him, a burly rough, tried to close, and he stopped him with a blow in the face. Then, realising that he was deserted, he dodged round and made off down the lane after the chaise, with the sturdy man close behind him, and the fugitive, who had turned now, following remotely.

Suddenly he stumbled and fell; his immediate pursuer went headlong, and he rose to his feet to find himself with a couple of antagonists again. He would have had little chance against them had not the slender lady very pluckily pulled up and returned to his help. It seems she had had a revolver all this time, but it had been under the seat when she and her companion were attacked. She fired at six yards' distance, narrowly missing my brother. The less courageous of the robbers made off, and his companion followed him, cursing his cowardice. They both stopped in sight down the lane, where the third man lay insensible.

"Take this!" said the slender lady, and she gave my brother her revolver.

"Go back to the chaise," said my brother, wiping the blood from his split lip.

She turned without a word — they were both panting — and they

went back to where the lady in white struggled to hold back the frightened pony.

The robbers had evidently had enough of it. When my brother looked again they were retreating.

"I'll sit here," said my brother, "if I may"; and he got upon the empty front seat. The lady looked over her shoulder.

"Give me the reins," she said, and laid the whip along the pony's side. In another moment a bend in the road hid the three men from my brother's eyes.

So, quite unexpectedly, my brother found himself, panting, with a cut mouth, a bruised jaw, and bloodstained knuckles, driving along an unknown lane with these two women.

He learned they were the wife and the younger sister of a surgeon living at Stanmore, who had come in the small hours from a dangerous case at Pinner, and heard at some railway station on his way of the Martian advance. He had hurried home, roused the women — their servant had left them two days before — packed some provisions, put his revolver under the seat — luckily for my brother — and told them to drive on to Edgware, with the idea of getting a train there. He stopped behind to tell the neighbours. He would overtake them, he said, at about half past four in the morning, and now it was nearly nine and they had seen nothing of him. They could not stop in Edgware because of the growing traffic through the place, and so they had come into this side lane.

That was the story they told my brother in fragments when presently they stopped again, nearer to New Barnet. He promised to stay with them, at least until they could determine what to do, or until the missing man arrived, and professed to be an expert shot with the revolver — a weapon strange to him — in order to give them confidence.

They made a sort of encampment by the wayside, and the pony became happy in the hedge. He told them of his own escape out of London, and all that he knew of these Martians and their ways. The sun crept higher in the sky, and after a time their talk died out and gave place to an uneasy state of anticipation. Several wayfarers came along the lane, and of these my brother gathered such news as he could. Every broken answer he had deepened his impression of the

great disaster that had come on humanity, deepened his persuasion of the immediate necessity for prosecuting this flight. He urged the matter upon them.

"We have money," said the slender woman, and hesitated.

Her eyes met my brother's, and her hesitation ended.

"So have I," said my brother.

She explained that they had as much as thirty pounds in gold, besides a five-pound note, and suggested that with that they might get upon a train at St. Albans or New Barnet. My brother thought that was hopeless, seeing the fury of the Londoners to crowd upon the trains, and broached his own idea of striking across Essex towards Harwich and thence escaping from the country altogether.

Mrs. Elphinstone — that was the name of the woman in white — would listen to no reasoning, and kept calling upon "George"; but her sister-in-law was astonishingly quiet and deliberate, and at last agreed to my brother's suggestion. So, designing to cross the Great North Road, they went on towards Barnet, my brother leading the pony to save it as much as possible. As the sun crept up the sky the day became excessively hot, and under foot a thick, whitish sand grew burning and blinding, so that they travelled only very slowly. The hedges were grey with dust. And as they advanced towards Barnet a tumultuous murmuring grew stronger.

They began to meet more people. For the most part these were staring before them, murmuring indistinct questions, jaded, haggard, unclean. One man in evening dress passed them on foot, his eyes on the ground. They heard his voice, and, looking back at him, saw one hand clutched in his hair and the other beating invisible things. His paroxysm of rage over, he went on his way without once looking back.

As my brother's party went on towards the crossroads to the south of Barnet they saw a woman approaching the road across some fields on their left, carrying a child and with two other children; and then passed a man in dirty black, with a thick stick in one hand and a small portmanteau in the other. Then round the corner of the lane, from between the villas that guarded it at its confluence with the high road, came a little cart drawn by a sweating black pony and driven by a sallow youth in a bowler hat, grey with dust. There were three girls,

East End factory girls, and a couple of little children crowded in the cart.

"This'll tike us rahnd Edgware?" asked the driver, wild-eyed, white-faced; and when my brother told him it would if he turned to the left, he whipped up at once without the formality of thanks.

My brother noticed a pale grey smoke or haze rising among the houses in front of them, and veiling the white facade of a terrace beyond the road that appeared between the backs of the villas. Mrs. Elphinstone suddenly cried out at a number of tongues of smoky red flame leaping up above the houses in front of them against the hot, blue sky. The tumultuous noise resolved itself now into the disorderly mingling of many voices, the gride of many wheels, the creaking of waggons, and the staccato of hoofs. The lane came round sharply not fifty yards from the crossroads.

"Good heavens!" cried Mrs. Elphinstone. "What is this you are driving us into?"

My brother stopped.

For the main road was a boiling stream of people, a torrent of human beings rushing northward, one pressing on another. A great bank of dust, white and luminous in the blaze of the sun, made everything within twenty feet of the ground grey and indistinct and was perpetually renewed by the hurrying feet of a dense crowd of horses and of men and women on foot, and by the wheels of vehicles of every description.

"Way!" my brother heard voices crying. "Make way!"

It was like riding into the smoke of a fire to approach the meeting point of the lane and road; the crowd roared like a fire, and the dust was hot and pungent. And, indeed, a little way up the road a villa was burning and sending rolling masses of black smoke across the road to add to the confusion.

Two men came past them. Then a dirty woman, carrying a heavy bundle and weeping. A lost retriever dog, with hanging tongue, circled dubiously round them, scared and wretched, and fled at my brother's threat.

So much as they could see of the road Londonward between the houses to the right was a tumultuous stream of dirty, hurrying people, pent in between the villas on either side; the black heads, the

crowded forms, grew into distinctness as they rushed towards the corner, hurried past, and merged their individuality again in a receding multitude that was swallowed up at last in a cloud of dust.

"Go on! Go on!" cried the voices. "Way! Way!"

One man's hands pressed on the back of another. My brother stood at the pony's head. Irresistibly attracted, he advanced slowly, pace by pace, down the lane.

Edgware had been a scene of confusion, Chalk Farm a riotous tumult, but this was a whole population in movement. It is hard to imagine that host. It had no character of its own. The figures poured out past the corner, and receded with their backs to the group in the lane. Along the margin came those who were on foot threatened by the wheels, stumbling in the ditches, blundering into one another.

The carts and carriages crowded close upon one another, making little way for those swifter and more impatient vehicles that darted forward every now and then when an opportunity showed itself of doing so, sending the people scattering against the fences and gates of the villas.

"Push on!" was the cry. "Push on! They are coming!"

In one cart stood a blind man in the uniform of the Salvation Army, gesticulating with his crooked fingers and bawling, "Eternity! Eternity!" His voice was hoarse and very loud so that my brother could hear him long after he was lost to sight in the dust. Some of the people who crowded in the carts whipped stupidly at their horses and quarrelled with other drivers; some sat motionless, staring at nothing with miserable eyes; some gnawed their hands with thirst, or lay prostrate in the bottoms of their conveyances. The horses' bits were covered with foam, their eyes bloodshot.

There were cabs, carriages, shop cars, waggons, beyond counting; a mail cart, a road-cleaner's cart marked "Vestry of St. Pancras," a huge timber waggon crowded with roughs. A brewer's dray rumbled by with its two near wheels splashed with fresh blood.

"Clear the way!" cried the voices. "Clear the way!"

"Eter-nity! Eter-nity!" came echoing down the road.

There were sad, haggard women tramping by, well dressed, with children that cried and stumbled, their dainty clothes smothered in dust, their weary faces smeared with tears. With many of these came

men, sometimes helpful, sometimes lowering and savage. Fighting side by side with them pushed some weary street outcast in faded black rags, wide-eyed, loud-voiced, and foul-mouthed. There were sturdy workmen thrusting their way along, wretched, unkempt men, clothed like clerks or shopmen, struggling spasmodically; a wounded soldier my brother noticed, men dressed in the clothes of railway porters, one wretched creature in a nightshirt with a coat thrown over it.

But varied as its composition was, certain things all that host had in common. There were fear and pain on their faces, and fear behind them. A tumult up the road, a quarrel for a place in a waggon, sent the whole host of them quickening their pace; even a man so scared and broken that his knees bent under him was galvanised for a moment into renewed activity. The heat and dust had already been at work upon this multitude. Their skins were dry, their lips black and cracked. They were all thirsty, weary, and footsore. And amid the various cries one heard disputes, reproaches, groans of weariness and fatigue; the voices of most of them were hoarse and weak. Through it all ran a refrain:

"Way! Way! The Martians are coming!"

Few stopped and came aside from that flood. The lane opened slantingly into the main road with a narrow opening, and had a delusive appearance of coming from the direction of London. Yet a kind of eddy of people drove into its mouth; weaklings elbowed out of the stream, who for the most part rested but a moment before plunging into it again. A little way down the lane, with two friends bending over him, lay a man with a bare leg, wrapped about with bloody rags. He was a lucky man to have friends.

A little old man, with a grey military moustache and a filthy black frock coat, limped out and sat down beside the trap, removed his boot — his sock was blood-stained — shook out a pebble, and hobbled on again; and then a little girl of eight or nine, all alone, threw herself under the hedge close by my brother, weeping.

"I can't go on! I can't go on!"

My brother woke from his torpor of astonishment and lifted her up, speaking gently to her, and carried her to Miss Elphinstone. So soon as my brother touched her she became quite still, as if

frightened.

"Ellen!" shrieked a woman in the crowd, with tears in her voice—"Ellen!" And the child suddenly darted away from my brother, crying "Mother!"

"They are coming," said a man on horseback, riding past along the lane.

"Out of the way, there!" bawled a coachman, towering high; and my brother saw a closed carriage turning into the lane.

The people crushed back on one another to avoid the horse. My brother pushed the pony and chaise back into the hedge, and the man drove by and stopped at the turn of the way. It was a carriage, with a pole for a pair of horses, but only one was in the traces. My brother saw dimly through the dust that two men lifted out something on a white stretcher and put it gently on the grass beneath the privet hedge.

One of the men came running to my brother.

"Where is there any water?" he said. "He is dying fast, and very thirsty. It is Lord Garrick."

"Lord Garrick!" said my brother; "the Chief Justice?"

"The water?" he said.

"There may be a tap," said my brother, "in some of the houses. We have no water. I dare not leave my people."

The man pushed against the crowd towards the gate of the corner house.

"Go on!" said the people, thrusting at him. "They are coming! Go on!"

Then my brother's attention was distracted by a bearded, eagle-faced man lugging a small handbag, which split even as my brother's eyes rested on it and disgorged a mass of sovereigns that seemed to break up into separate coins as it struck the ground. They rolled hither and thither among the struggling feet of men and horses. The man stopped and looked stupidly at the heap, and the shaft of a cab struck his shoulder and sent him reeling. He gave a shriek and dodged back, and a cartwheel shaved him narrowly.

"Way!" cried the men all about him. "Make way!"

So soon as the cab had passed, he flung himself, with both hands open, upon the heap of coins, and began thrusting handfuls in his

pocket. A horse rose close upon him, and in another moment, half rising, he had been borne down under the horse's hoofs.

"Stop!" screamed my brother, and pushing a woman out of his way, tried to clutch the bit of the horse.

Before he could get to it, he heard a scream under the wheels, and saw through the dust the rim passing over the poor wretch's back. The driver of the cart slashed his whip at my brother, who ran round behind the cart. The multitudinous shouting confused his ears. The man was writhing in the dust among his scattered money, unable to rise, for the wheel had broken his back, and his lower limbs lay limp and dead. My brother stood up and yelled at the next driver, and a man on a black horse came to his assistance.

"Get him out of the road," said he; and, clutching the man's collar with his free hand, my brother lugged him sideways. But he still clutched after his money, and regarded my brother fiercely, hammering at his arm with a handful of gold. "Go on! Go on!" shouted angry voices behind.

"Way! Way!"

There was a smash as the pole of a carriage crashed into the cart that the man on horseback stopped. My brother looked up, and the man with the gold twisted his head round and bit the wrist that held his collar. There was a concussion, and the black horse came staggering sideways, and the carthorse pushed beside it. A hoof missed my brother's foot by a hair's breadth. He released his grip on the fallen man and jumped back. He saw anger change to terror on the face of the poor wretch on the ground, and in a moment he was hidden and my brother was borne backward and carried past the entrance of the lane, and had to fight hard in the torrent to recover it.

He saw Miss Elphinstone covering her eyes, and a little child, with all a child's want of sympathetic imagination, staring with dilated eyes at a dusty something that lay black and still, ground and crushed under the rolling wheels. "Let us go back!" he shouted, and began turning the pony round. "We cannot cross this — hell," he said and they went back a hundred yards the way they had come, until the fighting crowd was hidden. As they passed the bend in the lane my brother saw the face of the dying man in the ditch under the privet, deadly white and drawn, and shining with perspiration. The two

women sat silent, crouching in their seat and shivering.

Then beyond the bend my brother stopped again. Miss Elphinstone was white and pale, and her sister-in-law sat weeping, too wretched even to call upon "George." My brother was horrified and perplexed. So soon as they had retreated he realised how urgent and unavoidable it was to attempt this crossing. He turned to Miss Elphinstone, suddenly resolute.

"We must go that way," he said, and led the pony round again.

For the second time that day this girl proved her quality. To force their way into the torrent of people, my brother plunged into the traffic and held back a cab horse, while she drove the pony across its head. A waggon locked wheels for a moment and ripped a long splinter from the chaise. In another moment they were caught and swept forward by the stream. My brother, with the cabman's whip marks red across his face and hands, scrambled into the chaise and took the reins from her.

"Point the revolver at the man behind," he said, giving it to her, "if he presses us too hard. No! — point it at his horse."

Then he began to look out for a chance of edging to the right across the road. But once in the stream he seemed to lose volition, to become a part of that dusty rout. They swept through Chipping Barnet with the torrent; they were nearly a mile beyond the centre of the town before they had fought across to the opposite side of the way. It was din and confusion indescribable; but in and beyond the town the road forks repeatedly, and this to some extent relieved the stress.

They struck eastward through Hadley, and there on either side of the road, and at another place farther on they came upon a great multitude of people drinking at the stream, some fighting to come at the water. And farther on, from a lull near East Barnet, they saw two trains running slowly one after the other without signal or order — trains swarming with people, with men even among the coals behind the engines — going northward along the Great Northern Railway. My brother supposes they must have filled outside London, for at that time the furious terror of the people had rendered the central termini impossible.

Near this place they halted for the rest of the afternoon, for the

violence of the day had already utterly exhausted all three of them. They began to suffer the beginnings of hunger; the night was cold, and none of them dared to sleep. And in the evening many people came hurrying along the road nearby their stopping place, fleeing from unknown dangers before them, and going in the direction from which my brother had come.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE "THUNDER CHILD"

Had the Martians aimed only at destruction, they might on Monday have annihilated the entire population of London, as it spread itself slowly through the home counties. Not only along the road through Barnet, but also through Edgware and Waltham Abbey, and along the roads eastward to Southend and Shoeburyness, and south of the Thames to Deal and Broadstairs, poured the same frantic rout. If one could have hung that June morning in a balloon in the blazing blue above London every northward and eastward road running out of the tangled maze of streets would have seemed stippled black with the streaming fugitives, each dot a human agony of terror and physical distress. I have set forth at length in the last chapter my brother's account of the road through Chipping Barnet, in order that my readers may realise how that swarming of black dots appeared to one of those concerned. Never before in the history of the world had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together. The legendary hosts of Goths and Huns, the hugest armies Asia has ever seen, would have been but a drop in that current. And this was no disciplined march; it was a stampede — a stampede gigantic and terrible — without order and without a goal, six million people unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong. It was the beginning of the rout of civilisation, of the massacre of mankind.

Directly below him the balloonist would have seen the network of streets far and wide, houses, churches, squares, crescents, gardens — already derelict — spread out like a huge map, and in the southward *blotted*. Over Ealing, Richmond, Wimbledon, it would have seemed as if some monstrous pen had flung ink upon the chart. Steadily, incessantly, each black splash grew and spread, shooting out ramifications this way and that, now banking itself against rising ground, now pouring swiftly over a crest into a new-found valley, exactly as a gout of ink would spread itself upon blotting paper.

And beyond, over the blue hills that rise southward of the river, the glittering Martians went to and fro, calmly and methodically

spreading their poison cloud over this patch of country and then over that, laying it again with their steam jets when it had served its purpose, and taking possession of the conquered country. They do not seem to have aimed at extermination so much as at complete demoralisation and the destruction of any opposition. They exploded any stores of powder they came upon, cut every telegraph, and wrecked the railways here and there. They were hamstringing mankind. They seemed in no hurry to extend the field of their operations, and did not come beyond the central part of London all that day. It is possible that a very considerable number of people in London stuck to their houses through Monday morning. Certain it is that many died at home suffocated by the Black Smoke.

Until about midday the Pool of London was an astonishing scene. Steamboats and shipping of all sorts lay there, tempted by the enormous sums of money offered by fugitives, and it is said that many who swam out to these vessels were thrust off with boathooks and drowned. About one o'clock in the afternoon the thinning remnant of a cloud of the black vapour appeared between the arches of Blackfriars Bridge. At that the Pool became a scene of mad confusion, fighting, and collision, and for some time a multitude of boats and barges jammed in the northern arch of the Tower Bridge, and the sailors and lightermen had to fight savagely against the people who swarmed upon them from the riverfront. People were actually clambering down the piers of the bridge from above.

When, an hour later, a Martian appeared beyond the Clock Tower and waded down the river, nothing but wreckage floated above Limehouse.

Of the falling of the fifth cylinder I have presently to tell. The sixth star fell at Wimbledon. My brother, keeping watch beside the women in the chaise in a meadow, saw the green flash of it far beyond the hills. On Tuesday the little party, still set upon getting across the sea, made its way through the swarming country towards Colchester. The news that the Martians were now in possession of the whole of London was confirmed. They had been seen at Highgate, and even, it was said, at Neasden. But they did not come into my brother's view until the morrow.

That day the scattered multitudes began to realise the urgent need

of provisions. As they grew hungry the rights of property ceased to be regarded. Farmers were out to defend their cattle-sheds, granaries, and ripening root crops with arms in their hands. A number of people now, like my brother, had their faces eastward, and there were some desperate souls even going back towards London to get food. These were chiefly people from the northern suburbs, whose knowledge of the Black Smoke came by hearsay. He heard that about half the members of the government had gathered at Birmingham, and that enormous quantities of high explosives were being prepared to be used in automatic mines across the Midland counties.

He was also told that the Midland Railway Company had replaced the desertions of the first day's panic, had resumed traffic, and was running northward trains from St. Albans to relieve the congestion of the home counties. There was also a placard in Chipping Ongar announcing that large stores of flour were available in the northern towns and that within twenty-four hours bread would be distributed among the starving people in the neighbourhood. But this intelligence did not deter him from the plan of escape he had formed, and the three pressed eastward all day, and heard no more of the bread distribution than this promise. Nor, as a matter of fact, did anyone else hear more of it. That night fell the seventh star, falling upon Primrose Hill. It fell while Miss Elphinstone was watching, for she took that duty alternately with my brother. She saw it.

On Wednesday the three fugitives — they had passed the night in a field of unripe wheat — reached Chelmsford, and there a body of the inhabitants, calling itself the Committee of Public Supply, seized the pony as provisions, and would give nothing in exchange for it but the promise of a share in it the next day. Here there were rumours of Martians at Epping, and news of the destruction of Waltham Abbey Powder Mills in a vain attempt to blow up one of the invaders.

People were watching for Martians here from the church towers. My brother, very luckily for him as it chanced, preferred to push on at once to the coast rather than wait for food, although all three of them were very hungry. By midday they passed through Tillingham, which, strangely enough, seemed to be quite silent and deserted, save for a few furtive plunderers hunting for food. Near Tillingham they suddenly came in sight of the sea, and the most amazing crowd of

shipping of all sorts that it is possible to imagine.

For after the sailors could no longer come up the Thames, they came on to the Essex coast, to Harwich and Walton and Clacton, and afterwards to Foulness and Shoebury, to bring off the people. They lay in a huge sickle-shaped curve that vanished into mist at last towards the Naze. Close inshore was a multitude of fishing smacks — English, Scotch, French, Dutch, and Swedish; steam launches from the Thames, yachts, electric boats; and beyond were ships of large burden, a multitude of filthy colliers, trim merchantmen, cattle ships, passenger boats, petroleum tanks, ocean tramps, an old white transport even, neat white and grey liners from Southampton and Hamburg; and along the blue coast across the Blackwater my brother could make out dimly a dense swarm of boats chaffering with the people on the beach, a swarm which also extended up the Blackwater almost to Maldon.

About a couple of miles out lay an ironclad, very low in the water, almost, to my brother's perception, like a water-logged ship. This was the ram *Thunder Child*. It was the only warship in sight, but far away to the right over the smooth surface of the sea — for that day there was a dead calm — lay a serpent of black smoke to mark the next ironclads of the Channel Fleet, which hovered in an extended line, steam up and ready for action, across the Thames estuary during the course of the Martian conquest, vigilant and yet powerless to prevent it.

At the sight of the sea, Mrs. Elphinstone, in spite of the assurances of her sister-in-law, gave way to panic. She had never been out of England before, she would rather die than trust herself friendless in a foreign country, and so forth. She seemed, poor woman, to imagine that the French and the Martians might prove very similar. She had been growing increasingly hysterical, fearful, and depressed during the two days' journeyings. Her great idea was to return to Stanmore. Things had been always well and safe at Stanmore. They would find George at Stanmore.

It was with the greatest difficulty they could get her down to the beach, where presently my brother succeeded in attracting the attention of some men on a paddle steamer from the Thames. They sent a boat and drove a bargain for thirty-six pounds for the three.

The steamer was going, these men said, to Ostend.

It was about two o'clock when my brother, having paid their fares at the gangway, found himself safely aboard the steamboat with his charges. There was food aboard, albeit at exorbitant prices, and the three of them contrived to eat a meal on one of the seats forward.

There were already a couple of score of passengers aboard, some of whom had expended their last money in securing a passage, but the captain lay off the Blackwater until five in the afternoon, picking up passengers until the seated decks were even dangerously crowded. He would probably have remained longer had it not been for the sound of guns that began about that hour in the south. As if in answer, the ironclad seaward fired a small gun and hoisted a string of flags. A jet of smoke sprang out of her funnels.

Some of the passengers were of opinion that this firing came from Shoeburyness, until it was noticed that it was growing louder. At the same time, far away in the southeast the masts and upperworks of three ironclads rose one after the other out of the sea, beneath clouds of black smoke. But my brother's attention speedily reverted to the distant firing in the south. He fancied he saw a column of smoke rising out of the distant grey haze.

The little steamer was already flapping her way eastward of the big crescent of shipping, and the low Essex coast was growing blue and hazy, when a Martian appeared, small and faint in the remote distance, advancing along the muddy coast from the direction of Foulness. At that the captain on the bridge swore at the top of his voice with fear and anger at his own delay, and the paddles seemed infected with his terror. Every soul aboard stood at the bulwarks or on the seats of the steamer and stared at that distant shape, higher than the trees or church towers inland, and advancing with a leisurely parody of a human stride.

It was the first Martian my brother had seen, and he stood, more amazed than terrified, watching this Titan advancing deliberately towards the shipping, wading farther and farther into the water as the coast fell away. Then, far away beyond the Crouch, came another, striding over some stunted trees, and then yet another, still farther off, wading deeply through a shiny mudflat that seemed to hang halfway up between sea and sky. They were all stalking seaward, as

if to intercept the escape of the multitudinous vessels that were crowded between Foulness and the Naze. In spite of the throbbing exertions of the engines of the little paddle-boat, and the pouring foam that her wheels flung behind her, she receded with terrifying slowness from this ominous advance.

Glancing northwestward, my brother saw the large crescent of shipping already writhing with the approaching terror; one ship passing behind another, another coming round from broadside to end on, steamships whistling and giving off volumes of steam, sails being let out, launches rushing hither and thither. He was so fascinated by this and by the creeping danger away to the left that he had no eyes for anything seaward. And then a swift movement of the steamboat (she had suddenly come round to avoid being run down) flung him headlong from the seat upon which he was standing. There was a shouting all about him, a trampling of feet, and a cheer that seemed to be answered faintly. The steamboat lurched and rolled him over upon his hands.

He sprang to his feet and saw to starboard, and not a hundred yards from their heeling, pitching boat, a vast iron bulk like the blade of a plough tearing through the water, tossing it on either side in huge waves of foam that leaped towards the steamer, flinging her paddles helplessly in the air, and then sucking her deck down almost to the waterline.

A douche of spray blinded my brother for a moment. When his eyes were clear again he saw the monster had passed and was rushing landward. Big iron upperworks rose out of this headlong structure, and from that twin funnels projected and spat a smoking blast shot with fire. It was the torpedo ram, *Thunder Child*, steaming headlong, coming to the rescue of the threatened shipping.

Keeping his footing on the heaving deck by clutching the bulwarks, my brother looked past this charging leviathan at the Martians again, and he saw the three of them now close together, and standing so far out to sea that their tripod supports were almost entirely submerged. Thus sunken, and seen in remote perspective, they appeared far less formidable than the huge iron bulk in whose wake the steamer was pitching so helplessly. It would seem they were regarding this new antagonist with astonishment. To their

intelligence, it may be, the giant was even such another as themselves. The *Thunder Child* fired no gun, but simply drove full speed towards them. It was probably her not firing that enabled her to get so near the enemy as she did. They did not know what to make of her. One shell, and they would have sent her to the bottom forthwith with the Heat-Ray.

She was steaming at such a pace that in a minute she seemed halfway between the steamboat and the Martians — a diminishing black bulk against the receding horizontal expanse of the Essex coast.

Suddenly the foremost Martian lowered his tube and discharged a canister of the black gas at the ironclad. It hit her larboard side and glanced off in an inky jet that rolled away to seaward, an unfolding torrent of Black Smoke, from which the ironclad drove clear. To the watchers from the steamer, low in the water and with the sun in their eyes, it seemed as though she were already among the Martians.

They saw the gaunt figures separating and rising out of the water as they retreated shoreward, and one of them raised the camera-like generator of the Heat-Ray. He held it pointing obliquely downward, and a bank of steam sprang from the water at its touch. It must have driven through the iron of the ship's side like a white-hot iron rod through paper.

A flicker of flame went up through the rising steam, and then the Martian reeled and staggered. In another moment he was cut down, and a great body of water and steam shot high in the air. The guns of the *Thunder Child* sounded through the reek, going off one after the other, and one shot splashed the water high close by the steamer, ricocheted towards the other flying ships to the north, and smashed a smack to matchwood.

But no one heeded that very much. At the sight of the Martian's collapse the captain on the bridge yelled inarticulately, and all the crowding passengers on the steamer's stern shouted together. And then they yelled again. For, surging out beyond the white tumult, drove something long and black, the flames streaming from its middle parts, its ventilators and funnels spouting fire.

She was alive still; the steering gear, it seems, was intact and her engines working. She headed straight for a second Martian, and was

within a hundred yards of him when the Heat-Ray came to bear. Then with a violent thud, a blinding flash, her decks, her funnels, leaped upward. The Martian staggered with the violence of her explosion, and in another moment the flaming wreckage, still driving forward with the impetus of its pace, had struck him and crumpled him up like a thing of cardboard. My brother shouted involuntarily. A boiling tumult of steam hid everything again.

"Two!" yelled the captain.

Everyone was shouting. The whole steamer from end to end rang with frantic cheering that was taken up first by one and then by all in the crowding multitude of ships and boats that was driving out to sea.

The steam hung upon the water for many minutes, hiding the third Martian and the coast altogether. And all this time the boat was paddling steadily out to sea and away from the fight; and when at last the confusion cleared, the drifting bank of black vapour intervened, and nothing of the *Thunder Child* could be made out, nor could the third Martian be seen. But the ironclads to seaward were now quite close and standing in towards shore past the steamboat.

The little vessel continued to beat its way seaward, and the ironclads receded slowly towards the coast, which was hidden still by a marbled bank of vapour, part steam, part black gas, eddying and combining in the strangest way. The fleet of refugees was scattering to the northeast; several smacks were sailing between the ironclads and the steamboat. After a time, and before they reached the sinking cloud bank, the warships turned northward, and then abruptly went about and passed into the thickening haze of evening southward. The coast grew faint, and at last indistinguishable amid the low banks of clouds that were gathering about the sinking sun.

Then suddenly out of the golden haze of the sunset came the vibration of guns, and a form of black shadows moving. Everyone struggled to the rail of the steamer and peered into the blinding furnace of the west, but nothing was to be distinguished clearly. A mass of smoke rose slanting and barred the face of the sun. The steamboat throbbed on its way through an interminable suspense.

The sun sank into grey clouds, the sky flushed and darkened, the evening star trembled into sight. It was deep twilight when the captain cried out and pointed. My brother strained his eyes.

Something rushed up into the sky out of the greyness — rushed slantingly upward and very swiftly into the luminous clearness above the clouds in the western sky; something flat and broad, and very large, that swept round in a vast curve, grew smaller, sank slowly, and vanished again into the grey mystery of the night. And as it flew it rained down darkness upon the land.

BOOK TWO. THE EARTH UNDER THE MARTIANS

CHAPTER ONE

UNDER FOOT

In the first book I have wandered so much from my own adventures to tell of the experiences of my brother that all through the last two chapters I and the curate have been lurking in the empty house at Halliford whither we fled to escape the Black Smoke. There I will resume. We stopped there all Sunday night and all the next day — the day of the panic — in a little island of daylight, cut off by the Black Smoke from the rest of the world. We could do nothing but wait in aching inactivity during those two weary days.

My mind was occupied by anxiety for my wife. I figured her at Leatherhead, terrified, in danger, mourning me already as a dead man. I paced the rooms and cried aloud when I thought of how I was cut off from her, of all that might happen to her in my absence. My cousin I knew was brave enough for any emergency, but he was not the sort of man to realise danger quickly, to rise promptly. What was needed now was not bravery, but circumspection. My only consolation was to believe that the Martians were moving Londonward and away from her. Such vague anxieties keep the mind sensitive and painful. I grew very weary and irritable with the curate's perpetual ejaculations; I tired of the sight of his selfish despair. After some ineffectual remonstrance I kept away from him, staying in a room — evidently a children's schoolroom — containing globes, forms, and copybooks. When he followed me thither, I went to a box room at the top of the house and, in order to be alone with my aching miseries, locked myself in.

We were hopelessly hemmed in by the Black Smoke all that day and the morning of the next. There were signs of people in the next house on Sunday evening — a face at a window and moving lights, and later the slamming of a door. But I do not know who these people were, nor what became of them. We saw nothing of them next day. The Black Smoke drifted slowly riverward all through Monday morning, creeping nearer and nearer to us, driving at last along the roadway outside the house that hid us.

A Martian came across the fields about midday, laying the stuff with a jet of superheated steam that hissed against the walls, smashed all the windows it touched, and scalded the curate's hand as he fled out of the front room. When at last we crept across the sodden rooms and looked out again, the country northward was as though a black snowstorm had passed over it. Looking towards the river, we were astonished to see an unaccountable redness mingling with the black of the scorched meadows.

For a time we did not see how this change affected our position, save that we were relieved of our fear of the Black Smoke. But later I perceived that we were no longer hemmed in, that now we might get away. So soon as I realised that the way of escape was open, my dream of action returned. But the curate was lethargic, unreasonable.

"We are safe here," he repeated; "safe here."

I resolved to leave him — would that I had! Wiser now for the artilleryman's teaching, I sought out food and drink. I had found oil and rags for my burns, and I also took a hat and a flannel shirt that I found in one of the bedrooms. When it was clear to him that I meant to go alone — had reconciled myself to going alone — he suddenly roused himself to come. And all being quiet throughout the afternoon, we started about five o'clock, as I should judge, along the blackened road to Sunbury.

In Sunbury, and at intervals along the road, were dead bodies lying in contorted attitudes, horses as well as men, overturned carts and luggage, all covered thickly with black dust. That pall of cindery powder made me think of what I had read of the destruction of Pompeii. We got to Hampton Court without misadventure, our minds full of strange and unfamiliar appearances, and at Hampton Court our eyes were relieved to find a patch of green that had escaped the suffocating drift. We went through Bushey Park, with its deer going to and fro under the chestnuts, and some men and women hurrying in the distance towards Hampton, and so we came to Twickenham. These were the first people we saw.

Away across the road the woods beyond Ham and Petersham were still afire. Twickenham was uninjured by either Heat-Ray or Black Smoke, and there were more people about here, though none could give us news. For the most part they were like ourselves,

taking advantage of a lull to shift their quarters. I have an impression that many of the houses here were still occupied by scared inhabitants, too frightened even for flight. Here too the evidence of a hasty rout was abundant along the road. I remember most vividly three smashed bicycles in a heap, pounded into the road by the wheels of subsequent carts. We crossed Richmond Bridge about half past eight. We hurried across the exposed bridge, of course, but I noticed floating down the stream a number of red masses, some many feet across. I did not know what these were — there was no time for scrutiny — and I put a more horrible interpretation on them than they deserved. Here again on the Surrey side were black dust that had once been smoke, and dead bodies — a heap near the approach to the station; but we had no glimpse of the Martians until we were some way towards Barnes.

We saw in the blackened distance a group of three people running down a side street towards the river, but otherwise it seemed deserted. Up the hill Richmond town was burning briskly; outside the town of Richmond there was no trace of the Black Smoke.

Then suddenly, as we approached Kew, came a number of people running, and the upperworks of a Martian fighting-machine loomed in sight over the housetops, not a hundred yards away from us. We stood aghast at our danger, and had the Martian looked down we must immediately have perished. We were so terrified that we dared not go on, but turned aside and hid in a shed in a garden. There the curate crouched, weeping silently, and refusing to stir again.

But my fixed idea of reaching Leatherhead would not let me rest, and in the twilight I ventured out again. I went through a shrubbery, and along a passage beside a big house standing in its own grounds, and so emerged upon the road towards Kew. The curate I left in the shed, but he came hurrying after me.

That second start was the most foolhardy thing I ever did. For it was manifest the Martians were about us. No sooner had the curate overtaken me than we saw either the fighting-machine we had seen before or another, far away across the meadows in the direction of Kew Lodge. Four or five little black figures hurried before it across the green-grey of the field, and in a moment it was evident this Martian pursued them. In three strides he was among them, and they

ran radiating from his feet in all directions. He used no Heat-Ray to destroy them, but picked them up one by one. Apparently he tossed them into the great metallic carrier which projected behind him, much as a workman's basket hangs over his shoulder.

It was the first time I realised that the Martians might have any other purpose than destruction with defeated humanity. We stood for a moment petrified, then turned and fled through a gate behind us into a walled garden, fell into, rather than found, a fortunate ditch, and lay there, scarce daring to whisper to each other until the stars were out.

I suppose it was nearly eleven o'clock before we gathered courage to start again, no longer venturing into the road, but sneaking along hedgerows and through plantations, and watching keenly through the darkness, he on the right and I on the left, for the Martians, who seemed to be all about us. In one place we blundered upon a scorched and blackened area, now cooling and ashen, and a number of scattered dead bodies of men, burned horribly about the heads and trunks but with their legs and boots mostly intact; and of dead horses, fifty feet, perhaps, behind a line of four ripped guns and smashed gun carriages.

Sheen, it seemed, had escaped destruction, but the place was silent and deserted. Here we happened on no dead, though the night was too dark for us to see into the side roads of the place. In Sheen my companion suddenly complained of faintness and thirst, and we decided to try one of the houses.

The first house we entered, after a little difficulty with the window, was a small semi-detached villa, and I found nothing eatable left in the place but some mouldy cheese. There was, however, water to drink; and I took a hatchet, which promised to be useful in our next house-breaking.

We then crossed to a place where the road turns towards Mortlake. Here there stood a white house within a walled garden, and in the pantry of this domicile we found a store of food — two loaves of bread in a pan, an uncooked steak, and the half of a ham. I give this catalogue so precisely because, as it happened, we were destined to subsist upon this store for the next fortnight. Bottled beer stood under a shelf, and there were two bags of haricot beans and some

limp lettuces. This pantry opened into a kind of wash-up kitchen, and in this was firewood; there was also a cupboard, in which we found nearly a dozen of burgundy, tinned soups and salmon, and two tins of biscuits.

We sat in the adjacent kitchen in the dark — for we dared not strike a light — and ate bread and ham, and drank beer out of the same bottle. The curate, who was still timorous and restless, was now, oddly enough, for pushing on, and I was urging him to keep up his strength by eating when the thing happened that was to imprison us.

"It can't be midnight yet," I said, and then came a blinding glare of vivid green light. Everything in the kitchen leaped out, clearly visible in green and black, and vanished again. And then followed such a concussion as I have never heard before or since. So close on the heels of this as to seem instantaneous came a thud behind me, a clash of glass, a crash and rattle of falling masonry all about us, and the plaster of the ceiling came down upon us, smashing into a multitude of fragments upon our heads. I was knocked headlong across the floor against the oven handle and stunned. I was insensible for a long time, the curate told me, and when I came to we were in darkness again, and he, with a face wet, as I found afterwards, with blood from a cut forehead, was dabbing water over me.

For some time I could not recollect what had happened. Then things came to me slowly. A bruise on my temple asserted itself.

"Are you better?" asked the curate in a whisper.

At last I answered him. I sat up.

"Don't move," he said. "The floor is covered with smashed crockery from the dresser. You can't possibly move without making a noise, and I fancy *they* are outside."

We both sat quite silent, so that we could scarcely hear each other breathing. Everything seemed deadly still, but once something near us, some plaster or broken brickwork, slid down with a rumbling sound. Outside and very near was an intermittent, metallic rattle.

"That!" said the curate, when presently it happened again.

"Yes," I said. "But what is it?"

"A Martian!" said the curate.

I listened again.

“It was not like the Heat-Ray,” I said, and for a time I was inclined to think one of the great fighting-machines had stumbled against the house, as I had seen one stumble against the tower of Shepperton Church.

Our situation was so strange and incomprehensible that for three or four hours, until the dawn came, we scarcely moved. And then the light filtered in, not through the window, which remained black, but through a triangular aperture between a beam and a heap of broken bricks in the wall behind us. The interior of the kitchen we now saw greyly for the first time.

The window had been burst in by a mass of garden mould, which flowed over the table upon which we had been sitting and lay about our feet. Outside, the soil was banked high against the house. At the top of the window frame we could see an uprooted drainpipe. The floor was littered with smashed hardware; the end of the kitchen towards the house was broken into, and since the daylight shone in there, it was evident the greater part of the house had collapsed. Contrasting vividly with this ruin was the neat dresser, stained in the fashion, pale green, and with a number of copper and tin vessels below it, the wallpaper imitating blue and white tiles, and a couple of coloured supplements fluttering from the walls above the kitchen range.

As the dawn grew clearer, we saw through the gap in the wall the body of a Martian, standing sentinel, I suppose, over the still glowing cylinder. At the sight of that we crawled as circumspectly as possible out of the twilight of the kitchen into the darkness of the scullery.

Abruptly the right interpretation dawned upon my mind.

“The fifth cylinder,” I whispered, “the fifth shot from Mars, has struck this house and buried us under the ruins!”

For a time the curate was silent, and then he whispered:

“God have mercy upon us!”

I heard him presently whimpering to himself.

Save for that sound we lay quite still in the scullery; I for my part scarce dared breathe, and sat with my eyes fixed on the faint light of the kitchen door. I could just see the curate’s face, a dim, oval shape, and his collar and cuffs. Outside there began a metallic hammering, then a violent hooting, and then again, after a quiet interval, a hissing

like the hissing of an engine. These noises, for the most part problematical, continued intermittently, and seemed if anything to increase in number as time wore on. Presently a measured thudding and a vibration that made everything about us quiver and the vessels in the pantry ring and shift, began and continued. Once the light was eclipsed, and the ghostly kitchen doorway became absolutely dark. For many hours we must have crouched there, silent and shivering, until our tired attention failed. . . .

At last I found myself awake and very hungry. I am inclined to believe we must have spent the greater portion of a day before that awakening. My hunger was at a stride so insistent that it moved me to action. I told the curate I was going to seek food, and felt my way towards the pantry. He made me no answer, but so soon as I began eating the faint noise I made stirred him up and I heard him crawling after me.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT WE SAW FROM THE RUINED HOUSE

After eating we crept back to the scullery, and there I must have dozed again, for when presently I looked round I was alone. The thudding vibration continued with wearisome persistence. I whispered for the curate several times, and at last felt my way to the door of the kitchen. It was still daylight, and I perceived him across the room, lying against the triangular hole that looked out upon the Martians. His shoulders were hunched, so that his head was hidden from me.

I could hear a number of noises almost like those in an engine shed; and the place rocked with that beating thud. Through the aperture in the wall I could see the top of a tree touched with gold and the warm blue of a tranquil evening sky. For a minute or so I remained watching the curate, and then I advanced, crouching and stepping with extreme care amid the broken crockery that littered the floor.

I touched the curate's leg, and he started so violently that a mass of plaster went sliding down outside and fell with a loud impact. I gripped his arm, fearing he might cry out, and for a long time we crouched motionless. Then I turned to see how much of our rampart remained. The detachment of the plaster had left a vertical slit open in the debris, and by raising myself cautiously across a beam I was able to see out of this gap into what had been overnight a quiet suburban roadway. Vast, indeed, was the change that we beheld.

The fifth cylinder must have fallen right into the midst of the house we had first visited. The building had vanished, completely smashed, pulverised, and dispersed by the blow. The cylinder lay now far beneath the original foundations — deep in a hole, already vastly larger than the pit I had looked into at Woking. The earth all round it had splashed under that tremendous impact— "splashed" is the only word — and lay in heaped piles that hid the masses of the adjacent houses. It had behaved exactly like mud under the violent blow of a hammer. Our house had collapsed backward; the front

portion, even on the ground floor, had been destroyed completely; by a chance the kitchen and scullery had escaped, and stood buried now under soil and ruins, closed in by tons of earth on every side save towards the cylinder. Over that aspect we hung now on the very edge of the great circular pit the Martians were engaged in making. The heavy beating sound was evidently just behind us, and ever and again a bright green vapour drove up like a veil across our peephole.

The cylinder was already opened in the centre of the pit, and on the farther edge of the pit, amid the smashed and gravel-heaped shrubbery, one of the great fighting-machines, deserted by its occupant, stood stiff and tall against the evening sky. At first I scarcely noticed the pit and the cylinder, although it has been convenient to describe them first, on account of the extraordinary glittering mechanism I saw busy in the excavation, and on account of the strange creatures that were crawling slowly and painfully across the heaped mould near it.

The mechanism it certainly was that held my attention first. It was one of those complicated fabrics that have since been called handling-machines, and the study of which has already given such an enormous impetus to terrestrial invention. As it dawned upon me first, it presented a sort of metallic spider with five jointed, agile legs, and with an extraordinary number of jointed levers, bars, and reaching and clutching tentacles about its body. Most of its arms were retracted, but with three long tentacles it was fishing out a number of rods, plates, and bars which lined the covering and apparently strengthened the walls of the cylinder. These, as it extracted them, were lifted out and deposited upon a level surface of earth behind it.

Its motion was so swift, complex, and perfect that at first I did not see it as a machine, in spite of its metallic glitter. The fighting-machines were coordinated and animated to an extraordinary pitch, but nothing to compare with this. People who have never seen these structures, and have only the ill-imagined efforts of artists or the imperfect descriptions of such eye-witnesses as myself to go upon, scarcely realise that living quality.

I recall particularly the illustration of one of the first pamphlets to give a consecutive account of the war. The artist had evidently made

a hasty study of one of the fighting-machines, and there his knowledge ended. He presented them as tilted, stiff tripods, without either flexibility or subtlety, and with an altogether misleading monotony of effect. The pamphlet containing these renderings had a considerable vogue, and I mention them here simply to warn the reader against the impression they may have created. They were no more like the Martians I saw in action than a Dutch doll is like a human being. To my mind, the pamphlet would have been much better without them.

At first, I say, the handling-machine did not impress me as a machine, but as a crablike creature with a glittering integument, the controlling Martian whose delicate tentacles actuated its movements seeming to be simply the equivalent of the crab's cerebral portion. But then I perceived the resemblance of its grey-brown, shiny, leathery integument to that of the other sprawling bodies beyond, and the true nature of this dexterous workman dawned upon me. With that realisation my interest shifted to those other creatures, the real Martians. Already I had had a transient impression of these, and the first nausea no longer obscured my observation. Moreover, I was concealed and motionless, and under no urgency of action.

They were, I now saw, the most unearthly creatures it is possible to conceive. They were huge round bodies — or, rather, heads — about four feet in diameter, each body having in front of it a face. This face had no nostrils — indeed, the Martians do not seem to have had any sense of smell, but it had a pair of very large dark-coloured eyes, and just beneath this a kind of fleshy beak. In the back of this head or body — I scarcely know how to speak of it — was the single tight tympanic surface, since known to be anatomically an ear, though it must have been almost useless in our dense air. In a group round the mouth were sixteen slender, almost whiplike tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each. These bunches have since been named rather aptly, by that distinguished anatomist, Professor Howes, the *hands*. Even as I saw these Martians for the first time they seemed to be endeavouring to raise themselves on these hands, but of course, with the increased weight of terrestrial conditions, this was impossible. There is reason to suppose that on Mars they may have progressed upon them with some facility.

The internal anatomy, I may remark here, as dissection has since shown, was almost equally simple. The greater part of the structure was the brain, sending enormous nerves to the eyes, ear, and tactile tentacles. Besides this were the bulky lungs, into which the mouth opened, and the heart and its vessels. The pulmonary distress caused by the denser atmosphere and greater gravitational attraction was only too evident in the convulsive movements of the outer skin.

And this was the sum of the Martian organs. Strange as it may seem to a human being, all the complex apparatus of digestion, which makes up the bulk of our bodies, did not exist in the Martians. They were heads — merely heads. Entrails they had none. They did not eat, much less digest. Instead, they took the fresh, living blood of other creatures, and *injected* it into their own veins. I have myself seen this being done, as I shall mention in its place. But, squeamish as I may seem, I cannot bring myself to describe what I could not endure even to continue watching. Let it suffice to say, blood obtained from a still living animal, in most cases from a human being, was run directly by means of a little pipette into the recipient canal. . . .

The bare idea of this is no doubt horribly repulsive to us, but at the same time I think that we should remember how repulsive our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit.

The physiological advantages of the practice of injection are undeniable, if one thinks of the tremendous waste of human time and energy occasioned by eating and the digestive process. Our bodies are half made up of glands and tubes and organs, occupied in turning heterogeneous food into blood. The digestive processes and their reaction upon the nervous system sap our strength and colour our minds. Men go happy or miserable as they have healthy or unhealthy livers, or sound gastric glands. But the Martians were lifted above all these organic fluctuations of mood and emotion.

Their undeniable preference for men as their source of nourishment is partly explained by the nature of the remains of the victims they had brought with them as provisions from Mars. These creatures, to judge from the shrivelled remains that have fallen into human hands, were bipeds with flimsy, silicious skeletons (almost like those of the silicious sponges) and feeble musculature, standing

about six feet high and having round, erect heads, and large eyes in flinty sockets. Two or three of these seem to have been brought in each cylinder, and all were killed before earth was reached. It was just as well for them, for the mere attempt to stand upright upon our planet would have broken every bone in their bodies.

And while I am engaged in this description, I may add in this place certain further details which, although they were not all evident to us at the time, will enable the reader who is unacquainted with them to form a clearer picture of these offensive creatures.

In three other points their physiology differed strangely from ours. Their organisms did not sleep, any more than the heart of man sleeps. Since they had no extensive muscular mechanism to recuperate, that periodical extinction was unknown to them. They had little or no sense of fatigue, it would seem. On earth they could never have moved without effort, yet even to the last they kept in action. In twenty-four hours they did twenty-four hours of work, as even on earth is perhaps the case with the ants.

In the next place, wonderful as it seems in a sexual world, the Martians were absolutely without sex, and therefore without any of the tumultuous emotions that arise from that difference among men. A young Martian, there can now be no dispute, was really born upon earth during the war, and it was found attached to its parent, partially *budded* off, just as young lilybulbs bud off, or like the young animals in the fresh-water polyp.

In man, in all the higher terrestrial animals, such a method of increase has disappeared; but even on this earth it was certainly the primitive method. Among the lower animals, up even to those first cousins of the vertebrated animals, the Tunicates, the two processes occur side by side, but finally the sexual method superseded its competitor altogether. On Mars, however, just the reverse has apparently been the case.

It is worthy of remark that a certain speculative writer of quasi-scientific repute, writing long before the Martian invasion, did forecast for man a final structure not unlike the actual Martian condition. His prophecy, I remember, appeared in November or December, 1893, in a long-defunct publication, the *Pall Mall Budget*, and I recall a caricature of it in a pre-Martian periodical called

Punch. He pointed out — writing in a foolish, facetious tone — that the perfection of mechanical appliances must ultimately supersede limbs; the perfection of chemical devices, digestion; that such organs as hair, external nose, teeth, ears, and chin were no longer essential parts of the human being, and that the tendency of natural selection would lie in the direction of their steady diminution through the coming ages. The brain alone remained a cardinal necessity. Only one other part of the body had a strong case for survival, and that was the hand, "teacher and agent of the brain." While the rest of the body dwindled, the hands would grow larger.

There is many a true word written in jest, and here in the Martians we have beyond dispute the actual accomplishment of such a suppression of the animal side of the organism by the intelligence. To me it is quite credible that the Martians may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brain and hands (the latter giving rise to the two bunches of delicate tentacles at last) at the expense of the rest of the body. Without the body the brain would, of course, become a mere selfish intelligence, without any of the emotional substratum of the human being.

The last salient point in which the systems of these creatures differed from ours was in what one might have thought a very trivial particular. Micro-organisms, which cause so much disease and pain on earth, have either never appeared upon Mars or Martian sanitary science eliminated them ages ago. A hundred diseases, all the fevers and contagions of human life, consumption, cancers, tumours and such morbidities, never enter the scheme of their life. And speaking of the differences between the life on Mars and terrestrial life, I may allude here to the curious suggestions of the red weed.

Apparently the vegetable kingdom in Mars, instead of having green for a dominant colour, is of a vivid blood-red tint. At any rate, the seeds which the Martians (intentionally or accidentally) brought with them gave rise in all cases to red-coloured growths. Only that known popularly as the red weed, however, gained any footing in competition with terrestrial forms. The red creeper was quite a transitory growth, and few people have seen it growing. For a time, however, the red weed grew with astonishing vigour and luxuriance. It spread up the sides of the pit by the third or fourth day of our

imprisonment, and its cactus-like branches formed a carmine fringe to the edges of our triangular window. And afterwards I found it broadcast throughout the country, and especially wherever there was a stream of water.

The Martians had what appears to have been an auditory organ, a single round drum at the back of the head-body, and eyes with a visual range not very different from ours except that, according to Philips, blue and violet were as black to them. It is commonly supposed that they communicated by sounds and tentacular gesticulations; this is asserted, for instance, in the able but hastily compiled pamphlet (written evidently by someone not an eye-witness of Martian actions) to which I have already alluded, and which, so far, has been the chief source of information concerning them. Now no surviving human being saw so much of the Martians in action as I did. I take no credit to myself for an accident, but the fact is so. And I assert that I watched them closely time after time, and that I have seen four, five, and (once) six of them sluggishly performing the most elaborately complicated operations together without either sound or gesture. Their peculiar hooting invariably preceded feeding; it had no modulation, and was, I believe, in no sense a signal, but merely the expiration of air preparatory to the suctional operation. I have a certain claim to at least an elementary knowledge of psychology, and in this matter I am convinced — as firmly as I am convinced of anything — that the Martians interchanged thoughts without any physical intermediation. And I have been convinced of this in spite of strong preconceptions. Before the Martian invasion, as an occasional reader here or there may remember, I had written with some little vehemence against the telepathic theory.

The Martians wore no clothing. Their conceptions of ornament and decorum were necessarily different from ours; and not only were they evidently much less sensible of changes of temperature than we are, but changes of pressure do not seem to have affected their health at all seriously. Yet though they wore no clothing, it was in the other artificial additions to their bodily resources that their great superiority over man lay. We men, with our bicycles and road-skates, our Lilienthal soaring-machines, our guns and sticks and so forth, are just in the beginning of the evolution that the Martians have worked

out. They have become practically mere brains, wearing different bodies according to their needs just as men wear suits of clothes and take a bicycle in a hurry or an umbrella in the wet. And of their appliances, perhaps nothing is more wonderful to a man than the curious fact that what is the dominant feature of almost all human devices in mechanism is absent — the *wheel* is absent; among all the things they brought to earth there is no trace or suggestion of their use of wheels. One would have at least expected it in locomotion. And in this connection it is curious to remark that even on this earth Nature has never hit upon the wheel, or has preferred other expedients to its development. And not only did the Martians either not know of (which is incredible), or abstain from, the wheel, but in their apparatus singularly little use is made of the fixed pivot or relatively fixed pivot, with circular motions thereabout confined to one plane. Almost all the joints of the machinery present a complicated system of sliding parts moving over small but beautifully curved friction bearings. And while upon this matter of detail, it is remarkable that the long leverages of their machines are in most cases actuated by a sort of sham musculature of the disks in an elastic sheath; these disks become polarised and drawn closely and powerfully together when traversed by a current of electricity. In this way the curious parallelism to animal motions, which was so striking and disturbing to the human beholder, was attained. Such quasi-muscles abounded in the crablike handling-machine which, on my first peeping out of the slit, I watched unpacking the cylinder. It seemed infinitely more alive than the actual Martians lying beyond it in the sunset light, panting, stirring ineffectual tentacles, and moving feebly after their vast journey across space.

While I was still watching their sluggish motions in the sunlight, and noting each strange detail of their form, the curate reminded me of his presence by pulling violently at my arm. I turned to a scowling face, and silent, eloquent lips. He wanted the slit, which permitted only one of us to peep through; and so I had to forego watching them for a time while he enjoyed that privilege.

When I looked again, the busy handling-machine had already put together several of the pieces of apparatus it had taken out of the cylinder into a shape having an unmistakable likeness to its own; and

down on the left a busy little digging mechanism had come into view, emitting jets of green vapour and working its way round the pit, excavating and embanking in a methodical and discriminating manner. This it was which had caused the regular beating noise, and the rhythmic shocks that had kept our ruinous refuge quivering. It piped and whistled as it worked. So far as I could see, the thing was without a directing Martian at all.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DAYS OF IMPRISONMENT

The arrival of a second fighting-machine drove us from our peephole into the scullery, for we feared that from his elevation the Martian might see down upon us behind our barrier. At a later date we began to feel less in danger of their eyes, for to an eye in the dazzle of the sunlight outside our refuge must have been blank blackness, but at first the slightest suggestion of approach drove us into the scullery in heart-throbbing retreat. Yet terrible as was the danger we incurred, the attraction of peeping was for both of us irresistible. And I recall now with a sort of wonder that, in spite of the infinite danger in which we were between starvation and a still more terrible death, we could yet struggle bitterly for that horrible privilege of sight. We would race across the kitchen in a grotesque way between eagerness and the dread of making a noise, and strike each other, and thrust and kick, within a few inches of exposure.

The fact is that we had absolutely incompatible dispositions and habits of thought and action, and our danger and isolation only accentuated the incompatibility. At Halliford I had already come to hate the curate's trick of helpless exclamation, his stupid rigidity of mind. His endless muttering monologue vitiated every effort I made to think out a line of action, and drove me at times, thus pent up and intensified, almost to the verge of craziness. He was as lacking in restraint as a silly woman. He would weep for hours together, and I verily believe that to the very end this spoiled child of life thought his weak tears in some way efficacious. And I would sit in the darkness unable to keep my mind off him by reason of his importunities. He ate more than I did, and it was in vain I pointed out that our only chance of life was to stop in the house until the Martians had done with their pit, that in that long patience a time might presently come when we should need food. He ate and drank impulsively in heavy meals at long intervals. He slept little.

As the days wore on, his utter carelessness of any consideration so intensified our distress and danger that I had, much as I loathed doing

it, to resort to threats, and at last to blows. That brought him to reason for a time. But he was one of those weak creatures, void of pride, timorous, anaemic, hateful souls, full of shifty cunning, who face neither God nor man, who face not even themselves.

It is disagreeable for me to recall and write these things, but I set them down that my story may lack nothing. Those who have escaped the dark and terrible aspects of life will find my brutality, my flash of rage in our final tragedy, easy enough to blame; for they know what is wrong as well as any, but not what is possible to tortured men. But those who have been under the shadow, who have gone down at last to elemental things, will have a wider charity.

And while within we fought out our dark, dim contest of whispers, snatched food and drink, and gripping hands and blows, without, in the pitiless sunlight of that terrible June, was the strange wonder, the unfamiliar routine of the Martians in the pit. Let me return to those first new experiences of mine. After a long time I ventured back to the peephole, to find that the new-comers had been reinforced by the occupants of no fewer than three of the fighting-machines. These last had brought with them certain fresh appliances that stood in an orderly manner about the cylinder. The second handling-machine was now completed, and was busied in serving one of the novel contrivances the big machine had brought. This was a body resembling a milk can in its general form, above which oscillated a pear-shaped receptacle, and from which a stream of white powder flowed into a circular basin below.

The oscillatory motion was imparted to this by one tentacle of the handling-machine. With two spatulate hands the handling-machine was digging out and flinging masses of clay into the pear-shaped receptacle above, while with another arm it periodically opened a door and removed rusty and blackened clinkers from the middle part of the machine. Another steely tentacle directed the powder from the basin along a ribbed channel towards some receiver that was hidden from me by the mound of bluish dust. From this unseen receiver a little thread of green smoke rose vertically into the quiet air. As I looked, the handling-machine, with a faint and musical clinking, extended, telescopic fashion, a tentacle that had been a moment before a mere blunt projection, until its end was hidden behind the

mound of clay. In another second it had lifted a bar of white aluminium into sight, untarnished as yet, and shining dazzlingly, and deposited it in a growing stack of bars that stood at the side of the pit. Between sunset and starlight this dexterous machine must have made more than a hundred such bars out of the crude clay, and the mound of bluish dust rose steadily until it topped the side of the pit.

The contrast between the swift and complex movements of these contrivances and the inert panting clumsiness of their masters was acute, and for days I had to tell myself repeatedly that these latter were indeed the living of the two things.

The curate had possession of the slit when the first men were brought to the pit. I was sitting below, huddled up, listening with all my ears. He made a sudden movement backward, and I, fearful that we were observed, crouched in a spasm of terror. He came sliding down the rubbish and crept beside me in the darkness, inarticulate, gesticulating, and for a moment I shared his panic. His gesture suggested a resignation of the slit, and after a little while my curiosity gave me courage, and I rose up, stepped across him, and clambered up to it. At first I could see no reason for his frantic behaviour. The twilight had now come, the stars were little and faint, but the pit was illuminated by the flickering green fire that came from the aluminium-making. The whole picture was a flickering scheme of green gleams and shifting rusty black shadows, strangely trying to the eyes. Over and through it all went the bats, heeding it not at all. The sprawling Martians were no longer to be seen, the mound of blue-green powder had risen to cover them from sight, and a fighting-machine, with its legs contracted, crumpled, and abbreviated, stood across the corner of the pit. And then, amid the clangour of the machinery, came a drifting suspicion of human voices, that I entertained at first only to dismiss.

I crouched, watching this fighting-machine closely, satisfying myself now for the first time that the hood did indeed contain a Martian. As the green flames lifted I could see the oily gleam of his integument and the brightness of his eyes. And suddenly I heard a yell, and saw a long tentacle reaching over the shoulder of the machine to the little cage that hunched upon its back. Then something — something struggling violently — was lifted high

against the sky, a black, vague enigma against the starlight; and as this black object came down again, I saw by the green brightness that it was a man. For an instant he was clearly visible. He was a stout, ruddy, middle-aged man, well dressed; three days before, he must have been walking the world, a man of considerable consequence. I could see his staring eyes and gleams of light on his studs and watch chain. He vanished behind the mound, and for a moment there was silence. And then began a shrieking and a sustained and cheerful hooting from the Martians.

I slid down the rubbish, struggled to my feet, clapped my hands over my ears, and bolted into the scullery. The curate, who had been crouching silently with his arms over his head, looked up as I passed, cried out quite loudly at my desertion of him, and came running after me.

That night, as we lurked in the scullery, balanced between our horror and the terrible fascination this peeping had, although I felt an urgent need of action I tried in vain to conceive some plan of escape; but afterwards, during the second day, I was able to consider our position with great clearness. The curate, I found, was quite incapable of discussion; this new and culminating atrocity had robbed him of all vestiges of reason or forethought. Practically he had already sunk to the level of an animal. But as the saying goes, I gripped myself with both hands. It grew upon my mind, once I could face the facts, that terrible as our position was, there was as yet no justification for absolute despair. Our chief chance lay in the possibility of the Martians making the pit nothing more than a temporary encampment. Or even if they kept it permanently, they might not consider it necessary to guard it, and a chance of escape might be afforded us. I also weighed very carefully the possibility of our digging a way out in a direction away from the pit, but the chances of our emerging within sight of some sentinel fighting-machine seemed at first too great. And I should have had to do all the digging myself. The curate would certainly have failed me.

It was on the third day, if my memory serves me right, that I saw the lad killed. It was the only occasion on which I actually saw the Martians feed. After that experience I avoided the hole in the wall for the better part of a day. I went into the scullery, removed the door,

and spent some hours digging with my hatchet as silently as possible; but when I had made a hole about a couple of feet deep the loose earth collapsed noisily, and I did not dare continue. I lost heart, and lay down on the scullery floor for a long time, having no spirit even to move. And after that I abandoned altogether the idea of escaping by excavation.

It says much for the impression the Martians had made upon me that at first I entertained little or no hope of our escape being brought about by their overthrow through any human effort. But on the fourth or fifth night I heard a sound like heavy guns.

It was very late in the night, and the moon was shining brightly. The Martians had taken away the excavating-machine, and, save for a fighting-machine that stood in the remoter bank of the pit and a handling-machine that was buried out of my sight in a corner of the pit immediately beneath my peephole, the place was deserted by them. Except for the pale glow from the handling-machine and the bars and patches of white moonlight the pit was in darkness, and, except for the clinking of the handling-machine, quite still. That night was a beautiful serenity; save for one planet, the moon seemed to have the sky to herself. I heard a dog howling, and that familiar sound it was that made me listen. Then I heard quite distinctly a booming exactly like the sound of great guns. Six distinct reports I counted, and after a long interval six again. And that was all.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEATH OF THE CURATE

It was on the sixth day of our imprisonment that I peeped for the last time, and presently found myself alone. Instead of keeping close to me and trying to oust me from the slit, the curate had gone back into the scullery. I was struck by a sudden thought. I went back quickly and quietly into the scullery. In the darkness I heard the curate drinking. I snatched in the darkness, and my fingers caught a bottle of burgundy.

For a few minutes there was a tussle. The bottle struck the floor and broke, and I desisted and rose. We stood panting and threatening each other. In the end I planted myself between him and the food, and told him of my determination to begin a discipline. I divided the food in the pantry, into rations to last us ten days. I would not let him eat any more that day. In the afternoon he made a feeble effort to get at the food. I had been dozing, but in an instant I was awake. All day and all night we sat face to face, I weary but resolute, and he weeping and complaining of his immediate hunger. It was, I know, a night and a day, but to me it seemed — it seems now — an interminable length of time.

And so our widened incompatibility ended at last in open conflict. For two vast days we struggled in undertones and wrestling contests. There were times when I beat and kicked him madly, times when I cajoled and persuaded him, and once I tried to bribe him with the last bottle of burgundy, for there was a rain-water pump from which I could get water. But neither force nor kindness availed; he was indeed beyond reason. He would neither desist from his attacks on the food nor from his noisy babbling to himself. The rudimentary precautions to keep our imprisonment endurable he would not observe. Slowly I began to realise the complete overthrow of his intelligence, to perceive that my sole companion in this close and sickly darkness was a man insane.

From certain vague memories I am inclined to think my own mind wandered at times. I had strange and hideous dreams whenever I

slept. It sounds paradoxical, but I am inclined to think that the weakness and insanity of the curate warned me, braced me, and kept me a sane man.

On the eighth day he began to talk aloud instead of whispering, and nothing I could do would moderate his speech.

"It is just, O God!" he would say, over and over again. "It is just. On me and mine be the punishment laid. We have sinned, we have fallen short. There was poverty, sorrow; the poor were trodden in the dust, and I held my peace. I preached acceptable folly — my God, what folly! — when I should have stood up, though I died for it, and called upon them to repent — repent! . . . Oppressors of the poor and needy . . . ! The wine press of God!"

Then he would suddenly revert to the matter of the food I withheld from him, praying, begging, weeping, at last threatening. He began to raise his voice — I prayed him not to. He perceived a hold on me — he threatened he would shout and bring the Martians upon us. For a time that scared me; but any concession would have shortened our chance of escape beyond estimating. I defied him, although I felt no assurance that he might not do this thing. But that day, at any rate, he did not. He talked with his voice rising slowly, through the greater part of the eighth and ninth days — threats, entreaties, mingled with a torrent of half-sane and always frothy repentance for his vacant sham of God's service, such as made me pity him. Then he slept awhile, and began again with renewed strength, so loudly that I must needs make him desist.

"Be still!" I implored.

He rose to his knees, for he had been sitting in the darkness near the copper.

"I have been still too long," he said, in a tone that must have reached the pit, "and now I must bear my witness. Woe unto this unfaithful city! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe! To the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet — —"

"Shut up!" I said, rising to my feet, and in a terror lest the Martians should hear us. "For God's sake — —"

"Nay," shouted the curate, at the top of his voice, standing likewise and extending his arms. "Speak! The word of the Lord is upon me!"

In three strides he was at the door leading into the kitchen.

"I must bear my witness! I go! It has already been too long delayed."

I put out my hand and felt the meat chopper hanging to the wall. In a flash I was after him. I was fierce with fear. Before he was halfway across the kitchen I had overtaken him. With one last touch of humanity I turned the blade back and struck him with the butt. He went headlong forward and lay stretched on the ground. I stumbled over him and stood panting. He lay still.

Suddenly I heard a noise without, the run and smash of slipping plaster, and the triangular aperture in the wall was darkened. I looked up and saw the lower surface of a handling-machine coming slowly across the hole. One of its gripping limbs curled amid the debris; another limb appeared, feeling its way over the fallen beams. I stood petrified, staring. Then I saw through a sort of glass plate near the edge of the body the face, as we may call it, and the large dark eyes of a Martian, peering, and then a long metallic snake of tentacle came feeling slowly through the hole.

I turned by an effort, stumbled over the curate, and stopped at the scullery door. The tentacle was now some way, two yards or more, in the room, and twisting and turning, with queer sudden movements, this way and that. For a while I stood fascinated by that slow, fitful advance. Then, with a faint, hoarse cry, I forced myself across the scullery. I trembled violently; I could scarcely stand upright. I opened the door of the coal cellar, and stood there in the darkness staring at the faintly lit doorway into the kitchen, and listening. Had the Martian seen me? What was it doing now?

Something was moving to and fro there, very quietly; every now and then it tapped against the wall, or started on its movements with a faint metallic ringing, like the movements of keys on a split-ring. Then a heavy body — I knew too well what — was dragged across the floor of the kitchen towards the opening. Irresistibly attracted, I crept to the door and peeped into the kitchen. In the triangle of bright outer sunlight I saw the Martian, in its Briareus of a handling-machine, scrutinizing the curate's head. I thought at once that it would infer my presence from the mark of the blow I had given him.

I crept back to the coal cellar, shut the door, and began to cover

myself up as much as I could, and as noiselessly as possible in the darkness, among the firewood and coal therein. Every now and then I paused, rigid, to hear if the Martian had thrust its tentacles through the opening again.

Then the faint metallic jingle returned. I traced it slowly feeling over the kitchen. Presently I heard it nearer — in the scullery, as I judged. I thought that its length might be insufficient to reach me. I prayed copiously. It passed, scraping faintly across the cellar door. An age of almost intolerable suspense intervened; then I heard it fumbling at the latch! It had found the door! The Martians understood doors!

It worried at the catch for a minute, perhaps, and then the door opened.

In the darkness I could just see the thing — like an elephant's trunk more than anything else — waving towards me and touching and examining the wall, coals, wood and ceiling. It was like a black worm swaying its blind head to and fro.

Once, even, it touched the heel of my boot. I was on the verge of screaming; I bit my hand. For a time the tentacle was silent. I could have fancied it had been withdrawn. Presently, with an abrupt click, it gripped something — I thought it had me! — and seemed to go out of the cellar again. For a minute I was not sure. Apparently it had taken a lump of coal to examine.

I seized the opportunity of slightly shifting my position, which had become cramped, and then listened. I whispered passionate prayers for safety.

Then I heard the slow, deliberate sound creeping towards me again. Slowly, slowly it drew near, scratching against the walls and tapping the furniture.

While I was still doubtful, it rapped smartly against the cellar door and closed it. I heard it go into the pantry, and the biscuit-tins rattled and a bottle smashed, and then came a heavy bump against the cellar door. Then silence that passed into an infinity of suspense.

Had it gone?

At last I decided that it had.

It came into the scullery no more; but I lay all the tenth day in the close darkness, buried among coals and firewood, not daring even to

crawl out for the drink for which I craved. It was the eleventh day before I ventured so far from my security.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STILLNESS

My first act before I went into the pantry was to fasten the door between the kitchen and the scullery. But the pantry was empty; every scrap of food had gone. Apparently, the Martian had taken it all on the previous day. At that discovery I despaired for the first time. I took no food, or no drink either, on the eleventh or the twelfth day.

At first my mouth and throat were parched, and my strength ebbed sensibly. I sat about in the darkness of the scullery, in a state of despondent wretchedness. My mind ran on eating. I thought I had become deaf, for the noises of movement I had been accustomed to hear from the pit had ceased absolutely. I did not feel strong enough to crawl noiselessly to the peephole, or I would have gone there.

On the twelfth day my throat was so painful that, taking the chance of alarming the Martians, I attacked the creaking rain-water pump that stood by the sink, and got a couple of glassfuls of blackened and tainted rain water. I was greatly refreshed by this, and emboldened by the fact that no enquiring tentacle followed the noise of my pumping.

During these days, in a rambling, inconclusive way, I thought much of the curate and of the manner of his death.

On the thirteenth day I drank some more water, and dozed and thought disjointedly of eating and of vague impossible plans of escape. Whenever I dozed I dreamt of horrible phantasms, of the death of the curate, or of sumptuous dinners; but, asleep or awake, I felt a keen pain that urged me to drink again and again. The light that came into the scullery was no longer grey, but red. To my disordered imagination it seemed the colour of blood.

On the fourteenth day I went into the kitchen, and I was surprised to find that the fronds of the red weed had grown right across the hole in the wall, turning the half-light of the place into a crimson-coloured obscurity.

It was early on the fifteenth day that I heard a curious, familiar

sequence of sounds in the kitchen, and, listening, identified it as the snuffing and scratching of a dog. Going into the kitchen, I saw a dog's nose peering in through a break among the ruddy fronds. This greatly surprised me. At the scent of me he barked shortly.

I thought if I could induce him to come into the place quietly I should be able, perhaps, to kill and eat him; and in any case, it would be advisable to kill him, lest his actions attracted the attention of the Martians.

I crept forward, saying "Good dog!" very softly; but he suddenly withdrew his head and disappeared.

I listened — I was not deaf — but certainly the pit was still. I heard a sound like the flutter of a bird's wings, and a hoarse croaking, but that was all.

For a long while I lay close to the peephole, but not daring to move aside the red plants that obscured it. Once or twice I heard a faint pitter-patter like the feet of the dog going hither and thither on the sand far below me, and there were more birdlike sounds, but that was all. At length, encouraged by the silence, I looked out.

Except in the corner, where a multitude of crows hopped and fought over the skeletons of the dead the Martians had consumed, there was not a living thing in the pit.

I stared about me, scarcely believing my eyes. All the machinery had gone. Save for the big mound of greyish-blue powder in one corner, certain bars of aluminium in another, the black birds, and the skeletons of the killed, the place was merely an empty circular pit in the sand.

Slowly I thrust myself out through the red weed, and stood upon the mound of rubble. I could see in any direction save behind me, to the north, and neither Martians nor sign of Martians were to be seen. The pit dropped sheerly from my feet, but a little way along the rubbish afforded a practicable slope to the summit of the ruins. My chance of escape had come. I began to tremble.

I hesitated for some time, and then, in a gust of desperate resolution, and with a heart that throbbed violently, I scrambled to the top of the mound in which I had been buried so long.

I looked about again. To the northward, too, no Martian was visible.

When I had last seen this part of Sheen in the daylight it had been a straggling street of comfortable white and red houses, interspersed with abundant shady trees. Now I stood on a mound of smashed brickwork, clay, and gravel, over which spread a multitude of red cactus-shaped plants, knee-high, without a solitary terrestrial growth to dispute their footing. The trees near me were dead and brown, but further a network of red thread scaled the still living stems.

The neighbouring houses had all been wrecked, but none had been burned; their walls stood, sometimes to the second story, with smashed windows and shattered doors. The red weed grew tumultuously in their roofless rooms. Below me was the great pit, with the crows struggling for its refuse. A number of other birds hopped about among the ruins. Far away I saw a gaunt cat slink crouchingly along a wall, but traces of men there were none.

The day seemed, by contrast with my recent confinement, dazzlingly bright, the sky a glowing blue. A gentle breeze kept the red weed that covered every scrap of unoccupied ground gently swaying. And oh! the sweetness of the air!

CHAPTER SIX

THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DAYS

For some time I stood tottering on the mound regardless of my safety. Within that noisome den from which I had emerged I had thought with a narrow intensity only of our immediate security. I had not realised what had been happening to the world, had not anticipated this startling vision of unfamiliar things. I had expected to see Sheen in ruins — I found about me the landscape, weird and lurid, of another planet.

For that moment I touched an emotion beyond the common range of men, yet one that the poor brutes we dominate know only too well. I felt as a rabbit might feel returning to his burrow and suddenly confronted by the work of a dozen busy navvies digging the foundations of a house. I felt the first inkling of a thing that presently grew quite clear in my mind, that oppressed me for many days, a sense of dethronement, a persuasion that I was no longer a master, but an animal among the animals, under the Martian heel. With us it would be as with them, to lurk and watch, to run and hide; the fear and empire of man had passed away.

But so soon as this strangeness had been realised it passed, and my dominant motive became the hunger of my long and dismal fast. In the direction away from the pit I saw, beyond a red-covered wall, a patch of garden ground unburied. This gave me a hint, and I went knee-deep, and sometimes neck-deep, in the red weed. The density of the weed gave me a reassuring sense of hiding. The wall was some six feet high, and when I attempted to clamber it I found I could not lift my feet to the crest. So I went along by the side of it, and came to a corner and a rockwork that enabled me to get to the top, and tumble into the garden I coveted. Here I found some young onions, a couple of gladiolus bulbs, and a quantity of immature carrots, all of which I secured, and, scrambling over a ruined wall, went on my way through scarlet and crimson trees towards Kew — it was like walking through an avenue of gigantic blood drops — possessed with two ideas: to get more food, and to limp, as soon and as far as

my strength permitted, out of this accursed unearthly region of the pit.

Some way farther, in a grassy place, was a group of mushrooms which also I devoured, and then I came upon a brown sheet of flowing shallow water, where meadows used to be. These fragments of nourishment served only to whet my hunger. At first I was surprised at this flood in a hot, dry summer, but afterwards I discovered that it was caused by the tropical exuberance of the red weed. Directly this extraordinary growth encountered water it straightway became gigantic and of unparalleled fecundity. Its seeds were simply poured down into the water of the Wey and Thames, and its swiftly growing and Titanic water fronds speedily choked both those rivers.

At Putney, as I afterwards saw, the bridge was almost lost in a tangle of this weed, and at Richmond, too, the Thames water poured in a broad and shallow stream across the meadows of Hampton and Twickenham. As the water spread the weed followed them, until the ruined villas of the Thames valley were for a time lost in this red swamp, whose margin I explored, and much of the desolation the Martians had caused was concealed.

In the end the red weed succumbed almost as quickly as it had spread. A cankering disease, due, it is believed, to the action of certain bacteria, presently seized upon it. Now by the action of natural selection, all terrestrial plants have acquired a resisting power against bacterial diseases — they never succumb without a severe struggle, but the red weed rotted like a thing already dead. The fronds became bleached, and then shrivelled and brittle. They broke off at the least touch, and the waters that had stimulated their early growth carried their last vestiges out to sea.

My first act on coming to this water was, of course, to slake my thirst. I drank a great deal of it and, moved by an impulse, gnawed some fronds of red weed; but they were watery, and had a sickly, metallic taste. I found the water was sufficiently shallow for me to wade securely, although the red weed impeded my feet a little; but the flood evidently got deeper towards the river, and I turned back to Mortlake. I managed to make out the road by means of occasional ruins of its villas and fences and lamps, and so presently I got out of

this spate and made my way to the hill going up towards Roehampton and came out on Putney Common.

Here the scenery changed from the strange and unfamiliar to the wreckage of the familiar: patches of ground exhibited the devastation of a cyclone, and in a few score yards I would come upon perfectly undisturbed spaces, houses with their blinds trimly drawn and doors closed, as if they had been left for a day by the owners, or as if their inhabitants slept within. The red weed was less abundant; the tall trees along the lane were free from the red creeper. I hunted for food among the trees, finding nothing, and I also raided a couple of silent houses, but they had already been broken into and ransacked. I rested for the remainder of the daylight in a shrubbery, being, in my enfeebled condition, too fatigued to push on.

All this time I saw no human beings, and no signs of the Martians. I encountered a couple of hungry-looking dogs, but both hurried circuitously away from the advances I made them. Near Roehampton I had seen two human skeletons — not bodies, but skeletons, picked clean — and in the wood by me I found the crushed and scattered bones of several cats and rabbits and the skull of a sheep. But though I gnawed parts of these in my mouth, there was nothing to be got from them.

After sunset I struggled on along the road towards Putney, where I think the Heat-Ray must have been used for some reason. And in the garden beyond Roehampton I got a quantity of immature potatoes, sufficient to stay my hunger. From this garden one looked down upon Putney and the river. The aspect of the place in the dusk was singularly desolate: blackened trees, blackened, desolate ruins, and down the hill the sheets of the flooded river, red-tinged with the weed. And over all — silence. It filled me with indescribable terror to think how swiftly that desolating change had come.

For a time I believed that mankind had been swept out of existence, and that I stood there alone, the last man left alive. Hard by the top of Putney Hill I came upon another skeleton, with the arms dislocated and removed several yards from the rest of the body. As I proceeded I became more and more convinced that the extermination of mankind was, save for such stragglers as myself, already accomplished in this part of the world. The Martians, I

thought, had gone on and left the country desolated, seeking food elsewhere. Perhaps even now they were destroying Berlin or Paris, or it might be they had gone northward.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MAN ON PUTNEY HILL

I spent that night in the inn that stands at the top of Putney Hill, sleeping in a made bed for the first time since my flight to Leatherhead. I will not tell the needless trouble I had breaking into that house — afterwards I found the front door was on the latch — nor how I ransacked every room for food, until just on the verge of despair, in what seemed to me to be a servant's bedroom, I found a rat-gnawed crust and two tins of pineapple. The place had been already searched and emptied. In the bar I afterwards found some biscuits and sandwiches that had been overlooked. The latter I could not eat, they were too rotten, but the former not only stayed my hunger, but filled my pockets. I lit no lamps, fearing some Martian might come beating that part of London for food in the night. Before I went to bed I had an interval of restlessness, and prowled from window to window, peering out for some sign of these monsters. I slept little. As I lay in bed I found myself thinking consecutively — a thing I do not remember to have done since my last argument with the curate. During all the intervening time my mental condition had been a hurrying succession of vague emotional states or a sort of stupid receptivity. But in the night my brain, reinforced, I suppose, by the food I had eaten, grew clear again, and I thought.

Three things struggled for possession of my mind: the killing of the curate, the whereabouts of the Martians, and the possible fate of my wife. The former gave me no sensation of horror or remorse to recall; I saw it simply as a thing done, a memory infinitely disagreeable but quite without the quality of remorse. I saw myself then as I see myself now, driven step by step towards that hasty blow, the creature of a sequence of accidents leading inevitably to that. I felt no condemnation; yet the memory, static, unprogressive, haunted me. In the silence of the night, with that sense of the nearness of God that sometimes comes into the stillness and the darkness, I stood my trial, my only trial, for that moment of wrath and fear. I retraced every step of our conversation from the moment

when I had found him crouching beside me, heedless of my thirst, and pointing to the fire and smoke that streamed up from the ruins of Weybridge. We had been incapable of co-operation — grim chance had taken no heed of that. Had I foreseen, I should have left him at Halliford. But I did not foresee; and crime is to foresee and do. And I set this down as I have set all this story down, as it was. There were no witnesses — all these things I might have concealed. But I set it down, and the reader must form his judgment as he will.

And when, by an effort, I had set aside that picture of a prostrate body, I faced the problem of the Martians and the fate of my wife. For the former I had no data; I could imagine a hundred things, and so, unhappily, I could for the latter. And suddenly that night became terrible. I found myself sitting up in bed, staring at the dark. I found myself praying that the Heat-Ray might have suddenly and painlessly struck her out of being. Since the night of my return from Leatherhead I had not prayed. I had uttered prayers, fetish prayers, had prayed as heathens mutter charms when I was in extremity; but now I prayed indeed, pleading steadfastly and sanely, face to face with the darkness of God. Strange night! Strangest in this, that so soon as dawn had come, I, who had talked with God, crept out of the house like a rat leaving its hiding place — a creature scarcely larger, an inferior animal, a thing that for any passing whim of our masters might be hunted and killed. Perhaps they also prayed confidently to God. Surely, if we have learned nothing else, this war has taught us pity — pity for those witless souls that suffer our dominion.

The morning was bright and fine, and the eastern sky glowed pink, and was fretted with little golden clouds. In the road that runs from the top of Putney Hill to Wimbledon was a number of poor vestiges of the panic torrent that must have poured Londonward on the Sunday night after the fighting began. There was a little two-wheeled cart inscribed with the name of Thomas Lobb, Greengrocer, New Malden, with a smashed wheel and an abandoned tin trunk; there was a straw hat trampled into the now hardened mud, and at the top of West Hill a lot of blood-stained glass about the overturned water trough. My movements were languid, my plans of the vaguest. I had an idea of going to Leatherhead, though I knew that there I had the poorest chance of finding my wife. Certainly, unless death had

overtaken them suddenly, my cousins and she would have fled thence; but it seemed to me I might find or learn there whither the Surrey people had fled. I knew I wanted to find my wife, that my heart ached for her and the world of men, but I had no clear idea how the finding might be done. I was also sharply aware now of my intense loneliness. From the corner I went, under cover of a thicket of trees and bushes, to the edge of Wimbledon Common, stretching wide and far.

That dark expanse was lit in patches by yellow gorse and broom; there was no red weed to be seen, and as I prowled, hesitating, on the verge of the open, the sun rose, flooding it all with light and vitality. I came upon a busy swarm of little frogs in a swampy place among the trees. I stopped to look at them, drawing a lesson from their stout resolve to live. And presently, turning suddenly, with an odd feeling of being watched, I beheld something crouching amid a clump of bushes. I stood regarding this. I made a step towards it, and it rose up and became a man armed with a cutlass. I approached him slowly. He stood silent and motionless, regarding me.

As I drew nearer I perceived he was dressed in clothes as dusty and filthy as my own; he looked, indeed, as though he had been dragged through a culvert. Nearer, I distinguished the green slime of ditches mixing with the pale drab of dried clay and shiny, coaly patches. His black hair fell over his eyes, and his face was dark and dirty and sunken, so that at first I did not recognise him. There was a red cut across the lower part of his face.

“Stop!” he cried, when I was within ten yards of him, and I stopped. His voice was hoarse. “Where do you come from?” he said.

I thought, surveying him.

“I come from Mortlake,” I said. “I was buried near the pit the Martians made about their cylinder. I have worked my way out and escaped.”

“There is no food about here,” he said. “This is my country. All this hill down to the river, and back to Clapham, and up to the edge of the common. There is only food for one. Which way are you going?”

I answered slowly.

“I don’t know,” I said. “I have been buried in the ruins of a house

thirteen or fourteen days. I don't know what has happened."

He looked at me doubtfully, then started, and looked with a changed expression.

"I've no wish to stop about here," said I. "I think I shall go to Leatherhead, for my wife was there."

He shot out a pointing finger.

"It is you," said he; "the man from Woking. And you weren't killed at Weybridge?"

I recognised him at the same moment.

"You are the artilleryman who came into my garden."

"Good luck!" he said. "We are lucky ones! Fancy *you*!" He put out a hand, and I took it. "I crawled up a drain," he said. "But they didn't kill everyone. And after they went away I got off towards Walton across the fields. But —— It's not sixteen days altogether — and your hair is grey." He looked over his shoulder suddenly. "Only a rook," he said. "One gets to know that birds have shadows these days. This is a bit open. Let us crawl under those bushes and talk."

"Have you seen any Martians?" I said. "Since I crawled out — —"

"They've gone away across London," he said. "I guess they've got a bigger camp there. Of a night, all over there, Hampstead way, the sky is alive with their lights. It's like a great city, and in the glare you can just see them moving. By daylight you can't. But nearer — I haven't seen them—" (he counted on his fingers) "five days. Then I saw a couple across Hammersmith way carrying something big. And the night before last" — he stopped and spoke impressively— "it was just a matter of lights, but it was something up in the air. I believe they've built a flying-machine, and are learning to fly."

I stopped, on hands and knees, for we had come to the bushes.

"Fly!"

"Yes," he said, "fly."

I went on into a little bower, and sat down.

"It is all over with humanity," I said. "If they can do that they will simply go round the world."

He nodded.

"They will. But —— It will relieve things over here a bit. And besides — —" He looked at me. "Aren't you satisfied it *is* up with

humanity? I am. We're down; we're beat."

I stared. Strange as it may seem, I had not arrived at this fact — a fact perfectly obvious so soon as he spoke. I had still held a vague hope; rather, I had kept a lifelong habit of mind. He repeated his words, "We're beat." They carried absolute conviction.

"It's all over," he said. "They've lost *one* — just *one*. And they've made their footing good and crippled the greatest power in the world. They've walked over us. The death of that one at Weybridge was an accident. And these are only pioneers. They kept on coming. These green stars — I've seen none these five or six days, but I've no doubt they're falling somewhere every night. Nothing's to be done. We're under! We're beat!"

I made him no answer. I sat staring before me, trying in vain to devise some countervailing thought.

"This isn't a war," said the artilleryman. "It never was a war, any more than there's war between man and ants."

Suddenly I recalled the night in the observatory.

"After the tenth shot they fired no more — at least, until the first cylinder came."

"How do you know?" said the artilleryman. I explained. He thought. "Something wrong with the gun," he said. "But what if there is? They'll get it right again. And even if there's a delay, how can it alter the end? It's just men and ants. There's the ants builds their cities, live their lives, have wars, revolutions, until the men want them out of the way, and then they go out of the way. That's what we are now — just ants. Only — —"

"Yes," I said.

"We're eatable ants."

We sat looking at each other.

"And what will they do with us?" I said.

"That's what I've been thinking," he said; "that's what I've been thinking. After Weybridge I went south — thinking. I saw what was up. Most of the people were hard at it squealing and exciting themselves. But I'm not so fond of squealing. I've been in sight of death once or twice; I'm not an ornamental soldier, and at the best and worst, death — it's just death. And it's the man that keeps on thinking comes through. I saw everyone tracking away south. Says I,

‘Food won’t last this way,’ and I turned right back. I went for the Martians like a sparrow goes for man. All round” — he waved a hand to the horizon— “they’re starving in heaps, bolting, treading on each other. . . .”

He saw my face, and halted awkwardly.

“No doubt lots who had money have gone away to France,” he said. He seemed to hesitate whether to apologise, met my eyes, and went on: “There’s food all about here. Canned things in shops; wines, spirits, mineral waters; and the water mains and drains are empty. Well, I was telling you what I was thinking. ‘Here’s intelligent things,’ I said, ‘and it seems they want us for food. First, they’ll smash us up — ships, machines, guns, cities, all the order and organisation. All that will go. If we were the size of ants we might pull through. But we’re not. It’s all too bulky to stop. That’s the first certainty.’ Eh?”

I assented.

“It is; I’ve thought it out. Very well, then — next; at present we’re caught as we’re wanted. A Martian has only to go a few miles to get a crowd on the run. And I saw one, one day, out by Wandsworth, picking houses to pieces and routing among the wreckage. But they won’t keep on doing that. So soon as they’ve settled all our guns and ships, and smashed our railways, and done all the things they are doing over there, they will begin catching us systematic, picking the best and storing us in cages and things. That’s what they will start doing in a bit. Lord! They haven’t begun on us yet. Don’t you see that?”

“Not begun!” I exclaimed.

“Not begun. All that’s happened so far is through our not having the sense to keep quiet — worrying them with guns and such foolery. And losing our heads, and rushing off in crowds to where there wasn’t any more safety than where we were. They don’t want to bother us yet. They’re making their things — making all the things they couldn’t bring with them, getting things ready for the rest of their people. Very likely that’s why the cylinders have stopped for a bit, for fear of hitting those who are here. And instead of our rushing about blind, on the howl, or getting dynamite on the chance of busting them up, we’ve got to fix ourselves up according to the new

state of affairs. That's how I figure it out. It isn't quite according to what a man wants for his species, but it's about what the facts point to. And that's the principle I acted upon. Cities, nations, civilisation, progress — it's all over. That game's up. We're beat."

"But if that is so, what is there to live for?"

The artilleryman looked at me for a moment.

"There won't be any more blessed concerts for a million years or so; there won't be any Royal Academy of Arts, and no nice little feeds at restaurants. If it's amusement you're after, I reckon the game is up. If you've got any drawing-room manners or a dislike to eating peas with a knife or dropping aitches, you'd better chuck 'em away. They ain't no further use."

"You mean — —"

"I mean that men like me are going on living — for the sake of the breed. I tell you, I'm grim set on living. And if I'm not mistaken, you'll show what insides *you've* got, too, before long. We aren't going to be exterminated. And I don't mean to be caught either, and tamed and fattened and bred like a thundering ox. Ugh! Fancy those brown creepers!"

"You don't mean to say — —"

"I do. I'm going on, under their feet. I've got it planned; I've thought it out. We men are beat. We don't know enough. We've got to learn before we've got a chance. And we've got to live and keep independent while we learn. See! That's what has to be done."

I stared, astonished, and stirred profoundly by the man's resolution.

"Great God!" cried I. "But you are a man indeed!" And suddenly I gripped his hand.

"Eh!" he said, with his eyes shining. "I've thought it out, eh?"

"Go on," I said.

"Well, those who mean to escape their catching must get ready. I'm getting ready. Mind you, it isn't all of us that are made for wild beasts; and that's what it's got to be. That's why I watched you. I had my doubts. You're slender. I didn't know that it was you, you see, or just how you'd been buried. All these — the sort of people that lived in these houses, and all those damn little clerks that used to live down that way — they'd be no good. They haven't any spirit in them

— no proud dreams and no proud lusts; and a man who hasn't one or the other — Lord! What is he but funk and precautions? They just used to skedaddle off to work — I've seen hundreds of 'em, bit of breakfast in hand, running wild and shining to catch their little season-ticket train, for fear they'd get dismissed if they didn't; working at businesses they were afraid to take the trouble to understand; skedaddling back for fear they wouldn't be in time for dinner; keeping indoors after dinner for fear of the back streets, and sleeping with the wives they married, not because they wanted them, but because they had a bit of money that would make for safety in their one little miserable skedaddle through the world. Lives insured and a bit invested for fear of accidents. And on Sundays — fear of the hereafter. As if hell was built for rabbits! Well, the Martians will just be a godsend to these. Nice roomy cages, fattening food, careful breeding, no worry. After a week or so chasing about the fields and lands on empty stomachs, they'll come and be caught cheerful. They'll be quite glad after a bit. They'll wonder what people did before there were Martians to take care of them. And the bar loafers, and mashers, and singers — I can imagine them. I can imagine them," he said, with a sort of sombre gratification. "There'll be any amount of sentiment and religion loose among them. There's hundreds of things I saw with my eyes that I've only begun to see clearly these last few days. There's lots will take things as they are — fat and stupid; and lots will be worried by a sort of feeling that it's all wrong, and that they ought to be doing something. Now whenever things are so that a lot of people feel they ought to be doing something, the weak, and those who go weak with a lot of complicated thinking, always make for a sort of do-nothing religion, very pious and superior, and submit to persecution and the will of the Lord. Very likely you've seen the same thing. It's energy in a gale of funk, and turned clean inside out. These cages will be full of psalms and hymns and piety. And those of a less simple sort will work in a bit of — what is it? — eroticism."

He paused.

"Very likely these Martians will make pets of some of them; train them to do tricks — who knows? — get sentimental over the pet boy who grew up and had to be killed. And some, maybe, they will train

to hunt us.”

“No,” I cried, “that’s impossible! No human being — —”

“What’s the good of going on with such lies?” said the artilleryman. “There’s men who’d do it cheerful. What nonsense to pretend there isn’t!”

And I succumbed to his conviction.

“If they come after me,” he said; “Lord, if they come after me!” and subsided into a grim meditation.

I sat contemplating these things. I could find nothing to bring against this man’s reasoning. In the days before the invasion no one would have questioned my intellectual superiority to his — I, a professed and recognised writer on philosophical themes, and he, a common soldier; and yet he had already formulated a situation that I had scarcely realised.

“What are you doing?” I said presently. “What plans have you made?”

He hesitated.

“Well, it’s like this,” he said. “What have we to do? We have to invent a sort of life where men can live and breed, and be sufficiently secure to bring the children up. Yes — wait a bit, and I’ll make it clearer what I think ought to be done. The tame ones will go like all tame beasts; in a few generations they’ll be big, beautiful, rich-blooded, stupid — rubbish! The risk is that we who keep wild will go savage — degenerate into a sort of big, savage rat. . . . You see, how I mean to live is underground. I’ve been thinking about the drains. Of course those who don’t know drains think horrible things; but under this London are miles and miles — hundreds of miles — and a few days rain and London empty will leave them sweet and clean. The main drains are big enough and airy enough for anyone. Then there’s cellars, vaults, stores, from which bolting passages may be made to the drains. And the railway tunnels and subways. Eh? You begin to see? And we form a band — able-bodied, clean-minded men. We’re not going to pick up any rubbish that drifts in. Weaklings go out again.”

“As you meant me to go?”

“Well — I parleyed, didn’t I?”

“We won’t quarrel about that. Go on.”

“Those who stop obey orders. Able-bodied, clean-minded women we want also — mothers and teachers. No lackadaisical ladies — no blasted rolling eyes. We can’t have any weak or silly. Life is real again, and the useless and cumbersome and mischievous have to die. They ought to die. They ought to be willing to die. It’s a sort of disloyalty, after all, to live and taint the race. And they can’t be happy. Moreover, dying’s none so dreadful; it’s the funking makes it bad. And in all those places we shall gather. Our district will be London. And we may even be able to keep a watch, and run about in the open when the Martians keep away. Play cricket, perhaps. That’s how we shall save the race. Eh? It’s a possible thing? But saving the race is nothing in itself. As I say, that’s only being rats. It’s saving our knowledge and adding to it is the thing. There men like you come in. There’s books, there’s models. We must make great safe places down deep, and get all the books we can; not novels and poetry swipes, but ideas, science books. That’s where men like you come in. We must go to the British Museum and pick all those books through. Especially we must keep up our science — learn more. We must watch these Martians. Some of us must go as spies. When it’s all working, perhaps I will. Get caught, I mean. And the great thing is, we must leave the Martians alone. We mustn’t even steal. If we get in their way, we clear out. We must show them we mean no harm. Yes, I know. But they’re intelligent things, and they won’t hunt us down if they have all they want, and think we’re just harmless vermin.”

The artilleryman paused and laid a brown hand upon my arm.

“After all, it may not be so much we may have to learn before — Just imagine this: four or five of their fighting machines suddenly starting off — Heat-Rays right and left, and not a Martian in ‘em. Not a Martian in ‘em, but men — men who have learned the way how. It may be in my time, even — those men. Fancy having one of them lovely things, with its Heat-Ray wide and free! Fancy having it in control! What would it matter if you smashed to smithereens at the end of the run, after a bust like that? I reckon the Martians’ll open their beautiful eyes! Can’t you see them, man? Can’t you see them hurrying, hurrying — puffing and blowing and hooting to their other mechanical affairs? Something out of gear in every case. And swish,

bang, rattle, swish! Just as they are fumbling over it, *swish* comes the Heat-Ray, and, behold! man has come back to his own."

For a while the imaginative daring of the artilleryman, and the tone of assurance and courage he assumed, completely dominated my mind. I believed unhesitatingly both in his forecast of human destiny and in the practicability of his astonishing scheme, and the reader who thinks me susceptible and foolish must contrast his position, reading steadily with all his thoughts about his subject, and mine, crouching fearfully in the bushes and listening, distracted by apprehension. We talked in this manner through the early morning time, and later crept out of the bushes, and, after scanning the sky for Martians, hurried precipitately to the house on Putney Hill where he had made his lair. It was the coal cellar of the place, and when I saw the work he had spent a week upon — it was a burrow scarcely ten yards long, which he designed to reach to the main drain on Putney Hill — I had my first inkling of the gulf between his dreams and his powers. Such a hole I could have dug in a day. But I believed in him sufficiently to work with him all that morning until past midday at his digging. We had a garden barrow and shot the earth we removed against the kitchen range. We refreshed ourselves with a tin of mock-turtle soup and wine from the neighbouring pantry. I found a curious relief from the aching strangeness of the world in this steady labour. As we worked, I turned his project over in my mind, and presently objections and doubts began to arise; but I worked there all the morning, so glad was I to find myself with a purpose again. After working an hour I began to speculate on the distance one had to go before the cloaca was reached, the chances we had of missing it altogether. My immediate trouble was why we should dig this long tunnel, when it was possible to get into the drain at once down one of the manholes, and work back to the house. It seemed to me, too, that the house was inconveniently chosen, and required a needless length of tunnel. And just as I was beginning to face these things, the artilleryman stopped digging, and looked at me.

"We're working well," he said. He put down his spade. "Let us knock off a bit" he said. "I think it's time we reconnoitred from the roof of the house."

I was for going on, and after a little hesitation he resumed his

spade; and then suddenly I was struck by a thought. I stopped, and so did he at once.

"Why were you walking about the common," I said, "instead of being here?"

"Taking the air," he said. "I was coming back. It's safer by night."

"But the work?"

"Oh, one can't always work," he said, and in a flash I saw the man plain. He hesitated, holding his spade. "We ought to reconnoitre now," he said, "because if any come near they may hear the spades and drop upon us unawares."

I was no longer disposed to object. We went together to the roof and stood on a ladder peeping out of the roof door. No Martians were to be seen, and we ventured out on the tiles, and slipped down under shelter of the parapet.

From this position a shrubbery hid the greater portion of Putney, but we could see the river below, a bubbly mass of red weed, and the low parts of Lambeth flooded and red. The red creeper swarmed up the trees about the old palace, and their branches stretched gaunt and dead, and set with shrivelled leaves, from amid its clusters. It was strange how entirely dependent both these things were upon flowing water for their propagation. About us neither had gained a footing; laburnums, pink mays, snowballs, and trees of arbor-vitae, rose out of laurels and hydrangeas, green and brilliant into the sunlight. Beyond Kensington dense smoke was rising, and that and a blue haze hid the northward hills.

The artilleryman began to tell me of the sort of people who still remained in London.

"One night last week," he said, "some fools got the electric light in order, and there was all Regent Street and the Circus ablaze, crowded with painted and ragged drunkards, men and women, dancing and shouting till dawn. A man who was there told me. And as the day came they became aware of a fighting-machine standing near by the Langham and looking down at them. Heaven knows how long he had been there. It must have given some of them a nasty turn. He came down the road towards them, and picked up nearly a hundred too drunk or frightened to run away."

Grotesque gleam of a time no history will ever fully describe!

From that, in answer to my questions, he came round to his grandiose plans again. He grew enthusiastic. He talked so eloquently of the possibility of capturing a fighting-machine that I more than half believed in him again. But now that I was beginning to understand something of his quality, I could divine the stress he laid on doing nothing precipitately. And I noted that now there was no question that he personally was to capture and fight the great machine.

After a time we went down to the cellar. Neither of us seemed disposed to resume digging, and when he suggested a meal, I was nothing loath. He became suddenly very generous, and when we had eaten he went away and returned with some excellent cigars. We lit these, and his optimism glowed. He was inclined to regard my coming as a great occasion.

"There's some champagne in the cellar," he said.

"We can dig better on this Thames-side burgundy," said I.

"No," said he; "I am host today. Champagne! Great God! We've a heavy enough task before us! Let us take a rest and gather strength while we may. Look at these blistered hands!"

And pursuant to this idea of a holiday, he insisted upon playing cards after we had eaten. He taught me euchre, and after dividing London between us, I taking the northern side and he the southern, we played for parish points. Grotesque and foolish as this will seem to the sober reader, it is absolutely true, and what is more remarkable, I found the card game and several others we played extremely interesting.

Strange mind of man! that, with our species upon the edge of extermination or appalling degradation, with no clear prospect before us but the chance of a horrible death, we could sit following the chance of this painted pasteboard, and playing the "joker" with vivid delight. Afterwards he taught me poker, and I beat him at three tough chess games. When dark came we decided to take the risk, and lit a lamp.

After an interminable string of games, we supped, and the artilleryman finished the champagne. We went on smoking the cigars. He was no longer the energetic regenerator of his species I had encountered in the morning. He was still optimistic, but it was a

less kinetic, a more thoughtful optimism. I remember he wound up with my health, proposed in a speech of small variety and considerable intermittence. I took a cigar, and went upstairs to look at the lights of which he had spoken that blazed so greenly along the Highgate hills.

At first I stared unintelligently across the London valley. The northern hills were shrouded in darkness; the fires near Kensington glowed redly, and now and then an orange-red tongue of flame flashed up and vanished in the deep blue night. All the rest of London was black. Then, nearer, I perceived a strange light, a pale, violet-purple fluorescent glow, quivering under the night breeze. For a space I could not understand it, and then I knew that it must be the red weed from which this faint irradiation proceeded. With that realisation my dormant sense of wonder, my sense of the proportion of things, awoke again. I glanced from that to Mars, red and clear, glowing high in the west, and then gazed long and earnestly at the darkness of Hampstead and Highgate.

I remained a very long time upon the roof, wondering at the grotesque changes of the day. I recalled my mental states from the midnight prayer to the foolish card-playing. I had a violent revulsion of feeling. I remember I flung away the cigar with a certain wasteful symbolism. My folly came to me with glaring exaggeration. I seemed a traitor to my wife and to my kind; I was filled with remorse. I resolved to leave this strange undisciplined dreamer of great things to his drink and gluttony, and to go on into London. There, it seemed to me, I had the best chance of learning what the Martians and my fellowmen were doing. I was still upon the roof when the late moon rose.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DEAD LONDON

After I had parted from the artilleryman, I went down the hill, and by the High Street across the bridge to Fulham. The red weed was tumultuous at that time, and nearly choked the bridge roadway; but its fronds were already whitened in patches by the spreading disease that presently removed it so swiftly.

At the corner of the lane that runs to Putney Bridge station I found a man lying. He was as black as a sweep with the black dust, alive, but helplessly and speechlessly drunk. I could get nothing from him but curses and furious lunges at my head. I think I should have stayed by him but for the brutal expression of his face.

There was black dust along the roadway from the bridge onwards, and it grew thicker in Fulham. The streets were horribly quiet. I got food — sour, hard, and mouldy, but quite eatable — in a baker's shop here. Some way towards Walham Green the streets became clear of powder, and I passed a white terrace of houses on fire; the noise of the burning was an absolute relief. Going on towards Brompton, the streets were quiet again.

Here I came once more upon the black powder in the streets and upon dead bodies. I saw altogether about a dozen in the length of the Fulham Road. They had been dead many days, so that I hurried quickly past them. The black powder covered them over, and softened their outlines. One or two had been disturbed by dogs.

Where there was no black powder, it was curiously like a Sunday in the City, with the closed shops, the houses locked up and the blinds drawn, the desertion, and the stillness. In some places plunderers had been at work, but rarely at other than the provision and wine shops. A jeweller's window had been broken open in one place, but apparently the thief had been disturbed, and a number of gold chains and a watch lay scattered on the pavement. I did not trouble to touch them. Farther on was a tattered woman in a heap on a doorstep; the hand that hung over her knee was gashed and bled down her rusty brown dress, and a smashed magnum of champagne

formed a pool across the pavement. She seemed asleep, but she was dead.

The farther I penetrated into London, the profounder grew the stillness. But it was not so much the stillness of death — it was the stillness of suspense, of expectation. At any time the destruction that had already singed the northwestern borders of the metropolis, and had annihilated Ealing and Kilburn, might strike among these houses and leave them smoking ruins. It was a city condemned and derelict. . . .

In South Kensington the streets were clear of dead and of black powder. It was near South Kensington that I first heard the howling. It crept almost imperceptibly upon my senses. It was a sobbing alternation of two notes, "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," keeping on perpetually. When I passed streets that ran northward it grew in volume, and houses and buildings seemed to deaden and cut it off again. It came in a full tide down Exhibition Road. I stopped, staring towards Kensington Gardens, wondering at this strange, remote wailing. It was as if that mighty desert of houses had found a voice for its fear and solitude.

"Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," wailed that superhuman note — great waves of sound sweeping down the broad, sunlit roadway, between the tall buildings on each side. I turned northwards, marvelling, towards the iron gates of Hyde Park. I had half a mind to break into the Natural History Museum and find my way up to the summits of the towers, in order to see across the park. But I decided to keep to the ground, where quick hiding was possible, and so went on up the Exhibition Road. All the large mansions on each side of the road were empty and still, and my footsteps echoed against the sides of the houses. At the top, near the park gate, I came upon a strange sight — a bus overturned, and the skeleton of a horse picked clean. I puzzled over this for a time, and then went on to the bridge over the Serpentine. The voice grew stronger and stronger, though I could see nothing above the housetops on the north side of the park, save a haze of smoke to the northwest.

"Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," cried the voice, coming, as it seemed to me, from the district about Regent's Park. The desolating cry worked upon my mind. The mood that had sustained me passed. The wailing

took possession of me. I found I was intensely weary, footsore, and now again hungry and thirsty.

It was already past noon. Why was I wandering alone in this city of the dead? Why was I alone when all London was lying in state, and in its black shroud? I felt intolerably lonely. My mind ran on old friends that I had forgotten for years. I thought of the poisons in the chemists' shops, of the liquors the wine merchants stored; I recalled the two sodden creatures of despair, who so far as I knew, shared the city with myself. . . .

I came into Oxford Street by the Marble Arch, and here again were black powder and several bodies, and an evil, ominous smell from the gratings of the cellars of some of the houses. I grew very thirsty after the heat of my long walk. With infinite trouble I managed to break into a public-house and get food and drink. I was weary after eating, and went into the parlour behind the bar, and slept on a black horsehair sofa I found there.

I awoke to find that dismal howling still in my ears, "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla." It was now dusk, and after I had routed out some biscuits and a cheese in the bar — there was a meat safe, but it contained nothing but maggots — I wandered on through the silent residential squares to Baker Street — Portman Square is the only one I can name — and so came out at last upon Regent's Park. And as I emerged from the top of Baker Street, I saw far away over the trees in the clearness of the sunset the hood of the Martian giant from which this howling proceeded. I was not terrified. I came upon him as if it were a matter of course. I watched him for some time, but he did not move. He appeared to be standing and yelling, for no reason that I could discover.

I tried to formulate a plan of action. That perpetual sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," confused my mind. Perhaps I was too tired to be very fearful. Certainly I was more curious to know the reason of this monotonous crying than afraid. I turned back away from the park and struck into Park Road, intending to skirt the park, went along under the shelter of the terraces, and got a view of this stationary, howling Martian from the direction of St. John's Wood. A couple of hundred yards out of Baker Street I heard a yelping chorus, and saw, first a dog with a piece of putrescent red meat in his jaws coming

headlong towards me, and then a pack of starving mongrels in pursuit of him. He made a wide curve to avoid me, as though he feared I might prove a fresh competitor. As the yelping died away down the silent road, the wailing sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," reasserted itself.

I came upon the wrecked handling-machine halfway to St. John's Wood station. At first I thought a house had fallen across the road. It was only as I clambered among the ruins that I saw, with a start, this mechanical Samson lying, with its tentacles bent and smashed and twisted, among the ruins it had made. The forepart was shattered. It seemed as if it had driven blindly straight at the house, and had been overwhelmed in its overthrow. It seemed to me then that this might have happened by a handling-machine escaping from the guidance of its Martian. I could not clamber among the ruins to see it, and the twilight was now so far advanced that the blood with which its seat was smeared, and the gnawed gristle of the Martian that the dogs had left, were invisible to me.

Wondering still more at all that I had seen, I pushed on towards Primrose Hill. Far away, through a gap in the trees, I saw a second Martian, as motionless as the first, standing in the park towards the Zoological Gardens, and silent. A little beyond the ruins about the smashed handling-machine I came upon the red weed again, and found the Regent's Canal, a spongy mass of dark-red vegetation.

As I crossed the bridge, the sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," ceased. It was, as it were, cut off. The silence came like a thunderclap.

The dusky houses about me stood faint and tall and dim; the trees towards the park were growing black. All about me the red weed clambered among the ruins, writhing to get above me in the dimness. Night, the mother of fear and mystery, was coming upon me. But while that voice sounded the solitude, the desolation, had been endurable; by virtue of it London had still seemed alive, and the sense of life about me had upheld me. Then suddenly a change, the passing of something — I knew not what — and then a stillness that could be felt. Nothing but this gaunt quiet.

London about me gazed at me spectrally. The windows in the white houses were like the eye sockets of skulls. About me my

imagination found a thousand noiseless enemies moving. Terror seized me, a horror of my temerity. In front of me the road became pitchy black as though it was tarred, and I saw a contorted shape lying across the pathway. I could not bring myself to go on. I turned down St. John's Wood Road, and ran headlong from this unendurable stillness towards Kilburn. I hid from the night and the silence, until long after midnight, in a cabmen's shelter in Harrow Road. But before the dawn my courage returned, and while the stars were still in the sky I turned once more towards Regent's Park. I missed my way among the streets, and presently saw down a long avenue, in the half-light of the early dawn, the curve of Primrose Hill. On the summit, towering up to the fading stars, was a third Martian, erect and motionless like the others.

An insane resolve possessed me. I would die and end it. And I would save myself even the trouble of killing myself. I marched on recklessly towards this Titan, and then, as I drew nearer and the light grew, I saw that a multitude of black birds was circling and clustering about the hood. At that my heart gave a bound, and I began running along the road.

I hurried through the red weed that choked St. Edmund's Terrace (I waded breast-high across a torrent of water that was rushing down from the waterworks towards the Albert Road), and emerged upon the grass before the rising of the sun. Great mounds had been heaped about the crest of the hill, making a huge redoubt of it — it was the final and largest place the Martians had made — and from behind these heaps there rose a thin smoke against the sky. Against the sky line an eager dog ran and disappeared. The thought that had flashed into my mind grew real, grew credible. I felt no fear, only a wild, trembling exultation, as I ran up the hill towards the motionless monster. Out of the hood hung lank shreds of brown, at which the hungry birds pecked and tore.

In another moment I had scrambled up the earthen rampart and stood upon its crest, and the interior of the redoubt was below me. A mighty space it was, with gigantic machines here and there within it, huge mounds of material and strange shelter places. And scattered about it, some in their overturned war-machines, some in the now rigid handling-machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and

laid in a row, were the Martians — *dead*! — slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their systems were unprepared; slain as the red weed was being slain; slain, after all man's devices had failed, by the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth.

For so it had come about, as indeed I and many men might have foreseen had not terror and disaster blinded our minds. These germs of disease have taken toll of humanity since the beginning of things — taken toll of our prehuman ancestors since life began here. But by virtue of this natural selection of our kind we have developed resisting power; to no germs do we succumb without a struggle, and to many — those that cause putrefaction in dead matter, for instance — our living frames are altogether immune. But there are no bacteria in Mars, and directly these invaders arrived, directly they drank and fed, our microscopic allies began to work their overthrow. Already when I watched them they were irrevocably doomed, dying and rotting even as they went to and fro. It was inevitable. By the toll of a billion deaths man has bought his birthright of the earth, and it is his against all comers; it would still be his were the Martians ten times as mighty as they are. For neither do men live nor die in vain.

Here and there they were scattered, nearly fifty altogether, in that great gulf they had made, overtaken by a death that must have seemed to them as incomprehensible as any death could be. To me also at that time this death was incomprehensible. All I knew was that these things that had been alive and so terrible to men were dead. For a moment I believed that the destruction of Sennacherib had been repeated, that God had repented, that the Angel of Death had slain them in the night.

I stood staring into the pit, and my heart lightened gloriously, even as the rising sun struck the world to fire about me with his rays. The pit was still in darkness; the mighty engines, so great and wonderful in their power and complexity, so unearthly in their tortuous forms, rose weird and vague and strange out of the shadows towards the light. A multitude of dogs, I could hear, fought over the bodies that lay darkly in the depth of the pit, far below me. Across the pit on its farther lip, flat and vast and strange, lay the great flying-machine with which they had been experimenting upon our denser

atmosphere when decay and death arrested them. Death had come not a day too soon. At the sound of a cawing overhead I looked up at the huge fighting-machine that would fight no more for ever, at the tattered red shreds of flesh that dripped down upon the overturned seats on the summit of Primrose Hill.

I turned and looked down the slope of the hill to where, enhaloed now in birds, stood those other two Martians that I had seen overnight, just as death had overtaken them. The one had died, even as it had been crying to its companions; perhaps it was the last to die, and its voice had gone on perpetually until the force of its machinery was exhausted. They glittered now, harmless tripod towers of shining metal, in the brightness of the rising sun.

All about the pit, and saved as by a miracle from everlasting destruction, stretched the great Mother of Cities. Those who have only seen London veiled in her sombre robes of smoke can scarcely imagine the naked clearness and beauty of the silent wilderness of houses.

Eastward, over the blackened ruins of the Albert Terrace and the splintered spire of the church, the sun blazed dazzling in a clear sky, and here and there some facet in the great wilderness of roofs caught the light and glared with a white intensity.

Northward were Kilburn and Hampsted, blue and crowded with houses; westward the great city was dimmed; and southward, beyond the Martians, the green waves of Regent's Park, the Langham Hotel, the dome of the Albert Hall, the Imperial Institute, and the giant mansions of the Brompton Road came out clear and little in the sunrise, the jagged ruins of Westminster rising hazily beyond. Far away and blue were the Surrey hills, and the towers of the Crystal Palace glittered like two silver rods. The dome of St. Paul's was dark against the sunrise, and injured, I saw for the first time, by a huge gaping cavity on its western side.

And as I looked at this wide expanse of houses and factories and churches, silent and abandoned; as I thought of the multitudinous hopes and efforts, the innumerable hosts of lives that had gone to build this human reef, and of the swift and ruthless destruction that had hung over it all; when I realised that the shadow had been rolled back, and that men might still live in the streets, and this dear vast

dead city of mine be once more alive and powerful, I felt a wave of emotion that was near akin to tears.

The torment was over. Even that day the healing would begin. The survivors of the people scattered over the country — leaderless, lawless, foodless, like sheep without a shepherd — the thousands who had fled by sea, would begin to return; the pulse of life, growing stronger and stronger, would beat again in the empty streets and pour across the vacant squares. Whatever destruction was done, the hand of the destroyer was stayed. All the gaunt wrecks, the blackened skeletons of houses that stared so dismally at the sunlit grass of the hill, would presently be echoing with the hammers of the restorers and ringing with the tapping of their trowels. At the thought I extended my hands towards the sky and began thanking God. In a year, thought I — in a year. . .

With overwhelming force came the thought of myself, of my wife, and the old life of hope and tender helpfulness that had ceased for ever.

CHAPTER NINE

WRECKAGE

And now comes the strangest thing in my story. Yet, perhaps, it is not altogether strange. I remember, clearly and coldly and vividly, all that I did that day until the time that I stood weeping and praising God upon the summit of Primrose Hill. And then I forget.

Of the next three days I know nothing. I have learned since that, so far from my being the first discoverer of the Martian overthrow, several such wanderers as myself had already discovered this on the previous night. One man — the first — had gone to St. Martin's-le-Grand, and, while I sheltered in the cabmen's hut, had contrived to telegraph to Paris. Thence the joyful news had flashed all over the world; a thousand cities, chilled by ghastly apprehensions, suddenly flashed into frantic illuminations; they knew of it in Dublin, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, at the time when I stood upon the verge of the pit. Already men, weeping with joy, as I have heard, shouting and staying their work to shake hands and shout, were making up trains, even as near as Crewe, to descend upon London. The church bells that had ceased a fortnight since suddenly caught the news, until all England was bell-ringing. Men on cycles, lean-faced, unkempt, scorched along every country lane shouting of unhoped deliverance, shouting to gaunt, staring figures of despair. And for the food! Across the Channel, across the Irish Sea, across the Atlantic, corn, bread, and meat were tearing to our relief. All the shipping in the world seemed going Londonward in those days. But of all this I have no memory. I drifted — a demented man. I found myself in a house of kindly people, who had found me on the third day wandering, weeping, and raving through the streets of St. John's Wood. They have told me since that I was singing some insane doggerel about "The Last Man Left Alive! Hurrah! The Last Man Left Alive!" Troubled as they were with their own affairs, these people, whose name, much as I would like to express my gratitude to them, I may not even give here, nevertheless cumbered themselves with me, sheltered me, and protected me from myself. Apparently

they had learned something of my story from me during the days of my lapse.

Very gently, when my mind was assured again, did they break to me what they had learned of the fate of Leatherhead. Two days after I was imprisoned it had been destroyed, with every soul in it, by a Martian. He had swept it out of existence, as it seemed, without any provocation, as a boy might crush an ant hill, in the mere wantonness of power.

I was a lonely man, and they were very kind to me. I was a lonely man and a sad one, and they bore with me. I remained with them four days after my recovery. All that time I felt a vague, a growing craving to look once more on whatever remained of the little life that seemed so happy and bright in my past. It was a mere hopeless desire to feast upon my misery. They dissuaded me. They did all they could to divert me from this morbidity. But at last I could resist the impulse no longer, and, promising faithfully to return to them, and parting, as I will confess, from these four-day friends with tears, I went out again into the streets that had lately been so dark and strange and empty.

Already they were busy with returning people; in places even there were shops open, and I saw a drinking fountain running water.

I remember how mockingly bright the day seemed as I went back on my melancholy pilgrimage to the little house at Woking, how busy the streets and vivid the moving life about me. So many people were abroad everywhere, busied in a thousand activities, that it seemed incredible that any great proportion of the population could have been slain. But then I noticed how yellow were the skins of the people I met, how shaggy the hair of the men, how large and bright their eyes, and that every other man still wore his dirty rags. Their faces seemed all with one of two expressions — a leaping exultation and energy or a grim resolution. Save for the expression of the faces, London seemed a city of tramps. The vestries were indiscriminately distributing bread sent us by the French government. The ribs of the few horses showed dismally. Haggard special constables with white badges stood at the corners of every street. I saw little of the mischief wrought by the Martians until I reached Wellington Street, and there I saw the red weed clambering over the buttresses of Waterloo

Bridge.

At the corner of the bridge, too, I saw one of the common contrasts of that grotesque time — a sheet of paper flaunting against a thicket of the red weed, transfixed by a stick that kept it in place. It was the placard of the first newspaper to resume publication — the *Daily Mail*. I bought a copy for a blackened shilling I found in my pocket. Most of it was in blank, but the solitary compositor who did the thing had amused himself by making a grotesque scheme of advertisement stereo on the back page. The matter he printed was emotional; the news organisation had not as yet found its way back. I learned nothing fresh except that already in one week the examination of the Martian mechanisms had yielded astonishing results. Among other things, the article assured me what I did not believe at the time, that the "Secret of Flying," was discovered. At Waterloo I found the free trains that were taking people to their homes. The first rush was already over. There were few people in the train, and I was in no mood for casual conversation. I got a compartment to myself, and sat with folded arms, looking greyly at the sunlit devastation that flowed past the windows. And just outside the terminus the train jolted over temporary rails, and on either side of the railway the houses were blackened ruins. To Clapham Junction the face of London was grimy with powder of the Black Smoke, in spite of two days of thunderstorms and rain, and at Clapham Junction the line had been wrecked again; there were hundreds of out-of-work clerks and shopmen working side by side with the customary navvies, and we were jolted over a hasty relaying.

All down the line from there the aspect of the country was gaunt and unfamiliar; Wimbledon particularly had suffered. Walton, by virtue of its unburned pine woods, seemed the least hurt of any place along the line. The Wandle, the Mole, every little stream, was a heaped mass of red weed, in appearance between butcher's meat and pickled cabbage. The Surrey pine woods were too dry, however, for the festoons of the red climber. Beyond Wimbledon, within sight of the line, in certain nursery grounds, were the heaped masses of earth about the sixth cylinder. A number of people were standing about it, and some sappers were busy in the midst of it. Over it flaunted a Union Jack, flapping cheerfully in the morning breeze. The nursery

grounds were everywhere crimson with the weed, a wide expanse of livid colour cut with purple shadows, and very painful to the eye. One's gaze went with infinite relief from the scorched greys and sullen reds of the foreground to the blue-green softness of the eastward hills.

The line on the London side of Woking station was still undergoing repair, so I descended at Byfleet station and took the road to Maybury, past the place where I and the artilleryman had talked to the hussars, and on by the spot where the Martian had appeared to me in the thunderstorm. Here, moved by curiosity, I turned aside to find, among a tangle of red fronds, the warped and broken dog cart with the whitened bones of the horse scattered and gnawed. For a time I stood regarding these vestiges. . . .

Then I returned through the pine wood, neck-high with red weed here and there, to find the landlord of the Spotted Dog had already found burial, and so came home past the College Arms. A man standing at an open cottage door greeted me by name as I passed.

I looked at my house with a quick flash of hope that faded immediately. The door had been forced; it was unfast and was opening slowly as I approached.

It slammed again. The curtains of my study fluttered out of the open window from which I and the artilleryman had watched the dawn. No one had closed it since. The smashed bushes were just as I had left them nearly four weeks ago. I stumbled into the hall, and the house felt empty. The stair carpet was ruffled and discoloured where I had crouched, soaked to the skin from the thunderstorm the night of the catastrophe. Our muddy footsteps I saw still went up the stairs.

I followed them to my study, and found lying on my writing-table still, with the selenite paper weight upon it, the sheet of work I had left on the afternoon of the opening of the cylinder. For a space I stood reading over my abandoned arguments. It was a paper on the probable development of Moral Ideas with the development of the civilising process; and the last sentence was the opening of a prophecy: "In about two hundred years," I had written, "we may expect — —" The sentence ended abruptly. I remembered my inability to fix my mind that morning, scarcely a month gone by, and how I had broken off to get my *Daily Chronicle* from the newsboy. I

remembered how I went down to the garden gate as he came along, and how I had listened to his odd story of “Men from Mars.”

I came down and went into the dining room. There were the mutton and the bread, both far gone now in decay, and a beer bottle overturned, just as I and the artilleryman had left them. My home was desolate. I perceived the folly of the faint hope I had cherished so long. And then a strange thing occurred. “It is no use,” said a voice. “The house is deserted. No one has been here these ten days. Do not stay here to torment yourself. No one escaped but you.”

I was startled. Had I spoken my thought aloud? I turned, and the French window was open behind me. I made a step to it, and stood looking out.

And there, amazed and afraid, even as I stood amazed and afraid, were my cousin and my wife — my wife white and tearless. She gave a faint cry.

“I came,” she said. “I knew — knew — —”

She put her hand to her throat — swayed. I made a step forward, and caught her in my arms.

CHAPTER TEN

THE EPILOGUE

I cannot but regret, now that I am concluding my story, how little I am able to contribute to the discussion of the many debatable questions which are still unsettled. In one respect I shall certainly provoke criticism. My particular province is speculative philosophy. My knowledge of comparative physiology is confined to a book or two, but it seems to me that Carver's suggestions as to the reason of the rapid death of the Martians is so probable as to be regarded almost as a proven conclusion. I have assumed that in the body of my narrative.

At any rate, in all the bodies of the Martians that were examined after the war, no bacteria except those already known as terrestrial species were found. That they did not bury any of their dead, and the reckless slaughter they perpetrated, point also to an entire ignorance of the putrefactive process. But probable as this seems, it is by no means a proven conclusion.

Neither is the composition of the Black Smoke known, which the Martians used with such deadly effect, and the generator of the Heat-Rays remains a puzzle. The terrible disasters at the Ealing and South Kensington laboratories have disinclined analysts for further investigations upon the latter. Spectrum analysis of the black powder points unmistakably to the presence of an unknown element with a brilliant group of three lines in the green, and it is possible that it combines with argon to form a compound which acts at once with deadly effect upon some constituent in the blood. But such unproven speculations will scarcely be of interest to the general reader, to whom this story is addressed. None of the brown scum that drifted down the Thames after the destruction of Shepperton was examined at the time, and now none is forthcoming.

The results of an anatomical examination of the Martians, so far as the prowling dogs had left such an examination possible, I have already given. But everyone is familiar with the magnificent and almost complete specimen in spirits at the Natural History Museum,

and the countless drawings that have been made from it; and beyond that the interest of their physiology and structure is purely scientific.

A question of graver and universal interest is the possibility of another attack from the Martians. I do not think that nearly enough attention is being given to this aspect of the matter. At present the planet Mars is in conjunction, but with every return to opposition I, for one, anticipate a renewal of their adventure. In any case, we should be prepared. It seems to me that it should be possible to define the position of the gun from which the shots are discharged, to keep a sustained watch upon this part of the planet, and to anticipate the arrival of the next attack.

In that case the cylinder might be destroyed with dynamite or artillery before it was sufficiently cool for the Martians to emerge, or they might be butchered by means of guns so soon as the screw opened. It seems to me that they have lost a vast advantage in the failure of their first surprise. Possibly they see it in the same light.

Lessing has advanced excellent reasons for supposing that the Martians have actually succeeded in effecting a landing on the planet Venus. Seven months ago now, Venus and Mars were in alignment with the sun; that is to say, Mars was in opposition from the point of view of an observer on Venus. Subsequently a peculiar luminous and sinuous marking appeared on the unillumined half of the inner planet, and almost simultaneously a faint dark mark of a similar sinuous character was detected upon a photograph of the Martian disk. One needs to see the drawings of these appearances in order to appreciate fully their remarkable resemblance in character.

At any rate, whether we expect another invasion or not, our views of the human future must be greatly modified by these events. We have learned now that we cannot regard this planet as being fenced in and a secure abiding place for Man; we can never anticipate the unseen good or evil that may come upon us suddenly out of space. It may be that in the larger design of the universe this invasion from Mars is not without its ultimate benefit for men; it has robbed us of that serene confidence in the future which is the most fruitful source of decadence, the gifts to human science it has brought are enormous, and it has done much to promote the conception of the commonweal of mankind. It may be that across the immensity of space the

Martians have watched the fate of these pioneers of theirs and learned their lesson, and that on the planet Venus they have found a securer settlement. Be that as it may, for many years yet there will certainly be no relaxation of the eager scrutiny of the Martian disk, and those fiery darts of the sky, the shooting stars, will bring with them as they fall an unavoidable apprehension to all the sons of men.

The broadening of men's views that has resulted can scarcely be exaggerated. Before the cylinder fell there was a general persuasion that through all the deep of space no life existed beyond the petty surface of our minute sphere. Now we see further. If the Martians can reach Venus, there is no reason to suppose that the thing is impossible for men, and when the slow cooling of the sun makes this earth uninhabitable, as at last it must do, it may be that the thread of life that has begun here will have streamed out and caught our sister planet within its toils.

Dim and wonderful is the vision I have conjured up in my mind of life spreading slowly from this little seed bed of the solar system throughout the inanimate vastness of sidereal space. But that is a remote dream. It may be, on the other hand, that the destruction of the Martians is only a reprieve. To them, and not to us, perhaps, is the future ordained.

I must confess the stress and danger of the time have left an abiding sense of doubt and insecurity in my mind. I sit in my study writing by lamplight, and suddenly I see again the healing valley below set with writhing flames, and feel the house behind and about me empty and desolate. I go out into the Byfleet Road, and vehicles pass me, a butcher boy in a cart, a cabful of visitors, a workman on a bicycle, children going to school, and suddenly they become vague and unreal, and I hurry again with the artilleryman through the hot, brooding silence. Of a night I see the black powder darkening the silent streets, and the contorted bodies shrouded in that layer; they rise upon me tattered and dog-bitten. They gibber and grow fiercer, paler, uglier, mad distortions of humanity at last, and I wake, cold and wretched, in the darkness of the night.

I go to London and see the busy multitudes in Fleet Street and the Strand, and it comes across my mind that they are but the ghosts of the past, haunting the streets that I have seen silent and wretched,

going to and fro, phantasms in a dead city, the mockery of life in a galvanised body. And strange, too, it is to stand on Primrose Hill, as I did but a day before writing this last chapter, to see the great province of houses, dim and blue through the haze of the smoke and mist, vanishing at last into the vague lower sky, to see the people walking to and fro among the flower beds on the hill, to see the sight-seers about the Martian machine that stands there still, to hear the tumult of playing children, and to recall the time when I saw it all bright and clear-cut, hard and silent, under the dawn of that last great day. . . .

And strangest of all is it to hold my wife's hand again, and to think that I have counted her, and that she has counted me, among the dead.

WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES

This novel was serialised in *The Graphic* in 1898-99. Dissatisfied with this version, Wells rewrote the novel for its eventual publication in book form in 1910, under the title *The Sleeper Awakes*. The story is an ironic tale of a man who falls asleep for 203 years. When he awakes, he finds that compound interest on his savings has made him the richest man in the world – but his joy at this discovery is overshadowed by his horror and bewilderment at the way the world has developed during his two centuries' sleep.

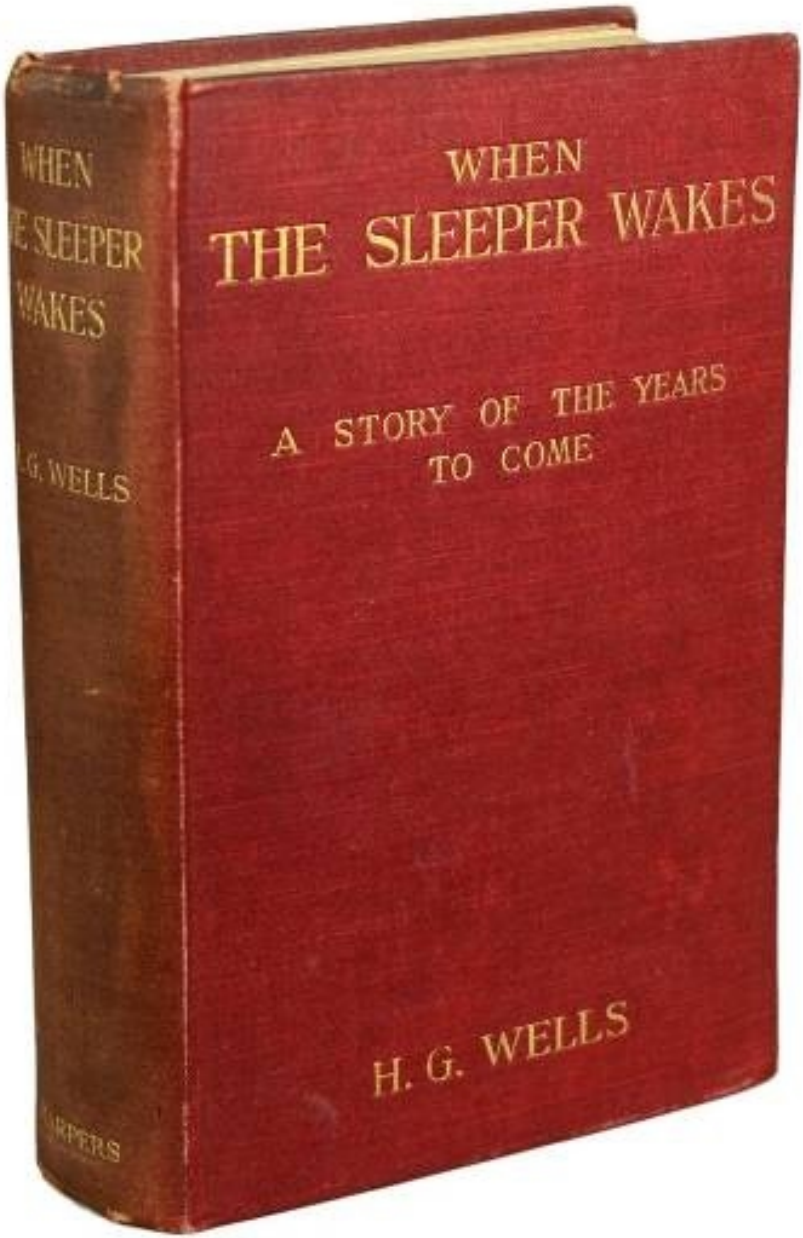

The first edition

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The Graphic – the popular Victorian periodical in which the novel was first serialised

CHAPTER I. INSOMNIA

One afternoon, at low water, Mr. Isbister, a young artist lodging at Boscastle, walked from that place to the picturesque cove of Pentargen, desiring to examine the caves there. Halfway down the precipitous path to the Pentargen beach he came suddenly upon a man sitting in an attitude of profound distress beneath a projecting mass of rock. The hands of this man hung limply over his knees, his eyes were red and staring before him, and his face was wet with tears.

He glanced round at Isbister's footfall. Both men were disconcerted, Isbister the more so, and, to override the awkwardness of his involuntary pause, he remarked, with an air of mature conviction, that the weather was hot for the time of year.

"Very," answered the stranger shortly, hesitated a second, and added in a colourless tone, "I can't sleep."

Isbister stopped abruptly. "No?" was all he said, but his bearing conveyed his helpful impulse.

"It may sound incredible," said the stranger, turning weary eyes to Isbister's face and emphasizing his words with a languid hand, "but I have had no sleep — no sleep at all for six nights."

"Had advice?"

"Yes. Bad advice for the most part. Drugs. My nervous system.... They are all very well for the run of people. It's hard to explain. I dare not take... sufficiently powerful drugs."

"That makes it difficult," said Isbister.

He stood helplessly in the narrow path, perplexed what to do. Clearly the man wanted to talk. An idea natural enough under the circumstances, prompted him to keep the conversation going. "I've never suffered from sleeplessness myself," he said in a tone of commonplace gossip, "but in those cases I have known, people have usually found something—"

"I dare make no experiments."

He spoke wearily. He gave a gesture of rejection, and for a space both men were silent.

"Exercise?" suggested Isbister diffidently, with a glance from his

interlocutor's face of wretchedness to the touring costume he wore.

"That is what I have tried. Unwisely perhaps. I have followed the coast, day after day — from New Quay. It has only added muscular fatigue to the mental. The cause of this unrest was overwork — trouble. There was something—"

He stopped as if from sheer fatigue. He rubbed his forehead with a lean hand. He resumed speech like one who talks to himself.

"I am a lone wolf, a solitary man, wandering through a world in which I have no part. I am wifeless — childless — who is it speaks of the childless as the dead twigs on the tree of life? I am wifeless, I childless — I could find no duty to do. No desire even in my heart. One thing at last I set myself to do.

"I said, I will do this, and to do it, to overcome the inertia of this dull body, I resorted to drugs. Great God, I've had enough of drugs! I don't know if *you* feel the heavy inconvenience of the body, its exasperating demand of time from the mind — time — life! Live! We only live in patches. We have to eat, and then comes the dull digestive complacencies — or irritations. We have to take the air or else our thoughts grow sluggish, stupid, run into gulfs and blind alleys. A thousand distractions arise from within and without, and then comes drowsiness and sleep. Men seem to live for sleep. How little of a man's day is his own — even at the best! And then come those false friends, those Thug helpers, the alkaloids that stifle natural fatigue and kill rest — black coffee, cocaine—"

"I see," said Isbister.

"I did my work," said the sleepless man with a querulous intonation.

"And this is the price?"

"Yes."

For a little while the two remained without speaking.

"You cannot imagine the craving for rest that I feel — a hunger and thirst. For six long days, since my work was done, my mind has been a whirlpool, swift, unprogressive and incessant, a torrent of thoughts leading nowhere, spinning round swift and steady—"

He paused. "Towards the gulf."

"You must sleep," said Isbister decisively, and with an air of a remedy discovered. "Certainly you must sleep."

“My mind is perfectly lucid. It was never clearer. But I know I am drawing towards the vortex. Presently—”

“Yes?”

“You have seen things go down an eddy? Out of the light of the day, out of this sweet world of sanity — down—”

“But,” expostulated Isbister.

The man threw out a hand towards him, and his eyes were wild, and his voice suddenly high. “I shall kill myself. If in no other way — at the foot of yonder dark precipice there, where the waves are green, and the white surge lifts and falls, and that little thread of water trembles down. There at any rate is ... sleep.”

“That’s unreasonable,” said Isbister, startled at the man’s hysterical gust of emotion. “Drugs are better than that.”

“There at any rate is sleep,” repeated the stranger, not heeding him.

Isbister looked at him and wondered transitorily if some complex Providence had indeed brought them together that afternoon. “It’s not a cert, you know,” he remarked. “There’s a cliff like that at Lulworth Cove — as high, anyhow — and a little girl fell from top to bottom. And lives to-day — sound and well.”

“But those rocks there?”

“One might lie on them rather dismally through a cold night, broken bones grating as one shivered, chill water splashing over you. Eh?”

Their eyes met. “Sorry to upset your ideals,” said Isbister with a sense of devil-may-careish brilliance.

“But a suicide over that cliff (or any cliff for the matter of that), really, as an artist—” He laughed. “It’s so damned amateurish.”

“But the other thing,” said the sleepless man irritably, “the other thing. No man can keep sane if night after night—”

“Have you been walking along this coast alone?”

“Yes.”

“Silly sort of thing to do. If you’ll excuse my saying so. Alone! As you say; body fag is no cure for brain fag. Who told you to? No wonder; walking! And the sun on your head, heat, fag, solitude, all the day long, and then, I suppose, you go to bed and try very hard — eh?”

Isbister stopped short and looked at the sufferer doubtfully.

“Look at these rocks!” cried the seated man with a sudden force of gesture. “Look at that sea that has shone and quivered there for ever! See the white spume rush into darkness under that great cliff. And this blue vault, with the blinding sun pouring from the dome of it. It is your world. You accept it, you rejoice in it. It warms and supports and delights you. And for me—”

He turned his head and showed a ghastly face, bloodshot pallid eyes and bloodless lips. He spoke almost in a whisper. “It is the garment of my misery. The whole world... is the garment of my misery.”

Isbister looked at all the wild beauty of the sunlit cliffs about them and back to that face of despair For a moment he was silent.

He started, and made a gesture of impatient rejection. “You get a night’s sleep,” he said, “and you won’t see much misery out here. Take my word for it.”

He was quite sure now that this was a providential encounter. Only half an hour ago he had been feeling horribly bored. Here was employment the bare thought of which was righteous self-applause. He took possession forthwith. It seemed to him that the first need of this exhausted being was companionship He flung himself down on the steeply sloping turf beside the motionless seated figure, and deployed forthwith into a skirmishing line of gossip.

His hearer seemed to have lapsed into apathy; he stared dismally seaward, and spoke only in answer to Isbister’s direct questions — and not to all of those But he made no sign of objection to this benevolent intrusion upon his despair.

In a helpless way he seemed even grateful, and when presently Isbister, feeling that his unsupported talk was losing vigour, suggested that they should reascend the steep and return towards Boscastle, alleging the view into Blackapit, he submitted quietly. Halfway up he began talking to himself, and abruptly turned a ghastly face on his helper. “What can be happening?” he asked with a gaunt illustrative hand. “What can be happening? Spin, spin, spin, spin. It goes round and round, round and round for evermore.”

He stood with his hand circling

“It’s all right, old chap,” said Isbister with the air of an old friend.

“Don’t worry yourself. Trust to me.”

The man dropped his hand and turned again. They went over the brow in single file and to the headland beyond Penally, with the sleepless man gesticulating ever and again, and speaking fragmentary things concerning his whirling brain. At the headland they stood for a space by the seat that looks into the dark mysteries of Blackapit, and then he sat down. Isbister had resumed his talk whenever the path had widened sufficiently for them to walk abreast. He was enlarging upon the complex difficulty of making Boscastle Harbour in bad weather, when suddenly and quite irrelevantly his companion interrupted him again.

“My head is not like what it was,” he said, gesticulating for want of expressive phrases. “It’s not like what it was. There is a sort of oppression, a weight. No — not drowsiness, would God it were! It is like a shadow, a deep shadow falling suddenly and swiftly across something busy. Spin, spin into the darkness The tumult of thought, the confusion, the eddy and eddy. I can’t express it. I can hardly keep my mind on it — steadily enough to tell you.”

He stopped feebly.

“Don’t trouble, old chap,” said Isbister. “I think I can understand. At any rate, it don’t matter very much just at present about telling me, you know.”

The sleepless man thrust his knuckles into his eyes and rubbed them. Isbister talked for awhile while this rubbing continued, and then he had a fresh idea. “Come down to my room,” he said, “and try a pipe. I can show you some sketches of this Blackapit. If you’d care?”

The other rose obediently and followed him down the steep.

Several times Isbister heard him stumble as they came down, and his movements were slow and hesitating. “Come in with me,” said Isbister, “and try some cigarettes and the blessed gift of alcohol. If you take alcohol?”

The stranger hesitated at the garden gate. He seemed no longer clearly aware of his actions. “I don’t drink,” he said slowly, coming up the garden path, and after a moment’s interval repeated absently, “No — I don’t drink. It goes round. Spin, it goes — spin—”

He stumbled at the doorstep and entered the room with the

bearing of one who sees nothing.

Then he sat down abruptly and heavily in the easy chair, seemed almost to fall into it. He leant forward with his brows on his hands and became motionless.

Presently he made a faint sound in his throat. Isbister moved about the room with the nervousness of an inexperienced host, making little remarks that scarcely required answering. He crossed the room to his portfolio, placed it on the table and noticed the mantel clock.

“I don’t know if you’d care to have supper with me,” he said with an unlighted cigarette in his hand — his mind troubled with a design of the furtive administration of chloral. “Only cold mutton, you know, but passing sweet. Welsh. And a tart, I believe.” He repeated this after momentary silence.

The seated man made no answer. Isbister stopped, match in hand, regarding him.

The stillness lengthened. The match went out, the cigarette was put down unlit. The man was certainly very still. Isbister took up the portfolio, opened it, put it down, hesitated, seemed about to speak. “Perhaps,” he whispered doubtfully. Presently he glanced at the door and back to the figure. Then he stole on tiptoe out of the room, glancing at his companion after each elaborate pace.

He closed the door noiselessly. The house door was standing open, and he went out beyond the porch, and stood where the monkshood rose at the corner of the garden bed. From this point he could see the stranger through the open window, still and dim, sitting head on hand. He had not moved.

A number of children going along the road stopped and regarded the artist curiously. A boatman exchanged civilities with him. He felt that possibly his circumspect attitude and position seemed peculiar and unaccountable. Smoking, perhaps, might seem more natural. He drew pipe and pouch from his pocket, filled the pipe slowly.

“I wonder,”... he said, with a scarcely perceptible loss of complacency. “At any rate we must give him a chance.” He struck a match in the virile way, and proceeded to light his pipe.

Presently he heard his landlady behind him, coming with his lamp lit from the kitchen. He turned, gesticulating with his pipe, and

stopped her at the door of his sitting-room. He had some difficulty in explaining the situation in whispers, for she did not know he had a visitor. She retreated again with the lamp, still a little mystified to judge from her manner, and he resumed his hovering at the corner of the porch, flushed and less at his ease.

Long after he had smoked out his pipe, and when the bats were abroad, his curiosity dominated his complex hesitations, and he stole back into his darkling sitting-room. He paused in the doorway. The stranger was still in the same attitude, dark against the window. Save for the singing of some sailors aboard one of the little slate-carrying ships in the harbour, the evening was very still. Outside, the spikes of monkshood and delphinium stood erect and motionless against the shadow of the hillside. Something flashed into Isbister's mind; he started, and leaning over the table, listened. An unpleasant suspicion grew stronger; became conviction. Astonishment seized him and became — dread!

No sound of breathing came from the seated figure!

He crept slowly and noiselessly round the table, pausing twice to listen. At last he could lay his hand on the back of the armchair. He bent down until the two heads were ear to ear.

Then he bent still lower to look up at his visitor's face. He started violently and uttered an exclamation. The eyes were void spaces of white.

He looked again and saw that they were open and with the pupils rolled under the lids. He was suddenly afraid. Overcome by the strangeness of the man's condition, he took him by the shoulder and shook him. "Are you asleep?" he said, with his voice jumping into alto, and again, "Are you asleep?"

A conviction took possession of his mind that this man was dead. He suddenly became active and noisy, strode across the room, blundering against the table as he did so, and rang the bell.

"Please bring a light at once," he said in the passage. "There is something wrong with my friend."

Then he returned to the motionless seated figure, grasped the shoulder, shook it, and shouted. The room was flooded with yellow glare as his astonished landlady entered with the light. His face was white as he turned blinking towards her. "I must fetch a doctor at

once," he said. "It is either death or a fit. Is there a doctor in the village? Where is a doctor to be found?"

CHAPTER II. THE TRANCE

The state of cataleptic rigour into which this man had fallen, lasted for an unprecedented length of time, and then he passed slowly to the flaccid state, to a lax attitude suggestive of profound repose. Then it was his eyes could be closed.

He was removed from the hotel to the Boscastle surgery, and from the surgery, after some weeks, to London. But he still resisted every attempt at reanimation. After a time, for reasons that will appear later, these attempts were discontinued. For a great space he lay in that strange condition, inert and still neither dead nor living but, as it were, suspended, hanging midway between nothingness and existence. His was a darkness unbroken by a ray of thought or sensation, a dreamless inanition, a vast space of peace. The tumult of his mind had swelled and risen to an abrupt climax of silence. Where was the man? Where is any man when insensibility takes hold of him?

"It seems only yesterday," said Isbister. "I remember it all as though it happened yesterday — clearer perhaps, than if it had happened yesterday."

It was the Isbister of the last chapter, but he was no longer a young man. The hair that had been brown and a trifle in excess of the fashionable length, was iron grey and clipped close, and the face that had been pink and white was buff and ruddy. He had a pointed beard shot with grey. He talked to an elderly man who wore a summer suit of drill (the summer of that year was unusually hot). This was Warming, a London solicitor and next of kin to Graham, the man who had fallen into the trance. And the two men stood side by side in a room in a house in London regarding his recumbent figure.

It was a yellow figure lying lax upon a water-bed and clad in a flowing shirt, a figure with a shrunken face and a stubby beard, lean limbs and lank nails, and about it was a case of thin glass. This glass seemed to mark off the sleeper from the reality of life about him, he was a thing apart, a strange, isolated abnormality. The two men stood close to the glass, peering in.

"The thing gave me a shock," said Isbister "I feel a queer sort of

surprise even now when I think of his white eyes. They were white, you know, rolled up. Coming here again brings it all back to me.

"Have you never seen him since that time?" asked Warming.

"Often wanted to come," said Isbister; "but business nowadays is too serious a thing for much holiday keeping. I've been in America most of the time."

"If I remember rightly," said Warming, "you were an artist?"

"Was. And then I became a married man. I saw it was all up with black and white, very soon — at least for a mediocre man, and I jumped on to process. Those posters on the Cliffs at Dover are by my people."

"Good posters," admitted the solicitor, "though I was sorry to see them there."

"Last as long as the cliffs, if necessary," exclaimed Isbister with satisfaction. "The world changes. When he fell asleep, twenty years ago, I was down at Boscastle with a box of water-colours and a noble, old-fashioned ambition. I didn't expect that some day my pigments would glorify the whole blessed coast of England, from Land's End round again to the Lizard. Luck comes to a man very often when he's not looking."

Warming seemed to doubt the quality of the luck. "I just missed seeing you, if I recollect aright."

"You came back by the trap that took me to Camelford railway station. It was close on the Jubilee, Victoria's Jubilee, because I remember the seats and flags in Westminster, and the row with the cabman at Chelsea."

"The Diamond Jubilee, it was," said Warming; "the second one."

"Ah, yes! At the proper Jubilee — the Fifty Year affair — I was down at Wookey — a boy. I missed all that.... What a fuss we had with him! My landlady wouldn't take him in, wouldn't let him stay — he looked so queer when he was rigid. We had to carry him in a chair up to the hotel. And the Boscastle doctor — it wasn't the present chap, but the G.P. before him — was at him until nearly two, with, me and the landlord holding lights and so forth."

"It was a cataleptic rigour at first, wasn't it?"

"Stiff! — wherever you bent him he stuck. You might have stood him on his head and he'd have stopped. I never saw such stiffness. Of

course this" — he indicated the prostrate figure by a movement of his head— "is quite different. And, of course, the little doctor — what was his name?"

"Smithers?"

"Smithers it was — was quite wrong in trying to fetch him round too soon, according to all accounts. The things he did. Even now it makes me feel all — ugh! Mustard, snuff, pricking. And one of those beastly little things, not dynamos—"

"Induction coils."

"Yes. You could see his muscles throb and jump, and he twisted about. There was just two flaring yellow candles, and all the shadows were shivering, and the little doctor nervous and putting on side, and him — stark and squirming in the most unnatural ways. Well, it made me dream."

Pause.

"It's a strange state," said Warming.

"It's a sort of complete absence," said Isbister.

"Here's the body, empty. Not dead a bit, and yet not alive. It's like a seat vacant and marked 'engaged.' No feeling, no digestion, no beating of the heart — not a flutter. *That* doesn't make me feel as if there was a man present. In a sense it's more dead than death, for these doctors tell me that even the hair has stopped growing. Now with the proper dead, the hair will go on growing—"

"I know," said Warming, with a flash of pain in his expression.

They peered through the glass again. Graham was indeed in a strange state, in the flaccid phase of a trance, but a trance unprecedented in medical history. Trances had lasted for as much as a year before — but at the end of that time it had ever been waking or a death; sometimes first one and then the other. Isbister noted the marks the physicians had made in injecting nourishment, for that device had been resorted to to postpone collapse; he pointed them out to Warming, who had been trying not to see them.

"And while he has been lying here," said Isbister, with the zest of a life freely spent, "I have changed my plans in life; married, raised a family, my eldest lad — I hadn't begun to think of sons then — is an American citizen, and looking forward to leaving Harvard. There's a touch of grey in my hair. And this man, not a day older nor wiser

(practically) than I was in my downy days. It's curious to think of."

Warming turned. "And I have grown old too. I played cricket with him when I was still only a lad. And he looks a young man still. Yellow perhaps. But that is a young man nevertheless."

"And there's been the War," said Isbister.

"From beginning to end."

"And these Martians."

"I've understood," said Isbister after a pause, "that he had some moderate property of his own?"

"That is so," said Warming. He coughed primly. "As it happens — have charge of it."

"Ah!" Isbister thought, hesitated and spoke: "No doubt — his keep here is not expensive — no doubt it will have improved — accumulated?"

"It has. He will wake up very much better off — if he wakes — than when he slept."

"As a business man," said Isbister, "that thought has naturally been in my mind. I have, indeed, sometimes thought that, speaking commercially, of course, this sleep may be a very good thing for him. That he knows what he is about, so to speak, in being insensible so long. If he had lived straight on—"

"I doubt if he would have premeditated as much," said Warming. "He was not a far-sighted man. In fact—"

"Yes?"

"We differed on that point. I stood to him somewhat in the relation of a guardian. You have probably seen enough of affairs to recognise that occasionally a certain friction — . But even if that was the case, there is a doubt whether he will ever wake. This sleep exhausts slowly, but it exhausts. Apparently he is sliding slowly, very slowly and tediously, down a long slope, if you can understand me?"

"It will be a pity to lose his surprise. There's been a lot of change these twenty years. It's Rip Van Winkle come real."

"It's Bellamy," said Warming. "There has been a lot of change certainly. And, among other changes, I have changed. I am an old man."

Isbister hesitated, and then feigned a belated surprise. "I shouldn't

have thought it."

"I was forty-three when his bankers — you remember you wired to his bankers — sent on to me."

"I got their address from the cheque book in his pocket," said Isbister.

"Well, the addition is not difficult," said Warming.

There was another pause, and then Isbister gave way to an unavoidable curiosity. "He may go on for years yet," he said, and had a moment of hesitation. "We have to consider that. His affairs, you know, may fall some day into the hands of — someone else, you know."

"That, if you will believe me, Mr. Isbister, is one of the problems most constantly before my mind. We happen to be — as a matter of fact, there are no very trustworthy connections of ours. It is a grotesque and unprecedented position."

"It is," said Isbister. "As a matter of fact, it's a case for a public trustee, if only we had such a functionary."

"It seems to me it's a case for some public body, some practically undying guardian. If he really is going on living — as the doctors, some of them, think. As a matter of fact, I have gone to one or two public men about it. But, so far, nothing has been done."

"It wouldn't be a bad idea to hand him over to some public body — the British Museum Trustees, or the Royal College of Physicians. Sounds a bit odd, of course, but the whole situation is odd."

"The difficulty is to induce them to take him."

"Red tape, I suppose?"

"Partly."

Pause. "It's a curious business, certainly," said Isbister. "And compound interest has a way of mounting up."

"It has," said Warming. "And now the gold supplies are running short there is a tendency towards ... appreciation."

"I've felt that," said Isbister with a grimace. "But it makes it better for him."

"If he wakes."

"If he wakes," echoed Isbister. "Do you notice the pinched-ill look of his nose, and the way in which his eyelids sink?"

Warming looked and thought for a space. "I doubt if he will

wake," he said at last.

"I never properly understood," said Isbister, "what it was brought this on. He told me something about overstudy. I've often been curious."

"He was a man of considerable gifts, but spasmodic, emotional. He had grave domestic troubles, divorced his wife, in fact, and it was as a relief from that, I think, that he took up politics of the rabid sort. He was a fanatical Radical — a Socialist — or typical Liberal, as they used to call themselves, of the advanced school. Energetic — flighty — undisciplined. Overwork upon a controversy did this for him. I remember the pamphlet he wrote — a curious production. Wild, whirling stuff. There were one or two prophecies. Some of them are already exploded, some of them are established facts. But for the most part to read such a thesis is to realise how full the world is of unanticipated things. He will have much to learn, much to unlearn, when he wakes. If ever a waking comes."

"I'd give anything to be there," said Isbister, "just to hear what he would say to it all."

"So would I," said Warming. "Aye! so would I," with an old man's sudden turn to self pity. "But I shall never see him wake."

He stood looking thoughtfully at the waxen figure. "He will never wake," he said at last. He sighed "He will never wake again."

CHAPTER III. THE AWAKENING

But Warming was wrong in that. An awakening came.

What a wonderfully complex thing! this simple seeming unity — the self! Who can trace its reintegration as morning after morning we awaken, the flux and confluence of its countless factors interweaving, rebuilding, the dim first stirrings of the soul, the growth and synthesis of the unconscious to the subconscious, the sub-conscious to dawning consciousness, until at last we recognise ourselves again. And as it happens to most of us after the night's sleep, so it was with Graham at the end of his vast slumber. A dim cloud of sensation taking shape, a cloudy dreariness, and he found himself vaguely somewhere, recumbent, faint, but alive.

The pilgrimage towards a personal being seemed to traverse vast gulfs, to occupy epochs. Gigantic dreams that were terrible realities at the time, left vague perplexing memories, strange creatures, strange scenery, as if from another planet. There was a distinct impression, too, of a momentous conversation, of a name — he could not tell what name — that was subsequently to recur, of some queer long-forgotten sensation of vein and muscle, of a feeling of vast hopeless effort, the effort of a man near drowning in darkness. Then came a panorama of dazzling unstable confluent scenes.

Graham became aware his eyes were open and regarding some unfamiliar thing.

It was something white, the edge of something, a frame of wood. He moved his head slightly, following the contour of this shape. It went up beyond the top of his eyes. He tried to think where he might be. Did it matter, seeing he was so wretched? The colour of his thoughts was a dark depression. He felt the featureless misery of one who wakes towards the hour of dawn. He had an uncertain sense of whispers and footsteps hastily receding.

The movement of his head involved a perception of extreme physical weakness. He supposed he was in bed in the hotel at the place in the valley — but he could not recall that white edge. He must have slept. He remembered now that he had wanted to sleep. He recalled the cliff and waterfall again, and then recollected

something about talking to a passer-by.

How long had he slept? What was that sound of pattering feet? And that rise and fall, like the murmur of breakers on pebbles? He put out a languid hand to reach his watch from the chair whereon it was his habit to place it, and touched some smooth hard surface like glass. This was so unexpected that it startled him extremely. Quite suddenly he rolled over, stared for a moment, and struggled into a sitting position. The effort was unexpectedly difficult, and it left him giddy and weak — and amazed.

He rubbed his eyes. The riddle of his surroundings was confusing but his mind was quite clear — evidently his sleep had benefited him. He was not in a bed at all as he understood the word, but lying naked on a very soft and yielding mattress, in a trough of dark glass. The mattress was partly transparent, a fact he observed with a strange sense of insecurity, and below it was a mirror reflecting him greyly. About his arm — and he saw with a shock that his skin was strangely dry and yellow — was bound a curious apparatus of rubber, bound so cunningly that it seemed to pass into his skin above and below. And this strange bed was placed in a case of greenish coloured glass (as it seemed to him), a bar in the white framework of which had first arrested his attention. In the corner of the case was a stand of glittering and delicately made apparatus, for the most part quite strange appliances, though a maximum and minimum thermometer was recognisable.

The slightly greenish tint of the glass-like substance which surrounded him on every hand obscured what lay behind, but he perceived it was a vast apartment of splendid appearance, and with a very large and simple white archway facing him. Close to the walls of the cage were articles of furniture, a table covered with a silvery cloth, silvery like the side of a fish, a couple of graceful chairs, and on the table a number of dishes with substances piled on them, a bottle and two glasses. He realised that he was intensely hungry.

He could see no human being, and after a period of hesitation scrambled off the translucent mattress and tried to stand on the clean white floor of his little apartment. He had miscalculated his strength, however, and staggered and put his hand against the glasslike pane before him to steady himself. For a moment it resisted his hand,

bending outward like a distended bladder, then it broke with a slight report and vanished — a pricked bubble. He reeled out into the general space of the hall, greatly astonished. He caught at the table to save himself, knocking one of the glasses to the floor — it rang but did not break — and sat down in one of the armchairs.

When he had a little recovered he filled the remaining glass from the bottle and drank — a colourless liquid it was, but not water, with a pleasing faint aroma and taste and a quality of immediate support and stimulus. He put down the vessel and looked about him.

The apartment lost none of its size and magnificence now that the greenish transparency that had intervened was removed. The archway he saw led to a flight of steps, going downward without the intermediation of a door, to a spacious transverse passage. This passage ran between polished pillars of some white-veined substance of deep ultramarine, and along it came the sound of human movements and voices and a deep undeviating droning note. He sat, now fully awake, listening alertly, forgetting the viands in his attention.

Then with a shock he remembered that he was naked, and casting about him for covering, saw a long black robe thrown on one of the chairs beside him. This he wrapped about him and sat down again, trembling.

His mind was still a surging perplexity. Clearly he had slept, and had been removed in his sleep. But here? And who were those people, the distant crowd beyond the deep blue pillars? Boscastle? He poured out and partially drank another glass of the colourless fluid.

What was this place? — this place that to his senses seemed subtly quivering like a thing alive? He looked about him at the clean and beautiful form of the apartment, unstained by ornament, and saw that the roof was broken in one place by a circular shaft full of light, and, as he looked, a steady, sweeping shadow blotted it out and passed, and came again and passed. “Beat, beat,” that sweeping shadow had a note of its own in the subdued tumult that filled the air.

He would have called out, but only a little sound came into his throat. Then he stood up, and, with the uncertain steps of a drunkard, made his way towards the archway. He staggered down the steps,

tripped on the corner of the black cloak he had wrapped about himself, and saved himself by catching at one of the blue pillars.

The passage ran down a cool vista of blue and purple, and ended remotely in a railed space like a balcony, brightly lit and projecting into a space of haze, a space like the interior of some gigantic building. Beyond and remote were vast and vague architectural forms. The tumult of voices rose now loud and clear, and on the balcony and with their backs to him, gesticulating and apparently in animated conversation, were three figures, richly dressed in loose and easy garments of bright soft colourings. The noise of a great multitude of people poured up over the balcony, and once it seemed the top of a banner passed, and once some brightly coloured object, a pale blue cap or garment thrown up into the air perhaps, flashed athwart the space and fell. The shouts sounded like English, there was a reiteration of "Wake!" He heard some indistinct shrill cry, and abruptly the three men began laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed one — a red-haired man in a short purple robe. "When the Sleeper wakes — *When!*"

He turned his eyes full of merriment along the passage. His face changed, the whole man changed, became rigid. The other two turned swiftly at his exclamation and stood motionless. Their faces assumed an expression of consternation, an expression that deepened into awe.

Suddenly Graham's knees bent beneath him, his arm against the pillar collapsed limply, he staggered forward and fell upon his face.

CHAPTER IV. THE SOUND OF A TUMULT

Graham's last impression before he fainted was of a clamorous ringing of bells. He learnt afterwards that he was insensible, hanging between life and death, for the better part of an hour. When he recovered his senses, he was back on his translucent couch, and there was a stirring warmth at heart and throat. The dark apparatus, he perceived, had been removed from his arm, which was bandaged. The white framework was still about him, but the greenish transparent substance that had filled it was altogether gone. A man in a deep violet robe, one of those who had been on the balcony, was looking keenly into his face.

Remote but insistent was a clamour of bells and confused sounds, that suggested to his mind the picture of a great number of people shouting together. Something seemed to fall across this tumult, a door suddenly closed.

Graham moved his head. "What does this all mean?" he said slowly. "Where am I?"

He saw the red-haired man who had been first to discover him. A voice seemed to be asking what he had said, and was abruptly stilled.

The man in violet answered in a soft voice, speaking English with a slightly foreign accent, or so at least it seemed to the Sleeper's ears, "You are quite safe. You were brought hither from where you fell asleep. It is quite safe. You have been here some time — sleeping. In a trance."

He said something further that Graham could not hear, and a little phial was handed across to him. Graham felt a cooling spray, a fragrant mist played over his forehead for a moment, and his sense of refreshment increased. He closed his eyes in satisfaction.

"Better?" asked the man in violet, as Graham's eyes reopened. He was a pleasant-faced man of thirty, perhaps, with a pointed flaxen beard, and a clasp of gold at the neck of his violet robe.

"Yes," said Graham.

"You have been asleep some time. In a cataleptic trance. You have heard? Catalepsy? It may seem strange to you at first, but I can assure you everything is well."

Graham did not answer, but these words served their reassuring purpose. His eyes went from face to face of the three people about him. They were regarding him strangely. He knew he ought to be somewhere in Cornwall, but he could not square these things with that impression.

A matter that had been in his mind during his last waking moments at Boscastle recurred, a thing resolved upon and somehow neglected. He cleared his throat.

"Have you wired my cousin?" he asked. "E. Warming, 27, Chancery Lane?"

They were all assiduous to hear. But he had to repeat it. "What an odd *blurr* in his accent!" whispered the red-haired man. "Wire, sir?" said the young man with the flaxen beard, evidently puzzled.

"He means send an electric telegram," volunteered the third, a pleasant-faced youth of nineteen or twenty. The flaxen-bearded man gave a cry of comprehension. "How stupid of me! You may be sure everything shall be done, sir," he said to Graham. "I am afraid it would be difficult to — wire to your cousin. He is not in London now. But don't trouble about arrangements yet; you have been asleep a very long time and the important thing is to get over that, sir." (Graham concluded the word was sir, but this man pronounced it "Sire.")

"Oh!" said Graham, and became quiet.

It was all very puzzling, but apparently these people in unfamiliar dress knew what they were about. Yet they were odd and the room was odd. It seemed he was in some newly established place. He had a sudden flash of suspicion. Surely this wasn't some hall of public exhibition! If it was he would give Warming a piece of his mind. But it scarcely had that character. And in a place of public exhibition he would not have discovered himself naked.

Then suddenly, quite abruptly, he realised what had happened. There was no perceptible interval of suspicion, no dawn to his knowledge. Abruptly he knew that his trance had lasted for a vast interval; as if by some processes of thought reading he interpreted the awe in the faces that peered into his. He looked at them strangely, full of intense emotion. It seemed they read his eyes. He framed his lips to speak and could not. A queer impulse to hide his knowledge

came into his mind almost at the moment of his discovery. He looked at his bare feet, regarding then silently. His impulse to speak passed. He was trembling exceedingly.

They gave him some pink fluid with a greenish fluorescence and a meaty taste, and the assurance of returning strength grew.

"That — that makes me feel better," he said hoarsely, and there were murmurs of respectful approval. He knew now quite clearly. He made to speak again, and again he could not.

He pressed his throat and tried a third time.

"How long?" he asked in a level voice. "How long have I been asleep?"

"Some considerable time," said the flaxen-bearded man, glancing quickly at the others.

"How long?"

"A very long time."

"Yes — yes," said Graham, suddenly testy. "But I want — Is it — it is — some years? Many years? There was something — I forget what. I feel — confused. But you—" He sobbed. "You need not fence with me. How long — ?"

He stopped, breathing irregularly. He squeezed his eyes with his knuckles and sat waiting for an answer.

They spoke in undertones.

"Five or six?" he asked faintly. "More?"

"Very much more than that."

"Morel"

"More."

He looked at them and it seemed as though imps were twitching the muscles of his face. He looked his question.

"Many years," said the man with the red beard.

Graham struggled into a sitting position. He wiped a rheumy tear from his face with a lean hand. "Many years!" he repeated. He shut his eyes tight, opened them, and sat looking about him, from one unfamiliar thing to another.

"How many years?" he asked.

"You must be prepared to be surprised."

"Well?"

"More than a gross of years."

He was irritated at the strange word. “More than a *what*?”

Two of them spoke together. Some quick remarks that were made about “decimal” he did not catch.

“How long did you say?” asked Graham. “How long? Don’t look like that. Tell me.”

Among the remarks in an undertone, his ear caught six words: “More than a couple of centuries.”

“What?” he cried, turning on the youth who he thought had spoken. “Who says — ? What was that? A couple of centuries!”

“Yes,” said the man with the red beard. “Two hundred years.”

Graham repeated the words. He had been prepared to hear of a vast repose, and yet these concrete centuries defeated him.

“Two hundred years,” he said again, with the figure of a great gulf opening very slowly in his mind; and then, “Oh, but — !”

They said nothing.

“You — did you say — ?”

“Two hundred years. Two centuries of years,” said the man with the red beard.

There was a pause. Graham looked at their faces and saw that what he had heard was indeed true.

“But it can’t be,” he said querulously. “I am dreaming. Trances. Trances don’t last. That is not right — this is a joke you have played upon me! Tell me — some days ago, perhaps, I was walking along the coast of Cornwall — ?”

His voice failed him.

The man with the flaxen beard hesitated. “I’m not very strong in history, sir,” he said weakly, and glanced at the others.

“That was it, sir,” said the youngster. “Boscastle, in the old Duchy of Cornwall — it’s in the southwest country beyond the dairy meadows. There is a house there still. I have been there.”

“Boscastle!” Graham turned his eyes to the youngster. “That was it — Boscastle. Little Boscastle. I fell asleep — somewhere there. I don’t exactly remember. I don’t exactly remember.”

He pressed his brows and whispered, “More than two hundred years!”

He began to speak quickly with a twitching face, but his heart was cold within him. “But if it is two hundred years, every soul I know,

every human being that ever I saw or spoke to before I went to sleep, must be dead."

They did not answer him.

"The Queen and the Royal Family, her Ministers, of Church and State. High and low, rich and poor, one with another—"

"Is there England still?"

"That's a comfort! Is there London?" E "This *is* London, eh? And you are my assistant — custodian; assistant-custodian. And these — ? Eh? Assistant-custodians to?"

He sat with a gaunt stare on his face. "But why am I here? No! Don't talk. Be quiet. Let me—"

He sat silent, rubbed his eyes, and, uncovering them, found another little glass of pinkish fluid held towards him. He took the dose. It was almost immediately sustaining. Directly he had taken it he began to weep naturally and refreshingly.

Presently he looked at their faces, suddenly laughed through his tears, a little foolishly. "But — two — hun — dred — years!" he said. He grimaced hysterically and covered up his face again.

After a space he grew calm. He sat up, his hands hanging over his knees in almost precisely the same attitude in which Isbister had found him on the cliff at Pentargen. His attention was attracted by a thick domineering voice, the footsteps of an advancing personage. "What are you doing? Why was I not warned? Surely you could tell? Someone will suffer for this. The man must be kept quiet. Are the doorways closed? All the doorways? He must be kept perfectly quiet. He must not be told. Has he been told anything?"

The man with the fair beard made some inaudible remark, and Graham looking over his shoulder saw approaching a very short, fat, and thickset beardless man, with aquiline nose and heavy neck and chin. Very thick black and slightly sloping eyebrows that almost met over his nose and overhung deep grey eyes, gave his face an oddly formidable expression. He scowled momentarily at Graham and then his regard returned to the man with the flaxen beard. "These others," he said in a voice of extreme irritation. "You had better go."

"Go?" said the red-bearded man.

"Certainly — go now. But see the doorways are closed as you go."

The two men addressed turned obediently, after one reluctant glance at Graham, and instead of going through the archway as he expected, walked straight to the dead wall of the apartment opposite the archway. And then came a strange thing; a long strip of this apparently solid wall rolled up with a snap, hung over the two retreating men and fell again, and immediately Graham was alone with the new comer and the purple-robed man with the flaxen beard.

For a space the thickset man took not the slightest notice of Graham, but proceeded to interrogate the other — obviously his subordinate — upon the treatment of their charge. He spoke clearly, but in phrases only partially intelligible to Graham. The awakening seemed not only a matter of surprise but of consternation and annoyance to him. He was evidently profoundly excited.

"You must not confuse his mind by telling him things," he repeated again and again. "You must not confuse his mind."

His questions answered, he turned quickly and eyed the awakened sleeper with an ambiguous expression.

"Feel queer?" he asked.

"Very."

"The world, what you see of it, seems strange to you?"

"I suppose I have to live in it, strange as it seems."

"I suppose so, now."

"In the first place, hadn't I better have some clothes?"

"They—" said the thickset man and stopped, and the flaxen-bearded man met his eye and went away. "You will very speedily have clothes," said the thickset man.

"Is it true indeed, that I have been asleep two hundred — ?" asked Graham.

"They have told you that, have they? Two hundred and three, as a matter of fact."

Graham accepted the indisputable now with raised eyebrows and depressed mouth. He sat silent for a moment, and then asked a question, "Is there a mill or dynamo near here?" He did not wait for an answer. "Things have changed tremendously, I suppose?" he said.

"What is that shouting?" he asked abruptly.

"Nothing," said the thickset man impatiently. "It's people. You'll understand better later — perhaps. As you say, things have changed."

He spoke shortly, his brows were knit, and he glanced about him like a man trying to decide in an emergency. “We must get you clothes and so forth, at any rate. Better wait here until some can come. No one will come near you. You want shaving.”

Graham rubbed his chin.

The man with the flaxen beard came back towards them, turned suddenly, listened for a moment, lifted his eyebrows at the older man, and hurried off through the archway towards the balcony. The tumult of shouting grew louder, and the thickset man turned and listened also. He cursed suddenly under his breath, and turned his eyes upon Graham with an unfriendly expression. It was a surge of many voices, rising and falling, shouting and screaming, and once came a sound like blows and sharp cries, and then a snapping like the crackling of dry sticks. Graham strained his ears to draw some single thread of sound from the woven tumult.

Then he perceived, repeated again and again, a certain formula. For a time he doubted his ears. But surely these were the words: “Show us the Sleeper! Show us the Sleeper!”

The thickset man rushed suddenly to the archway.

“Wild!” he cried, “How do they know? Do they know? Or is it guessing?”

There was perhaps an answer.

“I can’t come,” said the thickset man; “I have *him* to see to. But shout from the balcony.”

There was an inaudible reply.

“Say he is not awake. Anything! I leave it to you.”

He came hurrying back to Graham. “You must have clothes at once,” he said. “You cannot stop here — and it will be impossible to —”

He rushed away, Graham shouting unanswered questions after him. In a moment he was back.

“I can’t tell you what is happening. It is too complex to explain. In a moment you shall have your clothes made. Yes — in a moment. And then I can take you away from here. You will find out our troubles soon enough.”

“But those voices. They were shouting — ?”

“Something about the Sleeper — that’s you. They have some

twisted idea. I don't know what it is. I know nothing."

A shrill bell jetted acutely across the indistinct mingling of remote noises, and this brusque person sprang to a little group of appliances in the corner of the room. He listened for a moment, regarding a ball of crystal, nodded, and said a few indistinct words; then he walked to the wall through which the two men had vanished. It rolled up again like a curtain, and he stood waiting.

Graham lifted his arm and was astonished to find what strength the restoratives had given him. He thrust one leg over the side of the couch and then the other. His head no longer swam. He could scarcely credit his rapid recovery. He sat feeling his limbs.

The man with the flaxen beard re-entered from the archway, and as he did so the cage of a lift came sliding down in front of the thickset man, and a lean, grey-bearded man, carrying a roll, and wearing a tightly-fitting costume of dark green, appeared therein.

"This is the tailor," said the thickset man with an introductory gesture. "It will never do for you to wear that black. I cannot understand how it got here. But I shall. I shall. You will be as rapid as possible?" he said to the tailor.

The man in green bowed, and, advancing, seated himself by Graham on the bed. His manner was calm, but his eyes were full of curiosity. "You will find the fashions altered, Sire," he said. He glanced from under his brows at the thickset man.

He opened the roller with a quick movement, and a confusion of brilliant fabrics poured out over his knees. "You lived, Sire, in a period essentially cylindrical — the Victorian. With a tendency to the hemisphere in hats. Circular curves always. Now—" He flicked out a little appliance the size and appearance of a keyless watch, whirled the knob, and behold — a little figure in white appeared kinetoscope fashion on the dial, walking and turning. The tailor caught up a pattern of bluish white satin. "That is my conception of your immediate treatment," he said.

The thickset man came and stood by the shoulder of Graham.

"We have very little time," he said.

"Trust me," said the tailor. "My machine follows. What do you think of this?"

"What is that?" asked the man from the nineteenth century.

“In your days they showed you a fashion-plate,” said the tailor, “but this is our modern development See here.” The little figure repeated its evolutions, but in a different costume. “Or this,” and with a click another small figure in a more voluminous type of robe marched on to the dial. The tailor was very quick in his movements, and glanced twice towards the lift as he did these things.

It rumbled again, and a crop-haired anaemic lad with features of the Chinese type, clad in coarse pale blue canvas, appeared together with a complicated machine, which he pushed noiselessly on little castors into the room. Incontinently the little kinetoscope was dropped, Graham was invited to stand in front of the machine and the tailor muttered some instructions to the crop-haired lad, who answered in guttural tones and with words Graham did not recognise. The boy then went to conduct an incomprehensible monologue in the corner, and the tailor pulled out a number of slotted arms terminating in little discs, pulling them out until the discs were flat against the body of Graham, one at each shoulder blade, one at the elbows, one at the neck and so forth, so that at last there were, perhaps, two score of them upon his body and limbs. At the same time, some other person entered the room by the lift, behind Graham. The tailor set moving a mechanism that initiated a faint-sounding rhythmic movement of parts in the machine, and in another moment he was knocking up the levers and Graham was released. The tailor replaced his cloak of black, and the man with the flaxen beard proffered him a little glass of some refreshing fluid. Graham saw over the rim of the glass a pale-faced young man regarding him with a singular fixity.

The thickset man had been pacing the room fretfully, and now turned and went through the archway towards the balcony, from which the noise of a distant crowd still came in gusts and cadences. The cropheaded lad handed the tailor a roll of the bluish satin and the two began fixing this in the mechanism in a manner reminiscent of a roll of paper in a nineteenth century printing machine. Then they ran the entire thing on its easy, noiseless bearings across the room to a remote corner where a twisted cable looped rather gracefully from the wall. They made some connexion and the machine became energetic and swift.

“What is that doing?” asked Graham, pointing with the empty

glass to the busy figures and trying to ignore the scrutiny of the new comer. “Is that — some sort of force — laid on?”

“Yes,” said the man with the flaxen beard.

“Who is that?” He indicated the archway behind him.

The man in purple stroked his little beard, hesitated, and answered in an undertone, “He is Howard, your chief guardian. You see, Sire, — it’s a little difficult to explain. The Council appoints a guardian and assistants. This hall has under certain restrictions been public. In order that people might satisfy themselves. We have barred the doorways for the first time. But I think — if you don’t mind, I will leave him to explain.”

“Odd” said Graham. “Guardian? Council?” Then turning his back on the new comer, he asked in an undertone, “Why is this man glaring at me? Is he a mesmerist?”

“Mesmerist! He is a capillotomist.”

“Capillotomist!”

“Yes — one of the chief. His yearly fee is sixdoz lions.”

It sounded sheer nonsense. Graham snatched at the last phrase with an unsteady mind. “Sixdoz lions?” he said.

“Didn’t you have lions? I suppose not. You had the old pounds? They are our monetary units.”

“But what was that you said — sixdoz?”

“Yes. Six dozen, Sire. Of course things, even these little things, have altered. You lived in the days of the decimal system, the Arab system — tens, and little hundreds and thousands. We have eleven numerals now. We have single figures for both ten and eleven, two figures for a dozen, and a dozen dozen makes a gross, a great hundred, you know, a dozen gross a dozand, and a dozand dozand a myriad. Very simple?”

“I suppose so,” said Graham. “But about this cap — what was it?”

The man with the flaxen beard glanced over his shoulder.

“Here are your clothes!” he said. Graham turned round sharply and saw the tailor standing at his elbow smiling, and holding some palpably new garments over his arm. The crop-headed boy, by means of one finger, was impelling the complicated machine towards the lift by which he had arrived. Graham stared at the completed suit. “You don’t mean to say — !”

“Just made,” said the tailor. He dropped the garments at the feet of Graham, walked to the bed on which Graham had so recently been lying, flung out the translucent mattress, and turned up the looking glass. As he did so a furious bell summoned the thickset man to the corner. The man with the flaxen beard rushed across to him and then hurried out by the archway.

The tailor was assisting Graham into a dark purple combination garment, stockings, vest, and pants in one, as the thickset man came back from the corner to meet the man with the flaxen beard returning from the balcony. They began speaking quickly in an undertone, their bearing had an unmistakable quality of anxiety. Over the purple under-garment came a complex but graceful garment of bluish white, and Graham was clothed in the fashion once more and saw himself, sallow-faced, unshaven and shaggy still, but at least naked no longer, and in some indefinable unprecedented way graceful.

“I must shave,” he said regarding himself in the glass.

“In a moment,” said Howard.

The persistent stare ceased. The young man closed his eyes, reopened them, and with a lean hand extended, advanced on Graham. Then he stopped, with his hand slowly gesticulating, and looked about him.

“A seat,” said Howard impatiently, and in a moment the flaxen-bearded man had a chair behind Graham. “Sit down, please,” said Howard.

Graham hesitated, and in the other hand of the wildeyed man he saw the glint of steel.

“Don’t you understand, Sire?” cried the flaxen-bearded man with hurried politeness. “He is going to cut your hair.”

“Oh!” cried Graham enlightened. “But you called him —

“A capillotomist — precisely! He is one of the finest artists in the world.”

Graham sat down abruptly. The flaxen-bearded man disappeared. The capillotomist came forward with graceful gestures, examined Graham’s ears and surveyed him, felt the back of his head, and would have sat down again to regard him but for Howard’s audible impatience. Forthwith with rapid movements and a succession of deftly handled implements he shaved Graham’s chin, clipped his

moustache, and cut and arranged his hair. All this he did without a word, with something of the rapt air of a poet inspired. And as soon as he had finished Graham was handed a pair of shoes.

Suddenly a loud voice shouted — it seemed from a piece of machinery in the corner— “At once — at once. The people know all over the city. Work is being stopped. Work is being stopped. Wait for nothing, but come.”

This shout appeared to perturb Howard exceedingly. By his gestures it seemed to Graham that he hesitated between two directions. Abruptly he went towards the corner where the apparatus stood about the little crystal ball. As he did so the undertone of tumultuous shouting from the archway that had continued during all these occurrences rose to a mighty sound, roared as if it were sweeping past, and fell again as if receding swiftly. It drew Graham after it with an irresistible attraction. He glanced at the thickset man, and then obeyed his impulse. In two strides he was down the steps and in the passage, and, in a score he was out upon the balcony upon which | the three men had been standing.

CHAPTER V. THE MOVING WAYS

He went to the railings of the balcony and stared upward. An exclamation of surprise at his appearance, and the movements of a number of people came from the spacious area below.

His first impression was of overwhelming architecture. The place into which he looked was an aisle of Titanic buildings, curving spaciously in either direction. Overhead mighty cantilevers sprang together across the huge width of the place, and a tracery of translucent material shut out the sky. Gigantic globes of cool white light shamed the pale sunbeams that filtered down through the girders and wires. Here and there a gossamer suspension bridge dotted with foot passengers flung across the chasm and the air was webbed with slender cables. A cliff of edifice hung above him, he perceived as he glanced upward, and the opposite facade was grey and dim and broken by great archings, circular perforations, balconies, buttresses, turret projections, myriads of vast windows, and an intricate scheme of architectural relief. Athwart these ran inscriptions horizontally and obliquely in an unfamiliar lettering. Here and there close to the roof cables of a peculiar stoutness were fastened, and drooped in a steep curve to circular openings on the opposite side of the space, and even as Graham noted these a remote and tiny figure of a man clad in pale blue arrested his attention. This little figure was far overhead across the space beside the higher fastening of one of these festoons, hanging forward from a little ledge of masonry and handling some well-nigh invisible strings dependent from the line. Then suddenly, with a swoop that sent Graham's heart into his mouth, this man had rushed down the curve and vanished through a round opening on the hither side of the way. Graham had been looking up as he came out upon the balcony, and the things he saw above and opposed to him had at first seized his attention to the exclusion of anything else. Then suddenly he discovered the roadway! It was not a roadway at all, as Graham understood such things, for in the nineteenth century the only roads and streets were beaten tracks of motionless earth, jostling rivulets of vehicles between narrow footways. But this roadway was three

hundred feet across, and it moved; it moved, all save the middle, the lowest part. For a moment, the motion dazzled his mind. Then he understood.

Under the balcony this extraordinary roadway ran swiftly to Graham's right, an endless flow rushing along as fast as a nineteenth century express train, an endless platform of narrow transverse overlapping slats with little interspaces that permitted it to follow the curvatures of the street. Upon it were seats, and here and there little kiosks, but they swept by too swiftly for him to see what might be therein. From this nearest and swiftest platform a series of others descended to the centre of the space. Each moved to the right, each perceptibly slower than the one above it, but the difference in pace was small enough to permit anyone to step from any platform to the one adjacent, and so walk uninterruptedly from the swiftest to the motionless middle way. Beyond this middle way was another series of endless platforms rushing with varying pace to Graham's left. And seated in crowds upon the two widest and swiftest platforms, or stepping from one to another down the steps, or swarming over the central space, was an innumerable and wonderfully diversified multitude of people.

"You must not stop here," shouted Howard suddenly at his side. "You must come away at once."

Graham made no answer. He heard without hearing. The platforms ran with a roar and the people were shouting. He perceived women and girls with flowing hair, beautifully robed, with bands crossing between the breasts. These first came out of the confusion. Then he perceived that the dominant note in that kaleidoscope of costume was the pale blue that the tailor's boy had worn. He became aware of cries of "The Sleeper. What has happened to the Sleeper?" and it seemed as though the rushing platforms before him were suddenly spattered with the pale buff of human faces, and then still more thickly. He saw pointing fingers. He perceived that the motionless central area of this huge arcade just opposite to the balcony was densely crowded with blue-clad people. Some sort of struggle had sprung into life. People seemed to be pushed up the running platforms on either side, and carried away against their will. They would spring off so soon as they were beyond the thick of the

confusion, and run back towards the conflict.

"It is the Sleeper. Verily it is the Sleeper," shouted voices. "That is never the Sleeper," shouted others. More and more faces were turned to him. At the intervals along this central area Graham noted openings, pits, apparently the heads of staircases going down with people ascending out of them and descending into them. The struggle it seemed centred about the one of these nearest to him. People were running down the moving platforms to this, leaping dexterously from platform to platform. The clustering people on the higher platforms seemed to divide their interest between this point and the balcony. A number of sturdy little figures clad in a uniform of bright red, and working methodically together, were employed it seemed in preventing access to this descending staircase. About them a crowd was rapidly accumulating. Their brilliant colour contrasted vividly with the whitish-blue of their antagonists, for the struggle was indisputable.

He saw these things with Howard shouting in his ear and shaking his arm. And then suddenly Howard was gone and he stood alone.

He perceived that the cries of "The Sleeper" grew in volume, and that the people on the nearer platform were standing up. The nearer swifter platform he perceived was empty to the right of him, and far across the space the platform running in the opposite direction was coming crowded and passing away bare. With incredible swiftness a vast crowd had gathered in the central space before his eyes; a dense swaying mass of people, and the shouts grew from a fitful crying to a voluminous incessant clamour: "The Sleeper! The Sleeper!" and yells and cheers, a waving of garments and cries of "Stop the ways!" They were also crying another name strange to Graham. It sounded like "Ostrog." The slower platforms were soon thick with active people, running against the movement so as to keep themselves opposite to him.

"Stop the ways," they cried. Agile figures ran up swiftly from the centre to the swift road nearest to him, were borne rapidly past him, shouting strange, unintelligible things, and ran back obliquely to the central way. One thing he distinguished: "It is indeed the Sleeper. It is indeed the Sleeper," they testified.

For a space Graham stood without a movement. Then he became

vividly aware that all this concerned him. He was pleased at his wonderful popularity, he bowed, and, seeking a gesture of longer range, waved his arm. He was astonished at the violence of uproar that this provoked. The tumult about the descending stairway rose to furious violence. He became aware of crowded balconies, of men sliding along ropes, of men in trapeze-like seats hurling athwart the space. He heard voices behind him, a number of people descending the steps through the archway; he suddenly perceived that his guardian Howard was back again and gripping his arm painfully, and shouting inaudibly in his ear.

He turned, and Howard's face was white. "Come back," he heard. "They will stop the ways. The whole city will be in confusion."

He perceived a number of men hurrying along the passage of blue pillars behind Howard, the red-haired man, the man with the flaxen beard, a tall man in vivid vermilion, a crowd of others in red carrying staves, and all these people had anxious eager faces.

"Get him away," cried Howard.

"But why?" said Graham. "I don't see—"

"You must come away!" said the man in red in a resolute voice. His face and eyes were resolute, too. Graham's glances went from face to face, and he was suddenly aware of that most disagreeable flavour in life, compulsion. Some one gripped his arm.... He was being dragged away. It seemed as though the tumult suddenly became two, as if half the shouts that had come in from this wonderful roadway had sprung into the passages of the great building behind him. Marvelling and confused, feeling an impotent desire to resist, Graham was half led, half thrust, along the passage of blue pillars, and suddenly he found himself alone with Howard in a lift and moving swiftly upward.

CHAPTER VI. THE HALL OF THE ATLAS

From the moment when the tailor had bowed his farewell to the moment when Graham found himself in the lift, was altogether barely five minutes. And as yet the haze of his vast interval of sleep hung about him, as yet the initial strangeness of his being alive at all in this remote age touched everything with wonder, with a sense of the irrational, with something of the quality of a realistic dream. He was still detached, an astonished spectator, still but half involved in life. What he had seen, and especially the last crowded tumult, framed in the setting of the balcony, had a spectacular turn, like a thing witnessed from the box of a theatre. “I don’t understand,” he said. “What was the trouble? My mind is in a whirl. Why were they shouting? What is the danger?”

“We have our troubles,” said Howard. His eyes avoided Graham’s enquiry. “This is a time of unrest. And, in fact, your appearance, your waking just now, has a sort of connexion—”

He spoke jerkily, like a man not quite sure of his breathing. He stopped abruptly.

“I don’t understand,” said Graham.

“It will be clearer later,” said Howard.

He glanced uneasily upward, as though he found the progress of the lift slow.

“I shall understand better, no doubt, when I have seen my way about a little,” said Graham puzzled. “It. will be — it is bound to be perplexing. At present it is all so strange. Anything seems possible. Anything In the details even. Your counting, I understand, is different.”

The lift stopped, and they stepped out into a narrow but very long passage between high walls, along which ran an extraordinary number of tubes and big cables.

“What a huge place this is!” said Graham. “Is it all one building? What place is it?”

“This is one of the city ways for various public services. Light and so forth.”

“Was it a social trouble — that — in the great roadway place?

How are you governed? Have you still a police?" "Several," said Howard.

"Several?"

"About fourteen."

"I don't understand."

"Very probably not. Our social order will probably seem very complex to you. To tell you the truth, I don't understand it myself very clearly. Nobody does. You will, perhaps — bye and bye. We have to go to the Council."

Graham's attention was divided between the urgent necessity of his inquiries and the people in the passages and halls they were traversing. For a moment his mind would be concentrated upon Howard and the halting answers he made, and then he would lose the thread in response to some vivid unexpected impression. Along the passages, in the halls, half the people seemed to be men in the red uniform. The pale blue canvas that had been so abundant in the aisle of moving ways did not appear. Invariably these men looked at him, and saluted him and Howard as they passed.

He had a clear vision of entering a long corridor, and there were a number of girls sitting on low seats and as though in a class. He saw no teacher, but only a novel apparatus from which he fancied a voice proceeded. The girls regarded him and his conductor, he thought, with curiosity and astonishment. But he was hurried on before he could form a clear idea of the gathering. He judged they knew Howard and not himself, and that they wondered who he was. This Howard, it seemed, was a person of importance. But then he was also merely Graham's guardian. That was odd.

There came a passage in twilight, and into this passage a footway hung so that he could see the feet and ankles of people going to and fro thereon, but no more of them. Then vague impressions of galleries and of casual astonished passers-by turning round to stare after the two of them with their red-clad guard.

The stimulus of the restoratives he had taken was only temporary. He was speedily fatigued by this excessive haste. He asked Howard to slacken his speed. Presently he was in a lift that had a window upon the great street space, but this was glazed and did not open, and they were too high for him to see the moving platforms below. But

he saw people going to and fro along cables and along strange, frail-looking ridges.

And thence they passed across the street and at a vast height above it. They crossed by means of a narrow bridge closed in with glass, so clear that it made him giddy even to remember it. The floor of it also was of glass. From his memory of the cliffs between New Quay and Boscastle, so remote in time, and so recent in his experience, it seemed to him that they must be near four hundred feet above the moving ways. He stopped, looked down between his legs upon the swarming blue and red multitudes, minute and fore-shortened, struggling and gesticulating still towards the little balcony far below, a little toy balcony, it seemed, where he had so recently been standing. A thin haze and the glare of the mighty globes of light obscured everything. A man seated in a little open-work cradle shot by from some point still higher than the little narrow bridge, rushing down a cable as swiftly almost as if he were falling. Graham stopped involuntarily to watch this strange passenger vanish in a great circular opening below, and then his eyes went back to the tumultuous struggle.

Along one of the swifter ways rushed a thick crowd of red spots. This broke up into individuals as it approached the balcony, and went pouring down the slower ways towards the dense struggling crowd on the central area. These men in red appeared to be armed with sticks or truncheons; they seemed to be striking and thrusting. A great shouting, cries of wrath, screaming, burst out and came up to Graham, faint and thin. “Go on,” cried Howard, laying hands on him.

Another man rushed down a cable. Graham suddenly glanced up to see whence he came, and beheld through the glassy roof and the network of cables and girders, dim rhythmically passing forms like the vans of windmills, and between them glimpses of a remote and pallid sky. Then Howard had thrust him forward across the bridge, and he was in a little narrow passage decorated with geometrical patterns.

“I want to see more of that,” cried Graham, resisting.

“No, no,” cried Howard, still gripping his arm.

“This way. You must go this way.” And the men in red following them seemed ready to enforce his orders.

Some negroes in a curious wasp-like uniform of black and yellow appeared down the passage, and one hastened to throw up a sliding shutter that had seemed a door to Graham, and led the way through it. Graham found himself in a gallery overhanging the end of a great chamber. The attendant in black and yellow crossed this, thrust up a second shutter and stood waiting.

This place had the appearance of an ante-room. He saw a number of people in the central space, and at the opposite end a large and imposing doorway at the top of a flight of steps, heavily curtained but giving a glimpse of some still larger hall beyond. He perceived white men in red and other negroes in black and yellow standing stiffly about those portals.

As they crossed the gallery he heard a whisper from below, "The Sleeper," and was aware of a turning of heads, a hum of observation. They entered another little passage in the wall of this ante-chamber, and then he found himself on an iron-railed gallery of metal that passed round the side of the great hall he had already seen through the curtains. He entered the place at the corner, so that he received the fullest impression of its huge proportions. The black in the wasp uniform stood aside like a well-trained servant, and closed the valve behind him.

Compared with any of the places Graham had see thus far, this second hall appeared to be decorate with extreme richness. On a pedestal at the remote end, and more brilliantly lit than any other object, was a gigantic white figure of Atlas, strong and strenuous, the globe upon his bowed shoulders. It was the first thing to strike his attention, it was so vast, so patiently and painfully real, so white and simple. Save for this figure and for a dais in the centre, the wide floor of the place was a shining vacancy. The dais was remote in the greatness of the area; it would have looked a mere slab of metal had it not been for the group of seven men who stood about a table on it, and gave an inkling of its proportions. They were all dressed in white robes, they seemed to have arisen that moment from their seats, and they were regarding Graham steadfastly. At the end of the table he perceived the glitter of some mechanical appliances.

Howard led him along the end gallery until they were opposite this mighty labouring figure. Then he stopped. The two men in red

who had followed them into the gallery came and stood on either hand of Graham.

"You must remain here," murmured Howard, "for a few moments," and, without waiting for a reply, hurried away along the gallery.

"But, *why?*" began Graham.

He moved as if to follow Howard, and found his path obstructed by one of the men in red. "You have to wait here, Sire," said the man in red.

"Why?"

"Orders, Sire."

"Whose orders?"

"Our orders, Sire."

Graham looked his exasperation.

"What place is this?" he said presently. "Who are those men?"

"They are the lords of the Council, Sire."

"What Council?"

"*The* Council."

"Oh!" said Graham, and after an equally ineffectual attempt at the other man, went to the railing and stared at the distant men in white, who stood watching him and whispering together.

The Council? He perceived there were now eight, though how the newcomer had arrived he had not observed. They made no gestures of greeting; they stood regarding him as in the nineteenth century a group of men might have stood in the street regarding a distant balloon that had suddenly floated into view. What council could it be that gathered there, that little body of men beneath the significant white Atlas, secluded from every eavesdropper in this impressive spaciousness? And why should he be brought to them, and be looked at strangely and spoken of inaudibly? Howard appeared beneath, walking quickly across the polished floor towards them. As he drew near he bowed and performed certain peculiar movements, apparently of a ceremonious nature. Then he ascended the steps of the dais, and stood by the apparatus at the end of the table.

Graham watched that visible inaudible conversation. Occasionally, one of the white-robed men would glance towards him. He strained his ears in vain. The gesticulation of two of the speakers

became animated. He glanced from them to the passive faces of his attendants.... When he looked again Howard was extending his hands and moving his head like a man who protests. He was interrupted, it seemed, by one of the white-robed men rapping the table.

The conversation lasted an interminable time to Graham's sense. His eyes rose to the still giant at whose feet the Council sat. Thence they wandered at last to the walls of the hall. It was decorated in long painted panels of a quasi-Japanese type, many of them very beautiful. These panels were grouped in a great and elaborate framing of dark metal, which passed into the metallic caryatidae of the galleries, and the great structural lines of the interior. The facile grace of these panels enhanced the mighty white effort that laboured in the centre of the scheme. Graham's eyes came back to the Council, and Howard was descending the steps. As he drew nearer his features could be distinguished, and Graham saw that he was flushed and blowing out his cheeks. His countenance was still disturbed when presently he reappeared along the gallery.

"This way," he said concisely, and they went on in silence to a little door that opened at their approach. The two men in red stopped on either side of this door. Howard and Graham passed in, and Graham, glancing back, saw the white-robed Council still standing in a close group and looking at him. Then the door closed behind him with a heavy thud, and for the first time since his awakening he was in silence. The floor, even, was noiseless to his feet.

Howard opened another door, and they were in the first of two contiguous chambers furnished in white and green. "What Council was that?" began Graham. "What were they discussing? What have they to do with me?" Howard closed the door carefully, heaved a huge sigh, and said something in an undertone. He walked slanting ways across the room and turned, blowing out his cheeks again. "Ugh!" he grunted, a man relieved.

Graham stood regarding him.

"You must understand," began Howard abruptly, avoiding Graham's eyes, "that our social order is very complex. A half explanation, a bare unqualified statement would give you false impressions. As a matter of fact — it is a case of compound interest partly — your small fortune, and the fortune of your cousin Warming

which was left to you — and certain other beginnings — have become very considerable. And in other ways that will be hard for you to understand, you have become a person of significance — of very considerable significance — involved in the world's affairs."

He stopped.

"Yes?" said Graham.

"We have grave social troubles."

"Yes?"

"Things have come to such a pass that, in fact, is advisable to seclude you here."

"Keep me prisoner!" exclaimed Graham.

"Well — to ask you to keep in seclusion."

Graham turned on him. "This is strange!" he said.

"No harm will be done you."

"No harm!"

"But you must be kept here—"

"While I learn my position, I presume."

"Precisely."

"Very well then. Begin. Why *harm?*"

"Not now."

"Why not?"

"It is too long a story, Sire."

"All the more reason I should begin at once. You say I am a person of importance. What was that shouting I heard? Why is a great multitude shouting and excited because my trance is over, and who are the men in white in that huge council chamber?"

"All in good time, Sire," said Howard. "But not crudely, not crudely. This is one of those flimsy times when no man has a settled mind. Your awakening. No one expected your awakening. The Council is consulting."

"What council?"

"The Council you saw."

Graham made a petulant movement. "This is not right," he said. "I should be told what is happening.

"You must wait. Really you must wait."

Graham sat down abruptly. "I suppose since I have waited so long to resume life," he said, "that I must wait a little longer."

“That is better,” said Howard. “Yes, that is much better. And I must leave you alone. For a space. While I attend the discussion in the Council. I am sorry.”

He went towards the noiseless door, hesitated and vanished.

Graham walked to the door, tried it, found it securely fastened in some way he never came to understand, turned about, paced the room restlessly, made the circuit of the room, and sat down. He remained sitting for some time with folded arms and knitted brow, biting his finger nails and trying to piece together the kaleidoscopic impressions of this first hour of awakened life; the vast mechanical spaces, the endless series of chambers and passages, the great struggle that roared and splashed through these strange ways, the little group of remote unsympathetic men beneath the colossal Atlas, Howard’s mysterious behaviour. There was an inkling of some vast inheritance already in his mind — a vast inheritance perhaps misapplied — of some unprecedented importance and opportunity. What had he to do? And this room’s secluded silence was eloquent of imprisonment!

It came into Graham’s mind with irresistible conviction that this series of magnificent impressions was a dream. He tried to shut his eyes and succeeded, but that time-honoured device led to no awakening.

Presently he began to touch and examine all the unfamiliar appointments of the two small rooms in which he found himself.

In a long oval panel of mirror he saw himself and stopped astonished. He was clad in a graceful costume of purple and bluish white, with a little greyshot beard trimmed to a point, and his hair, its blackness streaked now with bands of grey, arranged over his forehead in an unfamiliar but graceful manner. He seemed a man of five-and-forty perhaps. For a moment he did not perceive this was himself.

A flash of laughter came with the recognition. “To call on old Warming like this!” he exclaimed, “and make him take me out to lunch!”

Then he thought of meeting first one and then another of the few familiar acquaintances of his early manhood, and in the midst of his amusement realised that every soul with whom he might jest had

died many score of years ago. The thought smote him abruptly and keenly; he stopped short, the expression of his face changed to a white consternation.

The tumultuous memory of the moving platforms and the huge facade of that wonderful street reasserted itself. The shouting multitudes came back clear and vivid, and those remote, inaudible, unfriendly councilors in white. He felt himself a little figure, very small and ineffectual, pitifully conspicuous. And all about him, the world was — strange.

CHAPTER VII. IN THE SILENT ROOMS

Presently Graham resumed his examination of his apartments. Curiosity kept him moving in spite of his fatigue. The inner room, he perceived, was high, and its ceiling dome shaped', with an oblong aperture in the centre, opening into a funnel in which a wheel of broad vans seemed to be rotating, apparently driving the air up the shaft. The faint humming note of its easy motion was the only clear sound in that quiet place. As these vans sprang up one after the other, Graham could get transient glimpses of the sky. He was surprised to see a star.

This drew his attention to the fact that the bright lighting of these rooms was due to a multitude of very faint glow lamps set about the cornices. There were no windows. And he began to recall that along all the vast chambers and passages he had traversed with Howard he had observed no windows at all. Had there been windows? There were windows on the street indeed, but were they for light? Or was the whole city lit day and night for evermore, so that there was no night there?

And another thing dawned upon him. There was no fireplace in either room. Was the season summer, and were these merely summer apartments, or was the whole City uniformly heated or cooled? He became interested in these questions, began examining the smooth texture of the walls, the simply constructed bed, the ingenious arrangements by which the labour of bedroom service was practically abolished. And over everything was a curious absence of deliberate ornament, a bare grace of form and colour, that he found very pleasing to the eye. There were several very comfortable chairs, a light table on silent runners carrying several bottles of fluids and glasses, and two plates bearing a clear substance like jelly. Then he noticed there were no books, no newspapers, no writing materials. "The world has changed indeed," he said.

He observed one entire side of the outer room was set with rows of peculiar double cylinders inscribed with green lettering on white that harmonized With the decorative scheme of the room, and in the centre of this side projected a little apparatus about a yard square and

having a white smooth face to the room. A chair faced this. He had a transitory idea that these cylinders might be books, or a modern substitute for books, but at first it did not seem so.

The lettering on the cylinders puzzled him. At first sight it seemed like Russian. Then he noticed a suggestion of mutilated English about certain of the words.

"oi Man huwdbi Kin"

forced itself on him as "The Man who would be King." "Phonetic spelling," he said. He remembered reading a story with that title, then he recalled the story vividly, one of the best stories in the world. But this thing before him was not a book as he understood it. He puzzled out the titles of two adjacent cylinders. 'The Heart of Darkness,' he had never heard of before nor 'The Madonna of the Future' — no doubt if they were indeed stories, they were by post Victorian authors.

He puzzled over this peculiar cylinder for some time and replaced it. Then he turned to the square apparatus and examined that. He opened a sort of lid and found one of the double cylinders within, and on the upper edge a little stud like the stud of an electric bell. He pressed this and a rapid clicking began and ceased. He became aware of voices and music, and noticed a play of colour on the smooth front face. He suddenly realised what this might be, and stepped back to regard it.

On the flat surface was now a little picture, very vividly coloured, and in this picture were figures that moved. Not only did they move, but they were conversing in clear small voices. It was exactly like reality viewed through an inverted opera glass and heard through a long tube. His interest was seized at once by the situation, which presented a man pacing up and down and vociferating angry things to a pretty but petulant woman. Both were in the picturesque costume that seemed so strange to Graham. "I have worked," said the man, "but what have you been doing?"

"Ah!" said Graham. He forgot everything else, and sat down in the chair. Within five minutes he heard himself named, heard "when the Sleeper wakes," used jestingly as a proverb for remote postponement, and passed himself by, a thing remote and incredible. But in a little while he knew those two people like intimate friends.

At last the miniature drama came to an end, and the square face of the apparatus was blank again.

It was a strange world into which he had been permitted to see, unscrupulous, pleasure seeking, energetic, subtle, a world too of dire economic struggle; there were allusions he did not understand, incidents that conveyed strange suggestions of altered moral ideals, flashes of dubious enlightenment. The blue canvas that bulked so largely in his first impression of the city ways appeared again and again as the costume of the common people. He had no doubt the story was contemporary, and its intense realism was undeniable. And the end had been a tragedy that oppressed him. He sat staring at the blankness.

He started and rubbed his eyes. He had been so absorbed in the latter-day substitute for a novel, that he awoke to the little green and white room with more than a touch of the surprise of his first awakening.

He stood up, and abruptly he was back in his own wonderland. The clearness of the kinetoscope drama passed, and the struggle in the vast place of streets, the ambiguous Council, the swift phases of his waking hour, came back. These people had spoken of the Council with suggestions of a vague universality of power. And they had spoken of the Sleeper; it had not really struck him vividly at the time that he was the Sleeper. He had to recall precisely what they had said.

He walked into the bedroom and peered up through the quick intervals of the revolving fan. As the fan swept round, a dim turmoil like the noise of machinery came in rhythmic eddies. All else was silence.

Though the perpetual day still irradiated his apartments, he perceived the little intermittent strip of sky was now deep blue — black almost, with a dust of little stars.

He resumed his examination of the rooms. He could find no way of opening the padded door, no bell nor other means of calling for attendance. His feeling of wonder was in abeyance; but he was curious, anxious for information. He wanted to know exactly how he stood to these new things. He tried to compose himself to wait until someone came to him. Presently he became restless and eager for

information, for distraction, for fresh sensations.

He went back to the apparatus in the other room, and had soon puzzled out the method of replacing the cylinders by others. As he did so, it came into his mind that it must be these little appliances had fixed the language so that it was still clear and understandable after two hundred years. The haphazard cylinders he substituted displayed a musical fantasia. At first it was beautiful, and then it was sensuous. He presently recognized what appeared to him to be an altered version of the story of Tannhauser. The music was unfamiliar. But the rendering was realistic, and with a contemporary unfamiliarity. Tannhauser did not go to a Venusberg, but to a Pleasure City. What was a Pleasure City? A dream, surely, the fancy of a fantastic, voluptuous writer.

He became interested, curious. The story developed with a flavour of strangely twisted sentimentality. Suddenly he did not like it. He liked it less as it proceeded.

He had a revulsion of feeling. These were no pictures, no idealisations, but photographed realities. He wanted no more of the twenty-second century Venusberg. He forgot the part played by the model in nineteenth century art, and gave way to an archaic indignation. He rose, angry and half ashamed at himself for witnessing this thing even in solitude. He pulled forward the apparatus, and with some violence sought for a means of stopping its action. Something snapped. A violet spark stung and convulsed his arm and the thing was still. When he attempted next day to replace these Tannhauser cylinders by another pair, he found the apparatus broken....

He struck out a path oblique to the room and paced to and fro, struggling with intolerable vast impressions. The things he had derived from the cylinders and the things he had seen, conflicted, confused him. It seemed to him the most amazing thing of all that in his thirty years of life he had never tried to shape a picture of these coming times. “We were making the future,” he said, “and hardly any of us troubled to think what future we were making. And here it is!”

“What have they got to, what has been done? How do I come into the midst of it all?” The vastness of street and house he was prepared

for, the multitudes of people. But conflicts in the city ways! And the systematised sensuality of a class of rich men!

He thought of Bellamy, the hero of whose Socialistic Utopia had so oddly anticipated this actual experience. But here was no Utopia, no Socialistic state. He had already seen enough to realise that the ancient antithesis of luxury, waste and sensuality on the one hand and abject poverty on the other, still prevailed. He knew enough of the essential factors of life to understand that correlation. And not only were the buildings of the city gigantic and the crowds in the street gigantic, but the voices he had heard in the ways, the uneasiness of Howard, the very atmosphere spoke of gigantic discontent. What country was he in? Still England it seemed, and yet strangely "un-English." His mind glanced at the rest of the world, and saw only an enigmatical veil.

He prowled about his apartment, examining everything as a caged animal might do. He felt very tired, felt that feverish exhaustion that does not admit of rest. He listened for long spaces under the ventilator to catch some distant echo of the tumults he felt must be proceeding in the city.

He began to talk to himself. "Two hundred and three years!" he said to himself over and over again, laughing stupidly. "Then I am two hundred and thirty-three years old! The oldest inhabitant. Surely they haven't reversed the tendency of our time and gone back to the rule of the oldest. My claims are indisputable. Mumble, mumble. I remember the Bulgarian atrocities as though it was yesterday. 'Tis a great age! Ha ha!" He was surprised at first to hear himself laughing, and then laughed again deliberately and louder. Then he realised that he was behaving foolishly. "Steady," he said. "Steady!"

His pacing became more regular. "This new world," he said. "I don't understand it. *Why?*... But it is all *why!*"

"I suppose they can fly and do all sorts of things Let me try and remember just how it began."

He was surprised at first to find how vague the memories of his first thirty years had become. He remembered fragments, for the most part trivial moments, things of no great importance that he had observed. His boyhood seemed the most accessible at first, he recalled school books and certain lessons in mensuration. Then he

revived the more salient features of his life, memories of the wife long since dead, her magic influence now gone beyond corruption, of his rivals and friends and betrayers, of the swift decision of this issue and that, and then of his, last years of misery, of fluctuating resolves, and at last of his strenuous studies. In a little while he perceived he had it all again; dim perhaps, like metal long laid aside, but in no way defective or injured, capable of re-polishing. And the hue of it was a deepening misery. Was it worth re-polishing? By a miracle he had been lifted out of a life that had become intolerable.

He reverted to his present condition. He wrestled with the facts in vain. It became an inextricable tangle. He saw the sky through the ventilator pink with dawn. An old persuasion came out of the dark recesses of his memory. “I must sleep,” he said. It appeared as a delightful relief from this mental distress and from the growing pain and heaviness of his limbs. He went to the strange little bed, lay down and was presently asleep.

He was destined to become very familiar indeed with these apartments before he left them, for he remained imprisoned for three days. During that time no one, except Howard, entered his prison. The marvel of his fate mingled with and in some way minimised the marvel of his survival. He had awakened to mankind it seemed only to be snatched away into this unaccountable solitude. Howard came regularly with subtly sustaining and nutritive fluids, and light and pleasant foods, quite strange to Graham. He always closed the door carefully as he entered. On matters of detail he was increasingly obliging, but the bearing of Graham on the great issues that were evidently being contested so closely beyond the soundproof walls that enclosed him, he would not elucidate. He evaded, as politely as possible, every question on the position of affairs in the outer world.

And in those three days Graham’s incessant thoughts went far and wide. All that he had seen, all this elaborate contrivance to prevent him seeing, worked together in his mind. Almost every possible interpretation of his position he debated — even as it chanced, the right interpretation. Things that presently happened to him, came to him at last credible, by virtue of this seclusion. When at length the moment of his release arrived, it found him prepared.

Howard’s bearing went far to deepen Graham’s impression of his

own strange importance; the door between its opening and closing seemed to admit with him a breath of momentous happening. His enquiries became more definite and searching. Howard retreated through protests and difficulties. The awakening was unforeseen, he repeated; it happened to have fallen in with the trend of a social convulsion.

"To explain it I must tell you the history of a gross and a half of years," protested Howard.

"The thing is this," said Graham. "You are afraid of something I shall do. In some way I am arbitrator — I might be arbitrator."

"It is not that. But you have — I may tell you this much — the automatic increase of your property puts great possibilities of interference in your hands. And in certain other ways you have influence, with your eighteenth century notions."

"Nineteenth century," corrected Graham.

"With your old world notions, anyhow, ignorant as you are of every feature of our State."

"Am I a fool?"

"Certainly not."

"Do I seem to be the sort of man who would act rashly?"

"You were never expected to act at all. No one counted on your awakening. No one dreamt you would ever awake. The Council had surrounded you with antiseptic conditions. As a matter of fact, we thought that you were dead — a mere arrest of decay. And — but it is too complex. We dare not suddenly — while you are still half awake."

"It won't do," said Graham. "Suppose it is as you say — why am I not being crammed night and day with facts and warnings and all the wisdom of the time to fit me for my responsibilities? Am I any wiser now than two days ago, if it is two days, when I awoke?"

Howard pulled his lip.

"I am beginning to feel — every hour I feel more clearly — a sense of complex concealment of which you are the salient point. Is this Council, or committee, or whatever they are, cooking the accounts of my estate? Is that it?"

"That note of suspicion—" said Howard.

"Ugh!" said Graham. "Now, mark my words, it will be ill for

those who have put me here. It will be ill. I am alive. Make no doubt of it, I am alive. Every day my pulse is stronger and my mind clearer and more vigorous. No more quiescence. I am a man come back to life. And I want to *live*—"

"*Live!*"

Howard's face lit with an idea. He came towards Graham and spoke in an easy confidential tone.

"The Council secludes you here for your good. You are restless. Naturally — an energetic man! You find it dull here. But we are anxious that everything you may desire — every desire — every sort of desire... There may be something. Is there any sort of company?"

He paused meaningly.

"Yes," said Graham thoughtfully. "There is."

"Ah! *Now!* We have treated you neglectfully."

"The crowds in yonder streets of yours."

"That," said Howard, "I am afraid — . But—"

Graham began pacing the room. Howard stood near the door watching him. The implication of Howard's suggestion was only half evident to Graham Company? Suppose he were to accept the proposal, demand some sort of *company*? Would there be any possibilities of gathering from the conversation of this additional person some vague inkling of the struggle that had broken out so vividly at his waking moment? He meditated again, and the suggestion took colour. He turned on Howard abruptly.

"What do you mean by company?"

Howard raised his eyes and shrugged his shoulders. "Human beings," he said, with a curious smile on his heavy face.

"Our social ideas," he said, "have a certain increased liberality, perhaps, in comparison with your times. If a man wishes to relieve such a tedium as this — by feminine society, for instance. We think it no scandal. We have cleared our minds of formulae. There is in our city a class, a necessary class, no longer despised — discreet—"

Graham stopped dead.

"It would pass the time," said Howard. "It is a thing I should perhaps have thought of before, but, as a matter of fact, so much is happening—"

He indicated the exterior world.

Graham hesitated. For a moment the figure of a possible woman that his imagination suddenly created dominated his mind with an intense attraction. Then he flashed into anger.

"No!" he shouted.

He began striding rapidly up and down the room.

"Everything you say, everything you do, convinces me — of some great issue in which I am concerned. I do not want to pass the time, as you call it. Yes, I know. Desire and indulgence are life in a sense — and Death! Extinction! In my life before I slept I had worked out that pitiful question. I will not begin again. There is a city, a multitude — . And meanwhile I am here like a rabbit in a bag."

His rage surged high. He choked for a moment and began to wave his clenched fists. He gave way to an anger fit, he swore archaic curses. His gestures had the quality of physical threats.

"I do not know who your party may be. I am in the dark, and you keep me in the dark. But I know this, that I am secluded here for no good purpose. For no good purpose. I warn you, I warn you of the consequences. Once I come at my power—"

He realised that to threaten thus might be a danger to himself. He stopped. Howard stood regarding him with a curious expression.

"I take it this is a message to the Council," said Howard.

Graham had a momentary impulse to leap upon the man, fell or stun him. It must have shown upon his face; at any rate Howard's movement was quick. In a second the noiseless door had closed again, and the man from the nineteenth century was alone.

For a moment he stood rigid, with clenched hands half raised. Then he flung them down. "What a fool I have been!" he said, and gave way to his anger again, stamping about the room and shouting curses. For a long time he kept himself in a sort of frenzy, raging at his position, at his own folly, at the knaves who had imprisoned him. He did this because he did not want to look calmly at his position. He clung to his anger — because he was afraid of Fear.

Presently he found himself reasoning with himself This imprisonment was unaccountable, but no doubt the legal forms — new legal forms — of the time permitted it. It must, of course, be legal. These people were two hundred years further on in the march

of civilisation than the Victorian generation. It was not likely they would be less — humane. Yet they had cleared their minds of formulae! Was humanity a formula as well as chastity?

His imagination set to work to suggest things that might be done to him. The attempts of his reason to dispose of these suggestions, though for the most part logically valid, were quite unavailing. “Why should anything be done to me?”

“If the worst comes to the worst,” he found himself saying at last, “I can give up what they want. But what do they want? And why don’t they ask me for it instead of cooping me up?”

He returned to his former preoccupation with the Council’s possible intentions. He began to reconsider the details of Howard’s behaviour, sinister glances, inexplicable hesitations. Then, for a time, his mind circled about the idea of escaping from these rooms; but whither could he escape into this vast, crowded world? He would be worse off than a Saxon yeoman suddenly dropped into nineteenth century London. And besides, how could anyone escape from these rooms?

“How can it benefit anyone if harm should happen to me?”

He thought of the tumult, the great social trouble of which he was so unaccountably the axis. A text, irrelevant enough and yet curiously insistent, came floating up out of the darkness of his memory. This also a Council had said:

“It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people.”

CHAPTER VIII. THE ROOF SPACES

As the fans in the circular aperture of the inner room rotated and permitted glimpses of the night, dim sounds drifted in thereby. And Graham, standing underneath, wrestling darkly with the unknown powers that imprisoned him, and which he had now deliberately challenged, was startled by the sound of a voice.

He peered up and saw in the intervals of the rotation, dark and dim, the face and shoulders of a man regarding him. When a dark hand was extended, the swift fan struck it, swung round and beat on with a little brownish patch on the edge of its thin blade, and something began to fall therefrom upon the floor, dripping silently.

Graham looked down, and there were spots of blood at his feet. He looked up again in a strange excitement. The figure had gone.

He remained motionless — his every sense intent upon the flickering patch of darkness, for outside it was high night. He became aware of some faint, remote, dark specks floating lightly through the outer air. They came down towards him, fitfully, eddyingly, and passed aside out of the uprush from the fan. A gleam of light flickered, the specks flashed white, and then the darkness came again. Warmed and lit as he was, he perceived that it was snowing within a few feet of him.

Graham walked across the room and came back to the ventilator again. He saw the head of a man pass near. There was a sound of whispering. Then a smart blow on some metallic substance, effort, voices, and the vans stopped. A gust of snowflakes whirled into the room, and vanished before they touched the floor. “Don’t be afraid,” said a voice.

Graham stood under the fan. “Who are you?” he whispered.

For a moment there was nothing but a swaying of the fan, and then the head of a man was thrust cautiously into the opening. His face appeared nearly inverted to Graham; his dark hair was wet with dissolving flakes of snow upon it. His arm went up into the darkness holding something unseen. He had a youthful face and bright eyes, and the veins of his forehead were swollen. He seemed to be exerting himself to maintain his position.

For several seconds neither he nor Graham spoke.

"You were the Sleeper?" said the stranger at last.

"Yes," said Graham. "What do you want with me?"

"I come from Ostrog, Sire."

"Ostrog?"

The man in the ventilator twisted his head round so that his profile was towards Graham. He appeared to be listening. Suddenly there was a hasty exclamation, and the intruder sprang back just in time to escape the sweep of the released fan. And when Graham peered up there was nothing visible but the slowly falling snow.

It was perhaps a quarter of an hour before anything returned to the ventilator. But at last came the same metallic interference again; the fans stopped and the face reappeared. Graham had remained all this time in the same place, alert and tremulously excited.

"Who are you? What do you want?" he said.

"We want to speak to you, Sire," said the intruder.

"We want — I can't hold the thing. We have been trying to find a way to you these three days."

"Is it rescue?" whispered Graham. "Escape?"

"Yes, Sire. If you will."

"You are my party — the party of the Sleeper?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What am I to do?" said Graham.

There was a struggle. The stranger's arm appeared, and his hand was bleeding. His knees came into view over the edge of the funnel. "Stand away from me," he said, and he dropped rather heavily on his hands and one shoulder at Graham's feet. The released ventilator whirled noisily. The stranger rolled over, sprang up nimbly and stood panting, hand to a bruised shoulder, and with his bright eyes on Graham.

"You are indeed the Sleeper," he said. "I saw you asleep. When it was the law that anyone might see you."

"I am the man who was in the trance," said Graham. "They have imprisoned me here. I have been here since I awoke — at least three days."

The intruder seemed about to speak, heard something, glanced swiftly at the door, and suddenly left Graham and ran towards it,

shouting quick incoherent words. A bright wedge of steel flashed in his hand, and he began tap, tap, a quick succession of blows upon the hinges. “Mind!” cried a voice. “Oh!” The voice came from above.

Graham glanced up, saw the soles of two feet, ducked, was struck on the shoulder by one of them, and a heavy weight bore him to the earth. He fell on his knees and forward, and the weight went over his head. He knelt up and saw a second man from above seated before him.

“I did not see you, Sire,” panted the man. He rose and assisted Graham to arise. “Are you hurt, Sire?” he panted. A succession of heavy blows on the ventilator began, something fell close to Graham’s face, and a shivering edge of white metal danced, fell over, and lay flat upon the floor.

“What is this?” cried Graham, confused and looking at the ventilator. “Who are you? What are you going to do? Remember, I understand nothing.”

“Stand back,” said the stranger, and drew him from under the ventilator as another fragment of metal fell heavily.

“We want you to come, Sire,” panted the newcomer, and Graham glancing at his face again, saw a new cut had changed from white to red on his forehead, and a couple of little trickles of blood starting therefrom. “Your people call for you.”

“Come where? My people?”

“To the hall about the markets. Your life is in danger here. We have spies. We learned but just in time. The Council has decided — this very day — either to drug or kill you. And everything is ready. The people are drilled, the wind-vane police, the engineers, and half the way-gearers are with us. We have the halls crowded — shouting. The whole city shouts against the Council. We have arms.” He wiped the blood with his hand. “Your life here is not worth—” “But why arms?”

“The people have risen to protect you, Sire. What?”

He turned quickly as the man who had first come down made a hissing with his teeth. Graham saw the latter start back, gesticulate to them to conceal themselves, and move as if to hide behind the opening door.

As he did so Howard appeared, a little tray in one hand and his

heavy face downcast. He started, looked up, the door slammed behind him, the tray tilted sideways, and the steel wedge struck him behind the ear. He went down like a felled tree, and lay as he fell athwart the floor of the outer room. The man who had struck him bent hastily, studied his face for a moment, rose, and returned to his work at the door.

"Your poison!" said a voice in Graham's ear.

Then abruptly they were in darkness. The innumerable cornice lights had been extinguished. Graham saw the aperture of the ventilator with ghostly snow whirling above it and dark figures moving hastily. Three knelt on the fan. Some dim thing — a ladder was being lowered through the opening, and a hand appeared holding a fitful yellow light.

He had a moment of hesitation. But the manner of these men, their swift alacrity, their words, marched so completely with his own fears of the Council, with his idea and hope of a rescue, that it lasted not a moment. And his people awaited him!

"I do not understand," he said, "I trust. Tell me what to do."

The man with the cut brow gripped Graham's arm.

"Clamber up the ladder," he whispered. "Quick. They will have heard—"

Graham felt for the ladder with extended hands, put his foot on the lower rung, and, turning his head, saw over the shoulder of the nearest man, in the yellow flicker of the light, the first-comer astride over Howard and still working at the door. Graham turned to the ladder again, and was thrust by his conductor and helped up by those above, and then he was standing on something hard and cold and slippery outside the ventilating funnel.

He shivered. He was aware of a great difference in the temperature. Half a dozen men stood about him, and light flakes of snow touched hands and face and melted. For a moment it was dark, then for a flash a ghastly violet white, and then everything was dark again.

He saw he had come out upon the roof of the vast city structure which had replaced the miscellaneous houses, streets and open spaces of Victorian London. The place upon which he stood was level, with huge serpentine cables lying athwart it in every direction.

The circular wheels of a number of windmills loomed indistinct and gigantic through the darkness and snowfall, and roared with a varying loudness as the fitful white light smote up from below, touched the snow eddies with a transient glitter, and made an evanescent spectre in the night; and here and there, low down! some vaguely outlined wind-driven mechanism flickered with livid sparks.

All this he appreciated in a fragmentary manner as his rescuers stood about him. Someone threw a thick soft cloak of fur-like texture about him, and fastened it by buckled straps at waist and shoulders. Things were said briefly, decisively. Someone thrust him forward.

Before his mind was yet clear a dark shape gripped his arm. “This way,” said this shape, urging him along, and pointed Graham across the flat roof in the direction of a dim semicircular haze of light. Graham obeyed.

“Mind!” said a voice, as Graham stumbled against a cable. “Between them and not across them,” said the voice. And, “We must hurry.”

“Where are the people?” said Graham. “The people you said awaited me?”

The stranger did not answer. He left Graham’s arm as the path grew narrower, and led the way with rapid strides. Graham followed blindly. In a minute he found himself running. “Are the others coming?” he panted, but received no reply. His companion glanced back and ran on. They came to a sort of pathway of open metal-work, transverse to the direction they had come, and they turned aside to follow this. Graham looked back, but the snowstorm had hidden the others.

“Come on!” said his guide. Running now, they drew near a little windmill spinning high in the air. “Stoop,” said Graham’s guide, and they avoided an endless band running roaring up to the shaft of the vane. “This way!” and they were ankle deep in a gutter full of drifted thawing snow, between two low walls of metal that presently rose waist high. “I will go first,” said the guide. Graham drew his cloak about him and followed. Then suddenly came a narrow abyss across which the gutter leapt to the snowy darkness of the further side. Graham peeped over the side once and the gulf was black. For a moment he regretted his flight. He dared not look again, and his brain

spun as he waded through the half liquid snow.

Then out of the gutter they clambered and hurried across a wide flat space damp with thawing snow, and for half its extent dimly translucent to lights that went to and fro underneath. He hesitated at this unstable looking substance, but his guide ran on unheeding, and so they came to and clambered up slippery steps to the rim of a great dome of glass. Round this they went. Far below a number of people seemed to be dancing, and music filtered through the dome.... Graham fancied he heard a shouting through the snowstorm, and his guide hurried him on with a new spurt of haste. They clambered panting to a space of huge windmills, one so vast that only the lower edge of its vans came rushing into sight and rushed up again and was lost in the night and the snow. They hurried for a time through the colossal metallic tracery of its supports, and came at last above a place of moving platforms like the place into which Graham had looked from the balcony. They crawled across the sloping transparency that covered this street of platforms, crawling on hands and knees because of the slipperiness of the snowfall.

For the most part the glass was bedewed, and Graham saw only hazy suggestions of the forms below, but near the pitch of the transparent roof the glass was clear, and he found himself looking sheerly down upon it all. For awhile, in spite of the urgency of his guide, he gave way to vertigo and lay spread-eagled on the glass, sick and paralysed. Far below, mere stirring specks and dots, went the people of the unsleeping city in their perpetual daylight, and the moving platforms ran on their incessant journey. Messengers and men on unknown businesses shot along the drooping cables and the frail bridges were crowded with men. It was like peering into a gigantic glass hive, and it lay vertically below him with only a tough glass of unknown thickness to save him from a fall. The street showed warm and lit, and Graham was wet now to the skin with thawing snow, and his feet were numbed with cold. For a space he could not move.

“Come on!” cried his guide, with terror in his voice. “Come on!”

Graham reached the pitch of the roof by an effort.

Over the ridge, following his guide’s example, he turned about and slid backward down the opposite slope very swiftly, amid a little

avalanche of snow While he was sliding he thought of what would happen if some broken gap should come in his way. At the edge he stumbled to his feet ankle deep in slush thanking heaven for an opaque footing again. His guide was already clambering up a metal screen to a level expanse.

Through the spare snowflakes above this loomed another line of vast windmills, and then suddenly the amorphous tumult of the rotating wheels was pierced with a deafening sound. It was a mechanical shrilling of extraordinary intensity that seemed to come simultaneously from every point of the compass.

"They have missed us already!" cried Graham's guide in an accent of terror, and suddenly, with a blinding flash, the night became day.

Above the driving snow, from the summits of the wind-wheels, appeared vast masts carrying globes of livid light. They receded in illimitable vistas in every direction. As far as his eye could penetrate the snowfall they glared.

"Get on this," cried Graham's conductor, and thrust him forward to a long grating of snowless metal that ran like a band between two slightly sloping expanses of snow. It felt warm to Graham's benurrled feet, and a faint eddy of steam rose from it.

"Come on!" shouted his guide ten yards off, and, without waiting, ran swiftly through the incandescent glare towards the iron supports of the next range of wind-wheels. Graham, recovering from his astonishment, followed as fast, convinced of his imminent capture.

In a score of seconds they were within a tracery of glare and black shadows shot with moving bars beneath the monstrous wheels. Graham's conductor ran on for some time, and suddenly darted sideways and vanished into a black shadow in the corner of the foot of a huge support. In another moment Graham was beside him.

They cowered panting and stared out.

The scene upon which Graham looked was very wild and strange. The snow had now almost ceased; only a belated flake passed now and again across the picture. But the broad stretch of level before them was a ghastly white, broken only by gigantic masses and moving shapes and lengthy strips of impenetrable darkness, vast ungainly Titans of shadow. All about them, huge metallic structures,

iron girders, inhumanly vast as it seemed to him, interlaced, and the edges of wind-wheels, scarcely moving in the lull, passed in great shining curves steeper and steeper up into a luminous haze. Wherever the snow-spangled light struck down, beams and girders, and incessant bands running with a halting, indomitable resolution passed upward and downward into the black. And with all that mighty activity, with an omnipresent sense of motive and design, this snow-clad desolation of mechanism seemed void of all human presence save themselves, seemed as trackless and deserted and unfrequented by men as some inaccessible Alpine snowfield.

"They will be chasing us," cried the leader. "We are scarcely halfway there yet. Cold as it is we must hide here for a space — at least until it snows more thickly again."

His teeth chattered in his head.

"Where are the markets?" asked Graham staring out. "Where are all the people?"

The other made no answer.

"Look!" whispered Graham, crouched close, and became very still.

The snow had suddenly become thick again, and sliding with the whirling eddies out of the black pit of the sky came something, vague and large and very swift. It came down in a steep curve and swept round, wide wings extended and a trail of white condensing steam behind it, rose with an easy swiftness and went gliding up the air, swept horizontally forward in a wide curve, and vanished again in the steaming specks of snow. And, through the ribs of its body, Graham saw two little men, very minute and active, searching the snowy areas about him, as it seemed to him, with field glasses. For a second they were clear, then hazy through a thick whirl of snow, then small and distant, and in a minute they were gone.

"Now!" cried his companion. "Come!"

He pulled Graham's sleeve, and incontinently the two were running headlong down the arcade of ironwork beneath the wind-wheels. Graham, running blindly, collided with his leader, who had turned back on him suddenly. He found himself within a dozen yards of a black chasm. It extended as far as he could see right and left. It seemed to cut off their progress in either direction.

“Do as I do,” whispered his guide. He lay down and crawled to the edge, thrust his head over and twisted until one leg hung. He seemed to feel for something with his foot, found it, and went sliding over the edge into the gulf. His head reappeared. “It is a ledge,” he whispered. “In the dark all the way along. Do as I did.”

Graham hesitated, went down upon all fours, crawled to the edge, and peered into a velvety blackness. For a sickly moment he had courage neither to go on nor retreat, then he sat and hung his leg down, felt his guide’s hands pulling at him, had a horrible sensation of sliding over the edge into the unfathomable, splashed, and felt himself in a slushy gutter, impenetrably dark.

“This way,” whispered the voice, and he began crawling along the gutter through the trickling thaw, pressing himself against the wall. They continued along it for some minutes. He seemed to pass through a hundred stages of misery, to pass minute after minute through a hundred degrees of cold, damp, and exhaustion. In a little while he ceased to feel his hands and feet.

The gutter sloped downwards. He observed that they were now many feet below the edge of the buildings. Rows of spectral white shapes like the ghosts of blind-drawn windows rose above them. They came to the end of a cable fastened above one of these white windows, dimly visible and dropping into impenetrable shadows. Suddenly his hand came against his guide’s.

“Still!” whispered the latter very softly.

He looked up with a start and saw the huge wings of the flying machine gliding slowly and noiselessly overhead athwart the broad band of snow-flecked grey-blue sky. In a moment it was hidden again.

“Keep still; they were just turning.”

For awhile both were motionless, then Graham’s companion stood up, and reaching towards the fastenings of the cable fumbled with some indistinct tackle.

“What is that?” asked Graham.

The only answer was a faint cry. The man crouched motionless. Graham peered and saw his face dimly. He was staring down the long ribbon of sky, and Graham, following his eyes, saw the flying machine small and faint and remote. Then he saw that the wings

spread on either side, that it headed towards them, that every moment it grew larger. It was following the edge of the chasm towards them.

The man's movements became convulsive. He thrust two cross bars into Graham's hand. Graham could not see them, he ascertained their form by feeling. They were slung by thin cords to the cable. On the cord were hand grips of some soft elastic substance. "Put the cross between your legs," whispered the guide hysterically, "and grip the holdfasts. Grip tightly, grip!"

Graham did as he was told.

"Jump," said the voice. "In heaven's name, jump!"

For one momentous second Graham could not speak. He was glad afterwards that darkness hid his face. He said nothing. He began to tremble violently. He looked sideways at the swift shadow that swallowed up the sky as it rushed upon him.

"Jump! Jump — in God's name! Or they will have us," cried Graham's guide, and in the violence of his passion thrust him forward.

Graham tottered convulsively, gave a sobbing cry, a cry in spite of himself, and then, as the flying machine swept over them, fell forward into the pit of that darkness, seated on the cross wood and holding the ropes with the clutch of death. Something cracked, something rapped smartly against a wall. He heard the pulley of the cradle hum on its rope. He heard the aeronauts shout. He felt a pair of knees digging into his back.... He was sweeping headlong through the air, falling through the air. All his strength was in his hands. He would have screamed but he had no breath.

He shot into a blinding light that made him grip the tighter. He recognised the great passage with the running ways, the hanging lights and interlacing girders. They rushed upward and by him. He had a momentary impression of a great circular aperture yawning to swallow him up.

He was in the dark again, falling, falling, gripping with aching hands, and behold! a clap of sound, a burst of light, and he was in a brightly lit hall with a roaring multitude of people beneath his feet. The people! His people! A proscenium, a stage rushed up towards him, and his cable swept down to a circular aperture to the right of this. He felt he was travelling slower, and suddenly very much

slower. He distinguished shouts of “Saved! The Master. He is safe!” The stage rushed up towards him with rapidly diminishing swiftness. Then —

He heard the man clinging behind him shout as if suddenly terrified, and this shout was echoed by a shout from below. He felt that he was no longer gliding along the cable but falling with it. There was a tumult of yells, screams and cries. He felt something soft against his extended hand, and the impact of a broken fall quivering through his arm...

He wanted to be still and the people were lifting him. He believed afterwards he was carried to the platform and given some drink, but he was never sure. He did not notice what became of his guide. When his mind was clear again he was on his feet; eager hands were assisting him to stand. He was in a big alcove, occupying the position that in his previous experience had been devoted to the lower boxes. If this was indeed a theatre.

A mighty tumult was in his ears, a thunderous roar, the shouting of a countless multitude. “It is the Sleeper! The Sleeper is with us!”

“The Sleeper is with us! The Master — the Owner! The Master is with us. He is safe.”

Graham had a surging vision of a great hall crowded with people. He saw no individuals, he was conscious of a froth of pink faces, of waving arms and garments, he felt the occult influence of a vast crowd pouring over him, buoying him up. There were balconies, galleries, great archways giving remoter perspectives, and everywhere people, a vast arena of people, densely packed and cheering. Across the nearer space lay the collapsed cable like a huge snake. It had been cut by the men of the flying machine at its upper end, and had crumpled down into the hall. Men seemed to be hauling this out of the way. But the whole effect was vague, the very buildings throbbed and leapt with the roar of the voices.

He stood unsteadily and looked at those about him. Someone supported him by one arm. “Let me go into a little room,” he said, weeping; “a little room,” and could say no more. A man in black stepped forward, took his disengaged arm. He was aware of officious men opening a door before him. Someone guided him to a seat. He staggered. He sat down heavily and covered his face with his hands;

he was trembling violently, his nervous control was at an end. He was relieved of his cloak, he could not remember how; his purple hose he saw were black with wet. People were running about him, things were happening, but for some time he gave no heed to them.

He had escaped. A myriad of cries told him that. He was safe. These were the people who were on his side. For a space he sobbed for breath, and then he sat still with his face covered. The air was full of the shouting of innumerable men.

CHAPTER IX. THE PEOPLE MARCH

He became aware of someone urging a glass of clear fluid upon his attention, looked up and discovered this was a dark young man in a yellow garment. He took the dose forthwith, and in a moment he was glowing. A tall man in a black robe stood by his shoulder, and pointed to the half open door into the hall. This man was shouting close to his ear and yet what was said was indistinct because of the tremendous uproar from the great theatre. Behind the man was a girl in a silvery grey robe, whom Graham, even in this confusion, perceived to be beautiful. Her dark eyes, full of wonder and curiosity,-were fixed on him, her lips trembled apart. A partially opened door gave a glimpse of the crowded hall, and admitted a vast uneven tumult, a hammering, clapping and shouting that died away and began again, and rose to a thunderous pitch, and so continued intermittently all the time that Graham remained in the little room. He watched the lips of the man in black and gathered that he was making some clumsy explanation.

He stared stupidly for some moments at these things and then stood up abruptly; he grasped the arm of this shouting person.

"Tell me!" he cried. "Who am I? Who am I?"

The others came nearer to hear his words. "Who am I?" His eyes searched their faces.

"They have told him nothing!" cried the girl.

"Tell me, tell me!" cried Graham.

"You are the Master of the Earth. You are owner of half the world."

He did not believe he heard aright. He resisted the persuasion. He pretended not to understand, not to hear. He lifted his voice again. "I have been awake three days — a prisoner three days. I judge there is some struggle between a number of people in this city — it is London?"

"Yes," said the younger man.

"And those who meet in the great hall with the white Atlas? How does it concern me? In some way it has to do with me. Why, I don't know. Drugs? It seems to me that while I have slept the world has

gone mad. I have gone mad.”

“Who are those Councillors under the Atlas? Why should they try to drug me?”

“To keep you insensible,” said the man in yellow.

“To prevent your interference.”

“But *why?*”

“Because *you* are the Atlas, Sire,” said the man in yellow. “The world is on your shoulders. They rule it in your name.”

The sounds from the hall had died into a silence threaded by one monotonous voice. Now suddenly, trampling on these last words, came a deafening tumult, a roaring and thundering, cheer crowded on cheer, voices hoarse and shrill, beating, overlapping, and while it lasted the people in the little room could not hear each other shout.

Graham stood, his intelligence clinging helplessly to the thing he had just heard. “The Council,” he repeated blankly, and then snatched at a name that had struck him. “But who is Ostrog?” he said.

“He is the organiser — the organiser of the revolt. Our Leader — in your name.”

“In my name? — And you? Why is he not here?”

“He — has deputed us. I am his brother — his half-brother, Lincoln. He wants you to show yourself to these people and then come on to him. That is why he has sent. He is at the wind-vane offices directing. The people are marching.”

“In your name,” shouted the younger man. “They have ruled, crushed, tyrannised. At last even—”

“In my name! My name! Master?”

The younger man suddenly became audible in a pause of the outer thunder, indignant and vociferous, a high penetrating voice under his red aquiline nose and bushy moustache. “No one expected you to wake. No one expected you to wake. They were cunning. Damned tyrants! But they were taken by surprise. They did not know whether to drug you, hypnotise you, kill you.”

Again the hall dominated everything.

“Ostrog is at the wind-vane offices ready — . Even now there is a rumour of fighting beginning.”

The man who had called himself Lincoln came close to him.

“Ostrog has it planned. Trust him. We have our organisations ready. We shall seize the flying stages — . Even now he may be doing that. Then—”

“This public theatre,” bawled the man in yellow, “is only a contingent. We have five myriads of drilled men—”

“We have arms,” cried Lincoln. “We have plans. A leader. Their police have gone from the streets and are massed in the—” (inaudible). “It is now or never. The Council is rocking — They cannot trust even their drilled men—”

“Hear the people calling to you!”

Graham’s mind was like a night of moon and swift clouds, now dark and hopeless, now clear and ghastly. He was Master of the Earth, he was a man sodden with thawing snow. Of all his fluctuating impressions the dominant ones presented an antagonism; on the one hand was the White Council, powerful, disciplined, few, the White Council from which he had just escaped; and on the other, monstrous crowds, packed masses of indistinguishable people clamouring his name, hailing him Master. The other side had imprisoned him, debated his death. These shouting thousands beyond the little doorway had rescued him. But why these things should be so he could not understand.

The door opened, Lincoln’s voice was swept away and drowned, and a rush of people followed on the heels of the tumult. These intruders came towards him and Lincoln gesticulating. The voices without explained their soundless lips. “Show us the Sleeper, show us the Sleeper!” was the burden of the uproar Men were bawling for “Order! Silence!”

Graham glanced towards the open doorway, and saw a tall, oblong picture of the hall beyond, a waving, incessant confusion of crowded, shouting faces, men and women together, waving pale blue garments, extended hands. Many were standing, one man in rags of dark brown, a gaunt figure, stood on the seat and waved a black cloth. He met the wonder and expectation of the girl’s eyes. What did these people expect from him. He was dimly aware that the tumult outside had changed its character, was in some way beating, marching. His own mind, too, changed for a space he did not recognise the influence that was transforming him. But a moment

that was near to panic passed. He tried to make audible inquiries of what was required of him.

Lincoln was shouting in his ear, but Graham was deafened to that. All the others save the woman gesticulated towards the hall. He perceived what had happened to the uproar. The whole mass of people was chanting together. It was not simply a song, the voices were gathered together and upborne by a torrent of instrumental music, music like the music of an organ, a woven texture of sounds, full of trumpets, full of flaunting banners, full of the march and pageantry of opening war. And the feet of the people were beating time — tramp, tramp.

He was urged towards the door. He obeyed mechanically. The strength of that chant took hold of him, stirred him, emboldened him. The hall opened to him, a vast welter of fluttering colour swaying to the music.

"Wave your arm to them," said Lincoln. "Wave your arm to them."

"This," said a voice on the other side, "he must have this." Arms were about his neck detaining him in the doorway, and a black subtly-folding mantle hung from his shoulders. He threw his arm free of this and followed Lincoln. He perceived the girl in grey close to him, her face lit, her gesture onward. For the instant she became to him, flushed and eager as she was, an embodiment of the song. He emerged in the alcove again. Incontinently the mounting waves of the song broke upon his appearing, and flashed up into a foam of shouting. Guided by Lincoln's hand he marched obliquely across the centre of the stage facing the people.

The hall was a vast and intricate space — galleries, balconies, broad spaces of amphitheatral steps, and great archways. Far away, high up, seemed the mouth of a huge passage full of struggling humanity. The whole multitude was swaying in congested masses. Individual figures sprang out of the tumult, impressed him momentarily, and lost definition again. Close to the platform swayed a beautiful fair woman, carried by three men, her hair across her face and brandishing a green staff. Next this group an old careworn man in blue canvas maintained his place in the crush with difficulty, and behind shouted a hairless face, a great cavity of toothless mouth. A

voice called that enigmatical word “Ostrog.” All his impressions were vague save the massive emotion of that trampling song. The multitude were beating time with their feet — marking time, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. The green weapons waved, flashed and slanted. Then he saw those nearest to him on a level space before the stage were marching in front of him, passing towards a great archway, shouting “To the Council!” Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. He raised his arm, and the roaring was redoubled. He remembered he had to shout “March!” His mouth shaped inaudible heroic words. He waved his arm again and pointed to the archway, shouting “Onward!” They were no longer marking time, they were marching; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. In that host were bearded men, old men, youths, fluttering robed bare-armed women, girls. Men and women of the new age! Rich robes, grey rags fluttered together in the whirl of their movement amidst the dominant blue. A monstrous black banner jerked its way to the right. He perceived a blue-clad negro, a shrivelled woman in yellow, then a group of tall fair-haired, white-faced, blue-clad men pushed theatrically past him. He noted two Chinamen. A tall, sallow, dark-haired, shining-eyed youth, white clad from top to toe, clambered up towards the platform shouting loyally, and sprang down again and receded, looking backward. Heads, shoulders, hands clutching weapons, all were swinging with those marching cadences.

Faces came out of the confusion to him as he stood there, eyes met his and passed and vanished. Men gesticulated to him, shouted inaudible personal things. Most of the faces were flushed, but many were ghastly white. And disease was there, and many a hand that waved to him was gaunt and lean. Men and women of the new age! Strange and incredible meeting! As the broad stream passed before him to the right, tributary gangways from the remote uplands of the hall thrust downward in an incessant replacement of people; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. The unison of the song was enriched and complicated by the massive echoes of arches and passages. Men and women mingled in the ranks; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. The whole world seemed marching. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp; his brain was tramping. The garments waved onward, the faces poured by more abundantly.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp; at Lincoln's pressure he turned towards the archway, walking unconsciously in that rhythm, scarcely noticing his movement for the melody and stir of it. The multitude, the gesture and song, all moved in that direction, the flow of people smote downward until the upturned faces were below the level of his feet. He was aware of a path before him, of a suite about him, of guards and dignities, and Lincoln on his right hand. Attendants intervened, and ever and again blotted out the sight of the multitude to the left. Before him went the backs of the guards in black — three and three and three. He was marched along a little railed way, and crossed above the archway, with the torrent dipping to flow beneath, and shouting up to him. He did not know whither he went; he did not want to know. He glanced back across a flaming spaciousness of hall. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

CHAPTER X. THE BATTLE OF THE DARKNESS

He was no longer in the hall. He was marching along a gallery overhanging one of the great streets of the moving platforms that traversed the city. Before him and behind him tramped his guards. The whole concave of the moving ways below was a congested mass of people marching, tramping to the left, shouting, waving hands and arms, pouring along a huge vista, shouting as they came into view, shouting as they passed, shouting as they receded, until the globes of electric light receding in perspective dropped down it seemed and hid the swarming bare heads. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

The song roared up to Graham now, no longer upborne by music, but coarse and noisy, and the beating of the marching feet, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, interwove with a thunderous irregularity of footsteps from the undisciplined rabble that poured along the higher ways.

Abruptly he noted a contrast. The buildings on the opposite side of the way seemed deserted, the cables and bridges that laced across the aisle were empty and shadowy. It came into Graham's mind that these also should have swarmed with people.

He felt a curious emotion — throbbing — very fast! He stopped again. The guards before him marched on; those about him stopped as he did. He saw the direction of their faces. The throbbing had something to do with the lights. He too looked up.

At first it seemed to him a thing that affected the lights simply, an isolated phenomenon, having no bearing on the things below. Each huge globe of blinding whiteness was as it were clutched, compressed in a systole that was followed by a transitory diastole, and again a systole like a tightening grip, darkness, light, darkness, in rapid alternation.

Graham became aware that this strange behaviour of the lights had to do with the people below. The appearance of the houses and ways, the appearance of the packed masses changed, became a confusion of vivid lights and leaping shadows. He saw a multitude of

shadows had sprung into aggressive existence, seemed rushing up, broadening, widening, growing with steady swiftness — to leap suddenly back and return reinforced. The song and the tramping had ceased. The unanimous march, he discovered, was arrested, there were eddies, a flow sideways, shouts of "The lights!" Voices were crying together one thing. "The lights!" cried these voices. "The lights!" He looked down. In this dancing death of the lights the area of the street had suddenly become a monstrous struggle. The huge white globes became purple-white, purple with a reddish glow, flickered, flickered faster and faster, fluttered between light and extinction, ceased to flicker and became mere fading specks of glowing red in a vast obscurity. In ten seconds the extinction was accomplished, and there was only this roaring darkness, a black monstrosity that had suddenly swallowed up those glittering myriads of men.

He felt invisible forms about him; his arms were gripped. Something rapped sharply against his shin. A voice bawled in his ear, "It is all right — all right."

Graham shook off the paralysis of his first astonishment. He struck his forehead against Lincoln's and bawled, "What is this darkness?"

"The Council has cut the currents that light the city. We must wait — stop. The people will go on. They will—"

His voice was drowned. Voices were shouting, "Save the Sleeper. Take care of the Sleeper." A guard stumbled against Graham and hurt his hand by an inadvertent blow of his weapon. A wild tumult tossed and whirled about him, growing, as it seemed, louder, denser, more furious each moment. Fragments of recognisable sounds drove towards him, were whirled away from him as his mind reached out to grasp them. Voices seemed to be shouting conflicting orders, other voices answered. There were suddenly a succession of piercing screams close beneath them.

A voice bawled in his ear, "The red police," and receded forthwith beyond his questions.

A crackling sound grew to distinctness, and there with a leaping of faint flashes along the edge of the further ways. By their light Graham saw the heads and bodies of a number of men, armed with

weapons like those of his guards, leap into an instant's dim visibility. The whole area began to crackle, to flash with little instantaneous streaks of light, and abruptly the darkness rolled back like a curtain.

A glare of light dazzled his eyes, a vast seething expanse of struggling men confused his mind. A shout, a burst of cheering, came across the ways. He looked up to see the source of the light. A man hung far overhead from the upper part of a cable, holding by a rope the blinding star that had driven the darkness back. He wore a red uniform.

Graham's eyes fell to the ways again. A wedge of red a little way along the vista caught his eye. He saw it was a dense mass of red-clad men jammed the higher further way, their backs against the pitiless cliff of building, and surrounded by a dense crowd of antagonists. They were fighting. Weapons flashed and rose and fell, heads vanished at the edge of the contest, and other heads replaced them, the little flashes from the green weapons became little jets of smoky grey while the light lasted.

Abruptly the flare was extinguished and the ways were an inky darkness once more, a tumultuous mystery.

He felt something thrusting against him. He was being pushed along the gallery. Someone was shouting — it might be at him. He was too confused to hear. He was thrust against the wall, and a number of people blundered past him. It seemed to him that his guards were struggling with one another.

Suddenly the cable-hung star-holder appeared again, and the whole scene was white and dazzling. The band of red-coats seemed broader and nearer; its apex was half-way down the ways towards the central aisle. And raising his eyes Graham saw that a number of these men had also appeared now in the darkened lower galleries of the opposite building, and were firing over the heads of their fellows below at the boiling confusion of people on the lower ways. The meaning of these things dawned upon him. The march of the people had come upon an ambush at the very outset. Thrown into confusion by the extinction of the lights they were now being attacked by the red police. Then he became aware that he was standing alone, that his guards and Lincoln were along the gallery in the direction along which he had come before the darkness fell. He saw they were

gesticulating to him wildly, running back towards him. A great shouting came from across the ways. Then it seemed as though the whole face of the darkened building opposite was lined and speckled with red-clad men. And they were pointing over to him and shouting. “The Sleeper! Save the Sleeper!” shouted a multitude of throats.

Something struck the wall above his head. He looked up at the impact and saw a star-shaped splash of silvery metal. He saw Lincoln near him. Felt his arm gripped. Then, pat, pat; he had been missed twice.

For a moment he did not understand this. The street was hidden, everything was hidden, as he looked. The second flare had burned out.

Lincoln had gripped Graham by the arm, was lugging him along the gallery. “Before the next light!” he cried. His haste was contagious. Graham’s instinct of self-preservation overcame the paralysis of his incredulous astonishment. He became for a time the blind creature of the fear of death. He ran, stumbling because of the uncertainty of the darkness, blundered into his guards as they turned to run with him. Haste was his one desire, to escape this perilous gallery upon which he was exposed. A third glare came close on its predecessors. With it came a great shouting across the ways, an answering tumult from the ways. The red-coats below, he saw, had now almost gained the central passage. Their countless faces turned towards him, and they shouted. The white facade opposite was densely stippled with red. All these wonderful things concerned him, turned upon him as a pivot. These were the guards of the Council attempting to recapture him.

Lucky it was for him that these shots were the first fired in anger for a hundred and fifty years. He heard bullets whacking over his head, felt a splash of molten metal sting his ear, and perceived without looking that the whole opposite facade, an unmasked ambuscade of red police, was crowded and bawling and firing at him.

Down went one of his guards before him, and Graham, unable to stop, leapt the writhing body.

In another second he had plunged, unhurt, into a black passage, and incontinently someone, coming, it may be, in a transverse direction, blundered violently into him. He was hurling down a

staircase in absolute darkness. He reeled, and was struck again, and came against a wall with his hands. He was crushed by a weight of struggling bodies, whirled round, and thrust to the right. A vast pressure pinned him. He could not breathe, his ribs seemed cracking. He felt a momentary relaxation, and then the whole mass of people moving together, bore him back towards the great theatre from which he had so recently come.

There were moments when his feet did not touch the ground. Then he was staggering and shoving. He heard shouts of "They are coming!" and a muffled cry close to him. His foot blundered against something soft, he heard a hoarse scream under foot. He heard shouts of "The Sleeper!" but he was too confused to speak. He heard the green weapons crackling. For a space he lost his individual will, became an atom in a panic, blind, unthinking, mechanical. He thrust and pressed back and writhed in the pressure, kicked presently against a step, and found himself ascending a slope. And abruptly the faces all about him leapt out of the black, visible, ghastly-white and astonished, terrified, perspiring, in a livid glare. One face, a young man's, was very near to him, not twenty inches away. At the time it was but a passing incident of no emotional value, but afterwards it came back to him in his dreams. For this young man, wedged upright in the crowd for a time, had been shot and was already dead.

A fourth white star must have been lit by the man on the cable. Its light came glaring in through vast windows and arches and showed Graham that he was now one of a dense mass of flying black figures pressed back across the lower area of the great theatre. This time the picture was livid and fragmentary slashed and barred with black shadows. He saw that quite near to him the red guards were fighting their way through the people. He could not tell whether they saw him. He looked for Lincoln and his guards. He saw Lincoln near the stage of the theatre surrounded in a crowd of black-badged revolutionaries, lifted up and staring to and fro as if seeking him. Graham perceived that he himself was near the opposite edge of the crowd, that behind him, separated by a barrier, sloped the now vacant seats of the theatre. A sudden idea came to him, and he began fighting his way towards the barrier. As he reached it the glare came to an end.

In a moment he had thrown off the great cloak that not only impeded his movements but made him conspicuous, and had slipped it from his shoulders. He heard someone trip in its folds. In another he was scaling the barrier and had dropped into the blackness on the further side. Then feeling his way he came to the lower end of an ascending gangway. In the darkness the sound of firing ceased and the roar of feet and voices lulled. Then suddenly he came to an unexpected step and tripped and fell. As he did so pools and islands amidst the darkness about him leapt to vivid light again, the uproar surged louder and the glare of the fifth white star shone through the vast fenestrations of the theatre walls.

He rolled over among some seats, heard a shouting and the whirring rattle of weapons, struggled up and was knocked back again, perceived that a number of black-badged men were all about him firing at the rebels below, leaping from seat to seat, crouching among the seats to reload. Instinctively he crouched amidst the seats, as stray shots ripped the pneumatic cushions and cut bright slashes on their soft metal frames. Instinctively he marked the direction of the gangways, the most plausible way of escape for him so soon as the veil of darkness fell again.

A young man in faded blue garments came vaulting over the seats. “Hullo!” he said, with his flying feet within six inches of the crouching Sleeper’s face.

He stared without any sign of recognition, turned to fire, fired, and, shouting, “To hell with the Council!” was about to fire again. Then it seemed to Graham that the half of this man’s neck had vanished. A drop of moisture fell on Graham’s cheek. The green weapon stopped half raised. For a moment the man stood still with his face suddenly expressionless, then he began to slant forward. His knees bent. Man and darkness fell together. At the sound of his fall Graham rose up and ran for his life until a step down to the gangway tripped him. He scrambled to his feet, turned up the gangway and ran on.

When the sixth star glared he was already close to the yawning throat of a passage. He ran on the swifter for the light, entered the passage and turned a corner into absolute night again. He was knocked sideways, rolled over, and recovered his feet. He found

himself one of a crowd of invisible fugitives pressing in one direction. His one thought now was their thought also; to escape out of this fighting. He thrust and struck, staggered, ran, was wedged tightly, lost ground and then was clear again.

For some minutes he was running through the darkness along a winding passage, and then he crossed some wide and open space, passed down a long incline, and came at last down a flight of steps to a level place. Many people were shouting, “They are coming! The guards are coming. They are firing. Get out of the fighting. The guards are firing. It will be safe in Seventh Way. Along here to Seventh Way!” There were women and children in the crowd as well as men. Men called names to him. The crowd converged on an archway, passed through a short throat and emerged on a wider space again, lit dimly. The black figures about him spread out and ran up what seemed in the twilight to be a gigantic series of steps. He followed. The people dispersed to the right and left.... He perceived that he was no longer in a crowd. He stopped near the highest step. Before him, on that level, were groups of seats and a little kiosk. He went up to this and, stopping in the shadow of its eaves, looked about him panting.

Everything was vague and gray, but he recognised that these great steps were a series of platforms of the “ways,” now motionless again. The platform slanted up on either side, and the tall buildings rose beyond, vast dim ghosts, their inscriptions and advertisements indistinctly seen, and up through the girders and cables was a faint interrupted ribbon of pallid sky. A number of people hurried by. From their shouts and voices, it seemed they were hurrying to join the fighting. Other less noisy figures flitted timidly among the shadows.

From very far away down the street he could hear the sound of a struggle. But it was evident to him that this was not the street into which the theatre opened. That former fight, it seemed, had suddenly dropped out of sound and hearing. And — grotesque thought! — they were fighting for him!

For a space he was like a man who pauses in the reading of a vivid book, and suddenly doubts what he has been taking unquestioningly. At that time he had little mind for details; the whole

effect was a huge astonishment. Oddly enough, while the flight from the Council prison, the great crowd in the hall, and the attack of the red police upon the swarming people were clearly present in his mind, it cost him an effort to piece in his awakening and to revive the meditative interval of the Silent Rooms. At first his memory leapt these things and took him back to the cascade at Pentargen quivering in the wind, and all the sombre splendours of the sunlit Cornish coast. The contrast touched everything with unreality. And then the gap filled, and he began to comprehend his position.

It was no longer absolutely a riddle, as it had been in the Silent Rooms. At least he had the strange, bare outline now. He was in some way the owner of half the world, and great political parties were fighting to possess him. On the one hand was the White Council, with its red police, set resolutely, it seemed, on the usurpation of his property and perhaps his murder; on the other, the revolution that had liberated him, with this unseen "Ostrog" as its leader. And the whole of this gigantic city was convulsed by their struggle. Frantic development of his world! "I do not understand," he cried. "I do not understand!"

He had slipped out between the contending parties into this liberty of the twilight. What would happen next? What was happening? He figured the redclad men as busily hunting him, driving the blackbadged revolutionists before them.

At any rate chance had given him a breathing space. He could lurk unchallenged by the passers-by, and watch the course of things. His eye followed up the intricate dim immensity of the twilight buildings, and it came to him as a thing infinitely wonderful, that above there the sun was rising, and the world was lit and glowing with the old familiar light of day. In a little while he had recovered his breath. His clothing had already dried upon him from the snow.

He wandered for miles along these twilight ways, speaking to no one, accosted by no one — a dark figure among dark figures — the coveted man out of the past, the inestimable unintentional owner of half the world. Wherever there were lights or dense crowds, or exceptional excitement he was afraid of recognition, and watched and turned back or went up and down by the middle stairways, into some transverse system of ways at a lower or higher level. And

though he came on no more fighting, the whole city stirred with battle. Once he had to run to avoid a marching multitude of men that swept the street. Everyone abroad seemed involved. For the most part they were men, and they carried what he judged were weapons. It seemed as though the struggle was concentrated mainly in the quarter of the city from which he came. Ever and again a distant roaring, the remote suggestion of that conflict, reached his ears. Then his caution and his curiosity struggled together. But his caution prevailed, and he continued wandering away from the fighting — so far as he could judge. He went unmolested, unsuspected through the dark. After a time he ceased to hear even a remote echo of the battle, fewer and fewer people passed him, until at last the Titanic streets became deserted. The frontages of the buildings grew plain and harsh; he seemed to have come to a district of vacant warehouses. Solitude crept upon him — his pace slackened.

He became aware of a growing fatigue. At times he would turn aside and seat himself on one of the numerous seats of the upper ways. But a feverish restlessness, the knowledge of his vital implication in his struggle, would not let him rest in any place for long. Was the struggle on his behalf alone?

And then in a desolate place came the shock of an earthquake — a roaring and thundering — a mighty wind of cold air pouring through the city, the smash of glass, the slip and thud of falling masonry — a series of gigantic concussions. A mass of glass and ironwork fell from the remote roofs into the middle gallery, not a hundred yards away from him, and in the distance were shouts and running. He, too, was startled to an aimless activity, and ran first one way and then as aimlessly back.

A man came running towards him. His self-control returned. “What have they blown up?” asked the man breathlessly. “That was an explosion,” and before Graham could speak he had hurried on.

The great buildings rose dimly, veiled by a perplexing twilight, albeit the rivulet of sky above was now bright with day. He noted many strange features, understanding none at the time; he even spelt out many of the inscriptions in Phonetic lettering. But what profits it to decipher a confusion of odd-looking letters resolving itself, after painful strain of eye and mind, into “Here is Eadhamite,” or, “Labour

Bureau — Little Side?" Grotesque thought, that in all probability some or all of these cliff-like houses were his!

The perversity of his experience came to him vividly. In actual fact he had made such a leap in time as romancers have imagined again and again. And that fact realised, he had been prepared, his mind had, as it were, seated itself for a spectacle. And no spectacle, but a great vague danger, unsympathetic shadows and veils of darkness. Somewhere through the labyrinthine obscurity his death sought him. Would he, after all, be killed before he saw? It might be that even at the next shadowy corner his destruction ambushed. A great desire to see, a great longing to know, arose in him.

He became fearful of corners. It seemed to him that there was safety in concealment. Where could he hide to be inconspicuous when the lights returned? At last he sat down upon a seat in a recess on one of the higher ways, conceiving he was alone there.

He squeezed his knuckles into his weary eyes. Suppose when he looked again he found the dark through of parallel ways and that intolerable altitude of edifice, gone? Suppose he were to discover the whole story of these last few days, the awakening, the shouting multitudes, the darkness and the fighting, a phantasmagoria, a new and more vivid sort of dream. It must be a dream; it was so inconsecutive, so reasonless. Why were the people fighting for him? Why should this saner world regard him as Owner and Master?

So he thought, sitting blinded, and then he looked again, half hoping in spite of his ears to see some familiar aspect of the life of the nineteenth century, to see, perhaps, the little harbour of Boscastle about him, the cliffs of Pentargen, or the bedroom of his home. But fact takes no heed of human hopes. A squad of men with a black banner tramped athwart the nearer shadows, intent on conflict, and beyond rose that giddy wall of frontage, vast and dark, with the dim incomprehensible lettering showing faintly on its face.

"It is no dream," he said, "no dream." And he bowed his face upon his hands.

CHAPTER XI. THE OLD MAN WHO KNEW EVERYTHING

He was startled by a cough close at hand.

He turned sharply, and peering, saw a small, hunched-up figure sitting a couple of yards off in the shadow of the enclosure.

“Have ye any news?” asked the high-pitched wheezy voice of a very old man.

Graham hesitated. “None,” he said.

“I stay here till the lights come again,” said the old man. “These blue scoundrels are everywhere — everywhere.”

Graham’s answer was inarticulate assent. He tried to see the old man but the darkness hid his face. He wanted very much to respond, to talk, but he did not know how to begin.

“Dark and damnable,” said the old man suddenly. “Dark and damnable. Turned out of my room among all these dangers.”

“That’s hard,” ventured Graham. “That’s hard on you.”

“Darkness. An old man lost in the darkness. And all the world gone mad. War and fighting. The police beaten and rogues abroad. Why don’t they bring some negroes to protect us?... No more dark passages for me. I fell over a dead man.”

“You’re safer with company,” said the old man, “if it’s company of the right sort,” and peered frankly. He rose suddenly and came towards Graham.

Apparently the scrutiny was satisfactory. The old man sat down as if relieved to be no longer alone. “Eh!” he said, “but this is a terrible time! War and fighting, and the dead lying there — men, strong men, dying in the dark. Sons! I have three sons. God knows where they are tonight.”

The voice ceased. Then repeated quavering: “God knows where they are tonight.”

Graham stood revolving a question that should not betray his ignorance. Again the old man’s voice ended the pause.

“This Ostrog will win,” he said. “He will win. And what the world will be like under him no one can tell. My sons are under the wind-

vanes, all three. One of my daughters-in-law was his mistress for a while. His mistress! Were not common people. Though they've sent me to wander tonight and take my chance.... I knew what was going on. Before most people. But this darkness! And to fall over a dead body suddenly in the dark!"

His wheezy breathing could be heard.

"Ostrog!" said Graham.

"The greatest Boss the world has ever seen," said the voice.

Graham ransacked his mind. "The Council has few friends among the people," he hazarded.

"Few friends. And poor ones at that. They've had their time. Eh! They should have kept to the clever ones. But twice they held election. And Ostrog. And now it has burst out and nothing can stay it, nothing can stay it. Twice they rejected Ostrog — Ostrog the Boss. I heard of his rages at the time — he was terrible. Heaven save them! For nothing on earth can now, he has raised the Labour Companies upon them. No one else would have dared. All the blue canvas armed and marching! He will go through with it. He will go through."

He was silent for a little while. "This Sleeper," he said, and stopped.

"Yes," said Graham. "Well?"

The senile voice sank to a confidential whisper, the dim, pale face came close. "The real Sleeper—"

"Yes," said Graham.

"Died years ago."

"What?" said Graham, sharply.

"Years ago. Died. Years ago."

"You don't say so!" said Graham.

"I do. I do say so. He died. This Sleeper who's woke up — they changed in the night. A poor, drugged insensible creature. But I mustn't tell all I know. I mustn't tell all I know."

For a little while he muttered inaudibly. His secret was too much for him. "I don't know the ones that put him to sleep — that was before my time — but I know the man who injected the stimulants and woke him again. It was ten to one — wake or kill. Wake or kill. Ostrog's way."

Graham was so astonished at these things that he had to interrupt, to make the old man repeat his words, to re-question vaguely, before he was sure of the meaning and folly of what he heard. And his awakening had not been natural! Was that an old man's senile superstition, too, or had it any truth in it? Feeling in the dark corners of his memory, he presently came on something that might conceivably be an impression of some such stimulating effect. It dawned upon him that he had happened upon a lucky encounter, that at last he might learn something of the new age. The old man wheezed a while and spat, and then the piping, reminiscent voice resumed:

"The first time they rejected him. I've followed it all."

"Rejected whom?" said Graham. "The Sleeper?"

"Sleeper? No. Ostrog. He was terrible — terrible! And he was promised then, promised certainly the next time. Fools they were — not to be more afraid of him. Now all the city's his millstone, and such as we dust ground upon it. Dust ground upon it. Until he set to work — the workers cut each other's throats, and murdered a Chinaman or a Labour policeman at times, and left the rest of us in peace. Dead bodies! Robbing! Darkness! Such a thing hasn't been this gross of years. Eh! — but 'tis ill on small folks when the great fall out! It's ill."

"Did you say — there had not been what? — for a gross of years?"

"Eh?" said the old man.

The old man said something about clipping his words, and made him repeat this a third time. "Fighting and slaying, and weapons in hand, and fools bawling freedom and the like," said the old man. "Not in all my life has there been that. These are like the old days — for sure — when the Paris people broke out — three gross of years ago. That's what I mean hasn't been. But it's the world's way. It had to come back. I know. I know. This five years Ostrog has been working, and there has been trouble and trouble, and hunger and threats and high talk and arms. Blue canvas and murmurs. No one safe. Everything sliding and slipping. And now here we are! Revolt and fighting, and the Council come to its end."

"You are rather well-informed on these things," said Graham.

“I know what I hear. It isn’t all Babble Machine with me.”

“No,” said Graham, wondering what Babble Machine might be. “And you are certain this Ostrog — you are certain Ostrog organised this rebellion and arranged for the waking of the Sleeper? Just to assert himself — because he was not elected to the Council?

“Everyone knows that, I should think,” said the old man. “Except — just fools. He meant to be master somehow. In the Council or not. Everyone who knows anything knows that. And here we are with dead bodies lying in the dark! Why, where have you been if you haven’t heard all about the trouble between Ostrog and the Verneys? And what do you think the troubles are about? The Sleeper? Eh? You think the Sleeper’s real and woke of his own accord — eh?”

“I’m a dull man, older than I look, and forgetful,” said Graham. “Lots of things that have happened — especially of late years — . If I was the Sleeper, to tell you the truth, I couldn’t know less about them.”

“Eh!” said the voice. “Old, are you? You don’t sound so very old! But its not everyone keeps his memory to my time of life — truly. But these notorious things! But you’re not so old as me — not nearly so old as me. Well! I ought not to judge other men by myself, perhaps. I’m young — for so old a man. Maybe you’re old for so young.”

“That’s it,” said Graham. “And I’ve a queer history. I know very little. And history! Practically I know no history. The Sleeper and Julius Caesar are all the same to me. It’s interesting to hear you talk of these things.”

“I know a few things,” said the old man. “I know a thing or two. But — . Hark!”

The two men became silent, listening. There was heavy thud, a concussion that made their seat shiver. The passers-by stopped, shouted to one another. The old man was full of questions; he shouted to a man who passed near. Graham, emboldened by his example, got up and accosted others. None knew what had happened.

He returned to the seat and found the old man muttering vague interrogations in an undertone. For a while they said nothing to one another.

The sense of this gigantic struggle, so near and yet so remote

oppressed Graham's imagination. Was this old man right, was the report of the people right, and were the revolutionaries winning? Or were they all in error, and were the red guards driving all before them? At any time the flood of warfare might pour into this silent quarter of the city and seize upon him again. It behooved him to learn all he could while there was time. He turned suddenly to the old man with a question and left it unsaid. But his motion moved the old man to speech again.

"Eh! but how things work together!" said the old man. "This Sleeper that all the fools put their trust in! I've the whole history of it — I was always a good one for histories. When I was a boy — I'm that old — I used to read printed books. You'd hardly think it. Likely you've seen none — they rot and dust so — and the Sanitary Company burns them to make ashlarite. But they were convenient in their dirty way. Oh I learnt a lot. These new-fangled Babble Machines — they don't seem new-fangled to you, eh? — they're easy to hear, easy to forget. But I've traced all the Sleeper business from the first."

"You will scarcely believe it," said Graham slowly, "I'm so ignorant — I've been so preoccupied in my own little affairs, my circumstances have been so odd — I know nothing of this Sleeper's history. Who was he?"

"Eh!" said the old man. "I know. I know. He was a poor nobody, and set on a playful woman, poor soul! And he fell into a trance. There's the old things they had, those brown things — silver photographs — still showing him as he lay, a gross and a half years ago — a gross and a half of years."

"Set on a playful woman, poor soul," said Graham softly to himself, and then aloud, "Yes — well! go on."

"You must know he had a cousin named Warming a solitary man without children, who made a big fortune speculating in roads — the first Eadhamite roads. But surely you've heard? No? Why? He bought all the patent rights and made a big company. In those days there were grosses of grosses of separate businesses and business companies. Grosses of grosses! His roads killed the railroads — the old things — in two dozen years; he bought up and Eadhamited the tracks. And because he didn't want to break up his great property or

let in shareholders, he left it all to the Sleeper, and put it under a Board of Trustees that he had picked and trained. He knew then the Sleeper wouldn't wake, that he would go on sleeping, sleeping till he died. He knew that quite well! And plump! a man in the United States, who had lost two sons in a boat accident, followed that up with another great bequest. His trustees found themselves with a dozen myriads of lions'-worth or more of property at the very beginning."

"What was his name?"

"Graham."

"No, I mean — that American's."

"Isbister."

"Isbister!" cried Graham. "Why, I don't even know the name."

"Of course not," said the old man. "Of course not. People don't learn much in the schools nowadays. But I know all about him. He was a rich American who went from England, and he left the Sleeper even more than Warming. How he made it? That I don't know. Something about pictures by machinery. But he made it and left it, and so the Council had its start. It was just a council of trustees at first."

"And how did it grow?"

"Eh! — but you're not up to things. Money attracts money — and twelve brains are better than one. They played it cleverly. They worked politics with money, and kept on adding to the money by working currency and tariffs. They grew — they grew. And for years the twelve trustees hid the growing of the Sleeper's estate, under double names and company titles and all that. The Council spread by title deed, mortgage, share, every political party, every newspaper, they bought. If you listen to the old stories you will see the Council growing and growing Billions and billions of lions at last — the Sleeper's estate. And all growing out of a whim — out of this Warming's will, and an accident to Isbister's sons.

"Men are strange," said the old man. "The strange, thing to me is how the Council worked together so long. As many as twelve. But they worked in cliques from the first. And they've slipped back. In my young days speaking of the Council was like an ignorant man speaking of God. We didn't think they could do wrong. We didn't

know of their women and all that! Or else I've got wiser.

"Men are strange," said the old man. "Here are you, young and ignorant, and me — sevendy years old, and I might reasonably be forgetting — explaining it all to you short and clear.

"Sevendy," he said, "sevendy, and I hear and see — hear better than I see. And reason clearly, and keep myself up to all the happenings of things. Sevendy!

"Life is strange. I was twaindy before Ostrog was a baby. I remember him long before he'd pushed his way to the head of the Wind Vanes Control. I've seen many changes. Eh! I've worn the blue. And at last I've come to see this crush and darkness and tumult and dead men carried by in heaps on the ways. And all his doing! All his doing!"

His voice died away in scarcely articulate praises of Ostrog

Graham thought. "Let me see," he said, "if I have it right."

He extended a hand and ticked off points upon his fingers. "The Sleeper has been asleep—"

"Changed," said the old man.

"Perhaps. And meanwhile the Sleeper's property grew in the hands of Twelve Trustees, until it swallowed up nearly all the great ownership of the world. The Twelve Trustees — by virtue of this property have become virtually masters of the world. Because they are the paying power — just as the old English Parliament used to be —"

"Eh!" said the old man. "That's so — that's a good comparison. You're not so—"

"And now this Ostrog — has suddenly revolutionised the world by waking the Sleeper — whom no one but the superstitious, common people had ever dreamt would wake again — raising the Sleeper to claim his property from the Council, after all these years."

The old man endorsed this statement with a cough. "It's strange," he said, "to meet a man who learns these things for the first time tonight."

"Aye," said Graham, "it's strange."

"Have you been in a Pleasure City?" said the old man. "All my life I've longed—" He laughed. "Even now," he said, "I could enjoy a little fun. Enjoy seeing things, anyhow." He mumbled a sentence

Graham did not understand.

"The Sleeper — when did he awake?" said Graham suddenly.

"Three days ago."

"Where is he?"

"Ostrog has him. He escaped from the Council not four hours ago. My dear sir, where were you at the time? He was in the hall of the markets — where the fighting has been. All the city was screaming about it. All the Babble Machines! Everywhere it was shouted. Even the fools who speak for the Council were admitting it. Everyone was rushing off to see him — everyone was getting arms. Were you drunk or asleep? And even then! But you're joking! Surely you're pretending. It was to stop the shouting of the Babble Machines and prevent the people gathering that they turned off the electricity — and put this damned darkness upon us. Do you mean to say — ?"

"I had heard the Sleeper was rescued," said Graham. "But — to come back a minute. Are you sure Ostrog has him?"

"He won't let him go," said the old man.

"And the Sleeper. Are you sure he is not genuine? I have never heard—"

"So all the fools think. So they think. As if there wasn't a thousand things that were never heard. I know Ostrog too well for that. Did I tell you? In a way I'm a sort of relation of Ostrog's. A sort of relation. Through my daughter-in-law."

"I suppose—"

"Well?"

"I suppose there's no chance of this Sleeper asserting himself. I suppose he's certain to be a puppet — in Ostrog's hands or the Council's, as soon as the struggle is over."

"In Ostrog's hands — certainly. Why shouldn't he be a puppet? Look at his position. Everything done for him, every pleasure possible. Why should he want to assert himself?"

"What are these Pleasure Cities?" said Graham, abruptly.

The old man made him repeat the question. When at last he was assured of Graham's words, he nudged him violently. "That's too much," said he. "You're poking fun at an old man. I've been suspecting you know more than you pretend."

"Perhaps I do," said Graham. "But no! why should I go on acting?

No, I do not know what a Pleasure City is."

The old man laughed in an intimate way.

"What is more, I do not know how to read your letters, I do not know what money you use, I do not know what foreign countries there are. I do not know where I am. I cannot count. I do not know where to get food, nor drink, nor shelter."

"Come, come," said the old man, "if you had a glass of drink, now, would you put it in your ear or your eye?"

"I want you to tell me all these things."

"He, he! Well, gentlemen who dress in silk must have their fun." A withered hand caressed Graham's arm for a moment. "Silk. Well, well! But, all the same, I wish I was the man who was put up as the Sleeper. He'll have a fine time of it. All the pomp and pleasure. He's a queer looking face. When they used to let anyone go to see him, I've got tickets and been. The image of the real one, as the photographs show him, this substitute used to be. Yellow. But he'll get fed up. It's a queer world. Think of the luck of it. The luck of it. I expect he'll be sent to Capri. It's the best fun for a greener."

His cough overtook him again. Then he began mumbling enviously of pleasures and strange delights. "The luck of it, the luck of it! All my life I've been in London, hoping to get my chance."

"But you don't know that the Sleeper died," said Graham, suddenly.

The old man made him repeat his words.

"Men don't live beyond ten dozen. It's not in the order of things," said the old man. "I'm not a fool. Fools may believe it, but not me."

Graham became angry with the old man's assurance. "Whether you are a fool or not," he said, "it happens you are wrong about the Sleeper."

"Eh?"

"You are wrong about the Sleeper. I haven't told you before, but I will tell you now. You are wrong about the Sleeper."

"How do you know? I thought you didn't know anything — not even about Pleasure Cities."

Graham paused.

"You don't know," said the old man. "How are you to know? It's very few men—"

“I *am* the Sleeper.”

He had to repeat it.

There was a brief pause. “There’s a silly thing to say, sir, if you’ll excuse me. It might get you into trouble in a time like this,” said the old man. Graham, slightly dashed, repeated his assertion.

“I was saying I was the Sleeper. That years and years ago I did, indeed, fall asleep, in a little stonebuilt village, in the days when there were hedgerows, and villages, and inns, and all the countryside cut up into little pieces, little fields. Have you never heard of those days? And it is I — I who speak to you — who awakened again these four days since.”

“Four days since! — the Sleeper! But they’ve got the Sleeper. They have him and they won’t let him go. Nonsense! You’ve been talking sensibly enough up to now. I can see it as though I was there. There will be Lincoln like a keeper just behind him; they won’t let him go about alone. Trust them. You’re a queer fellow. One of these fun pokers. I see now why you have been clipping your words so oddly, but—”

He stopped abruptly, and Graham could see his gesture.

“As if Ostrog would let the Sleeper run about alone! No, you’re telling that to the wrong man altogether. Eh! as if I should believe. What’s your game? And besides, we’ve been talking of the Sleeper.”

Graham stood up. “Listen,” he said. “I am the Sleeper.”

“You’re an odd man,” said the old man, “to sit here in the dark, talking clipped, and telling a lie of that sort. But—”

Graham’s exasperation fell to laughter. “It is preposterous,” he cried. “Preposterous. The dream must end. It gets wilder and wilder. Here am I — in this damned twilight — I never knew a dream in twilight before — an anachronism by two hundred years and trying to persuade an old fool that I am myself, and meanwhile — Ugh!”

He moved in gusty irritation and went striding. In a moment the old man was pursuing him. “Eh! but don’t go!” cried the old man. “I’m an old fool, I know. Don’t go. Don’t leave me in all this darkness.”

Graham hesitated, stopped. Suddenly the folly of telling his secret flashed into his mind.

“I didn’t mean to offend you — disbelieving you,” said the old

man coming near. “It’s no manner of harm. Call yourself the Sleeper if it pleases you. ’Tis a foolish trick.”

Graham hesitated, turned abruptly and went on his way.

For a time he heard the old man’s hobbling pursuit and his wheezy cries receding. But at last the darkness swallowed him, and Graham saw him no more.

CHAPTER XII. OSTROG

Graham could now take a clearer view of his position. For a long time yet he wandered, but after the talk of the old man his discovery of this Ostrog was clear in his mind as the final inevitable decision. One thing was evident, those who were at the headquarters of the revolt had succeeded very admirably in suppressing the fact of his disappearance. But every moment he expected to hear the report of his death or of his recapture by the Council.

Presently a man stopped before him. “Have you heard?” he said.

“No!” said Graham starting.

“Near a dozand,” said the man, “a dozand men!” and hurried on.

A number of men and a girl passed in the darkness, gesticulating and shouting: “Capitulated! Given up!” “A dozand of men.” “Two dozand of men.” “Ostrog, Hurrah! Ostrog, Hurrah!” These cries receded, became indistinct.

Other shouting men followed. For a time his attention was absorbed in the fragments of speech he heard. He had a doubt whether all were speaking English. Scraps floated to him, scraps like Pigeon English, like ‘nigger’ dialect, blurred and mangled distortions. He dared accost no one with questions. The impression the people gave him jarred altogether with his preconceptions of the struggle and confirmed the old man’s faith in Ostrog. It was only slowly he could bring himself to believe that all these people were rejoicing at the defeat of the Council, that the Council which had pursued him with such power and vigour was after all the weaker of the two sides in conflict. And if that was so, how did it affect him? Several times he hesitated on the verge of fundamental questions. Once he turned and walked for a long way after a little man of rotund inviting outline, but he was unable to master confidence to address him.

It was only slowly that it came to him that he might ask for the “wind-vane offices,” whatever the “wind-vane offices” might be. His first enquiry simply resulted in a direction to go on towards Westminster. His second led to the discovery of a short cut in which he was speedily lost. He was told to leave the ways to which he had

hitherto confined himself knowing no other means of transit — and to plunge down one of the middle staircases into the blackness of a crossway. Thereupon came some trivial adventures; chief of these an ambiguous encounter with a gruff-voiced invisible creature speaking in a strange dialect that seemed at first a strange tongue, a thick flow of speech with the drifting corpses of English words therein, the dialect of the latter-day vile. Then another voice drew near, a girl's voice singing, "tralala tralala." She spoke to Graham, her English touched with something of the same quality. She professed to have lost her sister, she blundered needlessly into him he thought, caught hold of him and laughed. But a word of vague remonstrance sent her into the unseen again.

The sounds about him increased. Stumbling people passed him, speaking excitedly. "They have surrendered!" "The Council! Surely not the Council!" "They are saying so in the Ways." The passage seemed wider. Suddenly the wall fell away. He was in a great space and people were stirring remotely. He inquired his way of an indistinct figure. "Strike straight across," said a woman's voice. He left his guiding wall, and in a moment had stumbled against a little table on which were utensils of glass. Graham's eyes, now attuned to darkness, made out a long vista with pallid tables on either side. He went down this. At one or two of the tables he heard a clang of glass and a sound of eating. There were people then cool enough to dine, or daring enough to steal a meal in spite of social convulsion and darkness. Far off and high up he presently saw a pallid light of a semi-circular shape. As he approached this, a black edge came up and hid it. He stumbled at steps and found himself in a gallery. He heard a sobbing, and found two scared little girls crouched by a railing. These children became silent at the near sound of feet. He tried to console them, but they were very still until he left them. Then as he receded he could hear them sobbing again.

Presently he found himself at the foot of a staircase and near a wide opening. He saw a dim twilight above this and ascended out of the blackness into a street of moving Ways again. Along this a disorderly swarm of people marched shouting. They were singing snatches of the song of the revolt, most of them out of tune. Here and there torches flared creating brief hysterical shadows. He asked his

way and was twice puzzled by that same thick dialect. His third attempt won an answer he could understand. He was two miles from the wind-vane offices in Westminster, but the way was easy to follow.

When at last he did approach the district of the wind-vane offices it seemed to him, from the cheering processions that came marching along the Ways, from the tumult of rejoicing, and finally from the restoration of the lighting of the city, that the overthrow of the Council must already be accomplished. And still no news of his absence came to his ears.

The re-illumination of the city came with startling abruptness. Suddenly he stood blinking, all about him men halted dazzled, and the world was incandescent. The light found him already upon the outskirts of the excited crowds that choked the Ways near the wind-vane offices, and the sense of visibility and exposure that came with it turned his colourless intention of joining Ostrog to a keen anxiety.

For a time he was jostled, obstructed, and endangered by men hoarse and weary with cheering his name, some of them bandaged and bloody in his cause. The frontage of the wind-vane offices was illuminated by some moving picture, but what it was he could not see, because in spite of his strenuous attempts the density of the crowd prevented his approaching it. From the fragments of speech he caught, he judged it conveyed news of the fighting about the Council House. Ignorance and indecision made him slow and ineffective in his movements. For a time he could not conceive how he was to get within the unbroken facade of this place. He made his way slowly into the midst of this mass of people, until he realised that the descending staircase of the central Way led to the interior of the buildings. This gave him a goal, but the crowding in the central path was so dense that it was long before he could reach it. And even then he encountered intricate obstruction, and had an hour of vivid argument first in this guard room and then in that before he could get a note taken to the one man of all men who was most eager to see him. His story was laughed to scorn at one place, and wiser for that, when at last he reached a second stairway he professed simply to have news of extraordinary importance for Ostrog. What it was he would not say. They sent his note reluctantly. For a long time he

waited in a little room at the foot of the lift shaft, and thither at last came Lincoln, eager, apologetic, astonished. He stopped in the doorway scrutinising Graham, then rushed forward effusively.

"Yes," he cried. "It is you. And you are not dead!"

Graham made a brief explanation.

"My brother is waiting," explained Lincoln. "He is alone in the wind-vane offices. We feared you had been killed in the theatre. He doubted — and things are very urgent still in spite of what we are telling them *there* — or he would have come to you."

They ascended a lift, passed along a narrow passage, crossed a great hall, empty save for two hurrying messengers, and entered a comparatively little room, whose only furniture was a long settee and a large oval disc of cloudy, shifting grey, hung by cables from the wall. There Lincoln left Graham for a space, and he remained alone without understanding the shifting smoky shapes that drove slowly across this disc.

His attention was arrested by a sound that began abruptly. It was cheering, the frantic cheering of a vast but very remote crowd, a roaring exultation. This ended as sharply as it had begun, like a sound heard between the opening and shutting of a door. In the outer room was a noise of hurrying steps and a melodious clinking as if a loose chain was running over the teeth of a wheel.

Then he heard the voice of a woman, the rustle of unseen garments. "It is Ostrog!" he heard her say. A little bell rang fitfully, and then everything was still again.

Presently came voices, footsteps and movement without. The footsteps of some one person detached itself from the other sounds and drew near, firm, evenly measured steps. The curtain lifted slowly. A tall, white-haired man, clad in garments of cream coloured silk, appeared, regarding Graham from under his raised arm.

For a moment the white form remained holding the curtain, then dropped it and stood before it. Graham's first impression was of a very broad forehead, very pale blue eyes deep sunken under white brows, an aquiline nose, and a heavily-lined resolute mouth. The folds of flesh over the eyes, the drooping of the corners of the mouth contradicted the upright bearing, and said the man was old. Graham rose to his feet instinctively, and for a moment the two men stood in

silence, regarding each other.

“You are Ostrog?” said Graham.

“I am Ostrog.”

“The Boss?”

“So I am called.”

Graham felt the inconvenience of the silence. “I have to thank you chiefly, I understand, for my safety,” he said presently.

“We were afraid you were killed,” said Ostrog.

“Or sent to sleep again — for ever. We have been doing everything to keep our secret — the secret of your disappearance. Where have you been? How did you get here?”

Graham told him briefly.

Ostrog listened in silence.

He smiled faintly. “Do you know what I was doing when they came to tell me you had come?”

“How can I guess?”

“Preparing your double.”

“My double?”

“A man as like you as we could find. We were going to hypnotise him, to save him the difficulty of acting. It was imperative. The whole of this revolt depends on the idea that you are awake, alive, and with us. Even now a great multitude of people has gathered in the theatre clamouring to see you. They do not trust... You know, of course — something of your position?”

“Very little,” said Graham.

“It is like this.” Ostrog walked a pace or two into the room and turned. “You are absolute owner,” he said, “of more than half the world. As a result of that you are practically King. Your powers are limited in many intricate ways, but you are the figure head, the popular symbol of government. This White Council, the Council of Trustees as it is called.”

“I have heard the vague outline of these things.”

“I wondered.”

“I came upon a garrulous old man.”

“I see... Our masses — the word comes from your days — you know of course, that we still have masses — regard you as our actual ruler. Just as a great number of people in your days regarded the

Crown as the ruler. They are discontented — the masses all over the earth — with the rule of your Trustees. For the most part it is the old discontent, the old quarrel of the common man with his commonness — the misery of work and discipline and unfitness. But your Trustees have ruled ill. In certain matters, in the administration of the Labour Companies, for example, they have been unwise. They have given endless opportunities. Already we of the popular party were agitating for reforms — when your waking came. Came! If it had been contrived it could not have come more opportunity." He smiled. "The public mind, making no allowance for your years of quiescence, had already hit on the thought of waking you and appealing to you, and — Flash!"

He indicated the outbreak by a gesture, and Graham moved his head to show that he understood.

"The Council muddled — quarreled. They always do. They could not decide what to do with you. You know how they imprisoned you?"

"I see. I see. And now — we win?"

"We win. Indeed we win. Tonight, in five swift hours. Suddenly we struck everywhere. The windvane people, the Labour Company and its millions, burst the bonds. We got the pull of the aeropiles."

He paused. "Yes," said Graham, guessing that aeropile meant flying machine.

"That was, of course, essential. Or they could have got away. All the city rose, every third man almost was in it! All the blue, all the public services, save only just a few aeronauts and about half the red police. You were rescued, and their own police of the Ways — not half of them could be massed at the Council House — have been broken up, disarmed or killed. All London is ours — now. Only the Council House remains.

"Half of those who remain to them of the red police were lost in that foolish attempt to recapture you. They lost their heads when they lost you. They flung all they had at the theatre. We cut them off from the Council House there. Truly tonight has been a night of victory. Everywhere your star has blazed. A day ago — the White Council ruled as it has ruled for a gross of years, for a century and a half of years, and then, with only a little whispering, a covert arming here

and there, suddenly — So!”

“I am very ignorant,” said Graham. “I suppose — . I do not clearly understand the conditions of this fighting. If you could explain. Where is the Council? Where is the fight?”

Ostrog stepped across the room, something clicked, and suddenly, save for an oval glow, they were in darkness. For a moment Graham was puzzled.

Then he saw that the cloudy grey disc had taken depth and colour, had assumed the appearance of an oval window looking out upon a strange unfamiliar scene.

At the first glance he was unable to guess what this scene might be. It was a daylight scene, the daylight of a wintry day, grey and clear. Across the picture and halfway as it seemed between him and the remoter view, a stout cable of twisted white wire stretched vertically. Then he perceived that the rows of great windwheels he saw, the wide intervals, the occasional gulfs of darkness, were akin to those through which he had fled from the Council House. He distinguished an orderly file of red figures marching across an open space between files of men in black, and realised before Ostrog spoke that he was looking down on the upper surface of latter-day London. The overnight snows had gone. He judged that this mirror was some modern replacement of the camera obscura, but that matter was not explained to him. He saw that though the file of red figures was trotting from left to right, yet they were passing out of the picture to the left. He wondered momentarily, and then saw that the picture was passing slowly, panorama fashion, across the oval.

“In a moment you will see the fighting,” said Ostrog at his elbow. “Those fellows in red you notice are prisoners. This is the roof space of London — all the houses are practically continuous now. The streets and public squares are covered in. The gaps and chasms of your time have disappeared.”

Something out of focus obliterated half the picture. Its form suggested a man. There was a gleam of metal, a flash, something that swept across the oval, as the eyelid of a bird sweeps across its eye, and the picture was clear again. And now Graham beheld men running down among the wind-wheels, pointing weapons from which jetted out little smoky flashes. They swarmed thicker and

thicker to the right, gesticulating — it might be they were shouting, but of that the picture told nothing. They and the windwheels passed slowly and steadily across the field of the mirror.

"Now," said Ostrog, "comes the Council House," and slowly a black edge crept into view and gathered Graham's attention. Soon it was no longer an edge but a cavity, a huge blackened space amidst the clustering edifices, and from it thin spires of smoke rose into the pallid winter sky. Gaunt ruinous masses of the building, mighty truncated piers and girders, rose dismally out of this cavernous darkness. And over these vestiges of some splendid place, countless minute men were clambering, leaping, swarming.

"This is the Council House," said Ostrog. "Their last stronghold. And the fools wasted enough ammunition to hold out for a month in blowing up the buildings all about them — to stop our attack. You heard the smash? It shattered half the brittle glass in the city."

And while he spoke, Graham saw that beyond this sea of ruins, overhanging it and rising to a great height, was a ragged mass of white building. This mass had been isolated by the ruthless destruction of its surroundings. Black gaps marked the passages the disaster had torn apart; big halls had been slashed open and the decoration of their interiors showed dismally in the wintry dawn, and down the jagged wall hung festoons of divided cables and twisted ends of lines and metallic rods. And amidst all the vast details moved little red specks, the red-clothed defenders of the Council. Every now and then faint flashes illuminated the bleak shadows. At the first sight it seemed to Graham that an attack upon this isolated white building was in progress, but then he perceived that the party of the revolt was not advancing, but sheltered amidst the colossal wreckage that encircled this last ragged stronghold of the red-garbed men, was keeping up a fitful firing.

And not ten hours ago he had stood beneath the ventilating fans in a little chamber within that remote building wondering what was happening in the world!

Looking more attentively as this warlike episode moved silently across the centre of the mirror, Graham saw that the white building was surrounded on every side by ruins, and Ostrog proceeded to describe in concise phrases how its defenders had sought by such

destruction to isolate themselves from a storm. He spoke of the loss of men that huge downfall had entailed in an indifferent tone. He indicated an improvised mortuary among the wreckage showed ambulances swarming like cheese-mites along a ruinous groove that had once been a street of moving ways. He was more interested in pointing out the parts of the Council House, the distribution of the besiegers. In a little while the civil contest that had convulsed London was no longer a mystery to Graham. It was no tumultuous revolt had occurred that night, no equal warfare, but a splendidly organised *coup d'etat*. Ostrog's grasp of details was astonishing; he seemed to know the business of even the smallest knot of black and red specks that crawled amidst these places.

He stretched a huge black arm across the luminous picture, and showed the room whence Graham had escaped, and across the chasm of ruins the course of his flight. Graham recognised the gulf across which the gutter ran, and the wind-wheels where he had crouched from the flying machine. The rest of his path had succumbed to the explosion. He looked again at the Council House, and it was already half hidden, and on the right a hillside with a cluster of domes and pinnacles, hazy, dim and distant, was gliding into view.

"And the Council is really overthrown?" he said.

"Overthrown," said Ostrog.

"And I — . Is it indeed true that I?"

"You are Master of the World."

"But that white flag—"

"That is the flag of the Council — the flag of the Rule of the World. It will fall. The fight is over. Their attack on the theatre was their last frantic struggle. They have only a thousand men or so, and some of these men will be disloyal. They have little ammunition. And we are reviving the ancient arts. We are casting guns."

"But — help. Is this city the world?"

"Practically this is all they have left to them of their empire. Abroad the cities have either revolted with us or wait the issue. Your awakening has perplexed them, paralysed them."

"But haven't the Council flying machines? Why is there no fighting with them?"

"They had. But the greater part of the aeronauts were in the revolt

with us. They wouldn't take the risk of fighting on our side, but they would not stir against us. We had to get a pull with the aeronauts. Quite half were with us, and the others knew it. Directly they knew you had got away, those looking for you dropped. We killed the man who shot at you — an hour ago. And we occupied the flying stages at the outset in every city we could, and so stopped and captured the airplanes, and as for the little flying machines that turned out — for some did — we kept up too straight and steady a fire for them to get near the Council House. If they dropped they couldn't rise again, because there's no clear space about there for them to get up. Several we have smashed, several others have dropped and surrendered, the rest have gone off to the Continent to find a friendly city if they can before their fuel runs out. Most of these men were only too glad to be taken prisoner and kept out of harm's way. Upsetting in a flying machine isn't a very attractive prospect. There's no chance for the Council that way. Its days are done."

He laughed and turned to the oval reflection again to show Graham what he meant by flying stages. Even the four nearer ones were remote and obscured by a thin morning haze. But Graham could perceive they were very vast structures, judged even by the standard of the things about them.

And then as these dim shapes passed to the left there came again the sight of the expanse across which the disarmed men in red had been marching. And then the black ruins, and then again the beleaguered white fastness of the Council. It appeared no longer a ghostly pile, but glowing amber in the sunlight, for a cloud shadow had passed. About it the pigmy struggle still hung in suspense, but now the red defenders were no longer firing.

So, in a dusky stillness, the man from the nineteenth century saw the closing scene of the great revolt, the forcible establishment of his rule. With a quality of startling discovery it came to him that this was his world, and not that other he had left behind; that this was no spectacle to culminate and cease; that in this world lay whatever life was still before him, lay all his duties and dangers and responsibilities. He turned with fresh questions. Ostrog began to answer them, and then broke off abruptly. "But these things I must explain more fully later. At present there are — duties. The people

are coming by the moving ways towards this ward from every part of the city — the markets and theatres are densely crowded. You are just in time for them. They are clamouring to see you. And abroad they want to see you. Paris, New York, Chicago, Denver, Capri — thousands of cities are up and in a tumult, undecided, and clamouring to see you. They have clamoured that you should be awakened for years, and now it is done they will scarcely believe—"

"But surely — I can't go..."

Ostrog answered from the other side of the room, and the picture on the oval disc paled and vanished as the light jerked back again. "There are kinetotele-photographs," he said. "As you bow to the people here — all over the world myriads of myriads of people, packed and still in darkened halls, will see you also. In black and white, of course — not like this. And you will hear their shouts reinforcing the shouting in the hall.

"And there is an optical contrivance we shall use," said Ostrog, "used by some of the posturers and women dancers. It may be novel to you. You stand in a very bright light, and they see not you but a magnified image of you thrown on a screen — so that even the furtherest man in the remotest gallery can, if he chooses, count your eyelashes."

Graham clutched desperately at one of the questions in his mind. "What is the population of London?"

"Eight and twaindy myriads."

"Eight and what?"

"More than thirty-three millions."

These figures went beyond Graham's imagination "You will be expected to say something," said Ostrog. "Not what you used to call a Speech, but what our people call a Word — just one sentence, six or seven words. Something formal. If I might suggest — I have awakened and my heart is with you. That is the sort of thing they want."

"What was that?" asked Graham.

"'I am awakened and my heart is with you.' And bow — bow royally. But first we must get you black robes — for black is your colour. Do you mind? And then they will disperse to their homes."

Graham hesitated. "I am in your hands," he said.

Ostrog was clearly of that opinion. He thought for a moment, turned to the curtain and called brief directions to some unseen attendants. Almost immediately a black robe, the very fellow of the black robe Graham had worn in the theatre, was brought. And as he threw it about his shoulders there came from the room without the shrilling of a high-pitched bell. Ostrog turned in interrogation to the attendant, then suddenly seemed to change his mind, pulled the curtain aside and disappeared.

For a moment Graham stood with the deferential attendant listening to Ostrog's retreating steps. There was a sound of quick question and answer and of men running. The curtain was snatched back and Ostrog reappeared, his massive face glowing with excitement. He crossed the room in a stride, clicked the room into darkness, gripped Grahams arm and pointed to the mirror.

"Even as we turned away," he said.

Graham saw his index finger, black and colossal, above the mirrored Council House. For a moment he did not understand. And then he perceived that the flagstaff that had carried the white banner was bare.

"Do you mean — ?" he began.

"The Council has surrendered. Its rule is at an end for evermore."

"Look!" and Ostrog pointed to a coil of black that crept in little jerks up the vacant flagstaff, unfolding as it rose.

The oval picture paled as Lincoln pulled the curtain aside and entered.

"They are clamourous," he said.

Ostrog kept his grip of Graham's arm.

"We have raised the people," he said. "We have given them arms. For today at least their wishes must be law."

Lincoln held the Curtain open for Graham and Ostrog to pass through.

On his way to the markets Graham had a transitory glance of a long narrow white-walled room in which men in the universal blue canvas were carrying covered things like biers, and about which men in medical purple hurried to and fro. From this room came groans and wailing. He had an impression of an empty blood-stained couch, of men on other couches, bandaged and blood-stained. It was just a

glimpse from a railed footway and then a buttress hid the place and they were going on towards the markets.

The roar of the multitude was near now: it leapt to thunder. And, arresting his attention, a fluttering of black banners, the waving of blue canvas and brown rags, and the swarming vastness of the theatre near the public markets came into view down a long passage. The picture opened out. He perceived they were entering the great theatre of his first appearance, the great theatre he had last seen as a chequer-work of glare and blackness in his flight from the red police. This time he entered it along a gallery at a level high above the stage. The place was now brilliantly lit again. He sought the gangway up which he had fled, but he could not tell it from among its dozens of fellows; nor could he see anything of the smashed seats, deflated cushions, and such like traces of the fight because of the density of the people. Except the stage the whole place was closely packed. Looking down the effect was a vast area of stippled pink, each dot a still upturned face regarding him. At his appearance with Ostrog the cheering died away, the singing died away, a common interest stilled and unified the disorder. It seemed as though every individual of those myriads was watching him.

CHAPTER XIII. THE END OF THE OLD ORDER

So far as Graham was able to judge, it was near midday when the white banner of the Council fell. But some hours had to elapse before it was possible to effect the formal capitulation, and so after he had spoken his "Word" he retired to his new apartments in the wind-vane offices. The continuous excitement of the last twelve hours had left him inordinately fatigued, even his curiosity was exhausted; for a space he sat inert and passive with open eyes, and for a space he slept. He was roused by two medical attendants, come prepared with stimulants to sustain him through the next occasion. After he had taken their drugs and bathed by their advice in cold water, he felt a rapid return of interest and energy, and was presently able and willing to accompany Ostrog through several miles (as it seemed) of passages, lifts, and slides to the closing scene of the White Council's rule.

The way ran deviously through a maze of buildings. They came at last to a passage that curved about, and showed broadening before him an oblong opening, clouds hot with sunset, and the ragged skyline of the ruinous Council House. A tumult of shouts came drifting up to him. In another moment they had come out high up on the brow of the cliff of torn buildings that overhung the wreckage. The vast area opened to Graham's eyes, none the less strange and wonderful for the remote view he had had of it in the oval mirror.

This rudely amphitheatral space seemed now the better part of a mile to its outer edge. It was gold lit on the left hand, catching the sunlight, and below and to the right clear and cold in the shadow. Above the shadowy grey Council House that stood in the midst of it, the great black banner of the surrender still hung in sluggish folds against the blazing sunset. Severed rooms, halls and passages gaped strangely, broken masses of metal projected dismally from the complex wreckage, vast masses of twisted cable dropped like tangled seaweed, and from its base came a tumult of innumerable voices, violent concussions, and the sound of trumpets. All about this great

white pile was a ring of desolation; the smashed and blackened masses, the gaunt foundations and ruinous lumber of the fabric that had been destroyed by the Council's orders, skeletons of girders, Titanic masses of wall, forests of stout pillars. Amongst the sombre wreckage beneath, running water flashed and glistened, and far away across the space, out of the midst of a vague vast mass of buildings, there thrust the twisted end of a water-main, two hundred feet in the air, thunderously spouting a shining cascade. And everywhere great multitudes of people.

Wherever there was space and foothold, people swarmed, little people, small and minutely clear, except where the sunset touched them to indistinguishable gold. They clambered up the tottering walls, they clung in wreaths and groups about the high-standing pillars. They swarmed along the edges of the circle of ruins. The air was full of their shouting, and were pressing and swaying towards the central space.

The upper storeys of the Council House seemed deserted, not a human being was visible. Only the drooping banner of the surrender hung heavily against the light. The dead were within the Council House, or hidden by the swarming people, or carried away. Graham could see only a few neglected bodies in gaps and corners of the ruins, and amidst the flowing water.

"Will you let them see you, Sire?" said Ostrog. "They are very anxious to see you."

Graham hesitated, and then walked forward to where the broken verge of wall dropped sheer. He I stood looking down, a lonely, tall, black figure against the sky.

Very slowly the swarming ruins became aware of him. And as they did so little bands of black-uniformed men appeared remotely, thrusting through the crowds towards the Council House. He saw little black heads become pink, looking at him, saw by that means a wave of recognition sweep across the space. It occurred to him that he should accord them some recognition. He held up his arm, then pointed to the Council House and dropped his hand. The voices below became unanimous, gathered volume, came up to him as multitudinous wavelets of cheering.

The western sky was a pallid bluish green, and Jupiter shone high

in the south, before the capitulation was accomplished. Above was a slow insensible change, the advance of night serene and beautiful; below was hurry, excitement, conflicting orders, pauses, spasmodic developments of organisation, a vast ascending clamour and confusion. Before the Council came out, toiling perspiring men, directed by a conflict of shouts, carried forth hundreds of those who had perished in the hand-to-hand conflict within those long passages and chambers.

Guards in black lined the way that the Council would come, and as far as the eye could reach into the hazy blue twilight of the ruins, and swarming now at every possible point in the captured Council House and along the shattered cliff of its circumadjacent buildings, were innumerable people, and their voices even when they were not cheering, were as the soughing of the sea upon a pebble beach. Ostrog had chosen a huge commanding pile of crushed and overthrown masonry, and on this a stage of timbers and metal girders was being hastily constructed. Its essential parts were complete, but humming and clangorous machinery still glared fitfully in the shadows beneath this temporary edifice.

The stage had a small higher portion on which Graham stood with Ostrog and Lincoln close beside him, a little in advance of a group of minor officers. A broader lower stage surrounded this quarter deck, and on this were the black-uniformed guards of the revolt armed with the little green weapons whose very names Graham still did not know. Those standing about him perceived that his eyes wandered perpetually from the swarming people in the twilight ruins about him to the darkling mass of the White Council House, whence the Trustees would presently come, and to the gaunt cliffs of ruin that encircled him, and so back to the people. The voices of the crowd swelled to a deafening tumult.

He saw the Councillors first afar off in the glare of one of the temporary lights that marked their path, a little group of white figures blinking in a black archway. In the Council House they had been in darkness. He watched them approaching, drawing nearer past first this blazing electric star and then that; the minatory roar of the crowd over whom their power had lasted for a hundred and fifty years marched along beside them. As they drew still nearer their faces

came out weary, white and anxious. He saw them blinking up through the glare about him and Ostrog. He contrasted their strange cold looks in the Hall of Atlas.... Presently he could recognise several of them; the man who had rapped the table at Howard, a burly man with a red beard, and one delicate-featured, short, dark man with a peculiarly long skull. He noted that two were whispering together and looking behind him at Ostrog. Next there came a tall, dark and handsome man, walking downcast. Abruptly he glanced up, his eyes touched Graham for a moment, and passed beyond him to Ostrog. The way that had been made for them was so contrived that they had to march past and curve about before they came to the sloping path of planks that ascended to the stage where their surrender was to be made.

"The Master, the Master! God and the Master," shouted the people. "To hell with the Council!" Graham looked at their multitudes, receding beyond counting into a shouting haze, and then at Ostrog beside him, white and steadfast and still. His eye went again to the little group of White Councillors. And then he looked up at the familiar quiet stars overhead. The marvellous element in his fate was suddenly vivid. Could that be his indeed, that little life in his memory two hundred years gone by — and this as well?

CHAPTER XIV. FROM THE CROW'S NEST

And so after strange delays and through an avenue of doubt and battle, this man from the nineteenth century came at last to his position at the head of that complex world.

At first when he rose from the long deep sleep that followed his rescue and the surrender of the Council, he did not recognise his surroundings. By an effort he gained a clue in his mind, and all that had happened came back to him, at first with a quality of insincerity like a story heard, like something read out of a book. And even before his memories were clear, the exultation of his escape, the wonder of his prominence were back in his mind. He was owner of half the world; Master of the Earth. This new great age was in the completest sense his. He no longer hoped to discover his experiences a dream; he became anxious now to convince himself that they were real.

An obsequious valet assisted him to dress under the direction of a dignified chief attendant, a little man whose face proclaimed him Japanese, albeit he spoke English like an Englishman. From the latter he learnt something of the state of affairs. Already the revolution was an accepted fact; already business was being resumed throughout the city. Abroad the downfall of the Council had been received for the most part with delight. Nowhere was the Council popular, and the thousand cities of Western America, after two hundred years still jealous of New York, London, and the East, had risen almost unanimously two days before at the news of Graham's imprisonment. Paris was fighting within itself. The rest of the world hung in suspense.

While he was breaking his fast, the sound of a telephone bell jetted from a corner, and his chief attendant called his attention to the voice of Ostrog making polite enquiries. Graham interrupted his refreshment to reply. Very shortly Lincoln arrived, and Graham at once expressed a strong desire to talk to people and to be shown more of the new life that was opening before him. Lincoln informed him that in three hours' time a representative gathering of officials and their wives would be held in the state apartments of the wind-

vane Chief. Graham's desire to traverse the ways of the city was, however, at present impossible, because of the enormous excitement of the people. It was, however, quite possible for him to take a bird's eye view of the city from the crow's nest of the windvane keeper. To this accordingly Graham was conducted by his attendant. Lincoln, with a graceful compliment to the attendant, apologised for not accompanying them, on account of the present pressure of administrative work.

Higher even than the most gigantic wind-wheels hung this crow's nest, a clear thousand feet above the roofs, a little disc-shaped speck on a spear of metallic filigree, cable stayed. To its summit Graham was drawn in a little wire-hung cradle. Halfway down the frail-seeming stem was a light gallery about which hung a cluster of tubes — minute they looked from above — rotating slowly on the ring of its outer rail. These were the specula, *en rapport* with the wind-vane keeper's mirrors, in one of which Ostrog had shown him the coming of his rule. His Japanese attendant ascended before him and they spent nearly an hour asking and answering questions.

It was a day full of the promise and quality of spring. The touch of the wind warmed. The sky was an intense blue and the vast expanse of London shone dazzling under the morning sun. The air was clear of smoke and haze, sweet as the air of a mountain glen.

Save for the irregular oval of ruins about the House of the Council and the black flag of the surrender that fluttered there, the mighty city seen from above showed few signs of the swift revolution that had, to his imagination, in one night and one day, changed the destinies of the world. A multitude of people still swarmed over these ruins, and the huge openwork stagings in the distance from which started in times of peace the service of aeroplanes to the various great cities of Europe and America, were also black with the victors. Across a narrow way of planking raised on trestles that crossed the ruins a crowd of workmen were busy restoring the connection between the cables and wires of the Council House and the rest of the city, preparatory to the transfer thither of Ostrog's headquarters from the Wind-Vane buildings.

For the rest the luminous expanse was undisturbed. So vast was its serenity in comparison with the areas of disturbance, that

presently Graham, looking beyond them, could almost forget the thousands of men lying out of sight in the artificial glare within the quasi-subterranean labyrinth, dead or dying of the overnight wounds, forget the improvised wards with the hosts of surgeons, nurses, and bearers feverishly busy, forget, indeed, all the wonder, consternation and novelty under the electric lights. Down there in the hidden ways of the anthill he knew that the revolution triumphed, that black everywhere carried the day, black favours, black banners, black festoons across the streets. And out here, under the fresh sunlight, beyond the crater of the fight, as if nothing had happened to the earth, the forest of Wind Vanes that had grown from one or two while the Council had ruled, roared peacefully upon their incessant duty.

Far away, spiked, jagged and indented by the wind vanes, the Surrey Hills rose blue and faint; to the north and nearer, the sharp contours of Highgate and Muswell Hill were similarly jagged. And all over the countryside, he knew, on every crest and hill, where once the hedges had interlaced, and cottages, churches, inns, and farmhouses had nestled among their trees, wind wheels similar to those he saw and bearing like vast advertisements, gaunt and distinctive symbols of the new age, cast their whirling shadows and stored incessantly the energy that flowed away incessantly through all the arteries of the city. And underneath these wandered the countless flocks and herds of the British Food Trust with their lonely guards and keepers.

Not a familiar outline anywhere broke the cluster of gigantic shapes below. St. Paul's he knew survived, and many of the old buildings in Westminster, embedded out of sight, arched over and covered in among the giant growths of this great age. The Themes, too, made no fall and gleam of silver to break the wilderness of the city; the thirsty water mains drank up every drop of its waters before they reached the walls. Its bed and estuary scoured and sunken, was now a canal of sea water and a race of grimy bargemen brought the heavy materials of trade from the Pool thereby beneath the very feet of the workers. Faint and dim in the eastward between earth and sky hung the clustering masts of the colossal shipping in the Pool. For all the heavy traffic, for which there was no need of haste, came in gigantic sailing ships from the ends of the earth, and the heavy goods

for which there was urgency in mechanical ships of a smaller swifter sort.

And to the south over the hills, came vast aqueducts with sea water for the sewers and in three separate directions, ran pallid lines — the roads, stippled with moving grey specks. On the first occasion that offered he was determined to go out and see these roads. That would come after the flying ship he was presently to try. His attendant officer described them as a pair of gently curving surfaces a hundred yards wide, each one for the traffic going in one direction, and made of a substance called Eadhamite — an artificial substance, so far as he could gather, resembling toughened glass. Along this shot a strange traffic of narrow rubber-shod vehicles, great single wheels, two and four wheeled vehicles, sweeping along at velocities of from one to six miles a minute. Railroads had vanished; a few embankments remained as rust-crowned trenches here and there. Some few formed the cores of Eadhamite ways.

Among the first things to strike his attention had been the great fleets of advertisement balloons and kites that receded in irregular vistas northward and southward along the lines of the aeroplane journeys. No aeroplanes were to be seen. Their passages had ceased, and only one little-seeming aeropile circled high in the blue distance above the Surrey Hills, an unimpressive soaring speck.

A thing Graham had already learnt, and which he found very hard to imagine, was that nearly all the towns in the country, and almost all the villages, had disappeared. Here and there only, he understood, some gigantic hotel-like edifice stood amid square miles of some single cultivation and preserved the name of a town — as Bournemouth, Wareham, or Swanage. Yet the officer had speedily convinced him how inevitable such a change had been. The old order had dotted the country with farmhouses, and every two or three miles was the ruling landlord's estate, and the place of the inn and cobbler, the grocer's shop and church — the village. Every eight miles or so was the country town, where lawyer, corn merchant, wool-stapler, saddler, veterinary surgeon, doctor, draper, milliner and so forth lived. Every eight miles — simply because that eight mile marketing journey, four there and back, was as much as was comfortable for the farmer. But directly the railways came into play, and after them the

light railways, and all the swift new motor cars that had replaced waggons and horses, and so soon as the high roads began to be made of wood, and rubber, and Eadhamite, and all sorts of elastic durable substances — the necessity of having such frequent market towns disappeared. And the big towns grew. They drew the worker with the gravitational force of seemingly endless work, the employer with their suggestions of an infinite ocean of labour.

And as the standard of comfort rose, as the complexity of the mechanism of living increased life in the country had become more and more costly, or narrow and impossible. The disappearance of vicar and squire, the extinction of the general practitioner by the city specialist, had robbed the village of its last touch of culture. After telephone, kinematograph and phonograph had replaced newspaper, book, schoolmaster, and letter, to live outside the range of the electric cables was to live an isolated savage. In the country were neither means of being clothed nor fed (according to the refined conceptions of the time), no efficient doctors for an emergency, no company and no pursuits.

Moreover, mechanical appliances in agriculture made one engineer the equivalent of thirty labourers. So, inverting the condition of the city clerk in the days when London was scarce inhabitable because of the coaly foulness of its air, the labourers now came hurrying by road or air to the city and its life and delights at night to leave it again in the morning. The city had swallowed up humanity; man had entered upon a new stage in his development. First had come the nomad, the hunter, then had followed the agriculturist of the agricultural state, whose towns and cities and ports were but the headquarters and markets of the countryside. And now, logical consequence of an epoch of invention, was this huge new aggregation of men. Save London, there were only four other cities in Britain — Edinburgh, Portsmouth, Manchester and Shrewsbury. Such things as these, simple statements of fact though they were to contemporary men, strained Graham's imagination to picture. And when he glanced "over beyond there" at the strange things that existed on the Continent, it failed him altogether.

He had a vision of city beyond city, cities on great plains, cities beside great rivers, vast cities along the sea margin, cities girdled by

snowy mountains. Over a great part of the earth the English tongue was spoken; taken together with its Spanish American and Hindoo and Negro and "Pidgin" dialects, it was the everyday language of two-thirds of the people of the earth. On the Continent, save as remote and curious survivals, three other languages alone held sway — German, which reached to Antioch and Genoa and jostled Spanish-English at Gdiz, a Gallicised Russian which met the Indian English in Persia and Kurdistan and the "Pidgin" English in Pekin, and French still clear and brilliant, the language of lucidity, which shared the Mediterranean with the Indian English and German and reached through a negro dialect to the Congo.

And everywhere now, through the city-set earth, save in the administered "black belt" territories of the tropics, the same cosmopolitan social organisation prevailed, and everywhere from Pole to Equator his property and his responsibilities extended. The whole world was civilised; the whole world dwelt in cities; the whole world was property. Over the British Empire and throughout America his ownership was scarcely disguised, Congress and Parliament were usually regarded as antique, curious gatherings. And even in the two Empires of Russia and Germany, the influence of his wealth was conceivably of enormous weight. There, of course, came problems — possibilities, but, uplifted as he was, even Russia and Germany seemed sufficiently remote. And of the quality of the black belt administration, and of what that might mean for him he thought, after the fashion of his former days, not at all. That it should hang like a threat over the spacious vision before him could not enter his nineteenth century mind. But his mind turned at once from the scenery to the thought of a vanished dread. "What of the yellow peril?" he asked and Asano made him explain. The Chinese spectre had vanished. Chinaman and European were at peace. The twentieth century had discovered with reluctant certainty that the average Chinaman was as civilised, more moral, and far more intelligent than the average European serf, and had repeated on a gigantic scale the fraternisation of Scot and Englishman that happened in the seventeenth century. As Asano put it; "They thought it over. They found we were white men after all." Graham turned again to the view and his thoughts took a new direction.

Out of the dim south-west, glittering and strange, voluptuous, and in some way terrible, shone those Pleasure Cities, of which the kinematograph-phonograph and the old man in the street had spoken. Strange places reminiscent of the legendary Sybaris, cities of art and beauty, mercenary art and mercenary beauty, sterile wonderful cities of motion and music, whither repaired all who profited by the fierce, inglorious, economic struggle that went on in the glaring labyrinth below.

Fierce he knew it was. How fierce he could judge from the fact that these latter-day people referred back to the England of the nineteenth century as the figure of an idyllic easy-going life. He turned his eyes to the scene immediately before him again, trying to conceive the big factories of that intricate maze.

Northward he knew were the potters, makers not only of earthenware and china, but of the kindred pastes and compounds a subtler mineralogical chemistry had devised; there were the makers of statuettes and wall ornaments and much intricate furniture; there too were the factories where feverishly competitive authors devised their phonograph discourses and advertisements and arranged the groupings and developments for their perpetually startling and novel kinematographic dramatic works. Thence, too, flashed the world-wide messages, the world-wide falsehoods of the news-tellers, the chargers of the telephonic machines that had replaced the newspapers of the past.

To the westward beyond the smashed Council House were the voluminous offices of municipal control and government; and to the eastward, towards the port, the trading quarters, the huge public markets, the theatres, houses of resort, betting palaces, miles of billiard saloons, baseball and football circuses, wild beast rings and the innumerable temples of the Christian and quasi-Christian sects, the Mahomedans, Buddhists, Gnostics, Spook Worshippers, the Incubus Worshippers, the Furniture Worshippers, and so forth; and to the south again a vast manufacture of textiles, pickles, wines and condiments. And from point to point tore the countless multitudes along the roaring mechanical ways. A gigantic hive, of which the winds were tireless servants, and the ceaseless wind-vanes an appropriate crown and symbol.

He thought of the unprecedented population that had been sucked up by this sponge of halls and galleries — the thirty-three million lives that were playing out each its own brief ineffectual drama below him, and the complacency that the brightness of the day and the space and splendour of the view, and above all the sense of his own importance had begotten, dwindled and perished. Looking down from this height over the city it became at last possible to conceive this overwhelming multitude of thirty-three millions, the reality of the responsibility he would take upon himself, the vastness of the human Maelstrom over which his slender kingship hung.

He tried to figure the individual life. It astonished him to realise how little the common man had changed in spite of the visible change in his conditions. Life and property, indeed, were secure from violence almost all over the world, zymotic diseases, bacterial diseases of all sorts had practically vanished, everyone had a sufficiency of food and clothing, was warmed in the city ways and sheltered from the weather — so much the almost mechanical progress of science and the physical organisation of society had accomplished. But the crowd, he was already beginning to discover, was a crowd still, helpless in the hands of demagogue and organiser, individually cowardly, individually swayed by appetite, collectively incalculable. The memory of countless figures in pale blue canvas came before his mind. Millions of such men and women below him, he knew, had never been out of the city, had never seen beyond the little round of unintelligent grudging participation in the world's business, and unintelligent dissatisfied sharing in its tawdrier pleasures. He thought of the hopes of his vanished contemporaries, and for a moment the dream of London in Morris's quaint old *News from Nowhere*, and the perfect land of Hudson's beautiful *Crystal Age* — appeared before him in an atmosphere of infinite loss. He thought of his own hopes.

For in the latter days of that passionate life that lay now so far behind him, the conception of a free and equal manhood had become a very real thing to him. He had hoped, as indeed his age had hoped, rashly taking it for granted, that the sacrifice of the many to the few would some day cease, that a day was near when every child born of woman should have a fair and assured chance of happiness. And

here, after two hundred years, the same hope, still unfulfilled, cried passionately through the city. After two hundred years, he knew, greater than ever, grown with the city to gigantic proportions, were poverty and helpless labour and all the sorrows of his time.

Already he knew something of the history of the intervening years. He had heard now of the moral decay that had followed the collapse of supernatural religion in the minds of ignoble man, the decline of public honour, the ascendency of wealth. For men who had lost their belief in God had still kept their faith in property, and wealth ruled a venial world.

His Japanese attendant, Asano, in expounding the political history of the intervening two centuries, drew an apt image from a seed eaten by insect parasites. First there is the original seed, ripening vigorously enough. And then comes some insect and lays an egg under the skin, and behold! in a little while the seed is a hollow shape with an active grub inside that has eaten out its substance. And then comes some secondary parasite, some ichneumon fly, and lays an egg within this grub, and behold! that, too, is a hollow shape, and the new living thing is inside its predecessor's skin which itself is snug within the seed coat. And the seed coat still keeps its shape, most people think it a seed still, and for all one knows it may still think itself a seed, vigorous and alive. "Your Victorian kingdom," said Asano, "was like that — kingship with the heart eaten out. The landowners — the barons and gentry — began ages ago with King John; there were lapses, but they beheaded King Charles, and ended practically with King George mere husk of a king... the real power in the hands of their parliament. But the Parliament — the organ of the land-holding tenant-ruling gentry — did not keep its power long. The change had already come in the nineteenth century. The franchises had been broadened until it included masses of ignorant men, 'urban myriads,' who went in their featureless thousands to vote together. And the natural consequence of a swarming constituency is the rule of the party organisation. Power was passing even in the Victorian time to the party machinery, secret, complex, and corrupt. Very speedily power was in the hands of great men of business who financed the machines. A time came when the real power and interest of the Empire rested visibly between the two party councils, ruling

by newspapers and electoral organisations — two small groups of rich and able men, working at first in opposition, then presently together."

There was a reaction of a genteel ineffectual sort. There were numberless books in existence, Asano said, to prove that — the publication of some of them was as early as Graham's sleep — a whole literature of reaction in fact. The party of the reaction seems to have locked itself into its study and rebelled with unflinching determination — on paper. The urgent necessity of either capturing or depriving the party councils of power is a common suggestion underlying all the thoughtful work of the early twentieth century, both in America and England. In most of these things America was a little earlier than England, though both countries drove the same way.

That counter-revolution never came. It could never organise and keep pure. There was not enough of the old sentimentality, the old faith in righteousness, left among men. Any organisation that became big enough to influence the polls became complex enough to be undermined, broken up, or bought outright by capable rich men. Socialistic and Popular, Reactionary and Purity Parties were all at last mere Stock Exchange counters, selling their principles to pay for their electioneering. And the great concern of the rich was naturally to keep property intact, the board clear for the game of trade. Just as the feudal concern had been to keep the board clear for hunting and war. The whole world was exploited, a battle field of businesses; and financial convulsions, the scourge of currency manipulation, tariff wars, made more human misery during the twentieth century — because the wretchedness was dreary life instead of speedy death — than had war, pestilence and famine, in the darkest hours of earlier history.

His own part in the development of this time he now knew clearly enough. Through the successive phases in the development of this mechanical civilisation, aiding and presently directing its development, there had grown a new power, the Council, the board of his trustees. At first it had been a mere chance union of the millions of Isbister and Warming, a mere property holding company, the creation of two childless testators' whims, but the collective

talent of its first constitution had speedily guided it to a vast influence, until by title deed, loan and share, under a hundred disguises and pseudonyms it had ramified through the fabric of the American and English States.

Wielding an enormous influence and patronage, the Council had early assumed a political aspect; and in its development it had continually used its wealth to tip the beam of political decisions and its political advantages to grasp yet more and more wealth. At last the party organisations of two hemispheres were in its hands; it became an inner council of political control. Its last struggle was with the tacit alliance of the great Jewish families. But these families were linked only by a feeble sentiment, at any time inheritance might fling a huge fragment of their resources to a minor, a woman or a fool, marriages and legacies alienated hundreds of thousands at one blow. The Council had no such breach in its continuity. Steadily, steadfastly it grew.

The original Council was not simply twelve men of exceptional ability; they fused, it was a council of genius. It struck boldly for riches, for political influence, and the two subserved each other. With amazing foresight it spent great sums of money on the art of flying, holding that invention back against an hour foreseen. It used the patent laws, and a thousand half-legal expedients, to hamper all investigators who refused to work with it. In the old days it never missed a capable man. It paid his price. Its policy in those days was vigorous — unerring, and against it as it grew steadily and incessantly was only the chaotic selfish rule of the casually rich. In a hundred years Graham had become almost exclusive owner of Africa, of South America, of France, of London, of England and all its influence — for all practical purposes, that is — a power in North America — then the dominant power in America. The Council bought and organised China, drilled Asia, crippled the Old World empires, undermined them financially, fought and defeated them.

And this spreading usurpation of the world was so dexterously performed — a proteus — hundreds of banks, companies, syndicates, masked the Council's operations — that it was already far advanced before common men suspected the tyranny that had come. The Council never hesitated, never faltered. Means of communication,

land, buildings, governments, municipalities, the territorial companies of the tropics, every human enterprise, it gathered greedily. And it drilled and marshalled its men, its railway police, its roadway police, its house guards, and drain and cable guards, its hosts of land-workers. Their unions it did not fight, but it undermined and betrayed and bought them. It bought the world at last. And, finally, its culminating stroke was the introduction of flying.

When the Council, in conflict with the workers in some of its huge monopolies, did something flagrantly illegal and that without even the ordinary civility of bribery, the old Law, alarmed for the profits of its complaisance, looked about it for weapons. But there were no more armies, no fighting navies; the age of Peace had come. The only possible war ships were the great steam vessels of the Council's Navigation Trust. The police forces they controlled; the police of the railways, of the ships, of their agricultural estates, their time-keepers and order-keepers, outnumbered the neglected little forces of the old country and municipal organisations ten to one. And they produced flying machines. There were men alive still who could remember the last great debate in the London House of Commons — the legal party, the party against the Council was in a minority, but it made a desperate fight — and how the members came crowding out upon the terrace to see these great unfamiliar winged shapes circling quietly overhead. The Council had soared to its power. The last sham of a democracy that had permitted unlimited irresponsible property was at an end.

Within one hundred and fifty years of Graham's falling asleep, his Council had thrown off its disguises and ruled openly, supreme in his name. Elections had become a cheerful formality, a septennial folly, an ancient unmeaning custom; a social Parliament as ineffectual as the convocation of the Established Church in Victorian times assembled now and then; and a legitimate King of England, disinherited, drunken and witless, played foolishly in a second-rate music-hall. So the magnificent dream of the nineteenth century, the noble project of universal individual liberty and universal happiness, touched by a disease of honour, crippled by a superstition of absolute property, crippled by the religious feuds that had robbed the common citizens of education, robbed men of standards of conduct, and

brought the sanctions of morality to utter contempt, had worked itself out in the face of invention and ignoble enterprise, first to a warring plutocracy, and finally to the rule of a supreme plutocrat. His Council at last had ceased even to trouble to have its decrees endorsed by the constitutional authorities, and he a motionless, sunken, yellow-skinned figure had lain, neither dead nor living, recognisably and immediately Master of the Earth. And awoke at last to find himself — Master of that inheritance! Awoke to stand under the cloudless empty sky and gaze down upon the greatness of his dominion.

To what end had he awakened? Was this city, this hive of hopeless toilers, the final refutation of his ancient hopes? Or was the fire of liberty, the fire that had blazed and waned in the years of his past life, still smouldering below there? He thought of the stir and impulse of the song of the revolution. Was that song merely the trick of a demagogue, to be forgotten when its purpose was served? Was the hope that still stirred within him only the memory of abandoned things, the vestige of a creed outworn? Or had it a wider meaning, an import interwoven with the destiny of man? To what end had he awakened, what was there for him to do? Humanity was spread below him like a map. He thought of the millions and millions of humanity following each other unceasingly for ever out of the darkness of non-existence into the darkness of death. To what end? Aim there must be, but it transcended his power of thought. He saw for the first time clearly his own infinite littleness, saw stark and terrible the tragic contrast of human strength and the craving of the human heart. For that little while he knew himself for the petty accident he was, and knew therewith the greatness of his desire. And suddenly his littleness was intolerable, his aspiration was intolerable, and there came to him an irresistible impulse to pray. And he prayed. He prayed vague, incoherent, contradictory things, his soul strained up through time and space and all the fleeting multitudinous confusion of being, towards something — he scarcely knew what — towards something that could comprehend his striving and endure.

A man and a woman were far below on a roof space to the southward enjoying the freshness of the morning air. The man had brought out a perspective glass to spy upon the Council House and he was showing her how to use it. Presently their curiosity was

satisfied, they could see no traces of bloodshed from their position, and after a survey of the empty sky she came round to the crow's nest. And there she saw two little black figures, so small it was hard to believe they were men, one who watched and one who gesticulated with hands outstretched to the silent emptiness of Heaven.

She handed the glass to the man. He looked and exclaimed:

"I believe it is the Master. Yes. I am sure. It is the Master!"

He lowered the glass and looked at her. "Waving his hands about almost as if he was praying. I wonder what he is up to. Worshipping the sun? There weren't Parses in this country in his time, were there?"

He looked again. "He's stopped it now. It was a chance attitude, I suppose." He put down the glass and became meditative. "He won't have anything to do but enjoy himself — just enjoy himself. Ostrog will boss the show of course. Ostrog will have to, because of keeping all these Labourer fools in bounds. Them and their song! And got it all by sleeping, dear eyes — just sleeping. It's a wonderful world."

CHAPTER XV. PROMINENT PEOPLE

The state apartments of the Wind Vane Keeper would have seemed astonishingly intricate to Graham had he entered them fresh from his nineteenth century life, but already he was growing accustomed to the scale of the new time. They can scarcely be described as halls and rooms, seeing that a complicated system of arches, bridges, passages and galleries divided and united every part of the great space. He came out through one of the now familiar sliding panels upon a. plateau of landing at the head of a flight of very broad and gentle steps, with men and women far more brilliantly dressed than any he had hitherto seen ascending and descending. From this position he looked down a vista of intricate ornament in lustreless white and mauve and purple, spanned by bridges that seemed wrought of porcelain and filigree, and terminating far off in a cloudy mystery of perforated screens.

Glancing upward, he saw tier above tier of ascending galleries with faces looking down upon him. The air was full of the babble of innumerable voices and of a music that descended from above, a gay and exhilarating music whose source he never discovered.

The central aisle was thick with people, but by no means uncomfortably crowded; altogether that assembly must have numbered many thousands. They were brilliantly, even fantastically dressed, the men as fancifully as the women, for the sobering influence of the Puritan conception of dignity upon masculine dress had long since passed away. The hair of the men, too, though it was rarely worn long, was commonly curled in a manner that suggested the barber, and baldness had vanished from the earth. Frizzy straight-cut masses that would have charmed Rossetti abounded, and one gentleman, who was pointed out to Graham under the mysterious title of an “amorist”, wore his hair in two becoming plaits a la Marguerite. The pigtail was in evidence; it would seem that citizens of Chinese extraction were no longer ashamed of their race. There was little uniformity of fashion apparent in the forms of clothing worn. The more shapely men displayed their symmetry in trunk hose, and here were puffs and slashes, and there a cloak and there a robe.

The fashions of the days of Leo the Tenth were perhaps the prevailing influence, but the aesthetic conceptions of the far east were also patent. Masculine embonpoint, which, in Victorian times, would have been subjected to the tightly buttoned perils, the ruthless exaggeration of tight-legged tight-armed evening dress, now formed but the basis of a wealth of dignity and drooping folds. Graceful slenderness abounded also. To Graham, a typically stiff man from a typically stiff period, not only did these men seem altogether too graceful in person, but altogether too expressive in their vividly expressive faces. They gesticulated, they expressed surprise, interest, amusement, above all, they expressed the emotions excited in their minds by the ladies about them with astonishing frankness. Even at the first glance it was evident that women were in a great majority.

The ladies in the company of these gentlemen displayed in dress, bearing and manner alike, less emphasis and more intricacy. Some affected a classical simplicity of robing and subtlety of fold, after the fashion of the First French Empire, and flashed conquering arms and shoulders as Graham passed. Others had closely-fitting dresses without seam or belt at the waist, sometimes with long folds falling from the shoulders. The delightful confidences of evening dress had not been diminished by the passage of two centuries.

Everyone's movements seemed graceful. Graham remarked to Lincoln that he saw men as Raphael's cartoons walking, and Lincoln told him that the attainment of an appropriate set of gestures was part of every rich person's education. The Master's entry was greeted with a sort of tittering applause, but these people showed their distinguished manners by not crowding upon him nor annoying him by any persistent scrutiny, as he descended the steps towards the floor of the aisle.

He had already learnt from Lincoln that these were the leaders of existing London society; almost every person there that night was either a powerful official or the immediate connexion of a powerful official. Many had returned from the European Pleasure Cities expressly to welcome him. The aeronautic authorities, whose defection had played a part in the overthrow of the Council only second to Graham's were very prominent, and so, too, was the Wind Vane Control. Amongst others there were several of the more

prominent officers of the Food Trust; the controller of the European Piggeries had a particularly melancholy and interesting countenance and a daintily cynical manner. A bishop in full canonicals passed athwart Graham's vision, conversing with a gentleman dressed exactly like the traditional Chaucer, including even the laurel wreath.

"Who is that?" he asked almost involuntarily

"The Bishop of London," said Lincoln.

"No — the other, I mean."

"Poet Laureate."

"You still?"

"He doesn't make poetry, of course. He's a cousin of Wotton — one of the Councillors. But he's one of the Red Rose Royalists — a delightful club — and they keep up the tradition of these things."

"Asano told me there was a King."

"The King doesn't belong. They had to expel him. It's the Stuart blood, I suppose; but really—"

"Too much?"

"Far too much."

Graham did not quite follow all this, but it seemed part of the general inversion of the new age. He bowed condescendingly to his first introduction. It was evident that subtle distinctions of class prevailed even in this assembly, that only to a small proportion of the guests, to an inner group, did Lincoln consider it appropriate to introduce him. This first introduction was the Master Aeronaut, a man whose suntanned face contrasted oddly with the delicate complexions about him. Just at present his critical defection from the Council made him a very important person indeed.

His manner contrasted very favourably, according to Graham's ideas, with the general bearing. He made a few commonplace remarks, assurances of loyalty and frank inquiries about the Master's health. His manner was breezy, his accent lacked the easy staccato of latter-day English. He made it admirably clear to Graham that he was a bluff "aerial dog" — he used that phrase — that there was no nonsense about him, that he was a thoroughly manly fellow and old-fashioned at that, that he didn't profess to know much, and that what he did not know was not worth knowing He made a manly bow, ostentatiously free from obsequiousness and passed.

“I am glad to see that type endures,” said Graham

“Phonographs and kinematographs,” said Lincoln, a little spitefully. “He has studied from the life.” Graham glanced at the burly form again. It was oddly reminiscent.

“As a matter of fact we bought him,” said Lincoln. “Partly. And partly he was afraid of Ostrog Everything rested with him.”

He turned sharply to introduce the Surveyor-General of the Public School Trust. This person was a willowy figure in a blue-grey academic gown, he beamed down upon Graham through *pince-nez* of a Victorian pattern, and illustrated his remarks by gestures of a beautifully manicured hand. Graham was immediately interested in this gentleman’s functions, and asked him a number of singularly direct questions. The Surveyor-General seemed quietly amused at the Master’s fundamental bluntness. He was a little vague as to the monopoly of education his Company possessed; it was done by contract with the syndicate that ran the numerous London Municipalities, but he waxed enthusiastic over educational progress since the Victorian times. “We have conquered Cram,” he said, “completely conquered Cram — there is not an examination left in the world. Aren’t you glad?”

“How do you get the work done?” asked Graham.

“We make it attractive — as attractive as possible. And if it does not attract then — we let it go. We cover an immense field.”

He proceeded to details, and they had a lengthy conversation. The Surveyor-General mentioned the names of Pestalozzi and Froebel with profound respect, although he displayed no intimacy with their epoch-making works. Graham learnt that University Extension still existed in a modified form. “There is a certain type of girl, for example,” said the Surveyor-General, dilating with a sense of his usefulness, “with a perfect passion for severe studies — when they are not too difficult you know. We cater for them by the thousand. At this moment,” he said with a Napoleonic touch, “nearly five hundred phonographs are lecturing in different parts of London on the influence exercised by Plato and Swift on the love affairs of Shelley, Hazlitt, and Burns. And afterwards they write essays on the lectures, and the names in order of merit are put in conspicuous places. You see how your little germ has grown? The illiterate middle-class of

your days has quite passed away."

"About the public elementary schools," said Graham. "Do you control them?"

The Surveyor-General did, "entirely." Now, Graham, in his later democratic days, had taken a keen interest in these and his questioning quickened. Certain casual phrases that had fallen from the old man with whom he had talked in the darkness recurred to him. The Surveyor-General, in effect, endorsed the old man's words. "We have abolished Cram," he said, a phrase Graham was beginning to interpret as the abolition of all sustained work. The Surveyor-General became sentimental. "We try and make the elementary schools very pleasant for the little children. They will have to work so soon. Just a few simple principles — obedience — industry."

"You teach them very little?"

"Why should we? It only leads to trouble and discontent. We amuse them. Even as it is — there are troubles — agitations. Where the labourers get the ideas, one cannot tell. They tell one another. There are socialistic dreams — anarchy even! Agitators will get to work among them. I take it — I have always taken it — that my foremost duty is to fight against popular discontent. Why should people be made unhappy?"

"I wonder," said Graham thoughtfully. "But there are a great many things I want to know."

Lincoln, who had stood watching Graham's face throughout the conversation, intervened. "There are others," he said in an undertone.

The Surveyor-General of schools gesticulated himself away. "Perhaps," said Lincoln, intercepting a casual glance, "you would like to know some of these ladies?"

The daughter of the Manager of the Piggeries of the European Food Trust was a particularly charming little person with red hair and animated blue eyes. Lincoln left him awhile to converse with her, and she displayed herself as quite an enthusiast for the "dear old times," as she called them, that had seen the beginning of his trance. As she talked she smiled, and her eyes smiled in a manner that demanded reciprocity.

"I have tried," she said, "countless times — to imagine those old romantic days. And to you they are memories. How strange and

crowded the world must seem to you! I have seen photographs and pictures of the old times, the little isolated houses built of bricks made out of burnt mud and all black with soot from your fires, the railway bridges, the simple advertisements, the solemn savage Puritanical men in strange black coats and those tall hats of theirs, iron railway trains on iron bridges overhead, horses and cattle, and even dogs running half wild about the streets. And suddenly, you have come into this!"

"Into this," said Graham.

"Out of your life — out of all that was familiar."

"The old life was not a happy one," said Graham. "I do not regret that."

She looked at him quickly. There was a brief pause. She sighed encouragingly. "No?"

"No," said Graham. "It was a little life — and unmeaning. But this — . We thought the world complex and crowded and civilised enough. Yet I see — although in this world I am barely four days old — looking back on my own time, that it was a queer, barbaric time — the mere beginning of this new order. The mere beginning of this new order. You will find it hard to understand how little I know."

"You may ask me what you like," she said, smiling at him.

"Then tell me who these people are. I'm still very much in the dark about them. It's puzzling. Are there any Generals?"

"Men in hats and feathers?"

"Of course not. No. I suppose they are the men who control the great public businesses. Who is that distinguished looking man?"

"That? He's a most important officer. That is Morden. He is managing director of the Antibilious Pill Company. I have heard that his workers sometimes turn out a myriad myriad pills a day in the twenty-four hours. Fancy a myriad myriad!"

"A myriad myriad. No wonder he looks proud," said Graham. "Pills! What a wonderful time it is! That man in purple?"

"He is not quite one of the inner circle, you know. But we like him. He is really clever and very amusing. He is one of the heads of the Medical Faculty of our London University. All medical men, you know, are shareholders in the Medical Faculty Company, and wear that purple. You have to be — to be qualified. But of course, people

who are paid by fees for doing something—" She smiled away the social pretensions of all such people.

"Are any of your great artists or authors here?"

"No authors. They are mostly such queer people — and so preoccupied about themselves. And they quarrel so dreadfully! They will fight, some of them, for precedence on staircases! Dreadful isn't it? But I think Wraysbury, the fashionable capillotomist, is here. From Capri."

"Capillotomist," said Graham. "Ah! I remember. An artist! Why not?"

"We have to cultivate him," she said apologetically. "Our heads are in his hands." She smiled.

Graham hesitated at the invited compliment, but his glance was expressive. "Have the arts grown with the rest of civilised things?" he said. "Who are your great painters?"

She looked at him doubtfully. Then laughed. "For a moment," she said, "I thought you meant—" She laughed again. "You mean, of course, those good men you used to think so much of because they could cover great spaces of canvas with oil-colours? Great oblongs. And people used to put the things in gilt frames and hang them up in rows in their square rooms. We haven't any. People grew tired of that sort of thing."

"But what did you think I meant?"

She put a finger significantly on a cheek whose glow was above suspicion, and smiled and looked very arch and pretty and inviting. "And here," and she indicated her eyelid.

Graham had an adventurous moment. Then a grotesque memory of a picture he had somewhere seen of Uncle Toby and the Widow flashed across his mind. An archaic shame came upon him. He became acutely aware that he was visible to a great number of interested people. "I see," he remarked inadequately. He turned awkwardly away from her, fascinating facility. He looked about him to meet a number of eyes that immediately occupied themselves with other things. Possibly he coloured a little. "Who is that talking with the lady in saffron?" he asked, avoiding her eyes.

The person in question he learnt was one of the great organisers of the American theatres just fresh from a gigantic production at

Mexico. His face reminded Graham of a bust of Caligula. Another striking looking man was the Black Labour Master. The phrase at the time made no deep impression, but afterwards it recurred; — the Black Labour Master? The little lady, in no degree embarrassed, pointed out to him a charming little woman as one of the subsidiary wives of the Anglican Bishop of London. She added encomiums on the episcopal courage — hitherto there had been a rule of clerical monogamy— "neither a natural nor an expedient condition of things. Why should the natural development of the affections be dwarfed and restricted because a man is a priest?"

"And, bye the bye," she added, "are you an Anglican?" Graham was on the verge of hesitating inquiries about the status of a "subsidiary wife," apparently an euphemistic phrase, when Lincoln's return broke off this very suggestive and interesting conversation. They crossed the aisle to where a tall man in crimson, and two charming persons in Burmese costume (as it seemed to him) awaited him diffidently. From their civilities he passed to other presentations.

In a little while his multitudinous impressions began to organise themselves into a general effect. At first the glitter of the gathering had raised all the democrat in Graham; he had felt hostile and satirical. But it is not in human nature to resist an atmosphere of courteous regard. Soon the music, the light, the play of colours, the shining arms and shoulders about him, the touch of hands, the transient interest of smiling faces, the frothing sound of skillfully modulated voices, the atmosphere of compliment, interest and respect, had woven together into a fabric of indisputable pleasure. Graham for a time forgot his spacious resolutions. He gave way insensibly to the intoxication of the position that was conceded him, his manner became less conscious, more convincingly regal, his feet walked assuredly, the black robe fell with a bolder fold and pride ennobled his voice. After all this was a brilliant interesting world.

His glance went approvingly over the shifting colours of the people, it rested here and there in kindly criticism upon a face. Presently it occurred to him that he owed some apology to the charming little person with the red hair and blue eyes. He felt guilty of a clumsy snub. It was not princely to ignore her advances, even if his policy necessitated their rejection. He wondered if he should see

her again. And suddenly a little thing touched all the glamour of this brilliant gathering and changed its quality.

He looked up and saw passing across a bridge of porcelain and looking down upon him, a face that was almost immediately hidden, the face of the girl he had seen overnight in the little room beyond the theatre after his escape from the Council. And she was looking with much the same expression of curious expectation, of uncertain intentness, upon his proceedings. For the moment he did not remember when he had seen her, and then with recognition came a vague memory of the stirring emotions of their first encounter. But the dancing web of melody about him kept the air of that great marching song from his memory.

The lady to whom he was talking repeated her remark, and Graham recalled himself to the quasiregal flirtation upon which he was engaged.

But from that moment a vague restlessness, a feeling that grew to dissatisfaction, came into his mind. He was troubled as if by some half forgotten duty, by the sense of things important slipping from him amidst this light and brilliance. The attraction that these bright ladies who crowded about him were beginning to exercise ceased. He no longer made vague and clumsy responses to the subtly amorous advances that he was now assured were being made to him, and his eyes wandered for another sight of that face that had appealed so strongly to his sense of beauty. But he did not see her again until he was awaiting Lincoln's return to leave this assembly. In answer to his request Lincoln had promised that an attempt should be made to fly that afternoon, if the weather permitted. He had gone to make certain necessary arrangements.

Graham was in one of the upper galleries in conversation with a bright-eyed lady on the subject of Eadhamite — the subject was his choice and not hers. He had interrupted her warm assurances of personal devotion with a matter-of-fact inquiry. He found her, as he had already found several other latter-day women that night, less well informed than charming. Suddenly, struggling against the eddying drift of nearer melody, the song of the Revolt, the great song he had heard in the Hall, hoarse and massive, came beating down to him.

He glanced up startled, and perceived above him an *oeil de boeuf* through which this song had come, and beyond, the upper courses of cable, the blue haze, and the pendant fabric of the lights of the public ways. He heard the song break into a tumult of voices and cease. But now he perceived quite clearly the drone and tumult of the moving platforms and a murmur of many people. He had a vague persuasion that he could not account for, a sort of instinctive feeling that outside in the ways a huge crowd must be watching this place in which their Master amused himself. He wondered what they might be thinking.

Though the song had stopped so abruptly, though the special music of this gathering reasserted itself, the motif of the marching song, once it had begun, lingered in his mind.

The bright-eyed lady was still struggling with the mysteries of Eadhamite when he perceived the girl he had seen in the theatre again. She was coming now along the gallery towards him; he saw her first before she saw him. She was dressed in a faintly luminous grey, her dark hair about her brows was like a cloud, and as he saw her the cold light from the circular opening into the ways fell upon her downcast face.

The lady in trouble about the Eadhamite saw the change in his expression, and grasped her opportunity to escape. “Would you care to know that girl, Sire?” she asked boldly. “She is Helen Wotton — a niece of Ostrog’s. She knows a great many serious things. She is one of the most serious persons alive. I am sure you will like her.”

In another moment Graham was talking to the girl, and the bright-eyed lady had fluttered away.

“I remember you quite well,” said Graham. “You were in that little room. When all the people were singing and beating time with their feet. Before I walked across the Hall.”

Her momentary embarrassment passed. She looked up at him, and her face was steady. “It was wonderful,” she said, hesitated, and spoke with a sudden effort. “All those people would have died for you, Sire. Countless people did die for you that night.”

Her face glowed. She glanced swiftly aside to see that no other heard her words.

Lincoln appeared some way off along the gallery, making his way through the press towards them. She saw him and turned to Graham

strangely eager, with a swift change to confidence and intimacy. “Sire,” she said quickly, “I cannot tell you now and here. But the common people are very unhappy; they are oppressed — they are misgoverned. Do not forget the people, who faced death — death that you might live.”

“I know nothing—” began Graham.

“I cannot tell you now.”

Lincoln’s face appeared close to them. He bowed an apology to the girl.

“You find the new world pleasant, Sire?” asked Lincoln, with smiling deference, and indicating the space and splendour of the gathering by one comprehensive gesture. “At any rate, you find it changed.”

“Yes,” said Graham, “changed. And yet, after all, not so greatly changed.”

“Wait till you are in the air,” said Lincoln. “The wind has fallen; even now an aeropile awaits you.”

The girl’s attitude awaited dismissal.

Graham glanced at her face, was on the verge of a question, found a warning in her expression, bowed to her and turned to accompany Lincoln.

CHAPTER XVI. THE AEROPHILE

For a while, as Graham went through the passages of the Wind-Vane offices with Lincoln, he was preoccupied. But, by an effort, he attended to the things which Lincoln was saying. Soon his preoccupation vanished. Lincoln was talking of flying. Graham had a strong desire to know more of this new human attainment. He began to ply Lincoln with questions. He had followed the crude beginnings of aerial navigation very keenly in his previous life; he was delighted to find the familiar names of Maxim and Pilcher, Langley and Chanute, and, above all, of the aerial proto-martyr Lillienthal, still honoured by men.

Even during his previous life two lines of investigation had pointed clearly to two distinct types of contrivance as possible, and both of these had been realised. On the one hand was the great engine-driven aeroplane, a double row of horizontal floats with a big aerial screw behind, and on the other the nimbler aeropile. The aeroplanes flew safely only in a calm or moderate wind, and sudden storms, occurrences that were now accurately predictable, rendered them for all practical purposes useless. They were built of enormous size — the usual stretch of wing being six hundred feet or more, and the length of the fabric a thousand feet. They were for passenger traffic alone. The lightly swung car they carried was from a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet in length. It Was hung in a peculiar manner in order to minimise the complex vibration that even a moderate wind produced, and for the same reason the little seats within the car — each passenger remained seated during the voyage — were slung with great freedom of movement. The starting of the mechanism was only possible from a gigantic car on the rail of a specially constructed stage. Graham had seen these vast stages, the flying stages, from the crow's nest very well. Six huge blank areas they were, with a giant "carrier" stage on each.

The choice of descent was equally circumscribed, an accurately plane surface being needed for safe grounding. Apart from the destruction that would have been caused by the descent of this great expanse of sail and metal, and the impossibility of its rising again,

the concussion of an irregular surface, a tree-set hillside, for instance, or an embankment, would be sufficient to pierce or damage the framework, to smash the ribs of the body, and perhaps kill those aboard.

At first Graham felt disappointed with these cumbersome contrivances, but he speedily grasped the fact that smaller machines would have been unremunerative, for the simple reason that their carrying power would be disproportionately diminished with diminished size. Moreover, the huge size of these things enabled them — and it was a consideration of primary importance — to traverse the air at enormous speeds, and so run no risks of unanticipated weather. The briefest journey performed, that from London to Paris, took about three-quarters of an hour, but the velocity attained was not high; the leap to New York occupied about two hours, and by timing oneself carefully at the intermediate stations it was possible in quiet weather to go around the world in a day.

The little aeropiles (as for no particular reason they were distinctively called) were of an altogether different type. Several of these were going to and fro in the air. They were designed to carry only one or two persons, and their manufacture and maintenance was so costly as to render them the monopoly of the richer sort of people. Their sails, which were brilliantly coloured, consisted only of two pairs of lateral air floats in the same plane, and of a screw behind. Their small size rendered a descent in any open space neither difficult nor disagreeable, and it was possible to attach pneumatic wheels or even the ordinary motors for terrestrial traffic to them, and so carry them to a convenient starting place. They required a special sort of swift car to throw them into the air, but such a car was efficient in any open place clear of high buildings or trees. Human aeronautics, Graham perceived, were evidently still a long way behind the instinctive gift of the albatross or the fly-catcher. One great influence that might have brought the aeropile to a more rapid perfection had been withheld; these inventions had never been used in warfare. The last great international struggle had occurred before the usurpation of the Council.

The Flying Stages of London were collected together in an

irregular crescent on the southern side of the river. They formed three groups of two each and retained the names of ancient suburban hills or villages. They were named in order, Roehampton, Wimbledon Park, Streatham, Norwood, Blackheath, and Shooter's Hill. They were uniform structures rising high above the general roof surfaces. Each was about four thousand yards long and a thousand broad, and constructed of the compound of aluminium and iron that had replaced iron in architecture. Their higher tiers formed an openwork of girders through which lifts and staircases ascended. The upper surface was a uniform expanse, with portions — the starting carriers — that could be raised and were then able to run on very slightly inclined rails to the end of the fabric. Save for any aeropiles or aeroplanes that were in port these open surfaces were kept clear for arrivals.

During the adjustment of the aeroplanes it was the custom for passengers to wait in the system of theatres, restaurants, news-rooms, and places of pleasure and indulgence of various sorts that interwove with the prosperous shops below. This portion of London was in consequence commonly the gayest of all its districts, with something of the meretricious gaiety of a seaport or city of hotels. And for those who took a more serious view of aeronautics, the religious quarters had flung out an attractive colony of devotional chapels, while a host of brilliant medical establishments competed to supply physical preparatives for the journey. At various levels through the mass of chambers and passages beneath these, ran, in addition to the main moving ways of the city which laced and gathered here, a complex system of special passages and lifts and slides, for the convenient interchange of people and luggage between stage and stage. And a distinctive feature of the architecture of this section was the ostentatious massiveness of the metal piers and girders that everywhere broke the vistas and spanned the halls and passages, crowding and twining up to meet the weight of the stages and the weighty impact of the aeroplanes overhead.

Graham went to the flying stages by the public ways. He was accompanied by Asano, his Japanese attendant. Lincoln was called away by Ostrog, who was busy with his administrative concerns. A strong guard of the Wind-Vane police awaited the Master outside the

Wind-Vane offices, and they cleared a space for him on the upper moving platform. His passage to the flying stages was unexpected, nevertheless a considerable crowd gathered and followed him to his destination. As he went along, he could hear the people shouting his name, and saw numberless men and women and children in blue come swarming up the staircases in the central path, gesticulating and shouting. He could not hear what they shouted. He was struck again by the evident existence of a vulgar dialect among the poor of the city. When at last he descended, his guards were immediately surrounded by a dense excited crowd. Afterwards it occurred to him that some had attempted to reach him with petitions. His guards cleared a passage for him with difficulty.

He found an aeropile in charge of an aeronaut awaiting him on the westward stage. Seen close this mechanism was no longer small. As it lay on its launching carrier upon the wide expanse of the flying stage, its aluminium body skeleton was as big as the hull of a twenty-ton yacht. Its lateral supporting sails braced and stayed with metal nerves almost like the nerves of a bee's wing, and made of some sort of glassy artificial membrane, cast their shadow over many hundreds of square yards. The chairs for the engineer and his passenger hung free to swing by a complex tackle, within the protecting ribs of the frame and well abaft the middle. The passenger's chair was protected by a wind-guard and guarded about with metallic rods carrying air cushions. It could, if desired, be completely closed in, but Graham was anxious for novel experiences, and desired that it should be left open. The aeronaut sat behind a glass that sheltered his face. The passenger could secure himself firmly in his seat, and this was almost unavoidable on landing, or he could move along by means of a little rail and rod to a locker at the stem of the machine, where his personal luggage, his wraps and restoratives were placed, and which also with the seats, served as a makeweight to the parts of the central engine that projected to the propeller at the stern.

The engine was very simple in appearance. Asano, pointing out the parts of this apparatus to him, told him that, like the gas-engine of Victorian days, it was of the explosive type, burning a small drop of a substance called "fomile" at each stroke. It consisted simply of reservoir and piston about the long fluted crank of the propeller shaft.

So much Graham saw of the machine.

The flying stage about him was empty save for Asano and their suite of attendants. Directed by the aeronaut he placed himself in his seat. He then drank a mixture containing ergot — a dose, he learnt, invariably administered to those about to fly, and designed to counteract the possible effect of diminished air pressure upon the system. Having done so, he declared himself ready for the journey. Asano took the empty glass from him, stepped through the bars of the hull, and stood below on the stage waving his hand. Suddenly he seemed to slide along the stage to the right and vanish.

The engine was beating, the propeller spinning, and for a second the stage and the buildings beyond were gliding swiftly and horizontally past Graham's eye; then these things seemed to tilt up abruptly. He gripped the little rods on either side of him instinctively. He felt himself moving upward, heard the air whistle over the top of the wind screen. The propeller screw moved round with powerful rhythmic impulses — one, two, three, pause; one, two, three — which the engineer controlled very delicately. The machine began a quivering vibration that continued throughout the flight, and the roof areas seemed running away to starboard very quickly and growing rapidly smaller. He looked from the face of the engineer through the ribs of the machine. Looking sideways, there was nothing very startling in what he saw — a rapid funicular railway might have given the same sensations. He recognised the Council House and the Highgate Ridge. And then he looked straight down between his feet.

For a moment physical terror possessed him, a passionate sense of insecurity. He held tight. For a second or so he could not lift his eyes. Some hundred feet or more sheer below him was one of the big windvanes of south-west London, and beyond it the southernmost flying stage crowded with little black dots. These things seemed to be falling away from him. For a second he had an impulse to pursue the earth. He set his teeth, he lifted his eyes by a muscular effort, and the moment of panic passed.

He remained for a space with his teeth set hard, his eyes staring into the sky. Throb, throb, throb — beat, went the engine; throb, throb, throb, — beat. He gripped his bars tightly, glanced at the aeronaut, and saw a smile upon his sun-tanned face. He smiled in

return — perhaps a little artificially. “A little strange at first,” he shouted before he recalled his dignity. But he dared not look down again for some time. He stared over the aeronaut’s head to where a rim of vague blue horizon crept up the sky. For a little while he could not banish the thought of possible accidents from his mind. Throb, throb, throb — beat; suppose some trivial screw went wrong in that supporting engine! Suppose — ! He made a grim effort to dismiss all such suppositions. After a while they did at least abandon the foreground of his thoughts. And up he went steadily, higher and higher into the clear air.

Once the mental shock of moving unsupported through the air was over, his sensations ceased to be unpleasant, became very speedily pleasurable. He had been warned of air sickness. But he found the pulsating movement of the aeropile as it drove up the faint south-west breeze was very little in excess of the pitching of a boat head on to broad rollers in a moderate gale, and he was constitutionally a good sailor. And the keenness of the more rarefied air into which they ascended produced a sense of lightness and exhilaration. He looked up and saw the blue sky above fretted with cirrus clouds. His eye came cautiously down through the ribs and bars to a shining flight of white birds that hung in the lower sky. For a space he watched these. Then going lower and less apprehensively, he saw the slender figure of the Wind-Vane keeper’s crow’s nest shining golden in the sunlight and growing smaller every moment. As his eye fell with more confidence now, there came a blue line of hills, and then London, already to leeward, an intricate space of roofing. Its near edge came sharp and clear, and banished his last apprehensions in a shock of surprise. For the boundary of London was like a wall, like a cliff, a steep fall of three or four hundred feet, a frontage broken only by terraces here and there, a complex decorative facade.

That gradual passage of town into country through an extensive sponge of suburbs, which was so characteristic a feature of the great cities of the nineteenth century, existed no longer. Nothing remained of it but a waste of ruins here, variegated and dense with thickets of the heterogeneous growths that had once adorned the gardens of the belt, interspersed among levelled brown patches of sown ground, and

verdant stretches of winter greens. The latter even spread among the vestiges of houses. But for the most part the reefs and skerries of ruins, the wreckage of suburban villas, stood among their streets and roads, queer islands amidst the levelled expanses of green and brown, abandoned indeed by the inhabitants years since, but too substantial, it seemed', to be cleared out of the way of the wholesale horticultural mechanisms of the time.

The vegetation of this waste undulated and frothed amidst the countless cells of crumbling house walls, and broke along the foot of the city wall in a surf of bramble and holly and ivy and teazle and tall grasses. Here and there gaudy pleasure palaces towered amidst the puny remains of Victorian times, and cable ways slanted to them from the city. That winter day they seemed deserted. Deserted, too, were the artificial gardens among the ruins. The city limits were indeed as sharply defined as in the ancient days when the gates were shut at nightfall and the robber foreman prowled to the very walls. A huge semi-circular throat poured out a vigorous traffic upon the Eadhamite Bath Road. So the first prospect of the world beyond the city flashed on Graham, and dwindled. And when at last he could look vertically downward again, he saw below him the vegetable fields of the Thames valley — innumerable minute oblongs of ruddy brown, intersected by shining threads, the sewage ditches.

His exhilaration increased rapidly, became a sort of intoxication. He found himself drawing deep breaths of air, laughing aloud, desiring to shout. After a time that desire became too strong for him, and he shouted.

The machine had now risen as high as was customary with aeropiles, and they began to curve about towards the south. Steering, Graham perceived, was effected by the opening or closing of one or two thin strips of membrane in one or other of the otherwise rigid wings, and by the movement of the whole engine backward or forward along its supports. The aeronaut set the engine gliding slowly forward along its rail and opened the valve of the leeward wing until the stem of the aeropile was horizontal and pointing southward. And in that direction they drove with a slight list to leeward, and with a slow alternation of movement, first a short, sharp ascent and then a long downward glide that was very swift and

pleasing. During these downward glides the propellor was inactive altogether. These ascents gave Graham a glorious sense of successful effort; the descents through the rarefied air were beyond all experience. He wanted never to leave the upper air again.

For a time he was intent upon the minute details of the landscape that ran swiftly northward beneath him. Its minute, clear detail pleased him exceedingly. He was impressed by the ruin of the houses that had once dotted the country, by the vast treeless expanse of country from which all farms and villages had gone, save for crumbling ruins. He had known the thing was so, but seeing it so was an altogether different matter. He tried to make out places he had known within the hollow basin of the world below, but at first he could distinguish no data now that the Thames valley was left behind. Soon, however, they were driving over a sharp chalk hill that he recognised as the Guildford Hog's Back, because of the familiar outline of the gorge at its eastward end, and because of the ruins of the town that rose steeply on either lip of this gorge. And from that he made out other points, Leith Hill, the sandy wastes of Aldershot, and so forth. The Downs escarpment was set with gigantic slow-moving wind-wheels. Save where the broad Eadhamite Portsmouth Road, thickly dotted with rushing shapes, followed the course of the old railway, the gorge of the Wey was choked with thickets.

The whole expanse of the Downs escarpment, so far as the grey haze permitted him to see, was set with wind-wheels to which the largest of the city was but a younger brother. They stirred with a stately motion before the south-west wind. And here and there were patches dotted with the sheep of the British Food Trust, and here and there a mounted shepherd made a spot of black. Then rushing under the stern of the aeropile came the Wealden Heights, the line of Hindhead, Pitch Hill, and Leith Hill, with a second row of wind-wheels that seemed striving to rob the downland whirlers of their share of breeze. The purple heather was speckled with yellow gorse, and on the further side a drove of black oxen stampeded before a couple of mounted men. Swiftly these swept behind, and dwindled and lost colour, and became scarce moving specks that were swallowed up in haze.

And when these had vanished in the distance Graham heard a

peewit wailing close at hand. He perceived he was now above the South Downs, and staring over his shoulder saw the battlements of Portsmouth Landing Stage towering over the ridge of Portsdown Hill. In another moment there came into sight a spread of shipping like floating cities, the little white cliffs of the Needles dwarfed and sunlit, and the grey and glittering waters of the narrow sea. They seemed to leap the Solent in a moment, and in a few seconds the Isle of Wight was running past, and then beneath him spread a wider and wide extent of sea, here purple with the shadow of a cloud, here grey, here a burnished mirror, and here a spread of cloudy greenish blue. The Isle of Wight grew smaller and smaller. In a few more minutes a strip of grey haze detached itself from other strips that were clouds, descended out of the sky and became a coastline — sunlit and pleasant — the coast of northern France. It rose, it took colour, became definite and detailed, and the counterpart of the Downland of England was speeding by below.

In a little time, as it seemed, Paris came above the horizon, and hung there for a space, and sank out of sight again as the aeropile circled about to the north again. But he perceived the Eiffel Tower still standing, and beside it a huge dome surmounted by a pinpoint Colossus. And he perceived, too, though he did not understand it at the time, a slanting drift of smoke. The aeronaut said something about "trouble in the underways," that Graham did not heed at the time. But he marked the minarets and towers and slender masses that streamed skyward above the city windvanes, and knew that in the matter of grace at least Paris still kept in front of her larger rival. And even as he looked a pale blue shape ascended very swiftly from the city like a dead leaf driving up before a gale. It curved round and soared towards them growing rapidly larger and larger. The aeronaut was saying something. "What?" said Graham, loath to take his eyes from this. "Aeroplane, Sire," bawled the aeronaut pointing.

They rose and curved about northward as it drew nearer. Nearer it came and nearer, larger and larger. The throb, throb, throb — beat, of the aeropile's flight, that had seemed so potent and so swift, suddenly appeared slow by comparison with this tremendous rush. How great the monster seemed, how swift and steady! It passed quite closely beneath them, driving along silently, a vast spread of wirenetted

translucent wings, a thing alive. Graham had a momentary glimpse of the rows and rows of wrapped-up passengers, slung in their little cradles behind wind-screens, of a white-clothed engineer crawling against the gale along a ladder way, of spouting engines beating together, of the whirling wind screw, and of a wide waste of wing. He exulted in the sight. And in an instant the thing had passed.

It rose slightly and their own little wings swayed in the rush of its flight. It fell and grew smaller. Scarcely had they moved, as it seemed, before it was again only a flat blue thing that dwindled in the sky. This was the aeroplane that went to and fro between London and Paris. In fair weather and in peaceful times it came and went four times a day.

They beat across the Channel, slowly as it seemed now, to Graham's enlarged ideas, and Beachy Head rose greyly to the left of them.

"Land," called the aeronaut, his voice small against the whistling of the air over the wind-screen.

"Not yet," bawled Graham, laughing. "Not land yet. I want to learn more of this machine."

"I meant—" said the aeronaut.

"I want to learn more of this machine," repeated Graham.

"I'm coming to you," he said, and had flung himself free of his chair and taken a step along the guarded rail between them. He stopped for a moment, and his colour changed and his hands tightened. Another step and he was clinging close to the aeronaut. He felt a weight on his shoulder, the pressure of the air. His hat was a whirling speck behind. The wind came in gusts over his wind-screen and blew his hair in streamers past his cheek. The aeronaut made some hasty adjustments for the shifting of the centres of gravity and pressure.

"I want to have these things explained," said Graham. "What do you do when you move that engine forward?"

The aeronaut hesitated. Then he answered, "They are complex, Sire."

"I don't mind," shouted Graham. "I don't mind."

There was a moment's pause. "Aeronautics is the secret — the privilege—"

“I know. But I’m the Master, and I mean to know.” He laughed, full of this novel realisation of power that was his gift from the upper air.

The aeropile curved about, and the keen fresh wind cut across Graham’s face and his garment lugged at his body as the stem pointed round to the west. The two men looked into each other’s eyes.

“Sire, there are rules—”

“Not where I am concerned,” said Graham. “You seem to forget.”

The aeronaut scrutinised his face. “No,” he said. “I do not forget, Sire. But in all the earth — no man who is not a sworn aeronaut — has ever a chance. They come as passengers—”

“I have heard something of the sort. But I’m not going to argue these points. Do you know why I have slept two hundred years? To fly!”

“Sire,” said the aeronaut, “the rules — if I break the rules—”

Graham waved the penalties aside.

“Then if you will watch me—”

“No,” said Graham, swaying and gripping tight as the machine lifted its nose again for an ascent. “That’s not my game. I want to do it myself. Do it myself if I smash for it! No! I will. See. I am going to clamber by this to come and share your seat. Steady! I mean to fly of my own accord if I smash at the end of it. I will have something to pay for my sleep. Of all other things — . In my past it was my dream to fly. Now — keep your balance.”

“A dozen spies are watching me, Sire!”

Graham’s temper was at end. Perhaps he chose it should be. He swore. He swung himself round the intervening mass of levers and the aeropile swayed.

“Am I Master of the earth?” he said. “Or is your Society? Now. Take your hands off those levers, and hold my wrists. Yes — so. And now, how do we turn her nose down to the glide?”

“Sire,” said the aeronaut.

“What is it?”

“You will protect me?”

“Lord! Yes! If I have to burn London. Now!”

And with that promise Graham bought his first lesson in aerial

navigation. “It’s clearly to your advantage, this journey,” he said with a loud laugh — for the air was like strong wine— “to teach me quickly and well. Do I pull this? Ah! So! Hullo!”

“Back, Sire! Back!”

“Back — right. One — two — three — good God! Ah! Up she goes! But this is living!”

And now the machine began to dance the strangest figures in the air. Now it would sweep round a spiral of scarcely a hundred yards diameter, now it would rush up into the air and swoop down again, steeply, swiftly, falling like a hawk, to recover in a rushing loop that swept it high again. In one of these descents it seemed driving straight at the drifting park of balloons in the southeast, and only curved about and cleared them by a sudden recovery of dexterity. The extraordinary swiftness and smoothness of the motion, the extraordinary effect of the rarefied air upon his constitution, threw Graham into a careless fury.

But at last a queer incident came to sober him, to send him flying down once more to the crowded life below with all its dark insoluble riddles. As he swooped, came a tap and something flying past, and a drop like a drop of rain. Then as he went on down he saw something like a white rag whirling down in his wake. “What was that?” he asked. “I did not see.”

The aeronaut glanced, and then clutched at the lever to recover, for they were sweeping down. When the aeropile was rising again he drew a deep breath and replied. “That,” and he indicated the white thing still fluttering down, “was a swan.”

“I never saw it,” said Graham.

The aeronaut made no answer, and Graham saw little drops upon his forehead.

They drove horizontally while Graham clambered back to the passenger’s place out of the lash of the wind. And then came a swift rush down, with the wind-screw whirling to check their fall, and the flying stage growing broad and dark before them. The sun, sinking over the chalk hills in the west, fell with them, and left the sky a blaze of gold.

Soon men could be seen as little specks. He heard a noise coming up to meet him, a noise like the sound of waves upon a pebbly beach,

and saw that the roofs about the flying stage were dark with his people rejoicing over his safe return. A dark mass was crushed together under the stage, a darkness stippled with innumerable faces, and quivering with the minute oscillation of waved white handkerchiefs and waving hands.

CHAPTER XVII. THREE DAYS

Lincoln awaited Graham in an apartment beneath the flying stages. He seemed curious to learn all that had happened, pleased to hear of the extraordinary delight and interest which Graham took in flying Graham was in a mood of enthusiasm. “I must learn to fly,” he cried. “I must master that. I pity all poor souls who have died without this opportunity. The sweet swift air! It is the most wonderful experience in the world.”

“You will find our new times full of wonderful experiences,” said Lincoln. “I do not know what you will care to do now. We have music that may seem novel.”

“For the present,” said Graham, “flying holds me. Let me learn more of that. Your aeronaut was saying there is some trades union objection to one’s learning.”

“There is, I believe,” said Lincoln. “But for you — ! If you would’ like to occupy yourself with that, we can make you a sworn aeronaut tomorrow.”

Graham expressed his wishes vividly and talked of his sensations for a while. “And as for affairs,” he asked abruptly. “How are things going on?”

Lincoln waved affairs aside. “Ostrog will tell you that tomorrow,” he said. “Everything is settling down. The Revolution accomplishes itself all over the world. Friction is inevitable here and there, of course; but your rule is assured. You may rest secure with things in Ostrog’s hands.”

“Would it be possible for me to be made a sworn aeronaut, as you call it, forthwith — before I sleep?” said Graham, pacing. “Then I could be at it the very first thing tomorrow again.

“It would be possible,” said Lincoln thoughtfully. “Quite possible. Indeed, it shall be done.” He laughed. “I came prepared to suggest amusements, but you have found one for yourself. I will telephone to the aeronautical offices from here and we will return to your apartments in the Wind-Vane Control. By the time you have dined the aeronauts will be able to come. You don’t think that after you have dined, you might prefer — ?” He paused.

“Yes,” said Graham.

“We had prepared a show of dancers — they have been brought from the Capri theatre.”

“I hate ballets,” said Graham, shortly. “Always did. That other — . That’s not what I want to see. We had dancers in the old days. For the matter of that, they had them in ancient Egypt. But flying—”

“True,” said Lincoln. “Though our dancers—”

“They can afford to wait,” said Graham; “they can afford to wait. I know. I’m not a Latin. There’s questions I want to ask some expert — about your machinery. I’m keen. I want no distractions.”

“You have the world to choose from,” said Lincoln; “whatever you want is yours.”

Asano appeared, and under the escort of a strong guard they returned through the city streets to Graham’s apartments. Far larger crowds had assembled to witness his return than his departure had gathered, and the shouts and cheering of these masses of people sometimes drowned Lincoln’s answers to the endless questions Graham’s aerial journey had suggested. At first Graham had acknowledged the cheering and cries of the crowd by bows and gestures, but Lincoln warned him that such a recognition would be considered incorrect behaviour. Graham, already a little wearied by rhythmic civilities, ignored his subjects for the remainder of his public progress.

Directly they arrived at his apartments Asano departed in search of kinematographic renderings of machinery in motion, and Lincoln despatched Graham’s commands for models of machines and small machines to illustrate the various mechanical advances of the last two centuries. The little group of appliances for telegraphic communication attracted the Master so strongly that his delightfully prepared dinner, served by a number of charmingly dexterous girls, waited for a space. The habit of smoking had almost ceased from the face of the earth, but when he expressed a wish for that indulgence, inquiries were made and some excellent cigars were discovered in Florida, and sent to him by pneumatic dispatch while the dinner was still in progress. Afterwards came the aeronauts, and a feast of ingenious wonders in the hands of a latter-day engineer. For the time, at any rate, the neat dexterity of counting and numbering machines,

building machines, spinning engines, patent doorways, explosive motors, grain and water elevators, slaughter-house machines and harvesting appliances, was more fascinating to Graham than any bayadere. “We were savages,” was his refrain, “we were savages. We were in the stone age — compared with this.... And what else have you?”

There came also practical psychologists with some very interesting developments in the art of hypnotism. The names of Milne Bramwell, Fechner, Liebault, William James, Myers and Gurney, he found, bore a value now that would have astonished their contemporaries. Several practical applications of psychology were now in general use; it had largely superseded drugs, antiseptics and anaesthetics in medicine; was employed by almost all who had any need of mental concentration. A real enlargement of human faculty seemed to have been effected in this direction. The feats of “calculating boys,” the wonders, as Graham had been wont to regard them, of mesmerisers, were now within the range of anyone who could afford the services of a skilled hypnotist. Long ago the old examination methods in education had been destroyed by these expedients. Instead of years of study, candidates had substituted a few weeks of trances, and during the trances expert coaches had simply to repeat all the points necessary for adequate answering, adding a suggestion of the post hypnotic recollection of these points. In process mathematics particularly, this aid had been of singular service, and it was now invariably invoked by such players of chess and games of manual dexterity as were still to be found. In fact, all operations conducted under finite rules, of a quasi-mechanical sort that is, were now systematically relieved from the wanderings of imagination and emotion, and brought to an unexampled pitch of accuracy. Little children of the labouring classes, so soon as they were of sufficient age to be hypnotised, were thus converted into beautifully punctual and trustworthy machine minders, and released forthwith from the long, long thoughts of youth. Aeronautical pupils, who gave way to giddiness, could be relieved from their imaginary terrors. In every street were hypnotists ready to print permanent memories upon the mind. If anyone desired to remember a name, a series of numbers, a song or a speech, it could be done by this

method, and conversely memories could be effaced, habits removed, and desires eradicated — a sort of psychic surgery was, in fact, in general use. Indignities, humbling experiences, were thus forgotten, amorous widows would obliterate their previous husbands, angry lovers release themselves from their slavery. To graft desires, however, was still impossible, and the facts of thought transference were yet unsystematised. The psychologists illustrated their expositions with some astounding experiments in mnemonics made through the agency of a troupe of pale-faced children in blue.

Graham, like most of the people of his former time, distrusted the hypnotist, or he might then and there have eased his mind of many painful preoccupations. But in spite of Lincoln's assurances he held to the old theory that to be hypnotised was in some way the surrender of his personality, the abdication of his will. At the banquet of wonderful experiences that was beginning, he wanted very keenly to remain absolutely himself.

The next day, and another day, and yet another day passed in such interests as these. Each day Graham spent many hours in the glorious entertainment of flying. On the third day he soared across middle France, and within sight of the snow-clad Alps. These vigorous exercises gave him restful sleep, and each day saw a great stride in his health from the spiritless anaemia of his first awakening. And whenever he was not in the air, and awake, Lincoln was assiduous in the cause of his amusement; all that was novel and curious in contemporary invention was brought to him, until at last his appetite for novelty was well-nigh glutted. One might fill a dozen inconsecutive volumes with the strange things they exhibited. Each afternoon he held his court for an hour or so. He speedily found his interest in his contemporaries becoming personal and intimate. At first he had been alert chiefly for unfamiliarity and peculiarity; any foppishness in their dress, any discordance with his preconceptions of nobility in their status and manners had jarred upon him, and it was remarkable to him how soon that strangeness and the faint hostility that arose from it, disappeared; how soon he came to appreciate the true perspective of his position, and see the old Victorian days remote and quaint. He found himself particularly amused by the red-haired daughter of the Manager of the European

Piggeries. On the second day after dinner he made the acquaintance of a latter-day dancing girl, and found her an astonishing artist. And after that, more hypnotic wonders. On the third day Lincoln was moved to suggest that the Master should repair to a Pleasure City, but this Graham declined, nor would he accept the services of the hypnotists in his aeronautical experiments. The link of locality held him to London; he found a perpetual wonder in topographical identifications that he would have missed abroad. “Here — or a hundred feet below here,” he could say, “I used to eat my midday cutlets during my London University days. Underneath here was Waterloo and the perpetual hunt for confusing trains. Often have I stood waiting down there, bag in hand, and stared up into the sky above the forest of signals, little thinking I should walk some day a hundred yards in the air. And now in that very sky that was once a grey smoke canopy, I circle in an aeropile.”

During those three days Graham was so occupied with such distractions that the vast political movements in progress outside his quarters had but a small share of his attention. Those about him told him little. Daily came Ostrog, the Boss, his Grand Vizier, his mayor of the palace, to report in vague terms the steady establishment of his rule; “a little trouble” soon to be settled in this city, “a slight disturbance” in that. The song of the social revolt came to him no more; he never learned that it had been forbidden in the municipal limits; and all the great emotions of the crow’s nest slumbered in his mind.

But on the second and third of the three days he found himself, in spite of his interest in the daughter of the Pig Manager, or it may be by, reason of the thoughts her conversation suggested, remembering the girl Helen Wotton, who had spoken to him so oddly at the Wind-Vane Keeper’s gathering. The impression she had made was a deep one, albeit the incessant surprise of novel circumstances had kept him from brooding upon it for a space. But now her memory was coming to its own. He wondered what she had meant by those broken half-forgotten sentences; the picture of her eyes and the earnest passion of her face became more vivid as his mechanical interests faded. Her beauty came compellingly between him and certain immediate temptations of ignoble passion. But he did not see

her again until three full days were past.

CHAPTER XVIII. GRAHAM REMEMBERS

She came upon him at last in a little gallery that ran from the Wind Vane Offices toward his state apartments. The gallery was long and narrow, with a series of recesses, each with an arched fenestration that looked upon a court of palms. He came upon her suddenly in one of these recesses. She was seated. She turned her head at the sound of his footsteps and started at the sight of him. Every touch of colour vanished from her face. She rose instantly, made a step toward him as if to address him, and hesitated. He stopped and stood still, expectant. Then he perceived that a nervous tumult silenced her, perceived too, that she must have sought speech with him to be waiting for him in this place.

He felt a regal impulse to assist her. “I have wanted to see you,” he said. “A few days ago you wanted to tell me something — you wanted to tell me of the people. What was it you had to tell me?”

She looked at him with troubled eyes.

“You said the people were unhappy?”

For a moment she was silent still.

“It must have seemed strange to you,” she said abruptly.

“It did. And yet—”

“It was an impulse.”

“Well?”

“That is all.”

She looked at him with a face of hesitation. She spoke with an effort. “You forget,” she said, drawing a deep breath.

“What?”

“The people—”

“Do you mean — ?”

“You forget the people.”

He looked interrogative.

“Yes. I know you are surprised. For you do not understand what you are. You do not know the things that are happening.”

“Well?”

“You do not understand.”

“Not clearly, perhaps. But — tell me.”

She turned to him with sudden resolution. “It is so hard to explain. I have meant to, I have wanted to. And now — I cannot. I am not ready with words. But about you — there is something. It is Wonder. Your sleep — your awakening. These things are miracles. To me at least — and to all the common people. You who lived and suffered and died, you who were a common citizen, wake again, live again, to find yourself Master almost of the earth.”

“Master of the earth,” he said. “So they tell me. But try and imagine how little I know of it.”

“Cities — Trusts — the Labour Company—”

“Principalities, powers, dominions — the power and the glory. Yes, I have heard them shout. I know. I am Master. King, if you wish. With Ostrog, the Boss—”

He paused.

She turned upon him and surveyed his face with a curious scrutiny. “Well?”

He smiled. “To take the responsibility.”

“That is what we have begun to fear.” For a moment she said no more. “No,” she said slowly. “You will take the responsibility. You will take the responsibility. The people look to you.”

She spoke softly. “Listen! For at least half the years of your sleep — in every generation — multitudes of people, in every generation greater multitudes of people, have prayed that you might awake — prayed.”

Graham moved to speak and did not.

She hesitated, and a faint colour crept back to her cheek. “Do you know that you have been to myriads — King Arthur, Barbarossa — the King who would come in his own good time and put the world right for them?”

“I suppose the imagination of the people—”

“Have you not heard our proverb, ‘When the Sleeper wakes?’ While you lay insensible and motionless there — thousands came. Thousands. Every first of the month you lay in state with a white robe upon you and the people filed by you. When I was a little girl I saw you like that, with your face white and calm.”

She turned her face from him and looked steadfastly at the painted wall before her. Her voice fell. “When I was a little girl I used to

look at your face....it seemed to me fixed and waiting, like the patience of God."

"That is what we thought of you," she said. "That is how you seemed to us."

She turned shining eyes to him, her voice was clear and strong. "In the city, in the earth, a myriad myriad men and women are waiting to see what you will do, full of strange incredible expectations."

"Yes?"

"Ostrog — no one — can take that responsibility."

Graham looked at her in surprise, at her face lit with emotion. She seemed at first to have spoken with an effort, and to have fired herself by speaking.

"Do you think," she said, "that you who have lived that little life so far away in the past, you who have fallen into and risen out of this miracle of sleep — do you think that the wonder and reverence and hope of half the world has gathered about you only that you may live another little life?... That you may shift the responsibility to any other man?"

"I know how great this kingship of mine is," he said haltingly. "I know how great it seems. But is it real? It is incredible — dreamlike. Is it real, or is it only a great delusion?"

"It is real," she said; "if you dare."

"After all, like all kingship, my kingship is Belief. It is an illusion in the minds of men."

"If you dare!" she said.

"But—"

"Countless men," she said, "and while it is in their minds — they will obey."

"But I know nothing. That is what I had in mind. I know nothing. And these others — the Councillors, Ostrog. They are wiser, cooler, they know so much, every detail. And, indeed, what are these miseries of which you speak? What am I to know? Do you mean—"

He stopped blankly.

"I am still hardly more than a girl," she said. "But to me the world seems full of wretchedness. The world has altered since your day, altered very strangely. I have prayed that I might see you and tell you

these things. The world has changed. As if a canker had seized it — and robbed life of — everything worth having."

She turned a flushed face upon him, moving suddenly. "Your days were the days of freedom. Yes — I have thought. I have been made to think, for my life — has not been happy. Men are no longer free — no greater, no better than the men of your time. That is not all. This city — is a prison. Every city now is a prison. Mammon grips the key in his hand. Myriads, countless myriads, toil from the cradle to the grave. Is that right? Is that to be — for ever? Yes, far worse than in your time. All about us, beneath us, sorrow and pain. All the shallow delight of such life as you find about you, is separated by just a little from a life of wretchedness beyond any telling Yes, the poor know it — they know they suffer. These countless multitudes who faced death for you two nights since — ! You owe your life to them."

"Yes," said Graham, slowly. "Yes. I owe my life to them."

"You come," she said, "from the days when this new tyranny of the cities was scarcely beginning. It is a tyranny — a tyranny. In your days the feudal war lords had gone, and the new lordship of wealth had still to come. Half the men in the world still lived out upon the free countryside. The cities had still to devour them. I have heard the stories out of the old books — there was nobility! Common men led lives of love and faithfulness then — they did a thousand things. And you — you come from that time."

"It was not — . But never mind. How is it now — ?"

"Gain and the Pleasure Cities! Or slavery — unthanked, unhonoured, slavery."

"Slavery!" he said.

"Slavery."

"You don't mean to say that human beings are chattels."

"Worse. That is what I want you to know, what I want you to see. I know you do not know. They will keep things from you, they will take you presently to a Pleasure City. But you have noticed men and women and children in pale blue canvas, with thin yellow faces and dull eyes?"

"Everywhere."

"Speaking a horrible dialect, coarse and weak."

“I have heard it.”

“They are the slaves — your slaves. They are the slaves of the Labour Company you own.”

“The Labour Company! In some way — that is familiar. Ah! now I remember. I saw it when I was wandering about the city, after the lights returned, great fronts of buildings coloured pale blue. Do you really mean — ?”

“Yes. How can I explain it to you? Of course the blue uniform struck you. Nearly a third of our people wear it — more assume it now every day. This Labour Company has grown imperceptibly.”

“What is this Labour Company?” asked Graham.

“In the old times, how did you manage with starving people?”

“There was the workhouse — which the parishes maintained.”

“Workhouse! Yes — there was something. In our history lessons. I remember now. The Labour Company ousted the workhouse. It grew — partly — out of something — you, perhaps, may remember it — an emotional religious organisation called the Salvation Army — that became a business company. In the first place it was almost a charity. To save people from workhouse rigours. Now I come to think of it, it was one of the earliest properties your Trustees acquired. They bought the Salvation Army and reconstructed it as this. The idea in the first place was to give work to starving homeless people.”

“Yes.”

“Nowadays there are no workhouses, no refuges and charities, nothing but that Company. Its offices are everywhere. That blue is its colour. And any man, woman or child who comes to be hungry and weary and with neither home nor friend nor resort, must go to the Company in the end — or seek some way of death. The Euthanasy is beyond their means — for the poor there is no easy death. And at any hour in the day or night there is food, shelter and a blue uniform for all comers — that is the first condition of the Company’s incorporation — and in return for a day’s shelter the Company extracts a day’s work, and then returns the visitor’s proper clothing and sends him or her out again.”

“Yes?”

“Perhaps that does not seem so terrible to you. In your days men

starved in your streets. That was bad. But they died — men. These people in blue — . The proverb runs: 'Blue canvas once and ever.' The Company trades in their labour, and it has taken care to assure itself of the supply. People come to it starving and helpless — they eat and sleep for a night and day, they — work for a day, and at the end of the day they go out again. If they have worked well they have a penny or so — enough for a theatre or a cheap dancing place, or a kinematograph story, or a dinner or a bet. They wander about after that is spent. Begging is prevented by the police of the ways. Besides, no one gives. They come back again the next day or the day after — brought back by the same incapacity that brought them first. At last their proper clothing wears out, or their rags get so shabby that they are ashamed. Then they must work for months to get fresh. If they want fresh. A great number of children are born under the Company's care. The mother owes them a month thereafter — the children they cherish and educate until they are fourteen, and they pay two years' service. You may be sure these children are educated for the blue canvas. And so it is the Company works."

"And none are destitute in the city?"

"None. They are either in blue canvas or in prison."

"If they will not work?"

"Most people will work at that pitch, and the Company has powers. There are stages of unpleasantness in the work — stoppage of food — and a man or woman who has refused to work once is known by a thumb-marking system in the Company's offices all over the world. Besides, who can leave the city poor? To go to Paris costs two Lions. And for insubordination there are the prisons — dark and miserable — out of sight below. There are prisons now for many things."

"And a third of the people wear this blue canvas?"

"More than a third. Toilers, living without pride or delight or hope, with the stories of Pleasure Cities ringing in their ears, mocking their shameful lives, their privations and hardships. Too poor even for the Euthanasy, the rich man's refuge from life. Dumb, crippled millions, countless millions, all the world about, ignorant of anything but limitations and unsatisfied desires. They are born, they are thwarted and they die. That is the state to which we have come."

For a space Graham sat downcast.

“But there has been a revolution,” he said. “All these things will be changed.” Ostrog—”

“That is our hope. That is the hope of the world. But Ostrog will not do it. He is a politician. To him it seems things must be like this. He does not mind. He takes it for granted. All the rich, all the influential, all who are happy, come at last to take these miseries for granted. They use the people in their politics, they live in ease by their degradation. But you — you who come from a happier age — it is to you the people look. To you.”

He looked at her face. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears. He felt a rush of emotion. For a moment he forgot this city, he forgot the race, and all those vague remote voices, in the immediate humanity of her beauty.

“But what am I to do?” he said with his eyes upon her.

“Rule,” she answered, bending towards him and speaking in a low tone. “Rule the world as it has never been ruled, for the good and happiness of men. For you might rule it — you could rule it.

“The people are stirring. All over the world the people are stirring. It wants but a word — but a word from you — to bring them all together. Even the middle sort of people are restless unhappy.

“They are not telling you the things that are happening. The people will not go back to their drudgery — they refuse to be disarmed. Ostrog has awakened something greater than he dreamt of — he has awakened hopes.”

His heart was beating fast. He tried to seem judicial, to weigh considerations.

“They only want their leader,” she said.

“And then?”

“You could do what you would; — the world is yours.”

He sat, no longer regarding her. Presently he spoke. “The old dreams, and the thing I have dreamt, liberty, happiness. Are they dreams? Could one man — one man — ?” His voice sank and ceased.

“Not one man, but all men — give them only a leader to speak the desire of their hearts.”

He shook his head, and for a time there was silence.

He looked up suddenly, and their eyes met. “I have not your faith,” he said. “I have not your youth. I am here with power that mocks me. No — let me speak. I want to do — not right — I have not the strength for that — but something rather right than wrong. It will bring no millennium, but I am resolved now that I will rule. What you have said has awakened me.... You are right. Ostrog must know his place. And I will learn — .... One thing I promise you. This Labour slavery shall end.”

“And you will rule?”

“Yes. Provided — . There is one thing.”

“Yes?”

“That you will help me.”

“I! — a girl!”

“Yes. Does it not occur to you I am absolutely alone?”

She started and for an instant her eyes had pity. “Need you ask whether I will help you?” she said.

She stood before him, beautiful, worshipful, and her enthusiasm and the greatness of their theme was like a great gulf fixed between them. To touch her, to clasp her hand, was a thing beyond hope. “Then I will rule indeed,” he said slowly. “I will rule-” He paused. “With you.”

There came a tense silence, and then the beating a clock striking the hour. She made him no answer. Graham rose.

“Even now,” he said, “Ostrog will be waiting.” He hesitated, facing her. “When I have asked him certain questions — . There is much I do not know. It may be, that I will go to see with my own eyes the things of which you have spoken. And when I return — ?”

“I shall know of your going and coming. I will wait for you here again.”

He stood for a moment regarding her.

“I knew,” she said, and stopped.

He waited, but she said no more. They regarded one another steadfastly, questioningly, and then he turned from her towards the Wind Vane office.

CHAPTER XIX. OSTROG'S POINT OF VIEW

Graham found Ostrog waiting to give a formal account of his day's stewardship. On previous occasions he had passed over this ceremony as speedily as possible, in order to resume his aerial experiences, but now he began to ask quick short questions. He was very anxious to take up his empire forthwith. Ostrog brought flattering reports of the development of affairs abroad. In Paris and Berlin, Graham perceived that he was saying, there had been trouble, not organised resistance indeed, but insubordinate proceedings. "After all these years," said Ostrog, when Graham pressed enquiries, "the Commune has lifted its head again. That is the real nature of the struggle, to be explicit." But order had been restored in these cities. Graham, the more deliberately judicial for the stirring emotions he felt, asked if there had been any fighting. "A little," said Ostrog. "In one quarter only. But the Senegalese division of our African agricultural police — the Consolidated African Companies have a very well drilled police — was ready, and so were the aeroplanes. We expected a little trouble in the continental cities, and in America. But things are very quiet in America. They are satisfied with the overthrow of the Council. For the time."

"Why should you expect trouble?" asked Graham abruptly.

"There is a lot of discontent — social discontent."

"The Labour Company?"

"You are learning," said Ostrog with a touch of surprise. "Yes. It is chiefly the discontent with the Labour Company. It was that discontent supplied the motive force of this overthrow — that and your awakening."

"Yes?"

Ostrog smiled. He became explicit. "We had to stir up their discontent, we had to revive the old ideals of universal happiness — all men equal — all men happy — no luxury that everyone may not share — ideas that have slumbered for two hundred years. You know that? We had to revive these ideals, impossible as they are — in order to overthrow the Council. And now—"

"Well?"

“Our revolution is accomplished, and the Council is overthrown, and people whom we have stirred up remain surging. There was scarcely enough fighting... We made promises, of course. It is extraordinary how violently and rapidly this vague out-of-date humanitarianism has revived and spread. We who sowed the seed even, have been astonished. In Paris, as I say — we have had to call in a little external help.”

“And here?”

“There is trouble. Multitudes will not go back to work. There is a general strike. Half the factories are empty and the people are swarming in the Ways. They are talking of a Commune. Men in silk and satin have been insulted in the streets. The blue canvas is expecting all sorts of things from you.... Of course there is no need for you to trouble. We are setting the Babble Machines to work with counter suggestions in the cause of law and order. We must keep the grip tight; that is all.”

Graham thought. He perceived a way of asserting himself. But he spoke with restraint.

“Even to the pitch of bringing a negro police,” he said.

“They are useful,” said Ostrog. “They are fine loyal brutes, with no wash of ideas in their heads — such as our rabble has. The Council should have had them as police of the Ways, and things might have been different. Of course, there is nothing to fear except rioting and wreckage. You can manage your own wings now, and you can soar away to Capri if there is any smoke or fuss. We have the pull of all the great things; the aeronauts are privileged and rich, the closest trades union in the world, and so are the engineers of the wind vanes. We have the air, and the mastery of the air is the mastery of the earth. No one of any ability is organising against us. They have no leaders — only the sectional leaders of the secret society we organised before your very opportune awakening. Mere busy bodies and sentimentalists they are and bitterly jealous of each other. None of them is man enough for a central figure. The only trouble will be a disorganised upheaval. To be frank — that may happen. But it won’t interrupt your aeronautics. The days when the People could make revolutions are past.”

“I suppose they are,” said Graham. “I suppose they are.” He

mused. “This world of yours has been full of surprises to me. In the old days we dreamt of a wonderful democratic life, of a time when all men would be equal and happy.”

Ostrog looked at him steadfastly. “The day of democracy is past,” he said. “Past for ever. That day began with the bowmen of Crecy, it ended when marching infantry, when common men in masses ceased to win the battles of the world, when costly cannon, great ironclads, and strategic railways became the means of power. To-day is the day of wealth. Wealth now is power as it never was power before — it commands earth and sea and sky. All power is for those who can handle wealth.... You must accept facts, and these are facts. The world for the Crowd! The Crowd as Ruler! Even in your days that creed had been tried and condemned. To-day it has only one believer — a multiplex, silly one — the mall in the Crowd.”

Graham did not answer immediately. He stood lost in sombre preoccupations.

“No,” said Ostrog. “The day of the common man is past. On the open countryside one man is as good as another, or nearly as good. The earlier aristocracy had a precarious tenure of strength and audacity. They were tempered — tempered. There were insurrections, duels, riots. The first real aristocracy, the first permanent aristocracy, came in with castles and armour, and vanished before the musket and bow. But this is the second aristocracy. The real one. Those days of gunpowder and democracy were only an eddy in the stream. The common man now is a helpless unit. In these days we have this great machine of the city, and an organisation complex beyond his understanding.”

“Yet,” said Graham, “there is something resists, something you are holding down — something that stirs and presses.”

“You will see,” said Ostrog, with a forced smile that would brush these difficult questions aside. “I have not roused the force to destroy myself — trust me.”

“I wonder,” said Graham.

Ostrog stared.

“Must the world go this way?” said Graham, with his emotions at the speaking point. “Must it indeed go in this way? Have all our hopes been vain?”

“What do you mean?” said Ostrog. “Hopes?”

“I came from a democratic age. And I find an aristocratic tyranny!”

“Well, — but you are the chief tyrant.”

Graham shook his head.

“Well,” said Ostrog, “take the general question. It is the way that change has always travelled. Aristocracy, the prevalence of the best — the suffering and extinction of the unfit, and so to better things.”

“But aristocracy! those people I met—”

“Oh! not those!” said Ostrog. “But for the most part they go to their death. Vice and pleasure! They have no children. That sort of stuff will die out. If the world keeps to one road, that is, if there is no turning back. An easy road to excess, convenient Euthanasia for the pleasure seekers singed in the flame, that is the way to improve the race!”

“Pleasant extinction,” said Graham. “Yet — .” He thought for an instant. “There is that other thing — the Crowd, the great mass of poor men. Will that die out? That will not die out. And it suffers, its suffering is a force that even you—”

Ostrog moved impatiently, and when he spoke, he spoke rather less evenly than before.

“Don’t you trouble about these things,” he said. “Everything will be settled in a few days now. The Crowd is a huge foolish beast. What if it does not die out? Even if it does not die, it can still be tamed and driven. I have no sympathy with servile men. You heard those people shouting and singing two nights ago. They were taught that song. If you had taken any man there in cold blood and asked why he shouted, he could not have told you. They think they are shouting for you, that they are loyal and devoted to you. Just then they were ready to slaughter the Council. To-day — they are already murmuring against those who have overthrown the Council.”

“No, no,” said Graham. “They shouted because their lives were dreary, without joy or pride, and because in me — in me — they hoped.”

“And what was their hope? What is their hope? What right have they to hope? They work ill and they want the reward of those who work well. The hope of mankind — what is it? That some day the

Over-man may come, that some day the inferior, the weak and the bestial may be subdued or eliminated. Subdued if not eliminated. The world is no place for the bad, the stupid, the enervated. Their duty — it's a fine duty too! — is to die. The death of the failure! That is the path by which the beast rose to manhood, by which man goes on to higher things."

Ostrog took a pace, seemed to think, and turned on Graham. "I can imagine how this great world state of ours seems to a Victorian Englishman. You regret all the old forms of representative government — their spectres still haunt the world, the voting councils and parliaments and all that eighteenth century tomfoolery You feel moved against our Pleasure Cities. I might have thought of that, — had I not been busy. But you will learn better. The people are mad with envy — they would be in sympathy with you. Even in the streets now, they clamour to destroy the Pleasure Cities. But the Pleasure Cities are the excretory organs of the State, attractive places that year after year draw together all that is weak and vicious, all that is lascivious and lazy, all the easy roguery of the world, to a graceful destruction. They go there, they have their time, they die childless, all the pretty silly lascivious women die childless, and mankind is the better. If the people were sane they would not envy the rich their way of death. And you would emancipate the silly brainless workers that we have enslaved, and try to make their lives easy and pleasant again. Just as they have sunk to what they are fit for." He smiled a smile that irritated Graham oddly. "You will learn better. I know those ideas; in my boyhood I read your Shelley and dreamt of Liberty. There is no liberty, save wisdom and self control. Liberty is within — not without. It is each man's own affair. Suppose — which is impossible — that these swarming yelping fools in blue get the upper hand of us, what then? They will only fall to other masters. So long as there are sheep Nature will insist on beasts of prey. It would mean but a few hundred years' delay. The coming of the aristocrat is fatal and assured. The end will be the Over-man — for all the mad protests of humanity. Let them revolt, let them win and kill me and my like. Others will arise — other masters. The end will be the same."

"I wonder," said Graham doggedly.

For a moment he stood downcast.

“But I must see these things for myself,” he said, suddenly assuming a tone of confident mastery. “Only by seeing can I understand. I must learn. That is what I want to tell you, Ostrog. I do not want to be King in a Pleasure City; that is not my, pleasure. I have spent enough time with aeronautics — and those other things. I must learn how people live now, how the common life has developed. Then I shall understand these things better. I must learn how common people live — the labour people more especially — how they work, marry, bear children, die—”

“You get that from our realistic novelists,” suggested Ostrog, suddenly preoccupied.

“I want reality,” said Graham, “not realism.”

“There are difficulties,” said Ostrog, and thought.

“On the whole perhaps —

“I did not expect — .

“I had thought — . And yet, perhaps — . You say you want to go through the Ways of the city and see the common people.”

Suddenly he came to some conclusion. “You would need to go disguised,” he said. “The city is intensely excited, and the discovery of your presence among them might create a fearful tumult. Still this wish of yours to go into this city — this idea of yours — . Yes, now I think the thing over it seems to me not altogether — . It can be contrived. If you would really find an interest in that! You are, of course, Master. You can go soon if you like. A disguise for this excursion Asano will be able to manage. He would go with you. After all it is not a bad idea of yours.”

“You will not want to consult me in any matter?” asked Graham suddenly, struck by an odd suspicion.

“Oh, dear no! No! I think you may trust affairs to me for a time, at any rate,” said Ostrog, smiling. “Even if we differ—”

Graham glanced; at him sharply.

“There is no fighting likely to happen soon?” he asked abruptly.

“Certainly not.”

“I have been thinking about these negroes. I don’t believe the people intend any hostility to me, and, after all, I am the Master. I do not want any negroes brought to London. It is an archaic prejudice

perhaps, but I have peculiar feelings about Europeans and the subject races. Even about Paris—”

Ostrog stood watching him from under his drooping brows. “I am not bringing negroes to London,” he said slowly. “But if—”

“You are not to bring armed negroes to London, whatever happens,” said Graham. “In that matter I am quite decided.”

Ostrog, after a pause, decided not to speak, and bowed deferentially.

CHAPTER XX. IN THE CITY WAYS

And that night, unknown and unsuspected, Graham, dressed in the costume of an inferior wind-vane official keeping holiday, and accompanied by Asano in Labour Company canvas, surveyed the city through which he had wandered when it was veiled in darkness. But now he saw it lit and waking, a whirlpool of life. In spite of the surging and swaying of the forces of revolution, in spite of the unusual discontent, the mutterings of the greater struggle of which the first revolt was but the prelude, the myriad streams of commerce still flowed wide and strong. He knew now something of the dimensions and quality of the new age, but he was not prepared for the infinite surprise of the detailed view, for the torrent of colour and vivid impressions that poured past him.

This was his first real contact with the people of these latter days. He realised that all that had gone before, saving his glimpses of the public theatres and markets, had had its element of seclusion, had been a movement within the comparatively narrow political quarter, that all his previous experiences had revolved immediately about the question of his own position. But here was the city at the busiest hours of night, the people to a large extent returned to their own immediate interests, the resumption of the real informal life, he common habits of the new time.

They emerged at first into a street whose opposite ways were crowded with the blue canvas liveries. This swarm Graham saw was a portion of a procession — it was odd to see a procession parading the city seated They carried banners of coarse red stuff with red letters. “No disarmament,” said the banners, for the most part in crudely daubed letters and with variant spelling, and “Why should we disarm?” “No disarming.” “No disarming.” Banner after banner went by, a stream of banners flowing past, and at last at the end, the song of the revolt and a noisy band of strange instruments. “They all ought to be at work,” said Asano. “They have had no food these two days, or they have stolen it.”

Presently Asano made a detour to avoid the congested crowd that gaped upon the occasional passage of dead bodies from hospital to a

mortuary, the gleanings after death's harvest of the first revolt.

That night few people were sleeping, everyone was abroad. A vast excitement, perpetual crowds perpetually changing, surrounded Graham; his mind was confused and darkened by an incessant tumult, by the cries and enigmatical fragments of the social struggle that was as yet only beginning. Everywhere festoons and banners of black and strange decorations, intensified the quality of his popularity. Everywhere he caught snatches of that crude thick dialect that served the illiterate class, the class, that is, beyond the reach of phonograph culture, in their common-place intercourse. Everywhere this trouble of disarmament was in the air, with a quality of immediate stress of which he had no inkling during his seclusion in the Wind-Vane quarter. He perceived that as soon as he returned he must discuss this with Ostrog, this and the greater issues of which it was the expression, in a far more conclusive way than he had so far done. Perpetually that night, even in the earlier hours of their wanderings about the city, the spirit of unrest and revolt swamped his attention, to the exclusion of countless strange things he might otherwise have observed.

This preoccupation made his impressions fragmentary. Yet amidst so much that was strange and vivid, no subject, however personal and insistent, could exert undivided sway. There were spaces when the revolutionary movement passed clean out of his mind, was drawn aside like a curtain from before some startling new aspect of the time. Helen had swayed his mind to this intense earnestness of enquiry, but there came times when she, even, receded beyond his conscious thoughts. At one moment, for example, he found they were traversing the religious quarter, for the easy transit about the city afforded by the moving ways rendered sporadic churches and chapels no longer necessary — and his attention was vividly arrested by the facade of one of the Christian sects.

They were travelling seated on one of the swift upper ways, the place leapt upon them at a bend and advanced rapidly towards them. It was covered with inscriptions from top to base, in vivid white and blue, save where a vast and glaring kinematograph transparency presented a realistic New Testament scene, and where a vast festoon of black to show that the popular religion followed the popular

politics, hung across the lettering Graham had already become familiar with the phonotype writing and these inscriptions arrested him, being to his sense for the most part almost incredible blasphemy. Among the less offensive were "Salvation on the First Floor and turn to the Right." "Put your Money on your Maker." "The Sharpest Conversion in London, Expert Operators! Look Slippy!" "What Christ would say to the Sleeper; — Join the Up-to-date Saints!" "Be a Christian — without hindrance to your present Occupation." "All the Brightest Bishops on the Bench to-night and Prices as Usual." "Brisk Blessings for Busy Business Men."

"But this is appalling!" said Graham, as that deafening scream of mercantile piety towered above them.

"What is appalling?" asked his little officer, apparently seeking vainly for anything unusual in this shrieking enamel.

"*This!* Surely the essence of religion is reverence."

"Oh *that!*" Asano looked at Graham. "Does it shock you?" he said in the tone of one who makes a discovery. "I suppose it would, of course. I had forgotten. Nowadays the competition for attention is so keen, and people simply haven't the leisure to attend to their souls, you know, as they used to do." He smiled. "In the old days you had quiet Sabbaths and the countryside. Though somewhere I've read of Sunday afternoons that—"

"But, *that*," said Graham, glancing back at the receding blue and white. "That is surely not the only—"

"There are hundreds of different ways. But, of course, if a sect doesn't tell it doesn't pay. Worship has moved with the times. There are high class sects with quieter ways — costly incense and personal attentions and all that. These people are extremely popular and prosperous. They pay several dozen lions for those apartments to the Council — to you, I should say."

Graham still felt a difficulty with the coinage, and this mention of a dozen lions brought him abruptly to that matter. In a moment the screaming temples and their swarming touts were forgotten in this new interest. A turn of a phrase suggested, and an answer confirmed the idea that gold and silver were both demonetised, that stamped gold which had begun its reign amidst the merchants of Phoenicia was at last dethroned. The change had been graduated but swift,

brought about by an extension of the system of cheques that had even in his previous life already practically superseded gold in all the larger business transactions. The common traffic of the city, the common currency indeed of all the world, was conducted by means of the little brown, green and pink council cheques for small amounts, printed with a blank payee. Asano had several with him, and at the first opportunity he supplied the gaps in his set. They were printed not on tearable paper, but on a semi-transparent fabric of silken, flexibility, interwoven with silk. Across them all sprawled a facsimile of Graham's signature, his first encounter with the curves and turns of that familiar autograph for two hundred and three years.

Some intermediary experiences made no impression sufficiently vivid to prevent the matter of the disarmament claiming his thoughts again; a blurred picture of a Theosophist temple that promised MIRACLES in enormous letters of unsteady fire was least submerged perhaps, but then came the view of the dining hall in Northumberland Avenue. That interested him very greatly.

By the energy and thought of Asano he was able to view this place from a little screened gallery reserved for the attendants of the tables. The building was pervaded by a distant muffled hooting, piping and bawling, of which he did not at first understand the import, but which recalled a certain mysterious leathery voice he had heard after the resumption of the lights on the night of his solitary wandering.

He had grown accustomed now to vastness and great numbers of people, nevertheless this spectacle held him for a long time. It was as he watched the table service more immediately beneath, and interspersed with many questions and answers concerning details, that the realisation of the full significance of the feast of several thousand people came to him.

It was his constant surprise to find that points that one might have expected to strike vividly at the very outset never occurred to him until some trivial detail suddenly shaped as a riddle and pointed to the obvious thing he had overlooked. In this matter, for instance, it had not occurred to him that this continuity of the city, this exclusion of weather, these vast halls and ways, involved the disappearance of the household; that the typical Victorian "home," the little brick cell

containing kitchen and scullery, living rooms and bedrooms, had, save for the ruins that diversified the countryside, vanished as surely as the wattle hut. But now he saw what had indeed been manifest from the first, that London, regarded as a living place, was no longer an aggregation of houses but a prodigious hotel, an hotel with a thousand classes of accommodation, thousands of dining halls, chapels, theatres, markets and places of assembly, a synthesis of enterprises, of which he chiefly was the owner. People had their sleeping rooms, with, it might be, antechambers, rooms that were always sanitary at least whatever the degree of comfort and privacy, and for the rest they lived much as many people had lived in the new-made giant hotels of the Victorian days, eating, reading, thinking, playing, conversing, all in places of public resort, going to their work in the industrial quarters of the city or doing business in their offices in the trading section.

He perceived at once how necessarily this state of affairs had developed from the Victorian city. The fundamental reason for the modern city had ever been the economy of co-operation. The chief thing to prevent the merging of the separate households in his own generation was simply the still imperfect civilisation of the people, the strong barbaric pride, passions, and prejudices, the jealousies, rivalries, and violence of the middle and lower classes, which had necessitated the entire separation of contiguous households. But the change, the taming of the people, had been in rapid progress even then. In his brief thirty years of previous life he had seen an enormous extension of the habit of consuming meals from home, the casually patronised horse-box coffee-house had given place to the open and crowded Aerated Bread Shop for instance, women's clubs had had their beginning, and an immense development of reading rooms, lounges and libraries had witnessed to the growth of social confidence. These promises had by this time attained to their complete fulfillment. The locked and barred household had passed away.

These people below him belonged, he learnt, to the lower middle class, the class just above the blue labourers, a class so accustomed in the Victorian period to feed with every precaution of privacy that its members, when occasion confronted them with a public meal,

would usually hide their embarrassment under horseplay or a markedly militant demeanour. But these gaily, if lightly dressed people below, albeit vivacious, hurried and uncommunicative, were dexterously mannered and certainly quite at their ease with regard to one another.

He noted a slight significant thing; the table, as far as he could see, was and remained delightfully neat, there was nothing to parallel the confusion, the broadcast crumbs, the splashes of viand and condiment, the overturned drink and displaced ornaments, which would have marked the stormy progress of the Victorian meal. The table furniture was very different. There were no ornaments, no flowers, and the table was without a cloth, being made, he learnt, of a solid substance having the texture and appearance of damask. He discerned that this damask substance was patterned with gracefully designed trade advertisements.

In a sort of recess before each diner was a complete apparatus of porcelain and metal. There was one plate of white porcelain, and by means of taps for hot and cold volatile fluids the diner washed this himself between the courses; he also washed his elegant white metal knife and fork and spoon as occasion required.

Soup and the chemical wine that was the common drink were delivered by similar taps, and the remaining covers travelled automatically in tastefully arranged dishes down the table along silver rails. The diner stopped these and helped himself at his discretion. They appeared at a little door at one end of the table, and vanished at the other. That turn of democratic sentiment in decay, that ugly pride of menial souls, which renders equals loth to wait on one another, was very strong he found among these people. He was so preoccupied with these details that it was only just as he was leaving the place that he remarked the huge advertisement dioramas that marched majestically along the upper walls and proclaimed the most remarkable commodities.

Beyond this place they came into a crowded hall, and he discovered the cause of the noise that had perplexed him. They paused at a turnstile at which a payment was made.

Graham's attention was immediately arrested by a violent, loud hoot, followed by a vast leathery voice. "The Master is sleeping

peacefully," it said vociferately. "He is in excellent health. He is going to devote the rest of his life to aeronautics. He says women are more beautiful than ever. Galloop! Wow! Our wonderful civilisation astonishes him beyond measure. Beyond all measure. Galloop. He puts great trust in Boss Ostrog, absolute confidence in Boss Ostrog. Ostrog is to be his chief minister; is authorised to remove or reinstate public officers — all patronage will be in his hands. All patronage in the hands of Boss Ostrog! The Councillors have been sent back to their own prison above the Council House."

Graham stopped at the first sentence, and, looking up, beheld a foolish trumpet face from which this was brayed. This was the General Intelligence Machine. For a space it seemed to be gathering breath, and a regular throbbing from its cylindrical body was audible. Then it trumpeted "Galloop, Galloop," and broke out again.

"Paris is now pacified. All resistance is over. Galloop! The black police hold every position of importance in the city. They fought with great bravery, singing songs written in praise of their ancestors by the poet Kipling. Once or twice they got out of hand, and tortured and mutilated wounded and captured insurgents, men and women. Moral — don't go rebelling. Haha! Galloop, Galloop! They are lively fellows. Lively brave fellows. Let this be a lesson to the disorderly banderlog of this city. Yah! Banderlog! Filth of the earth! Galloop, Galloop!"

The voice ceased. There was a confused murmur of disapproval among the crowd. "Damned niggers." A man began to harangue near them. "Is this the Master's doing, brothers? Is this the Master's doing?"

"Black police!" said Graham. "What is that? You don't mean—"

Asano touched his arm and gave him a warning look, and forthwith another of these mechanisms screamed deafeningly and gave tongue in a shrill voice. "Yahaha, Yahah, Yap! Hear a live paper yelp! Live paper. Yaha! Shocking outrage in Paris. Yahahah! The Parisians exasperated by the black police to the pitch of assassination. Dreadful reprisals. Savage times come again. Blood! Blood! Yaha!" The nearer Babble Machine hooted stupendously, "Galloop, Galloop," drowned the end of the sentence, and proceeded in a rather flatter note than before with novel comments on the

horrors of disorder. “Law and order must be maintained,” said the nearer Babble Machine.

“But,” began Graham.

“Don’t ask questions here,” said Asano, “or you will be involved in an argument.”

“Then let us go on,” said Graham, “for I want to know more of this.”

As he and his companion pushed their way through the excited crowd that swarmed beneath these voices, towards the exit, Graham conceived more clearly the proportion and features of this room. Altogether, great and small, there must have been nearly a thousand of these erections, piping, hooting, bawling and gabbling in that great space, each with its crowd of excited listeners, the majority of them men dressed in blue canvas. There were all sizes of machines, from the little gossipping mechanisms that chuckled out mechanical sarcasm in odd corners, through a number of grades to such fifty-foot giants as that which had first hooted over Graham.

This place was unusually crowded, because of the intense public interest in the course of affairs in Paris. Evidently the struggle had been much more savage than Ostrog had represented it. All the mechanisms were discoursing upon that topic, and the repetition of the people made the huge hive buzz with such phrases as “Lynched policemen,” “Women burnt alive,” “Fuzzy Wuzzy.” “But does the Master allow such things?” asked a man near him. “Is this the beginning of the Master’s rule?”

Is *this* the beginning of the Master’s rule? For a long time after he had left the place, the hooting, whistling and braying of the machines pursued him; “Galloop, Galloop,” “Yahahah, Yaha, Yap! Yaha!” Is this the beginning of the Master’s rule?

Directly they were out upon the ways he began to question Asano closely on the nature of the Parisian struggle. “This disarmament! What was their trouble? What does it all mean?” Asano seemed chiefly anxious to reassure him that it was “all right.” “But these outrages!” “You cannot have an omelette,” said Asano, “without breaking eggs. It is only the rough people. Only in one part of the city. All the rest is all right. The Parisian labourers are the wildest in the world, except ours.”

“What! the Londoners?”

“No, the Japanese. They have to be kept in order.” “But burning women alive!”

“A Commune!” said Asano. “They would rob you of your property. They would do away with property and give the world over to mob rule. You are Master, the world is yours. But there will be no Commune here. There is no need for black police here.

“And every consideration has been shown. It is their own negroes — French speaking negroes. Senegal regiments, and Niger and Timbuctoo.”

“Regiments?” said Graham, “I thought there was only one — .”

“No,” said Asano, and glanced at him. “There is more than one.”

Graham felt unpleasantly helpless.

“I did not think,” he began and stopped abruptly He went off at a tangent to ask for information about these Babble Machines. For the most part, the crowd present had been shabbily or even raggedly dressed, and Graham learnt that so far as the more prosperous classes were concerned, in all the more comfortable private apartments of the city were fixed Babble Machines that would speak directly a lever was pulled. The tenant of the apartment could connect this with the cables of any of the great News Syndicates that he preferred. When he learnt this presently, he demanded the reason of their absence from his own suite of apartments. Asano stared. “I never thought,” he said. “Ostrog must have had them removed.”

Graham stared. “How was I to know?” he exclaimed.

“Perhaps he thought they would annoy you,” said Asano.

“They must be replaced directly I return,” said Graham after an interval.

He found a difficulty in understanding that this news room and the dining hall were not great central places, that such establishments were repeated almost beyond counting all over the city. But ever and again during the night’s expedition his ears, in some new quarter would pick out from the tumult of the ways the peculiar hooting of the organ of Boss Ostrog, “Galloop, Galloop!” or the shrill “Yahaha, Yaha, Yap! — Hear a live paper yelp!” of its chief rival.

Repeated, too, everywhere, were such *creches* as the one he now entered. It was reached by a lift, and by a glass bridge that flung

across the dining hall and traversed the ways at a slight upward angle. To enter the first section of the place necessitated the use of his solvent signature under Asano's direction. They were immediately attended to by a man in a violet robe and gold clasp, the insignia of practising medical men. He perceived from this man's manner that his identity was known, and proceeded to ask questions on the strange arrangements of the place without reserve.

On either side of the passage, which was silent and padded, as if to deaden the footfall, were narrow little doors, their size and arrangement suggestive of the cells of a Victorian prison. But the upper portion of each door was of the same greenish transparent stuff that had enclosed him at his awakening, and within, dimly seen, lay, in every case, a very young baby in a little nest of wadding. Elaborate apparatus watched the atmosphere and rang a bell far away in the central office at the slightest departure from the optimum of temperature and moisture. A system of such *creches* had almost entirely replaced the hazardous adventures of the old-world nursing. The attendant presently called Graham's attention to the wet nurses, a vista of mechanical figures, with arms, shoulders and breasts of astonishingly realistic modelling, articulation, and texture, but mere brass tripods below, and having in the place of features a flat disc bearing advertisements likely to be of interest to mothers.

Of all the strange things that Graham came upon that night, none jarred more upon his habits of thought than this place. The spectacle of the little pink creatures, their feeble limbs swaying uncertainly in vague first movements, left alone, without embrace or endearment, was wholly repugnant to him. The attendant doctor was of a different opinion. His statistical evidence showed beyond dispute that in the Victorian times the most dangerous passage of life was the arms of the mother, that there human mortality had ever been most terrible. On the other hand this *creche* company, the International Creche Syndicate, lost not one-half per cent of the million babies or so that formed its peculiar care. But Graham's prejudice was too strong even for those figures.

Along one of the many passages of the place they presently came upon a young couple in the usual blue canvas peering through the transparency and laughing hysterically at the bald head of their first-

born. Graham's face must have showed his estimate of them, for their merriment ceased and they looked abashed. But this little incident accentuated his sudden realisation of the gulf between his habits of thought and the ways of the new age. He passed on to the crawling rooms and the Kindergarten, perplexed and distressed. He found the endless long playrooms were empty! the latter-day children at least still spent their nights in sleep. As they went through these, the little officer pointed out the nature of the toys, developments of those devised by that inspired sentimentalist Froebel. There were nurses here, but much was done by machines that sang and danced and dandled.

Graham was still not clear upon many points. "But so many orphans," he said perplexed, reverting to a first misconception, and learnt again that they were not orphans.

So soon as they had left the *creche* he began to speak of the horror the babies in their incubating cases had caused him. "Is motherhood gone?" he said. "Was it a cant? Surely it was an instinct. This seems so unnatural — abominable almost."

"Along here we shall come to the dancing place," said Asano by way of reply. "It is sure to be crowded. In spite of all the political unrest it will be crowded. The women take no great interest in politics — except a few here and there. You will see the mothers — most young women in London are mothers. In that class it is considered a creditable thing to have one child — a proof of animation. Few middle class people have more than one. With the Labour Company it is different. As for motherhood They still take an immense pride in the children. They come here to look at them quite often."

"Then do you mean that the population of the world — ?"

"Is falling? Yes. Except among the people under the Labour Company. They are reckless — ."

The air was suddenly dancing with music, and down a way they approached obliquely, set with gorgeous pillars as it seemed of clear amethyst, flowed a concourse of gay people and a tumult of merry cries and laughter. He saw curled heads, wreathed brows, and a happy intricate flutter of gamboge pass triumphant across the picture.

"You will see," said Asano with a faint smile "The world has

changed. In a moment you will see the mothers of the new age. Come this way. We shall see those yonder again very soon."

They ascended a certain height in a swift lift, and changed to a slower one. As they went on the music grew upon them, until it was near and full and splendid, and, moving with its glorious intricacies they could distinguish the beat of innumerable dancing feet. They made a payment at a turnstile, and emerged upon the wide gallery that overlooked the dancing place, and upon the full enchantment of sound and sight.

"Here," said Asano, "are the fathers and mothers of the little ones you saw."

The hall was not so richly decorated as that of the Atlas, but saving that, it was, for its size, the most splendid Graham had seen. The beautiful white limbed figures that supported the galleries reminded him once more of the restored magnificence of sculpture; they seemed to writhe in engaging attitudes, their faces laughed. The source of the music that filled the place was hidden, and the whole vast shining floor was thick with dancing couples. "Look at them," said the little officer, "see how much they show of motherhood."

The gallery they stood upon ran along the upper edge of a huge screen that cut the dancing hall on one side from a sort of outer hall that showed through broad arches the incessant onward rush of the city ways. In this outer hall was a great crowd of less brilliantly dressed people, as numerous almost as those who danced within, the great majority wearing the blue uniform of the Labour Company that was now so familiar to Graham. Too poor to pass the turnstiles to the festival, they were yet unable to keep away from the sound of its seductions. Some of them even had cleared spaces, and were dancing also, fluttering their rags in the air. Some shouted as they danced, jests and odd allusions Graham did not understand. Once someone began whistling the refrain of the revolutionary song, but it seemed as though that beginning was promptly suppressed. The corner was dark and Graham could not see. He turned to the hall again. Above the caryatidae were marble busts of men whom that age esteemed great moral emancipators and pioneers; for the most part their names were strange to Graham, though he recognised Grant Allen, Le Gallienne, Nietzsche, Shelley and Goodwin. Great black festoons

and eloquent sentiments reinforced the huge inscription that partially defaced the upper end of the dancing place, and asserted that "The Festival of the Awakening" was in progress.

"Myriads are taking holiday or staying from work because of that, quite apart from the labourers who refuse to go back," said Asano. "These people are always ready for holidays."

Graham walked to the parapet and stood leaning over, looking down at the dancers. Save for two or three remote whispering couples, who had stolen apart, he and his guide had the gallery to themselves. A warm breath of scent and vitality came up to him. Both men and women below were lightly clad, bare-armed, open-necked, as the universal warmth of the city permitted. The hair of the men was often a mass of effeminate curls, their chins were always shaven, and many of them had flushed or coloured cheeks. Many of the women were very pretty, and all were dressed with elaborate coquetry. As they swept by beneath, he saw ecstatic faces with eyes half closed in pleasure.

"What sort of people are these?" he asked abruptly.

"Workers — prosperous workers. What you would have called the middle class. Independent tradesmen with little separate businesses have vanished long ago, but there are store servers, managers, engineers of a hundred sorts. Tonight is a holiday of course, and every dancing place in the city will be crowded, and every place of worship."

"But — the women?"

"The same. There's a thousand forms of work for women now. But you had the beginning of the independent working-woman in your days. Most women are independent now. Most of these are married more or less — there are a number of methods of contract — and that gives them more money, and enables them to enjoy themselves."

"I see," said Graham looking at the flushed faces, the flash and swirl of movement, and still thinking of that nightmare of pink helpless limbs. "And these are — mothers."

"Most of them."

"The more I see of these things the more complex I find your problems. This, for instance, is a surprise. That news from Paris was

a surprise."

In a little while he spoke again:

"These are mothers. Presently, I suppose, I shall get into the modern way of seeing things. I have old habits of mind clinging about me — habits based, I suppose, on needs that are over and done with. Of course, in our time, a woman was supposed not only to bear children, but to cherish them, to devote herself to them, to educate them — all the essentials of moral and mental education a child owed its mother. Or went without. Quite a number, I admit, went without. Nowadays, clearly, there is no more need for such care than if they were butterflies. I see that! Only there was an ideal — that figure of a grave, patient woman, silently and serenely mistress of a home, mother and maker of men — to love her was a sort of worship —"

He stopped and repeated, "A sort of worship."

"Ideals change," said the little man, "as needs change."

Graham awoke from an instant reverie and Asano repeated his words. Graham's mind returned to the thing at hand.

"Of course I see the perfect reasonableness of this Restraint, soberness, the matured thought, the unselfish a act, they are necessities of the barbarous state, the life of dangers. Dourness is man's tribute to unconquered nature. But man has conquered nature now for all practical purposes — his political affairs are managed by Bosses with a black police — and life is joyous."

He looked at the dancers again. "Joyous," he said.

"There are weary moments," said the little officer, reflectively.

"They all look young. Down there I should be visibly the oldest man. And in my own time I should have passed as middle-aged."

"They are young. There are few old people in this class in the work cities."

"How is that?"

"Old people's lives are not so pleasant as they used to be, unless they are rich to hire lovers and helpers. And we have an institution called Euthanasy."

"Ah! that Euthanasy!" said Graham. "The easy death?"

"The easy death. It is the last pleasure. The Euthanasy Company does it well. People will pay the sum — it is a costly thing — long

beforehand, go off to some pleasure city and return impoverished and weary, very weary."

"There is a lot left for me to understand," said Graham after a pause. "Yet I see the logic of it all. Our array of angry virtues and sour restraints was the consequence of danger and insecurity. The Stoic, the Puritan, even in my time, were vanishing types. In the old days man was armed against Pain, now he is eager for Pleasure. There lies the difference. Civilisation has driven pain and danger so far off — for well-to-do people. And only well-to-do people matter now. I have been asleep two hundred years."

For a minute they leant on the balustrading, following the intricate evolution of the dance. Indeed the scene was very beautiful.

"Before God," said Graham, suddenly, "I would rather be a wounded sentinel freezing in the snow than one of these painted fools!"

"In the snow," said Asano, "one might think differently."

"I am uncivilised," said Graham, not heeding him. "That is the trouble. I am primitive — Palaeolithic. Their fountain of rage and fear and anger is sealed and closed, the habits of a lifetime make them cheerful and easy and delightful. You must bear with my nineteenth century shocks and disgusts. These people, you say, are skilled workers and so forth. And while these dance, men are fighting — men are dying in Paris to keep the world — that they may dance."

Asano smiled faintly. "For that matter, men are dying in London," he said.

There was a moment's silence.

"Where do these sleep?" asked Graham.

"Above and below — an intricate warren."

"And where do they work? This is — the domestic life."

"You will see little work to-night. Half the workers are out or under arms. Half these people are keeping holiday. But we will go to the work places if you wish it."

For a time Graham watched the dancers, then suddenly turned away. "I want to see the workers. I have seen enough of these," he said.

Asano led the way along the gallery across the dancing hall. Presently they came to a transverse passage that brought a breath of

fresher, colder air.

Asano glanced at this passage as they went past, stopped, went back to it, and turned to Graham with a smile. “Here, Sire,” he said, “is something — will be familiar to you at least — and yet — . But I will not tell you. Come!”

He led the way along a closed passage that presently became cold. The reverberation of their feet told that this passage was a bridge. They came into a circular gallery that was glazed in from the outer weather, and so reached a circular chamber which seemed familiar, though Graham could not recall distinctly when he had entered it before. In this was a ladder — the first ladder he had seen since his awakening — up which they went, and came into a high, dark, cold place in which was another almost vertical ladder. This they ascended, Graham still perplexed.

But at the top he understood, and recognized the metallic bars to which he clung. He was in the cage under the ball of St. Paul’s. The dome rose but a little way above the general contour of the city, into the still twilight, and sloped away, shining greasily under a few distant lights, into a circumambient ditch of darkness.

Out between the bars he looked upon the wind-clear northern sky and saw the starry constellations all unchanged. Capella hung in the west, Vega was rising, and the seven glittering points of the Great Bear swept overhead in their stately circle about the Pole.

He saw these stars in a clear gap of sky. To the east and south the great circular shapes of complaining wind-wheels blotted out the heavens, so that the glare about the Council House was hidden. To the south-west hung Orion, showing like a pallid ghost through a tracery of iron-work and interlacing shapes above a dazzling coruscation of lights. A bellowing and siren screaming that came from the flying stages warned the world that one of the aeroplanes was ready to start. He remained for a space gazing towards the glaring stage. Then his eyes went back to the northward constellations.

For a long time he was silent. “This,” he said at last, smiling in the shadow, “seems the strangest thing of all. To stand in the dome of Saint Paul’s and look once more upon these familiar, silent stars!”

Thence Graham was taken by Asano along devious ways to the

great gambling and business quarters where the bulk of the fortunes in the city were lost and made. It impressed him as a well-nigh interminable series of very high halls, surrounded by tiers upon tiers of galleries into which opened thousands of offices, and traversed by a complicated multitude of bridges, footways, aerial motor rails, and trapeze and cable leaps. And here more than anywhere the note of vehement vitality, of uncontrollable, hasty activity, rose high. Everywhere was violent advertisement, until his brain swam at the tumult of light and colour. And Babble Machines of a peculiarly rancid tone were abundant and filled the air with strenuous squealing and an idiotic slang. "Skin your eyes and slide," "Gewhoop, Bonanza," "Gollipers come and hark!"

The place seemed to him to be dense with people either profoundly agitated or swelling with obscure cunning, yet he learnt that the place was comparatively empty, that the great political convulsion of the last few days had reduced transactions to an unprecedented minimum. In one huge place were long avenues of roulette tables, each with an excited, undignified crowd about it; in another a yelping Babel of white-faced women and red-necked leathery-lunged men bought and sold the shares of an absolutely fictitious business undertaking which, every five minutes, paid a dividend of ten per cent and cancelled a certain proportion of its shares by means of a lottery wheel.

These business activities were prosecuted with an energy that readily passed into violence, and Graham approaching a dense crowd found at its centre a couple of prominent merchants in violent controversy with teeth and nails on some delicate point of business etiquette. Something still remained in life to be fought for. Further he had a shock at a vehement announcement in phonetic letters of scarlet flame, each twice the height of a man, that "WE ASSURE THE PROPRAIET'R. WE ASSURE THE PROPRAIET'R."

"Who's the proprietor?" he asked.

"You."

"But what do they assure me?" he asked. "What do they assure me?"

"Didn't you have assurance?"

Graham thought. "Insurance?"

“Yes — Insurance. I remember that was the older word. They are insuring your life. Dozands of people are taking out policies, myriads of lions are being put on you. And further on other people are buying annuities. They do that on everybody who is at all prominent. Look there!”

A crowd of people surged and roared, and Graham saw a vast black screen suddenly illuminated in still larger letters of burning purple. “Anuetes on the Propraiet’r — x 5 pr. G.” The people began to boo and shout at this, a number of hard breathing, wildeyed men came running past, clawing with hooked fingers at the air. There was a furious crush about a little doorway.

Asano did a brief calculation. “Seventeen per cent per annum is their annuity on you. They would not pay so much per cent if they could see you now, Sire. But they do not know. Your own annuities used to be a very safe investment, but now you are sheer gambling, of course. This is probably a desperate bid. I doubt if people will get their money.”

The crowd of would-be annuitants grew so thick about them that for some time they could move neither forward no backward. Graham noticed what appeared to him to be a high proportion of women among the speculators, and was reminded again of the economical independence of their sex. They seemed remarkably well able to take care of themselves in the crowd, using their elbows with particular skill, as he learnt to his cost. One curly-headed person caught in the pressure for a space, looked steadfastly at him several times, almost as if she recognized him, and then, edging deliberately towards him, touched his hand with her arm in a scarcely accidental manner, and made it plain by a look as ancient as Chaldea that he had found favour in her eyes. And then a lank, grey-bearded man, perspiring copiously in a noble passion of self-help, blind to all earthly things save that glaring, bait, thrust between them in a cataclysmal rush towards that alluring “x 5 pr. G.”

“I want to get out of this,” said Graham to Asano. “This is not what I came to see. Show me the workers. I want to see the people in blue. These parasitic lunatics—”

He found himself wedged in a struggling mass of people, and this hopeful sentence went unfinished.

CHAPTER XXI. THE UNDER SIDE

From the Business Quarter they presently passed by the running ways into a remote quarter of the city, where the bulk of the manufactures was done. On their way the platforms crossed the Thames twice, and passed in a broad viaduct across one of the great roads that entered the city from the North. In both cases his impression was swift and in both very vivid. The river was a broad wrinkled glitter of black sea water, overarched by buildings, and vanishing either way into a blackness starred with receding lights. A string of black barges passed seaward, manned by blue-clad men. The road was a long and very broad and high tunnel, along which big-wheeled machines drove noiselessly and swiftly. Here, too, the distinctive blue of the Labour Company was in abundance. The smoothness of the double tracks, the largeness and the lightness of the big pneumatic wheels in proportion to the vehicular body, struck Graham most vividly. One lank and very high carriage with longitudinal metallic rods hung with the dripping carcasses of many hundred sheep arrested his attention unduly. Abruptly the edge of the archway cut and blotted out the picture.

Presently they left the way and descended by a lift and traversed a passage that sloped downward, and so came to a descending lift again. The appearance of things changed. Even the pretence of architectural ornament disappeared, the lights diminished in number and size, the architecture became more and more massive in proportion to the spaces as the factory quarters were reached. And in the dusty biscuit-making place of the potters, among the felspar mills in the furnace rooms of the metal workers, among the incandescent lakes of crude Eadhamite, the blue canvas clothing was on man, woman and child.

Many of these great and dusty galleries were silent avenues of machinery, endless raked out ashen furnaces testified to the revolutionary dislocation, but wherever there was work it was being done by slow-moving workers in blue canvas. The only people not in blue canvas were the overlookers of the work-places and the orange-clad Labour Police. And fresh from the flushed faces of the dancing

halls, the voluntary vigours of the business quarter, Graham could note the pinched faces, the feeble muscles, and weary eyes of many of the latter-day workers. Such as he saw at work were noticeably inferior in physique to the few gaily dressed managers and forewomen who were directing their labours. The burly labourers of the Victorian times had followed the dray horse and all such living force producers, to extinction; the place of his costly muscles was taken by some dexterous machine. The latter-day labourer, male as well as female, was essentially a machine-minder and feeder, a servant and attendant, or an artist under direction.

The women, in comparison with those Graham remembered, were as a class distinctly plain and flat-chested. Two hundred years of emancipation from the moral restraints of Puritanical religion, two hundred years of city life, had done their work in eliminating the strain of feminine beauty and vigour from the blue canvas myriads. To be brilliant physically or mentally, to be in any way attractive or exceptional, had been and was still a certain way of emancipation to the drudge, a line of escape to the Pleasure City and its splendours and delights, and at last to the Euthanasy and peace. To be steadfast against such inducements was scarcely to be expected of meanly nourished souls. In the young cities of Graham's former life, the newly aggregated labouring mass had been a diverse multitude, still stirred by the tradition of personal honour and a high morality; now it was differentiating into a distinct class, with a moral and physical difference of its own — even with a dialect of its own.

They penetrated downward, ever downward, towards the working places. Presently they passed underneath one of the streets of the moving ways, and saw its platforms running on their rails far overhead, and chinks of white lights between the transverse slits. The factories that were not working were sparsely lighted; to Graham they and their shrouded aisles of giant machines seemed plunged in gloom, and even where work was going on the illumination was far less brilliant than upon the public ways.

Beyond the blazing lakes of Eadhamite he came to the warren of the jewellers, and, with some difficulty and by using his signature, obtained admission to these galleries. They were high and dark, and rather cold. In the first a few men were making ornaments of gold

filigree, each man at a little bench by himself, and with a little shaded light. The long vista of light patches, with the nimble fingers brightly lit and moving among the gleaming yellow coils, and the intent face like the face of a ghost, in each shadow had the oddest effect.

The work was beautifully executed, but without any strength of modelling or drawing, for the most part intricate grotesques or the ringing of the changes on a geometrical motif. These workers wore a peculiar white uniform without pockets or sleeves. They assumed this on coming to work, but at night they were stripped and examined before they left the premises of the Company. In spite of every precaution, the Labour policeman told them in a depressed tone, the Company was not infrequently robbed.

Beyond was a gallery of women busied in cutting and setting slabs of artificial ruby, and next these were men and women busied together upon the slabs of copper net that formed the basis of cloisonne tiles. Many of these workers had lips and nostrils a livid white, due to a disease caused by a peculiar purple enamel that chanced to be much in fashion. Asano apologised to Graham for the offence of their faces, but excused himself on the score of the convenience of this route. “This is what I wanted to see,” said Graham; “this is what I wanted to see,” trying to avoid a start at a particularly striking disfigurement that suddenly stared him in the face.

“She might have done better with herself than that,” said Asano.

Graham made some indignant comments.

“But, Sire, we simply could not stand that stuff without the purple,” said Asano. “In your days people could stand such crudities, they were nearer the barbaric by two hundred years.”

They continued along one of the lower galleries of this cloisonne factory, and came to a little bridge that spanned a vault. Looking over the parapet, Graham saw that beneath was a wharf under yet more tremendous archings than any he had seen. Three barges, smothered in floury dust, were being unloaded of their cargoes of powdered felspar by a multitude of coughing men, each guiding a little truck; the dust filled the place with a choking mist, and turned the electric glare yellow. The vague shadows of these workers gesticulated about their feet, and rushed to and fro against a long

stretch of white-washed wall. Every now and then one would stop to cough.

A shadowy, huge mass of masonry rising out of the inky water, brought to Graham's mind the thought of the multitude of ways and galleries and lifts, that rose floor above floor overhead between him and the sky. The men worked in silence under the supervision of two of the Labour Police; their feet made a hollow thunder on the planks along which they went to and fro. And as he looked at this scene, some hidden voice in the darkness began to sing.

"Stop that!" shouted one of the policemen, but the order was disobeyed, and first one and then all the white-stained men who were working there had taken up the beating refrain, singing it defiantly, the Song of the Revolt. The feet upon the planks thundered now to the rhythm of the song, tramp, tramp, tramp. The policeman who had shouted glanced at his fellow, and Graham saw him shrug his shoulders. He made no further effort to stop the singing.

And so they went through these factories and places of toil, seeing many painful and grim things. But why should the gentle reader be depressed? Surely to a refined nature our present world is distressing enough without bothering ourselves about these miseries to come. We shall not suffer anyhow. Our children may, but what is that to us? That walk left on Graham's mind a maze of memories, fluctuating pictures of swathed halls, and crowded vaults seen through clouds of dust, of intricate machines, the racing threads of looms, the heavy beat of stamping machinery, the roar and rattle of belt and armature, of ill-lit subterranean aisles of sleeping places, illimitable vistas of pin-point lights. And here the smell of tanning, and here the reek of a brewery and here, unprecedented reeks. And everywhere were pillars and cross archings of such a massiveness as Graham had never before seen, thick Titans of greasy, shining brickwork crushed beneath the vast weight of that complex city world, even as these anemic millions were crushed by its complexity. And everywhere were pale features, lean limbs, disfigurement and degradation.

Once and again, and again a third time, Graham heard the song of the revolt during his long, unpleasant research in these places, and once he saw a confused struggle down a passage, and learnt that a number of these serfs had seized their bread before their work was

done. Graham was ascending towards the ways again when he saw a number of blue-clad children running down a transverse passage, and presently perceived the reason of their panic in a company of the Labour Police armed with clubs, trotting towards some unknown disturbance. And then came a remote disorder. But for the most part this remnant that worked, worked hopelessly. All the spirit that was left in fallen humanity was above in the streets that night, calling for the Master, and valiantly and noisily keeping its arms.

They emerged from these wanderings and stood blinking in the bright light of the middle passage of the platforms again. They became aware of the remote hooting and yelping of the machines of one of the General Intelligence Offices, and suddenly came men running, and along the platforms and about the ways everywhere was a shouting and crying. Then a woman with a face of mute white terror, and another who gasped and shrieked as she ran.

"What has happened now?" said Graham, puzzled, for he could not understand their thick speech. Then he heard it in English and perceived that the thing that everyone was shouting, that men yelled to one another, that women took up screaming, that was passing like the first breeze of a thunderstorm, chill and sudden through the city, was this: "Ostrog has ordered the Black Police to London. The Black Police are coming from South Africa.... The Black Police. The Black Police."

Asano's face was white and astonished; he hesitated, looked at Graham's face, and told him the thing he already knew. "But how can they know?" asked Asano.

Graham heard someone shouting. "Stop all work. Stop all work," and a swarthy hunchback, ridiculously gay in green and gold, came leaping down the platforms toward him, bawling again and again in good English, "This is Ostrog's doing, Ostrog, the Knave! The Master is betrayed." His voice was hoarse and a thin foam dropped from his ugly shouting mouth. He yelled an unspeakable horror that the Black Police had done in Paris, and so passed shrieking, "Ostrog the Knave!"

For a moment Graham stood still, for it had come upon him again that these things were a dream. He looked up at the great cliff of buildings on either side, vanishing into blue haze at last above the

lights, and down to the roaring tiers of platforms, and the shouting, running people who were gesticulating past. “The Master is betrayed!” they cried. “The Master is betrayed!”

Suddenly the situation shaped itself in his mind real and urgent. His heart began to beat fast and strong.

“It has come,” he said. “I might have known. The hour has come.”

He thought swiftly. “What am I to do?”

“Go back to the Council House,” said Asano.

“Why should I not appeal — ? The people are here.”

“You will lose time. They will doubt if it is you. But they will mass about the Council House. There you will find their leaders. Your strength is there with them.”

“Suppose this is only a rumour?”

“It sounds true,” said Asano.

“Let us have the facts,” said Graham.

Asano shrugged his shoulders. “We had better get towards the Council House,” he cried. “That is where they will swarm. Even now the ruins may be impassable.”

Graham regarded him doubtfully and followed him.

They went up the stepped platforms to the swiftest one, and there Asano accosted a labourer. The answers to his questions were in the thick, vulgar speech.

“What did he say?” asked Graham.

“He knows little, but he told me that the Black Police would have arrived here before the people knew — had not someone in the Wind-Vane Offices Learnt. He said a girl.”

“A girl? Not?”

“He said a girl — he did not know who she was. Who came out from the Council House crying aloud, and told the men at work among the ruins.”

And then another thing was shouted, something that turned an aimless tumult into determinate movements, it came like a wind along the street. “To your Wards, to your Wards. Every man get arms. Every man to his Ward!”

CHAPTER XXII. THE STRUGGLE IN THE COUNCIL HOUSE

As Asano and Graham hurried along to the ruins about the Council House, they saw everywhere the excitement of the people rising. “To your Wards To your Wards!” Everywhere men and women in blue were hurrying from unknown subterranean employments, up the staircases of the middle path — at one place Graham saw an arsenal of the revolutionary committee besieged by a crowd of shouting men, at another a couple of men in the hated yellow uniform of the Labour Police, pursued by a gathering crowd, fled precipitately along the swift way that went in the opposite direction.

The cries of “To your Wards!” became at last a continuous shouting as they drew near the Government quarter. Many of the shouts were unintelligible. “Ostrog has betrayed us,” one man bawled in a hoarse voice, again and again, dinning that refrain into Graham’s ear until it haunted him. This person stayed close beside Graham and Asano on the swift way, shouting to the people who swarmed on the lower platforms as he rushed past them. His cry about Ostrog alternated with some incomprehensible orders Presently he went leaping down and disappeared.

Graham’s mind was filled with the din. His plans were vague and unformed. He had one picture of some commanding position from which he could address the multitudes, another of meeting Ostrog face to face. He was full of rage, of tense muscular excitement, his hands gripped, his lips were pressed together.

The way to the Council House across the ruins was impassable, but Asano met that difficulty and took Graham into the premises of the central post-office. The post-office was nominally at work, but the blue-clothed porters moved sluggishly or had stopped to stare through the arches of their galleries at the shouting men who were going by outside. “Every man to his Ward! Every man to his Ward!” Here, by Asano’s advice, Graham revealed his identity.

They crossed to the Council House by a cable cradle. Already in the brief interval since the capitulation of the Councillors a great

change had been wrought in the appearance of the ruins. The spurting cascades of the ruptured sea water-mains had been captured and tamed, and huge temporary pipes ran overhead along a flimsy looking fabric of girders. The sky was laced with restored cables and wires that served the Council House, and a mass of new fabric with cranes and other building machines going to and fro upon it, projected to the left of the white pile.

The moving ways that ran across this area had been restored, albeit for once running under the open sky. These were the ways that Graham had seen from the little balcony in the hour of his awakening, not nine days since, and the hall of his Trance had been on the further side, where now shapeless piles of smashed and shattered masonry were heaped together.

It was already high day and the sun was shining brightly. Out of their tall caverns of blue electric light came the swift ways crowded with multitudes of people, who poured off them and gathered ever denser over the wreckage and confusion of the ruins. The air was full of their shouting, and they were pressing and swaying towards the central building. For the most part that shouting mass consisted of shapeless swarms, but here and there Graham could see that a rude discipline struggled to establish itself. And every voice clamoured for order in the chaos. “To your Wards! Every man to his Ward!”

The cable carried them into a hall which Graham recognised as the ante-chamber to the Hall of the Atlas, about the gallery of which he had walked days ago with Howard to show himself to the vanished Council, an hour from his awakening. Now the place was empty except for two cable attendants. These men seemed hugely astonished to recognise the Sleeper in the man who swung down from the cross seat.

“Where is Helen Wotton?” he demanded. “Where is Helen Wotton?”

They did not know.

“Then where is Ostrog? I must see Ostrog forthwith. He has disobeyed me. I have come back to take things out of his hands.” Without waiting for Asano, he went straight across the place, ascended the steps at the further end, and, pulling the curtain aside, found himself facing the perpetually labouring Titan.

The hall was empty. Its appearance had changed very greatly since his first sight of it. It had suffered serious injury in the violent struggle of the first outbreak. On the right hand side of the great figure the upper half of the wall had been torn away for nearly two hundred feet of its length, and a sheet of the same glassy film that had enclosed Graham at his awakening had been drawn across the gap. This deadened, but did not altogether exclude the roar of the people outside. “Wards! Wards! Wards!” they seemed to be saying. Through it there were visible the beams and supports of metal scaffoldings that rose and fell according to the requirements of a great crowd of workmen. An idle building machine, with lank arms of red painted metal that caught the still plastic blocks of mineral paste and swung them neatly into position, stretched gauntly across this green tinted picture. On it were still a number of workmen staring at the crowd below. For a moment he stood regarding these things, and Asano overtook him.

“Ostrog,” said Asano, “will be in the small offices beyond there.” The little man looked livid now and his eyes searched Graham’s face.

They had scarcely advanced ten paces from the curtain before a little panel to the left of the Atlas rolled up, and Ostrog, accompanied by Lincoln and followed by two black and yellow clad negroes, appeared crossing the remote corner of the hall, towards a second panel that was raised and open. “Ostrog,” shouted Graham, and at the sound of his voice the little party turned astonished.

Ostrog said something to Lincoln and advanced alone.

Graham was the first to speak. His voice was loud and dictatorial. “What is this I hear?” he asked. “Are you bringing negroes here — to keep the people down?”

“It is none too soon,” said Ostrog. “They have been getting out of hand more and more, since the revolt. I under-estimated—”

“Do you mean that these infernal negroes are on the way?”

“On the way. As it is, you have seen the people — outside?”

“No wonder! But — after what was said. You have taken too much on yourself, Ostrog.”

Ostrog said nothing, but drew nearer.

“These negroes must not come to London,” said Graham. “I am

Master and they shall not come."

Ostrog glanced at Lincoln, who at once came towards them with his two attendants close behind him. "Why not?" asked Ostrog.

"White men must be mastered by white men. Besides—"

"The negroes are only an instrument."

"But that is not the question. I am the Master. I mean to be the Master. And I tell you these negroes shall not come."

"The people—"

"I believe in the people."

"Because you are an anachronism. You are a man out of the Past — an accident. You are Owner perhaps of half the property in the world. But you are not Master. You do not know enough to be Master."

He glanced at Lincoln again. "I know now what you think — I can guess something of what you mean to do. Even now it is not too late to warn you. You dream of human equality — of a socialistic order — you have all those worn-out dreams of the nineteenth century fresh and vivid in your mind, and you would rule this age that you do not understand."

"Listen!" said Graham. "You can hear it — a sound like the sea. Not voices — but a voice. Do you altogether understand?"

"We taught them that," said Ostrog.

"Perhaps. Can you teach them to forget it? But enough of this! These negroes must not come."

There was a pause and Ostrog looked him in the eyes.

"They will," he said.

"I forbid it," said Graham.

"They have started."

"I will not have it."

"No," said Ostrog. "Sorry as I am to follow the method of the Council — . For your own good — you must not side with disorder. And now that you are here — . It was kind of you to come here."

Lincoln laid his hand on Graham's shoulder. Abruptly Graham realized the enormity of his blunder in coming to the Council House. He turned towards the curtains that separated the hall from the antechamber. The clutching hand of Asano intervened. In another moment Lincoln had grasped Graham's cloak.

He turned and struck at Lincoln's face, and incontinently a negro had him by collar and arm. He wrenched himself away, his sleeve tore noisily, and he stumbled back, to be tripped by the other attendant. Then he struck the ground heavily and he was staring at the distant ceiling of the hall.

He shouted, rolled over, struggling fiercely, clutched an attendant's leg and threw him headlong, and struggled to his feet.

Lincoln appeared before him, went down heavily again with a blow under the point of the jaw and lay still. Graham made two strides, stumbled. And then Ostrog's arm was round his neck, he was pulled over backward, fell heavily, and his arms were pinned to the ground. After a few violent efforts he ceased to struggle and lay staring at Ostrog's heaving throat.

"You — are — a prisoner," panted Ostrog, exulting. "You — were rather a fool — to come back."

Graham turned his head about and perceived through the irregular green window in the walls of the hall the men who had been working the building cranes gesticulating excitedly to the people below them. They had seen!

Ostrog followed his eyes and started. He shouted something to Lincoln, but Lincoln did not move. A bullet smashed among the mouldings above the Atlas The two sheets of transparent matter that had been stretched across this gap were rent, the edges of the torn aperture darkened, curved, ran rapidly towards the framework, and in a moment the Council chamber stood open to the air. A chilly gust blew in by the gap, bringing with it a war of voices from the ruinous spaces without, an elvish babblement, "Save the Master!" "What are they doing to the Master?" "The Master is betrayed!"

And then he realised that Ostrog's attention was distracted, that Ostrog's grip had relaxed, and, wrenching his arms free, he struggled to his knees. In another moment he had thrust Ostrog back, and he was on one foot, his hand gripping Ostrog's throat, and Ostrog's hands clutching the silk about his neck. But now men were coming towards them from the dais — men whose intentions he misunderstood. He had a glimpse of someone running in the distance towards the curtains of the antechamber, and then Ostrog had slipped from him and these newcomers were upon him. To his infinite

astonishment, they seized him. They obeyed the shouts of Ostrog.

He was lugged a dozen yards before he realised that they were not friends — that they were dragging him towards the open panel. When he saw this he pulled back, he tried to fling himself down, he shouted for help with all his strength. And this time there were answering cries.

The grip upon his neck relaxed, and behold! in the lower corner of the rent upon the wall, first one and then a number of little black figures appeared shouting and waving arms. They came leaping down from the gap into the light gallery that had led to the Silent Rooms. They ran along it, so near were they that Graham could see the weapons in their hands, Then Ostrog was shouting in his ear to the men who held him, and once more he was struggling with all his strength against their endeavours to thrust him towards the opening that yawned to receive him. “They can’t come down,” panted Ostrog. “They daren’t fire. It’s all right.” “We’ll save him from them yet.”

For long minutes as it seemed to Graham that inglorious struggle continued. His clothes were rent in a dozen places, he was covered in dust, one hand had been trodden upon. He could hear the shouts of his supporters, and once he heard shots. He could feel his strength giving way, feel his efforts wild and aimless. But no help came, and surely, irresistibly, that black, yawning opening came nearer.

The pressure upon him relaxed and he struggled up. He saw Ostrog’s grey head receding and perceived that he was no longer held. He turned about and came full into a man in black. One of the green weapons cracked close to him, a drift of pungent smoke came into his face, and a steel blade flashed. The huge chamber span about him.

He saw a man in pale blue stabbing one of the black and yellow attendants not three yards from his face. Then hands were upon him again.

He was being pulled in two, directions now. It seemed as though people were shouting to him. He wanted to understand and could not. Someone was clutching about his thighs, he was being hoisted in spite of his vigorous efforts. He understood suddenly, he ceased to struggle. He was lifted up on men’s shoulders and carried away from that devouring panel. Ten thousand throats were cheering.

He saw men in blue and black hurrying after the retreating Ostrogites and firing. Lifted up, he saw now across the whole expanse of the hall beneath the Atlas image, saw that he was being carried towards the raised platform in the centre of the place. The far end of the hall was already full of people running towards him. They were looking at him and cheering.

He became aware that a sort of body-guard surrounded him. Active men about him shouted vague orders. He saw close at hand the black moustached man in yellow who had been among those who had greeted him in the public theatre, shouting directions. The hall was already densely packed with swaying people, the little metal gallery sagged with a shouting load, the curtains at the end had been torn away, and the ante-chamber was revealed densely crowded. He could scarcely make the man near him hear for the tumult about them. “Where has Ostrog gone?” he asked.

The man he questioned pointed over the heads towards the lower panels about the hall on the side opposite the gap. They stood open and armed men, blue clad with black sashes, were running through them and vanishing into the chambers and passages beyond. It seemed to Graham that a sound of firing drifted through the riot. He was carried in a staggering curve across the great hall towards an opening beneath the gap.

He perceived men working with a sort of rude discipline to keep the crowd off him, to make a space clear about him. He passed out of the hall, and saw a crude, new wall rising blankly before him topped by blue sky. He was swung down to his feet; someone gripped his arm and guided him. He found the man in yellow close at hand. They were taking him up a narrow stairway of brick, and close at hand rose the great red painted masses, the cranes and levers and the still engines of the big building machine.

He was at the top of the steps. He was hurried across a narrow railed footway, and suddenly with a vast shouting the amphitheatre of ruins opened again before him. “The Master is with us! The Master! The Master!” The shout swept athwart the lake of faces like a wave, broke against the distant cliff of ruins, and came back in a welter of cries. “The Master is on our side!”

Graham perceived that he was no longer encompassed by people,

that he was standing upon a little temporary platform of white metal, part of a flimsy seeming scaffolding that laced about the great mass of the Council House. Over all the huge expanse of the ruins, swayed and eddied the shouting people; and here and there the black banners of the revolutionary societies ducked and swayed and formed rare nuclei of organisation in the chaos. Up the steep stairs of wall and scaffolding by which his rescuers had reached the opening in the Atlas Chamber, clung a solid crowd, and little energetic black figures clinging to pillars and projections were strenuous to induce these congested masses to stir. Behind him, at a higher point on the scaffolding, a number of men struggled upwards with the flapping folds of a huge black standard. Through the yawning gap in the walls below him he could look down upon the packed attentive multitudes in the Hall of the Atlas. The distant flying stages to the south came out bright and vivid, brought nearer as it seemed by an unusual translucency of the air. A solitary aeropile beat up from the central stage as if to meet the coming aeroplanes.

"What had become of Ostrog?" asked Graham, and even as he spoke he saw that all eyes were turned from him towards the crest of the Council House building. He looked also in this direction of universal attention. For a moment he saw nothing but the jagged corner of a wall, hard and clear against the sky. Then in the shadow he perceived the interior of a room and recognised with a start the green and white decorations of his former prison. And coming quickly across this opened room and up to the very verge of the cliff of the ruins came a little white clad figure followed by two other smaller seeming figures in black and yellow. He heard the man beside him exclaim "Ostrog," and turned to ask a question. But he never did, because of the startled exclamation of another of those who were with him and a lank finger suddenly pointing. He looked, and behold the aeropile that had been rising from the flying stage when last he had looked in that direction, was driving towards them. The swift steady flight was still novel enough to hold his attention.

Nearer it came, growing rapidly larger and larger, until it had swept over the further edge of the ruins and into view of the dense multitudes below. It drooped across the space and rose and passed overhead, rising to clear the mass of the Council House, a filmy

translucent shape with the solitary aeronaut peering down through its ribs. It vanished beyond the skyline of the ruins.

Graham transferred his attention to Ostrog. He was signalling with his hands, and his attendants busy breaking down the wall beside him. In another moment the aeropile came into view again, a little thing far away, coming round in a wide curve and going slower.

Then suddenly the man in yellow shouted: “What are they doing? What are the people doing? Why is Ostrog left there? Why is he not captured? They will lift him — the aeropile will lift him! Ah!”

The exclamation was echoed by a shout from the ruins. The rattling sound of the green weapons drifted across the intervening gulf to Graham, and, looking down, he saw a number of black and yellow uniforms running along one of the galleries that lay open to the air below the promontory upon which Ostrog stood. They fired as they ran at men unseen, and then emerged a number of pale blue figures in pursuit. These minute fighting figures had the oddest effect; they seemed as they ran like little model soldiers in a toy. This queer appearance of a house cut open gave that struggle amidst furniture and passages a quality of unreality. It was perhaps two hundred yards away from him, and very nearly fifty above the heads in the ruins below. The black and yellow men ran into an open archway, and turned and fired a volley. One of the blue pursuers striding forward close to the edge, flung up his arms, staggered sideways, seemed to Graham’s sense to hang over the edge for several seconds, and fell headlong down. Graham saw him strike a projecting corner, fly out, head over heels, head over heels, and vanish behind the red arm of the building machine.

And then a shadow came between Graham and the sun. He looked up and the sky was clear, but he knew the aeropile had passed. Ostrog had vanished. The man in yellow thrust before him, zealous and perspiring, pointing and blatent.

“They are grounding!” cried the man in yellow. “They are grounding. Tell the people to fire at him. Tell them to fire at him!”

Graham could not understand. He heard loud voices repeating these enigmatical orders.

Suddenly over the edge of the ruins he saw the prow of the aeropile come gliding and stop with a jerk. In a moment Graham

understood that the thing had grounded in order that Ostrog might escape by it. He saw a blue haze climbing out of the gulf, perceived that the people below him were now firing up at the projecting stem.

A man beside him cheered hoarsely, and he saw that the blue rebels had gained the archway that had been contested by the men in black and yellow a moment before, and were running in a continual stream along the open passage.

And suddenly the aeropile slipped over the edge of the Council House and fell. It dropped, tilting at an angle of forty-five degrees, and dropping so steeply that it seemed to Graham, it seemed perhaps to most of these below, that it could not possibly rise again.

It fell so closely past him that he could see Ostrog clutching the guides of the seat, with his grey hair streaming; see the white-faced aeronaut wrenching over the lever that drove the engine along its guides. He heard the apprehensive vague cry of innumerable men below.

Graham clutched the railing before him and gasped. The second seemed an age. The lower fan of the aeropile passed within an ace of touching the people, who yelled and screamed and trampled one another below.

And then it rose.

For a moment it looked as if it could not possibly clear the opposite cliff, and then that it could not possibly clear the wind-wheel that rotated beyond.

And behold! it was clear and soaring, still heeling sideways, upward, upward into the wind-swept sky.

The suspense of the moment gave place to a fury of exasperation as the swarming people realised that Ostrog had escaped them. With belated activity they renewed their fire, until the rattling wove into a roar, until the whole area became dim and blue and the air pungent with the thin smoke of their weapons.

Too late! The aeropile dwindled smaller and smaller, and curved about and swept gracefully downward to the flying stage from which it had so lately risen. Ostrog had escaped.

For a while a confused babblement arose from the ruins, and then the universal attention came back to Graham, perched high among the scaffolding. He saw the faces of the people turned towards him,

heard their shouts at his rescue. From the throat of the ways came the song of the revolt spreading like a breeze across that swaying sea of men.

The little group of men about him shouted congratulations on his escape. The man in yellow was close to him, with a set face and shining eyes. And the song was rising, louder and louder; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

Slowly the realisation came of the full meaning of these things to him, the perception of the swift change in his position. Ostrog, who had stood beside him whenever he had faced that shouting multitude before, was beyond there — the antagonist. There was no one to rule for him any longer. Even the people about him, the leaders and organisers of the multitude, looked to see what he would do, looked to him to act, awaited his orders. He was King indeed. His puppet reign was at an end.

He was very intent to do the thing that was expected of him. His nerves and muscles were quivering, his mind was perhaps a little confused, but he felt neither fear nor anger. His hand that had been trodden upon throbbed and was hot. He was a little nervous about his bearing. He knew he was not afraid, but he was anxious not to seem afraid. In his former life he had often been more excited in playing games of skill. He was desirous of immediate action, he knew he must not think too much in detail of the huge complexity of the struggle about him lest he should be paralysed by the sense of its intricacy. Over there those square blue shapes, the flying stages, meant Ostrog; against Ostrog he was fighting for the world.

CHAPTER XXIII. WHILE THE AEROPLANES WERE COMING

For a time the Master of the Earth was not even master of his own mind. Even his will seemed a will not his own, his own acts surprised him and were but a part of the confusion of strange experiences that poured across his being. These things were definite, the aeroplanes were coming, Helen Wotton had warned the people of their coming, and he was Master of the Earth. Each of these facts seemed struggling for complete possession of his thoughts. They protruded from a background of swarming halls, elevated passages, rooms jammed with ward leaders in council kinematograph and telephone rooms, and windows looking out on a seething sea of marching men. The man in yellow, and men whom he fancied were called Ward Leaders, were either propelling him forward or following him obediently; it was hard to tell. Perhaps they were doing a little of both. Perhaps some power unseen and unsuspected, propelled them all. He was aware that he was going to make a proclamation to the People of the Earth, aware of certain grandiose phrases floating in his mind as the thing he meant to say. Many little things happened, and then he found himself with the man in yellow entering a little room where this proclamation of his was to be made.

This room was grotesquely latter-day in its appointments. In the centre was a bright oval lit by shaded electric lights from above. The rest was in shadow, and the double finely fitting doors through which he came from the swarming Hall of the Atlas made the place very still. The dead thud of these as they closed behind him, the sudden cessation of the tumult in which he had been living for hours, the quivering circle of light, the whispers and quick noiseless movements of vaguely visible attendants in the shadows, had a strange effect upon Graham. The huge ears of a phonographic mechanism gaped in a battery for his words, the black eyes of great photographic cameras awaited his beginning, beyond metal rods and coils glittered dimly, and something whirled about with a droning hum. He walked into the centre of the light, and his shadow drew

together black and sharp to a little blot at his feet.

The vague shape of the thing he meant to say was already in his mind. But this silence, this isolation, the sudden withdrawal from that contagious crowd, this silent audience of gaping, glaring machines had not been in his anticipation. All his supports seemed withdrawn together; he seemed to have dropped into this suddenly, suddenly to have discovered himself. In a moment he was changed. He found that he now feared to be inadequate, he feared to be theatrical, he feared the quality of his voice, the quality of his wit, astonished, he turned to the man in yellow with a propitiatory gesture. “For a moment,” he said, “I must wait. I did not think it would be like this. I must think of the thing I have to say.”

While he was still hesitating there came an agitated messenger with news that the foremost aeroplanes were passing over Arawan.

“Arawan?” he said. “Where is that? But anyhow, they are coming. They will be here. When?”

“By twilight.”

“Great God! In only a few hours. What news of the flying stages?” he asked.

“The people of the south-west wards are ready.”

“Ready!”

He turned impatiently to the blank circles of the lenses again.

“I suppose it must be a sort of speech. Would to God I knew certainly the thing that should be said! Aeroplanes at Arawan! They must have started before the main fleet. And the people only ready! Surely...”

“Oh! what does it matter whether I speak well or ill?” he said, and felt the light grow brighter.

He had framed some vague sentence of democratic sentiment when suddenly doubts overwhelmed him. His belief in his heroic quality and calling he found had altogether lost its assured conviction. The picture of a little strutting futility in a windy waste of incomprehensible destinies replaced it. Abruptly it was perfectly clear to him that this revolt against Ostrog was premature, foredoomed to failure, the impulse of passionate inadequacy against inevitable things. He thought of that swift flight of aeroplanes like the swoop of Fate towards him. He was astonished that he could

have seen things in any other light. In that final emergency he debated, thrust debate resolutely aside, determined at all costs to go through with the thing he had undertaken. And he could find no word to begin. Even as he stood, awkward, hesitating, with an indiscrete apology for his inability trembling on his lips, came the noise of many people crying out, the running to and fro of feet. “Wait,” cried someone, and a door opened. “She is coming,” said the voices. Graham turned, and the watching lights waned.

Through the open doorway he saw a slight grey figure advancing across a spacious hall. His heart leapt. It was Helen Wotton. Behind and about her marched a riot of applause. The man in yellow came out of the nearer shadows into the circle of light.

“This is the girl who told us what Ostrog had dune,” he said.

Her face was aflame, and the heavy coils of her black hair fell about her shoulders. The folds of the soft silk robe she wore streamed from her and floated in the rhythm of her advance. She drew nearer and nearer, and his heart was beating fast. All his doubts were gone. The shadow of the doorway fell athwart her face and she was near him. “You have not betrayed us?” she cried. “You are with us?”

“Where have you been?” said Graham.

“At the office of the south-west wards. Until ten minutes since I did not know you had returned. I went to the office of the south-west wards to find the Ward Leaders in order that they might tell the people.”

“I came back so soon as I heard — .”

“I knew,” she cried, “knew you would be with us. And it was I — it was I that told them. They have risen. All the world is rising. The people have awakened. Thank God that I did not act in vain! You are Master still.”

“You told them” he said slowly, and he saw that in spite of her steady eyes her lips trembled and her throat rose and fell.

“I told them. I knew of the order. I was here. I heard that the negroes were to come to London to guard you and to keep the people down — to keep you a prisoner. And I stopped it. I came out and told the people. And you are Master still.”

Graham glanced at the black lenses of the cameras, the vast listening ears, and back to her face. “I am Master still,” he said

slowly, and the swift rush of a fleet of aeroplanes passed across his thoughts.

"And you did this? You, who are the niece of Ostrog."

"For you," she cried. "For you! That you for whom the world has waited should not be cheated of your power."

Graham stood for a space, wordless, regarding her. His doubts and questionings had fled before her presence. He remembered the things that he had meant to say. He faced the cameras again and the light about him grew brighter. He turned again towards her.

"You have saved me," he said; "you have saved my power. And the battle is beginning. God knows what this night will see — but not dishonour."

He paused. He addressed himself to the unseen multitudes who stared upon him through those grotesque black eyes. At first he spoke slowly. "Men and women of the new age," he said; "You have arisen to do battle for the race... There is no easy victory before us."

He stopped to gather words. The thoughts that had been in his mind before she came returned, but transfigured, no longer touched with the shadow of a possible irrelevance. "This night is a beginning," he cried. "This battle that is coming, this battle that rushes upon us to-night, is only a beginning. All your lives, it may be, you must fight. Take no thought though I am beaten, though I am utterly overthrown."

He found the thing in his mind too vague for words. He paused momentarily, and broke into vague exhortations, and then a rush of speech came upon him. Much that he said was but the humanitarian commonplace of a vanished age, but the conviction of his voice touched it to vitality. He stated the case of the old days to the people of the new age, to the woman at his side. "I come out of the past to you," he said, "with the memory of an age that hoped. My age was an age of dreams — of beginnings, an age of noble hopes; throughout the world we had made an end of slavery; throughout the world we had spread the desire and anticipation that wars might cease, that all men and women might live nobly, in freedom and peace. ... So we hoped in the days that are past. And what of those hopes? How is it with man after two hundred years?

"Great cities, vast powers, a collective greatness beyond our

dreams. For that we did not work, and that has come. But how is it with the little lives that make up this greater life? How is it with the common lives? As it has ever been — sorrow and labour, lives cramped and unfulfilled, lives tempted by power, tempted by wealth, and gone to waste and folly. The old faiths have faded and changed, the new faith — . Is there a new faith?"

Things that he had long wished to believe, he found that he believed. He plunged at belief and seized it, and clung for a time at her level. He spoke gustily, in broken incomplete sentences, but with all his heart and strength, of this new faith within him. He spoke of the greatness of self-abnegation, of his belief in an immortal life of Humanity in which we live and move and have our being. His voice rose and fell, and the recording appliances hummed their hurried applause, dim attendants watched him out of the shadow. Through all those doubtful places his sense of that silent spectator beside him sustained his sincerity. For a few glorious moments he was carried away; he felt no doubt of his heroic quality, no doubt of his heroic words, he had it all straight and plain. His eloquence limped no longer. And at last he made an end to speaking. "Here and now," he cried, "I make my will. All that is mine in the world I give to the people of the world. All that is mine in the world I give to the people of the world. I give it to you, and myself I give to you. And as God wills, I will live for you, or I will die."

He ended with a florid gesture and turned about. He found the light of his present exaltation reflected in the face of the girl. Their eyes met; her eyes were swimming with tears of enthusiasm. They seemed to be urged towards each other. They clasped hands and stood gripped, facing one another, in an eloquent silence. She whispered. "I knew," she whispered. "I knew." He could not speak, he crushed her hand in his. His mind was the theatre of gigantic passions.

The man in yellow was beside them. Neither had noted his coming. He was saying that the south-west wards were marching. "I never expected it so soon," he cried. "They have done wonders. You must send them a word to help them on their way."

Graham dropped Helen's hand and stared at him absent-mindedly. Then with a start he returned to his previous preoccupation about the

flying stages.

"Yes," he said. "That is good, that is good." He weighed a message. "Tell them; — well done South West."

He turned his eyes to Helen Wotton again. His face expressed his struggle between conflicting ideas. "We must capture the flying stages," he explained. "Unless we can do that they will land negroes. At all costs we must prevent that."

He felt even as he spoke that this was not what had been in his mind before the interruption. He saw a touch of surprise in her eyes. She seemed about to speak and a shrill bell drowned her voice.

It occurred to Graham that she expected him to lead these marching people, that that was the thing he had to do. He made the offer abruptly. He addressed the man in yellow, but he spoke to her. He saw her face respond. "Here I am doing nothing," he said.

"It is impossible," protested the man in yellow.

"It is a fight in a warren. Your place is here."

He explained elaborately. He motioned towards the room where Graham must wait, he insisted no other course was possible. "We must know where you are," he said. "At any moment a crisis may arise needing your presence and decision." The room was a luxurious little apartment with news machines and a broken mirror that had once been en *rapport* with the crow's nest specula. It seemed a matter of course to Graham that Helen should stop with him.

A picture had drifted through his mind of such a vast dramatic struggle as the masses in the ruins had suggested. But here was no spectacular battle-field such as he imagined. Instead was seclusion — and suspense. It was only as the afternoon wore on that he pieced together a truer picture of the fight that was raging, inaudibly and invisibly, within four miles of him, beneath the Roehampton stage. A strange and unprecedented contest it was, a battle that was a hundred thousand little battles, a battle in a sponge of ways and channels, fought out of sight of sky or sun under the electric glare, fought out in a vast confusion by multitudes untrained in arms, led chiefly by acclamation, multitudes dulled by mindless labour and enervated by the tradition of two hundred years of servile security against multitudes demoralised by lives of venial privilege and sensual indulgence. They had no artillery, no differentiation into this force or

that; the only weapon on either side was the little green metal carbine, whose secret manufacture and sudden distribution in enormous quantities had been one of Ostrog's culminating moves against the Council. Few had had any experience with this weapon, many had never discharged one, many who carried it came unprovided with ammunition; never was wilder firing in the history of warfare. It was a battle of amateurs, a hideous experimental warfare, armed rioters fighting armed rioters, armed rioters swept forward by the words and fury of a song, by the tramping sympathy of their numbers, pouring in countless myriads towards the smaller ways, the disabled lifts, the galleries slippery with blood, the halls and passages choked with smoke, beneath the flying stages, to learn there when retreat was hopeless the ancient mysteries of warfare. And overhead save for a few sharpshooters upon the roof spaces and for a few bands and threads of vapour that multiplied and darkened towards the evening, the day was a clear serenity. Ostrog it seems had no bombs at command and in all the earlier phases of the battle the aeropiles played no part. Not the smallest cloud was there to break the empty brilliance of the sky. It seemed as though it held itself vacant until the aeroplanes should come.

Ever and again there was news of these, drawing nearer, from this Mediterranean port and then that, and presently from the south of France. But of the new guns that Ostrog had made and which were known to be in the city came no news in spite of Graham's urgency, nor any report of successes from the dense felt of fighting strands about the flying stages. Section after section of the Labour Societies reported itself assembled, reported itself marching, and vanished from knowledge into the labyrinth of that warfare What was happening there? Even the busy ward leaders did not know. In spite of the opening and closing of doors, the hasty messengers, the ringing of bells and the perpetual clitter-clack of recording implements, Graham felt isolated, strangely inactive, inoperative.

Their isolation seemed at times the strangest, the most unexpected of all the things that had happened since his awakening. It had something of the quality of that inactivity that comes in dreams. A tumult, the stupendous realisation of a world struggle between Ostrog and himself, and then this confined quiet little room with its

mouthpieces and bells and broken mirror!

Now the door would be closed and they were alone together; they seemed sharply marked off then from all the unprecedented world storm that rushed together without, vividly aware of one another, only concerned with one another. Then the door would open again, messengers would enter, or a sharp bell would stab their quiet privacy, and it was like a window in a well built brightly lit house flung open suddenly to a hurricane. The dark hurry and tumult, the stress and vehemence of the battle rushed in and overwhelmed them. They were no longer persons but mere spectators, mere impressions of a tremendous convulsion. They became unreal even to themselves, miniatures of personality, indescribably small, and the two antagonistic realities, the only realities in being were first the city, that throbbed and roared yonder in a belated frenzy of defence and secondly the aeroplanes hurling inexorably towards them over the round shoulder of the world.

At first their mood had been one of exalted confidence, a great pride had possessed them, a pride in one another for the greatness of the issues they had challenged. At first he had walked the room eloquent with a transitory persuasion of his tremendous destiny. But slowly uneasy intimations of their coming defeat touched his spirit. There came a long period in which they were alone. He changed his theme, became egotistical, spoke of the wonder of his sleep, of the little life of his memories, remote yet minute and clear, like something seen through an inverted opera-glass, and all the brief play of desires and errors that had made his former life. She said little, but the emotion in her face followed the tones in his voice, and it seemed to him he had at last a perfect understanding. He reverted from pure reminiscence to that sense of greatness she imposed upon him. “And through it all, this destiny was before me,” he said; “this vast inheritance of which I did not dream.”

Insensibly their heroic preoccupation with the revolutionary struggle passed to the question of their relationship. He began to question her. She told him of the days before his awakening, spoke with a brief vividness of the girlish dreams that had given a bias to her life, of the incredulous emotions his awakening had aroused. She told him too of a tragic circumstance of her girlhood that had

darkened her life, quickened her sense of injustice and opened her heart prematurely to the wider sorrows of the world. For a little time, so far as he was concerned, the great war about them was but the vast ennobling background to these personal things.

In an instant these personal relations were submerged. There came messengers to tell that a great fleet of aeroplanes was rushing between the sky and Avignon. He went to the crystal dial in the corner and assured himself that the thing was so. He went to the chart room and consulted a map to measure the distances of Avignon, New Arawan, and London. He made swift calculations. He went to the room of the Ward Leaders to ask for news of the fight for the stages — and there was no one there. After a time he came back to her.

His face had changed. It had dawned upon him that the struggle was perhaps more than half over, that Ostrog was holding his own, that the arrival of the aeroplanes would mean a panic that might leave him helpless. A chance phrase in the message had given him a glimpse of the reality that came. Each of these soaring giants bore its thousand half savage negroes to the death grapple of the city. Suddenly his humanitarian enthusiasm showed flimsy. Only two of the Ward Leaders were in their room, when presently he repaired thither, the Hall of the Atlas seemed empty. He fancied a change in the bearing of the attendants in the outer rooms. A sombre disillusionment darkened his mind. She looked at him anxiously when he returned to her.

"No news," he said with an assumed carelessness in answer to her eyes.

Then he was moved to frankness. "Or rather — bad news. We are losing. We are gaining no ground and the aeroplanes draw nearer and nearer."

He walked the length of the room and turned.

"Unless we can capture those flying stages in the next hour — there will be horrible things. We shall be beaten.

"No!" she said. "We have justice — we have the people. We have God on our side."

"Ostrog has discipline — he has plans. Do you know, out there just now I felt — . When I heard that these aeroplanes were a stage nearer. I felt as if I were fighting the machinery of fate."

She made no answer for a while. “We have done right,” she said at last.

He looked at her doubtfully. “We have done what we could. But does this depend upon us? Is it not an older sin, a wider sin?”

“What do you mean?” she asked.

“These blacks are savages, ruled by force, used as force. And they have been under the rule of the whites two hundred years. Is it not a race quarrel? The race sinned — the race pays.”

“But these labourers, these poor people of London — !”

“Vicarious atonement. To stand wrong is to share the guilt.”

She looked keenly at him, astonished at the new aspect he presented.

Without came the shrill ringing of a bell, the sound of feet and the gabble of a phonographic message. The man in yellow appeared. “Yes?” said Graham.

“They are at Vichy.”

“Where are the attendants who were in the great Hall of the Atlas?” asked Graham abruptly.

Presently the Babble Machine rang again. “We may win yet,” said the man in yellow, going out to it. “If only we can find where Ostrog has hidden his guns. Everything hangs on that now. Perhaps this—”

Graham followed him. But the only news was of the aeroplanes. They had reached Orleans.

Graham returned to Helen. “No news,” he said “No news.”

“And we can do nothing?”

“Nothing.”

He paced impatiently. Suddenly the swift anger that was his nature swept upon him. “Curse this complex world!” he cried, “and all the inventions of men! That a man must die like a rat in a snare and never see his foe! Oh, for one blow!...”

He turned with an abrupt change in his manner. “That’s nonsense,” he said. “I am a savage.”

He paced and stopped. “After all London and Paris are only two cities. All the temperate zone has risen. What if London is doomed and Paris destroyed? These are but accidents.” Again came the mockery of news to call him to fresh enquiries. He returned with a graver face and sat down beside her.

“The end must be near,” he said. “The people it seems have fought and died in tens of thousands, the ways about Roehampton must be like a smoked beehive. And they have died in vain. They are still only at the sub stage. The aeroplanes are near Paris. Even were a gleam of success to come now, there would be nothing to do, there would be no time to do anything before they were upon us. The guns that might have saved us are mislaid. Mislaid! Think of the disorder of things! Think of this foolish tumult, that cannot even find its weapons! Oh, for one aeropile — just one! For the want of that I am beaten. Humanity is beaten and our cause is lost! My kingship, my headlong foolish kingship will not last a night. And I have egged on the people to fight — .”

“They would have fought anyhow.”

“I doubt it. I have come among them—”

“No,” she cried, “not that. If defeat comes — if you die — . But even that cannot be, it cannot be, after all these years.”

“Ah! We have meant well. But — do you indeed believe — ?”

“If they defeat you,” she cried, “you have spoken. Your word has gone like a great wind through the world, fanning liberty into a flame. What if the flame sputters a little! Nothing can change the spoken word. Your message will have gone forth....”

“To what end? It may be. It may be. You know I said, when you told me of these things dear God! but that was scarcely a score of hours ago! — I said that I had not your faith. Well — at any rate there is nothing to do now....”

“You have not my faith! Do you mean — ? You are sorry?”

“No,” he said hurriedly, “no! Before God — no!” His voice changed. “But — . I think — I have been indiscreet. I knew little — I grasped too hastily....”

He paused. He was ashamed of this avowal. “There is one thing that makes up for all. I have known you. Across this gulf of time I have come to you. The rest is done. It is done. With you, too, it has been something more — or something less—”

He paused with his face searching hers, and without clamoured the unheeded message that the aeroplanes were rising into the sky of Amiens.

She put her hand to her throat, and her lips were white. She stared

before her as if she saw some horrible possibility. Suddenly her features changed. “Oh, but I have been honest!” she cried, and then, “Have I been honest? I loved the world and freedom, I hated cruelty and oppression. Surely it was that.”

“Yes,” he said, “yes. And we have done what it lay in us to do. We have given our message, our message! We have started Armageddon! But now — . Now that we have, it may be our last hour, together, now that all these greater things are done....”

He stopped. She sat in silence. Her face was a white riddle.

For a moment they heeded nothing of a sudden stir outside, a running to and fro, and cries. Then Helen started to an attitude of tense attention. “It is — ,” she cried and stood up, speechless, incredulous, triumphant. And Graham, too, heard. Metallic voices were shouting “Victory!” Yes it was “Victory!” He stood up also with the light of a desperate hope in his eyes.

Bursting through the curtains appeared the man in yellow, startled and dishevelled with excitement. “Victory,” he cried, “victory! The people are winning. Ostrog’s people have collapsed.”

She rose. “Victory?” And her voice was hoarse and faint.

“What do you mean?” asked Graham. “Tell me! What?”

“We have driven them out of the under galleries at Norwood, Streatham is afire and burning wildly, and Roehampton is ours. Ours! — and we have taken the aeropile that lay thereon.”

For an instant Graham and Helen stood in silence, their hearts were beating fast, they looked at one another. For one last moment there gleamed in Graham his dream of empire, of kingship, with Helen by his side. It gleamed, and passed.

A shrill bell rang. An agitated grey-headed man appeared from the room of the Ward Leaders. “It is all over,” he cried.

“What matters it now that we have Roehampton? The aeroplanes have been sighted at Boulogne!”

“The Channel!” said the man in yellow. He calculated swiftly. “Half an hour.”

“They still have three of the flying stages,” said the old man.

“Those guns?” cried Graham.

“We cannot mount them — in half an hour.”

“Do you mean they are found?”

“Too late,” said the old man.

“If we could stop them another hour!” cried the man in yellow.

“Nothing can stop them now,” said the old man, “they have near a hundred aeroplanes in the first fleet.”

“Another hour?” asked Graham.

“To be so near!” said the Ward Leader. “Now that we have found those guns. To be so near — . If once we could get them out upon the roof spaces.”

“How long would that take?” asked Graham suddenly.

“An hour — certainly.”

“Too late,” cried the Ward Leader, “too late.”

“Is it too late?” said Graham. “Even now — . An hour!”

He had suddenly perceived a possibility. He tried to speak calmly, but his face was white. “There is one chance. You said there was an aeropile — ?”

“On the Roehampton stage, Sire.”

“Smashed?”

“No. It is lying crossways to the carrier. It might be got upon the guides — easily. But there is no aeronaut — .”

Graham glanced at the two men and then at Helen. He spoke after a long pause. “We have no aeronauts?”

“None.”

“The aeroplanes are clumsy,” he said thoughtfully, “compared with the aeropiles.”

He turned suddenly to Helen. His decision was made. “I must do it.”

“Do what?”

“Go to this flying stage — to this aeropile.”

“What do you mean?”

“I am an aeronaut. After all — . Those days for which you reproached me were not wasted.”

He turned to the old man in yellow. “Put the aeropile upon the guides.”

The man in yellow hesitated.

“What do you mean to do?” cried Helen.

“This aeropile — it is a chance — .”

“You don’t mean — ?”

“To fight — yes. To fight in the air. I have thought before — . An aeroplane is a clumsy thing. A resolute man — !”

“But — never since flying began—” cried the man in yellow.

“There has been no need. But now the time has come. Tell them now — send them my message — to put it upon the guides.”

The old man dumbly interrogated the man in yellow, nodded, and hurried out.

Helen made a step towards Graham. Her face was white. “But — How can one fight? You will be killed.”

“Perhaps. Yet, not to do it — or to let someone else attempt it — .”

He stopped, he could speak no more, he swept the alternative aside by a gesture, and they stood looking at one another.

“You are right,” she said at last in a low tone. “You are right. If it can be done... must go.”

Those days for not altogether

He moved a step towards her, and she stepped back, her white face struggled against him and resisted him. “No,” she gasped. “I cannot bear — . Go now.”

He extended his hands stupidly. She clenched her fists. “Go now,” she cried. “Go now.”

He hesitated and understood. He threw his hands up in a queer half-theatrical gesture. He had no word to say. He turned from her.

The man in yellow moved towards the door with clumsy belated tact. But Graham stepped past him. He went striding through the room where the Ward Leader bawled at a telephone directing that the aeropile should be put upon the guides.

The man in yellow glanced at Helen’s still figure, hesitated and hurried after him. Graham did not once look back, he did not speak until the curtain of the ante-chamber of the great hall fell behind him. Then he turned his head with curt swift directions upon his bloodless lips.

CHAPTER XXIV. THE COMING OF THE AEROPLANES

Two men in pale blue were lying in the irregular line that stretched along the edge of the captured Roehampton stage from end to end, grasping their carbines and peering into the shadows of the stage called Wimbledon Park. Now and then they spoke to one another. They spoke the mutilated English of their class and period. The fire of the Ostrogites had dwindled and ceased, and few of the enemy had been seen for some time. But the echoes of the fight that was going on now far below in the lower galleries of that stage, came every now and then between the staccato of shots from the popular side. One of these men was describing to the other how he had seen a man down below there dodge behind a girder, and had aimed at a guess and hit him cleanly as he dodged too far "He's down there still," said the marksman. "See that little patch. Yes. Between those bars." A few yards behind them lay a dead stranger, face upward to the sky, with the blue canvas of his jacket smoldering in a circle about the neat bullet hole on his chest. Close beside him a wounded man, with a leg swathed about, sat with an expressionless face and watched the progress of that burning. Gigantic behind them, athwart the carrier lay the captured aeropile.

"I can't see him now," said the second man in a ton of provocation.

The marksman became foul-mouthed and high-voiced in his earnest endeavour to make things plain And suddenly, interrupting him, came a noisy shouting from the substage.

"What's going on now," he said, and raised himself on one arm to stare at the stairheads in the central groove of the stage. A number of blue figures were coming up these, and swarming across the stage to the aeropile.

"We don't want all these fools," said his friend. "They only crowd up and spoil shots. What are they after?"

"Ssh! — they're shouting something."

The two men listened. The swarming new-comers had crowded

densely about the aeropile. Three Ward Leaders, conspicuous by their black mantles and badges, clambered into the body and appeared above it. The rank and file flung themselves upon the vans, gripping hold of the edges, until the entire outline of the thing was manned, in some places three deep. One of the marksmen knelt up. “They’re putting it on the carrier — that’s what they’re after.”

He rose to his feet, his friend rose also. “What’s the good?” said his friend. “We’ve got no aeronauts.”

“That’s what they’re doing anyhow.” He looked at his rifle, looked at the struggling crowd, and suddenly turning to the wounded man. “Mind these, mate,” he said, handing his carbine and cartridge belt; and in a moment he was running towards the aeropile. For a quarter of an hour he was a perspiring Titan, lugging, thrusting, shouting and heeding shouts, and then the thing was done, and he stood with a multitude of others cheering their own achievement. By this time he knew, what indeed everyone in the city knew, that the Master, raw learner though he was, intended to fly this machine himself, was coming even now to take control of it, would let no other man attempt it. “He who takes the greatest danger, he who bears the heaviest burden, that man is King,” so the Master was reported to have spoken. And even as this man cheered, and while the beads of sweat still chased one another from the disorder of his hair, he heard the thunder of a greater tumult, and in fitful snatches the beat and impulse of the revolutionary song. He saw through a gap in the people that a thick stream of heads still poured up the stairway. “The Master is coming,” shouted voices, “the Master is coming,” and the crowd about him grew denser and denser. He began to thrust himself towards the central groove. “The Master is coming!” “The Sleeper, the Master!” “God and the Master!” roared the Voices.

And suddenly quite close to him were the black uniforms of the revolutionary guard, and for the first and last time in his life he saw Graham, saw him quite nearly. A tall, dark man in a flowing black robe, with a white, resolute face and eyes fixed steadfastly before him; a man who for all the little things about him held neither ears nor eyes nor thoughts.... For all his days that man remembered the passing of Graham’s bloodless face. In a moment it had gone and he was fighting in the swaying crowd. A lad weeping with terror thrust

against him, pressing towards the stairways, yelling “Clear for the aeropile!” The bell that clears the flying stage became a loud unmelodious clanging.

With that clanging in his ears Graham drew near the aeropile, marched into the shadow of its tilting wing. He became aware that a number of people about him were offering to accompany him, and waved their offers aside. He wanted to think how one started the engine. The bell clanged faster and faster, and the feet of the retreating people roared faster and louder. The man in yellow was assisting him to mount through the ribs of the body. He clambered into the aeronaut’s place, fixing himself very carefully and deliberately. What was it? The man in yellow was pointing to two aeropiles driving upward in the southern sky. No doubt they were looking for the coming aeroplanes. That — presently — the thing to do now was to start. Things were being shouted at him, questions, warnings. They bothered him. He wanted to think about the aeropile, to recall every item of his previous experience. He waved the people from him, saw the man in yellow dropping off through the ribs, saw the crowd cleft down the line of the girders by his gesture.

For a moment he was motionless, staring at the levers, the wheel by which the engine shifted, and all the delicate appliances of which he knew so little. His eye caught a spirit level with the bubble towards him, and he remembered something, spent a dozen seconds in swinging the engine forward until the bubble floated in the centre of the tube. He noted that the people were not shouting, knew they watched his deliberation. A bullet smashed on the bar above his head. Who fired? Was the line clear of people? He stood up to see and sat down again.

In another second the propeller was spinning, and he was rushing down the guides. He gripped the wheel and swung the engine back to lift the stem. Then it was the people shouted. In a moment he was throbbing with the quiver of the engine, and the shouts dwindled swiftly behind, rushed down to silence. The wind whistled over the edges of the screen, and the world sank away from him very swiftly.

Throb, throb, throb — throb, throb, throb; up he drove. He fancied himself free of all excitement, felt cool and deliberate. He lifted the stem still more, opened one valve on his left wing and swept round

and up. He looked down with a steady head, and up. One of the Ostrogite aeropiles was driving across his course, so that he drove obliquely towards it and would pass below it at a steep angle. Its little aeronauts were peering down at him. What did they mean to do? His mind became active. One, he saw held a weapon pointing, seemed prepared to fire. What did they think he meant to do? In a moment he understood their tactics, and his resolution was taken. His momentary lethargy was past. He opened two more valves to his left, swung round, end on to this hostile machine, closed his valves, and shot straight at it, stem and wind-screen shielding him from the shot. They tilted a little as if to clear him. He flung up his stem.

Throb, throb, throb — pause — throb, throb — he set his teeth, his face into an involuntary grimace, and crash! He struck it! He struck upward beneath the nearer wing.

Very slowly the wing of his antagonist seemed to broaden as the impetus of his blow turned it up. He saw the full breadth of it and then it slid downward out of his sight.

He felt his stem going down, his hands tightened on the levers, whirled and rammed the engine back. He felt the jerk of a clearance, the nose of the machine jerked upward steeply, and for a moment he seemed to be lying on his back. The machine was reeling and staggering, it seemed to be dancing on its screw. He made a huge effort, hung for a moment on the levers, and slowly the engine came forward again. He was driving upward but no longer so steeply. He gasped for a moment and flung himself at the levers again. The wind whistled about him. One further effort and he was almost level. He could breathe. He turned his head for the first time to see what had become of his antagonists. Turned back to the levers for a moment and looked again. For a moment he could have believed they were annihilated. And then he saw between the two stages to the east was a chasm, and down this something, a slender edge, fell swiftly and vanished, as a sixpence falls down a crack.

At first he did not understand, and then a wild joy possessed him. He shouted at the top of his voice, an inarticulate shout, and drove higher and higher up the sky. Throb, throb, throb, pause, throb, throb, throb. “Where was the other aeropile?” he thought. “They too — .” As he looked round the empty heavens he had a momentary fear that

this machine had risen above him, and then he saw it alighting on the Norwood stage. They had meant shooting. To risk being rammed headlong two thousand feet in the air was beyond their latter-day courage. The combat was declined.

For a little while he circled, then swooped in a steep descent towards the westward stage. Throb throb throb, throb throb throb. The twilight was creeping on apace, the smoke from the Streatham stage that had been so dense and dark, was now a pillar of fire, and all the laced curves of the moving ways and the translucent roofs and domes and the chasms between the buildings were glowing softly now, lit by the tempered radiance of the electric light that the glare of the way overpowered. The three efficient stages that the Ostrogites held — for Wimbledon Park was useless because of the fire from Roehampton, and Streatham was a furnace — were glowing with guide lights for the coming aeroplanes. As he swept over the Roehampton stage he saw the dark masses of the people thereon. He heard a clap of frantic cheering, heard a bullet from the Wimbledon Park stage tweet through the air, and went beating up above the Surrey wastes. He felt a breath of wind from the south-west, and lifted his westward wing as he had learnt to do, and so drove upward heeling into the rare swift upper air. Throb throb throb — throb throb throb.

Up he drove and up, to that pulsating rhythm, until the country beneath was blue and indistinct, and London spread like a little map traced in light, like the mere model of a city near the brim of the horizon. The south-west was a sky of sapphire over the shadowy rim of the world, and ever as he drove upward the multitude of stars increased.

And behold! In the southward, low down and glittering swiftly nearer, were two little patches of nebulous light. And then two more, and then a nebulous glow of swiftly driving shapes. Presently he could count them. There were four and twenty. The first fleet of aeroplanes had come! Beyond appeared a yet greater glow.

He swept round in a half circle, staring at this advancing fleet. It flew in a wedge-like shape, a triangular flight of gigantic phosphorescent shapes sweeping nearer through the lower air. He made a swift calculation of their pace, and spun the little wheel that

brought the engine forward. He touched a lever and the throbbing effort of the engine ceased. He began to fall, fell swifter and swifter. He aimed at the apex of the wedge. He dropped like a stone through the whistling air. It seemed scarce a second from that soaring moment before he struck the foremost aeroplane.

No man of all that black multitude saw the coming of his fate, no man among them dreamt of the hawk that struck downward upon him out of the sky. Those who were not limp in the agonies of air-sickness, were craning their black necks and staring to see the filmy city that was rising out of the haze, the rich and splendid city to which "Massa Boss" had brought their obedient muscles. Bright teeth gleamed and the glossy faces shone. They had heard of Paris. They knew they were to have lordly times among the "poor white" trash. And suddenly Graham struck them.

He had aimed at the body of the aeroplane, but at the very last instant a better idea had flashed into his mind. He twisted about and struck near the edge of the starboard wing with all his accumulated weight. He was jerked back as he struck. His prow went gliding across its smooth expanse towards the rim. He felt the forward rush of the huge fabric sweeping him and his aeropile along with it, and for a moment that seemed an age he could not tell what was happening. He heard a thousand throats yelling, and perceived that his machine was balanced on the edge of the gigantic float, and driving down, down; glanced over his shoulder and saw the backbone of the aeroplane and the opposite float swaying up. He had a vision through the ribs of sliding chairs, staring faces, and hands clutching at the tilting guide bars. The fenestrations in the further float flashed open as the aeronaut tried to right her. Beyond, he saw a second aeroplane leaping steeply to escape the whirl of its heeling fellow. The broad area of swaying wings seemed to jerk upward. He felt his aeropile had dropped clear, that the monstrous fabric, clean overturned, hung like a sloping wall above him.

He did not clearly understand that he had struck the side float of the aeroplane and slipped off, but he perceived that he was flying free on the down glide and rapidly nearing earth. What had he done? His heart throbbed like a noisy engine in his throat and for a perilous instant he could not move his levers because of the paralysis of his

hands. He wrenched the levers to throw his engine back, fought for two seconds against the weight of it, felt himself righting driving horizontally, set the engine beating again.

He looked upward and saw two aeroplanes glide shouting far overhead, looked back, and saw the main body of the fleet opening out and rushing upward and outward; saw the one he had struck fall edgewise on and strike like a gigantic knife-blade along the wind-wheels below it.

He put down his stern and looked again. He drove up heedless of his direction as he watched. He saw the wind-vanes give, saw the huge fabric strike the earth, saw its downward vans crumple with the weight of its descent, and then the whole mass turned over and smashed, upside down, upon the sloping wheels. Throb, throb, throb, pause. Suddenly from the heaving wreckage a thin tongue of white fire licked up towards the zenith. And then he was aware of a huge mass flying through the air towards him, and turned upwards just in time to escape the charge — if it was a charge — of a second aeroplane. It whirled by below, sucked him down a fathom, and nearly turned him over in the gust of its close passage.

He became aware of three others rushing towards him, aware of the urgent necessity of beating above them. Aeroplanes were all about him, circling wildly to avoid him, as it seemed. They drove past him, above, below, eastward and westward. Far away to the westward was the sound of a collision, and two falling flares. Far away to the southward a second squadron was coming. Steadily he beat upward. Presently all the aeroplanes were below him, but for a moment he doubted the height he had of them, and did not swoop again. And then he came down upon a second victim and all its load of soldiers saw him coming. The big machine heeled and swayed as the fear maddened men scrambled to the stern for their weapons. A score of bullets sung through the air, and there flashed a star in the thick glass wind-screen that protected him. The aeroplane slowed and dropped to foil his stroke, and dropped too low. Just in time he saw the wind-wheels of Bromley hill rushing up towards him, and spun about and up as the aeroplane he had chased crashed among them. All its voices wove into a felt of yelling. The great fabric seemed to be standing on end for a second among the heeling and

splintering vans, and then it flew to pieces. Huge splinters came flying through the air, its engines burst like shells. A hot rush of flame shot overhead into the darkling sky.

"*Two!*" he cried, with a bomb from overhead bursting as it fell, and forthwith he was beating up again. A glorious exhilaration possessed him now, a giant activity. His troubles about humanity, about his inadequacy, were gone for ever. He was a man in battle rejoicing in his power. Aeroplanes seemed radiating from him in every direction, intent only upon avoiding him, the yelling of their packed passengers came in short gusts as they swept by. He chose his third quarry, struck hastily and did but turn it on edge. It escaped him, to smash against the tall cliff of London wall. Flying from that impact he skimmed the darkling ground so nearly he could see a frightened rabbit bolting up a slope. He jerked up steeply, and found himself driving over south London with the air about him vacant. To the right of him a wild riot of signal rockets from the Ostrogites banged tumultuously in the sky. To the south the wreckage of half a dozen air ships flamed, and east and west and north the air ships fled before him. They drove away to the east and north, and went about in the south, for they could not pause in the air. In their present confusion any attempt at evolution would have meant disastrous collisions. He could scarcely realize the thing he had done. In every quarter aeroplanes were receding. They were receding. They dwindled smaller and smaller. They were in flight!

He passed two hundred feet or so above the Roehampton stage. It was black with people and noisy with their frantic shouting. But why was the Wimbledon Park stage black and cheering, too? The smoke and flame of Streatham now hid the three further stages. He curved about and rose to see them and the northern quarters. First came the square masses of Shooter's Hill into sight from behind the smoke, lit and orderly with the aeroplane that had landed and its disembarking negroes. Then came Blackheath, and then under the corner of the reek the Norwood stage. On Blackheath no aeroplane had landed but an aeropile lay upon the guides. Norwood was covered by a swarm of little figures running to and fro in a passionate confusion. Why? Abruptly he understood. The stubborn defence of the flying stages was over, the people were pouring into the under-ways of these last

strongholds of Ostrog's usurpation. And then, from far away on the northern border of the city, full of glorious import to him, came a sound, a signal, a note of triumph, the leaden thud of a gun. His lips fell apart, his face was disturbed with emotion.

He drew an immense breath. "They win," he shouted to the empty air; "the people win!" The sound of a second gun came like an answer. And then he saw the aeropile on Blackheath was running down its guides to launch. It lifted clean and rose. It shot up into the air, driving straight southward and away from him.

In an instant it came to him what this meant. It must needs be Ostrog in flight. He shouted and dropped towards it. He had the momentum of his elevation and fell slanting down the air and very swiftly. It rose steeply at his approach. He allowed for its velocity and drove straight upon it.

It suddenly became a mere flat edge, and behold! he was past it, and driving headlong down with all the force of his futile blow.

He was furiously angry. He reeled the engine back along its shaft and went circling up. He saw Ostrog's machine beating up a spiral before him. He rose straight towards it, won above it by virtue of the impetus of his swoop and by the advantage and weight of a man. He dropped headlong — dropped and missed again! As he rushed past he saw the face of Ostrog's aeronaut confident and cool and in Ostrog's attitude a wincing resolution. Ostrog was looking steadfastly away from him — to the south. He realized with a gleam of wrath how bungling his flight must be. Below he saw the Croyden hills. He jerked upward and once more he gained on his enemy.

He glanced over his shoulder and his attention was arrested by a strange thing. The eastward stage, the one on Shooter's Hill, appeared to lift; a flash changing to a tall grey shape, a cowled figure of smoke and dust, jerked into the air. For a moment this cowled figure stood motionless, dropping huge masses of metal from its shoulders, and then it began to uncoil a dense head of smoke. The people had blown it up, aeroplane and all! As suddenly a second flash and grey shape sprang up from the Norwood stage. And even as he stared at this came a dead report, and the air wave of the first explosion struck him. He was flung up and sideways.

For a moment the aeropile fell nearly edgewise with her nose

down, and seemed to hesitate whether to overset altogether. He stood on his wind-shield wrenching the wheel that swayed up over his head. And then the shock of the second explosion took his machine sideways.

He found himself clinging to one of the ribs of his machine, and the air was blowing past him and upward. He seemed to be hanging quite still in the air, with the wind blowing up past him. It occurred to him that he was falling. Then he was sure that he was falling. He could not look down.

He found himself recapitulating with incredible swiftness all that had happened since his awakening, the days of doubt the days of Empire, and at last the tumultuous discovery of Ostrog's calculated treachery, he was beaten but London was saved. London was saved!

The thought had a quality of utter unreality. Who was he? Why was he holding so tightly with his hands? Why could he not leave go? In such a fall as this countless dreams have ended. But in a moment he would wake....

His thoughts ran swifter and swifter. He wondered if he should see Helen again. It seemed so unreasonable that he should not see her again. It *must* be a dream! Yet surely he would meet her. She at least was real. She was real. He would wake and meet her.

Although he could not look at it, he was suddenly aware that the earth was very near.

LOVE AND MR. LEWISHAM

First published in 1899 (but set in the 1880's), this is one of Wells' first novels not to include elements of science fiction or fantasy and, along with *Kipps* (1905), was the novel Wells declared himself most pleased with among his works. This reflects the fact that the novel was a conscious move towards the 'serious' or 'realistic' fiction which, during the Edwardian period, was generally held by critics to be inherently superior to the 'romances' of the kind Wells had previously attempted. As such, it is Wells' attempt to prove himself as a master of the art of the novel, rather than as a mere jobbing storyteller.

The novel is the tale of an ordinary young man who is forced to sacrifice his political ideals for a sense of duty to the woman he loves. In his portrayal of Mr. Lewisham, Wells drew on autobiographical details, including his early career as a teacher and his experiences as a student of science at the Normal School of Science in South Kensington.

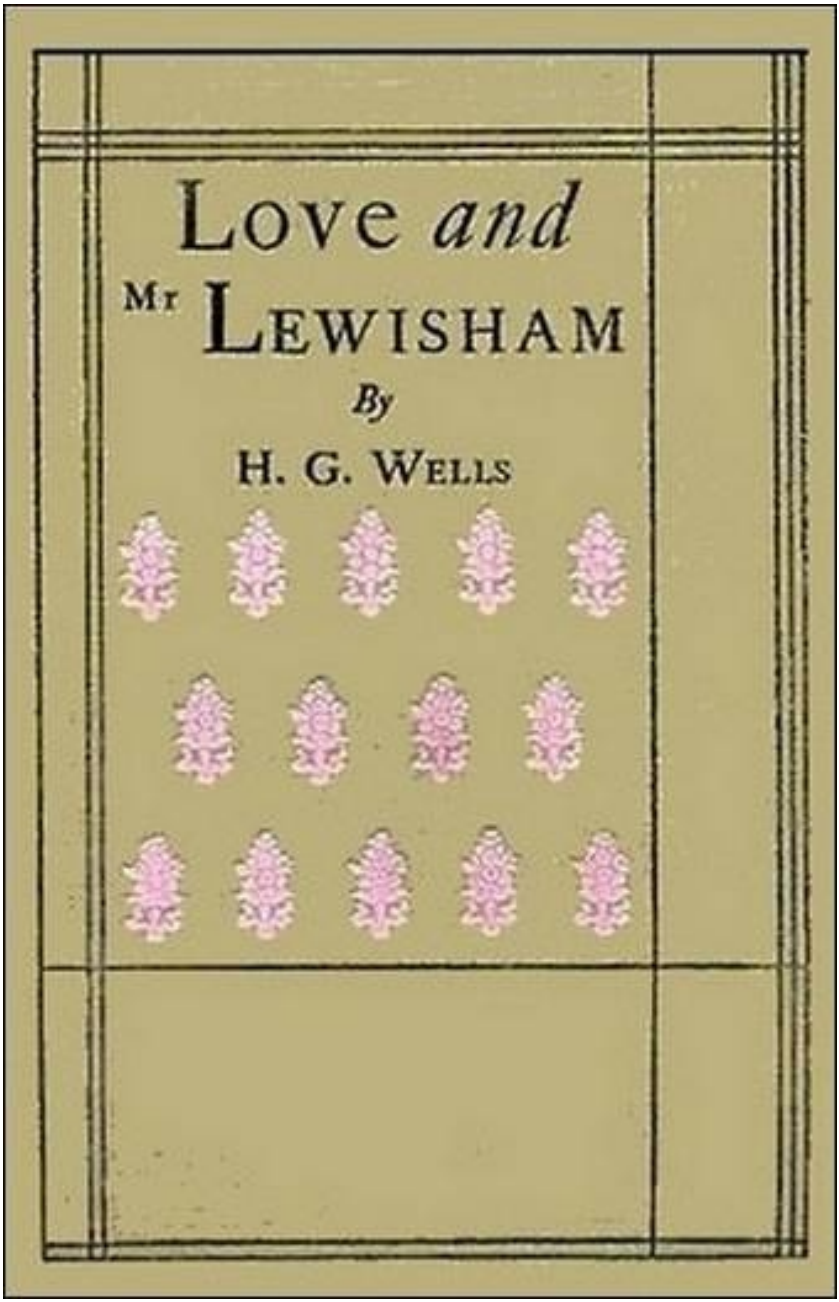

Cover of the first edition

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"Great Spirits and Great Businesse doe keepe out this weak Passion . . . yet Love can finde Entrance not only into an open Heart but also into a Heart well fortified, if Watch be not well kept."—BACON.

LOVE *and* MR. LEWISHAM

THE STORY OF A VERY YOUNG COUPLE

BY

H. G. WELLS

AUTHOR OF "MR. BRITTLING SEES IT THROUGH," "MARRIAGE," "TONO-BUNGAY," AND "THE RESEARCH MAGNIFICENT," ETC.

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Title page and epigraph from the first American edition

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES MR. LEWISHAM.

The opening chapter does not concern itself with Love — indeed that antagonist does not certainly appear until the third — and Mr. Lewisham is seen at his studies. It was ten years ago, and in those days he was assistant master in the Whortley Proprietary School, Whortley, Sussex, and his wages were forty pounds a year, out of which he had to afford fifteen shillings a week during term time to lodge with Mrs. Munday, at the little shop in the West Street. He was called "Mr." to distinguish him from the bigger boys, whose duty it was to learn, and it was a matter of stringent regulation that he should be addressed as "Sir."

He wore ready-made clothes, his black jacket of rigid line was dusted about the front and sleeves with scholastic chalk, and his face was downy and his moustache incipient. He was a passable-looking youngster of eighteen, fair-haired, indifferently barbered, and with a quite unnecessary pair of glasses on his fairly prominent nose — he wore these to make himself look older, that discipline might be maintained. At the particular moment when this story begins he was in his bedroom. An attic it was, with lead-framed dormer windows, a slanting ceiling and a bulging wall, covered, as a number of torn places witnessed, with innumerable strata of florid old-fashioned paper.

To judge by the room Mr. Lewisham thought little of Love but much on Greatness. Over the head of the bed, for example, where good folks hang texts, these truths asserted themselves, written in a clear, bold, youthfully florid hand:— "Knowledge is Power," and "What man has done man can do," — man in the second instance referring to Mr. Lewisham. Never for a moment were these things to be forgotten. Mr. Lewisham could see them afresh every morning as his head came through his shirt. And over the yellow-painted box upon which — for lack of shelves — Mr. Lewisham's library was arranged, was a "*Schema*." (Why he should not have headed it "Scheme," the editor of the *Church Times*, who calls his

miscellaneous notes "*Varia*," is better able to say than I.) In this scheme, 1892 was indicated as the year in which Mr. Lewisham proposed to take his B.A. degree at the London University with "hons. in all subjects," and 1895 as the date of his "gold medal." Subsequently there were to be "pamphlets in the Liberal interest," and such like things duly dated. "Who would control others must first control himself," remarked the wall over the wash-hand stand, and behind the door against the Sunday trousers was a portrait of Carlyle.

These were no mere threats against the universe; operations had begun. Jostling Shakespeare, Emerson's Essays, and the penny Life of Confucius, there were battered and defaced school books, a number of the excellent manuals of the Universal Correspondence Association, exercise books, ink (red and black) in penny bottles, and an india-rubber stamp with Mr. Lewisham's name. A trophy of bluish green South Kensington certificates for geometrical drawing, astronomy, physiology, physiography, and inorganic chemistry adorned his further wall. And against the Carlyle portrait was a manuscript list of French irregular verbs.

Attached by a drawing-pin to the roof over the wash-hand stand, which — the room being an attic — sloped almost dangerously, dangled a Time-Table. Mr. Lewisham was to rise at five, and that this was no vain boasting, a cheap American alarum clock by the books on the box witnessed. The lumps of mellow chocolate on the papered ledge by the bed-head indorsed that evidence. "French until eight," said the time-table curtly. Breakfast was to be eaten in twenty minutes; then twenty-five minutes of "literature" to be precise, learning extracts (preferably pompous) from the plays of William Shakespeare — and then to school and duty. The time-table further prescribed Latin Composition for the recess and the dinner hour ("literature," however, during the meal), and varied its injunctions for the rest of the twenty-four hours according to the day of the week. Not a moment for Satan and that "mischief still" of his. Only three-score and ten has the confidence, as well as the time, to be idle.

But just think of the admirable quality of such a scheme! Up and busy at five, with all the world about one horizontal, warm, dreamy-brained or stupidly hullish, if roused, roused only to grunt and sigh and roll over again into oblivion. By eight three hours' clear start,

three hours' knowledge ahead of everyone. It takes, I have been told by an eminent scholar, about a thousand hours of sincere work to learn a language completely — after three or four languages much less — which gives you, even at the outset, one each a year before breakfast. The gift of tongues — picked up like mushrooms! Then that "literature" — an astonishing conception! In the afternoon mathematics and the sciences. Could anything be simpler or more magnificent? In six years Mr. Lewisham will have his five or six languages, a sound, all-round education, a habit of tremendous industry, and be still but four-and-twenty. He will already have honour in his university and ampler means. One realises that those pamphlets in the Liberal interests will be no obscure platitudes. Where Mr. Lewisham will be at thirty stirs the imagination. There will be modifications of the Schema, of course, as experience widens. But the spirit of it — the spirit of it is a devouring flame!

He was sitting facing the diamond-framed window, writing, writing fast, on a second yellow box that was turned on end and empty, and the lid was open, and his knees were conveniently stuck into the cavity. The bed was strewn with books and copygraphed sheets of instructions from his remote correspondence tutors. Pursuant to the dangling time-table he was, you would have noticed, translating Latin into English.

Imperceptibly the speed of his writing diminished. "*Urit me Glycerae nitor*" lay ahead and troubled him. "Urit me," he murmured, and his eyes travelled from his book out of window to the vicar's roof opposite and its ivied chimneys. His brows were knit at first and then relaxed. "*Urit me*!" He had put his pen into his mouth and glanced about for his dictionary. *Urare*?

Suddenly his expression changed. Movement dictionary-ward ceased. He was listening to a light tapping sound — it was a footfall — outside.

He stood up abruptly, and, stretching his neck, peered through his unnecessary glasses and the diamond panes down into the street. Looking acutely downward he could see a hat daintily trimmed with pinkish white blossom, the shoulder of a jacket, and just the tips of nose and chin. Certainly the stranger who sat under the gallery last Sunday next the Frobishers. Then, too, he had seen her only

obliquely….

He watched her until she passed beyond the window frame. He strained to see impossibly round the corner….

Then he started, frowned, took his pen from his mouth. “This wandering attention!” he said. “The slightest thing! Where was I? Tcha!” He made a noise with his teeth to express his irritation, sat down, and replaced his knees in the upturned box. “Urit me,” he said, biting the end of his pen and looking for his dictionary.

It was a Wednesday half-holiday late in March, a spring day glorious in amber light, dazzling white clouds and the intensest blue, casting a powder of wonderful green hither and thither among the trees and rousing all the birds to tumultuous rejoicings, a rousing day, a clamatory insistent day, a veritable herald of summer. The stir of that anticipation was in the air, the warm earth was parting above the swelling seeds, and all the pine-woods were full of the minute crepitation of opening bud scales. And not only was the stir of Mother Nature’s awakening in the earth and the air and the trees, but also in Mr. Lewisham’s youthful blood, bidding him rouse himself to live — live in a sense quite other than that the Schema indicated.

He saw the dictionary peeping from under a paper, looked up “Urit me,” appreciated the shining “nitor” of Glycera’s shoulders, and so fell idle again to rouse himself abruptly.

“I *can’t* fix my attention,” said Mr. Lewisham. He took off the needless glasses, wiped them, and blinked his eyes. This confounded Horace and his stimulating epithets! A walk?

“I won’t be beat,” he said — incorrectly — replaced his glasses, brought his elbows down on either side of his box with resonant violence, and clutched the hair over his ears with both hands….

In five minutes’ time he found himself watching the swallows curving through the blue over the vicarage garden.

“Did ever man have such a bother with himself as me?” he asked vaguely but vehemently. “It’s self-indulgence does it — sitting down’s the beginning of laziness.”

So he stood up to his work, and came into permanent view of the village street. “If she has gone round the corner by the post office, she will come in sight over the palings above the allotments,” suggested the unexplored and undisciplined region of Mr.

Lewisham's mind….

She did not come into sight. Apparently she had not gone round by the post office after all. It made one wonder where she had gone. Did she go up through the town to the avenue on these occasions?… Then abruptly a cloud drove across the sunlight, the glowing street went cold and Mr. Lewisham's imagination submitted to control. So "*Mater saeva cupidinum*," "The untamable mother of desires," — Horace (Book II. of the Odes) was the author appointed by the university for Mr. Lewisham's matriculation — was, after all, translated to its prophetic end.

Precisely as the church clock struck five Mr. Lewisham, with a punctuality that was indeed almost too prompt for a really earnest student, shut his Horace, took up his Shakespeare, and descended the narrow, curved, uncarpeted staircase that led from his garret to the living room in which he had his tea with his landlady, Mrs. Munday. That good lady was alone, and after a few civilities Mr. Lewisham opened his Shakespeare and read from a mark onward — that mark, by-the-bye, was in the middle of a scene — while he consumed mechanically a number of slices of bread and whort jam.

Mrs. Munday watched him over her spectacles and thought how bad so much reading must be for the eyes, until the tinkling of her shop-bell called her away to a customer. At twenty-five minutes to six he put the book back in the window-sill, dashed a few crumbs from his jacket, assumed a mortar-board cap that was lying on the tea-caddy, and went forth to his evening "preparation duty."

The West Street was empty and shining golden with the sunset. Its beauty seized upon him, and he forgot to repeat the passage from Henry VIII. that should have occupied him down the street. Instead he was presently thinking of that insubordinate glance from his window and of little chins and nose-tips. His eyes became remote in their expression….

The school door was opened by an obsequious little boy with "lines" to be examined.

Mr. Lewisham felt a curious change of atmosphere on his entry. The door slammed behind him. The hall with its insistent scholastic suggestions, its yellow marbled paper, its long rows of hat-pegs, its disreputable array of umbrellas, a broken mortar-board and a tattered

and scattered *Principia*, seemed dim and dull in contrast with the luminous stir of the early March evening outside. An unusual sense of the greyness of a teacher's life, of the greyness indeed of the life of all studious souls came, and went in his mind. He took the "lines," written painfully over three pages of exercise book, and obliterated them with a huge G.E.L., scrawled monstrously across each page. He heard the familiar mingled noises of the playground drifting in to him through the open schoolroom door.

CHAPTER II.

"AS THE WIND BLOWS."

A flaw in that pentagram of a time-table, that pentagram by which the demons of distraction were to be excluded from Mr. Lewisham's career to Greatness, was the absence of a clause forbidding study out of doors. It was the day after the trivial window peeping of the last chapter that this gap in the time-table became apparent, a day if possible more gracious and alluring than its predecessor, and at half-past twelve, instead of returning from the school directly to his lodging, Mr. Lewisham escaped through the omission and made his way — Horace in pocket — to the park gates and so to the avenue of ancient trees that encircles the broad Whortley domain. He dismissed a suspicion of his motive with perfect success. In the avenue — for the path is but little frequented — one might expect to read undisturbed. The open air, the erect attitude, are surely better than sitting in a stuffy, enervating bedroom. The open air is distinctly healthy, hardy, simple….

The day was breezy, and there was a perpetual rustling, a going and coming in the budding trees.

The network of the beeches was full of golden sunlight, and all the lower branches were shot with horizontal dashes of new-born green.

"*Tu, nisi ventis*
Debes ludibrium, cave."

was the appropriate matter of Mr. Lewisham's thoughts, and he was mechanically trying to keep the book open in three places at once, at the text, the notes, and the literal translation, while he turned up the vocabulary for *ludibrium*, when his attention, wandering dangerously near the top of the page, fell over the edge and escaped with incredible swiftness down the avenue….

A girl, wearing a straw hat adorned with white blossom, was advancing towards him. Her occupation, too, was literary. Indeed,

she was so busy writing that evidently she did not perceive him.

Unreasonable emotions descended upon Mr. Lewisham — emotions that are unaccountable on the mere hypothesis of a casual meeting. Something was whispered; it sounded suspiciously like "It's her!" He advanced with his fingers in his book, ready to retreat to its pages if she looked up, and watched her over it. *Ludibrium* passed out of his universe. She was clearly unaware of his nearness, he thought, intent upon her writing, whatever that might be. He wondered what it might be. Her face, foreshortened by her downward regard, seemed infantile. Her fluttering skirt was short, and showed her shoes and ankles. He noted her graceful, easy steps. A figure of health and lightness it was, sunlit, and advancing towards him, something, as he afterwards recalled with a certain astonishment, quite outside the Schema.

Nearer she came and nearer, her eyes still downcast. He was full of vague, stupid promptings towards an uncalled-for intercourse. It was curious she did not see him. He began to expect almost painfully the moment when she would look up, though what there was to expect — ! He thought of what she would see when she discovered him, and wondered where the tassel of his cap might be hanging — it sometimes occluded one eye. It was of course quite impossible to put up a hand and investigate. He was near trembling with excitement. His paces, acts which are usually automatic, became uncertain and difficult. One might have thought he had never passed a human being before. Still nearer, ten yards now, nine, eight. Would she go past without looking up?…

Then their eyes met.

She had hazel eyes, but Mr. Lewisham, being quite an amateur about eyes, could find no words for them. She looked demurely into his face. She seemed to find nothing there. She glanced away from him among the trees, and passed, and nothing remained in front of him but an empty avenue, a sunlit, green-shot void.

The incident was over.

From far away the soughing of the breeze swept towards him, and in a moment all the twigs about him were quivering and rustling and the boughs creaking with a gust of wind. It seemed to urge him away from her. The faded dead leaves that had once been green and young

sprang up, raced one another, leapt, danced and pirouetted, and then something large struck him on the neck, stayed for a startling moment, and drove past him up the avenue.

Something vividly white! A sheet of paper — the sheet upon which she had been writing!

For what seemed a long time he did not grasp the situation. He glanced over his shoulder and understood suddenly. His awkwardness vanished. Horace in hand, he gave chase, and in ten paces had secured the fugitive document. He turned towards her, flushed with triumph, the quarry in his hand. He had as he picked it up seen what was written, but the situation dominated him for the instant. He made a stride towards her, and only then understood what he had seen. Lines of a measured length and capitals! Could it really be — ? He stopped. He looked again, eyebrows rising. He held it before him, staring now quite frankly. It had been written with a stylographic pen. Thus it ran: —

"*Come! Sharp's the word.*"
And then again,
"*Come! Sharp's the word.*"
And then,
"*Come! Sharp's the word.*"
"*Come! Sharp's the word.*"

And so on all down the page, in a boyish hand uncommonly like Frobisher ii.'s.

Surely! "I say!" said Mr. Lewisham, struggling with, the new aspect and forgetting all his manners in his surprise…. He remembered giving the imposition quite well: — Frobisher ii. had repeated the exhortation just a little too loudly — had brought the thing upon himself. To find her doing this jarred oddly upon certain vague preconceptions he had formed of her. Somehow it seemed as if she had betrayed him. That of course was only for the instant.

She had come up with him now. "May I have my sheet of paper, please?" she said with a catching of her breath. She was a couple of inches less in height than he. Do you observe her half-open lips? said

Mother Nature in a noiseless aside to Mr. Lewisham — a thing he afterwards recalled. In her eyes was a touch of apprehension.

"I say," he said, with protest still uppermost, "you oughtn't to do this."

"Do what?"

"This. Impositions. For my boys."

She raised her eyebrows, then knitted them momentarily, and looked at him. "Are *you* Mr. Lewisham?" she asked with an affectation of entire ignorance and discovery.

She knew him perfectly well, which was one reason why she was writing the imposition, but pretending not to know gave her something to say.

Mr. Lewisham nodded.

"Of all people! Then" — frankly— "you have just found me out."

"I am afraid I have," said Lewisham. "I am afraid I *have* found you out."

They looked at one another for the next move. She decided to plead in extenuation.

"Teddy Frobisher is my cousin. I know it's very wrong, but he seemed to have such a lot to do and to be in *such* trouble. And I had nothing to do. In fact, it was *I* who offered…."

She stopped and looked at him. She seemed to consider her remark complete.

That meeting of the eyes had an oddly disconcerting quality. He tried to keep to the business of the imposition. "You ought not to have done that," he said, encountering her steadfastly.

She looked down and then into his face again. "No," she said. "I suppose I ought not to. I'm very sorry."

Her looking down and up again produced another unreasonable effect. It seemed to Lewisham that they were discussing something quite other than the topic of their conversation; a persuasion patently absurd and only to be accounted for by the general disorder of his faculties. He made a serious attempt to keep his footing of reproof.

"I should have detected the writing, you know."

"Of course you would. It was very wrong of me to persuade him. But I did — I assure you. He seemed in such trouble. And I thought —"

She made another break, and there was a faint deepening of colour in her cheeks. Suddenly, stupidly, his own adolescent cheeks began to glow. It became necessary to banish that sense of a duplicate topic forthwith.

"I can assure you," he said, now very earnestly, "I never give a punishment, never, unless it is merited. I make that a rule. I — er — *always* make that a rule. I am very careful indeed."

"I am really sorry," she interrupted with frank contrition. "It *was* silly of me."

Lewisham felt unaccountably sorry she should have to apologise, and he spoke at once with the idea of checking the reddening of his face. "I don't think *that*," he said with a sort of belated alacrity. "Really, it was kind of you, you know — very kind of you indeed. And I know that — I can quite understand that — er — your kindness…."

"Ran away with me. And now poor little Teddy will get into worse trouble for letting me…."

"Oh no," said Mr. Lewisham, perceiving an opportunity and trying not to smile his appreciation of what he was saying. "I had no business to read this as I picked it up — absolutely no business. Consequently…."

"You won't take any notice of it? Really!"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Lewisham.

Her face lit with a smile, and Mr. Lewisham's relaxed in sympathy. "It is nothing — it's the proper thing for me to do, you know."

"But so many people won't do it. Schoolmasters are not usually so — chivalrous."

He was chivalrous! The phrase acted like a spur. He obeyed a foolish impulse.

"If you like—" he said.

"What?"

"He needn't do this. The Impot., I mean. I'll let him off."

"Really?"

"I can."

"It's awfully kind of you."

"I don't mind," he said. "It's nothing much. If you really think

…”

He was full of self-applause for this scandalous sacrifice of justice.

“It’s awfully kind of you,” she said.

“It’s nothing, really,” he explained, “nothing.”

“Most people wouldn’t—”

“I know.”

Pause.

“It’s all right,” he said. “Really.”

He would have given worlds for something more to say, something witty and original, but nothing came.

The pause lengthened. She glanced over her shoulder down the vacant avenue. This interview — this momentous series of things unsaid was coming to an end! She looked at him hesitatingly and smiled again. She held out her hand. No doubt that was the proper thing to do. He took it, searching a void, tumultuous mind in vain.

“It’s awfully kind of you,” she said again as she did so.

“It don’t matter a bit,” said Mr. Lewisham, and sought vainly for some other saying, some doorway remark into new topics. Her hand was cool and soft and firm, the most delightful thing to grasp, and this observation ousted all other things. He held it for a moment, but nothing would come.

They discovered themselves hand in hand. They both laughed and felt “silly.” They shook hands in the manner of quite intimate friends, and snatched their hands away awkwardly. She turned, glanced timidly at him over her shoulder, and hesitated. “Good-bye,” she said, and was suddenly walking from him.

He bowed to her receding back, made a seventeenth-century sweep with his college cap, and then some hitherto unexplored regions of his mind flashed into revolt.

Hardly had she gone six paces when he was at her side again.

“I say,” he said with a fearful sense of his temerity, and raising his mortar-board awkwardly as though he was passing a funeral. “But that sheet of paper …”

“Yes,” she said surprised — quite naturally.

“May I have it?”

“Why?”

He felt a breathless pleasure, like that of sliding down a slope of snow. “I would like to have it.”

She smiled and raised her eyebrows, but his excitement was now too great for smiling. “Look here!” she said, and displayed the sheet crumpled into a ball. She laughed — with a touch of effort.

“I don’t mind that,” said Mr. Lewisham, laughing too. He captured the paper by an insistent gesture and smoothed it out with fingers that trembled.

“You don’t mind?” he said.

“Mind what?”

“If I keep it?”

“Why should I?”

Pause. Their eyes met again. There was an odd constraint about both of them, a palpitating interval of silence.

“I really *must* be going,” she said suddenly, breaking the spell by an effort. She turned about and left him with the crumpled piece of paper in the fist that held the book, the other hand lifting the mortar board in a dignified salute again.

He watched her receding figure. His heart was beating with remarkable rapidity. How light, how living she seemed! Little round flakes of sunlight raced down her as she went. She walked fast, then slowly, looking sideways once or twice, but not back, until she reached the park gates. Then she looked towards him, a remote friendly little figure, made a gesture of farewell, and disappeared.

His face was flushed and his eyes bright. Curiously enough, he was out of breath. He stared for a long time at the vacant end of the avenue. Then he turned his eyes to his trophy gripped against the closed and forgotten Horace in his hand.

CHAPTER III.

THE WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.

On Sunday it was Lewisham's duty to accompany the boarders twice to church. The boys sat in the gallery above the choirs facing the organ loft and at right angles to the general congregation. It was a prominent position, and made him feel painfully conspicuous, except in moods of exceptional vanity, when he used to imagine that all these people were thinking how his forehead and his certificates accorded. He thought a lot in those days of his certificates and forehead, but little of his honest, healthy face beneath it. (To tell the truth there was nothing very wonderful about his forehead.) He rarely looked down the church, as he fancied to do so would be to meet the collective eye of the congregation regarding him. So that in the morning he was not able to see that the Frobishers' pew was empty until the litany.

But in the evening, on the way to church, the Frobishers and their guest crossed the market-square as his string of boys marched along the west side. And the guest was arrayed in a gay new dress, as if it was already Easter, and her face set in its dark hair came with a strange effect of mingled freshness and familiarity. She looked at him calmly! He felt very awkward, and was for cutting his new acquaintance. Then hesitated, and raised his hat with a jerk as if to Mrs. Frobisher. Neither lady acknowledged his salute, which may possibly have been a little unexpected. Then young Siddons dropped his hymn-book; stooped to pick it up, and Lewisham almost fell over him…. He entered church in a mood of black despair.

But consolation of a sort came soon enough. As *she* took her seat she distinctly glanced up at the gallery, and afterwards as he knelt to pray he peeped between his fingers and saw her looking up again. She was certainly not laughing at him.

In those days much of Lewisham's mind was still an unknown land to him. He believed among other things that he was always the same consistent intelligent human being, whereas under certain stimuli he became no longer reasonable and disciplined but a purely

imaginative and emotional person. Music, for instance, carried him away, and particularly the effect of many voices in unison whirled him off from almost any state of mind to a fine massive emotionality. And the evening service at Whortley church — at the evening service surplices were worn — the chanting and singing, the vague brilliance of the numerous candle flames, the multitudinous unanimity of the congregation down there, kneeling, rising, thunderously responding, invariably inebriated him. Inspired him, if you will, and turned the prose of his life into poetry. And Chance, coming to the aid of Dame Nature, dropped just the apt suggestion into his now highly responsive ear.

The second hymn was a simple and popular one, dealing with the theme of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and having each verse ending with the word "Love." Conceive it, long drawn out and disarticulate, —

"Faith will van … ish in … to sight,
Hope be emp … tied in deli … ight,
Love in Heaven will shine more bri … ight,
There … fore give us Love."

At the third repetition of the refrain, Lewisham looked down across the chancel and met her eyes for a brief instant….

He stopped singing abruptly. Then the consciousness of the serried ranks of faces below there came with almost overwhelming force upon him, and he dared not look at her again. He felt the blood rushing to his face.

Love! The greatest of these. The greatest of all things. Better than fame. Better than knowledge. So came the great discovery like a flood across his mind, pouring over it with the cadence of the hymn and sending a tide of pink in sympathy across his forehead. The rest of the service was phantasmagorial background to that great reality — a phantasmagorial background a little inclined to stare. He, Mr. Lewisham, was in Love.

"A … men." He was so preoccupied that he found the whole congregation subsiding into their seats, and himself still standing, rapt. He sat down spasmodically, with an impact that seemed to him

to re-echo through the church.

As they came out of the porch into the thickening night, he seemed to see her everywhere. He fancied she had gone on in front, and he hurried up the boys in the hope of overtaking her. They pushed through the throng of dim people going homeward. Should he raise his hat to her again?… But it was Susie Hopbrow in a light-coloured dress — a raven in dove's plumage. He felt a curious mixture of relief and disappointment. He would see her no more that night.

He hurried from the school to his lodging. He wanted very urgently to be alone. He went upstairs to his little room and sat before the upturned box on which his Butler's Analogy was spread open. He did not go to the formality of lighting the candle. He leant back and gazed blissfully at the solitary planet that hung over the vicarage garden.

He took out of his pocket a crumpled sheet of paper, smoothed and carefully refolded, covered with a writing not unlike that of Frobisher ii., and after some maidenly hesitation pressed this treasure to his lips. The Schema and the time-table hung in the darkness like the mere ghosts of themselves.

Mrs. Munday called him thrice to his supper.

He went out immediately after it was eaten and wandered under the stars until he came over the hill behind the town again, and clambered up the back to the stile in sight of the Frobishers' house. He selected the only lit window as hers. Behind the blind, Mrs. Frobisher, thirty-eight, was busy with her curl-papers — she used papers because they were better for the hair — and discussing certain neighbours in a fragmentary way with Mr. Frobisher, who was in bed. Presently she moved the candle to examine a faint discolouration of her complexion that rendered her uneasy.

Outside, Mr. Lewisham (eighteen) stood watching the orange oblong for the best part of half an hour, until it vanished and left the house black and blank. Then he sighed deeply and returned home in a very glorious mood indeed.

He awoke the next morning feeling extremely serious, but not clearly remembering the overnight occurrences. His eye fell on his clock. The time was six and he had not heard the alarum; as a matter

of fact the alarum had not been wound up. He jumped out of bed at once and alighted upon his best trousers amorphously dropped on the floor instead of methodically cast over a chair. As he soaped his head he tried, according to his rules of revision, to remember the overnight reading. He could not for the life of him. The truth came to him as he was getting into his shirt. His head, struggling in its recesses, became motionless, the handless cuffs ceased to dangle for a minute….

Then his head came through slowly with a surprised expression upon his face. He remembered. He remembered the thing as a bald discovery, and without a touch of emotion. With all the achromatic clearness, the unromantic colourlessness of the early morning….

Yes. He had it now quite distinctly. There had been no overnight reading. He was in Love.

The proposition jarred with some vague thing in his mind. He stood staring for a space, and then began looking about absent-mindedly for his collar-stud. He paused in front of his Schema, regarding it.

CHAPTER IV.

RAISED EYEBROWS.

"Work must be done anyhow," said Mr. Lewisham.

But never had the extraordinary advantages of open-air study presented themselves so vividly. Before breakfast he took half an hour of open-air reading along the allotments lane near the Frobishers' house, after breakfast and before school he went through the avenue with a book, and returned from school to his lodgings circuitously through the avenue, and so back to the avenue for thirty minutes or so before afternoon school. When Mr. Lewisham was not looking over the top of his book during these periods of open-air study, then commonly he was glancing over his shoulder. And at last who should he see but — !

He saw her out of the corner of his eye, and he turned away at once, pretending not to have seen her. His whole being was suddenly irradiated with emotion. The hands holding his book gripped it very tightly. He did not glance back again, but walked slowly and steadfastly, reading an ode that he could not have translated to save his life, and listening acutely for her approach. And after an interminable time, as it seemed, came a faint footfall and the swish of skirts behind him.

He felt as though his head was directed forward by a clutch of iron.

"Mr. Lewisham," she said close to him, and he turned with a quality of movement that was almost convulsive. He raised his cap clumsily.

He took her extended hand by an afterthought, and held it until she withdrew it. "I am so glad to have met you," she said.

"So am I," said Lewisham simply.

They stood facing one another for an expressive moment, and then by a movement she indicated her intention to walk along the avenue with him. "I wanted so much," she said, looking down at her feet, "to thank you for letting Teddy off, you know. That is why I wanted to see you." Lewisham took his first step beside her. "And

it's odd, isn't it," she said, looking up into his face, "that I should meet you here in just the same place. I believe … Yes. The very same place we met before."

Mr. Lewisham was tongue-tied.

"Do you often come here?" she said.

"Well," he considered — and his voice was most unreasonably hoarse when he spoke— "no. No…. That is — At least not often. Now and then. In fact, I like it rather for reading and that sort of thing. It's so quiet."

"I suppose you read a great deal?"

"When one teaches one has to."

"But you …"

"I'm rather fond of reading, certainly. Are you?"

"I *love* it."

Mr. Lewisham was glad she loved reading. He would have been disappointed had she answered differently. But she spoke with real fervour. She *loved* reading! It was pleasant. She would understand him a little perhaps. "Of course," she went on, "I'm not clever like some people are. And I have to read books as I get hold of them."

"So do I," said Mr. Lewisham, "for the matter of that…. Have you read … Carlyle?"

The conversation was now fairly under way. They were walking side by side beneath the swaying boughs. Mr. Lewisham's sensations were ecstatic, marred only by a dread of some casual boy coming upon them. She had not read *much* Carlyle. She had always wanted to, even from quite a little girl — she had heard so much about him. She knew he was a Really Great Writer, a *very* Great Writer indeed. All she *had* read of him she liked. She could say that. As much as she liked anything. And she had seen his house in Chelsea.

Lewisham, whose knowledge of London had been obtained by excursion trips on six or seven isolated days, was much impressed by this. It seemed to put her at once on a footing of intimacy with this imposing Personality. It had never occurred to him at all vividly that these Great Writers had real abiding places. She gave him a few descriptive touches that made the house suddenly real and distinctive to him. She lived quite near, she said, at least within walking distance, in Clapham. He instantly forgot the vague design of lending

her his "*Sartor Resartus*" in his curiosity to learn more about her home. "Clapham — that's almost in London, isn't it?" he said.

"Quite," she said, but she volunteered no further information about her domestic circumstances, "I like London," she generalised, "and especially in winter." And she proceeded to praise London, its public libraries, its shops, the multitudes of people, the facilities for "doing what you like," the concerts one could go to, the theatres. (It seemed she moved in fairly good society.) "There's always something to see even if you only go out for a walk," she said, "and down here there's nothing to read but idle novels. And those not new."

Mr. Lewisham had regretfully to admit the lack of such culture and mental activity in Whortley. It made him feel terribly her inferior. He had only his bookishness and his certificates to set against it all — and she had seen Carlyle's house! "Down here," she said, "there's nothing to talk about but scandal." It was too true.

At the corner by the stile, beyond which the willows were splendid against the blue with silvery aments and golden pollen, they turned by mutual impulse and retraced their steps. "I've simply had no one to talk to down here," she said. "Not what *I* call talking."

"I hope," said Lewisham, making a resolute plunge, "perhaps while you are staying at Whortley …"

He paused perceptibly, and she, following his eyes, saw a voluminous black figure approaching. "We may," said Mr. Lewisham, resuming his remark, "chance to meet again, perhaps."

He had been about to challenge her to a deliberate meeting. A certain delightful tangle of paths that followed the bank of the river had been in his mind. But the apparition of Mr. George Bonover, headmaster of the Whortley Proprietary School, chilled him amazingly. Dame Nature no doubt had arranged the meeting of our young couple, but about Bonover she seems to have been culpably careless. She now receded inimitably, and Mr. Lewisham, with the most unpleasant feelings, found himself face to face with a typical representative of a social organisation which objects very strongly *inter alia* to promiscuous conversation on the part of the young unmarried junior master.

" — chance to meet again, perhaps," said Mr. Lewisham, with a

sudden lack of spirit.

"I hope so too," she said.

Pause. Mr. Bonover's features, and particularly a bushy pair of black eyebrows, were now very near, those eyebrows already raised, apparently to express a refined astonishment.

"Is this Mr. Bonover approaching?" she asked.

"Yes."

Prolonged pause.

Would he stop and accost them? At any rate this frightful silence must end. Mr. Lewisham sought in his mind for some remark wherewith to cover his employer's approach. He was surprised to find his mind a desert. He made a colossal effort. If they could only talk, if they could only seem at their ease! But this blank incapacity was eloquent of guilt. Ah!

"It's a lovely day, though," said Mr. Lewisham. "Isn't it?"

She agreed with him. "Isn't it?" she said.

And then Mr. Bonover passed, forehead tight reefed so to speak, and lips impressively compressed. Mr. Lewisham raised his mortar-board, and to his astonishment Mr. Bonover responded with a markedly formal salute — mock clerical hat sweeping circuitously — and the regard of a searching, disapproving eye, and so passed. Lewisham was overcome with astonishment at this improvement on the nod of their ordinary commerce. And so this terrible incident terminated for the time.

He felt a momentary gust of indignation. After all, why should Bonover or anyone interfere with his talking to a girl if he chose? And for all he knew they might have been properly introduced. By young Frobisher, say. Nevertheless, Lewisham's spring-tide mood relapsed into winter. He was, he felt, singularly stupid for the rest of their conversation, and the delightful feeling of enterprise that had hitherto inspired and astonished him when talking to her had shrivelled beyond contempt. He was glad — positively glad — when things came to an end.

At the park gates she held out her hand. "I'm afraid I have interrupted your reading," she said.

"Not a bit," said Mr. Lewisham, warming slightly. "I don't know when I've enjoyed a conversation…."

“It was — a breach of etiquette, I am afraid, my speaking to you, but I did so want to thank you….”

“Don’t mention it,” said Mr. Lewisham, secretly impressed by the etiquette.

“Good-bye.” He stood hesitating by the lodge, and then turned back up the avenue in order not to be seen to follow her too closely up the West Street.

And then, still walking away from her, he remembered that he had not lent her a book as he had planned, nor made any arrangement ever to meet her again. She might leave Whortley anywhen for the amenities of Clapham. He stopped and stood irresolute. Should he run after her? Then he recalled Bonover’s enigmatical expression of face. He decided that to pursue her would be altogether too conspicuous. Yet … So he stood in inglorious hesitation, while the seconds passed.

He reached his lodging at last to find Mrs. Munday halfway through dinner.

“You get them books of yours,” said Mrs. Munday, who took a motherly interest in him, “and you read and you read, and you take no account of time. And now you’ll have to eat your dinner half cold, and no time for it to settle proper before you goes off to school. It’s ruination to a stummik — such ways.”

“Oh, never mind my stomach, Mrs. Munday,” said Lewisham, roused from a tangled and apparently gloomy meditation; “that’s *my* affair.” Quite crossly he spoke for him.

“I’d rather have a good sensible actin’ stummik than a full head,” said Mrs. Monday, “any day.”

“I’m different, you see,” snapped Mr. Lewisham, and relapsed into silence and gloom.

(“Hoity toity!” said Mrs. Monday under her breath.)

CHAPTER V.

HESITATIONS.

Mr. Bonover, having fully matured a Hint suitable for the occasion, dropped it in the afternoon, while Lewisham was superintending cricket practice. He made a few remarks about the prospects of the first eleven by way of introduction, and Lewisham agreed with him that Frobisher i. looked like shaping very well this season.

A pause followed and the headmaster hummed. "By-the-bye," he said, as if making conversation and still watching the play; "I, ah, — understood that you, ah — were a *stranger* to Whortley."

"Yes," said Lewisham, "that's so."

"You have made friends in the neighbourhood?"

Lewisham was troubled with a cough, and his ears — those confounded ears — brightened, "Yes," he said, recovering, "Oh yes. Yes, I have."

"Local people, I presume."

"Well, no. Not exactly." The brightness spread from Lewisham's ears over his face.

"I saw you," said Bonover, "talking to a young lady in the avenue. Her face was somehow quite familiar to me. Who *was* she?"

Should he say she was a friend of the Frobishers? In that case Bonover, in his insidious amiable way, might talk to the Frobisher parents and make things disagreeable for her. "She was," said Lewisham, flushing deeply with the stress on his honesty and dropping his voice to a mumble, "a … a … an old friend of my mother's. In fact, I met her once at Salisbury."

"Where?"

"Salisbury."

"And her name?"

"Smith," said Lewisham, a little hastily, and repenting the lie even as it left his lips.

"Well *hit*, Harris!" shouted Bonover, and began to clap his hands. "Well *hit*, sir."

"Harris shapes very well," said Mr. Lewisham.

“Very,” said Mr. Bonover. “And — what was it? Ah! I was just remarking the odd resemblances there are in the world. There is a Miss Henderson — or Henson — stopping with the Frobishers — in the very same town, in fact, the very picture of your Miss …”

“Smith,” said Lewisham, meeting his eye and recovering the full crimson note of his first blush.

“It’s odd,” said Bonover, regarding him pensively.

“Very odd,” mumbled Lewisham, cursing his own stupidity and looking away.

“*Very* — very odd,” said Bonover.

“In fact,” said Bonover, turning towards the school-house, “I hardly expected it of you, Mr. Lewisham.”

“Expected what, sir?”

But Mr. Bonover feigned to be already out of earshot.

“Damn!” said Mr. Lewisham. “Oh! — *damn*!” — a most objectionable expression and rare with him in those days. He had half a mind to follow the head-master and ask him if he doubted his word. It was only too evident what the answer would be.

He stood for a minute undecided, then turned on his heel and marched homeward with savage steps. His muscles quivered as he walked, and his face twitched. The tumult of his mind settled at last into angry indignation.

“Confound him!” said Mr. Lewisham, arguing the matter out with the bedroom furniture. “Why the *devil* can’t he mind his own business?”

“Mind your own business, sir!” shouted Mr. Lewisham at the wash-hand stand. “Confound you, sir, mind your own business!”

The wash-hand stand did.

“You overrate your power, sir,” said Mr. Lewisham, a little mollified. “Understand me! I am my own master out of school.”

Nevertheless, for four days and some hours after Mr. Bonover’s Hint, Mr. Lewisham so far observed its implications as to abandon open-air study and struggle with diminishing success to observe the spirit as well as the letter of his time-table prescriptions. For the most part he fretted at accumulating tasks, did them with slipshod energy or looked out of window. The Career constituent insisted that to meet and talk to this girl again meant reproof, worry, interference with his

work for his matriculation, the destruction of all "Discipline," and he saw the entire justice of the insistence. It was nonsense this being in love; there wasn't such a thing as love outside of trashy novelettes. And forthwith his mind went off at a tangent to her eyes under the shadow of her hat brim, and had to be lugged back by main force. On Thursday when he was returning from school he saw her far away down the street, and hurried in to avoid her, looking ostentatiously in the opposite direction. But that was a turning-point. Shame overtook him. On Friday his belief in love was warm and living again, and his heart full of remorse for laggard days.

On Saturday morning his preoccupation with her was so vivid that it distracted him even while he was teaching that most teachable subject, algebra, and by the end of the school hours the issue was decided and the Career in headlong rout. That afternoon he would go, whatever happened, and see her and speak to her again. The thought of Bonover arose only to be dismissed. And besides —

Bonover took a siesta early in the afternoon.

Yes, he would go out and find her and speak to her. Nothing should stop him.

Once that decision was taken his imagination became riotous with things he might say, attitudes he might strike, and a multitude of vague fine dreams about her. He would say this, he would say that, his mind would do nothing but circle round this wonderful pose of lover. What a cur he had been to hide from her so long! What could he have been thinking about? How *could* he explain it to her, when the meeting really came? Suppose he was very frank —

He considered the limits of frankness. Would she believe he had not seen her on Thursday? — if he assured her that it was so?

And, most horrible, in the midst of all this came Bonover with a request that he would take "duty" in the cricket field instead of Dunkerley that afternoon. Dunkerley was the senior assistant master, Lewisham's sole colleague. The last vestige of disapprobation had vanished from Bonover's manner; asking a favour was his autocratic way of proffering the olive branch. But it came to Lewisham as a cruel imposition. For a fateful moment he trembled on the brink of acquiescence. In a flash came a vision of the long duty of the afternoon — she possibly packing for Clapham all the while. He

turned white. Mr. Bonover watched his face.

"*No*," said Lewisham bluntly, saying all he was sure of, and forthwith racking his unpractised mind for an excuse. "I'm sorry I can't oblige you, but … my arrangements … I've made arrangements, in fact, for the afternoon."

Mr. Bonover's eyebrows went up at this obvious lie, and the glow of his suavity faded, "You see," he said, "Mrs. Bonover expects a friend this afternoon, and we rather want Mr. Dunkerley to make four at croquet…."

"I'm sorry," said Mr. Lewisham, still resolute, and making a mental note that Bonover would be playing croquet.

"You don't play croquet by any chance?" asked Bonover.

"No," said Lewisham, "I haven't an idea."

"If Mr. Dunkerley had asked you?…" persisted Bonover, knowing Lewisham's respect for etiquette.

"Oh! it wasn't on that account," said Lewisham, and Bonover with eyebrows still raised and a general air of outraged astonishment left him standing there, white and stiff, and wondering at his extraordinary temerity.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCANDALOUS RAMBLE.

As soon as school was dismissed Lewisham made a gaol-delivery of his outstanding impositions, and hurried back to his lodgings, to spend the time until his dinner was ready — Well?… It seems hardly fair, perhaps, to Lewisham to tell this; it is doubtful, indeed, whether a male novelist's duty to his sex should not restrain him, but, as the wall in the shadow by the diamond-framed window insisted, "*Magna est veritas et prevalebit*." Mr. Lewisham brushed his hair with elaboration, and ruffled it picturesquely, tried the effect of all his ties and selected a white one, dusted his boots with an old pocket-handkerchief, changed his trousers because the week-day pair was minutely frayed at the heels, and inked the elbows of his coat where the stitches were a little white. And, to be still more intimate, he studied his callow appearance in the glass from various points of view, and decided that his nose might have been a little smaller with advantage….

Directly after dinner he went out, and by the shortest path to the allotment lane, telling himself he did not care if he met Bonover forthwith in the street. He did not know precisely what he intended to do, but he was quite clear that he meant to see the girl he had met in the avenue. He knew he should see her. A sense of obstacles merely braced him and was pleasurable. He went up the stone steps out of the lane to the stile that overlooked the Frobishers, the stile from which he had watched the Frobisher bedroom. There he seated himself with his arms, folded, in full view of the house.

That was at ten minutes to two. At twenty minutes to three he was still sitting there, but his hands were deep in his jacket pockets, and he was scowling and kicking his foot against the step with an impatient monotony. His needless glasses had been thrust into his waistcoat pocket — where they remained throughout the afternoon — and his cap was tilted a little back from his forehead and exposed a wisp of hair. One or two people had gone down the lane, and he had pretended not to see them, and a couple of hedge-sparrows

chasing each other along the side of the sunlit, wind-rippled field had been his chief entertainment. It is unaccountable, no doubt, but he felt angry with her as the time crept on. His expression lowered.

He heard someone going by in the lane behind him. He would not look round — it annoyed him to think of people seeing him in this position. His once eminent discretion, though overthrown, still made muffled protests at the afternoon's enterprise. The feet down the lane stopped close at hand.

"Stare away," said Lewisham between his teeth. And then began mysterious noises, a violent rustle of hedge twigs, a something like a very light foot-tapping.

Curiosity boarded Lewisham and carried him after the briefest struggle. He looked round, and there she was, her back to him, reaching after the spiky blossoming blackthorn that crested the opposite hedge. Remarkable accident! She had not seen him!

In a moment Lewisham's legs were flying over the stile. He went down the steps in the bank with such impetus that it carried him up into the prickly bushes beside her. "Allow me," he said, too excited to see she was not astonished.

"Mr. Lewisham!" she said in feigned surprise, and stood away to give him room at the blackthorn.

"Which spike will you have?" he cried, overjoyed. "The whitest? The highest? Any!"

"That piece," she chose haphazard, "with the black spike sticking out from it."

A mass of snowy blossom it was against the April sky, and Lewisham, straggling for it — it was by no means the most accessible — saw with fantastic satisfaction a lengthy scratch flash white on his hand, and turn to red.

"Higher up the lane," he said, descending triumphant and breathless, "there is blackthorn…. This cannot compare for a moment…."

She laughed and looked at him as he stood there flushed, his eyes triumphant, with an unpremeditated approval. In church, in the gallery, with his face foreshortened, he had been effective in a way, but this was different. "Show me," she said, though she knew this was the only place for blackthorn for a mile in either direction.

“I *knew* I should see you,” he said, by way of answer, “I felt sure I should see you to-day.”

“It was our last chance almost,” she answered with as frank a quality of avowal. “I’m going home to London on Monday.”

“I knew,” he cried in triumph. “To Clapham?” he asked.

“Yes. I have got a situation. You did not know that I was a shorthand clerk and typewriter, did you? I am. I have just left the school, the Grogram School. And now there is an old gentleman who wants an amanuensis.”

“So you know shorthand?” said he. “That accounts for the stylographic pen. Those lines were written…. I have them still.”

She smiled and raised her eyebrows. “Here,” said Mr. Lewisham, tapping his breast-pocket.

“This lane,” he said — their talk was curiously inconsecutive— “some way along this lane, over the hill and down, there is a gate, and that goes — I mean, it opens into the path that runs along the river bank. Have you been?”

“No,” she said.

“It’s the best walk about Whortley. It brings you out upon Immering Common. You *must* — before you go.”

“*Now*?” she said with her eyes dancing.

“Why not?”

“I told Mrs. Frobisher I should be back by four,” she said.

“It’s a walk not to be lost.”

“Very well,” said she.

“The trees are all budding,” said Mr. Lewisham, “the rushes are shooting, and all along the edge of the river there are millions of little white flowers floating on the water, *I* don’t know the names of them, but they’re fine…. May I carry that branch of blossom?”

As he took it their hands touched momentarily … and there came another of those significant gaps.

“Look at those clouds,” said Lewisham abruptly, remembering the remark he had been about to make and waving the white froth of blackthorn, “And look at the blue between them.”

“It’s perfectly splendid. Of all the fine weather the best has been

kept for now. My last day. My very last day.”

And off these two young people went together in a highly electrical state — to the infinite astonishment of Mrs. Frobisher, who was looking out of the attic window — stepping out manfully and finding the whole world lit and splendid for their entertainment. The things they discovered and told each other that afternoon down by the river! — that spring was wonderful, young leaves beautiful, bud scales astonishing things, and clouds dazzling and stately! — with an air of supreme originality! And their naïve astonishment to find one another in agreement upon these novel delights! It seemed to them quite outside the play of accident that they should have met each other.

They went by the path that runs among the trees along the river bank, and she must needs repent and wish to take the lower one, the towing path, before they had gone three hundred yards. So Lewisham had to find a place fit for her descent, where a friendly tree proffered its protruding roots as a convenient balustrade, and down she clambered with her hand in his.

Then a water-vole washing his whiskers gave occasion for a sudden touching of hands and the intimate confidence of whispers and silence together. After which Lewisham essayed to gather her a marsh mallow at the peril, as it was judged, of his life, and gained it together with a bootful of water. And at the gate by the black and shiny lock, where the path breaks away from the river, she overcame him by an unexpected feat, climbing gleefully to the top rail with the support of his hand, and leaping down, a figure of light and grace, to the ground.

They struck boldly across the meadows, which were gay with lady’s smock, and he walked, by special request, between her and three matronly cows — feeling as Perseus might have done when he fended off the sea-monster. And so by the mill, and up a steep path to Immering Common. Across the meadows Lewisham had broached the subject of her occupation. “And are you really going away from here to be an amanuensis?” he said, and started her upon the theme of herself, a theme she treated with a specialist’s enthusiasm. They dealt with it by the comparative methods and neither noticed the light was out of the sky until the soft feet of the advancing shower had

stolen right upon them.

"Look!" said he. "Yonder! A shed," and they ran together. She ran laughing, and yet swiftly and lightly. He pulled her through the hedge by both hands, and released her skirt from an amorous bramble, and so they came into a little black shed in which a rusty harrow of gigantic proportions sheltered. He noted how she still kept her breath after that run.

She sat down on the harrow and hesitated. "I *must* take off my hat," she said, "that rain will spot it," and so he had a chance of admiring the sincerity of her curls — not that he had ever doubted them. She stooped over her hat, pocket-handkerchief in hand, daintily wiping off the silvery drops. He stood up at the opening of the shed and looked at the country outside through the veil of the soft vehemence of the April shower.

"There's room for two on this harrow," she said.

He made inarticulate sounds of refusal, and then came and sat down beside her, close beside her, so that he was almost touching her. He felt a fantastic desire to take her in his arms and kiss her, and overcame the madness by an effort. "I don't even know your name," he said, taking refuge from his whirling thoughts in conversation.

"Henderson," she said.

"*Miss* Henderson?"

She smiled in his face — hesitated. "Yes — *Miss* Henderson."

Her eyes, her atmosphere were wonderful. He had never felt quite the same sensation before, a strange excitement, almost like a faint echo of tears. He was for demanding her Christian name. For calling her "dear" and seeing what she would say. He plunged headlong into a rambling description of Bonover and how he had told a lie about her and called her Miss Smith, and so escaped this unaccountable emotional crisis….

The whispering of the rain about them sank and died, and the sunlight struck vividly across the distant woods beyond Immering. Just then they had fallen on a silence again that was full of daring thoughts for Mr. Lewisham. He moved his arm suddenly and placed it so that it was behind her on the frame of the harrow.

"Let us go on now," she said abruptly. "The rain has stopped."

"That little path goes straight to Immering," said Mr. Lewisham.

“But, four o’clock?”

He drew out his watch, and his eyebrows went up. It was already nearly a quarter past four.

“Is it past four?” she asked, and abruptly they were face to face with parting. That Lewisham had to take “duty” at half-past five seemed a thing utterly trivial. “Surely,” he said, only slowly realising what this parting meant. “But must you? I — I want to talk to you.”

“Haven’t you been talking to me?”

“It isn’t that. Besides — no.”

She stood looking at him. “I promised to be home by four,” she said. “Mrs. Frobisher has tea….”

“We may never have a chance to see one another again.”

“Well?”

Lewisham suddenly turned very white.

“Don’t leave me,” he said, breaking a tense silence and with a sudden stress in his voice. “Don’t leave me. Stop with me yet — for a little while…. You … You can lose your way.”

“You seem to think,” she said, forcing a laugh, “that I live without eating and drinking.”

“I have wanted to talk to you so much. The first time I saw you…. At first I dared not…. I did not know you would let me talk…. And now, just as I am — happy, you are going.”

He stopped abruptly. Her eyes were downcast. “No,” she said, tracing a curve with the point of her shoe. “No. I am not going.”

Lewisham restrained an impulse to shout. “You will come to Immering?” he cried, and as they went along the narrow path through the wet grass, he began to tell her with simple frankness how he cared for her company, “I would not change this,” he said, casting about for an offer to reject, “for — anything in the world…. I shall not be back for duty. I don’t care. I don’t care what happens so long as we have this afternoon.”

“Nor I,” she said.

“Thank you for coming,” he said in an outburst of gratitude.— “Oh, thank you for coming,” and held out his hand. She took it and pressed it, and so they went on hand in hand until the village street was reached. Their high resolve to play truant at all costs had begotten a wonderful sense of fellowship. “I can’t call you Miss

Henderson," he said. "You know I can't. You know … I must have your Christian name."

"Ethel," she told him.

"Ethel," he said and looked at her, gathering courage as he did so. "Ethel," he repeated. "It is a pretty name. But no name is quite pretty enough for you, Ethel … *dear*."…

The little shop in Immering lay back behind a garden full of wallflowers, and was kept by a very fat and very cheerful little woman, who insisted on regarding them as brother and sister, and calling them both "dearie." These points conceded she gave them an admirable tea of astonishing cheapness. Lewisham did not like the second condition very much, because it seemed to touch a little on his latest enterprise. But the tea and the bread and butter and the whort jam were like no food on earth. There were wallflowers, heavy scented, in a jug upon the table, and Ethel admired them, and when they set out again the little old lady insisted on her taking a bunch with her.

It was after they left Immering that this ramble, properly speaking, became scandalous. The sun was already a golden ball above the blue hills in the west — it turned our two young people into little figures of flame — and yet, instead of going homeward, they took the Wentworth road that plunges into the Forshaw woods. Behind them the moon, almost full, hung in the blue sky above the tree-tops, ghostly and indistinct, and slowly gathered to itself such light as the setting sun left for it in the sky.

Going out of Immering they began to talk of the future. And for the very young lover there is no future but the immediate future.

"You must write to me," he said, and she told him she wrote such *silly* letters. "But I shall have reams to write to you," he told her.

"How are you to write to me?" she asked, and they discussed a new obstacle between them. It would never do to write home — never. She was sure of that with an absolute assurance. "My mother —" she said and stopped.

That prohibition cut him, for at that time he had the makings of a voluminous letter-writer. Yet it was only what one might expect. The whole world was unpropitious — obdurate indeed…. A splendid isolation *à deux*.

Perhaps she might find some place where letters might be sent to her?
Yet that seemed to her deceitful.

So these two young people wandered on, full of their discovery of love, and yet so full too of the shyness of adolescence that the word "Love" never passed their lips that day. Yet as they talked on, and the kindly dusk gathered about them, their speech and their hearts came very close together. But their speech would seem so threadbare, written down in cold blood, that I must not put it here. To them it was not threadbare.

When at last they came down the long road into Whortley, the silent trees were black as ink and the moonlight made her face pallid and wonderful, and her eyes shone like stars. She still carried the blackthorn from which most of the blossoms had fallen. The fragrant wallflowers were fragrant still. And far away, softened by the distance, the Whortley band, performing publicly outside the vicarage for the first time that year, was playing with unctuous slowness a sentimental air. I don't know if the reader remembers it that, favourite melody of the early eighties: —

"Sweet dreamland faces, passing to and fro, (pum, pum)
Bring back to Mem'ry days of long ago-o-o-oh,"

was the essence of it, very slow and tender and with an accompaniment of pum, pum. Pathetically cheerful that pum, pum, hopelessly cheerful indeed against the dirge of the air, a dirge accentuated by sporadic vocalisation. But to young people things come differently.

"I *love* music," she said.

"So do I," said he.

They came on down the steepness of West Street. They walked athwart the metallic and leathery tumult of sound into the light cast by the little circle of yellow lamps. Several people saw them and wondered what the boys and girls were coming to nowadays, and one eye-witness even subsequently described their carriage as "brazen." Mr. Lewisham was wearing his mortarboard cap of office — there

was no mistaking him. They passed the Proprietary School and saw a yellow picture framed and glazed, of Mr. Bonover taking duty for his aberrant assistant master. And outside the Frobisher house at last they parted perforce.

"Good-bye," he said for the third time. "Good-bye, Ethel."

She hesitated. Then suddenly she darted towards him. He felt her hands upon his shoulders, her lips soft and warm upon his cheek, and before he could take hold of her she had eluded him, and had flitted into the shadow of the house. "Good-bye," came her sweet, clear voice out of the shadow, and while he yet hesitated an answer, the door opened.

He saw her, black in the doorway, heard some indistinct words, and then the door closed and he was alone in the moonlight, his cheek still glowing from her lips….

So ended Mr. Lewisham's first day with Love.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RECKONING.

And after the day of Love came the days of Reckoning. Mr. Lewisham was astonished — overwhelmed almost — by that Reckoning, as it slowly and steadily unfolded itself. The wonderful emotions of Saturday carried him through Sunday, and he made it up with the neglected Schema by assuring it that She was his Inspiration, and that he would work for Her a thousand times better than he could possibly work for himself. That was certainly not true, and indeed he found himself wondering whither the interest had vanished out of his theological examination of Butler's Analogy. The Frobishers were not at church for either service. He speculated rather anxiously why?

Monday dawned coldly and clearly — a Herbert Spencer of a day — and he went to school sedulously assuring himself there was nothing to apprehend. Day boys were whispering in the morning apparently about him, and Frobisher ii. was in great request. Lewisham overheard a fragment "My mother *was* in a wax," said Frobisher ii.

At twelve came an interview with Bonover, and voices presently rising in angry altercation and audible to Senior-assistant Dunkerley through the closed study door. Then Lewisham walked across the schoolroom, staring straight before him, his cheeks very bright.

Thereby Dunkerley's mind was prepared for the news that came the next morning over the exercise books. "When?" said Dunkerley.

"End of next term," said Lewisham.

"About this girl that's been staying at the Frobishers?"

"Yes."

"She's a pretty bit of goods. But it will mess up your matric next June," said Dunkerley.

"That's what I'm sorry for."

"It's scarcely to be expected he'll give you leave to attend the exam…."

"He won't," said Lewisham shortly, and opened his first exercise

book. He found it difficult to talk.

"He's a greaser," said Dunkerley. "But there! — what can you expect from Durham?" For Bonover had only a Durham degree, and Dunkerley, having none, inclined to be particular. Therewith Dunkerley lapsed into a sympathetic and busy rustling over his own pile of exercises. It was not until the heap had been reduced to a book or so that he spoke again — an elaborate point.

"Male and female created He them," said Dunkerley, ticking his way down the page. "Which (tick, tick) was damned hard (tick, tick) on assistant masters."

He closed the book with a snap and flung it on the floor behind him. "You're lucky," he said. "I *did* think I should be first to get out of this scandalising hole. You're lucky. It's always acting down here. Running on parents and guardians round every corner. That's what I object to in life in the country: it's so confoundedly artificial. *I* shall take jolly good care *I* get out of it just as soon as ever I can. You bet!"

"And work those patents?"

"Rather, my boy. Yes. Work those patents. The Patent Square Top Bottle! Lord! Once let me get to London…."

"I think *I* shall have a shot at London," said Lewisham.

And then the experienced Dunkerley, being one of the kindest young men alive, forgot certain private ambitions of his own — he cherished dreams of amazing patents — and bethought him of agents. He proceeded to give a list of these necessary helpers of the assistant master at the gangway — Orellana, Gabbitas, The Lancaster Gate Agency, and the rest of them. He knew them all — intimately. He had been a "nix" eight years. "Of course that Kensington thing may come off," said Dunkerley, "but it's best not to wait. I tell you frankly — the chances are against you."

The "Kensington thing" was an application for admission to the Normal School of Science at South Kensington, which Lewisham had made in a sanguine moment. There being an inadequate supply of qualified science teachers in England, the Science and Art Department is wont to offer free instruction at its great central school

and a guinea a week to select young pedagogues who will bind themselves to teach science after their training is over. Dunkerley had been in the habit of applying for several years, always in vain, and Lewisham had seen no harm in following his example. But then Dunkerley had no green-grey certificates.

So Lewisham spent all that "duty" left him of the next day composing a letter to copy out and send the several scholastic agencies. In this he gave a brief but appreciative sketch of his life, and enlarged upon his discipline and educational methods. At the end was a long and decorative schedule of his certificates and distinctions, beginning with a good-conduct prize at the age of eight. A considerable amount of time was required to recopy this document, but his modesty upheld him. After a careful consideration of the time-table, he set aside the midday hour for "Correspondence."

He found that his work in mathematics and classics was already some time in arrears, and a "test" he had sent to his correspondence Tutor during those troublous days after the meeting with Bonover in the Avenue, came back blottesquely indorsed: "Below Pass Standard." This last experience was so unprecedented and annoyed him so much that for a space he contemplated retorting with a sarcastic letter to the tutor. And then came the Easter recess, and he had to go home and tell his mother, with a careful suppression of details, that he was leaving Whortley, "Where you have been getting on so well!" cried his mother.

But that dear old lady had one consolation. She observed he had given up his glasses — he had forgotten to bring them with him — and her secret fear of grave optical troubles — that were being "kept" from her — was alleviated.

Sometimes he had moods of intense regret for the folly of that walk. One such came after the holidays, when the necessity of revising the dates of the Schema brought before his mind, for the first time quite clearly, the practical issue of this first struggle with all those mysterious and powerful influences the spring-time sets a-stirring. His dream of success and fame had been very real and dear to him, and the realisation of the inevitable postponement of his long anticipated matriculation, the doorway to all the other great things, took him abruptly like an actual physical sensation in his chest.

He sprang up, pen in hand, in the midst of his corrections, and began pacing up and down the room. “What a fool I have been!” he cried. “What a fool I have been!”

He flung the pen on the floor and made a rush at an ill-drawn attempt upon a girl’s face that adorned the end of his room, the visible witness of his slavery. He tore this down and sent the fragments of it scattering….

“Fool!”

It was a relief — a definite abandonment. He stared for a moment at the destruction he had made, and then went back to the revision of the time-table, with a mutter about “silly spooning.”

That was one mood. The rarer one. He watched the posts with far more eagerness for the address to which he might write to her than for any reply to those reiterated letters of application, the writing of which now ousted Horace and the higher mathematics (Lewisham’s term for conics) from his attention. Indeed he spent more time meditating the letter to her than even the schedule of his virtues had required.

Yet the letters of application were wonderful compositions; each had a new pen to itself and was for the first page at least in a handwriting far above even his usual high standard. And day after day passed and that particular letter he hoped for still did not come.

His moods were complicated by the fact that, in spite of his studied reticence on the subject, the reason of his departure did in an amazingly short time get “all over Whortley.” It was understood that he had been discovered to be “fast,” and Ethel’s behaviour was animadverted upon with complacent Indignation — if the phrase may be allowed — by the ladies of the place. Pretty looks were too often a snare. One boy — his ear was warmed therefor — once called aloud “Ethel,” as Lewisham went by. The curate, a curate of the pale-faced, large-knuckled, nervous sort, now passed him without acknowledgment of his existence. Mrs. Bonover took occasion to tell him that he was a “mere boy,” and once Mrs. Frobisher sniffed quite threateningly at him when she passed him in the street. She did it so suddenly she made him jump.

This general disapproval inclined him at times to depression, but in certain moods he found it exhilarating, and several times he

professed himself to Dunkerley not a little of a blade. In others, he told himself he bore it for *her* sake. Anyhow he had to bear it.

He began to find out, too, how little the world feels the need of a young man of nineteen — he called himself nineteen, though he had several months of eighteen still to run — even though he adds prizes for good conduct, general improvement, and arithmetic, and advanced certificates signed by a distinguished engineer and headed with the Royal Arms, guaranteeing his knowledge of geometrical drawing, nautical astronomy, animal physiology, physiography, inorganic chemistry, and building construction, to his youth and strength and energy. At first he had imagined headmasters clutching at the chance of him, and presently he found himself clutching eagerly at them. He began to put a certain urgency into his applications for vacant posts, an urgency that helped him not at all. The applications grew longer and longer until they ran to four sheets of note-paper — a pennyworth in fact. "I can assure you," he would write, "that you will find me a loyal and devoted assistant." Much in that strain. Dunkerley pointed out that Bonover's testimonial ignored the question of moral character and discipline in a marked manner, and Bonover refused to alter it. He was willing to do what he could to help Lewisham, in spite of the way he had been treated, but unfortunately his conscience….

Once or twice Lewisham misquoted the testimonial — to no purpose. And May was halfway through, and South Kensington was silent. The future was grey.

And in the depths of his doubt and disappointment came her letter. It was typewritten on thin paper. "Dear," she wrote simply, and it seemed to him the most sweet and wonderful of all possible modes of address, though as a matter of fact it was because she had forgotten his Christian name and afterwards forgotten the blank she had left for it.

"Dear, I could not write before because I have no room at home now where I can write a letter, and Mrs. Frobisher told my mother falsehoods about you. My mother has surprised me dreadfully — I did not think it of her. She told me nothing. But of that I must tell you in another letter. I am too angry to write about it now. Even now you cannot write back, for *you must not send letters here*. It would

never do. But I think of you, dear," — the "dear" had been erased and rewritten— "and I must write and tell you so, and of that nice walk we had, if I never write again. I am very busy now. My work is rather difficult and I am afraid I am a little stupid. It is hard to be interested in anything just because that is how you have to live, is it not? I daresay you sometimes feel the same of school. But I suppose everybody is doing things they don't like. I don't know when I shall come to Whortley again, if ever, but very likely you will be coming to London. Mrs. Frobisher said the most horrid things. It would be nice If you could come to London, because then perhaps you might see me. There is a big boys' school at Chelsea, and when I go by it every morning I wish you were there. Then you would come out in your cap and gown as I went by. Suppose some day I was to see you there suddenly!!"

So it ran, with singularly little information in it, and ended quite abruptly, "Good-bye, dear. Good-bye, dear," scribbled in pencil. And then, "Think of me sometimes."

Reading it, and especially that opening "dear," made Lewisham feel the strangest sensation in his throat and chest, almost as though he was going to cry. So he laughed instead and read it again, and went to and fro in his little room with his eyes bright and that precious writing held in his hand. That "dear" was just as if she had spoken — a voice suddenly heard. He thought of her farewell, clear and sweet, out of the shadow of the moonlit house.

But why that "If I never write again," and that abrupt ending? Of course he would think of her.

It was her only letter. In a little time its creases were worn through.

Early in June came a loneliness that suddenly changed into almost intolerable longing to see her. He had vague dreams of going to London, to Clapham to find her. But you do not find people in Clapham as you do in Whortley. He spent an afternoon writing and re-writing a lengthy letter, against the day when her address should come. If it was to come. He prowled about the village disconsolately, and at last set off about seven and retraced by moonlight almost every step of that one memorable walk of theirs.

In the blackness of the shed he worked himself up to the pitch of

talking as if she were present. And he said some fine brave things.

He found the little old lady of the wallflowers with a candle in her window, and drank a bottle of ginger beer with a sacramental air. The little old lady asked him, a trifle archly, after his sister, and he promised to bring her again some day. “I’ll certainly bring her,” he said. Talking to the little old lady somehow blunted his sense of desolation. And then home through the white indistinctness in a state of melancholy that became at last so fine as to be almost pleasurable.

The day after that mood a new “text” attracted and perplexed Mrs. Munday, an inscription at once mysterious and familiar, and this inscription was:

Mizpah.

It was in Old English lettering and evidently very carefully executed.

Where had she seen it before?

It quite dominated all the rest of the room at first, it flaunted like a flag of triumph over “discipline” and the time-table and the Schema. Once indeed it was taken down, but the day after it reappeared. Later a list of scholastic vacancies partially obscured it, and some pencil memoranda were written on the margin.

And when at last the time came for him to pack up and leave Whortley, he took it down and used it with several other suitable papers — the Schema and the time-table were its next-door neighbours — to line the bottom of the yellow box in which he packed his books: chiefly books for that matriculation that had now to be postponed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAREER PREVAILS.

There is an interval of two years and a half and the story resumes with a much maturer Mr. Lewisham, indeed no longer a youth, but a man, a legal man, at any rate, of one-and-twenty years. Its scene is no longer little Whortley embedded among its trees, ruddy banks, parks and common land, but the grey spaciousness of West London.

And it does not resume with Ethel at all. For that promised second letter never reached him, and though he spent many an afternoon during his first few months in London wandering about Clapham, that arid waste of people, the meeting that he longed for never came. Until at last, after the manner of youth, so gloriously recuperative in body, heart, and soul, he began to forget.

The quest of a "crib" had ended in the unexpected fruition of Dunkerley's blue paper. The green-blue certificates had, it seemed, a value beyond mural decoration, and when Lewisham was already despairing of any employment for the rest of his life, came a marvellous blue document from the Education Department promising inconceivable things. He was to go to London and be paid a guinea a week for listening to lectures — lectures beyond his most ambitious dreams! Among the names that swam before his eyes was Huxley — Huxley and then Lockyer! What a chance to get! Is it any wonder that for three memorable years the Career prevailed with him?

You figure him on his way to the Normal School of Science at the opening of his third year of study there. (They call the place the Royal College of Science in these latter days.) He carried in his right hand a shiny black bag, well stuffed with text-books, notes, and apparatus for the forthcoming session; and in his left was a book that the bag had no place for, a book with gilt edges, and its binding very carefully protected by a brown paper cover.

The lapse of time had asserted itself upon his upper lip in an inaggressive but indisputable moustache, in an added inch or so of stature, and in his less conscious carriage. For he no longer felt that

universal attention he believed in at eighteen; it was beginning to dawn on him indeed that quite a number of people were entirely indifferent to the fact of his existence. But if less conscious, his carriage was decidedly more confident — as of one with whom the world goes well.

His costume was — with one exception — a tempered black, — mourning put to hard uses and "cutting up rusty." The mourning was for his mother, who had died more than a year before the date when this story resumes, and had left him property that capitalized at nearly a hundred pounds, a sum which Lewisham hoarded jealously in the Savings Bank, paying only for such essentials as university fees, and the books and instruments his brilliant career as a student demanded. For he was having a brilliant career, after all, in spite of the Whortley check, licking up paper certificates indeed like a devouring flame.

(Surveying him, Madam, your eye would inevitably have fallen to his collar — curiously shiny, a surface like wet gum. Although it has practically nothing to do with this story, I must, I know, dispose of that before I go on, or you will be inattentive. London has its mysteries, but this strange gloss on his linen! "Cheap laundresses always make your things blue," protests the lady. "It ought to have been blue-stained, generously frayed, and loose about the button, fretting his neck. But this gloss …" You would have looked nearer, and finally you would have touched — a charnel-house surface, dank and cool! You see, Madam, the collar was a patent waterproof one. One of those you wash over night with a tooth-brush, and hang on the back of your chair to dry, and there you have it next morning rejuvenesced. It was the only collar he had in the world, it saved threepence a week at least, and that, to a South Kensington "science teacher in training," living on the guinea a week allowed by a parental but parsimonious government, is a sum to consider. It had come to Lewisham as a great discovery. He had seen it first in a shop window full of indiarubber goods, and it lay at the bottom of a glass bowl in which goldfish drifted discontentedly to and fro. And he told himself that he rather liked that gloss.)

But the wearing of a bright red tie would have been unexpected — a bright red tie after the fashion of a South-Western railway

guard's! The rest of him by no means dandiacal, even the vanity of glasses long since abandoned. You would have reflected…. Where had you seen a crowd — red ties abundant and in some way significant? The truth has to be told. Mr. Lewisham had become a Socialist!

That red tie was indeed but one outward and visible sign of much inward and spiritual development. Lewisham, in spite of the demands of a studious career, had read his Butler's Analogy through by this time, and some other books; he had argued, had had doubts, and called upon God for "Faith" in the silence of the night— "Faith" to be delivered immediately if Mr. Lewisham's patronage was valued, and which nevertheless was not so delivered…. And his conception of his destiny in this world was no longer an avenue of examinations to a remote Bar and political eminence "in the Liberal interest (D.V.)." He had begun to realise certain aspects of our social order that Whortley did not demonstrate, begun to feel something of the dull stress deepening to absolute wretchedness and pain, which is the colour of so much human life in modern London. One vivid contrast hung in his mind symbolical. On the one hand were the coalies of the Westbourne Park yards, on strike and gaunt and hungry, children begging in the black slush, and starving loungers outside a soup kitchen; and on the other, Westbourne Grove, two streets further, a blazing array of crowded shops, a stirring traffic of cabs and carriages, and such a spate of spending that a tired student in leaky boots and graceless clothes hurrying home was continually impeded in the whirl of skirts and parcels and sweetly pretty womanliness. No doubt the tired student's own inglorious sensations pointed the moral. But that was only one of a perpetually recurring series of vivid approximations.

Lewisham had a strong persuasion, an instinct it may be, that human beings should not be happy while others near them were wretched, and this gay glitter of prosperity had touched him with a sense of crime. He still believed people were responsible for their own lives; in those days he had still to gauge the possibilities of moral stupidity in himself and his fellow-men. He happened upon "Progress and Poverty" just then, and some casual numbers of the "Commonweal," and it was only too easy to accept the theory of

cunning plotting capitalists and landowners, and faultless, righteous, martyr workers. He became a Socialist forthwith. The necessity to do something at once to manifest the new faith that was in him was naturally urgent. So he went out and (historical moment) bought that red tie!

"Blood colour, please," said Lewisham meekly to the young lady at the counter.

"*What* colour?" said the young lady at the counter, sharply.

"A bright scarlet, please," said Lewisham, blushing. And he spent the best part of the evening and much of his temper in finding out how to tie this into a neat bow. It was a plunge into novel handicraft — for previously he had been accustomed to made-up ties.

So it was that Lewisham proclaimed the Social Revolution. The first time that symbol went abroad a string of stalwart policemen were walking in single file along the Brompton Road. In the opposite direction marched Lewisham. He began to hum. He passed the policemen with a significant eye and humming the *Marseillaise*….

But that was months ago, and by this time the red tie was a thing of use and wont.

He turned out of the Exhibition Road through a gateway of wrought iron, and entered the hall of the Normal School. The hall was crowded with students carrying books, bags, and boxes of instruments, students standing and chattering, students reading the framed and glazed notices of the Debating Society, students buying note-books, pencils, rubber, or drawing pins from the privileged stationer. There was a strong representation of new hands, the paying students, youths and young men in black coats and silk hats or tweed suits, the scholar contingent, youngsters of Lewisham's class, raw, shabby, discordant, grotesquely ill-dressed and awe-stricken; one Lewisham noticed with a sailor's peaked cap gold-decorated, and one with mittens and very genteel grey kid gloves; and Grummett the perennial Official of the Books was busy among them.

"Der Zozalist!" said a wit.

Lewisham pretended not to hear and blushed vividly. He often wished he did not blush quite so much, seeing he was a man of one-and-twenty. He looked studiously away from the Debating Society notice-board, whereon "G.E. Lewisham on Socialism" was

announced for the next Friday, and struggled through the hall to where the Book awaited his signature. Presently he was hailed by name, and then again. He could not get to the Book for a minute or so, because of the hand-shaking and clumsy friendly jests of his fellow-”men.”

He was pointed out to a raw hand, by the raw hand’s experienced fellow-townsman, as “that beast Lewisham — awful swat. He was second last year on the year’s work. Frightful mugger. But all these swats have a touch of the beastly prig. Exams — Debating Society — more Exams. Don’t seem to have ever heard of being alive. Never goes near a Music Hall from one year’s end to the other.”

Lewisham heard a shrill whistle, made a run for the lift and caught it just on the point of departure. The lift was unlit and full of black shadows; only the sapper who conducted it was distinct. As Lewisham peered doubtfully at the dim faces near him, a girl’s voice addressed him by name.

“Is that you, Miss Heydinger?” he answered. “I didn’t see, I hope you have had a pleasant vacation.”

CHAPTER IX.

ALICE HEYDINGER.

When he arrived at the top of the building he stood aside for the only remaining passenger to step out before him. It was the Miss Heydinger who had addressed him, the owner of that gilt-edged book in the cover of brown paper. No one else had come all the way up from the ground floor. The rest of the load in the lift had emerged at the "astronomical" and "chemical" floors, but these two had both chosen "zoology" for their third year of study, and zoology lived in the attics. She stepped into the light, with a rare touch of colour springing to her cheeks in spite of herself. Lewisham perceived an alteration in her dress. Perhaps she was looking for and noticed the transitory surprise in his face.

The previous session — their friendship was now nearly a year old — it had never once dawned upon him that she could possibly be pretty. The chief thing he had been able to recall with any definiteness during the vacation was, that her hair was not always tidy, and that even when it chanced to be so, she was nervous about it; she distrusted it. He remembered her gesture while she talked, a patting exploration that verged on the exasperating. From that he went on to remember that its colour was, on the whole, fair, a light brown. But he had forgotten her mouth, he had failed to name the colour of her eyes. She wore glasses, it is true. And her dress was indefinite in his memory — an amorphous dinginess.

And yet he had seen a good deal of her. They were not in the same course, but he had made her acquaintance on the committee of the school Debating Society. Lewisham was just then discovering Socialism. That had afforded a basis of conversation — an incentive to intercourse. She seemed to find something rarely interesting in his peculiar view of things, and, as chance would have it, he met her accidentally quite a number of times, in the corridors of the schools, in the big Education Library, and in the Art Museum. After a time those meetings appear to have been no longer accidental.

Lewisham for the first time in his life began to fancy he had

conversational powers. She resolved to stir up his ambitions — an easy task. She thought he had exceptional gifts and that she might serve to direct them; she certainly developed his vanity. She had matriculated at the London University and they took the Intermediate Examination in Science together in July — she a little unwisely — which served, as almost anything will serve in such cases, as a further link between them. She failed, which in no way diminished Lewisham's regard for her. On the examination days they discoursed about Friendship in general, and things like that, down the Burlington Arcade during the lunch time — Burlington Arcade undisguisedly amused by her learned dinginess and his red tie — and among other things that were said she reproached him for not reading poetry. When they parted in Piccadilly, after the examination, they agreed to write, about poetry and themselves, during the holidays, and then she lent him, with a touch of hesitation, Rossetti's poems. He began to forget what had at first been very evident to him, that she was two or three years older than he.

Lewisham spent the vacation with an unsympathetic but kindly uncle who was a plumber and builder. His uncle had a family of six, the eldest eleven, and Lewisham made himself agreeable and instructive. Moreover he worked hard for the culminating third year of his studies (in which he had decided to do great things), and he learnt to ride the Ordinary Bicycle. He also thought about Miss Heydinger, and she, it would seem, thought about him.

He argued on social questions with his uncle, who was a prominent local Conservative. His uncle's controversial methods were coarse in the extreme. Socialists, he said, were thieves. The object of Socialism was to take away what a man earned and give it to "a lot of lazy scoundrels." Also rich people were necessary. "If there weren't well-off people, how d'ye think I'd get a livin'? Hey? And where'd *you* be then?" Socialism, his uncle assured him, was "got up" by agitators. "They get money out of young Gabies like you, and they spend it in champagne." And thereafter he met Mr. Lewisham's arguments with the word "Champagne" uttered in an irritating voice, followed by a luscious pantomime of drinking.

Naturally Lewisham felt a little lonely, and perhaps he laid stress upon it in his letters to Miss Heydinger. It came to light that she felt

rather lonely too. They discussed the question of True as distinguished from Ordinary Friendship, and from that they passed to Goethe and Elective Affinities. He told her how he looked for her letters, and they became more frequent. Her letters were Indisputably well written. Had he been a journalist with a knowledge of "*per thou*." he would have known each for a day's work. After the practical plumber had been asking what he expected to make by this here science of his, re-reading her letters was balsamic. He liked Rossetti — the exquisite sense of separation in "The Blessed Damozel" touched him. But, on the whole, he was a little surprised at Miss Heydinger's taste in poetry. Rossetti was so sensuous … so florid. He had scarcely expected that sort of thing.

Altogether he had returned to the schools decidedly more interested in her than when they had parted. And the curious vague memories of her appearance as something a little frayed and careless, vanished at sight of her emerging from the darkness of the lift. Her hair was in order, as the light glanced through it it looked even pretty, and she wore a well-made, dark-green and black dress, loose-gathered as was the fashion in those days, that somehow gave a needed touch of warmth to her face. Her hat too was a change from the careless lumpishness of last year, a hat that, to a feminine mind, would have indicated design. It suited her — these things are past a male novelist's explaining.

"I have this book of yours, Miss Heydinger," he said.

"I am glad you have written that paper on Socialism," she replied, taking the brown-covered volume.

They walked along the little passage towards the biological laboratory side by side, and she stopped at the hat pegs to remove her hat. For that was the shameless way of the place, a girl student had to take her hat off publicly, and publicly assume the holland apron that was to protect her in the laboratory. Not even a looking-glass!

"I shall come and hear your paper," she said.

"I hope you will like it," said Lewisham at the door of the laboratory.

"And in the vacation I have been collecting evidence about ghosts — you remember our arguments. Though I did not tell you in my letters."

“I’m sorry you’re still obdurate,” said Lewisham. “I thought that was over.”

“And have you read ‘Looking Backward’?”

“I want to.”

“I have it here with my other books, if you’d care for me to lend it to you. Wait till I reach my table. My hands are so full.”

They entered the laboratory together, Lewisham holding the door open courtly-wise, Miss Heydinger taking a reassuring pat at her hair. Near the door was a group of four girls, which group Miss Heydinger joined, holding the brown-covered book as inconspicuously as possible. Three of them had been through the previous two years with her, and they greeted her by her Christian name. They had previously exchanged glances at her appearance in Lewisham’s company.

A morose elderly young demonstrator brightened momentarily at the sight of Lewisham. “Well, we’ve got one of the decent ones anyhow,” said the morose elderly young demonstrator, who was apparently taking an inventory, and then brightening at a fresh entry. “Ah! and here’s Smithers.”

CHAPTER X.

IN THE GALLERY OF OLD IRON.

As one goes into the South Kensington Art Museum from the Brompton Road, the Gallery of Old Iron is overhead to the right. But the way thither is exceedingly devious and not to be revealed to everybody, since the young people who pursue science and art thereabouts set a peculiar value on its seclusion. The gallery is long and narrow and dark, and set with iron gates, iron-bound chests, locks, bolts and bars, fantastic great keys, lamps, and the like, and over the balustrade one may lean and talk of one's finer feelings and regard Michael Angelo's horned Moses, or Trajan's Column (in plaster) rising gigantic out of the hall below and far above the level of the gallery. And here, on a Wednesday afternoon, were Lewisham and Miss Heydinger, the Wednesday afternoon immediately following that paper upon Socialism, that you saw announced on the notice-board in the hall.

The paper had been an immense success, closely reasoned, delivered with a disciplined emotion, the redoubtable Smithers practically converted, the reply after the debate methodical and complete, and it may be there were symptoms of that febrile affection known to the vulgar as "swelled 'ed." Lewisham regarded Moses and spoke of his future. Miss Heydinger for the most part watched his face.

"And then?" said Miss Heydinger.

"One must bring these views prominently before people. I believe still in pamphlets. I have thought …" Lewisham paused, it is to be hoped through modesty.

"Yes?" said Miss Heydinger.

"Well — Luther, you know. There is room, I think, in Socialism, for a
Luther."

"Yes," said Miss Heydinger, imagining it. "Yes — that would be

a grand way."

So it seemed to many people in those days. But eminent reformers have been now for more than seven years going about the walls of the Social Jericho, blowing their own trumpets and shouting — with such small result beyond incidental displays of ill-temper within, that it is hard to recover the fine hopefulness of those departed days.

"Yes," said Miss Heydinger. "That would be a grand way."

Lewisham appreciated the quality of personal emotion in her voice. He turned his face towards her, and saw unstinted admiration in her eyes. "It would be a great thing to do," he said, and added, quite modestly, "if only one could do it."

"*You* could do it."

"You think I could?" Lewisham blushed vividly — with pleasure.

"I do. Certainly you could set out to do it. Even to fail hopelessly would be Great. Sometimes …"

She hesitated. He looked expectation. "I think sometimes it is greater even to fail than to succeed."

"I don't see that," said the proposed Luther, and his eyes went back to the Moses. She was about to speak, and changed her mind.

Contemplative pause.

"And then, when a great number of people have heard of your views?" she said presently.

"Then I suppose we must form a party and … bring things about."

Another pause — full, no doubt, of elevated thoughts.

"I say," said Lewisham quite suddenly. "You do put — well — courage into a chap. I shouldn't have done that Socialism paper if it hadn't been for you." He turned round and stood leaning with his back to the Moses, and smiling at her. "You do help a fellow," he said.

That was one of the vivid moments of Miss Heydinger's life. She changed colour a little. "Do I?" she said, standing straight and awkward and looking into his face, "I'm … glad."

"I haven't thanked you for your letters," said Lewisham, "And I've been thinking …"

"Yes?"

"We're first-rate friends, aren't we? The best of friends."

She held out her hand and drew a breath. "Yes," she said as they

gripped. He hesitated whether to hold her hand. He looked into her eyes, and at that moment she would have given three-quarters of the years she had still to live, to have had eyes and features that could have expressed her. Instead, she felt her face hard, the little muscles of her mouth twitching insubordinate, and fancied that her self-consciousness made her eyes dishonest.

"What I mean," said Lewisham, "is — that this will go on. We're always going to be friends, side by side."

"Always. Just as I am able to help you — I will help you. However I can help you, I will."

"We two," said Lewisham, gripping her hand.

Her face lit. Her eyes were for a moment touched with the beauty of simple emotion. "We two," she said, and her lips trembled and her throat seemed to swell. She snatched her hand back suddenly and turned her face away. Abruptly she walked towards the end of the gallery, and he saw her fumbling for her handkerchief in the folds of the green and black dress.

She was going to cry!

It set Lewisham marvelling — this totally inappropriate emotion.

He followed her and stood by her. Why cry? He hoped no one would come into the little gallery until her handkerchief was put away. Nevertheless he felt vaguely flattered. She controlled herself, dashed her tears away, and smiled bravely at him with reddened eyes. "I'm sorry," she said, gulping.

"I am so glad," she explained.

"But we will fight together. We two. I *can* help you. I know I can help you. And there is such Work to be done in the world!"

"You are very good to help me," said Lewisham, quoting a phrase from what he had intended to say before he found out that he had a hold upon her emotions.

"No!

"Has it ever occurred to you," she said abruptly, "how little a woman can do alone in the world?"

"Or a man," he answered after a momentary meditation.

So it was Lewisham enrolled his first ally in the cause of the red tie — of the red tie and of the Greatness that was presently to come. His first ally; for hitherto — save for the indiscretion of his mural

inscriptions — he had made a secret of his private ambitions. In that now half-forgotten love affair at Whortley even, he had, in spite of the considerable degree of intimacy attained, said absolutely nothing about his Career.

CHAPTER XI.

MANIFESTATIONS.

Miss Heydinger declined to disbelieve in the spirits of the dead, and this led to controversy in the laboratory over Tea. For the girl students, being in a majority that year, had organised Tea between four o'clock and the advent of the extinguishing policeman at five. And the men students were occasionally invited to Tea. But not more than two of them at a time really participated, because there were only two spare cups after that confounded Simmons broke the third.

Smithers, the square-headed student with the hard grey eyes, argued against the spirits of the dead with positive animosity, while Bletherley, who displayed an orange tie and lank hair in unshorn abundance, was vaguely open-minded, "What is love?" asked Bletherley, "surely that at any rate is immortal!" His remark was considered irrelevant and ignored.

Lewisham, as became the most promising student of the year, weighed the evidence — comprehensively under headings. He dismissed the mediumistic *séances* as trickery.

"Rot and imposture," said Smithers loudly, and with an oblique glance to see if his challenge reached its mark. Its mark was a grizzled little old man with a very small face and very big grey eyes, who had been standing listlessly at one of the laboratory windows until the discussion caught him. He wore a brown velvet jacket and was reputed to be enormously rich. His name was Lagune. He was not a regular attendant, but one of those casual outsiders who are admitted to laboratories that are not completely full. He was known to be an ardent spiritualist — it was even said that he had challenged Huxley to a public discussion on materialism, and he came to the biological lectures and worked intermittently, in order, he explained, to fight disbelief with its own weapons. He rose greedily to Smithers' controversial bait.

"I say *no*!" he said, calling down the narrow laboratory and following his voice. He spoke with the ghost of a lisp. "Pardon my interrupting, sir. The question interests me profoundly. I hope I don't

intrude. Excuse me, sir. Make it personal. Am I a — fool, or an impostor?"

"Well," parried Smithers, with all a South Kensington student's want of polish, "that's a bit personal."

"Assume, sir, that I am an honest observer."

"Well?"

"I have *seen* spirits, *heard* spirits, *felt* the touch of spirits,"
He opened his pale eyes very widely.

"Fool, then," said Smithers in an undertone which did not reach the ears of the spiritualist.

"You may have been deceived," paraphrased Lewisham.

"I can assure you … others can see, hear, feel. I have tested, sir. Tested! I have some scientific training and I have employed tests. Scientific and exhaustive tests! Every possible way. I ask you, sir — have you given the spirits a chance?"

"It is only paying guineas to humbugs," said Smithers.

"There you are! Prejudice! Here is a man denies the facts and consequently *won't* see them, won't go near them."

"But you wouldn't have every man in the three kingdoms, who disbelieved in spirits, attend *séances* before he should be allowed to deny?"

"Most assuredly yes. Most assuredly yes! He knows nothing about it till then."

The argument became heated. The little old gentleman was soon under way. He knew a person of the most extraordinary gifts, a medium …

"Paid?" asked Smithers.

"Would you muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn?" said Lagune promptly.

Smithers' derision was manifest.

"Would you distrust a balance because you bought it? Come and see." Lagune was now very excited and inclined to gesticulate and raise his voice. He invited the whole class incontinently to a series of special *séances*. "Not all at once — the spirits — new influences." But in sections. "I warn you we may get nothing. But the chances are

… I would rejoice infinitely …”

So it came about that Lewisham consented to witness a spirit-raising. Miss Heydinger it was arranged should be there, and the sceptic Smithers, Lagune, his typewriter and the medium would complete the party. Afterwards there was to be another party for the others. Lewisham was glad he had the moral support of Smithers. “It’s an evening wasted,” said Smithers, who had gallantly resolved to make the running for Lewisham in the contest for the Forbes medal. “But I’ll prove my case. You see if I don’t.” They were given an address in Chelsea.

The house, when Lewisham found it at last, proved a large one, with such an air of mellowed dignity that he was abashed. He hung his hat up for himself beside a green-trimmed hat of straw in the wide, rich-toned hall. Through an open door he had a glimpse of a palatial study, book shelves bearing white busts, a huge writing-table lit by a green-shaded electric lamp and covered thickly with papers. The housemaid looked, he thought, with infinite disdain at the rusty mourning and flamboyant tie, and flounced about and led him upstairs.

She rapped, and there was a discussion within. “They’re at it already, I believe,” she said to Lewisham confidentially. “Mr. Lagune’s always at it.”

There were sounds of chairs being moved, Smithers’ extensive voice making a suggestion and laughing nervously. Lagune appeared opening the door. His grizzled face seemed smaller and his big grey eyes larger than usual.

“We were just going to begin without you,” he whispered. “Come along.”

The room was furnished even more finely than the drawing-room of the Whortley Grammar School, hitherto the finest room (except certain of the State Apartments at Windsor) known to Lewisham. The furniture struck him in a general way as akin to that in the South Kensington Museum. His first impression was an appreciation of the vast social superiority of the chairs; it seemed impertinent to think of sitting on anything quite so quietly stately. He perceived Smithers standing with an air of bashful hostility against a bookcase. Then he was aware that Lagune was asking them all to sit down. Already

seated at the table was the Medium, Chaffery, a benevolent-looking, faintly shabby gentleman with bushy iron-grey side-whiskers, a wide, thin-lipped mouth tucked in at the corners, and a chin like the toe of a boot. He regarded Lewisham critically and disconcertingly over gilt glasses. Miss Heydinger was quite at her ease and began talking at once. Lewisham's replies were less confident than they had been in the Gallery of Old Iron; indeed there was almost a reversal of their positions. She led and he was abashed. He felt obscurely that she had taken an advantage of him. He became aware of another girlish figure in a dark dress on his right.

Everyone moved towards the round table in the centre of the room, on which lay a tambourine and a little green box. Lagune developed unsuspected lengths of knobby wrist and finger directing his guests to their seats. Lewisham was to sit next to him, between him and the Medium; beyond the Medium sat Smithers with Miss Heydinger on the other side of him, linked to Lagune by the typewriter. So sceptics compassed the Medium about. The company was already seated before Lewisham looked across Lagune and met the eyes of the girl next that gentleman. It was Ethel! The close green dress, the absence of a hat, and a certain loss of colour made her seem less familiar, but did not prevent the instant recognition. And there was recognition in her eyes.

Immediately she looked away. At first his only emotion was surprise. He would have spoken, but a little thing robbed him of speech. For a moment he was unable to remember her surname. Moreover, the strangeness of his surroundings made him undecided. He did not know what was the proper way to address her — and he still kept to the superstition of etiquette. Besides — to speak to her would involve a general explanation to all these people …

"Just leave a pin-point of gas, Mr. Smithers, please," said Lagune, and suddenly the one surviving jet of the gas chandelier was turned down and they were in darkness. The moment for recognition had passed.

The joining of hands was punctiliously verified, the circle was linked little finger to little finger. Lewisham's abstraction received a rebuke from Smithers. The Medium, speaking in an affable voice, premised that he could promise nothing, he had no "*directing*" power

over manifestations. Thereafter ensued a silence….

For a space Lewisham was inattentive to all that happened.

He sat in the breathing darkness, staring at the dim elusive shape that had presented that remembered face. His mind was astonishment mingled with annoyance. He had settled that this girl was lost to him for ever. The spell of the old days of longing, of the afternoons that he had spent after his arrival in London, wandering through Clapham with a fading hope of meeting her, had not returned to him. But he was ashamed of his stupid silence, and irritated by the awkwardness of the situation. At one moment he was on the very verge of breaking the compact and saying "Miss Henderson" across the table….

How was it he had forgotten that "Henderson"? He was still young enough to be surprised at forgetfulness.

Smithers coughed, one might imagine with a warning intention.

Lewisham, recalling his detective responsibility with an effort, peered about him, but the room was very dark. The silence was broken ever and again by deep sighs and a restless stirring from the Medium. Out of this mental confusion Lewisham's personal vanity was first to emerge. What did she think of him? Was she peering at him through the darkness even as he peered at her? Should he pretend to see her for the first time when the lights were restored? As the minutes lengthened it seemed as though the silence grew deeper and deeper. There was no fire in the room, and it looked, for lack of that glow, chilly. A curious scepticism arose in his mind as to whether he had actually seen Ethel or only mistaken someone else for her. He wanted the *séance* over in order that he might look at her again. The old days at Whortley came out of his memory with astonishing detail and yet astonishingly free from emotion….

He became aware of a peculiar sensation down his back, that he tried to account for as a draught….

Suddenly a beam of cold air came like a touch against his face, and made him shudder convulsively. Then he hoped that she had not marked his shudder. He thought of laughing a low laugh to show he was not afraid. Someone else shuddered too, and he perceived an extraordinarily vivid odour of violets. Lagune's finger communicated a nervous quivering.

What was happening?

The musical box somewhere on the table began playing a rather trivial, rather plaintive air that was strange to him. It seemed to deepen the silence about him, an accent on the expectant stillness, a thread of tinkling melody spanning an abyss.

Lewisham took himself in hand at this stage. What *was* happening? He must attend. Was he really watching as he should do? He had been wool-gathering. There were no such things as spirits, mediums were humbugs, and he was here to prove that sole remaining Gospel. But he must keep up with things — he was missing points. What was that scent of violets? And who had set the musical box going? The Medium, of course; but how? He tried to recall whether he had heard a rustling or detected any movement before the music began. He could not recollect. Come! he must be more on the alert than this!

He became acutely desirous of a successful exposure. He figured the dramatic moment he had prepared with Smithers — Ethel a spectator. He peered suspiciously into the darkness.

Somebody shuddered again, someone opposite him this time. He felt Lagune's finger quiver still more palpably, and then suddenly the raps began, abruptly, all about him. *Rap*! — making him start violently. A swift percussive sound, tap, rap, dap, under the table, under the chair, in the air, round the cornices. The Medium groaned again and shuddered, and his nervous agitation passed sympathetically round the circle. The music seemed to fade to the vanishing point and grew louder again.

How was it done?

He heard Lagune's voice next him speaking with a peculiar quality of breathless reverence, "The alphabet?" he asked, "shall we — shall we use the alphabet?"

A forcible rap under the table.

"No!" interpreted the voice of the Medium.

The raps were continued everywhere.

Of course it was trickery, Lewisham endeavoured to think what the mechanism was. He tried to determine whether he really had the Medium's little finger touching his. He peered at the dark shape next him. There was a violent rapping far away behind them with an almost metallic resonance. Then the raps ceased, and over the

healing silence the little jet of melody from the musical box played alone. And after a moment that ceased also….

The stillness was profound, Mr. Lewisham was now highly strung. Doubts assailed him suddenly, and an overwhelming apprehension, a sense of vast occurrences gathering above him. The darkness was a physical oppression….

He started. Something had stirred on the table. There was the sharp ping of metal being struck. A number of little crepitating sounds like paper being smoothed. The sound of wind without the movement of air. A sense of a presence hovering over the table.

The excitement of Lagune communicated itself in convulsive tremblings; the Medium's hand quivered. In the darkness on the table something faintly luminous, a greenish-white patch, stirred and hopped slowly among the dim shapes.

The object, whatever it was, hopped higher, rose slowly in the air, expanded. Lewisham's attention followed this slavishly. It was ghostly — unaccountable — marvellous. For the moment he forgot even Ethel. Higher and higher this pallid luminosity rose overhead, and then he saw that it was a ghostly hand and arm, rising, rising. Slowly, deliberately it crossed the table, seemed to touch Lagune, who shivered. It moved slowly round and touched Lewisham. He gritted his teeth.

There was no mistaking the touch, firm and yet soft, of finger-tips. Almost simultaneously, Miss Heydinger cried out that something was smoothing her hair, and suddenly the musical box set off again with a reel. The faint oval of the tambourine rose, jangled, and Lewisham heard it pat Smithers in the face. It seemed to pass overhead. Immediately a table somewhere beyond the Medium began moving audibly on its castors.

It seemed impossible that the Medium, sitting so still beside him, could be doing all these things — grotesquely unmeaning though they might be. After all….

The ghostly hand was hovering almost directly in front of Mr. Lewisham's eyes. It hung with a slight quivering. Ever and again its fingers flapped down and rose stiffly again.

Noise! A loud noise it seemed. Something moving? What was it he had to do?

Lewisham suddenly missed the Medium's little finger. He tried to recover it. He could not find it. He caught, held and lost an arm. There was an exclamation. A faint report. A curse close to him bitten in half by the quick effort to suppress it. Tzit! The little pinpoint of light flew up with a hiss.

Lewisham, standing, saw a circle of blinking faces turned to the group of two this sizzling light revealed. Smithers was the chief figure of the group; he stood triumphant, one hand on the gas tap, the other gripping the Medium's wrist, and in the Medium's hand — the incriminatory tambourine.

"How's this, Lewisham?" cried Smithers, with the shadows on his face jumping as the gas flared.

"*Caught*!" said Lewisham loudly, rising in his place and avoiding Ethel's eyes.

"What's this?" cried the Medium.

"Cheating," panted Smithers.

"Not so," cried the Medium. "When you turned up the light … put my hand up … caught tambourine … to save head."

"Mr. Smithers," cried Lagune. "Mr. Smithers, this is very wrong. This — shock—"

The tambourine fell noisily to the floor. The Medium's face changed, he groaned strangely and staggered back. Lagune cried out for a glass of water. Everyone looked at the man, expecting him to fall, save Lewisham. The thought of Ethel had flashed back into his mind. He turned to see how she took this exposure in which he was such a prominent actor. He saw her leaning over the table as if to pick up something that lay across it. She was not looking at him, she was looking at the Medium. Her face was set and white. Then, as if she felt his glance, her eyes met his.

She started back, stood erect, facing him with a strange hardness in her eyes.

In the moment Lewisham did not grasp the situation. He wanted to show that he was acting upon equal terms with Smithers in the exposure. For the moment her action simply directed his attention to the object towards which she had been leaning, a thing of shrivelled membrane, a pneumatic glove, lying on the table. This was evidently part of the mediumistic apparatus. He pounced and seized it.

“Look!” he said, holding it towards Smithers. “Here is more! What is this?”

He perceived that the girl started. He saw Chaffery, the Medium, look instantly over Smithers’ shoulders, saw his swift glance of reproach at the girl. Abruptly the situation appeared to Lewisham; he perceived her complicity. And he stood, still in the attitude of triumph, with the evidence against her in his hand! But his triumph had vanished.

“Ah!” cried Smithers, leaning across the table to secure it. “*Good* old Lewisham!… Now we *have* it. This is better than the tambourine.”

His eyes shone with triumph. “Do you see, Mr. Lagune?” said Smithers. “The Medium held this in his teeth and blew it out. There’s no denying this. This wasn’t falling on your head, Mr. Medium, was it? *This* — this was the luminous hand!”

CHAPTER XII.

LEWISHAM IS UNACCOUNTABLE.

That night, as she went with him to Chelsea station, Miss Heydinger discovered an extraordinary moodiness in Lewisham. She had been vividly impressed by the scene in which they had just participated, she had for a time believed in the manifestations; the swift exposure had violently revolutionised her ideas. The details of the crisis were a little confused in her mind. She ranked Lewisham with Smithers in the scientific triumph of the evening. On the whole she felt elated. She had no objection to being confuted by Lewisham. But she was angry with the Medium, "It is dreadful," she said. "Living a lie! How can the world grow better, when sane, educated people use their sanity and enlightenment to darken others? It is dreadful!

"He was a horrible man — such an oily, dishonest voice. And the girl — I was sorry for her. She must have been oh! — bitterly ashamed, or why should she have burst out crying? That *did* distress me. Fancy crying like that! It was — yes — *abandon*. But what can one do?"

She paused. Lewisham was walking along, looking straight before him, lost in some grim argument with himself.

"It makes me think of Sludge the Medium," she said.

He made no answer.

She glanced at him suddenly. "Have you read Sludge the Medium?"

"Eigh?" he said, coming back out of infinity. "What? I beg your pardon.
Sludge, the Medium? I thought his name was — it *was* — Chaffery."

He looked at her, clearly very anxious upon this question of fact.

"But I mean Browning's 'Sludge.' You know the poem."

"No — I'm afraid I don't," said Lewisham.

"I must lend it to you," she said. "It's splendid. It goes to the very bottom of this business."

“Does it?”

“It never occurred to me before. But I see the point clearly now. If people, poor people, are offered money if phenomena happen, it’s too much. They are *bound* to cheat. It’s bribery — immorality!”

She talked in panting little sentences, because Lewisham was walking in heedless big strides. “I wonder how much — such people — could earn honestly.”

Lewisham slowly became aware of the question at his ear. He hurried back from infinity. “How much they could earn honestly? I haven’t the slightest idea.”

He paused. “The whole of this business puzzles me,” he said. “I want to think.”

“It’s frightfully complex, isn’t it?” she said — a little staggered.

But the rest of the way to the station was silence. They parted with a hand-clasp they took a pride in — a little perfunctory so far as Lewisham was concerned on this occasion. She scrutinised his face as the train moved out of the station, and tried to account for his mood. He was staring before him at unknown things as if he had already forgotten her.

He wanted to think! But two heads, she thought, were better than one in a matter of opinion. It troubled her to be so ignorant of his mental states. “How we are wrapped and swathed about — soul from soul!” she thought, staring out of the window at the dim things flying by outside.

Suddenly a fit of depression came upon her. She felt alone — absolutely alone — in a void world.

Presently she returned to external things. She became aware of two people in the next compartment eyeing her critically. Her hand went patting at her hair.

CHAPTER XIII.

LEWISHAM INSISTS.

Ethel Henderson sat at her machine before the window of Mr. Lagume's study, and stared blankly at the greys and blues of the November twilight. Her face was white, her eyelids were red from recent weeping, and her hands lay motionless in her lap. The door had just slammed behind Lagune.

"Heigh-ho!" she said. "I wish I was dead. Oh! I wish I was out of it all."

She became passive again. "I wonder what I have *done*," she said, "that I should be punished like this."

She certainly looked anything but a Fate-haunted soul, being indeed visibly and immediately a very pretty girl. Her head was shapely and covered with curly dark hair, and the eyebrows above her hazel eyes were clear and dark. Her lips were finely shaped, her mouth was not too small to be expressive, her chin small, and her neck white and full and pretty. There is no need to lay stress upon her nose — it sufficed. She was of a mediocre height, sturdy rather than slender, and her dress was of a pleasant, golden-brown material with the easy sleeves and graceful line of those aesthetic days. And she sat at her typewriter and wished she was dead and wondered what she had *done*.

The room was lined with bookshelves, and conspicuous therein were a long row of foolish pretentious volumes, the "works" of Lagune — the witless, meandering imitation of philosophy that occupied his life. Along the cornices were busts of Plato, Socrates, and Newton. Behind Ethel was the great man's desk with its green-shaded electric light, and littered with proofs and copies of *Hesperus*, "A Paper for Doubters," which, with her assistance, he edited, published, compiled, wrote, and (without her help) paid for and read. A pen, flung down forcibly, quivered erect with its one surviving nib in the blotting pad. Mr. Lagune had flung it down.

The collapse of the previous night had distressed him dreadfully, and ever and again before his retreat he had been breaking into

passionate monologue. The ruin of a life-work, it was, no less. Surely she had known that Chaffery was a cheat. Had she not known? Silence. “After so many kindnesses—”

She interrupted him with a wailing, “Oh, I know — I know.”

But Lagune was remorseless and insisted she had betrayed him, worse — made him ridiculous! Look at the “work” he had undertaken at South Kensington — how could he go on with that now? How could he find the heart? When his own typewriter sacrificed him to her stepfather’s trickery? “Trickery!”

The gesticulating hands became active, the grey eyes dilated with indignation, the piping voice eloquent.

“If he hadn’t cheated you, someone else would,” was Ethel’s inadequate muttered retort, unheard by the seeker after phenomena.

It was perhaps not so bad as dismissal, but it certainly lasted longer. And at home was Chaffery, grimly malignant at her failure to secure that pneumatic glove. He had no right to blame her, he really had not; but a disturbed temper is apt to falsify the scales of justice. The tambourine, he insisted, he could have explained by saying he put up his hand to catch it and protect his head directly Smithers moved. But the pneumatic glove there was no explaining. He had made a chance for her to secure it when he had pretended to faint. It was rubbish to say anyone could have been looking on the table then — rubbish.

Beside that significant wreck of a pen stood a little carriage clock in a case, and this suddenly lifted a slender voice and announced *five*. She turned round on her stool and sat staring at the clock. She smiled with the corners of her mouth down. “Home,” she said, “and begin again. It’s like battledore and shuttlecock….

“I *was* silly….

“I suppose I’ve brought it on myself. I ought to have picked it up, I suppose. I had time….

“Cheats … just cheats.

“I never thought I should see him again….

“He was ashamed, of course…. He had his own friends.”

For a space she sat still, staring blankly before her. She sighed, rubbed a knuckle in a reddened eye, rose.

She went into the hall, where her hat, transfixed by a couple of

hat-pins, hung above her jacket, assumed these garments, and let herself out into the cold grey street.

She had hardly gone twenty yards from Lagune's door before she became aware of a man overtaking her and walking beside her. That kind of thing is a common enough experience to girls who go to and from work in London, and she had had perforce to learn many things since her adventurous Whortley days. She looked stiffly in front of her. The man deliberately got in her way so that she had to stop. She lifted eyes of indignant protest. It was Lewisham — and his face was white.

He hesitated awkwardly, and then in silence held out his hand. She took it mechanically. He found his voice. "Miss Henderson," he said.

"What do you want?" she asked faintly.

"I don't know," he said…. "I want to talk to you."

"Yes?" Her heart was beating fast.

He found the thing unexpectedly difficult.

"May I — ? Are you expecting — ? Have you far to go? I would like to talk to you. There is a lot …"

"I walk to Clapham," she said. "If you care … to come part of the way …"

She moved awkwardly. Lewisham took his place at her side. They walked side by side for a moment, their manner constrained, having so much to say that they could not find a word to begin upon.

"Have you forgotten Whortley?" he asked abruptly.

"No."

He glanced at her; her face was downcast. "Why did you never write?" he asked bitterly.

"I wrote."

"Again, I mean."

"I did — in July."

"I never had it."

"It came back."

"But Mrs. Munday …"

"I had forgotten her name. I sent it to the Grammar School."

Lewisham suppressed an exclamation.

"I am very sorry," she said.

They went on again in silence. “Last night,” said Lewisham at length. “I have no business to ask. But—”

She took a long breath. “Mr. Lewisham,” she said. “That man you saw — the Medium — was my stepfather.”

“Well?”

“Isn’t that enough?”

Lewisham paused. “No,” he said.

There was another constrained silence. “No,” he said less dubiously. “I don’t care a rap what your stepfather is. Were *you* cheating?”

Her face turned white. Her mouth opened and closed. “Mr. Lewisham,” she said deliberately, “you may not believe it, it may sound impossible, but on my honour … I did not know — I did not know for certain, that is — that my stepfather …”

“Ah!” said Lewisham, leaping at conviction. “Then I was right….”

For a moment she stared at him, and then, “I *did* know,” she said, suddenly beginning to cry. “How can I tell you? It is a lie. I *did* know. I *did* know all the time.”

He stared at her in white astonishment. He fell behind her one step, and then in a stride came level again. Then, a silence, a silence that seemed it would never end. She had stopped crying, she was one huge suspense, not daring even to look at his face. And at last he spoke.

“No,” he said slowly. “I don’t mind even that. I don’t care — even if it was that.”

Abruptly they turned into the King’s Road, with its roar of wheeled traffic and hurrying foot-passengers, and forthwith a crowd of boys with a broken-spirited Guy involved and separated them. In a busy highway of a night one must needs talk disconnectedly in shouted snatches or else hold one’s peace. He glanced at her face and saw that it was set again. Presently she turned southward out of the tumult into a street of darkness and warm blinds, and they could go on talking again.

“I understand what you mean,” said Lewisham. “I know I do. You knew, but you did not want to know. It was like that.”

But her mind had been active. “At the end of this road,” she said,

gulping a sob, “you must go back. It was kind of you to come, Mr. Lewisham. But you were ashamed — you are sure to be ashamed. My employer is a spiritualist, and my stepfather is a professional Medium, and my mother is a spiritualist. You were quite right not to speak to me last night. Quite. It was kind of you to come, but you must go back. Life is hard enough as it is … You must go back at the end of the road. Go back at the end of the road …”

Lewisham made no reply for a hundred yards. “I’m coming on to Clapham,” he said.

They came to the end of the road in silence. Then at the kerb corner she turned and faced him. “Go back,” she whispered.

“No,” he said obstinately, and they stood face to face at the cardinal point of their lives.

“Listen to me,” said Lewisham. “It is hard to say what I feel. I don’t know myself…. But I’m not going to lose you like this. I’m not going to let you slip a second time. I was awake about it all last night. I don’t care where you are, what your people are, nor very much whether you’ve kept quite clear of this medium humbug. I don’t. You will in future. Anyhow. I’ve had a day and night to think it over. I had to come and try to find you. It’s you. I’ve never forgotten you. Never. I’m not going to be sent back like this.”

“It can be no good for either of us,” she said as resolute as he.

“I shan’t leave you.”

“But what is the good?…”

“I’m coming,” said Lewisham, dogmatically.

And he came.

He asked her a question point blank and she would not answer him, and for some way they walked in grim silence. Presently she spoke with a twitching mouth. “I wish you would leave me,” she said. “You are quite different from what I am. You felt that last night. You helped find us out….”

“When first I came to London I used to wander about Clapham looking for you,” said Lewisham, “week after week.”

They had crossed the bridge and were in a narrow little street of shabby shops near Clapham Junction before they talked again. She

kept her face averted and expressionless.

"I'm sorry," said Lewisham, with a sort of stiff civility, "if I seem to be forcing myself upon you. I don't want to pry into your affairs — if you don't wish me to. The sight of you has somehow brought back a lot of things…. I can't explain it. Perhaps — I had to come to find you — I kept on thinking of your face, of how you used to smile, how you jumped from the gate by the lock, and how we had tea … a lot of things."

He stopped again.

"A lot of things."

"If I may come," he said, and went unanswered. They crossed the wide streets by the Junction and went on towards the Common.

"I live down this road," she said, stopping abruptly at a corner. "I would rather …"

"But I have said nothing."

She looked at him with her face white, unable to speak for a space. "It can do no good," she said. "I am mixed up with this…."

She stopped.

He spoke deliberately. "I shall come," he said, "to-morrow night."

"No," she said.

"But I shall come."

"No," she whispered.

"I shall come." She could hide the gladness of her heart from herself no longer. She was frightened that he had come, but she was glad, and she knew he knew that she was glad. She made no further protest. She held out her hand dumbly. And on the morrow she found him awaiting her even as he had said.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. LAGUNE'S POINT OF VIEW.

For three days the Laboratory at South Kensington saw nothing of Lagune, and then he came back more invincibly voluble than ever. Everyone had expected him to return apostate, but he brought back an invigorated faith, a propaganda unashamed. From some source he had derived strength and conviction afresh. Even the rhetorical Smithers availed nothing. There was a joined battle over the insufficient tea-cups, and the elderly young assistant demonstrator hovered on the verge of the discussion, rejoicing, it is supposed, over the entanglements of Smithers. For at the outset Smithers displayed an overweening confidence and civility, and at the end his ears were red and his finer manners lost to him.

Lewisham, it was remarked by Miss Heydinger, made but a poor figure in this discussion. Once or twice he seemed about to address Lagune, and thought better of it with the words upon his lips.

Lagune's treatment of the exposure was light and vigorous. "The man Chaffery," he said, "has made a clean breast of it. His point of view—"

"Facts are facts," said Smithers.

"A fact is a synthesis of impressions," said Lagune; "but that you will learn when you are older. The thing is that we were at cross purposes. I told Chaffery you were beginners. He treated you as beginners — arranged a demonstration."

"It *was* a demonstration," said Smithers.

"Precisely. If it had not been for your interruptions …"

"Ah!"

"He forged elementary effects …"

"You can't but admit that."

"I don't attempt to deny it. But, as he explained, the thing is necessary — justifiable. Psychic phenomena are subtle, a certain training of the observation is necessary. A medium is a more subtle instrument than a balance or a borax bead, and see how long it is before you can get assured results with a borax bead! In the

elementary class, in the introductory phase, conditions are too crude…."

"For honesty."

"Wait a moment. *Is* it dishonest — rigging a demonstration?"

"Of course it is."

"Your professors do it."

"I deny that in toto," said Smithers, and repeated with satisfaction, "in toto."

"That's all right," said Lagune, "because I have the facts. Your chemical lecturers — you may go downstairs now and ask, if you disbelieve me — always cheat over the indestructibility of matter experiment — always. And then another — a physiography thing. You know the experiment I mean? To demonstrate the existence of the earth's rotation. They use — they use—"

"Foucault's pendulum," said Lewisham. "They use a rubber ball with a pin-hole hidden in the hand, and blow the pendulum round the way it ought to go."

"But that's different," said Smithers.

"Wait a moment," said Lagune, and produced a piece of folded printed paper from his pocket. "Here is a review from *Nature* of the work of no less a person than Professor Greenhill. And see — a convenient pin is introduced in the apparatus for the demonstration of virtual velocities! Read it — if you doubt me. I suppose you doubt me."

Smithers abruptly abandoned his position of denial "in toto." "This isn't my point, Mr. Lagune; this isn't my point," he said. "These things that are done in the lecture theatre are not to prove facts, but to give ideas."

"So was my demonstration," said Lagune.

"We didn't understand it in that light."

"Nor does the ordinary person who goes to Science lectures understand it in that light. He is comforted by the thought that he is seeing things with his own eyes."

"Well, I don't care," said Smithers; "two wrongs don't make a right. To rig demonstrations is wrong."

"There I agree with you. I have spoken plainly with this man Chaffery. He's not a full-blown professor, you know, a highly

salaried ornament of the rock of truth like your demonstration-rigging professors here, and so I can speak plainly to him without offence. He takes quite the view they would take. But I am more rigorous. I insist that there shall be no more of this….”

“Next time—” said Smithers with irony.

“There will be no next time. I have done with elementary exhibitions. You must take the word of the trained observer — just as you do in the matter of chemical analysis.”

“Do you mean you are going on with that chap when he’s been caught cheating under your very nose?”

“Certainly. Why not?”

Smithers set out to explain why not, and happened on confusion. “I still believe the man has powers,” said Lagune.

“Of deception,” said Smithers.

“Those I must eliminate,” said Lagune. “You might as well refuse to study electricity because it escaped through your body. All new science is elusive. No investigator in his senses would refuse to investigate a compound because it did unexpected things. Either this dissolves in acid or I have nothing more to do with it — eh? That’s fine research!”

Then it was the last vestiges of Smithers’ manners vanished. “I don’t care *what* you say,” said Smithers. “It’s all rot — it’s all just rot. Argue if you like — but have you convinced anybody? Put it to the vote.”

“That’s democracy with a vengeance,” said Lagune. “A general election of the truth half-yearly, eh?”

“That’s simply wriggling out of it,” said Smithers. “That hasn’t anything to do with it at all.”

Lagune, flushed but cheerful, was on his way downstairs when Lewisham overtook him. He was pale and out of breath, but as the staircase invariably rendered Lagune breathless he did not remark the younger man’s disturbance. “Interesting talk,” panted Lewisham. “Very interesting talk, sir.”

“I’m glad you found it so — very,” said Lagune.

There was a pause, and then Lewisham plunged desperately. “There is a young lady — she is your typewriter….”

He stopped from sheer loss of breath.

“Yes?” said Lagune.

“Is she a medium or anything of that sort?”

“Well,” Lagune reflected, “She is not a medium, certainly. But — why do you ask?”

“Oh!… I wondered.”

“You noticed her eyes perhaps. She is the stepdaughter of that man Chaffery — a queer character, but indisputably mediumistic. It’s odd the thing should have struck you. Curiously enough I myself have fancied she might be something of a psychic — judging from her face.”

“A what?”

“A psychic — undeveloped, of course. I have thought once or twice. Only a little while ago I was speaking to that man Chaffery about her.”

“Were you?”

“Yes. He of course would like to see any latent powers developed. But it’s a little difficult to begin, you know.”

“You mean — she won’t?”

“Not at present. She is a good girl, but in this matter she is — timid. There is often a sort of disinclination — a queer sort of feeling — one might almost call it modesty.”

“I see,” said Lewisham.

“One can override it usually. I don’t despair.”

“No,” said Lewisham shortly. They were at the foot of the staircase now. He hesitated. “You’ve given me a lot to think about,” he said with an attempt at an off-hand manner. “The way you talked upstairs;” and turned towards the book he had to sign.

“I’m glad you don’t take up quite such an intolerant attitude as Mr. Smithers,” said Lagune; “very glad. I must lend you a book or two. If your *cramming* here leaves you any time, that is.”

“Thanks,” said Lewisham shortly, and walked away from him. The studiously characteristic signature quivered and sprawled in an unfamiliar manner.

“I’m *damned* if he overrides it,” said Lewisham, under his breath.

CHAPTER XV.

LOVE IN THE STREETS.

Lewisham was not quite clear what course he meant to take in the high enterprise of foiling Lagune, and indeed he was anything but clear about the entire situation. His logical processes, his emotions and his imagination seemed playing some sort of snatching game with his will. Enormous things hung imminent, but it worked out to this, that he walked home with Ethel night after night for — to be exact — seven-and-sixty nights. Every week night through November and December, save once, when he had to go into the far East to buy himself an overcoat, he was waiting to walk with her home. A curious, inconclusive affair, that walk, to which he came nightly full of vague longings, and which ended invariably under an odd shadow of disappointment. It began outside Lagune's most punctually at five, and ended — mysteriously — at the corner of a side road in Clapham, a road of little yellow houses with sunk basements and tawdry decorations of stone. Up that road she vanished night after night, into a grey mist and the shadow beyond a feeble yellow gas-lamp, and he would watch her vanish, and then sigh and turn back towards his lodgings.

They talked of this and that, their little superficial ideas about themselves, and of their circumstances and tastes, and always there was something, something that was with them unspoken, unacknowledged, which made all these things unreal and insincere.

Yet out of their talk he began to form vague ideas of the home from which she came. There was, of course, no servant, and the mother was something meandering, furtive, tearful in the face of troubles. Sometimes of an afternoon or evening she grew garrulous. "Mother does talk so — sometimes." She rarely went out of doors. Chaffery always rose late, and would sometimes go away for days together. He was mean; he allowed only a weekly twenty-five shillings for housekeeping, and sometimes things grew unsatisfactory at the week-end. There seemed to be little sympathy between mother and daughter; the widow had been flighty in a dingy fashion, and her

marriage with her chief lodger Chaffery had led to unforgettable sayings. It was to facilitate this marriage that Ethel had been sent to Whortley, so that was counted a mitigated evil. But these were far-off things, remote and unreal down the long, ill-lit vista of the suburban street which swallowed up Ethel nightly. The walk, her warmth and light and motion close to him, her clear little voice, and the touch of her hand; that was reality.

The shadow of Chaffery and his deceptions lay indeed across all these things, sometimes faint, sometimes dark and present. Then Lewisham became insistent, his sentimental memories ceased, and he asked questions that verged on gulfs of doubt. Had she ever "helped"? She had not, she declared. Then she added that twice at home she had "sat down" to complete the circle. She would never help again. That she promised — if it needed promising. There had already been dreadful trouble at home about the exposure at Lagune's. Her mother had sided with her stepfather and joined in blaming her. But was she to blame?

"Of *course* you were not to blame," said Lewisham. Lagune, he learnt, had been unhappy and restless for the three days after the *séance* — indulging in wearisome monologue — with Ethel as sole auditor (at twenty-one shillings a week). Then he had decided to give Chaffery a sound lecture on his disastrous dishonesty. But it was Chaffery gave the lecture. Smithers, had he only known it, had been overthrown by a better brain than Lagune's, albeit it spoke through Lagune's treble.

Ethel did not like talking of Chaffery and these other things. "If you knew how sweet it was to forget it all," she would say; "to be just us two together for a little while." And, "What good *does* it do to keep on?" when Lewisham was pressing. Lewisham wanted very much to keep on at times, but the good of it was a little hard to demonstrate. So his knowledge of the situation remained imperfect and the weeks drifted by.

Wonderfully varied were those seven-and-sixty nights, as he came to remember in after life. There were nights of damp and drizzle, and then thick fogs, beautiful, isolating, grey-white veils, turning every yard of pavement into a private room. Grand indeed were these fogs, things to rejoice at mightily, since then it was no longer a thing for

public scorn when two young people hurried along arm in arm, and one could do a thousand impudent, significant things with varying pressure and the fondling of a little hand (a hand in a greatly mended glove of cheap kid). Then indeed one seemed to be nearer that elusive something that threaded it all together. And the dangers of the street corners, the horses looming up suddenly out of the dark, the carters with lanterns at their horses' heads, the street lamps, blurred, smoky orange at one's nearest, and vanishing at twenty yards into dim haze, seemed to accentuate the infinite need of protection on the part of a delicate young lady who had already traversed three winters of fogs, thornily alone. Moreover, one could come right down the quiet street where she lived, halfway to the steps of her house, with a delightful sense of enterprise.

The fogs passed all too soon into a hard frost, into nights of starlight and presently moonlight, when the lamps looked hard, flashing like rows of yellow gems, and their reflections and the glare of the shop windows were sharp and frosty, and even the stars hard and bright, snapping noiselessly (if one may say so) instead of twinkling. A jacket trimmed with imitation Astrachan replaced Ethel's lighter coat, and a round cap of Astrachan her hat, and her eyes shone hard and bright, and her forehead was broad and white beneath it. It was exhilarating, but one got home too soon, and so the way from Chelsea to Clapham was lengthened, first into a loop of side streets, and then when the first pulverulent snows told that Christmas was at hand, into a new loop down King's Road, and once even through the Brompton Road and Sloane Street, where the shops were full of decorations and entertaining things.

And, under circumstances of infinite gravity, Mr. Lewisham secretly spent three-and-twenty shillings out of the vestiges of that hundred pounds, and bought Ethel a little gold ring set with pearls. With that there must needs be a ceremonial, and on the verge of the snowy, foggy Common she took off her glove and the ring was placed on her finger. Whereupon he was moved to kiss her — on the frost-pink knuckle next to an inky nail.

"It's silly of us," she said. "What can we do? — ever?"

"You wait," he said, and his tone was full of vague promises.

Afterwards he thought over those promises, and another evening

went into the matter more fully, telling her of all the brilliant things that he held it was possible for a South Kensington student to do and be — of headmasterships, northern science schools, inspectorships, demonstratorships, yea, even professorships. And then, and then — To all of which she lent a willing and incredulous ear, finding in that dreaming a quality of fear as well as delight.

The putting on of the pearl-set ring was mere ceremonial, of course; she could not wear it either at Lagune's or at home, so instead she threaded it on a little white satin ribbon and wore it round her neck— "next her heart." He thought of it there warm "next her heart."

When he had bought the ring he had meant to save it for Christmas before he gave it to her. But the desire to see her pleasure had been too strong for him.

Christmas Eve, I know not by what deceit on her part, these young people spent together all day. Lagune was down with a touch of bronchitis and had given his typewriter a holiday. Perhaps she forgot to mention it at home. The Royal College was in vacation and Lewisham was free. He declined the plumber's invitation; "work" kept him in London, he said, though it meant a pound or more of added expenditure. These absurd young people walked sixteen miles that Christmas Eve, and parted warm and glowing. There had been a hard frost and a little snow, the sky was a colourless grey, icicles hung from the arms of the street lamps, and the pavements were patterned out with frond-like forms that were trodden into slides as the day grew older. The Thames they knew was a wonderful sight, but that they kept until last. They went first along the Brompton Road….

And it is well that you should have the picture of them right: Lewisham in the ready-made overcoat, blue cloth and velvet collar, dirty tan gloves, red tie, and bowler hat; and Ethel in a two-year-old jacket and hat of curly Astrachan; both pink-cheeked from the keen air, shyly arm in arm occasionally, and very alert to miss no possible spectacle. The shops were varied and interesting along the Brompton Road, but nothing to compare with Piccadilly. There were windows in Piccadilly so full of costly little things, it took fifteen minutes to get them done, card shops, drapers' shops full of foolish, entertaining

attractions. Lewisham, in spite of his old animosities, forgot to be severe on the Shopping Class, Ethel was so vastly entertained by all these pretty follies.

Then up Regent Street by the place where the sham diamonds are, and the place where the girls display their long hair, and the place where the little chickens run about in the window, and so into Oxford Street, Holborn, Ludgate Hill, St. Paul's Churchyard, to Leadenhall, and the markets where turkeys, geese, ducklings, and chickens — turkeys predominant, however — hang in rows of a thousand at a time.

"I *must* buy you something," said Lewisham, resuming a topic.

"No, no," said Ethel, with her eye down a vista of innumerable birds.

"But I *must*," said Lewisham. "You had better choose it, or I shall get something wrong." His mind ran on brooches and clasps.

"You mustn't waste your money, and besides, I have that ring."

But Lewisham insisted.

"Then — if you must — I am starving. Buy me something to eat."

An immense and memorable joke. Lewisham plunged recklessly — orientally — into an awe-inspiring place with mitred napkins. They lunched on cutlets — stripped the cutlets to the bone — and little crisp brown potatoes, and they drank between them a whole half bottle of — some white wine or other, Lewisham selected in an off-hand way from the list. Neither of them had ever taken wine at a meal before. One-and-ninepence it cost him, Sir, and the name of it was Capri! It was really very passable Capri — a manufactured product, no doubt, but warming and aromatic. Ethel was aghast at his magnificence and drank a glass and a half.

Then, very warm and comfortable, they went down by the Tower, and the Tower Bridge with its crest of snow, huge pendant icicles, and the ice blocks choked in its side arches, was seasonable seeing. And as they had had enough of shops and crowds they set off resolutely along the desolate Embankment homeward.

But indeed the Thames was a wonderful sight that year! ice-fringed along either shore, and with drift-ice in the middle reflecting a luminous scarlet from the broad red setting sun, and moving steadily, incessantly seaward. A swarm of mewing gulls went to and

fro, and with them mingled pigeons and crows. The buildings on the Surrey side were dim and grey and very mysterious, the moored, ice-blocked barges silent and deserted, and here and there a lit window shone warm. The sun sank right out of sight into a bank of blue, and the Surrey side dissolved in mist save for a few insoluble, spots of yellow light, that presently became many. And after our lovers had come under Charing Cross Bridge the Houses of Parliament rose before them at the end of a great crescent of golden lamps, blue and faint, halfway between the earth and sky. And the clock on the Tower was like a November sun.

It was a day without a flaw, or at most but the slightest speck. And that only came at the very end.

"Good-bye, dear," she said. "I have been very happy to-day."

His face came very close to hers. "Good-bye," he said, pressing her hand and looking into her eyes.

She glanced round, she drew nearer to him. "*Dearest* one," she whispered very softly, and then, "Good-bye."

Suddenly he became unaccountably petulant, he dropped her hand. "It's always like this. We are happy. *I* am happy. And then — then you are taken away…."

There was a silence of mute interrogations.

"Dear," she whispered, "we must wait."

A moment's pause. "*Wait*!" he said, and broke off. He hesitated. "Good-bye," he said as though he was snapping a thread that held them together.

CHAPTER XVI.

MISS HEYDINGER'S PRIVATE THOUGHTS.

The way from Chelsea to Clapham and the way from South Kensington to Battersea, especially if the former is looped about a little to make it longer, come very near to each other. One night close upon Christmas two friends of Lewisham's passed him and Ethel. But Lewisham did not see them, because he was looking at Ethel's face.

"Did you see?" said the other girl, a little maliciously.

"Mr. Lewisham — wasn't it?" said Miss Heydinger in a perfectly indifferent tone.

* * * * *

Miss Heydinger sat in the room her younger sisters called her "Sanctum." Her Sanctum was only too evidently an intellectualised bedroom, and a cheap wallpaper of silvery roses peeped coquettishly from among her draped furniture. Her particular glories were the writing-desk in the middle and the microscope on the unsteady octagonal table under the window. There were bookshelves of workmanship patently feminine in their facile decoration and structural instability, and on them an array of glittering poets, Shelley, Rossetti, Keats, Browning, and odd volumes of Ruskin, South Place Sermons, Socialistic publications in torn paper covers, and above, science text-books and note-books in an oppressive abundance. The autotypes that hung about the room were eloquent of aesthetic ambitions and of a certain impermeability to implicit meanings. There were the Mirror of Venus by Burne Jones, Rossetti's Annunciation, Lippi's Annunciation, and the Love of Life and Love and Death of Watts. And among other photographs was one of last year's Debating Society Committee, Lewisham smiling a little weakly near the centre, and Miss Heydinger out of focus in the right wing. And Miss Heydinger sat with her back to all these things, in her black horse-hair arm-chair, staring into the fire, her eyes hot,

and her chin on her hand.

"I might have guessed — before," she said. "Ever since that *séance*. It has been different …"

She smiled bitterly. "Some shop girl …"

She mused. "They are all alike, I suppose. They come back — a little damaged, as the woman says in 'Lady Windermere's Fan.' Perhaps he will. I wonder …"

"Why should he be so deceitful? Why should he act to me …?

"Pretty, pretty, pretty — that is our business. What man hesitates in the choice? He goes his own way, thinks his own thoughts, does his own work …

"His dissection is getting behind — one can see he takes scarcely any notes…."

For a long time she was silent. Her face became more intent. She began to bite her thumb, at first slowly, then faster. She broke out at last into words again.

"The things he might do, the great things he might do. He is able, he is dogged, he is strong. And then comes a pretty face! Oh God! *Why* was I made with heart and brain?" She sprang to her feet, with her hands clenched and her face contorted. But she shed no tears.

Her attitude fell limp in a moment. One hand dropped by her side, the other rested on a fossil on the mantel-shelf, and she stared down into the red fire.

"To think of all we might have done! It maddens me!

"To work, and think, and learn. To hope and wait. To despise the petty arts of womanliness, to trust to the sanity of man….

"To awake like the foolish virgins," she said, "and find the hour of life is past!"

Her face, her pose, softened into self-pity.

"Futility …

"It's no good…." Her voice broke.

"I shall never be happy…."

She saw the grandiose vision of the future she had cherished suddenly rolled aside and vanishing, more and more splendid as it grew more and more remote — like a dream at the waking moment. The vision of her inevitable loneliness came to replace it, clear and acute. She saw herself alone and small in a huge desolation —

infinitely pitiful, Lewisham callously receding with “some shop girl.” The tears came, came faster, until they were streaming down her face. She turned as if looking for something. She flung herself upon her knees before the little arm-chair, and began an incoherent sobbing prayer for the pity and comfort of God.

* * * * *

The next day one of the other girls in the biological course remarked to her friend that “Heydinger-dingery” had relapsed. Her friend glanced down the laboratory. “It’s a bad relapse,” she said. “Really … I couldn’t … wear my hair like that.”

She continued to regard Miss Heydinger with a critical eye. She was free to do this because Miss Heydinger was standing, lost in thought, staring at the December fog outside the laboratory windows. “She looks white,” said the girl who had originally spoken. “I wonder if she works hard.”

“It makes precious little difference if she does,” said her friend. “I asked her yesterday what were the bones in the parietal segment, and she didn’t know one. Not one.”

The next day Miss Heydinger’s place was vacant. She was ill — from overstudy — and her illness lasted to within three weeks of the terminal examination. Then she came back with a pallid face and a strenuous unavailing industry.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN THE RAPHAEL GALLERY.

It was nearly three o'clock, and in the Biological Laboratory the lamps were all alight. The class was busy with razors cutting sections of the root of a fern to examine it microscopically. A certain silent frog-like boy, a private student who plays no further part in this story, was working intently, looking more like a frog than usual — his expression modest with a touch of effort. Behind Miss Heydinger, jaded and untidy in her early manner again, was a vacant seat, an abandoned microscope and scattered pencils and note-books.

On the door of the class-room was a list of those who had passed the Christmas examination. At the head of it was the name of the aforesaid frog-like boy; next to him came Smithers and one of the girls bracketed together. Lewisham ingloriously headed the second class, and Miss Heydinger's name did not appear — there was, the list asserted, "one failure." So the student pays for the finer emotions.

And in the spacious solitude of the museum gallery devoted to the Raphael cartoons sat Lewisham, plunged in gloomy meditation. A negligent hand pulled thoughtfully at the indisputable moustache, with particular attention to such portions as were long enough to gnaw.

He was trying to see the situation clearly. As he was just smarting acutely under his defeat, this speaks little for the clearness of his mind. The shadow of that defeat lay across everything, blotted out the light of his pride, shaded his honour, threw everything into a new perspective. The rich prettiness of his love-making had fled to some remote quarter of his being. Against the frog-like youngster he felt a savage animosity. And Smithers had betrayed him. He was angry, bitterly angry, with "swats" and "muggers" who spent their whole time grinding for these foolish chancy examinations. Nor had the practical examination been altogether fair, and one of the questions in the written portion was quite outside the lectures. Biver, Professor Biver, was an indiscriminating ass, he felt assured, and so too was Weeks, the demonstrator. But these obstacles could not blind his

intelligence to the manifest cause of his overthrow, the waste of more than half his available evening, the best time for study in the twenty-four hours, day after day. And that was going on steadily, a perpetual leakage of time. To-night he would go to meet her again, and begin to accumulate to himself ignominy in the second part of the course, the botanical section, also. And so, reluctantly rejecting one cloudy excuse after another, he clearly focussed the antagonism between his relations to Ethel and his immediate ambitions.

Things had come so easily to him for the last two years that he had taken his steady upward progress in life as assured. It had never occurred to him, when he went to intercept Ethel after that *séance*, that he went into any peril of that sort. Now he had had a sharp reminder. He began to shape a picture of the frog-like boy at home — he was a private student of the upper middle class — sitting in a convenient study with a writing-table, book-shelves, and a shaded lamp — Lewisham worked at his chest of drawers, with his greatcoat on, and his feet in the lowest drawer wrapped in all his available linen — and in the midst of incredible conveniences the frog-like boy was working, working, working. Meanwhile Lewisham toiled through the foggy streets, Chelsea-ward, or, after he had left her, tramped homeward — full of foolish imaginings.

He began to think with bloodless lucidity of his entire relationship to Ethel. His softer emotions were in abeyance, but he told himself no lies. He cared for her, he loved to be with her and to talk to her and please her, but that was not all his desire. He thought of the bitter words of an orator at Hammersmith, who had complained that in our present civilisation even the elemental need of marriage was denied. Virtue had become a vice. “We marry in fear and trembling, sex for a home is the woman’s traffic, and the man comes to his heart’s desire when his heart’s desire is dead.” The thing which had seemed a mere flourish, came back now with a terrible air of truth. Lewisham saw that it was a case of divergent ways. On the one hand that shining staircase to fame and power, that had been his dream from the very dawn of his adolescence, and on the other hand — Ethel.

And if he chose Ethel, even then, would he have his choice? What would come of it? A few walks more or less! She was hopelessly poor, he was hopelessly poor, and this cheat of a Medium was her

stepfather! After all she was not well-educated, she did not understand his work and his aims….

He suddenly perceived with absolute conviction that after the *séance* he should have gone home and forgotten her. Why had he felt that irresistible impulse to seek her out? Why had his imagination spun such a strange web of possibilities about her? He was involved now, foolishly involved…. All his future was a sacrifice to this transitory ghost of love-making in the streets. He pulled spitefully at his moustache.

His picture began to shape itself into Ethel, and her mysterious mother, and the vague dexterous Chaffery holding him back, entangled in an impalpable net from that bright and glorious ascent to performance and distinction. Leaky boots and the splash of cabs for all his life as his portion! Already the Forbes Medal, the immediate step, was as good as lost….

What on earth had he been thinking about? He fell foul of his upbringing. Men of the upper or middle classes were put up to these things by their parents; they were properly warned against involving themselves in this love nonsense before they were independent. It was much better….

Everything was going. Not only his work — his scientific career, but the Debating Society, the political movement, all his work for Humanity…. Why not be resolute — even now?… Why not put the thing clearly and plainly to her? Or write? If he wrote now he could get the advantage of the evening at the Library. He must ask her to forgo these walks home — at least until the next examination. *She* would understand. He had a qualm of doubt whether she would understand…. He grew angry at this possibility. But it was no good mincing matters. If once he began to consider her — Why should he consider her in that way? Simply because she was unreasonable!

Lewisham had a transitory gust of anger.

Yet that abandonment of the walks insisted on looking mean to him. And she would think it mean. Which was very much worse, somehow. *Why* mean? Why should she think it mean? He grew angry again.

The portly museum policeman who had been watching him furtively, wondering why a student should sit in front of the

“Sacrifice of Lystra” and gnaw lips and nails and moustache, and scowl and glare at that masterpiece, saw him rise suddenly to his feet with an air of resolution, spin on his heel, and set off with a quick step out of the gallery. He looked neither to the right nor the left. He passed out of sight down the staircase.

“Gone to get some more moustache to eat, I suppose,” said the policeman reflectively….

“One ‘ud think something had bit him.”

After some pensive moments the policeman strolled along down the gallery and came to a stop opposite the cartoon.

“Figgers is a bit big for the houses,” said the policeman, anxious to do impartial justice. “But that’s Art. I lay ‘*e* couldn’t do anything … not arf so good.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FRIENDS OF PROGRESS MEET.

The night next but one after this meditation saw a new order in the world. A young lady dressed in an astrachan-edged jacket and with a face of diminished cheerfulness marched from Chelsea to Clapham alone, and Lewisham sat in the flickering electric light of the Education Library staring blankly over a business-like pile of books at unseen things.

The arrangement had not been effected without friction, the explanation had proved difficult. Evidently she did not appreciate the full seriousness of Lewisham's mediocre position in the list. "But you have *passed* all right," she said. Neither could she grasp the importance of evening study. "Of course I don't know," she said judicially; "but I thought you were learning all day." She calculated the time consumed by their walk as half an hour, "just one half hour;" she forgot that he had to get to Chelsea and then to return to his lodgings. Her customary tenderness was veiled by an only too apparent resentment. First at him, and then when he protested, at Fate. "I suppose it *has* to be," she said. "Of course, it doesn't matter, I suppose, if we *don't* see each other quite so often," with a quiver of pale lips.

He had returned from the parting with an uneasy mind, and that evening had gone in the composition of a letter that was to make things clearer. But his scientific studies rendered his prose style "hard," and things he could whisper he could not write. His justification indeed did him no sort of justice. But her reception of it made her seem a very unreasonable person. He had some violent fluctuations. At times he was bitterly angry with her for her failure to see things as he did. He would wander about the museum conducting imaginary discussions with her and making even scathing remarks. At other times he had to summon all his powers of acrid discipline and all his memories of her resentful retorts, to keep himself from a headlong rush to Chelsea and unmanly capitulation.

And this new disposition of things endured for two weeks. It did

not take Miss Heydinger all that time to discover that the disaster of the examination had wrought a change in Lewisham. She perceived those nightly walks were over. It was speedily evident to her that he was working with a kind of dogged fury; he came early, he went late. The wholesome freshness of his cheek paled. He was to be seen on each of the late nights amidst a pile of diagrams and text-books in one of the less draughty corners of the Educational Library, accumulating piles of memoranda. And nightly in the Students' "club" he wrote a letter addressed to a stationer's shop in Clapham, but that she did not see. For the most part these letters were brief, for Lewisham, South Kensington fashion, prided himself upon not being "literary," and some of the more despatch-like wounded a heart perhaps too hungry for tender words.

He did not meet Miss Heydinger's renewed advances with invariable kindness. Yet something of the old relations were presently restored. He would talk well to her for a time, and then snap like a dry twig. But the loaning of books was resumed, the subtle process of his aesthetic education that Miss Heydinger had devised. "Here is a book I promised you," she said one day, and he tried to remember the promise.

The book was a collection of Browning's Poems, and it contained "Sludge"; it also happened that it contained "The Statue and the Bust" — that stimulating lecture on half-hearted constraints. "Sludge" did not interest Lewisham, it was not at all his idea of a medium, but he read and re-read "The Statue and the Bust." It had the profoundest effect upon him. He went to sleep — he used to read his literature in bed because it was warmer there, and over literature nowadays it did not matter as it did with science if one dozed a little — with these lines stimulating his emotion: —

> "So weeks grew months, years; gleam by gleam
> The glory dropped from their youth and love,
> And both perceived they had dreamed a dream."

By way of fruit it may be to such seed, he dreamed a dream that night. It concerned Ethel, and at last they were a-marrying. He drew her to his arms. He bent to kiss her. And suddenly he saw her lips

were shrivelled and her eyes were dull, saw the wrinkles seaming her face! She was old! She was intolerably old! He woke in a kind of horror and lay awake and very dismal until dawn, thinking of their separation and of her solitary walk through the muddy streets, thinking of his position, the leeway he had lost and the chances there were against him in the battle of the world. He perceived the colourless truth; the Career was improbable, and that Ethel should be added to it was almost hopeless. Clearly the question was between these two. Or should he vacillate and lose both? And then his wretchedness gave place to that anger that comes of perpetually thwarted desires….

It was on the day after this dream that he insulted Parkson so grossly. He insulted Parkson after a meeting of the "Friends of Progress" at Parkson's rooms.

No type of English student quite realises the noble ideal of plain living and high thinking nowadays. Our admirable examination system admits of extremely little thinking at any level, high or low. But the Kensington student's living is at any rate insufficient, and he makes occasional signs of recognition towards the cosmic process.

One such sign was the periodic gathering of these "Friends of Progress," an association begotten of Lewisham's paper on Socialism. It was understood that strenuous things were to be done to make the world better, but so far no decisive action had been taken.

They met in Parkson's sitting-room, because Parkson was the only one of the Friends opulent enough to have a sitting-room, he being a Whitworth Scholar and in receipt of one hundred pounds a year. The Friends were of various ages, mostly very young. Several smoked and others held pipes which they had discontinued smoking — but there was nothing to drink, except coffee, because that was the extent of their means. Dunkerley, an assistant master in a suburban school, and Lewisham's former colleague at Whortley, attended these assemblies through the introduction of Lewisham. All the Friends wore red ties except Bletherley, who wore an orange one to show that he was aware of Art, and Dunkerley, who wore a black one with blue specks, because assistant masters in small private schools

have to keep up appearances. And their simple procedure was that each talked as much as the others would suffer.

Usually the self-proposed "Luther of Socialism" — ridiculous Lewisham! — had a thesis or so to maintain, but this night he was depressed and inattentive. He sat with his legs over the arm of his chair by way of indicating the state of his mind. He had a packet of Algerian cigarettes (twenty for fivepence), and appeared chiefly concerned to smoke them all before the evening was out. Bletherley was going to discourse of "Woman under Socialism," and he brought a big American edition of Shelley's works and a volume of Tennyson with the "Princess," both bristling with paper tongues against his marked quotations. He was all for the abolition of "monopolies," and the *créche* was to replace the family. He was unctuous when he was not pretty-pretty, and his views were evidently unpopular.

Parkson was a man from Lancashire, and a devout Quaker; his third and completing factor was Ruskin, with whose work and phraseology he was saturated. He listened to Bletherley with a marked disapproval, and opened a vigorous defence of that ancient tradition of loyalty that Bletherley had called the monopolist institution of marriage. "The pure and simple old theory — love and faithfulness," said Parkson, "suffices for me. If we are to smear our political movements with this sort of stuff …"

"Does it work?" interjected Lewisham, speaking for the first time.

"What work?"

"The pure and simple old theory. I know the theory. I believe in the theory. Bletherley's Shelley-witted. But it's theory. You meet the inevitable girl. The theory says you may meet her anywhen. You meet too young. You fall in love. You marry — in spite of obstacles. Love laughs at locksmiths. You have children. That's the theory. All very well for a man whose father can leave him five hundred a year. But how does it work for a shopman?… An assistant master like Dunkerley? Or … Me?"

"In these cases one must exercise restraint," said Parkson. "Have faith. A man that is worth having is worth waiting for."

"Worth growing old for?" said Lewisham.

"Chap ought to fight," said Dunkerley. "Don't see your difficulty,

Lewisham. Struggle for existence keen, no doubt, tremendous in fact — still. In it — may as well struggle. Two — join forces — pool the luck. If I saw, a girl I fancied so that I wanted to, I'd marry her tomorrow. And my market value is seventy *non res*."

Lewisham looked round at him eagerly, suddenly interested. "*Would* you?" he said. Dunkerley's face was slightly flushed.

"Like a shot. Why not?"

"But how are you to live?"

"That comes after. If …"

"I can't agree with you, Mr. Dunkerley," said Parkson. "I don't know if you have read Sesame and Lilies, but there you have, set forth far more fairly than any words of mine could do, an ideal of a woman's place …"

"All rot — Sesame and Lilies," interrupted Dunkerley. "Read bits. Couldn't stand it. Never *can* stand Ruskin. Too many prepositions. Tremendous English, no doubt, but not my style. Sort of thing a wholesale grocer's daughter might read to get refined. *We* can't afford to get refined."

"But would you really marry a girl …?" began Lewisham, with an unprecedented admiration for Dunkerley in his eyes.

"Why not?"

"On — ?" Lewisham hesitated.

"Forty pounds a year *res*. Whack! Yes."

A silent youngster began to speak, cleared an accumulated huskiness from his throat and said, "Consider the girl."

"Why *marry*?" asked Bletherley, unregarded.

"You must admit you are asking a great thing when you want a girl …" began Parkson.

"Not so. When a girl's chosen a man, and he chooses her, her place is with him. What is the good of hankering? Mutual. Fight together."

"Good!" said Lewisham, suddenly emotional. "You talk like a man, Dunkerley. I'm hanged if you don't."

"The place of Woman," insisted Parkson, "is the Home. And if there is no home — ! I hold that, if need be, a man should toil seven

years — as Jacob did for Rachel — ruling his passions, to make the home fitting and sweet for her …"

"Get the hutch for the pet animal," said Dunkerley. "No. I mean to marry a *woman*. Female sex always *has* been in the struggle for existence — no great damage so far — always will be. Tremendous idea — that struggle for existence. Only sensible theory you've got hold of, Lewisham. Woman who isn't fighting square side by side with a man — woman who's just kept and fed and petted is …" He hesitated.

A lad with a spotted face and a bulldog pipe between his teeth supplied a Biblical word.

"That's shag," said Dunkerley, "I was going to say 'a harem of one'."

The youngster was puzzled for a moment. "I smoke Perique," he said.

"It will make you just as sick," said Dunkerley.

"Refinement's so beastly vulgar," was the belated answer of the smoker of Perique.

That was the interesting part of the evening to Lewisham. Parkson suddenly rose, got down "Sesame and Lilies," and insisted upon reading a lengthy mellifluous extract that went like a garden roller over the debate, and afterwards Bletherley became the centre of a wrangle that left him grossly insulted and in a minority of one. The institution of marriage, so far as the South Kensington student is concerned, is in no immediate danger.

Parkson turned out with the rest of them at half-past ten, for a walk. The night was warm for February and the waxing moon bright. Parkson fixed himself upon Lewisham and Dunkerley, to Lewisham's intense annoyance — for he had a few intimate things he could have said to the man of Ideas that night. Dunkerley lived north, so that the three went up Exhibition Road to High Street, Kensington. There they parted from Dunkerley, and Lewisham and Parkson turned southward again for Lewisham's new lodging in Chelsea.

Parkson was one of those exponents of virtue for whom the discussion of sexual matters has an irresistible attraction. The meeting had left him eloquent. He had argued with Dunkerley to the

verge of indelicacy, and now he poured out a vast and increasingly confidential flow of talk upon Lewisham. Lewisham was distraught. He walked as fast as he could. His sole object was to get rid of Parkson. Parkson's sole object was to tell him interesting secrets, about himself and a Certain Person with a mind of extraordinary Purity of whom Lewisham had heard before.

Ages passed.

Lewisham suddenly found himself being shown a photograph under a lamp. It represented an unsymmetrical face singularly void of expression, the upper part of an "art" dress, and a fringe of curls. He perceived he was being given to understand that this was a Paragon of Purity, and that she was the particular property of Parkson. Parkson was regarding him proudly, and apparently awaiting his verdict.

Lewisham struggled with the truth. "It's an interesting face," he said.

"It is a face essentially beautiful," said Parkson quietly but firmly. "Do you notice the eyes, Lewisham?"

"Oh yes," said Lewisham. "Yes. I see the eyes."

"They are … innocent. They are the eyes of a little child."

"Yes. They look that sort of eye. Very nice, old man. I congratulate you. Where does she live?"

"You never saw a face like that in London," said Parkson.

"*Never*," said Lewisham decisively.

"I would not show that to every one," said Parkson. "You can scarcely judge all that pure-hearted, wonderful girl is to me." He returned the photograph solemnly to its envelope, regarding Lewisham with an air of one who has performed the ceremony of blood-brotherhood. Then taking Lewisham's arm affectionately — a thing Lewisham detested — he went on to a copious outpouring on Love — with illustrative anecdotes of the Paragon. It was just sufficiently cognate to the matter of Lewisham's thoughts to demand attention. Every now and then he had to answer, and he felt an idiotic desire — albeit he clearly perceived its idiocy — to reciprocate confidences. The necessity of fleeing Parkson became urgent — Lewisham's temper under these multitudinous stresses was going.

"Every man needs a Lode Star," said Parkson — and Lewisham

swore under his breath.

Parkson's lodgings were now near at hand to the left, and it occurred to him this boredom would be soonest ended if he took Parkson home, Parkson consented mechanically, still discoursing.

"I have often seen you talking to Miss Heydinger," he said. "If you will pardon my saying it …"

"We are excellent friends," admitted Lewisham. "But here we are at your diggings."

Parkson stared at his "diggings." "There's Heaps I want to talk about. I'll come part of the way at any rate to Battersea. Your Miss Heydinger, I was saying …"

From that point onwards he made casual appeals to a supposed confidence between Lewisham and Miss Heydinger, each of which increased Lewisham's exasperation. "It will not be long before you also, Lewisham, will begin to know the infinite purification of a Pure Love…." Then suddenly, with a vague idea of suppressing Parkson's unendurable chatter, as one motive at least, Lewisham rushed into the confidential.

"I know," he said. "You talk to me as though … I've marked out my destiny these three years." His confidential impulse died as he relieved it.

"You don't mean to say Miss Heydinger — ?" asked Parkson.

"Oh, *damn* Miss Heydinger!" said Lewisham, and suddenly, abruptly, uncivilly, he turned away from Parkson at the end of the street and began walking away southward, leaving Parkson in mid-sentence at the crossing.

Parkson stared in astonishment at his receding back and ran after him to ask for the grounds of this sudden offence. Lewisham walked on for a space with Parkson trotting by his side. Then suddenly he turned. His face was quite white and he spoke in a tired voice.

"Parkson," he said, "you are a fool!… You have the face of a sheep, the manners of a buffalo, and the conversation of a bore, Pewrity indeed!… The girl whose photograph you showed me has eyes that don't match. She looks as loathsome as one would naturally expect…. I'm not joking now…. Go away!"

After that Lewisham went on his southward way alone. He did not go straight to his room in Chelsea, but spent some hours in a street in

Battersea, pacing to and fro in front of a possible house. His passion changed from savageness to a tender longing. If only he could see her to-night! He knew his own mind now. To-morrow he was resolved *he* would fling work to the dogs and meet her. The things Dunkerley had said had filled his mind with wonderful novel thoughts. If only he could see her now!

His wish was granted. At the corner of the street two figures passed him; one of these, a tall man in glasses and a quasi-clerical hat, with coat collar turned up under his grey side-whiskers, he recognised as Chaffery; the other he knew only too well. The pair passed him without seeing him, but for an instant the lamplight fell upon her face and showed it white and tired.

Lewisham stopped dead at the corner, staring in blank astonishment after these two figures as they receded into the haze under the lights. He was dumfounded. A clock struck slowly. It was midnight. Presently down the road came the slamming of their door.

Long after the echo died away he stood there. "She has been at a *séance*; she has broken her promise. She has been at a *séance*; she has broken her promise," sang in perpetual reiteration through his brain.

And then came the interpretation. "She has done it because I have left her. I might have told it from her letters. She has done it because she thinks I am not in earnest, that my love-making was just boyishness …

"I knew she would never understand."

CHAPTER XIX.

LEWISHAM'S SOLUTION.

The next morning Lewisham learnt from Lagune that his intuition was correct, that Ethel had at last succumbed to pressure and consented to attempt thought-reading. "We made a good beginning," said Lagune, rubbing his hands. "I am sure we shall do well with her. Certainly she has powers. I have always felt it in her face. She has powers."

"Was much … pressure necessary?" asked Lewisham by an effort.

"We had — considerable difficulty. Considerable. But of course — as I pointed out to her — it was scarcely possible for her to continue as my typewriter unless she was disposed to take an interest in my investigations—"

"You did that?"

"Had to. Fortunately Chaffery — it was his idea. I must admit—"

Lagune stopped astonished. Lewisham, after making an odd sort of movement with his hands, had turned round and was walking away down the laboratory. Lagune stared; confronted by a psychic phenomenon beyond his circle of ideas. "Odd!" he said at last, and began to unpack his bag. Ever and again he stopped and stared at Lewisham, who was now sitting in his own place and drumming on the table with both hands.

Presently Miss Heydinger came out of the specimen room and addressed a remark to the young man. He appeared to answer with considerable brevity. He then stood up, hesitated for a moment between the three doors of the laboratory and walked out by that opening on the back staircase. Lagune did not see him again until the afternoon.

That night Ethel had Lewisham's company again on her way home, and their voices were earnest. She did not go straight home, but instead they went up under the gas lamps to the vague spaces of Clapham Common to talk there at length. And the talk that night was a momentous one. "Why have you broken your promise?" he said.

Her excuses were vague and weak. "I thought you did not care so

much as you did," she said. "And when you stopped these walks — nothing seemed to matter. Besides — it is not like *séances* with spirits …"

At first Lewisham was passionate and forcible. His anger at Lagune and Chaffery blinded him to her turpitude. He talked her defences down. "It is cheating," he said. "Well — even if what *you* do is not cheating, it is delusion — unconscious cheating. Even if there is something in it, it is wrong. True or not, it is wrong. Why don't they thought-read each other? Why should they want you? Your mind is your own. It is sacred. To probe it! — I won't have it! I won't have it! At least you are mine to that extent. I can't think of you like that — bandaged. And that little fool pressing his hand on the back of your neck and asking questions. I won't have it! I would rather kill you than that."

"They don't do that!"

"I don't care! that is what it will come to. The bandage is the beginning. People must not get their living in that way anyhow. I've thought it out. Let them thought-read their daughters and hypnotise their aunts, and leave their typewriters alone."

"But what am I to do?"

"That's not it. There are things one must not suffer anyhow, whatever happens! Or else — one might be made to do anything. Honour! Just because we are poor — Let him dismiss you! *Let* him dismiss you. You can get another place—"

"Not at a guinea a week."

"Then take less."

"But I have to pay sixteen shillings every week."

"That doesn't matter."

She caught at a sob, "But to leave London — I can't do it, I can't."

"But how? — Leave London?" Lewisham's face changed.

"Oh! life is *hard*," she said. "I can't. They — they wouldn't let me stop in London."

"What do you mean?"

She explained if Lagune dismissed her she was to go into the country to an aunt, a sister of Chaffery's who needed a companion. Chaffery insisted upon that. "Companion they call it. I shall be just a

servant — she has no servant. My mother cries when I talk to her. She tells me she doesn't want me to go away from her. But she's afraid of him. 'Why don't you do what he wants?' she says."

She sat staring in front of her at the gathering night. She spoke again in an even tone.

"I hate telling you these things. It is you … If you didn't mind … But you make it all different. I could do it — if it wasn't for you. I was … I *was* helping … I had gone meaning to help if anything went wrong at Mr. Lagune's. Yes — that night. No … don't! It was too hard before to tell you. But I really did not feel it … until I saw you there. Then all at once I felt shabby and mean."

"Well?" said Lewisham.

"That's all. I may have done thought-reading, but I have never really cheated since — *never*…. If you knew how hard it is …"

"I wish you had told me that before."

"I couldn't. Before you came it was different. He used to make fun of the people — used to imitate Lagune and make me laugh. It seemed a sort of joke." She stopped abruptly. "Why did you ever come on with me? I told you not to — you *know* I did."

She was near wailing. For a minute she was silent.

"I can't go to his sister's," she cried. "I may be a coward — but I can't."

Pause. And then Lewisham saw his solution straight and clear. Suddenly his secret desire had become his manifest duty.

"Look here," he said, not looking at her and pulling his moustache. "I won't have you doing any more of that damned cheating. You shan't soil yourself any more. And I won't have you leaving London."

"But what am I to do?" Her voice went up.

"Well — there is one thing you can do. If you dare."

"What is it?"

He made no answer for some seconds. Then he turned round and sat looking at her. Their eyes met….

The grey of his mind began to colour. Her face was white and she was looking at him, in fear and perplexity. A new tenderness for her sprang up in him — a new feeling. Hitherto he had loved and desired her sweetness and animation — but now she was white and weary-

eyed. He felt as though he had forgotten her and suddenly remembered. A great longing came into his mind.

"But what is the other thing I can do?"

It was strangely hard to say. There came a peculiar sensation in his throat and facial muscles, a nervous stress between laughing and crying. All the world vanished before that great desire. And he was afraid she would not dare, that she would not take him seriously.

"What is it?" she said again.

"Don't you see that we can marry?" he said, with the flood of his resolution suddenly strong and steady. "Don't you see that is the only thing for us? The dead lane we are in! You must come out of your cheating, and I must come out of my … cramming. And we — we must marry."

He paused and then became eloquent. "The world is against us, against — us. To you it offers money to cheat — to be ignoble. For it *is* ignoble! It offers you no honest way, only a miserable drudgery. And it keeps you from me. And me too it bribes with the promise of success — if I will desert you … You don't know all … We may have to wait for years — we may have to wait for ever, if we wait until life is safe. We may be separated…. We may lose one another altogether…. Let us fight against it. Why should we separate? Unless True Love is like the other things — an empty cant. This is the only way. We two — who belong to one another."

She looked at him, her face perplexed with this new idea, her heart beating very fast. "We are so young," she said. "And how are we to live? You get a guinea."

"I can get more — I can earn more, I have thought it out. I have been thinking of it these two days. I have been thinking what we could do. I have money."

"You have money?"

"Nearly a hundred pounds."

"But we are so young — And my mother …"

"We won't ask her. We will ask no one. This is *our* affair. Ethel! this is *our* affair. It is not a question of ways and means — even before this — I have thought … Dear one! — *don't* you love me?"

She did not grasp his emotional quality. She looked at him with puzzled eyes — still practical — making the suggestion arithmetical.

“I could typewrite if I had a machine. I have heard—”

“It’s not a question of ways and means. Now. Ethel — I have longed—”

He stopped. She looked at his face, at his eyes now eager and eloquent with the things that never shaped themselves into words.

“*Dare* you come with me?” he whispered.

Suddenly the world opened out in reality to her as sometimes it had opened out to her in wistful dreams. And she quailed before it. She dropped her eyes from his. She became a fellow-conspirator. “But, how — ?”

“I will think how. Trust me! Surely we know each other now — Think! We two—”

“But I have never thought—”

“I could get apartments for us both. It would be so easy. And think of it — think — of what life would be!”

“How can I?”

“You will come?”

She looked at him, startled. “You know,” she said, “you must know I would like — I would love—”

“You will come?”

“But, dear — ! Dear, if you *make* me—”

“Yes!” cried Lewisham triumphantly. “You will come.” He glanced round and his voice dropped. “Oh! my dearest! my dearest!…”

His voice sank to an inaudible whisper. But his face was eloquent. Two garrulous, home-going clerks passed opportunely to remind him that his emotions were in a public place.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CAREER IS SUSPENDED.

On the Wednesday afternoon following this — it was hard upon the botanical examination — Mr. Lewisham was observed by Smithers in the big Education Library reading in a volume of the British Encyclopaedia. Beside him were the current Whitaker's Almanac, an open note-book, a book from the Contemporary Science Series, and the Science and Art Department's Directory. Smithers, who had a profound sense of Lewisham's superiority in the art of obtaining facts of value in examinations, wondered for some minutes what valuable tip for a student in botany might be hidden in Whitaker, and on reaching his lodgings spent some time over the landlady's copy. But really Lewisham was not studying botany, but the art of marriage according to the best authorities. (The book from the Contemporary Science Series was Professor Letourneau's "Evolution of Marriage." It was interesting certainly, but of little immediate use.)

From Whitaker Lewisham learnt that it would be possible at a cost of £2, 6s. 1d. or £2, 7s. 1d. (one of the items was ambiguous) to get married within the week — that charge being exclusive of vails — at the district registry office. He did little addition sums in the note-book. The church fees he found were variable, but for more personal reasons he rejected a marriage at church. Marriage by certificate at a registrar's involved an inconvenient delay. It would have to be £2, 7s. 1d. Vails — ten shillings, say.

Afterwards, without needless ostentation, he produced a cheque-book and a deposit-book, and proceeded to further arithmetic. He found that he was master of £61, 4s. 7d. Not a hundred as he had said, but a fine big sum — men have started great businesses on less. It had been a hundred originally. Allowing five pounds for the marriage and moving, this would leave about £56. Plenty. No provision was made for flowers, carriages, or the honeymoon. But there would be a typewriter to buy. Ethel was to do her share….

"It will be a devilish close thing," said Lewisham with a quite unreasonable exultation. For, strangely enough, the affair was

beginning to take on a flavour of adventure not at all unpleasant. He leant back in his chair with the note-book closed in his hand….

But there was much to see to that afternoon. First of all he had to discover the district superintendent registrar, and then to find a lodging whither he should take Ethel — their lodging, where they were to live together.

At the thought of that new life together that was drawing so near, she came into his head, vivid and near and warm….

He recovered himself from a day dream. He became aware of a library attendant down the room leaning forward over his desk, gnawing the tip of a paper knife after the fashion of South Kensington library attendants, and staring at him curiously. It occurred to Lewisham that thought reading was one of the most possible things in the world. He blushed, rose clumsily and took the volume of the Encyclopaedia back to its shelf.

He found the selection of lodgings a difficult business. After his first essay he began to fancy himself a suspicious-looking character, and that perhaps hampered him. He had chosen the district southward of the Brompton Road. It had one disadvantage — he might blunder into a house with a fellow-student…. Not that it mattered vitally. But the fact is, it is rather unusual for married couples to live permanently in furnished lodgings in London. People who are too poor to take a house or a flat commonly find it best to take part of a house or unfurnished apartments. There are a hundred couples living in unfurnished rooms (with "the use of the kitchen") to one in furnished in London. The absence of furniture predicates a dangerous want of capital to the discreet landlady. The first landlady Lewisham interviewed didn't like ladies, they required such a lot of attendance; the second was of the same mind; the third told Mr. Lewisham he was "youngish to be married;" the fourth said she only "did" for single "gents." The fifth was a young person with an arch manner, who liked to know all about people she took in, and subjected Lewisham to a searching cross-examination. When she had spitted him in a downright lie or so, she expressed an opinion that her rooms "would scarcely do," and bowed him amiably out.

He cooled his ears and cheeks by walking up and down the street for a space, and then tried again. This landlady was a terrible and

pitiful person, so grey and dusty she was, and her face deep lined with dust and trouble and labour. She wore a dirty cap that was all askew. She took Lewisham up into a threadbare room on the first floor, "There's the use of a piano," she said, and indicated an instrument with a front of torn green silk. Lewisham opened the keyboard and evoked a vibration of broken strings. He took one further survey of the dismal place, "Eighteen shillings," he said. "Thank you … I'll let you know." The woman smiled with the corners of her mouth down, and without a word moved wearily towards the door. Lewisham felt a transient wonder at her hopeless position, but he did not pursue the inquiry.

The next landlady sufficed. She was a clean-looking German woman, rather smartly dressed; she had a fringe of flaxen curls and a voluble flow of words, for the most part recognisably English. With this she sketched out remarks. Fifteen shillings was her demand for a minute bedroom and a small sitting-room, separated by folding doors on the ground floor, and her personal services. Coals were to be "sixpence a kettle," she said — a pretty substitute for scuttle. She had not understood Lewisham to say he was married. But she had no hesitation. "Aayteen shillin'," she said imperturbably. "Paid furs day ich wik … See?" Mr. Lewisham surveyed the rooms again. They looked clean, and the bonus tea vases, the rancid, gilt-framed oleographs, two toilet tidies used as ornaments, and the fact that the chest of drawers had been crowded out of the bedroom into the sitting-room, simply appealed to his sense of humour. "I'll take 'em from Saturday next," he said.

She was sure he would like them, and proposed to give him his book forthwith. She mentioned casually that the previous lodger had been a captain and had stayed three years. (One never hears by any chance of lodgers stopping for a shorter period.) Something happened (German) and now he kept his carriage — apparently an outcome of his stay. She returned with a small penny account-book, a bottle of ink and an execrable pen, wrote Lewisham's name on the cover of this, and a receipt for eighteen shillings on the first page. She was evidently a person of considerable business aptitude. Lewisham paid, and the transaction terminated. "Szhure to be gomfortable," followed him comfortingly to the street.

Then he went on to Chelsea and interviewed a fatherly gentleman at the Vestry offices. The fatherly gentleman was chubby-faced and spectacled, and his manner was sympathetic but business-like. He "called back" each item of the interview, "And what can I do for you? You wish to be married! By licence?"

"By licence."

"By licence!"

And so forth. He opened a book and made neat entries of the particulars.

"The lady's age?"

"Twenty-one."

"A very suitable age … for a lady."

He advised Lewisham to get a ring, and said he would need two witnesses.

"*Well*—" hesitated Lewisham.

"There is always someone about," said the superintendent registrar. "And they are quite used to it."

Thursday and Friday Lewisham passed in exceedingly high spirits. No consciousness of the practical destruction of the Career seems to have troubled him at this time. Doubt had vanished from his universe for a space. He wanted to dance along the corridors. He felt curiously irresponsible and threw up an unpleasant sort of humour that pleased nobody. He wished Miss Heydinger many happy returns of the day, *apropos* of nothing, and he threw a bun across the refreshment room at Smithers and hit one of the Art School officials. Both were extremely silly things to do. In the first instance he was penitent immediately after the outrage, but in the second he added insult to injury by going across the room and asking in an offensively suspicious manner if anyone had seen his bun. He crawled under a table and found it at last, rather dusty but quite eatable, under the chair of a lady art student. He sat down by Smithers to eat it, while he argued with the Art official. The Art official said the manners of the Science students were getting unbearable, and threatened to bring the matter before the refreshment-room committee. Lewisham said it was a pity to make such a fuss about a trivial thing, and proposed that the Art official should throw his lunch — steak and kidney pudding — across the room at him, Lewisham, and so get immediate

satisfaction. He then apologised to the official and pointed out in extenuation that it was a very long and difficult shot he had attempted. The official then drank a crumb, or breathed some beer, or something of that sort, and the discussion terminated. In the afternoon, however, Lewisham, to his undying honour, felt acutely ashamed of himself. Miss Heydinger would not speak to him.

On Saturday morning he absented himself from the schools, pleading by post a slight indisposition, and took all his earthly goods to the booking office at Vauxhall Station. Chaffery's sister lived at Tongham, near Farnham, and Ethel, dismissed a week since by Lagune, had started that morning, under her mother's maudlin supervision, to begin her new slavery. She was to alight either at Farnham or Woking, as opportunity arose, and to return to Vauxhall to meet him. So that Lewisham's vigil on the main platform was of indefinite duration.

At first he felt the exhilaration of a great adventure. Then, as he paced the long platform, came a philosophical mood, a sense of entire detachment from the world. He saw a bundle of uprooted plants beside the portmanteau of a fellow-passenger and it suggested a grotesque simile. His roots, his earthly possessions, were all downstairs in the booking-office. What a flimsy thing he was! A box of books and a trunk of clothes, some certificates and scraps of paper, an entry here and an entry there, a body not over strong — and the vast multitude of people about him — against him — the huge world in which he found himself! Did it matter anything to one human soul save her if he ceased to exist forthwith? And miles away perhaps she also was feeling little and lonely….

Would she have trouble with her luggage? Suppose her aunt were to come to Farnham Junction to meet her? Suppose someone stole her purse? Suppose she came too late! The marriage was to take place at two…. Suppose she never came at all! After three trains in succession had disappointed him his vague feelings of dread gave place to a profound depression….

But she came at last, and it was twenty-three minutes to two. He hurried her luggage downstairs, booked it with his own, and in another minute they were in a hansom — their first experience of that species of conveyance — on the way to the Vestry office. They had

said scarcely anything to one another, save hasty directions from Lewisham, but their eyes were full of excitement, and under the apron of the cab their hands were gripped together.

The little old gentleman was business-like but kindly. They made their vows to him, to a little black-bearded clerk and a lady who took off an apron in the nether part of the building to attend. The little old gentleman made no long speeches. “You are young people,” he said slowly, “and life together is a difficult thing…. Be kind to each other.” He smiled a little sadly, and held out a friendly hand.

Ethel’s eyes glistened and she found she could not speak.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOME!

Then a furtive payment of witnesses, and Lewisham was beside her. His face was radiant. A steady current of workers going home to their half-holiday rest poured along the street. On the steps before them lay a few grains of rice from some more public nuptials.

A critical little girl eyed our couple curiously and made some remark to her ragamuffin friend.

"Not them," said the ragamuffin friend, "They've only been askin' questions."

The ragamuffin friend was no judge of faces.

They walked back through the thronged streets to Vauxhall station, saying little to one another, and there Lewisham, assuming as indifferent a manner as he could command, recovered their possessions from the booking-office by means of two separate tickets and put them aboard a four-wheeler. His luggage went outside, but the little brown portmanteau containing Ethel's trousseau was small enough to go on the seat in front of them. You must figure a rather broken-down four-wheeler bearing the yellow-painted box and the experienced trunk and Mr. Lewisham and all his fortunes, a despondent fitful horse, and a threadbare venerable driver, blasphemous *sotto voce* and flagellant, in an ancient coat with capes. When our two young people found themselves in the cab again a certain stiffness of manner between them vanished and there was more squeezing of hands. "Ethel *Lewisham*," said Lewisham several times, and Ethel reciprocated with "Husbinder" and "Hubby dear," and took off her glove to look again in an ostentatious manner at a ring. And she kissed the ring.

They were resolved that their newly-married state should not appear, and with considerable ceremony it was arranged that he should treat her with off-hand brusqueness when they arrived at their lodging. The Teutonic landlady appeared in the passage with an amiable smile and the hope that they had had a pleasant journey, and became voluble with promises of comfort. Lewisham having assisted

the slatternly general servant to carry in his boxes, paid the cabman a florin in a resolute manner and followed the ladies into the sitting-room.

Ethel answered Madam Gadow's inquiries with admirable self-possession, followed her through the folding-doors and displayed an intelligent interest in a new spring mattress. Presently the folding-doors were closed again. Lewisham hovered about the front room pulling his moustache and pretending to admire the oleographs, surprised to find himself trembling….

The slatternly general servant reappeared with the chops and tinned salmon he had asked Madam Gadow to prepare for them. He went and stared out of the window, heard the door close behind the girl, and turned at a sound as Ethel appeared shyly through the folding-doors.

She was suddenly domestic. Hitherto he had seen her without a hat and jacket only on one indistinct dramatic occasion. Now she wore a little blouse of soft, dark red material, with a white froth about the wrists and that pretty neck of hers. And her hair was a new wonderland of curls and soft strands. How delicate she looked and sweet as she stood hesitating there. These gracious moments in life! He took two steps and held out his arms. She glanced at the closed door of the room and came flitting towards him….

CHAPTER XXII.

EPITHALAMY.

For three indelible days Lewisham's existence was a fabric of fine emotions, life was too wonderful and beautiful for any doubts or forethought. To be with Ethel was perpetual delight — she astonished this sisterless youngster with a thousand feminine niceties and refinements. She shamed him for his strength and clumsiness. And the light in her eyes and the warmth in her heart that lit them!

Even to be away from her was a wonder and in its way delightful. He was no common Student, he was a man with a Secret Life. To part from her on Monday near South Kensington station and go up Exhibition Road among all the fellows who lived in sordid, lonely lodgings and were boys to his day-old experience! To neglect one's work and sit back and dream of meeting again! To slip off to the shady churchyard behind the Oratory when, or even a little before, the midday bell woke the great staircase to activity, and to meet a smiling face and hear a soft, voice saying sweet foolish things! And after four another meeting and the walk home — their own home.

No little form now went from him and flitted past a gas lamp down a foggy vista, taking his desire with her. Never more was that to be. Lewisham's long hours in the laboratory were spent largely in a dreamy meditation, in — to tell the truth — the invention of foolish terms of endearment: "Dear Wife," "Dear Little Wife Thing," "Sweetest Dearest Little Wife," "Dillywings." A pretty employment! And these are quite a fair specimen of his originality during those wonderful days. A moment of heart-searching in that particular matter led to the discovery of hitherto undreamt-of kindred with Swift. For Lewisham, like Swift and most other people, had hit upon, the Little Language. Indeed it was a very foolish time.

Such section cutting as he did that third day of his married life — and he did very little — was a thing to marvel at. Bindon, the botany professor, under the fresh shock of his performance, protested to a colleague in the grill room that never had a student been so foolishly overrated.

And Ethel too had a fine emotional time. She was mistress of a home — *their* home together. She shopped and was called "Ma'am" by respectful, good-looking shopmen; she designed meals and copied out papers of notes with a rich sense of helpfulness. And ever and again she would stop writing and sit dreaming. And for four bright week-days she went to and fro to accompany and meet Lewisham and listen greedily to the latest fruits of his imagination.

The landlady was very polite and conversed entertainingly about the very extraordinary and dissolute servants that had fallen to her lot. And Ethel disguised her newly wedded state by a series of ingenious prevarications. She wrote a letter that Saturday evening to her mother — Lewisham had helped her to write it — making a sort of proclamation of her heroic departure and promising a speedy visit. They posted the letter so that it might not be delivered until Monday.

She was quite sure with Lewisham that only the possible dishonour of mediumship could have brought their marriage about — she sank the mutual attraction beyond even her own vision. There was more than a touch of magnificence, you perceive, about this affair.

It was Lewisham had persuaded her to delay that reassuring visit until Monday night. "One whole day of honeymoon," he insisted, was to be theirs. In his prenuptial meditations he had not clearly focussed the fact that even after marriage some sort of relations with Mr. and Mrs. Chaffery would still go on. Even now he was exceedingly disinclined to face that obvious necessity. He foresaw, in spite of a resolute attempt to ignore it, that there would be explanatory scenes of some little difficulty. But the prevailing magnificence carried him over this trouble.

"Let us at least have this little time for ourselves," he said, and that seemed to settle their position.

Save for its brevity and these intimations of future trouble it was a very fine time indeed. Their midday dinner together, for example — it was a little cold when at last they came to it on Saturday — was immense fun. There was no marked subsidence of appetite; they ate extremely well in spite of the meeting of their souls, and in spite of certain shiftings of chairs and hand claspings and similar delays. He really made the acquaintance of her hands then for the first time,

plump white hands with short white fingers, and the engagement ring had come out of its tender hiding-place and acted as keeper to the wedding ring. Their eyes were perpetually flitting about the room and coming back to mutual smiles. All their movements were faintly tremulous.

She professed to be vastly interested and amused by the room and its furniture and her position, and he was delighted by her delight. She was particularly entertained by the chest of drawers in the living room, and by Lewisham's witticisms at the toilet tidies and the oleographs.

And after the chops and the most of the tinned salmon and the very new loaf were gone they fell to with fine effect upon a tapioca pudding. Their talk was fragmentary. "Did you hear her call me *Madame? Mádáme* — so!" "And presently I must go out and do some shopping. There are all the things for Sunday and Monday morning to get. I must make a list. It will never do to let her know how little I know about things…. I wish I knew more."

At the time Lewisham regarded her confession of domestic ignorance as a fine basis for facetiousness. He developed a fresh line of thought, and condoled with her on the inglorious circumstances of their wedding. "No bridesmaids," he said; "no little children scattering flowers, no carriages, no policemen to guard the wedding presents, nothing proper — nothing right. Not even a white favour. Only you and I."

"Only you and I. *Oh*!"

"This is nonsense," said Lewisham, after an interval.

"And think what we lose in the way of speeches," he resumed. "Cannot you imagine the best man rising:— 'Ladies and gentlemen — the health of the bride.' That is what the best man has to do, isn't it?"

By way of answer she extended her hand.

"And do you know," he said, after that had received due recognition, "we have never been introduced!"

"Neither have we!" said Ethel. "Neither have we! We have never been introduced!"

For some inscrutable reason it delighted them both enormously to think that they had never been introduced….

In the later afternoon Lewisham, having unpacked his books to a certain extent, and so forth, was visible to all men, visibly in the highest spirits, carrying home Ethel's shopping. There were parcels and cones in blue and parcels in rough grey paper and a bag of confectionery, and out of one of the side pockets of that East-end overcoat the tail of a haddock protruded from its paper. Under such magnificent sanctions and amid such ignoble circumstances did this honeymoon begin.

On Sunday evening they went for a long rambling walk through the quiet streets, coming out at last into Hyde Park. The early spring night was mild and clear and the kindly moonlight was about them. They went to the bridge and looked down the Serpentine, with the little lights of Paddington yellow and remote. They stood there, dim little figures and very close together. They whispered and became silent.

Presently it seemed that something passed and Lewisham began talking in his magnificent vein. He likened the Serpentine to Life, and found Meaning in the dark banks of Kensington Gardens and the remote bright lights. "The long struggle," he said, "and the lights at the end," — though he really did not know what he meant by the lights at the end. Neither did Ethel, though the emotion was indisputable. "We are Fighting the World," he said, finding great satisfaction in the thought. "All the world is against us — and we are fighting it all."

"We will not be beaten," said Ethel.

"How could we be beaten — together?" said Lewisham. "For you I would fight a dozen worlds."

It seemed a very sweet and noble thing to them under the sympathetic moonlight, almost indeed too easy for their courage, to be merely fighting the world.

* * * * *

"You 'aven't bin married ver' long," said Madam Gadow with an insinuating smile, when she readmitted Ethel on Monday morning after Lewisham had been swallowed up by the Schools.

"No, I haven't *very* long," admitted Ethel.

“You are ver’ ‘appy,” said Madam Gadow, and sighed.
“*I* was ver’ ‘appy,” said Madam Gadow.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. CHAFFERY AT HOME.

The golden mists of delight lifted a little on Monday, when Mr. and Mrs. G.E. Lewisham went to call on his mother-in-law and Mr. Chaffery. Mrs. Lewisham went in evident apprehension, but clouds of glory still hung about Lewisham's head, and his manner was heroic. He wore a cotton shirt and linen collar, and a very nice black satin tie that Mrs. Lewisham had bought on her own responsibility during the day. She naturally wanted him to look all right.

Mrs. Chaffery appeared in the half light of the passage as the top of a grimy cap over Ethel's shoulder and two black sleeves about her neck. She emerged as a small, middle-aged woman, with a thin little nose between silver-rimmed spectacles, a weak mouth and perplexed eyes, a queer little dust-lined woman with the oddest resemblance to Ethel in her face. She was trembling visibly with nervous agitation.

She hesitated, peering, and then kissed Mr. Lewisham effusively. "And this is Mr. Lewisham!" she said as she did so.

She was the third thing feminine to kiss Lewisham since the promiscuous days of his babyhood. "I was so afraid — There!" She laughed hysterically.

"You'll excuse my saying that it's comforting to see you — honest like and young. Not but what Ethel … *He* has been something dreadful," said Mrs. Chaffery. "You didn't ought to have written about that mesmerising. And of all letters that which Jane wrote — there! But he's waiting and listening—"

"Are we to go downstairs, Mums?" asked Ethel.

"He's waiting for you there," said Mrs. Chaffery. She held a dismal little oil lamp, and they descended a tenebrous spiral structure into an underground breakfast-room lit by gas that shone through a partially frosted globe with cut-glass stars. That descent had a distinctly depressing effect upon Lewisham. He went first. He took a deep breath at the door. What on earth was Chaffery going to say? Not that he cared, of course.

Chaffery was standing with his back to the fire, trimming his

finger-nails with a pocket-knife. His gilt glasses were tilted forward so as to make an inflamed knob at the top of his long nose, and he regarded Mr. and Mrs. Lewisham over them with — Lewisham doubted his eyes for a moment — but it was positively a smile, an essentially waggish smile.

"You've come back," he said quite cheerfully over Lewisham to Ethel. There was a hint of falsetto in his voice.

"She has called to see her mother," said Lewisham. "You, I believe, are Mr. Chaffery?"

"I would like to know who the Deuce *you* are?" said Chaffery, suddenly tilting his head back so as to look through his glasses instead of over them, and laughing genially. "For thoroughgoing Cheek, I'm inclined to think you take the Cake. Are you the Mr. Lewisham to whom this misguided girl refers in her letter?"

"I am."

"Maggie," said Mr. Chaffery to Mrs. Chaffery, "there is a class of being upon whom delicacy is lost — to whom delicacy is practically unknown. Has your daughter got her marriage lines?"

"Mr. Chaffery!" said Lewisham, and Mrs. Chaffery exclaimed, "James!
How *can* you?"

Chaffery shut his penknife with a click and slipped it into his vest-pocket. Then he looked up again, speaking in the same equal voice. "I presume we are civilised persons prepared to manage our affairs in a civilised way. My stepdaughter vanishes for two nights and returns with an alleged husband. I at least am not disposed to be careless about her legal position."

"You ought to know her better—" began Lewisham.

"Why argue about it," said Chaffery gaily, pointing a lean finger at Ethel's gesture, "when she has 'em in her pocket? She may just as well show me now. I thought so. Don't be alarmed at my handling them. Fresh copies can always be got at the nominal price of two-and-seven. Thank you … Lewisham, George Edgar. One-and-twenty.

And … You — one-and-twenty! I never did know your age, my dear, exactly, and now your mother won't say. Student! Thank you. I am greatly obliged. Indeed I am greatly relieved. And now, what have you got to say for yourselves in this remarkable affair?"

"You had a letter," said Lewisham.

"I had a letter of excuses — the personalities I overlook … Yes, sir — they were excuses. You young people wanted to marry — and you seized an occasion. You did not even refer to the fact that you wanted to marry in your letter. Pure modesty! But now you have come here married. It disorganises this household, it inflicts endless bother on people, but never you mind that! I'm not blaming *you*. Nature's to blame! Neither of you know what you are in for yet. You will. You're married, and that is the great essential thing…. (Ethel, my dear, just put your husband's hat and stick behind the door.) And you, sir, are so good as to disapprove of the way in which I earn my living?"

"Well," said Lewisham. "Yes — I'm bound to say I do."

"You are really *not* bound to say it. The modesty of inexperience would excuse you."

"Yes, but it isn't right — it isn't straight."

"Dogma," said Chaffery. "Dogma!"

"What do you mean by dogma?" asked Lewisham.

"I mean, dogma. But we must argue this out in comfort. It is our supper hour, and I'm not the man to fight against accomplished facts. We have intermarried. There it is. You must stop to supper — and you and I must thresh these things out. We've involved ourselves with each other and we've got to make the best of it. Your wife and mine will spread the board, and we will go on talking. Why not sit in that chair instead of leaning on the back? This is a home — *domus* — not a debating society — humble in spite of my manifest frauds…. That's better. And in the first place I hope — I do so hope" — Chaffery was suddenly very impressive— "that you're not a Dissenter."

"Eh!" said Lewisham, and then, "No! I am *not* a Dissenter."

"That's better," said Mr. Chaffery. "I'm glad of that. I was just a little afraid — Something in your manner. I can't stand Dissenters. I've a peculiar dislike to Dissenters. To my mind it's the great

drawback of this Clapham. You see … I have invariably found them deceitful — invariably."

He grimaced and dropped his glasses with a click against his waistcoat buttons. "I'm very glad of that," he said, replacing them. "The Dissenter, the Nonconformist Conscience, the Puritan, you know, the Vegetarian and Total Abstainer, and all that sort of thing, I cannot away with them. I have cleared my mind of cant and formulae. I've a nature essentially Hellenic. Have you ever read Matthew Arnold?"

"Beyond my scientific reading—"

"Ah! you *should* read Matthew Arnold — a mind of singular clarity. In him you would find a certain quality that is sometimes a little wanting in your scientific men. They are apt to be a little too phenomenal, you know, a little too objective. Now I seek after noumena. Noumena, Mr. Lewisham! If you follow me — ?"

He paused, and his eyes behind the glasses were mildly interrogative. Ethel re-entered without her hat and jacket, and with a noisy square black tray, a white cloth, some plates and knives and glasses, and began to lay the table.

"*I* follow you," said Lewisham, reddening. He had not the courage to admit ignorance of this remarkable word. "You state your case."

"I seek after *noumena*," repeated Chaffery with great satisfaction, and gesticulated with his hand, waving away everything but that. "I cannot do with surfaces and appearances. I am one of those nympholepts, you know, nympholepts … Must pursue the truth of things! the elusive fundamental … I make a rule, I never tell myself lies — never. There are few who can say that. To my mind — truth begins at home. And for the most part — stops there. Safest and seemliest! *you* know. With most men — with your typical Dissenter *par excellence* — it's always gadding abroad, calling on the neighbours. You see my point of view?"

He glanced at Lewisham, who was conscious of an unwonted opacity of mind. He became wary, as wary as he could manage to be on the spur of the moment.

"It's a little surprising, you know," he said very carefully, "if I may say so — and considering what happened — to hear *you* …"

"Speaking of truth? Not when you understand my position. Not

when you see where I stand. That is what I am getting at. That is what I am naturally anxious to make clear to you now that we have intermarried, now that you are my stepson-in-law. You're young, you know, you're young, and you're hard and fast. Only years can give a mind *tone* — mitigate the varnish of education. I gather from this letter — and your face — that you are one of the party that participated in that little affair at Lagune's."

He stuck out a finger at a point he had just seen. "By-the-bye! — That accounts for Ethel," he said.

Ethel rapped down the mustard on the table. "It does," she said, but not very loudly.

"But you had met before?" said Chaffery.

"At Whortley," said Lewisham.

"I see," said Chaffery.

"I was in — I was one of those who arranged the exposure," said Lewisham. "And now you have raised the matter, I am bound to say —"

"I knew," interrupted Chaffery. "But what a shock that was for Lagune!" He looked down at his toes for a moment with the corners of his mouth tucked in. "The hand dodge wasn't bad, you know," he said, with a queer sidelong smile.

Lewisham was very busy for a moment trying to get this remark in focus. "I don't see it in the same light as you do," he explained at last.

"Can't get away from your moral bias, eh? — Well, well. We'll go into all that. But apart from its moral merits — simply as an artistic trick — it was not bad."

"I don't know much about tricks—"

"So few who undertake exposures do. You admit you never heard or thought of that before — the bladder, I mean. Yet it's as obvious as tintacks that a medium who's hampered at his hands will do all he can with his teeth, and what *could* be so self-evident as a bladder under one's lappel? What could be? Yet I know psychic literature pretty well, and it's never been suggested even! Never. It's a perpetual surprise to me how many things are *not* thought of by

investigators. For one thing, they never count the odds against them, and that puts them wrong at the start. Look at it! I am by nature tricky. I spend all my leisure standing or sitting about and thinking up or practising new little tricks, because it amuses me immensely to do so. The whole thing amuses me. Well — what is the result of these meditations? Take one thing: — I know eight-and-forty ways of making raps — of which at least ten are original. Ten original ways of making raps." His manner was very impressive. "And some of them simply tremendous raps. There!"

A confirmatory rap exploded — as it seemed between Lewisham and Chaffery.

"*Eh?*" said Chaffery.

The mantelpiece opened a dropping fire, and the table went off under Lewisham's nose like a cracker.

"You see?" said Chaffery, putting his hands under the tail of his coat. The whole room seemed snapping its fingers at Lewisham for a space.

"Very well, and now take the other side. Take the severest test I ever tried. Two respectable professors of physics — not Newtons, you understand, but good, worthy, self-important professors of physics — a lady anxious to prove there's a life beyond the grave, a journalist who wants stuff to write — a person, that is, who gets his living by these researches just as I do — undertook to test me. Test *me*!… Of course they had their other work to do, professing physics, professing religion, organising research, and so forth. At the outside they don't think an hour a day about it, and most of them had never cheated anybody in their existence, and couldn't, for example, travel without a ticket for a three-mile journey and not get caught, to save their lives…. Well — you see the odds?"

He paused. Lewisham appeared involved in some interior struggle.

"You know," explained Chaffery, "it was quite an accident you got me — quite. The thing slipped out of my mouth. Or your friend

with, the flat voice wouldn't have had a chance. Not a chance."

Lewisham spoke like a man who is lifting a weight. "All *this*, you know, is off the question. I'm not disputing your ability. But the thing is … it isn't right."

"We're coming to that," said Chaffery.

"It's evident we look at things in a different light."

"That's it. That's just what we've got to discuss. Exactly!"

"Cheating is cheating. You can't get away from that. That's simple enough."

"Wait till I've done with it," said Chaffery with a certain zest. "Of course it's imperative you should understand my position. It isn't as though I hadn't one. Ever since I read your letter I've been thinking over that. Really! — a justification! In a way you might almost say I had a mission. A sort of prophet. You really don't see the beginning of it yet."

"Oh, but hang it!" protested Lewisham.

"Ah! you're young, you're crude. My dear young man, you're only at the beginning of things. You really must concede a certain possibility of wider views to a man more than twice your age. But here's supper. For a little while at any rate we'll call a truce."

Ethel had come in again bearing an additional chair, and Mrs. Chaffery appeared behind her, crowning the preparations with a jug of small beer. The cloth, Lewisham observed, as he turned towards it, had several undarned holes and discoloured places, and in the centre stood a tarnished cruet which contained mustard, pepper, vinegar, and three ambiguous dried-up bottles. The bread was on an ample board with a pious rim, and an honest wedge of cheese loomed disproportionate on a little plate. Mr. and Mrs. Lewisham were seated facing one another, and Mrs. Chaffery sat in the broken chair because she understood its ways.

"This cheese is as nutritious and unattractive and indigestible as Science," remarked Chaffery, cutting and passing wedges. "But crush it — so — under your fork, add a little of this good Dorset butter, a dab of mustard, pepper — the pepper is very necessary — and some malt vinegar, and crush together. You get a compound called Crab and by no means disagreeable. So the wise deal with the facts of life, neither bolting nor rejecting, but adapting."

“As though pepper and mustard were not facts,” said Lewisham, scoring his solitary point that evening.

Chaffery admitted the collapse of his image in very complimentary terms, and Lewisham could not avoid a glance across the table at Ethel. He remembered that Chaffery was a slippery scoundrel whose blame was better than his praise, immediately afterwards.

For a time the Crab engaged Chaffery, and the conversation languished. Mrs. Chaffery asked Ethel formal questions about their lodgings, and Ethel’s answers were buoyant, “You must come and have tea one day,” said Ethel, not waiting for Lewisham’s endorsement, “and see it all.”

Chaffery astonished Lewisham by suddenly displaying a complete acquaintance with his status as a South Kensington teacher in training. “I suppose you have some money beyond that guinea,” said Chaffery offhandedly.

“Enough to go on with,” said Lewisham, reddening.

“And you look to them at South Kensington, to do something for you — a hundred a year or so, when your scholarship is up?”

“Yes,” said Lewisham a little reluctantly. “Yes. A hundred a year or so. That’s the sort of idea. And there’s lots of places beyond South Kensington, of course, even if they don’t put me up there.”

“I see,” said Chaffery; “but it will be a pretty close shave for all that — one hundred a year. Well, well — there’s many a deserving man has to do with less,” and after a meditative pause he asked Lewisham to pass the beer.

“Hev you a mother living, Mr. Lewisham?” said Mrs. Chaffery suddenly, and pursued him through the tale of his connexions. When he came to the plumber, Mrs. Chaffery remarked with an unexpected air of consequence that most families have their poor relations. Then the air of consequence vanished again into the past from which it had arisen.

Supper finished, Chaffery poured the residuum of the beer into his glass, produced a Broseley clay of the longest sort, and invited Lewisham to smoke. “Honest smoking,” said Chaffery, tapping the bowl of his clay, and added: “In this country — cigars — sound cigars — and honesty rarely meet.”

Lewisham fumbled in his pocket for his Algerian cigarettes, and Chaffery having regarded them unfavourably through his glasses, took up the thread of his promised apologia. The ladies retired to wash up the supper things.

"You see," said Chaffery, opening abruptly so soon as the clay was drawing, "about this cheating — I do not find life such a simple matter as you do."

"*I* don't find life simple," said Lewisham, "but I do think there's a Right and a Wrong in things. And I don't think you have said anything so far to show that spiritualistic cheating is Right."

"Let us thresh the matter out," said Chaffery, crossing his legs; "let us thresh the matter out. Now" — he drew at his pipe— "I don't think you fully appreciate the importance of Illusion in life, the Essential Nature of Lies and Deception of the body politic. You are inclined to discredit one particular form of Imposture, because it is not generally admitted — carries a certain discredit, and — witness the heel edges of my trouser legs, witness yonder viands — small rewards."

"It's not that," said Lewisham.

"Now I am prepared to maintain," said Chaffery, proceeding with his proposition, "that Honesty is essentially an anarchistic and disintegrating force in society, that communities are held together and the progress of civilisation made possible only by vigorous and sometimes even, violent Lying; that the Social Contract is nothing more or less than a vast conspiracy of human beings to lie to and humbug themselves and one another for the general Good. Lies are the mortar that bind the savage Individual man into the social masonry. There is the general thesis upon which I base my justification. My mediumship, I can assure you, is a particular instance of the general assertion. Were I not of a profoundly indolent, restless, adventurous nature, and horribly averse to writing, I would make a great book of this and live honoured by every profound duffer in the world."

"But how are *you* going to prove it?"

"Prove It! It simply needs pointing out. Even now there are men — Bernard Shaw, Ibsen, and such like — who have seen bits of it in a new-gospel-grubbing sort of fashion. What Is man? Lust and greed

tempered by fear and an irrational vanity."

"I don't agree with that," said Mr. Lewisham.

"You will as you grow older," said Chaffery. "There's truths you have to grow into. But about this matter of Lies — let us look at the fabric of society, let us compare the savage. You will discover the only essential difference between savage and civilised is this: The former hasn't learnt to shirk the truth of things, and the latter has. Take the most obvious difference — the clothing of the civilised man, his invention of decency. What *is* clothing? The concealment of essential facts. What is decorum? Suppression! I don't argue against decency and decorum, mind you, but there they are — essentials to civilisation and essentially '*suppressio veri*.' And in the pockets of his clothes our citizen carries money. The pure savage has no money. To him a lump of metal is a lump of metal — possibly ornamental — no more. That's right. To any lucid-minded man it's the same or different only through the gross folly of his fellows. But to the common civilised man the universal exchangeability of this gold is a sacred and fundamental fact. Think of it! Why should it be? There isn't a why! I live in perpetual amazement at the gullibility of my fellow-creatures. Of a morning sometimes, I can assure you, I lie in bed fancying that people may have found out this swindle in the night, expect to hear a tumult downstairs and see your mother-in-law come rushing into the room with a rejected shilling from the milkman. 'What's this?' says he. 'This Muck for milk?' But it never happens. Never. If it did, if people suddenly cleared their minds of this cant of money, what would happen? The true nature of man would appear. I should whip out of bed, seize some weapon, and after the milkman forthwith. It's becoming to keep the peace, but it's necessary to have milk. The neighbours would come pouring out — also after milk. Milkman, suddenly enlightened, would start clattering up the street. After him! Clutch — tear! Got him! Over goes the cart! Fight if you like, but don't upset the can!… Don't you see it all? — perfectly reasonable every bit of it. I should return, bruised and bloody, with the milk-can under my arm. Yes, *I* should have the milk-can — I should keep my eye on that…. But why go on? You of all men should know that life is a struggle for existence, a fight for food. Money is just the lie that mitigates our fury."

“No,” said Lewisham; “no! I’m not prepared to admit that.”

“What *is* money?”

Mr. Lewisham dodged. “You state your case first,” he said. “I really don’t see what all this has to do with cheating at a *séance*.”

“I weave my defence from this loom, though. Take some aggressively respectable sort of man — a bishop, for example.”

“Well,” said Lewisham, “I don’t much hold with bishops.”

“It doesn’t matter. Take a professor of science, walking the earth. Remark his clothing, making a decent citizen out of him, concealing the fact that physically he is a flabby, pot-bellied degenerate. That is the first Lie of his being. No fringes round *his* trousers, my boy. Notice his hair, groomed and clipped, the tacit lie that its average length is half an inch, whereas in nature he would wave a few score yard-long hairs of ginger grey to the winds of heaven. Notice the smug suppressions of his face. In his mouth are Lies in the shape of false teeth. Then on the earth somewhere poor devils are toiling to get him meat and corn and wine. He is clothed in the lives of bent and thwarted weavers, his Way is lit by phossy jaw, he eats from lead-glazed crockery — all his ways are paved with the lives of men…. Think of the chubby, comfortable creature! And, as Swift has it — to think that such a thing should deal in pride!… He pretends that his blessed little researches are in some way a fair return to these remote beings for their toil, their suffering; pretends that he and his parasitic career are payment for their thwarted desires. Imagine him bullying his gardener over some transplanted geraniums, the thick mist of lies they stand in, so that the man does not immediately with the edge of a spade smite down his impertinence to the dust from which it rose…. And his case is the case of all comfortable lives. What a lie and sham all civility is, all good breeding, all culture and refinement, while one poor ragged wretch drags hungry on the earth!”

“But this is Socialism!” said Lewisham. “*I*—”

“No Ism,” said Chaffery, raising his rich voice. “Only the ghastly truth of things — the truth that the warp and the woof of the world of men is Lying. Socialism is no remedy, no *ism* is a remedy; things are so.”

“I don’t agree—” began Lewisham.

“Not with the hopelessness, because you are young, but with the description you do.”

“Well — within limits.”

“You agree that most respectable positions in the world are tainted with the fraud of our social conditions. If they were not tainted with fraud they would not be respectable. Even your own position — Who gave you the right to marry and prosecute interesting scientific studies while other young men rot in mines?”

“I admit—”

“You can’t help admitting. And here is my position. Since all ways of life are tainted with fraud, since to live and speak the truth is beyond human strength and courage — as one finds it — is it not better for a man that he engage in some straightforward comparatively harmless cheating, than if he risk his mental integrity in some ambiguous position and fall at last into self-deception and self-righteousness? That is the essential danger. That is the thing I always guard against. Heed that! It is the master sin. Self-righteousness.”

Mr. Lewisham pulled at his moustache.

“You begin to take me. And after all, these worthy people do not suffer so greatly. If I did not take their money some other impostor would. Their huge conceit of intelligence would breed perhaps some viler swindle than my facetious rappings. That’s the line our doubting bishops take, and why shouldn’t I? For example, these people might give it to Public Charities, minister to the fattened secretary, the prodigal younger son. After all, at worst, I am a sort of latter-day Robin Hood; I take from the rich according to their incomes. I don’t give to the poor certainly, I don’t get enough. But — there are other good works. Many a poor weakling have I comforted with Lies, great thumping, silly Lies, about the grave! Compare me with one of those rascals who disseminate phossy jaw and lead poisons, compare me with a millionaire who runs a music hall with an eye to feminine talent, or an underwriter, or the common stockbroker. Or any sort of lawyer….

“There are bishops,” said Chaffery, “who believe in Darwin and doubt Moses. Now, I hold myself better than they — analogous perhaps, but better — for I do at least invent something of the tricks I

play — I do do that."

"That's all very well," began Lewisham.

"I might forgive them their dishonesty," said Chaffery, "but the stupidity of it, the mental self-abnegation — Lord! If a solicitor doesn't swindle in the proper shabby-magnificent way, they chuck him for unprofessional conduct." He paused. He became meditative, and smiled faintly.

"Now, some of *my* dodges," he said with a sudden change of voice, turning towards Lewisham, his eyes smiling over his glasses and an emphatic hand patting the table-cloth; "some of *my* dodges are *damned* ingenious, you know — *damned* ingenious — and well worth double the money they bring me — double."

He turned towards the fire again, pulling at his smouldering pipe, and eyeing Lewisham over the corner of his glasses.

"One or two of my little things would make Maskelyne sit up," he said presently. "They would set that mechanical orchestra playing out of pure astonishment. I really must explain some of them to you — now we have intermarried."

It took Mr. Lewisham a minute or so to re-form the regiment of his mind, disordered by its headlong pursuit of Chaffery's flying arguments. "But on your principles you might do almost anything!" he said.

"Precisely!" said Chaffery.

"But—"

"It is rather a curious method," protested Chaffery; "to test one's principles of action by judging the resultant actions on some other principle, isn't it?"

Lewisham took a moment to think. "I suppose that is so," he said, in the manner of a man convinced against his will.

He perceived his logic insufficient. He suddenly thrust the delicacies of argument aside. Certain sentences he had brought ready for use in his mind came up and he delivered them abruptly. "Anyhow," he said, "I don't agree with this cheating. In spite of what you say, I hold to what I said in my letter. Ethel's connexion with all these things is at an end. I shan't go out of my way to expose you, of course, but if it comes in my way I shall speak my mind of all these spiritualistic phenomena. It's just as well that we should know

clearly where we are."

"That is clearly understood, my dear stepson-in-law," said Chaffery. "Our present object is discussion."

"But Ethel—"

"Ethel is yours," said Chaffery. "Ethel is yours," he repeated after an interval and added pensively— "to keep."

"But talking of Illusion," he resumed, dismissing the sordid with a sign of relief, "I sometimes think with Bishop Berkeley, that all experience is probably something quite different from reality. That consciousness is *essentially* hallucination. I, here, and you, and our talk — it is all Illusion. Bring your Science to bear — what am I? A cloudy multitude of atoms, an infinite interplay of little cells. Is this hand that I hold out me? This head? Is the surface of my skin any more than a rude average boundary? You say it is my mind that is me? But consider the war of motives. Suppose I have an impulse that I resist — it is *I* resist it — the impulse is outside me, eh? But suppose that impulse carries me and I do the thing — that impulse is part of me, is it not? Ah! My brain reels at these mysteries! Lord! what flimsy fluctuating things we are — first this, then that, a thought, an impulse, a deed and a forgetting, and all the time madly cocksure we are ourselves. And as for you — you who have hardly learned to think for more than five or six short years, there you sit, assured, coherent, there you sit in all your inherited original sin — Hallucinatory Windlestraw! — judging and condemning. *You* know Right from Wrong! My boy, so did Adam and Eve … *so soon as they'd had dealings with the father of lies*!"

* * * * *

At the end of the evening whisky and hot water were produced, and Chaffery, now in a mood of great urbanity, said he had rarely enjoyed anyone's conversation so much as Lewisham's, and insisted upon everyone having whisky. Mrs. Chaffery and Ethel added sugar and lemon. Lewisham felt an instantaneous mild surprise at the sight of Ethel drinking grog.

At the door Mrs. Chaffery kissed Lewisham an effusive good-bye, and told Ethel she really believed it was all for the best.

On the way home Lewisham was thoughtful and preoccupied. The problem of Chaffery assumed enormous proportions. At times indeed even that good man's own philosophical sketch of himself as a practical exponent of mental sincerity touched with humour and the artistic spirit, seemed plausible. Lagune was an undeniable ass, and conceivably psychic research was an incentive to trickery. Then he remembered the matter in his relation to Ethel….

"Your stepfather is a little hard to follow," he said at last, sitting on the bed and taking off one boot. "He's dodgy — he's so confoundedly dodgy. One doesn't know where to take hold of him. He's got such a break he's clean bowled me again and again."

He thought for a space, and then removed his boot and sat with it on his knee. "Of course!… all that he said was wrong — quite wrong. Right is right and cheating is cheating, whatever you say about it."

"That's what I feel about him," said Ethel at the looking-glass. "That's exactly how it seems to me."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CAMPAIGN OPENS.

On Saturday Lewisham was first through the folding doors. In a moment he reappeared with a document extended. Mrs. Lewisham stood arrested with her dress skirt in her hand, astonished at the astonishment on his face. "*I* say!" said Lewisham; "just look here!"

She looked at the book that he held open before her, and perceived that its vertical ruling betokened a sordid import, that its list of items in an illegible mixture of English and German was lengthy. "1 kettle of coals 6d." occurred regularly down that portentous array and buttoned it all together. It was Madam Gadow's first bill. Ethel took it out of his hand and examined it closer. It looked no smaller closer. The overcharges were scandalous. It was curious how the humour of calling a scuttle "kettle" had evaporated.

That document, I take it, was the end of Mr. Lewisham's informal honeymoon. Its advent was the snap of that bright Prince Rupert's drop; and in a moment — Dust. For a glorious week he had lived in the persuasion that life was made of love and mystery, and now he was reminded with singular clearness that it was begotten of a struggle for existence and the Will to Live. "Confounded imposition!" fumed Mr. Lewisham, and the breakfast table was novel and ominous, mutterings towards anger on the one hand and a certain consternation on the other. "I must give her a talking to this afternoon," said Lewisham at his watch, and after he had bundled his books into the shiny black bag, he gave the first of his kisses that was not a distinct and self-subsisting ceremony. It was usage and done in a hurry, and the door slammed as he went his way to the schools. Ethel was not coming that morning, because by special request and because she wanted to help him she was going to copy out some of his botanical notes which had fallen into arrears.

On his way to the schools Lewisham felt something suspiciously near a sinking of the heart. His preoccupation was essentially arithmetical. The thing that engaged his mind to the exclusion of all other matters is best expressed in the recognised business form.

Dr.	£	s.	d.	Cr.	£	s.	d
Mr. L.{	13	10	4-1/2	By bus fares to South			
Cash in hand {				Kensington (late)	0	0	2
Mrs. L.{	0	11	7	By six lunches at the			
				Students' Club	0	5	2-1/2
At bank	45	0	0	By two packets of cig-			
To scholarship	1	1	0	arettes (to smoke			
				after dinner)	0	0	6
				By marriage and elope-			
				ment	4	18	10
				By necessary subse-			
				quent additions to			
				bride's trousseau	0	16	1
				By housekeeping exs.	1	1	4-1/2
				By "A few little			
				things" bought by			
				housekeeper	0	15	3-1/2
				By Madam Gadow for			
				coal, lodging and			
				attendance (as per			
				account rendered)	1	15	0
				By missing	0	0	4
				By balance	50	3	2
	£60	3	11-1/2		£60	3	11-1/2

From this it will be manifest to the most unbusiness like that, disregarding the extraordinary expenditure on the marriage, and the by no means final "few little things" Ethel had bought, outgoings exceeded income by two pounds and more, and a brief excursion into arithmetic will demonstrate that in five-and-twenty weeks the balance of the account would be nothing.

But that guinea a week was not to go on for five-and-twenty weeks, but simply for fifteen, and then the net outgoings will be well over three guineas, reducing the "law" accorded our young couple to two-and-twenty weeks. These details are tiresome and disagreeable,

no doubt, to the refined reader, but just imagine how much more disagreeable they were to Mr. Lewisham, trudging meditative to the schools. You will understand his slipping out of the laboratory, and betaking himself to the Educational Reading-room, and how it was that the observant Smithers, grinding his lecture notes against the now imminent second examination for the "Forbes," was presently perplexed to the centre of his being by the spectacle of Lewisham intent upon a pile of current periodicals, the *Educational Times*, the *Journal of Education*, the *Schoolmaster, Science and Art, The University Correspondent, Nature, The Athenaeum, The Academy*, and *The Author*.

Smithers remarked the appearance of a note-book, the jotting down of memoranda. He edged into the bay nearest Lewisham's table and approached him suddenly from the flank. "What are *you* after?" said Smithers in a noisy whisper and with a detective eye on the papers. He perceived Lewisham was scrutinising the advertisement column, and his perplexity increased.

"Oh — nothing," said Lewisham blandly, with his hand falling casually over his memoranda; "what's your particular little game?"

"Nothing much," said Smithers, "just mooching round. You weren't at the meeting last Friday?"

He turned a chair, knelt on it, and began whispering over the back about Debating Society politics. Lewisham was inattentive and brief. What had he to do with these puerilities? At last Smithers went away foiled, and met Parkson by the entrance. Parkson, by-the-bye, had not spoken to Lewisham since their painful misunderstanding. He made a wide detour to his seat at the end table, and so, and by a singular rectitude of bearing and a dignified expression, showed himself aware of Lewisham's offensive presence.

Lewisham's investigations were two-fold. He wanted to discover some way of adding materially to that weekly guinea by his own exertions, and he wanted to learn the conditions of the market for typewriting. For himself he had a vague idea, an idea subsequently abandoned, that it was possible to get teaching work in evening classes during the month of March. But, except by reason of sudden death, no evening class in London changes its staff after September until July comes round again. Private tuition, moreover, offered

many attractions to him, but no definite proposals. His ideas of his own possibilities were youthful or he would not have spent time in noting the conditions of application for a vacant professorship in physics at the Melbourne University. He also made a note of the vacant editorship of a monthly magazine devoted to social questions. He would not have minded doing that sort of thing at all, though the proprietor might. There was also a vacant curatorship in the Museum of Eton College.

The typewriting business was less varied and more definite. Those were the days before the violent competition of the half-educated had brought things down to an impossible tenpence the thousand words, and the prevailing price was as high as one-and-six. Calculating that Ethel could do a thousand words in an hour and that she could work five or six hours in the day, it was evident that her contributions to the household expenses would be by no means despicable; thirty shillings a week perhaps. Lewisham was naturally elated at this discovery. He could find no advertisements of authors or others seeking typewriting, but he saw that a great number of typewriters advertised themselves in the literary papers. It was evident Ethel also must advertise. "'Scientific phraseology a speciality' might be put," meditated Lewisham. He returned to his lodgings in a hopeful mood with quite a bundle of memoranda of possible employments. He spent five shillings in stamps on the way.

After lunch, Lewisham — a little short of breath-asked to see Madam Gadow. She came up in the most affable frame of mind; nothing could be further from the normal indignation of the British landlady. She was very voluble, gesticulatory and lucid, but unhappily bi-lingual, and at all the crucial points German. Mr. Lewisham's natural politeness restrained him from too close a pursuit across the boundary of the two imperial tongues. Quite half an hour's amicable discussion led at last to a reduction of sixpence, and all parties professed themselves satisfied with this result.

Madam Gadow was quite cool even at the end. Mr. Lewisham was flushed in the face, red-eared, and his hair slightly disordered, but that sixpence was at any rate an admission of the justice of his claim. "She was evidently trying it on," he said almost apologetically to Ethel. "It was absolutely necessary to present a firm front to her. I

doubt if we shall have any trouble again….

"Of course what she says about kitchen coals is perfectly just."

Then the young couple went for a walk in Kensington Gardens, and — the spring afternoon was so warm and pleasant — sat on two attractive green chairs near the band-stand, for which Lewisham had subsequently to pay twopence. They had what Ethel called a "serious talk." She was really wonderfully sensible, and discussed the situation exhaustively. She was particularly insistent upon the importance of economy in her domestic disbursements and deplored her general ignorance very earnestly. It was decided that Lewisham should get a good elementary text-book of domestic economy for her private study. At home Mrs. Chaffery guided her house by the oracular items of "Inquire Within upon Everything," but Lewisham considered that work unscientific.

Ethel was also of opinion that much might be learnt from the sixpenny ladies' papers — the penny ones had hardly begun in those days. She had bought such publications during seasons of affluence, but chiefly, as she now deplored, with an eye to the trimming of hats and such like vanities. The sooner the typewriter came the better. It occurred to Lewisham with unpleasant suddenness that he had not allowed for the purchase of a typewriter in his estimate of their resources. It brought their "law" down to twelve or thirteen weeks.

They spent the evening in writing and copying a number of letters, addressing envelopes and enclosing stamps. There were optimistic moments.

"Melbourne's a fine city," said Lewisham, "and we should have a glorious voyage out." He read the application for the Melbourne professorship out loud to her, just to see how it read, and she was greatly impressed by the list of his accomplishments and successes.

"I did not, know you knew *half* those things," she said, and became depressed at her relative illiteracy. It was natural, after such encouragement, to write to the scholastic agents in a tone of assured consequence.

The advertisement for typewriting in the *Athenaeum* troubled his conscience a little. After he had copied out his draft with its "Scientific phraseology a speciality," fine and large, he saw the notes she had written out for him. Her handwriting was still round and

boyish, even as it had appeared in the Whortley avenue, but her punctuation was confined to the erratic comma and the dash, and there was a disposition to spell the imperfectly legible along the line of least resistance. However, he dismissed that matter with a resolve to read over and correct anything in that way that she might have sent her to do. It would not be a bad idea, he thought parenthetically, if he himself read up some sound authority on the punctuation of sentences.

They sat at this business quite late, heedless of the examination in botany that came on the morrow. It was very bright and cosy in their little room with their fire burning, the gas lit and the curtains drawn, and the number of applications they had written made them hopeful. She was flushed and enthusiastic, now flitting about the room, now coming close to him and leaning over him to see what he had done. At Lewisham's request she got him the envelopes from the chest of drawers. "You *are* a help to a chap," said Lewisham, leaning back from the table, "I feel I could do anything for a girl like you — anything."

"*Really!*" she cried, "Really! Am I really a help?"

Lewisham's face and gesture, were all assent. She gave a little cry of delight, stood for a moment, and then by way of practical demonstration of her unflinching helpfulness, hurried round the table towards him with arms extended, "You dear!" she cried.

Lewisham, partially embraced, pushed his chair back with his disengaged arm, so that she might sit on his knee….

Who could doubt that she was a help?

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FIRST BATTLE.

Lewisham's inquiries for evening teaching and private tuition were essentially provisional measures. His proposals for a more permanent establishment displayed a certain defect in his sense of proportion. That Melbourne professorship, for example, was beyond his merits, and there were aspects of things that would have affected the welcome of himself and his wife at Eton College. At the outset he was inclined to regard the South Kensington scholar as the intellectual salt of the earth, to overrate the abundance of "decent things" yielding from one hundred and fifty to three hundred a year, and to disregard the competition of such inferior enterprises as the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and the literate North. But the scholastic agents to whom he went on the following Saturday did much in a quiet way to disabuse his mind.

Mr. Blendershin's chief assistant in the grimy little office in Oxford Street cleared up the matter so vigorously that Lewisham was angered. "Headmaster of an endowed school, perhaps!" said Mr. Blendershin's chief assistant "Lord! — why not a bishopric? I say," — as Mr. Blendershin entered smoking an assertive cigar— "one-and-twenty, *no* degree, *no* games, two years' experience as junior — wants a headmastership of an endowed school!" He spoke so loudly that it was inevitable the selection of clients in the waiting-room should hear, and he pointed with his pen.

"Look here!" said Lewisham hotly; "if I knew the ways of the market I shouldn't come to you."

Mr. Blendershin stared at Lewisham for a moment. "What's he done in the way of certificates?" asked Mr. Blendershin of the assistant.

The assistant read a list of 'ologies and 'ographies. "Fifty resident," said Mr. Blendershin concisely— "that's *your* figure. Sixty, if you're lucky."

"*What*?" said Mr. Lewisham.

"Not enough for you?"

“Not nearly.”

“You can get a Cambridge graduate for eighty resident — and grateful,” said Mr. Blendershin.

“But I don’t want a resident post,” said Lewisham.

“Precious few non-resident shops,” said Mr. Blendershin. “Precious few. They want you for dormitory supervision — and they’re afraid of your taking pups outside.”

“Not married by any chance?” said the assistant suddenly, after an attentive study of Lewisham’s face.

“Well — er.” Lewisham met Mr. Blendershin’s eye. “Yes,” he said.

The assistant was briefly unprintable. “Lord! you’ll have to keep that dark,” said Mr. Blendershin. “But you have got a tough bit of hoeing before you. If I was you I’d go on and get my degree now you’re so near it. You’ll stand a better chance.”

Pause.

“The fact is,” said Lewisham slowly and looking at his boot toes, “I must be doing *something* while I am getting my degree.”

The assistant, whistled softly.

“Might get you a visiting job, perhaps,” said Mr. Blendershin speculatively. “Just read me those items again, Binks.” He listened attentively. “Objects to religious teaching! — Eh?” He stopped the reading by a gesture, “That’s nonsense. You can’t have everything, you know. Scratch that out. You won’t get a place in any middle-class school in England if you object to religious teaching. It’s the mothers — bless ‘em! Say nothing about it. Don’t believe — who does? There’s hundreds like you, you know — hundreds. Parsons — all sorts. Say nothing about it—”

“But if I’m asked?”

“Church of England. Every man in this country who has not dissented belongs to the Church of England. It’ll be hard enough to get you anything without that.”

“But—” said Mr. Lewisham. “It’s lying.”

“Legal fiction,” said Mr. Blendershin. “Everyone understands. If you don’t do that, my dear chap, we can’t do anything for you. It’s Journalism, or London docks. Well, considering your experience, — say docks.”

Lewisham's face flushed irregularly. He did not answer. He scowled and tugged at the still by no means ample moustache.

"Compromise, you know," said Mr. Blendershin, watching him kindly. "Compromise."

For the first time in his life Lewisham faced the necessity of telling a lie in cold blood. He glissaded from, the austere altitudes of his self-respect, and his next words were already disingenuous.

"I won't promise to tell lies if I'm asked," he said aloud. "I can't do that."

"Scratch it out," said Blendershin to the clerk. "You needn't mention it. Then you don't say you can teach drawing."

"I can't," said Lewisham.

"You just give out the copies," said Blendershin, "and take care they don't see you draw, you know."

"But that's not teaching drawing—"

"It's what's understood by it in *this* country," said Blendershin. "Don't you go corrupting your mind with pedagogueries. They're the ruin of assistants. Put down drawing. Then there's shorthand—"

"Here, I say!" said Lewisham.

"There's shorthand, French, book-keeping, commercial geography, land measuring—"

"But I can't teach any of those things!"

"Look here," said Blendershin, and paused. "Has your wife or you a private income?"

"No," said Lewisham.

"Well?"

A pause of further moral descent, and a whack against an obstacle.
"But they will find me out," said Lewisham.

Blendershin smiled. "It's not so much ability as willingness to teach, you know. And *they* won't find you out. The sort of schoolmaster we deal with can't find anything out. He can't teach any of these things himself — and consequently he doesn't believe they *can* be taught. Talk to him of pedagogics and he talks of practical experience. But he puts 'em on his prospectus, you know, and he wants 'em on his time-table. Some of these subjects —

There's commercial geography, for instance. What *is* commercial geography?"

"Barilla," said the assistant, biting the end of his pen, and added pensively, "*and* blethers."

"Fad," said Blendershin, "Just fad. Newspapers talk rot about commercial education, Duke of Devonshire catches on and talks ditto — pretends he thought it himself — much *he* cares — parents get hold of it — schoolmasters obliged to put something down, consequently assistants must. And that's the end of the matter!"

"*All* right," said Lewisham, catching his breath in a faint sob of shame, "Stick 'em down. But mind — a non-resident place."

"Well," said Blendershin, "your science may pull you through. But I tell you it's hard. Some grant-earning grammar school may want that. And that's about all, I think. Make a note of the address…."

The assistant made a noise, something between a whistle and the word
"Fee." Blendershin glanced at Lewisham and nodded doubtfully.

"Fee for booking," said the assistant; "half a crown, postage — in advance — half a crown."

But Lewisham remembered certain advice Dunkerley had given him in the old Whortley days. He hesitated. "No," he said. "I don't pay that. If you get me anything there's the commission — if you don't—"

"We lose," supplied the assistant.

"And you ought to," said Lewisham. "It's a fair game."

"Living in London?" asked Blendershin.

"Yes," said the clerk.

"That's all right," said Mr. Blendershin. "We won't say anything about the postage in that case. Of course it's the off season, and you mustn't expect anything at present very much. Sometimes there's a shift or so at Easter…. There's nothing more…. Afternoon. Anyone else, Binks?"

Messrs. Maskelyne, Smith, and Thrums did a higher class of work than Blendershin, whose specialities were lower class private

establishments and the cheaper sort of endowed schools. Indeed, so superior were Maskelyne, Smith, and Thrums that they enraged Lewisham by refusing at first to put him on their books. He was interviewed briefly by a young man dressed and speaking with offensive precision, whose eye adhered rigidly to the waterproof collar throughout the interview.

"Hardly our line," he said, and pushed Lewisham a form to fill up. "Mostly upper class and good preparatory schools here, you know."

As Lewisham filled up the form with his multitudinous "'ologies" and "'ographies," a youth of ducal appearance entered and greeted the precise young man in a friendly way. Lewisham, bending down to write, perceived that this professional rival wore a very long frock coat, patent leather boots, and the most beautiful grey trousers. His conceptions of competition enlarged. The precise young man by a motion of his eyes directed the newcomer's attention to Lewisham's waterproof collar, and was answered by raised eyebrows and a faint tightening of the mouth. "That bounder at Castleford has answered me," said the new-comer in a fine rich voice. "Is he any bally good?"

When the bounder at Castleford had been discussed Lewisham presented his paper, and the precise young man with his eye still fixed on the waterproof collar took the document in the manner of one who reaches across a gulf. "I doubt if we shall be able to do anything for you," he said reassuringly. "But an English mastership may chance to be vacant. Science doesn't count for much in *our* sort of schools, you know. Classics and good games — that's our sort of thing."

"I see," said Lewisham.

"Good games, good form, you know, and all that sort of thing."

"I see," said Lewisham.

"You don't happen to be a public-school boy?" asked the precise young man.

"No," said Lewisham.

"Where were you educated?"

Lewisham's face grew hot. "Does that matter?" he asked, with his eye on the exquisite grey trousering.

"In our sort of school — decidedly. It's a question of tone, you know."

“I see,” said Lewisham, beginning to realise new limitations. His immediate impulse was to escape the eye of the nicely dressed assistant master. “You’ll write, I suppose, if you have anything,” he said, and the precise young man responded with alacrity to his doorward motion.

“Often get that kind of thing?” asked the nicely dressed young man when Lewisham had departed.

“Rather. Not quite so bad as that, you know. That waterproof collar — did you notice it? Ugh! And— ‘I see.’ And the scowl and the clumsiness of it. Of course *he* hasn’t any decent clothes — he’d go to a new shop with one tin box! But that sort of thing — and board school teachers — they’re getting everywhere! Only the other day — Rowton was here.”

“Not Rowton of Pinner?”

“Yes, Rowton of Pinner. And he asked right out for a board schoolmaster. He said, ‘I want someone who can teach arithmetic.’”

He laughed. The nicely dressed young man meditated over the handle of his cane. “A bounder of that kind can’t have a particularly nice time,” he said, “anyhow. If he does get into a decent school, he must get tremendously cut by all the decent men.”

“Too thick-skinned to mind that sort of thing, I fancy,” said the scholastic agent. “He’s a new type. This South Kensington place and the polytechnics an turning him out by the hundred….”

Lewisham forgot his resentment at having to profess a religion he did not believe, in this new discovery of the scholastic importance of clothing. He went along with an eye to all the shop windows that afforded a view of his person. Indisputably his trousers *were* ungainly, flapping abominably over his boots and bagging terribly at the knees, and his boots were not only worn and ugly but extremely ill blacked. His wrists projected offensively from his coat sleeves, he perceived a huge asymmetry in the collar of his jacket, his red tie was askew and ill tied, and that waterproof collar! It was shiny, slightly discoloured, suddenly clammy to the neck. What if he did happen to be well equipped for science teaching? That was nothing. He speculated on the cost of a complete outfit. It would be difficult to get such grey trousers as those he had seen for less than sixteen shillings, and he reckoned a frock coat at forty shillings at least —

possibly even more. He knew good clothes were very expensive. He hesitated at Poole's door and turned away. The thing was out of the question. He crossed Leicester Square and went down Bedford Street, disliking every well-dressed person he met.

Messrs. Danks and Wimborne inhabited a bank-like establishment near
Chancery Lane, and without any conversation presented him with forms
to fill up. Religion? asked the form. Lewisham paused and wrote "Church of England."

Thence he went to the College of Pedagogues in Holborn. The College of Pedagogues presented itself as a long-bearded, corpulent, comfortable person with a thin gold watch chain and fat hands. He wore gilt glasses and had a kindly confidential manner that did much to heal Lewisham's wounded feelings. The 'ologies and 'ographies were taken down with polite surprise at their number. "You ought to take one of our diplomas," said the stout man. "You would find no difficulty. No competition. And there are prizes — several prizes — in money."

Lewisham was not aware that the waterproof collar had found a sympathetic observer.

"We give courses of lectures, and have an examination in the theory and practice of education. It is the only examination in the theory and practice of education for men engaged in middle and upper class teaching in this country. Except the Teacher's Diploma. And so few come — not two hundred a year. Mostly governesses. The men prefer to teach by rule of thumb, you know. English characteristic — rule of thumb. It doesn't do to say anything of course — but there's bound to be — something happen — something a little disagreeable — somewhen if things go on as they do. American schools keep on getting better — German too. What used to do won't do now. I tell this to you, you know, but it doesn't do to tell everyone. It doesn't do. It doesn't do to do anything. So much has to be considered. However … But you'd do well to get a diploma and make yourself efficient. Though that's looking ahead."

He spoke of looking ahead with an apologetic laugh as though it was an amiable weakness of his. He turned from such abstruse matters and furnished Lewisham with the particulars of the college diplomas, and proceeded to other possibilities. “There’s private tuition,” he said. “Would you mind a backward boy? Then we are occasionally asked for visiting masters. Mostly by girls’ schools. But that’s for older men — married men, you know.”

“I am married,” said Lewisham.

“*Eh*?” said the College of Pedagogues, startled.

“I *am* married,” said Lewisham.

“Dear me,” said the College of Pedagogues gravely, and regarding Mr. Lewisham over gold-rimmed glasses. “Dear me! And I am more than twice your age, and I am not married at all. One-and-twenty! Have you — have you been married long?”

“A few weeks,” said Lewisham.

“That’s very remarkable,” said the College of Pedagogues. “Very interesting…. *Really!* Your wife must be a very courageous young person…. Excuse me! You know — You will really have a hard fight for a position. However — it certainly makes you eligible for girls’ schools; it does do that. To a certain extent, that is.”

The evidently enhanced respect of the College of Pedagogues pleased Lewisham extremely. But his encounter with the Medical, Scholastic, and Clerical Agency that holds by Waterloo Bridge was depressing again, and after that he set out to walk home. Long before he reached home he was tired, and his simple pride in being married and in active grapple with an unsympathetic world had passed. His surrender on the religious question had left a rankling bitterness behind it; the problem of the clothes was acutely painful. He was still far from a firm grasp of the fact that his market price was under rather than over one hundred pounds a year, but that persuasion was gaining ground in his mind.

The day was a greyish one, with a dull cold wind, and a nail in one of his boots took upon itself to be objectionable. Certain wild shots and disastrous lapses in his recent botanical examination, that he had managed to keep out of his mind hitherto, forced their way on his attention. For the first time since his marriage he harboured premonitions of failure.

When he got in he wanted to sit down at once in the little creaky chair by the fire, but Ethel came flitting from the newly bought typewriter with arms extended and prevented him. “Oh! — it *has* been dull,” she said.

He missed the compliment. “*I* haven’t had such a giddy time that you should grumble,” he said, in a tone that was novel to her. He disengaged himself from her arms and sat down. He noticed the expression of her face.

“I’m rather tired,” he said by way of apology. “And there’s a confounded nail I must hammer down in my boot. It’s tiring work hunting up these agents, but of course it’s better to go and see them. How have you been getting on?”

“All right,” she said, regarding him. And then, “You *are* tired. We’ll have some tea. And — let me take off your boot for you, dear. Yes — I will.”

She rang the bell, bustled out of the room, called for tea at the staircase, came back, pulled out Madam Gadow’s ungainly hassock and began unlacing his boot. Lewisham’s mood changed. “You *are* a trump, Ethel,” he said; “I’m hanged if you’re not.” As the laces flicked he bent forward and kissed her ear. The unlacing was suspended and there were reciprocal endearments….

Presently he was sitting in his slippers, with a cup of tea in his hand, and Ethel, kneeling on the hearthrug with the firelight on her face, was telling him of an answer that had come that afternoon to her advertisement in the *Athenaeum*.

“That’s good,” said Lewisham.

“It’s a novelist,” she said with the light of pride in her eyes, and handed him the letter. “Lucas Holderness, the author of ‘The Furnace of Sin’ and other stories.”

“That’s first rate,” said Lewisham with just a touch of envy, and bent forward to read by the firelight.

The letter was from an address in Judd Street, Euston Road, written on good paper and in a fair round hand such as one might imagine a novelist using. “Dear Madam,” said the letter, “I propose to send you, by registered letter, the MS. of a three-volume novel. It

is about 90,000 words — but you must count the exact number."

"How I shall count I don't know," said Ethel.

"I'll show you a way," said Lewisham. "There's no difficulty in that. You count the words on three or four pages, strike an average, and multiply."

"But, of course, before doing so I must have a satisfactory guarantee that my confidence in putting my work in your hands will not be misplaced and that your execution is of the necessary high quality."

"Oh!" said Lewisham; "that's a bother."

"Accordingly I must ask you for references."

"That's a downright nuisance," said Lewisham. "I suppose that ass, Lagune … But what's this? 'Or, failing references, for a deposit …' That's reasonable, I suppose."

It was such a moderate deposit too — merely a guinea. Even had the doubt been stronger, the aspect of helpful hopeful little Ethel eager for work might well have thrust it aside. "Sending him a cheque will show him we have a banking account behind us," said Lewisham, — his banking was still sufficiently recent for pride. "We will send him a cheque. That'll settle *him* all right."

That evening after the guinea cheque had been despatched, things were further brightened by the arrival of a letter of atrociously jellygraphed advices from Messrs. Danks and Wimborne. They all referred to resident vacancies for which Lewisham was manifestly unsuitable, nevertheless their arrival brought an encouraging assurance of things going on, of shifting and unstable places in the defences of the beleaguered world. Afterwards, with occasional endearments for Ethel, he set himself to a revision of his last year's note-books, for now the botany was finished, the advanced zoological course — the last lap, as it were, for the Forbes medal — was beginning. She got her best hat from the next room to make certain changes in the arrangement of its trimmings. She sat in the little chair, while Lewisham, with documents spread before him, sat at the table.

Presently she looked up from an experimental arrangement of her

cornflowers, and discovered Lewisham, no longer reading, but staring blankly at the middle of the table-cloth, with an extraordinary misery in his eyes. She forgot the cornflowers and stared at him.

"Penny," she said after an interval.

Lewisham started and looked up. "*Eh*?"

"Why were you looking so miserable?" she asked.

"*Was* I looking miserable?"

"Yes. And *cross*!"

"I was thinking just then that I would like to boil a bishop or so in oil."

"My dear!"

"They know perfectly well the case against what they teach, they know it's neither madness nor wickedness nor any great harm, to others not to believe, they know perfectly well that a man may be as honest as the day, and right — right and decent in every way — and not believe in what they teach. And they know that it only wants the edge off a man's honour, for him to profess anything in the way of belief. Just anything. And they won't say so. I suppose they want the edge off every man's honour. If a man is well off they will truckle to him no end, though he laughs at all their teaching. They'll take gold plate from company promoters and rent from insanitary houses. But if a man is poor and doesn't profess to believe in what some of them scarcely believe themselves, they wouldn't lift a finger to help him against the ignorance of their followers. Your stepfather was right enough there. They know what's going on. They know that it means lying and humbug for any number of people, and they don't care. Why should they? *They've* got it down all right. They're spoilt, and why shouldn't we be?"

Lewisham having selected the bishops as scapegoats for his turpitude, was inclined to ascribe even the nail in his boot to their agency.

Mrs. Lewisham looked puzzled. She realised his drift.

"You're not," she said, and dropped her voice, "an *infidel*?"

Lewisham nodded gloomily. "Aren't you?" he said.

"Oh no," said Mrs. Lewisham.

"But you don't go to church, you don't—"

“No, I don’t,” said Mrs. Lewisham; and then with more assurance, “But
I’m not an infidel.”

“Christian?”

“I suppose so.”

“But a Christian — What do you believe?”

“Oh! to tell the truth, and do right, and not hurt or injure people and all that.”

“That’s not a Christian. A Christian is one who believes.”

“It’s what *I* mean by a Christian,” said Mrs. Lewisham.

“Oh! at that rate anyone’s a Christian,” said Lewisham. “We all think it’s right to do right and wrong to do wrong.”

“But we don’t all do it,” said Mrs. Lewisham, taking up the cornflowers again.

“No,” said Lewisham, a little taken aback by the feminine method of discussion. “We don’t all do it — certainly.” He stared at her for a moment — her head was a little on one side and her eyes on the cornflower — and his mind was full of a strange discovery. He seemed on the verge of speaking, and turned to his note-book again.

Very soon the centre of the table-cloth resumed its sway.

* * * * *

The following day Mr. Lucas Holderness received his cheque for a guinea. Unhappily it was crossed. He meditated for some time, and then took pen and ink and improved Lewisham’s careless “one” to “five” and touched up his unticked figure one to correspond.

You perceive him, a lank, cadaverous, good-looking man with long black hair and a semi-clerical costume of quite painful rustiness. He made the emendations with grave carefulness. He took the cheque round to his grocer. His grocer looked at it suspiciously.

“You pay it in,” said Mr. Lucas Holderness, “if you’ve any doubts about it. Pay it in. *I* don’t know the man or what he is. He may be a swindler for all I can tell. *I* can’t answer for him. Pay it in and see. Leave the change till then. I can wait. I’ll call round in a few days’ time.”

“All right, wasn’t it?” said Mr. Lucas Holderness in a casual tone two days later.

“Quite, sir,” said his grocer with enhanced respect, and handed him his four pounds thirteen and sixpence change.

Mr. Lucas Holderness, who had been eyeing the grocer’s stock with a curious intensity, immediately became animated and bought a tin of salmon. He went out of the shop with the rest of the money in his hand, for the pockets of his clothes were old and untrustworthy. At the baker’s he bought a new roll.

He bit a huge piece of the roll directly he was out of the shop, and went on his way gnawing. It was so large a piece that his gnawing mouth was contorted into the ugliest shapes. He swallowed by an effort, stretching his neck each time. His eyes expressed an animal satisfaction. He turned the corner of Judd Street biting again at the roll, and the reader of this story, like the Lewishams, hears of him no more.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GLAMOUR FADES.

After all, the rosy love-making and marrying and Epithalamy are no more than the dawn of things, and to follow comes all the spacious interval of white laborious light. Try as we may to stay those delightful moments, they fade and pass remorselessly; there is no returning, no recovering, only — for the foolish — the vilest peep-shows and imitations in dens and darkened rooms. We go on — we grow. At least we age. Our young couple, emerging presently from an atmosphere of dusk and morning stars, found the sky gathering greyly overhead and saw one another for the first time clearly in the light of every-day.

It might perhaps witness better to Lewisham's refinement if one could tell only of a moderated and dignified cooling, of pathetic little concealments of disappointment and a decent maintenance of the sentimental atmosphere. And so at last daylight. But our young couple were too crude for that. The first intimations of their lack of identity have already been described, but it would be tedious and pitiful to tell of all the little intensifications, shade by shade, of the conflict of their individualities. They fell out, dear lady! they came to conflict of words. The stress of perpetual worry was upon them, of dwindling funds and the anxious search for work that would not come. And on Ethel lay long, vacant, lonely hours in dull surroundings. Differences arose from the most indifferent things; one night Lewisham lay awake in unfathomable amazement because she had convinced him she did not care a rap for the Welfare of Humanity, and deemed his Socialism a fancy and an indiscretion. And one Sunday afternoon they started for a walk under the pleasantest auspices, and returned flushed and angry, satire and retort flying free — on the score of the social conventions in Ethel's novelettes. For some inexplicable reason Lewisham saw fit to hate her novelettes very bitterly. These encounters indeed were mere skirmishes for the most part, and the silences and embarrassments that followed ended sooner or later in a "making up," tacit or

definite, though once or twice this making up only re-opened the healing wound. And always each skirmish left its scar, effaced from yet another line of their lives the lingering tints of romantic colour.

There came no work, no added income for either of them, saving two trifles, for five long months. Once Lewisham won twelve shillings in the prize competition of a penny weekly, and three times came infinitesimal portions of typewriting from a poet who had apparently seen the *Athenaeum* advertisement. His name was Edwin Peak Baynes and his handwriting was sprawling and unformed. He sent her several short lyrics on scraps of paper with instructions that he desired "three copies of each written beautifully in different styles" and "*not* fastened with metal fasteners but with silk thread of an appropriate colour." Both of our young people were greatly exercised by these instructions. One fragment was called "Bird Song," one "Cloud Shadows," and one "Eryngium," but Lewisham thought they might be spoken of collectively as Bosh. By way of payment, this poet sent, in contravention of the postal regulations, half a sovereign stuck into a card, asking her to keep the balance against future occasions. In a little while, greatly altered copies of these lyrics were returned by the poet in person, with this enigmatical instruction written across the cover of each: "This style I like, only if possible more so."

Lewisham was out, but Ethel opened the door, so this indorsement was unnecessary, "He's really only a boy," said Ethel, describing the interview to Lewisham, who was curious. They both felt that the youthfulness of Edwin Peak Baynes detracted something from the reality of this employment.

From his marriage until the final examination in June, Lewisham's life had an odd amphibious quality. At home were Ethel and the perpetual aching pursuit of employment, the pelting irritations of Madam Gadow's persistent overcharges, and so forth, and amid such things he felt extraordinarily grown up; but intercalated with these experiences were those intervals at Kensington, scraps of his adolescence, as it were, lying amidst the new matter of his manhood, intervals during which he was simply an insubordinate and disappointing student with an increasing disposition to gossip. At South Kensington he dwelt with theories

and ideals as a student should; at the little rooms in Chelsea — they grew very stuffy as the summer came on, and the accumulation of the penny novelettes Ethel favoured made a litter — there was his particular private concrete situation, and ideals gave place to the real.

It was a strangely narrow world, he perceived dimly, in which his manhood opened. The only visitors were the Chafferys. Chaffery would come to share their supper, and won upon Lewisham in spite of his roguery by his incessantly entertaining monologue and by his expressed respect for and envy of Lewisham's scientific attainments. Moreover, as time went on Lewisham found himself more and more in sympathy with Chaffery's bitterness against those who order the world. It was good to hear him on bishops and that sort of people. He said what Lewisham wanted to say beautifully. Mrs. Chaffery was perpetually flitting — out of the house as Lewisham came home, a dim, black, nervous, untidy little figure. She came because Ethel, in spite of her expressed belief that love was "all in all," found married life a little dull and lonely while Lewisham was away. And she went hastily when he came, because of a certain irritability that the struggle against the world was developing. He told no one at Kensington about his marriage, at first because it was such a delicious secret, and then for quite other reasons. So there was no overlapping. The two worlds began and ended sharply at the wrought-iron gates. But the day came when Lewisham passed those gates for the last time and his adolescence ended altogether.

In the final examination of the biological course, the examination that signalised the end of his income of a weekly guinea, he knew well enough that he had done badly. The evening of the last day's practical work found him belated, hot-headed, beaten, with ruffled hair and red ears. He sat to the last moment doggedly struggling to keep cool and to mount the ciliated funnel of an earthworm's nephridium. But ciliated funnels come not to those who have shirked the laboratory practice. He rose, surrendered his paper to the morose elderly young assistant demonstrator who had welcomed him so flatteringly eight months before, and walked down the laboratory to the door where the rest of his fellow-students clustered.

Smithers was talking loudly about the "twistiness" of the identification, and the youngster with the big ears was listening

attentively.

"Here's Lewisham! How did *you* get on, Lewisham?" asked Smithers, not concealing his assurance.

"Horribly," said Lewisham shortly, and pushed past.

"Did you spot D?" clamoured Smithers.

Lewisham pretended not to hear.

Miss Heydinger stood with her hat in her hand and looked at Lewisham's hot eyes. He was for walking past her, but something in her face penetrated even his disturbance. He stopped.

"Did you get out the nephridium?" he said as graciously as he could.

She shook her head. "Are you going downstairs?" she asked.

"Rather," said Lewisham, with a vague intimation in his manner of the offence Smithers gave him.

He opened the glass door from the passage to the staircase. They went down one tier of that square spiral in silence.

"Are you coming up again next year?" asked Miss Heydinger.

"No," said Lewisham. "No, I shall not come here again. Ever."

Pause. "What will you do?" she asked.

"I don't know. I have to get a living somehow. It's been bothering me all the session."

"I thought—" She stopped. "Will you go down to your uncle's again?" she said.

"No. I shall stop in London. It's no good going out of things into the country. And besides — I've quarrelled rather with my uncle."

"What do you think of doing? — teaching?"

"I suppose it will be teaching, I'm not sure. Anything that turns up."

"I see," she said.

They went on down in silence for a time.

"I suppose you will come up again?" he asked.

"I may try the botanical again — if they can find room. And, I was thinking — sometimes one hears of things. What is your address? So that if I heard of anything."

Lewisham stopped on the staircase and thought. "Of course," he said. He made no effort to give her the address, and she demanded it again at the foot of the stairs.

“That confounded nephridium — !” he said. “It has put everything out of my head.”

They exchanged addresses on leaflets torn from Miss Heydinger’s little note-book.

She waited at the Book in the hall while he signed his name. At the iron gates of the Schools she said: “I am going through Kensington Gardens.”

He was now feeling irritated about the addresses, and he would not see the implicit invitation. “I am going towards Chelsea.”

She hesitated a moment, looking at him — puzzled. “Good-bye, then,” she said.

“Good-bye,” he answered, lifting his hat.

He crossed the Exhibition Road slowly with his packed glazed bag, now seamed with cracks, in his hand. He went thoughtfully down to the corner of the Cromwell Road and turned along that to the right so that he could see the red pile of the Science Schools rising fair, and tall across the gardens of the Natural History Museum. He looked back towards it regretfully.

He was quite sure that he had failed in this last examination. He knew that any career as a scientific man was now closed to him for ever. And he remembered now how he had come along this very road to that great building for the first time in his life, and all the hopes and resolves that had swelled within him as he had drawn near. That dream of incessant unswerving work! Where might he have reached if only he had had singleness of purpose to realise that purpose?…

And in these gardens it was that he and Smithers and Parkson had sat on a seat hard by the fossil tree, and discoursed of Socialism together before the great paper was read….

“Yes,” he said, speaking aloud to himself; “yes — *that’s* all over too. Everything’s over.”

Presently the corner of the Natural History Museum came between him and his receding Alma Mater. He sighed and turned his face towards the stuffy little rooms at Chelsea, and the still unconquered world.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCERNING A QUARREL.

It was late in September that this particular quarrel occurred. Almost all the roseate tints seemed gone by this time, for the Lewishams had been married six months. Their financial affairs had changed from the catastrophic to the sordid; Lewisham had found work. An army crammer named Captain Vigours wanted someone energetic for his mathematical duffers and to teach geometrical drawing and what he was pleased to call "Sandhurst Science." He paid no less than two shillings an hour for his uncertain demands on Lewisham's time. Moreover, there was a class in lower mathematics beginning at Walham Green where Lewisham was to show his quality. Fifty shillings a week or more seemed credible — more might be hoped for. It was now merely a case of tiding over the interval until Vigours paid. And meanwhile the freshness of Ethel's blouses departed, and Lewisham refrained from the repair of his boot which had cracked across the toe.

The beginning of the quarrel was trivial enough. But by the end they got to generalities. Lewisham had begun the day in a bad temper and under the cloud of an overnight passage of arms — and a little incident that had nothing to do with their ostensible difference lent it a warmth of emotion quite beyond its merits. As he emerged through the folding doors he saw a letter lying among the sketchily laid breakfast things, and Ethel's attitude suggested the recoil of a quick movement; the letter suddenly dropped. Her eyes met his and she flushed. He sat down and took the letter — a trifle awkwardly perhaps. It was from Miss Heydinger. He hesitated with it halfway to his pocket, then decided to open it. It displayed an ample amount of reading, and he read. On the whole he thought it rather a dull sort of letter, but he did not allow this to appear. When it was read he put it carefully in his pocket.

That formally had nothing to do with the quarrel. The breakfast was already over when the quarrel began. Lewisham's morning was vacant, and be proposed to occupy it in the revision of certain notes

bearing upon “Sandhurst Science.” Unhappily the search for his note-book brought him into collision with the accumulation of Ethel’s novelettes.

“These things are everywhere,” he said after a gust of vehement handling, “I *wish* you’d tidy them up sometimes.”

“They were tidy enough till you began to throw them about,” Ethel pointed out.

“Confounded muck! it’s only fit to be burnt,” Lewisham remarked to the universe, and pitched one viciously into the corner.

“Well, you tried to write one, anyhow,” said Ethel, recalling a certain “Mammoth” packet of note-paper that had come on an evil end before Lewisham found his industrial level. This reminiscence always irritated him exceedingly.

“Eh?” he said sharply.

“You tried to write one,” repeated Ethel — a little unwillingly.

“You don’t mean me to forget that.”

“It’s you reminded me.”

He stared hostility for a space.

“Well, the things make a beastly litter anyhow; there isn’t a tidy corner anywhere in the room. There never is.”

“That’s just the sort of thing you always say.”

“Well — *is* there?”

“Yes, there is.”

“*Where*?”

Ethel professed not to hear. But a devil had possession of Lewisham for a time. “It isn’t as though you had anything else to do,” he remarked, wounding dishonourably.

Ethel turned. “If I *put* those things away,” she said with tremendous emphasis on the “*put*,” “you’d only say I’d hidden them. What *is* the good of trying to please you?”

The spirit of perversity suggested to Lewisham, “None apparently.”

Ethel’s cheeks glowed and her eyes were bright with unshed tears. Abruptly she abandoned the defensive and blurted out the thing that had been latent so long between them. Her voice took a note of passion. “Nothing I can do ever does please you, since that Miss Heydinger began to write to you.”

There was a pause, a gap. Something like astonishment took them both. Hitherto it had been a convention that she knew nothing of the existence of Miss Heydinger. He saw a light. “How did you know?” he began, and perceived that line was impossible. He took the way of the natural man; he ejaculated an “Ugh!” of vast disgust, he raised his voice. “You *are* unreasonable!” he cried in angry remonstrance. “Fancy saying that! As though you ever tried to please me! Just as though it wasn’t all the other way about!” He stopped — struck by a momentary perception of injustice. He plunged at the point he had shirked, “How did you know it *was* Miss Heydinger — ?”

Ethel’s voice took upon itself the quality of tears. “I wasn’t *meant* to know, was I?” she said.

“But how?”

“I suppose you think it doesn’t concern me? I suppose you think I’m made of stone?”

“You mean — you think — ?”

“Yes — I *do*.”

For a brief interval Lewisham stared at the issue she had laid bare. He sought some crashing proposition, some line of convincing reasoning, with which to overwhelm and hide this new aspect of things. It would not come. He found himself fenced in on every side. A surging, irrational rage seized upon him.

“Jealousy!” he cried. “Jealousy! Just as though — Can’t I have letters about things you don’t understand — that you *won’t* understand? If I asked you to read them you wouldn’t — It’s just because—”

“You never give me a *chance* to understand.”

“Don’t I?”

“No!”

“Why! — At first I was always trying. Socialism, religion — all those things. But you don’t care — you won’t care. You won’t have that I’ve thought over these things at all, that I care for these things! It wasn’t any *good* to argue. You just care for me in a way — and all the rest of me — doesn’t matter! And because I’ve got a friend …”

“Friend!”

“Yes — *friend!*”

“Why! — you hide her letters!”

“Because I tell you you wouldn’t understand what they are about. But, pah! I won’t argue. I *won’t!* You’re jealous, and there’s the end of the matter!”

“Well, who *wouldn’t* be jealous?”

He stared at her as if he found the question hard to see. The theme was difficult — invincibly difficult. He surveyed the room for a diversion. The note-book he had disinterred from her novelettes lay upon the table and reminded him of his grievance of rained hours. His rage exploded. He struck out abruptly towards fundamental things. He gesticulated forcibly. “This can’t go on!” he cried, “this can’t go on! How can I work? How can I do anything?”

He made three steps and stood in a clear space.

“I won’t *stand*, it — I won’t go on at this! Quarrels — bickerings — discomfort. Look there! I meant to work this morning. I meant to look up notes! Instead of which you start a quarrel—”

The gross injustice raised Ethel’s voice to an outcry. “*I* didn’t start the quarrel—”

The only response to this was to shout, and Lewisham shouted. “You start a quarrel!” he repeated. “You make a shindy! You spring a dispute — jealousy! — on me! How can I do anything? How can one stop in a house like this? I shall go out. Look here! — I shall go out. I shall go to Kensington and work there!”

He perceived himself wordless, and Ethel was about to speak. He glared about him, seeking a prompt climax. Instant action was necessary. He perceived Huxley’s *Vertebrata* upon the side-table. He clutched it, swayed it through a momentous arc, hurled it violently into the empty fireplace.

For a second he seemed to be seeking some other missile. He perceived his hat on the chest of drawers, seized it, and strode tragically from the room.

He hesitated with the door half closed, then opened it wide and slammed it vehemently. Thereby the world was warned of the justice of his rage, and so he passed with credit into the street.

He went striding heedless of his direction through the streets dotted with intent people hurrying to work, and presently habit turned his feet towards the Brompton Road. The eastward trend of the morning traffic caught him. For a time, save for a rebellious

ingredient of wonder at the back of his mind, he kept his anger white and pure. Why had he married her? was the text to which he clung. Why in the name of destiny had he married her? But anyhow he had said the decisive thing. He would not stand it! It must end. Things were intolerable and they must end. He meditated devastating things that he might presently say to her in pursuance of this resolution. He contemplated acts of cruelty. In such ways he would demonstrate clearly that he would not stand it. He was very careful to avoid inquiring what it was he would not stand.

How in the name of destiny had he come to marry her? The quality of his surroundings mingled in some way with the quality of his thoughts. The huge distended buildings of corrugated iron in which the Art Museum (of all places!) culminates, the truncated Oratory all askew to the street, seemed to have a similar quarrel with fate. How in the name of destiny? After such high prolusions!

He found that his thoughts had carried him past the lodge of the museum. He turned back irritably and went through the turnstile. He entered the museum and passed beneath the gallery of Old Iron on his way to the Education Library. The vacant array of tables, the bays of attendant books had a quality of refuge….

So much for Lewisham in the morning. Long before midday all the vigour of his wrath was gone, all his passionate conviction of Ethel's unworthiness. Over a pile of neglected geological works he presented a face of gloom. His memory presented a picture of himself as noisy, overbearing, and unfair. What on earth had it all been about?

By two o'clock he was on his way to Vigours', and his mood was acute remorse. Of the transition there can be no telling in words, for thoughts are more subtle than words and emotions infinitely vaguer. But one thing at least is definite, that a memory returned.

It drifted in to him, through the glass roof of the Library far above. He did not perceive it as a memory at first, but as an irritating obstacle to attention. He struck the open pages of the book before him with his flat hand. "Damn that infernal hurdy-gurdy!" he whispered.

Presently he made a fretful movement and put his hands over his ears.

Then he thrust his books from him, got up, and wandered about the Library. The organ came to an abrupt end in the middle of a bar, and vanished in the circumambient silence of space.

Lewisham standing in a bay closed a book with a snap and returned to his seat.

Presently he found himself humming a languid tune, and thinking again of the quarrel that he had imagined banished from his mind. What in the name of destiny had it all been about? He had a curious sense that something had got loose, was sliding about in his mind. And as if by way of answer emerged a vision of Whortley — a singularly vivid vision. It was moonlight and a hillside, the little town lay lit and warm below, and the scene was set to music, a lugubriously sentimental air. For some reason this music had the quality of a barrel organ — though he knew that properly it came from a band — and it associated with itself a mystical formula of words, drawing words: —

"Sweet dreamland fa — ces, passing to and fro,
Bring back to mem'ry days of long ago — oh!"

This air not only reproduced the picture with graphic vividness, but it trailed after it an enormous cloud of irrational emotion, emotion that had but a moment before seemed gone for ever from his being.

He recalled it all! He had come down that hillside and Ethel had been with him….

Had he really felt like that about her?

"Pah!" he said suddenly, and reverted to his books.

But the tune and the memory had won their footing, they were with him through his meagre lunch of milk and scones — he had resolved at the outset he would not go back to her for the midday meal — and on his way to Vigours' they insisted on attention. It may be that lunching on scone and milk does in itself make for milder ways of thinking. A sense of extraordinary contradiction, of infinite perplexity, came to him.

"But then," he asked, "how the devil did we get to *this*?"

Which is indeed one of the fundamental questions of matrimony.

The morning tumults had given place to an almost scientific calm. Very soon he was grappling manfully with the question. There was no disputing it, they had quarrelled. Not once but several times lately they had quarrelled. It was real quarrelling; — they had stood up against one another, striking, watching to strike, seeking to wound. He tried to recall just how things had gone — what he had said and what she had replied. He could not do it. He had forgotten phrases and connexions. It stood in his memory not as a sequence of events but as a collection of disconnected static sayings; each saying blunt, permanent, inconsecutive like a graven inscription. And of the scene there came only one picture — Ethel with a burning face and her eyes shining with tears.

The traffic of a cross street engaged him for a space. He emerged on the further side full of the vivid contrast of their changed relations. He made a last effort to indict her, to show that for the transition she was entirely to blame. She had quarrelled with him, she had quarrelled deliberately because she was jealous. She was jealous of Miss Heydinger because she was stupid. But now these accusations faded like smoke as he put them forth. But the picture of two little figures back there in the moonlit past did not fade. It was in the narrows of Kensington High Street that he abandoned her arraignment. It was beyond the Town Hall that he made the new step. Was it, after all, just possible that in some degree he himself rather was the chief person to blame?

It was instantly as if he had been aware of that all the time.

Once he had made that step, he moved swiftly. Not a hundred paces before the struggle was over, and he had plunged headlong into the blue abyss of remorse. And all these things that had been so dramatic and forcible, all the vivid brutal things he had said, stood no longer graven inscriptions but in letters of accusing flame. He tried to imagine he had not said them, that his memory played him a trick; tried to suppose he had said something similar perhaps, but much less forcible. He attempted with almost equal futility to minimise his own wounds. His endeavour served only to measure the magnitude of his fall.

He had recovered everything now, he saw it all. He recalled Ethel, sunlit in the avenue, Ethel, white in the moonlight before they parted

outside the Frobisher house, Ethel as she would come out of Lagune's house greeting him for their nightly walk, Ethel new wedded, as she came to him through the folding doors radiant in the splendour his emotions threw about her. And at last, Ethel angry, dishevelled and tear-stained in that ill-lit, untidy little room. All to the cadence of a hurdy-gurdy tune! From that to this! How had it been possible to get from such an opalescent dawning to such a dismal day? What was it had gone? He and she were the same two persons who walked so brightly in his awakened memory; he and she who had lived so bitterly through the last few weeks of misery!

His mood sank for a space to the quality of groaning. He implicated her now at most as his partner in their failure— "What a mess we have made of things!" was his new motif. "What a mess!"

He knew love now for what it was, knew it for something more ancient and more imperative than reason. He knew now that he loved her, and his recent rage, his hostility, his condemnation of her seemed to him the reign of some exterior influence in his mind. He thought incredulously of the long decline in tenderness that had followed the first days of their delight in each other, the diminution of endearment, the first yielding to irritability, the evenings he had spent doggedly working, resisting all his sense of her presence. "One cannot always be love-making," he had said, and so they were slipping apart. Then in countless little things he had not been patient, he had not been fair. He had wounded her by harshness, by unsympathetic criticism, above all by his absurd secrecy about Miss Heydinger's letters. Why on earth had he kept those letters from her? as though there was something to hide! What was there to hide? What possible antagonism could there be? Yet it was by such little things that their love was now like some once valued possession that had been in brutal hands, it was scratched and chipped and tarnished, it was on its way to being altogether destroyed. Her manner had changed towards him, a gulf was opening that he might never be able to close again.

"No, it *shall* not be!" he said, "it shall not be!"

But how to get back to the old footing? how to efface the things he had said, the things that had been done?

Could they get back?

For a moment he faced a new possibility. Suppose they could not get back! Suppose the mischief was done! Suppose that when he slammed the door behind him it locked, and was locked against him for ever!

"But we *must*!" said Lewisham, "we must!"

He perceived clearly that this was no business of reasoned apologies. He must begin again, he must get back to emotion, he must thrust back the overwhelming pressure of everyday stresses and necessities that was crushing all the warmth and colour from their lives. But how? How?

He must make love to her again. But how to begin — how to mark the change? There had been making-up before, sullen concessions and treaties. But this was different. He tried to imagine something he might say, some appeal that he might make. Everything he thought of was cold and hard, or pitiful and undignified, or theatrical and foolish. Suppose the door *was* closed! If already it was too late! In every direction he was confronted by the bristling memories of harsh things. He had a glimpse of how he must have changed in her eyes, and things became intolerable for him. For now he was assured he loved her still with all his heart.

And suddenly came a florist's window, and in the centre of it a glorious heap of roses.

They caught his eye before they caught his mind. He saw white roses, virginal white, roses of cream and pink and crimson, the tints of flesh and pearl, rich, a mass of scented colour, visible odours, and in the midst of them a note of sullen red. It was as it were the very colour of his emotion. He stopped abruptly. He turned back to the window and stared frankly. It was gorgeous, he saw, but why so particularly did it appeal to him?

Then he perceived as though it was altogether self-evident what he had to do. This was what he wanted. This was the note he had to strike. Among other things because it would repudiate the accursed worship of pinching self-restraint that was one of the incessant stresses between them. They would come to her with a pure unexpectedness, they would flame upon her.

Then, after the roses, he would return.

Suddenly the grey trouble passed from his mind; he saw the world

full of colour again. He saw the scene he desired bright and clear, saw Ethel no longer bitter and weeping, but glad as once she had always seemed glad. His heart-beats quickened. It was giving had been needed, and he would give.

Some weak voice of indiscreet discretion squeaked and vanished. He had, he knew, a sovereign in his pocket. He went in.

He found himself in front of a formidable young lady in black, and unprepared with any formula. He had never bought flowers before. He looked about him for an inspiration. He pointed at the roses. “I want those roses,” he said….

He emerged again with only a few small silver coins remaining out of the sovereign he had changed. The roses were to go to Ethel, properly packed; they were to be delivered according to his express direction at six o’clock.

“Six o’clock,” Lewisham had reiterated very earnestly.

“We quite understand,” the young lady in black had said, and had pretended to be unable to conceal a smile. “We’re *quite* accustomed to sending out flowers.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE COMING OF THE ROSES.

And the roses miscarried!

When Lewisham returned from Vigours' it was already nearly seven. He entered the house with a beating heart. He had expected to find Ethel excited, the roses displayed. But her face was white and jaded. He was so surprised by this that the greeting upon his lips died away. He was balked! He went into, the sitting-room and there were no roses to be seen. Ethel came past him and stood with her back to him looking out of the window. The suspense was suddenly painful….

He was obliged to ask, though he was certain of the answer, "Has nothing come?"

Ethel looked at him. "What did you think had come?"

"Oh! nothing."

She looked out of the window again. "No," she said slowly, "nothing has come."

He tried to think of something to say that might bridge the distance between them, but he could think of nothing. He must wait until the roses came. He took out his books and a gaunt hour passed to supper time. Supper was a chilly ceremonial set with necessary over-polite remarks. Disappointment and exasperation darkened Lewisham's soul. He began to feel angry with everything — even with her — he perceived she still judged him angry, and that made him angry with her. He was resuming his books and she was helping Madam Gadow's servant to clear away, when they heard a rapping at the street door. "They have come at last," he said to himself brightening, and hesitated whether he should bolt or witness her reception of them. The servant was a nuisance. Then he heard Chaffery's voices and whispered a soft "damn!" to himself.

The only thing to do now if the roses came was to slip out into the passage, intercept them, and carry them into the bedroom by the door between that and the passage. It would be undesirable for Chaffery to witness that phase of sentiment. He might flash some dart of ridicule

that would stick in their memory for ever.

Lewisham tried to show that he did not want a visitor. But Chaffery was in high spirits, and could have warmed a dozen cold welcomes. He sat down without any express invitation in the chair that he preferred.

Before Mr. and Mrs. Chaffery the Lewishams veiled whatever trouble might be between them beneath an insincere cordiality, and Chaffery was soon talking freely, unsuspicious of their crisis. He produced two cigars. "I had a wild moment," he said. "'For once,' said I, 'the honest shall smoke the admirable — or the admirable shall smoke the honest,' whichever you like best. Try one? No? Those austere principles of yours! There will be more pleasure then. But really, I would as soon you smoked it as I. For to-night I radiate benevolence."

He cut the cigar with care, he lit it with ceremony, waiting until nothing but honest wood was burning on the match, and for fully a minute he was silent, evolving huge puffs of smoke. And then he spoke again, punctuating his words by varied and beautiful spirals. "So far," he said, "I have only trifled with knavery."

As Lewisham said nothing he resumed after a pause.

"There are three sorts of men in the world, my boy, three and no more — and of women only one. There are happy men and there are knaves and fools. Hybrids I don't count. And to my mind knaves and fools are very much alike."

He paused again.

"I suppose they are," said Lewisham flatly, and frowned at the fireplace.

Chaffery eyed him. "I am talking wisdom. To-night I am talking a particular brand of wisdom. I am broaching some of my oldest and finest, because — as you will find one day — this is a special occasion. And you are distrait!"

Lewisham looked up. "Birthday?" he said.

"You will see. But I was making golden observations about knaves and fools. I was early convinced of the absolute necessity of righteousness if a man is to be happy. I know it as surely as there is a sun in the heavens. Does that surprise you?"

"Well, it hardly squares—"

“No. I know. I will explain all that. But let me tell you the happy life. Let me give you that, as if I lay on my deathbed and this was a parting gift. In the first place, mental integrity. Prove all things, hold fast to that which is right. Let the world have no illusions for you, no surprises. Nature is full of cruel catastrophes, man is a physically degenerate ape, every appetite, every instinct, needs the curb; salvation is not in the nature of things, but whatever salvation there may be is in the nature of man; face all these painful things. I hope you follow that?”

“Go on,” said Lewisham, with the debating-society taste for a thesis prevailing for a minute over that matter of the roses.

“In youth, exercise and learning; in adolescence, ambition; and in early manhood, love — no footlight passion.” Chaffery was very solemn and insistent, with a lean extended finger, upon this point.

“Then marriage, young and decent, and then children and stout honest work for them, work too for the State in which they live; a life of self-devotion, indeed, and for sunset a decent pride — that is the happy life. Rest assured that is the happy life; the life Natural Selection has been shaping for man since life began. So a man may go happy from the cradle to the grave — at least — passably happy. And to do this needs just three things — a sound body, a sound intelligence, and a sound will … A sound will.”

Chaffery paused on the repetition.

“No other happiness endures. And when all men are wise, all men will seek that life. Fame! Wealth! Art! — the Red Indians worship lunatics, and we are still by way of respecting the milder sorts. But I say that all men who do not lead that happy life are knaves and fools. The physical cripple, you know, poor devil, I count a sort of bodily fool.”

“Yes,” weighed Lewisham, “I suppose he is.”

“Now a fool fails of happiness because of his insufficient mind, he miscalculates, he stumbles and hobbles, some cant or claptrap whirls him away; he gets passion out of a book and a wife out of the stews, or he quarrels on a petty score; threats frighten him, vanity beguiles him, he fails by blindness. But the knave who is not a fool fails against the light. Many knaves are fools also — *most* are — but some are not. I know — I am a knave but no fool. The essence of your

knave is that he lacks the will, the motive capacity to seek his own greater good. The knave abhors persistence. Strait is the way and narrow the gate; the knave cannot keep to it and the fool cannot find it."

Lewisham lost something of what Chaffery was saying by reason of a rap outside. He rose, but Ethel was before him. He concealed his anxiety as well as he could; and was relieved when he heard the front door close again and her footsteps pass into the bedroom by the passage door. He reverted to Chaffery.

"Has it ever occurred to you," asked Chaffery, apparently apropos of nothing, "that intellectual conviction is no motive at all? Any more than a railway map will run a train a mile."

"Eh?" said Lewisham. "Map — run a train a mile — of course, yes. No, it won't."

"That is precisely my case," said Chaffery. "That is the case of your pure knave everywhere. We are not fools — because we know. But yonder runs the highway, windy, hard, and austere, a sort of dry happiness that will endure; and here is the pleasant by-way — lush, my boy, lush, as the poets have it, and with its certain man-trap among the flowers …"

Ethel returned through the folding doors. She glanced at Lewisham, remained standing for awhile, sat down in the basket chair as if to resume some domestic needlework that lay upon the table, then rose and went back into the bedroom.

Chaffery proceeded to expatiate on the transitory nature of passion and all glorious and acute experiences. Whole passages of that discourse Lewisham did not hear, so intent was he upon those roses. Why had Ethel gone back into the bedroom? Was it possible — ? Presently she returned, but she sat down so that he could not see her face.

"If there is one thing to set against the wholesome life it is adventure," Chaffery was saying. "But let every adventurer pray for an early death, for with adventure come wounds, and with wounds come sickness, and — except in romances — sickness affects the nervous system. Your nerve goes. Where are you then, my boy?"

"Ssh! what's that?" said Lewisham.

It was a rap at the house door. Heedless of the flow of golden

wisdom, he went out at once and admitted a gentleman friend of Madam Gadow, who passed along the passage and vanished down the staircase. When he returned Chaffery was standing to go.

"I could have talked with you longer," he said, "but you have something on your mind, I see. I will not worry you by guessing what. Some day you will remember …" He said no more, but laid his hand on Lewisham's shoulder.

One might almost fancy he was offended at something.

At any other time Lewisham might have been propitiatory, but now he offered no apology. Chaffery turned to Ethel and looked at her curiously for a moment. "Good-bye," he said, holding out his hand to her.

On the doorstep Chaffery regarded Lewisham with the same curious look, and seemed to weigh some remark. "Good-bye," he said at last with something in his manner that kept Lewisham at the door for a moment looking after his stepfather's receding figure. But immediately the roses were uppermost again.

When he re-entered the living room he found Ethel sitting idly at her typewriter, playing with the keys. She got up at his return and sat down in the armchair with a novelette that hid her face. He stared at her, full of questions. After all, then, they had not come. He was intensely disappointed now, he was intensely angry with the ineffable young shop-woman in black. He looked at his watch and then again, he took a book and pretended to read and found himself composing a scathing speech of remonstrance to be delivered on the morrow at the flower-shop. He put his book down, went to his black bag, opened and closed it aimlessly. He glanced covertly at Ethel, and found her looking covertly at him. He could not quite understand her expression.

He fidgeted into the bedroom and stopped as dead as a pointer.

He felt an extraordinary persuasion of the scent of roses. So strong did it seem that he glanced outside the room door, expecting to find a box there, mysteriously arrived. But there was no scent of roses in the passage.

Then he saw close by his foot an enigmatical pale object, and stooping, picked up the creamy petal of a rose. He stood with it in his hand, perplexed beyond measure. He perceived a slight disorder of

the valence of the dressing-table and linked it with this petal by a swift intuition.

He made two steps, lifted the valence, and behold! there lay his roses crushed together!

He gasped like a man who plunges suddenly into cold water. He remained stooping with the valence raised.

Ethel appeared in the half doorway and her, expression was unfamiliar.
He stared at her white face.

"Why on earth did you put my roses here?" he asked.

She stared back at him. Her face reflected his astonishment.

"Why did you put my roses here?" he asked again.

"Your roses!" she cried, "What! Did *you* send those roses?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

THORNS AND ROSE PETALS.

He remained stooping and staring up at her, realising the implication of her words only very slowly.

Then it grew clear to him.

As she saw understanding dawning in his face, she uttered a cry of consternation. She came forward and sat down upon the little bedroom chair. She turned to him and began a sentence. “I,” she said, and stopped, with an impatient gesture of her hands. “*Oh*!”

He straightened himself and stood regarding her. The basket of roses lay overturned between them.

“You thought these came from someone else?” he said, trying to grasp this inversion of the universe.

She turned her eyes, “I did not know,” she panted. “A trap…. Was it likely — they came from you?”

“You thought they came from someone else,” he said.

“Yes,” she said, “I did.”

“Who?”

“Mr. Baynes.”

“That boy!”

“Yes — that boy.”

“Well!”

Lewisham looked about him — a man in the presence of the inconceivable.

“You mean to say you have been carrying on with that youngster behind my back?” he asked.

She opened her lips to speak and had no words to say.

His pallor increased until every tinge of colour had left his face. He laughed and then set his teeth. Husband and wife looked at one another.

“I never dreamt,” he said in even tones.

He sat down on the bed, thrusting his feet among the scattered roses with a sort of grim satisfaction. “I never dreamt,” he repeated, and the flimsy basket kicked by his swinging foot hopped indignantly

through the folding doors into the living room and left a trail of blood-red petals.

They sat for perhaps two minutes, and when he spoke again his voice was hoarse. He reverted to a former formula. “Look here,” he said, and cleared his throat. “I don’t know whether you think I’m going to stand this, but I’m not.”

He looked at her. She sat staring in front of her, making no attempt to cope with disaster.

“When I say I’m not going to stand it,” explained Lewisham, “I don’t mean having a row or anything of that sort. One can quarrel and be disappointed over — other things — and still go on. But this is a different thing altogether.

“Of all dreams and illusions!… Think what I have lost in this accursed marriage. And *now* … You don’t understand — you won’t understand.”

“Nor you,” said Ethel, weeping but neither looking at him nor moving her hands from her lap where they lay helplessly. “*You* don’t understand.”

“I’m beginning to.”

He sat in silence gathering force. “In one year,” he said, “all my hopes, all my ambitions have gone. I know I have been cross and irritable — I know that. I’ve been pulled two ways. But … I bought you these roses.”

She looked at the roses, and then at his white face, made an imperceptible movement towards him, and became impassive again.

“I do think one thing. I have found out you are shallow, you don’t think, you can’t feel things that I think and feel. I have been getting over that. But I did think you were loyal—”

“I *am* loyal,” she cried.

“And you think — Bah! — you poke my roses under the table!”

Another portentous silence. Ethel stirred and he turned his eyes to watch what she was about to do. She produced her handkerchief and began to wipe her dry eyes rapidly, first one and then the other. Then she began sobbing. “I’m … as loyal as you … anyhow,” she said.

For a moment Lewisham was aghast. Then he perceived he must ignore that argument.

“I would have stood it — I would have stood anything if you had

been loyal — if I could have been sure of you. I am a fool, I know, but I would have stood the interruption of my work, the loss of any hope of a Career, if I had been sure you were loyal. I … I cared for you a great deal."

He stopped. He had suddenly perceived the pathetic. He took refuge in anger.

"And you have deceived me! How long, how much, I don't care. You have deceived me. And I tell you" — he began to gesticulate— "I'm not so much your slave and fool as to stand that! No woman shall make me *that* sort of fool, whatever else — So far as I am concerned, this ends things. This ends things. We are married — but I don't care if we were married five hundred times. I won't stop with a woman who takes flowers from another man—"

"I *didn't*," said Ethel.

Lewisham gave way to a transport of anger. He caught up a handful of roses and extended them, trembling. "What's *this*?" he asked. His finger bled from a thorn, as once it had bled from a blackthorn spray.

"I *didn't* take them," said Ethel. "I couldn't help it if they were sent."

"Ugh!" said Lewisham. "But what is the good of argument and denial? You took them in, you had them. You may have been cunning, but you have given yourself away. And our life and all this" — he waved an inclusive hand at Madam Gadow's furniture— "is at an end."

He looked at her and repeated with bitter satisfaction, "At an end."

She glanced at his face, and his expression was remorseless. "I will not go on living with you," he said, lest there should be any mistake. "Our life is at an end."

Her eyes went from his face to the scattered roses. She remained staring at these. She was no longer weeping, and her face, save about the eyes, was white.

He presented it in another form. "I shall go away."

"We never ought to have married," he reflected. "But … I never expected *this*!"

"I didn't know," she cried out, lifting up her voice. "I *didn't*

know. How could *I* help! *Oh*!"

She stopped and stared at him with hands clenched, her eyes haggard with despair.

Lewisham remained impenetrably malignant.

"I don't *want* to know," he said, answering her dumb appeal. "That settles everything. *That*!" He indicated the scattered flowers. "What does it matter to me what has happened or hasn't happened? Anyhow — oh! I don't mind. I'm glad. See? It settles things.

"The sooner we part the better. I shan't stop with you another night. I shall take my box and my portmanteau into that room and pack. I shall stop in there to-night, sleep in a chair or *think*. And to-morrow I shall settle up with Madam Gadow and go. You can go back … to your cheating."

He stopped for some seconds. She was deadly still. "You wanted to, and now you may. You wanted to, before I got work. You remember? You know your place is still open at Lagune's. I don't care. I tell you I don't care *that*. Not that! You may go your own way — and I shall go mine. See? And all this rot — this sham of living together when neither cares for the other — I don't care for you *now*, you know, so you needn't think it — will be over and done with. As for marriage — I don't care *that* for marriage — it can't make a sham and a blunder anything but a sham.

"It's a sham, and shams have to end, and that's the end of the matter."

He stood up resolutely. He kicked the scattered roses out of his way and dived beneath the bed for his portmanteau. Ethel neither spoke nor moved, but remained watching his movements. For a time the portmanteau refused to emerge, and he marred his stern resolution by a half audible "Come here — damn you!" He swung it into the living room and returned for his box. He proposed to pack in that room.

When he had taken all his personal possessions out of the bedroom, he closed the folding-doors with an air of finality. He knew from the sounds that followed that she flung herself upon the bed, and that filled him with grim satisfaction.

He stood listening for a space, then set about packing methodically. The first rage of discovery had abated; he knew quite

clearly that he was inflicting grievous punishment, and that gratified him. There was also indeed a curious pleasure in the determination of a long and painful period of vague misunderstanding by this unexpected crisis. He was acutely conscious of the silence on the other side of the folding-doors, he kept up a succession of deliberate little noises, beat books together and brushed clothes, to intimate the resolute prosecution of his preparations.

That was about nine o'clock. At eleven he was still busy….

Darkness came suddenly upon him. It was Madam Gadow's economical habit to turn off all her gas at that hour unless she chanced to be entertaining friends.

He felt in his pocket for matches and he had none. He whispered curses. Against such emergencies he had bought a brass lamp and in the bedroom there were candles. Ethel had a candle alight, he could see the bright yellow line that appeared between the folding doors. He felt his way presently towards the mantel, receiving a blow in the ribs from a chair on the way, and went carefully amidst Madam Gadow's once amusing ornaments.

There were no matches on the mantel. Going to the chest of drawers he almost fell over his open portmanteau. He had a silent ecstasy of rage. Then he kicked against the basket in which the roses had come. He could find no matches on the chest of drawers.

Ethel must have the matches in the bedroom, but that was absolutely impossible. He might even have to ask her for them, for at times she pocketed matches…. There was nothing for it but to stop packing. Not a sound came from the other room.

He decided he would sit down in the armchair and go to sleep. He crept very carefully to the chair and sat down. Another interval of listening and he closed his eyes and composed himself for slumber.

He began to think over his plans for the morrow. He imagined the scene with Madam Gadow, and then his departure to find bachelor lodgings once more. He debated in what direction he should go to get, suitable lodgings. Possible difficulties with his luggage, possible annoyances of the search loomed gigantic. He felt greatly irritated at these minor difficulties. He wondered if Ethel also was packing. What particularly would she do? He listened, but he could hear nothing. She was very still. She was really very still! What could she

be doing? He forgot the bothers of the morrow in this new interest. Presently he rose very softly and listened. Then he sat down again impatiently. He tried to dismiss his curiosity about the silence by recapitulating the story of his wrongs.

He had some difficulty in fixing his mind upon this theme, but presently his memories were flowing freely. Only it was not wrongs now that he could recall. He was pestered by an absurd idea that he had again behaved unjustly to Ethel, that he had been headlong and malignant. He made strenuous efforts to recover his first heat of jealousy — in vain. Her remark that she had been as loyal as he, became an obstinate headline in his mind. Something arose within him that insisted upon Ethel's possible fate if he should leave her. What particularly would she do? He knew how much her character leant upon his, Good Heavens! What might she not do?

By an effort he succeeded in fixing his mind on Baynes. That helped him back to the harsher footing. However hard things might be for her she deserved them. She deserved them!

Yet presently he slipped again, slipped back to the remorse and regrets of the morning time. He clutched at Baynes as a drowning man clutches at a rope, and recovered himself. For a time he meditated on Baynes. He had never seen the poet, so his imagination had scope. It appeared to him as an exasperating obstacle to a tragic avenging of his honour that Baynes was a mere boy — possibly even younger than himself.

The question, "What will become of Ethel?" rose to the surface again. He struggled against its possibilities. No! That was not it! That was her affair.

He felt inexorably kept to the path he had chosen, for all the waning of his rage. He had put his hand to the plough. "If you condone this," he told himself, "you might condone anything. There are things one *must* not stand." He tried to keep to that point of view — assuming for the most part out of his imagination what it was he was not standing. A dim sense came to him of how much he was assuming. At any rate she must have flirted!… He resisted this reviving perception of justice as though it was some unspeakably disgraceful craving. He tried to imagine her with Baynes.

He determined he would go to sleep.

But his was a waking weariness. He tried counting. He tried to distract his thoughts from her by going over the atomic weights of the elements….

He shivered, and realised that he was cold and sitting cramped on an uncomfortable horsehair chair. He had dozed. He glanced for the yellow line between the folding doors. It was still there, but it seemed to quiver. He judged the candle must be flaring. He wondered why everything was so still.

Now why should he suddenly feel afraid?

He sat for a long time trying to hear some movement, his head craning forward in the darkness.

A grotesque idea came into his head that all that had happened a very long time ago. He dismissed that. He contested an unreasonable persuasion that some irrevocable thing had passed. But why was everything so still?

He was invaded by a prevision of unendurable calamity.

Presently he rose and crept very slowly, and with infinite precautions against noise, towards the folding doors. He stood listening with his ear near the yellow chink.

He could hear nothing, not even the measured breathing of a sleeper.

He perceived that the doors were not shut, but slightly ajar. He pushed against the inner one very gently and opened it silently. Still there was no sound of Ethel. He opened the door still wider and peered into the room. The candle had burnt down and was flaring in its socket. Ethel was lying half undressed upon the bed, and in her hand and close to her face was a rose.

He stood watching her, fearing to move. He listened hard and his face was very white. Even now he could not hear her breathing.

After all, it was probably all right. She was just asleep. He would slip back before she woke. If she found him —

He looked at her again. There was something in her face —

He came nearer, no longer heeding the sounds he made. He bent over her. Even now she did not seem to breathe.

He saw that her eyelashes were still wet, the pillow by her cheek was wet. Her white, tear-stained face hurt him….

She was intolerably pitiful to him. He forgot everything but that

and how he had wounded her that day. And then she stirred and murmured indistinctly a foolish name she had given him.

He forgot that they were going to part for ever. He felt nothing but a great joy that she could stir and speak. His jealousy flashed out of being. He dropped upon his knees.

"Dear," he whispered, "Is it all right? I … I could not hear you breathing. I could not hear you breathing."

She started and was awake.

"I was in the other room," said Lewisham in a voice full of emotion. "Everything was so quiet, I was afraid — I did not know what had happened. Dear — Ethel dear. Is it all right?"

She sat up quickly and scrutinised his face. "Oh! let me tell you," she wailed. "Do let me tell you. It's nothing. It's nothing. You wouldn't hear me. You wouldn't hear me. It wasn't fair — before you had heard me…."

His arms tightened about her. "Dear," he said, "I knew it was nothing. I knew. I knew."

She spoke in sobbing sentences. "It was so simple. Mr. Baynes … something in his manner … I knew he might be silly … Only I did so want to help you." She paused. Just for one instant she saw one untenable indiscretion as it were in a lightning flash. A chance meeting it was, a "silly" thing or so said, a panic, retreat. She would have told it — had she known how. But she could not do it. She hesitated. She abolished it — untold. She went on: "And then, I thought he had sent the roses and I was frightened … I was frightened."

"Dear one," said Lewisham. "Dear one! I have been cruel to you. I have been unjust. I understand. I do understand. Forgive me. Dearest — forgive me."

"I did so want to do something for you. It was all I could do — that little money. And then you were angry. I thought you didn't love me any more because I did not understand your work…. And that Miss Heydinger — Oh! it was hard."

"Dear one," said Lewisham, "I do not care your little finger for Miss Heydinger."

“I know how I hamper you. But if you will help me. Oh! I would work, I would study. I would do all I could to understand.”

“Dear,” whispered Lewisham. “*Dear*”

“And to have *her*—”

“Dear,” he vowed, “I have been a brute. I will end all that. I will end all that.”

He took her suddenly into his arms and kissed her.

“Oh, I *know* I’m stupid,” she said.

“You’re not. It’s I have been stupid. I have been unkind, unreasonable. All to-day — … I’ve been thinking about it. Dear! I don’t care for anything — It’s *you*. If I have you nothing else matters … Only I get hurried and cross. It’s the work and being poor. Dear one, we *must* hold to each other. All to-day — It’s been dreadful….”

He stopped. They sat clinging to one another.

“I do love you,” she said presently with her arms about him. “Oh! I do — *do* — love you.”

He drew her closer to him.

He kissed her neck. She pressed him to her.

Their lips met.

The expiring candle streamed up into a tall flame, flickered, and was suddenly extinguished. The air was heavy with the scent of roses.

CHAPTER XXX.

A WITHDRAWAL.

On Tuesday Lewisham returned from Vigours' at five — at half-past six he would go on to his science class at Walham Green — and discovered Mrs. Chaffery and Ethel in tears. He was fagged and rather anxious for some tea, but the news they had for him drove tea out of his head altogether.

"He's gone," said Ethel.

"Who's gone? What! Not Chaffery?"

Mrs. Chaffery, with a keen eye to Lewisham's behaviour, nodded tearfully over an experienced handkerchief.

Lewisham grasped the essentials of the situation forthwith, and trembled on the brink of an expletive. Ethel handed him a letter.

For a moment Lewisham held this in his hand asking; questions. Mrs. Chaffery had come upon it in the case of her eight-day clock when the time to wind it came round. Chaffery, it seemed, had not been home since Saturday night. The letter was an open one addressed to Lewisham, a long rambling would-be clever letter, oddly inferior in style to Chaffery's conversation. It had been written some hours before Chaffery's last visit his talk then had been perhaps a sort of codicil.

"The inordinate stupidity of that man Lagune is driving me out of the country," Lewisham saw. "It has been at last a definite stumbling block — even a legal stumbling block. I fear. I am off. I skedaddle. I break ties. I shall miss our long refreshing chats — you had found me out and I could open my mind. I am sorry to part from Ethel also, but thank Heaven she has you to look to! And indeed they both have you to look to, though the 'both' may be a new light to you."

Lewisham growled, went from page 1 to page 3 — conscious of their both looking to him now — even intensely — and discovered Chaffery in a practical vein.

"There is but little light, and portable property in that house in Clapham that has escaped my lamentable improvidence, but there are one or two things — the iron-bound chest, the bureau with a broken

hinge, and the large air pump — distinctly pawnable if only you can contrive to get them to a pawnshop. You have more Will power than I — I never could get the confounded things downstairs. That iron-bound box was originally mine, before I married your mother-in-law, so that I am not altogether regardless of your welfare and the necessity of giving some equivalent. Don't judge me too harshly."

Lewisham turned over sharply without finishing that page.

"My life at Clapham," continued the letter, "has irked me for some time, and to tell you the truth, the spectacle of your vigorous young happiness — you are having a very good time, you know, fighting the world — reminded me of the passing years. To be frank in self-criticism, there is more than a touch of the New Woman about me, and I feel I have still to live my own life. What a beautiful phrase that is — to live one's own life! — redolent of honest scorn for moral plagiarism. No *Imitatio Christi* in that … I long to see more of men and cities…. I begin late, I know, to live my own life, bald as I am and grey-whiskered; but better late than never. Why should the educated girl have the monopoly of the game? And after all, the whiskers will dye….

"There are things — I touch upon them lightly — that will presently astonish Lagune." Lewisham became more attentive. "I marvel at that man, grubbing hungry for marvels amidst the almost incredibly marvellous. What can be the nature of a man who gapes after Poltergeists with the miracle of his own silly existence (inconsequent, reasonless, unfathomably weird) nearer to him than breathing and closer than hands and feet. What is *he* for, that he should wonder at Poltergeists? I am astonished these by no means flimsy psychic phenomena do not turn upon their investigators, and that a Research Society of eminent illusions and hallucinations does not pursue Lagune with sceptical! inquiries. Take his house — expose the alleged man of Chelsea! *A priori* they might argue that a thing so vain, so unmeaning, so strongly beset by cackle, could only be the diseased imagining of some hysterical phantom. Do *you* believe that such a thing as Lagune exists? I must own to the gravest doubts. But happily his banker is of a more credulous type than I…. Of all that Lagune will tell you soon enough."

Lewisham read no more. "I suppose he thought himself clever

when he wrote that rot," said Lewisham bitterly, throwing the sheets forcibly athwart the table. "The simple fact is, he's stolen, or forged, or something — and bolted."

There was a pause. "What will become of Mother?" said Ethel.

Lewisham looked at Mother and thought for a moment. Then he glanced at Ethel.

"We're all in the same boat," said Lewisham.

"I don't want to give any trouble to a single human being," said Mrs. Chaffery.

"I think you might get a man his tea, Ethel," said Lewisham, sitting down suddenly; "anyhow." He drummed on the table with his fingers. "I have to get to Walham Green by a quarter to seven."

"We're all in the same boat," he repeated after an interval, and continued drumming. He was chiefly occupied by the curious fact that they were all in the same boat. What an extraordinary faculty he had for acquiring responsibility! He looked up suddenly and caught Mrs. Chaffery's tearful eye directed to Ethel and full of distressful interrogation, and his perplexity was suddenly changed to pity. "It's all right, Mother," he said. "I'm not going to be unreasonable. I'll stand by you."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Chaffery. "As if I didn't know!" and Ethel came and kissed him.

He seemed in imminent danger of universal embraces.

"I wish you'd let me have my tea," he said. And while he had his tea he asked Mrs. Chaffery questions and tried to get the new situation into focus.

But even at ten o'clock, when he was returning hot and jaded from Walham Green, he was still trying to get the situation into focus. There were vague ends and blank walls of interrogation in the matter, that perplexed him.

He knew that his supper would be only the prelude to an interminable "talking over," and indeed he did not get to bed until nearly two. By that time a course of action was already agreed upon. Mrs. Chaffery was tied to the house in Clapham by a long lease, and thither they must go. The ground floor and first floor were let

unfurnished, and the rent of these practically paid the rent of the house. The Chafferys occupied basement and second floor. There was a bedroom on the second floor, formerly let to the first floor tenants, that he and Ethel could occupy, and in this an old toilet table could be put for such studies as were to be prosecuted at home. Ethel could have her typewriter in the subterranean breakfast-room. Mrs. Chaffery and Ethel must do the catering and the bulk of the housework, and as soon as possible, since letting lodgings would not square with Lewisham's professional pride, they must get rid of the lease that bound them and take some smaller and more suburban residence. If they did that without leaving any address it might save their feelings from any return of the prodigal Chaffery.

Mrs. Chaffery's frequent and pathetic acknowledgments of Lewisham's goodness only partly relieved his disposition to a philosophical bitterness. And the practical issues were complicated by excursions upon the subject of Chaffery, what he might have done, and where he might have gone, and whether by any chance he might not return.

When at last Mrs. Chaffery, after a violent and tearful kissing and blessing of them both — they were "good dear children," she said — had departed, Mr. and Mrs. Lewisham returned into their sitting-room. Mrs. Lewisham's little face was enthusiastic. "You're a Trump," she said, extending the willing arms that were his reward. "I know," she said, "I know, and all to-night I have been loving you. Dear! Dear! Dear…."

The next day Lewisham was too full of engagements to communicate with Lagune, but the following morning he called and found the psychic investigator busy with the proofs of *Hesperus*. He welcomed the young man cordially nevertheless, conceiving him charged with the questions that had been promised long ago — it was evident he knew nothing of Lewisham's marriage. Lewisham stated his case with some bluntness.

"He was last here on Saturday," said Lagune. "You have always been inclined to suspicion about him. Have you any grounds?"

"You'd better read this," said Lewisham, repressing a grim smile, and he handed Lagune Chaffery's letter.

He glanced at the little man ever and again to see if he had come

to the personal portion, and for the rest of the time occupied himself with an envious inventory of the writing appointments about him. No doubt the boy with the big ears had had the same sort of thing …

When Lagune came to the question of his real identity he blew out his cheeks in the most astonishing way, but made no other sign.

"Dear, dear!" he said at last. "My bankers!"

He looked at Lewisham with the exaggerated mildness of his spectacled eye. "What do you think it means?" he asked. "Has he gone mad? We have been conducting some experiments involving — considerable mental strain. He and I and a lady. Hypnotic—"

"I should look at my cheque-book if I were you."

Lagune produced some keys and got out his cheque book. He turned over the counterfoils. "There's nothing wrong here," he said, and handed the book to Lewisham.

"Um," said Lewisham. "I suppose this — I say, is *this* right?"

He handed back the book to Lagune, open at the blank counterfoil of a cheque that had been removed. Lagune stared and passed his hand over his forehead in a confused way. "I can't see this," he said.

Lewisham had never heard of post hypnotic suggestion and he stood incredulous. "You can't see that?" he said. "What nonsense!"

"I can't see it," repeated Lagune.

For some seconds Lewisham could not get away from stupid repetitions of his inquiry. Then he hit upon a collateral proof. "But look here! Can you see *this* counterfoil?"

"Plainly," said Lagune.

"Can you read the number?"

"Five thousand two hundred and seventy-nine."

"Well, and this?"

"Five thousand two hundred and eighty-one."

"Well — where's five thousand two hundred and eighty?"

Lagune began to look uncomfortable. "Surely," he said, "he has not — Will you read it out — the cheque, the counterfoil I mean, that I am unable to see?"

"It's blank," said Lewisham with an irresistible grin.

"Surely," said Lagune, and the discomfort of his expression deepened. "Do you mind if I call in a servant to confirm — ?"

Lewisham did not mind, and the same girl who had admitted him

to the *séance* appeared. When she had given her evidence she went again. As she left the room by the door behind Lagune her eyes met Lewisham's, and she lifted her eyebrows, depressed her mouth, and glanced at Lagune with a meaning expression.

"I'm afraid," said Lagune, "that I have been shabbily treated.
Mr. Chaffery is a man of indisputable powers — indisputable
powers; but
I am afraid — I am very much afraid he has abused the conditions of
the
experiment. All this — and his insults — touch me rather nearly."

He paused. Lewisham rose. "Do you mind if you come again?"
asked
Lagune with gentle politeness.

Lewisham was surprised to find himself sorry.

"He was a man of extraordinary gifts," said Lagune. "I had come to rely upon him…. My cash balance has been rather heavy lately. How he came to know of that I am unable to say. Without supposing, that is, that he had very remarkable gifts."

When Lewisham saw Lagune again he learnt the particulars of Chaffery's misdeed and the additional fact that the "lady" had also disappeared. "That's a good job," he remarked selfishly. "There's no chance of *his* coming back." He spent a moment trying to imagine the "lady"; he realised more vividly than he had ever done before the narrow range of his experience, the bounds of his imagination. These people also — with grey hair and truncated honour — had their emotions I Even it may be glowing! He came back to facts. Chaffery had induced Lagune when hypnotised to sign a blank cheque as an "autograph." "The strange thing is," explained Lagune, "it's doubtful if he's legally accountable. The law is so peculiar about hypnotism and I certainly signed the cheque, you know."

The little man, in spite of his losses, was now almost cheerful again on account of a curious side issue. "You may say it is coincidence," he said, "you may call it a fluke, but I prefer to look for some other interpretation! Consider this. The amount of my balance

is a secret between me and my bankers. He never had it from *me*, for I did not know it — I hadn't looked at my passbook for months. But he drew it all in one cheque, within seventeen and sixpence of the total. And the total was over five hundred pounds!"

He seemed quite bright again as he culminated.

"Within seventeen and sixpence," he said. "Now how do you account for that, eh? Give me a materialistic explanation that will explain away all that. You can't. Neither can I."

"I think I can," said Lewisham.

"Well — what is it?"

Lewisham nodded towards a little drawer of the bureau. "Don't you think — perhaps" — a little ripple of laughter passed across his mind— "he had a skeleton key?"

Lagune's face lingered amusingly in Lewisham's mind as he returned to Clapham. But after a time that amusement passed away. He declined upon the extraordinary fact that Chaffery was his father-in-law, Mrs. Chaffery his mother-in-law, that these two and Ethel constituted his family, his clan, and that grimy graceless house up the Clapham hillside was to be his home. Home! His connexion with these things as a point of worldly departure was as inexorable now as though he had been born to it. And a year ago, except for a fading reminiscence of Ethel, none of these people had existed for him. The ways of Destiny! The happenings of the last few months, foreshortened in perspective, seemed to have almost a pantomimic rapidity. The thing took him suddenly as being laughable; and he laughed.

His laugh marked an epoch. Never before had Lewisham laughed at any fix in which he had found himself! The enormous seriousness of adolescence was coming to an end; the days of his growing were numbered. It was a laugh of infinite admissions.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN BATTERSEA PARK.

Now although Lewisham had promised to bring things to a conclusion with Miss Heydinger, he did nothing in the matter for five weeks, he merely left that crucial letter of hers unanswered. In that time their removal from Madam Gadow's into the gaunt house at Clapham was accomplished — not without polyglot controversy — and the young couple settled themselves into the little room on the second floor even as they had arranged. And there it was that suddenly the world was changed — was astonishingly transfigured — by a whisper.

It was a whisper between sobs and tears, with Ethel's arms about him and Ethel's hair streaming down so that it hid her face from him. And he too had whispered, dismayed perhaps a little, and yet feeling a strange pride, a strange novel emotion, feeling altogether different from the things he had fancied he might feel when this thing that he had dreaded should come. Suddenly he perceived finality, the advent of the solution, the reconciliation of the conflict that had been waged so long. Hesitations were at an end; — he took his line.

Next day he wrote a note, and two mornings later he started for his mathematical duffers an hour before it was absolutely necessary, and instead of going directly to Vigours', went over the bridge to Battersea Park. There waiting for him by a seat where once they had met before, he found Miss Heydinger pacing. They walked up and down side by side, speaking for a little while about indifferent topics, and then they came upon a pause …

"You have something to tell me?" said Miss Heydinger abruptly.

Lewisham changed colour a little. "Oh yes," he said; "the fact is—" He affected ease. "Did I ever tell you I was married?"

"*Married*?"

"Yes."

"Married!"

“Yes,” a little testily.

For a moment neither spoke. Lewisham stood without dignity staring at the dahlias of the London County Council, and Miss Heydinger stood regarding him.

“And that is what you have to tell me?”

Mr. Lewisham tamed and met her eyes. “Yes!” he said. “That is what I have to tell you.”

Pause. “Do you mind if I sit down?” asked Miss Heydinger in an indifferent tone.

“There is a seat yonder,” said Lewisham, “under the tree.”

They walked to the seat in silence.

“Now,” said Miss Heydinger, quietly. “Tell me whom you have married.”

Lewisham answered sketchily. She asked him another question and another. He felt stupid and answered with a halting truthfulness.

“I might have known,” she said, “I might have known. Only I would not know. Tell me some more. Tell me about her.”

Lewisham did. The whole thing was abominably disagreeable to him, but it had to be done, he had promised Ethel it should be done. Presently Miss Heydinger knew the main outline of his story, knew all his story except, the emotion that made it credible. “And you were married — before the second examination?” she repeated.

“Yes,” said Lewisham.

“But why did you not tell me of this before?” asked Miss Heydinger.

“I don’t, know,” said Lewisham. “I wanted to — that day, in Kensington
Gardens. But I didn’t. I suppose I ought to have done so.”

“I think you ought to have done so.”

“Yes, I suppose I ought … But I didn’t. Somehow — it has been hard. I didn’t know what you would say. The thing seemed so rash, you know, and all that.”

He paused blankly.

“I suppose you had to do it,” said Miss Heydinger presently, with her eyes on his profile.

Lewisham began the second and more difficult part of his explanation. “There’s been a difficulty,” he said, “all the way along — I mean — about you, that is. It’s a little difficult — The fact is, my life, you know — She looks at things differently from what we do.”

“We?”

“Yes — it’s odd, of course. But she has seen your letters—”

“You didn’t show her — ?”

“No. But, I mean, she knows you write to me, and she knows you write about Socialism and Literature and — things we have in common — things she hasn’t.”

“You mean to say she doesn’t understand these things?”

“She’s not thought about them. I suppose there’s a sort of difference in education—”

“And she objects — ?”

“No,” said Lewisham, lying promptly. “She doesn’t *object* …”

“Well?” said Miss Heydinger, and her face was white.

“She feels that — She feels — she does not say, of course, but I know she feels that it is something she ought to share. I know — how she cares for me. And it shames her — it reminds her — Don’t you see how it hurts her?”

“Yes. I see. So that even that little—” Miss Heydinger’s breath seemed to catch and she was abruptly silent.

She spoke at last with an effort. “That it hurts *me*,” she said, and grimaced and stopped again.

“No,” said Lewisham, “that is not it.” He hesitated.

“I *knew* this would hurt you.”

“You love her. You can sacrifice—”

“No. It is not that. But there is a difference. Hurting *her* — she would not understand. But you — somehow it seems a natural thing for me to come to you. I seem to look to you — For her I am always making allowances—”

“You love her.”

“I wonder if it *is* that makes the difference. Things are so complex. Love means anything — or nothing. I know you better than I do her, you know me better than she will ever do. I could tell you things I could not tell her. I could put all myself before you —

almost — and know you would understand — Only—”

“You love her.”

“Yes,” said Lewisham lamely and pulling at his moustache. “I suppose … that must be it.”

For a space neither spoke. Then Miss Heydinger said “*Oh*!” with extraordinary emphasis.

“To think of this end to it all! That all your promise … What is it she gives that I could not have given?

“Even now! Why should I give up that much of you that is mine? If she could take it — But she cannot take it. If I let you go — you will do nothing. All this ambition, all these interests will dwindle and die, and she will not mind. She will not understand. She will think that she still has you. Why should she covet what she cannot possess? Why should she be given the thing that is mine — to throw aside?”

She did not look at Lewisham, but before her, her face a white misery.

“In a way — I had come to think of you as something, belonging to me
… I shall — still.”

“There is one thing,” said Lewisham after a pause, “it is a thing that has come to me once or twice lately. Don’t you think that perhaps you over-estimate the things I might have done? I know we’ve talked of great things to do. But I’ve been struggling for half a year and more to get the sort of living almost anyone seems able to get. It has taken me all my time. One can’t help thinking after that, perhaps the world is a stiffer sort of affair …”

“No,” she said decisively. “You could have done great things.

“Even now,” she said, “you may do great things — If only I might see you sometimes, write to you sometimes — You are so capable and — weak. You must have somebody — That is your weakness. You fail in your belief. You must have support and belief — unstinted support and belief. Why could I not be that to you? It is all I want to be. At least — all I want to be now. Why need she know? It robs her of nothing. I want nothing — she has. But I know of my

own strength too I can do nothing. I know that with you … It is only knowing hurts her. Why should she know?”

Mr. Lewisham looked at her doubtfully. That phantom greatness of his, it was that lit her eyes. In that instant, at least he had no doubts of the possibility of his Career. But he knew that in some way the secret of his greatness and this admiration went together. Conceivably they were one and indivisible. Why indeed need Ethel know? His imagination ran over the things that might be done, the things that might happen, and touched swiftly upon complication, confusion, discovery.

“The thing is, I must simplify my life. I shall do nothing unless I simplify my life. Only people who are well off can be — complex. It is one thing or the other—”

He hesitated and suddenly had a vision of Ethel weeping as once he had seen her weep with the light on the tears in her eyes.

“No,” he said almost brutally. “No. It’s like this — I can’t do anything underhand. I mean — I’m not so amazingly honest — now. But I’ve not that sort of mind. She would find me out. It would do no good and she would find me out. My life’s too complex. I can’t manage it and go straight. I — you’ve overrated me. And besides — Things have happened. Something—” He hesitated and then snatched at his resolve, “I’ve got to simplify — and that’s the plain fact of the case. I’m sorry, but it is so.”

Miss Heydinger made no answer. Her silence astonished him. For nearly twenty seconds perhaps they sat without speaking. With a quick motion she stood up, and at once he stood up before her. Her face was flushed, her eyes downcast.

“Good-bye,” she said suddenly in a low tone and held out her hand.

“But,” said Lewisham and stopped. Miss Heydinger’s colour left her.

“Good-bye,” she said, looking him suddenly in the eyes and smiling awry. “There is no more to say, is there? Good-bye.”

He took her hand. “I hope I didn’t—”

“Good-bye,” she said impatiently, and suddenly disengaged her hand and turned away from him. He made a step after her.

“Miss Heydinger,” he said, but she did not stop. “Miss

Heydinger.” He realised that she did not want to answer him again….

He remained motionless, watching her retreating figure. An extraordinary sense of loss came into his mind, a vague impulse to pursue her and pour out vague passionate protestations….

Not once did she look back. She was already remote when he began hurrying after her. Once he was in motion he quickened his pace and gained upon her. He was within thirty yards of her as she drew near the gates.

His pace slackened. Suddenly he was afraid she might look back. She passed out of the gates, out of his sight. He stopped, looking where she had disappeared. He sighed and took the pathway to his left that led back to the bridge and Vigours’.

Halfway across this bridge came another crisis of indecision. He stopped, hesitating. An impertinent thought obtruded. He looked at his watch and saw that he must hurry if he would catch the train for Earl’s Court and Vigours’. He said Vigours’ might go to the devil.

But in the end he caught his train.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CROWNING VICTORY.

That night about seven Ethel came into their room with a waste-paper basket she had bought for him, and found him sitting at the little toilet table at which he was to "write." The outlook was, for a London outlook, spacious, down a long slope of roofs towards the Junction, a huge sky of blue passing upward to the darkling zenith and downward into a hazy bristling mystery of roofs and chimneys, from which emerged signal lights and steam puffs, gliding chains of lit window carriages and the vague vistas of streets. She showed him the basket and put it beside him, and then her eye caught the yellow document in his hand. "What is that you have there?"

He held it out to her. "I found it — lining my yellow box. I had it at Whortley."

She took it and perceived a chronological scheme. It was headed "SCHEMA," there were memoranda in the margin, and all the dates had been altered by a hasty hand.

"Hasn't it got yellow?" she said.

That seemed to him the wrong thing for her to say. He stared at the document with a sudden accession of sympathy. There was an interval. He became aware of her hand upon his shoulder, that she was bending over him. "Dear," she whispered, with a strange change in the quality of her voice. He knew she was seeking to say something that was difficult to say.

"Yes?" he said presently.

"You are not grieving?"

"What about?"

"*This*."

"No!"

"You are not — you are not even sorry?" she said.

"No — not even sorry."

"I can't understand that. It's so much—"

“I’m glad,” he proclaimed. “*Glad.”*

“But — the trouble — the expense — everything — and your work?”

“Yes,” he said, “that’s just it.”

She looked at him doubtfully. He glanced up at her, and she questioned his eyes. He put his arm about her, and presently and almost absent-mindedly she obeyed his pressure and bent down and kissed him.

“It settles things,” he said, holding her. “It joins us. Don’t you see? Before … But now it’s different. It’s something we have between us. It’s something that … It’s the link we needed. It will hold us together, cement us together. It will be our life. This will be my work now. The other …”

He faced a truth. “It was just … vanity!”

There was still a shade of doubt in her face, a wistfulness.

Presently she spoke.

“Dear,” she said.

“Yes?”

She knitted her brows. “No!” she said. “I can’t say it.”

In the interval she came into a sitting position on his knees.

He kissed her hand, but her face remained grave, and she looked out upon the twilight. “I know I’m stupid,” she said. “The things I say … aren’t the things I feel.”

He waited for her to say more.

“It’s no good,” she said.

He felt the onus of expression lay on him. He too found it a little difficult to put into words. “I think I understand,” he said, and wrestled with the impalpable. The pause seemed long and yet not altogether vacant. She lapsed abruptly into the prosaic. She started from him.

“If I don’t go down, Mother will get supper …”

At the door she stopped and turned a twilight face to him. For a moment they scrutinised one another. To her he was no more than a dim outline. Impulsively he held out his arms….

Then at the sound of a movement downstairs she freed herself and hurried out. He heard her call “Mother! You’re not to lay supper. You’re to rest.”

He listened to her footsteps until the kitchen had swallowed them up. Then he turned his eyes to the Schema again and for a moment it seemed but a little thing.

He picked it up in both hands and looked at it as if it was the writing of another man, and indeed it was the writing of another man. "Pamphlets in the Liberal Interest," he read, and smiled.

Presently a train of thought carried him off. His attitude relaxed a little, the Schema became for a time a mere symbol, a point of departure, and he stared out of the window at the darkling night. For a long time he sat pursuing thoughts that were half emotions, emotions that took upon themselves the shape and substance of ideas. The deepening current stirred at last among the roots of speech.

"Yes, it was vanity," he said. "A boy's vanity. For me — anyhow. I'm too two-sided…. Two-sided?… Commonplace!

"Dreams like mine — abilities like mine. Yes — any man! And yet … — The things I meant to do!"

His thoughts went to his Socialism, to his red-hot ambition of world mending. He marvelled at the vistas he had discovered since those days.

"Not for us — Not for us.

"We must perish in the wilderness. — Some day. Somewhen. But not for us….

"Come to think, it is all the Child. The future is the Child. The Future. What are we — any of us — but servants or traitors to that?…

* * * * *

"Natural Selection — it follows … this way is happiness … must be. There can be no other."

He sighed. "To last a lifetime, that is.

"And yet — it is almost as if Life had played me a trick — promised so much — given so little!…

"No! One must not look at it in that way! That will not do! That will *not* do.

“Career! In itself it is a career — the most important career in the world. Father! Why should I want more?

“And … Ethel! No wonder she seemed shallow … She has been shallow. No wonder she was restless. Unfulfilled … What had she to do? She was drudge, she was toy …

“Yes. This is life. This alone is life! For this we were made and born. All these other things — all other things — they are only a sort of play….

“Play!”

His eyes came back to the Schema. His hands shifted to the opposite corner and he hesitated. The vision of that arranged Career, that ordered sequence of work and successes, distinctions and yet further distinctions, rose brightly from the symbol. Then he compressed his lips and tore the yellow sheet in half, tearing very deliberately. He doubled the halves and tore again, doubled again very carefully and neatly until the Schema was torn into numberless little pieces. With it he seemed to be tearing his past self.

“Play,” he whispered after a long silence.

“It is the end of adolescence,” he said; “the end of empty dreams….”

He became very still, his hands resting on the table, his eyes staring out of the blue oblong of the window. The dwindling light gathered itself together and became a star.

He found he was still holding the torn fragments. He stretched out his hand and dropped them into that new waste-paper basket Ethel had bought for him.

Two pieces fell outside the basket. He stooped, picked them up, and put them carefully with their fellows.

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON

First published in 1901, this is one of Wells' more whimsical 'scientific romances'. In the narrative, a businessman named Bedford and a scientist called Cavor use a gravity-defying substance invented by the latter to travel to the moon, where they discover a race of insect-like creatures called Selenites. The novel was the basis for Georges Méliès's celebrated silent film *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (1902), which also drew on Jules Verne's lunar fantasies.

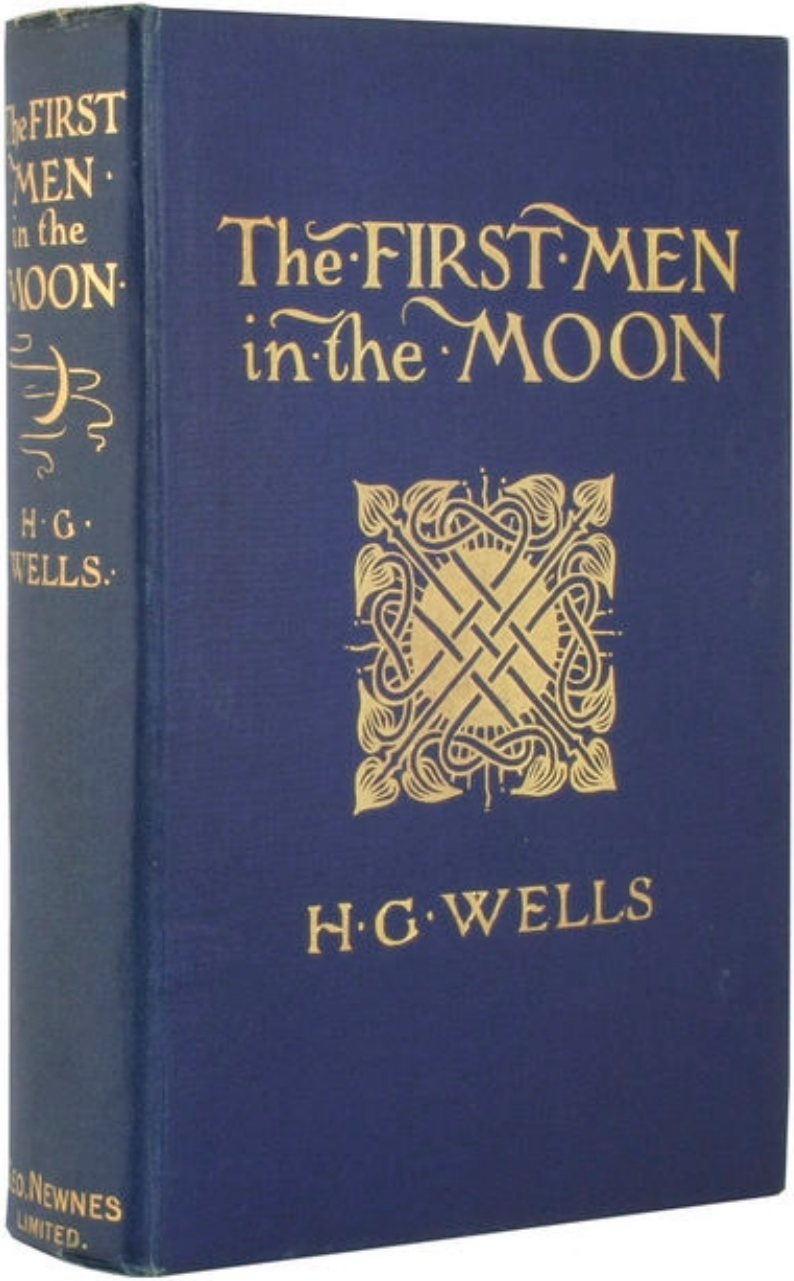

Cover of the first edition

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"I was progressing in great leaps and bounds"

Frontispiece.

The First Men in the Moon

By

H. G. Wells

Author of "Tales of Space and Time,"
"Love and Mr. Lewisham,"
and "Anticipations"

"Three thousand stadia from the earth to the moon. . . . Marvel not, my comrade, if I appear talking to you on super-terrestrial and aerial topics. The long and the short of the matter is that I am running over the order of a Journey I have lately made."—LUCIAN's *Icaromenippus*

London
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1901

Title page and frontispiece of the first edition

Chapter 1

Mr. Bedford Meets Mr. Cavor at Lympne

As I sit down to write here amidst the shadows of vine-leaves under the blue sky of southern Italy, it comes to me with a certain quality of astonishment that my participation in these amazing adventures of Mr. Cavor was, after all, the outcome of the purest accident. It might have been any one. I fell into these things at a time when I thought myself removed from the slightest possibility of disturbing experiences. I had gone to Lympne because I had imagined it the most uneventful place in the world. "Here, at any rate," said I, "I shall find peace and a chance to work!"

And this book is the sequel. So utterly at variance is destiny with all the little plans of men. I may perhaps mention here that very recently I had come an ugly cropper in certain business enterprises. Sitting now surrounded by all the circumstances of wealth, there is a luxury in admitting my extremity. I can admit, even, that to a certain extent my disasters were conceivably of my own making. It may be there are directions in which I have some capacity, but the conduct of business operations is not among these. But in those days I was young, and my youth among other objectionable forms took that of a pride in my capacity for affairs. I am young still in years, but the things that have happened to me have rubbed something of the youth from my mind. Whether they have brought any wisdom to light below it is a more doubtful matter.

It is scarcely necessary to go into the details of the speculations that landed me at Lympne, in Kent. Nowadays even about business transactions there is a strong spice of adventure. I took risks. In these things there is invariably a certain amount of give and take, and it fell to me finally to do the giving reluctantly enough. Even when I had got out of everything, one cantankerous creditor saw fit to be malignant. Perhaps you have met that flaming sense of outraged virtue, or perhaps you have only felt it. He ran me hard. It seemed to me, at last, that there was nothing for it but to write a play, unless I wanted to drudge for my living as a clerk. I have a certain

imagination, and luxurious tastes, and I meant to make a vigorous fight for it before that fate overtook me. In addition to my belief in my powers as a business man, I had always in those days had an idea that I was equal to writing a very good play. It is not, I believe, a very uncommon persuasion. I knew there is nothing a man can do outside legitimate business transactions that has such opulent possibilities, and very probably that biased my opinion. I had, indeed, got into the habit of regarding this unwritten drama as a convenient little reserve put by for a rainy day. That rainy day had come, and I set to work.

I soon discovered that writing a play was a longer business than I had supposed; at first I had reckoned ten days for it, and it was to have a pied-a-terre while it was in hand that I came to Lympne. I reckoned myself lucky in getting that little bungalow. I got it on a three years' agreement. I put in a few sticks of furniture, and while the play was in hand I did my own cooking. My cooking would have shocked Mrs. Bond. And yet, you know, it had flavour. I had a coffee-pot, a sauce-pan for eggs, and one for potatoes, and a frying-pan for sausages and bacon — such was the simple apparatus of my comfort. One cannot always be magnificent, but simplicity is always a possible alternative. For the rest I laid in an eighteen-gallon cask of beer on credit, and a trustful baker came each day. It was not, perhaps, in the style of Sybaris, but I have had worse times. I was a little sorry for the baker, who was a very decent man indeed, but even for him I hoped.

Certainly if any one wants solitude, the place is Lympne. It is in the clay part of Kent, and my bungalow stood on the edge of an old sea cliff and stared across the flats of Romney Marsh at the sea. In very wet weather the place is almost inaccessible, and I have heard that at times the postman used to traverse the more succulent portions of his route with boards upon his feet. I never saw him doing so, but I can quite imagine it. Outside the doors of the few cottages and houses that make up the present village big birch besoms are stuck, to wipe off the worst of the clay, which will give some idea of the texture of the district. I doubt if the place would be there at all, if it were not a fading memory of things gone for ever. It was the big port of England in Roman times, Portus Lemanis, and

now the sea is four miles away. All down the steep hill are boulders and masses of Roman brickwork, and from it old Watling Street, still paved in places, starts like an arrow to the north. I used to stand on the hill and think of it all, the galleys and legions, the captives and officials, the women and traders, the speculators like myself, all the swarm and tumult that came clanking in and out of the harbour. And now just a few lumps of rubble on a grassy slope, and a sheep or two — and I. And where the port had been were the levels of the marsh, sweeping round in a broad curve to distant Dungeness, and dotted here and there with tree clumps and the church towers of old medieval towns that are following Lemanis now towards extinction.

That outlook on the marsh was, indeed, one of the finest views I have ever seen. I suppose Dungeness was fifteen miles away; it lay like a raft on the sea, and farther westward were the hills by Hastings under the setting sun. Sometimes they hung close and clear, sometimes they were faded and low, and often the drift of the weather took them clean out of sight. And all the nearer parts of the marsh were laced and lit by ditches and canals.

The window at which I worked looked over the skyline of this crest, and it was from this window that I first set eyes on Cavor. It was just as I was struggling with my scenario, holding down my mind to the sheer hard work of it, and naturally enough he arrested my attention.

The sun had set, the sky was a vivid tranquillity of green and yellow, and against that he came out black — the oddest little figure.

He was a short, round-bodied, thin-legged little man, with a jerky quality in his motions; he had seen fit to clothe his extraordinary mind in a cricket cap, an overcoat, and cycling knickerbockers and stockings. Why he did so I do not know, for he never cycled and he never played cricket. It was a fortuitous concurrence of garments, arising I know not how. He gesticulated with his hands and arms, and jerked his head about and buzzed. He buzzed like something electric. You never heard such buzzing. And ever and again he cleared his throat with a most extraordinary noise.

There had been rain, and that spasmodic walk of his was enhanced by the extreme slipperiness of the footpath. Exactly as he came against the sun he stopped, pulled out a watch, hesitated. Then

with a sort of convulsive gesture he turned and retreated with every manifestation of haste, no longer gesticulating, but going with ample strides that showed the relatively large size of his feet — they were, I remember, grotesquely exaggerated in size by adhesive clay — to the best possible advantage.

This occurred on the first day of my sojourn, when my play-writing energy was at its height and I regarded the incident simply as an annoying distraction — the waste of five minutes. I returned to my scenario. But when next evening the apparition was repeated with remarkable precision, and again the next evening, and indeed every evening when rain was not falling, concentration upon the scenario became a considerable effort. "Confound the man," I said, "one would think he was learning to be a marionette!" and for several evenings I cursed him pretty heartily. Then my annoyance gave way to amazement and curiosity. Why on earth should a man do this thing? On the fourteenth evening I could stand it no longer, and so soon as he appeared I opened the french window, crossed the verandah, and directed myself to the point where he invariably stopped.

He had his watch out as I came up to him. He had a chubby, rubicund face with reddish brown eyes — previously I had seen him only against the light. "One moment, sir," said I as he turned. He stared. "One moment," he said, "certainly. Or if you wish to speak to me for longer, and it is not asking too much — your moment is up — would it trouble you to accompany me?"

"Not in the least," said I, placing myself beside him.

"My habits are regular. My time for intercourse — limited."

"This, I presume, is your time for exercise?"

"It is. I come here to enjoy the sunset."

"You don't."

"Sir?"

"You never look at it."

"Never look at it?"

"No. I've watched you thirteen nights, and not once have you looked at the sunset — not once."

He knitted his brows like one who encounters a problem.

"Well, I enjoy the sunlight — the atmosphere — I go along this

path, through that gate" — he jerked his head over his shoulder— "and round—"

"You don't. You never have been. It's all nonsense. There isn't a way.
To-night for instance—"

"Oh! to-night! Let me see. Ah! I just glanced at my watch, saw that I had already been out just three minutes over the precise half-hour, decided there was not time to go round, turned—"

"You always do."

He looked at me — reflected. "Perhaps I do, now I come to think of it. But what was it you wanted to speak to me about?"

"Why, this!"

"This?"

"Yes. Why do you do it? Every night you come making a noise —"

"Making a noise?"

"Like this." I imitated his buzzing noise. He looked at me, and it was evident the buzzing awakened distaste. "Do I do that?" he asked.

"Every blessed evening."

"I had no idea."

He stopped dead. He regarded me gravely. "Can it be," he said, "that I have formed a Habit?"

"Well, it looks like it. Doesn't it?"

He pulled down his lower lip between finger and thumb. He regarded a puddle at his feet.

"My mind is much occupied," he said. "And you want to know why! Well, sir,
I can assure you that not only do I not know why I do these things, but I
did not even know I did them. Come to think, it is just as you say;
I never *have* been beyond that field…. And these things annoy you?"

For some reason I was beginning to relent towards him. "Not annoy,"

I said. “But — imagine yourself writing a play!”

“I couldn’t.”

“Well, anything that needs concentration.”

“Ah!” he said, “of course,” and meditated. His expression became so eloquent of distress, that I relented still more. After all, there is a touch of aggression in demanding of a man you don’t know why he hums on a public footpath.

“You see,” he said weakly, “it’s a habit.”

“Oh, I recognise that.”

“I must stop it.”

“But not if it puts you out. After all, I had no business — it’s something of a liberty.”

“Not at all, sir,” he said, “not at all. I am greatly indebted to you. I should guard myself against these things. In future I will. Could I trouble you — once again? That noise?”

“Something like this,” I said. “Zuzzoo, zuzzoo. But really, you know—”

“I am greatly obliged to you. In fact, I know I am getting absurdly absent-minded. You are quite justified, sir — perfectly justified. Indeed, I am indebted to you. The thing shall end. And now, sir, I have already brought you farther than I should have done.”

“I do hope my impertinence—”

“Not at all, sir, not at all.”

We regarded each other for a moment. I raised my hat and wished him a good evening. He responded convulsively, and so we went our ways.

At the stile I looked back at his receding figure. His bearing had changed remarkably, he seemed limp, shrunken. The contrast with his former gesticulating, zuzzoing self took me in some absurd way as pathetic. I watched him out of sight. Then wishing very heartily I had kept to my own business, I returned to my bungalow and my play.

The next evening I saw nothing of him, nor the next. But he was very much in my mind, and it had occurred to me that as a sentimental comic character he might serve a useful purpose in the development of my plot. The third day he called upon me.

For a time I was puzzled to think what had brought him. He made indifferent conversation in the most formal way, then abruptly he came to business. He wanted to buy me out of my bungalow.

"You see," he said, "I don't blame you in the least, but you've destroyed a habit, and it disorganises my day. I've walked past here for years — years. No doubt I've hummed…. You've made all that impossible!"

I suggested he might try some other direction.

"No. There is no other direction. This is the only one. I've inquired. And now — every afternoon at four — I come to a dead wall."

"But, my dear sir, if the thing is so important to you—"

"It's vital. You see, I'm — I'm an investigator — I am engaged in a scientific research. I live—" he paused and seemed to think. "Just over there," he said, and pointed suddenly dangerously near my eye. "The house with white chimneys you see just over the trees. And my circumstances are abnormal — abnormal. I am on the point of completing one of the most important — demonstrations — I can assure you one of the most important demonstrations that have ever been made. It requires constant thought, constant mental ease and activity. And the afternoon was my brightest time! — effervescing with new ideas — new points of view."

"But why not come by still?"

"It would be all different. I should be self-conscious. I should think of you at your play — watching me irritated — instead of thinking of my work. No! I must have the bungalow."

I meditated. Naturally, I wanted to think the matter over thoroughly before anything decisive was said. I was generally ready enough for business in those days, and selling always attracted me; but in the first place it was not my bungalow, and even if I sold it to him at a good price I might get inconvenienced in the delivery of goods if the current owner got wind of the transaction, and in the second I was, well — undischarged. It was clearly a business that required delicate handling. Moreover, the possibility of his being in pursuit of some valuable invention also interested me. It occurred to me that I would like to know more of this research, not with any

dishonest intention, but simply with an idea that to know what it was would be a relief from play-writing. I threw out feelers.

He was quite willing to supply information. Indeed, once he was fairly under way the conversation became a monologue. He talked like a man long pent up, who has had it over with himself again and again. He talked for nearly an hour, and I must confess I found it a pretty stiff bit of listening. But through it all there was the undertone of satisfaction one feels when one is neglecting work one has set oneself. During that first interview I gathered very little of the drift of his work. Half his words were technicalities entirely strange to me, and he illustrated one or two points with what he was pleased to call elementary mathematics, computing on an envelope with a copying-ink pencil, in a manner that made it hard even to seem to understand. "Yes," I said, "yes. Go on!" Nevertheless I made out enough to convince me that he was no mere crank playing at discoveries. In spite of his crank-like appearance there was a force about him that made that impossible. Whatever it was, it was a thing with mechanical possibilities. He told me of a work-shed he had, and of three assistants — originally jobbing carpenters — whom he had trained. Now, from the work-shed to the patent office is clearly only one step. He invited me to see those things. I accepted readily, and took care, by a remark or so, to underline that. The proposed transfer of the bungalow remained very conveniently in suspense.

At last he rose to depart, with an apology for the length of his call. Talking over his work was, he said, a pleasure enjoyed only too rarely. It was not often he found such an intelligent listener as myself, he mingled very little with professional scientific men.

"So much pettiness," he explained; "so much intrigue! And really, when one has an idea — a novel, fertilising idea — I don't want to be uncharitable, but—"

I am a man who believes in impulses. I made what was perhaps a rash proposition. But you must remember, that I had been alone, play-writing in Lympne, for fourteen days, and my compunction for his ruined walk still hung about me. "Why not," said I, "make this your new habit? In the place of the one I spoilt? At least, until we can settle about the bungalow. What you want is to turn over your work in your mind. That you have always done during your afternoon

walk. Unfortunately that's over — you can't get things back as they were. But why not come and talk about your work to me; use me as a sort of wall against which you may throw your thoughts and catch them again? It's certain I don't know enough to steal your ideas myself — and I know no scientific men—"

I stopped. He was considering. Evidently the thing, attracted him. "But
I'm afraid I should bore you," he said.

"You think I'm too dull?"

"Oh, no; but technicalities—"

"Anyhow, you've interested me immensely this afternoon."

"Of course it would be a great help to me. Nothing clears up one's ideas so much as explaining them. Hitherto—"

"My dear sir, say no more."

"But really can you spare the time?"

"There is no rest like change of occupation," I said, with profound conviction.

The affair was over. On my verandah steps he turned. "I am already greatly indebted to you," he said.

I made an interrogative noise.

"You have completely cured me of that ridiculous habit of humming," he explained.

I think I said I was glad to be of any service to him, and he turned away.

Immediately the train of thought that our conversation had suggested must have resumed its sway. His arms began to wave in their former fashion. The faint echo of "zuzzoo" came back to me on the breeze….

Well, after all, that was not my affair….

He came the next day, and again the next day after that, and delivered two lectures on physics to our mutual satisfaction. He talked with an air of being extremely lucid about the "ether" and "tubes of force," and "gravitational potential," and things like that, and I sat in my other folding-chair and said, "Yes," "Go on," "I follow you," to keep him going. It was tremendously difficult stuff,

but I do not think he ever suspected how much I did not understand him. There were moments when I doubted whether I was well employed, but at any rate I was resting from that confounded play. Now and then things gleamed on me clearly for a space, only to vanish just when I thought I had hold of them. Sometimes my attention failed altogether, and I would give it up and sit and stare at him, wondering whether, after all, it would not be better to use him as a central figure in a good farce and let all this other stuff slide. And then, perhaps, I would catch on again for a bit.

At the earliest opportunity I went to see his house. It was large and carelessly furnished; there were no servants other than his three assistants, and his dietary and private life were characterised by a philosophical simplicity. He was a water-drinker, a vegetarian, and all those logical disciplinary things. But the sight of his equipment settled many doubts. It looked like business from cellar to attic — an amazing little place to find in an out-of-the-way village. The ground-floor rooms contained benches and apparatus, the bakehouse and scullery boiler had developed into respectable furnaces, dynamos occupied the cellar, and there was a gasometer in the garden. He showed it to me with all the confiding zest of a man who has been living too much alone. His seclusion was overflowing now in an excess of confidence, and I had the good luck to be the recipient.

The three assistants were creditable specimens of the class of "handy-men" from which they came. Conscientious if unintelligent, strong, civil, and willing. One, Spargus, who did the cooking and all the metal work, had been a sailor; a second, Gibbs, was a joiner; and the third was an ex-jobbing gardener, and now general assistant. They were the merest labourers. All the intelligent work was done by Cavor. Theirs was the darkest ignorance compared even with my muddled impression.

And now, as to the nature of these inquiries. Here, unhappily, comes a grave difficulty. I am no scientific expert, and if I were to attempt to set forth in the highly scientific language of Mr. Cavor the aim to which his experiments tended, I am afraid I should confuse not only the reader but myself, and almost certainly I should make some blunder that would bring upon me the mockery of every up-to-date student of mathematical physics in the country. The best thing I

can do therefore is, I think to give my impressions in my own inexact language, without any attempt to wear a garment of knowledge to which I have no claim.

The object of Mr. Cavor's search was a substance that should be "opaque" — he used some other word I have forgotten, but "opaque" conveys the idea — to "all forms of radiant energy." "Radiant energy," he made me understand, was anything like light or heat, or those Rontgen Rays there was so much talk about a year or so ago, or the electric waves of Marconi, or gravitation. All these things, he said, *radiate* out from centres, and act on bodies at a distance, whence comes the term "radiant energy." Now almost all substances are opaque to some form or other of radiant energy. Glass, for example, is transparent to light, but much less so to heat, so that it is useful as a fire-screen; and alum is transparent to light, but blocks heat completely. A solution of iodine in carbon bisulphide, on the other hand, completely blocks light, but is quite transparent to heat. It will hide a fire from you, but permit all its warmth to reach you. Metals are not only opaque to light and heat, but also to electrical energy, which passes through both iodine solution and glass almost as though they were not interposed. And so on.

Now all known substances are "transparent" to gravitation. You can use screens of various sorts to cut off the light or heat, or electrical influence of the sun, or the warmth of the earth from anything; you can screen things by sheets of metal from Marconi's rays, but nothing will cut off the gravitational attraction of the sun or the gravitational attraction of the earth. Yet why there should be nothing is hard to say. Cavor did not see why such a substance should not exist, and certainly I could not tell him. I had never thought of such a possibility before. He showed me by calculations on paper, which Lord Kelvin, no doubt, or Professor Lodge, or Professor Karl Pearson, or any of those great scientific people might have understood, but which simply reduced me to a hopeless muddle, that not only was such a substance possible, but that it must satisfy certain conditions. It was an amazing piece of reasoning. Much as it amazed and exercised me at the time, it would be impossible to reproduce it here. "Yes," I said to it all, "yes; go on!" Suffice it for this story that he believed he might be able to manufacture this

possible substance opaque to gravitation out of a complicated alloy of metals and something new — a new element, I fancy — called, I believe, *helium*, which was sent to him from London in sealed stone jars. Doubt has been thrown upon this detail, but I am almost certain it was *helium* he had sent him in sealed stone jars. It was certainly something very gaseous and thin. If only I had taken notes…

But then, how was I to foresee the necessity of taking notes?

Any one with the merest germ of an imagination will understand the extraordinary possibilities of such a substance, and will sympathise a little with the emotion I felt as this understanding emerged from the haze of abstruse phrases in which Cavor expressed himself. Comic relief in a play indeed! It was some time before I would believe that I had interpreted him aright, and I was very careful not to ask questions that would have enabled him to gauge the profundity of misunderstanding into which he dropped his daily exposition. But no one reading the story of it here will sympathise fully, because from my barren narrative it will be impossible to gather the strength of my conviction that this astonishing substance was positively going to be made.

I do not recall that I gave my play an hour's consecutive work at any time after my visit to his house. My imagination had other things to do. There seemed no limit to the possibilities of the stuff; whichever way I tried I came on miracles and revolutions. For example, if one wanted to lift a weight, however enormous, one had only to get a sheet of this substance beneath it, and one might lift it with a straw. My first natural impulse was to apply this principle to guns and ironclads, and all the material and methods of war, and from that to shipping, locomotion, building, every conceivable form of human industry. The chance that had brought me into the very birth-chamber of this new time — it was an epoch, no less — was one of those chances that come once in a thousand years. The thing unrolled, it expanded and expanded. Among other things I saw in it my redemption as a business man. I saw a parent company, and daughter companies, applications to right of us, applications to left, rings and trusts, privileges, and concessions spreading and spreading, until one vast, stupendous Cavorite company ran and ruled the world.

And I was in it!

I took my line straight away. I knew I was staking everything, but I jumped there and then.

"We're on absolutely the biggest thing that has ever been invented," I said, and put the accent on "we." "If you want to keep me out of this, you'll have to do it with a gun. I'm coming down to be your fourth labourer to-morrow."

He seemed surprised at my enthusiasm, but not a bit suspicious or hostile. Rather, he was self-depreciatory. He looked at me doubtfully. "But do you really think — ?" he said. "And your play! How about that play?"

"It's vanished!" I cried. "My dear sir, don't you see what you've got? Don't you see what you're going to do?"

That was merely a rhetorical turn, but positively, he didn't. At first I could not believe it. He had not had the beginning of the inkling of an idea. This astonishing little man had been working on purely theoretical grounds the whole time! When he said it was "the most important" research the world had ever seen, he simply meant it squared up so many theories, settled so much that was in doubt; he had troubled no more about the application of the stuff he was going to turn out than if he had been a machine that makes guns. This was a possible substance, and he was going to make it! V'la tout, as the Frenchman says.

Beyond that, he was childish! If he made it, it would go down to posterity as Cavorite or Cavorine, and he would be made an F.R.S., and his portrait given away as a scientific worthy with Nature, and things like that. And that was all he saw! He would have dropped this bombshell into the world as though he had discovered a new species of gnat, if it had not happened that I had come along. And there it would have lain and fizzled, like one or two other little things these scientific people have lit and dropped about us.

When I realised this, it was I did the talking, and Cavor who said, "Go on!" I jumped up. I paced the room, gesticulating like a boy of twenty. I tried to make him understand his duties and responsibilities in the matter — *our* duties and responsibilities in the matter. I assured him we might make wealth enough to work any sort of social

revolution we fancied, we might own and order the whole world. I told him of companies and patents, and the case for secret processes. All these things seemed to take him much as his mathematics had taken me. A look of perplexity came into his ruddy little face. He stammered something about indifference to wealth, but I brushed all that aside. He had got to be rich, and it was no good his stammering. I gave him to understand the sort of man I was, and that I had had very considerable business experience. I did not tell him I was an undischarged bankrupt at the time, because that was temporary, but I think I reconciled my evident poverty with my financial claims. And quite insensibly, in the way such projects grow, the understanding of a Cavorite monopoly grew up between us. He was to make the stuff, and I was to make the boom.

I stuck like a leech to the "we"— "you" and "I" didn't exist for me.

His idea was that the profits I spoke of might go to endow research, but that, of course, was a matter we had to settle later. "That's all right," I shouted, "that's all right." The great point, as I insisted, was to get the thing done.

"Here is a substance," I cried, "no home, no factory, no fortress, no ship can dare to be without — more universally applicable even than a patent medicine. There isn't a solitary aspect of it, not one of its ten thousand possible uses that will not make us rich, Cavor, beyond the dreams of avarice!"

"No!" he said. "I begin to see. It's extraordinary how one gets new points of view by talking over things!"

"And as it happens you have just talked to the right man!"

"I suppose no one," he said, "is absolutely *averse* to enormous wealth.
Of course there is one thing—"

He paused. I stood still.

"It is just possible, you know, that we may not be able to make it after all! It may be one of those things that are a theoretical possibility, but a practical absurdity. Or when we make it, there may be some little hitch!"

“We’ll tackle the hitch when it comes.” said I.

Chapter 2

The First Making of Cavorite

But Cavor's fears were groundless, so far as the actual making was concerned. On the 14th of October, 1899, this incredible substance was made!

Oddly enough, it was made at last by accident, when Mr. Cavor least expected it. He had fused together a number of metals and certain other things — I wish I knew the particulars now! — and he intended to leave the mixture a week and then allow it to cool slowly. Unless he had miscalculated, the last stage in the combination would occur when the stuff sank to a temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit. But it chanced that, unknown to Cavor, dissension had arisen about the furnace tending. Gibbs, who had previously seen to this, had suddenly attempted to shift it to the man who had been a gardener, on the score that coal was soil, being dug, and therefore could not possibly fall within the province of a joiner; the man who had been a jobbing gardener alleged, however, that coal was a metallic or ore-like substance, let alone that he was cook. But Spargus insisted on Gibbs doing the coaling, seeing that he was a joiner and that coal is notoriously fossil wood. Consequently Gibbs ceased to replenish the furnace, and no one else did so, and Cavor was too much immersed in certain interesting problems concerning a Cavorite flying machine (neglecting the resistance of the air and one or two other points) to perceive that anything was wrong. And the premature birth of his invention took place just as he was coming across the field to my bungalow for our afternoon talk and tea.

I remember the occasion with extreme vividness. The water was boiling, and everything was prepared, and the sound of his "zuzzoo" had brought me out upon the verandah. His active little figure was black against the autumnal sunset, and to the right the chimneys of his house just rose above a gloriously tinted group of trees. Remoter rose the Wealden Hills, faint and blue, while to the left the hazy marsh spread out spacious and serene. And then —

The chimneys jerked heavenward, smashing into a string of bricks

as they rose, and the roof and a miscellany of furniture followed. Then overtaking them came a huge white flame. The trees about the building swayed and whirled and tore themselves to pieces, that sprang towards the flare. My ears were smitten with a clap of thunder that left me deaf on one side for life, and all about me windows smashed, unheeded.

I took three steps from the verandah towards Cavor's house, and even as I did so came the wind.

Instantly my coat tails were over my head, and I was progressing in great leaps and bounds, and quite against my will, towards him. In the same moment the discoverer was seized, whirled about, and flew through the screaming air. I saw one of my chimney pots hit the ground within six yards of me, leap a score of feet, and so hurry in great strides towards the focus of the disturbance. Cavor, kicking and flapping, came down again, rolled over and over on the ground for a space, struggled up and was lifted and borne forward at an enormous velocity, vanishing at last among the labouring, lashing trees that writhed about his house.

A mass of smoke and ashes, and a square of bluish shining substance rushed up towards the zenith. A large fragment of fencing came sailing past me, dropped edgeways, hit the ground and fell flat, and then the worst was over. The aerial commotion fell swiftly until it was a mere strong gale, and I became once more aware that I had breath and feet. By leaning back against the wind I managed to stop, and could collect such wits as still remained to me.

In that instant the whole face of the world had changed. The tranquil sunset had vanished, the sky was dark with scurrying clouds, everything was flattened and swaying with the gale. I glanced back to see if my bungalow was still in a general way standing, then staggered forwards towards the trees amongst which Cavor had vanished, and through whose tall and leaf-denuded branches shone the flames of his burning house.

I entered the copse, dashing from one tree to another and clinging to them, and for a space I sought him in vain. Then amidst a heap of smashed branches and fencing that had banked itself against a portion of his garden wall I perceived something stir. I made a run for this, but before I reached it a brown object separated itself, rose

on two muddy legs, and protruded two drooping, bleeding hands. Some tattered ends of garment fluttered out from its middle portion and streamed before the wind.

For a moment I did not recognise this earthy lump, and then I saw that it was Cavor, caked in the mud in which he had rolled. He leant forward against the wind, rubbing the dirt from his eyes and mouth.

He extended a muddy lump of hand, and staggered a pace towards me. His face worked with emotion, little lumps of mud kept falling from it. He looked as damaged and pitiful as any living creature I have ever seen, and his remark therefore amazed me exceedingly.

"Gratulate me," he gasped; "gratulate me!"

"Congratulate you!" said I. "Good heavens! What for?"

"I've done it."

"You *have*. What on earth caused that explosion?"

A gust of wind blew his words away. I understood him to say that it wasn't an explosion at all. The wind hurled me into collision with him, and we stood clinging to one another.

"Try and get back — to my bungalow," I bawled in his ear. He did not hear me, and shouted something about "three martyrs — science," and also something about "not much good." At the time he laboured under the impression that his three attendants had perished in the whirlwind. Happily this was incorrect. Directly he had left for my bungalow they had gone off to the public-house in Lympne to discuss the question of the furnaces over some trivial refreshment.

I repeated my suggestion of getting back to my bungalow, and this time he understood. We clung arm-in-arm and started, and managed at last to reach the shelter of as much roof as was left to me. For a space we sat in arm-chairs and panted. All the windows were broken, and the lighter articles of furniture were in great disorder, but no irrevocable damage was done. Happily the kitchen door had stood the pressure upon it, so that all my crockery and cooking materials had survived. The oil stove was still burning, and I put on the water to boil again for tea. And that prepared, I could turn on Cavor for his explanation.

"Quite correct," he insisted; "quite correct. I've done it, and it's all right."

"But," I protested. "All right! Why, there can't be a rick standing,

or a fence or a thatched roof undamaged for twenty miles round….”

“It’s all right — *really*. I didn’t, of course, foresee this little upset. My mind was preoccupied with another problem, and I’m apt to disregard these practical side issues. But it’s all right—”

“My dear sir,” I cried, “don’t you see you’ve done thousands of pounds’ worth of damage?”

“There, I throw myself on your discretion. I’m not a practical man, of course, but don’t you think they will regard it as a cyclone?”

“But the explosion—”

“It was not an explosion. It’s perfectly simple. Only, as I say, I’m apt to overlook these little things. Its that zuzzoo business on a larger scale. Inadvertently I made this substance of mine, this Cavorite, in a thin, wide sheet….”

He paused. “You are quite clear that the stuff is opaque to gravitation, that it cuts off things from gravitating towards each other?”

“Yes,” said I. “Yes.”

“Well, so soon as it reached a temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit, and the process of its manufacture was complete, the air above it, the portions of roof and ceiling and floor above it ceased to have weight. I suppose you know — everybody knows nowadays — that, as a usual thing, the air *has* weight, that it presses on everything at the surface of the earth, presses in all directions, with a pressure of fourteen and a half pounds to the square inch?”

“I know that,” said I. “Go on.”

“I know that too,” he remarked. “Only this shows you how useless knowledge is unless you apply it. You see, over our Cavorite this ceased to be the case, the air there ceased to exert any pressure, and the air round it and not over the Cavorite was exerting a pressure of fourteen pounds and a half to the square in upon this suddenly weightless air. Ah! you begin to see! The air all about the Cavorite crushed in upon the air above it with irresistible force. The air above the Cavorite was forced upward violently, the air that rushed in to replace it immediately lost weight, ceased to exert any pressure, followed suit, blew the ceiling through and the roof off….

“You perceive,” he said, “it formed a sort of atmospheric fountain, a kind of chimney in the atmosphere. And if the Cavorite

itself hadn't been loose and so got sucked up the chimney, does it occur to you what would have happened?"

I thought. "I suppose," I said, "the air would be rushing up and up over that infernal piece of stuff now."

"Precisely," he said. "A huge fountain—"

"Spouting into space! Good heavens! Why, it would have squirted all the atmosphere of the earth away! It would have robbed the world of air! It would have been the death of all mankind! That little lump of stuff!"

"Not exactly into space," said Cavor, "but as bad — practically. It would have whipped the air off the world as one peels a banana, and flung it thousands of miles. It would have dropped back again, of course — but on an asphyxiated world! From our point of view very little better than if it never came back!"

I stared. As yet I was too amazed to realise how all my expectations had been upset. "What do you mean to do now?" I asked.

"In the first place if I may borrow a garden trowel I will remove some of this earth with which I am encased, and then if I may avail myself of your domestic conveniences I will have a bath. This done, we will converse more at leisure. It will be wise, I think" — he laid a muddy hand on my arm— "if nothing were said of this affair beyond ourselves. I know I have caused great damage — probably even dwelling-houses may be ruined here and there upon the country-side. But on the other hand, I cannot possibly pay for the damage I have done, and if the real cause of this is published, it will lead only to heartburning and the obstruction of my work. One cannot foresee everything, you know, and I cannot consent for one moment to add the burthen of practical considerations to my theorising. Later on, when you have come in with your practical mind, and Cavorite is floated — floated is the word, isn't it? — and it has realised all you anticipate for it, we may set matters right with these persons. But not now — not now. If no other explanation is offered, people, in the present unsatisfactory state of meteorological science, will ascribe all this to a cyclone; there might be a public subscription, and as my house has collapsed and been burnt, I should in that case receive a considerable share in the compensation, which would be extremely

helpful to the prosecution of our researches. But if it is known that *I* caused this, there will be no public subscription, and everybody will be put out. Practically I should never get a chance of working in peace again. My three assistants may or may not have perished. That is a detail. If they have, it is no great loss; they were more zealous than able, and this premature event must be largely due to their joint neglect of the furnace. If they have not perished, I doubt if they have the intelligence to explain the affair. They will accept the cyclone story. And if during the temporary unfitness of my house for occupation, I may lodge in one of the untenanted rooms of this bungalow of yours—"

He paused and regarded me.

A man of such possibilities, I reflected, is no ordinary guest to entertain.

"Perhaps," said I, rising to my feet, "we had better begin by looking for a trowel," and I led the way to the scattered vestiges of the greenhouse.

And while he was having his bath I considered the entire question alone. It was clear there were drawbacks to Mr. Cavor's society I had not foreseen. The absentmindedness that had just escaped depopulating the terrestrial globe, might at any moment result in some other grave inconvenience. On the other hand I was young, my affairs were in a mess, and I was in just the mood for reckless adventure — with a chance of something good at the end of it. I had quite settled in my mind that I was to have half at least in that aspect of the affair. Fortunately I held my bungalow, as I have already explained, on a three-year agreement, without being responsible for repairs; and my furniture, such as there was of it, had been hastily purchased, was unpaid for, insured, and altogether devoid of associations. In the end I decided to keep on with him, and see the business through.

Certainly the aspect of things had changed very greatly. I no longer doubted at all the enormous possibilities of the substance, but I began to have doubts about the gun-carriage and the patent boots. We set to work at once to reconstruct his laboratory and proceed with our experiments. Cavor talked more on my level than he had ever done before, when it came to the question of how we should make

the stuff next.

"Of course we must make it again," he said, with a sort of glee I had not expected in him, "of course we must make it again. We have caught a Tartar, perhaps, but we have left the theoretical behind us for good and all. If we can possibly avoid wrecking this little planet of ours, we will. But — there must be risks! There must be. In experimental work there always are. And here, as a practical man, *you* must come in. For my own part it seems to me we might make it edgeways, perhaps, and very thin. Yet I don't know. I have a certain dim perception of another method. I can hardly explain it yet. But curiously enough it came into my mind, while I was rolling over and over in the mud before the wind, and very doubtful how the whole adventure was to end, as being absolutely the thing I ought to have done."

Even with my aid we found some little difficulty, and meanwhile we kept at work restoring the laboratory. There was plenty to do before it became absolutely necessary to decide upon the precise form and method of our second attempt. Our only hitch was the strike of the three labourers, who objected to my activity as a foreman. But that matter we compromised after two days' delay.

Chapter 3

The Building of the sphere

I remember the occasion very distinctly when Cavor told me of his idea of the sphere. He had had intimations of it before, but at the time it seemed to come to him in a rush. We were returning to the bungalow for tea, and on the way he fell humming. Suddenly he shouted, “That’s it! That finishes it! A sort of roller blind!”

“Finishes what?” I asked.

“Space — anywhere! The moon.”

“What do you mean?”

“Mean? Why — it must be a sphere! That’s what I mean!”

I saw I was out of it, and for a time I let him talk in his own fashion. I hadn’t the ghost of an idea then of his drift. But after he had taken tea he made it clear to me.

“It’s like this,” he said. “Last time I ran this stuff that cuts things off from gravitation into a flat tank with an overlap that held it down. And directly it had cooled and the manufacture was completed all that uproar happened, nothing above it weighed anything, the air went squirting up, the house squirted up, and if the stuff itself hadn’t squirted up too, I don’t know what would have happened! But suppose the substance is loose, and quite free to go up?”

“It will go up at once!”

“Exactly. With no more disturbance than firing a big gun.”

“But what good will that do?”

“I’m going up with it!”

I put down my teacup and stared at him.

“Imagine a sphere,” he explained, “large enough to hold two people and their luggage. It will be made of steel lined with thick glass; it will contain a proper store of solidified air, concentrated food, water distilling apparatus, and so forth. And enamelled, as it were, on the outer steel—”

“Cavorite?”

“Yes.”

“But how will you get inside?”

“There was a similar problem about a dumpling.”

“Yes, I know. But how?”

“That’s perfectly easy. An air-tight manhole is all that is needed. That, of course, will have to be a little complicated; there will have to be a valve, so that things may be thrown out, if necessary, without much loss of air.”

“Like Jules Verne’s thing in *A Trip to the Moon*.”

But Cavor was not a reader of fiction.

“I begin to see,” I said slowly. “And you could get in and screw yourself up while the Cavorite was warm, and as soon as it cooled it would become impervious to gravitation, and off you would fly—”

“At a tangent.”

“You would go off in a straight line—” I stopped abruptly. “What is to prevent the thing travelling in a straight line into space for ever?” I asked. “You’re not safe to get anywhere, and if you do — how will you get back?”

“I’ve just thought of that,” said Cavor. “That’s what I meant when I said the thing is finished. The inner glass sphere can be air-tight, and, except for the manhole, continuous, and the steel sphere can be made in sections, each section capable of rolling up after the fashion of a roller blind. These can easily be worked by springs, and released and checked by electricity conveyed by platinum wires fused through the glass. All that is merely a question of detail. So you see, that except for the thickness of the blind rollers, the Cavorite exterior of the sphere will consist of windows or blinds, whichever you like to call them. Well, when all these windows or blinds are shut, no light, no heat, no gravitation, no radiant energy of any sort will get at the inside of the sphere, it will fly on through space in a straight line, as you say. But open a window, imagine one of the windows open. Then at once any heavy body that chances to be in that direction will attract us—”

I sat taking it in.

“You see?” he said.

“Oh, I *see*.”

“Practically we shall be able to tack about in space just as we wish. Get attracted by this and that.”

“Oh, yes. That’s clear enough. Only—”

“Well?”

“I don’t quite see what we shall do it for! It’s really only jumping off the world and back again.”

“Surely! For example, one might go to the moon.”

“And when one got there? What would you find?”

“We should see — Oh! consider the new knowledge.”

“Is there air there?”

“There may be.”

“It’s a fine idea,” I said, “but it strikes me as a large order all the same. The moon! I’d much rather try some smaller things first.”

“They’re out of the question, because of the air difficulty.”

“Why not apply that idea of spring blinds — Cavorite blinds in strong steel cases — to lifting weights?”

“It wouldn’t work,” he insisted. “After all, to go into outer space is not so much worse, if at all, than a polar expedition. Men go on polar expeditions.”

“Not business men. And besides, they get paid for polar expeditions. And if anything goes wrong there are relief parties. But this — it’s just firing ourselves off the world for nothing.”

“Call it prospecting.”

“You’ll have to call it that…. One might make a book of it perhaps,” I said.

“I have no doubt there will be minerals,” said Cavor.

“For example?”

“Oh! sulphur, ores, gold perhaps, possibly new elements.”

“Cost of carriage,” I said. “You know you’re not a practical man. The moon’s a quarter of a million miles away.”

“It seems to me it wouldn’t cost much to cart any weight anywhere if you packed it in a Cavorite case.”

I had not thought of that. “Delivered free on head of purchaser, eh?”

“It isn’t as though we were confined to the moon.”

“You mean?”

“There’s Mars — clear atmosphere, novel surroundings, exhilarating sense of lightness. It might be pleasant to go there.”

“Is there air on Mars?”

“Oh, yes!”

“Seems as though you might run it as a sanatorium. By the way, how far is Mars?”

“Two hundred million miles at present,” said Cavor airily; “and you go close by the sun.”

My imagination was picking itself up again. “After all,” I said, “there’s something in these things. There’s travel—”

An extraordinary possibility came rushing into my mind. Suddenly I saw, as in a vision, the whole solar system threaded with Cavorite liners and spheres deluxe. “Rights of pre-emption,” came floating into my head — planetary rights of pre-emption. I recalled the old Spanish monopoly in American gold. It wasn’t as though it was just this planet or that — it was all of them. I stared at Cavor’s rubicund face, and suddenly my imagination was leaping and dancing. I stood up, I walked up and down; my tongue was unloosened.

“I’m beginning to take it in,” I said; “I’m beginning to take it in.” The transition from doubt to enthusiasm seemed to take scarcely any time at all. “But this is tremendous!” I cried. “This is Imperial! I haven’t been dreaming of this sort of thing.”

Once the chill of my opposition was removed, his own pent-up excitement had play. He too got up and paced. He too gesticulated and shouted. We behaved like men inspired. We *were* men inspired.

“We’ll settle all that!” he said in answer to some incidental difficulty that had pulled me up. “We’ll soon settle that! We’ll start the drawings for mouldings this very night.”

“We’ll start them now,” I responded, and we hurried off to the laboratory to begin upon this work forthwith.

I was like a child in Wonderland all that night. The dawn found us both still at work — we kept our electric light going heedless of the day. I remember now exactly how these drawings looked. I shaded and tinted while Cavor drew — smudged and haste-marked they were in every line, but wonderfully correct. We got out the orders for the steel blinds and frames we needed from that night’s work, and the glass sphere was designed within a week. We gave up our afternoon conversations and our old routine altogether. We worked, and we slept and ate when we could work no longer for hunger and fatigue. Our enthusiasm infected even our three men, though they had no idea

what the sphere was for. Through those days the man Gibbs gave up walking, and went everywhere, even across the room, at a sort of fussy run.

And it grew — the sphere. December passed, January — I spent a day with a broom sweeping a path through the snow from bungalow to laboratory — February, March. By the end of March the completion was in sight. In January had come a team of horses, a huge packing-case; we had our thick glass sphere now ready, and in position under the crane we had rigged to sling it into the steel shell. All the bars and blinds of the steel shell — it was not really a spherical shell, but polyhedral, with a roller blind to each facet — had arrived by February, and the lower half was bolted together. The Cavorite was half made by March, the metallic paste had gone through two of the stages in its manufacture, and we had plastered quite half of it on to the steel bars and blinds. It was astonishing how closely we kept to the lines of Cavor's first inspiration in working out the scheme. When the bolting together of the sphere was finished, he proposed to remove the rough roof of the temporary laboratory in which the work was done, and build a furnace about it. So the last stage of Cavorite making, in which the paste is heated to a dull red glow in a stream of helium, would be accomplished when it was already on the sphere.

And then we had to discuss and decide what provisions we were to take — compressed foods, concentrated essences, steel cylinders containing reserve oxygen, an arrangement for removing carbonic acid and waste from the air and restoring oxygen by means of sodium peroxide, water condensers, and so forth. I remember the little heap they made in the corner — tins, and rolls, and boxes — convincingly matter-of-fact.

It was a strenuous time, with little chance of thinking. But one day, when we were drawing near the end, an odd mood came over me. I had been bricking up the furnace all the morning, and I sat down by these possessions dead beat. Everything seemed dull and incredible.

"But look here, Cavor," I said. "After all! What's it all for?"

He smiled. "The thing now is to go."

"The moon," I reflected. "But what do you expect? I thought the

moon was a dead world."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"We're going to see."

"Are we?" I said, and stared before me.

"You are tired," he remarked. "You'd better take a walk this afternoon."

"No," I said obstinately; "I'm going to finish this brickwork."

And I did, and insured myself a night of insomnia. I don't think I have ever had such a night. I had some bad times before my business collapse, but the very worst of those was sweet slumber compared to this infinity of aching wakefulness. I was suddenly in the most enormous funk at the thing we were going to do.

I do not remember before that night thinking at all of the risks we were running. Now they came like that array of spectres that once beleaguered Prague, and camped around me. The strangeness of what we were about to do, the unearthliness of it, overwhelmed me. I was like a man awakened out of pleasant dreams to the most horrible surroundings. I lay, eyes wide open, and the sphere seemed to get more flimsy and feeble, and Cavor more unreal and fantastic, and the whole enterprise madder and madder every moment.

I got out of bed and wandered about. I sat at the window and stared at the immensity of space. Between the stars was the void, the unfathomable darkness! I tried to recall the fragmentary knowledge of astronomy I had gained in my irregular reading, but it was all too vague to furnish any idea of the things we might expect. At last I got back to bed and snatched some moments of sleep — moments of nightmare rather — in which I fell and fell and fell for evermore into the abyss of the sky.

I astonished Cavor at breakfast. I told him shortly, "I'm not coming with you in the sphere."

I met all his protests with a sullen persistence. "The thing's too mad,"
I said, "and I won't come. The thing's too mad."

I would not go with him to the laboratory. I fretted bout my bungalow for a time, and then took hat and stick and set out alone, I

knew not whither. It chanced to be a glorious morning: a warm wind and deep blue sky, the first green of spring abroad, and multitudes of birds singing. I lunched on beef and beer in a little public-house near Elham, and startled the landlord by remarking apropos of the weather, “A man who leaves the world when days of this sort are about is a fool!”

“That’s what I says when I heerd on it!” said the landlord, and I found that for one poor soul at least this world had proved excessive, and there had been a throat-cutting. I went on with a new twist to my thoughts.

In the afternoon I had a pleasant sleep in a sunny place, and went on my way refreshed. I came to a comfortable-looking inn near Canterbury. It was bright with creepers, and the landlady was a clean old woman and took my eye. I found I had just enough money to pay for my lodging with her. I decided to stop the night there. She was a talkative body, and among many other particulars learnt she had never been to London. “Canterbury’s as far as ever I been,” she said. “I’m not one of your gad-about sort.”

“How would you like a trip to the moon?” I cried.

“I never did hold with them ballooneys,” she said evidently under the impression that this was a common excursion enough. “I wouldn’t go up in one — not for ever so.”

This struck me as being funny. After I had supped I sat on a bench by the door of the inn and gossiped with two labourers about brickmaking, and motor cars, and the cricket of last year. And in the sky a faint new crescent, blue and vague as a distant Alp, sank westward over the sun.

The next day I returned to Cavor. “I am coming,” I said. “I’ve been a little out of order, that’s all.”

That was the only time I felt any serious doubt our enterprise. Nerves purely! After that I worked a little more carefully, and took a trudge for an hour every day. And at last, save for the heating in the furnace, our labours were at an end.

Chapter 4

Inside the Sphere

"Go on," said Cavor, as I sat across the edge of the manhole, and looked down into the black interior of the sphere. We two were alone. It was evening, the sun had set, and the stillness of the twilight was upon everything.

I drew my other leg inside and slid down the smooth glass to the bottom of the sphere, then turned to take the cans of food and other impedimenta from Cavor. The interior was warm, the thermometer stood at eighty, and as we should lose little or none of this by radiation, we were dressed in shoes and thin flannels. We had, however, a bundle of thick woollen clothing and several thick blankets to guard against mischance.

By Cavor's direction I placed the packages, the cylinders of oxygen, and so forth, loosely about my feet, and soon we had everything in. He walked about the roofless shed for a time seeking anything we had overlooked, and then crawled in after me. I noted something in his hand.

"What have you got there?" I asked.

"Haven't you brought anything to read?"

"Good Lord! No."

"I forgot to tell you. There are uncertainties — The voyage may last —
We may be weeks!"

"But—"

"We shall be floating in this sphere with absolutely no occupation."

"I wish I'd known—"

He peered out of the manhole. "Look!" he said. "There's something there!"

"Is there time?"

"We shall be an hour."

I looked out. It was an old number of *Tit-Bits* that one of the men must have brought. Farther away in the corner I saw a torn *Lloyd's News*. I scrambled back into the sphere with these things. "What have you got?" I said.

I took the book from his hand and read, "The Works of William Shakespeare".

He coloured slightly. "My education has been so purely scientific —" he said apologetically.

"Never read him?"

"Never."

"He knew a little, you know — in an irregular sort of way."

"Precisely what I am told," said Cavor.

I assisted him to screw in the glass cover of the manhole, and then he pressed a stud to close the corresponding blind in the outer case. The little oblong of twilight vanished. We were in darkness. For a time neither of us spoke. Although our case would not be impervious to sound, everything was very still. I perceived there was nothing to grip when the shock of our start should come, and I realised that I should be uncomfortable for want of a chair.

"Why have we no chairs?" I asked.

"I've settled all that," said Cavor. "We won't need them."

"Why not?"

"You will see," he said, in the tone of a man who refuses to talk.

I became silent. Suddenly it had come to me clear and vivid that I was a fool to be inside that sphere. Even now, I asked myself, is to too late to withdraw? The world outside the sphere, I knew, would be cold and inhospitable enough for me — for weeks I had been living on subsidies from Cavor — but after all, would it be as cold as the infinite zero, as inhospitable as empty space? If it had not been for the appearance of cowardice, I believe that even then I should have made him let me out. But I hesitated on that score, and hesitated, and grew fretful and angry, and the time passed.

There came a little jerk, a noise like champagne being uncorked in another room, and a faint whistling sound. For just one instant I had a sense of enormous tension, a transient conviction that my feet were

pressing downward with a force of countless tons. It lasted for an infinitesimal time.

But it stirred me to action. “Cavor!” I said into the darkness, “my nerve’s in rags. I don’t think—”

I stopped. He made no answer.

“Confound it!” I cried; “I’m a fool! What business have I here? I’m not coming, Cavor. The thing’s too risky. I’m getting out.”

“You can’t,” he said.

“Can’t! We’ll soon see about that!”

He made no answer for ten seconds. “It’s too late for us to quarrel now, Bedford,” he said. “That little jerk was the start. Already we are flying as swiftly as a bullet up into the gulf of space.”

“I—” I said, and then it didn’t seem to matter what happened. For a time I was, as it were, stunned; I had nothing to say. It was just as if I had never heard of this idea of leaving the world before. Then I perceived an unaccountable change in my bodily sensations. It was a feeling of lightness, of unreality. Coupled with that was a queer sensation in the head, an apoplectic effect almost, and a thumping of blood vessels at the ears. Neither of these feelings diminished as time went on, but at last I got so used to them that I experienced no inconvenience.

I heard a click, and a little glow lamp came into being.

I saw Cavor’s face, as white as I felt my own to be. We regarded one another in silence. The transparent blackness of the glass behind him made him seem as though he floated in a void.

“Well, we’re committed,” I said at last.

“Yes,” he said, “we’re committed.”

“Don’t move,” he exclaimed, at some suggestion of a gesture. “Let your muscles keep quite lax — as if you were in bed. We are in a little universe of our own. Look at those things!”

He pointed to the loose cases and bundles that had been lying on the blankets in the bottom of the sphere. I was astonished to see that they were floating now nearly a foot from the spherical wall. Then I saw from his shadow that Cavor was no longer leaning against the glass. I thrust out my hand behind me, and found that I too was suspended in space, clear of the glass.

I did not cry out nor gesticulate, but fear came upon me. It was

like being held and lifted by something — you know not what. The mere touch of my hand against the glass moved me rapidly. I understood what had happened, but that did not prevent my being afraid. We were cut off from all exterior gravitation, only the attraction of objects within our sphere had effect. Consequently everything that was not fixed to the glass was falling — slowly because of the slightness of our masses — towards the centre of gravity of our little world, which seemed to be somewhere about the middle of the sphere, but rather nearer to myself than Cavor, on account of my greater weight.

"We must turn round," said Cavor, "and float back to back, with the things between us."

It was the strangest sensation conceivable, floating thus loosely in space, at first indeed horribly strange, and when the horror passed, not disagreeable at all, exceeding restful; indeed, the nearest thing in earthly experience to it that I know is lying on a very thick, soft feather bed. But the quality of utter detachment and independence! I had not reckoned on things like this. I had expected a violent jerk at starting, a giddy sense of speed. Instead I felt — as if I were disembodied. It was not like the beginning of a journey; it was like the beginning of a dream.

Chapter 5

The Journey to the Moon

Presently Cavor extinguished the light. He said we had not overmuch energy stored, and that what we had we must economise for reading. For a time, whether it was long or short I do not know, there was nothing but blank darkness.

A question floated up out of the void. “How are we pointing?” I said. “What is our direction?”

“We are flying away from the earth at a tangent, and as the moon is near her third quarter we are going somewhere towards her. I will open a blind—”

Came a click, and then a window in the outer case yawned open. The sky outside was as black as the darkness within the sphere, but the shape of the open window was marked by an infinite number of stars.

Those who have only seen the starry sky from the earth cannot imagine its appearance when the vague, half luminous veil of our air has been withdrawn. The stars we see on earth are the mere scattered survivors that penetrate our misty atmosphere. But now at last I could realise the meaning of the hosts of heaven!

Stranger things we were presently to see, but that airless, star-dusted sky! Of all things, I think that will be one of the last I shall forget.

The little window vanished with a click, another beside it snapped open and instantly closed, and then a third, and for a moment I had to close my eyes because of the blinding splendour of the waning moon.

For a space I had to stare at Cavor and the white-lit things about me to season my eyes to light again, before I could turn them towards that pallid glare.

Four windows were open in order that the gravitation of the moon might act upon all the substances in our sphere. I found I was no

longer floating freely in space, but that my feet were resting on the glass in the direction of the moon. The blankets and cases of provisions were also creeping slowly down the glass, and presently came to rest so as to block out a portion of the view. It seemed to me, of course, that I looked "down" when I looked at the moon. On earth "down" means earthward, the way things fall, and "up" the reverse direction. Now the pull of gravitation was towards the moon, and for all I knew to the contrary our earth was overhead. And, of course, when all the Cavorite blinds were closed, "down" was towards the centre of our sphere, and "up" towards its outer wall.

It was curiously unlike earthly experience, too, to have the light coming up to one. On earth light falls from above, or comes slanting down sideways, but here it came from beneath our feet, and to see our shadows we had to look up.

At first it gave me a sort of vertigo to stand only on thick glass and look down upon the moon through hundreds of thousands of miles of vacant space; but this sickness passed very speedily. And then — the splendour of the sight!

The reader may imagine it best if he will lie on the ground some warm summer's night and look between his upraised feet at the moon, but for some reason, probably because the absence of air made it so much more luminous, the moon seemed already considerably larger than it does from earth. The minutest details of its surface were acutely clear. And since we did not see it through air, its outline was bright and sharp, there was no glow or halo about it, and the star-dust that covered the sky came right to its very margin, and marked the outline of its unilluminated part. And as I stood and stared at the moon between my feet, that perception of the impossible that had been with me off and on ever since our start, returned again with tenfold conviction.

"Cavor," I said, "this takes me queerly. Those companies we were going to run, and all that about minerals?"

"Well?"

"I don't see 'em here."

"No," said Cavor; "but you'll get over all that."

"I suppose I'm made to turn right side up again. Still, *this* —

For a moment I could half believe there never was a world.”

“That copy of *Lloyd’s News* might help you.”

I stared at the paper for a moment, then held it above the level of my face, and found I could read it quite easily. I struck a column of mean little advertisements. “A gentleman of private means is willing to lend money,” I read. I knew that gentleman. Then somebody eccentric wanted to sell a Cutaway bicycle, “quite new and cost 15 pounds,” for five pounds; and a lady in distress wished to dispose of some fish knives and forks, “a wedding present,” at a great sacrifice. No doubt some simple soul was sagely examining these knives and forks, and another triumphantly riding off on that bicycle, and a third trustfully consulting that benevolent gentleman of means even as I read. I laughed, and let the paper drift from my hand.

“Are we visible from the earth?” I asked.

“Why?”

“I knew some one who was rather interested in astronomy. It occurred to me that it would be rather odd if — my friend — chanced to be looking through some telescope.”

“It would need the most powerful telescope on earth even now to see us as the minutest speck.”

For a time I stared in silence at the moon.

“It’s a world,” I said; “one feels that infinitely more than one ever did on earth. People perhaps—”

“People!” he exclaimed. “No! Banish all that! Think yourself a sort of ultra-arctic voyager exploring the desolate places of space. Look at it!”

He waved his hand at the shining whiteness below. “It’s dead — dead! Vast extinct volcanoes, lava wildernesses, tumbled wastes of snow, or frozen carbonic acid, or frozen air, and everywhere landslip seams and cracks and gulfs. Nothing happens. Men have watched this planet systematically with telescopes for over two hundred years. How much change do you think they have seen?”

“None.”

“They have traced two indisputable landslips, a doubtful crack, and one slight periodic change of colour, and that’s all.”

“I didn’t know they’d traced even that.”

“Oh, yes. But as for people — !”

“By the way,” I asked, “how small a thing will the biggest telescopes show upon the moon?”

“One could see a fair-sized church. One could certainly see any towns or buildings, or anything like the handiwork of men. There might perhaps be insects, something in the way of ants, for example, so that they could hide in deep burrows from the lunar light, or some new sort of creatures having no earthly parallel. That is the most probable thing, if we are to find life there at all. Think of the difference in conditions! Life must fit itself to a day as long as fourteen earthly days, a cloudless sun-blaze of fourteen days, and then a night of equal length, growing ever colder and colder under these, cold, sharp stars. In that night there must be cold, the ultimate cold, absolute zero, 273 degrees Centigrade, below the earthly freezing point. Whatever life there is must hibernate through that, and rise again each day.”

He mused. “One can imagine something worm-like,” he said, “taking its air solid as an earth-worm swallows earth, or thick-skinned monsters—”

“By the bye,” I said, “why didn’t we bring a gun?”

He did not answer that question. “No,” he concluded, “we just have to go.
We shall see when we get there.”

I remembered something. “Of course, there’s my minerals, anyhow,” I said; “whatever the conditions may be.”

Presently he told me he wished to alter our course a little by letting the earth tug at us for a moment. He was going to open one earthward blind for thirty seconds. He warned me that it would make my head swim, and advised me to extend my hands against the glass to break my fall. I did as he directed, and thrust my feet against the bales of food cases and air cylinders to prevent their falling upon me. Then with a click the window flew open. I fell clumsily upon hands and face, and saw for a moment between my black extended fingers our mother earth — a planet in a downward sky.

We were still very near — Cavor told me the distance was

perhaps eight hundred miles and the huge terrestrial disc filled all heaven. But already it was plain to see that the world was a globe. The land below us was in twilight and vague, but westward the vast gray stretches of the Atlantic shone like molten silver under the receding day. I think I recognised the cloud-dimmed coast-lines of France and Spain and the south of England, and then, with a click, the shutter closed again, and I found myself in a state of extraordinary confusion sliding slowly over the smooth glass.

When at last things settled themselves in my mind again, it seemed quite beyond question that the moon was "down" and under my feet, and that the earth was somewhere away on the level of the horizon — the earth that had been "down" to me and my kindred since the beginning of things.

So slight were the exertions required of us, so easy did the practical annihilation of our weight make all we had to do, that the necessity for taking refreshment did not occur to us for nearly six hours (by Cavor's chronometer) after our start. I was amazed at that lapse of time. Even then I was satisfied with very little. Cavor examined the apparatus for absorbing carbonic acid and water, and pronounced it to be in satisfactory order, our consumption of oxygen having been extraordinarily slight. And our talk being exhausted for the time, and there being nothing further for us to do, we gave way to a curious drowsiness that had come upon us, and spreading our blankets on the bottom of the sphere in such a manner as to shut out most of the moonlight, wished each other good-night, and almost immediately fell asleep.

And so, sleeping, and sometimes talking and reading a little, and at times eating, although without any keenness of appetite,[*] but for the most part in a sort of quiescence that was neither waking nor slumber, we fell through a space of time that had neither night nor day in it, silently, softly, and swiftly down towards the moon.

[* Footnote: It is a curious thing, that while we were in the sphere we felt not the slightest desire for food, nor did we feel the want of it when we abstained. At first we forced our appetites, but afterwards we fasted completely. Altogether we did not consume one-hundredth part of the compressed provisions we had brought with us. The amount of carbonic acid we breathed was also unnaturally low, but

why this was, I am quite unable to explain.]

Chapter 6

The Landing on the Moon

I remember how one day Cavor suddenly opened six of our shutters and blinded me so that I cried aloud at him. The whole area was moon, a stupendous scimitar of white dawn with its edge hacked out by notches of darkness, the crescent shore of an ebbing tide of darkness, out of which peaks and pinnacles came glittering into the blaze of the sun. I take it the reader has seen pictures or photographs of the moon and that I need not describe the broader features of that landscape, those spacious ring-like ranges vaster than any terrestrial mountains, their summits shining in the day, their shadows harsh and deep, the gray disordered plains, the ridges, hills, and craterlets, all passing at last from a blazing illumination into a common mystery of black. Athwart this world we were flying scarcely a hundred miles above its crests and pinnacles. And now we could see, what no eye on earth will ever see, that under the blaze of the day the harsh outlines of the rocks and ravines of the plains and crater floor grew gray and indistinct under a thickening haze, that the white of their lit surfaces broke into lumps and patches, and broke again and shrank and vanished, and that here and there strange tints of brown and olive grew and spread.

But little time we had for watching then. For now we had come to the real danger of our journey. We had to drop ever closer to the moon as we spun about it, to slacken our pace and watch our chance, until at last we could dare to drop upon its surface.

For Cavor that was a time of intense exertion; for me it was an anxious inactivity. I seemed perpetually to be getting out of his way. He leapt about the sphere from point to point with an agility that would have been impossible on earth. He was perpetually opening and closing the Cavorite windows, making calculations, consulting his chronometer by means of the glow lamp during those last eventful hours. For a long time we had all our windows closed and hung silently in darkness hurling through space.

Then he was feeling for the shutter studs, and suddenly four

windows were open. I staggered and covered my eyes, drenched and scorched and blinded by the unaccustomed splendour of the sun beneath my feet. Then again the shutters snapped, leaving my brain spinning in a darkness that pressed against the eyes. And after that I floated in another vast, black silence.

Then Cavor switched on the electric light, and told me he proposed to bind all our luggage together with the blankets about it, against the concussion of our descent. We did this with our windows closed, because in that way our goods arranged themselves naturally at the centre of the sphere. That too was a strange business; we two men floating loose in that spherical space, and packing and pulling ropes. Imagine it if you can! No up nor down, and every effort resulting in unexpected movements. Now I would be pressed against the glass with the full force of Cavor's thrust, now I would be kicking helplessly in a void. Now the star of the electric light would be overhead, now under foot. Now Cavor's feet would float up before my eyes, and now we would be crossways to each other. But at last our goods were safely bound together in a big soft bale, all except two blankets with head holes that we were to wrap about ourselves.

Then for a flash Cavor opened a window moonward, and we saw that we were dropping towards a huge central crater with a number of minor craters grouped in a sort of cross about it. And then again Cavor flung our little sphere open to the scorching, blinding sun. I think he was using the sun's attraction as a brake. "Cover yourself with a blanket," he cried, thrusting himself from me, and for a moment I did not understand.

Then I hauled the blanket from beneath my feet and got it about me and over my head and eyes. Abruptly he closed the shutters again, snapped one open again and closed it, then suddenly began snapping them all open, each safely into its steel roller. There came a jar, and then we were rolling over and over, bumping against the glass and against the big bale of our luggage, and clutching at each other, and outside some white substance splashed as if we were rolling down a slope of snow….

Over, clutch, bump, clutch, bump, over….

Came a thud, and I was half buried under the bale of our

possessions, and for a space everything was still. Then I could hear Cavor puffing and grunting, and the snapping of a shutter in its sash. I made an effort, thrust back our blanket-wrapped luggage, and emerged from beneath it. Our open windows were just visible as a deeper black set with stars.

We were still alive, and we were lying in the darkness of the shadow of the wall of the great crater into which we had fallen.

We sat getting our breath again, and feeling the bruises on our limbs. I don't think either of us had had a very clear expectation of such rough handling as we had received. I struggled painfully to my feet. "And now," said I, "to look at the landscape of the moon! But — ! It's tremendously dark, Cavor!"

The glass was dewy, and as I spoke I wiped at it with my blanket. "We're half an hour or so beyond the day," he said. "We must wait."

It was impossible to distinguish anything. We might have been in a sphere of steel for all that we could see. My rubbing with the blanket simply smeared the glass, and as fast as I wiped it, it became opaque again with freshly condensed moisture mixed with an increasing quantity of blanket hairs. Of course I ought not to have used the blanket. In my efforts to clear the glass I slipped upon the damp surface, and hurt my shin against one of the oxygen cylinders that protruded from our bale.

The thing was exasperating — it was absurd. Here we were just arrived upon the moon, amidst we knew not what wonders, and all we could see was the gray and streaming wall of the bubble in which we had come.

"Confound it!" I said, "but at this rate we might have stopped at home;" and I squatted on the bale and shivered, and drew my blanket closer about me.

Abruptly the moisture turned to spangles and fronds of frost. "Can you reach the electric heater," said Cavor. "Yes — that black knob. Or we shall freeze."

I did not wait to be told twice. "And now," said I, "what are we to do?"

"Wait," he said.

"Wait?"

"Of course. We shall have to wait until our air gets warm again,

and then this glass will clear. We can't do anything till then. It's night here yet; we must wait for the day to overtake us. Meanwhile, don't you feel hungry?"

For a space I did not answer him, but sat fretting. I turned reluctantly from the smeared puzzle of the glass and stared at his face. "Yes," I said, "I am hungry. I feel somehow enormously disappointed. I had expected — I don't know what I had expected, but not this."

I summoned my philosophy, and rearranging my blanket about me sat down on the bale again and began my first meal on the moon. I don't think I finished it — I forget. Presently, first in patches, then running rapidly together into wider spaces, came the clearing of the glass, came the drawing of the misty veil that hid the moon world from our eyes.

We peered out upon the landscape of the moon.

Chapter 7

Sunrise on the Moon

As we saw it first it was the wildest and most desolate of scenes. We were in an enormous amphitheatre, a vast circular plain, the floor of the giant crater. Its cliff-like walls closed us in on every side. From the westward the light of the unseen sun fell upon them, reaching to the very foot of the cliff, and showed a disordered escarpment of drab and grayish rock, lined here and there with banks and crevices of snow. This was perhaps a dozen miles away, but at first no intervening atmosphere diminished in the slightest the minutely detailed brilliancy with which these things glared at us. They stood out clear and dazzling against a background of starry blackness that seemed to our earthly eyes rather a gloriously spangled velvet curtain than the spaciousness of the sky.

The eastward cliff was at first merely a starless selvedge to the starry dome. No rosy flush, no creeping pallor, announced the commencing day. Only the Corona, the Zodiacal light, a huge cone-shaped, luminous haze, pointing up towards the splendour of the morning star, warned us of the imminent nearness of the sun.

Whatever light was about us was reflected by the westward cliffs. It showed a huge undulating plain, cold and gray, a gray that deepened eastward into the absolute raven darkness of the cliff shadow. Innumerable rounded gray summits, ghostly hummocks, billows of snowy substance, stretching crest beyond crest into the remote obscurity, gave us our first inkling of the distance of the crater wall. These hummocks looked like snow. At the time I thought they were snow. But they were not — they were mounds and masses of frozen air.

So it was at first; and then, sudden, swift, and amazing, came the lunar day.

The sunlight had crept down the cliff, it touched the drifted masses at its base and incontinently came striding with seven-leagued boots towards us. The distant cliff seemed to shift and quiver, and at the touch of the dawn a reek of gray vapour poured

upward from the crater floor, whirls and puffs and drifting wraiths of gray, thicker and broader and denser, until at last the whole westward plain was steaming like a wet handkerchief held before the fire, and the westward cliffs were no more than refracted glare beyond.

"It is air," said Cavor. "It must be air — or it would not rise like this — at the mere touch of a sun-beam. And at this pace…."

He peered upwards. "Look!" he said.

"What?" I asked.

"In the sky. Already. On the blackness — a little touch of blue. See! The stars seem larger. And the little ones and all those dim nebulosities we saw in empty space — they are hidden!"

Swiftly, steadily, the day approached us. Gray summit after gray summit was overtaken by the blaze, and turned to a smoking white intensity. At last there was nothing to the west of us but a bank of surging fog, the tumultuous advance and ascent of cloudy haze. The distant cliff had receded farther and farther, had loomed and changed through the whirl, and foundered and vanished at last in its confusion.

Nearer came that steaming advance, nearer and nearer, coming as fast as the shadow of a cloud before the south-west wind. About us rose a thin anticipatory haze.

Cavor gripped my arm. "What?" I said.

"Look! The sunrise! The sun!"

He turned me about and pointed to the brow of the eastward cliff, looming above the haze about us, scarce lighter than the darkness of the sky. But now its line was marked by strange reddish shapes, tongues of vermilion flame that writhed and danced. I fancied it must be spirals of vapour that had caught the light and made this crest of fiery tongues against the sky, but indeed it was the solar prominences I saw, a crown of fire about the sun that is forever hidden from earthly eyes by our atmospheric veil.

And then — the sun!

Steadily, inevitably came a brilliant line, came a thin edge of intolerable effulgence that took a circular shape, became a bow, became a blazing sceptre, and hurled a shaft of heat at us as though it was a spear.

It seemed verily to stab my eyes! I cried aloud and turned about

blinded, groping for my blanket beneath the bale.

And with that incandescence came a sound, the first sound that had reached us from without since we left the earth, a hissing and rustling, the stormy trailing of the aerial garment of the advancing day. And with the coming of the sound and the light the sphere lurched, and blinded and dazzled we staggered helplessly against each other. It lurched again, and the hissing grew louder. I had shut my eyes perforce, I was making clumsy efforts to cover my head with my blanket, and this second lurch sent me helplessly off my feet. I fell against the bale, and opening my eyes had a momentary glimpse of the air just outside our glass. It was running — it was boiling — like snow into which a white-hot rod is thrust. What had been solid air had suddenly at the touch of the sun become a paste, a mud, a slushy liquefaction, that hissed and bubbled into gas.

There came a still more violent whirl of the sphere and we had clutched one another. In another moment we were spun about again. Round we went and over, and then I was on all fours. The lunar dawn had hold of us. It meant to show us little men what the moon could do with us.

I caught a second glimpse of things without, puffs of vapour, half liquid slush, excavated, sliding, falling, sliding. We dropped into darkness. I went down with Cavor's knees in my chest. Then he seemed to fly away from me, and for a moment I lay with all the breath out of my body staring upward. A toppling crag of the melting stuff had splashed over us, buried us, and now it thinned and boiled off us. I saw the bubbles dancing on the glass above. I heard Cavor exclaiming feebly.

Then some huge landslip in the thawing air had caught us, and spluttering expostulation, we began to roll down a slope, rolling faster and faster, leaping crevasses and rebounding from banks, faster and faster, westward into the white-hot boiling tumult of the lunar day.

Clutching at one another we spun about, pitched this way and that, our bale of packages leaping at us, pounding at us. We collided, we gripped, we were torn asunder — our heads met, and the whole universe burst into fiery darts and stars! On the earth we should have smashed one another a dozen times, but on the moon, luckily for us,

our weight was only one-sixth of what it is terrestrially, and we fell very mercifully. I recall a sensation of utter sickness, a feeling as if my brain were upside down within my skull, and then —

Something was at work upon my face, some thin feelers worried my ears. Then I discovered the brilliance of the landscape around was mitigated by blue spectacles. Cavor bent over me, and I saw his face upside down, his eyes also protected by tinted goggles. His breath came irregularly, and his lip was bleeding from a bruise. "Better?" he said, wiping the blood with the back of his hand.

Everything seemed swaying for a space, but that was simply my giddiness. I perceived that he had closed some of the shutters in the outer sphere to save me — from the direct blaze of the sun. I was aware that everything about us was very brilliant.

"Lord!" I gasped. "But this—"

I craned my neck to see. I perceived there was a blinding glare outside, an utter change from the gloomy darkness of our first impressions. "Have I been insensible long?" I asked.

"I don't know — the chronometer is broken. Some little time…. My dear chap! I have been afraid…"

I lay for a space taking this in. I saw his face still bore evidences of emotion. For a while I said nothing. I passed an inquisitive hand over my contusions, and surveyed his face for similar damages. The back of my right hand had suffered most, and was skinless and raw. My forehead was bruised and had bled. He handed me a little measure with some of the restorative — I forget the name of it — he had brought with us. After a time I felt a little better. I began to stretch my limbs carefully. Soon I could talk.

"It wouldn't have done," I said, as though there had been no interval.

"No! it *wouldn't*."

He thought, his hands hanging over his knees. He peered through the glass and then stared at me.

"Good Lord!" he said. "No!"

"What has happened?" I asked after a pause. "Have we jumped to the tropics?"

"It was as I expected. This air has evaporated — if it is air. At any rate, it has evaporated, and the surface of the moon is showing. We

are lying on a bank of earthy rock. Here and there bare soil is exposed. A queer sort of soil!”

It occurred to him that it was unnecessary to explain. He assisted me into a sitting position, and I could see with my own eyes.

Chapter 8

A Lunar Morning

The harsh emphasis, the pitiless black and white of scenery had altogether disappeared. The glare of the sun had taken upon itself a faint tinge of amber; the shadows upon the cliff of the crater wall were deeply purple. To the eastward a dark bank of fog still crouched and sheltered from the sunrise, but to the westward the sky was blue and clear. I began to realise the length of my insensibility.

We were no longer in a void. An atmosphere had arisen about us. The outline of things had gained in character, had grown acute and varied; save for a shadowed space of white substance here and there, white substance that was no longer air but snow, the arctic appearance had gone altogether. Everywhere broad rusty brown spaces of bare and tumbled earth spread to the blaze of the sun. Here and there at the edge of the snowdrifts were transient little pools and eddies of water, the only things stirring in that expanse of barrenness. The sunlight inundated the upper two blinds of our sphere and turned our climate to high summer, but our feet were still in shadow, and the sphere was lying upon a drift of snow.

And scattered here and there upon the slope, and emphasised by little white threads of unthawed snow upon their shady sides, were shapes like sticks, dry twisted sticks of the same rusty hue as the rock upon which they lay. That caught one's thoughts sharply. Sticks! On a lifeless world? Then as my eye grew more accustomed to the texture of their substance, I perceived that almost all this surface had a fibrous texture, like the carpet of brown needles one finds beneath the shade of pine trees.

"Cavor!" I said.

"Yes."

"It may be a dead world now — but once—"

Something arrested my attention. I had discovered among these needles a number of little round objects. And it seemed to me that one of these had moved. "Cavor," I whispered.

"What?"

But I did not answer at once. I stared incredulous. For an instant I could not believe my eyes. I gave an inarticulate cry. I gripped his arm. I pointed. “Look!” I cried, finding my tongue. “There! Yes! And there!”

His eyes followed my pointing finger. “Eh?” he said.

How can I describe the thing I saw? It is so petty a thing to state, and yet it seemed so wonderful, so pregnant with emotion. I have said that amidst the stick-like litter were these rounded bodies, these little oval bodies that might have passed as very small pebbles. And now first one and then another had stirred, had rolled over and cracked, and down the crack of each of them showed a minute line of yellowish green, thrusting outward to meet the hot encouragement of the newly-risen sun. For a moment that was all, and then there stirred, and burst a third!

“It is a seed,” said Cavor. And then I heard him whisper very softly, “Life!”

“Life!” And immediately it poured upon us that our vast journey had not been made in vain, that we had come to no arid waste of minerals, but to a world that lived and moved! We watched intensely. I remember I kept rubbing the glass before me with my sleeve, jealous of the faintest suspicion of mist.

The picture was clear and vivid only in the middle of the field. All about that centre the dead fibres and seeds were magnified and distorted by the curvature of the glass. But we could see enough! One after another all down the sunlit slope these miraculous little brown bodies burst and gaped apart, like seed-pods, like the husks of fruits; opened eager mouths. that drank in the heat and light pouring in a cascade from the newly-risen sun.

Every moment more of these seed coats ruptured, and even as they did so the swelling pioneers overflowed their rent-distended seed-cases, and passed into the second stage of growth. With a steady assurance, a swift deliberation, these amazing seeds thrust a rootlet downward to the earth and a queer little bundle-like bud into the air. In a little while the whole slope was dotted with minute plantlets standing at attention in the blaze of the sun.

They did not stand for long. The bundle-like buds swelled and strained and opened with a jerk, thrusting out a coronet of little sharp tips, spreading a whorl of tiny, spiky, brownish leaves, that lengthened rapidly, lengthened visibly even as we watched. The movement was slower than any animal's, swifter than any plant's I have ever seen before. How can I suggest it to you — the way that growth went on? The leaf tips grew so that they moved onward even while we looked at them. The brown seed-case shrivelled and was absorbed with an equal rapidity. Have you ever on a cold day taken a thermometer into your warm hand and watched the little thread of mercury creep up the tube? These moon plants grew like that.

In a few minutes, as it seemed, the buds of the more forward of these plants had lengthened into a stem and were even putting forth a second whorl of leaves, and all the slope that had seemed so recently a lifeless stretch of litter was now dark with the stunted olive-green herbage of bristling spikes that swayed with the vigour of their growing.

I turned about, and behold! along the upper edge of a rock to the eastward a similar fringe in a scarcely less forward condition swayed and bent, dark against the blinding glare of the sun. And beyond this fringe was the silhouette of a plant mass, branching clumsily like a cactus, and swelling visibly, swelling like a bladder that fills with air.

Then to the westward also I discovered that another such distended form was rising over the scrub. But here the light fell upon its sleek sides, and I could see that its colour was a vivid orange hue. It rose as one watched it; if one looked away from it for a minute and then back, its outline had changed; it thrust out blunt congested branches until in a little time it rose a coralline shape of many feet in height. Compared with such a growth the terrestrial puff-ball, which will sometimes swell a foot in diameter in a single night, would be a hopeless laggard. But then the puff-ball grows against a gravitational pull six times that of the moon. Beyond, out of gullies and flats that had been hidden from us, but not from the quickening sun, over reefs and banks of shining rock, a bristling beard of spiky and fleshy vegetation was straining into view, hurrying tumultuously to take advantage of the brief day in which it must flower and fruit and seed again and die. It was like a miracle, that growth. So, one must

imagine, the trees and plants arose at the Creation and covered the desolation of the new-made earth.

Imagine it! Imagine that dawn! The resurrection of the frozen air, the stirring and quickening of the soil, and then this silent uprising of vegetation, this unearthly ascent of fleshiness and spikes. Conceive it all lit by a blaze that would make the intensest sunlight of earth seem watery and weak. And still around this stirring jungle, wherever there was shadow, lingered banks of bluish snow. And to have the picture of our impression complete, you must bear in mind that we saw it all through a thick bent glass, distorting it as things are distorted by a lens, acute only in the centre of the picture, and very bright there, and towards the edges magnified and unreal.

Chapter 9

Prospecting Begins

We ceased to gaze. We turned to each other, the same thought, the same question in our eyes. For these plants to grow, there must be some air, however attenuated, air that we also should be able to breathe.

"The manhole?" I said.

"Yes!" said Cavor, "if it is air we see!"

"In a little while," I said, "these plants will be as high as we are. Suppose — suppose after all — Is it certain? How do you know that stuff *is* air? It may be nitrogen — it may be carbonic acid even!"

"That's easy," he said, and set about proving it. He produced a big piece of crumpled paper from the bale, lit it, and thrust it hastily through the man-hole valve. I bent forward and peered down through the thick glass for its appearance outside, that little flame on whose evidence depended so much!

I saw the paper drop out and lie lightly upon the snow. The pink flame of its burning vanished. For an instant it seemed to be extinguished. And then I saw a little blue tongue upon the edge of it that trembled, and crept, and spread!

Quietly the whole sheet, save where it lay in immediate contact with the snow, charred and shrivelled and sent up a quivering thread of smoke. There was no doubt left to me; the atmosphere of the moon was either pure oxygen or air, and capable therefore — unless its tenuity was excessive — of supporting our alien life. We might emerge — and live!

I sat down with my legs on either side of the manhole and prepared to unscrew it, but Cavor stopped me. "There is first a little precaution," he said. He pointed out that although it was certainly an oxygenated atmosphere outside, it might still be so rarefied as to cause us grave injury. He reminded me of mountain sickness, and of the bleeding that often afflicts aeronauts who have ascended too swiftly, and he spent some time in the preparation of a sickly-tasting drink which he insisted on my sharing. It made me feel a little numb,

but otherwise had no effect on me. Then he permitted me to begin unscrewing.

Presently the glass stopper of the manhole was so far undone that the denser air within our sphere began to escape along the thread of the screw, singing as a kettle sings before it boils. Thereupon he made me desist. It speedily became evident that the pressure outside was very much less than it was within. How much less it was we had no means of telling.

I sat grasping the stopper with both hands, ready to close it again if, in spite of our intense hope, the lunar atmosphere should after all prove too rarefied for us, and Cavor sat with a cylinder of compressed oxygen at hand to restore our pressure. We looked at one another in silence, and then at the fantastic vegetation that swayed and grew visibly and noiselessly without. And ever that shrill piping continued.

My blood-vessels began to throb in my ears, and the sound of Cavor's movements diminished. I noted how still everything had become, because of the thinning of the air.

As our air sizzled out from the screw the moisture of it condensed in little puffs.

Presently I experienced a peculiar shortness of breath that lasted indeed during the whole of the time of our exposure to the moon's exterior atmosphere, and a rather unpleasant sensation about the ears and finger-nails and the back of the throat grew upon my attention, and presently passed off again.

But then came vertigo and nausea that abruptly changed the quality of my courage. I gave the lid of the manhole half a turn and made a hasty explanation to Cavor; but now he was the more sanguine. He answered me in a voice that seemed extraordinarily small and remote, because of the thinness of the air that carried the sound. He recommended a nip of brandy, and set me the example, and presently I felt better. I turned the manhole stopper back again. The throbbing in my ears grew louder, and then I remarked that the piping note of the outrush had ceased. For a time I could not be sure that it had ceased.

"Well?" said Cavor, in the ghost of a voice.

"Well?" said I.

“Shall we go on?”

I thought. “Is this all?”

“If you can stand it.”

By way of answer I went on unscrewing. I lifted the circular operculum from its place and laid it carefully on the bale. A flake or so of snow whirled and vanished as that thin and unfamiliar air took possession of our sphere. I knelt, and then seated myself at the edge of the manhole, peering over it. Beneath, within a yard of my face, lay the untrodden snow of the moon.

There came a little pause. Our eyes met.

“It doesn’t distress your lungs too much?” said Cavor.

“No,” I said. “I can stand this.”

He stretched out his hand for his blanket, thrust his head through its central hole, and wrapped it about him. He sat down on the edge of the manhole, he let his feet drop until they were within six inches of the lunar ground. He hesitated for a moment, then thrust himself forward, dropped these intervening inches, and stood upon the untrodden soil of the moon.

As he stepped forward he was refracted grotesquely by the edge of the glass. He stood for a moment looking this way and that. Then he drew himself together and leapt.

The glass distorted everything, but it seemed to me even then to be an extremely big leap. He had at one bound become remote. He seemed twenty or thirty feet off. He was standing high upon a rocky mass and gesticulating back to me. Perhaps he was shouting — but the sound did not reach me. But how the deuce had he done this? I felt like a man who has just seen a new conjuring trick.

In a puzzled state of mind I too dropped through the manhole. I stood up. Just in front of me the snowdrift had fallen away and made a sort of ditch. I made a step and jumped.

I found myself flying through the air, saw the rock on which he stood coming to meet me, clutched it and clung in a state of infinite amazement.

I gasped a painful laugh. I was tremendously confused. Cavor bent down and shouted in piping tones for me to be careful.

I had forgotten that on the moon, with only an eighth part of the earth’s mass and a quarter of its diameter, my weight was barely a

sixth what it was on earth. But now that fact insisted on being remembered.

"We are out of Mother Earth's leading-strings now," he said.

With a guarded effort I raised myself to the top, and moving as cautiously as a rheumatic patient, stood up beside him under the blaze of the sun. The sphere lay behind us on its dwindling snowdrift thirty feet away.

As far as the eye could see over the enormous disorder of rocks that formed the crater floor, the same bristling scrub that surrounded us was starting into life, diversified here and there by bulging masses of a cactus form, and scarlet and purple lichens that grew so fast they seemed to crawl over the rocks. The whole area of the crater seemed to me then to be one similar wilderness up to the very foot of the surrounding cliff.

This cliff was apparently bare of vegetation save at its base, and with buttresses and terraces and platforms that did not very greatly attract our attention at the time. It was many miles away from us in every direction; we seemed to be almost at the centre of the crater, and we saw it through a certain haziness that drove before the wind. For there was even a wind now in the thin air, a swift yet weak wind that chilled exceedingly but exerted little pressure. It was blowing round the crater, as it seemed, to the hot illuminated side from the foggy darkness under the sunward wall. It was difficult to look into this eastward fog; we had to peer with half-closed eyes beneath the shade of our hands, because of the fierce intensity of the motionless sun.

"It seems to be deserted," said Cavor, "absolutely desolate."

I looked about me again. I retained even then a clinging hope of some quasi-human evidence, some pinnacle of building, some house or engine, but everywhere one looked spread the tumbled rocks in peaks and crests, and the darting scrub and those bulging cacti that swelled and swelled, a flat negation as it seemed of all such hope.

"It looks as though these plants had it to themselves," I said. "I see no trace of any other creature."

"No insects — no birds, no! Not a trace, not a scrap nor particle of animal life. If there was — what would they do in the night? … No; there's just these plants alone."

I shaded my eyes with my hand. “It’s like the landscape of a dream. These things are less like earthly land plants than the things one imagines among the rocks at the bottom of the sea. Look at that yonder! One might imagine it a lizard changed into a plant. And the glare!”

“This is only the fresh morning,” said Cavor.

He sighed and looked about him. “This is no world for men,” he said. “And yet in a way — it appeals.”

He became silent for a time, then commenced his meditative humming.

I started at a gentle touch, and found a thin sheet of livid lichen lapping over my shoe. I kicked at it and it fell to powder, and each speck began to grow.

I heard Cavor exclaim sharply, and perceived that one of the fixed bayonets of the scrub had pricked him. He hesitated, his eyes sought among the rocks about us. A sudden blaze of pink had crept up a ragged pillar of crag. It was a most extraordinary pink, a livid magenta.

“Look!” said I, turning, and behold Cavor had vanished.

For an instant I stood transfixed. Then I made a hasty step to look over the verge of the rock. But in my surprise at his disappearance I forgot once more that we were on the moon. The thrust of my foot that I made in striding would have carried me a yard on earth; on the moon it carried me six — a good five yards over the edge. For the moment the thing had something of the effect of those nightmares when one falls and falls. For while one falls sixteen feet in the first second of a fall on earth, on the moon one falls two, and with only a sixth of one’s weight. I fell, or rather I jumped down, about ten yards I suppose. It seemed to take quite a long time, five or six seconds, I should think. I floated through the air and fell like a feather, knee-deep in a snow-drift in the bottom of a gully of blue-gray, white-veined rock.

I looked about me. “Cavor!” I cried; but no Cavor was visible.

“Cavor!” I cried louder, and the rocks echoed me.

I turned fiercely to the rocks and clambered to the summit of them. “Cavor!” I cried. My voice sounded like the voice of a lost lamb.

The sphere, too, was not in sight, and for a moment a horrible feeling of desolation pinched my heart.

Then I saw him. He was laughing and gesticulating to attract my attention. He was on a bare patch of rock twenty or thirty yards away. I could not hear his voice, but "jump" said his gestures. I hesitated, the distance seemed enormous. Yet I reflected that surely I must be able to clear a greater distance than Cavor.

I made a step back, gathered myself together, and leapt with all my might.
I seemed to shoot right up in the air as though I should never come down.

It was horrible and delightful, and as wild as a nightmare, to go flying off in this fashion. I realised my leap had been altogether too violent. I flew clean over Cavor's head and beheld a spiky confusion in a gully spreading to meet my fall. I gave a yelp of alarm. I put out my hands and straightened my legs.

I hit a huge fungoid bulk that burst all about me, scattering a mass of orange spores in every direction, and covering me with orange powder. I rolled over spluttering, and came to rest convulsed with breathless laughter.

I became aware of Cavor's little round face peering over a bristling hedge. He shouted some faded inquiry. "Eh?" I tried to shout, but could not do so for want of breath. He made his way towards me, coming gingerly among the bushes.

"We've got to be careful," he said. "This moon has no discipline. She'll let us smash ourselves."

He helped me to my feet. "You exerted yourself too much," he said, dabbing at the yellow stuff with his hand to remove it from my garments.

I stood passive and panting, allowing him to beat off the jelly from my knees and elbows and lecture me upon my misfortunes. "We don't quite allow for the gravitation. Our muscles are scarcely educated yet. We must practise a little, when you have got your breath."

I pulled two or three little thorns out of my hand, and sat for a

time on a boulder of rock. My muscles were quivering, and I had that feeling of personal disillusionment that comes at the first fall to the learner of cycling on earth.

It suddenly occurred to Cavor that the cold air in the gully, after the brightness of the sun, might give me a fever. So we clambered back into the sunlight. We found that beyond a few abrasions I had received no serious injuries from my tumble, and at Cavor's suggestion we were presently looking round for some safe and easy landing-place for my next leap. We chose a rocky slab some ten yards off, separated from us by a little thicket of olive-green spikes.

"Imagine it there!" said Cavor, who was assuming the airs of a trainer, and he pointed to a spot about four feet from my toes. This leap I managed without difficulty, and I must confess I found a certain satisfaction in Cavor's falling short by a foot or so and tasting the spikes of the scrub. "One has to be careful you see," he said, pulling out his thorns, and with that he ceased to be my mentor and became my fellow-learner in the art of lunar locomotion.

We chose a still easier jump and did it without difficulty, and then leapt back again, and to and fro several times, accustoming our muscles to the new standard. I could never have believed had I not experienced it, how rapid that adaptation would be. In a very little time indeed, certainly after fewer than thirty leaps, we could judge the effort necessary for a distance with almost terrestrial assurance.

And all this time the lunar plants were growing around us, higher and denser and more entangled, every moment thicker and taller, spiked plants, green cactus masses, fungi, fleshy and lichenous things, strangest radiate and sinuous shapes. But we were so intent upon our leaping, that for a time we gave no heed to their unfaltering expansion.

An extraordinary elation had taken possession of us. Partly, I think, it was our sense of release from the confinement of the sphere. Mainly, however, the thin sweetness of the air, which I am certain contained a much larger proportion of oxygen than our terrestrial atmosphere. In spite of the strange quality of all about us, I felt as adventurous and experimental as a cockney would do placed for the first time among mountains and I do not think it occurred to either of us, face to face though we were with the unknown, to be very greatly

afraid.

We were bitten by a spirit of enterprise. We selected a lichenous kopje perhaps fifteen yards away, and landed neatly on its summit one after the other. “Good!” we cried to each other; “good!” and Cavor made three steps and went off to a tempting slope of snow a good twenty yards and more beyond. I stood for a moment struck by the grotesque effect of his soaring figure — his dirty cricket cap, and spiky hair, his little round body, his arms and his knicker-bockered legs tucked up tightly — against the weird spaciousness of the lunar scene. A gust of laughter seized me, and then I stepped off to follow. Plump! I dropped beside him.

We made a few gargantuan strides, leapt three or four times more, and sat down at last in a lichenous hollow. Our lungs were painful. We sat holding our sides and recovering our breath, looking appreciation to one another. Cavor panted something about “amazing sensations.” And then came a thought into my head. For the moment it did not seem a particularly appalling thought, simply a natural question arising out of the situation.

“By the way,” I said, “where exactly is the sphere?”

Cavor looked at me. “Eh?”

The full meaning of what we were saying struck me sharply.

“Cavor!” I cried, laying a hand on his arm, “where is the sphere?”

Chapter 10

Lost Men in the Moon

His face caught something of my dismay. He stood up and stared about him at the scrub that fenced us in and rose about us, straining upward in a passion of growth. He put a dubious hand to his lips. He spoke with a sudden lack of assurance. “I think,” he said slowly, “we left it … somewhere … about *there*.”

He pointed a hesitating finger that wavered in an arc.

“I’m not sure.” His look of consternation deepened. “Anyhow,” he said, with his eyes on me, “it can’t be far.”

We had both stood up. We made unmeaning ejaculations, our eyes sought in the twining, thickening jungle round about us.

All about us on the sunlit slopes frothed and swayed the darting shrubs, the swelling cactus, the creeping lichens, and wherever the shade remained the snow-drifts lingered. North, south, east, and west spread an identical monotony of unfamiliar forms. And somewhere, buried already among this tangled confusion, was our sphere, our home, our only provision, our only hope of escape from this fantastic wilderness of ephemeral growths into which we had come.

“I think after all,” he said, pointing suddenly, “it might be over there.”

“No,” I said. “We have turned in a curve. See! here is the mark of my heels. It’s clear the thing must be more to the eastward, much more. No — the sphere must be over there.”

“I *think*,” said Cavor, “I kept the sun upon my right all the time.”

“Every leap, it seems to me,” I said, “my shadow flew before me.”

We stared into one another’s eyes. The area of the crater had become enormously vast to our imaginations, the growing thickets already impenetrably dense.

“Good heavens! What fools we have been!”

“It’s evident that we must find it again,” said Cavor, “and that soon. The sun grows stronger. We should be fainting with the heat already if it wasn’t so dry. And … I’m hungry.”

I stared at him. I had not suspected this aspect of the matter

before. But it came to me at once — a positive craving. “Yes,” I said with emphasis. “I am hungry too.”

He stood up with a look of active resolution. “Certainly we must find the sphere.”

As calmly as possible we surveyed the interminable reefs and thickets that formed the floor of the crater, each of us weighing in silence the chances of our finding the sphere before we were overtaken by heat and hunger.

“It can’t be fifty yards from here,” said Cavor, with indecisive gestures.
“The only thing is to beat round about until we come upon it.”

“That is all we can do,” I said, without any alacrity to begin our hunt. “I wish this confounded spike bush did not grow so fast!”

“That’s just it,” said Cavor. “But it was lying on a bank of snow.”

I stared about me in the vain hope of recognising some knoll or shrub that had been near the sphere. But everywhere was a confusing sameness, everywhere the aspiring bushes, the distending fungi, the dwindling snow banks, steadily and inevitably changed. The sun scorched and stung, the faintness of an unaccountable hunger mingled with our infinite perplexity. And even as we stood there, confused and lost amidst unprecedented things, we became aware for the first time of a sound upon the moon other than the air of the growing plants, the faint sighing of the wind, or those that we ourselves had made.

Boom…. Boom…. Boom.

It came from beneath our feet, a sound in the earth. We seemed to hear it with our feet as much as with our ears. Its dull resonance was muffled by distance, thick with the quality of intervening substance. No sound that I can imagine could have astonished us more, or have changed more completely the quality of things about us. For this sound, rich, slow, and deliberate, seemed to us as though it could be nothing but the striking of some gigantic buried clock.

Boom…. Boom…. Boom.

Sound suggestive of still cloisters, of sleepless nights in crowded

cities, of vigils and the awaited hour, of all that is orderly and methodical in life, booming out pregnant and mysterious in this fantastic desert! To the eye everything was unchanged: the desolation of bushes and cacti waving silently in the wind, stretched unbroken to the distant cliffs, the still dark sky was empty overhead, and the hot sun hung and burned. And through it all, a warning, a threat, throbbed this enigma of sound.

Boom…. Boom…. Boom….

We questioned one another in faint and faded voices.

"A clock?"

"Like a clock!"

"What is it?"

"What can it be?"

"Count," was Cavor's belated suggestion, and at that word the striking ceased.

The silence, the rhythmic disappointment of the silence, came as a fresh shock. For a moment one could doubt whether one had ever heard a sound. Or whether it might not still be going on. Had I indeed heard a sound?

I felt the pressure of Cavor's hand upon my arm. He spoke in an undertone, as though he feared to wake some sleeping thing. "Let us keep together," he whispered, "and look for the sphere. We must get back to the sphere. This is beyond our understanding."

"Which way shall we go?"

He hesitated. An intense persuasion of presences, of unseen things about us and near us, dominated our minds. What could they be? Where could they be? Was this arid desolation, alternately frozen and scorched, only the outer rind and mask of some subterranean world? And if so, what sort of world? What sort of inhabitants might it not presently disgorge upon us?

And then, stabbing the aching stillness as vivid and sudden as an unexpected thunderclap, came a clang and rattle as though great gates of metal had suddenly been flung apart.

It arrested our steps. We stood gaping helplessly. Then Cavor stole towards me.

"I do not understand!" he whispered close to my face. He waved his hand vaguely skyward, the vague suggestion of still vaguer

thoughts.

"A hiding-place! If anything came…"

I looked about us. I nodded my head in assent to him.

We started off, moving stealthily with the most exaggerated precautions against noise. We went towards a thicket of scrub. A clangour like hammers flung about a boiler hastened our steps. "We must crawl," whispered Cavor.

The lower leaves of the bayonet plants, already overshadowed by the newer ones above, were beginning to wilt and shrivel so that we could thrust our way in among the thickening stems without serious injury. A stab in the face or arm we did not heed. At the heart of the thicket I stopped, and stared panting into Cavor's face.

"Subterranean," he whispered. "Below."

"They may come out."

"We must find the sphere!"

"Yes," I said; "but how?"

"Crawl till we come to it."

"But if we don't?"

"Keep hidden. See what they are like."

"We will keep together," said I.

He thought. "Which way shall we go?"

"We must take our chance."

We peered this way and that. Then very circumspectly, we began to crawl through the lower jungle, making, so far as we could judge, a circuit, halting now at every waving fungus, at every sound, intent only on the sphere from which we had so foolishly emerged. Ever and again from out of the earth beneath us came concussions, beatings, strange, inexplicable, mechanical sounds; and once, and then again, we thought we heard something, a faint rattle and tumult, borne to us through the air. But fearful as we were we dared essay no vantage-point to survey the crater. For long we saw nothing of the beings whose sounds were so abundant and insistent. But for the faintness of our hunger and the drying of our throats that crawling would have had the quality of a very vivid dream. It was so absolutely unreal. The only element with any touch of reality was these sounds.

Picture it to yourself! About us the dream-like jungle, with the

silent bayonet leaves darting overhead, and the silent, vivid, sun-splashed lichens under our hands and knees, waving with the vigour of their growth as a carpet waves when the wind gets beneath it. Ever and again one of the bladder fungi, bulging and distending under the sun, loomed upon us. Ever and again some novel shape in vivid colour obtruded. The very cells that built up these plants were as large as my thumb, like beads of coloured glass. And all these things were saturated in the unmitigated glare of the sun, were seen against a sky that was bluish black and spangled still, in spite of the sunlight, with a few surviving stars. Strange! the very forms and texture of the stones were strange. It was all strange, the feeling of one's body was unprecedented, every other movement ended in a surprise. The breath sucked thin in one's throat, the blood flowed through one's ears in a throbbing tide — thud, thud, thud, thud….

And ever and again came gusts of turmoil, hammering, the clanging and throb of machinery, and presently — the bellowing of great beasts!

Chapter 11

The Mooncalf Pastures

So we two poor terrestrial castaways, lost in that wild-growing moon jungle, crawled in terror before the sounds that had come upon us. We crawled, as it seemed, a long time before we saw either Selenite or mooncalf, though we heard the bellowing and gruntulous noises of these latter continually drawing nearer to us. We crawled through stony ravines, over snow slopes, amidst fungi that ripped like thin bladders at our thrust, emitting a watery humour, over a perfect pavement of things like puff-balls, and beneath interminable thickets of scrub. And ever more helplessly our eyes sought for our abandoned sphere. The noise of the mooncalves would at times be a vast flat calf-like sound, at times it rose to an amazed and wrathy bellowing, and again it would become a clogged bestial sound, as though these unseen creatures had sought to eat and bellow at the same time.

Our first view was but an inadequate transitory glimpse, yet none the less disturbing because it was incomplete. Cavor was crawling in front at the time, and he first was aware of their proximity. He stopped dead, arresting me with a single gesture.

A crackling and smashing of the scrub appeared to be advancing directly upon us, and then, as we squatted close and endeavoured to judge of the nearness and direction of this noise, there came a terrific bellow behind us, so close and vehement that the tops of the bayonet scrub bent before it, and one felt the breath of it hot and moist. And, turning about, we saw indistinctly through a crowd of swaying stems the mooncalf's shining sides, and the long line of its back loomed out against the sky.

Of course it is hard for me now to say how much I saw at that time, because my impressions were corrected by subsequent observation. First of all impressions was its enormous size; the girth of its body was some fourscore feet, its length perhaps two hundred. Its sides rose and fell with its laboured breathing. I perceived that its gigantic, flabby body lay along the ground, and that its skin was of a

corrugated white, dappling into blackness along the backbone. But of its feet we saw nothing. I think also that we saw then the profile at least of the almost brainless head, with its fat-encumbered neck, its slobbering omnivorous mouth, its little nostrils, and tight shut eyes. (For the mooncalf invariably shuts its eyes in the presence of the sun.) We had a glimpse of a vast red pit as it opened its mouth to bleat and bellow again; we had a breath from the pit, and then the monster heeled over like a ship, dragged forward along the ground, creasing all its leathery skin, rolled again, and so wallowed past us, smashing a path amidst the scrub, and was speedily hidden from our eyes by the dense interlacings beyond. Another appeared more distantly, and then another, and then, as though he was guiding these animated lumps of provender to their pasture, a Selenite came momentarily into ken. My grip upon Cavor's foot became convulsive at the sight of him, and we remained motionless and peering long after he had passed out of our range.

By contrast with the mooncalves he seemed a trivial being, a mere ant, scarcely five feet high. He was wearing garments of some leathery substance, so that no portion of his actual body appeared, but of this, of course, we were entirely ignorant. He presented himself, therefore, as a compact, bristling creature, having much of the quality of a complicated insect, with whip-like tentacles and a clanging arm projecting from his shining cylindrical body case. The form of his head was hidden by his enormous many-spiked helmet — we discovered afterwards that he used the spikes for prodding refractory mooncalves — and a pair of goggles of darkened glass, set very much at the side, gave a bird-like quality to the metallic apparatus that covered his face. His arms did not project beyond his body case, and he carried himself upon short legs that, wrapped though they were in warm coverings, seemed to our terrestrial eyes inordinately flimsy. They had very short thighs, very long shanks, and little feet.

In spite of his heavy-looking clothing, he was progressing with what would be, from the terrestrial point of view, very considerable strides, and his clanging arm was busy. The quality of his motion during the instant of his passing suggested haste and a certain anger, and soon after we had lost sight of him we heard the bellow of a

mooncalf change abruptly into a short, sharp squeal followed by the scuffle of its acceleration. And gradually that bellowing receded, and then came to an end, as if the pastures sought had been attained.

We listened. For a space the moon world was still. But it was some time before we resumed our crawling search for the vanished sphere.

When next we saw mooncalves they were some little distance away from us in a place of tumbled rocks. The less vertical surfaces of the rocks were thick with a speckled green plant growing in dense mossy clumps, upon which these creatures were browsing. We stopped at the edge of the reeds amidst which we were crawling at the sight of them, peering out at then and looking round for a second glimpse of a Selenite. They lay against their food like stupendous slugs, huge, greasy hulls, eating greedily and noisily, with a sort of sobbing avidity. They seemed monsters of mere fatness, clumsy and overwhelmed to a degree that would make a Smithfield ox seem a model of agility. Their busy, writhing, chewing mouths, and eyes closed, together with the appetising sound of their munching, made up an effect of animal enjoyment that was singularly stimulating to our empty frames.

"Hogs!" said Cavor, with unusual passion. "Disgusting hogs!" and after one glare of angry envy crawled off through the bushes to our right. I stayed long enough to see that the speckled plant was quite hopeless for human nourishment, then crawled after him, nibbling a quill of it between my teeth.

Presently we were arrested again by the proximity of a Selenite, and this time we were able to observe him more exactly. Now we could see that the Selenite covering was indeed clothing, and not a sort of crustacean integument. He was quite similar in his costume to the former one we had glimpsed, except that ends of something like wadding were protruding from his neck, and he stood on a promontory of rock and moved his head this way and that, as though he was surveying the crater. We lay quite still, fearing to attract his attention if we moved, and after a time he turned about and disappeared.

We came upon another drove of mooncalves bellowing up a ravine, and then we passed over a place of sounds, sounds of beating

machinery as if some huge hall of industry came near the surface there. And while these sounds were still about us we came to the edge of a great open space, perhaps two hundred yards in diameter, and perfectly level. Save for a few lichens that advanced from its margin this space was bare, and presented a powdery surface of a dusty yellow colour. We were afraid to strike out across this space, but as it presented less obstruction to our crawling than the scrub, we went down upon it and began very circumspectly to skirt its edge.

For a little while the noises from below ceased and everything, save for the faint stir of the growing vegetation, was very still. Then abruptly there began an uproar, louder, more vehement, and nearer than any we had so far heard. Of a certainty it came from below. Instinctively we crouched as flat as we could, ready for a prompt plunge into the thicket beside us. Each knock and throb seemed to vibrate through our bodies. Louder grew this throbbing and beating, and that irregular vibration increased until the whole moon world seemed to be jerking and pulsing.

"Cover," whispered Cavor, and I turned towards the bushes.

At that instant came a thud like the thud of a gun, and then a thing happened — it still haunts me in my dreams. I had turned my head to look at Cavor's face, and thrust out my hand in front of me as I did so. And my hand met nothing! I plunged suddenly into a bottomless hole!

My chest hit something hard, and I found myself with my chin on the edge of an unfathomable abyss that had suddenly opened beneath me, my hand extended stiffly into the void. The whole of that flat circular area was no more than a gigantic lid, that was now sliding sideways from off the pit it had covered into a slot prepared for it.

Had it not been for Cavor I think I should have remained rigid, hanging over this margin and staring into the enormous gulf below, until at last the edges of the slot scraped me off and hurled me into its depths. But Cavor had not received the shock that had paralysed me. He had been a little distance from the edge when the lid had first opened, and perceiving the peril that held me helpless, gripped my legs and pulled me backward. I came into a sitting position, crawled away from the edge for a space on all fours, then staggered up and ran after him across the thundering, quivering sheet of metal. It

seemed to be swinging open with a steadily accelerated velocity, and the bushes in front of me shifted sideways as I ran.

I was none too soon. Cavor's back vanished amidst the bristling thicket, and as I scrambled up after him, the monstrous valve came into its position with a clang. For a long time we lay panting, not daring to approach the pit.

But at last very cautiously and bit by bit we crept into a position from which we could peer down. The bushes about us creaked and waved with the force of a breeze that was blowing down the shaft. We could see nothing at first except smooth vertical walls descending at last into an impenetrable black. And then very gradually we became aware of a number of very faint and little lights going to and fro.

For a time that stupendous gulf of mystery held us so that we forgot even our sphere. In time, as we grew more accustomed to the darkness, we could make out very small, dim, elusive shapes moving about among those needle-point illuminations. We peered amazed and incredulous, understanding so little that we could find no words to say. We could distinguish nothing that would give us a clue to the meaning of the faint shapes we saw.

"What can it be?" I asked; "what can it be?"

"The engineering!… They must live in these caverns during the night, and come out during the day."

"Cavor!" I said. "Can they be — that — it was something like — men?"

"*That* was not a man."

"We dare risk nothing!"

"We dare do nothing until we find the sphere!"

"We *can* do nothing until we find the sphere."

He assented with a groan and stirred himself to move. He stared about him for a space, sighed, and indicated a direction. We struck out through the jungle. For a time we crawled resolutely, then with diminishing vigour. Presently among great shapes of flabby purple there came a noise of trampling and cries about us. We lay close, and for a long time the sounds went to and fro and very near. But this time we saw nothing. I tried to whisper to Cavor that I could hardly go without food much longer, but my mouth had become too dry for

whispering.

"Cavor," I said, "I must have food."

He turned a face full of dismay towards me. "It's a case for holding out," he said.

"But I *must*," I said, "and look at my lips!"

"I've been thirsty some time."

"If only some of that snow had remained!"

"It's clean gone! We're driving from arctic to tropical at the rate of a degree a minute…."

I gnawed my hand.

"The sphere!" he said. "There is nothing for it but the sphere."

We roused ourselves to another spurt of crawling. My mind ran entirely on edible things, on the hissing profundity of summer drinks, more particularly I craved for beer. I was haunted by the memory of a sixteen gallon cask that had swaggered in my Lympne cellar. I thought of the adjacent larder, and especially of steak and kidney pie — tender steak and plenty of kidney, and rich, thick gravy between. Ever and again I was seized with fits of hungry yawning. We came to flat places overgrown with fleshy red things, monstrous coralline growths; as we pushed against them they snapped and broke. I noted the quality of the broken surfaces. The confounded stuff certainly looked of a biteable texture. Then it seemed to me that it smelt rather well.

I picked up a fragment and sniffed at it.

"Cavor," I said in a hoarse undertone.

He glanced at me with his face screwed up. "Don't," he said. I put down the fragment, and we crawled on through this tempting fleshiness for a space.

"Cavor," I asked, "why not?"

"Poison," I heard him say, but he did not look round.

We crawled some way before I decided.

"I'll chance it," said I.

He made a belated gesture to prevent me. I stuffed my mouth full. He crouched watching my face, his own twisted into the oddest expression. "It's good," I said.

"O Lord!" he cried.

He watched me munch, his face wrinkled between desire and

disapproval, then suddenly succumbed to appetite and began to tear off huge mouthfuls. For a time we did nothing but eat.

The stuff was not unlike a terrestrial mushroom, only it was much laxer in texture, and, as one swallowed it, it warmed the throat. At first we experienced a mere mechanical satisfaction in eating; then our blood began to run warmer, and we tingled at the lips and fingers, and then new and slightly irrelevant ideas came bubbling up in our minds.

"Its good," said I. "Infernally good! What a home for our surplus population! Our poor surplus population," and I broke off another large portion. It filled me with a curiously benevolent satisfaction that there was such good food in the moon. The depression of my hunger gave way to an irrational exhilaration. The dread and discomfort in which I had been living vanished entirely. I perceived the moon no longer as a planet from which I most earnestly desired the means of escape, but as a possible refuge from human destitution. I think I forgot the Selenites, the mooncalves, the lid, and the noises completely so soon as I had eaten that fungus.

Cavor replied to my third repetition of my "surplus population" remark with similar words of approval. I felt that my head swam, but I put this down to the stimulating effect of food after a long fast. "Ess'lent discov'ry yours, Cavor," said I. "Se'nd on'y to the 'tato."

"Whajer mean?" asked Cavor. "'Scovery of the moon — se'nd on'y to the 'tato?"

I looked at him, shocked at his suddenly hoarse voice, and by the badness of his articulation. It occurred to me in a flash that he was intoxicated, possibly by the fungus. It also occurred to me that he erred in imagining that he had discovered the moon; he had not discovered it, he had only reached it. I tried to lay my hand on his arm and explain this to him, but the issue was too subtle for his brain. It was also unexpectedly difficult to express. After a momentary attempt to understand me — I remember wondering if the fungus had made my eyes as fishy as his — he set off upon some observations on his own account.

"We are," he announced with a solemn hiccup, "the creashurs o' what we eat and drink."

He repeated this, and as I was now in one of my subtle moods, I

determined to dispute it. Possibly I wandered a little from the point. But Cavor certainly did not attend at all properly. He stood up as well as he could, putting a hand on my head to steady himself, which was disrespectful, and stood staring about him, quite devoid now of any fear of the moon beings.

I tried to point out that this was dangerous for some reason that was not perfectly clear to me, but the word "dangerous" had somehow got mixed with "indiscreet," and came out rather more like "injurious" than either; and after an attempt to disentangle them, I resumed my argument, addressing myself principally to the unfamiliar but attentive coralline growths on either side. I felt that it was necessary to clear up this confusion between the moon and a potato at once — I wandered into a long parenthesis on the importance of precision of definition in argument. I did my best to ignore the fact that my bodily sensations were no longer agreeable.

In some way that I have now forgotten, my mind was led back to projects of colonisation. "We must annex this moon," I said. "There must be no shilly-shally. This is part of the White Man's Burthen. Cavor — we are — hic — Satap — mean Satraps! Nempire Caesar never dreamt. B'in all the newspapers. Cavorecia. Bedfordecia. Bedfordecia — hic — Limited. Mean — unlimited! Practically."

Certainly I was intoxicated.

I embarked upon an argument to show the infinite benefits our arrival would confer on the moon. I involved myself in a rather difficult proof that the arrival of Columbus was, on the whole, beneficial to America. I found I had forgotten the line of argument I had intended to pursue, and continued to repeat "sim'lar to C'lumbus," to fill up time.

From that point my memory of the action of that abominable fungus becomes confused. I remember vaguely that we declared our intention of standing no nonsense from any confounded insects, that we decided it ill became men to hide shamefully upon a mere satellite, that we equipped ourselves with huge armfuls of the fungus — whether for missile purposes or not I do not know — and, heedless of the stabs of the bayonet scrub, we started forth into the sunshine.

Almost immediately we must have come upon the Selenites.

There were six of them, and they were marching in single file over a rocky place, making the most remarkable piping and whining sounds. They all seemed to become aware of us at once, all instantly became silent and motionless, like animals, with their faces turned towards us.

For a moment I was sobered.

“Insects,” murmured Cavor, “insects! And they think I’m going to crawl about on my stomach — on my vertebrated stomach!

“Stomach,” he repeated slowly, as though he chewed the indignity.

Then suddenly, with a sort of fury, he made three vast strides and leapt towards them. He leapt badly; he made a series of somersaults in the air, whirled right over them, and vanished with an enormous splash amidst the cactus bladders. What the Selenites made of this amazing, and to my mind undignified irruption from another planet, I have no means of guessing. I seem to remember the sight of their backs as they ran in all directions, but I am not sure. All these last incidents before oblivion came are vague and faint in my mind. I know I made a step to follow Cavor, and tripped and fell headlong among the rocks. I was, I am certain, suddenly and vehemently ill. I seem to remember, a violent struggle and being gripped by metallic clasps….

My next clear recollection is that we were prisoners at we knew not what depths beneath the moon’s surface; we were in darkness amidst strange distracting noises; our bodies were covered with scratches and bruises, and our heads racked with pain.

Chapter 12

The Selenite's Face

I found myself sitting crouched together in a tumultuous darkness. For a long time I could not understand where I was, nor how I had come to this perplexity. I thought of the cupboard into which I had been thrust at times when I was a child, and then of a very dark and noisy bedroom in which I had slept during an illness. But these sounds about me were not the noises I had known, and there was a thin flavour in the air like the wind of a stable. Then I supposed we must still be at work upon the sphere, and that somehow I had got into the cellar of Cavor's house. I remembered we had finished the sphere, and fancied I must still be in it and travelling through space.

"Cavor," I said, "cannot we have some light?"

There came no answer.

"Cavor!" I insisted.

I was answered by a groan. "My head!" I heard him say; "my head!"

I attempted to press my hands to my brow, which ached, and discovered they were tied together. This startled me very much. I brought them up to my mouth and felt the cold smoothness of metal. They were chained together. I tried to separate my legs and made out they were similarly fastened, and also that I was fastened to the ground by a much thicker chain about the middle of my body.

I was more frightened than I had yet been by anything in all our strange experiences. For a time I tugged silently at my bonds. "Cavor!" I cried out sharply. "Why am I tied? Why have you tied me hand and foot?"

"I haven't tied you," he answered. "It's the Selenites."

The Selenites! My mind hung on that for a space. Then my memories came back to me: the snowy desolation, the thawing of the air, the growth of the plants, our strange hopping and crawling among the rocks and vegetation of the crater. All the distress of our frantic search for the sphere returned to me…. Finally the opening of the great lid that covered the pit!

Then as I strained to trace our later movements down to our present plight, the pain in my head became intolerable. I came to an insurmountable barrier, an obstinate blank.

"Cavor!"

"Yes?"

"Where are we?"

"How should I know?"

"Are we dead?"

"What nonsense!"

"They've got us, then!"

He made no answer but a grunt. The lingering traces of the poison seemed to make him oddly irritable.

"What do you mean to do?"

"How should I know what to do?"

"Oh, very well!" said I, and became silent. Presently, I was roused from a stupor. "O Lord!" I cried; "I wish you'd stop that buzzing!"

We lapsed into silence again, listening to the dull confusion of noises like the muffled sounds of a street or factory that filled our ears. I could make nothing of it, my mind pursued first one rhythm and then another, and questioned it in vain. But after a long time I became aware of a new and sharper element, not mingling with the rest but standing out, as it were, against that cloudy background of sound. It was a series of relatively very little definite sounds, tappings and rubbings, like a loose spray of ivy against a window or a bird moving about upon a box. We listened and peered about us, but the darkness was a velvet pall. There followed a noise like the subtle movement of the wards of a well-oiled lock. And then there appeared before me, hanging as it seemed in an immensity of black, a thin bright line.

"Look!" whispered Cavor very softly.

"What is it?"

"I don't know."

We stared.

The thin bright line became a band, and broader and paler. It took upon itself the quality of a bluish light falling upon a white-washed wall. It ceased to be parallel-sided; it developed a deep indentation on one side. I turned to remark this to Cavor, and was amazed to see

his ear in a brilliant illumination — all the rest of him in shadow. I twisted my head round as well as my bonds would permit. “Cavor,” I said, “it’s behind!”

His ear vanished — gave place to an eye!

Suddenly the crack that had been admitting the light broadened out, and revealed itself as the space of an opening door. Beyond was a sapphire vista, and in the doorway stood a grotesque outline silhouetted against the glare.

We both made convulsive efforts to turn, and failing, sat staring over our shoulders at this. My first impression was of some clumsy quadruped with lowered head. Then I perceived it was the slender pinched body and short and extremely attenuated bandy legs of a Selenite, with his head depressed between his shoulders. He was without the helmet and body covering they wear upon the exterior.

He was a blank, black figure to us, but instinctively our imaginations supplied features to his very human outline. I, at least, took it instantly that he was somewhat hunchbacked, with a high forehead and long features.

He came forward three steps and paused for a time. His movements seemed absolutely noiseless. Then he came forward again. He walked like a bird, his feet fell one in front of the other. He stepped out of the ray of light that came through the doorway, and it seemed as though he vanished altogether in the shadow.

For a moment my eyes sought him in the wrong place, and then I perceived him standing facing us both in the full light. Only the human features I had attributed to him were not there at all!

Of course I ought to have expected that, only I didn’t. It came to me as an absolute, for a moment an overwhelming shock. It seemed as though it wasn’t a face, as though it must needs be a mask, a horror, a deformity, that would presently be disavowed or explained. There was no nose, and the thing had dull bulging eyes at the side — in the silhouette I had supposed they were ears. There were no ears…. I have tried to draw one of these heads, but I cannot. There was a mouth, downwardly curved, like a human mouth in a face that stares ferociously….

The neck on which the head was poised was jointed in three places, almost like the short joints in the leg of a crab. The joints of

the limbs I could not see, because of the puttee-like straps in which they were swathed, and which formed the only clothing the being wore.

There the thing was, looking at us!

At the time my mind was taken up by the mad impossibility of the creature. I suppose he also was amazed, and with more reason, perhaps, for amazement than we. Only, confound him! he did not show it. We did at least know what had brought about this meeting of incompatible creatures. But conceive how it would seem to decent Londoners, for example, to come upon a couple of living things, as big as men and absolutely unlike any other earthly animals, careering about among the sheep in Hyde Park! It must have taken him like that.

Figure us! We were bound hand and foot, fagged and filthy; our beards two inches long, our faces scratched and bloody. Cavor you must imagine in his knickerbockers (torn in several places by the bayonet scrub) his Jaegar shirt and old cricket cap, his wiry hair wildly disordered, a tail to every quarter of the heavens. In that blue light his face did not look red but very dark, his lips and the drying blood upon my hands seemed black. If possible I was in a worse plight than he, on account of the yellow fungus into which I had jumped. Our jackets were unbuttoned, and our shoes had been taken off and lay at our feet. And we were sitting with our backs to this queer bluish light, peering at such a monster as Durer might have invented.

Cavor broke the silence; started to speak, went hoarse, and cleared his throat. Outside began a terrific bellowing, as if a mooncalf were in trouble. It ended in a shriek, and everything was still again.

Presently the Selenite turned about, flickered into the shadow, stood for a moment retrospective at the door, and then closed it on us; and once more we were in that murmurous mystery of darkness into which we had awakened.

Chapter 13

Mr. Cavor Makes Some Suggestions

For a time neither of us spoke. To focus together all the things we had brought upon ourselves seemed beyond my mental powers.

"They've got us," I said at last.

"It was that fungus."

"Well — if I hadn't taken it we should have fainted and starved."

"We might have found the sphere."

I lost my temper at his persistence, and swore to myself. For a time we hated one another in silence. I drummed with my fingers on the floor between my knees, and gritted the links of my fetters together. Presently I was forced to talk again.

"What do you make of it, anyhow?" I asked humbly.

"They are reasonable creatures — they can make things and do things.
Those lights we saw…"

He stopped. It was clear he could make nothing of it.

When he spoke again it was to confess, "After all, they are more human than we had a right to expect. I suppose—"

He stopped irritatingly.

"Yes?"

"I suppose, anyhow — on any planet where there is an intelligent animal — it will carry its brain case upward, and have hands, and walk erect."

Presently he broke away in another direction.

"We are some way in," he said. "I mean — perhaps a couple of thousand feet or more."

"Why?"

"It's cooler. And our voices are so much louder. That faded quality — it has altogether gone. And the feeling in one's ears and throat."

I had not noted that, but I did now.

“The air is denser. We must be some depths — a mile even, we may be — inside the moon.”

“We never thought of a world inside the moon.”

“No.”

“How could we?”

“We might have done. Only one gets into habits of mind.”

He thought for a time.

“Now,” he said, “it seems such an obvious thing.”

“Of course! The moon must be enormously cavernous, with an atmosphere within, and at the centre of its caverns a sea.

“One knew that the moon had a lower specific gravity than the earth, one knew that it had little air or water outside, one knew, too, that it was sister planet to the earth, and that it was unaccountable that it should be different in composition. The inference that it was hollowed out was as clear as day. And yet one never saw it as a fact. Kepler, of course—”

His voice had the interest now of a man who has discerned a pretty sequence of reasoning.

“Yes,” he said, “Kepler with his sub-volvani was right after all.”

“I wish you had taken the trouble to find that out before we came,” I said.

He answered nothing, buzzing to himself softly, as he pursued his thoughts. My temper was going.

“What do you think has become of the sphere, anyhow?” I asked.

“Lost,” he said, like a man who answers an uninteresting question.

“Among those plants?”

“Unless they find it.”

“And then?”

“How can I tell?”

“Cavor,” I said, with a sort of hysterical bitterness, “things look bright for my Company…”

He made no answer.

“Good Lord!” I exclaimed. “Just think of all the trouble we took to get into this pickle! What did we come for? What are we after? What was the moon to us or we to the moon? We wanted too much,

we tried too much. We ought to have started the little things first. It was you proposed the moon! Those Cavorite spring blinds! I am certain we could have worked them for terrestrial purposes. Certain! Did you really understand what I proposed? A steel cylinder—"

"Rubbish!" said Cavor.

We ceased to converse.

For a time Cavor kept up a broken monologue without much help from me.

"If they find it," he began, "if they find it … what will they do with it? Well, that's a question. It may be that's *the* question. They won't understand it, anyhow. If they understood that sort of thing they would have come long since to the earth. Would they? Why shouldn't they? But they would have sent something — they couldn't keep their hands off such a possibility. No! But they will examine it. Clearly they are intelligent and inquisitive. They will examine it — get inside it — trifle with the studs. Off! … That would mean the moon for us for all the rest of our lives. Strange creatures, strange knowledge…."

"As for strange knowledge—" said I, and language failed me.

"Look here, Bedford," said Cavor, "you came on this expedition of your own free will."

"You said to me, 'Call it prospecting'."

"There's always risks in prospecting."

"Especially when you do it unarmed and without thinking out every possibility."

"I was so taken up with the sphere. The thing rushed on us, and carried us away."

"Rushed on *me*, you mean."

"Rushed on me just as much. How was I to know when I set to work on molecular physics that the business would bring me here — of all places?"

"It's this accursed science," I cried. "It's the very Devil. The medieval priests and persecutors were right and the Moderns are all wrong. You tamper with it — and it offers you gifts. And directly you take them it knocks you to pieces in some unexpected way. Old passions and new weapons — now it upsets your religion, now it upsets your social ideas, now it whirls you off to desolation and

misery!”

“Anyhow, it’s no use your quarrelling with me now. These creatures — these Selenites, or whatever we choose to call them — have got us tied hand and foot. Whatever temper you choose to go through with it in, you will have to go through with it…. We have experiences before us that will need all our coolness.”

He paused as if he required my assent. But I sat sulking. “Confound your science!” I said.

“The problem is communication. Gestures, I fear, will be different. Pointing, for example. No creatures but men and monkeys point.”

That was too obviously wrong for me. “Pretty nearly every animal,” I cried, “points with its eyes or nose.”

Cavor meditated over that. “Yes,” he said at last, “and we don’t. There’s such differences — such differences!”

“One might…. But how can I tell? There is speech. The sounds they make, a sort of fluting and piping. I don’t see how we are to imitate that. Is it their speech, that sort of thing? They may have different senses, different means of communication. Of course they are minds and we are minds; there must be something in common. Who knows how far we may not get to an understanding?”

“The things are outside us,” I said. “They’re more different from us than the strangest animals on earth. They are a different clay. What is the good of talking like this?”

Cavor thought. “I don’t see that. Where there are minds they will have something similar — even though they have been evolved on different planets. Of course if it was a question of instincts, if we or they are no more than animals—”

“Well, are they? They’re much more like ants on their hind legs than human beings, and who ever got to any sort of understanding with ants?”

“But these machines and clothing! No, I don’t hold with you, Bedford. The difference is wide—”

“It’s insurmountable.”

“The resemblance must bridge it. I remember reading once a paper by the late Professor Galton on the possibility of

communication between the planets. Unhappily, at that time it did not seem probable that that would be of any material benefit to me, and I fear I did not give it the attention I should have done — in view of this state of affairs. Yet…. Now, let me see!

"His idea was to begin with those broad truths that must underlie all conceivable mental existences and establish a basis on those. The great principles of geometry, to begin with. He proposed to take some leading proposition of Euclid's, and show by construction that its truth was known to us, to demonstrate, for example, that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal, and that if the equal sides be produced the angles on the other side of the base are equal also, or that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the two other sides. By demonstrating our knowledge of these things we should demonstrate our possession of a reasonable intelligence…. Now, suppose I … I might draw the geometrical figure with a wet finger, or even trace it in the air…."

He fell silent. I sat meditating his words. For a time his wild hope of communication, of interpretation, with these weird beings held me. Then that angry despair that was a part of my exhaustion and physical misery resumed its sway. I perceived with a sudden novel vividness the extraordinary folly of everything I had ever done. "Ass!" I said; "oh, ass, unutterable ass…. I seem to exist only to go about doing preposterous things. Why did we ever leave the thing? … Hopping about looking for patents and concessions in the craters of the moon!… If only we had had the sense to fasten a handkerchief to a stick to show where we had left the sphere!"

I subsided, fuming.

"It is clear," meditated Cavor, "they are intelligent. One can hypothecate certain things. As they have not killed us at once, they must have ideas of mercy. Mercy! at any rate of restraint. Possibly of intercourse. They may meet us. And this apartment and the glimpses we had of its guardian. These fetters! A high degree of intelligence…"

"I wish to heaven," cried I, "I'd thought even twice! Plunge after plunge. First one fluky start and then another. It was my confidence in you! Why didn't I stick to my play? That was what I was equal to.

That was my world and the life I was made for. I could have finished that play. I'm certain … it was a good play. I had the scenario as good as done. Then…. Conceive it! leaping to the moon! Practically — I've thrown my life away! That old woman in the inn near Canterbury had better sense."

I looked up, and stopped in mid-sentence. The darkness had given place to that bluish light again. The door was opening, and several noiseless Selenites were coming into the chamber. I became quite still, staring at their grotesque faces.

Then suddenly my sense of disagreeable strangeness changed to interest. I perceived that the foremost and second carried bowls. One elemental need at least our minds could understand in common. They were bowls of some metal that, like our fetters, looked dark in that bluish light; and each contained a number of whitish fragments. All the cloudy pain and misery that oppressed me rushed together and took the shape of hunger. I eyed these bowls wolfishly, and, though it returned to me in dreams, at that time it seemed a small matter that at the end of the arms that lowered one towards me were not hands, but a sort of flap and thumb, like the end of an elephant's trunk. The stuff in the bowl was loose in texture, and whitish brown in colour — rather like lumps of some cold souffle, and it smelt faintly like mushrooms. From a partially divided carcass of a mooncalf that we presently saw, I am inclined to believe it must have been mooncalf flesh.

My hands were so tightly chained that I could barely contrive to reach the bowl; but when they saw the effort I made, two of them dexterously released one of the turns about my wrist. Their tentacle hands were soft and cold to my skin. I immediately seized a mouthful of the food. It had the same laxness in texture that all organic structures seem to have upon the moon; it tasted rather like a gauffre or a damp meringue, but in no way was it disagreeable. I took two other mouthfuls. "I wanted — foo'!" said I, tearing off a still larger piece….

For a time we ate with an utter absence of self-consciousness. We ate and presently drank like tramps in a soup kitchen. Never before nor since have I been hungry to the ravenous pitch, and save that I have had this very experience I could never have believed that, a

quarter of a million of miles out of our proper world, in utter perplexity of soul, surrounded, watched, touched by beings more grotesque and inhuman than the worst creations of a nightmare, it would be possible for me to eat in utter forgetfulness of all these things. They stood about us watching us, and ever and again making a slight elusive twittering that stood, I suppose, in the stead of speech. I did not even shiver at their touch. And when the first zeal of my feeding was over, I could note that Cavor, too, had been eating with the same shameless abandon.

Chapter 14

Experiments in intercourse

When at last we had made an end of eating, the Selenites linked our hands closely together again, and then untwisted the chains about our feet and rebound them, so as to give us a limited freedom of movement. Then they unfastened the chains about our waists. To do all this they had to handle us freely, and ever and again one of their queer heads came down close to my face, or a soft tentacle-hand touched my head or neck. I don't remember that I was afraid then or repelled by their proximity. I think that our incurable anthropomorphism made us imagine there were human heads inside their masks. The skin, like everything else, looked bluish, but that was on account of the light; and it was hard and shiny, quite in the beetle-wing fashion, not soft, or moist, or hairy, as a vertebrated animal's would be. Along the crest of the head was a low ridge of whitish spines running from back to front, and a much larger ridge curved on either side over the eyes. The Selenite who untied me used his mouth to help his hands.

"They seem to be releasing us," said Cavor. "Remember we are on the moon!
Make no sudden movements!"

"Are you going to try that geometry?"

"If I get a chance. But, of course, they may make an advance first."

We remained passive, and the Selenites, having finished their arrangements, stood back from us, and seemed to be looking at us. I say seemed to be, because as their eyes were at the side and not in front, one had the same difficulty in determining the direction in which they were looking as one has in the case of a hen or a fish. They conversed with one another in their reedy tones, that seemed to me impossible to imitate or define. The door behind us opened wider, and, glancing over my shoulder, I saw a vague large space beyond, in

which quite a little crowd of Selenites were standing. They seemed a curiously miscellaneous rabble.

"Do they want us to imitate those sounds?" I asked Cavor.

"I don't think so," he said.

"It seems to me that they are trying to make us understand something."

"I can't make anything of their gestures. Do you notice this one, who is worrying with his head like a man with an uncomfortable collar?"

"Let us shake our heads at him."

We did that, and finding it ineffectual, attempted an imitation of the Selenites' movements. That seemed to interest them. At any rate they all set up the same movement. But as that seemed to lead to nothing, we desisted at last and so did they, and fell into a piping argument among themselves. Then one of them, shorter and very much thicker than the others, and with a particularly wide mouth, squatted down suddenly beside Cavor, and put his hands and feet in the same posture as Cavor's were bound, and then by a dexterous movement stood up.

"Cavor," I shouted, "they want us to get up!"

He stared open-mouthed. "That's it!" he said.

And with much heaving and grunting, because our hands were tied together, we contrived to struggle to our feet. The Selenites made way for our elephantine heavings, and seemed to twitter more volubly. As soon as we were on our feet the thick-set Selenite came and patted each of our faces with his tentacles, and walked towards the open doorway. That also was plain enough, and we followed him. We saw that four of the Selenites standing in the doorway were much taller than the others, and clothed in the same manner as those we had seen in the crater, namely, with spiked round helmets and cylindrical body-cases, and that each of the four carried a goad with spike and guard made of that same dull-looking metal as the bowls. These four closed about us, one on either side of each of us, as we emerged from our chamber into the cavern from which the light had come.

We did not get our impression of that cavern all at once. Our attention was taken up by the movements and attitudes of the

Selenites immediately about us, and by the necessity of controlling our motion, lest we should startle and alarm them and ourselves by some excessive stride. In front of us was the short, thick-set being who had solved the problem of asking us to get up, moving with gestures that seemed, almost all of them, intelligible to us, inviting us to follow him. His spout-like face turned from one of us to the other with a quickness that was clearly interrogative. For a time, I say, we were taken up with these things.

But at last the great place that formed a background to our movements asserted itself. It became apparent that the source of much, at least, of the tumult of sounds which had filled our ears ever since we had recovered from the stupefaction of the fungus was a vast mass of machinery in active movement, whose flying and whirling parts were visible indistinctly over the heads and between the bodies of the Selenites who walked about us. And not only did the web of sounds that filled the air proceed from this mechanism, but also the peculiar blue light that irradiated the whole place. We had taken it as a natural thing that a subterranean cavern should be artificially lit, and even now, though the fact was patent to my eyes, I did not really grasp its import until presently the darkness came. The meaning and structure of this huge apparatus we saw I cannot explain, because we neither of us learnt what it was for or how it worked. One after another, big shafts of metal flung out and up from its centre, their heads travelling in what seemed to me to be a parabolic path; each dropped a sort of dangling arm as it rose towards the apex of its flight and plunged down into a vertical cylinder, forcing this down before it. About it moved the shapes of tenders, little figures that seemed vaguely different from the beings about us. As each of the three dangling arms of the machine plunged down, there was a clank and then a roaring, and out of the top of the vertical cylinder came pouring this incandescent substance that lit the place, and ran over as milk runs over a boiling pot, and dripped luminously into a tank of light below. It was a cold blue light, a sort of phosphorescent glow but infinitely brighter, and from the tanks into which it fell it ran in conduits athwart the cavern.

Thud, thud, thud, thud, came the sweeping arms of this unintelligible apparatus, and the light substance hissed and poured.

At first the thing seemed only reasonably large and near to us, and then I saw how exceedingly little the Selenites upon it seemed, and I realised the full immensity of cavern and machine. I looked from this tremendous affair to the faces of the Selenites with a new respect. I stopped, and Cavor stopped, and stared at this thunderous engine.

"But this is stupendous!" I said. "What can it be for?"

Cavor's blue-lit face was full of an intelligent respect. "I can't dream! Surely these beings — Men could not make a thing like that! Look at those arms, are they on connecting rods?"

The thick-set Selenite had gone some paces unheeded. He came back and stood between us and the great machine. I avoided seeing him, because I guessed somehow that his idea was to beckon us onward. He walked away in the direction he wished us to go, and turned and came back, and flicked our faces to attract our attention.

Cavor and I looked at one another.

"Cannot we show him we are interested in the machine?" I said.

"Yes," said Cavor. "We'll try that." He turned to our guide and smiled, and pointed to the machine, and pointed again, and then to his head, and then to the machine. By some defect of reasoning he seemed to imagine that broken English might help these gestures. "Me look 'im," he said, "me think 'im very much. Yes."

His behaviour seemed to check the Selenites in their desire for our progress for a moment. They faced one another, their queer heads moved, the twittering voices came quick and liquid. Then one of them, a lean, tall creature, with a sort of mantle added to the puttee in which the others were dressed, twisted his elephant trunk of a hand about Cavor's waist, and pulled him gently to follow our guide, who again went on ahead. Cavor resisted. "We may just as well begin explaining ourselves now. They may think we are new animals, a new sort of mooncalf perhaps! It is most important that we should show an intelligent interest from the outset."

He began to shake his head violently. "No, no," he said, "me not come on one minute. Me look at 'im."

"Isn't there some geometrical point you might bring in apropos of that affair?" I suggested, as the Selenites conferred again.

"Possibly a parabolic—" he began.

He yelled loudly, and leaped six feet or more!

One of the four armed moon-men had pricked him with a goad!

I turned on the goad-bearer behind me with a swift threatening gesture, and he started back. This and Cavor's sudden shout and leap clearly astonished all the Selenites. They receded hastily, facing us. For one of those moments that seem to last for ever, we stood in angry protest, with a scattered semicircle of these inhuman beings about us.

"He pricked me!" said Cavor, with a catching of the voice.

"I saw him," I answered.

"Confound it!" I said to the Selenites; "we're not going to stand that! What on earth do you take us for?"

I glanced quickly right and left. Far away across the blue wilderness of cavern I saw a number of other Selenites running towards us; broad and slender they were, and one with a larger head than the others. The cavern spread wide and low, and receded in every direction into darkness. Its roof, I remember, seemed to bulge down as if with the weight of the vast thickness of rocks that prisoned us. There was no way out of it — no way out of it. Above, below, in every direction, was the unknown, and these inhuman creatures, with goads and gestures, confronting us, and we two unsupported men!

Chapter 15

The Giddy Bridge

Just for a moment that hostile pause endured. I suppose that both we and the Selenites did some very rapid thinking. My clearest impression was that there was nothing to put my back against, and that we were bound to be surrounded and killed. The overwhelming folly of our presence there loomed over me in black, enormous reproach. Why had I ever launched myself on this mad, inhuman expedition?

Cavor came to my side and laid his hand on my arm. His pale and terrified face was ghastly in the blue light.

"We can't do anything," he said. "It's a mistake. They don't understand.
We must go. As they want us to go."

I looked down at him, and then at the fresh Selenites who were coming to help their fellows. "If I had my hands free—"

"It's no use," he panted.

"No."

"We'll go."

And he turned about and led the way in the direction that had been indicated for us.

I followed, trying to look as subdued as possible, and feeling at the chains about my wrists. My blood was boiling. I noted nothing more of that cavern, though it seemed to take a long time before we had marched across it, or if I noted anything I forgot it as I saw it. My thoughts were concentrated, I think, upon my chains and the Selenites, and particularly upon the helmeted ones with the goads. At first they marched parallel with us, and at a respectful distance, but presently they were overtaken by three others, and then they drew nearer, until they were within arms length again. I winced like a beaten horse as they came near to us. The shorter, thicker Selenite marched at first on our right flank, but presently came in front of us

again.

How well the picture of that grouping has bitten into my brain; the back of Cavor's downcast head just in front of me, and the dejected droop of his shoulders, and our guide's gaping visage, perpetually jerking about him, and the goad-bearers on either side, watchful, yet open-mouthed — a blue monochrome. And after all, I do remember one other thing besides the purely personal affair, which is, that a sort of gutter came presently across the floor of the cavern, and then ran along by the side of the path of rock we followed. And it was full of that same bright blue luminous stuff that flowed out of the great machine. I walked close beside it, and I can testify it radiated not a particle of heat. It was brightly shining, and yet it was neither warmer nor colder than anything else in the cavern.

Clang, clang, clang, we passed right under the thumping levers of another vast machine, and so came at last to a wide tunnel, in which we could even hear the pad, pad, of our shoeless feet, and which, save for the trickling thread of blue to the right of us, was quite unlit. The shadows made gigantic travesties of our shapes and those of the Selenites on the irregular wall and roof of the tunnel. Ever and again crystals in the walls of the tunnel scintillated like gems, ever and again the tunnel expanded into a stalactitic cavern, or gave off branches that vanished into darkness.

We seemed to be marching down that tunnel for a long time. "Trickle, trickle," went the flowing light very softly, and our footfalls and their echoes made an irregular paddle, paddle. My mind settled down to the question of my chains. If I were to slip off one turn *so*, and then to twist it *so* …

If I tried to do it very gradually, would they see I was slipping my wrist out of the looser turn? If they did, what would they do?

"Bedford," said Cavor, "it goes down. It keeps on going down."

His remark roused me from my sullen pre-occupation.

"If they wanted to kill us," he said, dropping back to come level with me, "there is no reason why they should not have done it."

"No," I admitted, "that's true."

"They don't understand us," he said, "they think we are merely strange animals, some wild sort of mooncalf birth, perhaps. It will be only when they have observed us better that they will begin to think

we have minds—”

“When you trace those geometrical problems,” said I.

“It may be that.”

We tramped on for a space.

“You see,” said Cavor, “these may be Selenites of a lower class.”

“The infernal fools!” said I viciously, glancing at their exasperating faces.

“If we endure what they do to us—”

“We’ve got to endure it,” said I.

“There may be others less stupid. This is the mere outer fringe of their world. It must go down and down, cavern, passage, tunnel, down at last to the sea — hundreds of miles below.”

His words made me think of the mile or so of rock and tunnel that might be over our heads already. It was like a weight dropping, on my shoulders. “Away from the sun and air,” I said. “Even a mine half a mile deep is stuffy.”

“This is not, anyhow. It’s probable — Ventilation! The air would blow from the dark side of the moon to the sunlit, and all the carbonic acid would well out there and feed those plants. Up this tunnel, for example, there is quite a breeze. And what a world it must be. The earnest we have in that shaft, and those machines—”

“And the goad,” I said. “Don’t forget the goad!”

He walked a little in front of me for a time.

“Even that goad—” he said.

“Well?”

“I was angry at the time. But — it was perhaps necessary we should get on. They have different skins, and probably different nerves. They may not understand our objection — just as a being from Mars might not like our earthly habit of nudging.”

“They’d better be careful how they nudge me.”

“And about that geometry. After all, their way is a way of understanding, too. They begin with the elements of life and not of thought. Food. Compulsion. Pain. They strike at fundamentals.”

“There’s no doubt about that,” I said.

He went on to talk of the enormous and wonderful world into which we were being taken. I realised slowly from his tone, that even now he was not absolutely in despair at the prospect of going ever

deeper into this inhuman planet-burrow. His mind ran on machines and invention, to the exclusion of a thousand dark things that beset me. It wasn't that he intended to make any use of these things, he simply wanted to know them.

"After all," he said, "this is a tremendous occasion. It is the meeting of two worlds! What are we going to see? Think of what is below us here."

"We shan't see much if the light isn't better," I remarked.

"This is only the outer crust. Down below — On this scale — There will be everything. Do you notice how different they seem one from another? The story we shall take back!"

"Some rare sort of animal," I said, "might comfort himself in that way while they were bringing him to the Zoo…. It doesn't follow that we are going to be shown all these things."

"When they find we have reasonable minds," said Cavor, "they will want to learn about the earth. Even if they have no generous emotions, they will teach in order to learn…. And the things they must know! The unanticipated things!"

He went on to speculate on the possibility of their knowing things he had never hoped to learn on earth, speculating in that way, with a raw wound from that goad already in his skin! Much that he said I forget, for my attention was drawn to the fact that the tunnel along which we had been marching was opening out wider and wider. We seemed, from the feeling of the air, to be going out into a huge space. But how big the space might really be we could not tell, because it was unlit. Our little stream of light ran in a dwindling thread and vanished far ahead. Presently the rocky walls had vanished altogether on either hand. There was nothing to be seen but the path in front of us and the trickling hurrying rivulet of blue phosphorescence. The figures of Cavor and the guiding Selenite marched before me, the sides of their legs and heads that were towards the rivulet were clear and bright blue, their darkened sides, now that the reflection of the tunnel wall no longer lit them, merged indistinguishably in the darkness beyond.

And soon I perceived that we were approaching a declivity of some sort, because the little blue stream dipped suddenly out of sight.

In another moment, as it seemed, we had reached the edge. The shining stream gave one meander of hesitation and then rushed over. It fell to a depth at which the sound of its descent was absolutely lost to us. Far below was a bluish glow, a sort of blue mist — at an infinite distance below. And the darkness the stream dropped out of became utterly void and black, save that a thing like a plank projected from the edge of the cliff and stretched out and faded and vanished altogether. There was a warm air blowing up out of the gulf.

For a moment I and Cavor stood as near the edge as we dared, peering into a blue-tinged profundity. And then our guide was pulling at my arm.

Then he left me, and walked to the end of that plank and stepped upon it, looking back. Then when he perceived we watched him, he turned about and went on along it, walking as surely as though he was on firm earth. For a moment his form was distinct, then he became a blue blur, and then vanished into the obscurity. I became aware of some vague shape looming darkly out of the black.

There was a pause. “Surely!—” said Cavor.

One of the other Selenites walked a few paces out upon the plank, and turned and looked back at us unconcernedly. The others stood ready to follow after us. Our guide’s expectant figure reappeared. He was returning to see why we had not advanced.

“What is that beyond there?” I asked.

“I can’t see.”

“We can’t cross this at any price,” said I.

“I could not go three steps on it,” said Cavor, “even with my hands free.”

We looked at each other’s drawn faces in blank consternation.

“They can’t know what it is to be giddy!” said Cavor.

“It’s quite impossible for us to walk that plank.”

“I don’t believe they see as we do. I’ve been watching them. I wonder if they know this is simply blackness for us. How can we make them understand?”

“Anyhow, we must make them understand.”

I think we said these things with a vague half hope the Selenites might somehow understand. I knew quite clearly that all that was

needed was an explanation. Then as I saw their faces, I realised that an explanation was impossible. Just here it was that our resemblances were not going to bridge our differences. Well, I wasn't going to walk the plank, anyhow. I slipped my wrist very quickly out of the coil of chain that was loose, and then began to twist my wrists in opposite directions. I was standing nearest to the bridge, and as I did this two of the Selenites laid hold of me, and pulled me gently towards it.

I shook my head violently. "No go," I said, "no use. You don't understand."

Another Selenite added his compulsion. I was forced to step forward.

"I've got an idea," said Cavor; but I knew his ideas.

"Look here!" I exclaimed to the Selenites. "Steady on! It's all very well for you—"

I sprang round upon my heel. I burst out into curses. For one of the armed
Selenites had stabbed me behind with his goad.

I wrenched my wrists free from the little tentacles that held them. I turned on the goad-bearer. "Confound you!" I cried. "I've warned you of that. What on earth do you think I'm made of, to stick that into me? If you touch me again—"

By way of answer he pricked me forthwith.

I heard Cavor's voice in alarm and entreaty. Even then I think he wanted to compromise with these creatures. "I say, Bedford," he cried, "I know a way!" But the sting of that second stab seemed to set free some pent-up reserve of energy in my being. Instantly the link of the wrist-chain snapped, and with it snapped all considerations that had held us unresisting in the hands of these moon creatures. For that second, at least, I was mad with fear and anger. I took no thought of consequences. I hit straight out at the face of the thing with the goad. The chain was twisted round my fist.

There came another of these beastly surprises of which the moon world is full.

My mailed hand seemed to go clean through him. He smashed

like — like some softish sort of sweet with liquid in it! He broke right in! He squelched and splashed. It was like hitting a damp toadstool. The flimsy body went spinning a dozen yards, and fell with a flabby impact. I was astonished. I was incredulous that any living thing could be so flimsy. For an instant I could have believed the whole thing a dream.

Then it had become real and imminent again. Neither Cavor nor the other Selenites seemed to have done anything from the time when I had turned about to the time when the dead Selenite hit the ground. Every one stood back from us two, every one alert. That arrest seemed to last at least a second after the Selenite was down. Every one must have been taking the thing in. I seem to remember myself standing with my arm half retracted, trying also to take it in. "What next?" clamoured my brain; "what next?" Then in a moment every one was moving!

I perceived we must get our chains loose, and that before we could do this these Selenites had to be beaten off. I faced towards the group of the three goad-bearers. Instantly one threw his goad at me. It swished over my head, and I suppose went flying into the abyss behind.

I leaped right at him with all my might as the goad flew over me. He turned to run as I jumped, and I bore him to the ground, came down right upon him, and slipped upon his smashed body and fell. He seemed to wriggle under my foot.

I came into a sitting position, and on every hand the blue backs of the Selenites were receding into the darkness. I bent a link by main force and untwisted the chain that had hampered me about the ankles, and sprang to my feet, with the chain in my hand. Another goad, flung javelin-wise, whistled by me, and I made a rush towards the darkness out of which it had come. Then I turned back towards Cavor, who was still standing in the light of the rivulet near the gulf convulsively busy with his wrists, and at the same time jabbering nonsense about his idea.

"Come on!" I cried.

"My hands!" he answered.

Then, realising that I dared not run back to him, because my ill-calculated steps might carry me over the edge, he came shuffling

towards me, with his hands held out before him.

I gripped his chains at once to unfasten them.

"Where are they?" he panted.

"Run away. They'll come back. They're throwing things! Which way shall we go?"

"By the light. To that tunnel. Eh?"

"Yes," said I, and his hands were free.

I dropped on my knees and fell to work on his ankle bonds. Whack came something — I know not what — and splashed the livid streamlet into drops about us. Far away on our right a piping and whistling began.

I whipped the chain off his feet, and put it in his hand. "Hit with that!" I said, and without waiting for an answer, set off in big bounds along the path by which we had come. I had a nasty sort of feeling that these things could jump out of the darkness on to my back. I heard the impact of his leaps come following after me.

We ran in vast strides. But that running, you must understand, was an altogether different thing from any running on earth. On earth one leaps and almost instantly hits the ground again, but on the moon, because of its weaker pull, one shot through the air for several seconds before one came to earth. In spite of our violent hurry this gave an effect of long pauses, pauses in which one might have counted seven or eight. "Step," and one soared off! All sorts of questions ran through my mind: "Where are the Selenites? What will they do? Shall we ever get to that tunnel? Is Cavor far behind? Are they likely to cut him off?" Then whack, stride, and off again for another step.

I saw a Selenite running in front of me, his legs going exactly as a man's would go on earth, saw him glance over his shoulder, and heard him shriek as he ran aside out of my way into the darkness. He was, I think, our guide, but I am not sure. Then in another vast stride the walls of rock had come into view on either hand, and in two more strides I was in the tunnel, and tempering my pace to its low roof. I went on to a bend, then stopped and turned back, and plug, plug, plug, Cavor came into view, splashing into the stream of blue light at every stride, and grew larger and blundered into me. We stood clutching each other. For a moment, at least, we had shaken off our

captors and were alone.

We were both very much out of breath. We spoke in panting, broken sentences.

"You've spoilt it all!" panted Cavor. "Nonsense," I cried. "It was that or death!"

"What are we to do?"

"Hide."

"How can we?"

"It's dark enough."

"But where?"

"Up one of these side caverns."

"And then?"

"Think."

"Right — come on."

We strode on, and presently came to a radiating dark cavern. Cavor was in front. He hesitated, and chose a black mouth that seemed to promise good hiding. He went towards it and turned.

"It's dark," he said.

"Your legs and feet will light us. You're wet with that luminous stuff."

"But—"

A tumult of sounds, and in particular a sound like a clanging gong, advancing up the main tunnel, became audible. It was horribly suggestive of a tumultuous pursuit. We made a bolt for the unlit side cavern forthwith. As we ran along it our way was lit by the irradiation of Cavor's legs. "It's lucky," I panted, "they took off our boots, or we should fill this place with clatter." On we rushed, taking as small steps as we could to avoid striking the roof of the cavern. After a time we seemed to be gaining on the uproar. It became muffled, it dwindled, it died away.

I stopped and looked back, and I heard the pad, pad of Cavor's feet receding. Then he stopped also. "Bedford," he whispered; "there's a sort of light in front of us."

I looked, and at first could see nothing. Then I perceived his head and shoulders dimly outlined against a fainter darkness. I saw, also, that this mitigation of the darkness was not blue, as all the other light within the moon had been, but a pallid gray, a very vague, faint

white, the daylight colour. Cavor noted this difference as soon, or sooner, than I did, and I think, too, that it filled him with much the same wild hope.

“Bedford,” he whispered, and his voice trembled. “That light — it is possible—”

He did not dare to say the thing he hoped. Then came a pause. Suddenly I knew by the sound of his feet that he was striding towards that pallor. I followed him with a beating heart.

Chapter 16

Points of View

The light grew stronger as we advanced. In a little time it was nearly as strong as the phosphorescence on Cavor's legs. Our tunnel was expanding into a cavern, and this new light was at the farther end of it. I perceived something that set my hopes leaping and bounding.

"Cavor," I said, "it comes from above! I am certain it comes from above!"

He made no answer, but hurried on.

Indisputably it was a gray light, a silvery light.

In another moment we were beneath it. It filtered down through a chink in the walls of the cavern, and as I stared up, drip, came a drop of water upon my face. I started and stood aside — drip, fell another drop quite audibly on the rocky floor.

"Cavor," I said, "if one of us lifts the other, he can reach that crack!"

"I'll lift you," he said, and incontinently hoisted me as though I was a baby.

I thrust an arm into the crack, and just at my finger tips found a little ledge by which I could hold. I could see the white light was very much brighter now. I pulled myself up by two fingers with scarcely an effort, though on earth I weigh twelve stone, reached to a still higher corner of rock, and so got my feet on the narrow ledge. I stood up and searched up the rocks with my fingers; the cleft broadened out upwardly. "It's climbable," I said to Cavor. "Can you jump up to my hand if I hold it down to you?"

I wedged myself between the sides of the cleft, rested knee and foot on the ledge, and extended a hand. I could not see Cavor, but I could hear the rustle of his movements as he crouched to spring. Then whack and he was hanging to my arm — and no heavier than a kitten! I lugged him up until he had a hand on my ledge, and could release me.

"Confound it!" I said, "any one could be a mountaineer on the moon;" and so set myself in earnest to the climbing. For a few

minutes I clambered steadily, and then I looked up again. The cleft opened out steadily, and the light was brighter. Only —

It was not daylight after all.

In another moment I could see what it was, and at the sight I could have beaten my head against the rocks with disappointment. For I beheld simply an irregularly sloping open space, and all over its slanting floor stood a forest of little club-shaped fungi, each shining gloriously with that pinkish silvery light. For a moment I stared at their soft radiance, then sprang forward and upward among them. I plucked up half a dozen and flung them against the rocks, and then sat down, laughing bitterly, as Cavor's ruddy face came into view.

"It's phosphorescence again!" I said. "No need to hurry. Sit down and make yourself at home." And as he spluttered over our disappointment, I began to lob more of these growths into the cleft.

"I thought it was daylight," he said.

"Daylight!" cried I. "Daybreak, sunset, clouds, and windy skies! Shall we ever see such things again?"

As I spoke, a little picture of our world seemed to rise before me, bright and little and clear, like the background of some old Italian picture. "The sky that changes, and the sea that changes, and the hills and the green trees and the towns and cities shining in the sun. Think of a wet roof at sunset, Cavor! Think of the windows of a westward house!" He made no answer.

"Here we are burrowing in this beastly world that isn't a world, with its inky ocean hidden in some abominable blackness below, and outside that torrid day and that death stillness of night. And all these things that are chasing us now, beastly men of leather — insect men, that come out of a nightmare! After all, they're right! What business have we here smashing them and disturbing their world! For all we know the whole planet is up and after us already. In a minute we may hear them whimpering, and their gongs going. What are we to do? Where are we to go? Here we are as comfortable as snakes from Jamrach's loose in a Surbiton villa!"

"It was your fault," said Cavor.

"My fault!" I shouted. "Good Lord!"

"I had an idea!"

"Curse your ideas!"

“If we had refused to budge—”

“Under those goads?”

“Yes. They would have carried us!”

“Over that bridge?”

“Yes. They must have carried us from outside.”

“I’d rather be carried by a fly across a ceiling.”

“Good Heavens!”

I resumed my destruction of the fungi. Then suddenly I saw something that struck me even then. “Cavor,” I said, “these chains are of gold!”

He was thinking intently, with his hands gripping his cheeks. He turned his head slowly and stared at me, and when I had repeated my words, at the twisted chain about his right hand. “So they are,” he said, “so they are.” His face lost its transitory interest even as he looked. He hesitated for a moment, then went on with his interrupted meditation. I sat for a space puzzling over the fact that I had only just observed this, until I considered the blue light in which we had been, and which had taken all the colour out of the metal. And from that discovery I also started upon a train of thought that carried me wide and far. I forgot that I had just been asking what business we had in the moon. Gold….

It was Cavor who spoke first. “It seems to me that there are two courses open to us.”

“Well?”

“Either we can attempt to make our way — fight our way if necessary — out to the exterior again, and then hunt for our sphere until we find it, or the cold of the night comes to kill us, or else—”

He paused. “Yes?” I said, though I knew what was coming.

“We might attempt once more to establish some sort of understanding with the minds of the people in the moon.”

“So far as I’m concerned — it’s the first.”

“I doubt.”

“I don’t.”

“You see,” said Cavor, “I do not think we can judge the Selenites by what we have seen of them. Their central world, their civilised world will be far below in the profounder caverns about their sea. This region of the crust in which we are is an outlying district, a

pastoral region. At any rate, that is my interpretation. These Selenites we have seen may be only the equivalent of cowboys and engine-tenders. Their use of goads — in all probability mooncalf goads — the lack of imagination they show in expecting us to be able to do just what they can do, their indisputable brutality, all seem to point to something of that sort. But if we endured—"

"Neither of us could endure a six-inch plank across the bottomless pit for very long."

"No," said Cavor; "but then—"

"I *won't*," I said.

He discovered a new line of possibilities. "Well, suppose we got ourselves into some corner, where we could defend ourselves against these hinds and labourers. If, for example, we could hold out for a week or so, it is probable that the news of our appearance would filter down to the more intelligent and populous parts—"

"If they exist."

"They must exist, or whence came those tremendous machines?"

"That's possible, but it's the worst of the two chances."

"We might write up inscriptions on walls—"

"How do we know their eyes would see the sort of marks we made?"

"If we cut them—"

"That's possible, of course."

I took up a new thread of thought. "After all," I said, "I suppose you don't think these Selenites so infinitely wiser than men."

"They must know a lot more — or at least a lot of different things."

"Yes, but—" I hesitated.

"I think you'll quite admit, Cavor, that you're rather an exceptional man."

"How?"

"Well, you — you're a rather lonely man — have been, that is. You haven't married."

"Never wanted to. But why—"

"And you never grew richer than you happened to be?"

"Never wanted that either."

"You've just rooted after knowledge?"

“Well, a certain curiosity is natural—”

“You think so. That’s just it. You think every other mind wants to know. I remember once, when I asked you why you conducted all these researches, you said you wanted your F.R.S., and to have the stuff called Cavorite, and things like that. You know perfectly well you didn’t do it for that; but at the time my question took you by surprise, and you felt you ought to have something to look like a motive. Really you conducted researches because you had to. It’s your twist.”

“Perhaps it is—”

“It isn’t one man in a million has that twist. Most men want — well, various things, but very few want knowledge for its own sake. I don’t, I know perfectly well. Now, these Selenites seem to be a driving, busy sort of being, but how do you know that even the most intelligent will take an interest in us or our world? I don’t believe they’ll even know we have a world. They never come out at night — they’d freeze if they did. They’ve probably never seen any heavenly body at all except the blazing sun. How are they to know there is another world? What does it matter to them if they do? Well, even if they have had a glimpse of a few stars, or even of the earth crescent, what of that? Why should people living inside a planet trouble to observe that sort of thing? Men wouldn’t have done it except for the seasons and sailing; why should the moon people?…

“Well, suppose there are a few philosophers like yourself. They are just the very Selenites who’ll never have heard of our existence. Suppose a Selenite had dropped on the earth when you were at Lympne, you’d have been the last man in the world to hear he had come. You never read a newspaper! You see the chances against you. Well, it’s for these chances we’re sitting here doing nothing while precious time is flying. I tell you we’ve got into a fix. We’ve come unarmed, we’ve lost our sphere, we’ve got no food, we’ve shown ourselves to the Selenites, and made them think we’re strange, strong, dangerous animals; and unless these Selenites are perfect fools, they’ll set about now and hunt us till they find us, and when they find us they’ll try to take us if they can, and kill us if they can’t, and that’s the end of the matter. If they take us, they’ll probably kill us, through some misunderstanding. After we’re done for, they may

discuss us perhaps, but we shan't get much fun out of that."

"Go on."

"On the other hand, here's gold knocking about like cast iron at home. If only we can get some of it back, if only we can find our sphere again before they do, and get back, then—"

"Yes?"

"We might put the thing on a sounder footing. Come back in a bigger sphere with guns."

"Good Lord!" cried Cavor, as though that was horrible.

I shied another luminous fungus down the cleft.

"Look here, Cavor," I said, "I've half the voting power anyhow in this affair, and this is a case for a practical man. I'm a practical man, and you are not. I'm not going to trust to Selenites and geometrical diagrams if I can help it. That's all. Get back. Drop all this secrecy — or most of it. And come again."

He reflected. "When I came to the moon," he said, "I ought to have come alone."

"The question before the meeting," I said, "is how to get back to the sphere."

For a time we nursed our knees in silence. Then he seemed to decide for my reasons.

"I think," he said, "one can get data. It is clear that while the sun is on this side of the moon the air will be blowing through this planet sponge from the dark side hither. On this side, at any rate, the air will be expanding and flowing out of the moon caverns into the craters…. Very well, there's a draught here."

"So there is."

"And that means that this is not a dead end; somewhere behind us this cleft goes on and up. The draught is blowing up, and that is the way we have to go. If we try to get up any sort of chimney or gully there is, we shall not only get out of these passages where they are hunting for us—"

"But suppose the gully is too narrow?"

"We'll come down again."

"Ssh!" I said suddenly; "what's that?"

We listened. At first it was an indistinct murmur, and then one picked out the clang of a gong. "They must think we are

mooncalves," said I, "to be frightened at that."

"They're coming along that passage," said Cavor.

"They must be."

"They'll not think of the cleft. They'll go past."

I listened again for a space. "This time," I whispered, "they're likely to have some sort of weapon."

Then suddenly I sprang to my feet. "Good heavens, Cavor!" I cried. "But they will! They'll see the fungi I have been pitching down. They'll—"

I didn't finish my sentence. I turned about and made a leap over the fungus tops towards the upper end of the cavity. I saw that the space turned upward and became a draughty cleft again, ascending to impenetrable darkness. I was about to clamber up into this, and then with a happy inspiration turned back.

"What are you doing?" asked Cavor.

"Go on!" said I, and went back and got two of the shining fungi, and putting one into the breast pocket of my flannel jacket, so that it stuck out to light our climbing, went back with the other for Cavor. The noise of the Selenites was now so loud that it seemed they must be already beneath the cleft. But it might be they would have difficulty in clambering in to it, or might hesitate to ascend it against our possible resistance. At any rate, we had now the comforting knowledge of the enormous muscular superiority our birth in another planet gave us. In other minute I was clambering with gigantic vigour after Cavor's blue-lit heels.

Chapter 17

The Fight in the Cave of the Moon Butchers

I do not know how far we clambered before we came to the grating. It may be we ascended only a few hundred feet, but at the time it seemed to me we might have hauled and jammed and hopped and wedged ourselves through a mile or more of vertical ascent. Whenever I recall that time, there comes into my head the heavy clank of our golden chains that followed every movement. Very soon my knuckles and knees were raw, and I had a bruise on one cheek. After a time the first violence of our efforts diminished, and our movements became more deliberate and less painful. The noise of the pursuing Selenites had died away altogether. It seemed almost as though they had not traced us up the crack after all, in spite of the tell-tale heap of broken fungi that must have lain beneath it. At times the cleft narrowed so much that we could scarce squeeze up it; at others it expanded into great drusy cavities, studded with prickly crystals or thickly beset with dull, shining fungoid pimples. Sometimes it twisted spirally, and at other times slanted down nearly to the horizontal direction. Ever and again there was the intermittent drip and trickle of water by us. Once or twice it seemed to us that small living things had rustled out of our reach, but what they were we never saw. They may have been venomous beasts for all I know, but they did us no harm, and we were now tuned to a pitch when a weird creeping thing more or less mattered little. And at last, far above, came the familiar bluish light again, and then we saw that it filtered through a grating that barred our way.

We whispered as we pointed this out to one another, and became more and more cautious in our ascent. Presently we were close under the grating, and by pressing my face against its bars I could see a limited portion of the cavern beyond. It was clearly a large space, and lit no doubt by some rivulet of the same blue light that we had seen flow from the beating machinery. An intermittent trickle of water dropped ever and again between the bars near my face.

My first endeavour was naturally to see what might be upon the

floor of the cavern, but our grating lay in a depression whose rim hid all this from our eyes. Our foiled attention then fell back upon the suggestion of the various sounds we heard, and presently my eye caught a number of faint shadows that played across the dim roof far overhead.

Indisputably there were several Selenites, perhaps a considerable number, in this space, for we could hear the noises of their intercourse, and faint sounds that I identified as their footfalls. There was also a succession of regularly repeated sounds — chid, chid, chid — which began and ceased, suggestive of a knife or spade hacking at some soft substance. Then came a clank as if of chains, a whistle and a rumble as of a truck running over a hollowed place, and then again that chid, chid, chid resumed. The shadows told of shapes that moved quickly and rhythmically, in agreement with that regular sound, and rested when it ceased.

We put our heads close together, and began to discuss these things in noiseless whispers.

"They are occupied," I said, "they are occupied in some way."

"Yes."

"They're not seeking us, or thinking of us."

"Perhaps they have not heard of us."

"Those others are hunting about below. If suddenly we appeared here—"

We looked at one another.

"There might be a chance to parley," said Cavor.

"No," I said. "Not as we are."

For a space we remained, each occupied by his own thoughts.

Chid, chid, chid went the chipping, and the shadows moved to and fro.

I looked at the grating. "It's flimsy," I said. "We might bend two of the bars and crawl through."

We wasted a little time in vague discussion. Then I took one of the bars in both hands, and got my feet up against the rock until they were almost on a level with my head, and so thrust against the bar. It bent so suddenly that I almost slipped. I clambered about and bent the adjacent bar in the opposite direction, and then took the luminous fungus from my pocket and dropped it down the fissure.

“Don’t do anything hastily,” whispered Cavor, as I twisted myself up through the opening I had enlarged. I had a glimpse of busy figures as I came through the grating, and immediately bent down, so that the rim of the depression in which the grating lay hid me from their eyes, and so lay flat, signalling advice to Cavor as he also prepared to come through. Presently we were side by side in the depression, peering over the edge at the cavern and its occupants.

It was a much larger cavern than we had supposed from our first glimpse of it, and we looked up from the lowest portion of its sloping floor. It widened out as it receded from us, and its roof came down and hid the remoter portion altogether. And lying in a line along its length, vanishing at last far away in that tremendous perspective, were a number of huge shapes, huge pallid hulls, upon which the Selenites were busy. At first they seemed big white cylinders of vague import. Then I noted the heads upon them lying towards us, eyeless and skinless like the heads of sheep at a butcher’s, and perceived they were the carcasses of mooncalves being cut up, much as the crew of a whaler might cut up a moored whale. They were cutting off the flesh in strips, and on some of the farther trunks the white ribs were showing. It was the sound of their hatchets that made that chid, chid, chid. Some way away a thing like a trolley cable, drawn and loaded with chunks of lax meat, was running up the slope of the cavern floor. This enormous long avenue of hulls that were destined to be food gave us a sense of the vast populousness of the moon world second only to the effect of our first glimpse down the shaft.

It seemed to me at first that the Selenites must be standing on trestle-supported planks,[*] and then I saw that the planks and supports and the hatchets were really of the same leaden hue as my fetters had seemed before white light came to bear on them. A number of very thick-looking crowbars lay about the floor, and had apparently assisted to turn the dead mooncalf over on its side. They were perhaps six feet long, with shaped handles, very tempting-looking weapons. The whole place was lit by three transverse streams of the blue fluid.

[* Footnote: I do not remember seeing any wooden things on the moon; doors tables, everything corresponding to our terrestrial

joinery was made of metal, and I believe for the most part of gold, which as a metal would, of course, naturally recommend itself — other things being equal — on account of the ease in working it, and its toughness and durability.]

We lay for a long time noting all these things in silence. “Well?” said Cavor at last.

I crouched over and turned to him. I had come upon a brilliant idea. “Unless they lowered those bodies by a crane,” I said, “we must be nearer the surface than I thought.”

“Why?”

“The mooncalf doesn’t hop, and it hasn’t got wings.”

He peered over the edge of the hollow again. “I wonder now—” he began.

“After all, we have never gone far from the surface—”

I stopped him by a grip on his arm. I had heard a noise from the cleft below us!

We twisted ourselves about, and lay as still as death, with every sense alert. In a little while I did not doubt that something was quietly ascending the cleft. Very slowly and quite noiselessly I assured myself of a good grip on my chain, and waited for that something to appear.

“Just look at those chaps with the hatchets again,” I said.

“They’re all right,” said Cavor.

I took a sort of provisional aim at the gap in the grating. I could hear now quite distinctly the soft twittering of the ascending Selenites, the dab of their hands against the rock, and the falling of dust from their grips as they clambered.

Then I could see that there was something moving dimly in the blackness below the grating, but what it might be I could not distinguish. The whole thing seemed to hang fire just for a moment — then smash! I had sprung to my feet, struck savagely at something that had flashed out at me. It was the keen point of a spear. I have thought since that its length in the narrowness of the cleft must have

prevented its being sloped to reach me. Anyhow, it shot out from the grating like the tongue of a snake, and missed and flew back and flashed again. But the second time I snatched and caught it, and wrenched it away, but not before another had darted ineffectually at me.

I shouted with triumph as I felt the hold of the Selenite resist my pull for a moment and give, and then I was jabbing down through the bars, amidst squeals from the darkness, and Cavor had snapped off the other spear, and was leaping and flourishing it beside me, and making inefficient jabs. Clang, clang, came up through the grating, and then an axe hurtled through the air and whacked against the rocks beyond, to remind me of the fleshers at the carcasses up the cavern.

I turned, and they were all coming towards us in open order waving their axes. They were short, thick, little beggars, with long arms, strikingly different from the ones we had seen before. If they had not heard of us before, they must have realised the situation with incredible swiftness. I stared at them for a moment, spear in hand. "Guard that grating, Cavor," I cried, howled to intimidate them, and rushed to meet them. Two of them missed with their hatchets, and the rest fled incontinently. Then the two also were sprinting away up the cavern, with hands clenched and heads down. I never saw men run like them!

I knew the spear I had was no good for me. It was thin and flimsy, only effectual for a thrust, and too long for a quick recover. So I only chased the Selenites as far as the first carcass, and stopped there and picked up one of the crowbars that were lying about. It felt comfortingly heavy, and equal to smashing any number of Selenites. I threw away my spear, and picked up a second crowbar for the other hand. I felt five times better than I had with the spear. I shook the two threateningly at the Selenites, who had come to a halt in a little crowd far away up the cavern, and then turned about to look at Cavor.

He was leaping from side to side of the grating, making threatening jabs with his broken spear. That was all right. It would keep the Selenites down — for a time at any rate. I looked up the cavern again. What on earth were we going to do now?

We were cornered in a sort of way already. But these butchers up the cavern had been surprised, they were probably scared, and they had no special weapons, only those little hatchets of theirs. And that way lay escape. Their sturdy little forms — ever so much shorter and thicker than the mooncalf herds — were scattered up the slope in a way that was eloquent of indecision. I had the moral advantage of a mad bull in a street. But for all that, there seemed a tremendous crowd of them. Very probably there was. Those Selenites down the cleft had certainly some infernally long spears. It might be they had other surprises for us…. But, confound it! if we charged up the cave we should let them up behind us, and if we didn't those little brutes up the cave would probably get reinforced. Heaven alone knew what tremendous engines of warfare — guns, bombs, terrestrial torpedoes — this unknown world below our feet, this vaster world of which we had only pricked the outer cuticle, might not presently send up to our destruction. It became clear the only thing to do was to charge! It became clearer as the legs of a number of fresh Selenites appeared running down the cavern towards us.

"Bedford!" cried Cavor, and behold! he was halfway between me and the grating.

"Go back!" I cried. "What are you doing—"

"They've got — it's like a gun!"

And struggling in the grating between those defensive spears appeared the head and shoulders of a singularly lean and angular Selenite, bearing some complicated apparatus.

I realised Cavor's utter incapacity for the fight we had in hand. For a moment I hesitated. Then I rushed past him whirling my crowbars, and shouting to confound the aim of the Selenite. He was aiming in the queerest way with the thing against his stomach. "Chuzz!" The thing wasn't a gun; it went off like cross-bow more, and dropped me in the middle of a leap.

I didn't fall down, I simply came down a little shorter than I should have done if I hadn't been hit, and from the feel of my shoulder the thing might have tapped me and glanced off. Then my left hand hit again the shaft, and I perceived there was a sort of spear sticking half through my shoulder. The moment after I got home with the crowbar in my right hand, and hit the Selenite fair and square. He

collapsed — he crushed and crumpled — his head smashed like an egg.

I dropped a crowbar, pulled the spear out of my shoulder, and began to jab it down the grating into the darkness. At each jab came a shriek and twitter. Finally I hurled the spear down upon them with all my strength, leapt up, picked up the crowbar again, and started for the multitude up the cavern.

"Bedford!" cried Cavor. "Bedford!" as I flew past him.

I seem to remember his footsteps coming on behind me.

Step, leap … whack, step, leap…. Each leap seemed to last ages. With each, the cave opened out and the number of Selenites visible increased. At first they seemed all running about like ants in a disturbed ant-hill, one or two waving hatchets and coming to meet me, more running away, some bolting sideways into the avenue of carcasses, then presently others came in sight carrying spears, and then others. I saw a most extraordinary thing, all hands and feet, bolting for cover. The cavern grew darker farther up.

Flick! something flew over my head. Flick! As I soared in mid-stride I saw a spear hit and quiver in one of the carcasses to my left. Then, as I came down, one hit the ground before me, and I heard the remote chuzz! with which their things were fired. Flick, flick! for a moment it was a shower. They were volleying!

I stopped dead.

I don't think I thought clearly then. I seem to remember a kind of stereotyped phrase running through my mind: "Zone of fire, seek cover!" I know I made a dash for the space between two of the carcasses, and stood there panting and feeling very wicked.

I looked round for Cavor, and for a moment it seemed as if he had vanished from the world. Then he came out of the darkness between the row of the carcasses and the rocky wall of the cavern. I saw his little face, dark and blue, and shining with perspiration and emotion.

He was saying something, but what it was I did not heed. I had realised that we might work from mooncalf to mooncalf up the cave until we were near enough to charge home. It was charge or nothing. "Come on!" I said, and led the way.

"Bedford!" he cried unavailingly.

My mind was busy as we went up that narrow alley between the

dead bodies and the wall of the cavern. The rocks curved about — they could not enfilade us. Though in that narrow space we could not leap, yet with our earth-born strength we were still able to go very much faster than the Selenites. I reckoned we should presently come right among them. Once we were on them, they would be nearly as formidable as black beetles. Only there would first of all be a volley. I thought of a stratagem. I whipped off my flannel jacket as I ran.

"Bedford!" panted Cavor behind me.

I glanced back. "What?" said I.

He was pointing upward over the carcasses. "White light!" he said. "White light again!"

I looked, and it was even so; a faint white ghost of light in the remoter cavern roof. That seemed to give me double strength.

"Keep close," I said. A flat, long Selenite dashed out of the darkness, and squealed and fled. I halted, and stopped Cavor with my hand. I hung my jacket over my crowbar, ducked round the next carcass, dropped jacket and crowbar, showed myself, and darted back.

"Chuzz-flick," just one arrow came. We were close on the Selenites, and they were standing in a crowd, broad, short, and tall together, with a little battery of their shooting implements pointing down the cave. Three or four other arrows followed the first, then their fire ceased.

I stuck out my head, and escaped by a hair's-breadth. This time I drew a dozen shots or more, and heard the Selenites shouting and twittering as if with excitement as they shot. I picked up jacket and crowbar again.

"Now!" said I, and thrust out the jacket.

"Chuzz-zz-zz-zz! Chuzz!" In an instant my jacket had grown a thick beard of arrows, and they were quivering all over the carcass behind us. Instantly I slipped the crowbar out of the jacket, dropped the jacket — for all I know to the contrary it is lying up there in the moon now — and rushed out upon them.

For a minute perhaps it was massacre. I was too fierce to discriminate, and the Selenites were probably too scared to fight. At any rate they made no sort of fight against me. I saw scarlet, as the saying is. I remember I seemed to be wading among those leathery,

thin things as a man wades through tall grass, mowing and hitting, first right, then left; smash. Little drops of moisture flew about. I trod on things that crushed and piped and went slippery. The crowd seemed to open and close and flow like water. They seemed to have no combined plan whatever. There were spears flew about me, I was grazed over the ear by one. I was stabbed once in the arm and once in the cheek, but I only found that out afterwards, when the blood had had time to run and cool and feel wet.

What Cavor did I do not know. For a space it seemed that this fighting had lasted for an age, and must needs go on for ever. Then suddenly it was all over, and there was nothing to be seen but the backs of heads bobbing up and down as their owners ran in all directions…. I seemed altogether unhurt. I ran forward some paces, shouting, then turned about. I was amazed.

I had come right through them in vast flying strides, they were all behind me, and running hither and thither to hide.

I felt an enormous astonishment at the evaporation of the great fight into which I had hurled myself, and not a little exultation. It did not seem to me that I had discovered the Selenites were unexpectedly flimsy, but that I was unexpectedly strong. I laughed stupidly. This fantastic moon!

I glanced for a moment at the smashed and writhing bodies that were scattered over the cavern floor, with a vague idea of further violence, then hurried on after Cavor.

Chapter 18

In the Sunlight

Presently we saw that the cavern before us opened upon a hazy void. In another moment we had emerged upon a sort of slanting gallery, that projected into a vast circular space, a huge cylindrical pit running vertically up and down. Round this pit the slanting gallery ran without any parapet or protection for a turn and a half, and then plunged high above into the rock again. Somehow it reminded me then one of those spiral turns of the railway through the Saint Gothard. It was all tremendously huge. I can scarcely hope to convey to you the Titanic proportion of all that place, the Titanic effect of it. Our eyes followed up the vast declivity of the pit wall, and overhead and far above we beheld a round opening set with faint stars, and half of the lip about it well nigh blinding with the white light of the sun. At that we cried aloud simultaneously.

"Come on!" I said, leading the way.

"But there?" said Cavor, and very carefully stepped nearer the edge of the gallery. I followed his example, and craned forward and looked down, but I was dazzled by that gleam of light above, and I could see only a bottomless darkness with spectral patches of crimson and purple floating therein. Yet if I could not see, I could hear. Out of this darkness came a sound, a sound like the angry hum one can hear if one puts one's ear outside a hive of bees, a sound out of that enormous hollow, it may be, four miles beneath our feet…

For a moment I listened, then tightened my grip on my crowbar, and led the way up the gallery.

"This must be the shaft we looked down upon," said Cavor. "Under that lid."

"And below there, is where we saw the lights."

"The lights!" said he. "Yes — the lights of the world that now we shall never see."

"We'll come back," I said, for now we had escaped so much I was rashly sanguine that we should recover the sphere.

His answer I did not catch.

“Eh?” I asked.

“It doesn’t matter,” he answered, and we hurried on in silence.

I suppose that slanting lateral way was four or five miles long, allowing for its curvature, and it ascended at a slope that would have made it almost impossibly steep on earth, but which one strode up easily under lunar conditions. We saw only two Selenites during all that portion of our flight, and directly they became aware of us they ran headlong. It was clear that the knowledge of our strength and violence had reached them. Our way to the exterior was unexpectedly plain. The spiral gallery straightened into a steeply ascendent tunnel, its floor bearing abundant traces of the mooncalves, and so straight and short in proportion to its vast arch, that no part of it was absolutely dark. Almost immediately it began to lighten, and then far off and high up, and quite blindingly brilliant, appeared its opening on the exterior, a slope of Alpine steepness surmounted by a crest of bayonet shrub, tall and broken down now, and dry and dead, in spiky silhouette against the sun.

And it is strange that we men, to whom this very vegetation had seemed so weird and horrible a little time ago, should now behold it with the emotion a home-coming exile might feel at sight of his native land. We welcomed even the rareness of the air that made us pant as we ran, and which rendered speaking no longer the easy thing that it had been, but an effort to make oneself heard. Larger grew the sunlit circle above us, and larger, and all the nearer tunnel sank into a rim of indistinguishable black. We saw the dead bayonet shrub no longer with any touch of green in it, but brown and dry and thick, and the shadow of its upper branches high out of sight made a densely interlaced pattern upon the tumbled rocks. And at the immediate mouth of the tunnel was a wide trampled space where the mooncalves had come and gone.

We came out upon this space at last into a light and heat that hit and pressed upon us. We traversed the exposed area painfully, and clambered up a slope among the scrub stems, and sat down at last panting in a high place beneath the shadow of a mass of twisted lava. Even in the shade the rock felt hot.

The air was intensely hot, and we were in great physical discomfort, but for all that we were no longer in a nightmare. We

seemed to have come to our own province again, beneath the stars. All the fear and stress of our flight through the dim passages and fissures below had fallen from us. That last fight had filled us with an enormous confidence in ourselves so far as the Selenites were concerned. We looked back almost incredulously at the black opening from which we had just emerged. Down there it was, in a blue glow that now in our memories seemed the next thing to absolute darkness, we had met with things like mad mockeries of men, helmet-headed creatures, and had walked in fear before them, and had submitted to them until we could submit no longer. And behold, they had smashed like wax and scattered like chaff, and fled and vanished like the creatures of a dream!

I rubbed my eyes, doubting whether we had not slept and dreamt these things by reason of the fungus we had eaten, and suddenly discovered the blood upon my face, and then that my shirt was sticking painfully to my shoulder and arm.

"Confound it!" I said, gauging my injuries with an investigatory hand, and suddenly that distant tunnel mouth became, as it were, a watching eye.

"Cavor!" I said; "what are they going to do now? And what are we going to do?"

He shook his head, with his eyes fixed upon the tunnel. "How can one tell what they will do?"

"It depends on what they think of us, and I don't see how we can begin to guess that. And it depends upon what they have in reserve. It's as you say, Cavor, we have touched the merest outside of this world. They may have all sorts of things inside here. Even with those shooting things they might make it bad for us….

"Yet after all," I said, "even if we don't find the sphere at once, there is a chance for us. We might hold out. Even through the night. We might go down there again and make a fight for it."

I stared about me with speculative eyes. The character of the scenery had altered altogether by reason of the enormous growth and subsequent drying of the scrub. The crest on which we sat was high, and commanded a wide prospect of the crater landscape, and we saw it now all sere and dry in the late autumn of the lunar afternoon. Rising one behind the other were long slopes and fields of trampled

brown where the mooncalves had pastured, and far away in the full blaze of the sun a drove of them basked slumberously, scattered shapes, each with a blot of shadow against it like sheep on the side of a down. But never a sign of a Selenite was to be seen. Whether they had fled on our emergence from the interior passages, or whether they were accustomed to retire after driving out the mooncalves, I cannot guess. At the time I believed the former was the case.

"If we were to set fire to all this stuff," I said, "we might find the sphere among the ashes."

Cavor did not seem to hear me. He was peering under his hand at the stars, that still, in spite of the intense sunlight, were abundantly visible in the sky. "How long do you think we've have been here?" he asked at last.

"Been where?"

"On the moon."

"Two earthly days, perhaps."

"More nearly ten. Do you know, the sun is past its zenith, and sinking in the west. In four days' time or less it will be night."

"But — we've only eaten once!"

"I know that. And — But there are the stars!"

"But why should time seem different because we are on a smaller planet?"

"I don't know. There it is!"

"How does one tell time?"

"Hunger — fatigue — all those things are different. Everything is different — everything. To me it seems that since first we came out of the sphere has been only a question of hours — long hours — at most."

"Ten days," I said; "that leaves—" I looked up at the sun for a moment, and then saw that it was halfway from the zenith to the western edge of things. "Four days! … Cavor, we mustn't sit here and dream. How do you think we may begin?"

I stood up. "We must get a fixed point we can recognise — we might hoist a flag, or a handkerchief, or something — and quarter the ground, and work round that."

He stood up beside me.

“Yes,” he said, “there is nothing for it but to hunt the sphere.
Nothing.
We may find it — certainly we may find it. And if not—”

“We must keep on looking.”

He look this way and that, glanced up at the sky and down at the tunnel, and astonished me by a sudden gesture of impatience. “Oh! but we have done foolishly! To have come to this pass! Think how it might have been, and the things we might have done!”

“We might do something yet.”

“Never the thing we might have done. Here below out feet is a world. Think of what that world must be! Think of that machine we saw, and the lid and the shaft! They were just remote outlying things, and those creatures we have seen and fought with no more than ignorant peasants, dwellers in the outskirts, yokels and labourers half akin to brutes. Down below! Caverns beneath caverns, tunnels, structures, ways… It must open out, and be greater and wider and more populous as one descends. Assuredly. Right down at the last the central sea that washes round the core of the moon. Think of its inky waters under the spare lights — if, indeed, their eyes need lights! Think of the cascading tributaries pouring down their channels to feed it! Think of the tides upon its surface, and the rush and swirl of its ebb and flow! perhaps they have ships that go upon it, perhaps down there are mighty cities and swarming ways, and wisdom and order passing the wit of man. And we may die here upon it, and never see the masters who must be — ruling over these things! We may freeze and die here, and the air will freeze and thaw upon us, and then — ! Then they will come upon us, come on our stiff and silent bodies, and find the sphere we cannot find, and they will understand at last too late all the thought and effort that ended here in vain!”

His voice for all that speech sounded like the voice of someone heard in a telephone, weak and far away.

“But the darkness,” I said.

“One might get over that.”

“How?”

“I don’t know. How am I to know? One might carry a torch, one

might have a lamp — The others — might understand."

He stood for a moment with his hands held down and a rueful face, staring out over the waste that defied him. Then with a gesture of renunciation he turned towards me with proposals for the systematic hunting of the sphere.

"We can return," I said.

He looked about him. "First of all we shall have to get to earth."

"We could bring back lamps to carry and climbing irons, and a hundred necessary things."

"Yes," he said.

"We can take back an earnest of success in this gold."

He looked at my golden crowbars, and said nothing for a space. He stood with his hands clasped behind his back, staring across the crater. At last he signed and spoke. "It was I found the way here, but to find a way isn't always to be master of a way. If I take my secret back to earth, what will happen? I do not see how I can keep my secret for a year, for even a part of a year. Sooner or later it must come out, even if other men rediscover it. And then … Governments and powers will struggle to get hither, they will fight against one another, and against these moon people; it will only spread warfare and multiply the occasions of war. In a little while, in a very little while, if I tell my secret, this planet to its deepest galleries will be strewn with human dead. Other things are doubtful, but that is certain. It is not as though man had any use for the moon. What good would the moon be to men? Even of their own planet what have they made but a battle-ground and theatre of infinite folly? Small as his world is, and short as his time, he has still in his little life down there far more than he can do. No! Science has toiled too long forging weapons for fools to use. It is time she held her hand. Let him find it out for himself again — in a thousand years' time."

"There are methods of secrecy," I said.

He looked up at me and smiled. "After all," he said, "why should one worry? There is little chance of our finding the sphere, and down below things are brewing. It's simply the human habit of hoping till we die that makes us think of return. Our troubles are only beginning. We have shown these moon folk violence, we have given them a taste of our quality, and our chances are about as good as a

tiger's that has got loose and killed a man in Hyde Park. The news of us must be running down from gallery to gallery, down towards the central parts…. No sane beings will ever let us take that sphere back to earth after so much as they have seen of us."

"We aren't improving our chances," said I, "by sitting here."

We stood up side by side.

"After all," he said, "we must separate. We must stick up a handkerchief on these tall spikes here and fasten it firmly, and from this as a centre we must work over the crater. You must go westward, moving out in semicircles to and fro towards the setting sun. You must move first with your shadow on your right until it is at right angles with the direction of your handkerchief, and then with your shadow on your left. And I will do the same to the east. We will look into every gully, examine every skerry of rocks; we will do all we can to find my sphere. If we see the Selenites we will hide from them as well as we can. For drink we must take snow, and if we feel the need of food, we must kill a mooncalf if we can, and eat such flesh as it has — raw — and so each will go his own way."

"And if one of us comes upon the sphere?"

"He must come back to the white handkerchief, and stand by it and signal to the other."

"And if neither?"

Cavor glanced up at the sun. "We go on seeking until the night and cold overtake us."

"Suppose the Selenites have found the sphere and hidden it?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Or if presently they come hunting us?"

He made no answer.

"You had better take a club," I said.

He shook his head, and stared away from me across the waste.

But for a moment he did not start. He looked round at me shyly, hesitated.
"Au revoir," he said.

I felt an odd stab of emotion. A sense of how we had galled each other, and particularly how I must have galled him, came to me.

“Confound it,” thought I, “we might have done better!” I was on the point of asking him to shake hands — for that, somehow, was how I felt just then — when he put his feet together and leapt away from me towards the north. He seemed to drift through the air as a dead leaf would do, fell lightly, and leapt again. I stood for a moment watching him, then faced westward reluctantly, pulled myself together, and with something of the feeling of a man who leaps into icy water, selected a leaping point, and plunged forward to explore my solitary half of the moon world. I dropped rather clumsily among rocks, stood up and looked about me, clambered on to a rocky slab, and leapt again….

When presently I looked for Cavor he was hidden from my eyes, but the handkerchief showed out bravely on its headland, white in the blaze of the sun.

I determined not to lose sight of that handkerchief whatever might betide.

Chapter 19

Mr. Bedford Alone

In a little while it seemed to me as though I had always been alone on the moon. I hunted for a time with a certain intentness, but the heat was still very great, and the thinness of the air felt like a hoop about one's chest. I came presently into a hollow basin bristling with tall, brown, dry fronds about its edge, and I sat down under these to rest and cool. I intended to rest for only a little while. I put down my clubs beside me, and sat resting my chin on my hands. I saw with a sort of colourless interest that the rocks of the basin, where here and there the crackling dry lichens had shrunk away to show them, were all veined and splattered with gold, that here and there bosses of rounded and wrinkled gold projected from among the litter. What did that matter now? A sort of languor had possession of my limbs and mind, I did not believe for a moment that we should ever find the sphere in that vast desiccated wilderness. I seemed to lack a motive for effort until the Selenites should come. Then I supposed I should exert myself, obeying that unreasonable imperative that urges a man before all things to preserve and defend his life, albeit he may preserve it only to die more painfully in a little while.

Why had we come to the moon?

The thing presented itself to me as a perplexing problem. What is this spirit in man that urges him for ever to depart from happiness and security, to toil, to place himself in danger, to risk even a reasonable certainty of death? It dawned upon me up there in the moon as a thing I ought always to have known, that man is not made simply to go about being safe and comfortable and well fed and amused. Almost any man, if you put the thing to him, not in words, but in the shape of opportunities, will show that he knows as much. Against his interest, against his happiness, he is constantly being driven to do unreasonable things. Some force not himself impels him, and go he must. But why? Why? Sitting there in the midst of that useless moon gold, amidst the things of another world, I took count of all my life. Assuming I was to die a castaway upon the

moon, I failed altogether to see what purpose I had served. I got no light on that point, but at any rate it was clearer to me than it had ever been in my life before that I was not serving my own purpose, that all my life I had in truth never served the purposes of my private life. Whose purposes, what purposes, was I serving? … I ceased to speculate on why we had come to the moon, and took a wider sweep. Why had I come to the earth? Why had I a private life at all? … I lost myself at last in bottomless speculations….

My thoughts became vague and cloudy, no longer leading in definite directions. I had not felt heavy or weary — I cannot imagine one doing so upon the moon — but I suppose I was greatly fatigued. At any rate I slept.

Slumbering there rested me greatly, I think, and the sun was setting and the violence of the heat abating, through all the time I slumbered. When at last I was roused from my slumbers by a remote clamour, I felt active and capable again. I rubbed my eyes and stretched my arms. I rose to my feet — I was a little stiff — and at once prepared to resume my search. I shouldered my golden clubs, one on each shoulder, and went on out of the ravine of the gold-veined rocks.

The sun was certainly lower, much lower than it had been; the air was very much cooler. I perceived I must have slept some time. It seemed to me that a faint touch of misty blueness hung about the western cliff I leapt to a little boss of rock and surveyed the crater. I could see no signs of mooncalves or Selenites, nor could I see Cavor, but I could see my handkerchief far off, spread out on its thicket of thorns. I looked bout me, and then leapt forward to the next convenient view-point.

I beat my round in a semicircle, and back again in a still remoter crescent. It was very fatiguing and hopeless. The air was really very much cooler, and it seemed to me that the shadow under the westward cliff was growing broad. Ever and again I stopped and reconnoitred, but there was no sign of Cavor, no sign of Selenites; and it seemed to me the mooncalves must have been driven into the interior again — I could see none of them. I became more and more desirous of seeing Cavor. The winged outline of the sun had sunk now, until it was scarcely the distance of its diameter from the rim of

the sky. I was oppressed by the idea that the Selenites would presently close their lids and valves, and shut us out under the inexorable onrush of the lunar night. It seemed to me high time that he abandoned his search, and that we took counsel together. I felt how urgent it was that we should decide soon upon our course. We had failed to find the sphere, we no longer had time to seek it, and once these valves were closed with us outside, we were lost men. The great night of space would descend upon us — that blackness of the void which is the only absolute death. All my being shrank from that approach. We must get into the moon again, though we were slain in doing it. I was haunted by a vision of our freezing to death, of our hammering with our last strength on the valve of the great pit.

I took no thought any more of the sphere. I thought only of finding Cavor again. I was half inclined to go back into the moon without him, rather than seek him until it was too late. I was already half-way back towards our handkerchief, when suddenly —

I saw the sphere!

I did not find it so much as it found me. It was lying much farther to the westward than I had gone, and the sloping rays of the sinking sun reflected from its glass had suddenly proclaimed its presence in a dazzling beam. For an instant I thought this was some new device of the Selenites against us, and then I understood.

I threw up my arms, shouted a ghostly shout, and set off in vast leaps towards it. I missed one of my leaps and dropped into a deep ravine and twisted my ankle, and after that I stumbled at almost every leap. I was in a state of hysterical agitation, trembling violently, and quite breathless long before I got to it. Three times at least I had to stop with my hands resting on my side and in spite of the thin dryness of the air, the perspiration was wet upon my face.

I thought of nothing but the sphere until I reached it, I forgot even my trouble of Cavor's whereabouts. My last leap flung me with my hands hard against its glass; then I lay against it panting, and trying vainly to shout, "Cavor! here is the sphere!" When I had recovered a little I peered through the thick glass, and the things inside seemed tumbled. I stooped to peer closer. Then I attempted to get in. I had to hoist it over a little to get my head through the manhole. The screw stopper was inside, and I could see now that nothing had been

touched, nothing had suffered. It lay there as we had left it when we had dropped out amidst the snow. For a time I was wholly occupied in making and remaking this inventory. I found I was trembling violently. It was good to see that familiar dark interior again! I cannot tell you how good. Presently I crept inside and sat down among the things. I looked through the glass at the moon world and shivered. I placed my gold clubs upon the table, and sought out and took a little food; not so much because I wanted it, but because it was there. Then it occurred to me that it was time to go out and signal for Cavor. But I did not go out and signal for Cavor forthwith. Something held me to the sphere.

After all, everything was coming right. There would be still time for us to get more of the magic stone that gives one mastery over men. Away there, close handy, was gold for the picking up; and the sphere would travel as well half full of gold as though it were empty. We could go back now, masters of ourselves and our world, and then —

I roused myself at last, and with an effort got myself out of the sphere. I shivered as I emerged, for the evening air was growing very cold. I stood in the hollow staring about me. I scrutinised the bushes round me very carefully before I leapt to the rocky shelf hard by, and took once more what had been my first leap in the moon. But now I made it with no effort whatever.

The growth and decay of the vegetation had gone on apace, and the whole aspect of the rocks had changed, but still it was possible to make out the slope on which the seeds had germinated, and the rocky mass from which we had taken our first view of the crater. But the spiky shrub on the slope stood brown and sere now, and thirty feet high, and cast long shadows that stretched out of sight, and the little seeds that clustered in its upper branches were brown and ripe. Its work was done, and it was brittle and ready to fall and crumple under the freezing air, so soon as the nightfall came. And the huge cacti, that had swollen as we watched them, had long since burst and scattered their spores to the four quarters of the moon. Amazing little corner in the universe — the landing place of men!

Some day, thought I, I will have an inscription standing there right in the midst of the hollow. It came to me, if only this teeming world

within knew of the full import of the moment, how furious its tumult would become!

But as yet it could scarcely be dreaming of the significance of our coming. For if it did, the crater would surely be an uproar of pursuit, instead of as still as death! I looked about for some place from which I might signal Cavor, and saw that same patch of rock to which he had leapt from my present standpoint, still bare and barren in the sun. For a moment I hesitated at going so far from the sphere. Then with a pang of shame at that hesitation, I leapt….

From this vantage point I surveyed the crater again. Far away at the top of the enormous shadow I cast was the little white handkerchief fluttering on the bushes. It was very little and very far, and Cavor was not in sight. It seemed to me that by this time he ought to be looking for me. That was the agreement. But he was nowhere to be seen.

I stood waiting and watching, hands shading my eyes, expecting every moment to distinguish him. Very probably I stood there for quite a long time. I tried to shout, and was reminded of the thinness of the air. I made an undecided step back towards the sphere. But a lurking dread of the Selenites made me hesitate to signal my whereabouts by hoisting one of our sleeping-blankets on to the adjacent scrub. I searched the crater again.

It had an effect of emptiness that chilled me. And it was still. Any sound from the Selenites in the world beneath had died away. It was as still as death. Save for the faint stir of the shrub about me in the little breeze that was rising, there was no sound nor shadow of a sound. And the breeze blew chill.

Confound Cavor!

I took a deep breath. I put my hands to the sides of my mouth. “Cavor!” I bawled, and the sound was like some manikin shouting far away.

I looked at the handkerchief, I looked behind me at the broadening shadow of the westward cliff, I looked under my hand at the sun. It seemed to me that almost visibly it was creeping down the sky.

I felt I must act instantly if I was to save Cavor. I whipped off my vest and flung it as a mark on the sere bayonets of the shrubs behind

me, and then set off in a straight line towards the handkerchief. Perhaps it was a couple of miles away — a matter of a few hundred leaps and strides. I have already told how one seemed to hang through those lunar leaps. In each suspense I sought Cavor, and marvelled why he should be hidden. In each leap I could feel the sun setting behind me. Each time I touched the ground I was tempted to go back.

A last leap and I was in the depression below our handkerchief, a stride, and I stood on our former vantage point within arms' reach of it. I stood up straight and scanned the world about me, between its lengthening bars of shadow. Far away, down a long declivity, was the opening of the tunnel up which we had fled, and my shadow reached towards it, stretched towards it, and touched it, like a finger of the night.

Not a sign of Cavor, not a sound in all the stillness, only the stir and waving of the scrub and of the shadows increased. And suddenly and violently I shivered. "Cav—" I began, and realised once more the uselessness of the human voice in that thin air. Silence. The silence of death.

Then it was my eye caught something — a little thing lying, perhaps fifty yards away down the slope, amidst a litter of bent and broken branches. What was it? I knew, and yet for some reason I would not know. I went nearer to it. It was the little cricket-cap Cavor had worn. I did not touch it, I stood looking at it.

I saw then that the scattered branches about it had been forcibly smashed and trampled. I hesitated, stepped forward, and picked it up.

I stood with Cavor's cap in my hand, staring at the trampled reeds and thorns about me. On some, of them were little smears of something dark, something that I dared not touch. A dozen yards away, perhaps, the rising breeze dragged something into view, something small and vividly white.

It was a little piece of paper crumpled tightly, as though it had been clutched tightly. I picked it up, and on it were smears of red. My eye caught faint pencil marks. I smoothed it out, and saw uneven and broken writing ending at last in a crooked streak up on the paper.

I set myself to decipher this.

"I have been injured about the knee, I think my kneecap is hurt,

and I cannot run or crawl," it began — pretty distinctly written.

Then less legibly: "They have been chasing me for some time, and it is only a question of" — the word "time" seemed to have been written here and erased in favour of something illegible— "before they get me. They are beating all about me."

Then the writing became convulsive. "I can hear them," I guessed the tracing meant, and then it was quite unreadable for a space. Then came a little string of words that were quite distinct: "a different sort of Selenite altogether, who appears to be directing the—" The writing became a mere hasty confusion again.

"They have larger brain cases — much larger, and slenderer bodies, and very short legs. They make gentle noises, and move with organized deliberation…

"And though I am wounded and helpless here, their appearance still gives me hope." That was like Cavor. "They have not shot at me or attempted… injury. I intend—"

Then came the sudden streak of the pencil across the paper, and on the back and edges — blood!

And as I stood there stupid, and perplexed, with this dumbfounding relic in my hand, something very soft and light and chill touched my hand for a moment and ceased to be, and then a thing, a little white speck, drifted athwart a shadow. It was a tiny snowflake, the first snowflake, the herald of the night.

I looked up with a start, and the sky had darkened almost to blackness, and was thick with a gathering multitude of coldly watchful stars. I looked eastward, and the light of that shrivelled world was touched with sombre bronze; westward, and the sun robbed now by a thickening white mist of half its heat and splendour, was touching the crater rim, was sinking out of sight, and all the shrubs and jagged and tumbled rocks stood out against it in a bristling disorder of black shapes. Into the great lake of darkness westward, a vast wreath of mist was sinking. A cold wind set all the crater shivering. Suddenly, for a moment, I was in a puff of falling snow, and all the world about me gray and dim.

And then it was I heard, not loud and penetrating as at first, but faint and dim like a dying voice, that tolling, that same tolling that had welcomed the coming of the day: Boom!… Boom!… Boom!…

It echoed about the crater, it seemed to throb with the throbbing of the greater stars, the blood-red crescent of the sun's disc sank as it tolled out: Boom!… Boom!… Boom!…

What had happened to Cavor? All through that tolling I stood there stupidly, and at last the tolling ceased.

And suddenly the open mouth of the tunnel down below there, shut like an eye and vanished out of sight.

Then indeed was I alone.

Over me, around me, closing in on me, embracing me ever nearer, was the Eternal; that which was before the beginning, and that which triumphs over the end; that enormous void in which all light and life and being is but the thin and vanishing splendour of a falling star, the cold, the stillness, the silence — the infinite and final Night of space.

The sense of solitude and desolation became the sense of an overwhelming presence that stooped towards me, that almost touched me.

"No," I cried. "No! Not yet! not yet! Wait! Wait! Oh, wait!" My voice went up to a shriek. I flung the crumpled paper from me, scrambled back to the crest to take my bearings, and then, with all the will that was in me, leapt out towards the mark I had left, dim and distant now in the very margin of the shadow.

Leap, leap, leap, and each leap was seven ages.

Before me the pale serpent-girdled section of the sun sank and sank, and the advancing shadow swept to seize the sphere before I could reach it. I was two miles away, a hundred leaps or more, and the air about me was thinning out as it thins under an air-pump, and the cold was gripping at my joints. But had I died, I should have died leaping. Once, and then again my foot slipped on the gathering snow as I leapt and shortened my leap; once I fell short into bushes that crashed and smashed into dusty chips and nothingness, and once I stumbled as I dropped and rolled head over heels into a gully, and rose bruised and bleeding and confused as to my direction.

But such incidents were as nothing to the intervals, those awful pauses when one drifted through the air towards that pouring tide of night. My breathing made a piping noise, and it was as though knives were whirling in my lungs. My heart seemed to beat against the top of my brain. "Shall I reach it? O Heaven! Shall I reach it?"

My whole being became anguish.

"Lie down!" screamed my pain and despair; "lie down!"

The nearer I struggled, the more awfully remote it seemed. I was numb,
I stumbled, I bruised and cut myself and did not bleed.

It was in sight.

I fell on all fours, and my lungs whooped.

I crawled. The frost gathered on my lips, icicles hung from my moustache,
I was white with the freezing atmosphere.

I was a dozen yards from it. My eyes had become dim. "Lie down!" screamed despair; "lie down!"

I touched it, and halted. "Too late!" screamed despair; "lie down!"

I fought stiffly with it. I was on the manhole lip, a stupefied, half-dead being. The snow was all about me. I pulled myself in. There lurked within a little warmer air.

The snowflakes — the airflakes — danced in about me, as I tried with chilling hands to thrust the valve in and spun it tight and hard. I sobbed. "I will," I chattered in my teeth. And then, with fingers that quivered and felt brittle, I turned to the shutter studs.

As I fumbled with the switches — for I had never controlled them before — I could see dimly through the steaming glass the blazing red streamers of the sinking sun, dancing and flickering through the snowstorm, and the black forms of the scrub thickening and bending and breaking beneath the accumulating snow. Thicker whirled the snow and thicker, black against the light. What if even now the switches overcame me? Then something clicked under my hands, and in an instant that last vision of the moon world was hidden from my eyes. I was in the silence and darkness of the inter-planetary sphere.

Chapter 20

Mr. Bedford in Infinite Space

It was almost as though I had been killed. Indeed, I could imagine a man suddenly and violently killed would feel very much as I did. One moment, a passion of agonising existence and fear; the next darkness and stillness, neither light nor life nor sun, moon nor stars, the blank infinite. Although the thing was done by my own act, although I had already tasted this very of effect in Cavor's company, I felt astonished, dumbfounded, and overwhelmed. I seemed to be borne upward into an enormous darkness. My fingers floated off the studs, I hung as if I were annihilated, and at last very softly and gently I came against the bale and the golden chain, and the crowbars that had drifted to the middle of the sphere.

I do not know how long that drifting took. In the sphere of course, even more than on the moon, one's earthly time sense was ineffectual. At the touch of the bale it was as if I had awakened from a dreamless sleep. I immediately perceived that if I wanted to keep awake and alive I must get a light or open a window, so as to get a grip of something with my eyes. And besides, I was cold. I kicked off from the bale, therefore, clawed on to the thin cords within the glass, crawled along until I got to the manhole rim, and so got my bearings for the light and blind studs, took a shove off, and flying once round the bale, and getting a scare from something big and flimsy that was drifting loose, I got my hand on the cord quite close to the studs, and reached them. I lit the little lamp first of all to see what it was I had collided with, and discovered that old copy of *Lloyd's News* had slipped its moorings, and was adrift in the void. That brought me out of the infinite to my own proper dimensions again. It made me laugh and pant for a time, and suggested the idea of a little oxygen from one of the cylinders. After that I lit the heater until I felt warm, and then I took food. Then I set to work in a very gingerly fashion on the Cavorite blinds, to see if I could guess by any means how the sphere was travelling.

The first blind I opened I shut at once, and hung for a time

flattened and blinded by the sunlight that had hit me. After thinking a little I started upon the windows at right angles to this one, and got the huge crescent moon and the little crescent earth behind it, the second time. I was amazed to find how far I was from the moon. I had reckoned that not only should I have little or none of the "kick-off" that the earth's atmosphere had given us at our start, but that the tangential "fly off" of the moon's spin would be at least twenty-eight times less than the earth's. I had expected to discover myself hanging over our crater, and on the edge of the night, but all that was now only a part of the outline of the white crescent that filled the sky. And Cavor — ?

He was already infinitesimal.

I tried to imagine what could have happened to him. But at that time I could think of nothing but death. I seemed to see him, bent and smashed at the foot of some interminably high cascade of blue. And all about him the stupid insects stared…

Under the inspiring touch of the drifting newspaper I became practical again for a while. It was quite clear to me that what I had to do was to get back to earth, but as far as I could see I was drifting away from it. Whatever had happened to Cavor, even if he was still alive, which seemed to me incredible after that blood-stained scrap, I was powerless to help him. There he was, living or dead behind the mantle of that rayless night, and there he must remain at least until I could summon our fellow men to his assistance. Should I do that? Something of the sort I had in my mind; to come back to earth if it were possible, and then as maturer consideration might determine, either to show and explain the sphere to a few discreet persons, and act with them, or else to keep my secret, sell my gold, obtain weapons, provisions, and an assistant, and return with these advantages to deal on equal terms with the flimsy people of the moon, to rescue Cavor, if that were still possible, and at any rate to procure a sufficient supply of gold to place my subsequent proceedings on a firmer basis. But that was hoping far; I had first to get back.

I set myself to decide just exactly how the return to earth could be contrived. As I struggled with that problem I ceased to worry about what I should do when I got there. At last my only care was to get

back.

I puzzled out at last that my best chance would be to drop back towards the moon as near as I dared in order to gather velocity, then to shut my windows, and fly behind it, and when I was past to open my earthward windows, and so get off at a good pace homeward. But whether I should ever reach the earth by that device, or whether I might not simply find myself spinning about it in some hyperbolic or parabolic curve or other, I could not tell. Later I had a happy inspiration, and by opening certain windows to the moon, which had appeared in the sky in front of the earth, I turned my course aside so as to head off the earth, which it had become evident to me I must pass behind without some such expedient. I did a very great deal of complicated thinking over these problems — for I am no mathematician — and in the end I am certain it was much more my good luck than my reasoning that enabled me to hit the earth. Had I known then, as I know now, the mathematical chances there were against me, I doubt if I should have troubled even to touch the studs to make any attempt. And having puzzled out what I considered to be the thing to do, I opened all my moonward windows, and squatted down — the effort lifted me for a time some feet or so into the air, and I hung there in the oddest way — and waited for the crescent to get bigger and bigger until I felt I was near enough for safety. Then I would shut the windows, fly past the moon with the velocity I had got from it — if I did not smash upon it — and so go on towards the earth.

And that is what I did.

At last I felt my moonward start was sufficient. I shut out the sight of the moon from my eyes, and in a state of mind that was, I now recall, incredibly free from anxiety or any distressful quality, I sat down to begin a vigil in that little speck of matter in infinite space that would last until I should strike the earth. The heater had made the sphere tolerably warm, the air had been refreshed by the oxygen, and except for that faint congestion of the head that was always with me while I was away from earth, I felt entire physical comfort. I had extinguished the light again, lest it should fail me in the end; I was in darkness, save for the earthshine and the glitter of the stars below me. Everything was so absolutely silent and still that I might indeed

have been the only being in the universe, and yet, strangely enough, I had no more feeling of loneliness or fear than if I had been lying in bed on earth. Now, this seems all the stranger to me, since during my last hours in that crater of the moon, the sense of my utter loneliness had been an agony….

Incredible as it will seem, this interval of time that I spent in space has no sort of proportion to any other interval of time in my life. Sometimes it seemed as though I sat through immeasurable eternities like some god upon a lotus leaf, and again as though there was a momentary pause as I leapt from moon to earth. In truth, it was altogether some weeks of earthly time. But I had done with care and anxiety, hunger or fear, for that space. I floated, thinking with a strange breadth and freedom of all that we had undergone, and of all my life and motives, and the secret issues of my being. I seemed to myself to have grown greater and greater, to have lost all sense of movement; to be floating amidst the stars, and always the sense of earth's littleness and the infinite littleness of my life upon it, was implicit in my thoughts.

I can't profess to explain the things that happened in my mind. No doubt they could all be traced directly or indirectly to the curious physical conditions under which I was living. I set them down here just for what they are worth, and without any comment. The most prominent quality of it was a pervading doubt of my own identity. I became, if I may so express it, dissociate from Bedford; I looked down on Bedford as a trivial, incidental thing with which I chanced to be connected. I saw Bedford in many relations — as an ass or as a poor beast, where I had hitherto been inclined to regard him with a quiet pride as a very spirited or rather forcible person. I saw him not only as an ass, but as the son of many generations of asses. I reviewed his school-days and his early manhood, and his first encounter with love, very much as one might review the proceedings of an ant in the sand. Something of that period of lucidity I regret still hangs about me, and I doubt if I shall ever recover the full-bodied self satisfaction of my early days. But at the time the thing was not in the least painful, because I had that extraordinary persuasion that, as a matter of fact, I was no more Bedford than I was any one else, but only a mind floating in the still serenity of space.

Why should I be disturbed about this Bedford's shortcomings? I was not responsible for him or them.

For a time I struggled against this really very grotesque delusion. I tried to summon the memory of vivid moments, of tender or intense emotions to my assistance; I felt that if I could recall one genuine twinge of feeling the growing severance would be stopped. But I could not do it. I saw Bedford rushing down Chancery Lane, hat on the back of his head, coat tails flying out, en route for his public examination. I saw him dodging and bumping against, and even saluting, other similar little creatures in that swarming gutter of people. Me? I saw Bedford that same evening in the sitting-room of a certain lady, and his hat was on the table beside him, and it wanted brushing badly, and he was in tears. Me? I saw him with that lady in various attitudes and emotions — I never felt so detached before…. I saw him hurrying off to Lympne to write a play, and accosting Cavor, and in his shirt sleeves working at the sphere, and walking out to Canterbury because he was afraid to come! Me? I did not believe it.

I still reasoned that all this was hallucination due to my solitude, and the fact that I had lost all weight and sense of resistance. I endeavoured to recover that sense by banging myself about the sphere, by pinching my hands and clasping them together. Among other things, I lit the light, captured that torn copy of *Lloyd's*, and read those convincingly realistic advertisements about the Cutaway bicycle, and the gentleman of private means, and the lady in distress who was selling those "forks and spoons." There was no doubt *they* existed surely enough, and, said I, "This is your world, and you are Bedford, and you are going back to live among things like that for all the rest of your life." But the doubts within me could still argue: "It is not you that is reading, it is Bedford, but you are not Bedford, you know. That's just where the mistake comes in."

"Confound it!" I cried; "and if I am not Bedford, what am I?"

But in that direction no light was forthcoming, though the strangest fancies came drifting into my brain, queer remote suspicions, like shadows seen from away. Do you know, I had a sort of idea that really I was something quite outside not only the world, but all worlds, and out of space and time, and that this poor Bedford

was just a peephole through which I looked at life? …

Bedford! However I disavowed him, there I was most certainly bound up with him, and I knew that wherever or whatever I might be, I must needs feel the stress of his desires, and sympathise with all his joys and sorrows until his life should end. And with the dying of Bedford — what then? …

Enough of this remarkable phase of my experiences! I tell it here simply to show how one's isolation and departure from this planet touched not only the functions and feeling of every organ of the body, but indeed also the very fabric of the mind, with strange and unanticipated disturbances. All through the major portion of that vast space journey I hung thinking of such immaterial things as these, hung dissociated and apathetic, a cloudy megalomaniac, as it were, amidst the stars and planets in the void of space; and not only the world to which I was returning, but the blue-lit caverns of the Selenites, their helmet faces, their gigantic and wonderful machines, and the fate of Cavor, dragged helpless into that world, seemed infinitely minute and altogether trivial things to me.

Until at last I began to feel the pull of the earth upon my being, drawing me back again to the life that is real for men. And then, indeed, it grew clearer and clearer to me that I was quite certainly Bedford after all, and returning after amazing adventures to this world of ours, and with a life that I was very likely to lose in this return. I set myself to puzzle out the conditions under which I must fall to earth.

Chapter 21

Mr. Bedford at Littlestone

My line of flight was about parallel with the surface as I came into the upper air. The temperature of sphere began to rise forthwith. I knew it behoved me to drop at once. Far below me, in a darkling twilight, stretched a great expanse of sea. I opened every window I could, and fell — out of sunshine into evening, and out of evening into night. Vaster grew the earth and vaster, swallowing up the stars, and the silvery translucent starlit veil of cloud it wore spread out to catch me. At last the world seemed no longer a sphere but flat, and then concave. It was no longer a planet in the sky, but the world of Man. I shut all but an inch or so of earthward window, and dropped with a slackening velocity. The broadening water, now so near that I could see the dark glitter of the waves, rushed up to meet me. The sphere became very hot. I snapped the last strip of window, and sat scowling and biting my knuckles, waiting for the impact….

The sphere hit the water with a huge splash: it must have sent it fathoms high. At the splash I flung the Cavorite shutters open. Down I went, but slower and slower, and then I felt the sphere pressing against my feet, and so drove up again as a bubble drives. And at the last I was floating and rocking upon the surface of the sea, and my journey in space was at an end.

The night was dark and overcast. Two yellow pinpoints far away showed the passing of a ship, and nearer was a red glare that came and went. Had not the electricity of my glow-lamp exhausted itself, I could have got picked up that night. In spite of the inordinate fatigue I was beginning to feel, I was excited now, and for a time hopeful, in a feverish, impatient way, that so my travelling might end.

But at last I ceased to move about, and sat, wrists on knees, staring at a distant red light. It swayed up and down, rocking, rocking. My excitement passed. I realised I had yet to spend another night at least in the sphere. I perceived myself infinitely heavy and fatigued. And so I fell asleep.

A change in my rhythmic motion awakened me. I peered through

the refracting glass, and saw that I had come aground upon a huge shallow of sand. Far away I seemed to see houses and trees, and seaward a curve, vague distortion of a ship hung between sea and sky.

I stood up and staggered. My one desire was to emerge. The manhole was upward, and I wrestled with the screw. Slowly I opened the manhole. At last the air was singing in again as once it had sung out. But this time I did not wait until the pressure was adjusted. In another moment I had the weight of the window on my hands, and I was open, wide open, to the old familiar sky of earth.

The air hit me on the chest so that I gasped. I dropped the glass screw. I cried out, put my hands to my chest, and sat down. For a time I was in pain. Then I took deep breaths. At last I could rise and move about again.

I tried to thrust my head through the manhole, and the sphere rolled over. It was as though something had lugged my head down directly it emerged. I ducked back sharply, or I should have been pinned face under water. After some wriggling and shoving I managed to crawl out upon sand, over which the retreating waves still came and went.

I did not attempt to stand up. It seemed to me that my body must be suddenly changed to lead. Mother Earth had her grip on me now — no Cavorite intervening. I sat down heedless of the water that came over my feet.

It was dawn, a gray dawn, rather overcast but showing here and there a long patch of greenish gray. Some way out a ship was lying at anchor, a pale silhouette of a ship with one yellow light. The water came rippling in in long shallow waves. Away to the right curved the land, a shingle bank with little hovels, and at last a lighthouse, a sailing mark and a point. Inland stretched a space of level sand, broken here and there by pools of water, and ending a mile away perhaps in a low shore of scrub. To the north-east some isolated watering-place was visible, a row of gaunt lodging-houses, the tallest things that I could see on earth, dull dabs against the brightening sky. What strange men can have reared these vertical piles in such an amplitude of space I do not know. There they are, like pieces of Brighton lost in the waste.

For a long time I sat there, yawning and rubbing my face. At last I struggled to rise. It made me feel that I was lifting a weight. I stood up.

I stared at the distant houses. For the first time since our starvation in the crater I thought of earthly food. “Bacon,” I whispered, “eggs. Good toast and good coffee…. And how the devil am I going to get all this stuff to Lympne?” I wondered where I was. It was an east shore anyhow, and I had seen Europe before I dropped.

I heard footsteps crunching in the sand, and a little round-faced, friendly-looking man in flannels, with a bathing towel wrapped about his shoulders, and his bathing dress over his arm, appeared up the beach. I knew instantly that I must be in England. He was staring most intently at the sphere and me. He advanced staring. I dare say I looked a ferocious savage enough — dirty, unkempt, to an indescribable degree; but it did not occur to me at the time. He stopped at a distance of twenty yards. “Hul-lo, my man!” he said doubtfully.

“Hullo yourself!” said I.

He advanced, reassured by that. “What on earth is that thing?” he asked.

“Can you tell me where I am?” I asked.

“That’s Littlestone,” he said, pointing to the houses; “and that’s Dungeness! Have you just landed? What’s that thing you’ve got? Some sort of machine?”

“Yes.”

“Have you floated ashore? Have you been wrecked or something? What is it?”

I meditated swiftly. I made an estimate of the little man’s appearance as he drew nearer. “By Jove!” he said, “you’ve had a time of it! I thought you — Well — Where were you cast away? Is that thing a sort of floating thing for saving life?”

I decided to take that line for the present. I made a few vague affirmatives. “I want help,” I said hoarsely. “I want to get some stuff up the beach — stuff I can’t very well leave about.” I became aware of three other pleasant-looking young men with towels, blazers, and straw hats, coming down the sands towards me. Evidently the early bathing section of this Littlestone.

“Help!” said the young man: “rather!” He became vaguely active. “What particularly do you want done?” He turned round and gesticulated. The three young men accelerated their pace. In a minute they there about me, plying me with questions I was indisposed to answer. “I’ll tell all that later,” I said. “I’m dead beat. I’m a rag.”

“Come up to the hotel,” said the foremost little man. “We’ll look after that thing there.”

I hesitated. “I can’t,” I said. “In that sphere there’s two big bars of gold.”

They looked incredulously at one another, then at me with a new inquiry. I went to the sphere, stooped, crept in, and presently they had the Selenites’ crowbars and the broken chain before them. If I had not been so horribly fagged I could have laughed at them. It was like kittens round a beetle. They didn’t know what to do with the stuff. The fat little man stooped and lifted the end of one of the bars, and then dropped it with a grunt. Then they all did.

“It’s lead, or gold!” said one.

“Oh, it’s gold!” said another.

“Gold, right enough,” said the third.

Then they all stared at me, and then they all stared at the ship lying at anchor.

“I say!” cried the little man. “But where did you get that?”

I was too tired to keep up a lie. “I got it in the moon.”

I saw them stare at one another.

“Look here!” said I, “I’m not going to argue now. Help me carry these lumps of gold up to the hotel — I guess, with rests, two of you can manage one, and I’ll trail this chain thing — and I’ll tell you more when I’ve had some food.”

“And how about that thing?”

“It won’t hurt there,” I said. “Anyhow — confound it! — it must stop there now. If the tide comes up, it will float all right.”

And in a state of enormous wonderment, these young men most obediently hoisted my treasures on their shoulders, and with limbs that felt like lead I headed a sort of procession towards that distant fragment of “sea-front.” Half-way there we were reinforced by two awe-stricken little girls with spades, and later a lean little boy, with a penetrating sniff, appeared. He was, I remember, wheeling a bicycle,

and he accompanied us at a distance of about a hundred yards on our right flank, and then I suppose, gave us up as uninteresting, mounted his bicycle and rode off over the level sands in the direction of the sphere.

I glanced back after him.

"He won't touch it," said the stout young man reassuringly, and I was only too willing to be reassured.

At first something of the gray of the morning was in my mind, but presently the sun disengaged itself from the level clouds of the horizon and lit the world, and turned the leaden sea to glittering waters. My spirits rose. A sense of the vast importance of the things I had done and had yet to do came with the sunlight into my mind. I laughed aloud as the foremost man staggered under my gold. When indeed I took my place in the world, how amazed the world would be!

If it had not been for my inordinate fatigue, the landlord of the Littlestone hotel would have been amusing, as he hesitated between my gold and my respectable company on the one and my filthy appearance on the other. But at last I found myself in a terrestrial bathroom once more with warm water to wash myself with, and a change of raiment, preposterously small indeed, but anyhow clean, that the genial little man had lent me. He lent me a razor too, but I could not screw up my resolution to attack even the outposts of the bristling beard that covered my face.

I sat down to an English breakfast and ate with a sort of languid appetite — an appetite many weeks old and very decrepit — and stirred myself to answer the questions of the four young men. And I told them the truth.

"Well," said I, "as you press me — I got it in the moon."

"The moon?"

"Yes, the moon in the sky."

"But how do you mean?"

"What I say, confound it!"

"Then you have just come from the moon?"

"Exactly! through space — in that ball." And I took a delicious mouthful of egg. I made a private note that when I went back to the moon I would take a box of eggs.

I could see clearly that they did not believe one word what I told them, but evidently they considered me the most respectable liar they had ever met. They glanced at one another, and then concentrated the fire of their eyes on me. I fancy they expected a clue to me in the way I helped myself to salt. They seemed to find something significant in my peppering my egg. These strangely shaped masses of gold they had staggered under held their minds. There the lumps lay in front of me, each worth thousands of pounds, and as impossible for any one to steal as a house or a piece of land. As I looked at their curious faces over my coffee-cup, I realised something of the enormous wilderness of explanations into which I should have to wander to render myself comprehensible again.

"You don't really mean—" began the youngest young man, in the tone of one who speaks to an obstinate child.

"Just pass me that toast-rack," I said, and shut him up completely.

"But look here, I say," began one of the others. "We're not going to believe that, you know."

"Ah, well," said I, and shrugged my shoulders.

"He doesn't want to tell us," said the youngest young man in a stage aside; and then, with an appearance of great sang-froid, "You don't mind if I take a cigarette?"

I waved him a cordial assent, and proceeded with my breakfast. Two of the others went and looked out of the farther window and talked inaudibly. I was struck by a thought. "The tide," I said, "is running out?"

There was a pause, a doubt who should answer me.

"It's near the ebb," said the fat little man.

"Well, anyhow," I said, "it won't float far."

I decapitated my third egg, and began a little speech. "Look here," I said. "Please don't imagine I'm surly or telling you uncivil lies, or anything of that sort. I'm forced almost, to be a little short and mysterious. I can quite understand this is as queer as it can be, and that your imaginations must be going it. I can assure you, you're in at a memorable time. But I can't make it clear to you now — it's impossible. I give you my word of honour I've come from the moon, and that's all I can tell you…. All the same, I'm tremendously obliged to you, you know, tremendously. I hope that my manner

hasn't in any way given you offence."

"Oh, not in the least!" said the youngest young man affably. "We can quite understand," and staring hard at me all the time, he heeled his chair back until it very nearly upset, and recovered with some exertion. "Not a bit of it," said the fat young man.

"Don't you imagine that!" and they all got up and dispersed, and walked about and lit cigarettes, and generally tried to show they were perfectly amiable and disengaged, and entirely free from the slightest curiosity about me and the sphere. "I'm going to keep an eye on that ship out there all the same," I heard one of them remarking in an undertone. If only they could have forced themselves to it, they would, I believe, even have gone out and left me. I went on with my third egg.

"The weather," the fat little man remarked presently, "has been immense, has it not? I don't know when we have had such a summer."

Phoo-whizz! Like a tremendous rocket!

And somewhere a window was broken….

"What's that?" said I.

"It isn't — ?" cried the little man, and rushed to the corner window.

All the others rushed to the window likewise. I sat staring at them.

Suddenly I leapt up, knocked over my third egg, rushed for the window also. I had just thought of something. "Nothing to be seen there," cried the little man, rushing for the door.

"It's that boy!" I cried, bawling in hoarse fury; "it's that accursed boy!" and turning about I pushed the waiter aside — he was just bring me some more toast — and rushed violently out of the room and down and out upon the queer little esplanade in front of the hotel.

The sea, which had been smooth, was rough now with hurrying cat's-paws, and all about where the sphere had been was tumbled water like the wake of a ship. Above, a little puff of cloud whirled like dispersing smoke, and the three or four people on the beach were staring up with interrogative faces towards the point of that unexpected report. And that was all! Boots and waiter and the four young men in blazers came rushing out behind me. Shouts came

from windows and doors, and all sorts of worrying people came into sight — agape.

For a time I stood there, too overwhelmed by this new development to think of the people.

At first I was too stunned to see the thing as any definite disaster — I was just stunned, as a man is by some accidental violent blow. It is only afterwards he begins to appreciate his specific injury.

"Good Lord!"

I felt as though somebody was pouring funk out of a can down the back of my neck. My legs became feeble. I had got the first intimation of what the disaster meant for me. There was that confounded boy — sky high! I was utterly left. There was the gold in the coffee-room — my only possession on earth. How would it all work out? The general effect was of a gigantic unmanageable confusion.

"I say," said the voice of the little man behind. "I say, you know."

I wheeled about, and there were twenty or thirty people, a sort of irregular investment of people, all bombarding me with dumb interrogation, with infinite doubt and suspicion. I felt the compulsion of their eyes intolerably. I groaned aloud.

"I *can't*," I shouted. "I tell you I can't! I'm not equal to it! You must puzzle and — and be damned to you!"

I gesticulated convulsively. He receded a step as though I had threatened him. I made a bolt through them into the hotel. I charged back into the coffee-room, rang the bell furiously. I gripped the waiter as he entered. "D'ye hear?" I shouted. "Get help and carry these bars up to my room right away."

He failed to understand me, and I shouted and raved at him. A scared-looking little old man in a green apron appeared, and further two of the young men in flannels. I made a dash at them and commandeered their services. As soon as the gold was in my room I felt free to quarrel. "Now get out," I shouted; "all of you get out if you don't want to see a man go mad before your eyes!" And I helped the waiter by the shoulder as he hesitated in the doorway. And then, as soon as I had the door locked on them all, I tore off the little man's clothes again, shied them right and left, and got into bed forthwith. And there I lay swearing and panting and cooling for a very long

time.

At last I was calm enough to get out of bed and ring up the round-eyed waiter for a flannel nightshirt, a soda and whisky, and some good cigars. And these things being procured me, after an exasperating delay that drove me several times to the bell, I locked the door again and proceeded very deliberately to look the entire situation in the face.

The net result of the great experiment presented itself as an absolute failure. It was a rout, and I was the sole survivor. It was an absolute collapse, and this was the final disaster. There was nothing for it but to save myself, and as much as I could in the way of prospects from our debacle. At one fatal crowning blow all my vague resolutions of return and recovery had vanished. My intention of going back to the moon, of getting a sphereful of gold, and afterwards of having a fragment of Cavorite analysed and so recovering the great secret — perhaps, finally, even of recovering Cavor's body — all these ideas vanished altogether.

I was the sole survivor, and that was all.

I think that going to bed was one of the luckiest ideas I have ever had in an emergency. I really believe I should either have got loose-headed or done some indiscreet thing. But there, locked in and secure from all interruptions, I could think out the position in all its bearings and make my arrangements at leisure.

Of course, it was quite clear to me what had happened to the boy. He had crawled into the sphere, meddled with the studs, shut the Cavorite windows, and gone up. It was highly improbable he had screwed the manhole stopper, and, even if he had, the chances were a thousand to one against his getting back. It was fairly evident that he would gravitate with my bales to somewhere near the middle of the sphere and remain there, and so cease to be a legitimate terrestrial interest, however remarkable he might seem to the inhabitants of some remote quarter of space. I very speedily convinced myself on that point. And as for any responsibility I might have in the matter, the more I reflected upon that, the clearer it became that if only I kept quiet about things, I need not trouble myself about that. If I was faced by sorrowing parents demanding their lost boy, I had merely to demand my lost sphere — or ask them what they meant. At first I

had had a vision of weeping parents and guardians, and all sorts of complications; but now I saw that I simply had to keep my mouth shut, and nothing in that way could arise. And, indeed, the more I lay and smoked and thought, the more evident became the wisdom of impenetrability.

It is within the right of every British citizen, provided he does not commit damage nor indecorum, to appear suddenly wherever he pleases, and as ragged and filthy as he pleases, and with whatever amount of virgin gold he sees fit to encumber himself, and no one has any right at all to hinder and detain him in this procedure. I formulated that at last to myself, and repeated it over as a sort of private Magna Charta of my liberty.

Once I had put that issue on one side, I could take up and consider in an equable manner certain considerations I had scarcely dared to think of before, namely, those arising out of the circumstances of my bankruptcy. But now, looking at this matter calmly and at leisure, I could see that if only I suppressed my identity by a temporary assumption of some less well-known name, and if I retained the two months' beard that had grown upon me, the risks of any annoyance from the spiteful creditor to whom I have already alluded became very small indeed. From that to a definite course of rational worldly action was plain sailing. It was all amazingly petty, no doubt, but what was there remaining for me to do?

Whatever I did I was resolved that I would keep myself level and right side up.

I ordered up writing materials, and addressed a letter to the New Romney Bank — the nearest, the waiter informed me — telling the manager I wished to open an account with him, and requesting him to send two trustworthy persons properly authenticated in a cab with a good horse to fetch some hundredweight of gold with which I happened to be encumbered. I signed the letter "Blake," which seemed to me to be a thoroughly respectable sort of name. This done, I got a Folkstone Blue Book, picked out an outfitter, and asked him to send a cutter to measure me for a dark tweed suit, ordering at the same time a valise, dressing bag, brown boots, shirts, hat (to fit), and so forth; and from a watchmaker I also ordered a watch. And these letters being despatched, I had up as good a lunch as the hotel could

give, and then lay smoking a cigar, as calm and ordinary as possible, until in accordance with my instructions two duly authenticated clerks came from the bank and weighed and took away my gold. After which I pulled the clothes over my ears in order to drown any knocking, and went very comfortably to sleep.

I went to sleep. No doubt it was a prosaic thing for the first man back from the moon to do, and I can imagine that the young and imaginative reader will find my behaviour disappointing. But I was horribly fatigued and bothered, and, confound it! what else was there to do? There certainly was not the remotest chance of my being believed, if I had told my story then, and it would certainly have subjected me to intolerable annoyances. I went to sleep. When at last I woke up again I was ready to face the world as I have always been accustomed to face it since I came to years of discretion. And so I got away to Italy, and there it is I am writing this story. If the world will not have it as fact, then the world may take it as fiction. It is no concern of mine.

And now that the account is finished, I am amazed to think how completely this adventure is gone and done with. Everybody believes that Cavor was a not very brilliant scientific experimenter who blew up his house and himself at Lympne, and they explain the bang that followed my arrival at Littlestone by a reference to the experiments with explosives that are going on continually at the government establishment of Lydd, two miles away. I must confess that hitherto I have not acknowledged my share in the disappearance of Master Tommy Simmons, which was that little boy's name. That, perhaps, may prove a difficult item of corroboration to explain away. They account for my appearance in rags with two bars of indisputable gold upon the Littlestone beach in various ingenious ways — it doesn't worry me what they think of me. They say I have strung all these things together to avoid being questioned too closely as to the source of my wealth. I would like to see the man who could invent a story that would hold together like this one. Well, they must take it as fiction — there it is.

I have told my story — and now, I suppose, I have to take up the worries of this terrestrial life again. Even if one has been to the moon, one has still to earn a living. So I am working here at Amalfi,

on the scenario of that play I sketched before Cavor came walking into my world, and I am trying to piece my life together as it was before ever I saw him. I must confess that I find it hard to keep my mind on the play when the moonshine comes into my room. It is full moon here, and last night I was out on the pergola for hours, staring away at the shining blankness that hides so much. Imagine it! tables and chairs, and trestles and bars of gold! Confound it! — if only one could hit on that Cavorite again! But a thing like that doesn't come twice in a life. Here I am, a little better off than I was at Lympne, and that is all. And Cavor has committed suicide in a more elaborate way than any human being ever did before. So the story closes as finally and completely as a dream. It fits in so little with all the other things of life, so much of it is so utterly remote from all human experience, the leaping, the eating, the breathing, and these weightless times, that indeed there are moments when, in spite of my moon gold, I do more than half believe myself that the whole thing was a dream….

Chapter 22

The Astonishing Communication of Mr. Julius Wendigee

When I had finished my account of my return to the earth at Littlestone, I wrote, "The End," made a flourish, and threw my pen aside, fully believing that the whole story of the First Men in the Moon was done. Not only had I done this, but I had placed my manuscript in the hands of a literary agent, had permitted it to be sold, had seen the greater portion of it appear in the *Strand Magazine*, and was setting to work again upon the scenario of the play I had commenced at Lympne before I realised that the end was not yet. And then, following me from Amalfi to Algiers, there reached me (it is now about six months ago) one of the most astounding communications I have ever been fated to receive. Briefly, it informed me that Mr. Julius Wendigee, a Dutch electrician, who has been experimenting with certain apparatus akin to the apparatus used by Mr. Tesla in America, in the hope of discovering some method of communication with Mars, was receiving day by day a curiously fragmentary message in English, which was indisputably emanating from Mr. Cavor in the moon.

At first I thought the thing was an elaborate practical joke by some one who had seen the manuscript of my narrative. I answered Mr. Wendigee jestingly, but he replied in a manner that put such suspicion altogether aside, and in a state of inconceivable excitement I hurried from Algiers to the little observatory upon the Monte Rosa in which he was working. In the presence of his record and his appliances — and above all of the messages from Cavor that were coming to hand — my lingering doubts vanished. I decided at once to accept a proposal he made to me to remain with him, assisting him to take down the record from day to day, and endeavouring with him to send a message back to the moon. Cavor, we learnt, was not only alive, but free, in the midst of an almost inconceivable community of these ant-like beings, these ant-men, in the blue darkness of the lunar caves. He was lamed, it seemed, but otherwise in quite good health — in better health, he distinctly said, than he usually enjoyed on

earth. He had had a fever, but it had left no bad effects. But curiously enough he seemed to be labouring under a conviction that I was either dead in the moon crater or lost in the deep of space.

His message began to be received by Mr. Wendigee when that gentleman was engaged in quite a different investigation. The reader will no doubt recall the little excitement that began the century, arising out of an announcement by Mr. Nikola Tesla, the American electrical celebrity, that he had received a message from Mars. His announcement renewed attention to fact that had long been familiar to scientific people, namely: that from some unknown source in space, waves of electromagnetic disturbance, entirely similar those used by Signor Marconi for his wireless telegraphy, are constantly reaching the earth. Besides Tesla quite a number of other observers have been engaged in perfecting apparatus for receiving and recording these vibrations, though few would go so far to consider them actual messages from some extraterrestrial sender. Among that few, however, we must certainly count Mr. Wendigee. Ever since 1898 he had devoted himself almost entirely to this subject, and being a man of ample means he had erected an observatory on the flanks of Monte Rosa, in a position singularly adapted in every way for such observations.

My scientific attainments, I must admit, are not great, but so far as they enable me to judge, Mr. Wendigee's contrivances for detecting and recording any disturbances in the electromagnetic conditions of space are singularly original and ingenious. And by a happy combination of circumstances they were set up and in operation about two months before Cavor made his first attempt to call up the earth. Consequently we have fragments of his communication even from the beginning. Unhappily, they are only fragments, and the most momentous of all the things that he had to tell humanity — the instructions, that is, for the making of Cavorite, if, indeed, he ever transmitted them — have throbbed themselves away unrecorded into space. We never succeeded in getting a response back to Cavor. He was unable to tell, therefore, what we had received or what we had missed; nor, indeed, did he certainly know that any one on earth was really aware of his efforts to reach us. And the persistence he displayed in sending eighteen long descriptions of lunar affairs — as

they would be if we had them complete — shows how much his mind must have turned back towards his native planet since he left it two years ago.

You can imagine how amazed Mr. Wendigee must have been when he discovered his record of electromagnetic disturbances interlaced by Cavor's straightforward English. Mr. Wendigee knew nothing of our wild journey moonward, and suddenly — this English out of the void!

It is well the reader should understand the conditions under which it would seem these messages were sent. Somewhere within the moon Cavor certainly had access for a time to a considerable amount of electrical apparatus, and it would seem he rigged up — perhaps furtively — a transmitting arrangement of the Marconi type. This he was able to operate at irregular intervals: sometimes for only half an hour or so, sometimes for three or four hours at a stretch. At these times he transmitted his earthward message, regardless of the fact that the relative position of the moon and points upon the earth's surface is constantly altering. As a consequence of this and of the necessary imperfections of our recording instruments his communication comes and goes in our records in an extremely fitful manner; it becomes blurred; it "fades out" in a mysterious and altogether exasperating way. And added to this is the fact that he was not an expert operator; he had partly forgotten, or never completely mastered, the code in general use, and as he became fatigued he dropped words and misspelt in a curious manner.

Altogether we have probably lost quite half of the communications he made, and much we have is damaged, broken, and partly effaced. In the abstract that follows the reader must be prepared therefore for a considerable amount of break, hiatus, and change of topic. Mr. Wendigee and I are collaborating in a complete and annotated edition of the Cavor record, which we hope to publish, together with a detailed account of the instruments employed, beginning with the first volume in January next. That will be the full and scientific report, of which this is only the popular transcript. But here we give at least sufficient to complete the story I have told, and to give the broad outlines of the state of that other world so near, so akin, and yet so dissimilar to our own.

Chapter 23

An Abstract of the Six Messages First Received from Mr. Cavor

The two earlier messages of Mr. Cavor may very well be reserved for that larger volume. They simply tell, with greater brevity and with a difference in several details that is interesting, but not of any vital importance, the bare facts of the making of the sphere and our departure from the world. Throughout, Cavor speaks of me as a man who is dead, but with a curious change of temper as he approaches our landing on the moon. “Poor Bedford,” he says of me, and “this poor young man,” and he blames himself for inducing a young man, “by no means well equipped for such adventures,” to leave a planet “on which he was indisputably fitted to succeed” on so precarious a mission. I think he underrates the part my energy and practical capacity played in bringing about the realisation of his theoretical sphere. “We arrived,” he says, with no more account of our passage through space than if we had made a journey of common occurrence in a railway train.

And then he becomes increasingly unfair to me. Unfair, indeed, to an extent I should not have expected in a man trained in the search for truth. Looking back over my previously written account of these things, I must insist that I have been altogether juster to Cavor than he has been to me. I have extenuated little and suppressed nothing. But his account is: —

“It speedily became apparent that the entire strangeness of our circumstances and surroundings — great loss of weight, attenuated but highly oxygenated air, consequent exaggeration of the results of muscular effort, rapid development of weird plants from obscure spores, lurid sky — was exciting my companion unduly. On the moon his character seemed to deteriorate. He became impulsive, rash, and quarrelsome. In a little while his folly in devouring some gigantic vesicles and his consequent intoxication led to our capture by the Selenites — before we had had the slightest opportunity of properly observing their ways….”

(He says, you observe, nothing of his own concession to these

same “vesicles.”)

And he goes on from that point to say that “We came to a difficult passage with them, and Bedford mistaking certain gestures of theirs” — pretty gestures they were!— “gave way to a panic violence. He ran amuck, killed three, and perforce I had to flee with him after the outrage. Subsequently we fought with a number who endeavoured to bar our way, and slew seven or eight more. It says much for the tolerance of these beings that on my recapture I was not instantly slain. We made our way to the exterior and separated in the crater of our arrival, to increase our chances of recovering our sphere. But presently I came upon a body of Selenites, led by two who were curiously different, even in form, from any of these we had seen hitherto, with larger heads and smaller bodies, and much more elaborately wrapped about. And after evading them for some time I fell into a crevasse, cut my head rather badly, and displaced my patella, and, finding crawling very painful, decided to surrender — if they would still permit me to do so. This they did, and, perceiving my helpless condition, carried me with them again into the moon. And of Bedford I have heard or seen nothing more, nor, so far as I can gather, any Selenite. Either the night overtook him in the crater, or else, which is more probable, he found the sphere, and, desiring to steal a march upon me, made off with it — only, I fear, to find it uncontrollable, and to meet a more lingering fate in outer space.”

And with that Cavor dismisses me and goes on to more interesting topics. I dislike the idea of seeming to use my position as his editor to deflect his story in my own interest, but I am obliged to protest here against the turn he gives these occurrences. He said nothing about that gasping message on the blood-stained paper in which he told, or attempted to tell, a very different story. The dignified self-surrender is an altogether new view of the affair that has come to him, I must insist, since he began to feel secure among the lunar people; and as for the “stealing a march” conception, I am quite willing to let the reader decide between us on what he has before him. I know I am not a model man — I have made no pretence to be. But am I that?

However, that is the sum of my wrongs. From this point I can edit Cavor with an untroubled mind, for he mentions me no more.

It would seem the Selenites who had come upon him carried him to some point in the interior down “a great shaft” by means of what he describes as “a sort of balloon.” We gather from the rather confused passage in which he describes this, and from a number of chance allusions and hints in other and subsequent messages, that this “great shaft” is one of an enormous system of artificial shafts that run, each from what is called a lunar “crater,” downwards for very nearly a hundred miles towards the central portion of our satellite. These shafts communicate by transverse tunnels, they throw out abysmal caverns and expand into great globular places; the whole of the moon’s substance for a hundred miles inward, indeed, is a mere sponge of rock. “Partly,” says Cavor, “this sponginess is natural, but very largely it is due to the enormous industry of the Selenites in the past. The enormous circular mounds of the excavated rock and earth it is that form these great circles about the tunnels known to earthly astronomers (misled by a false analogy) as volcanoes.”

It was down this shaft they took him, in this “sort of balloon” he speaks of, at first into an inky blackness and then into a region of continually increasing phosphorescence. Cavor’s despatches show him to be curiously regardless of detail for a scientific man, but we gather that this light was due to the streams and cascades of water— “no doubt containing some phosphorescent organism” — that flowed ever more abundantly downward towards the Central Sea. And as he descended, he says, “The Selenites also became luminous.” And at last far below him he saw, as it were, a lake of heatless fire, the waters of the Central Sea, glowing and eddying in strange perturbation, “like luminous blue milk that is just on the boil.”

“This Lunar Sea,” says Cavor, in a later passage “is not a stagnant ocean; a solar tide sends it in a perpetual flow around the lunar axis, and strange storms and boilings and rushings of its waters occur, and at times cold winds and thunderings that ascend out of it into the busy ways of the great ant-hill above. It is only when the water is in motion that it gives out light; in its rare seasons of calm it is black. Commonly, when one sees it, its waters rise and fall in an oily swell, and flakes and big rafts of shining, bubbly foam drift with the sluggish, faintly glowing current. The Selenites navigate its

cavernous straits and lagoons in little shallow boats of a canoe-like shape; and even before my journey to the galleries about the Grand Lunar, who is Master of the Moon, I was permitted to make a brief excursion on its waters.

"The caverns and passages are naturally very tortuous. A large proportion of these ways are known only to expert pilots among the fishermen, and not infrequently Selenites are lost for ever in their labyrinths. In their remoter recesses, I am told, strange creatures lurk, some of them terrible and dangerous creatures that all the science of the moon has been unable to exterminate. There is particularly the Rapha, an inextricable mass of clutching tentacles that one hacks to pieces only to multiply; and the Tzee, a darting creature that is never seen, so subtly and suddenly does it slay…"

He gives us a gleam of description.

"I was reminded on this excursion of what I have read of the Mammoth Caves; if only I had had a yellow flambeau instead of the pervading blue light, and a solid-looking boatman with an oar instead of a scuttle-faced Selenite working an engine at the back of the canoe, I could have imagined I had suddenly got back to earth. The rocks about us were very various, sometimes black, sometimes pale blue and veined, and once they flashed and glittered as though we had come into a mine of sapphires. And below one saw the ghostly phosphorescent fishes flash and vanish in the hardly less phosphorescent deep. Then, presently, a long ultra-marine vista down the turgid stream of one of the channels of traffic, and a landing stage, and then, perhaps, a glimpse up the enormous crowded shaft of one of the vertical ways.

"In one great place heavy with glistening stalactites a number of boats were fishing. We went alongside one of these and watched the long-armed Selenites winding in a net. They were little, hunchbacked insects, with very strong arms, short, bandy legs, and crinkled face-masks. As they pulled at it that net seemed the heaviest thing I had come upon in the moon; it was loaded with weights — no doubt of gold — and it took a long time to draw, for in those waters the larger and more edible fish lurk deep. The fish in the net came up like a blue moonrise — a blaze of darting, tossing blue.

"Among their catch was a many-tentaculate, evil-eyed black

thing, ferociously active, whose appearance they greeted with shrieks and twitters, and which with quick, nervous movements they hacked to pieces by means of little hatchets. All its dissevered limbs continued to lash and writhe in a vicious manner. Afterwards, when fever had hold of me, I dreamt again and again of that bitter, furious creature rising so vigorous and active out of the unknown sea. It was the most active and malignant thing of all the living creatures I have yet seen in this world inside the moon….

"The surface of this sea must be very nearly two hundred miles (if not more) below the level of the moon's exterior; all the cities of the moon lie, I learnt, immediately above this Central Sea, in such cavernous spaces and artificial galleries as I have described, and they communicate with the exterior by enormous vertical shafts which open invariably in what are called by earthly astronomers the 'craters' of the moon. The lid covering one such aperture I had already seen during the wanderings that had preceded my capture.

"Upon the condition of the less central portion of the moon I have not yet arrived at very precise knowledge. There is an enormous system of caverns in which the mooncalves shelter during the night; and there are abattoirs and the like — in one of these it was that I and Bedford fought with the Selenite butchers — and I have since seen balloons laden with meat descending out of the upper dark. I have as yet scarcely learnt as much of these things as a Zulu in London would learn about the British corn supplies in the same time. It is clear, however, that these vertical shafts and the vegetation of the surface must play an essential role in ventilating and keeping fresh the atmosphere of the moon. At one time, and particularly on my first emergence from my prison, there was certainly a cold wind blowing *down* the shaft, and later there was a kind of sirocco upward that corresponded with my fever. For at the end of about three weeks I fell ill of an indefinable sort of fever, and in spite of sleep and the quinine tabloids that very fortunately I had brought in my pocket, I remained ill and fretting miserably, almost to the time when I was taken into the presence of the Grand Lunar, who is Master of the Moon.

"I will not dilate on the wretchedness of my condition," he remarks, "during those days of ill-health." And he goes on with great

amplitude with details I omit here. “My temperature,” he concludes, “kept abnormally high for a long time, and I lost all desire for food. I had stagnant waking intervals, and sleep tormented by dreams, and at one phase I was, I remember, so weak as to be earth-sick and almost hysterical. I longed almost intolerably for colour to break the everlasting blue…”

He reverts again presently to the topic of this sponge-caught lunar atmosphere. I am told by astronomers and physicists that all he tells is in absolute accordance with what was already known of the moon’s condition. Had earthly astronomers had the courage and imagination to push home a bold induction, says Mr. Wendigee, they might have foretold almost everything that Cavor has to say of the general structure of the moon. They know now pretty certainly that moon and earth are not so much satellite and primary as smaller and greater sisters, made out of one mass, and consequently made of the same material. And since the density of the moon is only three-fifths that of the earth, there can be nothing for it but that she is hollowed out by a great system of caverns. There was no necessity, said Sir Jabez Flap, F.R.S., that most entertaining exponent of the facetious side of the stars, that we should ever have gone to the moon to find out such easy inferences, and points the pun with an allusion to Gruyere, but he certainly might have announced his knowledge of the hollowness of the moon before. And if the moon is hollow, then the apparent absence of air and water is, of course, quite easily explained. The sea lies within at the bottom of the caverns, and the air travels through the great sponge of galleries, in accordance with simple physical laws. The caverns of the moon, on the whole, are very windy places. As the sunlight comes round the moon the air in the outer galleries on that side is heated, its pressure increases, some flows out on the exterior and mingles with the evaporating air of the craters (where the plants remove its carbonic acid), while the greater portion flows round through the galleries to replace the shrinking air of the cooling side that the sunlight has left. There is, therefore, a constant eastward breeze in the air of the outer galleries, and an upflow during the lunar day up the shafts, complicated, of course, very greatly by the varying shape of the galleries, and the ingenious contrivances of the Selenite mind….

Chapter 24

The Natural History of the Selenites

The messages of Cavor from the sixth up to the sixteenth are for the most part so much broken, and they abound so in repetitions, that they scarcely form a consecutive narrative. They will be given in full, of course, in the scientific report, but here it will be far more convenient to continue simply to abstract and quote as in the former chapter. We have subjected every word to a keen critical scrutiny, and my own brief memories and impressions of lunar things have been of inestimable help in interpreting what would otherwise have been impenetrably dark. And, naturally, as living beings, our interest centres far more upon the strange community of lunar insects in which he was living, it would seem, as an honoured guest than upon the mere physical condition of their world.

I have already made it clear, I think, that the Selenites I saw resembled man in maintaining the erect attitude, and in having four limbs, and I have compared the general appearance of their heads and the jointing of their limbs to that of insects. I have mentioned, too, the peculiar consequence of the smaller gravitation of the moon on their fragile slightness. Cavor confirms me upon all these points. He calls them "animals," though of course they fall under no division of the classification of earthly creatures, and he points out "the insect type of anatomy had, fortunately for men, never exceeded a relatively very small size on earth." The largest terrestrial insects, living or extinct, do not, as a matter of fact, measure six inches in length; "but here, against the lesser gravitation of the moon, a creature certainly as much an insect as vertebrate seems to have been able to attain to human and ultra-human dimensions."

He does not mention the ant, but throughout his allusions the ant is continually being brought before my mind, in its sleepless activity, in its intelligence and social organisation, in its structure, and more particularly in the fact that it displays, in addition to the two forms, the male and the female form, that almost all other animals possess, a number of other sexless creatures, workers, soldiers, and the like,

differing from one another in structure, character, power, and use, and yet all members of the same species. For these Selenites, also, have a great variety of forms. Of course, they are not only colossally greater in size than ants, but also, in Cavor's opinion at least, in intelligence, morality, and social wisdom are they colossally greater than men. And instead of the four or five different forms of ant that are found, there are almost innumerably different forms of Selenite. I had endeavoured to indicate the very considerable difference observable in such Selenites of the outer crust as I happened to encounter; the differences in size and proportions were certainly as wide as the differences between the most widely separated races of men. But such differences as I saw fade absolutely to nothing in comparison with the huge distinctions of which Cavor tells. It would seem the exterior Selenites I saw were, indeed, mostly engaged in kindred occupations — mooncalf herds, butchers, fleshers, and the like. But within the moon, practically unsuspected by me, there are, it seems, a number of other sorts of Selenite, differing in size, differing in the relative size of part to part, differing in power and appearance, and yet not different species of creatures, but only different forms of one species, and retaining through all their variations a certain common likeness that marks their specific unity. The moon is, indeed, a sort of vast ant-hill, only, instead of there being only four or five sorts of ant, there are many hundred different sorts of Selenite, and almost every gradation between one sort and another.

It would seem the discovery came upon Cavor very speedily. I infer rather than learn from his narrative that he was captured by the mooncalf herds under the direction of these other Selenites who "have larger brain cases (heads?) and very much shorter legs." Finding he would not walk even under the goad, they carried him into darkness, crossed a narrow, plank-like bridge that may have been the identical bridge I had refused, and put him down in something that must have seemed at first to be some sort of lift. This was the balloon — it had certainly been absolutely invisible to us in the darkness — and what had seemed to me a mere plank-walking into the void was really, no doubt, the passage of the gangway. In this he descended towards constantly more luminous caverns of the

moon. At first they descended in silence — save for the twitterings of the Selenites — and then into a stir of windy movement. In a little while the profound blackness had made his eyes so sensitive that he began to see more and more of the things about him, and at last the vague took shape.

"Conceive an enormous cylindrical space," says Cavor, in his seventh message, "a quarter of a mile across, perhaps; very dimly lit at first and then brighter, with big platforms twisting down its sides in a spiral that vanishes at last below in a blue profundity; and lit even more brightly — one could not tell how or why. Think of the well of the very largest spiral staircase or lift-shaft that you have ever looked down, and magnify that by a hundred. Imagine it at twilight seen through blue glass. Imagine yourself looking down that; only imagine also that you feel extraordinarily light, and have got rid of any giddy feeling you might have on earth, and you will have the first conditions of my impression. Round this enormous shaft imagine a broad gallery running in a much steeper spiral than would be credible on earth, and forming a steep road protected from the gulf only by a little parapet that vanishes at last in perspective a couple of miles below.

"Looking up, I saw the very fellow of the downward vision; it had, of course, the effect of looking into a very steep cone. A wind was blowing down the shaft, and far above I fancy I heard, growing fainter and fainter, the bellowing of the mooncalves that were being driven down again from their evening pasturage on the exterior. And up and down the spiral galleries were scattered numerous moon people, pallid, faintly luminous beings, regarding our appearance or busied on unknown errands.

"Either I fancied it or a flake of snow came drifting down on the icy breeze. And then, falling like a snowflake, a little figure, a little man-insect, clinging to a parachute, drove down very swiftly towards the central places of the moon.

"The big-headed Selenite sitting beside me, seeing me move my head with the gesture of one who saw, pointed with his trunk-like 'hand' and indicated a sort of jetty coming into sight very far below: a little landing-stage, as it were, hanging into the void. As it swept up towards us our pace diminished very rapidly, and in a few moments,

as it seemed, we were abreast of it, and at rest. A mooring-rope was flung and grasped, and I found myself pulled down to a level with a great crowd of Selenites, who jostled to see me.

"It was an incredible crowd. Suddenly and violently there was forced upon my attention the vast amount of difference there is amongst these beings of the moon.

"Indeed, there seemed not two alike in all that jostling multitude. They differed in shape, they differed in size, they rang all the horrible changes on the theme of Selenite form! Some bulged and overhung, some ran about among the feet of their fellows. All of them had a grotesque and disquieting suggestion of an insect that has somehow contrived to mock humanity; but all seemed to present an incredible exaggeration of some particular feature: one had a vast right fore-limb, an enormous antennal arm, as it were; one seemed all leg, poised, as it were, on stilts; another protruded the edge of his face mask into a nose-like organ that made him startlingly human until one saw his expressionless gaping mouth. The strange and (except for the want of mandibles and palps) most insect-like head of the mooncalf-minders underwent, indeed, the most incredible transformations: here it was broad and low, here high and narrow; here its leathery brow was drawn out into horns and strange features; here it was whiskered and divided, and there with a grotesquely human profile. One distortion was particularly conspicuous. There were several brain cases distended like bladders to a huge size, with the face mask reduced to quite small proportions. There were several amazing forms, with heads reduced to microscopic proportions and blobby bodies; and fantastic, flimsy things that existed, it would seem, only as a basis for vast, trumpet-like protrusions of the lower part of the mask. And oddest of all, as it seemed to me for the moment, two or three of these weird inhabitants of a subterranean world, a world sheltered by innumerable miles of rock from sun or rain, *carried umbrellas* in their tentaculate hands — real terrestrial looking umbrellas! And then I thought of the parachutist I had watched descend.

"These moon people behaved exactly as a human crowd might have done in similar circumstances: they jostled and thrust one another, they shoved one another aside, they even clambered upon

one another to get a glimpse of me. Every moment they increased in numbers, and pressed more urgently upon the discs of my ushers" — Cavor does not explain what he means by this— "every moment fresh shapes emerged from the shadows and forced themselves upon my astounded attention. And presently I was signed and helped into a sort of litter, and lifted up on the shoulders of strong-armed bearers, and so borne through the twilight over this seething multitude towards the apartments that were provided for me in the moon. All about me were eyes, faces, masks, a leathery noise like the rustling of beetle wings, and a great bleating and cricket-like twittering of Selenite voices."

We gather he was taken to a "hexagonal apartment," and there for a space he was confined. Afterwards he was given a much more considerable liberty; indeed, almost as much freedom as one has in a civilised town on earth. And it would appear that the mysterious being who is the ruler and master of the moon appointed two Selenites "with large heads" to guard and study him, and to establish whatever mental communications were possible with him. And, amazing and incredible as it may seem, these two creatures, these fantastic men insects, these beings of other world, were presently communicating with Cavor by means of terrestrial speech.

Cavor speaks of them as Phi-oo and Tsi-puff. Phi-oo, he says, was about 5 feet high; he had small slender legs about 18 inches long, and slight feet of the common lunar pattern. On these balanced a little body, throbbing with the pulsations of his heart. He had long, soft, many-jointed arms ending in a tentacled grip, and his neck was many-jointed in the usual way, but exceptionally short and thick. His head, says Cavor — apparently alluding to some previous description that has gone astray in space— "is of the common lunar type, but strangely modified. The mouth has the usual expressionless gape, but it is unusually small and pointing downward, and the mask is reduced to the size of a large flat nose-flap. On either side are the little eyes.

"The rest of the head is distended into a huge globe and the chitinous leathery cuticle of the mooncalf herds thins out to a mere membrane, through which the pulsating brain movements are distinctly visible. He is a creature, indeed, with a tremendously

hypertrophied brain, and with the rest of his organism both relatively and absolutely dwarfed."

In another passage Cavor compares the back view of him to Atlas supporting the world. Tsi-puff it seems was a very similar insect, but his "face" was drawn out to a considerable length, and the brain hypertrophy being in different regions, his head was not round but pear-shaped, with the stalk downward. There were also litter-carriers, lopsided beings, with enormous shoulders, very spidery ushers, and a squat foot attendant in Cavor's retinue.

The manner in which Phi-oo and Tsi-puff attacked the problem of speech was fairly obvious. They came into this "hexagonal cell" in which Cavor was confined, and began imitating every sound he made, beginning with a cough. He seems to have grasped their intention with great quickness, and to have begun repeating words to them and pointing to indicate the application. The procedure was probably always the same. Phi-oo would attend to Cavor for a space, then point also and say the word he had heard.

The first word he mastered was "man," and the second "Mooney" — which Cavor on the spur of the moment seems to have used instead of "Selenite" for the moon race. As soon as Phi-oo was assured of the meaning of a word he repeated it to Tsi-puff, who remembered it infallibly. They mastered over one hundred English nouns at their first session.

Subsequently it seems they brought an artist with them to assist the work of explanation with sketches and diagrams — Cavor's drawings being rather crude. "He was," says Cavor, "a being with an active arm and an arresting eye," and he seemed to draw with incredible swiftness.

The eleventh message is undoubtedly only a fragment of a longer communication. After some broken sentences, the record of which is unintelligible, it goes on: —

"But it will interest only linguists, and delay me too long, to give the details of the series of intent parleys of which these were the beginning, and, indeed, I very much doubt if I could give in anything like the proper order all the twistings and turnings that we made in our pursuit of mutual comprehension. Verbs were soon plain sailing — at least, such active verbs as I could express by drawings; some

adjectives were easy, but when it came to abstract nouns, to prepositions, and the sort of hackneyed figures of speech, by means of which so much is expressed on earth, it was like diving in cork-jackets. Indeed, these difficulties were insurmountable until to the sixth lesson came a fourth assistant, a being with a huge football-shaped head, whose forte was clearly the pursuit of intricate analogy. He entered in a preoccupied manner, stumbling against a stool, and the difficulties that arose had to be presented to him with a certain amount of clamour and hitting and pricking before they reached his apprehension. But once he was involved his penetration was amazing. Whenever there came a need of thinking beyond Phi-oo's by no means limited scope, this prolate-headed person was in request, but he invariably told the conclusion to Tsi-puff, in order that it might be remembered; Tsi-puff was ever the arsenal for facts. And so we advanced again.

"It seemed long and yet brief — a matter of days — before I was positively talking with these insects of the moon. Of course, at first it was an intercourse infinitely tedious and exasperating, but imperceptibly it has grown to comprehension. And my patience has grown to meet its limitations, Phi-oo it is who does all the talking. He does it with a vast amount of meditative provisional 'M'm — M'm' and has caught up one or two phrases, 'If I may say,' 'If you understand,' and beads all his speech with them.

"Thus he would discourse. Imagine him explaining his artist.

"'M'm — M'm — he — if I may say — draw. Eat little — drink little — draw. Love draw. No other thing. Hate all who not draw like him. Angry. Hate all who draw like him better. Hate most people. Hate all who not think all world for to draw. Angry. M'm. All things mean nothing to him — only draw. He like you … if you understand…. New thing to draw. Ugly — striking. Eh?

"'He' — turning to Tsi-puff— 'love remember words. Remember wonderful more than any. Think no, draw no — remember. Say' — here he referred to his gifted assistant for a word— 'histories — all things. He hear once — say ever.'

"It is more wonderful to me than I dreamt that anything ever could be again, to hear, in this perpetual obscurity, these extraordinary creatures — for even familiarity fails to weaken the

inhuman effect of their appearance — continually piping a nearer approach to coherent earthly speech — asking questions, giving answers. I feel that I am casting back to the fable-hearing period of childhood again, when the ant and the grasshopper talked together and the bee judged between them…"

And while these linguistic exercises were going on Cavor seems to have experienced a considerable relaxation of his confinement. "The first dread and distrust our unfortunate conflict aroused is being," he said, "continually effaced by the deliberate rationality of all I do…. I am now able to come and go as I please, or I am restricted only for my own good. So it is I have been able to get at this apparatus, and, assisted by a happy find among the material that is littered in this enormous store-cave, I have contrived to despatch these messages. So far not the slightest attempt has been made to interfere with me in this, though I have made it quite clear to Phi-oo that I am signalling to the earth.

"'You talk to other?' he asked, watching me.

"'Others,' said I.

"'Others,' he said. 'Oh yes, Men?'

"And I went on transmitting."

Cavor was continually making corrections in his previous accounts of the Selenites as fresh facts flowed upon him to modify his conclusions, and accordingly one gives the quotations that follow with a certain amount of reservation. They are quoted from the ninth, thirteenth, and sixteenth messages, and, altogether vague and fragmentary as they are, they probably give as complete a picture of the social life of this strange community as mankind can now hope to have for many generations.

"In the moon," says Cavor, "every citizen knows his place. He is born to that place, and the elaborate discipline of training and education and surgery he undergoes fits him at last so completely to it that he has neither ideas nor organs for any purpose beyond it. 'Why should he?' Phi-oo would ask. If, for example, a Selenite is destined to be a mathematician, his teachers and trainers set out at once to that end. They check any incipient disposition to other pursuits, they encourage his mathematical bias with a perfect psychological skill. His brain grows, or at least the mathematical

faculties of his brain grow, and the rest of him only so much as is necessary to sustain this essential part of him. At last, save for rest and food, his one delight lies in the exercise and display of his faculty, his one interest in its application, his sole society with other specialists in his own line. His brain grows continually larger, at least so far as the portions engaging in mathematics are concerned; they bulge ever larger and seem to suck all life and vigour from the rest of his frame. His limbs shrivel, his heart and digestive organs diminish, his insect face is hidden under its bulging contours. His voice becomes a mere stridulation for the stating of formula; he seems deaf to all but properly enunciated problems. The faculty of laughter, save for the sudden discovery of some paradox, is lost to him; his deepest emotion is the evolution of a novel computation. And so he attains his end.

"Or, again, a Selenite appointed to be a minder of mooncalves is from his earliest years induced to think and live mooncalf, to find his pleasure in mooncalf lore, his exercise in their tending and pursuit. He is trained to become wiry and active, his eye is indurated to the tight wrappings, the angular contours that constitute a 'smart mooncalfishness.' He takes at last no interest in the deeper part of the moon; he regards all Selenites not equally versed in mooncalves with indifference, derision, or hostility. His thoughts are of mooncalf pastures, and his dialect an accomplished mooncalf technique. So also he loves his work, and discharges in perfect happiness the duty that justifies his being. And so it is with all sorts and conditions of Selenites — each is a perfect unit in a world machine….

"These beings with big heads, on whom the intellectual labours fall, form a sort of aristocracy in this strange society, and at the head of them, quintessential of the moon, is that marvellous gigantic ganglion the Grand Lunar, into whose presence I am finally to come. The unlimited development of the minds of the intellectual class is rendered possible by the absence of any bony skull in the lunar anatomy, that strange box of bone that clamps about the developing brain of man, imperiously insisting 'thus far and no farther' to all his possibilities. They fall into three main classes differing greatly in influence and respect. There are administrators, of whom Phi-oo is one, Selenites of considerable initiative and versatility, responsible

each for a certain cubic content of the moon's bulk; the experts like the football-headed thinker, who are trained to perform certain special operations; and the erudite, who are the repositories of all knowledge. To the latter class belongs Tsi-puff, the first lunar professor of terrestrial languages. With regard to these latter, it is a curious little thing to note that the unlimited growth of the lunar brain has rendered unnecessary the invention of all those mechanical aids to brain work which have distinguished the career of man. There are no books, no records of any sort, no libraries or inscriptions. All knowledge is stored in distended brains much as the honey-ants of Texas store honey in their distended abdomens. The lunar Somerset House and the lunar British Museum Library are collections of living brains…

"The less specialised administrators, I note, do for the most part take a very lively interest in me whenever they encounter me. They will come out of the way and stare at me and ask questions to which Phi-oo will reply. I see them going hither and thither with a retinue of bearers, attendants, shouters, parachute-carriers, and so forth — queer groups to see. The experts for the most part ignore me completely, even as they ignore each other, or notice me only to begin a clamorous exhibition of their distinctive skill. The erudite for the most part are rapt in an impervious and apoplectic complacency, from which only a denial of their erudition can rouse them. Usually they are led about by little watchers and attendants, and often there are small and active-looking creatures, small females usually, that I am inclined to think are a sort of wife to them; but some of the profounder scholars are altogether too great for locomotion, and are carried from place to place in a sort of sedan tub, wabbling jellies of knowledge that enlist my respectful astonishment. I have just passed one in coming to this place where I am permitted to amuse myself with these electrical toys, a vast, shaven, shaky head, bald and thin-skinned, carried on his grotesque stretcher. In front and behind came his bearers, and curious, almost trumpet-faced, news disseminators shrieked his fame.

"I have already mentioned the retinues that accompany most of the intellectuals: ushers, bearers, valets, extraneous tentacles and muscles, as it were, to replace the abortive physical powers of these

hypertrophied minds. Porters almost invariably accompany them. There are also extremely swift messengers with spider-like legs and 'hands' for grasping parachutes, and attendants with vocal organs that could well nigh wake the dead. Apart from their controlling intelligence these subordinates are as inert and helpless as umbrellas in a stand. They exist only in relation to the orders they have to obey, the duties they have to perform.

"The bulk of these insects, however, who go to and fro upon the spiral ways, who fill the ascending balloons and drop past me clinging to flimsy parachutes are, I gather, of the operative class. 'Machine hands,' indeed, some of these are in actual nature — it is not figure of speech, the single tentacle of the mooncalf herd is profoundly modified for clawing, lifting, guiding, the rest of them no more than necessary subordinate appendages to these important mechanisms, have enormously developed auditory organs; some whose work lies in delicate chemical operations project a vast olfactory organ; others again have flat feet for treadles with anchylosed joints; and others — who I have been told are glassblowers — seem mere lung-bellows. But every one of these common Selenites I have seen at work is exquisitely adapted to the social need it meets. Fine work is done by fined-down workers, amazingly dwarfed and neat. Some I could hold on the palm of my hand. There is even a sort of turnspit Selenite, very common, whose duty and only delight it is to apply the motive power for various small appliances. And to rule over these things and order any erring tendency there might be in some aberrant natures are the most muscular beings I have seen in the moon, a sort of lunar police, who must have been trained from their earliest years to give a perfect respect and obedience to the swollen heads.

"The making of these various sorts of operative must be a very curious and interesting process. I am very much in the dark about it, but quite recently I came upon a number of young Selenites confined in jars from which only the fore-limbs protruded, who were being compressed to become machine-minders of a special sort. The extended 'hand' in this highly developed system of technical education is stimulated by irritants and nourished by injection, while the rest of the body is starved. Phi-oo, unless I misunderstood him,

explained that in the earlier stages these queer little creatures are apt to display signs of suffering in their various cramped situations, but they easily become indurated to their lot; and he took me on to where a number of flexible-minded messengers were being drawn out and broken in. It is quite unreasonable, I know, but such glimpses of the educational methods of these beings affect me disagreeably. I hope, however, that may pass off, and I may be able to see more of this aspect of their wonderful social order. That wretched-looking hand-tentacle sticking out of its jar seemed to have a sort of limp appeal for lost possibilities; it haunts me still, although, of course it is really in the end a far more humane proceeding than our earthly method of leaving children to grow into human beings, and then making machines of them.

"Quite recently, too — I think it was on the eleventh or twelfth visit I made to this apparatus — I had a curious light upon the lives of these operatives. I was being guided through a short cut hither, instead of going down the spiral, and by the quays to the Central Sea. From the devious windings of a long, dark gallery, we emerged into a vast, low cavern, pervaded by an earthy smell, and as things go in this darkness, rather brightly lit. The light came from a tumultuous growth of livid fungoid shapes — some indeed singularly like our terrestrial mushrooms, but standing as high or higher than a man.

"'Mooneys eat these?' said I to Phi-oo.

"'Yes, food.'

"'Goodness me!' I cried; 'what's that?'

"My eye had just caught the figure of an exceptionally big and ungainly
Selenite lying motionless among the stems, face downward. We stopped.

"'Dead?' I asked. (For as yet I have seen no dead in the moon, and I have grown curious.)

"'No!' exclaimed Phi-oo. 'Him — worker — no work to do. Get little drink then — make sleep — till we him want. What good him wake, eh? No want him walking about.'

"'There's another!' cried I.

“And indeed all that huge extent of mushroom ground was, I found, peppered with these prostrate figures sleeping under an opiate until the moon had need of them. There were scores of them of all sorts, and we were able to turn over some of them, and examine them more precisely than I had been able to previously. They breathed noisily at my doing so, but did not wake. One, I remember very distinctly: he left a strong impression, I think, because some trick the light and of his attitude was strongly suggestive a drawn-up human figure. His fore-limbs were long, delicate tentacles — he was some kind of refined manipulator — and the pose of his slumber suggested a submissive suffering. No doubt it was a mistake for me to interpret his expression in that way, but I did. And as Phi-oo rolled him over into the darkness among the livid fleshiness again I felt a distinctly unpleasant sensation, although as he rolled the insect in him was confessed.

“It simply illustrates the unthinking way in which one acquires habits of feeling. To drug the worker one does not want and toss him aside is surely far better than to expel him from his factory to wander starving in the streets. In every complicated social community there is necessarily a certain intermittency of employment for all specialised labour, and in this way the trouble of an ‘unemployed’ problem is altogether anticipated. And yet, so unreasonable are even scientifically trained minds, I still do not like the memory of those prostrate forms amidst those quiet, luminous arcades of fleshy growth, and I avoid that short cut in spite of the inconveniences of the longer, more noisy, and more crowded alternative.

“My alternative route takes me round by a huge, shadowy cavern, very crowded and clamorous, and here it is I see peering out of the hexagonal openings of a sort of honeycomb wall, or parading a large open space behind, or selecting the toys and amulets made to please them by the dainty-tentacled jewellers who work in kennels below, the mothers of the moon world — the queen bees, as it were, of the hive. They are noble-looking beings, fantastically and sometimes quite beautifully adorned, with a proud carriage, and, save for their mouths, almost microscopic heads.

“Of the condition of the moon sexes, marrying and giving in marriage, and of birth and so forth among the Selenites, I have as yet

been able to learn very little. With the steady progress of Phi-oo in English, however, my ignorance will no doubt as steadily disappear. I am of opinion that, as with the ants and bees, there is a large majority of the members in this community of the neuter sex. Of course on earth in our cities there are now many who never live that life of parentage which is the natural life of man. Here, as with the ants, this thing has become a normal condition of the race, and the whole of such replacement as is necessary falls upon this special and by no means numerous class of matrons, the mothers of the moon-world, large and stately beings beautifully fitted to bear the larval Selenite. Unless I misunderstand an explanation of Phi-oo's, they are absolutely incapable of cherishing the young they bring into the moon; periods of foolish indulgence alternate with moods of aggressive violence, and as soon as possible the little creatures, who are quite soft and flabby and pale coloured, are transferred to the charge of celibate females, women 'workers' as it were, who in some cases possess brains of almost masculine dimensions."

Just at this point, unhappily, this message broke off. Fragmentary and tantalising as the matter constituting this chapter is, it does nevertheless give a vague, broad impression of an altogether strange and wonderful world — a world with which our own may have to reckon we know not how speedily. This intermittent trickle of messages, this whispering of a record needle in the stillness of the mountain slopes, is the first warning of such a change in human conditions as mankind has scarcely imagined heretofore. In that satellite of ours there are new elements, new appliances, traditions, an overwhelming avalanche of new ideas, a strange race with whom we must inevitably struggle for mastery — gold as common as iron or wood…

Chapter 25

The Grand Lunar

The penultimate message describes, with occasionally elaborate detail, the encounter between Cavor and the Grand Lunar, who is the ruler or master of the moon. Cavor seems to have sent most of it without interference, but to have been interrupted in the concluding portion. The second came after an interval of a week.

The first message begins: "At last I am able to resume this—" it then becomes illegible for a space, and after a time resumed in mid-sentence.

The missing words of the following sentence are probably "the crowd." There follows quite clearly: "grew ever denser as we drew near the palace of the Grand Lunar — if I may call a series of excavations a palace. Everywhere faces stared at me — blank, chitinous gapes and masks, eyes peering over tremendous olfactory developments, eyes beneath monstrous forehead plates; and undergrowth of smaller creatures dodged and yelped, and helmet faces poised on sinuous, long-jointed necks appeared craning over shoulders and beneath armpits. Keeping a welcome space about me marched a cordon of stolid, scuttle-headed guards, who had joined us on our leaving the boat in which we had come along the channels of the Central Sea. The quick-eyed artist with the little brain joined us also, and a thick bunch of lean porter-insects swayed and struggled under the multitude of conveniences that were considered essential to my state. I was carried in a litter during the final stage of our journey. This litter was made of some very ductile metal that looked dark to me, meshed and woven, and with bars of paler metal, and about me as I advanced there grouped itself a long and complicated procession.

"In front, after the manner of heralds, marched four trumpet-faced creatures making a devastating bray; and then came squat, resolute-moving ushers before and behind, and on either hand a galaxy of learned heads, a sort of animated encyclopedia, who were, Phi-oo explained, to stand about the Grand Lunar for purposes of reference. (Not a thing in lunar science, not a point of view or method of

thinking, that these wonderful beings did not carry in their heads!) Followed guards and porters, and then Phi-oo's shivering brain borne also on a litter. Then came Tsi-puff in a slightly less important litter; then myself on a litter of greater elegance than any other, and surrounded by my food and drink attendants. More trumpeters came next, splitting the ear with vehement outcries, and then several big brains, special correspondents one might well call them, or historiographers, charged with the task of observing and remembering every detail of this epoch-making interview. A company of attendants, bearing and dragging banners and masses of scented fungus and curious symbols, vanished in the darkness behind. The way was lined by ushers and officers in caparisons that gleamed like steel, and beyond their line, so far as my eyes could pierce the gloom, the heads of that enormous crowd extended.

"I will own that I am still by no means indurated to the peculiar effect of the Selenite appearance, and to find myself, as it were, adrift on this broad sea of excited entomology was by no means agreeable. Just for a space I had something very like what I should imagine people mean when they speak of the 'horrors.' It had come to me before in these lunar caverns, when on occasion I have found myself weaponless and with an undefended back, amidst a crowd of these Selenites, but never quite so vividly. It is, of course, as absolutely irrational a feeling as one could well have, and I hope gradually to subdue it. But just for a moment, as I swept forward into the welter of the vast crowd, it was only by gripping my litter tightly and summoning all my will-power that I succeeded in avoiding an outcry or some such manifestation. It lasted perhaps three minutes; then I had myself in hand again.

"We ascended the spiral of a vertical way for some time, and then passed through a series of huge halls dome-roofed and elaborately decorated. The approach to the Grand Lunar was certainly contrived to give one a vivid impression of his greatness. Each cavern one entered seemed greater and more boldly arched than its predecessor. This effect of progressive size was enhanced by a thin haze of faintly phosphorescent blue incense that thickened as one advanced, and robbed even the nearer figures of clearness. I seemed to advance continually to something larger, dimmer, and less material.

“I must confess that all this multitude made me feel extremely shabby and unworthy. I was unshaven and unkempt; I had brought no razor; I had a coarse beard over my mouth. On earth I have always been inclined to despise any attention to my person beyond a proper care for cleanliness; but under the exceptional circumstances in which I found myself, representing, as I did, my planet and my kind, and depending very largely upon the attractiveness of my appearance for a proper reception, I could have given much for something a little more artistic and dignified than the husks I wore. I had been so serene in the belief that the moon was uninhabited as to overlook such precautions altogether. As it was I was dressed in a flannel jacket, knickerbockers, and golfing stockings, stained with every sort of dirt the moon offered, slippers (of which the left heel was wanting), and a blanket, through a hole in which I thrust my head. (These clothes, indeed, I still wear.) Sharp bristles are anything but an improvement to my cast of features, and there was an unmended tear at the knee of my knickerbockers that showed conspicuously as I squatted in my litter; my right stocking, too, persisted in getting about my ankle. I am fully alive to the injustice my appearance did humanity, and if by any expedient I could have improvised something a little out of the way and imposing I would have done so. But I could hit upon nothing. I did what I could with my blanket — folding it somewhat after the fashion of a toga, and for the rest I sat as upright as the swaying of my litter permitted.

“Imagine the largest hall you have ever been in, imperfectly lit with blue light and obscured by a gray-blue fog, surging with metallic or livid-gray creatures of such a mad diversity as I have hinted. Imagine this hall to end in an open archway beyond which is a still larger hall, and beyond this yet another and still larger one, and so on. At the end of the vista, dimly seen, a flight of steps, like the steps of Ara Coeli at Rome, ascend out of sight. Higher and higher these steps appear to go as one draws nearer their base. But at last I came under a huge archway and beheld the summit of these steps, and upon it the Grand Lunar exalted on his throne.

“He was seated in what was relatively a blaze of incandescent blue. This, and the darkness about him gave him an effect of floating in a blue-black void. He seemed a small, self-luminous cloud at first,

brooding on his sombre throne; his brain case must have measured many yards in diameter. For some reason that I cannot fathom a number of blue search-lights radiated from behind the throne on which he sat, and immediately encircling him was a halo. About him, and little and indistinct in this glow, a number of body-servants sustained and supported him, and overshadowed and standing in a huge semicircle beneath him were his intellectual subordinates, his remembrancers and computators and searchers and servants, and all the distinguished insects of the court of the moon. Still lower stood ushers and messengers, and then all down the countless steps of the throne were guards, and at the base, enormous, various, indistinct, vanishing at last into an absolute black, a vast swaying multitude of the minor dignitaries of the moon. Their feet made a perpetual scraping whisper on the rocky floor, as their limbs moved with a rustling murmur.

"As I entered the penultimate hall the music rose and expanded into an imperial magnificence of sound, and the shrieks of the news-bearers died away….

"I entered the last and greatest hall….

"My procession opened out like a fan. My ushers and guards went right and left, and the three litters bearing myself and Phi-oo and Tsi-puff marched across a shiny darkness of floor to the foot of the giant stairs. Then began a vast throbbing hum, that mingled with the music. The two Selenites dismounted, but I was bidden remain seated — I imagine as a special honour. The music ceased, but not that humming, and by a simultaneous movement of ten thousand respectful heads my attention was directed to the enhaloed supreme intelligence that hovered above me.

"At first as I peered into the radiating glow this quintessential brain looked very much like an opaque, featureless bladder with dim, undulating ghosts of convolutions writhing visibly within. Then beneath its enormity and just above the edge of the throne one saw with a start minute elfin eyes peering out of the glow. No face, but eyes, as if they peered through holes. At first I could see no more than these two staring little eyes, and then below I distinguished the little dwarfed body and its insect-jointed limbs shrivelled and white. The eyes stared down at me with a strange intensity, and the lower

part of the swollen globe was wrinkled. Ineffectual-looking little hand-tentacles steadied this shape on the throne….

"It was great. It was pitiful. One forgot the hall and the crowd.

"I ascended the staircase by jerks. It seemed to me that this darkly glowing brain case above us spread over me, and took more and more of the whole effect into itself as I drew nearer. The tiers of attendants and helpers grouped about their master seemed to dwindle and fade into the night. I saw that shadowy attendants were busy spraying that great brain with a cooling spray, and patting and sustaining it. For my own part, I sat gripping my swaying litter and staring at the Grand Lunar, unable to turn my gaze aside. And at last, as I reached a little landing that was separated only by ten steps or so from the supreme seat, the woven splendour of the music reached a climax and ceased, and I was left naked, as it were, in that vastness, beneath the still scrutiny of the Grand Lunar's eyes.

"He was scrutinising the first man he had ever seen….

"My eyes dropped at last from his greatness to the ant figures in the blue mist about him, and then down the steps to the massed Selenites, still and expectant in their thousands, packed on the floor below. Once again an unreasonable horror reached out towards me…. And passed.

"After the pause came the salutation. I was assisted from my litter, and stood awkwardly while a number of curious and no doubt deeply symbolical gestures were vicariously performed for me by two slender officials. The encyclopaedic galaxy of the learned that had accompanied me to the entrance of the last hall appeared two steps above me and left and right of me, in readiness for the Grand Lunar's need, and Phi-oo's pale brain placed itself about half-way up to the throne in such a position as to communicate easily between us without turning his back on either the Grand Lunar or myself. Tsi-puff took up position behind him. Dexterous ushers sidled sideways towards me, keeping a full face to the Presence. I seated myself Turkish fashion, and Phi-oo and Tsi-puff also knelt down above me. There came a pause. The eyes of the nearer court went from me to the Grand Lunar and came back to me, and a hissing and piping of expectation passed across the hidden multitudes below and ceased.

"That humming ceased.

“For the first and last time in my experience the moon was silent.

“I became aware of a faint wheezy noise. The Grand Lunar was addressing me. It was like the rubbing of a finger upon a pane of glass.

“I watched him attentively for a time, and then glanced at the alert Phi-oo. I felt amidst these slender beings ridiculously thick and fleshy and solid; my head all jaw and black hair. My eyes went back to the Grand Lunar. He had ceased; his attendants were busy, and his shining superfices was glistening and running with cooling spray.

“Phi-oo meditated through an interval. He consulted Tsi-puff. Then he began piping his recognisable English — at first a little nervously, so that he was not very clear.

“‘M’m — the Grand Lunar — wished to say — wishes to say — he gathers you are — m’m — men — that you are a man from the planet earth. He wishes to say that he welcomes you — welcomes you — and wishes to learn — learn, if I may use the word — the state of your world, and the reason why you came to this.’

“He paused. I was about to reply when he resumed. He proceeded to remarks of which the drift was not very clear, though I am inclined to think they were intended to be complimentary. He told me that the earth was to the moon what the sun is to the earth, and that the Selenites desired very greatly to learn about the earth and men. He then told me no doubt in compliment also, the relative magnitude and diameter of earth and moon, and the perpetual wonder and speculation with which the Selenites had regarded our planet. I meditated with downcast eyes, and decided to reply that men too had wondered what might lie in the moon, and had judged it dead, little recking of such magnificence as I had seen that day. The Grand Lunar, in token of recognition, caused his long blue rays to rotate in a very confusing manner, and all about the great hall ran the pipings and whisperings and rustlings of the report of what I had said. He then proceeded to put to Phi-oo a number of inquiries which were easier to answer.

“He understood, he explained, that we lived on the surface of the earth, that our air and sea were outside the globe; the latter part, indeed, he already knew from his astronomical specialists. He was very anxious to have more detailed information of what he called this

extraordinary state of affairs, for from the solidity of the earth there had always been a disposition regard it as uninhabitable. He endeavoured first to ascertain the extremes of temperature to which we earth beings were exposed, and he was deeply interested by my descriptive treatment of clouds and rain. His imagination was assisted by the fact that the lunar atmosphere in the outer galleries of the night side is not infrequently very foggy. He seemed inclined to marvel that we did not find the sunlight too intense for our eyes, and was interested in my attempt to explain that the sky was tempered to a bluish colour through the refraction of the air, though I doubt if he clearly understood that. I explained how the iris of the human eyes can contract the pupil and save the delicate internal structure from the excess of sunlight, and was allowed to approach within a few feet of the Presence in order that this structure might be seen. This led to a comparison of the lunar and terrestrial eyes. The former is not only excessively sensitive to such light as men can see, but it can also *see* heat, and every difference in temperature within the moon renders objects visible to it.

"The iris was quite a new organ to the Grand Lunar. For a time he amused himself by flashing his rays into my face and watching my pupils contract. As a consequence, I was dazzled and blinded for some little time….

"But in spite of that discomfort I found something reassuring by insensible degrees in the rationality of this business of question and answer. I could shut my eyes, think of my answer, and almost forget that the the Grand Lunar has no face….

"When I had descended again to my proper place the Grand Lunar asked how we sheltered ourselves from heat and storms, and I expounded to him the arts of building and furnishing. Here we wandered into misunderstandings and cross-purposes, due largely, I must admit, to the looseness of my expressions. For a long time I had great difficulty in making him understand the nature of a house. To him and his attendant Selenites it seemed, no doubt, the most whimsical thing in the world that men should build houses when they might descend into excavations, and an additional complication was introduced by the attempt I made to explain that men had originally begun their homes in caves, and that they were now taking their

railways and many establishments beneath the surface. Here I think a desire for intellectual completeness betrayed me. There was also a considerable tangle due to an equally unwise attempt on my part to explain about mines. Dismissing this topic at last in an incomplete state, the Grand Lunar inquired what we did with the interior of our globe.

"A tide of twittering and piping swept into the remotest corners of that great assembly when it was at last made clear that we men know absolutely nothing of the contents of the world upon which the immemorial generations of our ancestors had been evolved. Three times had I to repeat that of all the 4000 miles of distance between the earth and its centre men knew only to the depth of a mile, and that very vaguely. I understood the Grand Lunar to ask why had I come to the moon seeing we had scarcely touched our own planet yet, but he did not trouble me at that time to proceed to an explanation, being too anxious to pursue the details of this mad inversion of all his ideas.

"He reverted to the question of weather, and I tried to describe the perpetually changing sky, and snow, and frost and hurricanes. 'But when the night comes,' he asked, 'is it not cold?'

"I told him it was colder than by day.

"'And does not your atmosphere freeze?'

"I told him not; that it was never cold enough for that, because our nights were so short.

"'Not even liquefy?'

"I was about to say 'No,' but then it occurred to me that one part at least of our atmosphere, the water vapour of it, does sometimes liquefy and form dew, and sometimes freeze and form frost — a process perfectly analogous to the freezing of all the external atmosphere of the moon during its longer night. I made myself clear on this point, and from that the Grand Lunar went on to speak with me of sleep. For the need of sleep that comes so regularly every twenty-four hours to all things is part also of our earthly inheritance. On the moon they rest only at rare intervals, and after exceptional exertions. Then I tried to describe to him the soft splendours of a summer night, and from that I passed to a description of those animals that prowl by night and sleep by day. I told him of lions and

tigers, and here it seemed as though we had come to a deadlock. For, save in their waters, there are no creatures in the moon not absolutely domestic and subject to his will, and so it has been for immemorial years. They have monstrous water creatures, but no evil beasts, and the idea of anything strong and large existing 'outside' in the night is very difficult for them…."

[The record is here too broken to transcribe for the space of perhaps twenty words or more.]

"He talked with his attendants, as I suppose, upon the strange superficiality and unreasonableness of (man) who lives on the mere surface of a world, a creature of waves and winds, and all the chances of space, who cannot even unite to overcome the beasts that prey upon his kind, and yet who dares to invade another planet. During this aside I sat thinking, and then at his desire I told him of the different sorts of men. He searched me with questions. 'And for all sorts of work you have the same sort of men. But who thinks? Who governs?'

"I gave him an outline of the democratic method.

"When I had done he ordered cooling sprays upon his brow, and then requested me to repeat my explanation conceiving something had miscarried.

"'Do they not do different things, then?' said Phi-oo.

"Some, I admitted, were thinkers and some officials; some hunted, some were mechanics, some artists, some toilers. 'But *all* rule,' I said.

"'And have they not different shapes to fit them to their different duties?'

"'None that you can see,' I said, 'except perhaps, for clothes. Their minds perhaps differ a little,' I reflected.

"'Their minds must differ a great deal,' said the Grand Lunar, 'or they would all want to do the same things.'

"In order to bring myself into a closer harmony with his preconceptions, I said that his surmise was right. 'It was all hidden in the brain,' I said; 'but the difference was there. Perhaps if one could see the minds and souls of men they would be as varied and unequal as the Selenites. There were great men and small men, men who could reach out far and wide, men who could go swiftly; noisy,

trumpet-minded men, and men who could remember without thinking….'"

[The record is indistinct for three words.]

"He interrupted me to recall me to my previous statements. 'But you said all men rule?' he pressed.

"'To a certain extent,' I said, and made, I fear, a denser fog with my explanation.

"He reached out to a salient fact. 'Do you mean,' asked, 'that there is no Grand Earthly?'

"I thought of several people, but assured him finally there was none. I explained that such autocrats and emperors as we had tried upon earth had usually ended in drink, or vice, or violence, and that the large and influential section of the people of the earth to which I belonged, the Anglo-Saxons, did not mean to try that sort of thing again. At which the Grand Lunar was even more amazed.

"'But how do you keep even such wisdom as you have?' he asked; and I explained to him the way we helped our limited"

[A word omitted here, probably "brains."]

"with libraries of books. I explained to him how our science was growing by the united labours of innumerable little men, and on that he made no comment save that it was evident we had mastered much in spite of our social savagery, or we could not have come to the moon. Yet the contrast was very marked. With knowledge the Selenites grew and changed; mankind stored their knowledge about them and remained brutes — equipped. He said this…"

[Here there is a short piece of the record indistinct.]

"He then caused me to describe how we went about this earth of ours, and I described to him our railways and ships. For a time he could not understand that we had had the use of steam only one hundred years, but when he did he was clearly amazed. (I may mention as a singular thing, that the Selenites use years to count by, just as we do on earth, though I can make nothing of their numeral system. That, however, does not matter, because Phi-oo understands ours.) From that I went on to tell him that mankind had dwelt in cities only for nine or ten thousand years, and that we were still not united in one brotherhood, but under many different forms of government. This astonished the Grand Lunar very much, when it

was made clear to him. At first he thought we referred merely to administrative areas.

"'Our States and Empires are still the rawest sketches of what order will some day be,' I said, and so I came to tell him…."

[At this point a length of record that probably represents thirty or forty words is totally illegible.]

"The Grand Lunar was greatly impressed by the folly of men in clinging to the inconvenience of diverse tongues. 'They want to communicate, and yet not to communicate,' he said, and then for a long time he questioned me closely concerning war.

"He was at first perplexed and incredulous. 'You mean to say,' he asked, seeking confirmation, 'that you run about over the surface of your world — this world, whose riches you have scarcely begun to scrape — killing one another for beasts to eat?'

"I told him that was perfectly correct.

"He asked for particulars to assist his imagination.

"'But do not ships and your poor little cities get injured?' he asked, and I found the waste of property and conveniences seemed to impress him almost as much as the killing. 'Tell me more,' said the Grand Lunar; 'make me see pictures. I cannot conceive these things.'

"And so, for a space, though something loath, I told him the story of earthly War.

"I told him of the first orders and ceremonies of war, of warnings and ultimatums, and the marshalling and marching of troops. I gave him an idea of manoeuvres and positions and battle joined. I told him of sieges and assaults, of starvation and hardship in trenches, and of sentinels freezing in the snow. I told him of routs and surprises, and desperate last stands and faint hopes, and the pitiless pursuit of fugitives and the dead upon the field. I told, too, of the past, of invasions and massacres, of the Huns and Tartars, and the wars of Mahomet and the Caliphs, and of the Crusades. And as I went on, and Phi-oo translated, and the Selenites cooed and murmured in a steadily intensified emotion.

"I told them an ironclad could fire a shot of a ton twelve miles, and go through 20 feet of iron — and how we could steer torpedoes under water. I went on to describe a Maxim gun in action, and what I could imagine of the Battle of Colenso. The Grand Lunar was so

incredulous that he interrupted the translation of what I had said in order to have my verification of my account. They particularly doubted my description of the men cheering and rejoicing as they went into battle.

"'But surely they do not like it!' translated Phi-oo.

"I assured them men of my race considered battle the most glorious experience of life, at which the whole assembly was stricken with amazement.

"'But what good is this war?' asked the Grand Lunar, sticking to his theme.

"'Oh! as for *good*!' said I; 'it thins the population!'

"'But why should there be a need — ?'

"There came a pause, the cooling sprays impinged upon his brow, and then he spoke again."

[At this point a series of undulations that have been apparent as a perplexing complication as far back as Cavor's description of the silence that fell before the first speaking of the Grand Lunar become confusingly predominant in the record. These undulations are evidently the result of radiations proceeding from a lunar source, and their persistent approximation to the alternating signals of Cavor is curiously suggestive of some operator deliberately seeking to mix them in with his message and render it illegible. At first they are small and regular, so that with a little care and the loss of very few words we have been able to disentangle Cavor's message; then they become broad and larger, then suddenly they are irregular, with an irregularity that gives the effect at last of some one scribbling through a line of writing. For a long time nothing can be made of this madly zigzagging trace; then quite abruptly the interruption ceases, leaves a few words clear, and then resumes and continues for the rest of the message, completely obliterating whatever Cavor was attempting to transmit. Why, if this is indeed a deliberate intervention, the Selenites should have preferred to let Cavor go on transmitting his message in happy ignorance of their obliteration of its record, when it was clearly quite in their power and much more easy and convenient for them to stop his proceedings at any time, is a problem to which I can contribute nothing. The thing seems to have happened so, and that is all I can say. This last rag of his description

of the Grand Lunar begins in mid-sentence.]

"…interrogated me very closely upon my secret. I was able in a little while to get to an understanding with them, and at last to elucidate what has been a puzzle to me ever since I realised the vastness of their science, namely, how it is they themselves have never discovered 'Cavorite.' I find they know of it as a theoretical substance, but they have always regarded it as a practical impossibility, because for some reason there is no helium in the moon, and helium…"

[Across the last letters of helium slashes the resumption of that obliterating trace. Note that word "secret," for that, and that alone, I base my interpretation of the message that follows, the last message, as both Mr. Wendigee and myself now believe it to be, that he is ever likely to send us.]

Chapter 26

The Last Message Cavor sent to the Earth

On this unsatisfactory manner the penultimate message of Cavor dies out. One seems to see him away there in the blue obscurity amidst his apparatus intently signalling us to the last, all unaware of the curtain of confusion that drops between us; all unaware, too, of the final dangers that even then must have been creeping upon him. His disastrous want of vulgar common sense had utterly betrayed him. He had talked of war, he had talked of all the strength and irrational violence of men, of their insatiable aggressions, their tireless futility of conflict. He had filled the whole moon world with this impression of our race, and then I think it is plain that he made the most fatal admission that upon himself alone hung the possibility — at least for a long time — of any further men reaching the moon. The line the cold, inhuman reason of the moon would take seems plain enough to me, and a suspicion of it, and then perhaps some sudden sharp realisation of it, must have come to him. One imagines him about the moon with the remorse of this fatal indiscretion growing in his mind. During a certain time I am inclined to guess the Grand Lunar was deliberating the new situation, and for all that time Cavor may have gone as free as ever he had gone. But obstacles of some sort prevented his getting to his electromagnetic apparatus again after that message I have just given. For some days we received nothing. Perhaps he was having fresh audiences, and trying to evade his previous admissions. Who can hope to guess?

And then suddenly, like a cry in the night, like a cry that is followed by a stillness, came the last message. It is the briefest fragment, the broken beginnings of two sentences.

The first was: “I was mad to let the Grand Lunar know—”

There was an interval of perhaps a minute. One imagines some interruption from without. A departure from the instrument — a dreadful hesitation among the looming masses of apparatus in that dim, blue-lit cavern — a sudden rush back to it, full of a resolve that came too late. Then, as if it were hastily transmitted came: “Cavorite

made as follows: take—”

There followed one word, a quite unmeaning word as it stands: “uless.”

And that is all.

It may be he made a hasty attempt to spell “useless” when his fate was close upon him. Whatever it was that was happening about that apparatus we cannot tell. Whatever it was we shall never, I know, receive another message from the moon. For my own part a vivid dream has come to my help, and I see, almost as plainly as though I had seen it in actual fact, a blue-lit shadowy dishevelled Cavor struggling in the grip of these insect Selenites, struggling ever more desperately and hopelessly as they press upon him, shouting, expostulating, perhaps even at last fighting, and being forced backwards step by step out of all speech or sign of his fellows, for evermore into the Unknown — into the dark, into that silence that has no end….

THE SEA LADY

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"Am I doing it right?" asked the Sea Lady.

CHAPTER THE FIRST. THE COMING OF THE SEA LADY

I

Such previous landings of mermaids as have left a record, have all a flavour of doubt. Even the very circumstantial account of that Bruges Sea Lady, who was so clever at fancy work, gives occasion to the sceptic. I must confess that I was absolutely incredulous of such things until a year ago. But now, face to face with indisputable facts in my own immediate neighbourhood, and with my own second cousin Melville (of Seaton Carew) as the chief witness to the story, I see these old legends in a very different light. Yet so many people concerned themselves with the hushing up of this affair, that, but for my sedulous enquiries, I am certain it would have become as doubtful as those older legends in a couple of score of years. Even now to many minds ——

The difficulties in the way of the hushing-up process were no doubt exceptionally great in this case, and that they did contrive to do so much, seems to show just how strong are the motives for secrecy in all such cases. There is certainly no remoteness nor obscurity about the scene of these events. They began upon the beach just east of Sandgate Castle, towards Folkestone, and they ended on the beach near Folkestone pier not two miles away. The beginning was in broad daylight on a bright blue day in August and in full sight of the windows of half a dozen houses. At first sight this alone is sufficient to make the popular want of information almost incredible. But of that you may think differently later.

Mrs. Randolph Bunting's two charming daughters were bathing at the time in company with their guest, Miss Mabel Glendower. It is from the latter lady chiefly, and from Mrs. Bunting, that I have pieced together the precise circumstances of the Sea Lady's arrival. From Miss Glendower, the elder of two Glendower girls, for all that she is a principal in almost all that follows, I have obtained, and have sought to obtain, no information whatever. There is the question of the lady's feelings — and in this case I gather they are of a peculiarly

complex sort. Quite naturally they would be. At any rate, the natural ruthlessness of the literary calling has failed me. I have not ventured to touch them.…

The villa residences to the east of Sandgate Castle, you must understand, are particularly lucky in having gardens that run right down to the beach. There is no intervening esplanade or road or path such as cuts off ninety-nine out of the hundred of houses that face the sea. As you look down on them from the western end of the Leas, you see them crowding the very margin. And as a great number of high groins stand out from the shore along this piece of coast, the beach is practically cut off and made private except at very low water, when people can get around the ends of the groins. These houses are consequently highly desirable during the bathing season, and it is the custom of many of their occupiers to let them furnished during the summer to persons of fashion and affluence.

The Randolph Buntings were such persons — indisputably. It is true of course that they were not Aristocrats, or indeed what an unpaid herald would freely call "gentle." They had no right to any sort of arms. But then, as Mrs. Bunting would sometimes remark, they made no pretence of that sort; they were quite free (as indeed everybody is nowadays) from snobbery. They were simple homely Buntings — Randolph Buntings— "good people" as the saying is — of a widely diffused Hampshire stock addicted to brewing, and whether a suitably remunerated herald could or could not have proved them "gentle" there can be no doubt that Mrs. Bunting was quite justified in taking in the *Gentlewoman*, and that Mr. Bunting and Fred were sedulous gentlemen, and that all their ways and thoughts were delicate and nice. And they had staying with them the two Miss Glendowers, to whom Mrs. Bunting had been something of a mother, ever since Mrs. Glendower's death.

The two Miss Glendowers were half sisters, and gentle beyond dispute, a county family race that had only for a generation stooped to trade, and risen at once Antæus-like, refreshed and enriched. The elder, Adeline, was the rich one — the heiress, with the commercial blood in her veins. She was really very rich, and she had dark hair and grey eyes and serious views, and when her father died, which he did a little before her step-mother, she had only the later portion of

her later youth left to her. She was nearly seven-and-twenty. She had sacrificed her earlier youth to her father's infirmity of temper in a way that had always reminded her of the girlhood of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. But after his departure for a sphere where his temper has no doubt a wider scope — for what is this world for if it is not for the Formation of Character? — she had come out strongly. It became evident she had always had a mind, and a very active and capable one, an accumulated fund of energy and much ambition. She had bloomed into a clear and critical socialism, and she had blossomed at public meetings; and now she was engaged to that really very brilliant and promising but rather extravagant and romantic person, Harry Chatteris, the nephew of an earl and the hero of a scandal, and quite a possible Liberal candidate for the Hythe division of Kent. At least this last matter was under discussion and he was about, and Miss Glendower liked to feel she was supporting him by being about too, and that was chiefly why the Buntings had taken a house in Sandgate for the summer. Sometimes he would come and stay a night or so with them, sometimes he would be off upon affairs, for he was known to be a very versatile, brilliant, first-class political young man — and Hythe very lucky to have a bid for him, all things considered. And Fred Bunting was engaged to Miss Glendower's less distinguished, much less wealthy, seventeen-year old and possibly altogether more ordinary half-sister, Mabel Glendower, who had discerned long since when they were at school together that it wasn't any good trying to be clear when Adeline was about.

The Buntings did not bathe "mixed," a thing indeed that was still only very doubtfully decent in 1898, but Mr. Randolph Bunting and his son Fred came down to the beach with them frankly instead of hiding away or going for a walk according to the older fashion. (This, notwithstanding that Miss Mabel Glendower, Fred's *fiancée* to boot, was of the bathing party.) They formed a little procession down under the evergreen oaks in the garden and down the ladder and so to the sea's margin.

Mrs. Bunting went first, looking as it were for Peeping Tom with her glasses, and Miss Glendower, who never bathed because it made her feel undignified, went with her — wearing one of those simple,

costly “art” morning costumes Socialists affect. Behind this protecting van came, one by one, the three girls, in their beautiful Parisian bathing dresses and headdresses — though these were of course completely muffled up in huge hooded gowns of towelling — and wearing of course stockings and shoes — they bathed in stockings and shoes. Then came Mrs. Bunting’s maid and the second housemaid and the maid the Glendower girls had brought, carrying towels, and then at a little interval the two men carrying ropes and things. (Mrs. Bunting always put a rope around each of her daughters before ever they put a foot in the water and held it until they were safely out again. But Mabel Glendower would not have a rope.)

Where the garden ends and the beach begins Miss Glendower turned aside and sat down on the green iron seat under the evergreen oak, and having found her place in “Sir George Tressady” — a book of which she was naturally enough at that time inordinately fond — sat watching the others go on down the beach. There they were a very bright and very pleasant group of prosperous animated people upon the sunlit beach, and beyond them in streaks of grey and purple, and altogether calm save for a pattern of dainty little wavelets, was that ancient mother of surprises, the Sea.

As soon as they reached the high-water mark where it is no longer indecent to be clad merely in a bathing dress, each of the young ladies handed her attendant her wrap, and after a little fun and laughter Mrs. Bunting looked carefully to see if there were any jelly fish, and then they went in. And after a minute or so, it seems Betty, the elder Miss Bunting, stopped splashing and looked, and then they all looked, and there, about thirty yards away was the Sea Lady’s head, as if she were swimming back to land.

Naturally they concluded that she must be a neighbour from one of the adjacent houses. They were a little surprised not to have noticed her going down into the water, but beyond that her apparition had no shadow of wonder for them. They made the furtive penetrating observations usual in such cases. They could see that she was swimming very gracefully and that she had a lovely face and very beautiful arms, but they could not see her wonderful golden hair because all that was hidden in a fashionable Phrygian bathing cap, picked up — as she afterwards admitted to my second cousin —

some nights before upon a Norman *plage*. Nor could they see her lovely shoulders because of the red costume she wore.

They were just on the point of feeling their inspection had reached the limit of really nice manners and Mabel was pretending to go on splashing again and saying to Betty, "She's wearing a red dress. I wish I could see—" when something very terrible happened.

The swimmer gave a queer sort of flop in the water, threw up her arms and — vanished!

It was the sort of thing that seems for an instant to freeze everybody, just one of those things that everyone has read of and imagined and very few people have seen.

For a space no one did anything. One, two, three seconds passed and then for an instant a bare arm flashed in the air and vanished again.

Mabel tells me she was quite paralysed with horror, she did nothing all the time, but the two Miss Buntings, recovering a little, screamed out, "Oh, she's drowning!" and hastened to get out of the sea at once, a proceeding accelerated by Mrs. Bunting, who with great presence of mind pulled at the ropes with all her weight and turned about and continued to pull long after they were many yards from the water's edge and indeed cowering in a heap at the foot of the sea wall. Miss Glendower became aware of a crisis and descended the steps, "Sir George Tressady" in one hand and the other shading her eyes, crying in her clear resolute voice, "She must be saved!" The maids of course were screaming — as became them — but the two men appear to have acted with the greatest presence of mind. "Fred, Nexdoors ledder!" said Mr. Randolph Bunting — for the next-door neighbour instead of having convenient stone steps had a high wall and a long wooden ladder, and it had often been pointed out by Mr. Bunting if ever an accident should happen to anyone there was *that!* In a moment it seems they had both flung off jacket and vest, collar, tie and shoes, and were running the neighbour's ladder out into the water.

"Where did she go, Ded?" said Fred.

"Right out hea!" said Mr. Bunting, and to confirm his word there flashed again an arm and "something dark" — something which in the light of all that subsequently happened I am inclined to suppose

was an unintentional exposure of the Lady's tail.

Neither of the two gentlemen are expert swimmers — indeed so far as I can gather, Mr. Bunting in the excitement of the occasion forgot almost everything he had ever known of swimming — but they waded out valiantly one on each side of the ladder, thrust it out before them and committed themselves to the deep, in a manner casting no discredit upon our nation and race.

Yet on the whole I think it is a matter for general congratulation that they were not engaged in the rescue of a genuinely drowning person. At the time of my enquiries whatever soreness of argument that may once have obtained between them had passed, and it is fairly clear that while Fred Bunting was engaged in swimming hard against the long side of the ladder and so causing it to rotate slowly on its axis, Mr. Bunting had already swallowed a very considerable amount of sea-water and was kicking Fred in the chest with aimless vigour. This he did, as he explains, "to get my legs down, you know. Something about that ladder, you know, and they *would* go up!"

And then quite unexpectedly the Sea Lady appeared beside them. One lovely arm supported Mr. Bunting about the waist and the other was over the ladder. She did not appear at all pale or frightened or out of breath, Fred told me when I cross-examined him, though at the time he was too violently excited to note a detail of that sort. Indeed she smiled and spoke in an easy pleasant voice.

"Cramp," she said, "I have cramp." Both the men were convinced of that.

Mr. Bunting was on the point of telling her to hold tight and she would be quite safe, when a little wave went almost entirely into his mouth and reduced him to wild splutterings.

"*We'll* get you in," said Fred, or something of that sort, and so they all hung, bobbing in the water to the tune of Mr. Bunting's trouble.

They seem to have rocked so for some time. Fred says the Sea Lady looked calm but a little puzzled and that she seemed to measure the distance shoreward. "You *mean* to save me?" she asked him.

He was trying to think what could be done before his father drowned. "We're saving you now," he said.

"You'll take me ashore?"

As she seemed so cool he thought he would explain his plan of operations, “Trying to get — end of ladder — kick with my legs. Only a few yards out of our depth — if we could only — —”

“Minute — get my breath — moufu’ sea-water,” said Mr. Bunting. *Splash!* wuff!…

And then it seemed to Fred that a little miracle happened. There was a swirl of the water like the swirl about a screw propeller, and he gripped the Sea Lady and the ladder just in time, as it seemed to him, to prevent his being washed far out into the Channel. His father vanished from his sight with an expression of astonishment just forming on his face and reappeared beside him, so far as back and legs are concerned, holding on to the ladder with a sort of death grip. And then behold! They had shifted a dozen yards inshore, and they were in less than five feet of water and Fred could feel the ground.

At its touch his amazement and dismay immediately gave way to the purest heroism. He thrust ladder and Sea Lady before him, abandoned the ladder and his now quite disordered parent, caught her tightly in his arms, and bore her up out of the water. The young ladies cried “Saved!” the maids cried “Saved!” Distant voices echoed “Saved, Hooray!” Everybody in fact cried “Saved!” except Mrs. Bunting, who was, she says, under the impression that Mr. Bunting was in a fit, and Mr. Bunting, who seems to have been under an impression that all those laws of nature by which, under Providence, we are permitted to float and swim, were in suspense and that the best thing to do was to kick very hard and fast until the end should come. But in a dozen seconds or so his head was up again and his feet were on the ground and he was making whale and walrus noises, and noises like a horse and like an angry cat and like sawing, and was wiping the water from his eyes; and Mrs. Bunting (except that now and then she really *had* to turn and say “*Ran*dolph!”) could give her attention to the beautiful burthen that clung about her son.

And it is a curious thing that the Sea Lady was at least a minute out of the water before anyone discovered that she was in any way different from — other ladies. I suppose they were all crowding close to her and looking at her beautiful face, or perhaps they imagined that she was wearing some indiscreet but novel form of dark riding habit or something of that sort. Anyhow not one of them noticed it,

although it must have been before their eyes as plain as day. Certainly it must have blended with the costume. And there they stood, imagining that Fred had rescued a lovely lady of indisputable fashion, who had been bathing from some neighbouring house, and wondering why on earth there was nobody on the beach to claim her. And she clung to Fred and, as Miss Mabel Glendower subsequently remarked in the course of conversation with him, Fred clung to her.

"I had cramp," said the Sea Lady, with her lips against Fred's cheek and one eye on Mrs. Bunting. "I am sure it was cramp.… I've got it still."

"I don't see anybody—" began Mrs. Bunting.

"Please carry me in," said the Sea Lady, closing her eyes as if she were ill — though her cheek was flushed and warm. "Carry me in."

"Where?" gasped Fred.

"Carry me into the house," she whispered to him.

"Which house?"

Mrs. Bunting came nearer.

"*Your* house," said the Sea Lady, and shut her eyes for good and became oblivious to all further remarks.

"She — But I don't understand—" said Mrs. Bunting, addressing everybody.…

And then it was they saw it. Nettie, the younger Miss Bunting, saw it first. She pointed, she says, before she could find words to speak. Then they all saw it! Miss Glendower, I believe, was the person who was last to see it. At any rate it would have been like her if she had been.

"Mother," said Nettie, giving words to the general horror. "*Mother!* She has a *tail!*"

And then the three maids and Mabel Glendower screamed one after the other. "Look!" they cried. "A tail!"

"Of all—" said Mrs. Bunting, and words failed her.

"*Oh!*" said Miss Glendower, and put her hand to her heart.

And then one of the maids gave it a name. "It's a mermaid!" screamed the maid, and then everyone screamed, "It's a mermaid."

Except the mermaid herself; she remained quite passive, pretending to be insensible partly on Fred's shoulder and altogether in his arms.

II

That, you know, is the tableau so far as I have been able to piece it together again. You must imagine this little knot of people upon the beach, and Mr. Bunting, I figure, a little apart, just wading out of the water and very wet and incredulous and half drowned. And the neighbour's ladder was drifting quietly out to sea.

Of course it was one of those positions that have an air of being conspicuous.

Indeed it was conspicuous. It was some way below high water and the group stood out perhaps thirty yards down the beach. Nobody, as Mrs. Bunting told my cousin Melville, knew a bit *what* to do and they all had even an exaggerated share of the national hatred of being seen in a puzzle. The mermaid seemed content to remain a beautiful problem clinging to Fred, and by all accounts she was a reasonable burthen for a man. It seems that the very large family of people who were stopping at the house called Koot Hoomi had appeared in force, and they were all staring and gesticulating. They were just the sort of people the Buntings did not want to know — tradespeople very probably. Presently one of the men — the particularly vulgar man who used to shoot at the gulls — began putting down their ladder as if he intended to offer advice, and Mrs. Bunting also became aware of the black glare of the field glasses of a still more horrid man to the west.

Moreover the popular author who lived next door, an irascible dark square-headed little man in spectacles, suddenly turned up and began bawling from his inaccessible wall top something foolish about his ladder. Nobody thought of his silly ladder or took any trouble about it, naturally. He was quite stupidly excited. To judge by his tone and gestures he was using dreadful language and seemed disposed every moment to jump down to the beach and come to them.

And then to crown the situation, over the westward groin appeared Low Excursionists!

First of all their heads came, and then their remarks. Then they began to clamber the breakwater with joyful shouts.

"Pip, Pip," said the Low Excursionists as they climbed — it was

the year of "pip, pip" — and, "What HO she bumps!" and then less generally, "What's up '*ere?"*

And the voices of other Low Excursionists still invisible answered, "Pip, Pip."

It was evidently a large party.

"Anything wrong?" shouted one of the Low Excursionists at a venture.

"My *dear!"* said Mrs. Bunting to Mabel, "what *are* we to do?" And in her description of the affair to my cousin Melville she used always to make that the *clou* of the story. "My DEAR! What ARE we to do?"

I believe that in her desperation she even glanced at the water. But of course to have put the mermaid back then would have involved the most terrible explanations.…

It was evident there was only one thing to be done. Mrs. Bunting said as much. "The only thing," said she, "is to carry her indoors."

And carry her indoors they did!…

One can figure the little procession. In front Fred, wet and astonished but still clinging and clung to, and altogether too out of breath for words. And in his arms the Sea Lady. She had a beautiful figure, I understand, until that horrible tail began (and the fin of it, Mrs. Bunting told my cousin in a whispered confidence, went up and down and with pointed corners for all the world like a mackerel's). It flopped and dripped along the path — I imagine. She was wearing a very nice and very long-skirted dress of red material trimmed with coarse white lace, and she had, Mabel told me, a *gilet*, though that would scarcely show as they went up the garden. And that Phrygian cap hid all her golden hair and showed the white, low, level forehead over her sea-blue eyes. From all that followed, I imagine her at the moment scanning the veranda and windows of the house with a certain eagerness of scrutiny.

Behind this staggering group of two I believe Mrs. Bunting came. Then Mr. Bunting. Dreadfully wet and broken down Mr. Bunting must have been by then, and from one or two things I have noticed since, I can't help imagining him as pursuing his wife with, "Of course, my dear, *I* couldn't tell, you know!"

And then, in a dismayed yet curious bunch, the girls in their wraps

of towelling and the maids carrying the ropes and things and, as if inadvertently, as became them, most of Mr. and Fred Bunting's clothes.

And then Miss Glendower, for once at least in no sort of pose whatever, clutching "Sir George Tressady" and perplexed and disturbed beyond measure.

And then, as it were pursuing them all, "Pip, pip," and the hat and raised eyebrows of a Low Excursionist still anxious to know "What's up?" from the garden end.

So it was, or at least in some such way, and to the accompaniment of the wildest ravings about some ladder or other heard all too distinctly over the garden wall — ("Overdressed Snobbs take my *rare old English adjective* ladder…!") — that they carried the Sea Lady (who appeared serenely insensible to everything) up through the house and laid her down upon the couch in Mrs. Bunting's room.

And just as Miss Glendower was suggesting that the very best thing they could do would be to send for a doctor, the Sea Lady with a beautiful naturalness sighed and came to.

CHAPTER THE SECOND SOME FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I

There with as much verisimilitude as I can give it, is how the Folkestone mermaid really came to land. There can be no doubt that the whole affair was a deliberately planned intrusion upon her part. She never had cramp, she couldn't have cramp, and as for drowning, nobody was near drowning for a moment except Mr. Bunting, whose valuable life she very nearly sacrificed at the outset of her adventure. And her next proceeding was to demand an interview with Mrs. Bunting and to presume upon her youthful and glowing appearance to gain the support, sympathy and assistance of that good-hearted lady (who as a matter of fact was a thing of yesterday, a mere chicken in comparison with her own immemorial years) in her extraordinary raid upon Humanity.

Her treatment of Mrs. Bunting would be incredible if we did not know that, in spite of many disadvantages, the Sea Lady was an extremely well read person. She admitted as much in several later conversations with my cousin Melville. For a time there was a friendly intimacy — so Melville always preferred to present it — between these two, and my cousin, who has a fairly considerable amount of curiosity, learnt many very interesting details about the life "out there" or "down there" — for the Sea Lady used either expression. At first the Sea Lady was exceedingly reticent under the gentle insistence of his curiosity, but after a time, I gather, she gave way to bursts of cheerful confidence. "It is clear," says my cousin, "that the old ideas of the submarine life as a sort of perpetual game of 'who-hoop' through groves of coral, diversified by moonlight hair-combings on rocky strands, need very extensive modification." In this matter of literature, for example, they have practically all that we have, and unlimited leisure to read it in. Melville is very insistent upon and rather envious of that unlimited leisure. A picture of a mermaid swinging in a hammock of woven seaweed, with what bishops call a "latter-day" novel in one hand and a sixteen candle-

power phosphorescent fish in the other, may jar upon one's preconceptions, but it is certainly far more in accordance with the picture of the abyss she printed on his mind. Everywhere Change works her will on things. Everywhere, and even among the immortals, Modernity spreads. Even on Olympus I suppose there is a Progressive party and a new Phaeton agitating to supersede the horses of his father by some solar motor of his own. I suggested as much to Melville and he said "Horrible! Horrible!" and stared hard at my study fire. Dear old Melville! She gave him no end of facts about Deep Sea Reading.

Of course they do not print books "out there," for the printer's ink under water would not so much run as fly — she made that very plain; but in one way or another nearly the whole of terrestrial literature, says Melville, has come to them. "We know," she said. They form indeed a distinct reading public, and additions to their vast submerged library that circulates forever with the tides, are now pretty systematically sought. The sources are various and in some cases a little odd. Many books have been found in sunken ships. "Indeed!" said Melville. There is always a dropping and blowing overboard of novels and magazines from most passenger-carrying vessels — sometimes, but these are not as a rule valuable additions — a deliberate shying overboard. But sometimes books of an exceptional sort are thrown over when they are quite finished. (Melville is a dainty irritable reader and no doubt he understood that.) From the sea beaches of holiday resorts, moreover, the lighter sorts of literature are occasionally getting blown out to sea. And so soon as the Booms of our great Popular Novelists are over, Melville assured me, the libraries find it convenient to cast such surplus copies of their current works as the hospitals and prisons cannot take, below high-water mark.

"That's not generally known," said I.

"*They* know it," said Melville.

In other ways the beaches yield. Young couples who "begin to sit heapy," the Sea Lady told my cousin, as often as not will leave excellent modern fiction behind them, when at last they return to their proper place. There is a particularly fine collection of English work, it seems, in the deep water of the English Channel; practically

the whole of the Tauchnitz Library is there, thrown overboard at the last moment by conscientious or timid travellers returning from the continent, and there was for a time a similar source of supply of American reprints in the Mersey, but that has fallen off in recent years. And the Deep Sea Mission for Fishermen has now for some years been raining down tracts and giving a particularly elevated tone of thought to the extensive shallows of the North Sea. The Sea Lady was very precise on these points.

When one considers the conditions of its accumulation, one is not surprised to hear that the element of fiction is as dominant in this Deep Sea Library as it is upon the counters of Messrs. Mudie; but my cousin learnt that the various illustrated magazines, and particularly the fashion papers, are valued even more highly than novels, are looked for far more eagerly and perused with envious emotion. Indeed on that point my cousin got a sudden glimpse of one of the motives that had brought this daring young lady into the air. He made some sort of suggestion. "We should have taken to dressing long ago," she said, and added, with a vague quality of laughter in her tone, "it isn't that we're unfeminine, Mr. Melville. Only — as I was explaining to Mrs. Bunting, one must consider one's circumstances — how *can* one *hope* to keep anything nice under water? Imagine lace!"

"Soaked!" said my cousin Melville.

"Drenched!" said the Sea Lady.

"Ruined!" said my cousin Melville.

"And then you know," said the Sea Lady very gravely, "one's hair!"

"Of course," said Melville. "Why! — you can never get it *dry!"*

"That's precisely it," said she.

My cousin Melville had a new light on an old topic. "And that's why — in the old time —— ?"

"Exactly!" she cried, "exactly! Before there were so many Excursionists and sailors and Low People about, one came out, one sat and brushed it in the sun. And then of course it really *was* possible to do it up. But now — —"

She made a petulant gesture and looked gravely at Melville, biting her lip the while. My cousin made a sympathetic noise. "The horrid

modern spirit," he said — almost automatically.…

But though fiction and fashion appear to be so regrettably dominant in the nourishment of the mer-mind, it must not be supposed that the most serious side of our reading never reaches the bottom of the sea. There was, for example, a case quite recently, the Sea Lady said, of the captain of a sailing ship whose mind had become unhinged by the huckstering uproar of the *Times* and *Daily Mail*, and who had not only bought a second-hand copy of the *Times* reprint of the Encyclopædia Britannica, but also that dense collection of literary snacks and samples, that All-Literature Sausage which has been compressed under the weighty editing of Doctor Richard Garnett. It has long been notorious that even the greatest minds of the past were far too copious and confusing in their — as the word goes — lubrications. Doctor Garnett, it is alleged, has seized the gist and presented it so compactly that almost any business man now may take hold of it without hindrance to his more serious occupations. The unfortunate and misguided seaman seems to have carried the entire collection aboard with him, with the pretty evident intention of coming to land in Sydney the wisest man alive — a Hindoo-minded thing to do. The result might have been anticipated. The mass shifted in the night, threw the whole weight of the science of the middle nineteenth century and the literature of all time, in a virulently concentrated state, on one side of his little vessel and capsized it instantly.…

The ship, the Sea Lady said, dropped into the abyss as if it were loaded with lead, and its crew and other movables did not follow it down until much later in the day. The captain was the first to arrive, said the Sea Lady, and it is a curious fact, due probably to some preliminary dippings into his purchase, that he came head first, instead of feet down and limbs expanded in the customary way.…

However, such exceptional windfalls avail little against the rain of light literature that is constantly going on. The novel and the newspaper remain the world's reading even at the bottom of the sea. As subsequent events would seem to show, it must have been from the common latter-day novel and the newspaper that the Sea Lady derived her ideas of human life and sentiment and the inspiration of her visit. And if at times she seemed to underestimate the nobler

tendencies of the human spirit, if at times she seemed disposed to treat Adeline Glendower and many of the deeper things of life with a certain sceptical levity, if she did at last indisputably subordinate reason and right feeling to passion, it is only just to her, and to those deeper issues, that we should ascribe her aberrations to their proper cause.…

II

My cousin Melville, I was saying, did at one time or another get a vague, a very vague conception of what that deep-sea world was like. But whether his conception has any quality of truth in it is more than I dare say. He gives me an impression of a very strange world indeed, a green luminous fluidity in which these beings float, a world lit by great shining monsters that drift athwart it, and by waving forests of nebulous luminosity amidst which the little fishes drift like netted stars. It is a world with neither sitting, nor standing, nor going, nor coming, through which its inhabitants float and drift as one floats and drifts in dreams. And the way they live there! "My dear man!" said Melville, "it must be like a painted ceiling!…"

I do not even feel certain that it is in the sea particularly that this world of the Sea Lady is to be found. But about those saturated books and drowned scraps of paper, you say? Things are not always what they seem, and she told him all of that, we must reflect, one laughing afternoon.

She could appear, at times, he says, as real as you or I, and again came mystery all about her. There were times when it seemed to him you might have hurt her or killed her as you can hurt and kill anyone — with a penknife for example — and there were times when it seemed to him you could have destroyed the whole material universe and left her smiling still. But of this ambiguous element in the lady, more is to be told later. There are wider seas than ever keel sailed upon, and deeps that no lead of human casting will ever plumb. When it is all summed up, I have to admit, I do not know, I cannot tell. I fall back upon Melville and my poor array of collected facts. At first there was amazingly little strangeness about her for any who had to deal with her. There she was, palpably solid and material, a

lady out of the sea.

This modern world is a world where the wonderful is utterly commonplace. We are bred to show a quiet freedom from amazement, and why should we boggle at material Mermaids, with Dewars solidifying all sorts of impalpable things and Marconi waves spreading everywhere? To the Buntings she was as matter of fact, as much a matter of authentic and reasonable motives and of sound solid sentimentality, as everything else in the Bunting world. So she was for them in the beginning, and so up to this day with them her memory remains.

III

The way in which the Sea Lady talked to Mrs. Bunting on that memorable morning, when she lay all wet and still visibly fishy on the couch in Mrs. Bunting's dressing-room, I am also able to give with some little fulness, because Mrs. Bunting repeated it all several times, acting the more dramatic speeches in it, to my cousin Melville in several of those good long talks that both of them in those happy days — and particularly Mrs. Bunting — always enjoyed so much. And with her very first speech, it seems, the Sea Lady took her line straight to Mrs. Bunting's generous managing heart. She sat up on the couch, drew the antimacassar modestly over her deformity, and sometimes looking sweetly down and sometimes openly and trustfully into Mrs. Bunting's face, and speaking in a soft clear grammatical manner that stamped her at once as no mere mermaid but a finished fine Sea Lady, she "made a clean breast of it," as Mrs. Bunting said, and "fully and frankly" placed herself in Mrs. Bunting's hands.

"Mrs. Bunting," said Mrs. Bunting to my cousin Melville, in a dramatic rendering of the Sea Lady's manner, "do permit me to apologise for this intrusion, for I know it *is* an intrusion. But indeed it has almost been *forced* upon me, and if you will only listen to my story, Mrs. Bunting, I think you will find — well, if not a complete excuse for me — for I can understand how exacting your standards must be — at any rate *some* excuse for what I have done — for what I *must* call, Mrs. Bunting, my deceitful conduct towards you.

Deceitful it was, Mrs. Bunting, for I never had cramp — But then, Mrs. Bunting" — and here Mrs. Bunting would insert a long impressive pause— "I never had a mother!"

"And then and there," said Mrs. Bunting, when she told the story to my cousin Melville, "the poor child burst into tears and confessed she had been born ages and ages ago in some dreadful miraculous way in some terrible place near Cyprus, and had no more right to a surname — Well, *there* — !" said Mrs. Bunting, telling the story to my cousin Melville and making the characteristic gesture with which she always passed over and disowned any indelicacy to which her thoughts might have tended. "And all the while speaking with such a nice accent and moving in such a ladylike way!"

"Of course," said my cousin Melville, "there are classes of people in whom one excuses — One must weigh — —"

"Precisely," said Mrs. Bunting. "And you see it seems she deliberately chose *me* as the very sort of person she had always wanted to appeal to. It wasn't as if she came to us haphazard — she picked us out. She had been swimming round the coast watching people day after day, she said, for quite a long time, and she said when she saw my face, watching the girls bathe — you know how funny girls are," said Mrs. Bunting, with a little deprecatory laugh, and all the while with a moisture of emotion in her kindly eyes. "She took quite a violent fancy to me from the very first."

"I can *quite* believe *that*, at any rate," said my cousin Melville with unction. I know he did, although he always leaves it out of the story when he tells it to me. But then he forgets that I have had the occasional privilege of making a third party in these good long talks.

"You know it's most extraordinary and exactly like the German story," said Mrs. Bunting. "Oom — what is it?"

"Undine?"

"Exactly — yes. And it really seems these poor creatures are Immortal, Mr. Melville — at least within limits — creatures born of the elements and resolved into the elements again — and just as it is in the story — there's always a something — they have no Souls! No Souls at all! Nothing! And the poor child feels it. She feels it dreadfully. But in order to *get* souls, Mr. Melville, you know they have to come into the world of men. At least so they believe down

there. And so she has come to Folkestone. To get a soul. Of course that's her great object, Mr. Melville, but she's not at all fanatical or silly about it. Any more than *we* are. Of course *we* — people who feel deeply — —"

"Of course," said my cousin Melville, with, I know, a momentary expression of profound gravity, drooping eyelids and a hushed voice. For my cousin does a good deal with his soul, one way and another.

"And she feels that if she comes to earth at all," said Mrs. Bunting, "she *must* come among *nice* people and in a nice way. One can understand her feeling like that. But imagine her difficulties! To be a mere cause of public excitement, and silly paragraphs in the silly season, to be made a sort of show of, in fact — she doesn't want *any* of it," added Mrs. Bunting, with the emphasis of both hands.

"What *does* she want?" asked my cousin Melville.

"She wants to be treated exactly like a human being, to *be* a human being, just like you or me. And she asks to stay with us, to be one of our family, and to learn how we live. She has asked me to advise her what books to read that are really nice, and where she can get a dress-maker, and how she can find a clergyman to sit under who would really be likely to understand her case, and everything. She wants me to advise her about it all. She wants to put herself altogether in my hands. And she asked it all so nicely and sweetly. She wants me to advise her about it all."

"Um," said my cousin Melville.

"You should have heard her!" cried Mrs. Bunting.

"Practically it's another daughter," he reflected.

"Yes," said Mrs. Bunting, "and even that did not frighten me. She admitted as much."

"Still — —"

He took a step.

"She has means?" he inquired abruptly.

"Ample. She told me there was a box. She said it was moored at the end of a groin, and accordingly dear Randolph watched all through luncheon, and afterwards, when they could wade out and reach the end of the rope that tied it, he and Fred pulled it in and helped Fitch and the coachman carry it up. It's a curious little box for a lady to have, well made, of course, but of wood, with a ship painted

on the top and the name of ‘Tom’ cut in it roughly with a knife; but, as she says, leather simply will *not* last down there, and one has to put up with what one can get; and the great thing is it’s *full*, perfectly full, of gold coins and things. Yes, gold — and diamonds, Mr. Melville. You know Randolph understands something — Yes, well he says that box — oh! I couldn’t tell you *how* much it isn’t worth! And all the gold things with just a sort of faint reddy touch.… But anyhow, she is rich, as well as charming and beautiful. And really you know, Mr. Melville, altogether — Well, I’m going to help her, just as much as ever I can. Practically, she’s to be our paying guest. As you know — it’s no great secret between *us* — Adeline — Yes. … She’ll be the same. And I shall bring her out and introduce her to people and so forth. It will be a great help. And for everyone except just a few intimate friends, she is to be just a human being who happens to be an invalid — temporarily an invalid — and we are going to engage a good, trustworthy woman — the sort of woman who isn’t astonished at anything, you know — they’re a little expensive but they’re to be got even nowadays — who will be her maid — and make her dresses, her skirts at any rate — and we shall dress her in long skirts — and throw something over It, you know — —”

“Over —— ?”

“The tail, you know.”

My cousin Melville said “Precisely!” with his head and eyebrows. But that was the point that hadn’t been clear to him so far, and it took his breath away. Positively — a tail! All sorts of incorrect theories went by the board. Somehow he felt this was a topic not to be too urgently pursued. But he and Mrs. Bunting were old friends.

“And she really has … a tail?” he asked.

“Like the tail of a big mackerel,” said Mrs. Bunting, and he asked no more.

“It’s a most extraordinary situation,” he said.

“But what else *could* I do?” asked Mrs. Bunting.

“Of course the thing’s a tremendous experiment,” said my cousin Melville, and repeated quite inadvertently, “*a tail!*”

Clear and vivid before his eyes, obstructing absolutely the advance of his thoughts, were the shiny clear lines, the oily black, the

green and purple and silver, and the easy expansiveness of a mackerel's termination.

"But really, you know," said my cousin Melville, protesting in the name of reason and the nineteenth century— "a tail!"

"I patted it," said Mrs. Bunting.

IV

Certain supplementary aspects of the Sea Lady's first conversation with Mrs. Bunting I got from that lady herself afterwards.

The Sea Lady had made one queer mistake. "Your four charming daughters," she said, "and your two sons."

"My dear!" cried Mrs. Bunting — they had got through their preliminaries by then— "I've only two daughters and one son!"

"The young man who carried — who rescued me?"

"Yes. And the other two girls are friends, you know, visitors who are staying with me. On land one has visitors — —"

"I know. So I made a mistake?"

"Oh yes."

"And the other young man?"

"You don't mean Mr. Bunting."

"Who is Mr. Bunting?"

"The other gentleman who — —"

"*No!*"

"There was no one — —"

"But several mornings ago?"

"Could it have been Mr. Melville?… *I* know! You mean Mr. Chatteris! I remember, he came down with us one morning. A tall young man with fair — rather curlyish you might say — hair, wasn't it? And a rather thoughtful face. He was dressed all in white linen and he sat on the beach."

"I fancy he did," said the Sea Lady.

"He's not my son. He's — he's a friend. He's engaged to Adeline, to the elder Miss Glendower. He was stopping here for a night or so. I daresay he'll come again on his way back from Paris. Dear me! Fancy *my* having a son like that!"

The Sea Lady was not quite prompt in replying.

“What a stupid mistake for me to make!” she said slowly; and then with more animation, “Of course, now I think, he’s much too old to be your son!”

“Well, he’s thirty-two!” said Mrs. Bunting with a smile.

“It’s preposterous.”

“I won’t say *that*.”

“But I saw him only at a distance, you know,” said the Sea Lady; and then, “And so he is engaged to Miss Glendower? And Miss Glendower —— ?”

“Is the young lady in the purple robe who — —”

“Who carried a book?”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Bunting, “that’s the one. They’ve been engaged three months.”

“Dear me!” said the Sea Lady. “She seemed — And is he very much in love with her?”

“Of course,” said Mrs. Bunting.

“*Very* much?”

“Oh — of *course*. If he wasn’t, he wouldn’t — —”

“Of course,” said the Sea Lady thoughtfully.

“And it’s such an excellent match in every way. Adeline’s just in the very position to help him — —”

And Mrs. Bunting it would seem briefly but clearly supplied an indication of the precise position of Mr. Chatteris, not omitting even that he was the nephew of an earl, as indeed why should she omit it? — and the splendid prospects of his alliance with Miss Glendower’s plebeian but extensive wealth. The Sea Lady listened gravely. “He is young, he is able, he may still be anything — anything. And she is so earnest, so clever herself — always reading. She even reads Blue Books — government Blue Books I mean — dreadful statistical schedulely things. And the condition of the poor and all those things. She knows more about the condition of the poor than any one I’ve ever met; what they earn and what they eat, and how many of them live in a room. So dreadfully crowded, you know — perfectly shocking.… She is just the helper he needs. So dignified — so capable of giving political parties and influencing people, so earnest! And you know she can talk to workmen and take an interest in trades unions, and in quite astonishing things. *I* always think she’s just

Marcella come to life."

And from that the good lady embarked upon an illustrative but involved anecdote of Miss Glendower's marvellous blue-bookishness.…

"He'll come here again soon?" the Sea Lady asked quite carelessly in the midst of it.

The query was carried away and lost in the anecdote, so that later the Sea Lady repeated her question even more carelessly.

But Mrs. Bunting did not know whether the Sea Lady sighed at all or not. She thinks not. She was so busy telling her all about everything that I don't think she troubled very much to see how her information was received.

What mind she had left over from her own discourse was probably centred on the tail.

V

Even to Mrs. Bunting's senses — she is one of those persons who take everything (except of course impertinence or impropriety) quite calmly — it must, I think, have been a little astonishing to find herself sitting in her boudoir, politely taking tea with a real live legendary creature. They were having tea in the boudoir, because of callers, and quite quietly because, in spite of the Sea Lady's smiling assurances, Mrs. Bunting would have it she *must* be tired and unequal to the exertions of social intercourse. "After *such* a journey," said Mrs. Bunting. There were just the three, Adeline Glendower being the third; and Fred and the three other girls, I understand, hung about in a general sort of way up and down the staircase (to the great annoyance of the servants who were thus kept out of it altogether) confirming one another's views of the tail, arguing on the theory of mermaids, revisiting the garden and beach and trying to invent an excuse for seeing the invalid again. They were forbidden to intrude and pledged to secrecy by Mrs. Bunting, and they must have been as altogether unsettled and miserable as young people can be. For a time they played croquet in a half-hearted way, each no doubt with an eye on the boudoir window.

(And as for Mr. Bunting, he was in bed.)

I gather that the three ladies sat and talked as any three ladies all quite resolved to be pleasant to one another would talk. Mrs. Bunting and Miss Glendower were far too well trained in the observances of good society (which is as every one knows, even the best of it now, extremely mixed) to make too searching enquiries into the Sea Lady's status and way of life or precisely where she lived when she was at home, or whom she knew or didn't know. Though in their several ways they wanted to know badly enough. The Sea Lady volunteered no information, contenting herself with an entertaining superficiality of touch and go, in the most ladylike way. She professed herself greatly delighted with the sensation of being in air and superficially quite dry, and was particularly charmed with tea.

"And don't you have *tea?"* cried Miss Glendower, startled.

"How can we?"

"But do you really mean —— ?"

"I've never tasted tea before. How do you think we can boil a kettle?"

"What a strange — what a wonderful world it must be!" cried Adeline. And Mrs. Bunting said: "I can hardly *imagine* it without tea. It's worse than — I mean it reminds me — of abroad."

Mrs. Bunting was in the act of refilling the Sea Lady's cup. "I suppose," she said suddenly, "as you're not used to it — It won't affect your diges—" She glanced at Adeline and hesitated. "But it's China tea."

And she filled the cup.

"It's an inconceivable world to me," said Adeline. "Quite."

Her dark eyes rested thoughtfully on the Sea Lady for a space. "Inconceivable," she repeated, for, in that unaccountable way in which a whisper will attract attention that a turmoil fails to arouse, the tea had opened her eyes far more than the tail.

The Sea Lady looked at her with sudden frankness. "And think how wonderful all this must seem to *me!"* she remarked.

But Adeline's imagination was aroused for the moment and she was not to be put aside by the Sea Lady's terrestrial impressions. She pierced — for a moment or so — the ladylike serenity, the assumption of a terrestrial fashion of mind that was imposing so successfully upon Mrs. Bunting. "It must be," she said, "the strangest

world.” And she stopped invitingly….

She could not go beyond that and the Sea Lady would not help her.

There was a pause, a silent eager search for topics. Apropos of the Niphetos roses on the table they talked of flowers and Miss Glendower ventured: “You have your anemones too! How beautiful they must be amidst the rocks!”

And the Sea Lady said they were very pretty — especially the cultivated sorts….

“And the fishes,” said Mrs. Bunting. “How wonderful it must be to see the fishes!”

“Some of them,” volunteered the Sea Lady, “will come and feed out of one’s hand.”

Mrs. Bunting made a little coo of approval. She was reminded of chrysanthemum shows and the outside of the Royal Academy exhibition and she was one of those people to whom only the familiar is really satisfying. She had a momentary vision of the abyss as a sort of diverticulum of Piccadilly and the Temple, a place unexpectedly rational and comfortable. There was a kink for a time about a little matter of illumination, but it recurred to Mrs. Bunting only long after. The Sea Lady had turned from Miss Glendower’s interrogative gravity of expression to the sunlight.

“The sunlight seems so golden here,” said the Sea Lady. “Is it always golden?”

“You have that beautiful greenery-blue shimmer I suppose,” said Miss Glendower, “that one catches sometimes ever so faintly in aquaria — —”

“One lives deeper than that,” said the Sea Lady. “Everything is phosphorescent, you know, a mile or so down, and it’s like — I hardly know. As towns look at night — only brighter. Like piers and things like that.”

“Really!” said Mrs. Bunting, with the Strand after the theatres in her head. “Quite bright?”

“Oh, quite,” said the Sea Lady.

“But—” struggled Adeline, “is it never put out?”

“It’s so different,” said the Sea Lady.

“That’s why it is so interesting,” said Adeline.

“There are no nights and days, you know. No time nor anything of that sort.”

“Now that’s very queer,” said Mrs. Bunting with Miss Glendower’s teacup in her hand — they were both drinking quite a lot of tea absent-mindedly, in their interest in the Sea Lady. “But how do you tell when it’s Sunday?”

“We don’t—” began the Sea Lady. “At least not exactly—” And then— “Of course one hears the beautiful hymns that are sung on the passenger ships.”

“Of course!” said Mrs. Bunting, having sung so in her youth and quite forgetting something elusive that she had previously seemed to catch.

But afterwards there came a glimpse of some more serious divergence — a glimpse merely. Miss Glendower hazarded a supposition that the sea people also had their Problems, and then it would seem the natural earnestness of her disposition overcame her proper attitude of ladylike superficiality and she began to ask questions. There can be no doubt that the Sea Lady was evasive, and Miss Glendower, perceiving that she had been a trifle urgent, tried to cover her error by expressing a general impression.

“I can’t see it,” she said, with a gesture that asked for sympathy. “One wants to see it, one wants to *be* it. One needs to be born a mer-child.”

“A mer-child?” asked the Sea Lady.

“Yes — Don’t you call your little ones —— ?”

“*What* little ones?” asked the Sea Lady.

She regarded them for a moment with a frank wonder, the undying wonder of the Immortals at that perpetual decay and death and replacement which is the gist of human life. Then at the expression of their faces she seemed to recollect. “Of course,” she said, and then with a transition that made pursuit difficult, she agreed with Adeline. “It *is* different,” she said. “It *is* wonderful. One feels so alike, you know, and so different. That’s just where it *is* so wonderful. Do I look — ? And yet you know I have never had my hair up, nor worn a dressing gown before today.”

“What do you wear?” asked Miss Glendower. “Very charming things, I suppose.”

“It’s a different costume altogether,” said the Sea Lady, brushing away a crumb.

Just for a moment Mrs. Bunting regarded her visitor fixedly. She had, I fancy, in that moment, an indistinct, imperfect glimpse of pagan possibilities. But there, you know, was the Sea Lady in her wrapper, so palpably a lady, with her pretty hair brought up to date and such a frank innocence in her eyes, that Mrs. Bunting’s suspicions vanished as they came.

(But I am not so sure of Adeline.)

CHAPTER THE THIRD THE EPISODE OF THE VARIOUS JOURNALISTS

I

The remarkable thing is that the Buntings really carried out the programme Mrs. Bunting laid down. For a time at least they positively succeeded in converting the Sea Lady into a credible human invalid, in spite of the galaxy of witnesses to the lady's landing and in spite of the severe internal dissensions that presently broke out. In spite, moreover, of the fact that one of the maids — they found out which only long after — told the whole story under vows to her very superior young man who told it next Sunday to a rising journalist who was sitting about on the Leas maturing a descriptive article. The rising journalist was incredulous. But he went about enquiring. In the end he thought it good enough to go upon. He found in several quarters a vague but sufficient rumour of a something; for the maid's young man was a conversationalist when he had anything to say.

Finally the rising journalist went and sounded the people on the two chief Folkestone papers and found the thing had just got to them. They were inclined to pretend they hadn't heard of it, after the fashion of local papers when confronted by the abnormal, but the atmosphere of enterprise that surrounded the rising journalist woke them up. He perceived he had done so and that he had no time to lose. So while they engaged in inventing representatives to enquire, he went off and telephoned to the *Daily Gunfire* and the *New Paper*. When they answered he was positive and earnest. He staked his reputation — the reputation of a rising journalist!

"I swear there's something up," he said. "Get in first — that's all."

He had some reputation, I say — and he had staked it. The *Daily Gunfire* was sceptical but precise, and the *New Paper* sprang a headline "A Mermaid at last!"

You might well have thought the thing was out after that, but it wasn't. There are things one doesn't believe even if they are printed in a halfpenny paper. To find the reporters hammering at their doors,

so to speak, and fended off only for a time by a proposal that they should call again; to see their incredible secret glaringly in print, did indeed for a moment seem a hopeless exposure to both the Buntings and the Sea Lady. Already they could see the story spreading, could imagine the imminent rush of intimate enquiries, the tripod strides of a multitude of cameras, the crowds watching the windows, the horrors of a great publicity. All the Buntings and Mabel were aghast, simply aghast. Adeline was not so much aghast as excessively annoyed at this imminent and, so far as she was concerned, absolutely irrelevant publicity. "They will never dare—" she said, and "Consider how it affects Harry!" and at the earliest opportunity she retired to her own room. The others, with a certain disregard of her offence, sat around the Sea Lady's couch — she had scarcely touched her breakfast — and canvassed the coming terror.

"They will put our photographs in the papers," said the elder Miss Bunting.

"Well, they won't put mine in," said her sister. "It's horrid. I shall go right off now and have it taken again."

"They'll interview the Ded!"

"No, no," said Mr. Bunting terrified. "Your mother — —"

"It's your place, my dear," said Mrs. Bunting.

"But the Ded—" said Fred.

"I couldn't," said Mr. Bunting.

"Well, some one'll have to tell 'em anyhow," said Mrs. Bunting. "You know, they will — —"

"But it isn't at all what I wanted," wailed the Sea Lady, with the *Daily Gunfire* in her hand. "Can't it be stopped?"

"You don't know our journalists," said Fred.

The tact of my cousin Melville saved the situation. He had dabbled in journalism and talked with literary fellows like myself. And literary fellows like myself are apt at times to be very free and outspoken about the press. He heard of the Buntings' shrinking terror of publicity as soon as he arrived, a perfect clamour — an almost exultant clamour indeed, of shrinking terror, and he caught the Sea Lady's eye and took his line there and then.

"It's not an occasion for sticking at trifles, Mrs. Bunting," he said. "But I think we can save the situation all the same. You're too

hopeless. We must put our foot down at once; that's all. Let *me* see these reporter fellows and write to the London dailies. I think I can take a line that will settle them."

"Eh?" said Fred.

"I can take a line that will stop it, trust me."

"What, altogether?"

"Altogether."

"How?" said Fred and Mrs. Bunting. "You're not going to bribe them!"

"Bribe!" said Mr. Bunting. "We're not in France. You can't bribe a British paper."

(A sort of subdued cheer went around from the assembled Buntings.)

"You leave it to me," said Melville, in his element.

And with earnestly expressed but not very confident wishes for his success, they did.

He managed the thing admirably.

"What's this about a mermaid?" he demanded of the local journalists when they returned. They travelled together for company, being, so to speak, emergency journalists, compositors in their milder moments, and unaccustomed to these higher aspects of journalism. "What's this about a mermaid?" repeated my cousin, while they waived precedence dumbly one to another.

"I believe some one's been letting you in," said my cousin Melville. "Just imagine! — a mermaid!"

"That's what we thought," said the younger of the two emergency journalists. "We knew it was some sort of hoax, you know. Only the *New Paper* giving it a headline — —"

"I'm amazed even Banghurst—" said my cousin Melville.

"It's in the *Daily Gunfire* as well," said the older of the two emergency journalists.

"What's one more or less of these ha'penny fever rags?" cried my cousin with a ringing scorn. "Surely you're not going to take your Folkestone news from mere London papers."

"But how did the story come about?" began the older emergency journalist.

"That's not my affair."

The younger emergency journalist had an inspiration. He produced a note book from his breast pocket. “Perhaps, sir, you wouldn’t mind suggesting to us something we might say — —”

My cousin Melville complied.

II

The rising young journalist who had first got wind of the business — who must not for a moment be confused with the two emergency journalists heretofore described — came to Banghurst next night in a state of strange exultation. “I’ve been through with it and I’ve seen her,” he panted. “I waited about outside and saw her taken into the carriage. I’ve talked to one of the maids — I got into the house under pretence of being a telephone man to see their telephone — I spotted the wire — and it’s a fact. A positive fact — she’s a mermaid with a tail — a proper mermaid’s tail. I’ve got here — —”

He displayed sheets.

“Whaddyer talking about?” said Banghurst from his littered desk, eyeing the sheets with apprehensive animosity.

“The mermaid — there really *is* a mermaid. At Folkestone.”

Banghurst turned away from him and pawed at his pen tray. “Whad if there is!” he said after a pause.

“But it’s proved. That note you printed — —”

“That note I printed was a mistake if there’s anything of that sort going, young man.” Banghurst remained an obstinate expansion of back.

“How?”

“We don’t deal in mermaids here.”

“But you’re not going to let it drop?”

“I am.”

“But there she is!”

“Let her be.” He turned on the rising young journalist, and his massive face was unusually massive and his voice fine and full and fruity. “Do you think we’re going to make our public believe anything simply because it’s true? They know perfectly well what they are going to believe and what they aren’t going to believe, and they aren’t going to believe anything about mermaids — you bet

your hat. I don't care if the whole damned beach was littered with mermaids — not the whole damned beach! We've got our reputation to keep up. See?… Look here! — you don't learn journalism as I hoped you'd do. It was you what brought in all that stuff about a discovery in chemistry — —"

"It's true."

"Ugh!"

"I had it from a Fellow of the Royal Society — —"

"Stuff that the public won't believe aren't facts."

"I don't care if you had it from — anybody. Stuff that the public won't believe aren't facts. Being true only makes 'em worse. They buy our paper to swallow it and it's got to go down easy. When I printed you that note and headline I thought you was up to a lark. I thought you was on to a mixed bathing scandal or something of that sort — with juice in it. The sort of thing that *all* understand. You

know when you went down to Folkestone you were going to describe what Salisbury and all the rest of them wear upon the Leas. And start a discussion on the acclimatisation of the café. And all that. And then you get on to this (unprintable epithet) nonsense!"

"But Lord Salisbury — he doesn't go to Folkestone."

Banghurst shrugged his shoulders over a hopeless case. "What the deuce," he said, addressing his inkpot in plaintive tones, "does *that* matter?"

The young man reflected. He addressed Banghurst's back after a pause. His voice had flattened a little. "I might go over this and do it up as a lark perhaps. Make it a comic dialogue sketch with a man who really believed in it — or something like that. It's a beastly lot of copy to get slumped, you know."

"Nohow," said Banghurst. "Not in any shape. No! Why! They'd think it clever. They'd think you was making game of them. They hate things they think are clever!"

The young man made as if to reply, but Banghurst's back expressed quite clearly that the interview was at an end.

"Nohow," repeated Banghurst just when it seemed he had finished altogether.

"I may take it to the *Gunfire* then?"

Banghurst suggested an alternative.

"Very well," said the young man, heated, "the *Gunfire* it is."

But in that he was reckoning without the editor of the *Gunfire*.

III

It must have been quite soon after that, that I myself heard the first mention of the mermaid, little recking that at last it would fall to me to write her history. I was on one of my rare visits to London, and Micklethwaite was giving me lunch at the Penwiper Club, certainly one of the best dozen literary clubs in London. I noted the rising young journalist at a table near the door, lunching alone. All about him tables were vacant, though the other parts of the room were crowded. He sat with his face towards the door, and he kept looking up whenever any one came in, as if he expected some one who never came. Once distinctly I saw him beckon to a man, but the man did

not respond.

“Look here, Micklethwaite,” I said, “why is everybody avoiding that man over there? I noticed just now in the smoking-room that he seemed to be trying to get into conversation with some one and that a kind of taboo — —”

Micklethwaite stared over his fork. “Ra-ther,” he said.

“But what’s he done?”

“He’s a fool,” said Micklethwaite with his mouth full, evidently annoyed. “Ugh,” he said as soon as he was free to do so.

I waited a little while.

“What’s he done?” I ventured.

Micklethwaite did not answer for a moment and crammed things into his mouth vindictively, bread and all sorts of things. Then leaning towards me in a confidential manner he made indignant noises which I could not clearly distinguish as words.

“Oh!” I said, when he had done.

“Yes,” said Micklethwaite. He swallowed and then poured himself wine — splashing the tablecloth.

“He had *me* for an hour very nearly the other day.”

“Yes?” I said.

“Silly fool,” said Micklethwaite.

I was afraid it was all over, but luckily he gave me an opening again after gulping down his wine.

“He leads you on to argue,” he said.

“That —— ?”

“That he can’t prove it.”

“Yes?”

“And then he shows you he can. Just showing off how damned ingenious he is.”

I was a little confused. “Prove what?” I asked.

“Haven’t I been telling you?” said Micklethwaite, growing very red. “About this confounded mermaid of his at Folkestone.”

“He says there is one?”

“Yes, he does,” said Micklethwaite, going purple and staring at me very hard. He seemed to ask mutely whether I of all people proposed to turn on him and back up this infamous scoundrel. I thought for a moment he would have apoplexy, but happily he

remembered his duty as my host. So he turned very suddenly on a meditative waiter for not removing our plates.

"Had any golf lately?" I said to Micklethwaite, when the plates and the remains of the waiter had gone away. Golf always does Micklethwaite good except when he is actually playing. Then, I am told — If I were Mrs. Bunting I should break off and raise my eyebrows and both hands at this point, to indicate how golf acts on Micklethwaite when he is playing.

I turned my mind to feigning an interest in golf — a game that in truth I despise and hate as I despise and hate nothing else in this world. Imagine a great fat creature like Micklethwaite, a creature who ought to wear a turban and a long black robe to hide his grossness, whacking a little white ball for miles and miles with a perfect surgery of instruments, whacking it either with a babyish solemnity or a childish rage as luck may have decided, whacking away while his country goes to the devil, and incidentally training an innocent-eyed little boy to swear and be a tip-hunting loafer. That's golf! However, I controlled my all too facile sneer and talked of golf and the relative merits of golf links as I might talk to a child about buns or distract a puppy with the whisper of "rats," and when at last I could look at the rising young journalist again our lunch had come to an end.

I saw that he was talking with a greater air of freedom than it is usual to display to club waiters, to the man who held his coat. The man looked incredulous but respectful, and was answering shortly but politely.

When we went out this little conversation was still going on. The waiter was holding the rising young journalist's soft felt hat and the rising young journalist was fumbling in his coat pocket with a thick mass of papers.

"It's tremendous. I've got most of it here," he was saying as we went by. "I don't know if you'd care — —"

"I get very little time for reading, sir," the waiter was replying.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH THE QUALITY OF PARKER

I

So far I have been very full, I know, and verisimilitude has been my watchword rather than the true affidavit style. But if I have made it clear to the reader just how the Sea Lady landed and just how it was possible for her to land and become a member of human society without any considerable excitement on the part of that society, such poor pains as I have taken to tint and shadow and embellish the facts at my disposal will not have been taken in vain. She positively and quietly settled down with the Buntings. Within a fortnight she had really settled down so thoroughly that, save for her exceptional beauty and charm and the occasional faint touches of something a little indefinable in her smile, she had become a quite passable and credible human being. She was a cripple, indeed, and her lower limb was most pathetically swathed and put in a sort of case, but it was quite generally understood — I am afraid at Mrs. Bunting's initiative — that presently *they* — Mrs. Bunting said "they," which was certainly almost as far or even a little farther than legitimate prevarication may go — would be as well as ever.

She positively and quietly settled down with the Buntings.

"Of course," said Mrs. Bunting, "she will never be able to *bicycle* again — —"

That was the sort of glamour she threw about it.

II

In Parker it is indisputable that the Sea Lady found — or at least had found for her by Mrs. Bunting — a treasure of the richest sort. Parker was still fallaciously young, but she had been maid to a lady from India who had been in a "case" and had experienced and overcome

cross-examination. She had also been deceived by a young man, whom she had fancied greatly, only to find him walking out with another — contrary to her inflexible sense of correctness — in the presence of which all other things are altogether vain. Life she had resolved should have no further surprises for her. She looked out on its (largely improper) pageant with an expression of alert impartiality in her hazel eyes, calm, doing her specific duty, and entirely declining to participate further. She always kept her elbows down by her side and her hands always just in contact, and it was impossible for the most powerful imagination to conceive her under any circumstances as being anything but absolutely straight and clean and neat. And her voice was always under all circumstances low and wonderfully distinct — just to an infinitesimal degree indeed "mincing."

Mrs. Bunting had been a little nervous when it came to the point. It was Mrs. Bunting of course who engaged her, because the Sea Lady was so entirely without experience. But certainly Mrs. Bunting's nervousness was thrown away.

"You understand," said Mrs. Bunting, taking a plunge at it, "that — that she is an invalid."

"I *didn't*, Mem," replied Parker respectfully, and evidently quite willing to understand anything as part of her duty in this world.

"In fact," said Mrs. Bunting, rubbing the edge of the tablecloth daintily with her gloved finger and watching the operation with interest, "as a matter of fact, she has a mermaid's tail."

"Mermaid's tail! Indeed, Mem! And is it painful at all?"

"Oh, dear, no, it involves no inconvenience — nothing. Except — you understand, there is a need of — discretion."

"Of course, Mem," said Parker, as who should say, "there always is."

"We particularly don't want the servants — —"

"The lower servants — No, Mem."

"You understand?" and Mrs. Bunting looked up again and regarded Parker calmly.

"Precisely, Mem!" said Parker, with a face unmoved, and so they came to the question of terms. "It all passed off *most* satisfactorily," said Mrs. Bunting, taking a deep breath at the mere memory of that

moment. And it is clear that Parker was quite of her opinion.

She was not only discreet but really clever and handy. From the very outset she grasped the situation, unostentatiously but very firmly. It was Parker who contrived the sort of violin case for It, and who made the tea gown extension that covered the case's arid contours. It was Parker who suggested an invalid's chair for use indoors and in the garden, and a carrying chair for the staircase. Hitherto Fred Bunting had been on hand, at last even in excessive abundance, whenever the Sea Lady lay in need of masculine arms. But Parker made it clear at once that that was not at all in accordance with her ideas, and so earned the lifelong gratitude of Mabel Glendower. And Parker too spoke out for drives, and suggested with an air of rightness that left nothing else to be done, the hire of a carriage and pair for the season — to the equal delight of the Buntings and the Sea Lady. It was Parker who dictated the daily drive up to the eastern end of the Leas and the Sea Lady's transfer, and the manner of the Sea Lady's transfer, to the bath chair in which she promenaded the Leas. There seemed to be nowhere that it was pleasant and proper for the Sea Lady to go that Parker did not swiftly and correctly indicate it and the way to get to it, and there seems to have been nothing that it was really undesirable the Sea Lady should do and anywhere that it was really undesirable that she should go, that Parker did not at once invisibly but effectively interpose a bar. It was Parker who released the Sea Lady from being a sort of private and peculiar property in the Bunting household and carried her off to a becoming position in the world, when the crisis came. In little things as in great she failed not. It was she who made it luminous that the Sea Lady's card plate was not yet engraved and printed ("Miss Doris Thalassia Waters" was the pleasant and appropriate name with which the Sea Lady came primed), and who replaced the box of the presumably dank and drowned and dripping "Tom" by a jewel case, a dressing bag and the first of the Sea Lady's trunks.

On a thousand little occasions this Parker showed a sense of propriety that was penetratingly fine. For example, in the shop one day when "things" of an intimate sort were being purchased, she suddenly intervened.

"There are stockings, Mem," she said in a discreet undertone,

behind, but not too vulgarly behind, a fluttering straight hand.

"*Stockings!*" cried Mrs. Bunting. "But —— !"

"I think, Mem, she should have stockings," said Parker, quietly but very firmly.

And come to think of it, why *should* an unavoidable deficiency in a lady excuse one that can be avoided? It's there we touch the very quintessence and central principle of the proper life.

But Mrs. Bunting, you know, would never have seen it like that.

III

Let me add here, regretfully but with infinite respect, one other thing about Parker, and then she shall drop into her proper place.

I must confess, with a slight tinge of humiliation, that I pursued this young woman to her present situation at Highton Towers — maid she is to that eminent religious and social propagandist, the Lady Jane Glanville. There were certain details of which I stood in need, certain scenes and conversations of which my passion for verisimilitude had scarcely a crumb to go upon. And from first to last, what she must have seen and learnt and inferred would amount practically to everything.

I put this to her frankly. She made no pretence of not understanding me nor of ignorance of certain hidden things. When I had finished she regarded me with a level regard.

"I couldn't think of it, sir," she said. "It wouldn't be at all according to my ideas."

"But! — It surely couldn't possibly hurt you now to tell me."

"I'm afraid I couldn't, sir."

"It couldn't hurt anyone."

"It isn't that, sir."

"I should see you didn't lose by it, you know."

She looked at me politely, having said what she intended to say.

And, in spite of what became at last very fine and handsome inducements, that remained the inflexible Parker's reply. Even after I had come to an end with my finesse and attempted to bribe her in the grossest manner, she displayed nothing but a becoming respect for my impregnable social superiority.

“I couldn’t think of it, sir,” she repeated. “It wouldn’t be at all according to my ideas.”

And if in the end you should find this story to any extent vague or incomplete, I trust you will remember how the inflexible severity of Parker’s ideas stood in my way.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH THE ABSENCE AND RETURN OF MR. HARRY CHATTERIS

I

These digressions about Parker and the journalists have certainly led me astray from the story a little. You will, however, understand that while the rising young journalist was still in pursuit of information, Hope and Banghurst, and Parker merely a budding perfection, the carriage not even thought of, things were already developing in that bright little establishment beneath the evergreen oaks on the Folkestone Riviera. So soon as the minds of the Buntings ceased to be altogether focused upon this new and amazing social addition, they — of all people — had most indisputably discovered, it became at first faintly and then very clearly evident that their own simple pleasure in the possession of a guest so beautiful as Miss Waters, so solidly wealthy and — in a manner — so distinguished, was not entirely shared by the two young ladies who were to have been their principal guests for the season.

This little rift was perceptible the very first time Mrs. Bunting had an opportunity of talking over her new arrangements with Miss Glendower.

"And is she really going to stay with you all the summer?" said Adeline.

"Surely, dear, you don't mind?"

"It takes me a little by surprise."

"She's asked me, my dear — —"

"I'm thinking of Harry. If the general election comes on in September — and every one seems to think it will — You promised you would let us inundate you with electioneering."

"But do you think she — —"

"She will be dreadfully in the way."

She added after an interval, "She stops my working."

"But, my dear!"

"She's out of harmony," said Adeline.

Mrs. Bunting looked out of her window at the tamarisk and the

sea. “I’m sure I wouldn’t do anything to hurt Harry’s prospects. You know how enthusiastic we all are. Randolph would do anything. But are you sure she will be in the way?”

“What else can she be?”

“She might help even.”

“Oh, help!”

“She might canvass. She’s very attractive, you know, dear.”

“Not to me,” said Miss Glendower. “I don’t trust her.”

“But to some people. And as Harry says, at election times every one who can do anything must be let do it. Cut them — do anything afterwards, but at the time — you know he talked of it when Mr. Fison and he were here. If you left electioneering only to the really nice people — —”

“It was Mr. Fison said that, not Harry. And besides, she wouldn’t help.”

“I think you misjudge her there, dear. She has been asking — —”

“To help?”

“Yes, and all about it,” said Mrs. Bunting, with a transient pink. “She keeps asking questions about why we are having the election and what it is all about, and why Harry is a candidate and all that. She wants to go into it quite deeply. *I* can’t answer half the things she asks.”

“And that’s why she keeps up those long conversations with Mr. Melville, I suppose, and why Fred goes about neglecting Mabel — —”

“My dear!” said Mrs. Bunting.

“I wouldn’t have her canvassing with us for anything,” said Miss Glendower. “She’d spoil everything. She is frivolous and satirical. She looks at you with incredulous eyes, she seems to blight all one’s earnestness.… I don’t think you quite understand, dear Mrs. Bunting, what this election and my studies mean to me — and Harry. She comes across all that — like a contradiction.”

“Surely, my dear! I’ve never heard her contradict.”

“Oh, she doesn’t contradict. But she — There is something about her — One feels that things that are most important and vital are nothing to her. Don’t you feel it? She comes from another world to us.”

Mrs. Bunting remained judicial. Adeline dropped to a lower key again. “I think,” she said, “anyhow, that we’re taking her very easily. How do we know what she is? Down there, out there, she may be anything. She may have had excellent reasons for coming to land — —”

“My dear!” cried Mrs. Bunting. “Is that charity?”

“How do they live?”

“If she hadn’t lived nicely I’m sure she couldn’t behave so nicely.”

“Besides — coming here! She had no invitation — —”

“I’ve invited her now,” said Mrs. Bunting gently.

“You could hardly help yourself. I only hope your kindness — —”

“It’s not a kindness,” said Mrs. Bunting, “it’s a duty. If she were only half as charming as she is. You seem to forget” — her voice dropped— “what it is she comes for.”

“That’s what I want to know.”

“I’m sure in these days, with so much materialism about and such wickedness everywhere, when everybody who has a soul seems trying to lose it, to find any one who hadn’t a soul and who is trying to find one — —”

“But *is* she trying to get one?”

“Mr. Flange comes twice every week. He would come oftener, as you know, if there wasn’t so much confirmation about.”

“And when he comes he sits and touches her hand if he can, and he talks in his lowest voice, and she sits and smiles — she almost laughs outright at the things he says.”

“Because he has to win his way with her. Surely Mr. Flange may do what he can to make religion attractive?”

“I don’t believe she believes she will get a soul. I don’t believe she wants one a bit.”

She turned towards the door as if she had done.

Mrs. Bunting’s pink was now permanent. She had brought up a son and two daughters, and besides she had brought down a husband to “My dear, how was *I* to know?” and when it was necessary to be firm — even with Adeline Glendower — she knew how to be firm just as well as anybody.

“My dear,” she began in her very firmest quiet manner, “I am positive you misjudge Miss Waters. Trivial she may be — on the surface at any rate. Perhaps she laughs and makes fun a little. There are different ways of looking at things. But I am sure that at bottom she is just as serious, just as grave, as — any one. You judge her hastily. I am sure if you knew her better — as I do — —”

Mrs. Bunting left an eloquent pause.

Miss Glendower had two little pink flushes in her cheeks. She turned with her hand on the door.

“At any rate,” she said, “I am sure that Harry will agree with me that she can be no help to our cause. We have our work to do and it is something more than just vulgar electioneering. We have to develop and establish ideas. Harry has views that are new and wide-reaching. We want to put our whole strength into this work. Now especially. And her presence — —”

She paused for a moment. “It is a digression. She divides things. She puts it all wrong. She has a way of concentrating attention about herself. She alters the values of things. She prevents my being single-minded, she will prevent Harry being single-minded — —”

“I think, my dear, that you might trust my judgment a little,” said Mrs. Bunting and paused.

Miss Glendower opened her mouth and shut it again, without speaking. It became evident finality was attained. Nothing remained to be said but the regrettable.

The door opened and closed smartly and Mrs. Bunting was alone.

Within an hour they all met at the luncheon table and Adeline’s behaviour to the Sea Lady and to Mrs. Bunting was as pleasant and alert as any highly earnest and intellectual young lady’s could be. And all that Mrs. Bunting said and did tended with what people call infinite tact — which really, you know, means a great deal more tact than is comfortable — to develop and expose the more serious aspect of the Sea Lady’s mind. Mr. Bunting was unusually talkative and told them all about a glorious project he had just heard of, to cut out the rather shrubby and weedy front of the Leas and stick in something between a wine vault and the Crystal Palace as a Winter Garden — which seemed to him a very excellent idea indeed.

II

It is time now to give some impression of the imminent Chatteris, who for all his late appearance is really the chief human being in my cousin Melville's story. It happens that I met him with some frequency in my university days and afterwards ever and again I came upon him. He was rather a brilliant man at the university, smart without being vulgar and clever for all that. He was remarkably good-looking from the very onset of his manhood and without being in any way a showy spendthrift, was quite magnificently extravagant. There was trouble in his last year, something hushed up about a girl or woman in London, but his family had it all over with him, and his uncle, the Earl of Beechcroft, settled some of his bills. Not all — for the family is commendably free from sentimental excesses — but enough to make him comfortable again. The family is not a rich one and it further abounds in an extraordinary quantity of rather frowsy, loose-tongued aunts — I never knew a family quite so rich in old aunts. But Chatteris was so good-looking, easy-mannered, and clever, that they seemed to agree almost without discussion to pull him through. They hunted about for something that would be really remunerative without being laborious or too commercial; and meanwhile — after the extraordinary craving of his aunt, Lady Poynting Mallow, to see him acting had been overcome by the united efforts of the more religious section of his aunts — Chatteris set himself seriously to the higher journalism — that is to say, the journalism that dines anywhere, gets political tips after dinner, and is always acceptable — if only to avoid thirteen articles — in a half-crown review. In addition, he wrote some very passable verse and edited Jane Austen for the only publisher who had not already reprinted the works of that classic lady.

His verse, like himself, was shapely and handsome, and, like his face, it suggested to the penetrating eye certain reservations and indecisions. There was just that touch of refinement that is weakness in the public man. But as yet he was not a public man; he was known to be energetic and his work was gathering attention as always capable and occasionally brilliant. His aunts declared he was ripening, that any defect in vigour he displayed was the

incompleteness of the process, and decided he should go to America, where vigour and vigorous opportunities abound, and there, I gather, he came upon something like a failure. Something happened, indeed, quite a lot happened. He came back unmarried — and *viâ* the South Seas, Australasia and India. And Lady Poynting Mallow publicly told him he was a fool, when he got back.

What happened in America, even if one does not consult contemporary American papers, is still very difficult to determine. There appear to have been the daughter of a millionaire and something like an engagement in the story. According to the *New York Yell*, one of the smartest, crispest, and altogether most representative papers in America, there was also the daughter of some one else, whom the *Yell* interviewed, or professed to interview, under the heading:

AN ARISTOCRATIC BRITISHER
TRIFLES WITH
A PURE AMERICAN GIRL
INTERVIEW WITH THE VICTIM
OF HIS
HEARTLESS LEVITY

But this some one else was, I am inclined to think in spite of her excellently executed portrait, merely a brilliant stroke of modern journalism, the *Yell* having got wind of the sudden retreat of Chatteris and inventing a reason in preference to discovering one. Wensleydale tells me the true impetus to bolt was the merest trifle. The daughter of the millionaire, being a bright and spirited girl, had undergone interviewing on the subject of her approaching marriage, on marriage in general, on social questions of various sorts, and on the relations of the British and American peoples, and he seems to have found the thing in his morning paper. It took him suddenly and he lost his head. And once he started, he seems to have lacked the power of mind to turn about and come back. The affair was a mess, the family paid some more of his bills and shirked others, and Chatteris turned up in London again after a time, with somewhat

diminished glory and a series of letters on Imperial Affairs, each headed with the quotation: “What do they know of England who only England know?”

Of course people of England learnt nothing of the real circumstances of the case, but it was fairly obvious that he had gone to America and come back empty-handed.

And that was how, in the course of some years, he came to Adeline Glendower, of whose special gifts as his helper and inspiration you have already heard from Mrs. Bunting. When he became engaged to her, the family, which had long craved to forgive him — Lady Poynting Mallow as a matter of fact had done so — brightened wonderfully. And after considerable obscure activities he declared himself a philanthropic Liberal with open spaces in his platform, and in a position, and ready as a beginning, to try the quality of the conservative South.

He was away making certain decisive arrangements, in Paris and elsewhere, at the time of the landing of the Sea Lady. Before the matter was finally settled it was necessary that something should be said to a certain great public character, and then he was to return and tell Adeline. And every one was expecting him daily, including, it is now indisputable, the Sea Lady.

III

The meeting of Miss Glendower and her affianced lover on his return from Paris was one of those scenes in this story for which I have scarcely an inkling of the true details. He came to Folkestone and stopped at the Métropole, the Bunting house being full and the Métropole being the nearest hotel to Sandgate; and he walked down in the afternoon and asked for Adeline, which was pretty rather than correct. I gather that they met in the drawing-room, and as Chatteris closed the door behind him, I imagine there was something in the nature of a caress.

I must confess I envy the freedom of the novelist who can take you behind such a locked door as this and give you all that such persons say and do. But with the strongest will in the world to blend the little scraps of fact I have into a continuous sequence of events, I

falter at this occasion. After all, I never saw Adeline at all until after all these things were over, and what is she now? A rather tall, a rather restless and active woman, very keen and obvious in public affairs — with something gone out of her. Melville once saw a gleam of that, but for the most part Melville never liked her; she had a wider grasp of things than he, and he was a little afraid of her; she was in some inexplicable way neither a pretty woman nor a "dear lady" nor a *grande dame* nor totally insignificant, and a heretic therefore in Melville's scheme of things. He gives me small material for that earlier Adeline. "She posed," he says; she was "political," and she was always reading Mrs. Humphry Ward.

The last Melville regarded as the most heinous offence. It is not the least of my cousin's weaknesses that he regards this great novelist as an extremely corrupting influence for intelligent girls. She makes them good and serious in the wrong way, he says. Adeline, he asserts, was absolutely built on her. She was always attempting to be the incarnation of *Marcella*. It was he who had perverted Mrs. Bunting's mind to adopt this fancy. But I don't believe for a moment in this idea of girls building themselves on heroines in fiction. These are matters of elective affinity, and unless some bullying critic or preacher sends us astray, we take each to our own novelist as the souls in the Swedenborgian system take to their hells. Adeline took to the imaginary *Marcella*. There was, Melville says, the strongest likeness in their mental atmosphere. They had the same defects, a bias for superiority — to use his expressive phrase — the same disposition towards arrogant benevolence, that same obtuseness to little shades of feeling that leads people to speak habitually of the "Lower Classes," and to think in the vein of that phrase. They certainly had the same virtues, a conscious and conscientious integrity, a hard nobility without one touch of magic, an industrious thoroughness. More than in anything else, Adeline delighted in her novelist's thoroughness, her freedom from impressionism, the patient resolution with which she went into the corners and swept under the mat of every incident. And it would be easy to argue from that, that Adeline behaved as Mrs. Ward's most characteristic heroine behaved, on an analogous occasion.

Marcella we know — at least after her heart was changed —

would have clung to him. There would have been a moment of high emotion in which thoughts — of the highest class — mingled with the natural ambition of two people in the prime of life and power. Then she would have receded with a quick movement and listened with her beautiful hand pensive against her cheek, while Chatteris began to sum up the forces against him — to speculate on the action of this group and that. Something infinitely tender and maternal would have spoken in her, pledging her to the utmost help that love and a woman can give. She would have produced in Chatteris that exquisite mingled impression of grace, passion, self-yielding, which in all its infinite variations and repetitions made up for him the constant poem of her beauty.

But that is the dream and not the reality. So Adeline might have dreamt of behaving, but — she was not *Marcella*, and only wanting to be, and he was not only not Maxwell but he had no intention of being Maxwell anyhow. If he had had an opportunity of becoming Maxwell he would probably have rejected it with extreme incivility. So they met like two unheroic human beings, with shy and clumsy movements and, I suppose, fairly honest eyes. Something there was in the nature of a caress, I believe, and then I incline to fancy she said "Well?" and I think he must have answered, "It's all right." After that, and rather allusively, with a backward jerk of the head at intervals as it were towards the great personage, Chatteris must have told her particulars. He must have told her that he was going to contest Hythe and that the little difficulty with the Glasgow commission agent who wanted to run the Radical ticket as a "Man of Kent" had been settled without injury to the party (such as it is). Assuredly they talked politics, because soon after, when they came into the garden side by side to where Mrs. Bunting and the Sea Lady sat watching the girls play croquet, Adeline was in full possession of all these facts. I fancy that for such a couple as they were, such intimation of success, such earnest topics, replaced, to a certain extent at any rate, the vain repetition of vulgar endearments.

The Sea Lady appears to have been the first to see them. "Here he is," she said abruptly.

"Whom?" said Mrs. Bunting, glancing up at eyes that were suddenly eager, and then following their glance towards Chatteris.

“Your other son,” said the Sea Lady, jesting unheeded.

“It’s Harry and Adeline!” cried Mrs. Bunting. “Don’t they make a handsome couple?”

But the Sea Lady made no reply, and leaned back, scrutinising their advance. Certainly they made a handsome pair. Coming out of the veranda into the blaze of the sun and across the trim lawn towards the shadow of the ilex trees, they were lit, as it were, with a more glorious limelight, and displayed like actors on a stage more spacious than the stage of any theatre. The figure of Chatteris must have come out tall and fair and broad, a little sunburnt, and I gather even then a little preoccupied, as indeed he always seemed to be in those latter days. And beside him Adeline, glancing now up at him and now towards the audience under the trees, dark and a little flushed, rather tall — though not so tall as *Marcella* seems to have been — and, you know, without any instructions from any novel-writer in the world, glad.

Chatteris did not discover that there was any one but Buntings under the tree until he was close at hand. Then the abrupt discovery of this stranger seems to have checked whatever he was prepared to say for his *début*, and Adeline took the centre of the stage. Mrs. Bunting was standing up, and all the croquet players — except Mabel, who was winning — converged on Chatteris with cries of welcome. Mabel remained in the midst of what I understand is called a tea-party, loudly demanding that they should see her “play it out.” No doubt if everything had gone well she would have given a most edifying exhibition of what croquet can sometimes be.

Adeline swam forward to Mrs. Bunting and cried with a note of triumph in her voice: “It is all settled. Everything is settled. He has won them all and he is to contest Hythe.”

Quite involuntarily her eyes must have met the Sea Lady’s.

It is of course quite impossible to say what she found there — or indeed what there was to find there then. For a moment they faced riddles, and then the Sea Lady turned her eyes with a long deferred scrutiny to the man’s face, which she probably saw now closely for the first time. One wonders whether it is just possible that there may have been something, if it were no more than a gleam of surprise and enquiry, in that meeting of their eyes. Just for a moment she held his

regard, and then it shifted enquiringly to Mrs. Bunting.

That lady intervened effusively with an "Oh! I forgot," and introduced them. I think they went through that without another meeting of the foils of their regard.

"You back?" said Fred to Chatteris, touching his arm, and Chatteris confirmed this happy guess.

The Bunting girls seemed to welcome Adeline's enviable situation rather than Chatteris as an individual. And Mabel's voice could be heard approaching. "Oughtn't they to see me play it out, Mr. Chatteris?"

"Hullo, Harry, my boy!" cried Mr. Bunting, who was cultivating a bluff manner. "How's Paris?"

"How's the fishing?" said Harry.

And so they came into a vague circle about this lively person who had "won them all" — except Parker, of course, who remained in her own proper place and was, I am certain, never to be won by anybody.

There was a handing and shifting of garden chairs.

No one seemed to take the slightest notice of Adeline's dramatic announcement. The Buntings were not good at thinking of things to say. She stood in the midst of the group like a leading lady when the other actors have forgotten their parts. Then every one woke up to this, as it were, and they went off in a volley. "So it's really all settled," said Mrs. Bunting; and Betty Bunting said, "There *is* to be an election then!" and Nettie said, "What fun!" Mr. Bunting remarked with a knowing air, "So you saw him then?" and Fred flung "Hooray!" into the tangle of sounds.

The Sea Lady of course said nothing.

"We'll give 'em a jolly good fight for it, anyhow," said Mr. Bunting.

"Well, I hope we shall do that," said Chatteris.

"We shall do more than that," said Adeline.

"Oh, yes!" said Betty Bunting, "we shall."

"I knew they would let him," said Adeline.

"If they had any sense," said Mr. Bunting.

Then came a pause, and Mr. Bunting was emboldened to lift up his voice and utter politics. "They are getting sense," he said. "They are learning that a party must have men, men of birth and training.

Money and the mob — they've tried to keep things going by playing to fads and class jealousies. And the Irish. And they've had their lesson. How? Why, — we've stood aside. We've left 'em to faddists and fomenters — and the Irish. And here they are! It's a revolution in the party. We've let it down. Now we must pick it up again."

He made a gesture with his fat little hand, one of those fat pink little hands that appear to have neither flesh nor bones inside them but only sawdust or horse-hair. Mrs. Bunting leaned back in her chair and smiled at him indulgently.

"It is no common election," said Mr. Bunting. "It is a great issue."

The Sea Lady had been regarding him thoughtfully. "What is a great issue?" she asked. "I don't quite understand."

Mr. Bunting spread himself to explain to her. "This," he said to begin with. Adeline listened with a mingling of interest and impatience, attempting ever and again to suppress him and to involve Chatteris by a tactful interposition. But Chatteris appeared disinclined to be involved. He seemed indeed quite interested in Mr. Bunting's view of the case.

Presently the croquet quartette went back — at Mabel's suggestion — to their game, and the others continued their political talk. It became more personal at last, dealing soon quite specifically with all that Chatteris was doing and more particularly all that Chatteris was to do. Mrs. Bunting suddenly suppressed Mr. Bunting as he was offering advice, and Adeline took the burden of the talk again. She indicated vast purposes. "This election is merely the opening of a door," she said. When Chatteris made modest disavowals she smiled with a proud and happy consciousness of what she meant to make of him.

And Mrs. Bunting supplied footnotes to make it all clear to the Sea Lady. "He's so modest," she said at one point, and Chatteris pretended not to hear and went rather pink. Ever and again he attempted to deflect the talk towards the Sea Lady and away from himself, but he was hampered by his ignorance of her position.

And the Sea Lady said scarcely anything but watched Chatteris and Adeline, and more particularly Chatteris in relation to Adeline.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH SYMPTOMATIC

I

My cousin Melville is never very clear about his dates. Now this is greatly to be regretted, because it would be very illuminating indeed if one could tell just how many days elapsed before he came upon Chatteris in intimate conversation with the Sea Lady. He was going along the front of the Leas with some books from the Public Library that Miss Glendower had suddenly wished to consult, and which she, with that entire ignorance of his lack of admiration for her which was part of her want of charm for him, had bidden him bring her. It was in one of those sheltered paths just under the brow which give such a pleasant and characteristic charm to Folkestone, that he came upon a little group about the Sea Lady's bath chair. Chatteris was seated in one of the wooden seats that are embedded in the bank, and was leaning forward and looking into the Sea Lady's face; and she was speaking with a smile that struck Melville even at the time as being a little special in its quality — and she seems to have been capable of many charming smiles. Parker was a little distance away, where a sort of bastion projects and gives a wide view of the pier and harbour and the coast of France, regarding it all with a qualified disfavour, and the bath chairman was crumpled up against the bank lost in that wistful melancholy that the constant perambulation of broken humanity necessarily engenders.

A little group about the Sea Lady's bath chair.

My cousin slackened his pace a little and came up and joined them. The conversation hung at his approach. Chatteris sat back a little, but there seemed no resentment and he sought a topic for the three to discuss in the books Melville carried.

"Books?" he said.

"For Miss Glendower," said Melville.

“Oh!” said Chatteris.

“What are they about?” asked the Sea Lady.

“Land tenure,” said Melville.

“That’s hardly my subject,” said the Sea Lady, and Chatteris joined in her smile as if he saw a jest.

There was a little pause.

“You are contesting Hythe?” said Melville.

“Fate points that way,” said Chatteris.

“They threaten a dissolution for September.”

“It will come in a month,” said Chatteris, with the inimitable tone of one who knows.

“In that case we shall soon be busy.”

“And *I* may canvass,” said the Sea Lady. “I never have — —”

“Miss Waters,” explained Chatteris, “has been telling me she means to help us.” He met Melville’s eye frankly.

“It’s rough work, Miss Waters,” said Melville.

“I don’t mind that. It’s fun. And I want to help. I really do want to help — Mr. Chatteris.”

“You know, that’s encouraging.”

“I could go around with you in my bath chair?”

“It would be a picnic,” said Chatteris.

“I mean to help anyhow,” said the Sea Lady.

“You know the case for the plaintiff?” asked Melville.

She looked at him.

“You’ve got your arguments?”

“I shall ask them to vote for Mr. Chatteris, and afterwards when I see them I shall remember them and smile and wave my hand. What else is there?”

“Nothing,” said Chatteris, and shut the lid on Melville. “I wish I had an argument as good.”

“What sort of people are they here?” asked Melville. “Isn’t there a smuggling interest to conciliate?”

“I haven’t asked that,” said Chatteris. “Smuggling is over and past, you know. Forty years ago. It always has been forty years ago. They trotted out the last of the smugglers, — interesting old man, full of reminiscences, — when there was a count of the Saxon Shore. He remembered smuggling — forty years ago. Really, I doubt if there

ever was any smuggling. The existing coast guard is a sacrifice to a vain superstition."

"Why!" cried the Sea Lady. "Only about five weeks ago I saw quite near here — —"

She stopped abruptly and caught Melville's eye. He grasped her difficulty.

"In a paper?" he suggested.

"Yes, in a paper," she said, seizing the rope he threw her.

"Well?" asked Chatteris.

"There is smuggling still," said the Sea Lady, with an air of some one who decides not to tell an anecdote that is suddenly found to be half forgotten.

"There's no doubt it happens," said Chatteris, missing it all. "But it doesn't appear in the electioneering. I certainly sha'n't agitate for a faster revenue cutter. However things may be in that respect, I take the line that they are very well as they are. That's my line, of course." And he looked out to sea. The eyes of Melville and the Sea Lady had an intimate moment.

"There, you know, is just a specimen of the sort of thing we do," said Chatteris. "Are you prepared to be as intricate as that?"

"Quite," said the Sea Lady.

My cousin was reminded of an anecdote.

The talk degenerated into anecdotes of canvassing, and ran shallow. My cousin was just gathering that Mrs. Bunting and Miss Bunting had been with the Sea Lady and had gone into the town to a shop, when they returned. Chatteris rose to greet them and explained — what had been by no means apparent before — that he was on his way to Adeline, and after a few further trivialities he and Melville went on together.

A brief silence fell between them.

"Who is that Miss Waters?" asked Chatteris.

"Friend of Mrs. Bunting," prevaricated Melville.

"So I gather.… She seems a very charming person."

"She is."

"She's interesting. Her illness seems to throw her up. It makes a passive thing of her, like a picture or something that's — imaginary. Imagined — anyhow. She sits there and smiles and responds. Her

eyes — have something intimate. And yet — —”

My cousin offered no assistance.

“Where did Mrs. Bunting find her.”

My cousin had to gather himself together for a second or so.

“There’s something,” he said deliberately, “that Mrs. Bunting doesn’t seem disposed — —”

“What can it be?”

“It’s bound to be all right,” said Melville rather weakly.

“It’s strange, too. Mrs. Bunting is usually so disposed — —”

Melville left that to itself.

“That’s what one feels,” said Chatteris.

“What?”

“Mystery.”

My cousin shares with me a profound detestation of that high mystic method of treating women. He likes women to be finite — and nice. In fact, he likes everything to be finite — and nice. So he merely grunted.

But Chatteris was not to be stopped by that. He passed to a critical note. “No doubt it’s all illusion. All women are impressionists, a patch, a light. You get an effect. And that is all you are meant to get, I suppose. She gets an effect. But how — that’s the mystery. It’s not merely beauty. There’s plenty of beauty in the world. But not of these effects. The eyes, I fancy.”

He dwelt on that for a moment.

“There’s really nothing in eyes, you know, Chatteris,” said my cousin Melville, borrowing an alien argument and a tone of analytical cynicism from me. “Have you ever looked at eyes through a hole in a sheet?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Chatteris. “I don’t mean the mere physical eye.… Perhaps it’s the look of health — and the bath chair. A bold discord. You don’t know what’s the matter, Melville?”

“How?”

“I gather from Bunting it’s a disablement — not a deformity.”

“He ought to know.”

“I’m not so sure of that. You don’t happen to know the nature of her disablement?”

“I can’t tell at all,” said Melville in a speculative tone. It struck

him he was getting to prevaricate better.

The subject seemed exhausted. They spoke of a common friend whom the sight of the Métropole suggested. Then they did not talk at all for a time, until the stir and interest of the band stand was passed. Then Chatteris threw out a thought.

"Complex business — feminine motives," he remarked.

"How?"

"This canvassing. *She* can't be interested in philanthropic Liberalism."

"There's a difference in the type. And besides, it's a personal matter."

"Not necessarily, is it? Surely there's not such an intellectual gap between the sexes! If *you* can get interested — —"

"Oh, I know."

"Besides, it's not a question of principles. It's the fun of electioneering."

"Fun!"

"There's no knowing what won't interest the feminine mind," said Melville, and added, "or what will."

Chatteris did not answer.

"It's the district visiting instinct, I suppose," said Melville. "They all have it. It's the canvassing. All women like to go into houses that don't belong to them."

"Very likely," said Chatteris shortly, and failing a reply from Melville, he gave way to secret meditations, it would seem still of a fairly agreeable sort.

The twelve o'clock gun thudded from Shornecliffe Camp.

"By Jove!" said Chatteris, and quickened his steps.

They found Adeline busy amidst her papers. As they entered she pointed reproachfully, yet with the protrusion of a certain Marcella-like undertone of sweetness, at the clock. The apologies of Chatteris were effusive and winning, and involved no mention of the Sea Lady on the Leas.

Melville delivered his books and left them already wading deeply into the details of the district organisation that the local Liberal organiser had submitted.

II

A little while after the return of Chatteris, my cousin Melville and the Sea Lady were under the ilex at the end of the sea garden and — disregarding Parker (as every one was accustomed to do), who was in a garden chair doing some afternoon work at a proper distance — there was nobody with them at all. Fred and the girls were out cycling — Fred had gone with them at the Sea Lady's request — and Miss Glendower and Mrs. Bunting were at Hythe calling diplomatically on some rather horrid local people who might be serviceable to Harry in his electioneering.

Mr. Bunting was out fishing. He was not fond of fishing, but he was in many respects an exceptionally resolute little man, and he had taken to fishing every day in the afternoon after luncheon in order to break himself of what Mrs. Bunting called his "ridiculous habit" of getting sea-sick whenever he went out in a boat. He said that if fishing from a boat with pieces of mussels for bait after luncheon would not break the habit nothing would, and certainly it seemed at times as if it were going to break everything that was in him. But the habit escaped. This, however, is a digression.

These two, I say, were sitting in the ample shade under the evergreen oak, and Melville, I imagine, was in those fine faintly patterned flannels that in the year 1899 combined correctness with ease. He was no doubt looking at the shaded face of the Sea Lady, framed in a frame of sunlit yellow-green lawn and black-green ilex leaves — at least so my impulse for verisimilitude conceives it — and she at first was pensive and downcast that afternoon and afterwards she was interested and looked into his eyes. Either she must have suggested that he might smoke or else he asked. Anyhow, his cigarettes were produced. She looked at them with an arrested gesture, and he hung for a moment, doubtful, on her gesture.

"I suppose *you*—" he said.

"I never learned."

He glanced at Parker and then met the Sea Lady's regard.

"It's one of the things I came for," she said.

He took the only course.

She accepted a cigarette and examined it thoughtfully. "Down

there," she said, "it's just one of the things — You will understand we get nothing but saturated tobacco. Some of the mermen — There's something they have picked up from the sailors. Quids, I think they call it. But that's too horrid for words!"

She dismissed the unpleasant topic by a movement, and lapsed into thought.

My cousin clicked his match-box.

She had a momentary doubt and glanced towards the house. "Mrs. Bunting?" she asked. Several times, I understand, she asked the same thing.

"She wouldn't mind—" said Melville, and stopped.

"She won't think it improper," he amplified, "if nobody else thinks it improper."

"There's nobody else," said the Sea Lady, glancing at Parker, and my cousin lit the match.

My cousin has an indirect habit of mind. With all general and all personal things his desperation to get at them obliquely amounts almost to a passion; he could no more go straight to a crisis than a cat could to a stranger. He came off at a tangent now as he was sitting forward and scrutinising her first very creditable efforts to draw. "I just wonder," he said, "exactly what it was you *did* come for."

She smiled at him over a little jet of smoke. "Why, this," she said.

"And hairdressing?"

"And dressing."

She smiled again after a momentary hesitation. "And all this sort of thing," she said, as if she felt she had answered him perhaps a little below his deserts. Her gesture indicated the house and the lawn and — my cousin Melville wondered just exactly how much else.

"Am I doing it right?" asked the Sea Lady.

"Beautifully," said my cousin with a faint sigh in his voice. "What do you think of it?"

"It was worth coming for," said the Sea Lady, smiling into his eyes.

"But did you really just come —— ?"

She filled in his gap. "To see what life was like on land here?… Isn't that enough?"

Melville's cigarette had failed to light. He regarded its blighted

career pensively.

“Life,” he said, “isn’t all — this sort of thing.”

“This sort of thing?”

“Sunlight. Cigarette smoking. Talk. Looking nice.”

“But it’s made up — —”

“Not altogether.”

“For example?”

“Oh, *you* know.”

“What?”

“You know,” said Melville, and would not look at her.

“I decline to know,” she said after a little pause.

“Besides—” he said.

“Yes?”

“You told Mrs. Bunting—” It occurred to him that he was telling tales, but that scruple came too late.

“Well?”

“Something about a soul.”

She made no immediate answer. He looked up and her eyes were smiling. “Mr. Melville,” she said, innocently, “what *is* a soul?”

“Well,” said my cousin readily, and then paused for a space. “A soul,” said he, and knocked an imaginary ash from his extinct cigarette.

“A soul,” he repeated, and glanced at Parker.

“A soul, you know,” he said again, and looked at the Sea Lady with the air of a man who is handling a difficult matter with skilful care.

“Come to think of it,” he said, “it’s a rather complicated matter to explain — —”

“To a being without one?”

“To any one,” said my cousin Melville, suddenly admitting his difficulty.

He meditated upon her eyes for a moment.

“Besides,” he said, “you know what a soul is perfectly well.”

“No,” she answered, “I don’t.”

“You know as well as I do.”

“Ah! that may be different.”

“You came to get a soul.”

“Perhaps I don’t want one. Why — if one hasn’t one —— ?”

“Ah, *there!”* And my cousin shrugged his shoulders. “But really you know — It’s just the generality of it that makes it hard to define.”

“Everybody has a soul?”

“Every one.”

“Except me?”

“I’m not certain of that.”

“Mrs. Bunting?”

“Certainly.”

“And Mr. Bunting?”

“Every one.”

“Has Miss Glendower?”

“Lots.”

The Sea Lady mused. She went off at a tangent abruptly.

“Mr. Melville,” she said, “what is a union of souls?”

Melville flicked his extinct cigarette suddenly into an elbow shape and then threw it away. The phrase may have awakened some reminiscence. “It’s an extra,” he said. “It’s a sort of flourish.… And sometimes it’s like leaving cards by footmen — a substitute for the real presence.”

There came a gap. He remained downcast, trying to find a way towards whatever it was that was in his mind to say. Conceivably, he did not clearly know what that might be until he came to it. The Sea Lady abandoned an attempt to understand him in favour of a more urgent topic.

“Do you think Miss Glendower and Mr. Chatteris —— ?”

Melville looked up at her. He noticed she had hung on the latter name. “Decidedly,” he said. “It’s just what they *would* do.”

Then he spoke again. “Chatteris?” he said.

“Yes,” said she.

“I thought so,” said Melville.

The Sea Lady regarded him gravely. They scrutinised each other with an unprecedented intimacy. Melville was suddenly direct. It was a discovery that it seemed he ought to have made all along. He felt quite unaccountably bitter; he spoke with a twitch of the mouth and his voice had a note of accusation. “You want to talk about him.”

She nodded — still grave.

"Well, *I* don't." He changed his note. "But I will if you wish it."

"I thought you would."

"Oh, *you* know," said Melville, discovering his extinct cigarette was within reach of a vindictive heel.

She said nothing.

"Well?" said Melville.

"I saw him first," she apologised, "some years ago."

"Where?"

"In the South Seas — near Tonga."

"And that is really what you came for?"

This time her manner was convincing. She admitted, "Yes."

Melville was carefully impartial. "He's sightly," he admitted, "and well-built and a decent chap — a decent chap. But I don't see why you — —"

He went off at a tangent. "He didn't see you —— ?"

"Oh, no."

Melville's pose and tone suggested a mind of extreme liberality. "I don't see why you came," he said. "Nor what you mean to do. You see" — with an air of noting a trifling but valid obstacle— "there's Miss Glendower."

"Is there?" she said.

"Well, isn't there?"

"That's just it," she said.

"And besides after all, you know, why should you —— ?"

"I admit it's unreasonable," she said. "But why reason about it? It's a matter of the imagination — —"

"For him?"

"How should I know how it takes him? That is what I *want* to know."

Melville looked her in the eyes again. "You know, you're not playing fair," he said.

"To her?"

"To any one."

"Why?"

"Because you are immortal — and unincumbered. Because you can do everything you want to do — and we cannot. I don't know

why we cannot, but we cannot. Here we are, with our short lives and our little souls to save, or lose, fussing for our little concerns. And you, out of the elements, come and beckon — —"

"The elements have their rights," she said. And then: "The elements are the elements, you know. That is what you forget."

"Imagination?"

"Certainly. That's *the* element. Those elements of your chemists — —"

"Yes?"

"Are all imagination. There isn't any other." She went on: "And all the elements of your life, the life you imagine you are living, the little things you must do, the little cares, the extraordinary little duties, the day by day, the hypnotic limitations — all these things are a fancy that has taken hold of you too strongly for you to shake off. You daren't, you mustn't, you can't. To us who watch you — —"

"You watch us?"

"Oh, yes. We watch you, and sometimes we envy you. Not only for the dry air and the sunlight, and the shadows of trees, and the feeling of morning, and the pleasantness of many such things, but because your lives begin and end — because you look towards an end."

She reverted to her former topic. "But you are so limited, so tied! The little time you have, you use so poorly. You begin and you end, and all the time between it is as if you were enchanted; you are afraid to do this that would be delightful to do, you must do that, though you know all the time it is stupid and disagreeable. Just think of the things — even the little things — you mustn't do. Up there on the Leas in this hot weather all the people are sitting in stuffy ugly clothes — ever so much too much clothes, hot tight boots, you know, when they have the most lovely pink feet, some of them — we *see*, — and they are all with little to talk about and nothing to look at, and bound not to do all sorts of natural things and bound to do all sorts of preposterous things. Why are they bound? Why are they letting life slip by them? Just as if they wouldn't all of them presently be dead! Suppose you were to go up there in a bathing dress and a white cotton hat — —"

"It wouldn't be proper!" cried Melville.

“Why not?”

“Why not?”

“It would be outrageous!”

“But any one may see you like that on the beach!”

“That’s different.”

“It isn’t different. You dream it’s different. And in just the same way you dream all the other things are proper or improper or good or bad to do. Because you are in a dream, a fantastic, unwholesome little dream. So small, so infinitely small! I saw you the other day dreadfully worried by a spot of ink on your sleeve — almost the whole afternoon.”

My cousin looked distressed. She abandoned the ink-spot.

“Your life, I tell you, is a dream — a dream, and you can’t wake out of it — —”

“And if so, why do you tell me?”

She made no answer for a space.

"Why do you tell me?" he insisted.

He heard the rustle of her movement as she bent towards him.

She came warmly close to him. She spoke in gently confidential undertone, as one who imparts a secret that is not to be too lightly given. "Because," she said, "there are better dreams."

III

For a moment it seemed to Melville that he had been addressed by something quite other than the pleasant lady in the bath chair before him. "But how — ?" he began and stopped. He remained silent with a perplexed face. She leaned back and glanced away from him, and when at last she turned and spoke again, specific realities closed in on him once more.

"Why shouldn't I," she asked, "if I want to?"

"Shouldn't what?"

"If I fancy Chatteris."

"One might think of obstacles," he reflected.

"He's not hers," she said.

"In a way, he's trying to be," said Melville.

"Trying to be! He has to be what he is. Nothing can make him hers. If you weren't dreaming you would see that." My cousin was silent. "She's not *real*," she went on. "She's a mass of fancies and vanities. She gets everything out of books. She gets herself out of a book. You can see her doing it here.… What is she seeking? What is she trying to do? All this work, all this political stuff of hers? She talks of the condition of the poor! What is the condition of the poor? A dreary tossing on the bed of existence, a perpetual fear of consequences that perpetually distresses them. Lives of anxiety they lead, because they do not know what a dream the whole thing is. Suppose they were not anxious and afraid.… And what does she care for the condition of the poor, after all? It is only a point of departure in her dream. In her heart she does not want their dreams to be happier, in her heart she has no passion for them, only her dream is that she should be prominently doing good, asserting herself, controlling their affairs amidst thanks and praise and blessings. *Her*

dream! Of serious things! — a rout of phantoms pursuing a phantom ignis fatuus — the afterglow of a mirage. Vanity of vanities — —"

"It's real enough to her."

"As real as she can make it, you know. But she isn't real herself. She begins badly."

"And he, you know — —"

"He doesn't believe in it."

"I'm not so sure."

"I am — now."

"He's a complicated being."

"He will ravel out," said the Sea Lady.

"I think you misjudge him about that work of his, anyhow," said Melville. "He's a man rather divided against himself." He added abruptly, "We all are." He recovered himself from the generality. "It's vague, I admit, a sort of vague wish to do something decent, you know, that he has — —"

"A sort of vague wish," she conceded; "but — —"

"He means well," said Melville, clinging to his proposition.

"He means nothing. Only very dimly he suspects — —"

"Yes?"

"What you too are beginning to suspect.… That other things may be conceivable even if they are not possible. That this life of yours is not everything. That it is not to be taken too seriously. Because … there are better dreams!"

The song of the sirens was in her voice; my cousin would not look at her face. "I know nothing of any other dreams," he said. "One has oneself and this life, and that is enough to manage. What other dreams can there be? Anyhow, we are in the dream — we have to accept it. Besides, you know, that's going off the question. We were talking of Chatteris, and why you have come for him. Why should you come, why should any one outside come — into this world?"

"Because we are permitted to come — we immortals. And why, if we choose to do so, and taste this life that passes and continues, as rain that falls to the ground, why should we not do it? Why should we abstain?"

"And Chatteris?"

"If he pleases me."

He roused himself to a Titanic effort against an oppression that was coming over him. He tried to get the thing down to a definite small case, an incident, an affair of considerations. “But look here, you know,” he said. “What precisely do you mean to do if you get him? You don’t seriously intend to keep up the game to that extent. You don’t mean — positively, in our terrestrial fashion, you know — to marry him?”

The Sea Lady laughed at his recovery of the practical tone. “Well, why not?” she asked.

“And go about in a bath chair, and — No, that’s not it. What *is* it?”

He looked up into her eyes, and it was like looking into deep water. Down in that deep there stirred impalpable things. She smiled at him.

“No!” she said, “I sha’n’t marry him and go about in a bath chair. And grow old as all earthly women must. (It’s the dust, I think, and the dryness of the air, and the way you begin and end.) You burn too fast, you flare and sink and die. This life of yours! — the illnesses and the growing old! When the skin wears shabby, and the light is out of the hair, and the teeth — Not even for love would I face it. No. … But then you know—” Her voice sank to a low whisper. “*There are better dreams.*”

“What dreams?” rebelled Melville. “What do you mean? What are you? What do you mean by coming into this life — you who pretend to be a woman — and whispering, whispering … to us who are in it, to us who have no escape.”

“But there is an escape,” said the Sea Lady.

“How?”

“For some there is an escape. When the whole life rushes to a moment—” And then she stopped. Now there is clearly no sense in this sentence to my mind, even from a lady of an essentially imaginary sort, who comes out of the sea. How can a whole life rush to a moment? But whatever it was she really did say, there is no doubt she left it half unsaid.

He glanced up at her abrupt pause, and she was looking at the house.

“Do … ris! Do … ris! Are you there?” It was Mrs. Bunting’s voice floating athwart the lawn, the voice of the ascendant present, of invincibly sensible things. The world grew real again to Melville. He seemed to wake up, to start back from some delusive trance that crept upon him.

He looked at the Sea Lady as if he were already incredulous of the things they had said, as if he had been asleep and dreamed the talk. Some light seemed to go out, some fancy faded. His eye rested upon the inscription, “Flamps, Bath Chair Proprietor,” just visible under her arm.

“We’ve got perhaps a little more serious than—” he said doubtfully, and then, “What you have been saying — did you exactly mean —— ?”

The rustle of Mrs. Bunting’s advance became audible, and Parker moved and coughed.

He was quite sure they had been “more serious than — —”

“Another time perhaps — —”

Had all these things really been said, or was he under some fantastic hallucination?

He had a sudden thought. “Where’s your cigarette?” he asked.

But her cigarette had ended long ago.

“And what have you been talking about so long?” sang Mrs. Bunting, with an almost motherly hand on the back of Melville’s chair.

“Oh!” said Melville, at a loss for once, and suddenly rising from his chair to face her, and then to the Sea Lady with an artificially easy smile, “What *have* we been talking about?”

“All sorts of things, I dare say,” said Mrs. Bunting, in what might almost be called an arch manner. And she honoured Melville with a special smile — one of those smiles that are morally almost winks.

My cousin caught all the archness full in the face, and for four seconds he stared at Mrs. Bunting in amazement. He wanted breath. Then they all laughed together, and Mrs. Bunting sat down pleasantly and remarked, quite audibly to herself, “As if I couldn’t guess.”

The waiter retires amazed.

IV

I gather that after this talk Melville fell into an extraordinary net of doubting. In the first place, and what was most distressing, he doubted whether this conversation could possibly have happened at all, and if it had whether his memory had not played him some trick in modifying and intensifying the import of it all. My cousin occasionally dreams conversations of so sober and probable a sort as to mingle quite perplexingly with his real experiences. Was this one of these occasions? He found himself taking up and scrutinising, as it were, first this remembered sentence and then that. Had she really

said this thing and quite in this way? His memory of their conversation was never quite the same for two days together. Had she really and deliberately foreshadowed for Chatteris some obscure and mystical submergence?

What intensified and complicated his doubts most, was the Sea Lady's subsequent serene freedom from allusion to anything that might or might not have passed. She behaved just as she had always behaved; neither an added intimacy nor that distance that follows indiscreet confidences appeared in her manner.

And amidst this crop of questions arose presently quite a new set of doubts, as if he were not already sufficiently equipped. The Sea Lady alleged she had come to the world that lives on land, for Chatteris.

And then —— ?

He had not hitherto looked ahead to see precisely what would happen to Chatteris, to Miss Glendower, to the Buntings or any one when, as seemed highly probable, Chatteris was "got." There were other dreams, there was another existence, an elsewhere — and Chatteris was to go there! So she said! But it came into Melville's mind with a quite disproportionate force and vividness that once, long ago, he had seen a picture of a man and a mermaid, rushing downward through deep water.… Could it possibly be that sort of thing in the year eighteen hundred and ninety-nine? Conceivably, if she had said these things, did she mean them, and if she meant them, and this definite campaign of capture was in hand, what was an orderly, sane-living, well-dressed bachelor of the world to do?

Look on — until things ended in a catastrophe?

One figures his face almost aged. He appears to have hovered about the house on the Sandgate Riviera to a scandalous extent, failing always to get a sufficiently long and intimate tête-à-tête with the Sea Lady to settle once for all his doubts as to what really had been said and what he had dreamed or fancied in their talk. Never had he been so exceedingly disturbed as he was by the twist this talk had taken. Never had his habitual pose of humorous acquiescence in life been quite so difficult to keep up. He became positively absent-minded. "You know if it's like that, it's serious," was the burden of

his private mutterings. His condition was palpable even to Mrs. Bunting. But she misunderstood his nature. She said something. Finally, and quite abruptly, he set off to London in a state of frantic determination to get out of it all. The Sea Lady wished him good-bye in Mrs. Bunting's presence as if there had never been anything unusual between them.

I suppose one may contrive to understand something of his disturbance. He had made quite considerable sacrifices to the world. He had, at great pains, found his place and his way in it, he had imagined he had really "got the hang of it," as people say, and was having an interesting time. And then, you know, to encounter a voice, that subsequently insists upon haunting you with "*There are better dreams*"; to hear a tale that threatens complications, disasters, broken hearts, and not to have the faintest idea of the proper thing to do.

But I do not think he would have bolted from Sandgate until he had really got some more definite answer to the question, "*What* better dreams?" until he had surprised or forced some clearer illumination from the passive invalid, if Mrs. Bunting one morning had not very tactfully dropped a hint.

You know Mrs. Bunting, and you can imagine what she tactfully hinted. Just at that time, what with her own girls and the Glendower girls, her imagination was positively inflamed for matrimony; she was a matrimonial fanatic; she would have married anybody to anything just for the fun of doing it, and the idea of pairing off poor Melville to this mysterious immortal with a scaly tail seems to have appeared to her the most natural thing in the world.

Apropos of nothing whatever I fancy she remarked, "Your opportunity is now, Mr. Melville."

"My opportunity!" cried Melville, trying madly not to understand in the face of her pink resolution.

"You've a monopoly now," she cried. "But when we go back to London with her there will be ever so many people running after her."

I fancy Melville said something about carrying the thing too far. He doesn't remember what he did say. I don't think he even knew at the time.

However, he fled back to London in August, and was there so miserably at loose ends that he had not the will to get out of the place. On this passage in the story he does not dwell, and such verisimilitude as may be, must be supplied by my imagination. I imagine him in his charmingly appointed flat, — a flat that is light without being trivial, and artistic with no want of dignity or sincerity, — finding a loss of interest in his books, a loss of beauty in the silver he (not too vehemently) collects. I imagine him wandering into that dainty little bed-room of his and around into the dressing-room, and there, rapt in a blank contemplation of the seven-and-twenty pairs of trousers (all creasing neatly in their proper stretchers) that are necessary to his conception of a wise and happy man. For every occasion he has learnt, in a natural easy progress to knowledge, the exquisitely appropriate pair of trousers, the permissible upper garment, the becoming gesture and word. He was a man who had mastered his world. And then, you know, the whisper: —

"*There are better dreams.*"

"What dreams?" I imagine him asking, with a defensive note. Whatever transparence the world might have had, whatever suggestion of something beyond there, in the sea garden at Sandgate, I fancy that in Melville's apartments in London it was indisputably opaque.

And "Damn it!" he cried, "if these dreams are for Chatteris, why should she tell me? Suppose I had the chance of them — Whatever they are — —"

He reflected, with a terrible sincerity in the nature of his will.

"No!" And then again, "No!

"And if one mustn't have 'em, why should one know about 'em and be worried by them? If she comes to do mischief, why shouldn't she do mischief without making me an accomplice?"

He walks up and down and stops at last and stares out of his window on the jaded summer traffic going Haymarket way.

He sees nothing of that traffic. He sees the little sea garden at Sandgate and that little group of people very small and bright and something — something hanging over them. "It isn't fair on them — or me — or anybody!"

Then you know, quite suddenly, I imagine him swearing.

I imagine him at his luncheon, a meal he usually treats with a becoming gravity. I imagine the waiter marking the kindly self-indulgence of his clean-shaven face, and advancing with that air of intimate participation the good waiter shows to such as he esteems. I figure the respectful pause, the respectful enquiry.

"Oh, anything!" cries Melville, and the waiter retires amazed.

V

To add to Melville's distress, as petty discomforts do add to all genuine trouble, his club-house was undergoing an operation, and was full of builders and decorators; they had gouged out its windows and gagged its hall with scaffolding, and he and his like were guests of a stranger club that had several members who blew. They seemed never to do anything but blow and sigh and rustle papers and go to sleep about the place; they were like blight-spots on the handsome plant of this host-club, and it counted for little with Melville, in the state he was in, that all the fidgety breathers were persons of eminent position. But it was this temporary dislocation of his world that brought him unexpectedly into a *quasi* confidential talk with Chatteris one afternoon, for Chatteris was one of the less eminent and amorphous members of this club that was sheltering Melville's club.

They seemed never to do anything but blow and sigh and rustle papers.

Melville had taken up *Punch* — he was in that mood when a man takes up anything — and was reading, he did not know exactly what. Presently he sighed, looked up, and discovered Chatteris entering the room.

He was surprised to see Chatteris, startled and just faintly alarmed, and Chatteris it was evident was surprised and disconcerted to see him. Chatteris stood in as awkward an attitude as he was capable of, staring unfavourably, and for a moment or so he gave no sign of recognition. Then he nodded and came forward reluctantly. His every movement suggested the will without the wit to escape.

“You here?” he said.

“What are you doing away from Hythe at this time?” asked Melville.

“I came here to write a letter,” said Chatteris.

He looked about him rather helplessly. Then he sat down beside Melville and demanded a cigarette. Suddenly he plunged into intimacy.

“It is doubtful whether I shall contest Hythe,” he remarked.

“Yes?”

“Yes.”

He lit his cigarette.

“Would you?” he asked.

“Not a bit of it,” said Melville. “But then it’s not my line.”

“Is it mine?”

“Isn’t it a little late in the day to drop it?” said Melville. “You’ve been put up for it now. Every one’s at work. Miss Glendower — —”

“I know,” said Chatteris.

“Well?”

“I don’t seem to want to go on.”

“My dear man!”

“It’s a bit of overwork perhaps. I’m off colour. Things have gone flat. That’s why I’m up here.”

He did a very absurd thing. He threw away a quarter-smoked cigarette and almost immediately demanded another.

“You’ve been a little immoderate with your statistics,” said Melville.

Chatteris said something that struck Melville as having somehow been said before. “Election, progress, good of humanity, public spirit. None of these things interest me really,” he said. “At least, not just now.”

Melville waited.

“One gets brought up in an atmosphere in which it’s always being whispered that one should go for a career. You learn it at your mother’s knee. They never give you time to find out what you really want, they keep on shoving you at that. They form your character. They rule your mind. They rush you into it.”

“They didn’t rush me,” said Melville.

“They rushed me, anyhow. And here I am!”

“You don’t want a career?”

“Well — Look what it is.”

“Oh! if you look at what things are!”

“First of all, the messing about to get into the House. These confounded parties mean nothing — absolutely nothing. They aren’t even decent factions. You blither to damned committees of damned tradesmen whose sole idea for this world is to get overpaid for their self-respect; you whisper and hobnob with local solicitors and get yourself seen about with them; you ask about the charities and institutions, and lunch and chatter and chum with every conceivable form of human conceit and pushfulness and trickery — —”

He broke off. “It isn’t as if *they* were up to anything! They’re working in their way, just as you are working in your way. It’s the same game with all of them. They chase a phantom gratification, they toil and quarrel and envy, night and day, in the perpetual attempt to persuade themselves in spite of everything that they are real and a success — —”

He stopped and smoked.

Melville was spiteful. “Yes,” he admitted, “but I thought *your* little movement was to be something more than party politics and self-advancement —— ?”

He left his sentence interrogatively incomplete.

“The condition of the poor,” he said.

“Well?” said Chatteris, regarding him with a sort of stony admission in his blue eyes.

Melville dodged the look. “At Sandgate,” he said, “there was, you know, a certain atmosphere of belief — —”

“I know,” said Chatteris for the second time.

“That’s the devil of it!” said Chatteris after a pause.

“If I don’t believe in the game I’m playing, if I’m left high and dry on this shoal, with the tide of belief gone past me, it isn’t *my* planning, anyhow. I know the decent thing I ought to do. I mean to do it; in the end I mean to do it; I’m talking in this way to relieve my mind. I’ve started the game and I must see it out; I’ve put my hand to the plough and I mustn’t go back. That’s why I came to London — to get it over with myself. It was running up against you, set me off.

You caught me at the crisis."

"Ah!" said Melville.

"But for all that, the thing is as I said — none of these things interest me really. It won't alter the fact that I am committed to fight a phantom election about nothing in particular, for a party that's been dead ten years. And if the ghosts win, go into the Parliament as a constituent spectre.… There it is — as a mental phenomenon!"

He reiterated his cardinal article. "The interest is dead," he said, "the will has no soul."

He became more critical. He bent a little closer to Melville's ear. "It isn't really that I don't believe. When I say I don't believe in these things I go too far. I do. I know, the electioneering, the intriguing is a means to an end. There is work to be done, sound work, and important work. Only — —"

Melville turned an eye on him over his cigarette end.

Chatteris met it, seemed for a moment to cling to it. He became absurdly confidential. He was evidently in the direst need of a confidential ear.

"I don't want to do it. When I sit down to it, square myself down in the chair, you know, and say, now for the rest of my life this is IT — this is your life, Chatteris; there comes a sort of terror, Melville."

"H'm," said Melville, and turned away. Then he turned on Chatteris with the air of a family physician, and tapped his shoulder three times as he spoke. "You've had too much statistics, Chatteris," he said.

He let that soak in. Then he turned about towards his interlocutor, and toyed with a club ash tray. "It's every day has overtaken you," he said. "You can't see the wood for the trees. You forget the spacious design you are engaged upon, in the heavy details of the moment. You are like a painter who has been working hard upon something very small and exacting in a corner. You want to step back and look at the whole thing."

"No," said Chatteris, "that isn't quite it."

Melville indicated that he knew better.

"I keep on, stepping back and looking at it," said Chatteris. "Just lately I've scarcely done anything else. I'll admit it's a spacious and noble thing — political work done well — only — I admire it, but it

doesn't grip my imagination. That's where the trouble comes in."

"What *does* grip your imagination?" asked Melville. He was absolutely certain the Sea Lady had been talking this paralysis into Chatteris, and he wanted to see just how far she had gone. "For example," he tested, "are there — by any chance — other dreams?"

Chatteris gave no sign at the phrase. Melville dismissed his suspicion. "What do you mean — other dreams?" asked Chatteris.

"Is there conceivably another way — another sort of life — some other aspect —— ?"

"It's out of the question," said Chatteris. He added, rather remarkably, "Adeline's awfully good."

My cousin Melville acquiesced silently in Adeline's goodness.

"All this, you know, is a mood. My life is made for me — and it's a very good life. It's better than I deserve."

"Heaps," said Melville.

"Much," said Chatteris defiantly.

"Ever so much," endorsed Melville.

"Let's talk of other things," said Chatteris. "It's what even the street boys call *mawbid* nowadays to doubt for a moment the absolute final all-this-and-nothing-else-in-the-worldishness of whatever you happen to be doing."

My cousin Melville, however, could think of no other sufficiently interesting topic. "You left them all right at Sandgate?" he asked, after a pause.

"Except little Bunting."

"Seedy?"

"Been fishing."

"Of course. Breezes and the spring tides.… And Miss Waters?"

Chatteris shot a suspicious glance at him. He affected the offhand style. "*She's* quite well," he said. "Looks just as charming as ever."

"She really means that canvassing?"

"She's spoken of it again."

"She'll do a lot for you," said Melville, and left a fine wide pause.

Chatteris assumed the tone of a man who gossips.

"Who is this Miss Waters?" he asked.

"A very charming person," said Melville and said no more.

Chatteris waited and his pretence of airy gossip vanished. He

became very much in earnest.

"Look here," he said. "Who is this Miss Waters?"

"How should *I* know?" prevaricated Melville.

"Well, you do know. And the others know. Who is she?"

Melville met his eyes. "Won't they tell you?" he asked.

"That's just it," said Chatteris.

"Why do you want to know?"

"Why shouldn't I know?"

"There's a sort of promise to keep it dark."

"Keep *what* dark?"

My cousin gestured.

"It can't be anything wrong?" My cousin made no sign.

"She may have had experiences?"

My cousin reflected a moment on the possibilities of the deep-sea life. "She has had them," he said.

"I don't care, if she has."

There came a pause.

"Look here, Melville," said Chatteris, "I want to know this. Unless it's a thing to be specially kept from me.… I don't like being among a lot of people who treat me as an outsider. What is this something about Miss Waters?"

"What does Miss Glendower say?"

"Vague things. She doesn't like her and she won't say why. And Mrs. Bunting goes about with discretion written all over her. And she herself looks at you — And that maid of hers looks — The thing's worrying me."

"Why don't you ask the lady herself?"

"How can I, till I know what it is? Confound it! I'm asking *you* plainly enough."

"Well," said Melville, and at the moment he had really decided to tell Chatteris. But he hung upon the manner of presentation. He thought in the moment to say, "The truth is, she is a mermaid." Then as instantly he perceived how incredible this would be. He always suspected Chatteris of a capacity for being continental and romantic. The man might fly out at him for saying such a thing of a lady.

A dreadful doubt fell upon Melville. As you know, he had never seen that tail with his own eyes. In these surroundings there came to

him such an incredulity of the Sea Lady as he had not felt even when first Mrs. Bunting told him of her. All about him was an atmosphere of solid reality, such as one can breathe only in a first-class London club. Everywhere ponderous arm-chairs met the eye. There were massive tables in abundance and match-boxes of solid rock. The matches were of some specially large, heavy sort. On a ponderous elephant-legged green baize table near at hand were several copies of the *Times*, the current *Punch*, an inkpot of solid brass, and a paper weight of lead. *There are other dreams!* It seemed impossible. The breathing of an eminent person in a chair in the far corner became very distinct in that interval. It was heavy and resolute like the sound of a stone-mason's saw. It insisted upon itself as the touchstone of reality. It seemed to say that at the first whisper of a thing so utterly improbable as a mermaid it would snort and choke.

"You wouldn't believe me if I told you," said Melville.

"Well, tell me — anyhow."

My cousin looked at an empty chair beside him. It was evidently stuffed with the very best horse-hair that money could procure, stuffed with infinite skill and an almost religious care. It preached in the open invitation of its expanded arms that man does not live by bread alone — inasmuch as afterwards he needs a nap. An utterly dreamless chair!

Mermaids?

He felt that he was after all quite possibly the victim of a foolish delusion, hypnotised by Mrs. Bunting's beliefs. Was there not some more plausible interpretation, some phrase that would lie out bridgeways from the plausible to the truth?

"It's no good," he groaned at last.

Chatteris had been watching him furtively.

"Oh, I don't care a hang," he said, and shied his second cigarette into the massively decorated fireplace. "It's no affair of mine."

Then quite abruptly he sprang to his feet and gesticulated with an ineffectual hand.

"You needn't," he said, and seemed to intend to say many regrettable things. Meanwhile until his intention ripened he sawed the air with his ineffectual hand. I fancy he ended by failing to find a thing sufficiently regrettable to express the pungency of the moment.

He flung about and went towards the door.

"Don't!" he said to the back of the newspaper of the breathing member.

"If you don't want to," he said to the respectful waiter at the door.

The hall-porter heard that he didn't care — he was damned if he did!

"He might be one of these here guests," said the hall-porter, greatly shocked. "That's what comes of lettin' 'em in so young."

VI

Melville overcame an impulse to follow him.

"Confound the fellow!" said he.

And then as the whole outburst came into focus, he said with still more emphasis, "Confound the fellow!"

He stood up and became aware that the member who had been asleep was now regarding him with malevolent eyes. He perceived it was a hard and invincible malevolence, and that no petty apologetics of demeanour could avail against it. He turned about and went towards the door.

The interview had done my cousin good. His misery and distress had lifted. He was presently bathed in a profound moral indignation, and that is the very antithesis of doubt and unhappiness. The more he thought it over, the more his indignation with Chatteris grew. That sudden unreasonable outbreak altered all the perspectives of the case. He wished very much that he could meet Chatteris again and discuss the whole matter from a new footing.

"Think of it!" He thought so vividly and so verbally that he was nearly talking to himself as he went along. It shaped itself into an outspoken discourse in his mind.

"Was there ever a more ungracious, ungrateful, unreasonable creature than this same Chatteris? He was the spoiled child of Fortune; things came to him, things were given to him, his very blunders brought more to him than other men's successes. Out of every thousand men, nine hundred and ninety-nine might well find food for envy in this way luck had served him. Many a one has toiled all his life and taken at last gratefully the merest fraction of all that

had thrust itself upon this insatiable thankless young man. Even I," thought my cousin, "might envy him — in several ways. And then, at the mere first onset of duty, nay! — at the mere first whisper of restraint, this insubordination, this protest and flight!

"Think!" urged my cousin, "of the common lot of men. Think of the many who suffer from hunger — —"

(It was a painful Socialistic sort of line to take, but in his mood of moral indignation my cousin pursued it relentlessly.)

"Think of many who suffer from hunger, who lead lives of unremitting toil, who go fearful, who go squalid, and withal strive, in a sort of dumb, resolute way, their utmost to do their duty, or at any rate what they think to be their duty. Think of the chaste poor women in the world! Think again of the many honest souls who aspire to the service of their kind, and are so hemmed about and preoccupied that they may not give it! And then this pitiful creature comes, with his mental gifts, his gifts of position and opportunity, the stimulus of great ideas, and a *fiancée*, who is not only rich and beautiful — she *is* beautiful! — but also the best of all possible helpers for him. And he turns away. It isn't good enough. It takes no hold upon his imagination, if you please. It isn't beautiful enough for him, and that's the plain truth of the matter. What does the man *want?* What does he expect?…"

My cousin's moral indignation took him the whole length of Piccadilly, and along by Rotten Row, and along the flowery garden walks almost into Kensington High Street, and so around by the Serpentine to his home, and it gave him such an appetite for dinner as he had not had for many days. Life was bright for him all that evening, and he sat down at last, at two o'clock in the morning, before a needlessly lit, delightfully fusillading fire in his flat to smoke one sound cigar before he went to bed.

"No," he said suddenly, "I am not *mawbid* either. I take the gifts the gods will give me. I try to make myself happy, and a few other people happy, too, to do a few little duties decently, and that is enough for me. I don't look too deeply into things, and I don't look too widely about things. A few old simple ideals ——

"H'm.

"Chatteris is a dreamer, with an impossible, extravagant

discontent. What does he dream of?… Three parts he is a dreamer and the fourth part — spoiled child.”

“Dreamer.…”

“Other dreams.…”

“What other dreams could she mean?”

My cousin fell into profound musings. Then he started, looked about him, saw the time by his Rathbone clock, got up suddenly and went to bed.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH THE CRISIS

I

The crisis came about a week from that time — I say about because of Melville's conscientious inexactness in these matters. And so far as the crisis goes, I seem to get Melville at his best. He was keenly interested, keenly observant, and his more than average memory took some excellent impressions. To my mind, at any rate, two at least of these people come out, fuller and more convincingly than anywhere else in this painfully disinterred story. He has given me here an Adeline I seem to believe in, and something much more like Chatteris than any of the broken fragments I have had to go upon, and amplify and fudge together so far. And for all such transient lucidities in this mysterious story, the reader no doubt will echo my Heaven be thanked!

Melville was called down to participate in the crisis at Sandgate by a telegram from Mrs. Bunting, and his first exponent of the situation was Fred Bunting.

"*Come down. Urgent. Please*," was the irresistible message from Mrs. Bunting. My cousin took the early train and arrived at Sandgate in the forenoon.

He was told that Mrs. Bunting was upstairs with Miss Glendower and that she implored him to wait until she could leave her charge. "Miss Glendower not well, then?" said Melville. "No, sir, not at all well," said the housemaid, evidently awaiting a further question. "Where are the others?" he asked casually. The three younger young ladies had gone to Hythe, said the housemaid, with a marked omission of the Sea Lady. Melville has an intense dislike of questioning servants on points at issue, so he asked nothing at all concerning Miss Waters. This general absence of people from the room of familiar occupation conveyed the same suggested warning of crisis as the telegram. The housemaid waited an instant longer and withdrew.

He stood for a moment in the drawing-room and then walked out upon the veranda. He perceived a richly caparisoned figure

advancing towards him. It was Fred Bunting. He had been taking advantage of the general desertion of home to bathe from the house. He was wearing an umbrageous white cotton hat and a striped blanket, and a more aggressively manly pipe than any fully adult male would ever dream of smoking, hung from the corner of his mouth.

"Hello!" he said. "The mater sent for you?"

Melville admitted the truth of this theory.

"There's ructions," said Fred, and removed the pipe. The act offered conversation.

"Where's Miss Waters?"

"Gone."

"Back?"

"Lord, no! Catch her! She's gone to Lummidge's Hotel. With her maid. Took a suite."

"Why — —"

"The mater made a row with her."

"Whatever for?"

"Harry."

My cousin stared at the situation.

"It broke out," said Fred.

"What broke out?"

"The row. Harry's gone daft on her, Addy says."

"On Miss Waters?"

"Rather. Mooney. Didn't care for his electioneering — didn't care for his ordinary nourishment. Loose ends. Didn't mention it to Adeline, but she began to see it. Asked questions. Next day, went off. London. She asked what was up. Three days' silence. Then — wrote to her."

Fred intensified all this by raising his eyebrows, pulling down the corners of his mouth and nodding portentously. "Eh?" he said, and then to make things clearer: "Wrote a letter."

"He didn't write to her about Miss Waters?"

"Don't know what he wrote about. Don't suppose he mentioned her name, but I dare say he made it clear enough. All I know is that everything in the house felt like elastic pulled tighter than it ought to be for two whole days — everybody in a sort of complicated twist —

and then there was a snap. All that time Addy was writing letters to him and tearing 'em up, and no one could quite make it out. Everyone looked blue except the Sea Lady. She kept her own lovely pink. And at the end of that time the mater began asking things, Adeline chucked writing, gave the mater half a hint, mater took it all in in an instant and the thing burst."

"Miss Glendower didn't —— ?"

"No, the mater did. Put it pretty straight too — as the mater can. … *She* didn't deny it. Said she couldn't help herself, and that he was as much hers as Adeline's. I *heard* that," said Fred shamelessly. "Pretty thick, eh? — considering he's engaged. And the mater gave it her pretty straight. Said, 'I've been very much deceived in you, Miss Waters — very much indeed.' I heard her.…"

"And then?"

"Asked her to go. Said she'd requited us ill for taking her up when nobody but a fisherman would have looked at her."

"She said that?".

"Well, words to that effect."

"And Miss Waters went?"

"In a first-class cab, maid and boxes in another, all complete. Perfect lady.… Couldn't have believed if I hadn't seen it — the tail, I mean."

"And Miss Glendower?"

"Addy? Oh, she's been going it. Comes downstairs and does the pale-faced heroine and goes upstairs and does the broken-hearted part. *I* know. It's all very well. You never had sisters. You know — —"

Fred held his pipe elaborately out of the way and protruded his face to a confidential nearness.

"I believe they half like it," said Fred, in a confidential half whisper. "Such a go, you know. Mabel pretty near as bad. And the girls. All making the very most they can of it. Me! I think Chatteris was the only man alive to hear 'em. *I* couldn't get up emotion as they do, if my feet were being flayed. Cheerful home, eh? For holidays."

"Where's — the principal gentleman?" asked Melville a little grimly. "In London?"

"Unprincipled gentleman, I call him," said Fred. "He's stopping

down here at the Métropole. Stuck.”

“Down here? Stuck?”

“Rather. Stuck and set about.”

My cousin tried for sidelights. “What’s his attitude?” he asked.

“Slump,” said Fred with intensity.

“This little blow-off has rather astonished him,” he explained. “When he wrote to say that the election didn’t interest him for a bit, but he hoped to pull around — —”

“You said you didn’t know what he wrote.”

“I do that much,” said Fred. “He no more thought they’d have spotted that it meant Miss Waters than a baby. But women are so thundering sharp, you know. They’re born spotters. How it’ll all end — —”

“But why has he come to the Métropole?”

“Middle of the stage, I suppose,” said Fred.

“What’s his attitude?”

“Says he’s going to see Adeline and explain everything — and doesn’t do it.… Puts it off. And Adeline, as far as I can gather, says that if he doesn’t come down soon, she’s hanged if she’ll see him, much as her heart may be broken, and all that, if she doesn’t. You know.”

“Naturally,” said Melville, rather inconsecutively. “And he doesn’t?”

“Doesn’t stir.”

“Does he see — the other lady?”

“We don’t know. We can’t watch him. But if he does he’s clever — —”

“Why?”

“There’s about a hundred blessed relatives of his in the place — came like crows for a corpse. I never saw such a lot. Talk about a man of good old family — it’s decaying! I never saw such a high old family in my life. Aunts they are chiefly.”

“Aunts?”

“Aunts. Say, they’ve rallied round him. How they got hold of it I don’t know. Like vultures. Unless the mater — But they’re here. They’re all at him — using their influence with him, threatening to cut off legacies and all that. There’s one old girl at Bate’s, Lady

Poynting Mallow — least bit horsey, but about as all right as any of ’em — who’s been down here twice. Seems a trifle disappointed in Adeline. And there’s two aunts at Wampach’s — you know the sort that stop at Wampach’s — regular hothouse flowers — a watering-potful of real icy cold water would kill both of ‘em. And there’s one come over from the Continent, short hair, short skirts — regular terror — she’s at the Pavilion. They’re all chasing round saying, ‘Where is this woman-fish sort of thing? Let me peek!’”

“Does that constitute the hundred relatives?”

“Practically. The Wampachers are sending for a Bishop who used to be his schoolmaster — —”

“No stone unturned, eh?”

“None.”

“And has he found out yet — —”

“That she’s a mermaid? I don’t believe he has. The pater went up to tell him. Of course, he was a bit out of breath and embarrassed. And Chatteris cut him down. ‘At least let me hear nothing against her,’ he said. And the pater took that and came away. Good old pater. Eh?”

“And the aunts?”

“They’re taking it in. Mainly they grasp the fact that he’s going to jilt Adeline, just as he jilted the American girl. The mermaid side they seem to boggle at. Old people like that don’t take to a new idea all at once. The Wampach ones are shocked — but curious. They don’t believe for a moment she really is a mermaid, but they want to know all about it. And the one down at the Pavilion simply said, ‘Bosh! How can she breathe under water? Tell me that, Mrs. Bunting. She’s some sort of person you have picked up, I don’t know how, but mermaid she *cannot* be.’ They’d be all tremendously down on the mater, I think, for picking her up, if it wasn’t that they can’t do without her help to bring Addy round again. Pretty mess all round, eh?”

“I suppose the aunts will tell him?”

“What?”

“About the tail.”

“I suppose they will.”

“And what then?”

“Heaven knows! Just as likely they won’t.”

My cousin meditated on the veranda tiles for a space.

“It amuses me,” said Fred Bunting.

“Look here,” said my cousin Melville, “what am I supposed to do? Why have I been asked to come?”

“I don’t know. Stir it up a bit, I expect. Everybody do a bit — like the Christmas pudding.”

“But—” said Melville.

“I’ve been bathing,” said Fred. “Nobody asked me to take a hand and I didn’t. It won’t be a good pudding without me, but there you are! There’s only one thing I can see to do — —”

“It might be the right thing. What is it?”

“Punch Chatteris’s head.”

“I don’t see how that would help matters.”

“Oh, it wouldn’t help matters,” said Fred, adding with an air of conclusiveness, “There it is!” Then adjusting the folds of his blanket to a greater dignity, and replacing his long extinct large pipe between his teeth, he went on his way. The tail of his blanket followed him reluctantly through the door. His bare feet padded across the hall and became inaudible on the carpet of the stairs.

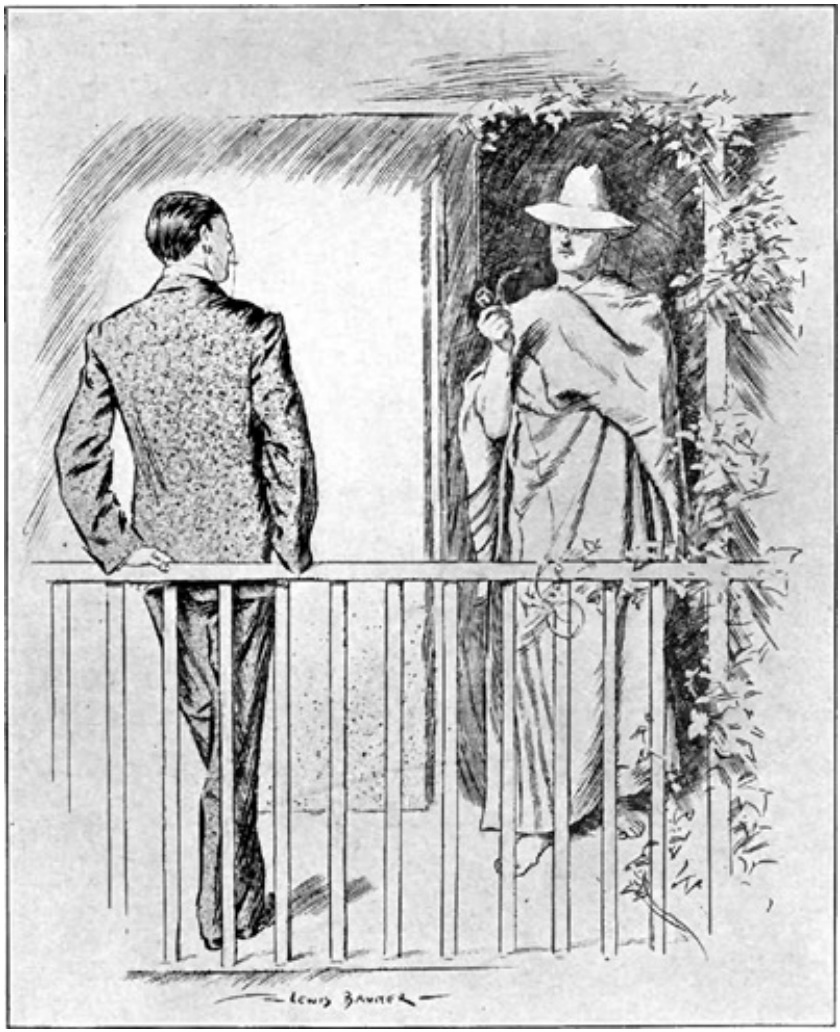

Adjusting the folds of his blanket to a greater dignity.

"Fred!" said Melville, going doorward with a sudden afterthought for fuller particulars.

But Fred had gone.

Instead, Mrs. Bunting appeared.

II

She appeared with traces of recent emotion. "I telegraphed," she said. "We are in dreadful trouble."

“Miss Waters, I gather — —”

“She’s gone.”

She went towards the bell and stopped. “They’ll get luncheon as usual,” she said. “You will be wanting your luncheon.”

She came towards him with rising hands. “You can *not* imagine,” she said. “That poor child!”

“You must tell me,” said Melville.

“I simply do not know what to do. I don’t know where to turn.” She came nearer to him. She protested. “All that I did, Mr. Melville, I did for the best. I saw there was trouble. I could see that I had been deceived, and I stood it as long as I could. I *had* to speak at last.”

My cousin by leading questions and interrogative silences developed her story a little.

“And every one,” she said, “blames me. Every one.”

“Everybody blames everybody who does anything, in affairs of this sort,” said Melville. “You mustn’t mind that.”

“I’ll try not to,” she said bravely. “*You* know, Mr. Melville — —”

He laid his hand on her shoulder for a moment. “Yes,” he said very impressively, and I think Mrs. Bunting felt better.

“We all look to you,” she said. “I don’t know what I should do without you.”

“That’s it,” said Melville. “How do things stand? What am I to do?”

“Go to him,” said Mrs. Bunting, “and put it all right.”

“But suppose—” began Melville doubtfully.

“Go to her. Make her see what it would mean for him and all of us.”

He tried to get more definite instructions. “Don’t make difficulties,” implored Mrs. Bunting. “Think of that poor girl upstairs. Think of us all.”

“Exactly,” said Melville, thinking of Chatteris and staring despondently out of the window.

“Bunting, I gather — —”

“It is you or no one,” said Mrs. Bunting, sailing over his unspoken words. “Fred is too young, and Randolph — ! He’s not diplomatic. He — he hectors.”

“Does he?” exclaimed Melville.

“You should see him abroad. Often — many times I have had to interfere.… No, it is you. You know Harry so well. He trusts you. You can say things to him — no one else could say.”

“That reminds me. Does *he* know — —”

“We don’t know. How can we know? We know he is infatuated, that is all. He is up there in Folkestone, and she is in Folkestone, and they may be meeting — —”

My cousin sought counsel with himself.

“Say you will go?” said Mrs. Bunting, with a hand upon his arm.

“I’ll go,” said Melville, “but I don’t see what I can do!”

And Mrs. Bunting clasped his hand in both of her own plump shapely hands and said she knew all along that he would, and that for coming down so promptly to her telegram she would be grateful to him so long as she had a breath to draw, and then she added, as if it were part of the same remark, that he must want his luncheon.

He accepted the luncheon proposition in an incidental manner and reverted to the question in hand.

“Do you know what his attitude — —”

“He has written only to Addy.”

“It isn’t as if he had brought about this crisis?”

“It was Addy. He went away and something in his manner made her write and ask him the reason why. So soon as she had his letter saying he wanted to rest from politics for a little, that somehow he didn’t seem to find the interest in life he thought it deserved, she divined everything — —”

“Everything? Yes, but just what *is* everything?”

“That *she* had led him on.”

“Miss Waters?”

“Yes.”

My cousin reflected. So that was what they considered to be everything! “I wish I knew just where he stood,” he said at last, and followed Mrs. Bunting luncheonward. In the course of that meal, which was *tête-à-tête*, it became almost unsatisfactorily evident what a great relief Melville’s consent to interview Chatteris was to Mrs. Bunting. Indeed, she seemed to consider herself relieved from the greater portion of her responsibility in the matter, since Melville was bearing her burden. She sketched out her defence against the

accusations that had no doubt been levelled at her, explicitly and implicitly.

"How was *I* to know?" she asked, and she told over again the story of that memorable landing, but with new, extenuating details. It was Adeline herself who had cried first, "She must be saved!" Mrs. Bunting made a special point of that. "And what else was there for me to do?" she asked.

And as she talked, the problem before my cousin assumed graver and yet graver proportions. He perceived more and more clearly the complexity of the situation with which he was entrusted. In the first place it was not at all clear that Miss Glendower was willing to receive back her lover except upon terms, and the Sea Lady, he was quite sure, did not mean to release him from any grip she had upon him. They were preparing to treat an elemental struggle as if it were an individual case. It grew more and more evident to him how entirely Mrs. Bunting overlooked the essentially abnormal nature of the Sea Lady, how absolutely she regarded the business as a mere every-day vacillation, a commonplace outbreak of that jilting spirit which dwells, covered deep, perhaps, but never entirely eradicated, in the heart of man; and how confidently she expected him, with a little tactful remonstrance and pressure, to restore the *status quo ante*.

As for Chatteris! — Melville shook his head at the cheese, and answered Mrs. Bunting abstractedly.

III

"She wants to speak to you," said Mrs. Bunting, and Melville with a certain trepidation went upstairs. He went up to the big landing with the seats, to save Adeline the trouble of coming down. She appeared dressed in a black and violet tea gown with much lace, and her dark hair was done with a simple carefulness that suited it. She was pale, and her eyes showed traces of tears, but she had a certain dignity that differed from her usual bearing in being quite unconscious.

She gave him a limp hand and spoke in an exhausted voice.

"You know — all?" she asked.

"All the outline, anyhow."

"Why has he done this to me?"

Melville looked profoundly sympathetic through a pause.

"I feel," she said, "that it isn't coarseness."

"Certainly not," said Melville.

"It is some mystery of the imagination that I cannot understand. I should have thought — his career at any rate — would have appealed…." She shook her head and regarded a pot of ferns fixedly for a space.

"He has written to you?" asked Melville.

"Three times," she said, looking up.

Melville hesitated to ask the extent of that correspondence, but she left no need for that.

"I had to ask him," she said. "He kept it all from me, and I had to force it from him before he would tell."

"Tell!" said Melville, "what?"

"What he felt for her and what he felt for me."

"But did he —— ?"

"He has made it clearer. But still even now. No, I don't understand."

She turned slowly and watched Melville's face as she spoke: "You know, Mr. Melville, that this has been an enormous shock to me. I suppose I never really knew him. I suppose I — idealised him. I thought he cared for — our work at any rate…. He *did* care for our work. He believed in it. Surely he believed in it."

"He does," said Melville.

"And then — But how can he?"

"He is — he is a man with rather a strong imagination."

"Or a weak will?"

"Relatively — yes."

"It is so strange," she sighed. "It is so inconsistent. It is like a child catching at a new toy. Do you know, Mr. Melville" — she hesitated— "all this has made me feel old. I feel very much older, very much wiser than he is. I cannot help it. I am afraid it is for all women … to feel that sometimes."

She reflected profoundly. "For *all* women — The child, man! I see now just what Sarah Grand meant by that."

She smiled a wan smile. "I feel just as if he had been a naughty child. And I — I worshipped him, Mr. Melville," she said, and her

voice quivered.

My cousin coughed and turned about to stare hard out of the window. He was, he perceived, much more shockingly inadequate even than he had expected to be.

“If I thought she could make him happy!” she said presently, leaving a hiatus of generous self-sacrifice.

“The case is — complicated,” said Melville.

Her voice went on, clear and a little high, resigned, impenetrably assured.

“But she would not. All his better side, all his serious side — She would miss it and ruin it all.”

“Does he—” began Melville and repented of the temerity of his question.

“Yes?” she said.

“Does he — ask to be released?”

“No.… He wants to come back to me.”

“And you — —”

“He doesn’t come.”

“But do you — do you want him back?”

“How can I say, Mr. Melville? He does not say certainly even that he wants to come back.”

My cousin Melville looked perplexed. He lived on the superficies of emotion, and these complexities in matters he had always assumed were simple, put him out.

“There are times,” she said, “when it seems to me that my love for him is altogether dead.… Think of the disillusionment — the shock — the discovery of such weakness.”

My cousin lifted his eyebrows and shook his head in agreement.

“His feet — to find his feet were of clay!”

There came a pause.

“It seems as if I have never loved him. And then — and then I think of all the things that still might be.”

Her voice made him look up, and he saw that her mouth was set hard and tears were running down her cheeks.

It occurred to my cousin, he says, that he would touch her hand in a sympathetic manner, and then it occurred to him that he wouldn’t. Her words rang in his thoughts for a space, and then he said

somewhat tardily, “He may still be all those things.”

“I suppose he may,” she said slowly and without colour. The weeping moment had passed.

“What is she?” she changed abruptly. “What is this being, who has come between him and all the realities of life? What is there about her — ? And why should I have to compete with her, because he — because he doesn’t know his own mind?”

“For a man,” said Melville, “to know his own mind is — to have exhausted one of the chief interests in life. After that — ! A cultivated extinct volcano — if ever it was a volcano.”

He reflected egotistically for a space. Then with a secret start he came back to consider her.

“What is there,” she said, with that deliberate attempt at clearness which was one of her antipathetic qualities for Melville— “what is there that she has, that she offers, that *I* —— ?”

Melville winced at this deliberate proposal of appalling comparisons. All the catlike quality in his soul came to his aid. He began to edge away, and walk obliquely and generally to shirk the issue. “My dear Miss Glendower,” he said, and tried to make that seem an adequate reply.

“What *is* the difference?” she insisted.

“There are impalpable things,” waived Melville. “They are above reason and beyond describing.”

“But you,” she urged, “you take an attitude, you must have an impression. Why don’t you — Don’t you see, Mr. Melville, this is very” — her voice caught for a moment— “very vital for me. It isn’t kind of you, if you have impressions — I’m sorry, Mr. Melville, if I seem to be trying to get too much from you. I — I want to know.”

It came into Melville’s head for a moment that this girl had something in her, perhaps, that was just a little beyond his former judgments.

“I must admit, I have a sort of impression,” he said.

“You are a man; you know him; you know all sorts of things — all sorts of ways of looking at things, I don’t know. If you could go so far — as to be frank.”

“Well,” said Melville and stopped.

She hung over him as it were, as a tense silence.

“There *is* a difference,” he admitted, and still went unhelped.

“How can I put it? I think in certain ways you contrast with her, in a way that makes things easier for her. He has — I know the thing sounds like cant, only you know, *he* doesn’t plead it in defence — he has a temperament, to which she sometimes appeals more than you do.”

“Yes, I know, but how?”

“Well — —”

“Tell me.”

“You are austere. You are restrained. Life — for a man like Chatteris — is schooling. He has something — something perhaps more worth having than most of us have — but I think at times — it makes life harder for him than it is for a lot of us. Life comes at him, with limitations and regulations. He knows his duty well enough. And you — You mustn’t mind what I say too much, Miss Glendower — I may be wrong.”

“Go on,” she said, “go on.”

“You are too much — the agent general of his duty.”

“But surely! — what else —— ?”

“I talked to him in London and then I thought he was quite in the wrong. Since that I’ve thought all sorts of things — even that you might be in the wrong. In certain minor things.”

“Don’t mind my vanity now,” she cried. “Tell me.”

“You see you have defined things — very clearly. You have made it clear to him what you expect him to be, and what you expect him to do. It is like having built a house in which he is to live. For him, to go to her is like going out of a house, a very fine and dignified house, I admit, into something larger, something adventurous and incalculable. She is — she has an air of being — *natural*. She is as lax and lawless as the sunset, she is as free and familiar as the wind. She doesn’t — if I may put it in this way — she doesn’t love and respect him when he is this, and disapprove of him highly when he is that; she takes him altogether. She has the quality of the open sky, of the flight of birds, of deep tangled places, she has the quality of the high sea. That I think is what she is for him, she is the Great Outside. You — you have the quality — —”

He hesitated.

“Go on,” she insisted. “Let us get the meaning.”

“Of an edifice.… I don’t sympathise with him,” said Melville. “I am a tame cat and I should scratch and mew at the door directly I got outside of things. I don’t want to go out. The thought scares me. But he is different.”

“Yes,” she said, “he is different.”

For a time it seemed that Melville’s interpretation had hold of her. She stood thoughtful. Slowly other aspects of the thing came into his mind.

“Of course,” she said, thinking as she looked at him. “Yes. Yes. That is the impression. That is the quality. But in reality — There are other things in the world beside effects and impressions. After all, that is — an analogy. It is pleasant to go out of houses and dwellings into the open air, but most of us, nearly all of us must live in houses.”

“Decidedly,” said Melville.

“He cannot — What can he do with her? How can he live with her? What life could they have in common?”

“It’s a case of attraction,” said Melville, “and not of plans.”

“After all,” she said, “he must come back — if I let him come back. He may spoil everything now; he may lose his election and be forced to start again, lower and less hopefully; he may tear his heart to pieces — —”

She stopped at a sob.

“Miss Glendower,” said Melville abruptly.

“I don’t think you quite understand.”

“Understand what?”

“You think he cannot marry this — this being who has come among us?”

“How could he?”

“No — he couldn’t. You think his imagination has wandered away from you — to something impossible. That generally, in an aimless way, he has cut himself up for nothing, and made an inordinate fool of himself, and that it’s simply a business of putting everything back into place again.”

He paused and she said nothing. But her face was attentive. “What you do not understand,” he went on, “what no one seems to understand, is that she comes — —”

“Out of the sea.”

“Out of some other world. She comes, whispering that this life is a phantom life, unreal, flimsy, limited, casting upon everything a spell of disillusionment — —”

“So that *he* — —”

“Yes, and then she whispers, ‘There are better dreams!’”

The girl regarded him in frank perplexity.

“She hints of these vague better dreams, she whispers of a way — —”

“*What* way?”

“I do not know what way. But it is something — something that tears at the very fabric of this daily life.”

“You mean —— ?”

“She is a mermaid, she is a thing of dreams and desires, a siren, a whisper and a seduction. She will lure him with her — —”

He stopped.

“Where?” she whispered.

“Into the deeps.”

“The deeps?”

They hung upon a long pause. Melville sought vagueness with infinite solicitude, and could not find it. He blurted out at last: “There can be but one way out of this dream we are all dreaming, you know.”

“And that way?”

“That way—” began Melville and dared not say it.

“You mean,” she said, with a pale face, half awakened to a new thought, “the way is —— ?”

Melville shirked the word. He met her eyes and nodded weakly.

“But how — ?” she asked.

“At any rate” — he said hastily, seeking some palliative phrase— “at any rate, if she gets him, this little world of yours — There will be no coming back for him, you know.”

“No coming back?” she said.

“No coming back,” said Melville.

“But are you sure?” she doubted.

“Sure?”

“That it is so?”

“That desire is desire, and the deep the deep — yes.”

“I never thought—” she began and stopped.

“Mr. Melville,” she said, “you know I don’t understand. I thought — I scarcely know what I thought. I thought he was trivial and foolish to let his thoughts go wandering. I agreed — I see your point — as to the difference in our effect upon him. But this — this suggestion that for him she may be something determining and final — After all, she — —”

“She is nothing,” he said. “She is the hand that takes hold of him, the shape that stands for things unseen.”

“What things unseen?”

My cousin shrugged his shoulders. “Something we never find in life,” he said. “Something we are always seeking.”

“But what?” she asked.

Melville made no reply. She scrutinised his face for a time, and then looked out at the sunlight again.

“Do you want him back?” he said.

“I don’t know.”

“Do you want him back?”

“I feel as if I had never wanted him before.”

“And now?”

“Yes.… But — if he will not come back?”

“He will not come back,” said Melville, “for the work.”

“I know.”

“He will not come back for his self-respect — or any of those things.”

“No.”

“Those things, you know, are only fainter dreams. All the palace you have made for him is a dream. But — —”

“Yes?”

“He might come back—” he said, and looked at her and stopped. He tells me he had some vague intention of startling her, rousing her, wounding her to some display of romantic force, some insurgence of passion, that might yet win Chatteris back, and then in that moment, and like a blow, it came to him how foolish such a fancy had been. There she stood impenetrably herself, limitedly intelligent, well-meaning, imitative, and powerless. Her pose, her face, suggested

nothing but a clear and reasonable objection to all that had come to her, a critical antagonism, a steady opposition. And then, amazingly, she changed. She looked up, and suddenly held out both her hands, and there was something in her eyes that he had never seen before.

Melville took her hands mechanically, and for a second or so they stood looking with a sort of discovery into each other's eyes.

"Tell him," she said, with an astounding perfection of simplicity, "to come back to me. There can be no other thing than what I am. Tell him to come back to me!"

"And —— ?"

"Tell him *that*."

"Forgiveness?"

"No! Tell him I want him. If he will not come for that he will not come at all. If he will not come back for that" — she halted for a moment— "I do not want him. No! I do not want him. He is not mine and he may go."

His passive hold of her hands became a pressure. Then they dropped apart again.

"You are very good to help us," she said as he turned to go.

He looked at her. "You are very good to help me," she said, and then: "Tell him whatever you like if only he will come back to me!… No! Tell him what I have said." He saw she had something more to say, and stopped. "You know, Mr. Melville, all this is like a book newly opened to me. Are you sure —— ?"

"Sure?"

"Sure of what you say — sure of what she is to him — sure that if he goes on he will—" She stopped.

He nodded.

"It means—" she said and stopped again.

"No adventure, no incident, but a going out from all that this life has to offer."

"You mean," she insisted, "you mean —— ?"

"Death," said Melville starkly, and for a space both stood without a word.

She winced, and remained looking into his eyes. Then she spoke again.

"Mr. Melville, tell him to come back to me."

“And —— ?”

“Tell him to come back to me, or” — a sudden note of passion rang in her voice— “if I have no hold upon him, let him go his way.”

“But—” said Melville.

“I know,” she cried, with her face set, “I know. But if he is mine he will come to me, and if he is not — Let him dream his dream.”

Her clenched hand tightened as she spoke. He saw in her face she would say no more, that she wanted urgently to leave it there. He turned again towards the staircase. He glanced at her and went down.

As he looked up from the bend of the stairs she was still standing in the light.

He was moved to proclaim himself in some manner her adherent, but he could think of nothing better than: “Whatever I can do I will.” And so, after a curious pause, he departed, rather stumblingly, from her sight.

IV

After this interview it was right and proper that Melville should have gone at once to Chatteris, but the course of events in the world does occasionally display a lamentable disregard for what is right and proper. Points of view were destined to crowd upon him that day — for the most part entirely unsympathetic points of view. He found Mrs. Bunting in the company of a boldly trimmed bonnet in the hall, waiting, it became clear, to intercept him.

As he descended, in a state of extreme preoccupation, the boldly trimmed bonnet revealed beneath it a white-faced, resolute person in a duster and sensible boots. This stranger, Mrs. Bunting made apparent, was Lady Poynting Mallow, one of the more representative of the Chatteris aunts. Her ladyship made a few enquiries about Adeline with an eye that took Melville’s measure, and then, after agreeing to a number of the suggestions Mrs. Bunting had to advance, proposed that he should escort her back to her hotel. He was much too exercised with Adeline to discuss the proposal. “I walk,” she said. “And we go along the lower road.”

He found himself walking.

She remarked, as the Bunting door closed behind them, that it was

always a comfort to have to do with a man; and there was a silence for a space.

I don't think at that time Melville completely grasped the fact that he had a companion. But presently his meditations were disturbed by her voice. He started.

"I beg your pardon," he said.

"That Bunting woman is a fool," repeated Lady Poynting Mallow.

There was a slight interval for consideration.

"She's an old friend of mine," said Melville.

"Quite possibly," said Lady Poynting Mallow.

The position seemed a little awkward to Melville for a moment. He flicked a fragment of orange peel into the road. "I want to get to the bottom of all this," said Lady Poynting Mallow. "Who *is* this other woman?"

"What other woman?"

"*Tertium quid*," said Lady Poynting Mallow, with a luminous incorrectness.

"Mermaid, I gather," said Melville.

"What's the objection to her?"

"Tail."

"Fin and all?"

"Complete."

"You're sure of it?"

"Certain."

"How do you know?"

"I'm certain," repeated Melville with a quite unusual testiness.

The lady reflected.

"Well, there are worse things in the world than a fishy tail," she said at last.

Melville saw no necessity for a reply. "H'm," said Lady Poynting Mallow, apparently by way of comment on his silence, and for a space they went on.

"That Glendower girl is a fool too," she added after a pause.

My cousin opened his mouth and shut it again. How can one answer when ladies talk in this way? But if he did not answer, at any rate his preoccupation was gone. He was now acutely aware of the determined person at his side.

“She has means?” she asked abruptly.

“Miss Glendower?”

“No. I know all about her. The other?”

“The mermaid?”

“Yes, the mermaid. Why not?”

“Oh, *she* — Very considerable means. Galleons. Phœnician treasure ships, wrecked frigates, submarine reefs — —”

“Well, that’s all right. And now will you tell me, Mr. Melville, why shouldn’t Harry have her? What if she is a mermaid? It’s no worse than an American silver mine, and not nearly so raw and ill-bred.”

“In the first place there’s his engagement — —”

“Oh, *that!”*

“And in the next there’s the Sea Lady.”

“But I thought she — —”

“She’s a mermaid.”

“It’s no objection. So far as I can see, she’d make an excellent wife for him. And, as a matter of fact, down here she’d be able to help him in just the right way. The member here — he’ll be fighting — this Sassoon man — makes a lot of capital out of deep-sea cables. Couldn’t be better. Harry could dish him easily. That’s all right. Why shouldn’t he have her?”

She stuck her hands deeply into the pockets of her dust-coat, and a china-blue eye regarded Melville from under the brim of the boldly trimmed bonnet.

“You understand clearly she is a properly constituted mermaid with a real physical tail?”

“Well?” said Lady Poynting Mallow.

“Apart from any question of Miss Glendower — —”

“That’s understood.”

“I think that such a marriage would be impossible.”

“Why?”

My cousin played round the question. “She’s an immortal, for example, with a past.”

“Simply makes her more interesting.”

Melville tried to enter into her point of view. “You think,” he said, “she would go to London for him, and marry at St. George’s,

Hanover Square, and pay for a mansion in Park Lane and visit just anywhere he liked?"

"That's precisely what she would do. Just now, with a Court that is waking up — —"

"It's precisely what she won't do," said Melville.

"But any woman would do it who had the chance."

"She's a mermaid."

"She's a fool," said Lady Poynting Mallow.

"She doesn't even mean to marry him; it doesn't enter into her code."

"The hussy! What does she mean?"

My cousin made a gesture seaward. "That!" he said. "She's a mermaid."

"What?"

"Out there."

"Where?"

"There!"

Lady Poynting Mallow scanned the sea as if it were some curious new object. "It's an amphibious outlook for the family," she said after reflection. "But even then — if she doesn't care for society and it makes Harry happy — and perhaps after they are tired of — rusticating — —"

"I don't think you fully realise that she is a mermaid," said Melville; "and Chatteris, you know, breathes air."

"That *is* a difficulty," admitted Lady Poynting Mallow, and studied the sunlit offing for a space.

"I don't see why it shouldn't be managed for all that," she considered after a pause.

"It can't be," said Melville with arid emphasis.

"She cares for him?"

"She's come to fetch him."

"If she wants him badly he might make terms. In these affairs it's always one or other has to do the buying. She'd have to *marry* — anyhow."

My cousin regarded her impenetrably satisfied face.

"He could have a yacht and a diving bell," she suggested; "if she wanted him to visit her people."

“They are pagan demigods, I believe, and live in some mythological way in the Mediterranean.”

“Dear Harry’s a pagan himself — so that doesn’t matter, and as for being mythological — all good families are. He could even wear a diving dress if one could be found to suit him.”

“I don’t think that anything of the sort is possible for a moment.”

“Simply because you’ve never been a woman in love,” said Lady Poynting Mallow with an air of vast experience.

She continued the conversation. “If it’s sea water she wants it would be quite easy to fit up a tank wherever they lived, and she could easily have a bath chair like a sitz bath on wheels.… Really, Mr. Milvain — —”

“Melville.”

“Mr. Melville, I don’t see where your ‘impossible’ comes in.”

“Have you seen the lady?”

“Do you think I’ve been in Folkestone two days doing nothing?”

“You don’t mean you’ve called on her?”

“Dear, no! It’s Harry’s place to settle that. But I’ve seen her in her bath chair on the Leas, and I’m certain I’ve never seen any one who looked so worthy of dear Harry. *Never!*”

“Well, well,” said Melville. “Apart from any other considerations, you know, there’s Miss Glendower.”

“I’ve never regarded her as a suitable wife for Harry.”

“Possibly not. Still — she exists.”

“So many people do,” said Lady Poynting Mallow.

She evidently regarded that branch of the subject as dismissed.

They pursued their way in silence.

“What I wanted to ask you, Mr. Milvain — —”

“Melville.”

“Mr. Melville, is just precisely where you come into this business?”

“I’m a friend of Miss Glendower.”

“Who wants him back.”

“Frankly — yes.”

“Isn’t she devoted to him?”

“I presume as she’s engaged — —”

“She ought to be devoted to him — yes. Well, why can’t she see

that she ought to release him for his own good?”

“She doesn’t see it’s for his good. Nor do I.”

“Simply an old-fashioned prejudice because the woman’s got a tail. Those old frumps at Wampach’s are quite of your opinion.”

Melville shrugged his shoulders.

“And so I suppose you’re going to bully and threaten on account of Miss Glendower.… You’ll do no good.”

“May I ask what you are going to do?”

“What a good aunt always does.”

“And that?”

“Let him do what he likes.”

“Suppose he wants to drown himself?”

“My dear Mr. Milvain, Harry isn’t a fool.”

“I’ve told you she’s a mermaid.”

“Ten times.”

A constrained silence fell between them.

It became apparent they were near the Folkestone Lift.

“You’ll do no good,” said Lady Poynting Mallow.

Melville’s escort concluded at the lift station. There the lady turned upon him.

“I’m greatly obliged to you for coming, Mr. Milvain,” she said; “and very glad to hear your views of this matter. It’s a peculiar business, but I hope we’re sensible people. You think over what I have said. As a friend of Harry’s. You *are* a friend of Harry’s?”

“We’ve known each other some years.”

“I feel sure you will come round to my point of view sooner or later. It is so obviously the best thing for him.”

“There’s Miss Glendower.”

“If Miss Glendower is a womanly woman, she will be ready to make any sacrifice for his good.”

And with that they parted.

In the course of another minute Melville found himself on the side of the road opposite the lift station, regarding the ascending car. The boldly trimmed bonnet, vivid, erect, assertive, went gliding upward, a perfect embodiment of sound common sense. His mind was lapsing once again into disorder; he was stunned, as it were, by the vigour of her ladyship’s view. Could any one not absolutely right be quite so

clear and emphatic? And if so, what became of all that oppression of foreboding, that sinister promise of an escape, that whisper of "other dreams," that had dominated his mind only a short half-hour before?

He turned his face back to Sandgate, his mind a theatre of warring doubts. Quite vividly he could see the Sea Lady as Lady Poynting Mallow saw her, as something pink and solid and smart and wealthy, and, indeed, quite abominably vulgar, and yet quite as vividly he recalled her as she had talked to him in the garden, her face full of shadows, her eyes of deep mystery, and the whisper that made all the world about him no more than a flimsy, thin curtain before vague and wonderful, and hitherto, quite unsuspected things.

V

Chatteris was leaning against the railings. He started violently at Melville's hand upon his shoulder. They made awkward greetings.

"The fact is," said Melville, "I — I have been asked to talk to you."

"Don't apologise," said Chatteris. "I'm glad to have it out with some one."

There was a brief silence.

They stood side by side — looking down upon the harbour. Behind, the evening band played remotely and the black little promenaders went to and fro under the tall electric lights. I think Chatteris decided to be very self-possessed at first — a man of the world.

"It's a gorgeous night," he said.

"Glorious," said Melville, playing up to the key set.

He clicked his cutter on a cigar. "There was something you wanted me to tell you — —"

"I know all that," said Chatteris with the shoulder towards Melville becoming obtrusive. "I know everything."

"You have seen and talked to her?"

"Several times."

There was perhaps a minute's pause.

"What are you going to do?" asked Melville.

Chatteris made no answer and Melville did not repeat his

question.

Presently Chatteris turned about. “Let’s walk,” he said, and they paced westward, side by side.

He made a little speech. “I’m sorry to give everybody all this trouble,” he said with an air of having prepared his sentences; “I suppose there is no question that I have behaved like an ass. I am profoundly sorry. Largely it is my own fault. But you know — so far as the overt kick-up goes — there is a certain amount of blame attaches to our outspoken friend Mrs. Bunting.”

“I’m afraid there is,” Melville admitted.

“You know there are times when one is under the necessity of having moods. It doesn’t help them to drag them into general discussion.”

“The mischief’s done.”

“You know Adeline seems to have objected to the presence of — this sea lady at a very early stage. Mrs. Bunting overruled her. Afterwards when there was trouble she seems to have tried to make up for it.”

“I didn’t know Miss Glendower had objected.”

“She did. She seems to have seen — ahead.”

Chatteris reflected. “Of course all that doesn’t excuse me in the least. But it’s a sort of excuse for *your* being dragged into this bother.”

He said something less distinctly about a “stupid bother” and “private affairs.”

They found themselves drawing near the band and already on the outskirts of its territory of votaries. Its cheerful rhythms became insistent. The canopy of the stand was a focus of bright light, music-stands and instruments sent out beams of reflected brilliance, and a luminous red conductor in the midst of the lantern guided the ratatoo-tat, ratatoo-tat of a popular air. Voices, detached fragments of conversation, came to our talkers and mingled impertinently with their thoughts.

“I wouldn’t ‘ave no truck with ‘im, not after that,” said a young person to her friend.

“Let’s get out of this,” said Chatteris abruptly.

They turned aside from the high path of the Leas to the head of

some steps that led down the declivity. In a few moments it was as if those imposing fronts of stucco, those many-windowed hotels, the electric lights on the tall masts, the band-stand and miscellaneous holiday British public, had never existed. It is one of Folkestone's best effects, that black quietness under the very feet of a crowd. They no longer heard the band even, only a remote suggestion of music filtered to them over the brow. The black-treed slopes fell from them to the surf below, and out at sea were the lights of many ships. Away to the westward like a swarm of fire-flies hung the lights of Hythe. The two men sat down on a vacant seat in the dimness. For a time neither spoke. Chatteris impressed Melville with an air of being on the defensive. He murmured in a meditative undertone, "I wouldn't 'ave no truck with 'im not after that."

"I will admit by every standard," he said aloud, "that I have been flappy and feeble and wrong. Very. In these things there is a prescribed and definite course. To hesitate, to have two points of view, is condemned by all right-thinking people.… Still — one has the two points of view.… You have come up from Sandgate?"

"Yes."

"Did you see Miss Glendower?"

"Yes."

"Talked to her?… I suppose — What do you think of her?"

His cigar glowed into an expectant brightness while Melville hesitated at his answer, and showed his eyes thoughtful upon Melville's face.

"I've never thought her—" Melville sought more diplomatic phrasing. "I've never found her exceptionally attractive before. Handsome, you know, but not — winning. But this time, she seemed … rather splendid."

"She is," said Chatteris, "she is."

He sat forward and began flicking imaginary ash from the end of his cigar.

"She *is* splendid," he admitted. "You — only begin to imagine. You don't, my dear man, know that girl. She is not — quite — in your line. She is, I assure you, the straightest and cleanest and clearest human being I have ever met. She believes so firmly, she does right so simply, there is a sort of queenly benevolence, a sort of

integrity of benevolence — —”

He left the sentence unfinished, as if unfinished it completely expressed his thought.

“She wants you to go back to her,” said Melville bluntly.

“I know,” said Chatteris and flicked again at that ghostly ash. “She has written that.… That’s just where her complete magnificence comes in. She doesn’t fence and fool about, as the she-women do. She doesn’t squawk and say, ‘You’ve insulted me and everything’s at an end;’ and she doesn’t squawk and say, ‘For God’s sake come back to me!’ *She* doesn’t say, she ‘won’t ‘ave no truck with me not after this.’ She writes — straight. I don’t believe, Melville, I half knew her until all this business came up. She comes out.… Before that it was, as you said, and I quite perceive — I perceived all along — a little too — statistical.”

He became meditative, and his cigar glow waned and presently vanished altogether.

“You are going back?”

“By Jove! *Yes.*”

Melville stirred slightly and then they both sat rigidly quiet for a space. Then abruptly Chatteris flung away his extinct cigar. He seemed to fling many other things away with that dim gesture. “Of course,” he said, “I shall go back.

“It is not my fault,” he insisted, “that this trouble, this separation, has ever arisen. I was moody, I was preoccupied, I know — things had got into my head. But if I’d been left alone.…

“I have been forced into this position,” he summarised.

“You understand,” said Melville, “that — though I think matters are indefined and distressing just now — I don’t attach blame — anywhere.”

“You’re open-minded,” said Chatteris. “That’s just your way. And I can imagine how all this upset and discomfort distresses you. You’re awfully good to keep so open-minded and not to consider me an utter outcast, an ill-regulated disturber of the order of the world.”

“It’s a distressing state of affairs,” said Melville. “But perhaps I understand the forces pulling at you — better than you imagine.”

“They’re very simple, I suppose.”

“Very.”

“And yet —— ?”

“Well?”

He seemed to hesitate at a dangerous topic. “The other,” he said.

Melville’s silence bade him go on.

He plunged from his prepared attitude. “What is it? Why should — this being — come into my life, as she has done, if it *is* so simple? What is there about her, or me, that has pulled me so astray? She has, you know. Here we are at sixes and sevens! It’s not the situation, it’s the mental conflict. Why am I pulled about? She has got into my imagination. How? I haven’t the remotest idea.”

“She’s beautiful,” meditated Melville.

“She’s beautiful certainly. But so is Miss Glendower.”

“She’s very beautiful. I’m not blind, Chatteris. She’s beautiful in a different way.”

“Yes, but that’s only the name for the effect. *Why* is she very beautiful?”

Melville shrugged his shoulders.

“She’s not beautiful to every one.”

“You mean?”

“Bunting keeps calm.”

“Oh — *he* —— !”

“And other people don’t seem to see it — as I do.”

“Some people seem to see no beauty at all, as we do. With emotion, that is.”

“Why do we?”

“We see — finer.”

“Do we? Is it finer? Why should it be finer to see beauty where it is fatal to us to see it? Why? Unless we are to believe there is no reason in things, why should this — impossibility, be beautiful to any one anyhow? Put it as a matter of reason, Melville. Why should *her* smile be so sweet to me, why should *her* voice move me! Why her’s and not Adeline’s? Adeline has straight eyes and clear eyes and fine eyes, and all the difference there can be, what is it? An infinitesimal curving of the lid, an infinitesimal difference in the lashes — and it shatters everything — in this way. Who could measure the difference, who could tell the quality that makes me *swim* in the sound of her voice.… The difference? After all, it’s a

visible thing, it's a material thing! It's in my eyes. By Jove!" he laughed abruptly. "Imagine old Helmholtz trying to gauge it with a battery of resonators, or Spencer in the light of Evolution and the Environment explaining it away!"

"These things are beyond measurement," said Melville.

"Not if you measure them by their effect," said Chatteris. "And anyhow, why do they take us? That is the question I can't get away from just now."

My cousin meditated, no doubt with his hands deep in his trousers' pockets. "It is illusion," he said. "It is a sort of glamour. After all, look at it squarely. What is she? What can she give you? She promises you vague somethings.… She is a snare, she is deception. She is the beautiful mask of death."

"Yes," said Chatteris. "I know."

And then again, "I know.

"There is nothing for me to learn about that," he said. "But why — why should the mask of death be beautiful? After all — We get our duty by good hard reasoning. Why should reason and justice carry everything? Perhaps after all there are things beyond our reason, perhaps after all desire has a claim on us?"

He stopped interrogatively and Melville was profound. "I think," said my cousin at last, "Desire *has* a claim on us. Beauty, at any rate

——

"I mean," he explained, "we are human beings. We are matter with minds growing out of ourselves. We reach downward into the beautiful wonderland of matter, and upward to something—" He stopped, from sheer dissatisfaction with the image. "In another direction, anyhow," he tried feebly. He jumped at something that was not quite his meaning. "Man is a sort of half-way house — he must compromise."

"As you do?"

"Well. Yes. I try to strike a balance."

"A few old engravings — good, I suppose — a little luxury in furniture and flowers, a few things that come within your means. Art — in moderation, and a few kindly acts of the pleasanter sort, a certain respect for truth; duty — also in moderation. Eh? It's just that even balance that I cannot contrive. I cannot sit down to the oatmeal

of this daily life and wash it down with a temperate draught of beauty and water. Art!… I suppose I'm voracious, I'm one of the unfit — for the civilised stage. I've sat down once, I've sat down twice, to perfectly sane, secure, and reasonable things.… It's not my way."

He repeated, "It's not my way."

Melville, I think, said nothing to that. He was distracted from the immediate topic by the discussion of his own way of living. He was lost in egotistical comparisons. No doubt he was on the verge of saying, as most of us would have been under the circumstances: "I don't think you quite understand my position."

"But, after all, what is the good of talking in this way?" exclaimed Chatteris abruptly. "I am simply trying to elevate the whole business by dragging in these wider questions. It's justification, when I didn't mean to justify. I have to choose between life with Adeline and this woman out of the sea."

"Who is Death."

"How do I know she is Death?"

"But you said you had made your choice!"

"I have."

He seemed to recollect.

"I have," he corroborated. "I told you. I am going back to see Miss Glendower to-morrow.

"Yes." He recalled further portions of what I believe was some prepared and ready-phrased decision — some decision from which the conversation had drifted. "The need of my life is discipline, the habit of persistence, of ignoring side issues and wandering thoughts. Discipline!"

"And work."

"Work, if you like to put it so; it's the same thing. The trouble so far has been I haven't worked hard enough. I've stopped to speak to the woman by the wayside. I've paltered with compromise, and the other thing has caught me.… I've got to renounce it, that is all."

"It isn't that your work is contemptible."

"By Jove! No. It's — arduous. It has its dusty moments. There are places to climb that are not only steep but muddy — —"

"The world wants leaders. It gives a man of your class a great

deal. Leisure. Honour. Training and high traditions — —”

“And it expects something back. I know. I am wrong — have been wrong anyhow. This dream has taken me wonderfully. And I must renounce it. After all it is not so much — to renounce a dream. It’s no more than deciding to live. There are big things in the world for men to do.”

Melville produced an elaborate conceit. “If there is no Venus Anadyomene,” he said, “there is Michael and his Sword.”

“The stern angel in armour! But then he had a good palpable dragon to slash and not his own desires. And our way nowadays is to do a deal with the dragons somehow, raise the minimum wage and get a better housing for the working classes by hook or by crook.”

Melville does not think that was a fair treatment of his suggestion.

“No,” said Chatteris, “I’ve no doubt about the choice. I’m going to fall in — with the species; I’m going to take my place in the ranks in that great battle for the future which is the meaning of life. I want a moral cold bath and I mean to take one. This lax dalliance with dreams and desires must end. I will make a time table for my hours and a rule for my life, I will entangle my honour in controversies, I will give myself to service, as a man should do. Clean-handed work, struggle, and performance.”

“And there is Miss Glendower, you know.”

“Rather!” said Chatteris, with a faint touch of insincerity. “Tall and straight-eyed and capable. By Jove! if there’s to be no Venus Anadyomene, at any rate there will be a Pallas Athene. It is she who plays the reconciler.”

And then he said these words: “It won’t be so bad, you know.”

Melville restrained a movement of impatience, he tells me, at that.

Then Chatteris, he says, broke into a sort of speech. “The case is tried,” he said, “the judgment has been given. I am that I am. I’ve been through it all and worked it out. I am a man and I must go a man’s way. There is Desire, the light and guide of the world, a beacon on a headland blazing out. Let it burn! Let it burn! The road runs near it and by it — and past.… I’ve made my choice. I’ve got to be a man, I’ve got to live a man and die a man and carry the burden of my class and time. There it is! I’ve had the dream, but you see I keep hold of reason. Here, with the flame burning, I renounce it. I

make my choice.… Renunciation! Always — renunciation! That is life for all of us. We have desires, only to deny them, senses that we all must starve. We can live only as a part of ourselves. Why should *I* be exempt. For me, she is evil. For me she is death.… Only why have I seen her face? Why have I heard her voice?…”

VI

They walked out of the shadows and up a long sloping path until Sandgate, as a little line of lights, came into view below. Presently they came out upon the brow and walked together (the band playing with a remote and sweetening indistinctness far away behind them) towards the cliff at the end. They stood for a little while in silence looking down. Melville made a guess at his companion’s thoughts.

“Why not come down to-night?” he asked.

“On a night like this!” Chatteris turned about suddenly and regarded the moonlight and the sea. He stood quite still for a space, and that cold white radiance gave an illusory strength and decision to his face. “No,” he said at last, and the word was almost a sigh.

“Go down to the girl below there. End the thing. She will be there, thinking of you — —”

“No,” said Chatteris, “no.”

“It’s not ten yet,” Melville tried again.

Chatteris thought. “No,” he answered, “not to-night. To-morrow, in the light of everyday.

“I want a good, gray, honest day,” he said, “with a south-west wind.… These still, soft nights! How can you expect me to do anything of that sort to-night?”

And then he murmured as if he found the word a satisfying word to repeat, “Renunciation.”

“By Jove!” he said with the most astonishing transition, “but this is a night out of fairyland! Look at the lights of those windows below there and then up — up into this enormous blue of sky. And there, as if it were fainting with moonlight — shines one star.”

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH MOONSHINE TRIUMPHANT

I

Just precisely what happened after that has been the most impossible thing to disinter. I have given all the things that Melville remembered were said, I have linked them into a conversation and checked them by my cousin's afterthoughts, and finally I have read the whole thing over to him. It is of course no verbatim rendering, but it is, he says, closely after the manner of their talk, the gist was that, and things of that sort were said. And when he left Chatteris, he fully believed that the final and conclusive thing was said. And then he says it came into his head that, apart from and outside this settlement, there still remained a tangible reality, capable of action, the Sea Lady. What was she going to do? The thought toppled him back into a web of perplexities again. It carried him back into a state of inconclusive interrogation past Lummidge's Hotel.

The two men had gone back to the Métropole and had parted with a firm handclasp outside the glare of the big doorway. Chatteris went straight in, Melville fancies, but he is not sure. I understand Melville had some private thinking to do on his own account, and I conceive him walking away in a state of profound preoccupation. Afterwards the fact that the Sea Lady was not to be abolished by renunciations, cropped up in his mind, and he passed back along the Leas, as I have said. His inconclusive interrogations elicited at the utmost that Lummidge's Private and Family Hotel is singularly like any other hotel of its class. Its windows tell no secrets. And there Melville's narrative ends.

With that my circumstantial record necessarily comes to an end also. There are sources, of course, and glimpses. Parker refuses, unhappily — as I explained. The chief of these sources are, first, Gooch, the valet employed by Chatteris; and, secondly, the hall-porter of Lummidge's Private and Family Hotel.

The valet's evidence is precise, but has an air of being irrelevant. He witnesses that at a quarter past eleven he went up to ask Chatteris

if there was anything more to do that night, and found him seated in an arm-chair before the open window, with his chin upon his hands, staring at nothing — which, indeed, as Schopenhauer observes in his crowning passage, is the whole of human life.

"More to do?" said Chatteris.

"Yessir," said the valet.

"Nothing," said Chatteris, "absolutely nothing." And the valet, finding this answer quite satisfactory, wished him goodnight and departed.

Probably Chatteris remained in this attitude for a considerable time — half an hour, perhaps, or more. Slowly, it would seem, his mood underwent a change. At some definite moment it must have been that his lethargic meditation gave way to a strange activity, to a sort of hysterical reaction against all his resolves and renunciations. His first action seems to me grotesque — and grotesquely pathetic. He went into his dressing-room, and in the morning "his clo'es," said the valet, "was shied about as though 'e'd lost a ticket." This poor worshipper of beauty and the dream shaved! He shaved and washed and he brushed his hair, and, his valet testifies, one of the brushes got "shied" behind the bed. Even this throwing about of brushes seems to me to have done little or nothing to palliate his poor human preoccupation with the toilette. He changed his gray flannels — which suited him very well — for his white ones, which suited him extremely. He must deliberately and conscientiously have made himself quite "lovely," as a schoolgirl would have put it.

And having capped his great "renunciation" by these proceedings, he seems to have gone straight to Lummidge's Private and Family Hotel and demanded to see the Sea Lady.

She had retired.

This came from Parker, and was delivered in a chilling manner by the hall-porter.

Chatteris swore at the hall-porter. "Tell her I'm here," he said.

"She's retired," said the hall-porter with official severity.

"Will you tell her I'm here?" said Chatteris, suddenly white.

"What name, sir?" said the hall-porter, in order, as he explains, "to avoid a frackass."

"Chatteris. Tell her I must see her now. Do you hear, *now?*"

The hall-porter went to Parker, and came half-way back. He wished to goodness he was not a hall-porter. The manager had gone out — it was a stagnant hour. He decided to try Parker again; he raised his voice.

The Sea Lady called to Parker from the inner room. There was an interval of tension.

I gather that the Sea Lady put on a loose wrap, and the faithful Parker either carried her or sufficiently helped her from her bedroom to the couch in the little sitting-room. In the meanwhile the hall-porter hovered on the stairs, praying for the manager — prayers that went unanswered — and Chatteris fumed below. Then we have a glimpse of the Sea Lady.

"I see her just in the crack of the door," said the porter, "as that maid of hers opened it. She was raised up on her hands, and turned so towards the door. Looking exactly like this — —"

And the hall-porter, who has an Irish type of face, a short nose, long upper lip, and all the rest of it, and who has also neglected his dentist, projected his face suddenly, opened his eyes very wide, and slowly curved his mouth into a fixed smile, and so remained until he judged the effect on me was complete.

Parker, a little flushed, but resolutely flattening everything to the quality of the commonplace, emerged upon him suddenly. Miss Waters could see Mr. Chatteris for a few minutes. She was emphatic with the "Miss Waters," the more emphatic for all the insurgent stress of the goddess, protestingly emphatic. And Chatteris went up, white and resolved, to that smiling expectant presence. No one witnessed their meeting but Parker — assuredly Parker could not resist seeing that, but Parker is silent — Parker preserves a silence that rubies could not break.

All I know, is this much from the porter:

"When I said she was up there and would see him," he says, "the way he rooshed up was outrageous. This is a Private Family Hotel. Of course one sees things at times even here, but ——

"I couldn't find the manager to tell 'im," said the hall-porter. "And what was *I* authorised to do?

"For a bit they talked with the door open, and then it was shut. That maid of hers did it — I lay."

I asked an ignoble question.

"Couldn't ketch a word," said the hall-porter. "Dropped to whispers — instanter."

II

And afterwards —

It was within ten minutes of one that Parker, conferring an amount of decorum on the request beyond the power of any other living being, descended to demand — of all conceivable things — the bath chair!

"I got it," said the hall-porter with inimitable profundity.

And then, having let me realise the fulness of that, he said: "They never used it!"

"No?"

"No! He carried her down in his arms."

"And out?"

"And out!"

He was difficult to follow in his description of the Sea Lady. She wore her wrap, it seems, and she was "like a statue" — whatever he may have meant by that. Certainly not that she was impassive. "Only," said the porter, "she was alive. One arm was bare, I know, and her hair was down, a tossing mass of gold.

"He looked, you know, like a man who's screwed himself up.

"She had one hand holding his hair — yes, holding his hair, with her fingers in among it.…

"And when she see my face she threw her head back laughing at me.

"As much as to say, '*got* 'im!'

"Laughed at me, she did. Bubblin' over."

I stood for a moment conceiving this extraordinary picture. Then a question occurred to me.

"Did *he* laugh?" I asked.

"Gord bless you, sir, laugh? *No!*"

III

The definite story ends in the warm light outside Lummidge's Private and Family Hotel. One sees that bright solitude of the Leas stretching white and blank — deserted as only a seaside front in the small hours can be deserted — and all its electric light ablaze. And then the dark line of the edge where the cliff drops down to the undercliff and sea. And beyond, moonlit, the Channel and its incessant ships. Outside the front of the hotel, which is one of a great array of pallid white facades, stands this little black figure of a hall-porter, staring stupidly into the warm and luminous mystery of the night that has swallowed Sea Lady and Chatteris together. And he is the sole living thing in the picture.

There is a little shelter set in the brow of the Leas, wherein, during the winter season, a string band plays. Close by there are steps that go down precipitously to the lower road below. Down these it must have been they went together, hastening downward out of this life of ours to unknown and inconceivable things. So it is I seem to see them, and surely though he was not in a laughing mood, there was now no doubt nor resignation in his face. Assuredly now he had found himself, for a time at least he was sure of himself, and that at least cannot be misery, though it lead straight through a few swift strides to death.

They went down through the soft moonlight, tall and white and splendid, interlocked, with his arms about her, his brow to her white shoulder and her hair about his face. And she, I suppose, smiled above him and caressed him and whispered to him. For a moment they must have glowed under the warm light of the lamp that is half-way down the steps there, and then the shadows closed about them. He must have crossed the road with her, through the laced moonlight of the tree shadows, and through the shrubs and bushes of the undercliff, into the shadeless moon glare of the beach. There was no one to see that last descent, to tell whether for a moment he looked back before he waded into the phosphorescence, and for a little swam with her, and presently swam no longer, and so was no more to be seen by any one in this gray world of men.

Did he look back, I wonder? They swam together for a little while, the man and the sea goddess who had come for him, with the sky above them and the water about them all, warmly filled with the

moonlight and set with shining stars. It was no time for him to think of truth, nor of the honest duties he had left behind him, as they swam together into the unknown. And of the end I can only guess and dream. Did there come a sudden horror upon him at the last, a sudden perception of infinite error, and was he drawn down, swiftly and terribly, a bubbling repentance, into those unknown deeps? Or was she tender and wonderful to the last, and did she wrap her arms about him and draw him down, down until the soft waters closed above him into a gentle ecstasy of death?

Into these things we cannot pry or follow, and on the margin of the softly breathing water the story of Chatteris must end. For the tailpiece to that, let us put that policeman who in the small hours before dawn came upon the wrap the Sea Lady had been wearing just as the tide overtook it. It was not the sort of garment low people sometimes throw away — it was a soft and costly wrap. I seem to see him perplexed and dubious, wrap in charge over his arm and lantern in hand, scanning first the white beach and black bushes behind him and then staring out to sea. It was the inexplicable abandonment of a thoroughly comfortable and desirable thing.

"What were people up to?" one figures him asking, this simple citizen of a plain and observed world. "What do such things mean?

"To throw away such an excellent wrap…!"

In all the southward heaven there were only a planet and the sinking moon, and from his feet a path of quivering light must have started and run up to the extreme dark edge before him of the sky. Ever and again the darkness east and west of that glory would be lit by a momentary gleam of phosphorescence; and far out the lights of ships were shining bright and yellow. Across its shimmer a black fishing smack was gliding out of mystery into mystery. Dungeness shone from the west a pin-point of red light, and in the east the tireless glare of that great beacon on Gris-nez wheeled athwart the sky and vanished and came again.

I picture the interrogation of his lantern going out for a little way, a stain of faint pink curiosity upon the mysterious vast serenity of night.

THE END

THE FOOD OF THE GODS AND HOW IT CAME TO EARTH

This science fiction novel was published in 1904 and deals with the idea of the importance of scale and size in human affairs, telling the story of a superfood, Heraklephorbia IV, which, when consumed, causes living beings to grow to enormous size. As the food is given to children, a race of young giants is founded. These giants are initially tolerated but, as the years progress, tensions mount between the giants and the ordinary humans.

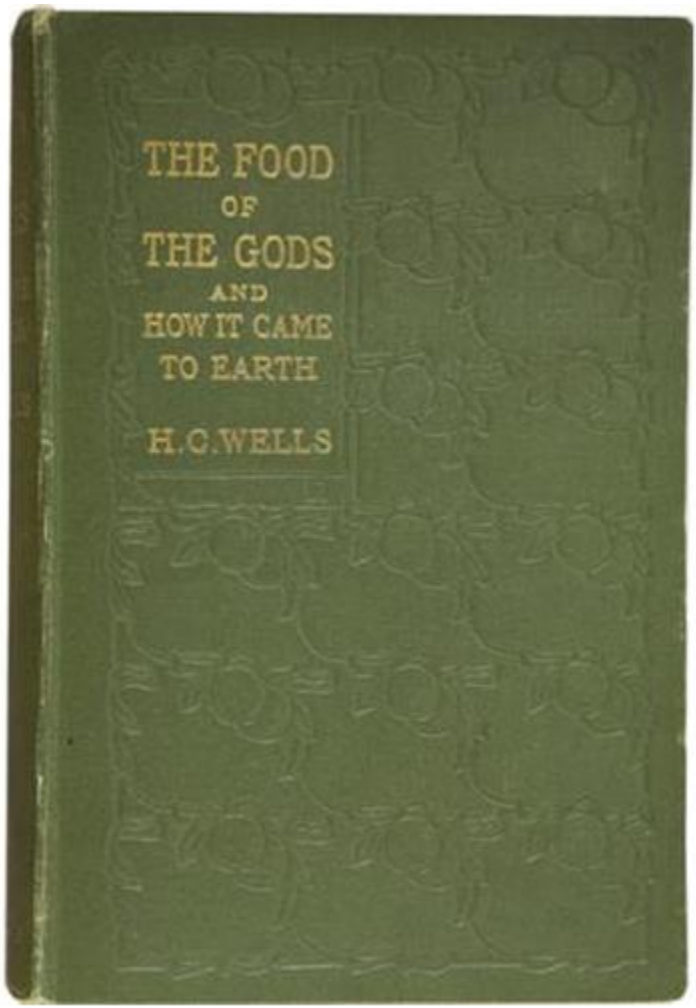

The first edition

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CHAPTER THE FOURTH.
CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

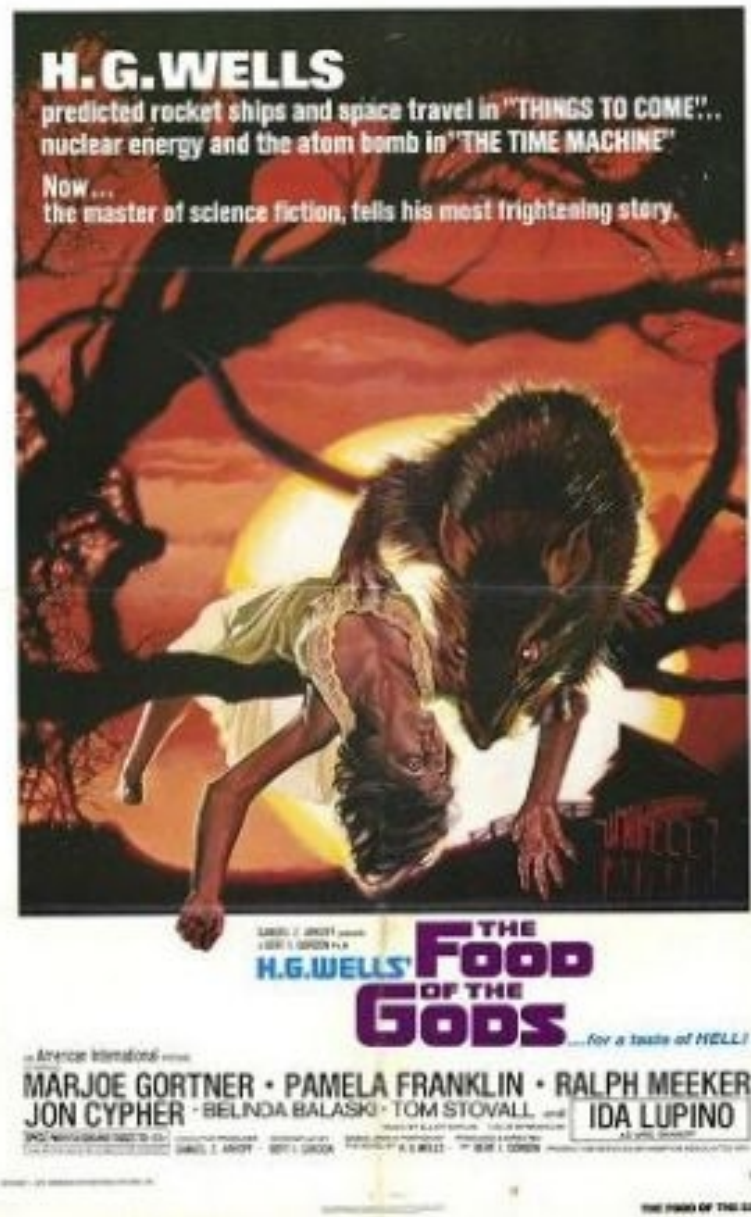

A theatrical poster for the 1976 film, loosely based on the novel

BOOK I. THE DAWN OF THE FOOD.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE FOOD.

I.

In the middle years of the nineteenth century there first became abundant in this strange world of ours a class of men, men tending for the most part to become elderly, who are called, and who are very properly called, but who dislike extremely to be called—"Scientists." They dislike that word so much that from the columns of *Nature*, which was from the first their distinctive and characteristic paper, it is as carefully excluded as if it were — that other word which is the basis of all really bad language in this country. But the Great Public and its Press know better, and "Scientists" they are, and when they emerge to any sort of publicity, "distinguished scientists" and "eminent scientists" and "well-known scientists" is the very least we call them.

Certainly both Mr. Bensington and Professor Redwood quite merited any of these terms long before they came upon the marvellous discovery of which this story tells. Mr. Bensington was a Fellow of the Royal Society and a former president of the Chemical Society, and Professor Redwood was Professor of Physiology in the Bond Street College of the London University, and he had been grossly libelled by the anti-vivisectionists time after time. And they had led lives of academic distinction from their very earliest youth.

They were of course quite undistinguished looking men, as indeed all true Scientists are. There is more personal distinction about the mildest-mannered actor alive than there is about the entire Royal Society. Mr. Bensington was short and very, very bald, and he stooped slightly; he wore gold-rimmed spectacles and cloth boots that were abundantly cut open because of his numerous corns, and Professor Redwood was entirely ordinary in his appearance. Until they happened upon the Food of the Gods (as I must insist upon calling it) they led lives of such eminent and studious obscurity that it is hard to find anything whatever to tell the reader about them.

Mr. Bensington won his spurs (if one may use such an expression of a gentleman in boots of slashed cloth) by his splendid researches upon the More Toxic Alkaloids, and Professor Redwood rose to eminence — I do not clearly remember how he rose to eminence! I know he was very eminent, and that's all. Things of this sort grow. I fancy it was a voluminous work on Reaction Times with numerous plates of sphygmograph tracings (I write subject to correction) and an admirable new terminology, that did the thing for him.

The general public saw little or nothing of either of these gentlemen. Sometimes at places like the Royal Institution and the Society of Arts it did in a sort of way see Mr. Bensington, or at least his blushing baldness and something of his collar and coat, and hear fragments of a lecture or paper that he imagined himself to be reading audibly; and once I remember — one midday in the vanished past — when the British Association was at Dover, coming on Section C or D, or some such letter, which had taken up its quarters in a public-house, and following two, serious-looking ladies with paper parcels, out of mere curiosity, through a door labelled "Billiards" and "Pool" into a scandalous darkness, broken only by a magic-lantern circle of Redwood's tracings.

I watched the lantern slides come and go, and listened to a voice (I forget what it was saying) which I believe was the voice of Professor Redwood, and there was a sizzling from the lantern and another sound that kept me there, still out of curiosity, until the lights were unexpectedly turned up. And then I perceived that this sound was the sound of the munching of buns and sandwiches and things that the assembled British Associates had come there to eat under cover of the magic-lantern darkness.

And Redwood I remember went on talking all the time the lights were up and dabbing at the place where his diagram ought to have been visible on the screen — and so it was again so soon as the darkness was restored. I remember him then as a most ordinary, slightly nervous-looking dark man, with an air of being preoccupied with something else, and doing what he was doing just then under an unaccountable sense of duty.

I heard Bensington also once — in the old days — at an educational conference in Bloomsbury. Like most eminent chemists

and botanists, Mr. Bensington was very authoritative upon teaching — though I am certain he would have been scared out of his wits by an average Board School class in half-an-hour — and so far as I can remember now, he was propounding an improvement of Professor Armstrong's Heuristic method, whereby at the cost of three or four hundred pounds' worth of apparatus, a total neglect of all other studies and the undivided attention of a teacher of exceptional gifts, an average child might with a peculiar sort of thumby thoroughness learn in the course of ten or twelve years almost as much chemistry as one could get in one of those objectionable shilling text-books that were then so common….

Quite ordinary persons you perceive, both of them, outside their science. Or if anything on the unpractical side of ordinary. And that you will find is the case with "scientists" as a class all the world over. What there is great of them is an annoyance to their fellow scientists and a mystery to the general public, and what is not is evident.

There is no doubt about what is not great, no race of men have such obvious littlenesses. They live in a narrow world so far as their human intercourse goes; their researches involve infinite attention and an almost monastic seclusion; and what is left over is not very much. To witness some queer, shy, misshapen, grey-headed, self-important, little discoverer of great discoveries, ridiculously adorned with the wide ribbon of some order of chivalry and holding a reception of his fellow-men, or to read the anguish of *Nature* at the "neglect of science" when the angel of the birthday honours passes the Royal Society by, or to listen to one indefatigable lichenologist commenting on the work of another indefatigable lichenologist, such things force one to realise the unfaltering littleness of men.

And withal the reef of Science that these little "scientists" built and are yet building is so wonderful, so portentous, so full of mysterious half-shapen promises for the mighty future of man! They do not seem to realise the things they are doing! No doubt long ago even Mr. Bensington, when he chose this calling, when he consecrated his life to the alkaloids and their kindred compounds, had some inkling of the vision, — more than an inkling. Without some such inspiration, for such glories and positions only as a

“scientist” may expect, what young man would have given his life to such work, as young men do? No, they *must* have seen the glory, they must have had the vision, but so near that it has blinded them. The splendour has blinded them, mercifully, so that for the rest of their lives they can hold the lights of knowledge in comfort — that we may see!

And perhaps it accounts for Redwood’s touch of preoccupation, that — there can be no doubt of it now — he among his fellows was different, he was different inasmuch as something of the vision still lingered in his eyes.

II.

The Food of the Gods I call it, this substance that Mr. Bensington and Professor Redwood made between them; and having regard now to what it has already done and all that it is certainly going to do, there is surely no exaggeration in the name. So I shall continue to call it therefore throughout my story. But Mr. Bensington would no more have called it that in cold blood than he would have gone out from his flat in Sloane Street clad in regal scarlet and a wreath of laurel. The phrase was a mere first cry of astonishment from him. He called it the Food of the Gods, in his enthusiasm and for an hour or so at the most altogether. After that he decided he was being absurd. When he first thought of the thing he saw, as it were, a vista of enormous possibilities — literally enormous possibilities; but upon this dazzling vista, after one stare of amazement, he resolutely shut his eyes, even as a conscientious “scientist” should. After that, the Food of the Gods sounded blatant to the pitch of indecency. He was surprised he had used the expression. Yet for all that something of that clear-eyed moment hung about him and broke out ever and again….

“Really, you know,” he said, rubbing his hands together and laughing nervously, “it has more than a theoretical interest.

“For example,” he confided, bringing his face close to the Professor’s and dropping to an undertone, “it would perhaps, if suitably handled, *sell*….

“Precisely,” he said, walking away,— “as a Food. Or at least a

food ingredient.

"Assuming of course that it is palatable. A thing we cannot know till we have prepared it."

He turned upon the hearthrug, and studied the carefully designed slits upon his cloth shoes.

"Name?" he said, looking up in response to an inquiry. "For my part I incline to the good old classical allusion. It — it makes Science res — . Gives it a touch of old-fashioned dignity. I have been thinking … I don't know if you will think it absurd of me…. A little fancy is surely occasionally permissible…. Herakleophorbia. Eh? The nutrition of a possible Hercules? You know it *might* …

"Of course if you think *not*—"

Redwood reflected with his eyes on the fire and made no objection.

"You think it would do?"

Redwood moved his head gravely.

"It might be Titanophorbia, you know. Food of Titans…. You prefer the former?

"You're quite sure you don't think it a little *too*—"

"No."

"Ah! I'm glad."

And so they called it Herakleophorbia throughout their investigations, and in their report, — the report that was never published, because of the unexpected developments that upset all their arrangements, — it is invariably written in that way. There were three kindred substances prepared before they hit on the one their speculations had foretolds and these they spoke of as Herakleophorbia I, Herakleophorbia II, and Herakleophorbia III. It is Herakleophorbia IV. which I — insisting upon Bensington's original name — call here the Food of the Gods.

III.

The idea was Mr. Bensington's. But as it was suggested to him by one of Professor Redwood's contributions to the Philosophical Transactions, he very properly consulted that gentleman before he carried it further. Besides which it was, as a research, a

physiological, quite as much as a chemical inquiry.

Professor Redwood was one of those scientific men who are addicted to tracings and curves. You are familiar — if you are at all the sort of reader I like — with the sort of scientific paper I mean. It is a paper you cannot make head nor tail of, and at the end come five or six long folded diagrams that open out and show peculiar zigzag tracings, flashes of lightning overdone, or sinuous inexplicable things called "smoothed curves" set up on ordinates and rooting in abscissae — and things like that. You puzzle over the thing for a long time and end with the suspicion that not only do you not understand it but that the author does not understand it either. But really you know many of these scientific people understand the meaning of their own papers quite well: it is simply a defect of expression that raises the obstacle between us.

I am inclined to think that Redwood thought in tracings and curves. And after his monumental work upon Reaction Times (the unscientific reader is exhorted to stick to it for a little bit longer and everything will be as clear as daylight) Redwood began to turn out smoothed curves and sphygmographeries upon Growth, and it was one of his papers upon Growth that really gave Mr. Bensington his idea.

Redwood, you know, had been measuring growing things of all sorts, kittens, puppies, sunflowers, mushrooms, bean plants, and (until his wife put a stop to it) his baby, and he showed that growth went out not at a regular pace, or, as he put it, so,

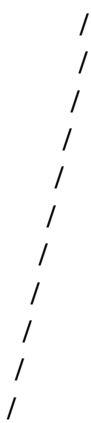

but with bursts and intermissions of this sort,

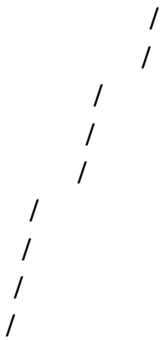

and that apparently nothing grew regularly and steadily, and so far as he could make out nothing could grow regularly and steadily: it was as if every living thing had just to accumulate force to grow, grew with vigour only for a time, and then had to wait for a space before it could go on growing again. And in the muffled and highly technical language of the really careful "scientist," Redwood suggested that the process of growth probably demanded the presence of a considerable quantity of some necessary substance in the blood that was only formed very slowly, and that when this substance was used up by growth, it was only very slowly replaced, and that meanwhile the organism had to mark time. He compared his unknown substance to oil in machinery. A growing animal was rather like an engine, he suggested, that can move a certain distance and must then be oiled before it can run again. ("But why shouldn't one oil the engine from without?" said Mr. Bensington, when he read the paper.) And all this, said Redwood, with the delightful nervous inconsecutiveness of his class, might very probably be found to throw a light upon the mystery of certain of the ductless glands. As though they had anything to do with it at all!

In a subsequent communication Redwood went further. He gave a perfect Brock's benefit of diagrams — exactly like rocket trajectories they were; and the gist of it — so far as it had any gist — was that the blood of puppies and kittens and the sap of sunflowers and the juice of mushrooms in what he called the "growing phase" differed in

the proportion of certain elements from their blood and sap on the days when they were not particularly growing.

And when Mr. Bensington, after holding the diagrams sideways and upside down, began to see what this difference was, a great amazement came upon him. Because, you see, the difference might probably be due to the presence of just the very substance he had recently been trying to isolate in his researches upon such alkaloids as are most stimulating to the nervous system. He put down Redwood's paper on the patent reading-desk that swung inconveniently from his arm-chair, took off his gold-rimmed spectacles, breathed on them and wiped them very carefully.

"By Jove!" said Mr. Bensington.

Then replacing his spectacles again he turned to the patent reading-desk, which immediately, as his elbow came against its arm, gave a coquettish squeak and deposited the paper, with all its diagrams in a dispersed and crumpled state, on the floor. "By Jove!" said Mr. Bensington, straining his stomach over the arm-chair with a patient disregard of the habits of this convenience, and then, finding the pamphlet still out of reach, he went down on all fours in pursuit. It was on the floor that the idea of calling it the Food of the Gods came to him….

For you see, if he was right and Redwood was right, then by injecting or administering this new substance of his in food, he would do away with the "resting phase," and instead of growth going on in this fashion,

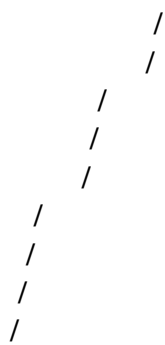

it would (if you follow me) go thus —

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IV.

The night after his conversation with Redwood Mr. Bensington could scarcely sleep a wink. He did seem once to get into a sort of doze, but it was only for a moment, and then he dreamt he had dug a deep hole into the earth and poured in tons and tons of the Food of the Gods, and the earth was swelling and swelling, and all the boundaries of the countries were bursting, and the Royal Geographical Society was all at work like one great guild of tailors letting out the equator….

That of course was a ridiculous dream, but it shows the state of mental excitement into which Mr. Bensington got and the real value he attached to his idea, much better than any of the things he said or did when he was awake and on his guard. Or I should not have mentioned it, because as a general rule I do not think it is at all interesting for people to tell each other about their dreams.

By a singular coincidence Redwood also had a dream that night, and his dream was this: —

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It was a diagram done in fire upon a long scroll of the abyss. And he (Redwood) was standing on a planet before a sort of black platform lecturing about the new sort of growth that was now possible, to the More than Royal Institution of Primordial Forces —

forces which had always previously, even in the growth of races, empires, planetary systems, and worlds, gone so: —

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And even in some cases so: —

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And he was explaining to them quite lucidly and convincingly that these slow, these even retrogressive methods would be very speedily quite put out of fashion by his discovery.

Ridiculous of course! But that too shows —

That either dream is to be regarded as in any way significant or prophetic beyond what I have categorically said, I do not for one moment suggest.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

I.

Mr. Bensington proposed originally to try this stuff, so soon as he was really able to prepare it, upon tadpoles. One always does try this sort of thing upon tadpoles to begin with; this being what tadpoles are for. And it was agreed that he should conduct the experiments and not Redwood, because Redwood's laboratory was occupied with the ballistic apparatus and animals necessary for an investigation into the Diurnal Variation in the Butting Frequency of the Young Bull Calf, an investigation that was yielding curves of an abnormal and very perplexing sort, and the presence of glass globes of tadpoles was extremely undesirable while this particular research was in progress.

But when Mr. Bensington conveyed to his cousin Jane something of what he had in mind, she put a prompt veto upon the importation of any considerable number of tadpoles, or any such experimental creatures, into their flat. She had no objection whatever to his use of one of the rooms of the flat for the purposes of a non-explosive chemistry that, so far as she was concerned, came to nothing; she let him have a gas furnace and a sink and a dust-tight cupboard of refuge from the weekly storm of cleaning she would not forego. And having known people addicted to drink, she regarded his solicitude for distinction in learned societies as an excellent substitute for the coarser form of depravity. But any sort of living things in quantity, "wriggly" as they were bound to be alive and "smelly" dead, she could not and would not abide. She said these things were certain to be unhealthy, and Bensington was notoriously a delicate man — it was nonsense to say he wasn't. And when Bensington tried to make the enormous importance of this possible discovery clear, she said that it was all very well, but if she consented to his making everything nasty and unwholesome in the place (and that was what it all came to) then she was certain he would be the first to complain.

And Mr. Bensington went up and down the room, regardless of his corns, and spoke to her quite firmly and angrily without the slightest effect. He said that nothing ought to stand in the way of the Advancement of Science, and she said that the Advancement of Science was one thing and having a lot of tadpoles in a flat was another; he said that in Germany it was an ascertained fact that a man with an idea like his would at once have twenty thousand properly-fitted cubic feet of laboratory placed at his disposal, and she said she was glad and always had been glad that she was not a German; he said that it would make him famous for ever, and she said it was much more likely to make him ill to have a lot of tadpoles in a flat like theirs; he said he was master in his own house, and she said that rather than wait on a lot of tadpoles she'd go as matron to a school; and then he asked her to be reasonable, and she asked *him* to be reasonable then and give up all this about tadpoles; and he said she might respect his ideas, and she said not if they were smelly she wouldn't, and then he gave way completely and said — in spite of the classical remarks of Huxley upon the subject — a bad word. Not a very bad word it was, but bad enough.

And after that she was greatly offended and had to be apologised to, and the prospect of ever trying the Food of the Gods upon tadpoles in their flat at any rate vanished completely in the apology.

So Bensington had to consider some other way of carrying out these experiments in feeding that would be necessary to demonstrate his discovery, so soon as he had his substance isolated and prepared. For some days he meditated upon the possibility of boarding out his tadpoles with some trustworthy person, and then the chance sight of the phrase in a newspaper turned his thoughts to an Experimental Farm.

And chicks. Directly he thought of it, he thought of it as a poultry farm. He was suddenly taken with a vision of wildly growing chicks. He conceived a picture of coops and runs, outsize and still more outsize coops, and runs progressively larger. Chicks are so accessible, so easily fed and observed, so much drier to handle and measure, that for his purpose tadpoles seemed to him now, in comparison with them, quite wild and uncontrollable beasts. He was quite puzzled to understand why he had not thought of chicks instead

of tadpoles from the beginning. Among other things it would have saved all this trouble with his cousin Jane. And when he suggested this to Redwood, Redwood quite agreed with him.

Redwood said that in working so much upon needlessly small animals he was convinced experimental physiologists made a great mistake. It is exactly like making experiments in chemistry with an insufficient quantity of material; errors of observation and manipulation become disproportionately large. It was of extreme importance just at present that scientific men should assert their right to have their material *big*. That was why he was doing his present series of experiments at the Bond Street College upon Bull Calves, in spite of a certain amount of inconvenience to the students and professors of other subjects caused by their incidental levity in the corridors. But the curves he was getting were quite exceptionally interesting, and would, when published, amply justify his choice. For his own part, were it not for the inadequate endowment of science in this country, he would never, if he could avoid it, work on anything smaller than a whale. But a Public Vivarium on a sufficient scale to render this possible was, he feared, at present, in this country at any rate, a Utopian demand. In Germany — Etc.

As Redwood's Bull calves needed his daily attention, the selection and equipment of the Experimental Farm fell largely on Bensington. The entire cost also, was, it was understood, to be defrayed by Bensington, at least until a grant could be obtained. Accordingly he alternated his work in the laboratory of his flat with farm hunting up and down the lines that run southward out of London, and his peering spectacles, his simple baldness, and his lacerated cloth shoes filled the owners of numerous undesirable properties with vain hopes. And he advertised in several daily papers and *Nature* for a responsible couple (married), punctual, active, and used to poultry, to take entire charge of an Experimental Farm of three acres.

He found the place he seemed in need of at Hickleybrow, near Urshot, in Kent. It was a little queer isolated place, in a dell surrounded by old pine woods that were black and forbidding at night. A humped shoulder of down cut it off from the sunset, and a gaunt well with a shattered penthouse dwarfed the dwelling. The

little house was creeperless, several windows were broken, and the cart shed had a black shadow at midday. It was a mile and a half from the end house of the village, and its loneliness was very doubtfully relieved by an ambiguous family of echoes.

The place impressed Bensington as being eminently adapted to the requirements of scientific research. He walked over the premises sketching out coops and runs with a sweeping arm, and he found the kitchen capable of accommodating a series of incubators and foster mothers with the very minimum of alteration. He took the place there and then; on his way back to London he stopped at Dunton Green and closed with an eligible couple that had answered his advertisements, and that same evening he succeeded in isolating a sufficient quantity of Herakleophorbia I. to more than justify these engagements.

The eligible couple who were destined under Mr. Bensington to be the first almoners on earth of the Food of the Gods, were not only very perceptibly aged, but also extremely dirty. This latter point Mr. Bensington did not observe, because nothing destroys the powers of general observation quite so much as a life of experimental science. They were named Skinner, Mr. and Mrs. Skinner, and Mr. Bensington interviewed them in a small room with hermetically sealed windows, a spotted overmantel looking-glass, and some ailing calceolarias.

Mrs. Skinner was a very little old woman, capless, with dirty white hair drawn back very very tightly from a face that had begun by being chiefly, and was now, through the loss of teeth and chin, and the wrinkling up of everything else, ending by being almost exclusively — nose. She was dressed in slate colour (so far as her dress had any colour) slashed in one place with red flannel. She let him in and talked to him guardedly and peered at him round and over her nose, while Mr. Skinner she alleged made some alteration in his toilette. She had one tooth that got into her articulations and she held her two long wrinkled hands nervously together. She told Mr. Bensington that she had managed fowls for years; and knew all about incubators; in fact, they themselves had run a Poultry Farm at one time, and it had only failed at last through the want of pupils. “It’s the pupils as pay,” said Mrs. Skinner.

Mr. Skinner, when he appeared, was a large-faced man, with a lisp and a squint that made him look over the top of your head, slashed slippers that appealed to Mr. Bensington's sympathies, and a manifest shortness of buttons. He held his coat and shirt together with one hand and traced patterns on the black-and-gold tablecloth with the index finger of the other, while his disengaged eye watched Mr. Bensington's sword of Damocles, so to speak, with an expression of sad detachment. "You don't want to run thith Farm for profit. No, Thir. Ith all the thame, Thir. Ekthperimenth! Prethithely."

He said they could go to the farm at once. He was doing nothing at Dunton Green except a little tailoring. "It ithn't the thmart plathe I thought it wath, and what I get ithent thkarthely worth having," he said, "tho that if it ith any convenienth to you for uth to come…."

And in a week Mr. and Mrs. Skinner were installed in the farm, and the jobbing carpenter from Hickleybrow was diversifying the task of erecting runs and henhouses with a systematic discussion of Mr. Bensington.

"I haven't theen much of 'im yet," said Mr. Skinner. "But as far as I can make 'im out 'e theems to be a thtewpid o' fool."

"*I* thought 'e seemed a bit Dotty," said the carpenter from Hickleybrow.

"'E fanthieth 'imself about poultry," said Mr. Skinner. "O my goodneth!
You'd think nobody knew nothin' about poultry thept 'im."

"'E *looks* like a 'en," said the carpenter from Hickleybrow; "what with them spectacles of 'is."

Mr. Skinner came closer to the carpenter from Hickleybrow, and spoke in a confidential manner, and one sad eye regarded the distant village, and one was bright and wicked. "Got to be meathured every blethed day — every blethed 'en, 'e thays. Tho as to thee they grow properly. What oh … eh? Every blethed 'en — every blethed day."

And Mr. Skinner put up his hand to laugh behind it in a refined and contagious manner, and humped his shoulders very much — and only the other eye of him failed to participate in his laughter. Then doubting if the carpenter had quite got the point of it, he repeated in a

penetrating whisper; "*Meathured*!"

"'E's worse than our old guvnor; I'm dratted if 'e ain't," said the carpenter from Hickleybrow.

II.

Experimental work is the most tedious thing in the world (unless it be the reports of it in the *Philosophical Transactions*), and it seemed a long time to Mr. Bensington before his first dream of enormous possibilities was replaced by a crumb of realisation. He had taken the Experimental Farm in October, and it was May before the first inklings of success began. Herakleophorbia I. and II. and III. had to be tried, and failed; there was trouble with the rats of the Experimental Farm, and there was trouble with the Skinners. The only way to get Skinner to do anything he was told to do was to dismiss him. Then he would nib his unshaven chin — he was always unshaven most miraculously and yet never bearded — with a flattened hand, and look at Mr. Bensington with one eye, and over him with the other, and say, "Oo, of courthe, Thir — if you're *theriouth*!"

But at last success dawned. And its herald was a letter in the long slender handwriting of Mr. Skinner.

"The new Brood are out," wrote Mr. Skinner, "and don't quite like the look of them. Growing very rank — quite unlike what the similar lot was before your last directions was given. The last, before the cat got them, was a very nice, stocky chick, but these are Growing like thistles. I never saw. They peck so hard, striking above boot top, that am unable to give exact Measures as requested. They are regular Giants, and eating as such. We shall want more com very soon, for you never saw such chicks to eat. Bigger than Bantams. Going on at this rate, they ought to be a bird for show, rank as they are. Plymouth Rocks won't be in it. Had a scare last night thinking that cat was at them, and when I looked out at the window could have sworn I see her getting in under the wire. The chicks was all awake and pecking about hungry when I went out, but could not see anything of the cat. So gave them a peck of corn, and fastened up safe. Shall be glad to know if the Feeding to be continued as

directed. Food you mixed is pretty near all gone, and do not like to mix any more myself on account of the accident with the pudding. With best wishes from us both, and soliciting continuance of esteemed favours,

"Respectfully yours,

"ALFRED NEWTON SKINNER."

The allusion towards the end referred to a milk pudding with which some Herakleophorbia II. had got itself mixed with painful and very nearly fatal results to the Skinners.

But Mr. Bensington, reading between the lines saw in this rankness of growth the attainment of his long sought goal. The next morning he alighted at Urshot station, and in the bag in his hand he carried, sealed in three tins, a supply of the Food of the Gods sufficient for all the chicks in Kent.

It was a bright and beautiful morning late in May, and his corns were so much better that he resolved to walk through Hickleybrow to his farm. It was three miles and a half altogether, through the park and villages and then along the green glades of the Hickleybrow preserves. The trees were all dusted with the green spangles of high spring, the hedges were full of stitchwort and campion and the woods of blue hyacinths and purple orchid; and everywhere there was a great noise of birds — thrushes, blackbirds, robins, finches, and many more — and in one warm corner of the park some bracken was unrolling, and there was a leaping and rushing of fallow deer.

These things brought back to Mr. Bensington his early and forgotten delight in life; before him the promise of his discovery grew bright and joyful, and it seemed to him that indeed he must have come upon the happiest day in his life. And when in the sunlit run by the sandy bank under the shadow of the pine trees he saw the chicks that had eaten the food he had mixed for them, gigantic and gawky, bigger already than many a hen that is married and settled and still growing, still in their first soft yellow plumage (just faintly marked with brown along the back), he knew indeed that his happiest day had come.

At Mr. Skinner's urgency he went into the runs but after he had

been pecked through the cracks in his shoes once or twice he got out again, and watched these monsters through the wire netting. He peered close to the netting, and followed their movements as though he had never seen a chick before in his life.

"Whath they'll be when they're grown up ith impothible to think," said
Mr. Skinner.

"Big as a horse," said Mr. Bensington.

"Pretty near," said Mr. Skinner.

"Several people could dine off a wing!" said Mr. Bensington. "They'd cut up into joints like butcher's meat."

"They won't go on growing at thith pathe though," said Mr. Skinner.

"No?" said Mr. Bensington.

"No," said Mr. Skinner. "I know thith thort. They begin rank, but they don't go on, bleth you! No."

There was a pause.

"Itth management," said Mr. Skinner modestly.

Mr. Bensington turned his glasses on him suddenly.

"We got 'em almoth ath big at the other plathe," said Mr. Skinner, with his better eye piously uplifted and letting himself go a little; "me and the mithith."

Mr. Bensington made his usual general inspection of the premises, but he speedily returned to the new run. It was, you know, in truth ever so much more than he had dared to expect. The course of science is so tortuous and so slow; after the clear promises and before the practical realisation arrives there comes almost always year after year of intricate contrivance, and here — here was the Foods of the Gods arriving after less than a year of testing! It seemed too good — too good. That Hope Deferred which is the daily food of the scientific imagination was to be his no more! So at least it seemed to him then. He came back and stared at these stupendous chicks of his, time after time.

"Let me see," he said. "They're ten days old. And by the side of an ordinary chick I should fancy — about six or seven times as

big….”

“Itth about time we artht for a rithe in thkrew,” said Mr. Skinner to his wife. “He’th ath pleathed ath Punth about the way we got thothe chickth on in the further run — pleathed ath Punth he ith.”

He bent confidentially towards her. “Thinkth it’th that old food of hith,” he said behind his hands and made a noise of suppressed laughter in his pharyngeal cavity….

Mr. Bensington was indeed a happy man that day. He was in no mood to find fault with details of management. The bright day certainly brought out the accumulating slovenliness of the Skinner couple more vividly than he had ever seen it before. But his comments were of the gentlest. The fencing of many of the runs was out of order, but he seemed to consider it quite satisfactory when Mr. Skinner explained that it was a “fokth or a dog or thomething” did it. He pointed out that the incubator had not been cleaned.

“That it *asn’t*, Sir,” said Mrs. Skinner with her arms folded, smiling coyly behind her nose. “We don’t seem to have had time to clean it not since we been ‘ere….”

He went upstairs to see some rat-holes that Skinner said would justify a trap — they certainly were enormous — and discovered that the room in which the Food of the Gods was mixed with meal and bran was in a quite disgraceful order. The Skinners were the sort of people who find a use for cracked saucers and old cans and pickle jars and mustard boxes, and the place was littered with these. In one corner a great pile of apples that Skinner had saved was decaying, and from a nail in the sloping part of the ceiling hung several rabbit skins, upon which he proposed to test his gift as a furrier. (“There ithn’t mutth about furth and thingth that *I* don’t know,” said Skinner.)

Mr. Bensington certainly sniffed critically at this disorder, but he made no unnecessary fuss, and even when he found a wasp regaling itself in a gallipot half full of Herakleophorbia IV, he simply remarked mildly that his substance was better sealed from the damp than exposed to the air in that manner.

And he turned from these things at once to remark — what had been for some time in his mind— “I *think*, Skinner — you know, I shall kill one of these chicks — as a specimen. I think we will kill it

this afternoon, and I will take it back with me to London."

He pretended to peer into another gallipot and then took off his spectacles to wipe them.

"I should like," he said, "I should like very much, to have some relic — some memento — of this particular brood at this particular day."

"By-the-bye," he said, "you don't give those little chicks meat?"

"Oh! *no*, Thir," said Skinner, "I can athure you, Thir, we know far too much about the management of fowlth of all dethcriptionth to do anything of that thort."

"Quite sure you don't throw your dinner refuse — I thought I noticed the bones of a rabbit scattered about the far corner of the run —"

But when they came to look at them they found they were the larger bones of a cat picked very clean and dry.

III.

"*That's* no chick," said Mr. Bensington's cousin Jane.

"Well, I should *think* I knew a chick when I saw it," said Mr. Bensington's cousin Jane hotly.

"It's too big for a chick, for one thing, and besides you can *see* perfectly well it isn't a chick.

"It's more like a bustard than a chick."

"For my part," said Redwood, reluctantly allowing Bensington to drag him into the argument, "I must confess that, considering all the evidence—"

"Oh I if you do *that*," said Mr. Bensington's cousin Jane, "instead of using your eyes like a sensible person—"

"Well, but really, Miss Bensington — !"

"Oh! Go *on!*" said Cousin Jane. "You men are all alike."

"Considering all the evidence, this certainly falls within the definition — no doubt it's abnormal and hypertrophied, but still — especially since it was hatched from the egg of a normal hen — Yes, I think, Miss Bensington, I must admit — this, so far as one can call

it anything, is a sort of chick."

"You mean it's a chick?" said cousin Jane.

"I *think* it's a chick," said Redwood.

"What NONSENSE!" said Mr. Bensington's cousin Jane, and "Oh!" directed at Redwood's head, "I haven't patience with you," and then suddenly she turned about and went out of the room with a slam.

"And it's a very great relief for me to see it too, Bensington," said Redwood, when the reverberation of the slam had died away. "In spite of its being so big."

Without any urgency from Mr. Bensington he sat down in the low arm-chair by the fire and confessed to proceedings that even in an unscientific man would have been indiscreet. "You will think it very rash of me, Bensington, I know," he said, "but the fact is I put a little — not very much of it — but some — into Baby's bottle, very nearly a week ago!"

"But suppose — !" cried Mr. Bensington.

"I know," said Redwood, and glanced at the giant chick upon the plate on the table.

"It's turned out all right, thank goodness," and he felt in his pocket for his cigarettes.

He gave fragmentary details. "Poor little chap wasn't putting on weight… desperately anxious. — Winkles, a frightful duffer … former pupil of mine … no good…. Mrs. Redwood — unmitigated confidence in Winkles…. *You* know, man with a manner like a cliff — towering…. No confidence in *me*, of course…. Taught Winkles…. Scarcely allowed in the nursery…. Something had to be done…. Slipped in while the nurse was at breakfast … got at the bottle."

"But he'll grow," said Mr. Bensington.

"He's growing. Twenty-seven ounces last week…. You should hear Winkles. It's management, he said."

"Dear me! That's what Skinner says!"

Redwood looked at the chick again. "The bother is to keep it up," he said. "They won't trust me in the nursery alone, because I tried to

get a growth curve out of Georgina Phyllis — you know — and how I'm to give him a second dose—"

"Need you?"

"He's been crying two days — can't get on with his ordinary food again, anyhow. He wants some more now."

"Tell Winkles."

"Hang Winkles!" said Redwood.

"You might get at Winkles and give him powders to give the child —"

"That's about what I shall have to do," said Redwood, resting his chin on his fist and staring into the fire.

Bensington stood for a space smoothing the down on the breast of the giant chick. "They will be monstrous fowls," he said.

"They will," said Redwood, still with his eyes on the glow.

"Big as horses," said Bensington.

"Bigger," said Redwood. "That's just it!"

Bensington turned away from the specimen. "Redwood," he said, "these fowls are going to create a sensation."

Redwood nodded his head at the fire.

"And by Jove!" said Bensington, coming round suddenly with a flash in his spectacles, "so will your little boy!"

"That's just what I'm thinking of," said Redwood.

He sat back, sighed, threw his unconsumed cigarette into the fire and thrust his hands deep into his trousers pockets. "That's precisely what I'm thinking of. This Herakleophorbia is going to be queer stuff to handle. The pace that chick must have grown at — !"

"A little boy growing at that pace," said Mr. Bensington slowly, and stared at the chick as he spoke.

"I *Say*!" said Bensington, "he'll be Big."

"I shall give him diminishing doses," said Redwood. "Or at any rate Winkles will."

"It's rather too much of an experiment."

"Much."

"Yet still, you know, I must confess — … Some baby will sooner or later have to try it."

"Oh, we'll try it on *some* baby — certainly."

"Exactly so," said Bensington, and came and stood on the hearthrug and took off his spectacles to wipe them.

"Until I saw these chicks, Redwood, I don't think I *began* to realise — anything — of the possibilities of what we were making. It's only beginning to dawn upon me … the possible consequences…."

And even then, you know, Mr. Bensington was far from any conception of the mine that little train would fire.

IV.

That happened early in June. For some weeks Bensington was kept from revisiting the Experimental Farm by a severe imaginary catarrh, and one necessary flying visit was made by Redwood. He returned an even more anxious-looking parent than he had gone. Altogether there were seven weeks of steady, uninterrupted growth….

And then the Wasps began their career.

It was late in July and nearly a week before the hens escaped from Hickleybrow that the first of the big wasps was killed. The report of it appeared in several papers, but I do not know whether the news reached Mr. Bensington, much less whether he connected it with the general laxity of method that prevailed in the Experimental Farm.

There can be but little doubt now, that while Mr. Skinner was plying Mr. Bensington's chicks with Herakleophorbia IV, a number of wasps were just as industriously — perhaps more industriously — carrying quantities of the same paste to their early summer broods in the sand-banks beyond the adjacent pine-woods. And there can be no dispute whatever that these early broods found just as much growth and benefit in the substance as Mr. Bensington's hens. It is in the nature of the wasp to attain to effective maturity before the domestic fowl — and in fact of all the creatures that were — through the generous carelessness of the Skinners — partaking of the benefits Mr. Bensington heaped upon his hens, the wasps were the first to make any sort of figure in the world.

It was a keeper named Godfrey, on the estate of Lieutenant-Colonel Rupert Hick, near Maidstone, who encountered and had the

luck to kill the first of these monsters of whom history has any record. He was walking knee high in bracken across an open space in the beechwoods that diversify Lieutenant-Colonel Hick's park, and he was carrying his gun — very fortunately for him a double-barrelled gun — over his shoulder, when he first caught sight of the thing. It was, he says, coming down against the light, so that he could not see it very distinctly, and as it came it made a drone "like a motor car." He admits he was frightened. It was evidently as big or bigger than a barn owl, and, to his practised eye, its flight and particularly the misty whirl of its wings must have seemed weirdly unbirdlike. The instinct of self-defence, I fancy, mingled with long habit, when, as he says, he "let fly, right away."

The queerness of the experience probably affected his aim; at any rate most of his shot missed, and the thing merely dropped for a moment with an angry "Wuzzzz" that revealed the wasp at once, and then rose again, with all its stripes shining against the light. He says it turned on him. At any rate, he fired his second barrel at less than twenty yards and threw down his gun, ran a pace or so, and ducked to avoid it.

It flew, he is convinced, within a yard of him, struck the ground, rose again, came down again perhaps thirty yards away, and rolled over with its body wriggling and its sting stabbing out and back in its last agony. He emptied both barrels into it again before he ventured to go near.

When he came to measure the thing, he found it was twenty-seven and a half inches across its open wings, and its sting was three inches long. The abdomen was blown clean off from its body, but he estimated the length of the creature from head to sting as eighteen inches — which is very nearly correct. Its compound eyes were the size of penny pieces.

That is the first authenticated appearance of these giant wasps. The day after, a cyclist riding, feet up, down the hill between Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, very narrowly missed running over a second of these giants that was crawling across the roadway. His passage seemed to alarm it, and it rose with a noise like a sawmill. His bicycle jumped the footpath in the emotion of the moment, and when he could look back, the wasp was soaring away above the

woods towards Westerham.

After riding unsteadily for a little time, he put on his brake, dismounted — he was trembling so violently that he fell over his machine in doing so — and sat down by the roadside to recover. He had intended to ride to Ashford, but he did not get beyond Tonbridge that day….

After that, curiously enough, there is no record of any big wasps being seen for three days. I find on consulting the meteorological record of those days that they were overcast and chilly with local showers, which may perhaps account for this intermission. Then on the fourth day came blue sky and brilliant sunshine and such an outburst of wasps as the world had surely never seen before.

How many big wasps came out that day it is impossible to guess. There are at least fifty accounts of their apparition. There was one victim, a grocer, who discovered one of these monsters in a sugar-cask and very rashly attacked it with a spade as it rose. He struck it to the ground for a moment, and it stung him through the boot as he struck at it again and cut its body in half. He was first dead of the two….

The most dramatic of the fifty appearances was certainly that of the wasp that visited the British Museum about midday, dropping out of the blue serene upon one of the innumerable pigeons that feed in the courtyard of that building, and flying up to the cornice to devour its victim at leisure. After that it crawled for a time over the museum roof, entered the dome of the reading-room by a skylight, buzzed about inside it for some little time — there was a stampede among the readers — and at last found another window and vanished again with a sudden silence from human observation.

Most of the other reports were of mere passings or descents. A picnic party was dispersed at Aldington Knoll and all its sweets and jam consumed, and a puppy was killed and torn to pieces near Whitstable under the very eyes of its mistress….

The streets that evening resounded with the cry, the newspaper placards gave themselves up exclusively in the biggest of letters to the “Gigantic Wasps in Kent.” Agitated editors and assistant editors ran up and down tortuous staircases bawling things about “wasps.” And Professor Redwood, emerging from his college in Bond Street

at five, flushed from a heated discussion with his committee about the price of bull calves, bought an evening paper, opened it, changed colour, forgot about bull calves and committee forthwith, and took a hansom headlong for Bensington's flat.

V.

The flat was occupied, it seemed to him — to the exclusion of all other sensible objects — by Mr. Skinner and his voice, if indeed you can call either him or it a sensible object!

The voice was up very high slopping about among the notes of anguish. "Itth impothible for uth to thtop, Thir. We've thtopped on hoping thingth would get better and they've only got worth, Thir. It ithn't on'y the waptheth, Thir — thereth big earwigth, Thir — big ath that, Thir." (He indicated all his hand and about three inches of fat dirty wrist.) "They pretty near give Mithith Thkinner fitth, Thir. And the thtinging nettleth by the runth, Thir, *they're* growing, Thir, and the canary creeper, Thir, what we thowed near the think, Thir — it put itth tendril through the window in the night, Thir, and very nearly caught Mithith Thkinner by the legth, Thir. Itth that food of yourth, Thir. Wherever we thplathed it about, Thir, a bit, it'th thet everything growing ranker, Thir, than I ever thought anything could grow. Itth impothible to thtop a month, Thir. Itth more than our liveth are worth, Thir. Even if the waptheth don't thting uth, we thall be thuffocated by the creeper, Thir. You can't imagine, Thir — unleth you come down to thee, Thir—"

He turned his superior eye to the cornice above Redwood's head. "'Ow do we know the ratth 'aven't got it, Thir! That 'th what I think of motht, Thir. I 'aven't theen any big ratth, Thir, but 'ow do I know, Thir. We been frightened for dayth becauth of the earwigth we've theen — like lobthters they wath — two of 'em, Thir — and the frightful way the canary creeper wath growing, and directly I heard the waptheth — directly I 'eard 'em, Thir, I underthood. I didn't wait for nothing exthept to thow on a button I'd lortht, and then I came on up. Even now, Thir, I'm arf wild with angthiety, Thir. 'Ow do *I* know watth happenin' to Mithith Thkinner, Thir! Thereth the creeper growing all over the plathe like a thnake, Thir — thwelp me but you

‘ave to watch it, Thir, and jump out of itth way! — and the earwigth gettin’ bigger and bigger, and the waptheth — . She ‘athen’t even got a Blue Bag, Thir — if anything thould happen, Thir!”

“But the hens,” said Mr. Bensington; “how are the hens?”

“We fed ’em up to yethterday, thwelp me,” said Mr. Skinner, “But thith morning we didn’t *dare*, Thir. The noithe of the waptheth wath — thomething awful, Thir. They wath coming ont — dothenth. Ath big ath ‘enth. I thayth, to ‘er, I thayth you juth thow me on a button or two, I thayth, for I can’t go to London like thith, I thayth, and I’ll go up to Mithter Benthington, I thayth, and ekthplain thingth to ‘im. And you thtop in thith room till I come back to you, I thayth, and keep the windowth thhut jutht ath tight ath ever you can, I thayth.”

“If you hadn’t been so confoundedly untidy—” began Redwood.

“Oh! don’t thay *that*, Thir,” said Skinner. “Not now, Thir. Not with me tho diththrethed, Thir, about Mithith Thkinner, Thir! Oh, *don’t,* Thir! I ‘aven’t the ‘eart to argue with you. Thwelp me, Thir, I ‘aven’t! Itth the ratth I keep a thinking of— ‘Ow do I know they ‘aven’t got at Mithith Thkinner while I been up ‘ere?”

“And you haven’t got a solitary measurement of all these beautiful growth curves!” said Redwood.

“I been too upthet, Thir,” said Mr. Skinner. “If you knew what we been through — me and the mithith! All thith latht month. We ‘aven’t known what to make of it, Thir. What with the henth gettin’ tho rank, and the earwigth, and the canary creeper. I dunno if I told you, Thir — the canary creeper …”

“You’ve told us all that,” said Redwood. “The thing is, Bensington, what are we to do?”

“What are *we* to do?” said Mr. Skinner.

“You’ll have to go back to Mrs. Skinner,” said Redwood. “You can’t leave her there alone all night.”

“Not alone, Thir, I don’t. Not if there wath a dothen Mithith Thkinnerth. Itth Mithter Benthington—”

“Nonsense,” said Redwood. “The wasps will be all right at night. And the earwigs will get out of your way—”

“But about the ratth?”

“There aren’t any rats,” said Redwood.

VI.

Mr. Skinner might have foregone his chief anxiety. Mrs. Skinner did not stop out her day.

About eleven the canary creeper, which had been quietly active all the morning, began to clamber over the window and darken it very greatly, and the darker it got the more and more clearly Mrs. Skinner perceived that her position would speedily become untenable. And also that she had lived many ages since Skinner went. She peered out of the darkling window, through the stirring tendrils, for some time, and then went very cautiously and opened the bedroom door and listened….

Everything seemed quiet, and so, tucking her skirts high about her, Mrs. Skinner made a bolt for the bedroom, and having first looked under the bed and locked herself in, proceeded with the methodical rapidity of an experienced woman to pack for departure. The bed had not been made, and the room was littered with pieces of the creeper that Skinner had hacked off in order to close the window overnight, but these disorders she did not heed. She packed in a decent sheet. She packed all her own wardrobe and a velveteen jacket that Skinner wore in his finer moments, and she packed a jar of pickles that had not been opened, and so far she was justified in her packing. But she also packed two of the hermetically closed tins containing Herakleophorbia IV. that Mr. Bensington had brought on his last visit. (She was honest, good woman — but she was a grandmother, and her heart had burned within her to see such good growth lavished on a lot of dratted chicks.)

And having packed all these things, she put on her bonnet, took off her apron, tied a new boot-lace round her umbrella, and after listening for a long time at door and window, opened the door and sallied out into a perilous world. The umbrella was under her arm and she clutched the bundle with two gnarled and resolute hands. It was her best Sunday bonnet, and the two poppies that reared their heads amidst its splendours of band and bead seemed instinct with the same tremulous courage that possessed her.

The features about the roots of her nose wrinkled with determination. She had had enough of it! All alone there! Skinner might come back there if he liked.

She went out by the front door, going that way not because she wanted to go to Hickleybrow (her goal was Cheasing Eyebright, where her married daughter resided), but because the back door was impassable on account of the canary creeper that had been growing so furiously ever since she upset the can of food near its roots. She listened for a space and closed the front door very carefully behind her.

At the corner of the house she paused and reconnoitred….

An extensive sandy scar upon the hillside beyond the pine-woods marked the nest of the giant Wasps, and this she studied very earnestly. The coming and going of the morning was over, not a wasp chanced to be in sight then, and except for a sound scarcely more perceptible than a steam wood-saw at work amidst the pines would have been, everything was still. As for earwigs, she could see not one. Down among the cabbage indeed something was stirring, but it might just as probably be a cat stalking birds. She watched this for a time.

She went a few paces past the corner, came in sight of the run containing the giant chicks and stopped again. “Ah!” she said, and shook her head slowly at the sight of them. They were at that time about the height of emus, but of course much thicker in the body — a larger thing altogether. They were all hens and five all told, now that the two cockerels had killed each other. She hesitated at their drooping attitudes. “Poor dears!” she said, and put down her bundle; “they’ve got no water. And they’ve ‘ad no food these twenty-four hours! And such appetites, too, as they ‘ave!” She put a lean finger to her lips and communed with herself.

Then this dirty old woman did what seems to me a quite heroic deed of mercy. She left her bundle and umbrella in the middle of the brick path and went to the well and drew no fewer than three pailfuls of water for the chickens’ empty trough, and then while they were all crowding about that, she undid the door of the run very softly. After which she became extremely active, resumed her package, got over the hedge at the bottom of the garden, crossed the rank meadows (in

order to avoid the wasps' nest) and toiled up the winding path towards Cheasing Eyebright.

She panted up the hill, and as she went she paused ever and again, to rest her bundle and get her breath and stare back at the little cottage beside the pine-wood below. And when at last, when she was near the crest of the hill, she saw afar off three several wasps dropping heavily westward, it helped her greatly on her way.

She soon got out of the open and in the high banked lane beyond (which seemed a safer place to her), and so up by Hickleybrow Coombe to the downs. There at the foot of the downs where a big tree gave an air of shelter she rested for a space on a stile.

Then on again very resolutely….

You figure her, I hope, with her white bundle, a sort of erect black ant, hurrying along the little white path-thread athwart the downland slopes under the hot sun of the summer afternoon. On she struggled after her resolute indefatigable nose, and the poppies in her bonnet quivered perpetually and her spring-side boots grew whiter and whiter with the downland dust. Flip-flap, flip-flap went her footfalls through the still heat of the day, and persistently, incurably, her umbrella sought to slip from under the elbow that retained it. The mouth wrinkle under her nose was pursed to an extreme resolution, and ever and again she told her umbrella to come up or gave her tightly clutched bundle a vindictive jerk. And at times her lips mumbled with fragments of some foreseen argument between herself and Skinner.

And far away, miles and miles away, a steeple and a hanger grew insensibly out of the vague blue to mark more and more distinctly the quiet corner where Cheasing Eyebright sheltered from the tumult of the world, recking little or nothing of the Herakleophorbia concealed in that white bundle that struggled so persistently towards its orderly retirement.

VII.

So far as I can gather, the pullets came into Hickleybrow about three o'clock in the afternoon. Their coming must have been a brisk affair, though nobody was out in the street to see it. The violent bellowing

of little Skelmersdale seems to have been the first announcement of anything out of the way. Miss Durgan of the Post Office was at the window as usual, and saw the hen that had caught the unhappy child, in violent flight up the street with its victim, closely pursued by two others. You know that swinging stride of the emancipated athletic latter-day pullet! You know the keen insistence of the hungry hen! There was Plymouth Rock in these birds, I am told, and even without Herakleophorbia that is a gaunt and striding strain.

Probably Miss Durgan was not altogether taken by surprise. In spite of
Mr. Bensington's insistence upon secrecy, rumours of the great chicken
Mr. Skinner was producing had been about the village for some weeks.
"Lor!" she cried, "it's what I expected."

She seems to have behaved with great presence of mind. She snatched up the sealed bag of letters that was waiting to go on to Urshot, and rushed out of the door at once. Almost simultaneously Mr. Skelmersdale himself appeared down the village, gripping a watering-pot by the spout, and very white in the face. And, of course, in a moment or so every one in the village was rushing to the door or window.

The spectacle of Miss Durgan all across the road, with the entire day's correspondence of Hickleybrow in her hand, gave pause to the pullet in possession of Master Skelmersdale. She halted through one instant's indecision and then turned for the open gates of Fulcher's yard. That instant was fatal. The second pullet ran in neatly, got possession of the child by a well-directed peck, and went over the wall into the vicarage garden.

"Charawk, chawk, chawk, chawk, chawk, chawk!" shrieked the hindmost hen, hit smartly by the watering-can Mr. Skelmersdale had thrown, and fluttered wildly over Mrs. Glue's cottage and so into the doctor's field, while the rest of those Gargantuan birds pursued the pullet, in possession of the child across the vicarage lawn.

"Good heavens!" cried the Curate, or (as some say) something

much more manly, and ran, whirling his croquet mallet and shouting, to head off the chase.

"Stop, you wretch!" cried the curate, as though giant hens were the commonest facts in life.

And then, finding he could not possibly intercept her, he hurled his mallet with all his might and main, and out it shot in a gracious curve within a foot or so of Master Skelmersdale's head and through the glass lantern of the conservatory. Smash! The new conservatory! The Vicar's wife's beautiful new conservatory!

It frightened the hen. It might have frightened any one. She dropped her victim into a Portugal laurel (from which he was presently extracted, disordered but, save for his less delicate garments, uninjured), made a flapping leap for the roof of Fulcher's stables, put her foot through a weak place in the tiles, and descended, so to speak, out of the infinite into the contemplative quiet of Mr. Bumps the paralytic — who, it is now proved beyond all cavil, did, on this one occasion in his life, get down the entire length of his garden and indoors without any assistance whatever, bolt the door after him, and immediately relapse again into Christian resignation and helpless dependence upon his wife….

The rest of the pullets were headed off by the other croquet players, and went through the vicar's kitchen garden into the doctor's field, to which rendezvous the fifth also came at last, clucking disconsolately after an unsuccessful attempt to walk on the cucumber frames in Mr. Witherspoon's place.

They seem to have stood about in a hen-like manner for a time, and scratched a little and chirrawked meditatively, and then one pecked at and pecked over a hive of the doctor's bees, and after that they set off in a gawky, jerky, feathery, fitful sort of way across the fields towards Urshot, and Hickleybrow Street saw them no more. Near Urshot they really came upon commensurate food in a field of swedes; and pecked for a space with gusto, until their fame overtook them.

The chief immediate reaction of this astonishing irruption of gigantic poultry upon the human mind was to arouse an extraordinary passion to whoop and run and throw things, and in quite a little time almost all the available manhood of Hickleybrows

and several ladies, were out with a remarkable assortment of flappish and whangable articles in hand — to commence the scooting of the giant hens. They drove them into Urshot, where there was a Rural Fete, and Urshot took them as the crowning glory of a happy day. They began to be shot at near Findon Beeches, but at first only with a rook rifle. Of course birds of that size could absorb an unlimited quantity of small shot without inconvenience. They scattered somewhere near Sevenoaks, and near Tonbridge one of them fled clucking for a time in excessive agitation, somewhat ahead of and parallel with the afternoon boat express — to the great astonishment of every one therein.

And about half-past five two of them were caught very cleverly by a circus proprietor at Tunbridge Wells, who lured them into a cage, rendered vacant through the death of a widowed dromedary, by scattering cakes and bread….

VIII.

When the unfortunate Skinner got out of the South-Eastern train at Urshot that evening it was already nearly dusk. The train was late, but not inordinately late — and Mr. Skinner remarked as much to the station-master. Perhaps he saw a certain pregnancy in the station-master's eye. After the briefest hesitation and with a confidential movement of his hand to the side of his mouth he asked if "anything" had happened that day.

"How d'yer *mean*?" said the station-master, a man with a hard, emphatic voice.

"Thethe 'ere waptheth and thingth."

"We 'aven't 'ad much time to think of *waptheth*," said the station-master agreeably. "We've been too busy with your brasted 'ens," and he broke the news of the pullets to Mr. Skinner as one might break the window of an adverse politician.

"You ain't 'eard anything of Mithith Thkinner?" asked Skinner, amidst that missile shower of pithy information and comment.

"No fear!" said the station-master — as though even he drew the line somewhere in the matter of knowledge.

"I mutht make inquireth bout thith," said Mr. Skinner, edging out

of reach of the station-master's concluding generalisations about the responsibility attaching to the excessive nurture of hens….

Going through Urshot Mr. Skinner was hailed by a lime-burner from the pits over by Hankey and asked if he was looking for his hens.

"You ain't 'eard anything of Mithith Thkinner?" he asked.

The lime-burner — his exact phrases need not concern us — expressed his superior interest in hens….

It was already dark — as dark at least as a clear night in the English June can be — when Skinner — or his head at any rate — came into the bar of the Jolly Drovers and said: "Ello! You 'aven't 'eard anything of thith 'ere thtory bout my 'enth, 'ave you?"

"Oh, *'aven't* we!" said Mr. Fulcher. "Why, part of the story's been and bust into my stable roof and one chapter smashed a 'ole in Missis Vicar's green 'ouse — I beg 'er pardon — Conservarratory."

Skinner came in. "I'd like thomething a little comforting," he said, "'ot gin and water'th about my figure," and everybody began to tell him things about the pullets.

"*Grathuth* me!" said Skinner.

"You 'aven't 'eard anything about Mithith Thkinner, 'ave you?" he asked in a pause.

"That we 'aven't!" said Mr. Witherspoon. "We 'aven't thought of 'er. We ain't thought nothing of either of you."

"Ain't you been 'ome to-day?" asked Fulcher over a tankard.

"If one of those brasted birds 'ave pecked 'er," began Mr. Witherspoons and left the full horror to their unaided imaginations….

It appeared to the meeting at the time that it would be an interesting end to an eventful day to go on with Skinner and see if anything *had* happened to Mrs. Skinner. One never knows what luck one may have when accidents are at large. But Skinner, standing at the bar and drinking his hot gin and water, with one eye roving over the things at the back of the bar and the other fixed on the Absolute, missed the psychological moment.

"I thuppothe there 'athen't been any trouble with any of thethe big waptheth to-day anywhere?" he asked, with an elaborate detachment of manner.

“Been too busy with your ‘ens,” said Fulcher.

“I thuppothe they’ve all gone in now anyhow,” said Skinner.

“What — the ‘ens?”

“I wath thinking of the waptheth more particularly,” said Skinner.

And then, with, an air of circumspection that would have awakened suspicion in a week-old baby, and laying the accent heavily on most of the words he chose, he asked, “I *thuppothe nobody* ‘athn’t ‘*eard* of any other *big* thingth, about, ‘ave they? Big *dogth* or *catth* or anything of *that* thort? Theemth to me if thereth big henth and big waptheth comin’ on—”

He laughed with a fine pretence of talking idly.

But a brooding expression came upon the faces of the Hickleybrow men. Fulcher was the first to give their condensing thought the concrete shape of words.

“A cat to match them ‘ens—” said Fulcher.

“Ay!” said Witherspoon, “a cat to match they ‘ens.”

“’Twould be a tiger,” said Fulcher.

“More’n a tiger,” said Witherspoon….

When at last Skinner followed the lonely footpath over the swelling field that separated Hickleybrow from the sombre pine-shaded hollow in whose black shadows the gigantic canary-creeper grappled silently with the Experimental Farm, he followed it alone.

He was distinctly seen to rise against the sky-line, against the warm clear immensity of the northern sky — for so far public interest followed him — and to descend again into the night, into an obscurity from which it would seem he will nevermore emerge. He passed — into a mystery. No one knows to this day what happened to him after he crossed the brow. When later on the two Fulchers and Witherspoon, moved by their own imaginations, came up the hill and stared after him, the flight had swallowed him up altogether.

The three men stood close. There was not a sound out of the wooded blackness that hid the Farm from their eyes.

“It’s all right,” said young Fulcher, ending a silence.

“Don’t see any lights,” said Witherspoon.

“You wouldn’t from here.”

“It’s misty,” said the elder Fulcher.

They meditated for a space.

“‘E’d ‘ave come back if anything was wrong,” said young Fulcher, and this seemed so obvious and conclusive that presently old Fulcher said, “Well,” and the three went home to bed — thoughtfully I will admit….

A shepherd out by Huckster’s Farm heard a squealing in the night that he thought was foxes, and in the morning one of his lambs had been killed, dragged halfway towards Hickleybrow and partially devoured….

The inexplicable part of it all is the absence of any indisputable remains of Skinner!

Many weeks after, amidst the charred ruins of the Experimental Farm, there was found something which may or may not have been a human shoulder-blade and in another part of the ruins a long bone greatly gnawed and equally doubtful. Near the stile going up towards Eyebright there was found a glass eye, and many people discovered thereupon that Skinner owed much of his personal charm to such a possession. It stared out upon the world with that same inevitable effect of detachment, that same severe melancholy that had been the redemption of his else worldly countenance.

And about the ruins industrious research discovered the metal rings and charred coverings of two linen buttons, three shanked buttons entire, and one of that metallic sort which is used in the less conspicuous sutures of the human Oeconomy. These remains have been accepted by persons in authority as conclusive of a destroyed and scattered Skinner, but for my own entire conviction, and in view of his distinctive idiosyncrasy, I must confess I should prefer fewer buttons and more bones.

The glass eye of course has an air of extreme conviction, but if it really *is* Skinner’s — and even Mrs. Skinner did not certainly know if that immobile eye of his was glass — something has changed it from a liquid brown to a serene and confident blue. That shoulder-blade is an extremely doubtful document, and I would like to put it side by side with the gnawed scapulae of a few of the commoner domestic animals before I admitted its humanity.

And where were Skinner’s boots, for example? Perverted and strange as a rat’s appetite must be, is it conceivable that the same creatures that could leave a lamb only half eaten, would finish up

Skinner — hair, bones, teeth, and boots?

I have closely questioned as many as I could of those who knew Skinner at all intimately, and they one and all agree that they cannot imagine *anything* eating him. He was the sort of man, as a retired seafaring person living in one of Mr. W.W. Jacobs' cottages at Dunton Green told me, with a guarded significance of manner not uncommon in those parts, who would "get washed up anyhow," and as regards *the* devouring element was "fit to put a fire out." He considered that Skinner would be as safe on a raft as anywhere. The retired seafaring man added that he wished to say nothing whatever against Skinner; facts were facts. And rather than have his clothes made by Skinner, the retired seafaring man remarked he would take his chance of being locked up. These observations certainly do not present Skinner in the light of an appetising object.

To be perfectly frank with the reader, I do not believe he ever went back to the Experimental Farm. I believe he hovered through long hesitations about the fields of the Hickleybrow glebe, and finally, when that squealing began, took the line of least resistance out of his perplexities into the Incognito.

And in the Incognito, whether of this or of some other world unknown to us, he obstinately and quite indisputably has remained to this day….

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

THE GIANT RATS.

I.

It was two nights after the disappearance of Mr. Skinner that the Podbourne doctor was out late near Hankey, driving in his buggy. He had been up all night assisting another undistinguished citizen into this curious world of ours, and his task accomplished, he was driving homeward in a drowsy mood enough. It was about two o'clock in the morning, and the waning moon was rising. The summer night had gone cold, and there was a low-lying whitish mist that made things indistinct. He was quite alone — for his coachman was ill in bed — and there was nothing to be seen on either hand but a drifting mystery of hedge running athwart the yellow glare of his lamps, and nothing to hear but the clitter-clatter of his horses and the gride and hedge echo of his wheels. His horse was as trustworthy as himself, and one does not wonder that he dozed….

You know that intermittent drowsing as one sits, the drooping of the head, the nodding to the rhythm of the wheels then chin upon the breast, and at once the sudden start up again.

Pitter, litter, patter.

"What was that?"

It seemed to the doctor he had heard a thin shrill squeal close at hand. For a moment he was quite awake. He said a word or two of undeserved rebuke to his horse, and looked about him. He tried to persuade himself that he had heard the distant squeal of a fox — or perhaps a young rabbit gripped by a ferret.

Swish, swish, swish, pitter, patter, swish — …

What was that?

He felt he was getting fanciful. He shook his shoulders and told his horse to get on. He listened, and heard nothing.

Or was it nothing?

He had the queerest impression that something had just peeped over the hedge at him, a queer big head. With round ears! He peered

hard, but he could see nothing.

“Nonsense,” said he.

He sat up with an idea that he had dropped into a nightmare, gave his horse the slightest touch of the whip, spoke to it and peered again over the hedge. The glare of his lamp, however, together with the mist, rendered things indistinct, and he could distinguish nothing. It came into his head, he says, that there could be nothing there, because if there was his horse would have shied at it. Yet for all that his senses remained nervously awake.

Then he heard quite distinctly a soft pattering of feet in pursuit along the road.

He would not believe his ears about that. He could not look round, for the road had a sinuous curve just there. He whipped up his horse and glanced sideways again. And then he saw quite distinctly where a ray from his lamp leapt a low stretch of hedge, the curved back of — some big animal, he couldn’t tell what, going along in quick convulsive leaps.

He says he thought of the old tales of witchcraft — the thing was so utterly unlike any animal he knew, and he tightened his hold on the reins for fear of the fear of his horse. Educated man as he was, he admits he asked himself if this could be something that his horse could not see.

Ahead, and drawing near in silhouette against the rising moon, was the outline of the little hamlet of Hankey, comforting, though it showed never a light, and he cracked his whip and spoke again, and then in a flash the rats were at him!

He had passed a gate, and as he did so, the foremost rat came leaping over into the road. The thing sprang upon him out of vagueness into the utmost clearness, the sharp, eager, round-eared face, the long body exaggerated by its movement; and what particularly struck him, the pink, webbed forefeet of the beast. What must have made it more horrible to him at the time was, that he had no idea the thing was any created beast he knew. He did not recognise it as a rat, because of the size. His horse gave a bound as the thing dropped into the road beside it. The little lane woke into tumult at the report of the whip and the doctor’s shout. The whole thing suddenly went fast.

Rattle-clatter, clash, clatter.

The doctor, one gathers, stood up, shouted to his horse, and slashed with all his strength. The rat winced and swerved most reassuringly at his blow — in the glare of his lamp he could see the fur furrow under the lash — and he slashed again and again, heedless and unaware of the second pursuer that gained upon his off side.

He let the reins go, and glanced back to discover the third rat in pursuit behind….

His horse bounded forward. The buggy leapt high at a rut. For a frantic minute perhaps everything seemed to be going in leaps and bounds….

It was sheer good luck the horse came down in Hankey, and not either before or after the houses had been passed.

No one knows how the horse came down, whether it stumbled or whether the rat on the off side really got home with one of those slashing down strokes of the teeth (given with the full weight of the body); and the doctor never discovered that he himself was bitten until he was inside the brickmaker's house, much less did he discover when the bite occurred, though bitten he was and badly — a long slash like the slash of a double tomahawk that had cut two parallel ribbons of flesh from his left shoulder.

He was standing up in his buggy at one moment, and in the next he had leapt to the ground, with his ankle, though he did not know it, badly sprained, and he was cutting furiously at a third rat that was flying directly at him. He scarcely remembers the leap he must have made over the top of the wheel as the buggy came over, so obliteratingly hot and swift did his impressions rush upon him. I think myself the horse reared up with the rat biting again at its throat, and fell sideways, and carried the whole affair over; and that the doctor sprang, as it were, instinctively. As the buggy came down, the receiver of the lamp smashed, and suddenly poured a flare of blazing oil, a thud of white flame, into the struggle.

That was the first thing the brickmaker saw.

He had heard the clatter of the doctor's approach and — though the doctor's memory has nothing of this — wild shouting. He had got out of bed hastily, and as he did so came the terrific smash, and up shot the glare outside the rising blind. "It was brighter than day,"

he says. He stood, blind cord in hand, and stared out of the window at a nightmare transformation of the familiar road before him. The black figure of the doctor with its whirling whip danced out against the flame. The horse kicked indistinctly, half hidden by the blaze, with a rat at its throat. In the obscurity against the churchyard wall, the eyes of a second monster shone wickedly. Another — a mere dreadful blackness with red-lit eyes and flesh-coloured hands — clutched unsteadily on the wall coping to which it had leapt at the flash of the exploding lamp.

You know the keen face of a rat, those two sharp teeth, those pitiless eyes. Seen magnified to near six times its linear dimensions, and still more magnified by darkness and amazement and the leaping fancies of a fitful blaze, it must have been an ill sight for the brickmaker — still more than half asleep.

Then the doctor had grasped the opportunity, that momentary respite the flare afforded, and was out of the brickmaker's sight below battering the door with the butt of his whip….

The brickmaker would not let him in until he had got a light.

There are those who have blamed the man for that, but until I know my own courage better, I hesitate to join their number.

The doctor yelled and hammered….

The brickmaker says he was weeping with terror when at last the door was opened.

"Bolt," said the doctor, "bolt" — he could not say "bolt the door." He tried to help, and was of no service. The brickmaker fastened the door, and the doctor had to sit on the chair beside the clock for a space before he could go upstairs….

"I don't know what they *are*!" he repeated several times. "I don't know what they *are*" — with a high note on the "are."

The brickmaker would have got him whisky, but the doctor would not be left alone with nothing but a flickering light just then.

It was long before the brickmaker could get him to go upstairs….

And when the fire was out the giant rats came back, took the dead horse, dragged it across the churchyard into the brickfield and ate at it until it was dawn, none even then daring to disturb them….

II.

Redwood went round, to Bensington about eleven the next morning with the "second editions" of three evening papers in his hand.

Bensington looked up from a despondent meditation over the forgotten pages of the most distracting novel the Brompton Road librarian had been able to find him. "Anything fresh?" he asked.

"Two men stung near Chartham."

"They ought to let us smoke out that nest. They really did. It's their own fault."

"It's their own fault, certainly," said Redwood.

"Have you heard anything — about buying the farm?"

"The House Agent," said Redwood, "is a thing with a big mouth and made of dense wood. It pretends someone else is after the house — it always does, you know — and won't understand there's a hurry. 'This is a matter of life and death,' I said, 'don't you understand?' It drooped its eyes half shut and said, 'Then why don't you go the other two hundred pounds?' I'd rather live in a world of solid wasps than give in to the stonewalling stupidity of that offensive creature. I—"

He paused, feeling that a sentence like that might very easily be spoiled by its context.

"It's too much to hope," said Bensington, "that one of the wasps —"

"The wasp has no more idea of public utility than a — than a House Agent," said Redwood.

He talked for a little while about house agents and solicitors and people of that sort, in the unjust, unreasonable way that so many people do somehow get to talk of these business calculi ("Of all the cranky things in this cranky world, it is the most cranky to my mind of all, that while we expect honour, courage, efficiency, from a doctor or a soldier as a matter of course, a solicitor or a house agent is not only permitted but expected to display nothing but a sort of greedy, greasy, obstructive, over-reaching imbecility—" etc.) — and then, greatly relieved, he went to the window and stared out at the Sloane Street traffic.

Bensington had put the most exciting novel conceivable on the

little table that carried his electric standard. He joined the fingers of his opposed hands very carefully and regarded them. “Redwood,” he said. “Do they say much about *Us*?”

“Not so much as I should expect.”

“They don’t denounce us at all?”

“Not a bit. But, on the other hand, they don’t back up what I point out must be done. I’ve written to the *Times*, you know, explaining the whole thing—”

“We take the *Daily Chronicle*,” said Bensington.

“And the *Times* has a long leader on the subject — a very high-class, well-written leader, with three pieces of *Times* Latin — *status quo* is one — and it reads like the voice of Somebody Impersonal of the Greatest Importance suffering from Influenza Headache and talking through sheets and sheets of felt without getting any relief from it whatever. Reading between the lines, you know, it’s pretty clear that the *Times* considers that it is useless to mince matters, and that something (indefinite of course) has to be done at once. Otherwise still more undesirable consequences — *Times* English, you know, for more wasps and stings. Thoroughly statesmanlike article!”

“And meanwhile this Bigness is spreading in all sorts of ugly ways.”

“Precisely.”

“I wonder if Skinner was right about those big rats—”

“Oh no! That would be too much,” said Redwood.

He came and stood by Bensington’s chair.

“By-the-bye,” he said, with a slightly lowered voice, “how does *she* — ?”

He indicated the closed door.

“Cousin Jane? She simply knows nothing about it. Doesn’t connect us with it and won’t read the articles. ‘Gigantic wasps!’ she says, ‘I haven’t patience to read the papers.’”

“That’s very fortunate,” said Redwood.

“I suppose — Mrs. Redwood — ?”

“No,” said Redwood, “just at present it happens — she’s terribly worried about the child. You know, he keeps on.”

“Growing?”

“Yes. Put on forty-one ounces in ten days. Weighs nearly four stone. And only six months old! Naturally rather alarming.”

“Healthy?”

“Vigorous. His nurse is leaving because he kicks so forcibly. And everything, of course, shockingly outgrown. Everything, you know, has had to be made fresh, clothes and everything. Perambulator — light affair — broke one wheel, and the youngster had to be brought home on the milkman’s hand-truck. Yes. Quite a crowd…. And we’ve put Georgina Phyllis back into his cot and put him into the bed of Georgina Phyllis. His mother — naturally alarmed. Proud at first and inclined to praise Winkles. Not now. Feels the thing *can’t* be wholesome. *You* know.”

“I imagined you were going to put him on diminishing doses.”

“I tried it.”

“Didn’t it work?”

“Howls. In the ordinary way the cry of a child is loud and distressing; it is for the good of the species that this should be so — but since he has been on the Herakleophorbia treatment—”

“Mm,” said Bensington, regarding his fingers with more resignation than he had hitherto displayed.

“Practically the thing *must* come out. People will hear of this child, connect it up with our hens and things, and the whole thing will come round to my wife…. How she will take it I haven’t the remotest idea.”

“It *is* difficult,” said Mr. Bensington, “to form any plan — certainly.”

He removed his glasses and wiped them carefully.

“It is another instance,” he generalised, “of the thing that is continually happening. We — if indeed I may presume to the adjective — *scientific* men — we work of course always for a theoretical result — a purely theoretical result. But, incidentally, we do set forces in operation — *new* forces. We mustn’t control them — and nobody else *can*. Practically, Redwood, the thing is out of our hands. *We* supply the material—”

“And they,” said Redwood, turning to the window, “get the experience.”

“So far as this trouble down in Kent goes I am not disposed to

worry further."

"Unless they worry us."

"Exactly. And if they like to muddle about with solicitors and pettifoggers and legal obstructions and weighty considerations of the tomfool order, until they have got a number of new gigantic species of vermin well established — Things always *have* been in a muddle, Redwood."

Redwood traced a twisted, tangled line in the air.

"And our real interest lies at present with your boy."

Redwood turned about and came and stared at his collaborator.

"What do you think of him, Bensington? You can look at this business with a greater detachment than I can. What am I to do about him?"

"Go on feeding him."

"On Herakleophorbia?"

"On Herakleophorbia."

"And then he'll grow."

"He'll grow, as far as I can calculate from the hens and the wasps, to the height of about five-and-thirty feet — with everything in proportion—"

"And then what'll he do?"

"That," said Mr. Bensington, "is just what makes the whole thing so interesting."

"Confound it, man! Think of his clothes."

"And when he's grown up," said Redwood, "he'll only be one solitary
Gulliver in a pigmy world."

Mr. Bensington's eye over his gold rim was pregnant.

"Why solitary?" he said, and repeated still more darkly, "*Why* solitary?"

"But you don't propose — ?"

"I said," said Mr. Bensington, with the self-complacency of a man who has produced a good significant saying, "Why solitary?"

"Meaning that one might bring up other children — ?"

"Meaning nothing beyond my inquiry."

Redwood began to walk about the room. “Of course,” he said, “one might — But still! What are we coming to?”

Bensington evidently enjoyed his line of high intellectual detachment. “The thing that interests me most, Redwood, of all this, is to think that his brain at the top of him will also, so far as my reasoning goes, be five-and-thirty feet or so above our level…. What’s the matter?”

Redwood stood at the window and stared at a news placard on a paper-cart that rattled up the street.

“What’s the matter?” repeated Bensington, rising.

Redwood exclaimed violently.

“What is it?” said Bensington.

“Get a paper,” said Redwood, moving doorward.

“Why?”

“Get a paper. Something — I didn’t quite catch — Gigantic rats — !”

“Rats?”

“Yes, rats. Skinner was right after all!”

“What do you mean?”

“How the Deuce am *I* to know till I see a paper? Great Rats! Good Lord!
I wonder if he’s eaten!”

He glanced for his hat, and decided to go hatless.

As he rushed downstairs two steps at a time, he could hear along the street the mighty howlings, to and fro of the Hooligan paper-sellers making a Boom.

“‘Orrible affair in Kent— ‘orrible affair in Kent. Doctor … eaten by rats. ‘Orrible affair— ‘orrible affair — rats — eaten by Stchewpendous rats. Full perticulars— ‘orrible affair.”

III.

Cossar, the well-known civil engineer, found them in the great doorway of the flat mansions, Redwood holding out the damp pink paper, and Bensington on tiptoe reading over his arm. Cossar was a

large-bodied man with gaunt inelegant limbs casually placed at convenient corners of his body, and a face like a carving abandoned at an early stage as altogether too unpromising for completion. His nose had been left square, and his lower jaw projected beyond his upper. He breathed audibly. Few people considered him handsome. His hair was entirely tangential, and his voice, which he used sparingly, was pitched high, and had commonly a quality of bitter protest. He wore a grey cloth jacket suit and a silk hat on all occasions. He plumbed an abysmal trouser pocket with a vast red hand, paid his cabman, and came panting resolutely up the steps, a copy of the pink paper clutched about the middle, like Jove's thunderbolt, in his hand.

"Skinner?" Bensington was saying, regardless of his approach.

"Nothing about him," said Redwood. "Bound to be eaten. Both of them.
It's too terrible…. Hullo! Cossar!"

"This your stuff?" asked Cossar, waving the paper.

"Well, why don't you stop it?" he demanded.

"*Can't* be jiggered!" said Cossar.

"*Buy the place*?" he cried. "What nonsense! Burn it! I knew you chaps would fumble this. *What are you to do*? Why — what I tell you.

"*You*? Do? Why! Go up the street to the gunsmith's, of course. *Why*? For guns. Yes — there's only one shop. Get eight guns! Rifles. Not elephant guns — no! Too big. Not army rifles — too small. Say it's to kill — kill a bull. Say it's to shoot buffalo! See? Eh? Rats? No! How the deuce are they to understand that? Because we *want* eight. Get a lot of ammunition. Don't get guns without ammunition — No! Take the lot in a cab to — where's the place? *Urshot*? Charing Cross, then. There's a train — Well, the first train that starts after two. Think you can do it? All right. License? Get eight at a post-office, of course. Gun licenses, you know. Not game. Why? It's rats, man.

"You — Bensington. Got a telephone? Yes. I'll ring up five of my chaps from Ealing. *Why* five? Because it's the right number!

"Where you going, Redwood? Get a hat! *Nonsense*. Have mine.

You want guns, man — not hats. Got money? Enough? All right. So long.

"Where's the telephone, Bensington?"

Bensington wheeled about obediently and led the way.

Cossar used and replaced the instrument. "Then there's the wasps," he said. "Sulphur and nitre'll do that. Obviously. Plaster of Paris. You're a chemist. Where can I get sulphur by the ton in portable sacks? *What* for? Why, Lord *bless* my heart and soul! — to smoke out the nest, of course! I suppose it must be sulphur, eh? You're a chemist. Sulphur best, eh?"

"Yes, I should *think* sulphur."

"Nothing better?"

"Right. That's your job. That's all right. Get as much sulphur as you can — saltpetre to make it burn. Sent? Charing Cross. Right away. See they do it. Follow it up. Anything?"

He thought a moment.

"Plaster of Paris — any sort of plaster — bung up nest — holes — you know.
That *I'd* better get."

"How much?"

"How much what?"

"Sulphur."

"Ton. See?"

Bensington tightened his glasses with a hand tremulous with determination. "Right," he said, very curtly.

"Money in your pocket?" asked Cossar.

"Hang cheques. They may not know you. Pay cash. Obviously. Where's your bank? All right. Stop on the way and get forty pounds — notes and gold."

Another meditation. "If we leave this job for public officials we shall have all Kent in tatters," said Cossar. "Now is there — anything? *No! HI*!"

He stretched a vast hand towards a cab that became convulsively eager to serve him ("Cab, Sir?" said the cabman. "Obviously," said Cossar); and Bensington, still hatless, paddled down the steps and

prepared to mount.

"I *think*," he said, with his hand on the cab apron, and a sudden glance up at the windows of his flat, "I *ought* to tell my cousin Jane —"

"More time to tell her when you come back," said Cossar, thrusting him in with a vast hand expanded over his back….

"Clever chaps," remarked Cossar, "but no initiative whatever. Cousin Jane indeed! I know her. Rot, these Cousin Janes! Country infested with 'em. I suppose I shall have to spend the whole blessed night, seeing they do what they know perfectly well they ought to do all along. I wonder if it's Research makes 'em like that or Cousin Jane or what?"

He dismissed this obscure problem, meditated for a space upon his watch, and decided there would be just time to drop into a restaurant and get some lunch before he hunted up the plaster of Paris and took it to Charing Cross.

The train started at five minutes past three, and he arrived at Charing Cross at a quarter to three, to find Bensington in heated argument between two policemen and his van-driver outside, and Redwood in the luggage office involved in some technical obscurity about this ammunition. Everybody was pretending not to know anything or to have any authority, in the way dear to South-Eastern officials when they catch you in a hurry.

"Pity they can't shoot all these officials and get a new lot," remarked Cossar with a sigh. But the time was too limited for anything fundamental, and so he swept through these minor controversies, disinterred what may or may not have been the station-master from some obscure hiding-place, walked about the premises holding him and giving orders in his name, and was out of the station with everybody and everything aboard before that official was fully awake to the breaches in the most sacred routines and regulations that were being committed.

"Who *was* he?" said the high official, caressing the arm Cossar had gripped, and smiling with knit brows.

"'E was a gentleman, Sir," said a porter, "anyhow. 'Im and all 'is party travelled first class."

"Well, we got him and his stuff off pretty sharp — whoever he

was," said the high official, rubbing his arm with something approaching satisfaction.

And as he walked slowly back, blinking in the unaccustomed daylight, towards that dignified retirement in which the higher officials at Charing Cross shelter from the importunity of the vulgar, he smiled still at his unaccustomed energy. It was a very gratifying revelation of his own possibilities, in spite of the stiffness of his arm. He wished some of those confounded arm-chair critics of railway management could have seen it.

IV.

By five o'clock that evening this amazing Cossar, with no appearance of hurry at all, had got all the stuff for his fight with insurgent Bigness out of Urshot and on the road to Hickleybrow. Two barrels of paraffin and a load of dry brushwood he had bought in Urshot; plentiful sacks of sulphur, eight big game guns and ammunition, three light breechloaders, with small-shot ammunition for the wasps, a hatchet, two billhooks, a pick and three spades, two coils of rope, some bottled beer, soda and whisky, one gross of packets of rat poison, and cold provisions for three days, had come down from London. All these things he had sent on in a coal trolley and a hay waggon in the most business-like way, except the guns and ammunition, which were stuck under the seat of the Red Lion waggonette appointed to bring on Redwood and the five picked men who had come up from Ealing at Cossar's summons.

Cossar conducted all these transactions with an invincible air of commonplace, in spite of the fact that Urshot was in a panic about the rats, and all the drivers had to be specially paid. All the shops were shut in the place, and scarcely a soul abroad in the street, and when he banged at a door a window was apt to open. He seemed to consider that the conduct of business from open windows was an entirely legitimate and obvious method. Finally he and Bensington got the Red Lion dog-cart and set off with the waggonette, to overtake the baggage. They did this a little beyond the cross-roads, and so reached Hickleybrow first.

Bensington, with a gun between his knees, sitting beside Cossar in

the dog-cart, developed a long germinated amazement. All they were doing was, no doubt, as Cossar insisted, quite the obvious thing to do, only — ! In England one so rarely does the obvious thing. He glanced from his neighbour's feet to the boldly sketched hands upon the reins. Cossar had apparently never driven before, and he was keeping the line of least resistance down the middle of the road by some no doubt quite obvious but certainly unusual light of his own.

"Why don't we all do the obvious?" thought Bensington. "How the world would travel if one did! I wonder for instance why I don't do such a lot of things I know would be all right to do — things I *want* to do. Is everybody like that, or is it peculiar to me!" He plunged into obscure speculation about the Will. He thought of the complex organised futilities of the daily life, and in contrast with them the plain and manifest things to do, the sweet and splendid things to do, that some incredible influences will never permit us to do. Cousin Jane? Cousin Jane he perceived was important in the question, in some subtle and difficult way. Why should we after all eat, drink, and sleep, remain unmarried, go here, abstain from going there, all out of deference to Cousin Jane? She became symbolical without ceasing to be incomprehensible!

A stile and a path across the fields caught his eye and reminded him of that other bright day, so recent in time, so remote in its emotions, when he had walked from Urshot to the Experimental Farm to see the giant chicks.

Fate plays with us.

"Tcheck, tcheck," said Cossar. "Get up."

It was a hot midday afternoon, not a breath of wind, and the dust was thick in the roads. Few people were about, but the deer beyond the park palings browsed in profound tranquillity. They saw a couple of big wasps stripping a gooseberry bush just outside Hickleybrow, and another was crawling up and down the front of the little grocer's shop in the village street trying to find an entry. The grocer was dimly visible within, with an ancient fowling-piece in hand, watching its endeavours. The driver of the waggonette pulled up outside the Jolly Drovers and informed Redwood that his part of the bargain was done. In this contention he was presently joined by the drivers of the waggon and the trolley. Not only did they maintain

this, but they refused to let the horses be taken further.

"Them big rats is nuts on 'orses," the trolley driver kept on repeating.

Cossar surveyed the controversy for a moment.

"Get the things out of that waggonette," he said, and one of his men, a tall, fair, dirty engineer, obeyed.

"Gimme that shot gun," said Cossar.

He placed himself between the drivers. "We don't want *you* to drive," he said.

"You can say what you like," he conceded, "but we want these horses."

They began to argue, but he continued speaking.

"If you try and assault us I shall, in self-defence, let fly at your legs. The horses are going on."

He treated the incident as closed. "Get up on that waggon, Flack," he said to a thickset, wiry little man. "Boon, take the trolley."

The two drivers blustered to Redwood.

"You've done your duty to your employers," said Redwood. "You stop in this village until we come back. No one will blame you, seeing we've got guns. We've no wish to do anything unjust or violent, but this occasion is pressing. I'll pay if anything happens to the horses, never fear."

"*That's* all right," said Cossar, who rarely promised.

They left the waggonette behind, and the men who were not driving went afoot. Over each shoulder sloped a gun. It was the oddest little expedition for an English country road, more like a Yankee party, trekking west in the good old Indian days.

They went up the road, until at the crest by the stile they came into sight of the Experimental Farm. They found a little group of men there with a gun or so — the two Fulchers were among them — and one man, a stranger from Maidstone, stood out before the others and watched the place through an opera-glass.

These men turned about and stared at Redwood's party.

"Anything fresh?" said Cossar.

"The waspses keeps a comin' and a goin'," said old Fulcher. "Can't see as they bring anything."

"The canary creeper's got in among the pine trees now," said the

man with the lorgnette. “It wasn’t there this morning. You can see it grow while you watch it.”

He took out a handkerchief and wiped his object-glasses with careful deliberation.

“I reckon you’re going down there,” ventured Skelmersdale.

“Will you come?” said Cossar.

Skelmersdale seemed to hesitate.

“It’s an all-night job.”

Skelmersdale decided that he wouldn’t.

“Rats about?” asked Cossar.

“One was up in the pines this morning — rabbiting, we reckon.”

Cossar slouched on to overtake his party.

Bensington, regarding the Experimental Farm under his hand, was able to gauge now the vigour of the Food. His first impression was that the house was smaller than he had thought — very much smaller; his second was to perceive that all the vegetation between the house and the pine-wood had become extremely large. The roof over the well peeped amidst tussocks of grass a good eight feet high, and the canary creeper wrapped about the chimney stack and gesticulated with stiff tendrils towards the heavens. Its flowers were vivid yellow splashes, distinctly visible as separate specks this mile away. A great green cable had writhed across the big wire inclosures of the giant hens’ run, and flung twining leaf stems about two outstanding pines. Fully half as tall as these was the grove of nettles running round behind the cart-shed. The whole prospect, as they drew nearer, became more and more suggestive of a raid of pigmies upon a dolls’ house that has been left in a neglected corner of some great garden.

There was a busy coming and going from the wasps’ nest, they saw. A swarm of black shapes interlaced in the air, above the rusty hill-front beyond the pine cluster, and ever and again one of these would dart up into the sky with incredible swiftness and soar off upon some distant quest. Their humming became audible at more than half a mile’s distance from the Experimental Farm. Once a yellow-striped monster dropped towards them and hung for a space watching them with its great compound eyes, but at an ineffectual shot from Cossar it darted off again. Down in a corner of the field,

away to the right, several were crawling about over some ragged bones that were probably the remains of the lamb the rats had brought from Huxter's Farm. The horses became very restless as they drew near these creatures. None of the party was an expert driver, and they had to put a man to lead each horse and encourage it with the voice.

They could see nothing of the rats as they came up to the house, and everything seemed perfectly still except for the rising and falling "whoozzzzzzZZZ, whoooo-zoo-oo" of the wasps' nest.

They led the horses into the yard, and one of Cossar's men, seeing the door open — the whole of the middle portion of the door had been gnawed out — walked into the house. Nobody missed him for the time, the rest being occupied with the barrels of paraffin, and the first intimation they had of his separation from them was the report of his gun and the whizz of his bullet. "Bang, bang," both barrels, and his first bullet it seems went through the cask of sulphur, smashed out a stave from the further side, and filled the air with yellow dust. Redwood had kept his gun in hand and let fly at something grey that leapt past him. He had a vision of the broad hind-quarters, the long scaly tail and long soles of the hind-feet of a rat, and fired his second barrel. He saw Bensington drop as the beast vanished round the corner.

Then for a time everybody was busy with a gun. For three minutes lives were cheap at the Experimental Farm, and the banging of guns filled the air. Redwood, careless of Bensington in his excitement, rushed in pursuit, and was knocked headlong by a mass of brick fragments, mortar, plaster, and rotten lath splinters that came flying out at him as a bullet whacked through the wall.

He found himself sitting on the ground with blood on his hands and lips, and a great stillness brooded over all about him.

Then a flattish voice from within the house remarked: "Gee-whizz!"

"Hullo!" said Redwood.

"Hullo there!" answered the voice.

And then: "Did you chaps get 'im?"

A sense of the duties of friendship returned to Redwood. "Is Mr.

Bensington hurt?" he said.

The man inside heard imperfectly. "No one ain't to blame if I ain't," said the voice inside.

It became clearer to Redwood that he must have shot Bensington. He forgot the cuts upon his face, arose and came back to find Bensington seated on the ground and rubbing his shoulder. Bensington looked over his glasses. "We peppered him, Redwood," he said, and then: "He tried to jump over me, and knocked me down. But I let him have it with both barrels, and my! how it has hurt my shoulder, to be sure."

A man appeared in the doorway. "I got him once in the chest and once in the side," he said.

"Where's the waggons?" said Cossar, appearing amidst a thicket of gigantic canary-creeper leaves.

It became evident, to Redwood's amazement, first, that no one had been shot, and, secondly, that the trolley and waggon had shifted fifty yards, and were now standing with interlocked wheels amidst the tangled distortions of Skinner's kitchen garden. The horses had stopped their plunging. Half-way towards them, the burst barrel of sulphur lay in the path with a cloud of sulphur dust above it. He indicated this to Cossar and walked towards it. "Has any one seen that rat?" shouted Cossar, following. "I got him in between the ribs once, and once in the face as he turned on me."

They were joined by two men, as they worried at the locked wheels.

"I killed that rat," said one of the men.

"Have they got him?" asked Cossar.

"Jim Bates has found him, beyond the hedge. I got him jest as he came round the corner…. Whack behind the shoulder…."

When things were a little ship-shape again Redwood went and stared at the huge misshapen corpse. The brute lay on its side, with its body slightly bent. Its rodent teeth overhanging its receding lower jaw gave its face a look of colossal feebleness, of weak avidity. It seemed not in the least ferocious or terrible. Its fore-paws reminded him of lank emaciated hands. Except for one neat round hole with a scorched rim on either side of its neck, the creature was absolutely

intact. He meditated over this fact for some time. “There must have been two rats,” he said at last, turning away.

“Yes. And the one that everybody hit — got away.”

“I am certain that my own shot—”

A canary-creeper leaf tendril, engaged in that mysterious search for a holdfast which constitutes a tendril’s career, bent itself engagingly towards his neck and made him step aside hastily.

“Whoo-z-z z-z-z-z-Z-Z-Z,” from the distant wasps’ nest, “whoo oo zoo-oo.”

V.

This incident left the party alert but not unstrung.

They got their stores into the house, which had evidently been ransacked by the rats after the flight of Mrs. Skinner, and four of the men took the two horses back to Hickleybrow. They dragged the dead rat through the hedge and into a position commanded by the windows of the house, and incidentally came upon a cluster of giant earwigs in the ditch. These creatures dispersed hastily, but Cossar reached out incalculable limbs and managed to kill several with his boots and gun-butt. Then two of the men hacked through several of the main stems of the canary creeper — huge cylinders they were, a couple of feet in diameter, that came out by the sink at the back; and while Cossar set the house in order for the night, Bensington, Redwood, and one of the assistant electricians went cautiously round by the fowl runs in search of the rat-holes.

They skirted the giant nettles widely, for these huge weeds threatened them with poison-thorns a good inch long. Then round beyond the gnawed, dismantled stile they came abruptly on the huge cavernous throat of the most westerly of the giant rat-holes, an evil-smelling profundity, that drew them up into a line together.

“I *hope* they’ll come out,” said Redwood, with a glance at the pent-house of the well.

“If they don’t—” reflected Bensington.

“They will,” said Redwood.

They meditated.

“We shall have to rig up some sort of flare if we *do* go in,” said Redwood.

They went up a little path of white sand through the pine-wood and halted presently within sight of the wasp-holes.

The sun was setting now, and the wasps were coming home for good; their wings in the golden light made twirling haloes about them. The three men peered out from under the trees — they did not care to go right to the edge of the wood — and watched these tremendous insects drop and crawl for a little and enter and disappear. “They will be still in a couple of hours from now,” said Redwood…. “This is like being a boy again.”

“We can’t miss those holes,” said Bensington, “even if the night is dark. By-the-bye — about the light—”

“Full moon,” said the electrician. “I looked it up.”

They went back and consulted with Cossar.

He said that “obviously” they must get the sulphur, nitre, and plaster of Paris through the wood before twilight, and for that they broke bulk and carried the sacks. After the necessary shouting of the preliminary directions, never a word was spoken, and as the buzzing of the wasps’ nest died away there was scarcely a sound in the world but the noise of footsteps, the heavy breathing of burthened men, and the thud of the sacks. They all took turns at that labour except Mr. Bensington, who was manifestly unfit. He took post in the Skinners’ bedroom with a rifle, to watch the carcase of the dead rat, and of the others, they took turns to rest from sack-carrying and to keep watch two at a time upon the rat-holes behind the nettle grove. The pollen sacs of the nettles were ripe, and every now and then the vigil would be enlivened by the dehiscence of these, the bursting of the sacs sounding exactly like the crack of a pistol, and the pollen grains as big as buckshot pattered all about them.

Mr. Bensington sat at his window on a hard horse-hair-stuffed arm-chair, covered by a grubby antimacassar that had given a touch of social distinction to the Skinners’ sitting-room for many years. His unaccustomed rifle rested on the sill, and his spectacles anon watched the dark bulk of the dead rat in the thickening twilight, anon wandered about him in curious meditation. There was a faint smell of

paraffin without, for one of the casks leaked, and it mingled with a less unpleasant odour arising from the hacked and crushed creeper.

Within, when he turned his head, a blend of faint domestic scents, beer, cheese, rotten apples, and old boots as the leading *motifs*, was full of reminiscences of the vanished Skinners. He regarded the dim room for a space. The furniture had been greatly disordered — perhaps by some inquisitive rat — but a coat upon a clothes-peg on the door, a razor and some dirty scraps of paper, and a piece of soap that had hardened through years of disuse into a horny cube, were redolent of Skinner's distinctive personality. It came to Bensington's mind with a complete novelty of realisation that in all probability the man had been killed and eaten, at least in part, by the monster that now lay dead there in the darkling.

To think of all that a harmless-looking discovery in chemistry may lead to!

Here he was in homely England and yet in infinite danger, sitting out alone with a gun in a twilit, ruined house, remote from every comfort, his shoulder dreadfully bruised from a gun-kick, and — by Jove!

He grasped now how profoundly the order of the universe had changed for him. He had come right away to this amazing experience, *without even saying a word to his cousin Jane*!

What must she be thinking of him?

He tried to imagine it and he could not. He had an extraordinary feeling that she and he were parted for ever and would never meet again. He felt he had taken a step and come into a world of new immensities. What other monsters might not those deepening shadows hide? The tips of the giant nettles came out sharp and black against the pale green and amber of the western sky. Everything was very still — very still indeed. He wondered why he could not hear the others away there round the corner of the house. The shadow in the cart-shed was now an abysmal black.

* * * * *

Bang … Bang … Bang.

A sequence of echoes and a shout.

A long silence.

Bang and a *diminuendo* of echoes.

Stillness.

Then, thank goodness! Redwood and Cossar were coming out of the inaudible darknesses, and Redwood was calling "Bensington!"

"Bensington! We've bagged another of the rats!"

"Cossar's bagged another of the rats!"

VI.

When the Expedition had finished refreshment, the night had fully come. The stars were at their brightest, and a growing pallor towards Hankey heralded the moon. The watch on the rat-holes had been maintained, but the watchers had shifted to the hill slope above the holes, feeling this a safer firing-point. They squatted there in a rather abundant dew, fighting the damp with whisky. The others rested in the house, and the three leaders discussed the night's work with the men. The moon rose towards midnight, and as soon as it was clear of the downs, every one except the rat-hole sentinels started off in single file, led by Cossar, towards the wasps' nest.

So far as the wasps' nest went, they found their task exceptionally easy — astonishingly easy. Except that it was a longer labour, it was no graver affair than any common wasps' nest might have been. Danger there was, no doubt, danger to life, but it never so much as thrust its head out of that portentous hillside. They stuffed in the sulphur and nitre, they bunged the holes soundly, and fired their trains. Then with a common impulse all the party but Cossar turned and ran athwart the long shadows of the pines, and, finding Cossar had stayed behind, came to a halt together in a knot, a hundred yards away, convenient to a ditch that offered cover. Just for a minute or two the moonlit night, all black and white, was heavy with a suffocated buzz, that rose and mingled to a roar, a deep abundant note, and culminated and died, and then almost incredibly the night was still.

"By Jove!" said Bensington, almost in a whisper, "*it's done!*"

All stood intent. The hillside above the black point-lace of the pine shadows seemed as bright as day and as colourless as snow. The

setting plaster in the holes positively shone. Cossar's loose framework moved towards them.

"So far—" said Cossar.

Crack — *bang*!

A shot from near the house and then — stillness.

"What's *that*?" said Bensington.

"One of the rats put its head out," suggested one of the men.

"By-the-bye, we left our guns up there," said Redwood.

"By the sacks."

Every one began to walk towards the hill again.

"That must be the rats," said Bensington.

"Obviously," said Cossar, gnawing his finger nails.

Bang!

"Hullo?" said one of the men.

Then abruptly came a shout, two shots, a loud shout that was almost a scream, three shots in rapid succession and a splintering of wood. All these sounds were very clear and very small in the immense stillness of the night. Then for some moments nothing but a minute muffled confusion from the direction of the rat-holes, and then again a wild yell … Each man found himself running hard for the guns.

Two shots.

Bensington found himself, gun in hand, going hard through the pine trees after a number of receding backs. It is curious that the thought uppermost in his mind at that moment was the wish that his cousin Jane could see him. His bulbous slashed boots flew out in wild strides, and his face was distorted into a permanent grin, because that wrinkled his nose and kept his glasses in place. Also he held the muzzle of his gun projecting straight before him as he flew through the chequered moonlight. The man who had run away met them full tilt — he had dropped his gun.

"Hullo," said Cossar, and caught him in his arms. "What's this?"

"They came out together," said the man.

"The rats?"

"Yes, six of them."

"Where's Flack?"

"Down."

“What’s he say?” panted Bensington, coming up, unheeded.

“Flack’s down?”

“He fell down.”

“They came out one after the other.”

“What?”

“Made a rush. I fired both barrels first.”

“You left Flack?”

“They were on to us.”

“Come on,” said Cossar. “You come with us. Where’s Flack? Show us.”

The whole party moved forward. Further details of the engagement dropped from the man who had run away. The others clustered about him, except Cossar, who led.

“Where are they?”

“Back in their holes, perhaps. I cleared. They made a rush for their holes.”

“What do you mean? Did you get behind them?”

“We got down by their holes. Saw ’em come out, you know, and tried to cut ’em off. They lolloped out — like rabbits. We ran down and let fly. They ran about wild after our first shot and suddenly came at us. *Went* for us.”

“How many?”

“Six or seven.”

Cossar led the way to the edge of the pine-wood and halted.

“D’yer mean they *got* Flack?” asked some one.

“One of ’em was on to him.”

“Didn’t you shoot?”

“How *could* I?”

“Every one loaded?” said Cossar over his shoulder.

There was a confirmatory movement.

“But Flack—” said one.

“D’yer mean — Flack—” said another.

“There’s no time to lose,” said Cossar, and shouted “Flack!” as he led the way. The whole force advanced towards the rat-holes, the man who had run away a little to the rear. They went forward through the rank exaggerated weeds and skirted the body of the second dead rat. They were extended in a bunchy line, each man with

his gun pointing forward, and they peered about them in the clear moonlight for some crumpled, ominous shape, some crouching form. They found the gun of the man who had run away very speedily.

"Flack!" cried Cossar. "Flack!"

"He ran past the nettles and fell down," volunteered the man who ran away.

"Where?"

"Round about there."

"Where did he fall?"

He hesitated and led them athwart the long black shadows for a space and turned judicially. "About here, I think."

"Well, he's not here now."

"But his gun — ?"

"Confound it!" swore Cossar, "where's everything got to?" He strode a step towards the black shadows on the hillside that masked the holes and stood staring. Then he swore again. "If they *have* dragged him in — !"

So they hung for a space tossing each other the fragments of thoughts. Bensington's glasses flashed like diamonds as he looked from one to the other. The men's faces changed from cold clearness to mysterious obscurity as they turned them to or from the moon. Every one spoke, no one completed a sentence. Then abruptly Cossar chose his line. He flapped limbs this way and that and expelled orders in pellets. It was obvious he wanted lamps. Every one except Cossar was moving towards the house.

"You're going into the holes?" asked Redwood.

"Obviously," said Cossar.

He made it clear once more that the lamps of the cart and trolley were to be got and brought to him.

Bensington, grasping this, started off along the path by the well. He glanced over his shoulder, and saw Cossar's gigantic figure standing out as if he were regarding the holes pensively. At the sight Bensington halted for a moment and half turned. They were all leaving Cossar — !

Cossar was able to take care of himself, of course!

Suddenly Bensington saw something that made him shout a windless "HI!" In a second three rats had projected themselves from

the dark tangle of the creeper towards Cossar. For three seconds Cossar stood unaware of them, and then he had become the most active thing in the world. He didn't fire his gun. Apparently he had no time to aim, or to think of aiming; he ducked a leaping rat, Bensington saw, and then smashed at the back of its head with the butt of his gun. The monster gave one leap and fell over itself.

Cossar's form went right down out of sight among the reedy grass, and then he rose again, running towards another of the rats and whirling his gun overhead. A faint shout came to Bensington's ears, and then he perceived the remaining two rats bolting divergently, and Cossar in pursuit towards the holes.

The whole thing was an affair of misty shadows; all three fighting monsters were exaggerated and made unreal by the delusive clearness of the light. At moments Cossar was colossal, at moments invisible. The rats flashed athwart the eye in sudden unexpected leaps, or ran with a movement of the feet so swift, they seemed to run on wheels. It was all over in half a minute. No one saw it but Bensington. He could hear the others behind him still receding towards the house. He shouted something inarticulate and then ran back towards Cossar, while the rats vanished. He came up to him outside the holes. In the moonlight the distribution of shadows that constituted Cossar's visage intimated calm. "Hullo," said Cossar, "back already? Where's the lamps? They're all back now in their holes. One I broke the neck of as it ran past me … See? There!" And he pointed a gaunt finger.

Bensington was too astonished for conversation …

The lamps seemed an interminable time in coming. At last they appeared, first one unwinking luminous eye, preceded by a swaying yellow glare, and then, winking now and then, and then shining out again, two others. About them came little figures with little voices, and then enormous shadows. This group made as it were a spot of inflammation upon the gigantic dreamland of moonshine.

"Flack," said the voices. "Flack."

An illuminating sentence floated up. "Locked himself in the attic."

Cossar was continually more wonderful. He produced great handfuls of cotton wool and stuffed them in his ears — Bensington wondered why. Then he loaded his gun with a quarter charge of

powder. Who else could have thought of that? Wonderland culminated with the disappearance of Cossar's twin realms of boot sole up the central hole.

Cossar was on all fours with two guns, one trailing on each side from a string under his chin, and his most trusted assistant, a little dark man with a grave face, was to go in stooping behind him, holding a lantern over his head. Everything had been made as sane and obvious and proper as a lunatic's dream. The wool, it seems, was on account of the concussion of the rifle; the man had some too. Obviously! So long as the rats turned tail on Cossar no harm could come to him, and directly they headed for him he would see their eyes and fire between them. Since they would have to come down the cylinder of the hole, Cossar could hardly fail to hit them. It was, Cossar insisted, the obvious method, a little tedious perhaps, but absolutely certain. As the assistant stooped to enter, Bensington saw that the end of a ball of twine had been tied to the tail of his coat. By this he was to draw in the rope if it should be needed to drag out the bodies of the rats.

Bensington perceived that the object he held in his hand was Cossar's silk hat.

How had it got there?

It would be something to remember him by, anyhow.

At each of the adjacent holes stood a little group with a lantern on the ground shining up the hole, and with one man kneeling and aiming at the round void before him, waiting for anything that might emerge.

There was an interminable suspense.

Then they heard Cossar's first shot, like an explosion in a mine….

Every one's nerves and muscles tightened at that, and bang! bang! bang! the rats had tried a bolt, and two more were dead. Then the man who held the ball of twine reported a twitching. "He's killed one in there," said Bensington, "and he wants the rope."

He watched the rope creep into the hole, and it seemed as though it had become animated by a serpentine intelligence — for the darkness made the twine invisible. At last it stopped crawling, and there was a long pause. Then what seemed to Bensington the queerest monster of all crept slowly from the hole, and resolved itself

into the little engineer emerging backwards. After him, and ploughing deep furrows, Cossar's boots thrust out, and then came his lantern-illuminated back….

Only one rat was left alive now, and this poor, doomed wretch cowered in the inmost recesses until Cossar and the lantern went in again and slew it, and finally Cossar, that human ferret, went through all the runs to make sure.

"We got 'em," he said to his nearly awe-stricken company at last. "And if I hadn't been a mud-headed mucker I should have stripped to the waist. Obviously. Feel my sleeves, Bensington! I'm wet through with perspiration. Jolly hard to think of everything. Only a halfway-up of whisky can save me from a cold."

VII.

There were moments during that wonderful night when it seemed to Bensington that he was planned by nature for a life of fantastic adventure. This was particularly the case for an hour or so after he had taken a stiff whisky. "Shan't go back to Sloane Street," he confided to the tall, fair, dirty engineer.

"You won't, eh?"

"No fear," said Bensington, nodding darkly.

The exertion of dragging the seven dead rats to the funeral pyre by the nettle grove left him bathed in perspiration, and Cossar pointed out the obvious physical reaction of whisky to save him from the otherwise inevitable chill. There was a sort of brigand's supper in the old bricked kitchen, with the row of dead rats lying in the moonlight against the hen-runs outside, and after thirty minutes or so of rest, Cossar roused them all to the labours that were still to do. "Obviously," as he said, they had to "wipe the place out. No litter — no scandal. See?" He stirred them up to the idea of making destruction complete. They smashed and splintered every fragment of wood in the house; they built trails of chopped wood wherever big vegetation was springing; they made a pyre for the rat bodies and soaked them in paraffin.

Bensington worked like a conscientious navvy. He had a sort of climax of exhilaration and energy towards two o'clock. When in the

work of destruction he wielded an axe the bravest fled his neighbourhood. Afterwards he was a little sobered by the temporary loss of his spectacles, which were found for him at last in his side coat-pocket.

Men went to and fro about him — grimy, energetic men. Cossar moved amongst them like a god.

Bensington drank that delight of human fellowship that comes to happy armies, to sturdy expeditions — never to those who live the life of the sober citizen in cities. After Cossar had taken his axe away and set him to carry wood he went to and fro, saying they were all "good fellows." He kept on — long after he was aware of fatigue.

At last all was ready, and the broaching of the paraffin began. The moon, robbed now of all its meagre night retinue of stars, shone high above the dawn.

"Burn everything," said Cossar, going to and fro— "burn the ground and make a clean sweep of it. See?"

Bensington became aware of him, looking now very gaunt and horrible in the pale beginnings of the daylight, hurrying past with his lower jaw projected and a flaring torch of touchwood in his hand.

"Come away!" said some one, pulling Bensington's arm.

The still dawn — no birds were singing there — was suddenly full of a tumultuous crackling; a little dull red flame ran about the base of the pyre, changed to blue upon the ground, and set out to clamber, leaf by leaf, up the stem of a giant nettle. A singing sound mingled with the crackling….

They snatched their guns from the corner of the Skinners' living-room, and then every one was running. Cossar came after them with heavy strides….

Then they were standing looking back at the Experimental Farm. It was boiling up; the smoke and flames poured out like a crowd in a panic, from doors and windows and from a thousand cracks and crevices in the roof. Trust Cossar to build a fire! A great column of smoke, shot with blood-red tongues and darting flashes, rushed up into the sky. It was like some huge giant suddenly standing up, straining upward and abruptly spreading his great arms out across the sky. It cast the night back upon them, utterly hiding and obliterating the incandescence of the sun that rose behind it. All Hickleybrow

was soon aware of that stupendous pillar of smoke, and came out upon the crest, in various *deshabille*, to watch them coming.

Behind, like some fantastic fungus, this smoke pillar swayed and fluctuated, up, up, into the sky — making the Downs seem low and all other objects petty, and in the foreground, led by Cossar, the makers of this mischief followed the path, eight little black figures coming wearily, guns shouldered, across the meadow.

As Bensington looked back there came into his jaded brain, and echoed there, a familiar formula. What was it? "You have lit to-day — ? You have lit to-day — ?" Then he remembered Latimer's words: "We have lit this day such a candle in England as no man may ever put out again—"

What a man Cossar was, to be sure! He admired his back view for a space, and was proud to have held that hat. Proud! Although he was an eminent investigator and Cossar only engaged in applied science.

Suddenly he fell shivering and yawning enormously and wishing he was warmly tucked away in bed in his little flat that looked out upon Sloane Street. (It didn't do even to think of Cousin Jane.) His legs became cotton strands, his feet lead. He wondered if any one would get them coffee in Hickleybrow. He had never been up all night for three-and-thirty years.

VIII.

And while these eight adventurers fought with rats about the Experimental Farm, nine miles away, in the village of Cheasing Eyebright, an old lady with an excessive nose struggled with great difficulties by the light of a flickering candle. She gripped a sardine tin opener in one gnarled hand, and in the other she held a tin of Herakleophorbia, which she had resolved to open or die. She struggled indefatigably, grunting at each fresh effort, while through the flimsy partition the voice of the Caddles infant wailed.

"Bless 'is poor 'art," said Mrs. Skinner; and then, with her solitary tooth biting her lip in an ecstasy of determination, "Come *up*!"

And presently, "*Jab*!" a fresh supply of the Food of the Gods was let loose to wreak its powers of giantry upon the world.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE GIANT CHILDREN.

I.

For a time at least the spreading circle of residual consequences about the Experimental Farm must pass out of the focus of our narrative — how for a long time a power of bigness, in fungus and toadstool, in grass and weed, radiated from that charred but not absolutely obliterated centre. Nor can we tell here at any length how these mournful spinsters, the two surviving hens, made a wonder of and a show, spent their remaining years in eggless celebrity. The reader who is hungry for fuller details in these matters is referred to the newspapers of the period — to the voluminous, indiscriminate files of the modern Recording Angel. Our business lies with Mr. Bensington at the focus of the disturbance.

He had come back to London to find himself a quite terribly famous man. In a night the whole world had changed with respect to him. Everybody understood. Cousin Jane, it seemed, knew all about it; the people in the streets knew all about it; the newspapers all and more. To meet Cousin Jane was terrible, of course, but when it was over not so terrible after all. The good woman had limits even to her power over facts; it was clear that she had communed with herself and accepted the Food as something in the nature of things.

She took the line of huffy dutifulness. She disapproved highly, it was evident, but she did not prohibit. The flight of Bensington, as she must have considered it, may have shaken her, and her worst was to treat him with bitter persistence for a cold he had not caught and fatigue he had long since forgotten, and to buy him a new sort of hygienic all-wool combination underwear that was apt to get involved and turned partially inside out and partially not, and as difficult to get into for an absent-minded man, as — Society. And so for a space, and as far as this convenience left him leisure, he still continued to participate in the development of this new element in human history, the Food of the Gods.

The public mind, following its own mysterious laws of selection, had chosen him as the one and only responsible Inventor and Promoter of this new wonder; it would hear nothing of Redwood, and without a protest it allowed Cossar to follow his natural impulse into a terribly prolific obscurity. Before he was aware of the drift of these things, Mr. Bensington was, so to speak, stark and dissected upon the hoardings. His baldness, his curious general pinkness, and his golden spectacles had become a national possession. Resolute young men with large expensive-looking cameras and a general air of complete authorisation took possession of the flat for brief but fruitful periods, let off flash lights in it that filled it for days with dense, intolerable vapour, and retired to fill the pages of the syndicated magazines with their admirable photographs of Mr. Bensington complete and at home in his second-best jacket and his slashed shoes. Other resolute-mannered persons of various ages and sexes dropped in and told him things about Boomfood — it was *Punch* first called the stuff "Boomfood" — and afterwards reproduced what they had said as his own original contribution to the Interview. The thing became quite an obsession with Broadbeam, the Popular Humourist. He scented another confounded thing he could not understand, and he fretted dreadfully in his efforts to "laugh the thing down." One saw him in clubs, a great clumsy presence with the evidences of his midnight oil burning manifest upon his large unwholesome face, explaining to every one he could buttonhole: "These Scientific chaps, you know, haven't a Sense of Humour, you know. That's what it is. This Science — kills it." His jests at Bensington became malignant libels….

An enterprising press-cutting agency sent Bensington a long article about himself from a sixpenny weekly, entitled "A New Terror," and offered to supply one hundred such disturbances for a guinea, and two extremely charming young ladies, totally unknown to him, called, and, to the speechless indignation of Cousin Jane, had tea with him and afterwards sent him their birthday books for his signature. He was speedily quite hardened to seeing his name associated with the most incongruous ideas in the public press, and to discover in the reviews articles written about Boomfood and himself in a tone of the utmost intimacy by people he had never heard of.

And whatever delusions he may have cherished in the days of his obscurity about the pleasantness of Fame were dispelled utterly and for ever.

At first — except for Broadbeam — the tone of the public mind was quite free from any touch of hostility. It did not seem to occur to the public mind as anything but a mere playful supposition that any more Herakleophorbia was going to escape again. And it did not seem to occur to the public mind that the growing little band of babies now being fed on the food would presently be growing more "up" than most of us ever grow. The sort of thing that pleased the public mind was caricatures of eminent politicians after a course of Boom-feeding, uses of the idea on hoardings, and such edifying exhibitions as the dead wasps that had escaped the fire and the remaining hens.

Beyond that the public did not care to look, until very strenuous efforts were made to turn its eyes to the remoter consequences, and even then for a while its enthusiasm for action was partial. "There's always somethin' New," said the public — a public so glutted with novelty that it would hear of the earth being split as one splits an apple without surprise, and, "I wonder what they'll do next."

But there were one or two people outside the public, as it were, who did already take that further glance, and some it seems were frightened by what they saw there. There was young Caterham, for example, cousin of the Earl of Pewterstone, and one of the most promising of English politicians, who, taking the risk of being thought a faddist, wrote a long article in the *Nineteenth Century and After* to suggest its total suppression. And — in certain of his moods, there was Bensington.

"They don't seem to realise—" he said to Cossar.

"No, they don't."

"And do we? Sometimes, when I think of what it means — This poor child of
Redwood's — And, of course, your three… Forty feet high, perhaps! After all, *ought* we to go on with it?"

"Go on with it!" cried Cossar, convulsed with inelegant

astonishment and pitching his note higher than ever. “Of *course* you’ll go on with it! What d’you think you were made for? Just to loaf about between meal-times?

“Serious consequences,” he screamed, “of course! Enormous. Obviously. Ob-viously. Why, man, it’s the only chance you’ll ever get of a serious consequence! And you want to shirk it!” For a moment his indignation was speechless, “It’s downright Wicked!” he said at last, and repeated explosively, “Wicked!”

But Bensington worked in his laboratory now with more emotion than zest. He couldn’t, tell whether he wanted serious consequences to his life or not; he was a man of quiet tastes. It was a marvellous discovery, of course, quite marvellous — but — He had already become the proprietor of several acres of scorched, discredited property near Hickleybrow, at a price of nearly £90 an acre, and at times he was disposed to think this as serious a consequence of speculative chemistry as any unambitious man, could wish. Of course he was Famous — terribly Famous. More than satisfying, altogether more than satisfying, was the Fame he had attained.

But the habit of Research was strong in him….

And at moments, rare moments in the laboratory chiefly, he would find something else than habit and Cossar’s arguments to urge him to his work. This little spectacled man, poised perhaps with his slashed shoes wrapped about the legs of his high stool and his hand upon the tweezer of his balance weights, would have again a flash of that adolescent vision, would have a momentary perception of the eternal unfolding of the seed that had been sown in his brain, would see as it were in the sky, behind the grotesque shapes and accidents of the present, the coming world of giants and all the mighty things the future has in store — vague and splendid, like some glittering palace seen suddenly in the passing of a sunbeam far away…. And presently it would be with him as though that distant splendour had never shone upon his brain, and he would perceive nothing ahead but sinister shadows, vast declivities and darknesses, inhospitable immensities, cold, wild, and terrible things.

II.

Amidst the complex and confused happenings, the impacts from the great outer world that constituted Mr. Bensington's fame, a shining and active figure presently became conspicuous — became almost, as it were, a leader and marshal of these externalities in Mr. Bensington's eyes. This was Dr. Winkles, that convincing young practitioner, who has already appeared in this story as the means whereby Redwood was able to convey the Food to his son. Even before the great outbreak, it was evident that the mysterious powders Redwood had given him had awakened this gentleman's interest immensely, and so soon as the first wasps came he was putting two and two together.

He was the sort of doctor that is in manners, in morals, in methods and appearance, most succinctly and finally expressed by the word "rising." He was large and fair, with a hard, alert, superficial, aluminium-coloured eye, and hair like chalk mud, even-featured and muscular about the clean-shaven mouth, erect in figure and energetic in movement, quick and spinning on the heel, and he wore long frock coats, black silk ties and plain gold studs and chains and his silk hats had a special shape and brim that made him look wiser and better than anybody. He looked as young or old as anybody grown up. And after that first wonderful outbreak he took to Bensington and Redwood and the Food of the Gods with such a convincing air of proprietorship, that at times, in spite of the testimony of the Press to the contrary, Bensington was disposed to regard him as the original inventor of the whole affair.

"These accidents," said Winkles, when Bensington hinted at the dangers of further escapes, "are nothing. Nothing. The discovery is everything. Properly developed, suitably handled, sanely controlled, we have — we have something very portentous indeed in this food of ours…. We must keep our eye on it … We mustn't let it out of control again, and — we mustn't let it rest."

He certainly did not mean to do that. He was at Bensington's now almost every day. Bensington, glancing from the window, would see the faultless equipage come spanking up Sloane Street and after an incredibly brief interval Winkles would enter the room with a light, strong motion, and pervade it, and protrude some newspaper and supply information and make remarks.

“Well,” he would say, rubbing his hands, “how are we getting on?” and so pass to the current discussion about it.

“Do you see,” he would say, for example, “that Caterham has been talking about our stuff at the Church Association?”

“Dear me!” said Bensington, “that’s a cousin of the Prime Minister, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” said Winkles, “a very able young man — very able. Quite wrong-headed; you know, violently reactionary — but thoroughly able. And he’s evidently disposed to make capital out of this stuff of ours. Takes a very emphatic line. Talks of our proposal to use it in the elementary schools—”

“Our proposal to use it in the elementary schools!”

“*I* said something about that the other day — quite in passing — little affair at a Polytechnic. Trying to make it clear the stuff was really highly beneficial. Not in the slightest degree dangerous, in spite of those first little accidents. Which cannot possibly occur again…. You know it *would* be rather good stuff — But he’s taken it up.”

“What did you say?”

“Mere obvious nothings. But as you see — ! Takes it up with perfect gravity. Treats the thing as an attack. Says there is already a sufficient waste of public money in elementary schools without this. Tells the old stories about piano lessons again — *you* know. No one; he says, wishes to prevent the children of the lower classes obtaining an education suited to their condition, but to give them a food of this sort will be to destroy their sense of proportion utterly. Expands the topic. What Good will it do, he asks, to make poor people six-and-thirty feet high? He really believes, you know, that they *will* be thirty-six feet high.”

“So they would *be*,” said Bensington, “if you gave them our food at all regularly. But nobody said anything—”

“*I* said something.”

“But, my dear Winkles — !”

“They’ll be Bigger, of course,” interrupted Winkles, with an air of knowing all about it, and discouraging the crude ideas of Bensington. “Bigger indisputably. But listen to what he says! Will it make them happier? That’s his point. Curious, isn’t it? Will it make them better?

Will they be more respectful to properly constituted authority? Is it fair to the children themselves?? Curious how anxious his sort are for justice — so far as any future arrangements go. Even nowadays, he says, the cost, of feeding and clothing children is more than many of their parents can contrive, and if this sort of thing is to be permitted — ! Eh?

"You see he makes my mere passing suggestion into a positive proposal. And then he calculates how much a pair of breeches for a growing lad of twenty feet high or so will cost. Just as though he really believed — Ten pounds, he reckons, for the merest decency. Curious this Caterham! So concrete! The honest, and struggling ratepayer will have to contribute to that, he says. He says we have to consider the Rights of the Parent. It's all here. Two columns. Every Parent has a right to have, his children brought up in his own Size….

"Then comes the question of school accommodation, cost of enlarged desks and forms for our already too greatly burthened National Schools. And to get what? — a proletariat of hungry giants. Winds up with a very serious passage, says even if this wild suggestion — mere passing fancy of mine, you know, and misinterpreted at that — this wild suggestion about the schools comes to nothing, that doesn't end the matter. This is a strange food, so strange as to seem to him almost wicked. It has been scattered recklessly — so he says — and it may be scattered again. Once you've taken it, it's poison unless you go on with it. 'So it is,' said Bensington. And in short he proposes the formation of a National Society for the Preservation of the Proper Proportions of Things. Odd? Eh? People are hanging on to the idea like anything."

"But what do they propose to do?"

Winkles shrugged his shoulders and threw out his hands. "Form a Society," he said, "and fuss. They want to make it illegal to manufacture this Herakleophorbia — or at any rate to circulate the knowledge of it. I've written about a bit to show that Caterham's idea of the stuff is very much exaggerated — very much exaggerated indeed, but that doesn't seem to check it. Curious how people are turning against it. And the National Temperance Association, by-the-bye, has founded a branch for Temperance in Growth."

"Mm," said Bensington and stroked his nose.

“After all that has happened there’s bound to be this uproar. On the face of it the thing’s — *startling*.”

Winkles walked about the room for a time, hesitated, and departed.

It became evident there was something at the back of his mind, some aspect of crucial importance to him, that he waited to display. One day, when Redwood and Bensington were at the flat together he gave them a glimpse of this something in reserve.

“How’s it all going?” he said; rubbing his hands together.

“We’re getting together a sort of report.”

“For the Royal Society?”

“Yes.”

“Hm,” said. Winkles, very profoundly, and walked to the hearth-rug. “Hm. But — Here’s the point. *Ought* you?”

“Ought we — what?”

“Ought you to publish?”

“We’re not in the Middle Ages,” said Redwood.

“I know.”

“As Cossar says, swapping wisdom — that’s the true scientific method.”

“In most cases, certainly. But — This is exceptional.”

“We shall put the whole thing before the Royal Society in the proper way,” said Redwood.

Winkles returned to that on a later occasion.

“It’s in many ways an Exceptional discovery.”

“That doesn’t matter,” said Redwood.

“It’s the sort of knowledge that could easily be subject to grave abuse — grave dangers, as Caterham puts it.”

Redwood said nothing.

“Even carelessness, you know—”

“If we were to form a committee of trustworthy people to control the manufacture of Boomfood — Herakleophorbia, I *should* say — we might—”

He paused, and Redwood, with a certain private discomfort, pretended that he did not see any sort of interrogation….

Outside the apartments of Redwood and Bensington, Winkle, in spite of the incompleteness of his instructions, became a leading authority upon Boomfood. He wrote letters defending its use; he made notes and articles explaining its possibilities; he jumped up irrelevantly at the meetings of the scientific and medical associations to talk about it; he identified himself with it. He published a pamphlet called "The Truth about Boomfood," in which he minimised the whole of the Hickleybrow affair almost to nothing. He said that it was absurd to say Boomfood would make people thirty-seven feet high. That was "obviously exaggerated." It would make them Bigger, of course, but that was all….

Within that intimate circle of two it was chiefly evident that Winkles was extremely anxious to help in the making of Herakleophorbia, help in correcting any proofs there might be of any paper there might be in preparation upon the subject — do anything indeed that might lead up to his participation in the details of the making of Herakleophorbia. He was continually telling them both that he felt it was a Big Thing, that it had big possibilities. If only they were— "safeguarded in some way." And at last one day he asked outright to be told just how it was made.

"I've been thinking over what you said," said Redwood.

"Well?" said Winkles brightly.

"It's the sort of knowledge that could easily be subject to grave abuse," said Redwood.

"But I don't see how that applies," said Winkles.

"It does," said Redwood.

Winkles thought it over for a day or so. Then he came to Redwood and said that he doubted if he ought to give powders about which he knew nothing to Redwood's little boy; it seemed to him it was uncommonly like taking responsibility in the dark. That made Redwood thoughtful.

"You've seen that the Society for the Total Suppression of Boomfood claims to have several thousand members," said Winkles, changing the subject. "They've drafted a Bill," said Winkles. "They've got young Caterham to take it up — readily enough. They're in earnest. They're forming local committees to influence candidates. They want to make it penal to prepare and store

Herakleophorbia without special license, and felony — matter of imprisonment without option — to administer Boomfood — that's what they call it, you know — to any person under one-and-twenty. But there's collateral societies, you know. All sorts of people. The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Statures is going to have Mr. Frederic Harrison on the council, they say. You know he's written an essay about it; says it is vulgar, and entirely inharmonious with that Revelation of Humanity that is found in the teachings of Comte. It is the sort of thing the Eighteenth Century *couldn't* have produced even in its worst moments. The idea of the Food never entered the head of Comte — which shows how wicked it really is. No one, he says, who really understood Comte…."

"But you don't mean to say—" said Redwood, alarmed out of his disdain for Winkles.

"They'll not do all that," said Winkles. "But public opinion is public opinion, and votes are votes. Everybody can see you are up to a disturbing thing. And the human instinct is all against disturbance, you know. Nobody seems to believe Caterham's idea of people thirty-seven feet high, who won't be able to get inside a church, or a meeting-house, or any social or human institution. But for all that they're not so easy in their minds about it. They see there's something — something more than a common discovery—"

"There is," said Redwood, "in every discovery."

"Anyhow, they're getting — restive. Caterham keeps harping on what may happen if it gets loose again. I say over and over again, it won't, and it can't. But — there it is!"

And he bounced about the room for a little while as if he meant to reopen the topic of the secret, and then thought better of it and went.

The two scientific men looked at one another. For a space only their eyes spoke.

"If the worst comes to the worst," said Redwood at last, in a strenuously calm voice, "I shall give the Food to my little Teddy with my own hands."

III.

It was only a few days after this that Redwood opened his paper to

find that the Prime Minister had promised a Royal Commission on Boomfood. This sent him, newspaper in hand, round to Bensington's flat.

"Winkles, I believe, is making mischief for the stuff. He plays into the hands of Caterham. He keeps on talking about it, and what it is going to do, and alarming people. If he goes on, I really believe he'll hamper our inquiries. Even as it is — with this trouble about my little boy—"

Bensington wished Winkles wouldn't.

"Do you notice how he has dropped into the way of calling it Boomfood?"

"I don't like that name," said Bensington, with a glance over his glasses.

"It is just so exactly what it is — to Winkles."

"Why does he keep on about it? It isn't his!"

"It's something called Booming," said Redwood. "*I* don't understand. If it isn't his, everybody is getting to think it is. Not that *that* matters."

"In the event of this ignorant, this ridiculous agitation becoming — Serious," began Bensington.

"My little boy can't get on without the stuff," said Redwood. "I don't see how I can help myself now. If the worst comes to the worst —"

A slight bouncing noise proclaimed the presence of Winkles. He became visible in the middle of the room rubbing his hands together.

"I wish you'd knock," said Bensington, looking vicious over the gold rims.

Winkles was apologetic. Then he turned to Redwood. "I'm glad to find you here," he began; "the fact is—"

"Have you seen about this Royal Commission?" interrupted Redwood.

"Yes," said Winkles, thrown out. "Yes."

"What do you think of it?"

"Excellent thing," said Winkles. "Bound to stop most of this clamour. Ventilate the whole affair. Shut up Caterham. But that's not what I came round for, Redwood. The fact is—"

"I don't like this Royal Commission," said Bensington.

“I can assure you it will be all right. I may say — I don’t think it’s a breach of confidence — that very possibly *I* may have a place on the Commission—”

“Oom,” said Redwood, looking into the fire.

“I can put the whole thing right. I can make it perfectly clear, first, that the stuff is controllable, and, secondly, that nothing short of a miracle is needed before anything like that catastrophe at Hickleybrow can possibly happen again. That is just what is wanted, an authoritative assurance. Of course, I could speak with more confidence if I knew — But that’s quite by the way. And just at present there’s something else, another little matter, upon which I’m wanting to consult you. Ahem. The fact is — Well — I happen to be in a slight difficulty, and you can help me out.”

Redwood raised his eyebrows, and was secretly glad.

“The matter is — highly confidential.”

“Go on,” said Redwood. “Don’t worry about that.”

“I have recently been entrusted with a child — the child of — of an Exalted Personage.”

Winkles coughed.

“You’re getting on,” said Redwood.

“I must confess it’s largely your powders — and the reputation of my success with your little boy — There is, I cannot disguise, a strong feeling against its use. And yet I find that among the more intelligent — One must go quietly in these things, you know — little by little. Still, in the case of Her Serene High — I mean this new little patient of mine. As a matter of fact — the suggestion came from the parent. Or I should never—”

He struck Redwood as being embarrassed.

“I thought you had a doubt of the advisability of using these powders,” said Redwood.

“Merely a passing doubt.”

“You don’t propose to discontinue—”

“In the case of your little boy? Certainly not!”

“So far as I can see, it would be murder.”

“I wouldn’t do it for the world.”

“You shall have the powders,” said Redwood.

“I suppose you couldn’t—”

“No fear,” said Redwood. “There isn’t a recipe. It’s no good, Winkles, if you’ll pardon my frankness. I’ll make you the powders myself.”

“Just as well, perhaps,” said Winkles, after a momentary hard stare at Redwood— “just as well.” And then: “I can assure you I really don’t mind in the least.”

IV.

When Winkles had gone Bensington came and stood on the hearth-rug and looked down at Redwood.

“Her Serene Highness!” he remarked.

“Her Serene Highness!” said Redwood.

“It’s the Princess of Weser Dreiburg!”

“No further than a third cousin.”

“Redwood,” said Bensington; “it’s a curious thing to say, I know, but — do you think Winkles understands?”

“What?”

“Just what it is we have made.

“Does he really understand,” said Bensington, dropping his voice and keeping his eye doorward, “that in the Family — the Family of his new patient—”

“Go on,” said Redwood.

“Who have always been if anything a little *under* — *under*—”

“The Average?”

“Yes. And so *very* tactfully undistinguished in *any* way, he is going to produce a royal personage — an outsize royal personage — of *that* size. You know, Redwood, I’m not sure whether there is not something almost — *treasonable* …”

He transferred his eyes from the door to Redwood.

Redwood flung a momentary gesture — index finger erect — at the fire. “By
Jove!” he said, “he *doesn’t* know!”

“That man,” said Redwood, “doesn’t know anything. That was his most exasperating quality as a student. Nothing. He passed all his examinations, he had all his facts — and he had just as much knowledge — as a rotating bookshelf containing the *Times Encyclopedia*. And he doesn’t know anything *now*. He’s Winkles, and incapable of really assimilating anything not immediately and directly related to his superficial self. He is utterly void of imagination and, as a consequence, incapable of knowledge. No one could possibly pass so many examinations and be so well dressed, so well done, and so successful as a doctor without that precise incapacity. That’s it. And in spite of all he’s seen and heard and been told, there he is — he has no idea whatever of what he has set going. He has got a Boom on, he’s working it well on Boomfood, and some one has let him in to this new Royal Baby — and that’s Boomier than ever! And the fact that Weser Dreiburg will presently have to face the gigantic problem of a thirty-odd-foot Princess not only hasn’t entered his head, but couldn’t — it couldn’t!”

“There’ll be a fearful row,” said Bensington.

“In a year or so.”

“So soon as they really see she is going on growing.”

“Unless after their fashion — they hush it up.”

“It’s a lot to hush up.”

“Rather!”

“I wonder what they’ll do?”

“They never do anything — Royal tact.”

“They’re bound to do something.”

“Perhaps *she* will.”

“O Lord! Yes.”

“They’ll suppress her. Such things have been known.”

Redwood burst into desperate laughter. “The redundant royalty — the bouncing babe in the Iron Mask!” he said. “They’ll have to put her in the tallest tower of the old Weser Dreiburg castle and make holes in the ceilings as she grows from floor to floor! Well, I’m in the very same pickle. And Cossar and his three boys. And — Well, well.”

“There’ll be a fearful row,” Bensington repeated, not joining in the laughter. “A *fearful* row.”

“I suppose,” he argued, “you’ve really thought it out thoroughly, Redwood. You’re quite sure it wouldn’t be wiser to warn Winkles, wean your little boy gradually, and — and rely upon the Theoretical Triumph?”

“I wish to goodness you’d spend half an hour in my nursery when the Food’s a little late,” said Redwood, with a note of exasperation in his voice; “then you wouldn’t talk like that, Bensington. Besides — Fancy warning Winkles… No! The tide of this thing has caught us unawares, and whether we’re frightened or whether we’re not — *we’ve got to swim!*”

“I suppose we have,” said Bensington, staring at his toes. “Yes. We’ve got to swim. And your boy will have to swim, and Cossar’s boys — he’s given it to all three of them. Nothing partial about Cossar — all or nothing! And Her Serene Highness. And everything. We are going on making the Food. Cossar also. We’re only just in the dawn of the beginning, Redwood. It’s evident all sorts of things are to follow. Monstrous great things. But I can’t imagine them, Redwood. Except—”

He scanned his finger nails. He looked up at Redwood with eyes bland through his glasses.

“I’ve half a mind,” he adventured, “that Caterham is right. At times. It’s going to destroy the Proportions of Things. It’s going to dislocate — What isn’t it going to dislocate?”

“Whatever it dislocates,” said Redwood, “my little boy must have the Food.”

They heard some one falling rapidly upstairs. Then Cossar put his head into the fiat. “Hullo!” he said at their expressions, and entering, “Well?”

They told him about the Princess.

“*Difficult question!*” he remarked. “Not a bit of it. *She’ll* grow. Your boy’ll grow. All the others you give it to ‘ll grow. Everything. Like anything. What’s difficult about that? That’s all right. A child could tell you that. Where’s the bother?”

They tried to make it clear to him.

“*Not go on with it!*” he shrieked. “But — ! You can’t help

yourselves now. It's what you're for. It's what Winkles is for. It's all right. Often wondered what Winkles was for. *Now* it's obvious. What's the trouble?

"*Disturbance*? Obviously. *Upset things*? Upset everything. Finally — upset every human concern. Plain as a pikestaff. They're going to try and stop it, but they're too late. It's their way to be too late. You go on and start as much of it as you can. Thank God He has a use for you!"

"But the conflict!" said Bensington, "the stress! I don't know if you have imagined—"

"You ought to have been some sort of little vegetable, Bensington," said Cossar— "that's what you ought to have been. Something growing over a rockery. Here you are, fearfully and wonderfully made, and all you think you're made for is just to sit about and take your vittles. D'you think this world was made for old women to mop about in? Well, anyhow, you can't help yourselves now — you've *got* to go on."

"I suppose we must," said Redwood. "Slowly—"

"No!" said Cossar, in a huge shout. "No! Make as much as you can and as soon as you can. Spread it about!"

He was inspired to a stroke of wit. He parodied one of Redwood's curves with a vast upward sweep of his arm.

"Redwood!" he said, to point the allusion, "make it SO!"

V.

There is, it seems, an upward limit to the pride of maternity, and this in the case of Mrs. Redwood was reached when her offspring completed his sixth month of terrestrial existence, broke down his high-class bassinet-perambulator, and was brought home, bawling, in the milk-truck. Young Redwood at that time weighed fifty-nine and a half pounds, measured forty-eight inches in height, and gripped about sixty pounds. He was carried upstairs to the nursery by the cook and housemaid. After that, discovery was only a question of days. One afternoon Redwood came home from his laboratory to find his unfortunate wife deep in the fascinating pages of *The Mighty Atom*, and at the sight of him she put the book aside and ran violently

forward and burst into tears on his shoulder.

"Tell me what you have *done* to him," she wailed. "Tell me what you have done." Redwood took her hand and led her to the sofa, while he tried to think of a satisfactory line of defence.

"It's all right, my dear," he said; "it's all right. You're only a little overwrought. It's that cheap perambulator. I've arranged for a bath-chair man to come round with something stouter to-morrow—"

Mrs. Redwood looked at him tearfully over the top of her handkerchief.

"A baby in a bath-chair?" she sobbed.

"Well, why not?"

"It's like a cripple."

"It's like a young giant, my dear, and you've no cause to be ashamed of him."

"You've done something to him, Dandy," she said. "I can see it in your face."

"Well, it hasn't stopped his growth, anyhow," said Redwood heartlessly.

"I *knew*," said Mrs. Redwood, and clenched her pocket-handkerchief ball fashion in one hand. She looked at him with a sudden change to severity. "What have you done to our child, Dandy?"

"What's wrong with him?"

"He's so big. He's a monster."

"Nonsense. He's as straight and clean a baby as ever a woman had. What's wrong with him?"

"Look at his size."

"That's all right. Look at the puny little brutes about us! He's the finest baby—"

"He's *too* fine," said Mrs. Redwood.

"It won't go on," said Redwood reassuringly; "it's just a start he's taken."

But he knew perfectly well it would go on. And it did. By the time this baby was twelve months old he tottered just one inch under five feet high and scaled eight stone three; he was as big in fact as a St. Peter's *in Vaticano* cherub, and his affectionate clutch at the hair and features of visitors became the talk of West Kensington. They had an

invalid's chair to carry him up and down to his nursery, and his special nurse, a muscular young person just out of training, used to take him for his airings in a Panhard 8 h.p. hill-climbing perambulator specially made to meet his requirement. It was lucky in every way that Redwood had his expert witness connection in addition to his professorship.

When one got over the shock of little Redwood's enormous size, he was, I am told by people who used to see him almost daily teufteufing slowly about Hyde Park, a singularly bright and pretty baby. He rarely cried or needed a comforter. Commonly he clutched a big rattle, and sometimes he went along hailing the bus-drivers and policemen along the road outside the railings as "Dadda!" and "Babba!" in a sociable, democratic way.

"There goes that there great Boomfood baby," the bus-driver used to say.

"Looks 'ealthy," the forward passenger would remark.

"Bottle fed," the bus-driver would explain. "They say it 'olds a gallon and 'ad to be specially made for 'im."

"Very 'ealthy child any'ow," the forward passenger would conclude.

When Mrs. Redwood realized that his growth was indeed going on indefinitely and logically — and this she really did for the first time when the motor-perambulator arrived — she gave way to a passion of grief. She declared she never wished to enter her nursery again, wished she was dead, wished the child was dead, wished everybody was dead, wished she had never married Redwood, wished no one ever married anybody, Ajaxed a little, and retired to her own room, where she lived almost exclusively on chicken broth for three days. When Redwood came to remonstrate with her, she banged pillows about and wept and tangled her hair.

"*He's* all right," said Redwood. "He's all the better for being big. You wouldn't like him smaller than other people's children."

"I want him to be *like* other children, neither smaller nor bigger. I wanted him to be a nice little boy, just as Georgina Phyllis is a nice little girl, and I wanted to bring him up nicely in a nice way, and here he is" — and the unfortunate woman's voice broke— "wearing number four grown-up shoes and being wheeled about by —

booboo! — Petroleum!

"I can never love him," she wailed, "never! He's too much for me! I can never be a mother to him, such as I meant to be!"

But at last, they contrived to get her into the nursery, and there was Edward Monson Redwood ("Pantagruel" was only a later nickname) swinging in a specially strengthened rocking-chair and smiling and talking "goo" and "wow." And the heart of Mrs. Redwood warmed again to her child, and she went and held him in her arms and wept.

"They've done something to you," she sobbed, "and you'll grow and grow, dear; but whatever I can do to bring you up nice I'll do for you, whatever your father may say."

And Redwood, who had helped to bring her to the door, went down the passage much relieved. (Eh! but it's a base job this being a man — with women as they are!)

VI.

Before the year was out there were, in addition to Redwood's pioneer vehicle, quite a number of motor-perambulators to be seen in the west of London. I am told there were as many as eleven; but the most careful inquiries yield trustworthy evidence of only six within the Metropolitan area at that time. It would seem the stuff acted differently upon different types of constitution. At first Herakleophorbia was not adapted to injection, and there can be no doubt that quite a considerable proportion of human beings are incapable of absorbing this substance in the normal course of digestion. It was given, for example, to Winkles' youngest boy; but he seems to have been as incapable of growth as, if Redwood was right, his father was incapable of knowledge. Others again, according to the Society for the Total Suppression of Boomfood, became in some inexplicable way corrupted by it, and perished at the onset of infantile disorders. The Cossar boys took to it with amazing avidity.

Of course a thing of this kind never comes with absolute simplicity of application into the life of man; growth in particular is a complex thing, and all generalisations must needs be a little inaccurate. But the general law of the Food would seem to be this,

that when it could be taken into the system in any way it stimulated it in very nearly the same degree in all cases. It increased the amount of growth from six to seven times, and it did not go beyond that, whatever amount of the Food in excess was taken. Excess of Herakleophorbia indeed beyond the necessary minimum led, it was found, to morbid disturbances of nutrition, to cancer and tumours, ossifications, and the like. And once growth upon the large scale had begun, it was soon evident that it could only continue upon that scale, and that the continuous administration of Herakleophorbia in small but sufficient doses was imperative.

If it was discontinued while growth was still going on, there was first a vague restlessness and distress, then a period of voracity — as in the case of the young rats at Hankey — and then the growing creature had a sort of exaggerated anaemia and sickened and died. Plants suffered in a similar way. This, however, applied only to the growth period. So soon as adolescence was attained — in plants this was represented by the formation of the first flower-buds — the need and appetite for Herakleophorbia diminished, and so soon as the plant or animal was fully adult, it became altogether independent of any further supply of the food. It was, as it were, completely established on the new scale. It was so completely established on the new scale that, as the thistles about Hickleybrow and the grass of the down side already demonstrated, its seed produced giant offspring after its kind.

And presently little Redwood, pioneer of the new race, first child of all who ate the food, was crawling about his nursery, smashing furniture, biting like a horse, pinching like a vice, and bawling gigantic baby talk at his "Nanny" and "Mammy" and the rather scared and awe-stricken "Daddy," who had set this mischief going.

The child was born with good intentions. "Padda be good, be good," he used to say as the breakables flew before him. "Padda" was his rendering of Pantagruel, the nickname Redwood imposed on him. And Cossar, disregarding certain Ancient Lights that presently led to trouble, did, after a conflict with the local building regulations, get building on a vacant piece of ground adjacent to Redwood's home, a comfortable well-lit playroom, schoolroom, and nursery for their four boys — sixty feet square about this room was, and forty

feet high.

Redwood fell in love with that great nursery as he and Cossar built it, and his interest in curves faded, as he had never dreamt it could fade, before the pressing needs of his son. “There is much,” he said, “in fitting a nursery. Much.

“The walls, the things in it, they will all speak to this new mind of ours, a little more, a little less eloquently, and teach it, or fail to teach it a thousand things.”

“Obviously,” said Cossar, reaching hastily for his hat.

They worked together harmoniously, but Redwood supplied most of the educational theory required …

They had the walls and woodwork painted with a cheerful vigour; for the most part a slightly warmed white prevailed, but there were bands of bright clean colour to enforce the simple lines of construction. “Clean colours we *must* have,” said Redwood, and in one place had a neat horizontal band of squares, in which crimson and purple, orange and lemon, blues and greens, in many hues and many shades, did themselves honour. These squares the giant children should arrange and rearrange to their pleasure. “Decorations must follow,” said Redwood; “let them first get the range of all the tints, and then this may go away. There is no reason why one should bias them in favour of any particular colour or design.”

Then, “The place must be full of interest,” said Redwood. “Interest is food for a child, and blankness torture and starvation. He must have pictures galore.” There were no pictures hung about the room for any permanent service, however, but blank frames were provided into which new pictures would come and pass thence into a portfolio so soon as their fresh interest had passed. There was one window that looked down the length of a street, and in addition, for an added interest, Redwood had contrived above the roof of the nursery a camera obscura that watched the Kensington High Street and not a little of the Gardens.

In one corner that most worthy implement, an Abacus, four feet square, a specially strengthened piece of ironmongery with rounded corners, awaited the young giants’ incipient computations. There were few woolly lambs and such-like idols, but instead Cossar, without explanation, had brought one day in three four-wheelers a

great number of toys (all just too big for the coming children to swallow) that could be piled up, arranged in rows, rolled about, bitten, made to flap and rattle, smacked together, felt over, pulled out, opened, closed, and mauled and experimented with to an interminable extent. There were many bricks of wood in diverse colours, oblong and cuboid, bricks of polished china, bricks of transparent glass and bricks of india-rubber; there were slabs and slates; there were cones, truncated cones, and cylinders; there were oblate and prolate spheroids, balls of varied substances, solid and hollow, many boxes of diverse size and shape, with hinged lids and screw lids and fitting lids, and one or two to catch and lock; there were bands of elastic and leather, and a number of rough and sturdy little objects of a size together that could stand up steadily and suggest the shape of a man. "Give 'em these," said Cossar. "One at a time."

These things Redwood arranged in a locker in one corner. Along one side of the room, at a convenient height for a six-or eight-foot child, there was a blackboard, on which the youngsters might flourish in white and coloured chalk, and near by a sort of drawing block, from which sheet after sheet might be torn, and on which they could draw in charcoal, and a little desk there was, furnished with great carpenter's pencils of varying hardness and a copious supply of paper, on which the boys might first scribble and then draw more neatly. And moreover Redwood gave orders, so far ahead did his imagination go, for specially large tubes of liquid paint and boxes of pastels against the time when they should be needed. He laid in a cask or so of plasticine and modelling clay. "At first he and his tutor shall model together," he said, "and when he is more skilful he shall copy casts and perhaps animals. And that reminds me, I must also have made for him a box of tools!

"Then books. I shall have to look out a lot of books to put in his way, and they'll have to be big type. Now what sort of books will he need? There is his imagination to be fed. That, after all, is the crown of every education. The crown — as sound habits of mind and conduct are the throne. No imagination at all is brutality; a base imagination is lust and cowardice; but a noble imagination is God walking the earth again. He must dream too of a dainty fairy-land

and of all the quaint little things of life, in due time. But he must feed chiefly on the splendid real; he shall have stories of travel through all the world, travels and adventures and how the world was won; he shall have stories of beasts, great books splendidly and clearly done of animals and birds and plants and creeping things, great books about the deeps of the sky and the mystery of the sea; he shall have histories and maps of all the empires the world has seen, pictures and stories of all the tribes and habits and customs of men. And he must have books and pictures to quicken his sense of beauty, subtle Japanese pictures to make him love the subtler beauties of bird and tendril and falling flower, and western pictures too, pictures of gracious men and women, sweet groupings, and broad views of land and sea. He shall have books on the building of houses and palaces; he shall plan rooms and invent cities —

"I think I must give him a little theatre.

"Then there is music!"

Redwood thought that over, and decided that his son might best begin with a very pure-sounding harmonicon of one octave, to which afterwards there could be an extension. "He shall play with this first, sing to it and give names to the notes," said Redwood, "and afterwards — ?"

He stared up at the window-sill overhead and measured the size of the room with his eye.

"They'll have to build his piano in here," he said. "Bring it in in pieces."

He hovered about amidst his preparations, a pensive, dark, little figure. If you could have seen him there he would have looked to you like a ten-inch man amidst common nursery things. A great rug — indeed it was a Turkey carpet — four hundred square feet of it, upon which young Redwood was soon to crawl — stretched to the grill-guarded electric radiator that was to warm the whole place. A man from Cossar's hung amidst scaffolding overhead, fixing the great frame that was to hold the transitory pictures. A blotting-paper book for plant specimens as big as a house door leant against the wall, and from it projected a gigantic stalk, a leaf edge or so and one flower of chickweed, all of that gigantic size that was soon to make Urshot famous throughout the botanical world …

A sort of incredulity came to Redwood as he stood among these things.

"If it really *is* going on—" said Redwood, staring up at the remote ceiling.

From far away came a sound like the bellowing of a Mafficking bull, almost as if in answer.

"It's going on all right," said Redwood. "Evidently."

There followed resounding blows upon a table, followed by a vast crowing shout, "Gooloo! Boozoo! Bzz …"

"The best thing I can do," said Redwood, following out some divergent line of thought, "is to teach him myself."

That beating became more insistent. For a moment it seemed to Redwood that it caught the rhythm of an engine's throbbing — the engine he could have imagined of some great train of events that bore down upon him. Then a descendant flight of sharper beats broke up that effect, and were repeated.

"Come in," he cried, perceiving that some one rapped, and the door that was big enough for a cathedral opened slowly a little way. The new winch ceased to creak, and Bensington appeared in the crack, gleaming benevolently under his protruded baldness and over his glasses.

"I've ventured round to *see*," he whispered in a confidentially furtive manner.

"Come in," said Redwood, and he did, shutting the door behind him.

He walked forward, hands behind his back, advanced a few steps, and peered up with a bird-like movement at the dimensions about him. He rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"Every time I come in," he said, with a subdued note in his voice, "it strikes me as— '*Big*.'"

"Yes," said Redwood, surveying it all again also, as if in an endeavour to keep hold of the visible impression. "Yes. They're going to be big too, you know."

"I know," said Bensington, with a note that was nearly awe. "*Very* big."

They looked at one another, almost, as it were, apprehensively.

"Very big indeed," said Bensington, stroking the bridge of his

nose, and with one eye that watched Redwood doubtfully for a confirmatory expression. “All of them, you know — fearfully big. I don’t seem able to imagine — even with this — just how big they’re all going to be.”

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE MINIMIFICENCE OF MR. BENSINGTON.

I.

It was while the Royal Commission on Boomfood was preparing its report that Herakleophorbia really began to demonstrate its capacity for leakage. And the earliness of this second outbreak was the more unfortunate, from the point of view of Cossar at any rate, since the draft report still in existence shows that the Commission had, under the tutelage of that most able member, Doctor Stephen Winkles (F.R.S. M.D. F.R.C.P. D. Sc. J.P. D.L. etc.), already quite made up its mind that accidental leakages were impossible, and was prepared to recommend that to entrust the preparation of Boomfood to a qualified committee (Winkles chiefly), with an entire control over its sale, was quite enough to satisfy all reasonable objections to its free diffusion. This committee was to have an absolute monopoly. And it is, no doubt, to be considered as a part of the irony of life that the first and most alarming of this second series of leakages occurred within fifty yards of a little cottage at Keston occupied during the summer months by Doctor Winkles.

There can be little doubt now that Redwood's refusal to acquaint Winkles with the composition of Herakleophorbia IV. had aroused in that gentleman a novel and intense desire towards analytical chemistry. He was not a very expert manipulator, and for that reason probably he saw fit to do his work not in the excellently equipped laboratories that were at his disposal in London, but without consulting any one, and almost with an air of secrecy, in a rough little garden laboratory at the Keston establishment. He does not seem to have shown either very great energy or very great ability in this quest; indeed one gathers he dropped the inquiry after working at it intermittently for about a month.

This garden laboratory, in which the work was done, was very roughly equipped, supplied by a standpipe tap with water, and draining into a pipe that ran down into a swampy rush-bordered pool

under an alder tree in a secluded corner of the common just outside the garden hedge. The pipe was cracked, and the residuum of the Food of the Gods escaped through the crack into a little puddle amidst clumps of rushes, just in time for the spring awakening.

Everything was astir with life in that scummy little corner. There was frog spawn adrift, tremulous with tadpoles just bursting their gelatinous envelopes; there were little pond snails creeping out into life, and under the green skin of the rush stems the larvae of a big Water Beetle were struggling out of their egg cases. I doubt if the reader knows the larva of the beetle called (I know not why) Dytiscus. It is a jointed, queer-looking thing, very muscular and sudden in its movements, and given to swimming head downward with its tail out of water; the length of a man's top thumb joint it is, and more — two inches, that is for those who have not eaten the Food — and it has two sharp jaws that meet in front of its head — tubular jaws with sharp points — through which its habit is to suck its victim's blood …

The first things to get at the drifting grains of the Food were the little tadpoles and the little water snails; the little wriggling tadpoles in particular, once they had the taste of it, took to it with zest. But scarcely did one of them begin to grow into a conspicuous position in that little tadpole world and try a smaller brother or so as an aid to a vegetarian dietary, when nip! one of the Beetle larva had its curved bloodsucking prongs gripping into his heart, and with that red stream went Herakleophorbia IV, in a state of solution, into the being of a new client. The only thing that had a chance with these monsters to get any share of the Food were the rushes and slimy green scum in the water and the seedling weeds in the mud at the bottom. A clean up of the study presently washed a fresh spate of the Food into the puddle, and overflowed it, and carried all this sinister expansion of the struggle for life into the adjacent pool under the roots of the alder…

The first person to discover what was going on was a Mr. Lukey Carrington, a special science teacher under the London Education Board, and, in his leisure, a specialist in fresh-water algae, and he is certainly not to be envied his discovery. He had come down to Keston Common for the day to fill a number of specimen tubes for

subsequent examination, and he came, with a dozen or so of corked tubes clanking faintly in his pocket, over the sandy crest and down towards the pool, spiked walking stick in hand. A garden lad standing on the top of the kitchen steps clipping Doctor Winkles' hedge saw him in this unfrequented corner, and found him and his occupation sufficiently inexplicable and interesting to watch him pretty closely.

He saw Mr. Carrington stoop down by the side of the pool, with his hand against the old alder stem, and peer into the water, but of course he could not appreciate the surprise and pleasure with which Mr. Carrington beheld the big unfamiliar-looking blobs and threads of the algal scum at the bottom. There were no tadpoles visible — they had all been killed by that time — and it would seem Mr. Carrington saw nothing at all unusual except the excessive vegetation. He bared his arm to the elbow, leant forward, and dipped deep in pursuit of a specimen. His seeking hand went down. Instantly there flashed out of the cool shadow under the tree roots something —

Flash! It had buried its fangs deep into his arm — a bizarre shape it was, a foot long and more, brown and jointed like a scorpion.

Its ugly apparition and the sharp amazing painfulness of its bite were too much for Mr. Carrington's equilibrium. He felt himself going, and yelled aloud. Over he toppled, face foremost, splash! into the pool.

The boy saw him vanish, and heard the splashing of his struggle in the water. The unfortunate man emerged again into the boy's field of vision, hatless and streaming with water, and screaming!

Never before had the boy heard screams from a man.

This astonishing stranger appeared to be tearing at something on the side of his face. There appeared streaks of blood there. He flung out his arms as if in despair, leapt in the air like a frantic creature, ran violently ten or twelve yards, and then fell and rolled on the ground and over and out of sight of the boy. The lad was down the steps and through the hedge in a trice — happily with the garden shears still in hand. As he came crashing through the gorse bushes, he says he was half minded to turn back, fearing he had to deal with a lunatic, but the possession of the shears reassured him. "I could 'ave jabbed his

eyes," he explained, "anyhow." Directly Mr. Carrington caught sight of him, his demeanour became at once that of a sane but desperate man. He struggled to his feet, stumbled, stood up, and came to meet the boy.

"Look!" he cried, "I can't get 'em off!"

And with a qualm of horror the boy saw that, attached to Mr. Carrington's cheek, to his bare arm, and to his thigh, and lashing furiously with their lithe brown muscular bodies, were three of these horrible larvae, their great jaws buried deep in his flesh and sucking for dear life. They had the grip of bulldogs, and Mr. Carrington's efforts to detach the monsters from his face had only served to lacerate the flesh to which it had attached itself, and streak face and neck and coat with living scarlet.

"I'll cut 'im," cried the boy; "'old on, Sir."

And with the zest of his age in such proceedings, he severed one by one the heads from the bodies of Mr. Carrington's assailants. "Yup," said the boy with a wincing face as each one fell before him. Even then, so tough and determined was their grip that the severed heads remained for a space, still fiercely biting home and still sucking, with the blood streaming out of their necks behind. But the boy stopped that with a few more slashes of his scissors — in one of which Mr. Carrington was implicated.

"I couldn't get 'em off!" repeated Carrington, and stood for a space, swaying and bleeding profusely. He dabbed feeble hands at his injuries and examined the result upon his palms. Then he gave way at the knees and fell headlong in a dead faint at the boy's feet, between the still leaping bodies of his defeated foes. Very luckily it didn't occur to the boy to splash water on his face — for there were still more of these horrors under the alder roots — and instead he passed back by the pond and went into the garden with the intention of calling assistance. And there he met the gardener coachman and told him of the whole affair.

When they got back to Mr. Carrington he was sitting up, dazed and weak, but able to warn them against the danger in the pool.

II.

Such were the circumstances by which the world had its first notification that the Food was loose again. In another week Keston Common was in full operation as what naturalists call a centre of distribution. This time there were no wasps or rats, no earwigs and no nettles, but there were at least three water-spiders, several dragon-fly larvae which presently became dragon-flies, dazzling all Kent with their hovering sapphire bodies, and a nasty gelatinous, scummy growth that swelled over the pond margin, and sent its slimy green masses surging halfway up the garden path to Doctor Winkles's house. And there began a growth of rushes and equisetum and potamogeton that ended only with the drying of the pond.

It speedily became evident to the public mind that this time there was not simply one centre of distribution, but quite a number of centres. There was one at Ealing — there can be no doubt now — and from that came the plague of flies and red spider; there was one at Sunbury, productive of ferocious great eels, that could come ashore and kill sheep; and there was one in Bloomsbury that gave the world a new strain of cockroaches of a quite terrible sort — an old house it was in Bloomsbury, and much inhabited by undesirable things. Abruptly the world found itself confronted with the Hickleybrow experiences all over again, with all sorts of queer exaggerations of familiar monsters in the place of the giant hens and rats and wasps. Each centre burst out with its own characteristic local fauna and flora….

We know now that every one of these centres corresponded to one of the patients of Doctor Winkles, but that was by no means apparent at the time. Doctor Winkles was the last person to incur any odium in the matter. There was a panic quite naturally, a passionate indignation, but it was indignation not against Doctor Winkles but against the Food, and not so much against the Food as against the unfortunate Bensington, whom from the very first the popular imagination had insisted upon regarding as the sole and only person responsible for this new thing.

The attempt to lynch him that followed is just one of those explosive events that bulk largely in history and are in reality the least significant of occurrences.

The history of the outbreak is a mystery. The nucleus of the crowd

certainly came from an Anti-Boomfood meeting in Hyde Park organised by extremists of the Caterham party, but there seems no one in the world who actually first proposed, no one who ever first hinted a suggestion of the outrage at which so many people assisted. It is a problem for M. Gustave le Bon — a mystery in the psychology of crowds. The fact emerges that about three o'clock on Sunday afternoon a remarkably big and ugly London crowd, entirely out of hand, came rolling down Thursday Street intent on Bensington's exemplary death as a warning to all scientific investigators, and that it came nearer accomplishing its object than any London crowd has ever come since the Hyde Park railings came down in remote middle Victorian times. This crowd came so close to its object indeed, that for the space of an hour or more a word would have settled the unfortunate gentleman's fate.

The first intimation he had of the thing was the noise of the people outside. He went to the window and peered, realising nothing of what impended. For a minute perhaps he watched them seething about the entrance, disposing of an ineffectual dozen of policemen who barred their way, before he fully realised his own importance in the affair. It came upon him in a flash — that that roaring, swaying multitude was after him. He was all alone in the flat — fortunately perhaps — his cousin Jane having gone down to Ealing to have tea with a relation on her mother's side, and he had no more idea of how to behave under such circumstances than he had of the etiquette of the Day of Judgment. He was still dashing about the flat asking his furniture what he should do, turning keys in locks and then unlocking them again, making darts at door and window and bedroom — when the floor clerk came to him.

"There isn't a moment, Sir," he said. "They've got your number from the board in the hall! They're coming straight up!"

He ran Mr. Bensington out into the passage, already echoing with the approaching tumult from the great staircase, locked the door behind them, and led the way into the opposite flat by means of his duplicate key.

"It's our only chance now," he said.

He flung up a window which opened on a ventilating shaft, and showed that the wall was set with iron staples that made the rudest

and most perilous of wall ladders to serve as a fire escape from the upper flats. He shoved Mr. Bensington out of the window, showed him how to cling on, and pursued him up the ladder, goading and jabbing his legs with a bunch of keys whenever he desisted from climbing. It seemed to Bensington at times that he must climb that vertical ladder for evermore. Above, the parapet was inaccessibly remote, a mile perhaps, below — He did not care to think of things below.

"Steady on!" cried the clerk, and gripped his ankle. It was quite horrible having his ankle gripped like that, and Mr. Bensington tightened his hold on the iron staple above to a drowning clutch, and gave a faint squeal of terror.

It became evident the clerk had broken a window, and then it seemed he had leapt a vast distance sideways, and there came the noise of a window-frame sliding in its sash. He was bawling things.

Mr. Bensington moved his head round cautiously until he could see the clerk. "Come down six steps," the clerk commanded.

All this moving about seemed very foolish, but very, very cautiously Mr.
Bensington lowered a foot.

"Don't pull me!" he cried, as the clerk made to help him from the open window.

It seemed to him that to reach the window from the ladder would be a very respectable feat for a flying fox, and it was rather with the idea of a decent suicide than in any hope of accomplishing it that he made the step at last, and quite ruthlessly the clerk pulled him in. "You'll have to stop here," said the clerk; "my keys are no good here. It's an American lock. I'll get out and slam the door behind me and see if I can find the man of this floor. You'll be locked in. Don't go to the window, that's all. It's the ugliest crowd I've ever seen. If only they think you're out they'll probably content themselves by breaking up your stuff—"

"The indicator said In," said Bensington.

"The devil it did! Well, anyhow, I'd better not be found—"

He vanished with a slam of the door.

Bensington was left to his own initiative again.

It took him under the bed.

There presently he was found by Cossar.

Bensington was almost comatose with terror when he was found, for Cossar had burst the door in with his shoulder by jumping at it across the breadth of the passage.

"Come out of it, Bensington," he said. "It's all right. It's me. We've got to get out of this. They're setting the place on fire. The porters are all clearing out. The servants are gone. It's lucky I caught the man who knew.

"Look here!"

Bensington, peering from under the bed, became aware of some unaccountable garments on Cossar's arm, and, of all things, a black bonnet in his hand!

"They're having a clear out," said Cossar, "If they don't set the place on fire they'll come here. Troops may not be here for an hour yet. Fifty per cent. Hooligans in the crowd, and the more furnished flats they go into the better they'll like it. Obviously…. They mean a clear out. You put this skirt and bonnet on, Bensington, and clear out with me."

"D'you *mean* — ?" began Bensington, protruding a head, tortoise fashion.

"I mean, put 'em on and come! Obviously," And with a sudden vehemence he dragged Bensington from under the bed, and began to dress him for his new impersonation of an elderly woman of the people.

He rolled up his trousers and made him kick off his slippers, took off his collar and tie and coat and vest, slipped a black skirt over his head, and put on a red flannel bodice and a body over the same. He made him take off his all too characteristic spectacles, and clapped the bonnet on his head. "You might have been born an old woman," he said as he tied the strings. Then came the spring-side boots — a terrible wrench for corns — and the shawl, and the disguise was complete. "Up and down," said Cossar, and Bensington obeyed.

"You'll do," said Cossar.

And in this guise it was, stumbling awkwardly over his unaccustomed skirts, shouting womanly imprecations upon his own

head in a weird falsetto to sustain his part, and to the roaring note of a crowd bent upon lynching him, that the original discoverer of Herakleophorbia IV. proceeded down the corridor of Chesterfield Mansions, mingled with that inflamed disorderly multitude, and passed out altogether from the thread of events that constitutes our story.

Never once after that escape did he meddle again with the stupendous development of the Food of the Gods he of all men had done most to begin.

III.

This little man who started the whole thing passes out of the story, and after a time he passed altogether out of the world of things, visible and tellable. But because he started the whole thing it is seemly to give his exit an intercalary page of attention. One may picture him in his later days as Tunbridge Wells came to know him. For it was at Tunbridge Wells he reappeared after a temporary obscurity, so soon as he fully realised how transitory, how quite exceptional and unmeaning that fury of rioting was. He reappeared under the wing of Cousin Jane, treating himself for nervous shock to the exclusion of all other interests, and totally indifferent, as it seemed, to the battles that were raging then about those new centres of distribution, and about the baby Children of the Food.

He took up his quarters at the Mount Glory Hydrotherapeutic Hotel, where there are quite extraordinary facilities for baths, Carbonated Baths, Creosote Baths, Galvanic and Faradic Treatment, Massage, Pine Baths, Starch and Hemlock Baths, Radium Baths, Light Baths, Heat Baths, Bran and Needle Baths, Tar and Birdsdown Baths, — all sorts of baths; and he devoted his mind to the development of that system of curative treatment that was still imperfect when he died. And sometimes he would go down in a hired vehicle and a sealskin trimmed coat, and sometimes, when his feet permitted, he would walk to the Pantiles, and there he would sip chalybeate water under the eye of his cousin Jane.

His stooping shoulders, his pink appearance, his beaming glasses, became a “feature” of Tunbridge Wells. No one was the least bit

unkind to him, and indeed the place and the Hotel seemed very glad to have the distinction of his presence. Nothing could rob him of that distinction now. And though he preferred not to follow the development of his great invention in the daily papers, yet when he crossed the Lounge of the Hotel or walked down the Pantiles and heard the whisper, “There he is! That’s him!” it was not dissatisfaction that softened his mouth and gleamed for a moment in his eye.

This little figure, this minute little figure, launched the Food of the Gods upon the world! One does not know which is the most amazing, the greatness or the littleness of these scientific and philosophical men. You figure him there on the Pantiles, in the overcoat trimmed with fur. He stands under that chinaware window where the spring spouts, and holds and sips the glass of chalybeate water in his hand. One bright eye over the gilt rim is fixed, with an expression of inscrutable severity, on Cousin Jane, “Mm,” he says, and sips.

So we make our souvenir, so we focus and photograph this discoverer of ours for the last time, and leave him, a mere dot in our foreground, and pass to the greater picture that, has developed about him, to the story of his Food, how the scattered Giant Children grew up day by day into a world that was all too small for them, and how the net of Boomfood Laws and Boomfood Conventions, which the Boomfood Commission was weaving even then, drew closer and closer upon them with every year of their growth, Until —

BOOK II. THE FOOD IN THE VILLAGE.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE COMING OF THE FOOD.

I.

Our theme, which began so compactly in Mr. Bensington's study, has already spread and branched, until it points this way and that, and henceforth our whole story is one of dissemination. To follow the Food of the Gods further is to trace the ramifications of a perpetually branching tree; in a little while, in the quarter of a lifetime, the Food had trickled and increased from its first spring in the little farm near Hickleybrow until it had spread, — it and the report and shadow of its power, — throughout the world. It spread beyond England very speedily. Soon in America, all over the continent of Europe, in Japan, in Australia, at last all over the world, the thing was working towards its appointed end. Always it worked slowly, by indirect courses and against resistance. It was bigness insurgent. In spite of prejudice, in spite of law and regulation, in spite of all that obstinate conservatism that lies at the base of the formal order of mankind, the Food of the Gods, once it had been set going, pursued its subtle and invincible progress.

The children of the Food grew steadily through all these years; that was the cardinal fact of the time. But it is the leakages make history. The children who had eaten grew, and soon there were other children growing; and all the best intentions in the world could not stop further leakages and still further leakages. The Food insisted on escaping with the pertinacity of a thing alive. Flour treated with the stuff crumbled in dry weather almost as if by intention into an impalpable powder, and would lift and travel before the lightest breeze. Now it would be some fresh insect won its way to a temporary fatal new development, now some fresh outbreak from the sewers of rats and such-like vermin. For some days the village of Pangbourne in Berkshire fought with giant ants. Three men were bitten and died. There would be a panic, there would be a struggle, and the salient evil would be fought down again, leaving always

something behind, in the obscurer things of life — changed for ever. Then again another acute and startling outbreak, a swift upgrowth of monstrous weedy thickets, a drifting dissemination about the world of inhumanly growing thistles, of cockroaches men fought with shot guns, or a plague of mighty flies.

There were some strange and desperate struggles in obscure places. The
Food begot heroes in the cause of littleness …

And men took such happenings into their lives, and met them by the expedients of the moment, and told one another there was "no change in the essential order of things." After the first great panic, Caterham, in spite of his power of eloquence, became a secondary figure in the political world, remained in men's minds as the exponent of an extreme view.

Only slowly did he win a way towards a central position in affairs. "There was no change in the essential order of things," — that eminent leader of modern thought, Doctor Winkles, was very clear upon this, — and the exponents of what was called in those days Progressive Liberalism grew quite sentimental upon the essential insincerity of their progress. Their dreams, it would appear, ran wholly on little nations, little languages, little households, each self-supported on its little farm. A fashion for the small and neat set in. To be big was to be "vulgar," and dainty, neat, mignon, miniature, "minutely perfect," became the key-words of critical approval….

Meanwhile, quietly, taking their time as children must, the children of the Food, growing into a world that changed to receive them, gathered strength and stature and knowledge, became individual and purposeful, rose slowly towards the dimensions of their destiny. Presently they seemed a natural part of the world; all these stirrings of bigness seemed a natural part of the world, and men wondered how things had been before their time. There came to men's ears stories of things the giant boys could do, and they said "Wonderful!" — without a spark of wonder. The popular papers would tell of the three sons of Cossar, and how these amazing children would lift great cannons, hurl masses of iron for hundreds of

yards, and leap two hundred feet. They were said to be digging a well, deeper than any well or mine that man had ever made, seeking, it was said, for treasures hidden in the earth since ever the earth began.

These Children, said the popular magazines, will level mountains, bridge seas, tunnel your earth to a honeycomb. "Wonderful!" said the little folks, "isn't it? What a lot of conveniences we shall have!" and went about their business as though there was no such thing as the Food of the Gods on earth. And indeed these things were no more than the first hints and promises of the powers of the Children of the Food. It was still no more than child's play with them, no more than the first use of a strength in which no purpose had arisen. They did not know themselves for what they were. They were children — slow-growing children of a new race. The giant strength grew day by day — the giant will had still to grow into purpose and an aim.

Looking at it in a shortened perspective of time, those years of transition have the quality of a single consecutive occurrence; but indeed no one saw the coming of Bigness in the world, as no one in all the world till centuries had passed saw, as one happening, the Decline and Fall of Rome. They who lived in those days were too much among these developments to see them together as a single thing. It seemed even to wise men that the Food was giving the world nothing but a crop of unmanageable, disconnected irrelevancies, that might shake and trouble indeed, but could do no more to the established order and fabric of mankind.

To one observer at least the most wonderful thing throughout that period of accumulating stress is the invincible inertia of the great mass of people, their quiet persistence in all that ignored the enormous presences, the promise of still more enormous things, that grew among them. Just as many a stream will be at its smoothest, will look most tranquil, running deep and strong, at the very verge of a cataract, so all that is most conservative in man seemed settling quietly into a serene ascendency during these latter days. Reaction became popular: there was talk of the bankruptcy of science, of the dying of Progress, of the advent of the Mandarins, — talk of such things amidst the echoing footsteps of the Children of the Food. The fussy pointless Revolutions of the old time, a vast crowd of silly little

people chasing some silly little monarch and the like, had indeed died out and passed away; but Change had not died out. It was only Change that had changed. The New was coming in its own fashion and beyond the common understanding of the world.

To tell fully of its coming would be to write a great history, but everywhere there was a parallel chain of happenings. To tell therefore of the manner of its coming in one place is to tell something of the whole. It chanced one stray seed of Immensity fell into the pretty, petty village of Cheasing Eyebright in Kent, and from the story of its queer germination there and of the tragic futility that ensued, one may attempt — following one thread, as it were — to show the direction in which the whole great interwoven fabric of the thing rolled off the loom of Time.

II.

Cheasing Eyebright had of course a Vicar. There are vicars and vicars, and of all sorts I love an innovating vicar — a piebald progressive professional reactionary — the least. But the Vicar of Cheasing Eyebright was one of the least innovating of vicars, a most worthy, plump, ripe, and conservative-minded little man. It is becoming to go back a little in our story to tell of him. He matched his village, and one may figure them best together as they used to be, on the sunset evening when Mrs. Skinner — you will remember her flight! — brought the Food with her all unsuspected into these rustic serenities.

The village was looking its very best just then, under that western light. It lay down along the valley beneath the beechwoods of the Hanger, a beading of thatched and red-tiled cottages — cottages with trellised porches and pyracanthus-lined faces, that clustered closer and closer as the road dropped from the yew trees by the church towards the bridge. The vicarage peeped not too ostentatiously between the trees beyond the inn, an early Georgian front ripened by time, and the spire of the church rose happily in the depression made by the valley in the outline of the hills. A winding stream, a thin intermittency of sky blue and foam, glittered amidst a thick margin of reeds and loosestrife and overhanging willows, along the centre of

a sinuous pennant of meadow. The whole prospect had that curiously English quality of ripened cultivation — that look of still completeness — that apes perfection, under the sunset warmth.

And the Vicar too looked mellow. He looked habitually and essentially mellow, as though he had been a mellow baby born into a mellow class, a ripe and juicy little boy. One could see, even before he mentioned it, that he had gone to an ivy-clad public school in its anecdotage, with magnificent traditions, aristocratic associations, and no chemical laboratories, and proceeded thence to a venerable college in the very ripest Gothic. Few books he had younger than a thousand years; of these, Yarrow and Ellis and good pre-Methodist sermons made the bulk. He was a man of moderate height, a little shortened in appearance by his equatorial dimensions, and a face that had been mellow from the first was now climacterically ripe. The beard of a David hid his redundancy of chin; he wore no watch chain out of refinements and his modest clerical garments were made by a West End tailor…. And he sat with a hand on either shin, blinking at his village in beatific approval. He waved a plump palm towards it. His burthen sang out again. What more could any one desire?

"We are fortunately situated," he said, putting the thing tamely.

"We are in a fastness of the hills," he expanded.

He explained himself at length. "We are out of it all."

For they had been talking, he and his friend, of the Horrors of the Age, of Democracy, and Secular Education, and Sky Scrapers, and Motor Cars, and the American Invasion, the Scrappy Reading of the Public, and the disappearance of any Taste at all.

"We are out of it all," he repeated, and even as he spoke the footsteps of some one coming smote upon his ear, and he rolled over and regarded her.

You figure the old woman's steadfastly tremulous advance, the bundle clutched in her gnarled lank hand, her nose (which was her countenance) wrinkled with breathless resolution. You see the poppies nodding fatefully on her bonnet, and the dust-white spring-sided boots beneath her skimpy skirts, pointing with an irrevocable slow alternation east and west. Beneath her arm, a restive captive, waggled and slipped a scarcely valuable umbrella. What was there to tell the Vicar that this grotesque old figure was — so far as his

village was concerned at any rate — no less than Fruitful Chance and the Unforeseen, the Hag weak men call Fate. But for us, you understand, no more than Mrs. Skinner.

As she was too much encumbered for a curtsey, she pretended not to see him and his friend at all, and so passed, flip-flop, within three yards of them, onward down towards the village. The Vicar watched her slow transit in silence, and ripened a remark the while….

The incident seemed to him of no importance whatever. Old womankind, *aere perennius*, has carried bundles since the world began. What difference has it made?

"We are out of it all," said the Vicar. "We live in an atmosphere of simple and permanent things, Birth and Toil, simple seed-time and simple harvest. The Uproar passes us by." He was always very great upon what he called the permanent things. "Things change," he would say, "but Humanity — *aere perennius*."

Thus the Vicar. He loved a classical quotation subtly misapplied. Below, Mrs. Skinner, inelegant but resolute, had involved herself curiously with Wilmerding's stile.

III.

No one knows what the Vicar made of the Giant Puff-Balls.

No doubt he was among the first to discover them. They were scattered at intervals up and down the path between the near down and the village end — a path he frequented daily in his constitutional round. Altogether, of these abnormal fungi there were, from first to last, quite thirty. The Vicar seems to have stared at each severally, and to have prodded most of them with his stick once or twice. One he attempted to measure with his arms, but it burst at his Ixion embrace.

He spoke to several people about them, and said they were "marvellous!" and he related to at least seven different persons the well-known story of the flagstone that was lifted from the cellar floor by a growth of fungi beneath. He looked up his Sowerby to see if it was *Lycoperdon coelatum* or *giganteum* — like all his kind since Gilbert White became famous, he Gilbert-Whited. He cherished a theory that *giganteum* is unfairly named.

One does not know if he observed that those white spheres lay in the very track that old woman of yesterday had followed, or if he noted that the last of the series swelled not a score of yards from the gate of the Caddles' cottage. If he observed these things, he made no attempt to place his observation on record. His observation in matters botanical was what the inferior sort of scientific people call a "trained observation" — you look for certain definite things and neglect everything else. And he did nothing to link this phenomenon with the remarkable expansion of the Caddles' baby that had been going on now for some weeks, indeed ever since Caddles walked over one Sunday afternoon a month or more ago to see his mother-in-law and hear Mr. Skinner (since defunct) brag about his management of hens.

IV.

The growth of the puff-balls following on the expansion of the Caddles' baby really ought to have opened the Vicar's eyes. The latter fact had already come right into his arms at the christening — almost over-poweringly….

The youngster bawled with deafening violence when the cold water that sealed its divine inheritance and its right to the name of "Albert Edward Caddles" fell upon its brow. It was already beyond maternal porterage, and Caddles, staggering indeed, but grinning triumphantly at quantitatively inferior parents, bore it back to the free-sitting occupied by his party.

"I never saw such a child!" said the Vicar. This was the first public intimation that the Caddles' baby, which had begun its earthly career a little under seven pounds, did after all intend to be a credit to its parents. Very soon it was clear it meant to be not only a credit but a glory. And within a month their glory shone so brightly as to be, in connection with people in the Caddles' position, improper.

The butcher weighed the infant eleven times. He was a man of few words, and he soon got through with them. The first time he said, "E's a good un;" the next time he said, "My word!" the third time he said, "*Well*, mum," and after that he simply blew enormously each time, scratched his head, and looked at his scales with an unprecedented mistrust. Every one came to see the Big Baby — so it

was called by universal consent — and most of them said, "E's a Bouncer," and almost all remarked to him, "*Did* they?" Miss Fletcher came and said she "never *did*," which was perfectly true.

Lady Wondershoot, the village tyrant, arrived the day after the third weighing, and inspected the phenomenon narrowly through glasses that filled it with howling terror. "It's an unusually Big child," she told its mother, in a loud instructive voice. "You ought to take unusual care of it, Caddles. Of course it won't go on like this, being bottle fed, but we must do what we can for it. I'll send you down some more flannel."

The doctor came and measured the child with a tape, and put the figures in a notebook, and old Mr. Drift-hassock, who fanned by Up Marden, brought a manure traveller two miles out of their way to look at it. The traveller asked the child's age three times over, and said finally that he was blowed. He left it to be inferred how and why he was blowed; apparently it was the child's size blowed him. He also said it ought to be put into a baby show. And all day long, out of school hours, little children kept coming and saying, "Please, Mrs. Caddles, mum, may we have a look at your baby, please, mum?" until Mrs. Caddles had to put a stop to it. And amidst all these scenes of amazement came Mrs. Skinner, and stood and smiled, standing somewhat in the background, with each sharp elbow in a lank gnarled hand, and smiling, smiling under and about her nose, with a smile of infinite profundity.

"It makes even that old wretch of a grandmother look quite pleasant," said Lady Wondershoot. "Though I'm sorry she's come back to the village."

Of course, as with almost all cottagers' babies, the eleemosynary element had already come in, but the child soon made it clear by colossal bawling, that so far as the filling of its bottle went, it hadn't come in yet nearly enough.

The baby was entitled to a nine days' wonder, and every one wondered happily over its amazing growth for twice that time and more. And then you know, instead of its dropping into the background and giving place to other marvels, it went on growing more than ever!

Lady Wondershoot heard Mrs. Greenfield, her housekeeper, with

infinite amazement.

"Caddles downstairs again. No food for the child! My dear Greenfield, it's impossible. The creature eats like a hippopotamus! I'm sure it can't be true."

"I'm sure I hope you're not being imposed upon, my lady," said Mrs. Greenfield.

"It's so difficult to tell with these people," said Lady Wondershoot. "Now I do wish, my good Greenfield, that you'd just go down there yourself this afternoon and *see* — see it have its bottle. Big as it is, I cannot imagine that it needs more than six pints a day."

"It hasn't no business to, my lady," said Mrs. Greenfield.

The hand of Lady Wondershoot quivered, with that C.O.S. sort of emotion, that suspicious rage that stirs in all true aristocrats, at the thought that possibly the meaner classes are after all — as mean as their betters, and — where the sting lies — scoring points in the game.

But Mrs. Greenfield could observe no evidence of peculation, and the order for an increasing daily supply to the Caddles' nursery was issued. Scarcely had the first instalment gone, when Caddles was back again at the great house in a state abjectly apologetic.

"We took the greates' care of 'em, Mrs. Greenfield, I do assure you, mum, but he's regular bust 'em! They flew with such vilence, mum, that one button broke a pane of the window, mum, and one hit me a regular stinger jest 'ere, mum."

Lady Wondershoot, when she heard that this amazing child had positively burst out of its beautiful charity clothes, decided that she must speak to Caddles herself. He appeared in her presence with his hair hastily wetted and smoothed by hand, breathless, and clinging to his hat brim as though it was a life-belt, and he stumbled at the carpet edge out of sheer distress of mind.

Lady Wondershoot liked bullying Caddles. Caddles was her ideal lower-class person, dishonest, faithful, abject, industrious, and inconceivably incapable of responsibility. She told him it was a serious matter, the way his child was going on. "It's 'is appetite, my

ladyship," said Caddles, with a rising note.

"Check 'im, my ladyship, you can't," said Caddles. "There 'e lies, my ladyship, and kicks out 'e does, and 'owls, that distressin'. We 'aven't the 'eart, my ladyship. If we 'ad — the neighbours would interfere…."

Lady Wondershoot consulted the parish doctor.

"What I want to know," said Lady Wondershoot, "is it *right* this child should have such an extraordinary quantity of milk?"

"The proper allowance for a child of that age," said the parish doctor, "is a pint and a half to two pints in the twenty-four hours. I don't see that you are called upon to provide more. If you do, it is your own generosity. Of course we might try the legitimate quantity for a few days. But the child, I must admit, seems for some reason to be physiologically different. Possibly what is called a Sport. A case of General Hypertrophy."

"It isn't fair to the other parish children," said Lady Wondershoot. "I am certain we shall have complaints if this goes on."

"I don't see that any one can be expected to give more than the recognised allowance. We might insist on its doing with that, or if it wouldn't, send it as a case into the Infirmary."

"I suppose," said Lady Wondershoot, reflecting, "that apart from the size and the appetite, you don't find anything else abnormal — nothing monstrous?"

"No. No, I don't. But no doubt if this growth goes on, we shall find grave moral and intellectual deficiencies. One might almost prophesy that from Max Nordau's law. A most gifted and celebrated philosopher, Lady Wondershoot. He discovered that the abnormal is — abnormal, a most valuable discovery, and well worth bearing in mind. I find it of the utmost help in practice. When I come upon anything abnormal, I say at once, This is abnormal." His eyes became profound, his voice dropped, his manner verged upon the intimately confidential. He raised one hand stiffly. "And I treat it in that spirit," he said.

V.

"Tut, tut!" said the Vicar to his breakfast things — the day after the

coming of Mrs. Skinner. “Tut, tut! what’s this?” and poised his glasses at his paper with a general air of remonstrance.

“Giant wasps! What’s the world coming to? American journalists, I suppose! Hang these Novelties! Giant gooseberries are good enough for me.

“Nonsense!” said the Vicar, and drank off his coffee at a gulp, eyes steadfast on the paper, and smacked his lips incredulously.

“Bosh!” said the Vicar, rejecting the hint altogether.

But the next day there was more of it, and the light came.

Not all at once, however. When he went for his constitutional that day he was still chuckling at the absurd story his paper would have had him believe. Wasps indeed — killing a dog! Incidentally as he passed by the site of that first crop of puff-balls he remarked that the grass was growing very rank there, but he did not connect that in any way with the matter of his amusement. “We should certainly have heard something of it,” he said; “Whitstable can’t be twenty miles from here.”

Beyond he found another puff-ball, one of the second crop, rising like a roc’s egg out of the abnormally coarsened turf.

The thing came upon him in a flash.

He did not take his usual round that morning. Instead he turned aside by the second stile and came round to the Caddles’ cottage. “Where’s that baby?” he demanded, and at the sight of it, “Goodness me!”

He went up the village blessing his heart, and met the doctor full tilt coming down. He grasped his arm. “What does this *mean*?” he said. “Have you seen the paper these last few days?”

The doctor said he had.

“Well, what’s the matter with that child? What’s the matter with everything — wasps, puff-balls, babies, eh? What’s making them grow so big? This is most unexpected. In Kent too! If it was America now—”

“It’s a little difficult to say just what it is,” said the doctor. “So far as I can grasp the symptoms—”

“Yes?”

“It’s Hypertrophy — General Hypertrophy.”

“Hypertrophy?”

“Yes. General — affecting all the bodily structures — all the organism. I may say that in my own mind, between ourselves, I’m very nearly convinced it’s that…. But one has to be careful.”

“Ah,” said the Vicar, a good deal relieved to find the doctor equal to the situation. “But how is it it’s breaking out in this fashion, all over the place?”

“That again,” said the doctor, “is difficult to say.”

“Urshot. Here. It’s a pretty clear case of spreading.”

“Yes,” said the doctor. “Yes. I think so. It has a strong resemblance at any rate to some sort of epidemic. Probably Epidemic Hypertrophy will meet the case.”

“Epidemic!” said the Vicar. “You don’t mean it’s contagious?”

The doctor smiled gently and rubbed one hand against the other. “That I couldn’t say,” he said.

“But — !” cried the Vicar, round-eyed. “If it’s *catching* — it — it affects *us!*”

He made a stride up the road and turned about.

“I’ve just been there,” he cried. “Hadn’t I better — ? I’ll go home at once and have a bath and fumigate my clothes.”

The doctor regarded his retreating back for a moment, and then turned about and went towards his own house….

But on the way he reflected that one case had been in the village a month without any one catching the disease, and after a pause of hesitation decided to be as brave as a doctor should be and take the risks like a man.

And indeed he was well advised by his second thoughts. Growth was the last thing that could ever happen to him again. He could have eaten — and the Vicar could have eaten — Herakleophorbia by the truckful. For growth had done with them. Growth had done with these two gentlemen for evermore.

VI.

It was a day or so after this conversation — a day or so, that is, after the burning of the Experimental Farm — that Winkles came to Redwood and showed him an insulting letter. It was an anonymous letter, and an author should respect his character’s secrets. “You are

only taking credit for a natural phenomenon," said the letter, "and trying to advertise yourself by your letter to the *Times*. You and your Boomfood! Let me tell you, this absurdly named food of yours has only the most accidental connection with those big wasps and rats. The plain fact is there is an epidemic of Hypertrophy — Contagious Hypertrophy — which you have about as much claim to control as you have to control the solar system. The thing is as old as the hills. There was Hypertrophy in the family of Anak. Quite outside your range, at Cheasing Eyebright, at the present time there is a baby—"

"Shaky up and down writing. Old gentleman apparently," said Redwood.
"But it's odd a baby—"

He read a few lines further, and had an inspiration.

"By Jove!" said he. "That's my missing Mrs. Skinner!"

He descended upon her suddenly in the afternoon of the following day.

She was engaged in pulling onions in the little garden before her daughter's cottage when she saw him coming through the garden gate. She stood for a moment "consternated," as the country folks say, and then folded her arms, and with the little bunch of onions held defensively under her left elbow, awaited his approach. Her mouth opened and shut several times; she mumbled her remaining tooth, and once quite suddenly she curtsied, like the blink of an arc-light.

"I thought I should find you," said Redwood.

"I thought you might, sir," she said, without joy.

"Where's Skinner?"

"'E ain't never written to me, Sir, not once, nor come nigh of me since
I came here. Sir."

"Don't you know what's become of him?"

"Him not having written, no, Sir," and she edged a step towards the left with an imperfect idea of cutting off Redwood from the barn

door.

"No one knows what has become of him," said Redwood.

"I dessay '*e* knows," said Mrs. Skinner.

"He doesn't tell."

"He was always a great one for looking after 'imself and leaving them that was near and dear to 'im in trouble, was Skinner. Though clever as could be," said Mrs. Skinner….

"Where's this child?" asked Redwood abruptly.

She begged his pardon.

"This child I hear about, the child you've been giving our stuff to — the child that weighs two stone."

Mrs. Skinner's hands worked, and she dropped the onions. "Reely, Sir," she protested, "I don't hardly know, Sir, what you mean. My daughter, Sir, Mrs. Caddles, '*as* a baby, Sir." And she made an agitated curtsey and tried to look innocently inquiring by tilting her nose to one side.

"You'd better let me see that baby, Mrs. Skinner," said Redwood.

Mrs. Skinner unmasked an eye at him as she led the way towards the barn. "Of course, Sir, there may 'ave been a *little*, in a little can of Nicey I give his father to bring over from the farm, or a little perhaps what I happened to bring about with me, so to speak. Me packing in a hurry and all …"

"Um!" said Redwood, after he had cluckered to the infant for a space.

"Oom!"

He told Mrs. Caddles the baby was a very fine child indeed, a thing that was getting well home to her intelligence — and he ignored her altogether after that. Presently she left the barn — through sheer insignificance.

"Now you've started him, you'll have to keep on with him, you know," he said to Mrs. Skinner.

He turned on her abruptly. "Don't splash it about *this* time," he said.

"Splash it about, Sir?"

"Oh! *you* know."

She indicated knowledge by convulsive gestures.

"You haven't told these people here? The parents, the squire and so on at the big house, the doctor, no one?"

Mrs. Skinner shook her head.

"I wouldn't," said Redwood….

He went to the door of the barn and surveyed the world about him. The door of the barn looked between the end of the cottage and some disused piggeries through a five-barred gate upon the highroad. Beyond was a high, red brick-wall rich with ivy and wallflower and pennywort, and set along the top with broken glass. Beyond the corner of the wall, a sunlit notice-board amidst green and yellow branches reared itself above the rich tones of the first fallen leaves and announced that "Trespassers in these Woods will be Prosecuted." The dark shadow of a gap in the hedge threw a stretch of barbed wire into relief.

"Um," said Redwood, then in a deeper note, "Oom!"

There came a clatter of horses and the sound of wheels, and Lady Wondershoot's greys came into view. He marked the faces of coachman and footman as the equipage approached. The coachman was a very fine specimen, full and fruity, and he drove with a sort of sacramental dignity. Others might doubt their calling and position in the world, he at any rate was sure — he drove her ladyship. The footman sat beside him with folded arms and a face of inflexible certainties. Then the great lady herself became visible, in a hat and mantle disdainfully inelegant, peering through her glasses. Two young ladies protruded necks and peered also.

The Vicar passing on the other side swept off the hat from his David's brow unheeded….

Redwood remained standing in the doorway for a long time after the carriage had passed, his hands folded behind him. His eyes went to the green, grey upland of down, and into the cloud-curdled sky, and came back to the glass-set wall. He turned upon the cool shadows within, and amidst spots and blurs of colour regarded the giant child amidst that Rembrandtesque gloom, naked except for a swathing of flannel, seated upon a huge truss of straw and playing with its toes.

"I begin to see what we have done," he said.

He mused, and young Caddles and his own child and Cossar's brood mingled in his musing.

He laughed abruptly. "Good Lord!" he said at some passing thought.

He roused himself presently and addressed Mrs. Skinner. "Anyhow he mustn't be tortured by a break in his food. That at least we can prevent. I shall send you a can every six months. That ought to do for him all right."

Mrs. Skinner mumbled something about "if you think so, Sir," and "probably got packed by mistake…. Thought no harm in giving him a little," and so by the aid of various aspen gestures indicated that she understood.

So the child went on growing.

And growing.

"Practically," said Lady Wondershoot, "he's eaten up every calf in the place. If I have any more of this sort of thing from that man Caddles—"

VII.

But even so secluded a place as Cheasing Eyebright could not rest for long in the theory of Hypertrophy — Contagious or not — in view of the growing hubbub about the Food. In a little while there were painful explanations for Mrs. Skinner — explanations that reduced her to speechless mumblings of her remaining tooth — explanations that probed her and ransacked her and exposed her — until at last she was driven to take refuge from a universal convergence of blame in the dignity of inconsolable widowhood. She turned her eye — which she constrained to be watery — upon the angry Lady of the Manor, and wiped suds from her hands.

"You forget, my lady, what I'm bearing up under."

And she followed up this warning note with a slightly defiant:

"It's 'IM I think of, my lady, night *and* day."

She compressed her lips, and her voice flattened and faltered: "Bein' et, my lady."

And having established herself on these grounds, she repeated the affirmation her ladyship had refused before. "I 'ad no more idea what

I was giving the child, my lady, than any one *could* ‘ave….”

Her ladyship turned her mind in more hopeful directions, wigging Caddles of course tremendously by the way. Emissaries, full of diplomatic threatenings, entered the whirling lives of Bensington and Redwood. They presented themselves as Parish Councillors, stolid and clinging phonographically to prearranged statements. “We hold you responsible, Mister Bensington, for the injury inflicted upon our parish, Sir. We hold you responsible.”

A firm of solicitors, with a snake of a style — Banghurst, Brown, Flapp, Codlin, Brown, Tedder, and Snoxton, they called themselves, and appeared invariably in the form of a small rufous cunning-looking gentleman with a pointed nose — said vague things about damages, and there was a polished personage, her ladyship’s agent, who came in suddenly upon Redwood one day and asked, “Well, Sir, and what do you propose to do?”

To which Redwood answered that he proposed to discontinue supplying the food for the child, if he or Bensington were bothered any further about the matter. “I give it for nothing as it is,” he said, “and the child will yell your village to ruins before it dies if you don’t let it have the stuff. The child’s on your hands, and you have to keep it. Lady Wondershoot can’t always be Lady Bountiful and Earthly Providence of her parish without sometimes meeting a responsibility, you know.”

“The mischief’s done,” Lady Wondershoot decided when they told her — with expurgations — what Redwood had said.

“The mischief’s done,” echoed the Vicar.

Though indeed as a matter of fact the mischief was only beginning.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE BRAT GIGANTIC.

I.

The giant child was ugly — the Vicar would insist. “He always had been ugly — as all excessive things must be.” The Vicar’s views had carried him out of sight of just judgment in this matter. The child was much subjected to snapshots even in that rustic retirement, and their net testimony is against the Vicar, testifying that the young monster was at first almost pretty, with a copious curl of hair reaching to his brow and a great readiness to smile. Usually Caddles, who was slightly built, stands smiling behind the baby, perspective emphasising his relative smallness.

After the second year the good looks of the child became more subtle and more contestable. He began to grow, as his unfortunate grandfather would no doubt have put it, “rank.” He lost colour and developed an increasing effect of being somehow, albeit colossal, yet slight. He was vastly delicate. His eyes and something about his face grew finer — grew, as people say, “interesting.” His hair, after one cutting, began to tangle into a mat. “It’s the degenerate strain coming out in him,” said the parish doctor, marking these things, but just how far he was right in that, and just how far the youngster’s lapse from ideal healthfulness was the result of living entirely in a whitewashed barn upon Lady Wondershoot’s sense of charity tempered by justice, is open to question.

The photographs of him that present him from three to six show him developing into a round-eyed, flaxen-haired youngster with a truncated nose and a friendly stare. There lurks about his lips that never very remote promise of a smile that all the photographs of the early giant children display. In summer he wears loose garments of ticking tacked together with string; there is usually one of those straw baskets upon his head that workmen use for their tools, and he is barefooted. In one picture he grins broadly and holds a bitten melon in his hand.

The winter pictures are less numerous and satisfactory. He wears huge sabots — no doubt of beechwoods and (as fragments of the inscription "John Stickells, Iping," show) sacks for socks, and his trousers and jacket are unmistakably cut from the remains of a gaily patterned carpet. Underneath that there were rude swathings of flannel; five or six yards of flannel are tied comforter-fashion about his neck. The thing on his head is probably another sack. He stares, sometimes smiling, sometimes a little ruefully, at the camera. Even when he was only five years old, one sees that half whimsical wrinkling over his soft brown eyes that characterised his face.

He was from the first, the Vicar always declared, a terrible nuisance about the village. He seems to have had a proportionate impulse to play, much curiosity and sociability, and in addition there was a certain craving within him — I grieve to say — for more to eat. In spite of what Mrs. Greenfield called an "*excessively* generous" allowance of food from Lady Wondershoot, he displayed what the doctor perceived at once was the "Criminal Appetite." It carries out only too completely Lady Wondershoot's worst experiences of the lower classes — that in spite of an allowance of nourishment inordinately beyond what is known to be the maximum necessity even of an adult human being, the creature was found to steal. And what he stole he ate with an inelegant voracity. His great hand would come over garden walls; he would covet the very bread in the bakers' carts. Cheeses went from Marlow's store loft, and never a pig trough was safe from him. Some farmer walking over his field of swedes would find the great spoor of his feet and the evidence of his nibbling hunger — a root picked here, a root picked there, and the holes, with childish cunning, heavily erased. He ate a swede as one devours a radish. He would stand and eat apples from a tree, if no one was about, as normal children eat blackberries from a bush. In one way at any rate this shortness of provisions was good for the peace of Cheasing Eyebright — for many years he ate up every grain very nearly of the Food of the Gods that was given him….

Indisputably the child was troublesome and out of place, "He was always about," the Vicar used to say. He could not go to school; he could not go to church by virtue of the obvious limitations of its cubical content. There was some attempt to satisfy the spirit of that

“most foolish and destructive law” — I quote the Vicar — the Elementary Education Act of 1870, by getting him to sit outside the open window while instruction was going on within. But his presence there destroyed the discipline of the other children. They were always popping up and peering at him, and every time he spoke they laughed together. His voice was so odd! So they let him stay away.

Nor did they persist in pressing him to come to church, for his vast proportions were of little help to devotion. Yet there they might have had an easier task; there are good reasons for guessing there were the germs of religious feeling somewhere in that big carcase. The music perhaps drew him. He was often in the churchyard on a Sunday morning, picking his way softly among the graves after the congregation had gone in, and he would sit the whole service out beside the porch, listening as one listens outside a hive of bees.

At first he showed a certain want of tact; the people inside would hear his great feet crunch restlessly round their place of worship, or become aware of his dim face peering in through the stained glass, half curious, half envious, and at times some simple hymn would catch him unawares, and he would howl lugubriously in a gigantic attempt at unison. Whereupon little Sloppet, who was organ-blower and verger and beadle and sexton and bell-ringer on Sundays, besides being postman and chimney-sweep all the week, would go out very briskly and valiantly and send him mournfully away. Sloppet, I am glad to say, felt it — in his more thoughtful moments at any rate. It was like sending a dog home when you start out for a walk, he told me.

But the intellectual and moral training of young Caddles, though fragmentary, was explicit. From the first, Vicar, mother, and all the world, combined to make it clear to him that his giant strength was not for use. It was a misfortune that he had to make the best of. He had to mind what was told him, do what was set him, be careful never to break anything nor hurt anything. Particularly he must not go treading on things or jostling against things or jumping about. He had to salute the gentlefolks respectful and be grateful for the food and clothing they spared him out of their riches. And he learnt all these things submissively, being by nature and habit a teachable

creature and only by food and accident gigantic.

For Lady Wondershoot, in these early days, he displayed the profoundest awe. She found she could talk to him best when she was in short skirts and had her dog-whip, and she gesticulated with that and was always a little contemptuous and shrill. But sometimes the Vicar played master — a minute, middle-aged, rather breathless David pelting a childish Goliath with reproof and reproach and dictatorial command. The monster was now so big that it seems it was impossible for any one to remember he was after all only a child of seven, with all a child's desire for notice and amusement and fresh experience, with all a child's craving for response, attention and affection, and all a child's capacity for dependence and unrestricted dulness and misery.

The Vicar, walking down the village road some sunlit morning, would encounter an ungainly eighteen feet of the Inexplicable, as fantastic and unpleasant to him as some new form of Dissent, as it padded fitfully along with craning neck, seeking, always seeking the two primary needs of childhood — something to eat and something with which to play.

There would come a look of furtive respect into the creature's eyes and an attempt to touch the matted forelock.

In a limited way the Vicar had an imagination — at any rate, the remains of one — and with young Caddles it took the line of developing the huge possibilities of personal injury such vast muscles must possess. Suppose a sudden madness — ! Suppose a mere lapse into disrespect — ! However, the truly brave man is not the man who does not feel fear but the man who overcomes it. Every time and always the Vicar got his imagination under. And he used always to address young Caddles stoutly in a good clear service tenor.

"Being a good boy, Albert Edward?"

And the young giant, edging closer to the wall and blushing deeply, would answer, "Yessir — trying."

"Mind you do," said the Vicar, and would go past him with at most a slight acceleration of his breathing. And out of respect for his manhood he made it a rule, whatever he might fancy, never to look back at the danger, when once it was passed.

In a fitful manner the Vicar would give young Caddles private tuition. He never taught the monster to read — it was not needed; but he taught him the more important points of the Catechism — his duty to his neighbour for example, and of that Deity who would punish Caddles with extreme vindictiveness if ever he ventured to disobey the Vicar and Lady Wondershoot. The lessons would go on in the Vicar's yard, and passers-by would hear that great cranky childish voice droning out the essential teachings of the Established Church.

"To onner 'n 'bey the King and allooer put 'nthority under 'im. To s'bmit meself t'all my gov'ners, teachers, spir'shall pastors an' masters. To order myself lowly 'n rev'rently t'all my betters—"

Presently it became evident that the effect of the growing giant on unaccustomed horses was like that of a camel, and he was told to keep off the highroad, not only near the shrubbery (where the oafish smile over the wall had exasperated her ladyship extremely), but altogether. That law he never completely obeyed, because of the vast interest the highroad had for him. But it turned what had been his constant resort into a stolen pleasure. He was limited at last almost entirely to old pasture and the Downs.

I do not know what he would have done if it had not been for the Downs. There there were spaces where he might wander for miles, and over these spaces he wandered. He would pick branches from trees and make insane vast nosegays there until he was forbidden, take up sheep and put them in neat rows, from which they immediately wandered (at this he invariably laughed very heartily), until he was forbidden, dig away the turf, great wanton holes, until he was forbidden….

He would wander over the Downs as far as the hill above Wreckstone, but not farther, because there he came upon cultivated land, and the people, by reason of his depredations upon their root-crops, and inspired moreover by a sort of hostile timidity his big unkempt appearance frequently evoked, always came out against him with yapping dogs to drive him away. They would threaten him and lash at him with cart whips. I have heard that they would sometimes fire at him with shot guns. And in the other direction he ranged within sight of Hickleybrow. From above Thursley Hanger he could get a glimpse of the London, Chatham, and Dover railway, but

ploughed fields and a suspicious hamlet prevented his nearer access.

And after a time there came boards — great boards with red letters that barred him in every direction. He could not read what the letters said: "Out of Bounds," but in a little while he understood. He was often to be seen in those days, by the railway passengers, sitting, chin on knees, perched up on the Down hard by the Thursley chalk pits, where afterwards he was set working. The train seemed to inspire a dim emotion of friendliness in him, and sometimes he would wave an enormous hand at it, and sometimes give it a rustic incoherent hail.

"Big," the peering passenger would say. "One of these Boom children. They say, Sir, quite unable to do anything for itself — little better than an idiot in fact, and a great burden on the locality."

"Parents quite poor, I'm told."

"Lives on the charity of the local gentry."

Every one would stare intelligently at that distant squatting monstrous figure for a space.

"Good thing that was put a stop to," some spacious thinking mind would suggest. "Nice to 'ave a few thousand of *them* on the rates, eh?"

And usually there was some one wise enough to tell this philosopher: "You're about Right there, Sir," in hearty tones.

II.

He had his bad days.

There was, for example, that trouble with the river.

He made little boats out of whole newspapers, an art he learnt by watching the Spender boy, and he set them sailing down the stream — great paper cocked-hats. When they vanished under the bridge which marks the boundary of the strictly private grounds about Eyebright House, he would give a great shout and run round and across Tormat's new field — Lord! how Tormat's pigs did scamper, to be sure, and turn their good fat into lean muscle! — and so to meet his boats by the ford. Right across the nearer lawns these paper boats of his used to go, right in front of Eyebright House, right under Lady

Wondershoot's eyes! Disorganising folded newspapers! A pretty thing!

Gathering enterprise from impunity, he began babyish hydraulic engineering. He delved a huge port for his paper fleets with an old shed door that served him as a spade, and, no one chancing to observe his operations just then, he devised an ingenious canal that incidentally flooded Lady Wondershoot's ice-house, and finally he dammed the river. He dammed it right across with a few vigorous doorfuls of earth — he must have worked like an avalanche — and down came a most amazing spate through the shrubbery and washed away Miss Spinks and her easel and the most promising water-colour sketch she had ever begun, or, at any rate, it washed away her easel and left her wet to the knees and dismally tucked up in flight to the house, and thence the waters rushed through the kitchen garden, and so by the green door into the lane and down into the riverbed again by Short's ditch.

Meanwhile, the Vicar, interrupted in conversation with the blacksmith, was amazed to see distressful stranded fish leaping out of a few residual pools, and heaped green weed in the bed of the stream, where ten minutes before there had been eight feet and more of clear cool water.

After that, horrified at his own consequences, young Caddles fled his home for two days and nights. He returned only at the insistent call of hunger, to bear with stoical calm an amount of violent scolding that was more in proportion to his size than anything else that had ever before fallen to his lot in the Happy Village.

III.

Immediately after that affair Lady Wondershoot, casting about for exemplary additions to the abuse and fastings she had inflicted, issued a Ukase. She issued it first to her butler, and very suddenly, so that she made him jump. He was clearing away the breakfast things, and she was staring out of the tall window on the terrace where the fawns would come to be fed. "Jobbet," she said, in her most imperial voice— "Jobbet, this Thing must work for its living."

And she made it quite clear not only to Jobbet (which was easy),

but to every one else in the village, including young Caddles, that in this matter, as in all things, she meant what she said.

"Keep him employed," said Lady Wondershoot. "That's the tip for Master
Caddles."

"It's the Tip, I fancy, for all Humanity," said the Vicar. "The simple duties, the modest round, seed-time and harvest—"

"Exactly," said Lady Wondershoot. "What *I* always say. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do. At any rate among the labouring classes. We bring up our under-housemaids on that principle, always. What shall we set him to do?"

That was a little difficult. They thought of many things, and meanwhile they broke him in to labour a bit by using him instead of a horse messenger to carry telegrams and notes when extra speed was needed, and he also carried luggage and packing-cases and things of that sort very conveniently in a big net they found for him. He seemed to like employment, regarding it as a sort of game, and Kinkle, Lady Wondershoot's agent, seeing him shift a rockery for her one day, was struck by the brilliant idea of putting him into her chalk quarry at Thursley Hanger, hard by Hickleybrow. This idea was carried out, and it seemed they had settled his problem.

He worked in the chalk pit, at first with the zest of a playing child, and afterwards with an effect of habit — delving, loading, doing all the haulage of the trucks, running the full ones down the lines towards the siding, and hauling the empty ones up by the wire of a great windlass — working the entire quarry at last single-handed.

I am told that Kinkle made a very good thing indeed out of him for Lady Wondershoot, consuming as he did scarcely anything but his food, though that never restrained her denunciation of "the Creature" as a gigantic parasite upon her charity….

At that time he used to wear a sort of smock of sacking, trousers of patched leather, and iron-shod sabots. Over his head was sometimes a queer thing — a worn-out beehive straw chair it was, but usually he went bareheaded. He would be moving about the pit with a powerful deliberation, and the Vicar on his constitutional

round would get there about midday to find him shamefully eating his vast need of food with his back to all the world.

His food was brought to him every day, a mess of grain in the husk, in a truck — a small railway truck, like one of the trucks he was perpetually filling with chalk, and this load he used to char in an old limekiln and then devour. Sometimes he would mix with it a bag of sugar. Sometimes he would sit licking a lump of such salt as is given to cows, or eating a huge lump of dates, stones and all, such as one sees in London on barrows. For drink he walked to the rivulet beyond the burnt-out site of the Experimental Farm at Hickleybrow and put down his face to the stream. It was from his drinking in that way after eating that the Food of the Gods did at last get loose, spreading first of all in huge weeds from the river-side, then in big frogs, bigger trout and stranding carp, and at last in a fantastic exuberance of vegetation all over the little valley.

And after a year or so the queer monstrous grub things in the field before the blacksmith's grew so big and developed into such frightful skipjacks and cockchafers — motor cockchafers the boys called them — that they drove Lady Wondershoot abroad.

IV.

But soon the Food was to enter upon a new phase of its work in him. In spite of the simple instructions of the Vicar — instructions intended to round off the modest natural life befitting a giant peasant, in the most complete and final manner — he began to ask questions, to inquire into things, to *think*. As he grew from boyhood to adolescence it became increasingly evident that his mind had processes of its own — out of the Vicar's control. The Vicar did his best to ignore this distressing phenomenon, but still — he could feel it there.

The young giant's material for thought lay about him. Quite involuntarily, with his spacious views, his constant overlooking of things, he must have seen a good deal of human life, and as it grew clearer to him that he too, save for this clumsy greatness of his, was also human, he must have come to realise more and more just how much was shut against him by his melancholy distinction. The

sociable hum of the school, the mystery of religion that was partaken in such finery, and which exhaled so sweet a strain of melody, the jovial chorusing from the Inn, the warmly glowing rooms, candle-lit and fire-lit, into which he peered out of the darkness, or again the shouting excitement, the vigour of flannelled exercise upon some imperfectly understood issue that centred about the cricket-field — all these things must have cried aloud to his companionable heart. It would seem that as his adolescence crept upon him, he began to take a very considerable interest in the proceedings of lovers, in those preferences and pairings, those close intimacies that are so cardinal in life.

One Sunday, just about that hour when the stars and the bats and the passions of rural life come out, there chanced to be a young couple "kissing each other a bit" in Love Lane, the deep hedged lane that runs out back towards the Upper Lodge. They were giving their little emotions play, as secure in the warm still twilight as any lovers could be. The only conceivable interruption they thought possible must come pacing visibly up the lane; the twelve-foot hedge towards the silent Downs seemed to them an absolute guarantee.

Then suddenly — incredibly — they were lifted and drawn apart.

They discovered themselves held up, each with a finger and thumb under the armpits, and with the perplexed brown eyes of young Caddles scanning their warm flushed faces. They were naturally dumb with the emotions of their situation.

"*Why* do you like doing that?" asked young Caddles.

I gather the embarrassment continued until the swain remembering his manhood, vehemently, with loud shouts, threats, and virile blasphemies, such as became the occasion, bade young Caddles under penalties put them down. Whereupon young Caddles, remembering his manners, did put them down politely and very carefully, and conveniently near for a resumption of their embraces, and having hesitated above them for a while, vanished again into the twilight …

"But I felt precious silly," the swain confided to me. "We couldn't 'ardly look at one another — bein' caught like that.

"Kissing we was — *you* know.

"And the cur'ous thing is, she blamed it all on to me," said the

swain.

"Flew out something outrageous, and wouldn't 'ardly speak to me all the way 'ome…."

The giant was embarking upon investigations, there could be no doubt. His mind, it became manifest, was throwing up questions. He put them to few people as yet, but they troubled him. His mother, one gathers, sometimes came in for cross-examination.

He used to come into the yard behind his mother's cottage, and, after a careful inspection of the ground for hens and chicks, he would sit down slowly with his back against the barn. In a minute the chicks, who liked him, would be pecking all over him at the mossy chalk-mud in the seams of his clothing, and if it was blowing up for wet, Mrs. Caddles' kitten, who never lost her confidence in him, would assume a sinuous form and start scampering into the cottage, up to the kitchen fender, round, out, up his leg, up his body, right up to his shoulder, meditative moment, and then scat! back again, and so on. Sometimes she would stick her claws in his face out of sheer gaiety of heart, but he never dared to touch her because of the uncertain weight of his hand upon a creature so frail. Besides, he rather liked to be tickled. And after a time he would put some clumsy questions to his mother.

"Mother," he would say, "if it's good to work, why doesn't every one work?"

His mother would look up at him and answer, "It's good for the likes of us."

He would meditate, "*Why*?"

And going unanswered, "What's work *for*, mother? Why do I cut chalk and you wash clothes, day after day, while Lady Wondershoot goes about in her carriage, mother, and travels off to those beautiful foreign countries you and I mustn't see, mother?"

"She's a lady," said Mrs. Caddles.

"Oh," said young Caddles, and meditated profoundly.

"If there wasn't gentlefolks to make work for us to do," said Mrs. Caddles, "how should we poor people get a living?"

This had to be digested.

“Mother,” he tried again; “if there wasn’t any gentlefolks, wouldn’t things belong to people like me and you, and if they did—”

“Lord sakes and *drat* the Boy!” Mrs. Caddles would say — she had with the help of a good memory become quite a florid and vigorous individuality since Mrs. Skinner died. “Since your poor dear grandma was took, there’s no abiding you. Don’t you arst no questions and you won’t be told no lies. If once I was to start out answerin’ you *serious*, y’r father ‘d ‘ave to go’ and arst some one else for ‘is supper — let alone finishing the washin’.”

“All right, mother,” he would say, after a wondering stare at her. “I didn’t mean to worry.”

And he would go on thinking.

V.

He was thinking too four years after, when the Vicar, now no longer ripe but over-ripe, saw him for the last time of all. You figure the old gentleman visibly a little older now, slacker in his girth, a little coarsened and a little weakened in his thought and speech, with a quivering shakiness in his hand and a quivering shakiness in his convictions, but his eye still bright and merry for all the trouble the Food had caused his village and himself. He had been frightened at times and disturbed, but was he not alive still and the same still? and fifteen long years — a fair sample of eternity — had turned the trouble into use and wont.

“It was a disturbance, I admit,” he would say, “and things are different — different in many ways. There was a time when a boy could weed, but now a man must go out with axe and crowbar — in some places down by the thickets at least. And it’s a little strange still to us old-fashioned people for all this valley, even what used to be the river bed before they irrigated, to be under wheat — as it is this year — twenty-five feet high. They used the old-fashioned scythe here twenty years ago, and they would bring home the harvest on a wain — rejoicing — in a simple honest fashion. A little simple drunkenness, a little frank love-making, to conclude … poor dear Lady Wondershoot — she didn’t like these Innovations. Very conservative, poor dear lady! A touch of the eighteenth century about

her, I always Said. Her language for example … Bluff vigour …

"She died comparatively poor. These big weeds got into her garden. She was not one of these gardening women, but she liked her garden in order — things growing where they were planted and as they were planted — under control … The way things grew was unexpected — upset her ideas … She didn't like the perpetual invasion of this young monster — at last she began to fancy he was always gaping at her over her wall … She didn't like his being nearly as high as her house … Jarred with her sense of proportion. Poor dear lady! I had hoped she would last my time. It was the big cockchafers we had for a year or so that decided her. They came from the giant larvae — nasty things as big as rats — in the valley turf …

"And the ants no doubt weighed with her also.

"Since everything was upset and there was no peace and quietness anywhere now, she said she thought she might just as well be at Monte Carlo as anywhere else. And she went.

"She played pretty boldly, I'm told. Died in a hotel there. Very sad end… Exile… Not — not what one considers meet… A natural leader of our English people… Uprooted. So I…

"Yet after all," harped the Vicar, "it comes to very little. A nuisance of course. Children cannot run about so freely as they used to do, what with ant bites and so forth. Perhaps it's as well … There used to be talk — as though this stuff would revolutionise everything … But there is something that defies all these forces of the New … I don't know of course. I'm not one of your modern philosophers — explain everything with ether and atoms. Evolution. Rubbish like that. What I mean is something the 'Ologies don't include. Matter of reason — not understanding. Ripe wisdom. Human nature. *Aere perennius.* … Call it what you will."

And so at last it came to the last time.

The Vicar had no intimation of what lay so close upon him. He did his customary walk, over by Farthing Down, as he had done it for more than a score of years, and so to the place whence he would watch young Caddles. He did the rise over by the chalk-pit crest a little puffily — he had long since lost the Muscular Christian stride of early days; but Caddles was not at his work, and then, as he skirted

the thicket of giant bracken that was beginning to obscure and overshadow the Hanger, he came upon the monster's huge form seated on the hill — brooding as it were upon the world. Caddles' knees were drawn up, his cheek was on his hand, his head a little aslant. He sat with his shoulder towards the Vicar, so that those perplexed eyes could not be seen. He must have been thinking very intently — at any rate he was sitting very still …

He never turned round. He never knew that the Vicar, who had played so large a part in shaping his life, looked then at him for the very last of innumerable times — did not know even that he was there. (So it is so many partings happen.) The Vicar was struck at the time by the fact that, after all, no one on earth had the slightest idea of what this great monster thought about when he saw fit to rest from his labours. But he was too indolent to follow up that new theme that day; he fell back from its suggestion into his older grooves of thought.

"*Aere-perennius,*" he whispered, walking slowly homeward by a path that no longer ran straight athwart the turf after its former fashion, but wound circuitously to avoid new sprung tussocks of giant grass. "No! nothing is changed. Dimensions are nothing. The simple round, the common way—"

And that night, quite painlessly, and all unknowing, he himself went the common way — out of this Mystery of Change he had spent his life in denying.

They buried him in the churchyard of Cheasing Eyebright, near to the largest yew, and the modest tombstone bearing his epitaph — it ended with: *Ut in Principio, nunc est et semper* — was almost immediately hidden from the eye of man by a spread of giant, grey tasselled grass too stout for scythe or sheep, that came sweeping like a fog over the village out of the germinating moisture of the valley meadows in which the Food of the Gods had been working.

BOOK III. THE HARVEST OF THE FOOD.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE ALTERED WORLD.

I.

Change played in its new fashion with the world for twenty years. To most men the new things came little by little and day by day, remarkably enough, but not so abruptly as to overwhelm. But to one man at least the full accumulation of those two decades of the Food's work was to be revealed suddenly and amazingly in one day. For our purpose it is convenient to take him for that one day and to tell something of the things he saw. This man was a convict, a prisoner for life — his crime is no concern of ours — whom the law saw fit to pardon after twenty years. One summer morning this poor wretch, who had left the world a young man of three-and-twenty, found himself thrust out again from the grey simplicity of toil and discipline, that had become his life, into a dazzling freedom. They had put unaccustomed clothes upon him; his hair had been growing for some weeks, and he had parted it now for some days, and there he stood, in a sort of shabby and clumsy newness of body and mind, blinking with his eyes and blinking indeed with his soul, *outside* again, trying to realise one incredible thing, that after all he was again for a little while in the world of life, and for all other incredible things, totally unprepared. He was so fortunate as to have a brother who cared enough for their distant common memories to come and meet him and clasp his hand — a brother he had left a little lad, and who was now a bearded prosperous man — whose very eyes were unfamiliar. And together he and this stranger from his kindred came down into the town of Dover, saying little to one another and feeling many things.

They sat for a space in a public-house, the one answering the questions of the other about this person and that, reviving queer old points of view, brushing aside endless new aspects and new perspectives, and then it was time to go to the station and take the London train. Their names and the personal things they had to talk of

do not matter to our story, but only the changes and all the strangeness that this poor returning soul found in the once familiar world.

In Dover itself he remarked little except the goodness of beer from pewter — never before had there been such a draught of beer, and it brought tears of gratitude to his eyes. “Beer’s as good as ever,” said he, believing it infinitely better….

It was only as the train rattled them past Folkestone that he could look out beyond his more immediate emotions, to see what had happened to the world. He peered out of the window. “It’s sunny,” he said for the twelfth time. “I couldn’t ha’ had better weather.” And then for the first time it dawned upon him that there were novel disproportions in the world. “Lord sakes,” he cried, sitting up and looking animated for the first time, “but them’s mortal great thissels growing out there on the bank by that broom. If so be they *be* thissels? Or ‘ave I been forgetting?” But they were thistles, and what he took for tall bushes of broom was the new grass, and amidst these things a company of British soldiers — red-coated as ever — was skirmishing in accordance with the directions of the drill book that had been partially revised after the Boer War. Then whack! into a tunnel, and then into Sandling Junction, which was now embedded and dark — its lamps were all alight — in a great thicket of rhododendron that had crept out of some adjacent gardens and grown enormously up the valley. There was a train of trucks on the Sandgate siding piled high with rhododendron logs, and here it was the returning citizen heard first of Boomfood.

As they sped out into a country again that seemed absolutely unchanged, the two brothers were hard at their explanations. The one was full of eager, dull questions; the other had never thought, had never troubled to see the thing as a single fact, and he was allusive and difficult to follow. “It’s this here Boomfood stuff,” he said, touching his bottom rock of knowledge. “Don’t you know? ‘Aven’t they told you — any of ‘em? Boomfood! You know — Boomfood. What all the election’s about. Scientific sort of stuff. ‘Asn’t no one ever told you?”

He thought prison had made his brother a fearful duffer not to know that.

They made wide shots at each other by way of question and answer. Between these scraps of talk were intervals of window-gazing. At first the man's interest in things was vague and general. His imagination had been busy with what old so-and-so would say, how so-and-so would look, how he would say to all and sundry certain things that would present his "putting away" in a mitigated light. This Boomfood came in at first as it were a thing in an odd paragraph of the newspapers, then as a source of intellectual difficulty with his brother. But it came to him presently that Boomfood was persistently coming in upon any topic he began.

In those days the world was a patchwork of transition, so that this great new fact came to him in a series of shocks of contrast. The process of change had not been uniform; it had spread from one centre of distribution here and another centre there. The country was in patches: great areas where the Food was still to come, and areas where it was already in the soil and in the air, sporadic and contagious. It was a bold new motif creeping in among ancient and venerable airs.

The contrast was very vivid indeed along the line from Dover to London at that time. For a space they traversed just such a country-side as he had known since his childhood, the small oblongs of field, hedge-lined, of a size for pigmy horses to plough, the little roads three cart-widths wide, the elms and oaks and poplars dotting these fields about, little thickets of willow beside the streams; ricks of hay no higher than a giant's knees, dolls' cottages with diamond panes, brickfields, and straggling village streets, the larger houses of the petty great, flower-grown railway banks, garden-set stations, and all the little things of the vanished nineteenth century still holding out against Immensity. Here and there would be a patch of wind-sown, wind-tattered giant thistle defying the axe; here and there a ten-foot puff-ball or the ashen stems of some burnt-out patch of monster grass; but that was all there was to hint at the coming of the Food.

For a couple of score of miles there was nothing else to foreshadow in any way the strange bigness of the wheat and of the weeds that were hidden from him not a dozen miles from his route just over the hills in the Cheasing Eyebright valley. And then presently the traces of the Food would begin. The first striking thing

was the great new viaduct at Tonbridge, where the swamp of the choked Medway (due to a giant variety of *Chara*) began in those days. Then again the little country, and then, as the petty multitudinous immensity of London spread out under its haze, the traces of man's fight to keep out greatness became abundant and incessant.

In that south-eastern region of London at that time, and all about where Cossar and his children lived, the Food had become mysteriously insurgent at a hundred points; the little life went on amidst daily portents that only the deliberation of their increase, the slow parallel growth of usage to their presence, had robbed of their warning. But this returning citizen peered out to see for the first time the facts of the Food strange and predominant, scarred and blackened areas, big unsightly defences and preparations, barracks and arsenals that this subtle, persistent influence had forced into the life of men.

Here, on an ampler scale, the experience of the first Experimental Farm had been repeated time and again. It had been in the inferior and accidental things of life — under foot and in waste places, irregularly and irrelevantly — that the coming of a new force and new issues had first declared itself. There were great evil-smelling yards and enclosures where some invincible jungle of weed furnished fuel for gigantic machinery (little cockneys came to stare at its clangorous oiliness and tip the men a sixpence); there were roads and tracks for big motors and vehicles — roads made of the interwoven fibres of hypertrophied hemp; there were towers containing steam sirens that could yell at once and warn the world against any new insurgence of vermin, or, what was queerer, venerable church towers conspicuously fitted with a mechanical scream. There were little red-painted refuge huts and garrison shelters, each with its 300-yard rifle range, where the riflemen practised daily with soft-nosed ammunition at targets in the shape of monstrous rats.

Six times since the day of the Skinners there had been outbreaks of giant rats — each time from the south-west London sewers, and now they were as much an accepted fact there as tigers in the delta by Calcutta….

The man's brother had bought a paper in a heedless sort of way at Sandling, and at last this chanced to catch the eye of the released

man. He opened the unfamiliar sheets — they seemed to him to be smaller, more numerous, and different in type from the papers of the times before — and he found himself confronted with innumerable pictures about things so strange as to be uninteresting, and with tall columns of printed matter whose headings, for the most part, were as unmeaning as though they had been written in a foreign tongue— "Great Speech by Mr. Caterham"; "The Boomfood Laws."

"Who's this here Caterham?" he asked, in an attempt to make conversation.

"*He's* all right," said his brother.

"Ah! Sort of politician, eh?"

"Goin' to turn out the Government. Jolly well time he did."

"Ah!" He reflected. "I suppose all the lot *I* used to know — Chamberlain, Rosebery — all that lot — *What*?"

His brother had grasped his wrist and pointed out of the window.

"That's the Cossars!" The eyes of the released prisoner followed the finger's direction and saw —

"My Gawd!" he cried, for the first time really overcome with amazement. The paper dropped into final forgottenness between his feet. Through the trees he could see very distinctly, standing in an easy attitude, the legs wide apart and the hand grasping a ball as if about to throw it, a gigantic human figure a good forty feet high. The figure glittered in the sunlight, clad in a suit of woven white metal and belted with a broad belt of steel. For a moment it focussed all attention, and then the eye was wrested to another more distant Giant who stood prepared to catch, and it became apparent that the whole area of that great bay in the hills just north of Sevenoaks had been scarred to gigantic ends.

A hugely banked entrenchment overhung the chalk pit, in which stood the house, a monstrous squat Egyptian shape that Cossar had built for his sons when the Giant Nursery had served its turn, and behind was a great dark shed that might have covered a cathedral, in which a spluttering incandescence came and went, and from out of which came a Titanic hammering to beat upon the ear. Then the attention leapt back to the giant as the great ball of iron-bound timber soared up out of his hand.

The two men stood up and stared. The ball seemed as big as a

cask.

"Caught!" cried the man from prison, as a tree blotted out the thrower.

The train looked on these things only for the fraction of a minute and then passed behind trees into the Chislehurst tunnel. "My Gawd!" said the man from prison again, as the darkness closed about them. "Why! that chap was as 'igh as a 'ouse."

"That's them young Cossars," said his brother, jerking his head allusively— "what all this trouble's about…."

They emerged again to discover more siren-surmounted towers, more red huts, and then the clustering villas of the outer suburbs. The art of bill-sticking had lost nothing in the interval, and from countless tall hoardings, from house ends, from palings, and a hundred such points of vantage came the polychromatic appeals of the great Boomfood election. "Caterham," "Boomfood," and "Jack the Giant-killer" again and again and again, and monstrous caricatures and distortions — a hundred varieties of misrepresentations of those great and shining figures they had passed so nearly only a few minutes before….

II.

It had been the purpose of the younger brother to do a very magnificent thing, to celebrate this return to life by a dinner at some restaurant of indisputable quality, a dinner that should be followed by all that glittering succession of impressions the Music Halls of those days were so capable of giving. It was a worthy plan to wipe off the more superficial stains of the prison house by this display of free indulgence; but so far as the second item went the plan was changed. The dinner stood, but there was a desire already more powerful than the appetite for shows, already more efficient in turning the man's mind away from his grim prepossession with his past than any theatre could be, and that was an enormous curiosity and perplexity about this Boomfood and these Boom children — this new portentous giantry that seemed to dominate the world. "I 'aven't the 'ang of 'em," he said. "They disturve me."

His brother had that fineness of mind that can even set aside a

contemplated hospitality. “It’s *your* evening, dear old boy,” he said. “We’ll try to get into the mass meeting at the People’s Palace.”

And at last the man from prison had the luck to find himself wedged into a packed multitude and staring from afar at a little brightly lit platform under an organ and a gallery. The organist had been playing something that had set boots tramping as the people swarmed in; but that was over now.

Hardly had the man from prison settled into place and done his quarrel with an importunate stranger who elbowed, before Caterham came. He walked out of a shadow towards the middle of the platform, the most insignificant little pigmy, away there in the distance, a little black figure with a pink dab for a face, — in profile one saw his quite distinctive aquiline nose — a little figure that trailed after it most inexplicably — a cheer. A cheer it was that began away there and grew and spread. A little spluttering of voices about the platform at first that suddenly leapt up into a flame of sound and swept athwart the whole mass of humanity within the building and without. How they cheered! Hooray! Hooray!

No one in all those myriads cheered like the man from prison. The tears poured down his face, and he only stopped cheering at last because the thing had choked him. You must have been in prison as long as he before you can understand, or even begin to understand, what it means to a man to let his lungs go in a crowd. (But for all that he did not even pretend to himself that he knew what all this emotion was about.) Hooray! O God! — Hoo-ray!

And then a sort of silence. Caterham had subsided to a conspicuous patience, and subordinate and inaudible persons were saying and doing formal and insignificant things. It was like hearing voices through the noise of leaves in spring. “Wawawawa—” What did it matter? People in the audience talked to one another. “Wawawawawa—” the thing went on. Would that grey-headed duffer never have done? Interrupting? Of course they were interrupting. “Wa, wa, wa, wa—” But shall we hear Caterham any better?

Meanwhile at any rate there was Caterham to stare at, and one could stand and study the distant prospect of the great man’s features. He was easy to draw was this man, and already the world

had him to study at leisure on lamp chimneys and children's plates, on Anti-Boomfood medals and Anti-Boomfood flags, on the selvedges of Caterham silks and cottons and in the linings of Good Old English Caterham hats. He pervades all the caricature of that time. One sees him as a sailor standing to an old-fashioned gun, a port-fire labelled "New Boomfood Laws" in his hand; while in the sea wallows that huge, ugly, threatening monster, "Boomfood;" or he is *cap-a-pie* in armour, St. George's cross on shield and helm, and a cowardly titanic Caliban sitting amidst desecrations at the mouth of a horrid cave declines his gauntlet of the "New Boomfood Regulations;" or he comes flying down as Perseus and rescues a chained and beautiful Andromeda (labelled distinctly about her belt as "Civilisation") from a wallowing waste of sea monster bearing upon its various necks and claws "Irreligion," "Trampling Egotism," "Mechanism," "Monstrosity," and the like. But it was as "Jack the Giant-killer" that the popular imagination considered Caterham most correctly cast, and it was in the vein of a Jack the Giant-killer poster that the man from prison, enlarged that distant miniature.

The "Wawawawa" came abruptly to an end.

He's done. He's sitting down. Yes! No! Yes! It's Caterham!
"Caterham!"
"Caterham!" And then came the cheers.

It takes a multitude to make such a stillness as followed that disorder of cheering. A man alone in a wilderness; — it's stillness of a sort no doubt, but he hears himself breathe, he hears himself move, he hears all sorts of things. Here the voice of Caterham was the one single thing heard, a thing very bright and clear, like a little light burning in a black velvet recess. Hear indeed! One heard him as though he spoke at one's elbow.

It was stupendously effective to the man from prison, that gesticulating little figure in a halo of light, in a halo of rich and swaying sounds; behind it, partially effaced as it were, sat its supporters on the platform, and in the foreground was a wide perspective of innumerable backs and profiles, a vast multitudinous attention. That little figure seemed to have absorbed the substance

from them all.

Caterham spoke of our ancient institutions. “Earearear,” roared the crowd. “Ear! ear!” said the man from prison. He spoke of our ancient spirit of order and justice. “Earearear!” roared the crowd. “Ear! Ear!” cried the man from prison, deeply moved. He spoke of the wisdom of our forefathers, of the slow growth of venerable institutions, of moral and social traditions, that fitted our English national characteristics as the skin fits the hand. “Ear! Ear!” groaned the man from prison, with tears of excitement on his cheeks. And now all these things were to go into the melting pot. Yes, into the melting pot! Because three men in London twenty years ago had seen fit to mix something indescribable in a bottle, all the order and sanctity of things — Cries of “No! No!” — Well, if it was not to be so, they must exert themselves, they must say good-bye to hesitation — Here there came a gust of cheering. They must say good-bye to hesitation and half measures.

“We have heard, gentlemen,” cried Caterham, “of nettles that become giant nettles. At first they are no more than other nettles — little plants that a firm hand may grasp and wrench away; but if you leave them — if you leave them, they grow with such a power of poisonous expansion that at last you must needs have axe and rope, you must needs have danger to life and limb, you must needs have toil and distress — men may be killed in their felling, men may be killed in their felling—”

There came a stir and interruption, and then the man from prison heard Caterham’s voice again, ringing clear and strong: “Learn about Boomfood from Boomfood itself and—” He paused— “*Grasp your nettle before it is too late!*”

He stopped and stood wiping his lips. “A crystal,” cried some one, “a crystal,” and then came that same strange swift growth to thunderous tumult, until the whole world seemed cheering….

The man from prison came out of the hall at last, marvellously stirred, and with that in his face that marks those who have seen a vision. He knew, every one knew; his ideas were no longer vague. He had come back to a world in crisis, to the immediate decision of a stupendous issue. He must play his part in the great conflict like a man — like a free, responsible man. The antagonism presented itself

as a picture. On the one hand those easy gigantic mail-clad figures of the morning — one saw them now in a different light — on the other this little black-clad gesticulating creature under the limelight, that pigmy thing with its ordered flow of melodious persuasion, its little, marvellously penetrating voice, John Caterham— "Jack the Giant-killer." They must all unite to "grasp the nettle" before it was "too late."

III.

The tallest and strongest and most regarded of all the children of the Food were the three sons of Cossar. The mile or so of land near Sevenoaks in which their boyhood passed became so trenched, so dug out and twisted about, so covered with sheds and huge working models and all the play of their developing powers, it was like no other place on earth. And long since it had become too little for the things they sought to do. The eldest son was a mighty schemer of wheeled engines; he had made himself a sort of giant bicycle that no road in the world had room for, no bridge could bear. There it stood, a great thing of wheels and engines, capable of two hundred and fifty miles an hour, useless save that now and then he would mount it and fling himself backwards and forwards across that cumbered work-yard. He had meant to go around the little world with it; he had made it with that intention, while he was still no more than a dreaming boy. Now its spokes were rusted deep red like wounds, wherever the enamel had been chipped away.

"You must make a road for it first, Sonnie," Cossar had said, "before you can do that."

So one morning about dawn the young giant and his brothers had set to work to make a road about the world. They seem to have had an inkling of opposition impending, and they had worked with remarkable vigour. The world had discovered them soon enough, driving that road as straight as a flight of a bullet towards the English Channel, already some miles of it levelled and made and stamped hard. They had been stopped before midday by a vast crowd of excited people, owners of land, land agents, local authorities, lawyers, policemen, soldiers even.

“We’re making a road,” the biggest boy had explained.

“Make a road by all means,” said the leading lawyer on the ground, “but please respect the rights of other people. You have already infringed the private rights of twenty-seven private proprietors; let alone the special privileges and property of an urban district board, nine parish councils, a county council, two gasworks, and a railway company….”

“Goodney!” said the elder boy Cossar.

“You will have to stop it.”

“But don’t you want a nice straight road in the place of all these rotten rutty little lanes?”

“I won’t say it wouldn’t be advantageous, but—”

“It isn’t to be done,” said the eldest Cossar boy, picking up his tools.

“Not in this way,” said the lawyer, “certainly.”

“How is it to be done?”

The leading lawyer’s answer had been complicated and vague.

Cossar had come down to see the mischief his children had done, and reproved them severely and laughed enormously and seemed to be extremely happy over the affair. “You boys must wait a bit,” he shouted up to them, “before you can do things like that.”

“The lawyer told us we must begin by preparing a scheme, and getting special powers and all sorts of rot. Said it would take us years.”

“*We’ll* have a scheme before long, little boy,” cried Cossar, hands to his mouth as he shouted, “never fear. For a bit you’d better play about and make models of the things you want to do.”

They did as he told them like obedient sons.

But for all that the Cossar lads brooded a little.

“It’s all very well,” said the second to the first, “but I don’t always want just to play about and plan, I want to do something *real*, you know. We didn’t come into this world so strong as we are, just to play about in this messy little bit of ground, you know, and take little walks and keep out of the towns” — for by that time they were forbidden all boroughs and urban districts, “Doing nothing’s just wicked. Can’t we find out something the little people *want* done and do it for them — just for the fun of doing it?

“Lots of them haven’t houses fit to live in,” said the second boy, “Let’s go and build ’em a house close up to London, that will hold heaps and heaps of them and be ever so comfortable and nice, and let’s make ’em a nice little road to where they all go and do business — nice straight little road, and make it all as nice as nice. We’ll make it all so clean and pretty that they won’t any of them be able to live grubby and beastly like most of them do now. Water enough for them to wash with, we’ll have — you know they’re so dirty now that nine out of ten of their houses haven’t even baths in them, the filthy little skunks! You know, the ones that have baths spit insults at the ones that haven’t, instead of helping them to get them — and call ’em the Great Unwashed — *You* know. We’ll alter all that. And we’ll make electricity light and cook and clean up for them, and all. Fancy! They make their women — women who are going to be mothers — crawl about and scrub floors!

“We could make it all beautifully. We could bank up a valley in that range of hills over there and make a nice reservoir, and we could make a big place here to generate our electricity and have it all simply lovely. Couldn’t we, brother? And then perhaps they’d let us do some other things.”

“Yes,” said the elder brother, “we could do it *very* nice for them.”

“Then *let’s,”* said the second brother.

“*I* don’t mind,” said the elder brother, and looked about for a handy tool.

And that led to another dreadful bother.

Agitated multitudes were at them in no time, telling them for a thousand reasons to stop, telling them to stop for no reason at all — babbling, confused, and varied multitudes. The place they were building was too high — it couldn’t possibly be safe. It was ugly; it interfered with the letting of proper-sized houses in the neighbourhood; it ruined the tone of the neighbourhood; it was unneighbourly; it was contrary to the Local Building Regulations; it infringed the right of the local authority to muddle about with a minute expensive electric supply of its own; it interfered with the concerns of the local water company.

Local Government Board clerks roused themselves to judicial obstruction. The little lawyer turned up again to represent about a

dozen threatened interests; local landowners appeared in opposition; people with mysterious claims claimed to be bought off at exorbitant rates; the Trades Unions of all the building trades lifted up collective voices; and a ring of dealers in all sorts of building material became a bar. Extraordinary associations of people with prophetic visions of aesthetic horrors rallied to protect the scenery of the place where they would build the great house, of the valley where they would bank up the water. These last people were absolutely the worst asses of the lot, the Cossar boys considered. That beautiful house of the Cossar boys was just like a walking-stick thrust into a wasps' nest, in no time.

"I never did!" said the elder boy.

"We can't go on," said the second brother.

"Rotten little beasts they are," said the third of the brothers; "we can't do *anything!*"

"Even when it's for their own comfort. Such a *nice* place we'd have made for them too."

"They seem to spend their silly little lives getting in each other's way," said the eldest boy, "Rights and laws and regulations and rascalities; it's like a game of spellicans…. Well, anyhow, they'll have to live in their grubby, dirty, silly little houses for a bit longer. It's very evident *we* can't go on with this."

And the Cossar children left that great house unfinished, a mere hole of foundations and the beginning of a wall, and sulked back to their big enclosure. After a time the hole was filled with water and with stagnation and weeds, and vermin, and the Food, either dropped there by the sons of Cossar or blowing thither as dust, set growth going in its usual fashion. Water voles came out over the country and did infinite havoc, and one day a farmer caught his pigs drinking there, and instantly and with great presence of mind — for he knew: of the great hog of Oakham — slew them all. And from that deep pool it was the mosquitoes came, quite terrible mosquitoes, whose only virtue was that the sons of Cossar, after being bitten for a little, could stand the thing no longer, but chose a moonlight night when law and order were abed and drained the water clean away into the river by Brook.

But they left the big weeds and the big water voles and all sorts of

big undesirable things still living and breeding on the site they had chosen — the site on which the fair great house of the little people might have towered to heaven …

IV.

That had been in the boyhood of the Sons, but now they were nearly men, And the chains had been tightening upon them and tightening with every year of growth. Each year they grew, and the Food spread and great things multiplied, each year the stress and tension rose. The Food had been at first for the great mass of mankind a distant marvel, and now It was coming home to every threshold, and threatening, pressing against and distorting the whole order of life. It blocked this, it overturned that; it changed natural products, and by changing natural products it stopped employments and threw men out of work by the hundred thousands; it swept over boundaries and turned the world of trade into a world of cataclysms: no wonder mankind hated it.

And since it is easier to hate animate than inanimate things, animals more than plants, and one's fellow-men more completely than any animals, the fear and trouble engendered by giant nettles and six-foot grass blades, awful insects and tiger-like vermin, grew all into one great power of detestation that aimed itself with a simple directness at that scattered band of great human beings, the Children of the Food. That hatred had become the central force in political affairs. The old party lines had been traversed and effaced altogether under the insistence of these newer issues, and the conflict lay now with the party of the temporisers, who were for putting little political men to control and regulate the Food, and the party of reaction for whom Caterharn spoke, speaking always with a more sinister ambiguity, crystallising his intention first in one threatening phrase and then another, now that men must "prune the bramble growths," now that they must find a "cure for elephantiasis," and at last upon the eve of the election that they must "Grasp the nettle."

One day the three sons of Cossar, who were now no longer boys but men, sat among the masses of their futile work and talked together after their fashion of all these things. They had been

working all day at one of a series of great and complicated trenches their father had bid them make, and now it was sunset, and they sat in the little garden space before the great house and looked at the world and rested, until the little servants within should say their food was ready.

You must figure these mighty forms, forty feet high the least of them was, reclining on a patch of turf that would have seemed a stubble of reeds to a common man. One sat up and chipped earth from his huge boots with an iron girder he grasped in his hand; the second rested on his elbow; the third whittled a pine tree into shape and made a smell of resin in the air. They were clothed not in cloth but in under-garments of woven rope and outer clothes of felted aluminium wire; they were shod with timber and iron, and the links and buttons and belts of their clothing were all of plated steel. The great single-storeyed house they lived in, Egyptian in its massiveness, half built of monstrous blocks of chalk and half excavated from the living rock of the hill, had a front a full hundred feet in height, and beyond, the chimneys and wheels, the cranes and covers of their work sheds rose marvellously against the sky. Through a circular window in the house there was visible a spout from which some white-hot metal dripped and dripped in measured drops into a receptacle out of sight. The place was enclosed and rudely fortified by monstrous banks of earth, backed with steel both over the crests of the Downs above and across the dip of the valley. It needed something of common size to mark the nature of the scale. The train that came rattling from Sevenoaks athwart their vision, and presently plunged into the tunnel out of their sight, looked by contrast with them like some small-sized automatic toy.

"They have made all the woods this side of Ightham out of bounds," said one, "and moved the board that was out by Knockholt two miles and more this way."

"It is the least they could do," said the youngest, after a pause. "They are trying to take the wind out of Caterham's sails."

"It's not enough for that, and — it is almost too much for us," said the third.

"They are cutting us off from Brother Redwood. Last time I went to him the red notices had crept a mile in, either way. The road to

him along the Downs is no more than a narrow lane."

The speaker thought. "What has come to our brother Redwood?"

"Why?" said the eldest brother.

The speaker hacked a bough from his pine. "He was like — as though he wasn't awake. He didn't seem to listen to what I had to say. And he said something of — love."

The youngest tapped his girder on the edge of his iron sole and laughed.
"Brother Redwood," he said, "has dreams."

Neither spoke for a space. Then the eldest brother said, "This cooping up and cooping up grows more than I can bear. At last, I believe, they will draw a line round our boots and tell us to live on that."

The middle brother swept aside a heap of pine boughs with one hand and shifted his attitude. "What they do now is nothing to what they will do when Caterham has power."

"If he gets power," said the youngest brother, smiting the ground with his girder.

"As he will," said the eldest, staring at his feet.

The middle brother ceased his lopping, and his eye went to the great banks that sheltered them about. "Then, brothers," he said, "our youth will be over, and, as Father Redwood said to us long ago, we must quit ourselves like men."

"Yes," said the eldest brother; "but what exactly does that mean? Just what does it mean — when that day of trouble comes?"

He too glanced at those rude vast suggestions of entrenchment about them, looking not so much at them as through them and over the hills to the innumerable multitudes beyond. Something of the same sort came into all their minds — a vision of little people coming out to war, in a flood, the little people, inexhaustible, incessant, malignant….

"They are little," said the youngest brother; "but they have numbers beyond counting, like the sands of the sea."

"They have arms — they have weapons even, that our brothers in Sunderland have made."

“Besides, Brothers, except for vermin, except for little accidents with evil things, what have we seen of killing?”

“I know,” said the eldest brother. “For all that — we are what we are. When the day of trouble comes we must do the thing we have to do.”

He closed his knife with a snap — the blade was the length of a man — and used his new pine staff to help himself rise. He stood up and turned towards the squat grey immensity of the house. The crimson of the sunset caught him as he rose, caught the mail and clasps about his neck and the woven metal of his arms, and to the eyes of his brother it seemed as though he was suddenly suffused with blood …

As the young giant rose a little black figure became visible to him against that western incandescence on the top of the embankment that towered above the summit of the down. The black limbs waved in ungainly gestures. Something in the fling of the limbs suggested haste to the young giant’s mind. He waved his pine mast in reply, filled the whole valley with his vast Hullo! threw a “Something’s up” to his brothers, and set off in twenty-foot strides to meet and help his father.

V.

It chanced too that a young man who was not a giant was delivering his soul about these sons of Cossar just at that same time. He had come over the hills beyond Sevenoaks, he and his friend, and he it was did the talking. In the hedge as they came along they had heard a pitiful squealing, and had intervened to rescue three nestling tits from the attack of a couple of giant ants. That adventure it was had set him talking.

“Reactionary!” he was saying, as they came within sight of the Cossar encampment. “Who wouldn’t be reactionary? Look at that square of ground, that space of God’s earth that was once sweet and fair, torn, desecrated, disembowelled! Those sheds! That great wind-wheel! That monstrous wheeled machine! Those dykes! Look at those three monsters squatting there, plotting some ugly devilment or

other! Look — look at all the land!"

His friend glanced at his face. "You have been listening to Caterham," he said.

"Using my eyes. Looking a little into the peace and order of the past we leave behind. This foul Food is the last shape of the Devil, still set as ever upon the ruin of our world. Think what the world must have been before our days, what it was still when our mothers bore us, and see it now! Think how these slopes once smiled under the golden harvest, how the hedges, full of sweet little flowers, parted the modest portion of this man from that, how the ruddy farmhouses dotted the land, and the voice of the church bells from yonder tower stilled the whole world each Sabbath into Sabbath prayer. And now, every year, still more and more of monstrous weeds, of monstrous vermin, and these giants growing all about us, straddling over us, blundering against all that is subtle and sacred in our world. Why here — Look!"

He pointed, and his friend's eyes followed the line of his white finger.

"One of their footmarks. See! It has smashed itself three feet deep and more, a pitfall for horse and rider, a trap to the unwary. There is a briar rose smashed to death; there is grass uprooted and a teazle crushed aside, a farmer's drain pipe snapped and the edge of the pathway broken down. Destruction! So they are doing all over the world, all over the order and decency the world of men has made. Trampling on all things. Reaction! What else?"

"But — reaction. What do you hope to do?"

"Stop it!" cried the young man from Oxford. "Before it is too late."

"But—"

"It's *not* impossible," cried the young man from Oxford, with a jump in his voice. "We want the firm hand; we want the subtle plan, the resolute mind. We have been mealy-mouthed and weak-handed; we have trifled and temporised and the Food has grown and grown. Yet even now—"

He stopped for a moment. "This is the echo of Caterham," said his friend.

"Even now. Even now there is hope — abundant hope, if only we

make sure of what we want and what we mean to destroy. The mass of people are with us, much more with us than they were a few years ago; the law is with us, the constitution and order of society, the spirit of the established religions, the customs and habits of mankind are with us — and against the Food. Why should we temporise? Why should we lie? We hate it, we don't want it; why then should we have it? Do you mean to just grizzle and obstruct passively and do nothing — till the sands are out?"

He stopped short and turned about. "Look at that grove of nettles there. In the midst of them are homes — deserted — where once clean families of simple men played out their honest lives!

"And there!" he swung round to where the young Cossars muttered to one another of their wrongs.

"Look at them! And I know their father, a brute, a sort of brute beast with an intolerant loud voice, a creature who has ran amuck in our all too merciful world for the last thirty years and more. An engineer! To him all that we hold dear and sacred is nothing. Nothing! The splendid traditions of our race and land, the noble institutions, the venerable order, the broad slow march from precedent to precedent that has made our English people great and this sunny island free — it is all an idle tale, told and done with. Some claptrap about the Future is worth all these sacred things…. The sort of man who would run a tramway over his mother's grave if he thought that was the cheapest line the tramway could take…. And you think to temporise, to make some scheme of compromise, that will enable you to live in your way while that — that machinery — lives in its. I tell you it is hopeless — hopeless. As well make treaties with a tiger! They want things monstrous — we want them sane and sweet. It is one thing or the other."

"But what can you do?"

"Much! All! Stop the Food! They are still scattered, these giants; still immature and disunited. Chain them, gag them, muzzle them. At any cost stop them. It is their world or ours! Stop the Food. Shut up these men who make it. Do anything to stop Cossar! You don't seem to remember — one generation — only one generation needs holding down, and then — Then we could level those mounds there, fill up their footsteps, take the ugly sirens from our church towers, smash

all our elephant guns, and turn our faces again to the old order, the ripe old civilisation for which the soul of man is fitted."

"It's a mighty effort."

"For a mighty end. And if we don't? Don't you see the prospect before us clear as day? Everywhere the giants will increase and multiply; everywhere they will make and scatter the Food. The grass will grow gigantic in our fields, the weeds in our hedges, the vermin in the thickets, the rats in the drains. More and more and more. This is only a beginning. The insect world will rise on us, the plant world, the very fishes in the sea, will swamp and drown our ships. Tremendous growths will obscure and hide our houses, smother our churches, smash and destroy all the order of our cities, and we shall become no more than a feeble vermin under the heels of the new race. Mankind will be swamped and drowned in things of its own begetting! And all for nothing! Size! Mere size! Enlargement and *da capo*. Already we go picking our way among the first beginnings of the coming time. And all we do is to say 'How inconvenient!' To grumble and do nothing. *No*!"

He raised his hand.

"Let them do the thing they have to do! So also will I. I am for Reaction — unstinted and fearless Reaction. Unless you mean to take this Food also, what else is there to do in all the world? We have trifled in the middle ways too long. You! Trifling in the middle ways is your habit, your circle of existence, your space and time. So, not I! I am against the Food, with all my strength and purpose against the Food."

He turned on his companion's grunt of dissent. "Where are you?"

"It's a complicated business—"

"Oh! — Driftwood!" said the young man from Oxford, very bitterly, with a fling of all his limbs. "The middle way is nothingness. It is one thing or the other. Eat or destroy. Eat or destroy! What else is there to do?"

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE GIANT LOVERS.

I.

Now it chanced in the days when Caterham was campaigning against the Boom-children before the General Election that was — amidst the most tragic and terrible circumstances — to bring him into power, that the giant Princess, that Serene Highness whose early nutrition had played so great a part in the brilliant career of Doctor Winkles, had come from the kingdom of her father to England, on an occasion that was deemed important. She was affianced for reasons of state to a certain Prince — and the wedding was to be made an event of international significance. There had arisen mysterious delays. Rumour and Imagination collaborated in the story and many things were said. There were suggestions of a recalcitrant Prince who declared he would not be made to look like a fool — at least to this extent. People sympathised with him. That is the most significant aspect of the affair.

Now it may seem a strange thing, but it is a fact that the giant Princess, when she came to England, knew of no other giants whatever. She had lived in a world where tact is almost a passion and reservations the air of one's life. They had kept the thing from her; they had hedged her about from sight or suspicion of any gigantic form, until her appointed coming to England was due. Until she met young Redwood she had no inkling that there was such a thing as another giant in the world.

In the kingdom of the father of the Princess there were wild wastes of upland and mountains where she had been accustomed to roam freely. She loved the sunrise and the sunset and all the great drama of the open heavens more than anything else in the world, but among a people at once so democratic and so vehemently loyal as the English her freedom was much restricted. People came in brakes, in excursion trains, in organised multitudes to see her; they would cycle long distances to stare at her, and it was necessary to rise betimes if

she would walk in peace. It was still near the dawn that morning when young Redwood came upon her.

The Great Park near the Palace where she lodged stretched, for a score of miles and more, west and south of the western palace gates. The chestnut trees of its avenues reached high above her head. Each one as she passed it seemed to proffer a more abundant wealth of blossom. For a time she was content with sight and scent, but at last she was won over by these offers, and set herself so busily to choose and pick that she did not perceive young Redwood until he was close upon her.

She moved among the chestnut trees, with the destined lover drawing near to her, unanticipated, unsuspected. She thrust her hands in among the branches, breaking them and gathering them. She was alone in the world. Then —

She looked up, and in that moment she was mated.

We must needs put our imaginations to his stature to see the beauty he saw. That unapproachable greatness that prevents our immediate sympathy with her did not exist for him. There she stood, a gracious girl, the first created being that had ever seemed a mate for him, light and slender, lightly clad, the fresh breeze of the dawn moulding the subtly folding robe upon her against the soft strong lines of her form, and with a great mass of blossoming chestnut branches in her hands. The collar of her robe opened to show the whiteness of her neck and a soft shadowed roundness that passed out of sight towards her shoulders. The breeze had stolen a strand or so of her hair too, and strained its red-tipped brown across her cheek. Her eyes were open blue, and her lips rested always in the promise of a smile as she reached among the branches.

She turned upon him with a start, saw him, and for a space they regarded one another. For her, the sight of him was so amazing, so incredible, as to be, for some moments at least, terrible. He came to her with the shock of a supernatural apparition; he broke all the established law of her world. He was a youth of one-and-twenty then, slenderly built, with his father's darkness and his father's gravity. He was clad in a sober soft brown leather, close-fitting easy garments, and in brown hose, that shaped him bravely. His head went uncovered in all weathers. They stood regarding one another — she

incredulously amazed, and he with his heart beating fast. It was a moment without a prelude, the cardinal meeting of their lives.

For him there was less surprise. He had been seeking her, and yet his heart beat fast. He came towards her, slowly, with his eyes upon her face.

"You are the Princess," he said. "My father has told me. You are the Princess who was given the Food of the Gods."

"I am the Princess — yes," she said, with eyes of wonder. "But — what are you?"

"I am the son of the man who made the Food of the Gods."

"The Food of the Gods!"

"Yes, the Food of the Gods."

"But—"

Her face expressed infinite perplexity.

"What? I don't understand. The Food of the Gods?"

"You have not heard?"

"The Food of the Gods! *No*!"

She found herself trembling violently. The colour left her face. "I did not know," she said. "Do you mean — ?"

He waited for her.

"Do you mean there are other — giants?"

He repeated, "Did you not know?"

And she answered, with the growing amazement of realisation, "*No!*"

The whole world and all the meaning of the world was changing for her. A branch of chestnut slipped from her hand. "Do you mean to say," she repeated stupidly, "that there are other giants in the world? That some food — ?"

He caught her amazement.

"You know nothing?" he cried. "You have never heard of us? You, whom the
Food has made akin to us!"

There was terror still in the eyes that stared at him. Her hand rose

towards her throat and fell again. She whispered, "*No*."

It seemed to her that she must weep or faint. Then in a moment she had rule over herself and she was speaking and thinking clearly. "All this has been kept from me," she said. "It is like a dream. I have dreamt — have dreamt such things. But waking — No. Tell me! Tell me! What are you? What is this Food of the Gods? Tell me slowly — and clearly. Why have they kept it from me, that I am not alone?"

II.

"Tell me," she said, and young Redwood, tremulous and excited, set himself to tell her — it was poor and broken telling for a time — of the Food of the Gods and the giant children who were scattered over the world.

You must figure them both, flushed and startled in their bearing; getting at one another's meaning through endless half-heard, half-spoken phrases, repeating, making perplexing breaks and new departures — a wonderful talk, in which she awakened from the ignorance of all her life. And very slowly it became clear to her that she was no exception to the order of mankind, but one of a scattered brotherhood, who had all eaten the Food and grown for ever out of the little limits of the folk beneath their feet. Young Redwood spoke of his father, of Cossar, of the Brothers scattered throughout the country, of the great dawn of wider meaning that had come at last into the history of the world. "We are in the beginning of a beginning," he said; "this world of theirs is only the prelude to the world the Food will make.

"My father believes — and I also believe — that a time will come when littleness will have passed altogether out of the world of man, — when giants shall go freely about this earth — their earth — doing continually greater and more splendid things. But that — that is to come. We are not even the first generation of that — we are the first experiments."

"And of these things," she said, "I knew nothing!"

"There are times when it seems to me almost as if we had come too soon. Some one, I suppose, had to come first. But the world was all unprepared for our coming and for the coming of all the lesser

great things that drew their greatness from the Food. There have been blunders; there have been conflicts. The little people hate our kind….

"They are hard towards us because they are so little…. And because our feet are heavy on the things that make their lives. But at any rate they hate us now; they will have none of us — only if we could shrink back to the common size of them would they begin to forgive….

"They are happy in houses that are prison cells to us; their cities are too small for us; we go in misery along their narrow ways; we cannot worship in their churches….

"We see over their walls and over their protections; we look inadvertently into their upper windows; we look over their customs; their laws are no more than a net about our feet….

"Every time we stumble we hear them shouting; every time we blunder against their limits or stretch out to any spacious act….

"Our easy paces are wild flights to them, and all they deem great and wonderful no more than dolls' pyramids to us. Their pettiness of method and appliance and imagination hampers and defeats our powers. There are no machines to the power of our hands, no helps to fit our needs. They hold our greatness in servitude by a thousand invisible bands. We are stronger, man for man, a hundred times, but we are disarmed; our very greatness makes us debtors; they claim the land we stand upon; they tax our ampler need of food and shelter, and for all these things we must toil with the tools these dwarfs can make us — and to satisfy their dwarfish fancies …

"They pen us in, in every way. Even to live one must cross their boundaries. Even to meet you here to-day I have passed a limit. All that is reasonable and desirable in life they make out of bounds for us. We may not go into the towns; we may not cross the bridges; we may not step on their ploughed fields or into the harbours of the game they kill. I am cut off now from all our Brethren except the three sons of Cossar, and even that way the passage narrows day by day. One could think they sought occasion against us to do some more evil thing …"

"But we are strong," she said.

"We should be strong — yes. We feel, all of us — you too I know must feel — that we have power, power to do great things, power

insurgent in us. But before we can do anything—”

He flung out a hand that seemed to sweep away a world.

“Though I thought I was alone in the world,” she said, after a pause, “I have thought of these things. They have taught me always that strength was almost a sin, that it was better to be little than great, that all true religion was to shelter the weak and little, encourage the weak and little, help them to multiply and multiply until at last they crawled over one another, to sacrifice all our strength in their cause. But … always I have doubted the thing they taught.”

“This life,” he said, “these bodies of ours, are not for dying.”

“No.”

“Nor to live in futility. But if we would not do that, it is already plain to all our Brethren a conflict must come. I know not what bitterness of conflict must presently come, before the little folks will suffer us to live as we need to live. All the Brethren have thought of that. Cossar, of whom I told you: he too has thought of that.”

“They are very little and weak.”

“In their way. But you know all the means of death are in their hands, and made for their hands. For hundreds of thousands of years these little people, whose world we invade, have been learning how to kill one another. They are very able at that. They are able in many ways. And besides, they can deceive and change suddenly…. I do not know…. There comes a conflict. You — you perhaps are different from us. For us, assuredly, the conflict comes…. The thing they call War. We know it. In a way we prepare for it. But you know — those little people! — we do not know how to kill, at least we do not want to kill—”

“Look,” she interrupted, and he heard a yelping horn.

He turned at the direction of her eyes, and found a bright yellow motor car, with dark goggled driver and fur-clad passengers, whooping, throbbing, and buzzing resentfully at his heel. He moved his foot, and the mechanism, with three angry snorts, resumed its fussy way towards the town. “Filling up the roadway!” floated up to him.

Then some one said, “Look! Did you see? There is the monster Princess over beyond the trees!” and all their goggled faces came round to stare.

“I say,” said another. “*That* won’t do …”

“All this,” she said, “is more amazing than I can tell.”

“That they should not have told you,” he said, and left his sentence incomplete.

“Until you came upon me, I had lived in a world where I was great — alone. I had made myself a life — for that. I had thought I was the victim of some strange freak of nature. And now my world has crumbled down, in half an hour, and I see another world, other conditions, wider possibilities — fellowship—”

“Fellowship,” he answered.

“I want you to tell me more yet, and much more,” she said. “You know this passes through my mind like a tale that is told. You even … In a day perhaps, or after several days, I shall believe in you. Now — Now I am dreaming…. Listen!”

The first stroke of a clock above the palace offices far away had penetrated to them. Each counted mechanically “Seven.”

“This,” she said, “should be the hour of my return. They will be taking the bowl of my coffee into the hall where I sleep. The little officials and servants — you cannot dream how grave they are — will be stirring about their little duties.”

“They will wonder … But I want to talk to you.”

She thought. “But I want to think too. I want now to think alone, and think out this change in things, think away the old solitude, and think you and those others into my world…. I shall go. I shall go back to-day to my place in the castle, and to-morrow, as the dawn comes, I shall come again — here.”

“I shall be here waiting for you.”

“All day I shall dream and dream of this new world you have given me.
Even now, I can scarcely believe—”

She took a step back and surveyed him from the feet to the face. Their eyes met and locked for a moment.

“Yes,” she said, with a little laugh that was half a sob. “You are real. But it is very wonderful! Do you think — indeed — ? Suppose to-morrow I come and find you — a pigmy like the others… Yes, I

must think. And so for to-day — as the little people do—”

She held out her hand, and for the first time they touched one another.
Their hands clasped firmly and their eyes met again.

“Good-bye,” she said, “for to-day. Good-bye! Good-bye, Brother Giant!”

He hesitated with some unspoken thing, and at last he answered her simply, “Good-bye.”

For a space they held each other’s hands, studying each the other’s face. And many times after they had parted, she looked back half doubtfully at him, standing still in the place where they had met….

She walked into her apartments across the great yard of the Palace like one who walks in a dream, with a vast branch of chestnut trailing from her hand.

III.

These two met altogether fourteen times before the beginning of the end. They met in the Great Park or on the heights and among the gorges of the rusty-roaded, heathery moorland, set with dusky pine-woods, that stretched to the south-west. Twice they met in the great avenue of chestnuts, and five times near the broad ornamental water the king, her great-grandfather, had made. There was a place where a great trim lawn, set with tall conifers, sloped graciously to the water’s edge, and there she would sit, and he would lie at her knees and look up in her face and talk, telling of all the things that had been, and of the work his father had set before him, and of the great and spacious dream of what the giant people should one day be. Commonly they met in the early dawn, but once they met there in the afternoon, and found presently a multitude of peering eavesdroppers about them, cyclists, pedestrians, peeping from the bushes, rustling (as sparrows will rustle about one in the London parks) amidst the dead leaves in the woods behind, gliding down the lake in boats towards a point of view, trying to get nearer to them and hear.

It was the first hint that offered of the enormous interest the countryside was taking in their meetings. And once — it was the seventh time, and it precipitated the scandal — they met out upon the breezy moorland under a clear moonlight, and talked in whispers there, for the night was warm and still.

Very soon they had passed from the realisation that in them and through them a new world of giantry shaped itself in the earth, from the contemplation of the great struggle between big and little, in which they were clearly destined to participate, to interests at once more personal and more spacious. Each time they met and talked and looked on one another, it crept a little more out of their subconscious being towards recognition, that something more dear and wonderful than friendship was between them, and walked between them and drew their hands together. And in a little while they came to the word itself and found themselves lovers, the Adam and Eve of a new race in the world.

They set foot side by side into the wonderful valley of love, with its deep and quiet places. The world changed about them with their changing mood, until presently it had become, as it were, a tabernacular beauty about their meetings, and the stars were no more than flowers of light beneath the feet of their love, and the dawn and sunset the coloured hangings by the way. They ceased to be beings of flesh and blood to one another and themselves; they passed into a bodily texture of tenderness and desire. They gave it first whispers and then silence, and drew close and looked into one another's moonlit and shadowy faces under the infinite arch of the sky. And the still black pine-trees stood about them like sentinels.

The beating steps of time were hushed into silence, and it seemed to them the universe hung still. Only their hearts were audible, beating. They seemed to be living together in a world where there is no death, and indeed so it was with them then. It seemed to them that they sounded, and indeed they sounded, such hidden splendours in the very heart of things as none have ever reached before. Even for mean and little souls, love is the revelation of splendours. And these were giant lovers who had eaten the Food of the Gods …

* * * * *

You may imagine the spreading consternation in this ordered world when it became known that the Princess who was affianced to the Prince, the Princess, Her Serene Highness! with royal blood in her veins! met, — frequently met, — the hypertrophied offspring of a common professor of chemistry, a creature of no rank, no position, no wealth, and talked to him as though there were no Kings and Princes, no order, no reverence — nothing but Giants and Pigmies in the world, talked to him and, it was only too certain, held him as her lover.

"If those newspaper fellows get hold of it!" gasped Sir Arthur Poodle Bootlick …

"I am told—" whispered the old Bishop of Frumps.

"New story upstairs," said the first footman, as he nibbled among the dessert things. "So far as I can make out this here giant Princess —"

"They say—" said the lady who kept the stationer's shop by the main entrance to the Palace, where the little Americans get their tickets for the State Apartments …

And then:

"We are authorised to deny—" said "Picaroon" in *Gossip*.

And so the whole trouble came out.

IV.

"They say that we must part," the Princess said to her lover.

"But why?" he cried. "What new folly have these people got into their heads?"

"Do you know," she asked, "that to love me — is high treason?"

"My dear," he cried; "but does it matter? What is their right — right without a shadow of reason — and their treason and their loyalty to us?"

"You shall hear," she said, and told him of the things that had been told to her.

"It was the queerest little man who came to me with a soft, beautifully modulated voice, a softly moving little gentleman who

sidled into the room like a cat and put his pretty white hand up so, whenever he had anything significant to say. He is bald, but not of course nakedly bald, and his nose and face are chubby rosy little things, and his beard is trimmed to a point in quite the loveliest way. He pretended to have emotions several times and made his eyes shine. You know he is quite a friend of the real royal family here, and he called me his dear young lady and was perfectly sympathetic even from the beginning. 'My dear young lady,' he said, 'you know — *you mustn't,'* several times, and then, 'You owe a duty.'"

"Where do they make such men?"

"He likes it," she said.

"But I don't see—"

"He told me serious things."

"You don't think," he said, turning on her abruptly, "that there's anything in the sort of thing he said?"

"There's something in it quite certainly," said she.

"You mean — ?"

"I mean that without knowing it we have been trampling on the most sacred conceptions of the little folks. We who are royal are a class apart. We are worshipped prisoners, processional toys. We pay for worship by losing — our elementary freedom. And I was to have married that Prince — You know nothing of him though. Well, a pigmy Prince. He doesn't matter…. It seems it would have strengthened the bonds between my country and another. And this country also was to profit. Imagine it! — strengthening the bonds!"

"And now?"

"They want me to go on with it — as though there was nothing between us two."

"Nothing!"

"Yes. But that isn't all. He said—"

"Your specialist in Tact?"

"Yes. He said it would be better for you, better for all the giants, if we two — abstained from conversation. That was how he put it."

"But what can they do if we don't?"

"He said you might have your freedom."

"I!"

“He said, with a stress, ‘My dear young lady, it would be better, it would be more dignified, if you parted, willingly.’ That was all he said. With a stress on willingly.”

“But — ! What business is it of these little wretches, where we love, how we love? What have they and their world to do with us?”

“They do not think that.”

“Of course,” he said, “you disregard all this.”

“It seems utterly foolish to me.”

“That their laws should fetter us! That we, at the first spring of life, should be tripped by their old engagements, their aimless institutions! Oh — ! We disregard it.”

“I am yours. So far — yes.”

“So far? Isn’t that all?”

“But they — If they want to part us—”

“What can they do?”

“I don’t know. What *can* they do?”

“Who cares what they can do, or what they will do? I am yours and you are mine. What is there more than that? I am yours and you are mine — for ever. Do you think I will stop for their little rules, for their little prohibitions, their scarlet boards indeed! — and keep from *you*?”

“Yes. But still, what can they do?”

“You mean,” he said, “what are we to do?”

“Yes.”

“We? We can go on.”

“But if they seek to prevent us?”

He clenched his hands. He looked round as if the little people were already coming to prevent them. Then turned away from her and looked about the world. “Yes,” he said. “Your question was the right one. What can they do?”

“Here in this little land,” she said, and stopped.
He seemed to survey it all. “They are everywhere.”

“But we might—”

“Whither?”

“We could go. We could swim the seas together. Beyond the seas

—”

“I have never been beyond the seas.”

“There are great and desolate mountains amidst which we should seem no more than little people, there are remote and deserted valleys, there are hidden lakes and snow-girdled uplands untrodden by the feet of men. *There*—”

“But to get there we must fight our way day after day through millions and millions of mankind.”

“It is our only hope. In this crowded land there is no fastness, no shelter. What place is there for us among these multitudes? They who are little can hide from one another, but where are we to hide? There is no place where we could eat, no place where we could sleep. If we fled — night and day they would pursue our footsteps.”

A thought came to him.

“There is one place,” he said, “even in this island.”

“Where?”

“The place our Brothers have made over beyond there. They have made great banks about their house, north and south and east and west; they have made deep pits and hidden places, and even now — one came over to me quite recently. He said — I did not altogether heed what he said then. But he spoke of arms. It may be — there — we should find shelter….

“For many days,” he said, after a pause, “I have not seen our Brothers… Dear! I have been dreaming, I have been forgetting! The days have passed, and I have done nothing but look to see you again … I must go to them and talk to them, and tell them of you and of all the things that hang over us. If they will help us, they can help us. Then indeed we might hope. I do not know how strong their place is, but certainly Cossar will have made it strong. Before all this — before you came to me, I remember now — there was trouble brewing. There was an election — when all the little people settle things, by counting heads. It must be over now. There were threats against all our race — against all our race, that is, but you. I must see our Brothers. I must tell them all that has happened between us, and all that threatens now.”

V.

He did not come to their next meeting until she had waited some time. They were to meet that day about midday in a great space of park that fitted into a bend of the river, and as she waited, looking ever southward under her hand, it came to her that the world was very still, that indeed it was broodingly still. And then she perceived that, spite of the lateness of the hour, her customary retinue of voluntary spies had failed her. Left and right, when she came to look, there was no one in sight, and there was never a boat upon the silver curve of the Thames. She tried to find a reason for this strange stillness in the world….

Then, a grateful sight for her, she saw young Redwood far away over a gap in the tree masses that bounded her view.

Immediately the trees hid him, and presently he was thrusting through them and in sight again. She could see there was something different, and then she saw that he was hurrying unusually and then that he limped. He gestured to her, and she walked towards him. His face became clearer, and she saw with infinite concern that he winced at every stride.

She ran towards him, her mind full of questions and vague fear. He drew near to her and spoke without a greeting.

"Are we to part?" he panted.

"No," she answered. "Why? What is the matter?"

"But if we do not part — ! It is *now*."

"What is the matter?"

"I do not want to part," he said. "Only—" He broke off abruptly to ask, "You will not part from me?"

She met his eyes with a steadfast look. "What has happened?" she pressed.

"Not for a time?"

"What time?"

"Years perhaps."

"Part! No!"

"You have thought?" he insisted.

"I will not part." She took his hand. "If this meant death, *now*, I would not let you go."

"If it meant death," he said, and she felt his grip upon her fingers.

He looked about him as if he feared to see the little people coming

as he spoke. And then: “It may mean death.”

“Now tell me,” she said.

“They tried to stop my coming.”

“How?”

“And as I came out of my workshop where I make the Food of the Gods for the Cossars to store in their camp, I found a little officer of police — a man in blue with white clean gloves — who beckoned me to stop. ‘This way is closed!’ said he. I thought little of that; I went round my workshop to where another road runs west, and there was another officer. ‘This road is closed!’ he said, and added: ‘All the roads are closed!’”

“And then?”

“I argued with him a little. ‘They are public roads!’ I said.

“‘That’s it,’ said he. ‘You spoil them for the public.’

“‘Very well,’ said I, ‘I’ll take the fields,’ and then, up leapt others from behind a hedge and said, ‘These fields are private.’

“‘Curse your public and private,’ I said, ‘I’m going to my Princess,’ and I stooped down and picked him up very gently — kicking and shouting — and put him out of my way. In a minute all the fields about me seemed alive with running men. I saw one on horseback galloping beside me and reading something as he rode — shouting it. He finished and turned and galloped away from me — head down. I couldn’t make it out. And then behind me I heard the crack of guns.”

“Guns!”

“Guns — just as they shoot at the rats. The bullets came through the air with a sound like things tearing: one stung me in the leg.”

“And you?”

“Came on to you here and left them shouting and running and shooting behind me. And now—”

“Now?”

“It is only the beginning. They mean that we shall part. Even now they are coming after me.”

“We will not.”

“No. But if we will not part — then you must come with me to our Brothers.”

“Which way?” she said.

“To the east. Yonder is the way my pursuers will be coming. This then is the way we must go. Along this avenue of trees. Let me go first, so that if they are waiting—”

He made a stride, but she had seized his arm.

“No,” cried she. “I come close to you, holding you. Perhaps I am royal, perhaps I am sacred. If I hold you — Would God we could fly with my arms about you! — it may be, they will not shoot at you—”

She clasped his shoulder and seized his hand as she spoke; she pressed herself nearer to him. “It may be they will not shoot you,” she repeated, and with a sudden passion of tenderness he took her into his arms and kissed her cheek. For a space he held her.

“Even if it is death,” she whispered.

She put her hands about his neck and lifted her face to his.

“Dearest, kiss me once more.”

He drew her to him. Silently they kissed one another on the lips, and for another moment clung to one another. Then hand in hand, and she striving always to keep her body near to his, they set forward if haply they might reach the camp of refuge the sons of Cossar had made, before the pursuit of the little people overtook them.

And as they crossed the great spaces of the park behind the castle there came horsemen galloping out from among the trees and vainly seeking to keep pace with their giant strides. And presently ahead of them were houses, and men with guns running out of the houses. At the sight of that, though he sought to go on and was even disposed to fight and push through, she made him turn aside towards the south.

As they fled a bullet whipped by them overhead.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

YOUNG CADDLES IN LONDON.

I.

All unaware of the trend of events, unaware of the laws that were closing in upon all the Brethren, unaware indeed that there lived a Brother for him on the earth, young Caddles chose this time to come out of his chalk pit and see the world. His brooding came at last to that. There was no answer to all his questions in Cheasing Eyebright; the new Vicar was less luminous even than the old, and the riddle of his pointless labour grew at last to the dimensions of exasperation. "Why should I work in this pit day after day?" he asked. "Why should I walk within bounds and be refused all the wonders of the world beyond there? What have I done, to be condemned to this?"

And one day he stood up, straightened his back, and said in a loud voice, "No!

"I won't," he said, and then with great vigour cursed the pit.

Then, having few words, he sought to express his thought in acts. He took a truck half filled with chalk, lifted it, and flung it, smash, against another. Then he grasped a whole row of empty trucks and spun them down a bank. He sent a huge boulder of chalk bursting among them, and then ripped up a dozen yards of rail with a mighty plunge of his foot. So he commenced the conscientious wrecking of the pit.

"Work all my days," he said, "at this!"

It was an astonishing five minutes for the little geologist he had, in his preoccupation, overlooked. This poor little creature having dodged two boulders by a hairbreadth, got out by the westward corner and fled athwart the hill, with flapping rucksack and twinkling knicker-bockered legs, leaving a trail of Cretaceous echinoderms behind him; while young Caddles, satisfied with the destruction he had achieved, came striding out to fulfil his purpose in the world.

"Work in that old pit, until I die and rot and stink!… What worm did they think was living in my giant body? Dig chalk for God

knows what foolish purpose! Not *I!*"

The trend of road and railway perhaps, or mere chance it was, turned his face to London, and thither he came striding; over the Downs and athwart the meadows through the hot afternoon, to the infinite amazement of the world. It signified nothing to him that torn posters in red and white bearing various names flapped from every wall and barn; he knew nothing of the electoral revolution that had flung Caterham, "Jack the Giant-killer," into power. It signified nothing to him that every police station along his route had what was known as Caterham's ukase upon its notice board that afternoon, proclaiming that no giant, no person whatever over eight feet in height, should go more than five miles from his "place of location" without a special permission. It signified nothing to him that on his wake belated police officers, not a little relieved to find themselves belated, shook warning handbills at his retreating back. He was going to see what the world had to show him, poor incredulous blockhead, and he did not mean that occasional spirited persons shouting "Hi!" at him should stay his course. He came on down by Rochester and Greenwich towards an ever-thickening aggregation of houses, walking rather slowly now, staring about him and swinging his huge chopper.

People in London had heard something of him before, how that he was idiotic but gentle, and wonderfully managed by Lady Wondershoot's agent and the Vicar; how in his dull way he revered these authorities and was grateful to them for their care of him, and so forth. So that when they learnt from the newspaper placards that afternoon that he also was "on strike," the thing appeared to many of them as a deliberate, concerted act.

"They mean to try our strength," said the men in the trains going home from business.

"Lucky we have Caterham."

"It's in answer to his proclamation."

The men in the clubs were better informed. They clustered round the tape or talked in groups in their smoking-rooms.

"He has no weapons. He would have gone to Sevenoaks if he had been put up to it."

"Caterham will handle him…."

The shopmen told their customers. The waiters in restaurants snatched a moment for an evening paper between the courses. The cabmen read it immediately after the betting news….

The placards of the chief government evening paper were conspicuous with "Grasping the Nettle." Others relied for effect on: "Giant Redwood continues to meet the Princess." The *Echo* struck a line of its own with: "Rumoured Revolt of Giants in the North of England. The Sunderland Giants start for Scotland." The, *Westminster Gazette* sounded its usual warning note. "Giants Beware," said the *Westminster Gazette*, and tried to make a point out of it that might perhaps serve towards uniting the Liberal party — at that time greatly torn between seven intensely egotistical leaders. The later newspapers dropped into uniformity. "The Giant in the New Kent Road," they proclaimed.

"What I want to know," said the pale young man in the tea shop, "is why we aren't getting any news of the young Cossars. You'd think they'd be in it most of all …"

"They tell me there's another of them young giants got loose," said the barmaid, wiping out a glass. "I've always said they was dangerous things to 'ave about. Right away from the beginning … It ought to be put a stop to. Any'ow, I 'ope 'e won't come along 'ere."

"I'd like to 'ave a look at 'im," said the young man at the bar recklessly, and added, "I *seen* the Princess."

"D'you think they'll 'urt 'im?" said the barmaid.

"May 'ave to," said the young man at the bar, finishing his glass.

Amidst a hum of ten million such sayings young Caddles came to London…

II.

I think of young Caddles always as he was seen in the New Kent Road, the sunset warm upon his perplexed and staring face. The Road was thick with its varied traffic, omnibuses, trams, vans, carts, trolleys, cyclists, motors, and a marvelling crowd — loafers, women, nurse-maids, shopping women, children, venturesome hobble-dehoys — gathered behind his gingerly moving feet. The hoardings were untidy everywhere with the tattered election paper. A babblement of

voices surged about him. One sees the customers and shopmen crowding in the doorways of the shops, the faces that came and went at the windows, the little street boys running and shouting, the policemen taking it all quite stiffly and calmly, the workmen knocking off upon scaffoldings, the seething miscellany of the little folks. They shouted to him, vague encouragement, vague insults, the imbecile catchwords of the day, and he stared down at them, at such a multitude of living creatures as he had never before imagined in the world.

Now that he had fairly entered London he had had to slacken his pace more and more, the little folks crowded so mightily upon him. The crowd grew denser at every step, and at last, at a corner where two great ways converged, he came to a stop, and the multitude flowed about him and closed him in.

There he stood, with his feet a little apart, his back to a big corner gin palace that towered twice his height and ended In a sky sign, staring down at the pigmies and wondering — trying, I doubt not, to collate it all with the other things of his life, with the valley among the downlands, the nocturnal lovers, the singing in the church, the chalk he hammered daily, and with instinct and death and the sky, trying to see it all together coherent and significant. His brows were knit. He put up his huge paw to scratch his coarse hair, and groaned aloud.

"I don't see It," he said.

His accent was unfamiliar. A great babblement went across the open space — a babblement amidst which the gongs of the trams, ploughing their obstinate way through the mass, rose like red poppies amidst corn. "What did he say?" "Said he didn't see." "Said, where is the sea?" "Said, where is a seat?" "He wants a seat." "Can't the brasted fool sit on a 'ouse or somethin'?"

"What are ye for, ye swarming little people? What are ye all doing, what are ye all for?

"What are ye doing up here, ye swarming little people, while I'm a-cuttin' chalk for ye, down in the chalk pits there?"

His queer voice, the voice that had been so bad for school discipline at Cheasing Eyebright, smote the multitude to silence while it sounded and splashed them all to tumult at the end. Some wit

was audible screaming “Speech, speech!” “What’s he saying?” was the burthen of the public mind, and an opinion was abroad that he was drunk. “Hi, hi, hi,” bawled the omnibus-drivers, threading a dangerous way. A drunken American sailor wandered about tearfully inquiring, “What’s he want anyhow?” A leathery-faced rag-dealer upon a little pony-drawn cart soared up over the tumult by virtue of his voice. “Garn ‘ome, you Brasted Giant!” he brawled, “Garn ‘Ome! You Brasted Great Dangerous Thing! Can’t you see you’re a-frightening the ‘orses? Go *‘ome* with you! ‘Asn’t any one ‘ad the sense to tell you the law?” And over all this uproar young Caddles stared, perplexed, expectant, saying no more.

Down a side road came a little string of solemn policemen, and threaded itself ingeniously into the traffic. “Stand back,” said the little voices; “keep moving, please.”

Young Caddles became aware of a little dark blue figure thumping at his shin. He looked down, and perceived two white hands gesticulating. “*What*?” he said, bending forward.

“Can’t stand about here,” shouted the inspector.

“No! You can’t stand about here,” he repeated.

“But where am I to go?”

“Back to your village. Place of location. Anyhow, now — you’ve got to move on. You’re obstructing the traffic.”

“What traffic?”

“Along the road.”

“But where is it going? Where does it come from? What does it mean? They’re all round me. What do they want? What are they doin’? I want to understand. I’m tired of cuttin’ chalk and bein’ all alone. What are they doin’ for me while I’m a-cuttin’ chalk? I may just as well understand here and now as anywhere.”

“Sorry. But we aren’t here to explain things of that sort. I must arst you to move on.”

“Don’t you know?”

“I must arst you to move on — *if* you please … I’d strongly advise you to get off ‘ome. We’ve ‘ad no special instructions yet — but it’s against the law … Clear away there. Clear away.”

The pavement to his left became invitingly bare, and young Caddles went slowly on his way. But now his tongue was loosened.

“I don’t understand,” he muttered. “I don’t understand.” He would appeal brokenly to the changing crowd that ever trailed beside him and behind. “I didn’t know there were such places as this. What are all you people doing with yourselves? What’s it all for? What is it all for, and where do I come in?”

He had already begotten a new catchword. Young men of wit and spirit addressed each other in this manner, “Ullo ‘Arry O’Cock. Wot’s it all *for*? Eh? Wot’s it all bloomin’ well *for*?”

To which there sprang up a competing variety of repartees, for the most part impolite. The most popular and best adapted for general use appears to have been “*Shut* it,” or, in a voice of scornful detachment— “*Garn!*”

There were others almost equally popular.

III.

What was he seeking? He wanted something the pigmy world did not give, some end which the pigmy world prevented his attaining, prevented even his seeing clearly, which he was never to see clearly. It was the whole gigantic social side of this lonely dumb monster crying out for his race, for the things akin to him, for something he might love and something he might serve, for a purpose he might comprehend and a command he could obey. And, you know, all this was *dumb*, raged dumbly within him, could not even, had he met a fellow giant, have found outlet and expression in speech. All the life he knew was the dull round of the village, all the speech he knew was the talk of the cottage, that failed and collapsed at the bare outline of his least gigantic need. He knew nothing of money, this monstrous simpleton, nothing of trade, nothing of the complex pretences upon which the social fabric of the little folks was built. He needed, he needed — Whatever he needed, he never found his need.

All through the day and the summer night he wandered, growing hungry but as yet untired, marking the varied traffic of the different streets, the inexplicable businesses of all these infinitesimal beings. In the aggregate it had no other colour than confusion for him….

He is said to have plucked a lady from her carriage in Kensington, a lady in evening dress of the smartest sort, to have scrutinised her

closely, train and shoulder blades, and to have replaced her — a little carelessly — with the profoundest sigh. For that I cannot vouch. For an hour or so he watched people fighting for places in the omnibuses at the end of Piccadilly. He was seen looming over Kennington Oval for some moments in the afternoon, but when he saw these dense thousands were engaged with the mystery of cricket and quite regardless of him he went his way with a groan.

He came back to Piccadilly Circus between eleven and twelve at night and found a new sort of multitude. Clearly they were very intent: full of things they, for inconceivable reasons, might do, and of others they might not do. They stared at him and jeered at him and went their way. The cabmen, vulture-eyed, followed one another continually along the edge of the swarming pavement. People emerged from the restaurants or entered them, grave, intent, dignified, or gently and agreeably excited or keen and vigilant — beyond the cheating of the sharpest waiter born. The great giant, standing at his corner, peered at them all. "What is it all for?" he murmured in a mournful vast undertone, "What is it all for? They are all so earnest. What is it I do not understand?"

And none of them seemed to see, as he could do, the drink-sodden wretchedness of the painted women at the corner, the ragged misery that sneaked along the gutters, the infinite futility of all this employment. The infinite futility! None of them seemed to feel the shadow of that giant's need, that shadow of the future, that lay athwart their paths…

Across the road high up mysterious letters flamed and went, that might, could he have read them, have measured for him the dimensions of human interest, have told him of the fundamental needs and features of life as the little folks conceived it. First would come a flaming

T;

Then U would follow,

TU;

Then P,

TUP;

Until at last there stood complete, across the sky, this cheerful message to all who felt the burthen of life's earnestness:

TUPPER'S TONIC WINE FOR VIGOUR.

Snap! and it had vanished into night, to be followed in the same slow development by a second universal solicitude:

BEAUTY SOAP.

Not, you remark, mere cleansing chemicals, but something, as they say, "ideal;" and then, completing the tripod of the little life:

TANKER'S YELLOW PILLS.

After that there was nothing for it but Tupper again, in naming crimson letters, snap, snap, across the void.

T U P P….

Early in the small hours it would seem that young Caddles came to the shadowy quiet of Regent's Park, stepped over the railings and lay down on a grassy slope near where the people skate in winter time, and there he slept an hour or so. And about six o'clock in the morning, he was talking to a draggled woman he had found sleeping in a ditch near Hampstead Heath, asking her very earnestly what she thought she was for….

IV.

The wandering of Caddles about London came to a head on the second day in the morning. For then his hunger overcame him. He hesitated where the hot-smelling loaves were being tossed into a cart, and then very quietly knelt down and commenced robbery. He emptied the cart while the baker's man fled for the police, and then

his great hand came into the shop and cleared counter and cases. Then with an armful, still eating, he went his way looking for another shop to go on with his meal. It happened to be one of those seasons when work is scarce and food dear, and the crowd in that quarter was sympathetic even with a giant who took the food they all desired. They applauded the second phase of his meal, and laughed at his stupid grimace at the policeman.

"I woff hungry," he said, with his mouth full.

"Brayvo!" cried the crowd. "Brayvo!"

Then when he was beginning his third baker's shop, he was stopped by half a dozen policemen hammering with truncheons at his shins. "Look here, my fine giant, you come along o' me," said the officer in charge. "You ain't allowed away from home like this. You come off home with me." They did their best to arrest him. There was a trolley, I am told, chasing up and down streets at that time, bearing rolls of chain and ship's cable to play the part of handcuffs in that great arrest. There was no intention then of killing him. "He is no party to the plot," Caterham had said. "I will not have innocent blood upon my hands." And added: " — until everything else has been tried."

At first Caddles did not understand the import of these attentions. When he did, he told the policemen not to be fools, and set off in great strides that left them all behind. The bakers' shops had been in the Harrow Road, and he went through canal London to St. John's Wood, and sat down in a private garden there to pick his teeth and be speedily assailed by another posse of constables.

"You lea' me alone," he growled, and slouched through the gardens — spoiling several lawns and kicking down a fence or so, while the energetic little policemen followed him up, some through the gardens, some along the road in front of the houses. Here there were one or two with guns, but they made no use of them. When he came out into the Edgware Road there was a new note and a new movement in the crowd, and a mounted policeman rode over his foot and got upset for his pains.

"You lea' me alone," said Caddles, facing the breathless crowd. "I ain't done anything to you." At that time he was unarmed, for he had left his chalk chopper in Regent's Park. But now, poor wretch, he

seems to have felt the need of some weapon. He turned back towards the goods yard of the Great Western Railway, wrenched up the standard of a tall arc light, a formidable mace for him, and flung it over his shoulder. And finding the police still turning up to pester him, he went back along the Edgware Road, towards Cricklewood, and struck off sullenly to the north.

He wandered as far as Waltham, and then turned back westward and then again towards London, and came by the cemeteries and over the crest of Highgate about midday into view of the greatness of the city again. He turned aside and sat down in a garden, with his back to a house that overlooked all London. He was breathless, and his face was lowering, and now the people no longer crowded upon him as they had done when first he came to London, but lurked in the adjacent garden, and peeped from cautious securities. They knew by now the thing was grimmer than they had thought. "Why can't they lea' me alone?" growled young Caddles. "I *mus'* eat. Why can't they lea' me alone?"

He sat with a darkling face, gnawing at his knuckles and looking down over London. All the fatigue, worry, perplexity, and impotent wrath of his wanderings was coming to a head in him. "They mean nothing," he whispered. "They mean nothing. And they *won't* let me alone, and they *will* get in my way." And again, over and over to himself, "Meanin' nothing.

"Ugh! the little people!"

He bit harder at his knuckles and his scowl deepened. "Cuttin' chalk for 'em," he whispered. "And all the world is theirs! *I* don't come in — nowhere."

Presently with a spasm of sick anger he saw the now familiar form of a policeman astride the garden wall.

"Lea' me alone," grunted the giant. "Lea' me alone."

"I got to do my duty," said the little policeman, with a face that was white and resolute.

"You lea' me alone. I got to live as well as you. I got to think. I got to eat. You lea' me alone."

"It's the Law," said the little policeman, coming no further. "We never made the Law."

"Nor me," said young Caddles. "You little people made all that

before I was born. You and your Law! What I must and what I mustn't! No food for me to eat unless I work a slave, no rest, no shelter, nothin', and you tell me—"

"I ain't got no business with that," said the policeman. "I'm not one to argue. All I got to do is to carry out the Law." And he brought his second leg over the wall and seemed disposed to get down. Other policemen appeared behind him.

"I got no quarrel with *you* — mind," said young Caddles, with his grip tight upon his huge mace of iron, his face pale, and a lank explanatory great finger to the policeman. "I got no quarrel with you. But — *You lea' me alone."*

The policeman tried to be calm and commonplace, with a monstrous tragedy clear before his eyes. "Give me the proclamation," he said to some unseen follower, and a little white paper was handed to him.

"Lea' me alone," said Caddles, scowling, tense, and drawn together.

"This means," said the policeman before he read, "go 'ome. Go 'ome to your chalk pit. If not, you'll be hurt."

Caddles gave an inarticulate growl.

Then when the proclamation had been read, the officer made a sign. Four men with rifles came into view and took up positions of affected ease along the wall. They wore the uniform of the rat police. At the sight of the guns, young Caddles blazed into anger. He remembered the sting of the Wreckstone farmers' shot guns. "You going to shoot off those at me?" he said, pointing, and it seemed to the officer he must be afraid.

"If you don't march back to your pit—"

Then in an instant the officer had slung himself back over the wall, and sixty feet above him the great electric standard whirled down to his death. Bang, bang, bang, went the heavy guns, and smash! the shattered wall, the soil and subsoil of the garden flew. Something flew with it, that left red drops on one of the shooter's hands. The riflemen dodged this way and that and turned valiantly to fire again. But young Caddles, already shot twice through the body, had spun about to find who it was had hit him so heavily in the back. Bang! Bang! He had a vision of houses and greenhouses and

gardens, of people dodging at windows, the whole swaying fearfully and mysteriously. He seems to have made three stumbling strides, to have raised and dropped his huge mace, and to have clutched his chest. He was stung and wrenched by pain.

What was this, warm and wet, on his hand?

One man peering from a bedroom window saw his face, saw him staring, with a grimace of weeping dismay, at the blood upon his hand, and then his knees bent under him, and he came crashing to the earth, the first of the giant nettles to fall to Caterham's resolute clutch, the very last that he had reckoned would come into his hand.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

REDWOOD'S TWO DAYS.

I.

So soon as Caterham knew the moment for grasping his nettle had come, he took the law into his own hands and sent to arrest Cossar and Redwood.

Redwood was there for the taking. He had been undergoing an operation in the side, and the doctors had kept all disturbing things from him until his convalescence was assured. Now they had released him. He was just out of bed, sitting in a fire-warmed room, with a heap of newspapers about him, reading for the first time of the agitation that had swept the country into the hands of Caterham, and of the trouble that was darkening over the Princess and his son. It was in the morning of the day when young Caddles died, and when the policeman tried to stop young Redwood on his way to the Princess. The latest newspapers Redwood had did but vaguely prefigure these imminent things. He was re-reading these first adumbrations of disaster with a sinking heart, reading the shadow of death more and more perceptibly into them, reading to occupy his mind until further news should come. When the officers followed the servant into his room, he looked up eagerly.

"I thought it was an early evening paper," he said. Then standing up, and with a swift change of manner: "What's this?"

After that Redwood had no news of anything for two days.

They had come with a vehicle to take him away, but when it became evident that he was ill, it was decided to leave him for a day or so until he could be safely removed, and his house was taken over by the police and converted into a temporary prison. It was the same house in which Giant Redwood had been born and in which Herakleophorbia had for the first time been given to a human being, and Redwood had now been a widower and had lived alone in it eight years.

He had become an iron-grey man, with a little pointed grey beard

and still active brown eyes. He was slender and soft-voiced, as he had ever been, but his features had now that indefinable quality that comes of brooding over mighty things. To the arresting officer his appearance was in impressive contrast to the enormity of his offences. “Here’s this feller,” said the officer in command, to his next subordinate, “has done his level best to bust up everything, and ‘e’s got a face like a quiet country gentleman; and here’s Judge Hangbrow keepin’ everything nice and in order for every one, and ‘e’s got a ‘ead like a ‘og. Then their manners! One all consideration and the other snort and grunt. Which just shows you, doesn’t it, that appearances aren’t to be gone upon, whatever else you do.”

But his praise of Redwood’s consideration was presently dashed. The officers found him troublesome at first until they had made it clear that it was useless for him to ask questions or beg for papers. They made a sort of inspection of his study indeed, and cleared away even the papers he had. Redwood’s voice was high and expostulatory. “But don’t you see,” he said over and over again, “it’s my Son, my only Son, that is in this trouble. It isn’t the Food I care for, but my Son.”

“I wish indeed I could tell you, Sir,” said the officer. “But our orders are strict.”

“Who gave the orders?” cried Redwood.

“Ah! *that*, Sir—” said the officer, and moved towards the door….

“‘E’s going up and down ‘is room,” said the second officer, when his superior came down. “That’s all right. He’ll walk it off a bit.”

“I hope ‘e will,” said the chief officer. “The fact is I didn’t see it in that light before, but this here Giant what’s been going on with the Princess, you know, is this man’s son.”

The two regarded one another and the third policeman for a space.

“Then it is a bit rough on him,” the third policeman said.

It became evident that Redwood had still imperfectly apprehended the fact that an iron curtain had dropped between him and the outer world. They heard him go to the door, try the handle and rattle the lock, and then the voice of the officer who was stationed on the landing telling him it was no good to do that. Then afterwards they heard him at the windows and saw the men outside looking up. “It’s no good that way,” said the second officer. Then Redwood began

upon the bell. The senior officer went up and explained very patiently that it could do no good to ring the bell like that, and if it was rung for nothing now it might have to be disregarded presently when he had need of something. “Any reasonable attendance, Sir,” the officer said. “But if you ring it just by way of protest we shall be obliged, Sir, to disconnect.”

The last word the officer heard was Redwood’s high-pitched, “But at least you might tell me if my Son—”

II.

After that Redwood spent most of his time at the windows.

But the windows offered him little of the march of events outside. It was a quiet street at all times, and that day it was unusually quiet: scarcely a cab, scarcely a tradesman’s cart passed all that morning. Now and then men went by — without any distinctive air of events — now and then a little group of children, a nursemaid and a woman going shopping, and so forth. They came on to the stage right or left, up or down the street, with an exasperating suggestion of indifference to any concerns more spacious than their own; they would discover the police-guarded house with amazement and exit in the opposite direction, where the great trusses of a giant hydrangea hung across the pavement, staring back or pointing. Now and then a man would come and ask one of the policemen a question and get a curt reply …

Opposite the houses seemed dead. A housemaid appeared once at a bedroom window and stared for a space, and it occurred to Redwood to signal to her. For a time she watched his gestures as if with interest and made a vague response to them, then looked over her shoulder suddenly and turned and went away. An old man hobbled out of Number 37 and came down the steps and went off to the right, altogether without looking up. For ten minutes the only occupant of the road was a cat….

With such events that interminable momentous morning lengthened out.

About twelve there came a bawling of newsvendors from the adjacent road; but it passed. Contrary to their wont they left Redwood’s street alone, and a suspicion dawned upon him that the

police were guarding the end of the street. He tried to open the window, but this brought a policeman into the room forthwith….

The clock of the parish church struck twelve, and after an abyss of time — one.

They mocked him with lunch.

He ate a mouthful and tumbled the food about a little in order to get it taken away, drank freely of whisky, and then took a chair and went back to the window. The minutes expanded into grey immensities, and for a time perhaps he slept….

He woke with a vague impression of remote concussions. He perceived a rattling of the windows like the quiver of an earthquake, that lasted for a minute or so and died away. Then after a silence it returned…. Then it died away again. He fancied it might be merely the passage of some heavy vehicle along the main road. What else could it be?

After a time he began to doubt whether he had heard this sound.

He began to reason interminably with himself. Why, after all, was he seized? Caterham had been in office two days — just long enough — to grasp his Nettle! Grasp his Nettle! Grasp his Giant Nettle! The refrain once started, sang through his mind, and would not be dismissed.

What, after all, could Caterham do? He was a religious man. He was bound in a sort of way by that not to do violence without a cause.

Grasp his Nettle! Perhaps, for example, the Princess was to be seized and sent abroad. There might be trouble with his son. In which case — ! But why had he been arrested? Why was it necessary to keep him in ignorance of a thing like that? The thing suggested — something more extensive.

Perhaps, for example — they meant to lay all the giants by the heels! They were all to be arrested together. There had been hints of that in the election speeches. And then?

No doubt they had got Cossar also?

Caterham was a religious man. Redwood clung to that. The back of his mind was a black curtain, and on that curtain there came and went a word — a word written in letters of fire. He struggled perpetually against that word. It was always as it were beginning to

get written on the curtain and never getting completed.

He faced it at last. “Massacre!” There was the word in its full brutality.

No! No! No! It was impossible! Caterham was a religious man, a civilised man. And besides after all these years, after all these hopes!

Redwood sprang up; he paced the room. He spoke to himself; he shouted.

“*No!*”

Mankind was surely not so mad as that — surely not! It was impossible, it was incredible, it could not be. What good would it do to kill the giant human when the gigantic in all the lower things had now inevitably come? They could not be so mad as that! “I must dismiss such an idea,” he said aloud; “dismiss such an idea! Absolutely!”

He pulled up short. What was that?

Certainly the windows had rattled. He went to look out into the street. Opposite he saw the instant confirmation of his ears. At a bedroom at Number 35 was a woman, towel in hand, and at the dining-room of Number 37 a man was visible behind a great vase of hypertrophied maidenhair fern, both staring out and up, both disquieted and curious. He could see now too, quite clearly, that the policeman on the pavement had heard it also. The thing was not his imagination.

He turned to the darkling room.

“Guns,” he said.

He brooded.

“Guns?”

They brought him in strong tea, such as he was accustomed to have. It was evident his housekeeper had been taken into consultation. After drinking it, he was too restless to sit any longer at the window, and he paced the room. His mind became more capable of consecutive thought.

The room had been his study for four-and-twenty years. It had been furnished at his marriage, and all the essential equipment dated from then, the large complex writing-desk, the rotating chair, the easy chair at the fire, the rotating bookcase, the fixture of indexed pigeon-holes that filled the further recess. The vivid Turkey carpet,

the later Victorian rugs and curtains had mellowed now to a rich dignity of effect, and copper and brass shone warm about the open fire. Electric lights had replaced the lamp of former days; that was the chief alteration in the original equipment. But among these things his connection with the Food had left abundant traces. Along one wall, above the dado, ran a crowded array of black-framed photographs and photogravures, showing his son and Cossar's sons and others of the Boom-children at various ages and amidst various surroundings. Even young Caddles' vacant visage had its place in that collection. In the corner stood a sheaf of the tassels of gigantic meadow grass from Cheasing Eyebright, and on the desk there lay three empty poppy heads as big as hats. The curtain rods were grass stems. And the tremendous skull of the great hog of Oakham hung, a portentous ivory overmantel, with a Chinese jar in either eye socket, snout down above the fire….

It was to the photographs that Redwood went, and in particular to the photographs of his son.

They brought back countless memories of things that had passed out of his mind, of the early days of the Food, of Bensington's timid presence, of his cousin Jane, of Cossar and the night work at the Experimental Farm. These things came to him now very little and bright and distinct, like things seen through a telescope on a sunny day. And then there was the giant nursery, the giant childhood, the young giant's first efforts to speak, his first clear signs of affection.

Guns?

It flowed in on him, irresistibly, overwhelmingly, that outside there, outside this accursed silence and mystery, his son and Cossar's sons, and all these glorious first-fruits of a greater age were even now — fighting. Fighting for life! Even now his son might be in some dismal quandary, cornered, wounded, overcome….

He swung away from the pictures and went up and down the room gesticulating. "It cannot be," he cried, "it cannot be. It cannot end like that!"

"What was that?"

He stopped, stricken rigid.

The trembling of the windows had begun again, and then had come a thud — a vast concussion that shook the house. The

concussion seemed to last for an age. It must have been very near. For a moment it seemed that something had struck the house above him — an enormous impact that broke into a tinkle of falling glass, and then a stillness that ended at last with a minute clear sound of running feet in the street below.

Those feet released him from his rigor. He turned towards the window, and saw it starred and broken.

His heart beat high with a sense of crisis, of conclusive occurrence, of release. And then again, his realisation of impotent confinement fell about him like a curtain!

He could see nothing outside except that the small electric lamp opposite was not lighted; he could hear nothing after the first suggestion of a wide alarm. He could add nothing to interpret or enlarge that mystery except that presently there came a reddish fluctuating brightness in the sky towards the south-east.

This light waxed and waned. When it waned he doubted if it had ever waxed. It had crept upon him very gradually with the darkling. It became the predominant fact in his long night of suspense. Sometimes it seemed to him it had the quiver one associates with dancing flames, at others he fancied it was no more than the normal reflection of the evening lights. It waxed and waned through the long hours, and only vanished at last when it was submerged altogether under the rising tide of dawn. Did it mean — ? What could it mean? Almost certainly it was some sort of fire, near or remote, but he could not even tell whether it was smoke or cloud drift that streamed across the sky. But about one o'clock there began a flickering of searchlights athwart that ruddy tumult, a flickering that continued for the rest of the night. That too might mean many things? What could it mean? What did it mean? Just this stained unrestful sky he had and the suggestion of a huge explosion to occupy his mind. There came no further sounds, no further running, nothing but a shouting that might have been only the distant efforts of drunken men…

He did not turn up his lights; he stood at his draughty broken window, a distressful, slight black outline to the officer who looked ever and again into the room and exhorted him to rest.

All night Redwood remained at his window peering up at the ambiguous drift of the sky, and only with the coming of the dawn did

he obey his fatigue and lie down upon the little bed they had prepared for him between his writing-desk and the sinking fire in the fireplace under the great hog's skull.

III.

For thirty-six long hours did Redwood remain imprisoned, closed in and shut off from the great drama of the Two Days, while the little people in the dawn of greatness fought against the Children of the Food. Then abruptly the iron curtain rose again, and he found himself near the very centre of the struggle. That curtain rose as unexpectedly as it fell. In the late afternoon he was called to the window by the clatter of a cab, that stopped without. A young man descended, and in another minute stood before him in the room, a slightly built young man of thirty perhaps, clean shaven, well dressed, well mannered.

"Mr. Redwood, Sir," he began, "would you be willing to come to Mr.
Caterham? He needs your presence very urgently."

"Needs my presence!" There leapt a question into Redwood's mind, that for a moment he could not put. He hesitated. Then in a voice that broke he asked: "What has he done to my Son?" and stood breathless for the reply.

"Your Son, Sir? Your Son is doing well. So at least we gather."

"Doing well?"

"He was wounded, Sir, yesterday. Have you not heard?"

Redwood smote these pretences aside. His voice was no longer coloured by fear, but by anger. "You know I have not heard. You know I have heard nothing."

"Mr. Caterham feared, Sir — It was a time of upheaval. Every one — taken by surprise. He arrested you to save you, Sir, from any misadventure—"

"He arrested me to prevent my giving any warning or advice to my son. Go on. Tell me what has happened. Have you succeeded? Have you killed them all?"

The young man made a pace or so towards the window, and turned.

"No, Sir," he said concisely.

"What have you to tell me?"

"It's our proof, Sir, that this fighting was not planned by us. They found us … totally unprepared."

"You mean?"

"I mean, Sir, the Giants have — to a certain extent — held their own."

The world changed, for Redwood. For a moment something like hysteria had the muscles of his face and throat. Then he gave vent to a profound "Ah!" His heart bounded towards exultation. "The Giants have held their own!"

"There has been terrible fighting — terrible destruction. It is all a most hideous misunderstanding … In the north and midlands Giants have been killed … Everywhere."

"They are fighting now?"

"No, Sir. There was a flag of truce."

"From them?"

"No, Sir. Mr. Caterham sent a flag of truce. The whole thing is a hideous misunderstanding. That is why he wants to talk to you, and put his case before you. They insist, Sir, that you should intervene —"

Redwood interrupted. "Do you know what happened to my Son?" he asked.

"He was wounded."

"Tell me! Tell me!"

"He and the Princess came — before the — the movement to surround the Cossar camp was complete — the Cossar pit at Chislehurst. They came suddenly, Sir, crashing through a dense thicket of giant oats, near River, upon a column of infantry … Soldiers had been very nervous all day, and this produced a panic."

"They shot him?"

"No, Sir. They ran away. Some shot at him — wildly — against orders."

Redwood gave a note of denial. "It's true, Sir. Not on account of your son, I won't pretend, but on account of the Princess."

“Yes. That’s true.”

“The two Giants ran shouting towards the encampment. The soldiers ran this way and that, and then some began firing. They say they saw him stagger—”

“Ugh!”

“Yes, Sir. But we know he is not badly hurt.”

“How?”

“He sent the message, Sir, that he was doing well!”

“To me?”

“Who else, Sir?”

Redwood stood for nearly a minute with his arms tightly folded, taking this in. Then his indignation found a voice.

“Because you were fools in doing the thing, because you miscalculated and blundered, you would like me to think you are not murderers in intention. And besides — The rest?”

The young man looked interrogation.

“The other Giants?”

The young man made no further pretence of misunderstanding. His tone fell. “Thirteen, Sir, are dead.”

“And others wounded?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And Caterham,” he gasped, “wants to meet me! Where are the others?”

“Some got to the encampment during the fighting, Sir … They seem to have known—”

“Well, of course they did. If it hadn’t been for Cossar — Cossar is there?”

“Yes, Sir. And all the surviving Giants are there — the ones who didn’t get to the camp in the fighting have gone, or are going now under the flag of trace.”

“That means,” said Redwood, “that you are beaten.”

“We are not beaten. No, Sir. You cannot say we are beaten. But your sons have broken the rules of war. Once last night, and now again. After our attack had been withdrawn. This afternoon they began to bombard London—”

“That’s legitimate!”

“They have been firing shells filled with — poison.”

“Poison?”

“Yes. Poison. The Food—”

“Herakleophorbia?”

“Yes, Sir. Mr. Caterham, Sir—”

“You are beaten! Of course that beats you. It’s Cossar! What can you hope to do now? What good is it to do anything now? You will breathe it in the dust of every street. What is there to fight for more? Rules of war, indeed! And now Caterham wants to humbug me to help him bargain. Good heavens, man! Why should I come to your exploded windbag? He has played his game … murdered and muddled. Why should I?”

The young man stood with an air of vigilant respect.

“It is a fact, Sir,” he interrupted, “that the Giants insist that they shall see you. They will have no ambassador but you. Unless you come to them, I am afraid, Sir, there will be more bloodshed.”

“On *your* side, perhaps.”

“No, Sir — on both sides. The world is resolved the thing must end.”

Redwood looked about the study. His eyes rested for a moment on the photograph of his boy. He turned and met the expectation of the young man. “Yes,” he said at last, “I will come.”

IV.

His encounter with Caterham was entirely different from his anticipation. He had seen the man only twice in his life, once at dinner and once in the lobby of the House, and his imagination had been active not with the man but with the creation of the newspapers and caricaturists, the legendary Caterham, Jack the Giant-killer, Perseus, and all the rest of it. The element of a human personality came in to disorder all that.

Here was not the face of the caricatures and portraits, but the face of a worn and sleepless man, lined and drawn, yellow in the whites of the eyes, a little weakened about the mouth. Here, indeed, were the red-brown eyes, the black hair, the distinctive aquiline profile of the great demagogue, but here was also something else that smote any premeditated scorn and rhetoric aside. This man was suffering;

he was suffering acutely; he was under enormous stress. From the beginning he had an air of impersonating himself. Presently, with a single gesture, the slightest movement, he revealed to Redwood that he was keeping himself up with drugs. He moved a thumb to his waistcoat pocket, and then, after a few sentences more, threw concealment aside, and slipped the little tabloid to his lips.

Moreover, in spite of the stresses upon him, in spite of the fact that he was in the wrong, and Redwood's junior by a dozen years, that strange quality in him, the something — personal magnetism one may call it for want of a better name — that had won his way for him to this eminence of disaster was with him still. On that also Redwood had failed to reckon. From the first, so far as the course and conduct of their speech went, Caterham prevailed over Redwood. All the quality of the first phase of their meeting was determined by him, all the tone and procedure were his. That happened as if it was a matter of course. All Redwood's expectations vanished at his presence. He shook hands before Redwood remembered that he meant to parry that familiarity; he pitched the note of their conference from the outset, sure and clear, as a search for expedients under a common catastrophe.

If he made any mistake it was when ever and again his fatigue got the better of his immediate attention, and the habit of the public meeting carried him away. Then he drew himself up — through all their interview both men stood — and looked away from Redwood, and began to fence and justify. Once even he said "Gentlemen!"

Quietly, expandingly, he began to talk….

There were moments when Redwood ceased even to feel himself an interlocutor, when he became the mere auditor of a monologue. He became the privileged spectator of an extraordinary phenomenon. He perceived something almost like a specific difference between himself and this being whose beautiful voice enveloped him, who was talking, talking. This mind before him was so powerful and so limited. From its driving energy, its personal weight, its invincible oblivion to certain things, there sprang up in Redwood's mind the most grotesque and strange of images. Instead of an antagonist who was a fellow-creature, a man one could hold morally responsible, and to whom one could address reasonable appeals, he saw Caterham as

something, something like a monstrous rhinoceros, as it were, a civilised rhinoceros begotten of the jungle of democratic affairs, a monster of irresistible onset and invincible resistance. In all the crashing conflicts of that tangle he was supreme. And beyond? This man was a being supremely adapted to make his way through multitudes of men. For him there was no fault so important as self-contradiction, no science so significant as the reconciliation of "interests." Economic realities, topographical necessities, the barely touched mines of scientific expedients, existed for him no more than railways or rifled guns or geographical literature exist for his animal prototype. What did exist were gatherings, and caucuses, and votes — above all, votes. He was votes incarnate — millions of votes.

And now in the great crisis, with the Giants broken but not beaten, this vote-monster talked.

It was so evident that even now he had everything to learn. He did not know there were physical laws and economic laws, quantities and reactions that all humanity voting *nemine contradicente* cannot vote away, and that are disobeyed only at the price of destruction. He did not know there are moral laws that cannot be bent by any force of glamour, or are bent only to fly back with vindictive violence. In the face of shrapnel or the Judgment Day, it was evident to Redwood that this man would have sheltered behind some curiously dodged vote of the House of Commons.

What most concerned his mind now was not the powers that held the fastness away there to the south, not defeat and death, but the effect of these things upon his Majority, the cardinal reality in his life. He had to defeat the Giants or go under. He was by no means absolutely despairful. In this hour of his utmost failure, with blood and disaster upon his hands, and the rich promise of still more horrible disaster, with the gigantic destinies of the world towering and toppling over him, he was capable of a belief that by sheer exertion of his voice, by explaining and qualifying and restating, he might yet reconstitute his power. He was puzzled and distressed no doubt, fatigued and suffering, but if only he could keep up, if only he could keep talking —

As he talked he seemed to Redwood to advance and recede, to dilate and contract. Redwood's share of the talk was of the most

subsidiary sort, wedges as it were suddenly thrust in. “That’s all nonsense.” “No.” “It’s no use suggesting that.” “Then why did you begin?”

It is doubtful if Caterham really heard him at all. Round such interpolations Caterham’s speech flowed indeed like some swift stream about a rock. There this incredible man stood, on his official hearthrug, talking, talking with enormous power and skill, talking as though a pause in his talk, his explanations, his presentation of standpoints and lights, of considerations and expedients, would permit some antagonistic influence to leap into being — into vocal being, the only being he could comprehend. There he stood amidst the slightly faded splendours of that official room in which one man after another had succumbed to the belief that a certain power of intervention was the creative control of an empire….

The more he talked the more certain Redwood’s sense of stupendous futility grew. Did this man realise that while he stood and talked there, the whole great world was moving, that the invincible tide of growth flowed and flowed, that there were any hours but parliamentary hours, or any weapons in the hands of the Avengers of Blood? Outside, darkling the whole room, a single leaf of giant Virginian creeper tapped unheeded on the pane.

Redwood became anxious to end this amazing monologue, to escape to sanity and judgment, to that beleaguered camp, the fastness of the future, where, at the very nucleus of greatness, the Sons were gathered together. For that this talking was endured. He had a curious impression that unless this monologue ended he would presently find himself carried away by it, that he must fight against Caterham’s voice as one fights against a drug. Facts had altered and were altering beneath that spell.

What was the man saying?

Since Redwood had to report it to the Children of the Food, in a sort of way he perceived it did matter. He would have to listen and guard his sense of realities as well as he could.

Much about bloodguiltiness. That was eloquence. That didn’t matter. Next?

He was suggesting a convention!

He was suggesting that the surviving Children of the Food should capitulate and go apart and form a community of their own. There were precedents, he said, for this. “We would assign them territory —”

“Where?” interjected Redwood, stooping to argue.

Caterham snatched at that concession. He turned his face to Redwood’s, and his voice fell to a persuasive reasonableness. That could be determined. That, he contended, was a quite subsidiary question. Then he went on to stipulate: “And except for them and where they are we must have absolute control, the Food and all the Fruits of the Food must be stamped out—”

Redwood found himself bargaining: “The Princess?”

“She stands apart.”

“No,” said Redwood, struggling to get back to the old footing. “That’s absurd.”

“That afterwards. At any rate we are agreed that the making of the Food must stop—”

“I have agreed to nothing. I have said nothing—”

“But on one planet, to have two races of men, one great, one small! Consider what has happened! Consider that is but a little foretaste of what might presently happen if this Food has its way! Consider all you have already brought upon this world! If there is to be a race of Giants, increasing and multiplying—”

“It is not for me to argue,” said Redwood. “I must go to our sons. I want to go to my son. That is why I have come to you. Tell me exactly what you offer.”

Caterham made a speech upon his terms.

The Children of the Food were to be given a great reservation — in North America perhaps or Africa — in which they might live out their lives in their own fashion.

“But it’s nonsense,” said Redwood. “There are other Giants now abroad.
All over Europe — here and there!”

“There could be an international convention. It’s *not* impossible.

Something of the sort indeed has already been spoken of … But in this reservation they can live out their own lives in their own way. They may do what they like; they may make what they like. We shall be glad if they will make us things. They may be happy. Think!"

"Provided there are no more Children."

"Precisely. The Children are for us. And so, Sir, we shall save the world, we shall save it absolutely from the fruits of your terrible discovery. It is not too late for us. Only we are eager to temper expediency with mercy. Even now we are burning and searing the places their shells hit yesterday. We can get it under. Trust me we shall get it under. But in that way, without cruelty, without injustice —"

"And suppose the Children do not agree?"

For the first time Caterham looked Redwood fully in the face.

"They must!"

"I don't think they will."

"Why should they not agree?" he asked, in richly toned amazement.

"Suppose they don't?"

"What can it be but war? We cannot have the thing go on. We cannot. Sir. Have you scientific men *no* imagination? Have you no mercy? We cannot have our world trampled under a growing herd of such monsters and monstrous growths as your Food has made. We cannot and we cannot! I ask you, Sir, what can it be but war? And remember — this that has happened is only a beginning! *This* was a skirmish. A mere affair of police. Believe me, a mere affair of police. Do not be cheated by perspective, by the immediate bigness of these newer things. Behind us is the nation — is humanity. Behind the thousands who have died there are millions. Were it not for the fear of bloodshed, Sir, behind our first attacks there would be forming other attacks, even now. Whether we can kill this Food or not, most assuredly we can kill your sons! You reckon too much on the things of yesterday, on the happenings of a mere score of years, on one battle. You have no sense of the slow course of history. I offer this convention for the sake of lives, not because it can change the inevitable end. If you think that your poor two dozen of Giants can resist all the forces of our people and of all the alien peoples who

will come to our aid; if you think you can change Humanity at a blow, in a single generation, and alter the nature and stature of Man —”

He flung out an arm. “Go to them now, Sir. I see them, for all the evil they have done, crouching among their wounded—”

He stopped, as though he had glanced at Redwood’s son by chance.

There came a pause.

“Go to them,” he said.

“That is what I want to do.”

“Then go now….”

He turned and pressed the button of a bell; without, in immediate response, came a sound of opening doors and hastening feet.

The talk was at an end. The display was over. Abruptly Caterham seemed to contract, to shrivel up into a yellow-faced, fagged-out, middle-sized, middle-aged man. He stepped forward, as if he were stepping out of a picture, and with a complete assumption of that friendliness that lies behind all the public conflicts of our race, he held out his hand to Redwood.

As if it were a matter of course, Redwood shook hands with him for the second time.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE GIANT LEAGUER.

I.

Presently Redwood found himself in a train going south over the Thames. He had a brief vision of the river shining under its lights, and of the smoke still going up from the place where the shell had fallen on the north bank, and where a vast multitude of men had been organised to burn the Herakleophorbia out of the ground. The southern bank was dark, for some reason even the streets were not lit, all that was clearly visible was the outlines of the tall alarm-towers and the dark bulks of flats and schools, and after a minute of peering scrutiny he turned his back on the window and sank into thought. There was nothing more to see or do until he saw the Sons….

He was fatigued by the stresses of the last two days; it seemed to him that his emotions must needs be exhausted, but he had fortified himself with strong coffee before starting, and his thoughts ran thin and clear. His mind touched many things. He reviewed again, but now in the enlightenment of accomplished events, the manner in which the Food had entered and unfolded itself in the world.

"Bensington thought it might be an excellent food for infants," he whispered to himself, with a faint smile. Then there came into his mind as vivid as if they were still unsettled his own horrible doubts after he had committed himself by giving it to his own son. From that, with a steady unfaltering expansion, in spite of every effort of men to help and hinder, the Food had spread through the whole world of man. And now?

"Even if they kill them all," Redwood whispered, "the thing is done."

The secret of its making was known far and wide. That had been his own work. Plants, animals, a multitude of distressful growing children would conspire irresistibly to force the world to revert again to the Food, whatever happened in the present struggle. "The thing is done," he said, with his mind swinging round beyond all his

controlling to rest upon the present fate of the Children and his son. Would he find them exhausted by the efforts of the battle, wounded, starving, on the verge of defeat, or would he find them still stout and hopeful, ready for the still grimmer conflict of the morrow? His son was wounded! But he had sent a message!

His mind came back to his interview with Caterham.

He was roused from his thoughts by the stopping of his train in Chislehurst station. He recognised the place by the huge rat alarm-tower that crested Camden Hill, and the row of blossoming giant hemlocks that lined the road….

Caterham's private secretary came to him from the other carriage and told him that half a mile farther the line had been wrecked, and that the rest of the journey was to be made in a motor car. Redwood descended upon a platform lit only by a hand lantern and swept by the cool night breeze. The quiet of that derelict, wood-set, weed-embedded suburb — for all the inhabitants had taken refuge in London at the outbreak of yesterday's conflict — became instantly impressive. His conductor took him down the steps to where a motor car was waiting with blazing lights — the only lights to be seen — handed him over to the care of the driver and bade him farewell.

"You will do your best for us," he said, with an imitation of his master's manner, as he held Redwood's hand.

So soon as Redwood could be wrapped about they started out into the night. At one moment they stood still, and then the motor car was rushing softly and swiftly down the station incline. They turned one corner and another, followed the windings of a lane of villas, and then before them stretched the road. The motor droned up to its topmost speed, and the black night swept past them. Everything was very dark under the starlight, and the whole world crouched mysteriously and was gone without a sound. Not a breath stirred the flying things by the wayside; the deserted, pallid white villas on either hand, with their black unlit windows, reminded him of a noiseless procession of skulls. The driver beside him was a silent man, or stricken into silence by the conditions of his journey. He answered Redwood's brief questions in monosyllables, and gruffly. Athwart the southern sky the beams of searchlights waved noiseless passes; the sole strange evidences of life they seemed in all that

derelict world about the hurrying machine.

The road was presently bordered on either side by gigantic blackthorn shoots that made it very dark, and by tail grass and big campions, huge giant dead-nettles as high as trees, flickering past darkly in silhouette overhead. Beyond Keston they came to a rising hill, and the driver went slow. At the crest he stopped. The engine throbbed and became still. “There,” he said, and his big gloved finger pointed, a black misshapen thing before Redwood’s eyes.

Far away as it seemed, the great embankment, crested by the blaze from which the searchlights sprang, rose up against the sky. Those beams went and came among the clouds and the hilly land about them as if they traced mysterious incantations.

“I don’t know,” said the driver at last, and it was clear he was afraid to go on.

Presently a searchlight swept down the sky to them, stopped as it were with a start, scrutinised them, a blinding stare confused rather than mitigated by an intervening monstrous weed stem or so. They sat with their gloves held over their eyes, trying to look under them and meet that light.

“Go on,” said Redwood after a while.

The driver still had his doubts; he tried to express them, and died down to “I don’t know” again.

At last he ventured on. “Here goes,” he said, and roused his machinery to motion again, followed intently by that great white eye.

To Redwood it seemed for a long time they were no longer on earth, but in a state of palpitating hurry through a luminous cloud. Teuf, teuf, teuf, teuf, went the machine, and ever and again — obeying I know not what nervous impulse — the driver sounded his horn.

They passed into the welcome darkness of a high-fenced lane, and down into a hollow and past some houses into that blinding stare again. Then for a space the road ran naked across a down, and they seemed to hang throbbing in immensity. Once more giant weeds rose about them and whirled past. Then quite abruptly close upon them loomed the figure of a giant, shining brightly where the searchlight caught him below, and black against the sky above. “Hullo there!” he cried, and “stop! There’s no more road beyond … Is that Father

Redwood?”

Redwood stood up and gave a vague shout by way of answer, and then Cossar was in the road beside him, gripping both hands with both of his and pulling him out of the car.

“What of my son?” asked Redwood.

“He’s all right,” said Cossar. “They’ve hurt nothing serious in *him*.”

“And your lads?”

“Well. All of them, well. But we’ve had to make a fight for it.”

The Giant was saying something to the motor driver. Redwood stood aside as the machine wheeled round, and then suddenly Cossar vanished, everything vanished, and he was in absolute darkness for a space. The glare was following the motor back to the crest of the Keston hill. He watched the little conveyance receding in that white halo. It had a curious effect, as though it was not moving at all and the halo was. A group of war-blasted Giant elders flashed into gaunt scarred gesticulations and were swallowed again by the night … Redwood turned to Cossar’s dim outline again and clasped his hand. “I have been shut up and kept in ignorance,” he said, “for two whole days.”

“We fired the Food at them,” said Cossar. “Obviously! Thirty shots. Eh!”

“I come from Caterham.”

“I know you do.” He laughed with a note of bitterness. “I suppose he’s wiping it up.”

II.

“Where is my son?” said Redwood.

“He is all right. The Giants are waiting for your message.”

“Yes, but my son — …”

He passed with Cossar down a long slanting tunnel that was lit red for a moment and then became dark again, and came out presently into the great pit of shelter the Giants had made.

Redwood’s first impression was of an enormous arena bounded by very high cliffs and with its floor greatly encumbered. It was in darkness save for the passing reflections of the watchman’s

searchlights that whirled perpetually high overhead, and for a red glow that came and went from a distant corner where two Giants worked together amidst a metallic clangour. Against the sky, as the glare came about, his eye caught the familiar outlines of the old worksheds and playsheds that were made for the Cossar boys. They were hanging now, as it were, at a cliff brow, and strangely twisted and distorted with the guns of Caterham's bombardment. There were suggestions of huge gun emplacements above there, and nearer were piles of mighty cylinders that were perhaps ammunition. All about the wide space below, the forms of great engines and incomprehensible bulks were scattered in vague disorder. The Giants appeared and vanished among these masses and in the uncertain light; great shapes they were, not disproportionate to the things amidst which they moved. Some were actively employed, some sitting and lying as if they courted sleep, and one near at hand, whose body was bandaged, lay on a rough litter of pine boughs and was certainly asleep. Redwood peered at these dim forms; his eyes went from one stirring outline to another.

"Where is my son, Cossar?"

Then he saw him.

His son was sitting under the shadow of a great wall of steel. He presented himself as a black shape recognisable only by his pose, — his features were invisible. He sat chin upon hand, as though weary or lost in thought. Beside him Redwood discovered the figure of the Princess, the dark suggestion of her merely, and then, as the glow from the distant iron returned, he saw for an instant, red lit and tender, the infinite kindliness of her shadowed face. She stood looking down upon her lover with her hand resting against the steel. It seemed that she whispered to him.

Redwood would have gone towards them.

"Presently," said Cossar. "First there is your message."

"Yes," said Redwood, "but—"

He stopped. His son was now looking up and speaking to the Princess, but in too low a tone for them to hear. Young Redwood raised his face, and she bent down towards him, and glanced aside before she spoke.

"But if we are beaten," they heard the whispered voice of young

Redwood.

She paused, and the red blaze showed her eyes bright with unshed tears. She bent nearer him and spoke still lower. There was something so intimate and private in their bearing, in their soft tones, that Redwood — Redwood who had thought for two whole days of nothing but his son — felt himself intrusive there. Abruptly he was checked. For the first time in his life perhaps he realised how much more a son may be to his father than a father can ever be to a son; he realised the full predominance of the future over the past. Here between these two he had no part. His part was played. He turned to Cossar, in the instant realisation. Their eyes met. His voice was changed to the tone of a grey resolve.

"I will deliver my message now," he said. "Afterwards — … It will be soon enough then."

The pit was so enormous and so encumbered that it was a long and tortuous route to the place from which Redwood could speak to them all.

He and Cossar followed a steeply descending way that passed beneath an arch of interlocking machinery, and so came into a vast deep gangway that ran athwart the bottom of the pit. This gangway, wide and vacant, and yet relatively narrow, conspired with everything about it to enhance Redwood's sense of his own littleness. It became, as it were, an excavated gorge. High overhead, separated from him by cliffs of darkness, the searchlights wheeled and blazed, and the shining shapes went to and fro. Giant voices called to one another above there, calling the Giants together to the Council of War, to hear the terms that Caterham had sent. The gangway still inclined downward towards black vastnesses, towards shadows and mysteries and inconceivable things, into which Redwood went slowly with reluctant footsteps and Cossar with a confident stride….

Redwood's thoughts were busy. The two men passed into the completest darkness, and Cossar took his companion's wrist. They went now slowly perforce.

Redwood was moved to speak. "All this," he said, "is strange."

"Big," said Cossar.

"Strange. And strange that it should be strange to me — I, who

am, in a sense, the beginning of it all. It's—"

He stopped, wrestling with his elusive meaning, and threw an unseen gesture at the cliff.

"I have not thought of it before. I have been busy, and the years have passed. But here I see — It is a new generation, Cossar, and new emotions and new needs. All this, Cossar—"

Cossar saw now his dim gesture to the things about them.

"All this is Youth."

Cossar made no answers and his irregular footfalls went striding on.

"It isn't *our* youth, Cossar. They are taking things over. They are beginning upon their own emotions, their own experiences, their own way.
We have made a new world, and it isn't ours. It isn't even — sympathetic.
This great place—"

"I planned it," said Cossar, his face close.

"But now?"

"Ah! I have given it to my sons."

Redwood could feel the loose wave of the arm that he could not see.

"That is it. We are over — or almost over."

"Your message!"

"Yes. And then—"

"We're over."

"Well — ?"

"Of course we are out of it, we two old men," said Cossar, with his familiar note of sudden anger. "Of course we are. Obviously. Each man for his own time. And now — it's *their* time beginning. That's all right. Excavator's gang. We do our job and go. See? That is what death is for. We work out all our little brains and all our little emotions, and then this lot begins afresh. Fresh and fresh! Perfectly simple. What's the trouble?"

He paused to guide Redwood to some steps.

"Yes," said Redwood, "but one feels—"

He left his sentence incomplete.

"That is what Death is for." He heard Cossar below him insisting, "How else could the thing be done? That is what Death is for."

III.

After devious windings and ascents they came out upon a projecting ledge from which it was possible to see over the greater extent of the Giants' pit, and from which Redwood might make himself heard by the whole of their assembly. The Giants were already gathered below and about him at different levels, to hear the message he had to deliver. The eldest son of Cossar stood on the bank overhead watching the revelations of the searchlights, for they feared a breach of the truce. The workers at the great apparatus in the corner stood out clear in their own light; they were near stripped; they turned their faces towards Redwood, but with a watchful reference ever and again to the castings that they could not leave. He saw these nearer figures with a fluctuating indistinctness, by lights that came and went, and the remoter ones still less distinctly. They came from and vanished again into the depths of great obscurities. For these Giants had no more light than they could help in the pit, that their eyes might be ready to see effectually any attacking force that might spring upon them out of the darknesses around.

Ever and again some chance glare would pick out and display this group or that of tall and powerful forms, the Giants from Sunderland clothed in overlapping metal plates, and the others clad in leather, in woven rope or in woven metal, as their conditions had determined. They sat amidst or rested their hands upon, or stood erect among machines and weapons as mighty as themselves, and all their faces, as they came and went from visible to invisible, had steadfast eyes.

He made an effort to begin and did not do so. Then for a moment his son's face glowed out in a hot insurgence of the fire, his son's face looking up to him, tender as well as strong; and at that he found a voice to reach them all, speaking across a gulf, as it were, to his son.

"I come from Caterham," he said. "He sent me to you, to tell you the terms he offers."

He paused. “They are impossible terms, I know, now that I see you here all together; they are impossible terms, but I brought them to you, because I wanted to see you all — and my son. Once more … I wanted to see my son….”

“Tell them the terms,” said Cossar.

“This is what Caterham offers. He wants you to go apart and leave his world!”

“Where?”

“He does not know. Vaguely somewhere in the world a great region is to be set apart…. And you are to make no more of the Food, to have no children of your own, to live in your own way for your own time, and then to end for ever.”

He stopped.

“And that is all?”

“That is all.”

There followed a great stillness. The darkness that veiled the Giants seemed to look thoughtfully at him.

He felt a touch at his elbow, and Cossar was holding a chair for him — a queer fragment of doll’s furniture amidst these piled immensities. He sat down and crossed his legs, and then put one across the knee of the other, and clutched his boot nervously, and felt small and self-conscious and acutely visible and absurdly placed.

Then at the sound of a voice he forgot himself again.

“You have heard, Brothers,” said this voice out of the shadows.

And another answered, “We have heard.”

“And the answer, Brothers?”

“To Caterham?”

“Is No!”

“And then?”

There was a silence for the space of some seconds.

Then a voice said: “These people are right. After their lights, that is. They have been right in killing all that grew larger than its kind — beast and plant and all manner of great things that arose. They were right in trying to massacre us. They are right now in saying we must not marry our kind. According to their lights they are right. They know — it is time that we also knew — that you cannot have pigmies and giants in one world together. Caterham has said that

again and again — clearly — their world or ours."

"We are not half a hundred now," said another, "and they are endless millions."

"So it may be. But the thing is as I have said."

Then another long silence.

"And are we to die then?"

"God forbid!"

"Are they?"

"No."

"But that is what Caterham says! He would have us live out our lives, die one by one, till only one remains, and that one at last would die also, and they would cut down all the giant plants and weeds, kill all the giant under-life, burn out the traces of the Food — make an end to us and to the Food for ever. Then the little pigmy world would be safe. They would go on — safe for ever, living their little pigmy lives, doing pigmy kindnesses and pigmy cruelties each to the other; they might even perhaps attain a sort of pigmy millennium, make an end to war, make an end to over-population, sit down in a world-wide city to practise pigmy arts, worshipping one another till the world begins to freeze…."

In the corner a sheet of iron fell in thunder to the ground.

"Brothers, we know what we mean to do."

In a spluttering of light from the searchlights Redwood saw earnest youthful faces turning to his son.

"It is easy now to make the Food. It would be easy for us to make Food for all the world."

"You mean, Brother Redwood," said a voice out of the darkness, "that it is for the little people to eat the Food."

"What else is there to do?"

"We are not half a hundred and they are many millions."

"But we held our own."

"So far."

"If it is God's will, we may still hold our own."

"Yes. But think of the dead!"

Another voice took up the strain. "The dead," it said. "Think of the unborn…."

"Brothers," came the voice of young Redwood, "what can we do

but fight them, and if we beat them, make them take the Food? They cannot help but take the Food now. Suppose we were to resign our heritage and do this folly that Caterham suggests! Suppose we could! Suppose we give up this great thing that stirs within us, repudiate this thing our fathers did for us — that *you*, Father, did for us — and pass, when our time has come, into decay and nothingness! What then? Will this little world of theirs be as it was before? They may fight against greatness in us who are the children of men, but can they conquer? Even if they should destroy us every one, what then? Would it save them? No! For greatness is abroad, not only in us, not only in the Food, but in the purpose of all things! It is in the nature of all things; it is part of space and time. To grow and still to grow: from first to last that is Being — that is the law of life. What other law can there be?"

"To help others?"

"To grow. It is still, to grow. Unless we help them to fail…."

"They will fight hard to overcome us," said a voice.

And another, "What of that?"

"They will fight," said young Redwood. "If we refuse these terms, I doubt not they will fight. Indeed I hope they will be open and fight. If after all they offer peace, it will be only the better to catch us unawares. Make no mistake, Brothers; in some way or other they will fight. The war has begun, and we must fight, to the end. Unless we are wise, we may find presently we have lived only to make them better weapons against our children and our kind. This, so far, has been only the dawn of battle. All our lives will be a battle. Some of us will be killed in battle, some of us will be waylaid. There is no easy victory — no victory whatever that is not more than half defeat for us. Be sure of that. What of that? If only we keep a foothold, if only we leave behind us a growing host to fight when we are gone!"

"And to-morrow?"

"We will scatter the Food; we will saturate the world with the Food."

"Suppose they come to terms?"

"Our terms are the Food. It is not as though little and great could live together in any perfection of compromise. It is one thing or the other. What right have parents to say, My child shall have no light

but the light I have had, shall grow no greater than the greatness to which I have grown? Do I speak for you, Brothers?"

Assenting murmurs answered him.

"And to the children who will be women as well as to the children who will be men," said a voice from the darkness.

"Even more so — to be mothers of a new race …"

"But for the next generation there must be great and little," said Redwood, with his eyes on his son's face.

"For many generations. And the little will hamper the great and the great press upon the little. So it must needs be, father."

"There will be conflict."

"Endless conflict. Endless misunderstanding. All life is that. Great and little cannot understand one another. But in every child born of man, Father Redwood, lurks some seed of greatness — waiting for the Food."

"Then I am to go to Caterham again and tell him—"

"You will stay with us, Father Redwood. Our answer goes to Caterham at dawn."

"He says that he will fight…."

"So be it," said young Redwood, and his brethren murmured assent.

"*The iron waits*," cried a voice, and the two giants who were working in the corner began a rhythmic hammering that made a mighty music to the scene. The metal glowed out far more brightly than it had done before, and gave Redwood a clearer view of the encampment than had yet come to him. He saw the oblong space to its full extent, with the great engines of warfare ranged ready to hand. Beyond, and at a higher level, the house of the Cossars stood. About him were the young giants, huge and beautiful, glittering in their mail, amidst the preparations for the morrow. The sight of them lifted his heart. They were so easily powerful! They were so tall and gracious! They were so steadfast in their movements! There was his son amongst them, and the first of all giant women, the Princess….

There leapt into his mind the oddest contrast, a memory of Bensington, very bright and little — Bensington with his hand

amidst the soft breast feathers of that first great chick, standing in that conventionally furnished room of his, peering over his spectacles dubiously as cousin Jane banged the door….

It had all happened in a yesterday of one-and-twenty years.

Then suddenly a strange doubt took hold of him: that this place and present greatness were but the texture of a dream; that he was dreaming, and would in an instant wake to find himself in his study again, the Giants slaughtered, the Food suppressed, and himself a prisoner locked in. What else indeed was life but that — always to be a prisoner locked in! This was the culmination and end of his dream. He would wake through bloodshed and battle, to find his Food the most foolish of fancies, and his hopes and faith of a greater world to come no more than the coloured film upon a pool of bottomless decay. Littleness invincible!

So strong and deep was this wave of despondency, this suggestion of impending disillusionment, that he started to his feet. He stood and pressed his clenched fists into his eyes, and so for a moment remained, fearing to open them again and see, lest the dream should already have passed away….

The voice of the giant children spoke to one another, an undertone to that clangorous melody of the smiths. His tide of doubt ebbed. He heard the giant voices; he heard their movements about him still. It was real, surely it was real — as real as spiteful acts! More real, for these great things, it may be, are the coming things, and the littleness, bestiality, and infirmity of men are the things that go. He opened his eyes. “Done,” cried one of the two ironworkers, and they flung their hammers down.

A voice sounded above. The son of Cossar, standing on the great embankment, had turned and was now speaking to them all.

“It is not that we would oust the little people from the world,” he said, “in order that we, who are no more than one step upwards from their littleness, may hold their world for ever. It is the step we fight for and not ourselves…. We are here, Brothers, to what end? To serve the spirit and the purpose that has been breathed into our lives. We fight not for ourselves — for we are but the momentary hands and eyes of the Life of the World. So you, Father Redwood, taught us. Through us and through the little folk the Spirit looks and learns.

From us by word and birth and act it must pass — to still greater lives. This earth is no resting place; this earth is no playing place, else indeed we might put our throats to the little people's knife, having no greater right to live than they. And they in their turn might yield to the ants and vermin. We fight not for ourselves but for growth — growth that goes on for ever. To-morrow, whether we live or die, growth will conquer through us. That is the law of the spirit for ever more. To grow according to the will of God! To grow out of these cracks and crannies, out of these shadows and darknesses, into greatness and the light! Greater," he said, speaking with slow deliberation, "greater, my Brothers! And then — still greater. To grow, and again — to grow. To grow at last into the fellowship and understanding of God. Growing…. Till the earth is no more than a footstool…. Till the spirit shall have driven fear into nothingness, and spread…." He swung his arm heavenward:— "*There!*" His voice ceased. The white glare of one of tho searchlights wheeled about, and for a moment fell upon him, standing out gigantic with hand upraised against the sky.

For one instant he shone, looking up fearlessly into the starry deeps, mail-clad, young and strong, resolute and still. Then the light had passed, and he was no more than a great black outline against the starry sky — a great black outline that threatened with one mighty gesture the firmament of heaven and all its multitude of stars.

THE END

KIPPS

This novel was Wells' favourite of his own works and is considered by some critics to be his masterpiece. First published in 1905, it tells the story of Arthur Kipps, a lower-middle-class draper's apprentice, who unexpectedly inherits a fortune. Through Kipps' attempts to negotiate his new social position, the novel enacts a light-hearted critique of the English class-system, which owes much to Dickens – not least its Kentish setting and its vivid and memorably-drawn characters. It became one of Wells' most successful novels and has been adapted for the screen several times (the 1921 adaptation by Harold M. Shaw featured Wells as an extra) as well as forming the basis for the popular musical *Half a Sixpence* – a reference to the token given to Kipps by his childhood sweetheart, Anne.

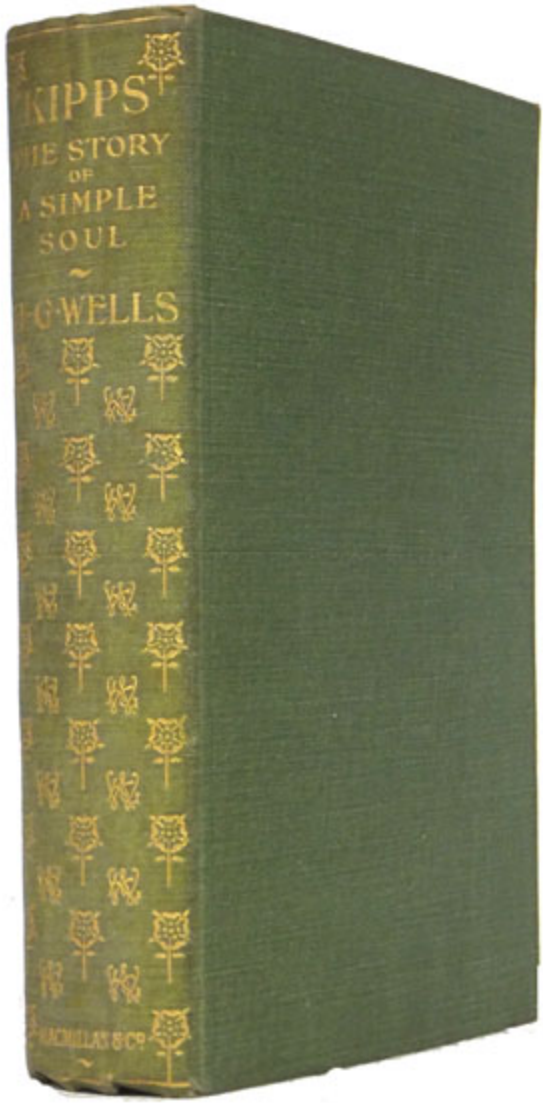

The first edition

KIPPS

THE STORY OF A SIMPLE SOUL

BY

H. G. WELLS

AUTHOR OF

"THE SEA LADY" AND "LOVE AND MR. LEWISHAM"

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

1905

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Title page of the first edition

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Poster for the 1941 film version, directed by Carol Reed

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“Those individuals who have led secluded or isolated lives, or have hitherto moved in other spheres than those wherein well-bred people move, will gather all the information necessary from these pages to render them thoroughly conversant with the manners and amenities of society.”

Manners and Rules of Good Society

By a Member of the Aristocracy

BOOK I THE MAKING OF KIPPS

CHAPTER I THE LITTLE SHOP AT NEW ROMNEY

§1

Until he was nearly arrived at adolescence it did not become clear to Kipps how it was that he was under the care of an aunt and uncle instead of having a father and mother like other boys. Yet he had vague memories of a somewhere else that was not New Romney — of a dim room, a window looking down on white buildings — and of a some one else who talked to forgotten people, and who was his mother. He could not recall her features very distinctly, but he remembered with extreme definition a white dress she wore, with a pattern of little sprigs of flowers and little bows of ribbon upon it, and a girdle of straight-ribbed white ribbon about the waist. Linked with this, he knew not how, were clouded half-obliterated recollections of scenes in which there was weeping, weeping in which he was inscrutably moved to join. Some terrible tall man with a loud voice played a part in these scenes, and either before or after them there were impressions of looking for interminable periods out of the windows of railway trains in the company of these two people....

He knew, though he could not remember that he had ever been told, that a certain faded, wistful face, that looked at him from a plush and gilt framed daguerreotype above the mantel of the "sitting-room," was the face of his mother. But that knowledge did not touch his dim memories with any elucidation. In that photograph she was a girlish figure, leaning against a photographer's stile, and with all the self-conscious shrinking natural to that position. She had curly hair and a face far younger and prettier than any other mother in his experience. She swung a Dolly Varden hat by the string, and looked with obedient respectful eyes on the photographer-gentleman who had commanded the pose. She was very slight and pretty. But the phantom mother that haunted his memory so elusively was not like that, though he could not remember how she differed. Perhaps she was older, or a little less shrinking, or, it may be, only dressed in a

different way....

It is clear she handed him over to his aunt and uncle at New Romney with explicit directions and a certain endowment. One gathers she had something of that fine sense of social distinctions that subsequently played so large a part in Kipps' career. He was not to go to a "common" school, she provided, but to a certain seminary in Hastings that was not only a "middle-class academy," with mortar boards and every evidence of a higher social tone, but also remarkably cheap. She seems to have been animated by the desire to do her best for Kipps, even at a certain sacrifice of herself, as though Kipps were in some way a superior sort of person. She sent pocket-money to him from time to time for a year or more after Hastings had begun for him, but her face he never saw in the days of his lucid memory.

His aunt and uncle were already high on the hill of life when first he came to them. They had married for comfort in the evening or at any rate in the late afternoon of their days. They were at first no more than vague figures in the background of proximate realities, such realities as familiar chairs and tables, quiet to ride and drive, the newel of the staircase, kitchen furniture, pieces of firewood, the boiler tap, old newspapers, the cat, the High Street, the back yard and the flat fields that are always so near in that little town. He knew all the stones in the yard individually, the creeper in the corner, the dustbin and the mossy wall, better than many men know the faces of their wives. There was a corner under the ironing-board which by means of a shawl could, under propitious gods, be made a very decent cubby-house, a corner that served him for several years as the indisputable hub of the world; and the stringy places in the carpet, the knots upon the dresser, and the several corners of the rag hearthrug his uncle had made, became essential parts of his mental foundations. The shop he did not know so thoroughly — it was a forbidden region to him; yet somehow he managed to know it very well.

His aunt and uncle were, as it were, the immediate gods of this world; and, like the gods of the world of old, occasionally descended right into it, with arbitrary injunctions and disproportionate punishments. And, unhappily, one rose to their Olympian level at

meals. Then one had to say one's "grace," hold one's spoon and fork in mad, unnatural ways called "properly," and refrain from eating even nice sweet things "too fast." If he "gobbled" there was trouble, and at the slightest *abandon* with knife, fork, and spoon, his aunt rapped his knuckles, albeit his uncle always finished up his gravy with his knife. Sometimes, moreover, his uncle would come, pipe in hand, out of a sedentary remoteness in the most disconcerting way, when a little boy was doing the most natural and attractive things, with "Drat and drabbit that young rascal! What's he a-doing of now?" And his aunt would appear at door or window to interrupt interesting conversation with children who were upon unknown grounds considered "low" and undesirable, and call him in. The pleasantest little noises, however softly you did them, — drumming on tea-trays, trumpeting your fists, whistling on keys, ringing chimes with a couple of pails, or playing tunes on the window-panes, — brought down the gods in anger. Yet what noise is fainter than your finger on the window — gently done? Sometimes, however, these gods gave him broken toys out of the shop, and then one loved them better — for the shop they kept was, among other things, a toy shop. (The other things included books to read and books to give away and local photographs; it had some pretensions also to be a china shop, and the fascia spoke of glass; it was also a stationer's shop with a touch of haberdashery about it, and in the windows and odd corners were mats and terra-cotta dishes, and milking-stools for painting; and there was a hint of picture-frames, and fire-screens, and fishing tackle, and air-guns, and bathing suits, and tents: various things, indeed, but all cruelly attractive to a small boy's fingers.) Once his aunt gave him a trumpet if he would *promise* faithfully not to blow it, and afterwards took it away again. And his aunt made him say his Catechism and something she certainly called the "Colic for the Day" every Sunday in the year.

As the two grew old while he grew up, and as his impression of them modified insensibly from year to year, it seemed to him at last that they had always been as they were when, in his adolescent days, his impression of things grew fixed. His aunt he thought of as always lean, rather worried-looking, and prone to a certain obliquity of cap, and his uncle massive, many-chinned, and careless about his buttons.

They neither visited nor received visitors. They were always very suspicious about their neighbours and other people generally; they feared the "low" and they hated and despised the "stuck-up," and so they "kept themselves *to* themselves," according to the English ideal. Consequently little Kipps had no playmates, except through the sin of disobedience. By inherent nature he had a sociable disposition. When he was in the High Street he made a point of saying "Hello!" to passing cyclists, and he would put his tongue out at the Quodling children whenever their nursemaid was not looking. And he began a friendship with Sid Pornick, the son of the haberdasher next door, that, with wide intermissions, was destined to last his lifetime through.

Pornick, the haberdasher, I may say at once, was, according to old Kipps, a "blaring jackass"; he was a teetotaller, a "nyar, nyar, 'im-singing Methodis'," and altogether distasteful and detrimental, he and his together, to true Kipps ideals, so far as little Kipps could gather them. This Pornick certainly possessed an enormous voice, and he annoyed old Kipps greatly by calling, "You — Arn" and "Siddee," up and down his house. He annoyed old Kipps by private choral services on Sunday, all his family "nyar, nyar-ing"; and by mushroom culture; by behaving as though the pilaster between the two shops was common property; by making a noise of hammering in the afternoon, when old Kipps wanted to be quiet after his midday meal; by going up and down uncarpeted stairs in his boots; by having a black beard; by attempting to be friendly; and by — all that sort of thing. In fact, he annoyed old Kipps. He annoyed him especially with his shop doormat. Old Kipps never beat his mat, preferring to let sleeping dust lie; and, seeking a motive for a foolish proceeding, he held that Pornick waited until there was a suitable wind in order that the dust disengaged in that operation might defile his neighbour's shop. These issues would frequently develop into loud and vehement quarrels, and on one occasion came so near to violence as to be subsequently described by Pornick (who read his newspaper) as a "Disgraceful Frackass." On that occasion he certainly went into his own shop with extreme celerity.

But it was through one of these quarrels that the friendship of little Kipps and Sid Pornick came about. The two small boys found

themselves one day looking through the gate at the doctor's goats together; they exchanged a few contradictions about which goat could fight which, and then young Kipps was moved to remark that Sid's father was a "blaring jackass." Sid said he wasn't, and Kipps repeated that he was, and quoted his authority. Then Sid, flying off at a tangent rather alarmingly, said he could fight young Kipps with one hand, an assertion young Kipps with a secret want of confidence denied. There were some vain repetitions, and the incident might have ended there, but happily a sporting butcher boy chanced on the controversy at this stage, and insisted upon seeing fair play.

The two small boys under his pressing encouragement did at last button up their jackets, square and fight an edifying drawn battle, until it seemed good to the butcher boy to go on with Mrs. Holyer's mutton. Then, according to his directions and under his experienced stage management, they shook hands and made it up. Subsequently, a little tear-stained perhaps, but flushed with the butcher boy's approval ("tough little kids"), and with cold stones down their necks as he advised, they sat side by side on the doctor's gate, projecting very much behind, staunching an honourable bloodshed, and expressing respect for one another. Each had a bloody nose and a black eye — three days later they matched to a shade — neither had given in, and, though this was tacit, neither wanted any more.

It was an excellent beginning. After this first encounter the attributes of their parents and their own relative value in battle never rose between them, and if anything was wanted to complete the warmth of their regard it was found in a joint dislike of the eldest Quodling. The eldest Quodling lisped, had a silly sort of straw hat and a large pink face (all covered over with self-satisfaction), and he went to the National School with a green baize bag — a contemptible thing to do. They called him names and threw stones at him, and when he replied by threatenings ("Look 'ere, young Art Kipth, you better *thtoppit*!") they were moved to attack and put him to flight.

And after that they broke the head of Ann Pornick's doll, so that she went home weeping loudly — a wicked and endearing proceeding. Sid was whacked, but, as he explained, he wore a newspaper tactically adjusted during the transaction, and really it didn't hurt him at all.... And Mrs. Pornick put her head out of the

shop door suddenly, and threatened Kipps as he passed.

§2

"Cavendish Academy," the school that had won the limited choice of Kipps' vanished mother, was established in a battered private house in the part of Hastings remotest from the sea; it was called an Academy for Young Gentlemen, and many of the young gentlemen had parents in "India," and other unverifiable places. Others were the sons of credulous widows, anxious, as Kipps' mother had been, to get something a little "superior" to a board school education as cheaply as possible; and others again were sent to demonstrate the dignity of their parents and guardians. And of course there were boys from France.

Its "principal" was a lean, long creature of indifferent digestion and temper, who proclaimed himself on a gilt-lettered board in his front garden George Garden Woodrow, F.S.Sc., letters indicating that he had paid certain guineas for a bogus diploma. A bleak white-washed outhouse constituted his schoolroom, and the scholastic quality of its carved and worn desks and forms was enhanced by a slippery blackboard and two large yellow out-of-date maps, one of Africa and the other of Wiltshire, that he had picked up cheap at a sale. There were other maps and globes in his study, where he interviewed inquiring parents, but these his pupils never saw. And in a glass cupboard in the passage was several shillingsworth of test tubes and chemicals, a tripod, a glass retort, and a damaged Bunsen burner, manifesting that the "Scientific laboratory" mentioned in the prospectus was no idle boast.

This prospectus, which was in dignified but incorrect English, laid particular stress on the sound preparation for a commercial career given in the Academy, but the army, navy and civil service were glanced at in an ambiguous sentence. There was something vague in the prospectus about "examinational successes" — though Woodrow, of course, disapproved of "cram" — and a declaration that the curriculum included "art," "modern foreign languages" and "a sound technical and scientific training." Then came insistence upon the "moral well-being" of the pupils, and an emphatic boast of

the excellence of the religious instruction, “so often neglected nowadays even in schools of wide repute.” “That’s bound to fetch ‘em,” Mr. Woodrow had remarked when he drew up the prospectus. And in conjunction with the mortarboards it certainly did. Attention was directed to the “motherly” care of Mrs. Woodrow — in reality a small partially effaced woman with a plaintive face and a mind above cookery; and the prospectus concluded with a phrase intentionally vague, “Fare unrestricted, and our own milk and produce.”

The memories Kipps carried from that school into after life were set in an atmosphere of stuffiness and mental muddle; and included countless pictures of sitting on creaking forms bored and idle, of blot licking and the taste of ink, of torn books with covers that set one’s teeth on edge, of the slimy surface of the laboured slates, of furtive marble-playing, whispered story-telling, and of pinches, blows, and a thousand such petty annoyances being perpetually “passed on” according to the custom of the place, of standing up in class and being hit suddenly and unreasonably for imaginary misbehaviour, of Mr. Woodrow’s raving days, when a scarcely sane injustice prevailed, of the cold vacuity of the hour of preparation before the bread-and-butter breakfast, and of horrible headaches and queer, unprecedented, internal feelings resulting from Mrs. Woodrow’s motherly rather than intelligent cookery. There were dreary walks, when the boys marched two by two, all dressed in the mortarboard caps that so impressed the widowed mothers; there were dismal half-holidays when the weather was wet and the spirit of evil temper and evil imagination had the pent boys to work its will on; there were unfair, dishonourable fights and miserable defeats and victories, there was bullying and being bullied. A coward boy Kipps particularly afflicted, until at last he was goaded to revolt by incessant persecution, and smote Kipps to tolerance with whirling fists. There were memories of sleeping three in a bed, of the dense leathery smell of the schoolroom when one returned thither after ten minutes’ play, of a playground of mud and incidental sharp flints. And there was much furtive foul language.

“Our Sundays are our happiest days,” was one of Woodrow’s formulæ with the inquiring parent, but Kipps was not called in evidence. They were to him terrible gaps of inanity — no work, no

play, a drear expanse of time with the mystery of church twice and plum duff once in the middle. The afternoon was given up to furtive relaxations, among which "Torture Chamber" games with the less agreeable, weaker boys figured. It was from the difference between this day and common days that Kipps derived his first definite conceptions of the nature of God and heaven. His instinct was to evade any closer acquaintance as long as he could.

The school work varied, according to the prevailing mood of Mr. Woodrow. Sometimes that was a despondent lethargy; copy-books were distributed or sums were "set," or the great mystery of bookkeeping was declared in being, and beneath these superficial activities lengthy conversations and interminable guessing games with marbles went on while Mr. Woodrow sat inanimate at his desk heedless of school affairs, staring in front of him at unseen things. At times his face was utterly inane, at times it had an expression of stagnant amazement, as if he saw before his eyes with pitiless clearness the dishonour and mischief of his being....

At other times the F.S.Sc. roused himself to action, and would stand up a wavering class and teach it, goading it with bitter mockery and blows through a chapter of Ann's "First French Course," or "France and the French," or a Dialogue about a traveller's washing, or the parts of an opera-house. His own knowledge of French had been obtained years ago in another English private school, and he had refreshed it by occasional weeks of loafing and mean adventure in Dieppe. He would sometimes in their lessons hit upon some reminiscence of these brighter days, and then he would laugh inexplicably and repeat French phrases of an unfamiliar type.

Among the commoner exercises he prescribed the learning of long passages of poetry from a "Poetry Book," which he would delegate an elder boy to "hear," and there was reading aloud from the Holy Bible, verse by verse — it was none of your "godless" schools! — so that you counted the verses up to your turn and then gave yourself to conversation — and sometimes one read from a cheap History of this land. They did, as Kipps reported, "loads of catechism." Also there was much learning of geographical names and lists, and sometimes Woodrow in an outbreak of energy would see these names were actually found on a map. And once, just once, there was a chemistry

lesson — a lesson of indescribable excitement — glass things of the strangest shape, a smell like bad eggs, something bubbling in something, a smash and stench, and Mr. Woodrow saying quite distinctly — they thrashed it out in the dormitory afterwards— "Damn!" followed by the whole school being kept in, with extraordinary severities, for an hour....

But interspersed with the memories of this grey routine were certain patches of brilliant colour — the holidays, his holidays, which in spite of the feud between their seniors, he spent as much as possible with Sid Pornick, the son of the irascible black-bearded haberdasher next door. They seemed to be memories of a different world. There were glorious days of "mucking about" along the beach, the siege of unresisting Martello towers, the incessant interest of the mystery and motion of windmills, the windy excursions with boarded feet over the yielding shingle to Dungeness lighthouse — Sid Pornick and he far adrift from reality, smugglers and armed men from the moment they left Great Stone behind them — wanderings in the hedgeless reedy marsh, long excursions reaching even to Hythe, where the machine guns of the Empire are forever whirling and tapping, and to Rye and Winchelsea, perched like dream-cities on their little hills. The sky in these memories was the blazing hemisphere of the marsh heavens in summer, or its wintry tumult of sky and sea; and there were wrecks, real wrecks, in it (near Dymchurch pitched high and blackened and rotting were the ribs of a fishing smack flung aside like an empty basket when the sea had devoured its crew); and there was bathing all naked in the sea, bathing to one's armpits and even trying to swim in the warm sea-water (spite of his aunt's prohibition), and (with her indulgence) the rare eating of dinner from a paper parcel miles away from home. Toke and cold ground rice pudding with plums it used to be — there is no better food at all. And for the background, in the place of Woodrow's mean, fretting rule, were his aunt's spare but frequently quite amiable figure — for though she insisted on his repeating the English Church Catechism every Sunday, she had an easy way over dinners that one wanted to take abroad — and his uncle, corpulent and irascible, but sedentary and easily escaped. And freedom!

The holidays were indeed very different from school. They were

free, they were spacious, and though he never knew it in these words — they had an element of beauty. In his memory of his boyhood they shone like strips of stained glass window in a dreary waste of scholastic wall, they grew brighter and brighter as they grew remoter. There came a time at last and moods when he could look back to them with a feeling akin to tears.

The last of these windows was the brightest, and instead of the kaleidoscopic effects of its predecessors its glory was a single figure. For in the last of his holidays, before the Moloch of Retail Trade got hold of him, Kipps made his first tentative essays at the mysterious shrine of Love. Very tentative they were, for he had become a boy of subdued passions, and potential rather than actual affectionateness.

And the objects of these first stirrings of the great desire was no other than Ann Pornick, the head of whose doll he and Sid had broken long ago, and rejoiced over long ago, in the days when he had yet to learn the meaning of a heart.

§3

Negotiations were already on foot to make Kipps into a draper before he discovered the lights that lurked in Ann Pornick's eyes. School was over, absolutely over, and it was chiefly present to him that he was never to go to school again. It was high summer. The "breaking up" of school had been hilarious; and the excellent maxim, "Last Day's Pay Day," had been observed by him with a scrupulous attention to his honour. He had punched the heads of all his enemies, wrung wrists and kicked shins; he had distributed all his unfinished copybooks, all his school books, his collection of marbles and his mortarboard cap among such as loved him; and he had secretly written in obscure pages of their books, "remember Art Kipps." He had also split the anæmic Woodrow's cane, carved his own name deeply in several places about the premises, and broken the scullery window. He had told everybody so often that he was to learn to be a sea captain that he had come almost to believe the thing himself. And now he was home, and school was at an end for him for evermore.

He was up before six on the day of his return, and out in the hot sunlight of the yard. He set himself to whistle a peculiarly

penetrating arrangement of three notes supposed by the boys of the Hastings Academy and himself and Sid Pornick, for no earthly reason whatever, to be the original Huron war-cry. As he did this he feigned not to be doing it, because of the hatred between his uncle and the Pornicks, but to be examining with respect and admiration a new wing of the dustbin recently erected by his uncle — a pretence that would not have deceived a nestling tomtit.

Presently there came a familiar echo from the Pornick hunting-ground. Then Kipps began to sing, "Ar pars eight tra-la, in the lane be'ind the church." To which an unseen person answered, "Ar pars eight it is, in the lane be'ind the church." The "tra-la" was considered to render this sentence incomprehensible to the uninitiated. In order to conceal their operations still more securely, both parties to this duet then gave vent to a vocalisation of the Huron war-cry again, and after a lingering repetition of the last and shrillest note, dispersed severally, as became boys in the enjoyment of holidays, to light the house fires for the day.

Half-past eight found Kipps sitting on the sunlit gate at the top of the long lane that runs towards the sea, clashing his boots in a slow rhythm, and whistling with great violence all that he knew of an excruciatingly pathetic air. There appeared along by the churchyard wall a girl in a short frock, brown-haired, quick-coloured, and with dark blue eyes. She had grown so that she was a little taller than Kipps, and her colour had improved. He scarcely remembered her, so changed was she since last holidays — if indeed he had seen her last holidays, a thing he could not clearly remember. Some vague emotion arose at the sight of her. He stopped whistling and regarded her, oddly tongue-tied.

"He can't come," said Ann, advancing boldly. "Not yet."

"What — not Sid?"

"No. Father's made him dust all his boxes again."

"What for?"

"I dunno. Father's in a stew 'smorning."

"Oh!"

Pause. Kipps looked at her, and then was unable to look at her again. She regarded him with interest. "You left school?" she remarked after a pause.

“Yes.”

“So’s Sid.”

The conversation languished. Ann put her hands on the top of the gate, and began a stationary hopping, a sort of ineffectual gymnastic experiment.

“Can you run?” she said presently.

“Run you any day,” said Kipps.

“Gimme a start?”

“Where for?” said Kipps.

Ann considered, and indicated a tree. She walked towards it, and turned. “Gimme to here?” she called.

Kipps, standing now and touching the gate, smiled to express conscious superiority. “Further!” he said.

“Here?”

“Bit more!” said Kipps, and then, repenting of his magnanimity, said “Orf!” suddenly, and so recovered his lost concession.

They arrived abreast at the tree, flushed and out of breath.

“Tie!” said Ann, throwing her hair back from her face with her hand.

“I won,” panted Kipps.

They disputed firmly but quite politely.

“Run it again, then,” said Kipps. “*I* don’t mind.”

They returned towards the gate.

“You don’t run bad,” said Kipps, temperately expressing sincere admiration. “I’m pretty good, you know.”

Ann sent her hair back by an expert toss of the head. “You give me a start,” she allowed.

They became aware of Sid approaching them.

“You better look out, young Ann,” said Sid, with that irreverent want of sympathy usual in brothers. “You been out nearly ‘arf-hour. Nothing ain’t been done upstairs. Father said he didn’t know where you was, but when he did he’d warm y’r young ear.”

Ann prepared to go.

“How about that race?” asked Kipps.

“Lor!” cried Sid, quite shocked. “You ain’t been racing *her!*”

Ann swung herself round the end of the gate with her eyes on Kipps, and then turned away suddenly and ran off down the lane.

Kipps' eyes tried to go after her, and came back to Sid's.

"I give her a lot of start," said Kipps apologetically. "It wasn't a proper race." And so the subject was dismissed. But Kipps was *distrait* for some seconds, perhaps, and the mischief had begun in him.

§4

They proceeded to the question of how two accomplished Hurons might most satisfactorily spend the morning. Manifestly their line lay straight along the lane to the sea.

"There's a new wreck," said Sid, "and my! — don't it smell just!"

"Smell?"

"Fair make you sick. It's rotten wheat."

They fell to talking of wrecks, and so came to ironclads and wars and suchlike manly matters.

Half-way to the wreck Kipps made a casual irrelevant remark. "Your sister ain't a bad sort," he said off-handedly.

"I clout her a lot," said Sidney modestly, and after a pause the talk reverted to more suitable topics.

The new wreck was full of rotting grain, and smelt abominably, even as Sid had said. This was excellent. They had it all to themselves. They took possession of it in force, at Sid's suggestion, and had speedily to defend it against enormous numbers of imaginary "natives," who were at last driven off by loud shouts of *bang*, *bang*, and vigorous thrusting and shoving of sticks. Then, also at Sid's direction, they sailed with it into the midst of a combined French, German and Russian fleet, demolishing the combination unassisted, and having descended to the beach, clambered up the side and cut out their own vessel in brilliant style, they underwent a magnificent shipwreck (with vocalised thunder) and floated "waterlogged" — so Sid insisted — upon an exhausted sea.

These things drove Ann out of mind for a time. But at last, as they drifted without food or water upon a stagnant ocean, haggard-eyed, chins between their hands, looking in vain for a sail, she came to mind again abruptly.

"It's rather nice 'aving sisters," remarked one perishing mariner.

Sid turned round and regarded him thoughtfully. “Not it!” he said.

“No?”

“Not a bit of it.” He grinned confidentially. “Know too much,” he said; and afterwards, “Get out of things.”

He resumed his gloomy scrutiny of the hopeless horizon. Presently he fell to spitting jerkily between his teeth, as he had read was the way with such ripe manhood as chews its quid.

“Sisters,” he said, “is rot. That’s what sisters are. Girls if you like, but sisters — no!”

“But ain’t sisters girls?”

“*N-eaow!*” said Sid, with unspeakable scorn.

And Kipps answered, “Of course. I didn’t mean —— I wasn’t thinking of that.”

“You got a girl?” asked Sid, spitting very cleverly again.

Kipps admitted his deficiency. He felt compunction.

“You don’t know who *my* girl is, Art Kipps — I bet.”

“Who is, then?” asked Kipps, still chiefly occupied by his own poverty.

“Ah!”

Kipps let a moment elapse before he did his duty. “Tell us!”

Sid eyed him and hesitated. “Secret?” he said.

“Secret.”

“Dying solemn?”

“Dying solemn!” Kipps’ self-concentration passed into curiosity.

Sid administered a terrible oath. Even after that precaution he adhered lovingly to his facts. “It begins with a Nem,” he said, doling them out parsimoniously. “M A U D,” he spelt, with a stern eye on Kipps, “C H A R T E R I S.”

Now, Maud Charteris was a young person of eighteen and the daughter of the vicar of St. Bavon’s, — besides which she had a bicycle, — so that as her name unfolded the face of Kipps lengthened with respect. “Get out!” he gasped incredulously. “She ain’t your girl, Sid Pornick.”

“She is!” answered Sid, stoutly.

“What — truth?”

“*Truth.*”

Kipps scrutinised his face. “Reely?”

Sid touched wood, whistled, and repeated a binding doggerel with great solemnity.

Kipps still struggled with the amazing new light on the world about him. “D’you mean — she knows?”

Sid flushed deeply, and his aspect became stern and gloomy. He resumed his wistful scrutiny of the sunlit sea. “I’d die for that girl, Art Kipps,” he said presently, and Kipps did not press a question he felt to be ill timed. “I’d do anything she asked me to do,” said Sid— “just anything. If she was to ask me to chuck myself into the sea.” He met Kipps’ eye. “I *would*,” he said.

They were pensive for a space, and then Sid began to discourse in fragments of Love, a theme upon which Kipps had already in a furtive way meditated a little, but which, apart from badinage, he had never yet heard talked about in the light of day. Of course many and various aspects of life had come to light in the muffled exchange of knowledge that went on under the shadow of Woodrow, but this of Sentimental Love was not among them. Sid, who was a boy with an imagination, having once broached this topic, opened his heart, or at any rate a new wing of his heart, to Kipps, and found no fault with Kipps for a lack of return. He produced a thumbed novelette that had played a part in his sentimental awakening; he proffered it to Kipps, and confessed there was a character in it, a baronet, singularly like himself. This baronet was a person of volcanic passions which he concealed beneath a demeanour of “icy cynicism.” The utmost expression he permitted himself was to grit his teeth; and now his attention was called to it, Kipps remarked that Sid also had a habit of gritting his teeth — and indeed had had all the morning. They read for a time, and presently Sid talked again. The conception of love Sid made evident was compact of devotion and much spirited fighting and a touch of mystery; but through all that cloud of talk there floated before Kipps a face that was flushed and hair that was tossed aside.

So they budded, sitting on the blackening old wreck in which men had lived and died, looking out to sea, talking of that other sea upon which they must presently embark....

They ceased to talk, and Sid read; but Kipps falling behind with the reading and not wishing to admit that he read slowlier than Sid,

whose education was of the inferior elementary school brand, lapsed into meditation.

"I *would* like to 'ave a girl," said Kipps. "I mean just to talk to and all that...."

A floating object distracted them at last from this obscure topic. They abandoned the wreck and followed the new interest a mile along the beach, bombarding it with stones until it came to land. They had inclined to a view that it would contain romantic mysteries, but it was simply an ill-preserved kitten — too much even for them. And at last they were drawn dinnerward and went home hungry and pensive side by side.

§5

But Kipps' imagination had been warmed by that talk of love, and in the afternoon, when he saw Ann Pornick in the High Street and said "Hello!" it was a different "hello" from that of their previous intercourse. And when they had passed they both looked back and caught each other doing so. Yes, he *did* want a girl badly....

Afterwards he was distracted by a traction engine going through the town, and his aunt had got some sprats for supper. When he was in bed, however, sentiment came upon him again in a torrent quite abruptly and abundantly, and he put his head under the pillow and whispered very softly, "I love Ann Pornick," as a sort of supplementary devotion.

In his subsequent dreams he ran races with Ann, and they lived in a wreck together, and always her face was flushed and her hair about her face. They just lived in a wreck and ran races, and were very, very fond of one another. And their favourite food was rock-chocolate, dates, such as one buys off barrows, and sprats — fried sprats....

In the morning he could hear Ann singing in the scullery next door. He listened to her for some time, and it was clear to him that he must put things before her.

Towards dusk that evening they chanced on one another at the gate by the church; but though there was much in his mind, it stopped there with a resolute shyness until he and Ann were out of

breath catching cockchafers, and were sitting on that gate of theirs again. Ann sat up upon the gate, dark against vast masses of flaming crimson and darkling purple, and her eyes looked at Kipps from a shadowed face. There came a stillness between them, and quite abruptly he was moved to tell his love.

"Ann," he said, "I *do* like you. I wish you was my girl.... I say, Ann: will you *be* my girl?"

Ann made no pretence of astonishment. She weighed the proposal for a moment with her eyes on Kipps. "If you like, Artie," she said lightly. "*I* don't mind if I am."

"All right," said Kipps, breathless with excitement, "then you are."

"All right," said Ann.

Something seemed to fall between them, and they no longer looked openly at one another. "Lor'!" cried Ann suddenly, "see that one!" and jumped down and darted after a cockchafer that had boomed within a yard of her face. And with that they were girl and boy again....

They avoided their new relationship painfully.

They did not recur to it for several days, though they met twice. Both felt that there remained something before this great experience was complete, but there was an infinite diffidence about the next step. Kipps talked in fragments of all sorts of matters, telling particularly of the great things that were being done to make a man and a draper of him, how he had two new pairs of trousers and a black coat and four new shirts. And all the while his imagination was urging him to that unknown next step, and when he was alone and in the dark he became even an enterprising wooer. It became evident to him that it would be nice to take Ann by the hand; even the decorous novelettes Sid affected egged him on to that greater nearness of intimacy.

Then a great idea came to him, in a paragraph called "Lovers' Tokens" that he read in a torn fragment of *Tit Bits*. It fell in to the measure of his courage — a divided sixpence! He secured his aunt's best scissors, fished a sixpence out of his jejune tin money-box, and jabbed his finger in a varied series of attempts to get it in half. When they met again the sixpence was still undivided. He had not intended to mention the matter to her at that stage, but it came up

spontaneously. He endeavoured to explain the theory of broken sixpences and his unexpected failure to break one.

"But what you break it for?" said Ann. "It's no good if it's broke."

"It's a Token," said Kipps.

"Like...?"

"Oh, you keep half and I keep half, and when we're sep'rated you look at your half and I look at mine — see! Then we think of each other."

"Oh!" said Ann, and appeared to assimilate this information.

"Only *I* can't get it in 'arf nohow," said Kipps.

They discussed this difficulty for some time without illumination. Then Ann had a happy thought. "Tell you what," she said, starting away from him abruptly and laying a hand on his arm, "you let *me* 'ave it, Artie. I know where father keeps his file."

Kipps handed her the sixpence, and they came upon a pause.

"I'll easy do it," said Ann.

In considering the sixpence side by side, his head had come near her cheek. Quite abruptly he was moved to take his next step into the unknown mysteries of love.

"Ann," he said, and gulped at his temerity, "I *do* love you. Straight. I'd do anything for you, Ann. Reely — I would."

He paused for breath. She answered nothing, but she was no doubt enjoying herself. He came yet closer to her — his shoulder touched hers. "Ann, I wish you'd — —"

He stopped.

"What?" said Ann.

"Ann — lemme kiss you."

Things seemed to hang for a space; his tone, the drop of his courage, made the thing incredible as he spoke. Kipps was not of that bold order of wooers who impose conditions.

Ann perceived that she was not prepared for kissing after all. Kissing, she said, was silly, and when Kipps would have displayed a belated enterprise, she flung away from him. He essayed argument. He stood afar off, as it were — the better part of a yard — and said she *might* let him kiss her, and then that he didn't see what good it was for her to be his girl if he couldn't kiss her.

She repeated that kissing was silly. A certain estrangement took

them homeward. They arrived in the dusky High Street not exactly together, and not exactly apart, but struggling. They had not kissed, but all the guilt of kissing was between them. When Kipps saw the portly contours of his uncle standing dimly in the shop doorway, his footsteps faltered, and the space between our young couple increased. Above, the window over Pornick's shop was open, and Mrs. Pornick was visible, taking the air. Kipps assumed an expression of extreme innocence. He found himself face to face with his uncle's advanced outposts of waistcoat buttons.

"Where ye bin, my boy?"

"Bin for a walk, uncle."

"Not along of that brat of Pornick's?"

"Along of who?"

"That gell" — indicating Ann with his pipe.

"Oh, no, uncle!" — very faintly.

"Run in, my boy."

Old Kipps stood aside, with an oblique glance upward, and his nephew brushed clumsily by him and vanished out of sight of the street, into the vague obscurity of the little shop. The door closed behind old Kipps with a nervous jangle of its bell, and he set himself to light the single oil lamp that illuminated his shop at nights. It was an operation requiring care and watching, or else it flared and "smelt." Often it smelt after all. Kipps for some reason found the dusky living-room with his aunt in it too populous for his feelings, and went upstairs.

"That brat of Pornick's!" It seemed to him that a horrible catastrophe had occurred. He felt he had identified himself inextricably with his uncle, and cut himself off from her for ever by saying "Oh, no!" At supper he was so visibly depressed that his aunt asked him if he wasn't feeling well. Under this imminent threat of medicine he assumed an unnatural cheerfulness.

He lay awake for nearly half an hour that night, groaning because things had all gone wrong — because Ann wouldn't let him kiss her, and because his uncle had called her a brat. It seemed to Kipps almost as though he himself had called her a brat....

There came an interval during which Ann was altogether inaccessible. One, two, three days passed, and he did not see her. Sid

he met several times; they went fishing, and twice they bathed; but though Sid lent and received back two further love stories, they talked no more of love. They kept themselves in accord, however, agreeing that the most flagrantly sentimental story was "proper." Kipps was always wanting to speak of Ann, but never daring to do so. He saw her on Sunday evening going off to chapel. She was more beautiful than ever in her Sunday clothes, but she pretended not to see him because her mother was with her. But he thought she pretended not to see him because she had given him up for ever. Brat! — who could be expected ever to forgive that? He abandoned himself to despair, he ceased even to haunt the places where she might be found.

§6

With paralysing unexpectedness came the end.

Mr. Shalford, the draper at Folkestone to whom he was to be bound apprentice, had expressed a wish to "shape the lad a bit" before the autumn sale. Kipps became aware that his box was being packed, and gathered the full truth of things on the evening before his departure. He became feverishly eager to see Ann just once more. He made silly and needless excuses to go out into the yard, he walked three times across the street without any excuse at all, to look up at the Pornick windows. Still she was hidden. He grew desperate. It was within half an hour of his departure that he came on Sid.

"Hello!" he said; "I'm orf!"

"Business?"

"Yes."

Pause.

"I say, Sid. You going 'ome?"

"Straight now."

"D'you mind? Ask Ann about that."

"About what?"

"She'll know."

And Sid said he would. But even that, it seemed, failed to evoke Ann.

At last the Folkestone bus rumbled up, and he ascended. His aunt

stood in the doorway to see him off. His uncle assisted with the box and portmanteau. Only furtively could he glance up at the Pornick windows, and still it seemed Ann hardened her heart against him. “Get up!” said the driver, and the hoofs began to clatter. No — she would not come out even to see him off. The bus was in motion, and old Kipps was going back into his shop. Kipps stared in front of him, assuring himself that he did not care.

He heard a door slam, and instantly craned out his neck to look back. He knew that slam so well. Behold! out of the haberdasher’s door a small, untidy figure in homely pink print had shot resolutely into the road, and was sprinting in pursuit. In a dozen seconds she was abreast of the bus. At the sight of her Kipps’ heart began to beat very quickly, but he made no immediate motion of recognition.

“Artie!” she cried breathlessly, “Artie! Artie! You know! I got *that*!”

The bus was already quickening its pace, and leaving her behind again, when Kipps realized what “that” meant. He became animated, he gasped, and gathered his courage together, and mumbled an incoherent request to the driver to “stop jest a jiff for sunthin’.” The driver grunted, as the disparity of their years demanded, and then the bus had pulled up, and Ann was below.

She leapt up upon the wheel. Kipps looked down into Ann’s face, and it was foreshortened and resolute. He met her eyes just for one second as their hands touched. He was not a reader of eyes. Something passed quickly from hand to hand, something that the driver, alert at the corner of his eye, was not allowed to see. Kipps hadn’t a word to say, and all she said was, “I done it, ‘smorning.” It was like a blank space in which something pregnant should have been written and wasn’t. Then she dropped down, and the bus moved forward.

After the lapse of about ten seconds it occurred to him to stand and wave his new bowler hat at her over the corner of the bus top, and to shout hoarsely, “Goo-bye, Ann! Don’ forget me — while I’m away!”

She stood in the road looking after him, and presently she waved her hand.

He remained standing unstably, his bright, flushed face looking

back at her, and his hair fluffing in the wind, and he waved his hat until at last the bend of the road hid her from his eyes. Then he turned about and sat down, and presently he began to put the half sixpence he held clenched in his hand into his trouser pocket. He looked sideways at the driver, to judge how much he had seen.

Then he fell a-thinking. He resolved that, come what might, when he came back to New Romney at Christmas, he would by hook or by crook kiss Ann.

Then everything would be perfect and right, and he would be perfectly happy.

CHAPTER II THE EMPORIUM

§1

When Kipps left New Romney, with a small yellow tin box, a still smaller portmanteau, a new umbrella, and a keepsake half-sixpence, to become a draper, he was a youngster of fourteen, thin, with whimsical drakes' tails at the poll of his head, smallish features, and eyes that were sometimes very light and sometimes very dark, gifts those of his birth; and by the nature of his training he was indistinct in his speech, confused in his mind, and retreating in his manners. Inexorable fate had appointed him to serve his country in commerce, and the same national bias towards private enterprise and leaving bad alone, which entrusted his general education to Mr. Woodrow, now indentured him firmly into the hands of Mr. Shalford, of the Folkestone Drapery Bazaar. Apprenticeship is still the recognised English way to the distributing branch of the social service. If Mr. Kipps had been so unfortunate as to have been born a German he might have been educated in an elaborate and costly special school ("over-educated — crammed up" — Old Kipps) to fit him for his end — such being their pedagogic way. He might.... But why make unpatriotic reflections in a novel? There was nothing pedagogic about Mr. Shalford.

He was an irascible, energetic little man, with hairy hands, for the most part under his coat tails, a long, shiny, bald head, a pointed, aquiline nose a little askew, and a neatly trimmed beard. He walked lightly and with a confident jerk, and he was given to humming. He had added to exceptional business "push," bankruptcy under the old dispensation, and judicious matrimony. His establishment was now one of the most considerable in Folkestone, and he insisted on every inch of frontage by alternate stripes of green and yellow down the houses over the shops. His shops were numbered 3, 5 and 7 on the street, and on his billheads 3 to 7. He encountered the abashed and awestricken Kipps with the praises of his system and himself. He spread himself out behind his desk with a grip on the lapel of his coat and made Kipps a sort of speech. "We expect y'r to work, y'r know,

and we expect y'r to study our interests," explained Mr. Shalford in the regal and commercial plural. "Our system here is the best system y'r could have. I made it, and I ought to know. I began at the very bottom of the ladder when I was fourteen, and there isn't a step in it I don't know. Not a step. Mr. Booch in the desk will give y'r the card of rules and fines. Jest wait a minute." He pretended to be busy with some dusty memoranda under a paper-weight, while Kipps stood in a sort of paralysis of awe regarding his new master's oval baldness. "Two thous'n three forty-seven pounds," whispered Mr. Shalford audibly, feigning forgetfulness of Kipps. Clearly a place of great transactions!

Mr. Shalford rose, and handing Kipps a blotting-pad and an inkpot to carry — mere symbols of servitude, for he made no use of them — emerged into a counting-house where three clerks had been feverishly busy ever since his door handle had turned. "Booch," said Mr. Shalford, "'ave y'r copy of the rules?" and a down-trodden, shabby little old man with a ruler in one hand and a quill pen in his mouth, silently held out a small book with green and yellow covers, mainly devoted, as Kipps presently discovered, to a voracious system of fines. He became acutely aware that his hands were full, and that everybody was staring at him. He hesitated a moment before putting the inkpot down to free a hand.

"Mustn't fumble like *that*," said Mr. Shalford as Kipps pocketed the rules. "Won't do here. Come along, come along," and he cocked his coat tails high, as a lady might hold up her dress, and led the way into the shop.

A vast interminable place it seemed to Kipps, with unending shining counters and innumerable faultlessly dressed young men and presently Houri-like young women staring at him. Here there was a long vista of gloves dangling from overhead rods, there ribbons and baby-linen. A short young lady in black mittens was making out the account of a customer, and was clearly confused in her addition by Shalford's eagle eye.

A thickset young man with a bald head and a round, very wise face, who was profoundly absorbed in adjusting all the empty chairs down the counter to absolutely equal distances, awoke out of his preoccupation and answered respectfully to a few Napoleonic and

quite unnecessary remarks from his employer. Kipps was told that this young man's name was Mr. Buggins, and that he was to do whatever Mr. Buggins told him to do.

They came round a corner into a new smell, which was destined to be the smell of Kipps' life for many years, the vague, distinctive smell of Manchester goods. A fat man with a large nose jumped — actually jumped — at their appearance, and began to fold a pattern of damask in front of him exactly like an automaton that is suddenly set going.

"Carshot, see to this boy to-morrow," said the master. "See he don't fumble. Smart'n 'im up."

"Yussir," said Carshot fatly, glanced at Kipps, and resumed his pattern-folding with extreme zeal.

"Whatever Mr. Carshot says y'r to do, ye *do*," said Mr. Shalford, trotting onward; and Carshot blew out his face with an appearance of relief.

They crossed a large room full of the strangest things Kipps had ever seen. Ladylike figures, surmounted by black wooden knobs in the place of the refined heads one might have reasonably expected, stood about with a lifelike air of conscious fashion.

"Costume room," said Shalford.

Two voices engaged in some sort of argument— "I can assure you, Miss Mergle, you are entirely mistaken — entirely, in supposing I should do anything so unwomanly," — sank abruptly, and they discovered two young ladies, taller and fairer than any of the other young ladies, and with black trains to their dresses, who were engaged in writing at a little table. Whatever they told him to do, Kipps gathered he was to do. He was also, he understood, to do whatever Carshot and Booch told him to do. And there were also Buggins and Mr. Shalford. And not to forget or fumble!

They descended into a cellar called "The Warehouse," and Kipps had an optical illusion of errand boys fighting. Some aerial voice said, "Teddy!" and the illusion passed. He looked again, and saw quite clearly that they were packing parcels and always would be, and that the last thing in the world that they would or could possibly do was to fight. Yet he gathered from the remarks Mr. Shalford addressed to their busy backs that they had been fighting — no doubt

at some past period of their lives.

Emerging in the shop again among a litter of toys and what are called "fancy articles," Shalford withdrew a hand from beneath his coat tails to indicate an overhead change-carrier. He entered into elaborate calculations to show how many minutes in one year were saved thereby, and lost himself among the figures. "Seven tums eight seven nine — was it? Or seven eight nine? Now, *now*! Why, when I was a boy your age I c'd do a sum like that as soon as hear it. We'll soon get y'r into better shape than that. Make you Fishent. Well, y'r must take my word, it comes to pounds and pounds saved in the year — pounds and pounds. System! System everywhere. Fishency." He went on murmuring "Fishency" and "System" at intervals for some time.

They passed into a yard, and Mr. Shalford waved his hand to his three delivery vans all striped green and yellow— "uniform — green, yell'r — System." All over the premises were pinned absurd little cards. "This door locked after 7:30. — By order, Edwin Shalford," and the like.

Mr. Shalford always wrote "By order," though it conveyed no earthly meaning to him. He was one of those people who collect technicalities upon them as the Reduvius bug collects dirt. He was the sort of man who is not only ignorant, but absolutely incapable of English. When he wanted to say he had a sixpenny-ha'penny longcloth to sell, he put it thus to startled customers: "Can DO you one, six half if y' like." He always omitted pronouns and articles and so forth; it seemed to him the very essence of the efficiently businesslike. His only preposition was "as" or the compound "as per." He abbreviated every word he could; he would have considered himself the laughing-stock of Wood Street if he had chanced to spell *socks* in any way but "sox." But, on the other hand, if he saved words here, he wasted them there: he never acknowledged an order that was not an esteemed favour, nor sent a pattern without begging to submit it. He never stipulated for so many months' credit, but bought in November "as Jan." It was not only words he abbreviated in his London communications. In paying his wholesalers his "System" admitted of a constant error in the discount of a penny or twopence, and it "facilitated business," he alleged, to ignore odd pence in the

cheques he wrote. His ledger clerk was so struck with the beauty of this part of the System, that he started a private one on his own account with the stamp box, that never came to Shalford's knowledge.

This admirable British merchant would glow with a particular pride of intellect when writing his London orders.

"Ah! do y'r think *you*'ll ever be able to write London orders?" he would say with honest pride to Kipps, waiting impatiently long after closing time to take these triumphs of commercial efficiency to post, and so end the interminable day.

Kipps shook his head, anxious for Mr. Shalford to get on.

"Now, here, f' example, I've written — see?—'1 piece 1 in. cott. blk, elas. 1/ or.' What do I mean by that *or*, eh? — d'ye know?"

Kipps promptly hadn't the faintest idea.

"And then, '2 ea. silk net as per patts herewith': *ea.*, eh?"

"Dunno, sir."

It was not Mr. Shalford's way to explain things. "Dear, dear! Pity you couldn't get some c'mercial education at your school. 'Stid of all this lit'ry stuff. Well, my boy, if y' don't 'ussel a bit y'll never write London orders, *that's* pretty plain. Jest stick stamps on all those letters, and mind y'r stick 'em right way up, and try and profit a little more by the opportunities your aunt and uncle have provided ye. Can't say *what*'ll happen t'ye if ye don't."

And Kipps, tired, hungry, and belated, set about stamping with vigour and despatch.

"Lick the *envelope*," said Mr. Shalford, "lick the *envelope*," as though he grudged the youngster the postage-stamp gum. "It's the little things mount up," he would say; and, indeed, that was his philosophy of life — to bustle and save, always to bustle and save. His political creed linked Reform, which meant nothing, with Efficiency which meant a sweated service, and Economy which meant a sweated expenditure, and his conception of a satisfactory municipal life was to "keep down the rates." Even his religion was to save his soul, and to preach a similar cheese-paring to the world.

The indentures that bound Kipps to Mr. Shalford were antique and complex: they insisted on the latter gentleman's parental privileges; they forbade Kipps to dice and game; they made him over body and soul to Mr. Shalford for seven long years, the crucial years of his life. In return there were vague stipulations about teaching the whole art and mystery of the trade to him; but as there was no penalty attached to negligence, Mr. Shalford, being a sound, practical business man, considered this a mere rhetorical flourish, and set himself assiduously to get as much out of Kipps and to put as little into him as he could in the seven years of their intercourse.

What he put into Kipps was chiefly bread and margarine, infusions of chicory and tea-dust, colonial meat by contract at threepence a pound, potatoes by the sack, and watered beer. If, however, Kipps chose to buy any supplementary material for growth, Mr. Shalford had the generosity to place his kitchen resources at his disposal free — if the fire chanced to be going. He was also allowed to share a bedroom with eight other young Englishmen, and to sleep in a bed which, except in very severe weather, could be made with the help of his overcoat and private underlinen, not to mention newspapers, quite sufficiently warm for any reasonable soul. In addition Kipps was taught the list of fines; and how to tie up parcels; to know where goods were kept in Mr. Shalford's systematised shop; to hold his hands extended upon the counter and to repeat such phrases as "What can I have the pleasure...?" "No trouble, I 'ssure you," and the like; to block, fold, and measure materials of all sorts; to lift his hat from his head when he passed Mr. Shalford abroad, and to practise a servile obedience to a large number of people. But he was not, of course, taught the "cost" mark of the goods he sold, nor anything of the method of buying such goods. Nor was his attention directed to the unfamiliar social habits and fashions to which his trade ministered. The use of half the goods he saw sold and was presently to assist in selling he did not understand; materials for hangings, cretonnes, chintzes, and the like, serviettes and all the bright, hard white wear of a well-ordered house, pleasant dress materials, linings, stiffenings — they were to him from first to last no more than things heavy and difficult to handle in bulk, that one folded up, unfolded, cut in lengths, and saw dwindle and pass away

out into that mysterious happy world in which the customer dwells. Kipps hurried from piling linen table-cloths, that were collectively as heavy as lead, to eat off oil-cloth in a gas-lit dining-room underground; and he dreamt of combing endless blankets beneath his overcoat, spare undershirt, and three newspapers. So he had at least the chance of learning the beginnings of philosophy.

In return for these benefits he worked so that he commonly went to bed exhausted and footsore. His round began at half-past six in the morning, when he would descend unwashed and shirtless, in old clothes and a scarf, and dust boxes and yawn, and take down wrappers and clean the windows until eight. Then in half an hour he would complete his toilet and take an austere breakfast of bread and margarine and what only an Imperial Englishman would admit to be coffee, after which refreshment he ascended to the shop for the labours of the day. Commonly these began with a mighty running to and fro with planks and boxes and goods for Carshot, the window-dresser, who, whether he worked well or ill, nagged persistently by reason of a chronic indigestion, until the window was done. Sometimes the costume window had to be dressed, and then Kipps staggered down the whole length of the shop from the costume room with one after another of those ladylike shapes grasped firmly, but shamefully, each about her single ankle of wood. Such days as there was no window-dressing, there was a mighty carrying and lifting of blocks and bales of goods into piles and stacks. After this there were terrible exercises, at first almost despairfully difficult: certain sorts of goods that came in folded had to be rolled upon rollers, and for the most part refused absolutely to be rolled, at any rate by Kipps; and certain other sorts of goods that came from the wholesalers rolled had to be measured and folded, which folding makes young apprentices wish they were dead. All of it, too, quite avoidable trouble, you know, that is not avoided because of the cheapness of the genteeler sorts of labour and the dearness of forethought in the world. And then consignments of new goods had to be marked off and packed into proper parcels; and Carshot packed like conjuring tricks, and Kipps packed like a boy with tastes in some other direction — not ascertained. And always Carshot nagged.

He had a curious formula of appeal to his visceral œconomy, had

Carshot, that the refinement of the times and the earnest entreaties of my friends induce me to render by an anæmic paraphrase.

"My heart and lungs! I never see such a boy," so I present Carshot's refrain; and even when he was within a foot or so of the customer's face the disciplined ear of Kipps would still at times develop a featureless, intercalary murmur into — well, "my heart and lungs!"

There came a blessed interval when Kipps was sent abroad "matching." This consisted chiefly in supplying unexpected defects in buttons, ribbon, lining, and so forth in the dressmaking department. He was given a written paper of orders with patterns pinned thereto, and discharged into the sunshine and interest of the street. Then, until he thought it wise to return and stand the racket of his delay, he was a free man, clear of all reproach.

He made remarkable discoveries in topography, as for example that the most convenient way from the establishment of Mr. Adolphus Davis to the establishment of Messrs. Plummer, Roddis & Tyrrel, two of his principal places of call, is not as is generally supposed down the Sandgate Road, but up the Sandgate Road, round by West Terrace, and along the Leas to the lift, watch the lift up and down *twice*, but not longer, because that wouldn't do, back along the Leas, watch the Harbour for a short time, and then round by the churchyard, and so (hurrying) into Church Street and Rendezvous Street. But on some exceptionally fine days the route lay through Radnor Park to the pond where the little boys sail ships and there are interesting swans.

He would return to find the shop settling down to the business of serving customers. And now he had to stand by to furnish any help that was necessary to the seniors who served, to carry parcels and bills about the shop, to clear away "stuff" after each engagement, to hold up curtains until his arms ached, and what was more difficult than all, to do nothing, and not stare disconcertingly at customers when there was nothing for him to do. He plumbed an abyss of boredom, or stood a mere carcass, with his mind far away, fighting the enemies of the Empire, or steering a dream ship perilously into unknown seas. To be recalled sharply to our higher civilisation by some bustling senior's "Nar then, Kipps. *Look* alive! Ketch 'old. (My

heart and lungs!)”

At half-past seven o’clock — except on late nights — a feverish activity of “straightening up” began, and when the last shutter was up outside, Kipps with the speed of an arrow leaving a bow would start hanging wrappers over the fixtures and over the piles of wares upon the counters, preparatory to a vigorous scattering of wet sawdust and the sweeping out of the shop.

Sometimes people would stay long after the shop was closed— “They don’t mind a bit at Shalford’s,” these ladies used to say — it is always ladies do this sort of thing — and while they loitered it was forbidden to touch a wrapper, or take any measures to conclude the day until the doors closed behind them.

Mr. Kipps would watch these later customers from the shadow of a stack of goods, and death and disfigurement was the least he wished for them. Rarely much later than nine, a supper of bread and cheese and watered beer awaited him upstairs, and, that consumed, the rest of the day was entirely at his disposal for reading, recreation, and the improvement of his mind....

The front door was locked at half-past ten, and the gas in the dormitory extinguished at eleven.

§3

On Sundays he was obliged to go to church once, and commonly he went twice, for there was nothing else to do. He sat in the free seats at the back; he was too shy to sing, and not always clever enough to keep his place in the prayer-book, and he rarely listened to the sermon. But he had developed a sort of idea that going to church had a tendency to alleviate life. His aunt wanted to have him confirmed, but he evaded this ceremony for some years.

In the intervals between services he walked about Folkestone with an air of looking for something. Folkestone was not so interesting on Sundays as on week-days, because the shops were shut; but on the other hand there was a sort of confusing brilliance along the front of the Leas in the afternoon. Sometimes the apprentice next above him would condescend to go with him; but when the apprentice next but one above him condescended to go with the apprentice next above

him, then Kipps, being habited as yet in ready-made clothes without tails, and unsuitable therefore to appear in such company, went alone.

Sometimes he would strike out into the country — still as if looking for something he missed — but the rope of meal-times haled him home again; and sometimes he would invest the major portion of the weekly allowance of a shilling that old Booch handed out to him, in a sacred concert on the pier. He would sometimes walk up and down the Leas between twenty and thirty times after supper, desiring much the courage to speak to some other person in the multitude similarly employed. Almost invariably he ended his Sunday footsore.

He never read a book; there were none for him to read, and besides, in spite of Mr. Woodrow's guidance through a cheap and cheaply annotated edition of the *Tempest* (English Literature) he had no taste that way; he never read any newspapers, except occasionally *Tit-Bits* or a ha'penny "comic." His chief intellectual stimulus was an occasional argey-bargey that sprang up between Carshot and Buggins at dinner. Kipps listened as if to unparalleled wisdom and wit, and treasured all the gems of repartee in his heart against the time when he, too, should be a Buggins and have the chance and courage for speech.

At times there came breaks in this routine — sale times, darkened by extra toil and work past midnight, but brightened by a sprat supper and some shillings in the way of 'premiums.' And every year — not now and then, but every year — Mr. Shalford, with parenthetic admiration of his own generosity and glancing comparisons with the austerer days when *he* was apprenticed, conceded Kipps no less than ten days' holiday — ten whole days every year! Many a poor soul at Portland might well envy the fortunate Kipps. Insatiable heart of man! but how those days were grudged and counted as they snatched themselves away from him one after another!

Once a year came stock-taking, and at intervals gusts of "marking off" goods newly arrived. Then the splendours of Mr. Shalford's being shone with oppressive brilliancy. "System!" he would say, "system. Come! 'ussel!" and issue sharp, confusing, contradictory orders very quickly. Carshot trotted about, confused, perspiring, his

big nose up in the air, his little eye on Mr. Shalford, his forehead crinkled, his lips always going to the formula "Oh, my heart and lungs!" The smart junior and the second apprentice vied with one another in obsequious alacrity. The smart junior aspired to Carshot's position, and that made him almost violently subservient to Shalford. They all snapped at Kipps. Kipps held the blotting-pad and the safety inkpot and a box of tickets, and ran and fetched things. If he put the ink down before he went to fetch things Mr. Shalford usually knocked it over, and if he took it away Mr. Shalford wanted it before he returned. "You make my tooth ache, Kipps," Mr. Shalford would say. "You gimme n'ralgia. You got no more System in you than a bad potato." And at the times when Kipps carried off the inkpot Mr. Shalford would become purple in the face and jab round with his dry pen at imaginary inkpots and swear, and Carshot would stand and vociferate, and the smart junior would run to the corner of the department and vociferate, and the second apprentice would pursue Kipps, vociferating, "Look Alive, Kipps! Look Alive! Ink, Man! Ink!"

A vague self-disgust, that shaped itself as an intense hate of Shalford and all his fellow-creatures, filled the soul of Kipps during these periods of storm and stress. He felt that the whole business was unjust and idiotic, but the why and the wherefore was too much for his unfortunate brain. His mind was a welter. One desire, the desire to dodge some at least of a pelting storm of disagreeable comment, guided him through a fumbling performance of his duties. His disgust was infinite! It was not decreased by the inflamed ankles and sore feet that form a normal incident in the business of making an English draper; and the senior apprentice, Minton, a gaunt, sullen-faced youngster with close-cropped, wiry, black hair, a loose, ugly mouth, and a moustache like a smudge of ink, directed his attention to deeper aspects of the question and sealed his misery.

"When you get too old to work they chuck you away," said Minton. "Lor! you find old drapers everywhere — tramps, beggars, dock labourers, 'bus conductors — Quod. Anywhere but in a crib."

"Don't they get shops of their own?"

"Lord! '*Ow* are they to get shops of their own? They 'aven't any capital! How's a draper's shopman to save up five hundred pounds

even? I tell you it can't be done. You got to stick to cribs until it's over. I tell you we're in a blessed drainpipe, and we've got to crawl along it till we die."

The idea that fermented perpetually in the mind of Minton was to "hit the little beggar slap in the eye" — the little beggar being Mr. Shalford— "and see how his blessed System met that."

The threat filled Kipps with splendid anticipations whenever Shalford went marking off in Minton's department. He would look at Minton and look at Shalford, and decide where he would best like Shalford hit.... But for reasons known to himself Shalford never pished and tushed with Minton, as he did at the harmless Carshot, and this interesting experiment upon the System was never attempted.

§4

There were times when Kipps would lie awake, all others in the dormitory asleep and snoring, and think dismally of the outlook Minton pictured. Dimly he perceived the thing that had happened to him — how the great, stupid machine of retail trade had caught his life into its wheels, a vast, irresistible force which he had neither strength of will nor knowledge to escape. This was to be his life until his days should end. No adventures, no glory, no change, no freedom. Neither — though the force of that came home to him later — might he dream of effectual love and marriage. And there was a terrible something called the "swap," or "the key of the street," and "crib hunting," of which the talk was scanty but sufficient. Night after night he would resolve to enlist, to run away to sea, to set fire to the warehouse, or drown himself; and morning after morning he rose up and hurried downstairs in fear of a sixpenny fine. He would compare his dismal round of servile drudgery with those windy, sunlit days at Littlestone, those windows of happiness shining ever brighter as they receded. The little figure of Ann seemed in all these windows now.

She, too, had happened on evil things. When Kipps went home for the first Christmas after he was bound, that great suspended resolve of his to kiss her flared up to hot determination, and he hurried out

and whistled in the yard. There was a still silence, and then old Kipps appeared behind him.

"It's no good your whistling there, my boy," said Old Kipps in a loud, clear tone, designed to be audible over the wall. "They've cleared out all you 'ad any truck with. *She's* gone as help to Ashford, my boy. *Help!* Slavey is what we used to call 'em, but times are changed. Wonder they didn't say lady-'elp while they was about it. It 'ud be like 'em."

And Sid? Sid had gone, too. "Arrand boy or somethink," said Old Kipps. "To one of these here brasted cicycle shops."

"*Has* 'e!" said Kipps, with a feeling that he had been gripped about the chest, and he turned quickly and went indoors.

Old Kipps, still supposing him present, went on to further observations of an anti-Pornick hue....

When Kipps got upstairs safe in his own bedroom, he sat down on the bed and stared at nothing. They were caught — they were all caught. All life took on the hue of one perpetual, dismal Monday morning. The Hurons were scattered, the wrecks and the beach had passed away from him, the sun of those warm evenings at Littlestone had set for evermore....

The only pleasure left for the brief remainder of his holiday after that was to think he was not in the shop. Even that was transient. Two more days — one more day — half a day. When he went back there were one or two very dismal nights indeed. He went so far as to write home some vague intimation of his feelings about business and his prospects, quoting Minton. But Mrs. Kipps answered him, "Did he want the Pornicks to say he wasn't good enough to be a draper?" This dreadful possibility was of course conclusive in the matter. "No," he resolved they should not say he failed at that.

He derived much help from a "manly" sermon delivered in an enormous voice by a large, fat, sun-red clergyman, just home from a colonial bishopric he had resigned on the plea of ill-health, exhorting him that whatever his hand found to do, he was to do with all his might; and the revision of his Catechism preparatory to his confirmation reminded him that it behooved him "to do his duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call him...."

After a time the sorrows of Kipps grew less acute, and save for a

miracle the brief tragedy of his life was over. He subdued himself to his position even as his Church required of him, seeing moreover no way out of it.

The earliest mitigation of his lot was that his soles and ankles became indurated to the perpetual standing. The next was an unexpected weekly whiff of freedom that came every Thursday. Mr. Shalford, after a brave stand for what he called "Innyvishal lib'ty" and the "Idea of my System," a stand which he explained he made chiefly on patriotic grounds, was at last, under pressure of certain of his customers, compelled to fall in line with the rest of the local Early Closing Association, and Mr. Kipps could emerge in daylight and go where he listed for long, long hours. Moreover Minton, the pessimist, reached the end of his appointed time and left — to enlist in a cavalry regiment and go about this planet leading an insubordinate but interesting life, that ended at last in an intimate, vivid and really you know by no means painful or tragic night grapple in the Terah Valley. In a little while Kipps cleaned windows no longer; he was serving customers (of the less important sort) and taking goods out on approval; and presently he was third apprentice, and his moustache was visible, and there were three apprentices whom he might legally snub and cuff. But one was (most dishonestly) too big to cuff in spite of his greener years.

§5

There came still other distractions, the natural distractions of adolescence, to take his mind off the inevitable. His costume, for example, began to interest him more; he began to realise himself as a visible object, to find an interest in the costume-room mirrors and the eyes of the girl apprentices.

In this he was helped by counsel and example. Pierce, his immediate senior, was by way of being what was called a Masher, and preached his cult. During slack times grave discussions about collars, ties, the cut of trouser legs, and the proper shape of a boot-toe, were held in the Manchester department. In due course Kipps went to a tailor, and his short jacket was replaced by a morning coat with tails. Stirred by this, he purchased at his own expense three

stand-up collars to replace his former turn-down ones. They were nearly three inches high, higher than those Pierce wore, and they made his neck quite sore and left a red mark under his ears.... So equipped, he found himself fit company even for this fashionable apprentice, who had now succeeded Minton in his seniority.

Most potent help of all in the business of forgetting his cosmic disaster was this, that so soon as he was in tail coats the young ladies of the establishment began to discover that he was no longer a "horrid little boy." Hitherto they had tossed heads at him and kept him in his place. Now they discovered that he was a "nice boy," which is next door at least to being a "feller," and in some ways even preferable. It is painful to record that his fidelity to Ann failed at their first onset. I am fully sensible how entirely better this story would be from a sentimental point of view if he had remained true to that early love. Only then it would have been a different story altogether. And at least Kipps was thus far true, that with none of these later loves was there any of that particular quality that linked Ann's flushed face and warmth and the inner things of life so inseparably together. Though they were not without emotions of various sorts.

It was one of the young ladies in the costume-room who first showed by her manner that he was a visible object and capable of exciting interest. She talked to him, she encouraged him to talk to her, she lent him a book she possessed, and darned a sock for him, and said she would be his elder sister. She allowed him to escort her to church with a great air of having induced him to go. Then she investigated his eternal welfare, overcame a certain affectation of virile indifference to religion, and extorted a promise that he would undergo "confirmation." This excited the other young lady in the costumes, her natural rival, and she set herself with great charm and subtlety to the capture of the ripening heart of Kipps. She took a more worldly line. She went for a walk with him to the pier on Sunday afternoon, and explained to him how a gentleman must always walk "outside" a lady on a pavement, and how all gentlemen wore, or at least carried gloves, and generally the broad beginnings of the British social ideal. Afterwards the ladies exchanged "words," upon Sabbatical grounds. In this way was the *toga virilis* bestowed on Kipps, and he became recognised as a suitable object for that

Platonic Eros whose blunted darts devastate even the very highest-class establishments. In this way, too, did that pervading ambition of the British young man to be, if not a "gentleman," at least mistakably like one, take root in his heart.

He took to these new interests with quite natural and personal zest. He became initiated into the mysteries of "flirting," and — at a slightly later stage, and with some leading hints from Pierce, who was of a communicative disposition in these matters — of the milder forms of "spooning." Very soon he was engaged. Before two years were out he had been engaged six times, and was beginning to be rather a desperate fellow, so far as he could make out. Desperate, but quite gentlemanly, be it understood, and without let or hindrance to the fact that he was, in four brief lessons, "prepared" by a distant-mannered and gloomy young curate, and "confirmed" a member of the Established Church.

The engagements in drapery establishments do not necessarily involve a subsequent marriage. They are essentially more refined, less coarsely practical, and altogether less binding than the engagements of the vulgar rich. These young ladies do not like not to be engaged — it is so unnatural; and Mr. Kipps was as easy to get engaged to as one could wish. There are, from the young lady's point of view, many conveniences in being engaged. You get an escort for church and walks and so forth. It is not quite the thing to walk abroad with a "feller," much more to "spoon" with him, when he is neither one's *fiancé* nor an adopted brother; it is considered either a little *fast*, or else as savouring of the "walking-out" habits of the servant girls. Now, such is the sweetness of human charity, that the shop young lady in England has just the same horror of doing anything that savours of the servant girl as the lady journalist, let us say, has of anything savouring of the shop girl, or the really quite nice young lady has of anything savouring of any sort of girl who has gone down into the economic battlefield to earn herself a living.... But the very deepest of these affairs was still among the shallow places of love; at best it was paddling where it is decreed that men must sink or swim. Of the deep and dangerous places, and of the huge buoyant lift of its waves, he tasted nothing. Affairs of clothes and vanities they were, jealousies about a thing said, flatteries and mutual boastings,

climaxes in the answering grasp of hands, the temerarious use of Christian names, culminations in a walk, or a near confidence, or a little pressure more or less. Close-sitting on a seat after twilight, with some little fondling, was indeed the boldest of a lover's adventures, the utmost limit of his enterprises in the service of that stark Great Lady, who is daughter of Uranus and the sea. The "young ladies" who reigned in his heart came and went like people in an omnibus: there was the vehicle, so to speak, upon the road, and they entered and left it without any cataclysm of emotion. For all that, this development of the sex interest was continuously very interesting to Kipps, and kept him going as much as anything through all these servile years.

§6

For a tailpiece to this chapter one may vignette one of those little affairs.

It is a bright Sunday afternoon; the scene is a secluded little seat half-way down the front of the Leas, and Kipps is four years older than when he parted from Ann. There is a quite perceptible down upon his upper lip, and his costume is just as tremendous a "mash" as lies within his means. His collar is so high that it scars his inaggressive jawbone, and his hat has a curly brim, his tie shows taste, his trousers are modestly brilliant, and his boots have light cloth uppers and button at the side. He jabs at the gravel before him with a cheap cane, and glances sideways at Flo Bates, the young lady from the cash desk. She is wearing a brilliant blouse and a gaily trimmed hat. There is an air of fashion about her that might disappear under the analysis of a woman of the world, but which is quite sufficient to make Kipps very proud to be distinguished as her particular "feller," and to be allowed at temperate intervals to use her Christian name.

The conversation is light and gay in the modern style, and Flo keeps on smiling, good temper being her special charm.

"Ye see, you don' mean what *I* mean," he is saying.

"Well, what do *you* mean?"

"Not what you mean!"

“Well, tell me.”

“*Ah!* That’s another story.”

Pause. They look meaningly at one another.

“You *are* a one for being roundabout,” says the lady.

“Well, you’re not so plain, you know.”

“Not plain?”

“No.”

“You don’t mean to say I’m roundabout?”

“No. I mean to say ... though — —”

Pause.

“Well?”

“You’re not a bit plain — you’re” (his voice jumps up to a squeak) “pretty. See?”

“Oh, get *out*!” her voice lifts also — with pleasure.

She strikes at him with her glove, then glances suddenly at a ring upon her finger. Her smile disappears momentarily. Another pause. Eyes meet and the smile returns.

“I wish I knew — —” says Kipps.

“Knew —— ?”

“Where you got that ring.”

She lifts the hand with the ring until her eyes just show (very prettily) over it. “You’d just *like* to know,” she says slowly, and smiles still more brightly with the sense of successful effect.

“I dessay I could guess.”

“I dessay you couldn’t.”

“Couldn’t I?”

“No!”

“Guess it in three.”

“Not the name.”

“Ah!”

“*Ah!*”

“Well, anyhow lemme look at it.”

He looks at it. Pause. Giggles, slight struggle, and a slap on Kipps’ coatsleeve. A passerby appears down the path, and she hastily withdraws her hand.

She glances at the face of the approaching man. They maintain a bashful silence until he has passed.

CHAPTER III THE WOOD-CARVING CLASS

§1

Though these services to Venus Epipontia, the seaside Venus, and these studies in the art of dress, did much to distract his thoughts and mitigate his earlier miseries, it would be mere optimism to present Kipps as altogether happy. A vague dissatisfaction with life drifted about him and every now and again enveloped him like a sea fog. During these periods it was greyly evident that there was something, something vital in life, lacking. For no earthly reason that Kipps could discover, he was haunted by a suspicion that life was going wrong or had already gone wrong in some irrevocable way. The ripening self-consciousness of adolescence developed this into a clearly felt insufficiency. It was all very well to carry gloves, open doors, never say "Miss" to a girl, and walk "outside," but were there not other things, conceivably even deeper things, before the complete thing was attained? For example, certain matters of knowledge. He perceived great bogs of ignorance about him, fumbling traps, where other people, it was alleged, *real* gentlemen and ladies, for example, and the clergy, had knowledge and assurance, bogs which it was sometimes difficult to elude. A girl arrived in the millinery department who could, she said, *speak* French and German. She snubbed certain advances, and a realisation of inferiority blistered Kipps. But he tried to pass the thing off as a joke by saying, "Parlez-vous Francey," whenever he met her, and inducing the junior apprentice to say the same.

He even made some dim half-secret experiments towards remedying the deficiencies he suspected. He spent five shillings on five serial numbers of a Home Educator, and bought (and even thought of reading) a Shakespeare and a Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" and the poems of Herrick from a chap who was hard up. He battled with Shakespeare all one Sunday afternoon, and found the "English Literature" with which Mr. Woodrow had equipped him had vanished down some crack in his mind. He had no doubt it was very splendid stuff, but he couldn't quite make out what it was all

about. There was an occult meaning, he knew, in literature, and he had forgotten it. Moreover, he discovered one day, while taunting the junior apprentice with ignorance, that his "rivers of England" had also slipped his memory, and he laboriously restored that fabric of rote learning: "Ty Wear Tees 'Umber...."

I suppose some such phase of discontent is a normal thing in every adolescence. The ripening mind seeks something upon which its will may crystallise, upon which its discursive emotions, growing more abundant with each year of life, may concentrate. For many, though not for all, it takes a religious direction, but in those particular years the mental atmosphere of Folkestone was exceptionally free from any revivalistic disturbance that might have reached Kipps' mental being. Sometimes they fall in love. I have known this uneasiness end in different cases in a vow to read one book (not a novel) every week, to read the Bible through in a year, to pass in the Honours division of the London Matriculation examination, to become an accomplished chemist, and never more to tell a lie. It led Kipps finally into Technical Education as we understand it in the south of England.

It was in the last year of his apprenticeship that he had pursued his researches after that missing qualification into the Folkestone Young Men's Association, where Mr. Chester Coote prevailed. Mr. Chester Coote was a young man of semi-independent means who inherited a share in a house agency, read Mrs. Humphry Ward, and took an interest in social work. He was a whitish-faced young man with a prominent nose, pale blue eyes, and a quivering quality in his voice. He was very active upon committees; he was very prominent and useful on all social occasions, in evidence upon platforms and upon all those semi-public occasions when the Great descend. He lived with an only sister. To Kipps and his kind in the Young Men's Association he read a stimulating paper on "Self-Help." He said it was the noblest of all our distinctive English characteristics, and he was very much down upon the "over-educated" Germans. At the close a young German hairdresser made a few commendatory remarks which developed somehow into an oration on Hanoverian politics. As he became excited he became guttural and obscure; the meeting sniggered cheerfully at such ridiculous English, and Kipps

was so much amused that he forgot a private project to ask this Chester Coote how he might set about a little self-help on his own private account in such narrow margins of time as the System of Mr. Shalford spared him. But afterwards in the night-time it came to him again.

It was a few months later, and after his apprenticeship was over and Mr. Shalford had with depreciatory observations taken him on as an improver at twenty pounds a year, that this question was revived by a casual article on Technical Education in a morning paper that a commercial traveller had left behind him. It played the *rôle* of the word in season. Something in the nature of conversion, a faint sort of concentration of purpose, really occurred in him then. The article was written with penetrating vehemence, and it stimulated him to the pitch of inquiring about the local Science and Art Classes, and after he had told everybody in the shop about it and taken the advice of all who supported his desperate resolution, he joined. At first he attended the class in Freehand, that being the subject taught on early closing night; and he had already made some progress in that extraordinary routine of reproducing freehand "copies" which for two generations had passed with English people for instruction in art, when the dates of the classes were changed. Thereby just as the March winds were blowing he was precipitated into the wood-carving class, and his mind diverted first to this useful and broadening pursuit, and then to its teacher.

§2

The class in wood-carving was an extremely select class, conducted at that time by a young lady named Walshingham, and as this young lady was destined by fortune to teach Kipps a great deal more than wood carving, it will be well if the reader gets the picture of her correctly in mind. She was only a year or so older than he was; she had a pale, intellectual face, dark grey eyes, and black hair, which she wore over her forehead in an original and striking way that she had adopted from a picture by Rossetti in the South Kensington Museum. She was slender, so that without ungainliness she had an effect of being tall, and her hands were shapely and white when they

came into contrast with hands much exercised in rolling and blocking. She dressed in those loose and pleasant forms and those soft and tempered shades that arose in England in the socialistic-æsthetic epoch and remain to this day among us as the badge of those who read Turgenev's novels, scorn current fiction, and think on higher planes. I think she was as beautiful as most beautiful people, and to Kipps she was altogether beautiful. She had, Kipps learnt, matriculated at London University, an astounding feat to his imagination; and the masterly way in which she demonstrated how to prod and worry honest pieces of wood into useless and unedifying patterns in relief extorted his utmost admiration.

At first, when Kipps had learnt he was to be taught by a "girl," he was inclined to resent it, the more so as Buggins had recently been very strong on the gross injustice of feminine employment.

"We have to keep wives," said Buggins (though as a matter of fact he did not keep even one), "and how are we to do it with a lot of girls coming in to take the work out of our mouths?"

Afterwards Kipps, in conjunction with Pierce, looked at it from another point of view, and thought it would be rather a "lark." Finally, when he saw her, and saw her teaching, and coming nearer to him with an impressive deliberation, he was breathless with awe and the quality of her dark, slender femininity.

The class consisted of two girls and a maiden lady of riper years, friends of Miss Walshingham's, and anxious rather to support her in an interesting experiment than to become really expert wood-carvers; an oldish young man with spectacles and a black beard, who never spoke to any one, and who was evidently too short-sighted to see his work as a whole; a small boy who was understood to have a "gift" for wood-carving; and a lodging-house keeper who "took classes" every winter, she told Mr. Kipps, as though they were a tonic, and "found they did her good." And occasionally Mr. Chester Coote — refined and gentlemanly — would come into the class, with or without papers, ostensibly on committee business, but in reality to talk to the less attractive one of the two girl students; and sometimes a brother of Miss Walshingham's, a slender, dark young man with a pale face, and fluctuating resemblances to the young Napoleon, would arrive just at the end of the class-time to see his sister home.

All these personages impressed Kipps with a sense of inferiority that in the case of Miss Walshingham became positively abysmal. The ideas and knowledge they appeared to have, their personal capacity and freedom, opened a new world to his imagination. These people came and went, with a sense of absolute assurance, against an overwhelming background of plaster casts, diagrams and tables, benches and a blackboard — a background that seemed to him to be saturated with recondite knowledge and the occult and jealously guarded tips and secrets that constitute Art and the Higher Life. They went home, he imagined, to homes where the piano was played with distinction and freedom, and books littered the tables, and foreign languages were habitually used. They had complicated meals, no doubt — with serviettes. They "knew etiquette," and how to avoid all the errors for which Kipps bought penny manuals, "What to Avoid," "Common Errors in Speaking," and the like. He knew nothing about it all — nothing whatever; he was a creature of the outer darkness blinking in an unsuspected light.

He heard them speak easily and freely to one another of examinations, of books and paintings, of "last year's Academy" — a little contemptuously; and once, just at the end of the class-time, Mr. Chester Coote and young Walshingham and the two girls argued about something or other called, he fancied, "Vagner" or "Vargner" — they seemed to say it both ways — and which presently shaped itself more definitely as the name of a man who made up music. (Carshot and Buggins weren't in it with them.) Young Walshingham, it appeared, said something or other that was an "epigram," and they all applauded him. Kipps, I say, felt himself a creature of outer darkness, an inexcusable intruder in an altitudinous world. When the epigram happened, he first of all smiled, to pretend he understood, and instantly suppressed the smile to show he did not listen. Then he became extremely hot and uncomfortable, though nobody had noticed either phase.

It was clear his only chance of concealing his bottomless baseness was to hold his tongue, and meanwhile he chipped with earnest care, and abased his soul before the very shadow of Miss Walshingham. She used to come and direct and advise him, with, he felt, an effort to conceal the scorn she had for him; and, indeed, it is true that at first

she thought of him chiefly as the clumsy young man with the red ears.

And as soon as he emerged from the first effect of pure and awestricken humility — he was greatly helped to emerge from that condition to a perception of human equality by the need the lodging-house keeper was under to talk while she worked, and as she didn't like Miss Walshingham and her friends very much, and the young man with spectacles was deaf, she naturally talked to Kipps — he perceived that he was in a state of adoration for Miss Walshingham that it seemed almost a blasphemous familiarity to speak of us being in love.

This state, you must understand, had nothing to do with "flirting" or "spooning" and that superficial passion that flashes from eye to eye upon the leas and pier — absolutely nothing. That he knew from the first. Her rather pallid, intelligent young face, beneath those sombre clouds of hair, put her in a class apart; towards her the thought of "attentions" paled and vanished. To approach such a being, to perform sacrifices and to perish obviously for her, seemed the limit he might aspire to, he or any man. For if his love was abasement, at any rate it had this much of manliness, that it covered all his sex. It had not yet come to Kipps to acknowledge any man as his better in his heart of hearts. When one does that the game is played and one grows old indeed.

The rest of his sentimental interests vanished altogether in this great illumination. He meditated about her when he was blocking cretonne; her image was before his eyes at tea-time, and blotted out the more immediate faces, and made him silent and preoccupied, and so careless in his bearing that the junior apprentice, sitting beside him, mocked at and parodied his enormous bites of bread and butter unreproved. He became conspicuously less popular on the "fancy" side, the "costumes" was chilly with him and the "millinery" cutting. But he did not care. An intermittent correspondent with Flo Bates, that had gone on since she left Mr. Shalford's desk for a position at Tunbridge "nearer home," and which had roused Kipps in its earlier stages to unparalleled heights of epistolatory effort, died out altogether by reason of his neglect. He heard with scarcely a pang that, as a consequence perhaps of his neglect, Flo was "carrying on

with a chap who managed a farm."

Every Thursday he jabbed and gouged at his wood, jabbing and gouging intersecting circles and diamond traceries, and that laboured inane which our mad world calls ornament, and he watched Miss Walshingham furtively whenever she turned away. The circles in consequence were jabbed crooked; and his panels, losing their symmetry, became comparatively pleasing to the untrained eye — and once he jabbed his finger. He would cheerfully have jabbed all his fingers if he could have found some means of using the opening to express himself of the vague emotions that possessed him. But he shirked conversation just as earnestly as he desired it; he feared that profound general ignorance of his might appear.

§3

There came a time when she could not open one of the class-room windows. The man with the black beard pored over his chipping heedlessly....

It did not take Kipps a moment to grasp his opportunity. He dropped his gouge and stepped forward. "Lem *me*," he said....

He could not open the window either!

"Oh, please don't trouble," she said.

"'Sno trouble," he gasped.

Still the sash stuck. He felt his manhood was at stake. He gathered himself together for a tremendous effort, and the pane broke with a snap, and he thrust his hand into the void beyond.

"*There!*" said Miss Walshingham, and the glass fell ringing into the courtyard below.

Then Kipps made to bring his hand back, and felt the keen touch of the edge of the broken glass at his wrist. He turned dolefully. "I'm tremendously sorry," he said in answer to the accusation in Miss Walshingham's eyes. "I didn't think it would break like that," — as if he had expected it to break in some quite different and entirely more satisfactory manner. The boy with the gift of wood-carving having stared at Kipps' face for a moment, became involved in a Laocoon struggle with a giggle.

"You've cut your wrist," said one of the girl friends, standing up

and pointing. She was a pleasant-faced, greatly freckled girl, with a helpful disposition, and she said "You've cut your wrist," as brightly as if she had been a trained nurse.

Kipps looked down, and saw a swift line of scarlet rush down his hand. He perceived the other man student regarding this with magnified eyes. "You *have* cut your wrist," said Miss Walshingham, and Kipps regarded his damage with greater interest.

"He's cut his wrist," said the maiden lady to the lodging-house keeper, and seemed in doubt what a lady should do. "It's — —" she hesitated at the word "bleeding," and nodded to the lodging-house keeper instead.

"Dreadfully," said the maiden lady, and tried to look and tried not to look at the same time.

"Of *course* he's cut his wrist," said the lodging-house keeper, momentarily quite annoyed at Kipps; and the other young lady, who thought Kipps rather common, went on quietly with her wood-cutting with an air of its being the proper thing to do — though nobody else seemed to know it.

"You must tie it up," said Miss Walshingham.

"We must tie it up," said the freckled girl.

"I 'adn't the slightest idea that window was going to break like that," said Kipps, with candour. "Nort the slightest."

He glanced again at the blood on his wrist, and it seemed to him that it was on the very point of dropping on the floor of that cultured class-room. So he very neatly licked it off, feeling at the same time for his handkerchief. "Oh, *don't!*" said Miss Walshingham as he did so, and the girl with the freckles made a movement of horror. The giggle got the better of the boy with the gift, and celebrated its triumph by unseemly noises; in spite of which it seemed to Kipps at the moment that the act that had made Miss Walshingham say "Oh, *don't!*" was rather a desperate and manly treatment of what was after all a creditable injury.

"It ought to be tied up," said the lodging-house keeper, holding her chisel upright in her hand. "It's a bad cut to bleed like that."

"We must tie it up," said the freckled girl, and hesitated in front of Kipps. "Have you got a handkerchief?" she said.

"I dunno 'ow I managed *not* to bring one," said Kipps. "I ——

Not ‘aving a cold I suppose some’ow I didn’t think — —”

He checked a further flow of blood.

The girl with the freckles caught Miss Walshingham’s eye, and held it for a moment. Both glanced at Kipps’ injury. The boy with the gift, who had reappeared with a chastened expression from some noisy pursuit beneath his desk, made the neglected motions of one who proffers shyly. Miss Walshingham under the spell of the freckled girl’s eye produced a handkerchief. The voice of the maiden lady could be heard in the background. “I’ve been through all the technical education ambulance classes twice, and I know you go *so* if it’s a vein, and *so* if it’s an artery — at least you go *so* for one and *so* for the other, whichever it may be; but....”

“If you will give me your hand,” said the freckled girl, and proceeded with Miss Walshingham’s assistance to bandage Kipps in a most businesslike way. Yes, they actually bandaged Kipps. They pulled up his cuffs — happily they were not a very frayed pair — and held his wrist, and wrapped the soft handkerchief round it, and tightened the knot together. And Miss Walshingham’s face, the face of that almost divine Over-human, came close to the face of Kipps.

“We’re not hurting you, are we?” she said.

“Not a bit,” said Kipps, as he would have said if they had been sawing his arm off.

“We’re not experts, you know,” said the freckled girl.

“I’m sure it’s a dreadful cut,” said Miss Walshingham.

“It ain’t much reely,” said Kipps; “and you’re taking a lot of trouble. I’m sorry I broke that window. I can’t think what I could have been doing.”

“It isn’t so much the cut at the time, it’s the poisoning afterwards,” came the voice of the maiden lady.

“Of course I’m quite willing to pay for the window,” panted Kipps opulently.

“We must make it just as tight as possible, to stop the bleeding,” said the freckled girl.

“I don’t think it’s much reely,” said Kipps. “I’m awful sorry I broke that window, though.”

“Put your finger on the knot, dear,” said the freckled girl.

“Eh?” said Kipps; “I mean — —”

Both the young ladies became very intent on the knot, and Mr. Kipps was very red and very intent upon the two young ladies.

"Mortified, and had to be sawn off," said the maiden lady.

"Sawn off?" said the lodging-house keeper.

"Sawn *right* off," said the maiden lady, and jabbed at her mangled design.

"*There*," said the freckled girl, "I think that ought to do. You're sure it's not too tight?"

"Not a bit," said Kipps.

He met Miss Walshingham's eye, and smiled to show how little he cared for wounds and pain. "It's only a little cut," he added.

The maiden lady appeared as an addition to their group. "You should have washed the wound, dear," she said. "I was just telling Miss Collis." She peered through her glasses at the bandage. "That doesn't look *quite* right," she remarked critically. "You should have taken the ambulance classes. But I suppose it will have to do. Are you hurting?"

"Not a bit," said Kipps, and he smiled at them all with the air of a brave soldier in hospital.

"I'm sure it *must* hurt," said Miss Walshingham.

"Anyhow, you're a very good patient," said the girl with the freckles.

Mr. Kipps became quite pink. "I'm only sorry I broke the window — that's all," he said. "But who would have thought it was going to break like that?"

Pause.

"I'm afraid you won't be able to go on carving to-night," said Miss Walshingham.

"I'll try," said Kipps. "It reelly doesn't hurt — not anything to matter."

Presently Miss Walshingham came to him as he carved heroically with his hand bandaged in her handkerchief. There was a touch of a novel interest in her eyes. "I'm afraid you're not getting on very fast," she said.

The freckled girl looked up and regarded Miss Walshingham.

"I'm doing a little, anyhow," said Kipps. "I don't want to waste any time. A feller like me hasn't much time to spare."

It struck the girls that there was a quality of modest disavowal about that “feller like me.” It gave them a light into this obscure person, and Miss Walshingham ventured to commend his work as “promising” and to ask whether he meant to follow it up. Kipps didn’t “altogether know”— “things depended on so much,” but if he was in Folkestone next winter he certainly should. It did not occur to Miss Walshingham at the time to ask why his progress in art depended upon his presence in Folkestone. There was some more questions and answers — they continued to talk to him for a little time, even when Mr. Chester Coote had come into the room — and when at last the conversation had died out it dawned upon Kipps just how much his cut wrist had done for him....

He went to sleep that night revising that conversation for the twentieth time, treasuring this and expanding that, and inserting things he might have said to Miss Walshingham, things he might still say about himself — in relation more or less explicit to her. He wasn’t quite sure if he wouldn’t like his arm to mortify a bit, which would make him interesting, or to heal up absolutely, which would show the exceptional purity of his blood.

§4

The affair of the broken window happened late in April, and the class came to an end in May. In that interval there were several small incidents and great developments of emotion. I have done Kipps no justice if I have made it seem that his face was unsightly. It was, as the freckled girl pointed out to Helen Walshingham, an “interesting” face, and that aspect of him which presented chiefly erratic hair and glowing ears ceased to prevail.

They talked him over, and the freckled girl discovered there was something “wistful” in his manner. They detected a “natural delicacy,” and the freckled girl set herself to draw him out from that time forth. The freckled girl was nineteen, and very wise and motherly and benevolent, and really she greatly preferred drawing out Kipps to wood-carving. It was quite evident to her that Kipps was in love with Helen Walshingham, and it struck her as a queer and romantic and pathetic and extremely interesting phenomenon.

And as at that time she regarded Helen as “simply lovely,” it seemed only right and proper that she should assist Kipps in his modest efforts to place himself in a state of absolute *abandon* upon her altar.

Under her sympathetic management the position of Kipps was presently defined quite clearly. He was unhappy in his position — misunderstood. He told her he “didn’t seem to get on like” with customers, and she translated this for him as “too sensitive.” The discontent with his fate in life, the dreadful feeling that education was slipping by him, troubles that time and usage were glazing over a little, revived to their old acuteness but not to their old hopelessness. As a basis for sympathy indeed they were even a source of pleasure.

And one day at dinner it happened that Carshot and Buggins fell talking of “these here writers,” and how Dickens had been a labeller of blacking and Thackeray “an artist who couldn’t sell a drawing,” and how Samuel Johnson had walked to London without any boots, having thrown away his only pair “out of pride.” “It’s luck,” said Buggins, “to a very large extent. They just happen to hit on something that catches on, and there you are!”

“Nice easy life they have of it, too,” said Miss Mergle. “Write just an hour or so, and done for the day! Almost like gentlefolks.”

“There’s more work in it than you’d think,” said Carshot, stooping to a mouthful.

“I wouldn’t mind changing, for all that,” said Buggins. “I’d like to see one of these here authors marking off with Jimmy.”

“I think they copy from each other a good deal,” said Miss Mergle.

“Even then (chup, chup, chup),” said Carshot, “there’s writing it out in their own hands.”

They proceeded to enlarge upon the literary life, on its ease and dignity, on the social recognition accorded to those who led it, and on the ample gratifications their vanity achieved. “Pictures everywhere — never get a new suit without being photographed — almost like Royalty,” said Miss Mergle.

And all this talk impressed the imagination of Kipps very greatly. Here was a class that seemed to bridge the gulf. On the one hand essentially Low, but by factitious circumstances capable of entering

upon those levels of social superiority to which all true Englishmen aspire, those levels from which one may tip a butler, scorn a tailor, and even commune with those who lead "men" into battle. "Almost like gentlefolks" — that was it! He brooded over these things in the afternoon, until they blossomed into daydreams. Suppose, for example, he had chanced to write a book, a well-known book, under an assumed name, and yet kept on being a draper all the time.... Impossible, of course, but *suppose* — it made quite a long dream.

And at the next wood-carving class he let it be drawn from him that his real choice in life was to be a Nawther— "only one doesn't get a chance."

After that there were times when Kipps had that pleasant sense that comes of attracting interest. He was a mute, inglorious Dickens, or at any rate something of that sort, and they were all taking him at that. The discovery of this indefinable "something in" him, the development of which was now painfully restricted and impossible, did much to bridge the gulf between himself and Miss Walshingham. He was unfortunate, he was futile, but he was not "common." Even now with help...? The two girls, and the freckled girl in particular, tried to "stir him up" to some effort to do his imputed potentialities justice. They were still young enough to believe that to nice and niceish members of the male sex — more especially when under the stimulus of feminine encouragement — nothing is finally impossible.

The freckled girl was, I say, the stage manager of this affair, but Miss Walshingham was the presiding divinity. A touch of proprietorship came in her eyes at times when she looked at him. He was hers — unconditionally — and she knew it.

To her directly Kipps scarcely ever made a speech. The enterprising things that he was continually devising to say to her, he usually did not say, or he said them in a suitably modified form to the girl with the freckles. And one day the girl with the freckles smote him to the heart. She said to him, with the faintest indication of her head across the class-room to where her friend reached a cast from the shelf, "I do think Helen Walshingham is sometimes the most lovely person in the world. Look at her now!"

Kipps gasped for a moment. The moment lengthened, and she regarded him as an intelligent young surgeon might regard an

operation without anæsthetics.

"You're right," he said, and then looked at her with an entire abandonment of visage.

She coloured under his glare of silent avowal, and he blushed brightly.

"I think so, too," he said hoarsely, cleared his throat, and after a meditative moment proceeded sacramentally with his wood-carving.

"You *are* wonderful," said the freckled girl to Miss Walshingham, apropos of nothing, as they went on their way home together. "He simply adores you."

"But, my dear, what have I done?" said Helen.

"That's just it," said the freckled girl. "What *have* you done?"

And then with a terrible swiftness came the last class of the course, to terminate this relationship altogether. Kipps was careless of dates, and the thing came upon him with an effect of abrupt surprise. Just as his petals were expanding so hopefully, "Finis," and the thing was at an end. But Kipps did not fully appreciate that the end was indeed and really and truly the end, until he was back in the Emporium after the end was over.

The end began practically in the middle of the last class, when the freckled girl broached the topic of terminations. She developed the question of just how he was going on after the class ended. She hoped he would stick to certain resolutions of self-improvement he had breathed. She said quite honestly that he owed it to himself to develop his possibilities. He expressed firm resolve, but dwelt on difficulties. He had no books. She instructed him how to get books from the public library. He was to get a form of application for a ticket signed by a ratepayer; and he said "of course," when she said Mr. Shalford would do that, though all the time he knew perfectly well it would "never do" to ask Mr. Shalford for anything of the sort. She explained that she was going to North Wales for the summer, information he received without immediate regret. At intervals he expressed his intention of going on with wood-carving when the summer was over, and once he added "If — —"

She considered herself extremely delicate not to press for the completion of that "if — —"

After that talk there was an interval of languid wood-carving and

watching Miss Walshingham.

Then presently there came a bustle of packing, a great ceremony of hand-shaking all round by Miss Collis and the maiden lady of ripe years, and then Kipps found himself outside the class-room, on the landing with his two friends. It seemed to him he had only just learnt that this was the last class of all. There came a little pause, and the freckled girl suddenly went back into the class-room, and left Kipps and Miss Walshingham alone together for the first time. Kipps was instantly breathless. She looked at his face with a glance that mingled sympathy and curiosity, and held out her white hand.

"Well, good-bye, Mr. Kipps," she said.

He took her hand and held it. "I'd do anything," said Kipps, and had not the temerity to add, "for you." He stopped awkwardly. He shook her hand and said, "Good-bye."

There was a little pause.

"I hope you will have a pleasant holiday," she said.

"I shall come back to the class next year, anyhow," said Kipps valiantly, and turned abruptly to the stairs.

"I hope you will," said Miss Walshingham.

He turned back towards her. "Reelly?" he said.

"I hope everybody will come back."

"I will — anyhow," said Kipps. "You may count on that," and he tried to make his tones significant.

They looked at one another through a little pause.

"Good-bye," she said.

Kipps lifted his hat. She turned towards the class-room.

"Well?" said the freckled girl, coming back towards her.

"Nothing," said Helen. "At least — presently." And she became very energetic about some scattered tools on a desk.

The freckled girl went out and stood for a moment at the head of the stairs. When she came back she looked very hard at her friend. The incident struck her as important — wonderfully important. It was unassimilable, of course, and absurd, but there it was, the thing that is so cardinal to a girl, the emotion, the subservience, the crowning triumph of her sex. She could not help feeling that Helen took it, on the whole, a little too hardly.

CHAPTER IV CHITTERLOW

§1

The hour of the class on the following Thursday found Kipps in a state of nearly incredible despondency. He was sitting with his eyes on the reading room clock, his chin resting on his fists and his elbows on the accumulated comic papers that were comic alas! in vain! He paid no heed to the little man in spectacles glaring opposite to him, famishing for *Fun*. In this place it was he had sat night after night, each night more blissful than the last, waiting until it should be time to go to Her! And then — bliss! And now the hour had come and there was no class! There would be no class now until next October; it might be there would never be a class so far as he was concerned again.

It might be there would never be a class again, for Shalford, taking exception at a certain absent-mindedness that led to mistakes and more particularly to the ticketing of several articles in Kipps' Manchester window upside down, had been "on to" him for the past few days in an exceedingly onerous manner....

He sighed profoundly, pushed the comic papers back — they were rent away from him instantly by the little man in spectacles — and tried the old engravings of Folkestone in the past, that hang about the room. But these, too, failed to minister to his bruised heart. He wandered about the corridors for a time and watched the library indicator for awhile. Wonderful thing that! But it did not hold him for long. People came and laughed near him and that jarred with him dreadfully. He went out of the building and a beastly cheerful barrel organ mocked him in the street. He was moved to a desperate resolve to go down to the beach. There it might be he would be alone. The sea might be rough — and attuned to him. It would certainly be dark.

"If I 'ad a penny I'm blest if I wouldn't go and chuck myself off the end of the pier.... *She'd* never miss me...." He followed a deepening vein of thought.

"Penny though! It's tuppence," he said after a space.

He went down Dover Street in a state of profound melancholia —

at the pace and mood as it were of his own funeral procession — and he crossed at the corner of Tontine Street heedless of all mundane things. And there it was that Fortune came upon him, in disguise and with a loud shout, the shout of a person endowed with an unusually rich, full voice, followed immediately by a violent blow in the back.

His hat was over his eyes and an enormous weight rested on his shoulders and something kicked him in the back of his calf.

Then he was on all fours in some mud that Fortune, in conjunction with the Folkestone corporation and in the pursuit of equally mysterious ends, had heaped together even lavishly for his reception.

He remained in that position for some seconds awaiting further developments and believing almost anything broken before his heart. Gathering at last that this temporary violence of things in general was over, and being perhaps assisted by a clutching hand, he arose, and found himself confronting a figure holding a bicycle and thrusting forward a dark face in anxious scrutiny.

"You aren't hurt, Matey?" gasped the figure.

"Was that *you* 'it me?" said Kipps.

"It's these handles, you know," said the figure with an air of being a fellow sufferer. "They're too *low*. And when I go to turn, if I don't remember, Bif! — and I'm *in* to something."

"Well — you give me a oner in the back — anyhow," said Kipps, taking stock of his damages.

"I was coming down hill, you know," explained the bicyclist. "These little Folkestone hills are a Fair Treat. It isn't as though I'd been on the level. I came rather a whop."

"You did *that*," said Kipps.

"I was back pedalling for all I was worth anyhow," said the bicyclist. "Not that I *am* worth much back pedalling."

He glanced round and made a sudden movement almost as if to mount his machine. Then he turned as rapidly to Kipps again, who was now stooping down, pursuing the tale of his injuries.

"Here's the back of my trouser leg all tore down," said Kipps, "and I believe I'm bleeding. You reely ought to be more careful — —"

The stranger investigated the damage with a rapid movement. "Holy Smoke, so you are!" He laid a friendly hand on Kipps' arm. "I

say — look here! Come up to my diggings and sew it up. I'm —— . Of course I'm to blame, and I say — —" his voice sank to a confidential friendliness. "Here's a slop. Don't let on I ran you down. Haven't a lamp, you know. Might be a bit awkward, for *me*."

Kipps looked up towards the advancing policeman. The appeal to his generosity was not misplaced. He immediately took sides with his assailant. He stood up as the representative of the law drew nearer. He assumed an air which he considered highly suggestive of an accident not having happened.

"All right," he said, "go on!"

"Right you are," said the cyclist promptly, and led the way, and then, apparently with some idea of deception, called over his shoulder, "I'm tremendous glad to have met you, old chap.

"It really isn't a hundred yards," he said after they had passed the policeman, "it's just round the corner."

"Of course," said Kipps, limping slightly. "I don't want to get a chap into trouble. Accidents *will* happen. Still — —"

"Oh! *rather!* I believe you. Accidents *will* happen. Especially when you get *me* on a bicycle." He laughed. "You aren't the first I've run down not by any manner of means! I don't think you can be hurt much either. It isn't as though I was scorching. You didn't see me coming. I was back pedalling like anything. Only naturally it seems to you I must have been coming fast. And I did all I could to ease off the bump as I hit you. It was just the treadle I think came against your calf. But it was All Right of you about that policeman, you know. That was a Fair Bit of All Right. Under the Circs, if you'd told him I was riding it might have been forty bob! Forty bob! I'd have had to tell 'em Time is Money. Just now for Mr. H. C.

"I shouldn't have blamed you either, you know. Most men after a bump like that might have been spiteful. The least I can do is to stand you a needle and thread. And a clothes brush. It isn't everyone who'd have taken it like you.

"Scorching! Why if I'd been scorching you'd have — coming as we did — you'd have been knocked silly.

"But I tell you, the way you caught on about that slop was something worth seeing. When I asked you, I didn't half expect it. Bif! Right off. Cool as a cucumber. Had your line at once. I tell you

that there isn't many men would have acted as you have done, I *will* say that. You acted like a gentleman over that slop."

Kipps' first sense of injury disappeared. He limped along a pace or so behind, making depreciatory noises in response to these flattering remarks and taking stock of the very appreciative person who uttered them.

As they passed the lamps he was visible as a figure with a slight anterior plumpness, progressing buoyantly on knickerbockered legs, with quite enormous calves, legs that, contrasting with Kipps' own narrow practice, were even exuberantly turned out at the knees and toes. A cycling cap was worn very much on one side, and from beneath it protruded carelessly straight wisps of dark red hair, and ever and again an ample nose came into momentary view round the corner. The muscular cheeks of this person and a certain generosity of chin he possessed were blue shaven and he had no moustache. His carriage was spacious and confident, his gestures up and down the narrow deserted back street they traversed, were irresistibly suggestive of ownership; a suggestion of broadly gesticulating shadows were born squatting on his feet and grew and took possession of the road and reunited at last with the shadows of the infinite, as lamp after lamp was passed. Kipps saw by the flickering light of one of them that they were in Little Fenchurch Street, and then they came round a corner sharply into a dark court and stopped at the door of a particularly ramshackle looking little house, held up between two larger ones, like a drunken man between policemen.

The cyclist propped his machine carefully against the window, produced a key and blew down it sharply. "The lock's a bit tricky," he said, and devoted himself for some moments to the task of opening the door. Some mechanical catastrophe ensued and the door was open.

"You'd better wait here a bit while I get the lamp," he remarked to Kipps; "very likely it isn't filled," and vanished into the blackness of the passage. "Thank God for matches!" he said, and Kipps had an impression of a passage in the transitory pink flare and the bicyclist disappearing into a further room. Kipps was so much interested by these things that for the time he forgot his injuries altogether.

An interval and Kipps was dazzled by a pink shaded kerosene

lamp. “You go in,” said the red-haired man, “and I’ll bring in the bike,” and for a moment Kipps was alone in the lamp-lit room. He took in rather vaguely the shabby ensemble of the little apartment, the round table covered with a torn, red, glass-stained cover on which the lamp stood, a mottled looking-glass over the fireplace reflecting this, a disused gas bracket, an extinct fire, a number of dusty postcards and memoranda stuck round the glass, a dusty, crowded paper rack on the mantel with a number of cabinet photographs, a table littered with papers and cigarette ash and a syphon of soda water. Then the cyclist reappeared and Kipps saw his blue-shaved, rather animated face and bright-reddish, brown eyes for the first time. He was a man perhaps ten years older than Kipps, but his beardless face made them in a way contemporary.

“You behaved all right about that policeman — anyhow,” he repeated as he came forward.

“I don’t see ‘ow else I could ‘ave done,” said Kipps quite modestly. The cyclist scanned his guest for the first time and decided upon hospitable details.

“We’d better let that mud dry a bit before we brush it. Whiskey there is, good old Methusaleh, Canadian Rye, and there’s some brandy that’s all right. Which’ll you have?”

“*I* dunno,” said Kipps, taken by surprise, and then seeing no other course but acceptance, “well — whiskey, then.”

“Right you are, old boy, and if you’ll take my advice you’ll take it neat. I may not be a particular judge of this sort of thing, but I do know old Methusaleh pretty well. Old Methusaleh — four stars. That’s me! Good old Harry Chitterlow and good old Methusaleh. Leave ’em together. Bif! He’s gone!”

He laughed loudly, looked about him, hesitated and retired, leaving Kipps in possession of the room and free to make a more precise examination of its contents.

§2

He particularly remarked the photographs that adorned the apartment. They were chiefly photographs of ladies, in one case in tights, which Kipps thought a “bit ‘ot,” but one represented the

bicyclist in the costume of some remote epoch. It did not take Kipps long to infer that the others were probably actresses and that his host was an actor, and the presence of the half of a large, coloured playbill seemed to confirm this. A note framed in an Oxford frame that was a little too large for it, he presently demeaned himself to read. "Dear Mr. Chitterlow," it ran its brief course, "if after all you will send the play you spoke of I will endeavour to read it," followed by a stylish but absolutely illegible signature, and across this was written in pencil, "What price, Harry, now?" And in the shadow by the window was a rough and rather able sketch of the bicyclist in chalk on brown paper, calling particular attention to the curvature of the forward lines of his hull and calves and the jaunty carriage of his nose, and labelled unmistakably "Chitterlow." Kipps thought it "rather a take-off." The papers on the table by the syphon were in manuscript. Kipps observed manuscript of a particularly convulsive and blottesque sort and running obliquely across the page.

Presently he heard the metallic clamour as if of a series of irreparable breakages with which the lock of the front door discharged its function, and then Chitterlow reappeared, a little out of breath as if from running and with a starry labelled bottle in his large, freckled hand.

"Sit down, old chap," he said, "sit down. I had to go out for it after all. Wasn't a solitary bottle left. However, it's all right now we're here. No, don't sit on that chair, there's sheets of my play on that. That's the one — with the broken arm. I think this glass is clean, but anyhow wash it out with a squizz of syphon and shy it in the fireplace. Here! I'll do it! Lend it here!"

As he spoke Mr. Chitterlow produced a corkscrew from a table drawer, attached and overcame good old Methusaleh's cork in a style a bartender might envy, washed out two tumblers in his simple, effectual manner, and poured a couple of inches of the ancient fluid into each. Kipps took his tumbler, said "Thenks" in an off-hand way, and after a momentary hesitation whether he should say "here's to you!" or not, put it to his lips without that ceremony. For a space fire in his throat occupied his attention to the exclusion of other matters, and then he discovered Mr. Chitterlow with an intensely bulldog pipe alight, seated on the opposite side of the empty fireplace and pouring

himself out a second dose of whiskey.

"After all," said Mr. Chitterlow, with his eye on the bottle and a little smile wandering to hide amidst his larger features, "this accident might have been worse. I wanted someone to talk to a bit, and I didn't want to go to a pub, leastways not a Folkestone pub, because as a matter of fact I'd promised Mrs. Chitterlow, who's away, not to, for various reasons, though of course if I'd wanted to I'm just that sort I should have all the same, and here we are! It's curious how one runs up against people out bicycling!"

"Isn't it!" said Kipps, feeling that the time had come for him to say something.

"Here we are, sitting and talking like old friends, and half an hour ago we didn't know we existed. Leastways we didn't know each other existed. I might have passed you in the street perhaps and you might have passed me, and how was I to tell that, put to the test, you would have behaved as decently as you have behaved. Only it happened otherwise, that's all. You're not smoking!" he said. "Have a cigarette?"

Kipps made a confused reply that took the form of not minding if he did, and drank another sip of old Methusaleh in his confusion. He was able to follow the subsequent course of that sip for quite a long way. It was as though the old gentleman was brandishing a burning torch through his vitals, lighting him here and lighting him there until at last his whole being was in a glow. Chitterlow produced a tobacco pouch and cigarette papers and with an interesting parenthesis that was a little difficult to follow about some lady named Kitty something or other who had taught him the art when he was as yet only what you might call a nice boy, made Kipps a cigarette, and with a consideration that won Kipps' gratitude suggested that after all he might find a little soda water an improvement with the whiskey. "Some people like it that way," said Chitterlow, and then with voluminous emphasis, "*I don't*."

Emboldened by the weakened state of his enemy Kipps promptly swallowed the rest of him and had his glass at once hospitably replenished. He began to feel he was of a firmer consistency than he commonly believed, and turned his mind to what Chitterlow was saying with the resolve to play a larger part in the conversation than

he had hitherto done. Also he smoked through his nose quite successfully, an art he had only very recently acquired.

Meanwhile Chitterlow explained that he was a playwright, and the tongue of Kipps was unloosened to respond that he knew a chap, or rather one of their fellows knew a chap, or at least to be perfectly correct this fellow's brother did, who had written a play. In response to Chitterlow's enquiries he could not recall the title of the play, nor where it had appeared nor the name of the manager who produced it, though he thought the title was something about "Love's Ransom" or something like that.

"He made five 'undred pounds by it, though," said Kipps. "I know that."

"That's nothing," said Chitterlow, with an air of experience that was extremely convincing. "Nothing. May seem a big sum to *you*, but *I* can assure you it's just what one gets any day. There's any amount of money, an-ny amount, in a good play."

"I dessay," said Kipps, drinking.

"Any amount of money!"

Chitterlow began a series of illustrative instances. He was clearly a person of quite unequalled gift for monologue. It was as though some conversational dam had burst upon Kipps, and in a little while he was drifting along upon a copious rapid of talk about all sorts of theatrical things by one who knows all about them, and quite incapable of anticipating whither that rapid meant to carry him. Presently somehow they had got to anecdotes about well-known theatrical managers, little Teddy Bletherskite, artful old Chumps, and the magnificent Behemoth, "petted to death, you know, fair sickened, by all these society women." Chitterlow described various personal encounters with these personages, always with modest self-depreciation, and gave Kipps a very amusing imitation of old Chumps in a state of intoxication. Then he took two more stiff doses of old Methusaleh in rapid succession.

Kipps reduced the hither end of his cigarette to a pulp as he sat "dessaying" and "quite believing" Chitterlow in the sagest manner and admiring the easy way in which he was getting on with this very novel and entertaining personage. He had another cigarette made for him, and then Chitterlow, assuming by insensible degrees more and

more of the manner of a rich and successful playwright being interviewed by a young admirer, set himself to answer questions which sometimes Kipps asked and sometimes Chitterlow, about the particulars and methods of his career. He undertook this self-imposed task with great earnestness and vigour, treating the matter indeed with such fulness that at times it seemed lost altogether under a thicket of parentheses, footnotes and episodes that branched and budded from its stem. But it always emerged again, usually by way of illustration to its own degressions. Practically it was a mass of material for the biography of a man who had been everywhere and done everything (including the Hon. Thomas Norgate, which was a Record), and in particular had acted with great distinction and profit (he dated various anecdotes, "when I was getting thirty, or forty or fifty, dollars a week") throughout America and the entire civilised world.

And as he talked on and on in that full, rich, satisfying voice he had, and as old Methusaleh, indisputably a most drunken old reprobate of a whiskey, busied himself throughout Kipps, lighting lamp after lamp until the entire framework of the little draper was illuminated and glowing like some public building on a festival, behold Chitterlow and Kipps with him and the room in which they sat, were transfigured! Chitterlow became in very truth that ripe, full man of infinite experience and humour and genius, fellow of Shakespeare and Ibsen and Maeterlinck (three names he placed together quite modestly far above his own) and no longer ambiguously dressed in a sort of yachting costume with cycling knickerbockers, but elegantly if unconventionally attired, and the room ceased to be a small and shabby room in a Folkestone slum, and grew larger and more richly furnished, and the fly-blown photographs were curious old pictures, and the rubbish on the walls the most rare and costly bric-à-brac, and the indisputable paraffin lamp, a soft and splendid light. A certain youthful heat that to many minds might have weakened old Methusaleh's starry claim to a ripe antiquity, vanished in that glamour, two burnt holes and a claimant darn in the table cloth, moreover, became no more than the pleasing contradictions natural in the house of genius, and as for Kipps! — Kipps was a bright young man of promise, distinguished by recent

quick, courageous proceedings not too definitely insisted upon, and he had been rewarded by admission to a sanctum and confidences, for which the common prosperous, for which "society women" even, were notoriously sighing in vain. "Don't *want* them, my boy; they'd simply play old Harry with the work, you know! Chaps outside, bank clerks and university fellows, think the life's all *that* sort of thing. Don't you believe 'em. Don't you believe 'em."

And then —— !

"Boom.... Boom.... Boom.... Boom.... right in the middle of a most entertaining digression on flats who join touring companies under the impression that they are actors, Kipps much amused at their flatness as exposed by Chitterlow.

"Lor'!" said Kipps like one who awakens, "that's not eleven!"

"Must be," said Chitterlow. "It was nearly ten when I got that whiskey. It's early yet — —"

"All the same I must be going," said Kipps, and stood up. "Even now — maybe. Fact is — I 'ad *no* idea. The 'ouse door shuts at 'arf past ten, you know. I ought to 'ave thought before."

"Well, if you *must* go! I tell you what. I'll come, too.... Why! There's your leg, old man! Clean forgot it! You can't go through the streets like that. I'll sew up the tear. And meanwhile have another whiskey."

"I ought to be getting on *now*," protested Kipps feebly, and then Chitterlow was showing him how to kneel on a chair in order that the rent trouser leg should be attainable and old Methusaleh on his third round was busy repairing the temporary eclipse of Kipps' arterial glow. Then suddenly Chitterlow was seized with laughter and had to leave off sewing to tell Kipps that the scene wouldn't make a bad bit of business in a farcical comedy, and then he began to sketch out the farcical comedy and that led him to a digression about another farcical comedy of which he had written a ripping opening scene which wouldn't take ten minutes to read. It had something in it that had never been done on the stage before, and was yet perfectly legitimate, namely, a man with a live beetle down the back of his neck trying to seem at his ease in a roomful of people....

"*They* won't lock you out," he said, in a singularly reassuring tone, and began to read and act what he explained to be (not because

he had written it, but simply because he knew it was so on account of his exceptional experience of the stage) and what Kipps also quite clearly saw to be, one of the best opening scenes that had ever been written.

When it was over Kipps, who rarely swore, was inspired to say the scene was "damned fine" about six times over, whereupon as if by way of recognition, Chitterlow took a simply enormous portion of the inspiring antediluvian, declaring at the same time that he had rarely met a "finer" intelligence than Kipps' (stronger there might be, *that* he couldn't say with certainty as yet, seeing how little after all they had seen of each other, but a finer *never*); that it was a shame such a gallant and discriminating intelligence should be nightly either locked up or locked out at ten — well, ten thirty then — and that he had half a mind to recommend old somebody or other (apparently the editor of a London daily paper) to put on Kipps forthwith as a dramatic critic in the place of the current incapable.

"I don't think I've ever made up anything for print," said Kipps; "—— ever. I'd have a thundering good try, though, if ever I got a chance. I would that! I've written window tickets often enough. Made 'em up and everything. But that's different."

"You'd come to it all the fresher for not having done it before. And the way you picked up every point in that scene, my boy, was a Fair Treat! I tell you, you'd knock William Archer into fits. Not so literary, of course, you'd be, but I don't believe in literary critics any more than in literary playwrights. Plays *aren't* literature — that's just the point they miss. Plays are plays. No! That won't hamper you anyhow. You're wasted down here, I tell you. Just as I was, before I took to acting. I'm hanged if I wouldn't like your opinion on these first two acts of that tragedy I'm on to. I haven't told you about that. It wouldn't take me more than an hour to read...."

§3

Then so far as he could subsequently remember, Kipps had "another," and then it would seem that suddenly, regardless of the tragedy, he insisted that he "reelly *must* be getting on," and from that point his memory became irregular. Certain things have remained

quite clearly, and as it is a matter of common knowledge that intoxicated people forget what happens to them, it follows that he was not intoxicated. Chitterlow came with him partly to see him home and partly for a freshener before turning in. Kipps recalled afterwards very distinctly how in Little Fenchurch Street he discovered that he could not walk straight and also that Chitterlow's needle and thread in his still unmended trouser leg was making an annoying little noise on the pavement behind him. He tried to pick up the needle suddenly by surprise and somehow tripped and fell and then Chitterlow, laughing uproariously, helped him up. "It wasn't a bicycle this time, old boy," said Chitterlow, and that appeared to them both at the time as being a quite extraordinarily good joke indeed. They punched each other about on the strength of it.

For a time after that Kipps certainly pretended to be quite desperately drunk and unable to walk and Chitterlow entered into the pretence and supported him. After that Kipps remembered being struck with the extremely laughable absurdity of going down hill to Tontine Street in order to go up hill again to the Emporium, and trying to get that idea into Chitterlow's head and being unable to do so on account of his own merriment or Chitterlow's evident intoxication, and his next memory after that was of the exterior of the Emporium, shut and darkened, and, as it were, frowning at him with all its stripes of yellow and green. The chilly way in which "Shalford" glittered in the moonlight printed itself with particular vividness on his mind. It appeared to Kipps that that establishment was closed to him for evermore. Those gilded letters, in spite of appearances, spelt Finis for him and exile from Folkestone. He would never do wood-carving, never see Miss Walshingham again. Not that he had ever hoped to see her again. But this was the knife, this was final. He had stayed out, he had got drunk, there had been that row about the Manchester window dressing only three days ago.... In the retrospect he was quite sure that he was perfectly sober then and at bottom extremely unhappy, but he kept a brave face on the matter nevertheless, and declared stoutly he didn't care if he *was* locked out.

Whereupon Chitterlow slapped him on the back very hard and told him that was a "Bit of All Right," and assured him that when he

himself had been a clerk in Sheffield before he took to acting he had been locked out sometimes for six nights running.

"What's the result?" said Chitterlow. "I could go back to that place now, and they'd be glad to have me.... Glad to have me," he repeated, and then added, "that is to say, if they remember me — which isn't very likely."

Kipps asked a little weakly, "What am I to do?"

"Keep out," said Chitterlow. "You can't knock 'em up now — that would give you Right away. You'd better try and sneak in in the morning with the Cat. That'll do you. You'll probably get in all right in the morning if nobody gives you away."

Then for a time — perhaps as the result of that slap in the back — Kipps felt decidedly queer, and acting on Chitterlow's advice went for a bit of a freshener upon the Leas. After a time he threw off the temporary queerness and found Chitterlow patting him on the shoulder and telling him that he'd be all right now in a minute and all the better for it — which he was. And the wind having dropped and the night being now a really very beautiful moonlight night indeed, and all before Kipps to spend as he liked and with only a very little tendency to spin round now and again to mar its splendour, they set out to walk the whole length of the Leas to the Sandgate lift and back, and as they walked Chitterlow spoke first of moonlight transfiguring the sea and then of moonlight transfiguring faces, and so at last he came to the topic of Love, and upon that he dwelt a great while, and with a wealth of experience and illustrative anecdote that seemed remarkably pungent and material to Kipps. He forgot his lost Miss Walshingham and his outraged employer again. He became as it were a desperado by reflection.

Chitterlow had had adventures, a quite astonishing variety of adventures in this direction; he was a man with a past, a really opulent past, and he certainly seemed to like to look back and see himself amidst its opulence.

He made no consecutive history, but he gave Kipps vivid, momentary pictures of relations and entanglements. One moment he was in flight — only too worthily in flight — before the husband of a Malay woman in Cape Town. At the next he was having passionate complications with the daughter of a clergyman in York. Then he

passed to a remarkable grouping at Seaford.

"They say you can't love two women at once," said Chitterlow. "But I tell you — —" He gesticulated and raised his ample voice. "It's *Rot! Rot!*"

"I know that," said Kipps.

"Why, when I was in the smalls with Bessie Hopper's company there were three." He laughed and decided to add, "Not counting Bessie, that is."

He set out to reveal Life as it is lived in touring companies, a quite amazing jungle of interwoven "affairs" it appeared to be, a mere amorous winepress for the crushing of hearts.

"People say this sort of thing's a nuisance and interferes with Work. I tell you it isn't. The Work couldn't go on without it. They *must* do it. They haven't the Temperament if they don't. If they hadn't the Temperament they wouldn't want to act, if they have — Bif!"

"You're right," said Kipps. "I see that."

Chitterlow proceeded to a close criticism of certain historical indiscretions of Mr. Clement Scott respecting the morals of the stage. Speaking in confidence and not as one who addresses the public, he admitted regretfully the general truth of these comments. He proceeded to examine various typical instances that had almost forced themselves upon him personally, and with especial regard to the contrast between his own character towards women and that of the Hon. Thomas Norgate, with whom it appeared he had once been on terms of great intimacy....

Kipps listened with emotion to these extraordinary recollections. They were wonderful to him, they were incredibly credible. Of course the tumultuous, passionate course was the way life ran — except in high-class establishments! Such things happened in novels, in plays — only he had been fool enough not to understand they happened. His share in the conversation was now indeed no more than faint writing in the margin; Chitterlow was talking quite continuously. He expanded his magnificent voice into huge guffaws, he drew it together into a confidential intensity, it became drawlingly reminiscent, he was frank, frank with the effect of a revelation, reticent also with the effect of a revelation, a stupendously

gesticulating, moonlit black figure, wallowing in itself, preaching Adventure and the Flesh to Kipps. Yet withal shot with something of sentiment, with a sort of sentimental refinement very coarsely and egotistically done. The Times he had had! — even before he was as old as Kipps he had had innumerable times.

Well, he said with a sudden transition, he had sown his wild oats — one had to somewhen — and now he fancied he had mentioned it earlier in the evening, he was happily married. She was, he indicated, a "born lady." Her father was a prominent lawyer, a solicitor in Kentish Town, "done a lot of public house business"; her mother was second cousin to the wife of Abel Jones, the fashionable portrait painter— "almost Society people in a way." That didn't count with Chitterlow. He was no snob. What *did* count was that she possessed, what he ventured to assert without much fear of contradiction, was the very finest, completely untrained contralto voice in all the world. ("But to hear it properly," said Chitterlow, "you want a Big Hall.") He became rather vague and jerked his head about to indicate when and how he had entered matrimony. She was, it seemed, "away with her people." It was clear that Chitterlow did not get on with these people very well. It would seem they failed to appreciate his playwright, regarding it as an unremunerative pursuit, whereas as he and Kipps knew, wealth beyond the dreams of avarice would presently accrue. Only patience and persistence were needful.

He went off at a tangent to hospitality. Kipps must come down home with him. They couldn't wander about all night, with a bottle of the right sort pining at home for them. "You can sleep on the sofa. You won't be worried by broken springs anyhow, for I took 'em all out myself two or three weeks ago. I don't see what they even put 'em in for. It's a point I know about. I took particular notice of it when I was with Bessie Hopper. Three months we were and all over England, North Wales and the Isle of Man, and I never struck a sofa in diggings anywhere that hadn't a broken spring. Not once — all the time."

He added almost absently: "It happens like that at times."

They descended the slant road towards Harbour Street and went on past the Pavilion Hotel.

They came into the presence of old Methusaleh again, and that worthy under Chitterlow's direction at once resumed the illumination of Kipps' interior with the conscientious thoroughness that distinguished him. Chitterlow took a tall portion to himself with an air of asbestos, lit the bulldog pipe again, and lapsed for a space into meditation, from which Kipps roused him by remarking that he expected "an acter 'as a lot of ups and downs like, now and then."

At which Chitterlow seemed to bestir himself. "Ra-ther," he said. "And sometimes it's his own fault and sometimes it isn't. Usually it is. If it isn't one thing it's another. If it isn't the manager's wife it's bar-bragging. I tell you things happen at times. I'm a fatalist. The fact is Character has you. You can't get away from it. You may think you do, but you don't."

He reflected for a moment. "It's that what makes tragedy Psychology really. It's the Greek irony — Ibsen and — all that. Up to date."

He emitted this exhaustive summary of high-toned modern criticism as if he was repeating a lesson while thinking of something else, but it seemed to rouse him as it passed his lips, by including the name of Ibsen.

He became interested in telling Kipps, who was indeed open to any information whatever about this quite novel name, exactly where he thought Ibsen fell short, points where it happened that Ibsen was defective just where it chanced that he, Chitterlow, was strong. Of course he had no desire to place himself in any way on an equality with Ibsen; still the fact remained that his own experience in England and America and the colonies was altogether more extensive than Ibsen could have had. Ibsen had probably never seen "one decent bar scrap" in his life. That, of course, was not Ibsen's fault or his own merit, but there the thing was. Genius, he knew, was supposed to be able to do anything or to do without anything; still he was now inclined to doubt that. He had a play in hand that might perhaps not please William Archer — whose opinion, after all, he did not value as he valued Kipps' opinion — but which he thought was at any rate as well constructed as anything Ibsen ever did.

So with infinite deviousness Chitterlow came at last to his play. He decided he would not read it to Kipps, but tell him about it. This was the simpler because much of it was still unwritten. He began to explain his plot. It was a complicated plot and all about a nobleman who had seen everything and done everything and knew practically all that Chitterlow knew about women; that is to say, "all about women" and suchlike matters. It warmed and excited Chitterlow. Presently he stood up to act a situation — which could not be explained. It was an extremely vivid situation.

Kipps applauded the situation vehemently. "Tha's dam' fine," said the new dramatic critic, quite familiar with his part now, striking the table with his fist and almost upsetting his third portion (in the second series) of old Methusaleh. "Tha's dam' fine, Chit'low!"

"You see it?" said Chitterlow, with the last vestiges of that incidental gloom disappearing. "Good, old boy! I thought you'd see it. But it's just the sort of thing the literary critic can't see. However, it's only a beginning — —"

He replenished Kipps and proceeded with his exposition.

In a little while it was no longer necessary to give that over-advertised Ibsen the purely conventional precedence he had hitherto had. Kipps and Chitterlow were friends and they could speak frankly and openly of things not usually admitted. "Any 'ow," said Kipps, a little irrelevantly and speaking over the brim of the replenishment, "what you read jus' now was dam' fine. Nothing can't alter that."

He perceived a sort of faint, buzzing vibration about things that was very nice and pleasant and with a little care he had no difficulty whatever in putting his glass back on the table. Then he perceived Chitterlow was going on with the scenario, and then that old Methusaleh had almost entirely left his bottle. He was glad there was so little more Methusaleh to drink because that would prevent his getting drunk. He knew that he was not now drunk, but he knew that he had had enough. He was one of those who always know when they have had enough. He tried to interrupt Chitterlow to tell him this, but he could not get a suitable opening. He doubted whether Chitterlow might not be one of those people who did not know when they had had enough. He discovered that he disapproved of Chitterlow. Highly. It seemed to him that Chitterlow went on and on

like a river. For a time he was inexplicably and quite unjustly cross with Chitterlow and wanted to say to him, “you got the gift of the gab,” but he only got so far as to say “the gift,” and then Chitterlow thanked him and said he was better than Archer any day. So he eyed Chitterlow with a baleful eye until it dawned upon him that a most extraordinary thing was taking place. Chitterlow kept mentioning someone named Kipps. This presently began to perplex Kipps very greatly. Dimly but decidedly he perceived this was wrong.

“Look ‘ere,” he said suddenly, “*what* Kipps?”

“This chap Kipps I’m telling you about.”

“What chap Kipps you’re telling which about?”

“I told you.”

Kipps struggled with a difficulty in silence for a space. Then he reiterated firmly, “*What* chap Kipps?”

“This chap in my play — man who kisses the girl.”

“Never kissed a girl,” said Kipps; “leastwise — —” and subsided for a space. He could not remember whether he had kissed Ann or not — he knew he had meant to. Then suddenly in a tone of great sadness and addressing the hearth he said, “*My* name’s Kipps.”

“Eh?” said Chitterlow.

“Kipps,” said Kipps, smiling a little cynically.

“What about him?”

“He’s me.” He tapped his breastbone with his middle finger to indicate his essential self.

He leant forward very gravely towards Chitterlow. “Look ‘ere, Chit’low,” he said, “you haven’t no business putting my name into play. You mustn’t do things like that. You’d lose me my crib, right away.” And they had a little argument — so far as Kipps could remember. Chitterlow entered upon a general explanation of how he got his names. These, he had for the most part got out of a newspaper that was still, he believed, “lying about.” He even made to look for it, and while he was doing so Kipps went on with the argument, addressing himself more particularly to the photograph of the girl in tights. He said that at first her costume had not commended her to him, but now he perceived she had an extremely sensible face. He told her she would like Buggins if she met him; he could see she was just that sort. She would admit, all sensible people would admit, that

using names in plays was wrong. You could, for example, have the law of him.

He became confidential. He explained that he was already in sufficient trouble for stopping out all night without having his name put in plays. He was certain to be in the deuce of a row, the deuce of a row. Why had he done it? Why hadn't he gone at ten? Because one thing leads to another. One thing, he generalized, always does lead to another....

He was trying to tell her that he was utterly unworthy of Miss Walshingham, when Chitterlow gave up the search and suddenly accused him of being drunk and talking "Rot —— ."

CHAPTER V "SWAPPED"

§1

He awoke on the thoroughly comfortable sofa that had had all its springs removed, and although he had certainly not been intoxicated, he awoke with what Chitterlow pronounced to be, quite indisputably, a Head and a Mouth. He had slept in his clothes and he felt stiff and uncomfortable all over, but the head and mouth insisted that he must not bother over little things like that. In the head was one large, angular idea that it was physically painful to have there. If he moved his head the angular idea shifted about in the most agonising way. This idea was that he had lost his situation and was utterly ruined and that it really mattered very little. Shalford was certain to hear of his escapade, and that coupled with that row about the Manchester window —— !

He raised himself into a sitting position under Chitterlow's urgent encouragement.

He submitted apathetically to his host's attentions. Chitterlow, who admitted being a "bit off it" himself and in need of an egg-cupful of brandy, just an egg-cupful neat, dealt with that Head and Mouth as a mother might deal with the fall of an only child. He compared it with other Heads and Mouths that he had met, and in particular to certain experienced by the Hon. Thomas Norgate. "Right up to the last," said Chitterlow, "he couldn't stand his liquor. It happens like that at times." And after Chitterlow had pumped on the young beginner's head and given him some anchovy paste piping hot on buttered toast, which he preferred to all the other remedies he had encountered, Kipps resumed his crumpled collar, brushed his clothes, tacked up his knee, and prepared to face Mr. Shalford and the reckoning for this wild, unprecedented night, the first "night out" that ever he had taken.

Acting on Chitterlow's advice to have a bit of a freshener before returning to the Emporium, Kipps walked some way along the Leas and back and then went down to a shop near the Harbour to get a cup of coffee. He found that extremely reinvigorating, and he went on up

the High Street to face the inevitable terrors of the office, a faint touch of pride in his depravity tempering his extreme self-abasement. After all, it was not an unmanly headache; he had been out all night, and he had been drinking and his physical disorder was there to witness the fact. If it wasn't for the thought of Shalford he would have been even a proud man to discover himself at last in such a condition. But the thought of Shalford was very dreadful. He met two of the apprentices snatching a walk before shop began. At the sight of them he pulled his spirits together, put his hat back from his pallid brow, thrust his hands into his trouser pockets and adopted an altogether more dissipated carriage; he met their innocent faces with a wan smile. Just for a moment he was glad that his patch at the knee was, after all, visible and that some at least of the mud on his clothes had refused to move at Chitterlow's brushing. What wouldn't they think he had been up to? He passed them without speaking. He could imagine how they regarded his back. Then he recollected Mr. Shalford....

The deuce of a row certainly and perhaps —— ! He tried to think of plausible versions of the affair. He could explain he had been run down by rather a wild sort of fellow who was riding a bicycle, almost stunned for the moment (even now he felt the effects of the concussion in his head) and had been given whiskey to restore him, and "the fact is, sir" — with an upward inflection of the voice, an upward inflection of the eyebrows and an air of its being the last thing one would have expected whiskey to do, the manifestation indeed of a practically unique physiological weakness— "it got into my '*ed*!"

Put like that it didn't look so bad.

He got to the Emporium a little before eight and the housekeeper with whom he was something of a favourite ("There's no harm in Mr. Kipps," she used to say) seemed to like him if anything better for having broken the rules and gave him a piece of dry toast and a good hot cup of tea.

"I suppose the G. V. — —" began Kipps.

"He knows," said the housekeeper.

He went down to shop a little before time, and presently Booch summoned him to the presence.

He emerged from the private office after an interval of ten minutes.

The junior clerk scrutinised his visage. Buggins put the frank question.

Kipps answered with one word.

"Swapped!" said Kipps.

§2

Kipps leant against the fixtures with his hands in his pockets and talked to the two apprentices under him.

"I don't care if I *am* swapped," said Kipps. "I been sick of Teddy and his System some time. I was a good mind to chuck it when my time was up. Wish I 'ad now."

Afterwards Pierce came round and Kipps repeated this.

"What's it for?" said Pierce. "That row about the window tickets?"

"No fear!" said Kipps and sought to convey a perspective of splendid depravity. "I wasn't in las' night," he said and made even Pierce, "man about town" Pierce, open his eyes.

"Why! where did you get to?" asked Pierce.

He conveyed that he had been "fair round the town." "With a Nactor chap, I know."

"One can't *always* be living like a curit," he said.

"No fear," said Pierce, trying to play up to him.

But Kipps had the top place in that conversation.

"My Lor'!" said Kipps, when Pierce had gone, "but wasn't my mouth and 'ed bad this morning before I 'ad a pick-me-up!"

"Whad jer 'ave?"

"Anchovy on 'ot buttered toast. It's the very best pick-me-up there is. You trust me, Rodgers. I never take no other and I don't advise you to. See?"

And when pressed for further particulars, he said again he had been "fair all *round* the town, with a Nactor chap" he knew. They asked curiously all he had done and he said, "Well, what do *you* think?" And when they pressed for still further details he said there were things little boys ought not to know and laughed darkly and

found them some huckaback to roll.

And in this manner for a space did Kipps fend off the contemplation of the "key of the street" that Shalford had presented him.

§3

This sort of thing was all very well when junior apprentices were about, but when Kipps was alone with himself it served him not at all. He was uncomfortable inside and his skin was uncomfortable, and Head and Mouth palliated perhaps, but certainly not cured, were still with him. He felt, to tell the truth, nasty and dirty and extremely disgusted with himself. To work was dreadful and to stand still and think still more dreadful. His patched knee reproached him. These were the second best of his three pairs of trousers, and they had cost him thirteen and sixpence. Practically ruined they were. His dusting pair was unfit for shop and he would have to degrade his best. When he was under inspection he affected the slouch of a desperado, but directly he found himself alone, this passed insensibly into the droop.

The financial aspect of things grew large before him. His whole capital in the world was the sum of five pounds in the Post Office Savings Bank and four and sixpence cash. Besides there would be two months' screw. His little tin box upstairs was no longer big enough for his belongings; he would have to buy another, let alone that it was not calculated to make a good impression in a new "crib." Then there would be paper and stamps needed in some abundance for answering advertisements and railway fares when he went "crib hunting." He would have to write letters, and he never wrote letters. There was spelling for example to consider. Probably if nothing turned up before his month was up he would have to go home to his Uncle and Aunt.

How would they take it?...

For the present at any rate he resolved not to write to them.

Such disagreeable things as this it was that lurked below the fair surface of Kipps' assertion, "I've been wanting a chance. If 'e 'adn't swapped me, I should very likely 'ave swapped *'im*."

In the perplexed privacies of his own mind he could not

understand how everything had happened. He had been the Victim of Fate, or at least of one as inexorable — Chitterlow. He tried to recall the successive steps that had culminated so disastrously. They were difficult to recall....

Buggins that night abounded in counsel and reminiscence.

"Curious thing," said Buggins, "but every time I've had the swap I've never believed I should get another Crib — never. But I have," said Buggins. "Always. So don't lose heart, whatever you do....

"Whatever you do," said Buggins, "keep hold of your collars and cuffs — shirts if you can, but collars anyhow. Spout them last. And anyhow, it's summer! — you won't want your coat.... You got a good umbrella....

"You'll no more get a shop from New Romney, than — anything. Go straight up to London, get the cheapest room you can find — and hang out. Don't eat too much. Many a chap's put his prospects in his stomach. Get a cup o' coffee and a slice — egg if you like — but remember you got to turn up at the Warehouse tidy. The best places *now*, I believe, are the old cabmen's eating houses. Keep your watch and chain as long as you can....

"There's lots of shops going," said Buggins. "Lots!"

And added reflectively, "But not this time of year perhaps."

He began to recall his own researches. "'Stonishing lot of chaps you see," he said. "All sorts. Look like Dukes some of 'em. High hat. Patent boots. Frock coat. All there. All right for a West End crib. Others — Lord! It's a caution, Kipps. Boots been inked in some reading rooms — *I* used to write in a Reading Room in Fleet Street, regular penny club — hat been wetted, collar frayed, tail coat buttoned up, black chest-plaster tie — spread out. Shirt, you know, gone — —" Buggins pointed upward with a pious expression.

"No shirt, I expect?"

"Eat it," said Buggins.

Kipps meditated. "I wonder where old Merton is," he said at last. "I often wondered about 'im."

§4

It was the morning following Kipps' notice of dismissal that Miss

Walshingham came into the shop. She came in with a dark, slender lady, rather faded, rather tightly dressed, whom Kipps was to know some day as her mother. He discovered them in the main shop at the counter of the ribbon department. He had come to the opposite glove counter with some goods enclosed in a parcel that he had unpacked in his own department. The two ladies were both bent over a box of black ribbon.

He had a moment of tumultuous hesitations. The etiquette of the situation was incomprehensible. He put down his goods very quietly and stood hands on counter, staring at these two ladies. Then, as Miss Walshingham sat back, the instinct of flight seized him....

He returned to his Manchester shop wildly agitated. Directly he was out of sight of her he wanted to see her. He fretted up and down the counter, and addressed some snappish remarks to the apprentice in the window. He fumbled for a moment with a parcel, untied it needlessly, began to tie it up again and then bolted back again into the main shop. He could hear his own heart beating.

The two ladies were standing in the manner of those who have completed their purchases and are waiting for their change. Mrs. Walshingham regarded some remnants with impersonal interest; Helen's eyes searched the shop. They distinctly lit up when they discovered Kipps.

He dropped his hands to the counter by habit and stood for a moment regarding her awkwardly. What would she do? Would she cut him? She came across the shop to him.

"How are *you*, Mr. Kipps?" she said, in her clear, distinct tones, and she held out her hand.

"Very well, thank you," said Kipps; "how are you?"

She said she had been buying some ribbon.

He became aware of Mrs. Walshingham very much surprised. This checked something allusive about the class and he said instead that he supposed she was glad to be having her holidays now. She said she was, it gave her more time for reading and that sort of thing. He supposed that she would be going abroad and she thought that perhaps they *would* go to Knocke or Bruges for a time.

Then came a pause and Kipps' soul surged within him. He wanted to tell her he was leaving and would never see her again. He could

find neither words nor voice to say it. The swift seconds passed. The girl in the ribbons was handing Mrs. Walshingham her change. “Well,” said Miss Walshingham, “Good-bye,” and gave him her hand again.

Kipps bowed over her hand. His manners, his counter manners, were the easiest she had ever seen upon him. She turned to her mother. It was no good now, no good. Her mother! You couldn’t say a thing like that before her mother! All was lost but politeness. Kipps rushed for the door. He stood at the door bowing with infinite gravity, and she smiled and nodded as she went out. She saw nothing of the struggle within him, nothing but a satisfactory emotion. She smiled like a satisfied goddess as the incense ascends.

Mrs. Walshingham bowed stiffly and a little awkwardly.

He remained holding the door open for some seconds after they had passed out, then rushed suddenly to the back of the “costume” window to watch them go down the street. His hands tightened on the window rack as he stared. Her mother appeared to be asking discreet questions. Helen’s bearing suggested the off-hand replies of a person who found the world a satisfactory place to live in. “Really, Mumsie, you cannot expect me to cut my own students dead,” she was in fact saying....

They vanished round Henderson’s corner.

Gone! And he would never see her again — never!

It was as though someone had struck his heart with a whip. Never! Never! Never! And she didn’t know! He turned back from the window and the department with its two apprentices was impossible. The whole glaring world was insupportable.

He hesitated and made a rush head down for the cellar that was his Manchester warehouse. Rodgers asked him a question that he pretended not to hear.

The Manchester warehouse was a small cellar apart from the general basement of the building and dimly lit by a small gas flare. He did not turn that up, but rushed for the darkest corner, where on the lowest shelf the sale window tickets were stored. He drew out the box of these with trembling hands and upset them on the floor, and so having made himself a justifiable excuse for being on the ground, with his head well in the dark, he could let his poor bursting little

heart have its way with him for a space.

And there he remained until the cry of “Kipps! Forward!” summoned him once more to face the world.

CHAPTER VI THE UNEXPECTED

§1

Now in the slack of that same day, after the midday dinner and before the coming of the afternoon customers, this disastrous Chitterlow descended upon Kipps with the most amazing coincidence in the world. He did not call formally, entering and demanding Kipps, but privately, in a confidential and mysterious manner.

Kipps was first aware of him as a dark object bobbing about excitedly outside the hosiery window. He was stooping and craning and peering in the endeavour to see into the interior between and over the socks and stockings. Then he transferred his attention to the door, and after a hovering scrutiny, tried the baby-linen display. His movements and gestures suggested a suppressed excitement.

Seen by daylight, Chitterlow was not nearly such a magnificent figure as he had been by the subdued nocturnal lightings and beneath the glamour of his own interpretation. The lines were the same indeed, but the texture was different. There was a quality about the yachting cap, an indefinable finality of dustiness, a shiny finish on all the salient surfaces of the reefer coat. The red hair and the profile, though still forcible and fine, were less in the quality of Michael Angelo and more in that of the merely picturesque. But it was a bright brown eye still that sought amidst the interstices of the baby-linen.

Kipps was by no means anxious to interview Chitterlow again. If he had felt sure that Chitterlow would not enter the shop he would have hid in the warehouse until the danger was past, but he had no idea of Chitterlow's limitations. He decided to keep up the shop in the shadows until Chitterlow reached the side window of the Manchester department and then to go outside as if to inspect the condition of the window and explain to him that things were unfavourable to immediate intercourse. He might tell him he had already lost his situation....

"Ullo, Chit'low," he said, emerging.

“Very man I want to see,” said Chitterlow, shaking with vigour. “Very man I want to see.” He laid a hand on Kipps’ arm. “How *old* are you, Kipps?”

“One and twenty,” said Kipps. “Why?”

“Talk about coincidences! And your name now? Wait a minute.” He held out a finger. “*Is* it Arthur?”

“Yes,” said Kipps.

“You’re the man,” said Chitterlow.

“What man?”

“It’s about the thickest coincidence I ever struck,” said Chitterlow, plunging his extensive hand into his breast coat pocket. “Half a jiff and I’ll tell you your mother’s Christian name.” He laughed and struggled with his coat for a space, produced a washing book and two pencils, which he deposited in his side pocket; then in one capacious handful, a bent but by no means finally disabled cigar, the rubber proboscis of a bicycle pump, some twine and a lady’s purse, and finally a small pocket book, and from this, after dropping and recovering several visiting cards, he extracted a carelessly torn piece of newspaper. “Euphemia,” he read and brought his face close to Kipps’. “Eh?” He laughed noisily. “It’s about as fair a Bit of All Right as anyone *could* have — outside a coincidence play. Don’t say her name wasn’t Euphemia, Kipps, and spoil the whole blessed show.”

“Whose name — Euphemia?” asked Kipps.

“Your mother’s.”

“Lemme see what it says on the paper.”

Chitterlow handed him the fragment and turned away. “You may say what you like,” he said, addressing a vast, deep laugh to the street generally.

Kipps attempted to read. “‘WADDY or KIPPS. If Arthur Waddy or Arthur Kipps, the son of Margaret Euphemia Kipps, who — —’”

Chitterlow’s finger swept over the print. “I went down the column and every blessed name that seemed to fit my play I took. I don’t believe in made-up names. As I told you. I’m all with Zola in that. Documents whenever you can. I like ’em hot and real. See? Who was Waddy?”

“Never heard his name.”

“Not Waddy?”

“No!”

Kipps tried to read again and abandoned the attempt. “What does it mean?” he said. “I don’t understand.”

“It means,” said Chitterlow, with a momentary note of lucid exposition, “so far as I can make out that you’re going to strike it Rich. Never mind about the Waddy — that’s a detail. What does it usually mean? You’ll hear of something to your advantage — very well. I took that newspaper up to get my names by the merest chance. Directly I saw it again and read that — I knew it was you. I believe in coincidences. People say they don’t happen. *I* say they do. Everything’s a coincidence. Seen properly. Here you are. Here’s one! Incredible? Not a bit of it! See? It’s you! Kipps! Waddy be damned! It’s a Mascot. There’s luck in my play. Bif! You’re there. *I’m* there. Fair *in* it! Snap!” And he discharged his fingers like a pistol. “Never you mind about the ‘Waddy.’”

“Eh?” said Kipps, with a nervous eye on Chitterlow’s fingers.

“You’re all right,” said Chitterlow; “you may bet the seat of your only breeches on that! Don’t you worry about the Waddy — that’s as clear as day. You’re about as right side up as a billiard ball — whatever you do. Don’t stand there gaping, man! Read the paper if you don’t believe me. Read it!”

He shook it under Kipps’ nose.

Kipps became aware of the second apprentice watching them from the shop. His air of perplexity gave place to a more confident bearing.

“‘ —— who was born at East Grinstead.’ I certainly was born there. I’ve ‘eard my Aunt say — —”

“I knew it,” said Chitterlow, taking hold of one edge of the paper and bringing his face close alongside Kipps’.

“‘ —— on September the first, eighteen hundred and seventy-eight — —’”

“*That’s* all right,” said Chitterlow. “It’s all, all right, and all you have to do is write to Watson and Bean and get it — —”

“Get what?”

“Whatever it is.”

Kipps sought his moustache. “You’d write?” he asked.

“Ra-ther.”

“But what d’you think it is?”

“That’s the fun of it!” said Chitterlow, taking three steps in some as yet uninvented dance. “That’s where the joke comes in. It may be anything — it may be a million. If so! Where does little Harry come in? Eh?”

Kipps was trembling slightly. “But — —” he said, and thought. “If you was me — —” he began. “About that Waddy —— ?”

He glanced up and saw the second apprentice disappear with amazing swiftness from behind the goods in the window.

“*What?*” asked Chitterlow, but he never had an answer.

“Lor’! There’s the guv’nor!” said Kipps, and made a prompt dive for the door.

He dashed in only to discover that Shalford, with the junior apprentice in attendance, had come to mark off remnants of Kipps’ cotton dresses and was demanding him. “Hullo, Kipps,” he said, “outside —— ?”

“Seein’ if the window was straight, Sir,” said Kipps.

“Umph!” said Shalford.

For a space Kipps was too busily employed to think at all of Chitterlow or the crumpled bit of paper in his trouser pocket. He was, however, painfully aware of a suddenly disconcerted excitement at large in the street. There came one awful moment when Chitterlow’s nose loomed interrogatively over the ground glass of the department door, and his bright, little, red-brown eye sought for the reason of Kipps’ disappearance, and then it became evident that he saw the high light of Shalford’s baldness and grasped the situation and went away. And then Kipps (with that advertisement in his pocket) was able to come back to the business in hand.

He became aware that Shalford had asked a question. “Yessir, nosir, rightsir. I’m sorting up zephyrs to-morrow, Sir,” said Kipps.

Presently he had a moment to himself again, and, taking up a safe position behind a newly unpacked pile of summer lace curtains, he straightened out the piece of paper and reperused it. It was a little perplexing. That “Arthur Waddy or Arthur Kipps” — did that imply two persons or one? He would ask Pierce or Buggins. Only ——

It had always been impressed upon him that there was something

demanding secrecy about his mother.

"Don't you answer no questions about your mother," his aunt had been wont to say. "Tell them you don't know, whatever it is they ask you."

"Now this —— ?"

Kipps' face became portentously careful and he tugged at his moustache, such as it was, hard.

He had always represented his father as being a "gentleman farmer." "It didn't pay," he used to say with a picture in his own mind of a penny magazine aristocrat prematurely worn out by worry. "I'm a Norfan, both sides," he would explain, with the air of one who had seen trouble. He said he lived with his uncle and aunt, but he did not say that they kept a toy shop, and to tell anyone that his uncle had been a butler — *a servant!* — would have seemed the maddest of indiscretions. Almost all the assistants in the Emporium were equally reticent and vague, so great is their horror of "Lowness" of any sort. To ask about this "Waddy or Kipps" would upset all these little fictions. He was not, as a matter of fact, perfectly clear about his real status in the world (he was not, as a matter of fact, perfectly clear about anything), but he knew that there was a quality about his status that was — detrimental.

Under the circumstances —— ?

It occurred to him that it would save a lot of trouble to destroy the advertisement there and then.

In which case he would have to explain to Chitterlow!

"Eng!" said Mr. Kipps.

"Kipps," cried Carshot, who was shopwalking; "Kipps, Forward!"

He thrust back the crumpled paper into his pocket and sallied forth to the customers.

"I want," said the customer, looking vaguely about her through glasses, "a little bit of something to cover a little stool I have. Anything would do — a remnant or anything — —"

The matter of the advertisement remained in abeyance for half an hour, and at the end the little stool was still a candidate for covering and Kipps had a thoroughly representative collection of the textile fabrics in his department to clear away. He was so angry about the little stool that the crumpled advertisement lay for a space in his

pocket, absolutely forgotten.

§2

Kipps sat on his tin box under the gas bracket that evening, and looked up the name Euphemia and learnt what it meant in the "Enquire Within About Everything" that constituted Buggins' reference library. He hoped Buggins, according to his habit, would ask him what he was looking for, but Buggins was busy turning out his week's washing. "Two collars," said Buggins, "half pair socks, two dickeys. Shirt?... M'm. There ought to be another collar somewhere."

"Euphemia," said Kipps at last, unable altogether to keep to himself this suspicion of a high origin that floated so delightfully about him, "Eu — phemia; it isn't a name *common* people would give to a girl, is it?"

"It isn't the name any decent people would give to a girl," said Buggins, " —— common or not."

"Lor'!" said Kipps. "Why?"

"It's giving girls names like that," said Buggins, "that nine times out of ten makes 'em go wrong. It unsettles 'em. If ever I was to have a girl, if ever I was to have a dozen girls, I'd call 'em all Jane. Every one of 'em. You couldn't have a better name than that. Euphemia indeed! What next?... Good Lord!... That isn't one of my collars there, is it? under your bed?"...

Kipps got him the collar.

"I don't see no great 'arm in Euphemia," he said as he did so.

After that he became restless. "I'm a good mind to write that letter," he said, and then, finding Buggins preoccupied wrapping his washing up in the "half sox," added to himself, "a thundering good mind."

So he got his penny bottle of ink, borrowed the pen from Buggins and with no very serious difficulty in spelling or composition, did as he had resolved.

He came back into the bedroom about an hour afterwards a little out of breath and pale. "Where you been?" said Buggins, who was now reading the *Daily World Manager*, which came to him in

rotation from Carshot.

"Out to post some letters," said Kipps, hanging up his hat.

"Crib hunting?"

"Mostly," said Kipps.

"Rather," he added, with a nervous laugh; "what else?"

Buggins went on reading. Kipps sat on his bed and regarded the back of the *Daily World Manager* thoughtfully.

"Buggins," he said at last.

Buggins lowered his paper and looked.

"I say, Buggins, what do these here advertisements mean that say so-and-so will hear of something greatly to his advantage?"

"Missin' people," said Buggins, making to resume reading.

"How d'yer mean?" asked Kipps. "Money left and that sort of thing?"

Buggins shook his head. "Debts," he said, "more often than not."

"But that ain't to his advantage."

"They put that to get 'old of 'em," said Buggins. "Often it's wives."

"What you mean?"

"Deserted wives, try and get their husbands back that way."

"I suppose it *is* legacies sometimes, eh? Perhaps if someone was left a hundred pounds by someone — —"

"Hardly ever," said Buggins.

"Well, 'ow —— ?" began Kipps and hesitated.

Buggins resumed reading. He was very much excited by a leader on Indian affairs. "By Jove!" he said, "it won't do to give these here Blacks votes."

"No fear," said Kipps.

"They're different altogether," said Buggins. "They 'aven't the sound sense of Englishmen, and they 'aven't the character. There's a sort of tricky dishonesty about 'em — false witness and all that — of which an Englishman has no idea. Outside their courts of law — it's a pos'tive fact, Kipps — there's witnesses waitin' to be 'ired. Reg'lar trade. Touch their 'ats as you go in. Englishmen 'ave no idea, I tell you — not ord'nary Englishmen. It's in their blood. They're too timid to be honest. Too slavish. They aren't used to being free like we are, and if you gave 'em freedom they wouldn't make a proper

use of it. Now *we* —— . Oh, *Damn*!"

For the gas had suddenly gone out and Buggins had the whole column of Society Club Chat still to read.

Buggins could talk of nothing after that but Shalford's meanness in turning off the gas, and after being extremely satirical indeed about their employer, undressed in the dark, hit his bare toe against a box and subsided after unseemly ejaculations into silent ill-temper.

Though Kipps tried to get to sleep before the affair of the letter he had just posted resumed possession of his mind he could not do so. He went over the whole thing again, quite exhaustively. Now that his first terror was abating he couldn't quite determine whether he was glad or sorry that he had posted that letter. If it *should* happen to be a hundred pounds!

It *must* be a hundred pounds!

If it was he could hold out for a year, for a couple of years even, before he got a Crib.

Even if it was fifty pounds —— !

Buggins was already breathing regularly when Kipps spoke again. "*Bug*-gins," he said.

Buggins pretended to be asleep, and thickened his regular breathing (a little too hastily) to a snore.

"I say Buggins," said Kipps after an interval.

"*What's* up now?" said Buggins unamiably.

"'Spose *you* saw an advertisement in a paper, with your name in it, see, asking you to come and see someone, like, so as to hear of something very much to your — —"

"Hide," said Buggins shortly.

"But — —"

"I'd hide."

"Er?"

"Goonight, o' man," said Buggins, with convincing earnestness. Kipps lay still for a long time, then blew profoundly, turned over and stared at the other side of the dark.

He had been a fool to post that letter!

Lord! *Hadn't* he been a fool!

It was just five days and a half after the light had been turned out while Buggins was reading, that a young man with a white face and eyes bright and wide-open, emerged from a side road upon the Leas front. He was dressed in his best clothes, and, although the weather was fine, he carried his umbrella, just as if he had been to church. He hesitated and turned to the right. He scanned each house narrowly as he passed it, and presently came to an abrupt stop. “Hughenden,” said the gateposts in firm, black letters, and the fanlight in gold repeated “Hughenden.” It was a stucco house fit to take your breath away, and its balcony was painted a beautiful sea-green, enlivened with gilding. He stood looking up at it.

“Gollys!” he said at last in an awestricken whisper.

It had rich-looking crimson curtains to all the lower windows and brass railed blinds above. There was a splendid tropical plant in a large, artistic pot in the drawing-room window. There was a splendid bronzed knocker (ring also) and two bells — one marked “servants.” Gollys! *Servants*, eh?

He walked past away from it, with his eyes regarding it, and then turned and came back. He passed through a further indecision, and finally drifted away to the sea front and sat down on a seat a little way along the Leas and put his arm over the back and regarded “Hughenden.” He whistled an air very softly to himself, put his head first on one side and then on the other. Then for a space he scowled fixedly at it.

A very stout old gentleman, with a very red face and very protuberant eyes, sat down beside Kipps, removed a Panama hat of the most abandoned desperado cut, and mopped his brow and blew. Then he began mopping the inside of his hat. Kipps watched him for a space, wondering how much he might have a year, and where he bought his hat. Then “Hughenden” reasserted itself.

An impulse overwhelmed him. “I say,” he said, leaning forward, to the old gentleman.

The old gentleman started and stared.

“*Whad* do you say?” he asked fiercely.

“You wouldn’t think,” said Kipps, indicating with his forefinger, “that that ‘ouse there belongs to me.”

The old gentleman twisted his neck round to look at

“Hughenden.” Then he came back to Kipps, looked at his mean, little garments with apoplectic intensity and blew at him by way of reply.

“It does,” said Kipps, a little less confidently.

“Don’t be a Fool,” said the old gentleman, and put his hat on and wiped out the corners of his eyes. “It’s hot enough,” panted the old gentleman indignantly, “without Fools.” Kipps looked from the old gentleman to the house and back to the old gentleman. The old gentleman looked at Kipps and snorted and looked out to sea, and again, snorting very contemptuously, at Kipps.

“Mean to say it doesn’t belong to me?” said Kipps.

The old gentleman just glanced over his shoulder at the house in dispute and then fell to pretending Kipps didn’t exist. “It’s been lef’ me this very morning,” said Kipps. “It ain’t the only one that’s been lef’ me, neither.”

“Aw!” said the old gentleman, like one who is sorely tried. He seemed to expect the passers-by presently to remove Kipps.

“It *‘as*,” said Kipps. He made no further remark to the old gentleman for a space, but looked with a little less certitude at the house....

“I got — —” he said and stopped.

“It’s no good telling you if you don’t believe,” he said.

The old gentleman, after a struggle with himself, decided not to have a fit. “Try that game on with me,” he panted. “Give you in charge.”

“What game?”

“Wasn’t born yesterday,” said the old gentleman, and blew. “Besides,” he added, “*look* at you! I know you,” and the old gentleman coughed shortly and nodded to the horizon and coughed again.

Kipps looked dubiously from the house to the old gentleman and back to the house. Their conversation, he gathered, was over. Presently he got up and went slowly across the grass to its stucco portal again. He stood and his mouth shaped the precious word, “Hughenden.” It was all *right*! He looked over his shoulder as if in appeal to the old gentleman, then turned and went his way. The old gentleman was so evidently past all reason!

He hung for a moment some distance along the parade, as though

some invisible string was pulling him back. When he could no longer see the house from the pavement he went out into the road. Then with an effort he snapped the string.

He went on down a quiet side street, unbuttoned his coat furtively, took out three bank notes in an envelope, looked at them and replaced them. Then he fished up five new sovereigns from his trouser pocket and examined them. To such a confidence had his exact resemblance to his dead mother's portrait carried Messrs. Watson and Bean.

It was right enough.

It really was *all* right.

He replaced the coins with grave precaution and went his way with a sudden briskness. It was all right — he had it now — he was a rich man at large. He went up a street and round a corner and along another street, and started towards the Pavilion and changed his mind and came round back, resolved to go straight to the Emporium and tell them all.

He was aware of someone crossing a road far off ahead of him, someone curiously relevant to his present extraordinary state of mind. It was Chitterlow. Of course it was Chitterlow who had told him first of the whole thing! The playwright was marching buoyantly along a cross street. His nose was in the air, the yachting cap was on the back of his head and the large freckled hand grasped two novels from the library, a morning newspaper, a new hat done up in paper and a lady's net bag full of onions and tomatoes....

He passed out of sight behind the wine merchant's at the corner, as Kipps decided to hurry forward and tell him of the amazing change in the Order of the Universe that had just occurred.

Kipps uttered a feeble shout, arrested as it began, and waved his umbrella. Then he set off at a smart pace in pursuit. He came round the corner and Chitterlow had gone; he hurried to the next and there was no Chitterlow, he turned back unavailingly and his eyes sought some other possible corner. His hand fluttered to his mouth and he stood for a space at the pavement edge, staring about him. No good!

But the sight of Chitterlow was a wholesome thing, it connected events together, joined him on again to the past at a new point, and that was what he so badly needed....

It was all right — all right.

He became suddenly very anxious to tell everybody at the Emporium, absolutely everybody, all about it. That was what wanted doing. He felt that telling was the thing to make this business real. He gripped his umbrella about the middle and walked very eagerly.

He entered the Emporium through the Manchester department. He flung open the door (over whose ground glass he had so recently, in infinite apprehension, watched the nose of Chitterlow) and discovered the second apprentice and Pierce in conversation. Pierce was prodding his hollow tooth with a pin and talking in fragments about the distinctive characteristics of Good Style.

Kipps came up in front of the counter.

"I say," he said; "what d'yer think?"

"What?" said Pierce over the pin.

"Guess."

"You've slipped out because Teddy's in London."

"Something more."

"What?"

"Been left a fortune."

"Garn!"

"I 'ave."

"Get out!"

"Straight. I been lef' twelve 'undred pounds — twelve 'undred pounds a year!"

He moved towards the little door out of the department into the house, moving, as heralds say, *regardant passant*. Pierce stood with mouth wide open and pin poised in air. "No!" he said at last.

"It's right," said Kipps, "and I'm going."

And he fell over the doormat into the house.

§4

It happened that Mr. Shalford was in London buying summer sale goods — and no doubt also interviewing aspirants to succeed Kipps.

So that there was positively nothing to hinder a wild rush of rumour from end to end of the Emporium. All the masculine members began their report with the same formula. "Heard about

Kipps?”

The new girl in the cash desk had had it from Pierce and had dashed out into the fancy shop to be the first with the news on the fancy side. Kipps had been left a thousand pounds a year, twelve thousand pounds a year. Kipps had been left twelve hundred thousand pounds. The figures were uncertain, but the essential facts they had correct. Kipps had gone upstairs. Kipps was packing his box. He said he wouldn’t stop another day in the old Emporium, not for a thousand pounds! It was said that he was singing ribaldry about old Shalford.

He had come down! He was in the counting house. There was a general movement thither. Poor old Buggins had a customer and couldn’t make out what the deuce it was all about! Completely out of it was Buggins.

There was a sound of running to and fro and voices saying this, that and the other thing about Kipps. Ring-a-dinger, ring-a-dinger went the dinner bell all unheeded. The whole of the Emporium was suddenly bright-eyed, excited, hungry to tell somebody, to find at any cost somebody who didn’t know and be first to tell them, “Kipps has been left thirty — forty — fifty thousand pounds!”

“*What!*” cried the senior porter, “Him!” and ran up to the counting house as eagerly as though Kipps had broken his neck.

“One of our chaps just been left sixty thousand pounds,” said the first apprentice, returning after a great absence, to his customer.

“Unexpectedly?” said the customer.

“Quite,” said the first apprentice....

“I’m sure if Anyone deserves it, it’s Mr. Kipps,” said Miss Mergle, and her train rustled as she hurried to the counting house.

There stood Kipps amidst a pelting shower of congratulations. His face was flushed and his hair disordered. He still clutched his hat and best umbrella in his left hand. His right hand was anyone’s to shake rather than his own. (Ring-a-dinger, ring-a-dinger ding, ding, ding, dang you! went the neglected dinner bell.)

“Good old Kipps,” said Pierce, shaking; “Good old Kipps.”

Booch rubbed one anæmic hand upon the other. “You’re sure it’s all right, Mr. Kipps,” he said in the background.

“I’m sure we all congratulate him,” said Miss Mergle.

“Great Scott!” said the new young lady in the glove department. “Twelve hundred a year! Great Scott! You aren’t thinking of marrying anyone, are you, Mr. Kipps?”

“Three pounds, five and ninepence a day,” said Mr. Booch, working in his head almost miraculously....

Everyone, it seemed, was saying how glad they were it was Kipps, except the junior apprentice, upon whom — he being the only son of a widow and used to having the best of everything as a right — an intolerable envy, a sense of unbearable wrong, had cast its gloomy shade. All the rest were quite honestly and simply glad — gladder perhaps at that time than Kipps because they were not so overpowered....

Kipps went downstairs to dinner, emitting fragmentary, disconnected statements. “Never expected anything of the sort.... When this here old Bean told me, you could have knocked me down with a feather.... He says, ‘You b’en lef’ money.’ Even then I didn’t expect it’d be mor’n a hundred pounds perhaps. Something like that.”

With the sitting down to dinner and the handing of plates the excitement assumed a more orderly quality. The housekeeper emitted congratulations as she carved and the maidservant became dangerous to clothes with the plates — she held them anyhow, one expected to see one upside down even — she found Kipps so fascinating to look at. Everyone was the brisker and hungrier for the news (except the junior apprentice) and the housekeeper carved with unusual liberality. It was High Old Times there under the gaslight, High Old Times. “I’m sure if Anyone deserves it,” said Miss Mergle— “pass the salt, please — it’s Kipps.”

The babble died away a little as Carshot began barking across the table at Kipps. “You’ll be a bit of a Swell, Kipps,” he said. “You won’t hardly know yourself.”

“Quite the gentleman,” said Miss Mergle.

“Many real gentlemen’s families,” said the housekeeper, “have to do with less.”

“See you on the Leas,” said Carshot. “My gu — !” He met the housekeeper’s eye. She had spoken about that before. “My eye!” he said tamely, lest words should mar the day.

“You’ll go to London, I reckon,” said Pierce. “You’ll be a man about town. We shall see you mashing ‘em, with violets in your button’ole down the Burlington Arcade.”

“One of these West End Flats. That’d be my style,” said Pierce. “And a first-class club.”

“Aren’t these clubs a bit ‘ard to get into?” asked Kipps, open-eyed, over a mouthful of potato.

“No fear. Not for Money,” said Pierce. And the girl in the laces who had acquired a cynical view of Modern Society from the fearless exposures of Miss Marie Corelli, said, “Money goes everywhere nowadays, Mr. Kipps.”

But Carshot showed the true British strain.

“If I was Kipps,” he said, pausing momentarily for a knifeful of gravy, “I should go to the Rockies and shoot bears.”

“I’d certainly ‘ave a run over to Boulogne,” said Pierce, “and look about a bit. I’m going to do that next Easter myself, anyhow — see if I don’t.”

“Go to Oireland, Mr. Kipps,” came the soft insistence of Biddy Murphy, who managed the big workroom, flushed and shining in the Irish way, as she spoke. “Go to Oireland. Ut’s the loveliest country in the world. Outside Car-rs. Fishin’, shootin’, huntin’. An’ pretty gals! Eh! You should see the Lakes of Killarney, Mr. Kipps!” And she expressed ecstasy by a facial pantomime and smacked her lips.

And presently they crowned the event.

It was Pierce who said, “Kipps, you ought to stand Sham!”

And it was Carshot who found the more poetical word, “Champagne.”

“Rather!” said Kipps hilariously, and the rest was a question of detail and willing emissaries. “Here it comes!” they said as the apprentice came down the staircase. “How about the shop?” said someone. “Oh! *hang* the shop!” said Carshot and made gruntulous demands for a corkscrew with a thing to cut the wire. Pierce, the dog! had a wire cutter in his pocket knife. How Shalford would have stared at the gold tipped bottles if he had chanced to take an early train! Bang with the corks, and bang! Gluck, gluck, gluck, and sizzle!

When Kipps found them all standing about him under the gas flare, saying almost solemnly “Kipps!” with tumblers upheld—

“Have it in tumblers,” Carshot had said; “have it in tumblers. It isn’t a wine like you have in glasses. Not like port and sherry. It cheers you up, but you don’t get drunk. It isn’t hardly stronger than lemonade. They drink it at dinner, some of ‘em, every day.”

“What! At three and six a bottle!” said the housekeeper incredulously.

“*They* don’t stick at *that*,” said Carshot; “not the champagne sort.”

The housekeeper pursed her lips and shook her head....

When Kipps, I say, found them all standing up to toast him in that manner, there came such a feeling in his throat and face that for the life of him he scarcely knew for a moment whether he was not going to cry. “Kipps!” they all said, with kindly eyes. It was very good of them, it was very good of them, and hard there wasn’t a stroke of luck for them all!

But the sight of upturned chins and glasses pulled him together again....

They did him honour. Unenviously and freely they did him honour.

For example, Carshot being subsequently engaged in serving cretonne and desiring to push a number of rejected blocks up the counter in order to have space for measuring, swept them by a powerful and ill-calculated movement of the arm, with a noise like thunder partly on to the floor and partly on to the foot of the still gloomily preoccupied junior apprentice. And Buggins, whose place it was to shopwalk while Carshot served, shopwalked with quite unparalleled dignity, dangling a new season’s sunshade with a crooked handle on one finger. He arrested each customer who came down the shop with a grave and penetrating look. “Showing very ‘tractive line new sheason’s shun-shade,” he would remark, and, after a suitable pause, “‘Markable thing, one our ‘sistant leg’sy twelve ‘undred a year. V’ry ‘tractive. Nothing more to-day, mum? No!” And he would then go and hold the door open for them with perfect decorum and with the sunshade dangling elegantly from his left hand....

And the second apprentice, serving a customer with cheap ticking, and being asked suddenly if it was strong, answered remarkably,

“Oo! *no*, mum! Strong! Why it ain’t ‘ardly stronger than

lemonade....”

The head porter, moreover, was filled with a virtuous resolve to break the record as a lightning packer and make up for lost time. Mr. Swaffenham, of the Sandgate Riviera, for example, who was going out to dinner that night at seven, received at half-past six, instead of the urgently needed dress shirt he expected, a corset specially adapted to the needs of persons inclined to embonpoint. A parcel of summer underclothing selected by the elder Miss Waldershawe, was somehow distributed in the form of gratis additions throughout a number of parcels of a less intimate nature, and a box of millinery on approval to Lady Pamshort (at Wampachs) was enriched by the addition of the junior porter’s cap....

These little things, slight in themselves, witness perhaps none the less eloquently to the unselfish exhilaration felt throughout the Emporium at the extraordinary and unexpected enrichment of Mr. Kipps.

§5

The ‘bus that plies between New Romney and Folkestone is painted a British red and inscribed on either side with the word “Tip-top” in gold amidst voluptuous scrolls. It is a slow and portly ‘bus. Below it swings a sort of hold, hung by chains between the wheels, and in the summer time the top has garden seats. The front over the two dauntless unhurrying horses rises in tiers like a theatre; there is first a seat for the driver and his company, and above that a seat and above that, unless my memory plays me false, a seat. There are days when this ‘bus goes and days when it doesn’t go — you have to find out. And so you get to New Romney.

This ‘bus it was, this ruddy, venerable and immortal ‘bus, that came down the Folkestone hill with unflinching deliberation, and trundled through Sandgate and Hythe, and out into the windy spaces of the Marsh, with Kipps and all his fortunes on its brow. You figure him there. He sat on the highest seat diametrically above the driver and his head was spinning and spinning with champagne and this stupendous Tomfoolery of Luck and his heart was swelling, swelling indeed at times as though it would burst him, and his face towards

the sunlight was transfigured. He said never a word, but ever and again as he thought of this or that, he laughed. He seemed full of chuckles for a time, detached and independent chuckles, chuckles that rose and burst in him like bubbles in a wine.... He held a banjo sceptre-fashion and restless on his knee. He had always wanted a banjo, and now he had got one at Malchior's while he was waiting for the 'bus.

There sat beside him a young servant who was sucking peppermint and a little boy with a sniff, whose flitting eyes showed him curious to know why ever and again Kipps laughed, and beside the driver were two young men in gaiters talking about "tegs." And there sat Kipps, all unsuspected, twelve hundred a year, as it were, disguised as a common young man. And the young man in gaiters to the left of the driver eyed Kipps and his banjo, and especially his banjo, ever and again as if he found it and him, with his rapt face, an insoluble enigma. And many a King has ridden into a conquered city with a lesser sense of splendour than Kipps.

Their shadows grew long behind them and their faces were transfigured in gold as they rumbled on towards the splendid West. The sun set before they had passed Dymchurch, and as they came lumbering into New Romney past the windmill the dusk had come.

The driver handed down the banjo and the portmanteau, and Kipps having paid him— "That's aw right," he said to the change, as a gentleman should — turned about and ran the portmanteau smartly into Old Kipps, whom the sound of the stopping of the 'bus had brought to the door of the shop in an aggressive mood and with his mouth full of supper.

"Ullo, Uncle, didn't see you," said Kipps.

"Blunderin' ninny," said Old Kipps. "What's brought *you* here? Ain't early closing, is it? Not Toosday?"

"Got some news for you, Uncle," said Kipps, dropping the portmanteau.

"Ain't lost your situation, 'ave you? What's that you got there? I'm blowed if it ain't a banjo. Goo-lord! Spendin' your money on banjoes! Don't put down your portmanty there — anyhow. Right in the way of everybody. I'm blowed if ever I saw such a boy as you've got lately. Here! Molly! And, look here! What you got a portmanty

for? Why! Goo-lord! You ain't *really* lost your place, 'ave you?"

"Somethin's happened," said Kipps slightly dashed. "It's all right, Uncle. I'll tell you in a minute."

Old Kipps took the banjo as his nephew picked up the portmanteau again.

The living room door opened quickly, showing a table equipped with elaborate simplicity for supper, and Mrs. Kipps appeared.

"If it ain't young Artie," she said. "Why! Whatever's brought *you* 'ome?"

"Ullo, Aunt," said Artie. "I'm coming in. I got somethin' to tell you. I've 'ad a bit of Luck."

He wouldn't tell them all at once. He staggered with the portmanteau round the corner of the counter, set a bundle of children's tin pails into clattering oscillation, and entered the little room. He deposited his luggage in the corner beside the tall clock, and turned to his Aunt and Uncle again. His Aunt regarded him doubtfully, the yellow light from the little lamp on the table escaped above the shade and lit her forehead and the tip of her nose. It would be all right in a minute. He wouldn't tell them all at once. Old Kipps stood in the shop door with the banjo in his hand, breathing noisily. "The fact is, Aunt, I've 'ad a bit of Luck."

"You ain't been backin' gordless 'orses, Artie?" she asked.

"No fear."

"It's a draw he's been in," said Old Kipps, still panting from the impact of the portmanteau; "it's a dratted draw. Jest look here, Molly. He's won this 'ere trashy banjer and thrown up his situation on the strength of it — that's what he's done. Goin' about singing. Dash and plunge! Jest the very fault poor Pheamy always 'ad. Blunder right in and no one mustn't stop 'er!"

"You ain't thrown up your place, Artie, 'ave you?" said Mrs. Kipps.

Kipps perceived his opportunity. "I 'ave," he said; "I've throwed it up."

"What for?" said Old Kipps.

"So's to learn the banjo!"

"Goo *Lord*!" said Old Kipps, in horror to find himself verified.

"I'm going about playing!" said Kipps with a giggle. "Goin' to

black my face, Aunt, and sing on the beach. I'm going to 'ave a most tremenjous lark and earn any amount of money — you see. Twenty-six fousand pounds I'm going to earn just as easy as nothing!"

"Kipps," said Mrs. Kipps, "he's been drinking!"

They regarded their nephew across the supper table with long faces. Kipps exploded with laughter and broke out again when his Aunt shook her head very sadly at him. Then suddenly he fell grave. He felt he could keep it up no longer. "It's all right, Aunt. Reely. I ain't mad and I ain't been drinking. I been lef' money. I been left twenty-six fousand pounds."

Pause.

"And you thrown up your place?" said Old Kipps.

"Yes," said Kipps. "Rather!"

"And bort this banjer, put on your best noo trousers and come right on 'ere?"

"Well," said Mrs. Kipps, "*I* never did."

"These ain't my noo trousers, Aunt," said Kipps regretfully. "My noo trousers wasn't done."

"I shouldn't ha' thought that *even you* could ha' been such a fool as that," said Old Kipps.

Pause.

"It's *all* right," said Kipps a little disconcerted by their distrustful solemnity. "It's all right — reely! Twenny-six fousan' pounds. And a 'ouse — —"

Old Kipps pursed his lips and shook his head.

"A 'ouse on the Leas. I could have gone there. Only I didn't. I didn't care to. I didn't know what to say. I wanted to come and tell you."

"How d'yer know the 'ouse —— ?"

"They told me."

"Well," said Old Kipps, and nodded his head portentously towards his nephew, with the corners of his mouth pulled down in a portentous, discouraging way. "Well, you *are* a young Gaby."

"I didn't *think* it of you, Artie!" said Mrs. Kipps.

"Wadjer mean?" asked Kipps faintly, looking from one to the other with a withered face.

Old Kipps closed the shop door. "They been 'avin' a lark with

you," said Old Kipps in a mournful undertone. "That's what I mean, my boy. They jest been seein' what a Gaby like you 'ud do."

"I dessay that young Quodling was in it," said Mrs. Kipps. "'E's jest that sort."

(For Quodling of the green baize bag had grown up to be a fearful dog, the terror of New Romney.)

"It's somebody after your place very likely," said Old Kipps.

Kipps looked from one sceptical, reproving face to the other, and round him at the familiar shabby, little room, with his familiar cheap portmanteau on the mended chair, and that banjo amidst the supper things like some irrevocable deed. Could he be rich indeed? Could it be that these things had really happened? Or had some insane fancy whirled him hither?

Still — perhaps a hundred pounds ——

"But," he said. "It's all right, reely, Uncle. You don't think —— ? I 'ad a letter."

"Got up," said Old Kipps.

"But I answered it and went to a norfis."

Old Kipps felt staggered for a moment, but he shook his head and chins sagely from side to side. As the memory of old Bean and Shalford revived, the confidence of Kipps came back to him.

"I saw a nold gent, Uncle — perfect gentleman. And 'e told me all about it. Mos' respectable 'e was. Said 'is name was Watson and Bean — leastways 'e was Bean. Said it was lef' me — —" Kipps suddenly dived into his breast pocket. "By my Grandfather — —"

The old people started.

Old Kipps uttered an exclamation and wheeled round towards the mantel shelf above which the daguerreotype of his lost younger sister smiled its fading smile upon the world.

"Waddy 'is name was," said Kipps, with his hand still deep in his pocket. "It was *'is* son was my father — —"

"Waddy!" said Old Kipps.

"Waddy!" said Mrs. Kipps.

"She'd never say," said Old Kipps.

There was a long silence.

Kipps fumbled with a letter, a crumpled advertisement and three bank notes. He hesitated between these items.

“Why! That young chap what was arsting questions — —” said Old Kipps, and regarded his wife with an eye of amazement.

“Must ‘ave been,” said Mrs. Kipps.

“Must ‘ave been,” said Old Kipps.

“James,” said Mrs. Kipps, in an awestricken voice, “after all — perhaps — it’s true!”

“‘*Ow* much did you say?” asked Old Kipps. “‘Ow much did you say ‘ed lef’ you, me b’y?”

It was thrilling, though not quite in the way Kipps had expected. He answered almost meekly across the meagre supper things, with his documentary evidence in his hand:

“Twelve ‘undred pounds. ‘Proximately, he said. Twelve ‘undred pounds a year. ‘E made ‘is will, jest before ‘e died — not more’n a month ago. When ‘e was dying, ‘e seemed to change like, Mr. Bean said. ‘E’d never forgiven ‘is son, never — not till then. ‘Is son ‘ad died in Australia, years and years ago, and *then* ‘e ‘adn’t forgiven ‘im. You know— ‘is son what was my father. But jest when ‘e was ill and dying ‘e seemed to get worried like and longing for someone of ‘is own. And ‘e told Mr. Bean it was ‘im that had prevented them marrying. So ‘e thought. That’s ‘ow it all come about....”

§6

At last Kipps’ flaring candle went up the narrow uncarpeted staircase to the little attic that had been his shelter and refuge during all the days of his childhood and youth. His head was whirling. He had been advised, he had been warned, he had been flattered and congratulated, he had been given whiskey and hot water and lemon and sugar, and his health had been drunk in the same. He had also eaten two Welsh Rabbits — an unusual supper. His Uncle was chiefly for his going into Parliament, his Aunt was consumed with a great anxiety. “I’m afraid he’ll go and marry beneath ‘im.”

“Y’ought to ‘ave a bit o’ shootin’ somewheer,” said Old Kipps.

“It’s your *duty* to marry into a county family, Artie. Remember that.”

“There’s lots of young noblemen’ll be glad to ‘ang on to you,” said Old Kipps. “You mark my words. And borry your money. And

then, good day to ye."

"I got to be precious Careful," said Kipps. "Mr. Bean said that."

"And you got to be precious careful of this old Bean," said Old Kipps. "We may be out of the world in Noo Romney, but I've 'eard a bit about s'licitors, for all that. You keep your eye on old Bean, me b'y.

"'Ow do we know what 'e's up to, with your money, even now?" said Old Kipps, pursuing this uncomfortable topic.

"'E *looked* very respectable," said Kipps....

Kipps undressed with great deliberation, and with vast gaps of pensive margin. Twenty-six thousand pounds!

His Aunt's solicitude had brought back certain matters into the foreground that his "Twelve 'Undred a year!" had for a time driven away altogether. His thoughts went back to the wood-carving class. Twelve Hundred a Year. He sat on the edge of the bed in profound meditation and his boots fell "whop" and "whop" upon the floor, with a long interval between each "whop." Twenty-five thousand pounds. "By Gum!" He dropped the remainder of his costume about him on the floor, got into bed, pulled the patchwork quilt over him and put his head on the pillow that had been first to hear of Ann Pornick's accession to his heart. But he did not think of Ann Pornick now.

It was about everything in the world except Ann Pornick that he seemed to be trying to think of — simultaneously. All the vivid happenings of the day came and went in his overtaxed brain; "that old Bean" explaining and explaining, the fat man who wouldn't believe, an overpowering smell of peppermint, the banjo, Miss Mergle saying he deserved it, Chitterlow's vanishing round a corner, the wisdom and advice and warnings of his Aunt and Uncle. She was afraid he would marry beneath him, *was* she? She didn't know....

His brain made an excursion into the wood-carving class and presented Kipps with the picture of himself amazing that class by a modest yet clearly audible remark, "I been left twenty-six thousand pounds."

Then he told them all quietly but firmly that he had always loved Miss Walshingham, always, and so he had brought all his twenty-six thousand pounds with him to give to her there and then. He wanted

nothing in return.... Yes, he wanted nothing in return. He would give it to her all in an envelope and go. Of course he would keep the banjo — and a little present for his Aunt and Uncle — and a new suit perhaps — and one or two other things she would not miss. He went off at a tangent. He might buy a motor car, he might buy one of these here things that will play you a piano — that would make old Buggins sit up! He could pretend he had learnt to play — he might buy a bicycle and a cyclist suit....

A terrific multitude of plans of what he might do and in particular of what he might buy, came crowding into his brain, and he did not so much fall asleep as pass into a disorder of dreams in which he was driving a four-horse Tip-Top coach down Sandgate Hill ("I shall have to be precious careful"), wearing innumerable suits of clothes, and through some terrible accident wearing them all wrong. Consequently he was being laughed at. The coach vanished in the interest of the costume. He was wearing golfing suits and a silk hat. This passed into a nightmare that he was promenading on the Leas in a Highland costume, with a kilt that kept shrinking, and Shalford was following him with three policemen. "He's my assistant," Shalford kept repeating; "he's escaped. He's an escaped Improver. Keep by him and in a minute you'll have to run him in. I know 'em. We say they wash, but they won't."... He could feel the kilt creeping up his legs. He would have tugged at it to pull it down only his arms were paralysed. He had an impression of giddy crisis. He uttered a shriek of despair. "*Now!*" said Shalford. He woke in horror, his quilt had slipped off the bed.

He had a fancy he had just been called, that he had somehow overslept himself and missed going down for dusting. Then he perceived it was still night and light by reason of the moonlight, and that he was no longer in the Emporium. He wondered where he could be. He had a curious fancy that the world had been swept and rolled up like a carpet and that he was nowhere. It occurred to him that perhaps he was mad. "Buggins!" he said. There was no answer, not even the defensive snore. No room, no Buggins, nothing!

Then he remembered better. He sat on the edge of his bed for some time. Could anyone have seen his face they would have seen it white and drawn with staring eyes. Then he groaned weakly.

“Twenty-six thousand pounds?” he whispered.

Just then it presented itself in an almost horribly overwhelming mass.

He remade his bed and returned to it. He was still dreadfully wakeful. It was suddenly clear to him that he need never trouble to get up punctually at seven again. That fact shone out upon him like a star through clouds. He was free to lie in bed as long as he liked, get up when he liked, go where he liked, have eggs every morning for breakfast or rashers or bloater paste or.... Also he was going to astonish Miss Walshingham....

Astonish her and astonish her....

* * * * * *

He was awakened by a thrush singing in the fresh dawn. The whole room was flooded with warm, golden sunshine. “I say!” said the thrush. “I say! I say! Twelve ‘undred a year! Twelve ‘Undred a Year. Twelve ‘UNDRED a Year! I say! I say! I say!”

He sat up in bed and rubbed the sleep from his eyes with his knuckles. Then he jumped out of bed and began dressing very eagerly. He did not want to lose any time in beginning the new life.

END OF BOOK I

BOOK II MR. COOTE, THE CHAPERON

CHAPTER I THE NEW CONDITIONS

§1

There comes a gentlemanly figure into these events and for a space takes a leading part therein, a Good Influence, a refined and amiable figure, Mr. Chester Coote. You must figure him as about to enter our story, walking with a curious rectitude of bearing through the evening dusk towards the Public Library, erect, large-headed — he had a great, big head full of the suggestion of a powerful mind, well under control — with a large, official-looking envelope in his white and knuckly hand. In the other he carries a gold-handled cane. He wears a silken grey jacket suit, buttoned up, and anon he coughs behind the official envelope. He has a prominent nose, slatey grey eyes and a certain heaviness about the mouth. His mouth hangs breathing open, with a slight protrusion of the lower jaw. His straw hat is pulled down a little in front, and he looks each person he passes in the eye, and directly his look is answered looks away.

Thus Mr. Chester Coote, as he was on the evening when he came upon Kipps. He was a local house agent and a most active and gentlemanly person, a conscious gentleman, equally aware of society and the serious side of life. From amateur theatricals of a nice, refined sort to science classes, few things were able to get along without him. He supplied a fine, full bass, a little flat and quavery perhaps, but very abundant, to the St. Stylites' choir....

He passes on towards the Public Library, lifts the envelope in salutation to a passing curate, smiles and enters....

It was in the Public Library that he came upon Kipps.

By that time Kipps had been rich a week or more, and the change in his circumstances was visible upon his person. He was wearing a new suit of drab flannels, a Panama hat and a red tie for the first time, and he carried a silver-mounted stick with a tortoise shell handle. He felt extraordinarily different, perhaps more different than he really was, from the meek Improver of a week ago. He felt as he felt Dukes must feel, yet at bottom he was still modest. He was leaning on his stick and regarding the indicator with a respect that never palled. He

faced round to meet Mr. Coote's overflowing smile.

"What are you doang hea?" said Mr. Chester Coote.

Kipps was momentarily abashed. "Oh," he said slowly, and then, "Mooching round a bit."

That Coote should address him with this easy familiarity was a fresh reminder of his enhanced social position. "Jes' mooching round," he said. "I been back in Folkestone free days now. At my 'ouse, you know."

"Ah!" said Mr. Coote. "I haven't yet had an opportunity of congratulating you on your good fortune."

Kipps held out his hand. "It was the cleanest surprise that ever was," he said. "When Mr. Bean told me of it — you could have knocked me down with a feather."

"It must mean a tremendous change for you."

"Oo. Rather. Change. Why, I'm like the chap in the song they sing, I don't 'ardly know where I are. *You* know."

"An extraordinary change," said Mr. Coote. "I can quite believe it. Are you stopping in Folkestone?"

"For a bit. I got a 'ouse, you know. What my gran'father 'ad. I'm stopping there. His housekeeper was kep' on. Fancy — being in the same town and everything!"

"Precisely," said Mr. Coote. "That's it!" and coughed like a sheep behind four straight fingers.

"Mr. Bean got me to come back to see to things. Else I was out in New Romney, where my Uncle and Aunt live. But it's a Lark coming back. In a way...."

The conversation hung for a moment.

"Are you getting a book?" asked Coote.

"Well, I 'aven't got a ticket yet. But I shall get one all right, and have a go in at reading. I've often wanted to. Rather. I was just 'aving a look at this Indicator. First-class idea. Tells you all you want to know."

"It's simple," said Coote, and coughed again, keeping his eyes fixed on Kipps. For a moment they hung, evidently disinclined to part. Then Kipps jumped at an idea he had cherished for a day or more, — not particularly in relation to Coote, but in relation to anyone.

“You doing anything?” he asked.

“Just called with a papah about the classes.”

“Because —— . Would you care to come up and look at my ‘ouse and ‘ave a smoke and a chat. Eh?” He made indicative back jerks of the head, and was smitten with a horrible doubt whether possibly this invitation might not be some hideous breach of etiquette. Was it, for example, the correct hour? “I’d be awfully glad if you would,” he added.

Mr. Coote begged for a moment while he handed the official-looking envelope to the librarian and then declared himself quite at Kipps’ service. They muddled a moment over precedence at each door they went through and so emerged to the street.

“It feels awful rum to me at first, all this,” said Kipps “‘Aving a ‘ouse of my own and all that. It’s strange, you know. ‘Aving all day. Reely I don’t ‘ardly know what to do with my time.

“D’ju smoke?” he said suddenly, proffering a magnificent gold decorated pigskin cigarette case, which he produced from nothing, almost as though it was some sort of trick. Coote hesitated and declined, and then, with great liberality, “Don’t let me hinder you....”

They walked a little way in silence, Kipps being chiefly concerned to affect ease in his new clothes and keeping a wary eye on Coote. “It’s rather a big windfall,” said Coote presently. “It yields you an income —— ?”

“Twelve ‘undred a year,” said Kipps. “Bit over — if anything.”

“Do you think of living in Folkestone?”

“Don’t know ‘ardly yet. I *may*. Then again, I may not. I got a furnished ‘ouse, but I may let it.”

“Your plans are undecided?”

“That’s jest it,” said Kipps.

“Very beautiful sunset it was to-night,” said Coote, and Kipps said, “Wasn’t it?” and they began to talk of the merits of sunsets. Did Kipps paint? Not since he was a boy. He didn’t believe he could now. Coote said his sister was a painter and Kipps received this intimation with respect. Coote sometimes wished he could find time to paint himself, — but one couldn’t do everything and Kipps said that was “jest it.”

They came out presently upon the end of the Leas and looked

down to where the squat dark masses of the Harbour and Harbour Station, gemmed with pinpoint lights, crouched against the twilit grey of the sea. “If one could do *that*,” said Coote, and Kipps was inspired to throw his head back, cock it on one side, regard the Harbour with one eye shut and say that it would take some doing. Then Coote said something about “Abend,” which Kipps judged to be in a foreign language and got over by lighting another cigarette from his by no means completed first one. “You’re right, *puff*, *puff*.”

He felt that so far he had held up his end of the conversation in a very creditable manner, but that extreme discretion was advisable.

They turned away and Coote remarked that the sea was good for crossing, and asked Kipps if he had been over the water very much. Kipps said he hadn’t been— “much,” but he thought very likely he’d have a run over to Boulogne soon, and Coote proceeded to talk of the charms of foreign travel, mentioning quite a number of unheard-of places by name. He had been to them! Kipps remained on the defensive, but behind his defences his heart sank. It was all very well to pretend, but presently it was bound to come out. *He* didn’t know anything of all this....

So they drew near the house. At his own gate Kipps became extremely nervous. It was a fine, impressive door. He knocked neither a single knock nor a double, but about one and a half — an apologetic half. They were admitted by an irreproachable housemaid, with a steady eye, before which Kipps cringed dreadfully. He hung up his hat and fell about over hall chairs and things. “There’s a fire in the study, Mary?” he had the audacity to ask, though evidently he knew, and led the way upstairs panting. He tried to shut the door and discovered the housemaid behind him coming to light his lamp. This enfeebled him further. He said nothing until the door closed behind her. Meanwhile to show his *sang froid* he hummed and flitted towards the window, and here and there.

Coote went to the big hearthrug and turned and surveyed his host. His hand went to the back of his head and patted his occiput — a gesture frequent with him.

“‘Ere we are,” said Kipps, hands in his pockets and glancing round him.

It was a gaunt Victorian room, with a heavy, dirty cornice, and the

ceiling enriched by the radiant plaster ornament of an obliterated gas chandelier. It held two large glass fronted bookcases, one of which was surmounted by a stuffed terrier encased in glass. There was a mirror over the mantel and hangings and curtains of magnificent crimson patternings. On the mantel were a huge black clock of classical design, vases in the Burslem Etruscan style, spills and toothpicks in large receptacles of carved rock, large lava ash trays and an exceptionally big box of matches. The fender was very great and brassy. In a favourable position, under the window, was a spacious rosewood writing desk, and all the chairs and other furniture were of rosewood and well stuffed.

"This," said Kipps, in something near an undertone, "was the o' gentleman's study — my grandfather that was. 'E used to sit at that desk and write."

"Books?"

"No. Letters to the *Times*, and things like that. 'E's got 'em all cut out — stuck in a book.... Leastways, he *'ad*. It's in that bookcase.... Won't you sit down?"

Coote did, bowing very slightly, and Kipps secured his vacated position on the extensive black skin rug. He spread out his legs compass-fashion and tried to appear at his ease. The rug, the fender, the mantel and mirror conspired with great success to make him look a trivial and intrusive little creature amidst their commonplace hauteur, and his own shadow on the opposite wall seemed to think everything a great lark and mocked and made tremendous fun of him....

§2

For a space Kipps played a defensive game and Coote drew the lines of the conversation. They kept away from the theme of Kipps' change of fortune, and Coote made remarks upon local and social affairs. "You must take an interest in these things now," was as much as he said in the way of personalities. But it speedily became evident that he was a person of wide and commanding social relationships. He spoke of "society" being mixed in the neighbourhood and of the difficulty of getting people to work together, and "do" things; they

were cliquish. Incidentally he alluded quite familiarly to men with military titles, and once even to someone with a title, a Lady Punnet. Not snobbishly, you understand, nor deliberately, but quite in passing. He had, it appeared, talked to Lady Punnet about private theatricals! In connection with the Hospitals. She had been unreasonable and he had put her right, gently of course, but firmly. "If you stand up to these people," said Coote, "they like you all the better." It was also very evident he was at his ease with the clergy; "My friend, Mr. Densemore — a curate, you know, and rather curious, the Reverend *and* Honourable." Coote grew visibly in Kipps' eyes as he said these things; he became, not only the exponent of "Vagner or Vargner," the man whose sister had painted a picture to be exhibited at the Royal Academy, the type of the hidden thing called culture, but a delegate, as it were, or at least an intermediary from that great world "up there," where there were men servants, where there were titles, where people dressed for dinner, drank wine at meals, wine costing very often as much as three and sixpence the bottle, and followed through a maze of etiquette, the most stupendous practices....

Coote sat back in the armchair smoking luxuriously and expanding pleasantly, with the delightful sense of Savoir Faire; Kipps sat forward, his elbows on his chair arm alert, and his head a little on one side. You figure him as looking little and cheap and feeling smaller and cheaper amidst his new surroundings. But it was a most stimulating and interesting conversation. And soon it became less general and more serious and intimate. Coote spoke of people who had got on, and of people who hadn't, of people who seemed to be *in* everything and people who seemed to be *out* of everything, and then he came round to Kipps.

"You'll have a good time," he said abruptly, with a smile that would have interested a dentist.

"I dunno," said Kipps.

"There's mistakes, of course."

"That's jest it."

Coote lit a new cigarette. "One can't help being interested in what you will do," he remarked. "Of course — for a young man of spirit, come suddenly into wealth — there's temptations."

“I got to go careful,” said Kipps. “O’ Bean told me that at the very first.”

Coote went on to speak of pitfalls, of Betting, of Bad Companions. “I know,” said Kipps, “I know.” “There’s Doubt again,” said Coote. “I know a young fellow — a solicitor — handsome, gifted. And yet, you know — utterly sceptical. Practically altogether a Sceptic.”

“Lor’!” said Kipps, “not a Natheist?”

“I fear so,” said Coote. “Really, you know, an awfully fine young fellow — Gifted! But full of this dreadful Modern Spirit — Cynical! All this Overman stuff. Nietzsche and all that.... I wish I could do something for him.”

“Ah!” said Kipps and knocked the ash off his cigarette. “I know a chap — one of our apprentices he was — once. Always scoffing.... He lef’!”

He paused. “Never wrote for his refs,” he said, in the deep tone proper to a moral tragedy, and then, after a pause— “Enlisted!”

“Ah!” said Coote.

“And often,” he said, after a pause, “it’s just the most spirited chaps, just the chaps one likes best, who Go Wrong.”

“It’s temptation,” Kipps remarked.

He glanced at Coote, leant forward, knocked the ash from his cigarette into the mighty fender. “That’s jest it,” he said; “you get tempted. Before you know where you are.”

“Modern life,” said Coote, “is so — complex. It isn’t everyone is Strong. Half the young fellows who go wrong, aren’t really bad.”

“That’s jest it,” said Kipps.

“One gets a tone from one’s surroundings — —”

“That’s exactly it,” said Kipps.

He meditated. “*I* picked up with a chap,” he said. “A Nacter. Leastways he writes plays. Clever fellow. But — —”

He implied extensive moral obloquy by a movement of his head. “Of course it’s seeing life,” he added.

Coote pretended to understand the full implications of Kipps’ remark. “Is it *worth* it?” he asked.

“That’s jest it,” said Kipps.

He decided to give some more. “One gets talking,” he said. “Then

it's ''ave a drink!' Old Methusaleh four stars — and where *are* you? *I* been drunk," he said in a tone of profound humility, and added, "lots of times."

"Tt. Tt.," said Coote.

"Dozens of times," said Kipps, smiling sadly, and added, "lately."

His imagination became active and seductive. "One thing leads to another. Cards, p'raps. Girls — —"

"I know," said Coote; "I know."

Kipps regarded the fire and flushed slightly. He borrowed a sentence that Chitterlow had recently used. "One can't tell tales out of school," he said.

"I can imagine it," said Coote.

Kipps looked with a confidential expression into Coote's face. "It was bad enough when money was limited," he remarked. "But now — —" He spoke with raised eyebrows, "I got to steady down."

"You *must*," said Coote, protruding his lips into a sort of whistling concern for a moment.

"I must," said Kipps, nodding his head slowly with raised eyebrows. He looked at his cigarette end and threw it into the fender. He was beginning to think he was holding his own in this conversation rather well, after all.

Kipps was never a good liar. He was the first to break silence. "I don't mean to say I been reely bad or reely bad drunk. A 'eadache perhaps — three or four times, say. But there it is!"

"I have never tasted alcohol in my life," said Coote, with an immense frankness, "never!"

"No?"

"Never. I don't feel *I* should be likely to get drunk at all — it isn't that. And I don't go so far as to say even that in small quantities — at meals — it does one harm. But if I take it, someone else who doesn't know where to stop — you see?"

"That's jest it," said Kipps, with admiring eyes.

"I smoke," admitted Coote. "One doesn't want to be a Pharisee."

It struck Kipps what a tremendously Good chap this Coote was, not only tremendously clever and educated and a gentleman and one knowing Lady Punnet, but Good. He seemed to be giving all his time and thought to doing good things to other people. A great desire to

confide certain things to him arose. At first Kipps hesitated whether he should confide an equal desire for Benevolent activities or for further Depravity — either was in his mind. He rather affected the pose of the Good Intentioned Dog. Then suddenly his impulses took quite a different turn, fell indeed into what was a far more serious rut in his mind. It seemed to him Coote might be able to do for him something he very much wanted done.

"Companionship accounts for so much," said Coote.

"That's jest it," said Kipps. "Of course, you know, in my new position —— . That's just the difficulty."

He plunged boldly at his most secret trouble. He knew that he wanted refinement — culture. It was all very well — but he knew. But how was one to get it? He knew no one, knew no people —— . He rested on the broken sentence. The shop chaps were all very well, very good chaps and all that, but not what one wanted. "I feel be'ind," said Kipps. "I feel out of it. And consequently I feel it's no good. And then if temptation comes along — —"

"Exactly," said Coote.

Kipps spoke of his respect for Miss Walshingham and her freckled friend. He contrived not to look too self-conscious. "You know, I'd like to talk to people like that, but I can't. A chap's afraid of giving himself away."

"Of course," said Coote, "of course."

"I went to a middle-class school, you know. You mustn't fancy I'm one of these here board-school chaps, but you know it reely wasn't a first-class affair. Leastways he didn't take pains with us. If you didn't want to learn you needn't — I don't believe it was *much* better than one of these here national schools. We wore mortarboards, o' course. But what's *that*?

"I'm a regular fish out of water with this money. When I got it — it's a week ago — reely I thought I'd got everything I wanted. But I dunno what to *do*."

His voice went up into a squeak. "Practically," he said, "it's no good shuttin' my eyes to things — I'm a gentleman."

Coote indicated a serious assent.

"And there's the responsibilities of a gentleman," he remarked.

"That's jest it," said Kipps.

“There’s calling on people,” said Kipps. “If you want to go on knowing Someone you knew before like. People that’s refined.” He laughed nervously. “I’m a regular fish out of water,” he said, with expectant eyes on Coote.

But Coote only nodded for him to go on.

“This actor chap,” he meditated, “is a good sort of chap. But ‘e isn’t what *I* call a gentleman. I got to ‘old myself in with ‘im. ‘E’d make me go it wild in no time. ‘E’s pretty near the on’y chap I know. Except the shop chaps. They’ve come round to ‘ave supper once already and a bit of a sing song afterwards. I sang. I got a banjo, you know, and I vamp a bit. Vamping — you know. Haven’t got far in the book— ‘Ow to Vamp — but still I’m getting on. Jolly, of course, in a way, but what does it lead to?... Besides that, there’s my Aunt and Uncle. *They’re* very good old people — very — jest a bit interfering p’r’aps and thinking one isn’t grown up, but Right enough. Only —— . It isn’t what I *want*. I feel I’ve got be’ind with everything. I want to make it up again. I want to get with educated people who know ‘ow to do things — in the regular, proper way.”

His beautiful modesty awakened nothing but benevolence in the mind of Chester Coote.

“If I had someone like you,” said Kipps, “that I knew regular like — —”

From that point their course ran swift and easy. “If I *could* be of any use to you,” said Coote....

“But you’re so busy and all that.”

“Not *too* busy. You know, your case is a very interesting one. It was partly that made me speak to you and draw you out. Here you are with all this money and no experience, a spirited young chap — —”

“That’s jest it,” said Kipps.

“I thought I’d see what you were made of, and I must confess I’ve rarely talked to anyone that I’ve found quite so interesting as you have been — —”

“I seem able to say things to you like somehow,” said Kipps.

“I’m glad. I’m tremendously glad.”

“I want a Friend. That’s it — straight.”

“My dear chap, if I — —”

"Yes, but — —"

"*I* want a Friend, too."

"Reely?"

"Yes. You know, my dear Kipps — if I may call you that."

"Go on," said Kipps.

"I'm rather a lonely dog myself. *This* to-night —— . I've not had anyone I've spoken to so freely of my Work for months."

"No?"

"You. And, my dear chap, if I can do anything to guide or help you — —"

Coote displayed all his teeth in a kindly tremulous smile and his eyes were shiny. "Shake 'ands," said Kipps, deeply moved, and he and Coote rose and clasped with mutual emotion.

"It's reely too good of you," said Kipps.

"Whatever I can do I will," said Coote.

And so their compact was made. From that moment they were Friends, intimate, confidential, high-thinking, *sotto voce* friends. All the rest of their talk (and it inclined to be interminable) was an expansion of that. For that night Kipps wallowed in self-abandonment and Coote behaved as one who had received a great trust. That sinister passion for pedagoguery to which the Good Intentioned are so fatally liable, that passion of infinite presumption that permits one weak human being to arrogate the direction of another weak human being's affairs, had Coote in its grip. He was to be a sort of lay confessor and director of Kipps, he was to help Kipps in a thousand ways, he was in fact to chaperon Kipps into the higher and better sort of English life. He was to tell him his faults, advise him about the right thing to do ——

"It's all these things I don't know," said Kipps. "I don't know, for instance, what's the right sort of dress to wear — I don't even know if I'm dressed right now — —"

"All these things" — Coote stuck out his lips and nodded rapidly to show he understood— "Trust me for that," he said, "trust me."

As the evening wore on Coote's manner changed, became more and more the manner of a proprietor. He began to take up his rôle, to survey Kipps with a new, with a critical affection. It was evident the thing fell in with his ideas. "It will be awfully interesting," he said.

“You know, Kipps, you’re really good stuff.” (Every sentence now he said “Kipps” or “my dear Kipps” with a curiously authoritative intonation.)

“I know,” said Kipps, “only there’s such a lot of things I don’t seem to be up to some’ow. That’s where the trouble comes in.”

They talked and talked, and now Kipps was talking freely. They rambled over all sorts of things. Among others Kipps’ character was dealt with at length. Kipps gave valuable lights on it. “When I’m reely excited,” he said, “I don’t seem to care *what* I do. I’m like that.” And again, “I don’t like to do anything under’and. I *must* speak out....”

He picked a piece of cotton from his knee, the fire grimaced behind his back, and his shadow on the wall and ceiling was disrespectfully convulsed.

§3

Kipps went to bed at last with an impression of important things settled, and he lay awake for quite a long time. He felt he was lucky. He had known — in fact Buggins and Carshot and Pierce had made it very clear indeed — that his status in life had changed and that stupendous adaptations had to be achieved, but how they were to be effected had driven that adaptation into the incredible. Here in the simplest, easiest way was the adapter. The thing had become possible. Not of course easy, but possible.

There was much to learn, sheer intellectual toil, methods of address, bowing, an enormous complexity of laws. One broken, you are an outcast. How, for example, would one encounter Lady Punnet? It was quite possible some day he might really have to do that. Coote might introduce him. “Lord!” he said aloud to the darkness between grinning and dismay. He figured himself going into the Emporium to buy a tie, for example, and there in the face of Buggins, Carshot, Pierce and the rest of them, meeting “my friend, Lady Punnet!” It might not end with Lady Punnet! His imagination plunged and bolted with him, galloped, took wings and soared to romantic, to poetical altitudes....

Suppose some day one met Royalty. By accident, say! He soared

to that! After all, — twelve hundred a year is a lift, a tremendous lift. How did one address Royalty? “Your Majesty’s Goodness,” it will be, no doubt — something like that — and on the knees. He became impersonal. Over a thousand a year made him an Esquire, didn’t it? He thought that was it. In which case, wouldn’t he have to be presented at Court? Velvet cycling breeches like you wear cycling, and a sword! What a curious place a court must be! Kneeling and bowing, and what was it Miss Mergle used to talk about? Of course! — ladies with long trains walking about backward. Everybody walked about backward at court, he knew, when not actually on their knees. Perhaps, though, some people regular stood up to the King! Talked to him, just as one might talk to Buggins, say. Cheek of course! Dukes, it might be, did that — by permission? Millionnaires?...

From such thoughts this free citizen of our Crowned Republic passed insensibly into dreams, turgid dreams of that vast ascent which constitutes the true-born Briton’s social scheme, which terminates with retrogressive progression and a bending back.

§4

The next morning he came down to breakfast looking grave — a man with much before him in the world....

Kipps made a very special thing of his breakfast. Daily once hopeless dreams came true then. It had been customary in the Emporium to supplement Shalford’s generous, indeed unlimited, supply of bread and butter-substitute, by private purchases, and this had given Kipps very broad, artistic conceptions of what the meal might be. Now there would be a cutlet or so or a mutton chop — this splendour Buggins had reported from the great London clubs — haddock, kipper, whiting or fish-balls, eggs, boiled or scrambled, or eggs and bacon, kidney also frequently and sometimes liver. Amidst a garland of such themes, sausages, black and white puddings, bubble-and-squeak, fried cabbage and scallops came and went. Always as camp followers came potted meat in all varieties, cold bacon, German sausage, brawn, marmalade and two sorts of jam, and when he had finished these he would sit among his plates and smoke

a cigarette and look at all these dishes crowded round him with a beatific approval. It was his principal meal. He was sitting with his cigarette regarding his apartment with that complacency begotten of a generous plan of feeding successfully realized, when newspapers and post arrived.

There were several things by the post, tradesmen's circulars and cards and two pathetic begging letters — his luck had got into the papers — and there was a letter from a literary man and a book to enforce his request for 10*l* — to put down Socialism. The book made it very clear that prompt action on the part of property owners was becoming urgent, if property was to last out the year. Kipps dipped in it and was seriously perturbed. And there was a letter from old Kipps saying it was difficult to leave the shop and come over and see him again just yet, but that he had been to a sale at Lydd the previous day and bought a few good old books and things it would be difficult to find the equal of in Folkestone. "They don't know the value of these things out here," wrote old Kipps, "but you may depend upon it they are valuable," and a brief financial statement followed. "There is an engraving someone might come along and offer you a lot of money for one of these days. Depend upon it, these old things are about the best investment you could make...."

Old Kipps had long been addicted to sales, and his nephew's good fortune had converted what had once been but a looking and a craving — he had rarely even bid for anything in the old days except the garden tools or the kitchen gallipots or things like that, things one gets for sixpence and finds a use for — into a very active pleasure. Sage and penetrating inspection, a certain mystery of bearing, tactical bids and Purchase! — Purchase! — the old man had had a good time.

While Kipps was rereading the begging letters and wishing he had the sound, clear common sense of Buggins to help him a little, the Parcels Post brought along the box from his uncle. It was a large, insecure looking case held together by a few still loyal nails, and by what the British War Office would have recognised at once as an Army Corps of string, rags and odds and ends tied together. Kipps unpacked it with a table knife, assisted at a critical point by the poker, and found a number of books and other objects of an antique type.

There were three bound volumes of early issues of Chambers' Journal, a copy of Punch's Pocket Book for 1875, Sturm's Reflections, an early version of Gill's Geography (slightly torn), an illustrated work on Spinal Curvature, an early edition of Kirke's Human Physiology, The Scottish Chiefs and a little volume on the Language of Flowers. There was a fine steel engraving, oak-framed and with some rusty spots, done in the Colossal style and representing the Handwriting on the Wall. There were also a copper kettle, a pair of candle snuffers, a brass shoehorn, a tea caddy to lock, two decanters (one stoppered) and what was probably a portion of an eighteenth century child's rattle.

Kipps examined these objects one by one and wished he knew more about them. Turning over the pages of the Physiology again he came upon a striking plate in which a youth of agreeable profile displayed his interior in an unstinted manner to the startled eye. It was a new view of humanity altogether for Kipps, and it arrested his mind.

This anatomised figure made him forget for a space that he was "practically a gentleman" altogether, and he was still surveying its extraordinary complications when another reminder of a world quite outside those spheres of ordered gentility into which his dreams had carried him overnight, arrived (following the servant) in the person of Chitterlow.

§5

"Ul-*lo*!" said Kipps, rising.

"Not busy?" said Chitterlow, enveloping Kipps' hand for a moment in one of his own and tossing the yachting cap upon the monumental carved oak sideboard.

"Only a bit of reading," said Kipps.

"Reading, eh?" Chitterlow cocked the red eye at the books and other properties for a moment and then, "I've been expecting you 'round again one night."

"I been coming 'round," said Kipps. "On'y there's a chap 'ere —— . I was coming 'round last night on'y I met 'im."

He walked to the hearthrug. Chitterlow drifted around the room

for a time, glancing at things as he talked. “I’ve altered that play tremendously since I saw you,” he said. “Pulled it all to pieces.”

“What play’s that, Chit’low?”

“The one we were talking about. You know. You said something — I don’t know if you meant it — about buying half of it. Not the tragedy. I wouldn’t sell my twin brother a share in that. That’s my investment. That’s my Serious Work. No! I mean that new farce I’ve been on to. Thing with the business about a beetle.”

“Oo yes,” said Kipps. “*I* remember.”

“I thought you would. Said you’d take a fourth share for a hundred pounds. *You* know.”

“I seem to remember something — —”

“Well, it’s all different. Every bit of it. I’ll tell you. You remember what you said about a butterfly? You got confused, you know — Old Meth. Kept calling the beetle a butterfly and that set me off. I’ve made it quite different. Quite different. Instead of Popplewaddle — thundering good farce name that, you know; for all that it came from a Visitors’ List — instead of Popplewaddle getting a beetle down his neck and rushing about, I’ve made him a collector — collects butterflies, and this one you know’s a rare one. Comes in at window, centre.” Chitterlow began to illustrate with appropriate gestures. “Pop rushes about after it. Forgets he mustn’t let on he’s in the house. After that —— . Tells ‘em. Rare butterfly, worth lots of money. Some are, you know. Everyone’s on to it after that. Butterfly can’t get out of room, every time it comes out to have a try, rush and scurry. Well, I’ve worked on that. Only — —”

He came very close to Kipps. He held up one hand horizontally and tapped it in a striking and confidential manner with the fingers of the other. “Something else,” he said. “That’s given me a Real Ibsenish Touch — like the Wild Duck. You know that woman — I’ve made her lighter — and she sees it. When they’re chasing the butterfly the third time, she’s on! She looks. ‘That’s me!’ she says. Bif! Pestered Butterfly. *She’s* the Pestered Butterfly. It’s legitimate. Much more legitimate than the Wild Duck — where there isn’t a duck!

“Knock ‘em! The very title ought to knock ‘em. I’ve been working like a horse at it.... You’ll have a gold mine in that quarter

share, Kipps.... *I* don't mind. It's suited me to sell it, and suited you to buy. Bif!"

Chitterlow interrupted his discourse to ask, "You haven't any brandy in the house, have you? Not to drink, you know. But I want just an eggcupful to pull me steady. My liver's a bit queer.... It doesn't matter, if you haven't. Not a bit. I'm like that. Yes, whiskey'll do. Better!"

Kipps hesitated for a moment, then turned and fumbled in the cupboard of his sideboard. Presently he disinterred a bottle of whiskey and placed it on the table. Then he put out first one bottle of soda water and after the hesitation of a moment another. Chitterlow picked up the bottle and read the label. "Good old Methusaleh," he said. Kipps handed him the corkscrew and then his hand fluttered up to his mouth. "I'll have to ring now," he said, "to get glasses." He hesitated for a moment before doing so, leaning doubtfully as it were towards the bell.

When the housemaid appeared he was standing on the hearthrug with his legs wide apart, with the bearing of a desperate fellow. And after they had both had whiskeys— "You know a decent whiskey," Chitterlow remarked and took another "just to drink." — Kipps produced cigarettes and the conversation flowed again.

Chitterlow paced the room. He was, he explained, taking a day off; that was why he had come around to see Kipps. Whenever he thought of any extensive change in a play he was writing he always took a day off. In the end it saved time to do so. It prevented his starting rashly upon work that might have to be rewritten. There was no good in doing work when you might have to do it over again, none whatever.

Presently they were descending the steps by the Parade *en route* for the Warren, with Chitterlow doing the talking and going with a dancing drop from step to step....

They had a great walk, not a long one, but a great one. They went up by the Sanatorium, and over the East Cliff and into that queer little wilderness of slippery and tumbling clay and rock under the chalk cliffs, a wilderness of thorn and bramble, wild rose and wayfaring tree, that adds so greatly to Folkestone's charm. They traversed its intricacies and clambered up to the crest of the cliffs at

last by a precipitous path that Chitterlow endowed in some mysterious way with suggestions of Alpine adventure. Every now and then he would glance aside at sea and cliffs with a fresh boyishness of imagination that brought back New Romney and the stranded wrecks to Kipps' memory; but mostly he bored on with his great obsession of plays and playwriting, and that empty absurdity that is so serious to his kind, his Art. That was a thing that needed a monstrous lot of explaining. Along they went, sometimes abreast, sometimes in single file, up the little paths, and down the little paths, and in among the bushes and out along the edge above the beach, and Kipps went along trying ever and again to get an insignificant word in edgeways, and the gestures of Chitterlow flew wide and far and his great voice rose and fell, and he said this and he said that and he biffed and banged into the circumambient Inane.

It was assumed that they were embarked upon no more trivial enterprise than the Reform of the British Stage, and Kipps found himself classed with many opulent and even royal and noble amateurs — the Honourable Thomas Norgate came in here — who had interested themselves in the practical realisation of high ideals about the Drama. Only he had a finer understanding of these things, and instead of being preyed upon by the common professional— "and they *are* a lot," said Chitterlow; "I haven't toured for nothing" — he would have Chitterlow. Kipps gathered few details. It was clear he had bought the quarter of a farcical comedy — practically a gold mine — and it would appear it would be a good thing to buy the half. A suggestion, or the suggestion of a suggestion, floated out that he should buy the whole play and produce it forthwith. It seemed he was to produce the play upon a royalty system of a new sort, whatever a royalty system of any sort might be. Then there was some doubt, after all, whether that farcical comedy was in itself sufficient to revolutionise the present lamentable state of the British Drama. Better perhaps for such a purpose was that tragedy — as yet unfinished — which was to display all that Chitterlow knew about women, and which was to centre about a Russian nobleman embodying the fundamental Chitterlow personality. Then it became clearer that Kipps was to produce several plays. Kipps was to produce a great number of plays. Kipps was to found a National

Theatre.

It is probable that Kipps would have expressed some sort of disavowal, if he had known how to express it. Occasionally his face assumed an expression of whistling meditation, but that was as far as he got towards protest.

In the clutch of Chitterlow and the Incalculable, Kipps came round to the house in Fenchurch Street and was there made to participate in the midday meal. He came to the house, forgetting certain confidences, and was reminded of the existence of a Mrs. Chitterlow (with the finest completely untrained Contralto voice in England) by her appearance. She had an air of being older than Chitterlow, although probably she wasn't, and her hair was a reddish brown, streaked with gold. She was dressed in one of those complaisant garments that are dressing gowns or tea gowns or bathing wraps or rather original evening robes according to the exigencies of the moment — from the first Kipps was aware that she possessed a warm and rounded neck, and her well-moulded arms came and vanished from the sleeves — and she had large, expressive brown eyes that he discovered ever and again fixed in an enigmatical manner upon his own.

A simple but sufficient meal had been distributed with careless spontaneity over the little round table in the room with the photographs and looking glass, and when a plate had by Chitterlow's direction been taken from under the marmalade in the cupboard and the kitchen fork and a knife that was not loose in its handle had been found for Kipps they began and she had evidently heard of Kipps before, and he made a tumultuous repast. Chitterlow ate with quiet enormity, but it did not interfere with the flow of his talk. He introduced Kipps to his wife very briefly; made it vaguely evident that the production of the comedy was the thing chiefly settled. His reach extended over the table, and he troubled nobody. When Mrs. Chitterlow, who for a little while seemed socially self-conscious, reproved him for taking a potato with a jab of his fork, he answered, "Well, you shouldn't have married a man of Genius," and from a subsequent remark it was perfectly clear that Chitterlow's standing in this respect was made no secret of in his household.

They drank old Methusaleh and syphon soda, and there was no

clearing away, they just sat among the plates and things, and Mrs. Chitterlow took her husband's tobacco pouch and made a cigarette and smoked and blew smoke and looked at Kipps with her large, brown eyes. Kipps had seen cigarettes smoked by ladies before, "for fun," but this was real smoking. It frightened him rather. He felt he must not encourage this lady — at any rate in Chitterlow's presence.

They became very cheerful after the repast, and as there was now no waste to deplore, such as one experiences in the windy, open air, Chitterlow gave his voice full vent. He fell to praising Kipps very highly and loudly. He said he had known Kipps was the right sort, he had seen it from the first, almost before he got up out of the mud on that memorable night. "You can," he said, "sometimes. That was why — —" he stopped, but he seemed on the verge of explaining that it was his certainty of Kipps being the right sort had led him to confer this great Fortune upon him. He left that impression. He threw out a number of long sentences and material for sentences of a highly philosophical and incoherent character about Coincidences. It became evident he considered dramatic criticism in a perilously low condition....

About four Kipps found himself stranded, as it were, by a receding Chitterlow on a seat upon the Leas.

He was chiefly aware that Chitterlow was an overwhelming personality. He puffed his cheeks and blew.

No doubt this was seeing life, but had he particularly wanted to see life that day? In a way Chitterlow had interrupted him. The day he had designed for himself was altogether different from this. He had been going to read through a precious little volume called "Don't" that Coote had sent round for him, a book of invaluable hints, a summary of British deportment that had only the one defect of being at points a little out of date.

That reminded him he had intended to perform a difficult exercise called an Afternoon Call upon the Cootes, as a preliminary to doing it in deadly earnest upon the Walshinghams. It was no good to-day, anyhow, now.

He came back to Chitterlow. He would have to explain to Chitterlow he was taking too much for granted, he would have to do that. It was so difficult to do in Chitterlow's presence though; in his

absence it was easy enough. This half share, and taking a theatre and all of it, was going too far.

The quarter share was right enough, he supposed, but even that —— ! A hundred pounds! What wealth is there left in the world after one has paid out a hundred pounds from it?

He had to recall that in a sense Chitterlow had indeed brought him his fortune before he could face even that.

You must not think too hardly of him. To Kipps you see there was as yet no such thing as proportion in these matters. A hundred pounds went to his horizon. A hundred pounds seemed to him just exactly as big as any other large sum of money.

CHAPTER II THE WALSHINGHAMS

§1

The Cootes live in a little house in Bouverie Square with a tangle of Virginia creeper up the verandah.

Kipps had been troubled in his mind about knocking double or single — it is these things show what a man is made of — but happily there was a bell.

A queer little maid, with a big cap, admitted Kipps and took him through a bead curtain and a door into a little drawing-room, with a black and gold piano, a glazed bookcase, a Moorish cosy corner and a draped looking glass over-mantel bright with Regent Street ornaments and photographs of various intellectual lights. A number of cards of invitation to meetings and the match list of a Band of Hope cricket club were stuck into the looking glass frame with Coote's name as a Vice-President. There was a bust of Beethoven over the bookcase and the walls were thick with conscientiously executed but carelessly selected "views" in oil and water colours and gilt frames. At the end of the room facing the light was a portrait that struck Kipps at first as being Coote in spectacles and feminine costume and that he afterwards decided must be Coote's mother. Then the original appeared and he discovered that it was Coote's elder and only sister who kept house for him. She wore her hair in a knob behind, and the sight of the knob suggested to Kipps an explanation for a frequent gesture of Coote's, a patting exploratory movement to the back of his head. And then it occurred to him that this was quite an absurd idea altogether.

She said "Mr. Kipps, I believe," and Kipps laughed pleasantly and said, "That's it!" and then she told him that "Chester" had gone down to the art school to see about sending off some drawings or other and that he would be back soon. Then she asked Kipps if he painted, and showed him the pictures on the wall. Kipps asked her where each one was "of," and when she showed him some of the Leas slopes he said he never would have recognised them. He said it was funny how things looked in a picture very often. "But they're

awfully *good*," he said. "Did you do them?" He would look at them with his neck arched like a swan's, his head back and on one side and then suddenly peer closely into them. "They *are* good. I wish I could paint." "That's what Chester says," she answered. "I tell him he has better things to do." Kipps seemed to get on very well with her.

Then Coote came in and they left her and went upstairs together and had a good talk about reading and the Rules of Life. Or rather Coote talked, and the praises of thought and reading were in his mouth....

You must figure Coote's study, a little bedroom put to studious uses, and over the mantel an array of things he had been led to believe indicative of culture and refinement, an autotype of Rossetti's "Annunciation," an autotype of Watt's "Minotaur," a Swiss carved pipe with many joints and a photograph of Amiens Cathedral (these two the spoils of travel), a phrenological bust and some broken fossils from the Warren. A rotating bookshelf carried the Encyclopædia Britannica (tenth edition), and on the top of it a large official looking, age grubby, envelope bearing the mystic words, "On His Majesty's Service," a number or so of the "Bookman," and a box of cigarettes were lying. A table under the window bore a little microscope, some dust in a saucer, some grimy glass slips and broken cover glasses, for Coote had "gone in for" biology a little. The longer side of the room was given over to bookshelves, neatly edged with pinked American cloth, and with an array of books — no worse an array of books than you find in any public library; an almost haphazard accumulation of obsolete classics, contemporary successes, the Hundred Best Books (including Samuel Warren's "Ten Thousand a Year") old school books, directories, the Times Atlas, Ruskin in bulk, Tennyson complete in one volume, Longfellow, Charles Kingsley, Smiles and Mrs. Humphry Ward, a guide book or so, several medical pamphlets, odd magazine numbers, and much indescribable rubbish — in fact a compendium of the contemporary British mind. And in front of this array stood Kipps, ill-taught and untrained, respectful, awestricken and, for a moment at any rate, willing to learn, while Coote, the exemplary Coote, talked to him like a bishop of reading and the virtue in books.

"Nothing enlarges the mind," said Coote, "like Travel and

Books.... And they're both so easy nowadays, and so cheap!"

"I've often wanted to 'ave a good go in at reading," Kipps replied.

"You'd hardly believe," Coote said, "how much you can get out of books. Provided you avoid trashy reading, that is. You ought to make a rule, Kipps, and read one Serious Book a week. Of course, we can Learn even from Novels, Nace Novels that is, but it isn't the same thing as serious reading. I made a rule, One Serious Book and One Novel — no more. There's some of the serious books I've been reading lately — on that table; Sartor Resartus — Mrs. Twaddletome's Pond Life, the Scottish Chiefs, Life and Letters of Dean Farrar...."

§2

There came at last the sound of a gong and Kipps descended to tea in that state of nervous apprehension at the difficulties of eating and drinking that his Aunt's knuckle rappings had implanted in him forever. Over Coote's shoulder he became aware of a fourth person in the Moorish cosy corner, and he turned, leaving incomplete something incoherent he was saying to Miss Coote about his modest respect and desire for literature to discover this fourth person was Miss Helen Walshingham, hatless and looking very much at home.

She rose at once with an extended hand to meet his hesitation.

"You're stopping in Folkestone, Mr. Kipps?"

"'Ere on a bit of business," said Kipps. "I thought you was away in Bruges."

"That's later," said Miss Walshingham. "We're stopping until my brother's holiday begins and we're trying to let our house. Where are you staying in Folkestone?"

"I got a 'ouse of mine — on the Leas."

"I've heard all about your good fortune — this afternoon."

"Isn't it a Go!" said Kips. "I 'aven't nearly got to believe its reely 'appened yet. When that Mr. Bean told me of it you could 'ave knocked me down with a feather.... It's a tremenjous change for me."

He discovered Miss Coote was asking him whether he took milk and sugar. "*I* don't mind," said Kipps. "Just as you like."

Coote became active handing tea and bread and butter. It was

thinly cut, and the bread was rather new, and the half of the slice that Kipps took fell upon the floor. He had been holding it by the edge, for he was not used to this migratory method of taking tea without plates or table. This little incident ruled him out of the conversation for a time, and when he came to attend to it again they were talking about something or other prodigious — a performer of some sort — that was coming, called, it seemed, "Padrooski." So Kipps, who had quietly dropped into a chair, ate his bread and butter, said "No, thenk you" to any more, and by this discreet restraint got more freedom with his cup and saucer.

Apart from the confusion natural to tea, he was in a state of tremulous excitement on account of the presence of Miss Walshingham. He glanced from Miss Coote to her brother and then at Helen. He regarded her over the top of his cup as he drank. Here she was, solid and real. It was wonderful. He remarked, as he had done at times before, the easy flow of the dark hair back from her brow over her ears, the shapeliness of the white hands that came out from her simple white cuffs, the delicate pencilling of her brow.

Presently she turned her face to him almost suddenly, and smiled with the easiest assurance of friendship.

"You will go, I suppose," she said, and added, "to the Recital."

"If I'm in Folkestone I shall," said Kipps, clearing away a little hoarseness. "I don't *know* much about music, but what I do know I like."

"I'm sure you'll like Paderewski," she said.

"If you do," he said, "I dessay I shall."

He found Coote very kindly taking his cup.

"Do you think of living in Folkestone?" asked Miss Coote, in a tone of proprietorship, from the hearthrug.

"No," said Kipps, "that's jest it — I hardly know." He also said that he wanted to look around a bit before doing anything. "There's so much to consider," said Coote, smoothing the back of his head.

"I may go back to New Romney for a bit," said Kipps. "I got an Uncle and Aunt there. I reely don't know."

Helen regarded him thoughtfully for a moment.

"You must come and see us," she said, "before we go to Bruges."

"Oo, rather!" said Kipps. "If I may."

“Yes, do,” she said, and suddenly stood up before Kipps could formulate an enquiry when he should call.

“You’re sure you can spare that drawing board?” she said to Miss Coote, and the conversation passed out of range.

And when he had said “Good-bye” to Miss Walshingham and she had repeated her invitation to call, he went upstairs again with Coote to look out certain initiatory books they had had under discussion. And then Kipps, blowing very resolutely, went back to his own place, bearing in his arm (1) Sesame and Lilies, (2) Sir George Tressady, (3) an anonymous book on “Vitality” that Coote particularly esteemed. And, having got to his own sitting-room, he opened Sesame and Lilies and read it with ruthless determination for some time.

§3

Presently he leant back and gave himself up to the business of trying to imagine just exactly what Miss Walshingham could have thought of him when she saw him. Doubts about the precise effect of the grey flannel suit began to trouble him. He turned to the mirror over the mantel, and then got into a chair to study the hang of the trousers. It looked all right. Luckily, she had not seen the Panama hat. He knew that he had the brim turned up wrong, but he could not find out which way the brim was right. However, that she had not seen. He might perhaps ask at the shop where he bought it.

He meditated for awhile on his reflected face — doubtful whether he liked it or not — and then got down again and flitted across to the sideboard where there lay two little books, one in a cheap, magnificent cover of red and gold, and the other in green canvas. The former was called, as its cover witnessed, “Manners and Rules of Good Society, by a Member of the Aristocracy,” and after the cover had indulged in a band of gilded decoration, light-hearted but natural under the circumstances, it added “TWENTY-FIRST EDITION.” The second was that admirable classic, “The Art of Conversing.” Kipps returned with these to his seat, placed the two before him, opened the latter with a sigh and flattened it under his hand.

Then with knitted brows he began to read onward from a mark,

his lips moving.

"Having thus acquired possession of an idea, the little ship should not be abruptly launched into deep waters, but should be first permitted to glide gently and smoothly into the shallows, that is to say, the conversation should not be commenced by broadly and roundly stating a fact, or didactically expressing an opinion, as the subject would be thus virtually or summarily disposed of, or perhaps be met with a 'Really' or 'Indeed,' or some equally brief monosyllabic reply. If an opposite opinion were held by the person to whom the remark were addressed, he might not, if a stranger, care to express it in the form of a direct contradiction, or actual dissent. To glide imperceptibly into conversation is the object to be attained."

At this point Mr. Kipps rubbed his fingers through his hair with an expression of some perplexity and went back to the beginning.

§4

When Kipps made his call on the Walshinghams, it all happened so differently from the "Manners and Rules" prescription ("Paying Calls") that he was quite lost from the very outset. Instead of the footman or maidservant proper in these cases, Miss Walshingham opened the door to him herself. "I'm so glad you've come," she said, with one of her rare smiles.

She stood aside for him to enter the rather narrow passage.

"I thought I'd call," he said, retaining his hat and stick.

She closed the door and led the way to a little drawing-room, which impressed Kipps as being smaller and less emphatically coloured than that of the Cootes, and in which at first only a copper bowl of white poppies upon the brown tablecloth caught his particular attention.

"You won't think it unconventional to come in, Mr. Kipps, will you?" she remarked. "Mother is out."

"I don't mind," he said, smiling amiably, "if you don't."

She walked around the table and stood regarding him across it, with that same look between speculative curiosity and appreciation that he remembered from the last of the art class meetings.

"I wondered whether you would call or whether you wouldn't

before you left Folkestone."

"I'm not leaving Folkestone for a bit, and any'ow, I should have called on you."

"Mother will be sorry she was out. I've told her about you, and she wants, I know, to meet you."

"I saw 'er — if that was 'er — in the shop," said Kipps.

"Yes — you did, didn't you!... She has gone out to make some duty calls, and I didn't go. I had something to write. I write a little, you know."

"Reely!" said Kipps.

"It's nothing much," she said, "and it comes to nothing." She glanced at a little desk near the window, on which there lay some paper. "One must do something." She broke off abruptly. "Have you seen our outlook?" she asked and walked to the window, and Kipps came and stood beside her. "We look on the Square. It might be worse, you know. That outporter's truck there is horrid — and the railings, but it's better than staring one's social replica in the face, isn't it? It's pleasant in early spring — bright green, laid on with a dry brush — and it's pleasant in autumn."

"I like it," said Kipps. "That laylock there is pretty, isn't it?"

"Children come and pick it at times," she remarked.

"I dessay they do," said Kipps.

He rested on his hat and stick and looked appreciatively out of the window, and she glanced at him for one swift moment. A suggestion that might have come from the Art of Conversing came into his head. "Have you a garden?" he said.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Only a little one," she said, and then, "perhaps you would like to see it."

"I like gardenin'," said Kipps, with memories of a pennyworth of nasturtiums he had once trained over his uncle's dustbin.

She led the way with a certain relief.

They emerged through a four seasons coloured glass door to a little iron verandah that led by iron steps to a minute walled garden. There was just room for a patch of turf and a flower-bed; one sturdy variegated Euonymus grew in the corner. But the early June flowers, the big narcissus, snow upon the mountains, and a fine show of yellow wallflowers shone gay.

“That’s our garden,” said Helen. “It’s not a very big one, is it?”

“I like it,” said Kipps.

“It’s small,” she said, “but this is the day of small things.”

Kipps didn’t follow that.

“If you were writing when I came,” he remarked, “I’m interrupting you.”

She turned round with her back to the railing and rested, leaning on her hands. “I had finished,” she said. “I couldn’t get on.”

“Were you making up something?” asked Kipps.

There was a little interval before she smiled. “I try — quite vainly — to write stories,” she said. “One must do something. I don’t know whether I shall ever do any good — at that — anyhow. It seems so hopeless. And, of course, one must study the popular taste. But, now my brother has gone to London, I get a lot of leisure.”

“I seen your brother, ‘aven’t I?”

“He came to the class once or twice. Very probably you have. He’s gone to London to pass his examinations and become a solicitor. And then, I suppose, he’ll have a chance. Not much, perhaps, even then. But he’s luckier than I am.”

“You got your classes and things.”

“They ought to satisfy me. But they don’t. I suppose I’m ambitious. We both are. And we hadn’t much of a springboard.” She glanced over his shoulder at the cramped little garden with an air of reference in her gesture.

“I should think you could do anything if you wanted to,” said Kipps.

“As a matter of fact I can’t do anything I want to.”

“You done a good deal.”

“What?”

“Well, didn’t you pass one of these here University things?”

“Oh! I matriculated!”

“I should think I was no end of a swell if *I* did, I know that.”

“Mr. Kipps, do you know how many people matriculate into London University every year?”

“How many then?”

“Between two and three thousand.”

“Well, just think how many don’t!”

Her smile came again, and broke into a laugh. “Oh, *they* don’t count,” she said, and then, realising that might penetrate Kipps if he was left with it, she hurried on to, “The fact is, I’m a discontented person, Mr. Kipps. Folkestone, you know, is a Sea Front, and it values people by sheer vulgar prosperity. We’re not prosperous, and we live in a back street. We have to live here because this is our house. It’s a mercy we haven’t to ‘let.’ One feels one hasn’t opportunities. If one had, I suppose one wouldn’t use them. Still — —”

Kipps felt he was being taken tremendously into her confidence. “That’s jest it,” he said, very sagely.

He leant forward on his stick and said, very earnestly, “I believe you could do anything you wanted to, if you tried.”

She threw out her hands in disavowal.

“I know,” said he, very sagely and nodding his head. “I watched you once or twice when you were teaching that wood-carving class.”

For some reason this made her laugh — a rather pleasant laugh, and that made Kipps feel a very witty and successful person. “It’s very evident,” she said, “that you’re one of those rare people who believe in me, Mr. Kipps,” to which he answered, “Oo, I *do*!” and then suddenly they became aware of Mrs. Walshingham coming along the passage. In another moment she appeared through the four seasons door, bonneted and ladylike, and a little faded, exactly as Kipps had seen her in the shop. Kipps felt a certain apprehension at her appearance, in spite of the reassurances he had had from Coote.

“Mr. Kipps has called on us,” said Helen, and Mrs. Walshingham said it was very kind of him, and added that new people didn’t call on them very much nowadays. There was nothing of the scandalised surprise Kipps had seen in the shop; she had heard, perhaps, he was a gentleman now. In the shop he had thought her rather jaded and haughty, but he had scarcely taken her hand, which responded to his touch with a friendly pressure, before he knew how mistaken he had been. She then told her daughter that someone called Mrs. Wace had been out, and turned to Kipps again to ask him if he had had tea. Kipps said he had not, and Helen moved towards some mysterious interior. “But *I* say,” said Kipps; “don’t you on my account —— !”

Helen vanished, and he found himself alone with Mrs.

Walshingham, which, of course, made him breathless and Boreas-looking for a moment.

"You were one of Helen's pupils in the wood-carving class?" asked Mrs. Walshingham, regarding him with the quiet watchfulness proper to her position.

"Yes," said Kipps, "that's 'ow I 'ad the pleasure — —"

"She took a great interest in her wood-carving class. She is so energetic, you know, and it gives her an Outlet."

"I thought she taught something splendid."

"Everyone says she did very well. Helen, I think, would do anything well that she undertook to do. She's so very clever. And she throws herself into things so."

She untied her bonnet strings with a pleasant informality.

"She has told me all about her class. She used to be full of it. And about your cut hand."

"Lor'!" said Kipps; "fancy, telling that!"

"Oh, yes! And how brave you were."

(Though, indeed, Helen's chief detail had been his remarkable expedient for checking bloodshed.)

Kipps became bright pink. "She said you didn't seem to feel it a bit."

Kipps felt he would have to spend weeks over "The Art of Conversing."

While he still hung fire Helen returned with the apparatus for afternoon tea upon a tray.

"Do you mind pulling out the table?" asked Mrs. Walshingham.

That, again, was very homelike. Kipps put down his hat and stick in the corner and, amidst an iron thunder, pulled out a little, rusty, green-painted table, and then in the easiest manner followed Helen in to get chairs.

So soon as he had got rid of his teacup — he refused all food, of course, and they were merciful — he became wonderfully at his ease. Presently he was talking. He talked quite modestly and simply about his changed condition and his difficulties and plans. He spread what indeed had an air of being all his simple little soul before his eyes. In a little while his clipped, defective accent had become less perceptible to their ears, and they began to realise, as the girl with the

freckles had long since realised, that there were passable aspects of Kipps. He confided, he submitted, and for both of them he had the realest, the most seductively flattering undertone of awe and reverence.

He stopped about two hours, having forgotten how terribly incorrect it is to stay at such a length. They did not mind at all.

CHAPTER III ENGAGED

§1

Within two months, within a matter of three and fifty days, Kipps had clambered to the battlements of Heart's Desire.

It all became possible by the Walshinghams — it would seem at Coote's instigation — deciding, after all, not to spend the holidays at Bruges. Instead, they remained in Folkestone, and this happy chance gave Kipps just all these opportunities of which he stood in need.

His crowning day was at Lympne, and long before the summer warmth began to break, while indeed August still flamed on high. They had organized — no one seemed to know who suggested it first — a water party on the still reaches of the old military canal at Hythe, the canal that was to have stopped Napoleon if the sea failed us, and they were to picnic by the brick bridge, and afterwards to clamber to Lympne Castle. The host of the gathering, it was understood very clearly, was Kipps.

They went, a merry party. The canal was weedy, with only a few inches of water at the shallows, and so they went in three Canadian canoes. Kipps had learned to paddle — it had been his first athletic accomplishment, and his second — with the last three or four of ten private lessons still to come — was to be cycling. But Kipps did not paddle at all badly; muscles hardened by lifting pieces of cretonne could cut a respectable figure by the side of Coote's executions, and the girl with the freckles, the girl who understood him, came in his canoe. They raced the Walshinghams, brother and sister; and Coote, in a liquefying state and blowing mightily, but still persistent and always quite polite and considerate, toiled behind with Mrs. Walshingham. She could not be expected to paddle (though, of course, she "offered") and she reclined upon specially adjusted cushions under a black and white sunshade and watched Kipps and her daughter, and feared at intervals that Coote was getting hot.

They were all more or less in holiday costume, the eyes of the girls looked out under the shade of wide-brimmed hats; even the freckled girl was unexpectedly pretty, and Helen, swinging sunlit to

her paddle, gave Kipps, almost for the first time, the suggestion of a graceful body. Kipps was arrayed in the completest boating costume, and when his fashionable Panama was discarded and his hair blown into disorder he became, in his white flannels, as sightly as most young men. His complexion was a notable asset.

Things favoured him, the day favoured him, everyone favoured him. Young Walshingham, the girl with the freckles, Coote and Mrs. Walshingham, were playing up to him in the most benevolent way, and between the landing place and Lympne, Fortune, to crown their efforts, had placed a small, convenient field entirely at the disposal of an adolescent bull. Not a big, real, resolute bull, but, on the other hand, no calf; a young bull, in the same stage of emotional development as Kipps, "standing where the two rivers meet." Detachedly our party drifted towards him.

When they landed young Walshingham, with the simple directness of a brother, abandoned his sister to Kipps and secured the freckled girl, leaving Coote to carry Mrs. Walshingham's light wool wrap. He started at once, in order to put an effectual distance between himself and his companion, on the one hand, and a certain persuasive chaperonage that went with Coote, on the other. Young Walshingham, I think I have said, was dark, with a Napoleonic profile, and it was natural for him, therefore, to be a bold thinker and an epigrammatic speaker, and he had long ago discovered great possibilities of appreciation in the freckled girl. He was in a very happy frame that day because he had just been entrusted with the management of Kipps' affairs (old Bean inexplicably dismissed), and that was not a bad beginning for a solicitor of only a few months' standing, and, moreover, he had been reading Nietzsche, and he thought that in all probability he was the Non-Moral Overman referred to by that writer. He wore fairly large-sized hats. He wanted to expand the theme of the Non-Moral Overman in the ear of the freckled girl, to say it over, so to speak, and in order to seclude his exposition they went aside from the direct path and trespassed through a coppice, avoiding the youthful bull. They escaped to these higher themes but narrowly, for Coote and Mrs. Walshingham, subtle chaperones both, and each indisposed for excellent reasons to encumber Kipps and Helen, were hot upon their heels. These two

kept direct route to the stile of the bull's field, and the sight of the animal at once awakened Coote's innate aversion to brutality in any shape or form. He said the stiles were too high, and that they could do better by going around by the hedge, and Mrs. Walshingham, nothing loath, agreed.

This left the way clear for Kipps and Helen, and they encountered the bull. Helen did not observe the bull, but Kipps did; but, that afternoon at any rate, he was equal to facing a lion. And the bull really came at them. It was not an affair of the bull-ring exactly, no desperate rushes and gorings; but he came; he regarded them with a large, wicked, bluish eye, opened a mouth below his moistly glistening nose and booed, at any rate, if he did not exactly bellow, and he shook his head wickedly and showed that tossing was in his mind. Helen was frightened, without any loss of dignity, and Kipps went extremely white. But he was perfectly calm, and he seemed to her to have lost the last vestiges of his accent and his social shakiness. He directed her to walk quietly towards the stile, and made an oblique advance towards the bull.

"You be orf!" he said....

When Helen was well over the stile Kipps withdrew in good order. He got over the stile under cover of a feint, and the thing was done — a small thing, no doubt, but just enough to remove from Helen's mind an incorrect deduction that a man who was so terribly afraid of a teacup as Kipps must necessarily be abjectly afraid of everything else in the world. In her moment of reaction she went perhaps too far in the opposite direction. Hitherto Kipps had always had a certain flimsiness of effect for her. Now suddenly he was discovered solid. He was discovered possible in many new ways. Here, after all, was the sort of back a woman can get behind!...

As so these heirs of the immemorial ages went past the turf-crowned mass of Portus Lemanus up the steep slopes towards the mediæval castle on the crest the thing was also manifest in her eyes.

§2

Everyone who stays in Folkestone gets, sooner or later, to Lympne. The castle became a farmhouse long ago, and the farmhouse, itself

now ripe and venerable, wears the walls of the castle as a little man wears a big man's coat. The kindliest of farm ladies entertains a perpetual stream of visitors and shows her vast mangle, and her big kitchen, and takes you out upon the sunniest little terrace garden in all the world, and you look down the sheep-dotted slopes to where, beside the canal and under the trees, the crumpled memories of Rome sleep forever. For hither to this lonely spot the galleys once came, the legions, the emperors, masters of the world. The castle is but a thing of yesterday, King Stephen's time or thereabout, in that retrospect. One climbs the pitch of perforation, and there one is lifted to the centre of far more than a hemisphere of view. Away below one's feet, almost at the bottom of the hill, the Marsh begins, and spreads and spreads in a mighty crescent that sweeps about the sea, the Marsh dotted with the church towers of forgotten mediæval towns and breaking at last into the low, blue hills of Winchelsea and Hastings; east hangs France, between the sea and the sky, and round the north, bounding the wide prospectives of farms and houses and woods, the Downs, with their hangers and chalk pits, sustain the passing shadows of the sailing clouds.

And here it was, high out of the world of everyday, and in the presence of spacious beauty, that Kipps and Helen found themselves agreeably alone. All six, it had seemed, had been coming for the Keep, but Mrs. Walshingham had hesitated at the horrid little stairs, and then suddenly felt faint, and so she and the freckled girl had remained below, walking up and down in the shadow of the house, and Coote had remembered they were all out of cigarettes, and had taken off young Walshingham into the village. There had been shouting to explain between ground and parapet, and then Helen and Kipps turned again to the view, and commended it and fell silent.

Helen sat fearlessly in an embrasure, and Kipps stood beside her.

"I've always been fond of scenery," Kipps repeated, after an interval.

Then he went off at a tangent. "D'you reely think that was right what Coote was saying?"

She looked interrogation.

"About my name?"

"Being really C-U-Y-P-S? I have my doubts. I thought at first

—— . What makes Mr. Coote add an S to Cuyp?”

“I dunno,” said Kipps, foiled. “I was jest thinking — —”

She shot one wary glance at him and then turned her eyes to the sea.

Kipps was out for a space. He had intended to lead from this question to the general question of surnames and change of names; it had seemed a light and witty way of saying something he had in mind, and suddenly he perceived that this was an unutterably vulgar and silly project. The hitch about that “s” had saved him. He regarded her profile for a moment, framed in weather-beaten stone, and backed by the blue elements.

He dropped the question of his name out of existence and spoke again of the view. “When I see scenery, and things that are beautiful, it makes me feel — —”

She looked at him suddenly, and saw him fumbling for his words.

“Silly like,” he said.

She took him in with her glance, the old look of proprietorship it was, touched with a certain warmth. She spoke in a voice as unambiguous as her eyes. “You needn’t,” she said. “You know, Mr. Kipps, you hold yourself too cheap.”

Her eyes and words smote him with amazement. He stared at her like a man who awakens. She looked down.

“You mean — —” he said; and then, “don’t you hold me cheap?”

She glanced up again and shook her head.

“But — for instance — you don’t think of me — as an equal like.”

“Why not?”

“Oo! But reely — —”

His heart beat very fast.

“If I thought,” he said, and then, “you know so much.”

“That’s nothing,” she said.

Then, for a long time, as it seemed to them, both kept silence, a silence that said and accomplished many things.

“I know what I am,” he said, at length.... “If I thought it was possible.... If I thought *you*.... I believe I could do anything — —”

He stopped, and she sat downcast and strikingly still.

“Miss Walshingham,” he said, “is it possible that you ... could

care for me enough to — to ‘elp me? Miss Walshingham, do you care for me at all?”

It seemed she was never going to answer. She looked up at him. “I think,” she said, “you are the most generous — look at what you have done for my brother — the most generous and the most modest of men. And this afternoon — I thought you were the bravest.”

She turned her head, glanced down, waved her hand to someone on the terrace below, and stood up.

“Mother is signalling,” she said. “We must go down.”

Kipps became polite and deferential by habit, but his mind was a tumult that had nothing to do with that.

He moved before her towards the little door that opened on the winding stairs— “always precede a lady down or up stairs” — and then on the second step he turned resolutely. “But,” he said, looking up out of the shadow, flannel-clad and singularly like a man.

She looked down on him, with her hand upon the stone lintel.

He held out his hand as if to help her. “Can you tell me?” he said. “You must know — —”

“What?”

“If you care for me?”

She did not answer for a long time. It was as if everything in the world had drawn to the breaking point, and in a minute must certainly break.

“Yes,” she said, at last, “I know.”

Abruptly, by some impalpable sign, he knew what the answer would be, and he remained still.

She bent down over him and softened to her wonderful smile.

“Promise me,” she insisted.

He promised with his still face.

“If *I* do not hold you cheap, you will never hold yourself cheap — —”

“If you do not hold me cheap, you mean?”

She bent down quite close beside him. “I hold you,” she said, and then whispered, “*dear*.”

“Me?”

She laughed aloud.

He was astonished beyond measure. He stipulated, lest there

might be some misconception, “You will marry me?”

She was laughing, inundated by the sense of bountiful power, of possession and success. He looked quite a nice little man to have. “Yes,” she laughed. “What else could I mean?” and, “Yes.”

He felt as a praying hermit might have felt, snatched from the midst of his quiet devotions, his modest sackcloth and ashes, and hurled neck and crop over the glittering gates of Paradise, smack among the iridescent wings, the bright-eyed Cherubim. He felt like some lowly and righteous man dynamited into Bliss....

His hand tightened upon the rope that steadies one upon the stairs of stone. He was for kissing her hand and did not.

He said not a word more. He turned about, and with something very like a scared expression on his face led the way into the obscurity of their descent.

§3

Everyone seemed to understand. Nothing was said, nothing was explained, the merest touch of the eyes sufficed. As they clustered in the castle gateway Coote, Kipps remembered afterwards, laid hold of his arm as if by chance and pressed it. It was quite evident he knew. His eyes, his nose, shone with benevolent congratulations, shone, too, with the sense of a good thing conducted to its climax. Mrs. Walshingham, who had seemed a little fatigued by the hill, recovered, and was even obviously stirred by affection for her daughter. There was, in passing, a motherly caress. She asked Kipps to give her his arm in walking down the steep. Kipps in a sort of dream obeyed. He found himself trying to attend to her, and soon he was attending.

She and Kipps talked like sober, responsible people and went slowly, while the others drifted down the hill together, a loose little group of four. He wondered momentarily what they would talk about and then sank into his conversation with Mrs. Walshingham. He conversed, as it were, out of his superficial personality, and his inner self lay stunned in unsuspected depths within. It had an air of being an interesting and friendly talk, almost their first long talk together. Hitherto he had had a sort of fear of Mrs. Walshingham, as of a

person possibly satirical, but she proved a soul of sense and sentiment, and Kipps, for all of his abstraction, got on with her unexpectedly well. They talked a little upon scenery and the inevitable melancholy attaching to the old ruins and the thought of vanished generations.

"Perhaps they jousted here," said Mrs. Walshingham.

"They was up to all sorts of things," said Kipps, and then the two came round to Helen. She spoke of her daughter's literary ambitions. "She will do something, I feel sure. You know, Mr. Kipps, it's a great responsibility to a mother to feel her daughter is — exceptionally clever."

"I dessay it is," said Kipps. "There's no mistake about that."

She spoke, too, of her son — almost like Helen's twin — alike, yet different. She made Kipps feel quite fatherly. "They are so quick, so artistic," she said, "so full of ideas. Almost they frighten me. One feels they need opportunities — as other people need air."

She spoke of Helen's writing. "Even when she was quite a little dot she wrote verse."

(Kipps, sensation.)

"Her father had just the same tastes — —" Mrs. Walshingham turned a little beam of half-pathetic reminiscence on the past. "He was more artist than business man. That was the trouble.... He was misled by his partner, and when the crash came everyone blamed him.... Well, it doesn't do to dwell on horrid things — especially to-day. There are bright days, Mr. Kipps, and dark days. And mine have not always been bright."

Kipps presented a face of Coote-like sympathy.

She diverged to talk of flowers, and Kipps' mind was filled with the picture of Helen bending down towards him in the Keep....

They spread the tea under the trees before the little inn, and at a certain moment Kipps became aware that everyone in the party was simultaneously and furtively glancing at him. There might have been a certain tension had it not been first of all for Coote and his tact, and afterwards for a number of wasps. Coote was resolved to make this memorable day pass off well, and displayed an almost boisterous sense of fun. Then young Walshingham began talking of the Roman remains below Lympne, intending to lead up to the Overman. "These

old Roman chaps," he said, and then the wasps arrived. They killed three in the jam alone.

Kipps killed wasps, as if it were in a dream, and handed things to the wrong people, and maintained a thin surface of ordinary intelligence with the utmost difficulty. At times he became aware, aware with an extraordinary vividness, of Helen. Helen was carefully not looking at him and behaving with amazing coolness and ease. But just for that one time there was the faintest suggestion of pink beneath the ivory of her cheeks....

Tacitly the others conceded to Kipps the right to paddle back with Helen; he helped her into the canoe and took his paddle, and, paddling slowly, dropped behind the others. And now his inner self stirred again. He said nothing to her. How could he ever say anything to her again? She spoke to him at rare intervals about reflections and the flowers and the trees, and he nodded in reply. But his mind moved very slowly forward now from the point at which it had fallen stunned in the Lympne Keep, moving forward to the beginnings of realisation. As yet he did not say even in the recesses of his heart that she was his. But he perceived that the goddess had come from her altar amazingly, and had taken him by the hand!

The sky was a vast splendour, and then close to them were the dark, protecting trees and the shining, smooth, still water. He was an erect, black outline to her; he plied his paddle with no unskilful gesture, the water broke to snaky silver and glittered far behind his strokes. Indeed, he did not seem bad to her. Youth calls to youth the wide world through, and her soul rose in triumph over his subjection. And behind him was money and opportunity, freedom and London, a great background of seductively indistinct hopes. To him her face was a warm dimness. In truth, he could not see her eyes, but it seemed to his love-witched brain he did and that they shone out at him like dusky stars.

All the world that evening was no more than a shadowy frame of darkling sky and water and dripping bows about Helen. He seemed to see through things with an extraordinary clearness; she was revealed to him certainly, as the cause and essence of it all.

He was indeed at his Heart's Desire. It was one of those times when there seems to be no future, when Time has stopped and we are

at an end. Kipps, that evening, could not have imagined a to-morrow, all that his imagination had pointed towards was attained. His mind stood still and took the moments as they came.

§4

About nine that night Coote came around to Kipps' new apartment in the Upper Sandgate Road — the house on the Leas had been let furnished — and Kipps made an effort toward realisation. He was discovered sitting at the open window and without a lamp, quite still. Coote was deeply moved, and he pressed Kipps' palm and laid a knobby, white hand on his shoulder and displayed the sort of tenderness becoming in a crisis. Kipps was too moved that night, and treated Coote like a very dear brother.

"She's splendid," said Coote, coming to it abruptly.

"Isn't she?" said Kipps.

"I couldn't help noticing her face," said Coote.... "You know, my dear Kipps, that this is better than a legacy."

"I don't deserve it," said Kipps.

"You can't say that."

"I don't. I can't 'ardly believe it. I can't believe it at all. No!"

There followed an expressive stillness.

"It's wonderful," said Kipps. "It takes me like that."

Coote made a faint blowing noise, and so again they came for a time of silence.

"And it began — before your money?"

"When I was in 'er class," said Kipps, solemnly.

Coote, speaking out of a darkness which he was illuminating strangely with efforts to strike a match, said that it was beautiful. He could not have *wished* Kipps a better fortune....

He lit a cigarette, and Kipps was moved to do the same, with a sacramental expression. Presently speech flowed more freely.

Coote began to praise Helen and her mother and brother. He talked of when "it" might be, he presented the thing as concrete and credible. "It's a county family, you know," he said. "She is connected, you know, with the Beaupres family — you know Lord Beaupres."

“No!” said Kipps, “reely!”

“Distantly, of course,” said Coote. “Still — —”

He smiled a smile that glimmered in the twilight.

“It’s too much,” said Kipps, overcome. “It’s so all like that.”

Coote exhaled. For a time Kipps listened to Helen’s praises and matured a point of view.

“I say, Coote,” he said. “What ought I to do now?”

“What do you mean?” said Coote.

“I mean about calling on ‘er and all that.”

He reflected. “Naturally, I want to do it all right.”

“Of course,” said Coote.

“It would be awful to go and do something — now — all wrong.”

Coote’s cigarette glowed as he meditated. “You must call, of course,” he decided. “You’ll have to speak to Mrs. Walshingham.”

“‘Ow?” said Kipps.

“Tell her you mean to marry her daughter.”

“I dessay she knows,” said Kipps, with defensive penetration.

Coote’s head was visible, shaking itself judiciously.

“Then there’s the ring,” said Kipps. “What ‘ave I to do about that?”

“What ring do you mean?”

“‘Ngagement Ring. There isn’t anything at all about that in ‘Manners and Rules of Good Society’ — not a word.”

“Of course you must get something — tasteful. Yes.”

“What sort of a ring?”

“Something nace. They’ll show you in the shop.”

“Of course. I ‘spose I got to take it to ‘er, eh? Put it on her finger.”

“Oh, no! Send it. Much better.”

“Ah!” said Kipps, for the first time, with a note of relief.

“Then, ‘ow about this call — on Mrs. Walshingham, I mean. ‘Ow ought one to go?”

“Rather a ceremonial occasion,” reflected Coote.

“Wadyer mean? Frock coat?”

“I *think* so,” said Coote, with discrimination.

“Light trousers and all that?”

“Yes.”

“Rose?”

“I think it might run to a buttonhole.”

The curtain that hung over the future became less opaque to the eyes of Kipps. To-morrow, and then other days, became perceptible at least as existing. Frock coat, silk hat and a rose! With a certain solemnity he contemplated himself in the process of slow transformation into an English gentleman, Arthur Cuyps, frock-coated on occasions of ceremony, the familiar acquaintance of Lady Punnet, the recognised wooer of a distant connection of the Earl of Beaupres.

Something like awe at the magnitude of his own fortune came upon him. He felt the world was opening out like a magic flower in a transformation scene at the touch of this wand of gold. And Helen, nestling beautiful in the red heart of the flower. Only ten weeks ago he had been no more than the shabbiest of improvers and shamefully dismissed for dissipation, the mere soil-burned seed, as it were, of these glories. He resolved the engagement ring should be of expressively excessive quality and appearance, in fact, the very best they had.

“Ought I to send ‘er flowers?” he speculated.

“Not necessarily,” said Coote. “Though, of course, it’s an attention.”...

Kipps meditated on flowers.

“When you see her,” said Coote, “you’ll have to ask her to name the day.”

Kipps started. “That won’t be just yet a bit, will it?”

“Don’t know any reason for delay.”

“Oo, but — a year, say.”

“Rather a long time,” said Coote.

“Is it?” said Kipps, turning his head sharply. “But — —”

There was quite a long pause.

“I say,” he said, at last, and in an unaltered voice, “you’ll ‘ave to ‘elp me about the wedding.”

“Only too happy,” said Coote.

“Of course,” said Kipps, “I didn’t think — —” He changed his line of thought. “Coote,” he asked, “wot’s a ‘state-eh-tate’?”

“A ‘tate-ah-tay’!” said Coote, improvingly, “is a conversation alone together.”

“Lor’!” said Kipps, “but I thought —— . It says *strictly* we oughtn’t to enjoy a tater-tay, not sit together, walk together, ride together or meet during any part of the day. That don’t leave much time for meeting, does it?”

“The books says that?” asked Coote.

“I jest learnt it by ‘eart before you came. I thought that was a bit rum, but I s’pose it’s all right.”

“You won’t find Miss Walshingham so strict as all that,” said Coote. “I think that’s a bit extreme. They’d only do that now in very strict old aristocratic families. Besides, the Walshinghams are so modern — advanced, you might say. I expect you’ll get plenty of chances of talking together.”

“There’s a tremendous lot to think about,” said Kipps, blowing a profound sigh. “D’you mean — p’raps we might be married in a few months or so.”

“You’ll *have* to be,” said Coote. “Why not?”...

Midnight found Kipps alone, looking a little tired and turning over the leaves of the red-covered textbook with a studious expression. He paused for a moment on page 233, his eye caught by the words:

“FOR AN UNCLE OR AUNT BY MARRIAGE the period is six weeks black, with jet trimmings.”

“No,” said Kipps, after a vigorous mental effort. “That’s not it.” The pages rustled again. He stopped and flattened out the little book decisively at the beginning of the chapter on “Weddings.”

He became pensive. He stared at the lamp wick. “I suppose I ought to go over and tell them,” he said, at last.

§5

Kipps called on Mrs. Walshingham, attired in the proper costume for ceremonial Occasions in the Day. He carried a silk hat, and he wore a deep-skirted frock coat, his boots were patent leather and his trousers dark grey. He had generous white cuffs with gold links, and his grey gloves, one thumb in which had burst when he put them on, he held loosely in his hand. He carried a small umbrella rolled to an exquisite tightness. A sense of singular correctness pervaded his being and warred with the enormity of the occasion for possession of his soul.

Anon he touched his silk cravat. The world smelt of his rosebud.

He seated himself on a new re-covered chintz armchair and stuck out the elbow of the arm that held his hat.

"I know," said Mrs. Walshingham, "I know everything," and helped him out most amazingly. She deepened the impression he had already received of her sense and refinement. She displayed an amount of tenderness that touched him.

"This is a great thing," she said, "to a mother," and her hand rested for a moment on his impeccable coat sleeve.

"A daughter, Arthur," she explained, "is so much more than a son."

Marriage, she said, was a lottery, and without love and toleration there was much unhappiness. Her life had not always been bright — there had been dark days and bright days. She smiled rather sweetly. "This is a bright one," she said.

She said very kind and flattering things to Kipps, and she thanked him for his goodness to her son. ("That wasn't anything," said Kipps.) And then she expanded upon the theme of her two children. "Both so accomplished," she said, "so clever. I call them my Twin Jewels."

She was repeating a remark that she had made at Lympne, that she always said her children needed opportunities, as other people needed air, when she was abruptly arrested by the entry of Helen. They hung on a pause, Helen perhaps surprised by Kipps' weekday magnificence. Then she advanced with outstretched hand.

Both the young people were shy. "I jest called 'round," began Kipps, and became uncertain how to end.

"Won't you have some tea?" asked Helen.

She walked to the window, looked out at the familiar outporter's barrow, turned, surveyed Kipps for a moment ambiguously, said "I will get some tea," and so departed again.

Mrs. Walshingham and Kipps looked at one another and the lady smiled indulgently. "You two young people mustn't be shy of each other," said Mrs. Walshingham, which damaged Kipps considerably.

She was explaining how sensitive Helen always had been, even about quite little things, when the servant appeared with the tea things, and then Helen followed, and taking up a secure position

behind the little banboo tea table, broke the ice with officious teacup clattering. Then she introduced the topic of a forthcoming open-air performance of "As You Like It," and steered past the worst of the awkwardness. They discussed stage illusion. "I mus' say," said Kipps, "I don't quite like a play in a theayter. It seems sort of unreal, some'ow."

"But most plays are written for the stage," said Helen, looking at the sugar.

"I know," admitted Kipps.

They finished tea. "Well," said Kipps, and rose.

"You mustn't go yet," said Mrs. Walshingham, rising and taking his hand. "I'm sure you two must have heaps to say to each other," and so she escaped towards the door.

§6

Among other projects that seemed almost equally correct to Kipps at that exalted moment was one of embracing Helen with ardour as soon as the door closed behind her mother and one of headlong flight through the open window. Then he remembered he ought to hold the door open for Mrs. Walshingham, and turned from that duty to find Helen still standing, beautifully inaccessible, behind the tea things. He closed the door and advanced toward her with his arms akimbo and his hands upon his coat skirts. Then, feeling angular, he moved his right hand to his moustache. Anyhow, he was dressed all right. Somewhere at the back of his mind, dim and mingled with doubt and surprise, appeared the perception that he felt now quite differently towards her, that something between them had been blown from Lympne Keep to the four winds of heaven....

She regarded him with an eye of critical proprietorship.

"Mother has been making up to you," she said, smiling slightly.

She added, "It was nice of you to come around to see her."

They stood through a brief pause, as though each had expected something different in the other and was a little perplexed at its not being there. Kipps found he was at the corner of the brown covered table, and he picked up a little flexible book that lay upon it to occupy his mind.

“I bought you a ring to-day,” he said, bending the book and speaking for the sake of saying something, and then he was moved to genuine speech. “You know,” he said, “I can’t ‘ardly believe it.”

Her face relaxed slightly again. “No?” she said, and may have breathed, “Nor I.”

“No,” he went on. “It’s as though everything ‘ad changed. More even than when I got my money. ‘Ere we are going to marry. It’s like being someone else. What I feel is — —”

He turned a flushed and earnest face to her. He seemed to come alive to her with one natural gesture. “I don’t *know* things. I’m not good enough. I’m not refined. The more you’ll see of me the more you’ll find me out.”

“But I’m going to help you.”

“You’ll ‘ave to ‘elp me a fearful lot.”

She walked to the window, glanced out of it, made up her mind, turned and came towards him, with her hands clasped behind her back.

“All these things that trouble you are very little things. If you don’t mind — if you will let me tell you things — —”

“I wish you would.”

“Then I will.”

“They’re little things to you, but they aren’t to me.”

“It all depends, if you don’t mind being told.”

“By you?”

“I don’t expect you to be told by strangers.”

“Oo!” said Kipps, expressing much.

“You know, there are just a few little things. For instance, you know, you are careless with your pronunciation.... You don’t mind my telling you?”

“I like it,” said Kipps.

“There’s aitches.”

“I know,” said Kipps, and then, endorsingly, “I been told. Fact is, I know a chap, a Nacter, *he’s* told me. He’s told me, and he’s going to give me a lesso nor so.”

“I’m glad of that. It only requires a little care.”

“Of course. On the stage they got to look out. They take regular lessons.”

“Of course,” said Helen, a little absently.

“I dessay I shall soon get into it,” said Kipps.

“And then there’s dress,” said Helen, taking up her thread again.

Kipps became pink, but he remained respectfully attentive.

“You don’t mind?” she said.

“Oo, no.”

“You mustn’t be too — too dressy. It’s possible to be over-conventional, over-elaborate. It makes you look like a shop — like a common, well-off person. There’s a sort of easiness that is better. A real gentleman looks right, without looking as though he had tried to be right.”

“Jest as though ‘e’d put on what came first?” said the pupil, in a faded voice.

“Not exactly that, but a sort of ease.”

Kipps nodded his head intelligently. In his heart he was kicking his silk hat about the room in an ecstasy of disappointment.

“And you must accustom yourself to be more at your ease when you are with people,” said Helen. “You’ve only got to forget yourself a little and not be anxious — —”

“I’ll try,” said Kipps, looking rather hard at the teapot. “I’ll do my best to try.”

“I know you will,” she said, and laid a hand for an instant upon his shoulder and withdrew it.

He did not perceive her caress. “One has to learn,” he said. His attention was distracted by the strenuous efforts that were going on in the back of his head to translate, “I say, didn’t you ought to name the day?” into easy as well as elegant English, a struggle that was still undecided when the time came for them to part....

He sat for a long time at the open window of his sitting-room with an intent face, recapitulating that interview. His eyes rested at last almost reproachfully on the silk hat beside him. “‘Ow is one to know?” he asked. His attention was caught by a rubbed place in the nap, and, still thoughtful, he rolled up his handkerchief skilfully into a soft ball and began to smooth this down.

His expression changed slowly.

“‘Ow the Juice is one to know?” he said, putting down the hat with some emphasis.

He rose up, went across the room to the sideboard, and, standing there, opened and began to read “Manners and Rules.”

CHAPTER IV THE BICYCLE MANUFACTURER

§1

So Kipps embarked upon his engagement, steeled himself to the high enterprise of marrying above his breeding. The next morning found him dressing with a certain quiet severity of movement, and it seemed to his landlady's housemaid that he was unusually dignified at breakfast. He meditated profoundly over his kipper and his kidney and bacon. He was going to New Romney to tell the old people what had happened and where he stood. And the love of Helen had also given him courage to do what Buggins had once suggested to him as a thing he would do were he in Kipps' place, and that was to hire a motor car for the afternoon. He had an early cold lunch, and then, with an air of quiet resolution, assumed a cap and coat he had purchased to this end, and thus equipped strolled around, blowing slightly, to the motor shop. The transaction was unexpectedly easy, and within the hour Kipps, spectacled and wrapped about, was tootling through Dymchurch.

They came to a stop smartly and neatly outside the little toy shop. "Make that thing 'oot a bit, will you," said Kipps. "Yes, that's it." "Whup," said the motor car. "Whurrup!"

Both his Aunt and Uncle came out on the pavement. "Why, it's Artie," cried his Aunt, and Kipps had a moment of triumph.

He descended to hand claspings, removed wraps and spectacles, and the motor driver retired to take "an hour off." Old Kipps surveyed the machinery and disconcerted Kipps for a moment by asking him in a knowing tone what they asked him for a thing like that. The two men stood inspecting the machine and impressing the neighbours for a time, and then they strolled through the shop into the little parlour for a drink.

"They ain't settled," old Kipps had said to the neighbours. "They ain't got no further than experiments. There's a bit of take-in about each. You take my advice and wait, me boy, even if it's a year or two, before you buy one for your own use."

(Though Kipps had said nothing of doing anything of the sort.)

"'Ow d'you like that whiskey I sent?" asked Kipps, dodging the old familiar bunch of children's pails.

Old Kipps became tactful. "It's a very good whiskey, my boy," said old Kipps. "I 'aven't the slightest doubt it's a very good whiskey and cost you a tidy price. But — dashed if it soots me! They put this here Foozle Ile in it, my boy, and it ketches me jest 'ere." He indicated his centre of figure. "Gives me the heartburn," he said, and shook his head rather sadly.

"It's a very good whiskey," said Kipps. "It's what the actor manager chaps drink in London, I 'appen to know."

"I dessay they do, my boy," said old Kipps, "but then they've 'ad their livers burnt out, and I 'aven't. They ain't dellicat like me. My stummik always *'as* been extrey dellicat. Sometimes it's almost been as though nothing would lay on it. But that's in passing. I liked those segars. You can send me some of them segars...."

You cannot lead a conversation straight from the gastric consequences of Foozle Ile to Love, and so Kipps, after a friendly inspection of a rare old engraving after Morland (perfect except for a hole kicked through the centre) that his Uncle had recently purchased by private haggle, came to the topic of the old people's removal.

At the outset of Kipps' great fortunes there had been much talk of some permanent provision for them. It had been conceded they were to be provided for comfortably, and the phrase "retire from business" had been very much in the air. Kipps had pictured an ideal cottage, with a creeper always in exuberant flower about the door, where the sun shone forever and the wind never blew and a perpetual welcome hovered in the doorway. It was an agreeable dream, but when it came to the point of deciding upon this particular cottage or that, and on this particular house or that, Kipps was surprised by an unexpected clinging to the little home, which he had always understood to be the worst of all possible houses.

"We don't want to move in a 'urry," said Mrs. Kipps.

"When we want to move, we want to move for life. I've had enough moving about in my time," said old Kipps.

"We can do here a bit more, now we done here so long," said Mrs. Kipps.

"You lemme look about a bit *fust*," said old Kipps.

And in looking about old Kipps found perhaps a finer joy than any mere possession could have given. He would shut his shop more or less effectually against the intrusion of customers, and toddle abroad seeking new matter for his dream; no house was too small and none too large for his knowing enquiries. Occupied houses took his fancy more than vacancies, and he would remark, "You won't be a livin' 'ere forever, even if you think you will," when irate householders protested against the unsolicited examination of their more intimate premises....

Remarkable difficulties arose of a totally unexpected sort.

"If we 'ave a larger 'ouse," said Mrs. Kipps with sudden bitterness, "we shall want a servant, and I don't want no gells in the place larfin' at me, sniggerin' and larfin' and prancin' and trapesin', lardy da! If we 'ave a smaller 'ouse, there won't be room to swing a cat."

Room to swing a cat it seemed was absolutely essential. It was an infrequent but indispensable operation.

"When we *do* move," said old Kipps, "if we could get a bit of shootin' —— . I don't want to sell off all this here stock for nothin'. It's took years to 'cumulate. I put a ticket in the winder sayin' 'sellin' orf,' but it 'asn't brought nothing like a roosh. One of these 'ere dratted visitors pretendin' to want an air gun, was all we 'ad in yesterday. Jest an excuse for spyin' round and then go away and larf at you. No-thanky to everything, it didn't matter what.... That's 'ow *I* look at it, Artie."

They pursued meandering fancies about the topic of their future settlement for a space and Kipps became more and more hopeless of any proper conversational opening that would lead to his great announcement, and more and more uncertain how such an opening should be taken. Once indeed old Kipps, anxious to get away from this dangerous subject of removals, began: "And what are you a-doin' of in Folkestone? I shall have to come over and see you one of these days," but before Kipps could get in upon that, his Uncle had passed into a general exposition of the proper treatment of landladies and their humbugging, cheating ways, and so the opportunity vanished. It seemed to Kipps the only thing to do was to go out into

the town for a stroll, compose an effectual opening at leisure, and then come back and discharge it at them in its consecutive completeness. And even out of doors and alone, he found his mind distracted by irrelevant thoughts.

§2

His steps led him out of the High Street towards the church, and he leant for a time over the gate that had once been the winning post of his race with Ann Pornick, and presently found himself in a sitting position on the top rail. He had to get things smooth again, he knew; his mind was like a mirror of water after a breeze. The image of Helen and his great future was broken and mingled into fragmentary reflections of remoter things, of the good name of Old Methusaleh Three Stars, of long dormant memories the High Street saw fit, by some trick of light and atmosphere, to arouse that afternoon....

Abruptly a fine, full voice from under his elbow shouted, "What — O Art!" and, behold, Sid Pornick was back in his world, leaning over the gate beside him, and holding out a friendly hand.

He was oddly changed and yet oddly like the Sid that Kipps had known. He had the old broad face and mouth, abundantly freckled, the same short nose, and the same blunt chin, the same odd suggestion of his sister Ann without a touch of her beauty; but he had quite a new voice, loud and a little hard, and his upper lip carried a stiff and very fair moustache.

Kipps shook hands. "I was jest thinking of *you*, Sid," he said, "jest this very moment and wondering if ever I should see you again, ever. And 'ere you are!"

"One likes a look 'round at times," said Sid. "How are *you*, old chap?"

"All right," said Kipps. "I just been lef' — —"

"You aren't changed much," interrupted Sid.

"Ent I?" said Kipps, foiled.

"I knew your back directly I came 'round the corner. Spite of that 'at you got on. Hang it, I said, that's Art Kipps or the devil. And so it was."

Kipps made a movement of his neck as if he would look at his

back and judge. Then he looked Sid in the face. “You got a moustache, Sid,” he said.

“I s’pose you’re having your holidays?” said Sid.

“Well, partly. But I just been lef’ — —”

“*I’m* taking a bit of a holiday,” Sid went on. “But the fact is, I have to give *myself* holidays nowadays. I’ve set up for myself.”

“Not down here?”

“No fear! I’m not a turnip. I’ve started in Hammersmith, manufacturing.” Sid spoke offhand as though there was no such thing as pride.

“Not drapery?”

“No fear! Engineer. Manufacture bicycles.” He clapped his hand to his breast pocket and produced a number of pink handbills. He handed one to Kipps and prevented him reading it by explanations and explanatory dabs of a pointing finger. “That’s our make, my make to be exact, The Red Flag, see? — I got a transfer with my name — Pantocrat tyres, eight pounds — yes, *there* — Clinchers ten, Dunlop’s eleven, Ladies’ one pound more — that’s the lady’s. Best machine at a democratic price in London. No guineas and no discounts — honest trade. I build ’em — to order. I’ve built,” he reflected, looking away seaward— “seventeen. Counting orders in ‘and.... Come down to look at the old place a bit. Mother likes it at times.”

“Thought you’d all gone away — —”

“What! after my father’s death? No! My mother’s come back, and she’s living at Muggett’s cottages. The sea air suits ‘er. She likes the old place better than Hammersmith ... and I can afford it. Got an old crony or so here.... Gossip ... have tea.... S’pose *you* ain’t married, Kipps?”

Kipps shook his head, “I — —” he began.

“*I* am,” said Sid. “Married these two years and got a nipper. Proper little chap.”

Kipps got his word in at last. “I got engaged day before yesterday,” he said.

“Ah!” said Sid airily. “That’s all right. Who’s the fortunate lady?”

Kipps tried to speak in an offhand way. He stuck his hands in his pockets as he spoke. “She’s a solicitor’s daughter,” he said, “in

Folkestone. Rather'r nice set. County family. Related to the Earl of Beaupres — —"

"Steady on!" cried Sid.

"You see, I've 'ad a bit of luck, Sid. Been lef' money."

Sid's eye travelled instinctively to mark Kipps' garments. "How much?" he asked.

"'Bout twelve 'undred a year," said Kipps, more offhandedly than ever.

"Lord!" said Sid, with a note of positive dismay, and stepped back a pace or two.

"My granfaver it was," said Kipps, trying hard to be calm and simple. "'Ardly knew I *'ad* a granfaver. And then — bang! When o' Bean, the solicitor, told me of it, you could 'ave knocked me down — —"

"'*Ow* much?" demanded Sid, with a sharp note in his voice.

"Twelve 'undred pound a year— 'proximately, that is...."

Sid's attempt at genial unenvious congratulation did not last a minute. He shook hands with an unreal heartiness and said he was jolly glad. "It's a blooming stroke of Luck," he said.

"It's a bloomin' stroke of Luck," he repeated; "that's what it is," with the smile fading from his face. "Of course, better you 'ave it than me, o' chap. So I don't envy you, anyhow. *I* couldn't keep it, if I did 'ave it."

"'Ow's that?" said Kipps, a little hipped by Sid's patent chagrin.

"I'm a Socialist, you see," said Sid. "I don't 'old with Wealth. What *is* Wealth? Labour robbed out of the poor. At most it's only yours in Trust. Leastways, that 'ow *I* should take it." He reflected. "The Present distribution of Wealth," he said and stopped.

Then he let himself go, with unmasked bitterness. "It's no sense at all. It's jest damn foolishness. Who's going to work and care in a muddle like this? Here first you do — something anyhow — of the world's work, and it pays you hardly anything, and then it invites you to do nothing, nothing whatever, and pays you twelve hundred pounds a year. Who's going to respect laws and customs when they come to damn silliness like that?" He repeated, "Twelve hundred pounds a year!"

At the sight of Kipps' face he relented slightly.

“It’s not you I’m thinking of, o’ man; it’s the system. Better you than most people. Still — —”

He laid both hands on the gate and repeated to himself, “Twelve ‘undred a year.... Gee-Whizz, Kipps! You’ll be a swell!”

“I shan’t,” said Kipps with imperfect conviction. “No fear.”

“You can’t ‘ave money like that and not swell out. You’ll soon be too big to speak to— ‘ow do they put it? — a mere mechanic like me.”

“No fear, Siddee,” said Kipps with conviction. “I ain’t that sort.”

“Ah!” said Sid, with a sort of unwilling scepticism, “money’ll be too much for you. Besides — you’re caught by a swell already.”

“‘Ow d’you mean?”

“That girl you’re going to marry. Masterman says — —”

“Oo’s Masterman?”

“Rare good chap I know — takes my first floor front room. Masterson says it’s always the wife pitches the key. Always. There’s no social differences — till women come in.”

“Ah!” said Kipps profoundly. “You don’t know.”

Sid shook his head. “Fancy!” he reflected, “Art Kipps!... Twelve ‘Undred a Year!”

Kipps tried to bridge that opening gulf. “Remember the Hurons, Sid?”

“Rather,” said Sid.

“Remember that wreck?”

“I can smell it now — sort of sour smell.”

Kipps was silent for a moment with reminiscent eyes on Sid’s still troubled face.

“I say, Sid, ‘ow’s Ann?”

“*She’s* all right,” said Sid.

“Where is she now?”

“In a place ... Ashford.”

“Oh!”

Sid’s face had become a shade sulkier than before.

“The fact is,” he said, “we don’t get on very well together. *I* don’t hold with service. We’re common people, I suppose, but I don’t like it. I don’t see why a sister of mine should wait at other people’s tables. No. Not even if they got Twelve ‘Undred a Year.”

Kipps tried to change the point of application. “Remember ‘ow you came out once when we were racing here?... She didn’t run bad for a girl.”

And his own words raised an image brighter than he could have supposed, so bright it seemed to breathe before him and did not fade altogether, even when he was back in Folkestone an hour or so later.

But Sid was not to be deflected from that other rankling theme by any reminiscences of Ann.

“I wonder what you will do with all that money,” he speculated. “I wonder if you will do any good at all. I wonder what you *could* do. You should hear Masterman. He’d tell you things. Suppose it came to me, what should I do? It’s no good giving it back to the state as things are. Start an Owenite profit-sharing factory perhaps. Or a new Socialist paper. We want a new Socialist paper.”

He tried to drown his personal chagrin in elaborate exemplary suggestions....

§3

“I must be gettin’ on to my motor,” said Kipps at last, having to a large extent heard him out.

“What! Got a motor?”

“No!” said Kipps apologetically. “Only jobbed for the day.”

“‘Ow much?”

“Five pounds.”

“Keep five families for a week! Good Lord!” That seemed to crown Sid’s disgust.

Yet drawn by a sort of fascination he came with Kipps and assisted at the mounting of the motor. He was pleased to note it was not the most modern of motors, but that was the only grain of comfort. Kipps mounted at once, after one violent agitation of the little shop-door to set the bell a-jingle and warn his Uncle and Aunt. Sid assisted with the great furlined overcoat and examined the spectacles.

“Good-bye, o’ chap!” said Kipps.

“Good-bye, o’ chap!” said Sid.

The old people came out to say good-bye.

Old Kipps was radiant with triumph. "'Pon my Sammy, Artie! I'm a goo' mind to come with you," he shouted, and then, "I got something you might take with you!"

He dodged back into the shop and returned with the perforated engraving after Morland.

"You stick to this, my boy," he said. "You get it repaired by someone who knows. It's the most vallyble thing I got you so far, you take my word."

"Warrup!" said the motor, and tuff, tuff, tuff, and backed and snorted while old Kipps danced about on the pavement as if foreseeing complex catastrophes, and told the driver, "That's all right."

He waved his stout stick to his receding nephew. Then he turned to Sid. "Now, if you could make something like that, young Pornick, you *might* blow a bit!"

"I'll make a doocid sight better than *that* before I done," said Sid, hands deep in his pockets.

"Not *you*," said old Kipps.

The motor set up a prolonged sobbing moan and vanished around the corner. Sid stood motionless for a space, unheeding some further remark from old Kipps. The young mechanic had just discovered that to have manufactured seventeen bicycles, including orders in hand, is not so big a thing as he had supposed, and such discoveries try one's manhood....

"Oh well!" said Sid at last, and turned his face towards his mother's cottage.

She had got a hot teacake for him, and she was a little hurt that he was dark and preoccupied as he consumed it. He had always been such a boy for teacake, and then when one went out specially and got him one —— !

He did not tell her — he did not tell anyone — he had seen young Kipps. He did not want to talk about Kipps for a bit to anyone at all.

CHAPTER V THE PUPIL LOVER

§1

When Kipps came to reflect upon his afternoon's work he had his first inkling of certain comprehensive incompatibilities lying about the course of true love in his particular case. He had felt without understanding the incongruity between the announcement he had failed to make and the circle of ideas of his Aunt and Uncle. It was this rather than the want of a specific intention that had silenced him, the perception that when he travelled from Folkestone to New Romney he travelled from an atmosphere where his engagement to Helen was sane and excellent to an atmosphere where it was only to be regarded with incredulous suspicion. Coupled and associated with this jar was his sense of the altered behaviour of Sid Pornick, the evident shock to that ancient alliance caused by the fact of his enrichment, the touch of hostility in his "You'll soon be swelled too big to speak to a poor mechanic like me." Kipps was unprepared for the unpleasant truth; that the path of social advancement is and must be strewn with broken friendships. This first protrusion of that fact caused a painful confusion in his mind. It was speedily to protrude in a far more serious fashion in relation to the "hands" from the Emporium, and Chitterlow.

From the day at Lympne Castle his relations with Helen had entered upon a new footing. He had prayed for Helen as good souls pray for Heaven, with as little understanding of what it was he prayed for. And now that period of standing humbly in the shadows before the shrine was over, and the Goddess, her veil of mystery flung aside, had come down to him and taken hold of him, a good, strong, firm hold, and walked by his side.... She liked him. What was singular was that very soon she had kissed him thrice, whimsically upon the brow, and he had never kissed her at all. He could not analyse his feelings, only he knew the world was wonderfully changed about them, but the truth was that, though he still worshipped and feared her, though his pride in his engagement was ridiculously vast, he loved her now no more. That subtle something

woven of the most delicate strands of self-love and tenderness and desire, had vanished imperceptibly; and was gone now for ever. But that she did not suspect in him, nor as a matter of fact did he.

She took him in hand in perfect good faith. She told him things about his accent, she told him things about his bearing, about his costume and his way of looking at things. She thrust the blade of her intelligence into the tenderest corners of Kipps' secret vanity, she slashed his most intimate pride to bleeding tatters. He sought very diligently to anticipate some at least of these informing thrusts by making great use of Coote. But the unanticipated made a brave number....

She found his simple willingness a very lovable thing.

Indeed she liked him more and more. There was a touch of motherliness in her feelings towards him. But his upbringing and his associations had been, she diagnosed, "awful." At New Romney she glanced but little; that was remote. But in her inventory — she went over him as one might go over a newly taken house, with impartial thoroughness — she discovered more proximate influences, surprising intimations of nocturnal "sing-songs" — she pictured it as almost shocking that Kipps should sing to the banjo — much low-grade wisdom treasured from a person called Buggins— "Who *is* Buggins?" said Helen — vague figures of indisputable vulgarity, Pierce and Carshot, and more particularly, a very terrible social phenomenon, Chitterlow.

Chitterlow blazed upon them with unheralded oppressive brilliance the first time they were abroad together.

They were going along the front of the Leas to see a school play in Sandgate — at the last moment Mrs. Walshingham had been unable to come with them — when Chitterlow loomed up into the new world. He was wearing the suit of striped flannel and the straw hat that had followed Kipps' payment in advance for his course in elocution, his hands were deep in his side pockets and animated the corners of his jacket, and his attentive gaze at the passing loungers, the faint smile under his boldly drawn nose, showed him engaged in studying character — no doubt for some forthcoming play.

"What HO!" said he, at the sight of Kipps, and swept off the straw hat with so ample a clutch of his great, flat hand that it suggested to

Helen's startled mind a conjurer about to palm a half-penny.

"'Ello, Chitt'low," said Kipps a little awkwardly and not saluting.

Chitterlow hesitated. "Half a mo', my boy," he said, and arrested Kipps by extending a large hand over his chest. "Excuse me, my dear," he said, bowing like his Russian count by way of apology to Helen and with a smile that would have killed at a hundred yards. He affected a semi-confidential grouping of himself and Kipps while Helen stood in white amazement.

"About that play," he said.

"'Ow about it?" asked Kipps, acutely aware of Helen.

"It's all right," said Chitterlow. "There's a strong smell of syndicate in the air, I may tell you — Strong."

"That's aw right," said Kipps.

"You needn't tell everybody," said Chitterlow with a transitory, confidential hand to his mouth, which pointed the application of the "everybody" just a trifle too strongly. "But I think it's coming off. However —— . I mustn't detain you now. So long. You'll come 'round, eh?"

"Right you are," said Kipps.

"To-night?"

"At eight."

And then, and more in the manner of a Russian prince than any common count, Chitterlow bowed and withdrew. Just for a moment he allowed a conquering eye to challenge Helen's and noted her for a girl of quality....

There was a silence between our lovers for a space.

"That," said Kipps with an allusive movement of the head, "was Chitterlow."

"Is he — a friend of yours?"

"In a way.... You see — I met 'im. Leastways 'e met me. Run into me with a bicycle, 'e did, and so we got talking together."

He tried to appear at his ease. The young lady scrutinised his profile.

"What is he?"

"'E's a Nacter chap," said Kipps. "Leastways 'e writes plays."

"And sells them?"

"Partly."

“Whom to?”

“Different people. Shares he sells.... It’s all right, reely — I meant to tell you about him before.”

Helen looked over her shoulder to catch a view of Chitterlow’s retreating aspect. It did not compel her complete confidence.

She turned to her lover and said in a tone of quiet authority, “You must tell me all about Chitterlow. Now.”

The explanation began....

The School Play came almost as a relief to Kipps. In the flusterment of going in he could almost forget for a time his Laocoon struggle to explain, and in the intervals he did his best to keep forgetting. But Helen, with a gentle insistence, resumed the explanation of Chitterlow as they returned towards Folkestone.

Chitterlow was confoundedly difficult to explain. You could hardly imagine!

There was an almost motherly anxiety in Helen’s manner, blended with the resolution of a schoolmistress to get to the bottom of the affair. Kipps’ ears were soon quite brightly red.

“Have you seen one of his plays?”

“‘E’s tole me about one.”

“But on the stage.”

“No. He ‘asn’t ‘ad any on the stage yet. That’s all coming....”

“Promise me,” she said in conclusion, “you won’t do anything without consulting me.”

And of course Kipps promised. “Oo — no!”

They went on their way in silence.

“One can’t know everybody,” said Helen in general.

“Of course,” said Kipps; “in a sort of way it was him that helped me to my money.” And he indicated in a confused manner the story of the advertisement. “I don’t like to drop ‘im all at once,” he added.

Helen was silent for a space, and when she spoke she went off at a tangent. “We shall live in London — soon,” she remarked. “It’s only while we are here.”

It was the first intimation she gave him of their post-nuptial prospects.

“We shall have a nice little flat somewhere, not too far west, and there we shall build up a circle of our own.”

§2

All that declining summer Kipps was the pupil lover. He made an extraordinarily open secret of his desire for self-improvement; indeed Helen had to hint once or twice that his modest frankness was excessive, and all this new circle of friends did, each after his or her manner, everything that was possible to supplement Helen's efforts and help him to ease and skill in the more cultivated circles to which he had come. Coote was still the chief teacher, the tutor — there are so many little difficulties that a man may take to another man that he would not care to propound to the woman he loves — but they were all, so to speak, upon the staff. Even the freckled girl said to him once in a pleasant way, "You mustn't say "contre temps," you must say "contraytom,""" when he borrowed that expression from "Manners and Rules," and she tried at his own suggestion to give him clear ideas upon the subject of "as" and "has." A certain confusion between these words was becoming evident, the first fruits of a lesson from Chitterlow on the aspirate. Hitherto he had discarded that dangerous letter almost altogether, but now he would pull up at words beginning with "h" and draw a sawing breath — rather like a startled kitten — and then aspirate with vigour.

Said Kipps one day, "*As* 'e? — I should say, ah — Has 'e? Ye know I got a lot of difficulty over them two words, which is which?"

"Well, 'as' is a conjunction and 'has' is a verb."

"I know," said Kipps, "but when is 'has' a conjunction and when is 'as' a verb?"

"Well," said the freckled girl, preparing to be very lucid. "It's *has* when it means one has, meaning having, but if it isn't it's *as*. As for instance one says 'e — I mean *he* — He has. But one says 'as he has.'"

"I see," said Kipps. "So I ought to say 'as 'e?'"

"No, if you are asking a question you say *has* 'e — I mean he— 'as he?" She blushed quite brightly, but still clung to her air of lucidity.

"I see," said Kipps. He was about to say something further, but he desisted. "I got it much clearer now. *Has* 'e? *Has* 'e as. Yes."

"If you remember about having."

“Oo I will,” said Kipps.

Miss Coote specialised in Kipps’ artistic development. She had early found an opinion that he had considerable artistic sensibility, his remarks on her work had struck her as decidedly intelligent, and whenever he called around to see them she would show him some work of art, now an illustrated book, now perhaps a colour print of a Botticelli, now the Hundred Best Paintings, now “Academy Pictures,” now a German art handbook and now some magazine of furniture and design. “I know you like these things,” she used to say, and Kipps said, “Oo I *do*.” He soon acquired a little armoury of appreciative sayings. When presently the Walshinghams took him up to the Arts and Crafts, his deportment was intelligent in the extreme. For a time he kept a wary silence and suddenly pitched upon a colour print. “That’s rather nace,” he said to Mrs. Walshingham. “That lill’ thing. There.” He always said things like that by preference to the mother rather than the daughter unless he was perfectly sure.

He quite took to Mrs. Walshingham. He was impressed by her conspicuous tact and refinement; it seemed to him that the ladylike could go no further. She was always dressed with a delicate fussiness that was never disarranged and even a sort of faded quality about her hair and face and bearing and emotions contributed to her effect. Kipps was not a big man, and commonly he did not feel a big man, but with Mrs. Walshingham he always felt enormous and distended, as though he was a navvy who had taken some disagreeable poison which puffed him up inside his skin as a preliminary to bursting. He felt, too, as though he had been rolled in clay and his hair dressed with gum. And he felt that his voice was strident and his accent like somebody swinging a crowded pig’s pail in a free and careless manner. All this increased and enforced his respect for her. Her hand, which flitted often and again to his hand and arm, was singularly well shaped and cool. “Arthur,” she called him from the very beginning.

She did not so much positively teach and tell him as tactfully guide and infect him. Her conversation was not so much didactic as exemplary. She would say, “I *do* like people to do” so and so. She would tell him anecdotes of nice things done, of gentlemanly feats of graceful consideration; she would record her neat observations of

people in trains and omnibuses; how, for example, a man had passed her change to the conductor, “quite a common man he looked,” but he had lifted his hat. She stamped Kipps so deeply with the hat-raising habit that he would uncover if he found himself in the same railway ticket office with a lady had to stand ceremoniously until the difficulties of change drove him to an apologetic provisional oblique resumption of his headgear.... And robbing these things of any air of personal application, she threw about them an abundant talk about her two children — she called them her Twin Jewels quite frequently — about their gifts, their temperaments, their ambition, their need of opportunity. They needed opportunity, she would say, as other people needed air....

In his conversations with her Kipps always assumed, and she seemed to assume, that she was to join that home in London Helen foreshadowed, but he was surprised one day to gather that this was not to be the case. “It wouldn’t do,” said Helen, with decision. “We want to make a circle of our own.”

“But won’t she be a bit lonely down here?” asked Kipps.

“There’s the Waces, and Mrs. Prebble and Mrs. Bindon Botting and — lots of people she knows.” And Helen dismissed this possibility....

Young Walshingham’s share in the educational syndicate was smaller. But he shone out when they went to London on that Arts and Crafts expedition. Then this rising man of affairs showed Kipps how to buy the more theatrical weeklies for consumption in the train, how to buy and what to buy in the way of cigarettes with gold tips and shilling cigars, and how to order hock for lunch and sparkling Moselle for dinner, how to calculate the fare of a hansom cab — penny a minute while he goes — how to look intelligently at an hotel tape, and how to sit still in a train like a thoughtful man instead of talking like a fool and giving yourself away. And he, too, would glance at the good time coming when they were to be in London for good and all.

That prospect expanded and developed particulars. It presently took up a large part of Helen’s conversation. Her conversations with Kipps were never of a grossly sentimental sort; there was a shyness of speech in that matter with both of them, but these new

adumbrations were at least as interesting and not so directly disagreeable as the clear-cut intimations of personal defect that for a time had so greatly chastened Kipps' delight in her presence. The future presented itself with an almost perfect frankness as a joint campaign of Mrs. Walshingham's Twin Jewels upon the Great World, with Kipps in the capacity of baggage and supply. They would still be dreadfully poor, of course — this amazed Kipps, but he said nothing — until "Brudderkins" began to succeed, but if they were clever and lucky they might do a great deal.

When Helen spoke of London a brooding look, as of one who contemplates a distant country, came into her eyes. Already it seemed they had the nucleus of a set. Brudderkins was a member of the Theatrical Judges, an excellent and influential little club of journalists and literary people, and he knew Shimer and Stargate and Whiffle, of the "Red Dragon," and besides these were the Revels. They knew the Revels quite well. Sidney Revel before his rapid rise to prominence as a writer of epigrammatic essays that were quite above the ordinary public, had been an assistant master at one of the best Folkestone schools, Brudderkins had brought him home to tea several times, and it was he had first suggested Helen should try and write. "It's perfectly easy," Sidney had said. He had been writing occasional things for the evening papers, and for the weekly reviews even at that time. Then he had gone up to London and had almost unavoidedly become a dramatic critic. Those brilliant essays had followed, and then "Red Hearts a-Beating," the romance that had made him. It was a tale of spirited adventure, full of youth and beauty and naïve passion and generous devotion, bold, as the *Bookman* said, and frank in places, but never in the slightest degree morbid. He had met and married an American widow with quite a lot of money, and they had made a very distinct place for themselves, Kipps learnt, in the literary and artistic society of London. Helen seemed to dwell on the Revels a great deal; it was her exemplary story, and when she spoke of Sidney — she often called him Sidney — she would become thoughtful. She spoke most of him naturally because she had still to meet Mrs. Revel.... Certainly they would be in the world in no time, even if the distant connection with the Beaupres family came to nothing.

Kipps gathered that with his marriage and the movement to London they were to undergo that subtle change of name Coote had first adumbrated. They were to become "Cuyps," Mr. and Mrs. Cuyps. Or, was it Cuyp?

"It'll be rum at first," said Kipps. "I dessay I shall soon get into it."...

So in their several ways they all contributed to enlarge and refine and exercise the intelligence of Kipps. And behind all these other influences, and, as it were, presiding over and correcting these influences, was Kipps' nearest friend, Coote, a sort of master of the ceremonies. You figure his face, blowing slightly with solicitude, his slate coloured, projecting but not unkindly eye intent upon our hero. The thing he thought was going off admirably. He studied Kipps' character immensely. He would discuss him with his sister, with Mrs. Walshingham, with the freckled girl, with anyone who would stand it. "He is an interesting character," he would say, "likable — a sort of gentleman by instinct. He takes to all these things. He improves every day. He'll soon get Sang Froid. We took him up just in time. He wants now — well —— . Next year, perhaps, if there is a good Extension Literature course, he might go in for it. He wants to go in for something like that."

"He's going in for his bicycle now," said Mrs. Walshingham.

"That's all right for summer," said Coote, "but he wants to go in for some serious, intellectual interest, something to take him out of himself a little more. Savoir Faire and self-forgetfulness is more than half the secret of Sang Froid."

§3

The world as Coote presented it was in part an endorsement, in part an amplification and in part a rectification of the world of Kipps, the world that derived from the old couple in New Romney and had been developed in the Emporium; the world, in fact, of common British life. There was the same subtle sense of social graduation that had moved Mrs. Kipps to prohibit intercourse with labourers' children and the same dread of anything "common" that had kept the personal quality of Mr. Shalford's establishment so high. But now a certain

disagreeable doubt about Kipps' own position was removed and he stood with Coote inside the sphere of gentlemen assured. Within the sphere of gentlemen there are distinctions of rank indeed, but none of class; there are the Big People and the modest, refined, gentlemanly little people like Coote, who may even dabble in the professions and counterless trades; there are lords and magnificences, and there are gentle folk who have to manage, but they can all call on one another, they preserve a general equality of deportment throughout, they constitute that great state within the state, Society, or at any rate they make believe they do.

"But reely," said the Pupil, "not what you call being in Society?"

"Yes," said Coote. "Of course, down here one doesn't see much of it, but there's local society. It has the same rules."

"Calling and all that?"

"Precisely," said Coote.

Kipps thought, whistled a bar, and suddenly broached a question of conscience. "I often wonder," he said, "whether I oughtn't to dress for dinner — when I'm alone 'ere."

Coote protruded his lips and reflected. "Not full dress," he adjudicated; "that would be a little excessive. But you should *change*, you know. Put on a mess jacket and that sort of thing — easy dress. That is what *I* should do, certainly, if I wasn't in harness — and poor."

He coughed modestly and patted his hair behind.

And after that the washing bill of Kipps quadrupled, and he was to be seen at times by the bandstand with his light summer overcoat unbuttoned to give a glimpse of his nice white tie. He and Coote would be smoking the gold-tipped cigarettes young Walshingham had prescribed as *chic*, and appreciating the music highly. "That's — puff — a very nice bit," Kipps would say, or better, "That's nace." And at the first grunts of the loyal anthem up they stood with religiously uplifted hats. Whatever else you might call them, you could never call them disloyal.

The boundary of Society was admittedly very close to Coote and Kipps, and a leading solicitude of the true gentleman was to detect clearly those "beneath" him, and to behave towards them in a proper spirit. "It's jest there it's so 'ard for me," said Kipps. He had to

cultivate a certain "distance," to acquire altogether the art of checking the presumption of bounders and old friends. It was difficult, Coote admitted. "That's what, so harkward — I mean awkward."

"I got mixed up with this lot 'ere," said Kipps.

"You could give them a hint," said Coote.

"'Ow?"

"Oh! — the occasion will suggest something."

The occasion came one early closing night when Kipps was sitting in a canopy chair near the bandstand, with his summer overcoat fully open and a new Gibus pulled slightly forward over his brow, waiting for Coote. They were to hear the band for an hour and then go down to assist Miss Coote and the freckled girl in trying over some of Beethoven's duets, if they remembered them, that is, sufficiently well. And as Kipps lounged back in his chair and occupied his mind with his favourite amusement on such evenings, which consisted chiefly in supposing that everyone about him was wondering who he was, came a rude rap at the canvas back and the voice of Pierce.

"It's nice to be a gentleman," said Pierce, and swung a penny chair into position while Buggins appeared smiling agreeably on the other side and leant upon his stick. *He was smoking a common briar pipe!*

Two real ladies, very fashionably dressed and sitting close at hand, glanced quickly at Pierce, and then away again, and it was evident *their* wonder was at an end.

"*He's* all right," said Buggins, removing his pipe and surveying Kipps.

"'Ello, Buggins!" said Kipps, not too cordially. "'Ow goes it?"

"All right. Holiday's next week. If you don't look out, Kipps, I shall be on the Continong before you. Eh?"

"You going t' Boologne?"

"Ra-ther. Parley vous Francey. You bet."

"*I* shall 'ave a bit of a run over there one of these days," said Kipps.

There came a pause. Pierce applied the top of his stick to his mouth for a space and regarded Kipps. Then he glanced at the people

about them.

"I say, Kipps," he said in a distinct, loud voice, "see 'er Ladyship lately?"

Kipps perceived the audience was to be impressed, but he responded half-heartedly, "No, I 'aven't," he said.

"She was along of Sir William the other night," said Pierce, still loud and clear, "and she asked to be remembered to you."

It seemed to Kipps that one of the two ladies smiled faintly and said something to the other, and then certainly they glanced at Pierce. Kipps flushed scarlet. "*Did* she?" he answered.

Buggins laughed good-humouredly over his pipe.

"Sir William suffers a lot from his gout," Pierce continued unabashed.

(Buggins much amused with his pipe between his teeth.)

Kipps became aware of Coote at hand.

Coote nodded rather distantly to Pierce. "Hope I haven't kept you waiting, Kipps," he said.

"I kep' a chair for you," said Kipps and removed a guardian foot.

"But you've got your friends," said Coote.

"Oh! *we* don't mind," said Pierce cordially, "the more the merrier," and, "why don't you get a chair, Buggins?" Buggins shook his head in a sort of aside to Pierce and Coote coughed behind his hand.

"Been kep' late at business?" asked Pierce.

Coote turned quite pale and pretended not to hear. His eyes sought in space for a time and with a convulsive movement he recognised a distant acquaintance and raised his hat.

Pierce had also become a little pale. He addressed himself to Kipps in an undertone.

"Mr. Coote, isn't he?" he asked.

Coote addressed himself to Kipps directly and exclusively. His manner had the calm of extreme tension.

"I'm rather late," he said. "I think we ought almost to be going on *now*."

Kipps stood up. "That's all right," he said.

"Which way are you going?" said Pierce, standing also, and brushing some crumbs of cigarette ash from his sleeve.

For a moment Coote was breathless. “Thank you,” he said, and gasped. Then he delivered the necessary blow; “I don’t think we’re in need of your society, you know,” and turned away.

Kipps found himself falling over chairs and things in the wake of Coote, and then they were clear of the crowd.

For a space Coote said nothing; then he remarked abruptly and quite angrily for him, “I think that was *awful* Cheek!”

Kipps made no reply....

The whole thing was an interesting little object lesson in distance, and it stuck in the front of Kipps’ mind for a long time. He had particularly vivid the face of Pierce, with an expression between astonishment and anger. He felt as though he had struck Pierce in the face under circumstances that gave Pierce no power to reply. He did not attend very much to the duets and even forgot at the end of one of them to say how perfectly lovely it was.

§4

But you must not imagine that the national ideal of a gentleman, as Coote developed it, was all a matter of deportment and selectness, a mere isolation from debasing associations. There is a Serious Side, a deeper aspect of the true, True Gentleman. The True Gentleman does not wear his heart on his sleeve. He is a polished surface above deeps. For example, he is deeply religious, as Coote was, as Mrs. Walshingham was, but outside the walls of a church it never appears, except perhaps now and then in a pause, in a profound look, in a sudden avoidance. In quite a little while Kipps also had learnt the pause, the profound look, the sudden avoidance, that final refinement of spirituality, impressionistic piety.

And the True Gentleman is patriotic also. When one saw Coote lifting his hat to the National Anthem, then perhaps one got a glimpse of what patriotic emotions, what worship, the polish of a gentleman may hide. Or singing out his deep notes against the Hosts of Midian, in the St. Stylites choir; then indeed you plumbed his spiritual side.

Christian, dost thou heed them,
On the holy ground,

How the hosts of Mid-i-an,
Prowl and prowl around!
Christian, up and smai-it them....

But these were but gleams. For the rest, Religion, Nationality, Passion, Money, Politics; much more so those cardinal issues, Birth and Death, the True Gentleman skirted about, and became facially rigid towards and ceased to speak and panted and blew.

"One doesn't talk of that sort of thing," Coote would say with a gesture of the knuckly hand.

"O' course," Kipps would reply, with an equal significance.

Profundities. Deep as it were, blowing to deep.

One does not talk, but on the other hand one is punctilious to do. Actions speak. Kipps — in spite of the fact that the Walshinghams were more than a little lax — Kipps, who had formerly flitted Sunday after Sunday from one Folkestone church to another, had now a sitting of his own, paid for duly at Saint Stylites. There he was to be seen, always at the surplice evening service, and sometimes of a morning, dressed with a sober precision, and with an eye on Coote in the chancel. No difficulties now about finding the place in his book. He became a communicant again — he had lapsed soon after his confirmation when the young lady in the costume-room, who was his adopted sister, left the Emporium — and he would sometimes go around to the Vestry for Coote after the service. One evening he was introduced to the Hon. and Rev. Densemore. He was much too confused to say anything, and the noble cleric had nothing to say, but indisputably they were introduced....

No! you must not imagine our national ideal of a gentleman is without its "serious side," without even its stern and uncompromising side. The imagination no doubt refuses to see Coote displaying extraordinary refinements of courage upon the stricken field, but in the walks of peace there is sometimes sore need of sternness. Charitable as one may be, one must admit there are people who *do* things, impossible things; people who place themselves "out of it" in countless ways; people, moreover, who are by a sort of predestination out of it from the beginning, and against these Society has invented a terrible protection for its Cootery, the Cut. The cut is no joke for anyone. It is excommunication. You may be cut by an

individual, you may be cut by a set or you may be — and this is so tragic that beautiful romances have been written about it— “Cut by the County.” One figures Coote discharging this last duty and cutting somebody — Coote, erect and pale, never speaking, going past with eyes of pitiless slate, lower jaw protruding a little, face pursed up and cold and stiff....

It never dawned upon Kipps that he would one day have to face this terrible front, to be to Coote not only as one dead, but as one gone more than a stage or so in decay, cut and passed, banned and outcast for ever.

Yet so it was to be!

One cannot hide any longer that all this fine progress of Kipps is doomed to end in collapse. So far indeed you have seen him ascend. You have seen him becoming more refined and careful day by day, more carefully dressed, less clumsy in the ways and methods of social life. You have seen the gulf widening between himself and his former low associates. I have brought you at last to the vision of him, faultlessly dressed and posed, in an atmosphere of candlelight and chanting, in his own sitting in one of the most fashionable churches in Folkestone.... All the time I have refrained from the lightest touch upon the tragic note that must now creep into my tale. Yet the net of his low connections has been about his feet, and moreover there was something interwoven in his being....

CHAPTER VI DISCORDS

§1

One day Kipps set out upon his newly-mastered bicycle to New Romney to break the news of his engagement to his Uncle and Aunt — this time positively. He was now a finished cyclist, but as yet an unseasoned one; the southwest wind, even in its summer guise, as one meets it in the Marsh, is the equivalent of a reasonable hill, and ever and again he got off and refreshed himself by a spell of walking. He was walking just outside New Romney preparatory to his triumphal entry (one hand off) when abruptly he came upon Ann Pornick.

It chanced he was thinking about her at the time. He had been thinking curious things; whether, after all, the atmosphere of New Romney and the Marsh had not some difference, some faint impalpable quality that was missing in the great and fashionable world of Folkestone behind there on the hill. Here there was a homeliness, a familiarity. He had noted as he passed that old Mr. Cliffordown's gate had been mended with a fresh piece of string. In Folkestone he didn't take notice and he didn't care if they built three hundred houses. Come to think of it, that was odd. It was fine and grand to have twelve hundred a year; it was fine to go about on trams and omnibuses and think not a person aboard was as rich as oneself; it was fine to buy and order this and that and never have any work to do and to be engaged to a girl distantly related to the Earl of Beauprés, but yet there had been a zest in the old time out here, a rare zest in the holidays, in sunlight, on the sea beach and in the High Street, that failed from these new things. He thought of those bright windows of holiday that had seemed so glorious to him in the retrospect from his apprentice days. It was strange that now, amidst his present splendours, they were glorious still!

All those things were over now — perhaps that was it! Something had happened to the world and the old light had been turned out. He himself was changed, and Sid was changed, terribly changed, and Ann no doubt was changed.

He thought of her with the hair blown about her flushed cheeks as they stood together after their race....

Certainly she must be changed, and all the magic she had been fraught with to the very hem of her short petticoats gone no doubt for ever. And as he thought that, or before and while he thought it, for he came to all these things in his own vague and stumbling way, he looked up, and there was Ann!

She was seven years older and greatly altered; yet for the moment it seemed to him that she had not changed at all. “Ann!” he said, and she, with a lifting note, “It’s Art Kipps!”

Then he became aware of changes — improvements. She was as pretty as she had promised to be, her blue eyes as dark as his memory of them, and with a quick, high colour, but now Kipps by several inches was the taller again. She was dressed in a simple grey dress that showed her very clearly as a straight and healthy little woman, and her hat was Sundayfied with pink flowers. She looked soft and warm and welcoming. Her face was alight to Kipps with her artless gladness at their encounter.

“It’s Art Kipps!” she said.

“Rather,” said Kipps.

“You got your holidays?”

It flashed upon Kipps that Sid had not told her of his great fortune. Much regretful meditation upon Sid’s behaviour had convinced him that he himself was to blame for exasperating boastfulness in that affair, and this time he took care not to err in that direction. He erred in the other.

“I’m taking a bit of a ‘oliday,” he said.

“So’m I,” said Ann.

“You been for a walk?” asked Kipps.

Ann showed him a bunch of wayside flowers.

“It’s a long time since I seen you, Ann. Why, ‘ow long must it be? Seven — eight years nearly.”

“It don’t do to count,” said Ann.

“It don’t look like it,” said Kipps, with the slightest emphasis.

“You got a moustache,” said Ann, smelling her flowers and looking at him over them, not without admiration.

Kipps blushed....

Presently they came to the bifurcation of the roads.

“I’m going down this way to mother’s cottage,” said Ann.

“I’ll come a bit your way if I may.”

In New Romney social distinctions that are primary realities in Folkestone are absolutely non-existent, and it seemed quite permissible for him to walk with Ann, for all that she was no more than a servant. They talked with remarkable ease to one another, they slipped into a vein of intimate reminiscence in the easiest manner. In a little while Kipps was amazed to find Ann and himself at this:

“You r’ember that half sixpence? What you cut for me?”

“Yes.”

“I got it still.”

She hesitated. “Funny, wasn’t it?” she said, and then, “you got yours, Artie?”

“Rather,” said Kipps. “What do you think?” and wondered in his heart of hearts why he had never looked at that sixpence for so long.

Ann smiled at him frankly.

“I didn’t expect you’d keep it,” she said. “I thought often — it was silly to keep mine. Besides,” she reflected, “it didn’t mean anything really.”

She glanced at him as she spoke and met his eye.

“Oh, didn’t it!” said Kipps, a little late with his response, and realising his infidelity to Helen even as he spoke.

“It didn’t mean much anyhow,” said Ann. “You still in the drapery?”

“I’m living at Folkestone,” began Kipps and decided that that sufficed. “Didn’t Sid tell you he met me?”

“No! Here?”

“Yes. The other day. ‘Bout a week or more ago.”

“That was before I came.”

“Ah! that was it,” said Kipps.

“‘E’s got on,” said Ann. “Got ‘is own shop now, Artie.”

“‘E tole me.”

They found themselves outside Muggett’s cottages. “You going in?” said Kipps.

“I s’pose so,” said Ann.

They both hung upon the pause. Ann took a plunge.

“D’you often come to New Romney?” she said.

“I ride over a bit at times,” said Kipps.

Another pause. Ann held out her hand.

“I’m glad I seen you,” she said.

Extraordinary impulses arose in neglected parts of Kipps’ being. “Ann,” he said and stopped.

“Yes,” said she, and was bright to him.

They looked at one another.

All and more than all of those first emotions of his adolescence had come back to him. Her presence banished a multitude of countervaling considerations. It was Ann more than ever. She stood breathing close to him, with her soft-looking lips a little apart and gladness in her eyes.

“I’m awful glad to see you again,” he said; “it brings back old times.”

“Doesn’t it?”

Another pause. He would have liked to have had a long talk to her, to have gone for a walk with her or something, to have drawn nearer to her in any conceivable way, and, above all, to have had some more of the appreciation that shone in her eyes, but a vestige of Folkestone still clinging to him told him it “wouldn’t do.” “Well,” he said, “I must be getting on,” and turned away reluctantly, with a will under compulsion....

When he looked back from the corner she was still at the gate. She was perhaps a little disconcerted by his retreat. He felt that. He hesitated for a moment, half turned, stood and suddenly did great things with his hat. That hat! The wonderful hat of our civilisation!...

In another minute he was engaged in a singularly absent-minded conversation with his Uncle about the usual topics.

His Uncle was very anxious to buy him a few upright clocks as an investment for subsequent sale. And there were also some very nice globes, one terrestrial and the other celestial, in a shop at Lydd that would look well in a drawing-room and inevitably increase in value.... Kipps either did or did not agree to this purchase; he was unable to recollect.

The southwest wind perhaps helped him back, at any rate he found himself through Dymchurch without having noticed the place.

There came an odd effect as he drew near Hythe. The hills on the left and the trees on the right seemed to draw together and close in upon him until his way was straight and narrow. He could not turn around on that treacherous, half-tamed machine, but he knew that behind him, he knew so well, spread the wide, vast flatness of the Marsh shining under the afternoon sky. In some way this was material to his thoughts. And as he rode through Hythe he came upon the idea that there was a considerable amount of incompatibility between the existence of one who was practically a gentleman and of Ann.

In the neighbourhood of Seabrook he began to think he had, in some subtle way, lowered himself by walking along by the side of Ann.... After all, she was only a servant.

Ann!

She called out all the least gentlemanly instincts of his nature. There had been a moment in their conversation when he had quite distinctly thought it would really be an extremely nice thing for someone to kiss her lips.... There was something warming about Ann — at least for Kipps. She impressed him as having somewhen during their vast interval of separation contrived to make herself in some distinctive way his.

Fancy keeping that half sixpence all this time!

It was the most flattering thing that had ever happened to Kipps.

§2

He found himself presently sitting over "The Art of Conversing," lost in the strangest musings. He got up, walked about, became stagnant at the window for a space, roused himself and by way of something lighter tried "Sesame and Lilies." From that, too, his attention wandered. He sat back. Anon he smiled, anon sighed. He arose, pulled his keys from his pocket, looked at them, decided and went upstairs. He opened the little yellow box that had been the nucleus of all his possessions in the world, and took out a small "Escritoire," the very humblest sort of present, and opened it — kneeling. And there, in the corner, was a little packet of paper, sealed as a last defence against any prying invader, with red sealing wax. It had gone untouched for years. He held this little packet between

finger and thumb for a moment, regarding it, and then put down the escritoire and broke the seal....

As he was getting into bed that night he remembered something for the first time!

"Dash it!" he said. "Dashed if I told 'em *this* time.... *Well!* I shall 'ave to go over to New Romney again!"

He got into bed and remained sitting pensively on the pillow for a space.

"It's a rum world," he reflected after a vast interval.

Then he recalled that she had noticed his moustache and embarked upon a sea of egotistical musings.

He imagined himself telling Ann how rich he was. What a surprise that would be for her!

Finally he sighed profoundly, blew out his candle and snuggled down, and in a little while he was asleep....

But the next morning and at intervals afterwards he found himself thinking of Ann — Ann, the bright, the desirable, the welcoming, and with an extraordinary streakiness he wanted quite badly to go and then as badly not to go over to New Romney again.

Sitting on the Leas in the afternoon, he had an idea. "I ought to 'ave told 'er, I suppose, about my being engaged.

"Ann!"

All sorts of dreams and impressions that had gone clean out of his mental existence came back to him, changed and brought up to date to fit her altered presence. He thought of how he had gone back to New Romney for his Christmas holidays, determined to kiss her, and of the awful blankness of the discovery that she had gone away.

It seemed incredible now, and yet not wholly incredible, that he had cried real tears for her — how many years was it ago?

§3

Daily I should thank my Maker that He did not appoint me Censor of the world of men. I should temper a fierce injustice with a spasmodic indecision that would prolong rather than mitigate the bitterness of the Day. For human dignity, for all conscious human superiority I should lack the beginnings of charity, for bishops, prosperous

schoolmasters, judges and all large respect-pampered souls. And more especially bishops, towards whom I bear an atavistic, Viking grudge, dreaming not infrequently and with invariable zest of galleys and landings and well known living ornaments of the episcopal bench sprinting inland on twinkling gaiters before my thirsty blade — all these people, I say, should treat below their deserts, but, on the other hand, for such as Kipps —— . There the exasperating indecisions would come in. The Judgment would be arrested at Kipps. Everyone and everything would wait. *You* would wait. The balance would sway and sway, and whenever it heeled towards an adverse decision, my finger would set it swaying again. Kings, warriors, statesmen, brilliant women of our first families, personalities, gallants, panting with indignation, headline humanity in general, would stand undamned, unheeded, or be damned in the most casual manner for their importunity, while my eye went about for anything possible that could be said on behalf of Kipps.... Albeit I fear nothing can save him from condemnation upon this present score, that within two days he was talking to Ann again.

One seeks excuses. Overnight there had been an encounter of Chitterlow and young Walshingham in his presence, that had certainly warped his standards. They had called within a few minutes of each other, and the two swayed by virile attentions to Old Methuselah Four Stars, had talked against each other, over and at the hospitable presence of Kipps. Walshingham had seemed to win at the beginning, but finally Chitterlow had made a magnificent display of vociferation and swept him out of existence. At the beginning Chitterlow had opened upon the great profits of playwrights and young Walshingham had capped him at once with a cynical, but impressive, display of knowledge of the High Finance. If Chitterlow boasted his thousands, young Walshingham boasted his hundreds of thousands, and was for a space left in sole possession of the stage, juggling with the wealth of nations. He was going on by way of Financial Politics to the Overman, before Chitterlow recovered from his first check, and came back to victory. “Talking of Women,” said Chitterlow, coming in abruptly upon some things not generally known, beyond Walshingham’s more immediate circle, about a recently departed Empire-builder; “Talking of Women and the way

they Get at a man — —”

[Though as a matter of fact they had been talking of the Corruption of Society by Speculation.]

Upon this new topic Chitterlow was soon manifestly invincible. He knew so much, he had known so many. Young Walshingham did his best with epigrams and reservations, but even to Kipps it was evident that this was a book-learned depravity. One felt Walshingham had never known the inner realities of passion. But Chitterlow convinced and amazed. He had run away with girls, he had been run away with by girls, he had been in love with several at a time— “not counting Bessie” — he had loved and lost, he had loved and refrained, and he had loved and failed. He threw remarkable lights upon the moral state of America — in which country he had toured with great success. He set his talk to the tune of one of Mr. Kipling’s best known songs. He told an incident of simple, romantic passion, a delirious dream of love and beauty in a Saturday to Monday steamboat trip up the Hudson, and tagged his end with, “I learnt about women from ‘er!” After that he adopted the refrain and then lapsed into the praises of Kipling. “Little Kipling,” said Chitterlow, with the familiarity of affection, “*he* knows,” and broke into quotation:

“I’ve taken my fun where I found it;
I’ve rogued and I’ve ranged in my time;
I’ve ‘ad my picking of sweet’earts,
An’ four of the lot was Prime.”

(These things, I say, affect the moral standards of the best of us.)

“*I’d* have liked to have written that,” said Chitterlow. “That’s Life, that is! But go and put it on the Stage, put even a bit of the Realities of Life on the Stage, and see what they’ll do to you! Only Kipling could venture on a job like that. That Poem KNOCKED me! I don’t say Kipling hasn’t knocked me before and since, but that was a Fair Knock Out. And yet — you know — there’s one thing in it ... this:

“I’ve taken my fun where I’ve found it,
And now I must pay for my fun,
For the more you ‘ave known o’ the others,
The less will you settle to one — —”

Well. In my case anyhow — I don't know how much that proves, seeing I'm exceptional in so many things and there's no good denying it — but so far as I'm concerned — I tell you two, but of course you needn't let it go any farther — I've been perfectly faithful to Muriel ever since I married her — ever since.... Not once. Not even by accident have I ever said or done anything in the slightest —— ." His little, brown eye became pensive after this flattering intimacy and the gorgeous draperies of his abundant voice fell into graver folds. "*I learnt about women from 'er*," he said impressively.

"Yes," said Walshingham, getting into the hinder spaces of that splendid pause, "a man must know about women. And the only sound way of learning is the experimental method."

"If you want to know about the experimental method, my boy," said Chitterlow, resuming....

So they talked. *Ex pede Herculem*, as Coote, that cultivated polyglot, would have put it. And in the small hours Kipps went to bed, with his brain whirling with words and whiskey, and sat for an unconscionable time upon his bed edge, musing sadly upon the unmanly monogamy of soul that had cast its shadow upon his career, musing with his thoughts pointing around more and more certainly to the possibility of at least duplicity with Ann.

§4

For some days he had been refraining with some insistence from going off to New Romney again....

I do not know if this may count in palliation of his misconduct. Men, real Strong-Souled, Healthy Men, should be, I suppose, impervious to conversational atmospheres, but I have never claimed for Kipps a place at these high levels. The unquenchable fact remains that the next day he spent the afternoon with Ann and found no scruple in displaying himself a budding lover.

He had met her in the High Street, had stopped her, and almost on the spur of the moment had boldly proposed a walk, "for the sake of old times."

"*I* don't mind," said Ann.

Her consent almost frightened Kipps. His imagination had not

carried him to that. “It would be a lark,” said Kipps, and looked up the street and down. “Now?” he said.

“I don’t mind a bit, Artie. I was just going for a walk along towards St. Mary’s.”

“Let’s go that way be’ind the church,” said Kipps, and presently they found themselves drifting seaward in a mood of pleasant commonplace. For a while they talked of Sid. It went clean out of Kipps’ head at that early stage even that Ann was a “girl” according to the exposition of Chitterlow, and for a time he remembered only that she was Ann. But afterwards, with the reek of that talk in his head, he lapsed a little from that personal relation. They came out upon the beach and sat down in a tumbled, pebbly place, where a meagre grass and patches of sea poppy were growing, and Kipps reclined on his elbow and tossed pebbles in his hand, and Ann sat up, sunlit, regarding him. They talked in fragments. They exhausted Sid, they exhausted Ann, and Kipps was chary of his riches.

He declined to a faint love-making. “I got that ‘arf sixpence still,” he said.

“Reely?”

That changed the key. “I always kept mine, some’ow,” said Ann, and there was a pause.

They spoke of how often they had thought of each other during those intervening years. Kipps may have been untruthful, but Ann perhaps was not. “I met people here and there,” said Ann; “but I never met anyone quite like you, Artie.”

“It’s jolly our meeting again, anyhow,” said Kipps. “Look at that ship out there. She’s pretty close in....”

He had a dull period, became indeed almost pensive, and then he was enterprising for a while. He tossed up his pebbles so that as if by accident they fell on Ann’s hand. Then, very penitently, he stroked the place. That would have led to all sorts of coquetries on the part of Flo Banks, for example, but it disconcerted and checked Kipps to find Ann made no objection, smiled pleasantly down on him, with eyes half shut because of the sun. She was taking things very much for granted.

He began to talk, and Chitterlow standards resuming possession of him he said he had never forgotten her.

“I never forgotten you either, Artie,” she said. “Funny, isn’t it?”

It impressed Kipps also as funny.

He became reminiscent, and suddenly a warm summer’s evening came back to him. “Remember them cockchafers, Ann?” he said. But the reality of the evening he recalled was not the chase of cockchafers. The great reality that had suddenly arisen between them was that he had never kissed Ann in his life. He looked up and there were her lips.

He had wanted to very badly, and his memory leaped and annihilated an interval. That old resolution came back to him and all sorts of new resolutions passed out of mind. And he had learnt something since those boyish days. This time he did not ask. He went on talking, his nerves began very faintly to quiver and his mind grew bright.

Presently, having satisfied himself that there was no one to see, he sat up beside her and remarked upon the clearness of the air, and how close Dungeness seemed to them. Then they came upon a pause again.

“Ann,” he whispered, and put an arm that quivered about her.

She was mute and unresisting, and, as he was to remember, solemn.

He turned her face towards him, and kissed her lips, and she kissed him back again — kisses frank and tender as a child’s.

§5

It was curious that in the retrospect he did not find nearly the satisfaction in this infidelity he had imagined was there. It was no doubt desperately doggish, doggish to an almost Chitterlowesque degree to recline on the beach at Littlestone with a “girl,” to make love to her and to achieve the triumph of kissing her, when he was engaged to another “girl” at Folkestone, but somehow these two people were not “girls,” they were Ann and Helen. Particularly Helen declined to be considered as a “girl.” And there was something in Ann’s quietly friendly eyes, in her frank smile, in the naïve pressure of her hand, there was something undefended and welcoming that imparted a flavour to the business upon which he had not counted.

He had learnt about women from her. That refrain ran through his mind and deflected his thoughts, but as a matter of fact he had learnt about nothing but himself.

He wanted very much to see Ann some more and explain. He did not clearly know what it was he wanted to explain.

He did not clearly know anything. It is the last achievement of the intelligence to get all of one's life into one coherent scheme, and Kipps was only in a measure more aware of himself as a whole than is a tree. His existence was an affair of dissolving and recurring moods. When he thought of Helen or Ann or any of his friends, he thought sometimes of this aspect and sometimes of that — and often one aspect was finally incongruous with another. He loved Helen, he revered Helen. He was also beginning to hate her with some intensity. When he thought of that expedition to Lympne, profound, vague, beautiful emotions flooded his being; when he thought of paying calls with her perforce, or of her latest comment on his bearing, he found himself rebelliously composing fierce and pungent insults, couched in the vernacular. But Ann, whom he had seen so much less of, was a simpler memory. She was pretty, she was almost softly feminine, and she was possible to his imagination just exactly where Helen was impossible. More than anything else, she carried the charm of respect for him, the slightest glance of her eyes was balm for his perpetually wounded self-conceit.

Chance suggestions it was set the tune of his thoughts, and his state of health and repletion gave the colour. Yet somehow he had this at least almost clear in his mind, that to have gone to see Ann a second time, to have implied that she had been in possession of his thoughts through all this interval, and, above all, to have kissed her, was shabby and wrong. Only unhappily this much of lucidity had come now just a few hours after it was needed.

§6

Four days after this it was that Kipps got up so late. He got up late, cut his chin while shaving, kicked a slipper into his sponge bath and said, "Desh!"

Perhaps you know those intolerable mornings, dear Reader, when

you seem to have neither the heart nor the strength to rise, and your nervous adjustments are all wrong and your fingers thumbs, and you hate the very birds for singing. You feel inadequate to any demand whatever. Often such awakenings follow a poor night's rest, and commonly they mean indiscriminate eating, or those subtle mental influences old Kipps ascribed to "Foozle Ile" in the system, or worry. And with Kipps — albeit Chitterlow had again been his guest overnight — assuredly worry had played a leading rôle. Troubles had been gathering upon him for days, there had been a sort of concentration of these hosts of Midian overnight, and in the grey small hours Kipps had held his review.

The predominating trouble marched under this banner:

MR. KIPPS

MRS. BINDON BOTTING

At Home

Thursday, September 16th

Anagrams, 4 to 6:30 R. S. V. P.

a banner that was the fac-simile of a card upon his looking glass in the room below. And in relation to this terribly significant document things had come to a pass with Helen that he could only describe in his own expressive idiom as "words."

It had long been a smouldering issue between them that Kipps was not availing himself with any energy or freedom of the opportunities he had of social exercises, much less was he seeking additional opportunities. He had, it was evident, a peculiar dread of that universal afternoon enjoyment, the Call, and Helen made it unambiguously evident that this dread was "silly" and had to be overcome. His first display of this unmanly weakness occurred at the Coote's on the day before he kissed Ann. They were all there,

chatting very pleasantly, when the little servant with the big cap announced the younger Miss Wace.

Whereupon Kipps manifested a lively horror and rose partially from his chair. “O Gum!” he protested. “Carn’t I go upstairs?”

Then he sank back, for it was too late. Very probably the younger Miss Wace had heard him as she came in.

Helen said nothing of that, though her manner may have shown her surprise, but afterwards she told Kipps he must get used to seeing people, and suggested that he should pay a series of calls with Mrs. Walshingham and herself. Kipps gave a reluctant assent at the time and afterwards displayed a talent for evasion that she had not suspected in him. At last she did succeed in securing him for a call upon Miss Punchafer, of Radnor Park — a particularly easy call because Miss Punchafer being so deaf one could say practically what one liked — and then outside the gate he shirked again. “I can’t go in,” he said in a faded voice.

“You *must*,” said Helen, beautiful as ever, but even more than a little hard and forbidding.

“I can’t.”

He produced his handkerchief hastily, thrust it to his face, and regarded her over it with rounded, hostile eyes.

“‘Possible,” he said in a hoarse, strange voice out of the handkerchief. “Nozzez bleedin’.”

But that was the end of his power of resistance, and when the rally for the Anagram Tea occurred she bore down his feeble protests altogether. She insisted. She said frankly, “I am going to give you a good talking to about this,” and she did....

From Coote he gathered something of the nature of Anagrams and Anagram parties. An anagram, Coote explained, was a word spelt the same way as another, only differently arranged, as, for instance, T. O. C. O. E. would be an anagram for his own name, Coote.

“T. O. C. O. E.,” repeated Kipps very carefully.

“Or T. O. E. C. O.,” said Coote.

“Or T. O. E. C. O.,” said Kipps, assisting his poor head by nodding it at each letter.

“Toe Company like,” he said in his efforts to comprehend.

When Kipps was clear what an anagram meant, Coote came to the

second heading, the Tea. Kipps gathered there might be from thirty to sixty people present, and that each one would have an anagram pinned on. “They give you a card to put your guesses on, rather like a dance programme, and then, you know, you go around and guess,” said Coote. “It’s rather good fun.”

“Oo rather!” said Kipps, with simulated gusto.

“It shakes everybody up together,” said Coote.

Kipps smiled and nodded....

In the small hours all his painful meditations were threaded by the vision of that Anagram Tea; it kept marching to and fro and in and out of all his other troubles, from thirty to sixty people, mostly ladies and callers, and a great number of the letters of the alphabet, and more particularly P. I. K. P. S. and T. O. E. C. O., and he was trying to make one word out of the whole interminable procession....

This word, as he finally gave it with some emphasis to the silence of the night, was *“Demn!”*

Then, wreathed as it were in this lettered procession, was the figure of Helen as she had appeared at the moment of “words”; her face a little hard, a little irritated, a little disappointed. He imagined himself going around and guessing under her eye....

He tried to think of other things, without lapsing upon a still deeper uneasiness that was wreathed with yellow sea poppies, and the figures of Buggins, Pierce and Carshot, three murdered Friendships, rose reproachfully in the stillness and changed horrible apprehensions into unspeakable remorse. Last night had been their customary night for the banjo, and Kipps, with a certain tremulous uncertainty, had put old Methuselah amidst a retinue of glasses on the table and opened a box of choice cigars. In vain. They were in no need, it seemed, of *his* society. But instead Chitterlow had come, anxious to know if it was all right about that syndicate plan. He had declined anything but a very weak whiskey and soda, “just to drink,” at least until business was settled, and had then opened the whole affair with an effect of great orderliness to Kipps. Soon he was taking another whiskey by sheer inadvertency, and the complex fabric of his conversation was running more easily from the broad loom of his mind. Into that pattern had interwoven a narrative of extensive alterations in the Pestered Butterfly — the neck and beetle business

was to be restored — the story of a grave difference of opinion with Mrs. Chitterlow, where and how to live after the play had succeeded, the reasons why the Hon. Thomas Norgate had never financed a syndicate, and much matter also about the syndicate now under discussion. But if the current of their conversation had been vortical and crowded, the outcome was perfectly clear. Kipps was to be the chief participator in the syndicate, and his contribution was to be two thousand pounds. Kipps groaned and rolled over and found Helen, as it were, on the other side. “Promise me,” she had said, “you won’t do anything without consulting me.”

Kipps at once rolled back to his former position, and for a space lay quite still. He felt like a very young rabbit in a trap.

Then suddenly, with extraordinary distinctness, his heart cried out for Ann, and he saw her as he had seen her at New Romney, sitting amidst the yellow sea poppies with the sunlight on her face. His heart called out for her in the darkness as one calls for rescue. He knew, as though he had known it always, that he loved Helen no more. He wanted Ann, he wanted to hold her and be held by her, to kiss her again and again, to turn his back forever on all these other things....

He rose late, but this terrible discovery was still there, undispelled by cockcrow or the day. He rose in a shattered condition, and he cut himself while shaving, but at last he got into his dining-room and could pull the bell for the hot constituents of his multifarious breakfast. And then he turned to his letters. There were two real letters in addition to the customary electric belt advertisement, continental lottery circular and betting tout’s card. One was in a slight mourning envelope and addressed in an unfamiliar hand. This he opened first and discovered a note:

MRS. RAYMOND WACE

Requests the pleasure of

MR. KIPPS'

Company at Dinner

on Tuesday, September 21st, at 8 o'clock

With a hasty movement Kipps turned his mind to the second letter. It was an unusually long one from his Uncle, and ran as follows:

"My Dear Nephew:

"We are considerably startled by your letter though expecting something of the sort and disposed to hope for the best. If the young lady is a relation to the Earl of Beauprés well and good but take care you are not being imposed upon for there are many who will be glad enough to snap you up now your circumstances are altered — I waited on the old Earl once while in service and he was remarkably close with his tips and suffered from corns. A hasty old gent and hard to please — I daresay he has forgotten me altogether — and anyhow there is no need to rake up bygones. To-morrow is bus day and as you say the young lady is living near by we shall shut up shop for there is really nothing doing now what with all the visitors bringing everything with them down to their very children's pails and say how de do to her and give her a bit of a kiss and encouragement if we think her suitable — she will be pleased to see your old uncle — We wish we could have had a look at her first but still there is not much mischief done and hoping that all will turn out well yet I am

"Your affectionate Uncle
"Edward George Kipps.

“My heartburn still very bad. I shall bring over a few bits of rhubub I picked up, a sort you won’t get in Folkestone and if possible a good bunch of flowers for the young lady.”

“Comin’ over to-day,” said Kipps, standing helplessly with the letter in his hand.

“‘Ow, the Juice —— ?

“I carn’t.

“Kiss ‘er!”

“I carn’t even face ‘er —— !”

A terrible anticipation of that gathering framed itself in his mind — a hideous, impossible disaster.

His voice went up to a note of despair, “And it’s too late to telegrarf and stop ‘em!”

About twenty minutes after this, an outporter in Castle Hill Avenue was accosted by a young man, with a pale, desperate face, an exquisitely rolled umbrella and a heavy Gladstone bag.

“Carry this to the station, will you?” said the young man. “I want to ketch the nex’ train to London.... You’ll ‘ave to look sharp — I ‘aven’t very much time.”

CHAPTER VII LONDON

§1

London was Kipps' third world. There were no doubt other worlds, but Kipps knew only these three; firstly, New Romney and the Emporium, constituting his primary world, his world of origin, which also contained Ann; secondly, the world of culture and refinement, the world of which Coote was chaperon, and into which Kipps was presently to marry, a world it was fast becoming evident absolutely incompatible with the first, and, thirdly, a world still to a large extent unexplored, London. London presented itself as a place of great, grey spaces and incredible multitudes of people, centring about Charing Cross station and the Royal Grand Hotel, and containing at unexpected arbitrary points shops of the most amazing sort, statuary, Squares, Restaurants — where it was possible for clever people like Walshingham to order a lunch item by item, to the waiters' evident respect and sympathy — exhibitions of incredible things — the Walshinghams had taken him to the Arts and Crafts and to a picture gallery — and theatres. London, moreover, is rendered habitable by hansom cabs. Young Walshingham was a natural cab taker, he was an all-round large minded young man, and he had in the course of their two days' stay taken Kipps into no less than nine, so that Kipps was singularly not afraid of these vehicles. He knew that whereever you were, so soon as you were thoroughly lost you said "Hi!" to a cab, and then "Royal Grand Hotel." Day and night these trusty conveyances are returning the strayed Londoner back to his point of departure, and were it not for their activity in a little while the whole population, so vast and incomprehensible is the intricate complexity of this great city, would be hopelessly lost forever. At any rate, that is how the thing presented itself to Kipps, and I have heard much the same from visitors from America.

His train was composed of corridor carriages, and he forgot his trouble for a time in the wonders of this modern substitute for railway compartments. He went from the non-smoking to the smoking carriage and smoked a cigarette, and strayed from his

second-class carriage to a first and back. But presently Black Care got aboard the train and came and sat beside him. The exhilaration of escape had evaporated now, and he was presented with a terrible picture of his Aunt and Uncle arriving at his lodgings and finding him fled. He had left a hasty message that he was called away suddenly on business, "ver' important business," and they were to be sumptuously entertained. His immediate motive had been his passionate dread of an encounter between these excellent but unrefined old people and the Walshinghams, but now that end was secured, he could see how thwarted and exasperated they would be.

How to explain to them?

He ought never to have written to tell them!

He ought to have got married and told them afterwards.

He ought to have consulted Helen.

"Promise me," she had said.

"Oh, *desh*!" said Kipps, and got up and walked back into the smoking car and began to consume cigarettes.

Suppose, after all, they found out the Walshingham's address and went there!

At Charing Cross, however, there were distractions again. He took a cab in an entirely Walshingham manner, and was pleased to note the enhanced respect of the cabman when he mentioned the Royal Grand. He followed Walshingham's routine on their previous visit with perfect success. They were very nice in the office, and gave him an excellent room at fourteen shillings the night.

He went up and spent a considerable time in examining the furniture of his room, scrutinising himself in its various mirrors and sitting on the edge of the bed whistling. It was a vast and splendid apartment, and cheap at fourteen shillings. But, finding the figure of Ann inclined to resume possession of his mind, he roused himself and descended by the staircase after a momentary hesitation before the lift. He had thought of lunch, but he drifted into the great drawing-room and read a guide to the Hotels of Europe for a space, until a doubt whether he was entitled to use this palatial apartment without extra charge arose in his mind. He would have liked something to eat very much now, but his inbred terror of the table was very strong. He did at last get by a porter in uniform towards the

dining-room, but at the sight of a number of waiters and tables, with remarkable complications of knives and glasses, terror seized him, and he backed out again, with a mumbled remark to the waiter in the doorway about this not being the way.

He hovered in the hall and lounge until he thought the presiding porter regarded him with suspicion, and then went up to his room again by the staircase, got his hat and umbrella and struck boldly across the courtyard. He would go to a restaurant instead.

He had a moment of elation in the gateway. He felt all the Strand must notice him as he emerged through the great gate of the Hotel. "One of these here rich swells," they would say. "Don't they do it just!" A cabman touched his hat. "No fear," said Kipps, pleasantly.

Then he remembered he was hungry again.

Yet he decided he was in no great hurry for lunch, in spite of an internal protest, and turned eastward along the Strand in a leisurely manner. He tried to find a place to suit him soon enough. He tried to remember the sort of things Walshingham had ordered. Before all things he didn't want to go into a place and look like a fool. Some of these places rook you dreadful, besides making fun of you. There was a place near Essex Street where there was a window brightly full of chops, tomatoes and lettuce. He stopped at this and reflected for a time, and then it occurred to him that you were expected to buy these things raw and cook them at home. Anyhow, there was sufficient doubt in the matter to stop him. He drifted on to a neat window with champagne bottles, a dish of asparagus and a framed menu of a two shilling lunch. He was about to enter, when fortunately he perceived two waiters looking at him over the back screen of the window with a most ironical expression, and he sheered off at once. There was a wonderful smell of hot food half way down Fleet Street and a nice looking Tavern with several doors, but he could not decide which door. His nerve was going under the strain.

He hesitated at Farringdon Street and drifted up to St. Paul's and round the church yard, full chiefly of dead bargains in the shop windows, to Cheapside. But now Kipps was getting demoralised, and each house of refreshment seemed to promise still more complicated obstacles to food. He didn't know how you went in and what was the correct thing to do with your hat, he didn't know what you said to the

waiter or what you called the different things; he was convinced absolutely he would "fumble," as Shalford would have said, and look like a fool. Somebody might laugh at him! The hungrier he got the more unendurable was the thought that anyone should laugh at him. For a time he considered an extraordinary expedient to account for his ignorance. He would go in and pretend to be a foreigner and not know English. Then they might understand.... Presently he had drifted into a part of London where there did not seem to be any refreshment places at all.

"Oh, *desh*!" said Kipps, in a sort of agony of indecisiveness. "The very nex' place I see, in I go."

The next place was a fried fish shop in a little side street, where there were also sausages on a gas-lit grill.

He would have gone in, but suddenly a new scruple came to him, that he was too well dressed for the company he could see dimly through the steam sitting at the counter and eating with a sort of nonchalant speed.

§2

He was half minded to resort to a hansom and brave the terrors of the dining-room of the Royal Grand — they wouldn't know why he had gone out really — when the only person he knew in London appeared (as the only person one does know will do in London) and slapped him on the shoulder. Kipps was hovering at a window at a few yards from the fish shop, pretending to examine some really strikingly cheap pink baby linen, and trying to settle finally about those sausages.

"Hullo, Kipps!" cried Sid; "spending the millions?"

Kipps turned, and was glad to perceive no lingering vestige of the chagrin that had been so painful at New Romney. Sid looked grave and important, and he wore a quite new silk hat that gave a commercial touch to a generally socialistic costume. For a moment the sight of Sid uplifted Kipps wonderfully. He saw him as a friend and helper, and only presently did it come clearly into his mind that this was the brother of Ann.

He made amiable noises.

“I’ve just been up this way,” Sid explained, “buying a second-hand ‘namelling stove.... I’m going to ‘namel myself.”

“Lor’!” said Kipps.

“Yes. Do me a lot of good. Let the customer choose his colour. See? What brings *you* up?”

Kipps had a momentary vision of his foiled Uncle and Aunt. “Jest a bit of a change,” he said.

Sid came to a swift decision. “Come down to my little show. I got someone I’d like to see talking to you.”

Even then Kipps did not think of Ann in this connection.

“Well,” he said, trying to invent an excuse on the spur of the moment. “Fact is,” he explained, “I was jest looking ‘round to get a bit of lunch.”

“Dinner, we call it,” said Sid. “But that’s all right. You can’t get anything to eat hereabout. If you’re not too haughty to do a bit of slumming, there’s some mutton spoiling for me now — —”

The word “mutton” affected Kipps greatly.

“It won’t take us ‘arf an hour,” said Sid, and Kipps was carried.

He discovered another means of London locomotion in the Underground Railway, and recovered his self-possession in that interest. “You don’t mind going third?” asked Sid, and Kipps said, “Nort a *bit* of it.” They were silent in the train for a time, on account of strangers in the carriage, and then Sid began to explain who it was that he wanted Kipps to meet. “It’s a chap named Masterman — do you no end of good.

“He occupies our first floor front room, you know. It isn’t so much for gain I let as company. We don’t *want* the whole ‘ouse, and another, I knew the man before. Met him at our Sociological, and after a bit he said he wasn’t comfortable where he was. That’s how it came about. He’s a first-class chap — first-class. Science! You should see his books!

“Properly he’s a sort of journalist. He’s written a lot of things, but he’s been too ill lately to do very much. Poetry he’s written, all sorts. He writes for the *Commonweal* sometimes, and sometimes he reviews books. ‘E’s got ‘eaps of books— ‘eaps. Besides selling a lot.

“He knows a regular lot of people, and all sorts of things. He’s been a dentist, and he’s a qualified chemist, an’ I seen him often

reading German and French. Taught ‘imself. He was here — —”

Sid indicated South Kensington, which had come opportunely outside the carriage windows, with a nod of his head, “ — three years. Studying science. But you’ll see ‘im. When he really gets to talking — he *pours* it out.”

“Ah!” said Kipps, nodding sympathetically, with his two hands on his umbrella knob.

“He’ll do big things some day,” said Sid. “He’s written a book on science already. ‘Physiography,’ it’s called. ‘Elementary Physiography’! Some day he’ll write an Advanced — when he gets time.”

He let this soak into Kipps.

“I can’t introduce you to Lords and swells,” he went on, “but I *can* show you a Famous Man, that’s going to be. I *can* do that. Leastways — unless — —”

Sid hesitated.

“He’s got a frightful cough,” he said.

“He won’t care to talk with me,” weighed Kipps.

“That’s all right; *he* won’t mind. He’s fond of talking. He’d talk to anyone,” said Sid, reassuringly, and added a perplexing bit of Londonized Latin. “He doesn’t *pute* anything, *non alienum*. You know.”

“*I* know,” said Kipps, intelligently, over his umbrella knob, though of course that was altogether untrue.

§3

Kipps found Sid’s shop a practical looking establishment, stocked with the most remarkable collection of bicycles and pieces of bicycle that he had ever beheld. “My hiring stock,” said Sid, with a wave to this ironmongery, “and there’s the best machine at a democratic price in London, The Red-Flag, built by *me*. See?”

He indicated a graceful, grey-brown framework in the window. “And there’s my stock of accessories — store prices.

“Go in for motors a bit,” added Sid.

“Mutton?” said Kipps, not hearing him distinctly.

“Motors, I *said*.... ‘Owever, Mutton Department ‘ere,” and he

opened a door that had a curtain guarded window in its upper panel, to reveal a little room with red walls and green furniture, with a white clothed table and the generous promise of a meal. “Fanny!” he shouted. “Here’s Art Kipps.”

A bright-eyed young woman of five or six and twenty in a pink print appeared, a little flushed from cooking, and wiped a hand on an apron and shook hands and smiled, and said it would all be ready in a minute. She went on to say she had heard of Kipps and his luck, and meanwhile Sid vanished to draw the beer, and returned with two glasses for himself and Kipps.

“Drink that,” said Sid, and Kipps felt all the better for it.

“I give Mr. Masterman *‘is* upstairs a hour ago,” said Mrs. Sid. “I didn’t think ‘e ought to wait.”

A rapid succession of brisk movements on the part of everyone, and they were all four at dinner — the fourth person being Master Walt Whitman Pornick, a cheerful young gentleman of one and a half, who was given a spoon to hammer on the table with to keep him quiet, and who got “Kipps” right at the first effort and kept it all through the meal, combining it first with this previous acquisition, and then that. “Peacock Kipps” said Master Walt, at which there was great laughter, and also “More Mutton, Kipps.”

“He’s a regular oner,” said Mrs. Sid, “for catching up words. You can’t say a word but what ‘e’s on to it.”

There were no serviettes and less ceremony, and Kipps thought he had never enjoyed a meal so much. Everyone was a little excited by the meeting and chatting, and disposed to laugh, and things went off easily from the very beginning. If there was a pause Master Walt filled it in. Mrs. Sid, who tempered her enormous admiration for Sid’s intellect and his socialism and his severe business methods by a motherly sense of her sex and seniority, spoke of them both as “you boys,” and dilated — when she was not urging Kipps to have some more of this or that — on the disparity between herself and her husband.

“Shouldn’t ha’ thought there was a year between you,” said Kipps; “you seem jest a match.”

“*I’m his* match, anyhow,” said Mrs. Sid, and no epigram of young Walshingham’s was ever better received.

“Match,” said young Walt, coming in on the trail of the joke and getting a round for himself.

Any sense of superior fortune had long vanished from Kipps’ mind, and he found himself looking at host and hostess with enormous respect. Really, old Sid was a wonderful chap, here in his own house at two and twenty, carving his own mutton and lording it over wife and child. No legacies needed by him! And Mrs. Sid, so kind and bright and hearty! And the child, old Sid’s child! Old Sid had jumped round a bit. It needed the sense of his fortune at the back of his mind to keep Kipps from feeling abject. He resolved he’d buy young Walt something tremendous in toys at the first opportunity.

“Drop more beer, Art?”

“Right you are, old man.”

“Cut Mr. Kipps a bit more bread, Sid.”

“Can’t I pass *you* a bit?”

Sid was all right, Sid was, and there was no mistake about that.

It was growing up in his mind that Sid was the brother of Ann, but he said nothing about her for excellent reasons. After all, because he remembered Sid’s irritation at her name when they had met in New Romney seemed to show a certain separation. They didn’t tell each other much.... He didn’t know how things might be between Ann and Sid, either.

Still, for all that, Sid was Ann’s brother.

The furniture of the room did not assert itself very much above the cheerful business at the table, but Kipps was impressed with the idea that it was pretty. There was a dresser at the end with a number of gay plates and a mug or so, a Labour Day poster, by Walter Crane, on the wall, and through the glass and over the blind of the shop door one had a glimpse of the bright coloured advertisement cards of bicycle dealers, and a shelfful of boxes labelled, The Paragon Bell, The Scarum Bell, and The Patent Omi! Horn....

It seemed incredible that he had been in Folkestone that morning, and even now his Aunt and Uncle —— !

Brrr. It didn’t do to think of his Aunt and Uncle.

When Sid repeated his invitation to come and see Masterman, Kipps, now flushed with beer and Irish stew, said he didn't mind if he did, and after a preliminary shout from Sid that was answered by a voice and a cough, the two went upstairs.

"Masterman's a rare one," said Sid over his arm and in an undertone. "You should hear him speak at a meeting.... If he's in form, that is."

He rapped and went into a large, untidy room.

"This is Kipps," he said. "You know. The chap I told you of. With twelve 'undred a year."

Masterman sat gnawing at an empty pipe and as close to the fire as though it was alight and the season midwinter. Kipps concentrated upon him for a space, and only later took in something of the frowsy furniture, the little bed half behind, and evidently supposed to be wholly behind, a careless screen, the spittoon by the fender, the remains of a dinner on the chest of drawers and the scattered books and papers. Masterman's face showed him a man of forty or more, with curious hollows at the side of his forehead and about his eyes. His eyes were very bright; there was a spot of red in his cheeks, and the wiry black moustache under his short, red nose had been trimmed with scissors into a sort of brush along his upper lip. His teeth were darkened ruins. His jacket collar was turned up about a knitted white neck wrap, and his sleeves betrayed no cuffs. He did not rise to greet Kipps, but held out a thin wristed hand and pointed with the other to a bedroom arm chair.

"Glad to see you," he said. "Sit down and make yourself at home. Will you smoke?"

Kipps said he would, and produced his store. He was about to take one, and then, with a civil afterthought, handed the packet first to Masterman and Sid. Masterman pretended surprise to find his pipe out before he took one. There was an interlude of matches. Sid pushed the end of the screen out of his way, sat down on the bed thus frankly admitted, and prepared, with a certain quiet satisfaction of manner, to witness Masterman's treatment of Kipps.

"And how does it feel to have twelve hundred a year?" asked Masterman, holding his cigarette to his nose tip in a curious manner.

"It's rum," confided Kipps, after a reflective interval. "It feels

juiced rum."

"I never felt it," said Masterman.

"It takes a bit of getting into," said Kipps. "I can tell you that."

Masterman smoked and regarded Kipps with curious eyes.

"I expect it does," he said presently.

"And has it made you perfectly happy?" he asked, abruptly.

"I couldn't 'ardly say *that*," said Kipps.

Masterman smiled. "No," he said. "Has it made you much happier?"

"It did at first."

"Yes. But you got used to it. How long, for example, did the real delirious excitement last?"

"Oo, *that*! Perhaps a week," said Kipps.

Masterman nodded his head. "That's what discourages *me* from amassing wealth," he said to Sid. "You adjust yourself. It doesn't last. I've always had an inkling of that, and it's interesting to get it confirmed. I shall go on sponging for a bit longer on *you*, I think."

"You don't," said Sid. "No fear."

"Twenty-four thousand pounds," said Masterman, and blew a cloud of smoke. "Lord! Doesn't it worry you?"

"It is a bit worrying at times.... Things 'appen."

"Going to marry?"

"Yes."

"H'm. Lady, I guess, of a superior social position?"

"Rather," said Kipps. "Cousin to the Earl of Beauprés."

Masterman readjusted his long body with an air of having accumulated all the facts he needed. He snuggled his shoulder-blades down into the chair and raised his angular knees. "I doubt," he said, flicking cigarette ash into the atmosphere, "if any great gain or loss of money does — as things are at present — make more than the slightest difference in one's happiness. It ought to — if money was what it ought to be, the token for given service; one ought to get an increase in power and happiness for every pound one got. But the plain fact is the times are out of joint, and money — money, like everything else, is a deception and a disappointment."

He turned his face to Kipps and enforced his next words with the index finger of his lean, lank hand. "If I thought otherwise," he said,

“I should exert *myself* to get some. But, if one sees things clearly, one is so discouraged. So confoundedly discouraged.... When you first got your money, you thought that it meant you might buy just anything you fancied?”

“I was a bit that way,” said Kipps.

“And you found that you couldn’t. You found that for all sorts of things it was a question of where to buy and how to buy, and what you didn’t know how to buy with your money, straight away this world planted something else upon you — —”

“I got rather done over a banjo first day,” said Kipps. “Leastways, my Uncle says.”

“Exactly,” said Masterman.

Sid began to speak from the bed. “That’s all very well, Masterman,” he said, “but, after all, money is Power, you know. You can do all sorts of things — —”

“I’m talking of happiness,” said Masterman. “You can do all sorts of things with a loaded gun in the Hammersmith Broadway, but nothing — practically — that will make you or any one else very happy. Nothing. Power’s a different matter altogether. As for happiness, you want a world in order before money or property, or any of those things that have any real value, and this world, I tell you, is hopelessly out of joint. Man is a social animal with a mind nowadays that goes around the globe, and a community cannot be happy in one part and unhappy in another. It’s all or nothing, no patching any more for ever. It is the standing mistake of the world not to understand that. Consequently people think there is a class or order somewhere, just above them or just below them, or a country or place somewhere, that is really safe and happy. The fact is, Society is one body, and it is either well or ill. That’s the law. This society we live in is ill. It’s a fractious, feverish invalid, gouty, greedy and ill-nourished. You can’t have a happy left leg with neuralgia, or a happy throat with a broken leg. That’s my position, and that’s the knowledge you’ll come to. I’m so satisfied of it that I sit here and wait for my end quite calmly, sure that I can’t better things by bothering — in my time, and so far as I am concerned, that is. I’m not even greedy any more — my egotism’s at the bottom of a pond, with a philosophical brick around its neck. The world is ill, my

time is short and my strength is small. I'm as happy here as anywhere."

He coughed and was silent for a moment, then brought the index finger around to Kipps again. "You've had the opportunity of sampling two grades of society, and you don't find the new people you're among much better or any happier than the old?"

"No," said Kipps, reflectively. "No. I 'aven't seen it quite like that before, but —— . No. They're not."

"And you might go all up the scale and down the scale and find the same thing. Man's a gregarious beast, a gregarious beast, and no money will buy you out of your own time — any more than out of your own skill. All the way up and all the way down the scale there's the same discontent. No one is quite sure where they stand, and everyone's fretting. The herd's uneasy and feverish. All the old tradition goes or has gone, and there's no one to make a new tradition. Where are your nobles now? Where are your gentlemen? They vanished directly the peasant found out he wasn't happy and ceased to be a peasant. There's big men and little men mixed up together, that's all. None of us know where we are. Your cads in a bank holiday train and your cads on a two thousand pound motor; except for a difference in scale, there's not a pin to choose between them. Your smart society is as low and vulgar and uncomfortable for a balanced soul as a gin palace, no more and no less; there's no place or level of honour or fine living left in the world; so what's the good of climbing?"

"'Ear, 'ear," said Sid.

"It's true," said Kipps.

"*I* don't climb," said Masterman, and accepted Kipps' silent offer of another cigarette.

"No," he said. "This world is out of joint. It's broken up, and I doubt if it will heal. I doubt very much if it'll heal. We're in the beginning of the Sickness of the World."

He rolled his cigarette in his lean fingers and repeated with satisfaction: "The Sickness of the World."

"It's we've got to make it better," said Sid, and looked at Kipps.

"Ah, Sid's an optimist," said Masterman.

"So are you, most times," said Sid.

Kipps lit another cigarette with an air of intelligent participation.

"Frankly," said Masterman, recrossing his legs and expelling a jet of smoke luxuriously, "frankly, I think this civilisation of ours is on the topple."

"There's Socialism," said Sid.

"There's no imagination to make use of it."

"We've got to *make* one," said Sid.

"In a couple of centuries perhaps," said Masterman. "But meanwhile we're going to have a pretty acute attack of confusion. Universal confusion. Like one of those crushes when men are killed and maimed for no reason at all, going into a meeting or crowding for a train. Commercial and Industrial Stresses. Political Exploitation. Tariff Wars. Revolutions. All the bloodshed that will come of some fools calling half the white world yellow. These things alter the attitude of everybody to everybody. Everybody's going to feel 'em. Every fool in the world panting and shoving. *We're* all going to be as happy and comfortable as a household during a removal. What else can we expect?"

Kipps was moved to speak, but not in answer to Masterman's enquiry. "I've never rightly got the 'eng of this Socialism," he said. "What's it going to do, like?"

They had been imagining that he had some elementary idea in the matter, but as soon as he had made it clear that he hadn't, Sid plunged at exposition, and in a little while Masterman, abandoning his pose of the detached man ready to die, joined in. At first he joined in only to correct Sid's version, but afterwards he took control. His manner changed. He sat up and rested his elbow on his knees, and his cheek flushed a little. He expanded his case against Property and the property class with such vigour that Kipps was completely carried away, and never thought of asking for a clear vision of the thing that would fill the void this abolition might create. For a time he quite forgot his own private opulence. And it was as if something had been lit in Masterman. His languor passed. He enforced his words by gestures of his long, thin hands. And as he passed swiftly from point to point of his argument it was evident he grew angry.

"To-day," he said, "the world is ruled by rich men; they may do almost anything they like with the world. And what are they doing?

Laying it waste!”

“Hear, hear!” said Sid, very sternly.

Masterman stood up, gaunt and long, thrust his hands in his pockets and turned his back to the fireplace.

“Collectively, the rich to-day have neither heart nor imagination. No! They own machinery, they have knowledge and instruments and powers beyond all previous dreaming, and what are they doing with them? Think what they are doing with them, Kipps, and think what they might do. God gives them a power like the motor car, and all they can do with it is to go careering about the roads in goggled masks killing children and making machinery hateful to the soul of man! (“True,” said Sid, “true.”) God gives them means of communication, power unparalleled of every sort, time and absolute liberty! They waste it all in folly! Here under their feet (and Kipps’ eyes followed the direction of a lean index finger to the hearthrug) under their accursed wheels, the great mass of men festers and breeds in darkness, darkness those others make by standing in the light. The darkness breeds and breeds. It knows no better.... Unless you can crawl or pander or rob you must stay in the stew you are born in. And those rich beasts above claw and clutch as though they had nothing! They grudge us our schools, they grudge us a gleam of light and air, they cheat us and then seek to forget us.... There is no rule, no guidance, only accidents and happy flukes.... Our multitudes of poverty increase, and this crew of rulers makes no provision, foresees nothing, anticipates nothing....”

He paused and made a step, and stood over Kipps in a white heat of anger. Kipps nodded in a non-commital manner and looked hard and rather gloomily at his host’s slipper as he talked.

“It isn’t as though they had something to show for the waste they make of us, Kipps. They haven’t. They are ugly and cowardly and mean. Look at their women! Painted, dyed and drugged, hiding their ugly shapes under a load of dress! There isn’t a woman in the swim of society at the present time, wouldn’t sell herself, body and soul, who wouldn’t lick the boots of a Jew or marry a nigger, rather than live decently on a hundred a year! On what would be wealth for you and me! They know it. They know we know it.... No one believes in them. No one believes in nobility any more. Nobody believes in

kingship any more. Nobody believes there is justice in the law.... But people have habits, people go on in the old grooves, as long as there's work, as long as there's weekly money.... It won't last, Kipps."

He coughed and paused. "Wait for the lean years," he cried. "Wait for the lean years." And suddenly he fell into a struggle with his cough and spat a gout of blood. "It's nothing," he said to Kipps' note of startled horror.

He went on talking, and the protests of his cough interlaced with his words, and Sid beamed in an ecstasy of painful admiration.

"Look at the fraud they have let life become, the miserable mockery of the hope of one's youth. What have *I* had? I found myself at thirteen being forced into a factory like a rabbit into a chloroformed box. Thirteen! — when *their* children are babies. But even a child of that age could see what it meant, that Hell of a factory! Monotony and toil and contempt and dishonour! And then death. So I fought — at thirteen!"

Minton's "crawling up a drain pipe until you die" echoed in Kipps' mind, but Masterman, instead of Minton's growl, spoke in a high, indignant tenor.

"I got out at last — somehow," he said, quietly, suddenly plumping back in his chair. He went on after a pause. "For a bit. Some of us get out by luck, some by cunning, and crawl on to the grass, exhausted and crippled to die. That's a poor man's success, Kipps. Most of us don't get out at all. I worked all day and studied half the night, and here I am with the common consequences. Beaten! And never once have I had a fair chance, never once!" His lean, clenched fist flew out in a gust of tremulous anger. "These Skunks shut up all the university scholarships at nineteen for fear of men like me. And then — do *nothin'*.... We're wasted for nothing. By the time I'd learnt something the doors were locked. I thought knowledge would do it — I did think that! I've fought for knowledge as other men fight for bread. I've starved for knowledge. I've turned my back on women; I've done even that. I've burst my accursed lung...." His voice rose with impotent anger. "I'm a better man than any ten princes alive! And I'm beaten and wasted. I've been crushed, trampled and defiled by a drove of hogs. I'm no use to myself or the

world. I've thrown my life away to make myself too good for use in this huckster's scramble. If I had gone in for business, if I had gone in for plotting to cheat my fellow men — ah, well! It's too late. It's too late for that, anyhow. It's too late for anything now! And I couldn't have done it.... And over in New York now there's a pet of society making a corner in wheat!

"By God!" he cried hoarsely, with a clutch of the lean hand. "By God! If I had his throat! Even now I might do something for the world."

He glared at Kipps, his face flushed deep, his sunken eyes glowing with passion, and then suddenly he changed altogether.

There was a sound of tea things rattling upon a tray outside the door, and Sid rose to open it.

"All of which amounts to this," said Masterman, suddenly quiet and again talking against time. "The world is out of joint, and there isn't a soul alive who isn't half waste or more. You'll find it the same with you in the end, wherever your luck may take you.... I suppose you won't mind my having another cigarette?"

He took Kipps' cigarette with a hand that trembled so violently it almost missed its object, and stood up, with something of guilt in his manner as Mrs. Sid came into the room.

Her eye met his and marked the flush upon his face.

"Been talking Socialism?" said Mrs. Sid, a little severely.

§5

Six o'clock that day found Kipps drifting eastward along the southward margin of Rotten Row. You figure him a small, respectably attired figure going slowly through a sometimes immensely difficult and always immense world. At times he becomes pensive and whistles softly. At times he looks about him. There are a few riders in the Row, a carriage flashes by every now and then along the roadway, and among the great rhododendrons and laurels and upon the greensward there are a few groups and isolated people dressed in the style Kipps adopted to call upon the Walshinghams when first he was engaged. Amid the complicated confusion of Kipps' mind was a regret that he had not worn his other things....

Presently he perceived that he would like to sit down; a green chair tempted him. He hesitated at it, took possession of it, and leant back and crossed one leg over the other.

He rubbed his under lip with his umbrella handle and reflected upon Masterman and his denunciation of the world.

"Bit orf 'is 'ead, poor chap," said Kipps, and added: "I wonder."

He thought intently for a space.

"I wonder what he meant by the lean years?"

The world seemed a very solid and prosperous concern just here, and well out of reach of Masterman's dying clutch. And yet ——

It was curious he should have been reminded of Minton.

His mind turned to a far more important matter. Just at the end Sid had said to him, "Seen Ann?" and as he was about to answer, "You'll see a bit more of her now. She's got a place in Folkestone."

It had brought him back from any concern about the world being out of joint or anything of that sort.

Ann!

One might run against her any day.

He tugged at his little moustache.

He would like to run against Ann very much....

"And it would be juiced awkward if I did!"

In Folkestone! It was a jolly sight too close....

Then, at the thought that he might run against Ann in his beautiful evening dress on the way to the band, he fluttered into a momentary dream, that jumped abruptly into a nightmare.

Suppose he met her when he was out with Helen! "Oh, Lor'!" said Kipps. Life had developed a new complication that would go on and go on. For some time he wished with the utmost fervour that he had not kissed Ann, that he had not gone to New Romney the second time. He marvelled at his amazing forgetfulness of Helen on that occasion. Helen took possession of his mind. He would have to write to Helen, an easy, off-hand letter, to say that he had come to London for a day or so. He tried to imagine her reading it. He would write just such another letter to the old people, and say he had had to come up on business. That might do for *them* all right, but Helen was different. She would insist on explanations.

He wished he could never go back to Folkestone again. That

would settle the whole affair.

A passing group attracted his attention, two faultlessly dressed gentlemen and a radiantly expensive lady. They were talking, no doubt, very brilliantly. His eyes followed them. The lady tapped the arm of the left hand gentleman with a daintily tinted glove. Swells! No end....

His soul looked out upon life in general as a very small nestling might peep out of its nest. What an extraordinary thing life was, to be sure, and what a remarkable variety of people there were in it!

He lit a cigarette and speculated upon that receding group of three, and blew smoke and watched them. They seemed to do it all right. Probably they all had incomes of very much over twelve hundred a year. Perhaps not. Probably none of them suspected, as they went past, that he, too, was a gentleman of independent means, dressed, as he was, without distinction. Of course things were easier for them. They were brought up always to dress well and do the right thing from their very earliest years; they started clear of all his perplexities; they had never got mixed up with all sorts of different people who didn't go together. If, for example, that lady there got engaged to that gentleman, she would be quite safe from any encounter from a corpulent, osculatory Uncle, or Chitterlow, or the dangerously insignificant eye of Pierce.

His thoughts came round to Helen.

When they were married and Cuyps, or Cuyp — Coote had failed to justify his "s" — and in that west end flat and shaken free of all these low class associations, would he and she parade here of an afternoon dressed like that? It would be rather fine to do so. If one's dress was all right.

Helen!

She was difficult to understand at times.

He blew extensive clouds of cigarette smoke.

There would be teas, there would be dinners, there would be calls. Of course he would get into the way of it.

But Anagrams were a bit stiff to begin with!

It was beastly confusing at first to know when to use your fork at dinner, and all that. Still ——

He felt an extraordinary doubt whether he would get into the way

of it. He was interested for a space by a girl and groom on horseback, and then he came back to his personal preoccupations.

He would have to write to Helen. What could he say to explain his absence from the Anagram Tea? She had been pretty clear she wanted him to come. He recalled her resolute face without any great tenderness. He *knew* he would look like a silly ass at that confounded tea! Suppose he shirked it and went back in time for the dinner! Dinners were beastly difficult, too, but not as bad as Anagrams. The very first thing that might happen when he got back to Folkestone would be to run against Ann. Suppose, after all, he did meet Ann when he was with Helen!

What queer encounters were possible in the world!

Thank goodness, they were going to live in London!

But that brought him around to Chitterlow. The Chitterlows were coming to London, too. If they didn't get money they'd come after it; they weren't the sort of people to be choked off easily, and if they did they'd come to London to produce their play. He tried to imagine some seemly social occasion invaded by Chitterlow and his rhetoric, by his torrential thunder of self-assertion, the whole company flattened thereunder like wheat under a hurricane.

Confound and hang Chitterlow! Yet, somehow, somewhen, one would have to settle accounts with him! And there was Sid! Sid was Ann's brother. He realised with sudden horror the social indiscretion of accepting Sid's invitation to dinner.

Sid wasn't the sort of chap one could snub or cut, and besides — Ann's brother! He didn't want to cut him. It would be worse than cutting Buggins and Pierce — a sight worse. And after that lunch!

It would be the next thing to cutting Ann herself. And even as to Ann!

Suppose he was with Helen or Coote!...

"Oh, Blow!" he said, at last, and then, viciously, "*Blow!*" and so rose and flung away his cigarette end, and pursued his reluctant, dubiating way towards the really quite uncongenial splendours of the Royal Grand....

And it is vulgarly imagined that to have money is to have no troubles at all!

§6

Kipps endured splendour at the Royal Grand Hotel for three nights and days, and then he retreated in disorder. The Royal Grand defeated and overcame and routed Kipps, not of intention, but by sheer royal grandeur, grandeur combined with an organisation for his comfort carried to excess. On his return he came upon a difficulty; he had lost his circular piece of cardboard with the number of his room, and he drifted about the hall and passages in a state of perplexity for some time, until he thought all the porters and officials in gold lace caps must be watching him and jesting to one another about him. Finally, in a quiet corner, down below the hairdresser's shop, he found a kindly looking personage in bottle green, to whom he broached his difficulty. "I say," he said, with a pleasant smile, "I can't find my room nohow." The personage in bottle green, instead of laughing in a nasty way, as he might well have done, became extremely helpful, showed Kipps what to do, got his key, and conducted him by lift and passage to his chamber. Kipps tipped him half a crown.

Safe in his room, Kipps pulled himself together for dinner. He had learnt enough from young Walshingham to bring his dress clothes, and now he began to assume them. Unfortunately, in the excitement of his flight from his Aunt and Uncle, he had forgotten to put in his other boots, and he was some time deciding between his purple cloth slippers, with a golden marigold, and the prospect of cleaning the boots he was wearing with the towel, but finally, being a little footsore, he took the slippers.

Afterwards, when he saw the porters and waiters and the other guests catch a sight of the slippers, he was sorry he had not chosen the boots. However, to make up for any want of style at that end, he had his crush hat under his arm.

He found the dining-room without excessive trouble. It was a vast and splendidly decorated place, and a number of people, evidently quite *au fait*, were dining there at little tables lit with electric, red shaded candles, gentlemen in evening dress, and ladies with dazzling, astonishing necks. Kipps had never seen evening dress in full vigour before, and he doubted his eyes. And there were also

people not in evening dress who, no doubt, wondered what noble family Kipps represented. There was a band in a decorated recess, and the band looked collectively at the purple slippers, and so lost any chance they may have had of a collection, so far as Kipps was concerned. The chief drawback to this magnificent place was the excessive space of floor that had to be crossed before you got your purple slippers hid in under a table.

He selected a little table — not the one where a rather impudent looking waiter held a chair, but another — sat down, and finding his gibus in his hand, decided after a moment of thought to rise slightly and sit on it. (It was discovered in his abandoned chair at a late hour by a supper party, and restored to him next day.)

He put the napkin carefully on one side, selected his soup without difficulty, "Clear, please," but he was rather floored by the presentation of a quite splendidly bound wine card. He turned it over, discovered a section devoted to whiskey, and had a bright idea.

"'Ere," he said to the waiter, with an encouraging movement of his head, and then in a confidential manner, "you haven't any Old Methuselah Three Stars, 'ave you?"

The waiter went away to enquire, and Kipps went on with his soup with an enhanced self-respect. Finally, Old Methuselah being unobtainable, he ordered a claret from about the middle of the list. "Let's 'ave some of this," he said. He knew claret was a good sort of wine.

"A half bottle?" said the waiter.

"Right you are," said Kipps.

He felt he was getting on. He leant back after his soup, a man of the world, and then slowly brought his eyes around to the ladies in evening dress on his right....

He couldn't have thought it!

They were scorchers. Jest a bit of black velvet over the shoulders!

He looked again. One of them was laughing with a glass of wine half raised — wicked-looking woman she was — the other, the black velvet one, was eating bits of bread with nervous quickness and talking fast.

He wished old Buggins could see them.

He found a waiter regarding him and blushed deeply. He did not

look again for some time, and became confused about his knife and fork over the fish. Presently he remarked a lady in pink to the left of him eating the fish with an entirely different implement.

It was over the *vol au vent* that he began to go to pieces. He took a knife to it; then saw the lady in pink was using a fork only, and hastily put down his knife, with a considerable amount of rich creaminess on the blade, upon the cloth. Then he found that a fork in his inexperienced hand was an instrument of chase rather than capture. His ears became violently red, and then he looked up, to discover the lady in pink glancing at him and then smiling as she spoke to the man beside her.

He hated the lady in pink very much.

He stabbed a large piece of the *vol au vent* at last, and was too glad of his luck not to take a mouthful of it. But it was an extensive fragment, and pieces escaped him. Shirt front! "Desh it!" he said, and had resort to his spoon. His waiter went and spoke to two other waiters, no doubt jeering at him. He became very fierce suddenly. "Ere!" he said, gesticulating, and then, "clear this away!"

The entire dinner party on his right, the party of the ladies in advanced evening dress, looked at him.... He felt that everyone was watching him and making fun of him, and the injustice of this angered him. After all, they had every advantage he hadn't. And then, when they got him there doing his best, what must they do but glance and sneer and nudge one another. He tried to catch them at it, and then took refuge in a second glass of wine.

Suddenly and extraordinarily he found himself a socialist. He did not care how close it was to the lean years when all these things would end.

Mutton came with peas. He arrested the hand of the waiter. "No peas," he said. He knew something of the difficulty and danger of eating peas. Then, when the peas went away again he was embittered again.... Echoes of Masterman's burning rhetoric began to reverberate in his mind. Nice lot of people these were to laugh at anyone! Women half undressed. It was that made him so beastly uncomfortable. How could one eat one's dinner with people about him like that? Nice lot they were. He was glad he wasn't one of them, anyhow. Yes, they might look. He resolved if they looked at

him again he would ask one of the men who he was staring at. His perturbed and angry face would have concerned anyone. The band by an unfortunate accident was playing truculent military music. The mental change Kipps underwent was, in its way, what psychologists call a conversion. In a few moments all Kipps' ideals were changed. He who had been "practically a gentleman," the sedulous pupil of Coote, the punctilious raiser of hats, was instantly a rebel, an outcast, the hater of everything "stuck up," the foe of Society and the social order of to-day. Here they were among the profits of their robbery, these people who might do anything with the world....

"No, thenks," he said to a dish.

He addressed a scornful eye at the shoulders of the lady to his left.

Presently he was refusing another dish. He didn't like it — fussed up food! Probably cooked by some foreigner. He finished up his wine and his bread.

"No, thenks."

"No, thenks."...

He discovered the eye of a diner fixed curiously upon his flushed face. He responded with a glare. Couldn't he go without things if he liked?

"What's this?" said Kipps to a great green cone.

"Ice," said the waiter.

"I'll 'ave some," said Kipps.

He seized a fork and spoon and assailed the bombe. It cut rather stiffly. "Come up!" said Kipps, with concentrated bitterness, and the truncated summit of the bombe flew off suddenly, travelling eastward with remarkable velocity. Flop, it went upon the floor a yard away, and for awhile time seemed empty.

At the adjacent table they were laughing together.

Shy the rest of the bombe at them?

Flight?

At any rate a dignified withdrawal.

"No!" said Kipps, "no more," arresting the polite attempt of the waiter to serve him with another piece. He had a vague idea he might carry off the affair as though he had meant the ice to go on the floor — not liking ice, for example, and being annoyed at the badness of his dinner. He put both hands on the table, thrust back his chair,

disengaged a purple slipper from his napkin, and rose. He stepped carefully over the prostrate ice, kicked the napkin under the table, thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and marched out — shaking the dust of the place, as it were, from his feet. He left behind him a melting fragment of ice upon the floor, his gibus hat, warm and compressed in his chair, and in addition every social ambition he had ever entertained in the world.

§7

Kipps went back to Folkestone in time for the Anagram Tea. But you must not imagine that the change of heart that came to him in the dining-room of the Royal Grand Hotel involved any change of attitude toward this promised social and intellectual treat. He went back because the Royal Grand was too much for him.

Outwardly calm, or at most a little flushed and ruffled, inwardly Kipps was a horrible, tormented battleground of scruples, doubts, shames and self-assertions during that three days of silent, desperate grappling with the big hotel. He did not intend the monstrosity should beat him without a struggle, but at last he had sullenly to admit himself overcome. The odds were terrific. On the one hand himself — with, among other things, only one pair of boots; on the other a vast wilderness of rooms, covering several acres, and with over a thousand people, staff and visitors, all chiefly occupied in looking queerly at Kipps, in laughing at him behind his back, in watching for difficult corners at which to confront and perplex him, and inflict humiliations upon him. For example, the hotel scored over its electric light. After the dinner the chambermaid, a hard, unsympathetic young woman with a superior manner, was summoned by a bell Kipps had rung under the impression the button was the electric light switch. “Look ‘ere,” said Kipps, rubbing a shin that had suffered during his search in the dark, “why aren’t there any candles or matches?” The hotel explained and scored heavily.

“It isn’t everyone is up to these things,” said Kipps.

“No, it isn’t,” said the chambermaid, with ill-concealed scorn, and slammed the door at him.

“S’pose I ought to have tipped her,” said Kipps.

After that Kipps cleaned his boots with a pocket-handkerchief and went for a long walk and got home in a hansom, but the hotel scored again by his not putting out his boots and so having to clean them again in the morning. The hotel also snubbed him by bringing him hot water when he was fully dressed and looking surprised at his collar, but he got a breakfast, I must admit, with scarcely any difficulty.

After that the hotel scored heavily by the fact that there are twenty-four hours in the day and Kipps had nothing to do in any of them. He was a little footsore from his previous day's pedestrianism, and he could make up his mind for no long excursions. He flitted in and out of the hotel several times, and it was the polite porter who touched his hat every time that first set Kipps tipping.

"What 'e wants is a tip," said Kipps.

So at the next opportunity he gave the man an unexpected shilling, and having once put his hand in his pocket, there was no reason why he should not go on. He bought a newspaper at the bookstall and tipped the boy the rest of the shilling, and then went up by the lift and tipped the man a sixpence, leaving his newspaper inadvertently in the lift. He met his chambermaid in the passage and gave her half a crown. He resolved to demonstrate his position to the entire establishment in this way. He didn't like the place; he disapproved of it politically, socially, morally, but he resolved no taint of meanness should disfigure his sojourn in its luxurious halls. He went down by the lift (tipping again), and, being accosted by a waiter with his gibus, tipped the finder half a crown. He had a vague sense that he was making a flank movement upon the hotel and buying over its staff. They would regard him as a character. They would get to like him. He found his stock of small silver diminishing, and replenished it at a desk in the hall. He tipped a man in bottle green who looked like the man who had shown him his room the day before, and then he saw a visitor eyeing him, and doubted whether he was in this instance doing right. Finally he went out and took chance 'buses to their destinations, and wandered a little in remote, wonderful suburbs and returned. He lunched at a chop house in Islington, and found himself back in the Royal Grand, now unmistakably footsore and London weary, about three. He was drawn

towards the drawing-room by a neat placard about afternoon tea.

It occurred to him that the campaign of tipping upon which he had embarked was perhaps after all a mistake. He was confirmed in this by observing that the hotel officials were watching him, not respectfully, but with a sort of amused wonder, as if to see whom he would tip next. However, if he backed out now, they would think him an awful fool. Everyone wasn't so rich as he was. It was his way to tip. Still ——

He grew more certain the hotel had scored again.

He pretended to be lost in thought and so drifted by, and having put hat and umbrella in the cloak-room went into the drawing-room for afternoon tea.

There he did get what for a time he held to be a point in his favour. The room was large and quiet at first, and he sat back restfully until it occurred to him that his attitude brought his extremely dusty boots too prominently into the light, so instead he sat up, and then people of the upper and upper middle classes began to come and group themselves about him and have tea likewise, and so revive the class animosities of the previous day.

Presently a fluffy, fair-haired lady came into prominent existence a few yards away. She was talking to a respectful, low-voiced clergyman, whom she was possibly entertaining at tea. "No," she said, "dear Lady Jane wouldn't like that!"

"Mumble, mumble, mumble," from the clergyman.

"Poor dear Lady Jane was always so sensitive," the voice of the lady sang out clear and emphatic.

A fat, hairless, important-looking man joined this group, took a chair and planted it firmly with its back in the face of Kipps, a thing that offended Kipps mightily. "Are you telling him," gurgled the fat, hairless man, "about dear Lady Jane's affliction?" A young couple, lady brilliantly attired and the man in a magnificently cut frock coat, arranged themselves to the right, also with an air of exclusion towards Kipps. "I've told him," said the gentleman in a flat, abundant voice. "My!" said the young lady, with an American smile. No doubt they all thought Kipps was out of it. A great desire to assert himself in some way surged up in his heart. He felt he would like to cut in on the conversation in some dramatic way. A monologue something in

the manner of Masterman? At any rate, abandoning that as impossible, he would like to appear self-centred and at ease. His eyes, wandering over the black surfaces of a noble architectural mass close by, discovered a slot — an enamelled plaque of directions.

It was some sort of musical box! As a matter of fact, it was the very best sort of Harmonicon and specially made to the scale of the Hotel.

He scrutinised the plaque with his head at various angles and glanced about him at his neighbours.

It occurred to Kipps that he would like some music, that to inaugurate some would show him a man of taste and at his ease at the same time. He rose, read over a list of tunes, selected one haphazard, pressed his sixpence — it was sixpence! — home, and prepared for a confidential, refined little melody.

Considering the high social tone of the Royal Grand, it was really a very loud instrument indeed. It gave vent to three deafening brays and so burst the dam of silence that had long pent it in. It seemed to be chiefly full of the greatuncles of trumpets, megalo-trombones and railway brakes. It made sounds like shunting trains. It did not so much begin as blow up your counter-scarp or rush forward to storm under cover of melodious shrapnel. It had not so much an air as a *ricochette*. The music had, in short, the inimitable quality of Sousa. It swept down upon the friend of Lady Jane and carried away something socially striking into the eternal night of the unheard; the American girl to the left of it was borne shrieking into the inaudible. "High cockalorum Tootletootle tootle loo. High cockalorum tootle lootle loo. Bump, bump, bump — BUMP." Joyous, exorbitant music it was from the gigantic nursery of the Future, bearing the hearer along upon its torrential succession of sounds, as if he was in a cask on Niagara. Whiroo! Yah and have at you! The strenuous Life! Yaha! Stop! A Reprieve! A Reprieve! No! Bang! Bump!

Everybody looked around, conversation ceased and gave place to gestures.

The friend of Lady Jane became terribly agitated.

"Can't it be stopped?" she vociferated, pointing a gloved finger and saying something to the waiter about "That dreadful young man."

“Ought not to be working,” said the clerical friend of Lady Jane.

The waiter shook his head at the fat, hairless gentleman. People began to move away. Kipps leant back luxurious, and then tipped with a half crown to pay. He paid, tipped like a gentleman, rose with an easy gesture, and strolled towards the door. His retreat evidently completed the indignation of the friend of Lady Jane, and from the door he could still discern her gestures as asking, “Can’t it be stopped?” The music followed him into the passage and pursued him to the lift and only died away completely in the quiet of his own room, and afterwards from his window he saw the friend of Lady Jane and her party having their tea carried out to a little table in the court. Bump, bump, bump, BUMP floated up to him, and certainly that was a point to him. But it was his only score; all the rest of the game lay in the hands of the upper classes and the big hotel. And presently he was doubting whether even this was really a point. It seemed a trifle vulgar, come to think it over, to interrupt people when they were talking.

He saw a clerk peering at him from the office, and suddenly it occurred to him that the place might get back at him tremendously over the bill.

They would probably take it out of him by charging pounds and pounds.

Suppose they charged more than he had!

The clerk had a particularly nasty face, just the face to take advantage of a vacillating Kipps.

He became aware of a man in a cap touching it, and produced his shilling automatically, but the strain was beginning to tell. It was a deuce and all of an expense — this tipping.

If the hotel chose to stick it on to the bill something tremendous what was Kipps to do? Refuse to pay? Make a row?

If he did he couldn’t fight all these men in bottle green....

He went out about seven and walked for a long time and dined at last upon a chop in the Euston Road; then he walked along to the Edgeware Road and sat and rested in the Metropolitan Music Hall for a time until a trapeze performance unnerved him and finally he came back to bed. He tipped the lift man sixpence and wished him good-night. In the silent watches of the night he reviewed the tale of the

day's tipping, went over the horrors of the previous night's dinner, and heard again the triumphant bray of the harmonicon devil released from its long imprisonment. Everyone would be told about him tomorrow. He couldn't go on! He admitted his defeat. Never in their whole lives had any of these people seen such a Fool as he! Ugh!...

His method of announcing his withdrawal to the clerk was touched with bitterness.

"I'm going to get out of this," said Kipps, blowing windily. "Let's see what you got on my bill."

"One breakfast?" asked the clerk.

"Do I *look* as if I'd ate two?"...

At his departure Kipps, with a hot face, convulsive gestures and an embittered heart, tipped everyone who did not promptly and actively resist, including an absent-minded South African diamond merchant, who was waiting in the hall for his wife and succumbed to old habit. He paid his cabman a four shilling piece at Charing Cross, having no smaller change, and wished he could burn him alive. Then in a sudden reaction of economy he refused the proffered help of a porter and carried his bag quite violently to the train.

CHAPTER VIII KIPPS ENTERS SOCIETY

§1

Submission to Inexorable Fate took Kipps to the Anagram Tea.

At any rate he would meet Helen there in the presence of other people and be able to carry off the worst of the difficulty of explaining his little jaunt to London. He had not seen her since his last portentous visit to New Romney. He was engaged to her, he would have to marry her, and the sooner he faced her again the better. Before wild plans of turning socialist, defying the world and repudiating all calling for ever, his heart on second thoughts sank. He felt Helen would never permit anything of the sort. As for the Anagrams he could do no more than his best and that he was resolved to do. What had happened at the Royal Grand, what had happened at New Romney, he must bury in his memory and begin again at the reconstruction of his social position. Ann, Buggins, Chitterlow, all these, seen in the matter-of-fact light of the Folkestone train, stood just as they stood before; people of an inferior social position who had to be eliminated from his world. It was a bother about Ann, a bother and a pity. His mind rested so for a space on Ann until the memory of these Anagrams drew him away. If he could see Coote that evening he might, he thought, be able to arrange some sort of connivance about the Anagrams, and his mind was chiefly busy sketching proposals for such an arrangement. It would not, of course, be ungentlemanly cheating, but only a little mystification. Coote very probably might drop him a hint of the solution of one or two of the things, not enough to win a prize, but enough to cover his shame. Or failing that he might take a humorous, quizzical line and pretend he was pretending to be very stupid. There were plenty of ways out of it if one kept a sharp lookout....

The costume Kipps wore to the Anagram Tea was designed as a compromise between the strict letter of high fashion and seaside laxity, a sort of easy, semi-state for afternoon. Helen's first reproof had always lingered in his mind. He wore a frock coat, but mitigated it by a Panama hat of romantic shape with a black band, grey gloves,

but for relaxation brown button boots. The only other man besides the clergy present, a new doctor with an attractive wife, was in full afternoon dress. Coote was not there.

Kipps was a little pale, but quite self-possessed, as he approached Mrs. Bindon Botting's door. He took a turn while some people went in and then faced it manfully. The door opened and revealed — Ann!

In the background through a draped doorway behind a big fern in a great art pot the elder Miss Botting was visible talking to two guests; the auditory background was a froth of feminine voices....

Our two young people were much too amazed to give one another any formula of greeting, though they had parted warmly enough. Each was already in a state of extreme tension to meet the demands of this great and unprecedented occasion of an Anagram Tea. "Lor'!" said Ann, her sole remark, and then the sense of Miss Botting's eye ruled her straight again. She became very pale, but she took his hat mechanically, and he was already removing his gloves. "Ann," he said in a low tone, and then "Fency!" The eldest Miss Botting knew Kipps was the sort of guest who requires nursing, and she came forward vocalising charm. She said it was "Awfully jolly of him to come, awfully jolly. It was awfully difficult to get any good men!"

She handed Kipps forward, mumbling in a dazed condition, to the drawing-room, and there he encountered Helen looking unfamiliar in an unfamiliar hat. It was as if he had not met her for years.

She astonished him. She didn't seem to mind in the least his going to London. She held out a shapely hand, and smiled encouragingly. "You've faced the anagrams?" she said.

The second Miss Botting accosted them, a number of oblong pieces of paper in her hand, mysteriously inscribed. "Take an anagram," she said; "take an anagram," and boldly pinned one of these brief documents to Kipps' lapel. The letters were "Cypshi," and Kipps from the very beginning suspected this was an anagram for Cuyps. She also left a thing like a long dance programme, from which dangled a little pencil in his hand. He found himself being introduced to people, and then he was in a corner with the short lady in a big bonnet, who was pelting him with gritty little bits of small talk that were gone before you could take hold of them and reply.

"Very hot," said this lady. "Very hot, indeed — hot all the

summer — remarkable year — all the years remarkable now — don't know what we're coming to — don't you think so, Mr. Kipps?"

"Oo rather," said Kipps, and wondered if Ann was still in the hall. Ann!

He ought not to have stared at her like a stuck fish and pretended not to know her. That couldn't be right. But what *was* right?

The lady in the big bonnet proceeded to a second discharge. "Hope you're fond of anagrams, Mr. Kipps — difficult exercise — still one must do something to bring people together — better than Ludo anyhow. Don't you think so, Mr. Kipps?"

Ann fluttered past the open door. Her eyes met his in amazed enquiry. Something had got dislocated in the world for both of them....

He ought to have told her he was engaged. He ought to have explained things to her. Perhaps even now he might be able to drop her a hint.

"Don't you think so, Mr. Kipps?"

"Oo rather," said Kipps for the third time.

A lady with a tired smile, who was labelled conspicuously "Wogdelenk," drifted towards Kipps' interlocutor and the two fell into conversation. Kipps found himself socially aground. He looked about him. Helen was talking to a curate and laughing. Kipps was overcome by a vague desire to speak to Ann. He was for sidling doorward.

"What are *you*, please?" said an extraordinarily bold, tall girl, and arrested him while she took down "Cypshi."

"I'm sure I don't know what it means," she explained. "I'm Sir Bubh. Don't you think anagrams are something chronic?"

Kipps made stockish noises, and the young lady suddenly became the nucleus of a party of excited friends who were forming a syndicate to guess, and barred his escape. She took no further notice of him. He found himself jammed against an occasional table and listening to the conversation of Mrs. "Wogdelenk" and his lady with the big bonnet.

"She packed her two beauties off together," said the lady in the big bonnet. "Time enough, too. Don't think much of this girl; she's got as housemaid now. Pretty, of course, but there's no occasion for a

housemaid to be pretty — none whatever. And she doesn't look particularly up to her work either. Kind of 'mazed expression."

"You never can tell," said the lady labelled "Wogdelenk;" "you never can tell. My wretches are big enough, Heaven knows, and do they work? Not a bit of it!"...

Kipps felt dreadfully out of it with regard to all these people, and dreadfully in it with Ann.

He scanned the back of the big bonnet and concluded it was an extremely ugly bonnet indeed. It got jerking forward as each short, dry sentence was snapped off at the end and a plume of osprey on it jerked excessively. "She hasn't guessed even one!" followed by a shriek of girlish merriment, came from the group about the tall, bold girl. They'd shriek at him presently, perhaps. Beyond thinking his own anagram might be Cuyps, he hadn't a notion. What a chatter they were all making! It was just like a summer sale! Just the sort of people who'd give a lot of trouble and swap you! And suddenly the smouldering fires of rebellion leapt to flame again. These were a rotten lot of people, and the anagrams were rotten nonsense, and he, Kipps, had been a rotten fool to come. There was Helen away there, still laughing, with her curate. Pity she couldn't marry a curate and leave him (Kipps) alone! Then he'd know what to do. He disliked the whole gathering collectively and in detail. Why were they all trying to make him one of themselves? He perceived unexpected ugliness everywhere about him. There were two great pins jabbed through the tall girl's hat, and the swirls of her hair below the brim with the minutest piece of tape tie-up showing did not repay close examination. Mrs. "Wogdelenk" wore a sort of mumps bandage of lace, and there was another lady perfectly dazzling with beads, and jewels and bits of trimming. They were all flaps and angles and flounces — these women. Not one of them looked as neat and decent a shape as Ann's clean, trim, little figure. Echoes of Masterman woke up in him again. Ladies indeed! Here were all these chattering people, with money, with leisure, with every chance in the world, and all they could do was to crowd like this into a couple of rooms and jabber nonsense about anagrams.

"Could Cypshi really mean Cuyps?" floated like a dissolving wreath of mist across his mind.

Abruptly resolution stood armed in his heart. He was going to get out of this!

"'Scuse me," he said, and began to wade neck deep through the bubbling tea party.

He was going to get out of it all!

He found himself close by Helen. "I'm orf," he said, but she gave him the briefest glance. She did not appear to hear him. "Still, Mr. Spratlingdown, you *must* admit there's a limit even to conformity," she was saying....

He was in a curtained archway, and Ann was before him carrying a tray supporting several small sugar bowls.

He was moved to speech. "*What* a Lot!" he said, and then mysteriously, "I'm engaged to *her*." He indicated Helen's new hat, and became aware of a skirt he had stepped upon.

Ann stared at him helplessly, borne past in the grip of incomprehensible imperatives.

Why shouldn't they talk together?

He was in a small room, and then at the foot of the staircase in the hall. He heard the rustle of a dress, and what was conceivable his hostess was upon him.

"But you're not going, Mr. Kipps?" she said.

"I must," he said; "I got to."

"But, Mr. Kipps!"

"I must," he said. "I'm not well."

"But before the guessing! Without any tea!"

Ann appeared and hovered behind him.

"I got to go," said Kipps.

If he parleyed with her Helen might awake to his desperate attempt.

"Of course if you *must* go."

"It's something I've forgotten," said Kipps, beginning to feel regrets. "Reely I must."

Mrs. Botting turned with a certain offended dignity, and Ann in a state of flushed calm that evidently concealed much came forward to open the door.

"I'm very sorry," he said; "I'm very sorry," half to his hostess and half to her, and was swept past her by superior social forces — like a

drowning man in a mill-race — and into the Upper Sandgate Road. He half turned upon the step, and then slam went the door....

He retreated along the Leas, a thing of shame and perplexity — Mrs. Botting's aggrieved astonishment uppermost in his mind....

Something — reinforced by the glances of the people he was passing — pressed its way to his attention through the tumultuous disorder of his mind.

He became aware that he was still wearing his little placard with the letters "Cypshi."

"Desh it!" he said, clutching off this abomination. In another moment its several letters, their task accomplished, were scattering gleefully before the breeze down the front of the Leas.

§2

Kipps was dressed for Mrs. Wace's dinner half an hour before it was time to start, and he sat waiting until Coote should come to take him around. "Manners and Rules of Good Society" lay before him neglected. He had read the polished prose of the Member of the Aristocracy, on page 96, as far as —

"the acceptance of an invitation is in the eyes of diners out, a binding obligation which only ill-health, family bereavement, or some all-important reason justifies its being set on one side or otherwise evaded" —

and then he had lapsed into gloomy thoughts.

That afternoon he had had a serious talk with Helen.

He had tried to express something of the change of heart that had happened to him. But to broach the real state of the matter had been altogether too terrible for him. He had sought a minor issue. "I don't like all this Seciety," he had said.

"But you must *see* people," said Helen.

"Yes, but —— . It's the sort of people you see." He nerved himself. "I didn't think much of that lot at the Enegram Tea."

"You have to see all sorts of people if you want to see the world," said Helen.

Kipps was silent for a space and a little short of breath.

"My dear Arthur," she began, almost kindly, "I shouldn't ask you

to go to these affairs if I didn't think it good for you, should I?"

Kipps acquiesced in silence.

"You will find the benefit of it all when we get to London. You learn to swim in a tank before you go out into the sea. These people here are good enough to learn upon. They're stiff and rather silly and dreadfully narrow and not an idea in a dozen of them, but it really doesn't matter at all. You'll soon get Savoir Faire."

He made to speak again, and found his powers of verbal expression lacking. Instead he blew a sigh.

"You'll get used to it all very soon," said Helen helpfully....

As he sat meditating over that interview and over the vistas of London that opened before him, on the little flat, and teas and occasions and the constant presence of Brudderkins and all the bright prospect of his new and better life, and how he would never see Ann any more, the housemaid entered with a little package, a small, square envelope to "Arthur Kipps, Esquire."

"A young woman left this, Sir," said the housemaid, a little severely.

"Eh?" said Kipps; "what young woman?" and then suddenly began to understand.

"She looked an ordinary young woman," said the housemaid coldly.

"Ah!" said Kipps. "*That's* orlright."

He waited till the door had closed behind the girl, staring at the envelope in his hand, and then, with a curious feeling of increasing tension, tore it open. As he did so, some quicker sense than sight or touch told him its contents. It was Ann's half sixpence. And, besides, not a word!

Then she must have heard him —— !

She had kept the half sixpence all these years!

He was standing with the envelope in his hand, trying to get on from that last inference, when Coote became audible without.

Coote appeared in evening dress, a clean and radiant Coote, with large, greenish, white gloves and a particularly large white tie, edged with black. "For a third cousin," he presently explained. "Nace, isn't it?" He could see Kipps was pale and disturbed and put this down to the approaching social trial. "You keep your nerve up, Kipps, my

dear chap, and you'll be all right," said Coote, with a big, brotherly glove on Kipps' sleeve.

§3

The dinner came to a crisis so far as Kipps' emotions were concerned, with Mrs. Bindon Botting's talk about servants, but before that there had been several things of greater or smaller magnitude to perturb and disarrange his social front. One little matter that was mildly insurgent throughout the entire meal was, if I may be permitted to mention so intimate a matter, the behaviour of his left brace. The webbing — which was of a cheerful scarlet silk — had slipped away from its buckle, fastened no doubt in agitation, and had developed a strong tendency to place itself obliquely in the manner rather of an official decoration, athwart his spotless front. It first asserted itself before they went in to dinner. He replaced this ornament by a dexterous thrust when no one was looking and thereafter the suppression of his novel innovation upon the stereotyped sombreness of evening dress became a standing preoccupation. On the whole, he was inclined to think his first horror excessive; at any rate no one remarked upon it. However you imagine him constantly throughout the evening, with one eye and one hand, whatever the rest of him might be doing, predominantly concerned with the weak corner.

But this, I say, was a little matter. What exercised him much more was to discover Helen quite terribly in evening dress.

The young lady had let her imagination rove Londonward, and this costume was perhaps an anticipation of that clever little flat not too far west which was to become the centre of so delightful a literary and artistic set. It was, of all the feminine costumes present, most distinctly an evening dress. One was advised Miss Walshingham had arms and shoulders of a type by no means despicable, one was advised Miss Walshingham was capable not only of dignity but charm, even a certain glow of charm. It was, you know, her first evening dress, a tribute paid by Walshingham finance to her brightening future. Had she wanted keeping in countenance, she would have had to have fallen back upon her hostess, who was

resplendent in black and steel. The other ladies had to a certain extent compromised. Mrs. Walshingham had dressed with just a refined, little V and Mrs. Bindon Botting, except for her dear mottled arms, confided scarcely more of her plump charm to the world. The elder Miss Botting stopped short of shoulders, and so did Miss Wace. But Helen didn't. She was — had Kipps had eyes to see it — a quite beautiful human figure; she knew it and she met him with a radiant smile that had forgotten all the little difference of the afternoon. But to Kipps her appearance was the last release. With that, she had become as remote, as foreign, as incredible as a wife and mate, as though the Cnidian Venus herself, in all her simple elegance, was before witnesses, declared to be his. If, indeed, she had ever been credible as a wife and mate.

She ascribed his confusion to modest reverence, and having blazed smiling upon him for a moment turned a shapely shoulder towards him and exchanged a remark with Mrs. Bindon Botting. Ann's poor little half sixpence came against Kipps' fingers in his pocket and he clutched at it suddenly as though it was a talisman. Then he abandoned it to suppress his Order of the Brace. He was affected by a cough. "Miss Wace tells me Mr. Revel is coming," Mrs. Botting was saying.

"Isn't it delightful?" said Helen. "We saw him last night. He's stopped on his way to Paris. He's going to meet his wife there."

Kipps' eyes rested for a moment on Helen's dazzling deltoid, and then went enquiringly, accusingly almost to Coote's face. Where, in the presence of this terrible emergency, was the gospel of suppression now — that Furtive treatment of Religion and Politics, and Birth and Death and Bathing and Babies, and "all those things" which constitutes your True Gentleman? He had been too modest even to discuss this question with his Mentor, but surely, surely this quintessence of all that is good and nice could regard these unsolicited confidences only in one way. With something between relief and the confirmation of his worst fears he perceived, by a sort of twitching of the exceptionally abundant muscles about Coote's lower jaw, in a certain deliberate avoidance of one particular direction by these pale, but resolute, grey eyes, by the almost convulsive grip of the ample, greenish white gloves behind him, a

grip broken at times for controlling pats at the black-bordered tie and the back of that spacious head, and by a slight but increasing disposition to cough, that *Coote did not approve*!

To Kipps Helen had once supplied a delicately beautiful dream, a thing of romance and unsubstantial mystery. But this was her final materialisation, and the last thin wreath of glamour about her was dispelled. In some way (he had forgotten how and it was perfectly incomprehensible) he was bound to this dark, solid and determined young person whose shadow and suggestion he had once loved. He had to go through with the thing as a gentleman should. Still ——

And when he was sacrificing Ann!

He wouldn't stand this sort of thing, whatever else he stood.... Should he say something about her dress to her — to-morrow?

He could put his foot down firmly. He could say, "Look 'ere. I don't care. I ain't going to stand it. See?"

She'd say something unexpected, of course. She always did say something unexpected.

Suppose for once he overrode what she said? Simply repeated his point?

He found these thoughts battling with certain conversational aggressions from Mrs. Wace, and then Revel arrived and took the centre of the stage.

The author of that brilliant romance, "Red Hearts a-Beating," was a less imposing man than Kipps had anticipated, but he speedily effaced that disappointment by his predominating manners. Although he lived habitually in the vivid world of London, his collar and tie were in no way remarkable, and he was neither brilliantly handsome nor curly nor long-haired. His personal appearance suggested arm chairs, rather than the equestrian exercises and amorous toyings and passionate intensities of his masterpiece; he was inclined to be fat, with whitish flesh, muddy coloured straight hair, he had a rather shapeless and truncated nose and his chin was asymmetrical. One eye was more inclined to stare than the other. He might have been esteemed a little undistinguished looking were it not for his beeswaxed moustache, which came amidst his features with a pleasing note of incongruity, and the whimsical wrinkles above and about his greater eye. His regard sought and found Helen's as he

entered the room and they shook hands presently with an air of intimacy Kipps, for no clear reason, found objectionable. He saw them clasp their hands, heard Coote's characteristic cough — a sound rather more like a very, very old sheep, a quarter of a mile away, being blown to pieces by a small charge of gunpowder than anything else in the world — did some confused beginnings of a thought, and then they were all going in to dinner and Helen's shining bare arm lay along his sleeve. Kipps was in no state for conversation. She glanced at him, and, though he did not know it, very slightly pressed his elbow. He struggled with strange respiratory dislocations. Before them went Coote, discoursing in amiable reverberations to Mrs. Walshingham, and at the head of the procession was Mrs. Bindon Botting talking fast and brightly beside the erect military figure of little Mr. Wace. (He was not a soldier really, but he had caught a martinet bearing by living so close to Shorncliffe.) Revel came last, in charge of Mrs. Wace's queenly black and steel, politely admiring in a flute-like cultivated voice the mellow wall paper of the staircase. Kipps marvelled at everybody's self-possession.

From the earliest spoonful of soup it became evident that Revel considered himself responsible for the table talk. And before the soup was over it was almost as manifest that Mrs. Bindon Botting inclined to consider his sense of responsibility excessive. In her circle Mrs. Bindon Botting was esteemed an agreeable rattle, her manner and appearance were conspicuously vivacious for one so plump, and she had an almost Irish facility for humorous description. She would keep people amused all through an afternoon call, with the story of how her jobbing gardener had got himself married and what his home was like, or how her favourite butt, Mr. Stigson Warder, had all his unfortunate children taught almost every conceivable instrument because they had the phrenological bump of music abnormally large. "They got to trombones, my dear!" she would say, with her voice coming to a climax. Usually her friends conspired to draw her out, but on this occasion they neglected to do so, a thing that militated against her keen desire to shine in Revel's eyes. After a time she perceived that the only thing for her to do was to cut in on the talk, on her own account, and this she began to do. She made

several ineffectual snatches at the general attention and then Revel drifted towards a topic she regarded as particularly her own, the ordering of households.

They came to the thing through talk about localities. “We are leaving our house in The Boltons,” said Revel, “and taking a little place at Wimbledon, and I think of having rooms in Dane’s Inn. It will be more convenient in many ways. My wife is furiously addicted to golf and exercise of all sorts, and I like to sit about in clubs — I haven’t the strength necessary for these hygienic proceedings — and the old arrangement suited neither of us. And, besides, no one could imagine the demoralisation the domestics of West London have undergone during the last three years.”

“It’s the same everywhere,” said Mrs. Bindon Botting.

“Very possibly it is. A friend of mine calls it the servile tradition in decay and regards it all as a most hopeful phenomenon — —”

“He ought to have had my last two criminals,” said Mrs. Bindon Botting.

She turned to Mrs. Wace while Revel came again a little too late with a “Possibly — —”

“And I haven’t told you, my dear,” she said, speaking with voluble rapidity, “I’m in trouble again.”

“The last girl?”

“The last girl. Before I can get a cook, my hard won housemaid” — she paused— “chucks it.”

“Panic?” asked young Walshingham.

“Mysterious grief! Everything merry as a marriage bell until my Anagram Tea! Then in the evening a portentous rigour of bearing, a word or so from my Aunt, and immediately — Floods of Tears and Notice!” For a moment her eye rested thoughtfully on Kipps, as she said: “Is there anything heartrending about Anagrams?”

“I find them so,” said Revel. “I — —”

But Mrs. Bindon Botting got away again. “For a time it made me quite uneasy — —”

Kipps jabbed his lip with his fork rather painfully, and was recalled from a fascinated glare at Mrs. Botting to the immediate facts of dinner.

“ —— whether anagrams might not have offended the good

domestic's Moral Code — you never can tell. We made enquiries. No. No. No. She *must* go and that's all!"

"One perceives," said Revel, "in these disorders, dimly and distantly, the last dying glow of the age of Romance. Let us suppose, Mrs. Botting, let us at least try to suppose — it is Love."

Kipps clattered with his knife and fork.

"It's love," said Mrs. Botting; "what else can it be? Beneath the orderly humdrum of our lives these romances are going on, until at last they bust up and give Notice and upset our humdrum altogether. Some fatal, wonderful soldier — —"

"The passions of the common or house domestic," said Revel, and recovered possession of the table.

Upon the troubled disorder of Kipps' table manners there had supervented a quietness, an unusual calm. For once in his life he had distinctly made up his mind on his own account. He listened no more to Revel. He put down his knife and fork and refused anything that followed. Coote regarded him with tactful concern and Helen flushed a little.

§4

About half-past nine that night came a violent pull at the bell of Mrs. Bindon Botting, and a young man in a dress suit, a gibus and other marks of exalted social position stood without. Athwart his white expanse of breast lay a ruddy bar of patterned silk that gave him a singular distinction and minimised the glow of a few small stains of burgundy. His gibus was thrust back and exposed a disorder of hair that suggested a reckless desperation. He had, in fact, burnt his boats and refused to join the ladies. Coote, in the subsequent conversation, had protested quietly, "You're going on all right, you know," to which Kipps had answered he didn't care a "Eng" about that, and so, after a brief tussle with Walshingham's detaining arm, had got away. "I got something to do," he said. "'Ome." And here he was — panting an extraordinary resolve. The door opened, revealing the pleasantly furnished hall of Mrs. Bindon Botting, lit by rose-tinted lights, and in the centre of the picture, neat and pretty in black and white, stood Ann. At the sight of Kipps her colour vanished.

“Ann,” said Kipps, “I want to speak to you. I got something to say to you right away. See? I’m — —”

“This ain’t the door to speak to me at,” said Ann.

“But, Ann! It’s something special.”

“You spoke enough,” said Ann.

“Ann!”

“Besides. That’s my door, down there. Basement. If I was caught talking at *this* door —— !”

“But, Ann, *I’m* — —”

“Basement after nine. Them’s my hours. I’m a servant and likely to keep one. If you’re calling here, what name please? But you got your friends and I got mine and you mustn’t go talking to *me*.”

“But, Ann, I want to ask you — —”

Someone appeared in the hall behind Ann. “Not here,” said Ann. “Don’t know anyone of that name,” and incontinently slammed the door in his face.

“What was that, Ann?” said Mrs. Bindon Botting’s invalid Aunt.

“Ge’m a little intoxicated, Ma’am — asking for the wrong name, Ma’am.”

“What name did he want?” asked the lady, doubtfully.

“No name that *we* know, Ma’am,” said Ann, hustling along the hall towards the kitchen stairs.

“I hope you weren’t too short with him, Ann.”

“No shorter than he deserved, considering ‘ow he be’aved,” said Ann, with her bosom heaving.

And Mrs. Bindon Botting’s invalid Aunt, perceiving suddenly that this call had some relation to Ann’s private and sentimental trouble, turned, after one moment of hesitating scrutiny, away.

She was an extremely sympathetic lady, was Mrs. Bindon Botting’s invalid Aunt; she took an interest in the servants, imposed piety, extorted confessions and followed human nature, blushing and lying defensively, to its reluctantly revealed recesses, but Ann’s sense of privacy was strong and her manner under drawing out and encouragement, sometimes even alarming....

So the poor old lady went upstairs again.

The basement door opened and Kipps came into the kitchen. He was flushed and panting.

He struggled for speech.

"'Ere," he said, and held out two half sixpences.

Ann stood behind the kitchen table — face pale and eyes round, and now — and it simplified Kipps very much — he could see she had indeed been crying.

"Well?" she said.

"Don't you see?"

Ann moved her head slightly.

"I kep' it all these years."

"You kep' it too long."

His mouth closed and his flush died away. He looked at her. The amulet, it seemed, had failed to work.

"Ann!" he said.

"Well?"

"Ann."

The conversation still hung fire.

"Ann," he said, made a movement with his hands that suggested appeal, and advanced a step.

Ann shook her head more defiantly, and became defensive.

"Look here, Ann," said Kipps. "I been a fool."

They stared into each other's miserable eyes.

"Ann," he said. "I want to marry you."

Ann clutched the table edge. "You can't," she said faintly.

He made as if to approach her around the table, and she took a step that restored their distance.

"I must," he said.

"You can't."

"I must. You *got* to marry me, Ann."

"You can't go marrying everybody. You got to marry 'er."

"I shan't."

Ann shook her head. "You're engaged to that girl. Lady, rather. You can't be engaged to me."

"I don't want to be engaged to you. I *been* engaged. I want to be married to you. See? Rightaway."

Ann turned a shade paler. "But what d'you mean?" she asked.

“Come right off to London and marry me. Now.”

“What d’you mean?”

Kipps became extremely lucid and earnest.

“I mean come right off and marry me now before anyone else can. *See?*”

“In London?”

“In London.”

They stared at one another again. They took things for granted in the most amazing way.

“I couldn’t,” said Ann. “For one thing my month’s not up for mor’n free weeks yet.”

They hung before that for a moment as though it was insurmountable.

“Look ‘ere, Ann! Arst to go. Arst to go!”

“*She* wouldn’t,” said Ann.

“Then come without arsting,” said Kipps.

“She’s keep my box — —”

“She won’t.”

“She will.”

“She won’t.”

“You don’t know ‘er.”

“Well, desh’er — let’er! Let’er! Who cares? I’ll buy you a ‘undred boxes if you’ll come.”

“It wouldn’t be right towards Her.”

“It isn’t Her you got to think about, Ann. It’s me.”

“And you ‘aven’t treated me properly,” she said. “You ‘aven’t treated me properly, Artie. You didn’t ought to ‘ave — —”

“I didn’t say I *‘ad*,” he interrupted, “did I, Ann?” he appealed. “I didn’t come to arguefy. I’m all wrong. I never said I wasn’t. It’s yes or no. Me or not.... I been a fool. There! See? I been a fool. Ain’t that enough? I got myself all tied up with everyone and made a fool of myself all around....”

He pleaded, “It isn’t as if we didn’t care for one another, Ann.”

She seemed impassive and he resumed his discourse.

“I thought I wasn’t likely ever to see you again, Ann. I reely did. It isn’t as though I was seein’ you all the time. I didn’t know what I wanted, and I went and be’aved like a fool — jest as anyone might. I

know what I want and I know what I don't want now."

"Ann!"

"Well?"

"Will you come?... Will you come?..."

Silence.

"If you don't answer me, Ann — I'm desprit — if you don't answer me now, if you don't say you'll come I'll go right out now — —"

He turned doorward passionately as he spoke, with his threat incomplete.

"I'll go," he said; "I 'aven't a friend in the world! I been and throwed everything away. I don't know why I done things and why I 'aven't. All I know is I can't stand nothing in the world any more." He choked. "The pier," he said.

He fumbled with the door latch, grumbling some inarticulate self-pity, as if he sought a handle, and then he had it open.

Clearly he was going.

"Artie!" said Ann, sharply.

He turned about and the two hung, white and tense.

"I'll do it," said Ann.

His face began to work, he shut the door and came a step back to her, staring; his face became pitiful and then suddenly they moved together. "Artie!" she cried, "don't go!" and held out her arms, weeping.

They clung close to one another....

"Oh! I *been* so mis'bel," cried Kipps, clinging to this lifebuoy, and suddenly his emotion, having no further serious work in hand, burst its way to a loud *boohoo*! His fashionable and expensive gibus flopped off and fell and rolled and lay neglected on the floor.

"I been so mis'bel," said Kipps, giving himself vent. "Oh! I *been* so mis'bel, Ann."

"Be quiet," said Ann, holding his poor, blubbering head tightly to her heaving shoulder, and herself all a-quiver; "be quiet. She's there! Listenin'. She'll 'ear you, Artie, on the stairs...."

Ann's last words when, an hour later, they parted, Mrs. and Miss Bindon Botting having returned very audibly upstairs, deserve a section to themselves.

"I wouldn't do this for everyone, mind you," whispered Ann.

CHAPTER IX THE LABYRINTHODON

§1

You imagine them fleeing through our complex and difficult social system, as it were, for life, first on foot and severally to the Folkestone Central Station; then in a first-class carriage, with Kipps' bag as sole chaperone to Charing Cross, and then in a four-wheeler, a long, rumbling, palpitating, slow flight through the multitudinous swarming London streets to Sid. Kipps kept peeping out of the window. "It's the next corner after this, I believe," he would say. For he had a sort of feeling that at Sid's he would be immune from the hottest pursuits. He paid the cabman in a manner adequate to the occasion and turned to his prospective brother-in-law. "Me and Ann," he said, "we're going to marry."

"But I thought — —" began Sid.

Kipps motioned him towards explanations in the shop....

"It's no good, my arguing with you," said Sid, smiling delightedly as the case unfolded. "You done it now." And Masterman being apprised of the nature of the affair descended slowly in a state of flushed congratulation.

"I thought you might find the Higher Life a bit difficult," said Masterman, projecting a bony hand. "But I never thought you'd have the originality to clear out.... Won't the young lady of the superior classes swear! Never mind — it doesn't matter anyhow.

"You were starting a climb," he said at dinner, "that doesn't lead anywhere. You would have clambered from one refinement of vulgarity to another and never got to any satisfactory top. There isn't a top. It's a squirrel's cage. Things are out of joint, and the only top there is is a lot of blazing card playing women and betting men — you should read Modern Society — seasoned with archbishops and officials and all that sort of glossy, pandering Bosh.... You'd have hung on, a disconsolate, dismal, little figure, somewhere up the ladder, far below even the motor-car class, while your wife larked about — or fretted because she wasn't a bit higher than she was.... I found it all out long ago. I've seen women of that sort. And I don't

climb any more."

"I often thought about what you said last time I saw you," said Kipps.

"I wonder what I said," said Masterman in parenthesis. "Anyhow, you're doing the right and sane thing, and that's a rare spectacle. You're going to marry your equal, and you're going to take your own line, quite independently of what people up there, or people down there, think you ought or ought not to do. That's about the only course one can take nowadays with everything getting more muddled and upside down every day. Make your own little world and your own house first of all, keep that right side up whatever you do, and marry your mate.... That, I suppose, is what *I* should do — if *I* had a mate.... But people of my sort, luckily for the world, don't get made in pairs. No!

"Besides —— ! However — —" And abruptly, taking advantage of an interruption by Master Walt, he lapsed into thought.

Presently he came out of his musings.

"After all," he said, "there's hope."

"What about?" said Sid.

"Everything," said Masterman.

"Where there's life there's hope," said Mrs. Sid. "But none of you aren't eating anything like you ought to."

Masterman lifted his glass.

"Here's to Hope!" he said, "The Light of the World!"

Sid beamed at Kipps as who should say, "You don't meet a character like *this* every dinner time."

"Here's to Hope," repeated Masterman. "The best thing one can have. Hope of life — yes."

He imposed his movement of magnificent self-pity on them all. Even young Walt was impressed.

They spent the days before their marriage in a number of agreeable excursions together. One day they went to Kew by steamboat, and admired the house full of paintings of flowers extremely; and one day they went early to have a good, long day at the Crystal Palace, and enjoyed themselves very much indeed. They got there so early that nothing was open inside, all the stalls were wrappered up and all the minor exhibitions locked and barred; they

seemed the minutest creatures even to themselves in that enormous empty aisle and their echoing footsteps indecently loud. They contemplated realistic groups of plaster savages, and Ann thought they'd be queer people to have about. She was glad there were none in this country. They meditated upon replicas of classical statuary without excessive comment. Kipps said at large, it must have been a queer world then, but Ann very properly doubted if they really went about like that. But the place at that early hour was really lonely. One began to fancy things. So they went out into the October sunshine of the mighty terraces, and wandered amidst miles of stucco tanks and about those quiet Gargantuan grounds. A great, grey emptiness it was, and it seemed marvellous to them, but not nearly so marvellous as it might have seemed. "I never see a finer place, never," said Kipps, turning to survey the entirety of the enormous glass front with Paxton's vast image in the centre.

"What it must 'ave cost to build!" said Ann, and left her sentence eloquently incomplete.

Presently they came to a region of caves and waterways, and amidst these waterways strange reminders of the possibilities of the Creator. They passed under an arch made of a whale's jaws, and discovered amidst herbage, as if they were browsing or standing unoccupied and staring as if amazed at themselves, huge effigies of iguanodons and deinotheria and mastodons and suchlike cattle, gloriously done in green and gold.

"They got everything," said Kipps. "Earl's Court isn't a patch on it."

His mind was very greatly exercised by these monsters, and he hovered about them and returned to them. "You'd wonder 'ow they ever got enough to eat," he said several times.

§2

It was later in the day, and upon a seat in the presence of the green and gold Labyrinthodon that looms so splendidly above the lake, that the Kippses fell into talk about their future. They had made a sufficient lunch in the palace, they had seen pictures and no end of remarkable things, and that and the amber sunlight made a mood for

them, quiet and philosophical, a heaven mood. Kipps broke a contemplative silence with an abrupt illusion to one principal preoccupation. “I shall offer an ‘pology and I shall offer ‘er brother damages. If she likes to bring an action for Breach after that, well — I done all I can.... They can’t get much out of reading my letters in court, because I didn’t write none. I dessay a thousan’ or two’ll settle all that, anyhow. I ain’t much worried about that. That don’t worry me very much, Ann — No.”

And then, “It’s a lark, our marrying. It’s curious ‘ow things come about. If I ‘adn’t run against you, where should I ‘ave been now. Eh?... Even after we met, I didn’t seem to see it like — not marrying you I mean — until that night I came. I didn’t — reely.”

“I didn’t neither,” said Ann, with thoughtful eyes on the water.

For a time Kipps’ mind was occupied by the prettiness of her thinking face. A faint, tremulous network of lights reflected from the ripples of a passing duck, played subtly over her cheek and faded away.

Ann reflected. “I s’pose things ‘ad to be,” she said.

Kipps mused. “It’s curious ‘ow ever I got on to be engaged to ‘er.”

“She wasn’t suited to you,” said Ann.

“Suited. No fear! That’s jest it. ‘Ow did it come about?”

“I expect she led you on,” said Ann.

Kipps was half-minded to assent. Then he had a twinge of conscience. “It wasn’t that, Ann,” he said. “It’s curious. I don’t know what it was, but it wasn’t that. I don’t recollect.... No.... Life’s jolly rum; that’s one thing any’ow. And I suppose I’m a rum sort of feller. I get excited sometimes, and then I don’t seem to care *what* I do. That’s about what it was reely. Still — —”

They meditated, Kipps with his arms folded and pulling at his scanty moustache. Presently a faint smile came over his face.

“We’ll get a nice *little* ‘ouse out Ithe way.”

“It’s ‘omelier than Folkestone,” said Ann.

“Jest a nice *little* ‘ouse,” said Kipps. “There’s Hughenden, of course. But that’s let. Besides being miles too big. And I wouldn’t live in Folkestone again some’ow — not for anything.”

“I’d like to ‘ave a ‘ouse of my own,” said Ann. “I’ve often

thought, being in service, ‘ow much I’d like to manage a ‘ouse of my own.”

“You’d know all about what the servants was up to, anyhow,” said Kipps, amused.

“Servants! We don’t want no servants,” said Ann, startled.

“You’ll ‘ave to ‘ave a servant,” said Kipps. “If it’s only to do the ‘eavy work of the ‘ouse.”

“What! and not be able ‘ardly to go into my own kitchen?” said Ann.

“You ought to ‘ave a servant,” said Kipps.

“One could easy ‘ave a woman in for anything that’s ‘eavy,” said Ann. “Besides —— If I ‘ad one of the girls one sees about nowadays I should want to be taking the broom out of ‘er ‘and and do it all over myself. I’d manage better without ‘er.”

“We ought to ‘ave one servant anyhow,” said Kipps, “else ‘ow should we manage if we wanted to go out together or anything like that?”

“I might get a *young* girl,” said Ann, “and bring ‘er up in my own way.”

Kipps left the matter at that and came back to the house.

“There’s little ‘ouses going into Hythe, just the sort we want, not too big and not too small. We’ll ‘ave a kitching and a dining-room and a little room to sit in of a night.”

“It mustn’t be a ‘ouse with a basement,” said Ann.

“What’s a basement?”

“It’s a downstairs, where there’s not arf enough light and everything got to be carried — up and down, up and down, all day — coals and everything. And it’s got to ‘ave a watertap and sink and things upstairs. You’d ‘ardly believe, Artie, if you ‘adn’t been in service, ‘ow cruel and silly some ‘ouses are built — you’d think they ‘ad a spite against servants the way the stairs are made.”

“We won’t ‘ave one of that sort,” said Kipps....

“We’ll ‘ave a quiet little life. Now go out a bit — now come ‘ome again. Read a book perhaps if we got nothing else to do. ‘Ave old Buggins in for an evening at times. ‘Ave Sid down. There’s bicycles — —”

“I don’t fancy myself on a bicycle,” said Ann.

“‘Ave a trailer,” said Kipps, “and sit like a lady. I’d take you out to New Romney easy as anything jest to see the old people.”

“I wouldn’t mind that,” said Ann.

“We’ll jest ‘ave a sensible little ‘ouse, and sensible things. No art or anything of that sort, nothing stuck-up or anything, but jest sensible. We’ll be as right as anything, Ann.”

“No socialism,” said Ann, starting a lurking doubt.

“No socialism,” said Kipps; “just sensible, that’s all.”

“I dessay it’s all right for them that understand it, Artie, but I don’t agree with this socialism.”

“I don’t neither, reely,” said Kipps. “I can’t argue about it, but it don’t seem real like to me. All the same Masterman’s a clever fellow, Ann.”

“I didn’t like ‘im at first, Artie, but I do now — in a way. You don’t understand ‘im all at once.”

“‘E’s so clever,” said Kipps. “Arf the time I can’t make out what ‘e’s up to. ‘E’s the cleverest chap I ever met. I never ‘eard such talking. ‘E ought to write a book.... It’s a rum world, Ann, when a chap like that isn’t ‘ardly able to earn a living.”

“It’s ‘is ‘ealth,” said Ann.

“I expect it is,” said Kipps, and ceased to talk for a little while.

Then he spoke with deliberation, “Sea air might be the saving of ‘im, Ann.”

He glanced doubtfully at Ann, and she was looking at him even fondly.

“You think of other people a lot,” said Ann. “I been looking at you sittin’ there and thinking.”

“I suppose I do. I suppose when one’s ‘appy one does.”

“*You* do,” said Ann.

“We shall be ‘appy in that little ‘ouse, Ann. Don’t y’ think?”

She met his eyes and nodded.

“I seem to see it,” said Kipps, “sort of cosy like. ‘Bout tea time and muffins, kettle on the ‘ob, cat on the ‘earthrug. We must get a cat, Ann, and *you* there. Eh?”

They regarded each other with appreciative eyes and Kipps became irrelevant.

“I don’t believe, Ann,” he said, “I ‘aven’t kissed you not for ‘arf

an hour. Leastways not since we was in those caves."

For kissing had already ceased to be a matter of thrilling adventure for them.

Ann shook her head. "You be sensible and go on talking about Mr. Masterman," she said....

But Kipps had wandered to something else. "I like the way your 'air turns back just there," he said, with an indicative finger. "It was like that, I remember, when you was a girl. Sort of wavy. I've often thought of it —— .... 'Member when we raced that time — out be'ind the church?"

Then for a time they sat idly, each following out agreeable meditations.

"It's rum," said Kipps.

"What's rum?"

"'Ow everything's 'appened," said Kipps. "Who'd 'ave thought of our being 'ere like this six weeks ago?... Who'd 'ave thought of my ever 'aving any money?"

His eyes went to the big Labyrinthodon. He looked first carelessly and then suddenly with a growing interest in its vast face.

"I'm deshed," he murmured. Ann became interested. He laid a hand on her arm and pointed. Ann scrutinised the Labyrinthodon and then came around to Kipps' face in mute interrogation.

"Don't you see it?" said Kipps.

"See what?"

"'E's jest *like* old Coote."

"It's extinct," said Ann, not clearly apprehending.

"I dessay 'e is. But 'e's jest like old Coote all the same for that."

Kipps meditated on the monstrous shapes in sight. "I wonder 'ow all these old antediluvium animals got extinct," he asked. "No one couldn't possibly 'ave killed 'em."

"Why! *I* know that," said Ann. "They was overtook by the Flood...."

Kipps meditated for a while. "But I thought they had to take two of everything there was — —"

"Within reason they 'ad," said Ann....

The Kippses left it at that.

The great green and gold Labyrinthodon took no notice of their

conversation. It gazed with its wonderful eyes over their heads into the infinite — inflexibly calm. It might indeed have been Coote himself there, Coote, the unassuming, cutting them dead....

§3

And in due course these two simple souls married, and Venus Urania, the Goddess of Wedded Love, the Goddess of Tolerant Kindliness or Meeting Half Way, to whom all young couples should pray and offer sacrifices of self, who is indeed a very great and noble and kindly goddess, was in some manner propitiated, and bent down and blessed them in their union.

END OF BOOK II.

BOOK III KIPPSES

CHAPTER I THE HOUSING PROBLEM

§1

Honeymoons and all things come to an end, and you see at last Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Kipps descending upon the Hythe platform — coming to Hythe to find that nice *little* house — to realise that bright dream of a home they had first talked about in the grounds of the Crystal Palace. They are a valiant couple, you perceive, but small, and the world is a large incongruous system of complex and difficult things. Kipps wears a grey suit, with a wing-poke collar and a neat, smart tie. Mrs. Kipps is the same bright and healthy little girl woman you saw in the marsh; not an inch has been added to her stature in all my voluminous narrative. Only now she wears a hat.

It is a hat very unlike the hats she used to wear on her Sundays out, a flourishing hat with feathers and buckle and bows and things. The price of that hat would take many people's breath away — it cost two guineas! Kipps chose it. Kipps paid for it. They left the shop with flushed cheeks and smarting eyes, glad to be out of range of the condescending saleswoman.

"Artie," said Ann, "you didn't ought to 'ave — —"

That was all. And you know, the hat didn't suit Ann a bit. Her clothes did not suit her at all. The simple, cheap, clean brightness of her former style had given place not only to this hat, but to several other things in the same key. And out from among these things looked her pretty face, the face of a wise little child — an artless wonder struggling through a preposterous dignity.

They had bought that hat one day when they had gone to see the shops in Bond street. Kipps had looked at the passers-by and it had suddenly occurred to him that Ann was dowdy. He had noted the hat of a very proud-looking lady passing in an electric brougham and had resolved to get Ann the nearest thing to that.

The railway porters perceived some subtle incongruity in Ann, the knot of cabmen in the station doorway, the two golfers and the lady with daughters, who had also got out of the train. And Kipps, a little pale, blowing a little, not in complete possession of himself, knew

that they noticed her and him. And Ann —— . It is hard to say just what Ann observed of these things.

"'Ere!" said Kipps to a cabman, and regretted too late a vanished "H."

"I got a trunk up there," he said to a ticket inspector, "marked A. K."

"Ask a porter," said the inspector, turning his back.

"Demn!" said Kipps, not altogether inaudibly.

§2

It is all very well to sit in the sunshine and talk of the house you will have, and another altogether to achieve it. We English — all the world indeed to-day — live in a strange atmosphere of neglected great issues, of insistent, triumphant petty things, we are given up to the fine littlenesses of intercourse; table manners and small correctitudes are the substance of our lives. You do not escape these things for long even by so catastrophic a proceeding as flying to London with a young lady of no wealth and inferior social position. The mists of noble emotion swirl and pass and there you are divorced from all your deities and grazing in the meadows under the Argus eyes of the social system, the innumerable mean judgments you feel raining upon you, upon your clothes and bearing, upon your pretensions and movements.

Our world to-day is a meanly conceived one — it is only an added meanness to conceal that fact. For one consequence, it has very few nice little houses, such things do not come for the asking, they are not to be bought with money during ignoble times. Its houses are built on the ground of monstrously rich, shabbily extortionate landowners, by poor, parsimonious, greedy people in a mood of elbowing competition. What can you expect from such ridiculous conditions? To go househunting is to spy out the nakedness of this pretentious world, to see what our civilization amounts to when you take away curtains and flounces and carpets and all the fluster and distraction of people and fittings. It is to see mean plans meanly executed for mean ends, the conventions torn aside, the secrets stripped, the substance underlying all such Chester Cootery, soiled

and worn and left.

So you see our poor, dear Kippses going to and fro, in Hythe, in Sandgate, in Ashford and Canterbury and Deal and Dover — at last even in Folkestone, with "orders to view," pink and green and white and yellow orders to view, and labelled keys in Kipps' hand and frowns and perplexity upon their faces.... They did not clearly know what they wanted, but whatever it was they saw, they knew they did not want that. Always they found a confusing multitude of houses they could not take, and none they could. Their dreams began to turn mainly on empty, abandoned-looking rooms, with unfaded patches of paper to mark the place of vanished pictures and doors that had lost their keys. They saw rooms floored with boards that yawned apart and were splintered, skirtings eloquent of the industrious mouse, kitchens with a dead black-beetle in the empty cupboard, and a hideous variety of coal holes and dark cupboards under the stairs. They stuck their little heads through roof trap-doors and gazed at disorganised ball taps, at the bleak filthiness of unstoppered roofs. There were occasions when it seemed to them that they must be the victims of an elaborate conspiracy of house agents, so bleak and cheerless is a second-hand empty house in comparison with the humblest of inhabited dwellings.

Commonly the houses were too big. They had huge windows that demanded vast curtains in mitigation, countless bedrooms, acreage of stone steps to be cleaned, kitchens that made Ann protest. She had come so far towards a proper conception of Kipps' social position as to admit the prospect of one servant— "but lor'!" she would say, "you'd want a manservant in this 'ouse." When the houses were not too big, then they were almost invariably the product of speculative building, of that multitudinous hasty building for the extravagant multitude of new births that was the essential disaster of the nineteenth century. The new houses Ann refused as damp, and even the youngest of these that had been in use showed remarkable signs of a sickly constitution, the plaster flaked away, the floors gaped, the paper mouldered and peeled, the doors dropped, the bricks scaled and the railings rusted, Nature in the form of spiders, earwigs, cockroaches, mice, rats, fungi and remarkable smells, was already fighting her way back....

And the plan was invariably inconvenient, invariably. All the houses they saw had a common quality for which she could find no word, but for which the proper word is incivility. “They build these ‘ouses,” she said, “as though girls wasn’t ‘uman beings.” Sid’s social democracy had got into her blood perhaps, and anyhow they went about discovering the most remarkable inconsiderateness in the contemporary house. “There’s kitching stairs to go up, Artie!” Ann would say. “Some poor girl’s got to go up and down, up and down, and be tired out, jest because they haven’t the sense to leave enough space to give their steps a proper rise — and no water upstairs anywhere — every drop got to be carried! It’s ‘ouses like this wear girls out.

“It’s ‘aving ‘ouses built by men, I believe, makes all the work and trouble,” said Ann....

The Kippses, you see, thought they were looking for a reasonably simple little contemporary house, but indeed they were looking either for dreamland or 1975 A.D. or thereabouts, and it hadn’t come.

§3

But it was a foolish thing of Kipps to begin building a house.

He did that out of an extraordinary animosity for house agents he had conceived.

Everybody hates house agents just as everybody loves sailors. It is no doubt a very wicked and unjust hatred, but the business of a novelist is not ethical principle but facts. Everybody hates house agents because they have everybody at a disadvantage. All other callings have a certain amount of give and take; the house agent simply takes. All other callings want you; your solicitor is afraid you may change him, your doctor cannot go too far, your novelist — if only you knew it — is mutely abject towards your unspoken wishes — and as for your tradespeople, milkmen will fight outside your front door for you, and green-grocers call in tears if you discard them suddenly; but who ever heard of a house agent struggling to serve anyone? You want to get a house; you go to him, you dishevelled and angry from travel, anxious, enquiring; he calm, clean, inactive, reticent, quietly doing nothing. You beg him to reduce rents,

whitewash ceilings, produce other houses, combine the summer house of No. 6 with the conservatory of No. 4 — much he cares! You want to dispose of a house; then he is just the same, serene, indifferent — on one occasion I remember he was picking his teeth all the time he answered me. Competition is a mockery among house agents, they are all alike, you cannot wound them by going to the opposite office, you cannot dismiss them, you can at most dismiss yourself. They are invulnerably placed behind mahogany and brass, too far usually even for a sudden swift lunge with an umbrella, and to throw away the keys they lend you instead of returning them is larceny and punishable as such.

It was a house agent in Dover who finally decided Kipps to build. Kipps, with a certain faltering in his voice, had delivered his ultimatum, no basement, not more than eight rooms, hot and cold water upstairs, coal cellar in the house but with intervening doors to keep dust from the scullery and so forth. He stood blowing. "You'll have to build a house," said the house agent, sighing wearily, "if you want all that." It was rather for the sake of effective answer than with any intention at the time that Kipps mumbled, "That's about what I shall do — this goes on."

Whereupon the house agent smiled. He smiled!

When Kipps came to turn the thing over in his mind he was surprised to find quite a considerable intention had germinated and was growing up in him. After all, lots of people *have* built houses. How could there be so many if they hadn't? Suppose he "reely" did! Then he would go to the house agent and say, "'Ere, while you been getting me a sootable 'ouse, blowed if I 'aven't built one!" Go round to all of them; all the house agents in Folkestone, in Dover, Ashford, Canterbury, Margate, Ramsgate, saying that! Perhaps then they might be sorry. It was in the small hours that he awoke to a realisation that he had made up his mind in the matter.

"Ann," he said, "Ann," and also used the sharp of his elbow.

Ann was at last awakened to the pitch of an indistinct enquiry what was the matter.

"I'm going to build a house, Ann."

"Eh?" said Ann, suddenly, as if awake.

"Build a house."

Ann said something incoherent about he'd better wait until the morning before he did anything of the sort, and immediately with a fine trustfulness went fast asleep again.

But Kipps lay awake for a long while building his house, and in the morning at breakfast he made his meaning clear. He had smarted under the indignities of house agents long enough, and this seemed to promise revenge — a fine revenge. "And, you know, we might reely make rather a nice little 'ouse out of it — like we want."

So resolved, it became possible for them to take a house for a year, with a basement, no service lift, blackleading to do everywhere, no water upstairs, no bathroom, vast sash windows to be cleaned from the sill, stone steps with a twist and open to the rain into the coal cellar, insufficient cupboards, unpaved path to the dustbin, no fireplace to the servant's bedroom, no end of splintery wood to scrub — in fact, a very typical English middle-class house. And having added to this house some furniture, and a languid young person with unauthentic golden hair named Gwendolen, who was engaged to a sergeant-major and had formerly been in an hotel, having "moved in" and spent some sleepless nights varied by nocturnal explorations in search of burglars, because of the strangeness of being in a house for which they were personally responsible, Kipps settled down for a time and turned himself with considerable resolution to the project of building a home.

§4

At first Kipps had gathered advice, finding an initial difficulty in how to begin. He went into a builder's shop at Seabrook one day, and told the lady in charge that he wanted a house built; he was breathless but quite determined, and he was prepared to give his order there and then, but she temporised with him and said her husband was out, and he left without giving his name. Also he went and talked to a man in a cart who was pointed out to him by a workman as the builder of a new house near Saltwood, but he found him first sceptical and then overpoweringly sarcastic. "I suppose you build a 'ouse every 'oliday," he said, and turned from Kipps with every symptom of contempt.

Afterwards Carshot told alarming stories about builders, and shook Kipps' expressed resolution a good deal, and then Pierce raised the question whether one ought to go in the first instance to a builder at all and not rather to an architect. Pierce knew a man at Ashford whose brother was an architect, and as it is always better in these matters to get someone you know, the Kippses decided, before Pierce had gone, and Carshot's warning had resumed their sway, to apply to him. They did so — rather dubiously.

The architect who was brother of Pierce's friend appeared as a small, alert individual with a black bag and a cylindrical silk hat, and he sat at the dining-room table, with his hat and his bag exactly equidistant right and left of him, and maintained a demeanour of impressive woodenness, while Kipps on the hearthrug, with a quaking sense of gigantic enterprise, vacillated answers to his enquiries. Ann held a watching brief for herself, in a position she had chosen as suitable to the occasion beside the corner of the carved oak sideboard. They felt, in a sense, at bay.

The architect began by asking for the site, and seemed a little discomposed to discover this had still to be found. "I thought of building just anywhere," said Kipps. "I 'aven't made up my mind about that yet." The architect remarked that he would have preferred to see the site in order to know where to put what he called his "ugly side," but it was quite possible of course to plan a house "in the air," on the level, "simply with back and front assumed" — if they would like to do that. Kipps flushed slightly, and secretly hoping it would make no great difference in the fees, said a little doubtfully that he thought that would be all right.

The architect then marked off as it were the first section of his subject, with a single dry cough, opened his bag, took out a spring tape measure, some hard biscuits, a metal flask, a new pair of dogskin gloves, a clockwork motor-car partially wrapped in paper, a bunch of violets, a paper of small brass screws, and finally a large, distended notebook; he replaced the other objects carefully, opened his notebook, put a pencil to his lips and said: "And what accommodation will you require?" To which Ann, who had followed his every movement with the closest attention and a deepening dread, replied with the violent suddenness of one who has long lain in wait,

“Cubbuds!”

“Anyhow,” she added, catching her husband’s eye.

The architect wrote it down.

“And how many rooms?” he said, coming to secondary matters.

The young people regarded one another. It was dreadfully like giving an order.

“How many bedrooms, for example?” asked the architect.

“One?” suggested Kipps, inclined now to minimise at any cost.

“There’s Gwendolen,” said Ann.

“Visitors perhaps,” said the architect, and temperately, “You never know.”

“Two, p’raps?” said Kipps. “We don’t want no more than a *little* ‘ouse, you know.”

“But the merest shooting-box —— ,” said the architect.

They got to six; he beat them steadily from bedroom to bedroom, the word “nursery” played across their imaginative skies — he mentioned it as the remotest possibility — and then six being reluctantly conceded, Ann came forward to the table, sat down and delivered herself of one of her prepared conditions: “‘Ot and cold water,” she said, “laid on to each room — any’ow.”

It was an idea long since acquired from Sid.

“Yes,” said Kipps, on the hearthrug, “‘Ot and cold water laid on to each bedroom — we’ve settled on that.”

It was the first intimation to the architect that he had to deal with a couple of exceptional originality, and as he had spent the previous afternoon in finding three large houses in *The Builder*, which he intended to combine into an original and copyright design of his own, he naturally struggled against these novel requirements. He enlarged on the extreme expensiveness of plumbing, on the extreme expensiveness of everything not already arranged for in his scheme, and only when Ann declared she’d as soon not have the house as not have her requirements, and Kipps, blenching the while, had said he didn’t mind what a thing cost him so long as he got what he wanted, did he allow a kindred originality of his own to appear beneath the acquired professionalism of his methods. He dismissed their previous talk with his paragraphic cough. “Of course,” he said, “if you don’t mind being unconventional — —”

He explained that he had been thinking of a Queen Anne style of architecture (Ann directly she heard her name shook her head at Kipps in an aside) so far as the exterior went. For his own part, he said, he liked to have the exterior of a house in a style, not priggishly in a style, but mixed, with one style uppermost, and the gables and dormers and casements of the Queen Anne style, with a little rough cast and sham timbering here and there and perhaps a bit of an overhang diversified a house and made it interesting. The advantages of what he called a Queen Anne style was that it had such a variety of features.... Still, if they were prepared to be unconventional it could be done. A number of houses were now built in the unconventional style and were often very pretty. In the unconventional style one frequently had what perhaps he might call Internal Features, for example, an Old English oak staircase and gallery. White rough-cast and green paint were a good deal favoured in houses of this type.

He indicated that this excursus on style was finished by a momentary use of his cough, and reopened his notebook, which he had closed to wave about in a moment of descriptive enthusiasm while expatiating on the unbridled wealth of External Features associated with Queen Anne. “Six bedrooms,” he said, moistening his pencil. “One with barred windows suitable for a nursery if required.”

Kipps endorsed this huskily and reluctantly.

There followed a most interesting discussion upon house building, in which Kipps played a minor part. They passed from bedrooms to the kitchen and scullery, and there Ann displayed an intelligent exactingness that won the expressed admiration of the architect. They were particularly novel upon the position of the coal cellar, which Ann held to be altogether too low in the ordinary house, necessitating much heavy carrying. They dismissed as impracticable the idea of having coal cellar and kitchen at the top of the house, because that would involve carrying all the coal through the house, and therewith much subsequent cleaning, and for a time they dealt with a conception of a coal cellar on the ground floor with a light staircase running up outside to an exterior shoot. “It might be made a Feature,” said the architect, a little doubtfully, jotting down a note of

it. “It would be apt to get black, you know.”

Thence they passed to the alternative of service lifts, and then by an inspiration of the architect to the possibilities of gas heating. Kipps did a complicated verbal fugue on the theme, “gas heating heats the air,” with variable aspirates; he became very red and was lost to the discussion altogether for a time, though his lips kept silently on.

Subsequently the architect wrote to say that he found in his notebook very full and explicit directions for bow windows to all rooms, for bedrooms, for water supply, lift, height of stairs and absence of twists therein, for a well-ventilated kitchen twenty feet square, with two dressers and a large box-window seat, for scullery and outhouses and offices, but nothing whatever about drawing-room, dining-room, library or study, or approximate cost, and he awaited further instructions. He presumed there would be a breakfast-room, dining-room, drawing-room, and study for Mr. Kipps, at least that was his conception, and the young couple discussed this matter long and ardently.

Ann was distinctly restrictive in this direction. “I don’t see what you want a drawin’-room and a dinin’ *and* a kitchen for. If we was going to let in summer — well and good. But we’re not going to let. Consequently we don’t want so many rooms. Then there’s a ‘all. What use is a ‘all? It only makes work. And a study!”

Kipps had been humming and stroking his moustache since he had read the architect’s letter. “I think I’d like a little bit of a study — not a big one, of course, but one with a desk and book-shelves, like there was in Hughenden. I’d like that.”

It was only after they had talked to the architect again and seen how scandalised he was at the idea of not having a drawing-room that they consented to that Internal Feature. They consented to please him. “But we shan’t never use it,” said Ann.

Kipps had his way about a study. “When I get that study,” said Kipps, “I shall do a bit of reading I’ve long wanted to do. I shall make a habit of going in there and reading something an hour every day. There’s Shakespeare and a lot of things a man like me ought to read. Besides, we got to ‘ave *somewhere* to put the Encyclopædia. I’ve always thought a study was about what I’ve wanted all along.

You can't 'elp reading if you got a study. If you 'aven't, there's nothing for it, so far's *I* can see, but treshy novels."

He looked down at Ann and was surprised to see a joyless thoughtfulness upon her face.

"Fency, Ann!" he said, not too buoyantly, "'aving a little 'ouse of our own!"

"It won't be a little 'ouse," said Ann, "not with all them rooms."

§5

Any lingering doubt in that matter was dispelled when it came to plans.

The architect drew three sets of plans on a transparent bluish sort of paper that smelt abominably. He painted them very nicely; brick red and ginger, and arsenic green and a leaden sort of blue, and brought them over to show our young people. The first set were very simple, with practically no External Features— "a plain style," he said it was — but it looked a big sort of house nevertheless; the second had such extras as a conservatory, bow windows of various sorts, one rough-cast gable and one half-timbered ditto in plaster, and a sort of overhung verandah, and was much more imposing; and the third was quite fungoid with External Features, and honeycombed with Internal ones; it was, he said, "practically a mansion," and altogether a very noble fruit of the creative mind of man. It was, he admitted, perhaps almost too good for Hythe; his art had run away with him and produced a modern mansion in the "best Folkestone style"; it had a central hall with a staircase, a Moorish gallery, and Tudor stained glass window, crenelated battlements to the leading over the portico, an octagonal bulge with octagonal bay windows, surmounted by an oriental dome of metal, lines of yellow bricks to break up the red and many other richnesses and attractions. It was the sort of house, ornate and in its dignified way voluptuous, that a city magnate might build, but it seemed excessive to the Kippses. The first plan had seven bedrooms, the second eight, the third eleven; that had, the architect explained, "worked in" as if they were pebbles in a mountaineer's boat.

"They're big 'ouses," said Ann directly the elevations were

unrolled.

Kipps listened to the architect with round eyes and an exuberant caution in his manner, anxious not to commit himself further than he had done to the enterprise, and the architect pointed out the Features and other objects of interest with the scalpel belonging to a pocket manicure set that he carried. Ann watched Kipps' face and communicated with him furtively over the architect's head. "*Not so big*," said Ann's lips.

"It's a bit big for what I meant," said Kipps, with a reassuring eye on Ann.

"You won't think it big when you see it up," said the architect; "you take my word for that."

"We don't want no more than six bedrooms," said Kipps.

"Make this one a box-room, then," said the architect.

A feeling of impotence silenced Kipps for a time.

"Now which," said the architect, spreading them out, "is it to be?"

He flattened down the plans of the most ornate mansion to show it to better effect.

Kipps wanted to know how much each would cost "at the outside," which led to much alarmed signalling from Ann. But the architect could estimate only in the most general way.

They were not really committed to anything when the architect went away; Kipps had promised to think it over, that was all.

"We can't 'ave that 'ouse," said Ann.

"They're miles too big — all of them," agreed Kipps.

"You'd want —— . Four servants wouldn't be 'ardly enough," said Ann.

Kipps went to the hearthrug and spread himself. His tone was almost offhand. "Nex' time 'e comes," said Kipps, "I'll 'splain to him. It isn't at all the sort of thing we want. It's — it's a misunderstanding. You got no occasion to be anxious 'bout it, Ann."

"I don't see much good reely in building an 'ouse at all," said Ann.

"Oo, we *got* to build a 'ouse now we begun," said Kipps. "But, now, supposin' we 'ad —— ."

He spread out the most modest of the three plans and scratched his cheek.

§6

It was unfortunate that old Kipps came over the next day.

Old Kipps always produced peculiar states of mind in his nephew, a rash assertiveness, a disposition towards display unlike his usual self. There had been great difficulty in reconciling both these old people to the Pornick mesalliance, and at times the controversy echoed in old Kipps' expressed thoughts. This perhaps it was, and no ignoble vanity, that set the note of florid successfulness going in Kipps' conversation whenever his uncle appeared. Mrs. Kipps was, as a matter of fact, not reconciled at all, she had declined all invitations to come over on the 'bus, and was a taciturn hostess on the one occasion when the young people called at the toy shop *en route* for Mrs. Pornick. She displayed a tendency to sniff that was clearly due to pride rather than catarrh, and except for telling Ann she hoped she would not feel too "stuck up" about her marriage, confined her conversation to her nephew or the infinite. The call was a brief one and made up chiefly of pauses, no refreshment was offered or asked for, and Ann departed with a singularly high colour. For some reason she would not call at the toy shop when they found themselves again in New Romney.

But old Kipps, having adventured over and tried the table of the new *menage* and found it to his taste, showed many signs of softening towards Ann. He came again and then again. He would come over by the 'bus, and except when his mouth was absolutely full, he would give his nephew one solid and continuous mass of advice of the most subtle and disturbing description, until it was time to toddle back to the High Street for the afternoon 'bus. He would walk with him to the sea front, and commence *pourparlers* with boatmen for the purchase of one of their boats. "You ought to keep a boat of your own," he said, though Kipps was a singularly poor sailor — or he would pursue a plan that was forming in his mind in which he should own and manage what he called "weekly" property in the less conspicuous streets of Hythe. The cream of that was to be a weekly collection of rents in person, the nearest approach to feudal splendour left in this democratised country. He gave no hint of the source of the capital he designed for this investment and at times it

would appear he intended it as an occupation for his nephew rather than himself.

But there remained something in his manner towards Ann; in the glances of scrutiny he gave her unawares, that kept Kipps alertly expansive whenever he was about. And in all sorts of ways. It was on account of old Kipps, for example, that our Kipps plunged one day, a golden plunge, and brought home a box of cummerbundy ninepenny cigars, and substituted blue label old Methusaleh Four Stars for the common and generally satisfactory white brand.

"Some of this is whiskey, my boy," said old Kipps when he tasted it, smacking critical lips.

"Saw a lot of young officer fellers coming along," said old Kipps. "You ought to join the volunteers, my boy, and get to know a few."

"I dessay I shall," said Kipps. "Later."

"They'd make you an officer, you know, 'n no time. They want officers," said old Kipps. "It isn't everyone can afford it. They'd be regular glad to 'ave you.... Ain't bort a dog yet?"

"Not yet, uncle. 'Ave a segar?"

"Not a moty car?"

"Not yet, uncle."

"There's no 'urry 'bout that. And don't get one of these 'ere trashy cheap ones when you do get it, my boy. Get one as'll last a lifetime.... I'm surprised you don't 'ire a bit more."

"Ann don't seem to fency a moty car," said Kipps.

"Ah!" said old Kipps, "I expect not," and glanced a comment at the door. "She ain't used to going out," he said. "More at 'ome indoors."

"Fact is," said Kipps, hastily, "we're thinking of building a 'ouse."

"I wouldn't do that, my boy," began old Kipps, but his nephew was routing in the cheffonier drawer amidst the plans. He got them in time to check some further comment on Ann. "Um," said the old gentleman, a little impressed by the extraordinary odour and the unusual transparency of the tracing paper Kipps put into his hands. "Thinking of building a 'ouse, are you?"

Kipps began with the most modest of the three projects.

Old Kipps read slowly through his silver-rimmed spectacles:

“Plan of a ‘ouse for Arthur Kipps Esquire — Um.”

He didn’t warm to the project all at once, and Ann drifted into the room to find him still scrutinising the architect’s proposals a little doubtfully.

“We couldn’t find a decent ‘ouse anywhere,” said Kipps, leaning against the table and assuming an offhand note. “I didn’t see why we shouldn’t run up one for ourselves.” Old Kipps could not help liking the tone of that.

“We thought we might see — —” said Ann.

“It’s a spekerlation, of course,” said old Kipps, and held the plan at a distance of two feet or more from his glasses and frowned. “This isn’t exactly the ‘ouse I should expect you to ‘ave thought of, though,” he said. “Practically it’s a villa. It’s the sort of ‘ouse a bank clerk might ‘ave. ’Tisn’t what I should call a gentleman’s ‘ouse, Artie.”

“It’s plain, of course,” said Kipps, standing beside his uncle and looking down at this plan, which certainly did seem a little less magnificent now than it had at the first encounter.

“You mustn’t ‘ave it too plain,” said old Kipps.

“If it’s comfortable —— ,” Ann hazarded.

Old Kipps glanced at her over his spectacles. “You ain’t comfortable, my gal, in this world, not if you don’t live up to your position,” so putting compactly into contemporary English that fine old phrase, *noblesse oblige*. “A ‘ouse of this sort is what a retired tradesman might ‘ave, or some little whippersnapper of a s’liciter. But *you* — —”

“Course that isn’t the o’ny plan,” said Kipps, and tried the middle one.

But it was the third one which won over old Kipps. “Now that’s a *‘ouse*, my boy,” he said at the sight of it.

Ann came and stood just behind her husband’s shoulder while old Kipps expanded upon the desirability of the larger scheme. “You ought to ‘ave a billiard-room,” he said; “I don’t see that, but all the rest’s all right. A lot of these ‘ere officers ‘ere ‘ud be glad of a game of billiards.”...

“What’s all these dots?” said old Kipps.

“S’rubbery,” said Kipps. “Flow’ing s’rubs.”

“There’s eleven bedrooms in that ‘ouse,” said Ann. “It’s a bit of a lot, ain’t it, uncle?”

“You’ll want ‘em, my girl. As you get on, you’ll be ‘aving visitors. Friends of your ‘usband, p’raps, from the School of Musketry, what you want ‘im to get on with. You can’t never tell.”

“If we ‘ave a great s’rubbery,” Ann ventured, “we shall ‘ave to keep a gardener.”

“If you don’t ‘ave a s’rubbery,” said old Kipps, with a note of patient reasoning, “‘ow are you to prevent every jackanapes that goes by, starin’ into your drorin’-room winder — p’raps when you get someone a bit special to entertain?”

“We ain’t *used* to a s’rubbery,” said Ann, mulishly; “we get on very well ‘ere.”

“It isn’t what you’re used to,” said old Kipps, “it’s what you ought to ‘ave *now*.” And with that Ann dropped out of the discussion.

“Study and lib’ry,” old Kipps read. “That’s right. I see a Tantalus the other day over Brookland, the very thing for a gentleman’s study. I’ll try and get over and bid for it.”...

By ‘bus time old Kipps was quite enthusiastic about the house building, and it seemed to be definitely settled that the largest plan was the one decided upon. But Ann had said nothing further in the matter.

§7

When Kipps returned from seeing his uncle into the ‘bus — there always seemed a certain doubt whether that portly figure would go into the little red “Tip-Top” box — he found Ann still standing by the table, looking with an expression of comprehensive disapproval at the three plans.

“There don’t seem much the matter with uncle,” said Kipps, assuming the hearthrug, “spite of ‘is ‘eartburn. ‘E ‘opped up them steps like a bird.”

Ann remained staring at the plans.

“You don’t like them plans?” hazarded Kipps.

“No, I don’t, Artie.”

“We got to build somethin’ now.”

“But — it’s a gentleman’s ‘ouse, Artie!”

“It’s — it’s a decent size, o’ course.”

Kipps took a flirting look at the drawing and went to the window.

“Look at the cleanin’. Free servants’ll be lost in that ‘ouse, Artie.”

“We must *‘ave* servants,” said Kipps.

Ann looked despondently at her future residence.

“We got to keep up our position, any’ow,” said Kipps, turning towards her. “It stands to reason, Ann, we got a position. Very well! I can’t ‘ave you scrubbin’ floors. You got to ‘ave a servant and you got to manage a ‘ouse. You wouldn’t ‘ave me ashamed — —”

Ann opened her lips and did not speak.

“What?” asked Kipps.

“Nothing,” said Ann, “only I did want it to be a *little* ‘ouse, Artie. I wanted it to be a ‘andy little ‘ouse, jest for us.”

Kipps’ face was suddenly flushed and mulish. He took up the curiously smelling tracings again. “I’m not a-going to be looked down upon,” he said. “It’s not only Uncle I’m thinking of!”

Ann stared at him.

Kipps went on. “I won’t ‘ave that young Walshingham f’r instance, sneering and sniffling at me. Making out as if we was all wrong. I see ‘im yesterday.... Nor Coote neether. I’m as good — we’re as good. Whatever’s ‘appened.”

Silence and the rustle of plans.

He looked up and saw Ann’s eyes bright with tears. For a moment the two stared at one another.

“We’ll ‘ave the big ‘ouse,” said Ann, with a gulp. “I didn’t think of that, Artie.”

Her aspect was fierce and resolute, and she struggled with emotion. “We’ll ‘ave the big ‘ouse,” she repeated. “They shan’t say I dragged you down wiv’ me — none of them shan’t say that. I’ve thought — I’ve always been afraid of that.”

Kipps looked again at the plan, and suddenly the grand house had become very grand indeed. He blew.

“No, Artie, none of them shan’t say that,” and with something blind in her motions Ann tried to turn the plan round to her....

After all, Kipps thought there might be something to say for the

milder project.... But he had gone so far that now he did not know how to say it.

And so the plans went out to the builders, and in a little while Kipps was committed to two thousand five hundred pounds worth of building. But then, you know, he had an income of twelve hundred a year.

§8

It is extraordinary what minor difficulties cluster about house building.

"I say, Ann," remarked Kipps one day, "we shall 'ave to call this little 'ouse by a name. I was thinking of 'Ome Cottage. But I dunno whether 'Ome Cottage is quite the thing like. All these little fishermen's places are called Cottages."

"I like cottage," said Ann.

"It's got eleven bedrooms, d'see," said Kipps. "I don't see 'ow you can call it a cottage with more bedrooms than four. Prop'ly speaking, it's a Large Villa. Prop'ly, it's almost a Big 'Ouse. Leastways a 'Ouse."

"Well," said Ann, "if you must call it Villa — Home Villa.... I wish it wasn't."

Kipps meditated.

"'Ow about Eureka Villa?" he said, raising his voice.

"What's Eureka?"

"It's a name," he said. "There used to be Eureka Dress Fasteners. There's lots of names, come to think of it, to be got out of a shop. There's Pyjama Villa. I remember that in the hosiery. No, come to think, that wouldn't do. But Maraposa — sort of oatmeal cloth, that was.... No! Eureka's better."

Ann meditated. "It seems silly like to 'ave a name that don't mean much."

"Perhaps it does," said Kipps. "Though it's what people 'ave to do."

He became meditative. "I got it!" he cried.

"Not Oreeka!" said Ann.

"No! There used to be a 'ouse at Hastings opposite our school —

quite a big ‘ouse it was — St. Ann’s. Now *that* — —”

“No,” said Mrs. Kipps with decision. “Thanking you kindly, but I don’t have no butcher boys making game of me.”...

They consulted Carshot, who suggested after some days of reflection, Waddycombe, as a graceful reminder of Kipps’ grandfather; Old Kipps, who was for “Upton Manor House,” where he had once been second footman; Buggins, who favoured either a stern simple number, “Number One” — if there were no other houses there, or something patriotic, as “Empire Villa,” and Pierce, who inclined to “Sandringham”; but in spite of all this help they were still undecided when, amidst violent perturbations of the soul, and after the most complex and difficult hagglings, wranglings, fears, muddles and goings to and fro, Kipps became the joyless owner of a freehold plot of three-eighths of an acre, and saw the turf being wheeled away from the site that should one day be his home.

CHAPTER II THE CALLERS

§1

The Kippses sat at their midday dinner-table and amidst the vestiges of rhubarb pie, and discussed two postcards the one o'clock post had brought. It was a rare bright moment of sunshine in a wet and windy day in the March that followed their marriage. Kipps was attired in a suit of brown, with a tie of fashionable green, while Ann wore one of those picturesque loose robes that are usually associated with sandals and advanced ideas. But there weren't any sandals on Ann or any advanced ideas, and the robe had come quite recently through the counsels of Mrs. Sid Pornick. "It's Artlike," said Kipps, giving way. "It's more comfortable," said Ann. The room looked out by French windows upon a little patch of green and the Hythe parade. The parade was all shiny wet with rain, and the green-grey sea tumbled and tumbled between parade and sky.

The Kipps' furniture, except for certain chromo lithographs of Kipps' incidental choice that struck a quiet note amidst the wall paper, had been tactfully forced by an expert salesman, and it was in a style of mediocre elegance. There was a sideboard of carved oak that had only one fault, it reminded Kipps at times of wood-carving, and its panel of bevelled glass now reflected the back of his head. On its shelf were two books from Parsons' Library, each with a "place" marked by a slip of paper; neither of the Kippses could have told you the title of either book they read, much less the author's name. There was an ebonised overmantel set with phials and pots of brilliant colour, each duplicated by looking-glass, and bearing also a pair of Chinese jars made in Birmingham, a wedding present from Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Pornick, and several sumptuous Japanese fans. And there was a Turkey carpet of great richness. In addition to these modern exploits of Messrs. Bunt and Bubble, there were two inactive tall clocks, whose extreme dilapidation appealed to the connoisseur; a terrestrial and a celestial globe, the latter deeply indented; a number of good old iron moulded and dusty books, and a stuffed owl wanting one (easily replaceable) glass eye, obtained by the exertions of Uncle

Kipps. The table equipage was as much as possible like Mrs. Bindon Botting's, only more costly, and in addition there were green and crimson wine glasses — though the Kippses never drank wine.

Kipps turned to the more legible of his two postcards again.

"'Unavoidably prevented from seein' me to-day,' 'e says. I like 'is cheek. After I give 'im 'is start and everything."

He blew.

"'E certainly treats you a bit orf'and," said Ann.

Kipps gave vent to his dislike of young Walshingham. "He's getting too big for 'is britches," he said. "I'm beginning to wish she *'ad* brought an action for breach. Ever since *'e* said she wouldn't, 'e's seemed to think I've got no right to spend my own money."

"'E's never liked your building the 'ouse," said Ann.

Kipps displayed wrath. "What the goodness 'as it got to do wiv' 'im?"

"Overman indeed!" he added. "Overmantel!... 'E trys that on with me, I'll tell 'im something 'e won't like."

He took up the second card. "Dashed if I can read a word of it. I can jest make out Chit-low at the end and that's all."

He scrutinised it. "It's like someone in a fit writing. This here might be W H A T — *what*. P R I C E — *I* got it! What price Harry now? It was a sort of saying of 'is. I expect 'e's either done something or not done something towards starting that play, Ann."

"I expect that's about it," said Ann.

Kipps grunted with effort. "I can't read the rest," he said at last, "nohow."

A thoroughly annoying post. He pitched the card on the table, stood up and went to the window, where Ann, after a momentary reconnaisance at Chitterlow's hieroglyphics, came to join him.

"Wonder what I shall do this afternoon," said Kipps, with his hands deep in his pockets.

He produced and lit a cigarette.

"Go for a walk, I s'pose," said Ann.

"I *been* for a walk this morning.

"S'pose I must go for another," he added, after an interval.

They regarded the windy waste of sea for a space.

"Wonder why it is 'e won't see me," said Kipps, returning to the

problem of young Walshingham. “It’s all lies about ‘is being too busy.”

Ann offered no solution.

“Rain again!” said Kipps, as the lash of the little drops stung the window.

“Oo, bother!” said Kipps, “you got to do something. Look ‘ere, Ann! I’ll go orf for a reg’lar tramp through the rain, up by Saltwood, ‘round by Newington, over the camp, and so ‘round and back, and see ‘ow they’re getting on about the ‘ouse. See? And look ‘ere! you get Gwendolen to go out a bit before I come back. If it’s still rainy, she can easy go ‘round and see ‘er sister. Then we’ll ‘ave a bit of tea, with tea cake — all buttery, see? Toce it ourselves, p’raps. Eh?”

“I dessay I can find something to do in the ‘ouse,” said Ann, considering. “You’ll take your mackintosh and leggin’s, I s’pose. You’ll get wet without your mackintosh over those roads.”

“Righ-O,” said Kipps, and went to ask Gwendolen for his brown leggings and his other pair of boots.

§2

Things conspired to demoralise Kipps that afternoon.

When he got outside the house everything looked so wet under the drive of the southwester that he abandoned the prospect of the clay lanes towards Newington altogether, and turned east to Folkestone along the Seabrook digue. His mackintosh flapped about him, the rain stung his cheek; for a time he felt a hardy man. And then as abruptly the rain ceased and the wind fell, and before he was through Sandgate High Street it was a bright spring day. And there was Kipps in his mackintosh and squeaky leggings, looking like a fool!

Inertia carried him another mile to the Leas, and there the whole world was pretending there had never been such a thing as rain — ever. There wasn’t a cloud in the sky; except for an occasional puddle the asphalt paths looked as dry as a bone. A smartly dressed man in one of those overcoats that look like ordinary cloth and are really most deceitfully and unfairly waterproof, passed him and glanced at the stiff folds of his mackintosh. “Demn!” said Kipps. His mackintosh swished against his leggings, his leggings piped and

whistled over his boot-tops.

"Why do I never get anything right?" Kipps asked of a bright implacable universe.

Nice old ladies passed him, refined people with tidy umbrellas, bright, beautiful, supercilious-looking children. Of course! the right thing for such a day as this was a light overcoat and an umbrella. A child might have known that. He had them at home, but how could one explain that? He decided to turn down by the Harvey monument and escape through Clifton Gardens towards the hills. And thereby he came upon Coote.

He already felt the most abject and propitiatory of social outcasts when he came upon Coote, and Coote finished him. He passed within a yard of Coote. Coote was coming along towards the Leas, and when Kipps saw him his legs hesitated about their office and he seemed to himself to stagger about all over the footpath. At the sight of him Coote started visibly. Then a sort of *rigor vitae* passed through his frame, his jaw protruded and errant bubbles of air seemed to escape and run about beneath his loose skin. (Seemed I say — I am perfectly well aware that there is really connective tissue in Coote as in all of us to prevent anything of the sort.) His eyes fixed themselves on the horizon and glazed. As he went by Kipps could hear his even, resolute breathing. He went by, and Kipps staggered on into a universe of dead cats and dust heaps, rind and ashes — *cut!* Cut!

It was part of the inexorable decrees of Providence that almost immediately afterwards the residuum of Kipps had to pass a very, very long and observant-looking girls' school.

Kipps recovered consciousness again on the road between Shorncliffe Station and Cheriton, though he cannot remember, indeed to this day he has never attempted to remember, how he got there. And he was back at certain thoughts suggested by his last night's novel reading, that linked up directly with the pariah-like emotions of these last encounters. The novel lay at home upon the cheffonier; it was one of society and politics — there is no need whatever to give the title or name the author — written with a heavy-handed thoroughness that overrode any possibility of resistance on the part of the Kipps mind. It had crushed all his poor little edifice of ideals,

his dreams of a sensible, unassuming existence, of snugness, of not caring what people said and all the rest of it, to dust; it had reinstated, squarely and strongly again, the only proper conception of English social life. There was a character in the book who trifled with Art, who was addicted to reading French novels, who dressed in a loose, careless way, who was a sorrow to his dignified, silvery-haired, politico-religious mother, and met the admonitions of bishops with a front of brass. He treated a "nice girl," to whom they had got him engaged, badly; he married beneath him — some low thing or other. And sank....

Kipps could not escape the application of the case. He was enabled to see how this sort of thing looked to decent people; he was enabled to gauge the measure of the penalties due. His mind went from that to the frozen marble of Coote's visage.

He deserved it!...

That day of remorse! Later it found him coming upon the site of his building operations and surveying it in a mood near to despair, his mackintosh over his arm.

Hardly anyone was at work that day — no doubt the builders were having him in some obscure manner — and the whole place seemed a dismal and depressing litter. The builder's shed, black-lettered Wilkins, Builder, Hythe, looked like a stranded thing amidst a cast-up disorder of wheelbarrows and wheeling planks, and earth and sand and bricks. The foundations of the walls were trenches full of damp concrete, drying in patches; the rooms — it was incredible they could ever be rooms — were shaped out as squares and oblongs of coarse, wet grass and sorrel. They looked absurdly small — dishonestly small. What could you expect? Of course the builders were having him, building too small, building all wrong, using bad materials! Old Kipps had told him a wrinkle or two. The builders were having him, young Walshingham was having him, everybody was having him! They were having him and laughing at him because they didn't respect him. They didn't respect him because he couldn't do things right. Who could respect him?...

He was an outcast, he had no place in the world. He had had his chance in the world and turned his back on it. He had "behaved badly" — that was the phrase....

Here a great house was presently to arise, a house to be paid for, a house neither he nor Ann could manage — with eleven bedrooms, and four disrespectful servants having them all the time!

How had it all happened exactly?

This was the end of his great fortune! What a chance he had had! If he had really carried out his first intentions and stuck to things, how much better everything might have been! If he had got a tutor — that had been in his mind originally — a special sort of tutor to show him everything right; a tutor for gentlemen of neglected education. If he had read more and attended better to what Coote had said!

Coote, who had just cut him!...

Eleven bedrooms! What had possessed him? No one would ever come to see them, no one would ever have anything to do with them. Even his aunt cut him! His uncle treated him with a half-contemptuous sufferance. He had not a friend worth counting in the world! Buggins, Carshot, Pierce; shop assistants! The Pornicks — a low socialist lot! He stood among his foundations like a lonely figure among ruins; he stood among the ruins of his future, and owned himself a foolish and mistaken man. He saw himself and Ann living out their shameful lives in this great crazy place — as it would be — with everybody laughing secretly at them and their eleven rooms, and nobody approaching them — nobody nice and right that is, for ever. And Ann!

What was the matter with Ann? She'd given up going for walks lately, got touchy and tearful, been fitful with her food. Just when she didn't ought to. It was all a part of the judgment upon wrongdoing, it was all part of the social penalties that Juggernaut of a novel had brought home to his mind.

§3

He let himself in with his latchkey. He went moodily into the dining-room and got out the plans to look at them. He had a vague hope that there would prove to be only ten bedrooms. But he found there were still eleven. He became aware of Ann standing over him. "Look 'ere, Artie!" said Ann.

He looked up and found her holding a number of white oblongs.

His eyebrows rose.

"It's Callers," said Ann.

He put his plans aside slowly and took and read the cards in silence, with a sort of solemnity. Callers after all! Then perhaps he wasn't to be left out of the world after all. Mrs. G. Porrett Smith, Miss Porrett Smith, Miss Mabel Porrett Smith, and two smaller cards of the Rev. G. Porrett Smith. "Lor'!" he said, "*Clergy!*"

"There was a lady," said Ann, "and two growed-up gals — all dressed up!"

"And 'im?"

"There wasn't no *'im*."

"Not —— ?" He held out the little card.

"No; there was a lady and two young ladies."

"But — these cards! Wad they go and leave these two little cards with the Rev. G. Smith on for? Not if 'e wasn't with 'em."

"'E wasn't with 'em."

"Not a little chap — dodgin' about be'ind the others? And didn't come in?"

"I didn't see no gentleman with them at all," said Ann.

"Rum!" said Kipps. A half-forgotten experience came back to him. "*I* know," he said, waving the reverend gentleman's card; "'e give 'em the slip, that's what he'd done. Gone off while they was rapping before you let 'em in. It's a fair call, any'ow." He felt a momentary base satisfaction at his absence. "What did they talk about, Ann?"

There was a pause. "I didn't let 'em in," said Ann.

He looked up suddenly and perceived that something unusual was the matter with Ann. Her face was flushed, her eyes were red and hard.

"Didn't let 'em in?"

"No! They didn't come in at all."

He was too astonished for words.

"I answered the door," said Ann; "I'd been upstairs 'namelling the floor. 'Ow was I to think about Callers, Artie? We ain't never 'ad Callers all the time we been 'ere. I'd sent Gwendolen out for a bref of fresh air, and there I was upstairs 'namelling that floor she done so bad, so's to get it done before she came back. I thought I'd 'namel

that floor and then get tea and ‘ave it quiet with you, toce and all, before she came back. ‘Ow was I to think about Callers?”

She paused. “Well,” said Kipps, “what them?”

“They came and rapped. ‘Ow was I to know? I thought it was a tradesman or something. Never took my apron off, never wiped the ‘namel off my ‘ands — nothing. There they was!”

She paused again. She was getting to the disagreeable part.

“Wad they say?” said Kipps.

“She says, ‘Is Mrs. Kipps at home?’ See? To me.”

“Yes.”

“And me all painty and no cap on and nothing, neither missis nor servant like. There, Artie, I could ‘a sunk through the floor with shame, I really could. I could ‘ardly get my voice. I couldn’t think of nothing to say but just ‘Not at ‘Ome,’ and out of ‘abit like I ‘eld the tray. And they give me the cards and went, and ‘ow I shall ever look that lady in the face again I don’t know.... And that’s all about it, Artie! They looked me up and down, they did, and then I shut the door on ‘em.”

“Goo!” said Kipps.

Ann went and poked the fire needlessly with a passion quivering hand.

“I wouldn’t ‘ave ‘ad that ‘appen for five pounds,” said Kipps. “A clergyman and all!”

Ann dropped the poker into the fender with some *éclat* and stood up and looked at her hot face in the glass. Kipps’ disappointment grew. “You did ought to ‘ave known better than that, Ann! You reely did.”

He sat forward, cards in hand, with a deepening sense of social disaster. The things were laid upon the table, toast sheltered under a cover, at mid fender, the teapot warmed beside it, and the kettle just lifted from the hob, sang amidst the coals. Ann glanced at him for a moment, then stooped with the kettle-holder to wet the tea.

“Tcha!” said Kipps, with his mental state developing.

“I don’t see it’s any use getting in a state about it now,” said Ann.

“Don’t you? I do. See? ‘Ere’s these people, good people, want to ‘sociate with us, and ‘ere you go and slap ’em in the face!”

“I didn’t slap ’em in the face.”

“You do — practically. You slams the door in their face, and that’s all we see of ’em ever. I wouldn’t ‘ave ‘ad this ‘appen not for a ten-pound note.”

He rounded his regrets with a grunt. For a while there was silence, save for the little stir of Ann’s movements preparing the tea.

“Tea, Artie,” said Ann, handing him a cup.

Kipps took it.

“I put sugar *once*,” said Ann.

“Oo, dash it! Oo cares?” said Kipps, taking an extraordinarily large additional lump with fury quivering fingers, and putting his cup with a slight excess of force on the recess cupboard. “Oo cares?

“I wouldn’t ‘ave ‘ad that ‘appen,” he said, bidding steadily against accomplished things, “for twenty pounds.”

He gloomed in silence through a long minute or so. Then Ann said the fatal thing that exploded him. “Artie!” she said.

“What?”

“There’s Buttud Toce down there! By your foot!” There was a pause, husband and wife regarded one another.

“Buttud Toce!” he said. “You go and mess up them callers and then you try and stuff me up with Buttud Toce! Buttud Toce indeed! ‘Ere’s our first chance of knowing anyone that’s at all fit to ‘sociate with —— . Look ‘ere, Ann! Tell you what it is — you got to return that call.”

“Return that call!”

“Yes, you got to return that call. That’s what you got to do! I know — —” He waved his arm vaguely towards the miscellany of books in the recess. “It’s in Manners and Rools of Good S’ity. You got to find jest ‘ow many cards to leave and you got to go and leave ‘em. See?”

Ann’s face expressed terror. “But, Artie, ‘ow *can* I?”

“‘Ow *can* you? ‘Ow *could* you? You got to do it, any’ow. They won’t know you — not in your Bond Street ‘at! If they do, they won’t say nothing.”

His voice assumed a note of entreaty. “You mus’, Ann.”

“I can’t.”

“You mus’.”

“I can’t and I won’t. Anything in reason I’ll do, but face those

people again I can't — after what 'as 'appened."

"You won't?"

"No!"...

"So there they go — orf! And we never see them again! And so it goes on! So it goes on! We don't know nobody and we *shan't* know anybody! And you won't put yourself out not a little bit, or take the trouble to find out anything 'ow it ought to be done."

Terrible pause.

"I never ought to 'ave merried you, Artie, that's the troof."

"Oh! *don't* go into that."

"I never ought to 'ave merried you, Artie. I'm not equal to the position. If you 'adn't said you'd drown yourself — —" She choked.

"I don' see why you shouldn't *try*, Ann. *I've* improved. Why don't you? 'Stead of which you go sending out the servant and 'namelling floors, and then when visitors come — —"

"'Ow was *I* to know about y'r old visitors?" cried Ann in a wail, and suddenly got up and fled from amidst their ruined tea, the tea of which "toce, all buttery," was to be the crown and glory.

Kipps watched her with a momentary consternation. Then he hardened his heart. "Ought to 'ave known better," he said, "goin' on like that!" He remained for a space rubbing his knees and muttering. He emitted scornfully: "I carn't an' I won't." He saw her as the source of all his shames.

Presently, quite mechanically, he stooped down and lifted the flowery china cover. "Ter dash 'er Buttud Toce!" he shouted at the sight of it, and clapped the cover down again hard....

When Gwendolen came back she perceived things were in a slightly unusual poise. Kipps sat by the fire in a rigid attitude reading a casually selected volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and Ann was upstairs and inaccessible — to reappear at a later stage with reddened eyes. Before the fire and still in a perfectly assimilable condition was what was evidently an untouched supply of richly buttered toast under a cracked cover.

"They've 'ad a bit of a tiff," said Gwendolen, attending to her duties in the kitchen, with her outdoor hat still on and her mouth full. "They're rummuns — if ever! My eye!"

And she took another piece of Ann's generously buttered toast.

The Kippses spoke no more that day to one another.

The squabble about cards and buttered toast was as serious to them as the most rational of differences. It was all rational to them. Their sense of wrong burnt within them; their sense of what was owing to themselves, the duty of implacability, the obstinacy of pride. In the small hours Kipps lay awake at the nadir of unhappiness and came near groaning. He saw life as an extraordinarily desolating muddle; his futile house, his social discredit, his bad behaviour to Helen, his low marriage to Ann....

He became aware of something irregular in Ann's breathing....

He listened. She was awake and quietly and privately sobbing!

He hardened his heart; resolutely he hardened his heart.

The stupid little tragedies of these clipped and limited lives!

What is the good of keeping up the idyllic sham and pretending that ill-educated, misdirected people "get along very well," and that all this is harmlessly funny and nothing more? You think I'm going to write fat, silly, grinning novels about half-educated, under-trained people and keep it up all the time, that the whole thing's nothing but funny!

As I think of them lying unhappily there in the darkness, my vision pierces the night. See what I can see! Above them, brooding over them, I tell you there is a monster, a lumpish monster, like some great, clumsy griffin thing, like the Crystal Palace labyrinthodon, like Coote, like the leaden goddess Dulness Pope Abhorred, like some fat, proud flunkey, like pride, like indolence, like all that is darkening and heavy and obstructive in life. It is matter and darkness, it is the anti-soul, Stupidity. My Kippses live in its shadow. Shalford and his apprenticeship system, the Hastings Academy, the ideas of Coote, the ideas of the old Kippses, all the ideas that have made Kipps what he is, all these are its shadow. But for that monster they might not be groping among false ideas and hurt one another so sorely and so stupidly; but for that, the glowing promise of childhood and youth might have had a happier fruition, thought might have awakened in them to meet *the* thought of the world, the quickening sunshine of literature pierced to the substance of their souls, their lives might not

have been divorced, as now they are divorced for ever, from the apprehension of beauty that we favoured ones are given — the vision of the Grail that makes life fine for ever. I have laughed, and I laugh at these two people; I have sought to make you laugh....

But I see through the darkness the souls of my Kippses, as they are, as little pink strips of living stuff, like the bodies of little, ill-nourished, ailing, ignorant children, children who feel pain, who are naughty and muddled and suffer and do not understand why. And the claw of this Beast rests upon them!

CHAPTER III TERMINATIONS

§1

Next morning came a remarkable telegram from Folkestone. “Please come at once, urgent, Walshingham,” said the telegram, and Kipps, after an agitated but still ample breakfast, departed....

When he returned his face was very white and his countenance disordered. He let himself in with his latchkey and came into the dining-room where Ann sat, affecting to work at a little thing she called a bib. She heard his hat fall in the hall before he entered, as though he had missed the peg. “I got something to tell you, Ann,” he said, disregarding their overnight quarrel, and went to the hearthrug and took hold of the mantel, and stared at Ann as though the sight of her was novel.

“Well?” said Ann, not looking up and working a little faster.

“‘E’s gone!”

Ann looked up sharply and her hands stopped. “*Who’s* gone?” For the first time she perceived Kipps’ pallor.

“Young Walshingham — I saw ‘er and she tole me.”

“Gone? What d’you mean?”

“Cleared out! Gone off for good!”

“What for?”

“For ‘is ‘ealth,” said Kipps, with sudden bitterness. “‘E’s been speckylating. He’s speckylated our money and ‘e’s speckylated their money, and now ‘e’s took ‘is ‘ook. That’s all about it, Ann.”

“You mean?”

“I mean ‘e’s orf and our twenty-four thousand’s orf, too! And ‘ere we are! Smashed up! That’s all about it, Ann.” He panted.

Ann had no vocabulary for such an occasion. “Oh, Lor’!” she said, and sat still.

Kipps came about and stuck his hands deeply in his trouser pockets. “Speckylated every penny — lorst it all — and gorn.”

Even his lips were white.

“You mean we ain’t got nothin’ left, Artie?”

“Not a penny! Not a bloomin’ penny, Ann. No!”

A gust of passion whirled across the soul of Kipps. He flung out a knuckly fist. “If I ‘ad ‘im ‘ere,” he said, “I’d — I’d — I’d wring ‘is neck for ‘im. I’d — I’d — —” His voice rose to a shout. He thought of Gwendolen in the kitchen and fell to “Ugh!”

“But, Artie,” said Ann, trying to grasp it, “d’you mean to say he’s took our money?”

“Speckylated it!” said Kipps, with an illustrative flourish of the arm, that failed to illustrate. “Bort things dear and sold ’em cheap, and played the ‘ankey-pankey jackass with everything we got. That’s what I mean ‘e’s done, Ann.” He repeated this last sentence with the addition of violent adverbs.

“D’you mean to say our money’s *gone*, Artie?”

“Ter-dash it, *Yes*, Ann!” swore Kipps, exploding in a shout. “Ain’t I tellin’ you?”

He was immediately sorry. “I didn’t mean to ‘oller at you, Ann,” he said, “but I’m all shook up. I don’t ‘ardly know what I’m sayin’. Ev’ry penny.”...

“But, Artie — —”

Kipps grunted. He went to the window and stared for a moment at a sunlit sea. “Gord!” he swore.

“I mean,” he said, coming back to Ann and with an air of exasperation, “that he’s ‘bezzled and ‘ooked it. That’s what I mean, Ann.”

Ann put down the bib. “But wot are we going to *do*, Artie?”

Kipps indicated ignorance, wrath and despair with one comprehensive gesture of his hands. He caught an ornament from the mantel and replaced it. “I’m going to bang about,” he said, “if I ain’t precious careful.”

“You saw *‘er*, you say?”

“Yes.”

“What did she say ‘xactly?” said Ann.

“Told me to see a s’licitor — tole me to get someone to ‘elp me at once. She was there in black — like she used to be — and speaking cool and careful-like. ‘Elen!... She’s precious ‘ard, is ‘Elen. She looked at me straight. ‘It’s my fault,’ she said, ‘I ought to ‘ave warned you.... Only under the circumstances it was a little difficult.’ Straight as anything. I didn’t ‘ardly say anything to ‘er. I didn’t seem

to begin to take it in until she was showing me out. I ‘adn’t anything to say. Jest as well, perhaps. She talked like a call a’most. She said — what *was* it she said about her mother? ‘My mother’s overcome with grief,’ she said, ‘so naturally everything comes on me.’”

“And she told you to get someone to ‘elp you?”

“Yes. I been to old Bean.”

“O’ Bean?”

“Yes. What I took my business away from!”

“What did he say?”

“He was a bit off’and at first, but then ‘e come ‘round. He couldn’t tell me anything till ‘e knew the facts. What I know of young Walshingham, there won’t be much ‘elp in the facts. No!”

He reflected for a space. “It’s a smash-up, Ann. More likely than not, Ann, ‘e’s left us over’ead in debt. We got to get out of it just ‘ow we can....

“We got to begin again,” he went on. “‘*Ow*, I don’t know. All the way ‘ome my ‘ead’s been going. We got to get a living some’ow or other. ‘Aving time to ourselves, and a bit of money to spend, and no hurry and worry, it’s all over for ever, Ann. We was fools, Ann. We didn’t know our benefits. We been caught. Gord!... Gord!”

He was on the verge of “banging about” again.

They heard a jingle in the passage, the large soft impact of a servant’s indoor boots. As if she were a part, a mitigatory part of Fate, came Gwendolen to lay the midday meal. Kipps displayed self-control forthwith. Ann picked up the bib again and bent over it, and the Kippses bore themselves gloomily perhaps, but not despairfully, while their dependant was in the room. She spread the cloth and put out the cutlery with a slow inaccuracy, and Kipps, after a whisper to himself, went again to the window. Ann got up and put away her work methodically in the cheffonier.

“When I think,” said Kipps, as soon as the door closed again behind Gwendolen, “when I think of the ‘ole people and ‘aving to tell ’em of it all — I want to smesh my ‘ead against the nearest wall. Smesh my silly brains out! And Buggins — Buggins what I’d ‘arf promised to start in a lill’ outfitting shop in Rendezvous Street.”...

Gwendolen returned and restored dignity.

The midday meal spread itself slowly before them. Gwendolen,

after her custom, left the door open and Kipps closed it carefully before sitting down.

He stood for a moment, regarding the meal doubtfully.

“I don’t feel as if I could swaller a moufful,” he said.

“You got to eat,” said Ann....

For a time they said little, and once swallowing was achieved, ate on with a sort of melancholy appetite. Each was now busy thinking.

“After all,” said Kipps, presently, “whatever ‘appens, they can’t turn us out or sell us up before nex’ quarter-day. I’m pretty sure about that.”

“Sell us up!” said Ann.

“I dessey we’re bankrup’,” said Kipps, trying to say it easily and helping himself with a trembling hand to unnecessary potatoes.

Then a long silence. Ann ceased to eat, and there were silent tears.

“More potatoes, Artie?” choked Ann.

“I couldn’t,” said Kipps. “No.”

He pushed back his plate, which was indeed replete with potatoes, got up and walked about the room. Even the dinner-table looked distraught and unusual.

“What to do, I *don’t* know,” he said.

“Oh, *Lord*!” he ejaculated, and picked up and slapped down a book.

Then his eye fell upon another postcard that had come from Chitterlow by the morning’s post, and which now lay by him on the mantel-shelf. He took it up, glanced at its imperfectly legible message, and put it down.

“Delayed!” he said, scornfully. “Not prodooced in the smalls. Or is it smells ‘e says? ‘Ow can one understand that? Any’ow ‘e’s ‘umbugging again.... Somefing about the Strand. No! Well, ‘e’s ‘ad all the money ‘e’ll ever get out of me!... I’m done.”

He seemed to find a momentary relief in the dramatic effect of his announcement. He came near to a swagger of despair upon the hearthrug, and then suddenly came and sat down next to Ann and rested his chin on the knuckles of his two clenched hands.

“I been a fool, Ann,” he said in a gloomy monotone. “I been a brasted fool. But it’s ‘ard on us, all the same. It’s ‘ard.”

“‘‘Ow was you to know?” said Ann.

“I ought to ‘ave known. I did in a sort of way know. And ‘ere we are! I wouldn’t care so much if it was myself, but it’s *you*, Ann! ‘Ere we are! Regular smashed up! And you — —” He checked at an unspeakable aggravation of their disaster. “I knew ‘e wasn’t to be depended upon and there I left it! And you got to pay.... What’s to ‘appen to us all, I don’t know.”

He thrust out his chin and glared at fate.

“‘Ow do you know ‘e’s speckylated everything?” said Ann, after a silent survey of him.

“‘E ‘as,” said Kipps, irritably, holding firm to disaster.

“She say so?”

“She don’t know, of course, but you depend upon it that’s it. She told me she knew something was on, and when she found ‘im gone and a note lef’ for her she knew it was up with ‘im. ‘E went by the night boat. She wrote that telegram off to me straight away.”

Ann surveyed his features with tender, perplexed eyes; she had never seen him so white and drawn before, and her hand rested an inch or so away from his arm. The actual loss was still, as it were, afar from her. The immediate thing was his enormous distress.

“‘Ow do you know —— ?” she said and stopped. It would irritate him too much.

Kipps’ imagination was going headlong.

“Sold up!” he emitted presently, and Ann flinched.

“Going back to work, day after day — I can’t stand it, Ann, I can’t. And you — —”

“It don’t do to think of it,” said Ann.

Presently he came upon a resolve. “I keep on thinking of it, and thinking of it, and what’s to be done and what’s to be done. I shan’t be any good ‘ome s’arfernoon. It keeps on going ‘round and ‘round in my ‘ead, and ‘round and ‘round. I better go for a walk or something. I’d be no comfort to you, Ann. I should want to ‘owl and ‘ammer things if I ‘ung about ‘ome. My fingers is all atwitch. I shall keep on thinking ‘ow I might ‘ave stopped it and callin’ myself a fool.”...

He looked at her between pleading and shame. It seemed like deserting her.

Ann regarded him with tear-dimmed eyes.

"You'd better do what's good for you, Artie," she said.... "*I'll* be best cleaning. It's no use sending off Gwendolen before her month, and the top room wants turning out." She added with a sort of grim humour: "May as well turn it out now while I got it."

"I *better* go for a walk," said Kipps....

And presently our poor exploded Kipps was marching out to bear his sudden misery. Habit turned him up the road towards his growing house, and then suddenly he perceived his direction— "Oh, Lor'!" — and turned aside and went up the steep way to the hill crest and the Sandling Road, and over the line by that tree-embowered Junction, and athwart the wide fields towards Postling — a little, black, marching figure — and so up the Downs and over the hills, whither he had never gone before....

§2

He came back long after dark, and Ann met him in the passage.

"Where you been, Artie?" she asked, with a strained note in her voice.

"I been walking and walking — trying to tire myself out. All the time I been thinking what shall I do. Trying to fix something up all out of nothing."

"I didn't know you meant to be out all this time."

Kipps was gripped by compunction....

"I can't think what we ought to do," he said, presently.

"You can't do anything much, Artie, not till you hear from Mr. Bean."

"No; I can't do anything much. That's jest it. And all this time I keep feelin' if I don't do something the top of my 'ead'll bust.... Been trying to make up advertisements 'arf the time I been out— 'bout finding a place, good salesman and stock-keeper, and good Manchester dresses, window-dressing — Lor'! Fancy that all beginning again!... If you went to stay with Sid a bit — if I sent every penny I got to you — I dunno! I dunno!"

When they had gone to bed there was an elaborate attempt to get to sleep.... In one of their great waking pauses Kipps remarked in a muffled tone: "I didn't mean to frighten you, Ann, being out so late. I

kep' on walking and walking, and some'ow it seemed to do me good. I went out to the 'illtop ever so far beyond Stanford, and sat there ever so long, and it seemed to make me better. Just looking over the marsh like, and seeing the sun set."...

"Very likely," said Ann, after a long interval, "it isn't so bad as you think it is, Artie."

"It's bad," said Kipps.

"Very likely, after all, it isn't quite so bad. If there's only a little — —"

There came another long silence.

"Ann," said Kipps in the quiet darkness.

"Yes," said Ann.

"Ann," said Kipps, and stopped as though he had hastily shut a door upon speech.

"I kep' thinking," he said, trying again, "I kep' thinking — after all — I been cross to you and a fool about things — about them cards, Ann; but" — his voice shook to pieces— "we *'ave* been 'appy, Ann ... some'ow ... togever."

And with that he and then she fell into a passion of weeping. They clung very tightly together — closer than they had been since ever the first brightness of their married days turned to the grey of common life again.

All the disaster in the world could not prevent their going to sleep at last with their poor little troubled heads close together on one pillow. There was nothing more to be done, there was nothing more to be thought; Time might go on with his mischiefs, but for a little while at least they still had one another.

§3

Kipps returned from his second interview with Mr. Bean in a state of strange excitement. He let himself in with his latch-key and slammed the door. "Ann!" he shouted, in an unusual note; "Ann!"

Ann replied distantly.

"Something to tell you," said Kipps; "something noo!"

Ann appeared apprehensive from the kitchen.

"Ann," he said, going before her into the little dining-room, for

his news was too dignified for the passage, “very likely, Ann, o’ Bean says, we shall ‘ave — —” He decided to prolong the suspense. “Guess!”

“I can’t, Artie.”

“Think of a lot of money!”

“A ‘undred pounds p’raps?”

He spoke with immense deliberation. “O v e r a f o u s a n d p o u n d s!”

Ann stared and said nothing, only went a shade whiter.

“Over, he said. A’most certainly over.”

He shut the dining-room door and came forward hastily, for Ann, it was clear, meant to take this mitigation of their disaster with a complete abandonment of her self-control. She came near flopping; she fell into his arms.

“Artie,” she got to at last and began to weep, clinging tightly to him.

“Pretty near certain,” said Kipps, holding her. “A fousand pounds!”

“I *said*, Artie,” she wailed on his shoulder with the note of accumulated wrongs, “very likely it wasn’t so bad.”...

“There’s things,” he said, when presently he came to particulars, “‘e couldn’t touch. The noo place! It’s freehold and paid for, and with the bit of building on it, there’s five or six ‘undred pound p’raps — say worf free ‘undred, for safety. We can’t be sold up to finish it, like we thought. O’ Bean says we can very likely sell it and get money. ‘E says you often get a chance to sell a ‘ouse lessen ‘arf done, ‘specially free’old. *Very* likely, ‘e say. Then there’s Hughenden. Hughenden ‘asn’t been mortgaged not for more than ‘arf its value. There’s a ‘undred or so to be got on that, and the furniture and the rent for the summer still coming in. ‘E says there’s very likely other things. A fousand pounds, that’s what ‘e said. ‘E said it might even be more.”...

They were sitting now at the table.

“It alters everything,” said Ann.

“I been thinking that, Ann, all the way ‘ome. I came in the motor car. First ride I’ve ‘ad since the smash. We needn’t send off Gwendolen, leastways not till *after*. You know. We needn’t turn out

of ‘ere — not for a long time. What we been doing for the o’ people we can go on doing a’most as much. And your mother!... I wanted to ‘oller coming along. I pretty near run coming down the road by the hotel.”

“Oh, I *am* glad we can stop ‘ere and be comfortable a bit,” said Ann. “I *am* glad for that.”

“I pretty near told the driver on the motor — only ‘e was the sort won’t talk.... You see, Ann, we’ll be able to start a shop, we’ll be able to get *into* something like. All about our ‘aving to go back to places and that; all that doesn’t matter any more.”

For a while they abandoned themselves to ejaculating transports. Then they fell talking to shape an idea to themselves of the new prospect that opened before them.

“We must start a sort of shop,” said Kipps, whose imagination had been working. “It’ll ‘ave to be a shop.”

“Drapery?” said Ann.

“You want such a lot of capital for the drapery, mor’n a thousand pounds you want by a long way — to start it anything like proper.”

“Well, outfitting. Like Buggins was going to do.”

Kipps glanced at that for a moment, because the idea had not occurred to him. Then he came back to his prepossession.

“Well, I thought of something else, Ann,” he said. “You see, I’ve always thought a little book-shop. It isn’t like the drapery— ‘aving to be learnt. I thought — even before this smash-up— ‘ow I’d like to ‘ave something to do, instead of always ‘aving ‘olidays always like we ‘ave been ‘aving.”

He reflected.

“You don’t know *much* about books, do you, Artie?”

“You don’t want to.” He illustrated. “I noticed when we used to go to that Lib’ry at Folkestone, ladies weren’t anything like what they was in a draper’s — if you ‘aven’t got *just* what they want it’s ‘Oh, no!’ and out they go. But in a book shop it’s different. One book’s very like another — after all, what is it? Something to read and done with. It’s not a thing that matters like print dresses or serviettes — where you either like ’em or don’t, and people judge you by. They take what you give ’em in books and lib’ries, and glad to be told *what* to. See ‘ow we was — up at that lib’ry.”...

He paused. “You see, Ann ——

“Well, I read ‘n ‘dvertisement the other day. I been asking Mr. Bean. It said — five ‘undred pounds.”

“What did?”

“Branches,” said Kipps.

Ann failed to understand. “It’s a sort of thing that gets up book shops all over the country,” said Kipps. “I didn’t tell you, but I arst about it a bit. On’y I dropped it again. Before this smash, I mean. I’d thought I’d like to keep a shop for a lark, on’y then I thought it silly. Besides it ‘ud ‘ave been beneath me.”

He blushed vividly. “It was a sort of projek of mine, Ann.

“On’y it wouldn’t ‘ave done,” he added.

It was a tortuous journey when the Kippses set out to explain anything to each other. But through a maze of fragmentary elucidations and questions, their minds did presently begin to approximate to a picture of a compact, bright, little shop, as a framework for themselves.

“I thought of it one day when I was in Folkestone. I thought of it one day when I was looking in at a window. I see a chap dressin’ a window and he was whistlin’ reg’lar light-’arted.... I thought then I’d like to keep a bookshop, any’ow, jest for something to do. And when people weren’t about, then you could sit and read the books. See? It wouldn’t be ‘arf bad.”...

They mused, each with elbows on table and knuckles to lips, looking with speculative eyes at each other.

“Very likely we’ll be ‘appier than we should ‘ave been with more money,” said Kipps presently.

“We wasn’t ‘ardly suited,” reflected Ann, and left her sentence incomplete.

“Fish out of water like,” said Kipps....

“You won’t ‘ave to return that call now,” said Kipps, opening a new branch of the question. “That’s one good thing.”

“Lor’!” said Ann, visibly brightening, “no more I shan’t!”

“I don’t s’pose they’d want you to, even if you did — with things as they are.”

A certain added brightness came into Ann’s face. “Nobody won’t be able to come leaving cards on us, Artie, now, any more. We are

out of *that*!"

"There isn't no necessity for us to be stuck up," said Kipps, "any more for ever! 'Ere we are, Ann, common people, with jest no position at all, as you might say, to keep up. No sev'nts, not if you don't like. No dressin' better than other people. If it wasn't we been robbed — dashed if I'd care a rap about losing that money. I b'lieve" — his face shone with the rare pleasure of paradox— "I reely b'lieve, Ann, it'll prove a savin' in the end."

§4

The remarkable advertisement which had fired Kipps' imagination with this dream of a bookshop opened out in the most alluring way. It was one little facet in a comprehensive scheme of transatlantic origin, which was to make our old-world methods of book-selling "sit up," and it displayed an imaginative briskness, a lucidity and promise that aroused the profoundest scepticism in the mind of Mr. Bean. To Kipps' renewed investigations it presented itself in an expository illustrated pamphlet (far too well printed, Mr. Bean thought, for a reputable undertaking) of the most convincing sort. Mr. Bean would not let him sink his capital in shares in its projected company that was to make all things new in the world of books, but he could not prevent Kipps becoming one of their associated booksellers. And so when presently it became apparent that an epoch was not to be made, and the "Associated Booksellers' Trading Union (Limited)" receded and dissolved and liquidated (a few drops) and vanished and went away to talk about something else, Kipps remained floating undamaged in this interestingly uncertain universe as an independent bookseller.

Except that it failed, the Associated Booksellers' Trading Union had all the stigmata of success. Its fault, perhaps, was that it had them all instead of only one or two. It was to buy wholesale for all its members and associates and exchange stock, having a common books-in-stock list and a common lending library, and it was to provide a uniform registered shop front to signify all these things to the intelligent passer-by. Except that it was controlled by buoyant young Over-men with a touch of genius in their arithmetic, it was, I

say, a most plausible and hopeful project. Kipps went several times to London and an agent came to Hythe; Mr. Bean made some timely interventions, and then behind a veil of planks and an announcement in the High Street, the uniform registered shop front came rapidly into being. “Associated Booksellers’ Trading Union,” said this shop front, in a refined, artistic lettering that bookbuyers were going to value, as wise men over forty value the proper label for Berncasteler Doctor, and then, “Arthur Kipps.”

Next to starting a haberdasher’s shop I doubt if Kipps could have been more truly happy than during those weeks of preparation.

There is, of course, nothing on earth, and I doubt at times if there is a joy in Heaven, like starting a small haberdasher’s shop. Imagine, for example, having a drawerful of tapes (one whole piece most exquisitely blocked of every possible width of tape), or, again, an army of neat, large packages, each displaying one sample of hooks and eyes. Think of your cottons, your drawer of coloured silks, the little, less, least of the compartments and thin packets of your needle drawer! Poor princes and wretched gentlefolk mysteriously above retail trade, may taste only the faint unsatisfactory shadow of these delights with trays of stamps or butterflies. I write, of course, for those to whom these things appeal; there are clods alive who see nothing, or next to nothing, in spools of mercerised cotton and endless bands of paper-set pins. I write for the wise, and as I write I wonder that Kipps resisted haberdashery. He did. Yet even starting a bookshop is at least twenty times as interesting as building your own house to your own design in unlimited space and time, or any possible thing people with indisputable social position and sound securities can possibly find to do. Upon that I rest.

You figure Kipps “going to have a look to see how the little shop is getting on,” the shop that is not to be a loss and a spending of money, but a gain. He does not walk too fast towards it; as he comes into view of it his paces slacken and his head goes to one side. He crosses to the pavement opposite in order to inspect the fascia better, already his name is adumbrated in faint white lines; stops in the middle of the road and scrutinises imaginary details for the benefit of his future next door neighbour, the curiosity-shop man, and so at last, in.... A smell of paint and of the shavings of imperfectly seasoned

pinewood! The shop is already glazed and a carpenter is busy over the fittings for adjustable shelves in the side windows. A painter is busy on the fixtures round about (shelving above and drawers below), which are to accommodate most of the stock, and the counter — the counter and desk are done. Kipps goes inside the desk, the desk which is to be the strategic centre of the shop, brushes away some sawdust, and draws out the marvellous till; here gold is to be, here silver, here copper — notes locked up in a cash-box in the well below. Then he leans his elbows on the desk, rests his chin on his fist and fills the shelves with imaginary stock; books beyond reading. Every day a man who cares to wash his hands and read uncut pages artfully may have his cake and eat it, among that stock. Under the counter to the right, paper and string are to lurk ready to leap up and embrace goods sold; on the table to the left, art publications, whatever they may prove to be! He maps it out, serves an imaginary customer, receives a dream seven and six pence, packs, bows out. He wonders how it was he ever came to fancy a shop a disagreeable place.

"It's different," he says at last, after musing on that difficulty, "being your own."

It *is* different....

Or, again, you figure Kipps with something of the air of a young sacristan, handling his brightly virginal account-books, and looking, and looking again, and then still looking, at an unparalleled specimen of copperplate engraving, ruled money below and above, bearing the words "In Account with, Arthur Kipps" (loud flourishes), "The Booksellers' Trading Union" (temperate decoration). You figure Ann sitting and stitching at one point of the circumference of the light of the lamp, stitching queer little garments for some unknown stranger, and over against her sits Kipps. Before him is one of those engraved memorandum forms, a moist pad, wet with some thick and greasy greenish purple ink that is also spreading quietly but steadily over his fingers, a cross-nibbed pen for first-aid surgical assistance to the patient in his hand, a dating rubber stamp. At intervals he brings down this latter with great care and emphasis upon the paper, and when he lifts it there appears a beautiful oval design of which "Paid, Arthur Kipps, The Associated Booksellers' Trading Union," and a

date, are the essential ingredients, stamped in purple ink.

Anon he turns his attention to a box of small, round, yellow labels, declaring "This book was bought from the Associated Booksellers' Trading Union." He licks one with deliberate care, sticks it on the paper before him and defaces it with great solemnity. "I can do it, Ann," he says, looking up brightly. For the Associated Booksellers' Trading Union, among other brilliant notions and inspirations, devised an ingenious system of taking back its books again in part payment for new ones within a specified period. When it failed, all sorts of people were left with these unredeemed pledges in hand.

§5

Amidst all this bustle and interest, all this going to and fro before they "moved in" to the High Street, came the great crisis that hung over the Kippses, and one morning in the small hours Ann's child was born....

Kipps was coming to manhood swiftly now. The once rabbit-like soul that had been so amazed by the discovery of "chubes" in the human interior and so shocked by the sight of a woman's shoulder-blades, that had found shame and anguish in a mislaid Gibus and terror in an Anagram Tea, was at last facing the greater realities. He came suddenly upon the master thing in life, birth. He passed through hours of listening, hours of impotent fear in the night and in the dawn, and then there was put into his arms something most wonderful, a weak and wailing creature, incredibly, heart-stirringly soft and pitiful, with minute appealing hands that it wrung his heart to see. He held this miracle in his arms and touched its tender cheek as if he feared his lips might injure it. And this marvel was his Son!

And there was Ann, with a greater strangeness and a greater familiarity in her quality than he had ever found before. There were little beads of perspiration on her temples and her lips, and her face was flushed, not pale as he had feared to see it. She had the look of one who emerges from some strenuous and invigorating act. He bent down and kissed her, and he had no words to say. She wasn't to speak much yet, but she stroked his arm with her hand and had to tell

him one thing:

"He's over nine pounds, Artie," she whispered. "Bessie's — Bessie's wasn't no more than eight."

To have given Kipps a pound of triumph over Sid seemed to her almost to justify Nunc Dimittis. She watched his face for a moment, then closed her eyes in a kind of blissful exhaustion as the nurse, with something motherly in her manner, pushed Kipps out of the room.

§6

Kipps was far too much preoccupied with his own life to worry about the further exploits of Chitterlow. The man had got his two thousand; on the whole Kipps was glad he had had it rather than young Walshingham, and there was an end to the matter. As for the complicated transactions he achieved and proclaimed by mainly illegible and always incomprehensible postcards, they were like passing voices heard in the street as one goes about one's urgent concerns. Kipps put them aside and they got in between the pages of the stock and were lost forever and sold in with the goods to customers who puzzled over them mightily.

Then one morning as he was dusting round before breakfast, Chitterlow returned, appeared suddenly in the shop doorway.

Kipps was overcome with amazement.

It was the most unexpected thing in the world. The man was in evening dress, evening dress in that singularly crumpled state it assumes after the hour of dawn, and above his dishevelled red hair, a smallish Gibus hat tilted remarkably forward. He opened the door and stood, tall and spread, with one vast white glove flung out as if to display how burst a glove might be, his eyes bright, such wrinkling of brow and mouth as only an experienced actor can produce, and a singular radiance of emotion upon his whole being, an altogether astonishing spectacle.

It was amazing beyond the powers of Kipps. The bell jangled for a bit and then gave it up and was silent. For a long, great second everything was quietly attentive. Kipps was amazed to his uttermost; had he had ten times the capacity he would still have been fully

amazed. “It’s Chit’low!” he said at last, standing duster in hand.

But he doubted whether it was not a dream.

“Tzit!” gasped that most excitable and extraordinary person, still in an incredibly expanded attitude, and then with a slight forward jerk of the starry split glove, “Bif!”

He could say no more. The tremendous speech he had had ready vanished from his mind. Kipps stared at his extraordinary facial changes, vaguely conscious of the truth of the teachings of Nisbet and Lombroso concerning men of genius.

Then suddenly Chitterlow’s features were convulsed, the histrionic fell from him like a garment, and he was weeping. He said something indistinct about “Old Kipps! *Good* old Kipps! Oh, old Kipps!” and somehow he managed to mix a chuckle and a sob in the most remarkable way. He emerged from somewhere near the middle of his original attitude, a merely life-size creature. “My play, boo-hoo!” he sobbed, clutching at his friend’s arm. “My play, Kipps! (sob) You know?”

“Well?” cried Kipps, with his heart sinking in sympathy, “it ain’t — —”

“No,” howled Chitterlow; “no. It’s a success! My dear chap! my dear boy! oh! it’s a — bu — boo-hoo! — a big success!” He turned away and wiped streaming tears with the back of his hand. He walked a pace or so and turned. He sat down on one of the specially designed artistic chairs of the Associated Booksellers’ Trading Union and produced an exiguous lady’s handkerchief, extraordinarily belaced. He choked. “*My* play,” and covered his face here and there.

He made an unsuccessful effort to control himself, and shrank for a space to the dimensions of a small and pathetic creature. His great nose suddenly came through a careless place in the handkerchief.

“I’m knocked,” he said in a muffled voice, and so remained for a space — wonderful — veiled.

He made a gallant effort to wipe his tears away. “I had to tell you,” he said, gulping.

“Be all right in a minute,” he added, “calm,” and sat still....

Kipps stared in commiseration of such success. Then he heard footsteps and went quickly to the house doorway. “Jest a minute,” he said. “Don’t go in the shop, Ann, for a minute. It’s Chitterlow. He’s a

bit essited. But he'll be better in a minute. It's knocked him over a bit. You see" — his voice sank to a hushed note as one who announces death—"'e's made a success with his play."

He pushed her back lest she should see the scandal of another male's tears....

Soon Chitterlow felt better, but for a little while his manner was even alarmingly subdued. "I *had* to come and tell you," he said. "I *had* to astonish someone. Muriel — she'll be firstrate, of course. But she's over at Dymchurch." He blew his nose with enormous noise, and emerged instantly a merely garrulous optimist.

"I expect she'll be precious glad."

"She doesn't know yet, my dear boy. She's at Dymchurch — with a friend. She's seen some of my first nights before.... Better out of it.... I'm going to her now. I've been up all night — talking to the boys and all that. I'm a bit off it just for a bit. But — it Knocked 'em. It Knocked everybody."

He stared at the floor and went on in a monotone. "They laughed a bit at the beginning — but nothing like a settled laugh — not until the second act — you know — the chap with the beetle down his neck. Little Chisholme did that bit to rights. Then they began — *to* rights." His voice warmed and increased. "Laughing! It made *me* laugh! We jumped 'em into the third act before they had time to cool. Everybody was on it. I never saw a first night go so fast. Laugh, laugh, laugh, LAUGH, LAUGH, LAUGH" (he howled the last word with stupendous violence). Everything they laughed at. They laughed at things that we hadn't meant to be funny — not for one moment. Bif! Bizz! Curtain. A Fair Knock-Out!... I went on — but I didn't say a word. Chisholme did the patter. Shouting! It was like walking under Niagara — going across that stage. It was like never having seen an audience before....

"Then afterwards — the Boys!"

His emotion held him for a space. "Dear old Boys!" he murmured.

His words multiplied, his importance increased. In a little while he was restored to something of his old self. He was enormously excited. He seemed unable to sit down anywhere. He came into the breakfast-room so soon as Kipps was sure of him, shook hands with Mrs. Kipps parenthetically, sat down and immediately got up again.

He went to the bassinette in the corner and looked absentmindedly at Kipps, junior, and said he was glad if only for the youngster's sake. He immediately resumed the thread of his discourse.... He drank a cup of coffee noisily and walked up and down the room talking, while they attempted breakfast amidst the gale of his excitement. The infant slept marvellously through it all.

"You won't mind my sitting down, Mrs. Kipps. I couldn't sit down for anyone, or I'd do it for you. It's you I'm thinking of more than anyone, you and Muriel, and all Old Pals and Good Friends. It means wealth, it means money — hundreds and thousands.... If you'd heard 'em, *you'd know*."

He was silent through a portentous moment while topics battled for him and finally he burst and talked of them all together. It was like the rush of water when a dam bursts and washes out a fair-sized provincial town; all sorts of things floated along on the swirl. For example, he was discussing his future behaviour. "I'm glad it's come now. Not before. I've had my lesson. I shall be very discreet now, trust me. We've learnt the value of money." He discussed the possibility of a country house, of taking a Martello tower as a swimming-box (as one might say a shooting-box) of living in Venice because of its artistic associations and scenic possibilities, of a flat in Westminster or a house in the West End. He also raised the question of giving up smoking and drinking, and what classes of drink were especially noxious to a man of his constitution. But discourses on all this did not prevent a parenthetical computation of the probable profits on the supposition of a thousand nights here and in America, nor did it ignore the share Kipps was to have, nor the gladness with which Chitterlow would pay that share, nor the surprise and regret with which he had learnt, through an indirect source which awakened many associations, of the turpitude of young Walshingham, nor the distaste Chitterlow had always felt for young Walshingham and men of his type. An excursus upon Napoleon had got into the torrent somehow and kept bobbing up and down. The whole thing was thrown into the form of a single complex sentence, with parenthetical and subordinate clauses fitting one into the other like Chinese boxes, and from first to last it never even had an air of approaching anything in the remotest degree partaking of the nature of a full stop.

Into this deluge came the *Daily News*, like the gleam of light in Watts' picture, the waters were assuaged while its sheet was opened, and it had a column, a whole column, of praise. Chitterlow held the paper and Kipps read over his left hand, and Ann under his right. It made the affair more real to Kipps; it seemed even to confirm Chitterlow against lurking doubts he had been concealing. But it took him away. He departed in a whirl, to secure a copy of every morning paper, every blessed rag there is, and take them all to Dymchurch and Muriel forthwith. It had been the send-off the Boys had given him that had prevented his doing as much at Charing Cross — let alone that he only caught it by the skin of his teeth.... Besides which the bookstall wasn't open. His white face, lit by a vast excitement, bid them a tremendous farewell, and he departed through the sunlight, with his buoyant walk, buoyant almost to the tottering pitch. His hair, as one got it sunlit in the street, seemed to have grown in the night.

They saw him stop a newsboy.

"Every blessed rag," floated to them on the notes of that gorgeous voice.

The newsboy, too, had happened on luck. Something like a faint cheer from the newsboy came down the air to terminate that transaction.

Chitterlow went on his way swinging a great budget of papers, a figure of merited success. The newsboy recovered from his emotion with a jerk, examined something in his hand again, transferred it to his pocket, watched Chitterlow for a space, and then in a sort of hushed silence resumed his daily routine....

Ann and Kipps watched that receding happiness in silence, until he vanished round the bend of the road.

"I *am* glad," said Ann at last, speaking with a little sigh.

"So'm I," said Kipps, with emphasis. "For if ever a feller 'as worked and waited — it's 'im."...

They went back through the shop rather thoughtfully, and after a peep at the sleeping baby, resumed their interrupted breakfast. "If ever a feller 'as worked and waited, it's 'im," said Kipps, cutting bread.

"Very likely it's true," said Ann, a little wistfully.

“What’s true?”

“About all that money coming.”

Kipps meditated. “I don’t see why it shouldn’t be,” he decided, and handed Ann a piece of bread on the tip of his knife.

“But we’ll keep on the shop,” he said after an interval for further reflection, “all the same.... I ‘aven’t much trust in money after the things we’ve seen.”

§7

That was two years ago, and as the whole world knows, the “Pestered Butterfly” is running still. It *was* true. It has made the fortune of a once declining little theatre in the Strand, night after night the great beetle scene draws happy tears from a house packed to repletion, and Kipps — for all that Chitterlow is not what one might call a business man — is almost as rich as he was in the beginning. People in Australia, people in Lancashire, Scotland, Ireland, in New Orleans, in Jamaica, in New York and Montreal, have crowded through doorways to Kipps’ enrichment, lured by the hitherto unsuspected humours of the entomological drama. Wealth rises like an exhalation all over our little planet, and condenses, or at least some of it does, in the pockets of Kipps.

“It’s rum,” said Kipps.

He sat in the little kitchen out behind the bookshop and philosophised and smiled, while Ann gave Arthur Waddy Kipps his evening tub before the fire. Kipps was always present at this ceremony unless customers prevented; there was something in the mixture of the odours of tobacco, soap and domesticity that charmed him unspeakably.

“Chuckerdee, o’ man,” he said, affably, wagging his pipe at his son, and thought incidentally, after the manner of all parents, that very few children could have so straight and clean a body.

“Dadda’s got a cheque,” said Arthur Waddy Kipps, emerging for a moment from the towel.

“‘E gets ‘old of everything,” said Ann. “You can’t say a word — —”

“Dadda got a cheque,” this marvellous child repeated.

“Yes, o’ man, I got a cheque. And it’s got to go into a bank for you, against when you got to go to school. See? So’s you’ll grow up knowing your way about a bit.”

“Dadda’s got a cheque,” said the wonder son, and then gave his mind to making mighty splashes with his foot. Every time he splashed, laughter overcame him, and he had to be held up for fear he should tumble out of the tub in his merriment. Finally he was towelled to his toe-tips, wrapped up in warm flannel, and kissed, and carried off to bed by Ann’s cousin and lady help, Emma. And then after Ann had carried away the bath into the scullery, she returned to find her husband with his pipe extinct and the cheque still in his hand.

“Two fousand pounds,” he said. “It’s dashed rum. Wot ‘ave *I* done to get two fousand pounds, Ann?”

“What ‘aven’t you — not to?” said Ann.

He reflected upon this view of the case.

“I shan’t never give up this shop,” he said at last.

“We’re very ‘appy ‘ere,” said Ann.

“Not if I ‘ad *fifty* fousand pounds.”

“No fear,” said Ann.

“You got a shop,” said Kipps, “and you come along in a year’s time and there it is. But money — look ‘ow it come and goes! There’s no sense in money. You may kill yourself trying to get it, and then it comes when you aren’t looking. There’s my ‘riginal money! Where is it now? Gone! And it’s took young Walshingham with it, and ‘e’s gone, too. It’s like playing skittles. ‘Long comes the ball, right and left you fly, and there it is rolling away and not changed a bit. No sense in it! ‘E’s gone, and she’s gone — gone off with that chap Revel, that sat with me at dinner. Merried man! And Chit’low rich! Lor’! — what a fine place that Gerrik Club is, to be sure, where I ‘ad lunch wiv’ ‘im! Better’n *any* ‘otel. Footmen in powder they got — not waiters, Ann — footmen! ‘E’s rich and me rich — in a sort of way.... Don’t seem much sense in it, Ann, ‘owever you look at it.” He shook his head.

“I know one thing,” said Kipps.

“What?”

“I’m going to put it in jest as many different banks as I can. See?

Fifty ‘ere, fifty there. ‘Posit. I’m not going to ‘nvest it — no fear.”

“It’s only frowing money away,” said Ann.

“I’m ‘arf a mind to bury some of it under the shop. Only I expect one ‘ud always be coming down at nights to make sure it was there.... I don’t seem to trust anyone — not with money.” He put the cheque on the table corner and smiled and tapped his pipe on the grate with his eyes on that wonderful document. “S’pose old Bean started orf,” he reflected.... “One thing, ‘e *is* a bit lame.”

“‘E wouldn’t,” said Ann; “not ‘im.”

“I was only joking like.” He stood up, put his pipe among the candlesticks on the mantel, took up the cheque and began folding it carefully to put it back in his pocket-book.

A little bell jangled.

“Shop!” said Kipps. “That’s right. Keep a shop and the shop’ll keep you. That’s ‘ow I look at it, Ann.”

He drove his pocket-book securely into his breast pocket before he opened the living-room door....

But whether indeed it is the bookshop that keeps Kipps or whether it is Kipps who keeps the bookshop is just one of those commercial mysteries people of my unarithmetical temperament are never able to solve. They do very well, the dears, anyhow, thank Heaven!

The bookshop of Kipps is on the left-hand side of the Hythe High Street coming from Folkestone, between the yard of the livery stable and the shop-window full of old silver and such like things — it is quite easy to find — and there you may see him for yourself and speak to him and buy this book of him if you like. He has it in stock, I know. Very delicately I’ve seen to that. His name is not Kipps, of course, you must understand that, but everything else is exactly as I have told you. You can talk to him about books, about politics, about going to Boulogne, about life, and the ups and downs of life. Perhaps he will quote you Buggins — from whom, by the bye, one can now buy everything a gentleman’s wardrobe should contain at the little shop in Rendezvous Street, Folkestone. If you are fortunate to find Kipps in a good mood he may even let you know how he inherited a fortune “once.” “Run froo it,” he’ll say with a not unhappy smile. “Got another afterwards — speckylating in plays. Needn’t keep this shop if I didn’t like. But it’s something to do.”...

Or he may be even more intimate. “I seen some things,” he said to me once. “Raver! Life! Why! once I — I *‘loped*! I did — reely!”

(Of course you will not tell Kipps that he *is* “Kipps,” or that I have put him in this book. He does not know. And you know, one never knows how people are going to take that sort of thing. I am an old and trusted customer now, and for many amiable reasons I should prefer that things remained exactly on their present footing.)

§8

One early-closing evening in July they left the baby to the servant cousin, and Kipps took Ann for a row on the Hythe canal. It was a glorious evening, and the sun set in a mighty blaze and left a world warm, and very still. The twilight came. And there was the water, shining bright, and the sky a deepening blue, and the great trees that dipped their boughs towards the water, exactly as it had been when he paddled home with Helen, when her eyes had seemed to him like dusky stars. He had ceased from rowing and rested on his oars, and suddenly he was touched by the wonder of life, the strangeness that is a presence stood again by his side.

Out of the darknesses beneath the shallow, weedy stream of his being rose a question, a question that looked up dimly and never reached the surface. It was the question of the wonder of the beauty, the purposeless, inconsecutive beauty, that falls so strangely among the happenings and memories of life. It never reached the surface of his mind, it never took to itself substance or form, it looked up merely as the phantom of a face might look, out of deep waters, and sank again to nothingness.

“Artie,” said Ann.

He woke up and pulled a stroke. “What?” he said.

“Penny for your thoughts, Artie.”

He considered.

“I reely don’t think I was thinking of anything,” he said at last with a smile. “No.”

He still rested on his oars.

“I expect,” he said, “I was thinking jest what a Rum Go everything is. I expect it was something like that.”

“Queer old Artie!”

“Ain’t I? I don’t suppose there ever was a chap quite like me before.”

He reflected for just another minute. “Oo! I dunno,” he said, and roused himself to pull.

THE END

A MODERN UTOPIA

Published in 1905, this novel is actually the part of a series of works by Wells on modern social problems, which had included *Anticipations* (1901) and *Mankind in the Making* (1903). Unlike those non-fictional works, however, *A Modern Utopia* adopts a fictional narrative framework in which to present an imaginary planet — a Utopia which is exactly the same as the Earth, but where all of our world's social problems have been solved. To this land are transported the narrator (known only as 'the Owner of the Voice') and his companion, 'the botanist'. Once there, the travellers meet their own doubles – members of a voluntary organisation of samurai that rule the Utopia.

Although received with interest at the time of original publication, the novel's depiction of a one-party world state, which depended on a shared faith (rather than democratic discussion) for its mandate and policies troubled many of the novel's original readers, and was later brutally satirised in E. M. Forster's short story, 'The Machine Stops' (1909).

A MODERN UTOPIA

H. G. WELLS

The first edition

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A MODERN UTOPIA

BY

H. G. WELLS

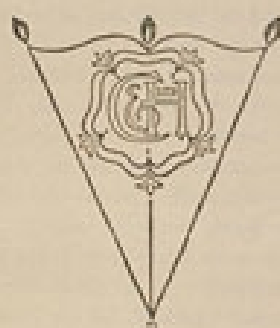

LONDON
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1905

Title page of the first edition

A NOTE TO THE READER

This book is in all probability the last of a series of writings, of which — disregarding certain earlier disconnected essays — my *Anticipations* was the beginning. Originally I intended *Anticipations* to be my sole digression from my art or trade (or what you will) of an imaginative writer. I wrote that book in order to clear up the muddle in my own mind about innumerable social and political questions, questions I could not keep out of my work, which it distressed me to touch upon in a stupid haphazard way, and which no one, so far as I knew, had handled in a manner to satisfy my needs. But *Anticipations* did not achieve its end. I have a slow constructive hesitating sort of mind, and when I emerged from that undertaking I found I had still most of my questions to state and solve. In *Mankind in the Making*, therefore, I tried to review the social organisation in a different way, to consider it as an educational process instead of dealing with it as a thing with a future history, and if I made this second book even less satisfactory from a literary standpoint than the former (and this is my opinion), I blundered, I think, more edifyingly — at least from the point of view of my own instruction. I ventured upon several themes with a greater frankness than I had used in *Anticipations*, and came out of that second effort guilty of much rash writing, but with a considerable development of formed opinion. In many matters I had shaped out at last a certain personal certitude, upon which I feel I shall go for the rest of my days. In this present book I have tried to settle accounts with a number of issues left over or opened up by its two predecessors, to correct them in some particulars, and to give the general picture of a *Utopia* that has grown up in my mind during the course of these speculations as a state of affairs at once possible and more desirable than the world in which I live. But this book has brought me back to imaginative writing again. In its two predecessors the treatment of social organisation had been purely objective; here my intention has been a little wider and deeper, in that I have tried to present not simply an ideal, but an ideal in reaction with two personalities. Moreover, since this may be the last book of the kind I shall ever publish, I have written into it as well

as I can the heretical metaphysical scepticism upon which all my thinking rests, and I have inserted certain sections reflecting upon the established methods of sociological and economic science....

The last four words will not attract the butterfly reader, I know. I have done my best to make the whole of this book as lucid and entertaining as its matter permits, because I want it read by as many people as possible, but I do not promise anything but rage and confusion to him who proposes to glance through my pages just to see if I agree with him, or to begin in the middle, or to read without a constantly alert attention. If you are not already a little interested and open-minded with regard to social and political questions, and a little exercised in self-examination, you will find neither interest nor pleasure here. If your mind is "made up" upon such issues your time will be wasted on these pages. And even if you are a willing reader you may require a little patience for the peculiar method I have this time adopted.

That method assumes an air of haphazard, but it is not so careless as it seems. I believe it to be — even now that I am through with the book — the best way to a sort of lucid vagueness which has always been my intention in this matter. I tried over several beginnings of a Utopian book before I adopted this. I rejected from the outset the form of the argumentative essay, the form which appeals most readily to what is called the "serious" reader, the reader who is often no more than the solemnly impatient parasite of great questions. He likes everything in hard, heavy lines, black and white, yes and no, because he does not understand how much there is that cannot be presented at all in that way; wherever there is any effect of obliquity, of incommensurables, wherever there is any levity or humour or difficulty of multiplex presentation, he refuses attention. Mentally he seems to be built up upon an invincible assumption that the Spirit of Creation cannot count beyond two, he deals only in alternatives. Such readers I have resolved not to attempt to please here. Even if I presented all my tri-clinic crystals as systems of cubes—! Indeed I felt it would not be worth doing. But having rejected the "serious" essay as a form, I was still greatly exercised, I spent some vacillating months, over the scheme of this book. I tried first a recognised method of viewing questions from divergent points that has always

attracted me and which I have never succeeded in using, the discussion novel, after the fashion of Peacock's (and Mr. Mallock's) development of the ancient dialogue; but this encumbered me with unnecessary characters and the inevitable complication of intrigue among them, and I abandoned it. After that I tried to cast the thing into a shape resembling a little the double personality of Boswell's Johnson, a sort of interplay between monologue and commentator; but that too, although it got nearer to the quality I sought, finally failed. Then I hesitated over what one might call "hard narrative." It will be evident to the experienced reader that by omitting certain speculative and metaphysical elements and by elaborating incident, this book might have been reduced to a straightforward story. But I did not want to omit as much on this occasion. I do not see why I should always pander to the vulgar appetite for stark stories. And in short, I made it this. I explain all this in order to make it clear to the reader that, however queer this book appears at the first examination, it is the outcome of trial and deliberation, it is intended to be as it is. I am aiming throughout at a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussion on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other.

H. G. WELLS.

A MODERN UTOPIA

THE OWNER OF THE VOICE

There are works, and this is one of them, that are best begun with a portrait of the author. And here, indeed, because of a very natural misunderstanding this is the only course to take. Throughout these papers sounds a note, a distinctive and personal note, a note that tends at times towards stridency; and all that is not, as these words are, in Italics, is in one Voice. Now, this Voice, and this is the peculiarity of the matter, is not to be taken as the Voice of the ostensible author who fathers these pages. You have to clear your mind of any preconceptions in that respect. The Owner of the Voice you must figure to yourself as a whitish plump man, a little under the middle size and age, with such blue eyes as many Irishmen have, and

agile in his movements and with a slight tonsorial baldness — a penny might cover it — of the crown. His front is convex. He droops at times like most of us, but for the greater part he bears himself as valiantly as a sparrow. Occasionally his hand flies out with a fluttering gesture of illustration. And his Voice (which is our medium henceforth) is an unattractive tenor that becomes at times aggressive. Him you must imagine as sitting at a table reading a manuscript about Utopias, a manuscript he holds in two hands that are just a little fat at the wrist. The curtain rises upon him so. But afterwards, if the devices of this declining art of literature prevail, you will go with him through curious and interesting experiences. Yet, ever and again, you will find him back at that little table, the manuscript in his hand, and the expansion of his ratiocinations about Utopia conscientiously resumed. The entertainment before you is neither the set drama of the work of fiction you are accustomed to read, nor the set lecturing of the essay you are accustomed to evade, but a hybrid of these two. If you figure this owner of the Voice as sitting, a little nervously, a little modestly, on a stage, with table, glass of water and all complete, and myself as the intrusive chairman insisting with a bland ruthlessness upon his "few words" of introduction before he recedes into the wings, and if furthermore you figure a sheet behind our friend on which moving pictures intermittently appear, and if finally you suppose his subject to be the story of the adventure of his soul among Utopian inquiries, you will be prepared for some at least of the difficulties of this unworthy but unusual work.

But over against this writer here presented, there is also another earthly person in the book, who gathers himself together into a distinct personality only after a preliminary complication with the reader. This person is spoken of as the botanist, and he is a leaner, rather taller, graver and much less garrulous man. His face is weakly handsome and done in tones of grey, he is fairish and grey-eyed, and you would suspect him of dyspepsia. It is a justifiable suspicion. Men of this type, the chairman remarks with a sudden intrusion of exposition, are romantic with a shadow of meanness, they seek at once to conceal and shape their sensuous cravings beneath egregious sentimentalities, they get into mighty tangles and

troubles with women, and he has had his troubles. You will hear of them, for that is the quality of his type. He gets no personal expression in this book, the Voice is always that other's, but you gather much of the matter and something of the manner of his interpolations from the asides and the tenour of the Voice.

So much by way of portraiture is necessary to present the explorers of the Modern Utopia, which will unfold itself as a background to these two enquiring figures. The image of a cinematograph entertainment is the one to grasp. There will be an effect of these two people going to and fro in front of the circle of a rather defective lantern, which sometimes jams and sometimes gets out of focus, but which does occasionally succeed in displaying on a screen a momentary moving picture of Utopian conditions. Occasionally the picture goes out altogether, the Voice argues and argues, and the footlights return, and then you find yourself listening again to the rather too plump little man at his table laboriously enunciating propositions, upon whom the curtain rises now.

CHAPTER THE FIRST Topographical

§ 1

The Utopia of a modern dreamer must needs differ in one fundamental aspect from the Nowheres and Utopias men planned before Darwin quickened the thought of the world. Those were all perfect and static States, a balance of happiness won for ever against the forces of unrest and disorder that inhere in things. One beheld a healthy and simple generation enjoying the fruits of the earth in an atmosphere of virtue and happiness, to be followed by other virtuous, happy, and entirely similar generations, until the Gods grew weary. Change and development were dammed back by invincible dams for ever. But the Modern Utopia must be not static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages. Nowadays we do not resist and overcome the great stream of things, but rather float upon it. We build now not citadels, but ships of state. For one ordered arrangement of citizens rejoicing in an equality of happiness safe and assured to them and their children for ever, we have to plan "a flexible common compromise, in which a perpetually novel succession of individualities may converge most effectually upon a comprehensive onward development." That is the first, most generalised difference between a Utopia based upon modern conceptions and all the Utopias that were written in the former time.

Our business here is to be Utopian, to make vivid and credible, if we can, first this facet and then that, of an imaginary whole and happy world. Our deliberate intention is to be not, indeed, impossible, but most distinctly impracticable, by every scale that reaches only between to-day and to-morrow. We are to turn our backs for a space upon the insistent examination of the thing that is, and face towards the freer air, the ampler spaces of the thing that perhaps might be, to the projection of a State or city "worth while," to designing upon the sheet of our imaginations the picture of a life conceivably possible, and yet better worth living than our own. That is our present enterprise. We are going to lay down certain necessary

starting propositions, and then we shall proceed to explore the sort of world these propositions give us....

It is no doubt an optimistic enterprise. But it is good for awhile to be free from the carping note that must needs be audible when we discuss our present imperfections, to release ourselves from practical difficulties and the tangle of ways and means. It is good to stop by the track for a space, put aside the knapsack, wipe the brows, and talk a little of the upper slopes of the mountain we think we are climbing, would but the trees let us see it.

There is to be no inquiry here of policy and method. This is to be a holiday from politics and movements and methods. But for all that, we must needs define certain limitations. Were we free to have our untrammelled desire, I suppose we should follow Morris to his Nowhere, we should change the nature of man and the nature of things together; we should make the whole race wise, tolerant, noble, perfect — wave our hands to a splendid anarchy, every man doing as it pleases him, and none pleased to do evil, in a world as good in its essential nature, as ripe and sunny, as the world before the Fall. But that golden age, that perfect world, comes out into the possibilities of space and time. In space and time the pervading Will to Live sustains for evermore a perpetuity of aggressions. Our proposal here is upon a more practical plane at least than that. We are to restrict ourselves first to the limitations of human possibility as we know them in the men and women of this world to-day, and then to all the inhumanity, all the insubordination of nature. We are to shape our state in a world of uncertain seasons, sudden catastrophes, antagonistic diseases, and inimical beasts and vermin, out of men and women with like passions, like uncertainties of mood and desire to our own. And, moreover, we are going to accept this world of conflict, to adopt no attitude of renunciation towards it, to face it in no ascetic spirit, but in the mood of the Western peoples, whose purpose is to survive and overcome. So much we adopt in common with those who deal not in Utopias, but in the world of Here and Now.

Certain liberties, however, following the best Utopian precedents, we may take with existing fact. We assume that the tone of public thought may be entirely different from what it is in the present world. We permit ourselves a free hand with the mental conflict of life,

within the possibilities of the human mind as we know it. We permit ourselves also a free hand with all the apparatus of existence that man has, so to speak, made for himself, with houses, roads, clothing, canals, machinery, with laws, boundaries, conventions, and traditions, with schools, with literature and religious organisation, with creeds and customs, with everything, in fact, that it lies within man's power to alter. That, indeed, is the cardinal assumption of all Utopian speculations old and new; the Republic and Laws of Plato, and More's Utopia, Howells' implicit Altruria, and Bellamy's future Boston, Comte's great Western Republic, Hertzka's Freeland, Cabet's Icaria, and Campanella's City of the Sun, are built, just as we shall build, upon that, upon the hypothesis of the complete emancipation of a community of men from tradition, from habits, from legal bonds, and that subtler servitude possessions entail. And much of the essential value of all such speculations lies in this assumption of emancipation, lies in that regard towards human freedom, in the undying interest of the human power of self-escape, the power to resist the causation of the past, and to evade, initiate, endeavour, and overcome.

§ 2

There are very definite artistic limitations also.

There must always be a certain effect of hardness and thinness about Utopian speculations. Their common fault is to be comprehensively jejune. That which is the blood and warmth and reality of life is largely absent; there are no individualities, but only generalised people. In almost every Utopia — except, perhaps, Morris's "News from Nowhere" — one sees handsome but characterless buildings, symmetrical and perfect cultivations, and a multitude of people, healthy, happy, beautifully dressed, but without any personal distinction whatever. Too often the prospect resembles the key to one of those large pictures of coronations, royal weddings, parliaments, conferences, and gatherings so popular in Victorian times, in which, instead of a face, each figure bears a neat oval with its index number legibly inscribed. This burthens us with an incurable effect of unreality, and I do not see how it is altogether to

be escaped. It is a disadvantage that has to be accepted. Whatever institution has existed or exists, however irrational, however preposterous, has, by virtue of its contact with individualities, an effect of realness and rightness no untried thing may share. It has ripened, it has been christened with blood, it has been stained and mellowed by handling, it has been rounded and dented to the softened contours that we associate with life; it has been salted, maybe, in a brine of tears. But the thing that is merely proposed, the thing that is merely suggested, however rational, however necessary, seems strange and inhuman in its clear, hard, uncompromising lines, its unqualified angles and surfaces.

There is no help for it, there it is! The Master suffers with the last and least of his successors. For all the humanity he wins to, through his dramatic device of dialogue, I doubt if anyone has ever been warmed to desire himself a citizen in the Republic of Plato; I doubt if anyone could stand a month of the relentless publicity of virtue planned by More.... No one wants to live in any community of intercourse really, save for the sake of the individualities he would meet there. The fertilising conflict of individualities is the ultimate meaning of the personal life, and all our Utopias no more than schemes for bettering that interplay. At least, that is how life shapes itself more and more to modern perceptions. Until you bring in individualities, nothing comes into being, and a Universe ceases when you shiver the mirror of the least of individual minds.

§ 3

No less than a planet will serve the purpose of a modern Utopia. Time was when a mountain valley or an island seemed to promise sufficient isolation for a polity to maintain itself intact from outward force; the Republic of Plato stood armed ready for defensive war, and the New Atlantis and the Utopia of More in theory, like China and Japan through many centuries of effectual practice, held themselves isolated from intruders. Such late instances as Butler's satirical "Erewhon," and Mr. Stead's queendom of inverted sexual conditions in Central Africa, found the Tibetan method of slaughtering the inquiring visitor a simple, sufficient rule. But the

whole trend of modern thought is against the permanence of any such enclosures. We are acutely aware nowadays that, however subtly contrived a State may be, outside your boundary lines the epidemic, the breeding barbarian or the economic power, will gather its strength to overcome you. The swift march of invention is all for the invader. Now, perhaps you might still guard a rocky coast or a narrow pass; but what of that near to-morrow when the flying machine soars overhead, free to descend at this point or that? A state powerful enough to keep isolated under modern conditions would be powerful enough to rule the world, would be, indeed, if not actively ruling, yet passively acquiescent in all other human organisations, and so responsible for them altogether. World-state, therefore, it must be.

That leaves no room for a modern Utopia in Central Africa, or in South America, or round about the pole, those last refuges of ideality. The floating isle of *La Cité Morellyste* no longer avails. We need a planet. Lord Erskine, the author of a Utopia ("Armata") that might have been inspired by Mr. Hewins, was the first of all Utopists to perceive this — he joined his twin planets pole to pole by a sort of umbilical cord. But the modern imagination, obsessed by physics, must travel further than that.

Out beyond Sirius, far in the deeps of space, beyond the flight of a cannon-ball flying for a billion years, beyond the range of unaided vision, blazes the star that is *our* Utopia's sun. To those who know where to look, with a good opera-glass aiding good eyes, it and three fellows that seem in a cluster with it — though they are incredible billions of miles nearer — make just the faintest speck of light. About it go planets, even as our planets, but weaving a different fate, and in its place among them is Utopia, with its sister mate, the Moon. It is a planet like our planet, the same continents, the same islands, the same oceans and seas, another Fuji-Yama is beautiful there dominating another Yokohama — and another Matterhorn overlooks the icy disorder of another Theodule. It is so like our planet that a terrestrial botanist might find his every species there, even to the meanest pondweed or the remotest Alpine blossom....

Only when he had gathered that last and turned about to find his inn again, perhaps he would not find his inn!

Suppose now that two of us were actually to turn about in just that fashion. Two, I think, for to face a strange planet, even though it be a wholly civilised one, without some other familiar backing, dashes the courage overmuch. Suppose that we were indeed so translated even as we stood. You figure us upon some high pass in the Alps, and though I — being one easily made giddy by stooping — am no botanist myself, if my companion were to have a specimen tin under his arm — so long as it is not painted that abominable popular Swiss apple green — I would make it no occasion for quarrel! We have tramped and botanised and come to a rest, and, sitting among rocks, we have eaten our lunch and finished our bottle of Yvorne, and fallen into a talk of Utopias, and said such things as I have been saying. I could figure it myself upon that little neck of the Lucendro Pass, upon the shoulder of the Piz Lucendro, for there once I lunched and talked very pleasantly, and we are looking down upon the Val Bedretto, and Villa and Fontana and Airolo try to hide from us under the mountain side — three-quarters of a mile they are vertically below. (*Lantern.*) With that absurd nearness of effect one gets in the Alps, we see the little train a dozen miles away, running down the Biaschina to Italy, and the Lukmanier Pass beyond Piora left of us, and the San Giacomo right, mere footpaths under our feet....

And behold! in the twinkling of an eye we are in that other world!

We should scarcely note the change. Not a cloud would have gone from the sky. It might be the remote town below would take a different air, and my companion the botanist, with his educated observation, might almost see as much, and the train, perhaps, would be gone out of the picture, and the embanked straightness of the Ticino in the Ambri-Piotta meadows — that might be altered, but that would be all the visible change. Yet I have an idea that in some obscure manner we should come to feel at once a difference in things.

The botanist's glance would, under a subtle attraction, float back to Airolo. "It's queer," he would say quite idly, "but I never noticed that building there to the right before."

"Which building?"

"That to the right — with a queer sort of thing—"

"I see now. Yes. Yes, it's certainly an odd-looking affair.... And

big, you know! Handsome! I wonder—”

That would interrupt our Utopian speculations. We should both discover that the little towns below had changed — but how, we should not have marked them well enough to know. It would be indefinable, a change in the quality of their grouping, a change in the quality of their remote, small shapes.

I should flick a few crumbs from my knee, perhaps. “It’s odd,” I should say, for the tenth or eleventh time, with a motion to rise, and we should get up and stretch ourselves, and, still a little puzzled, turn our faces towards the path that clambers down over the tumbled rocks and runs round by the still clear lake and down towards the Hospice of St. Gotthard — if perchance we could still find that path.

Long before we got to that, before even we got to the great high road, we should have hints from the stone cabin in the nape of the pass — it would be gone or wonderfully changed — from the very goats upon the rocks, from the little hut by the rough bridge of stone, that a mighty difference had come to the world of men.

And presently, amazed and amazing, we should happen on a man — no Swiss — dressed in unfamiliar clothing and speaking an unfamiliar speech....

§ 4

Before nightfall we should be drenched in wonders, but still we should have wonder left for the thing my companion, with his scientific training, would no doubt be the first to see. He would glance up, with that proprietary eye of the man who knows his constellations down to the little Greek letters. I imagine his exclamation. He would at first doubt his eyes. I should inquire the cause of his consternation, and it would be hard to explain. He would ask me with a certain singularity of manner for “Orion,” and I should not find him; for the Great Bear, and it would have vanished. “Where?” I should ask, and “where?” seeking among that scattered starriness, and slowly I should acquire the wonder that possessed him.

Then, for the first time, perhaps, we should realise from this unfamiliar heaven that not the world had changed, but ourselves —

that we had come into the uttermost deeps of space.

§ 5

We need suppose no linguistic impediments to intercourse. The whole world will surely have a common language, that is quite elementarily Utopian, and since we are free of the trammels of convincing story-telling, we may suppose that language to be sufficiently our own to understand. Indeed, should we be in Utopia at all, if we could not talk to everyone? That accursed bar of language, that hostile inscription in the foreigner's eyes, "deaf and dumb to you, sir, and so — your enemy," is the very first of the defects and complications one has fled the earth to escape.

But what sort of language would we have the world speak, if we were told the miracle of Babel was presently to be reversed?

If I may take a daring image, a mediæval liberty, I would suppose that in this lonely place the Spirit of Creation spoke to us on this matter. "You are wise men," that Spirit might say — and I, being a suspicious, touchy, over-earnest man for all my predisposition to plumpness, would instantly scent the irony (while my companion, I fancy, might even plume himself), "and to beget your wisdom is chiefly why the world was made. You are so good as to propose an acceleration of that tedious multitudinous evolution upon which I am engaged. I gather, a universal tongue would serve you there. While I sit here among these mountains — I have been filing away at them for this last aeon or so, just to attract your hotels, you know — will you be so kind—? A few hints—?"

Then the Spirit of Creation might transiently smile, a smile that would be like the passing of a cloud. All the mountain wilderness about us would be radiantly lit. (You know those swift moments, when warmth and brightness drift by, in lonely and desolate places.)

Yet, after all, why should two men be smiled into apathy by the Infinite? Here we are, with our knobby little heads, our eyes and hands and feet and stout hearts, and if not us or ours, still the endless multitudes about us and in our loins are to come at last to the World State and a greater fellowship and the universal tongue. Let us to the extent of our ability, if not answer that question, at any rate try to

think ourselves within sight of the best thing possible. That, after all, is our purpose, to imagine our best and strive for it, and it is a worse folly and a worse sin than presumption, to abandon striving because the best of all our bests looks mean amidst the suns.

Now you as a botanist would, I suppose, incline to something as they say, "*scientific*." You wince under that most offensive epithet — and I am able to give you my intelligent sympathy — though "pseudo-scientific" and "quasi-scientific" are worse by far for the skin. You would begin to talk of scientific languages, of Esperanto, La Langue Bleue, New Latin, Volapuk, and Lord Lytton, of the philosophical language of Archbishop Whateley, Lady Welby's work upon Significs and the like. You would tell me of the remarkable precisions, the encyclopædic quality of chemical terminology, and at the word terminology I should insinuate a comment on that eminent American biologist, Professor Mark Baldwin, who has carried the language biological to such heights of expressive clearness as to be triumphantly and invincibly unreadable. (Which foreshadows the line of my defence.)

You make your ideal clear, a scientific language you demand, without ambiguity, as precise as mathematical formulæ, and with every term in relations of exact logical consistency with every other. It will be a language with all the inflexions of verbs and nouns regular and all its constructions inevitable, each word clearly distinguishable from every other word in sound as well as spelling.

That, at any rate, is the sort of thing one hears demanded, and if only because the demand rests upon implications that reach far beyond the region of language, it is worth considering here. It implies, indeed, almost everything that we are endeavouring to repudiate in this particular work. It implies that the whole intellectual basis of mankind is established, that the rules of logic, the systems of counting and measurement, the general categories and schemes of resemblance and difference, are established for the human mind for ever — blank Comte-ism, in fact, of the blankest description. But, indeed, the science of logic and the whole framework of philosophical thought men have kept since the days of Plato and Aristotle, has no more essential permanence as a final expression of the human mind, than the Scottish Longer Catechism. Amidst the

welter of modern thought, a philosophy long lost to men rises again into being, like some blind and almost formless embryo, that must presently develop sight, and form, and power, a philosophy in which this assumption is denied. [Footnote: The serious reader may refer at leisure to Sidgwick's *Use of Words in Reasoning* (particularly), and to Bosanquet's *Essentials of Logic*, Bradley's *Principles of Logic*, and Sigwart's *Logik*; the lighter minded may read and mark the temper of Professor Case in the British Encyclopædia, article *Logic* (Vol. XXX.). I have appended to his book a rude sketch of a philosophy upon new lines, originally read by me to the Oxford Phil. Soc. in 1903.]

All through this Utopian excursion, I must warn you, you shall feel the thrust and disturbance of that insurgent movement. In the reiterated use of "Unique," you will, as it were, get the gleam of its integument; in the insistence upon individuality, and the individual difference as the significance of life, you will feel the texture of its shaping body. Nothing endures, nothing is precise and certain (except the mind of a pedant), perfection is the mere repudiation of that ineluctable marginal inexactitude which is the mysterious inmost quality of Being. Being, indeed! — there is no being, but a universal becoming of individualities, and Plato turned his back on truth when he turned towards his museum of specific ideals. Heraclitus, that lost and misinterpreted giant, may perhaps be coming to his own....

There is no abiding thing in what we know. We change from weaker to stronger lights, and each more powerful light pierces our hitherto opaque foundations and reveals fresh and different opacities below. We can never foretell which of our seemingly assured fundamentals the next change will not affect. What folly, then, to dream of mapping out our minds in however general terms, of providing for the endless mysteries of the future a terminology and an idiom! We follow the vein, we mine and accumulate our treasure, but who can tell which way the vein may trend? Language is the nourishment of the thought of man, that serves only as it undergoes metabolism, and becomes thought and lives, and in its very living passes away. You scientific people, with your fancy of a terrible exactitude in language, of indestructible foundations built, as that Wordsworthian doggerel on the title-page of *Nature* says, "for aye,"

are marvellously without imagination!

The language of Utopia will no doubt be one and indivisible; all mankind will, in the measure of their individual differences in quality, be brought into the same phase, into a common resonance of thought, but the language they will speak will still be a living tongue, an animated system of imperfections, which every individual man will infinitesimally modify. Through the universal freedom of exchange and movement, the developing change in its general spirit will be a world-wide change; that is the quality of its universality. I fancy it will be a coalesced language, a synthesis of many. Such a language as English is a coalesced language; it is a coalescence of Anglo-Saxon and Norman French and Scholar's Latin, welded into one speech more ample and more powerful and beautiful than either. The Utopian tongue might well present a more spacious coalescence, and hold in the frame of such an uninflected or slightly inflected idiom as English already presents, a profuse vocabulary into which have been cast a dozen once separate tongues, superposed and then welded together through bilingual and trilingual compromises. [Footnote: *Vide* an excellent article, *La Langue Française en l'an 2003*, par Leon Bollack, in *La Revue*, 15 Juillet, 1903.] In the past ingenious men have speculated on the inquiry, "Which language will survive?" The question was badly put. I think now that this wedding and survival of several in a common offspring is a far more probable thing.

§ 6

This talk of languages, however, is a digression. We were on our way along the faint path that runs round the rim of the Lake of Lucendro, and we were just upon the point of coming upon our first Utopian man. He was, I said, no Swiss. Yet he would have been a Swiss on mother Earth, and here he would have the same face, with some difference, maybe, in the expression; the same physique, though a little better developed, perhaps — the same complexion. He would have different habits, different traditions, different knowledge, different ideas, different clothing, and different appliances, but, except for all that, he would be the same man. We very distinctly

provided at the outset that the modern Utopia must have people inherently the same as those in the world.

There is more, perhaps, in that than appears at the first suggestion.

That proposition gives one characteristic difference between a modern Utopia and almost all its predecessors. It is to be a world Utopia, we have agreed, no less; and so we must needs face the fact that we are to have differences of race. Even the lower class of Plato's Republic was not specifically of different race. But this is a Utopia as wide as Christian charity, and white and black, brown, red and yellow, all tints of skin, all types of body and character, will be there. How we are to adjust their differences is a master question, and the matter is not even to be opened in this chapter. It will need a whole chapter even to glance at its issues. But here we underline that stipulation; every race of this planet earth is to be found in the strictest parallelism there, in numbers the same — only, as I say, with an entirely different set of traditions, ideals, ideas, and purposes, and so moving under those different skies to an altogether different destiny.

There follows a curious development of this to anyone clearly impressed by the uniqueness and the unique significance of individualities. Races are no hard and fast things, no crowd of identically similar persons, but massed sub-races, and tribes and families, each after its kind unique, and these again are clusterings of still smaller uniques and so down to each several person. So that our first convention works out to this, that not only is every earthly mountain, river, plant, and beast in that parallel planet beyond Sirius also, but every man, woman, and child alive has a Utopian parallel. From now onward, of course, the fates of these two planets will diverge, men will die here whom wisdom will save there, and perhaps conversely here we shall save men; children will be born to them and not to us, to us and not to them, but this, this moment of reading, is the starting moment, and for the first and last occasion the populations of our planets are abreast.

We must in these days make some such supposition. The alternative is a Utopia of dolls in the likeness of angels — imaginary laws to fit incredible people, an unattractive undertaking.

For example, we must assume there is a man such as I might have

been, better informed, better disciplined, better employed, thinner and more active — and I wonder what he is doing! — and you, Sir or Madam, are in duplicate also, and all the men and women that you know and I. I doubt if we shall meet our doubles, or if it would be pleasant for us to do so; but as we come down from these lonely mountains to the roads and houses and living places of the Utopian world-state, we shall certainly find, here and there, faces that will remind us singularly of those who have lived under our eyes.

There are some you never wish to meet again, you say, and some, I gather, you do. "And One—!"

It is strange, but this figure of the botanist will not keep in place. It sprang up between us, dear reader, as a passing illustrative invention. I do not know what put him into my head, and for the moment, it fell in with my humour for a space to foist the man's personality upon you as yours and call you scientific — that most abusive word. But here he is, indisputably, with me in Utopia, and lapsing from our high speculative theme into halting but intimate confidences. He declares he has not come to Utopia to meet again with his sorrows.

What sorrows?

I protest, even warmly, that neither he nor his sorrows were in my intention.

He is a man, I should think, of thirty-nine, a man whose life has been neither tragedy nor a joyous adventure, a man with one of those faces that have gained interest rather than force or nobility from their commerce with life. He is something refined, with some knowledge, perhaps, of the minor pains and all the civil self-controls; he has read more than he has suffered, and suffered rather than done. He regards me with his blue-grey eye, from which all interest in this Utopia has faded.

"It is a trouble," he says, "that has come into my life only for a month or so — at least acutely again. I thought it was all over. There was someone—"

It is an amazing story to hear upon a mountain crest in Utopia, this Hampstead affair, this story of a Frognal heart. "Frognal," he says, is the place where they met, and it summons to my memory the word on a board at the corner of a flint-dressed new road, an estate

development road, with a vista of villas up a hill. He had known her before he got his professorship, and neither her "people" nor his — he speaks that detestable middle-class dialect in which aunts and things with money and the right of intervention are called "people"! — approved of the affair. "She was, I think, rather easily swayed," he says. "But that's not fair to her, perhaps. She thought too much of others. If they seemed distressed, or if they seemed to think a course right—" ...

Have I come to Utopia to hear this sort of thing?

§ 7

It is necessary to turn the botanist's thoughts into a worthier channel. It is necessary to override these modest regrets, this intrusive, petty love story. Does he realise this is indeed Utopia? Turn your mind, I insist, to this Utopia of mine, and leave these earthly troubles to their proper planet. Do you realise just where the propositions necessary to a modern Utopia are taking us? Everyone on earth will have to be here; — themselves, but with a difference. Somewhere here in this world is, for example, Mr. Chamberlain, and the King is here (no doubt *incognito*), and all the Royal Academy, and Sandow, and Mr. Arnold White.

But these famous names do not appeal to him.

My mind goes from this prominent and typical personage to that, and for a time I forget my companion. I am distracted by the curious side issues this general proposition trails after it. There will be so-and-so, and so-and-so. The name and figure of Mr. Roosevelt jerks into focus, and obliterates an attempt to acclimatise the Emperor of the Germans. What, for instance, will Utopia do with Mr. Roosevelt? There drifts across my inner vision the image of a strenuous struggle with Utopian constables, the voice that has thrilled terrestrial millions in eloquent protest. The writ of arrest, drifting loose in the conflict, comes to my feet; I impale the scrap of paper, and read — but can it be?— "attempted disorganisation?... incitements to disarrange?... the balance of population?"

The trend of my logic for once has led us into a facetious alley. One might indeed keep in this key, and write an agreeable little

Utopia, that like the holy families of the mediæval artists (or Michael Angelo's Last Judgement) should compliment one's friends in various degrees. Or one might embark upon a speculative treatment of the entire *Almanach de Gotha*, something on the lines of Epistemon's vision of the damned great, when

"Xerxes was a crier of mustard.
Romulus was a salter and a patcher of patterns...."

That incomparable catalogue! That incomparable catalogue! Inspired by the Muse of Parody, we might go on to the pages of "Who's Who," and even, with an eye to the obdurate republic, to "Who's Who in America," and make the most delightful and extensive arrangements. Now where shall we put this most excellent man? And this?...

But, indeed, it is doubtful if we shall meet any of these doubles during our Utopian journey, or know them when we meet them. I doubt if anyone will be making the best of both these worlds. The great men in this still unexplored Utopia may be but village Hampdens in our own, and earthly goatherds and obscure illiterates sit here in the seats of the mighty.

That again opens agreeable vistas left of us and right.

But my botanist obtrudes his personality again. His thoughts have travelled by a different route.

"I know," he says, "that she will be happier here, and that they will value her better than she has been valued upon earth."

His interruption serves to turn me back from my momentary contemplation of those popular effigies inflated by old newspapers and windy report, the earthly great. He sets me thinking of more personal and intimate applications, of the human beings one knows with a certain approximation to real knowledge, of the actual common substance of life. He turns me to the thought of rivalries and tendernesses, of differences and disappointments. I am suddenly brought painfully against the things that might have been. What if instead of that Utopia of vacant ovals we meet relinquished loves here, and opportunities lost and faces as they might have looked to us?

I turn to my botanist almost reprovingly. “You know, she won’t be quite the same lady here that you knew in Frognal,” I say, and wrest myself from a subject that is no longer agreeable by rising to my feet.

“And besides,” I say, standing above him, “the chances against our meeting her are a million to one.... And we loiter! This is not the business we have come upon, but a mere incidental kink in our larger plan. The fact remains, these people we have come to see are people with like infirmities to our own — and only the conditions are changed. Let us pursue the tenour of our inquiry.”

With that I lead the way round the edge of the Lake of Lucendro towards our Utopian world.

(*You figure him doing it*.)

Down the mountain we shall go and down the passes, and as the valleys open the world will open, Utopia, where men and women are happy and laws are wise, and where all that is tangled and confused in human affairs has been unravelled and made right.

CHAPTER THE SECOND Concerning Freedoms

§ 1

Now what sort of question would first occur to two men descending upon the planet of a Modern Utopia? Probably grave solicitude about their personal freedom. Towards the Stranger, as I have already remarked, the Utopias of the past displayed their least amiable aspect. Would this new sort of Utopian State, spread to the dimensions of a world, be any less forbidding?

We should take comfort in the thought that universal Toleration is certainly a modern idea, and it is upon modern ideas that this World State rests. But even suppose we are tolerated and admitted to this unavoidable citizenship, there will still remain a wide range of possibility.... I think we should try to work the problem out from an inquiry into first principles, and that we should follow the trend of our time and kind by taking up the question as one of "Man *versus* the State," and discussing the compromise of Liberty.

The idea of individual liberty is one that has grown in importance and grows with every development of modern thought. To the classical Utopists freedom was relatively trivial. Clearly they considered virtue and happiness as entirely separable from liberty, and as being altogether more important things. But the modern view, with its deepening insistence upon individuality and upon the significance of its uniqueness, steadily intensifies the value of freedom, until at last we begin to see liberty as the very substance of life, that indeed it is life, and that only the dead things, the choiceless things, live in absolute obedience to law. To have free play for one's individuality is, in the modern view, the subjective triumph of existence, as survival in creative work and offspring is its objective triumph. But for all men, since man is a social creature, the play of will must fall short of absolute freedom. Perfect human liberty is possible only to a despot who is absolutely and universally obeyed. Then to will would be to command and achieve, and within the limits of natural law we could at any moment do exactly as it pleased us to do. All other liberty is a compromise between our own freedom of

will and the wills of those with whom we come in contact. In an organised state each one of us has a more or less elaborate code of what he may do to others and to himself, and what others may do to him. He limits others by his rights, and is limited by the rights of others, and by considerations affecting the welfare of the community as a whole.

Individual liberty in a community is not, as mathematicians would say, always of the same sign. To ignore this is the essential fallacy of the cult called Individualism. But in truth, a general prohibition in a state may increase the sum of liberty, and a general permission may diminish it. It does not follow, as these people would have us believe, that a man is more free where there is least law and more restricted where there is most law. A socialism or a communism is not necessarily a slavery, and there is no freedom under Anarchy. Consider how much liberty we gain by the loss of the common liberty to kill. Thereby one may go to and fro in all the ordered parts of the earth, unencumbered by arms or armour, free of the fear of playful poison, whimsical barbers, or hotel trap-doors. Indeed, it means freedom from a thousand fears and precautions. Suppose there existed even the limited freedom to kill in vendetta, and think what would happen in our suburbs. Consider the inconvenience of two households in a modern suburb estranged and provided with modern weapons of precision, the inconvenience not only to each other, but to the neutral pedestrian, the practical loss of freedoms all about them. The butcher, if he came at all, would have to come round in an armoured cart....

It follows, therefore, in a modern Utopia, which finds the final hope of the world in the evolving interplay of unique individualities, that the State will have effectually chipped away just all those spendthrift liberties that waste liberty, and not one liberty more, and so have attained the maximum general freedom.

There are two distinct and contrasting methods of limiting liberty; the first is Prohibition, “thou shalt not,” and the second Command, “thou shalt.” There is, however, a sort of prohibition that takes the form of a conditional command, and this one needs to bear in mind. It says if you do so-and-so, you must also do so-and-so; if, for example, you go to sea with men you employ, you must go in a

seaworthy vessel. But the pure command is unconditional; it says, whatever you have done or are doing or want to do, you are to do this, as when the social system, working through the base necessities of base parents and bad laws, sends a child of thirteen into a factory. Prohibition takes one definite thing from the indefinite liberty of a man, but it still leaves him an unbounded choice of actions. He remains free, and you have merely taken a bucketful from the sea of his freedom. But compulsion destroys freedom altogether. In this Utopia of ours there may be many prohibitions, but no indirect compulsions — if one may so contrive it — and few or no commands. As far as I see it now, in this present discussion, I think, indeed, there should be no positive compulsions at all in Utopia, at any rate for the adult Utopian — unless they fall upon him as penalties incurred.

§ 2

What prohibitions should we be under, we two Uitlanders in this Utopian world? We should certainly not be free to kill, assault, or threaten anyone we met, and in that we earth-trained men would not be likely to offend. And until we knew more exactly the Utopian idea of property we should be very chary of touching anything that might conceivably be appropriated. If it was not the property of individuals it might be the property of the State. But beyond that we might have our doubts. Are we right in wearing the strange costumes we do, in choosing the path that pleases us athwart this rock and turf, in coming striding with unfumigated rücksacks and snow-wet hobnails into what is conceivably an extremely neat and orderly world? We have passed our first Utopian now, with an answered vague gesture, and have noted, with secret satisfaction, there is no access of dismay; we have rounded a bend, and down the valley in the distance we get a glimpse of what appears to be a singularly well-kept road....

I submit that to the modern minded man it can be no sort of Utopia worth desiring that does not give the utmost freedom of going to and fro. Free movement is to many people one of the greatest of life's privileges — to go wherever the spirit moves them, to wander and see — and though they have every comfort, every security, every

virtuous discipline, they will still be unhappy if that is denied them. Short of damage to things cherished and made, the Utopians will surely have this right, so we may expect no unclimbable walls and fences, nor the discovery of any laws we may transgress in coming down these mountain places.

And yet, just as civil liberty itself is a compromise defended by prohibitions, so this particular sort of liberty must also have its qualifications. Carried to the absolute pitch the right of free movement ceases to be distinguishable from the right of free intrusion. We have already, in a comment on More's *Utopia*, hinted at an agreement with Aristotle's argument against communism, that it flings people into an intolerable continuity of contact. Schopenhauer carried out Aristotle in the vein of his own bitterness and with the truest of images when he likened human society to hedgehogs clustering for warmth, and unhappy when either too closely packed or too widely separated. Empedocles found no significance in life whatever except as an unsteady play of love and hate, of attraction and repulsion, of assimilation and the assertion of difference. So long as we ignore difference, so long as we ignore individuality, and that I hold has been the common sin of all Utopias hitherto, we can make absolute statements, prescribe communisms or individualisms, and all sorts of hard theoretic arrangements. But in the world of reality, which — to modernise Heraclitus and Empedocles — is nothing more nor less than the world of individuality, there are no absolute rights and wrongs, there are no qualitative questions at all, but only quantitative adjustments. Equally strong in the normal civilised man is the desire for freedom of movement and the desire for a certain privacy, for a corner definitely his, and we have to consider where the line of reconciliation comes.

The desire for absolute personal privacy is perhaps never a very strong or persistent craving. In the great majority of human beings, the gregarious instinct is sufficiently powerful to render any but the most temporary isolations not simply disagreeable, but painful. The savage has all the privacy he needs within the compass of his skull; like dogs and timid women, he prefers ill-treatment to desertion, and it is only a scarce and complex modern type that finds comfort and

refreshment in quite lonely places and quite solitary occupations. Yet such there are, men who can neither sleep well nor think well, nor attain to a full perception of beautiful objects, who do not savour the best of existence until they are securely alone, and for the sake of these even it would be reasonable to draw some limits to the general right of free movement. But their particular need is only a special and exceptional aspect of an almost universal claim to privacy among modern people, not so much for the sake of isolation as for congenial companionship. We want to go apart from the great crowd, not so much to be alone as to be with those who appeal to us particularly and to whom we particularly appeal; we want to form households and societies with them, to give our individualities play in intercourse with them, and in the appointments and furnishings of that intercourse. We want gardens and enclosures and exclusive freedoms for our like and our choice, just as spacious as we can get them — and it is only the multitudinous uncongenial, anxious also for similar developments in some opposite direction, that checks this expansive movement of personal selection and necessitates a compromise on privacy.

Glancing back from our Utopian mountain side down which this discourse marches, to the confusions of old earth, we may remark that the need and desire for privacies there is exceptionally great at the present time, that it was less in the past, that in the future it may be less again, and that under the Utopian conditions to which we shall come when presently we strike yonder road, it may be reduced to quite manageable dimensions. But this is to be effected not by the suppression of individualities to some common pattern, [Footnote: More's *Utopia*. "Whoso will may go in, for there is nothing within the houses that is private or anie man's owne."] but by the broadening of public charity and the general amelioration of mind and manners. It is not by assimilation, that is to say, but by understanding that the modern Utopia achieves itself. The ideal community of man's past was one with a common belief, with common customs and common ceremonies, common manners and common formulæ; men of the same society dressed in the same fashion, each according to his defined and understood grade, behaved in the same fashion, loved, worshipped, and died in the same fashion.

They did or felt little that did not find a sympathetic publicity. The natural disposition of all peoples, white, black, or brown, a natural disposition that education seeks to destroy, is to insist upon uniformity, to make publicity extremely unsympathetic to even the most harmless departures from the code. To be dressed "odd," to behave "oddly," to eat in a different manner or of different food, to commit, indeed, any breach of the established convention is to give offence and to incur hostility among unsophisticated men. But the disposition of the more original and enterprising minds at all times has been to make such innovations.

This is particularly in evidence in this present age. The almost cataclysmal development of new machinery, the discovery of new materials, and the appearance of new social possibilities through the organised pursuit of material science, has given enormous and unprecedented facilities to the spirit of innovation. The old local order has been broken up or is now being broken up all over the earth, and everywhere societies deliquesce, everywhere men are afloat amidst the wreckage of their flooded conventions, and still tremendously unaware of the thing that has happened. The old local orthodoxies of behaviour, of precedence, the old accepted amusements and employments, the old ritual of conduct in the important small things of the daily life and the old ritual of thought in the things that make discussion, are smashed up and scattered and mixed discordantly together, one use with another, and no world-wide culture of toleration, no courteous admission of differences, no wider understanding has yet replaced them. And so publicity in the modern earth has become confusedly unsympathetic for everyone. Classes are intolerable to classes and sets to sets, contact provokes aggressions, comparisons, persecutions and discomforts, and the subtler people are excessively tormented by a sense of observation, unsympathetic always and often hostile. To live without some sort of segregation from the general mass is impossible in exact proportion to one's individual distinction.

Of course things will be very different in Utopia. Utopia will be saturated with consideration. To us, clad as we are in mountain-soiled tweeds and with no money but British bank-notes negotiable only at a practically infinite distance, this must needs be a reassuring

induction. And Utopian manners will not only be tolerant, but almost universally tolerable. Endless things will be understood perfectly and universally that on earth are understood only by a scattered few; baseness of bearing, grossness of manner, will be the distinctive mark of no section of the community whatever. The coarser reasons for privacy, therefore, will not exist here. And that savage sort of shyness, too, that makes so many half-educated people on earth recluse and defensive, that too the Utopians will have escaped by their more liberal breeding. In the cultivated State we are assuming it will be ever so much easier for people to eat in public, rest and amuse themselves in public, and even work in public. Our present need for privacy in many things marks, indeed, a phase of transition from an ease in public in the past due to homogeneity, to an ease in public in the future due to intelligence and good breeding, and in Utopia that transition will be complete. We must bear that in mind throughout the consideration of this question.

Yet, after this allowance has been made, there still remains a considerable claim for privacy in Utopia. The room, or apartments, or home, or mansion, whatever it may be a man or woman maintains, must be private, and under his or her complete dominion; it seems harsh and intrusive to forbid a central garden plot or peristyle, such as one sees in Pompeii, within the house walls, and it is almost as difficult to deny a little private territory beyond the house. Yet if we concede that, it is clear that without some further provision we concede the possibility that the poorer townsman (if there are to be rich and poor in the world) will be forced to walk through endless miles of high fenced villa gardens before he may expand in his little scrap of reserved open country. Such is already the poor Londoner's miserable fate.... Our Utopia will have, of course, faultless roads and beautifully arranged inter-urban communications, swift trains or motor services or what not, to diffuse its population, and without some anticipatory provisions, the prospect of the residential areas becoming a vast area of defensively walled villa Edens is all too possible.

This is a quantitative question, be it remembered, and not to be dismissed by any statement of principle. Our Utopians will meet it, I presume, by detailed regulations, very probably varying locally with

local conditions. Privacy beyond the house might be made a privilege to be paid for in proportion to the area occupied, and the tax on these licences of privacy might increase as the square of the area affected. A maximum fraction of private enclosure for each urban and suburban square mile could be fixed. A distinction could be drawn between an absolutely private garden and a garden private and closed only for a day or a couple of days a week, and at other times open to the well-behaved public. Who, in a really civilised community, would grudge that measure of invasion? Walls could be taxed by height and length, and the enclosure of really natural beauties, of rapids, cascades, gorges, viewpoints, and so forth made impossible. So a reasonable compromise between the vital and conflicting claims of the freedom of movement and the freedom of seclusion might be attained....

And as we argue thus we draw nearer and nearer to the road that goes up and over the Gotthard crest and down the Val Tremola towards Italy.

What sort of road would that be?

§ 3

Freedom of movement in a Utopia planned under modern conditions must involve something more than unrestricted pedestrian wanderings, and the very proposition of a world-state speaking one common tongue carries with it the idea of a world population travelled and travelling to an extent quite beyond anything our native earth has seen. It is now our terrestrial experience that whenever economic and political developments set a class free to travel, that class at once begins to travel; in England, for example, above the five or six hundred pounds a year level, it is hard to find anyone who is not habitually migratory, who has not been frequently, as people say, “abroad.” In the Modern Utopia travel must be in the common texture of life. To go into fresh climates and fresh scenery, to meet a different complexion of humanity and a different type of home and food and apparatus, to mark unfamiliar trees and plants and flowers and beasts, to climb mountains, to see the snowy night of the North and the blaze of the tropical midday, to follow great rivers, to taste

loneliness in desert places, to traverse the gloom of tropical forests and to cross the high seas, will be an essential part of the reward and adventure of life, even for the commonest people.... This is a bright and pleasant particular in which a modern Utopia must differ again, and differ diametrically, from its predecessors.

We may conclude from what has been done in places upon our earth that the whole Utopian world will be open and accessible and as safe for the wayfarer as France or England is to-day. The peace of the world will be established for ever, and everywhere, except in remote and desolate places, there will be convenient inns, at least as convenient and trustworthy as those of Switzerland to-day; the touring clubs and hotel associations that have tariffed that country and France so effectually will have had their fine Utopian equivalents, and the whole world will be habituated to the coming and going of strangers. The greater part of the world will be as secure and cheaply and easily accessible to everyone as is Zermatt or Lucerne to a Western European of the middle-class at the present time.

On this account alone no places will be so congested as these two are now on earth. With freedom to go everywhere, with easy access everywhere, with no dread of difficulties about language, coinage, custom, or law, why should everyone continue to go to just a few special places? Such congestions are merely the measure of the general inaccessibility and insecurity and costliness of contemporary life, an awkward transitory phase in the first beginnings of the travel age of mankind.

No doubt the Utopian will travel in many ways. It is unlikely there will be any smoke-disgorging steam railway trains in Utopia, they are already doomed on earth, already threatened with that obsolescence that will endear them to the Ruskins of to-morrow, but a thin spider's web of inconspicuous special routes will cover the land of the world, pierce the mountain masses and tunnel under the seas. These may be double railways or monorails or what not — we are no engineers to judge between such devices — but by means of them the Utopian will travel about the earth from one chief point to another at a speed of two or three hundred miles or more an hour. That will abolish the greater distances.... One figures these main

communications as something after the manner of corridor trains, smooth-running and roomy, open from end to end, with cars in which one may sit and read, cars in which one may take refreshment, cars into which the news of the day comes printing itself from the wires beside the track; cars in which one may have privacy and sleep if one is so disposed, bath-room cars, library cars; a train as comfortable as a good club. There will be no distinctions of class in such a train, because in a civilised world there would be no offence between one kind of man and another, and for the good of the whole world such travelling will be as cheap as it can be, and well within the reach of any but the almost criminally poor.

Such great tramways as this will be used when the Utopians wish to travel fast and far; thereby you will glide all over the land surface of the planet; and feeding them and distributing from them, innumerable minor systems, clean little electric tramways I picture them, will spread out over the land in finer reticulations, growing close and dense in the urban regions and thinning as the population thins. And running beside these lighter railways, and spreading beyond their range, will be the smooth minor high roads such as this one we now approach, upon which independent vehicles, motor cars, cycles, and what not, will go. I doubt if we shall see any horses upon this fine, smooth, clean road; I doubt if there will be many horses on the high roads of Utopia, and, indeed, if they will use draught horses at all upon that planet. Why should they? Where the world gives turf or sand, or along special tracts, the horse will perhaps be ridden for exercise and pleasure, but that will be all the use for him; and as for the other beasts of burthen, on the remoter mountain tracks the mule will no doubt still be a picturesque survival, in the desert men will still find a use for the camel, and the elephant may linger to play a part in the pageant of the East. But the burthen of the minor traffic, if not the whole of it, will certainly be mechanical. This is what we shall see even while the road is still remote, swift and shapely motor-cars going past, cyclists, and in these agreeable mountain regions there will also be pedestrians upon their way. Cycle tracks will abound in Utopia, sometimes following beside the great high roads, but oftener taking their own more agreeable line amidst woods and crops and pastures; and there will be a rich variety of footpaths and

minor ways. There will be many footpaths in Utopia. There will be pleasant ways over the scented needles of the mountain pinewoods, primrose-strewn tracks amidst the budding thickets of the lower country, paths running beside rushing streams, paths across the wide spaces of the corn land, and, above all, paths through the flowery garden spaces amidst which the houses in the towns will stand. And everywhere about the world, on road and path, by sea and land, the happy holiday Utopians will go.

The population of Utopia will be a migratory population beyond any earthly precedent, not simply a travelling population, but migratory. The old Utopias were all localised, as localised as a parish councillor; but it is manifest that nowadays even quite ordinary people live over areas that would have made a kingdom in those former days, would have filled the Athenian of the *Laws* with incredulous astonishment. Except for the habits of the very rich during the Roman Empire, there was never the slightest precedent for this modern detachment from place. It is nothing to us that we go eighty or ninety miles from home to place of business, or take an hour's spin of fifty miles to our week-end golf; every summer it has become a fixed custom to travel wide and far. Only the clumsiness of communications limit us now, and every facilitation of locomotion widens not only our potential, but our habitual range. Not only this, but we change our habitations with a growing frequency and facility; to Sir Thomas More we should seem a breed of nomads. That old fixity was of necessity and not of choice, it was a mere phase in the development of civilisation, a trick of rooting man learnt for a time from his new-found friends, the corn and the vine and the hearth; the untamed spirit of the young has turned for ever to wandering and the sea. The soul of man has never yet in any land been willingly adscript to the glebe. Even Mr. Belloc, who preaches the happiness of a peasant proprietary, is so much wiser than his thoughts that he sails about the seas in a little yacht or goes afoot from Belgium to Rome. We are winning our freedom again once more, a freedom renewed and enlarged, and there is now neither necessity nor advantage in a permanent life servitude to this place or that. Men may settle down in our Modern Utopia for love and the family at last, but first and most abundantly they will see the world.

And with this loosening of the fetters of locality from the feet of men, necessarily there will be all sorts of fresh distributions of the factors of life. On our own poor haphazard earth, wherever men work, wherever there are things to be grown, minerals to be won, power to be used, there, regardless of all the joys and decencies of life, the households needs must cluster. But in Utopia there will be wide stretches of cheerless or unhealthy or toilsome or dangerous land with never a household; there will be regions of mining and smelting, black with the smoke of furnaces and gashed and desolated by mines, with a sort of weird inhospitable grandeur of industrial desolation, and the men will come thither and work for a spell and return to civilisation again, washing and changing their attire in the swift gliding train. And by way of compensation there will be beautiful regions of the earth specially set apart and favoured for children; in them the presence of children will remit taxation, while in other less wholesome places the presence of children will be taxed; the lower passes and fore hills of these very Alps, for example, will be populous with homes, serving the vast arable levels of Upper Italy.

So we shall see, as we come down by our little lake in the lap of Lucendro, and even before we reach the road, the first scattered chalets and households in which these migrant people live, the upper summer homes. With the coming of summer, as the snows on the high Alps recede, a tide of households and schools, teachers and doctors, and all such attendant services will flow up the mountain masses, and ebb again when the September snows return. It is essential to the modern ideal of life that the period of education and growth should be prolonged to as late a period as possible and puberty correspondingly retarded, and by wise regulation the statesmen of Utopia will constantly adjust and readjust regulations and taxation to diminish the proportion of children reared in hot and stimulating conditions. These high mountains will, in the bright sweet summer, be populous with youth. Even up towards this high place where the snow is scarce gone until July, these households will extend, and below, the whole long valley of Urseren will be a scattered summer town.

One figures one of the more urban highways, one of those along

which the light railways of the second order run, such as that in the valley of Urseren, into which we should presently come. I figure it as one would see it at night, a band a hundred yards perhaps in width, the footpath on either side shaded with high trees and lit softly with orange glowlights; while down the centre the tramway of the road will go, with sometimes a nocturnal tram-car gliding, lit and gay but almost noiselessly, past. Lantern-lit cyclists will flit along the track like fireflies, and ever and again some humming motor-car will hurry by, to or from the Rhoneland or the Rhineland or Switzerland or Italy. Away on either side the lights of the little country homes up the mountain slopes will glow.

I figure it at night, because so it is we should see it first.

We should come out from our mountain valley into the minor road that runs down the lonely rock wilderness of the San Gotthard Pass, we should descend that nine miles of winding route, and so arrive towards twilight among the clustering homes and upland unenclosed gardens of Realp and Hospenthal and Andermatt. Between Realp and Andermatt, and down the Schoellenen gorge, the greater road would run. By the time we reached it, we should be in the way of understanding our adventure a little better. We should know already, when we saw those two familiar clusters of chalets and hotels replaced by a great dispersed multitude of houses — we should see their window lights, but little else — that we were the victims of some strange transition in space or time, and we should come down by dimly-seen buildings into the part that would answer to Hospenthal, wondering and perhaps a little afraid. We should come out into this great main roadway — this roadway like an urban avenue — and look up it and down, hesitating whether to go along the valley Furka-ward, or down by Andermatt through the gorge that leads to Göschenen....

People would pass us in the twilight, and then more people; we should see they walked well and wore a graceful, unfamiliar dress, but more we should not distinguish.

"Good-night!" they would say to us in clear, fine voices. Their dim faces would turn with a passing scrutiny towards us.

We should answer out of our perplexity: "Good-night!" — for by the conventions established in the beginning of this book, we are

given the freedom of their tongue.

§ 4

Were this a story, I should tell at length how much we were helped by the good fortune of picking up a Utopian coin of gold, how at last we adventured into the Utopian inn and found it all marvellously easy. You see us the shyest and most watchful of guests; but of the food they put before us and the furnishings of the house, and all our entertainment, it will be better to speak later. We are in a migratory world, we know, one greatly accustomed to foreigners; our mountain clothes are not strange enough to attract acute attention, though ill-made and shabby, no doubt, by Utopian standards; we are dealt with as we might best wish to be dealt with, that is to say as rather untidy, inconspicuous men. We look about us and watch for hints and examples, and, indeed, get through with the thing. And after our queer, yet not unpleasant, dinner, in which we remark no meat figures, we go out of the house for a breath of air and for quiet counsel one with another, and there it is we discover those strange constellations overhead. It comes to us then, clear and full, that our imagination has realised itself; we dismiss quite finally a Rip-Van-Winkle fancy we have entertained, all the unfamiliarities of our descent from the mountain pass gather together into one fullness of conviction, and we know, we know, we are in Utopia.

We wander under the trees by the main road, watching the dim passers-by as though they were the phantoms of a dream. We say little to one another. We turn aside into a little pathway and come to a bridge over the turbulent Reuss, hurrying down towards the Devil's Bridge in the gorge below. Far away over the Furka ridge a pallid glow preludes the rising of the moon.

Two lovers pass us whispering, and we follow them with our eyes. This Utopia has certainly preserved the fundamental freedom, to love. And then a sweet-voiced bell from somewhere high up towards Oberalp chimes two-and-twenty times.

I break the silence. "That might mean ten o'clock," I say.

My companion leans upon the bridge and looks down into the dim river below. I become aware of the keen edge of the moon like a

needle of incandescent silver creeping over the crest, and suddenly the river is alive with flashes.

He speaks, and astonishes me with the hidden course his thoughts have taken.

"We two were boy and girl lovers like that," he says, and jerks a head at the receding Utopians. "I loved her first, and I do not think I have ever thought of loving anyone but her."

It is a curiously human thing, and, upon my honour, not one I had designed, that when at last I stand in the twilight in the midst of a Utopian township, when my whole being should be taken up with speculative wonder, this man should be standing by my side, and lugging my attention persistently towards himself, towards his limited futile self. This thing perpetually happens to me, this intrusion of something small and irrelevant and alive, upon my great impressions. The time I first saw the Matterhorn, that Queen among the Alpine summits, I was distracted beyond appreciation by the tale of a man who could not eat sardines — always sardines did this with him and that; and my first wanderings along the brown streets of Pompeii, an experience I had anticipated with a strange intensity, was shot with the most stupidly intelligent discourse on vehicular tariffs in the chief capitals of Europe that it is possible to imagine. And now this man, on my first night in Utopia, talks and talks and talks of his poor little love affair.

It shapes itself as the most trite and feeble of tragedies, one of those stories of effortless submission to chance and custom in which Mr. Hardy or George Gissing might have found a theme. I do but half listen at first — watching the black figures in the moonlit roadway pacing to and fro. Yet — I cannot trace how he conveys the subtle conviction to my mind — the woman he loves is beautiful.

They were boy and girl together, and afterwards they met again as fellow students in a world of comfortable discretions. He seems to have taken the decorums of life with a confiding good faith, to have been shy and innocent in a suppressed sort of way, and of a mental type not made for worldly successes; but he must have dreamt about her and loved her well enough. How she felt for him I could never gather; it seemed to be all of that fleshless friendliness into which we train our girls. Then abruptly happened stresses. The man who

became her husband appeared, with a very evident passion. He was a year or so older than either of them, and he had the habit and quality of achieving his ends; he was already successful, and with the promise of wealth, and I, at least, perceived, from my botanist's phrasing, that his desire was for her beauty.

As my botanist talked I seemed to see the whole little drama, rather clearer than his words gave it me, the actors all absurdly in Hampstead middle-class raiment, meetings of a Sunday after church (the men in silk hats, frock coats, and tightly-rolled umbrellas), rare excursions into evening dress, the decorously vulgar fiction read in their homes, its ambling sentimentalities of thought, the amiably worldly mothers, the respectable fathers, the aunts, the "people" — his "people" and her "people" — the piano music and the song, and in this setting our friend, "quite clever" at botany and "going in" for it "as a profession," and the girl, gratuitously beautiful; so I figured the arranged and orderly environment into which this claw of an elemental force had thrust itself to grip.

The stranger who had come in got what he wanted; the girl considered that she thought she had never loved the botanist, had had only friendship for him — though little she knew of the meaning of those fine words — they parted a little incoherently and in tears, and it had not occurred to the young man to imagine she was not going off to conventional life in some other of the endless Frognals he imagined as the cellular tissue of the world.

But she wasn't.

He had kept her photograph and her memory sweet, and if ever he had strayed from the severest constancy, it seemed only in the end to strengthen with the stuff of experience, to enhance by comparative disappointment his imagination of what she might have meant to him.... Then eight years afterwards they met again.

By the time he gets to this part of his story we have, at my initiative, left the bridge and are walking towards the Utopian guest house. The Utopian guest house! His voice rises and falls, and sometimes he holds my arm. My attention comes and goes. "Good-night," two sweet-voiced Utopians cry to us in their universal tongue, and I answer them "Good-night."

"You see," he persists, "I saw her only a week ago. It was in

Lucerne, while I was waiting for you to come on from England. I talked to her three or four times altogether. And her face — the change in her! I can't get it out of my head — night or day. The miserable waste of her...."

Before us, through the tall pine stems, shine the lights of our Utopian inn.

He talks vaguely of ill-usage. "The husband is vain, boastful, dishonest to the very confines of the law, and a drunkard. There are scenes and insults—"

"She told you?"

"Not much, but someone else did. He brings other women almost into her presence to spite her."

"And it's going on?" I interrupt.

"Yes. *Now*."

"Need it go on?"

"What do you mean?"

"Lady in trouble," I say. "Knight at hand. Why not stop this dismal grizzling and carry her off?" (You figure the heroic sweep of the arm that belongs to the Voice.) I positively forget for the moment that we are in Utopia at all.

"You mean?"

"Take her away from him! What's all this emotion of yours worth if it isn't equal to that!"

Positively he seems aghast at me.

"Do you mean elope with her?"

"It seems a most suitable case."

For a space he is silent, and we go on through the trees. A Utopian tram-car passes and I see his face, poor bitted wretch! looking pinched and scared in its trailing glow of light.

"That's all very well in a novel," he says. "But how could I go back to my laboratory, mixed classes with young ladies, you know, after a thing like that? How could we live and where could we live? We might have a house in London, but who would call upon us?... Besides, you don't know her. She is not the sort of woman.... Don't think I'm timid or conventional. Don't think I don't feel.... Feel! *You* don't know what it is to feel in a case of this sort...."

He halts and then flies out viciously: "Ugh! There are times when

I could strangle him with my hands."

Which is nonsense.

He flings out his lean botanising hands in an impotent gesture.

"My dear Man!" I say, and say no more.

For a moment I forget we are in Utopia altogether.

§ 5

Let us come back to Utopia. We were speaking of travel.

Besides roadways and railways and tramways, for those who go to and fro in the earth the Modern Utopians will have very many other ways of travelling. There will be rivers, for example, with a vast variety of boats; canals with diverse sorts of haulage; there will be lakes and lagoons; and when one comes at last to the borders of the land, the pleasure craft will be there, coming and going, and the swift great passenger vessels, very big and steady, doing thirty knots an hour or more, will trace long wakes as they go dwindling out athwart the restless vastness of the sea.

They will be just beginning to fly in Utopia. We owe much to M. Santos Dumont; the world is immeasurably more disposed to believe this wonder is coming, and coming nearly, than it was five years ago. But unless we are to suppose Utopian scientific knowledge far in advance of ours — and though that supposition was not proscribed in our initial undertaking, it would be inconvenient for us and not quite in the vein of the rest of our premises — they, too, will only be in the same experimental stage as ourselves. In Utopia, however, they will conduct research by the army corps while we conduct it — we don't conduct it! We let it happen. Fools make researches and wise men exploit them — that is our earthly way of dealing with the question, and we thank Heaven for an assumed abundance of financially impotent and sufficiently ingenious fools.

In Utopia, a great multitude of selected men, chosen volunteers, will be collaborating upon this new step in man's struggle with the elements. Bacon's visionary House of Saloman [Footnote: In *The New Atlantis*.] will be a thing realised, and it will be humming with this business. Every university in the world will be urgently working for priority in this aspect of the problem or that. Reports of

experiments, as full and as prompt as the telegraphic reports of cricket in our more sportive atmosphere, will go about the world. All this will be passing, as it were, behind the act drop of our first experience, behind this first picture of the urbanised Urseren valley. The literature of the subject will be growing and developing with the easy swiftness of an eagle's swoop as we come down the hillside; unseen in that twilight, unthought of by us until this moment, a thousand men at a thousand glowing desks, a busy specialist press, will be perpetually sifting, criticising, condensing, and clearing the ground for further speculation. Those who are concerned with the problems of public locomotion will be following these aeronautic investigations with a keen and enterprising interest, and so will the physiologist and the sociologist. That Utopian research will, I say, go like an eagle's swoop in comparison with the blind-man's fumbling of our terrestrial way. Even before our own brief Utopian journey is out, we may get a glimpse of the swift ripening of all this activity that will be in progress at our coming. To-morrow, perhaps, or in a day or so, some silent, distant thing will come gliding into view over the mountains, will turn and soar and pass again beyond our astonished sight....

§ 6

But my friend and his great trouble turn my mind from these questions of locomotion and the freedoms that cluster about them. In spite of myself I find myself framing his case. He is a lover, the most conventional of Anglican lovers, with a heart that has had its training, I should think, in the clean but limited schoolroom of Mrs. Henry Wood....

In Utopia I think they will fly with stronger pinions, it will not be in the superficialities of life merely that movement will be wide and free, they will mount higher and swoop more steeply than he in his cage can believe. What will their range be, their prohibitions? what jars to our preconceptions will he and I receive here?

My mind flows with the free, thin flow that it has at the end of an eventful day, and as we walk along in silence towards our inn I rove from issue to issue, I find myself ranging amidst the fundamental

things of the individual life and all the perplexity of desires and passions. I turn my questionings to the most difficult of all sets of compromises, those mitigations of spontaneous freedom that constitute the marriage laws, the mystery of balancing justice against the good of the future, amidst these violent and elusive passions. Where falls the balance of freedoms here? I pass for a time from Utopianising altogether, to ask the question that, after all, Schopenhauer failed completely to answer, why sometimes in the case of hurtful, pointless, and destructive things we want so vehemently....

I come back from this unavailing glance into the deeps to the general question of freedoms in this new relation. I find myself far adrift from the case of the Frognal botanist, and asking how far a modern Utopia will deal with personal morals.

As Plato demonstrated long ago, the principles of the relation of State control to personal morals may be best discussed in the case of intoxication, the most isolated and least complicated of all this group of problems. But Plato's treatment of this issue as a question of who may or may not have the use of wine, though suitable enough in considering a small State in which everybody was the effectual inspector of everybody, is entirely beside the mark under modern conditions, in which we are to have an extraordinarily higher standard of individual privacy and an amplitude and quantity of migration inconceivable to the Academic imagination. We may accept his principle and put this particular freedom (of the use of wine) among the distinctive privileges of maturity, and still find all that a modern would think of as the Drink Question untouched.

That question in Utopia will differ perhaps in the proportion of its factors, but in no other respect, from what it is upon earth. The same desirable ends will be sought, the maintenance of public order and decency, the reduction of inducements to form this bad and wasteful habit to their lowest possible minimum, and the complete protection of the immature. But the modern Utopians, having systematised their sociology, will have given some attention to the psychology of minor officials, a matter altogether too much neglected by the social reformer on earth. They will not put into the hands of a common policeman powers direct and indirect that would be dangerous to the

public in the hands of a judge. And they will have avoided the immeasurable error of making their control of the drink traffic a source of public revenue. Privacies they will not invade, but they will certainly restrict the public consumption of intoxicants to specified licensed places and the sale of them to unmistakable adults, and they will make the temptation of the young a grave offence. In so migratory a population as the Modern Utopian, the licensing of inns and bars would be under the same control as the railways and high roads. Inns exist for the stranger and not for the locality, and we shall meet with nothing there to correspond with our terrestrial absurdity of Local Option.

The Utopians will certainly control this trade, and as certainly punish personal excesses. Public drunkenness (as distinguished from the mere elation that follows a generous but controlled use of wine) will be an offence against public decency, and will be dealt with in some very drastic manner. It will, of course, be an aggravation of, and not an excuse for, crime.

But I doubt whether the State will go beyond that. Whether an adult shall use wine or beer or spirits, or not, seems to me entirely a matter for his doctor and his own private conscience. I doubt if we explorers shall meet any drunken men, and I doubt not we shall meet many who have never availed themselves of their adult freedom in this respect. The conditions of physical happiness will be better understood in Utopia, it will be worth while to be well there, and the intelligent citizen will watch himself closely. Half and more of the drunkenness of earth is an attempt to lighten dull days and hopelessly sordid and disagreeable lives, and in Utopia they do not suffer these things. Assuredly Utopia will be temperate, not only drinking, but eating with the soundest discretion. Yet I do not think wine and good ale will be altogether wanting there, nor good, mellow whisky, nor, upon occasion, the engaging various liqueur. I do not think so. My botanist, who abstains altogether, is of another opinion. We differ here and leave the question to the earnest reader. I have the utmost respect for all Teetotalers, Prohibitionists, and Haters and Persecutors of Innkeepers, their energy of reform awakens responsive notes in me, and to their species I look for a large part of the urgent repair of our earth; yet for all that—

There is Burgundy, for example, a bottle of soft and kindly Burgundy, taken to make a sunshine on one's lunch when four strenuous hours of toil have left one on the further side of appetite. Or ale, a foaming tankard of ale, ten miles of sturdy tramping in the sleet and slush as a prelude, and then good bread and good butter and a ripe hollow Stilton and celery and ale — ale with a certain quantitative freedom. Or, again, where is the sin in a glass of tawny port three or four times, or it may be five, a year, when the walnuts come round in their season? If you drink no port, then what are walnuts for? Such things I hold for the reward of vast intervals of abstinence; they justify your wide, immaculate margin, which is else a mere unmeaning blankness on the page of palate God has given you! I write of these things as a fleshly man, confessedly and knowingly fleshly, and more than usually aware of my liability to err; I know myself for a gross creature more given to sedentary world-mending than to brisk activities, and not one-tenth as active as the dullest newspaper boy in London. Yet still I have my uses, uses that vanish in monotony, and still I must ask why should we bury the talent of these bright sensations altogether? Under no circumstances can I think of my Utopians maintaining their fine order of life on ginger ale and lemonade and the ale that is Kops'. Those terrible Temperance Drinks, solutions of qualified sugar mixed with vast volumes of gas, as, for example, soda, seltzer, lemonade, and *fire-extincteurs* hand grenades — *minerals*, they call such stuff in England — fill a man with wind and self-righteousness. Indeed they do! Coffee destroys brain and kidney, a fact now universally recognised and advertised throughout America; and tea, except for a kind of green tea best used with discretion in punch, tans the entrails and turns honest stomachs into leather bags. Rather would I be Metchnikoffed [Footnote: See *The Nature of Man*, by Professor Elie Metchnikoff.] at once and have a clean, good stomach of German silver. No! If we are to have no ale in Utopia, give me the one clean temperance drink that is worthy to set beside wine, and that is simple water. Best it is when not quite pure and with a trace of organic matter, for then it tastes and sparkles....

My botanist would still argue.

Thank Heaven this is my book, and that the ultimate decision rests

with me. It is open to him to write his own Utopia and arrange that everybody shall do nothing except by the consent of the savants of the Republic, either in his eating, drinking, dressing or lodging, even as Cabet proposed. It is open to him to try a *News from Nowhere* Utopia with the wine left out. I have my short way with him here quite effectually. I turn in the entrance of our inn to the civil but by no means obsequious landlord, and with a careful ambiguity of manner for the thing may be considered an outrage, and I try to make it possible the idea is a jest — put my test demand....

"You see, my dear Teetotaler? — he sets before me tray and glass and..." Here follows the necessary experiment and a deep sigh.... "Yes, a bottle of quite *excellent* light beer! So there are also cakes and ale in Utopia! Let us in this saner and more beautiful world drink perdition to all earthly excesses. Let us drink more particularly to the coming of the day when men beyond there will learn to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative questions, to temper good intentions with good intelligence, and righteousness with wisdom. One of the darkest evils of our world is surely the unteachable wildness of the Good."

§ 7

So presently to bed and to sleep, but not at once to sleep. At first my brain, like a dog in unfamiliar quarters, must turn itself round for a time or so before it lies down. This strange mystery of a world of which I have seen so little as yet — a mountain slope, a twilit road, a traffic of ambiguous vehicles and dim shapes, the window lights of many homes — fills me with curiosities. Figures and incidents come and go, the people we have passed, our landlord, quietly attentive and yet, I feel, with the keenest curiosity peeping from his eyes, the unfamiliar forms of the house parts and furnishings, the unfamiliar courses of the meal. Outside this little bedroom is a world, a whole unimagined world. A thousand million things lie outside in the darkness beyond this lit inn of ours, unthought-of possibilities, overlooked considerations, surprises, riddles, incommensurables, a whole monstrous intricate universe of consequences that I have to do my best to unravel. I attempt impossible recapitulations and mingle

the weird quality of dream stuff with my thoughts.

Athwart all this tumult of my memory goes this queer figure of my unanticipated companion, so obsessed by himself and his own egotistical love that this sudden change to another world seems only a change of scene for his gnawing, uninvigorating passion. It occurs to me that she also must have an equivalent in Utopia, and then that idea and all ideas grow thin and vague, and are dissolved at last in the rising tide of sleep....

CHAPTER THE THIRD Utopian Economics

§ 1

These modern Utopians with the universally diffused good manners, the universal education, the fine freedoms we shall ascribe to them, their world unity, world language, world-wide travellings, world-wide freedom of sale and purchase, will remain mere dreamstuff, incredible even by twilight, until we have shown that at that level the community will still sustain itself. At any rate, the common liberty of the Utopians will not embrace the common liberty to be unserviceable, the most perfect economy of organisation still leaves the fact untouched that all order and security in a State rests on the certainty of getting work done. How will the work of this planet be done? What will be the economics of a modern Utopia?

Now in the first place, a state so vast and complex as this world Utopia, and with so migratory a people, will need some handy symbol to check the distribution of services and commodities. Almost certainly they will need to have money. They will have money, and it is not inconceivable that, for all his sorrowful thoughts, our botanist, with his trained observation, his habit of looking at little things upon the ground, would be the one to see and pick up the coin that has fallen from some wayfarer's pocket. (This, in our first hour or so before we reach the inn in the Urseren Thal.) You figure us upon the high Gotthard road, heads together over the little disk that contrives to tell us so much of this strange world.

It is, I imagine, of gold, and it will be a convenient accident if it is sufficient to make us solvent for a day or so, until we are a little more informed of the economic system into which we have come. It is, moreover, of a fair round size, and the inscription declares it one Lion, equal to "twaindy" bronze Crosses. Unless the ratio of metals is very different here, this latter must be a token coin, and therefore legal tender for but a small amount. (That would be pain and pleasure to Mr. Wordsworth Donisthorpe if he were to chance to join us, for once he planned a Utopian coinage, [Footnote: *A System of Measures*, by Wordsworth Donisthorpe.] and the words Lion and

Cross are his. But a token coinage and "legal tender" he cannot abide. They make him argue.) And being in Utopia, that unfamiliar "twaindy" suggests at once we have come upon that most Utopian of all things, a duodecimal system of counting.

My author's privilege of details serves me here. This Lion is distinctly a beautiful coin, admirably made, with its value in fine, clear letters circling the obverse side, and a head thereon — of Newton, as I live! One detects American influence here. Each year, as we shall find, each denomination of coins celebrates a centenary. The reverse shows the universal goddess of the Utopian coinage — Peace, as a beautiful woman, reading with a child out of a great book, and behind them are stars, and an hour-glass, halfway run. Very human these Utopians, after all, and not by any means above the obvious in their symbolism!

So for the first time we learn definitely of the World State, and we get our first clear hint, too, that there is an end to Kings. But our coin raises other issues also. It would seem that this Utopia has no simple community of goods, that there is, at any rate, a restriction upon what one may take, a need for evidences of equivalent value, a limitation to human credit.

It dates — so much of this present Utopia of ours dates. Those former Utopists were bitterly against gold. You will recall the undignified use Sir Thomas More would have us put it to, and how there was no money at all in the Republic of Plato, and in that later community for which he wrote his Laws an iron coinage of austere appearance and doubtful efficacy.... It may be these great gentlemen were a little hasty with a complicated difficulty, and not a little unjust to a highly respectable element.

Gold is abused and made into vessels of dishonour, and abolished from ideal society as though it were the cause instead of the instrument of human baseness; but, indeed, there is nothing bad in gold. Making gold into vessels of dishonour and banishing it from the State is punishing the hatchet for the murderer's crime. Money, did you but use it right, is a good thing in life, a necessary thing in civilised human life, as complicated, indeed, for its purposes, but as natural a growth as the bones in a man's wrist, and I do not see how one can imagine anything at all worthy of being called a civilisation

without it. It is the water of the body social, it distributes and receives, and renders growth and assimilation and movement and recovery possible. It is the reconciliation of human interdependence with liberty. What other device will give a man so great a freedom with so strong an inducement to effort? The economic history of the world, where it is not the history of the theory of property, is very largely the record of the abuse, not so much of money as of credit devices to supplement money, to amplify the scope of this most precious invention; and no device of labour credits [Footnote: Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, Ch. IX.] or free demand of commodities from a central store [Footnote: More's *Utopia* and Cabet's *Icaria*.] or the like has ever been suggested that does not give ten thousand times more scope for that inherent moral dross in man that must be reckoned with in any sane Utopia we may design and plan.... Heaven knows where progress may not end, but at any rate this developing State, into which we two men have fallen, this Twentieth Century Utopia, has still not passed beyond money and the use of coins.

§ 2

Now if this Utopian world is to be in some degree parallel to contemporary thought, it must have been concerned, it may be still concerned, with many unsettled problems of currency, and with the problems that centre about a standard of value. Gold is perhaps of all material substances the best adapted to the monetary purpose, but even at that best it falls far short of an imaginable ideal. It undergoes spasmodic and irregular cheapening through new discoveries of gold, and at any time it may undergo very extensive and sudden and disastrous depreciation through the discovery of some way of transmuting less valuable elements. The liability to such depreciations introduces an undesirable speculative element into the relations of debtor and creditor. When, on the one hand, there is for a time a check in the increase of the available stores of gold, or an increase in the energy applied to social purposes, or a checking of the public security that would impede the free exchange of credit and necessitate a more frequent production of gold in evidence, then

there comes an undue appreciation of money as against the general commodities of life, and an automatic impoverishment of the citizens in general as against the creditor class. The common people are mortgaged into the bondage of debt. And on the other hand an unexpected spate of gold production, the discovery of a single nugget as big as St. Paul's, let us say — a quite possible thing — would result in a sort of jail delivery of debtors and a financial earthquake.

It has been suggested by an ingenious thinker that it is possible to use as a standard of monetary value no substance whatever, but instead, force, and that value might be measured in units of energy. An excellent development this, in theory, at any rate, of the general idea of the modern State as kinetic and not static; it throws the old idea of the social order and the new into the sharpest antithesis. The old order is presented as a system of institutions and classes ruled by men of substance; the new, of enterprises and interests led by men of power.

Now I glance at this matter in the most incidental manner, as a man may skim through a specialist's exposition in a popular magazine. You must figure me, therefore, finding from a casual periodical paper in our inn, with a certain surprise at not having anticipated as much, the Utopian self of that same ingenious person quite conspicuously a leader of thought, and engaged in organising the discussion of the currency changes Utopia has under consideration. The article, as it presents itself to me, contains a complete and lucid, though occasionally rather technical, explanation of his newest proposals. They have been published, it seems, for general criticism, and one gathers that in the modern Utopia the administration presents the most elaborately detailed schemes of any proposed alteration in law or custom, some time before any measure is taken to carry it into effect, and the possibilities of every detail are acutely criticised, flaws anticipated, side issues raised, and the whole minutely tested and fined down by a planetful of critics, before the actual process of legislation begins.

The explanation of these proposals involves an anticipatory glance at the local administration of a Modern Utopia. To anyone who has watched the development of technical science during the last decade or so, there will be no shock in the idea that a general

consolidation of a great number of common public services over areas of considerable size is now not only practicable, but very desirable. In a little while heating and lighting and the supply of power for domestic and industrial purposes and for urban and inter-urban communications will all be managed electrically from common generating stations. And the trend of political and social speculation points decidedly to the conclusion that so soon as it passes out of the experimental stage, the supply of electrical energy, just like drainage and the supply of water, will fall to the local authority. Moreover, the local authority will be the universal landowner. Upon that point so extreme an individualist as Herbert Spencer was in agreement with the Socialist. In Utopia we conclude that, whatever other types of property may exist, all natural sources of force, and indeed all strictly natural products, coal, water power, and the like, are inalienably vested in the local authorities (which, in order to secure the maximum of convenience and administrative efficiency, will probably control areas as large sometimes as half England), they will generate electricity by water power, by combustion, by wind or tide or whatever other natural force is available, and this electricity will be devoted, some of it to the authority's lighting and other public works, some of it, as a subsidy, to the World-State authority which controls the high roads, the great railways, the inns and other apparatus of world communication, and the rest will pass on to private individuals or to distributing companies at a uniform fixed rate for private lighting and heating, for machinery and industrial applications of all sorts. Such an arrangement of affairs will necessarily involve a vast amount of book-keeping between the various authorities, the World-State government and the customers, and this book-keeping will naturally be done most conveniently in units of physical energy.

It is not incredible that the assessment of the various local administrations for the central world government would be already calculated upon the estimated total of energy, periodically available in each locality, and booked and spoken of in these physical units. Accounts between central and local governments could be kept in these terms. Moreover, one may imagine Utopian local authorities making contracts in which payment would be no longer in coinage

upon the gold basis, but in notes good for so many thousands or millions of units of energy at one or other of the generating stations.

Now the problems of economic theory will have undergone an enormous clarification if, instead of measuring in fluctuating money values, the same scale of energy units can be extended to their discussion, if, in fact, the idea of trading could be entirely eliminated. In my Utopia, at any rate, this has been done, the production and distribution of common commodities have been expressed as a problem in the conversion of energy, and the scheme that Utopia was now discussing was the application of this idea of energy as the standard of value to the entire Utopian coinage. Every one of those giant local authorities was to be free to issue energy notes against the security of its surplus of saleable available energy, and to make all its contracts for payment in those notes up to a certain maximum defined by the amount of energy produced and disposed of in that locality in the previous year. This power of issue was to be renewed just as rapidly as the notes came in for redemption. In a world without boundaries, with a population largely migratory and emancipated from locality, the price of the energy notes of these various local bodies would constantly tend to be uniform, because employment would constantly shift into the areas where energy was cheap. Accordingly, the price of so many millions of units of energy at any particular moment in coins of the gold currency would be approximately the same throughout the world. It was proposed to select some particular day when the economic atmosphere was distinctly equable, and to declare a fixed ratio between the gold coinage and the energy notes; each gold Lion and each Lion of credit representing exactly the number of energy units it could buy on that day. The old gold coinage was at once to cease to be legal tender beyond certain defined limits, except to the central government, which would not reissue it as it came in. It was, in fact, to become a temporary token coinage, a token coinage of full value for the day of conversion at any rate, if not afterwards, under the new standard of energy, and to be replaceable by an ordinary token coinage as time went on. The old computation by Lions and the values of the small change of daily life were therefore to suffer no disturbance whatever.

The economists of Utopia, as I apprehended them, had a different

method and a very different system of theories from those I have read on earth, and this makes my exposition considerably more difficult. This article upon which I base my account floated before me in an unfamiliar, perplexing, and dream-like phraseology. Yet I brought away an impression that here was a rightness that earthly economists have failed to grasp. Few earthly economists have been able to disentangle themselves from patriotisms and politics, and their obsession has always been international trade. Here in Utopia the World State cuts that away from beneath their feet; there are no imports but meteorites, and no exports at all. Trading is the earthly economists' initial notion, and they start from perplexing and insoluble riddles about exchange value, insoluble because all trading finally involves individual preferences which are incalculable and unique. Nowhere do they seem to be handling really defined standards, every economic dissertation and discussion reminds one more strongly than the last of the game of croquet Alice played in Wonderland, when the mallets were flamingoes and the balls were hedgehogs and crawled away, and the hoops were soldiers and kept getting up and walking about. But economics in Utopia must be, it seems to me, not a theory of trading based on bad psychology, but physics applied to problems in the theory of sociology. The general problem of Utopian economics is to state the conditions of the most efficient application of the steadily increasing quantities of material energy the progress of science makes available for human service, to the general needs of mankind. Human labour and existing material are dealt with in relation to that. Trading and relative wealth are merely episodical in such a scheme. The trend of the article I read, as I understood it, was that a monetary system based upon a relatively small amount of gold, upon which the business of the whole world had hitherto been done, fluctuated unreasonably and supplied no real criterion of well-being, that the nominal values of things and enterprises had no clear and simple relation to the real physical prosperity of the community, that the nominal wealth of a community in millions of pounds or dollars or Lions, measured nothing but the quantity of hope in the air, and an increase of confidence meant an inflation of credit and a pessimistic phase a collapse of this hallucination of possessions. The new standards, this

advocate reasoned, were to alter all that, and it seemed to me they would.

I have tried to indicate the drift of these remarkable proposals, but about them clustered an elaborate mass of keen and temperate discussion. Into the details of that discussion I will not enter now, nor am I sure I am qualified to render the multitudinous aspect of this complicated question at all precisely. I read the whole thing in the course of an hour or two of rest after lunch — it was either the second or third day of my stay in Utopia — and we were sitting in a little inn at the end of the Lake of Uri. We had loitered there, and I had fallen reading because of a shower of rain.... But certainly as I read it the proposition struck me as a singularly simple and attractive one, and its exposition opened out to me for the first time clearly, in a comprehensive outline, the general conception of the economic nature of the Utopian State.

§ 3

The difference between the social and economic sciences as they exist in our world [Footnote: But see Gidding's *Principles of Sociology*, a modern and richly suggestive American work, imperfectly appreciated by the British student. See also Walter Bagehot's *Economic Studies*.] and in this Utopia deserves perhaps a word or so more. I write with the utmost diffidence, because upon earth economic science has been raised to a very high level of tortuous abstraction by the industry of its professors, and I can claim neither a patient student's intimacy with their productions nor — what is more serious — anything but the most generalised knowledge of what their Utopian equivalents have achieved. The vital nature of economic issues to a Utopia necessitates, however, some attempt at interpretation between the two.

In Utopia there is no distinct and separate science of economics. Many problems that we should regard as economic come within the scope of Utopian psychology. My Utopians make two divisions of the science of psychology, first, the general psychology of individuals, a sort of mental physiology separated by no definite line from physiology proper, and secondly, the psychology of

relationship between individuals. This second is an exhaustive study of the reaction of people upon each other and of all possible relationships. It is a science of human aggregations, of all possible family groupings, of neighbours and neighbourhood, of companies, associations, unions, secret and public societies, religious groupings, of common ends and intercourse, and of the methods of intercourse and collective decision that hold human groups together, and finally of government and the State. The elucidation of economic relationships, depending as it does on the nature of the hypothesis of human aggregation actually in operation at any time, is considered to be subordinate and subsequent to this general science of Sociology. Political economy and economics, in our world now, consist of a hopeless muddle of social assumptions and preposterous psychology, and a few geographical and physical generalisations. Its ingredients will be classified out and widely separated in Utopian thought. On the one hand there will be the study of physical economies, ending in the descriptive treatment of society as an organisation for the conversion of all the available energy in nature to the material ends of mankind — a physical sociology which will be already at such a stage of practical development as to be giving the world this token coinage representing energy — and on the other there will be the study of economic problems as problems in the division of labour, having regard to a social organisation whose main ends are reproduction and education in an atmosphere of personal freedom. Each of these inquiries, working unencumbered by the other, will be continually contributing fresh valid conclusions for the use of the practical administrator.

In no region of intellectual activity will our hypothesis of freedom from tradition be of more value in devising a Utopia than here. From its beginning the earthly study of economics has been infertile and unhelpful, because of the mass of unanalysed and scarcely suspected assumptions upon which it rested. The facts were ignored that trade is a bye-product and not an essential factor in social life, that property is a plastic and fluctuating convention, that value is capable of impersonal treatment only in the case of the most generalised requirements. Wealth was measured by the standards of exchange. Society was regarded as a practically unlimited number of avaricious

adult units incapable of any other subordinate groupings than business partnerships, and the sources of competition were assumed to be inexhaustible. Upon such quicksands rose an edifice that aped the securities of material science, developed a technical jargon and professed the discovery of "laws." Our liberation from these false presumptions through the rhetoric of Carlyle and Ruskin and the activities of the Socialists, is more apparent than real. The old edifice oppresses us still, repaired and altered by indifferent builders, underpinned in places, and with a slight change of name. "Political Economy" has been painted out, and instead we read "Economics — under entirely new management." Modern Economics differs mainly from old Political Economy in having produced no Adam Smith. The old "Political Economy" made certain generalisations, and they were mostly wrong; new Economics evades generalisations, and seems to lack the intellectual power to make them. The science hangs like a gathering fog in a valley, a fog which begins nowhere and goes nowhere, an incidental, unmeaning inconvenience to passers-by. Its most typical exponents display a disposition to disavow generalisations altogether, to claim consideration as "experts," and to make immediate political application of that conceded claim. Now Newton, Darwin, Dalton, Davy, Joule, and Adam Smith did not affect this "expert" hankey-pankey, becoming enough in a hairdresser or a fashionable physician, but indecent in a philosopher or a man of science. In this state of impotent expertness, however, or in some equally unsound state, economics must struggle on — a science that is no science, a floundering lore wallowing in a mud of statistics — until either the study of the material organisation of production on the one hand as a development of physics and geography, or the study of social aggregation on the other, renders enduring foundations possible.

§ 4

The older Utopias were all relatively small states; Plato's Republic, for example, was to be smaller than the average English borough, and no distinction was made between the Family, the Local Government, and the State. Plato and Campanella — for all that the

latter was a Christian priest — carried communism to its final point and prescribed even a community of husbands and wives, an idea that was brought at last to the test of effectual experiment in the Oneida Community of New York State (1848-1879). This latter body did not long survive its founder, at least as a veritable communism, by reason of the insurgent individualism of its vigorous sons. More, too, denied privacy and ruled an absolute community of goods, at any rate, and so, coming to the Victorian Utopias, did Cabet. But Cabet's communism was one of the "free store" type, and the goods were yours only after you had requisitioned them. That seems the case in the "Nowhere" of Morris also. Compared with the older writers Bellamy and Morris have a vivid sense of individual separation, and their departure from the old homogeneity is sufficiently marked to justify a doubt whether there will be any more thoroughly communistic Utopias for ever.

A Utopia such as this present one, written in the opening of the Twentieth Century, and after the most exhaustive discussion — nearly a century long — between Communistic and Socialistic ideas on the one hand, and Individualism on the other, emerges upon a sort of effectual conclusion to those controversies. The two parties have so chipped and amended each other's initial propositions that, indeed, except for the labels still flutteringly adhesive to the implicated men, it is hard to choose between them. Each side established a good many propositions, and we profit by them all. We of the succeeding generation can see quite clearly that for the most part the heat and zeal of these discussions arose in the confusion of a quantitative for a qualitative question. To the onlooker, both Individualism and Socialism are, in the absolute, absurdities; the one would make men the slaves of the violent or rich, the other the slaves of the State official, and the way of sanity runs, perhaps even sinuously, down the intervening valley. Happily the dead past buries its dead, and it is not our function now to adjudicate the preponderance of victory. In the very days when our political and economic order is becoming steadily more Socialistic, our ideals of intercourse turn more and more to a fuller recognition of the claims of individuality. The State is to be progressive, it is no longer to be static, and this alters the general condition of the Utopian problem

profoundly; we have to provide not only for food and clothing, for order and health, but for initiative. The factor that leads the World State on from one phase of development to the next is the interplay of individualities; to speak teleologically, the world exists for the sake of and through initiative, and individuality is the method of initiative. Each man and woman, to the extent that his or her individuality is marked, breaks the law of precedent, transgresses the general formula, and makes a new experiment for the direction of the life force. It is impossible, therefore, for the State, which represents all and is preoccupied by the average, to make effectual experiments and intelligent innovations, and so supply the essential substance of life. As against the individual the state represents the species, in the case of the Utopian World State it absolutely represents the species. The individual emerges from the species, makes his experiment, and either fails, dies, and comes to an end, or succeeds and impresses himself in offspring, in consequences and results, intellectual, material and moral, upon the world.

Biologically the species is the accumulation of the experiments of all its successful individuals since the beginning, and the World State of the Modern Utopist will, in its economic aspect, be a compendium of established economic experience, about which individual enterprise will be continually experimenting, either to fail and pass, or to succeed and at last become incorporated with the undying organism of the World State. This organism is the universal rule, the common restriction, the rising level platform on which individualities stand.

The World State in this ideal presents itself as the sole landowner of the earth, with the great local governments I have adumbrated, the local municipalities, holding, as it were, feudally under it as landlords. The State or these subordinates holds all the sources of energy, and either directly or through its tenants, farmers and agents, develops these sources, and renders the energy available for the work of life. It or its tenants will produce food, and so human energy, and the exploitation of coal and electric power, and the powers of wind and wave and water will be within its right. It will pour out this energy by assignment and lease and acquiescence and what not upon its individual citizens. It will maintain order, maintain roads,

maintain a cheap and efficient administration of justice, maintain cheap and rapid locomotion and be the common carrier of the planet, convey and distribute labour, control, let, or administer all natural productions, pay for and secure healthy births and a healthy and vigorous new generation, maintain the public health, coin money and sustain standards of measurement, subsidise research, and reward such commercially unprofitable undertakings as benefit the community as a whole; subsidise when needful chairs of criticism and authors and publications, and collect and distribute information. The energy developed and the employment afforded by the State will descend like water that the sun has sucked out of the sea to fall upon a mountain range, and back to the sea again it will come at last, debouching in ground rent and royalty and license fees, in the fees of travellers and profits upon carrying and coinage and the like, in death duty, transfer tax, legacy and forfeiture, returning to the sea. Between the clouds and the sea it will run, as a river system runs, down through a great region of individual enterprise and interplay, whose freedom it will sustain. In that intermediate region between the kindred heights and deeps those beginnings and promises will arise that are the essential significance, the essential substance, of life. From our human point of view the mountains and sea are for the habitable lands that lie between. So likewise the State is for Individualities. The State is for Individuals, the law is for freedoms, the world is for experiment, experience, and change: these are the fundamental beliefs upon which a modern Utopia must go.

§ 5

Within this scheme, which makes the State the source of all energy, and the final legatee, what will be the nature of the property a man may own? Under modern conditions — indeed, under any conditions — a man without some negotiable property is a man without freedom, and the extent of his property is very largely the measure of his freedom. Without any property, without even shelter or food, a man has no choice but to set about getting these things; he is in servitude to his needs until he has secured property to satisfy them. But with a certain small property a man is free to do many things, to

take a fortnight's holiday when he chooses, for example, and to try this new departure from his work or that; with so much more, he may take a year of freedom and go to the ends of the earth; with so much more, he may obtain elaborate apparatus and try curious novelties, build himself houses and make gardens, establish businesses and make experiments at large. Very speedily, under terrestrial conditions, the property of a man may reach such proportions that his freedom oppresses the freedom of others. Here, again, is a quantitative question, an adjustment of conflicting freedoms, a quantitative question that too many people insist on making a qualitative one.

The object sought in the code of property laws that one would find in operation in Utopia would be the same object that pervades the whole Utopian organisation, namely, a universal maximum of individual freedom. Whatever far-reaching movements the State or great rich men or private corporations may make, the starvation by any complication of employment, the unwilling deportation, the destruction of alternatives to servile submissions, must not ensue. Beyond such qualifications, the object of Modern Utopian statesmanship will be to secure to a man the freedom given by all his legitimate property, that is to say, by all the values his toil or skill or foresight and courage have brought into being. Whatever he has justly made he has a right to keep, that is obvious enough; but he will also have a right to sell and exchange, and so this question of what may be property takes really the form of what may a man buy in Utopia?

A modern Utopian most assuredly must have a practically unqualified property in all those things that become, as it were, by possession, extensions and expressions of his personality; his clothing, his jewels, the tools of his employment, his books, the objects of art he may have bought or made, his personal weapons (if Utopia have need of such things), insignia, and so forth. All such things that he has bought with his money or acquired — provided he is not a professional or habitual dealer in such property — will be inalienably his, his to give or lend or keep, free even from taxation. So intimate is this sort of property that I have no doubt Utopia will give a man posthumous rights over it — will permit him to assign it

to a successor with at the utmost the payment of a small redemption. A horse, perhaps, in certain districts, or a bicycle, or any such mechanical conveyance personally used, the Utopians might find it well to rank with these possessions. No doubt, too, a house and privacy owned and occupied by a man, and even a man's own household furniture, might be held to stand as high or almost as high in the property scale, might be taxed as lightly and transferred under only a slightly heavier redemption, provided he had not let these things on hire, or otherwise alienated them from his intimate self. A thorough-going, Democratic Socialist will no doubt be inclined at first to object that if the Utopians make these things a specially free sort of property in this way, men would spend much more upon them than they would otherwise do, but indeed that will be an excellent thing. We are too much affected by the needy atmosphere of our own mismanaged world. In Utopia no one will have to hunger because some love to make and have made and own and cherish beautiful things. To give this much of property to individuals will tend to make clothing, ornamentation, implements, books, and all the arts finer and more beautiful, because by buying such things a man will secure something inalienable — save in the case of bankruptcy — for himself and for those who belong to him. Moreover, a man may in his lifetime set aside sums to ensure special advantages of education and care for the immature children of himself and others, and in this manner also exercise a posthumous right. [Footnote: But a Statute of Mortmain will set a distinct time limit to the continuance of such benefactions. A periodic revision of endowments is a necessary feature in any modern Utopia.]

For all other property, the Utopians will have a scantier respect; even money unspent by a man, and debts to him that bear no interest, will at his death stand upon a lower level than these things. What he did not choose to gather and assimilate to himself, or assign for the special education of his children, the State will share in the lion's proportion with heir and legatee.

This applies, for example, to the property that a man creates and acquires in business enterprises, which are presumably undertaken for gain, and as a means of living rather than for themselves. All new machinery, all new methods, all uncertain and variable and non-

universal undertakings, are no business for the State; they commence always as experiments of unascertained value, and next after the invention of money, there is no invention has so facilitated freedom and progress as the invention of the limited liability company to do this work of trial and adventure. The abuses, the necessary reforms of company law on earth, are no concern of ours here and now, suffice it that in a Modern Utopia such laws must be supposed to be as perfect as mortal laws can possibly be made. *Caveat vendor* will be a sound qualification of *Caveat emptor* in the beautifully codified Utopian law. Whether the Utopian company will be allowed to prefer this class of share to that or to issue debentures, whether indeed usury, that is to say lending money at fixed rates of interest, will be permitted at all in Utopia, one may venture to doubt. But whatever the nature of the shares a man may hold, they will all be sold at his death, and whatever he has not clearly assigned for special educational purposes will — with possibly some fractional concession to near survivors — lapse to the State. The "safe investment," that permanent, undying claim upon the community, is just one of those things Utopia will discourage; which indeed the developing security of civilisation quite automatically discourages through the fall in the rate of interest. As we shall see at a later stage, the State will insure the children of every citizen, and those legitimately dependent upon him, against the inconvenience of his death; it will carry out all reasonable additional dispositions he may have made for them in the same event; and it will insure him against old age and infirmity; and the object of Utopian economics will be to give a man every inducement to spend his surplus money in intensifying the quality of his surroundings, either by economic adventures and experiments, which may yield either losses or large profits, or in increasing the beauty, the pleasure, the abundance and promise of life.

Besides strictly personal possessions and shares in business adventures, Utopia will no doubt permit associations of its citizens to have a property in various sorts of contracts and concessions, in leases of agricultural and other land, for example; in houses they may have built, factories and machinery they may have made, and the like. And if a citizen prefer to adventure into business single-handed,

he will have all the freedoms of enterprise enjoyed by a company; in business affairs he will be a company of one, and his single share will be dealt with at his death like any other shares.... So much for the second kind of property. And these two kinds of property will probably exhaust the sorts of property a Utopian may possess.

The trend of modern thought is entirely against private property in land or natural objects or products, and in Utopia these things will be the inalienable property of the World State. Subject to the rights of free locomotion, land will be leased out to companies or individuals, but — in view of the unknown necessities of the future — never for a longer period than, let us say, fifty years.

The property of a parent in his children, and of a husband in his wife, seems to be undergoing a steadily increasing qualification in the world of to-day, but the discussion of the Utopian state of affairs in regard to such property may be better reserved until marriage becomes our topic. Suffice it here to remark, that the increasing control of a child's welfare and upbringing by the community, and the growing disposition to limit and tax inheritance are complementary aspects of the general tendency to regard the welfare and free intraplay of future generations no longer as the concern of parents and altruistic individuals, but as the predominant issue of statesmanship, and the duty and moral meaning of the world community as a whole.

§ 6

From the conception of mechanical force as coming in from Nature to the service of man, a conception the Utopian proposal of a coinage based on energy units would emphasise, arise profound contrasts between the modern and the classical Utopias. Except for a meagre use of water power for milling, and the wind for sailing — so meagre in the latter case that the classical world never contrived to do without the galley slave — and a certain restricted help from oxen in ploughing, and from horses in locomotion, all the energy that sustained the old-fashioned State was derived from the muscular exertion of toiling men. They ran their world by hand. Continual bodily labour was a condition of social existence. It is only with the

coming of coal burning, of abundant iron and steel, and of scientific knowledge that this condition has been changed. To-day, I suppose, if it were possible to indicate, in units of energy, the grand total of work upon which the social fabric of the United States or England rests, it would be found that a vastly preponderating moiety is derived from non-human sources, from coal and liquid fuel, and explosives and wind and water. There is every indication of a steady increase in this proportion of mechanical energy, in this emancipation of men from the necessity of physical labour. There appears no limit to the invasion of life by the machine.

Now it is only in the last three hundred years that any human being seems to have anticipated this. It stimulates the imagination to remark how entirely it was overlooked as a modifying cause in human development. [Footnote: It is interesting to note how little even Bacon seems to see of this, in his *New Atlantis*.] Plato clearly had no ideas about machines at all as a force affecting social organisation. There was nothing in his world to suggest them to him. I suppose there arose no invention, no new mechanical appliance or method of the slightest social importance through all his length of years. He never thought of a State that did not rely for its force upon human muscle, just as he never thought of a State that was not primarily organised for warfare hand to hand. Political and moral inventions he saw enough of and to spare, and in that direction he still stimulates the imagination. But in regard to all material possibilities he deadens rather than stimulates. [Footnote: The lost Utopia of Hippodamus provided rewards for inventors, but unless Aristotle misunderstood him, and it is certainly the fate of all Utopias to be more or less misread, the inventions contemplated were political devices.] An infinitude of nonsense about the Greek mind would never have been written if the distinctive intellectual and artistic quality of Plato's time, its extraordinarily clear definition of certain material conditions as absolutely permanent, coupled with its politico-social instability, had been borne in mind. The food of the Greek imagination was the very antithesis of our own nourishment. We are educated by our circumstances to think no revolution in appliances and economic organisation incredible, our minds play freely about possibilities that would have struck the men of the

Academy as outrageous extravagance, and it is in regard to politico-social expedients that our imaginations fail. Sparta, for all the evidence of history, is scarcely more credible to us than a motor-car throbbing in the agora would have been to Socrates.

By sheer inadvertence, therefore, Plato commenced the tradition of Utopias without machinery, a tradition we find Morris still loyally following, except for certain mechanical barges and such-like toys, in his *News from Nowhere*. There are some foreshadowings of mechanical possibilities in the *New Atlantis*, but it is only in the nineteenth century that Utopias appeared in which the fact is clearly recognised that the social fabric rests no longer upon human labour. It was, I believe, Cabet [Footnote: Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 1848.] who first in a Utopian work insisted upon the escape of man from irksome labours through the use of machinery. He is the great primitive of modern Utopias, and Bellamy is his American equivalent. Hitherto, either slave labour (Phaleas), [Footnote: Aristotle's *Politics*, Bk. II., Ch. VIII.] or at least class distinctions involving unavoidable labour in the lower class, have been assumed — as Plato does, and as Bacon in the *New Atlantis* probably intended to do (More gave his Utopians bondsmen *sans phrase* for their most disagreeable toil); or there is — as in Morris and the outright Return-to-Nature Utopians — a bold make-believe that all toil may be made a joy, and with that a levelling down of all society to an equal participation in labour. But indeed this is against all the observed behaviour of mankind. It needed the Olympian unworldliness of an irresponsible rich man of the shareholding type, a Ruskin or a Morris playing at life, to imagine as much. Road-making under Mr. Ruskin's auspices was a joy at Oxford no doubt, and a distinction, and it still remains a distinction; it proved the least contagious of practices. And Hawthorne did not find bodily toil anything more than the curse the Bible says it is, at Brook Farm. [Footnote: *The Blythedale Experiment*, and see also his Notebook.]

If toil is a blessing, never was blessing so effectually disguised, and the very people who tell us that, hesitate to suggest more than a beautiful ease in the endless day of Heaven. A certain amount of bodily or mental exercise, a considerable amount of doing things under the direction of one's free imagination is quite another matter.

Artistic production, for example, when it is at its best, when a man is freely obeying himself, and not troubling to please others, is really not toil at all. It is quite a different thing digging potatoes, as boys say, "for a lark," and digging them because otherwise you will starve, digging them day after day as a dull, unavoidable imperative. The essence of toil is that imperative, and the fact that the attention *must* cramp itself to the work in hand — that it excludes freedom, and not that it involves fatigue. So long as anything but a quasi-savage life depended upon toil, so long was it hopeless to expect mankind to do anything but struggle to confer just as much of this blessing as possible upon one another. But now that the new conditions physical science is bringing about, not only dispense with man as a source of energy but supply the hope that all routine work may be made automatic, it is becoming conceivable that presently there may be no need for anyone to toil habitually at all; that a labouring class — that is to say, a class of workers without personal initiative — will become unnecessary to the world of men.

The plain message physical science has for the world at large is this, that were our political and social and moral devices only as well contrived to their ends as a linotype machine, an antiseptic operating plant, or an electric tram-car, there need now at the present moment be no appreciable toil in the world, and only the smallest fraction of the pain, the fear, and the anxiety that now makes human life so doubtful in its value. There is more than enough for everyone alive. Science stands, a too competent servant, behind her wrangling underbred masters, holding out resources, devices, and remedies they are too stupid to use. [Footnote: See that most suggestive little book, *Twentieth Century Inventions*, by Mr. George Sutherland.] And on its material side a modern Utopia must needs present these gifts as taken, and show a world that is really abolishing the need of labour, abolishing the last base reason for anyone's servitude or inferiority.

§ 7

The effectual abolition of a labouring and servile class will make itself felt in every detail of the inn that will shelter us, of the bedrooms we shall occupy. You conceive my awakening to all these

things on the morning after our arrival. I shall lie for a minute or so with my nose peeping over the coverlet, agreeably and gently coming awake, and with some vague nightmare of sitting at a common table with an unavoidable dustman in green and gold called Boffin, [Footnote: *Vide* William Morris's *News from Nowhere*.] fading out of my mind. Then I should start up. You figure my apprehensive, startled inspection of my chamber. "Where am I?" that classic phrase, recurs. Then I perceive quite clearly that I am in bed in Utopia.

Utopia! The word is enough to bring anyone out of bed, to the nearest window, but thence I see no more than the great mountain mass behind the inn, a very terrestrial looking mountain mass. I return to the contrivances about me, and make my examination as I dress, pausing garment in hand to hover over first this thing of interest and then that.

The room is, of course, very clear and clean and simple; not by any means cheaply equipped, but designed to economise the labour of redding and repair just as much as is possible. It is beautifully proportioned, and rather lower than most rooms I know on earth. There is no fireplace, and I am perplexed by that until I find a thermometer beside six switches on the wall. Above this switch-board is a brief instruction: one switch warms the floor, which is not carpeted, but covered by a substance like soft oilcloth; one warms the mattress (which is of metal with resistance coils threaded to and fro in it); and the others warm the wall in various degrees, each directing current through a separate system of resistances. The casement does not open, but above, flush with the ceiling, a noiseless rapid fan pumps air out of the room. The air enters by a Tobin shaft. There is a recess dressing-room, equipped with a bath and all that is necessary to one's toilette, and the water, one remarks, is warmed, if one desires it warm, by passing it through an electrically heated spiral of tubing. A cake of soap drops out of a store machine on the turn of a handle, and when you have done with it, you drop that and your soiled towels and so forth, which also are given you by machines, into a little box, through the bottom of which they drop at once, and sail down a smooth shaft. A little notice tells you the price of your room, and you gather the price is doubled if you do not leave the

toilette as you found it. Beside the bed, and to be lit at night by a handy switch over the pillow, is a little clock, its face flush with the wall. The room has no corners to gather dirt, wall meets floor with a gentle curve, and the apartment could be swept out effectually by a few strokes of a mechanical sweeper. The door frames and window frames are of metal, rounded and impervious to draught. You are politely requested to turn a handle at the foot of your bed before leaving the room, and forthwith the frame turns up into a vertical position, and the bedclothes hang airing. You stand at the doorway and realise that there remains not a minute's work for anyone to do. Memories of the fœtid disorder of many an earthly bedroom after a night's use float across your mind.

And you must not imagine this dustless, spotless, sweet apartment as anything but beautiful. Its appearance is a little unfamiliar of course, but all the muddle of dust-collecting hangings and witless ornament that cover the earthly bedroom, the valances, the curtains to check the draught from the ill-fitting wood windows, the worthless irrelevant pictures, usually a little askew, the dusty carpets, and all the paraphernalia about the dirty, black-leaded fireplace are gone. But the faintly tinted walls are framed with just one clear coloured line, as finely placed as the member of a Greek capital; the door handles and the lines of the panels of the door, the two chairs, the framework of the bed, the writing table, have all that final simplicity, that exquisite finish of contour that is begotten of sustained artistic effort. The graciously shaped windows each frame a picture — since they are draughtless the window seats are no mere mockeries as are the window seats of earth — and on the sill, the sole thing to need attention in the room, is one little bowl of blue Alpine flowers.

The same exquisite simplicity meets one downstairs.

Our landlord sits down at table with us for a moment, and seeing we do not understand the electrically heated coffee-pot before us, shows us what to do. Coffee and milk we have, in the Continental fashion, and some excellent rolls and butter.

He is a swarthy little man, our landlord, and overnight we saw him preoccupied with other guests. But we have risen either late or early by Utopian standards, we know not which, and this morning he has us to himself. His bearing is kindly and inoffensive, but he

cannot conceal the curiosity that possesses him. His eye meets ours with a mute inquiry, and then as we fall to, we catch him scrutinising our cuffs, our garments, our boots, our faces, our table manners. He asks nothing at first, but says a word or so about our night's comfort and the day's weather, phrases that have an air of being customary. Then comes a silence that is interrogative.

"Excellent coffee," I say to fill the gap.

"And excellent rolls," says my botanist.

Our landlord indicates his sense of our approval.

A momentary diversion is caused by the entry of an elfin-tressed little girl, who stares at us half impudently, half shyly, with bright black eyes, hesitates at the botanist's clumsy smile and nod, and then goes and stands by her father and surveys us steadfastly.

"You have come far?" ventures our landlord, patting his daughter's shoulder.

I glance at the botanist. "Yes," I say, "we have."

I expand. "We have come so far that this country of yours seems very strange indeed to us."

"The mountains?"

"Not only the mountains."

"You came up out of the Ticino valley?"

"No — not that way."

"By the Oberalp?"

"No."

"The Furka?"

"No."

"Not up from the lake?"

"No."

He looks puzzled.

"We came," I say, "from another world."

He seems trying to understand. Then a thought strikes him, and he sends away his little girl with a needless message to her mother.

"Ah!" he says. "Another world — eh? Meaning—?"

"Another world — far in the deeps of space."

Then at the expression of his face one realises that a Modern Utopia will probably keep its more intelligent citizens for better work than inn-tending. He is evidently inaccessible to the idea we think of

putting before him. He stares at us a moment, and then remarks, "There's the book to sign."

We find ourselves confronted with a book, a little after the fashion of the familiar hotel visitors' book of earth. He places this before us, and beside it puts pen and ink and a slab, upon which ink has been freshly smeared.

"Thumbmarks," says my scientific friend hastily in English.

"You show me how to do it," I say as quickly.

He signs first, and I look over his shoulder.

He is displaying more readiness than I should have expected. The book is ruled in broad transverse lines, and has a space for a name, for a number, and a thumbmark. He puts his thumb upon the slab and makes the thumbmark first with the utmost deliberation. Meanwhile he studies the other two entries. The "numbers" of the previous guests above are complex muddles of letters and figures. He writes his name, then with a calm assurance writes down his number, A.M.a.1607.2.αβ⊕. I am wrung with momentary admiration. I follow his example, and fabricate an equally imposing signature. We think ourselves very clever. The landlord proffers finger bowls for our thumbs, and his eye goes, just a little curiously, to our entries.

I decide it is advisable to pay and go before any conversation about our formulæ arises.

As we emerge into the corridor, and the morning sunlight of the Utopian world, I see the landlord bending over the book.

"Come on," I say. "The most tiresome thing in the world is explanations, and I perceive that if we do not get along, they will fall upon us now."

I glance back to discover the landlord and a gracefully robed woman standing outside the pretty simplicity of the Utopian inn, watching us doubtfully as we recede.

"Come on," I insist.

§ 8

We should go towards the Schoellenen gorge, and as we went, our fresh morning senses would gather together a thousand factors for our impression of this more civilised world. A Modern Utopia will

have done with yapping about nationality, and so the ugly fortifications, the barracks and military defilements of the earthly vale of Urseren will be wanting. Instead there will be a great multitude of gracious little houses clustering in college-like groups, no doubt about their common kitchens and halls, down and about the valley slopes. And there will be many more trees, and a great variety of trees — all the world will have been ransacked for winter conifers. Despite the height of the valley there will be a double avenue along the road. This high road with its tramway would turn with us to descend the gorge, and we should hesitate upon the adventure of boarding the train. But now we should have the memory of our landlord's curious eye upon us, and we should decide at last to defer the risk of explanations such an enterprise might precipitate.

We should go by the great road for a time, and note something of the difference between Utopian and terrestrial engineering.

The tramway, the train road, the culverts, and bridges, the Urnerloch tunnel, into which the road plunges, will all be beautiful things.

There is nothing in machinery, there is nothing in embankments and railways and iron bridges and engineering devices to oblige them to be ugly. Ugliness is the measure of imperfection; a thing of human making is for the most part ugly in proportion to the poverty of its constructive thought, to the failure of its producer fully to grasp the purpose of its being. Everything to which men continue to give thought and attention, which they make and remake in the same direction, and with a continuing desire to do as well as they can, grows beautiful inevitably. Things made by mankind under modern conditions are ugly, primarily because our social organisation is ugly, because we live in an atmosphere of snatch and uncertainty, and do everything in an underbred strenuous manner. This is the misfortune of machinery, and not its fault. Art, like some beautiful plant, lives on its atmosphere, and when the atmosphere is good, it will grow everywhere, and when it is bad nowhere. If we smashed and buried every machine, every furnace, every factory in the world, and without any further change set ourselves to home industries, hand labour, spade husbandry, sheep-folding and pig minding, we should still do things in the same haste, and achieve nothing but

dirtiness, inconvenience, bad air, and another gaunt and gawky reflection of our intellectual and moral disorder. We should mend nothing.

But in Utopia a man who designs a tram road will be a cultivated man, an artist craftsman; he will strive, as a good writer, or a painter strives, to achieve the simplicity of perfection. He will make his girders and rails and parts as gracious as that first engineer, Nature, has made the stems of her plants and the joints and gestures of her animals. To esteem him a sort of anti-artist, to count every man who makes things with his unaided thumbs an artist, and every man who uses machinery as a brute, is merely a passing phase of human stupidity. This tram road beside us will be a triumph of design. The idea will be so unfamiliar to us that for a time it will not occur to us that it is a system of beautiful objects at all. We shall admire its ingenious adaptation to the need of a district that is buried half the year in snow, the hard bed below, curved and guttered to do its own clearing, the great arched sleeper masses, raising the rails a good two yards above the ground, the easy, simple standards and insulators. Then it will creep in upon our minds, "But, by Jove! *This is designed!*"

Indeed the whole thing will be designed.

Later on, perhaps, we may find students in an art school working in competition to design an electric tram, students who know something of modern metallurgy, and something of electrical engineering, and we shall find people as keenly critical of a signal box or an iron bridge as they are on earth of—! Heavens! what *are* they critical about on earth?

The quality and condition of a dress tie!

We should make some unpatriotic comparisons with our own planet, no doubt.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH The Voice of Nature

§ 1

Presently we recognise the fellow of the earthly Devil's Bridge, still intact as a footway, spanning the gorge, and old memories turn us off the road down the steep ruin of an ancient mule track towards it. It is our first reminder that Utopia too must have a history. We cross it and find the Reuss, for all that it has already lit and warmed and ventilated and cleaned several thousands of houses in the dale above, and for all that it drives those easy trams in the gallery overhead, is yet capable of as fine a cascade as ever it flung on earth. So we come to a rocky path, wild as one could wish, and descend, discoursing how good and fair an ordered world may be, but with a certain unformulated qualification in our minds about those thumb marks we have left behind.

"Do you recall the Zermatt valley?" says my friend, "and how on earth it reeks and stinks with smoke?"

"People make that an argument for obstructing change, instead of helping it forward!"

And here perforce an episode intrudes. We are invaded by a talkative person.

He overtakes us and begins talking forthwith in a fluty, but not unamiable, tenor. He is a great talker, this man, and a fairly respectable gesticulator, and to him it is we make our first ineffectual tentatives at explaining who indeed we are; but his flow of talk washes that all away again. He has a face of that rubicund, knobby type I have heard an indignant mineralogist speak of as botryoidal, and about it waves a quantity of disorderly blond hair. He is dressed in leather doublet and knee breeches, and he wears over these a streaming woollen cloak of faded crimson that give him a fine dramatic outline as he comes down towards us over the rocks. His feet, which are large and handsome, but bright pink with the keen morning air, are bare, except for sandals of leather. (It was the only time that we saw anyone in Utopia with bare feet.) He salutes us with a scroll-like waving of his stick, and falls in with our slower paces.

“Climbers, I presume?” he says, “and you scorn these trams of theirs? I like you. So do I! Why a man should consent to be dealt with as a bale of goods holding an indistinctive ticket — when God gave him legs and a face — passes my understanding.”

As he speaks, his staff indicates the great mechanical road that runs across the gorge and high overhead through a gallery in the rock, follows it along until it turns the corner, picks it up as a viaduct far below, traces it until it plunges into an arcade through a jutting crag, and there dismisses it with a spiral whirl. “*No!*” he says.

He seems sent by Providence, for just now we had been discussing how we should broach our remarkable situation to these Utopians before our money is spent.

Our eyes meet, and I gather from the botanist that I am to open our case.

I do my best.

“You came from the other side of space!” says the man in the crimson cloak, interrupting me. “Precisely! I like that — it’s exactly my note! So do I! And you find this world strange! Exactly my case! We are brothers! We shall be in sympathy. I am amazed, I have been amazed as long as I can remember, and I shall die, most certainly, in a state of incredulous amazement, at this remarkable world. Eh?... You found yourselves suddenly upon a mountain top! Fortunate men!” He chuckled. “For my part I found myself in the still stranger position of infant to two parents of the most intractable dispositions!”

“The fact remains,” I protest.

“A position, I can assure you, demanding Tact of an altogether superhuman quality!”

We desist for a space from the attempt to explain our remarkable selves, and for the rest of the time this picturesque and exceptional Utopian takes the talk entirely under his control....

§ 2

An agreeable person, though a little distracting, he was, and he talked, we recall, of many things. He impressed us, we found afterwards, as a *poseur* beyond question, a conscious Ishmaelite in the world of wit, and in some subtly inexplicable way as a most

consummate ass. He talked first of the excellent and commodious trams that came from over the passes, and ran down the long valley towards middle Switzerland, and of all the growth of pleasant homes and châlets amidst the heights that made the opening gorge so different from its earthly parallel, with a fine disrespect. “But they are beautiful,” I protested. “They are graciously proportioned, they are placed in well-chosen positions; they give no offence to the eye.”

“What do we know of the beauty they replace? They are a mere rash. Why should we men play the part of bacteria upon the face of our Mother?”

“All life is that!”

“No! not natural life, not the plants and the gentle creatures that live their wild shy lives in forest and jungle. That is a part of her. That is the natural bloom of her complexion. But these houses and tramways and things, all made from ore and stuff torn from her veins—! You can’t better my image of the rash. It’s a morbid breaking out! I’d give it all for one — what is it? — free and natural chamois.”

“You live at times in a house?” I asked.

He ignored my question. For him, untroubled Nature was the best, he said, and, with a glance at his feet, the most beautiful. He professed himself a Nazarite, and shook back his Teutonic poet’s shock of hair. So he came to himself, and for the rest of our walk he kept to himself as the thread of his discourse, and went over himself from top to toe, and strung thereon all topics under the sun by way of illustrating his splendours. But especially his foil was the relative folly, the unnaturalness and want of logic in his fellow men. He held strong views about the extreme simplicity of everything, only that men, in their muddle-headedness, had confounded it all. “Hence, for example, these trams! They are always running up and down as though they were looking for the lost simplicity of nature. ‘We dropped it here!’” He earned a living, we gathered, “some considerable way above the minimum wage,” which threw a chance light on the labour problem — by perforating records for automatic musical machines — no doubt of the Pianotist and Pianola kind — and he spent all the leisure he could gain in going to and fro in the earth lecturing on “The Need of a Return to Nature,” and on “Simple

Foods and Simple Ways." He did it for the love of it. It was very clear to us he had an inordinate impulse to lecture, and esteemed us fair game. He had been lecturing on these topics in Italy, and he was now going back through the mountains to lecture in Saxony, lecturing on the way, to perforate a lot more records, lecturing the while, and so start out lecturing again. He was undisguisedly glad to have us to lecture to by the way.

He called our attention to his costume at an early stage. It was the embodiment of his ideal of Nature-clothing, and it had been made especially for him at very great cost. "Simply because naturalness has fled the earth, and has to be sought now, and washed out from your crushed complexities like gold."

"I should have thought," said I, "that any clothing whatever was something of a slight upon the natural man."

"Not at all," said he, "not at all! You forget his natural vanity!"

He was particularly severe on our artificial hoofs, as he called our boots, and our hats or hair destructors. "Man is the real King of Beasts and should wear a mane. The lion only wears it by consent and in captivity." He tossed his head.

Subsequently while we lunched and he waited for the specific natural dishes he ordered — they taxed the culinary resources of the inn to the utmost — he broached a comprehensive generalisation. "The animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom are easily distinguished, and for the life of me I see no reason for confusing them. It is, I hold, a sin against Nature. I keep them distinct in my mind and I keep them distinct in my person. No animal substance inside, no vegetable without; — what could be simpler or more logical? Nothing upon me but leather and allwool garments, within, cereals, fruit, nuts, herbs, and the like. Classification — order — man's function. He is here to observe and accentuate Nature's simplicity. These people" — he swept an arm that tried not too personally to include us— "are filled and covered with confusion."

He ate great quantities of grapes and finished with a cigarette. He demanded and drank a great horn of unfermented grape juice, and it seemed to suit him well.

We three sat about the board — it was in an agreeable little arbour on a hill hard by the place where Wassen stands on earth, and it

looked down the valley to the Uri Rothstock, and ever and again we sought to turn his undeniable gift of exposition to the elucidation of our own difficulties.

But we seemed to get little, his style was so elusive. Afterwards, indeed, we found much information and many persuasions had soaked into us, but at the time it seemed to us he told us nothing. He indicated things by dots and dashes, instead of by good hard assertive lines. He would not pause to see how little we knew. Sometimes his wit rose so high that he would lose sight of it himself, and then he would pause, purse his lips as if he whistled, and then till the bird came back to the lure, fill his void mouth with grapes. He talked of the relations of the sexes, and love — a passion he held in great contempt as being in its essence complex and disingenuous — and afterwards we found we had learnt much of what the marriage laws of Utopia allow and forbid.

"A simple natural freedom," he said, waving a grape in an illustrative manner, and so we gathered the Modern Utopia did not at any rate go to that. He spoke, too, of the regulation of unions, of people who were not allowed to have children, of complicated rules and interventions. "Man," he said, "had ceased to be a natural product!"

We tried to check him with questions at this most illuminating point, but he drove on like a torrent, and carried his topic out of sight. The world, he held, was overmanaged, and that was the root of all evil. He talked of the overmanagement of the world, and among other things of the laws that would not let a poor simple idiot, a "natural," go at large. And so we had our first glimpse of what Utopia did with the feeble and insane. "We make all these distinctions between man and man, we exalt this and favour that, and degrade and seclude that; we make birth artificial, life artificial, death artificial."

"You say *We*," said I, with the first glimmering of a new idea, "but *you* don't participate?"

"Not I! I'm not one of your *samurai*, your voluntary noblemen who have taken the world in hand. I might be, of course, but I'm not."

"*Samurai!*" I repeated, "voluntary noblemen!" and for the

moment could not frame a question.

He whirled on to an attack on science, that stirred the botanist to controversy. He denounced with great bitterness all specialists whatever, and particularly doctors and engineers.

"Voluntary noblemen!" he said, "voluntary Gods I fancy they think themselves," and I was left behind for a space in the perplexed examination of this parenthesis, while he and the botanist — who is sedulous to keep his digestion up to date with all the newest devices — argued about the good of medicine men.

"The natural human constitution," said the blond-haired man, "is perfectly simple, with one simple condition — you must leave it to Nature. But if you mix up things so distinctly and essentially separated as the animal and vegetable kingdoms for example, and ram *that* in for it to digest, what can you expect?

"Ill health! There isn't such a thing — in the course of Nature. But you shelter from Nature in houses, you protect yourselves by clothes that are useful instead of being ornamental, you wash — with such abstersive chemicals as soap for example — and above all you consult doctors." He approved himself with a chuckle. "Have you ever found anyone seriously ill without doctors and medicine about? Never! You say a lot of people would die without shelter and medical attendance! No doubt — but a natural death. A natural death is better than an artificial life, surely? That's — to be frank with you — the very citadel of my position."

That led him, and rather promptly, before the botanist could rally to reply, to a great tirade against the laws that forbade "sleeping out." He denounced them with great vigour, and alleged that for his own part he broke that law whenever he could, found some corner of moss, shaded from an excess of dew, and there sat up to sleep. He slept, he said, always in a sitting position, with his head on his wrists, and his wrists on his knees — the simple natural position for sleep in man.... He said it would be far better if all the world slept out, and all the houses were pulled down.

You will understand, perhaps, the subdued irritation I felt, as I sat and listened to the botanist entangling himself in the logical net of this wild nonsense. It impressed me as being irrelevant. When one comes to a Utopia one expects a Cicerone, one expects a person as

precise and insistent and instructive as an American advertisement — the advertisement of one of those land agents, for example, who print their own engaging photographs to instil confidence and begin, "You want to buy real estate." One expects to find all Utopians absolutely convinced of the perfection of their Utopia, and incapable of receiving a hint against its order. And here was this purveyor of absurdities!

And yet now that I come to think it over, is not this too one of the necessary differences between a Modern Utopia and those finite compact settlements of the older school of dreamers? It is not to be a unanimous world any more, it is to have all and more of the mental contrariety we find in the world of the real; it is no longer to be perfectly explicable, it is just our own vast mysterious welter, with some of the blackest shadows gone, with a clearer illumination, and a more conscious and intelligent will. Irrelevance is not irrelevant to such a scheme, and our blond-haired friend is exactly just where he ought to be here.

Still—

§ 3

I ceased to listen to the argumentation of my botanist with this apostle of Nature. The botanist, in his scientific way, was, I believe, defending the learned professions. (He thinks and argues like drawing on squared paper.) It struck me as transiently remarkable that a man who could not be induced to forget himself and his personal troubles on coming into a whole new world, who could waste our first evening in Utopia upon a paltry egotistical love story, should presently become quite heated and impersonal in the discussion of scientific professionalism. He was — absorbed. I can't attempt to explain these vivid spots and blind spots in the imaginations of sane men; there they are!

"You say," said the botanist, with a prevalent index finger, and the resolute deliberation of a big siege gun being lugged into action over rough ground by a number of inexperienced men, "you prefer a natural death to an artificial life. But what is your *definition* (stress) of artificial?..."

And after lunch too! I ceased to listen, flicked the end of my cigarette ash over the green trellis of the arbour, stretched my legs with a fine restfulness, leant back, and gave my mind to the fields and houses that lay adown the valley.

What I saw interwove with fragmentary things our garrulous friend had said, and with the trend of my own speculations....

The high road, with its tramways and its avenues on either side, ran in a bold curve, and with one great loop of descent, down the opposite side of the valley, and below crossed again on a beautiful viaduct, and dipped into an arcade in the side of the Bristenstock. Our inn stood out boldly, high above the level this took. The houses clustered in their collegiate groups over by the high road, and near the subordinate way that ran almost vertically below us and past us and up towards the valley of the Meien Reuss. There were one or two Utopians cutting and packing the flowery mountain grass in the carefully levelled and irrigated meadows by means of swift, light machines that ran on things like feet and seemed to devour the herbage, and there were many children and a woman or so, going to and fro among the houses near at hand. I guessed a central building towards the high road must be the school from which these children were coming. I noted the health and cleanliness of these young heirs of Utopia as they passed below.

The pervading quality of the whole scene was a sane order, the deliberate solution of problems, a progressive intention steadily achieving itself, and the aspect that particularly occupied me was the incongruity of this with our blond-haired friend.

On the one hand here was a state of affairs that implied a power of will, an organising and controlling force, the co-operation of a great number of vigorous people to establish and sustain its progress, and on the other this creature of pose and vanity, with his restless wit, his perpetual giggle at his own cleverness, his manifest incapacity for comprehensive co-operation.

Now, had I come upon a hopeless incompatibility? Was this the *reductio ad absurdum* of my vision, and must it even as I sat there fade, dissolve, and vanish before my eyes?

There was no denying our blond friend. If this Utopia is indeed to parallel our earth, man for man — and I see no other reasonable

choice to that — there must be this sort of person and kindred sorts of persons in great abundance. The desire and gift to see life whole is not the lot of the great majority of men, the service of truth is the privilege of the elect, and these clever fools who choke the avenues of the world of thought, who stick at no inconsistency, who oppose, obstruct, confuse, will find only the freer scope amidst Utopian freedoms.

(They argued on, these two, as I worried my brains with riddles. It was like a fight between a cock sparrow and a tortoise; they both went on in their own way, regardless of each other's proceedings. The encounter had an air of being extremely lively, and the moments of contact were few. "But you mistake my point," the blond man was saying, disordering his hair — which had become unruffled in the preoccupation of dispute — with a hasty movement of his hand, "you don't appreciate the position I take up.")

"Ugh!" said I privately, and lighted another cigarette and went away into my own thoughts with that.

The position he takes up! That's the way of your intellectual fool, the Universe over. He takes up a position, and he's going to be the most brilliant, delightful, engaging and invincible of gay delicious creatures defending that position you can possibly imagine. And even when the case is not so bad as that, there still remains the quality. We "take up our positions," silly little contentious creatures that we are, we will not see the right in one another, we will not patiently state and restate, and honestly accommodate and plan, and so we remain at sixes and sevens. We've all a touch of Gladstone in us, and try to the last moment to deny we have made a turn. And so our poor broken-springed world jolts athwart its trackless destiny. Try to win into line with some fellow weakling, and see the little host of suspicions, aggressions, misrepresentations, your approach will stir — like summer flies on a high road — the way he will try to score a point and claim you as a convert to what he has always said, his fear lest the point should be scored to you.

It is not only such gross and palpable cases as our blond and tenoring friend. I could find the thing negligible were it only that. But when one sees the same thread woven into men who are leaders, men who sway vast multitudes, who are indeed great and powerful men;

when one sees how unfair they can be, how unteachable, the great blind areas in their eyes also, their want of generosity, then one's doubts gather like mists across this Utopian valley, its vistas pale, its people become unsubstantial phantoms, all its order and its happiness dim and recede....

If we are to have any Utopia at all, we must have a clear common purpose, and a great and steadfast movement of will to override all these incurably egotistical dissentients. Something is needed wide and deep enough to float the worst of egotisms away. The world is not to be made right by acclamation and in a day, and then for ever more trusted to run alone. It is manifest this Utopia could not come about by chance and anarchy, but by co-ordinated effort and a community of design, and to tell of just land laws and wise government, a wisely balanced economic system, and wise social arrangements without telling how it was brought about, and how it is sustained against the vanity and self-indulgence, the moody fluctuations and uncertain imaginations, the heat and aptitude for partisanship that lurk, even when they do not flourish, in the texture of every man alive, is to build a palace without either door or staircase.

I had not this in mind when I began.

Somewhere in the Modern Utopia there must be adequate men, men the very antithesis of our friend, capable of self-devotion, of intentional courage, of honest thought, and steady endeavour. There must be a literature to embody their common idea, of which this Modern Utopia is merely the material form; there must be some organisation, however slight, to keep them in touch one with the other.

Who will these men be? Will they be a caste? a race? an organisation in the nature of a Church? ... And there came into my mind the words of our acquaintance, that he was not one of these "voluntary noblemen."

At first that phrase struck me as being merely queer, and then I began to realise certain possibilities that were wrapped up in it.

The animus of our chance friend, at any rate, went to suggest that here was his antithesis. Evidently what he is not, will be the class to contain what is needed here. Evidently.

§ 4

I was recalled from my meditations by the hand of the blond-haired man upon my arm.

I looked up to discover the botanist had gone into the inn.

The blond-haired man was for a moment almost stripped of pose.

"I say," he said. "Weren't you listening to me?"

"No," I said bluntly.

His surprise was manifest. But by an effort he recalled what he had meant to say.

"Your friend," he said, "has been telling me, in spite of my sustained interruptions, a most incredible story."

I wondered how the botanist managed to get it in. "About that woman?" I said.

"About a man and a woman who hate each other and can't get away from each other."

"I know," I said.

"It sounds absurd."

"It is."

"Why can't they get away? What is there to keep them together? It's ridiculous. I—"

"Quite."

"He *would* tell it to me."

"It's his way."

"He interrupted me. And there's no point in it. Is he—" he hesitated, "mad?"

"There's a whole world of people mad with him," I answered after a pause.

The perplexed expression of the blond-haired man intensified. It is vain to deny that he enlarged the scope of his inquiry, visibly if not verbally. "Dear me!" he said, and took up something he had nearly forgotten. "And you found yourselves suddenly on a mountain side?... I thought you were joking."

I turned round upon him with a sudden access of earnestness. At least I meant my manner to be earnest, but to him it may have seemed wild.

"You," I said, "are an original sort of man. Do not be alarmed.

Perhaps you will understand.... We were not joking."

"But, my dear fellow!"

"I mean it! We come from an inferior world! Like this, but out of order."

"No world could be more out of order—"

"You play at that and have your fun. But there's no limit to the extent to which a world of men may get out of gear. In our world—"

He nodded, but his eye had ceased to be friendly.

"Men die of starvation; people die by the hundred thousand needlessly and painfully; men and women are lashed together to make hell for each other; children are born — abominably, and reared in cruelty and folly; there is a thing called war, a horror of blood and vileness. The whole thing seems to me at times a cruel and wasteful wilderness of muddle. You in this decent world have no means of understanding—"

"No?" he said, and would have begun, but I went on too quickly.

"No! When I see you dandering through this excellent and hopeful world, objecting, obstructing, and breaking the law, displaying your wit on science and order, on the men who toil so ingloriously to swell and use the knowledge that is salvation, this salvation for which *our* poor world cries to heaven—"

"You don't mean to say," he said, "that you really come from some other world where things are different and worse?"

"I do."

"And you want to talk to me about it instead of listening to me?"

"Yes."

"Oh, nonsense!" he said abruptly. "You can't do it — really. I can assure you this present world touches the nadir of imbecility. You and your friend, with his love for the lady who's so mysteriously tied — you're romancing! People could not possibly do such things. It's — if you'll excuse me — ridiculous. *He* began — he would begin. A most tiresome story — simply bore me down. We'd been talking very agreeably before that, or rather I had, about the absurdity of marriage laws, the interference with a free and natural life, and so on, and suddenly he burst like a dam. No!" He paused. "It's really impossible. You behave perfectly well for a time, and then you begin to interrupt.... And such a childish story, too!"

He spun round upon his chair, got up, glanced at me over his shoulder, and walked out of the arbour. He stepped aside hastily to avoid too close an approach to the returning botanist. “Impossible,” I heard him say. He was evidently deeply aggrieved by us. I saw him presently a little way off in the garden, talking to the landlord of our inn, and looking towards us as he talked — they both looked towards us — and after that, without the ceremony of a farewell, he disappeared, and we saw him no more. We waited for him a little while, and then I expounded the situation to the botanist....

“We are going to have a very considerable amount of trouble explaining ourselves,” I said in conclusion. “We are here by an act of the imagination, and that is just one of those metaphysical operations that are so difficult to make credible. We are, by the standard of bearing and clothing I remark about us, unattractive in dress and deportment. We have nothing to produce to explain our presence here, no bit of a flying machine or a space travelling sphere or any of the apparatus customary on these occasions. We have no means beyond a dwindling amount of small change out of a gold coin, upon which I suppose in ethics and the law some native Utopian had a better claim. We may already have got ourselves into trouble with the authorities with that confounded number of yours!”

“You did one too!”

“All the more bother, perhaps, when the thing is brought home to us. There’s no need for recriminations. The thing of moment is that we find ourselves in the position — not to put too fine a point upon it — of tramps in this admirable world. The question of all others of importance to us at present is what do they do with their tramps? Because sooner or later, and the balance of probability seems to incline to sooner, whatever they do with their tramps that they will do with us.”

“Unless we can get some work.”

“Exactly — unless we can get some work.”

“Get work!”

The botanist leant forward on his arms and looked out of the arbour with an expression of despondent discovery. “I say,” he remarked; “this is a strange world — quite strange and new. I’m only beginning to realise just what it means for us. The mountains there

are the same, the old Bristenstock and all the rest of it; but these houses, you know, and that roadway, and the costumes, and that machine that is licking up the grass there — only....”

He sought expression. “Who knows what will come in sight round the bend of the valley there? Who knows what may happen to us anywhere? We don’t know who rules over us even ... we don’t know that!”

“No,” I echoed, “we don’t know *that*.”

CHAPTER THE FIFTH Failure in a Modern Utopia

§ 1

The old Utopias — save for the breeding schemes of Plato and Campanella — ignored that reproductive competition among individualities which is the substance of life, and dealt essentially with its incidentals. The endless variety of men, their endless gradation of quality, over which the hand of selection plays, and to which we owe the unmanageable complication of real life, is tacitly set aside. The real world is a vast disorder of accidents and incalculable forces in which men survive or fail. A Modern Utopia, unlike its predecessors, dare not pretend to change the last condition; it may order and humanise the conflict, but men must still survive or fail.

Most Utopias present themselves as going concerns, as happiness in being; they make it an essential condition that a happy land can have no history, and all the citizens one is permitted to see are well looking and upright and mentally and morally in tune. But we are under the dominion of a logic that obliges us to take over the actual population of the world with only such moral and mental and physical improvements as lie within their inherent possibilities, and it is our business to ask what Utopia will do with its congenital invalids, its idiots and madmen, its drunkards and men of vicious mind, its cruel and furtive souls, its stupid people, too stupid to be of use to the community, its lumpish, unteachable and unimaginative people? And what will it do with the man who is "poor" all round, the rather spiritless, rather incompetent low-grade man who on earth sits in the den of the sweater, tramps the streets under the banner of the unemployed, or trembles — in another man's cast-off clothing, and with an infinity of hat-touching — on the verge of rural employment?

These people will have to be in the descendant phase, the species must be engaged in eliminating them; there is no escape from that, and conversely the people of exceptional quality must be ascendant.

The better sort of people, so far as they can be distinguished, must have the fullest freedom of public service, and the fullest opportunity of parentage. And it must be open to every man to approve himself worthy of ascendency.

The way of Nature in this process is to kill the weaker and the sillier, to crush them, to starve them, to overwhelm them, using the stronger and more cunning as her weapon. But man is the unnatural animal, the rebel child of Nature, and more and more does he turn himself against the harsh and fitful hand that reared him. He sees with a growing resentment the multitude of suffering ineffectual lives over which his species tramples in its ascent. In the Modern Utopia he will have set himself to change the ancient law. No longer will it be that failures must suffer and perish lest their breed increase, but the breed of failure must not increase, lest they suffer and perish, and the race with them.

Now we need not argue here to prove that the resources of the world and the energy of mankind, were they organised sanely, are amply sufficient to supply every material need of every living human being. And if it can be so contrived that every human being shall live in a state of reasonable physical and mental comfort, without the reproduction of inferior types, there is no reason whatever why that should not be secured. But there must be a competition in life of some sort to determine who are to be pushed to the edge, and who are to prevail and multiply. Whatever we do, man will remain a competitive creature, and though moral and intellectual training may vary and enlarge his conception of success and fortify him with refinements and consolations, no Utopia will ever save him completely from the emotional drama of struggle, from exultations and humiliations, from pride and prostration and shame. He lives in success and failure just as inevitably as he lives in space and time.

But we may do much to make the margin of failure endurable. On earth, for all the extravagance of charity, the struggle for the mass of men at the bottom resolves itself into a struggle, and often a very foul and ugly struggle, for food, shelter, and clothing. Deaths outright from exposure and starvation are now perhaps uncommon, but for the multitude there are only miserable houses, uncomfortable clothes, and bad and insufficient food; fractional starvation and exposure, that

is to say. A Utopia planned upon modern lines will certainly have put an end to that. It will insist upon every citizen being being properly housed, well nourished, and in good health, reasonably clean and clothed healthily, and upon that insistence its labour laws will be founded. In a phrasing that will be familiar to everyone interested in social reform, it will maintain a standard of life. Any house, unless it be a public monument, that does not come up to its rising standard of healthiness and convenience, the Utopian State will incontinently pull down, and pile the material and charge the owner for the labour; any house unduly crowded or dirty, it must in some effectual manner, directly or indirectly, confiscate and clear and clean. And any citizen indecently dressed, or ragged and dirty, or publicly unhealthy, or sleeping abroad homeless, or in any way neglected or derelict, must come under its care. It will find him work if he can and will work, it will take him to it, it will register him and lend him the money wherewith to lead a comely life until work can be found or made for him, and it will give him credit and shelter him and strengthen him if he is ill. In default of private enterprises it will provide inns for him and food, and it will — by itself acting as the reserve employer — maintain a minimum wage which will cover the cost of a decent life. The State will stand at the back of the economic struggle as the reserve employer of labour. This most excellent idea does, as a matter of fact, underlie the British institution of the workhouse, but it is jumbled up with the relief of old age and infirmity, it is administered parochially and on the supposition that all population is static and localised whereas every year it becomes more migratory; it is administered without any regard to the rising standards of comfort and self-respect in a progressive civilisation, and it is administered grudgingly. The thing that is done is done as unwilling charity by administrators who are often, in the rural districts at least, competing for low-priced labour, and who regard want of employment as a crime. But if it were possible for any citizen in need of money to resort to a place of public employment as a right, and there work for a week or month without degradation upon certain minimum terms, it seems fairly certain that no one would work, except as the victim of some quite exceptional and temporary accident, for less.

The work publicly provided would have to be toilsome, but not

cruel or incapacitating. A choice of occupations would need to be afforded, occupations adapted to different types of training and capacity, with some residual employment of a purely laborious and mechanical sort for those who were incapable of doing the things that required intelligence. Necessarily this employment by the State would be a relief of economic pressure, but it would not be considered a charity done to the individual, but a public service. It need not pay, any more than the police need pay, but it could probably be done at a small margin of loss. There is a number of durable things bound finally to be useful that could be made and stored whenever the tide of more highly paid employment ebbed and labour sank to its minimum, bricks, iron from inferior ores, shaped and preserved timber, pins, nails, plain fabrics of cotton and linen, paper, sheet glass, artificial fuel, and so on; new roads could be made and public buildings reconstructed, inconveniences of all sorts removed, until under the stimulus of accumulating material, accumulating investments or other circumstances, the tide of private enterprise flowed again.

The State would provide these things for its citizen as though it was his right to require them; he would receive as a shareholder in the common enterprise and not with any insult of charity. But on the other hand it will require that the citizen who renders the minimum of service for these concessions shall not become a parent until he is established in work at a rate above the minimum, and free of any debt he may have incurred. The State will never press for its debt, nor put a limit to its accumulation so long as a man or woman remains childless; it will not even grudge them temporary spells of good fortune when they may lift their earnings above the minimum wage. It will pension the age of everyone who cares to take a pension, and it will maintain special guest homes for the very old to which they may come as paying guests, spending their pensions there. By such obvious devices it will achieve the maximum elimination of its feeble and spiritless folk in every generation with the minimum of suffering and public disorder.

§ 2

But the mildly incompetent, the spiritless and dull, the poorer sort who are ill, do not exhaust our Utopian problem. There remain idiots and lunatics, there remain perverse and incompetent persons, there are people of weak character who become drunkards, drug takers, and the like. Then there are persons tainted with certain foul and transmissible diseases. All these people spoil the world for others. They may become parents, and with most of them there is manifestly nothing to be done but to seclude them from the great body of the population. You must resort to a kind of social surgery. You cannot have social freedom in your public ways, your children cannot speak to whom they will, your girls and gentle women cannot go abroad while some sorts of people go free. And there are violent people, and those who will not respect the property of others, thieves and cheats, they, too, so soon as their nature is confirmed, must pass out of the free life of our ordered world. So soon as there can be no doubt of the disease or baseness of the individual, so soon as the insanity or other disease is assured, or the crime repeated a third time, or the drunkenness or misdemeanour past its seventh occasion (let us say), so soon must he or she pass out of the common ways of men.

The dreadfulness of all such proposals as this lies in the possibility of their execution falling into the hands of hard, dull, and cruel administrators. But in the case of a Utopia one assumes the best possible government, a government as merciful and deliberate as it is powerful and decisive. You must not too hastily imagine these things being done — as they would be done on earth at present — by a number of zealous half-educated people in a state of panic at a quite imaginary "Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit."

No doubt for first offenders, and for all offenders under five-and-twenty, the Modern Utopia will attempt cautionary and remedial treatment. There will be disciplinary schools and colleges for the young, fair and happy places, but with less confidence and more restraint than the schools and colleges of the ordinary world. In remote and solitary regions these enclosures will lie, they will be fenced in and forbidden to the common run of men, and there, remote from all temptation, the defective citizen will be schooled. There will be no masking of the lesson; "which do you value most, the wide world of humanity, or this evil trend in you?" From that

discipline at last the prisoners will return.

But the others; what would a saner world do with them?

Our world is still vindictive, but the all-reaching State of Utopia will have the strength that begets mercy. Quietly the outcast will go from among his fellow men. There will be no drumming of him out of the ranks, no tearing off of epaulettes, no smiting in the face. The thing must be just public enough to obviate secret tyrannies, and that is all.

There would be no killing, no lethal chambers. No doubt Utopia will kill all deformed and monstrous and evilly diseased births, but for the rest, the State will hold itself accountable for their being. There is no justice in Nature perhaps, but the idea of justice must be sacred in any good society. Lives that statesmanship has permitted, errors it has not foreseen and educated against, must not be punished by death. If the State does not keep faith, no one will keep faith. Crime and bad lives are the measure of a State's failure, all crime in the end is the crime of the community. Even for murder Utopia will not, I think, kill.

I doubt even if there will be jails. No men are quite wise enough, good enough and cheap enough to staff jails as a jail ought to be staffed. Perhaps islands will be chosen, islands lying apart from the highways of the sea, and to these the State will send its exiles, most of them thanking Heaven, no doubt, to be quit of a world of prigs. The State will, of course, secure itself against any children from these people, that is the primary object in their seclusion, and perhaps it may even be necessary to make these island prisons a system of island monasteries and island nunneries. Upon that I am not competent to speak, but if I may believe the literature of the subject — unhappily a not very well criticised literature — it is not necessary to enforce this separation. [Footnote: See for example Dr. W. A. Chapple's *The Fertility of the Unfit*.]

About such islands patrol boats will go, there will be no freedoms of boat building, and it may be necessary to have armed guards at the creeks and quays. Beyond that the State will give these segregated failures just as full a liberty as they can have. If it interferes any further it will be simply to police the islands against the organisation of serious cruelty, to maintain the freedom of any of the detained

who wish it to transfer themselves to other islands, and so to keep a check upon tyranny. The insane, of course, will demand care and control, but there is no reason why the islands of the hopeless drunkard, for example, should not each have a virtual autonomy, have at the most a Resident and a guard. I believe that a community of drunkards might be capable of organising even its own bad habit to the pitch of tolerable existence. I do not see why such an island should not build and order for itself and manufacture and trade. "Your ways are not our ways," the World State will say; "but here is freedom and a company of kindred souls. Elect your jolly rulers, brew if you will, and distil; here are vine cuttings and barley fields; do as it pleases you to do. We will take care of the knives, but for the rest — deal yourselves with God!"

And you see the big convict steamship standing in to the Island of Incurable Cheats. The crew are respectfully at their quarters, ready to lend a hand overboard, but wide awake, and the captain is hospitably on the bridge to bid his guests good-bye and keep an eye on the movables. The new citizens for this particular Alsatia, each no doubt with his personal belongings securely packed and at hand, crowd the deck and study the nearing coast. Bright, keen faces would be there, and we, were we by any chance to find ourselves beside the captain, might recognise the double of this great earthly magnate or that, Petticoat Lane and Park Lane cheek by jowl. The landing part of the jetty is clear of people, only a government man or so stands there to receive the boat and prevent a rush, but beyond the gates a number of engagingly smart-looking individuals loiter speculatively. One figures a remarkable building labelled Custom House, an interesting fiscal revival this population has made, and beyond, crowding up the hill, the painted walls of a number of comfortable inns clamour loudly. One or two inhabitants in reduced circumstances would act as hotel touts, there are several hotel omnibuses and a Bureau de Change, certainly a Bureau de Change. And a small house with a large board, aimed point-blank seaward, declares itself a Gratis Information Office, and next to it rises the graceful dome of a small Casino. Beyond, great hoardings proclaim the advantages of many island specialities, a hustling commerce, and the opening of a Public Lottery. There is a large cheap-looking barrack, the school of

Commercial Science for gentlemen of inadequate training....

Altogether a very go-ahead looking little port it would be, and though this disembarkation would have none of the flow of hilarious good fellowship that would throw a halo of genial noise about the Islands of Drink, it is doubtful if the new arrivals would feel anything very tragic in the moment. Here at last was scope for adventure after their hearts.

This sounds more fantastic than it is. But what else is there to do, unless you kill? You must seclude, but why should you torment? All modern prisons are places of torture by restraint, and the habitual criminal plays the part of a damaged mouse at the mercy of the cat of our law. He has his little painful run, and back he comes again to a state more horrible even than destitution. There are no Alsatias left in the world. For my own part I can think of no crime, unless it is reckless begetting or the wilful transmission of contagious disease, for which the bleak terrors, the solitudes and ignominies of the modern prison do not seem outrageously cruel. If you want to go so far as that, then kill. Why, once you are rid of them, should you pester criminals to respect an uncongenial standard of conduct? Into such islands of exile as this a modern Utopia will have to purge itself. There is no alternative that I can contrive.

§ 3

Will a Utopian be free to be idle?

Work has to be done, every day humanity is sustained by its collective effort, and without a constant recurrence of effort in the single man as in the race as a whole, there is neither health nor happiness. The permanent idleness of a human being is not only burthensome to the world, but his own secure misery. But unprofitable occupation is also intended by idleness, and it may be considered whether that freedom also will be open to the Utopian. Conceivably it will, like privacy, locomotion, and almost all the freedoms of life, and on the same terms — if he possess the money to pay for it.

That last condition may produce a shock in minds accustomed to the proposition that money is the root of all evil, and to the idea that

Utopia necessarily implies something rather oaken and hand-made and primitive in all these relations. Of course, money is not the root of any evil in the world; the root of all evil in the world, and the root of all good too, is the Will to Live, and money becomes harmful only when by bad laws and bad economic organisation it is more easily attained by bad men than good. It is as reasonable to say food is the root of all disease, because so many people suffer from excessive and unwise eating. The sane economic ideal is to make the possession of money the clear indication of public serviceableness, and the more nearly that ideal is attained, the smaller is the justification of poverty and the less the hardship of being poor. In barbaric and disorderly countries it is almost honourable to be indigent and unquestionably virtuous to give to a beggar, and even in the more or less civilised societies of earth, so many children come into life hopelessly handicapped, that austerity to the poor is regarded as the meanest of mean virtues. But in Utopia everyone will have had an education and a certain minimum of nutrition and training; everyone will be insured against ill-health and accidents; there will be the most efficient organisation for balancing the pressure of employment and the presence of disengaged labour, and so to be moneyless will be clear evidence of unworthiness. In Utopia, no one will dream of giving to a casual beggar, and no one will dream of begging.

There will need to be, in the place of the British casual wards, simple but comfortable inns with a low tariff — controlled to a certain extent no doubt, and even in some cases maintained, by the State. This tariff will have such a definite relation to the minimum permissible wage, that a man who has incurred no liabilities through marriage or the like relationship, will be able to live in comfort and decency upon that minimum wage, pay his small insurance premium against disease, death, disablement, or ripening years, and have a margin for clothing and other personal expenses. But he will get neither shelter nor food, except at the price of his freedom, unless he can produce money.

But suppose a man without money in a district where employment is not to be found for him; suppose the amount of employment to have diminished in the district with such suddenness as to have stranded him there. Or suppose he has quarrelled with the only

possible employer, or that he does not like his particular work. Then no doubt the Utopian State, which wants everyone to be just as happy as the future welfare of the race permits, will come to his assistance. One imagines him resorting to a neat and business-like post-office, and stating his case to a civil and intelligent official. In any sane State the economic conditions of every quarter of the earth will be watched as constantly as its meteorological phases, and a daily map of the country within a radius of three or four hundred miles showing all the places where labour is needed will hang upon the post-office wall. To this his attention will be directed. The man out of work will decide to try his luck in this place or that, and the public servant, the official, will make a note of his name, verify his identity — the freedom of Utopia will not be incompatible with the universal registration of thumb-marks — and issue passes for travel and coupons for any necessary inn accommodation on his way to the chosen destination. There he will seek a new employer.

Such a free change of locality once or twice a year from a region of restricted employment to a region of labour shortage will be among the general privileges of the Utopian citizen.

But suppose that in no district in the world is there work within the capacity of this particular man?

Before we suppose that, we must take into consideration the general assumption one is permitted to make in all Utopian speculations. All Utopians will be reasonably well educated upon Utopian lines; there will be no illiterates unless they are unteachable imbeciles, no rule-of-thumb toilers as inadaptable as trained beasts. The Utopian worker will be as versatile as any well-educated man is on earth to-day, and no Trade Union will impose a limit to his activities. The world will be his Union. If the work he does best and likes best is not to be found, there is still the work he likes second best. Lacking his proper employment, he will turn to some kindred trade.

But even with that adaptability, it may be that sometimes he will not find work. Such a disproportion between the work to be done and the people to do it may arise as to present a surplus of labour everywhere. This disproportion may be due to two causes: to an increase of population without a corresponding increase of

enterprises, or to a diminution of employment throughout the world due to the completion of great enterprises, to economies achieved, or to the operation of new and more efficient labour-saving appliances. Through either cause, a World State may find itself doing well except for an excess of citizens of mediocre and lower quality.

But the first cause may be anticipated by wise marriage laws.... The full discussion of these laws will come later, but here one may insist that Utopia will control the increase of its population. Without the determination and ability to limit that increase as well as to stimulate it whenever it is necessary, no Utopia is possible. That was clearly demonstrated by Malthus for all time.

The second cause is not so easily anticipated, but then, though its immediate result in glutting the labour market is similar, its final consequences are entirely different from those of the first. The whole trend of a scientific mechanical civilisation is continually to replace labour by machinery and to increase it in its effectiveness by organisation, and so quite independently of any increase in population labour must either fall in value until it can compete against and check the cheapening process, or if that is prevented, as it will be in Utopia, by a minimum wage, come out of employment. There is no apparent limit to this process. But a surplus of efficient labour at the minimum wage is exactly the condition that should stimulate new enterprises, and that in a State saturated with science and prolific in invention will stimulate new enterprises. An increasing surplus of available labour without an absolute increase of population, an increasing surplus of labour due to increasing economy and not to proliferation, and which, therefore, does not press on and disarrange the food supply, is surely the ideal condition for a progressive civilisation. I am inclined to think that, since labour will be regarded as a delocalised and fluid force, it will be the World State and not the big municipalities ruling the force areas that will be the reserve employer of labour. Very probably it will be convenient for the State to hand over the surplus labour for municipal purposes, but that is another question. All over the world the labour exchanges will be reporting the fluctuating pressure of economic demand and transferring workers from this region of excess to that of scarcity; and whenever the excess is universal, the World State — failing an

adequate development of private enterprise — will either reduce the working day and so absorb the excess, or set on foot some permanent special works of its own, paying the minimum wage and allowing them to progress just as slowly or just as rapidly as the ebb and flow of labour dictated. But with sane marriage and birth laws there is no reason to suppose such calls upon the resources and initiative of the world more than temporary and exceptional occasions.

§ 4

The existence of our blond bare-footed friend was evidence enough that in a modern Utopia a man will be free to be just as idle or uselessly busy as it pleases him, after he has earned the minimum wage. He must do that, of course, to pay for his keep, to pay his assurance tax against ill-health or old age, and any charge or debt paternity may have brought upon him. The World State of the modern Utopist is no state of moral compulsions. If, for example, under the restricted Utopian scheme of inheritance, a man inherited sufficient money to release him from the need to toil, he would be free to go where he pleased and do what he liked. A certain proportion of men at ease is good for the world; work as a moral obligation is the morality of slaves, and so long as no one is overworked there is no need to worry because some few are underworked. Utopia does not exist as a solace for envy. From leisure, in a good moral and intellectual atmosphere, come experiments, come philosophy and the new departures.

In any modern Utopia there must be many leisurely people. We are all too obsessed in the real world by the strenuous ideal, by the idea that the vehement incessant fool is the only righteous man. Nothing done in a hurry, nothing done under strain, is really well done. A State where all are working hard, where none go to and fro, easily and freely, loses touch with the purpose of freedom.

But inherited independence will be the rarest and least permanent of Utopian facts, for the most part that wider freedom will have to be earned, and the inducements to men and women to raise their personal value far above the minimum wage will be very great indeed. Thereby will come privacies, more space in which to live,

liberty to go everywhere and do no end of things, the power and freedom to initiate interesting enterprises and assist and co-operate with interesting people, and indeed all the best things of life. The modern Utopia will give a universal security indeed, and exercise the minimum of compulsions to toil, but it will offer some acutely desirable prizes. The aim of all these devices, the minimum wage, the standard of life, provision for all the feeble and unemployed and so forth, is not to rob life of incentives but to change their nature, to make life not less energetic, but less panic-stricken and violent and base, to shift the incidence of the struggle for existence from our lower to our higher emotions, so to anticipate and neutralise the motives of the cowardly and bestial, that the ambitious and energetic imagination which is man's finest quality may become the incentive and determining factor in survival.

§ 5

After we have paid for our lunch in the little inn that corresponds to Wassen, the botanist and I would no doubt spend the rest of the forenoon in the discussion of various aspects and possibilities of Utopian labour laws. We should examine our remaining change, copper coins of an appearance ornamental rather than reassuring, and we should decide that after what we had gathered from the man with the blond hair, it would, on the whole, be advisable to come to the point with the labour question forthwith. At last we should draw the deep breath of resolution and arise and ask for the Public Office. We should know by this time that the labour bureau sheltered with the post-office and other public services in one building.

The public office of Utopia would of course contain a few surprises for two men from terrestrial England. You imagine us entering, the botanist lagging a little behind me, and my first attempts to be offhand and commonplace in a demand for work.

The office is in charge of a quick-eyed little woman of six and thirty perhaps, and she regards us with a certain keenness of scrutiny.

"Where are your papers?" she asks.

I think for a moment of the documents in my pocket, my passport chequered with visas and addressed in my commendation and in the

name of her late Majesty by *We, Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoigne Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury, Earl of Salisbury, Viscount Cranborne, Baron Cecil*, and so forth, to all whom it may concern, my *Carte d'Identité* (useful on minor occasions) of the Touring Club de France, my green ticket to the Reading Room of the British Museum, and my Lettre d'Indication from the London and County Bank. A foolish humour prompts me to unfold all these, hand them to her and take the consequences, but I resist.

"Lost," I say, briefly.

"Both lost?" she asks, looking at my friend.

"Both," I answer.

"How?"

I astonish myself by the readiness of my answer.

"I fell down a snow slope and they came out of my pocket."

"And exactly the same thing happened to both of you?"

"No. He'd given me his to put with my own." She raised her eyebrows. "His pocket is defective," I add, a little hastily.

Her manners are too Utopian for her to follow that up. She seems to reflect on procedure.

"What are your numbers?" she asks, abruptly.

A vision of that confounded visitors' book at the inn above comes into my mind. "Let me *see*," I say, and pat my forehead and reflect, refraining from the official eye before me. "Let me *see*."

"What is yours?" she asks the botanist.

"A. B.," he says, slowly, "little *a*, nine four seven, I *think*—"

"Don't you know?"

"Not exactly," says the botanist, very agreeably. "No."

"Do you mean to say neither of you know your own numbers?" says the little post-mistress, with a rising note.

"Yes," I say, with an engaging smile and trying to keep up a good social tone. "It's queer, isn't it? We've both forgotten."

"You're joking," she suggests.

"Well," I temporise.

"I suppose you've got your thumbs?"

"The fact is—" I say and hesitate. "We've got our thumbs, of course."

"Then I shall have to send a thumb-print down to the office and

get your number from that. But are you sure you haven't your papers or numbers? It's very queer."

We admit rather sheepishly that it's queer, and question one another silently.

She turns thoughtfully for the thumb-marking slab, and as she does so, a man enters the office. At the sight of him she asks with a note of relief, "What am I to do, sir, here?"

He looks from her to us gravely, and his eye lights to curiosity at our dress. "What is the matter, madam?" he asks, in a courteous voice.

She explains.

So far the impression we have had of our Utopia is one of a quite unearthly sanity, of good management and comprehensive design in every material thing, and it has seemed to us a little incongruous that all the Utopians we have talked to, our host of last night, the post-mistress and our garrulous tramp, have been of the most commonplace type. But suddenly there looks out from this man's pose and regard a different quality, a quality altogether nearer that of the beautiful tramway and of the gracious order of the mountain houses. He is a well-built man of perhaps five and thirty, with the easy movement that comes with perfect physical condition, his face is clean shaven and shows the firm mouth of a disciplined man, and his grey eyes are clear and steady. His legs are clad in some woven stuff deep-red in colour, and over this he wears a white shirt fitting pretty closely, and with a woven purple hem. His general effect reminds me somehow of the Knights Templars. On his head is a cap of thin leather and still thinner steel, and with the vestiges of ear-guards — rather like an attenuated version of the caps that were worn by Cromwell's Ironsides.

He looks at us and we interpolate a word or so as she explains and feel a good deal of embarrassment at the foolish position we have made for ourselves. I determine to cut my way out of this entanglement before it complicates itself further.

"The fact is—" I say.

"Yes?" he says, with a faint smile.

"We've perhaps been disingenuous. Our position is so entirely exceptional, so difficult to explain—"

“What have you been doing?”

“No,” I say, with decision; “it can’t be explained like that.”

He looks down at his feet. “Go on,” he says.

I try to give the thing a quiet, matter-of-fact air. “You see,” I say, in the tone one adopts for really lucid explanations, “we come from another world. Consequently, whatever thumb-mark registration or numbering you have in this planet doesn’t apply to us, and we don’t know our numbers because we haven’t got any. We are really, you know, explorers, strangers—”

“But what world do you mean?”

“It’s a different planet — a long way away. Practically at an infinite distance.”

He looks up in my face with the patient expression of a man who listens to nonsense.

“I know it sounds impossible,” I say, “but here is the simple fact — we *appear* in your world. We appeared suddenly upon the neck of Lucendro — the Passo Lucendro — yesterday afternoon, and I defy you to discover the faintest trace of us before that time. Down we marched into the San Gotthard road and here we are! That’s our fact. And as for papers—! Where in your world have you seen papers like this?”

I produce my pocket-book, extract my passport, and present it to him.

His expression has changed. He takes the document and examines it, turns it over, looks at me, and smiles that faint smile of his again.

“Have some more,” I say, and proffer the card of the T.C.F.

I follow up that blow with my green British Museum ticket, as tattered as a flag in a knight’s chapel.

“You’ll get found out,” he says, with my documents in his hand. “You’ve got your thumbs. You’ll be measured. They’ll refer to the central registers, and there you’ll be!”

“That’s just it,” I say, “we sha’n’t be.”

He reflects. “It’s a queer sort of joke for you two men to play,” he decides, handing me back my documents.

“It’s no joke at all,” I say, replacing them in my pocket-book.

The post-mistress intervenes. “What would you advise me to do?”

“No money?” he asks.

"No."

He makes some suggestions. "Frankly," he says, "I think you have escaped from some island. How you got so far as here I can't imagine, or what you think you'll do.... But anyhow, there's the stuff for your thumbs."

He points to the thumb-marking apparatus and turns to attend to his own business.

Presently we emerge from the office in a state between discomfiture and amusement, each with a tramway ticket for Lucerne in his hand and with sufficient money to pay our expenses until the morrow. We are to go to Lucerne because there there is a demand for comparatively unskilled labour in carving wood, which seems to us a sort of work within our range and a sort that will not compel our separation.

§ 6

The old Utopias are sessile organisations; the new must square itself to the needs of a migratory population, to an endless coming and going, to a people as fluid and tidal as the sea. It does not enter into the scheme of earthly statesmanship, but indeed all local establishments, all definitions of place, are even now melting under our eyes. Presently all the world will be awash with anonymous stranger men.

Now the simple laws of custom, the homely methods of identification that served in the little communities of the past when everyone knew everyone, fail in the face of this liquefaction. If the modern Utopia is indeed to be a world of responsible citizens, it must have devised some scheme by which every person in the world can be promptly and certainly recognised, and by which anyone missing can be traced and found.

This is by no means an impossible demand. The total population of the world is, on the most generous estimate, not more than 1,500,000,000, and the effectual indexing of this number of people, the record of their movement hither and thither, the entry of various material facts, such as marriage, parentage, criminal convictions and the like, the entry of the new-born and the elimination of the dead,

colossal task though it would be, is still not so great as to be immeasurably beyond comparison with the work of the post-offices in the world of to-day, or the cataloguing of such libraries as that of the British Museum, or such collections as that of the insects in Cromwell Road. Such an index could be housed quite comfortably on one side of Northumberland Avenue, for example. It is only a reasonable tribute to the distinctive lucidity of the French mind to suppose the central index housed in a vast series of buildings at or near Paris. The index would be classified primarily by some unchanging physical characteristic, such as we are told the thumb-mark and finger-mark afford, and to these would be added any other physical traits that were of material value. The classification of thumb-marks and of inalterable physical characteristics goes on steadily, and there is every reason for assuming it possible that each human being could be given a distinct formula, a number or "scientific name," under which he or she could be docketed. [Footnote: It is quite possible that the actual thumb-mark may play only a small part in the work of identification, but it is an obvious convenience to our thread of story to assume that it is the one sufficient feature.] About the buildings in which this great main index would be gathered, would be a system of other indices with cross references to the main one, arranged under names, under professional qualifications, under diseases, crimes and the like.

These index cards might conceivably be transparent and so contrived as to give a photographic copy promptly whenever it was needed, and they could have an attachment into which would slip a ticket bearing the name of the locality in which the individual was last reported. A little army of attendants would be at work upon this index day and night. From sub-stations constantly engaged in checking back thumb-marks and numbers, an incessant stream of information would come, of births, of deaths, of arrivals at inns, of applications to post-offices for letters, of tickets taken for long journeys, of criminal convictions, marriages, applications for public doles and the like. A filter of offices would sort the stream, and all day and all night for ever a swarm of clerks would go to and fro correcting this central register, and photographing copies of its entries for transmission to the subordinate local stations, in response

to their inquiries. So the inventory of the State would watch its every man and the wide world write its history as the fabric of its destiny flowed on. At last, when the citizen died, would come the last entry of all, his age and the cause of his death and the date and place of his cremation, and his card would be taken out and passed on to the universal pedigree, to a place of greater quiet, to the ever-growing galleries of the records of the dead.

Such a record is inevitable if a Modern Utopia is to be achieved.

Yet at this, too, our blond-haired friend would no doubt rebel. One of the many things to which some will make claim as a right, is that of going unrecognised and secret whither one will. But that, so far as one's fellow wayfarers were concerned, would still be possible. Only the State would share the secret of one's little concealment. To the eighteenth-century Liberal, to the old-fashioned nineteenth-century Liberal, that is to say to all professed Liberals, brought up to be against the Government on principle, this organised clairvoyance will be the most hateful of dreams. Perhaps, too, the Individualist would see it in that light. But these are only the mental habits acquired in an evil time. The old Liberalism assumed bad government, the more powerful the government the worse it was, just as it assumed the natural righteousness of the free individual. Darkness and secrecy were, indeed, the natural refuges of liberty when every government had in it the near possibility of tyranny, and the Englishman or American looked at the papers of a Russian or a German as one might look at the chains of a slave. You imagine that father of the old Liberalism, Rousseau, slinking off from his offspring at the door of the Foundling Hospital, and you can understand what a crime against natural virtue this quiet eye of the State would have seemed to him. But suppose we do not assume that government is necessarily bad, and the individual necessarily good — and the hypothesis upon which we are working practically abolishes either alternative — then we alter the case altogether. The government of a modern Utopia will be no perfection of intentions ignorantly ruling the world.... [Footnote: In the typical modern State of our own world, with its population of many millions, and its extreme facility of movement, undistinguished men who adopt an alias can make themselves untraceable with the utmost ease. The

temptation of the opportunities thus offered has developed a new type of criminality, the Deeming or Crossman type, base men who subsist and feed their heavy imaginations in the wooing, betrayal, ill-treatment, and sometimes even the murder of undistinguished women. This is a large, a growing, and, what is gravest, a prolific class, fostered by the practical anonymity of the common man. It is only the murderers who attract much public attention, but the supply of low-class prostitutes is also largely due to these free adventures of the base. It is one of the bye products of State Liberalism, and at present it is very probably drawing ahead in the race against the development of police organisation.]

Such is the eye of the State that is now slowly beginning to apprehend our existence as two queer and inexplicable parties disturbing the fine order of its field of vision, the eye that will presently be focussing itself upon us with a growing astonishment and interrogation. "Who in the name of Galton and Bertillon," one fancies Utopia exclaiming, "are *you*?"

I perceive I shall cut a queer figure in that focus. I shall affect a certain spurious ease of carriage no doubt. "The fact is, I shall begin...."

§ 7

And now see how an initial hypothesis may pursue and overtake its maker. Our thumb-marks have been taken, they have travelled by pneumatic tube to the central office of the municipality hard by Lucerne, and have gone on thence to the headquarters of the index at Paris. There, after a rough preliminary classification, I imagine them photographed on glass, and flung by means of a lantern in colossal images upon a screen, all finely squared, and the careful experts marking and measuring their several convolutions. And then off goes a brisk clerk to the long galleries of the index building.

I have told them they will find no sign of us, but you see him going from gallery to gallery, from bay to bay, from drawer to drawer, and from card to card. "Here he is!" he mutters to himself, and he whips out a card and reads. "But that is impossible!" he says....

You figure us returning after a day or so of such Utopian experiences as I must presently describe, to the central office in Lucerne, even as we have been told to do.

I make my way to the desk of the man who has dealt with us before. “Well?” I say, cheerfully, “have you heard?”

His expression dashes me a little. “We’ve heard,” he says, and adds, “it’s very peculiar.”

“I told you you wouldn’t find out about us,” I say, triumphantly.

“But we have,” he says; “but that makes your freak none the less remarkable.”

“You’ve heard! You know who we are! Well — tell us! We had an idea, but we’re beginning to doubt.”

“You,” says the official, addressing the botanist, “are—!”

And he breathes his name. Then he turns to me and gives me mine.

For a moment I am dumbfounded. Then I think of the entries we made at the inn in the Urserenthal, and then in a flash I have the truth. I rap the desk smartly with my finger-tips and shake my index-finger in my friend’s face.

“By Jove!” I say in English. “They’ve got our doubles!”

The botanist snaps his fingers. “Of course! I didn’t think of that.”

“Do you mind,” I say to this official, “telling us some more about ourselves?”

“I can’t think why you keep it up,” he remarks, and then almost wearily tells me the facts about my Utopian self. They are a little difficult to understand. He says I am one of the *samurai*, which sounds Japanese, “but you will be degraded,” he says, with a gesture almost of despair. He describes my position in this world in phrases that convey very little.

“The queer thing,” he remarks, “is that you were in Norway only three days ago.”

“I am there still. At least—. I’m sorry to be so much trouble to you, but do you mind following up that last clue and inquiring if the person to whom the thumb-mark really belongs isn’t in Norway still?”

The idea needs explanation. He says something incomprehensible about a pilgrimage. “Sooner or later,” I say, “you will have to believe

there are two of us with the same thumb-mark. I won't trouble you with any apparent nonsense about other planets and so forth again. Here I am. If I was in Norway a few days ago, you ought to be able to trace my journey hither. And my friend?"

"He was in India." The official is beginning to look perplexed.

"It seems to me," I say, "that the difficulties in this case are only just beginning. How did I get from Norway hither? Does my friend look like hopping from India to the Saint Gotthard at one hop? The situation is a little more difficult than that—"

"But here!" says the official, and waves what are no doubt photographic copies of the index cards.

"But we are not those individuals!"

"You *are* those individuals."

"You will see," I say.

He dabs his finger argumentatively upon the thumb-marks. "I see now," he says.

"There is a mistake," I maintain, "an unprecedented mistake. There's the difficulty. If you inquire you will find it begin to unravel. What reason is there for us to remain casual workmen here, when you allege we are men of position in the world, if there isn't something wrong? We shall stick to this wood-carving work you have found us here, and meanwhile I think you ought to inquire again. That's how the thing shapes to me."

"Your case will certainly have to be considered further," he says, with the faintest of threatening notes in his tone. "But at the same time" — hand out to those copies from the index again— "there you are, you know!"

§ 8

When my botanist and I have talked over and exhausted every possibility of our immediate position, we should turn, I think, to more general questions.

I should tell him the thing that was becoming more and more apparent in my own mind. Here, I should say, is a world, obviously on the face of it well organised. Compared with our world, it is like a well-oiled engine beside a scrap-heap. It has even got this

confounded visual organ swivelling about in the most alert and lively fashion. But that's by the way.... You have only to look at all these houses below. (We should be sitting on a seat on the Gütsch and looking down on the Lucerne of Utopia, a Lucerne that would, I insist, quite arbitrarily, still keep the Wasserthurm and the Kapellbrucke.) You have only to mark the beauty, the simple cleanliness and balance of this world, you have only to see the free carriage, the unaffected graciousness of even the common people, to understand how fine and complete the arrangements of this world must be. How are they made so? We of the twentieth century are not going to accept the sweetish, faintly nasty slops of Rousseauism that so gratified our great-great-grandparents in the eighteenth. We know that order and justice do not come by Nature— "if only the policeman would go away." These things mean intention, will, carried to a scale that our poor vacillating, hot and cold earth has never known. What I am really seeing more and more clearly is the will beneath this visible Utopia. Convenient houses, admirable engineering that is no offence amidst natural beauties, beautiful bodies, and a universally gracious carriage, these are only the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. Such an order means discipline. It means triumph over the petty egotisms and vanities that keep men on our earth apart; it means devotion and a nobler hope; it cannot exist without a gigantic process of inquiry, trial, forethought and patience in an atmosphere of mutual trust and concession. Such a world as this Utopia is not made by the chance occasional co-operations of self-indulgent men, by autocratic rulers or by the bawling wisdom of the democratic leader. And an unrestricted competition for gain, an enlightened selfishness, that too fails us....

I have compared the system of indexing humanity we have come upon to an eye, an eye so sensitive and alert that two strangers cannot appear anywhere upon the planet without discovery. Now an eye does not see without a brain, an eye does not turn round and look without a will and purpose. A Utopia that deals only with appliances and arrangements is a dream of superficialities; the essential problem here, the body within these garments, is a moral and an intellectual problem. Behind all this material order, these perfected

communications, perfected public services and economic organisations, there must be men and women willing these things. There must be a considerable number and a succession of these men and women of will. No single person, no transitory group of people, could order and sustain this vast complexity. They must have a collective if not a common width of aim, and that involves a spoken or written literature, a living literature to sustain the harmony of their general activity. In some way they must have put the more immediate objects of desire into a secondary place, and that means renunciation. They must be effectual in action and persistent in will, and that means discipline. But in the modern world in which progress advances without limits, it will be evident that whatever common creed or formula they have must be of the simplest sort; that whatever organisation they have must be as mobile and flexible as a thing alive. All this follows inevitably from the general propositions of our Utopian dream. When we made those, we bound ourselves helplessly to come to this....

The botanist would nod an abstracted assent.

I should cease to talk. I should direct my mind to the confused mass of memories three days in Utopia will have given us. Besides the personalities with whom we have come into actual contact, our various hosts, our foreman and work-fellows, the blond man, the public officials and so on, there will be a great multitude of other impressions. There will be many bright snapshots of little children, for example, of girls and women and men, seen in shops and offices and streets, on quays, at windows and by the wayside, people riding hither and thither and walking to and fro. A very human crowd it has seemed to me. But among them were there any who might be thought of as having a wider interest than the others, who seemed in any way detached from the rest by a purpose that passed beyond the seen?

Then suddenly I recall that clean-shaven man who talked with us for a little while in the public office at Wassen, the man who reminded me of my boyish conception of a Knight Templar, and with him come momentary impressions of other lithe and serious-looking people dressed after the same manner, words and phrases we have read in such scraps of Utopian reading as have come our way, and

expressions that fell from the loose mouth of the man with the blond hair....

CHAPTER THE SIXTH Women in a Modern Utopia

§ 1

But though I have come to a point where the problem of a Utopia has resolved itself very simply into the problem of government and direction, I find I have not brought the botanist with me. Frankly he cannot think so steadily onward as I can. I feel to think, he thinks to feel. It is I and my kind that have the wider range, because we can be impersonal as well as personal. We can escape ourselves. In general terms, at least, I understand him, but he does not understand me in any way at all. He thinks me an incomprehensible brute because his obsession is merely one of my incidental interests, and wherever my reasoning ceases to be explicit and full, the slightest ellipsis, the most transitory digression, he evades me and is back at himself again. He may have a personal liking for me, though I doubt it, but also he hates me pretty distinctly, because of this bias he cannot understand. My philosophical insistence that things shall be reasonable and hang together, that what can be explained shall be explained, and that what can be done by calculation and certain methods shall not be left to chance, he loathes. He just wants adventurously to feel. He wants to feel the sunset, and he thinks that on the whole he would feel it better if he had not been taught the sun was about ninety-two million miles away. He wants to feel free and strong, and he would rather feel so than be so. He does not want to accomplish great things, but to have dazzling things occur to him. He does not know that there are feelings also up in the clear air of the philosophic mountains, in the long ascents of effort and design. He does not know that thought itself is only a finer sort of feeling than his — good hock to the mixed gin, porter and treacle of his emotions, a perception of similitudes and oppositions that carries even thrills. And naturally he broods on the source of all his most copious feelings and emotions, women, and particularly upon the woman who has most made him feel. He forces me also to that.

Our position is unfortunate for me. Our return to the Utopian

equivalent of Lucerne revives in him all the melancholy distresses that so preoccupied him when first we were transferred to this better planet. One day, while we are still waiting there for the public office to decide about us, he broaches the matter. It is early evening, and we are walking beside the lake after our simple dinner. “About here,” he says, “the quays would run and all those big hotels would be along here, looking out on the lake. It’s so strange to have seen them so recently, and now not to see them at all.... Where have they gone?”

“Vanished by hypothesis.”

“What?”

“Oh! They’re there still. It’s we that have come hither.”

“Of course. I forgot. But still— You know, there was an avenue of little trees along this quay with seats, and she was sitting looking out upon the lake.... I hadn’t seen her for ten years.”

He looks about him still a little perplexed. “Now we are here,” he says, “it seems as though that meeting and the talk we had must have been a dream.”

He falls musing.

Presently he says: “I knew her at once. I saw her in profile. But, you know, I didn’t speak to her directly. I walked past her seat and on for a little way, trying to control myself.... Then I turned back and sat down beside her, very quietly. She looked up at me. Everything came back — everything. For a moment or so I felt I was going to cry....”

That seems to give him a sort of satisfaction even in the reminiscence.

“We talked for a time just like casual acquaintances — about the view and the weather, and things like that.”

He muses again.

“In Utopia everything would have been different,” I say.

“I suppose it would.”

He goes on before I can say anything more.

“Then, you know, there was a pause. I had a sort of intuition that the moment was coming. So I think had she. You may scoff, of course, at these intuitions—”

I don’t, as a matter of fact. Instead, I swear secretly. Always this sort of man keeps up the pretence of highly distinguished and

remarkable mental processes, whereas — have not I, in my own composition, the whole diapason of emotional fool? Is not the suppression of these notes my perpetual effort, my undying despair? And then, am I to be accused of poverty?

But to his story.

"She said, quite abruptly, 'I am not happy,' and I told her, 'I knew that the instant I saw you.' Then, you know, she began to talk to me very quietly, very frankly, about everything. It was only afterwards I began to feel just what it meant, her talking to me like that."

I cannot listen to this!

"Don't you understand," I cry, "that we are in Utopia. She may be bound unhappily upon earth and you may be bound, but not here. Here I think it will be different. Here the laws that control all these things will be humane and just. So that all you said and did, over there, does not signify here — does not signify here!"

He looks up for a moment at my face, and then carelessly at my wonderful new world.

"Yes," he says, without interest, with something of the tone of an abstracted elder speaking to a child, "I dare say it will be all very fine here." And he lapses, thwarted from his confidences, into musing.

There is something almost dignified in this withdrawal into himself. For a moment I entertain an illusion that really I am unworthy to hear the impalpable inconclusiveness of what he said to her and of what she said to him.

I am snubbed. I am also amazed to find myself snubbed. I become breathless with indignation. We walk along side by side, but now profoundly estranged.

I regard the façade of the Utopian public offices of Lucerne — I had meant to call his attention to some of the architectural features of these — with a changed eye, with all the spirit gone out of my vision. I wish I had never brought this introspective carcass, this mental ingrate, with me.

I incline to fatalistic submission. I suppose I had no power to leave him behind.... I wonder and I wonder. The old Utopists never had to encumber themselves with this sort of man.

§ 2

How would things be “different” in the Modern Utopia? After all it is time we faced the riddle of the problems of marriage and motherhood....

The Modern Utopia is not only to be a sound and happy World State, but it is to be one progressing from good to better. But as Malthus [Footnote: *Essay on the Principles of Population*.] demonstrated for all time, a State whose population continues to increase in obedience to unchecked instinct, can progress only from bad to worse. From the view of human comfort and happiness, the increase of population that occurs at each advance in human security is the greatest evil of life. The way of Nature is for every species to increase nearly to its possible maximum of numbers, and then to improve through the pressure of that maximum against its limiting conditions by the crushing and killing of all the feebler individuals. The way of Nature has also been the way of humanity so far, and except when a temporary alleviation is obtained through an expansion of the general stock of sustenance by invention or discovery, the amount of starvation and of the physical misery of privation in the world, must vary almost exactly with the excess of the actual birth-rate over that required to sustain population at a number compatible with a universal contentment. Neither has Nature evolved, nor has man so far put into operation, any device by which paying this price of progress, this misery of a multitude of starved and unsuccessful lives can be evaded. A mere indiscriminating restriction of the birth-rate — an end practically attained in the homely, old-fashioned civilisation of China by female infanticide, involves not only the cessation of distresses but stagnation, and the minor good of a sort of comfort and social stability is won at too great a sacrifice. Progress depends essentially on competitive selection, and that we may not escape.

But it is a conceivable and possible thing that this margin of futile struggling, pain and discomfort and death might be reduced to nearly nothing without checking physical and mental evolution, with indeed an acceleration of physical and mental evolution, by preventing the birth of those who would in the unrestricted interplay of natural forces be born to suffer and fail. The method of Nature “red in tooth and claw” is to degrade, thwart, torture, and kill the weakest and least

adapted members of every species in existence in each generation, and so keep the specific average rising; the ideal of a scientific civilisation is to prevent those weaklings being born. There is no other way of evading Nature's punishment of sorrow. The struggle for life among the beasts and uncivilised men means misery and death for the inferior individuals, misery and death in order that they may not increase and multiply; in the civilised State it is now clearly possible to make the conditions of life tolerable for every living creature, provided the inferiors can be prevented from increasing and multiplying. But this latter condition must be respected. Instead of competing to escape death and wretchedness, we may compete to give birth and we may heap every sort of consolation prize upon the losers in that competition. The modern State tends to qualify inheritance, to insist upon education and nurture for children, to come in more and more in the interests of the future between father and child. It is taking over the responsibility of the general welfare of the children more and more, and as it does so, its right to decide which children it will shelter becomes more and more reasonable.

How far will such conditions be prescribed? how far can they be prescribed in a Modern Utopia?

Let us set aside at once all nonsense of the sort one hears in certain quarters about the human stud farm. [Footnote: See *Mankind in the Making*, Ch. II.] State breeding of the population was a reasonable proposal for Plato to make, in view of the biological knowledge of his time and the purely tentative nature of his metaphysics; but from anyone in the days after Darwin, it is preposterous. Yet we have it given to us as the most brilliant of modern discoveries by a certain school of sociological writers, who seem totally unable to grasp the modification of meaning "species" and "individual" have undergone in the last fifty years. They do not seem capable of the suspicion that the boundaries of species have vanished, and that individuality now carries with it the quality of the unique! To them individuals are still defective copies of a Platonic ideal of the species, and the purpose of breeding no more than an approximation to that perfection. Individuality is indeed a negligible difference to them, an impertinence, and the whole flow of modern biological ideas has washed over them in vain.

But to the modern thinker individuality is the significant fact of life, and the idea of the State, which is necessarily concerned with the average and general, selecting individualities in order to pair them and improve the race, an absurdity. It is like fixing a crane on the plain in order to raise the hill tops. In the initiative of the individual above the average, lies the reality of the future, which the State, presenting the average, may subserve but cannot control. And the natural centre of the emotional life, the cardinal will, the supreme and significant expression of individuality, should lie in the selection of a partner for procreation.

But compulsory pairing is one thing, and the maintenance of general limiting conditions is another, and one well within the scope of State activity. The State is justified in saying, before you may add children to the community for the community to educate and in part to support, you must be above a certain minimum of personal efficiency, and this you must show by holding a position of solvency and independence in the world; you must be above a certain age, and a certain minimum of physical development, and free of any transmissible disease. You must not be a criminal unless you have expiated your offence. Failing these simple qualifications, if you and some person conspire and add to the population of the State, we will, for the sake of humanity, take over the innocent victim of your passions, but we shall insist that you are under a debt to the State of a peculiarly urgent sort, and one you will certainly pay, even if it is necessary to use restraint to get the payment out of you: it is a debt that has in the last resort your liberty as a security, and, moreover, if this thing happens a second time, or if it is disease or imbecility you have multiplied, we will take an absolutely effectual guarantee that neither you nor your partner offend again in this matter.

"Harsh!" you say, and "Poor Humanity!"

You have the gentler alternative to study in your terrestrial slums and asylums.

It may be urged that to permit conspicuously inferior people to have one or two children in this way would be to fail to attain the desired end, but, indeed, this is not so. A suitably qualified permission, as every statesman knows, may produce the social effects without producing the irksome pressure of an absolute prohibition.

Amidst bright and comfortable circumstances, and with an easy and practicable alternative, people will exercise foresight and self-restraint to escape even the possibilities of hardship and discomfort; and free life in Utopia is to be well worth this trouble even for inferior people. The growing comfort, self-respect, and intelligence of the English is shown, for example, in the fall in the proportion of illegitimate births from 2.2 per 1,000 in 1846-50 to 1.2 per 1,000 in 1890-1900, and this without any positive preventive laws whatever. This most desirable result is pretty certainly not the consequence of any great exaltation of our moral tone, but simply of a rising standard of comfort and a livelier sense of consequences and responsibilities. If so marked a change is possible in response to such progress as England has achieved in the past fifty years, if discreet restraint can be so effectual as this, it seems reasonable to suppose that in the ampler knowledge and the cleaner, franker atmosphere of our Utopian planet the birth of a child to diseased or inferior parents, and contrary to the sanctions of the State, will be the rarest of disasters.

And the death of a child, too, that most tragic event, Utopia will rarely know. Children are not born to die in childhood. But in our world, at present, through the defects of our medical science and nursing methods, through defects in our organisation, through poverty and carelessness, and through the birth of children that never ought to have been born, one out of every five children born dies within five years. It may be the reader has witnessed this most distressful of all human tragedies. It is sheer waste of suffering. There is no reason why ninety-nine out of every hundred children born should not live to a ripe age. Accordingly, in any Modern Utopia, it must be insisted they will.

§ 3

All former Utopias have, by modern standards, erred on the side of over regulation in these matters. The amount of State interference with the marriage and birth of the citizens of a modern Utopia will be much less than in any terrestrial State. Here, just as in relation to property and enterprise, the law will regulate only in order to secure the utmost freedom and initiative.

Up to the beginning of this chapter, our Utopian speculations, like many Acts of Parliament, have ignored the difference of sex. "He" indeed is to be read as "He and She" in all that goes before. But we may now come to the sexual aspects of the modern ideal of a constitution of society in which, for all purposes of the individual, women are to be as free as men. This will certainly be realised in the Modern Utopia, if it can be realised at all — not only for woman's sake, but for man's.

But women may be free in theory and not in practice, and as long as they suffer from their economic inferiority, from the inability to produce as much value as a man for the same amount of work — and there can be no doubt of this inferiority — so long will their legal and technical equality be a mockery. It is a fact that almost every point in which a woman differs from a man is an economic disadvantage to her, her incapacity for great stresses of exertion, her frequent liability to slight illnesses, her weaker initiative, her inferior invention and resourcefulness, her relative incapacity for organisation and combination, and the possibilities of emotional complications whenever she is in economic dependence on men. So long as women are compared economically with men and boys they will be inferior in precisely the measure in which they differ from men. All that constitutes this difference they are supposed not to trade upon except in one way, and that is by winning or luring a man to marry, selling themselves in an almost irrevocable bargain, and then following and sharing his fortunes for "better or worse."

But — do not let the proposition in its first crudity alarm you — suppose the Modern Utopia equalises things between the sexes in the only possible way, by insisting that motherhood is a service to the State and a legitimate claim to a living; and that, since the State is to exercise the right of forbidding or sanctioning motherhood, a woman who is, or is becoming, a mother, is as much entitled to wages above the minimum wage, to support, to freedom, and to respect and dignity as a policeman, a solicitor-general, a king, a bishop in the State Church, a Government professor, or anyone else the State sustains. Suppose the State secures to every woman who is, under legitimate sanctions, becoming or likely to become a mother, that is to say who is duly married, a certain wage from her husband to

secure her against the need of toil and anxiety, suppose it pays her a certain gratuity upon the birth of a child, and continues to pay at regular intervals sums sufficient to keep her and her child in independent freedom, so long as the child keeps up to the minimum standard of health and physical and mental development. Suppose it pays more upon the child when it rises markedly above certain minimum qualifications, physical or mental, and, in fact, does its best to make thoroughly efficient motherhood a profession worth following. And suppose in correlation with this it forbids the industrial employment of married women and of mothers who have children needing care, unless they are in a position to employ qualified efficient substitutes to take care of their offspring. What differences from terrestrial conditions will ensue?

This extent of intervention will at least abolish two or three salient hardships and evils of the civilised life. It will abolish the hardship of the majority of widows, who on earth are poor and encumbered exactly in proportion as they have discharged the chief distinctive duty of a woman, and miserable, just in proportion as their standard of life and of education is high. It will abolish the hardship of those who do not now marry on account of poverty, or who do not dare to have children. The fear that often turns a woman from a beautiful to a mercenary marriage will vanish from life. In Utopia a career of wholesome motherhood would be, under such conditions as I have suggested, the normal and remunerative calling for a woman, and a capable woman who has borne, bred, and begun the education of eight or nine well-built, intelligent, and successful sons and daughters would be an extremely prosperous woman, quite irrespective of the economic fortunes of the man she has married. She would need to be an exceptional woman, and she would need to have chosen a man at least a little above the average as her partner in life. But his death, or misbehaviour, or misfortunes would not ruin her.

Now such an arrangement is merely the completed induction from the starting propositions that make some measure of education free and compulsory for every child in the State. If you prevent people making profit out of their children — and every civilised State — even that compendium of old-fashioned Individualism, the United

States of America — is now disposed to admit the necessity of that prohibition — and if you provide for the aged instead of leaving them to their children's sense of duty, the practical inducements to parentage, except among very wealthy people, are greatly reduced. The sentimental factor in the case rarely leads to more than a solitary child or at most two to a marriage, and with a high and rising standard of comfort and circumspection it is unlikely that the birth-rate will ever rise very greatly again. The Utopians will hold that if you keep the children from profitable employment for the sake of the future, then, if you want any but the exceptionally rich, secure, pious, unselfish, or reckless to bear children freely, you must be prepared to throw the cost of their maintenance upon the general community.

In short, Utopia will hold that sound childbearing and rearing is a service done, not to a particular man, but to the whole community, and all its legal arrangements for motherhood will be based on that conception.

§ 4

And after these preliminaries we must proceed to ask, first, what will be the Utopian marriage law, and then what sort of customs and opinions are likely to be superadded to that law?

The trend of our reasoning has brought us to the conclusion that the Utopian State will feel justified in intervening between men and women on two accounts, first on account of paternity, and secondly on account of the clash of freedoms that may otherwise arise. The Utopian State will effectually interfere with and prescribe conditions for all sorts of contract, and for this sort of contract in particular it will be in agreement with almost every earthly State, in defining in the completest fashion what things a man or woman may be bound to do, and what they cannot be bound to do. From the point of view of a statesman, marriage is the union of a man and woman in a manner so intimate as to involve the probability of offspring, and it is of primary importance to the State, first in order to secure good births, and secondly good home conditions, that these unions should not be free, nor promiscuous, nor practically universal throughout the adult population.

Prolific marriage must be a profitable privilege. It must occur only under certain obvious conditions, the contracting parties must be in health and condition, free from specific transmissible taints, above a certain minimum age, and sufficiently intelligent and energetic to have acquired a minimum education. The man at least must be in receipt of a net income above the minimum wage, after any outstanding charges against him have been paid. All this much it is surely reasonable to insist upon before the State becomes responsible for the prospective children. The age at which men and women may contract to marry is difficult to determine. But if we are, as far as possible, to put women on an equality with men, if we are to insist upon a universally educated population, and if we are seeking to reduce the infantile death-rate to zero, it must be much higher than it is in any terrestrial State. The woman should be at least one-and-twenty; the man twenty-six or twenty-seven.

One imagines the parties to a projected marriage first obtaining licenses which will testify that these conditions are satisfied. From the point of view of the theoretical Utopian State, these licenses are the feature of primary importance. Then, no doubt, that universal register at Paris would come into play. As a matter of justice, there must be no deception between the two people, and the State will ensure that in certain broad essentials this is so. They would have to communicate their joint intention to a public office after their personal licenses were granted, and each would be supplied with a copy of the index card of the projected mate, on which would be recorded his or her age, previous marriages, legally important diseases, offspring, domiciles, public appointments, criminal convictions, registered assignments of property, and so forth. Possibly it might be advisable to have a little ceremony for each party, for each in the absence of the other, in which this record could be read over in the presence of witnesses, together with some prescribed form of address of counsel in the matter. There would then be a reasonable interval for consideration and withdrawal on the part of either spouse. In the event of the two people persisting in their resolution, they would after this minimum interval signify as much to the local official and the necessary entry would be made in the registers. These formalities would be quite independent of any

religious ceremonial the contracting parties might choose, for with religious belief and procedure the modern State has no concern.

So much for the preliminary conditions of matrimony. For those men and women who chose to ignore these conditions and to achieve any sort of union they liked the State would have no concern, unless offspring were born illegitimately. In that case, as we have already suggested, it would be only reasonable to make the parents chargeable with every duty, with maintenance, education, and so forth, that in the normal course of things would fall to the State. It would be necessary to impose a life assurance payment upon these parents, and to exact effectual guarantees against every possible evasion of the responsibility they had incurred. But the further control of private morality, beyond the protection of the immature from corruption and evil example, will be no concern of the State's. When a child comes in, the future of the species comes in; and the State comes in as the guardian of interests wider than the individual's; but the adult's private life is the entirely private life into which the State may not intrude.

Now what will be the nature of the Utopian contract of matrimony?

From the first of the two points of view named above, that of parentage, it is obvious that one unavoidable condition will be the chastity of the wife. Her infidelity being demonstrated, must at once terminate the marriage and release both her husband and the State from any liability for the support of her illegitimate offspring. That, at any rate, is beyond controversy; a marriage contract that does not involve that, is a triumph of metaphysics over common sense. It will be obvious that under Utopian conditions it is the State that will suffer injury by a wife's misconduct, and that a husband who condones anything of the sort will participate in her offence. A woman, therefore, who is divorced on this account will be divorced as a public offender, and not in the key of a personal quarrel; not as one who has inflicted a private and personal wrong. This, too, lies within the primary implications of marriage.

Beyond that, what conditions should a marriage contract in Utopia involve?

A reciprocal restraint on the part of the husband is clearly of no

importance whatever, so far as the first end of matrimony goes, the protection of the community from inferior births. It is no wrong to the State. But it does carry with it a variable amount of emotional offence to the wife; it may wound her pride and cause her violent perturbations of jealousy; it may lead to her neglect, her solitude and unhappiness, and it may even work to her physical injury. There should be an implication that it is not to occur. She has bound herself to the man for the good of the State, and clearly it is reasonable that she should look to the State for relief if it does occur. The extent of the offence given her is the exact measure of her injury; if she does not mind nobody minds, and if her self-respect does not suffer nothing whatever is lost to the world; and so it should rest with her to establish his misconduct, and, if she thinks fit, to terminate the marriage.

A failure on either side to perform the elementary duties of companionship, desertion, for example, should obviously give the other mate the right to relief, and clearly the development of any disqualifying habit, drunkenness, or drug-taking, or the like, or any serious crime or acts of violence, should give grounds for a final release. Moreover, the modern Utopian State intervenes between the sexes only because of the coming generation, and for it to sustain restrictions upon conduct in a continually fruitless marriage is obviously to lapse into purely moral intervention. It seems reasonable, therefore, to set a term to a marriage that remains childless, to let it expire at the end of three or four or five unfruitful years, but with no restriction upon the right of the husband and wife to marry each other again.

These are the fairly easy primaries of this question. We now come to the more difficult issues of the matter. The first of these is the question of the economic relationships of husband and wife, having regard to the fact that even in Utopia women, at least until they become mothers, are likely to be on the average poorer than men. The second is the question of the duration of a marriage. But the two interlock, and are, perhaps, best treated together in one common section. And they both ramify in the most complicated manner into the consideration of the general morale of the community.

§ 5

This question of marriage is the most complicated and difficult in the whole range of Utopian problems. But it is happily not the most urgent necessity that it should be absolutely solved. The urgent and necessary problem is the ruler. With rulers rightly contrived and a provisional defective marriage law a Utopia may be conceived as existing and studying to perfect itself, but without rulers a Utopia is impossible though the theory of its matrimony be complete. And the difficulty in this question is not simply the difficulty of a complicated chess problem, for example, in which the whole tangle of considerations does at least lie in one plane, but a series of problems upon different levels and containing incommensurable factors.

It is very easy to repeat our initial propositions, to recall that we are on another planet, and that all the customs and traditions of the earth are set aside, but the faintest realisation of that demands a feat of psychological insight. We have all grown up into an invincible mould of suggestion about sexual things; we regard this with approval, that with horror, and this again with contempt, very largely because the thing has always been put to us in this light or that. The more emancipated we think ourselves the more subtle are our bonds. The disentanglement of what is inherent in these feelings from what is acquired is an extraordinary complex undertaking. Probably all men and women have a more or less powerful disposition to jealousy, but what exactly they will be jealous about and what exactly they will suffer seems part of the superposed factor. Probably all men and women are capable of ideal emotions and wishes beyond merely physical desires, but the shape these take are almost entirely a reaction to external images. And you really cannot strip the external off; you cannot get your stark natural man, jealous, but not jealous about anything in particular, imaginative without any imaginings, proud at large. Emotional dispositions can no more exist without form than a man without air. Only a very observant man who had lived all over the planet Earth, in all sorts of social strata, and with every race and tongue, and who was endowed with great imaginative insight, could hope to understand the possibilities and the limitations of human plasticity in this matter, and say what any men and any

women could be induced to do willingly, and just exactly what no man and no woman could stand, provided one had the training of them. Though very young men will tell you readily enough. The proceedings of other races and other ages do not seem to carry conviction; what our ancestors did, or what the Greeks or Egyptians did, though it is the direct physical cause of the modern young man or the modern young lady, is apt to impress these remarkable consequences merely as an arrangement of quaint, comical or repulsive proceedings.

But there emerges to the modern inquirer certain ideals and desiderata that at least go some way towards completing and expanding the crude primaries of a Utopian marriage law set out in § 4.

The sound birth being assured, does there exist any valid reason for the persistence of the Utopian marriage union?

There are two lines of reasoning that go to establish a longer duration for marriage. The first of these rests upon the general necessity for a home and for individual attention in the case of children. Children are the results of a choice between individuals; they grow well, as a rule, only in relation to sympathetic and kindred individualities, and no wholesale character-ignoring method of dealing with them has ever had a shadow of the success of the individualised home. Neither Plato nor Socrates, who repudiated the home, seems ever to have had to do with anything younger than a young man. Procreation is only the beginning of parentage, and even where the mother is not the direct nurse and teacher of her child, even where she delegates these duties, her supervision is, in the common case, essential to its welfare. Moreover, though the Utopian State will pay the mother, and the mother only, for the being and welfare of her legitimate children, there will be a clear advantage in fostering the natural disposition of the father to associate his child's welfare with his individual egotism, and to dispense some of his energies and earnings in supplementing the common provision of the State. It is an absurd disregard of a natural economy to leave the innate philoprogenitiveness of either sex uncultivated. Unless the

parents continue in close relationship, if each is passing through a series of marriages, the dangers of a conflict of rights, and of the frittering away of emotions, become very grave. The family will lose homogeneity, and its individuals will have for the mother varied and perhaps incompatible emotional associations. The balance of social advantage is certainly on the side of much more permanent unions, on the side of an arrangement that, subject to ample provisions for a formal divorce without disgrace in cases of incompatibility, would bind, or at least enforce ideals that would tend to bind, a man and woman together for the whole term of her maternal activity, until, that is, the last born of her children was no longer in need of her help.

The second system of considerations arises out of the artificiality of woman's position. It is a less conclusive series than the first, and it opens a number of interesting side vistas.

A great deal of nonsense is talked about the natural equality or inferiority of women to men. But it is only the same quality that can be measured by degrees and ranged in ascending and descending series, and the things that are essentially feminine are different qualitatively from and incommensurable with the distinctly masculine things. The relationship is in the region of ideals and conventions, and a State is perfectly free to determine that men and women shall come to intercourse on a footing of conventional equality or with either the man or woman treated as the predominating individual. Aristotle's criticism of Plato in this matter, his insistence upon the natural inferiority of slaves and women, is just the sort of confusion between inherent and imposed qualities that was his most characteristic weakness. The spirit of the European people, of almost all the peoples now in the ascendant, is towards a convention of equality; the spirit of the Mahometan world is towards the intensification of a convention that the man alone is a citizen and that the woman is very largely his property. There can be no doubt that the latter of these two convenient fictions is the more primitive way of regarding this relationship. It is quite unfruitful to argue between these ideals as if there were a demonstrable conclusion, the adoption of either is an arbitrary act, and we shall simply follow our age and time if we display a certain bias for the former.

If one looks closely into the various practical expansions of these

ideas, we find their inherent falsity works itself out in a very natural way so soon as reality is touched. Those who insist upon equality work in effect for assimilation, for a similar treatment of the sexes. Plato's women of the governing class, for example, were to strip for gymnastics like men, to bear arms and go to war, and follow most of the masculine occupations of their class. They were to have the same education and to be assimilated to men at every doubtful point. The Aristotelian attitude, on the other hand, insists upon specialisation. The men are to rule and fight and toil; the women are to support motherhood in a state of natural inferiority. The trend of evolutionary forces through long centuries of human development has been on the whole in this second direction, has been towards differentiation. [Footnote: See Havelock Ellis's *Man and Woman*.] An adult white woman differs far more from a white man than a negress or pigmy woman from her equivalent male. The education, the mental disposition, of a white or Asiatic woman, reeks of sex; her modesty, her decorum is not to ignore sex but to refine and put a point to it; her costume is clamorous with the distinctive elements of her form. The white woman in the materially prosperous nations is more of a sexual specialist than her sister of the poor and austere peoples, of the prosperous classes more so than the peasant woman. The contemporary woman of fashion who sets the tone of occidental intercourse is a stimulant rather than a companion for a man. Too commonly she is an unwholesome stimulant turning a man from wisdom to appearance, from beauty to beautiful pleasures, from form to colour, from persistent aims to belief and stirring triumphs. Arrayed in what she calls distinctly "dress," scented, adorned, displayed, she achieves by artifice a sexual differentiation profounder than that of any other vertebrated animal. She outshines the peacock's excess above his mate, one must probe among the domestic secrets of the insects and crustacea to find her living parallel. And it is a question by no means easy and yet of the utmost importance, to determine how far the wide and widening differences between the human sexes is inherent and inevitable, and how far it is an accident of social development that may be converted and reduced under a different social regimen. Are we going to recognise and accentuate this difference and to arrange our Utopian organisation to

play upon it, are we to have two primary classes of human being, harmonising indeed and reacting, but following essentially different lives, or are we going to minimise this difference in every possible way?

The former alternative leads either to a romantic organisation of society in which men will live and fight and die for wonderful, beautiful, exaggerated creatures, or it leads to the hareem. It would probably lead through one phase to the other. Women would be enigmas and mysteries and maternal dignitaries that one would approach in a state of emotional excitement and seclude piously when serious work was in hand. A girl would blossom from the totally negligible to the mystically desirable at adolescence, and boys would be removed from their mother's educational influence at as early an age as possible. Whenever men and women met together, the men would be in a state of inflamed competition towards one another, and the women likewise, and the intercourse of ideas would be in suspense. Under the latter alternative the sexual relation would be subordinated to friendship and companionship; boys and girls would be co-educated — very largely under maternal direction, and women, disarmed of their distinctive barbaric adornments, the feathers, beads, lace, and trimmings that enhance their clamorous claim to a directly personal attention would mingle, according to their quality, in the counsels and intellectual development of men. Such women would be fit to educate boys even up to adolescence. It is obvious that a marriage law embodying a decision between these two sets of ideas would be very different according to the alternative adopted. In the former case a man would be expected to earn and maintain in an adequate manner the dear delight that had favoured him. He would tell her beautiful lies about her wonderful moral effect upon him, and keep her sedulously from all responsibility and knowledge. And, since there is an undeniably greater imaginative appeal to men in the first bloom of a woman's youth, she would have a distinct claim upon his energies for the rest of her life. In the latter case a man would no more pay for and support his wife than she would do so for him. They would be two friends, differing in kind no doubt but differing reciprocally, who had linked themselves in a matrimonial relationship. Our Utopian marriage so far as we have

discussed it, is indeterminate between these alternatives.

We have laid it down as a general principle that the private morals of an adult citizen are no concern for the State. But that involves a decision to disregard certain types of bargain. A sanely contrived State will refuse to sustain bargains wherein there is no plausibly fair exchange, and if private morality is really to be outside the scope of the State then the affections and endearments most certainly must not be regarded as negotiable commodities. The State, therefore, will absolutely ignore the distribution of these favours unless children, or at least the possibility of children, is involved. It follows that it will refuse to recognise any debts or transfers of property that are based on such considerations. It will be only consistent, therefore, to refuse recognition in the marriage contract to any financial obligation between husband and wife, or any settlements qualifying that contract, except when they are in the nature of accessory provision for the prospective children. [Footnote: Unqualified gifts for love by solvent people will, of course, be quite possible and permissible, unsalaried services and the like, provided the standard of life is maintained and the joint income of the couple between whom the services hold does not sink below twice the minimum wage.] So far the Utopian State will throw its weight upon the side of those who advocate the independence of women and their conventional equality with men.

But to any further definition of the marriage relation the World State of Utopia will not commit itself. The wide range of relationships that are left possible, within and without the marriage code, are entirely a matter for the individual choice and imagination. Whether a man treat his wife in private as a goddess to be propitiated, as a "mystery" to be adored, as an agreeable auxiliary, as a particularly intimate friend, or as the wholesome mother of his children, is entirely a matter for their private intercourse: whether he keep her in Oriental idleness or active co-operation, or leave her to live her independent life, rests with the couple alone, and all the possible friendship and intimacies outside marriage also lie quite beyond the organisation of the modern State. Religious teaching and literature may affect these; customs may arise; certain types of relationship may involve social isolation; the justice of the statesman

is blind to such things. It may be urged that according to Atkinson's illuminating analysis [Footnote: See Lang and Atkinson's *Social Origins and Primal Law*.] the control of love-making was the very origin of the human community. In Utopia, nevertheless, love-making is no concern of the State's beyond the province that the protection of children covers. [Footnote: It cannot be made too clear that though the control of morality is outside the law the State must maintain a general decorum, a systematic suppression of powerful and moving examples, and of incitations and temptations of the young and inexperienced, and to that extent it will, of course, in a sense, exercise a control over morals. But this will be only part of a wider law to safeguard the tender mind. For example, lying advertisements, and the like, when they lean towards adolescent interests, will encounter a specially disagreeable disposition in the law, over and above the treatment of their general dishonesty.] Change of function is one of the ruling facts in life, the sac that was in our remotest ancestors a swimming bladder is now a lung, and the State which was once, perhaps, no more than the jealous and tyrannous will of the strongest male in the herd, the instrument of justice and equality. The State intervenes now only where there is want of harmony between individuals — individuals who exist or who may presently come into existence.

§ 6

It must be reiterated that our reasoning still leaves Utopian marriage an institution with wide possibilities of variation. We have tried to give effect to the ideal of a virtual equality, an equality of spirit between men and women, and in doing so we have overridden the accepted opinion of the great majority of mankind. Probably the first writer to do as much was Plato. His argument in support of this innovation upon natural human feeling was thin enough — a mere analogy to illustrate the spirit of his propositions; it was his creative instinct that determined him. In the atmosphere of such speculations as this, Plato looms very large indeed, and in view of what we owe to him, it seems reasonable that we should hesitate before dismissing as a thing prohibited and evil, a type of marriage that he made almost

the central feature in the organisation of the ruling class, at least, of his ideal State. He was persuaded that the narrow monogamic family is apt to become illiberal and anti-social, to withdraw the imagination and energies of the citizen from the services of the community as a whole, and the Roman Catholic Church has so far endorsed and substantiated his opinion as to forbid family relations to its priests and significant servants. He conceived of a poetic devotion to the public idea, a devotion of which the mind of Aristotle, as his criticisms of Plato show, was incapable, as a substitute for the warm and tender but illiberal emotions of the home. But while the Church made the alternative to family ties celibacy [Footnote: The warm imagination of Campanella, that quaint Calabrian monastic, fired by Plato, reversed this aspect of the Church.] and participation in an organisation, Plato was far more in accordance with modern ideas in perceiving the disadvantage that would result from precluding the nobler types of character from offspring. He sought a way to achieve progeny, therefore, without the narrow concentration of the sympathies about the home, and he found it in a multiple marriage in which every member of the governing class was considered to be married to all the others. But the detailed operation of this system he put tentatively and very obscurely. His suggestions have the experimental inconsistency of an enquiring man. He left many things altogether open, and it is unfair to him to adopt Aristotle's forensic method and deal with his discussion as though it was a fully-worked-out project. It is clear that Plato intended every member of his governing class to be so "changed at birth" as to leave paternity untraceable; mothers were not to know their children, nor children their parents, but there is nothing to forbid the supposition that he intended these people to select and adhere to congenial mates within the great family. Aristotle's assertion that the Platonic republic left no scope for the virtue of continence shows that he had jumped to just the same conclusions a contemporary London errand boy, hovering a little shamefacedly over Jowett in a public library, might be expected to reach.

Aristotle obscures Plato's intention, it may be accidentally, by speaking of his marriage institution as a community of wives. When reading Plato he could not or would not escape reading in his own

conception of the natural ascendency of men, his idea of property in women and children. But as Plato intended women to be conventionally equal to men, this phrase belies him altogether; community of husbands and wives would be truer to his proposal. Aristotle condemns Plato as roundly as any commercial room would condemn him to-day, and in much the same spirit; he asserts rather than proves that such a grouping is against the nature of man. He wanted to have women property just as he wanted to have slaves property, he did not care to ask why, and it distressed his conception of convenience extremely to imagine any other arrangement. It is no doubt true that the natural instinct of either sex is exclusive of participators in intimacy during a period of intimacy, but it was probably Aristotle who gave Plato an offensive interpretation in this matter. No one would freely submit to such a condition of affairs as multiple marriage carried out, in the spirit of the Aristotelian interpretation, to an obscene completeness, but that is all the more reason why the modern Utopia should not refuse a grouped marriage to three or more freely consenting persons. There is no sense in prohibiting institutions which no sane people could ever want to abuse. It is claimed — though the full facts are difficult to ascertain — that a group marriage of over two hundred persons was successfully organised by John Humphrey Noyes at Oneida Creek. [Footnote: See John H. Noyes's *History of American Socialisms* and his writings generally. The bare facts of this and the other American experiments are given, together with more recent matter, by Morris Hillquirt, in *The History of Socialism in the United States*.] It is fairly certain in the latter case that there was no "promiscuity," and that the members mated for variable periods, and often for life, within the group. The documents are reasonably clear upon that point. This Oneida community was, in fact, a league of two hundred persons to regard their children as "common." Choice and preference were not abolished in the community, though in some cases they were set aside — just as they are by many parents under our present conditions. There seems to have been a premature attempt at "stirpiculture," at what Mr. Francis Galton now calls "Eugenics," in the mating of the members, and there was also a limitation of offspring. Beyond these points the inner secrets of the community do

not appear to be very profound; its atmosphere was almost commonplace, it was made up of very ordinary people. There is no doubt that it had a career of exceptional success throughout the whole lifetime of its founder, and it broke down with the advent of a new generation, with the onset of theological differences, and the loss of its guiding intelligence. The Anglo-Saxon spirit, it has been said by one of the ablest children of the experiment, is too individualistic for communism. It is possible to regard the temporary success of this complex family as a strange accident, as the wonderful exploit of what was certainly a very exceptional man. Its final disintegration into frankly monogamic couples — it is still a prosperous business association — may be taken as an experimental verification of Aristotle's common-sense psychology, and was probably merely the public acknowledgment of conditions already practically established.

Out of respect for Plato we cannot ignore this possibility of multiple marriage altogether in our Utopian theorising, but even if we leave this possibility open we are still bound to regard it as a thing so likely to be rare as not to come at all under our direct observation during our Utopian journeyings. But in one sense, of course, in the sense that the State guarantees care and support for all properly born children, our entire Utopia is to be regarded as a comprehensive marriage group. [Footnote: The Thelema of Rabelais, with its principle of "Fay ce que vouldras" within the limits of the order, is probably intended to suggest a Platonic complex marriage after the fashion of our interpretation.]

It must be remembered that a modern Utopia must differ from the Utopias of any preceding age in being world-wide; it is not, therefore, to be the development of any special race or type of culture, as Plato's developed an Athenian-Spartan blend, or More, Tudor England. The modern Utopia is to be, before all things, synthetic. Politically and socially, as linguistically, we must suppose it a synthesis; politically it will be a synthesis of once widely different forms of government; socially and morally, a synthesis of a great variety of domestic traditions and ethical habits. Into the modern Utopia there must have entered the mental tendencies and origins that give our own world the polygamy of the Zulus and of

Utah, the polyandry of Tibet, the latitudes of experiment permitted in the United States, and the divorceless wedlock of Comte. The tendency of all synthetic processes in matters of law and custom is to reduce and simplify the compulsory canon, to admit alternatives and freedoms; what were laws before become traditions of feeling and style, and in no matter will this be more apparent than in questions affecting the relations of the sexes.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH A Few Utopian Impressions

§ 1

But now we are in a better position to describe the houses and ways of the Utopian townships about the Lake of Lucerne, and to glance a little more nearly at the people who pass. You figure us as curiously settled down in Utopia, as working for a low wage at wood-carving, until the authorities at the central registry in Paris can solve the perplexing problem we have set them. We stay in an inn looking out upon the lake, and go to and fro for our five hours' work a day, with a curious effect of having been born Utopians. The rest of our time is our own.

Our inn is one of those inns and lodging houses which have a minimum tariff, inns which are partly regulated, and, in the default of private enterprise, maintained and controlled by the World State throughout the entire world. It is one of several such establishments in Lucerne. It possesses many hundreds of practically self-cleaning little bedrooms, equipped very much after the fashion of the rooms we occupied in the similar but much smaller inn at Hospenthal, differing only a little in the decoration. There is the same dressing-room recess with its bath, the same graceful proportion in the succinct simplicity of its furniture. This particular inn is a quadrangle after the fashion of an Oxford college; it is perhaps forty feet high, and with about five stories of bedrooms above its lower apartments; the windows of the rooms look either outward or inward to the quadrangle, and the doors give upon artificially-lit passages with staircases passing up and down. These passages are carpeted with a sort of cork carpet, but are otherwise bare. The lower story is occupied by the equivalent of a London club, kitchens and other offices, dining-room, writing-room, smoking and assembly rooms, a barber's shop, and a library. A colonnade with seats runs about the quadrangle, and in the middle is a grass-plot. In the centre of this a bronze figure, a sleeping child, reposes above a little basin and fountain, in which water lilies are growing. The place has been

designed by an architect happily free from the hampering traditions of Greek temple building, and of Roman and Italian palaces; it is simple, unaffected, gracious. The material is some artificial stone with the dull surface and something of the tint of yellow ivory; the colour is a little irregular, and a partial confession of girders and pillars breaks this front of tender colour with lines and mouldings of greenish gray, that blend with the tones of the leaden gutters and rain pipes from the light red roof. At one point only does any explicit effort towards artistic effect appear, and that is in the great arched gateway opposite my window. Two or three abundant yellow roses climb over the face of the building, and when I look out of my window in the early morning — for the usual Utopian working day commences within an hour of sunrise — I see Pilatus above this outlook, rosy in the morning sky.

This quadrangle type of building is the prevalent element in Utopian Lucerne, and one may go from end to end of the town along corridors and covered colonnades without emerging by a gateway into the open roads at all. Small shops are found in these colonnades, but the larger stores are usually housed in buildings specially adapted to their needs. The majority of the residential edifices are far finer and more substantial than our own modest shelter, though we gather from such chance glimpses as we get of their arrangements that the labour-saving ideal runs through every grade of this servantless world; and what we should consider a complete house in earthly England is hardly known here.

The autonomy of the household has been reduced far below terrestrial conditions by hotels and clubs, and all sorts of co-operative expedients. People who do not live in hotels seem usually to live in clubs. The fairly prosperous Utopian belongs, in most cases, to one or two residential clubs of congenial men and women. These clubs usually possess in addition to furnished bedrooms more or less elaborate suites of apartments, and if a man prefers it one of these latter can be taken and furnished according to his personal taste. A pleasant boudoir, a private library and study, a private garden plot, are among the commonest of such luxuries. Devices to secure roof gardens, loggias, verandahs, and such-like open-air privacies to the more sumptuous of these apartments, give interest

and variety to Utopian architecture. There are sometimes little cooking corners in these flats — as one would call them on earth — but the ordinary Utopian would no more think of a special private kitchen for his dinners than he would think of a private flour mill or dairy farm. Business, private work, and professional practice go on sometimes in the house apartments, but often in special offices in the great warren of the business quarter. A common garden, an infant school, play rooms, and a playing garden for children, are universal features of the club quadrangles.

Two or three main roads with their tramways, their cyclists' paths, and swift traffic paths, will converge on the urban centre, where the public offices will stand in a group close to the two or three theatres and the larger shops, and hither, too, in the case of Lucerne, the head of the swift railway to Paris and England and Scotland, and to the Rhineland and Germany will run. And as one walks out from the town centre one will come to that mingling of homesteads and open country which will be the common condition of all the more habitable parts of the globe.

Here and there, no doubt, will stand quite solitary homesteads, homesteads that will nevertheless be lit and warmed by cables from the central force station, that will share the common water supply, will have their perfected telephonic connection with the rest of the world, with doctor, shop, and so forth, and may even have a pneumatic tube for books and small parcels to the nearest post-office. But the solitary homestead, as a permanent residence, will be something of a luxury — the resort of rather wealthy garden lovers; and most people with a bias for retirement will probably get as much residential solitude as they care for in the hire of a holiday châlet in a forest, by remote lagoons or high up the mountain side.

The solitary house may indeed prove to be very rare indeed in Utopia. The same forces, the same facilitation of communications that will diffuse the towns will tend to little concentrations of the agricultural population over the country side. The field workers will probably take their food with them to their work during the day, and for the convenience of an interesting dinner and of civilised intercourse after the working day is over, they will most probably live in a college quadrangle with a common room and club. I doubt if

there will be any agricultural labourers drawing wages in Utopia. I am inclined to imagine farming done by tenant associations, by little democratic unlimited liability companies working under elected managers, and paying not a fixed rent but a share of the produce to the State. Such companies could reconstruct annually to weed out indolent members. [Footnote: Schemes for the co-operative association of producers will be found in Dr. Hertzka's *Freeland*.] A minimum standard of efficiency in farming would be insured by fixing a minimum beneath which the rent must not fall, and perhaps by inspection. The general laws respecting the standard of life would, of course, apply to such associations. This type of co-operation presents itself to me as socially the best arrangement for productive agriculture and horticulture, but such enterprises as stock breeding, seed farming and the stocking and loan of agricultural implements are probably, and agricultural research and experiment certainly, best handled directly by large companies or the municipality or the State.

But I should do little to investigate this question; these are presented as quite incidental impressions. You must suppose that for the most part our walks and observations keep us within the more urban quarters of Lucerne. From a number of beautifully printed placards at the street corners, adorned with caricatures of considerable pungency, we discover an odd little election is in progress. This is the selection, upon strictly democratic lines, with a suffrage that includes every permanent resident in the Lucerne ward over the age of fifteen, of the ugliest local building. The old little urban and local governing bodies, we find, have long since been superseded by great provincial municipalities for all the more serious administrative purposes, but they still survive to discharge a number of curious minor functions, and not the least among these is this sort of æsthetic ostracism. Every year every minor local governing body pulls down a building selected by local plebiscite, and the greater Government pays a slight compensation to the owner, and resumes possession of the land it occupies. The idea would strike us at first as simply whimsical, but in practice it appears to work as a cheap and practical device for the æsthetic education of builders, engineers, business men, opulent persons, and the general body of the public. But when we come to consider its application to our own world we

should perceive it was the most Utopian thing we had so far encountered.

§ 2

The factory that employs us is something very different from the ordinary earthly model. Our business is to finish making little wooden toys — bears, cattle men, and the like — for children. The things are made in the rough by machinery, and then finished by hand, because the work of unskilful but interested men — and it really is an extremely amusing employment — is found to give a personality and interest to these objects no machine can ever attain.

We carvers — who are the riffraff of Utopia — work in a long shed together, nominally by time; we must keep at the job for the length of the spell, but we are expected to finish a certain number of toys for each spell of work. The rules of the game as between employer and employed in this particular industry hang on the wall behind us; they are drawn up by a conference of the Common Council of Wages Workers with the employers, a common council which has resulted in Utopia from a synthesis of the old Trades Unions, and which has become a constitutional power; but any man who has skill or humour is presently making his own bargain with our employer more or less above that datum line.

Our employer is a quiet blue-eyed man with a humorous smile. He dresses wholly in an indigo blue, that later we come to consider a sort of voluntary uniform for Utopian artists. As he walks about the workshop, stopping to laugh at this production or praise that, one is reminded inevitably of an art school. Every now and then he carves a little himself or makes a sketch or departs to the machinery to order some change in the rough shapes it is turning out. Our work is by no means confined to animals. After a time I am told to specialise in a comical little Roman-nosed pony; but several of the better paid carvers work up caricature images of eminent Utopians. Over these our employer is most disposed to meditate, and from them he darts off most frequently to improve the type.

It is high summer, and our shed lies open at either end. On one hand is a steep mountain side down which there comes, now bridging

a chasm, now a mere straight groove across a meadow, now hidden among green branches, the water-slide that brings our trees from the purple forest overhead. Above us, but nearly hidden, hums the machine shed, but we see a corner of the tank into which, with a mighty splash, the pine trees are delivered. Every now and then, bringing with him a gust of resinous smell, a white-clad machinist will come in with a basketful of crude, unwrought little images, and will turn them out upon the table from which we carvers select them.

(Whenever I think of Utopia that faint and fluctuating smell of resin returns to me, and whenever I smell resin, comes the memory of the open end of the shed looking out upon the lake, the blue-green lake, the boats mirrored in the water, and far and high beyond floats the atmospheric fairyland of the mountains of Glarus, twenty miles away.)

The cessation of the second and last spell of work comes about midday, and then we walk home, through this beautiful intricacy of a town to our cheap hotel beside the lake.

We should go our way with a curious contentment, for all that we were earning scarcely more than the minimum wage. We should have, of course, our uneasiness about the final decisions of that universal eye which has turned upon us, we should have those ridiculous sham numbers on our consciences; but that general restlessness, that brooding stress that pursues the weekly worker on earth, that aching anxiety that drives him so often to stupid betting, stupid drinking, and violent and mean offences will have vanished out of mortal experience.

§ 3

I should find myself contrasting my position with my preconceptions about a Utopian visit. I had always imagined myself as standing outside the general machinery of the State — in the distinguished visitors' gallery, as it were — and getting the new world in a series of comprehensive perspective views. But this Utopia, for all the sweeping floats of generalisation I do my best to maintain, is swallowing me up. I find myself going between my work and the room in which I sleep and the place in which I dine, very much as I

went to and fro in that real world into which I fell five-and-forty years ago. I find about me mountains and horizons that limit my view, institutions that vanish also without an explanation, beyond the limit of sight, and a great complexity of things I do not understand and about which, to tell the truth, I do not formulate acute curiosities. People, very unrepresentative people, people just as casual as people in the real world, come into personal relations with us, and little threads of private and immediate interest spin themselves rapidly into a thickening grey veil across the general view. I lose the comprehensive interrogation of my first arrival; I find myself interested in the grain of the wood I work, in birds among the tree branches, in little irrelevant things, and it is only now and then that I get fairly back to the mood that takes all Utopia for its picture.

We spend our first surplus of Utopian money in the reorganisation of our wardrobes upon more Utopian lines; we develop acquaintance with several of our fellow workers, and of those who share our table at the inn. We pass insensibly into acquaintanceships and the beginnings of friendships. The World Utopia, I say, seems for a time to be swallowing me up. At the thought of detail it looms too big for me. The question of government, of its sustaining ideas, of race, and the wider future, hang like the arch of the sky over these daily incidents, very great indeed, but very remote. These people about me are everyday people, people not so very far from the minimum wage, accustomed much as the everyday people of earth are accustomed to take their world as they find it. Such enquiries as I attempt are pretty obviously a bore to them, pass outside their range as completely as Utopian speculation on earth outranges a stevedore or a member of Parliament or a working plumber. Even the little things of daily life interest them in a different way. So I get on with my facts and reasoning rather slowly. I find myself looking among the pleasant multitudes of the streets for types that promise congenial conversation.

My sense of loneliness is increased during this interlude by the better social success of the botanist. I find him presently falling into conversation with two women who are accustomed to sit at a table near our own. They wear the loose, coloured robes of soft material that are the usual wear of common adult Utopian women; they are

both dark and sallow, and they affect amber and crimson in their garments. Their faces strike me as a little unintelligent, and there is a faint touch of middle-aged coquetry in their bearing that I do not like. Yet on earth we should consider them women of exceptional refinement. But the botanist evidently sees in this direction scope for the feelings that have wilted a little under my inattention, and he begins that petty intercourse of a word, of a slight civility, of vague enquiries and comparisons that leads at last to associations and confidences. Such superficial confidences, that is to say, as he finds satisfactory.

This throws me back upon my private observations.

The general effect of a Utopian population is vigour. Everyone one meets seems to be not only in good health but in training; one rarely meets fat people, bald people, or bent or grey. People who would be obese or bent and obviously aged on earth are here in good repair, and as a consequence the whole effect of a crowd is livelier and more invigorating than on earth. The dress is varied and graceful; that of the women reminds one most of the Italian fifteenth century; they have an abundance of soft and beautifully-coloured stuffs, and the clothes, even of the poorest, fit admirably. Their hair is very simply but very carefully and beautifully dressed, and except in very sunny weather they do not wear hats or bonnets. There is little difference in deportment between one class and another; they all are graceful and bear themselves with quiet dignity, and among a group of them a European woman of fashion in her lace and feathers, her hat and metal ornaments, her mixed accumulations of "trimmings," would look like a barbarian tricked out with the miscellaneous plunder of a museum. Boys and girls wear much the same sort of costume — brown leather shoes, then a sort of combination of hose and close-fitting trousers that reaches from toe to waist, and over this a beltless jacket fitting very well, or a belted tunic. Many slender women wear the same sort of costume. We should see them in it very often in such a place as Lucerne, as they returned from expeditions in the mountains. The older men would wear long robes very frequently, but the greater proportion of the men would go in variations of much the same costume as the children. There would certainly be hooded cloaks and umbrellas for rainy weather, high

boots for mud and snow, and cloaks and coats and furry robes for the winter. There would be no doubt a freer use of colour than terrestrial Europe sees in these days, but the costume of the women at least would be soberer and more practical, and (in harmony with our discussion in the previous chapter) less differentiated from the men's.

But these, of course, are generalisations. These are the mere translation of the social facts we have hypotheticated into the language of costume. There will be a great variety of costume and no compulsions. The doubles of people who are naturally foppish on earth will be foppish in Utopia, and people who have no natural taste on earth will have inartistic equivalents. Everyone will not be quiet in tone, or harmonious, or beautiful. Occasionally, as I go through the streets to my work, I shall turn round to glance again at some robe shot with gold embroidery, some slashing of the sleeves, some eccentricity of cut, or some discord or untidiness. But these will be but transient flashes in a general flow of harmonious graciousness; dress will have scarcely any of that effect of disorderly conflict, of self-assertion qualified by the fear of ridicule, that it has in the crudely competitive civilisations of earth.

I shall have the seeker's attitude of mind during those few days at Lucerne. I shall become a student of faces. I shall be, as it were, looking for someone. I shall see heavy faces, dull faces, faces with an uncongenial animation, alien faces, and among these some with an immediate quality of appeal. I should see desirable men approaching me, and I should think; "Now, if I were to speak to *you*?" Many of these latter I should note wore the same clothing as the man who spoke to us at Wassen; I should begin to think of it as a sort of uniform....

Then I should see grave-faced girls, girls of that budding age when their bearing becomes delusively wise, and the old deception of my youth will recur to me; "Could you and I but talk together?" I should think. Women will pass me lightly, women with open and inviting faces, but they will not attract me, and there will come beautiful women, women with that touch of claustral preoccupation which forbids the thought of any near approach. They are private and secret, and I may not enter, I know, into their thoughts....

I go as often as I can to the seat by the end of old Kapelbrucke,

and watch the people passing over.

I shall find a quality of dissatisfaction throughout all these days. I shall come to see this period more and more distinctly as a pause, as a waiting interlude, and the idea of an encounter with my double, which came at first as if it were a witticism, as something verbal and surprising, begins to take substance. The idea grows in my mind that after all this is the "someone" I am seeking, this Utopian self of mine. I had at first an idea of a grotesque encounter, as of something happening in a looking glass, but presently it dawns on me that my Utopian self must be a very different person from me. His training will be different, his mental content different. But between us there will be a strange link of essential identity, a sympathy, an understanding. I find the thing rising suddenly to a preponderance in my mind. I find the interest of details dwindling to the vanishing point. That I have come to Utopia is the lesser thing now; the greater is that I have come to meet myself.

I spend hours trying to imagine the encounter, inventing little dialogues. I go alone to the Bureau to find if any news has come to hand from the Great Index in Paris, but I am told to wait another twenty-four hours. I cease absolutely to be interested in anything else, except so far as it leads towards intercourse with this being who is to be at once so strangely alien and so totally mine.

§ 4

Wrapped up in these preoccupations as I am, it will certainly be the botanist who will notice the comparative absence of animals about us.

He will put it in the form of a temperate objection to the Utopian planet.

He is a professed lover of dogs and there are none. We have seen no horses and only one or two mules on the day of our arrival, and there seems not a cat in the world. I bring my mind round to his suggestion. "This follows," I say.

It is only reluctantly that I allow myself to be drawn from my secret musings into a discussion of Utopian pets.

I try to explain that a phase in the world's development is

inevitable when a systematic world-wide attempt will be made to destroy for ever a great number of contagious and infectious diseases, and that this will involve, for a time at any rate, a stringent suppression of the free movement of familiar animals. Utopian houses, streets and drains will be planned and built to make rats, mice, and such-like house parasites impossible; the race of cats and dogs — providing, as it does, living fastnesses to which such diseases as plague, influenza, catarrhs and the like, can retreat to sally forth again — must pass for a time out of freedom, and the filth made by horses and the other brutes of the highway vanish from the face of the earth. These things make an old story to me, and perhaps explicitness suffers through my brevity.

My botanist fails altogether to grasp what the disappearance of diseases means. His mind has no imaginative organ of that compass. As I talk his mind rests on one fixed image. This presents what the botanist would probably call a "dear old doggie" — which the botanist would make believe did not possess any sensible odour — and it has faithful brown eyes and understands everything you say. The botanist would make believe it understood him mystically, and I figure his long white hand — which seems to me, in my more jaundiced moments, to exist entirely for picking things and holding a lens — patting its head, while the brute looked things unspeakable....

The botanist shakes his head after my explanation and says quietly, "I do not like your Utopia, if there are to be no dogs."

Perhaps that makes me a little malicious. Indeed I do not hate dogs, but I care ten thousand times more for a man than for all the brutes on the earth, and I can see, what the botanist I think cannot, that a life spent in the delightful atmosphere of many pet animals may have too dear a price....

I find myself back again at the comparison of the botanist and myself. There is a profound difference in our imaginations, and I wonder whether it is the consequence of innate character or of training and whether he is really the human type or I. I am not altogether without imagination, but what imagination I have has the most insistent disposition to square itself with every fact in the universe. It hypothesises very boldly, but on the other hand it will not gravely make believe. Now the botanist's imagination is always busy

with the most impossible make-believe. That is the way with all children I know. But it seems to me one ought to pass out of it. It isn't as though the world was an untidy nursery; it is a place of splendours indescribable for all who will lift its veils. It may be he is essentially different from me, but I am much more inclined to think he is simply more childish. Always it is make-believe. He believes that horses are beautiful creatures for example, dogs are beautiful creatures, that some women are inexpressibly lovely, and he makes believe that this is always so. Never a word of criticism of horse or dog or woman! Never a word of criticism of his impeccable friends! Then there is his botany. He makes believe that all the vegetable kingdom is mystically perfect and exemplary, that all flowers smell deliciously and are exquisitely beautiful, that *Drosera* does not hurt flies very much, and that onions do not smell. Most of the universe does not interest this nature lover at all. But I know, and I am querulously incapable of understanding why everyone else does not know, that a horse is beautiful in one way and quite ugly in another, that everything has this shot-silk quality, and is all the finer for that. When people talk of a horse as an ugly animal I think of its beautiful moments, but when I hear a flow of indiscriminate praise of its beauty I think of such an aspect as one gets for example from a dog-cart, the fiddle-shaped back, and that distressing blade of the neck, the narrow clumsy place between the ears, and the ugly glimpse of cheek. There is, indeed, no beauty whatever save that transitory thing that comes and comes again; all beauty is really the beauty of expression, is really kinetic and momentary. That is true even of those triumphs of static endeavour achieved by Greece. The Greek temple, for example, is a barn with a face that at a certain angle of vision and in a certain light has a great calm beauty.

But where are we drifting? All such things, I hold, are cases of more and less, and of the right moment and the right aspect, even the things I most esteem. There is no perfection, there is no enduring treasure. This pet dog's beautiful affection, I say, or this other sensuous or imaginative delight, is no doubt good, but it can be put aside if it is incompatible with some other and wider good. You cannot focus all good things together.

All right action and all wise action is surely sound judgment and

courageous abandonment in the matter of such incompatibilities. If I cannot imagine thoughts and feelings in a dog's brain that cannot possibly be there, at least I can imagine things in the future of men that might be there had we the will to demand them....

"I don't like this Utopia," the botanist repeats. "You don't understand about dogs. To me they're human beings — and more! There used to be such a jolly old dog at my aunt's at Frognal when I was a boy—"

But I do not heed his anecdote. Something — something of the nature of conscience — has suddenly jerked back the memory of that beer I drank at Hospenthal, and puts an accusing finger on the memory.

I never have had a pet animal, I confess, though I have been fairly popular with kittens. But with regard to a certain petting of myself—?

Perhaps I was premature about that beer. I have had no pet animals, but I perceive if the Modern Utopia is going to demand the sacrifice of the love of animals, which is, in its way, a very fine thing indeed, so much the more readily may it demand the sacrifice of many other indulgences, some of which are not even fine in the lowest degree.

It is curious this haunting insistence upon sacrifice and discipline!

It is slowly becoming my dominant thought that the sort of people whose will this Utopia embodies must be people a little heedless of small pleasures. You cannot focus all good things at the same time. That is my chief discovery in these meditations at Lucerne. Much of the rest of this Utopia I had in a sort of way anticipated, but not this. I wonder if I shall see my Utopian self for long and be able to talk to him freely....

We lie in the petal-strewn grass under some Judas trees beside the lake shore, as I meander among these thoughts, and each of us, disregardful of his companion, follows his own associations.

"Very remarkable," I say, discovering that the botanist has come to an end with his story of that Frognal dog.

"You'd wonder how he knew," he says.

"You would."

I nibble a green blade.

“Do you realise quite,” I ask, “that within a week we shall face our Utopian selves and measure something of what we might have been?”

The botanist’s face clouds. He rolls over, sits up abruptly and puts his lean hands about his knees.

“I don’t like to think about it,” he says. “What is the good of reckoning ... might have beens?”

§ 5

It is pleasant to think of one’s puzzling the organised wisdom of so superior a planet as this Utopia, this moral monster State my Frankenstein of reasoning has made, and to that pitch we have come. When we are next in the presence of our Lucerne official, he has the bearing of a man who faces a mystification beyond his powers, an incredible disarrangement of the order of Nature. Here, for the first time in the records of Utopian science, are two cases — not simply one but two, and these in each other’s company! — of duplicated thumb-marks. This, coupled with a cock-and-bull story of an instantaneous transfer from some planet unknown to Utopian astronomy. That he and all his world exists only upon a hypothesis that would explain everyone of these difficulties absolutely, is scarcely likely to occur to his obviously unphilosophic mind.

The official eye is more eloquent than the official lips and asks almost urgently, “What in this immeasurable universe have you managed to do to your thumbs? And why?” But he is only a very inferior sort of official indeed, a mere clerk of the post, and he has all the guarded reserve of your thoroughly unoriginal man. “You are not the two persons I ascertained you were,” he says, with the note of one resigned to communion with unreason; “because you” — he indicates me— “are evidently at your residence in London.” I smile. “That gentleman” — he points a pen at the botanist in a manner that is intended to dismiss my smile once for all— “will be in London next week. He will be returning next Friday from a special mission to investigate the fungoid parasites that have been attacking the cinchona trees in Ceylon.”

The botanist blesses his heart.

“Consequently” — the official sighs at the burthen of such nonsense, “you will have to go and consult with — the people you ought to be.”

I betray a faint amusement.

“You will have to end by believing in our planet,” I say.

He waggles a negation with his head. He would intimate his position is too responsible a one for jesting, and both of us in our several ways enjoy the pleasure we poor humans have in meeting with intellectual inferiority. “The Standing Committee of Identification,” he says, with an eye on a memorandum, “has remitted your case to the Research Professor of Anthropology in the University of London, and they want you to go there, if you will, and talk to him.”

“What else can we do?” says the botanist.

“There’s no positive compulsion,” he remarks, “but your work here will probably cease. Here—” he pushed the neat slips of paper towards us— “are your tickets for London, and a small but sufficient supply of money,” — he indicates two piles of coins and paper on either hand of him— “for a day or so there.” He proceeds in the same dry manner to inform us we are invited to call at our earliest convenience upon our doubles, and upon the Professor, who is to investigate our case.

“And then?”

He pulls down the corners of his mouth in a wry deprecatory smile, eyes us obliquely under a crumpled brow, shrugs his shoulders, and shows us the palms of his hands.

On earth, where there is nationality, this would have been a Frenchman — the inferior sort of Frenchman — the sort whose only happiness is in the routine security of Government employment.

§ 6

London will be the first Utopian city centre we shall see.

We shall find ourselves there with not a little amazement. It will be our first experience of the swift long distance travel of Utopia, and I have an idea — I know not why — that we should make the journey by night. Perhaps I think so because the ideal of long-

distance travel is surely a restful translation less suitable for the active hours.

We shall dine and gossip and drink coffee at the pretty little tables under the lantern-lit trees, we shall visit the theatre, and decide to sup in the train, and so come at last to the station. There we shall find pleasant rooms with seats and books — luggage all neatly elsewhere — and doors that we shall imagine give upon a platform. Our cloaks and hats and such-like outdoor impedimenta will be taken in the hall and neatly labelled for London, we shall exchange our shoes for slippers there, and we shall sit down like men in a club. An officious little bell will presently call our attention to a label "London" on the doorway, and an excellent phonograph will enforce that notice with infinite civility. The doors will open, and we shall walk through into an equally comfortable gallery.

"Where is the train for London?" we shall ask a uniformed fellow Utopian.

"This is the train for London," he will say.

There will be a shutting of doors, and the botanist and I, trying not to feel too childish, will walk exploring through the capacious train.

The resemblance to a club will strike us both. "A *good* club," the botanist will correct me.

When one travels beyond a certain speed, there is nothing but fatigue in looking out of a window, and this corridor train, twice the width of its poor terrestrial brother, will have no need of that distraction. The simple device of abandoning any but a few windows, and those set high, gives the wall space of the long corridors to books; the middle part of the train is indeed a comfortable library with abundant armchairs and couches, each with its green-shaded light, and soft carpets upon the soundproof floor. Further on will be a news-room, with a noiseless but busy tape at one corner, printing off messages from the wires by the wayside, and further still, rooms for gossip and smoking, a billiard room, and the dining car. Behind we shall come to bedrooms, bathrooms, the hairdresser, and so forth.

"When shall we start?" I ask presently, as we return, rather like bashful yokels, to the library, and the old gentleman reading the *Arabian Nights* in the armchair in the corner glances up at me with a sudden curiosity.

The botanist touches my arm and nods towards a pretty little lead-paned window, through which we see a village sleeping under cloudy moonlight go flashing by. Then a skylit lake, and then a string of swaying lights, gone with the leap of a camera shutter.

Two hundred miles an hour!

We resort to a dignified Chinese steward and secure our berths. It is perhaps terrestrial of us that we do not think of reading the Utopian literature that lines the middle part of the train. I find a bed of the simple Utopian pattern, and lie for a time thinking — quite tranquilly — of this marvellous adventure.

I wonder why it is that to lie securely in bed, with the light out, seems ever the same place, wherever in space one may chance to be? And asleep, there is no space for us at all. I become drowsy and incoherent and metaphysical....

The faint and fluctuating drone of the wheels below the car, re-echoed by the flying track, is more perceptible now, but it is not unpleasantly loud, merely a faint tinting of the quiet....

No sea crossing breaks our journey; there is nothing to prevent a Channel tunnel in that other planet; and I wake in London.

The train has been in London some time when I awake, for these marvellous Utopians have discovered that it is not necessary to bundle out passengers from a train in the small hours, simply because they have arrived. A Utopian train is just a peculiar kind of hotel corridor that flies about the earth while one sleeps.

§ 7

How will a great city of Utopia strike us?

To answer that question well one must needs be artist and engineer, and I am neither. Moreover, one must employ words and phrases that do not exist, for this world still does not dream of the things that may be done with thought and steel, when the engineer is sufficiently educated to be an artist, and the artistic intelligence has been quickened to the accomplishment of an engineer. How can one write of these things for a generation which rather admires that inconvenient and gawky muddle of ironwork and Flemish architecture, the London Tower Bridge. When before this,

temerarious anticipators have written of the mighty buildings that might someday be, the illustrator has blended with the poor ineffectual splutter of the author's words, his powerful suggestion that it amounted simply to something bulbous, florid and fluent in the vein of the onion, and *L'Art Nouveau*. But here, it may be, the illustrator will not intervene.

Art has scarcely begun in the world.

There have been a few forerunners and that is all. Leonardo, Michael Angelo; how they would have exulted in the liberties of steel! There are no more pathetic documents in the archives of art than Leonardo's memoranda. In these, one sees him again and again reaching out as it were, with empty desirous hands, towards the unborn possibilities of the engineer. And Dürer, too, was a Modern, with the same turn towards creative invention. In our times these men would have wanted to make viaducts, to bridge wild and inaccessible places, to cut and straddle great railways athwart the mountain masses of the world. You can see, time after time, in Dürer's work, as you can see in the imaginary architectural landscape of the Pompeian walls, the dream of structures, lighter and bolder than stone or brick can yield.... These Utopian town buildings will be the realisation of such dreams.

Here will be one of the great meeting places of mankind. Here — I speak of Utopian London — will be the traditional centre of one of the great races in the commonalty of the World State — and here will be its social and intellectual exchange. There will be a mighty University here, with thousands of professors and tens of thousands of advanced students, and here great journals of thought and speculation, mature and splendid books of philosophy and science, and a glorious fabric of literature will be woven and shaped, and with a teeming leisureliness, put forth. Here will be stupendous libraries, and a mighty organisation of museums. About these centres will cluster a great swarm of people, and close at hand will be another centre, for I who am an Englishman must needs stipulate that Westminster shall still be a seat of world Empire, one of several seats, if you will — where the ruling council of the world assembles. Then the arts will cluster round this city, as gold gathers about wisdom, and here Englishmen will weave into wonderful prose and

beautiful rhythms and subtly atmospheric forms, the intricate, austere and courageous imagination of our race.

One will come into this place as one comes into a noble mansion. They will have flung great arches and domes of glass above the wider spaces of the town, the slender beauty of the perfect metal-work far overhead will be softened to a fairy-like unsubstantiality by the mild London air. It will be the London air we know, clear of filth and all impurity, the same air that gives our October days their unspeakable clarity and makes every London twilight mysteriously beautiful. We shall go along avenues of architecture that will be emancipated from the last memories of the squat temple boxes of the Greek, the buxom curvatures of Rome; the Goth in us will have taken to steel and countless new materials as kindly as once he took to stone. The gay and swiftly moving platforms of the public ways will go past on either hand, carrying sporadic groups of people, and very speedily we shall find ourselves in a sort of central space, rich with palms and flowering bushes and statuary. We shall look along an avenue of trees, down a wide gorge between the cliffs of crowded hotels, the hotels that are still glowing with internal lights, to where the shining morning river streams dawnlit out to sea.

Great multitudes of people will pass softly to and fro in this central space, beautiful girls and youths going to the University classes that are held in the stately palaces about us, grave and capable men and women going to their businesses, children meandering along to their schools, holiday makers, lovers, setting out upon a hundred quests; and here we shall ask for the two we more particularly seek. A graceful little telephone kiosk will put us within reach of them, and with a queer sense of unreality I shall find myself talking to my Utopian twin. He has heard of me, he wants to see me and he gives me clear directions how to come to him.

I wonder if my own voice sounds like that.

"Yes," I say, "then I will come as soon as we have been to our hotel."

We indulge in no eloquence upon this remarkable occasion. Yet I feel an unusual emotional stir. I tremble greatly, and the telephonic mouthpiece rattles as I replace it.

And thence the botanist and I walk on to the apartments that have

been set aside for us, and into which the poor little rolls of the property that has accumulated about us in Utopia, our earthly raiment, and a change of linen and the like, have already been delivered. As we go I find I have little to say to my companion, until presently I am struck by a transitory wonder that he should have so little to say to me.

"I can still hardly realise," I say, "that I am going to see myself — as I might have been."

"No," he says, and relapses at once into his own preoccupation.

For a moment my wonder as to what he should be thinking about brings me near to a double self-forgetfulness.

I realise we are at the entrance of our hotel before I can formulate any further remark.

"This is the place," I say.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH My Utopian Self

§ 1

It falls to few of us to interview our better selves. My Utopian self is, of course, my better self — according to my best endeavours — and I must confess myself fully alive to the difficulties of the situation. When I came to this Utopia I had no thought of any such intimate self-examination.

The whole fabric of that other universe sways for a moment as I come into his room, into his clear and ordered work-room. I am trembling. A figure rather taller than myself stands against the light.

He comes towards me, and I, as I advance to meet him, stumble against a chair. Then, still without a word, we are clasping hands.

I stand now so that the light falls upon him, and I can see his face better. He is a little taller than I, younger looking and sounder looking; he has missed an illness or so, and there is no scar over his eye. His training has been subtly finer than mine; he has made himself a better face than mine.... These things I might have counted upon. I can fancy he winces with a twinge of sympathetic understanding at my manifest inferiority. Indeed, I come, trailing clouds of earthly confusion and weakness; I bear upon me all the defects of my world. He wears, I see, that white tunic with the purple band that I have already begun to consider the proper Utopian clothing for grave men, and his face is clean shaven. We forget to speak at first in the intensity of our mutual inspection. When at last I do gain my voice it is to say something quite different from the fine, significant openings of my premeditated dialogues.

"You have a pleasant room," I remark, and look about a little disconcerted because there is no fireplace for me to put my back against, or hearthrug to stand upon. He pushes me a chair, into which I plump, and we hang over an immensity of conversational possibilities.

"I say," I plunge, "what do you think of me? You don't think I'm an impostor?"

"Not now that I have seen you. No."

“Am I so like you?”

“Like me and your story — exactly.”

“You haven’t any doubt left?” I ask.

“Not in the least, since I saw you enter. You come from the world beyond Sirius, twin to this. Eh?”

“And you don’t want to know how I got here?”

“I’ve ceased even to wonder how I got here,” he says, with a laugh that echoes mine.

He leans back in his chair, and I in mine, and the absurd parody of our attitude strikes us both.

“Well?” we say, simultaneously, and laugh together.

I will confess this meeting is more difficult even than I anticipated.

§ 2

Our conversation at that first encounter would do very little to develop the Modern Utopia in my mind. Inevitably, it would be personal and emotional. He would tell me how he stood in his world, and I how I stood in mine. I should have to tell him things, I should have to explain things—.

No, the conversation would contribute nothing to a modern Utopia.

And so I leave it out.

§ 3

But I should go back to my botanist in a state of emotional relaxation. At first I should not heed the fact that he, too, had been in some manner stirred. “I have seen him,” I should say, needlessly, and seem to be on the verge of telling the untellable. Then I should fade off into: “It’s the strangest thing.”

He would interrupt me with his own preoccupation. “You know,” he would say, “I’ve seen someone.”

I should pause and look at him.

“She is in this world,” he says.

“Who is in this world?”

“Mary!”

I have not heard her name before, but I understand, of course, at once.

“I saw her,” he explains.

“Saw her?”

“I’m certain it was her. Certain. She was far away across those gardens near here — and before I had recovered from my amazement she had gone! But it was Mary.”

He takes my arm. “You know I did not understand this,” he says. “I did not really understand that when you said Utopia, you meant I was to meet her — in happiness.”

“I didn’t.”

“It works out at that.”

“You haven’t met her yet.”

“I shall. It makes everything different. To tell you the truth I’ve rather hated this Utopia of yours at times. You mustn’t mind my saying it, but there’s something of the Gradgrind—”

Probably I should swear at that.

“What?” he says.

“Nothing.”

“But you spoke?”

“I was purring. I’m a Gradgrind — it’s quite right — anything you can say about Herbert Spencer, vivisectors, materialistic Science or Atheists, applies without correction to me. Begbie away! But now you think better of a modern Utopia? Was the lady looking well?”

“It was her real self. Yes. Not the broken woman I met — in the real world.”

“And as though she was pining for you.”

He looks puzzled.

“Look there!” I say.

He looks.

We are standing high above the ground in the loggia into which our apartments open, and I point across the soft haze of the public gardens to a tall white mass of University buildings that rises with a free and fearless gesture, to lift saluting pinnacles against the clear evening sky. “Don’t you think that rather more beautiful than — say — our National Gallery?”

He looks at it critically. “There’s a lot of metal in it,” he objects. “What?”

I purred. “But, anyhow, whatever you can’t see in that, you can, I suppose, see that it is different from anything in your world — it lacks the kindly humanity of a red-brick Queen Anne villa residence, with its gables and bulges, and bow windows, and its stained glass fanlight, and so forth. It lacks the self-complacent unreasonableness of Board of Works classicism. There’s something in its proportions — as though someone with brains had taken a lot of care to get it quite right, someone who not only knew what metal can do, but what a University ought to be, somebody who had found the Gothic spirit enchanted, petrified, in a cathedral, and had set it free.”

“But what has this,” he asks, “to do with her?”

“Very much,” I say. “This is not the same world. If she is here, she will be younger in spirit and wiser. She will be in many ways more refined—”

“No one—” he begins, with a note of indignation.

“No, no! She couldn’t be. I was wrong there. But she will be different. Grant that at any rate. When you go forward to speak to her, she may not remember — very many things *you* may remember. Things that happened at Frognal — dear romantic walks through the Sunday summer evenings, practically you two alone, you in your adolescent silk hat and your nice gentlemanly gloves.... Perhaps that did not happen here! And she may have other memories — of things — that down there haven’t happened. You noted her costume. She wasn’t by any chance one of the *samurai*?”

He answers, with a note of satisfaction, “No! She wore a womanly dress of greyish green.”

“Probably under the Lesser Rule.”

“I don’t know what you mean by the Lesser Rule. She wasn’t one of the *samurai*.”

“And, after all, you know — I keep on reminding you, and you keep on losing touch with the fact, that this world contains your double.”

He pales, and his countenance is disturbed. Thank Heaven, I’ve touched him at last!

“This world contains your double. But, conceivably, everything

may be different here. The whole romantic story may have run a different course. It was as it was in our world, by the accidents of custom and proximity. Adolescence is a defenceless plastic period. You are a man to form great affections, — noble, great affections. You might have met anyone almost at that season and formed the same attachment."

For a time he is perplexed and troubled by this suggestion.

"No," he says, a little doubtfully. "No. It was herself." ... Then, emphatically, "*No!*"

§ 4

For a time we say no more, and I fall musing about my strange encounter with my Utopian double. I think of the confessions I have just made to him, the strange admissions both to him and myself. I have stirred up the stagnations of my own emotional life, the pride that has slumbered, the hopes and disappointments that have not troubled me for years. There are things that happened to me in my adolescence that no discipline of reason will ever bring to a just proportion for me, the first humiliations I was made to suffer, the waste of all the fine irrecoverable loyalties and passions of my youth. The dull base caste of my little personal tragi-comedy — I have ostensibly forgiven, I have for the most part forgotten — and yet when I recall them I hate each actor still. Whenever it comes into my mind — I do my best to prevent it — there it is, and these detestable people blot out the stars for me.

I have told all that story to my double, and he has listened with understanding eyes. But for a little while those squalid memories will not sink back into the deeps.

We lean, side by side, over our balcony, lost in such egotistical absorptions, quite heedless of the great palace of noble dreams to which our first enterprise has brought us.

§ 5

I can understand the botanist this afternoon; for once we are in the same key. My own mental temper has gone for the day, and I know

what it means to be untempered. Here is a world and a glorious world, and it is for me to take hold of it, to have to do with it, here and now, and behold! I can only think that I am burnt and scarred, and there rankles that wretched piece of business, the mean unimaginative triumph of my antagonist—

I wonder how many men have any real freedom of mind, are, in truth, unhampered by such associations, to whom all that is great and noble in life does not, at times at least, if not always, seem secondary to obscure rivalries and considerations, to the petty hates that are like germs in the blood, to the lust for self-assertion, to dwarfish pride, to affections they gave in pledge even before they were men.

The botanist beside me dreams, I know, of vindications for that woman.

All this world before us, and its order and liberty, are no more than a painted scene before which he is to meet Her at last, freed from "that scoundrel."

He expects "that scoundrel" really to be present and, as it were, writhing under their feet....

I wonder if that man *was* a scoundrel. He has gone wrong on earth, no doubt, has failed and degenerated, but what was it sent him wrong? Was his failure inherent, or did some net of cross purposes tangle about his feet? Suppose he is not a failure in Utopia!...

I wonder that this has never entered the botanist's head.

He, with his vaguer mind, can overlook — spite of my ruthless reminders — all that would mar his vague anticipations. That, too, if I suggested it, he would overcome and disregard. He has the most amazing power of resistance to uncongenial ideas; amazing that is, to me. He hates the idea of meeting his double, and consequently so soon as I cease to speak of that, with scarcely an effort of his will, it fades again from his mind.

Down below in the gardens two children pursue one another, and one, near caught, screams aloud and rouses me from my reverie.

I follow their little butterfly antics until they vanish beyond a thicket of flowering rhododendra, and then my eyes go back to the great façade of the University buildings.

But I am in no mood to criticise architecture.

Why should a modern Utopia insist upon slipping out of the hands

of its creator and becoming the background of a personal drama — of such a silly little drama?

The botanist will not see Utopia in any other way. He tests it entirely by its reaction upon the individual persons and things he knows; he dislikes it because he suspects it of wanting to lethal chamber his aunt's "dear old doggie," and now he is reconciled to it because a certain "Mary" looks much younger and better here than she did on earth. And here am I, near fallen into the same way of dealing!

We agreed to purge this State and all the people in it of traditions, associations, bias, laws, and artificial entanglements, and begin anew; but we have no power to liberate ourselves. Our past, even its accidents, its accidents above all, and ourselves, are one.

CHAPTER THE NINTH The Samurai

§ 1

Neither my Utopian double nor I love emotion sufficiently to cultivate it, and my feelings are in a state of seemly subordination when we meet again. He is now in possession of some clear, general ideas about my own world, and I can broach almost at once the thoughts that have been growing and accumulating since my arrival in this planet of my dreams. We find our interest in a humanised state-craft, makes us, in spite of our vast difference in training and habits, curiously akin.

I put it to him that I came to Utopia with but very vague ideas of the method of government, biassed, perhaps, a little in favour of certain electoral devices, but for the rest indeterminate, and that I have come to perceive more and more clearly that the large intricacy of Utopian organisation demands more powerful and efficient method of control than electoral methods can give. I have come to distinguish among the varied costumes and the innumerable types of personality Utopia presents, certain men and women of a distinctive costume and bearing, and I know now that these people constitute an order, the *samurai*, the "voluntary nobility," which is essential in the scheme of the Utopian State. I know that this order is open to every physically and mentally healthy adult in the Utopian State who will observe its prescribed austere rule of living, that much of the responsible work of the State is reserved for it, and I am inclined now at the first onset of realisation to regard it as far more significant than it really is in the Utopian scheme, as being, indeed, in itself and completely the Utopian scheme. My predominant curiosity concerns the organisation of this order. As it has developed in my mind, it has reminded me more and more closely of that strange class of guardians which constitutes the essential substance of Plato's *Republic*, and it is with an implicit reference to Plato's profound intuitions that I and my double discuss this question.

To clarify our comparison he tells me something of the history of Utopia, and incidentally it becomes necessary to make a correction in

the assumptions upon which I have based my enterprise. We are assuming a world identical in every respect with the real planet Earth, except for the profoundest differences in the mental content of life. This implies a different literature, a different philosophy, and a different history, and so soon as I come to talk to him I find that though it remains unavoidable that we should assume the correspondence of the two populations, man for man — unless we would face unthinkable complications — we must assume also that a great succession of persons of extraordinary character and mental gifts, who on earth died in childhood or at birth, or who never learnt to read, or who lived and died amidst savage or brutalising surroundings that gave their gifts no scope, did in Utopia encounter happier chances, and take up the development and application of social theory — from the time of the first Utopists in a steady onward progress down to the present hour. [Footnote: One might assume as an alternative to this that amidst the four-fifths of the Greek literature now lost to the world, there perished, neglected, some book of elementary significance, some earlier *Novum Organum*, that in Utopia survived to achieve the profoundest consequences.] The differences of condition, therefore, had widened with each successive year. Jesus Christ had been born into a liberal and progressive Roman Empire that spread from the Arctic Ocean to the Bight of Benin, and was to know no Decline and Fall, and Mahomet, instead of embodying the dense prejudices of Arab ignorance, opened his eyes upon an intellectual horizon already nearly as wide as the world.

And through this empire the flow of thought, the flow of intention, poured always more abundantly. There were wars, but they were conclusive wars that established new and more permanent relations, that swept aside obstructions, and abolished centres of decay; there were prejudices tempered to an ordered criticism, and hatreds that merged at last in tolerant reactions. It was several hundred years ago that the great organisation of the *samurai* came into its present form. And it was this organisation's widely sustained activities that had shaped and established the World State in Utopia.

This organisation of the *samurai* was a quite deliberate invention. It arose in the course of social and political troubles and complications, analogous to those of our own time on earth, and was,

indeed, the last of a number of political and religious experiments dating back to the first dawn of philosophical state-craft in Greece. That hasty despair of specialisation for government that gave our poor world individualism, democratic liberalism, and anarchism, and that curious disregard of the fund of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice in men, which is the fundamental weakness of worldly economics, do not appear in the history of Utopian thought. All that history is pervaded with the recognition of the fact that self-seeking is no more the whole of human life than the satisfaction of hunger; that it is an essential of a man's existence no doubt, and that under stress of evil circumstances it may as entirely obsess him as would the food hunt during famine, but that life may pass beyond to an illimitable world of emotions and effort. Every sane person consists of possibilities beyond the unavoidable needs, is capable of disinterested feeling, even if it amounts only to enthusiasm for a sport or an industrial employment well done, for an art, or for a locality or class. In our world now, as in the Utopian past, this impersonal energy of a man goes out into religious emotion and work, into patriotic effort, into artistic enthusiasms, into games and amateur employments, and an enormous proportion of the whole world's fund of effort wastes itself in religious and political misunderstandings and conflicts, and in unsatisfying amusements and unproductive occupations. In a modern Utopia there will, indeed, be no perfection; in Utopia there must also be friction, conflicts and waste, but the waste will be enormously less than in our world. And the co-ordination of activities this relatively smaller waste will measure, will be the achieved end for which the order of the *samurai* was first devised.

Inevitably such an order must have first arisen among a clash of social forces and political systems as a revolutionary organisation. It must have set before itself the attainment of some such Utopian ideal as this modern Utopia does, in the key of mortal imperfection, realise. At first it may have directed itself to research and discussion, to the elaboration of its ideal, to the discussion of a plan of campaign, but at some stage it must have assumed a more militant organisation, and have prevailed against and assimilated the pre-existing political organisations, and to all intents and purposes have become this present synthesised World State. Traces of that

militancy would, therefore, pervade it still, and a campaigning quality — no longer against specific disorders, but against universal human weaknesses, and the inanimate forces that trouble man — still remain as its essential quality.

"Something of this kind," I should tell my double, "had arisen in our thought" — I jerk my head back to indicate an infinitely distant planet— "just before I came upon these explorations. The idea had reached me, for example, of something to be called a New Republic, which was to be in fact an organisation for revolution something after the fashion of your *samurai*, as I understand them — only most of the organisation and the rule of life still remained to be invented. All sorts of people were thinking of something in that way about the time of my coming. The idea, as it reached me, was pretty crude in several respects. It ignored the high possibility of a synthesis of languages in the future; it came from a literary man, who wrote only English, and, as I read him — he was a little vague in his proposals — it was to be a purely English-speaking movement. And his ideas were coloured too much by the peculiar opportunism of his time; he seemed to have more than half an eye for a prince or a millionaire of genius; he seemed looking here and there for support and the structural elements of a party. Still, the idea of a comprehensive movement of disillusioned and illuminated men behind the shams and patriotisms, the spites and personalities of the ostensible world was there."

I added some particulars.

"Our movement had something of that spirit in the beginning," said my Utopian double. "But while your men seem to be thinking disconnectedly, and upon a very narrow and fragmentary basis of accumulated conclusions, ours had a fairly comprehensive science of human association, and a very careful analysis of the failures of preceding beginnings to draw upon. After all, your world must be as full as ours was of the wreckage and decay of previous attempts; churches, aristocracies, orders, cults...."

"Only at present we seem to have lost heart altogether, and now there are no new religions, no new orders, no new cults — no beginnings any more."

"But that's only a resting phase, perhaps. You were saying—"

"Oh! — let that distressful planet alone for a time! Tell me how you manage in Utopia."

§ 2

The social theorists of Utopia, my double explained, did not base their schemes upon the classification of men into labour and capital, the landed interest, the liquor trade, and the like. They esteemed these as accidental categories, indefinitely amenable to statesmanship, and they looked for some practical and real classification upon which to base organisation. [Footnote: In that they seem to have profited by a more searching criticism of early social and political speculations than our earth has yet undertaken. The social speculations of the Greeks, for example, had just the same primary defect as the economic speculations of the eighteenth century — they began with the assumption that the general conditions of the prevalent state of affairs were permanent.] But, on the other hand, the assumption that men are unclassifiable, because practically homogeneous, which underlies modern democratic methods and all the fallacies of our equal justice, is even more alien to the Utopian mind. Throughout Utopia there is, of course, no other than provisional classifications, since every being is regarded as finally unique, but for political and social purposes things have long rested upon a classification of temperaments, which attends mainly to differences in the range and quality and character of the individual imagination.

This Utopian classification was a rough one, but it served its purpose to determine the broad lines of political organisation; it was so far unscientific that many individuals fall between or within two or even three of its classes. But that was met by giving the correlated organisation a compensatory looseness of play. Four main classes of mind were distinguished, called, respectively, the Poietic, the Kinetic, the Dull, and the Base. The former two are supposed to constitute the living tissue of the State; the latter are the fulcra and resistances, the bone and cover of its body. They are not hereditary classes, nor is there any attempt to develop any class by special breeding, simply because the intricate interplay of heredity is

untraceable and incalculable. They are classes to which people drift of their own accord. Education is uniform until differentiation becomes unmistakable, and each man (and woman) must establish his position with regard to the lines of this abstract classification by his own quality, choice, and development....

The Poietic or creative class of mental individuality embraces a wide range of types, but they agree in possessing imaginations that range beyond the known and accepted, and that involve the desire to bring the discoveries made in such excursions, into knowledge and recognition. The scope and direction of the imaginative excursion may vary very greatly. It may be the invention of something new or the discovery of something hitherto unperceived. When the invention or discovery is primarily beauty then we have the artistic type of Poietic mind; when it is not so, we have the true scientific man. The range of discovery may be narrowed as it is in the art of Whistler or the science of a cytologist, or it may embrace a wide extent of relevance, until at last both artist or scientific inquirer merge in the universal reference of the true philosopher. To the accumulated activities of the Poietic type, reacted upon by circumstances, are due almost all the forms assumed by human thought and feeling. All religious ideas, all ideas of what is good or beautiful, entered life through the poietic inspirations of man. Except for processes of decay, the forms of the human future must come also through men of this same type, and it is a primary essential to our modern idea of an abundant secular progress that these activities should be unhampered and stimulated.

The Kinetic class consists of types, various, of course, and merging insensibly along the boundary into the less representative constituents of the Poietic group, but distinguished by a more restricted range of imagination. Their imaginations do not range beyond the known, experienced, and accepted, though within these limits they may imagine as vividly or more vividly than members of the former group. They are often very clever and capable people, but they do not do, and they do not desire to do, new things. The more vigorous individuals of this class are the most teachable people in the world, and they are generally more moral and more trustworthy than the Poietic types. They live, — while the Poietics are always

something of experimentalists with life. The characteristics of either of these two classes may be associated with a good or bad physique, with excessive or defective energy, with exceptional keenness of the senses in some determinate direction or such-like "bent," and the Kinetic type, just as the Poietic type, may display an imagination of restricted or of the most universal range. But a fairly energetic Kinetic is probably the nearest thing to that ideal our earthly anthropologists have in mind when they speak of the "Normal" human being. The very definition of the Poietic class involves a certain abnormality.

The Utopians distinguished two extremes of this Kinetic class according to the quality of their imaginative preferences, the Dan and Beersheba, as it were, of this division. At one end is the mainly intellectual, unoriginal type, which, with energy of personality, makes an admirable judge or administrator and without it an uninventive, laborious, common mathematician, or common scholar, or common scientific man; while at the other end is the mainly emotional, unoriginal man, the type to which — at a low level of personal energy — my botanist inclines. The second type includes, amidst its energetic forms, great actors, and popular politicians and preachers. Between these extremes is a long and wide region of varieties, into which one would put most of the people who form the reputable workmen, the men of substance, the trustworthy men and women, the pillars of society on earth.

Below these two classes in the Utopian scheme of things, and merging insensibly into them, come the Dull. The Dull are persons of altogether inadequate imagination, the people who never seem to learn thoroughly, or hear distinctly, or think clearly. (I believe if everyone is to be carefully educated they would be considerably in the minority in the world, but it is quite possible that will not be the reader's opinion. It is clearly a matter of an arbitrary line.) They are the stupid people, the incompetent people, the formal, imitative people, the people who, in any properly organised State, should, as a class, gravitate towards and below the minimum wage that qualifies for marriage. The laws of heredity are far too mysterious for such offspring as they do produce to be excluded from a fair chance in the world, but for themselves, they count neither for work nor direction

in the State.

Finally, with a bold disregard of the logician's classificatory rules, these Utopian statesmen who devised the World State, hewed out in theory a class of the Base. The Base may, indeed, be either poietic, kinetic, or dull, though most commonly they are the last, and their definition concerns not so much the quality of their imagination as a certain bias in it, that to a statesman makes it a matter for special attention. The Base have a narrower and more persistent egoistic reference than the common run of humanity; they may boast, but they have no frankness; they have relatively great powers of concealment, and they are capable of, and sometimes have an aptitude and inclination towards, cruelty. In the queer phrasing of earthly psychology with its clumsy avoidance of analysis, they have no "moral sense." They count as an antagonism to the State organisation.

Obviously, this is the rudest of classifications, and no Utopian has ever supposed it to be a classification for individual application, a classification so precise that one can say, this man is "poietic," and that man is "base." In actual experience these qualities mingle and vary in every possible way. It is not a classification for Truth, but a classification to an end. Taking humanity as a multitude of unique individuals in mass, one may, for practical purposes, deal with it far more conveniently by disregarding its uniquenesses and its mixed cases altogether, and supposing it to be an assembly of poietic, kinetic, dull, and base people. In many respects it behaves as if it were that. The State, dealing as it does only with non-individualised affairs, is not only justified in disregarding, but is bound to disregard, a man's special distinction, and to provide for him on the strength of his prevalent aspect as being on the whole poietic, kinetic, or what not. In a world of hasty judgments and carping criticism, it cannot be repeated too often that the fundamental ideas of a modern Utopia imply everywhere and in everything, margins and elasticities, a certain universal compensatory looseness of play.

§ 3

Now these Utopian statesmen who founded the World State put the

problem of social organisation in the following fashion: — To contrive a revolutionary movement that shall absorb all existing governments and fuse them with itself, and that must be rapidly progressive and adaptable, and yet coherent, persistent, powerful, and efficient.

The problem of combining progress with political stability had never been accomplished in Utopia before that time, any more than it has been accomplished on earth. Just as on earth, Utopian history was a succession of powers rising and falling in an alternation of efficient conservative with unstable liberal States. Just as on earth, so in Utopia, the kinetic type of men had displayed a more or less unintentional antagonism to the poietic. The general life-history of a State had been the same on either planet. First, through poietic activities, the idea of a community has developed, and the State has shaped itself; poietic men have arisen first in this department of national life, and then that, and have given place to kinetic men of a high type — for it seems to be in their nature that poietic men should be mutually repulsive, and not succeed and develop one another consecutively — and a period of expansion and vigour has set in. The general poietic activity has declined with the development of an efficient and settled social and political organisation; the statesman has given way to the politician who has incorporated the wisdom of the statesman with his own energy, the original genius in arts, letters, science, and every department of activity to the cultivated and scholarly man. The kinetic man of wide range, who has assimilated his poietic predecessor, succeeds with far more readiness than his poietic contemporary in almost every human activity. The latter is by his very nature undisciplined and experimental, and is positively hampered by precedents and good order. With this substitution of the efficient for the creative type, the State ceases to grow, first in this department of activity, and then in that, and so long as its conditions remain the same it remains orderly and efficient. But it has lost its power of initiative and change; its power of adaptation is gone, and with that secular change of conditions which is the law of life, stresses must arise within and without, and bring at last either through revolution or through defeat the release of fresh poietic power. The process, of course, is not in its entirety simple; it may be

masked by the fact that one department of activity may be in its poietic stage, while another is in a phase of realisation. In the United States of America, for example, during the nineteenth century, there was great poietic activity in industrial organisation, and none whatever in political philosophy; but a careful analysis of the history of any period will show the rhythm almost invariably present, and the initial problem before the Utopian philosopher, therefore, was whether this was an inevitable alternation, whether human progress was necessarily a series of developments, collapses, and fresh beginnings, after an interval of disorder, unrest, and often great unhappiness, or whether it was possible to maintain a secure, happy, and progressive State beside an unbroken flow of poietic activity.

Clearly they decided upon the second alternative. If, indeed, I am listening to my Utopian self, then they not only decided the problem could be solved, but they solved it.

He tells me how they solved it.

A modern Utopia differs from all the older Utopias in its recognition of the need of poietic activities — one sees this new consideration creeping into thought for the first time in the phrasing of Comte's insistence that "spiritual" must precede political reconstruction, and in his admission of the necessity of recurrent books and poems about Utopias — and at first this recognition appears to admit only an added complication to a problem already unmanageably complex. Comte's separation of the activities of a State into the spiritual and material does, to a certain extent, anticipate this opposition of poietic and kinetic, but the intimate texture of his mind was dull and hard, the conception slipped from him again, and his suppression of literary activities, and his imposition of a rule of life upon the poietic types, who are least able to sustain it, mark how deeply he went under. To a large extent he followed the older Utopists in assuming that the philosophical and constructive problem could be done once for all, and he worked the results out simply under an organised kinetic government. But what seems to be merely an addition to the difficulty may in the end turn out to be a simplification, just as the introduction of a fresh term to an intricate irreducible mathematical expression will at times bring it to unity.

Now philosophers after my Utopian pattern, who find the ultimate significance in life in individuality, novelty and the undefined, would not only regard the poietic element as the most important in human society, but would perceive quite clearly the impossibility of its organisation. This, indeed, is simply the application to the moral and intellectual fabric of the principles already applied in discussing the State control of reproduction (in Chapter the Sixth, § 2). But just as in the case of births it was possible for the State to frame limiting conditions within which individuality plays more freely than in the void, so the founders of this modern Utopia believed it possible to define conditions under which every individual born with poietic gifts should be enabled and encouraged to give them a full development, in art, philosophy, invention, or discovery. Certain general conditions presented themselves as obviously reasonable: — to give every citizen as good an education as he or she could acquire, for example; to so frame it that the directed educational process would never at any period occupy the whole available time of the learner, but would provide throughout a marginal free leisure with opportunities for developing idiosyncrasies, and to ensure by the expedient of a minimum wage for a specified amount of work, that leisure and opportunity did not cease throughout life.

But, in addition to thus making poietic activities universally possible, the founders of this modern Utopia sought to supply incentives, which was an altogether more difficult research, a problem in its nature irresolvably complex, and admitting of no systematic solution. But my double told me of a great variety of devices by which poietic men and women were given honour and enlarged freedoms, so soon as they produced an earnest of their quality, and he explained to me how great an ambition they might entertain.

There were great systems of laboratories attached to every municipal force station at which research could be conducted under the most favourable conditions, and every mine, and, indeed, almost every great industrial establishment, was saddled under its lease with similar obligations. So much for poietic ability and research in physical science. The World State tried the claims of every living contributor to any materially valuable invention, and paid or charged

a royalty on its use that went partly to him personally, and partly to the research institution that had produced him. In the matter of literature and the philosophical and sociological sciences, every higher educational establishment carried its studentships, its fellowships, its occasional lectureships, and to produce a poem, a novel, a speculative work of force or merit, was to become the object of a generous competition between rival Universities. In Utopia, any author has the option either of publishing his works through the public bookseller as a private speculation, or, if he is of sufficient merit, of accepting a University endowment and conceding his copyright to the University press. All sorts of grants in the hands of committees of the most varied constitution, supplemented these academic resources, and ensured that no possible contributor to the wide flow of the Utopian mind slipped into neglect. Apart from those who engaged mainly in teaching and administration, my double told me that the world-wide House of Saloman [Footnote: *The New Atlantis*.] thus created sustained over a million men. For all the rarity of large fortunes, therefore, no original man with the desire and capacity for material or mental experiments went long without resources and the stimulus of attention, criticism, and rivalry.

"And finally," said my double, "our Rules ensure a considerable understanding of the importance of poietic activities in the majority of the *samurai*, in whose hands as a class all the real power of the world resides."

"Ah!" said I, "and now we come to the thing that interests me most. For it is quite clear, in my mind, that these *samurai* form the real body of the State. All this time that I have spent going to and fro in this planet, it has been growing upon me that this order of men and women, wearing such a uniform as you wear, and with faces strengthened by discipline and touched with devotion, is the Utopian reality; but that for them, the whole fabric of these fair appearances would crumble and tarnish, shrink and shrivel, until at last, back I should be amidst the grime and disorders of the life of earth. Tell me about these *samurai*, who remind me of Plato's guardians, who look like Knights Templars, who bear a name that recalls the swordsmen of Japan ... and whose uniform you yourself are wearing. What are they? Are they an hereditary caste, a specially educated order, an

elected class? For, certainly, this world turns upon them as a door upon its hinges."

§ 4

"I follow the Common Rule, as many men do," said my double, answering my allusion to his uniform almost apologetically. "But my own work is, in its nature, poietic; there is much dissatisfaction with our isolation of criminals upon islands, and I am analysing the psychology of prison officials and criminals in general with a view to some better scheme. I am supposed to be ingenious with expedients in this direction. Typically, the *samurai* are engaged in administrative work. Practically the whole of the responsible rule of the world is in their hands; all our head teachers and disciplinary heads of colleges, our judges, barristers, employers of labour beyond a certain limit, practising medical men, legislators, must be *samurai*, and all the executive committees, and so forth, that play so large a part in our affairs are drawn by lot exclusively from them. The order is not hereditary — we know just enough of biology and the uncertainties of inheritance to know how silly that would be — and it does not require an early consecration or novitiate or ceremonies and initiations of that sort. The *samurai* are, in fact, volunteers. Any intelligent adult in a reasonably healthy and efficient state may, at any age after five-and-twenty, become one of the *samurai*, and take a hand in the universal control."

"Provided he follows the Rule."

"Precisely — provided he follows the Rule."

"I have heard the phrase, 'voluntary nobility.'"

"That was the idea of our Founders. They made a noble and privileged order — open to the whole world. No one could complain of an unjust exclusion, for the only thing that could exclude from the order was unwillingness or inability to follow the Rule."

"But the Rule might easily have been made exclusive of special lineages and races."

"That wasn't their intention. The Rule was planned to exclude the dull, to be unattractive to the base, and to direct and co-ordinate all sound citizens of good intent."

“And it has succeeded?”

“As well as anything finite can. Life is still imperfect, still a thick felt of dissatisfactions and perplexing problems, but most certainly the quality of all its problems has been raised, and there has been no war, no grinding poverty, not half the disease, and an enormous increase of the order, beauty, and resources of life since the *samurai*, who began as a private aggressive cult, won their way to the rule of the world.”

“I would like to have that history,” I said. “I expect there was fighting?” He nodded. “But first — tell me about the Rule.”

“The Rule aims to exclude the dull and base altogether, to discipline the impulses and emotions, to develop a moral habit and sustain a man in periods of stress, fatigue, and temptation, to produce the maximum co-operation of all men of good intent, and, in fact, to keep all the *samurai* in a state of moral and bodily health and efficiency. It does as much of this as well as it can, but, of course, like all general propositions, it does not do it in any case with absolute precision. On the whole, it is so good that most men who, like myself, are doing poietic work, and who would be just as well off without obedience, find a satisfaction in adhesion. At first, in the militant days, it was a trifle hard and uncompromising; it had rather too strong an appeal to the moral prig and harshly righteous man, but it has undergone, and still undergoes, revision and expansion, and every year it becomes a little better adapted to the need of a general rule of life that all men may try to follow. We have now a whole literature, with many very fine things in it, written about the Rule.”

He glanced at a little book on his desk, took it up as if to show it me, then put it down again.

“The Rule consists of three parts; there is the list of things that qualify, the list of things that must not be done, and the list of things that must be done. Qualification exacts a little exertion, as evidence of good faith, and it is designed to weed out the duller dull and many of the base. Our schooling period ends now about fourteen, and a small number of boys and girls — about three per cent. — are set aside then as unteachable, as, in fact, nearly idiotic; the rest go on to a college or upper school.”

“All your population?”

“With that exception.”

“Free?”

“Of course. And they pass out of college at eighteen. There are several different college courses, but one or other must be followed and a satisfactory examination passed at the end — perhaps ten per cent. fail — and the Rule requires that the candidate for the *samurai* must have passed.”

“But a very good man is sometimes an idle schoolboy.”

“We admit that. And so anyone who has failed to pass the college leaving examination may at any time in later life sit for it again — and again and again. Certain carefully specified things excuse it altogether.”

“That makes it fair. But aren’t there people who cannot pass examinations?”

“People of nervous instability—”

“But they may be people of great though irregular poietic gifts.”

“Exactly. That is quite possible. But we don’t want that sort of people among our *samurai*. Passing an examination is a proof of a certain steadiness of purpose, a certain self-control and submission—”

“Of a certain ‘ordinariness.’”

“Exactly what is wanted.”

“Of course, those others can follow other careers.”

“Yes. That’s what we want them to do. And, besides these two educational qualifications, there are two others of a similar kind of more debateable value. One is practically not in operation now. Our Founders put it that a candidate for the *samurai* must possess what they called a Technique, and, as it operated in the beginning, he had to hold the qualification for a doctor, for a lawyer, for a military officer, or an engineer, or teacher, or have painted acceptable pictures, or written a book, or something of the sort. He had, in fact, as people say, to ‘be something,’ or to have ‘done something.’ It was a regulation of vague intention even in the beginning, and it became catholic to the pitch of absurdity. To play a violin skilfully has been accepted as sufficient for this qualification. There may have been a reason in the past for this provision; in those days there were many daughters of prosperous parents — and even some sons — who did

nothing whatever but idle uninterestingly in the world, and the organisation might have suffered by their invasion, but that reason has gone now, and the requirement remains a merely ceremonial requirement. But, on the other hand, another has developed. Our Founders made a collection of several volumes, which they called, collectively, the Book of the Samurai, a compilation of articles and extracts, poems and prose pieces, which were supposed to embody the idea of the order. It was to play the part for the *samurai* that the Bible did for the ancient Hebrews. To tell you the truth, the stuff was of very unequal merit; there was a lot of very second-rate rhetoric, and some nearly namby-pamby verse. There was also included some very obscure verse and prose that had the trick of seeming wise. But for all such defects, much of the Book, from the very beginning, was splendid and inspiring matter. From that time to this, the Book of the Samurai has been under revision, much has been added, much rejected, and some deliberately rewritten. Now, there is hardly anything in it that is not beautiful and perfect in form. The whole range of noble emotions finds expression there, and all the guiding ideas of our Modern State. We have recently admitted some terse criticism of its contents by a man named Henley."

"Old Henley!"

"A man who died a little time ago."

"I knew that man on earth. And he was in Utopia, too! He was a great red-faced man, with fiery hair, a noisy, intolerant maker of enemies, with a tender heart — and he was one of the *samurai*?"

"He defied the Rules."

"He was a great man with wine. He wrote like wine; in our world he wrote wine; red wine with the light shining through."

"He was on the Committee that revised our Canon. For the revising and bracing of our Canon is work for poietic as well as kinetic men. You knew him in your world?"

"I wish I had. But I have seen him. On earth he wrote a thing ... it would run —

"Out of the night that covers me,
  Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever Gods may be,

For my unconquerable soul....”

“We have that here. All good earthly things are in Utopia also. We put that in the Canon almost as soon as he died,” said my double.

§ 5

“We have now a double Canon, a very fine First Canon, and a Second Canon of work by living men and work of inferior quality, and a satisfactory knowledge of both of these is the fourth intellectual qualification for the *samurai*.”

“It must keep a sort of uniformity in your tone of thought.”

“The Canon pervades our whole world. As a matter of fact, very much of it is read and learnt in the schools.... Next to the intellectual qualification comes the physical, the man must be in sound health, free from certain foul, avoidable, and demoralising diseases, and in good training. We reject men who are fat, or thin and flabby, or whose nerves are shaky — we refer them back to training. And finally the man or woman must be fully adult.”

“Twenty-one? But you said twenty-five!”

“The age has varied. At first it was twenty-five or over; then the minimum became twenty-five for men and twenty-one for women. Now there is a feeling that it ought to be raised. We don’t want to take advantage of mere boy and girl emotions — men of my way of thinking, at any rate, don’t — we want to get our *samurai* with experiences, with a settled mature conviction. Our hygiene and regimen are rapidly pushing back old age and death, and keeping men hale and hearty to eighty and more. There’s no need to hurry the young. Let them have a chance of wine, love, and song; let them feel the bite of full-bodied desire, and know what devils they have to reckon with.”

“But there is a certain fine sort of youth that knows the desirability of the better things at nineteen.”

“They may keep the Rule at any time — without its privileges. But a man who breaks the Rule after his adult adhesion at five-and-twenty is no more in the *samurai* for ever. Before that age he is free to break it and repent.”

“And now, what is forbidden?”

“We forbid a good deal. Many small pleasures do no great harm, but we think it well to forbid them, none the less, so that we can weed out the self-indulgent. We think that a constant resistance to little seductions is good for a man’s quality. At any rate, it shows that a man is prepared to pay something for his honour and privileges. We prescribe a regimen of food, forbid tobacco, wine, or any alcoholic drink, all narcotic drugs—”

“Meat?”

“In all the round world of Utopia there is no meat. There used to be. But now we cannot stand the thought of slaughter-houses. And, in a population that is all educated, and at about the same level of physical refinement, it is practically impossible to find anyone who will hew a dead ox or pig. We never settled the hygienic question of meat-eating at all. This other aspect decided us. I can still remember, as a boy, the rejoicings over the closing of the last slaughter-house.”

“You eat fish.”

“It isn’t a matter of logic. In our barbaric past horrible flayed carcases of brutes dripping blood, were hung for sale in the public streets.” He shrugged his shoulders.

“They do that still in London — in *my* world,” I said.

He looked again at my laxer, coarser face, and did not say whatever thought had passed across his mind.

“Originally the *samurai* were forbidden usury, that is to say the lending of money at fixed rates of interest. They are still under that interdiction, but since our commercial code practically prevents usury altogether, and our law will not recognise contracts for interest upon private accommodation loans to unprosperous borrowers, it is now scarcely necessary. The idea of a man growing richer by mere inaction and at the expense of an impoverishing debtor, is profoundly distasteful to Utopian ideas, and our State insists pretty effectually now upon the participation of the lender in the borrower’s risks. This, however, is only one part of a series of limitations of the same character. It is felt that to buy simply in order to sell again brings out many unsocial human qualities; it makes a man seek to enhance profits and falsify values, and so the *samurai* are forbidden to buy to sell on their own account or for any employer save the State, unless

some process of manufacture changes the nature of the commodity (a mere change in bulk or packing does not suffice), and they are forbidden salesmanship and all its arts. Consequently they cannot be hotel-keepers, or hotel proprietors, or hotel shareholders, and a doctor — all practising doctors must be *samurai* — cannot sell drugs except as a public servant of the municipality or the State."

"That, of course, runs counter to all our current terrestrial ideas," I said. "We are obsessed by the power of money. These rules will work out as a vow of moderate poverty, and if your *samurai* are an order of poor men—"

"They need not be. *Samurai* who have invented, organised, and developed new industries, have become rich men, and many men who have grown rich by brilliant and original trading have subsequently become *samurai*."

"But these are exceptional cases. The bulk of your money-making business must be confined to men who are not *samurai*. You must have a class of rich, powerful outsiders—"

"*Have* we?"

"I don't see the evidences of them."

"As a matter of fact, we have such people! There are rich traders, men who have made discoveries in the economy of distribution, or who have called attention by intelligent, truthful advertisement to the possibilities of neglected commodities, for example."

"But aren't they a power?"

"Why should they be?"

"Wealth *is* power."

I had to explain that phrase.

He protested. "Wealth," he said, "is no sort of power at all unless you make it one. If it is so in your world it is so by inadvertency. Wealth is a State-made thing, a convention, the most artificial of powers. You can, by subtle statesmanship, contrive what it shall buy and what it shall not. In your world it would seem you have made leisure, movement, any sort of freedom, life itself, *purchaseable*. The more fools you! A poor working man with you is a man in discomfort and fear. No wonder your rich have power. But here a reasonable leisure, a decent life, is to be had by every man on easier terms than by selling himself to the rich. And rich as men are here,

there is no private fortune in the whole world that is more than a little thing beside the wealth of the State. The *samurai* control the State and the wealth of the State, and by their vows they may not avail themselves of any of the coarser pleasures wealth can still buy. Where, then, is the power of your wealthy man?"

"But, then — where is the incentive—?"

"Oh! a man gets things for himself with wealth — no end of things. But little or no power over his fellows — unless they are exceptionally weak or self-indulgent persons."

I reflected. "What else may not the *samurai* do?"

"Acting, singing, or reciting are forbidden them, though they may lecture authoritatively or debate. But professional mimicry is not only held to be undignified in a man or woman, but to weaken and corrupt the soul; the mind becomes foolishly dependent on applause, over-skilful in producing tawdry and momentary illusions of excellence; it is our experience that actors and actresses as a class are loud, ignoble, and insincere. If they have not such flamboyant qualities then they are tepid and ineffectual players. Nor may the *samurai* do personal services, except in the matter of medicine or surgery; they may not be barbers, for example, nor inn waiters, nor boot cleaners. But, nowadays, we have scarcely any barbers or boot cleaners; men do these things for themselves. Nor may a man under the Rule be any man's servant, pledged to do whatever he is told. He may neither be a servant nor keep one; he must shave and dress and serve himself, carry his own food from the helper's place to the table, redd his sleeping room, and leave it clean...."

"That is all easy enough in a world as ordered as yours. I suppose no *samurai* may bet?"

"Absolutely not. He may insure his life and his old age for the better equipment of his children, or for certain other specified ends, but that is all his dealings with chance. And he is also forbidden to play games in public or to watch them being played. Certain dangerous and hardy sports and exercises are prescribed for him, but not competitive sports between man and man or side and side. That lesson was learnt long ago before the coming of the *samurai*. Gentlemen of honour, according to the old standards, rode horses, raced chariots, fought, and played competitive games of skill, and the

dull, cowardly and base came in thousands to admire, and howl, and bet. The gentlemen of honour degenerated fast enough into a sort of athletic prostitute, with all the defects, all the vanity, trickery, and self-assertion of the common actor, and with even less intelligence. Our Founders made no peace with this organisation of public sports. They did not spend their lives to secure for all men and women on the earth freedom, health, and leisure, in order that they might waste lives in such folly."

"We have those abuses," I said, "but some of our earthly games have a fine side. There is a game called cricket. It is a fine, generous game."

"Our boys play that, and men too. But it is thought rather puerile to give very much time to it; men should have graver interests. It was undignified and unpleasant for the *samurai* to play conspicuously ill, and impossible for them to play so constantly as to keep hand and eye in training against the man who was fool enough and cheap enough to become an expert. Cricket, tennis, fives, billiards—. You will find clubs and a class of men to play all these things in Utopia, but not the *samurai*. And they must play their games as games, not as displays; the price of a privacy for playing cricket, so that they could charge for admission, would be overwhelmingly high.... Negroes are often very clever at cricket. For a time, most of the *samurai* had their sword-play, but few do those exercises now, and until about fifty years ago they went out for military training, a fortnight in every year, marching long distances, sleeping in the open, carrying provisions, and sham fighting over unfamiliar ground dotted with disappearing targets. There was a curious inability in our world to realise that war was really over for good and all."

"And now," I said, "haven't we got very nearly to the end of your prohibitions? You have forbidden alcohol, drugs, smoking, betting, and usury, games, trade, servants. But isn't there a vow of Chastity?"

"That is the Rule for your earthly orders?"

"Yes — except, if I remember rightly, for Plato's Guardians."

"There is a Rule of Chastity here — but not of Celibacy. We know quite clearly that civilisation is an artificial arrangement, and that all the physical and emotional instincts of man are too strong, and his natural instinct of restraint too weak, for him to live easily in

the civilised State. Civilisation has developed far more rapidly than man has modified. Under the unnatural perfection of security, liberty and abundance our civilisation has attained, the normal untrained human being is disposed to excess in almost every direction; he tends to eat too much and too elaborately, to drink too much, to become lazy faster than his work can be reduced, to waste his interest upon displays, and to make love too much and too elaborately. He gets out of training, and concentrates upon egoistic or erotic broodings. The past history of our race is very largely a history of social collapses due to demoralisation by indulgences following security and abundance. In the time of our Founders the signs of a world-wide epoch of prosperity and relaxation were plentiful. Both sexes drifted towards sexual excesses, the men towards sentimental extravagances, imbecile devotions, and the complication and refinement of physical indulgences; the women towards those expansions and differentiations of feeling that find expression in music and costly and distinguished dress. Both sexes became unstable and promiscuous. The whole world seemed disposed to do exactly the same thing with its sexual interest as it had done with its appetite for food and drink — make the most of it."

He paused.

"Satiety came to help you," I said.

"Destruction may come before satiety. Our Founders organised motives from all sorts of sources, but I think the chief force to give men self-control is Pride. Pride may not be the noblest thing in the soul, but it is the best King there, for all that. They looked to it to keep a man clean and sound and sane. In this matter, as in all matters of natural desire, they held no appetite must be glutted, no appetite must have artificial whets, and also and equally that no appetite should be starved. A man must come from the table satisfied, but not replete. And, in the matter of love, a straight and clean desire for a clean and straight fellow-creature was our Founders' ideal. They enjoined marriage between equals as the *samurai's* duty to the race, and they framed directions of the precisest sort to prevent that uxorious inseparableness, that connubiality which will reduce a couple of people to something jointly less than either. That Canon is too long to tell you now. A man under the Rule who loves a woman

who does not follow it, must either leave the *samurai* to marry her, or induce her to accept what is called the Woman's Rule, which, while it excepts her from the severer qualifications and disciplines, brings her regimen of life into a working harmony with his."

"Suppose she breaks the Rule afterwards?"

"He must leave either her or the order."

"There is matter for a novel or so in that."

"There has been matter for hundreds."

"Is the Woman's Rule a sumptuary law as well as a regimen? I mean — may she dress as she pleases?"

"Not a bit of it," said my double. "Every woman who could command money used it, we found, to make underbred aggressions on other women. As men emerged to civilisation, women seemed going back to savagery — to paint and feathers. But the *samurai*, both men and women, and the women under the Lesser Rule also, all have a particular dress. No difference is made between women under either the Great or the Lesser Rule. You have seen the men's dress — always like this I wear. The women may wear the same, either with the hair cut short or plaited behind them, or they may have a high-waisted dress of very fine, soft woollen material, with their hair coiled up behind."

"I have seen it," I said. Indeed, nearly all the women had seemed to be wearing variants of that simple formula. "It seems to me a very beautiful dress. The other — I'm not used to. But I like it on girls and slender women."

I had a thought, and added, "Don't they sometimes, well — take a good deal of care, dressing their hair?"

My double laughed in my eyes. "They do," he said.

"And the Rule?"

"The Rule is never fussy," said my double, still smiling.

"We don't want women to cease to be beautiful, and consciously beautiful, if you like," he added. "The more real beauty of form and face we have, the finer our world. But costly sexualised trappings—"

"I should have thought," I said, "a class of women who traded on their sex would have arisen, women, I mean, who found an interest and an advantage in emphasising their individual womanly beauty. There is no law to prevent it. Surely they would tend to counteract

the severity of costume the Rule dictates."

"There are such women. But for all that the Rule sets the key of everyday dress. If a woman is possessed by the passion for gorgeous raiment she usually satisfies it in her own private circle, or with rare occasional onslaughts upon the public eye. Her everyday mood and the disposition of most people is against being conspicuous abroad. And I should say there are little liberties under the Lesser Rule; a discreet use of fine needlework and embroidery, a wider choice of materials."

"You have no changing fashions?"

"None. For all that, are not our dresses as beautiful as yours?"

"Our women's dresses are not beautiful at all," I said, forced for a time towards the mysterious philosophy of dress. "Beauty? That isn't their concern."

"Then what are they after?"

"My dear man! What is all my world after?"

§ 6

I should come to our third talk with a great curiosity to hear of the last portion of the Rule, of the things that the *samurai* are obliged to do.

There would be many precise directions regarding his health, and rules that would aim at once at health and that constant exercise of will that makes life good. Save in specified exceptional circumstances, the *samurai* must bathe in cold water, and the men must shave every day; they have the precisest directions in such matters; the body must be in health, the skin and muscles and nerves in perfect tone, or the *samurai* must go to the doctors of the order, and give implicit obedience to the regimen prescribed. They must sleep alone at least four nights in five; and they must eat with and talk to anyone in their fellowship who cares for their conversation for an hour, at least, at the nearest club-house of the *samurai* once on three chosen days in every week. Moreover, they must read aloud from the Book of the Samurai for at least ten minutes every day. Every month they must buy and read faithfully through at least one book that has been published during the past five years, and the only

intervention with private choice in that matter is the prescription of a certain minimum of length for the monthly book or books. But the full Rule in these minor compulsory matters is voluminous and detailed, and it abounds with alternatives. Its aim is rather to keep before the *samurai* by a number of sample duties, as it were, the need of, and some of the chief methods towards health of body and mind, rather than to provide a comprehensive rule, and to ensure the maintenance of a community of feeling and interests among the *samurai* through habit, intercourse, and a living contemporary literature. These minor obligations do not earmark more than an hour in the day. Yet they serve to break down isolations of sympathy, all sorts of physical and intellectual sluggishness and the development of unsocial preoccupations of many sorts.

Women *samurai* who are married, my double told me, must bear children — if they are to remain married as well as in the order — before the second period for terminating a childless marriage is exhausted. I failed to ask for the precise figures from my double at the time, but I think it is beyond doubt that it is from *samurai* mothers of the Greater or Lesser Rule that a very large proportion of the future population of Utopia will be derived. There is one liberty accorded to women *samurai* which is refused to men, and that is to marry outside the Rule, and women married to men not under the Rule are also free to become *samurai*. Here, too, it will be manifest there is scope for novels and the drama of life. In practice, it seems that it is only men of great poietic distinction outside the Rule, or great commercial leaders, who have wives under it. The tendency of such unions is either to bring the husband under the Rule, or take the wife out of it. There can be no doubt that these marriage limitations tend to make the *samurai* something of an hereditary class. Their children, as a rule, become *samurai*. But it is not an exclusive caste; subject to the most reasonable qualifications, anyone who sees fit can enter it at any time, and so, unlike all other privileged castes the world has seen, it increases relatively to the total population, and may indeed at last assimilate almost the whole population of the earth.

§ 7

So much my double told me readily.

But now he came to the heart of all his explanations, to the will and motives at the centre that made men and women ready to undergo discipline, to renounce the richness and elaboration of the sensuous life, to master emotions and control impulses, to keep in the key of effort while they had abundance about them to rouse and satisfy all desires, and his exposition was more difficult.

He tried to make his religion clear to me.

The leading principle of the Utopian religion is the repudiation of the doctrine of original sin; the Utopians hold that man, on the whole, is good. That is their cardinal belief. Man has pride and conscience, they hold, that you may refine by training as you refine his eye and ear; he has remorse and sorrow in his being, coming on the heels of all inconsequent enjoyments. How can one think of him as bad? He is religious; religion is as natural to him as lust and anger, less intense, indeed, but coming with a wide-sweeping inevitableness as peace comes after all tumults and noises. And in Utopia they understand this, or, at least, the *samurai* do, clearly. They accept Religion as they accept Thirst, as something inseparably in the mysterious rhythms of life. And just as thirst and pride and all desires may be perverted in an age of abundant opportunities, and men may be degraded and wasted by intemperance in drinking, by display, or by ambition, so too the nobler complex of desires that constitutes religion may be turned to evil by the dull, the base, and the careless. Slovenly indulgence in religious inclinations, a failure to think hard and discriminate as fairly as possible in religious matters, is just as alien to the men under the Rule as it would be to drink deeply because they were thirsty, eat until glutted, evade a bath because the day was chilly, or make love to any bright-eyed girl who chanced to look pretty in the dusk. Utopia, which is to have every type of character that one finds on earth, will have its temples and its priests, just as it will have its actresses and wine, but the *samurai* will be forbidden the religion of dramatically lit altars, organ music, and incense, as distinctly as they are forbidden the love of painted women, or the consolations of brandy. And to all the things that are less than religion and that seek to comprehend it, to cosmogonies and philosophies, to creeds and formulæ, to catechisms and easy

explanations, the attitude of the *samurai*, the note of the Book of Samurai, will be distrust. These things, the *samurai* will say, are part of the indulgences that should come before a man submits himself to the Rule; they are like the early gratifications of young men, experiences to establish renunciation. The *samurai* will have emerged above these things.

The theology of the Utopian rulers will be saturated with that same philosophy of uniqueness, that repudiation of anything beyond similarities and practical parallelisms, that saturates all their institutions. They will have analysed exhaustively those fallacies and assumptions that arise between the One and the Many, that have troubled philosophy since philosophy began. Just as they will have escaped that delusive unification of every species under its specific definition that has dominated earthly reasoning, so they will have escaped the delusive simplification of God that vitiates all terrestrial theology. They will hold God to be complex and of an endless variety of aspects, to be expressed by no universal formula nor approved in any uniform manner. Just as the language of Utopia will be a synthesis, even so will its God be. The aspect of God is different in the measure of every man's individuality, and the intimate thing of religion must, therefore, exist in human solitude, between man and God alone. Religion in its quintessence is a relation between God and man; it is perversion to make it a relation between man and man, and a man may no more reach God through a priest than love his wife through a priest. But just as a man in love may refine the interpretation of his feelings and borrow expression from the poems and music of poietic men, so an individual man may at his discretion read books of devotion and hear music that is in harmony with his inchoate feelings. Many of the *samurai*, therefore, will set themselves private regimens that will help their secret religious life, will pray habitually, and read books of devotion, but with these things the Rule of the order will have nothing to do.

Clearly the God of the *samurai* is a transcendental and mystical God. So far as the *samurai* have a purpose in common in maintaining the State, and the order and progress of the world, so far, by their discipline and denial, by their public work and effort, they worship God together. But the fount of motives lies in the individual life, it

lies in silent and deliberate reflections, and at this, the most striking of all the rules of the *samurai* aims. For seven consecutive days in the year, at least, each man or woman under the Rule must go right out of all the life of man into some wild and solitary place, must speak to no man or woman, and have no sort of intercourse with mankind. They must go bookless and weaponless, without pen or paper, or money. Provisions must be taken for the period of the journey, a rug or sleeping sack — for they must sleep under the open sky — but no means of making a fire. They may study maps beforehand to guide them, showing any difficulties and dangers in the journey, but they may not carry such helps. They must not go by beaten ways or wherever there are inhabited houses, but into the bare, quiet places of the globe — the regions set apart for them.

This discipline, my double said, was invented to secure a certain stoutness of heart and body in the members of the order, which otherwise might have lain open to too many timorous, merely abstemious, men and women. Many things had been suggested, swordplay and tests that verged on torture, climbing in giddy places and the like, before this was chosen. Partly, it is to ensure good training and sturdiness of body and mind, but partly, also, it is to draw their minds for a space from the insistent details of life, from the intricate arguments and the fretting effort to work, from personal quarrels and personal affections, and the things of the heated room. Out they must go, clean out of the world.

Certain great areas are set apart for these yearly pilgrimages beyond the securities of the State. There are thousands of square miles of sandy desert in Africa and Asia set apart; much of the Arctic and Antarctic circles; vast areas of mountain land and frozen marsh; secluded reserves of forest, and innumerable unfrequented lines upon the sea. Some are dangerous and laborious routes; some merely desolate; and there are even some sea journeys that one may take in the halcyon days as one drifts through a dream. Upon the seas one must go in a little undecked sailing boat, that may be rowed in a calm; all the other journeys one must do afoot, none aiding. There are, about all these desert regions and along most coasts, little offices at which the *samurai* says good-bye to the world of men, and at which they arrive after their minimum time of silence is overpast.

For the intervening days they must be alone with Nature, necessity, and their own thoughts.

"It is good?" I said.

"It is good," my double answered. "We civilised men go back to the stark Mother that so many of us would have forgotten were it not for this Rule. And one thinks.... Only two weeks ago I did my journey for the year. I went with my gear by sea to Tromso, and then inland to a starting-place, and took my ice-axe and rücksack, and said good-bye to the world. I crossed over four glaciers; I climbed three high mountain passes, and slept on moss in desolate valleys. I saw no human being for seven days. Then I came down through pine woods to the head of a road that runs to the Baltic shore. Altogether it was thirteen days before I reported myself again, and had speech with fellow creatures."

"And the women do this?"

"The women who are truly *samurai* — yes. Equally with the men. Unless the coming of children intervenes."

I asked him how it had seemed to him, and what he thought about during the journey.

"There is always a sense of effort for me," he said, "when I leave the world at the outset of the journey. I turn back again and again, and look at the little office as I go up my mountain side. The first day and night I'm a little disposed to shirk the job — every year it's the same — a little disposed, for example, to sling my pack from my back, and sit down, and go through its contents, and make sure I've got all my equipment."

"There's no chance of anyone overtaking you?"

"Two men mustn't start from the same office on the same route within six hours of each other. If they come within sight of each other, they must shun an encounter, and make no sign — unless life is in danger. All that is arranged beforehand."

"It would be, of course. Go on telling me of your journey."

"I dread the night. I dread discomfort and bad weather. I only begin to brace up after the second day."

"Don't you worry about losing your way?"

"No. There are cairns and skyline signs. If it wasn't for that, of course we should be worrying with maps the whole time. But I'm

only sure of being a man after the second night, and sure of my power to go through.”

“And then?”

“Then one begins to get into it. The first two days one is apt to have the events of one’s journey, little incidents of travel, and thoughts of one’s work and affairs, rising and fading and coming again; but then the perspectives begin. I don’t sleep much at nights on these journeys; I lie awake and stare at the stars. About dawn, perhaps, and in the morning sunshine, I sleep! The nights this last time were very short, never more than twilight, and I saw the glow of the sun always, just over the edge of the world. But I had chosen the days of the new moon, so that I could have a glimpse of the stars.... Years ago, I went from the Nile across the Libyan Desert east, and then the stars — the stars in the later days of that journey — brought me near weeping.... You begin to feel alone on the third day, when you find yourself out on some shining snowfield, and nothing of mankind visible in the whole world save one landmark, one remote thin red triangle of iron, perhaps, in the saddle of the ridge against the sky. All this busy world that has done so much and so marvellously, and is still so little — you see it little as it is — and far off. All day long you go and the night comes, and it might be another planet. Then, in the quiet, waking hours, one thinks of one’s self and the great external things, of space and eternity, and what one means by God.”

He mused.

“You think of death?”

“Not of my own. But when I go among snows and desolations — and usually I take my pilgrimage in mountains or the north — I think very much of the Night of this World — the time when our sun will be red and dull, and air and water will lie frozen together in a common snowfield where now the forests of the tropics are steaming.... I think very much of that, and whether it is indeed God’s purpose that our kind should end, and the cities we have built, the books we have written, all that we have given substance and a form, should lie dead beneath the snows.”

“You don’t believe that?”

“No. But if it is not so—. I went threading my way among gorges

and precipices, with my poor brain dreaming of what the alternative should be, with my imagination straining and failing. Yet, in those high airs and in such solitude, a kind of exaltation comes to men.... I remember that one night I sat up and told the rascal stars very earnestly how they should not escape us in the end."

He glanced at me for a moment as though he doubted I should understand.

"One becomes a personification up there," he said. "One becomes the ambassador of mankind to the outer world.

"There is time to think over a lot of things. One puts one's self and one's ambition in a new pair of scales....

"Then there are hours when one is just exploring the wilderness like a child. Sometimes perhaps one gets a glimpse from some precipice edge of the plains far away, and houses and roadways, and remembers there is still a busy world of men. And at last one turns one's feet down some slope, some gorge that leads back. You come down, perhaps, into a pine forest, and hear that queer clatter reindeer make — and then, it may be, see a herdsman very far away, watching you. You wear your pilgrim's badge, and he makes no sign of seeing you....

"You know, after these solitudes, I feel just the same queer disinclination to go back to the world of men that I feel when I have to leave it. I think of dusty roads and hot valleys, and being looked at by many people. I think of the trouble of working with colleagues and opponents. This last journey I outstayed my time, camping in the pine woods for six days. Then my thoughts came round to my proper work again. I got keen to go on with it, and so I came back into the world. You come back physically clean — as though you had had your arteries and veins washed out. And your brain has been cleaned, too.... I shall stick to the mountains now until I am old, and then I shall sail a boat in Polynesia. That is what so many old men do. Only last year one of the great leaders of the *samurai* — a white-haired man, who followed the Rule in spite of his one hundred and eleven years — was found dead in his boat far away from any land, far to the south, lying like a child asleep...."

"That's better than a tumbled bed," said I, "and some boy of a doctor jabbing you with injections, and distressful people hovering

about you."

"Yes," said my double; "in Utopia we who are samurai die better than that.... Is that how your great men die?"

It came to me suddenly as very strange that, even as we sat and talked, across deserted seas, on burning sands, through the still aisles of forests, and in all the high and lonely places of the world, beyond the margin where the ways and houses go, solitary men and women sailed alone or marched alone, or clambered — quiet, resolute exiles; they stood alone amidst wildernesses of ice, on the precipitous banks of roaring torrents, in monstrous caverns, or steering a tossing boat in the little circle of the horizon amidst the tumbled, incessant sea, all in their several ways communing with the emptiness, the enigmatic spaces and silences, the winds and torrents and soulless forces that lie about the lit and ordered life of men.

I saw more clearly now something I had seen dimly already, in the bearing and the faces of this Utopian chivalry, a faint persistent tinge of detachment from the immediate heats and hurries, the little graces and delights, the tensions and stimulations of the daily world. It pleased me strangely to think of this steadfast yearly pilgrimage of solitude, and how near men might come then to the high distances of God.

§ 8

After that I remember we fell talking of the discipline of the Rule, of the Courts that try breaches of it, and interpret doubtful cases — for, though a man may resign with due notice and be free after a certain time to rejoin again, one deliberate breach may exclude a man for ever — of the system of law that has grown up about such trials, and of the triennial council that revises and alters the Rule. From that we passed to the discussion of the general constitution of this World State. Practically all political power vests in the *samurai*. Not only are they the only administrators, lawyers, practising doctors, and public officials of almost all kinds, but they are the only voters. Yet, by a curious exception, the supreme legislative assembly must have one-tenth, and may have one-half of its members outside the order, because, it is alleged, there is a sort of wisdom that comes of sin and

laxness, which is necessary to the perfect ruling of life. My double quoted me a verse from the Canon on this matter that my unfortunate verbal memory did not retain, but it was in the nature of a prayer to save the world from "unfermented men." It would seem that Aristotle's idea of a rotation of rulers, an idea that crops up again in Harrington's *Oceana*, that first Utopia of "the sovereign people" (a Utopia that, through Danton's readings in English, played a disastrous part in the French Revolution), gets a little respect in Utopia. The tendency is to give a practically permanent tenure to good men. Every ruler and official, it is true, is put on his trial every three years before a jury drawn by lot, according to the range of his activities, either from the *samurai* of his municipal area or from the general catalogue of the *samurai*, but the business of this jury is merely to decide whether to continue him in office or order a new election. In the majority of cases the verdict is continuation. Even if it is not so the official may still appear as a candidate before the second and separate jury which fills the vacant post....

My double mentioned a few scattered details of the electoral methods, but as at that time I believed we were to have a number of further conversations, I did not exhaust my curiosities upon this subject. Indeed, I was more than a little preoccupied and inattentive. The religion of the *samurai* was after my heart, and it had taken hold of me very strongly.... But presently I fell questioning him upon the complications that arise in the Modern Utopia through the differences between the races of men, and found my attention returning. But the matter of that discussion I shall put apart into a separate chapter. In the end we came back to the particulars of this great Rule of Life that any man desiring of joining the *samurai* must follow.

I remember how, after our third bout of talking, I walked back through the streets of Utopian London to rejoin the botanist at our hotel.

My double lived in an apartment in a great building — I should judge about where, in our London, the Tate Gallery squats, and, as the day was fine, and I had no reason for hurry, I went not by the covered mechanical way, but on foot along the broad, tree-set terraces that follow the river on either side.

It was afternoon, and the mellow Thames Valley sunlight, warm

and gentle, lit a clean and gracious world. There were many people abroad, going to and fro, unhurrying, but not aimless, and I watched them so attentively that were you to ask me for the most elementary details of the buildings and terraces that lay back on either bank, or of the pinnacles and towers and parapets that laced the sky, I could not tell you them. But of the people I could tell a great deal.

No Utopians wear black, and for all the frequency of the *samurai* uniform along the London ways the general effect is of a gaily-coloured population. You never see anyone noticeably ragged or dirty; the police, who answer questions and keep order (and are quite distinct from the organisation for the pursuit of criminals) see to that; and shabby people are very infrequent. People who want to save money for other purposes, or who do not want much bother with their clothing, seem to wear costumes of rough woven cloth, dyed an unobtrusive brown or green, over fine woollen underclothing, and so achieve a decent comfort in its simplest form. Others outside the Rule of the *samurai* range the spectrum for colour, and have every variety of texture; the colours attained by the Utopian dyers seem to me to be fuller and purer than the common range of stuffs on earth; and the subtle folding of the woollen materials witness that Utopian Bradford is no whit behind her earthly sister. White is extraordinarily frequent; white woollen tunics and robes into which are woven bands of brilliant colour, abound. Often these ape the cut and purple edge that distinguishes the *samurai*. In Utopian London the air is as clear and less dusty than it is among high mountains; the roads are made of unbroken surfaces, and not of friable earth; all heating is done by electricity, and no coal ever enters the town; there are no horses or dogs, and so there is not a suspicion of smoke and scarcely a particle of any sort of dirt to render white impossible.

The radiated influence of the uniform of the *samurai* has been to keep costume simple, and this, perhaps, emphasises the general effect of vigorous health, of shapely bodies. Everyone is well grown and well nourished; everyone seems in good condition; everyone walks well, and has that clearness of eye that comes with cleanness of blood. In London I am apt to consider myself of a passable size and carriage; here I feel small and mean-looking. The faint suspicions of spinal curvatures, skew feet, unequal legs, and ill-grown bones, that

haunt one in a London crowd, the plain intimations — in yellow faces, puffy faces, spotted and irregular complexions, in nervous movements and coughs and colds — of bad habits and an incompetent or disregarded medical profession, do not appear here. I notice few old people, but there seems to be a greater proportion of men and women at or near the prime of life.

I hang upon that. I have seen one or two fat people here — they are all the more noticeable because they are rare. But wrinkled age? Have I yet in Utopia set eyes on a bald head?

The Utopians have brought a sounder physiological science than ours to bear upon regimen. People know better what to do and what to avoid, how to foresee and forestall coming trouble, and how to evade and suppress the subtle poisons that blunt the edge of sensation. They have put off the years of decay. They keep their teeth, they keep their digestions, they ward off gout and rheumatism, neuralgia and influenza and all those cognate decays that bend and wrinkle men and women in the middle years of existence. They have extended the level years far into the seventies, and age, when it comes, comes swiftly and easily. The feverish hurry of our earth, the decay that begins before growth has ceased, is replaced by a ripe prolonged maturity. This modern Utopia is an adult world. The flushed romance, the predominant eroticisms, the adventurous uncertainty of a world in which youth prevails, gives place here to a grave deliberation, to a fuller and more powerful emotion, to a broader handling of life.

Yet youth is here.

Amidst the men whose faces have been made fine by thought and steadfast living, among the serene-eyed women, comes youth, gaily-coloured, buoyantly healthy, with challenging eyes, with fresh and eager face....

For everyone in Utopia who is sane enough to benefit, study and training last until twenty; then comes the travel year, and many are still students until twenty-four or twenty-five. Most are still, in a sense, students throughout life, but it is thought that, unless responsible action is begun in some form in the early twenties, will undergoes a partial atrophy. But the full swing of adult life is hardly attained until thirty is reached. Men marry before the middle thirties,

and the women rather earlier, few are mothers before five-and-twenty. The majority of those who become *samurai* do so between twenty-seven and thirty-five. And, between seventeen and thirty, the Utopians have their dealings with love, and the play and excitement of love is a chief interest in life. Much freedom of act is allowed them so that their wills may grow freely. For the most part they end mated, and love gives place to some special and more enduring interest, though, indeed, there is love between older men and fresh girls, and between youths and maturer women. It is in these most graceful and beautiful years of life that such freedoms of dress as the atmosphere of Utopia permits are to be seen, and the crude bright will and imagination of youth peeps out in ornament and colour.

Figures come into my sight and possess me for a moment and pass, and give place to others; there comes a dusky little Jewess, red-lipped and amber-clad, with a deep crimson flower — I know not whether real or sham — in the dull black of her hair. She passes me with an unconscious disdain; and then I am looking at a brightly-smiling, blue-eyed girl, tall, ruddy, and freckled warmly, clad like a stage Rosalind, and talking gaily to a fair young man, a novice under the Rule. A red-haired mother under the Lesser Rule goes by, green-gowned, with dark green straps crossing between her breasts, and her two shock-headed children, bare-legged and lightly shod, tug at her hands on either side. Then a grave man in a long, fur-trimmed robe, a merchant, maybe, debates some serious matter with a white-tunicked clerk. And the clerk's face—? I turn to mark the straight, blue-black hair. The man must be Chinese....

Then come two short-bearded men in careless indigo blue raiment, both of them convulsed with laughter — men outside the Rule, who practise, perhaps, some art — and then one of the *samurai*, in cheerful altercation with a blue-robed girl of eight. "But you *could* have come back yesterday, Dadda," she persists. He is deeply sunburnt, and suddenly there passes before my mind the picture of a snowy mountain waste at night-fall and a solitary small figure under the stars....

When I come back to the present thing again, my eye is caught at once by a young negro, carrying books in his hand, a prosperous-looking, self-respecting young negro, in a trimly-cut coat of purple-

blue and silver.

I am reminded of what my double said to me of race.

CHAPTER THE TENTH Race in Utopia

§ 1

Above the sphere of the elemental cravings and necessities, the soul of man is in a perpetual vacillation between two conflicting impulses: the desire to assert his individual differences, the desire for distinction, and his terror of isolation. He wants to stand out, but not too far out, and, on the contrary, he wants to merge himself with a group, with some larger body, but not altogether. Through all the things of life runs this tortuous compromise, men follow the fashions but resent ready-made uniforms on every plane of their being. The disposition to form aggregations and to imagine aggregations is part of the incurable nature of man; it is one of the great natural forces the statesman must utilise, and against which he must construct effectual defences. The study of the aggregations and of the ideals of aggregations about which men's sympathies will twine, and upon which they will base a large proportion of their conduct and personal policy, is the legitimate definition of sociology.

Now the sort of aggregation to which men and women will refer themselves is determined partly by the strength and idiosyncrasy of the individual imagination, and partly by the reek of ideas that chances to be in the air at the time. Men and women may vary greatly both in their innate and their acquired disposition towards this sort of larger body or that, to which their social reference can be made. The "natural" social reference of a man is probably to some rather vaguely conceived tribe, as the "natural" social reference of a dog is to a pack. But just as the social reference of a dog may be educated until the reference to a pack is completely replaced by a reference to an owner, so on his higher plane of educability the social reference of the civilised man undergoes the most remarkable transformations. But the power and scope of his imagination and the need he has of response sets limits to this process. A highly intellectualised mature mind may refer for its data very consistently to ideas of a higher being so remote and indefinable as God, so comprehensive as humanity, so far-reaching as the purpose in things.

I write "may," but I doubt if this exaltation of reference is ever permanently sustained. Comte, in his *Positive Polity*, exposes his soul with great freedom, and the curious may trace how, while he professes and quite honestly intends to refer himself always to his "Greater Being" Humanity, he narrows constantly to his projected "Western Republic" of civilised men, and quite frequently to the minute indefinite body of Positivist subscribers. And the history of the Christian Church, with its development of orders and cults, sects and dissents, the history of fashionable society with its cliques and sets and every political history with its cabals and inner cabinets, witness to the struggle that goes on in the minds of men to adjust themselves to a body larger indeed than themselves, but which still does not strain and escape their imaginative grasp.

The statesman, both for himself and others, must recognise this inadequacy of grasp, and the necessity for real and imaginary aggregations to sustain men in their practical service of the order of the world. He must be a sociologist; he must study the whole science of aggregations in relation to that World State to which his reason and his maturest thought direct him. He must lend himself to the development of aggregatory ideas that favour the civilising process, and he must do his best to promote the disintegration of aggregations and the effacement of aggregatory ideas, that keep men narrow and unreasonably prejudiced one against another.

He will, of course, know that few men are even rudely consistent in such matters, that the same man in different moods and on different occasions, is capable of referring himself in perfect good faith, not only to different, but to contradictory larger beings, and that the more important thing about an aggregatory idea from the State maker's point of view is not so much what it explicitly involves as what it implicitly repudiates. The natural man does not feel he is aggregating at all, unless he aggregates *against* something. He refers himself to the tribe; he is loyal to the tribe, and quite inseparably he fears or dislikes those others outside the tribe. The tribe is always at least defensively hostile and usually actively hostile to humanity beyond the aggregation. The Anti-idea, it would seem, is inseparable from the aggregatory idea; it is a necessity of the human mind. When we think of the class A as desirable, we think of Not-A as

undesirable. The two things are as inevitably connected as the tendons of our hands, so that when we flatten down our little fingers on our palms, the fourth digit, whether we want it or not, comes down halfway. All real working gods, one may remark, all gods that are worshipped emotionally, are tribal gods, and every attempt to universalise the idea of God trails dualism and the devil after it as a moral necessity.

When we inquire, as well as the unformed condition of terrestrial sociology permits, into the aggregatory ideas that seem to satisfy men, we find a remarkable complex, a disorderly complex, in the minds of nearly all our civilised contemporaries. For example, all sorts of aggregatory ideas come and go across the chameleon surfaces of my botanist's mind. He has a strong feeling for systematic botanists as against plant physiologists, whom he regards as lewd and evil scoundrels in this relation, but he has a strong feeling for all botanists, and, indeed, all biologists, as against physicists, and those who profess the exact sciences, all of whom he regards as dull, mechanical, ugly-minded scoundrels in this relation; but he has a strong feeling for all who profess what is called Science as against psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, and literary men, whom he regards as wild, foolish, immoral scoundrels in this relation; but he has a strong feeling for all educated men as against the working man, whom he regards as a cheating, lying, loafing, drunken, thievish, dirty scoundrel in this relation; but so soon as the working man is comprehended together with those others, as Englishmen — which includes, in this case, I may remark, the Scottish and Welsh — he holds them superior to all other sorts of European, whom he regards, &c....

Now one perceives in all these aggregatory ideas and rearrangements of the sympathies one of the chief vices of human thought, due to its obsession by classificatory suggestions. [Footnote: See Chapter the First, § 5, and the Appendix.] The necessity for marking our classes has brought with it a bias for false and excessive contrast, and we never invent a term but we are at once cramming it with implications beyond its legitimate content. There is no feat of irrelevance that people will not perform quite easily in this way; there is no class,

however accidental, to which they will not at once ascribe deeply distinctive qualities. The seventh sons of seventh sons have remarkable powers of insight; people with a certain sort of ear commit crimes of violence; people with red hair have souls of fire; all democratic socialists are trustworthy persons; all people born in Ireland have vivid imaginations and all Englishmen are clods; all Hindoos are cowardly liars; all curly-haired people are good-natured; all hunch-backs are energetic and wicked, and all Frenchmen eat frogs. Such stupid generalisations have been believed with the utmost readiness, and acted upon by great numbers of sane, respectable people. And when the class is one's own class, when it expresses one of the aggregations to which one refers one's own activities, then the disposition to divide all qualities between this class and its converse, and to cram one's own class with every desirable distinction, becomes overwhelming.

It is part of the training of the philosopher to regard all such generalisations with suspicion; it is part of the training of the Utopist and statesman, and all good statesmen are Utopists, to mingle something very like animosity with that suspicion. For crude classifications and false generalisations are the curse of all organised human life.

§ 2

Disregarding classes, cliques, sets, castes, and the like minor aggregations, concerned for the most part with details and minor aspects of life, one finds among the civilised peoples of the world certain broad types of aggregatory idea. There are, firstly, the national ideas, ideas which, in their perfection, require a uniformity of physical and mental type, a common idiom, a common religion, a distinctive style of costume, decoration, and thought, and a compact organisation acting with complete external unity. Like the Gothic cathedral, the national idea is never found complete with all its parts; but one has in Russia, with her insistence on political and religious orthodoxy, something approaching it pretty closely, and again in the inland and typical provinces of China, where even a strange pattern

of hat arouses hostility. We had it in vigorous struggle to exist in England under the earlier Georges in the minds of those who supported the Established Church. The idea of the fundamental nature of nationality is so ingrained in thought, with all the usual exaggeration of implication, that no one laughs at talk about Swedish painting or American literature. And I will confess and point out that my own detachment from these delusions is so imperfect and discontinuous that in another passage I have committed myself to a short assertion of the exceptionally noble quality of the English imagination. [Footnote: Chapter the Seventh, § 6.] I am constantly gratified by flattering untruths about English superiority which I should reject indignantly were the application bluntly personal, and I am ever ready to believe the scenery of England, the poetry of England, even the decoration and music of England, in some mystic and impregnable way, the best. This habit of intensifying all class definitions, and particularly those in which one has a personal interest, is in the very constitution of man's mind. It is part of the defect of that instrument. We may watch against it and prevent it doing any great injustices, or leading us into follies, but to eradicate it is an altogether different matter. There it is, to be reckoned with, like the coccyx, the pineal eye, and the vermiform appendix. And a too consistent attack on it may lead simply to its inversion, to a vindictively pro-foreigner attitude that is equally unwise.

The second sort of aggregatory ideas, running very often across the boundaries of national ideas and in conflict with them, are religious ideas. In Western Europe true national ideas only emerged to their present hectic vigour after the shock of the Reformation had liberated men from the great tradition of a Latin-speaking Christendom, a tradition the Roman Catholic Church has sustained as its modification of the old Latin-speaking Imperialism in the rule of the *pontifex maximus*. There was, and there remains to this day, a profound disregard of local dialect and race in the Roman Catholic tradition, which has made that Church a persistently disintegrating influence in national life. Equally spacious and equally regardless of tongues and peoples is the great Arabic-speaking religion of Mahomet. Both Christendom and Islam are indeed on their secular

sides imperfect realisations of a Utopian World State. But the secular side was the weaker side of these cults; they produced no sufficiently great statesmen to realise their spiritual forces, and it is not in Rome under pontifical rule, nor in Munster under the Anabaptists, but rather in Thomas à Kempis and Saint Augustin's City of God that we must seek for the Utopias of Christianity.

In the last hundred years a novel development of material forces, and especially of means of communication, has done very much to break up the isolations in which nationality perfected its prejudices and so to render possible the extension and consolidation of such a world-wide culture as mediæval Christendom and Islam foreshadowed. The first onset of these expansive developments has been marked in the world of mind by an expansion of political ideals — Comte's "Western Republic" (1848) was the first Utopia that involved the synthesis of numerous States — by the development of "Imperialisms" in the place of national policies, and by the search for a basis for wider political unions in racial traditions and linguistic affinities. Anglo-Saxonism, Pan-Germanism, and the like are such synthetic ideas. Until the eighties, the general tendency of progressive thought was at one with the older Christian tradition which ignored "race," and the aim of the expansive liberalism movement, so far as it had a clear aim, was to Europeanise the world, to extend the franchise to negroes, put Polynesians into trousers, and train the teeming myriads of India to appreciate the exquisite lilt of *The Lady of the Lake*. There is always some absurdity mixed with human greatness, and we must not let the fact that the middle Victorians counted Scott, the suffrage and pantaloons among the supreme blessings of life, conceal from us the very real nobility of their dream of England's mission to the world....

We of this generation have seen a flood of reaction against such universalism. The great intellectual developments that centre upon the work of Darwin have exacerbated the realisation that life is a conflict between superior and inferior types, it has underlined the idea that specific survival rates are of primary significance in the world's development, and a swarm of inferior intelligences has applied to human problems elaborated and exaggerated versions of these generalisations. These social and political followers of Darwin

have fallen into an obvious confusion between race and nationality, and into the natural trap of patriotic conceit. The dissent of the Indian and Colonial governing class to the first crude applications of liberal propositions in India has found a voice of unparalleled penetration in Mr. Kipling, whose want of intellectual deliberation is only equalled by his poietic power. The search for a basis for a new political synthesis in adaptable sympathies based on linguistic affinities, was greatly influenced by Max Müller's unaccountable assumption that language indicated kindred, and led straight to wildly speculative ethnology, to the discovery that there was a Keltic race, a Teutonic race, an Indo-European race, and so forth. A book that has had enormous influence in this matter, because of its use in teaching, is J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People*, with its grotesque insistence upon Anglo-Saxonism. And just now, the world is in a sort of delirium about race and the racial struggle. The Briton forgetting his Defoe, [Footnote: *The True-born Englishman*.] the Jew forgetting the very word proselyte, the German forgetting his anthropometric variations, and the Italian forgetting everything, are obsessed by the singular purity of their blood, and the danger of contamination the mere continuance of other races involves. True to the law that all human aggregation involves the development of a spirit of opposition to whatever is external to the aggregation, extraordinary intensifications of racial definition are going on; the vileness, the inhumanity, the incompatibility of alien races is being steadily exaggerated. The natural tendency of every human being towards a stupid conceit in himself and his kind, a stupid depreciation of all unlikeness, is traded upon by this bastard science. With the weakening of national references, and with the pause before reconstruction in religious belief, these new arbitrary and unsubstantial race prejudices become daily more formidable. They are shaping policies and modifying laws, and they will certainly be responsible for a large proportion of the wars, hardships, and cruelties the immediate future holds in store for our earth.

No generalisations about race are too extravagant for the inflamed credulity of the present time. No attempt is ever made to distinguish differences in inherent quality — the true racial differences — from artificial differences due to culture. No lesson seems ever to be drawn

from history of the fluctuating incidence of the civilising process first upon this race and then upon that. The politically ascendant peoples of the present phase are understood to be the superior races, including such types as the Sussex farm labourer, the Bowery tough, the London hooligan, and the Paris apache; the races not at present prospering politically, such as the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Spanish, the Moors, the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Peruvians, and all uncivilised people are represented as the inferior races, unfit to associate with the former on terms of equality, unfit to intermarry with them on any terms, unfit for any decisive voice in human affairs. In the popular imagination of Western Europe, the Chinese are becoming bright gamboge in colour, and unspeakably abominable in every respect; the people who are black — the people who have fuzzy hair and flattish noses, and no calves to speak of — are no longer held to be within the pale of humanity. These superstitions work out along the obvious lines of the popular logic. The depopulation of the Congo Free State by the Belgians, the horrible massacres of Chinese by European soldiery during the Pekin expedition, are condoned as a painful but necessary part of the civilising process of the world. The world-wide repudiation of slavery in the nineteenth century was done against a vast sullen force of ignorant pride, which, reinvigorated by the new delusions, swings back again to power.

"Science" is supposed to lend its sanction to race mania, but it is only "science" as it is understood by very illiterate people that does anything of the sort— "scientists'" science, in fact. What science has to tell about "The Races of Man" will be found compactly set forth by Doctor J. Deinker, in the book published under that title. [Footnote: See also an excellent paper in the *American Journal of Sociology* for March, 1904, *The Psychology of Race Prejudice*, by W. I. Thomas.] From that book one may learn the beginnings of race charity. Save for a few isolated pools of savage humanity, there is probably no pure race in the whole world. The great continental populations are all complex mixtures of numerous and fluctuating types. Even the Jews present every kind of skull that is supposed to be racially distinctive, a vast range of complexion — from blackness in Goa, to extreme fairness in Holland — and a vast mental and

physical diversity. Were the Jews to discontinue all intermarriage with "other races" henceforth for ever, it would depend upon quite unknown laws of fecundity, prepotency, and variability, what their final type would be, or, indeed, whether any particular type would ever prevail over diversity. And, without going beyond the natives of the British Isles, one can discover an enormous range of types, tall and short, straight-haired and curly, fair and dark, supremely intelligent and unteachably stupid, straightforward, disingenuous, and what not. The natural tendency is to forget all this range directly "race" comes under discussion, to take either an average or some quite arbitrary ideal as the type, and think only of that. The more difficult thing to do, but the thing that must be done if we are to get just results in this discussion, is to do one's best to bear the range in mind.

Let us admit that the average Chinaman is probably different in complexion, and, indeed, in all his physical and psychical proportions, from the average Englishman. Does that render their association upon terms of equality in a World State impossible? What the average Chinaman or Englishman may be, is of no importance whatever to our plan of a World State. It is not averages that exist, but individuals. The average Chinaman will never meet the average Englishman anywhere; only individual Chinamen will meet individual Englishmen. Now among Chinamen will be found a range of variety as extensive as among Englishmen, and there is no single trait presented by all Chinamen and no Englishman, or *vice versa*. Even the oblique eye is not universal in China, and there are probably many Chinamen who might have been "changed at birth," taken away and educated into quite passable Englishmen. Even after we have separated out and allowed for the differences in carriage, physique, moral prepossessions, and so forth, due to their entirely divergent cultures, there remains, no doubt, a very great difference between the average Chinaman and the average Englishman; but would that amount to a wider difference than is to be found between extreme types of Englishmen?

For my own part I do not think that it would. But it is evident that any precise answer can be made only when anthropology has adopted much more exact and exhaustive methods of inquiry, and a

far more precise analysis than its present resources permit.

Be it remembered how doubtful and tainted is the bulk of our evidence in these matters. These are extraordinarily subtle inquiries, from which few men succeed in disentangling the threads of their personal associations — the curiously interwoven strands of self-love and self-interest that affect their inquiries. One might almost say that instinct fights against such investigations, as it does undoubtedly against many necessary medical researches. But while a long special training, a high tradition and the possibility of reward and distinction, enable the medical student to face many tasks that are at once undignified and physically repulsive, the people from whom we get our anthropological information are rarely men of more than average intelligence, and of no mental training at all. And the problems are far more elusive. It surely needs at least the gifts and training of a first-class novelist, combined with a sedulous patience that probably cannot be hoped for in combination with these, to gauge the all-round differences between man and man. Even where there are no barriers of language and colour, understanding may be nearly impossible. How few educated people seem to understand the servant class in England, or the working men! Except for Mr. Bart Kennedy's *A Man Adrift*, I know of scarcely any book that shows a really sympathetic and living understanding of the navvy, the longshore sailor man, the rough chap of our own race. Caricatures, luridly tragic or gaily comic, in which the misconceptions of the author blend with the preconceptions of the reader and achieve success, are, of course, common enough. And then consider the sort of people who pronounce judgments on the moral and intellectual capacity of the negro, the Malay, or the Chinaman. You have missionaries, native schoolmasters, employers of coolies, traders, simple downright men, who scarcely suspect the existence of any sources of error in their verdicts, who are incapable of understanding the difference between what is innate and what is acquired, much less of distinguishing them in their interplay. Now and then one seems to have a glimpse of something really living — in Mary Kingsley's buoyant work, for instance — and even that may be no more than my illusion.

For my own part I am disposed to discount all adverse judgments

and all statements of insurmountable differences between race and race. I talk upon racial qualities to all men who have had opportunities of close observation, and I find that their insistence upon these differences is usually in inverse proportion to their intelligence. It may be the chance of my encounters, but that is my clear impression. Common sailors will generalise in the profoundest way about Irishmen, and Scotchmen, and Yankees, and Nova Scotians, and "Dutchies," until one might think one talked of different species of animal, but the educated explorer flings clear of all these delusions. To him men present themselves individualised, and if they classify it is by some skin-deep accident of tint, some trick of the tongue, or habit of gesture, or such-like superficiality. And after all there exists to-day available one kind at least of unbiassed anthropological evidence. There are photographs. Let the reader turn over the pages of some such copiously illustrated work as *The Living Races of Mankind*, [Footnote: *The Living Races of Mankind*, by H. N. Hutchinson, J. W. Gregory, and R. Lydekker. (Hutchinson.)] and look into the eyes of one alien face after another. Are they not very like the people one knows? For the most part, one finds it hard to believe that, with a common language and common social traditions, one would not get on very well with these people. Here or there is a brutish or evil face, but you can find as brutish and evil in the Strand on any afternoon. There are differences no doubt, but fundamental incompatibilities — *no!* And very many of them send out a ray of special resemblance and remind one more strongly of this friend or that, than they do of their own kind. One notes with surprise that one's good friend and neighbour X and an anonymous naked Gold Coast negro belong to one type, as distinguished from one's dear friend Y and a beaming individual from Somaliland, who as certainly belong to another.

In one matter the careless and prejudiced nature of accepted racial generalisations is particularly marked. A great and increasing number of people are persuaded that "half-breeds" are peculiarly evil creatures — as hunchbacks and bastards were supposed to be in the middle ages. The full legend of the wickedness of the half-breed is best to be learnt from a drunken mean white from Virginia or the Cape. The half-breed, one hears, combines all the vices of either

parent, he is wretchedly poor in health and spirit, but vindictive, powerful, and dangerous to an extreme degree, his morals — the mean white has high and exacting standards — are indescribable even in whispers in a saloon, and so on, and so on. There is really not an atom of evidence an unprejudiced mind would accept to sustain any belief of the sort. There is nothing to show that the children of racial admixture are, as a class, inherently either better or worse in any respect than either parent. There is an equally baseless theory that they are better, a theory displayed to a fine degree of foolishness in the article on Shakespeare in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Both theories belong to the vast edifice of sham science that smothers the realities of modern knowledge. It may be that most "half-breeds" are failures in life, but that proves nothing. They are, in an enormous number of cases, illegitimate and outcast from the normal education of either race; they are brought up in homes that are the battle-grounds of conflicting cultures; they labour under a heavy premium of disadvantage. There is, of course, a passing suggestion of Darwin's to account for atavism that might go to support the theory of the vileness of half-breeds, if it had ever been proved. But, then, it never has been proved. There is no proof in the matter at all.

§ 3

Suppose, now, there is such a thing as an all-round inferior race. Is that any reason why we should propose to preserve it for ever in a condition of tutelage? Whether there is a race so inferior I do not know, but certainly there is no race so superior as to be trusted with human charges. The true answer to Aristotle's plea for slavery, that there are "natural slaves," lies in the fact that there are no "natural" masters. Power is no more to be committed to men without discipline and restriction than alcohol. The true objection to slavery is not that it is unjust to the inferior but that it corrupts the superior. There is only one sane and logical thing to be done with a really inferior race, and that is to exterminate it.

Now there are various ways of exterminating a race, and most of them are cruel. You may end it with fire and sword after the old

Hebrew fashion; you may enslave it and work it to death, as the Spaniards did the Caribs; you may set it boundaries and then poison it slowly with deleterious commodities, as the Americans do with most of their Indians; you may incite it to wear clothing to which it is not accustomed and to live under new and strange conditions that will expose it to infectious diseases to which you yourselves are immune, as the missionaries do the Polynesians; you may resort to honest simple murder, as we English did with the Tasmanians; or you can maintain such conditions as conduce to "race suicide," as the British administration does in Fiji. Suppose, then, for a moment, that there is an all-round inferior race; a Modern Utopia is under the hard logic of life, and it would have to exterminate such a race as quickly as it could. On the whole, the Fijian device seems the least cruel. But Utopia would do that without any clumsiness of race distinction, in exactly the same manner, and by the same machinery, as it exterminates all its own defective and inferior strains; that is to say, as we have already discussed in Chapter the Fifth, § 1, by its marriage laws, and by the laws of the minimum wage. That extinction need never be discriminatory. If any of the race did, after all, prove to be fit to survive, they would survive — they would be picked out with a sure and automatic justice from the over-ready condemnation of all their kind.

Is there, however, an all-round inferior race in the world? Even the Australian black-fellow is, perhaps, not quite so entirely eligible for extinction as a good, wholesome, horse-racing, sheep-farming Australian white may think. These queer little races, the black-fellows, the Pigmies, the Bushmen, may have their little gifts, a greater keenness, a greater fineness of this sense or that, a quaintness of the imagination or what not, that may serve as their little unique addition to the totality of our Utopian civilisation. We are supposing that every individual alive on earth is alive in Utopia, and so all the surviving "black-fellows" are there. Every one of them in Utopia has had what none have had on earth, a fair education and fair treatment, justice, and opportunity. Suppose that the common idea is right about the general inferiority of these people, then it would follow that in Utopia most of them are childless, and working at or about the

minimum wage, and some will have passed out of all possibility of offspring under the hand of the offended law; but still — cannot we imagine some few of these little people — whom you must suppose neither naked nor clothed in the European style, but robed in the Utopian fashion — may have found some delicate art to practise, some peculiar sort of carving, for example, that justifies God in creating them? Utopia has sound sanitary laws, sound social laws, sound economic laws; what harm are these people going to do?

Some may be even prosperous and admired, may have married women of their own or some other race, and so may be transmitting that distinctive thin thread of excellence, to take its due place in the great synthesis of the future.

And, indeed, coming along that terrace in Utopia, I see a little figure, a little bright-eyed, bearded man, inky black, frizzy haired, and clad in a white tunic and black hose, and with a mantle of lemon yellow wrapped about his shoulders. He walks, as most Utopians walk, as though he had reason to be proud of something, as though he had no reason to be afraid of anything in the world. He carries a portfolio in his hand. It is that, I suppose, as much as his hair, that recalls the *Quartier Latin* to my mind.

§ 4

I had already discussed the question of race with the botanist at Lucerne.

"But you would not like," he cried in horror, "your daughter to marry a Chinaman or a negro?"

"Of course," said I, "when you say Chinaman, you think of a creature with a pigtail, long nails, and insanitary habits, and when you say negro you think of a filthy-headed, black creature in an old hat. You do this because your imagination is too feeble to disentangle the inherent qualities of a thing from its habitual associations."

"Insult isn't argument," said the botanist.

"Neither is unsound implication. You make a question of race into a question of unequal cultures. You would not like your daughter to marry the sort of negro who steals hens, but then you would also not

like your daughter to marry a pure English hunchback with a squint, or a drunken cab tout of Norman blood. As a matter of fact, very few well-bred English girls do commit that sort of indiscretion. But you don't think it necessary to generalise against men of your own race because there are drunken cab touts, and why should you generalise against negroes? Because the proportion of undesirables is higher among negroes, that does not justify a sweeping condemnation. You may have to condemn most, but why *all*? There may be — neither of us knows enough to deny — negroes who are handsome, capable, courageous."

"Ugh!" said the botanist.

"How detestable you must find Othello!"

It is my Utopia, and for a moment I could almost find it in my heart to spite the botanist by creating a modern Desdemona and her lover sooty black to the lips, there before our eyes. But I am not so sure of my case as that, and for the moment there shall come nothing more than a swart-faced, dusky Burmese woman in the dress of the Greater Rule, with her tall Englishman (as he might be on earth) at her side. That, however, is a digression from my conversation with the botanist.

"And the Chinaman?" said the botanist.

"I think we shall have all the buff and yellow peoples intermingling pretty freely."

"Chinamen and white women, for example."

"Yes," I said, "you've got to swallow that, anyhow; you *shall* swallow that."

He finds the idea too revolting for comment.

I try and make the thing seem easier for him. "Do try," I said, "to grasp a Modern Utopian's conditions. The Chinaman will speak the same language as his wife — whatever her race may be — he will wear costume of the common civilised fashion, he will have much the same education as his European rival, read the same literature, bow to the same traditions. And you must remember a wife in Utopia is singularly not subject to her husband...."

The botanist proclaims his invincible conclusion: "Everyone would cut her!"

"This is Utopia," I said, and then sought once more to tranquillise

his mind. “No doubt among the vulgar, coarse-minded people outside the Rule there may be something of the sort. Every earthly moral blockhead, a little educated, perhaps, is to be found in Utopia. You will, no doubt, find the ‘cut’ and the ‘boycott,’ and all those nice little devices by which dull people get a keen edge on life, in their place here, and their place here is somewhere—”

I turned a thumb earthward. “There!”

The botanist did not answer for a little while. Then he said, with some temper and great emphasis: “Well, I’m jolly glad anyhow that I’m not to be a permanent resident in this Utopia, *if our daughters are to be married to Hottentots by regulation*. I’m jolly glad.”

He turned his back on me.

Now did I say anything of the sort?...

I had to bring him, I suppose; there’s no getting away from him in this life. But, as I have already observed, the happy ancients went to their Utopias without this sort of company.

§ 5

What gives the botanist so great an advantage in all his Anti-Utopian utterances is his unconsciousness of his own limitations. He thinks in little pieces that lie about loose, and nothing has any necessary link with anything else in his mind. So that I cannot retort upon him by asking him, if he objects to this synthesis of all nations, tongues and peoples in a World State, what alternative ideal he proposes.

People of this sort do not even feel the need of alternatives. Beyond the scope of a few personal projects, meeting Her again, and things like that, they do not feel that there is a future. They are unencumbered by any baggage of convictions whatever, in relation to that. That, at least, is the only way in which I can explain our friend’s high intellectual mobility. Attempts to correlate statesmanship, which they regard with interest as a dramatic interplay of personalities, with any secular movement of humanity, they class with the differential calculus and Darwinism, as things far too difficult to be anything but finally and subtly wrong.

So the argument must pass into a direct address to the reader.

If you are not prepared to regard a world-wide synthesis of all

cultures and polities and races into one World State as the desirable end upon which all civilising efforts converge, what do you regard as the desirable end? Synthesis, one may remark in passing, does not necessarily mean fusion, nor does it mean uniformity.

The alternatives fall roughly under three headings. The first is to assume there is a best race, to define as well as one can that best race, and to regard all other races as material for extermination. This has a fine, modern, biological air ("Survival of the Fittest"). If you are one of those queer German professors who write insanity about Welt-Politik, you assume the best race is the "Teutonic"; Cecil Rhodes affected that triumph of creative imagination, the "Anglo-Saxon race"; my friend, Moses Cohen, thinks there is much to be said for the Jew. On its premises, this is a perfectly sound and reasonable policy, and it opens out a brilliant prospect for the scientific inventor for what one might call Welt-Apparat in the future, for national harrowing and reaping machines, and race-destroying fumigations. The great plain of China ("Yellow Peril") lends itself particularly to some striking wholesale undertaking; it might, for example, be flooded for a few days, and then disinfected with volcanic chlorine. Whether, when all the inferior races have been stamped out, the superior race would not proceed at once, or after a brief millennial period of social harmony, to divide itself into sub-classes, and begin the business over again at a higher level, is an interesting residual question into which we need not now penetrate.

That complete development of a scientific Welt-Politik is not, however, very widely advocated at present, no doubt from a want of confidence in the public imagination. We have, however, a very audible and influential school, the Modern Imperialist school, which distinguishes its own race — there is a German, a British, and an Anglo-Saxon section in the school, and a wider teaching which embraces the whole "white race" in one remarkable tolerance — as the superior race, as one, indeed, superior enough to own slaves, collectively, if not individually; and the exponents of this doctrine look with a resolute, truculent, but slightly indistinct eye to a future in which all the rest of the world will be in subjection to these elect. The ideals of this type are set forth pretty clearly in Mr. Kidd's *Control of the Tropics*. The whole world is to be administered by the

“white” Powers — Mr. Kidd did not anticipate Japan — who will see to it that their subjects do not “prevent the utilisation of the immense natural resources which they have in charge.” Those other races are to be regarded as children, recalcitrant children at times, and without any of the tender emotions of paternity. It is a little doubtful whether the races lacking “in the elementary qualities of social efficiency” are expected to acquire them under the chastening hands of those races which, through “strength and energy of character, humanity, probity, and integrity, and a single-minded devotion to conceptions of duty,” are developing “the resources of the richest regions of the earth” over their heads, or whether this is the ultimate ideal.

Next comes the rather incoherent alternative that one associates in England with official Liberalism.

Liberalism in England is not quite the same thing as Liberalism in the rest of the world; it is woven of two strands. There is Whiggism, the powerful tradition of seventeenth-century Protestant and republican England, with its great debt to republican Rome, its strong constructive and disciplinary bias, its broad and originally very living and intelligent outlook; and interwoven with this there is the sentimental and logical Liberalism that sprang from the stresses of the eighteenth century, that finds its early scarce differentiated expression in Harrington’s *Oceana*, and after fresh draughts of the tradition of Brutus and Cato and some elegant trifling with noble savages, budded in *La Cité Morellyste*, flowered in the emotional democratic naturalism of Rousseau, and bore abundant fruit in the French Revolution. These are two very distinct strands. Directly they were freed in America from the grip of conflict with British Toryism, they came apart as the Republican and Democratic parties respectively. Their continued union in Great Britain is a political accident. Because of this mixture, the whole career of English-speaking Liberalism, though it has gone to one unbroken strain of eloquence, has never produced a clear statement of policy in relation to other peoples politically less fortunate. It has developed no definite ideas at all about the future of mankind. The Whig disposition, which once had some play in India, was certainly to attempt to anglicise the “native,” to assimilate his culture, and then to assimilate his political status with that of his temporary ruler. But

interwoven with this anglicising tendency, which was also, by the bye, a Christianising tendency, was a strong disposition, derived from the Rousseau strand, to leave other peoples alone, to facilitate even the separation and autonomy of detached portions of our own peoples, to disintegrate finally into perfect, because lawless, individuals. The official exposition of British "Liberalism" to-day still wriggles unstably because of these conflicting constituents, but on the whole the Whig strand now seems the weaker. The contemporary Liberal politician offers cogent criticism upon the brutality and conceit of modern imperialisms, but that seems to be the limit of his service. Taking what they do not say and do not propose as an indication of Liberal intentions, it would seem that the ideal of the British Liberals and of the American Democrats is to favour the existence of just as many petty, loosely allied, or quite independent nationalities as possible, just as many languages as possible, to deprecate armies and all controls, and to trust to the innate goodness of disorder and the powers of an ardent sentimentality to keep the world clean and sweet. The Liberals will not face the plain consequence that such a state of affairs is hopelessly unstable, that it involves the maximum risk of war with the minimum of permanent benefit and public order. They will not reflect that the stars in their courses rule inexorably against it. It is a vague, impossible ideal, with a rude sort of unworldly moral beauty, like the gospel of the Doukhobors. Besides that charm it has this most seductive quality to an official British Liberal, that it does not exact intellectual activity nor indeed activity of any sort whatever. It is, by virtue of that alone, a far less mischievous doctrine than the crude and violent Imperialism of the popular Press.

Neither of these two schools of policy, neither the international *laisser faire* of the Liberals, nor "hustle to the top" Imperialism, promise any reality of permanent progress for the world of men. They are the resort, the moral reference, of those who will not think frankly and exhaustively over the whole field of this question. Do that, insist upon solutions of more than accidental applicability, and you emerge with one or other of two contrasted solutions, as the consciousness of kind or the consciousness of individuality prevails in your mind. In the former case you will adopt aggressive

Imperialism, but you will carry it out to its "thorough" degree of extermination. You will seek to develop the culture and power of your kind of men and women to the utmost in order to shoulder all other kinds from the earth. If on the other hand you appreciate the unique, you will aim at such a synthesis as this Utopia displays, a synthesis far more credible and possible than any other Welt-Politik. In spite of all the pageant of modern war, synthesis is in the trend of the world. To aid and develop it, could be made the open and secure policy of any great modern empire now. Modern war, modern international hostility is, I believe, possible only through the stupid illiteracy of the mass of men and the conceit and intellectual indolence of rulers and those who feed the public mind. Were the will of the mass of men lit and conscious, I am firmly convinced it would now burn steadily for synthesis and peace.

It would be so easy to bring about a world peace within a few decades, was there but the will for it among men! The great empires that exist need but a little speech and frankness one with another. Within, the riddles of social order are already half solved in books and thought, there are the common people and the subject peoples to be educated and drilled, to be led to a common speech and a common literature, to be assimilated and made citizens; without, there is the possibility of treaties. Why, for example, should Britain and France, or either and the United States, or Sweden and Norway, or Holland, or Denmark, or Italy, fight any more for ever? And if there is no reason, how foolish and dangerous it is still to sustain linguistic differences and custom houses, and all sorts of foolish and irritating distinctions between their various citizens! Why should not all these peoples agree to teach some common language, French, for example, in their common schools, or to teach each other's languages reciprocally? Why should they not aim at a common literature, and bring their various common laws, their marriage laws, and so on, into uniformity? Why should they not work for a uniform minimum of labour conditions through all their communities? Why, then, should they not — except in the interests of a few rascal plutocrats — trade freely and exchange their citizenship freely throughout their common boundaries? No doubt there are difficulties to be found, but they are quite finite difficulties. What is there to prevent a parallel movement

of all the civilised Powers in the world towards a common ideal and assimilation?

Stupidity — nothing but stupidity, a stupid brute jealousy, aimless and unjustifiable.

The coarser conceptions of aggregation are at hand, the hostile, jealous patriotisms, the blare of trumpets and the pride of fools; they serve the daily need though they lead towards disaster. The real and the immediate has us in its grip, the accidental personal thing. The little effort of thought, the brief sustained effort of will, is too much for the contemporary mind. Such treaties, such sympathetic international movements, are but dream stuff yet on earth, though Utopia has realised them long since and already passed them by.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH The Bubble Bursts

§ 1

As I walk back along the river terrace to the hotel where the botanist awaits me, and observe the Utopians I encounter, I have no thought that my tenure of Utopia becomes every moment more precarious. There float in my mind vague anticipations of more talks with my double and still more, of a steady elaboration of detail, of interesting journeys of exploration. I forget that a Utopia is a thing of the imagination that becomes more fragile with every added circumstance, that, like a soap-bubble, it is most brilliantly and variously coloured at the very instant of its dissolution. This Utopia is nearly done. All the broad lines of its social organisation are completed now, the discussion of all its general difficulties and problems. Utopian individuals pass me by, fine buildings tower on either hand; it does not occur to me that I may look too closely. To find the people assuming the concrete and individual, is not, as I fondly imagine, the last triumph of realisation, but the swimming moment of opacity before the film gives way. To come to individual emotional cases, is to return to the earth.

I find the botanist sitting at a table in the hotel courtyard.

"Well?" I say, standing before him.

"I've been in the gardens on the river terrace," he answers, "hoping I might see her again."

"Nothing better to do?"

"Nothing in the world."

"You'll have your double back from India to-morrow. Then you'll have conversation."

"I don't want it," he replies, compactly.

I shrug my shoulders, and he adds, "At least with him."

I let myself down into a seat beside him.

For a time I sit restfully enjoying his companionable silence, and thinking fragmentarily of those *samurai* and their Rules. I entertain something of the satisfaction of a man who has finished building a bridge; I feel that I have joined together things that I had never joined

before. My Utopia seems real to me, very real, I can believe in it, until the metal chair-back gives to my shoulder blades, and Utopian sparrows twitter and hop before my feet. I have a pleasant moment of unhesitating self-satisfaction; I feel a shameless exultation to be there. For a moment I forget the consideration the botanist demands; the mere pleasure of completeness, of holding and controlling all the threads possesses me.

"You *will* persist in believing," I say, with an aggressive expository note, "that if you meet this lady she will be a person with the memories and sentiments of her double on earth. You think she will understand and pity, and perhaps love you. Nothing of the sort is the case." I repeat with confident rudeness, "Nothing of the sort is the case. Things are different altogether here; you can hardly tell even now how different are—"

I discover he is not listening to me.

"What is the matter?" I ask abruptly.

He makes no answer, but his expression startles me.

"What is the matter?" and then I follow his eyes.

A woman and a man are coming through the great archway — and instantly I guess what has happened. She it is arrests my attention first — long ago I knew she was a sweetly beautiful woman. She is fair, with frank blue eyes, that look with a sort of tender receptivity into her companion's face. For a moment or so they remain, greyish figures in the cool shadow, against the sunlit greenery of the gardens beyond.

"It is Mary," the botanist whispers with white lips, but he stares at the form of the man. His face whitens, it becomes so transfigured with emotion that for a moment it does not look weak. Then I see that his thin hand is clenched.

I realise how little I understand his emotions.

A sudden fear of what he will do takes hold of me. He sits white and tense as the two come into the clearer light of the courtyard. The man, I see, is one of the *samurai*, a dark, strong-faced man, a man I have never seen before, and she is wearing the robe that shows her a follower of the Lesser Rule.

Some glimmering of the botanist's feelings strikes through to my slow sympathies. Of course — a strange man! I put out a restraining

hand towards his arm. “I told you,” I say, “that very probably, most probably, she would have met some other. I tried to prepare you.”

“Nonsense,” he whispers, without looking at me. “It isn’t that. It’s — that scoundrel—”

He has an impulse to rise. “That scoundrel,” he repeats.

“He isn’t a scoundrel,” I say. “How do you know? Keep still! Why are you standing up?”

He and I stand up quickly, I as soon as he. But now the full meaning of the group has reached me. I grip his arm. “Be sensible,” I say, speaking very quickly, and with my back to the approaching couple. “He’s not a scoundrel here. This world is different from that. It’s caught his pride somehow and made a man of him. Whatever troubled them there—”

He turns a face of white wrath on me, of accusation, and for the moment of unexpected force. “This is *your* doing,” he says. “You have done this to mock me. He — of all men!” For a moment speech fails him, then; “You — you have done this to mock me.”

I try to explain very quickly. My tone is almost propitiatory.

“I never thought of it until now. But he’s— How did I know he was the sort of man a disciplined world has a use for?”

He makes no answer, but he looks at me with eyes that are positively baleful, and in the instant I read his mute but mulish resolve that Utopia must end.

“Don’t let that old quarrel poison all this,” I say almost entreatingly. “It happened all differently here — everything is different here. Your double will be back to-morrow. Wait for him. Perhaps then you will understand—”

He shakes his head, and then bursts out with, “What do I want with a double? Double! What do I care if things have been different here? This—”

He thrusts me weakly back with his long, white hand. “My God!” he says almost forcibly, “what nonsense all this is! All these dreams! All Utopias! There she is—! Oh, but I have dreamt of her! And now—”

A sob catches him. I am really frightened by this time. I still try to keep between him and these Utopians, and to hide his gestures from them.

“It’s different here,” I persist. “It’s different here. The emotion you feel has no place in it. It’s a scar from the earth — the sore scar of your past—”

“And what are we all but scars? What is life but a scarring? It’s *you* — you who don’t understand! Of course we are covered with scars, we live to be scarred, we are scars! We are the scars of the past! These *dreams*, these childish dreams—!”

He does not need to finish his sentence, he waves an unteachable destructive arm.

My Utopia rocks about me.

For a moment the vision of that great courtyard hangs real. There the Utopians live real about me, going to and fro, and the great archway blazes with sunlight from the green gardens by the riverside. The man who is one of the *samurai*, and his lady, whom the botanist loved on earth, pass out of sight behind the marble flower-set Triton that spouts coolness in the middle of the place. For a moment I see two working men in green tunics sitting on a marble seat in the shadow of the colonnade, and a sweet little silver-haired old lady, clad all in violet, and carrying a book, comes towards us, and lifts a curious eye at the botanist’s gestures. And then—

“Scars of the past! Scars of the past! These fanciful, useless dreams!”

§ 2

There is no jerk, no sound, no hint of material shock. We are in London, and clothed in the fashion of the town. The sullen roar of London fills our ears....

I see that I am standing beside an iron seat of poor design in that grey and gawky waste of asphalte — Trafalgar Square, and the botanist, with perplexity in his face, stares from me to a poor, shrivelled, dirt-lined old woman — my God! what a neglected thing she is! — who proffers a box of matches....

He buys almost mechanically, and turns back to me.

“I was saying,” he says, “the past rules us absolutely. These dreams—”

His sentence does not complete itself. He looks nervous and

irritated.

"You have a trick at times," he says instead, "of making your suggestions so vivid—"

He takes a plunge. "If you don't mind," he says in a sort of quavering ultimatum, "we won't discuss that aspect of the question — the lady, I mean — further."

He pauses, and there still hangs a faint perplexity between us.

"But—" I begin.

For a moment we stand there, and my dream of Utopia runs off me like water from an oiled slab. Of course — we lunched at our club. We came back from Switzerland by no dream train but by the ordinary Bâle express. We have been talking of that Lucerne woman he harps upon, and I have made some novel comment on his story. I have touched certain possibilities.

"You can't conceivably understand," he says.

"The fact remains," he goes on, taking up the thread of his argument again with an air of having defined our field, "we are the scars of the past. That's a thing one can discuss — without personalities."

"No," I say rather stupidly, "no."

"You are always talking as though you could kick the past to pieces; as though one could get right out from oneself and begin afresh. It is your weakness — if you don't mind my being frank — it makes you seem harsh and dogmatic. Life has gone easily for you; you have never been badly tried. You have been lucky — you do not understand the other way about. You are — hard."

I answer nothing.

He pants for breath. I perceive that in our discussion of his case I must have gone too far, and that he has rebelled. Clearly I must have said something wounding about that ineffectual love story of his.

"You don't allow for my position," he says, and it occurs to me to say, "I'm obliged to look at the thing from my own point of view...."

One or other of us makes a move. What a lot of filthy, torn paper is scattered about the world! We walk slowly side by side towards the dirt-littered basin of the fountain, and stand regarding two grimy tramps who sit and argue on a further seat. One holds a horrible old boot in his hand, and gesticulates with it, while his other hand

caresses his rag-wrapped foot. “Wot does Cham’lain *si*?” his words drift to us. “W’y, ‘e says, wot’s the good of ‘nvesting your kepital where these ‘ere Americans may dump it flat any time they like....”

(Were there not two men in green sitting on a marble seat?)

§ 3

We walk on, our talk suspended, past a ruthlessly clumsy hoarding, towards where men and women and children are struggling about a string of omnibuses. A newsvendor at the corner spreads a newspaper placard upon the wood pavement, pins the corners down with stones, and we glimpse something about: —

MASSACRE IN ODESSA.
DISCOVERY OF HUMAN REMAINS AT CHERTSEY.
SHOCKING LYNCHING OUTRAGE IN NEW YORK STATE.
GERMAN INTRIGUES GET A SET-BACK.
THE BIRTHDAY HONOURS. — FULL LIST.

Dear old familiar world!

An angry parent in conversation with a sympathetic friend jostles against us. “I’ll knock his blooming young ‘ed orf if ‘e cheeks me again. It’s these ‘ere brasted Board Schools—”

An omnibus passes, bearing on a board beneath an incorrectly drawn Union Jack an exhortation to the true patriot to “Buy Bumper’s British-Boiled Jam.”...

I am stunned beyond the possibility of discussion for a space. In this very place it must have been that the high terrace ran with the gardens below it, along which I came from my double to our hotel. I am going back, but now through reality, along the path I passed so happily in my dream. And the people I saw then are the people I am looking at now — with a difference.

The botanist walks beside me, white and nervously jerky in his movements, his ultimatum delivered.

We start to cross the road. An open carriage drives by, and we see a jaded, red-haired woman, smeared with paint, dressed in furs, and petulantly discontented. Her face is familiar to me, her face, with a

difference.

Why do I think of her as dressed in green?

Of course! — she it was I saw leading her children by the hand!

Comes a crash to our left, and a running of people to see a cab-horse down on the slippery, slanting pavement outside St. Martin's Church.

We go on up the street.

A heavy-eyed young Jewess, a draggled prostitute — no crimson flower for her hair, poor girl! — regards us with a momentary speculation, and we get a whiff of foul language from two newsboys on the kerb.

"We can't go on talking," the botanist begins, and ducks aside just in time to save his eye from the ferule of a stupidly held umbrella. He is going to treat our little tiff about that lady as closed. He has the air of picking up our conversation again at some earlier point.

He steps into the gutter, walks round outside a negro hawker, just escapes the wheel of a hansom, and comes to my side again.

"We can't go on talking of your Utopia," he says, "in a noise and crowd like this."

We are separated by a portly man going in the opposite direction, and join again. "We can't go on talking of Utopia," he repeats, "in London.... Up in the mountains — and holiday-time — it was all right. We let ourselves go!"

"I've been living in Utopia," I answer, tacitly adopting his tacit proposal to drop the lady out of the question.

"At times," he says, with a queer laugh, "you've almost made me live there too."

He reflects. "It doesn't do, you know. *No!* And I don't know whether, after all, I want—"

We are separated again by half-a-dozen lifted flagstones, a burning brazier, and two engineers concerned with some underground business or other — in the busiest hour of the day's traffic.

"Why shouldn't it do?" I ask.

"It spoils the world of everyday to let your mind run on impossible perfections."

"I wish," I shout against the traffic, "I could *smash* the world of

everyday."

My note becomes quarrelsome. "You may accept *this* as the world of reality, *you* may consent to be one scar in an ill-dressed compound wound, but so — not I! This is a dream too — this world. *Your* dream, and you bring me back to it — out of Utopia—"

The crossing of Bow Street gives me pause again.

The face of a girl who is passing westward, a student girl, rather carelessly dressed, her books in a carrying-strap, comes across my field of vision. The westward sun of London glows upon her face. She has eyes that dream, surely no sensuous nor personal dream.

After all, after all, dispersed, hidden, disorganised, undiscovered, unsuspected even by themselves, the *samurai* of Utopia are in this world, the motives that are developed and organised there stir dumbly here and stifle in ten thousand futile hearts....

I overtake the botanist, who got ahead at the crossing by the advantage of a dust-cart.

"You think this is real because you can't wake out of it," I say. "It's all a dream, and there are people — I'm just one of the first of a multitude — between sleeping and waking — who will presently be rubbing it out of their eyes."

A pinched and dirty little girl, with sores upon her face, stretches out a bunch of wilting violets, in a pitifully thin little fist, and interrupts my speech. "Bunch o' vi'lets — on'y a penny."

"No!" I say curtly, hardening my heart.

A ragged and filthy nursing mother, with her last addition to our Imperial People on her arm, comes out of a drinkshop, and stands a little unsteadily, and wipes mouth and nose comprehensively with the back of a red chapped hand....

§ 4

"Isn't *that* reality?" says the botanist, almost triumphantly, and leaves me aghast at his triumph.

"*That!*" I say belatedly. "It's a thing in a nightmare!"

He shakes his head and smiles — exasperatingly.

I perceive quite abruptly that the botanist and I have reached the limits of our intercourse.

“The world dreams things like that,” I say, “because it suffers from an indigestion of such people as you.”

His low-toned self-complacency, like the faded banner of an obstinate fort, still flies unconquered. And you know, he’s not even a happy man with it all!

For ten seconds or more I am furiously seeking in my mind for a word, for a term of abuse, for one compendious verbal missile that shall smash this man for ever. It has to express total inadequacy of imagination and will, spiritual anæmia, dull respectability, gross sentimentality, a cultivated pettiness of heart....

That word will not come. But no other word will do. Indeed the word does not exist. There is nothing with sufficient vituperative concentration for this moral and intellectual stupidity of educated people....

“Er—” he begins.

No! I can’t endure him.

With a passionate rapidity of movement, I leave his side, dart between a carriage and a van, duck under the head of a cab-horse, and board a ‘bus going westward somewhere — but anyhow, going in exactly the reverse direction to the botanist. I clamber up the steps and thread my swaying way to the seat immediately behind the driver.

“There!” I say, as I whack myself down on the seat and pant.

When I look round the botanist is out of sight.

§ 5

But I am back in the world for all that, and my Utopia is done.

It is good discipline for the Utopist to visit this world occasionally.

But from the front seat on the top of an omnibus on a sunny September afternoon, the Strand, and Charing Cross corner, and Whitehall, and the great multitude of people, the great uproar of vehicles, streaming in all directions, is apt to look a world altogether too formidable. It has a glare, it has a tumult and vigour that shouts one down. It shouts one down, if shouting is to carry it. What good was it to trot along the pavement through this noise and tumult of

life, pleading Utopia to that botanist? What good would it be to recommend Utopia in this driver's preoccupied ear?

There are moments in the life of every philosopher and dreamer when he feels himself the flimsiest of absurdities, when the Thing in Being has its way with him, its triumphant way, when it asks in a roar, unanswerably, with a fine solid use of the current vernacular, "What Good is all this — Rot about Utopias?"

One inspects the Thing in Being with something of the diffident speculation of primitive man, peering from behind a tree at an angry elephant.

(There is an omen in that image. On how many occasions must that ancestor of ours have had just the Utopist's feeling of ambitious unreality, have decided that on the whole it was wiser to go very quietly home again, and leave the big beast alone? But, in the end, men rode upon the elephant's head, and guided him this way or that.... The Thing in Being that roars so tremendously about Charing Cross corner seems a bigger antagonist than an elephant, but then we have better weapons than chipped flint blades....)

After all, in a very little time everything that impresses me so mightily this September afternoon will have changed or passed away for ever, everything. These omnibuses, these great, stalwart, crowded, many-coloured things that jostle one another, and make so handsome a clatter-clamour, will all have gone; they and their horses and drivers and organisation; you will come here and you will not find them. Something else will be here, some different sort of vehicle, that is now perhaps the mere germ of an idea in some engineer student's brain. And this road and pavement will have changed, and these impressive great buildings; other buildings will be here, buildings that are as yet more impalpable than this page you read, more formless and flimsy by far than anything that is reasoned here. Little plans sketched on paper, strokes of a pen or of a brush, will be the first materialisations of what will at last obliterate every detail and atom of these re-echoing actualities that overwhelm us now. And the clothing and gestures of these innumerable people, the character of their faces and bearing, these too will be recast in the spirit of what are now obscure and impalpable beginnings.

The new things will be indeed of the substance of the thing that is,

but differing just in the measure of the will and imagination that goes to make them. They will be strong and fair as the will is sturdy and organised and the imagination comprehensive and bold; they will be ugly and smeared with wretchedness as the will is fluctuating and the imagination timid and mean.

Indeed Will is stronger than Fact, it can mould and overcome Fact. But this world has still to discover its will, it is a world that slumbers inertly, and all this roar and pulsation of life is no more than its heavy breathing.... My mind runs on to the thought of an awakening.

As my omnibus goes lumbering up Cockspur Street through the clatter rattle of the cabs and carriages, there comes another fancy in my mind.... Could one but realise an apocalyptic image and suppose an angel, such as was given to each of the seven churches of Asia, given for a space to the service of the Greater Rule. I see him as a towering figure of flame and colour, standing between earth and sky, with a trumpet in his hands, over there above the Haymarket, against the October glow; and when he sounds, all the *samurai*, all who are *samurai* in Utopia, will know themselves and one another....

(Whup! says a motor brougham, and a policeman stays the traffic with his hand.)

All of us who partake of the *samurai* would know ourselves and one another!

For a moment I have a vision of this resurrection of the living, of a vague, magnificent answer, of countless myriads at attention, of all that is fine in humanity at attention, round the compass of the earth.

Then that philosophy of individual uniqueness resumes its sway over my thoughts, and my dream of a world's awakening fades.

I had forgotten....

Things do not happen like that. God is not simple, God is not theatrical, the summons comes to each man in its due time for him, with an infinite subtlety of variety....

If that is so, what of my Utopia?

This infinite world must needs be flattened to get it on one retina. The picture of a solid thing, although it is flattened and simplified, is not necessarily a lie. Surely, surely, in the end, by degrees, and steps, something of this sort, some such understanding, as this Utopia must

come. First here, then there, single men and then groups of men will fall into line — not indeed with my poor faulty hesitating suggestions — but with a great and comprehensive plan wrought out by many minds and in many tongues. It is just because my plan is faulty, because it mis-states so much, and omits so much, that they do not now fall in. It will not be like *my* dream, the world that is coming. My dream is just my own poor dream, the thing sufficient for me. We fail in comprehension, we fail so variously and abundantly. We see as much as it is serviceable for us to see, and we see no further. But the fresh undaunted generations come to take on our work beyond our utmost effort, beyond the range of our ideas. They will learn with certainty things that to us are guesses and riddles....

There will be many Utopias. Each generation will have its new version of Utopia, a little more certain and complete and real, with its problems lying closer and closer to the problems of the Thing in Being. Until at last from dreams Utopias will have come to be working drawings, and the whole world will be shaping the final World State, the fair and great and fruitful World State, that will only not be a Utopia because it will be this world. So surely it must be—

The policeman drops his hand. "Come up," says the 'bus driver, and the horses strain; "Clitter, clatter, cluck, clak," the line of hurrying hansoms overtakes the omnibus going west. A dexterous lad on a bicycle with a bale of newspapers on his back dodges nimbly across the head of the column and vanishes up a side street.

The omnibus sways forward. Rapt and prophetic, his plump hands clasped round the handle of his umbrella, his billycock hat a trifle askew, this irascible little man of the Voice, this impatient dreamer, this scolding Optimist, who has argued so rudely and dogmatically about economics and philosophy and decoration, and indeed about everything under the sun, who has been so hard on the botanist and fashionable women, and so reluctant in the matter of beer, is carried onward, dreaming dreams, dreams that with all the inevitable ironies of difference, may be realities when you and I are dreams.

He passes, and for a little space we are left with his egoisms and idiosyncrasies more or less in suspense.

But why was he intruded? you ask. Why could not a modern

Utopia be discussed without this impersonation — impersonally? It has confused the book, you say, made the argument hard to follow, and thrown a quality of insincerity over the whole. Are we but mocking at Utopias, you demand, using all these noble and generalised hopes as the backcloth against which two bickering personalities jar and squabble? Do I mean we are never to view the promised land again except through a foreground of fellow-travellers? There is a common notion that the reading of a Utopia should end with a swelling heart and clear resolves, with lists of names, formation of committees, and even the commencement of subscriptions. But this Utopia began upon a philosophy of fragmentation, and ends, confusedly, amidst a gross tumult of immediate realities, in dust and doubt, with, at the best, one individual's aspiration. Utopias were once in good faith, projects for a fresh creation of the world and of a most unworldly completeness; this so-called Modern Utopia is a mere story of personal adventures among Utopian philosophies.

Indeed, that came about without the writer's intention. So it was the summoned vision came. For I see about me a great multitude of little souls and groups of souls as darkened, as derivative as my own; with the passage of years I understand more and more clearly the quality of the motives that urge me and urge them to do whatever we do.... Yet that is not all I see, and I am not altogether bounded by my littleness. Ever and again, contrasting with this immediate vision, come glimpses of a comprehensive scheme, in which these personalities float, the scheme of a synthetic wider being, the great State, mankind, in which we all move and go, like blood corpuscles, like nerve cells, it may be at times like brain cells, in the body of a man. But the two visions are not seen consistently together, at least by me, and I do not surely know that they exist consistently together. The motives needed for those wider issues come not into the interplay of my vanities and wishes. That greater scheme lies about the men and women I know, as I have tried to make the vistas and spaces, the mountains, cities, laws, and order of Utopia lie about my talking couple, too great for their sustained comprehension. When one focuses upon these two that wide landscape becomes indistinct and distant, and when one regards that then the real persons one

knows grow vague and unreal. Nevertheless, I cannot separate these two aspects of human life, each commenting on the other. In that incongruity between great and individual inheres the incompatibility I could not resolve, and which, therefore, I have had to present in this conflicting form. At times that great scheme does seem to me to enter certain men's lives as a passion, as a real and living motive; there are those who know it almost as if it was a thing of desire; even for me, upon occasion, the little lures of the immediate life are seen small and vain, and the soul goes out to that mighty Being, to apprehend it and serve it and possess. But this is an illumination that passes as it comes, a rare transitory lucidity, leaving the soul's desire suddenly turned to presumption and hypocrisy upon the lips. One grasps at the Universe and attains — Bathos. The hungers, the jealousies, the prejudices and habits have us again, and we are forced back to think that it is so, and not otherwise, that we are meant to serve the mysteries; that in these blinkers it is we are driven to an end we cannot understand. And then, for measured moments in the night watches or as one walks alone or while one sits in thought and speech with a friend, the wider aspirations glow again with a sincere emotion, with the colours of attainable desire....

That is my all about Utopia, and about the desire and need for Utopia, and how that planet lies to this planet that bears the daily lives of men.

APPENDIX SCEPTICISM OF THE INSTRUMENT

A Portion of a Paper read to the Oxford Philosophical Society, November 8, 1903, and reprinted, with some Revision, from the Version given in *Mind*, vol. xiii. (N.S.), No. 51.

(*See also* Chapter I., § 6, and Chapter X., §§ 1 and 2.)

It seems to me that I may most propitiously attempt to interest you this evening by describing very briefly the particular metaphysical and philosophical system in which I do my thinking, and more particularly by setting out for your consideration one or two points in which I seem to myself to differ most widely from current accepted philosophy.

You must be prepared for things that will strike you as crude, for a certain difference of accent and dialect that you may not like, and you must be prepared too to hear what may strike you as the clumsy statement of my ignorant rediscovery of things already beautifully thought out and said. But in the end you may incline to forgive me some of this first offence.... It is quite unavoidable that, in setting out these intellectual foundations of mine, I should lapse for a moment or so towards autobiography.

A convergence of circumstances led to my having my knowledge of concrete things quite extensively developed before I came to philosophical examination at all. I have heard someone say that a savage or an animal is mentally a purely objective being, and in that respect I was like a savage or an animal until I was well over twenty. I was extremely unaware of the subjective or introverted element in my being. I was a Positivist without knowing it. My early education was a feeble one; it was one in which my private observation, inquiry and experiment were far more important factors than any instruction, or rather perhaps the instruction I received was less even than what I learnt for myself, and it terminated at thirteen. I had come into pretty intimate contact with the harder realities of life, with hunger in various forms, and many base and disagreeable necessities, before I

was fifteen. About that age, following the indication of certain theological and speculative curiosities, I began to learn something of what I will call deliberately and justly, Elementary Science — stuff I got out of *Cassell's Popular Educator* and cheap text-books — and then, through accidents and ambitions that do not matter in the least to us now, I came to three years of illuminating and good scientific work. The central fact of those three years was Huxley's course in Comparative Anatomy at the school in Exhibition Road. About that as a nucleus I arranged a spacious digest of facts. At the end of that time I had acquired what I still think to be a fairly clear, and complete and ordered view of the ostensibly real universe. Let me try to give you the chief things I had. I had man definitely placed in the great scheme of space and time. I knew him incurably for what he was, finite and not final, a being of compromises and adaptations. I had traced his lungs, for example, from a swimming bladder, step by step, with scalpel and probe, through a dozen types or more, I had seen the ancestral cæcum shrink to that disease nest, the appendix of to-day, I had watched the gill slit patched slowly to the purposes of the ear and the reptile jaw suspension utilised to eke out the needs of a sense organ taken from its native and natural water. I had worked out the development of those extraordinarily unsatisfactory and untrustworthy instruments, man's teeth, from the skin scutes of the shark to their present function as a basis for gold stoppings, and followed the slow unfolding of the complex and painful process of gestation through which man comes into the world. I had followed all these things and many kindred things by dissection and in embryology — I had checked the whole theory of development again in a year's course of palæontology, and I had taken the dimensions of the whole process, by the scale of the stars, in a course of astronomical physics. And all that amount of objective elucidation came before I had reached the beginnings of any philosophical or metaphysical inquiry, any inquiry as to why I believed, how I believed, what I believed, or what the fundamental stuff of things was.

Now following hard upon this interlude with knowledge, came a time when I had to give myself to teaching, and it became advisable to acquire one of those Teaching Diplomas that are so widely and so

foolishly despised, and that enterprise set me to a superficial, but suggestive study of educational method, of educational theory, of logic, of psychology, and so at last, when the little affair with the diploma was settled, to philosophy. Now to come to logic over the bracing uplands of comparative anatomy is to come to logic with a lot of very natural preconceptions blown clean out of one's mind. It is, I submit, a way of taking logic in the flank. When you have realised to the marrow, that all the physical organs of man and all his physical structure are what they are through a series of adaptations and approximations, and that they are kept up to a level of practical efficiency only by the elimination of death, and that this is true also of his brain and of his instincts and of many of his mental predispositions, you are not going to take his thinking apparatus unquestioningly as being in any way mysteriously different and better. And I had read only a little logic before I became aware of implications that I could not agree with, and assumptions that seemed to me to be altogether at variance with the general scheme of objective fact established in my mind.

I came to an examination of logical processes and of language with the expectation that they would share the profoundly provisional character, the character of irregular limitation and adaptation that pervades the whole physical and animal being of man. And I found the thing I had expected. And as a consequence I found a sort of intellectual hardihood about the assumptions of logic, that at first confused me and then roused all the latent scepticism in my mind.

My first quarrel with the accepted logic I developed long ago in a little paper that was printed in the *Fortnightly Review* in July 1891. It was called the "Rediscovery of the Unique," and re-reading it I perceive not only how bad and even annoying it was in manner — a thing I have long known — but also how remarkably bad it was in expression. I have good reason for doubting whether my powers of expression in these uses have very perceptibly improved, but at any rate I am doing my best now with that previous failure before me.

That unfortunate paper, among other oversights I can no longer regard as trivial, disregarded quite completely the fact that a whole literature upon the antagonism of the one and the many, of the

specific ideal and the individual reality, was already in existence. It defined no relations to other thought or thinkers. I understand now, what I did not understand then, why it was totally ignored. But the idea underlying that paper I cling to to-day. I consider it an idea that will ultimately be regarded as one of primary importance to human thought, and I will try and present the substance of that early paper again now very briefly, as the best opening of my general case. My opening scepticism is essentially a doubt of *the objective reality of classification*. I have no hesitation in saying that is the first and primary proposition of my philosophy.

I have it in my mind that classification is a necessary condition of the working of the mental implement, but that it is a departure from the objective truth of things, that classification is very serviceable for the practical purposes of life but a very doubtful preliminary to those fine penetrations the philosophical purpose, in its more arrogant moods, demands. All the peculiarities of my way of thinking derive from that.

A mind nourished upon anatomical study is of course permeated with the suggestion of the vagueness and instability of biological species. A biological species is quite obviously a great number of unique individuals which is separable from other biological species only by the fact that an enormous number of other linking individuals are inaccessible in time — are in other words dead and gone — and each new individual in that species does, in the distinction of its own individuality, break away in however infinitesimal degree from the previous average properties of the species. There is no property of any species, even the properties that constitute the specific definition, that is not a matter of more or less. If, for example, a species be distinguished by a single large red spot on the back, you will find if you go over a great number of specimens that red spot shrinking here to nothing, expanding there to a more general redness, weakening to pink, deepening to russet and brown, shading into crimson, and so on, and so on. And this is true not only of biological species. It is true of the mineral specimens constituting a mineral species, and I remember as a constant refrain in the lectures of Prof. Judd upon rock classification, the words “they pass into one another by insensible gradations.” That is true, I hold,

of all things.

You will think perhaps of atoms of the elements as instances of identically similar things, but these are things not of experience but of theory, and there is not a phenomenon in chemistry that is not equally well explained on the supposition that it is merely the immense quantities of atoms necessarily taken in any experiment that mask by the operation of the law of averages the fact that each atom also has its unique quality, its special individual difference. This idea of uniqueness in all individuals is not only true of the classifications of material science; it is true, and still more evidently true, of the species of common thought, it is true of common terms. Take the word *chair*. When one says chair, one thinks vaguely of an average chair. But collect individual instances, think of armchairs and reading chairs, and dining-room chairs and kitchen chairs, chairs that pass into benches, chairs that cross the boundary and become settees, dentists' chairs, thrones, opera stalls, seats of all sorts, those miraculous fungoid growths that cumber the floor of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and you will perceive what a lax bundle in fact is this simple straightforward term. In co-operation with an intelligent joiner I would undertake to defeat any definition of chair or chairishness that you gave me. Chairs just as much as individual organisms, just as much as mineral and rock specimens, are unique things — if you know them well enough you will find an individual difference even in a set of machine-made chairs — and it is only because we do not possess minds of unlimited capacity, because our brain has only a limited number of pigeon-holes for our correspondence with an unlimited universe of objective uniques, that we have to delude ourselves into the belief that there is a chairishness in this species common to and distinctive of all chairs.

Let me repeat; this is of the very smallest importance in all the practical affairs of life, or indeed in relation to anything but philosophy and wide generalisations. But in philosophy it matters profoundly. If I order two new-laid eggs for breakfast, up come two unhatched but still unique avian individuals, and the chances are they serve my rude physiological purpose. I can afford to ignore the hens' eggs of the past that were not quite so nearly this sort of thing, and the hens' eggs of the future that will accumulate modification age by

age; I can venture to ignore the rare chance of an abnormality in chemical composition and of any startling aberration in my physiological reaction; I can, with a confidence that is practically perfect, say with unqualified simplicity "two eggs," but not if my concern is not my morning's breakfast but the utmost possible truth.

Now let me go on to point out whither this idea of uniqueness tends. I submit to you that syllogism is based on classification, that all hard logical reasoning tends to imply and is apt to imply a confidence in the objective reality of classification. Consequently in denying that I deny the absolute validity of logic. Classification and number, which in truth ignore the fine differences of objective realities, have in the past of human thought been imposed upon things. Let me for clearness' sake take a liberty here — commit, as you may perhaps think, an unpardonable insolence. Hindoo thought and Greek thought alike impress me as being overmuch obsessed by an objective treatment of certain necessary preliminary conditions of human thought — number and definition and class and abstract form. But these things, number, definition, class and abstract form, I hold, are merely unavoidable conditions of mental activity — regrettable conditions rather than essential facts. *The forceps of our minds are clumsy forceps, and crush the truth a little in taking hold of it.*

It was about this difficulty that the mind of Plato played a little inconclusively all his life. For the most part he tended to regard the *idea* as the something behind reality, whereas it seems to me that the idea is the more proximate and less perfect thing, the thing by which the mind, by ignoring individual differences, attempts to comprehend an otherwise unmanageable number of unique realities.

Let me give you a rough figure of what I am trying to convey in this first attack upon the philosophical validity of general terms. You have seen the results of those various methods of black and white reproduction that involve the use of a rectangular net. You know the sort of process picture I mean — it used to be employed very frequently in reproducing photographs. At a little distance you really seem to have a faithful reproduction of the original picture, but when you peer closely you find not the unique form and masses of the original, but a multitude of little rectangles, uniform in shape and size. The more earnestly you go into the thing, the closer you look,

the more the picture is lost in reticulations. I submit the world of reasoned inquiry has a very similar relation to the world I call objectively real. For the rough purposes of every day the net-work picture will do, but the finer your purpose the less it will serve, and for an ideally fine purpose, for absolute and general knowledge that will be as true for a man at a distance with a telescope as for a man with a microscope it will not serve at all.

It is true you can make your net of logical interpretation finer and finer, you can fine your classification more and more — up to a certain limit. But essentially you are working in limits, and as you come closer, as you look at finer and subtler things, as you leave the practical purpose for which the method exists, the element of error increases. Every species is vague, every term goes cloudy at its edges, and so in my way of thinking, relentless logic is only another phrase for a stupidity, — for a sort of intellectual pigheadedness. If you push a philosophical or metaphysical inquiry through a series of valid syllogisms — never committing any generally recognised fallacy — you nevertheless leave a certain rubbing and marginal loss of objective truth and you get deflections that are difficult to trace, at each phase in the process. Every species waggles about in its definition, every tool is a little loose in its handle, every scale has its individual error. So long as you are reasoning for practical purposes about the finite things of experience, you can every now and then check your process, and correct your adjustments. But not when you make what are called philosophical and theological inquiries, when you turn your implement towards the final absolute truth of things. Doing that is like firing at an inaccessible, unmarkable and indestructible target at an unknown distance, with a defective rifle and variable cartridges. Even if by chance you hit, you cannot know that you hit, and so it will matter nothing at all.

This assertion of the necessary untrustworthiness of all reasoning processes arising out of the fallacy of classification in what is quite conceivably a universe of uniques, forms only one introductory aspect of my general scepticism of the Instrument of Thought.

I have now to tell you of another aspect of this scepticism of the instrument which concerns negative terms.

Classes in logic are not only represented by circles with a hard

firm outline, whereas they have no such definite limits, but also there is a constant disposition to think of negative terms as if they represented positive classes. With words just as with numbers and abstract forms there are definite phases of human development. There is, you know, with regard to number, the phase when man can barely count at all, or counts in perfect good faith and sanity upon his fingers. Then there is the phase when he is struggling with the development of number, when he begins to elaborate all sorts of ideas about numbers, until at last he develops complex superstitions about perfect numbers and imperfect numbers, about threes and sevens and the like. The same is the case with abstracted forms, and even to-day we are scarcely more than heads out of the vast subtle muddle of thinking about spheres and ideally perfect forms and so on, that was the price of this little necessary step to clear thinking. You know better than I do how large a part numerical and geometrical magic, numerical and geometrical philosophy has played in the history of the mind. And the whole apparatus of language and mental communication is beset with like dangers. The language of the savage is, I suppose, purely positive; the thing has a name, the name has a thing. This indeed is the tradition of language, and to-day even, we, when we hear a name, are predisposed — and sometimes it is a very vicious disposition — to imagine forthwith something answering to the name. *We are disposed, as an incurable mental vice, to accumulate intension in terms.* If I say to you Wodget or Crump, you find yourself passing over the fact that these are nothings, these are, so to speak, mere blankety blanks, and trying to think what sort of thing a Wodget or a Crump may be. And where this disposition has come in, in its most alluring guise, is in the case of negative terms. Our instrument of knowledge persists in handling even such openly negative terms as the Absolute, the Infinite, as though they were real existences, and when the negative element is ever so little disguised, as it is in such a word as Omniscience, then the illusion of positive reality may be complete.

Please remember that I am trying to tell you my philosophy, and not arguing about yours. Let me try and express how in my mind this matter of negative terms has shaped itself. I think of something which I may perhaps best describe as being off the stage or out of

court, or as the Void without Implications, or as Nothingness or as Outer Darkness. This is a sort of hypothetical Beyond to the visible world of human thought, and thither I think all negative terms reach at last, and merge and become nothing. Whatever positive class you make, whatever boundary you draw, straight away from that boundary begins the corresponding negative class and passes into the illimitable horizon of nothingness. You talk of pink things, you ignore, if you are a trained logician, the more elusive shades of pink, and draw your line. Beyond is the not pink, known and knowable, and still in the not pink region one comes to the Outer Darkness. Not blue, not happy, not iron, all the *not* classes meet in that Outer Darkness. That same Outer Darkness and nothingness is infinite space, and infinite time, and any being of infinite qualities, and all that region I rule out of court in my philosophy altogether. I will neither affirm nor deny if I can help it about any *not* things. I will not deal with not things at all, except by accident and inadvertence. If I use the word 'infinite' I use it as one often uses 'countless,' "the countless hosts of the enemy" — or 'immeasurable'— "immeasurable cliffs" — that is to say as the limit of measurement rather than as the limit of imaginary measurability, as a convenient equivalent to as many times this cloth yard as you can, and as many again and so on and so on. Now a great number of apparently positive terms are, or have become, practically negative terms and are under the same ban with me. A considerable number of terms that have played a great part in the world of thought, seem to me to be invalidated by this same defect, to have no content or an undefined content or an unjustifiable content. For example, that word Omniscient, as implying infinite knowledge, impresses me as being a word with a delusive air of being solid and full, when it is really hollow with no content whatever. I am persuaded that knowing is the relation of a conscious being to something not itself, that the thing known is defined as a system of parts and aspects and relationships, that knowledge is comprehension, and so that only finite things can know or be known. When you talk of a being of infinite extension and infinite duration, omniscient and omnipotent and Perfect, you seem to me to be talking in negatives of nothing whatever. When you speak of the Absolute you speak to me of nothing. If however you

talk of a great yet finite and thinkable being, a being not myself, extending beyond my imagination in time and space, knowing all that I can think of as known and capable of doing all that I can think of as done, you come into the sphere of my mental operations, and into the scheme of my philosophy....

These then are my first two charges against our Instrument of Knowledge, firstly, that it can work only by disregarding individuality and treating uniques as identically similar objects in this respect or that, so as to group them under one term, and that once it has done so it tends automatically to intensify the significance of that term, and secondly, that it can only deal freely with negative terms by treating them as though they were positive. But I have a further objection to the Instrument of Human Thought, that is not correlated to these former objections and that is also rather more difficult to convey.

Essentially this idea is to present a sort of stratification in human ideas. I have it very much in mind that various terms in our reasoning lie, as it were, at different levels and in different planes, and that we accomplish a large amount of error and confusion by reasoning terms together that do not lie or nearly lie in the same plane.

Let me endeavour to make myself a little less obscure by a most flagrant instance from physical things. Suppose some one began to talk seriously of a man seeing an atom through a microscope, or better perhaps of cutting one in half with a knife. There are a number of non-analytical people who would be quite prepared to believe that an atom could be visible to the eye or cut in this manner. But any one at all conversant with physical conceptions would almost as soon think of killing the square root of 2 with a rook rifle as of cutting an atom in half with a knife. Our conception of an atom is reached through a process of hypothesis and analysis, and in the world of atoms there are no knives and no men to cut. If you have thought with a strong consistent mental movement, then when you have thought of your atom under the knife blade, your knife blade has itself become a cloud of swinging grouped atoms, and your microscope lens a little universe of oscillatory and vibratory molecules. If you think of the universe, thinking at the level of atoms, there is neither knife to cut, scale to weigh nor eye to see. The

universe *at that plane to which the mind of the molecular physicist descends* has none of the shapes or forms of our common life whatever. This hand with which I write is in the universe of molecular physics a cloud of warring atoms and molecules, combining and recombining, colliding, rotating, flying hither and thither in the universal atmosphere of ether.

You see, I hope, what I mean, when I say that the universe of molecular physics is at a different level from the universe of common experience; — what we call stable and solid is in that world a freely moving system of interlacing centres of force, what we call colour and sound is there no more than this length of vibration or that. We have reached to a conception of that universe of molecular physics by a great enterprise of organised analysis, and our universe of daily experiences stands in relation to that elemental world as if it were a synthesis of those elemental things.

I would suggest to you that this is only a very extreme instance of the general state of affairs, that there may be finer and subtler differences of level between one term and another, and that terms may very well be thought of as lying obliquely and as being twisted through different levels.

It will perhaps give a clearer idea of what I am seeking to convey if I suggest a concrete image for the whole world of a man's thought and knowledge. Imagine a large clear jelly, in which at all angles and in all states of simplicity or contortion his ideas are imbedded. They are all valid and possible ideas as they lie, none in reality incompatible with any. If you imagine the direction of up or down in this clear jelly being as it were the direction in which one moves by analysis or by synthesis, if you go down for example from matter to atoms and centres of force and up to men and states and countries — if you will imagine the ideas lying in that manner — you will get the beginning of my intention. But our Instrument, our process of thinking, like a drawing before the discovery of perspective, appears to have difficulties with the third dimension, appears capable only of dealing with or reasoning about ideas by projecting them upon the same plane. It will be obvious that a great multitude of things may very well exist together in a solid jelly, which would be overlapping and incompatible and mutually destructive, when projected together

upon one plane. Through the bias in our Instrument to do this, through reasoning between terms not in the same plane, an enormous amount of confusion, perplexity and mental deadlocking occurs.

The old theological deadlock between predestination and free-will serves admirably as an example of the sort of deadlock I mean. Take life at the level of common sensation and common experience and there is no more indisputable fact than man's freedom of will, unless it is his complete moral responsibility. But make only the least penetrating of analyses and you perceive a world of inevitable consequences, a rigid succession of cause and effect. Insist upon a flat agreement between the two, and there you are! The Instrument fails.

It is upon these three objections, and upon an extreme suspicion of abstract terms which arises materially out of my first and second objections, that I chiefly rest my case for a profound scepticism of the remoter possibilities of the Instrument of Thought. It is a thing no more perfect than the human eye or the human ear, though like those other instruments it may have undefined possibilities of evolution towards increased range, and increased power.

So much for my main contention. But before I conclude I may — since I am here — say a little more in the autobiographical vein, and with a view to your discussion to show how I reconcile this fundamental scepticism with the very positive beliefs about world-wide issues I possess, and the very definite distinction I make between right and wrong.

I reconcile these things by simply pointing out to you that if there is any validity in my image of that three dimensional jelly in which our ideas are suspended, such a reconciliation as you demand in logic, such a projection of the things as in accordance upon one plane, is totally unnecessary and impossible.

This insistence upon the element of uniqueness in being, this subordination of the class to the individual difference, not only destroys the universal claim of philosophy, but the universal claim of ethical imperatives, the universal claim of any religious teaching. If you press me back upon my fundamental position I must confess I put faith and standards and rules of conduct upon exactly the same level as I put my belief of what is right in art, and what I consider

right practice in art. I have arrived at a certain sort of self-knowledge and there are, I find, very distinct imperatives for me, but I am quite prepared to admit there is no proving them imperative on any one else. One's political proceedings, one's moral acts are, I hold, just as much self-expression as one's poetry or painting or music. But since life has for its primordial elements assimilation and aggression, I try not only to obey my imperatives, but to put them persuasively and convincingly into other minds, to bring about *my* good and to resist and overcome *my* evil as though they were the universal Good and the universal Evil in which unthinking men believe. And it is obviously in no way contradictory to this philosophy, for me, if I find others responding sympathetically to any notes of mine or if I find myself responding sympathetically to notes sounding about me, to give that common resemblance between myself and others a name, to refer these others and myself in common to this thing as if it were externalised and spanned us all.

Scepticism of the Instrument is for example not incompatible with religious association and with organisation upon the basis of a common faith. It is possible to regard God as a Being synthetic in relation to men and societies, just as the idea of a universe of atoms and molecules and inorganic relationships is analytical in relation to human life.

The repudiation of demonstration in any but immediate and verifiable cases that this Scepticism of the Instrument amounts to, the abandonment of any universal validity for moral and religious propositions, brings ethical, social and religious teaching into the province of poetry, and does something to correct the estrangement between knowledge and beauty that is a feature of so much mental existence at this time. All these things are self-expression. Such an opinion sets a new and greater value on that penetrating and illuminating quality of mind we call insight, insight which when it faces towards the contradictions that arise out of the imperfections of the mental instrument is called humour. In these innate, unteachable qualities I hold — in humour and the sense of beauty — lies such hope of intellectual salvation from the original sin of our intellectual instrument as we may entertain in this uncertain and fluctuating world of unique appearances....

So frankly I spread my little equipment of fundamental assumptions before you, heartily glad of the opportunity you have given me of taking them out, of looking at them with the particularity the presence of hearers ensures, and of hearing the impression they make upon you. Of course, such a sketch must have an inevitable crudity of effect. The time I had for it — I mean the time I was able to give in preparation — was altogether too limited for any exhaustive finish of presentation; but I think on the whole I have got the main lines of this sketch map of my mental basis true. Whether I have made myself comprehensible is a different question altogether. It is for you rather than me to say how this sketch map of mine lies with regard to your own more systematic cartography....

Here followed certain comments upon *Personal Idealism*, and Mr. F. C. S. Schiller's *Humanism*, of no particular value.

IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET

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“The World’s Great Age begins anew,
The Golden Years return,
The Earth doth like a Snake renew
Her Winter Skin outworn:
Heaven smiles, and Faiths and Empires gleam
Like Wrecks of a Dissolving Dream.”

PROLOGUE. THE MAN WHO WROTE IN THE TOWER

I SAW a gray-haired man, a figure of hale age, sitting at a desk and writing.

He seemed to be in a room in a tower, very high, so that through the tall window on his left one perceived only distances, a remote horizon of sea, a headland and that vague haze and glitter in the sunset that many miles away marks a city. All the appointments of this room were orderly and beautiful, and in some subtle quality, in this small difference and that, new to me and strange. They were in no fashion I could name, and the simple costume the man wore suggested neither period nor country. It might, I thought, be the Happy Future, or Utopia, or the Land of Simple Dreams; an errant mote of memory, Henry James's phrase and story of "The Great Good Place," twinkled across my mind, and passed and left no light.

The man I saw wrote with a thing like a fountain pen, a modern touch that prohibited any historical retrospection, and as he finished each sheet, writing in an easy flowing hand, he added it to a growing pile upon a graceful little table under the window. His last done sheets lay loose, partly covering others that were clipped together into fascicles.

Clearly he was unaware of my presence, and I stood waiting until his pen should come to a pause. Old as he certainly was he wrote with a steady hand. . . .

I discovered that a concave speculum hung slantingly high over his head; a movement in this caught my attention sharply, and I looked up to see, distorted and made fantastic but bright and beautifully colored, the magnified, reflected, evasive rendering of a palace, of a terrace, of the vista of a great roadway with many people, people exaggerated, impossible-looking because of the curvature of the mirror, going to and fro. I turned my head quickly that I might see more clearly through the window behind me, but it was too high for me to survey this nearer scene directly, and after a momentary pause I came back to that distorting mirror again.

But now the writer was leaning back in his chair. He put down his pen and sighed the half resentful sigh— “ah! you, work, you! how you gratify and tire me!” — of a man who has been writing to his satisfaction.

“What is this place,” I asked, “and who are you?”

He looked around with the quick movement of surprise.

“What is this place?” I repeated, “and where am I?”

He regarded me steadfastly for a moment under his wrinkled brows, and then his expression softened to a smile. He pointed to a chair beside the table. “I am writing,” he said.

“About this?”

“About the change.”

I sat down. It was a very comfortable chair, and well placed under the light.

“If you would like to read—” he said.

I indicated the manuscript. “This explains?” I asked.

“That explains,” he answered.

He drew a fresh sheet of paper toward him as he looked at me.

I glanced from him about his apartment and back to the little table. A fascicle marked very distinctly “1” caught my attention, and I took it up. I smiled in his friendly eyes. “Very well,” said I, suddenly at my ease, and he nodded and went on writing. And in a mood between confidence and curiosity, I began to read.

This is the story that happy, active-looking old man in that pleasant place had written.

BOOK THE FIRST. THE COMET

CHAPTER THE FIRST

DUST IN THE SHADOWS

Section 1

I HAVE set myself to write the story of the Great Change, so far as it has affected my own life and the lives of one or two people closely connected with me, primarily to please myself.

Long ago in my crude unhappy youth, I conceived the desire of writing a book. To scribble secretly and dream of authorship was one of my chief alleviations, and I read with a sympathetic envy every scrap I could get about the world of literature and the lives of literary people. It is something, even amidst this present happiness, to find leisure and opportunity to take up and partially realize these old and hopeless dreams. But that alone, in a world where so much of vivid and increasing interest presents itself to be done, even by an old man, would not, I think, suffice to set me at this desk. I find some such recapitulation of my past as this will involve, is becoming necessary to my own secure mental continuity. The passage of years brings a man at last to retrospection; at seventy-two one's youth is far more important than it was at forty. And I am out of touch with my youth. The old life seems so cut off from the new, so alien and so unreasonable, that at times I find it bordering upon the incredible. The data have gone, the buildings and places. I stopped dead the other afternoon in my walk across the moor, where once the dismal outskirts of Swathinglea straggled toward Leet, and asked, "Was it here indeed that I crouched among the weeds and refuse and broken crockery and loaded my revolver ready for murder? Did ever such a thing happen in my life? Was such a mood and thought and intention ever possible to me? Rather, has not some queer nightmare spirit out of dreamland slipped a pseudo-memory into the records of my vanished life?" There must be many alive still who have the same perplexities. And I think too that those who are now growing up to take our places in the great enterprise of mankind, will need many such narratives as mine for even the most partial conception of the

old world of shadows that came before our day. It chances too that my case is fairly typical of the Change; I was caught midway in a gust of passion; and a curious accident put me for a time in the very nucleus of the new order.

My memory takes me back across the interval of fifty years to a little ill-lit room with a sash window open to a starry sky, and instantly there returns to me the characteristic smell of that room, the penetrating odor of an ill-trimmed lamp, burning cheap paraffin. Lighting by electricity had then been perfected for fifteen years, but still the larger portion of the world used these lamps. All this first scene will go, in my mind at least, to that olfactory accompaniment. That was the evening smell of the room. By day it had a more subtle aroma, a closeness, a peculiar sort of faint pungency that I associate — I know not why — with dust.

Let me describe this room to you in detail. It was perhaps eight feet by seven in area and rather higher than either of these dimensions; the ceiling was of plaster, cracked and bulging in places, gray with the soot of the lamp, and in one place discolored by a system of yellow and olive-green stains caused by the percolation of damp from above. The walls were covered with dun-colored paper, upon which had been printed in oblique reiteration a crimson shape, something of the nature of a curly ostrich feather, or an acanthus flower, that had in its less faded moments a sort of dingy gaiety. There were several big plaster-rimmed wounds in this, caused by Parload's ineffectual attempts to get nails into the wall, whereby there might hang pictures. One nail had hit between two bricks and got home, and from this depended, sustained a little insecurely by frayed and knotted blind-cord, Parload's hanging bookshelves, planks painted over with a treacly blue enamel and further decorated by a fringe of pinked American cloth insecurely fixed by tacks. Below this was a little table that behaved with a mulish vindictiveness to any knee that was thrust beneath it suddenly; it was covered with a cloth whose pattern of red and black had been rendered less monotonous by the accidents of Parload's versatile ink bottle, and on it, leit motif of the whole, stood and stank the lamp. This lamp, you must understand, was of some whitish translucent substance that was neither china nor glass, it had a shade of the same

substance, a shade that did not protect the eyes of a reader in any measure, and it seemed admirably adapted to bring into pitiless prominence the fact that, after the lamp's trimming, dust and paraffin had been smeared over its exterior with a reckless generosity.

The uneven floor boards of this apartment were covered with scratched enamel of chocolate hue, on which a small island of frayed carpet dimly blossomed in the dust and shadows.

There was a very small grate, made of cast-iron in one piece and painted buff, and a still smaller misfit of a cast-iron fender that confessed the gray stone of the hearth. No fire was laid, only a few scraps of torn paper and the bowl of a broken corn-cob pipe were visible behind the bars, and in the corner and rather thrust away was an angular japanned coal-box with a damaged hinge. It was the custom in those days to warm every room separately from a separate fireplace, more prolific of dirt than heat, and the rickety sash window, the small chimney, and the loose-fitting door were expected to organize the ventilation of the room among themselves without any further direction.

Parload's truckle bed hid its gray sheets beneath an old patchwork counterpane on one side of the room, and veiled his boxes and suchlike oddments, and invading the two corners of the window were an old whatnot and the washhandstand, on which were distributed the simple appliances of his toilet.

This washhandstand had been made of deal by some one with an excess of turnery appliances in a hurry, who had tried to distract attention from the rough economies of his workmanship by an arresting ornamentation of blobs and bulbs upon the joints and legs. Apparently the piece had then been placed in the hands of some person of infinite leisure equipped with a pot of ocherous paint, varnish, and a set of flexible combs. This person had first painted the article, then, I fancy, smeared it with varnish, and then sat down to work with the combs to streak and comb the varnish into a weird imitation of the grain of some nightmare timber. The washhandstand so made had evidently had a prolonged career of violent use, had been chipped, kicked, splintered, punched, stained, scorched, hammered, dessicated, damped, and defiled, had met indeed with almost every possible adventure except a conflagration or a

scrubbing, until at last it had come to this high refuge of Parload's attic to sustain the simple requirements of Parload's personal cleanliness. There were, in chief, a basin and a jug of water and a slop-pail of tin, and, further, a piece of yellow soap in a tray, a tooth-brush, a rat-tailed shaving brush, one huckaback towel, and one or two other minor articles. In those days only very prosperous people had more than such an equipage, and it is to be remarked that every drop of water Parload used had to be carried by an unfortunate servant girl, — the "slavey," Parload called her — up from the basement to the top of the house and subsequently down again. Already we begin to forget how modern an invention is personal cleanliness. It is a fact that Parload had never stripped for a swim in his life; never had a simultaneous bath all over his body since his childhood. Not one in fifty of us did in the days of which I am telling you.

A chest, also singularly grained and streaked, of two large and two small drawers, held Parload's reserve of garments, and pegs on the door carried his two hats and completed this inventory of a "bed-sitting-room" as I knew it before the Change. But I had forgotten — there was also a chair with a "squab" that apologized inadequately for the defects of its cane seat. I forgot that for the moment because I was sitting on the chair on the occasion that best begins this story.

I have described Parload's room with such particularity because it will help you to understand the key in which my earlier chapters are written, but you must not imagine that this singular equipment or the smell of the lamp engaged my attention at that time to the slightest degree. I took all this grimy unpleasantness as if it were the most natural and proper setting for existence imaginable. It was the world as I knew it. My mind was entirely occupied then by graver and intenser matters, and it is only now in the distant retrospect that I see these details of environment as being remarkable, as significant, as indeed obviously the outward visible manifestations of the old world disorder in our hearts.

Section 2

Parload stood at the open window, opera-glass in hand, and sought

and found and was uncertain about and lost again, the new comet.

I thought the comet no more than a nuisance then because I wanted to talk of other matters. But Parload was full of it. My head was hot, I was feverish with interlacing annoyances and bitterness, I wanted to open my heart to him — at least I wanted to relieve my heart by some romantic rendering of my troubles — and I gave but little heed to the things he told me. It was the first time I had heard of this new speck among the countless specks of heaven, and I did not care if I never heard of the thing again.

We were two youths much of an age together, Parload was two and twenty, and eight months older than I. He was — I think his proper definition was "engrossing clerk" to a little solicitor in Overcastle, while I was third in the office staff of Rawdon's pot-bank in Clayton. We had met first in the "Parliament" of the Young Men's Christian Association of Swathinglea; we had found we attended simultaneous classes in Overcastle, he in science and I in shorthand, and had started a practice of walking home together, and so our friendship came into being. (Swathinglea, Clayton, and Overcastle were contiguous towns, I should mention, in the great industrial area of the Midlands.) We had shared each other's secret of religious doubt, we had confided to one another a common interest in Socialism, he had come twice to supper at my mother's on a Sunday night, and I was free of his apartment. He was then a tall, flaxen-haired, gawky youth, with a disproportionate development of neck and wrist, and capable of vast enthusiasm; he gave two evenings a week to the evening classes of the organized science school in Overcastle, physiography was his favorite "subject," and through this insidious opening of his mind the wonder of outer space had come to take possession of his soul. He had commandeered an old opera-glass from his uncle who farmed at Leet over the moors, he had bought a cheap paper planisphere and Whitaker's Almanac, and for a time day and moonlight were mere blank interruptions to the one satisfactory reality in his life — star-gazing. It was the deeps that had seized him, the immensities, and the mysterious possibilities that might float unlit in that unplumbed abyss. With infinite labor and the help of a very precise article in The Heavens, a little monthly magazine that catered for those who were under this obsession, he had at last got his opera-

glass upon the new visitor to our system from outer space. He gazed in a sort of rapture upon that quivering little smudge of light among the shining pin-points — and gazed. My troubles had to wait for him.

"Wonderful," he sighed, and then as though his first emphasis did not satisfy him, "wonderful!"

He turned to me. "Wouldn't you like to see?"

I had to look, and then I had to listen, how that this scarce-visible intruder was to be, was presently to be, one of the largest comets this world has ever seen, how that its course must bring it within at most — so many score of millions of miles from the earth, a mere step, Parload seemed to think that; how that the spectroscope was already sounding its chemical secrets, perplexed by the unprecedented band in the green, how it was even now being photographed in the very act of unwinding — in an unusual direction — a sunward tail (which presently it wound up again), and all the while in a sort of undertow I was thinking first of Nettie Stuart and the letter she had just written me, and then of old Rawdon's detestable face as I had seen it that afternoon. Now I planned answers to Nettie and now belated repartees to my employer, and then again "Nettie" was blazing all across the background of my thoughts. . . .

Nettie Stuart was daughter of the head gardener of the rich Mr. Verrall's widow, and she and I had kissed and become sweethearts before we were eighteen years old. My mother and hers were second cousins and old schoolfellows, and though my mother had been widowed untimely by a train accident, and had been reduced to letting lodgings (she was the Clayton curate's landlady), a position esteemed much lower than that of Mrs. Stuart, a kindly custom of occasional visits to the gardener's cottage at Checkshill Towers still kept the friends in touch. Commonly I went with her. And I remember it was in the dusk of one bright evening in July, one of those long golden evenings that do not so much give way to night as admit at last, upon courtesy, the moon and a choice retinue of stars, that Nettie and I, at the pond of goldfish where the yew-bordered walks converged, made our shy beginners' vow. I remember still — something will always stir in me at that memory — the tremulous emotion of that adventure. Nettie was dressed in white, her hair went off in waves of soft darkness from above her dark shining eyes; there

was a little necklace of pearls about her sweetly modeled neck, and a little coin of gold that nestled in her throat. I kissed her half-reluctant lips, and for three years of my life thereafter — nay! I almost think for all the rest of her life and mine — I could have died for her sake.

You must understand — and every year it becomes increasingly difficult to understand — how entirely different the world was then from what it is now. It was a dark world; it was full of preventable disorder, preventable diseases, and preventable pain, of harshness and stupid unpremeditated cruelties; but yet, it may be even by virtue of the general darkness, there were moments of a rare and evanescent beauty that seem no longer possible in my experience. The great Change has come for ever more, happiness and beauty are our atmosphere, there is peace on earth and good will to all men. None would dare to dream of returning to the sorrows of the former time, and yet that misery was pierced, ever and again its gray curtain was stabbed through and through by joys of an intensity, by perceptions of a keenness that it seems to me are now altogether gone out of life. Is it the Change, I wonder, that has robbed life of its extremes, or is it perhaps only this, that youth has left me — even the strength of middle years leaves me now — and taken its despairs and raptures, leaving me judgment, perhaps, sympathy, memories?

I cannot tell. One would need to be young now and to have been young then as well, to decide that impossible problem.

Perhaps a cool observer even in the old days would have found little beauty in our grouping. I have our two photographs at hand in this bureau as I write, and they show me a gawky youth in ill-fitting ready-made clothing, and Nettie — Indeed Nettie is badly dressed, and her attitude is more than a little stiff; but I can see her through the picture, and her living brightness and something of that mystery of charm she had for me, comes back again to my mind. Her face has triumphed over the photographer — or I would long ago have cast this picture away.

The reality of beauty yields itself to no words. I wish that I had the sister art and could draw in my margin something that escapes description. There was a sort of gravity in her eyes. There was something, a matter of the minutest difference, about her upper lip so that her mouth closed sweetly and broke very sweetly to a smile.

That grave, sweet smile!

After we had kissed and decided not to tell our parents for awhile of the irrevocable choice we had made, the time came for us to part, shyly and before others, and I and my mother went off back across the moonlit park — the bracken thickets rustling with startled deer — to the railway station at Checkshill and so to our dingy basement in Clayton, and I saw no more of Nettie — except that I saw her in my thoughts — for nearly a year. But at our next meeting it was decided that we must correspond, and this we did with much elaboration of secrecy, for Nettie would have no one at home, not even her only sister, know of her attachment. So I had to send my precious documents sealed and under cover by way of a confidential schoolfellow of hers who lived near London. . . . I could write that address down now, though house and street and suburb have gone beyond any man's tracing.

Our correspondence began our estrangement, because for the first time we came into more than sensuous contact and our minds sought expression.

Now you must understand that the world of thought in those days was in the strangest condition, it was choked with obsolete inadequate formulae, it was tortuous to a maze-like degree with secondary contrivances and adaptations, suppressions, conventions, and subterfuges. Base immediacies fouled the truth on every man's lips. I was brought up by my mother in a quaint old-fashioned narrow faith in certain religious formulae, certain rules of conduct, certain conceptions of social and political order, that had no more relevance to the realities and needs of everyday contemporary life than if they were clean linen that had been put away with lavender in a drawer. Indeed, her religion did actually smell of lavender; on Sundays she put away all the things of reality, the garments and even the furnishings of everyday, hid her hands, that were gnarled and sometimes chapped with scrubbing, in black, carefully mended gloves, assumed her old black silk dress and bonnet and took me, unnaturally clean and sweet also, to church. There we sang and bowed and heard sonorous prayers and joined in sonorous responses, and rose with a congregational sigh refreshed and relieved when the doxology, with its opening "Now to God the Father, God the Son,"

bowed out the tame, brief sermon. There was a hell in that religion of my mother's, a red-haired hell of curly flames that had once been very terrible; there was a devil, who was also ex officio the British King's enemy, and much denunciation of the wicked lusts of the flesh; we were expected to believe that most of our poor unhappy world was to atone for its muddle and trouble here by suffering exquisite torments for ever after, world without end, Amen. But indeed those curly flames looked rather jolly. The whole thing had been mellowed and faded into a gentle unreality long before my time; if it had much terror even in my childhood I have forgotten it, it was not so terrible as the giant who was killed by the Beanstalk, and I see it all now as a setting for my poor old mother's worn and grimy face, and almost lovingly as a part of her. And Mr. Gabbitas, our plump little lodger, strangely transformed in his vestments and lifting his voice manfully to the quality of those Elizabethan prayers, seemed, I think, to give her a special and peculiar interest with God. She radiated her own tremulous gentleness upon Him, and redeemed Him from all the implications of vindictive theologians; she was in truth, had I but perceived it, the effectual answer to all she would have taught me.

So I see it now, but there is something harsh in the earnest intensity of youth, and having at first taken all these things quite seriously, the fiery hell and God's vindictiveness at any neglect, as though they were as much a matter of fact as Bladden's iron-works and Rawdon's pot-bank, I presently with an equal seriousness flung them out of my mind again.

Mr. Gabbitas, you see, did sometimes, as the phrase went, "take notice" of me, he had induced me to go on reading after I left school, and with the best intentions in the world and to anticipate the poison of the times, he had lent me Burble's "Scepticism Answered," and drawn my attention to the library of the Institute in Clayton.

The excellent Burble was a great shock to me. It seemed clear from his answers to the sceptic that the case for doctrinal orthodoxy and all that faded and by no means awful hereafter, which I had hitherto accepted as I accepted the sun, was an extremely poor one, and to hammer home that idea the first book I got from the Institute happened to be an American edition of the collected works of

Shelley, his gassy prose as well as his atmospheric verse. I was soon ripe for blatant unbelief. And at the Young Men's Christian Association I presently made the acquaintance of Parload, who told me, under promises of the most sinister secrecy, that he was "a Socialist out and out." He lent me several copies of a periodical with the clamant title of The Clarion, which was just taking up a crusade against the accepted religion. The adolescent years of any fairly intelligent youth lie open, and will always lie healthily open, to the contagion of philosophical doubts, of scorns and new ideas, and I will confess I had the fever of that phase badly. Doubt, I say, but it was not so much doubt — which is a complex thing — as startled emphatic denial. "Have I believed THIS!" And I was also, you must remember, just beginning love-letters to Nettie.

We live now in these days, when the Great Change has been in most things accomplished, in a time when every one is being educated to a sort of intellectual gentleness, a gentleness that abates nothing from our vigor, and it is hard to understand the stifled and struggling manner in which my generation of common young men did its thinking. To think at all about certain questions was an act of rebellion that set one oscillating between the furtive and the defiant. People begin to find Shelley — for all his melody — noisy and ill conditioned now because his Anarchs have vanished, yet there was a time when novel thought HAD to go to that tune of breaking glass. It becomes a little difficult to imagine the yeasty state of mind, the disposition to shout and say, "Yah!" at constituted authority, to sustain a persistent note of provocation such as we raw youngsters displayed. I began to read with avidity such writing as Carlyle, Browning, and Heine have left for the perplexity of posterity, and not only to read and admire but to imitate. My letters to Nettie, after one or two genuinely intended displays of perfervid tenderness, broke out toward theology, sociology, and the cosmos in turgid and startling expressions. No doubt they puzzled her extremely.

I retain the keenest sympathy and something inexplicably near to envy for my own departed youth, but I should find it difficult to maintain my case against any one who would condemn me altogether as having been a very silly, posturing, emotional hobbledehoy indeed and quite like my faded photograph. And when I try to recall what

exactly must have been the quality and tenor of my more sustained efforts to write memorably to my sweetheart, I confess I shiver. . . Yet I wish they were not all destroyed.

Her letters to me were simple enough, written in a roundish, unformed hand and badly phrased. Her first two or three showed a shy pleasure in the use of the word "dear," and I remember being first puzzled and then, when I understood, delighted, because she had written "Willie ASTHORE" under my name. "Asthore," I gathered, meant "darling." But when the evidences of my fermentation began, her answers were less happy.

I will not weary you with the story of how we quarreled in our silly youthful way, and how I went the next Sunday, all uninvited, to Checkshill, and made it worse, and how afterward I wrote a letter that she thought was "lovely," and mended the matter. Nor will I tell of all our subsequent fluctuations of misunderstanding. Always I was the offender and the final penitent until this last trouble that was now beginning; and in between we had some tender near moments, and I loved her very greatly. There was this misfortune in the business, that in the darkness, and alone, I thought with great intensity of her, of her eyes, of her touch, of her sweet and delightful presence, but when I sat down to write I thought of Shelley and Burns and myself, and other such irrelevant matters. When one is in love, in this fermenting way, it is harder to make love than it is when one does not love at all. And as for Nettie, she loved, I know, not me but those gentle mysteries. It was not my voice should rouse her dreams to passion. . . So our letters continued to jar. Then suddenly she wrote me one doubting whether she could ever care for any one who was a Socialist and did not believe in Church, and then hard upon it came another note with unexpected novelties of phrasing. She thought we were not suited to each other, we differed so in tastes and ideas, she had long thought of releasing me from our engagement. In fact, though I really did not apprehend it fully at the first shock, I was dismissed. Her letter had reached me when I came home after old Rawdon's none too civil refusal to raise my wages. On this particular evening of which I write, therefore, I was in a state of feverish adjustment to two new and amazing, two nearly overwhelming facts, that I was neither indispensable to Nettie nor at Rawdon's. And to

talk of comets!

Where did I stand?

I had grown so accustomed to think of Nettie as inseparably mine — the whole tradition of "true love" pointed me to that — that for her to face about with these precise small phrases toward abandonment, after we had kissed and whispered and come so close in the little adventurous familiarities of the young, shocked me profoundly. I! I! And Rawdon didn't find me indispensable either. I felt I was suddenly repudiated by the universe and threatened with effacement, that in some positive and emphatic way I must at once assert myself. There was no balm in the religion I had learnt, or in the irreligion I had adopted, for wounded self-love.

Should I fling up Rawdon's place at once and then in some extraordinary, swift manner make the fortune of Frobisher's adjacent and closely competitive pot-bank?

The first part of that program, at any rate, would be easy of accomplishment, to go to Rawdon and say, "You will hear from me again," but for the rest, Frobisher might fail me. That, however, was a secondary issue. The predominant affair was with Nettie. I found my mind thick-shot with flying fragments of rhetoric that might be of service in the letter I would write her. Scorn, irony, tenderness — what was it to be?

"Brother!" said Parload, suddenly.

"What?" said I.

"They're firing up at Bladden's iron-works, and the smoke comes right across my bit of sky."

The interruption came just as I was ripe to discharge my thoughts upon him.

"Parload," said I, "very likely I shall have to leave all this. Old Rawdon won't give me a rise in my wages, and after having asked I don't think I can stand going on upon the old terms anymore. See? So I may have to clear out of Clayton for good and all."

Section 3

That made Parload put down the opera-glass and look at me.

“It’s a bad time to change just now,” he said after a little pause.

Rawdon had said as much, in a less agreeable tone.

But with Parload I felt always a disposition to the heroic note. “I’m tired,” I said, “of humdrum drudgery for other men. One may as well starve one’s body out of a place as to starve one’s soul in one.”

“I don’t know about that altogether,” began Parload, slowly. . . .

And with that we began one of our interminable conversations, one of those long, wandering, intensely generalizing, diffusely personal talks that will be dear to the hearts of intelligent youths until the world comes to an end. The Change has not abolished that, anyhow.

It would be an incredible feat of memory for me now to recall all that meandering haze of words, indeed I recall scarcely any of it, though its circumstances and atmosphere stand out, a sharp, clear picture in my mind. I posed after my manner and behaved very foolishly no doubt, a wounded, smarting egotist, and Parload played his part of the philosopher preoccupied with the deeps.

We were presently abroad, walking through the warm summer’s night and talking all the more freely for that. But one thing that I said I can remember. “I wish at times,” said I, with a gesture at the heavens, “that comet of yours or some such thing would indeed strike this world — and wipe us all away, strikes, wars, tumults, loves, jealousies, and all the wretchedness of life!”

“Ah!” said Parload, and the thought seemed to hang about him.

“It could only add to the miseries of life,” he said irrelevantly, when presently I was discoursing of other things.

“What would?”

“Collision with a comet. It would only throw things back. It would only make what was left of life more savage than it is at present.”

“But why should ANYTHING be left of life?” said I. . . .

That was our style, you know, and meanwhile we walked together up the narrow street outside his lodging, up the stepway and the lanes toward Clayton Crest and the high road.

But my memories carry me back so effectually to those days before the Change that I forget that now all these places have been altered beyond recognition, that the narrow street and the stepway

and the view from Clayton Crest, and indeed all the world in which I was born and bred and made, has vanished clean away, out of space and out of time, and wellnigh out of the imagination of all those who are younger by a generation than I. You cannot see, as I can see, the dark empty way between the mean houses, the dark empty way lit by a bleary gas-lamp at the corner, you cannot feel the hard checkered pavement under your boots, you cannot mark the dimly lit windows here and there, and the shadows upon the ugly and often patched and crooked blinds of the people cooped within. Nor can you presently pass the beerhouse with its brighter gas and its queer, screening windows, nor get a whiff of foul air and foul language from its door, nor see the crumpled furtive figure — some rascal child — that slinks past us down the steps.

We crossed the longer street, up which a clumsy steam tram, vomiting smoke and sparks, made its clangorous way, and adown which one saw the greasy brilliance of shop fronts and the naphtha flares of hawkers' barrows dripping fire into the night. A hazy movement of people swayed along that road, and we heard the voice of an itinerant preacher from a waste place between the houses. You cannot see these things as I can see them, nor can you figure — unless you know the pictures that great artist Hyde has left the world — the effect of the great hoarding by which we passed, lit below by a gas-lamp and towering up to a sudden sharp black edge against the pallid sky.

Those hoardings! They were the brightest colored things in all that vanished world. Upon them, in successive layers of paste and paper, all the rough enterprises of that time joined in chromatic discord; pill vendors and preachers, theaters and charities, marvelous soaps and astonishing pickles, typewriting machines and sewing machines, mingled in a sort of visualized clamor. And passing that there was a muddy lane of cinders, a lane without a light, that used its many puddles to borrow a star or so from the sky. We splashed along unheeding as we talked.

Then across the allotments, a wilderness of cabbages and evil-looking sheds, past a gaunt abandoned factory, and so to the high road. The high road ascended in a curve past a few houses and a beerhouse or so, and round until all the valley in which four

industrial towns lay crowded and confluent was overlooked.

I will admit that with the twilight there came a spell of weird magnificence over all that land and brooded on it until dawn. The horrible meanness of its details was veiled, the hutches that were homes, the bristling multitudes of chimneys, the ugly patches of unwilling vegetation amidst the makeshift fences of barrel-stave and wire. The rusty scars that framed the opposite ridges where the iron ore was taken and the barren mountains of slag from the blast furnaces were veiled; the reek and boiling smoke and dust from foundry, pot-bank, and furnace, transfigured and assimilated by the night. The dust-laden atmosphere that was gray oppression through the day became at sundown a mystery of deep translucent colors, of blues and purples, of somber and vivid reds, of strange bright clearnesses of green and yellow athwart the darkling sky. Each upstart furnace, when its monarch sun had gone, crowned itself with flames, the dark cinder heaps began to glow with quivering fires, and each pot-bank squatted rebellious in a volcanic coronet of light. The empire of the day broke into a thousand feudal baronies of burning coal. The minor streets across the valley picked themselves out with gas-lamps of faint yellow, that brightened and mingled at all the principal squares and crossings with the greenish pallor of incandescent mantles and the high cold glare of the electric arc. The interlacing railways lifted bright signal-boxes over their intersections, and signal stars of red and green in rectangular constellations. The trains became articulated black serpents breathing fire.

Moreover, high overhead, like a thing put out of reach and near forgotten, Parload had rediscovered a realm that was ruled by neither sun nor furnace, the universe of stars.

This was the scene of many a talk we two had held together. And if in the daytime we went right over the crest and looked westward there was farmland, there were parks and great mansions, the spire of a distant cathedral, and sometimes when the weather was near raining, the crests of remote mountains hung clearly in the sky. Beyond the range of sight indeed, out beyond, there was Checkshill; I felt it there always, and in the darkness more than I did by day. Checkshill, and Nettie!

And to us two youngsters as we walked along the cinder path beside the rutted road and argued out our perplexities, it seemed that this ridge gave us compendiously a view of our whole world.

There on the one hand in a crowded darkness, about the ugly factories and work-places, the workers herded together, ill clothed, ill nourished, ill taught, badly and expensively served at every occasion in life, uncertain even of their insufficient livelihood from day to day, the chapels and churches and public-houses swelling up amidst their wretched homes like saprophytes amidst a general corruption, and on the other, in space, freedom, and dignity, scarce heeding the few cottages, as overcrowded as they were picturesque, in which the laborers festered, lived the landlords and masters who owned pot-banks and forge and farm and mine. Far away, distant, beautiful, irrelevant, from out of a little cluster of secondhand bookshops, ecclesiastical residences, and the inns and incidentals of a decaying market town, the cathedral of Lowchester pointed a beautiful, unemphatic spire to vague incredible skies. So it seemed to us that the whole world was planned in those youthful first impressions.

We saw everything simple, as young men will. We had our angry, confident solutions, and whosoever would criticize them was a friend of the robbers. It was a clear case of robbery, we held, visibly so; there in those great houses lurked the Landlord and the Capitalist, with his scoundrel the Lawyer, with his cheat the Priest, and we others were all the victims of their deliberate villainies. No doubt they winked and chuckled over their rare wines, amidst their dazzling, wickedly dressed women, and plotted further grinding for the faces of the poor. And amidst all the squalor on the other hand, amidst brutalities, ignorance, and drunkenness, suffered multitudinously their blameless victim, the Working Man. And we, almost at the first glance, had found all this out, it had merely to be asserted now with sufficient rhetoric and vehemence to change the face of the whole world. The Working Man would arise — in the form of a Labor Party, and with young men like Parload and myself to represent him — and come to his own, and then —— — ?

Then the robbers would get it hot, and everything would be extremely satisfactory.

Unless my memory plays me strange tricks that does no injustice

to the creed of thought and action that Parload and I held as the final result of human wisdom. We believed it with heat, and rejected with heat the most obvious qualification of its harshness. At times in our great talks we were full of heady hopes for the near triumph of our doctrine, more often our mood was hot resentment at the wickedness and stupidity that delayed so plain and simple a reconstruction of the order of the world. Then we grew malignant, and thought of barricades and significant violence. I was very bitter, I know, upon this night of which I am now particularly telling, and the only face upon the hydra of Capitalism and Monopoly that I could see at all clearly, smiled exactly as old Rawdon had smiled when he refused to give me more than a paltry twenty shillings a week.

I wanted intensely to salve my self-respect by some revenge upon him, and I felt that if that could be done by slaying the hydra, I might drag its carcass to the feet of Nettie, and settle my other trouble as well. "What do you think of me NOW, Nettie?"

That at any rate comes near enough to the quality of my thinking, then, for you to imagine how I gesticulated and spouted to Parload that night. You figure us as little black figures, unprepossessing in the outline, set in the midst of that desolating night of flaming industrialism, and my little voice with a rhetorical twang protesting, denouncing. . . .

You will consider those notions of my youth poor silly violent stuff; particularly if you are of the younger generation born since the Change you will be of that opinion. Nowadays the whole world thinks clearly, thinks with deliberation, pellucid certainties, you find it impossible to imagine how any other thinking could have been possible. Let me tell you then how you can bring yourself to something like the condition of our former state. In the first place you must get yourself out of health by unwise drinking and eating, and out of condition by neglecting your exercise, then you must contrive to be worried very much and made very anxious and uncomfortable, and then you must work very hard for four or five days and for long hours every day at something too petty to be interesting, too complex to be mechanical, and without any personal significance to you whatever. This done, get straightway into a room that is not ventilated at all, and that is already full of foul air, and

there set yourself to think out some very complicated problem. In a very little while you will find yourself in a state of intellectual muddle, annoyed, impatient, snatching at the obvious presently in choosing and rejecting conclusions haphazard. Try to play chess under such conditions and you will play stupidly and lose your temper. Try to do anything that taxes the brain or temper and you will fail.

Now, the whole world before the Change was as sick and feverish as that, it was worried and overworked and perplexed by problems that would not get stated simply, that changed and evaded solution, it was in an atmosphere that had corrupted and thickened past breathing; there was no thorough cool thinking in the world at all. There was nothing in the mind of the world anywhere but half-truths, hasty assumptions, hallucinations, and emotions. Nothing. . . .

I know it seems incredible, that already some of the younger men are beginning to doubt the greatness of the Change our world has undergone, but read — read the newspapers of that time. Every age becomes mitigated and a little ennobled in our minds as it recedes into the past. It is the part of those who like myself have stories of that time to tell, to supply, by a scrupulous spiritual realism, some antidote to that glamour.

Section 4

Always with Parload I was chief talker.

I can look back upon myself with, I believe, an almost perfect detachment, things have so changed that indeed now I am another being, with scarce anything in common with that boastful foolish youngster whose troubles I recall. I see him vulgarly theatrical, egotistical, insincere, indeed I do not like him save with that instinctive material sympathy that is the fruit of incessant intimacy. Because he was myself I may be able to feel and write understandingly about motives that will put him out of sympathy with nearly every reader, but why should I palliate or defend his quality?

Always, I say, I did the talking, and it would have amazed me beyond measure if any one had told me that mine was not the greater

intelligence in these wordy encounters. Parload was a quiet youth, and stiff and restrained in all things, while I had that supreme gift for young men and democracies, the gift of copious expression. Parload I diagnosed in my secret heart as a trifle dull; he posed as pregnant quiet, I thought, and was obsessed by the congenial notion of "scientific caution." I did not remark that while my hands were chiefly useful for gesticulation or holding a pen Parload's hands could do all sorts of things, and I did not think therefore that fibers must run from those fingers to something in his brain. Nor, though I bragged perpetually of my shorthand, of my literature, of my indispensable share in Rawdon's business, did Parload lay stress on the conics and calculus he "mugged" in the organized science school. Parload is a famous man now, a great figure in a great time, his work upon intersecting radiations has broadened the intellectual horizon of mankind for ever, and I, who am at best a hewer of intellectual wood, a drawer of living water, can smile, and he can smile, to think how I patronized and posed and jabbered over him in the darkness of those early days.

That night I was shrill and eloquent beyond measure. Rawdon was, of course, the hub upon which I went round — Rawdon and the Rawdonesque employer and the injustice of "wages slavery" and all the immediate conditions of that industrial blind alley up which it seemed our lives were thrust. But ever and again I glanced at other things. Nettie was always there in the background of my mind, regarding me enigmatically. It was part of my pose to Parload that I had a romantic love-affair somewhere away beyond the sphere of our intercourse, and that note gave a Byronic resonance to many of the nonsensical things I produced for his astonishment.

I will not weary you with too detailed an account of the talk of a foolish youth who was also distressed and unhappy, and whose voice was balm for the humiliations that smarted in his eyes. Indeed, now in many particulars I cannot disentangle this harangue of which I tell from many of the things I may have said in other talks to Parload. For example, I forget if it was then or before or afterwards that, as it were by accident, I let out what might be taken as an admission that I was addicted to drugs.

"You shouldn't do that," said Parload, suddenly. "It won't do to

poison your brains with that."

My brains, my eloquence, were to be very important assets to our party in the coming revolution. . . .

But one thing does clearly belong to this particular conversation I am recalling. When I started out it was quite settled in the back of my mind that I must not leave Rawdon's. I simply wanted to abuse my employer to Parload. But I talked myself quite out of touch with all the cogent reasons there were for sticking to my place, and I got home that night irrevocably committed to a spirited — not to say a defiant — policy with my employer.

"I can't stand Rawdon's much longer," I said to Parload by way of a flourish.

"There's hard times coming," said Parload.

"Next winter."

"Sooner. The Americans have been overproducing, and they mean to dump. The iron trade is going to have convulsions."

"I don't care. Pot-banks are steady."

"With a corner in borax? No. I've heard—"

"What have you heard?"

"Office secrets. But it's no secret there's trouble coming to potters. There's been borrowing and speculation. The masters don't stick to one business as they used to do. I can tell that much. Half the valley may be 'playing' before two months are out." Parload delivered himself of this unusually long speech in his most pithy and weighty manner.

"Playing" was our local euphemism for a time when there was no work and no money for a man, a time of stagnation and dreary hungry loafing day after day. Such interludes seemed in those days a necessary consequence of industrial organization.

"You'd better stick to Rawdon's," said Parload.

"Ugh," said I, affecting a noble disgust.

"There'll be trouble," said Parload.

"Who cares?" said I. "Let there be trouble — the more the better. This system has got to end, sooner or later. These capitalists with their speculation and corners and trusts make things go from bad to worse. Why should I cower in Rawdon's office, like a frightened dog, while hunger walks the streets? Hunger is the master

revolutionary. When he comes we ought to turn out and salute him. Anyway, I'M going to do so now."

"That's all very well," began Parload.

"I'm tired of it," I said. "I want to come to grips with all these Rawdons. I think perhaps if I was hungry and savage I could talk to hungry men—"

"There's your mother," said Parload, in his slow judicial way.

That WAS a difficulty.

I got over it by a rhetorical turn. "Why should one sacrifice the future of the world — why should one even sacrifice one's own future — because one's mother is totally destitute of imagination?"

Section 5

It was late when I parted from Parload and came back to my own home.

Our house stood in a highly respectable little square near the Clayton parish church. Mr. Gabbitas, the curate of all work, lodged on our ground floor, and upstairs there was an old lady, Miss Holroyd, who painted flowers on china and maintained her blind sister in an adjacent room; my mother and I lived in the basement and slept in the attics. The front of the house was veiled by a Virginian creeper that defied the Clayton air and clustered in untidy dependent masses over the wooden porch.

As I came up the steps I had a glimpse of Mr. Gabbitas printing photographs by candle light in his room. It was the chief delight of his little life to spend his holiday abroad in the company of a queer little snap-shot camera, and to return with a great multitude of foggy and sinister negatives that he had made in beautiful and interesting places. These the camera company would develop for him on advantageous terms, and he would spend his evenings the year through in printing from them in order to inflict copies upon his undeserving friends. There was a long frameful of his work in the Clayton National School, for example, inscribed in old English lettering, "Italian Travel Pictures, by the Rev. E. B. Gabbitas." For this it seemed he lived and traveled and had his being. It was his only real joy. By his shaded light I could see his sharp little nose, his little

pale eyes behind his glasses, his mouth pursed up with the endeavor of his employment.

"Hireling Liar," I muttered, for was not he also part of the system, part of the scheme of robbery that made wages serfs of Parload and me? — though his share in the proceedings was certainly small.

"Hireling Liar," said I, standing in the darkness, outside even his faint glow of traveled culture. . .

My mother let me in.

She looked at me, mutely, because she knew there was something wrong and that it was no use for her to ask what.

"Good night, mummy," said I, and kissed her a little roughly, and lit and took my candle and went off at once up the staircase to bed, not looking back at her.

"I've kept some supper for you, dear."

"Don't want any supper."

"But, dearie —— —"

"Good night, mother," and I went up and slammed my door upon her, blew out my candle, and lay down at once upon my bed, lay there a long time before I got up to undress.

There were times when that dumb beseeching of my mother's face irritated me unspeakably. It did so that night. I felt I had to struggle against it, that I could not exist if I gave way to its pleadings, and it hurt me and divided me to resist it, almost beyond endurance. It was clear to me that I had to think out for myself religious problems, social problems, questions of conduct, questions of expediency, that her poor dear simple beliefs could not help me at all — and she did not understand! Hers was the accepted religion, her only social ideas were blind submissions to the accepted order — to laws, to doctors, to clergymen, lawyers, masters, and all respectable persons in authority over us, and with her to believe was to fear. She knew from a thousand little signs — though still at times I went to church with her — that I was passing out of touch of all these things that ruled her life, into some terrible unknown. From things I said she could infer such clumsy concealments as I made. She felt my socialism, felt my spirit in revolt against the accepted order, felt the impotent resentments that filled me with bitterness against all she held sacred. Yet, you know, it was not her dear gods she sought to

defend so much as me! She seemed always to be wanting to say to me, “Dear, I know it’s hard — but revolt is harder. Don’t make war on it, dear — don’t! Don’t do anything to offend it. I’m sure it will hurt you if you do — it will hurt you if you do.”

She had been cowed into submission, as so many women of that time had been, by the sheer brutality of the accepted thing. The existing order dominated her into a worship of abject observances. It had bent her, aged her, robbed her of eyesight so that at fifty-five she peered through cheap spectacles at my face, and saw it only dimly, filled her with a habit of anxiety, made her hands —— — Her poor dear hands! Not in the whole world now could you find a woman with hands so grimy, so needle-worn, so misshapen by toil, so chapped and coarsened, so evilly entreated. . . . At any rate, there is this I can say for myself, that my bitterness against the world and fortune was for her sake as well as for my own.

Yet that night I pushed by her harshly. I answered her curtly, left her concerned and perplexed in the passage, and slammed my door upon her.

And for a long time I lay raging at the hardship and evil of life, at the contempt of Rawdon, and the loveless coolness of Nettie’s letter, at my weakness and insignificance, at the things I found intolerable, and the things I could not mend. Over and over went my poor little brain, tired out and unable to stop on my treadmill of troubles. Nettie. Rawdon. My mother. Gabbitas. Nettie. . .

Suddenly I came upon emotional exhaustion. Some clock was striking midnight. After all, I was young; I had these quick transitions. I remember quite distinctly, I stood up abruptly, undressed very quickly in the dark, and had hardly touched my pillow again before I was asleep.

But how my mother slept that night I do not know.

Oddly enough, I do not blame myself for behaving like this to my mother, though my conscience blames me acutely for my arrogance to Parload. I regret my behavior to my mother before the days of the Change, it is a scar among my memories that will always be a little painful to the end of my days, but I do not see how something of the sort was to be escaped under those former conditions. In that time of muddle and obscurity people were overtaken by needs and toil and

hot passions before they had the chance of even a year or so of clear thinking; they settled down to an intense and strenuous application to some partial but immediate duty, and the growth of thought ceased in them. They set and hardened into narrow ways. Few women remained capable of a new idea after five and twenty, few men after thirty-one or two. Discontent with the thing that existed was regarded as immoral, it was certainly an annoyance, and the only protest against it, the only effort against that universal tendency in all human institutions to thicken and clog, to work loosely and badly, to rust and weaken towards catastrophes, came from the young — the crude unmerciful young. It seemed in those days to thoughtful men the harsh law of being — that either we must submit to our elders and be stifled, or disregard them, disobey them, thrust them aside, and make our little step of progress before we too ossified and became obstructive in our turn.

My pushing past my mother, my irresponsive departure to my own silent meditations, was, I now perceive, a figure of the whole hard relationship between parents and son in those days. There appeared no other way; that perpetually recurring tragedy was, it seemed, part of the very nature of the progress of the world. We did not think then that minds might grow ripe without growing rigid, or children honor their parents and still think for themselves. We were angry and hasty because we stifled in the darkness, in a poisoned and vitiated air. That deliberate animation of the intelligence which is now the universal quality, that vigor with consideration, that judgment with confident enterprise which shine through all our world, were things disintegrated and unknown in the corrupting atmosphere of our former state.

(So the first fascicle ended. I put it aside and looked for the second.

"Well?" said the man who wrote.

"This is fiction?"

"It's my story."

"But you — Amidst this beauty — You are not this ill-conditioned, squalidly bred lad of whom I have been reading?"

He smiled. "There intervenes a certain Change," he said. "Have I not hinted at that?"

I hesitated upon a question, then saw the second fascicle at hand, and picked it up.)

CHAPTER THE SECOND

NETTIE

Section 1

I CANNOT now remember (the story resumed), what interval separated that evening on which Parload first showed me the comet — I think I only pretended to see it then — and the Sunday afternoon I spent at Checkshill.

Between the two there was time enough for me to give notice and leave Rawdon's, to seek for some other situation very strenuously in vain, to think and say many hard and violent things to my mother and to Parload, and to pass through some phases of very profound wretchedness. There must have been a passionate correspondence with Nettie, but all the froth and fury of that has faded now out of my memory. All I have clear now is that I wrote one magnificent farewell to her, casting her off forever, and that I got in reply a prim little note to say, that even if there was to be an end to everything, that was no excuse for writing such things as I had done, and then I think I wrote again in a vein I considered satirical. To that she did not reply. That interval was at least three weeks, and probably four, because the comet which had been on the first occasion only a dubious speck in the sky, certainly visible only when it was magnified, was now a great white presence, brighter than Jupiter, and casting a shadow on its own account. It was now actively present in the world of human thought, every one was talking about it, every one was looking for its waxing splendor as the sun went down — the papers, the music-halls, the hoardings, echoed it.

Yes; the comet was already dominant before I went over to make everything clear to Nettie. And Parload had spent two hoarded pounds in buying himself a spectroscope, so that he could see for himself, night after night, that mysterious, that stimulating line — the unknown line in the green. How many times I wonder did I look at the smudgy, quivering symbol of the unknown things that were rushing upon us out of the inhuman void, before I rebelled? But at

last I could stand it no longer, and I reproached Parload very bitterly for wasting his time in “astronomical dilettantism.”

“Here,” said I. “We’re on the verge of the biggest lock-out in the history of this countryside; here’s distress and hunger coming, here’s all the capitalistic competitive system like a wound inflamed, and you spend your time gaping at that damned silly streak of nothing in the sky!”

Parload stared at me. “Yes, I do,” he said slowly, as though it was a new idea. “Don’t I? . . . I wonder why.”

“*I* want to start meetings of an evening on Howden’s Waste.”

“You think they’d listen?”

“They’d listen fast enough now.”

“They didn’t before,” said Parload, looking at his pet instrument.

“There was a demonstration of unemployed at Swathinglea on Sunday.
They got to stone throwing.”

Parload said nothing for a little while and I said several things.
He seemed to be considering something.

“But, after all,” he said at last, with an awkward movement towards his spectroscope, “that does signify something.”

“The comet?”

“Yes.”

“What can it signify? You don’t want me to believe in astrology. What does it matter what flames in the heavens — when men are starving on earth?”

“It’s — it’s science.”

“Science! What we want now is socialism — not science.”

He still seemed reluctant to give up his comet.

“Socialism’s all right,” he said, “but if that thing up there WAS to hit the earth it might matter.”

“Nothing matters but human beings.”

“Suppose it killed them all.”

“Oh,” said I, “that’s Rot,”

“I wonder,” said Parload, dreadfully divided in his allegiance.

He looked at the comet. He seemed on the verge of repeating his growing information about the nearness of the paths of the earth and comet, and all that might ensue from that. So I cut in with something I had got out of a now forgotten writer called Ruskin, a volcano of beautiful language and nonsensical suggestions, who prevailed very greatly with eloquent excitable young men in those days. Something it was about the insignificance of science and the supreme importance of Life. Parload stood listening, half turned towards the sky with the tips of his fingers on his spectroscope. He seemed to come to a sudden decision.

"No. I don't agree with you, Leadford," he said. "You don't understand about science."

Parload rarely argued with that bluntness of opposition. I was so used to entire possession of our talk that his brief contradiction struck me like a blow. "Don't agree with me!" I repeated.

"No," said Parload

"But how?"

"I believe science is of more importance than socialism," he said. "Socialism's a theory. Science — science is something more."

And that was really all he seemed to be able to say.

We embarked upon one of those queer arguments illiterate young men used always to find so heating. Science or Socialism? It was, of course, like arguing which is right, left handedness or a taste for onions, it was altogether impossible opposition. But the range of my rhetoric enabled me at last to exasperate Parload, and his mere repudiation of my conclusions sufficed to exasperate me, and we ended in the key of a positive quarrel. "Oh, very well!" said I. "So long as I know where we are!"

I slammed his door as though I dynamited his house, and went raging down the street, but I felt that he was already back at the window worshiping his blessed line in the green, before I got round the corner.

I had to walk for an hour or so, before I was cool enough to go home.

And it was Parload who had first introduced me to socialism!

Recreant!

The most extraordinary things used to run through my head in those days. I will confess that my mind ran persistently that evening upon revolutions after the best French pattern, and I sat on a Committee of Safety and tried backsliders. Parload was there, among the prisoners, backsliderissimus, aware too late of the error of his ways. His hands were tied behind his back ready for the shambles; through the open door one heard the voice of justice, the rude justice of the people. I was sorry, but I had to do my duty.

"If we punish those who would betray us to Kings," said I, with a sorrowful deliberation, "how much the more must we punish those who would give over the State to the pursuit of useless knowledge"; and so with a gloomy satisfaction sent him off to the guillotine.

"Ah, Parload! Parload! If only you'd listened to me earlier, Parload. . . ."

None the less that quarrel made me extremely unhappy. Parload was my only gossip, and it cost me much to keep away from him and think evil of him with no one to listen to me, evening after evening.

That was a very miserable time for me, even before my last visit to Checkshill. My long unemployed hours hung heavily on my hands. I kept away from home all day, partly to support a fiction that I was sedulously seeking another situation, and partly to escape the persistent question in my mother's eyes. "Why did you quarrel with Mr. Rawdon? Why DID you? Why do you keep on going about with a sullen face and risk offending IT more?" I spent most of the morning in the newspaper-room of the public library, writing impossible applications for impossible posts — I remember that among other things of the sort I offered my services to a firm of private detectives, a sinister breed of traders upon base jealousies now happily vanished from the world, and wrote apropos of an advertisement for "stevedores" that I did not know what the duties of a stevedore might be, but that I was apt and willing to learn — and in the afternoons and evenings I wandered through the strange lights and shadows of my native valley and hated all created things. Until my wanderings were checked by the discovery that I was wearing out

my boots.

The stagnant inconclusive malaria of that time!

I perceive that I was an evil-tempered, ill-disposed youth with a great capacity for hatred, BUT —

There was an excuse for hate.

It was wrong of me to hate individuals, to be rude, harsh, and vindictive to this person or that, but indeed it would have been equally wrong to have taken the manifest offer life made me, without resentment. I see now clearly and calmly, what I then felt obscurely and with an unbalanced intensity, that my conditions were intolerable. My work was tedious and laborious and it took up an unreasonable proportion of my time, I was ill clothed, ill fed, ill housed, ill educated and ill trained, my will was suppressed and cramped to the pitch of torture, I had no reasonable pride in myself and no reasonable chance of putting anything right. It was a life hardly worth living. That a large proportion of the people about me had no better a lot, that many had a worse, does not affect these facts. It was a life in which contentment would have been disgraceful. If some of them were contented or resigned, so much the worse for every one. No doubt it was hasty and foolish of me to throw up my situation, but everything was so obviously aimless and foolish in our social organization that I do not feel disposed to blame myself even for that, except in so far as it pained my mother and caused her anxiety.

Think of the one comprehensive fact of the lock-out!

That year was a bad year, a year of world-wide economic disorganization. Through their want of intelligent direction the great "Trust" of American ironmasters, a gang of energetic, narrow-minded furnace owners, had smelted far more iron than the whole world had any demand for. (In those days there existed no means of estimating any need of that sort beforehand.) They had done this without even consulting the ironmasters of any other country. During their period of activity they had drawn into their employment a great number of workers, and had erected a huge productive plant. It is manifestly just that people who do headlong stupid things of this sort should suffer, but in the old days it was quite possible, it was customary for the real blunderers in such disasters, to shift nearly all

the consequences of their incapacity. No one thought it wrong for a light-witted "captain of industry" who had led his workpeople into overproduction, into the disproportionate manufacture, that is to say, of some particular article, to abandon and dismiss them, nor was there anything to prevent the sudden frantic underselling of some trade rival in order to surprise and destroy his trade, secure his customers for one's own destined needs, and shift a portion of one's punishment upon him. This operation of spasmodic underselling was known as "dumping." The American ironmasters were now dumping on the British market. The British employers were, of course, taking their loss out of their workpeople as much as possible, but in addition they were agitating for some legislation that would prevent — not stupid relative excess in production, but "dumping" — not the disease, but the consequences of the disease. The necessary knowledge to prevent either dumping or its causes, the uncorrelated production of commodities, did not exist, but this hardly weighed with them at all, and in answer to their demands there had arisen a curious party of retaliatory-protectionists who combined vague proposals for spasmodic responses to these convulsive attacks from foreign manufacturers, with the very evident intention of achieving financial adventures. The dishonest and reckless elements were indeed so evident in this movement as to add very greatly to the general atmosphere of distrust and insecurity, and in the recoil from the prospect of fiscal power in the hands of the class of men known as the "New Financiers," one heard frightened old-fashioned statesmen asserting with passion that "dumping" didn't occur, or that it was a very charming sort of thing to happen. Nobody would face and handle the rather intricate truth of the business. The whole effect upon the mind of a cool observer was of a covey of unsubstantial jabbering minds drifting over a series of irrational economic cataclysms, prices and employment tumbled about like towers in an earthquake, and amidst the shifting masses were the common work-people going on with their lives as well as they could, suffering, perplexed, unorganized, and for anything but violent, fruitless protests, impotent. You cannot hope now to understand the infinite want of adjustment in the old order of things. At one time there were people dying of actual starvation in India, while men were burning

unsalable wheat in America. It sounds like the account of a particularly mad dream, does it not? It was a dream, a dream from which no one on earth expected an awakening.

To us youngsters with the positiveness, the rationalism of youth, it seemed that the strikes and lockouts, the overproduction and misery could not possibly result simply from ignorance and want of thought and feeling. We needed more dramatic factors than these mental fogs, these mere atmospheric devils. We fled therefore to that common refuge of the unhappy ignorant, a belief in callous insensate plots — we called them "plots" — against the poor.

You can still see how we figured it in any museum by looking up the caricatures of capital and labor that adorned the German and American socialistic papers of the old time.

Section 2

I had cast Nettie off in an eloquent epistle, had really imagined the affair was over forever— "I've done with women," I said to Parload — and then there was silence for more than a week.

Before that week was over I was wondering with a growing emotion what next would happen between us.

I found myself thinking constantly of Nettie, picturing her — sometimes with stern satisfaction, sometimes with sympathetic remorse — mourning, regretting, realizing the absolute end that had come between us. At the bottom of my heart I no more believed that there was an end between us, than that an end would come to the world. Had we not kissed one another, had we not achieved an atmosphere of whispering nearness, breached our virgin shyness with one another? Of course she was mine, of course I was hers, and separations and final quarrels and harshness and distance were no more than flourishes upon that eternal fact. So at least I felt the thing, however I shaped my thoughts.

Whenever my imagination got to work as that week drew to its close, she came in as a matter of course, I thought of her recurrently all day and dreamt of her at night. On Saturday night I dreamt of her very vividly. Her face was flushed and wet with tears, her hair a little disordered, and when I spoke to her she turned away. In some

manner this dream left in my mind a feeling of distress and anxiety. In the morning I had a raging thirst to see her.

That Sunday my mother wanted me to go to church very particularly. She had a double reason for that; she thought that it would certainly exercise a favorable influence upon my search for a situation throughout the next week, and in addition Mr. Gabbitas, with a certain mystery behind his glasses, had promised to see what he could do for me, and she wanted to keep him up to that promise. I half consented, and then my desire for Nettie took hold of me. I told my mother I wasn't going to church, and set off about eleven to walk the seventeen miles to Checkshill.

It greatly intensified the fatigue of that long tramp that the sole of my boot presently split at the toe, and after I had cut the flapping portion off, a nail worked through and began to torment me. However, the boot looked all right after that operation and gave no audible hint of my discomfort. I got some bread and cheese at a little inn on the way, and was in Checkshill park about four. I did not go by the road past the house and so round to the gardens, but cut over the crest beyond the second keeper's cottage, along a path Nettie used to call her own. It was a mere deer track. It led up a miniature valley and through a pretty dell in which we had been accustomed to meet, and so through the hollies and along a narrow path close by the wall of the shrubbery to the gardens.

In my memory that walk through the park before I came upon Nettie stands out very vividly. The long tramp before it is foreshortened to a mere effect of dusty road and painful boot, but the bracken valley and sudden tumult of doubts and unwonted expectations that came to me, stands out now as something significant, as something unforgettable, something essential to the meaning of all that followed. Where should I meet her? What would she say? I had asked these questions before and found an answer. Now they came again with a trail of fresh implications and I had no answer for them at all. As I approached Nettie she ceased to be the mere butt of my egotistical self-projection, the custodian of my sexual pride, and drew together and became over and above this a personality of her own, a personality and a mystery, a sphinx I had evaded only to meet again.

I find a little difficulty in describing the quality of the old-world love-making so that it may be understandable now.

We young people had practically no preparation at all for the stir and emotions of adolescence. Towards the young the world maintained a conspiracy of stimulating silences. There came no initiation. There were books, stories of a curiously conventional kind that insisted on certain qualities in every love affair and greatly intensified one's natural desire for them, perfect trust, perfect loyalty, lifelong devotion. Much of the complex essentials of love were altogether hidden. One read these things, got accidental glimpses of this and that, wondered and forgot, and so one grew. Then strange emotions, novel alarming desires, dreams strangely charged with feeling; an inexplicable impulse of self-abandonment began to tickle queerly amongst the familiar purely egotistical and materialistic things of boyhood and girlhood. We were like misguided travelers who had camped in the dry bed of a tropical river. Presently we were knee deep and neck deep in the flood. Our beings were suddenly going out from ourselves seeking other beings — we knew not why. This novel craving for abandonment to some one of the other sex, bore us away. We were ashamed and full of desire. We kept the thing a guilty secret, and were resolved to satisfy it against all the world. In this state it was we drifted in the most accidental way against some other blindly seeking creature, and linked like nascent atoms.

We were obsessed by the books we read, by all the talk about us that once we had linked ourselves we were linked for life. Then afterwards we discovered that other was also an egotism, a thing of ideas and impulses, that failed to correspond with ours.

So it was, I say, with the young of my class and most of the young people in our world. So it came about that I sought Nettie on the Sunday afternoon and suddenly came upon her, light bodied, slenderly feminine, hazel eyed, with her soft sweet young face under the shady brim of her hat of straw, the pretty Venus I had resolved should be wholly and exclusively mine.

There, all unaware of me still, she stood, my essential feminine, the embodiment of the inner thing in life for me — and moreover an unknown other, a person like myself.

She held a little book in her hand, open as if she were walking

along and reading it. That chanced to be her pose, but indeed she was standing quite still, looking away towards the gray and lichenous shrubbery wall and, as I think now, listening. Her lips were a little apart, curved to that faint, sweet shadow of a smile.

Section 3

I recall with a vivid precision her queer start when she heard the rustle of my approaching feet, her surprise, her eyes almost of dismay for me. I could recollect, I believe, every significant word she spoke during our meeting, and most of what I said to her. At least, it seems I could, though indeed I may deceive myself. But I will not make the attempt. We were both too ill-educated to speak our full meanings, we stamped out our feelings with clumsy stereotyped phrases; you who are better taught would fail to catch our intention. The effect would be inanity. But our first words I may give you, because though they conveyed nothing to me at the time, afterwards they meant much.

"YOU, Willie!" she said.

"I have come," I said — forgetting in the instant all the elaborate things I had intended to say. "I thought I would surprise you—"

"Surprise me?"

"Yes."

She stared at me for a moment. I can see her pretty face now as it looked at me — her impenetrable dear face. She laughed a queer little laugh and her color went for a moment, and then so soon as she had spoken, came back again.

"Surprise me at what?" she said with a rising note.

I was too intent to explain myself to think of what might lie in that.

"I wanted to tell you," I said, "that I didn't mean quite . . . the things I put in my letter."

Section 4

When I and Nettie had been sixteen we had been just of an age and contemporaries altogether. Now we were a year and three-quarters

older, and she — her metamorphosis was almost complete, and I was still only at the beginning of a man's long adolescence.

In an instant she grasped the situation. The hidden motives of her quick ripened little mind flashed out their intuitive scheme of action. She treated me with that neat perfection of understanding a young woman has for a boy.

"But how did you come?" she asked.

I told her I had walked.

"Walked!" In an instant she was leading me towards the gardens. I MUST be tired. I must come home with her at once and sit down. Indeed it was near tea-time (the Stuarts had tea at the old-fashioned hour of five). Every one would be SO surprised to see me. Fancy walking! Fancy! But she supposed a man thought nothing of seventeen miles. When COULD I have started!

All the while, keeping me at a distance, without even the touch of her hand.

"But, Nettie! I came over to talk to you?"

"My dear boy! Tea first, if you please! And besides — aren't we talking?"

The "dear boy" was a new note, that sounded oddly to me.

She quickened her pace a little.

"I wanted to explain—" I began.

Whatever I wanted to explain I had no chance to do so. I said a few discrepant things that she answered rather by her intonation than her words.

When we were well past the shrubbery, she slackened a little in her urgency, and so we came along the slope under the beeches to the garden. She kept her bright, straightforward-looking girlish eyes on me as we went; it seemed she did so all the time, but now I know, better than I did then, that every now and then she glanced over me and behind me towards the shrubbery. And all the while, behind her quick breathless inconsecutive talk she was thinking.

Her dress marked the end of her transition.

Can I recall it?

Not, I am afraid, in the terms a woman would use. But her bright brown hair, which had once flowed down her back in a jolly pig-tail tied with a bit of scarlet ribbon, was now caught up into an intricacy

of pretty curves above her little ear and cheek, and the soft long lines of her neck; her white dress had descended to her feet; her slender waist, which had once been a mere geographical expression, an imaginary line like the equator, was now a thing of flexible beauty. A year ago she had been a pretty girl's face sticking out from a little unimportant frock that was carried upon an extremely active and efficient pair of brown-stockinged legs. Now there was coming a strange new body that flowed beneath her clothes with a sinuous insistence. Every movement, and particularly the novel droop of her hand and arm to the unaccustomed skirts she gathered about her, and a graceful forward inclination that had come to her, called softly to my eyes. A very fine scarf — I suppose you would call it a scarf — of green gossamer, that some new wakened instinct had told her to fling about her shoulders, clung now closely to the young undulations of her body, and now streamed fluttering out for a moment in a breath of wind, and like some shy independent tentacle with a secret to impart, came into momentary contact with my arm.

She caught it back and reproved it.

We went through the green gate in the high garden wall. I held it open for her to pass through, for this was one of my restricted stock of stiff politenesses, and then for a second she was near touching me. So we came to the trim array of flower-beds near the head gardener's cottage and the vistas of "glass" on our left. We walked between the box edgings and beds of begonias and into the shadow of a yew hedge within twenty yards of that very pond with the gold-fish, at whose brim we had plighted our vows, and so we came to the wistaria-smothered porch.

The door was wide open, and she walked in before me. "Guess who has come to see us!" she cried.

Her father answered indistinctly from the parlor, and a chair creaked. I judged he was disturbed in his nap.

"Mother!" she called in her clear young voice. "Puss!"

Puss was her sister.

She told them in a marveling key that I had walked all the way from Clayton, and they gathered about me and echoed her notes of surprise.

“You’d better sit down, Willie,” said her father; “now you have got here. How’s your mother?”

He looked at me curiously as he spoke.

He was dressed in his Sunday clothes, a sort of brownish tweeds, but the waistcoat was unbuttoned for greater comfort in his slumbers. He was a brown-eyed ruddy man, and I still have now in my mind the bright effect of the red-golden hairs that started out from his cheek to flow down into his beard. He was short but strongly built, and his beard and mustache were the biggest things about him. She had taken all the possibility of beauty he possessed, his clear skin, his bright hazel-brown eyes, and wedded them to a certain quickness she got from her mother. Her mother I remember as a sharp-eyed woman of great activity; she seems to me now to have been perpetually bringing in or taking out meals or doing some such service, and to me — for my mother’s sake and my own — she was always welcoming and kind. Puss was a youngster of fourteen perhaps, of whom a hard bright stare, and a pale skin like her mother’s, are the chief traces on my memory. All these people were very kind to me, and among them there was a common recognition, sometimes very agreeably finding expression, that I was— “clever.” They all stood about me as if they were a little at a loss.

“Sit down!” said her father. “Give him a chair, Puss.”

We talked a little stiffly — they were evidently surprised by my sudden apparition, dusty, fatigued, and white faced; but Nettie did not remain to keep the conversation going.

“There!” she cried suddenly, as if she were vexed. “I declare!” and she darted out of the room.

“Lord! what a girl it is!” said Mrs. Stuart. “I don’t know what’s come to her.”

It was half an hour before Nettie came back. It seemed a long time to me, and yet she had been running, for when she came in again she was out of breath. In the meantime, I had thrown out casually that I had given up my place at Rawdon’s. “I can do better than that,” I said.

“I left my book in the dell,” she said, panting. “Is tea ready?” and that was her apology. . .

We didn’t shake down into comfort even with the coming of the

tea-things. Tea at the gardener's cottage was a serious meal, with a big cake and little cakes, and preserves and fruit, a fine spread upon a table. You must imagine me, sullen, awkward, and preoccupied, perplexed by the something that was inexplicably unexpected in Nettie, saying little, and glowering across the cake at her, and all the eloquence I had been concentrating for the previous twenty-four hours, miserably lost somewhere in the back of my mind. Nettie's father tried to set me talking; he had a liking for my gift of ready speech, for his own ideas came with difficulty, and it pleased and astonished him to hear me pouring out my views. Indeed, over there I was, I think, even more talkative than with Parload, though to the world at large I was a shy young lout. "You ought to write it out for the newspapers," he used to say. "That's what you ought to do. I never heard such nonsense."

Or, "You've got the gift of the gab, young man. We ought to ha' made a lawyer of you."

But that afternoon, even in his eyes, I didn't shine. Failing any other stimulus, he reverted to my search for a situation, but even that did not engage me.

Section 5

For a long time I feared I should have to go back to Clayton without another word to Nettie, she seemed insensible to the need I felt for a talk with her, and I was thinking even of a sudden demand for that before them all. It was a transparent manoeuver of her mother's who had been watching my face, that sent us out at last together to do something — I forget now what — in one of the greenhouses. Whatever that little mission may have been it was the merest, most barefaced excuse, a door to shut, or a window to close, and I don't think it got done.

Nettie hesitated and obeyed. She led the way through one of the hot-houses. It was a low, steamy, brick-floored alley between staging that bore a close crowd of pots and ferns, and behind big branching plants that were spread and nailed overhead so as to make an impervious cover of leaves, and in that close green privacy she stopped and turned on me suddenly like a creature at bay.

“Isn’t the maidenhair fern lovely?” she said, and looked at me with eyes that said, “NOW.”

“Nettie,” I began, “I was a fool to write to you as I did.”

She startled me by the assent that flashed out upon her face. But she said nothing, and stood waiting.

“Nettie,” I plunged, “I can’t do without you. I — I love you.”

“If you loved me,” she said trimly, watching the white fingers she plunged among the green branches of a selaginella, “could you write the things you do to me?”

“I don’t mean them,” I said. “At least not always.”

I thought really they were very good letters, and that Nettie was stupid to think otherwise, but I was for the moment clearly aware of the impossibility of conveying that to her.

“You wrote them.”

“But then I tramp seventeen miles to say I don’t mean them.”

“Yes. But perhaps you do.”

I think I was at a loss; then I said, not very clearly, “I don’t.”

“You think you — you love me, Willie. But you don’t.”

“I do. Nettie! You know I do.”

For answer she shook her head.

I made what I thought was a most heroic plunge. “Nettie,” I said, “I’d rather have you than — than my own opinions.”

The selaginella still engaged her. “You think so now,” she said.

I broke out into protestations.

“No,” she said shortly. “It’s different now.”

“But why should two letters make so much difference?” I said.

“It isn’t only the letters. But it is different. It’s different for good.”

She halted a little with that sentence, seeking her expression. She looked up abruptly into my eyes and moved, indeed slightly, but with the intimation that she thought our talk might end.

But I did not mean it to end like that.

“For good?” said I. “No! . . Nettie! Nettie! You don’t mean that!”

“I do,” she said deliberately, still looking at me, and with all her pose conveying her finality. She seemed to brace herself for the outbreak that must follow.

Of course I became wordy. But I did not submerge her. She stood entrenched, firing her contradictions like guns into my scattered discursive attack. I remember that our talk took the absurd form of disputing whether I could be in love with her or not. And there was I, present in evidence, in a deepening and widening distress of soul because she could stand there, defensive, brighter and prettier than ever, and in some inexplicable way cut off from me and inaccessible.

You know, we had never been together before without little enterprises of endearment, without a faintly guilty, quite delightful excitement.

I pleaded, I argued. I tried to show that even my harsh and difficult letters came from my desire to come wholly into contact with her. I made exaggerated fine statements of the longing I felt for her when I was away, of the shock and misery of finding her estranged and cool. She looked at me, feeling the emotion of my speech and impervious to its ideas. I had no doubt — whatever poverty in my words, coolly written down now — that I was eloquent then. I meant most intensely what I said, indeed I was wholly concentrated upon it. I was set upon conveying to her with absolute sincerity my sense of distance, and the greatness of my desire. I toiled toward her painfully and obstinately through a jungle of words.

Her face changed very slowly — by such imperceptible degrees as when at dawn light comes into a clear sky. I could feel that I touched her, that her hardness was in some manner melting, her determination softening toward hesitations. The habit of an old familiarity lurked somewhere within her. But she would not let me reach her.

"No," she cried abruptly, starting into motion.

She laid a hand on my arm. A wonderful new friendliness came into her voice. "It's impossible, Willie. Everything is different now — everything. We made a mistake. We two young sillies made a mistake and everything is different for ever. Yes, yes."

She turned about.

"Nettie!" cried I, and still protesting, pursued her along the narrow alley between the staging toward the hot-house door. I pursued her like an accusation, and she went before me like one who

is guilty and ashamed. So I recall it now.

She would not let me talk to her again.

Yet I could see that my talk to her had altogether abolished the clear-cut distance of our meeting in the park. Ever and again I found her hazel eyes upon me. They expressed something novel — a surprise, as though she realized an unwonted relationship, and a sympathetic pity. And still — something defensive.

When we got back to the cottage, I fell talking rather more freely with her father about the nationalization of railways, and my spirits and temper had so far mended at the realization that I could still produce an effect upon Nettie, that I was even playful with Puss. Mrs. Stuart judged from that that things were better with me than they were, and began to beam mightily.

But Nettie remained thoughtful and said very little. She was lost in perplexities I could not fathom, and presently she slipped away from us and went upstairs.

Section 6

I was, of course, too footsore to walk back to Clayton, but I had a shilling and a penny in my pocket for the train between Checkshill and Two-Mile Stone, and that much of the distance I proposed to do in the train. And when I got ready to go, Nettie amazed me by waking up to the most remarkable solicitude for me. I must, she said, go by the road. It was altogether too dark for the short way to the lodge gates.

I pointed out that it was moonlight. “With the comet thrown in,” said old Stuart.

“No,” she insisted, “you MUST go by the road.”

I still disputed.

She was standing near me. “To please ME,” she urged, in a quick undertone, and with a persuasive look that puzzled me. Even in the moment I asked myself why should this please her?

I might have agreed had she not followed that up with, “The hollies by the shrubbery are as dark as pitch. And there’s the deer-hounds.”

“I’m not afraid of the dark,” said I. “Nor of the deer-hounds,

either.”

“But those dogs! Supposing one was loose!”

That was a girl’s argument, a girl who still had to understand that fear is an overt argument only for her own sex. I thought too of those grisly lank brutes straining at their chains and the chorus they could make of a night when they heard belated footsteps along the edge of the Killing Wood, and the thought banished my wish to please her. Like most imaginative natures I was acutely capable of dreads and retreats, and constantly occupied with their suppression and concealment, and to refuse the short cut when it might appear that I did it on account of half a dozen almost certainly chained dogs was impossible.

So I set off in spite of her, feeling valiant and glad to be so easily brave, but a little sorry that she should think herself crossed by me.

A thin cloud veiled the moon, and the way under the beeches was dark and indistinct. I was not so preoccupied with my love-affairs as to neglect what I will confess was always my custom at night across that wild and lonely park. I made myself a club by fastening a big flint to one end of my twisted handkerchief and tying the other about my wrist, and with this in my pocket, went on comforted.

And it chanced that as I emerged from the hollies by the corner of the shrubbery I was startled to come unexpectedly upon a young man in evening dress smoking a cigar.

I was walking on turf, so that the sound I made was slight. He stood clear in the moonlight, his cigar glowed like a blood-red star, and it did not occur to me at the time that I advanced towards him almost invisibly in an impenetrable shadow.

“Hullo,” he cried, with a sort of amiable challenge. “I’m here first!”

I came out into the light. “Who cares if you are?” said I.

I had jumped at once to an interpretation of his words. I knew that there was an intermittent dispute between the House people and the villager public about the use of this track, and it is needless to say where my sympathies fell in that dispute.

“Eh?” he cried in surprise.

“Thought I would run away, I suppose,” said I, and came close up to him.

All my enormous hatred of his class had flared up at the sight of his costume, at the fancied challenge of his words. I knew him. He was Edward Verrall, son of the man who owned not only this great estate but more than half of Rawdon's pot-bank, and who had interests and possessions, collieries and rents, all over the district of the Four Towns. He was a gallant youngster, people said, and very clever. Young as he was there was talk of parliament for him; he had been a great success at the university, and he was being sedulously popularized among us. He took with a light confidence, as a matter of course, advantages that I would have faced the rack to get, and I firmly believed myself a better man than he. He was, as he stood there, a concentrated figure of all that filled me with bitterness. One day he had stopped in a motor outside our house, and I remember the thrill of rage with which I had noted the dutiful admiration in my mother's eyes as she peered through her blind at him. "That's young Mr. Verrall," she said. "They say he's very clever."

"They would," I answered. "Damn them and him!"

But that is by the way.

He was clearly astonished to find himself face to face with a man. His note changed.

"Who the devil are YOU?" he asked.

My retort was the cheap expedient of re-echoing, "Who the devil are you?"

"WELL," he said.

"I'm coming along this path if I like," I said. "See? It's a public path — just as this used to be public land. You've stolen the land — you and yours, and now you want to steal the right of way. You'll ask us to get off the face of the earth next. I sha'n't oblige. See?"

I was shorter and I suppose a couple of years younger than he, but I had the improvised club in my pocket gripped ready, and I would have fought with him very cheerfully. But he fell a step backward as I came toward him.

"Socialist, I presume?" he said, alert and quiet and with the faintest note of badinage.

"One of many."

“We’re all socialists nowadays,” he remarked philosophically, “and I haven’t the faintest intention of disputing your right of way.”

“You’d better not,” I said.

“No!”

“No.”

He replaced his cigar, and there was a brief pause. “Catching a train?” he threw out.

It seemed absurd not to answer. “Yes,” I said shortly.

He said it was a pleasant evening for a walk.

I hovered for a moment and there was my path before me, and he stood aside. There seemed nothing to do but go on. “Good night,” said he, as that intention took effect.

I growled a surly good-night.

I felt like a bombshell of swearing that must presently burst with some violence as I went on my silent way. He had so completely got the best of our encounter.

Section 7

There comes a memory, an odd intermixture of two entirely divergent things, that stands out with the intensest vividness.

As I went across the last open meadow, following the short cut to Checkshill station, I perceived I had two shadows.

The thing jumped into my mind and stopped its tumid flow for a moment. I remember the intelligent detachment of my sudden interest. I turned sharply, and stood looking at the moon and the great white comet, that the drift of the clouds had now rather suddenly unveiled.

The comet was perhaps twenty degrees from the moon. What a wonderful thing it looked floating there, a greenish-white apparition in the dark blue deeps! It looked brighter than the moon because it was smaller, but the shadow it cast, though clearer cut, was much fainter than the moon’s shadow. . . I went on noting these facts, watching my two shadows precede me.

I am totally unable to account for the sequence of my thoughts on this occasion. But suddenly, as if I had come on this new fact round a corner, the comet was out of my mind again, and I was face to face with an absolutely new idea. I wonder sometimes if the two shadows I cast, one with a sort of feminine faintness with regard to the other and not quite so tall, may not have suggested the word or the thought of an assignation to my mind. All that I have clear is that with the certitude of intuition I knew what it was that had brought the youth in evening dress outside the shrubbery. Of course! He had come to meet Nettie!

Once the mental process was started it took no time at all. The day which had been full of perplexities for me, the mysterious invisible thing that had held Nettie and myself apart, the unaccountable strange something in her manner, was revealed and explained.

I knew now why she had looked guilty at my appearance, what had brought her out that afternoon, why she had hurried me in, the nature of the "book" she had run back to fetch, the reason why she had wanted me to go back by the high-road, and why she had pitied me. It was all in the instant clear to me.

You must imagine me a black little creature, suddenly stricken still — for a moment standing rigid — and then again suddenly becoming active with an impotent gesture, becoming audible with an inarticulate cry, with two little shadows mocking my dismay, and about this figure you must conceive a great wide space of moonlit grass, rimmed by the looming suggestion of distant trees — trees very low and faint and dim, and over it all the domed serenity of that wonderful luminous night.

For a little while this realization stunned my mind. My thoughts came to a pause, staring at my discovery. Meanwhile my feet and my previous direction carried me through the warm darkness to Checkshill station with its little lights, to the ticket-office window, and so to the train.

I remember myself as it were waking up to the thing — I was alone in one of the dingy "third-class" compartments of that time — and the sudden nearly frantic insurgence of my rage. I stood up with the cry of an angry animal, and smote my fist with all my strength against the panel of wood before me. . . .

Curiously enough I have completely forgotten my mood after that for a little while, but I know that later, for a minute perhaps, I hung for a time out of the carriage with the door open, contemplating a leap from the train. It was to be a dramatic leap, and then I would go storming back to her, denounce her, overwhelm her; and I hung, urging myself to do it. I don't remember how it was I decided not to do this, at last, but in the end I didn't.

When the train stopped at the next station I had given up all thoughts of going back. I was sitting in the corner of the carriage with my bruised and wounded hand pressed under my arm, and still insensible to its pain, trying to think out clearly a scheme of action — action that should express the monstrous indignation that possessed me.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE REVOLVER

Section 1

"THAT comet is going to hit the earth!"

So said one of the two men who got into the train and settled down.

"Ah!" said the other man.

"They do say that it is made of gas, that comet. We sha'n't blow up, shall us?". . .

What did it matter to me?

I was thinking of revenge — revenge against the primary conditions of my being. I was thinking of Nettie and her lover. I was firmly resolved he should not have her — though I had to kill them both to prevent it. I did not care what else might happen, if only that end was ensured. All my thwarted passions had turned to rage. I would have accepted eternal torment that night without a second thought, to be certain of revenge. A hundred possibilities of action, a hundred stormy situations, a whirl of violent schemes, chased one another through my shamed, exasperated mind. The sole prospect I could endure was of some gigantic, inexorably cruel vindication of my humiliated self.

And Nettie? I loved Nettie still, but now with the intensest jealousy, with the keen, unmeasuring hatred of wounded pride, and baffled, passionate desire.

Section 2

As I came down the hill from Clayton Crest — for my shilling and a penny only permitted my traveling by train as far as Two-Mile Stone, and thence I had to walk over the hill — I remember very vividly a little man with a shrill voice who was preaching under a gas-lamp against a hoarding to a thin crowd of Sunday evening loafers. He was a short man, bald, with a little fair curly beard and hair and watery

blue eyes, and he was preaching that the end of the world drew near.

I think that is the first time I heard any one link the comet with the end of the world. He had got that jumbled up with international politics and prophecies from the Book of Daniel.

I stopped to hear him only for a moment or so. I do not think I should have halted at all but his crowd blocked my path, and the sight of his queer wild expression, the gesture of his upward-pointing finger, held me.

"There is the end of all your Sins and Follies," he bawled. "There! There is the Star of Judgments, the Judgments of the most High God! It is appointed unto all men to die — unto all men to die" — his
voice changed to a curious flat chant— "and after death, the Judgment! The Judgment!"

I pushed and threaded my way through the bystanders and went on, and his curious harsh flat voice pursued me. I went on with the thoughts that had occupied me before — where I could buy a revolver, and how I might master its use — and probably I should have forgotten all about him had he not taken a part in the hideous dream that ended the little sleep I had that night. For the most part I lay awake thinking of Nettie and her lover.

Then came three strange days — three days that seem now to have been wholly concentrated upon one business.

This dominant business was the purchase of my revolver. I held myself resolutely to the idea that I must either restore myself by some extraordinary act of vigor and violence in Nettie's eyes or I must kill her. I would not let myself fall away from that. I felt that if I let this matter pass, my last shred of pride and honor would pass with it, that for the rest of my life I should never deserve the slightest respect or any woman's love. Pride kept me to my purpose between my gusts of passion.

Yet it was not easy to buy that revolver.

I had a kind of shyness of the moment when I should have to face the shopman, and I was particularly anxious to have a story ready if he should see fit to ask questions why I bought such a thing. I

determined to say I was going to Texas, and I thought it might prove useful there. Texas in those days had the reputation of a wild lawless land. As I knew nothing of caliber or impact, I wanted also to be able to ask with a steady face at what distance a man or woman could be killed by the weapon that might be offered me. I was pretty cool-headed in relation to such practical aspects of my affair. I had some little difficulty in finding a gunsmith. In Clayton there were some rook-rifles and so forth in a cycle shop, but the only revolvers these people had impressed me as being too small and toylike for my purpose. It was in a pawnshop window in the narrow High Street of Swathinglea that I found my choice, a reasonably clumsy and serious-looking implement ticketed "As used in the American army."

I had drawn out my balance from the savings bank, matter of two pounds and more, to make this purchase, and I found it at last a very easy transaction. The pawnbroker told me where I could get ammunition, and I went home that night with bulging pockets, an armed man.

The purchase of my revolver was, I say, the chief business of those days, but you must not think I was so intent upon it as to be insensible to the stirring things that were happening in the streets through which I went seeking the means to effect my purpose. They were full of murmurings: the whole region of the Four Towns scowled lowering from its narrow doors. The ordinary healthy flow of people going to work, people going about their business, was chilled and checked. Numbers of men stood about the streets in knots and groups, as corpuscles gather and catch in the blood-vessels in the opening stages of inflammation. The woman looked haggard and worried. The ironworkers had refused the proposed reduction of their wages, and the lockout had begun. They were already at "play." The Conciliation Board was doing its best to keep the coal-miners and masters from a breach, but young Lord Redcar, the greatest of our coal owners and landlord of all Swathinglea and half Clayton, was taking a fine upstanding attitude that made the breach inevitable. He was a handsome young man, a gallant young man; his pride revolted at the idea of being dictated to by a "lot of bally miners," and he meant, he said, to make a fight for it. The world had treated him sumptuously from his earliest years; the shares in the common stock

of five thousand people had gone to pay for his handsome upbringing, and large, romantic, expensive ambitions filled his generously nurtured mind. He had early distinguished himself at Oxford by his scornful attitude towards democracy. There was something that appealed to the imagination in his fine antagonism to the crowd — on the one hand, was the brilliant young nobleman, picturesquely alone; on the other, the ugly, inexpressive multitude, dressed inelegantly in shop-clothes, under-educated, under-fed, envious, base, and with a wicked disinclination for work and a wicked appetite for the good things it could so rarely get. For common imaginative purposes one left out the policeman from the design, the stalwart policeman protecting his lordship, and ignored the fact that while Lord Redcar had his hands immediately and legally on the workman's shelter and bread, they could touch him to the skin only by some violent breach of the law.

He lived at Lowchester House, five miles or so beyond Checkshill; but partly to show how little he cared for his antagonists, and partly no doubt to keep himself in touch with the negotiations that were still going on, he was visible almost every day in and about the Four Towns, driving that big motor car of his that could take him sixty miles an hour. The English passion for fair play one might have thought sufficient to rob this bold procedure of any dangerous possibilities, but he did not go altogether free from insult, and on one occasion at least an intoxicated Irish woman shook her fist at him. . . .

A dark, quiet crowd, that was greater each day, a crowd more than half women, brooded as a cloud will sometimes brood permanently upon a mountain crest, in the market-place outside the Clayton Town Hall, where the conference was held. . . .

I consider myself justified in regarding Lord Redcar's passing automobile with a special animosity because of the leaks in our roof.

We held our little house on lease; the owner was a mean, saving old man named Pettigrew, who lived in a villa adorned with plaster images of dogs and goats, at Overcastle, and in spite of our specific agreement, he would do no repairs for us at all. He rested secure in my mother's timidity. Once, long ago, she had been behind-hand with her rent, with half of her quarter's rent, and he had extended the

days of grace a month; her sense that some day she might need the same mercy again made her his abject slave. She was afraid even to ask that he should cause the roof to be mended for fear he might take offence. But one night the rain poured in on her bed and gave her a cold, and stained and soaked her poor old patchwork counterpane. Then she got me to compose an excessively polite letter to old Pettigrew, begging him as a favor to perform his legal obligations. It is part of the general imbecility of those days that such one-sided law as existed was a profound mystery to the common people, its provisions impossible to ascertain, its machinery impossible to set in motion. Instead of the clearly written code, the lucid statements of rules and principles that are now at the service of every one, the law was the muddle secret of the legal profession. Poor people, overworked people, had constantly to submit to petty wrongs because of the intolerable uncertainty not only of law but of cost, and of the demands upon time and energy, proceedings might make. There was indeed no justice for any one too poor to command a good solicitor's deference and loyalty; there was nothing but rough police protection and the magistrate's grudging or eccentric advice for the mass of the population. The civil law, in particular, was a mysterious upper-class weapon, and I can imagine no injustice that would have been sufficient to induce my poor old mother to appeal to it.

All this begins to sound incredible. I can only assure you that it was so.

But I, when I learned that old Pettigrew had been down to tell my mother all about his rheumatism, to inspect the roof, and to allege that nothing was needed, gave way to my most frequent emotion in those days, a burning indignation, and took the matter into my own hands. I wrote and asked him, with a withering air of technicality, to have the roof repaired "as per agreement," and added, "if not done in one week from now we shall be obliged to take proceedings." I had not mentioned this high line of conduct to my mother at first, and so when old Pettigrew came down in a state of great agitation with my letter in his hand, she was almost equally agitated.

"How could you write to old Mr. Pettigrew like that?" she asked me.

I said that old Pettigrew was a shameful old rascal, or words to

that effect, and I am afraid I behaved in a very undutiful way to her when she said that she had settled everything with him — she wouldn't say how, but I could guess well enough — and that I was to promise her, promise her faithfully, to do nothing more in the matter. I wouldn't promise her.

And — having nothing better to employ me then — I presently went raging to old Pettigrew in order to put the whole thing before him in what I considered the proper light. Old Pettigrew evaded my illumination; he saw me coming up his front steps — I can still see his queer old nose and the crinkled brow over his eye and the little wisp of gray hair that showed over the corner of his window-blind — and he instructed his servant to put up the chain when she answered the door, and to tell me that he would not see me. So I had to fall back upon my pen.

Then it was, as I had no idea what were the proper "proceedings" to take, the brilliant idea occurred to me of appealing to Lord Redcar as the ground landlord, and, as it were, our feudal chief, and pointing out to him that his security for his rent was depreciating in old Pettigrew's hands. I added some general observations on leaseholds, the taxation of ground rents, and the private ownership of the soil. And Lord Redcar, whose spirit revolted at democracy, and who cultivated a pert humiliating manner with his inferiors to show as much, earned my distinguished hatred for ever by causing his secretary to present his compliments to me, and his request that I would mind my own business and leave him to manage his. At which I was so greatly enraged that I first tore this note into minute innumerable pieces, and then dashed it dramatically all over the floor of my room — from which, to keep my mother from the job, I afterward had to pick it up laboriously on all-fours.

I was still meditating a tremendous retort, an indictment of all Lord Redcar's class, their manners, morals, economic and political crimes, when my trouble with Nettie arose to swamp all minor troubles. Yet, not so completely but that I snarled aloud when his lordship's motor-car whizzed by me, as I went about upon my long meandering quest for a weapon. And I discovered after a time that my mother had bruised her knee and was lame. Fearing to irritate me by bringing the thing before me again, she had set herself to move

her bed out of the way of the drip without my help, and she had knocked her knee. All her poor furnishings, I discovered, were cowering now close to the peeling bedroom walls; there had come a vast discoloration of the ceiling, and a washing-tub was in occupation of the middle of her chamber. . . .

It is necessary that I should set these things before you, should give the key of inconvenience and uneasiness in which all things were arranged, should suggest the breath of trouble that stirred along the hot summer streets, the anxiety about the strike, the rumors and indignations, the gatherings and meetings, the increasing gravity of the policemen's faces, the combative headlines of the local papers, the knots of picketers who scrutinized any one who passed near the silent, smokeless forges, but in my mind, you must understand, such impressions came and went irregularly; they made a moving background, changing undertones, to my preoccupation by that darkly shaping purpose to which a revolver was so imperative an essential.

Along the darkling streets, amidst the sullen crowds, the thought of Nettie, my Nettie, and her gentleman lover made ever a vivid inflammatory spot of purpose in my brain.

Section 3

It was three days after this — on Wednesday, that is to say — that the first of those sinister outbreaks occurred that ended in the bloody affair of Peacock Grove and the flooding out of the entire line of the Swathinglea collieries. It was the only one of these disturbances I was destined to see, and at most a mere trivial preliminary of that struggle.

The accounts that have been written of this affair vary very widely. To read them is to realize the extraordinary carelessness of truth that dishonored the press of those latter days. In my bureau I have several files of the daily papers of the old time — I collected them, as a matter of fact — and three or four of about that date I have just this moment taken out and looked through to refresh my impression of what I saw. They lie before me — queer, shriveled, incredible things; the cheap paper has already become brittle and

brown and split along the creases, the ink faded or smeared, and I have to handle them with the utmost care when I glance among their raging headlines. As I sit here in this serene place, their quality throughout, their arrangement, their tone, their arguments and exhortations, read as though they came from drugged and drunken men. They give one the effect of faded bawling, of screams and shouts heard faintly in a little gramophone. . . . It is only on Monday I find, and buried deep below the war news, that these publications contain any intimation that unusual happenings were forward in Clayton and Swathinglea.

What I saw was towards evening. I had been learning to shoot with my new possession. I had walked out with it four or five miles across a patch of moorland and down to a secluded little coppice full of blue-bells, halfway along the high-road between Leet and Stafford. Here I had spent the afternoon, experimenting and practising with careful deliberation and grim persistence. I had brought an old kite-frame of cane with me, that folded and unfolded, and each shot-hole I made I marked and numbered to compare with my other endeavors. At last I was satisfied that I could hit a playing-card at thirty paces nine times out of ten; the light was getting too bad for me to see my penciled bull's-eye, and in that state of quiet moodiness that sometimes comes with hunger to passionate men, I returned by the way of Swathinglea towards my home.

The road I followed came down between banks of wretched-looking working-men's houses, in close-packed rows on either side, and took upon itself the role of Swathinglea High Street, where, at a lamp and a pillar-box, the steam-trams began. So far that dirty hot way had been unusually quiet and empty, but beyond the corner, where the first group of beershops clustered, it became populous. It was very quiet still, even the children were a little inactive, but there were a lot of people standing dispersedly in little groups, and with a general direction towards the gates of the Bantock Burden coalpit.

The place was being picketed, although at that time the miners were still nominally at work, and the conferences between masters and men still in session at Clayton Town Hall. But one of the men employed at the Bantock Burden pit, Jack Briscoe, was a socialist, and he had distinguished himself by a violent letter upon the crisis to

the leading socialistic paper in England, The Clarion, in which he had adventured among the motives of Lord Redcar. The publication of this had been followed by instant dismissal. As Lord Redcar wrote a day or so later to the Times — I have that Times, I have all the London papers of the last month before the Change —

"The man was paid off and kicked out. Any self-respecting employer would do the same." The thing had happened overnight, and the men did not at once take a clear line upon what was, after all, a very intricate and debatable occasion. But they came out in a sort of semiofficial strike from all Lord Redcar's collieries beyond the canal that besets Swathinglea. They did so without formal notice, committing a breach of contract by this sudden cessation. But in the long labor struggles of the old days the workers were constantly putting themselves in the wrong and committing illegalities through that overpowering craving for dramatic promptness natural to uneducated minds.

All the men had not come out of the Bantock Burden pit. Something was wrong there, an indecision if nothing else; the mine was still working, and there was a rumor that men from Durham had been held in readiness by Lord Redcar, and were already in the mine. Now, it is absolutely impossible to ascertain certainly how things stood at that time. The newspapers say this and that, but nothing trustworthy remains.

I believe I should have gone striding athwart the dark stage of that stagnant industrial drama without asking a question, if Lord Redcar had not chanced to come upon the scene about the same time as myself and incontinently end its stagnation.

He had promised that if the men wanted a struggle he would put up the best fight they had ever had, and he had been active all that afternoon in meeting the quarrel half way, and preparing as conspicuously as possible for the scratch force of "blacklegs" — as we called them — who were, he said and we believed, to replace the strikers in his pits.

I was an eye-witness of the whole of the affair outside the Bantock Burden pit, and — I do not know what happened.

Picture to yourself how the thing came to me.

I was descending a steep, cobbled, excavated road between banked-up footways, perhaps six feet high, upon which, in a monotonous series, opened the living room doors of rows of dark, low cottages. The perspective of squat blue slate roofs and clustering chimneys drifted downward towards the irregular open space before the colliery — a space covered with coaly, wheel-scarred mud, with a patch of weedy dump to the left and the colliery gates to the right. Beyond, the High Street with shops resumed again in good earnest and went on, and the lines of the steam-tramway that started out from before my feet, and were here shining and acutely visible with reflected skylight and here lost in a shadow, took up for one acute moment the greasy yellow irradiation of a newly lit gaslamp as they vanished round the bend. Beyond, spread a darkling marsh of homes, an infinitude of little smoking hovels, and emergent, meager churches, public-houses, board schools, and other buildings amidst the prevailing chimneys of Swathinglea. To the right, very clear and relatively high, the Bantock Burden pit-mouth was marked by a gaunt lattice bearing a great black wheel, very sharp and distinct in the twilight, and beyond, in an irregular perspective, were others following the lie of the seams. The general effect, as one came down the hill, was of a dark compressed life beneath a very high and wide and luminous evening sky, against which these pit-wheels rose. And ruling the calm spaciousness of that heaven was the great comet, now green-white, and wonderful for all who had eyes to see.

The fading afterglow of the sunset threw up all the contours and skyline to the west, and the comet rose eastward out of the pouring tumult of smoke from Bladden's forges. The moon had still to rise.

By this time the comet had begun to assume the cloudlike form still familiar through the medium of a thousand photographs and sketches. At first it had been an almost telescopic speck; it had brightened to the dimensions of the greatest star in the heavens; it had still grown, hour by hour, in its incredibly swift, its noiseless and inevitable rush upon our earth, until it had equaled and surpassed the moon. Now it was the most splendid thing this sky of earth has ever held. I have never seen a photograph that gave a proper idea of it. Never at any time did it assume the conventional tailed outline,

comets are supposed to have. Astronomers talked of its double tail, one preceding it and one trailing behind it, but these were foreshortened to nothing, so that it had rather the form of a bellying puff of luminous smoke with an intenser, brighter heart. It rose a hot yellow color, and only began to show its distinctive greenness when it was clear of the mists of the evening.

It compelled attention for a space. For all my earthly concentration of mind, I could but stare at it for a moment with a vague anticipation that, after all, in some way so strange and glorious an object must have significance, could not possibly be a matter of absolute indifference to the scheme and values of my life.

But how?

I thought of Parload. I thought of the panic and uneasiness that was spreading in this very matter, and the assurances of scientific men that the thing weighed so little — at the utmost a few hundred tons of thinly diffused gas and dust — that even were it to smite this earth fully, nothing could possibly ensue. And, after all, said I, what earthly significance has any one found in the stars?

Then, as one still descended, the houses and buildings rose up, the presence of those watching groups of people, the tension of the situation; and one forgot the sky.

Preoccupied with myself and with my dark dream about Nettie and my honor, I threaded my course through the stagnating threat of this gathering, and was caught unawares, when suddenly the whole scene flashed into drama. . . .

The attention of every one swung round with an irresistible magnetism towards the High Street, and caught me as a rush of waters might catch a wisp of hay. Abruptly the whole crowd was sounding one note. It was not a word, it was a sound that mingled threat and protest, something between a prolonged “Ah!” and “Ugh!” Then with a hoarse intensity of anger came a low heavy booing, “Boo! boo — oo!” a note stupidly expressive of animal savagery. “Toot, toot!” said Lord Redcar’s automobile in ridiculous repartee. “Toot, toot!” One heard it whizzing and throbbing as the crowd obliged it to slow down.

Everybody seemed in motion towards the colliery gates, I, too, with the others.

I heard a shout. Through the dark figures about me I saw the motor-car stop and move forward again, and had a glimpse of something writhing on the ground.

It was alleged afterwards that Lord Redcar was driving, and that he quite deliberately knocked down a little boy who would not get out of his way. It is asserted with equal confidence that the boy was a man who tried to pass across the front of the motor-car as it came slowly through the crowd, who escaped by a hair's breadth, and then slipped on the tram-rail and fell down. I have both accounts set forth, under screaming headlines, in two of these sere newspapers upon my desk. No one could ever ascertain the truth. Indeed, in such a blind tumult of passion, could there be any truth?

There was a rush forward, the horn of the car sounded, everything swayed violently to the right for perhaps ten yards or so, and there was a report like a pistol-shot.

For a moment every one seemed running away. A woman, carrying a shawl-wrapped child, blundered into me, and sent me reeling back. Every one thought of firearms, but, as a matter of fact, something had gone wrong with the motor, what in those old-fashioned contrivances was called a backfire. A thin puff of bluish smoke hung in the air behind the thing. The majority of the people scattered back in a disorderly fashion, and left a clear space about the struggle that centered upon the motor-car.

The man or boy who had fallen was lying on the ground with no one near him, a black lump, an extended arm and two sprawling feet. The motor-car had stopped, and its three occupants were standing up. Six or seven black figures surrounded the car, and appeared to be holding on to it as if to prevent it from starting again; one — it was Mitchell, a well-known labor leader — argued in fierce low tones with Lord Redcar. I could not hear anything they said, I was not near enough. Behind me the colliery gates were open, and there was a sense of help coming to the motor-car from that direction. There was an unoccupied muddy space for fifty yards, perhaps, between car and gate, and then the wheels and head of the pit rose black against the sky. I was one of a rude semicircle of people that hung as yet indeterminate in action about this dispute.

It was natural, I suppose, that my fingers should close upon the

revolver in my pocket.

I advanced with the vaguest intentions in the world, and not so quickly but that several men hurried past me to join the little knot holding up the car.

Lord Redcar, in his big furry overcoat, towered up over the group about him; his gestures were free and threatening, and his voice loud. He made a fine figure there, I must admit; he was a big, fair, handsome young man with a fine tenor voice and an instinct for gallant effect. My eyes were drawn to him at first wholly. He seemed a symbol, a triumphant symbol, of all that the theory of aristocracy claims, of all that filled my soul with resentment. His chauffeur sat crouched together, peering at the crowd under his lordship's arm. But Mitchell showed as a sturdy figure also, and his voice was firm and loud.

"You've hurt that lad," said Mitchell, over and over again. "You'll wait here till you see if he's hurt."

"I'll wait here or not as I please," said Redcar; and to the chauffeur, "Here! get down and look at it!"

"You'd better not get down," said Mitchell; and the chauffeur stood bent and hesitating on the step.

The man on the back seat stood up, leant forward, and spoke to Lord Redcar, and for the first time my attention was drawn to him. It was young Verrall! His handsome face shone clear and fine in the green pallor of the comet.

I ceased to hear the quarrel that was raising the voice of Mitchell and Lord Redcar. This new fact sent them spinning into the background. Young Verrall!

It was my own purpose coming to meet me half way.

There was to be a fight here, it seemed certain to come to a scuffle, and here we were —

What was I to do? I thought very swiftly. Unless my memory cheats me, I acted with swift decision. My hand tightened on my revolver, and then I remembered it was unloaded. I had thought my course out in an instant. I turned round and pushed my way out of the angry crowd that was now surging back towards the motor-car.

It would be quiet and out of sight, I thought, among the dump heaps across the road, and there I might load unobserved. . .

A big young man striding forward with his fists clenched, halted for one second at the sight of me.

"What!" said he. "Ain't afraid of them, are you?"

I glanced over my shoulder and back at him, was near showing him my pistol, and the expression changed in his eyes. He hung perplexed at me. Then with a grunt he went on.

I heard the voices growing loud and sharp behind me.

I hesitated, half turned towards the dispute, then set off running towards the heaps. Some instinct told me not to be detected loading. I was cool enough therefore to think of the aftermath of the thing I meant to do.

I looked back once again towards the swaying discussion — or was it a fight now? and then I dropped into the hollow, knelt among the weeds, and loaded with eager trembling fingers. I loaded one chamber, got up and went back a dozen paces, thought of possibilities, vacillated, returned and loaded all the others. I did it slowly because I felt a little clumsy, and at the end came a moment of inspection — had I forgotten any thing? And then for a few seconds I crouched before I rose, resisting the first gust of reaction against my impulse. I took thought, and for a moment that great green-white meteor overhead swam back into my conscious mind. For the first time then I linked it clearly with all the fierce violence that had crept into human life. I joined up that with what I meant to do. I was going to shoot young Verrall as it were under the benediction of that green glare.

But about Nettie?

I found it impossible to think out that obvious complication.

I came up over the heap again, and walked slowly back towards the wrangle.

Of course I had to kill him. . . .

Now I would have you believe I did not want to murder young Verrall at all at that particular time. I had not pictured such circumstances as these, I had never thought of him in connection with Lord Redcar and our black industrial world. He was in that distant other world of Checkshill, the world of parks and gardens, the

world of sunlit emotions and Nettie. His appearance here was disconcerting. I was taken by surprise. I was too tired and hungry to think clearly, and the hard implication of our antagonism prevailed with me. In the tumult of my passed emotions I had thought constantly of conflicts, confrontations, deeds of violence, and now the memory of these things took possession of me as though they were irrevocable resolutions.

There was a sharp exclamation, the shriek of a woman, and the crowd came surging back. The fight had begun.

Lord Redcar, I believe, had jumped down from his car and felled Mitchell, and men were already running out to his assistance from the colliery gates.

I had some difficulty in shoving through the crowd; I can still remember very vividly being jammed at one time between two big men so that my arms were pinned to my sides, but all the other details are gone out of my mind until I found myself almost violently projected forward into the "scrap."

I blundered against the corner of the motor-car, and came round it face to face with young Verrall, who was descending from the back compartment. His face was touched with orange from the automobile's big lamps, which conflicted with the shadows of the comet light, and distorted him oddly. That effect lasted but an instant, but it put me out. Then he came a step forward, and the ruddy lights and queerness vanished.

I don't think he recognized me, but he perceived immediately I meant attacking. He struck out at once at me a haphazard blow, and touched me on the cheek.

Instinctively I let go of the pistol, snatched my right hand out of my pocket and brought it up in a belated parry, and then let out with my left full in his chest.

It sent him staggering, and as he went back I saw recognition mingle with astonishment in his face.

"You know me, you swine," I cried and hit again.

Then I was spinning sideways, half-stunned, with a huge lump of a fist under my jaw. I had an impression of Lord Redcar as a great furry bulk, towering like some Homeric hero above the fray. I went down before him — it made him seem to rush up — and he ignored

me further. His big flat voice counseled young Verrall —

"Cut, Teddy! It won't do. The picketa's got i'on bahs. . . ."

Feet swayed about me, and some hobnailed miner kicked my ankle and went stumbling. There were shouts and curses, and then everything had swept past me. I rolled over on my face and beheld the chauffeur, young Verrall, and Lord Redcar — the latter holding up his long skirts of fur, and making a grotesque figure — one behind the other, in full bolt across a coldly comet-lit interval, towards the open gates of the colliery.

I raised myself up on my hands.

Young Verrall!

I had not even drawn my revolver — I had forgotten it. I was covered with coaly mud — knees, elbows, shoulders, back. I had not even drawn my revolver! . . .

A feeling of ridiculous impotence overwhelmed me. I struggled painfully to my feet.

I hesitated for a moment towards the gates of the colliery, and then went limping homeward, thwarted, painful, confused, and ashamed. I had not the heart nor desire to help in the wrecking and burning of Lord Redcar's motor.

Section 4

In the night, fever, pain, fatigue — it may be the indigestion of my supper of bread and cheese — roused me at last out of a hag-rid sleep to face despair. I was a soul lost amidst desolations and shame, dishonored, evilly treated, hopeless. I raged against the God I denied, and cursed him as I lay.

And it was in the nature of my fever, which was indeed only half fatigue and illness, and the rest the disorder of passionate youth, that Nettie, a strangely distorted Nettie, should come through the brief dreams that marked the exhaustions of that vigil, to dominate my misery. I was sensible, with an exaggerated distinctness, of the intensity of her physical charm for me, of her every grace and beauty; she took to herself the whole gamut of desire in me and the whole gamut of pride. She, bodily, was my lost honor. It was not only loss but disgrace to lose her. She stood for life and all that was

denied; she mocked me as a creature of failure and defeat. My spirit raised itself towards her, and then the bruise upon my jaw glowed with a dull heat, and I rolled in the mud again before my rivals.

There were times when something near madness took me, and I gnashed my teeth and dug my nails into my hands and ceased to curse and cry out only by reason of the insufficiency of words. And once towards dawn I got out of bed, and sat by my looking-glass with my revolver loaded in my hand. I stood up at last and put it carefully in my drawer and locked it — out of reach of any gusty impulse. After that I slept for a little while.

Such nights were nothing rare and strange in that old order of the world. Never a city, never a night the whole year round, but amidst those who slept were those who waked, plumbing the deeps of wrath and misery. Countless thousands there were so ill, so troubled, they agonize near to the very border-line of madness, each one the center of a universe darkened and lost. . .

The next day I spent in gloomy lethargy.

I had intended to go to Checkshill that day, but my bruised ankle was too swollen for that to be possible. I sat indoors in the ill-lit downstairs kitchen, with my foot bandaged, and mused darkly and read. My dear old mother waited on me, and her brown eyes watched me and wondered at my black silences, my frowning preoccupations. I had not told her how it was my ankle came to be bruised and my clothes muddy. She had brushed my clothes in the morning before I got up.

Ah well! Mothers are not treated in that way now. That I suppose must console me. I wonder how far you will be able to picture that dark, grimy, untidy room, with its bare deal table, its tattered wall paper, the saucepans and kettle on the narrow, cheap, but by no means economical range, the ashes under the fireplace, the rust-spotted steel fender on which my bandaged feet rested; I wonder how near you can come to seeing the scowling pale-faced hobbledehoy I was, unshaven and collarless, in the Windsor chair, and the little timid, dirty, devoted old woman who hovered about me with love peering out from her puckered eyelids. . .

When she went out to buy some vegetables in the middle of the morning she got me a half-penny journal. It was just such a one as

these upon my desk, only that the copy I read was damp from the press, and these are so dry and brittle, they crack if I touch them. I have a copy of the actual issue I read that morning; it was a paper called emphatically the New Paper, but everybody bought it and everybody called it the "yell." It was full that morning of stupendous news and still more stupendous headlines, so stupendous that for a little while I was roused from my egotistical broodings to wider interests. For it seemed that Germany and England were on the brink of war.

Of all the monstrous irrational phenomena of the former time, war was certainly the most strikingly insane. In reality it was probably far less mischievous than such quieter evil as, for example, the general acquiescence in the private ownership of land, but its evil consequences showed so plainly that even in those days of stifling confusion one marveled at it. On no conceivable grounds was there any sense in modern war. Save for the slaughter and mangling of a multitude of people, the destruction of vast quantities of material, and the waste of innumerable units of energy, it effected nothing. The old war of savage and barbaric nations did at least change humanity, you assumed yourselves to be a superior tribe in physique and discipline, you demonstrated this upon your neighbors, and if successful you took their land and their women and perpetuated and enlarged your superiority. The new war changed nothing but the color of maps, the design of postage stamps, and the relationship of a few accidentally conspicuous individuals. In one of the last of these international epileptic fits, for example, the English, with much dysentery and bad poetry, and a few hundred deaths in battle, conquered the South African Boers at a gross cost of about three thousand pounds per head — they could have bought the whole of that preposterous imitation of a nation for a tenth of that sum — and except for a few substitutions of personalities, this group of partially corrupt officials in the place of that, and so forth, the permanent change was altogether insignificant. (But an excitable young man in Austria committed suicide when at length the Transvaal ceased to be a "nation.") Men went through the seat of that war after it was all over, and found humanity unchanged, except for a general impoverishment, and the convenience of an unlimited supply of

empty ration tins and barbed wire and cartridge cases — unchanged and resuming with a slight perplexity all its old habits and misunderstandings, the nigger still in his slum-like kraal, the white in his ugly ill-managed shanty. . .

But we in England saw all these things, or did not see them, through the mirage of the New Paper, in a light of mania. All my adolescence from fourteen to seventeen went to the music of that monstrous resonating futility, the cheering, the anxieties, the songs and the waving of flags, the wrongs of generous Buller and the glorious heroism of De Wet — who ALWAYS got away; that was the great point about the heroic De Wet — and it never occurred to us that the total population we fought against was less than half the number of those who lived cramped ignoble lives within the compass of the Four Towns.

But before and after that stupid conflict of stupidities, a greater antagonism was coming into being, was slowly and quietly defining itself as a thing inevitable, sinking now a little out of attention only to resume more emphatically, now flashing into some acute definitive expression and now percolating and pervading some new region of thought, and that was the antagonism of Germany and Great Britain.

When I think of that growing proportion of readers who belong entirely to the new order, who are growing up with only the vaguest early memories of the old world, I find the greatest difficulty in writing down the unintelligible confusions that were matter of fact to their fathers.

Here were we British, forty-one millions of people, in a state of almost indescribably aimless, economic, and moral muddle that we had neither the courage, the energy, nor the intelligence to improve, that most of us had hardly the courage to think about, and with our affairs hopelessly entangled with the entirely different confusions of three hundred and fifty million other persons scattered about the globe, and here were the Germans over against us, fifty-six millions, in a state of confusion no whit better than our own, and the noisy little creatures who directed papers and wrote books and gave lectures, and generally in that time of world-dementia pretended to be the national mind, were busy in both countries, with a sort of infernal unanimity, exhorting — and not only exhorting but

successfully persuading — the two peoples to divert such small common store of material, moral and intellectual energy as either possessed, into the purely destructive and wasteful business of war. And — I have to tell you these things even if you do not believe them, because they are vital to my story — there was not a man alive who could have told you of any real permanent benefit, of anything whatever to counterbalance the obvious waste and evil, that would result from a war between England and Germany, whether England shattered Germany or was smashed and overwhelmed, or whatever the end might be.

The thing was, in fact, an enormous irrational obsession, it was, in the microcosm of our nation, curiously parallel to the egotistical wrath and jealousy that swayed my individual microcosm. It measured the excess of common emotion over the common intelligence, the legacy of inordinate passion we have received from the brute from which we came. Just as I had become the slave of my own surprise and anger and went hither and thither with a loaded revolver, seeking and intending vague fluctuating crimes, so these two nations went about the earth, hot eared and muddle headed, with loaded navies and armies terribly ready at hand. Only there was not even a Nettie to justify their stupidity. There was nothing but quiet imaginary thwarting on either side.

And the press was the chief instrument that kept these two huge multitudes of people directed against one another.

The press — those newspapers that are now so strange to us — like the "Empires," the "Nations," the Trusts, and all the other great monstrous shapes of that extraordinary time — was in the nature of an unanticipated accident. It had happened, as weeds happen in abandoned gardens, just as all our world has happened, — because there was no clear Will in the world to bring about anything better. Towards the end this "press" was almost entirely under the direction of youngish men of that eager, rather unintelligent type, that is never able to detect itself aimless, that pursues nothing with incredible pride and zeal, and if you would really understand this mad era the comet brought to an end, you must keep in mind that every phase in the production of these queer old things was pervaded by a strong aimless energy and happened in a concentrated rush.

Let me describe to you, very briefly, a newspaper day.

Figure first, then, a hastily erected and still more hastily designed building in a dirty, paper-littered back street of old London, and a number of shabbily dressed men coming and going in this with projectile swiftness, and within this factory companies of printers, tensely active with nimble fingers — they were always speeding up the printers — ply their type-setting machines, and cast and arrange masses of metal in a sort of kitchen inferno, above which, in a beehive of little brightly lit rooms, disheveled men sit and scribble. There is a throbbing of telephones and a clicking of telegraph needles, a rushing of messengers, a running to and fro of heated men, clutching proofs and copy. Then begins a clatter roar of machinery catching the infection, going faster and faster, and whizzing and banging, — engineers, who have never had time to wash since their birth, flying about with oil-cans, while paper runs off its rolls with a shudder of haste. The proprietor you must suppose arriving explosively on a swift motor-car, leaping out before the thing is at a standstill, with letters and documents clutched in his hand, rushing in, resolute to "hustle," getting wonderfully in everybody's way. At the sight of him even the messenger boys who are waiting, get up and scamper to and fro. Sprinkle your vision with collisions, curses, incoherencies. You imagine all the parts of this complex lunatic machine working hysterically toward a crescendo of haste and excitement as the night wears on. At last the only things that seem to travel slowly in all those tearing vibrating premises are the hands of the clock.

Slowly things draw on toward publication, the consummation of all those stresses. Then in the small hours, into the now dark and deserted streets comes a wild whirl of carts and men, the place spurts paper at every door, bales, heaps, torrents of papers, that are snatched and flung about in what looks like a free fight, and off with a rush and clatter east, west, north, and south. The interest passes outwardly; the men from the little rooms are going homeward, the printers disperse yawning, the roaring presses slacken. The paper exists. Distribution follows manufacture, and we follow the bundles.

Our vision becomes a vision of dispersal. You see those bundles hurling into stations, catching trains by a hair's breadth, speeding on

their way, breaking up, smaller bundles of them hurled with a fierce accuracy out upon the platforms that rush by, and then everywhere a division of these smaller bundles into still smaller bundles, into dispersing parcels, into separate papers, and the dawn happens unnoticed amidst a great running and shouting of boys, a shoving through letter slots, openings of windows, spreading out upon bookstalls. For the space of a few hours you must figure the whole country dotted white with rustling papers — placards everywhere vociferating the hurried lie for the day; men and women in trains, men and women eating and reading, men by study-fenders, people sitting up in bed, mothers and sons and daughters waiting for father to finish — a million scattered people reading — reading headlong — or feverishly ready to read. It is just as if some vehement jet had sprayed that white foam of papers over the surface of the land. . .

And then you know, wonderfully gone — gone utterly, vanished as foam might vanish upon the sand.

Nonsense! The whole affair a noisy paroxysm of nonsense, unreasonable excitement, witless mischief, and waste of strength — signifying nothing. . . .

And one of those white parcels was the paper I held in my hands, as I sat with a bandaged foot on the steel fender in that dark underground kitchen of my mother's, clean roused from my personal troubles by the yelp of the headlines. She sat, sleeves tucked up from her ropy arms, peeling potatoes as I read.

It was like one of a flood of disease germs that have invaded a body, that paper. There I was, one corpuscle in the big amorphous body of the English community, one of forty-one million such corpuscles and, for all my preoccupations, these potent headlines, this paper ferment, caught me and swung me about. And all over the country that day, millions read as I read, and came round into line with me, under the same magnetic spell, came round — how did we say it? — Ah!— "to face the foe."

The comet had been driven into obscurity overleaf. The column headed "Distinguished Scientist says Comet will Strike our Earth. Does it Matter?" went unread. "Germany" — I usually figured this mythical malignant creature as a corseted stiff-mustached Emperor enhanced by heraldic black wings and a large sword — had insulted

our flag. That was the message of the New Paper, and the monster towered over me, threatening fresh outrages, visibly spitting upon my faultless country's colors. Somebody had hoisted a British flag on the right bank of some tropical river I had never heard of before, and a drunken German officer under ambiguous instructions had torn it down. Then one of the convenient abundant natives of the country, a British subject indisputably, had been shot in the leg. But the facts were by no means clear. Nothing was clear except that we were not going to stand any nonsense from Germany. Whatever had or had not happened we meant to have an apology for, and apparently they did not mean apologizing.

"HAS WAR COME AT LAST?"

That was the headline. One's heart leapt to assent. . . .

There were hours that day when I clean forgot Nettie, in dreaming of battles and victories by land and sea, of shell fire, and entrenchments, and the heaped slaughter of many thousands of men.

But the next morning I started for Checkshill, started, I remember, in a curiously hopeful state of mind, oblivious of comets, strikes, and wars.

Section 5

You must understand that I had no set plan of murder when I walked over to Checkshill. I had no set plan of any sort. There was a great confusion of dramatically conceived intentions in my head, scenes of threatening and denunciation and terror, but I did not mean to kill. The revolver was to turn upon my rival my disadvantage in age and physique. . . .

But that was not it really! The revolver! — I took the revolver because I had the revolver and was a foolish young lout. It was a dramatic sort of thing to take. I had, I say, no plan at all.

Ever and again during that second trudge to Checkshill I was irradiated with a novel unreasonable hope. I had awakened in the morning with the hope, it may have been the last unfaded trail of some obliterated dream, that after all Nettie might relent toward me,

that her heart was kind toward me in spite of all that I imagined had happened. I even thought it possible that I might have misinterpreted what I had seen. Perhaps she would explain everything. My revolver was in my pocket for all that.

I limped at the outset, but after the second mile my ankle warmed to forgetfulness, and the rest of the way I walked well. Suppose, after all, I was wrong?

I was still debating that, as I came through the park. By the corner of the paddock near the keeper's cottage, I was reminded by some belated blue hyacinths of a time when I and Nettie had gathered them together. It seemed impossible that we could really have parted ourselves for good and all. A wave of tenderness flowed over me, and still flooded me as I came through the little dell and drew towards the hollies. But there the sweet Nettie of my boy's love faded, and I thought of the new Nettie of desire and the man I had come upon in the moonlight, I thought of the narrow, hot purpose that had grown so strongly out of my springtime freshness, and my mood darkened to night.

I crossed the beech wood and came towards the gardens with a resolute and sorrowful heart. When I reached the green door in the garden wall I was seized for a space with so violent a trembling that I could not grip the latch to lift it, for I no longer had any doubt how this would end. That trembling was succeeded by a feeling of cold, and whiteness, and self-pity. I was astonished to find myself grimacing, to feel my cheeks wet, and thereupon I gave way completely to a wild passion of weeping. I must take just a little time before the thing was done. . . . I turned away from the door and stumbled for a little distance, sobbing loudly, and lay down out of sight among the bracken, and so presently became calm again. I lay there some time. I had half a mind to desist, and then my emotion passed like the shadow of a cloud, and I walked very coolly into the gardens.

Through the open door of one of the glass houses I saw old Stuart. He was leaning against the staging, his hands in his pockets, and so deep in thought he gave no heed to me.

I hesitated and went on towards the cottage, slowly.

Something struck me as unusual about the place, but I could not

tell at first what it was. One of the bedroom windows was open, and the customary short blind, with its brass upper rail partly unfastened, drooped obliquely across the vacant space. It looked negligent and odd, for usually everything about the cottage was conspicuously trim.

The door was standing wide open, and everything was still. But giving that usually orderly hall an odd look — it was about half-past two in the afternoon — was a pile of three dirty plates, with used knives and forks upon them, on one of the hall chairs.

I went into the hall, looked into either room, and hesitated.

Then I fell to upon the door-knocker and gave a loud rat-tat-too, and followed this up with an amiable "Hel-lo!"

For a time no one answered me, and I stood listening and expectant, with my fingers about my weapon. Some one moved about upstairs presently, and was still again. The tension of waiting seemed to brace my nerves.

I had my hand on the knocker for the second time, when Puss appeared in the doorway.

For a moment we remained staring at one another without speaking. Her hair was disheveled, her face dirty, tear-stained, and irregularly red. Her expression at the sight of me was pure astonishment. I thought she was about to say something, and then she had darted away out of the house again.

"I say, Puss!" I said. "Puss!"

I followed her out of the door. "Puss! What's the matter? Where's Nettie?"

She vanished round the corner of the house.

I hesitated, perplexed whether I should pursue her. What did it all mean? Then I heard some one upstairs.

"Willie!" cried the voice of Mrs. Stuart. "Is that you?"

"Yes," I answered. "Where's every one? Where's Nettie? I want to have a talk with her."

She did not answer, but I heard her dress rustle as she moved. I Judged she was upon the landing overhead.

I paused at the foot of the stairs, expecting her to appear and come down.

Suddenly came a strange sound, a rush of sounds, words jumbled and hurrying, confused and shapeless, borne along upon a note of throaty distress that at last submerged the words altogether and ended in a wail. Except that it came from a woman's throat it was exactly the babbling sound of a weeping child with a grievance. "I can't," she said, "I can't," and that was all I could distinguish. It was to my young ears the strangest sound conceivable from a kindly motherly little woman, whom I had always thought of chiefly as an unparalleled maker of cakes. It frightened me. I went upstairs at once in a state of infinite alarm, and there she was upon the landing, leaning forward over the top of the chest of drawers beside her open bedroom door, and weeping. I never saw such weeping. One thick strand of black hair had escaped, and hung with a spiral twist down her back; never before had I noticed that she had gray hairs.

As I came up upon the landing her voice rose again. "Oh that I should have to tell you, Willie! Oh that I should have to tell you!" She dropped her head again, and a fresh gust of tears swept all further words away.

I said nothing, I was too astonished; but I drew nearer to her, and waited. . . .

I never saw such weeping; the extraordinary wetness of her dripping handkerchief abides with me to this day.

"That I should have lived to see this day!" she wailed. "I had rather a thousand times she was struck dead at my feet."

I began to understand.

"Mrs. Stuart," I said, clearing my throat; "what has become of Nettie?"

"That I should have lived to see this day!" she said by way of reply.

I waited till her passion abated.

There came a lull. I forgot the weapon in my pocket. I said nothing, and suddenly she stood erect before me, wiping her swollen eyes. "Willie," she gulped, "she's gone!"

"Nettie?"

"Gone! . . . Run away. . . . Run away from her home. Oh, Willie, Willie! The shame of it! The sin and shame of it!"

She flung herself upon my shoulder, and clung to me, and began again to wish her daughter lying dead at our feet.

"There, there," said I, and all my being was a-tremble. "Where has she gone?" I said as softly as I could.

But for the time she was preoccupied with her own sorrow, and I had to hold her there, and comfort her with the blackness of finality spreading over my soul.

"Where has she gone?" I asked for the fourth time.

"I don't know — we don't know. And oh, Willie, she went out yesterday morning! I said to her, 'Nettie,' I said to her, 'you're mighty fine for a morning call.' 'Fine clo's for a fine day,' she said, and that was her last words to me! — Willie! — the child I suckled at my breast!"

"Yes, yes. But where has she gone?" I said.

She went on with sobs, and now telling her story with a sort of fragmentary hurry: "She went out bright and shining, out of this house for ever. She was smiling, Willie — as if she was glad to be going. ("Glad to be going," I echoed with soundless lips.) 'You're mighty fine for the morning,' I says; 'mighty fine.' 'Let the girl be pretty,' says her father, 'while she's young!' And somewhere she'd got a parcel of her things hidden to pick up, and she was going off — out of this house for ever!"

She became quiet.

"Let the girl be pretty," she repeated; "let the girl be pretty while she's young. . . . Oh! how can we go on LIVING, Willie? He doesn't show it, but he's like a stricken beast. He's wounded to the heart. She was always his favorite. He never seemed to care for Puss like he did for her. And she's wounded him—"

"Where has she gone?" I reverted at last to that.

"We don't know. She leaves her own blood, she trusts herself — Oh, Willie, it'll kill me! I wish she and me together were lying in our graves."

“But” — I moistened my lips and spoke slowly— “she may have gone to marry.”

“If that was so! I’ve prayed to God it might be so, Willie. I’ve prayed that he’d take pity on her — him, I mean, she’s with.”

I jerked out: “Who’s that?”

“In her letter, she said he was a gentleman. She did say he was a gentleman.”

“In her letter. Has she written? Can I see her letter?”

“Her father took it.”

“But if she writes — When did she write?”

“It came this morning.”

“But where did it come from? You can tell—”

“She didn’t say. She said she was happy. She said love took one like a storm—”

“Curse that! Where is her letter? Let me see it. And as for this gentleman—”

She stared at me.

“You know who it is.”

“Willie!” she protested.

“You know who it is, whether she said or not?” Her eyes made a mute unconfident denial.

“Young Verrall?”

She made no answer. “All I could do for you, Willie,” she began presently.

“Was it young Verrall?” I insisted.

For a second, perhaps, we faced one another in stark understanding. . . . Then she plumped back to the chest of drawers, and her wet pocket-handkerchief, and I knew she sought refuge from my relentless eyes.

My pity for her vanished. She knew it was her mistress’s son as well as I! And for some time she had known, she had felt.

I hovered over her for a moment, sick with amazed disgust. I suddenly bethought me of old Stuart, out in the greenhouse, and turned and went downstairs. As I did so, I looked up to see Mrs. Stuart moving droopingly and lamely back into her own room.

Section 6

Old Stuart was pitiful.

I found him still inert in the greenhouse where I had first seen him. He did not move as I drew near him; he glanced at me, and then stared hard again at the flowerpots before him.

"Eh, Willie," he said, "this is a black day for all of us."

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"The missus takes on so," he said. "I came out here."

"What do you mean to do?"

"What IS a man to do in such a case?"

"Do!" I cried, "why — Do!"

"He ought to marry her," he said.

"By God, yes!" I cried. "He must do that anyhow."

"He ought to. It's — it's cruel. But what am I to do? Suppose he won't? Likely he won't. What then?"

He drooped with an intensified despair.

"Here's this cottage," he said, pursuing some contracted argument. "We've lived here all our lives, you might say. . . . Clear out. At my age. . . . One can't die in a slum."

I stood before him for a space, speculating what thoughts might fill the gaps between these broken words. I found his lethargy, and the dimly shaped mental attitudes his words indicated, abominable. I said abruptly, "You have her letter?"

He dived into his breast-pocket, became motionless for ten seconds, then woke up again and produced her letter. He drew it clumsily from its envelope, and handed it to me silently.

"Why!" he cried, looking at me for the first time, "What's come to your chin, Willie?"

"It's nothing," I said. "It's a bruise;" and I opened the letter.

It was written on greenish tinted fancy note-paper, and with all and more than Nettie's usual triteness and inadequacy of expression. Her handwriting bore no traces of emotion; it was round and upright and clear as though it had been done in a writing lesson. Always her letters were like masks upon her image; they fell like curtains before the changing charm of her face; one altogether forgot the sound of her light clear voice, confronted by a perplexing stereotyped thing

that had mysteriously got a hold upon one's heart and pride. How did that letter run? —

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"Do not be distressed at my going away. I have gone somewhere safe, and with some one who cares for me very much. I am sorry for your sakes, but it seems that it had to be. Love is a very difficult thing, and takes hold of one in ways one does not expect. Do not think I am ashamed about this, I glory in my love, and you must not trouble too much about me. I am very, very happy (deeply underlined).

"Fondest love to Father and Puss.

"Your loving

"Nettie."

That queer little document! I can see it now for the childish simple thing it was, but at the time I read it in a suppressed anguish of rage. It plunged me into a pit of hopeless shame; there seemed to remain no pride for me in life until I had revenge. I stood staring at those rounded upstanding letters, not trusting myself to speak or move. At last I stole a glance at Stuart.

He held the envelope in his hand, and stared down at the postmark between his horny thumbnails.

"You can't even tell where she is," he said, turning the thing round in a hopeless manner, and then desisting. "It's hard on us, Willie. Here she is; she hadn't anything to complain of; a sort of pet for all of us. Not even made to do her share of the 'ousework. And she goes off and leaves us like a bird that's learnt to fly. Can't TRUST us, that's what takes me. Puts 'erself — But there! What's to happen to her?"

"What's to happen to him?"

He shook his head to show that problem was beyond him.

"You'll go after her," I said in an even voice; "you'll make him marry her?"

"Where am I to go?" he asked helplessly, and held out the envelope with a gesture; "and what could I do? Even if I knew — How could I leave the gardens?"

“Great God!” I cried, “not leave these gardens! It’s your Honor, man! If she was my daughter — if she was my daughter — I’d tear the world to pieces!” . . I choked. “You mean to stand it?”

“What can I do?”

“Make him marry her! Horsewhip him! Horsewhip him, I say! — I’d strangle him!”

He scratched slowly at his hairy cheek, opened his mouth, and shook his head. Then, with an intolerable note of sluggish gentle wisdom, he said, “People of our sort, Willie, can’t do things like that.”

I came near to raving. I had a wild impulse to strike him in the face. Once in my boyhood I happened upon a bird terribly mangled by some cat, and killed it in a frenzy of horror and pity. I had a gust of that same emotion now, as this shameful mutilated soul fluttered in the dust, before me. Then, you know, I dismissed him from the case.

“May I look?” I asked.

He held out the envelope reluctantly.

“There it is,” he said, and pointing with his garden-rough forefinger. “I.A.P.A.M.P. What can you make of that?”

I took the thing in my hands. The adhesive stamp customary in those days was defaced by a circular postmark, which bore the name of the office of departure and the date. The impact in this particular case had been light or made without sufficient ink, and half the letters of the name had left no impression. I could distinguish —

I A P A M P

and very faintly below D.S.O.

I guessed the name in an instant flash of intuition. It was Shaphambury. The very gaps shaped that to my mind. Perhaps in a sort of semi-visibility other letters were there, at least hinting themselves. It was a place somewhere on the east coast, I knew, either in Norfolk or Suffolk.

“Why!” cried I — and stopped.

What was the good of telling him?

Old Stuart had glanced up sharply, I am inclined to think almost fearfully, into my face. “You — you haven’t got it?” he said.

Shaphambury — I should remember that.

“You don’t think you got it?” he said.

I handed the envelope back to him.

“For a moment I thought it might be Hampton,” I said.

“Hampton,” he repeated. “Hampton. How could you make Hampton?” He turned the envelope about. “H.A.M. — why, Willie, you’re a worse hand at the job than me!”

He replaced the letter in the envelope and stood erect to put this back in his breast pocket.

I did not mean to take any risks in this affair. I drew a stump of pencil from my waistcoat pocket, turned a little away from him and wrote “Shaphambury” very quickly on my frayed and rather grimy shirt cuff.

“Well,” said I, with an air of having done nothing remarkable.

I turned to him with some unimportant observation — I have forgotten what.

I never finished whatever vague remark I commenced.

I looked up to see a third person waiting at the greenhouse door.

Section 7

It was old Mrs. Verrall.

I wonder if I can convey the effect of her to you. She was a little old lady with extraordinarily flaxen hair, her weak aquiline features were pursed up into an assumption of dignity, and she was richly dressed. I would like to underline that “richly dressed,” or have the words printed in florid old English or Gothic lettering. No one on earth is now quite so richly dressed as she was, no one old or young indulges in so quiet and yet so profound a sumptuosity. But you must not imagine any extravagance of outline or any beauty or richness of color. The predominant colors were black and fur browns, and the effect of richness was due entirely to the extreme costliness of the materials employed. She affected silk brocades with rich and elaborate patterns, priceless black lace over creamy or purple satin,

intricate trimmings through which threads and bands of velvet wriggled, and in the winter rare furs. Her gloves fitted exquisitely, and ostentatiously simple chains of fine gold and pearls, and a great number of bracelets, laced about her little person. One was forced to feel that the slightest article she wore cost more than all the wardrobe of a dozen girls like Nettie; her bonnet affected the simplicity that is beyond rubies. Richness, that is the first quality about this old lady that I would like to convey to you, and the second was cleanliness. You felt that old Mrs. Verrall was exquisitely clean. If you had boiled my poor dear old mother in soda for a month you couldn't have got her so clean as Mrs. Verrall constantly and manifestly was. And pervading all her presence shone her third great quality, her manifest confidence in the respectful subordination of the world.

She was pale and a little out of breath that day, but without any loss of her ultimate confidence, and it was clear to me that she had come to interview Stuart upon the outbreak of passion that had bridged the gulf between their families.

And here again I find myself writing in an unknown language, so far as my younger readers are concerned. You who know only the world that followed the Great Change will find much that I am telling inconceivable. Upon these points I cannot appeal, as I have appealed for other confirmations, to the old newspapers; these were the things that no one wrote about because every one understood and every one had taken up an attitude. There were in England and America, and indeed throughout the world, two great informal divisions of human beings — the Secure and the Insecure. There was not and never had been in either country a nobility — it was and remains a common error that the British peers were noble — neither in law nor custom were there noble families, and we altogether lacked the edification one found in Russia, for example, of a poor nobility. A peerage was an hereditary possession that, like the family land, concerned only the eldest sons of the house; it radiated no luster of noblesse oblige. The rest of the world were in law and practice common — and all America was common. But through the private ownership of land that had resulted from the neglect of feudal obligations in Britain and the utter want of political foresight in the Americas, large masses of property had become artificially stable in the hands of a small

minority, to whom it was necessary to mortgage all new public and private enterprises, and who were held together not by any tradition of service and nobility but by the natural sympathy of common interests and a common large scale of living. It was a class without any very definite boundaries; vigorous individualities, by methods for the most part violent and questionable, were constantly thrusting themselves from insecurity to security, and the sons and daughters of secure people, by marrying insecurity or by wild extravagance or flagrant vice, would sink into the life of anxiety and insufficiency which was the ordinary life of man. The rest of the population was landless and, except by working directly or indirectly for the Secure, had no legal right to exist. And such was the shallowness and insufficiency of our thought, such the stifled egotism of all our feelings before the Last Days, that very few indeed of the Secure could be found to doubt that this was the natural and only conceivable order of the world.

It is the life of the Insecure under the old order that I am displaying, and I hope that I am conveying something of its hopeless bitterness to you, but you must not imagine that the Secure lived lives of paradisiacal happiness. The pit of insecurity below them made itself felt, even though it was not comprehended. Life about them was ugly; the sight of ugly and mean houses, of ill-dressed people, the vulgar appeals of the dealers in popular commodities, were not to be escaped. There was below the threshold of their minds an uneasiness; they not only did not think clearly about social economy but they displayed an instinctive disinclination to think. Their security was not so perfect that they had not a dread of falling towards the pit, they were always lashing themselves by new ropes, their cultivation of "connexions," of interests, their desire to confirm and improve their positions, was a constant ignoble preoccupation. You must read Thackeray to get the full flavor of their lives. Then the bacterium was apt to disregard class distinctions, and they were never really happy in their servants. Read their surviving books. Each generation bewails the decay of that "fidelity" of servants, no generation ever saw. A world that is squalid in one corner is squalid altogether, but that they never understood. They believed there was not enough of anything to go round, they believed that this was the

intention of God and an incurable condition of life, and they held passionately and with a sense of right to their disproportionate share. They maintained a common intercourse as "Society" of all who were practically secure, and their choice of that word is exhaustively eloquent of the quality of their philosophy. But, if you can master these alien ideas upon which the old system rested, just in the same measure will you understand the horror these people had for marriages with the Insecure. In the case of their girls and women it was extraordinarily rare, and in the case of either sex it was regarded as a disastrous social crime. Anything was better than that.

You are probably aware of the hideous fate that was only too probably the lot, during those last dark days, of every girl of the insecure classes who loved and gave way to the impulse of self-abandonment without marriage, and so you will understand the peculiar situation of Nettie with young Verrall. One or other had to suffer. And as they were both in a state of great emotional exaltation and capable of strange generosities toward each other, it was an open question and naturally a source of great anxiety to a mother in Mrs. Verrall's position, whether the sufferer might not be her son — whether as the outcome of that glowing irresponsible commerce Nettie might not return prospective mistress of Checkshill Towers. The chances were greatly against that conclusion, but such things did occur.

These laws and customs sound, I know, like a record of some nasty-minded lunatic's inventions. They were invincible facts in that vanished world into which, by some accident, I had been born, and it was the dream of any better state of things that was scouted as lunacy. Just think of it! This girl I loved with all my soul, for whom I was ready to sacrifice my life, was not good enough to marry young Verrall. And I had only to look at his even, handsome, characterless face to perceive a creature weaker and no better than myself. She was to be his pleasure until he chose to cast her aside, and the poison of our social system had so saturated her nature — his evening dress, his freedom and his money had seemed so fine to her and I so clothed in squalor — that to that prospect she had consented. And to resent the social conventions that created their situation, was called "class envy," and gently born preachers reproached us for the mildest

resentment against an injustice no living man would now either endure or consent to profit by.

What was the sense of saying “peace” when there was no peace? If there was one hope in the disorders of that old world it lay in revolt and conflict to the death.

But if you can really grasp the shameful grotesqueness of the old life, you will begin to appreciate the interpretation of old Mrs. Verrall’s appearance that leapt up at once in my mind.

She had come to compromise the disaster!

And the Stuarts WOULD compromise! I saw that only too well.

An enormous disgust at the prospect of the imminent encounter between Stuart and his mistress made me behave in a violent and irrational way. I wanted to escape seeing that, seeing even Stuart’s first gesture in that, at any cost.

“I’m off,” said I, and turned my back on him without any further farewell.

My line of retreat lay by the old lady, and so I advanced toward her.

I saw her expression change, her mouth fell a little way open, her forehead wrinkled, and her eyes grew round. She found me a queer customer even at the first sight, and there was something in the manner of my advance that took away her breath.

She stood at the top of the three or four steps that descended to the level of the hothouse floor. She receded a pace or two, with a certain offended dignity at the determination of my rush.

I gave her no sort of salutation.

Well, as a matter of fact, I did give her a sort of salutation. There is no occasion for me to begin apologizing now for the thing I said to her — I strip these things before you — if only I can get them stark enough you will understand and forgive. I was filled with a brutal and overpowering desire to insult her.

And so I addressed this poor little expensive old woman in the following terms, converting her by a violent metonymy into a comprehensive plural. “You infernal land thieves!” I said point-blank into her face. “HAVE YOU COME TO OFFER THEM MONEY?”

And without waiting to test her powers of repartee I passed rudely beyond her and vanished, striding with my fists clenched, out of her

world again. . .

I have tried since to imagine how the thing must have looked to her. So far as her particular universe went I had not existed at all, or I had existed only as a dim black thing, an insignificant speck, far away across her park in irrelevant, unimportant transit, until this moment when she came, sedately troubled, into her own secure gardens and sought for Stuart among the greenhouses. Then abruptly I flashed into being down that green-walled, brick-floored vista as a black-avised, ill-clad young man, who first stared and then advanced scowling toward her. Once in existence I developed rapidly. I grew larger in perspective and became more and more important and sinister every moment. I came up the steps with inconceivable hostility and disrespect in my bearing, towered over her, becoming for an instant at least a sort of second French Revolution, and delivered myself with the intensest concentration of those wicked and incomprehensible words. Just for a second I threatened annihilation. Happily that was my climax.

And then I had gone by, and the Universe was very much as it had always been except for the wild swirl in it, and the faint sense of insecurity my episode left in its wake.

The thing that never entered my head in those days was that a large proportion of the rich were rich in absolute good faith. I thought they saw things exactly as I saw them, and wickedly denied. But indeed old Mrs. Verrall was no more capable of doubting the perfection of her family's right to dominate a wide country side, than she was of examining the Thirty-nine Articles or dealing with any other of the adamantine pillars upon which her universe rested in security.

No doubt I startled and frightened her tremendously. But she could not understand.

None of her sort of people ever did seem to understand such livid flashes of hate, as ever and again lit the crowded darkness below their feet. The thing leapt out of the black for a moment and vanished, like a threatening figure by a desolate roadside lit for a moment by one's belated carriage-lamp and then swallowed up by the night. They counted it with nightmares, and did their best to forget what was evidently as insignificant as it was disturbing.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

WAR

Section 1

FROM that moment when I insulted old Mrs. Verrall I became representative, I was a man who stood for all the disinherited of the world. I had no hope of pride or pleasure left in me, I was raging rebellion against God and mankind. There were no more vague intentions swaying me this way and that; I was perfectly clear now upon what I meant to do. I would make my protest and die.

I would make my protest and die. I was going to kill Nettie — Nettie who had smiled and promised and given herself to another, and who stood now for all the conceivable delightfulnesses, the lost imaginations of the youthful heart, the unattainable joys in life; and Verrall who stood for all who profited by the incurable injustice of our social order. I would kill them both. And that being done I would blow my brains out and see what vengeance followed my blank refusal to live.

So indeed I was resolved. I raged monstrously. And above me, abolishing the stars, triumphant over the yellow waning moon that followed it below, the giant meteor towered up towards the zenith.

"Let me only kill!" I cried. "Let me only kill!"

So I shouted in my frenzy. I was in a fever that defied hunger and fatigue; for a long time I had prowled over the heath towards Lowchester talking to myself, and now that night had fully come I was tramping homeward, walking the long seventeen miles without a thought of rest. And I had eaten nothing since the morning.

I suppose I must count myself mad, but I can recall my ravings.

There were times when I walked weeping through that brightness that was neither night nor day. There were times when I reasoned in a topsy-turvy fashion with what I called the Spirit of All Things. But always I spoke to that white glory in the sky.

"Why am I here only to suffer ignominies?" I asked. "Why have you made me with pride that cannot be satisfied, with desires that

turn and rend me? Is it a jest, this world — a joke you play on your guests? I — even I — have a better humor than that!"

"Why not learn from me a certain decency of mercy? Why not undo? Have I ever tormented — day by day, some wretched worm — making filth for it to trail through, filth that disgusts it, starving it, bruising it, mocking it? Why should you? Your jokes are clumsy. Try — try some milder fun up there; do you hear? Something that doesn't hurt so infernally."

"You say this is your purpose — your purpose with me. You are making something with me — birth pangs of a soul. Ah! How can I believe you? You forget I have eyes for other things. Let my own case go, but what of that frog beneath the cart-wheel, God? — and the bird the cat had torn?"

And after such blasphemies I would fling out a ridiculous little debating society hand. "Answer me that!"

A week ago it had been moonlight, white and black and hard across the spaces of the park, but now the light was livid and full of the quality of haze. An extraordinarily low white mist, not three feet above the ground, drifted broodingly across the grass, and the trees rose ghostly out of that phantom sea. Great and shadowy and strange was the world that night, no one seemed abroad; I and my little cracked voice drifted solitary through the silent mysteries. Sometimes I argued as I have told, sometimes I tumbled along in moody vacuity, sometimes my torment was vivid and acute.

Abruptly out of apathy would come a boiling paroxysm of fury, when I thought of Nettie mocking me and laughing, and of her and Verrall clasped in one another's arms.

"I will not have it so!" I screamed. "I will not have it so!"

And in one of these raving fits I drew my revolver from my pocket and fired into the quiet night. Three times I fired it.

The bullets tore through the air, the startled trees told one another in diminishing echoes the thing I had done, and then, with a slow finality, the vast and patient night healed again to calm. My shots, my curses and blasphemies, my prayers — for anon I prayed — that Silence took them all.

It was — how can I express it? — a stifled outcry tranquilized, lost, amid the serene assumptions, the overwhelming empire of that

brightness. The noise of my shots, the impact upon things, had for the instant been enormous, then it had passed away. I found myself standing with the revolver held up, astonished, my emotions penetrated by something I could not understand. Then I looked up over my shoulder at the great star, and remained staring at it.

"Who are YOU?" I said at last.

I was like a man in a solitary desert who has suddenly heard a voice. . . .

That, too, passed.

As I came over Clayton Crest I recalled that I missed the multitude that now night after night walked out to stare at the comet, and the little preacher in the waste beyond the hoardings, who warned sinners to repent before the Judgment, was not in his usual place.

It was long past midnight, and every one had gone home. But I did not think of this at first, and the solitude perplexed me and left a memory behind. The gas-lamps were all extinguished because of the brightness of the comet, and that too was unfamiliar. The little newsagent in the still High Street had shut up and gone to bed, but one belated board had been put out late and forgotten, and it still bore its placard.

The word upon it — there was but one word upon it in staring letters — was: "WAR."

You figure that empty mean street, emptily echoing to my footsteps — no soul awake and audible but me. Then my halt at the placard. And amidst that sleeping stillness, smeared hastily upon the board, a little askew and crumpled, but quite distinct beneath that cool meteoric glare, preposterous and appalling, the measureless evil of that word —

"WAR!"

Section 2

I awoke in that state of equanimity that so often follows an emotional drenching.

It was late, and my mother was beside my bed. She had some

breakfast for me on a battered tray.

"Don't get up yet, dear," she said. "You've been sleeping. It was three o'clock when you got home last night. You must have been tired out."

"Your poor face," she went on, "was as white as a sheet and your eyes shining. . . . It frightened me to let you in. And you stumbled on the stairs."

My eyes went quietly to my coat pocket, where something still bulged. She probably had not noticed. "I went to Checkshill," I said. "You know — perhaps — ?"

"I got a letter last evening, dear," and as she bent near me to put the tray upon my knees, she kissed my hair softly. For a moment we both remained still, resting on that, her cheek just touching my head.

I took the tray from her to end the pause.

"Don't touch my clothes, mummy," I said sharply, as she moved towards them. "I'm still equal to a clothes-brush."

And then, as she turned away, I astonished her by saying, "You dear mother, you! A little — I understand. Only — now — dear mother; oh! let me be! Let me be!"

And, with the docility of a good servant, she went from me. Dear heart of submission that the world and I had used so ill!

It seemed to me that morning that I could never give way to a gust of passion again. A sorrowful firmness of the mind possessed me. My purpose seemed now as inflexible as iron; there was neither love nor hate nor fear left in me — only I pitied my mother greatly for all that was still to come. I ate my breakfast slowly, and thought where I could find out about Shaphambury, and how I might hope to get there. I had not five shillings in the world.

I dressed methodically, choosing the least frayed of my collars, and shaving much more carefully than was my wont; then I went down to the Public Library to consult a map.

Shaphambury was on the coast of Essex, a long and complicated journey from Clayton. I went to the railway-station and made some memoranda from the time-tables. The porters I asked were not very clear about Shaphambury, but the booking-office clerk was helpful, and we puzzled out all I wanted to know. Then I came out into the coaly street again. At the least I ought to have two pounds.

I went back to the Public Library and into the newspaper room to think over this problem.

A fact intruded itself upon me. People seemed in an altogether exceptional stir about the morning journals, there was something unusual in the air of the room, more people and more talking than usual, and for a moment I was puzzled. Then I bethought me: "This war with Germany, of course!" A naval battle was supposed to be in progress in the North Sea. Let them! I returned to the consideration of my own affairs.

Parload?

Could I go and make it up with him, and then borrow? I weighed the chances of that. Then I thought of selling or pawning something, but that seemed difficult. My winter overcoat had not cost a pound when it was new, my watch was not likely to fetch many shillings. Still, both these things might be factors. I thought with a certain repugnance of the little store my mother was probably making for the rent. She was very secretive about that, and it was locked in an old tea-caddy in her bedroom. I knew it would be almost impossible to get any of that money from her willingly, and though I told myself that in this issue of passion and death no detail mattered, I could not get rid of tormenting scruples whenever I thought of that tea-caddy. Was there no other course? Perhaps after every other source had been tapped I might supplement with a few shillings frankly begged from her. "These others," I said to myself, thinking without passion for once of the sons of the Secure, "would find it difficult to run their romances on a pawnshop basis. However, we must manage it."

I felt the day was passing on, but I did not get excited about that. "Slow is swiftest," Parload used to say, and I meant to get everything thought out completely, to take a long aim and then to act as a bullet flies.

I hesitated at a pawnshop on my way home to my midday meal, but I determined not to pledge my watch until I could bring my overcoat also.

I ate silently, revolving plans.

Section 3

After our midday dinner — it was a potato-pie, mostly potato with some scraps of cabbage and bacon — I put on my overcoat and got it out of the house while my mother was in the scullery at the back.

A scullery in the old world was, in the case of such houses as ours, a damp, unsavory, mainly subterranean region behind the dark living-room kitchen, that was rendered more than typically dirty in our case by the fact that into it the coal-cellar, a yawning pit of black uncleanness, opened, and diffused small crunchable particles about the uneven brick floor. It was the region of "washing-up," that greasy, damp function that followed every meal; its atmosphere had ever a cooling steaminess and the memory of boiled cabbage, and the sooty black stains where saucepan or kettle had been put down for a minute, scraps of potato-peel caught by the strainer of the escape-pipe, and rags of a quite indescribable horribleness of acquisition, called "dish-clouts," rise in my memory at the name. The altar of this place was the "sink," a tank of stone, revolting to a refined touch, grease-filmed and unpleasant to see, and above this was a tap for cold water, so arranged that when the water descended it splashed and wetted whoever had turned it on. This tap was our water supply. And in such a place you must fancy a little old woman, rather incompetent and very gentle, a soul of unselfishness and sacrifice, in dirty clothes, all come from their original colors to a common dusty dark gray, in worn, ill-fitting boots, with hands distorted by ill use, and untidy graying hair — my mother. In the winter her hands would be "chapped," and she would have a cough. And while she washes up I go out, to sell my overcoat and watch in order that I may desert her.

I gave way to queer hesitations in pawning my two negotiable articles. A weakly indisposition to pawn in Clayton, where the pawnbroker knew me, carried me to the door of the place in Lynch Street, Swathinglea, where I had bought my revolver. Then came an idea that I was giving too many facts about myself to one man, and I came back to Clayton after all. I forget how much money I got, but I remember that it was rather less than the sum I had made out to be the single fare to Shaphambury. Still deliberate, I went back to the Public Library to find out whether it was possible, by walking for ten or twelve miles anywhere, to shorten the journey. My boots were in a

dreadful state, the sole of the left one also was now peeling off, and I could not help perceiving that all my plans might be wrecked if at this crisis I went on shoe leather in which I could only shuffle. So long as I went softly they would serve, but not for hard walking. I went to the shoemaker in Hacker Street, but he would not promise any repairs for me under forty-eight hours.

I got back home about five minutes to three, resolved to start by the five train for Birmingham in any case, but still dissatisfied about my money. I thought of pawning a book or something of that sort, but I could think of nothing of obvious value in the house. My mother's silver — two gravy-spoons and a salt-cellar — had been pawned for some weeks, since, in fact, the June quarter day. But my mind was full of hypothetical opportunities.

As I came up the steps to our door, I remarked that Mr. Gabbitas looked at me suddenly round his dull red curtains with a sort of alarmed resolution in his eye and vanished, and as I walked along the passage he opened his door upon me suddenly and intercepted me.

You are figuring me, I hope, as a dark and sullen lout in shabby, cheap, old-world clothes that are shiny at all the wearing surfaces, and with a discolored red tie and frayed linen. My left hand keeps in my pocket as though there is something it prefers to keep a grip upon there. Mr. Gabbitas was shorter than I, and the first note he struck in the impression he made upon any one was of something bright and birdlike. I think he wanted to be birdlike, he possessed the possibility of an avian charm, but, as a matter of fact, there was nothing of the glowing vitality of the bird in his being. And a bird is never out of breath and with an open mouth. He was in the clerical dress of that time, that costume that seems now almost the strangest of all our old-world clothing, and he presented it in its cheapest form — black of a poor texture, ill-fitting, strangely cut. Its long skirts accentuated the tubbiness of his body, the shortness of his legs. The white tie below his all-round collar, beneath his innocent large-spectacled face, was a little grubby, and between his not very clean teeth he held a briar pipe. His complexion was whitish, and although he was only thirty-three or four perhaps, his sandy hair was already thinning from the top of his head.

To your eye, now, he would seem the strangest figure, in the utter

disregard of all physical beauty or dignity about him. You would find him extraordinarily odd, but in the old days he met not only with acceptance but respect. He was alive until within a year or so ago, but his later appearance changed. As I saw him that afternoon he was a very slovenly, ungainly little human being indeed, not only was his clothing altogether ugly and queer, but had you stripped the man stark, you would certainly have seen in the bulging paunch that comes from flabby muscles and flabbily controlled appetites, and in the rounded shoulders and flawed and yellowish skin, the same failure of any effort toward clean beauty. You had an instinctive sense that so he had been from the beginning. You felt he was not only drifting through life, eating what came in his way, believing what came in his way, doing without any vigor what came in his way, but that into life also he had drifted. You could not believe him the child of pride and high resolve, or of any splendid passion of love. He had just HAPPENED. . . But we all happened then. Why am I taking this tone over this poor little curate in particular?

"Hello!" he said, with an assumption of friendly ease. "Haven't seen you for weeks! Come in and have a gossip."

An invitation from the drawing-room lodger was in the nature of a command. I would have liked very greatly to have refused it, never was invitation more inopportune, but I had not the wit to think of an excuse. "All right," I said awkwardly, and he held the door open for me.

"I'd be very glad if you would," he amplified. "One doesn't get much opportunity of intelligent talk in this parish."

What the devil was he up to, was my secret preoccupation. He fussed about me with a nervous hospitality, talking in jumpy fragments, rubbing his hands together, and taking peeps at me over and round his glasses. As I sat down in his leather-covered armchair, I had an odd memory of the one in the Clayton dentist's operating-room — I know not why.

"They're going to give us trouble in the North Sea, it seems," he remarked with a sort of innocent zest. "I'm glad they mean fighting."

There was an air of culture about his room that always cowed me, and that made me constrained even on this occasion. The table under the window was littered with photographic material and the later

albums of his continental souvenirs, and on the American cloth trimmed shelves that filled the recesses on either side of the fireplace were what I used to think in those days a quite incredible number of books — perhaps eight hundred altogether, including the reverend gentleman's photograph albums and college and school text-books. This suggestion of learning was enforced by the little wooden shield bearing a college coat-of-arms that hung over the looking-glass, and by a photograph of Mr. Gabbitas in cap and gown in an Oxford frame that adorned the opposite wall. And in the middle of that wall stood his writing-desk, which I knew to have pigeon-holes when it was open, and which made him seem not merely cultured but literary. At that he wrote sermons, composing them himself!

"Yes," he said, taking possession of the hearthrug, "the war had to come sooner or later. If we smash their fleet for them now; well, there's an end to the matter!"

He stood on his toes and then bumped down on his heels, and looked blandly through his spectacles at a water-color by his sister — the subject was a bunch of violets — above the sideboard which was his pantry and tea-chest and cellar. "Yes," he said as he did so.

I coughed, and wondered how I might presently get away.

He invited me to smoke — that queer old practice! — and then when I declined, began talking in a confidential tone of this "dreadful business" of the strikes. "The war won't improve THAT outlook," he said, and was very grave for a moment.

He spoke of the want of thought for their wives and children shown by the colliers in striking merely for the sake of the union, and this stirred me to controversy, and distracted me a little from my resolution to escape.

"I don't quite agree with that," I said, clearing my throat. "If the men didn't strike for the union now, if they let that be broken up, where would they be when the pinch of reductions did come?"

To which he replied that they couldn't expect to get top-price wages when the masters were selling bottom-price coal. I replied, "That isn't it. The masters don't treat them fairly. They have to protect themselves."

To which Mr. Gabbitas answered, "Well, I don't know. I've been in the Four Towns some time, and I must say I don't think the

balance of injustice falls on the masters' side."

"It falls on the men," I agreed, wilfully misunderstanding him.

And so we worked our way toward an argument. "Confound this argument!" I thought; but I had no skill in self-extraction, and my irritation crept into my voice. Three little spots of color came into the cheeks and nose of Mr. Gabbitas, but his voice showed nothing of his ruffled temper.

"You see," I said, "I'm a socialist. I don't think this world was made for a small minority to dance on the faces of every one else."

"My dear fellow," said the Rev. Gabbitas, "I'M a socialist too.
Who isn't. But that doesn't lead me to class hatred."

"You haven't felt the heel of this confounded system. I have."

"Ah!" said he; and catching him on that note came a rap at the front door, and, as he hung suspended, the sound of my mother letting some one in and a timid rap.

"NOW," thought I, and stood up, resolutely, but he would not let me. "No, no, no!" said he. "It's only for the Dorcas money."

He put his hand against my chest with an effect of physical compulsion, and cried, "Come in!"

"Our talk's just getting interesting," he protested; and there entered Miss Ramell, an elderly little young lady who was mighty in Church help in Clayton.

He greeted her — she took no notice of me — and went to his bureau, and I remained standing by my chair but unable to get out of the room. "I'm not interrupting?" asked Miss Ramell.

"Not in the least," he said; drew out the carriers and opened his desk. I could not help seeing what he did.

I was so fretted by my impotence to leave him that at the moment it did not connect at all with the research of the morning that he was taking out money. I listened sullenly to his talk with Miss Ramell, and saw only, as they say in Wales, with the front of my eyes, the small flat drawer that had, it seemed, quite a number of sovereigns scattered over its floor. "They're so unreasonable," complained Miss Ramell. Who could be otherwise in a social organization that bordered on insanity?

I turned away from them, put my foot on the fender, stuck my elbow on the plush-fringed mantelboard, and studied the photographs, pipes, and ash-trays that adorned it. What was it I had to think out before I went to the station?

Of course! My mind made a queer little reluctant leap — it felt like being forced to leap over a bottomless chasm — and alighted upon the sovereigns that were just disappearing again as Mr. Gabbitas shut his drawer.

"I won't interrupt your talk further," said Miss Ramell, receding doorward.

Mr. Gabbitas played round her politely, and opened the door for her and conducted her into the passage, and for a moment or so I had the fullest sense of proximity to those — it seemed to me there must be ten or twelve — sovereigns. . . .

The front door closed and he returned. My chance of escape had gone.

Section 4

"I MUST be going," I said, with a curiously reinforced desire to get away out of that room.

"My dear chap!" he insisted, "I can't think of it. Surely — there's nothing to call you away." Then with an evident desire to shift the venue of our talk, he asked, "You never told me what you thought of Burble's little book."

I was now, beneath my dull display of submission, furiously angry with him. It occurred to me to ask myself why I should defer and qualify my opinions to him. Why should I pretend a feeling of intellectual and social inferiority toward him. He asked what I thought of Burble. I resolved to tell him — if necessary with arrogance. Then perhaps he would release me. I did not sit down again, but stood by the corner of the fireplace.

"That was the little book you lent me last summer?" I said.

"He reasons closely, eh?" he said, and indicated the armchair with a flat hand, and beamed persuasively.

I remained standing. "I didn't think much of his reasoning powers,"

I said.

"He was one of the cleverest bishops London ever had."

"That may be. But he was dodging about in a jolly feeble case," said I.

"You mean?"

"That he's wrong. I don't think he proves his case. I don't think Christianity is true. He knows himself for the pretender he is. His reasoning's — Rot."

Mr. Gabbitas went, I think, a shade paler than his wont, and propitiation vanished from his manner. His eyes and mouth were round, his face seemed to get round, his eyebrows curved at my remarks.

"I'm sorry you think that," he said at last, with a catch in his breath.

He did not repeat his suggestion that I should sit. He made a step or two toward the window and turned. "I suppose you will admit—" he began, with a faintly irritating note of intellectual condescension. . . . .

I will not tell you of his arguments or mine. You will find if you care to look for them, in out-of-the-way corners of our book museums, the shriveled cheap publications — the publications of the Rationalist Press Association, for example — on which my arguments were based. Lying in that curious limbo with them, mixed up with them and indistinguishable, are the endless "Replies" of orthodoxy, like the mixed dead in some hard-fought trench. All those disputes of our fathers, and they were sometimes furious disputes, have gone now beyond the range of comprehension. You younger people, I know, read them with impatient perplexity. You cannot understand how sane creatures could imagine they had joined issue at all in most of these controversies. All the old methods of systematic thinking, the queer absurdities of the Aristotelian logic, have followed magic numbers and mystical numbers, and the Rumpelstiltskin magic of names now into the blackness of the unthinkable. You can no more understand our theological passions

than you can understand the fancies that made all ancient peoples speak of their gods only by circumlocutions, that made savages pine away and die because they had been photographed, or an Elizabethan farmer turn back from a day's expedition because he had met three crows. Even I, who have been through it all, recall our controversies now with something near incredulity.

Faith we can understand to-day, all men live by faith, but in the old time every one confused quite hopelessly Faith and a forced, incredible Belief in certain pseudo-concrete statements. I am inclined to say that neither believers nor unbelievers had faith as we understand it — they had insufficient intellectual power. They could not trust unless they had something to see and touch and say, like their barbarous ancestors who could not make a bargain without exchange of tokens. If they no longer worshipped stocks and stones, or eked out their needs with pilgrimages and images, they still held fiercely to audible images, to printed words and formulae.

But why revive the echoes of the ancient logomachies?

Suffice it that we lost our tempers very readily in pursuit of God and Truth, and said exquisitely foolish things on either side. And on the whole — from the impartial perspective of my three and seventy years — I adjudicate that if my dialectic was bad, that of the Rev. Gabbitas was altogether worse.

Little pink spots came into his cheeks, a squealing note into his voice. We interrupted each other more and more rudely. We invented facts and appealed to authorities whose names I mispronounced; and, finding Gabbitas shy of the higher criticism and the Germans, I used the names of Karl Marx and Engels as Bible exegetes with no little effect. A silly wrangle! a preposterous wrangle! — you must imagine our talk becoming louder, with a developing quarrelsome note — my mother no doubt hovering on the staircase and listening in alarm as who should say, "My dear, don't offend it! Oh, don't offend it! Mr. Gabbitas enjoys its friendship. Try to think whatever Mr. Gabbitas says" — though we still kept in touch with a pretence of mutual deference. The ethical superiority of Christianity to all other religions came to the fore — I know not how. We dealt with the matter in bold, imaginative generalizations, because of the insufficiency of our historical knowledge. I was moved to denounce Christianity as the

ethic of slaves, and declare myself a disciple of a German writer of no little vogue in those days, named Nietzsche.

For a disciple I must confess I was particularly ill acquainted with the works of the master. Indeed, all I knew of him had come to me through a two-column article in The Clarion for the previous week. . . . But the Rev. Gabbitas did not read The Clarion.

I am, I know, putting a strain upon your credulity when I tell you that I now have little doubt that the Rev. Gabbitas was absolutely ignorant even of the name of Nietzsche, although that writer presented a separate and distinct attitude of attack upon the faith that was in the reverend gentleman's keeping.

"I'm a disciple of Nietzsche," said I, with an air of extensive explanation.

He shied away so awkwardly at the name that I repeated it at once.

"But do you know what Nietzsche says?" I pressed him viciously.

"He has certainly been adequately answered," said he, still trying to carry it off.

"Who by?" I rapped out hotly. "Tell me that!" and became mercilessly expectant.

Section 5

A happy accident relieved Mr. Gabbitas from the embarrassment of that challenge, and carried me another step along my course of personal disaster.

It came on the heels of my question in the form of a clatter of horses without, and the gride and cessation of wheels. I glimpsed a straw-hatted coachman and a pair of grays. It seemed an incredibly magnificent carriage for Clayton.

"Eh!" said the Rev. Gabbitas, going to the window. "Why, it's old Mrs. Verrall! It's old Mrs. Verrall. Really! What CAN she want with me?"

He turned to me, and the flush of controversy had passed and his face shone like the sun. It was not every day, I perceived, that Mrs. Verrall came to see him.

"I get so many interruptions," he said, almost grinning. "You must

excuse me a minute! Then — then I'll tell you about that fellow. But don't go. I pray you don't go. I can assure you. . . . MOST interesting."

He went out of the room waving vague prohibitory gestures.

"I MUST go," I cried after him.

"No, no, no!" in the passage. "I've got your answer," I think it was he added, and "quite mistaken;" and I saw him running down the steps to talk to the old lady.

I swore. I made three steps to the window, and this brought me within a yard of that accursed drawer.

I glanced at it, and then at that old woman who was so absolutely powerful, and instantly her son and Nettie's face were flaming in my brain. The Stuarts had, no doubt, already accepted accomplished facts. And I too —

What was I doing here?

What was I doing here while judgment escaped me?

I woke up. I was injected with energy. I took one reassuring look at the curate's obsequious back, at the old lady's projected nose and quivering hand, and then with swift, clean movements I had the little drawer open, four sovereigns in my pocket, and the drawer shut again. Then again at the window — they were still talking.

That was all right. He might not look in that drawer for hours. I glanced at his clock. Twenty minutes still before the Birmingham train. Time to buy a pair of boots and get away. But how I was to get to the station?

I went out boldly into the passage, and took my hat and stick. . . .
Walk past him?

Yes. That was all right! He could not argue with me while so important a person engaged him. . . . I came boldly down the steps.

"I want a list made, Mr. Gabbitas, of all the really DESERVING cases," old Mrs. Verrall was saying.

It is curious, but it did not occur to me that here was a mother whose son I was going to kill. I did not see her in that aspect at all. Instead, I was possessed by a realization of the blazing imbecility of a social system that gave this palsied old woman the power to give or

withhold the urgent necessities of life from hundreds of her fellow-creatures just according to her poor, foolish old fancies of desert.

"We could make a PROVISIONAL list of that sort," he was saying, and glanced round with a preoccupied expression at me.

"I MUST go," I said at his flash of inquiry, and added, "I'll be back in twenty minutes," and went on my way. He turned again to his patroness as though he forgot me on the instant. Perhaps after all he was not sorry.

I felt extraordinarily cool and capable, exhilarated, if anything, by this prompt, effectual theft. After all, my great determination would achieve itself. I was no longer oppressed by a sense of obstacles, I felt I could grasp accidents and turn them to my advantage. I would go now down Hacker Street to the little shoemaker's — get a sound, good pair of boots — ten minutes — and then to the railway-station — five minutes more — and off! I felt as efficient and non-moral as if I was Nietzsche's Over-man already come. It did not occur to me that the curate's clock might have a considerable margin of error.

Section 6

I missed the train.

Partly that was because the curate's clock was slow, and partly it was due to the commercial obstinacy of the shoemaker, who would try on another pair after I had declared my time was up. I bought the final pair however, gave him a wrong address for the return of the old ones, and only ceased to feel like the Nietzschean Over-man, when I saw the train running out of the station.

Even then I did not lose my head. It occurred to me almost at once that, in the event of a prompt pursuit, there would be a great advantage in not taking a train from Clayton; that, indeed, to have done so would have been an error from which only luck had saved me. As it was, I had already been very indiscreet in my inquiries about Shaphambury; for once on the scent the clerk could not fail to remember me. Now the chances were against his coming into the case. I did not go into the station therefore at all, I made no demonstration of having missed the train, but walked quietly past, down the road, crossed the iron footbridge, and took the way back

circuitously by White's brickfields and the allotments to the way over Clayton Crest to Two-Mile Stone, where I calculated I should have an ample margin for the 6.13 train.

I was not very greatly excited or alarmed then. Suppose, I reasoned, that by some accident the curate goes to that drawer at once: will he be certain to miss four out of ten or eleven sovereigns? If he does, will he at once think I have taken them? If he does, will he act at once or wait for my return? If he acts at once, will he talk to my mother or call in the police? Then there are a dozen roads and even railways out of the Clayton region, how is he to know which I have taken? Suppose he goes straight at once to the right station, they will not remember my departure for the simple reason that I didn't depart. But they may remember about Shaphambury? It was unlikely.

I resolved not to go directly to Shaphambury from Birmingham, but to go thence to Monkshampton, thence to Wyvern, and then come down on Shaphambury from the north. That might involve a night at some intermediate stopping-place but it would effectually conceal me from any but the most persistent pursuit. And this was not a case of murder yet, but only the theft of four sovereigns.

I had argued away all anxiety before I reached Clayton Crest.

At the Crest I looked back. What a world it was! And suddenly it came to me that I was looking at this world for the last time. If I overtook the fugitives and succeeded, I should die with them — or hang. I stopped and looked back more attentively at that wide ugly valley.

It was my native valley, and I was going out of it, I thought never to return, and yet in that last prospect, the group of towns that had borne me and dwarfed and crippled and made me, seemed, in some indefinable manner, strange. I was, perhaps, more used to seeing it from this comprehensive view-point when it was veiled and softened by night; now it came out in all its weekday reek, under a clear afternoon sun. That may account a little for its unfamiliarity. And perhaps, too, there was something in the emotions through which I had been passing for a week and more, to intensify my insight, to enable me to pierce the unusual, to question the accepted. But it came to me then, I am sure, for the first time, how promiscuous, how

higgledy-piggledy was the whole of that jumble of mines and homes, collieries and potbanks, railway yards, canals, schools, forges and blast furnaces, churches, chapels, allotment hovels, a vast irregular agglomeration of ugly smoking accidents in which men lived as happy as frogs in a dustbin. Each thing jostled and damaged the other things about it, each thing ignored the other things about it; the smoke of the furnace defiled the potbank clay, the clatter of the railway deafened the worshipers in church, the public-house thrust corruption at the school doors, the dismal homes squeezed miserably amidst the monstrosities of industrialism, with an effect of groping imbecility. Humanity choked amidst its products, and all its energy went in increasing its disorder, like a blind stricken thing that struggles and sinks in a morass.

I did not think these things clearly that afternoon. Much less did I ask how I, with my murderous purpose, stood to them all. I write down that realization of disorder and suffocation here and now as though I had thought it, but indeed then I only felt it, felt it transitorily as I looked back, and then stood with the thing escaping from my mind.

I should never see that country-side again.

I came back to that. At any rate I wasn't sorry. The chances were I should die in sweet air, under a clean sky.

From distant Swathinglea came a little sound, the minute undulation of a remote crowd, and then rapidly three shots.

That held me perplexed for a space. . . . Well, anyhow I was leaving it all! Thank God I was leaving it all! Then, as I turned to go on, I thought of my mother.

It seemed an evil world in which to leave one's mother. My thoughts focused upon her very vividly for a moment. Down there, under that afternoon light, she was going to and fro, unaware as yet that she had lost me, bent and poking about in the darkling underground kitchen, perhaps carrying a lamp into the scullery to trim, or sitting patiently, staring into the fire, waiting tea for me. A great pity for her, a great remorse at the blacker troubles that lowered over her innocent head, came to me. Why, after all, was I doing this

thing?

Why?

I stopped again dead, with the hill crest rising between me and home. I had more than half a mind to return to her.

Then I thought of the curate's sovereigns. If he has missed them already, what should I return to? And, even if I returned, how could I put them back?

And what of the night after I renounced my revenge? What of the time when young Verrall came back? And Nettie?

No! The thing had to be done.

But at least I might have kissed my mother before I came away, left her some message, reassured her at least for a little while. All night she would listen and wait for me. . . . .

Should I send her a telegram from Two-Mile Stone?

It was no good now; too late, too late. To do that would be to tell the course I had taken, to bring pursuit upon me, swift and sure, if pursuit there was to be. No. My mother must suffer!

I went on grimly toward Two-Mile Stone, but now as if some greater will than mine directed my footsteps thither.

I reached Birmingham before darkness came, and just caught the last train for Monkshampton, where I had planned to pass the night.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE PURSUIT OF THE TWO LOVERS

Section 1

As the train carried me on from Birmingham to Monkshampton, it carried me not only into a country where I had never been before, but out of the commonplace daylight and the touch and quality of ordinary things, into the strange unprecedented night that was ruled by the giant meteor of the last days.

There was at that time a curious accentuation of the common alternation of night and day. They became separated with a widening difference of value in regard to all mundane affairs. During the day, the comet was an item in the newspapers, it was jostled by a thousand more living interests, it was as nothing in the skirts of the war storm that was now upon us. It was an astronomical phenomenon, somewhere away over China, millions of miles away in the deeps. We forgot it. But directly the sun sank one turned ever and again toward the east, and the meteor resumed its sway over us.

One waited for its rising, and yet each night it came as a surprise. Always it rose brighter than one had dared to think, always larger and with some wonderful change in its outline, and now with a strange, less luminous, greener disk upon it that grew with its growth, the umbra of the earth. It shone also with its own light, so that this shadow was not hard or black, but it shone phosphorescently and with a diminishing intensity where the stimulus of the sun's rays was withdrawn. As it ascended toward the zenith, as the last trailing daylight went after the abdicating sun, its greenish white illumination banished the realities of day, diffused a bright ghostliness over all things. It changed the starless sky about it to an extraordinary deep blue, the profoundest color in the world, such as I have never seen before or since. I remember, too, that as I peered from the train that was rattling me along to Monkshampton, I perceived and was puzzled by a coppery red light that mingled with all the shadows that were cast by it.

It turned our ugly English industrial towns to phantom cities. Everywhere the local authorities discontinued street lighting — one could read small print in the glare, — and so at Monkshampton I went about through pale, white, unfamiliar streets, whose electric globes had shadows on the path. Lit windows here and there burnt ruddy orange, like holes cut in some dream curtain that hung before a furnace. A policeman with noiseless feet showed me an inn woven of moonshine, a green-faced man opened to us, and there I abode the night. And the next morning it opened with a mighty clatter, and was a dirty little beerhouse that stank of beer, and there was a fat and grimy landlord with red spots upon his neck, and much noisy traffic going by on the cobbles outside.

I came out, after I had paid my bill, into a street that echoed to the bawlings of two newsvendors and to the noisy yappings of a dog they had raised to emulation. They were shouting: "Great British disaster in the North Sea. A battleship lost with all hands!"

I bought a paper, went on to the railway station reading such details as were given of this triumph of the old civilization, of the blowing up of this great iron ship, full of guns and explosives and the most costly and beautiful machinery of which that time was capable, together with nine hundred able-bodied men, all of them above the average, by a contact mine towed by a German submarine. I read myself into a fever of warlike emotions. Not only did I forget the meteor, but for a time I forgot even the purpose that took me on to the railway station, bought my ticket, and was now carrying me onward to Shaphambury.

So the hot day came to its own again, and people forgot the night.

Each night, there shone upon us more and more insistently, beauty, wonder, the promise of the deeps, and we were hushed, and marveled for a space. And at the first gray sounds of dawn again, at the shooting of bolts and the noise of milk-carts, we forgot, and the dusty habitual day came yawning and stretching back again. The stains of coal smoke crept across the heavens, and we rose to the soiled disorderly routine of life.

"Thus life has always been," we said; "thus it will always be."

The glory of those nights was almost universally regarded as spectacular merely. It signified nothing to us. So far as western

Europe went, it was only a small and ignorant section of the lower classes who regarded the comet as a portent of the end of the world. Abroad, where there were peasantries, it was different, but in England the peasantry had already disappeared. Every one read. The newspaper, in the quiet days before our swift quarrel with Germany rushed to its climax, had absolutely dispelled all possibilities of a panic in this matter. The very tramps upon the high-roads, the children in the nursery, had learnt that at the utmost the whole of that shining cloud could weigh but a few score tons. This fact had been shown quite conclusively by the enormous deflections that had at last swung it round squarely at our world. It had passed near three of the smallest asteroids without producing the minutest perceptible deflection in their course; while, on its own part, it had described a course through nearly three degrees. When it struck our earth there was to be a magnificent spectacle, no doubt, for those who were on the right side of our planet to see, but beyond that nothing. It was doubtful whether we were on the right side. The meteor would loom larger and larger in the sky, but with the umbra of our earth eating its heart of brightness out, and at last it would be the whole sky, a sky of luminous green clouds, with a white brightness about the horizon, west and east. Then a pause — a pause of not very exactly definite duration — and then, no doubt, a great blaze of shooting stars. They might be of some unwonted color because of the unknown element that line in the green revealed. For a little while the zenith would spout shooting stars. Some, it was hoped, would reach the earth and be available for analysis.

That, science said, would be all. The green clouds would whirl and vanish, and there might be thunderstorms. But through the attenuated wisps of comet shine, the old sky, the old stars, would reappear, and all would be as it had been before. And since this was to happen between one and eleven in the morning of the approaching Tuesday — I slept at Monkshampton on Saturday night, — it would be only partially visible, if visible at all, on our side of the earth. Perhaps, if it came late, one would see no more than a shooting star low down in the sky. All this we had with the utmost assurances of science. Still it did not prevent the last nights being the most beautiful and memorable of human experiences.

The nights had become very warm, and when next day I had ranged Shaphambury in vain, I was greatly tormented, as that unparalleled glory of the night returned, to think that under its splendid benediction young Verrall and Nettie made love to one another.

I walked backward and forward, backward and forward, along the sea front, peering into the faces of the young couples who promenaded, with my hand in my pocket ready, and a curious ache in my heart that had no kindred with rage. Until at last all the promenaders had gone home to bed, and I was alone with the star.

My train from Wyvern to Shaphambury that morning was a whole hour late; they said it was on account of the movement of troops to meet a possible raid from the Elbe.

Section 2

Shaphambury seemed an odd place to me even then. But something was quickening in me at that time to feel the oddness of many accepted things. Now in the retrospect I see it as intensely queer. The whole place was strange to my untraveled eyes; the sea even was strange. Only twice in my life had I been at the seaside before, and then I had gone by excursion to places on the Welsh coast whose great cliffs of rock and mountain backgrounds made the effect of the horizon very different from what it is upon the East Anglian seaboard. Here what they call a cliff was a crumbling bank of whitey-brown earth not fifty feet high.

So soon as I arrived I made a systematic exploration of Shaphambury. To this day I retain the clearest memories of the plan I shaped out then, and how my inquiries were incommoded by the overpowering desire of every one to talk of the chances of a German raid, before the Channel Fleet got round to us. I slept at a small public-house in a Shaphambury back street on Sunday night. I did not get on to Shaphambury from Wyvern until two in the afternoon, because of the infrequency of Sunday trains, and I got no clue whatever until late in the afternoon of Monday. As the little local train bumped into sight of the place round the curve of a swelling hill, one saw a series of undulating grassy spaces, amidst which a

number of conspicuous notice-boards appealed to the eye and cut up the distant sea horizon. Most of these referred to comestibles or to remedies to follow the comestibles; and they were colored with a view to be memorable rather than beautiful, to “stand out” amidst the gentle grayish tones of the east coast scenery. The greater number, I may remark, of the advertisements that were so conspicuous a factor in the life of those days, and which rendered our vast tree-pulp newspapers possible, referred to foods, drinks, tobacco, and the drugs that promised a restoration of the equanimity these other articles had destroyed. Wherever one went one was reminded in glaring letters that, after all, man was little better than a worm, that eyeless, earless thing that burrows and lives uncomplainingly amidst nutritious dirt, “an alimentary canal with the subservient appendages thereto.” But in addition to such boards there were also the big black and white boards of various grandiloquently named “estates.” The individualistic enterprise of that time had led to the plotting out of nearly all the country round the seaside towns into roads and building-plots — all but a small portion of the south and east coast was in this condition, and had the promises of those schemes been realized the entire population of the island might have been accommodated upon the sea frontiers. Nothing of the sort happened, of course; the whole of this uglification of the coast-line was done to stimulate a little foolish gambling in plots, and one saw everywhere agents’ boards in every state of freshness and decay, ill-made exploitation roads overgrown with grass, and here and there, at a corner, a label, “Trafalgar Avenue,” or “Sea View Road.” Here and there, too, some small investor, some shopman with “savings,” had delivered his soul to the local builders and built himself a house, and there it stood, ill-designed, mean-looking, isolated, ill-placed on a cheaply fenced plot, athwart which his domestic washing fluttered in the breeze amidst a bleak desolation of enterprise. Then presently our railway crossed a high road, and a row of mean yellow brick houses — workmen’s cottages, and the filthy black sheds that made the “allotments” of that time a universal eyesore, marked our approach to the more central areas of — I quote the local guidebook— “one of the most delightful resorts in the East Anglian poppy-land.” Then more mean houses, the gaunt ungainliness of the electric force station

— it had a huge chimney, because no one understood how to make combustion of coal complete — and then we were in the railway station, and barely three-quarters of a mile from the center of this haunt of health and pleasure.

I inspected the town thoroughly before I made my inquiries. The road began badly with a row of cheap, pretentious, insolvent-looking shops, a public-house, and a cab-stand, but, after an interval of little red villas that were partly hidden amidst shrubbery gardens, broke into a confusedly bright but not unpleasing High Street, shuttered that afternoon and sabbatically still. Somewhere in the background a church bell jangled, and children in bright, new-looking clothes were going to Sunday-school. Thence through a square of stuccoed lodging-houses, that seemed a finer and cleaner version of my native square, I came to a garden of asphalt and euonymus — the Sea Front. I sat down on a cast-iron seat, and surveyed first of all the broad stretches of muddy, sandy beach, with its queer wheeled bathing machines, painted with the advertisements of somebody's pills — and then at the house fronts that stared out upon these visceral counsels. Boarding-houses, private hotels, and lodging-houses in terraces clustered closely right and left of me, and then came to an end; in one direction scaffolding marked a building enterprise in progress, in the other, after a waste interval, rose a monstrous bulging red shape, a huge hotel, that dwarfed all other things. Northward were low pale cliffs with white denticulations of tents, where the local volunteers, all under arms, lay encamped, and southward, a spreading waste of sandy dunes, with occasional bushes and clumps of stunted pine and an advertisement board or so. A hard blue sky hung over all this prospect, the sunshine cast inky shadows, and eastward was a whitish sea. It was Sunday, and the midday meal still held people indoors.

A queer world! thought I even then — to you now it must seem impossibly queer, — and after an interval I forced myself back to my own affair.

How was I to ask? What was I to ask for? I puzzled for a long time over that — at first I was a little tired and indolent — and then presently I had a flow of ideas.

My solution was fairly ingenious. I invented the following story. I

happened to be taking a holiday in Shaphambury, and I was making use of the opportunity to seek the owner of a valuable feather boa, which had been left behind in the hotel of my uncle at Wyvern by a young lady, traveling with a young gentleman — no doubt a youthful married couple. They had reached Shaphambury somewhen on Thursday. I went over the story many times, and gave my imaginary uncle and his hotel plausible names. At any rate this yarn would serve as a complete justification for all the questions I might wish to ask.

I settled that, but I still sat for a time, wanting the energy to begin. Then I turned toward the big hotel. Its gorgeous magnificence seemed to my inexpert judgment to indicate the very place a rich young man of good family would select.

Huge draught-proof doors were swung round for me by an ironically polite under-porter in a magnificent green uniform, who looked at my clothes as he listened to my question and then with a German accent referred me to a gorgeous head porter, who directed me to a princely young man behind a counter of brass and polish, like a bank — like several banks. This young man, while he answered me, kept his eye on my collar and tie — and I knew that they were abominable.

"I want to find a lady and gentleman who came to Shaphambury on Tuesday," I said.

"Friends of yours?" he asked with a terrible fineness of irony.

I made out at last that here at any rate the young people had not been. They might have lunched there, but they had had no room. But I went out — door opened again for me obsequiously — in a state of social discomfiture, and did not attack any other establishment that afternoon.

My resolution had come to a sort of ebb. More people were promenading, and their Sunday smartness abashed me. I forgot my purpose in an acute sense of myself. I felt that the bulge of my pocket caused by the revolver was conspicuous, and I was ashamed. I went along the sea front away from the town, and presently lay down among pebbles and sea poppies. This mood of reaction prevailed

with me all that afternoon. In the evening, about sundown, I went to the station and asked questions of the outporters there. But outporters, I found, were a class of men who remembered luggage rather than people, and I had no sort of idea what luggage young Verrall and Nettie were likely to have with them.

Then I fell into conversation with a salacious wooden-legged old man with a silver ring, who swept the steps that went down to the beach from the parade. He knew much about young couples, but only in general terms, and nothing of the particular young couple I sought. He reminded me in the most disagreeable way of the sensuous aspects of life, and I was not sorry when presently a gunboat appeared in the offing signalling the coastguard and the camp, and cut short his observations upon holidays, beaches, and morals.

I went, and now I was past my ebb, and sat in a seat upon the parade, and watched the brightening of those rising clouds of chilly fire that made the ruddy west seem tame. My midday lassitude was going, my blood was running warmer again. And as the twilight and that filmy brightness replaced the dusty sunlight and robbed this unfamiliar place of all its matter-of-fact queerness, its sense of aimless materialism, romance returned to me, and passion, and my thoughts of honor and revenge. I remember that change of mood as occurring very vividly on this occasion, but I fancy that less distinctly I had felt this before many times. In the old times, night and the starlight had an effect of intimate reality the daytime did not possess. The daytime — as one saw it in towns and populous places — had hold of one, no doubt, but only as an uproar might, it was distracting, conflicting, insistent. Darkness veiled the more salient aspects of those agglomerations of human absurdity, and one could exist — one could imagine.

I had a queer illusion that night, that Nettie and her lover were close at hand, that suddenly I should come on them. I have already told how I went through the dusk seeking them in every couple that drew near. And I dropped asleep at last in an unfamiliar bedroom hung with gaudily decorated texts, cursing myself for having wasted a day.

Section 3

I sought them in vain the next morning, but after midday I came in quick succession on a perplexing multitude of clues. After failing to find any young couple that corresponded to young Verrall and Nettie, I presently discovered an unsatisfactory quartette of couples.

Any of these four couples might have been the one I sought; with regard to none of them was there conviction. They had all arrived either on Wednesday or Thursday. Two couples were still in occupation of their rooms, but neither of these were at home. Late in the afternoon I reduced my list by eliminating a young man in drab, with side whiskers and long cuffs, accompanied by a lady, of thirty or more, of consciously ladylike type. I was disgusted at the sight of them; the other two young people had gone for a long walk, and though I watched their boarding-house until the fiery cloud shone out above, sharing and mingling in an unusually splendid sunset, I missed them. Then I discovered them dining at a separate table in the bow window, with red-shaded candles between them, peering out ever and again at this splendor that was neither night nor day. The girl in her pink evening dress looked very light and pretty to me — pretty enough to enrage me, — she had well shaped arms and white, well-modeled shoulders, and the turn of her cheek and the fair hair about her ears was full of subtle delights; but she was not Nettie, and the happy man with her was that odd degenerate type our old aristocracy produced with such odd frequency, chinless, large bony nose, small fair head, languid expression, and a neck that had demanded and received a veritable sleeve of collar. I stood outside in the meteor's livid light, hating them and cursing them for having delayed me so long. I stood until it was evident they remarked me, a black shape of envy, silhouetted against the glare.

That finished Shaphambury. The question I now had to debate was which of the remaining couples I had to pursue.

I walked back to the parade trying to reason my next step out, and muttering to myself, because there was something in that luminous wonderfulness that touched one's brain, and made one feel a little light-headed.

One couple had gone to London; the other had gone to the Bungalow village at Bone Cliff. Where, I wondered, was Bone Cliff?

I came upon my wooden-legged man at the top of his steps.

“Hullo,” said I.

He pointed seaward with his pipe, his silver ring shone in the sky light.

“Rum,” he said.

“What is?” I asked.

“Search-lights! Smoke! Ships going north! If it wasn’t for this blasted Milky Way gone green up there, we might see.”

He was too intent to heed my questions for a time. Then he vouchsafed over his shoulder —

“Know Bungalow village? — rather. Artis’ and such. Nice goings on!
Mixed bathing — something scandalous. Yes.”

“But where is it?” I said, suddenly exasperated.

“There!” he said. “What’s that flicker? A gunflash — or I’m a lost soul!”

“You’d hear,” I said, “long before it was near enough to see a flash.”

He didn’t answer. Only by making it clear I would distract him until he told me what I wanted to know could I get him to turn from his absorbed contemplation of that phantom dance between the sea rim and the shine. Indeed I gripped his arm and shook him. Then he turned upon me cursing.

“Seven miles,” he said, “along this road. And now go to ‘ell with yer!”

I answered with some foul insult by way of thanks, and so we parted, and I set off towards the bungalow village.

I found a policeman, standing star-gazing, a little way beyond the end of the parade, and verified the wooden-legged man’s directions.

“It’s a lonely road, you know,” he called after me. . . .

I had an odd intuition that now at last I was on the right track. I left the dark masses of Shaphambury behind me, and pushed out into the dim pallor of that night, with the quiet assurance of a traveler who nears his end.

The incidents of that long tramp I do not recall in any orderly succession, the one progressive thing is my memory of a growing

fatigue. The sea was for the most part smooth and shining like a mirror, a great expanse of reflecting silver, barred by slow broad undulations, but at one time a little breeze breathed like a faint sigh and ruffled their long bodies into faint scaly ripples that never completely died out again. The way was sometimes sandy, thick with silvery colorless sand, and sometimes chalky and lumpy, with lumps that had shining facets; a black scrub was scattered, sometimes in thickets, sometimes in single bunches, among the somnolent hummocks of sand. At one place came grass, and ghostly great sheep looming up among the gray. After a time black pinewoods intervened, and made sustained darknesses along the road, woods that frayed out at the edges to weirdly warped and stunted trees. Then isolated pine witches would appear, and make their rigid gestures at me as I passed. Grotesquely incongruous amidst these forms, I presently came on estate boards, appealing, "Houses can be built to suit purchaser," to the silence, to the shadows, and the glare.

Once I remember the persistent barking of a dog from somewhere inland of me, and several times I took out and examined my revolver very carefully. I must, of course, have been full of my intention when I did that, I must have been thinking of Nettie and revenge, but I cannot now recall those emotions at all. Only I see again very distinctly the greenish gleams that ran over lock and barrel as I turned the weapon in my hand.

Then there was the sky, the wonderful, luminous, starless, moonless sky, and the empty blue deeps of the edge of it, between the meteor and the sea. And once — strange phantoms! — I saw far out upon the shine, and very small and distant, three long black warships, without masts, or sails, or smoke, or any lights, dark, deadly, furtive things, traveling very swiftly and keeping an equal distance. And when I looked again they were very small, and then the shine had swallowed them up.

Then once a flash and what I thought was a gun, until I looked up and saw a fading trail of greenish light still hanging in the sky. And after that there was a shiver and whispering in the air, a stronger throbbing in one's arteries, a sense of refreshment, a renewal of purpose. . . .

Somewhere upon my way the road forked, but I do not remember

whether that was near Shaphambury or near the end of my walk. The hesitation between two rutted unmade roads alone remains clear in my mind.

At last I grew weary. I came to piled heaps of decaying seaweed and cart tracks running this way and that, and then I had missed the road and was stumbling among sand hummocks quite close to the sea. I came out on the edge of the dimly glittering sandy beach, and something phosphorescent drew me to the water's edge. I bent down and peered at the little luminous specks that floated in the ripples.

Presently with a sigh I stood erect, and contemplated the lonely peace of that last wonderful night. The meteor had now trailed its shining nets across the whole space of the sky and was beginning to set; in the east the blue was coming to its own again; the sea was an intense edge of blackness, and now, escaped from that great shine, and faint and still tremulously valiant, one weak elusive star could just be seen, hovering on the verge of the invisible.

How beautiful it was! how still and beautiful! Peace! peace! — the peace that passeth understanding, robed in light descending! . . .

My heart swelled, and suddenly I was weeping.

There was something new and strange in my blood. It came to me that indeed I did not want to kill.

I did not want to kill. I did not want to be the servant of my passions any more. A great desire had come to me to escape from life, from the daylight which is heat and conflict and desire, into that cool night of eternity — and rest. I had played — I had done.

I stood upon the edge of the great ocean, and I was filled with an inarticulate spirit of prayer, and I desired greatly — peace from myself.

And presently, there in the east, would come again the red discoloring curtain over these mysteries, the finite world again, the gray and growing harsh certainties of dawn. My resolve I knew would take up with me again. This was a rest for me, an interlude, but to-morrow I should be William Leadford once more, ill-nourished, ill-dressed, ill-equipped and clumsy, a thief and shamed, a wound upon the face of life, a source of trouble and sorrow even to the mother I loved; no hope in life left for me now but revenge before my death.

Why this paltry thing, revenge? It entered into my thoughts that I might end the matter now and let these others go.

To wade out into the sea, into this warm lapping that mingled the natures of water and light, to stand there breast-high, to thrust my revolver barrel into my mouth —— — ?

Why not?

I swung about with an effort. I walked slowly up the beach thinking. . . .

I turned and looked back at the sea. No! Something within me said, "No!"

I must think.

It was troublesome to go further because the hummocks and the tangled bushes began. I sat down amidst a black cluster of shrubs, and rested, chin on hand. I drew my revolver from my pocket and looked at it, and held it in my hand. Life? Or Death? . . .

I seemed to be probing the very deeps of being, but indeed imperceptibly I fell asleep, and sat dreaming.

Section 4

Two people were bathing in the sea.

I had awakened. It was still that white and wonderful night, and the blue band of clear sky was no wider than before. These people must have come into sight as I fell asleep, and awakened me almost at once. They waded breast-deep in the water, emerging, coming shoreward, a woman, with her hair coiled about her head, and in pursuit of her a man, graceful figures of black and silver, with a bright green surge flowing off from them, a pattering of flashing wavelets about them. He smote the water and splashed it toward her, she retaliated, and then they were knee-deep, and then for an instant their feet broke the long silver margin of the sea.

Each wore a tightly fitting bathing dress that hid nothing of the shining, dripping beauty of their youthful forms.

She glanced over her shoulder and found him nearer than she

thought, started, gesticulated, gave a little cry that pierced me to the heart, and fled up the beach obliquely toward me, running like the wind, and passed me, vanished amidst the black distorted bushes, and was gone — she and her pursuer, in a moment, over the ridge of sand.

I heard him shout between exhaustion and laughter. . . .

And suddenly I was a thing of bestial fury, standing up with hands held up and clenched, rigid in gesture of impotent threatening, against the sky. . . .

For this striving, swift thing of light and beauty was Nettie — and this was the man for whom I had been betrayed!

And, it blazed upon me, I might have died there by the sheer ebbing of my will — unavenged!

In another moment I was running and stumbling, revolver in hand, in quiet unsuspected pursuit of them, through the soft and noiseless sand.

Section 5

I came up over the little ridge and discovered the bungalow village I had been seeking, nestling in a crescent lap of dunes. A door slammed, the two runners had vanished, and I halted staring.

There was a group of three bungalows nearer to me than the others. Into one of these three they had gone, and I was too late to see which. All had doors and windows carelessly open, and none showed a light.

This place, upon which I had at last happened, was a fruit of the reaction of artistic-minded and carelessly living people against the costly and uncomfortable social stiffness of the more formal seaside resorts of that time. It was, you must understand, the custom of the steam-railway companies to sell their carriages after they had been obsolete for a sufficient length of years, and some genius had hit upon the possibility of turning these into little habitable cabins for the summer holiday. The thing had become a fashion with a certain Bohemian-spirited class; they added cabin to cabin, and these little improvised homes, gaily painted and with broad verandas and supplementary leantos added to their accommodation, made the

brightest contrast conceivable to the dull rigidities of the decorous resorts. Of course there were many discomforts in such camping that had to be faced cheerfully, and so this broad sandy beach was sacred to high spirits and the young. Art muslin and banjoes, Chinese lanterns and frying, are leading "notes," I find, in the impression of those who once knew such places well. But so far as I was concerned this odd settlement of pleasure-squatters was a mystery as well as a surprise, enhanced rather than mitigated by an imaginative suggestion or so I had received from the wooden-legged man at Shaphambury. I saw the thing as no gathering of light hearts and gay idleness, but grimly — after the manner of poor men poisoned by the suppression of all their cravings after joy. To the poor man, to the grimy workers, beauty and cleanness were absolutely denied; out of a life of greasy dirt, of muddied desires, they watched their happier fellows with a bitter envy and foul, tormenting suspicions. Fancy a world in which the common people held love to be a sort of beastliness, own sister to being drunk! . . .

There was in the old time always something cruel at the bottom of this business of sexual love. At least that is the impression I have brought with me across the gulf of the great Change. To succeed in love seemed such triumph as no other success could give, but to fail was as if one was tainted. . . .

I felt no sense of singularity that this thread of savagery should run through these emotions of mine and become now the whole strand of these emotions. I believed, and I think I was right in believing, that the love of all true lovers was a sort of defiance then, that they closed a system in each other's arms and mocked the world without. You loved against the world, and these two loved AT me. They had their business with one another, under the threat of a watchful fierceness. A sword, a sharp sword, the keenest edge in life, lay among their roses.

Whatever may be true of this for others, for me and my imagination, at any rate, it was altogether true. I was never for dalliance, I was never a jesting lover. I wanted fiercely; I made love impatiently. Perhaps I had written irrelevant love-letters for that very reason; because with this stark theme I could not play. . .

The thought of Nettie's shining form, of her shrinking bold

abandon to her easy conqueror, gave me now a body of rage that was nearly too strong for my heart and nerves and the tense powers of my merely physical being. I came down among the pale sand-heaps slowly toward that queer village of careless sensuality, and now within my puny body I was coldly sharpset for pain and death, a darkly gleaming hate, a sword of evil, drawn.

Section 6

I halted, and stood planning what I had to do.

Should I go to bungalow after bungalow until one of the two I sought answered to my rap? But suppose some servant intervened!

Should I wait where I was — perhaps until morning — watching? And meanwhile —— —

All the nearer bungalows were very still now. If I walked softly to them, from open windows, from something seen or overheard, I might get a clue to guide me. Should I advance circuitously, creeping upon them, or should I walk straight to the door? It was bright enough for her to recognize me clearly at a distance of many paces.

The difficulty to my mind lay in this, that if I involved other people by questions, I might at last confront my betrayers with these others close about me, ready to snatch my weapon and seize my hands. Besides, what names might they bear here?

"Boom!" the sound crept upon my senses, and then again it came.

I turned impatiently as one turns upon an impertinence, and beheld a great ironclad not four miles out, steaming fast across the dappled silver, and from its funnels sparks, intensely red, poured out into the night. As I turned, came the hot flash of its guns, firing seaward, and answering this, red flashes and a streaming smoke in the line between sea and sky. So I remembered it, and I remember myself staring at it — in a state of stupid arrest. It was an irrelevance. What had these things to do with me?

With a shuddering hiss, a rocket from a headland beyond the village leapt up and burst hot gold against the glare, and the sound of the third and fourth guns reached me.

The windows of the dark bungalows, one after another, leapt out, squares of ruddy brightness that flared and flickered and became

steadily bright. Dark heads appeared looking seaward, a door opened, and sent out a brief lane of yellow to mingle and be lost in the comet's brightness. That brought me back to the business in hand.

"Boom! boom!" and when I looked again at the great ironclad, a little torchlike spurt of flame wavered behind her funnels. I could hear the throb and clangor of her straining engines. . . .

I became aware of the voices of people calling to one another in the village. A white-robed, hooded figure, some man in a bathing wrap, absurdly suggestive of an Arab in his burnous, came out from one of the nearer bungalows, and stood clear and still and shadowless in the glare.

He put his hands to shade his seaward eyes, and shouted to people within.

The people within — MY people! My fingers tightened on my revolver. What was this war nonsense to me? I would go round among the hummocks with the idea of approaching the three bungalows inconspicuously from the flank. This fight at sea might serve my purpose — except for that, it had no interest for me at all. Boom! boom! The huge voluminous concussions rushed past me, beat at my heart and passed. In a moment Nettie would come out to see.

First one and then two other wrappered figures came out of the bungalows to join the first. His arm pointed seaward, and his voice, a full tenor, rose in explanation. I could hear some of the words. "It's a German!" he said. "She's caught."

Some one disputed that, and there followed a little indistinct babble of argument. I went on slowly in the circuit I had marked out, watching these people as I went.

They shouted together with such a common intensity of direction that I halted and looked seaward. I saw the tall fountain flung by a shot that had just missed the great warship. A second rose still nearer us, a third, and a fourth, and then a great uprush of dust, a whirling cloud, leapt out of the headland whence the rocket had come, and spread with a slow deliberation right and left. Hard on that an enormous crash, and the man with the full voice leapt and cried, "Hit!"

Let me see! Of course, I had to go round beyond the bungalows, and then come up towards the group from behind.

A high-pitched woman's voice called, "Honeymooners! honeymooners!
Come out and see!"

Something gleamed in the shadow of the nearer bungalow, and a man's voice answered from within. What he said I did not catch, but suddenly I heard Nettie calling very distinctly, "We've been bathing."

The man who had first come out shouted, "Don't you hear the guns? They're fighting — not five miles from shore."

"Eh?" answered the bungalow, and a window opened.

"Out there!"

I did not hear the reply, because of the faint rustle of my own movements. Clearly these people were all too much occupied by the battle to look in my direction, and so I walked now straight toward the darkness that held Nettie and the black desire of my heart.

"Look!" cried some one, and pointed skyward.

I glanced up, and behold! The sky was streaked with bright green trails. They radiated from a point halfway between the western horizon and the zenith, and within the shining clouds of the meteor a streaming movement had begun, so that it seemed to be pouring both westwardly and back toward the east, with a crackling sound, as though the whole heaven was stippled over with phantom pistol-shots. It seemed to me then as if the meteor was coming to help me, descending with those thousand pistols like a curtain to fend off this unmeaning foolishness of the sea.

"Boom!" went a gun on the big ironclad, and "boom!" and the guns of the pursuing cruisers flashed in reply.

To glance up at that streaky, stirring light scum of the sky made one's head swim. I stood for a moment dazed, and more than a little giddy. I had a curious instant of purely speculative thought. Suppose, after all, the fanatics were right, and the world WAS coming to an

end! What a score that would be for Parload!

Then it came into my head that all these things were happening to consecrate my revenge! The war below, the heavens above, were the thunderous garment of my deed. I heard Nettie's voice cry out not fifty yards away, and my passion surged again. I was to return to her amid these terrors bearing unanticipated death. I was to possess her, with a bullet, amidst thunderings and fear. At the thought I lifted up my voice to a shout that went unheard, and advanced now recklessly, revolver displayed in my hand.

It was fifty yards, forty yards, thirty yards — the little group of people, still heedless of me, was larger and more important now, the green-shot sky and the fighting ships remoter. Some one darted out from the bungalow, with an interrupted question, and stopped, suddenly aware of me. It was Nettie, with some coquettish dark wrap about her, and the green glare shining on her sweet face and white throat. I could see her expression, stricken with dismay and terror, at my advance, as though something had seized her by the heart and held her still — a target for my shots.

"Boom!" came the ironclad's gunshot like a command. "Bang!" the bullet leapt from my hand. Do you know, I did not want to shoot her then. Indeed I did not want to shoot her then! Bang! and I had fired again, still striding on, and — each time it seemed I had missed.

She moved a step or so toward me, still staring, and then someone intervened, and near beside her I saw young Verrall.

A heavy stranger, the man in the hooded bath-gown, a fat, foreign-looking man, came out of nowhere like a shield before them. He seemed a preposterous interruption. His face was full of astonishment and terror. He rushed across my path with arms extended and open hands, as one might try to stop a runaway horse. He shouted some nonsense. He seemed to want to dissuade me, as though dissuasion had anything to do with it now.

"Not you, you fool!" I said hoarsely. "Not you!" But he hid Nettie nevertheless.

By an enormous effort I resisted a mechanical impulse to shoot through his fat body. Anyhow, I knew I mustn't shoot him. For a moment I was in doubt, then I became very active, turned aside abruptly and dodged his pawing arm to the left, and so found two

others irresolutely in my way. I fired a third shot in the air, just over their heads, and ran at them. They hastened left and right; I pulled up and faced about within a yard of a foxy-faced young man coming sideways, who seemed about to grapple me. At my resolute halt he fell back a pace, ducked, and threw up a defensive arm, and then I perceived the course was clear, and ahead of me, young Verrall and Nettie — he was holding her arm to help her — running away. “Of course!” said I.

I fired a fourth ineffectual shot, and then in an access of fury at my misses, started out to run them down and shoot them barrel to backbone. “These people!” I said, dismissing all these interferences. . . . “A yard,” I panted, speaking aloud to myself, “a yard! Till then, take care, you mustn’t — mustn’t shoot again.”

Some one pursued me, perhaps several people — I do not know, we left them all behind. . . .

We ran. For a space I was altogether intent upon the swift monotony of flight and pursuit. The sands were changed to a whirl of green moonshine, the air was thunder. A luminous green haze rolled about us. What did such things matter? We ran. Did I gain or lose? that was the question. They ran through a gap in a broken fence that sprang up abruptly out of nothingness and turned to the right. I noted we were in a road. But this green mist! One seemed to plough through it. They were fading into it, and at that thought I made a spurt that won a dozen feet or more.

She staggered. He gripped her arm, and dragged her forward. They doubled to the left. We were off the road again and on turf. It felt like turf. I tripped and fell at a ditch that was somehow full of smoke, and was up again, but now they were phantoms half gone into the livid swirls about me. . . .

Still I ran.

On, on! I groaned with the violence of my effort. I staggered again and swore. I felt the concussions of great guns tear past me through the murk.

They were gone! Everything was going, but I kept on running. Once more I stumbled. There was something about my feet that impeded me, tall grass or heather, but I could not see what it was, only this smoke that eddied about my knees. There was a noise and

spinning in my brain, a vain resistance to a dark green curtain that was falling, falling, falling, fold upon fold. Everything grew darker and darker.

I made one last frantic effort, and raised my revolver, fired my penultimate shot at a venture, and fell headlong to the ground. And behold! the green curtain was a black one, and the earth and I and all things ceased to be.

BOOK THE SECOND. THE GREEN VAPORS

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE CHANGE

Section 1

I SEEMED to awaken out of a refreshing sleep.

I did not awaken with a start, but opened my eyes, and lay very comfortably looking at a line of extraordinarily scarlet poppies that glowed against a glowing sky. It was the sky of a magnificent sunrise, and an archipelago of gold-beached purple islands floated in a sea of golden green. The poppies too, swan-necked buds, blazing corollas, translucent stout seed-vessels, stoutly upheld, had a luminous quality, seemed wrought only from some more solid kind of light.

I stared unwonderingly at these things for a time, and then there rose upon my consciousness, intermingling with these, the bristling golden green heads of growing barley.

A remote faint question, where I might be, drifted and vanished again in my mind. Everything was very still.

Everything was as still as death.

I felt very light, full of the sense of physical well-being. I perceived I was lying on my side in a little trampled space in a weedy, flowering barley field, that was in some inexplicable way saturated with light and beauty. I sat up, and remained for a long time filled with the delight and charm of the delicate little convolvulus that twined among the barley stems, the pimpernel that laced the ground below.

Then that question returned. What was this place? How had I come to be sleeping here?

I could not remember.

It perplexed me that somehow my body felt strange to me. It was unfamiliar — I could not tell how — and the barley, and the beautiful weeds, and the slowly developing glory of the dawn behind; all those things partook of the same unfamiliarity. I felt as though I was a thing in some very luminous painted window, as

though this dawn broke through me. I felt I was part of some exquisite picture painted in light and joy.

A faint breeze bent and rustled the barley-heads, and jogged my mind forward.

Who was I? That was a good way of beginning.

I held up my left hand and arm before me, a grubby hand, a frayed cuff; but with a quality of painted unreality, transfigured as a beggar might have been by Botticelli. I looked for a time steadfastly at a beautiful pearl sleeve-link.

I remembered Willie Leadford, who had owned that arm and hand, as though he had been some one else.

Of course! My history — its rough outline rather than the immediate past — began to shape itself in my memory, very small, very bright and inaccessible, like a thing watched through a microscope. Clayton and Swathinglea returned to my mind; the slums and darkness, Dureresque, minute and in their rich dark colors pleasing, and through them I went towards my destiny. I sat hands on knees recalling that queer passionate career that had ended with my futile shot into the growing darkness of the End. The thought of that shot awoke my emotions again.

There was something in it now, something absurd, that made me smile pityingly.

Poor little angry, miserable creature! Poor little angry, miserable world!

I sighed for pity, not only pity for myself, but for all the hot hearts, the tormented brains, the straining, striving things of hope and pain, who had found their peace at last beneath the pouring mist and suffocation of the comet. Because certainly that world was over and done. They were all so weak and unhappy, and I was now so strong and so serene. For I felt sure I was dead; no one living could have this perfect assurance of good, this strong and confident peace. I had made an end of the fever called living. I was dead, and it was all right, and these —— — ?

I felt an inconsistency.

These, then, must be the barley fields of God! — the still and silent barley fields of God, full of unfading poppy flowers whose seeds bear peace.

Section 2

It was queer to find barley fields in heaven, but no doubt there were many surprises in store for me.

How still everything was! Peace! The peace that passeth understanding. After all it had come to me! But, indeed, everything was very still! No bird sang. Surely I was alone in the world! No birds sang. Yes, and all the distant sounds of life had ceased, the lowing of cattle, the barking of dogs. . . .

Something that was like fear beatified came into my heart. It was all right, I knew; but to be alone! I stood up and met the hot summons of the rising sun, hurrying towards me, as it were, with glad tidings, over the spikes of the barley. . . .

Blinded, I made a step. My foot struck something hard, and I looked down to discover my revolver, a blue-black thing, like a dead snake at my feet.

For a moment that puzzled me.

Then I clean forgot about it. The wonder of the quiet took possession of my soul. Dawn, and no birds singing!

How beautiful was the world! How beautiful, but how still! I walked slowly through the barley towards a line of elder bushes, wayfaring tree and bramble that made the hedge of the field. I noted as I passed along a dead shrew mouse, as it seemed to me, among the halms; then a still toad. I was surprised that this did not leap aside from my footfalls, and I stooped and picked it up. Its body was limp like life, but it made no struggle, the brightness of its eye was veiled, it did not move in my hand.

It seems to me now that I stood holding that lifeless little creature for some time. Then very softly I stooped down and replaced it. I was trembling — trembling with a nameless emotion. I looked with quickened eyes closely among the barley stems, and behold, now everywhere I saw beetles, flies, and little creatures that did not move, lying as they fell when the vapors overcame them; they seemed no more than painted things. Some were novel creatures to me. I was very unfamiliar with natural things. “My God!” I cried; “but is it only I —— — ?”

And then at my next movement something squealed sharply. I

turned about, but I could not see it, only I saw a little stir in a rut and heard the diminishing rustle of the unseen creature's flight. And at that I turned to my toad again, and its eye moved and it stirred. And presently, with infirm and hesitating gestures, it stretched its limbs and began to crawl away from me.

But wonder, that gentle sister of fear, had me now. I saw a little way ahead a brown and crimson butterfly perched upon a cornflower. I thought at first it was the breeze that stirred it, and then I saw its wings were quivering. And even as I watched it, it started into life, and spread itself, and fluttered into the air.

I watched it fly, a turn this way, a turn that, until suddenly it seemed to vanish. And now, life was returning to this thing and that on every side of me, with slow stretchings and bendings, with twitterings, with a little start and stir. . . .

I came slowly, stepping very carefully because of these drugged, feebly awakening things, through the barley to the hedge. It was a very glorious hedge, so that it held my eyes. It flowed along and interlaced like splendid music. It was rich with lupin, honeysuckle, campions, and ragged robin; bed straw, hops, and wild clematis twined and hung among its branches, and all along its ditch border the starry stitchwort lifted its childish faces, and chorused in lines and masses. Never had I seen such a symphony of note-like flowers and tendrils and leaves. And suddenly in its depths, I heard a chirrup and the whirr of startled wings.

Nothing was dead, but everything had changed to beauty! And I stood for a time with clean and happy eyes looking at the intricate delicacy before me and marveling how richly God has made his worlds. . . . .

"Tweedle-Tweezle," a lark had shot the stillness with his shining thread of song; one lark, and then presently another, invisibly in the air, making out of that blue quiet a woven cloth of gold. . . .

The earth recreated — only by the reiteration of such phrases may I hope to give the intense freshness of that dawn. For a time I was altogether taken up with the beautiful details of being, as regardless of my old life of jealous passion and impatient sorrow as though I was Adam new made. I could tell you now with infinite particularity of the shut flowers that opened as I looked, of tendrils and grass

blades, of a blue-tit I picked up very tenderly — never before had I remarked the great delicacy of feathers — that presently disclosed its bright black eye and judged me, and perched, swaying fearlessly, upon my finger, and spread unhurried wings and flew away, and of a great ebullition of tadpoles in the ditch; like all the things that lived beneath the water, they had passed unaltered through the Change. Amid such incidents, I lived those first great moments, losing for a time in the wonder of each little part the mighty wonder of the whole.

A little path ran between hedge and barley, and along this, leisurely and content and glad, looking at this beautiful thing and that, moving a step and stopping, then moving on again, I came presently to a stile, and deep below it, and overgrown, was a lane.

And on the worn oak of the stile was a round label, and on the label these words, "Swindells' G 90 Pills."

I sat myself astraddle on the stile, not fully grasping all the implications of these words. But they perplexed me even more than the revolver and my dirty cuff.

About me now the birds lifted up their little hearts and sang, ever more birds and more.

I read the label over and over again, and joined it to the fact that I still wore my former clothes, and that my revolver had been lying at my feet. One conclusion stared out at me. This was no new planet, no glorious hereafter such as I had supposed. This beautiful wonderland was the world, the same old world of my rage and death! But at least it was like meeting a familiar house-slut, washed and dignified, dressed in a queen's robes, worshipful and fine. . . .

It might be the old world indeed, but something new lay upon all things, a glowing certitude of health and happiness. It might be the old world, but the dust and fury of the old life was certainly done. At least I had no doubt of that.

I recalled the last phases of my former life, that darkling climax of pursuit and anger and universal darkness and the whirling green vapors of extinction. The comet had struck the earth and made an end to all things; of that too I was assured.

But afterward? . . .

And now?

The imaginations of my boyhood came back as speculative possibilities. In those days I had believed firmly in the necessary advent of a last day, a great coming out of the sky, trumpetings and fear, the Resurrection, and the Judgment. My roving fancy now suggested to me that this Judgment must have come and passed. That it had passed and in some manner missed me. I was left alone here, in a swept and garnished world (except, of course, for this label of Swindells') to begin again perhaps. . . .

No doubt Swindells has got his deserts.

My mind ran for a time on Swindells, on the imbecile pushfulness of that extinct creature, dealing in rubbish, covering the country-side with lies in order to get — what had he sought? — a silly, ugly, great house, a temper-destroying motor-car, a number of disrespectful, abject servants; thwarted intrigues for a party-fund baronetcy as the crest of his life, perhaps. You cannot imagine the littleness of those former times; their naive, queer absurdities! And for the first time in my existence I thought of these things without bitterness. In the former days I had seen wickedness, I had seen tragedy, but now I saw only the extraordinary foolishness of the old life. The ludicrous side of human wealth and importance turned itself upon me, a shining novelty, poured down upon me like the sunrise, and engulfed me in laughter. Swindells! Swindells, damned! My vision of Judgment became a delightful burlesque. I saw the chuckling Angel sayer with his face veiled, and the corporeal presence of Swindells upheld amidst the laughter of the spheres. "Here's a thing, and a very pretty thing, and what's to be done with this very pretty thing?" I saw a soul being drawn from a rotund, substantial-looking body like a whelk from its shell. . . .

I laughed loudly and long. And behold! even as I laughed the keen point of things accomplished stabbed my mirth, and I was weeping, weeping aloud, convulsed with weeping, and the tears were pouring down my face.

Section 3

Everywhere the awakening came with the sunrise. We awakened to the gladness of the morning; we walked dazzled in a light that was

joy. Everywhere that was so. It was always morning. It was morning because, until the direct rays of the sun touched it, the changing nitrogen of our atmosphere did not pass into its permanent phase, and the sleepers lay as they had fallen. In its intermediate state the air hung inert, incapable of producing either revival or stupefaction, no longer green, but not yet changed to the gas that now lives in us. . . .

To every one, I think, came some parallel to the mental states I have already sought to describe — a wonder, an impression of joyful novelty. There was also very commonly a certain confusion of the intelligence, a difficulty in self-recognition. I remember clearly as I sat on my stile that presently I had the clearest doubts of my own identity and fell into the oddest metaphysical questionings. "If this be I," I said, "then how is it I am no longer madly seeking Nettie? Nettie is now the remotest thing — and all my wrongs. Why have I suddenly passed out of all that passion? Why does not the thought of Verrall quicken my pulses?" . . .

I was only one of many millions who that morning had the same doubts. I suppose one knows one's self for one's self when one returns from sleep or insensibility by the familiarity of one's bodily sensations, and that morning all our most intimate bodily sensations were changed. The intimate chemical processes of life were changed, its nervous metaboly. For the fluctuating, uncertain, passion-darkened thought and feeling of the old time came steady, full-bodied, wholesome processes. Touch was different, sight was different, sound and all the senses were subtler; had it not been that our thought was steadier and fuller, I believe great multitudes of men would have gone mad. But, as it was, we understood. The dominant impression I would convey in this account of the Change is one of enormous release, of a vast substantial exaltation. There was an effect, as it were, of light-headedness that was also clear-headedness, and the alteration in one's bodily sensations, instead of producing the mental obfuscation, the loss of identity that was a common mental trouble under former conditions, gave simply a new detachment from the tumid passions and entanglements of the personal life.

In this story of my bitter, restricted youth that I have been telling you, I have sought constantly to convey the narrowness, the intensity, the confusion, muddle, and dusty heat of the old world. It

was quite clear to me, within an hour of my awakening, that all that was, in some mysterious way, over and done. That, too, was the common experience. Men stood up; they took the new air into their lungs — a deep long breath, and the past fell from them; they could forgive, they could disregard, they could attempt. . . . And it was no new thing, no miracle that sets aside the former order of the world. It was a change in material conditions, a change in the atmosphere, that at one bound had released them. Some of them it had released to death. . . . Indeed, man himself had changed not at all. We knew before the Change, the meanest knew, by glowing moments in ourselves and others, by histories and music and beautiful things, by heroic instances and splendid stories, how fine mankind could be, how fine almost any human being could upon occasion be; but the poison in the air, its poverty in all the nobler elements which made such moments rare and remarkable — all that has changed. The air was changed, and the Spirit of Man that had drowsed and slumbered and dreamt dull and evil things, awakened, and stood with wonder-clean eyes, refreshed, looking again on life.

Section 4

The miracle of the awakening came to me in solitude, the laughter, and then the tears. Only after some time did I come upon another man. Until I heard his voice calling I did not seem to feel there were any other people in the world. All that seemed past, with all the stresses that were past. I had come out of the individual pit in which my shy egotism had lurked, I had overflowed to all humanity, I had seemed to be all humanity; I had laughed at Swindells as I could have laughed at myself, and this shout that came to me seemed like the coming of an unexpected thought in my own mind. But when it was repeated I answered.

"I am hurt," said the voice, and I descended into the lane forthwith, and so came upon Melmount sitting near the ditch with his back to me.

Some of the incidental sensory impressions of that morning bit so deeply into my mind that I verily believe, when at last I face the greater mysteries that lie beyond this life, when the things of this life

fade from me as the mists of the morning fade before the sun, these irrelevant petty details will be the last to leave me, will be the last wisps visible of that attenuating veil. I believe, for instance, I could match the fur upon the collar of his great motoring coat now, could paint the dull red tinge of his big cheek with his fair eyelashes just catching the light and showing beyond. His hat was off, his dome-shaped head, with its smooth hair between red and extreme fairness, was bent forward in scrutiny of his twisted foot. His back seemed enormous. And there was something about the mere massive sight of him that filled me with liking.

"What's wrong?" said I.

"I say," he said, in his full deliberate tones, straining round to see me and showing a profile, a well-modeled nose, a sensitive, clumsy, big lip, known to every caricaturist in the world, "I'm in a fix. I fell and wrenched my ankle. Where are you?"

I walked round him and stood looking at his face. I perceived he had his gaiter and sock and boot off, the motor gauntlets had been cast aside, and he was kneading the injured part in an exploratory manner with his thick thumbs.

"By Jove!" I said, "you're Melmount!"

"Melmount!" He thought. "That's my name," he said, without looking up. . . . "But it doesn't affect my ankle."

We remained silent for few moments except for a grunt of pain from him.

"Do you know?" I asked, "what has happened to things?"

He seemed to complete his diagnosis. "It's not broken," he said.

"Do you know," I repeated, "what has happened to everything?"

"No," he said, looking up at me incuriously for the first time.

"There's some difference —— —"

"There's a difference." He smiled, a smile of unexpected pleasantness, and an interest was coming into his eyes. "I've been a little preoccupied with my own internal sensations. I remark an extraordinary brightness about things. Is that it?"

"That's part of it. And a queer feeling, a clear-headedness —— —"

He surveyed me and meditated gravely. "I woke up," he said, feeling his way in his memory.

“And I.”

“I lost my way — I forget quite how. There was a curious green fog.” He stared at his foot, remembering. “Something to do with a comet. I was by a hedge in the darkness. Tried to run. . . . Then I must have pitched into this lane. Look!” He pointed with his head. “There’s a wooden rail new broken there. I must have stumbled over that out of the field above.” He scrutinized this and concluded. “Yes. . . .”

“It was dark,” I said, “and a sort of green gas came out of nothing everywhere. That is the last I remember.”

“And then you woke up? So did I. . . . In a state of great bewilderment. Certainly there’s something odd in the air. I was — I was rushing along a road in a motor-car, very much excited and preoccupied. I got down — —” He held out a triumphant finger. “Ironclads!”

“NOW I’ve got it! We’d strung our fleet from here to Texel. We’d got right across them and the Elbe mined. We’d lost the Lord Warden. By Jove, yes. The Lord Warden! A battleship that cost two million pounds — and that fool Rigby said it didn’t matter! Eleven hundred men went down. . . . I remember now. We were sweeping up the North Sea like a net, with the North Atlantic fleet waiting at the Faroes for ’em — and not one of ’em had three days’ coal! Now, was that a dream? No! I told a lot of people as much — a meeting was it? — to reassure them. They were warlike but extremely frightened. Queer people — paunchy and bald like gnomes, most of them. Where? Of course! We had it all over — a big dinner — oysters! — Colchester. I’d been there, just to show all this raid scare was nonsense. And I was coming back here. . . . But it doesn’t seem as though that was — recent. I suppose it was. Yes, of course! — it was. I got out of my car at the bottom of the rise with the idea of walking along the cliff path, because every one said one of their battleships was being chased along the shore. That’s clear! I heard their guns —— —”

He reflected. “Queer I should have forgotten! Did YOU hear any guns?”

I said I had heard them.

“Was it last night?”

“Late last night. One or two in the morning.”

He leant back on his hand and looked at me, smiling frankly. “Even now,” he said, “it’s odd, but the whole of that seems like a silly dream. Do you think there WAS a Lord Warden? Do you really believe we sank all that machinery — for fun? It was a dream. And yet — it happened.”

By all the standards of the former time it would have been remarkable that I talked quite easily and freely with so great a man. “Yes,” I said; “that’s it. One feels one has awakened — from something more than that green gas. As though the other things also — weren’t quite real.”

He knitted his brows and felt the calf of his leg thoughtfully. “I made a speech at Colchester,” he said.

I thought he was going to add something more about that, but there lingered a habit of reticence in the man that held him for the moment. “It is a very curious thing,” he broke away; “that this pain should be, on the whole, more interesting than disagreeable.”

“You are in pain?”

“My ankle is! It’s either broken or badly sprained — I think sprained; it’s very painful to move, but personally I’m not in pain. That sort of general sickness that comes with local injury — not a trace of it! . . .” He mused and remarked, “I was speaking at Colchester, and saying things about the war. I begin to see it better. The reporters — scribble, scribble. Max Sutaine, 1885. Hubbub. Compliments about the oysters. Mm — mm. . . . What was it? About the war? A war that must needs be long and bloody, taking toll from castle and cottage, taking toll! . . . Rhetorical gusto! Was I drunk last night?”

His eyebrows puckered. He had drawn up his right knee, his elbow rested thereon and his chin on his fist. The deep-set gray eyes beneath his thatch of eyebrow stared at unknown things. “My God!” he murmured, “My God!” with a note of disgust. He made a big brooding figure in the sunlight, he had an effect of more than physical largeness; he made me feel that it became me to wait upon his thinking. I had never met a man of this sort before; I did not know such men existed. . . .

It is a curious thing, that I cannot now recall any ideas whatever

that I had before the Change about the personalities of statesmen, but I doubt if ever in those days I thought of them at all as tangible individual human beings, conceivably of some intellectual complexity. I believe that my impression was a straightforward blend of caricature and newspaper leader. I certainly had no respect for them. And now without servility or any insincerity whatever, as if it were a first-fruit of the Change, I found myself in the presence of a human being towards whom I perceived myself inferior and subordinate, before whom I stood without servility or any insincerity whatever, in an attitude of respect and attention. My inflamed, my rancid egotism — or was it after all only the chances of life? — had never once permitted that before the Change.

He emerged from his thoughts, still with a faint perplexity in his manner. "That speech I made last night," he said, "was damned mischievous nonsense, you know. Nothing can alter that. Nothing. . . . No! . . . Little fat gnomes in evening dress — gobbling oysters. Gulp!"

It was a most natural part of the wonder of that morning that he should adopt this incredible note of frankness, and that it should abate nothing from my respect for him.

"Yes," he said, "you are right. It's all indisputable fact, and I can't believe it was anything but a dream."

Section 5

That memory stands out against the dark past of the world with extraordinary clearness and brightness. The air, I remember, was full of the calling and piping and singing of birds. I have a curious persuasion too that there was a distant happy clamor of pealing bells, but that I am half convinced is a mistake. Nevertheless, there was something in the fresh bite of things, in the dewy newness of sensation that set bells rejoicing in one's brain. And that big, fair, pensive man sitting on the ground had beauty even in his clumsy pose, as though indeed some Great Master of strength and humor had made him.

And — it is so hard now to convey these things — he spoke to me, a stranger, without reservations, carelessly, as men now speak to

men. Before those days, not only did we think badly, but what we thought, a thousand short-sighted considerations, dignity, objective discipline, discretion, a hundred kindred aspects of shabbiness of soul, made us muffle before we told it to our fellow-men.

"It's all returning now," he said, and told me half soliloquizingly what was in his mind.

I wish I could give every word he said to me; he struck out image after image to my nascent intelligence, with swift broken fragments of speech. If I had a precise full memory of that morning I should give it you, verbatim, minutely. But here, save for the little sharp things that stand out, I find only blurred general impressions. Throughout I have to make up again his half-forgotten sentences and speeches, and be content with giving you the general effect. But I can see and hear him now as he said, "The dream got worst at the end. The war — a perfectly horrible business! Horrible! And it was just like a nightmare, you couldn't do anything to escape from it — every one was driven!"

His sense of indiscretion was gone.

He opened the war out to me — as every one sees it now. Only that morning it was astonishing. He sat there on the ground, absurdly forgetful of his bare and swollen foot, treating me as the humblest accessory and as altogether an equal, talking out to himself the great obsessions of his mind. "We could have prevented it! Any of us who chose to speak out could have prevented it. A little decent frankness. What was there to prevent us being frank with one another? Their emperor — his position was a pile of ridiculous assumptions, no doubt, but at bottom — he was a sane man." He touched off the emperor in a few pithy words, the German press, the German people, and our own. He put it as we should put it all now, but with a certain heat as of a man half guilty and wholly resentful. "Their damned little buttoned-up professors!" he cried, incidentally. "Were there ever such men? And ours! Some of us might have taken a firmer line. . . . If a lot of us had taken a firmer line and squashed that nonsense early. . . ."

He lapsed into inaudible whisperings, into silence. . . .

I stood regarding him, understanding him, learning marvelously from him. It is a fact that for the best part of the morning of the

Change I forgot Nettie and Verrall as completely as though they were no more than characters in some novel that I had put aside to finish at my leisure, in order that I might talk to this man.

"Eh, well," he said, waking startlingly from his thoughts. "Here we are awakened! The thing can't go on now; all this must end. How it ever began —— — ! My dear boy, how did all those things ever begin? I feel like a new Adam. . . . Do you think this has happened — generally? Or shall we find all these gnomes and things? . . . Who cares?"

He made as if to rise, and remembered his ankle. He suggested I should help him as far as his bungalow. There seemed nothing strange to either of us that he should requisition my services or that I should cheerfully obey. I helped him bandage his ankle, and we set out, I his crutch, the two of us making up a sort of limping quadruped, along the winding lane toward the cliffs and the sea.

Section 6

His bungalow beyond the golf links was, perhaps, a mile and a quarter from the lane. We went down to the beach margin and along the pallid wave-smoothed sands, and we got along by making a swaying, hopping, tripod dance forward until I began to give under him, and then, as soon as we could, sitting down. His ankle was, in fact, broken, and he could not put it to the ground without exquisite pain. So that it took us nearly two hours to get to the house, and it would have taken longer if his butler-valet had not come out to assist me. They had found motor-car and chauffeur smashed and still at the bend of the road near the house, and had been on that side looking for Melmount, or they would have seen us before.

For most of that time we were sitting now on turf, now on a chalk boulder, now on a timber groin, and talking one to the other, with the frankness proper to the intercourse of men of good intent, without reservations or aggressions, in the common, open fashion of contemporary intercourse to-day, but which then, nevertheless, was the rarest and strangest thing in the world. He for the most part talked, but at some shape of a question I told him — as plainly as I could tell of passions that had for a time become incomprehensible to

me — of my murderous pursuit of Nettie and her lover, and how the green vapors overcame me. He watched me with grave eyes and nodded understandingly, and afterwards he asked me brief penetrating questions about my education, my upbringing, my work. There was a deliberation in his manner, brief full pauses, that had in them no element of delay.

"Yes," he said, "yes — of course. What a fool I have been!" and said no more until we had made another of our tripod struggles along the beach. At first I did not see the connection of my story with that self-accusation.

"Suppose," he said, panting on the groin, "there had been such a thing as a statesman! . . ."

He turned to me. "If one had decided all this muddle shall end! If one had taken it, as an artist takes his clay, as a man who builds takes site and stone, and made —— —" He flung out his big broad hand at the glories of sky and sea, and drew a deep breath, "something to fit that setting."

He added in explanation, "Then there wouldn't have been such stories as yours at all, you know. . . ."

"Tell me more about it," he said, "tell me all about yourself. I feel all these things have passed away, all these things are to be changed for ever. . . . You won't be what you have been from this time forth. All the things you have done — don't matter now. To us, at any rate, they don't matter at all. We have met, who were separated in that darkness behind us. Tell me.

"Yes," he said; and I told my story straight and as frankly as I have told it to you. "And there, where those little skerries of weed rock run out to the ebb, beyond the headland, is Bungalow village. What did you do with your pistol?"

"I left it lying there — among the barley."

He glanced at me from under his light eyelashes. "If others feel like you and I," he said, "there'll be a lot of pistols left among the barley to-day. . . ."

So we talked, I and that great, strong man, with the love of brothers so plain between us it needed not a word. Our souls went out to one another in stark good faith; never before had I had anything but a guarded watchfulness for any fellow-man. Still I see

him, upon that wild desolate beach of the ebb tide, I see him leaning against the shelly buttress of a groin, looking down at the poor drowned sailor whose body we presently found. For we found a newly drowned man who had just chanced to miss this great dawn in which we rejoiced. We found him lying in a pool of water, among brown weeds in the dark shadow of the timberings. You must not overrate the horrors of the former days; in those days it was scarcely more common to see death in England than it would be to-day. This dead man was a sailor from the Rother Adler, the great German battleship that — had we but known it — lay not four miles away along the coast amidst ploughed-up mountains of chalk ooze, a torn and battered mass of machinery, wholly submerged at high water, and holding in its interstices nine hundred drowned brave men, all strong and skilful, all once capable of doing fine things. . . .

I remember that poor boy very vividly. He had been drowned during the anaesthesia of the green gas, his fair young face was quiet and calm, but the skin of his chest had been crinkled by scalding water and his right arm was bent queerly back. Even to this needless death and all its tale of cruelty, beauty and dignity had come. Everything flowed together to significance as we stood there, I, the ill-clad, cheaply equipped proletarian, and Melmount in his great fur-trimmed coat — he was hot with walking but he had not thought to remove it — leaning upon the clumsy groins and pitying this poor victim of the war he had helped to make. “Poor lad!” he said, “poor lad! A child we blunderers sent to death! Do look at the quiet beauty of that face, that body — to be flung aside like this!”

(I remember that near this dead man’s hand a stranded star-fish writhed its slowly feeling limbs, struggling back toward the sea. It left grooved traces in the sand.)

“There must be no more of this,” panted Melmount, leaning on my shoulder, “no more of this. . . .”

But most I recall Melmount as he talked a little later, sitting upon a great chalk boulder with the sunlight on his big, perspiration-dewed face. He made his resolves. “We must end war,” he said, in that full whisper of his; “it is stupidity. With so many people able to read and think — even as it is — there is no need of anything of the sort. Gods! What have we rulers been at? . . . Drowsing like people in a

stifling room, too dull and sleepy and too base toward each other for any one to get up and open the window. What haven't we been at?"

A great powerful figure he sits there still in my memory, perplexed and astonished at himself and all things. "We must change all this," he repeated, and threw out his broad hands in a powerful gesture against the sea and sky. "We have done so weakly — Heaven alone knows why!" I can see him now, queer giant that he looked on that dawnlit beach of splendor, the sea birds flying about us and that crumpled death hard by, no bad symbol in his clumsiness and needless heat of the unawakened powers of the former time. I remember it as an integral part of that picture that far away across the sandy stretches one of those white estate boards I have described, stuck up a little askew amidst the yellow-green turf upon the crest of the low cliffs.

He talked with a sort of wonder of the former things. "Has it ever dawned upon you to imagine the pettiness — the pettiness! — of every soul concerned in a declaration of war?" he asked. He went on, as though speech was necessary to make it credible, to describe Laycock, who first gave the horror words at the cabinet council, "an undersized Oxford prig with a tenoring voice and a garbage of Greek — the sort of little fool who is brought up on the admiration of his elder sisters. . . .

"All the time almost," he said, "I was watching him — thinking what an ass he was to be trusted with men's lives. . . . I might have done better to have thought that of myself. I was doing nothing to prevent it all! The damned little imbecile was up to his neck in the drama of the thing, he liked to trumpet it out, he goggled round at us. 'Then it is war!' he said. Richover shrugged his shoulders. I made some slight protest and gave in. . . . Afterward I dreamt of him.

"What a lot we were! All a little scared at ourselves — all, as it were, instrumental. . . .

"And it's fools like that lead to things like this!" He jerked his head at that dead man near by us.

"It will be interesting to know what has happened to the world. . . . This green vapor — queer stuff. But I know what has happened to me.

It's Conversion. I've always known. . . . But this is being a fool. Talk! I'm going to stop it."

He motioned to rise with his clumsy outstretched hands.

"Stop what?" said I, stepping forward instinctively to help him.

"War," he said in his great whisper, putting his big hand on my shoulder but making no further attempt to arise, "I'm going to put an end to war — to any sort of war! And all these things that must end. The world is beautiful, life is great and splendid, we had only to lift up our eyes and see. Think of the glories through which we have been driving, like a herd of swine in a garden place. The color in life — the sounds — the shapes! We have had our jealousies, our quarrels, our ticklish rights, our invincible prejudices, our vulgar enterprise and sluggish timidities, we have chattered and pecked one another and fouled the world — like daws in the temple, like unclean birds in the holy place of God. All my life has been foolishness and pettiness, gross pleasures and mean discretions — all. I am a meagre dark thing in this morning's glow, a penitence, a shame! And, but for God's mercy, I might have died this night — like that poor lad there — amidst the squalor of my sins! No more of this! No more of this! — whether the whole world has changed or no, matters nothing. WE TWO HAVE SEEN THIS DAWN! . . ."

He paused.

"I will arise and go unto my Father," he began presently, "and will say unto Him —— —"

His voice died away in an inaudible whisper. His hand tightened painfully on my shoulder and he rose. . . .

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE AWAKENING

Section 1

So the great Day came to me.

And even as I had awakened so in that same dawn the whole world awoke.

For the whole world of living things had been overtaken by the same tide of insensibility; in an hour, at the touch of this new gas in the comet, the shiver of catalytic change had passed about the globe. They say it was the nitrogen of the air, the old AZOTE, that in the twinkling of an eye was changed out of itself, and in an hour or so became a respirable gas, differing indeed from oxygen, but helping and sustaining its action, a bath of strength and healing for nerve and brain. I do not know the precise changes that occurred, nor the names our chemists give them, my work has carried me away from such things, only this I know — I and all men were renewed.

I picture to myself this thing happening in space, a planetary moment, the faint smudge, the slender whirl of meteor, drawing nearer to this planet, — this planet like a ball, like a shaded rounded ball, floating in the void, with its little, nearly impalpable coat of cloud and air, with its dark pools of ocean, its gleaming ridges of land. And as that midge from the void touches it, the transparent gaseous outer shell clouds in an instant green and then slowly clears again. . . .

Thereafter, for three hours or more, — we know the minimum time for the Change was almost exactly three hours because all the clocks and watches kept going — everywhere, no man nor beast nor bird nor any living thing that breathes the air stirred at all but lay still. . . .

Everywhere on earth that day, in the ears of every one who breathed, there had been the same humming in the air, the same rush of green vapors, the crepitation, the streaming down of shooting stars. The Hindoo had stayed his morning's work in the fields to stare

and marvel and fall, the blue-clothed Chinaman fell head foremost athwart his midday bowl of rice, the Japanese merchant came out from some chaffering in his office amazed and presently lay there before his door, the evening gazers by the Golden Gates were overtaken as they waited for the rising of the great star. This had happened in every city of the world, in every lonely valley, in every home and house and shelter and every open place. On the high seas, the crowding steamship passengers, eager for any wonder, gaped and marveled, and were suddenly terror-stricken, and struggled for the gangways and were overcome, the captain staggered on the bridge and fell, the stoker fell headlong among his coals, the engines throbbed upon their way untended, the fishing craft drove by without a hail, with swaying rudder, heeling and dipping. . . .

The great voice of material Fate cried Halt! And in the midst of the play the actors staggered, dropped, and were still. The figure runs from my pen. In New York that very thing occurred. Most of the theatrical audiences dispersed, but in two crowded houses the company, fearing a panic, went on playing amidst the gloom, and the people, trained by many a previous disaster, stuck to their seats. There they sat, the back rows only moving a little, and there, in disciplined lines, they drooped and failed, nodded, and fell forward or slid down upon the floor. I am told by Parload — though indeed I know nothing of the reasoning on which his confidence rests — that within an hour of the great moment of impact the first green modification of nitrogen had dissolved and passed away, leaving the air as translucent as ever. The rest of that wonderful interlude was clear, had any had eyes to see its clearness. In London it was night, but in New York, for example, people were in the full bustle of the evening's enjoyment, in Chicago they were sitting down to dinner, the whole world was abroad. The moonlight must have illuminated streets and squares littered with crumpled figures, through which such electric cars as had no automatic brakes had ploughed on their way until they were stopped by the fallen bodies. People lay in their dress clothes, in dining-rooms, restaurants, on staircases, in halls, everywhere just as they had been overcome. Men gambling, men drinking, thieves lurking in hidden places, sinful couples, were caught, to arise with awakened mind and conscience amidst the

disorder of their sin. America the comet reached in the full tide of evening life, but Britain lay asleep. But as I have told, Britain did not slumber so deeply but that she was in the full tide of what may have been battle and a great victory. Up and down the North Sea her warships swept together like a net about their foes. On land, too, that night was to have decided great issues. The German camps were under arms from Redingen to Markirch, their infantry columns were lying in swathes like mown hay, in arrested night march on every track between Longuyon and Thiancourt, and between Avricourt and Donen. The hills beyond Spincourt were dusted thick with hidden French riflemen; the thin lash of the French skirmishers sprawled out amidst spades and unfinished rifle-pits in coils that wrapped about the heads of the German columns, thence along the Vosges watershed and out across the frontier near Belfort nearly to the Rhine. . . .

The Hungarian, the Italian peasant, yawned and thought the morning dark, and turned over to fall into a dreamless sleep; the Mahometan world spread its carpet and was taken in prayer. And in Sydney, in Melbourne, in New Zealand, the thing was a fog in the afternoon, that scattered the crowd on race-courses and cricket-fields, and stopped the unloading of shipping and brought men out from their afternoon rest to stagger and litter the streets. . . .

Section 2

My thoughts go into the woods and wildernesses and jungles of the world, to the wild life that shared man's suspension, and I think of a thousand feral acts interrupted and truncated — as it were frozen, like the frozen words Pantagruel met at sea. Not only men it was that were quieted, all living creatures that breathe the air became insensible, impassive things. Motionless brutes and birds lay amidst the drooping trees and herbage in the universal twilight, the tiger sprawled beside his fresh-struck victim, who bled to death in a dreamless sleep. The very flies came sailing down the air with wings outspread; the spider hung crumpled in his loaded net; like some gaily painted snowflake the butterfly drifted to earth and grounded, and was still. And as a queer contrast one gathers that the fishes in

the sea suffered not at all. . . .

Speaking of the fishes reminds me of a queer little inset upon that great world-dreaming. The odd fate of the crew of the submarine vessel B 94 has always seemed memorable to me. So far as I know, they were the only men alive who never saw that veil of green drawn across the world. All the while that the stillness held above, they were working into the mouth of the Elbe, past the booms and the mines, very slowly and carefully, a sinister crustacean of steel, explosive crammed, along the muddy bottom. They trailed a long clue that was to guide their fellows from the mother ship floating awash outside. Then in the long channel beyond the forts they came up at last to mark down their victims and get air. That must have been before the twilight of dawn, for they tell of the brightness of the stars. They were amazed to find themselves not three hundred yards from an ironclad that had run ashore in the mud, and heeled over with the falling tide. It was afire amidships, but no one heeded that — no one in all that strange clear silence heeded that — and not only this wrecked vessel, but all the dark ships lying about them, it seemed to their perplexed and startled minds must be full of dead men!

Theirs I think must have been one of the strangest of all experiences; they were never insensible; at once, and, I am told, with a sudden catch of laughter, they began to breathe the new air. None of them has proved a writer; we have no picture of their wonder, no description of what was said. But we know these men were active and awake for an hour and a half at least before the general awakening came, and when at last the Germans stirred and sat up they found these strangers in possession of their battleship, the submarine carelessly adrift, and the Englishmen, begrimed and weary, but with a sort of furious exultation, still busy, in the bright dawn, rescuing insensible enemies from the sinking conflagration. . . .

But the thought of certain stokers the sailors of the submarine failed altogether to save brings me back to the thread of grotesque horror that runs through all this event, the thread I cannot overlook for all the splendors of human well-being that have come from it. I cannot forget the unguided ships that drove ashore, that went down

in disaster with all their sleeping hands, nor how, inland, motor-cars rushed to destruction upon the roads, and trains upon the railways kept on in spite of signals, to be found at last by their amazed, reviving drivers standing on unfamiliar lines, their fires exhausted, or, less lucky, to be discovered by astonished peasants or awakening porters smashed and crumpled up into heaps of smoking, crackling ruin. The foundry fires of the Four Towns still blazed, the smoke of our burning still denied the sky. Fires burnt indeed the brighter for the Change — and spread. . . .

Section 3

Picture to yourself what happened between the printing and composing of the copy of the New Paper that lies before me now. It was the first newspaper that was printed upon earth after the Great Change. It was pocket-worn and browned, made of a paper no man ever intended for preservation. I found it on the arbor table in the inn garden while I was waiting for Nettie and Verrall, before that last conversation of which I have presently to tell. As I look at it all that scene comes back to me, and Nettie stands in her white raiment against a blue-green background of sunlit garden, scrutinizing my face as I read. . . .

It is so frayed that the sheet cracks along the folds and comes to pieces in my hands. It lies upon my desk, a dead souvenir of the dead ages of the world, of the ancient passions of my heart. I know we discussed its news, but for the life of me I cannot recall what we said, only I remember that Nettie said very little, and that Verrall for a time read it over my shoulder. And I did not like him to read over my shoulder. . . .

The document before me must have helped us through the first awkwardness of that meeting.

But of all that we said and did then I must tell in a later chapter. . . .

It is easy to see the New Paper had been set up overnight, and then large pieces of the stereo plates replaced subsequently. I do not know enough of the old methods of printing to know precisely what happened. The thing gives one an impression of large pieces of type

having been cut away and replaced by fresh blocks. There is something very rough and ready about it all, and the new portions print darker and more smudgily than the old, except toward the left, where they have missed ink and indented. A friend of mine, who knows something of the old typography, has suggested to me that the machinery actually in use for the New Paper was damaged that night, and that on the morning of the Change Banghurst borrowed a neighboring office — perhaps in financial dependence upon him — to print in.

The outer pages belong entirely to the old period, the only parts of the paper that had undergone alteration are the two middle leaves. Here we found set forth in a curious little four-column oblong of print, WHAT HAS HAPPENED. This cut across a column with scare headings beginning, "Great Naval Battle Now in Progress. The Fate of Two Empires in the Balance. Reported Loss of Two More ——— —"

These things, one gathered, were beneath notice now. Probably it was guesswork, and fabricated news in the first instance.

It is curious to piece together the worn and frayed fragments, and reread this discolored first intelligence of the new epoch.

The simple clear statements in the replaced portion of the paper impressed me at the time, I remember, as bald and strange, in that framework of shouting bad English. Now they seem like the voice of a sane man amidst a vast faded violence. But they witness to the prompt recovery of London from the gas; the new, swift energy of rebound in that huge population. I am surprised now, as I reread, to note how much research, experiment, and induction must have been accomplished in the day that elapsed before the paper was printed. . . . But that is by the way. As I sit and muse over this partly carbonized sheet, that same curious remote vision comes again to me that quickened in my mind that morning, a vision of those newspaper offices I have already described to you going through the crisis.

The catalytic wave must have caught the place in full swing, in its nocturnal high fever, indeed in a quite exceptional state of fever, what with the comet and the war, and more particularly with the war. Very probably the Change crept into the office imperceptibly, amidst the noise and shouting, and the glare of electric light that made the

night atmosphere in that place; even the green flashes may have passed unobserved there, the preliminary descending trails of green vapor seemed no more than unseasonable drifting wisps of London fog. (In those days London even in summer was not safe against dark fogs.) And then at the last the Change poured in and overtook them.

If there was any warning at all for them, it must have been a sudden universal tumult in the street, and then a much more universal quiet. They could have had no other intimation.

There was no time to stop the presses before the main development of green vapor had overwhelmed every one. It must have folded about them, tumbled them to the earth, masked and stilled them. My imagination is always curiously stirred by the thought of that, because I suppose it is the first picture I succeeded in making for myself of what had happened in the towns. It has never quite lost its strangeness for me that when the Change came, machinery went on working. I don't precisely know why that should have seemed so strange to me, but it did, and still to a certain extent does. One is so accustomed, I suppose, to regard machinery as an extension of human personality that the extent of its autonomy the Change displayed came as a shock to me. The electric lights, for example, hazy green-haloed nebulas, must have gone on burning at least for a time; amidst the thickening darkness the huge presses must have roared on, printing, folding, throwing aside copy after copy of that fabricated battle report with its quarter column of scare headlines, and all the place must have still quivered and throbbed with the familiar roar of the engines. And this though no men ruled there at all any more! Here and there beneath that thickening fog the crumpled or outstretched forms of men lay still.

A wonderful thing that must have seemed, had any man had by chance the power of resistance to the vapor, and could he have walked amidst it.

And soon the machines must have exhausted their feed of ink and paper, and thumped and banged and rattled emptily amidst the general quiet. Then I suppose the furnaces failed for want of stoking, the steam pressure fell in the pistons, the machinery slackened, the lights burnt dim, and came and went with the ebb of energy from the power-station. Who can tell precisely the sequence of these things

now?

And then, you know, amidst the weakening and terminating noises of men, the green vapor cleared and vanished, in an hour indeed it had gone, and it may be a breeze stirred and blew and went about the earth.

The noises of life were all dying away, but some there were that abated nothing, that sounded triumphantly amidst the universal ebb. To a heedless world the church towers tolled out two and then three. Clocks ticked and chimed everywhere about the earth to deafened ears. . . .

And then came the first flush of morning, the first rustlings of the revival. Perhaps in that office the filaments of the lamps were still glowing, the machinery was still pulsing weakly, when the crumpled, booted heaps of cloth became men again and began to stir and stare. The chapel of the printers was, no doubt, shocked to find itself asleep. Amidst that dazzling dawn the New Paper woke to wonder, stood up and blinked at its amazing self. . . .

The clocks of the city churches, one pursuing another, struck four. The staffs, crumpled and disheveled, but with a strange refreshment in their veins, stood about the damaged machinery, marveling and questioning; the editor read his overnight headlines with incredulous laughter. There was much involuntary laughter that morning. Outside, the mail men patted the necks and rubbed the knees of their awakening horses. . . .

Then, you know, slowly and with much conversation and doubt, they set about to produce the paper.

Imagine those bemused, perplexed people, carried on by the inertia of their old occupations and doing their best with an enterprise that had suddenly become altogether extraordinary and irrational. They worked amidst questionings, and yet light-heartedly. At every stage there must have been interruptions for discussion. The paper only got down to Menton five days late.

Section 4

Then let me give you a vivid little impression I received of a certain prosaic person, a grocer, named Wiggins, and how he passed through

the Change. I heard this man's story in the post-office at Menton, when, in the afternoon of the First Day, I bethought me to telegraph to my mother. The place was also a grocer's shop, and I found him and the proprietor talking as I went in. They were trade competitors, and Wiggins had just come across the street to break the hostile silence of a score of years. The sparkle of the Change was in their eyes, their slightly flushed cheeks, their more elastic gestures, spoke of new physical influences that had invaded their beings.

"It did us no good, all our hatred," Mr. Wiggins said to me, explaining the emotion of their encounter; "it did our customers no good. I've come to tell him that. You bear that in mind, young man, if ever you come to have a shop of your own. It was a sort of stupid bitterness possessed us, and I can't make out we didn't see it before in that light. Not so much downright wickedness it wasn't as stupidity. A stupid jealousy! Think of it! — two human beings within a stone's throw, who have not spoken for twenty years, hardening our hearts against each other!"

"I can't think how we came to such a state, Mr. Wiggins," said the other, packing tea into pound packets out of mere habit as he spoke. "It was wicked pride and obstinacy. We KNEW it was foolish all the time."

I stood affixing the adhesive stamp to my telegram.

"Only the other morning," he went on to me, "I was cutting French eggs. Selling at a loss to do it. He'd marked down with a great staring ticket to ninepence a dozen — I saw it as I went past. Here's my answer!" He indicated a ticket. "'Eightpence a dozen — same as sold elsewhere for ninepence.' A whole penny down, bang off! Just a touch above cost — if that — and even then —— —" He leant over the counter to say impressively, "NOT THE SAME EGGS!"

"Now, what people in their senses would do things like that?" said Mr. Wiggins.

I sent my telegram — the proprietor dispatched it for me, and while he did so I fell exchanging experiences with Mr. Wiggins. He knew no more than I did then the nature of the change that had come

over things. He had been alarmed by the green flashes, he said, so much so that after watching for a time from behind his bedroom window blind, he had got up and hastily dressed and made his family get up also, so that they might be ready for the end. He made them put on their Sunday clothes. They all went out into the garden together, their minds divided between admiration at the gloriousness of the spectacle and a great and growing awe. They were Dissenters, and very religious people out of business hours, and it seemed to them in those last magnificent moments that, after all, science must be wrong and the fanatics right. With the green vapors came conviction, and they prepared to meet their God. . . .

This man, you must understand, was a common-looking man, in his shirt-sleeves and with an apron about his paunch, and he told his story in an Anglian accent that sounded mean and clipped to my Staffordshire ears; he told his story without a thought of pride, and as it were incidentally, and yet he gave me a vision of something heroic.

These people did not run hither and thither as many people did. These four simple, common people stood beyond their back door in their garden pathway between the gooseberry bushes, with the terrors of their God and His Judgments closing in upon them, swiftly and wonderfully — and there they began to sing. There they stood, father and mother and two daughters, chanting out stoutly, but no doubt a little flatly after the manner of their kind —

"In Zion's Hope abiding,
My soul in Triumph sings—"

until one by one they fell, and lay still.

The postmaster had heard them in the gathering darkness,
"In Zion's Hope abiding." . . .

It was the most extraordinary thing in the world to hear this flushed and happy-eyed man telling that story of his recent death. It did not seem at all possible to have happened in the last twelve hours. It was minute and remote, these people who went singing through the darkling to their God. It was like a scene shown to me,

very small and very distinctly painted, in a locket.

But that effect was not confined to this particular thing. A vast number of things that had happened before the coming of the comet had undergone the same transfiguring reduction. Other people, too, I have learnt since, had the same illusion, a sense of enlargement. It seems to me even now that the little dark creature who had stormed across England in pursuit of Nettie and her lover must have been about an inch high, that all that previous life of ours had been an ill-lit marionette show, acted in the twilight. . . .

Section 5

The figure of my mother comes always into my conception of the Change.

I remember how one day she confessed herself.

She had been very sleepless that night, she said, and took the reports of the falling stars for shooting; there had been rioting in Clayton and all through Swathinglea all day, and so she got out of bed to look. She had a dim sense that I was in all such troubles.

But she was not looking when the Change came.

"When I saw the stars a-raining down, dear," she said, "and thought of you out in it, I thought there'd be no harm in saying a prayer for you, dear? I thought you wouldn't mind that."

And so I got another of my pictures — the green vapors come and go, and there by her patched coverlet that dear old woman kneels and droops, still clasping her poor gnarled hands in the attitude of prayer — prayer to IT — for me!

Through the meagre curtains and blinds of the flawed refracting window I see the stars above the chimneys fade, the pale light of dawn creeps into the sky, and her candle flares and dies. . . .

That also went with me through the stillness — that silent kneeling figure, that frozen prayer to God to shield me, silent in a silent world, rushing through the emptiness of space. . . .

Section 6

With the dawn that awakening went about the earth. I have told how it came to me, and how I walked in wonder through the transfigured cornfields of Shaphambury. It came to every one. Near me, and for the time, clear forgotten by me, Verrall and Nettie woke — woke near one another, each heard before all other sounds the other's voice amidst the stillness, and the light. And the scattered people who had run to and fro, and fallen on the beach of Bungalow village, awoke; the sleeping villagers of Menton started, and sat up in that unwonted freshness and newness; the contorted figures in the garden, with the hymn still upon their lips, stirred amidst the flowers, and touched each other timidly, and thought of Paradise. My mother found herself crouched against the bed, and rose — rose with a glad invincible conviction of accepted prayer. . . .

Already, when it came to us, the soldiers, crowded between the lines of dusty poplars along the road to Allarmont, were chatting and sharing coffee with the French riflemen, who had hailed them from their carefully hidden pits among the vineyards up the slopes of Beauville. A certain perplexity had come to these marksmen, who had dropped asleep tensely ready for the rocket that should wake the whirr and rattle of their magazines. At the sight and sound of the stir and human confusion in the roadway below, it had come to each man individually that he could not shoot. One conscript, at least, has told his story of his awakening, and how curious he thought the rifle there beside him in his pit, how he took it on his knees to examine. Then, as his memory of its purpose grew clearer, he dropped the thing, and stood up with a kind of joyful horror at the crime escaped, to look more closely at the men he was to have assassinated. "Brave types," he thought, they looked for such a fate. The summoning rocket never flew. Below, the men did not fall into ranks again, but sat by the roadside, or stood in groups talking, discussing with a novel incredulity the ostensible causes of the war. "The Emperor!" said they; and "Oh, nonsense! We're civilized men. Get some one else for this job! . . . Where's the coffee?"

The officers held their own horses, and talked to the men frankly, regardless of discipline. Some Frenchmen out of the rifle-pits came sauntering down the hill. Others stood doubtfully, rifles still in hand. Curious faces scanned these latter. Little arguments sprang as:

“Shoot at us! Nonsense! They’re respectable French citizens.” There is a picture of it all, very bright and detailed in the morning light, in the battle gallery amidst the ruins at old Nancy, and one sees the old-world uniform of the “soldier,” the odd caps and belts and boots, the ammunition-belt, the water-bottle, the sort of tourist’s pack the men carried, a queer elaborate equipment. The soldiers had awakened one by one, first one and then another. I wonder sometimes whether, perhaps, if the two armies had come awake in an instant, the battle, by mere habit and inertia, might not have begun. But the men who waked first, sat up, looked about them in astonishment, had time to think a little. . . .

Section 7

Everywhere there was laughter, everywhere tears.

Men and women in the common life, finding themselves suddenly lit and exalted, capable of doing what had hitherto been impossible, incapable of doing what had hitherto been irresistible, happy, hopeful, unselfishly energetic, rejected altogether the supposition that this was merely a change in the blood and material texture of life. They denied the bodies God had given them, as once the Upper Nile savages struck out their canine teeth, because these made them like the beasts. They declared that this was the coming of a spirit, and nothing else would satisfy their need for explanations. And in a sense the Spirit came. The Great Revival sprang directly from the Change — the last, the deepest, widest, and most enduring of all the vast inundations of religious emotion that go by that name.

But indeed it differed essentially from its innumerable predecessors. The former revivals were a phase of fever, this was the first movement of health, it was altogether quieter, more intellectual, more private, more religious than any of those others. In the old time, and more especially in the Protestant countries where the things of religion were outspoken, and the absence of confession and well-trained priests made religious states of emotion explosive and contagious, revivalism upon various scales was a normal phase in the religious life, revivals were always going on — now a little disturbance of consciences in a village, now an evening of emotion

in a Mission Room, now a great storm that swept a continent, and now an organized effort that came to town with bands and banners and handbills and motor-cars for the saving of souls. Never at any time did I take part in nor was I attracted by any of these movements. My nature, although passionate, was too critical (or sceptical if you like, for it amounts to the same thing) and shy to be drawn into these whirls; but on several occasions Parload and I sat, scoffing, but nevertheless disturbed, in the back seats of revivalist meetings.

I saw enough of them to understand their nature, and I am not surprised to learn now that before the comet came, all about the world, even among savages, even among cannibals, these same, or at any rate closely similar, periodic upheavals went on. The world was stifling; it was in a fever, and these phenomena were neither more nor less than the instinctive struggle of the organism against the ebb of its powers, the clogging of its veins, the limitation of its life. Invariably these revivals followed periods of sordid and restricted living. Men obeyed their base immediate motives until the world grew unendurably bitter. Some disappointment, some thwarting, lit up for them — darkly indeed, but yet enough for indistinct vision — the crowded squalor, the dark inclosure of life. A sudden disgust with the insensate smallness of the old-world way of living, a realization of sin, a sense of the unworthiness of all individual things, a desire for something comprehensive, sustaining, something greater, for wider communions and less habitual things, filled them. Their souls, which were shaped for wider issues, cried out suddenly amidst the petty interests, the narrow prohibitions, of life, "Not this! not this!" A great passion to escape from the jealous prison of themselves, an inarticulate, stammering, weeping passion shook them. . . .

I have seen —— — I remember how once in Clayton Calvinistic Methodist chapel I saw — his spotty fat face strangely distorted under the flickering gas-flares — old Pallet the ironmonger repent. He went to the form of repentance, a bench reserved for such exhibitions, and slobbered out his sorrow and disgust for some sexual indelicacy — he was a widower — and I can see now how his loose fat body quivered and swayed with his grief. He poured it out to five hundred people, from whom in common times he hid his

every thought and purpose. And it is a fact, it shows where reality lay, that we two youngsters laughed not at all at that blubbering grotesque, we did not even think the distant shadow of a smile. We two sat grave and intent — perhaps wondering.

Only afterward and with an effort did we scoff. . . .

Those old-time revivals were, I say, the convulsive movements of a body that suffocates. They are the clearest manifestations from before the Change of a sense in all men that things were not right. But they were too often but momentary illuminations. Their force spent itself in inco-ordinated shouting, gesticulations, tears. They were but flashes of outlook. Disgust of the narrow life, of all baseness, took shape in narrowness and baseness. The quickened soul ended the night a hypocrite; prophets disputed for precedence; seductions, it is altogether indisputable, were frequent among penitents! and Ananias went home converted and returned with a falsified gift. And it was almost universal that the converted should be impatient and immoderate, scornful of reason and a choice of expedients, opposed to balance, skill, and knowledge. Incontinently full of grace, like thin old wine-skins overfilled, they felt they must burst if once they came into contact with hard fact and sane direction.

So the former revivals spent themselves, but the Great Revival did not spend itself, but grew to be, for the majority of Christendom at least, the permanent expression of the Change. For many it has taken the shape of an outright declaration that this was the Second Advent — it is not for me to discuss the validity of that suggestion, for nearly all it has amounted to an enduring broadening of all the issues of life. . . .

Section 8

One irrelevant memory comes back to me, irrelevant, and yet by some subtle trick of quality it summarizes the Change for me. It is the memory of a woman's very beautiful face, a woman with a flushed face and tear-bright eyes who went by me without speaking, rapt in some secret purpose. I passed her when in the afternoon of the first day, struck by a sudden remorse, I went down to Menton to send a telegram to my mother telling her all was well with me. Whither

this woman went I do not know, nor whence she came; I never saw her again, and only her face, glowing with that new and luminous resolve, stands out for me. . . .

But that expression was the world's.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE CABINET COUNCIL

Section 1

AND what a strange unprecedented thing was that cabinet council at which I was present, the council that was held two days later in Melmount's bungalow, and which convened the conference to frame the constitution of the World State. I was there because it was convenient for me to stay with Melmount. I had nowhere to go particularly, and there was no one at his bungalow, to which his broken ankle confined him, but a secretary and a valet to help him to begin his share of the enormous labors that evidently lay before the rulers of the world. I wrote shorthand, and as there was not even a phonograph available, I went in so soon as his ankle had been dressed, and sat at his desk to write at his dictation. It is characteristic of the odd slackness that went with the spasmodic violence of the old epoch, that the secretary could not use shorthand and that there was no telephone whatever in the place. Every message had to be taken to the village post-office in that grocer's shop at Menton, half a mile away. . . . So I sat in the back of Melmount's room, his desk had been thrust aside, and made such memoranda as were needed. At that time his room seemed to me the most beautifully furnished in the world, and I could identify now the vivid cheerfulness of the chintz of the sofa on which the great statesman lay just in front of me, the fine rich paper, the red sealing-wax, the silver equipage of the desk I used. I know now that my presence in that room was a strange and remarkable thing, the open door, even the coming and going of Parker the secretary, innovations. In the old days a cabinet council was a secret conclave, secrecy and furtiveness were in the texture of all public life. In the old days everybody was always keeping something back from somebody, being wary and cunning, prevaricating, misleading — for the most part for no reason at all. Almost unnoticed, that secrecy had dropped out of life.

I close my eyes and see those men again, hear their deliberating voices. First I see them a little diffusely in the cold explicitness of daylight, and then concentrated and drawn together amidst the shadow and mystery about shaded lamps. Integral to this and very clear is the memory of biscuit crumbs and a drop of spilt water, that at first stood shining upon and then sank into the green table-cloth. . . .

I remember particularly the figure of Lord Adisham. He came to the bungalow a day before the others, because he was Melmount's personal friend. Let me describe this statesman to you, this one of the fifteen men who made the last war. He was the youngest member of the Government, and an altogether pleasant and sunny man of forty. He had a clear profile to his clean gray face, a smiling eye, a friendly, careful voice upon his thin, clean-shaven lips, an easy disabusing manner. He had the perfect quality of a man who had fallen easily into a place prepared for him. He had the temperament of what we used to call a philosopher — an indifferent, that is to say. The Change had caught him at his week-end recreation, fly-fishing; and, indeed, he said, I remember, that he recovered to find himself with his head within a yard of the water's brim. In times of crisis Lord Adisham invariably went fly-fishing at the week-end to keep his mind in tone, and when there was no crisis then there was nothing he liked so much to do as fly-fishing, and so, of course, as there was nothing to prevent it, he fished. He came resolved, among other things, to give up fly-fishing altogether. I was present when he came to Melmount, and heard him say as much; and by a more naive route it was evident that he had arrived at the same scheme of intention as my master. I left them to talk, but afterward I came back to take down their long telegrams to their coming colleagues. He was, no doubt, as profoundly affected as Melmount by the Change, but his tricks of civility and irony and acceptable humor had survived the Change, and he expressed his altered attitude, his expanded emotions, in a quaint modification of the old-time man-of-the-world style, with excessive moderation, with a trained horror of the enthusiasm that swayed him.

These fifteen men who ruled the British Empire were curiously unlike anything I had expected, and I watched them intently

whenever my services were not in request. They made a peculiar class at that time, these English politicians and statesmen, a class that has now completely passed away. In some respects they were unlike the statesmen of any other region of the world, and I do not find that any really adequate account remains of them. . . . Perhaps you are a reader of the old books. If so, you will find them rendered with a note of hostile exaggeration by Dickens in "Bleak House," with a mingling of gross flattery and keen ridicule by Disraeli, who ruled among them accidentally by misunderstanding them and pleasing the court, and all their assumptions are set forth, portentously, perhaps, but truthfully, so far as people of the "permanent official" class saw them, in the novels of Mrs. Humphry Ward. All these books are still in this world and at the disposal of the curious, and in addition the philosopher Bagehot and the picturesque historian Macaulay give something of their method of thinking, the novelist Thackeray skirts the seamy side of their social life, and there are some good passages of irony, personal descriptions, and reminiscence to be found in the "Twentieth Century Garner" from the pens of such writers, for example, as Sidney Low. But a picture of them as a whole is wanting. Then they were too near and too great; now, very rapidly, they have become incomprehensible.

We common people of the old time based our conception of our statesmen almost entirely on the caricatures that formed the most powerful weapon in political controversy. Like almost every main feature of the old condition of things these caricatures were an unanticipated development, they were a sort of parasitic outgrowth from, which had finally altogether replaced, the thin and vague aspirations of the original democratic ideals. They presented not only the personalities who led our public life, but the most sacred structural conceptions of that life, in ludicrous, vulgar, and dishonorable aspects that in the end came near to destroying entirely all grave and honorable emotion or motive toward the State. The state of Britain was represented nearly always by a red-faced, purse-proud farmer with an enormous belly, that fine dream of freedom, the United States, by a cunning, lean-faced rascal in striped trousers and a blue coat. The chief ministers of state were pickpockets, washerwomen, clowns, whales, asses, elephants, and what not, and

issues that affected the welfare of millions of men were dressed and judged like a rally in some idiotic pantomime. A tragic war in South Africa, that wrecked many thousand homes, impoverished two whole lands, and brought death and disablement to fifty thousand men, was presented as a quite comical quarrel between a violent queer being named Chamberlain, with an eyeglass, an orchid, and a short temper, and "old Kroojer," an obstinate and very cunning old man in a shocking bad hat. The conflict was carried through in a mood sometimes of brutish irritability and sometimes of lax slovenliness, the merry peculator plied his trade congenially in that asinine squabble, and behind these fooleries and masked by them, marched Fate — until at last the clowning of the booth opened and revealed — hunger and suffering, brands burning and swords and shame. . . . These men had come to fame and power in that atmosphere, and to me that day there was the oddest suggestion in them of actors who have suddenly laid aside grotesque and foolish parts; the paint was washed from their faces, the posing put aside.

Even when the presentation was not frankly grotesque and degrading it was entirely misleading. When I read of Laycock, for example, there arises a picture of a large, active, if a little wrong-headed, intelligence in a compact heroic body, emitting that "Goliath" speech of his that did so much to precipitate hostilities, it tallies not at all with the stammering, high-pitched, slightly bald, and very conscience-stricken personage I saw, nor with Melmount's contemptuous first description of him. I doubt if the world at large will ever get a proper vision of those men as they were before the Change. Each year they pass more and more incredibly beyond our intellectual sympathy. Our estrangement cannot, indeed, rob them of their portion in the past, but it will rob them of any effect of reality. The whole of their history becomes more and more foreign, more and more like some queer barbaric drama played in a forgotten tongue. There they strut through their weird metamorphoses of caricature, those premiers and presidents, their height preposterously exaggerated by political buskins, their faces covered by great resonant inhuman masks, their voices couched in the foolish idiom of public utterance, disguised beyond any semblance to sane humanity, roaring and squeaking through the public press. There it stands, this

incomprehensible faded show, a thing left on one side, and now still and deserted by any interest, its many emptinesses as inexplicable now as the cruelties of medieval Venice, the theology of old Byzantium. And they ruled and influenced the lives of nearly a quarter of mankind, these politicians, their clownish conflicts swayed the world, made mirth perhaps, made excitement, and permitted — infinite misery.

I saw these men quickened indeed by the Change, but still wearing the queer clothing of the old time, the manners and conventions of the old time; if they had disengaged themselves from the outlook of the old time they still had to refer back to it constantly as a common starting-point. My refreshed intelligence was equal to that, so that I think I did indeed see them. There was Gorrell-Browning, the Chancellor of the Duchy; I remember him as a big round-faced man, the essential vanity and foolishness of whose expression, whose habit of voluminous platitudinous speech, triumphed absurdly once or twice over the roused spirit within. He struggled with it, he burlesqued himself, and laughed. Suddenly he said simply, intensely — it was a moment for every one of clean, clear pain, "I have been a vain and self-indulgent and presumptuous old man. I am of little use here. I have given myself to politics and intrigues, and life is gone from me." Then for a long time he sat still. There was Carton, the Lord Chancellor, a white-faced man with understanding, he had a heavy, shaven face that might have stood among the busts of the Caesars, a slow, elaborating voice, with self-indulgent, slightly oblique, and triumphant lips, and a momentary, voluntary, humorous twinkle. "We have to forgive," he said. "We have to forgive — even ourselves."

These two were at the top corner of the table, so that I saw their faces well. Madgett, the Home Secretary, a smaller man with wrinkled eyebrows and a frozen smile on his thin wry mouth, came next to Carton; he contributed little to the discussion save intelligent comments, and when the electric lights above glowed out, the shadows deepened queerly in his eye-sockets and gave him the quizzical expression of an ironical goblin. Next him was that great peer, the Earl of Richover, whose self-indulgent indolence had accepted the role of a twentieth-century British Roman patrician of

culture, who had divided his time almost equally between his jockeys, politics, and the composition of literary studies in the key of his role. “We have done nothing worth doing,” he said. “As for me, I have cut a figure!” He reflected — no doubt on his ample patrician years, on the fine great houses that had been his setting, the teeming race-courses that had roared his name, the enthusiastic meetings he had fed with fine hopes, the futile Olympian beginnings. . . . “I have been a fool,” he said compactly. They heard him in a sympathetic and respectful silence.

Gurker, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was partially occulted, so far as I was concerned, by the back of Lord Adisham. Ever and again Gurker protruded into the discussion, swaying forward, a deep throaty voice, a big nose, a coarse mouth with a drooping everted lower lip, eyes peering amidst folds and wrinkles. He made his confession for his race. “We Jews,” he said, “have gone through the system of this world, creating nothing, consolidating many things, destroying much. Our racial self-conceit has been monstrous. We seem to have used our ample coarse intellectuality for no other purpose than to develop and master and maintain the convention of property, to turn life into a sort of mercantile chess and spend our winnings grossly. . . . We have had no sense of service to mankind. Beauty which is godhead — we made it a possession.”

These men and these sayings particularly remain in my memory. Perhaps, indeed, I wrote them down at the time, but that I do not now remember. How Sir Digby Privet, Revel, Markheimer, and the others sat I do not now recall; they came in as voices, interruptions, imperfectly assigned comments. . . .

One got a queer impression that except perhaps for Gurker or Revel these men had not particularly wanted the power they held; had desired to do nothing very much in the positions they had secured. They had found themselves in the cabinet, and until this moment of illumination they had not been ashamed; but they had made no ungentlemanly fuss about the matter. Eight of that fifteen came from the same school, had gone through an entirely parallel education; some Greek linguistics, some elementary mathematics, some emasculated “science,” a little history, a little reading in the silent or timidly orthodox English literature of the seventeenth,

eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, all eight had imbibed the same dull gentlemanly tradition of behavior; essentially boyish, unimaginative — with neither keen swords nor art in it, a tradition apt to slobber into sentiment at a crisis and make a great virtue of a simple duty rather clumsily done. None of these eight had made any real experiments with life, they had lived in blinkers, they had been passed from nurse to governess, from governess to preparatory school, from Eton to Oxford, from Oxford to the politico-social routine. Even their vices and lapses had been according to certain conceptions of good form. They had all gone to the races surreptitiously from Eton, had all cut up to town from Oxford to see life — music-hall life — had all come to heel again. Now suddenly they discovered their limitations. . . .

"What are we to do?" asked Melmount. "We have awakened; this empire in our hands. . . ." I know this will seem the most fabulous of all the things I have to tell of the old order, but, indeed, I saw it with my eyes, I heard it with my ears. It is a fact that this group of men who constituted the Government of one-fifth of the habitable land of the earth, who ruled over a million of armed men, who had such navies as mankind had never seen before, whose empire of nations, tongues, peoples still dazzles in these greater days, had no common idea whatever of what they meant to do with the world. They had been a Government for three long years, and before the Change came to them it had never even occurred to them that it was necessary to have no common idea. There was no common idea at all. That great empire was no more than a thing adrift, an aimless thing that ate and drank and slept and bore arms, and was inordinately proud of itself because it had chanced to happen. It had no plan, no intention; it meant nothing at all. And the other great empires adrift, perilously adrift like marine mines, were in the self-same case. Absurd as a British cabinet council must seem to you now, it was no whit more absurd than the controlling ganglion, autocratic council, president's committee, or what not, of each of its blind rivals. . . .

Section 2

I remember as one thing that struck me very forcibly at the time, the

absence of any discussion, any difference of opinion, about the broad principles of our present state. These men had lived hitherto in a system of conventions and acquired motives, loyalty to a party, loyalty to various secret agreements and understandings, loyalty to the Crown; they had all been capable of the keenest attention to precedence, all capable of the most complete suppression of subversive doubts and inquiries, all had their religious emotions under perfect control. They had seemed protected by invisible but impenetrable barriers from all the heady and destructive speculations, the socialistic, republican, and communistic theories that one may still trace through the literature of the last days of the comet. But now it was as if the very moment of the awakening those barriers and defences had vanished, as if the green vapors had washed through their minds and dissolved and swept away a hundred once rigid boundaries and obstacles. They had admitted and assimilated at once all that was good in the ill-dressed propagandas that had clamored so vehemently and vainly at the doors of their minds in the former days. It was exactly like the awakening from an absurd and limiting dream. They had come out together naturally and inevitably upon the broad daylight platform of obvious and reasonable agreement upon which we and all the order of our world now stand.

Let me try to give the chief things that had vanished from their minds. There was, first, the ancient system of "ownership" that made such an extraordinary tangle of our administration of the land upon which we lived. In the old time no one believed in that as either just or ideally convenient, but every one accepted it. The community which lived upon the land was supposed to have waived its necessary connection with the land, except in certain limited instances of highway and common. All the rest of the land was cut up in the maddest way into patches and oblongs and triangles of various sizes between a hundred square miles and a few acres, and placed under the nearly absolute government of a series of administrators called landowners. They owned the land almost as a man now owns his hat; they bought it and sold it, and cut it up like cheese or ham; they were free to ruin it, or leave it waste, or erect upon it horrible and devastating eyesores. If the community needed a road or a tramway, if it wanted a town or a village in any position, nay, even if it wanted

to go to and fro, it had to do so by exorbitant treaties with each of the monarchs whose territory was involved. No man could find foothold on the face of the earth until he had paid toll and homage to one of them. They had practically no relations and no duties to the nominal, municipal, or national Government amidst whose larger areas their own dominions lay. . . . This sounds, I know, like a lunatic's dream, but mankind was that lunatic; and not only in the old countries of Europe and Asia, where this system had arisen out of the rational delegation of local control to territorial magnates, who had in the universal baseness of those times at last altogether evaded and escaped their duties, did it obtain, but the "new countries," as we called them then — the United States of America, the Cape Colony, Australia, and New Zealand — spent much of the nineteenth century in the frantic giving away of land for ever to any casual person who would take it. Was there coal, was there petroleum or gold, was there rich soil or harborage, or the site for a fine city, these obsessed and witless Governments cried out for scramblers, and a stream of shabby, tricky, and violent adventurers set out to found a new section of the landed aristocracy of the world. After a brief century of hope and pride, the great republic of the United States of America, the hope as it was deemed of mankind, became for the most part a drifting crowd of landless men; landlords and railway lords, food lords (for the land is food) and mineral lords ruled its life, gave it Universities as one gave coins to a mendicant, and spent its resources upon such vain, tawdry, and foolish luxuries as the world had never seen before. Here was a thing none of these statesmen before the Change would have regarded as anything but the natural order of the world, which not one of them now regarded as anything but the mad and vanished illusion of a period of dementia.

And as it was with the question of the land, so was it also with a hundred other systems and institutions and complicated and disingenuous factors in the life of man. They spoke of trade, and I realized for the first time there could be buying and selling that was no loss to any man; they spoke of industrial organization, and one saw it under captains who sought no base advantages. The haze of old associations, of personal entanglements and habitual recognitions had been dispelled from every stage and process of the social training

of men. Things long hidden appeared discovered with an amazing clearness and nakedness. These men who had awakened, laughed dissolvent laughs, and the old muddle of schools and colleges, books and traditions, the old fumbling, half-figurative, half-formal teaching of the Churches, the complex of weakening and confusing suggestions and hints, amidst which the pride and honor of adolescence doubted and stumbled and fell, became nothing but a curious and pleasantly faded memory. "There must be a common training of the young," said Richover; "a frank initiation. We have not so much educated them as hidden things from them, and set traps. And it might have been so easy — it can all be done so easily."

That hangs in my memory as the refrain of that council, "It can all be done so easily," but when they said it then, it came to my ears with a quality of enormous refreshment and power. It can all be done so easily, given frankness, given courage. Time was when these platitudes had the freshness and wonder of a gospel.

In this enlarged outlook the war with the Germans — that mythical, heroic, armed female, Germany, had vanished from men's imaginations — was a mere exhausted episode. A truce had already been arranged by Melmount, and these ministers, after some marveling reminiscences, set aside the matter of peace as a mere question of particular arrangements. . . . The whole scheme of the world's government had become fluid and provisional in their minds, in small details as in great, the unanalyzable tangle of wards and vestries, districts and municipalities, counties, states, boards, and nations, the interlacing, overlapping, and conflicting authorities, the felt of little interests and claims, in which an innumerable and insatiable multitude of lawyers, agents, managers, bosses, organizers lived like fleas in a dirty old coat, the web of the conflicts, jealousies, heated patchings up and jobbings apart, of the old order — they flung it all on one side.

"What are the new needs?" said Melmount. "This muddle is too rotten to handle. We're beginning again. Well, let us begin afresh."

Section 3

"Let us begin afresh!" This piece of obvious common sense seemed

then to me instinct with courage, the noblest of words. My heart went out to him as he spoke. It was, indeed, that day as vague as it was valiant; we did not at all see the forms of what we were thus beginning. All that we saw was the clear inevitableness that the old order should end. . . .

And then in a little space of time mankind in halting but effectual brotherhood was moving out to make its world anew. Those early years, those first and second decades of the new epoch, were in their daily detail a time of rejoicing toil; one saw chiefly one's own share in that, and little of the whole. It is only now that I look back at it all from these ripe years, from this high tower, that I see the dramatic sequence of its changes, see the cruel old confusions of the ancient time become clarified, simplified, and dissolve and vanish away. Where is that old world now? Where is London, that somber city of smoke and drifting darkness, full of the deep roar and haunting music of disorder, with its oily, shining, mud-rimmed, barge-crowded river, its black pinnacles and blackened dome, its sad wildernesses of smut-grayed houses, its myriads of draggled prostitutes, its millions of hurrying clerks? The very leaves upon its trees were foul with greasy black defilements. Where is lime-white Paris, with its green and disciplined foliage, its hard unflinching tastefulness, its smartly organized viciousness, and the myriads of workers, noisily shod, streaming over the bridges in the gray cold light of dawn. Where is New York, the high city of clangor and infuriated energy, wind swept and competition swept, its huge buildings jostling one another and straining ever upward for a place in the sky, the fallen pitilessly overshadowed. Where are its lurking corners of heavy and costly luxury, the shameful bludgeoning bribing vice of its ill ruled underways, and all the gaunt extravagant ugliness of its strenuous life? And where now is Philadelphia, with its innumerable small and isolated homes, and Chicago with its interminable blood-stained stockyards, its polyglot underworld of furious discontent.

All these vast cities have given way and gone, even as my native Potteries and the Black Country have gone, and the lives that were caught, crippled, starved, and maimed amidst their labyrinths, their forgotten and neglected maladjustments, and their vast, inhuman, ill-conceived industrial machinery have escaped — to life. Those cities

of growth and accident are altogether gone, never a chimney smokes about our world to-day, and the sound of the weeping of children who toiled and hungered, the dull despair of overburdened women, the noise of brute quarrels in alleys, all shameful pleasures and all the ugly grossness of wealthy pride have gone with them, with the utter change in our lives. As I look back into the past I see a vast exultant dust of house-breaking and removal rise up into the clear air that followed the hour of the green vapors, I live again the Year of Tents, the Year of Scaffolding, and like the triumph of a new theme in a piece of music — the great cities of our new days arise. Come Caerlyon and Armedon, the twin cities of lower England, with the winding summer city of the Thames between, and I see the gaunt dirt of old Edinburgh die to rise again white and tall beneath the shadow of her ancient hill; and Dublin too, reshaped, returning enriched, fair, spacious, the city of rich laughter and warm hearts, gleaming gaily in a shaft of sunlight through the soft warm rain. I see the great cities America has planned and made; the Golden City, with ever-ripening fruit along its broad warm ways, and the bell-glad City of a Thousand Spires. I see again as I have seen, the city of theaters and meeting-places, the City of the Sunlight Bight, and the new city that is still called Utah; and dominated by its observatory dome and the plain and dignified lines of the university facade upon the cliff, Martenabar the great white winter city of the upland snows. And the lesser places, too, the townships, the quiet resting-places, villages half forest with a brawl of streams down their streets, villages laced with avenues of cedar, villages of garden, of roses and wonderful flowers and the perpetual humming of bees. And through all the world go our children, our sons the old world would have made into servile clerks and shopmen, plough drudges and servants; our daughters who were erst anaemic drudges, prostitutes, sluts, anxiety-racked mothers or sere, repining failures; they go about this world glad and brave, learning, living, doing, happy and rejoicing, brave and free. I think of them wandering in the clear quiet of the ruins of Rome, among the tombs of Egypt or the temples of Athens, of their coming to Mainington and its strange happiness, to Orba and the wonder of its white and slender tower. . . . But who can tell of the fullness and pleasure of life, who can number all our new cities in the

world? — cities made by the loving hands of men for living men, cities men weep to enter, so fair they are, so gracious and so kind. . . .

Some vision surely of these things must have been vouchsafed me as I sat there behind Melmount's couch, but now my knowledge of accomplished things has mingled with and effaced my expectations. Something indeed I must have foreseen — or else why was my heart so glad?

BOOK THE THIRD. THE NEW WORLD

CHAPTER THE FIRST

LOVE AFTER THE CHANGE

Section 1

So far I have said nothing of Nettie. I have departed widely from my individual story. I have tried to give you the effect of the change in relation to the general framework of human life, its effect of swift, magnificent dawn, of an overpowering letting in and inundation of light, and the spirit of living. In my memory all my life before the Change has the quality of a dark passage, with the dimmest side gleams of beauty that come and go. The rest is dull pain and darkness. Then suddenly the walls, the bitter confines, are smitten and vanish, and I walk, blinded, perplexed, and yet rejoicing, in this sweet, beautiful world, in its fair incessant variety, its satisfaction, its opportunities, exultant in this glorious gift of life. Had I the power of music I would make a world-wide motif swell and amplify, gather to itself this theme and that, and rise at last to sheer ecstasy of triumph and rejoicing. It should be all sound, all pride, all the hope of outsetting in the morning brightness, all the glee of unexpected happenings, all the gladness of painful effort suddenly come to its reward; it should be like blossoms new opened and the happy play of children, like tearful, happy mothers holding their first-born, like cities building to the sound of music, and great ships, all hung with flags and wine bespattered, gliding down through cheering multitudes to their first meeting with the sea. Through it all should march Hope, confident Hope, radiant and invincible, until at last it would be the triumph march of Hope the conqueror, coming with trumpetings and banners through the wide-flung gates of the world.

And then out of that luminous haze of gladness comes Nettie, transfigured.

So she came again to me — amazing, a thing incredibly forgotten.

She comes back, and Verrall is in her company. She comes back into my memories now, just as she came back then, rather quaintly at first — at first not seen very clearly, a little distorted by intervening

things, seen with a doubt, as I saw her through the slightly discolored panes of crinkled glass in the window of the Menton post-office and grocer's shop. It was on the second day after the Change, and I had been sending telegrams for Melmount, who was making arrangements for his departure for Downing Street. I saw the two of them at first as small, flawed figures. The glass made them seem curved, and it enhanced and altered their gestures and paces. I felt it became me to say "Peace" to them, and I went out, to the jangling of the door-bell. At the sight of me they stopped short, and Verrall cried with the note of one who has sought, "Here he is!" And Nettie cried, "Willie!"

I went toward them, and all the perspectives of my reconstructed universe altered as I did so.

I seemed to see these two for the first time; how fine they were, how graceful and human. It was as though I had never really looked at them before, and, indeed, always before I had beheld them through a mist of selfish passion. They had shared the universal darkness and dwarfing of the former time; they shared the universal exaltation of the new. Now suddenly Nettie, and the love of Nettie, a great passion for Nettie, lived again in me. This change which had enlarged men's hearts had made no end to love. Indeed, it had enormously enlarged and glorified love. She stepped into the center of that dream of world reconstruction that filled my mind and took possession of it all. A little wisp of hair had blown across her cheek, her lips fell apart in that sweet smile of hers; her eyes were full of wonder, of a welcoming scrutiny, of an infinitely courageous friendliness.

I took her outstretched hand, and wonder overwhelmed me. "I wanted to kill you," I said simply, trying to grasp that idea. It seemed now like stabbing the stars, or murdering the sunlight.

"Afterward we looked for you," said Verrall; "and we could not find you. . . . We heard another shot."

I turned my eyes to him, and Nettie's hand fell from me. It was then I thought of how they had fallen together, and what it must have been to have awakened in that dawn with Nettie by one's side. I had a vision of them as I had glimpsed them last amidst the thickening vapors, close together, hand in hand. The green hawks of the Change spread their darkling wings above their last stumbling paces. So they

fell. And awoke — lovers together in a morning of Paradise. Who can tell how bright the sunshine was to them, how fair the flowers, how sweet the singing of the birds? . . .

This was the thought of my heart. But my lips were saying, "When I awoke I threw my pistol away." Sheer blankness kept my thoughts silent for a little while; I said empty things. "I am very glad I did not kill you — that you are here, so fair and well. . . ."

"I am going away back to Clayton on the day after to-morrow," I said, breaking away to explanations. "I have been writing shorthand here for Melmount, but that is almost over now. . . ."

Neither of them said a word, and though all facts had suddenly ceased to matter anything, I went on informatively, "He is to be taken to Downing Street where there is a proper staff, so that there will be no need of me. . . . Of course, you're a little perplexed at my being with Melmount. You see I met him — by accident — directly I recovered. I found him with a broken ankle — in that lane. . . . I am to go now to the Four Towns to help prepare a report. So that I am glad to see you both again" — I found a catch in my voice— "to say good-bye to you, and wish you well."

This was after the quality of what had come into my mind when first I saw them through the grocer's window, but it was not what I felt and thought as I said it. I went on saying it because otherwise there would have been a gap. It had come to me that it was going to be hard to part from Nettie. My words sounded with an effect of unreality. I stopped, and we stood for a moment in silence looking at one another.

It was I, I think, who was discovering most. I was realizing for the first time how little the Change had altered in my essential nature. I had forgotten this business of love for a time in a world of wonder. That was all. Nothing was lost from my nature, nothing had gone, only the power of thought and restraint had been wonderfully increased and new interests had been forced upon me. The Green Vapors had passed, our minds were swept and garnished, but we were ourselves still, though living in a new and finer air. My affinities were unchanged; Nettie's personal charm for me was only

quickened by the enhancement of my perceptions. In her presence, meeting her eyes, instantly my desire, no longer frantic but sane, was awake again.

It was just like going to Checkshill in the old time, after writing about socialism. . . .

I relinquished her hand. It was absurd to part in these terms.

So we all felt it. We hung awkwardly over our sense of that. It was Verrall, I think, who shaped the thought for me, and said that tomorrow then we must meet and say good-bye, and so turned our encounter into a transitory making of arrangements. We settled we would come to the inn at Menton, all three of us, and take our midday meal together. . . .

Yes, it was clear that was all we had to say now. . . .

We parted a little awkwardly. I went on down the village street, not looking back, surprised at myself, and infinitely perplexed. It was as if I had discovered something overlooked that disarranged all my plans, something entirely disconcerting. For the first time I went back preoccupied and without eagerness to Melmount's work. I wanted to go on thinking about Nettie; my mind had suddenly become voluminously productive concerning her and Verrall.

Section 2

The talk we three had together in the dawn of the new time is very strongly impressed upon my memory. There was something fresh and simple about it, something young and flushed and exalted. We took up, we handled with a certain naive timidity, the most difficult questions the Change had raised for men to solve. I recall we made little of them. All the old scheme of human life had dissolved and passed away, the narrow competitiveness, the greed and base aggression, the jealous aloofness of soul from soul. Where had it left us? That was what we and a thousand million others were discussing. . . .

It chances that this last meeting with Nettie is inseparably associated — I don't know why — with the landlady of the Menton inn.

The Menton inn was one of the rare pleasant corners of the old

order; it was an inn of an unusual prosperity, much frequented by visitors from Shaphambury, and given to the serving of lunches and teas. It had a broad mossy bowling-green, and round about it were creeper-covered arbors amidst beds of snap-dragon, and hollyhock, and blue delphinium, and many such tall familiar summer flowers. These stood out against a background of laurels and holly, and above these again rose the gables of the inn and its signpost — a white-horsed George slaying the dragon — against copper beeches under the sky.

While I waited for Nettie and Verrall in this agreeable trysting place, I talked to the landlady — a broad-shouldered, smiling, freckled woman — about the morning of the Change. That motherly, abundant, red-haired figure of health was buoyantly sure that everything in the world was now to be changed for the better. That confidence, and something in her voice, made me love her as I talked to her. "Now we're awake," she said, "all sorts of things will be put right that hadn't any sense in them. Why? Oh! I'm sure of it."

Her kind blue eyes met mine in an infinitude of friendliness. Her lips in her pauses shaped in a pretty faint smile.

Old tradition was strong in us; all English inns in those days charged the unexpected, and I asked what our lunch was to cost.

"Pay or not," she said, "and what you like. It's holiday these days. I suppose we'll still have paying and charging, however we manage it, but it won't be the worry it has been — that I feel sure. It's the part I never had no fancy for. Many a time I peeped through the bushes worrying to think what was just and right to me and mine, and what would send 'em away satisfied. It isn't the money I care for. There'll be mighty changes, be sure of that; but here I'll stay, and make people happy — them that go by on the roads. It's a pleasant place here when people are merry; it's only when they're jealous, or mean, or tired, or eat up beyond any stomach's digesting, or when they got the drink in 'em that Satan comes into this garden. Many's the happy face I've seen here, and many that come again like friends, but nothing to equal what's going to be, now things are being set right."

She smiled, that bounteous woman, with the joy of life and hope. "You shall have an omelet," she said, "you and your friends; such an

omelet — like they'll have 'em in heaven! I feel there's cooking in me these days like I've never cooked before. I'm rejoiced to have it to do. . . ."

It was just then that Nettie and Verrall appeared under a rustic archway of crimson roses that led out from the inn. Nettie wore white and a sun-hat, and Verrall was a figure of gray. "Here are my friends," I said; but for all the magic of the Change, something passed athwart the sunlight in my soul like the passing of the shadow of a cloud. "A pretty couple," said the landlady, as they crossed the velvet green toward us. . . .

They were indeed a pretty couple, but that did not greatly gladden me. No — I winced a little at that.

Section 3

This old newspaper, this first reissue of the New Paper, dessicated last relic of a vanished age, is like the little piece of identification the superstitious of the old days — those queer religionists who brought a certain black-clad Mrs. Piper to the help of Christ — used to put into the hand of a clairvoyant. At the crisp touch of it I look across a gulf of fifty years and see again the three of us sitting about that table in the arbor, and I smell again the smell of the sweet-briar that filled the air about us, and hear in our long pauses the abundant murmuring of bees among the heliotrope of the borders.

It is the dawn of the new time, but we bear, all three of us, the marks and liveries of the old.

I see myself, a dark, ill-dressed youth, with the bruise Lord Redcar gave me still blue and yellow beneath my jaw; and young Verrall sits cornerwise to me, better grown, better dressed, fair and quiet, two years my senior indeed, but looking no older than I because of his light complexion; and opposite me is Nettie, with dark eyes upon my face, graver and more beautiful than I had ever seen her in the former time. Her dress is still that white one she had worn when I came upon her in the park, and still about her dainty neck she wears her string of pearls and that little coin of gold. She is so much the same, she is so changed; a girl then and now a woman — and all my agony and all the marvel of the Change between! Over the end of

the green table about which we sit, a spotless cloth is spread, it bears a pleasant lunch spread out with a simple equipage. Behind me is the liberal sunshine of the green and various garden. I see it all. Again I sit there, eating awkwardly, this paper lies upon the table and Verrall talks of the Change.

"You can't imagine," he says in his sure, fine accents, "how much the Change has destroyed of me. I still don't feel awake. Men of my sort are so tremendously MADE; I never suspected it before."

He leans over the table toward me with an evident desire to make himself perfectly understood. "I find myself like some creature that is taken out of its shell — soft and new. I was trained to dress in a certain way, to behave in a certain way, to think in a certain way; I see now it's all wrong and narrow — most of it anyhow — a system of class shibboleths. We were decent to each other in order to be a gang to the rest of the world. Gentlemen indeed! But it's perplexing ——— —"

I can hear his voice saying that now, and see the lift of his eyebrows and his pleasant smile.

He paused. He had wanted to say that, but it was not the thing we had to say.

I leant forward a little and took hold of my glass very tightly.
"You two," I said, "will marry?"

They looked at one another.

Nettie spoke very softly. "I did not mean to marry when I came away," she said.

"I know," I answered. I looked up with a sense of effort and met Verrall's eyes.

He answered me. "I think we two have joined our lives. . . . But the thing that took us was a sort of madness."

I nodded. "All passion," I said, "is madness." Then I fell into a doubting of those words.

"Why did we do these things?" he said, turning to her suddenly.

Her hands were clasped under her chin, her eyes downcast.

“We HAD to,” she said, with her old trick of inadequate expression.

Then she seemed to open out suddenly.

“Willie,” she cried with a sudden directness, with her eyes appealing to me, “I didn’t mean to treat you badly — indeed I didn’t. I kept thinking of you — and of father and mother, all the time. Only it didn’t seem to move me. It didn’t move me not one bit from the way I had chosen.”

“Chosen!” I said.

“Something seemed to have hold of me,” she admitted. “It’s all so unaccountable. . . .”

She gave a little gesture of despair.

Verrall’s fingers played on the cloth for a space. Then he turned his face to me again.

“Something said ‘Take her.’ Everything. It was a raging desire — for her. I don’t know. Everything contributed to that — or counted for nothing. You —— —”

“Go on,” said I.

“When I knew of you —— —”

I looked at Nettie. “You never told him about me?” I said, feeling, as it were, a sting out of the old time.

Verrall answered for her. “No. But things dropped; I saw you that night, my instincts were all awake. I knew it was you.”

“You triumphed over me? . . . If I could I would have triumphed over you,” I said. “But go on!”

“Everything conspired to make it the finest thing in life. It had an air of generous recklessness. It meant mischief, it might mean failure in that life of politics and affairs, for which I was trained, which it was my honor to follow. That made it all the finer. It meant ruin or misery for Nettie. That made it all the finer. No sane or decent man would have approved of what we did. That made it more splendid than ever. I had all the advantages of position and used them basely. That mattered not at all.”

“Yes,” I said; “it is true. And the same dark wave that lifted you, swept me on to follow. With that revolver — and blubbering with hate. And the word to you, Nettie, what was it? ‘Give?’ Hurl yourself down the steep?”

Nettie's hands fell upon the table. "I can't tell what it was," she said, speaking bare-hearted straight to me. "Girls aren't trained as men are trained to look into their minds. I can't see it yet. All sorts of mean little motives were there — over and above the 'must.' Mean motives. I kept thinking of his clothes." She smiled — a flash of brightness at Verrall. "I kept thinking of being like a lady and sitting in an hotel — with men like butlers waiting. It's the dreadful truth, Willie. Things as mean as that! Things meaner than that!"

I can see her now pleading with me, speaking with a frankness as bright and amazing as the dawn of the first great morning.

"It wasn't all mean," I said slowly, after a pause.

"No!" They spoke together.

"But a woman chooses more than a man does," Nettie added. "I saw it all in little bright pictures. Do you know — that jacket — there's something —— — You won't mind my telling you? But you won't now!"

I nodded, "No."

She spoke as if she spoke to my soul, very quietly and very earnestly, seeking to give the truth. "Something cottony in that cloth of yours," she said. "I know there's something horrible in being swung round by things like that, but they did swing me round. In the old time — to have confessed that! And I hated Clayton — and the grime of it. That kitchen! Your mother's dreadful kitchen! And besides, Willie, I was afraid of you. I didn't understand you and I did him. It's different now — but then I knew what he meant. And there was his voice."

"Yes," I said to Verrall, making these discoveries quietly, "yes, Verrall, you have a good voice. Queer I never thought of that before!"

We sat silently for a time before our vivisected passions.

"Gods!" I cried, "and there was our poor little top-hamper of intelligence on all these waves of instinct and wordless desire, these foaming things of touch and sight and feeling, like — like a coop of hens washed overboard and clucking amidst the seas."

Verrall laughed approval of the image I had struck out. "A week ago," he said, trying it further, "we were clinging to our chicken coops and going with the heave and pour. That was true enough a

week ago. But to-day —— — ?”

“To-day,” I said, “the wind has fallen. The world storm is over. And each chicken coop has changed by a miracle to a vessel that makes head against the sea.”

Section 4

“What are we to do?” asked Verrall.

Nettie drew a deep crimson carnation from the bowl before us, and began very neatly and deliberately to turn down the sepals of its calyx and remove, one by one, its petals. I remember that went on through all our talk. She put those ragged crimson shreds in a long row and adjusted them and readjusted them. When at last I was alone with these vestiges the pattern was still incomplete.

“Well,” said I, “the matter seems fairly simple. You two” — I swallowed it— “love one another.”

I paused. They answered me by silence, by a thoughtful silence.

“You belong to each other. I have thought it over and looked at it from many points of view. I happened to want — impossible things. . . . I behaved badly. I had no right to pursue you.” I turned to Verrall. “You hold yourself bound to her?”

He nodded assent.

“No social influence, no fading out of all this generous clearness in the air — for that might happen — will change you back . . . ?”

He answered me with honest eyes meeting mine, “No, Leadford, no!”

“I did not know you,” I said. “I thought of you as something very different from this.”

“I was,” he interpolated.

“Now,” I said, “it is all changed.”

Then I halted — for my thread had slipped away from me.

“As for me,” I went on, and glanced at Nettie’s downcast face, and then sat forward with my eyes upon the flowers between us, “since I am swayed and shall be swayed by an affection for Nettie, since that affection is rich with the seeds of desire, since to see her

yours and wholly yours is not to be endured by me — I must turn about and go from you; you must avoid me and I you. . . . We must divide the world like Jacob and Esau. . . . I must direct myself with all the will I have to other things. After all — this passion is not life! It is perhaps for brutes and savages, but for men. No! We must part and I must forget. What else is there but that?"

I did not look up, I sat very tense with the red petals printing an indelible memory in my brain, but I felt the assent of Verrall's pose. There were some moments of silence. Then Nettie spoke. "But ——" she said, and ceased.

I waited for a little while. I sighed and leant back in my chair.
"It is perfectly simple," I smiled, "now that we have cool heads."

"But IS it simple?" asked Nettie, and slashed my discourse out of being.

I looked up and found her with her eyes on Verrall. "You see," she said, "I like Willie. It's hard to say what one feels — but I don't want him to go away like that."

"But then," objected Verrall, "how —— — ?"

"No," said Nettie, and swept her half-arranged carnation petals back into a heap of confusion. She began to arrange them very quickly into one long straight line.

"It's so difficult —— — I've never before in all my life tried to get to the bottom of my mind. For one thing, I've not treated Willie properly. He — he counted on me. I know he did. I was his hope. I was a promised delight — something, something to crown life — better than anything he had ever had. And a secret pride. . . . He lived upon me. I knew — when we two began to meet together, you and I —— — It was a sort of treachery to him —— —"

"Treachery!" I said. "You were only feeling your way through all these perplexities."

"You thought it treachery."

"I don't now."

"I did. In a sense I think so still. For you had need of me."

I made a slight protest at this doctrine and fell thinking.

"And even when he was trying to kill us," she said to her lover, "I

felt for him down in the bottom of my mind. I can understand all the horrible things, the humiliation — the humiliation! he went through."

"Yes," I said, "but I don't see —— —"

"I don't see. I'm only trying to see. But you know, Willie, you are a part of my life. I have known you longer than I have known Edward. I know you better. Indeed I know you with all my heart. You think all your talk was thrown away upon me, that I never understood that side of you, or your ambitions or anything. I did. More than I thought at the time. Now — now it is all clear to me. What I had to understand in you was something deeper than Edward brought me. I have it now. . . . You are a part of my life, and I don't want to cut all that off from me now I have comprehended it, and throw it away."

"But you love Verrall."

"Love is such a queer thing! . . . Is there one love? I mean, only one love?" She turned to Verrall. "I know I love you. I can speak out about that now. Before this morning I couldn't have done. It's just as though my mind had got out of a scented prison. But what is it, this love for you? It's a mass of fancies — things about you — ways you look, ways you have. It's the senses — and the senses of certain beauties. Flattery too, things you said, hopes and deceptions for myself. And all that had rolled up together and taken to itself the wild help of those deep emotions that slumbered in my body; it seemed everything. But it wasn't. How can I describe it? It was like having a very bright lamp with a thick shade — everything else in the room was hidden. But you take the shade off and there they are — it is the same light — still there! Only it lights every one!"

Her voice ceased. For awhile no one spoke, and Nettie, with a quick movement, swept the petals into the shape of a pyramid.

Figures of speech always distract me, and it ran through my mind like some puzzling refrain, "It is still the same light. . . ."

"No woman believes these things," she asserted abruptly.

"What things?"

"No woman ever has believed them."

"You have to choose a man," said Verrall, apprehending her before I did.

“We’re brought up to that. We’re told — it’s in books, in stories, in the way people look, in the way they behave — one day there will come a man. He will be everything, no one else will be anything. Leave everything else; live in him.”

“And a man, too, is taught that of some woman,” said Verrall.

“Only men don’t believe it! They have more obstinate minds. . . . Men have never behaved as though they believed it. One need not be old to know that. By nature they don’t believe it. But a woman believes nothing by nature. She goes into a mold hiding her secret thoughts almost from herself.”

“She used to,” I said.

“You haven’t,” said Verrall, “anyhow.”

“I’ve come out. It’s this comet. And Willie. And because I never really believed in the mold at all — even if I thought I did. It’s stupid to send Willie off — shamed, cast out, never to see him again — when I like him as much as I do. It is cruel, it is wicked and ugly, to prance over him as if he was a defeated enemy, and pretend I’m going to be happy just the same. There’s no sense in a rule of life that prescribes that. It’s selfish. It’s brutish. It’s like something that has no sense. I —— —” there was a sob in her voice: “Willie! I WON’T.”

I sat lowering, I mused with my eyes upon her quick fingers.

“It IS brutish,” I said at last, with a careful unemotional deliberation. “Nevertheless — it is in the nature of things. . . . No! . . . You see, after all, we are still half brutes, Nettie. And men, as you say, are more obstinate than women. The comet hasn’t altered that; it’s only made it clearer. We have come into being through a tumult of blind forces. . . . I come back to what I said just now; we have found our poor reasonable minds, our wills to live well, ourselves, adrift on a wash of instincts, passions, instinctive prejudices, half animal stupidities. . . . Here we are like people clinging to something — like people awakening — upon a raft.”

“We come back at last to my question,” said Verrall, softly; “what are we to do?”

“Part,” I said. “You see, Nettie, these bodies of ours are not the bodies of angels. They are the same bodies —— — I have read somewhere that in our bodies you can find evidence of the lowliest

ancestry; that about our inward ears — I think it is — and about our teeth, there remains still something of the fish, that there are bones that recall little — what is it? — marsupial forebears — and a hundred traces of the ape. Even your beautiful body, Nettie, carries this taint. No! Hear me out." I leant forward earnestly. "Our emotions, our passions, our desires, the substance of them, like the substance of our bodies, is an animal, a competing thing, as well as a desiring thing. You speak to us now a mind to minds — one can do that when one has had exercise and when one has eaten, when one is not doing anything — but when one turns to live, one turns again to matter."

"Yes," said Nettie, slowly following me, "but you control it."

"Only through a measure of obedience. There is no magic in the business — to conquer matter, we must divide the enemy, and take matter as an ally. Nowadays it is indeed true, by faith a man can remove mountains; he can say to a mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; but he does it because he helps and trusts his brother men, because he has the wit and patience and courage to win over to his side iron, steel, obedience, dynamite, cranes, trucks, the money of other people. . . . To conquer my desire for you, I must not perpetually thwart it by your presence; I must go away so that I may not see you, I must take up other interests, thrust myself into struggles and discussions —— —"

"And forget?" said Nettie.

"Not forget," I said; "but anyhow — cease to brood upon you."

She hung on that for some moments.

"No," she said, demolished her last pattern and looked up at Verrall as he stirred.

Verrall leant forward on the table, elbows upon it, and the fingers of his two hands intertwined.

"You know," he said, "I haven't thought much of these things. At school and the university, one doesn't. . . . It was part of the system to prevent it. They'll alter all that, no doubt. We seem" — he thought — "to be skating about over questions that one came to at last in Greek — with variorum readings — in Plato, but which it never occurred to any one to translate out of a dead language into living realities. . . ." He halted and answered some unspoken question from

his own mind with, “No. I think with Leadford, Nettie, that, as he put it, it is in the nature of things for men to be exclusive. . . . Minds are free things and go about the world, but only one man can possess a woman. You must dismiss rivals. We are made for the struggle for existence — we ARE the struggle for existence; the things that live are the struggle for existence incarnate — and that works out that the men struggle for their mates; for each woman one prevails. The others go away.”

“Like animals,” said Nettie.

“Yes. . . .”

“There are many things in life,” I said, “but that is the rough universal truth.”

“But,” said Nettie, “you don’t struggle. That has been altered because men have minds.”

“You choose,” I said.

“If I don’t choose to choose?”

“You have chosen.”

She gave a little impatient “Oh! Why are women always the slaves of sex? Is this great age of Reason and Light that has come to alter nothing of that? And men too! I think it is all — stupid. I do not believe this is the right solution of the thing, or anything but the bad habits of the time that was. . . Instinct! You don’t let your instincts rule you in a lot of other things. Here am I between you. Here is Edward. I — love him because he is gay and pleasant, and because — because I LIKE him! Here is Willie — a part of me — my first secret, my oldest friend! Why must I not have both? Am I not a mind that you must think of me as nothing but a woman? imagine me always as a thing to struggle for?” She paused; then she made her distressful proposition to me. “Let us three keep together,” she said. “Let us not part. To part is hate, Willie. Why should we not anyhow keep friends? Meet and talk?”

“Talk?” I said. “About this sort of thing?”

I looked across at Verrall and met his eyes, and we studied one another. It was the clean, straight scrutiny of honest antagonism. “No,” I decided. “Between us, nothing of that sort can be.”

“Ever?” said Nettie.

“Never,” I said, convinced.

I made an effort within myself. “We cannot tamper with the law and customs of these things,” I said; “these passions are too close to one’s essential self. Better surgery than a lingering disease! From Nettie my love — asks all. A man’s love is not devotion — it is a demand, a challenge. And besides” — and here I forced my theme— “I have given myself now to a new mistress — and it is I, Nettie, who am unfaithful. Behind you and above you rises the coming City of the World, and I am in that building. Dear heart! you are only happiness — and that —— — Indeed that calls! If it is only that my life blood shall christen the foundation stones — I could almost hope that should be my part, Nettie — I will join myself in that.” I threw all the conviction I could into these words. . . . “No conflict of passion.” I added a little lamely, “must distract me.”

There was a pause.

“Then we must part,” said Nettie, with the eyes of a woman one strikes in the face.

I nodded assent. . . .

There was a little pause, and then I stood up. We stood up, all three. We parted almost sullenly, with no more memorable words, and I was left presently in the arbor alone.

I do not think I watched them go. I only remember myself left there somehow — horribly empty and alone. I sat down again and fell into a deep shapeless musing.

Section 5

Suddenly I looked up. Nettie had come back and stood looking down at me.

“Since we talked I have been thinking,” she said. “Edward has let me come to you alone. And I feel perhaps I can talk better to you alone.”

I said nothing and that embarrassed her.

“I don’t think we ought to part,” she said.

“No — I don’t think we ought to part,” she repeated.

“One lives,” she said, “in different ways. I wonder if you will understand what I am saying, Willie. It is hard to say what I feel. But I want it said. If we are to part for ever I want it said — very plainly.

Always before I have had the woman's instinct and the woman's training which makes one hide. But —— — Edward is not all of me. Think of what I am saying — Edward is not all of me. . . . I wish I could tell you better how I see it. I am not all of myself. You, at any rate, are a part of me and I cannot bear to leave you. And I cannot see why I should leave you. There is a sort of blood link between us, Willie. We grew together. We are in one another's bones. I understand you. Now indeed I understand. In some way I have come to an understanding at a stride. Indeed I understand you and your dream. I want to help you. Edward — Edward has no dreams. . . . It is dreadful to me, Willie, to think we two are to part."

"But we have settled that — part we must."

"But WHY?"

"I love you."

"Well, and why should I hide it Willie? — I love you. . . ." Our eyes met. She flushed, she went on resolutely: "You are stupid. The whole thing is stupid. I love you both."

I said, "You do not understand what you say. No!"

"You mean that I must go."

"Yes, yes. Go!"

For a moment we looked at one another, mute, as though deep down in the unfathomable darkness below the surface and present reality of things dumb meanings strove to be. She made to speak and desisted.

"But MUST I go?" she said at last, with quivering lips, and the tears in her eyes were stars. Then she began, "Willie —— —"

"Go!" I interrupted her. . . . "Yes."

Then again we were still.

She stood there, a tearful figure of pity, longing for me, pitying me. Something of that wider love, that will carry our descendants at last out of all the limits, the hard, clear obligations of our personal life, moved us, like the first breath of a coming wind out of heaven that stirs and passes away. I had an impulse to take her hand and kiss it, and then a trembling came to me, and I knew that if I touched her, my strength would all pass from me. . . .

And so, standing at a distance one from the other, we parted, and Nettie went, reluctant and looking back, with the man she had

chosen, to the lot she had chosen, out of my life — like the sunlight out of my life. . . .

Then, you know, I suppose I folded up this newspaper and put it in my pocket. But my memory of that meeting ends with the face of Nettie turning to go.

Section 6

I remember all that very distinctly to this day. I could almost vouch for the words I have put into our several mouths. Then comes a blank. I have a dim memory of being back in the house near the Links and the bustle of Melmount's departure, of finding Parker's energy distasteful, and of going away down the road with a strong desire to say good-bye to Melmount alone.

Perhaps I was already doubting my decision to part for ever from Nettie, for I think I had it in mind to tell him all that had been said and done. . . .

I don't think I had a word with him or anything but a hurried hand clasp. I am not sure. It has gone out of my mind. But I have a very clear and certain memory of my phase of bleak desolation as I watched his car recede and climb and vanish over Mapleborough Hill, and that I got there my first full and definite intimation that, after all, this great Change and my new wide aims in life, were not to mean indiscriminate happiness for me. I had a sense of protest, as against extreme unfairness, as I saw him go. "It is too soon," I said to myself, "to leave me alone."

I felt I had sacrificed too much, that after I had said good-bye to the hot immediate life of passion, to Nettie and desire, to physical and personal rivalry, to all that was most intensely myself, it was wrong to leave me alone and sore hearted, to go on at once with these steely cold duties of the wider life. I felt new born, and naked, and at a loss.

"Work!" I said with an effort at the heroic, and turned about with a sigh, and I was glad that the way I had to go would at least take me to my mother. . . .

But, curiously enough, I remember myself as being fairly cheerful in the town of Birmingham that night, I recall an active and

interested mood. I spent the night in Birmingham because the train service on was disarranged, and I could not get on. I went to listen to a band that was playing its brassy old-world music in the public park, and I fell into conversation with a man who said he had been a reporter upon one of their minor local papers. He was full and keen upon all the plans of reconstruction that were now shaping over the lives of humanity, and I know that something of that noble dream came back to me with his words and phrases. We walked up to a place called Bourneville by moonlight, and talked of the new social groupings that must replace the old isolated homes, and how the people would be housed.

This Bourneville was germane to that matter. It had been an attempt on the part of a private firm of manufacturers to improve the housing of their workers. To our ideas to-day it would seem the feeblest of benevolent efforts, but at the time it was extraordinary and famous, and people came long journeys to see its trim cottages with baths sunk under the kitchen floors (of all conceivable places), and other brilliant inventions. No one seemed to see the danger to liberty in that aggressive age, that might arise through making workpeople tenants and debtors of their employer, though an Act called the Truck Act had long ago intervened to prevent minor developments in the same direction. . . . But I and my chance acquaintance seemed that night always to have been aware of that possibility, and we had no doubt in our minds of the public nature of the housing duty. Our interest lay rather in the possibility of common nurseries and kitchens and public rooms that should economize toil and give people space and freedom.

It was very interesting, but still a little cheerless, and when I lay in bed that night I thought of Nettie and the queer modifications of preference she had made, and among other things and in a way, I prayed. I prayed that night, let me confess it, to an image I had set up in my heart, an image that still serves with me as a symbol for things inconceivable, to a Master Artificer, the unseen captain of all who go about the building of the world, the making of mankind.

But before and after I prayed I imagined I was talking and reasoning and meeting again with Nettie. . . . She never came into the temple of that worshiping with me.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

MY MOTHER'S LAST DAYS

Section 1

NEXT day I came home to Clayton.

The new strange brightness of the world was all the brighter there, for the host of dark distressful memories, of darkened childhood, toilsome youth, embittered adolescence that wove about the place for me. It seemed to me that I saw morning there for the first time. No chimneys smoked that day, no furnaces were burning, the people were busy with other things. The clear strong sun, the sparkle in the dustless air, made a strange gaiety in the narrow streets. I passed a number of smiling people coming home from the public breakfasts that were given in the Town Hall until better things could be arranged, and happened on Parload among them. "You were right about that comet," I sang out at the sight of him; and he came toward me and clasped my hand.

"What are people doing here?" said I.

"They're sending us food from outside," he said, "and we're going to level all these slums — and shift into tents on to the moors;" and he began to tell me of many things that were being arranged, the Midland land committees had got to work with remarkable celerity and directness of purpose, and the redistribution of population was already in its broad outlines planned. He was working at an improvised college of engineering. Until schemes of work were made out, almost every one was going to school again to get as much technical training as they could against the demands of the huge enterprise of reconstruction that was now beginning.

He walked with me to my door, and there I met old Pettigrew coming down the steps. He looked dusty and tired, but his eye was brighter than it used to be, and he carried in a rather unaccustomed manner, a workman's tool basket.

"How's the rheumatism, Mr. Pettigrew?" I asked.

"Dietary," said old Pettigrew, "can work wonders. . . ." He looked

me in the eye. “These houses,” he said, “will have to come down, I suppose, and our notions of property must undergo very considerable revision — in the light of reason; but meanwhile I’ve been doing something to patch that disgraceful roof of mine! To think that I could have dodged and evaded —— —”

He raised a deprecatory hand, drew down the loose corners of his ample mouth, and shook his old head.

“The past is past, Mr. Pettigrew.”

“Your poor dear mother! So good and honest a woman! So simple and kind and forgiving! To think of it! My dear young man!” — he said it manfully— “I’m ashamed.”

“The whole world blushed at dawn the other day, Mr. Pettigrew,” I said, “and did it very prettily. That’s over now. God knows, who is NOT ashamed of all that came before last Tuesday.”

I held out a forgiving hand, naively forgetful that in this place I was a thief, and he took it and went his way, shaking his head and repeating he was ashamed, but I think a little comforted.

The door opened and my poor old mother’s face, marvelously cleaned, appeared. “Ah, Willie, boy! YOU. You!”

I ran up the steps to her, for I feared she might fall.

How she clung to me in the passage, the dear woman! . . .

But first she shut the front door. The old habit of respect for my unaccountable temper still swayed her. “Ah deary!” she said, “ah deary! But you were sorely tried,” and kept her face close to my shoulder, lest she should offend me by the sight of the tears that welled within her.

She made a sort of gulping noise and was quiet for a while, holding me very tightly to her heart with her worn, long hands . . .

She thanked me presently for my telegram, and I put my arm about her and drew her into the living room.

“It’s all well with me, mother dear,” I said, “and the dark times are over — are done with for ever, mother.”

Whereupon she had courage and gave way and sobbed aloud, none chiding her.

She had not let me know she could still weep for five grimy years. . . .

Section 2

Dear heart! There remained for her but a very brief while in this world that had been renewed. I did not know how short that time would be, but the little I could do — perhaps after all it was not little to her — to atone for the harshness of my days of wrath and rebellion, I did. I took care to be constantly with her, for I perceived now her curious need of me. It was not that we had ideas to exchange or pleasures to share, but she liked to see me at table, to watch me working, to have me go to and fro. There was no toil for her any more in the world, but only such light services as are easy and pleasant for a worn and weary old woman to do, and I think she was happy even at her end.

She kept to her queer old eighteenth century version of religion, too, without a change. She had worn this particular amulet so long it was a part of her. Yet the Change was evident even in that persistence. I said to her one day, "But do you still believe in that hell of flame, dear mother? You — with your tender heart!"

She vowed she did.

Some theological intricacy made it necessary to her, but still —— —

She looked thoughtfully at a bank of primulas before her for a time, and then laid her tremulous hand impressively on my arm. "You know, Willie, dear," she said, as though she was clearing up a childish misunderstanding of mine, "I don't think any one will GO there. I never DID think that. . . ."

Section 3

That talk stands out in my memory because of that agreeable theological decision of hers, but it was only one of a great number of talks. It used to be pleasant in the afternoon, after the day's work was done and before one went on with the evening's study — how odd it would have seemed in the old time for a young man of the industrial class to be doing post-graduate work in sociology, and how much a matter of course it seems now! — to walk out into the gardens of Lowchester House, and smoke a cigarette or so and let her talk

ramblingly of the things that interested her. . . . Physically the Great Change did not do so very much to reinvigorate her — she had lived in that dismal underground kitchen in Clayton too long for any material rejuvenescence — she glowed out indeed as a dying spark among the ashes might glow under a draught of fresh air — and assuredly it hastened her end. But those closing days were very tranquil, full of an effortless contentment. With her, life was like a rainy, windy day that clears only to show the sunset afterglow. The light has passed. She acquired no new habits amid the comforts of the new life, did no new things, but only found a happier light upon the old.

She lived with a number of other old ladies belonging to our commune in the upper rooms of Lowchester House. Those upper apartments were simple and ample, fine and well done in the Georgian style, and they had been organized to give the maximum of comfort and conveniences and to economize the need of skilled attendance. We had taken over the various "great houses," as they used to be called, to make communal dining-rooms and so forth — their kitchens were conveniently large — and pleasant places for the old people of over sixty whose time of ease had come, and for suchlike public uses. We had done this not only with Lord Redcar's house, but also with Checkshill House — where old Mrs. Verrall made a dignified and capable hostess, — and indeed with most of the fine residences in the beautiful wide country between the Four Towns district and the Welsh mountains. About these great houses there had usually been good outbuildings, laundries, married servants' quarters, stabling, dairies, and the like, suitably masked by trees, we turned these into homes, and to them we added first tents and wood chalets and afterward quadrangular residential buildings. In order to be near my mother I had two small rooms in the new collegiate buildings which our commune was almost the first to possess, and they were very convenient for the station of the high-speed electric railway that took me down to our daily conferences and my secretarial and statistical work in Clayton.

Ours had been one of the first modern communes to get in order; we were greatly helped by the energy of Lord Redcar, who had a fine feeling for the picturesque associations of his ancestral home — the

detour that took our line through the beeches and bracken and bluebells of the West Wood and saved the pleasant open wildness of the park was one of his suggestions; and we had many reasons to be proud of our surroundings. Nearly all the other communes that sprang up all over the pleasant parkland round the industrial valley of the Four Towns, as the workers moved out, came to us to study the architecture of the residential squares and quadrangles with which we had replaced the back streets between the great houses and the ecclesiastical residences about the cathedral, and the way in which we had adapted all these buildings to our new social needs. Some claimed to have improved on us. But they could not emulate the rhododendron garden out beyond our shrubberies; that was a thing altogether our own in our part of England, because of its ripeness and of the rarity of good peat free from lime.

These gardens had been planned under the third Lord Redcar, fifty years ago and more; they abounded in rhododendra and azaleas, and were in places so well sheltered and sunny that great magnolias flourished and flowered. There were tall trees smothered in crimson and yellow climbing roses, and an endless variety of flowering shrubs and fine conifers, and such pampas grass as no other garden can show. And barred by the broad shadows of these, were glades and broad spaces of emerald turf, and here and there banks of pegged roses, and flower-beds, and banks given over some to spring bulbs, and some to primroses and primulas and polyanthuses. My mother loved these latter banks and the little round staring eyes of their innumerable yellow, ruddy brown, and purple corollas, more than anything else the gardens could show, and in the spring of the Year of Scaffolding she would go with me day after day to the seat that showed them in the greatest multitude.

It gave her, I think, among other agreeable impressions, a sense of gentle opulence. In the old time she had never known what it was to have more than enough of anything agreeable in the world at all.

We would sit and think, or talk — there was a curious effect of complete understanding between us whether we talked or were still.

“Heaven,” she said to me one day, “Heaven is a garden.”

I was moved to tease her a little. “There’s jewels, you know, walls and gates of jewels — and singing.”

“For such as like them,” said my mother firmly, and thought for a while. “There’ll be things for all of us, o’ course. But for me it couldn’t be Heaven, dear, unless it was a garden — a nice sunny garden. . . . And feeling such as we’re fond of, are close and handy by”

You of your happier generation cannot realize the wonderfulness of those early days in the new epoch, the sense of security, the extraordinary effects of contrast. In the morning, except in high summer, I was up before dawn, and breakfasted upon the swift, smooth train, and perhaps saw the sunrise as I rushed out of the little tunnel that pierced Clayton Crest, and so to work like a man. Now that we had got all the homes and schools and all the softness of life away from our coal and iron ore and clay, now that a thousand obstructive “rights” and timidities had been swept aside, we could let ourselves go, we merged this enterprise with that, cut across this or that anciently obstructive piece of private land, joined and separated, effected gigantic consolidations and gigantic economies, and the valley, no longer a pit of squalid human tragedies and meanly conflicting industries, grew into a sort of beauty of its own, a savage inhuman beauty of force and machinery and flames. One was a Titan in that Etna. Then back one came at midday to bath and change in the train, and so to the leisurely gossiping lunch in the club dining-room in Lowchester House, and the refreshment of these green and sunlit afternoon tranquillities.

Sometimes in her profounder moments my mother doubted whether all this last phase of her life was not a dream.

“A dream,” I used to say, “a dream indeed — but a dream that is one step nearer awakening than that nightmare of the former days.”

She found great comfort and assurance in my altered clothes — she liked the new fashions of dress, she alleged. It was not simply altered clothes. I did grow two inches, broaden some inches round my chest, and increase in weight three stones before I was twenty-three. I wore a soft brown cloth and she would caress my sleeve and admire it greatly — she had the woman’s sense of texture very strong in her.

Sometimes she would muse upon the past, rubbing together her poor rough hands — they never got softened — one over the other.

She told me much I had not heard before about my father, and her own early life. It was like finding flat and faded flowers in a book still faintly sweet, to realize that once my mother had been loved with passion; that my remote father had once shed hot tears of tenderness in her arms. And she would sometimes even speak tentatively in those narrow, old-world phrases that her lips could rob of all their bitter narrowness, of Nettie.

"She wasn't worthy of you, dear," she would say abruptly, leaving me to guess the person she intended.

"No man is worthy of a woman's love," I answered. "No woman is worthy of a man's. I love her, dear mother, and that you cannot alter."

"There's others," she would muse.

"Not for me," I said. "No! I didn't fire a shot that time; I burnt my magazine. I can't begin again, mother, not from the beginning."

She sighed and said no more then.

At another time she said — I think her words were: "You'll be lonely when I'm gone dear."

"You'll not think of going, then," I said.

"Eh, dear! but man and maid should come together."

I said nothing to that.

"You brood overmuch on Nettie, dear. If I could see you married to some sweet girl of a woman, some good, KIND girl —— —"

"Dear mother, I'm married enough. Perhaps some day —— — Who knows?
I can wait."

"But to have nothing to do with women!"

"I have my friends. Don't you trouble, mother. There's plentiful work for a man in this world though the heart of love is cast out from him. Nettie was life and beauty for me — is — will be. Don't think I've lost too much, mother."

(Because in my heart I told myself the end had still to come.)

And once she sprang a question on me suddenly that surprised me.

"Where are they now?" she asked.

“Who?”

“Nettie and — him.”

She had pierced to the marrow of my thoughts. “I don’t know,” I said shortly.

Her shriveled hand just fluttered into touch of mine.

“It’s better so,” she said, as if pleading. “Indeed . . . it is better so.”

There was something in her quivering old voice that for a moment took me back across an epoch, to the protests of the former time, to those counsels of submission, those appeals not to offend It, that had always stirred an angry spirit of rebellion within me.

“That is the thing I doubt,” I said, and abruptly I felt I could talk no more to her of Nettie. I got up and walked away from her, and came back after a while, to speak of other things, with a bunch of daffodils for her in my hand.

But I did not always spend my afternoons with her. There were days when my crushed hunger for Nettie rose again, and then I had to be alone; I walked, or bicycled, and presently I found a new interest and relief in learning to ride. For the horse was already very swiftly reaping the benefit to the Change. Hardly anywhere was the inhumanity of horse traction to be found after the first year of the new epoch, everywhere lugging and dragging and straining was done by machines, and the horse had become a beautiful instrument for the pleasure and carriage of youth. I rode both in the saddle and, what is finer, naked and barebacked. I found violent exercises were good for the states of enormous melancholy that came upon me, and when at last horse riding palled, I went and joined the aviators who practised soaring upon aeroplanes beyond Horsemarden Hill. . . . But at least every alternate day I spent with my mother, and altogether I think I gave her two-thirds of my afternoons.

Section 4

When presently that illness, that fading weakness that made an euthanasia for so many of the older people in the beginning of the new time, took hold upon my mother, there came Anna Reeves to daughter her — after our new custom. She chose to come. She was

already known to us a little from chance meetings and chance services she had done my mother in the garden; she sought to give her help. She seemed then just one of those plainly good girls the world at its worst has never failed to produce, who were indeed in the dark old times the hidden antiseptic of all our hustling, hating, faithless lives. They made their secret voiceless worship, they did their steadfast, uninspired, unthanked, unselfish work as helpful daughters, as nurses, as faithful servants, as the humble providences of homes. She was almost exactly three years older than I. At first I found no beauty in her, she was short but rather sturdy and ruddy, with red-tinged hair, and fair hairy brows and red-brown eyes. But her freckled hands I found, were full of apt help, her voice carried good cheer. . . .

At first she was no more than a blue-clad, white-aproned benevolence, that moved in the shadows behind the bed on which my old mother lay and sank restfully to death. She would come forward to anticipate some little need, to proffer some simple comfort, and always then my mother smiled on her. In a little while I discovered the beauty of that helpful poise of her woman's body, I discovered the grace of untiring goodness, the sweetness of a tender pity, and the great riches of her voice, of her few reassuring words and phrases. I noted and remembered very clearly how once my mother's lean old hand patted the firm gold-flecked strength of hers, as it went by upon its duties with the coverlet.

"She is a good girl to me," said my mother one day. "A good girl. Like a daughter should be. . . . I never had a daughter — really." She mused peacefully for a space. "Your little sister died," she said.

I had never heard of that little sister.

"November the tenth," said my mother. "Twenty-nine months and three days. . . . I cried. I cried. That was before you came, dear. So long ago — and I can see it now. I was a young wife then, and your father was very kind. But I can see its hands, its dear little quiet hands. . . . Dear, they say that now — now they will not let the little children die."

“No, dear mother,” I said. “We shall do better now.”

“The club doctor could not come. Your father went twice. There was some one else, some one who paid. So your father went on into Swathinglea, and that man wouldn’t come unless he had his fee. And your father had changed his clothes to look more respectful and he hadn’t any money, not even his tram fare home. It seemed cruel to be waiting there with my baby thing in pain. . . . And I can’t help thinking perhaps we might have saved her. . . . But it was like that with the poor always in the bad old times — always. When the doctor came at last he was angry. ‘Why wasn’t I called before?’ he said, and he took no pains. He was angry because some one hadn’t explained. I begged him — but it was too late.”

She said these things very quietly with drooping eyelids, like one who describes a dream. “We are going to manage all these things better now,” I said, feeling a strange resentment at this pitiful little story her faded, matter-of-fact voice was telling me.

“She talked,” my mother went on. “She talked for her age wonderfully.
. . . Hippopotamus.”

“Eh?” I said.

“Hippopotamus, dear — quite plainly one day, when her father was showing her pictures. . . And her little prayers. ‘Now I lay me. . . . down to sleep.’ . . . I made her little socks. Knitted they was, dear, and the heel most difficult.”

Her eyes were closed now. She spoke no longer to me but to herself. She whispered other vague things, little sentences, ghosts of long dead moments. . . . Her words grew less distinct.

Presently she was asleep and I got up and went out of the room, but my mind was queerly obsessed by the thought of that little life that had been glad and hopeful only to pass so inexplicably out of hope again into nonentity, this sister of whom I had never heard before. . . .

And presently I was in a black rage at all the irrecoverable sorrows of the past, of that great ocean of avoidable suffering of which this was but one luminous and quivering red drop. I walked in

the garden and the garden was too small for me; I went out to wander on the moors. “The past is past,” I cried, and all the while across the gulf of five and twenty years I could hear my poor mother’s heart-wrung weeping for that daughter baby who had suffered and died. Indeed that old spirit of rebellion has not altogether died in me, for all the transformation of the new time. . . . I quieted down at last to a thin and austere comfort in thinking that the whole is not told to us, that it cannot perhaps be told to such minds as ours; and anyhow, and what was far more sustaining, that now we have strength and courage and this new gift of wise love, whatever cruel and sad things marred the past, none of these sorrowful things that made the very warp and woof of the old life, need now go on happening. We could foresee, we could prevent and save. “The past is past,” I said, between sighing and resolve, as I came into view again on my homeward way of the hundred sunset-lit windows of old Lowchester House. “Those sorrows are sorrows no more.”

But I could not altogether cheat that common sadness of the new time, that memory, and insoluble riddle of the countless lives that had stumbled and failed in pain and darkness before our air grew clear.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

BELTANE AND NEW YEAR'S EVE

Section 1

IN the end my mother died rather suddenly, and her death came as a shock to me. Diagnosis was still very inadequate at that time. The doctors were, of course, fully alive to the incredible defects of their common training and were doing all they could to supply its deficiencies, but they were still extraordinarily ignorant. Some unintelligently observed factor of her illness came into play with her, and she became feverish and sank and died very quickly. I do not know what remedial measures were attempted. I hardly knew what was happening until the whole thing was over.

At that time my attention was much engaged by the stir of the great Beltane festival that was held on May-day in the Year of Scaffolding. It was the first of the ten great rubbish burnings that opened the new age. Young people nowadays can scarcely hope to imagine the enormous quantities of pure litter and useless accumulation with which we had to deal; had we not set aside a special day and season, the whole world would have been an incessant reek of small fires; and it was, I think, a happy idea to revive this ancient festival of the May and November burnings. It was inevitable that the old idea of purification should revive with the name, it was felt to be a burning of other than material encumbrances, innumerable quasi-spiritual things, deeds, documents, debts, vindictive records, went up on those great flares. People passed praying between the fires, and it was a fine symbol of the new and wiser tolerance that had come to men, that those who still found their comfort in the orthodox faiths came hither unpersuaded, to pray that all hate might be burnt out of their professions. For even in the fires of Baal, now that men have done with base hatred, one may find the living God.

Endless were the things we had to destroy in those great purgings. First, there were nearly all the houses and buildings of the old time.

In the end we did not save in England one building in five thousand that was standing when the comet came. Year by year, as we made our homes afresh in accordance with the saner needs of our new social families, we swept away more and more of those horrible structures, the ancient residential houses, hastily built, without imagination, without beauty, without common honesty, without even comfort or convenience, in which the early twentieth century had sheltered until scarcely one remained; we saved nothing but what was beautiful or interesting out of all their gaunt and melancholy abundance. The actual houses, of course, we could not drag to our fires, but we brought all their ill-fitting deal doors, their dreadful window sashes, their servant-tormenting staircases, their dank, dark cupboards, the verminous papers from their scaly walls, their dust and dirt-sodden carpets, their ill-designed and yet pretentious tables and chairs, sideboards and chests of drawers, the old dirt-saturated books, their ornaments — their dirty, decayed, and altogether painful ornaments — amidst which I remember there were sometimes even STUFFED DEAD BIRDS! — we burnt them all. The paint-plastered woodwork, with coat above coat of nasty paint, that in particular blazed finely. I have already tried to give you an impression of old-world furniture, of Parload's bedroom, my mother's room, Mr. Gabbitas's sitting-room, but, thank Heaven! there is nothing in life now to convey the peculiar dinginess of it all. For one thing, there is no more imperfect combustion of coal going on everywhere, and no roadways like grassless open scars along the earth from which dust pours out perpetually. We burnt and destroyed most of our private buildings and all the woodwork, all our furniture, except a few score thousand pieces of distinct and intentional beauty, from which our present forms have developed, nearly all our hangings and carpets, and also we destroyed almost every scrap of old-world clothing. Only a few carefully disinfected types and vestiges of that remain now in our museums.

One writes now with a peculiar horror of the dress of the old world. The men's clothes were worn without any cleansing process at all, except an occasional superficial brushing, for periods of a year or so; they were made of dark obscurely mixed patterns to conceal the stage of defilement they had reached, and they were of a felted

and porous texture admirably calculated to accumulate drifting matter. Many women wore skirts of similar substances, and of so long and inconvenient a form that they inevitably trailed among all the abomination of our horse-frequented roads. It was our boast in England that the whole of our population was booted — their feet were for the most part ugly enough to need it, — but it becomes now inconceivable how they could have imprisoned their feet in the amazing cases of leather and imitations of leather they used. I have heard it said that a large part of the physical decline that was apparent in our people during the closing years of the nineteenth century, though no doubt due in part to the miscellaneous badness of the food they ate, was in the main attributable to the vileness of the common footwear. They shirked open-air exercise altogether because their boots wore out ruinously and pinched and hurt them if they took it. I have mentioned, I think, the part my own boots played in the squalid drama of my adolescence. I had a sense of unholy triumph over a fallen enemy when at last I found myself steering truck after truck of cheap boots and shoes (unsold stock from Swathinglea) to the run-off by the top of the Glanville blast furnaces.

"Plup!" they would drop into the cone when Beltane came, and the roar of their burning would fill the air. Never a cold would come from the saturation of their brown paper soles, never a corn from their foolish shapes, never a nail in them get home at last in suffering flesh. . . .

Most of our public buildings we destroyed and burnt as we reshaped our plan of habitation, our theater sheds, our banks, and inconvenient business warrens, our factories (these in the first year of all), and all the "unmeaning repetition" of silly little sham Gothic churches and meeting-houses, mean looking shells of stone and mortar without love, invention, or any beauty at all in them, that men had thrust into the face of their sweated God, even as they thrust cheap food into the mouths of their sweated workers; all these we also swept away in the course of that first decade. Then we had the whole of the superseded steam-railway system to scrap and get rid of, stations, signals, fences, rolling stock; a plant of ill-planned, smoke-distributing nuisance apparatus, that would, under former conditions, have maintained an offensive dwindling obstructive life

for perhaps half a century. Then also there was a great harvest of fences, notice boards, hoardings, ugly sheds, all the corrugated iron in the world, and everything that was smeared with tar, all our gas works and petroleum stores, all our horse vehicles and vans and lorries had to be erased. . . . But I have said enough now perhaps to give some idea of the bulk and quality of our great bonfires, our burnings up, our meltings down, our toil of sheer wreckage, over and above the constructive effort, in those early years.

But these were the coarse material bases of the Phoenix fires of the world. These were but the outward and visible signs of the innumerable claims, rights, adhesions, debts, bills, deeds, and charters that were cast upon the fires; a vast accumulation of insignia and uniforms neither curious enough nor beautiful enough to preserve, went to swell the blaze, and all (saving a few truly glorious trophies and memories) of our symbols, our apparatus and material of war. Then innumerable triumphs of our old, bastard, half-commercial, fine-art were presently condemned, great oil paintings, done to please the half-educated middle-class, glared for a moment and were gone, Academy marbles crumbled to useful lime, a gross multitude of silly statuettes and decorative crockery, and hangings, and embroideries, and bad music, and musical instruments shared this fate. And books, countless books, too, and bales of newspapers went also to these pyres. From the private houses in Swathinglea alone — which I had deemed, perhaps not unjustly, altogether illiterate — we gathered a whole dust-cart full of cheap ill-printed editions of the minor English classics — for the most part very dull stuff indeed and still clean — and about a truckload of thumbed and dog-eared penny fiction, watery base stuff, the dropsy of our nation's mind. . . . And it seemed to me that when we gathered those books and papers together, we gathered together something more than print and paper, we gathered warped and crippled ideas and contagious base suggestions, the formulae of dull tolerances and stupid impatiences, the mean defensive ingenuities of sluggish habits of thinking and timid and indolent evasions. There was more than a touch of malignant satisfaction for me in helping gather it all together.

I was so busy, I say, with my share in this dustman's work that I

did not notice, as I should otherwise have done, the little indications of change in my mother's state. Indeed, I thought her a little stronger; she was slightly flushed, slightly more talkative. . . .

On Beltane Eve, and our Lowchester rummage being finished, I went along the valley to the far end of Swathinglea to help sort the stock of the detached group of potbanks there — their chief output had been mantel ornaments in imitation of marble, and there was very little sorting, I found, to be done — and there it was nurse Anna found me at last by telephone, and told me my mother had died in the morning suddenly and very shortly after my departure.

For a while I did not seem to believe it; this obviously imminent event stunned me when it came, as though I had never had an anticipatory moment. For a while I went on working, and then almost apathetically, in a mood of half-reluctant curiosity, I started for Lowchester.

When I got there the last offices were over, and I was shown my old mother's peaceful white face, very still, but a little cold and stern to me, a little unfamiliar, lying among white flowers.

I went in alone to her, into that quiet room, and stood for a long time by her bedside. I sat down then and thought. . . .

Then at last, strangely hushed, and with the deeps of my loneliness opening beneath me, I came out of that room and down into the world again, a bright-eyed, active world, very noisy, happy, and busy with its last preparations for the mighty cremation of past and superseded things.

Section 2

I remember that first Beltane festival as the most terribly lonely night in my life. It stands in my mind in fragments, fragments of intense feeling with forgotten gaps between.

I recall very distinctly being upon the great staircase of Lowchester House (though I don't remember getting there from the room in which my mother lay), and how upon the landing I met Anna ascending as I came down. She had but just heard of my return, and she was hurrying upstairs to me. She stopped and so did I, and we stood and clasped hands, and she scrutinized my face in the way

women sometimes do. So we remained for a second or so. I could say nothing to her at all, but I could feel the wave of her emotion. I halted, answered the earnest pressure of her hand, relinquished it, and after a queer second of hesitation went on down, returning to my own preoccupations. It did not occur to me at all then to ask myself what she might be thinking or feeling.

I remember the corridor full of mellow evening light, and how I went mechanically some paces toward the dining-room. Then at the sight of the little tables, and a gusty outburst of talking voices as some one in front of me swung the door open and to, I remembered that I did not want to eat. . . . After that comes an impression of myself walking across the open grass in front of the house, and the purpose I had of getting alone upon the moors, and how somebody passing me said something about a hat. I had come out without my hat.

A fragment of thought has linked itself with an effect of long shadows upon turf golden with the light of the sinking sun. The world was singularly empty, I thought, without either Nettie or my mother. There wasn't any sense in it any more. Nettie was already back in my mind then. . . .

Then I am out on the moors. I avoided the crests where the bonfires were being piled, and sought the lonely places. . . .

I remember very clearly sitting on a gate beyond the park, in a fold just below the crest, that hid the Beacon Hill bonfire and its crowd, and I was looking at and admiring the sunset. The golden earth and sky seemed like a little bubble that floated in the globe of human futility. . . . Then in the twilight I walked along an unknown, bat-haunted road between high hedges.

I did not sleep under a roof that night. But I hungered and ate. I ate near midnight at a little inn over toward Birmingham, and miles away from my home. Instinctively I had avoided the crests where the bonfire crowds gathered, but here there were many people, and I had to share a table with a man who had some useless mortgage deeds to burn. I talked to him about them — but my soul stood at a great distance behind my lips. . . .

Soon each hilltop bore a little tulip-shaped flame flower. Little black figures clustered round and dotted the base of its petals, and as

for the rest of the multitude abroad, the kindly night swallowed them up. By leaving the roads and clear paths and wandering in the fields I contrived to keep alone, though the confused noise of voices and the roaring and crackling of great fires was always near me.

I wandered into a lonely meadow, and presently in a hollow of deep shadows I lay down to stare at the stars. I lay hidden in the darkness, and ever and again the sough and uproar of the Beltane fires that were burning up the sere follies of a vanished age, and the shouting of the people passing through the fires and praying to be delivered from the prison of themselves, reached my ears. . . .

And I thought of my mother, and then of my new loneliness and the hunger of my heart for Nettie.

I thought of many things that night, but chiefly of the overflowing personal love and tenderness that had come to me in the wake of the Change, of the greater need, the unsatisfied need in which I stood, for this one person who could fulfil all my desires. So long as my mother had lived, she had in a measure held my heart, given me a food these emotions could live upon, and mitigated that emptiness of spirit, but now suddenly that one possible comfort had left me. There had been many at the season of the Change who had thought that this great enlargement of mankind would abolish personal love; but indeed it had only made it finer, fuller, more vitally necessary. They had thought that, seeing men now were all full of the joyful passion to make and do, and glad and loving and of willing service to all their fellows, there would be no need of the one intimate trusting communion that had been the finest thing of the former life. And indeed, so far as this was a matter of advantage and the struggle for existence, they were right. But so far as it was a matter of the spirit and the fine perceptions of life, it was altogether wrong.

We had indeed not eliminated personal love, we had but stripped it of its base wrappings, of its pride, its suspicions, its mercenary and competitive elements, until at last it stood up in our minds stark, shining and invincible. Through all the fine, divaricating ways of the new life, it grew ever more evident, there were for every one certain persons, mysteriously and indescribably in the key of one's self, whose mere presence gave pleasure, whose mere existence was interest, whose idiosyncrasy blended with accident to make a

completing and predominant harmony for their predestined lovers. They were the essential thing in life. Without them the fine brave show of the rejuvenated world was a caparisoned steed without a rider, a bowl without a flower, a theater without a play. . . . And to me that night of Beltane, it was as clear as white flames that Nettie, and Nettie alone, roused those harmonies in me. And she had gone! I had sent her from me; I knew not whither she had gone. I had in my first virtuous foolishness cut her out of my life for ever!

So I saw it then, and I lay unseen in the darkness and called upon Nettie, and wept for her, lay upon my face and wept for her, while the glad people went to and fro, and the smoke streamed thick across the distant stars, and the red reflections, the shadows and the fluctuating glares, danced over the face of the world.

No! the Change had freed us from our baser passions indeed, from habitual and mechanical concupiscence and mean issues and coarse imaginings, but from the passions of love it had not freed us. It had but brought the lord of life, Eros, to his own. All through the long sorrow of that night I, who had rejected him, confessed his sway with tears and inappeasable regrets. . . .

I cannot give the remotest guess of when I rose up, nor of my tortuous wanderings in the valleys between the midnight fires, nor how I evaded the laughing and rejoicing multitudes who went streaming home between three and four, to resume their lives, swept and garnished, stripped and clean. But at dawn, when the ashes of the world's gladness were ceasing to glow — it was a bleak dawn that made me shiver in my thin summer clothes — I came across a field to a little copse full of dim blue hyacinths. A queer sense of familiarity arrested my steps, and I stood puzzled. Then I was moved to go a dozen paces from the path, and at once a singularly misshapen tree hitched itself into a notch in my memory. This was the place! Here I had stood, there I had placed my old kite, and shot with my revolver, learning to use it, against the day when I should encounter Verrall.

Kite and revolver had gone now, and all my hot and narrow past, its last vestiges had shriveled and vanished in the whirling gusts of the Beltane fires. So I walked through a world of gray ashes at last, back to the great house in which the dead, deserted image of my dear

lost mother lay.

Section 3

I came back to Lowchester House very tired, very wretched; exhausted by my fruitless longing for Nettie. I had no thought of what lay before me.

A miserable attraction drew me into the great house to look again on the stillness that had been my mother's face, and as I came into that room, Anna, who had been sitting by the open window, rose to meet me. She had the air of one who waits. She, too, was pale with watching; all night she had watched between the dead within and the Beltane fires abroad, and longed for my coming. I stood mute between her and the bedside. . . .

"Willie," she whispered, and eyes and body seemed incarnate pity.

An unseen presence drew us together. My mother's face became resolute, commanding. I turned to Anna as a child may turn to its nurse. I put my hands about her strong shoulders, she folded me to her, and my heart gave way. I buried my face in her breast and clung to her weakly, and burst into a passion of weeping. . . .

She held me with hungry arms. She whispered to me, "There, there!" as one whispers comfort to a child. . . . Suddenly she was kissing me. She kissed me with a hungry intensity of passion, on my cheeks, on my lips. She kissed me on my lips with lips that were salt with tears. And I returned her kisses. . . .

Then abruptly we desisted and stood apart — looking at one another.

Section 4

It seems to me as if the intense memory of Nettie vanished utterly out of my mind at the touch of Anna's lips. I loved Anna.

We went to the council of our group — commune it was then called — and she was given me in marriage, and within a year she had borne me a son. We saw much of one another, and talked ourselves very close together. My faithful friend she became and has

been always, and for a time we were passionate lovers. Always she has loved me and kept my soul full of tender gratitude and love for her; always when we met our hands and eyes clasped in friendly greeting, all through our lives from that hour we have been each other's secure help and refuge, each other's ungrudging fastness of help and sweetly frank and open speech. . . . And after a little while my love and desire for Nettie returned as though it had never faded away.

No one will have a difficulty now in understanding how that could be, but in the evil days of the world malaria, that would have been held to be the most impossible thing. I should have had to crush that second love out of my thoughts, to have kept it secret from Anna, to have lied about it to all the world. The old-world theory was there was only one love — we who float upon a sea of love find that hard to understand. The whole nature of a man was supposed to go out to the one girl or woman who possessed him, her whole nature to go out to him. Nothing was left over — it was a discreditable thing to have any overplus at all. They formed a secret secluded system of two, two and such children as she bore him. All other women he was held bound to find no beauty in, no sweetness, no interest; and she likewise, in no other man. The old-time men and women went apart in couples, into defensive little houses, like beasts into little pits, and in these "homes" they sat down purposing to love, but really coming very soon to jealous watching of this extravagant mutual proprietorship. All freshness passed very speedily out of their love, out of their conversation, all pride out of their common life. To permit each other freedom was blank dishonor. That I and Anna should love, and after our love-journey together, go about our separate lives and dine at the public tables, until the advent of her motherhood, would have seemed a terrible strain upon our unmitigable loyalty. And that I should have it in me to go on loving Nettie — who loved in different manner both Verrall and me — would have outraged the very quintessence of the old convention.

In the old days love was a cruel proprietary thing. But now Anna could let Nettie live in the world of my mind, as freely as a rose will suffer the presence of white lilies. If I could hear notes that were not in her compass, she was glad, because she loved me, that I should

listen to other music than hers. And she, too, could see the beauty of Nettie. Life is so rich and generous now, giving friendship, and a thousand tender interests and helps and comforts, that no one stints another of the full realization of all possibilities of beauty. For me from the beginning Nettie was the figure of beauty, the shape and color of the divine principle that lights the world. For every one there are certain types, certain faces and forms, gestures, voices and intonations that have that inexplicable unanalyzable quality. These come through the crowd of kindly friendly fellow-men and women — one's own. These touch one mysteriously, stir deeps that must otherwise slumber, pierce and interpret the world. To refuse this interpretation is to refuse the sun, to darken and deaden all life. . . . I loved Nettie, I loved all who were like her, in the measure that they were like her, in voice, or eyes, or form, or smile. And between my wife and me there was no bitterness that the great goddess, the life-giver, Aphrodite, Queen of the living Seas, came to my imagination so. It qualified our mutual love not at all, since now in our changed world love is unstinted; it is a golden net about our globe that nets all humanity together.

I thought of Nettie much, and always movingly beautiful things restored me to her, all fine music, all pure deep color, all tender and solemn things. The stars were hers, and the mystery of moonlight; the sun she wore in her hair, powdered finely, beaten into gleams and threads of sunlight in the wisps and strands of her hair. . . . Then suddenly one day a letter came to me from her, in her unaltered clear handwriting, but in a new language of expression, telling me many things. She had learnt of my mother's death, and the thought of me had grown so strong as to pierce the silence I had imposed on her. We wrote to one another — like common friends with a certain restraint between us at first, and with a great longing to see her once more arising in my heart. For a time I left that hunger unexpressed, and then I was moved to tell it to her. And so on New Year's Day in the Year Four, she came to Lowchester and me. How I remember that coming, across the gulf of fifty years! I went out across the park to meet her, so that we should meet alone. The windless morning was clear and cold, the ground new carpeted with snow, and all the trees motionless lace and glitter of frosty crystals. The rising sun had

touched the white with a spirit of gold, and my heart beat and sang within me. I remember now the snowy shoulder of the down, sunlit against the bright blue sky. And presently I saw the woman I loved coming through the white still trees. . . .

I had made a goddess of Nettie, and behold she was a fellow-creature! She came, warm-wrapped and tremulous, to me, with the tender promise of tears in her eyes, with her hands outstretched and that dear smile quivering upon her lips. She stepped out of the dream I had made of her, a thing of needs and regrets and human kindliness. Her hands as I took them were a little cold. The goddess shone through her indeed, glowed in all her body, she was a worshipful temple of love for me — yes. But I could feel, like a thing new discovered, the texture and sinews of her living, her dear personal and mortal hands. . . .

THE EPILOGUE. THE WINDOW OF THE TOWER

This was as much as this pleasant-looking, gray-haired man had written. I had been lost in his story throughout the earlier portions of it, forgetful of the writer and his gracious room, and the high tower in which he was sitting. But gradually, as I drew near the end, the sense of strangeness returned to me. It was more and more evident to me that this was a different humanity from any I had known, unreal, having different customs, different beliefs, different interpretations, different emotions. It was no mere change in conditions and institutions the comet had wrought. It had made a change of heart and mind. In a manner it had dehumanized the world, robbed it of its spites, its little intense jealousies, its inconsistencies, its humor. At the end, and particularly after the death of his mother, I felt his story had slipped away from my sympathies altogether. Those Beltane fires had burnt something in him that worked living still and unsubdued in me, that rebelled in particular at that return of Nettie. I became a little inattentive. I no longer felt with him, nor gathered a sense of complete understanding from his phrases. His Lord Eros

indeed! He and these transfigured people — they were beautiful and noble people, like the people one sees in great pictures, like the gods of noble sculpture, but they had no nearer fellowship than these to men. As the change was realized, with every stage of realization the gulf widened and it was harder to follow his words.

I put down the last fascicle of all, and met his friendly eyes. It was hard to dislike him.

I felt a subtle embarrassment in putting the question that perplexed me. And yet it seemed so material to me I had to put it. "And did you — ?" I asked. "Were you — lovers?"

His eyebrows rose. "Of course."

"But your wife — ?"

It was manifest he did not understand me.

I hesitated still more. I was perplexed by a conviction of baseness. "But—" I began. "You remained lovers?"

"Yes." I had grave doubts if I understood him. Or he me.

I made a still more courageous attempt. "And had Nettie no other lovers?"

"A beautiful woman like that! I know not how many loved beauty in her, nor what she found in others. But we four from that time were very close, you understand, we were friends, helpers, personal lovers in a world of lovers."

"Four?"

"There was Verrall."

Then suddenly it came to me that the thoughts that stirred in my mind were sinister and base, that the queer suspicions, the coarseness and coarse jealousies of my old world were over and done for these more finely living souls. "You made," I said, trying to be liberal minded, "a home together."

"A home!" He looked at me, and, I know not why, I glanced down at my feet. What a clumsy, ill-made thing a boot is, and how hard and colorless seemed my clothing! How harshly I stood out amidst these fine, perfected things. I had a moment of rebellious detestation. I wanted to get out of all this. After all, it wasn't my style. I wanted intensely to say something that would bring him

down a peg, make sure, as it were, of my suspicions by launching an offensive accusation. I looked up and he was standing.

"I forgot," he said. "You are pretending the old world is still going on. A home!"

He put out his hand, and quite noiselessly the great window widened down to us, and the splendid nearer prospect of that dreamland city was before me. There for one clear moment I saw it; its galleries and open spaces, its trees of golden fruit and crystal waters, its music and rejoicing, love and beauty without ceasing flowing through its varied and intricate streets. And the nearer people I saw now directly and plainly, and no longer in the distorted mirror that hung overhead. They really did not justify my suspicions, and yet — ! They were such people as one sees on earth — save that they were changed. How can I express that change? As a woman is changed in the eyes of her lover, as a woman is changed by the love of a lover. They were exalted. . . .

I stood up beside him and looked out. I was a little flushed, my ears a little reddened, by the inconvenience of my curiosities, and by my uneasy sense of profound moral differences. He was taller than I. . . .

"This is our home," he said smiling, and with thoughtful eyes on me.

THE WAR IN THE AIR

This science fiction novel was first published in 1908 and uncannily foreshadows the use of aircraft in warfare during the First World War (1914-1918). The story involves a young man, who discovers that an amoral inventor has devised the first successful manned aircraft — a secret which he plans to sell to the highest-bidding world power.

Wells' earlier scientific romances, although based on hypothetically plausible contemporary science, involve a greater fantastical leap than is employed in this novel, which accurately reflects the mood during the arms race between the world powers in the run-up to the First World War, whilst also outlining a technological marvel destined to become a deadly reality. At the same time, the novel is a ripping adventure yarn, packed with action and incident, as well as political and scientific speculation. The domestic background of the main character also differentiates the novel from Wells' earlier romances, with *The War in the Air* providing an intriguing mix of social realism, adventure and scientific speculation.

Critics have argued that the idea of China and Japan uniting to form one massive superpower would, at the time of writing, owe more to the racist genre of the 'yellow peril' popular during the Edwardian era, than to realistic political prediction. At the same time, however, the novel's blatant anti-colonialism means that Wells' horror at a technological warfare founded on weapons of mass-destruction applies equally to British imperialism as well – a theme which the novel shares with *The War of the Worlds*.

See p. 163.] [Frontispiece

THE BATTLE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC.

THE WAR IN THE AIR

AND PARTICULARLY HOW MR. BERT SMALLWAYS FARED WHILE IT LASTED

BY

H. G. WELLS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. C. MICHAEL

176437
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LONDON
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1908

Frontispiece and title page of the first British edition

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PREFACE TO REPRINT EDITION

The reader should grasp clearly the date at which this book was written. It was done in 1907: it appeared in various magazines as a serial in 1908 and it was published in the Fall of that year. At that time the aeroplane was, for most people, merely a rumour and the "Sausage" held the air. The contemporary reader has all the advantage of ten years' experience since this story was imagined. He can correct his author at a dozen points and estimate the value of these warnings by the standard of a decade of realities. The book is weak on anti-aircraft guns, for example, and still more negligent of submarines. Much, no doubt, will strike the reader as quaint and limited but upon much the writer may not unreasonably plume himself. The interpretation of the German spirit must have read as a caricature in 1908. Was it a caricature? Prince Karl seemed a fantasy then. Reality has since copied Prince Carl with an astonishing faithfulness. Is it too much to hope that some democratic "Bert" may not ultimately get even with his Highness? Our author tells us in this book, as he has told us in others, more especially in The World Set Free, and as he has been telling us this year in his War and the Future, that if mankind goes on with war, the smash-up of civilization is inevitable. It is chaos or the United States of the World for mankind. There is no other choice. Ten years have but added an enormous conviction to the message of this book. It remains essentially right, a pamphlet story — in support of the League to Enforce Peace. K.

CHAPTER I. OF PROGRESS AND THE SMALLWAYS FAMILY

1

"This here Progress," said Mr. Tom Smallways, "it keeps on."

"You'd hardly think it could keep on," said Mr. Tom Smallways.

It was along before the War in the Air began that Mr. Smallways made this remark. He was sitting on the fence at the end of his garden and surveying the great Bun Hill gas-works with an eye that neither praised nor blamed. Above the clustering gasometers three unfamiliar shapes appeared, thin, wallowing bladders that flapped and rolled about, and grew bigger and bigger and rounder and rounder — balloons in course of inflation for the South of England Aero Club's Saturday-afternoon ascent.

"They goes up every Saturday," said his neighbour, Mr. Stringer, the milkman. "It's only yestiday, so to speak, when all London turned out to see a balloon go over, and now every little place in the country has its weekly-outings — uppings, rather. It's been the salvation of them gas companies."

"Larst Satiday I got three barrer-loads of gravel off my petaters," said Mr. Tom Smallways. "Three barrer-loads! What they dropped as ballase. Some of the plants was broke, and some was buried."

"Ladies, they say, goes up!"

"I suppose we got to call 'em ladies," said Mr. Tom Smallways.

"Still, it ain't hardly my idea of a lady — flying about in the air, and throwing gravel at people. It ain't what I been accustomed to consider ladylike, whether or no."

Mr. Stringer nodded his head approvingly, and for a time they continued to regard the swelling bulks with expressions that had changed from indifference to disapproval.

Mr. Tom Smallways was a green-grocer by trade and a gardener by disposition; his little wife Jessica saw to the shop, and Heaven had planned him for a peaceful world. Unfortunately Heaven had not planned a peaceful world for him. He lived in a world of obstinate and incessant change, and in parts where its operations were

unsparingly conspicuous. Vicissitude was in the very soil he tilled; even his garden was upon a yearly tenancy, and overshadowed by a huge board that proclaimed it not so much a garden as an eligible building site. He was horticulture under notice to quit, the last patch of country in a district flooded by new and (other) things. He did his best to console himself, to imagine matters near the turn of the tide.

"You'd hardly think it could keep on," he said.

Mr. Smallways' aged father, could remember Bun Hill as an idyllic Kentish village. He had driven Sir Peter Bone until he was fifty and then he took to drink a little, and driving the station bus, which lasted him until he was seventy-eight. Then he retired. He sat by the fireside, a shrivelled, very, very old coachman, full charged with reminiscences, and ready for any careless stranger. He could tell you of the vanished estate of Sir Peter Bone, long since cut up for building, and how that magnate ruled the country-side when it was country-side, of shooting and hunting, and of caches along the high road, of how "where the gas-works is" was a cricket-field, and of the coming of the Crystal Palace. The Crystal Palace was six miles away from Bun Hill, a great facade that glittered in the morning, and was a clear blue outline against the sky in the afternoon, and of a night, a source of gratuitous fireworks for all the population of Bun Hill. And then had come the railway, and then villas and villas, and then the gas-works and the water-works, and a great, ugly sea of workmen's houses, and then drainage, and the water vanished out of the Otterbourne and left it a dreadful ditch, and then a second railway station, Bun Hill South, and more houses and more, more shops, more competition, plate-glass shops, a school-board, rates, omnibuses, tramcars — going right away into London itself — bicycles, motor-cars and then more motor-cars, a Carnegie library.

"You'd hardly think it could keep on," said Mr. Tom Smallways, growing up among these marvels.

But it kept on. Even from the first the green-grocer's shop which he had set up in one of the smallest of the old surviving village houses in the tail of the High Street had a submerged air, an air of hiding from something that was looking for it. When they had made up the pavement of the High Street, they levelled that up so that one had to go down three steps into the shop. Tom did his best to sell

only his own excellent but limited range of produce; but Progress came shoving things into his window, French artichokes and aubergines, foreign apples — apples from the State of New York, apples from California, apples from Canada, apples from New Zealand, "pretty lookin' fruit, but not what I should call English apples," said Tom — bananas, unfamiliar nuts, grape fruits, mangoes.

The motor-cars that went by northward and southward grew more and more powerful and efficient, whizzed faster and smelt worse, there appeared great clangorous petrol trolleys delivering coal and parcels in the place of vanishing horse-vans, motor-omnibuses ousted the horse-omnibuses, even the Kentish strawberries going Londonward in the night took to machinery and clattered instead of creaking, and became affected in flavour by progress and petrol.

And then young Bert Smallways got a motor bicycle....

2

Bert, it is necessary to explain, was a progressive Smallways.

Nothing speaks more eloquently of the pitiless insistence of progress and expansion in our time than that it should get into the Smallways blood. But there was something advanced and enterprising about young Smallways before he was out of short frocks. He was lost for a whole day before he was five, and nearly drowned in the reservoir of the new water-works before he was seven. He had a real pistol taken away from him by a real policeman when he was ten. And he learnt to smoke, not with pipes and brown paper and cane as Tom had done, but with a penny packet of Boys of England American cigarettes. His language shocked his father before he was twelve, and by that age, what with touting for parcels at the station and selling the Bun Hill Weekly Express, he was making three shillings a week, or more, and spending it on Chips, Comic Cuts, Ally Sloper's Half-holiday, cigarettes, and all the concomitants of a life of pleasure and enlightenment. All of this without hindrance to his literary studies, which carried him up to the seventh standard at an exceptionally early age. I mention these things so that you may have no doubt at all concerning the sort of stuff Bert had in him.

He was six years younger than Tom, and for a time there was an attempt to utilise him in the green-grocer's shop when Tom at twenty-one married Jessica — who was thirty, and had saved a little money in service. But it was not Bert's forte to be utilised. He hated digging, and when he was given a basket of stuff to deliver, a nomadic instinct arose irresistibly, it became his pack and he did not seem to care how heavy it was nor where he took it, so long as he did not take it to its destination. Glamour filled the world, and he strayed after it, basket and all. So Tom took his goods out himself, and sought employers for Bert who did not know of this strain of poetry in his nature. And Bert touched the fringe of a number of trades in succession — draper's porter, chemist's boy, doctor's page, junior assistant gas-fitter, envelope addresser, milk-cart assistant, golf caddie, and at last helper in a bicycle shop. Here, apparently, he found the progressive quality his nature had craved. His employer was a pirate-souled young man named Grubb, with a black-smeared face by day, and a music-hall side in the evening, who dreamt of a patent lever chain; and it seemed to Bert that he was the perfect model of a gentleman of spirit. He hired out quite the dirtiest and unsafest bicycles in the whole south of England, and conducted the subsequent discussions with astonishing verve. Bert and he settled down very well together. Bert lived in, became almost a trick rider — he could ride bicycles for miles that would have come to pieces instantly under you or me — took to washing his face after business, and spent his surplus money upon remarkable ties and collars, cigarettes, and shorthand classes at the Bun Hill Institute.

He would go round to Tom at times, and look and talk so brilliantly that Tom and Jessie, who both had a natural tendency to be respectful to anybody or anything, looked up to him immensely.

"He's a go-ahead chap, is Bert," said Tom. "He knows a thing or two."

"Let's hope he don't know too much," said Jessica, who had a fine sense of limitations.

"It's go-ahead Times," said Tom. "Noo petaters, and English at that; we'll be having 'em in March if things go on as they do go. I never see such Times. See his tie last night?"

"It wasn't suited to him, Tom. It was a gentleman's tie. He wasn't

up to it — not the rest of him, It wasn't becoming"...

Then presently Bert got a cyclist's suit, cap, badge, and all; and to see him and Grubb going down to Brighton (and back) — heads down, handle-bars down, backbones curved — was a revelation in the possibilities of the Smallways blood.

Go-ahead Times!

Old Smallways would sit over the fire mumbling of the greatness of other days, of old Sir Peter, who drove his coach to Brighton and back in eight-and-twenty hours, of old Sir Peter's white top-hats, of Lady Bone, who never set foot to ground except to walk in the garden, of the great, prize-fights at Crawley. He talked of pink and pig-skin breeches, of foxes at Ring's Bottom, where now the County Council pauper lunatics were enclosed, of Lady Bone's chintzes and crinolines. Nobody heeded him. The world had thrown up a new type of gentleman altogether — a gentleman of most ungentlemanly energy, a gentleman in dusty oilskins and motor goggles and a wonderful cap, a stink-making gentleman, a swift, high-class badger, who fled perpetually along high roads from the dust and stink he perpetually made. And his lady, as they were able to see her at Bun Hill, was a weather-bitten goddess, as free from refinement as a gipsy — not so much dressed as packed for transit at a high velocity.

So Bert grew up, filled with ideals of speed and enterprise, and became, so far as he became anything, a kind of bicycle engineer of the let's-have-a-look-at-it and enamel chipping variety. Even a road-racer, geared to a hundred and twenty, failed to satisfy him, and for a time he pined in vain at twenty miles an hour along roads that were continually more dusty and more crowded with mechanical traffic. But at last his savings accumulated, and his chance came. The hire-purchase system bridged a financial gap, and one bright and memorable Sunday morning he wheeled his new possession through the shop into the road, got on to it with the advice and assistance of Grubb, and teuf-teuffed off into the haze of the traffic-tortured high road, to add himself as one more voluntary public danger to the amenities of the south of England.

"Orf to Brighton!" said old Smallways, regarding his youngest son from the sitting-room window over the green-grocer's shop with something between pride and reprobation. "When I was 'is age, I'd

never been to London, never bin south of Crawley — never bin anywhere on my own where I couldn't walk. And nobody didn't go. Not unless they was gentry. Now every body's orf everywhere; the whole dratted country sims flying to pieces. Wonder they all get back. Orf to Brighton indeed! Anybody want to buy 'orses?"

"You can't say *I* bin to Brighton, father," said Tom.

"Nor don't want to go," said Jessica sharply; "creering about and spendin' your money."

3

For a time the possibilities of the motor-bicycle so occupied Bert's mind that he remained regardless of the new direction in which the striving soul of man was finding exercise and refreshment. He failed to observe that the type of motor-car, like the type of bicycle, was settling-down and losing its adventurous quality. Indeed, it is as true as it is remarkable that Tom was the first to observe the new development. But his gardening made him attentive to the heavens, and the proximity of the Bun Hill gas-works and the Crystal Palace, from which ascents were continually being made, and presently the descent of ballast upon his potatoes, conspired to bear in upon his unwilling mind the fact that the Goddess of Change was turning her disturbing attention to the sky. The first great boom in aeronautics was beginning.

Grubb and Bert heard of it in a music-hall, then it was driven home to their minds by the cinematograph, then Bert's imagination was stimulated by a sixpenny edition of that aeronautic classic, Mr. George Griffith's "Clipper of the Clouds," and so the thing really got hold of them.

At first the most obvious aspect was the multiplication of balloons. The sky of Bun Hill began to be infested by balloons. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons particularly you could scarcely look skyward for a quarter of an hour without discovering a balloon somewhere. And then one bright day Bert, motoring toward Croydon, was arrested by the insurgence of a huge, bolster-shaped monster from the Crystal Palace grounds, and obliged to dismount and watch it. It was like a bolster with a broken nose, and below it,

and comparatively small, was a stiff framework bearing a man and an engine with a screw that whizzed round in front and a sort of canvas rudder behind. The framework had an air of dragging the reluctant gas-cylinder after it like a brisk little terrier towing a shy gas-distended elephant into society. The combined monster certainly travelled and steered. It went overhead perhaps a thousand feet up (Bert heard the engine), sailed away southward, vanished over the hills, reappeared a little blue outline far off in the east, going now very fast before a gentle south-west gale, returned above the Crystal Palace towers, circled round them, chose a position for descent, and sank down out of sight.

Bert sighed deeply, and turned to his motor-bicycle again.

And that was only the beginning of a succession of strange phenomena in the heavens — cylinders, cones, pear-shaped monsters, even at last a thing of aluminium that glittered wonderfully, and that Grubb, through some confusion of ideas about armour plates, was inclined to consider a war machine.

There followed actual flight.

This, however, was not an affair that was visible from Bun Hill; it was something that occurred in private grounds or other enclosed places and, under favourable conditions, and it was brought home to Grubb and Bert Smallways only by means of the magazine page of the half-penny newspapers or by cinematograph records. But it was brought home very insistently, and in those days if, ever one heard a man saying in a public place in a loud, reassuring, confident tone, "It's bound to come," the chances were ten to one he was talking of flying. And Bert got a box lid and wrote out in correct window-ticket style, and Grubb put in the window this inscription, "Aeroplanes made and repaired." It quite upset Tom — it seemed taking one's shop so lightly; but most of the neighbours, and all the sporting ones, approved of it as being very good indeed.

Everybody talked of flying, everybody repeated over and over again, "Bound to come," and then you know it didn't come. There was a hitch. They flew — that was all right; they flew in machines heavier than air. But they smashed. Sometimes they smashed the engine, sometimes they smashed the aeronaut, usually they smashed both. Machines that made flights of three or four miles and came

down safely, went up the next time to headlong disaster. There seemed no possible trusting to them. The breeze upset them, the eddies near the ground upset them, a passing thought in the mind of the aeronaut upset them. Also they upset — simply.

"It's this 'stability' does 'em," said Grubb, repeating his newspaper. "They pitch and they pitch, till they pitch themselves to pieces."

Experiments fell away after two expectant years of this sort of success, the public and then the newspapers tired of the expensive photographic reproductions, the optimistic reports, the perpetual sequence of triumph and disaster and silence. Flying slumped, even ballooning fell away to some extent, though it remained a fairly popular sport, and continued to lift gravel from the wharf of the Bun Hill gas-works and drop it upon deserving people's lawns and gardens. There were half a dozen reassuring years for Tom — at least so far as flying was concerned. But that was the great time of mono-rail development, and his anxiety was only diverted from the high heavens by the most urgent threats and symptoms of change in the lower sky.

There had been talk of mono-rails for several years. But the real mischief began when Brennan sprang his gyroscopic mono-rail car upon the Royal Society. It was the leading sensation of the 1907 soirees; that celebrated demonstration-room was all too small for its exhibition. Brave soldiers, leading Zionists, deserving novelists, noble ladies, congested the narrow passage and thrust distinguished elbows into ribs the world would not willingly let break, deeming themselves fortunate if they could see "just a little bit of the rail." Inaudible, but convincing, the great inventor expounded his discovery, and sent his obedient little model of the trains of the future up gradients, round curves, and across a sagging wire. It ran along its single rail, on its single wheels, simple and sufficient; it stopped, reversed stood still, balancing perfectly. It maintained its astounding equilibrium amidst a thunder of applause. The audience dispersed at last, discussing how far they would enjoy crossing an abyss on a wire cable. "Suppose the gyroscope stopped!" Few of them anticipated a tithe of what the Brennan mono-rail would do for their railway securities and the face of the world.

In a few, years they realised better. In a little while no one thought anything of crossing an abyss on a wire, and the mono-rail was superseding the tram-lines, railways: and indeed every form of track for mechanical locomotion. Where land was cheap the rail ran along the ground, where it was dear the rail lifted up on iron standards and passed overhead; its swift, convenient cars went everywhere and did everything that had once been done along made tracks upon the ground.

When old Smallways died, Tom could think of nothing more striking to say of him than that, "When he was a boy, there wasn't nothing higher than your chimbleys — there wasn't a wire nor a cable in the sky!"

Old Smallways went to his grave under an intricate network of wires and cables, for Bun Hill became not only a sort of minor centre of power distribution — the Home Counties Power Distribution Company set up transformers and a generating station close beside the old gas-works — but, also a junction on the suburban mono-rail system. Moreover, every tradesman in the place, and indeed nearly every house, had its own telephone.

The mono-rail cable standard became a striking fact in urban landscape, for the most part stout iron erections rather like tapering trestles, and painted a bright bluish green. One, it happened, bestrode Tom's house, which looked still more retiring and apologetic beneath its immensity; and another giant stood just inside the corner of his garden, which was still not built upon and unchanged, except for a couple of advertisement boards, one recommending a two-and-sixpenny watch, and one a nerve restorer. These, by the bye, were placed almost horizontally to catch the eye of the passing mono-rail passengers above, and so served admirably to roof over a tool-shed and a mushroom-shed for Tom. All day and all night the fast cars from Brighton and Hastings went murmuring by overhead long, broad, comfortable-looking cars, that were brightly lit after dusk. As they flew by at night, transient flares of light and a rumbling sound of passage, they kept up a perpetual summer lightning and thunderstorm in the street below.

Presently the English Channel was bridged — a series of great iron Eiffel Tower pillars carrying mono-rail cables at a height of a

hundred and fifty feet above the water, except near the middle, where they rose higher to allow the passage of the London and Antwerp shipping and the Hamburg-America liners.

Then heavy motor-cars began to run about on only a couple of wheels, one behind the other, which for some reason upset Tom dreadfully, and made him gloomy for days after the first one passed the shop...

All this gyroscopic and mono-rail development naturally absorbed a vast amount of public attention, and there was also a huge excitement consequent upon the amazing gold discoveries off the coast of Anglesea made by a submarine prospector, Miss Patricia Giddy. She had taken her degree in geology and mineralogy in the University of London, and while working upon the auriferous rocks of North Wales, after a brief holiday spent in agitating for women's suffrage, she had been struck by the possibility of these reefs cropping up again under the water. She had set herself to verify this supposition by the use of the submarine crawler invented by Doctor Alberto Cassini. By a happy mingling of reasoning and intuition peculiar to her sex she found gold at her first descent, and emerged after three hours' submersion with about two hundredweight of ore containing gold in the unparalleled quantity of seventeen ounces to the ton. But the whole story of her submarine mining, intensely interesting as it is, must be told at some other time; suffice it now to remark simply that it was during the consequent great rise of prices, confidence, and enterprise that the revival of interest in flying occurred.

It is curious how that revival began. It was like the coming of a breeze on a quiet day; nothing started it, it came. People began to talk of flying with an air of never having for one moment dropped the subject. Pictures of flying and flying machines returned to the newspapers; articles and allusions increased and multiplied in the serious magazines. People asked in mono-rail trains, "When are we going to fly?" A new crop of inventors sprang up in a night or so like fungi. The Aero Club announced the project of a great Flying Exhibition in a large area of ground that the removal of slums in Whitechapel had rendered available.

The advancing wave soon produced a sympathetic ripple in the

Bun Hill establishment. Grubb routed out his flying-machine model again, tried it in the yard behind the shop, got a kind of flight out of it, and broke seventeen panes of glass and nine flower-pots in the greenhouse that occupied the next yard but one.

And then, springing from nowhere, sustained one knew not how, came a persistent, disturbing rumour that the problem had been solved, that the secret was known. Bert met it one early-closing afternoon as he refreshed himself in an inn near Nutfield, whither his motor-bicycle had brought him. There smoked and meditated a person in khaki, an engineer, who presently took an interest in Bert's machine. It was a sturdy piece of apparatus, and it had acquired a kind of documentary value in these quick-changing times; it was now nearly eight years old. Its points discussed, the soldier broke into a new topic with, "My next's going to be an aeroplane, so far as I can see. I've had enough of roads and ways."

"They TORK," said Bert.

"They talk — and they do," said the soldier.

"The thing's coming—"

"It keeps ON coming," said Bert; "I shall believe when I see it."

"That won't be long," said the soldier.

The conversation seemed degenerating into an amiable wrangle of contradiction.

"I tell you they ARE flying," the soldier insisted. "I see it myself."

"We've all seen it," said Bert.

"I don't mean flap up and smash up; I mean real, safe, steady, controlled flying, against the wind, good and right."

"You ain't seen that!"

"I 'AVE! Aldershot. They try to keep it a secret. They got it right enough. You bet — our War Office isn't going to be caught napping this time."

Bert's incredulity was shaken. He asked questions — and the soldier expanded.

"I tell you they got nearly a square mile fenced in — a sort of valley. Fences of barbed wire ten feet high, and inside that they do things. Chaps about the camp — now and then we get a peep. It isn't only us neither. There's the Japanese; you bet they got it too — and the Germans!"

The soldier stood with his legs very wide apart, and filled his pipe thoughtfully. Bert sat on the low wall against which his motor-bicycle was leaning.

"Funny thing fighting'll be," he said.

"Flying's going to break out," said the soldier. "When it DOES come, when the curtain does go up, I tell you you'll find every one on the stage — busy.... Such fighting, too!... I suppose you don't read the papers about this sort of thing?"

"I read 'em a bit," said Bert.

"Well, have you noticed what one might call the remarkable case of the disappearing inventor — the inventor who turns up in a blaze of publicity, fires off a few successful experiments, and vanishes?"

"Can't say I 'ave," said Bert.

"Well, I 'ave, anyhow. You get anybody come along who does anything striking in this line, and, you bet, he vanishes. Just goes off quietly out of sight. After a bit, you don't hear anything more of 'em at all. See? They disappear. Gone — no address. First — oh! it's an old story now — there was those Wright Brothers out in America. They glided — they glided miles and miles. Finally they glided off stage. Why, it must be nineteen hundred and four, or five, THEY vanished! Then there was those people in Ireland — no, I forget their names. Everybody said they could fly. THEY went. They ain't dead that I've heard tell; but you can't say they're alive. Not a feather of 'em can you see. Then that chap who flew round Paris and upset in the Seine. De Booley, was it? I forget. That was a grand fly, in spite of the accident; but where's he got to? The accident didn't hurt him. Eh? *'E*'s gone to cover."

The soldier prepared to light his pipe.

"Looks like a secret society got hold of them," said Bert.

"Secret society! NAW!"

The soldier lit his match, and drew. "Secret society," he repeated, with his pipe between his teeth and the match flaring, in response to his words. "War Departments; that's more like it." He threw his match aside, and walked to his machine. "I tell you, sir," he said, "there isn't a big Power in Europe, OR Asia, OR America, OR Africa, that hasn't got at least one or two flying machines hidden up its sleeve at the present time. Not one. Real, workable, flying

machines. And the spying! The spying and manoeuvring to find out what the others have got. I tell you, sir, a foreigner, or, for the matter of that, an unaccredited native, can't get within four miles of Lydd nowadays — not to mention our little circus at Aldershot, and the experimental camp in Galway. No!"

"Well," said Bert, "I'd like to see one of them, anyhow. Jest to help believing. I'll believe when I see, that I'll promise you."

"You'll see 'em, fast enough," said the soldier, and led his machine out into the road.

He left Bert on his wall, grave and pensive, with his cap on the back of his head, and a cigarette smouldering in the corner of his mouth.

"If what he says is true," said Bert, "me and Grubb, we been wasting our blessed old time. Besides incurring expense with that green-'ouse."

5

It was while this mysterious talk with the soldier still stirred in Bert Smallways' imagination that the most astounding incident in the whole of that dramatic chapter of human history, the coming of flying, occurred. People talk glibly enough of epoch-making events; this was an epoch-making event. It was the unanticipated and entirely successful flight of Mr. Alfred Butteridge from the Crystal Palace to Glasgow and back in a small businesslike-looking machine heavier than air — an entirely manageable and controllable machine that could fly as well as a pigeon.

It wasn't, one felt, a fresh step forward in the matter so much as a giant stride, a leap. Mr. Butteridge remained in the air altogether for about nine hours, and during that time he flew with the ease and assurance of a bird. His machine was, however neither bird-like nor butterfly-like, nor had it the wide, lateral expansion of the ordinary aeroplane. The effect upon the observer was rather something in the nature of a bee or wasp. Parts of the apparatus were spinning very rapidly, and gave one a hazy effect of transparent wings; but parts, including two peculiarly curved "wing-cases" — if one may borrow a figure from the flying beetles — remained expanded stiffly. In the

middle was a long rounded body like the body of a moth, and on this Mr. Butteridge could be seen sitting astride, much as a man bestrides a horse. The wasp-like resemblance was increased by the fact that the apparatus flew with a deep booming hum, exactly the sound made by a wasp at a windowpane.

Mr. Butteridge took the world by surprise. He was one of those gentlemen from nowhere Fate still succeeds in producing for the stimulation of mankind. He came, it was variously said, from Australia and America and the South of France. He was also described quite incorrectly as the son of a man who had amassed a comfortable fortune in the manufacture of gold nibs and the Butteridge fountain pens. But this was an entirely different strain of Butteridges. For some years, in spite of a loud voice, a large presence, an aggressive swagger, and an implacable manner, he had been an undistinguished member of most of the existing aeronautical associations. Then one day he wrote to all the London papers to announce that he had made arrangements for an ascent from the Crystal Palace of a machine that would demonstrate satisfactorily that the outstanding difficulties in the way of flying were finally solved. Few of the papers printed his letter, still fewer were the people who believed in his claim. No one was excited even when a fracas on the steps of a leading hotel in Piccadilly, in which he tried to horse-whip a prominent German musician upon some personal account, delayed his promised ascent. The quarrel was inadequately reported, and his name spelt variously Betteridge and Betridge. Until his flight indeed, he did not and could not contrive to exist in the public mind. There were scarcely thirty people on the look-out for him, in spite of all his clamour, when about six o'clock one summer morning the doors of the big shed in which he had been putting together his apparatus opened — it was near the big model of a megatherium in the Crystal Palace grounds — and his giant insect came droning out into a negligent and incredulous world.

But before he had made his second circuit of the Crystal Palace towers, Fame was lifting her trumpet, she drew a deep breath as the startled tramps who sleep on the seats of Trafalgar Square were roused by his buzz and awoke to discover him circling the Nelson column, and by the time he had got to Birmingham, which place he

crossed about half-past ten, her deafening blast was echoing throughout the country. The despaired-of thing was done.

A man was flying securely and well.

Scotland was agape for his coming. Glasgow he reached by one o'clock, and it is related that scarcely a ship-yard or factory in that busy hive of industry resumed work before half-past two. The public mind was just sufficiently educated in the impossibility of flying to appreciate Mr. Butteridge at his proper value. He circled the University buildings, and dropped to within shouting distance of the crowds in West End Park and on the slope of Gilmorehill. The thing flew quite steadily at a pace of about three miles an hour, in a wide circle, making a deep hum that, would have drowned his full, rich voice completely had he not provided himself with a megaphone. He avoided churches, buildings, and mono-rail cables with consummate ease as he conversed.

"Me name's Butteridge," he shouted; "B-U-T-T-E-R-I-D-G-E. — Got it? Me mother was Scotch."

And having assured himself that he had been understood, he rose amidst cheers and shouting and patriotic cries, and then flew up very swiftly and easily into the south-eastern sky, rising and falling with long, easy undulations in an extraordinarily wasp-like manner.

His return to London — he visited and hovered over Manchester and Liverpool and Oxford on his way, and spelt his name out to each place — was an occasion of unparalleled excitement. Every one was staring heavenward. More people were run over in the streets upon that one day, than in the previous three months, and a County Council steamboat, the Isaac Walton, collided with a pier of Westminster Bridge, and narrowly escaped disaster by running ashore — it was low water — on the mud on the south side. He returned to the Crystal Palace grounds, that classic starting-point of aeronautical adventure, about sunset, re-entered his shed without disaster, and had the doors locked immediately upon the photographers and journalists who been waiting his return.

"Look here, you chaps," he said, as his assistant did so, "I'm tired to death, and saddle sore. I can't give you a word of talk. I'm too — done. My name's Butteridge. B-U-T-T-E-R-I-D-G-E. Get that right. I'm an Imperial Englishman. I'll talk to you all to-morrow."

Foggy snapshots still survive to record that incident. His assistant struggles in a sea of aggressive young men carrying note-books or upholding cameras and wearing bowler hats and enterprising ties. He himself towers up in the doorway, a big figure with a mouth — an eloquent cavity beneath a vast black moustache — distorted by his shout to these relentless agents of publicity. He towers there, the most famous man in the country.

Almost symbolically he holds and gesticulates with a megaphone in his left hand.

6

Tom and Bert Smallways both saw that return. They watched from the crest of Bun Hill, from which they had so often surveyed the pyrotechnics of the Crystal Palace. Bert was excited, Tom kept calm and lumpish, but neither of them realised how their own lives were to be invaded by the fruits of that beginning. "P'raps old Grubb'll mind the shop a bit now," he said, "and put his blessed model in the fire. Not that that can save us, if we don't tide over with Steinhart's account."

Bert knew enough of things and the problem of aeronautics to realise that this gigantic imitation of a bee would, to use his own idiom, "give the newspapers fits." The next day it was clear the fits had been given even as he said: their magazine pages were black with hasty photographs, their prose was convulsive, they foamed at the headline. The next day they were worse. Before the week was out they were not so much published as carried screaming into the street.

The dominant fact in the uproar was the exceptional personality of Mr. Butteridge, and the extraordinary terms he demanded for the secret of his machine.

For it was a secret and he kept it secret in the most elaborate fashion. He built his apparatus himself in the safe privacy of the great Crystal Palace sheds, with the assistance of inattentive workmen, and the day next following his flight he took it to pieces single handed, packed certain portions, and then secured unintelligent assistance in packing and dispersing the rest. Sealed packing-cases went north and east and west to various pantechnicons, and the engines were boxed

with peculiar care. It became evident these precautions were not inadvisable in view of the violent demand for any sort of photograph or impressions of his machine. But Mr. Butteridge, having once made his demonstration, intended to keep his secret safe from any further risk of leakage. He faced the British public now with the question whether they wanted his secret or not; he was, he said perpetually, an "Imperial Englishman," and his first wish and his last was to see his invention the privilege and monopoly of the Empire. Only —

It was there the difficulty began.

Mr. Butteridge, it became evident, was a man singularly free from any false modesty — indeed, from any modesty of any kind — singularly willing to see interviewers, answer questions upon any topic except aeronautics, volunteer opinions, criticisms, and autobiography, supply portraits and photographs of himself, and generally spread his personality across the terrestrial sky. The published portraits insisted primarily upon an immense black moustache, and secondarily upon a fierceness behind the moustache. The general impression upon the public was that Butteridge, was a small man. No one big, it was felt, could have so virulently aggressive an expression, though, as a matter of fact, Butteridge had a height of six feet two inches, and a weight altogether proportionate to that. Moreover, he had a love affair of large and unusual dimensions and irregular circumstances and the still largely decorous British public learnt with reluctance and alarm that a sympathetic treatment of this affair was inseparable from the exclusive acquisition of the priceless secret of aerial stability by the British Empire. The exact particulars of the similarity never came to light, but apparently the lady had, in a fit of high-minded inadvertence, had gone through the ceremony of marriage with, one quotes the unpublished discourse of Mr. Butteridge— "a white-livered skunk," and this zoological aberration did in some legal and vexatious manner mar her social happiness. He wanted to talk about the business, to show the splendour of her nature in the light of its complications. It was really most embarrassing to a press that has always possessed a considerable turn for reticence, that wanted things personal indeed in the modern fashion. Yet not too personal. It was embarrassing, I say,

to be inexorably confronted with Mr. Butteridge's great heart, to see it laid open in relentlesss self-vivisection, and its pulsating dissepiments adorned with emphatic flag labels.

Confronted they were, and there was no getting away from it. He would make this appalling viscus beat and throb before the shrinking journalists — no uncle with a big watch and a little baby ever harped upon it so relentlessly; whatever evasion they attempted he set aside. He "gloried in his love," he said, and compelled them to write it down.

"That's of course a private affair, Mr. Butteridge," they would object.

"The injustice, sorr, is public. I do not care either I am up against institutions or individuals. I do not care if I am up against the universal All. I am pleading the cause of a woman, a woman I lurve, sorr — a noble woman — misunderstood. I intend to vindicate her, sorr, to the four winds of heaven!"

"I lurve England," he used to say— "lurve England, but Puritanism, sorr, I abhor. It fills me with loathing. It raises my gorge. Take my own case."

He insisted relentlessly upon his heart, and upon seeing proofs of the interview. If they had not done justice to his erotic bellowings and gesticulations, he stuck in, in a large inky scrawl, all and more than they had omitted.

It was a strangely embarrassing thing for British journalism. Never was there a more obvious or uninteresting affair; never had the world heard the story of erratic affection with less appetite or sympathy. On the other hand it was extremely curious about Mr. Butteridge's invention. But when Mr. Butteridge could be deflected for a moment from the cause of the lady he championed, then he talked chiefly, and usually with tears of tenderness in his voice, about his mother and his childhood — his mother who crowned a complete encyclopedia of maternal virtue by being "largely Scotch." She was not quite neat, but nearly so. "I owe everything in me to me mother," he asserted— "everything. Eh!" and— "ask any man who's done anything. You'll hear the same story. All we have we owe to women. They are the species, sorr. Man is but a dream. He comes and goes. The woman's soul leadeth us upward and on!"

He was always going on like that.

What in particular he wanted from the Government for his secret did not appear, nor what beyond a money payment could be expected from a modern state in such an affair. The general effect upon judicious observers, indeed, was not that he was treating for anything, but that he was using an unexampled opportunity to bellow and show off to an attentive world. Rumours of his real identity spread abroad. It was said that he had been the landlord of an ambiguous hotel in Cape Town, and had there given shelter to, and witnessed, the experiments and finally stolen the papers and plans of, an extremely shy and friendless young inventor named Palliser, who had come to South Africa from England in an advanced stage of consumption, and died there. This, at any rate, was the allegation of the more outspoken American press. But the proof or disproof of that never reached the public.

Mr. Butteridge also involved himself passionately in a tangle of disputes for the possession of a great number of valuable money prizes. Some of these had been offered so long ago as 1906 for successful mechanical flight. By the time of Mr. Butteridge's success a really very considerable number of newspapers, tempted by the impunity of the pioneers in this direction, had pledged themselves to pay in some cases, quite overwhelming sums to the first person to fly from Manchester to Glasgow, from London to Manchester, one hundred miles, two hundred miles in England, and the like. Most had hedged a little with ambiguous conditions, and now offered resistance; one or two paid at once, and vehemently called attention to the fact; and Mr. Butteridge plunged into litigation with the more recalcitrant, while at the same time sustaining a vigorous agitation and canvass to induce the Government to purchase his invention.

One fact, however, remained permanent throughout all the developments of this affair behind Butteridge's preposterous love interest, his politics and personality, and all his shouting and boasting, and that was that, so far as the mass of people knew, he was in sole possession of the secret of the practicable aeroplane in which, for all one could tell to the contrary, the key of the future empire of the world resided. And presently, to the great consternation of innumerable people, including among others Mr. Bert Smallways, it

became apparent that whatever negotiations were in progress for the acquisition of this precious secret by the British Government were in danger of falling through. The London Daily Requiem first voiced the universal alarm, and published an interview under the terrific caption of, “Mr. Butteridge Speaks his Mind.”

Therein the inventor — if he was an inventor — poured out his heart.

“I came from the end of the earth,” he said, which rather seemed to confirm the Cape Town story, “bringing me Motherland the secret that would give her the empire of the world. And what do I get?” He paused. “I am sniffed at by elderly mandarins!... And the woman I love is treated like a leper!”

“I am an Imperial Englishman,” he went on in a splendid outburst, subsequently written into the interview by his own hand; “but there there are limits to the human heart! There are younger nations — living nations! Nations that do not snore and gurgle helplessly in paroxysms of plethora upon beds of formality and red tape! There are nations that will not fling away the empire of earth in order to slight an unknown man and insult a noble woman whose boots they are not fitted to unlatch. There are nations not blinded to Science, not given over hand and foot to effete snobocracies and Degenerate Decadents. In short, mark my words — THERE ARE OTHER NATIONS!”

This speech it was that particularly impressed Bert Smallways. “If them Germans or them Americans get hold of this,” he said impressively to his brother, “the British Empire’s done. It’s U-P. The Union Jack, so to speak, won’t be worth the paper it’s written on, Tom.”

“I suppose you couldn’t lend us a hand this morning,” said Jessica, in his impressive pause. “Everybody in Bun Hill seems wanting early potatoes at once. Tom can’t carry half of them.”

“We’re living on a volcano,” said Bert, disregarding the suggestion. “At any moment war may come — such a war!”

He shook his head portentously.

“You’d better take this lot first, Tom,” said Jessica. She turned briskly on Bert. “Can you spare us a morning?” she asked.

“I dessay I can,” said Bert. “The shop’s very quiet s’morning. Though all this danger to the Empire worries me something

frightful.”

“Work’ll take it off your mind,” said Jessica.

And presently he too was going out into a world of change and wonder, bowed beneath a load of potatoes and patriotic insecurity, that merged at last into a very definite irritation at the weight and want of style of the potatoes and a very clear conception of the entire detestableness of Jessica.

CHAPTER II. HOW BERT SMALLWAYS GOT INTO DIFFICULTIES

It did not occur to either Tom or Bert Smallways that this remarkable aerial performance of Mr. Butteridge was likely to affect either of their lives in any special manner, that it would in any way single them out from the millions about them; and when they had witnessed it from the crest of Bun Hill and seen the fly-like mechanism, its rotating planes a golden haze in the sunset, sink humming to the harbour of its shed again, they turned back towards the sunken green-grocery beneath the great iron standard of the London to Brighton mono-rail, and their minds reverted to the discussion that had engaged them before Mr. Butteridge's triumph had come in sight out of the London haze.

It was a difficult and unsuccessful discussions. They had to carry it on in shouts because of the moaning and roaring of the gyroscopic motor-cars that traversed the High Street, and in its nature it was contentious and private. The Grubb business was in difficulties, and Grubb in a moment of financial eloquence had given a half-share in it to Bert, whose relations with his employer had been for some time unsalaried and pallish and informal.

Bert was trying to impress Tom with the idea that the reconstructed Grubb & Smallways offered unprecedented and unparalleled opportunities to the judicious small investor. It was coming home to Bert, as though it were an entirely new fact, that Tom was singularly impervious to ideas. In the end he put the financial issues on one side, and, making the thing entirely a matter of fraternal affection, succeeded in borrowing a sovereign on the security of his word of honour.

The firm of Grubb & Smallways, formerly Grubb, had indeed been singularly unlucky in the last year or so. For many years the business had struggled along with a flavour of romantic insecurity in a small, dissolute-looking shop in the High Street, adorned with brilliantly coloured advertisements of cycles, a display of bells, trouser-clips, oil-cans, pump-clips, frame-cases, wallets, and other

accessories, and the announcement of “Bicycles on Hire,” “Repairs,” “Free inflation,” “Petrol,” and similar attractions. They were agents for several obscure makes of bicycle, — two samples constituted the stock, — and occasionally they effected a sale; they also repaired punctures and did their best — though luck was not always on their side — with any other repairing that was brought to them. They handled a line of cheap gramophones, and did a little with musical boxes.

The staple of their business was, however, the letting of bicycles on hire. It was a singular trade, obeying no known commercial or economic principles — indeed, no principles. There was a stock of ladies’ and gentlemen’s bicycles in a state of disrepair that passes description, and these, the hiring stock, were let to unexacting and reckless people, inexpert in the things of this world, at a nominal rate of one shilling for the first hour and sixpence per hour afterwards. But really there were no fixed prices, and insistent boys could get bicycles and the thrill of danger for an hour for so low a sum as threepence, provided they could convince Grubb that that was all they had. The saddle and handle-bar were then sketchily adjusted by Grubb, a deposit exacted, except in the case of familiar boys, the machine lubricated, and the adventurer started upon his career. Usually he or she came back, but at times, when the accident was serious, Bert or Grubb had to go out and fetch the machine home. Hire was always charged up to the hour of return to the shop and deducted from the deposit. It was rare that a bicycle started out from their hands in a state of pedantic efficiency. Romantic possibilities of accident lurked in the worn thread of the screw that adjusted the saddle, in the precarious pedals, in the loose-knit chain, in the handle-bars, above all in the brakes and tyres. Tappings and clankings and strange rhythmic creakings awoke as the intrepid hirer pedalled out into the country. Then perhaps the bell would jam or a brake fail to act on a hill; or the seat-pillar would get loose, and the saddle drop three or four inches with a disconcerting bump; or the loose and rattling chain would jump the cogs of the chain-wheel as the machine ran downhill, and so bring the mechanism to an abrupt and disastrous stop without at the same time arresting the forward momentum of the rider; or a tyre would bang, or sigh quietly, and

give up the struggle for efficiency.

When the hirer returned, a heated pedestrian, Grubb would ignore all verbal complaints, and examine the machine gravely.

"This ain't 'ad fair usage," he used to begin.

He became a mild embodiment of the spirit of reason. "You can't expect a bicycle to take you up in its arms and carry you," he used to say. "You got to show intelligence. After all — it's machinery."

Sometimes the process of liquidating the consequent claims bordered on violence. It was always a very rhetorical and often a trying affair, but in these progressive times you have to make a noise to get a living. It was often hard work, but nevertheless this hiring was a fairly steady source of profit, until one day all the panes in the window and door were broken and the stock on sale in the window greatly damaged and disordered by two over-critical hirers with no sense of rhetorical irrelevance. They were big, coarse stokers from Gravesend. One was annoyed because his left pedal had come off, and the other because his tyre had become deflated, small and indeed negligible accidents by Bun Hill standards, due entirely to the ungentle handling of the delicate machines entrusted to them — and they failed to see clearly how they put themselves in the wrong by this method of argument. It is a poor way of convincing a man that he has let you a defective machine to throw his foot-pump about his shop, and take his stock of gongs outside in order to return them through the window-panes. It carried no real conviction to the minds of either Grubb or Bert; it only irritated and vexed them. One quarrel makes many, and this unpleasantness led to a violent dispute between Grubb and the landlord upon the moral aspects of and legal responsibility for the consequent re-glazing. In the end Grubb and Smallways were put to the expense of a strategic nocturnal removal to another position.

It was a position they had long considered. It was a small, shed-like shop with a plate-glass window and one room behind, just at the sharp bend in the road at the bottom of Bun Hill; and here they struggled along bravely, in spite of persistent annoyance from their former landlord, hoping for certain eventualities the peculiar situation of the shop seemed to promise. Here, too, they were doomed to disappointment.

The High Road from London to Brighton that ran through Bun Hill was like the British Empire or the British Constitution — a thing that had grown to its present importance. Unlike any other roads in Europe the British high roads have never been subjected to any organised attempts to grade or straighten them out, and to that no doubt their peculiar picturesqueness is to be ascribed. The old Bun Hill High Street drops at its end for perhaps eighty or a hundred feet of descent at an angle of one in five, turns at right angles to the left, runs in a curve for about thirty yards to a brick bridge over the dry ditch that had once been the Otterbourne, and then bends sharply to the right again round a dense clump of trees and goes on, a simple, straightforward, peaceful high road. There had been one or two horse-and-van and bicycle accidents in the place before the shop Bert and Grubb took was built, and, to be frank, it was the probability of others that attracted them to it.

Its possibilities had come to them first with a humorous flavour.

"Here's one of the places where a chap might get a living by keeping hens," said Grubb.

"You can't get a living by keeping hens," said Bert.

"You'd keep the hen and have it spatch-cocked," said Grubb. "The motor chaps would pay for it."

When they really came to take the place they remembered this conversation. Hens, however, were out of the question; there was no place for a run unless they had it in the shop. It would have been obviously out of place there. The shop was much more modern than their former one, and had a plate-glass front. "Sooner or later," said Bert, "we shall get a motor-car through this."

"That's all right," said Grubb. "Compensation. I don't mind when that motor-car comes along. I don't mind even if it gives me a shock to the system."

"And meanwhile," said Bert, with great artfulness, "I'm going to buy myself a dog."

He did. He bought three in succession. He surprised the people at the Dogs' Home in Battersea by demanding a deaf retriever, and rejecting every candidate that pricked up its ears. "I want a good, deaf, slow-moving dog," he said. "A dog that doesn't put himself out for things."

They displayed inconvenient curiosity; they declared a great scarcity of deaf dogs.

"You see," they said, "dogs aren't deaf."

"Mine's got to be," said Bert. "I've HAD dogs that aren't deaf. All I want. It's like this, you see — I sell gramophones. Naturally I got to make 'em talk and tootle a bit to show 'em orf. Well, a dog that isn't deaf doesn't like it — gets excited, smells round, barks, growls. That upsets the customer. See? Then a dog that has his hearing fancies things. Makes burglars out of passing tramps. Wants to fight every motor that makes a whizz. All very well if you want livening up, but our place is lively enough. I don't want a dog of that sort. I want a quiet dog."

In the end he got three in succession, but none of them turned out well. The first strayed off into the infinite, heeding no appeals; the second was killed in the night by a fruit motor-waggon which fled before Grubb could get down; the third got itself entangled in the front wheel of a passing cyclist, who came through the plate glass, and proved to be an actor out of work and an undischarged bankrupt. He demanded compensation for some fancied injury, would hear nothing of the valuable dog he had killed or the window he had broken, obliged Grubb by sheer physical obduracy to straighten his buckled front wheel, and pestered the struggling firm with a series of inhumanly worded solicitor's letters. Grubb answered them — stingingly, and put himself, Bert thought, in the wrong.

Affairs got more and more exasperating and strained under these pressures. The window was boarded up, and an unpleasant altercation about their delay in repairing it with the new landlord, a Bun Hill butcher — and a loud, bellowing, unreasonable person at that — served to remind them of their unsettled troubles with the old. Things were at this pitch when Bert bethought himself of creating a sort of debenture capital in the business for the benefit of Tom. But, as I have said, Tom had no enterprise in his composition. His idea of investment was the stocking; he bribed his brother not to keep the offer open.

And then ill-luck made its last lunge at their crumbling business and brought it to the ground.

It is a poor heart that never rejoices, and Whitsuntide had an air of coming as an agreeable break in the business complications of Grubb & Smallways. Encouraged by the practical outcome of Bert's negotiations with his brother, and by the fact that half the hiring-stock was out from Saturday to Monday, they decided to ignore the residuum of hiring-trade on Sunday and devote that day to much-needed relaxation and refreshment — to have, in fact, an unstinted good time, a beano on Whit Sunday and return invigorated to grapple with their difficulties and the Bank Holiday repairs on the Monday. No good thing was ever done by exhausted and dispirited men. It happened that they had made the acquaintance of two young ladies in employment in Clapham, Miss Flossie Bright and Miss Edna Bunthorne, and it was resolved therefore to make a cheerful little cyclist party of four into the heart of Kent, and to picnic and spend an indolent afternoon and evening among the trees and bracken between Ashford and Maidstone.

Miss Bright could ride a bicycle, and a machine was found for her, not among the hiring stock, but specially, in the sample held for sale. Miss Bunthorne, whom Bert particularly affected, could not ride, and so with some difficulty he hired a basket-work trailer from the big business of Wray's in the Clapham Road.

To see our young men, brightly dressed and cigarettes alight, wheeling off to the rendezvous, Grubb guiding the lady's machine beside him with one skilful hand and Bert teuf-teuffing steadily, was to realise how pluck may triumph even over insolvency. Their landlord, the butcher, said, "Gurr," as they passed, and shouted, "Go it!" in a loud, savage tone to their receding backs.

Much they cared!

The weather was fine, and though they were on their way southward before nine o'clock, there was already a great multitude of holiday people abroad upon the roads. There were quantities of young men and women on bicycles and motor-bicycles, and a majority of gyroscopic motor-cars running bicycle-fashion on two wheels, mingled with old-fashioned four-wheeled traffic. Bank Holiday times always bring out old stored-away vehicles and odd

people; one saw tricars and electric broughams and dilapidated old racing motors with huge pneumatic tyres. Once our holiday-makers saw a horse and cart, and once a youth riding a black horse amidst the badinage of the passersby. And there were several navigable gas air-ships, not to mention balloons, in the air. It was all immensely interesting and refreshing after the dark anxieties of the shop. Edna wore a brown straw hat with poppies, that suited her admirably, and sat in the trailer like a queen, and the eight-year-old motor-bicycle ran like a thing of yesterday.

Little it seemed to matter to Mr. Bert Smallways that a newspaper placard proclaimed: —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— GERMANY

DENOUNCES THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

AMBIGUOUS ATTITUDE OF JAPAN.

WHAT WILL BRITAIN DO? IS IT WAR? —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —

This sort of thing was alvays going on, and on holidays one disregarded it as a matter of course. Week-davs, in the slack time after the midday meal, then perhaps one might worry about the Empire and international politics; but not on a sunny Sunday, with a pretty girl trailing behind one, and envious cyclists trying to race you. Nor did our young people attach any great importance to the flitting suggestions of military activity they glimpsed ever and again. Near Maidstone they came on a string of eleven motor-guns of peculiar construction halted by the roadside, with a number of businesslike engineers grouped about them watching through field-glasses some sort of entrenchment that was going on near the crest of the downs. It signified nothing to Bert.

"What's up?" said Edna.

"Oh! — manoeuvres," said Bert.

"Oh! I thought they did them at Easter," said Edna, and troubled no more.

The last great British war, the Boer war, was over and forgotten, and the public had lost the fashion of expert military criticism.

Our four young people picnicked cheerfully, and were happy in the manner of a happiness that was an ancient mode in Nineveh.

Eyes were bright, Grubb was funny and almost witty, and Bert achieved epigrams; the hedges were full of honeysuckle and dog-roses; in the woods the distant toot-toot-toot of the traffic on the dust-hazy high road might have been no more than the horns of elf-land. They laughed and gossiped and picked flowers and made love and talked, and the girls smoked cigarettes. Also they scuffled playfully. Among other things they talked aeronautics, and how thev would come for a picnic together in Bert's flying-machine before ten years were out. The world seemed full of amusing possibilities that afternoon. They wondered what their great-grandparents would have thought of aeronautics. In the evening, about seven, the party turned homeward, expecting no disaster, and it was only on the crest of the downs between Wrotham and Kingsdown that disaster came.

They had come up the hill in the twilight; Bert was anxious to get as far as possible before he lit — or attempted to light, for the issue was a doubtful one — his lamps, and they had scorched past a number of cyclists, and by a four-wheeled motor-car of the old style lamed by a deflated tyre. Some dust had penetrated Bert's horn, and the result was a curious, amusing, wheezing sound had got into his "honk, honk." For the sake of merriment and glory he was making this sound as much as possible, and Edna was in fits of laughter in the trailer. They made a sort of rushing cheerfulness along the road that affected their fellow travellers variously, according to their temperaments. She did notice a good lot of bluish, evil-smelling smoke coming from about the bearings between his feet, but she thought this was one of the natural concomitants of motor-traction, and troubled no more about it, until abruptly it burst into a little yellow-tipped flame.

"Bert!" she screamed.

But Bert had put on the brakes with such suddenness that she found herself involved with his leg as he dismounted. She got to the side of the road and hastily readjusted her hat, which had suffered.

"Gaw!" said Bert.

He stood for some fatal seconds watching the petrol drip and catch, and the flame, which was now beginning to smell of enamel as well as oil, spread and grew. His chief idea was the sorrowful one that he had not sold the machine second-hand a year ago, and that he

ought to have done so — a good idea in its way, but not immediately helpful. He turned upon Edna sharply. “Get a lot of wet sand,” he said. Then he wheeled the machine a little towards the side of the roadway, and laid it down and looked about for a supply of wet sand. The flames received this as a helpful attention, and made the most of it. They seemed to brighten and the twilight to deepen about them. The road was a flinty road in the chalk country, and ill-provided with sand.

Edna accosted a short, fat cyclist. “We want wet sand,” she said, and added, “our motor’s on fire.” The short, fat cyclist stared blankly for a moment, then with a helpful cry began to scrabble in the road-grit. Whereupon Bert and Edna also scrabbled in the road-grit. Other cyclists arrived, dismounted and stood about, and their flame-lit faces expressed satisfaction, interest, curiosity. “Wet sand,” said the short, fat man, scrabbling terribly— “wet sand.” One joined him. They threw hard-earned handfuls of road-grit upon the flames, which accepted them with enthusiasm.

Grubb arrived, riding hard. He was shouting something. He sprang off and threw his bicycle into the hedge. “Don’t throw water on it!” he said— “don’t throw water on it!” He displayed commanding presence of mind. He became captain of the occasion. Others were glad to repeat the things he said and imitate his actions.

“Don’t throw water on it!” they cried. Also there was no water.

“Beat it out, you fools!” he said.

He seized a rug from the trailer (it was an Austrian blanket, and Bert’s winter coverlet) and began to beat at the burning petrol. For a wonderful minute he seemed to succeed. But he scattered burning pools of petrol on the road, and others, fired by his enthusiasm, imitated his action. Bert caught up a trailer-cushion and began to beat; there was another cushion and a table-cloth, and these also were seized. A young hero pulled off his jacket and joined the beating. For a moment there was less talking than hard breathing, and a tremendous flapping. Flossie, arriving on the outskirts of the crowd, cried, “Oh, my God!” and burst loudly into tears. “Help!” she said, and “Fire!”

The lame motor-car arrived, and stopped in consternation. A tall, goggled, grey-haired man who was driving inquired with an Oxford

intonation and a clear, careful enunciation, “Can WE help at all?”

It became manifest that the rug, the table-cloth, the cushions, the jacket, were getting smeared with petrol and burning. The soul seemed to go out of the cushion Bert was swaying, and the air was full of feathers, like a snowstorm in the still twilight.

Bert had got very dusty and sweaty and strenuous. It seemed to him his weapon had been wrested from him at the moment of victory. The fire lay like a dying thing, close to the ground and wicked; it gave a leap of anguish at every whack of the beaters. But now Grubb had gone off to stamp out the burning blanket; the others were lacking just at the moment of victory. One had dropped the cushion and was running to the motor-car. “‘ERE!” cried Bert; “keep on!”

He flung the deflated burning rags of cushion aside, whipped off his jacket and sprang at the flames with a shout. He stamped into the ruin until flames ran up his boots. Edna saw him, a red-lit hero, and thought it was good to be a man.

A bystander was hit by a hot halfpenny flying out of the air. Then Bert thought of the papers in his pockets, and staggered back, trying to extinguish his burning jacket — checked, repulsed, dismayed.

Edna was struck by the benevolent appearance of an elderly spectator in a silk hat and Sabbatical garments. “Oh!” she cried to him. “Help this young man! How can you stand and see it?”

A cry of “The tarpaulin!” arose.

An earnest-looking man in a very light grey cycling-suit had suddenly appeared at the side of the lame motor-car and addressed the owner. “Have you a tarpaulin?” he said.

“Yes,” said the gentlemanly man. “Yes. We’ve got a tarpaulin.”

“That’s it,” said the earnest-looking man, suddenly shouting. “Let’s have it, quick!”

The gentlemanly man, with feeble and deprecatory gestures, and in the manner of a hypnotised person, produced an excellent large tarpaulin.

“Here!” cried the earnest-looking man to Grubb. “Ketch holt!”

Then everybody realised that a new method was to be tried. A number of willing hands seized upon the Oxford gentleman’s tarpaulin. The others stood away with approving noises. The

tarpaulin was held over the burning bicycle like a canopy, and then smothered down upon it.

"We ought to have done this before," panted Grubb.

There was a moment of triumph. The flames vanished. Every one who could contrive to do so touched the edge of the tarpaulin. Bert held down a corner with two hands and a foot. The tarpaulin, bulged up in the centre, seemed to be suppressing triumphant exultation. Then its self-approval became too much for it; it burst into a bright red smile in the centre. It was exactly like the opening of a mouth. It laughed with a gust of flames. They were reflected redly in the observant goggles of the gentleman who owned the tarpaulin. Everybody recoiled.

"Save the trailer!" cried some one, and that was the last round in the battle. But the trailer could not be detached; its wicker-work had caught, and it was the last thing to burn. A sort of hush fell upon the gathering. The petrol burnt low, the wicker-work trailer banged and crackled. The crowd divided itself into an outer circle of critics, advisers, and secondary characters, who had played undistinguished parts or no parts at all in the affair, and a central group of heated and distressed principals. A young man with an inquiring mind and a considerable knowledge of motor-bicycles fixed on to Grubb and wanted to argue that the thing could not have happened. Grubb wass short and inattentive with him, and the young man withdrew to the back of the crowd, and there told the benevolent old gentleman in the silk hat that people who went out with machines they didn't understand had only themselves to blame if things went wrong.

The old gentleman let him talk for some time, and then remarked, in a tone of rapturous enjoyment: "Stone deaf," and added, "Nasty things."

A rosy-faced man in a straw hat claimed attention. "I DID save the front wheel," he said; "you'd have had that tyre catch, too, if I hadn't kept turning it round." It became manifest that this was so. The front wheel had retained its tyre, was intact, was still rotating slowly among the blackened and twisted ruins of the rest of the machine. It had something of that air of conscious virtue, of unimpeachable respectability, that distinguishes a rent collector in a low neighbourhood. "That wheel's worth a pound," said the rosy-

faced man, making a song of it. “I kep’ turning it round.”

Newcomers kept arriving from the south with the question, “What’s up?” until it got on Grubb’s nerves. Londonward the crowd was constantly losing people; they would mount their various wheels with the satisfied manner of spectators who have had the best. Their voices would recede into the twilight; one would hear a laugh at the memory of this particularly salient incident or that.

“I’m afraid,” said the gentleman of the motor-car, “my tarpaulin’s a bit done for.”

Grubb admitted that the owner was the best judge of that.

“Nothin, else I can do for you?” said the gentleman of the motor-car, it may be with a suspicion of irony.

Bert was roused to action. “Look here,” he said. “There’s my young lady. If she ain’t ‘ome by ten they lock her out. See? Well, all my money was in my jacket pocket, and it’s all mixed up with the burnt stuff, and that’s too ‘ot to touch. Is Clapham out of your way?”

“All in the day’s work,” said the gentleman with the motor-car, and turned to Edna. “Very pleased indeed,” he said, “if you’ll come with us. We’re late for dinner as it is, so it won’t make much difference for us to go home by way of Clapham. We’ve got to get to Surbiton, anyhow. I’m afraid you’ll find us a little slow.”

“But what’s Bert going to do?” said Edna.

“I don’t know that we can accommodate Bert,” said the motor-car gentleman, “though we’re tremendously anxious to oblige.”

“You couldn’t take the whole lot?” said Bert, waving his hand at the deboshed and blackened ruins on the ground.

“I’m awfully afraid I can’t,” said the Oxford man. “Awfully sorry, you know.”

“Then I’ll have to stick ‘ere for a bit,” said Bert. “I got to see the thing through. You go on, Edna.”

“Don’t like leavin’ you, Bert.”

“You can’t ‘elp it, Edna.”...

The last Edna saw of Bert was his figure, in charred and blackened shirtsleeves, standing in the dusk. He was musing deeply by the mixed ironwork and ashes of his vanished motor-bicycle, a melancholy figure. His retinue of spectators had shrunk now to half a dozen figures. Flossie and Grubb were preparing to follow her

desertion.

“Cheer up, old Bert!” cried Edna, with artificial cheerfulness. “So long.”

“So long, Edna,” said Bert.

“See you to-morrer.”

“See you to-morrer,” said Bert, though he was destined, as a matter of fact, to see much of the habitable globe before he saw her again.

Bert began to light matches from a borrowed boxful, and search for a half-crown that still eluded him among the charred remains.

His face was grave and melancholy.

“I WISH that ‘adn’t ‘appened,” said Flossie, riding on with Grubb....

And at last Bert was left almost alone, a sad, blackened Promethean figure, cursed by the gift of fire. He had entertained vague ideas of hiring a cart, of achieving miraculous repairs, of still snatching some residual value from his one chief possession. Now, in the darkening night, he perceived the vanity of such intentions. Truth came to him bleakly, and laid her chill conviction upon him. He took hold of the handle-bar, stood the thing up, tried to push it forward. The tyreless hind-wheel was jammed hopelessly, even as he feared. For a minute or so he stood upholding his machine, a motionless despair. Then with a great effort he thrust the ruins from him into the ditch, kicked at it once, regarded it for a moment, and turned his face resolutely Londonward.

He did not once look back.

“That’s the end of THAT game!” said Bert. “No more teuf-teuf-teuf for Bert Smallways for a year or two. Good-bye ‘olidays!... Oh! I ought to ‘ave sold the blasted thing when I had a chance three years ago.”

3

The next morning found the firm of Grubb & Smallways in a state of profound despondency. It seemed a small matter to them that the newspaper and cigarette shop opposite displayed such placards as this: —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— ——

REPORTED AMERICAN ULTIMATUM.
BRITAIN MUST FIGHT.

OUR INFATUATED WAR OFFICE STILL
REFUSES TO LISTEN TO MR. BUTTERIDGE.
GREAT MONO-RAIL DISASTER AT TIMBUCTOO. —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —

or this: —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— WAR A QUESTION OF HOURS.
NEW YORK CALM.

EXCITEMENT IN BERLIN. —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —

or again: —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— WASHINGTON STILL SILENT.
WHAT WILL PARIS DO?

THE PANIC ON THE BOURSE.
THE KING'S GARDEN PARTY TO THE MASKED TWAREGS. MR. BUTTERIDGE TAKES AN OFFER. LATEST BETTING FROM TEHERAN. —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —

or this: —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— WILL AMERICA FIGHT?
ANTI-GERMAN RIOT IN BAGDAD.

THE MUNICIPAL SCANDALS AT DAMASCUS.
MR. BUTTERIDGE'S INVENTION FOR AMERICA. —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —

Bert stared at these over the card of pump-clips in the pane in the door with unseeing eyes. He wore a blackened flannel shirt, and the jacketless ruins of the holiday suit of yesterday. The boarded-up shop was dark and depressing beyond words, the few scandalous hiring machines had never looked so hopelessly disreputable. He thought of their fellows who were "out," and of the approaching disputations of the afternoon. He thought of their new landlord, and of their old landlord, and of bills and claims. Life presented itself for the first

time as a hopeless fight against fate....

"Grubb, o' man," he said, distilling the quintessence, "I'm fair sick of this shop."

"So'm I," said Grubb.

"I'm out of conceit with it. I don't seem to care ever to speak to a customer again."

"There's that trailer," said Grubb, after a pause.

"Blow the trailer!" said Bert. "Anyhow, I didn't leave a deposit on it. I didn't do that. Still—"

He turned round on his friend. "Look 'ere," he said, "we aren't gettin' on here. We been losing money hand over fist. We got things tied up in fifty knots."

"What can we do?" said Grubb.

"Clear out. Sell what we can for what it will fetch, and quit. See? It's no good 'anging on to a losing concern. No sort of good. Jest foolishness."

"That's all right," said Grubb— "that's all right; but it ain't your capital been sunk in it."

"No need for us to sink after our capital," said Bert, ignoring the point.

"I'm not going to be held responsible for that trailer, anyhow. That ain't my affair."

"Nobody arst you to make it your affair. If you like to stick on here, well and good. I'm quitting. I'll see Bank Holiday through, and then I'm O-R-P-H. See?"

"Leavin' me?"

"Leavin' you. If you must be left."

Grubb looked round the shop. It certainly had become distasteful. Once upon a time it had been bright with hope and new beginnings and stock and the prospect of credit. Now — now it was failure and dust. Very likely the landlord would be round presently to go on with the row about the window.... "Where d'you think of going, Bert?" Grubb asked.

Bert turned round and regarded him. "I thought it out as I was walking 'ome, and in bed. I couldn't sleep a wink."

"What did you think out?"

"Plans."

“What plans?”

“Oh! You’re for stickin, here.”

“Not if anything better was to offer.”

“It’s only an ideer,” said Bert.

“You made the girls laugh yestiday, that song you sang.”

“Seems a long time ago now,” said Grubb.

“And old Edna nearly cried — over that bit of mine.”

“She got a fly in her eye,” said Grubb; “I saw it. But what’s this got to do with your plan?”

“No end,” said Bert.

“‘Ow?”

“Don’t you see?”

“Not singing in the streets?”

“Streets! No fear! But ‘ow about the Tour of the Waterin’ Places of England, Grubb? Singing! Young men of family doing it for a lark? You ain’t got a bad voice, you know, and mine’s all right. I never see a chap singing on the beach yet that I couldn’t ‘ave sung into a cocked hat. And we both know how to put on the toff a bit. Eh? Well, that’s my ideer. Me and you, Grubb, with a refined song and a breakdown. Like we was doing for foolery yestiday. That was what put it into my ‘ead. Easy make up a programme — easy. Six choice items, and one or two for encores and patter. I’m all right for the patter anyhow.”

Grubb remained regarding his darkened and disheartening shop; he thought of his former landlord and his present landlord, and of the general disgustingness of business in an age which re-echoes to The Bitter Cry of the Middle Class; and then it seemed to him that afar off he heard the twankle, twankle of a banjo, and the voice of a stranded siren singing. He had a sense of hot sunshine upon sand, of the children of at least transiently opulent holiday makers in a circle round about him, of the whisper, “They are really gentlemen,” and then dollop, dollop came the coppers in the hat. Sometimes even silver. It was all income; no outgoings, no bills. “I’m on, Bert,” he said.

“Right O!” said Bert, and, “Now we shan’t be long.”

“We needn’t start without capital neither,” said Grubb. “If we take the best of these machines up to the Bicycle Mart in Finsbury we’d

raise six or seven pounds on ‘em. We could easy do that to-morrow before anybody much was about....”

“Nice to think of old Suet-and-Bones coming round to make his usual row with us, and finding a card up ‘Closed for Repairs.’”

“We’ll do that,” said Grubb with zest— “we’ll do that. And we’ll put up another notice, and jest arst all inquirers to go round to ‘im and inquire. See? Then they’ll know all about us.”

Before the day was out the whole enterprise was planned. They decided at first that they would call themselves the Naval Mr. O’s, a plagiarism, and not perhaps a very good one, from the title of the well-known troupe of “Scarlet Mr. E’s,” and Bert rather clung to the idea of a uniform of bright blue serge, with a lot of gold lace and cord and ornamentation, rather like a naval officer’s, but more so. But that had to be abandoned as impracticable, it would have taken too much time and money to prepare. They perceived they must wear some cheaper and more readily prepared costume, and Grubb fell back on white dominoes. They entertained the notion for a time of selecting the two worst machines from the hiring-stock, painting them over with crimson enamel paint, replacing the bells by the loudest sort of motor-horn, and doing a ride about to begin and end the entertainment. They doubted the advisability of this step.

“There’s people in the world,” said Bert, “who wouldn’t recognise us, who’d know them bicycles again like a shot, and we don’t want to go on with no old stories. We want a fresh start.”

“I do,” said Grubb, “badly.”

“We want to forget things — and cut all these rotten old worries. They ain’t doin’ us good.”

Nevertheless, they decided to take the risk of these bicycles, and they decided their costumes should be brown stockings and sandals, and cheap unbleached sheets with a hole cut in the middle, and wigs and beards of tow. The rest their normal selves! “The Desert Dervishes,” they would call themselves, and their chief songs would be those popular ditties, “In my Trailer,” and “What Price Hair-pins Now?”

They decided to begin with small seaside places, and gradually, as they gained confidence, attack larger centres. To begin with they selected Littlestone in Kent, chiefly because of its unassuming name.

So they planned, and it seemed a small and unimportant thing to them that as they clattered the governments of half the world and more were drifting into war. About midday they became aware of the first of the evening-paper placards shouting to them across the street: —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— ——

THE WAR-CLOUD DARKENS —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —— —

Nothing else but that.

"Always rottin' about war now," said Bert.

"They'll get it in the neck in real earnest one of these days, if they ain't precious careful."

4

So you will understand the sudden apparition that surprised rather than delighted the quiet informality of Dymchurch sands. Dymchurch was one of the last places on the coast of England to be reached by the mono-rail, and so its spacious sands were still, at the time of this story, the secret and delight of quite a limited number of people. They went there to flee vulgarity and extravagances, and to bathe and sit and talk and play with their children in peace, and the Desert Dervishes did not please them at all.

The two white figures on scarlet wheels came upon them out of the infinite along the sands from Littlestone, grew nearer and larger and more audible, honk-honking and emitting weird cries, and generally threatening liveliness of the most aggressive type. "Good heavens!" said Dymchurch, "what's this?"

Then our young men, according to a preconcerted plan, wheeled round from file to line, dismounted and stood it attention. "Ladies and gentlemen," they said, "we beg to present ourselves — the Desert Dervishes." They bowed profoundly.

The few scattered groups upon the beach regarded them with horror for

the most part, but some of the children and young people were interested

and drew nearer. "There ain't a bob on the beach," said Grubb in

an
undertone, and the Desert Dervishes plied their bicycles with comic
"business," that got a laugh from one very unsophisticated little boy.
Then they took a deep breath and struck into the cheerful strain of
"What Price Hair-pins Now?" Grubb sang the song, Bert did his best to
make the chorus a rousing one, and it the end of each verse they danced
certain steps, skirts in hand, that they had carefully rehearsed.

"Ting-a-ling-a-ting-a-ling-a-ting-a-ling-a-tang...
What Price Hair-pins Now?"

So they chanted and danced their steps in the sunshine on Dymchurch beach, and the children drew near these foolish young men, marvelling that they should behave in this way, and the older people looked cold and unfriendly.

All round the coasts of Europe that morning banjos were ringing, voices were bawling and singing, children were playing in the sun, pleasure-boats went to and fro; the common abundant life of the time, unsuspicious of all dangers that gathered darkly against it, flowed on its cheerful aimless way. In the cities men fussed about their businesses and engagements. The newspaper placards that had cried "wolf!" so often, cried "wolf!" now in vain.

5

Now as Bert and Grubb bawled their chorus for the third time, they
became aware of a very big, golden-brown balloon low in the sky to the
north-west, and coming rapidly towards them. "Jest as we're gettin' hold
of 'em," muttered Grubb, "up comes a counter-attraction. Go it, Bert!"

"Ting-a-ling-a-ting-a-ling-a-ting-a-ling-a-tang

What Price Hair-pins Now?”

The balloon rose and fell, went out of sight— “landed, thank goodness,” said Grubb — re-appeared with a leap. “‘ENG!” said Grubb. “Step it, Bert, or they’ll see it!”

They finished their dance, and then stood frankly staring.

“There’s something wrong with that balloon,” said Bert.

Everybody now was looking at the balloon, drawing rapidly nearer before a brisk north-westerly breeze. The song and dance were a “dead frost.” Nobody thought any more about it. Even Bert and Grubb forgot it, and ignored the next item on the programme altogether. The balloon was bumping as though its occupants were trying to land; it would approach, sinking slowly, touch the ground, and instantly jump fifty feet or so in the air and immediately begin to fall again. Its car touched a clump of trees, and the black figure that had been struggling in the ropes fell back, or jumped back, into the car. In another moment it was quite close. It seemed a huge affair, as big as a house, and it floated down swiftly towards the sands; a long rope trailed behind it, and enormous shouts came from the man in the car. He seemed to be taking off his clothes, then his head came over the side of the car. “Catch hold of the rope!” they heard, quite plain.

“Salvage, Bert!” cried Grubb, and started to head off the rope.

Bert followed him, and collided, without upsetting, with a fisherman bent upon a similar errand. A woman carrying a baby in her arms, two small boys with toy spades, and a stout gentleman in flannels all got to the trailing rope at about the same time, and began to dance over it in their attempts to secure it. Bert came up to this wriggling, elusive serpent and got his foot on it, went down on all fours and achieved a grip. In half a dozen seconds the whole diffused population of the beach had, as it were, crystallised on the rope, and was pulling against the balloon under the vehement and stimulating directions of the man in the car. “Pull, I tell you!” said the man in the car— “pull!”

For a second or so the balloon obeyed its momentum and the wind and tugged its human anchor seaward. It dropped, touched the water, and made a flat, silvery splash, and recoiled as one’s finger recoils when one touches anything hot. “Pull her in,” said the man in the car. “SHE’S FAINTED!”

He occupied himself with some unseen object while the people on the rope pulled him in. Bert was nearest the balloon, and much excited and interested. He kept stumbling over the tail of the Dervish costume in his zeal. He had never imagined before what a big, light, wallowing thing a balloon was. The car was of brown coarse wicker-work, and comparatively small. The rope he tugged at was fastened to a stout-looking ring, four or five feet above the car. At each tug he drew in a yard or so of rope, and the waggling wicker-work was drawn so much nearer. Out of the car came wrathful bellowings: "Fainted, she has!" and then: "It's her heart — broken with all she's had to go through."

The balloon ceased to struggle, and sank downward. Bert dropped the rope, and ran forward to catch it in a new place. In another moment he had his hand on the car. "Lay hold of it," said the man in the car, and his face appeared close to Bert's — a strangely familiar face, fierce eyebrows, a flattish nose, a huge black moustache. He had discarded coat and waistcoat — perhaps with some idea of presently having to swim for his life — and his black hair was extraordinarily disordered. "Will all you people get hold round the car?" he said. "There's a lady here fainted — or got failure of the heart. Heaven alone knows which! My name is Butteridge. Butteridge, my name is — in a balloon. Now please, all on to the edge. This is the last time I trust myself to one of these paleolithic contrivances. The ripping-cord failed, and the valve wouldn't act. If ever I meet the scoundrel who ought to have seen—"

He stuck his head out between the ropes abruptly, and said, in a note of earnest expostulation: "Get some brandy! — some neat brandy!" Some one went up the beach for it.

In the car, sprawling upon a sort of bed-bench, in an attitude of elaborate self-abandonment, was a large, blond lady, wearing a fur coat and a big floriferous hat. Her head lolled back against the padded corner of the car, and her eyes were shut and her mouth open. "Me dear!" said Mr. Butteridge, in a common, loud voice, "we're safe!"

She gave no sign.

"Me dear!" said Mr. Butteridge, in a greatly intensified loud voice, "we're safe!"

She was still quite impassive.

Then Mr. Butteridge showed the fiery core of his soul. “If she is dead,” he said, slowly lifting a fist towards the balloon above him, and speaking in an immense tremulous bellow— “if she is dead, I will r-r-rend the heavens like a garment! I must get her out,” he cried, his nostrils dilated with emotion— “I must get her out. I cannot have her die in a wicker-work basket nine feet square — she who was made for kings’ palaces! Keep holt of this car! Is there a strong man among ye to take her if I hand her out?”

He swept the lady together by a powerful movement of his arms, and lifted her. “Keep the car from jumping,” he said to those who clustered about him. “Keep your weight on it. She is no light woman, and when she is out of it — it will be relieved.”

Bert leapt lightly into a sitting position on the edge of the car. The others took a firmer grip upon the ropes and ring.

“Are you ready?” said Mr. Butteridge.

He stood upon the bed-bench and lifted the lady carefully. Then he sat down on the wicker edge opposite to Bert, and put one leg over to dangle outside. A rope or so seemed to incommode him. “Will some one assist me?” he said. “If they would take this lady?”

It was just at this moment, with Mr. Butteridge and the lady balanced finely on the basket brim, that she came-to. She came-to suddenly and violently with a loud, heart-rending cry of “Alfred! Save me!” And she waved her arms searchingly, and then clasped Mr. Butteridge about.

It seemed to Bert that the car swayed for a moment and then buck-jumped and kicked him. Also he saw the boots of the lady and the right leg of the gentleman describing arcs through the air, preparatory to vanishing over the side of the car. His impressions were complex, but they also comprehended the fact that he had lost his balance, and was going to stand on his head inside this creaking basket. He spread out clutching arms. He did stand on his head, more or less, his tow-beard came off and got in his mouth, and his cheek slid along against padding. His nose buried itself in a bag of sand. The car gave a violent lurch, and became still.

“Confound it!” he said.

He had an impression he must be stunned because of a surging in

his ears, and because all the voices of the people about him had become small and remote. They were shouting like elves inside a hill.

He found it a little difficult to get on his feet. His limbs were mixed up with the garments Mr. Butteridge had discarded when that gentleman had thought he must needs plunge into the sea. Bert bawled out half angry, half rueful, “You might have said you were going to tip the basket.” Then he stood up and clutched the ropes of the car convulsively.

Below him, far below him, shining blue, were the waters of the English Channel. Far off, a little thing in the sunshine, and rushing down as if some one was bending it hollow, was the beach and the irregular cluster of houses that constitutes Dymchurch. He could see the little crowd of people he had so abruptly left. Grubb, in the white wrapper of a Desert Dervish, was running along the edge of the sea. Mr. Butteridge was knee-deep in the water, bawling immensely. The lady was sitting up with her floriferous hat in her lap, shockingly neglected. The beach, east and west, was dotted with little people — they seemed all heads and feet — looking up. And the balloon, released from the twenty-five stone or so of Mr. Butteridge and his lady, was rushing up into the sky at the pace of a racing motor-car. “My crikey!” said Bert; “here’s a go!”

He looked down with a pinched face at the receding beach, and reflected that he wasn’t giddy; then he made a superficial survey of the cords and ropes about him with a vague idea of “doing something.” “I’m not going to mess about with the thing,” he said at last, and sat down upon the mattress. “I’m not going to touch it.... I wonder what one ought to do?”

Soon he got up again and stared for a long time it the sinking world below, at white cliffs to the east and flattening marsh to the left, at a minute wide prospect of weald and downland, at dim towns and harbours and rivers and ribbon-like roads, at ships and ships, decks and foreshortened funnels upon the ever-widening sea, and at the great mono-rail bridge that straddled the Channel from Folkestone to Boulogne, until at last, first little wisps and then a veil of filmy cloud hid the prospect from his eyes. He wasn’t at all giddy nor very much frightened, only in a state of enormous consternation.

CHAPTER III. THE BALLOON

I

Bert Smallways was a vulgar little creature, the sort of pert, limited soul that the old civilisation of the early twentieth century produced by the million in every country of the world. He had lived all his life in narrow streets, and between mean houses he could not look over, and in a narrow circle of ideas from which there was no escape. He thought the whole duty of man was to be smarter than his fellows, get his hands, as he put it, "on the dibs," and have a good time. He was, in fact, the sort of man who had made England and America what they were. The luck had been against him so far, but that was by the way. He was a mere aggressive and acquisitive individual with no sense of the State, no habitual loyalty, no devotion, no code of honour, no code even of courage. Now by a curious accident he found himself lifted out of his marvellous modern world for a time, out of all the rush and confused appeals of it, and floating like a thing dead and disembodied between sea and sky. It was as if Heaven was experimenting with him, had picked him out as a sample from the English millions, to look at him more nearly, and to see what was happening to the soul of man. But what Heaven made of him in that case I cannot profess to imagine, for I have long since abandoned all theories about the ideals and satisfactions of Heaven.

To be alone in a balloon at a height of fourteen or fifteen thousand feet — and to that height Bert Smallways presently rose is like nothing else in human experience. It is one of the supreme things possible to man. No flying machine can ever better it. It is to pass extraordinarily out of human things. It is to be still and alone to an unprecedented degree. It is solitude without the suggestion of intervention; it is calm without a single irrelevant murmur. It is to see the sky. No sound reaches one of all the roar and jar of humanity, the air is clear and sweet beyond the thought of defilement. No bird, no insect comes so high. No wind blows ever in a balloon, no breeze rustles, for it moves with the wind and is itself a part of the atmosphere. Once started, it does not rock nor sway; you cannot feel

whether it rises or falls. Bert felt acutely cold, but he wasn't mountain-sick; he put on the coat and overcoat and gloves Butteridge had discarded — put them over the "Desert Dervish" sheet that covered his cheap best suit — and sat very still for a long, time, overawed by the new-found quiet of the world. Above him was the light, translucent, billowing globe of shining brown oiled silk and the blazing sunlight and the great deep blue dome of the sky.

Below, far below, was a torn floor of sunlit cloud slashed by enormous rents through which he saw the sea.

If you had been watching him from below, you would have seen his head, a motionless little black knob, sticking out from the car first of all for a long time on one side, and then vanishing to reappear after a time at some other point.

He wasn't in the least degree uncomfortable nor afraid. He did think that as this uncontrollable thing had thus rushed up the sky with him it might presently rush down again, but this consideration did not trouble him very much. Essentially his state was wonder. There is no fear nor trouble in balloons — until they descend.

"Gollys!" he said at last, feeling a need for talking; "it's better than a motor-bike."

"It's all right!"

"I suppose they're telegraphing about, about me."...

The second hour found him examining the equipment of the car with great particularity. Above him was the throat of the balloon bunched and tied together, but with an open lumen through which Bert could peer up into a vast, empty, quiet interior, and out of which descended two fine cords of unknown import, one white, one crimson, to pockets below the ring. The netting about the balloon-ended in cords attached to the ring, a big steel-bound hoop to which the car was slung by ropes. From it depended the trail rope and grapnel, and over the sides of the car were a number of canvas bags that Bert decided must be ballast to "chuck down" if the balloon fell. ("Not much falling just yet," said Bert.)

There were an aneroid and another box-shaped instrument hanging from the ring. The latter had an ivory plate bearing "statoscope" and other words in French, and a little indicator quivered and waggled, between Montee and Descente. "That's all

right," said Bert. "That tells if you're going up or down." On the crimson padded seat of the balloon there lay a couple of rugs and a Kodak, and in opposite corners of the bottom of the car were an empty champagne bottle and a glass. "Refreshments," said Bert meditatively, tilting the empty bottle. Then he had a brilliant idea. The two padded bed-like seats, each with blankets and mattress, he perceived, were boxes, and within he found Mr. Butteridge's conception of an adequate equipment for a balloon ascent: a hamper which included a game pie, a Roman pie, a cold fowl, tomatoes, lettuce, ham sandwiches, shrimp sandwiches, a large cake, knives and forks and paper plates, self-heating tins of coffee and cocoa, bread, butter, and marmalade, several carefully packed bottles of champagne, bottles of Perrier water, and a big jar of water for washing, a portfolio, maps, and a compass, a rucksack containing a number of conveniences, including curling-tongs and hair-pins, a cap with ear-flaps, and so forth.

"A 'ome from 'ome," said Bert, surveying this provision as he tied the ear-flaps under his chin. He looked over the side of the car. Far below were the shining clouds. They had thickened so that the whole world was hidden. Southward they were piled in great snowy masses, so that he was half disposed to think them mountains; northward and eastward they were in wavelike levels, and blindingly sunlit.

"Wonder how long a balloon keeps up?" he said.

He imagined he was not moving, so insensibly did the monster drift with the air about it. "No good coming down till we shift a bit," he said.

He consulted the statoscope.

"Still Monty," he said.

"Wonder what would happen if you pulled a cord?"

"No," he decided. "I ain't going to mess it about."

Afterwards he did pull both the ripping- and the valve-cords, but, as Mr. Butteridge had already discovered, they had fouled a fold of silk in the throat. Nothing happened. But for that little hitch the ripping-cord would have torn the balloon open as though it had been slashed by a sword, and hurled Mr. Smallways to eternity at the rate of some thousand feet a second. "No go!" he said, giving it a final

tug. Then he lunched.

He opened a bottle of champagne, which, as soon as he cut the wire, blew its cork out with incredible violence, and for the most part followed it into space. Bert, however, got about a tumblerful. “Atmospheric pressure,” said Bert, finding a use at last for the elementary physiography of his seventh-standard days. “I’ll have to be more careful next time. No good wastin’ drink.”

Then he routed about for matches to utilise Mr. Butteridge’s cigars; but here again luck was on his side, and he couldn’t find any wherewith to set light to the gas above him. Or else he would have dropped in a flare, a splendid but transitory pyrotechnic display. “‘Eng old Grubb!” said Bert, slapping unproductive pockets. “‘E didn’t ought to ‘ave kep’ my box. ‘E’s always sneaking matches.”

He reposed for a time. Then he got up, paddled about, rearranged the ballast bags on the floor, watched the clouds for a time, and turned over the maps on the locker. Bert liked maps, and he spent some time in trying to find one of France or the Channel; but they were all British ordnance maps of English counties. That set him thinking about languages and trying to recall his seventh-standard French. “Je suis Anglais. C’est une meprise. Je suis arrive par accident ici,” he decided upon as convenient phrases. Then it occurred to him that he would entertain himself by reading Mr. Butteridge’s letters and examining his pocket-book, and in this manner he whiled away the afternoon.

2

He sat upon the padded locker, wrapped about very carefully, for the air, though calm, was exhilaratingly cold and clear. He was wearing first a modest suit of blue serge and all the unpretending underwear of a suburban young man of fashion, with sandal-like cycling-shoes and brown stockings drawn over his trouser ends; then the perforated sheet proper to a Desert Dervish; then the coat and waistcoat and big fur-trimmed overcoat of Mr. Butteridge; then a lady’s large fur cloak, and round his knees a blanket. Over his head was a tow wig, surmounted by a large cap of Mr. Butteridge’s with the flaps down over his ears. And some fur sleeping-boots of Mr. Butteridge’s

warmed his feet. The car of the balloon was small and neat, some bags of ballast the untidiest of its contents, and he had found a light folding-table and put it at his elbow, and on that was a glass with champagne. And about him, above and below, was space — such a clear emptiness and silence of space as only the aeronaut can experience.

He did not know where he might be drifting, or what might happen next. He accepted this state of affairs with a serenity creditable to the Smallways' courage, which one might reasonably have expected to be of a more degenerate and contemptible quality altogether. His impression was that he was bound to come down somewhere, and that then, if he wasn't smashed, some one, some "society" perhaps, would probably pack him and the balloon back to England. If not, he would ask very firmly for the British Consul.

"Le consuelo Britannique," he decided this would be. "Apportez moi a le consuelo Britannique, s'il vous plait," he would say, for he was by no means ignorant of French. In the meanwhile, he found the intimate aspects of Mr. Butteridge an interesting study.

There were letters of an entirely private character addressed to Mr. Butteridge, and among others several love-letters of a devouring sort in a large feminine hand. These are no business of ours, and one remarks with regret that Bert read them.

When he had read them he remarked, "Gollys!" in an awestricken tone, and then, after a long interval, "I wonder if that was her?

"Lord!"

He mused for a time.

He resumed his exploration of the Butteridge interior. It included a number of press cuttings of interviews and also several letters in German, then some in the same German handwriting, but in English. "Hul-LO!" said Bert.

One of the latter, the first he took, began with an apology to Butteridge for not writing to him in English before, and for the inconvenience and delay that had been caused him by that, and went on to matter that Bert found exciting in, the highest degree. "We can understand entirely the difficulties of your position, and that you shall possibly be watched at the present juncture. — But, sir, we do not believe that any serious obstacles will be put in your way if you

wished to endeavour to leave the country and come to us with your plans by the customary routes — either via Dover, Ostend, Boulogne, or Dieppe. We find it difficult to think you are right in supposing yourself to be in danger of murder for your invaluable invention."

"Funny!" said Bert, and meditated.

Then he went through the other letters.

"They seem to want him to come," said Bert, "but they don't seem hurting themselves to get 'im. Or else they're shamming don't care to get his prices down.

"They don't quite seem to be the gov'ment," he reflected, after an interval. "It's more like some firm's paper. All this printed stuff at the top. Drachenflieger. Drachenballons. Ballonstoffe. Kugelballons. Greek to me.

"But he was trying to sell his blessed secret abroad. That's all right. No Greek about that! Gollys! Here IS the secret!"

He tumbled off the seat, opened the locker, and had the portfolio open before him on the folding-table. It was full of drawings done in the peculiar flat style and conventional colours engineers adopt. And, in, addition there were some rather under-exposed photographs, obviously done by an amateur, at close quarters, of the actual machine's mutterings had made, in its shed near the Crystal Palace. Bert found he was trembling. "Lord" he said, "here am I and the whole blessed secret of flying — lost up here on the roof of everywhere.

"Let's see!" He fell to studying the drawings and comparing them with the photographs. They puzzled him. Half of them seemed to be missing. He tried to imagine how they fitted together, and found the effort too great for his mind.

"It's tryin'," said Bert. "I wish I'd been brought up to the engineering. If I could only make it out!"

He went to the side of the car and remained for a time staring with unseeing eyes at a huge cluster of great clouds — a cluster of slowly dissolving Monte Rosas, sunlit below. His attention was arrested by a strange black spot that moved over them. It alarmed him. It was a black spot moving slowly with him far below, following him down there, indefatigably, over the cloud mountains. Why should such a

thing follow him? What could it be?...

He had an inspiration. “Uv course!” he said. It was the shadow of the balloon. But he still watched it dubiously for a time.

He returned to the plans on the table.

He spent a long afternoon between his struggles to understand them and fits of meditation. He evolved a remarkable new sentence in French.

“Voici, Mossoo! — Je suis un inventeur Anglais. Mon nom est Butteridge. Beh. oo. teh. teh. eh. arr. I. deh. geh. eh. J’avais ici pour vendre le secret de le flying-machine. Comprenez? Vendre pour l’argent tout suite, l’argent en main. Comprenez? C’est le machine a jouer dans l’air. Comprenez? C’est le machine a faire l’oiseau. Comprenez? Balancer? Oui, exactement! Battir l’oiseau en fait, a son propre jeu. Je desire de vendre ceci a votre government national. Voulez vous me directer la?

“Bit rummy, I expect, from the point of view of grammar,” said Bert, “but they ought to get the hang of it all right.

“But then, if they arst me to explain the blessed thing?”

He returned in a worried way to the plans. “I don’t believe it’s all here!” he said....

He got more and more perplexed up there among the clouds as to what he should do with this wonderful find of his. At any moment, so far as he knew he might descend among he knew not what foreign people.

“It’s the chance of my life!” he said.

It became more and more manifest to him that it wasn’t. “Directly I come down they’ll telegraph — put it in the papers. Butteridge’ll know of it and come along — on my track.”

Butteridge would be a terrible person to be on any one’s track. Bert thought of the great black moustaches, the triangular nose, the searching bellow and the glare. His afternoon’s dream of a marvellous seizure and sale of the great Butteridge secret crumpled up in his mind, dissolved, and vanished. He awoke to sanity again.

“Wouldn’t do. What’s the good of thinking of it?” He proceeded slowly and reluctantly to replace the Butteridge papers in pockets and portfolio as he had found them. He became aware of a splendid golden light upon the balloon above him, and of a new warmth in the

blue dome of the sky. He stood up and beheld the sun, a great ball of blinding gold, setting upon a tumbled sea of gold-edged crimson and purple clouds, strange and wonderful beyond imagining. Eastward cloud-land stretched for ever, darkling blue, and it seemed to Bert the whole round hemisphere of the world was under his eyes.

Then far, away over the blue he caught sight of three long, dark shapes like hurrying fish that drove one after the other, as porpoises follow one another in the water. They were very fish-like indeed — with tails. It was an unconvincing impression in that light. He blinked his eyes, stared again, and they had vanished. For a long time he scrutinised those remote blue levels and saw no more....

"Wonder if I ever saw anything," he said, and then: "There ain't such things...."

Down went the sun and down, not diving steeply, but passing northward as it sank, and then suddenly daylight and the expansive warmth of daylight had gone altogether, and the index of the statoscope quivered over to Descente.

3

"NOW what's going to 'appen?" said Bert.

He found the cold, grey cloud wilderness rising towards him with a wide, slow steadiness. As he sank down among them the clouds ceased to seem the snowclad mountain-slopes they had resembled heretofore, became unsubstantial, confessed an immense silent drift and eddy in their substance. For a moment, when he was nearly among their twilight masses, his descent was checked. Then abruptly the sky was hidden, the last vestiges of daylight gone, and he was falling rapidly in an evening twilight through a whirl of fine snowflakes that streamed past him towards the zenith, that drifted in upon the things about him and melted, that touched his face with ghostly fingers. He shivered. His breath came smoking from his lips, and everything was instantly bedewed and wet.

He had an impression of a snowstorm pouring with unexampled and increasing fury UPWARD; then he realised that he was falling faster and faster.

Imperceptibly a sound grew upon his ears. The great silence of the

world was at an end. What was this confused sound?

He craned his head over the side, concerned, perplexed.

First he seemed to see, and then not to see. Then he saw clearly little edges of foam pursuing each other, and a wide waste of weltering waters below him. Far away was a pilot boat with a big sail bearing dim black letters, and a little pinkish-yellow light, and it was rolling and pitching, rolling and pitching in a gale, while he could feel no wind at, all. Soon the sound of waters was loud and near. He was dropping, dropping — into the sea!

He became convulsively active.

"Ballast!" he cried, and seized a little sack from the floor, and heaved it overboard. He did not wait for the effect of that, but sent another after it. He looked over in time to see a minute white splash in the dim waters below him, and then he was back in the snow and clouds again.

He sent out quite needlessly a third sack of ballast and a fourth, and presently had the immense satisfaction of soaring up out of the damp and chill into the clear, cold, upper air in which the day still lingered. "Thang-God!" he said, with all his heart.

A few stars now had pierced the blue, and in the east there shone brightly a prolate moon.

4

That first downward plunge filled Bert with a haunting sense of boundless waters below. It was a summer's night, but it seemed to him, nevertheless, extraordinarily long. He had a feeling of insecurity that he fancied quite irrationally the sunrise would dispel. Also he was hungry. He felt, in the dark, in the locker, put his fingers in the Roman pie, and got some sandwiches, and he also opened rather successfully a half-bottle of champagne. That warmed and restored him, he grumbled at Grubb about the matches, wrapped himself up warmly on the locker, and dozed for a time. He got up once or twice to make sure that he was still securely high above the sea. The first time the moonlit clouds were white and dense, and the shadow of the balloon ran athwart them like a dog that followed; afterwards they seemed thinner. As he lay still, staring up at the huge dark balloon

above, he made a discovery. His — or rather Mr. Butteridge's — waistcoat rustled as he breathed. It was lined with papers. But Bert could not see to get them out or examine them, much as he wished to do so....

He was awakened by the crowing of cocks, the barking of dogs, and a clamour of birds. He was driving slowly at a low level over a broad land lit golden by sunrise under a clear sky. He stared out upon hedgeless, well-cultivated fields intersected by roads, each lined with cable-bearing red poles. He had just passed over a compact, whitewashed, village with a straight church tower and steep red-tiled roofs. A number of peasants, men and women, in shiny blouses and lumpish footwear, stood regarding him, arrested on their way to work. He was so low that the end of his rope was trailing.

He stared out at these people. "I wonder how you land," he thought.

"S'pose I OUGHT to land?"

He found himself drifting down towards a mono-rail line, and hastily flung out two or three handfuls of ballast to clear it.

"Lemme see! One might say just 'Pre'nez'! Wish I knew the French for take hold of the rope!... I suppose they are French?"

He surveyed the country again. "Might be Holland. Or Luxembourg. Or Lorraine 's far as *I* know. Wonder what those big affairs over there are? Some sort of kiln. Prosperous-looking country..."

The respectability of the country's appearance awakened answering chords in his nature.

"Make myself a bit ship-shape first," he said.

He resolved to rise a little and get rid of his wig (which now felt hot on his head), and so forth. He threw out a bag of ballast, and was astonished to find himself careering up through the air very rapidly.

"Blow!" said Mr. Smallways. "I've over-done the ballast trick.... Wonder when I shall get down again?... brekfus' on board, anyhow."

He removed his cap and wig, for the air was warm, and an improvident impulse made him cast the latter object overboard. The statoscope responded with a vigorous swing to Monte.

"The blessed thing goes up if you only LOOK overboard," he remarked, and assailed the locker. He found among other items

several tins of liquid cocoa containing explicit directions for opening that he followed with minute care. He pierced the bottom with the key provided in the holes indicated, and forthwith the can grew from cold to hotter and hotter, until at last he could scarcely touch it, and then he opened the can at the other end, and there was his cocoa smoking, without the use of match or flame of any sort. It was an old invention, but new to Bert. There was also ham and marmalade and bread, so that he had a really very tolerable breakfast indeed.

Then he took off his overcoat, for the sunshine was now inclined to be hot, and that reminded him of the rustling he had heard in the night. He took off the waistcoat and examined it. "Old Butteridge won't like me unpicking this." He hesitated, and finally proceeded to unpick it. He found the missing drawings of the lateral rotating planes, on which the whole stability of the flying machine depended.

An observant angel would have seen Bert sitting for a long time after this discovery in a state of intense meditation. Then at last he rose with an air of inspiration, took Mr. Butteridge's ripped, demolished, and ransacked waistcoat, and hurled it from the balloon whence it fluttered down slowly and eddyingly until at last it came to rest with a contented flop upon the face of German tourist sleeping peacefully beside the Hohenweg near Wildbad. Also this sent the balloon higher, and so into a position still more convenient for observation by our imaginary angel who would next have seen Mr. Smallways tear open his own jacket and waistcoat, remove his collar, open his shirt, thrust his hand into his bosom, and tear his heart out — or at least, if not his heart, some large bright scarlet object. If the observer, overcoming a thrill of celestial horror, had scrutinised this scarlet object more narrowly, one of Bert's most cherished secrets, one of his essential weaknesses, would have been laid bare. It was a red-flannel chest-protector, one of those large quasi-hygienic objects that with pills and medicines take the place of beneficial relics and images among the Protestant peoples of Christendom. Always Bert wore this thing; it was his cherished delusion, based on the advice of a shilling fortune-teller at Margate, that he was weak in the lungs.

He now proceeded to unbutton his fetish, to attack it with a penknife, and to thrust the new-found plans between the two layers of imitation Saxony flannel of which it was made. Then with the help

of Mr. Butteridge's small shaving mirror and his folding canvas basin he readjusted his costume with the gravity of a man who has taken an irrevocable step in life, buttoned up his jacket, cast the white sheet of the Desert Dervish on one side, washed temperately, shaved, resumed the big cap and the fur overcoat, and, much refreshed by these exercises, surveyed the country below him.

It was indeed a spectacle of incredible magnificence. If perhaps it was not so strange and magnificent as the sunlit cloudland of the previous day, it was at any rate infinitely more interesting.

The air was at its utmost clearness and except to the south and south-west there was not a cloud in the sky. The country was hilly, with occasional fir plantations and bleak upland spaces, but also with numerous farms, and the hills were deeply intersected by the gorges of several winding rivers interrupted at intervals by the banked-up ponds and weirs of electric generating wheels. It was dotted with bright-looking, steep-roofed, villages, and each showed a distinctive and interesting church beside its wireless telegraph steeple; here and there were large chateaux and parks and white roads, and paths lined with red and white cable posts were extremely conspicuous in the landscape. There were walled enclosures like gardens and rickyards and great roofs of barns and many electric dairy centres. The uplands were mottled with cattle. At places he would see the track of one of the old railroads (converted now to mono-rails) dodging through tunnels and crossing embankments, and a rushing hum would mark the passing of a train. Everything was extraordinarily clear as well as minute. Once or twice he saw guns and soldiers, and was reminded of the stir of military preparations he had witnessed on the Bank Holiday in England; but there was nothing to tell him that these military preparations were abnormal or to explain an occasional faint irregular firing Of guns that drifted up to him....

"Wish I knew how to get down," said Bert, ten thousand feet or so above it all, and gave himself to much futile tugging at the red and white cords. Afterwards he made a sort of inventory of the provisions. Life in the high air was giving him an appalling appetite, and it seemed to him discreet at this stage to portion out his supply into rations. So far as he could see he might pass a week in the air.

At first all the vast panorama below had been as silent as a painted

picture. But as the day wore on and the gas diffused slowly from the balloon, it sank earthward again, details increased, men became more visible, and he began to hear the whistle and moan of trains and cars, sounds of cattle, bugles and kettle drums, and presently even men's voices. And at last his guide-rope was trailing again, and he found it possible to attempt a landing. Once or twice as the rope dragged over cables he found his hair erect with electricity, and once he had a slight shock, and sparks snapped about the car. He took these things among the chances of the voyage. He had one idea now very clear in his mind, and that was to drop the iron grapnel that hung from the ring.

From the first this attempt was unfortunate, perhaps because the place for descent was ill-chosen. A balloon should come down in an empty open space, and he chose a crowd. He made his decision suddenly, and without proper reflection. As he trailed, Bert saw ahead of him one of the most attractive little towns in the world — a cluster of steep gables surmounted by a high church tower and diversified with trees, walled, and with a fine, large gateway opening out upon a tree-lined high road. All the wires and cables of the countryside converged upon it like guests to entertainment. It had a most home-like and comfortable quality, and it was made gayer by abundant flags. Along the road a quantity of peasant folk, in big pair-wheeled carts and afoot, were coming and going, besides an occasional mono-rail car; and at the car-junction, under the trees outside the town, was a busy little fair of booths. It seemed a warm, human, well-rooted, and altogether delightful place to Bert. He came low over the tree-tops, with his grapnel ready to throw and so anchor him — a curious, interested, and interesting guest, so his imagination figured it, in the very middle of it all.

He thought of himself performing feats with the sign language and chance linguistics amidst a circle of admiring rustics....

And then the chapter of adverse accidents began.

The rope made itself unpopular long before the crowd had fully realised his advent over the trees. An elderly and apparently intoxicated peasant in a shiny black hat, and carrying a large crimson umbrella, caught sight of it first as it trailed past him, and was seized with a discreditable ambition to kill it. He pursued it, briskly with

unpleasant cries. It crossed the road obliquely, splashed into a pail of milk upon a stall, and slapped its milky tail athwart a motor-car load of factory girls halted outside the town gates. They screamed loudly. People looked up and saw Bert making what he meant to be genial salutations, but what they considered, in view of the feminine outcry, to be insulting gestures. Then the car hit the roof of the gatehouse smartly, snapped a flag staff, played a tune upon some telegraph wires, and sent a broken wire like a whip-lash to do its share in accumulating unpopularity. Bert, by clutching convulsively, just escaped being pitched headlong. Two young soldiers and several peasants shouted things up to him and shook fists at him and began to run in pursuit as he disappeared over the wall into the town.

Admiring rustics, indeed!

The balloon leapt at once, in the manner of balloons when part of their weight is released by touching down, with a sort of flippancy, and in another moment Bert was over a street crowded with peasants and soldiers, that opened into a busy market-square. The wave of unfriendliness pursued him.

"Grapnel," said Bert, and then with an afterthought shouted, "TETES there, you! I say! I say! TETES. 'Eng it!"

The grapnel smashed down a steeply sloping roof, followed by an avalanche of broken tiles, jumped the street amidst shrieks and cries, and smashed into a plate-glass window with an immense and sickening impact. The balloon rolled nauseatingly, and the car pitched. But the grapnel had not held. It emerged at once bearing on one fluke, with a ridiculous air of fastidious selection, a small child's chair, and pursued by a maddened shopman. It lifted its catch, swung about with an appearance of painful indecision amidst a roar of wrath, and dropped it at last neatly, and as if by inspiration, over the head of a peasant woman in charge of an assortment of cabbages in the market-place.

Everybody now was aware of the balloon. Everybody was either trying to dodge the grapnel or catch the trail rope. With a pendulum-like swoop through the crowd, that sent people flying right and left the grapnel came to earth again, tried for and missed a stout gentleman in a blue suit and a straw hat, smacked away a trestle from under a stall of haberdashery, made a cyclist soldier in

knickerbockers leap like a chamois, and secured itself uncertainly among the hind-legs of a sheep — which made convulsive, ungenerous efforts to free itself, and was dragged into a position of rest against a stone cross in the middle of the place. The balloon pulled up with a jerk. In another moment a score of willing hands were tugging it earthward. At the same instant Bert became aware for the first time of a fresh breeze blowing about him.

For some seconds he stood staggering in the car, which now swayed sickeningly, surveying the exasperated crowd below him and trying to collect his mind. He was extraordinarily astonished at this run of mishaps. Were the people really so annoyed? Everybody seemed angry with him. No one seemed interested or amused by his arrival. A disproportionate amount of the outcry had the flavour of imprecation — had, indeed a strong flavour of riot. Several greatly uniformed officials in cocked hats struggled in vain to control the crowd. Fists and sticks were shaken. And when Bert saw a man on the outskirts of the crowd run to a haycart and get a brightly pronged pitch-fork, and a blue-clad soldier unbuckle his belt, his rising doubt whether this little town was after all such a good place for a landing became a certainty.

He had clung to the fancy that they would make something of a hero of him. Now he knew that he was mistaken.

He was perhaps ten feet above the people when he made his decision. His paralysis ceased. He leapt up on the seat, and, at imminent risk of falling headlong, released the grapnel-rope from the toggle that held it, sprang on to the trail rope and disengaged that also. A hoarse shout of disgust greeted the descent of the grapnel-rope and the swift leap of the balloon, and something — he fancied afterwards it was a turnip — whizzed by his head. The trail-rope followed its fellow. The crowd seemed to jump away from him. With an immense and horrifying rustle the balloon brushed against a telephone pole, and for a tense instant he anticipated either an electric explosion or a bursting of the oiled silk, or both. But fortune was with him.

In another second he was cowering in the bottom of the car, and released from the weight of the grapnel and the two ropes, rushing up once more through the air. For a time he remained crouching, and

when at last he looked out again the little town was very small and travelling, with the rest of lower Germany, in a circular orbit round and round the car — or at least it appeared to be doing that. When he got used to it, he found this rotation of the balloon rather convenient; it saved moving about in the car.

5

Late in the afternoon of a pleasant summer day in the year 191-, if one may borrow a mode of phrasing that once found favour with the readers of the late G. P. R. James, a solitary balloonist — replacing the solitary horseman of the classic romances — might have been observed wending his way across Franconia in a north-easterly direction, and at a height of about eleven thousand feet above the sea and still spindling slowly. His head was craned over the side of the car, and he surveyed the country below with an expression of profound perplexity; ever and again his lips shaped inaudible words. "Shootin' at a chap," for example, and "I'll come down right enough soon as I find out 'ow." Over the side of the basket the robe of the Desert Dervish was hanging, an appeal for consideration, an ineffectual white flag.

He was now very distinctly aware that the world below him, so far from being the naive countryside of his earlier imaginings that day, sleepily unconscious of him and capable of being amazed and nearly reverential at his descent, was acutely irritated by his career, and extremely impatient with the course he was taking. — But indeed it was not he who took that course, but his masters, the winds of heaven. Mysterious voices spoke to him in his ear, jerking the words up to him by means of megaphones, in a weird and startling manner, in a great variety of languages. Official-looking persons had signalled to him by means of flag flapping and arm waving. On the whole a guttural variant of English prevailed in the sentences that alighted upon the balloon; chiefly he was told to "gome down or you will be shot."

"All very well," said Bert, "but 'ow?"

Then they shot a little wide of the car. Latterly he had been shot at six or seven times, and once the bullet had gone by with a sound so

persuasively like the tearing of silk that he had resigned himself to the prospect of a headlong fall. But either they were aiming near him or they had missed, and as yet nothing was torn but the air about him — and his anxious soul.

He was now enjoying a respite from these attentions, but he felt it was at best an interlude, and he was doing what he could to appreciate his position. Incidentally he was having some hot coffee and pie in an untidy inadvertent manner, with an eye fluttering nervously over the side of the car. At first he had ascribed the growing interest in his career to his ill-conceived attempt to land in the bright little upland town, but now he was beginning to realise that the military rather than the civil arm was concerned about him.

He was quite involuntarily playing that weird mysterious part — the part of an International Spy. He was seeing secret things. He had, in fact, crossed the designs of no less a power than the German Empire, he had blundered into the hot focus of Welt-Politik, he was drifting helplessly towards the great Imperial secret, the immense aeronautic park that had been established at a headlong pace in Franconia to develop silently, swiftly, and on an immense scale the great discoveries of Hunstedt and Stossel, and so to give Germany before all other nations a fleet of airships, the air power and the Empire of the world.

Later, just before they shot him down altogether, Bert saw that great area of passionate work, warm lit in the evening light, a great area of upland on which the airships lay like a herd of grazing monsters at their feed. It was a vast busy space stretching away northward as far as he could see, methodically cut up into numbered sheds, gasometers, squad encampments, storage areas, interlaced with the omnipresent mono-rail lines, and altogether free from overhead wires or cables. Everywhere was the white, black and yellow of Imperial Germany, everywhere the black eagles spread their wings. Even without these indications, the large vigorous neatness of everything would have marked it German. Vast multitudes of men went to and fro, many in white and drab fatigue uniforms busy about the balloons, others drilling in sensible drab. Here and there a full uniform glittered. The airships chiefly engaged his attention, and he knew at once it was three of these he had seen

on the previous night, taking advantage of the cloud welkin to manoeuvre unobserved. They were altogether fish-like. For the great airships with which Germany attacked New York in her last gigantic effort for world supremacy — before humanity realized that world supremacy was a dream — were the lineal descendants of the Zeppelin airship that flew over Lake Constance in 1906, and of the Lebaudy navigables that made their memorable excursions over Paris in 1907 and 1908.

These German airships were held together by rib-like skeletons of steel and aluminium and a stout inelastic canvas outer-skin, within which was an impervious rubber gas-bag, cut up by transverse dissepiments into from fifty to a hundred compartments. These were all absolutely gas tight and filled with hydrogen, and the entire aerostat was kept at any level by means of a long internal balloonette of oiled and toughened silk canvas, into which air could be forced and from which it could be pumped. So the airship could be made either heavier or lighter than air, and losses of weight through the consumption of fuel, the casting of bombs and so forth, could also be compensated by admitting air to sections of the general gas-bag. Ultimately that made a highly explosive mixture; but in all these matters risks must be taken and guarded against. There was a steel axis to the whole affair, a central backbone which terminated in the engine and propeller, and the men and magazines were forward in a series of cabins under the expanded headlike forepart. The engine, which was of the extraordinarily powerful Pforzheim type, that supreme triumph of German invention, was worked by wires from this forepart, which was indeed the only really habitable part of the ship. If anything went wrong, the engineers went aft along a rope ladder beneath the frame. The tendency of the whole affair to roll was partly corrected by a horizontal lateral fin on either side, and steering was chiefly effected by two vertical fins, which normally lay back like gill-flaps on either side of the head. It was indeed a most complete adaptation of the fish form to aerial conditions, the position of swimming bladder, eyes, and brain being, however, below instead of above. A striking, and unfish-like feature was the apparatus for wireless telegraphy that dangled from the forward cabin — that is to say, under the chin of the fish.

These monsters were capable of ninety miles an hour in a calm, so that they could face and make headway against nearly everything except the fiercest tornado. They varied in length from eight hundred to two thousand feet, and they had a carrying power of from seventy to two hundred tons. How many Germany possessed history does not record, but Bert counted nearly eighty great bulks receding in perspective during his brief inspection. Such were the instruments on which she chiefly relied to sustain her in her repudiation of the Monroe Doctrine and her bold bid for a share in the empire of the New World. But not altogether did she rely on these; she had also a one-man bomb-throwing Drachenflieger of unknown value among the resources.

But the Drachenflieger were away in the second great aeronautic park east of Hamburg, and Bert Smallways saw nothing of them in the bird's-eye view he took of the Franconian establishment before they shot him down very neatly. The bullet tore past him and made a sort of pop as it pierced his balloon — a pop that was followed by a rustling sigh and a steady downward movement. And when in the confusion of the moment he dropped a bag of ballast, the Germans, very politely but firmly overcame his scruples by shooting his balloon again twice.

CHAPTER IV. THE GERMAN AIR-FLEET

1

Of all the productions of the human imagination that make the world in which Mr. Bert Smallways lived confusingly wonderful, there was none quite so strange, so headlong and disturbing, so noisy and persuasive and dangerous, as the modernisations of patriotism produced by imperial and international politics. In the soul of all men is a liking for kind, a pride in one's own atmosphere, a tenderness for one's Mother speech and one's familiar land. Before the coming of the Scientific Age this group of gentle and noble emotions had been a fine factor in the equipment of every worthy human being, a fine factor that had its less amiable aspect in a usually harmless hostility to strange people, and a usually harmless detraction of strange lands. But with the wild rush of change in the pace, scope, materials, scale, and possibilities of human life that then occurred, the old boundaries, the old seclusions and separations were violently broken down. All the old settled mental habits and traditions of men found themselves not simply confronted by new conditions, but by constantly renewed and changing new conditions. They had no chance of adapting themselves. They were annihilated or perverted or inflamed beyond recognition.

Bert Smallways' grandfather, in the days when Bun Hill was a village under the sway of Sir Peter Bone's parent, had "known his place" to the uttermost farthing, touched his hat to his betters, despised and condescended to his inferiors, and hadn't changed an idea from the cradle to the grave. He was Kentish and English, and that meant hops, beer, dog-rose's, and the sort of sunshine that was best in the world. Newspapers and politics and visits to "Lunnon" weren't for the likes of him. Then came the change. These earlier chapters have given an idea of what happened to Bun Hill, and how the flood of novel things had poured over its devoted rusticity. Bert Smallways was only one of countless millions in Europe and America and Asia who, instead of being born rooted in the soil, were born struggling in a torrent they never clearly understood. All the

faiths of their fathers had been taken by surprise, and startled into the strangest forms and reactions. Particularly did the fine old tradition of patriotism get perverted and distorted in the rush of the new times. Instead of the sturdy establishment in prejudice of Bert's grandfather, to whom the word "Frenchified" was the ultimate term of contempt, there flowed through Bert's brain a squittering succession of thinly violent ideas about German competition, about the Yellow Danger, about the Black Peril, about the White Man's Burthen — that is to say, Bert's preposterous right to muddle further the naturally very muddled politics of the entirely similar little cads to himself (except for a smear of brown) who smoked cigarettes and rode bicycles in Buluwayo, Kingston (Jamaica), or Bombay. These were Bert's "Subject Races," and he was ready to die — by proxy in the person of any one who cared to enlist — to maintain his hold upon that right. It kept him awake at nights to think that he might lose it.

The essential fact of the politics of the age in which Bert Smallways lived — the age that blundered at last into the catastrophe of the War in the Air — was a very simple one, if only people had had the intelligence to be simple about it. The development of Science had altered the scale of human affairs. By means of rapid mechanical traction, it had brought men nearer together, so much nearer socially, economically, physically, that the old separations into nations and kingdoms were no longer possible, a newer, wider synthesis was not only needed, but imperatively demanded. Just as the once independent dukedoms of France had to fuse into a nation, so now the nations had to adapt themselves to a wider coalescence, they had to keep what was precious and possible, and concede what was obsolete and dangerous. A saner world would have perceived this patent need for a reasonable synthesis, would have discussed it temperately, achieved and gone on to organise the great civilisation that was manifestly possible to mankind. The world of Bert Smallways did nothing of the sort. Its national governments, its national interests, would not hear of anything so obvious; they were too suspicious of each other, too wanting in generous imaginations. They began to behave like ill-bred people in a crowded public car, to squeeze against one another, elbow, thrust, dispute and quarrel. Vain to point out to them that they had only to rearrange themselves to be

comfortable. Everywhere, all over the world, the historian of the early twentieth century finds the same thing, the flow and rearrangement of human affairs inextricably entangled by the old areas, the old prejudices and a sort of heated irascible stupidity, and everywhere congested nations in inconvenient areas, slopping population and produce into each other, annoying each other with tariffs, and every possible commercial vexation, and threatening each other with navies and armies that grew every year more portentous.

It is impossible now to estimate how much of the intellectual and physical energy of the world was wasted in military preparation and equipment, but it was an enormous proportion. Great Britain spent upon army and navy money and capacity, that directed into the channels of physical culture and education would have made the British the aristocracy of the world. Her rulers could have kept the whole population learning and exercising up to the age of eighteen and made a broad-chested and intelligent man of every Bert Smallways in the islands, had they given the resources they spent in war material to the making of men. Instead of which they waggled flags at him until he was fourteen, incited him to cheer, and then turned him out of school to begin that career of private enterprise we have compactly recorded. France achieved similar imbecilities; Germany was, if possible worse; Russia under the waste and stresses of militarism festered towards bankruptcy and decay. All Europe was producing big guns and countless swarms of little Smallways. The Asiatic peoples had been forced in self-defence into a like diversion of the new powers science had brought them. On the eve of the outbreak of the war there were six great powers in the world and a cluster of smaller ones, each armed to the teeth and straining every nerve to get ahead of the others in deadliness of equipment and military efficiency. The great powers were first the United States, a nation addicted to commerce, but roused to military necessities by the efforts of Germany to expand into South America, and by the natural consequences of her own unwary annexations of land in the very teeth of Japan. She maintained two immense fleets east and west, and internally she was in violent conflict between Federal and State governments upon the question of universal service in a defensive militia. Next came the great alliance of Eastern Asia, a

close-knit coalescence of China and Japan, advancing with rapid strides year by year to predominance in the world's affairs. Then the German alliance still struggled to achieve its dream of imperial expansion, and its imposition of the German language upon a forcibly united Europe. These were the three most spirited and aggressive powers in the world. Far more pacific was the British Empire, perilously scattered over the globe, and distracted now by insurrectionary movements in Ireland and among all its Subject Races. It had given these subject races cigarettes, boots, bowler hats, cricket, race meetings, cheap revolvers, petroleum, the factory system of industry, halfpenny newspapers in both English and the vernacular, inexpensive university degrees, motor-bicycles and electric trams; it had produced a considerable literature expressing contempt for the Subject Races, and rendered it freely accessible to them, and it had been content to believe that nothing would result from these stimulants because somebody once wrote "the immemorial east"; and also, in the inspired words of Kipling —

East is east and west is west,
And never the twain shall meet.

Instead of which, Egypt, India, and the subject countries generally had produced new generations in a state of passionate indignation and the utmost energy, activity and modernity. The governing class in Great Britain was slowly adapting itself to a new conception, of the Subject Races as waking peoples, and finding its efforts to keep the Empire together under these, strains and changing ideas greatly impeded by the entirely sporting spirit with which Bert Smallways at home (by the million) cast his vote, and by the tendency of his more highly coloured equivalents to be disrespectful to irascible officials. Their impertinence was excessive; it was no mere stone-throwing and shouting. They would quote Burns at them and Mill and Darwin and confute them in arguments.

Even more pacific than the British Empire were France and its allies, the Latin powers, heavily armed states indeed, but reluctant warriors, and in many ways socially and politically leading western civilisation. Russia was a pacific power perforce, divided within itself, torn between revolutionaries and reactionaries who were equally incapable of social reconstruction, and so sinking towards a

tragic disorder of chronic political vendetta. Wedged in among these portentous larger bulks, swayed and threatened by them, the smaller states of the world maintained a precarious independence, each keeping itself armed as dangerously as its utmost ability could contrive.

So it came about that in every country a great and growing body of energetic and inventive men was busied either for offensive or defensive ends, in elaborating the apparatus of war, until the accumulating tensions should reach the breaking-point. Each power sought to keep its preparations secret, to hold new weapons in reserve, to anticipate and learn the preparations of its rivals. The feeling of danger from fresh discoveries affected the patriotic imagination of every people in the world. Now it was rumoured the British had an overwhelming gun, now the French an invincible rifle, now the Japanese a new explosive, now the Americans a submarine that would drive every ironclad from the seas. Each time there would be a war panic.

The strength and heart of the nations was given to the thought of war, and yet the mass of their citizens was a teeming democracy as heedless of and unfitted for fighting, mentally, morally, physically, as any population has ever been — or, one ventures to add, could ever be. That was the paradox of the time. It was a period altogether unique in the world's history. The apparatus of warfare, the art and method of fighting, changed absolutely every dozen years in a stupendous progress towards perfection, and people grew less and less warlike, and there was no war.

And then at last it came. It came as a surprise to all the world because its real causes were hidden. Relations were strained between Germany and the United States because of the intense exasperation of a tariff conflict and the ambiguous attitude of the former power towards the Monroe Doctrine, and they were strained between the United States and Japan because of the perennial citizenship question. But in both cases these were standing causes of offence. The real deciding cause, it is now known, was the perfecting of the Pforzheim engine by Germany and the consequent possibility of a rapid and entirely practicable airship. At that time Germany was by far the most efficient power in the world, better organised for swift

and secret action, better equipped with the resources of modern science, and with her official and administrative classes at a higher level of education and training. These things she knew, and she exaggerated that knowledge to the pitch of contempt for the secret counsels of her neighbours. It may be that with the habit of self-confidence her spying upon them had grown less thorough. Moreover, she had a tradition of unsentimental and unscrupulous action that vitiated her international outlook profoundly. With the coming of these new weapons her collective intelligence thrilled with the sense that now her moment had come. Once again in the history of progress it seemed she held the decisive weapon. Now she might strike and conquer — before the others had anything but experiments in the air.

Particularly she must strike America, swiftly, because there, if anywhere, lay the chance of an aerial rival. It was known that America possessed a flying-machine of considerable practical value, developed out of the Wright model; but it was not supposed that the Washington War Office had made any wholesale attempts to create an aerial navy. It was necessary to strike before they could do so. France had a fleet of slow navigables, several dating from 1908, that could make no possible headway against the new type. They had been built solely for reconnoitring purposes on the eastern frontier, they were mostly too small to carry more than a couple of dozen men without arms or provisions, and not one could do forty miles an hour. Great Britain, it seemed, in an access of meanness, temporised and wrangled with the imperial spirited Butteridge and his extraordinary invention. That also was not in play — and could not be for some months at the earliest. From Asia there, came no sign. The Germans explained this by saying the yellow peoples were without invention. No other competitor was worth considering. “Now or never,” said the Germans— “now or never we may seize the air — as once the British seized the seas! While all the other powers are still experimenting.”

Swift and systematic and secret were their preparations, and their plan most excellent. So far as their knowledge went, America was the only dangerous possibility; America, which was also now the leading trade rival of Germany and one of the chief barriers to her

Imperial expansion. So at once they would strike at America. They would fling a great force across the Atlantic heavens and bear America down unwarned and unprepared.

Altogether it was a well-imagined and most hopeful and spirited enterprise, having regard to the information in the possession of the German government. The chances of it being a successful surprise were very great. The airship and the flying-machine were very different things from ironclads, which take a couple of years to build. Given hands, given plant, they could be made innumerably in a few weeks. Once the needful parks and foundries were organised, airships and Drachenflieger could be poured into the sky. Indeed, when the time came, they did pour into the sky like, as a bitter French writer put it, flies roused from filth.

The attack upon America was to be the first move in this tremendous game. But no sooner had it started than instantly the aeronautic parks were to proceed to put together and inflate the second fleet which was to dominate Europe and manoeuvre significantly over London, Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, or wherever else its moral effect was required. A World Surprise it was to be — no less a World Conquest; and it is wonderful how near the calmly adventurous minds that planned it came to succeeding in their colossal design.

Von Sternberg was the Moltke of this War in the Air, but it was the curious hard romanticism of Prince Karl Albert that won over the hesitating Emperor to the scheme. Prince Karl Albert was indeed the central figure of the world drama. He was the darling of the Imperialist spirit in German, and the ideal of the new aristocratic feeling — the new Chivalry, as it was called — that followed the overthrow of Socialism through its internal divisions and lack of discipline, and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few great families. He was compared by obsequious flatterers to the Black Prince, to Alcibiades, to the young Caesar. To many he seemed Nietzsche's Overman revealed. He was big and blond and virile, and splendidly non-moral. The first great feat that startled Europe, and almost brought about a new Trojan war, was his abduction of the Princess Helena of Norway and his blank refusal to marry her. Then followed his marriage with Gretchen Krass, a Swiss girl of peerless

beauty. Then came the gallant rescue, which almost cost him his life, of three drowning sailors whose boat had upset in the sea near Heligoland. For that and his victory over the American yacht Defender, C.C.I., the Emperor forgave him and placed him in control of the new aeronautic arm of the German forces. This he developed with marvellous energy and ability, being resolved, as he said, to give to Germany land and sea and sky. The national passion for aggression found in him its supreme exponent, and achieved through him its realisation in this astounding war. But his fascination was more than national; all over the world his ruthless strength dominated minds as the Napoleonic legend had dominated minds. Englishmen turned in disgust from the slow, complex, civilised methods of their national politics to this uncompromising, forceful figure. Frenchmen believed in him. Poems were written to him in American.

He made the war.

Quite equally with the rest of the world, the general German population was taken by surprise by the swift vigour of the Imperial government. A considerable literature of military forecasts, beginning as early as 1906 with Rudolf Martin, the author not merely of a brilliant book of anticipations, but of a proverb, "The future of Germany lies in the air," had, however, partially prepared the German imagination for some such enterprise.

2

Of all these world-forces and gigantic designs Bert Smallways knew nothing until he found himself in the very focus of it all and gaped down amazed on the spectacle of that giant herd of air-ships. Each one seemed as long as the Strand, and as big about as Trafalgar Square. Some must have been a third of a mile in length. He had never before seen anything so vast and disciplined as this tremendous park. For the first time in his life he really had an intimation of the extraordinary and quite important things of which a contemporary may go in ignorance. He had always clung to the illusion that Germans were fat, absurd men, who smoked china pipes, and were addicted to knowledge and horseflesh and sauerkraut and indigestible things generally.

His bird's-eye view was quite transitory. He ducked at the first shot; and directly his balloon began to drop, his mind ran confusedly upon how he might explain himself, and whether he should pretend to be Butteridge or not. "O Lord!" he groaned, in an agony of indecision. Then his eye caught his sandals, and he felt a spasm of self-disgust. "They'll think I'm a bloomin' idiot," he said, and then it was he rose up desperately and threw over the sand-bag and provoked the second and third shots.

It flashed into his head, as he cowered in the bottom of the car, that he might avoid all sorts of disagreeable and complicated explanations by pretending to be mad.

That was his last idea before the airships seemed to rush up about him as if to look at him, and his car hit the ground and bounded and pitched him out on his head....

He awoke to find himself famous, and to hear a voice crying, "Booteraidge! Ja! Ja! Herr Booteraidge! Selbst!"

He was lying on a little patch of grass beside one of the main avenues of the aeronautic park. The airships receded down a great vista, an immense perspective, and the blunt prow of each was adorned with a black eagle of a hundred feet or so spread. Down the other side of the avenue ran a series of gas generators, and big hose-pipes trailed everywhere across the intervening space. Close at hand was his now nearly deflated balloon and the car on its side looking minutely small, a mere broken toy, a shrivelled bubble, in contrast with the gigantic bulk of the nearer airship. This he saw almost end-on, rising like a cliff and sloping forward towards its fellow on the other side so as to overshadow the alley between them. There was a crowd of excited people about him, big men mostly in tight uniforms. Everybody was talking, and several were shouting, in German; he knew that because they splashed and aspirated sounds like startled kittens.

Only one phrase, repeated again and again could he recognize — the name of "Herr Booteraidge."

"Gollys!" said Bert. "They've spotted it."

"Besser," said some one, and some rapid German followed.

He perceived that close at hand was a field telephone, and that a tall officer in blue was talking thereat about him. Another stood close

beside him with the portfolio of drawings and photographs in his hand. They looked round at him.

"Do you spik Cherman, Herr Booteraidge?"

Bert decided that he had better be dazed. He did his best to seem thoroughly dazed. "Where AM I?" he asked.

Volubility prevailed. "Der Prinz," was mentioned. A bugle sounded far away, and its call was taken up by one nearer, and then by one close at hand. This seemed to increase the excitement greatly. A mono-rail car bumbled past. The telephone bell rang passionately, and the tall officer seemed to engage in a heated altercation. Then he approached the group about Bert, calling out something about "mitbringen."

An earnest-faced, emaciated man with a white moustache appealed to Bert. "Herr Booteraidge, sir, we are chust to start!"

"Where am I?" Bert repeated.

Some one shook him by the other shoulder. "Are you Herr Booteraidge?" he asked.

"Herr Booteraidge, we are chust to start!" repeated the white moustache, and then helplessly, "What is de goot? What can we do?"

The officer from the telephone repeated his sentence about "Der Prinz" and "mitbringen." The man with the moustache stared for a moment, grasped an idea and became violently energetic, stood up and bawled directions at unseen people. Questions were asked, and the doctor at Bert's side answered, "Ja! Ja!" several times, also something about "Kopf." With a certain urgency he got Bert rather unwillingly to his feet. Two huge soldiers in grey advanced upon Bert and seized hold of him. "'Ullo!" said Bert, startled. "What's up?"

"It is all right," the doctor explained; "they are to carry you."

"Where?" asked Bert, unanswered.

"Put your arms roundt their — hals — round them!"

"Yes! but where?"

"Hold tight!"

Before Bert could decide to say anything more he was whisked up by the two soldiers. They joined hands to seat him, and his arms were put about their necks. "Vorwarts!" Some one ran before him with the portfolio, and he was borne rapidly along the broad avenue

between the gas generators and the airships, rapidly and on the whole smoothly except that once or twice his bearers stumbled over hose-pipes and nearly let him down.

He was wearing Mr. Butteridge's Alpine cap, and his little shoulders were in Mr. Butteridge's fur-lined overcoat, and he had responded to Mr. Butteridge's name. The sandals dangled helplessly. Gaw! Everybody seemed in a devil of a hurry. Why? He was carried joggling and gaping through the twilight, marvelling beyond measure.

The systematic arrangement of wide convenient spaces, the quantities of business-like soldiers everywhere, the occasional neat piles of material, the ubiquitous mono-rail lines, and the towering ship-like hulls about him, reminded him a little of impressions he had got as a boy on a visit to Woolwich Dockyard. The whole camp reflected the colossal power of modern science that had created it. A peculiar strangeness was produced by the lowness of the electric light, which lay upon the ground, casting all shadows upwards and making a grotesque shadow figure of himself and his bearers on the airship sides, fusing all three of them into a monstrous animal with attenuated legs and an immense fan-like humped body. The lights were on the ground because as far as possible all poles and standards had been dispensed with to prevent complications when the airships rose.

It was deep twilight now, a tranquil blue-skyed evening; everything rose out from the splashes of light upon the ground into dim translucent tall masses; within the cavities of the airships small inspecting lamps glowed like cloud-veiled stars, and made them seem marvellously unsubstantial. Each airship had its name in black letters on white on either flank, and forward the Imperial eagle sprawled, an overwhelming bird in the dimness.

Bugles sounded, mono-rail cars of quiet soldiers slithered burbling by. The cabins under the heads of the airships were being lit up; doors opened in them, and revealed padded passages.

Now and then a voice gave directions to workers indistinctly seen.

There was a matter of sentinels, gangways and a long narrow passage, a scramble over a disorder of baggage, and then Bert found himself lowered to the ground and standing in the doorway of a

spacious cabin — it was perhaps ten feet square and eight high, furnished with crimson padding and aluminium. A tall, bird-like young man with a small head, a long nose, and very pale hair, with his hands full of things like shaving-strops, boot-trees, hair-brushes, and toilet tidies, was saying things about Gott and thunder and Dummer Booteraidge as Bert entered. He was apparently an evicted occupant. Then he vanished, and Bert was lying back on a couch in the corner with a pillow under his head and the door of the cabin shut upon him. He was alone. Everybody had hurried out again astonishingly.

"Gollys!" said Bert. "What next?"

He stared about him at the room.

"Butteridge! Shall I try to keep it up, or shan't I?"

The room he was in puzzled him. "'Tisn't a prison and 'tisn't a norfis?" Then the old trouble came uppermost. "I wish to 'eaven I 'adn't these silly sandals on," he cried querulously to the universe. "They give the whole blessed show away."

3

His door was flung open, and a compact young man in uniform appeared, carrying Mr. Butteridge's portfolio, rucksac, and shaving-glass.

"I say!" he said in faultless English as he entered. He had a beaming face, and a sort of pinkish blond hair. "Fancy you being Butteridge." He slapped Bert's meagre luggage down.

"We'd have started," he said, "in another half-hour! You didn't give yourself much time!"

He surveyed Bert curiously. His gaze rested for a fraction of a moment on the sandals. "You ought to have come on your flying-machine, Mr. Butteridge."

He didn't wait for an answer. "The Prince says I've got to look after you. Naturally he can't see you now, but he thinks your coming's providential. Last grace of Heaven. Like a sign. Hullo!"

He stood still and listened.

Outside there was a going to and fro of feet, a sound of distant bugles suddenly taken up and echoed close at hand, men called out in

loud tones short, sharp, seemingly vital things, and were answered distantly. A bell jangled, and feet went down the corridor. Then came a stillness more distracting than sound, and then a great gurgling and rushing and splashing of water. The young man's eyebrows lifted. He hesitated, and dashed out of the room. Presently came a stupendous bang to vary the noises without, then a distant cheering. The young man re-appeared.

"They're running the water out of the ballonette already."

"What water?" asked Bert.

"The water that anchored us. Artful dodge. Eh?"

Bert tried to take it in.

"Of course!" said the compact young man. "You don't understand."

A gentle quivering crept upon Bert's senses. "That's the engine," said the compact young man approvingly. "Now we shan't be long."

Another long listening interval.

The cabin swayed. "By Jove! we're starting already;" he cried. "We're starting!"

"Starting!" cried Bert, sitting up. "Where?"

But the young man was out of the room again. There were noises of German in the passage, and other nerve-shaking sounds.

The swaying increased. The young man reappeared. "We're off, right enough!"

"I say!" said Bert, "where are we starting? I wish you'd explain. What's this place? I don't understand."

"What!" cried the young man, "you don't understand?"

"No. I'm all dazed-like from that crack on the nob I got. Where ARE we? WHERE are we starting?"

"Don't you know where you are — what this is?"

"Not a bit of it! What's all the swaying and the row?"

"What a lark!" cried the young man. "I say! What a thundering lark! Don't you know? We're off to America, and you haven't realised. You've just caught us by a neck. You're on the blessed old flagship with the Prince. You won't miss anything. Whatever's on, you bet the Vaterland will be there."

"Us! — off to America?"

"Ra — ther!"

“In an airship?”

“What do YOU think?”

“Me! going to America on an airship! After that balloon! ‘Ere! I say — I don’t want to go! I want to walk about on my legs. Let me get out! I didn’t understand.”

He made a dive for the door.

The young man arrested Bert with a gesture, took hold of a strap, lifted up a panel in the padded wall, and a window appeared. “Look!” he said. Side by side they looked out.

“Gaw!” said Bert. “We’re going up!”

“We are!” said the young man, cheerfully; “fast!”

They were rising in the air smoothly and quietly, and moving slowly to the throb of the engine athwart the aeronautic park. Down below it stretched, dimly geometrical in the darkness, picked out at regular intervals by glow-worm spangles of light. One black gap in the long line of grey, round-backed airships marked the position from which the Vaterland had come. Beside it a second monster now rose softly, released from its bonds and cables into the air. Then, taking a beautifully exact distance, a third ascended, and then a fourth.

“Too late, Mr. Butteridge!” the young man remarked. “We’re off! I daresay it is a bit of a shock to you, but there you are! The Prince said you’d have to come.”

“Look ‘ere,” said Bert. “I really am dazed. What’s this thing? Where are we going?”

“This, Mr. Butteridge,” said the young man, taking pains to be explicit, “is an airship. It’s the flagship of Prince Karl Albert. This is the German air-fleet, and it is going over to America, to give that spirited people ‘what for.’ The only thing we were at all uneasy about was your invention. And here you are!”

“But! — you a German?” asked Bert.

“Lieutenant Kurt. Luft-lieutenant Kurt, at your service.”

“But you speak English!”

“Mother was English — went to school in England. Afterwards, Rhodes scholar. German none the less for that. Detailed for the present, Mr. Butteridge, to look after you. You’re shaken by your fall. It’s all right, really. They’re going to buy your machine and

everything. You sit down, and take it quite calmly. You'll soon get the hang of the position."

4

Bert sat down on the locker, collecting his mind, and the young man talked to him about the airship.

He was really a very tactful young man indeed, in a natural sort of way. "Daresay all this is new to you," he said; "not your sort of machine. These cabins aren't half bad."

He got up and walked round the little apartment, showing its points.

"Here is the bed," he said, whipping down a couch from the wall and throwing it back again with a click. "Here are toilet things," and he opened a neatly arranged cupboard. "Not much washing. No water we've got; no water at all except for drinking. No baths or anything until we get to America and land. Rub over with loofah. One pint of hot for shaving. That's all. In the locker below you are rugs and blankets; you will need them presently. They say it gets cold. I don't know. Never been up before. Except a little work with gliders — which is mostly going down. Three-quarters of the chaps in the fleet haven't. Here's a folding-chair and table behind the door. Compact, eh?"

He took the chair and balanced it on his little finger. "Pretty light, eh? Aluminium and magnesium alloy and a vacuum inside. All these cushions stuffed with hydrogen. Foxy! The whole ship's like that. And not a man in the fleet, except the Prince and one or two others, over eleven stone. Couldn't sweat the Prince, you know. We'll go all over the thing to-morrow. I'm frightfully keen on it."

He beamed at Bert. "You DO look young," he remarked. "I always thought you'd be an old man with a beard — a sort of philosopher. I don't know why one should expect clever people always to be old. I do."

Bert parried that compliment a little awkwardly, and then the lieutenant was struck with the riddle why Herr Butteridge had not come in his own flying machine.

"It's a long story," said Bert. "Look here!" he said abruptly, "I

wish you'd lend me a pair of slippers, or something. I'm regular sick of these sandals. They're rotten things. I've been trying them for a friend."

"Right O!"

The ex-Rhodes scholar whisked out of the room and reappeared with a considerable choice of footwear — pumps, cloth bath-slippers, and a purple pair adorned with golden sun-flowers.

But these he repented of at the last moment.

"I don't even wear them myself," he said. "Only brought 'em in the zeal of the moment." He laughed confidentially. "Had 'em worked for me — in Oxford. By a friend. Take 'em everywhere."

So Bert chose the pumps.

The lieutenant broke into a cheerful snigger. "Here we are trying on slippers," he said, "and the world going by like a panorama below. Rather a lark, eh? Look!"

Bert peeped with him out of the window, looking from the bright pettiness of the red-and-silver cabin into a dark immensity. The land below, except for a lake, was black and featureless, and the other airships were hidden. "See more outside," said the lieutenant. "Let's go! There's a sort of little gallery."

He led the way into the long passage, which was lit by one small electric light, past some notices in German, to an open balcony and a light ladder and gallery of metal lattice overhanging, empty space. Bert followed his leader down to the gallery slowly and cautiously. From it he was able to watch the wonderful spectacle of the first air-fleet flying through the night. They flew in a wedge-shaped formation, the Vaterland highest and leading, the tail receding into the corners of the sky. They flew in long, regular undulations, great dark fish-like shapes, showing hardly any light at all, the engines making a throb-throb-throbbing sound that was very audible out on the gallery. They were going at a level of five or six thousand feet, and rising steadily. Below, the country lay silent, a clear darkness dotted and lined out with clusters of furnaces, and the lit streets of a group of big towns. The world seemed to lie in a bowl; the overhanging bulk of the airship above hid all but the lowest levels of the sky.

They watched the landscape for a space.

“Jolly it must be to invent things,” said the lieutenant suddenly. “How did you come to think of your machine first?”

“Worked it out,” said Bert, after a pause. “Jest ground away at it.”

“Our people are frightfully keen on you. They thought the British had got you. Weren’t the British keen?”

“In a way,” said Bert. “Still — it’s a long story.”

“I think it’s an immense thing — to invent. I couldn’t invent a thing to save my life.”

They both fell silent, watching the darkened world and following their thoughts until a bugle summoned them to a belated dinner. Bert was suddenly alarmed. “Don’t you ‘ave to dress and things?” he said. “I’ve always been too hard at Science and things to go into Society and all that.”

“No fear,” said Kurt. “Nobody’s got more than the clothes they wear. We’re travelling light. You might perhaps take your overcoat off. They’ve an electric radiator each end of the room.”

And so presently Bert found himself sitting to eat in the presence of the “German Alexander” — that great and puissant Prince, Prince Karl Albert, the War Lord, the hero of two hemispheres. He was a handsome, blond man, with deep-set eyes, a snub nose, upturned moustache, and long white hands, a strange-looking man. He sat higher than the others, under a black eagle with widespread wings and the German Imperial flags; he was, as it were, enthroned, and it struck Bert greatly that as he ate he did not look at people, but over their heads like one who sees visions. Twenty officers of various ranks stood about the table — and Bert. They all seemed extremely curious to see the famous Butteridge, and their astonishment at his appearance was ill-controlled. The Prince gave him a dignified salutation, to which, by an inspiration, he bowed. Standing next the Prince was a brown-faced, wrinkled man with silver spectacles and fluffy, dingy-grey side-whiskers, who regarded Bert with a peculiar and disconcerting attention. The company sat after ceremonies Bert could not understand. At the other end of the table was the bird-faced officer Bert had dispossessed, still looking hostile and whispering about Bert to his neighbour. Two soldiers waited. The dinner was a plain one — a soup, some fresh mutton, and cheese — and there was very little talk.

A curious solemnity indeed brooded over every one. Partly this was reaction after the intense toil and restrained excitement of starting; partly it was the overwhelming sense of strange new experiences, of portentous adventure. The Prince was lost in thought. He roused himself to drink to the Emperor in champagne, and the company cried “Hoch!” like men repeating responses in church.

No smoking was permitted, but some of the officers went down to the little open gallery to chew tobacco. No lights whatever were safe amidst that bundle of inflammable things. Bert suddenly fell yawning and shivering. He was overwhelmed by a sense of his own insignificance amidst these great rushing monsters of the air. He felt life was too big for him — too much for him altogether.

He said something to Kurt about his head, went up the steep ladder from the swaying little gallery into the airship again, and so, as if it were a refuge, to bed.

5

Bert slept for a time, and then his sleep was broken by dreams. Mostly he was fleeing from formless terrors down an interminable passage in an airship — a passage paved at first with ravenous trap-doors, and then with openwork canvas of the most careless description.

“Gaw!” said Bert, turning over after his seventh fall through infinite space that night.

He sat up in the darkness and nursed his knees. The progress of the airship was not nearly so smooth as a balloon; he could feel a regular swaying up, up, up and then down, down, down, and the throbbing and tremulous quiver of the engines.

His mind began to teem with memories — more memories and more.

Through them, like a struggling swimmer in broken water, came the perplexing question, what am I to do to-morrow? To-morrow, Kurt had told him, the Prince’s secretary, the Graf Von Winterfeld, would come to him and discuss his flying-machine, and then he would see the Prince. He would have to stick it out now that he was Butteridge, and sell his invention. And then, if they found him out!

He had a vision of infuriated Butteridges.... Suppose after all he owned up? Pretended it was their misunderstanding? He began to scheme devices for selling the secret and circumventing Butteridge.

What should he ask for the thing? Somehow twenty thousand pounds struck him as about the sum indicated.

He fell into that despondency that lies in wait in the small hours. He had got too big a job on — too big a job....

Memories swamped his scheming.

"Where was I this time last night?"

He recapitulated his evenings tediously and lengthily. Last night he had been up above the clouds in Butteridge's balloon. He thought of the moment when he dropped through them and saw the cold twilight sea close below. He still remembered that disagreeable incident with a nightmare vividness. And the night before he and Grubb had been looking for cheap lodgings at Littlestone in Kent. How remote that seemed now. It might be years ago. For the first time he thought of his fellow Desert Dervish, left with the two red-painted bicycles on Dymchurch sands. "'E won't make much of a show of it, not without me. Any'ow 'e did 'ave the treasury — such as it was — in his pocket!"... The night before that was Bank Holiday night and they had sat discussing their minstrel enterprise, drawing up a programme and rehearsing steps. And the night before was Whit Sunday. "Lord!" cried Bert, "what a doing that motor-bicycle give me!" He recalled the empty flapping of the eviscerated cushion, the feeling of impotence as the flames rose again. From among the confused memories of that tragic flare one little figure emerged very bright and poignantly sweet, Edna, crying back reluctantly from the departing motor-car, "See you to-morrer, Bert?"

Other memories of Edna clustered round that impression. They led Bert's mind step by step to an agreeable state that found expression in "I'll marry 'ER if she don't look out." And then in a flash it followed in his mind that if he sold the Butteridge secret he could! Suppose after all he did get twenty thousand pounds; such sums have been paid! With that he could buy house and garden, buy new clothes beyond dreaming, buy a motor, travel, have every delight of the civilised life as he knew it, for himself and Edna. Of course, risks were involved. "I'll 'ave old Butteridge on my track, I

expect!”

He meditated upon that. He declined again to despondency. As yet he was only in the beginning of the adventure. He had still to deliver the goods and draw the cash. And before that — Just now he was by no means on his way home. He was flying off to America to fight there. “Not much fighting,” he considered; “all our own way.” Still, if a shell did happen to hit the Vaterland on the underside!...

“S’pose I ought to make my will.”

He lay back for some time composing wills — chiefly in favour of Edna. He had settled now it was to be twenty thousand pounds. He left a number of minor legacies. The wills became more and more meandering and extravagant....

He woke from the eighth repetition of his nightmare fall through space. “This flying gets on one’s nerves,” he said.

He could feel the airship diving down, down, down, then slowly swinging to up, up, up. Throb, throb, throb, throb, quivered the engine.

He got up presently and wrapped himself about with Mr. Butteridge’s overcoat and all the blankets, for the air was very keen. Then he peeped out of the window to see a grey dawn breaking over clouds, then turned up his light and bolted his door, sat down to the table, and produced his chest-protector.

He smoothed the crumpled plans with his hand, and contemplated them. Then he referred to the other drawings in the portfolio. Twenty thousand pounds. If he worked it right! It was worth trying, anyhow.

Presently he opened the drawer in which Kurt had put paper and writing-materials.

Bert Smallways was by no means a stupid person, and up to a certain limit he had not been badly educated. His board school had taught him to draw up to certain limits, taught him to calculate and understand a specification. If at that point his country had tired of its efforts, and handed him over unfinished to scramble for a living in an atmosphere of advertisments and individual enterprise, that was really not his fault. He was as his State had made him, and the reader must not imagine because he was a little Cockney cad, that he was absolutely incapable of grasping the idea of the Butteridge flying-machine. But he found it stiff and perplexing. His motor-bicycle and

Grubb's experiments and the "mechanical drawing" he had done in standard seven all helped him out; and, moreover, the maker of these drawings, whoever he was, had been anxious to make his intentions plain. Bert copied sketches, he made notes, he made a quite tolerable and intelligent copy of the essential drawings and sketches of the others. Then he fell into a meditation upon them.

At last he rose with a sigh, folded up the originals that had formerly been in his chest-protector and put them into the breast-pocket of his jacket, and then very carefully deposited the copies he had made in the place of the originals. He had no very clear plan in his mind in doing this, except that he hated the idea of altogether parting with the secret. For a long time he meditated profoundly — nodding. Then he turned out his light and went to bed again and schemed himself to sleep.

6

The hochgeboren Graf von Winterfeld was also a light sleeper that night, but then he was one of these people who sleep little and play chess problems in their heads to while away the time — and that night he had a particularly difficult problem to solve.

He came in upon Bert while he was still in bed in the glow of the sunlight reflected from the North Sea below, consuming the rolls and coffee a soldier had brought him. He had a portfolio under his arm, and in the clear, early morning light his dingy grey hair and heavy, silver-rimmed spectacles made him look almost benevolent. He spoke English fluently, but with a strong German flavour. He was particularly bad with his "b's," and his "th's" softened towards weak "z'ds." He called Bert explosively, "Pooterage." He began with some indistinct civilities, bowed, took a folding-table and chair from behind the door, put the former between himself and Bert, sat down on the latter, coughed drily, and opened his portfolio. Then he put his elbows on the table, pinched his lower lip with his two fore-fingers, and regarded Bert disconcertingly with magnified eyes. "You came to us, Herr Pooterage, against your will," he said at last.

"'Ow d'you make that out?" asked Bert, after a pause of astonishment.

“I chuge by ze maps in your car. They were all English. And your provisions. They were all picnic. Also your cords were entangled. You haf’ been tugging — but no good. You could not manage ze balloon, and anuzzer power than yours prought you to us. Is it not so?”

Bert thought.

“Also — where is ze laty?”

“‘Ere! — what lady?”

“You started with a laty. That is evident. You shtarted for an afternoon excursion — a picnic. A man of your temperament — he would take a laty. She was not wiz you in your balloon when you came down at Dornhof. No! Only her chacket! It is your affair. Still, I am curious.”

Bert reflected. “‘Ow d’you know that?”

“I chuge by ze nature of your farious provisions. I cannot account, Mr. Pooterage, for ze laty, what you haf done with her. Nor can I tell why you should wear nature-sandals, nor why you should wear such cheap plue clothes. These are outside my instructions. Trifles, perhaps. Officially they are to be ignored. Laties come and go — I am a man of ze worldt. I haf known wise men wear sandals and efen practice vegetarian habits. I haf known men — or at any rate, I haf known chemists — who did not schmoke. You haf, no doubt, put ze laty down somewhere. Well. Let us get to — business. A higher power” — his voice changed its emotional quality, his magnified eyes seemed to dilate— “has prought you and your secret straight to us. So!” — he bowed his head— “so pe it. It is ze Destiny of Chermany and my Prince. I can undershtandt you always carry zat secret. You are afraidt of roppers and spies. So it comes wiz you — to us. Mr. Pooterage, Chermany will puy it.”

“Will she?”

“She will,” said the secretary, looking hard at Bert’s abandoned sandals in the corner of the locker. He roused himself, consulted a paper of notes for a moment, and Bert eyed his brown and wrinkled face with expectation and terror. “Chermany, I am instructed to say,” said the secretary, with his eyes on the table and his notes spread out, “has always been willing to puy your secret. We haf indeed peen eager to acquire it fery eager; and it was only ze fear that you might

be, on patriotic groundts, acting in collusion with your Pritish War Office zat has made us discreet in offering for your marvellous invention through intermediaries. We haf no hesitation whatefer now, I am instructed, in agreeing to your proposal of a hundert tousand poundts."

"Crikey!" said Bert, overwhelmed.

"I peg your pardon?"

"Jest a twinge," said Bert, raising his hand to his bandaged head.

"Ah! Also I am instructed to say that as for that noble, unrightly accused laty you haf championed so brafely against Pritish hypocrisy and coldness, all ze chivalry of Chermany is on her site."

"Lady?" said Bert faintly, and then recalled the great Butteridge love story. Had the old chap also read the letters? He must think him a scorcher if he had. "Oh! that's aw-right," he said, "about 'er. I 'adn't any doubts about that. I—"

He stopped. The secretary certainly had a most appalling stare. It seemed ages before he looked down again. "Well, ze laty as you please. She is your affair. I haf performt my instructions. And ze title of Paron, zat also can pe done. It can all pe done, Herr Pooterage."

He drummed on the table for a second or so, and resumed. "I haf to tell you, sir, zat you come to us at a crisis in — Welt-Politik. There can be no harm now for me to put our plans before you. Pefore you leafe this ship again they will be manifest to all ze worldt. War is perhaps already declared. We go — to America. Our fleet will descend out of ze air upon ze United States — it is a country quite unprepared for war eferywhere — eferywhere. Zey have always relied on ze Atlantic. And their navy. We have selected a certain point — it is at present ze secret of our commanders — which we shall seize, and zen we shall establish a depot — a sort of inland Gibraltar. It will be — what will it be? — an eagle's nest. Zere our airships will gazzer and repair, and thence they will fly to and fro ofer ze United States, terrorising cities, dominating Washington, levying what is necessary, until ze terms we dictate are accepted. You follow me?"

"Go on!" said Bert.

"We could haf done all zis wiz such Luftschiffe and Drachenflieger as we possess, but ze accession of your machine

renders our project complete. It not only gifs us a better Drachenflieger, but it remofes our last uneasiness as to Great Pritain. Wizout you, sir, Great Pritain, ze land you lofed so well and zat has requited you so ill, zat land of Pharisees and reptiles, can do nozzing! — nozzing! You see, I am perfectly frank wiz you. Well, I am instructed that Chermany recognises all this. We want you to place yourself at our disposal. We want you to become our Chief Head Flight Engineer. We want you to manufacture, we want to equip a swarm of hornets under your direction. We want you to direct this force. And it is at our depot in America we want you. So we offer you simply, and without haggling, ze full terms you demanded weeks ago — one hundert tousand poundts in cash, a salary of three tousand poundts a year, a pension of one tousand poundts a year, and ze title of Paron as you desired. These are my instructions."

He resumed his scrutiny of Bert's face.

"That's all right, of course," said Bert, a little short of breath, but otherwise resolute and calm; and it seemed to him that now was the time to bring his nocturnal scheming to the issue.

The secretary contemplated Bert's collar with sustained attention. Only for one moment did his gaze move to the sandals and back.

"Jes' lemme think a bit," said Bert, finding the stare debilitating. "Look 'ere!" he said at last, with an air of great explicitness, "I GOT the secret."

"Yes."

"But I don't want the name of Butteridge to appear — see? I been thinking that over."

"A little delicacy?"

"Exactly. You buy the secret — leastways, I give it you — from Bearer — see?"

His voice failed him a little, and the stare continued. "I want to do the thing Enonymously. See?"

Still staring. Bert drifted on like a swimmer caught by a current. "Fact is, I'm going to edop' the name of Smallways. I don't want no title of Baron; I've altered my mind. And I want the money quiet-like. I want the hundred thousand pounds paid into benks — thirty thousand into the London and County Benk Branch at Bun Hill in Kent directly I 'and over the plans; twenty thousand into the Benk of

England; ‘arf the rest into a good French bank, the other ‘arf the German National Bank, see? I want it put there, right away. I don’t want it put in the name of Butteridge. I want it put in the name of Albert Peter Smallways; that’s the name I’m going to edop’. That’s condition one.”

“Go on!” said the secretary.

“The nex condition,” said Bert, “is that you don’t make any inquiries as to title. I mean what English gentlemen do when they sell or let you land. You don’t arst ‘ow I got it. See? ‘Ere I am — I deliver you the goods — that’s all right. Some people ‘ave the cheek to say this isn’t my invention, see? It is, you know — THAT’S all right; but I don’t want that gone into. I want a fair and square agreement saying that’s all right. See?”

His “See?” faded into a profound silence.

The secretary sighed at last, leant back in his chair and produced a tooth-pick, and used it, to assist his meditation on Bert’s case. “What was that name?” he asked at last, putting away the tooth-pick; “I must write it down.”

“Albert Peter Smallways,” said Bert, in a mild tone.

The secretary wrote it down, after a little difficulty about the spelling because of the different names of the letters of the alphabet in the two languages.

“And now, Mr. Schmallvays,” he said at last, leaning back and resuming the stare, “tell me: how did you ket hold of Mister Pooterage’s balloon?”

7

When at last the Graf von Winterfold left Bert Smallways, he left him in an extremely deflated condition, with all his little story told.

He had, as people say, made a clean breast of it. He had been pursued into details. He had had to explain the blue suit, the sandals, the Desert Dervishes — everything. For a time scientific zeal consumed the secretary, and the question of the plans remained in suspense. He even went into speculation about the previous occupants of the balloon. “I suppose,” he said, “the laty WAS the laty. Bot that is not our affair.

“It is fery curious and amusing, yes: but I am afraid the Prince may be annoyt. He acted wiz his usual decision — always he acts wiz wonterful decision. Like Napoleon. Directly he was tolt of your descent into the camp at Dornhof, he said, ‘Pring him! — pring him! It is my schtar!’ His schtar of Destiny! You see? He will be dthwarted. He directed you to come as Herr Pooterage, and you haf not done so. You haf triet, of course; but it has peen a poor try. His chugments of men are fery just and right, and it is better for men to act up to them — gompletely. Especially now. Particularly now.”

He resumed that attitude of his, with his underlip pinched between his forefingers. He spoke almost confidentially. “It will be awkward. I triet to suggest some doubt, but I was over-ruled. The Prince does not listen. He is impatient in the high air. Perhaps he will think his schtar has been making a fool of him. Perhaps he will think *I* haf been making a fool of him.”

He wrinkled his forehead, and drew in the corners of his mouth.

“I got the plans,” said Bert.

“Yes. There is that! Yes. But you see the Prince was interested in Herr Pooterage because of his romantic seit. Herr Pooterage was so much more — ah! — in the picture. I am afraid you are not equal to controlling the flying machine department of our aerial park as he wished you to do. He hadt promised himself that....

“And der was also the prestige — the worldt prestige of Pooterage with us.... Well, we must see what we can do.” He held out his hand. “Gif me the plans.”

A terrible chill ran through the being of Mr. Smallways. To this day he is not clear in his mind whether he wept or no, but certainly there was weeping in his voice. “‘Ere, I say!” he protested. “Ain’t I to ‘ave — nothin’ for ‘em?”

The secretary regarded him with benevolent eyes. “You do not deserve anyzing!” he said.

“I might ‘ave tore ’em up.”

“Zey are not yours!”

“They weren’t Butteridge’s!”

“No need to pay anyzing.”

Bert’s being seemed to tighten towards desperate deeds. “Gaw!” he said, clutching his coat, “AIN’T there?”

“Pe galm,” said the secretary. “Listen! You shall haf five hundert poundts. You shall haf it on my promise. I will do that for you, and that is all I can do. Take it from me. Gif me the name of that bank. Write it down. So! I tell you the Prince — is no choke. I do not think he approffed of your appearance last night. No! I can’t answer for him. He wanted Pooterage, and you haf spoilt it. The Prince — I do not understand quite, he is in a strange state. It is the excitement of the starting and this great soaring in the air. I cannot account for what he does. But if all goes well I will see to it — you shall haf five hundert poundts. Will that do? Then gif me the plans.”

“Old beggar!” said Bert, as the door clicked. “Gaw! — what an ole beggar! — SHARP!”

He sat down in the folding-chair, and whistled noiselessly for a time.

“Nice ‘old swindle for ‘im if I tore ’em up! I could ‘ave.”

He rubbed the bridge of his nose thoughtfully. “I gave the whole blessed show away. If I’d j’es’ kep quiet about being Enonymous.... Gaw!... Too soon, Bert, my boy — too soon and too rushy. I’d like to kick my silly self.

“I couldn’t ‘ave kep’ it up.

“After all, it ain’t so very bad,” he said.

“After all, five ‘undred pounds.... It isn’t MY secret, anyhow. It’s jes’ a pickup on the road. Five ‘undred.

“Wonder what the fare is from America back home?”

8

And later in the day an extremely shattered and disorganised Bert Smallways stood in the presence of the Prince Karl Albert.

The proceedings were in German. The Prince was in his own cabin, the end room of the airship, a charming apartment furnished in wicker-work with a long window across its entire breadth, looking forward. He was sitting at a folding-table of green baize, with Von Winterfeld and two officers sitting beside him, and littered before them was a number of American maps and Mr. Butteridge’s letters and his portfolio and a number of loose papers. Bert was not asked to sit down, and remained standing throughout the interview. Von

Winterfeld told his story, and every now and then the words Ballon and Pooterage struck on Bert's ears. The Prince's face remained stern and ominous and the two officers watched it cautiously or glanced at Bert. There was something a little strange in their scrutiny of the Prince — a curiosity, an apprehension. Then presently he was struck by an idea, and they fell discussing the plans. The Prince asked Bert abruptly in English. "Did you ever see this thing go op?"

Bert jumped. "Saw it from Bun 'Ill, your Royal Highness."

Von Winterfeld made some explanation.

"How fast did it go?"

"Couldn't say, your Royal Highness. The papers, leastways the Daily Courier, said eighty miles an hour."

They talked German over that for a time.

"Couldt it standt still? Op in the air? That is what I want to know."

"It could 'ovver, your Royal Highness, like a wasp," said Bert.

"Viel besser, nicht wahr?" said the Prince to Von Winterfeld, and then went on in German for a time.

Presently they came to an end, and the two officers looked at Bert. One rang a bell, and the portfolio was handed to an attendant, who took it away.

Then they reverted to the case of Bert, and it was evident the Prince was inclined to be hard with him. Von Winterfeld protested. Apparently theological considerations came in, for there were several mentions of "Gott!" Some conclusions emerged, and it was apparent that Von Winterfeld was instructed to convey them to Bert.

"Mr. Schmallvays, you haf obtained a footing in this airship," he said, "by disgraceful and systematic lying."

"'Ardly systematic," said Bert. "I—"

The Prince silenced him by a gesture.

"And it is within the power of his Highness to dispose of you as a spy."

"'Ere! — I came to sell—"

"Ssh!" said one of the officers.

"However, in consideration of the happy chance that mate you the instrument unter Gott of this Pooterage flying-machine reaching his Highness's hand, you haf been spared. Yes, — you were the pearer

of goot tidings. You will be allowed to remain on this ship until it is convenient to dispose of you. Do you understandt?"

"We will bring him," said the Prince, and added terribly with a terrible glare, "als Ballast."

"You are to come with us," said Winterfeld, "as pallast. Do you understandt?"

Bert opened his mouth to ask about the five hundred pounds, and then a saving gleam of wisdom silenced him. He met Von Winterfeld's eye, and it seemed to him the secretary nodded slightly.

"Go!" said the Prince, with a sweep of the great arm and hand towards the door. Bert went out like a leaf before a gale.

9

But in between the time when the Graf von Winterfeld had talked to him and this alarming conference with the Prince, Bert had explored the Vaterland from end to end. He had found it interesting in spite of grave preoccupations. Kurt, like the greater number of the men upon the German air-fleet, had known hardly anything of aeronautics before his appointment to the new flagship. But he was extremely keen upon this wonderful new weapon Germany had assumed so suddenly and dramatically. He showed things to Bert with a boyish eagerness and appreciation. It was as if he showed them over again to himself, like a child showing a new toy. "Let's go all over the ship," he said with zest. He pointed out particularly the lightness of everything, the use of exhausted aluminium tubing, of springy cushions inflated with compressed hydrogen; the partitions were hydrogen bags covered with light imitation leather, the very crockery was a light biscuit glazed in a vacuum, and weighed next to nothing. Where strength was needed there was the new Charlottenburg alloy, German steel as it was called, the toughest and most resistant metal in the world.

There was no lack of space. Space did not matter, so long as load did not grow. The habitable part of the ship was two hundred and fifty feet long, and the rooms in two tiers; above these one could go up into remarkable little white-metal turrets with big windows and airtight double doors that enabled one to inspect the vast cavity of the

gas-chambers. This inside view impressed Bert very much. He had never realised before that an airship was not one simple continuous gas-bag containing nothing but gas. Now he saw far above him the backbone of the apparatus and its big ribs, “like the neural and haemal canals,” said Kurt, who had dabbled in biology.

“Rather!” said Bert appreciatively, though he had not the ghost of an idea what these phrases meant.

Little electric lights could be switched on up there if anything went wrong in the night. There were even ladders across the space. “But you can’t go into the gas,” protested Bert. “You can’t breve it.”

The lieutenant opened a cupboard door and displayed a diver’s suit, only that it was made of oiled silk, and both its compressed-air knapsack and its helmet were of an alloy of aluminium and some light metal. “We can go all over the inside netting and stick up bullet holes or leaks,” he explained. “There’s netting inside and out. The whole outer-case is rope ladder, so to speak.”

Aft of the habitable part of the airship was the magazine of explosives, coming near the middle of its length. They were all bombs of various types mostly in glass — none of the German airships carried any guns at all except one small pom-pom (to use the old English nickname dating from the Boer war), which was forward in the gallery upon the shield at the heart of the eagle.

From the magazine amidships a covered canvas gallery with aluminium treads on its floor and a hand-rope, ran back underneath the gas-chamber to the engine-room at the tail; but along this Bert did not go, and from first to last he never saw the engines. But he went up a ladder against a gale of ventilation — a ladder that was encased in a kind of gas-tight fire escape — and ran right athwart the great forward air-chamber to the little look-out gallery with a telephone, that gallery that bore the light pom-pom of German steel and its locker of shells. This gallery was all of aluminium magnesium alloy, the tight front of the air-ship swelled cliff-like above and below, and the black eagle sprawled overwhelmingly gigantic, its extremities all hidden by the bulge of the gas-bag. And far down, under the soaring eagles, was England, four thousand feet below perhaps, and looking very small and defenceless indeed in the morning sunlight.

The realisation that there was England gave Bert sudden and unexpected qualms of patriotic compunction. He was struck by a quite novel idea. After all, he might have torn up those plans and thrown them away. These people could not have done so very much to him. And even if they did, ought not an Englishman to die for his country? It was an idea that had hitherto been rather smothered up by the cares of a competitive civilisation. He became violently depressed. He ought, he perceived, to have seen it in that light before. Why hadn't he seen it in that light before?

Indeed, wasn't he a sort of traitor?... He wondered how the aerial fleet must look from down there. Tremendous, no doubt, and dwarfing all the buildings.

He was passing between Manchester and Liverpool, Kurt told him; a gleaming band across the prospect was the Ship Canal, and a weltering ditch of shipping far away ahead, the Mersey estuary. Bert was a Southerner; he had never been north of the Midland counties, and the multitude of factories and chimneys — the latter for the most part obsolete and smokeless now, superseded by huge electric generating stations that consumed their own reek — old railway viaducts, mono-rail net-works and goods yards, and the vast areas of dingy homes and narrow streets, spreading aimlessly, struck him as though Camberwell and Rotherhithe had run to seed. Here and there, as if caught in a net, were fields and agricultural fragments. It was a sprawl of undistinguished population. There were, no doubt, museums and town halls and even cathedrals of a sort to mark theoretical centres of municipal and religious organisation in this confusion; but Bert could not see them, they did not stand out at all in that wide disorderly vision of congested workers' houses and places to work, and shops and meanly conceived chapels and churches. And across this landscape of an industrial civilisation swept the shadows of the German airships like a hurrying shoal of fishes....

Kurt and he fell talking of aerial tactics, and presently went down to the undergallery in order that Bert might see the Drachenflieger that the airships of the right wing had picked up overnight and were towing behind them; each airship towing three or four. They looked, like big box-kites of an exaggerated form, soaring at the ends of

invisible cords. They had long, square heads and flattened tails, with lateral propellers.

"Much skill is required for those! — much skill!"

"Rather!"

Pause.

"Your machine is different from that, Mr. Butteridge?"

"Quite different," said Bert. "More like an insect, and less like a bird. And it buzzes, and don't drive about so. What can those things do?"

Kurt was not very clear upon that himself, and was still explaining when Bert was called to the conference we have recorded with the Prince.

And after that was over, the last traces of Butteridge fell from Bert like a garment, and he became Smallways to all on board. The soldiers ceased to salute him, and the officers ceased to seem aware of his existence, except Lieutenant Kurt. He was turned out of his nice cabin, and packed in with his belongings to share that of Lieutenant Kurt, whose luck it was to be junior, and the bird-headed officer, still swearing slightly, and carrying strops and aluminium boot-trees and weightless hair-brushes and hand-mirrors and pomade in his hands, resumed possession. Bert was put in with Kurt because there was nowhere else for him to lay his bandaged head in that close-packed vessel. He was to mess, he was told, with the men.

Kurt came and stood with his legs wide apart and surveyed, him for a moment as he sat despondent in his new quarters.

"What's your real name, then?" said Kurt, who was only imperfectly informed of the new state of affairs.

"Smallways."

"I thought you were a bit of a fraud — even when I thought you were Butteridge. You're jolly lucky the Prince took it calmly. He's a pretty tidy blazer when he's roused. He wouldn't stick a moment at pitching a chap of your sort overboard if he thought fit. No!... They've shoved you on to me, but it's my cabin, you know."

"I won't forget," said Bert.

Kurt left him, and when he came to look about him the first thing he saw pasted on the padded wall was a reproduction, of the great picture by Siegfried Schmalz of the War God, that terrible, trampling

figure with the viking helmet and the scarlet cloak, wading through destruction, sword in hand, which had so strong a resemblance to Karl Albert, the prince it was painted to please.

CHAPTER V. THE BATTLE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

1

The Prince Karl Albert had made a profound impression upon Bert. He was quite the most terrifying person Bert had ever encountered. He filled the Smallways soul with passionate dread and antipathy. For a long time Bert sat alone in Kurt's cabin, doing nothing and not venturing even to open the door lest he should be by that much nearer that appalling presence.

So it came about that he was probably the last person on board to hear the news that wireless telegraphy was bringing to the airship in throbs and fragments of a great naval battle in progress in mid-Atlantic.

He learnt it at last from Kurt.

Kurt came in with a general air of ignoring Bert, but muttering to himself in English nevertheless. "Stupendous!" Bert heard him say. "Here!" he said, "get off this locker." And he proceeded to rout out two books and a case of maps. He spread them on the folding-table, and stood regarding them. For a time his Germanic discipline struggled with his English informality and his natural kindliness and talkativeness, and at last lost.

"They're at it, Smallways," he said.

"At what, sir?" said Bert, broken and respectful.

"Fighting! The American North Atlantic squadron and pretty nearly the whole of our fleet. Our Eiserne Kreuz has had a gruelling and is sinking, and their Miles Standish — she's one of their biggest — has sunk with all hands. Torpedoes, I suppose. She was a bigger ship than the Karl der Grosse, but five or six years older. Gods! I wish we could see it, Smallways; a square fight in blue water, guns or nothing, and all of 'em steaming ahead!"

He spread his maps, he had to talk, and so he delivered a lecture on the naval situation to Bert.

"Here it is," he said, "latitude 30 degrees 50 minutes N. longitude 30 degrees 50 minutes W. It's a good day off us, anyhow, and they're

all going south-west by south at full pelt as hard as they can go. We shan't see a bit of it, worse luck! Not a sniff we shan't get!"

2

The naval situation in the North Atlantic at that time was a peculiar one. The United States was by far the stronger of the two powers upon the sea, but the bulk of the American fleet was still in the Pacific. It was in the direction of Asia that war had been most feared, for the situation between Asiatic and white had become unusually violent and dangerous, and the Japanese government had shown itself quite unprecedentedly difficult. The German attack therefore found half the American strength at Manila, and what was called the Second Fleet strung out across the Pacific in wireless contact between the Asiatic station and San Francisco. The North Atlantic squadron was the sole American force on her eastern shore, it was returning from a friendly visit to France and Spain, and was pumping oil-fuel from tenders in mid-Atlantic — for most of its ships were steamships — when the international situation became acute. It was made up of four battleships and five armoured cruisers ranking almost with battleships, not one of which was of a later date than 1913. The Americans had indeed grown so accustomed to the idea that Great Britain could be trusted to keep the peace of the Atlantic that a naval attack on the eastern seaboard found them unprepared even in their imaginations. But long before the declaration of war — indeed, on Whit Monday — the whole German fleet of eighteen battleships, with a flotilla of fuel tenders and converted liners containing stores to be used in support of the air-fleet, had passed through the straits of Dover and headed boldly for New York. Not only did these German battleships outnumber the Americans two to one, but they were more heavily armed and more modern in construction — seven of them having high explosive engines built of Charlottenburg steel, and all carrying Charlottenburg steel guns.

The fleets came into contact on Wednesday before any actual declaration of war. The Americans had strung out in the modern fashion at distances of thirty miles or so, and were steaming to keep themselves between the Germans and either the eastern states or

Panama; because, vital as it was to defend the seaboard cities and particularly New York, it was still more vital to save the canal from any attack that might prevent the return of the main fleet from the Pacific. No doubt, said Kurt, this was now making records across that ocean, "unless the Japanese have had the same idea as the Germans." It was obviously beyond human possibility that the American North Atlantic fleet could hope to meet and defeat the German; but, on the other hand, with luck it might fight a delaying action and inflict such damage as to greatly weaken the attack upon the coast defences. Its duty, indeed, was not victory but devotion, the severest task in the world. Meanwhile the submarine defences of New York, Panama, and the other more vital points could be put in some sort of order.

This was the naval situation, and until Wednesday in Whit week it was the only situation the American people had realised. It was then they heard for the first time of the real scale of the Dornhof aeronautic park and the possibility of an attack coming upon them not only by sea, but by the air. But it is curious that so discredited were the newspapers of that period that a large majority of New Yorkers, for example, did not believe the most copious and circumstantial accounts of the German air-fleet until it was actually in sight of New York.

Kurt's talk was half soliloquy. He stood with a map on Mercator's projection before him, swaying to the swinging of the ship and talking of guns and tonnage, of ships and their build and powers and speed, of strategic points, and bases of operation. A certain shyness that reduced him to the status of a listener at the officers' table no longer silenced him.

Bert stood by, saying very little, but watching Kurt's finger on the map. "They've been saying things like this in the papers for a long time," he remarked. "Fancy it coming real!"

Kurt had a detailed knowledge of the Miles Standish. "She used to be a crack ship for gunnery — held the record. I wonder if we beat her shooting, or how? I wish I was in it. I wonder which of our ships beat her. Maybe she got a shell in her engines. It's a running fight! I wonder what the Barbarossa is doing," he went on, "She's my old ship. Not a first-rater, but good stuff. I bet she's got a shot or two home by now if old Schneider's up to form. Just think of it! There

they are whacking away at each other, great guns going, shells exploding, magazines bursting, ironwork flying about like straw in a gale, all we've been dreaming of for years! I suppose we shall fly right away to New York — just as though it wasn't anything at all. I suppose we shall reckon we aren't wanted down there. It's no more than a covering fight on our side. All those tenders and store-ships of ours are going on southwest by west to New York to make a floating depot for us. See?" He dabbed his forefinger on the map. "Here we are. Our train of stores goes there, our battleships elbow the Americans out of our way there."

When Bert went down to the men's mess-room to get his evening ration, hardly any one took notice of him except just to point him out for an instant. Every one was talking of the battle, suggesting, contradicting — at times, until the petty officers hushed them, it rose to a great uproar. There was a new bulletin, but what it said he did not gather except that it concerned the Barbarossa. Some of the men stared at him, and he heard the name of "Booteraidge" several times; but no one molested him, and there was no difficulty about his soup and bread when his turn at the end of the queue came. He had feared there might be no ration for him, and if so he did not know what he would have done.

Afterwards he ventured out upon the little hanging gallery with the solitary sentinel. The weather was still fine, but the wind was rising and the rolling swing of the airship increasing. He clutched the rail tightly and felt rather giddy. They were now out of sight of land, and over blue water rising and falling in great masses. A dingy old brigantine under the British flag rose and plunged amid the broad blue waves — the only ship in sight.

3

In the evening it began to blow and the air-ship to roll like a porpoise as it swung through the air. Kurt said that several of the men were sea-sick, but the motion did not inconvenience Bert, whose luck it was to be of that mysterious gastric disposition which constitutes a good sailor. He slept well, but in the small hours the light awoke him, and he found Kurt staggering about in search of something. He

found it at last in the locker, and held it in his hand unsteadily — a compass. Then he compared his map.

"We've changed our direction," he said, "and come into the wind. I can't make it out. We've turned away from New York to the south. Almost as if we were going to take a hand—"

He continued talking to himself for some time.

Day came, wet and windy. The window was bedewed externally, and they could see nothing through it. It was also very cold, and Bert decided to keep rolled up in his blankets on the locker until the bugle summoned him to his morning ration. That consumed, he went out on the little gallery; but he could see nothing but eddying clouds driving headlong by, and the dim outlines of the nearer airships. Only at rare intervals could he get a glimpse of grey sea through the pouring cloud-drift.

Later in the morning the Vaterland changed altitude, and soared up suddenly in a high, clear sky, going, Kurt said, to a height of nearly thirteen thousand feet.

Bert was in his cabin, and chanced to see the dew vanish from the window and caught the gleam of sunlight outside. He looked out, and saw once more that sunlit cloud floor he had seen first from the balloon, and the ships of the German air-fleet rising one by one from the white, as fish might rise and become visible from deep water. He stared for a moment and then ran out to the little gallery to see this wonder better. Below was cloudland and storm, a great drift of tumbled weather going hard away to the north-east, and the air about him was clear and cold and serene save for the faintest chill breeze and a rare, drifting snow-flake. Throb, throb, throb, throb, went the engines in the stillness. That huge herd of airships rising one after another had an effect of strange, portentous monsters breaking into an altogether unfamiliar world.

Either there was no news of the naval battle that morning, or the Prince kept to himself whatever came until past midday. Then the bulletins came with a rush, bulletins that made the lieutenant wild with excitement.

"Barbarossa disabled and sinking," he cried. "Gott im Himmel! Der alte Barbarossa! Aber welch ein braver krieger!"

He walked about the swinging cabin, and for a time he was

wholly German.

Then he became English again. “Think of it, Smallways! The old ship we kept so clean and tidy! All smashed about, and the iron flying about in fragments, and the chaps one knew — Gott! — flying about too! Scalding water squirting, fire, and the smash, smash of the guns! They smash when you’re near! Like everything bursting to pieces! Wool won’t stop it — nothing! And me up here — so near and so far! Der alte Barbarossa!”

“Any other ships?” asked Smallways, presently.

“Gott! Yes! We’ve lost the Karl der Grosse, our best and biggest. Run down in the night by a British liner that blundered into the fighting in trying to blunder out. They’re fighting in a gale. The liner’s afloat with her nose broken, sagging about! There never was such a battle! — never before! Good ships and good men on both sides, — and a storm and the night and the dawn and all in the open ocean full steam ahead! No stabbing! No submarines! Guns and shooting! Half our ships we don’t hear of any more, because their masts are shot away. Latitude, 30 degrees 40 minutes N. — longitude, 40 degrees 30 minutes W. — where’s that?”

He routed out his map again, and stared at it with eyes that did not see.

“Der alte Barbarossa! I can’t get it out of my head — with shells in her engine-room, and the fires flying out of her furnaces, and the stokers and engineers scalded and dead. Men I’ve messed with, Smallways — men I’ve talked to close! And they’ve had their day at last! And it wasn’t all luck for them!

“Disabled and sinking! I suppose everybody can’t have all the luck in a battle. Poor old Schneider! I bet he gave ’em something back!”

So it was the news of the battle came filtering through to them all that morning. The Americans had lost a second ship, name unknown; the Hermann had been damaged in covering the Barbarossa.... Kurt fretted like an imprisoned animal about the airship, now going up to the forward gallery under the eagle, now down into the swinging gallery, now poring over his maps. He infected Smallways with a sense of the immediacy of this battle that was going on just over the curve of the earth. But when Bert went down to the gallery the world

was empty and still, a clear inky-blue sky above and a rippled veil of still, thin sunlit cirrus below, through which one saw a racing drift of rain-cloud, and never a glimpse of sea. Throb, throb, throb, throb, went the engines, and the long, undulating wedge of airships hurried after the flagship like a flight of swans after their leader. Save for the quiver of the engines it was as noiseless as a dream. And down there, somewhere in the wind and rain, guns roared, shells crashed home, and, after the old manner of warfare, men toiled and died.

4

As the afternoon wore on the lower weather abated, and the sea became intermittently visible again. The air-fleet dropped slowly to the middle air, and towards sunset they had a glimpse of the disabled Barbarossa far away to the east. Smallways heard men hurrying along the passage, and was drawn out to the gallery, where he found nearly a dozen officers collected and scrutinising the helpless ruins of the battleship through field-glasses. Two other vessels stood by her, one an exhausted petrol tank, very high out of the water, and the other a converted liner. Kurt was at the end of the gallery, a little apart from the others.

"Gott!" he said at last, lowering his binocular, "it is like seeing an old friend with his nose cut off — waiting to be finished. Der Barbarossa!"

With a sudden impulse he handed his glass to Bert, who had peered beneath his hands, ignored by every one, seeing the three ships merely as three brown-black lines upon the sea.

Never had Bert seen the like of that magnified slightly hazy image before. It was not simply a battered ironclad that wallowed helpless, it was a mangled ironclad. It seemed wonderful she still floated. Her powerful engines had been her ruin. In the long chase of the night she had got out of line with her consorts, and nipped in between the Susquehanna and the Kansas City. They discovered her proximity, dropped back until she was nearly broadside on to the former battleship, and signalled up the Theodore Roosevelt and the little Monitor. As dawn broke she had found herself hostess of a circle. The fight had not lasted five minutes before the appearance of the

Hermann to the east, and immediately after of the Furst Bismarck in the west, forced the Americans to leave her, but in that time they had smashed her iron to rags. They had vented the accumulated tensions of their hard day's retreat upon her. As Bert saw her, she seemed a mere metal-worker's fantasy of frozen metal writhings. He could not tell part from part of her, except by its position.

"Gott!" murmured Kurt, taking the glasses Bert restored to him— "Gott! Da waren Albrecht — der gute Albrecht und der alte Zimmermann — und von Rosen!"

Long after the Barbarosa had been swallowed up in the twilight and distance he remained on the gallery peering through his glasses, and when he came back to his cabin he was unusually silent and thoughtful.

"This is a rough game, Smallways," he said at last— "this war is a rough game. Somehow one sees it different after a thing like that. Many men there were worked to make that Barbarossa, and there were men in it — one does not meet the like of them every day. Albrecht — there was a man named Albrecht — played the zither and improvised; I keep on wondering what has happened to him. He and I — we were very close friends, after the German fashion."

Smallways woke the next night to discover the cabin in darkness, a draught blowing through it, and Kurt talking to himself in German. He could see him dimly by the window, which he had unscrewed and opened, peering down. That cold, clear, attenuated light which is not so much light as a going of darkness, which casts inky shadows and so often heralds the dawn in the high air, was on his face.

"What's the row?" said Bert.

"Shut up!" said the lieutenant. "Can't you hear?"

Into the stillness came the repeated heavy thud of guns, one, two, a pause, then three in quick succession.

"Gaw!" said Bert— "guns!" and was instantly at the lieutenant's side. The airship was still very high and the sea below was masked by a thin veil of clouds. The wind had fallen, and Bert, following Kurt's pointing finger, saw dimly through the colourless veil first a red glow, then a quick red flash, and then at a little distance from it another. They were, it seemed for a while, silent flashes, and seconds after, when one had ceased to expect them, came the belated thuds —

thud, thud. Kurt spoke in German, very quickly.

A bugle call rang through the airship.

Kurt sprang to his feet, saying something in an excited tone, still using German, and went to the door.

“I say! What’s up?” cried Bert. “What’s that?”

The lieutenant stopped for an instant in the doorway, dark against the light passage. “You stay where you are, Smallways. You keep there and do nothing. We’re going into action,” he explained, and vanished.

Bert’s heart began to beat rapidly. He felt himself poised over the fighting vessels far below. In a moment, were they to drop like a hawk striking a bird? “Gaw!” he whispered at last, in awestricken tones.

Thud!... thud! He discovered far away a second ruddy flare flashing guns back at the first. He perceived some difference on the Vaterland for which he could not account, and then he realised that the engines had slowed to an almost inaudible beat. He stuck his head out of the window — it was a tight fit — and saw in the bleak air the other airships slowed down to a scarcely perceptible motion.

A second bugle sounded, was taken up faintly from ship to ship. Out went the lights; the fleet became dim, dark bulks against an intense blue sky that still retained an occasional star. For a long time they hung, for an interminable time it seemed to him, and then began the sound of air being pumped into the balloonette, and slowly, slowly the Vaterland sank down towards the clouds.

He craned his neck, but he could not see if the rest of the fleet was following them; the overhang of the gas-chambers intervened. There was something that stirred his imagination deeply in that stealthy, noiseless descent. The obscurity deepened for a time, the last fading star on the horizon vanished, and he felt the cold presence of cloud. Then suddenly the glow beneath assumed distinct outlines, became flames, and the Vaterland ceased to descend and hung observant, and it would seem unobserved, just beneath a drifting stratum of cloud, a thousand feet, perhaps, over the battle below.

In the night the struggling naval battle and retreat had entered upon a new phase. The Americans had drawn together the ends of the flying line skilfully and dexterously, until at last it was a column and

well to the south of the lax sweeping pursuit of the Germans. Then in the darkness before the dawn they had come about and steamed northward in close order with the idea of passing through the German battle-line and falling upon the flotilla that was making for New York in support of the German air-fleet. Much had altered since the first contact of the fleets. By this time the American admiral, O'Connor, was fully informed of the existence of the airships, and he was no longer vitally concerned for Panama, since the submarine flotilla was reported arrived there from Key West, and the Delaware and Abraham Lincoln, two powerful and entirely modern ships, were already at Rio Grande, on the Pacific side of the canal. His manoeuvre was, however, delayed by a boiler explosion on board the Susquehanna, and dawn found this ship in sight of and indeed so close to the Bremen and Weimar that they instantly engaged. There was no alternative to her abandonment but a fleet engagement. O'Connor chose the latter course. It was by no means a hopeless fight. The Germans, though much more numerous and powerful than the Americans, were in a dispersed line measuring nearly forty-five miles from end to end, and there were many chances that before they could gather in for the fight the column of seven Americans would have ripped them from end to end.

The day broke dim and overcast, and neither the Bremen nor the Weimar realised they had to deal with more than the Susquehanna until the whole column drew out from behind her at a distance of a mile or less and bore down on them. This was the position of affairs when the Vaterland appeared in the sky. The red glow Bert had seen through the column of clouds came from the luckless Susquehanna; she lay almost immediately below, burning fore and aft, but still fighting two of her guns and steaming slowly southward. The Bremen and the Weimar, both hit in several places, were going west by south and away from her. The American fleet, headed by the Theodore Roosevelt, was crossing behind them, pounding them in succession, steaming in between them and the big modern Furst Bismarck, which was coming up from the west. To Bert, however, the names of all these ships were unknown, and for a considerable time indeed, misled by the direction in which the combatants were moving, he imagined the Germans to be Americans and the

Americans Germans. He saw what appeared to him to be a column of six battleships pursuing three others who were supported by a newcomer, until the fact that the Bremen and Weimar were firing into the Susquehanna upset his calculations. Then for a time he was hopelessly at a loss. The noise of the guns, too, confused him, they no longer seemed to boom; they went whack, whack, whack, whack, and each faint flash made his heart jump in anticipation of the instant impact. He saw these ironclads, too, not in profile, as he was accustomed to see ironclads in pictures, but in plan and curiously foreshortened. For the most part they presented empty decks, but here and there little knots of men sheltered behind steel bulwarks. The long, agitated noses of their big guns, jetting thin transparent flashes and the broadside activity of the quick-firers, were the chief facts in this bird's-eye view. The Americans being steam-turbine ships, had from two to four blast funnels each; the Germans lay lower in the water, having explosive engines, which now for some reason made an unwonted muttering roar. Because of their steam propulsion, the American ships were larger and with a more graceful outline. He saw all these foreshortened ships rolling considerably and fighting their guns over a sea of huge low waves and under the cold, explicit light of dawn. The whole spectacle waved slowly with the long rhythmic rising and beat of the airship.

At first only the Vaterland of all the flying fleet appeared upon the scene below. She hovered high, over the Theodore Roosevelt, keeping pace with the full speed of that ship. From that ship she must have been intermittently visible through the drifting clouds. The rest of the German fleet remained above the cloud canopy at a height of six or seven thousand feet, communicating with the flagship by wireless telegraphy, but risking no exposure to the artillery below.

It is doubtful at what particular time the unlucky Americans realised the presence of this new factor in the fight. No account now survives of their experience. We have to imagine as well as we can what it must have been to a battled-strained sailor suddenly glancing upward to discover that huge long silent shape overhead, vaster than any battleship, and trailing now from its hinder quarter a big German flag. Presently, as the sky cleared, more of such ships appeared in the blue through the dissolving clouds, and more, all disdainfully free of

guns or armour, all flying fast to keep pace with the running fight below.

From first to last no gun whatever was fired at the Vaterland, and only a few rifle shots. It was a mere adverse stroke of chance that she had a man killed aboard her. Nor did she take any direct share in the fight until the end. She flew above the doomed American fleet while the Prince by wireless telegraphy directed the movements of her consorts. Meanwhile the Vogel-stern and Preussen, each with half a dozen drachenflieger in tow, went full speed ahead and then dropped through the clouds, perhaps five miles ahead of the Americans. The Theodore Roosevelt let fly at once with the big guns in her forward barbette, but the shells burst far below the Vogel-stern, and forthwith a dozen single-man drachenflieger were swooping down to make their attack.

Bert, craning his neck through the cabin port-hole, saw the whole of that incident, that first encounter of aeroplane and ironclad. He saw the queer German drachenflieger, with their wide flat wings and square box-shaped heads, their wheeled bodies, and their single-man riders, soar down the air like a flight of birds. “Gaw!” he said. One to the right pitched extravagantly, shot steeply up into the air, burst with a loud report, and flamed down into the sea; another plunged nose forward into the water and seemed to fly to pieces as it hit the waves. He saw little men on the deck of the Theodore Roosevelt below, men foreshortened in plan into mere heads and feet, running out preparing to shoot at the others. Then the foremost flying-machine was rushing between Bert and the American’s deck, and then bang! came the thunder of its bomb flung neatly at the forward barbette, and a thin little crackling of rifle shots in reply. Whack, whack, whack, went the quick-firing guns of the Americans’ battery, and smash came an answering shell from the Furst Bismarck. Then a second and third flying-machine passed between Bert and the American ironclad, dropping bombs also, and a fourth, its rider hit by a bullet, reeled down and dashed itself to pieces and exploded between the shot-torn funnels, blowing them apart. Bert had a momentary glimpse of a little black creature jumping from the crumpling frame of the flying-machine, hitting the funnel, and falling limply, to be instantly caught and driven to nothingness by the blaze

and rush of the explosion.

Smash! came a vast explosion in the forward part of the flagship, and a huge piece of metalwork seemed to lift out of her and dump itself into the sea, dropping men and leaving a gap into which a prompt drachenflieger planted a flaring bomb. And then for an instant Bert perceived only too clearly in the growing, pitiless light a number of minute, convulsively active animalcula scorched and struggling in the Theodore Roosevelt's foaming wake. What were they? Not men — surely not men? Those drowning, mangled little creatures tore with their clutching fingers at Bert's soul. "Oh, Gord!" he cried, "Oh, Gord!" almost whimpering. He looked again and they had gone, and the black stem of the Andrew Jackson, a little disfigured by the sinking Bremen's last shot, was parting the water that had swallowed them into two neatly symmetrical waves. For some moments sheer blank horror blinded Bert to the destruction below.

Then, with an immense rushing sound, bearing as it were a straggling volley of crashing minor explosions on its back, the Susquehanna, three miles and more now to the east, blew up and vanished abruptly in a boiling, steaming welter. For a moment nothing was to be seen but tumbled water, and — then there came belching up from below, with immense gulping noises, eructations of steam and air and petrol and fragments of canvas and woodwork and men.

That made a distinct pause in the fight. It seemed a long pause to Bert. He found himself looking for the drachenflieger. The flattened ruin of one was floating abeam of the Monitor, the rest had passed, dropping bombs down the American column; several were in the water and apparently uninjured, and three or four were still in the air and coming round now in a wide circle to return to their mother airships. The American ironclads were no longer in column formation; the Theodore Roosevelt, badly damaged, had turned to the southeast, and the Andrew Jackson, greatly battered but uninjured in any fighting part was passing between her and the still fresh and vigorous Furst Bismarck to intercept and meet the latter's fire. Away to the west the Hermann and the Germanicus had appeared and were coming into action.

In the pause, after the Susquehanna's disaster Bert became aware of a trivial sound like the noise of an ill-greased, ill-hung door that falls ajar — the sound of the men in the Furst Bismarck cheering.

And in that pause in the uproar too, the sun rose, the dark waters became luminously blue, and a torrent of golden light irradiated the world. It came like a sudden smile in a scene of hate and terror. The cloud veil had vanished as if by magic, and the whole immensity of the German air-fleet was revealed in the sky; the air-fleet stooping now upon its prey.

"Whack-bang, whack-bang," the guns resumed, but ironclads were not built to fight the zenith, and the only hits the Americans scored were a few lucky chances in a generally ineffectual rifle fire. Their column was now badly broken, the Susquehanna had gone, the Theodore Roosevelt had fallen astern out of the line, with her forward guns disabled, in a heap of wreckage, and the Monitor was in some grave trouble. These two had ceased fire altogether, and so had the Bremen and Weimar, all four ships lying within shot of each other in an involuntary truce and with their respective flags still displayed. Only four American ships now, with the Andrew Jackson leading, kept to the south-easterly course. And the Furst Bismarck, the Hermann, and the Germanicus steamed parallel to them and drew ahead of them, fighting heavily. The Vaterland rose slowly in the air in preparation for the concluding act of the drama.

Then, falling into place one behind the other, a string of a dozen airships dropped with unhurrying swiftness down the air in pursuit of the American fleet. They kept at a height of two thousand feet or more until they were over and a little in advance of the rearmost ironclad, and then stooped swiftly down into a fountain of bullets, and going just a little faster than the ship below, pelted her thinly protected decks with bombs until they became sheets of detonating flame. So the airships passed one after the other along the American column as it sought to keep up its fight with the Furst Bismarck, the Hermann, and the Germanicus, and each airship added to the destruction and confusion its predecessor had made. The American gunfire ceased, except for a few heroic shots, but they still steamed on, obstinately unsubdued, bloody, battered, and wrathfully resistant, spitting bullets at the airships and unmercifully pounded by the

German ironclads. But now Bert had but intermittent glimpses of them between the nearer bulks of the airships that assailed them....

It struck Bert suddenly that the whole battle was receding and growing small and less thunderously noisy. The Vaterland was rising in the air, steadily and silently, until the impact of the guns no longer smote upon the heart but came to the ear dulled by distance, until the four silenced ships to the eastward were little distant things: but were there four? Bert now could see only three of those floating, blackened, and smoking rafts of ruin against the sun. But the Bremen had two boats out; the Theodore Roosevelt was also dropping boats to where the drift of minute objects struggled, rising and falling on the big, broad Atlantic waves.... The Vaterland was no longer following the fight. The whole of that hurrying tumult drove away to the south-eastward, growing smaller and less audible as it passed. One of the airships lay on the water burning, a remote monstrous fount of flames, and far in the south-west appeared first one and then three other German ironclads hurrying in support of their consorts....

5

Steadily the Vaterland soared, and the air-fleet soared with her and came round to head for New York, and the battle became a little thing far away, an incident before the breakfast. It dwindled to a string of dark shapes and one smoking yellow flare that presently became a mere indistinct smear upon the vast horizon and the bright new day, that was at last altogether lost to sight...

So it was that Bert Smallways saw the first fight of the airship and the last fight of those strangest things in the whole history of war: the ironclad battleships, which began their career with the floating batteries of the Emperor Napoleon III in the Crimean war and lasted, with an enormous expenditure of human energy and resources, for seventy years. In that space of time the world produced over twelve thousand five hundred of these strange monsters, in schools, in types, in series, each larger and heavier and more deadly than its predecessors. Each in its turn was hailed as the last birth of time, most in their turn were sold for old iron. Only about five per cent of them ever fought in a battle. Some foundered, some went ashore, and

broke up, several rammed one another by accident and sank. The lives of countless men were spent in their service, the splendid genius, and patience of thousands of engineers and inventors, wealth and material beyond estimating; to their account we must put, stunted and starved lives on land, millions of children sent to toil unduly, innumerable opportunities of fine living undeveloped and lost. Money had to be found for them at any cost — that was the law of a nation's existence during that strange time. Surely they were the weirdest, most destructive and wasteful megatheria in the whole history of mechanical invention.

And then cheap things of gas and basket-work made an end of them altogether, smiting out of the sky!...

Never before had Bert Smallways seen pure destruction, never had he realised the mischief and waste of war. His startled mind rose to the conception; this also is in life. Out of all this fierce torrent of sensation one impression rose and became cardinal — the impression of the men of the Theodore Roosevelt who had struggled in the water after the explosion of the first bomb. "Gaw!" he said at the memory; "it might 'ave been me and Grubb!... I suppose you kick about and get the water in your mouf. I don't suppose it lasts long."

He became anxious to see how Kurt was affected by these things. Also he perceived he was hungry. He hesitated towards the door of the cabin and peeped out into the passage. Down forward, near the gangway to the men's mess, stood a little group of air sailors looking at something that was hidden from him in a recess. One of them was in the light diver's costume Bert had already seen in the gas chamber turret, and he was moved to walk along and look at this person more closely and examine the helmet he carried under his arm. But he forgot about the helmet when he got to the recess, because there he found lying on the floor the dead body of the boy who had been killed by a bullet from the Theodore Roosevelt.

Bert had not observed that any bullets at all had reached the Vaterland or, indeed, imagined himself under fire. He could not understand for a time what had killed the lad, and no one explained to him.

The boy lay just as he had fallen and died, with his jacket torn and scorched, his shoulder-blade smashed and burst away from his body

and all the left side of his body ripped and rent. There was much blood. The sailors stood listening to the man with the helmet, who made explanations and pointed to the round bullet hole in the floor and the smash in the panel of the passage upon which the still vicious missile had spent the residue of its energy. All the faces were grave and earnest: they were the faces of sober, blond, blue-eyed men accustomed to obedience and an orderly life, to whom this waste, wet, painful thing that had been a comrade came almost as strangely as it did to Bert.

A peal of wild laughter sounded down the passage in the direction of the little gallery and something spoke — almost shouted — in German, in tones of exultation.

Other voices at a lower, more respectful pitch replied.

"Der Prinz," said a voice, and all the men became stiffer and less natural. Down the passage appeared a group of figures, Lieutenant Kurt walking in front carrying a packet of papers.

He stopped point blank when he saw the thing in the recess, and his ruddy face went white.

"So!" said he in surprise.

The Prince was following him, talking over his shoulder to Von Winterfeld and the Kapitan.

"Eh?" he said to Kurt, stopping in mid-sentence, and followed the gesture of Kurt's hand. He glared at the crumpled object in the recess and seemed to think for a moment.

He made a slight, careless gesture towards the boy's body and turned to the Kapitan.

"Dispose of that," he said in German, and passed on, finishing his sentence to Von Winterfeld in the same cheerful tone in which it had begun.

6

The deep impression of helplessly drowning men that Bert had brought from the actual fight in the Atlantic mixed itself up inextricably with that of the lordly figure of Prince Karl Albert gesturing aside the dead body of the Vaterland sailor. Hitherto he had rather liked the idea of war as being a jolly, smashing, exciting affair,

something like a Bank Holiday rag on a large scale, and on the whole agreeable and exhilarating. Now he knew it a little better.

The next day there was added to his growing disillusionment a third ugly impression, trivial indeed to describe, a mere necessary everyday incident of a state of war, but very distressing to his urbanised imagination. One writes "urbanised" to express the distinctive gentleness of the period. It was quite peculiar to the crowded townsmen of that time, and different altogether from the normal experience of any preceding age, that they never saw anything killed, never encountered, save through the mitigating media of book or picture, the fact of lethal violence that underlies all life. Three times in his existence, and three times only, had Bert seen a dead human being, and he had never assisted at the killing of anything bigger than a new-born kitten.

The incident that gave him his third shock was the execution of one of the men on the Adler for carrying a box of matches. The case was a flagrant one. The man had forgotten he had it upon him when coming aboard. Ample notice had been given to every one of the gravity of this offence, and notices appeared at numerous points all over the airships. The man's defence was that he had grown so used to the notices and had been so preoccupied with his work that he hadn't applied them to himself; he pleaded, in his defence, what is indeed in military affairs another serious crime, inadvertency. He was tried by his captain, and the sentence confirmed by wireless telegraphy by the Prince, and it was decided to make his death an example to the whole fleet. "The Germans," the Prince declared, "hadn't crossed the Atlantic to go wool gathering." And in order that this lesson in discipline and obedience might be visible to every one, it was determined not to electrocute or drown but hang the offender.

Accordingly the air-fleet came clustering round the flagship like carp in a pond at feeding time. The Adler hung at the zenith immediately alongside the flagship. The whole crew of the Vaterland assembled upon the hanging gallery; the crews of the other airships manned the air-chambers, that is to say, clambered up the outer netting to the upper sides. The officers appeared upon the machine-gun platforms. Bert thought it an altogether stupendous sight, looking down, as he was, upon the entire fleet. Far off below two

steamers on the rippled blue water, one British and the other flying the American flag, seemed the minutest objects, and marked the scale. They were immensely distant. Bert stood on the gallery, curious to see the execution, but uncomfortable, because that terrible blond Prince was within a dozen feet of him, glaring terribly, with his arms folded, and his heels together in military fashion.

They hung the man from the Adler. They gave him sixty feet of rope, so, that he should hang and dangle in the sight of all evil-doers who might be hiding matches or contemplating any kindred disobedience. Bert saw the man standing, a living, reluctant man, no doubt scared and rebellious enough in his heart, but outwardly erect and obedient, on the lower gallery of the Adler about a hundred yards away. Then they had thrust him overboard.

Down he fell, hands and feet extending, until with a jerk he was at the end of the rope. Then he ought to have died and swung edifyingly, but instead a more terrible thing happened; his head came right off, and down the body went spinning to the sea, feeble, grotesque, fantastic, with the head racing it in its fall.

"Ugh!" said Bert, clutching the rail before him, and a sympathetic grunt came from several of the men beside him.

"So!" said the Prince, stiffer and sterner, glared for some seconds, then turned to the gang way up into the airship.

For a long time Bert remained clinging to the railing of the gallery. He was almost physically sick with the horror of this trifling incident. He found it far more dreadful than the battle. He was indeed a very degenerate, latter-day, civilised person.

Late that afternoon Kurt came into the cabin and found him curled up on his locker, and looking very white and miserable. Kurt had also lost something of his pristine freshness.

"Sea-sick?" he asked.

"No!"

"We ought to reach New York this evening. There's a good breeze coming up under our tails. Then we shall see things."

Bert did not answer.

Kurt opened out folding chair and table, and rustled for a time with his maps. Then he fell thinking darkly. He roused himself presently, and looked at his companion. "What's the matter?" he

said.

"Nothing!"

Kurt stared threateningly. "What's the matter?"

"I saw them kill that chap. I saw that flying-machine man hit the funnels of the big ironclad. I saw that dead chap in the passage. I seen too much smashing and killing lately. That's the matter. I don't like it. I didn't know war was this sort of thing. I'm a civilian. I don't like it."

"*I* don't like it," said Kurt. "By Jove, no!"

"I've read about war, and all that, but when you see it it's different. And I'm gettin' giddy. I'm gettin' giddy. I didn't mind a bit being up in that balloon at first, but all this looking down and floating over things and smashing up people, it's getting on my nerves. See?"

"It'll have to get off again...."

Kurt thought. "You're not the only one. The men are all getting strung up. The flying — that's just flying. Naturally it makes one a little swimmy in the head at first. As for the killing, we've got to be blooded; that's all. We're tame, civilised men. And we've got to get blooded. I suppose there's not a dozen men on the ship who've really seen bloodshed. Nice, quiet, law-abiding Germans they've been so far.... Here they are — in for it. They're a bit squeamy now, but you wait till they've got their hands in."

He reflected. "Everybody's getting a bit strung up," he said.

He turned again to his maps. Bert sat crumpled up in the corner, apparently heedless of him. For some time both kept silence.

"What did the Prince want to go and 'ang that chap for?" asked Bert, suddenly.

"That was all right," said Kurt, "that was all right. QUITE right. Here were the orders, plain as the nose on your face, and here was that fool going about with matches—"

"Gaw! I shan't forget that bit in a 'urry," said Bert irrelevantly.

Kurt did not answer him. He was measuring their distance from New York and speculating. "Wonder what the American aeroplanes are like?" he said. "Something like our drachenflieger.... We shall know by this time to-morrow.... I wonder what we shall know? I wonder. Suppose, after all, they put up a fight.... Rum sort of fight!"

He whistled softly and mused. Presently he fretted out of the

cabin, and later Bert found him in the twilight upon the swinging platform, staring ahead, and speculating about the things that might happen on the morrow. Clouds veiled the sea again, and the long straggling wedge of air-ships rising and falling as they flew seemed like a flock of strange new births in a Chaos that had neither earth nor water but only mist and sky.

CHAPTER VI. HOW WAR CAME TO NEW YORK

1

The City of New York was in the year of the German attack the largest, richest, in many respects the most splendid, and in some, the wickedest city the world had ever seen. She was the supreme type of the City of the Scientific Commercial Age; she displayed its greatness, its power, its ruthless anarchic enterprise, and its social disorganisation most strikingly and completely. She had long ousted London from her pride of place as the modern Babylon, she was the centre of the world's finance, the world's trade, and the world's pleasure; and men likened her to the apocalyptic cities of the ancient prophets. She sat drinking up the wealth of a continent as Rome once drank the wealth of the Mediterranean and Babylon the wealth of the east. In her streets one found the extremes of magnificence and misery, of civilisation and disorder. In one quarter, palaces of marble, laced and, crowned with light and flame and flowers, towered up into her marvellous twilights beautiful, beyond description; in another, a black and sinister polyglot population sweltered in indescribable congestion in warrens, and excavations beyond the power and knowledge of government. Her vice, her crime, her law alike were inspired by a fierce and terrible energy, and like the great cities of mediaeval Italy, her ways were dark and adventurous with private war.

It was the peculiar shape of Manhattan Island, pressed in by arms of the sea on either side, and incapable of comfortable expansion, except along a narrow northward belt, that first gave the New York architects their bias for extreme vertical dimensions. Every need was lavishly supplied them — money, material, labour; only space was restricted. To begin, therefore, they built high perforce. But to do so was to discover a whole new world of architectural beauty, of exquisite ascendant lines, and long after the central congestion had been relieved by tunnels under the sea, four colossal bridges over the east river, and a dozen mono-rail cables east and west, the upward

growth went on. In many ways New York and her gorgeous plutocracy repeated Venice in the magnificence of her architecture, painting, metal-work and sculpture, for example, in the grim intensity of her political method, in her maritime and commercial ascendancy. But she repeated no previous state at all in the lax disorder of her internal administration, a laxity that made vast sections of her area lawless beyond precedent, so that it was possible for whole districts to be impassable, while civil war raged between street and street, and for Alsatias to exist in her midst in which the official police never set foot. She was an ethnic whirlpool. The flags of all nations flew in her harbour, and at the climax, the yearly coming and going overseas numbered together upwards of two million human beings. To Europe she was America, to America she was the gateway of the world. But to tell the story of New York would be to write a social history of the world; saints and martyrs, dreamers and scoundrels, the traditions of a thousand races and a thousand religions, went to her making and throbbed and jostled in her streets. And over all that torrential confusion of men and purposes fluttered that strange flag, the stars and stripes, that meant at once the noblest thing in life, and the least noble, that is to say, Liberty on the one hand, and on the other the base jealousy the individual self-seeker feels towards the common purpose of the State.

For many generations New York had taken no heed of war, save as a thing that happened far away, that affected prices and supplied the newspapers with exciting headlines and pictures. The New Yorkers felt perhaps even more certainly than the English had done that war in their own land was an impossible thing. In that they shared the delusion of all North America. They felt as secure as spectators at a bullfight; they risked their money perhaps on the result, but that was all. And such ideas of war as the common Americans possessed were derived from the limited, picturesque, adventurous war of the past. They saw war as they saw history, through an iridescent mist, deodorised, scented indeed, with all its essential cruelties tactfully hidden away. They were inclined to regret it as something ennobling, to sigh that it could no longer come into their own private experience. They read with interest, if not with

avidity, of their new guns, of their immense and still more immense ironclads, of their incredible and still more incredible explosives, but just what these tremendous engines of destruction might mean for their personal lives never entered their heads. They did not, so far as one can judge from their contemporary literature, think that they meant anything to their personal lives at all. They thought America was safe amidst all this piling up of explosives. They cheered the flag by habit and tradition, they despised other nations, and whenever there was an international difficulty they were intensely patriotic, that is to say, they were ardently against any native politician who did not say, threaten, and do harsh and uncompromising things to the antagonist people. They were spirited to Asia, spirited to Germany, so spirited to Great Britain that the international attitude of the mother country to her great daughter was constantly compared in contemporary caricature to that between a hen-pecked husband and a vicious young wife. And for the rest, they all went about their business and pleasure as if war had died out with the megatherium....

And then suddenly, into a world peacefully busied for the most part upon armaments and the perfection of explosives, war came; came the shock of realising that the guns were going off, that the masses of inflammable material all over the world were at last ablaze.

2

The immediate effect upon New York of the sudden onset of war was merely to intensify her normal vehemence.

The newspapers and magazines that fed the American mind — for books upon this impatient continent had become simply material for the energy of collectors — were instantly a coruscation of war pictures and of headlines that rose like rockets and burst like shells. To the normal high-strung energy of New York streets was added a touch of war-fever. Great crowds assembled, more especially in the dinner hour, in Madison Square about the Farragut monument, to listen to and cheer patriotic speeches, and a veritable epidemic of little flags and buttons swept through these great torrents of swiftly moving young people, who poured into New York of a morning by

car and mono-rail and subway and train, to toil, and ebb home again between the hours of five and seven. It was dangerous not to wear a war button. The splendid music-halls of the time sank every topic in patriotism and evolved scenes of wild enthusiasm, strong men wept at the sight of the national banner sustained by the whole strength of the ballet, and special searchlights and illuminations amazed the watching angels. The churches re-echoed the national enthusiasm in graver key and slower measure, and the aerial and naval preparations on the East River were greatly incommoded by the multitude of excursion steamers which thronged, helpfully cheering, about them. The trade in small-arms was enormously stimulated, and many overwrought citizens found an immediate relief for their emotions in letting off fireworks of a more or less heroic, dangerous, and national character in the public streets. Small children's air-balloons of the latest model attached to string became a serious check to the pedestrian in Central Park. And amidst scenes of indescribable emotion the Albany legislature in permanent session, and with a generous suspension of rules and precedents, passed through both Houses the long-disputed Bill for universal military service in New York State.

Critics of the American character are disposed to consider — that up to the actual impact of the German attack the people of New York dealt altogether too much with the war as if it was a political demonstration. Little or no damage, they urge, was done to either the German or Japanese forces by the wearing of buttons, the waving of small flags, the fireworks, or the songs. They forgot that, under the conditions of warfare a century of science had brought about, the non-military section of the population could do no serious damage in any form to their enemies, and that there was no reason, therefore, why they should not do as they did. The balance of military efficiency was shifting back from the many to the few, from the common to the specialised.

The days when the emotional infantryman decided battles had passed by for ever. War had become a matter of apparatus of special training and skill of the most intricate kind. It had become undemocratic. And whatever the value of the popular excitement, there can be no denying that the small regular establishment of the

United States Government, confronted by this totally unexpected emergency of an armed invasion from Europe, acted with vigour, science, and imagination. They were taken by surprise so far as the diplomatic situation was concerned, and their equipment for building either navigables or aeroplanes was contemptible in comparison with the huge German parks. Still they set to work at once to prove to the world that the spirit that had created the Monitor and the Southern submarines of 1864 was not dead. The chief of the aeronautic establishment near West Point was Cabot Sinclair, and he allowed himself but one single moment of the posturing that was so universal in that democratic time. "We have chosen our epitaphs," he said to a reporter, "and we are going to have, 'They did all they could.' Now run away!"

The curious thing is that they did all do all they could; there is no exception known. Their only defect indeed was a defect of style. One of the most striking facts historically about this war, and the one that makes the complete separation that had arisen between the methods of warfare and the necessity of democratic support, is the effectual secrecy of the Washington authorities about their airships. They did not bother to confide a single fact of their preparations to the public. They did not even condescend to talk to Congress. They burked and suppressed every inquiry. The war was fought by the President and the Secretaries of State in an entirely autocratic manner. Such publicity as they sought was merely to anticipate and prevent inconvenient agitation to defend particular points. They realised that the chief danger in aerial warfare from an excitable and intelligent public would be a clamour for local airships and aeroplanes to defend local interests. This, with such resources as they possessed, might lead to a fatal division and distribution of the national forces. Particularly they feared that they might be forced into a premature action to defend New York. They realised with prophetic insight that this would be the particular advantage the Germans would seek. So they took great pains to direct the popular mind towards defensive artillery, and to divert it from any thought of aerial battle. Their real preparations they masked beneath ostensible ones. There was at Washington a large reserve of naval guns, and these were distributed rapidly, conspicuously, and with much press attention, among the

Eastern cities. They were mounted for the most part upon hills and prominent crests around the threatened centres of population. They were mounted upon rough adaptations of the Doan swivel, which at that time gave the maximum vertical range to a heavy gun. Much of this artillery was still unmounted, and nearly all of it was unprotected when the German air-fleet reached New York. And down in the crowded streets, when that occurred, the readers of the New York papers were regaling themselves with wonderful and wonderfully illustrated accounts of such matters as: —

THE SECRET OF THE THUNDERBOLT AGED SCIENTIST PERFECTS ELECTRIC GUN TO ELECTROCUTE AIRSHIP CREWS BY UPWARD LIGHTNING WASHINGTON ORDERS FIVE HUNDRED WAR SECRETARY LODGE DELIGHTED SAYS THEY WILL SUIT THE GERMANS DOWN TO THE GROUND PRESIDENT PUBLICLY APPLAUDS THIS MERRY QUIP 3

The German fleet reached New York in advance of the news of the American naval disaster. It reached New York in the late afternoon and was first seen by watchers at Ocean Grove and Long Branch coming swiftly out of the southward sea and going away to the northwest. The flagship passed almost vertically over the Sandy Hook observation station, rising rapidly as it did so, and in a few minutes all New York was vibrating to the Staten Island guns.

Several of these guns, and especially that at Giffords and the one on Beacon Hill above Matawan, were remarkably well handled. The former, at a distance of five miles, and with an elevation of six thousand feet, sent a shell to burst so close to the Vaterland that a pane of the Prince's forward window was smashed by a fragment. This sudden explosion made Bert tuck in his head with the celerity of a startled tortoise. The whole air-fleet immediately went up steeply to a height of about twelve thousand feet and at that level passed unscathed over the ineffectual guns. The airships lined out as they moved forward into the form of a flattened V, with its apex towards the city, and with the flagship going highest at the apex. The two ends of the V passed over Plumfield and Jamaica Bay, respectively, and the Prince directed his course a little to the east of the Narrows, soared over Upper Bay, and came to rest over Jersey City in a

position that dominated lower New York. There the monsters hung, large and wonderful in the evening light, serenely regardless of the occasional rocket explosions and flashing shell-bursts in the lower air.

It was a pause of mutual inspection. For a time naive humanity swamped the conventions of warfare altogether; the interest of the millions below and of the thousands above alike was spectacular. The evening was unexpectedly fine — only a few thin level bands of clouds at seven or eight thousand feet broke its luminous clarity. The wind had dropped; it was an evening infinitely peaceful and still. The heavy concussions of the distant guns and those incidental harmless pyrotechnics at the level of the clouds seemed to have as little to do with killing and force, terror and submission, as a salute at a naval review. Below, every point of vantage bristled with spectators, the roofs of the towering buildings, the public squares, the active ferry boats, and every favourable street intersection had its crowds: all the river piers were dense with people, the Battery Park was solid black with east-side population, and every position of advantage in Central Park and along Riverside Drive had its peculiar and characteristic assembly from the adjacent streets. The footways of the great bridges over the East River were also closely packed and blocked. Everywhere shopkeepers had left their shops, men their work, and women and children their homes, to come out and see the marvel.

"It beat," they declared, "the newspapers."

And from above, many of the occupants of the airships stared with an equal curiosity. No city in the world was ever so finely placed as New York, so magnificently cut up by sea and bluff and river, so admirably disposed to display the tall effects of buildings, the complex immensities of bridges and mono-railways and feats of engineering. London, Paris, Berlin, were shapeless, low agglomerations beside it. Its port reached to its heart like Venice, and, like Venice, it was obvious, dramatic, and proud. Seen from above it was alive with crawling trains and cars, and at a thousand points it was already breaking into quivering light. New York was altogether at its best that evening, its splendid best.

"Gaw! What a place!" said Bert.

It was so great, and in its collective effect so pacifically

magnificent, that to make war upon it seemed incongruous beyond measure, like laying siege to the National Gallery or attacking respectable people in an hotel dining-room with battle-axe and mail. It was in its entirety so large, so complex, so delicately immense, that to bring it to the issue of warfare was like driving a crowbar into the mechanism of a clock. And the fish-like shoal of great airships hovering light and sunlit above, filling the sky, seemed equally remote from the ugly forcefulness of war. To Kurt, to Smallways, to I know not how many more of the people in the air-fleet came the distinctest apprehension of these incompatibilities. But in the head of the Prince Karl Albert were the vapours of romance: he was a conqueror, and this was the enemy's city. The greater the city, the greater the triumph. No doubt he had a time of tremendous exultation and sensed beyond all precedent the sense of power that night.

There came an end at last to that pause. Some wireless communications had failed of a satisfactory ending, and fleet and city remembered they were hostile powers. "Look!" cried the multitude; "look!"

"What are they doing?"

"What?"... Down through the twilight sank five attacking airships, one to the Navy Yard on East River, one to City Hall, two over the great business buildings of Wall Street and Lower Broadway, one to the Brooklyn Bridge, dropping from among their fellows through the danger zone from the distant guns smoothly and rapidly to a safe proximity to the city masses. At that descent all the cars in the streets stopped with dramatic suddenness, and all the lights that had been coming on in the streets and houses went out again. For the City Hall had awakened and was conferring by telephone with the Federal command and taking measures for defence. The City Hall was asking for airships, refusing to surrender as Washington advised, and developing into a centre of intense emotion, of hectic activity. Everywhere and hastily the police began to clear the assembled crowds. "Go to your homes," they said; and the word was passed from mouth to mouth, "There's going to be trouble." A chill of apprehension ran through the city, and men hurrying in the unwonted darkness across City Hall Park and Union Square came upon the dim forms of soldiers and guns, and were challenged and sent back. In

half an hour New York had passed from serene sunset and gaping admiration to a troubled and threatening twilight.

The first loss of life occurred in the panic rush from Brooklyn Bridge as the airship approached it. With the cessation of the traffic an unusual stillness came upon New York, and the disturbing concussions of the futile defending guns on the hills about grew more and more audible. At last these ceased also. A pause of further negotiation followed. People sat in darkness, sought counsel from telephones that were dumb. Then into the expectant hush came a great crash and uproar, the breaking down of the Brooklyn Bridge, the rifle fire from the Navy Yard, and the bursting of bombs in Wall Street and the City Hall. New York as a whole could do nothing, could understand nothing. New York in the darkness peered and listened to these distant sounds until presently they died away as suddenly as they had begun. “What could be happening?” They asked it in vain.

A long, vague period intervened, and people looking out of the windows of upper rooms discovered the dark hulls of German airships, gliding slowly and noiselessly, quite close at hand. Then quietly the electric lights came on again, and an uproar of nocturnal newsvendors began in the streets.

The units of that vast and varied population bought and learnt what had happened; there had been a fight and New York had hoisted the white flag.

4

The lamentable incidents that followed the surrender of New York seem now in the retrospect to be but the necessary and inevitable consequence of the clash of modern appliances and social conditions produced by the scientific century on the one hand, and the tradition of a crude, romantic patriotism on the other. At first people received the fact with an irresponsible detachment, much as they would have received the slowing down of the train in which they were travelling or the erection of a public monument by the city to which they belonged.

“We have surrendered. Dear me! HAVE we?” was rather the

manner in which the first news was met. They took it in the same spectacular spirit they had displayed at the first apparition of the air-fleet. Only slowly was this realisation of a capitulation suffused with the flush of passion, only with reflection did they make any personal application. “WE have surrendered!” came later; “in us America is defeated.” Then they began to burn and tingle.

The newspapers, which were issued about one in the morning contained no particulars of the terms upon which New York had yielded — nor did they give any intimation of the quality of the brief conflict that had preceded the capitulation. The later issues remedied these deficiencies. There came the explicit statement of the agreement to victual the German airships, to supply the complement of explosives to replace those employed in the fight and in the destruction of the North Atlantic fleet, to pay the enormous ransom of forty million dollars, and to surrender the flotilla in the East River. There came, too, longer and longer descriptions of the smashing up of the City Hall and the Navy Yard, and people began to realise faintly what those brief minutes of uproar had meant. They read the tale of men blown to bits, of futile soldiers in that localised battle fighting against hope amidst an indescribable wreckage, of flags hauled down by weeping men. And these strange nocturnal editions contained also the first brief cables from Europe of the fleet disaster, the North Atlantic fleet for which New York had always felt an especial pride and solicitude. Slowly, hour by hour, the collective consciousness woke up, the tide of patriotic astonishment and humiliation came floating in. America had come upon disaster; suddenly New York discovered herself with amazement giving place to wrath unspeakable, a conquered city under the hand of her conqueror.

As that fact shaped itself in the public mind, there sprang up, as flames spring up, an angry repudiation. “No!” cried New York, waking in the dawn. “No! I am not defeated. This is a dream.” Before day broke the swift American anger was running through all the city, through every soul in those contagious millions. Before it took action, before it took shape, the men in the airships could feel the gigantic insurgence of emotion, as cattle and natural creatures feel, it is said, the coming of an earthquake. The newspapers of the

Knype group first gave the thing words and a formula. “We do not agree,” they said simply. “We have been betrayed!” Men took that up everywhere, it passed from mouth to mouth, at every street corner under the paling lights of dawn orators stood unchecked, calling upon the spirit of America to arise, making the shame a personal reality to every one who heard. To Bert, listening five hundred feet above, it seemed that the city, which had at first produced only confused noises, was now humming like a hive of bees — of very angry bees.

After the smashing of the City Hall and Post-Office, the white flag had been hoisted from a tower of the old Park Row building, and thither had gone Mayor O’Hagen, urged thither indeed by the terror-stricken property owners of lower New York, to negotiate the capitulation with Von Winterfeld. The Vaterland, having dropped the secretary by a rope ladder, remained hovering, circling very slowly above the great buildings, old and new, that clustered round City Hall Park, while the Helmholz, which had done the fighting there, rose overhead to a height of perhaps two thousand feet. So Bert had a near view of all that occurred in that central place. The City Hall and Court House, the Post-Office and a mass of buildings on the west side of Broadway, had been badly damaged, and the three former were a heap of blackened ruins. In the case of the first two the loss of life had not been considerable, but a great multitude of workers, including many girls and women, had been caught in the destruction of the Post-Office, and a little army of volunteers with white badges entered behind the firemen, bringing out the often still living bodies, for the most part frightfully charred, and carrying them into the big Monson building close at hand. Everywhere the busy firemen were directing their bright streams of water upon the smouldering masses: their hose lay about the square, and long cordons of police held back the gathering black masses of people, chiefly from the east side, from these central activities.

In violent and extraordinary contrast with this scene of destruction, close at hand were the huge newspaper establishments of Park Row. They were all alight and working; they had not been abandoned even while the actual bomb throwing was going on, and now staff and presses were vehemently active, getting out the story,

the immense and dreadful story of the night, developing comment and, in most cases, spreading the idea of resistance under the very noses of the airships. For a long time Bert could not imagine what these callously active offices could be, then he detected the noise of the presses and emitted his "Gaw!"

Beyond these newspaper buildings again, and partially hidden by the arches of the old Elevated Railway of New York (long since converted into a mono-rail), there was another cordon of police and a sort of encampment of ambulances and doctors, busy with the dead and wounded who had been killed early in the night by the panic upon Brooklyn Bridge. All this he saw in the perspectives of a bird's-eye view, as things happening in a big, irregular-shaped pit below him, between cliffs of high building. Northward he looked along the steep canon of Broadway, down whose length at intervals crowds were assembling about excited speakers; and when he lifted his eyes he saw the chimneys and cable-stacks and roof spaces of New York, and everywhere now over these the watching, debating people clustered, except where the fires raged and the jets of water flew. Everywhere, too, were flagstaffs devoid of flags; one white sheet drooped and flapped and drooped again over the Park Row buildings. And upon the lurid lights, the festering movement and intense shadows of this strange scene, there was breaking now the cold, impartial dawn.

For Bert Smallways all this was framed in the frame of the open porthole. It was a pale, dim world outside that dark and tangible rim. All night he had clutched at that rim, jumped and quivered at explosions, and watched phantom events. Now he had been high and now low; now almost beyond hearing, now flying close to crashings and shouts and outcries. He had seen airships flying low and swift over darkened and groaning streets; watched great buildings, suddenly red-lit amidst the shadows, crumple at the smashing impact of bombs; witnessed for the first time in his life the grotesque, swift onset of insatiable conflagrations. From it all he felt detached, disembodied. The Vaterland did not even fling a bomb; she watched and ruled. Then down they had come at last to hover over City Hall Park, and it had crept in upon his mind, chillingly, terrifyingly, that these illuminated black masses were great offices afire, and that the

going to and fro of minute, dim spectres of lantern-lit grey and white was a harvesting of the wounded and the dead. As the light grew clearer he began to understand more and more what these crumpled black things signified....

He had watched hour after hour since first New York had risen out of the blue indistinctness of the landfall. With the daylight he experienced an intolerable fatigue.

He lifted weary eyes to the pink flush in the sky, yawned immensely, and crawled back whispering to himself across the cabin to the locker. He did not so much lie down upon that as fall upon it and instantly become asleep.

There, hours after, sprawling undignified and sleeping profoundly, Kurt found him, a very image of the democratic mind confronted with the problems of a time too complex for its apprehension. His face was pale and indifferent, his mouth wide open, and he snored. He snored disagreeably.

Kurt regarded him for a moment with a mild distaste. Then he kicked his ankle.

"Wake up," he said to Smallways' stare, "and lie down decent."

Bert sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Any more fightin' yet?" he asked.

"No," said Kurt, and sat down, a tired man.

"Gott!" he cried presently, rubbing his hands over his face, "but I'd like a cold bath! I've been looking for stray bullet holes in the air-chambers all night until now." He yawned. "I must sleep. You'd better clear out, Smallways. I can't stand you here this morning. You're so infernally ugly and useless. Have you had your rations? No! Well, go in and get 'em, and don't come back. Stick in the gallery...."

5

So Bert, slightly refreshed by coffee and sleep, resumed his helpless co-operation in the War in the Air. He went down into the little gallery as the lieutenant had directed, and clung to the rail at the extreme end beyond the look-out man, trying to seem as inconspicuous and harmless a fragment of life as possible.

A wind was rising rather strongly from the south-east. It obliged the Vaterland to come about in that direction, and made her roll a great deal as she went to and fro over Manhattan Island. Away in the north-west clouds gathered. The throb-throb of her slow screw working against the breeze was much more perceptible than when she was going full speed ahead; and the friction of the wind against the underside of the gas-chamber drove a series of shallow ripples along it and made a faint flapping sound like, but fainter than, the beating of ripples under the stem of a boat. She was stationed over the temporary City Hall in the Park Row building, and every now and then she would descend to resume communication with the mayor and with Washington. But the restlessness of the Prince would not suffer him to remain for long in any one place. Now he would circle over the Hudson and East River; now he would go up high, as if to peer away into the blue distances; once he ascended so swiftly and so far that mountain sickness overtook him and the crew and forced him down again; and Bert shared the dizziness and nausea.

The swaying view varied with these changes of altitude. Now they would be low and close, and he would distinguish in that steep, unusual perspective, windows, doors, street and sky signs, people and the minutest details, and watch the enigmatical behaviour of crowds and clusters upon the roofs and in the streets; then as they soared the details would shrink, the sides of streets draw together, the view widen, the people cease to be significant. At the highest the effect was that of a concave relief map; Bert saw the dark and crowded land everywhere intersected by shining waters, saw the Hudson River like a spear of silver, and Lower Island Sound like a shield. Even to Bert's unphilosophical mind the contrast of city below and fleet above pointed an opposition, the opposition of the adventurous American's tradition and character with German order and discipline. Below, the immense buildings, tremendous and fine as they were, seemed like the giant trees of a jungle fighting for life; their picturesque magnificence was as planless as the chances of crag and gorge, their casualty enhanced by the smoke and confusion of still unsubdued and spreading conflagrations. In the sky soared the German airships like beings in a different, entirely more orderly world, all oriented to the same angle of the horizon, uniform in build

and appearance, moving accurately with one purpose as a pack of wolves will move, distributed with the most precise and effectual co-operation.

It dawned upon Bert that hardly a third of the fleet was visible. The others had gone upon errands he could not imagine, beyond the compass of that great circle of earth and sky. He wondered, but there was no one to ask. As the day wore on, about a dozen reappeared in the east with their stores replenished from the flotilla and towing a number of drachenflieger. Towards afternoon the weather thickened, driving clouds appeared in the south-west and ran together and seemed to engender more clouds, and the wind came round into that quarter and blew stronger. Towards the evening the wind became a gale into which the now tossing airships had to beat.

All that day the Prince was negotiating with Washington, while his detached scouts sought far and wide over the Eastern States looking for anything resembling an aeronautic park. A squadron of twenty airships detached overnight had dropped out of the air upon Niagara and was holding the town and power works.

Meanwhile the insurrectionary movement in the giant city grew uncontrollable. In spite of five great fires already involving many acres, and spreading steadily, New York was still not satisfied that she was beaten.

At first the rebellious spirit below found vent only in isolated shouts, street-crowd speeches, and newspaper suggestions; then it found much more definite expression in the appearance in the morning sunlight of American flags at point after point above the architectural cliffs of the city. It is quite possible that in many cases this spirited display of bunting by a city already surrendered was the outcome of the innocent informality of the American mind, but it is also undeniable that in many it was a deliberate indication that the people “felt wicked.”

The German sense of correctitude was deeply shocked by this outbreak. The Graf von Winterfeld immediately communicated with the mayor, and pointed out the irregularity, and the fire look-out stations were instructed in the matter. The New York police was speedily hard at work, and a foolish contest in full swing between impassioned citizens resolved to keep the flag flying, and irritated

and worried officers instructed to pull it down.

The trouble became acute at last in the streets above Columbia University. The captain of the airship watching this quarter seems to have stooped to lasso and drag from its staff a flag hoisted upon Morgan Hall. As he did so a volley of rifle and revolver shots was fired from the upper windows of the huge apartment building that stands between the University and Riverside Drive.

Most of these were ineffectual, but two or three perforated gas-chambers, and one smashed the hand and arm of a man upon the forward platform; The sentinel on the lower gallery immediately replied, and the machine gun on the shield of the eagle let fly and promptly stopped any further shots. The airship rose and signalled the flagship and City Hall, police and militiamen were directed at once to the spot, and this particular incident closed.

But hard upon that came the desperate attempt of a party of young clubmen from New York, who, inspired by patriotic and adventurous imaginations, slipped off in half a dozen motor-cars to Beacon Hill, and set to work with remarkable vigour to improvise a fort about the Doan swivel gun that had been placed there. They found it still in the hands of the disgusted gunners, who had been ordered to cease fire at the capitulation, and it was easy to infect these men with their own spirit. They declared their gun hadn't had half a chance, and were burning to show what it could do. Directed by the newcomers, they made a trench and bank about the mounting of the piece, and constructed flimsy shelter-pits of corrugated iron.

They were actually loading the gun when they were observed by the airship Preussen and the shell they succeeded in firing before the bombs of the latter smashed them and their crude defences to fragments, burst over the middle gas-chambers of the Bingen, and brought her to earth, disabled, upon Staten Island. She was badly deflated, and dropped among trees, over which her empty central gas-bags spread in canopies and festoons. Nothing, however, had caught fire, and her men were speedily at work upon her repair. They behaved with a confidence that verged upon indiscretion. While most of them commenced patching the tears of the membrane, half a dozen of them started off for the nearest road in search of a gas main, and presently found themselves prisoners in the hands of a hostile

crowd. Close at hand was a number of villa residences, whose occupants speedily developed from an unfriendly curiosity to aggression. At that time the police control of the large polyglot population of Staten Island had become very lax, and scarcely a household but had its rifle or pistols and ammunition. These were presently produced, and after two or three misses, one of the men at work was hit in the foot. Thereupon the Germans left their sewing and mending, took cover among the trees, and replied.

The crackling of shots speedily brought the Preussen and Kiel on the scene, and with a few hand grenades they made short work of every villa within a mile. A number of non-combatant American men, women, and children were killed and the actual assailants driven off. For a time the repairs went on in peace under the immediate protection of these two airships. Then when they returned to their quarters, an intermittent sniping and fighting round the stranded Bingen was resumed, and went on all the afternoon, and merged at last in the general combat of the evening....

About eight the Bingen was rushed by an armed mob, and all its defenders killed after a fierce, disorderly struggle.

The difficulty of the Germans in both these cases came from the impossibility of landing any efficient force or, indeed, any force at all from the air-fleet. The airships were quite unequal to the transport of any adequate landing parties; their complement of men was just sufficient to manoeuvre and fight them in the air. From above they could inflict immense damage; they could reduce any organised Government to a capitulation in the briefest space, but they could not disarm, much less could they occupy, the surrendered areas below. They had to trust to the pressure upon the authorities below of a threat to renew the bombardment. It was their sole resource. No doubt, with a highly organised and undamaged Government and a homogeneous and well-disciplined people that would have sufficed to keep the peace. But this was not the American case. Not only was the New York Government a weak one and insufficiently provided with police, but the destruction of the City Hall — and Post-Offide and other central ganglia had hopelessly disorganised the co-operation of part with part. The street cars and railways had ceased; the telephone service was out of gear and only worked intermittently.

The Germans had struck at the head, and the head was conquered and stunned — only to release the body from its rule. New York had become a headless monster, no longer capable of collective submission. Everywhere it lifted itself rebelliously; everywhere authorities and officials left to their own imitative were joining in the arming and flag-hoisting and excitement of that afternoon.

6

The disintegrating truce gave place to a definite general breach with the assassination of the Wetterhorn — for that is the only possible word for the act — above Union Square, and not a mile away from the exemplary ruins of City Hall. This occurred late in the afternoon, between five and six. By that time the weather had changed very much for the worse, and the operations of the airships were embarrassed by the necessity they were under of keeping head on to the gusts. A series of squalls, with hail and thunder, followed one another from the south by south-east, and in order to avoid these as much as possible, the air-fleet came low over the houses, diminishing its range of observation and exposing itself to a rifle attack.

Overnight there had been a gun placed in Union Square. It had never been mounted, much less fired, and in the darkness after the surrender it was taken with its supplies and put out of the way under the arches of the great Dexter building. Here late in the morning it was remarked by a number of patriotic spirits. They set to work to hoist and mount it inside the upper floors of the place. They made, in fact, a masked battery behind the decorous office blinds, and there lay in wait as simply excited as children until at last the stem of the luckless Wetterhorn appeared, beating and rolling at quarter speed over the recently reconstructed pinnacles of Tiffany's. Promptly that one-gun battery unmasked. The airship's look-out man must have seen the whole of the tenth story of the Dexter building crumble out and smash in the street below to discover the black muzzle looking out from the shadows behind. Then perhaps the shell hit him.

The gun fired two shells before the frame of the Dexter building collapsed, and each shell raked the Wetterhorn from stem to stern. They smashed her exhaustively. She crumpled up like a can that has

been kicked by a heavy boot, her forepart came down in the square, and the rest of her length, with a great snapping and twisting of shafts and stays, descended, collapsing athwart Tammany Hall and the streets towards Second Avenue. Her gas escaped to mix with air, and the air of her rent balloonette poured into her deflating gas-chambers. Then with an immense impact she exploded....

The Vaterland at that time was beating up to the south of City Hall from over the ruins of the Brooklyn Bridge, and the reports of the gun, followed by the first crashes of the collapsing Dexter building, brought Kurt and, Smallways to the cabin porthole. They were in time to see the flash of the exploding gun, and then they were first flattened against the window and then rolled head over heels across the floor of the cabin by the air wave of the explosion. The Vaterland bounded like a football some one has kicked and when they looked out again, Union Square was small and remote and shattered, as though some cosmically vast giant had rolled over it. The buildings to the east of it were ablaze at a dozen points, under the flaming tatters and warping skeleton of the airship, and all the roofs and walls were ridiculously askew and crumbling as one looked. "Gaw!" said Bert. "What's happened? Look at the people!"

But before Kurt could produce an explanation, the shrill bells of the airship were ringing to quarters, and he had to go. Bert hesitated and stepped thoughtfully into the passage, looking back at the window as he did so. He was knocked off his feet at once by the Prince, who was rushing headlong from his cabin to the central magazine.

Bert had a momentary impression of the great figure of the Prince, white with rage, bristling with gigantic anger, his huge fist swinging. "Blut und Eisen!" cried the Prince, as one who swears. "Oh! Blut und Eisen!"

Some one fell over Bert — something in the manner of falling suggested Von Winterfeld — and some one else paused and kicked him spitefully and hard. Then he was sitting up in the passage, rubbing a freshly bruised cheek and readjusting the bandage he still wore on his head. "Dem that Prince," said Bert, indignant beyond measure. "'E 'asn't the menners of a 'og!"

He stood up, collected his wits for a minute, and then went slowly

towards the gangway of the little gallery. As he did so he heard noises suggestive of the return of the Prince. The lot of them were coming back again. He shot into his cabin like a rabbit into its burrow, just in time to escape that shouting terror.

He shut the door, waited until the passage was still, then went across to the window and looked out. A drift of cloud made the prospect of the streets and squares hazy, and the rolling of the airship swung the picture up and down. A few people were running to and fro, but for the most part the aspect of the district was desertion. The streets seemed to broaden out, they became clearer, and the little dots that were people larger as the Vaterland came down again. Presently she was swaying along above the lower end of Broadway. The dots below, Bert saw, were not running now, but standing and looking up. Then suddenly they were all running again.

Something had dropped from the aeroplane, something that looked small and flimsy. It hit the pavement near a big archway just underneath Bert. A little man was sprinting along the sidewalk within half a dozen yards, and two or three others and one woman were bolting across the roadway. They were odd little figures, so very small were they about the heads, so very active about the elbows and legs. It was really funny to see their legs going. Foreshortened, humanity has no dignity. The little man on the pavement jumped comically — no doubt with terror, as the bomb fell beside him.

Then blinding flames squirted out in all directions from the point of impact, and the little man who had jumped became, for an instant, a flash of fire and vanished — vanished absolutely. The people running out into the road took preposterous clumsy leaps, then flopped down and lay still, with their torn clothes smouldering into flame. Then pieces of the archway began to drop, and the lower masonry of the building to fall in with the rumbling sound of coals being shot into a cellar. A faint screaming reached Bert, and then a crowd of people ran out into the street, one man limping and gesticulating awkwardly. He halted, and went back towards the building. A falling mass of brick-work hit him and sent him sprawling to lie still and crumpled where he fell. Dust and black smoke came pouring into the street, and were presently shot with red

flame....

In this manner the massacre of New York began. She was the first of the great cities of the Scientific Age to suffer by the enormous powers and grotesque limitations of aerial warfare. She was wrecked as in the previous century endless barbaric cities had been bombarded, because she was at once too strong to be occupied and too undisciplined and proud to surrender in order to escape destruction. Given the circumstances, the thing had to be done. It was impossible for the Prince to desist, and own himself defeated, and it was impossible to subdue the city except by largely destroying it. The catastrophe was the logical outcome of the situation, created by the application of science to warfare. It was unavoidable that great cities should be destroyed. In spite of his intense exasperation with his dilemma, the Prince sought to be moderate even in massacre. He tried to give a memorable lesson with the minimum waste of life and the minimum expenditure of explosives. For that night he proposed only the wrecking of Broadway. He directed the air-fleet to move in column over the route of this thoroughfare, dropping bombs, the Vaterland leading. And so our Bert Smallways became a participant in one of the most cold-blooded slaughters in the world's history, in which men who were neither excited nor, except for the remotest chance of a bullet, in any danger, poured death and destruction upon homes and crowds below.

He clung to the frame of the porthole as the airship tossed and swayed, and stared down through the light rain that now drove before the wind, into the twilight streets, watching people running out of the houses, watching buildings collapse and fires begin. As the airships sailed along they smashed up the city as a child will shatter its cities of brick and card. Below, they left ruins and blazing conflagrations and heaped and scattered dead; men, women, and children mixed together as though they had been no more than Moors, or Zulus, or Chinese. Lower New York was soon a furnace of crimson flames, from which there was no escape. Cars, railways, ferries, all had ceased, and never a light lit the way of the distracted fugitives in that dusky confusion but the light of burning. He had glimpses of what it must mean to be down there — glimpses. And it came to him suddenly as an incredible discovery, that such disasters were not only

possible now in this strange, gigantic, foreign New York, but also in London — in Bun Hill! that the little island in the silver seas was at the end of its immunity, that nowhere in the world any more was there a place left where a Smallways might lift his head proudly and vote for war and a spirited foreign policy, and go secure from such horrible things.

CHAPTER VII. THE “VATERLAND” IS DISABLED

1

And then above the flames of Manhattan Island came a battle, the first battle in the air. The Americans had realised the price their waiting game must cost, and struck with all the strength they had, if haply they might still save New York from this mad Prince of Blood and Iron, and from fire and death.

They came down upon the Germans on the wings of a great gale in the twilight, amidst thunder and rain. They came from the yards of Washington and Philadelphia, full tilt in two squadrons, and but for one sentinel airship hard by Trenton, the surprise would have been complete.

The Germans, sick and weary with destruction, and half empty of ammunition, were facing up into the weather when the news of this onset reached them. New York they had left behind to the south-eastward, a darkened city with one hideous red scar of flames. All the airships rolled and staggered, bursts of hailstorm bore them down and forced them to fight their way up again; the air had become bitterly cold. The Prince was on the point of issuing orders to drop earthward and trail copper lightning chains when the news of the aeroplane attack came to him. He faced his fleet in line abreast south, had the drachenflieger manned and held ready to cast loose, and ordered a general ascent into the freezing clearness above the wet and darkness.

The news of what was imminent came slowly to Bert’s perceptions. He was standing in the messroom at the time and the evening rations were being served out. He had resumed Butteridge’s coat and gloves, and in addition he had wrapped his blanket about him. He was dipping his bread into his soup and was biting off big mouthfuls. His legs were wide apart, and he leant against the partition in order to steady himself amidst the pitching and oscillation of the airship. The men about him looked tired and depressed; a few talked, but most were sullen and thoughtful, and

one or two were air-sick. They all seemed to share the peculiarly outcast feeling that had followed the murders of the evening, a sense of a land beneath them, and an outraged humanity grown more hostile than the Sea.

Then the news hit them. A red-faced sturdy man, a man with light eyelashes and a scar, appeared in the doorway and shouted something in German that manifestly startled every one. Bert felt the shock of the altered tone, though he could not understand a word that was said. The announcement was followed by a pause, and then a great outcry of questions and suggestions. Even the air-sick men flushed and spoke. For some minutes the mess-room was Bedlam, and then, as if it were a confirmation of the news, came the shrill ringing of the bells that called the men to their posts.

Bert with pantomime suddenness found himself alone.

"What's up?" he said, though he partly guessed.

He stayed only to gulp down the remainder of his soup, and then ran along the swaying passage and, clutching tightly, down the ladder to the little gallery. The weather hit him like cold water squirted from a hose. The airship engaged in some new feat of atmospheric Jiu-Jitsu. He drew his blanket closer about him, clutching with one straining hand. He found himself tossing in a wet twilight, with nothing to be seen but mist pouring past him. Above him the airship was warm with lights and busy with the movements of men going to their quarters. Then abruptly the lights went out, and the Vaterland with bounds and twists and strange writhings was fighting her way up the air.

He had a glimpse, as the Vaterland rolled over, of some large buildings burning close below them, a quivering acanthus of flames, and then he saw indistinctly through the driving weather another airship wallowing along like a porpoise, and also working up. Presently the clouds swallowed her again for a time, and then she came back to sight as a dark and whale-like monster, amidst streaming weather. The air was full of flappings and pipings, of void, gusty shouts and noises; it buffeted him and confused him; ever and again his attention became rigid — a blind and deaf balancing and clutching.

"Wow!"

Something fell past him out of the vast darknesses above and vanished into the tumults below, going obliquely downward. It was a German drachenflieger. The thing was going so fast he had but an instant apprehension of the dark figure of the aeronaut crouched together clutching at his wheel. It might be a manoeuvre, but it looked like a catastrophe.

"Gaw!" said Bert.

"Pup-pup-pup" went a gun somewhere in the mirk ahead and suddenly and quite horribly the Vaterland lurched, and Bert and the sentinel were clinging to the rail for dear life. "Bang!" came a vast impact out of the zenith, followed by another huge roll, and all about him the tumbled clouds flashed red and lurid in response to flashes unseen, revealing immense gulfs. The rail went right overhead, and he was hanging loose in the air holding on to it.

For a time Bert's whole mind and being was given to clutching. "I'm going into the cabin," he said, as the airship righted again and brought back the gallery floor to his feet. He began to make his way cautiously towards the ladder. "Whee-wow!" he cried as the whole gallery reared itself up forward, and then plunged down like a desperate horse.

Crack! Bang! Bang! Bang! And then hard upon this little rattle of shots and bombs came, all about him, enveloping him, engulfing him, immense and overwhelming, a quivering white blaze of lightning and a thunder-clap that was like the bursting of a world.

Just for the instant before that explosion the universe seemed to be standing still in a shadowless glare.

It was then he saw the American aeroplane. He saw it in the light of the flash as a thing altogether motionless. Even its screw appeared still, and its men were rigid dolls. (For it was so near he could see the men upon it quite distinctly.) Its stern was tilting down, and the whole machine was heeling over. It was of the Colt-Coburn-Langley pattern, with double up-tilted wings and the screw ahead, and the men were in a boat-like body netted over. From this very light long body, magazine guns projected on either side. One thing that was strikingly odd and wonderful in that moment of revelation was that the left upper wing was burning downward with a reddish, smoky flame. But this was not the most wonderful thing about this

apparition. The most wonderful thing was that it and a German airship five hundred yards below were threaded as it were on the lightning flash, which turned out of its path as if to take them, and, that out from the corners and projecting points of its huge wings everywhere, little branching thorn-trees of lightning were streaming.

Like a picture Bert saw these things, a picture a little blurred by a thin veil of wind-torn mist.

The crash of the thunder-clap followed the flash and seemed a part of it, so that it is hard to say whether Bert was the rather deafened or blinded in that instant.

And then darkness, utter darkness, and a heavy report and a thin small sound of voices that went wailing downward into the abyss below.

2

There followed upon these things a long, deep swaying of the airship, and then Bert began a struggle to get back to his cabin. He was drenched and cold and terrified beyond measure, and now more than a little air-sick. It seemed to him that the strength had gone out of his knees and hands, and that his feet had become icily slippery over the metal they trod upon. But that was because a thin film of ice had frozen upon the gallery.

He never knew how long his ascent of the ladder back into the airship took him, but in his dreams afterwards, when he recalled it, that experience seemed to last for hours. Below, above, around him were gulfs, monstrous gulfs of howling wind and eddies of dark, whirling snowflakes, and he was protected from it all by a little metal grating and a rail, a grating and rail that seemed madly infuriated with him, passionately eager to wrench him off and throw him into the tumult of space.

Once he had a fancy that a bullet tore by his ear, and that the clouds and snowflakes were lit by a flash, but he never even turned his head to see what new assailant whirled past them in the void. He wanted to get into the passage! He wanted to get into the passage! He wanted to get into the passage! Would the arm by which he was clinging hold out, or would it give way and snap? A handful of hail

smacked him in the face, so that for a time he was breathless and nearly insensible. Hold tight, Bert! He renewed his efforts.

He found himself, with an enormous sense of relief and warmth, in the passage. The passage was behaving like a dice-box, its disposition was evidently to rattle him about and then throw him out again. He hung on with the convulsive clutch of instinct until the passage lurched down ahead. Then he would make a short run cabin-ward, and clutch again as the fore-end rose.

Behold! He was in the cabin!

He snapped-to the door, and for a time he was not a human being, he was a case of air-sickness. He wanted to get somewhere that would fix him, that he needn't clutch. He opened the locker and got inside among the loose articles, and sprawled there helplessly, with his head sometimes bumping one side and sometimes the other. The lid shut upon him with a click. He did not care then what was happening any more. He did not care who fought who, or what bullets were fired or explosions occurred. He did not care if presently he was shot or smashed to pieces. He was full of feeble, inarticulate rage and despair. "Foolery!" he said, his one exhaustive comment on human enterprise, adventure, war, and the chapter of accidents that had entangled him. "Foolery! Ugh!" He included the order of the universe in that comprehensive condemnation. He wished he was dead.

He saw nothing of the stars, as presently the Vaterland cleared the rush and confusion of the lower weather, nor of the duel she fought with two circling aeroplanes, how they shot her rear-most chambers through, and how she fought them off with explosive bullets and turned to run as she did so.

The rush and swoop of these wonderful night birds was all lost upon him; their heroic dash and self-sacrifice. The Vaterland was rammed, and for some moments she hung on the verge of destruction, and sinking swiftly, with the American aeroplane entangled with her smashed propeller, and the Americans trying to scramble aboard. It signified nothing to Bert. To him it conveyed itself simply as vehement swaying. Foolery! When the American airship dropped off at last, with most of its crew shot or fallen, Bert in his locker appreciated nothing but that the Vaterland had taken a

hideous upward leap.

But then came infinite relief, incredibly blissful relief. The rolling, the pitching, the struggle ceased, ceased instantly and absolutely. The Vaterland was no longer fighting the gale; her smashed and exploded engines throbbed no more; she was disabled and driving before the wind as smoothly as a balloon, a huge, windspread, tattered cloud of aerial wreckage.

To Bert it was no more than the end of a series of disagreeable sensations. He was not curious to know what had happened to the airship, nor what had happened to the battle. For a long time he lay waiting apprehensively for the pitching and tossing and his qualms to return, and so, lying, boxed up in the locker, he presently fell asleep.

3

He awoke tranquil but very stuffy, and at the same time very cold, and quite unable to recollect where he could be. His head ached, and his breath was suffocated. He had been dreaming confusedly of Edna, and Desert Dervishes, and of riding bicycles in an extremely perilous manner through the upper air amidst a pyrotechnic display of crackers and Bengal lights — to the great annoyance of a sort of composite person made up of the Prince and Mr. Butteridge. Then for some reason Edna and he had begun to cry pitifully for each other, and he woke up with wet eye-lashes into this ill-ventilated darkness of the locker. He would never see Edna any more, never see Edna any more.

He thought he must be back in the bedroom behind the cycle shop at the bottom of Bun Hill, and he was sure the vision he had had of the destruction of a magnificent city, a city quite incredibly great and splendid, by means of bombs, was no more than a particularly vivid dream.

“Grubb!” he called, anxious to tell him.

The answering silence, and the dull resonance of the locker to his voice, supplementing the stifling quality of the air, set going a new train of ideas. He lifted up his hands and feet, and met an inflexible resistance. He was in a coffin, he thought! He had been buried alive! He gave way at once to wild panic. “‘Elp!” he screamed. “‘Elp!” and

drummed with his feet, and kicked and struggled. “Let me out! Let me out!”

For some seconds he struggled with this intolerable horror, and then the side of his imagined coffin gave way, and he was flying out into daylight. Then he was rolling about on what seemed to be a padded floor with Kurt, and being punched and sworn at lustily.

He sat up. His head bandage had become loose and got over one eye, and he whipped the whole thing off. Kurt was also sitting up, a yard away from him, pink as ever, wrapped in blankets, and with an aluminium diver’s helmet over his knee, staring at him with a severe expression, and rubbing his downy unshaven chin. They were both on a slanting floor of crimson padding, and above them was an opening like a long, low cellar flap that Bert by an effort perceived to be the cabin door in a half-inverted condition. The whole cabin had in fact turned on its side.

“What the deuce do you mean by it, Smallways?” said Kurt, “jumping out of that locker when I was certain you had gone overboard with the rest of them? Where have you been?”

“What’s up?” asked Bert.

“This end of the airship is up. Most other things are down.”

“Was there a battle?”

“There was.”

“Who won?”

“I haven’t seen the papers, Smallways. We left before the finish. We got disabled and unmanageable, and our colleagues — consorts I mean — were too busy most of them to trouble about us, and the wind blew us — Heaven knows where the wind IS blowing us. It blew us right out of action at the rate of eighty miles an hour or so. Gott! what a wind that was! What a fight! And here we are!”

“Where?”

“In the air, Smallways — in the air! When we get down on the earth again we shan’t know what to do with our legs.”

“But what’s below us?”

“Canada, to the best of my knowledge — and a jolly bleak, empty, inhospitable country it looks.”

“But why ain’t we right ways up?”

Kurt made no answer for a space.

“Last I remember was seeing a sort of flying-machine in a lightning flash,” said Bert. “Gaw! that was ‘orrible. Guns going off! Things explodin’! Clouds and ‘ail. Pitching and tossing. I got so scared and desperate — and sick. You don’t know how the fight came off?”

“Not a bit of it. I was up with my squad in those divers’ dresses, inside the gas-chambers, with sheets of silk for caulking. We couldn’t see a thing outside except the lightning flashes. I never saw one of those American aeroplanes. Just saw the shots flicker through the chambers and sent off men for the tears. We caught fire a bit — not much, you know. We were too wet, so the fires spluttered out before we banged. And then one of their infernal things dropped out of the air on us and rammed. Didn’t you feel it?”

“I felt everything,” said Bert. “I didn’t notice any particular smash —”

“They must have been pretty desperate if they meant it. They slashed down on us like a knife; simply ripped the after gas-chambers like gutting herrings, crumpled up the engines and screw. Most of the engines dropped off as they fell off us — or we’d have grounded — but the rest is sort of dangling. We just turned up our nose to the heavens and stayed there. Eleven men rolled off us from various points, and poor old Winterfeld fell through the door of the Prince’s cabin into the chart-room and broke his ankle. Also we got our electric gear shot or carried away — no one knows how. That’s the position, Smallways. We’re driving through the air like a common aerostat, at the mercy of the elements, almost due north — probably to the North Pole. We don’t know what aeroplanes the Americans have, or anything at all about it. Very likely we have finished ’em up. One fouled us, one was struck by lightning, some of the men saw a third upset, apparently just for fun. They were going cheap anyhow. Also we’ve lost most of our drachenflieger. They just skated off into the night. No stability in ‘em. That’s all. We don’t know if we’ve won or lost. We don’t know if we’re at war with the British Empire yet or at peace. Consequently, we daren’t get down. We don’t know what we are up to or what we are going to do. Our Napoleon is alone, forward, and I suppose he’s rearranging his plans. Whether New York was our Moscow or not remains to be seen.

We've had a high old time and murdered no end of people! War! Noble war! I'm sick of it this morning. I like sitting in rooms rightway up and not on slippery partitions. I'm a civilised man. I keep thinking of old Albrecht and the Barbarossa.... I feel I want a wash and kind words and a quiet home. When I look at you, I KNOW I want a wash. Gott!" — he stifled a vehement yawn— "What a Cockney tadpole of a ruffian you look!"

"Can we get any grub?" asked Bert.

"Heaven knows!" said Kurt.

He meditated upon Bert for a time. "So far as I can judge, Smallways," he said, "the Prince will probably want to throw you overboard — next time he thinks of you. He certainly will if he sees you.... After all, you know, you came als Ballast.... And we shall have to lighten ship extensively pretty soon. Unless I'm mistaken, the Prince will wake up presently and start doing things with tremendous vigour.... I've taken a fancy to you. It's the English strain in me. You're a rum little chap. I shan't like seeing you whizz down the air.... You'd better make yourself useful, Smallways. I think I shall requisition you for my squad. You'll have to work, you know, and be infernally intelligent and all that. And you'll have to hang about upside down a bit. Still, it's the best chance you have. We shan't carry passengers much farther this trip, I fancy. Ballast goes over-board — if we don't want to ground precious soon and be taken prisoners of war. The Prince won't do that anyhow. He'll be game to the last."

4

By means of a folding chair, which was still in its place behind the door, they got to the window and looked out in turn and contemplated a sparsely wooded country below, with no railways nor roads, and only occasional signs of habitation. Then a bugle sounded, and Kurt interpreted it as a summons to food. They got through the door and clambered with some difficulty up the nearly vertical passage, holding on desperately with toes and finger-tips, to the ventilating perforations in its floor. The mess stewards had found their fireless heating arrangements intact, and there was hot cocoa for

the officers and hot soup for the men.

Bert's sense of the queerness of this experience was so keen that it blotted out any fear he might have felt. Indeed, he was far more interested now than afraid. He seemed to have touched down to the bottom of fear and abandonment overnight. He was growing accustomed to the idea that he would probably be killed presently, that this strange voyage in the air was in all probability his death journey. No human being can keep permanently afraid: fear goes at last to the back of one's mind, accepted, and shelved, and done with. He squatted over his soup, sopping it up with his bread, and contemplated his comrades. They were all rather yellow and dirty, with four-day beards, and they grouped themselves in the tired, unpremeditated manner of men on a wreck. They talked little. The situation perplexed them beyond any suggestion of ideas. Three had been hurt in the pitching up of the ship during the fight, and one had a bandaged bullet wound. It was incredible that this little band of men had committed murder and massacre on a scale beyond precedent. None of them who squatted on the sloping gas-padded partition, soup mug in hand, seemed really guilty of anything of the sort, seemed really capable of hurting a dog wantonly. They were all so manifestly built for homely chalets on the solid earth and carefully tilled fields and blond wives and cheery merrymaking. The red-faced, sturdy man with light eyelashes who had brought the first news of the air battle to the men's mess had finished his soup, and with an expression of maternal solicitude was readjusting the bandages of a youngster whose arm had been sprained.

Bert was crumbling the last of his bread into the last of his soup, eking it out as long as possible, when suddenly he became aware that every one was looking at a pair of feet that were dangling across the downturned open doorway. Kurt appeared and squatted across the hinge. In some mysterious way he had shaved his face and smoothed down his light golden hair. He looked extraordinarily cherubic. "Der Prinz," he said.

A second pair of boots followed, making wide and magnificent gestures in their attempts to feel the door frame. Kurt guided them to a foothold, and the Prince, shaved and brushed and beeswaxed and clean and big and terrible, slid down into position astride of the door.

All the men and Bert also stood up and saluted.

The Prince surveyed them with the gesture of a man who site a steed. The head of the Kapitan appeared beside him.

Then Bert had a terrible moment. The blue blaze of the Prince's eye fell upon him, the great finger pointed, a question was asked. Kurt intervened with explanations.

"So," said the Prince, and Bert was disposed of.

Then the Prince addressed the men in short, heroic sentences, steadying himself on the hinge with one hand and waving the other in a fine variety of gesture. What he said Bert could not tell, but he perceived that their demeanor changed, their backs stiffened. They began to punctuate the Prince's discourse with cries of approval. At the end their leader burst into song and all the men with him. "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott," they chanted in deep, strong tones, with an immense moral uplifting. It was glaringly inappropriate in a damaged, half-overturned, and sinking airship, which had been disabled and blown out of action after inflicting the cruellest bombardment in the world's history; but it was immensely stirring nevertheless. Bert was deeply moved. He could not sing any of the words of Luther's great hymn, but he opened his mouth and emitted loud, deep, and partially harmonious notes....

Far below, this deep chanting struck on the ears of a little camp of Christianised half-breeds who were lumbering. They were breakfasting, but they rushed out cheerfully, quite prepared for the Second Advent. They stared at the shattered and twisted Vaterland driving before the gale, amazed beyond words. In so many respects it was like their idea of the Second Advent, and then again in so many respects it wasn't. They stared at its passage, awe-stricken and perplexed beyond their power of words. The hymn ceased. Then after a long interval a voice came out of heaven. "Vat id diss blace here galled itself; vat?"

They made no answer. Indeed they did not understand, though the question repeated itself.

And at last the monster drove away northward over a crest of pine woods and was no more seen. They fell into a hot and long disputation....

The hymn ended. The Prince's legs dangled up the passage again,

and every one was briskly prepared for heroic exertion and triumphant acts. “Smallways!” cried Kurt, “come here!”

5

Then Bert, under Kurt’s direction, had his first experience of the work of an air-sailor.

The immediate task before the captain of the Vaterland was a very simple one. He had to keep afloat. The wind, though it had fallen from its earlier violence, was still blowing strongly enough to render the grounding of so clumsy a mass extremely dangerous, even if it had been desirable for the Prince to land in inhabited country, and so risk capture. It was necessary to keep the airship up until the wind fell and then, if possible, to descend in some lonely district of the Territory where there would be a chance of repair or rescue by some searching consort. In order to do this weight had to be dropped, and Kurt was detailed with a dozen men to climb down among the wreckage of the deflated air-chambers and cut the stuff clear, portion by portion, as the airship sank. So Bert, armed with a sharp cutlass, found himself clambering about upon netting four thousand feet up in the air, trying to understand Kurt when he spoke in English and to divine him when he used German.

It was giddy work, but not nearly so giddy as a rather overnourished reader sitting in a warm room might imagine. Bert found it quite possible to look down and contemplate the wild sub-arctic landscape below, now devoid of any sign of habitation, a land of rocky cliffs and cascades and broad swirling desolate rivers, and of trees and thickets that grew more stunted and scrubby as the day wore on. Here and there on the hills were patches and pockets of snow. And over all this he worked, hacking away at the tough and slippery oiled silk and clinging stoutly to the netting. Presently they cleared and dropped a tangle of bent steel rods and wires from the frame, and a big chunk of silk bladder. That was trying. The airship flew up at once as this loose hamper parted. It seemed almost as though they were dropping all Canada. The stuff spread out in the air and floated down and hit and twisted up in a nasty fashion on the lip of a gorge. Bert clung like a frozen monkey to his ropes and did not

move a muscle for five minutes.

But there was something very exhilarating, he found, in this dangerous work, and above every thing else, there was the sense of fellowship. He was no longer an isolated and distrustful stranger among these others, he had now a common object with them, he worked with a friendly rivalry to get through with his share before them. And he developed a great respect and affection for Kurt, which had hitherto been only latent in him. Kurt with a job to direct was altogether admirable; he was resourceful, helpful, considerate, swift. He seemed to be everywhere. One forgot his pinkness, his light cheerfulness of manner. Directly one had trouble he was at hand with sound and confident advice. He was like an elder brother to his men.

All together they cleared three considerable chunks of wreckage, and then Bert was glad to clamber up into the cabins again and give place to a second squad. He and his companions were given hot coffee, and indeed, even gloved as they were, the job had been a cold one. They sat drinking it and regarding each other with satisfaction. One man spoke to Bert amiably in German, and Bert nodded and smiled. Through Kurt, Bert, whose ankles were almost frozen, succeeded in getting a pair of top-boots from one of the disabled men.

In the afternoon the wind abated greatly, and small, infrequent snowflakes came drifting by. Snow also spread more abundantly below, and the only trees were clumps of pine and spruce in the lower valleys. Kurt went with three men into the still intact gas-chambers, let out a certain quantity of gas from them, and prepared a series of ripping panels for the descent. Also the residue of the bombs and explosives in the magazine were thrown overboard and fell, detonating loudly, in the wilderness below. And about four o'clock in the afternoon upon a wide and rocky plain within sight of snow-crested cliffs, the Vaterland ripped and grounded.

It was necessarily a difficult and violent affair, for the Vaterland had not been planned for the necessities of a balloon. The captain got one panel ripped too soon and the others not soon enough. She dropped heavily, bounced clumsily, and smashed the hanging gallery into the fore-part, mortally injuring Von Winterfeld, and then came down in a collapsing heap after dragging for some moments. The

forward shield and its machine gun tumbled in upon the things below. Two men were hurt badly — one got a broken leg and one was internally injured — by flying rods and wires, and Bert was pinned for a time under the side. When at last he got clear and could take a view of the situation, the great black eagle that had started so splendidly from Franconia six evenings ago, sprawled deflated over the cabins of the airship and the frost-bitten rocks of this desolate place and looked a most unfortunate bird — as though some one had caught it and wrung its neck and cast it aside. Several of the crew of the airship were standing about in silence, contemplating the wreckage and the empty wilderness into which they had fallen. Others were busy under the imromptu tent made by the empty gas-chambers. The Prince had gone a little way off and was scrutinising the distant heights through his field-glass. They had the appearance of old sea cliffs; here and there were small clumps of conifers, and in two places tall cascades. The nearer ground was strewn with glaciated boulders and supported nothing but a stunted Alpine vegetation of compact clustering stems and stalkless flowers. No river was visible, but the air was full of the rush and babble of a torrent close at hand. A bleak and biting wind was blowing. Ever and again a snowflake drifted past. The springless frozen earth under Bert's feet felt strangely dead and heavy after the buoyant airship.

6

So it came about that that great and powerful Prince Karl Albert was for a time thrust out of the stupendous conflict he chiefly had been instrumental in provoking. The chances of battle and the weather conspired to maroon him in Labrador, and there he raged for six long days, while war and wonder swept the world. Nation rose against nation and air-fleet grappled air-fleet, cities blazed and men died in multitudes; but in Labrador one might have dreamt that, except for a little noise of hammering, the world was at peace.

There the encampment lay; from a distance the cabins, covered over with the silk of the balloon part, looked like a gipsy's tent on a rather exceptional scale, and all the available hands were busy in building out of the steel of the framework a mast from which the

Vaterland's electricians might hang the long conductors of the apparatus for wireless telegraphy that was to link the Prince to the world again. There were times when it seemed they would never rig that mast. From the outset the party suffered hardship. They were not too abundantly provisioned, and they were put on short rations, and for all the thick garments they had, they were but ill-equipped against the piercing wind and inhospitable violence of this wilderness. The first night was spent in darkness and without fires. The engines that had supplied power were smashed and dropped far away to the south, and there was never a match among the company. It had been death to carry matches. All the explosives had been thrown out of the magazine, and it was only towards morning that the bird-faced man whose cabin Bert had taken in the beginning confessed to a brace of duelling pistols and cartridges, with which a fire could be started. Afterwards the lockers of the machine gun were found to contain a supply of unused ammunition.

The night was a distressing one and seemed almost interminable. Hardly any one slept. There were seven wounded men aboard, and Von Winterfeld's head had been injured, and he was shivering and in delirium, struggling with his attendant and shouting strange things about the burning of New York. The men crept together in the mess-room in the darkling, wrapped in what they could find and drank cocoa from the fireless heaters and listened to his cries. In the morning the Prince made them a speech about Destiny, and the God of his Fathers and the pleasure and glory of giving one's life for his dynasty, and a number of similar considerations that might otherwise have been neglected in that bleak wilderness. The men cheered without enthusiasm, and far away a wolf howled.

Then they set to work, and for a week they toiled to put up a mast of steel, and hang from it a gridiron of copper wires two hundred feet by twelve. The theme of all that time was work, work continually, straining and toilsome work, and all the rest was grim hardship and evil chances, save for a certain wild splendour in the sunset and sunrise in the torrents and drifting weather, in the wilderness about them. They built and tended a ring of perpetual fires, gangs roamed for brushwood and met with wolves, and the wounded men and their beds were brought out from the airship cabins, and put in shelters

about the fires. There old Von Winterfeld raved and became quiet and presently died, and three of the other wounded sickened for want of good food, while their fellows mended. These things happened, as it were, in the wings; the central facts before Bert's consciousness were always firstly the perpetual toil, the holding and lifting, and lugging at heavy and clumsy masses, the tedious filing and winding of wires, and secondly, the Prince, urgent and threatening whenever a man relaxed. He would stand over them, and point over their heads, southward into the empty sky. "The world there," he said in German, "is waiting for us! Fifty Centuries come to their Consummation." Bert did not understand the words, but he read the gesture. Several times the Prince grew angry; once with a man who was working slowly, once with a man who stole a comrade's ration. The first he scolded and set to a more tedious task; the second he struck in the face and ill-used. He did no work himself. There was a clear space near the fires in which he would walk up and down, sometimes for two hours together, with arms folded, muttering to himself of Patience and his destiny. At times these mutterings broke out into rhetoric, into shouts and gestures that would arrest the workers; they would stare at him until they perceived that his blue eyes glared and his waving hand addressed itself always to the southward hills. On Sunday the work ceased for half an hour, and the Prince preached on faith and God's friendship for David, and afterwards they all sang: "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott."

In an improvised hovel lay Von Winterfeld, and all one morning he raved of the greatness of Germany. "Blut und Eisen!" he shouted, and then, as if in derision, "Welt-Politik — ha, ha!" Then he would explain complicated questions of polity to imaginary hearers, in low, wily tones. The other sick men kept still, listening to him. Bert's distracted attention would be recalled by Kurt. "Smallways, take that end. So!"

Slowly, tediously, the great mast was rigged and hoisted foot by foot into place. The electricians had contrived a catchment pool and a wheel in the torrent close at hand — for the little Mulhausen dynamo with its turbinal volute used by the telegraphists was quite adaptable to water driving, and on the sixth day in the evening the apparatus was in working order and the Prince was calling — weakly, indeed,

but calling — to his air-fleet across the empty spaces of the world. For a time he called unheeded.

The effect of that evening was to linger long in Bert's memory. A red fire spluttered and blazed close by the electricians at their work, and red gleams xan up the vertical steel mast and threads of copper wire towards the zenith. The Prince sat on a rock close by, with his chin on his hand, waiting. Beyond and to the northward was the cairn that covered Von Winterfeld, surmounted by a cross of steel, and from among the tumbled rocks in the distance the eyes of a wolf gleamed redly. On the other hand was the wreckage of the great airship and the men bivouacked about a second ruddy flare. They were all keeping very still, as if waiting to hear what news might presently be given them. Far away, across many hundreds of miles of desolation, other wireless masts would be clicking, and snapping, and waking into responsive vibration. Perhaps they were not. Perhaps those throbs upon the ethers wasted themselves upon a regardless world. When the men spoke, they spoke in low tones. Now and then a bird shrieked remotely, and once a wolf howled. All these things were set in the immense cold spaciousness of the wild.

7

Bert got the news last, and chiefly in broken English, from a linguist among his mates. It was only far on in the night that the weary telegraphist got an answer to his calls, but then the messages came clear and strong. And such news it was!

"I say," said Bert at his breakfast, amidst a great clamour, "tell us a bit."

"All de vorlt is at vor!" said the linguist, waving his cocoa in an illustrative manner, "all de vorlt is at vor!"

Bert stared southward into the dawn. It did not seem so.

"All de vorlt is at vor! They haf burn' Berlin; they haf burn' London; they haf burn' Hamburg and Paris. Chapan hass burn San Francisco. We haf mate a camp at Niagara. Dat is whad they are telling us. China has cot drachenflieger and luftschiffe beyont counting. All de vorlt is at vor!"

"Gaw!" said Bert.

“Yess,” said the linguist, drinking his cocoa.

“Burnt up London, ‘ave they? Like we did New York?”

“It wass a bombardment.”

“They don’t say anything about a place called Clapham, or Bun Hill, do they?”

“I haf heard noding,” said the linguist.

That was all Bert could get for a time. But the excitement of all the men about him was contagious, and presently he saw Kurt standing alone, hands behind him, and looking at one of the distant waterfalls very steadfastly. He went up and saluted, soldier-fashion. “Beg pardon, lieutenant,” he said.

Kurt turned his face. It was unusually grave that morning. “I was just thinking I would like to see that waterfall closer,” he said. “It reminds me — what do you want?”

“I can’t make ‘ead or tail of what they’re saying, sir. Would you mind telling me the news?”

“Damn the news,” said Kurt. “You’ll get news enough before the day’s out. It’s the end of the world. They’re sending the Graf Zeppelin for us. She’ll be here by the morning, and we ought to be at Niagara — or eternal smash — within eight and forty hours.... I want to look at that waterfall. You’d better come with me. Have you had your rations?”

“Yessir.”

“Very well. Come.”

And musing profoundly, Kurt led the way across the rocks towards the distant waterfall.

For a time Bert walked behind him in the character of an escort; then as they passed out of the atmosphere of the encampment, Kurt lagged for him to come alongside.

“We shall be back in it all in two days’ time,” he said. “And it’s a devil of a war to go back to. That’s the news. The world’s gone mad. Our fleet beat the Americans the night we got disabled, that’s clear. We lost eleven — eleven airships certain, and all their aeroplanes got smashed. God knows how much we smashed or how many we killed. But that was only the beginning. Our start’s been like firing a magazine. Every country was hiding flying-machines. They’re fighting in the air all over Europe — all over the world. The Japanese

and Chinese have joined in. That's the great fact. That's the supreme fact. They've pounced into our little quarrels.... The Yellow Peril was a peril after all! They've got thousands of airships. They're all over the world. We bombarded London and Paris, and now the French and English have smashed up Berlin. And now Asia is at us all, and on the top of us all.... It's mania. China on the top. And they don't know where to stop. It's limitless. It's the last confusion. They're bombarding capitals, smashing up dockyards and factories, mines and fleets."

"Did they do much to London, sir?" asked Bert.

"Heaven knows...."

He said no more for a time.

"This Labrador seems a quiet place," he resumed at last. "I'm half a mind to stay here. Can't do that. No! I've got to see it through. I've got to see it through. You've got to, too. Every one.... But why?... I tell you — our world's gone to pieces. There's no way out of it, no way back. Here we are! We're like mice caught in a house on fire, we're like cattle overtaken by a flood. Presently we shall be picked up, and back we shall go into the fighting. We shall kill and smash again — perhaps. It's a Chino-Japanese air-fleet this time, and the odds are against us. Our turns will come. What will happen to you I don't know, but for myself, I know quite well; I shall be killed."

"You'll be all right," said Bert, after a queer pause.

"No!" said Kurt, "I'm going to be killed. I didn't know it before, but this morning, at dawn, I knew it — as though I'd been told."

"'Ow?"

"I tell you I know."

"But 'ow COULD you know?"

"I know."

"Like being told?"

"Like being certain.

"I know," he repeated, and for a time they walked in silence towards the waterfall.

Kurt, wrapped in his thoughts, walked heedlessly, and at last broke out again. "I've always felt young before, Smallways, but this morning I feel old — old. So old! Nearer to death than old men feel. And I've always thought life was a lark. It isn't.... This sort of thing

has always been happening, I suppose — these things, wars and earthquakes, that sweep across all the decency of life. It's just as though I had woke up to it all for the first time. Every night since we were at New York I've dreamt of it.... And it's always been so — it's the way of life. People are torn away from the people they care for; homes are smashed, creatures full of life, and memories, and little peculiar gifts are scalded and smashed, and torn to pieces, and starved, and spoilt. London! Berlin! San Francisco! Think of all the human histories we ended in New York!... And the others go on again as though such things weren't possible. As I went on! Like animals! Just like animals."

He said nothing for a long time, and then he dropped out, "The Prince is a lunatic!"

They came to a place where they had to climb, and then to a long peat level beside a rivulet. There a quantity of delicate little pink flowers caught Bert's eye. "Gaw!" he said, and stooped to pick one. "In a place like this."

Kurt stopped and half turned. His face winced.

"I never see such a flower," said Bert. "It's so delicate."

"Pick some more if you want to," said Kurt.

Bert did so, while Kurt stood and watched him.

"Funny 'ow one always wants to pick flowers," said Bert.

Kurt had nothing to add to that.

They went on again, without talking, for a long time.

At last they came to a rocky hummock, from which the view of the waterfall opened out. There Kurt stopped and seated himself on a rock.

"That's as much as I wanted to see," he explained. "It isn't very like, but it's like enough."

"Like what?"

"Another waterfall I knew."

He asked a question abruptly. "Got a girl, Smallways?"

"Funny thing," said Bert, "those flowers, I suppose. — I was jes' thinking of 'er."

"So was I."

"WHAT! Edna?"

"No. I was thinking of MY Edna. We've all got Ednas, I suppose,

for our imaginations to play about. This was a girl. But all that's past for ever. It's hard to think I can't see her just for a minute — just let her know I'm thinking of her."

"Very likely," said Bert, "you'll see 'er all right."

"No," said Kurt with decision, "I KNOW."

"I met her," he went on, "in a place like this — in the Alps — Engstlen Alp. There's a waterfall rather like this one — a broad waterfall down towards Innertkirchen. That's why I came here this morning. We slipped away and had half a day together beside it. And we picked flowers. Just such flowers as you picked. The same for all I know. And gentian."

"I know" said Bert, "me and Edna — we done things like that. Flowers. And all that. Seems years off now."

"She was beautiful and daring and shy, Mein Gott! I can hardly hold myself for the desire to see her and hear her voice again before I die. Where is she?... Look here, Smallways, I shall write a sort of letter — And there's her portrait." He touched his breast pocket.

"You'll see 'er again all right," said Bert.

"No! I shall never see her again.... I don't understand why people should meet just to be torn apart. But I know she and I will never meet again. That I know as surely as that the sun will rise, and that cascade come shining over the rocks after I am dead and done.... Oh! It's all foolishness and haste and violence and cruel folly, stupidity and blundering hate and selfish ambition — all the things that men have done — all the things they will ever do. Gott! Smallways, what a muddle and confusion life has always been — the battles and massacres and disasters, the hates and harsh acts, the murders and sweatings, the lynchings and cheatings. This morning I am tired of it all, as though I'd just found it out for the first time. I HAVE found it out. When a man is tired of life, I suppose it is time for him to die. I've lost heart, and death is over me. Death is close to me, and I know I have got to end. But think of all the hopes I had only a little time ago, the sense of fine beginnings!... It was all a sham. There were no beginnings.... We're just ants in ant-hill cities, in a world that doesn't matter; that goes on and rambles into nothingness. New York — New York doesn't even strike me as horrible. New York was nothing but an ant-hill kicked to pieces by a fool!

“Think of it, Smallways: there’s war everywhere! They’re smashing up their civilisation before they have made it. The sort of thing the English did at Alexandria, the Japanese at Port Arthur, the French at Casablanca, is going on everywhere. Everywhere! Down in South America even they are fighting among themselves! No place is safe — no place is at peace. There is no place where a woman and her daughter can hide and be at peace. The war comes through the air, bombs drop in the night. Quiet people go out in the morning, and see air-fleets passing overhead — dripping death — dripping death!”

CHAPTER VIII. A WORLD AT WAR

1

It was only very slowly that Bert got hold of this idea that the whole world was at war, that he formed any image at all of the crowded countries south of these Arctic solitudes stricken with terror and dismay as these new-born aerial navies swept across their skies. He was not used to thinking of the world as a whole, but as a limitless hinterland of happenings beyond the range of his immediate vision. War in his imagination was something, a source of news and emotion, that happened in a restricted area, called the Seat of War. But now the whole atmosphere was the Seat of War, and every land a cockpit. So closely had the nations raced along the path of research and invention, so secret and yet so parallel had been their plans and acquisitions, that it was within a few hours of the launching of the first fleet in Franconia that an Asiatic Armada beat its west-ward way across, high above the marvelling millions in the plain of the Ganges. But the preparations of the Confederation of Eastern Asia had been on an altogether more colossal scale than the German. “With this step,” said Tan Ting-siang, “we overtake and pass the West. We recover the peace of the world that these barbarians have destroyed.”

Their secrecy and swiftness and inventions had far surpassed those of the Germans, and where the Germans had had a hundred men at work the Asiatics had ten thousand. There came to their great aeronautic parks at Chinsi-fu and Tsingyen by the mono-rails that now laced the whole surface of China a limitless supply of skilled and able workmen, workmen far above the average European in industrial efficiency. The news of the German World Surprise simply quickened their efforts. At the time of the bombardment of New York it is doubtful if the Germans had three hundred airships all together in the world; the score of Asiatic fleets flying east and west and south must have numbered several thousand. Moreover the Asiatics had a real fighting flying-machine, the Niais as they were called, a light but quite efficient weapon, infinitely superior to the German drachenflieger. Like that, it was a one-man machine, but it

was built very lightly of steel and cane and chemical silk, with a transverse engine, and a flapping sidewing. The aeronaut carried a gun firing explosive bullets loaded with oxygen, and in addition, and true to the best tradition of Japan, a sword. Mostly they were Japanese, and it is characteristic that from the first it was contemplated that the aeronaut should be a swordsman. The wings of these flyers had bat-like hooks forward, by which they were to cling to their antagonist's gas-chambers while boarding him. These light flying-machines were carried with the fleets, and also sent overland or by sea to the front with the men. They were capable of flights of from two to five hundred miles according to the wind.

So, hard upon the uprush of the first German air-fleet, these Asiatic swarms took to the atmosphere. Instantly every organised Government in the world was frantically and vehemently building airships and whatever approach to a flying machine its inventors' had discovered. There was no time for diplomacy. Warnings and ultimatums were telegraphed to and fro, and in a few hours all the panic-fierce world was openly at war, and at war in the most complicated way. For Britain and France and Italy had declared war upon Germany and outraged Swiss neutrality; India, at the sight of Asiatic airships, had broken into a Hindoo insurrection in Bengal and a Mohametan revolt hostile to this in the North-west Provinces — the latter spreading like wildfire from Gobi to the Gold Coast — and the Confederation of Eastern Asia had seized the oil wells of Burmha and was impartially attacking America and Germany. In a week they were building airships in Damascus and Cairo and Johannesburg; Australia and New Zealand were frantically equipping themselves. One unique and terrifying aspect of this development was the swiftness with which these monsters could be produced. To build an ironclad took from two to four years; an airship could be put together in as many weeks. Moreover, compared with even a torpedo boat, the airship was remarkably simple to construct, given the air-chamber material, the engines, the gas plant, and the design, it was really not more complicated and far easier than an ordinary wooden boat had been a hundred years before. And now from Cape Horn to Nova Zembla, and from Canton round to Canton again, there were factories and workshops and industrial resources.

And the German airships were barely in sight of the Atlantic waters, the first Asiatic fleet was scarcely reported from Upper Burmah, before the fantastic fabric of credit and finance that had held the world together economically for a hundred years strained and snapped. A tornado of realisation swept through every stock exchange in the world; banks stopped payment, business shrank and ceased, factories ran on for a day or so by a sort of inertia, completing the orders of bankrupt and extinguished customers, then stopped. The New York Bert Smallways saw, for all its glare of light and traffic, was in the pit of an economic and financial collapse unparalleled in history. The flow of the food supply was already a little checked. And before the world-war had lasted two weeks — by the time, that is, that mast was rigged in Labrador — there was not a city or town in the world outside China, however far from the actual centres of destruction, where police and government were not adopting special emergency methods to deal with a want of food and a glut of unemployed people.

The special peculiarities of aerial warfare were of such a nature as to trend, once it had begun, almost inevitably towards social disorganisation. The first of these peculiarities was brought home to the Germans in their attack upon New York; the immense power of destruction an airship has over the thing below, and its relative inability to occupy or police or guard or garrison a surrendered position. Necessarily, in the face of urban populations in a state of economic disorganisation and infuriated and starving, this led to violent and destructive collisions, and even where the air-fleet floated inactive above, there would be civil conflict and passionate disorder below. Nothing comparable to this state of affairs had been known in the previous history of warfare, unless we take such a case as that of a nineteenth century warship attacking some large savage or barbaric settlement, or one of those naval bombardments that disfigure the history of Great Britain in the late eighteenth century. Then, indeed, there had been cruelties and destruction that faintly foreshadowed the horrors of the aerial war. Moreover, before the twentieth century the world had had but one experience, and that a comparatively light one, in the Communist insurrection of Paris, 1871, of the possibilities of a modern urban population under warlike stresses.

A second peculiarity of airship war as it first came to the world that also made for social collapse, was the ineffectiveness of the early air-ships against each other. Upon anything below they could rain explosives in the most deadly fashion, forts and ships and cities lay at their mercy, but unless they were prepared for a suicidal grapple they could do remarkably little mischief to each other. The armament of the huge German airships, big as the biggest mammoth liners afloat, was one machine gun that could easily have been packed up on a couple of mules. In addition, when it became evident that the air must be fought for, the air-sailors were provided with rifles with explosive bullets of oxygen or inflammable substance, but no airship at any time ever carried as much in the way of guns and armour as the smallest gunboat on the navy list had been accustomed to do. Consequently, when these monsters met in battle, they manoeuvred for the upper place, or grappled and fought like junks, throwing grenades fighting hand to hand in an entirely medieval fashion. The risks of a collapse and fall on either side came near to balancing in every case the chances of victory. As a consequence, and after their first experiences of battle, one finds a growing tendency on the part of the air-fleet admirals to evade joining battle, and to seek rather the moral advantage of a destructive counter attack.

And if the airships were too ineffective, the early drachenflieger were either too unstable, like the German, or too light, like the Japanese, to produce immediately decisive results. Later, it is true, the Brazilians launched a flying-machine of a type and scale that was capable of dealing with an airship, but they built only three or four, they operated only in South America, and they vanished from history untraceably in the time when world-bankruptcy put a stop to all further engineering production on any considerable scale.

The third peculiarity of aerial warfare was that it was at once enormously destructive and entirely indecisive. It had this unique feature, that both sides lay open to punitive attack. In all previous forms of war, both by land and sea, the losing side was speedily unable to raid its antagonist's territory and the communications. One fought on a "front," and behind that front the winner's supplies and resources, his towns and factories and capital, the peace of his country, were secure. If the war was a naval one, you destroyed your

enemy's battle fleet and then blockaded his ports, secured his coaling stations, and hunted down any stray cruisers that threatened your ports of commerce. But to blockade and watch a coastline is one thing, to blockade and watch the whole surface of a country is another, and cruisers and privateers are things that take long to make, that cannot be packed up and hidden and carried unostentatiously from point to point. In aerial war the stronger side, even supposing it destroyed the main battle fleet of the weaker, had then either to patrol and watch or destroy every possible point at which he might produce another and perhaps a novel and more deadly form of flyer. It meant darkening his air with airships. It meant building them by the thousand and making aeronauts by the hundred thousand. A small uninitated airship could be hidden in a railway shed, in a village street, in a wood; a flying machine is even less conspicuous.

And in the air are no streets, no channels, no point where one can say of an antagonist, "If he wants to reach my capital he must come by here." In the air all directions lead everywhere.

Consequently it was impossible to end a war by any of the established methods. A, having outnumbered and overwhelmed B, hovers, a thousand airships strong, over his capital, threatening to bombard it unless B submits. B replies by wireless telegraphy that he is now in the act of bombarding the chief manufacturing city of A by means of three raider airships. A denounces B's raiders as pirates and so forth, bombards B's capital, and sets off to hunt down B's airships, while B, in a state of passionate emotion and heroic unconquerableness, sets to work amidst his ruins, making fresh airships and explosives for the benefit of A. The war became perforce a universal guerilla war, a war inextricably involving civilians and homes and all the apparatus of social life.

These aspects of aerial fighting took the world by surprise. There had been no foresight to deduce these consequences. If there had been, the world would have arranged for a Universal Peace Conference in 1900. But mechanical invention had gone faster than intellectual and social organisation, and the world, with its silly old flags, its silly unmeaning tradition of nationality, its cheap newspapers and cheaper passions and imperialisms, its base commercial motives and habitual insincerities and vulgarities, its

race lies and conflicts, was taken by surprise. Once the war began there was no stopping it. The flimsy fabric of credit that had grown with no man foreseeing, and that had held those hundreds of millions in an economic interdependence that no man clearly understood, dissolved in panic. Everywhere went the airships dropping bombs, destroying any hope of a rally, and everywhere below were economic catastrophe, starving workless people, rioting, and social disorder. Whatever constructive guiding intelligence there had been among the nations vanished in the passionate stresses of the time. Such newspapers and documents and histories as survive from this period all tell one universal story of towns and cities with the food supply interrupted and their streets congested with starving unemployed; of crises in administration and states of siege, of provisional Governments and Councils of Defence, and, in the cases of India and Egypt, insurrectionary committees taking charge of the re-arming of the population, of the making of batteries and gun-pits, of the vehement manufacture of airships and flying-machines.

One sees these things in glimpses, in illuminated moments, as if through a driving reek of clouds, going on all over the world. It was the dissolution of an age; it was the collapse of the civilisation that had trusted to machinery, and the instruments of its destruction were machines. But while the collapse of the previous great civilisation, that of Rome, had been a matter of centuries, had been a thing of phase and phase, like the ageing and dying of a man, this, like his killing by railway or motor car, was one swift, conclusive smashing and an end.

2

The early battles of the aerial war were no doubt determined by attempts to realise the old naval maxim, to ascertain the position of the enemy's fleet and to destroy it. There was first the battle of the Bernese Oberland, in which the Italian and French navigables in their flank raid upon the Franconian Park were assailed by the Swiss experimental squadron, supported as the day wore on by German airships, and then the encounter of the British Winterhouse-Dunn aeroplanes with three unfortunate Germans.

Then came the Battle of North India, in which the entire Anglo-Indian aeronautic settlement establishment fought for three days against overwhelming odds, and was dispersed and destroyed in detail.

And simultaneously with the beginning of that, commenced the momentous struggle of the Germans and Asiatics that is usually known as the Battle of Niagara because of the objective of the Asiatic attack. But it passed gradually into a sporadic conflict over half a continent. Such German airships as escaped destruction in battle descended and surrendered to the Americans, and were re-manned, and in the end it became a series of pitiless and heroic encounters between the Americans, savagely resolved to exterminate their enemies, and a continually reinforced army of invasion from Asia quartered upon the Pacific slope and supported by an immense fleet. From the first the war in America was fought with implacable bitterness; no quarter was asked, no prisoners were taken. With ferocious and magnificent energy the Americans constructed and launched ship after ship to battle and perish against the Asiatic multitudes. All other affairs were subordinate to this war, the whole population was presently living or dying for it. Presently, as I shall tell, the white men found in the Butteridge machine a weapon that could meet and fight the flying-machines of the Asiatic swordsman.

The Asiatic invasion of America completely effaced the German-American conflict. It vanishes from history. At first it had seemed to promise quite sufficient tragedy in itself — beginning as it did in unforgettable massacre. After the destruction of central New York all America had risen like one man, resolved to die a thousand deaths rather than submit to Germany. The Germans grimly resolved upon beating the Americans into submission and, following out the plans developed by the Prince, had seized Niagara — in order to avail themselves of its enormous powerworks; expelled all its inhabitants and made a desert of its environs as far as Buffalo. They had also, directly Great Britain and France declare war, wrecked the country upon the Canadian side for nearly ten miles inland. They began to bring up men and material from the fleet off the east coast, stringing out to and fro like bees getting honey. It was then that the Asiatic forces appeared, and it was in their attack upon this German base at

Niagara that the air-fleets of East and West first met and the greater issue became clear.

One conspicuous peculiarity of the early aerial fighting arose from the profound secrecy with which the airships had been prepared. Each power had had but the dimmest inkling of the schemes of its rivals, and even experiments with its own devices were limited by the needs of secrecy. None of the designers of airships and aeroplanes had known clearly what their inventions might have to fight; many had not imagined they would have to fight anything whatever in the air; and had planned them only for the dropping of explosives. Such had been the German idea. The only weapon for fighting another airship with which the Franconian fleet had been provided was the machine gun forward. Only after the fight over New York were the men given short rifles with detonating bullets. Theoretically, the drachenflieger were to have been the fighting weapon. They were declared to be aerial torpedo-boats, and the aeronaut was supposed to swoop close to his antagonist and cast his bombs as he whirled past. But indeed these contrivances were hopelessly unstable; not one-third in any engagement succeeded in getting back to the mother airship. The rest were either smashed up or grounded.

The allied Chino-Japanese fleet made the same distinction as the Germans between airships and fighting machines heavier than air, but the type in both cases was entirely different from the occidental models, and — it is eloquent of the vigour with which these great peoples took up and bettered the European methods of scientific research in almost every particular the invention of Asiatic engineers. Chief among these, it is worth remarking, was Mohini K. Chatterjee, a political exile who had formerly served in the British-Indian aeronautic park at Lahore.

The German airship was fish-shaped, with a blunted head; the Asiatic airship was also fish-shaped, but not so much on the lines of a cod or goby as of a ray or sole. It had a wide, flat underside, unbroken by windows or any opening except along the middle line. Its cabins occupied its axis, with a sort of bridge deck above, and the gas-chambers gave the whole affair the shape of a gipsy's hooped tent, except that it was much flatter. The German airship was

essentially a navigable balloon very much lighter than air; the Asiatic airship was very little lighter than air and skimmed through it with much greater velocity if with considerably less stability. They carried fore and aft guns, the latter much the larger, throwing inflammatory shells, and in addition they had nests for riflemen on both the upper and the under side. Light as this armament was in comparison with the smallest gunboat that ever sailed, it was sufficient for them to outfight as well as outfly the German monster airships. In action they flew to get behind or over the Germans: they even dashed underneath, avoiding only passing immediately beneath the magazine, and then as soon as they had crossed let fly with their rear gun, and sent flares or oxygen shells into the antagonist's gas-chambers.

It was not in their airships, but, as I have said, in their flying-machines proper, that the strength of the Asiatics lay. Next only to the Butteridge machine, these were certainly the most efficient heavier-than-air fliers that had ever appeared. They were the invention of a Japanese artist, and they differed in type extremely from the box-kite quality of the German drachenflieger. They had curiously curved, flexible side wings, more like BENT butterfly's wings than anything else, and made of a substance like celluloid and of brightly painted silk, and they had a long humming-bird tail. At the forward corner of the wings were hooks, rather like the claws of a bat, by which the machine could catch and hang and tear at the walls of an airship's gas-chamber. The solitary rider sat between the wings above a transverse explosive engine, an explosive engine that differed in no essential particular from those in use in the light motor bicycles of the period. Below was a single large wheel. The rider sat astride of a saddle, as in the Butteridge machine, and he carried a large double-edged two-handed sword, in addition to his explosive-bullet firing rifle.

3

One sets down these particulars and compares the points of the American and German pattern of aeroplane and navigable, but none of these facts were clearly known to any of those who fought in this

monstrously confused battle above the American great lakes.

Each side went into action against it knew not what, under novel conditions and with apparatus that even without hostile attacks was capable of producing the most disconcerting surprises. Schemes of action, attempts at collective manoeuvring necessarily went to pieces directly the fight began, just as they did in almost all the early ironclad battles of the previous century. Each captain then had to fall back upon individual action and his own devices; one would see triumph in what another read as a cue for flight and despair. It is as true of the Battle of Niagara as of the Battle of Lissa that it was not a battle but a bundle of "battlettes"!

To such a spectator as Bert it presented itself as a series of incidents, some immense, some trivial, but collectively incoherent. He never had a sense of any plain issue joined, of any point struggled for and won or lost. He saw tremendous things happen and in the end his world darkened to disaster and ruin.

He saw the battle from the ground, from Prospect Park and from Goat Island, whither he fled.

But the manner in which he came to be on the ground needs explaining.

The Prince had resumed command of his fleet through wireless telegraphy long before the Zeppelin had located his encampment in Labrador. By his direction the German air-fleet, whose advance scouts had been in contact with the Japanese over the Rocky Mountains, had concentrated upon Niagara and awaited his arrival. He had rejoined his command early in the morning of the twelfth, and Bert had his first prospect of the Gorge of Niagara while he was doing net drill outside the middle gas-chamber at sunrise. The Zeppelin was flying very high at the time, and far below he saw the water in the gorge marbled with froth and then away to the west the great crescent of the Canadian Fall shining, flickering and foaming in the level sunlight and sending up a deep, incessant thudding rumble to the sky. The air-fleet was keeping station in an enormous crescent, with its horns pointing south-westward, a long array of shining monsters with tails rotating slowly and German ensigns now trailing from their bellies aft of their Marconi pendants.

Niagara city was still largely standing then, albeit its streets were

empty of all life. Its bridges were intact; its hotels and restaurants still flying flags and inviting sky signs; its power-stations running. But about it the country on both sides of the gorge might have been swept by a colossal broom. Everything that could possibly give cover to an attack upon the German position at Niagara had been levelled as ruthlessly as machinery and explosives could contrive; houses blown up and burnt, woods burnt, fences and crops destroyed. The mono-rails had been torn up, and the roads in particular cleared of all possibility of concealment or shelter. Seen from above, the effect of this wreckage was grotesque. Young woods had been destroyed whole-sale by dragging wires, and the spoilt saplings, smashed or uprooted, lay in swathes like corn after the sickle. Houses had an appearance of being flattened down by the pressure of a gigantic finger. Much burning was still going on, and large areas had been reduced to patches of smouldering and sometimes still glowing blackness.

Here and there lay the debris of belated fugitives, carts, and dead bodies of horses and men; and where houses had had water-supplies there were pools of water and running springs from the ruptured pipes. In unscorched fields horses and cattle still fed peacefully. Beyond this desolated area the countryside was still standing, but almost all the people had fled. Buffalo was on fire to an enormous extent, and there were no signs of any efforts to grapple with the flames. Niagara city itself was being rapidly converted to the needs of a military depot. A large number of skilled engineers had already been brought from the fleet and were busily at work adapting the exterior industrial apparatus of the place to the purposes of an aeronautic park. They had made a gas recharging station at the corner of the American Fall above the funicular railway, and they were, opening up a much larger area to the south for the same purpose. Over the power-houses and hotels and suchlike prominent or important points the German flag was flying.

The Zeppelin circled slowly over this scene twice while the Prince surveyed it from the swinging gallery; it then rose towards the centre of the crescent and transferred the Prince and his suite, Kurt included, to the Hohenzollern, which had been chosen as the flagship during the impending battle. They were swung up on a small cable

from the forward gallery, and the men of the Zeppelin manned the outer netting as the Prince and his staff left them. The Zeppelin then came about, circled down and grounded in Prospect Park, in order to land the wounded and take aboard explosives; for she had come to Labrador with her magazines empty, it being uncertain what weight she might need to carry. She also replenished the hydrogen in one of her forward chambers which had leaked.

Bert was detailed as a bearer and helped carry the wounded one by one into the nearest of the large hotels that faced the Canadian shore. The hotel was quite empty except that there were two trained American nurses and a negro porter, and three or four Germans awaiting them. Bert went with the Zeppelin's doctor into the main street of the place, and they broke into a drug shop and obtained various things of which they stood in need. As they returned they found an officer and two men making a rough inventory of the available material in the various stores. Except for them the wide, main street of the town was quite deserted, the people had been given three hours to clear out, and everybody, it seemed, had done so. At one corner a dead man lay against the wall — shot. Two or three dogs were visible up the empty vista, but towards its river end the passage of a string of mono-rail cars broke the stillness and the silence. They were loaded with hose, and were passing to the trainful of workers who were converting Prospect Park into an airship dock.

Bert pushed a case of medicine balanced on a bicycle taken from an adjacent shop, to the hotel, and then he was sent to load bombs into the Zeppelin magazine, a duty that called for elaborate care. From this job he was presently called off by the captain of the Zeppelin, who sent him with a note to the officer in charge of the Anglo-American Power Company, for the field telephone had still to be adjusted. Bert received his instructions in German, whose meaning he guessed, and saluted and took the note, not caring to betray his ignorance of the language. He started off with a bright air of knowing his way and turned a corner or so, and was only beginning to suspect that he did not know where he was going when his attention was recalled to the sky by the report of a gun from the Hohenzollern and celestial cheering.

He looked up and found the view obstructed by the houses on

either side of the street. He hesitated, and then curiosity took him back towards the bank of the river. Here his view was inconvenienced by trees, and it was with a start that he discovered the Zeppelin, which he knew had still a quarter of her magazines to fill, was rising over Goat Island. She had not waited for her complement of ammunition. It occurred to him that he was left behind. He ducked back among the trees and bushes until he felt secure from any after-thought on the part of the Zeppelin's captain. Then his curiosity to see what the German air-fleet faced overcame him, and drew him at last halfway across the bridge to Goat Island.

From that point he had nearly a hemisphere of sky and got his first glimpse of the Asiatic airships low in the sky above the glittering tumults of the Upper Rapids.

They were far less impressive than the German ships. He could not judge the distance, and they flew edgeways to him, so as to conceal the broader aspect of their bulk.

Bert stood there in the middle of the bridge, in a place that most people who knew it remembered as a place populous with sightseers and excursionists, and he was the only human being in sight there. Above him, very high in the heavens, the contending air-fleets manoeuvred; below him the river seethed like a sluice towards the American Fall. He was curiously dressed. His cheap blue serge trousers were thrust into German airship rubber boots, and on his head he wore an aeronaut's white cap that was a trifle too large for him. He thrust that back to reveal his staring little Cockney face, still scarred upon the brow. "Gaw!" he whispered.

He stared. He gesticulated. Once or twice he shouted and applauded.

Then at a certain point terror seized him and he took to his heels in the direction of Goat Island.

4

For a time after they were in sight of each other, neither fleet attempted to engage. The Germans numbered sixty-seven great airships and they maintained the crescent formation at a height of nearly four thousand feet. They kept a distance of about one and a

half lengths, so that the horns of the crescent were nearly thirty miles apart. Closely in tow of the airships of the extreme squadrons on either wing were about thirty drachenflieger ready manned, but these were too small and distant for Bert to distinguish.

At first, only what was called the Southern fleet of the Asiatics was visible to him. It consisted of forty airships, carrying all together nearly four hundred one-man flying-machines upon their flanks, and for some time it flew slowly and at a minimum distance of perhaps a dozen miles from the Germans, eastward across their front. At first Bert could distinguish only the greater bulks, then he perceived the one-man machines as a multitude of very small objects drifting like motes in the sunshine about and beneath the larger shapes.

Bert saw nothing then of the second fleet of the Asiatics, though probably that was coming into sight of the Germans at the time, in the north-west.

The air was very still, the sky almost without a cloud, and the German fleet had risen to an immense height, so that the airships seemed no longer of any considerable size. Both ends of their crescent showed plainly. As they beat southward they passed slowly between Bert and the sunlight, and became black outlines of themselves. The drachenflieger appeared as little flecks of black on either wing of this aerial Armada.

The two fleets seemed in no hurry to engage. The Asiatics went far away into the east, quickening their pace and rising as they did so, and then tailed out into a long column and came flying back, rising towards the German left. The squadrons of the latter came about, facing this oblique advance, and suddenly little flickerings and a faint crepitating sound told that they had opened fire. For a time no effect was visible to the watcher on the bridge. Then, like a handful of snowflakes, the drachenflieger swooped to the attack, and a multitude of red specks whirled up to meet them. It was to Bert's sense not only enormously remote but singularly inhuman. Not four hours since he had been on one of those very airships, and yet they seemed to him now not gas-bags carrying men, but strange sentient creatures that moved about and did things with a purpose of their own. The flight of the Asiatic and German flying-machines joined and dropped earthward, became like a handful of white and red rose petals flung

from a distant window, grew larger, until Bert could see the overturned ones spinning through the air, and were hidden by great volumes of dark smoke that were rising in the direction of Buffalo. For a time they all were hidden, then two or three white and a number of red ones rose again into the sky, like a swarm of big butterflies, and circled fighting and drove away out of sight again towards the east.

A heavy report recalled Bert's eyes to the zenith, and behold, the great crescent had lost its dressing and burst into a disorderly long cloud of airships! One had dropped halfway down the sky. It was flaming fore and aft, and even as Bert looked it turned over and fell, spinning over and over itself and vanished into the smoke of Buffalo.

Bert's mouth opened and shut, and he clutched tighter on the rail of the bridge. For some moments — they seemed long moments — the two fleets remained without any further change flying obliquely towards each other, and making what came to Bert's ears as a midget uproar. Then suddenly from either side airships began dropping out of alignment, smitten by missiles he could neither see nor trace. The string of Asiatic ships swung round and either charged into or over (it was difficult to say from below) the shattered line of the Germans, who seemed to open out to give way to them. Some sort of manoeuvring began, but Bert could not grasp its import. The left of the battle became a confused dance of airships. For some minutes up there the two crossing lines of ships looked so close it seemed like a hand-to-hand scuffle in the sky. Then they broke up into groups and duels. The descent of German air-ships towards the lower sky increased. One of them flared down and vanished far away in the north; two dropped with something twisted and crippled in their movements; then a group of antagonists came down from the zenith in an eddying conflict, two Asiatics against one German, and were presently joined by another, and drove away eastward all together with others dropping out of the German line to join them.

One Asiatic either rammed or collided with a still more gigantic German, and the two went spinning to destruction together. The northern squadron of Asiatics came into the battle unnoted by Bert, except that the multitude of ships above seemed presently increased. In a little while the fight was utter confusion, drifting on the whole to

the southwest against the wind. It became more and more a series of group encounters. Here a huge German airship flamed earthward with a dozen flat Asiatic craft about her, crushing her every attempt to recover. Here another hung with its screw fighting off the swordsman from a swarm of flying-machines. Here, again, an Asiatic aflame at either end swooped out of the battle. His attention went from incident to incident in the vast clearness overhead; these conspicuous cases of destruction caught and held his mind; it was only very slowly that any sort of scheme manifested itself between those nearer, more striking episodes.

The mass of the airships that eddied remotely above was, however, neither destroying nor destroyed. The majority of them seemed to be going at full speed and circling upward for position, exchanging ineffectual shots as they did so. Very little ramming was essayed after the first tragic downfall of rammer and rammed, and what ever attempts at boarding were made were invisible to Bert. There seemed, however, a steady attempt to isolate antagonists, to cut them off from their fellows and bear them down, causing a perpetual sailing back and interlacing of these shoaling bulks. The greater numbers of the Asiatics and their swifter heeling movements gave them the effect of persistently attacking the Germans. Overhead, and evidently endeavouring to keep itself in touch with the works of Niagara, a body of German airships drew itself together into a compact phalanx, and the Asiatics became more and more intent upon breaking this up. He was grotesquely reminded of fish in a fish-pond struggling for crumbs. He could see puny puffs of smoke and the flash of bombs, but never a sound came down to him....

A flapping shadow passed for a moment between Bert and the sun and was followed by another. A whirring of engines, click, clock, clitter clock, smote upon his ears. Instantly he forgot the zenith.

Perhaps a hundred yards above the water, out of the south, riding like Valkyries swiftly through the air on the strange steeds the engineering of Europe had begotten upon the artistic inspiration of Japan, came a long string of Asiatic swordsman. The wings flapped jerkily, click, block, clitter clock, and the machines drove up; they spread and ceased, and the apparatus came soaring through the air. So they rose and fell and rose again. They passed so closely overhead

that Bert could hear their voices calling to one another. They swooped towards Niagara city and landed one after another in a long line in a clear space before the hotel. But he did not stay to watch them land. One yellow face had craned over and looked at him, and for one enigmatical instant met his eyes....

It was then the idea came to Bert that he was altogether too conspicuous in the middle of the bridge, and that he took to his heels towards Goat Island. Thence, dodging about among the trees, with perhaps an excessive self-consciousness, he watched the rest of the struggle.

5

When Bert's sense of security was sufficiently restored for him to watch the battle again, he perceived that a brisk little fight was in progress between the Asiatic aeronauts and the German engineers for the possession of Niagara city. It was the first time in the whole course of the war that he had seen anything resembling fighting as he had studied it in the illustrated papers of his youth. It seemed to him almost as though things were coming right. He saw men carrying rifles and taking cover and running briskly from point to point in a loose attacking formation. The first batch of aeronauts had probably been under the impression that the city was deserted. They had grounded in the open near Prospect Park and approached the houses towards the power-works before they were disillusioned by a sudden fire. They had scattered back to the cover of a bank near the water — it was too far for them to reach their machines again; they were lying and firing at the men in the hotels and frame-houses about the power-works.

Then to their support came a second string of red flying-machines driving up from the east. They rose up out of the haze above the houses and came round in a long curve as if surveying the position below. The fire of the Germans rose to a roar, and one of those soaring shapes gave an abrupt jerk backward and fell among the houses. The others swooped down exactly like great birds upon the roof of the power-house. They caught upon it, and from each sprang a nimble little figure and ran towards the parapet.

Other flapping bird-shapes came into this affair, but Bert had not seen their coming. A staccato of shots came over to him, reminding him of army manoeuvres, of newspaper descriptions of fights, of all that was entirely correct in his conception of warfare. He saw quite a number of Germans running from the outlying houses towards the power-house. Two fell. One lay still, but the other wriggled and made efforts for a time. The hotel that was used as a hospital, and to which he had helped carry the wounded men from the Zeppelin earlier in the day, suddenly ran up the Geneva flag. The town that had seemed so quiet had evidently been concealing a considerable number of Germans, and they were now concentrating to hold the central power-house. He wondered what ammunition they might have. More and more of the Asiatic flying-machines came into the conflict. They had disposed of the unfortunate German drachenflieger and were now aiming at the incipient aeronautic park, — the electric gas generators and repair stations which formed the German base. Some landed, and their aeronauts took cover and became energetic infantry soldiers. Others hovered above the fight, their men ever and again firing shots down at some chance exposure below. The firing came in paroxysms; now there would be a watchful lull and now a rapid tattoo of shots, rising to a roar. Once or twice flying machines, as they circled warily, came right overhead, and for a time Bert gave himself body and soul to cowering.

Ever and again a larger thunder mingled with the rattle and reminded him of the grapple of airships far above, but the nearer fight held his attention.

Abruptly something dropped from the zenith; something like a barrel or a huge football.

CRASH! It smashed with an immense report. It had fallen among the grounded Asiatic aeroplanes that lay among the turf and flower-beds near the river. They flew in scraps and fragments, turf, trees, and gravel leapt and fell; the aeronauts still lying along the canal bank were thrown about like sacks, catspaws flew across the foaming water. All the windows of the hotel hospital that had been shiningly reflecting blue sky and airships the moment before became vast black stars. Bang! — a second followed. Bert looked up and was filled with a sense of a number of monstrous bodies swooping down, coming

down on the whole affair like a flight of bellying blankets, like a string of vast dish-covers. The central tangle of the battle above was circling down as if to come into touch with the power-house fight. He got a new effect of airships altogether, as vast things coming down upon him, growing swiftly larger and larger and more overwhelming, until the houses over the way seemed small, the American rapids narrow, the bridge flimsy, the combatants infinitesimal. As they came down they became audible as a complex of shootings and vast creakings and groanings and beatings and throbbings and shouts and shots. The fore-shortened black eagles at the fore-ends of the Germans had an effect of actual combat of flying feathers.

Some of these fighting airships came within five hundred feet of the ground. Bert could see men on the lower galleries of the Germans, firing rifles; could see Asiatics clinging to the ropes; saw one man in aluminium diver's gear fall flashing headlong into the waters above Goat Island. For the first time he saw the Asiatic airships closely. From this aspect they reminded him more than anything else of colossal snowshoes; they had a curious patterning in black and white, in forms that reminded him of the engine-turned cover of a watch. They had no hanging galleries, but from little openings on the middle line peeped out men and the muzzles of guns. So, driving in long, descending and ascending curves, these monsters wrestled and fought. It was like clouds fighting, like puddings trying to assassinate each other. They whirled and circled about each other, and for a time threw Goat Island and Niagara into a smoky twilight, through which the sunlight smote in shafts and beams. They spread and closed and spread and grappled and drove round over the rapids, and two miles away or more into Canada, and back over the Falls again. A German caught fire, and the whole crowd broke away from her flare and rose about her dispersing, leaving her to drop towards Canada and blow up as she dropped. Then with renewed uproar the others closed again. Once from the men in Niagara city came a sound like an ant-hill cheering. Another German burnt, and one badly deflated by the prow of an antagonist, flopped out of action southward.

It became more and more evident that the Germans were getting

the worst of the unequal fight. More and more obviously were they being persecuted. Less and less did they seem to fight with any object other than escape. The Asiatics swept by them and above them, ripped their bladders, set them alight, picked off their dimly seen men in diving clothes, who struggled against fire and tear with fire extinguishers and silk ribbons in the inner netting. They answered only with ineffectual shots. Thence the battle circled back over Niagara, and then suddenly the Germans, as if at a preconcerted signal, broke and dispersed, going east, west, north, and south, in open and confused flight. The Asiatics, as they realised this, rose to fly above them and after them. Only one little knot of four Germans and perhaps a dozen Asiatics remained fighting about the Hohenzollern and the Prince as he circled in a last attempt to save Niagara.

Round they swooped once again over the Canadian Fall, over the waste of waters eastward, until they were distant and small, and then round and back, hurrying, bounding, swooping towards the one gaping spectator.

The whole struggling mass approached very swiftly, growing rapidly larger, and coming out black and featureless against the afternoon sun and above the blinding welter of the Upper Rapids. It grew like a storm cloud until once more it darkened the sky. The flat Asiatic airships kept high above the Germans and behind them, and fired unanswered bullets into their gas-chambers and upon their flanks — the one-man flying-machines hovered and alighted like a swarm of attacking bees. Nearer they came, and nearer, filling the lower heaven. Two of the Germans swooped and rose again, but the Hohenzollern had suffered too much for that. She lifted weakly, turned sharply as if to get out of the battle, burst into flames fore and aft, swept down to the water, splashed into it obliquely, and rolled over and over and came down stream rolling and smashing and writhing like a thing alive, halting and then coming on again, with her torn and bent propeller still beating the air. The bursting flames spluttered out again in clouds of steam. It was a disaster gigantic in its dimensions. She lay across the rapids like an island, like tall cliffs, tall cliffs that came rolling, smoking, and crumpling, and collapsing, advancing with a sort of fluctuating rapidity upon Bert. One Asiatic

airship — it looked to Bert from below like three hundred yards of pavement — whirled back and circled two or three times over that great overthrow, and half a dozen crimson flying-machines danced for a moment like great midges in the sunlight before they swept on after their fellows. The rest of the fight had already gone over the island, a wild crescendo of shots and yells and smashing uproar. It was hidden from Bert now by the trees of the island, and forgotten by him in the nearer spectacle of the huge advance of the defeated German airship. Something fell with a mighty smashing and splintering of boughs unheeded behind him.

It seemed for a time that the Hohenzollern must needs break her back upon the Parting of the Waters, and then for a time her propeller flopped and frothed in the river and thrust the mass of buckling, crumpled wreckage towards the American shore. Then the sweep of the torrent that foamed down to the American Fall caught her, and in another minute the immense mass of deflating wreckage, with flames spurting out in three new places, had crashed against the bridge that joined Goat Island and Niagara city, and forced a long arm, as it were, in a heaving tangle under the central span. Then the middle chambers blew up with a loud report, and in another moment the bridge had given way and the main bulk of the airship, like some grotesque cripple in rags, staggered, flapping and waving flambeaux to the crest of the Fall and hesitated there and vanished in a desperate suicidal leap.

Its detached fore-end remained jammed against that little island, Green Island it used to be called, which forms the stepping-stone between the mainland and Goat Island's patch of trees.

Bert followed this disaster from the Parting of the Waters to the bridge head. Then, regardless of cover, regardless of the Asiatic airship hovering like a huge house roof without walls above the Suspension Bridge, he sprinted along towards the north and came out for the first time upon that rocky point by Luna Island that looks sheer down upon the American Fall. There he stood breathless amidst that eternal rush of sound, breathless and staring.

Far below, and travelling rapidly down the gorge, whirled something like a huge empty sack. For him it meant — what did it not mean? — the German air-fleet, Kurt, the Prince, Europe, all

things stable and familiar, the forces that had brought him, the forces that had seemed indisputably victorious. And it went down the rapids like an empty sack and left the visible world to Asia, to yellow people beyond Christendom, to all that was terrible and strange!

Remote over Canada receded the rest of that conflict and vanished beyond the range of his vision....

CHAPTER IX. ON GOAT ISLAND

1

The whack of a bullet on the rocks beside him reminded him that he was a visible object and wearing at least portions of a German uniform. It drove him into the trees again, and for a time he dodged and dropped and sought cover like a chick hiding among reeds from imaginary hawks.

"Beaten," he whispered. "Beaten and done for... Chinese! Yellow chaps chasing 'em!"

At last he came to rest in a clump of bushes near a locked-up and deserted refreshment shed within view of the American side. They made a sort of hole and harbour for him; they met completely overhead. He looked across the rapids, but the firing had ceased now altogether and everything seemed quiet. The Asiatic aeroplane had moved from its former position above the Suspension Bridge, was motionless now above Niagara city, shadowing all that district about the power-house which had been the scene of the land fight. The monster had an air of quiet and assured predominance, and from its stern it trailed, serene and ornamental, a long streaming flag, the red, black, and yellow of the great alliance, the Sunrise and the Dragon. Beyond, to the east, at a much higher level, hung a second consort, and Bert, presently gathering courage, wriggled out and craned his neck to find another still airship against the sunset in the south.

"Gaw!" he said. "Beaten and chased! My Gawd!"

The fighting, it seemed at first, was quite over in Niagara city, though a German flag was still flying from one shattered house. A white sheet was hoisted above the power-house, and this remained flying all through the events that followed. But presently came a sound of shots and then German soldiers running. They disappeared among the houses, and then came two engineers in blue shirts and trousers hotly pursued by three Japanese swordsman. The foremost of the two fugitives was a shapely man, and ran lightly and well; the second was a sturdy little man, and rather fat. He ran comically in leaps and bounds, with his plump arms bent up by his side and his

head thrown back. The pursuers ran with uniforms and dark thin metal and leather head-dresses. The little man stumbled, and Bert gasped, realising a new horror in war.

The foremost swordsman won three strides on him and was near enough to slash at him and miss as he spurted.

A dozen yards they ran, and then the swordsman slashed again, and Bert could hear across the waters a little sound like the moo of an elfin cow as the fat little man fell forward. Slash went the swordsman and slash at something on the ground that tried to save itself with ineffectual hands. “Oh, I carn’t!” cried Bert, near blubbering, and staring with starting eyes.

The swordsman slashed a fourth time and went on as his fellows came up after the better runner. The hindmost swordsman stopped and turned back. He had perceived some movement perhaps; but at any rate he stood, and ever and again slashed at the fallen body.

“Oo-oo!” groaned Bert at every slash, and shrank closer into the bushes and became very still. Presently came a sound of shots from the town, and then everything was quiet, everything, even the hospital.

He saw presently little figures sheathing swords come out from the houses and walk to the debris of the flying-machines the bomb had destroyed. Others appeared wheeling undamaged aeroplanes upon their wheels as men might wheel bicycles, and sprang into the saddles and flapped into the air. A string of three airships appeared far away in the east and flew towards the zenith. The one that hung low above Niagara city came still lower and dropped a rope ladder to pick up men from the power-house.

For a long time he watched the further happenings in Niagara city as a rabbit might watch a meet. He saw men going from building to building, to set fire to them, as he presently realised, and he heard a series of dull detonations from the wheel pit of the power-house. Some similar business went on among the works on the Canadian side. Meanwhile more and more airships appeared, and many more flying-machines, until at last it seemed to him nearly a third of the Asiatic fleet had re-assembled. He watched them from his bush, cramped but immovable, watched them gather and range themselves and signal and pick up men, until at last they sailed away towards the

glowing sunset, going to the great Asiatic rendez-vous, above the oil wells of Cleveland. They dwindled and passed away, leaving him alone, so far as he could tell, the only living man in a world of ruin and strange loneliness almost beyond describing. He watched them recede and vanish. He stood gaping after them.

"Gaw!" he said at last, like one who rouses himself from a trance.

It was far more than any personal desolation extremity that flooded his soul. It seemed to him indeed that this must be the sunset of his race.

2

He did not at first envisage his own plight in definite and comprehensible terms. Things happened to him so much of late, his own efforts had counted for so little, that he had become passive and planless. His last scheme had been to go round the coast of England as a Desert Dervish giving refined entertainment to his fellow-creatures. Fate had quashed that. Fate had seen fit to direct him to other destinies, had hurried him from point to point, and dropped him at last upon this little wedge of rock between the cataracts. It did not instantly occur to him that now it was his turn to play. He had a singular feeling that all must end as a dream ends, that presently surely he would be back in the world of Grubb and Edna and Bun Hill, that this roar, this glittering presence of incessant water, would be drawn aside as a curtain is drawn aside after a holiday lantern show, and old familiar, customary things re-assume their sway. It would be interesting to tell people how he had seen Niagara. And then Kurt's words came into his head: "People torn away from the people they care for; homes smashed, creatures full of life and memories and peculiar little gifts — torn to pieces, starved, and spoilt."...

He wondered, half incredulous, if that was in deed true. It was so hard to realise it. Out beyond there was it possible that Tom and Jessica were also in some dire extremity? that the little green-grocer's shop was no longer standing open, with Jessica serving respectfully, warming Tom's ear in sharp asides, or punctually sending out the goods?

He tried to think what day of the week it was, and found he had lost his reckoning. Perhaps it was Sunday. If so, were they going to church or, were they hiding, perhaps in bushes? What had happened to the landlord, the butcher, and to Butteridge and all those people on Dymchurch beach? Something, he knew, had happened to London — a bombardment. But who had bombarded? Were Tom and Jessica too being chased by strange brown men with long bare swords and evil eyes? He thought of various possible aspects of affliction, but presently one phase ousted all the others. Were they getting much to eat? The question haunted him, obsessed him.

If one was very hungry would one eat rats?

It dawned upon him that a peculiar misery that oppressed him was not so much anxiety and patriotic sorrow as hunger. Of course he was hungry!

He reflected and turned his steps towards the little refreshment shed that stood near the end of the ruined bridge. "Ought to be somethin'—"

He strolled round it once or twice, and then attacked the shutters with his pocket-knife, reinforced presently by a wooden stake he found conveniently near. At last he got a shutter to give, and tore it back and stuck in his head.

"Grub," he remarked, "anyhow. Leastways—"

He got at the inside fastening of the shutter and had presently this establishment open for his exploration. He found several sealed bottles of sterilized milk, much mineral water, two tins of biscuits and a crock of very stale cakes, cigarettes in great quantity but very dry, some rather dry oranges, nuts, some tins of canned meat and fruit, and plates and knives and forks and glasses sufficient for several score of people. There was also a zinc locker, but he was unable to negotiate the padlock of this.

"Shan't starve," said Bert, "for a bit, anyhow." He sat on the vendor's seat and regaled himself with biscuits and milk, and felt for a moment quite contented.

"Quite restful," he muttered, munching and glancing about him restlessly, "after what I been through.

"Crikey! WOT a day! Oh! WOT a day!"

Wonder took possession of him. "Gaw!" he cried: "Wot a fight

it's been! Smashing up the poor fellers! 'Eadlong! The airships — the fliers and all. I wonder what happened to the Zeppelin?... And that chap Kurt — I wonder what happened to 'im? 'E was a good sort of chap, was Kurt."

Some phantom of imperial solicitude floated through his mind. "Injia," he said....

A more practical interest arose.

"I wonder if there's anything to open one of these tins of corned beef?"

3

After he had feasted, Bert lit a cigarette and sat meditative for a time. "Wonder where Grubb is?" he said; "I do wonder that! Wonder if any of 'em wonder about me?"

He reverted to his own circumstances. "Dessay I shall 'ave to stop on this island for some time."

He tried to feel at his ease and secure, but presently the indefinable restlessness of the social animal in solitude distressed him. He began to want to look over his shoulder, and, as a corrective, roused himself to explore the rest of the island.

It was only very slowly that he began to realise the peculiarities of his position, to perceive that the breaking down of the arch between Green Island and the mainland had cut him off completely from the world. Indeed it was only when he came back to where the fore-end of the Hohenzollern lay like a stranded ship, and was contemplating the shattered bridge, that this dawned upon him. Even then it came with no sort of shock to his mind, a fact among a number of other extraordinary and unmanageable facts. He stared at the shattered cabins of the Hohenzollern and its widow's garment of dishevelled silk for a time, but without any idea of its containing any living thing; it was all so twisted and smashed and entirely upside down. Then for a while he gazed at the evening sky. A cloud haze was now appearing and not an airship was in sight. A swallow flew by and snapped some invisible victim. "Like a dream," he repeated.

Then for a time the rapids held his mind. "Roaring. It keeps on roaring and splashin' always and always. Keeps on...."

At last his interests became personal. “Wonder what I ought to do now?”

He reflected. “Not an idee,” he said.

He was chiefly conscious that a fortnight ago he had been in Bun Hill with no idea of travel in his mind, and that now he was between the Falls of Niagara amidst the devastation and ruins of the greatest air fight in the world, and that in the interval he had been across France, Belgium, Germany, England, Ireland, and a number of other countries. It was an interesting thought and suitable for conversation, but of no great practical utility. “Wonder ‘ow I can get orf this?” he said. “Wonder if there is a way out? If not... rummy!”

Further reflection decided, “I believe I got myself in a bit of a ‘ole coming over that bridge....

“Any’ow — got me out of the way of them Japanesy chaps. Wouldn’t ‘ave taken ’em long to cut MY froat. No. Still—”

He resolved to return to the point of Luna Island. For a long time he stood without stirring, scrutinising the Canadian shore and the wreckage of hotels and houses and the fallen trees of the Victoria Park, pink now in the light of sundown. Not a human being was perceptible in that scene of headlong destruction. Then he came back to the American side of the island, crossed close to the crumpled aluminium wreckage of the Hohenzollern to Green Islet, and scrutinised the hopeless breach in the further bridge and the water that boiled beneath it. Towards Buffalo there was still much smoke, and near the position of the Niagara railway station the houses were burning vigorously. Everything was deserted now, everything was still. One little abandoned thing lay on a transverse path between town and road, a crumpled heap of clothes with sprawling limbs....

“‘Ave a look round,” said Bert, and taking a path that ran through the middle of the island he presently discovered the wreckage of the two Asiatic aeroplanes that had fallen out of the struggle that ended the Hohenzollern.

With the first he found the wreckage of an aeronaut too.

The machine had evidently dropped vertically and was badly knocked about amidst a lot of smashed branches in a clump of trees. Its bent and broken wings and shattered stays sprawled amidst new splintered wood, and its forepeak stuck into the ground. The aeronaut

dangled weirdly head downward among the leaves and branches some yards away, and Bert only discovered him as he turned from the aeroplane. In the dusky evening light and stillness — for the sun had gone now and the wind had altogether fallen-this inverted yellow face was anything but a tranquilising object to discover suddenly a couple of yards away. A broken branch had run clean through the man's thorax, and he hung, so stabbed, looking limp and absurd. In his hand he still clutched, with the grip of death, a short light rifle.

For some time Bert stood very still, inspecting this thing.

Then he began to walk away from it, looking constantly back at it.

Presently in an open glade he came to a stop.

"Gaw!" he whispered, "I don' like dead bodies some'ow! I'd almost rather that chap was alive."

He would not go along the path athwart which the Chinaman hung. He felt he would rather not have trees round him any more, and that it would be more comfortable to be quite close to the sociable splash and uproar of the rapids.

He came upon the second aeroplane in a clear grassy space by the side of the streaming water, and it seemed scarcely damaged at all. It looked as though it had floated down into a position of rest. It lay on its side with one wing in the air. There was no aeronaut near it, dead or alive. There it lay abandoned, with the water lapping about its long tail.

Bert remained a little aloof from it for a long time, looking into the gathering shadows among the trees, in the expectation of another Chinaman alive or dead. Then very cautiously he approached the machine and stood regarding its widespread vans, its big steering wheel and empty saddle. He did not venture to touch it.

"I wish that other chap wasn't there," he said. "I do wish 'e wasn't there!"

He saw a few yards away, something bobbing about in an eddy that spun within a projecting head of rock. As it went round it seemed to draw him unwillingly towards it....

What could it be?

"Blow!" said Bert. "It's another of 'em."

It held him. He told himself that it was the other aeronaut that had been shot in the fight and fallen out of the saddle as he strove to land.

He tried to go away, and then it occurred to him that he might get a branch or something and push this rotating object out into the stream. That would leave him with only one dead body to worry about. Perhaps he might get along with one. He hesitated and then with a certain emotion forced himself to do this. He went towards the bushes and cut himself a wand and returned to the rocks and clambered out to a corner between the eddy and the stream, By that time the sunset was over and the bats were abroad — and he was wet with perspiration.

He prodded the floating blue-clad thing with his wand, failed, tried again successfully as it came round, and as it went out into the stream it turned over, the light gleamed on golden hair and — it was Kurt!

It was Kurt, white and dead and very calm. There was no mistaking him. There was still plenty of light for that. The stream took him and he seemed to compose himself in its swift grip as one who stretches himself to rest. White-faced he was now, and all the colour gone out of him.

A feeling of infinite distress swept over Bert as the body swept out of sight towards the fall. “Kurt!” he cried, “Kurt! I didn’t mean to! Kurt! don’ leave me ‘ere! Don’ leave me!”

Loneliness and desolation overwhelmed him. He gave way. He stood on the rock in the evening light, weeping and wailing passionately like a child. It was as though some link that had held him to all these things had broken and gone. He was afraid like a child in a lonely room, shamelessly afraid.

The twilight was closing about him. The trees were full now of strange shadows. All the things about him became strange and unfamiliar with that subtle queerness one feels oftenest in dreams. “O God! I carn’ stand this,” he said, and crept back from the rocks to the grass and crouched down, and suddenly wild sorrow for the death of Kurt, Kurt the brave, Kurt the kindly, came to his help and he broke from whimpering to weeping. He ceased to crouch; he sprawled upon the grass and clenched an impotent fist.

“This war,” he cried, “this blarsted foolery of a war.

“O Kurt! Lieutenant Kurt!

“I done,” he said, “I done. I’ve ‘ad all I want, and more than I

want. The world's all rot, and there ain't no sense in it. The night's coming.... If 'E comes after me— 'E can't come after me— 'E can't!...

"If 'E comes after me, I'll fro' myself into the water."...

Presently he was talking again in a low undertone.

"There ain't nothing to be afraid of reely. It's jest imagination. Poor old Kurt — he thought it would happen. Prevision like. 'E never gave me that letter or tole me who the lady was. It's like what 'e said — people tore away from everything they belonged to — everywhere. Exactly like what 'e said.... 'Ere I am cast away — thousands of miles from Edna or Grubb or any of my lot — like a plant tore up by the roots.... And every war's been like this, only I 'adn't the sense to understand it. Always. All sorts of 'oles and corners chaps 'ave died in. And people 'adn't the sense to understand, 'adn't the sense to feel it and stop it. Thought war was fine. My Gawd!...

"Dear old Edna. She was a fair bit of all right — she was. That time we 'ad a boat at Kingston....

"I bet — I'll see 'er again yet. Won't be my fault if I don't."...

4

Suddenly, on the very verge of this heroic resolution, Bert became rigid with terror. Something was creeping towards him through the grass. Something was creeping and halting and creeping again towards him through the dim dark grass. The night was electrical with horror. For a time everything was still. Bert ceased to breathe. It could not be. No, it was too small!

It advanced suddenly upon him with a rush, with a little meawling cry and tail erect. It rubbed its head against him and purred. It was a tiny, skinny little kitten.

"Gaw, Pussy! 'ow you frightened me!" said Bert, with drops of perspiration on his brow.

5

He sat with his back to a tree stump all that night, holding the kitten

in his arms. His mind was tired, and he talked or thought coherently no longer. Towards dawn he dozed.

When he awoke, he was stiff but in better heart, and the kitten slept warmly and reassuringly inside his jacket. And fear, he found, had gone from amidst the trees.

He stroked the kitten, and the little creature woke up to excessive fondness and purring. “You want some milk,” said Bert. “That’s what you want. And I could do with a bit of brekker too.”

He yawned and stood up, with the kitten on his shoulder, and stared about him, recalling the circumstances of the previous day, the grey, immense happenings.

“Mus’ do something,” he said.

He turned towards the trees, and was presently contemplating the dead aeronaut again. The kitten he held companionably against his neck. The body was horrible, but not nearly so horrible as it had been at twilight, and now the limbs were limper and the gun had slipped to the ground and lay half hidden in the grass.

“I suppose we ought to bury ‘im, Kitty,” said Bert, and looked helplessly at the rocky soil about him. “We got to stay on the island with ‘im.”

It was some time before he could turn away and go on towards that provision shed. “Brekker first,” he said, “anyhow,” stroking the kitten on his shoulder. She rubbed his cheek affectionately with her furry little face and presently nibbled at his ear. “Wan’ some milk, eh?” he said, and turned his back on the dead man as though he mattered nothing.

He was puzzled to find the door of the shed open, though he had closed and latched it very carefully overnight, and he found also some dirty plates he had not noticed before on the bench. He discovered that the hinges of the tin locker were unscrewed and that it could be opened. He had not observed this overnight.

“Silly of me!” said Bert. “‘Ere I was puzzlin’ and whackin’ away at the padlock, never noticing.” It had been used apparently as an ice-chest, but it contained nothing now but the remains of half-dozen boiled chickens, some ambiguous substance that might once have been butter, and a singularly unappetising smell. He closed the lid again carefully.

He gave the kitten some milk in a dirty plate and sat watching its busy little tongue for a time. Then he was moved to make an inventory of the provisions. There were six bottles of milk unopened and one opened, sixty bottles of mineral water and a large stock of syrups, about two thousand cigarettes and upwards of a hundred cigars, nine oranges, two unopened tins of corned beef and one opened, and five large tins California peaches. He jotted it down on a piece of paper. "'Ain't much solid food," he said. "Still — A fortnight, say!

"Anything might happen in a fortnight."

He gave the kitten a small second helping and a scrap of beef and then went down with the little creature running after him, tail erect and in high spirits, to look at the remains of the Hohenzollern.

It had shifted in the night and seemed on the whole more firmly grounded on Green Island than before. From it his eye went to the shattered bridge and then across to the still desolation of Niagara city. Nothing moved over there but a number of crows. They were busy with the engineer he had seen cut down on the previous day. He saw no dogs, but he heard one howling.

"We got to get out of this some'ow, Kitty," he said. "That milk won't last forever — not at the rate you lap it."

He regarded the sluice-like flood before him.

"Plenty of water," he said. "Won't be drink we shall want."

He decided to make a careful exploration of the island. Presently he came to a locked gate labelled "Biddle Stairs," and clambered over to discover a steep old wooden staircase leading down the face of the cliff amidst a vast and increasing uproar of waters. He left the kitten above and descended these, and discovered with a thrill of hope a path leading among the rocks at the foot of the roaring downrush of the Centre Fall. Perhaps this was a sort of way!

It led him only to the choking and deafening experience of the Cave of the Winds, and after he had spent a quarter of an hour in a partially stupefied condition flattened between solid rock and nearly as solid waterfall, he decided that this was after all no practicable route to Canada and retraced his steps. As he reascended the Biddle Stairs, he heard what he decided at last must be a sort of echo, a sound of some one walking about on the gravel paths above. When

he got to the top, the place was as solitary as before.

Thence he made his way, with the kitten skirmishing along beside him in the grass, to a staircase that led to a lump of projecting rock that enfiladed the huge green majesty of the Horseshoe Fall. He stood there for some time in silence.

"You wouldn't think," he said at last, "there was so much water.... This roarin' and splashin', it gets on one's nerves at last.... Sounds like people talking.... Sounds like people going about.... Sounds like anything you fancy."

He retired up the staircase again. "I s'pose I shall keep on goin' round this blessed island," he said drearily. "Round and round and round."

He found himself presently beside the less damaged Asiatic aeroplane again. He stared at it and the kitten smelt it. "Broke!" he said.

He looked up with a convulsive start.

Advancing slowly towards him out from among the trees were two tall gaunt figures. They were blackened and tattered and bandaged; the hind-most one limped and had his head swathed in white, but the foremost one still carried himself as a Prince should do, for all that his left arm was in a sling and one side of his face scalded a livid crimson. He was the Prince Karl Albert, the War Lord, the "German Alexander," and the man behind him was the bird-faced man whose cabin had once been taken from him and given to Bert.

6

With that apparition began a new phase of Goat Island in Bert's experience. He ceased to be a solitary representative of humanity in a vast and violent and incomprehensible universe, and became once more a social creature, a man in a world of other men. For an instant these two were terrible, then they seemed sweet and desirable as brothers. They too were in this scrape with him, marooned and puzzled. He wanted extremely to hear exactly what had happened to them. What mattered it if one was a Prince and both were foreign soldiers, if neither perhaps had adequate English? His native

Cockney freedom flowed too generously for him to think of that, and surely the Asiatic fleets had purged all such trivial differences. "Ul-LO!" he said; "'ow did you get 'ere?"

"It is the Englishman who brought us the Butteridge machine," said the bird-faced officer in German, and then in a tone of horror, as Bert advanced, "Salute!" and again louder, "SALUTE!"

"Gaw!" said Bert, and stopped with a second comment under his breath. He stared and saluted awkwardly and became at once a masked defensive thing with whom co-operation was impossible.

For a time these two perfected modern aristocrats stood regarding the difficult problem of the Anglo-Saxon citizen, that ambiguous citizen who, obeying some mysterious law in his blood, would neither drill nor be a democrat. Bert was by no means a beautiful object, but in some inexplicable way he looked resistant. He wore his cheap suit of serge, now showing many signs of wear, and its loose fit made him seem sturdier than he was; above his disengaging face was a white German cap that was altogether too big for him, and his trousers were crumpled up his legs and their ends tucked into the rubber highlows of a deceased German aeronaut. He looked an inferior, though by no means an easy inferior, and instinctively they hated him.

The Prince pointed to the flying-machine and said something in broken English that Bert took for German and failed to understand. He intimated as much.

"Dummer Kerl!" said the bird-faced officer from among his bandages.

The Prince pointed again with his undamaged hand. "You verstehen dis drachenflieger?"

Bert began to comprehend the situation. He regarded the Asiatic machine. The habits of Bun Hill returned to him. "It's a foreign make," he said ambiguously.

The two Germans consulted. "You are an expert?" said the Prince.

"We reckon to repair," said Bert, in the exact manner of Grubb.

The Prince sought in his vocabulary. "Is dat," he said, "goot to fly?"

Bert reflected and scratched his cheek slowly. "I got to look at it," he replied.... "It's 'ad rough usage!"

He made a sound with his teeth he had also acquired from Grubb, put his hands in his trouser pockets, and strolled back to the machine. Typically Grubb chewed something, but Bert could chew only imaginatively. “Three days’ work in this,” he said, teething. For the first time it dawned on him that there were possibilities in this machine. It was evident that the wing that lay on the ground was badly damaged. The three stays that held it rigid had snapped across a ridge of rock and there was also a strong possibility of the engine being badly damaged. The wing hook on that side was also askew, but probably that would not affect the flight. Beyond that there probably wasn’t much the matter. Bert scratched his cheek again and contemplated the broad sunlit waste of the Upper Rapids. “We might make a job of this.... You leave it to me.”

He surveyed it intently again, and the Prince and his officer watched him. In Bun Hill Bert and Grubb had developed to a very high pitch among the hiring stock a method of repair by substituting; they substituted bits of other machines. A machine that was too utterly and obviously done for even to proffer for hire, had nevertheless still capital value. It became a sort of quarry for nuts and screws and wheels, bars and spokes, chain-links and the like; a mine of ill-fitting “parts” to replace the defects of machines still current. And back among the trees was a second Asiatic aeroplane....

The kitten caressed Bert’s airship boots unheeded.

“Mend dat drachenflieger,” said the Prince.

“If I do mend it,” said Bert, struck by a new thought, “none of us ain’t to be trusted to fly it.”

“*I* vill fly it,” said the Prince.

“Very likely break your neck,” said Bert, after a pause.

The Prince did not understand him and disregarded what he said. He pointed his gloved finger to the machine and turned to the bird-faced officer with some remark in German. The officer answered and the Prince responded with a sweeping gesture towards the sky. Then he spoke — it seemed eloquently. Bert watched him and guessed his meaning. “Much more likely to break your neck,” he said. “‘Owever. ‘Ere goes.”

He began to pry about the saddle and engine of the drachenflieger in search for tools. Also he wanted some black oily stuff for his

hands and face. For the first rule in the art of repairing, as it was known to the firm of Grubb and Smallways, was to get your hands and face thoroughly and conclusively blackened. Also he took off his jacket and waistcoat and put his cap carefully to the back of his head in order to facilitate scratching.

The Prince and the officer seemed disposed to watch him, but he succeeded in making it clear to them that this would inconvenience him and that he had to "puzzle out a bit" before he could get to work. They thought him over, but his shop experience had given him something of the authoritative way of the expert with common men. And at last they went away. Thereupon he went straight to the second aeroplane, got the aeronaut's gun and ammunition and hid them in a clump of nettles close at hand. "That's all right," said Bert, and then proceeded to a careful inspection of the debris of the wings in the trees. Then he went back to the first aeroplane to compare the two. The Bun Hill method was quite possibly practicable if there was nothing hopeless or incomprehensible in the engine.

The Germans returned presently to find him already generously smutty and touching and testing knobs and screws and levers with an expression of profound sagacity. When the bird-faced officer addressed a remark to him, he waved him aside with, "Nong comprong. Shut it! It's no good."

Then he had an idea. "Dead chap back there wants burying," he said, jerking a thumb over his shoulder.

7

With the appearance of these two men Bert's whole universe had changed again. A curtain fell before the immense and terrible desolation that had overwhelmed him. He was in a world of three people, a minute human world that nevertheless filled his brain with eager speculations and schemes and cunning ideas. What were they thinking of? What did they think of him? What did they mean to do? A hundred busy threads interlaced in his mind as he pottered studiously over the Asiatic aeroplane. New ideas came up like bubbles in soda water.

"Gaw!" he said suddenly. He had just appreciated as a special

aspect of this irrational injustice of fate that these two men were alive and that Kurt was dead. All the crew of the Hohenzollern were shot or burnt or smashed or drowned, and these two lurking in the padded forward cabin had escaped.

"I suppose 'e thinks it's 'is bloomin' Star," he muttered, and found himself uncontrollably exasperated.

He stood up, facing round to the two men. They were standing side by side regarding him.

"'It's no good," he said, "starin' at me. You only put me out." And then seeing they did not understand, he advanced towards them, wrench in hand. It occurred to him as he did so that the Prince was really a very big and powerful and serene-looking person. But he said, nevertheless, pointing through the trees, "dead man!"

The bird-faced man intervened with a reply in German.

"Dead man!" said Bert to him. "There."

He had great difficulty in inducing them to inspect the dead Chinaman, and at last led them to him. Then they made it evident that they proposed that he, as a common person below the rank of officer should have the sole and undivided privilege of disposing of the body by dragging it to the water's edge. There was some heated gesticulation, and at last the bird-faced officer abased himself to help. Together they dragged the limp and now swollen Asiatic through the trees, and after a rest or so — for he trailed very heavily — dumped him into the westward rapid. Bert returned to his expert investigation of the flying-machine at last with aching arms and in a state of gloomy rebellion. "Brasted cheek!" he said. "One'd think I was one of 'is beastly German slaves!

"Prancing beggar!"

And then he fell speculating what would happen when the flying-machine, was repaired — if it could be repaired.

The two Germans went away again, and after some reflection Bert removed several nuts, resumed his jacket and vest, pocketed those nuts and his tools and hid the set of tools from the second aeroplane in the fork of a tree. "Right O," he said, as he jumped down after the last of these precautions. The Prince and his companion reappeared as he returned to the machine by the water's edge. The Prince surveyed his progress for a time, and then went towards the Parting

of the Waters and stood with folded arms gazing upstream in profound thought. The bird-faced officer came up to Bert, heavy with a sentence in English.

"Go," he said with a helping gesture, "und eat."

When Bert got to the refreshment shed, he found all the food had vanished except one measured ration of corned beef and three biscuits.

He regarded this with open eyes and mouth.

The kitten appeared from under the vendor's seat with an ingratiating purr. "Of course!" said Bert. "Why! where's your milk?"

He accumulated wrath for a moment or so, then seized the plate in one hand, and the biscuits in another, and went in search of the Prince, breathing vile words anent "grub" and his intimate interior. He approached without saluting.

"'Ere!" he said fiercely. "Whad the devil's this?"

An entirely unsatisfactory altercation followed. Bert expounded the Bun Hill theory of the relations of grub to efficiency in English, the bird-faced man replied with points about nations and discipline in German. The Prince, having made an estimate of Bert's quality and physique, suddenly hectored. He gripped Bert by the shoulder and shook him, making his pockets rattle, shouted something to him, and flung him struggling back. He hit him as though he was a German private. Bert went back, white and scared, but resolved by all his Cockney standards upon one thing. He was bound in honour to "go for" the Prince. "Gaw!" he gasped, buttoning his jacket.

"Now," cried the Prince, "Vil you go?" and then catching the heroic gleam in Bert's eye, drew his sword.

The bird-faced officer intervened, saying something in German and pointing skyward.

Far away in the southwest appeared a Japanese airship coming fast toward them. Their conflict ended at that. The Prince was first to grasp the situation and lead the retreat. All three scuttled like rabbits for the trees, and ran to and for cover until they found a hollow in which the grass grew rank. There they all squatted within six yards of one another. They sat in this place for a long time, up to their necks in the grass and watching through the branches for the airship. Bert had dropped some of his corned beef, but he found the biscuits in his

hand and ate them quietly. The monster came nearly overhead and then went away to Niagara and dropped beyond the power-works. When it was near, they all kept silence, and then presently they fell into an argument that was robbed perhaps of immediate explosive effect only by their failure to understand one another.

It was Bert began the talking and he talked on regardless of what they understood or failed to understand. But his voice must have conveyed his cantankerous intentions.

"You want that machine done," he said first, "you better keep your 'ands off me!"

They disregarded that and he repeated it.

Then he expanded his idea and the spirit of speech took hold of him. "You think you got 'old of a chap you can kick and 'it like you do your private soldiers — you're jolly well mistaken. See? I've 'ad about enough of you and your antics. I been thinking you over, you and your war and your Empire and all the rot of it. Rot it is! It's you Germans made all the trouble in Europe first and last. And all for nothin'. Jest silly prancing! Jest because you've got the uniforms and flags! 'Ere I was — I didn't want to 'ave anything to do with you. I jest didn't care a 'eng at all about you. Then you get 'old of me — steal me practically — and 'ere I am, thousands of miles away from 'ome and everything, and all your silly fleet smashed up to rags. And you want to go on prancin' NOW! Not if 'I know it!

"Look at the mischief you done! Look at the way you smashed up New York — the people you killed, the stuff you wasted. Can't you learn?"

"Dummer Kerl!" said the bird-faced man suddenly in a tone of concentrated malignancy, glaring under his bandages. "Esel!"

"That's German for silly ass! — I know. But who's the silly ass— 'im or me? When I was a kid, I used to read penny dreadfuls about 'avin adventures and bein' a great c'mander and all that rot. I stowed it. But what's 'e got in 'is head? Rot about Napoleon, rot about Alexander, rot about 'is blessed family and 'im and Gord and David and all that. Any one who wasn't a dressed-up silly fool of a Prince could 'ave told all this was goin' to 'appen. There was us in Europe all at sixes and sevens with our silly flags and our silly newspapers raggin' us up against each other and keepin' us apart, and there was

China, solid as a cheese, with millions and millions of men only wantin' a bit of science and a bit of enterprise to be as good as all of us. You thought they couldn't get at you. And then they got flying-machines. And bif!— 'ere we are. Why, when they didn't go on making guns and armies in China, we went and poked 'em up until they did. They 'AD to give us this lickin' they've give us. We wouldn't be happy until they did, and as I say, 'ere we are!"

The bird-faced officer shouted to him to be quiet, and then began a conversation with the Prince.

"British citizen," said Bert. "You ain't obliged to listen, but I ain't obliged to shut up."

And for some time he continued his dissertation upon Imperialism, militarism, and international politics. But their talking put him out, and for a time he was certainly merely repeating abusive terms, "prancin' nincompoops" and the like, old terms and new. Then suddenly he remembered his essential grievance. "'Owever, look 'ere— 'ere! — the thing I started this talk about is where's that food there was in that shed? That's what I want to know. Where you put it?"

He paused. They went on talking in German. He repeated his question. They disregarded him. He asked a third time in a manner insupportably aggressive.

There fell a tense silence. For some seconds the three regarded one another. The Prince eyed Bert steadfastly, and Bert quailed under his eye. Slowly the Prince rose to his feet and the bird-faced officer jerked up beside him. Bert remained squatting.

"Be quaiat," said the Prince.

Bert perceived this was no moment for eloquence.

The two Germans regarded him as he crouched there. Death for a moment seemed near.

Then the Prince turned away and the two of them went towards the flying-machine.

"Gaw!" whispered Bert, and then uttered under his breath one single word of abuse. He sat crouched together for perhaps three minutes, then he sprang to his feet and went off towards the Chinese aeronaut's gun hidden among the weeds.

There was no pretence after that moment that Bert was under the orders of the Prince or that he was going on with the repairing of the flying-machine. The two Germans took possession of that and set to work upon it. Bert, with his new weapon went off to the neighbourhood of Terrapin Rock, and there sat down to examine it. It was a short rifle with a big cartridge, and a nearly full magazine. He took out the cartridges carefully and then tried the trigger and fittings until he felt sure he had the use of it. He reloaded carefully. Then he remembered he was hungry and went off, gun under his arm, to hunt in and about the refreshment shed. He had the sense to perceive that he must not show himself with the gun to the Prince and his companion. So long as they thought him unarmed they would leave him alone, but there was no knowing what the Napoleonic person might do if he saw Bert's weapon. Also he did not go near them because he knew that within himself boiled a reservoir of rage and fear that he wanted to shoot these two men. He wanted to shoot them, and he thought that to shoot them would be a quite horrible thing to do. The two sides of his inconsistent civilisation warred within him.

Near the shed the kitten turned up again, obviously keen for milk. This greatly enhanced his own angry sense of hunger. He began to talk as he hunted about, and presently stood still, shouting insults. He talked of war and pride and Imperialism. "Any other Prince but you would have died with his men and his ship!" he cried.

The two Germans at the machine heard his voice going ever and again amidst the clamour of the waters. Their eyes met and they smiled slightly.

He was disposed for a time to sit in the refreshment shed waiting for them, but then it occurred to him that so he might get them both at close quarters. He strolled off presently to the point of Luna Island to think the situation out.

It had seemed a comparatively simple one at first, but as he turned it over in his mind its possibilities increased and multiplied. Both these men had swords, — had either a revolver?

Also, if he shot them both, he might never find the food!

So far he had been going about with this gun under his arm, and a sense of lordly security in his mind, but what if they saw the gun and decided to ambush him? Goat Island is nearly all cover, trees, rocks, thickets, and irregularities.

Why not go and murder them both now?

"I carn't," said Bert, dismissing that. "I got to be worked up."

But it was a mistake to get right away from them. That suddenly became clear. He ought to keep them under observation, ought to "scout" them. Then he would be able to see what they were doing, whether either of them had a revolver, where they had hidden the food. He would be better able to determine what they meant to do to him. If he didn't "scout" them, presently they would begin to "scout" him. This seemed so eminently reasonable that he acted upon it forthwith. He thought over his costume and threw his collar and the tell-tale aeronaut's white cap into the water far below. He turned his coat collar up to hide any gleam of his dirty shirt. The tools and nuts in his pockets were disposed to clank, but he rearranged them and wrapped some letters and his pocket-handkerchief about them. He started off circumspectly and noiselessly, listening and peering at every step. As he drew near his antagonists, much grunting and creaking served to locate them. He discovered them engaged in what looked like a wrestling match with the Asiatic flying-machine. Their coats were off, their swords laid aside, they were working magnificently. Apparently they were turning it round and were having a good deal of difficulty with the long tail among the trees. He dropped flat at the sight of them and wriggled into a little hollow, and so lay watching their exertions. Ever and again, to pass the time, he would cover one or other of them with his gun.

He found them quite interesting to watch, so interesting that at times he came near shouting to advise them. He perceived that when they had the machine turned round, they would then be in immediate want of the nuts and tools he carried. Then they would come after him. They would certainly conclude he had them or had hidden them. Should he hide his gun and do a deal for food with these tools? He felt he would not be able to part with the gun again now he had once felt its reassuring company. The kitten turned up again and made a great fuss with him and licked and bit his ear.

The sun clambered to midday, and once that morning he saw, though the Germans did not, an Asiatic airship very far to the south, going swiftly eastward.

At last the flying-machine was turned and stood poised on its wheel, with its hooks pointing up the Rapids. The two officers wiped their faces, resumed jackets and swords, spoke and bore themselves like men who congratulated themselves on a good laborious morning. Then they went off briskly towards the refreshment shed, the Prince leading. Bert became active in pursuit; but he found it impossible to stalk them quickly enough and silently enough to discover the hiding-place of the food. He found them, when he came into sight of them again, seated with their backs against the shed, plates on knee, and a tin of corned beef and a plateful of biscuits between them. They seemed in fairly good spirits, and once the Prince laughed. At this vision of eating Bert's plans gave way. Fierce hunger carried him. He appeared before them suddenly at a distance of perhaps twenty yards, gun in hand.

"'Ands up!" he said in a hard, ferocious voice.

The Prince hesitated, and then up went two pairs of hands. The gun had surprised them both completely.

"Stand up," said Bert.... "Drop that fork!"

They obeyed again.

"What nex'?" said Bert to himself. "'Orf stage, I suppose. That way," he said. "Go!"

The Prince obeyed with remarkable alacrity. When he reached the head of the clearing, he said something quickly to the bird-faced man and they both, with an entire lack of dignity, RAN!

Bert was struck with an exasperating afterthought.

"Gord!" he cried with infinite vexation. "Why! I ought to 'ave took their swords! 'Ere!"

But the Germans were already out of sight, and no doubt taking cover among the trees. Bert fell back upon imprecations, then he went up to the shed, cursorily examined the possibility of a flank attack, put his gun handy, and set to work, with a convulsive listening pause before each mouthful on the Prince's plate of corned beef. He had finished that up and handed its gleanings to the kitten and he was falling-to on the second plateful, when the plate broke in

his hand! He stared, with the fact slowly creeping upon him that an instant before he had heard a crack among the thickets. Then he sprang to his feet, snatched up his gun in one hand and the tin of corned beef in the other, and fled round the shed to the other side of the clearing. As he did so came a second crack from the thickets, and something went phwit! by his ear.

He didn't stop running until he was in what seemed to him a strongly defensible position near Luna Island. Then he took cover, panting, and crouched expectant.

"They got a revolver after all!" he panted....

"Wonder if they got two? If they 'ave — Gord! I'm done!

"Where's the kitten? Finishin' up that corned beef, I suppose. Little beggar!"

9

So it was that war began upon Goat Island. It lasted a day and a night, the longest day and the longest night in Bert's life. He had to lie close and listen and watch. Also he had to scheme what he should do. It was clear now that he had to kill these two men if he could, and that if they could, they would kill him. The prize was first food and then the flying-machine and the doubtful privilege of trying' to ride it. If one failed, one would certainly be killed; if one succeeded, one would get away somewhere over there. For a time Bert tried to imagine what it was like over there. His mind ran over possibilities, deserts, angry Americans, Japanese, Chinese — perhaps Red Indians! (Were there still Red Indians?)

"Got to take what comes," said Bert. "No way out of it that I can see!"

Was that voices? He realised that his attention was wandering. For a time all his senses were very alert. The uproar of the Falls was very confusing, and it mixed in all sorts of sounds, like feet walking, like voices talking, like shouts and cries.

"Silly great catarac'," said Bert. "There ain't no sense in it, fallin' and fallin'."

Never mind that, now! What were the Germans doing?

Would they go back to the flying-machine? They couldn't do

anything with it, because he had those nuts and screws and the wrench and other tools. But suppose they found the second set of tools he had hidden in a tree! He had hidden the things well, of course, but they MIGHT find them. One wasn't sure, of course — one wasn't sure. He tried to remember just exactly how he had hidden those tools. He tried to persuade himself they were certainly and surely hidden, but his memory began to play antics. Had he really left the handle of the wrench sticking out, shining out at the fork of the branch?

Ssh! What was that? Some one stirring in those bushes? Up went an expectant muzzle. No! Where was the kitten? No! It was just imagination, not even the kitten.

The Germans would certainly miss and hunt about for the tools and nuts and screws he carried in his pockets; that was clear. Then they would decide he had them and come for him. He had only to remain still under cover, therefore, and he would get them. Was there any flaw in that? Would they take off more removable parts of the flying-machine and then lie up for him? No, they wouldn't do that, because they were two to one; they would have no apprehension of his getting off in the flying-machine, and no sound reason for supposing he would approach it, and so they would do nothing to damage or disable it. That he decided was clear. But suppose they lay up for him by the food. Well, that they wouldn't do, because they would know he had this corned beef; there was enough in this can to last, with moderation, several days. Of course they might try to tire him out instead of attacking him —

He roused himself with a start. He had just grasped the real weakness of his position. He might go to sleep!

It needed but ten minutes under the suggestion of that idea, before he realised that he was going to sleep!

He rubbed his eyes and handled his gun. He had never before realised the intensely soporific effect of the American sun, of the American air, the drowsy, sleep-compelling uproar of Niagara. Hitherto these things had on the whole seemed stimulating....

If he had not eaten so much and eaten it so fast, he would not be so heavy. Are vegetarians always bright?...

He roused himself with a jerk again.

If he didn't do something, he would fall asleep, and if he fell asleep, it was ten to one they would find him snoring, and finish him forthwith. If he sat motionless and noiseless, he would inevitably sleep. It was better, he told himself, to take even the risks of attacking than that. This sleep trouble, he felt, was going to beat him, must beat him in the end. They were all right; one could sleep and the other could watch. That, come to think of it, was what they would always do; one would do anything they wanted done, the other would lie under cover near at hand, ready to shoot. They might even trap him like that. One might act as a decoy.

That set him thinking of decoys. What a fool he had been to throw his cap away. It would have been invaluable on a stick — especially at night.

He found himself wishing for a drink. He settled that for a time by putting a pebble in his mouth. And then the sleep craving returned.

It became clear to him he must attack. Like many great generals before him, he found his baggage, that is to say his tin of corned beef, a serious impediment to mobility. At last he decided to put the beef loose in his pocket and abandon the tin. It was not perhaps an ideal arrangement, but one must make sacrifices when one is campaigning. He crawled perhaps ten yards, and then for a time the possibilities of the situation paralysed him.

The afternoon was still. The roar of the cataract simply threw up that immense stillness in relief. He was doing his best to contrive the death of two better men than himself. Also they were doing their best to contrive his. What, behind this silence, were they doing.

Suppose he came upon them suddenly and fired, and missed?

10

He crawled, and halted listening, and crawled again until nightfall, and no doubt the German Alexander and his lieutenant did the same. A large scale map of Goat Island marked with red and blue lines to show these strategic movements would no doubt have displayed much interlacing, but as a matter of fact neither side saw anything of the other throughout that age-long day of tedious alertness. Bert never knew how near he got to them nor how far he kept from them.

Night found him no longer sleepy, but athirst, and near the American Fall. He was inspired by the idea that his antagonists might be in the wreckage of the Hohenzollern cabins that was jammed against Green Island. He became enterprising, broke from any attempt to conceal himself, and went across the little bridge at the double. He found nobody. It was his first visit to these huge fragments of airships, and for a time he explored them curiously in the dim light. He discovered the forward cabin was nearly intact, with its door slanting downward and a corner under water. He crept in, drank, and then was struck by the brilliant idea of shutting the door and sleeping on it.

But now he could not sleep at all.

He nodded towards morning and woke up to find it fully day. He breakfasted on corned beef and water, and sat for a long time appreciative of the security of his position. At last he became enterprising and bold. He would, he decided, settle this business forthwith, one way or the other. He was tired of all this crawling. He set out in the morning sunshine, gun in hand, scarcely troubling to walk softly. He went round the refreshment shed without finding any one, and then through the trees towards the flying-machine. He came upon the bird-faced man sitting on the ground with his back against a tree, bent up over his folded arms, sleeping, his bandage very much over one eye.

Bert stopped abruptly and stood perhaps fifteen yards away, gun in hand ready. Where was the Prince? Then, sticking out at the side of the tree beyond, he saw a shoulder. Bert took five deliberate paces to the left. The great man became visible, leaning up against the trunk, pistol in one hand and sword in the other, and yawning — yawning. You can't shoot a yawning man Bert found. He advanced upon his antagonist with his gun levelled, some foolish fancy of "hands up" in his mind. The Prince became aware of him, the yawning mouth shut like a trap and he stood stiffly up. Bert stopped, silent. For a moment the two regarded one another.

Had the Prince been a wise man he would, I suppose, have dodged behind the tree. Instead, he gave vent to a shout, and raised pistol and sword. At that, like an automaton, Bert pulled his trigger.

It was his first experience of an oxygen-containing bullet. A great flame spurted from the middle of the Prince, a blinding flare, and

there came a thud like the firing of a gun. Something hot and wet struck Bert's face. Then through a whirl of blinding smoke and steam he saw limbs and a collapsing, burst body fling themselves to earth.

Bert was so astonished that he stood agape, and the bird-faced officer might have cut him to the earth without a struggle. But instead the bird-faced officer was running away through the undergrowth, dodging as he went. Bert roused himself to a brief ineffectual pursuit, but he had no stomach for further killing. He returned to the mangled, scattered thing that had so recently been the great Prince Karl Albert. He surveyed the scorched and splashed vegetation about it. He made some speculative identifications. He advanced gingerly and picked up the hot revolver, to find all its chambers strained and burst. He became aware of a cheerful and friendly presence. He was greatly shocked that one so young should see so frightful a scene.

"'Ere, Kitty," he said, "this ain't no place for you."

He made three strides across the devastated area, captured the kitten neatly, and went his way towards the shed, with her purring loudly on his shoulder.

"YOU don't seem to mind," he said.

For a time he fussed about the shed, and at last discovered the rest of the provisions hidden in the roof. "Seems 'ard," he said, as he administered a saucerful of milk, "when you get three men in a 'ole like this, they can't work together. But 'im and 'is princing was jest a bit too thick!"

"Gaw!" he reflected, sitting on the counter and eating, "what a thing life is! 'Ere am I; I seen 'is picture, 'eard 'is name since I was a kid in frocks. Prince Karl Albert! And if any one 'ad tole me I was going to blow 'im to smithereens — there! I shouldn't 'ave believed it, Kitty.

"That chap at Margit ought to 'ave tole me about it. All 'e tole me was that I got a weak chess.

"That other chap, 'e ain't going to do much. Wonder what I ought to do about 'im?"

He surveyed the trees with a keen blue eye and fingered the gun on his knee. "I don't like this killing, Kitty," he said. "It's like Kurt said about being blooded. Seems to me you got to be blooded young.... If that Prince 'ad come up to me and said, 'Shake 'ands!'

I'd 'ave shook 'ands.... Now 'ere's that other chap, dodging about! 'E's got 'is 'ead 'urt already, and there's something wrong with his leg. And burns. Golly! it isn't three weeks ago I first set eyes on 'im, and then 'e was smart and set up— 'ands full of 'air-brushes and things, and swearin' at me. A regular gentleman! Now 'e's 'arfway to a wild man. What am I to do with 'im? What the 'ell am I to do with 'im? I can't leave 'im 'ave that flying-machine; that's a bit too good, and if I don't kill 'im, 'e'll jest 'ang about this island and starve....

"'E's got a sword, of course"....

He resumed his philosophising after he had lit a cigarette.

"War's a silly gaim, Kitty. It's a silly gaim! We common people — we were fools. We thought those big people knew what they were up to — and they didn't. Look at that chap! 'E 'ad all Germany be'ind 'im, and what 'as 'e made of it? Smeshin' and blunderin' and destroyin', and there 'e 'is! Jest a mess of blood and boots and things! Jest an 'orrid splash! Prince Karl Albert! And all the men 'e led and the ships 'e 'ad, the airships, and the dragon-fliers — all scattered like a paper-chase between this 'ole and Germany. And fightin' going on and burnin' and killin' that 'e started, war without end all over the world!

"I suppose I shall 'ave to kill that other chap. I suppose I must. But it ain't at all the sort of job I fancy, Kitty!"

For a time he hunted about the island amidst the uproar of the waterfall, looking for the wounded officer, and at last he started him out of some bushes near the head of Biddle Stairs. But as he saw the bent and bandaged figure in limping flight before him, he found his Cockney softness too much for him again; he could neither shoot nor pursue. "I carn't," he said, "that's flat. I 'aven't the guts for it! 'E'll 'ave to go."

He turned his steps towards the flying-machine....

He never saw the bird-faced officer again, nor any further evidence of his presence. Towards evening he grew fearful of ambushes and hunted vigorously for an hour or so, but in vain. He slept in a good defensible position at the extremity of the rocky point that runs out to the Canadian Fall, and in the night he woke in panic terror and fired his gun. But it was nothing. He slept no more that

night. In the morning he became curiously concerned for the vanished man, and hunted for him as one might for an erring brother.

"If I knew some German," he said, "I'd 'oller. It's jest not knowing German does it. You can't explain'"

He discovered, later, traces of an attempt to cross the gap in the broken bridge. A rope with a bolt attached had been flung across and had caught in a fenestration of a projecting fragment of railing. The end of the rope trailed in the seething water towards the fall.

But the bird-faced officer was already rubbing shoulders with certain inert matter that had once been Lieutenant Kurt and the Chinese aeronaut and a dead cow, and much other uncongenial company, in the huge circle of the Whirlpool two and a quarter miles away. Never had that great gathering place, that incessant, aimless, unprogressive hurry of waste and battered things, been so crowded with strange and melancholy derelicts. Round they went and round, and every day brought its new contributions, luckless brutes, shattered fragments of boat and flying-machine, endless citizens from the cities upon the shores of the great lakes above. Much came from Cleveland. It all gathered here, and whirled about indefinitely, and over it all gathered daily a greater abundance of birds.

CHAPTER X. THE WORLD UNDER THE WAR

1

Bert spent two more days upon Goat Island, and finished all his provisions except the cigarettes and mineral water, before he brought himself to try the Asiatic flying-machine.

Even at last he did not so much go off upon it as get carried off. It had taken only an hour or so to substitute wing stays from the second flying-machine and to replace the nuts he had himself removed. The engine was in working order, and differed only very simply and obviously from that of a contemporary motor-bicycle. The rest of the time was taken up by a vast musing and delaying and hesitation. Chiefly he saw himself splashing into the rapids and whirling down them to the Fall, clutching and drowning, but also he had a vision of being hopelessly in the air, going fast and unable to ground. His mind was too concentrated upon the business of flying for him to think very much of what might happen to an indefinite-spirited Cockney without credential who arrived on an Asiatic flying-machine amidst the war-infuriated population beyond.

He still had a lingering solicitude for the bird-faced officer. He had a haunting fancy he might be lying disabled or badly smashed in some way in some nook or cranny of the Island; and it was only after a most exhaustive search that he abandoned that distressing idea. “If I found ‘im,” he reasoned the while, “what could I do wiv ‘im? You can’t blow a chap’s brains out when ‘e’s down. And I don’ see ‘ow else I can ‘elp ‘im.”

Then the kitten bothered his highly developed sense of social responsibility. “If I leave ‘er, she’ll starve.... Ought to catch mice for ‘erself.... ARE there mice?... Birds?... She’s too young.... She’s like me; she’s a bit too civilised.”

Finally he stuck her in his side pocket and she became greatly interested in the memories of corned beef she found there. With her in his pocket, he seated himself in the saddle of the flying-machine. Big, clumsy thing it was — and not a bit like a bicycle. Still the

working of it was fairly plain. You set the engine going — SO; kicked yourself up until the wheel was vertical, SO; engaged the gyroscope, SO, and then — then — you just pulled up this lever.

Rather stiff it was, but suddenly it came over —

The big curved wings on either side flapped disconcertingly, flapped again' click, clock, click, clock, clitter-clock!

Stop! The thing was heading for the water; its wheel was in the water. Bert groaned from his heart and struggled to restore the lever to its first position. Click, clock, clitter-clock, he was rising! The machine was lifting its dripping wheel out of the eddies, and he was going up! There was no stopping now, no good in stopping now. In another moment Bert, clutching and convulsive and rigid, with staring eyes and a face pale as death, was flapping up above the Rapids, jerking to every jerk of the wings, and rising, rising.

There was no comparison in dignity and comfort between a flying-machine and a balloon. Except in its moments of descent, the balloon was a vehicle of faultless urbanity; this was a buck-jumping mule, a mule that jumped up and never came down again. Click, clock, click, clock; with each beat of the strangely shaped wings it jumped Bert upward and caught him neatly again half a second later on the saddle. And while in ballooning there is no wind, since the balloon is a part of the wind, flying is a wild perpetual creation of and plunging into wind. It was a wind that above all things sought to blind him, to force him to close his eyes. It occurred to him presently to twist his knees and legs inward and grip with them, or surely he would have been bumped into two clumsy halves. And he was going up, a hundred yards high, two hundred, three hundred, over the streaming, frothing wilderness of water below — up, up, up. That was all right, but how presently would one go horizontally? He tried to think if these things did go horizontally. No! They flapped up and then they soared down. For a time he would keep on flapping up. Tears streamed from his eyes. He wiped them with one temerariously disengaged hand.

Was it better to risk a fall over land or over water — such water?

He was flapping up above the Upper Rapids towards Buffalo. It was at any rate a comfort that the Falls and the wild swirl of waters below them were behind him. He was flying up straight. That he

could see. How did one turn?

He was presently almost cool, and his eyes got more used to the rush of air, but he was getting very high, very high. He tilted his head forwards and surveyed the country, blinking. He could see all over Buffalo, a place with three great blackened scars of ruin, and hills and stretches beyond. He wondered if he was half a mile high, or more. There were some people among some houses near a railway station between Niagara and Buffalo, and then more people. They went like ants busily in and out of the houses. He saw two motor cars gliding along the road towards Niagara city. Then far away in the south he saw a great Asiatic airship going eastward. “Oh, Gord!” he said, and became earnest in his ineffectual attempts to alter his direction. But that airship took no notice of him, and he continued to ascend convulsively. The world got more and more extensive and maplike. Click, clock, clitter-clock. Above him and very near to him now was a hazy stratum of cloud.

He determined to disengage the wing clutch. He did so. The lever resisted his strength for a time, then over it came, and instantly the tail of the machine cocked up and the wings became rigidly spread. Instantly everything was swift and smooth and silent. He was gliding rapidly down the air against a wild gale of wind, his eyes three-quarters shut.

A little lever that had hitherto been obdurate now confessed itself mobile. He turned it over gently to the right, and whiroo! — the left wing had in some mysterious way given at its edge and he was sweeping round and downward in an immense right-handed spiral. For some moments he experienced all the helpless sensations of catastrophe. He restored the lever to its middle position with some difficulty, and the wings were equalised again.

He turned it to the left and had a sensation of being spun round backwards. “Too much!” he gasped.

He discovered that he was rushing down at a headlong pace towards a railway line and some factory buildings. They appeared to be tearing up to him to devour him. He must have dropped all that height. For a moment he had the ineffectual sensations of one whose bicycle bolts downhill. The ground had almost taken him by surprise. “‘Ere!” he cried; and then with a violent effort of all his being he got

the beating engine at work again and set the wings flapping. He swooped down and up and resumed his quivering and pulsating ascent of the air.

He went high again, until he had a wide view of the pleasant upland country of western New York State, and then made a long coast down, and so up again, and then a coast. Then as he came swooping a quarter of a mile above a village he saw people running about, running away — evidently in relation to his hawk-like passage. He got an idea that he had been shot at.

"Up!" he said, and attacked that lever again. It came over with remarkable docility, and suddenly the wings seemed to give way in the middle. But the engine was still! It had stopped. He flung the lever back rather by instinct than design. What to do?

Much happened in a few seconds, but also his mind was quick, he thought very quickly. He couldn't get up again, he was gliding down the air; he would have to hit something.

He was travelling at the rate of perhaps thirty miles an hour down, down.

That plantation of larches looked the softest thing — mossy almost!

Could he get it? He gave himself to the steering. Round to the right — left!

Swirroo! Crackle! He was gliding over the tops of the trees, ploughing through them, tumbling into a cloud of green sharp leaves and black twigs. There was a sudden snapping, and he fell off the saddle forward, a thud and a crashing of branches. Some twigs hit him smartly in the face....

He was between a tree-stem and the saddle, with his leg over the steering lever and, so far as he could realise, not hurt. He tried to alter his position and free his leg, and found himself slipping and dropping through branches with everything giving way beneath him. He clutched and found himself in the lower branches of a tree beneath the flying-machine. The air was full of a pleasant resinous smell. He stared for a moment motionless, and then very carefully clambered down branch by branch to the soft needle-covered ground below.

"Good business," he said, looking up at the bent and tilted kite-

wings above.

"I dropped soft!"

He rubbed his chin with his hand and meditated. "Blowed if I don't think I'm a rather lucky fellow!" he said, surveying the pleasant sun-bespattered ground under the trees. Then he became aware of a violent tumult at his side. "Lord!" he said, "You must be 'arf smothered," and extracted the kitten from his pocket-handkerchief and pocket. She was twisted and crumpled and extremely glad to see the light again. Her little tongue peeped between her teeth. He put her down, and she ran a dozen paces and shook herself and stretched and sat up and began to wash.

"Nex'?" he said, looking about him, and then with a gesture of vexation, "Desh it! I ought to 'ave brought that gun!"

He had rested it against a tree when he had seated himself in the flying-machine saddle.

He was puzzled for a time by the immense peacefulness in the quality of the world, and then he perceived that the roar of the cataract was no longer in his ears.

2

He had no very clear idea of what sort of people he might come upon in this country. It was, he knew, America. Americans he had always understood were the citizens of a great and powerful nation, dry and humorous in their manner, addicted to the use of the bowie-knife and revolver, and in the habit of talking through the nose like Norfolkshire, and saying "allow" and "reckon" and "calculate," after the manner of the people who live on the New Forest side of Hampshire. Also they were very rich, had rocking-chairs, and put their feet at unusual altitudes, and they chewed tobacco, gum, and other substances, with untiring industry. Commingled with them were cowboys, Red Indians, and comic, respectful niggers. This he had learnt from the fiction in his public library. Beyond that he had learnt very little. He was not surprised therefore when he met armed men.

He decided to abandon the shattered flying-machine. He wandered through the trees for some time, and then struck a road that seemed

to his urban English eyes to be remarkably wide but not properly "made." Neither hedge nor ditch nor curbed distinctive footpath separated it from the woods, and it went in that long easy curve which distinguishes the tracks of an open continent. Ahead he saw a man carrying a gun under his arm, a man in a soft black hat, a blue blouse, and black trousers, and with a broad round-fat face quite innocent of goatee. This person regarded him askance and heard him speak with a start.

"Can you tell me whereabouts I am at all?" asked Bert.

The man regarded him, and more particularly his rubber boots, with sinister suspicion. Then he replied in a strange outlandish tongue that was, as a matter of fact, Czech. He ended suddenly at the sight of Bert's blank face with "Don't spik English."

"Oh!" said Bert. He reflected gravely for a moment, and then went his way.

"Thenks," he, said as an afterthought. The man regarded his back for a moment, was struck with an idea, began an abortive gesture, sighed, gave it up, and went on also with a depressed countenance.

Presently Bert came to a big wooden house standing casually among the trees. It looked a bleak, bare box of a house to him, no creeper grew on it, no hedge nor wall nor fence parted it off from the woods about it. He stopped before the steps that led up to the door, perhaps thirty yards away. The place seemed deserted. He would have gone up to the door and rapped, but suddenly a big black dog appeared at the side and regarded him. It was a huge heavy-jawed dog of some unfamiliar breed, and it, wore a spike-studded collar. It did not bark nor approach him, it just bristled quietly and emitted a single sound like a short, deep cough.

Bert hesitated and went on.

He stopped thirty paces away and stood peering about him among the trees. "If I 'aven't been and lef' that kitten," he said.

Acute sorrow wrenched him for a time. The black dog came through the trees to get a better look at him and coughed that well-bred cough again. Bert resumed the road.

"She'll do all right," he said.... "She'll catch things.

"She'll do all right," he said presently, without conviction. But if it had not been for the black dog, he would have gone back.

When he was out of sight of the house and the black dog, he went into the woods on the other side of the way and emerged after an interval trimming a very tolerable cudgel with his pocket-knife. Presently he saw an attractive-looking rock by the track and picked it up and put it in his pocket. Then he came to three or four houses, wooden like the last, each with an ill-painted white verandah (that was his name for it) and all standing in the same casual way upon the ground. Behind, through the woods, he saw pig-stys and a rooting black sow leading a brisk, adventurous family. A wild-looking woman with sloe-black eyes and dishevelled black hair sat upon the steps of one of the houses nursing a baby, but at the sight of Bert she got up and went inside, and he heard her bolting the door. Then a boy appeared among the pig-stys, but he would not understand Bert's hail.

"I suppose it is America!" said Bert.

The houses became more frequent down the road, and he passed two other extremely wild and dirty-looking men without addressing them. One carried a gun and the other a hatchet, and they scrutinised him and his cudgel scornfully. Then he struck a cross-road with a mono-rail at its side, and there was a notice board at the corner with "Wait here for the cars." "That's all right, any'ow," said Bert. "Wonder 'ow long I should 'ave to wait?" It occurred to him that in the present disturbed state of the country the service might be interrupted, and as there seemed more houses to the right than the left he turned to the right. He passed an old negro. "'Ullo!" said Bert. "Goo' morning!"

"Good day, sah!" said the old negro, in a voice of almost incredible richness.

"What's the name of this place?" asked Bert.

"Tanooda, sah!" said the negro.

"Thenks!" said Bert.

"Thank YOU, sah!" said the negro, overwhelmingly.

Bert came to houses of the same detached, unwalled, wooden type, but adorned now with enamelled advertisements partly in English and partly in Esperanto. Then he came to what he concluded was a grocer's shop. It was the first house that professed the hospitality of an open door, and from within came a strangely

familiar sound. “Gaw!” he said searching in his pockets. “Why! I ‘aven’t wanted money for free weeks! I wonder if I — Grubb ‘ad most of it. Ah!” He produced a handful of coins and regarded it; three pennies, sixpence, and a shilling. “That’s all right,” he said, forgetting a very obvious consideration.

He approached the door, and as he did so a compactly built, grey-faced man in shirt sleeves appeared in it and scrutinised him and his cudgel. “Mornin’,” said Bert. “Can I get anything to eat ‘r drink in this shop?”

The man in the door replied, thank Heaven, in clear, good American. “This, sir, is not A shop, it is A store.”

“Oh!” said Bert, and then, “Well, can I get anything to eat?”

“You can,” said the American in a tone of confident encouragement, and led the way inside.

The shop seemed to him by his Bun Hill standards extremely roomy, well lit, and unencumbered. There was a long counter to the left of him, with drawers and miscellaneous commodities ranged behind it, a number of chairs, several tables, and two spittoons to the right, various barrels, cheeses, and bacon up the vista, and beyond, a large archway leading to more space. A little group of men was assembled round one of the tables, and a woman of perhaps five-and-thirty leant with her elbows on the counter. All the men were armed with rifles, and the barrel of a gun peeped above the counter. They were all listening idly, inattentively, to a cheap, metallic-toned gramophone that occupied a table near at hand. From its brazen throat came words that gave Bert a qualm of homesickness, that brought back in his memory a sunlit beach, a group of children, red-painted bicycles, Grubb, and an approaching balloon: —

“Ting-a-ling-a-ting-a-ling-a-ting-a ling-a-tang... What Price Hair-pins Now?”

A heavy-necked man in a straw hat, who was chewing something, stopped the machine with a touch, and they all turned their eyes on Bert. And all their eyes were tired eyes.

“Can we give this gentleman anything to eat, mother, or can we not?” said the proprietor.

“He kin have what he likes?” said the woman at the counter, without moving, “right up from a cracker to a square meal.” She

struggled with a yawn, after the manner of one who has been up all night.

"I want a meal," said Bert, "but I 'aven't very much money. I don' want to give mor'n a shillin'."

"Mor'n a WHAT?" said the proprietor, sharply.

"Mor'n a shillin'," said Bert, with a sudden disagreeable realisation coming into his mind.

"Yes," said the proprietor, startled for a moment from his courtly bearing. "But what in hell is a shilling?"

"He means a quarter," said a wise-looking, lank young man in riding gaiters.

Bert, trying to conceal his consternation, produced a coin. "That's a shilling," he said.

"He calls A store A shop," said the proprietor, "and he wants A meal for A shilling. May I ask you, sir, what part of America you hail from?"

Bert replaced the shilling in his pocket as he spoke, "Niagara," he said.

"And when did you leave Niagara?"

"'Bout an hour ago."

"Well," said the proprietor, and turned with a puzzled smile to the others. "Well!"

They asked various questions simultaneously.

Bert selected one or two for reply. "You see," he said, "I been with the German air-fleet. I got caught up by them, sort of by accident, and brought over here."

"From England?"

"Yes — from England. Way of Germany. I was in a great battle with them Asiatics, and I got lef' on a little island between the Falls."

"Goat Island?"

"I don' know what it was called. But any'ow I found a flying-machine and made a sort of fly with it and got here."

Two men stood up with incredulous eyes on him. "Where's the flying-machine?" they asked; "outside?"

"It's back in the woods here— 'bout arf a mile away."

"Is it good?" said a thick-lipped man with a scar.

"I come down rather a smash — ."

Everybody got up and stood about him and talked confusingly. They wanted him to take them to the flying-machine at once.

"Look 'ere," said Bert, "I'll show you — only I 'aven't 'ad anything to eat since yestiday — except mineral water."

A gaunt soldierly-looking young man with long lean legs in riding gaiters and a bandolier, who had hitherto not spoken, intervened now on his behalf in a note of confident authority. "That's aw right," he said. "Give him a feed, Mr. Logan — from me. I want to hear more of that story of his. We'll see his machine afterwards. If you ask me, I should say it's a remarkably interesting accident had dropped this gentleman here. I guess we requisition that flying-machine — if we find it — for local defence."

3

So Bert fell on his feet again, and sat eating cold meat and good bread and mustard and drinking very good beer, and telling in the roughest outline and with the omissions and inaccuracies of statement natural to his type of mind, the simple story of his adventures. He told how he and a "gentleman friend" had been visiting the seaside for their health, how a "chep" came along in a balloon and fell out as he fell in, how he had drifted to Franconia, how the Germans had seemed to mistake him for some one and had "took him prisoner" and brought him to New York, how he had been to Labrador and back, how he had got to Goat Island and found himself there alone. He omitted the matter of the Prince and the Butteridge aspect of the affair, not out of any deep deceitfulness, but because he felt the inadequacy of his narrative powers. He wanted everything to seem easy and natural and correct, to present himself as a trustworthy and understandable Englishman in a sound mediocre position, to whom refreshment and accommodation might be given with freedom and confidence. When his fragmentary story came to New York and the battle of Niagara, they suddenly produced newspapers which had been lying about on the table, and began to check him and question him by these vehement accounts. It became evident to him that his descent had revived and roused to flames again a discussion, a topic, that had been burning continuously, that

had smouldered only through sheer exhaustion of material during the temporary diversion of the gramophone, a discussion that had drawn these men together, rifle in hand, the one supreme topic of the whole world, the War and the methods of the War. He found any question of his personality and his personal adventures falling into the background, found himself taken for granted, and no more than a source of information. The ordinary affairs of life, the buying and selling of everyday necessities, the cultivation of the ground, the tending of beasts, was going on as it were by force of routine, as the common duties of life go on in a house whose master lies under the knife of some supreme operation. The overruling interest was furnished by those great Asiatic airships that went upon incalculable missions across the sky, the crimson-clad swordsmen who might come fluttering down demanding petrol, or food, or news. These men were asking, all the continent was asking, "What are we to do? What can we try? How can we get at them?" Bert fell into his place as an item, ceased even in his own thoughts to be a central and independent thing.

After he had eaten and drunken his fill and sighed and stretched and told them how good the food seemed to him, he lit a cigarette they gave him and led the way, with some doubts and trouble, to the flying-machine amidst the larches. It became manifest that the gaunt young man, whose name, it seemed, was Laurier, was a leader both by position and natural aptitude. He knew the names and characters and capabilities of all the men who were with him, and he set them to work at once with vigour and effect to secure this precious instrument of war. They got the thing down to the ground deliberately and carefully, felling a couple of trees in the process, and they built a wide flat roof of timbers and tree boughs to guard their precious find against its chance discovery by any passing Asiatics. Long before evening they had an engineer from the next township at work upon it, and they were casting lots among the seventeen picked men who wanted to take it for its first flight. And Bert found his kitten and carried it back to Logan's store and handed it with earnest admonition to Mrs. Logan. And it was reassuringly clear to him that in Mrs. Logan both he and the kitten had found a congenial soul.

Laurier was not only a masterful person and a wealthy property

owner and employer — he was president, Bert learnt with awe, of the Tanooda Canning Corporation — but he was popular and skilful in the arts of popularity. In the evening quite a crowd of men gathered in the store and talked of the flying-machine and of the war that was tearing the world to pieces. And presently came a man on a bicycle with an ill-printed newspaper of a single sheet which acted like fuel in a blazing furnace of talk. It was nearly all American news; the old-fashioned cables had fallen into disuse for some years, and the Marconi stations across the ocean and along the Atlantic coastline seemed to have furnished particularly tempting points of attack.

But such news it was.

Bert sat in the background — for by this time they had gauged his personal quality pretty completely — listening. Before his staggering mind passed strange vast images as they talked, of great issues at a crisis, of nations in tumultuous march, of continents overthrown, of famine and destruction beyond measure. Ever and again, in spite of his efforts to suppress them, certain personal impressions would scamper across the weltering confusion, the horrible mess of the exploded Prince, the Chinese aeronaut upside down, the limping and bandaged bird-faced officer blundering along in miserable and hopeless flight....

They spoke of fire and massacre, of cruelties and counter cruelties, of things that had been done to harmless Asiatics by race-mad men, of the wholesale burning and smashing up of towns, railway junctions, bridges, of whole populations in hiding and exodus. “Every ship they’ve got is in the Pacific,” he heard one man exclaim. “Since the fighting began they can’t have landed on the Pacific slope less than a million men. They’ve come to stay in these States, and they will — living or dead.”

Slowly, broadly, invincibly, there grew upon Bert’s mind realisation of the immense tragedy of humanity into which his life was flowing; the appalling and universal nature of the epoch that had arrived; the conception of an end to security and order and habit. The whole world was at war and it could not get back to peace, it might never recover peace.

He had thought the things he had seen had been exceptional, conclusive things, that the besieging of New York and the battle of

the Atlantic were epoch-making events between long years of security. And they had been but the first warning impacts of universal cataclysm. Each day destruction and hate and disaster grew, the fissures widened between man and man, new regions of the fabric of civilisation crumbled and gave way. Below, the armies grew and the people perished; above, the airships and aeroplanes fought and fled, raining destruction.

It is difficult perhaps for the broad-minded and long-perspectived reader to understand how incredible the breaking down of the scientific civilisation seemed to those who actually lived at this time, who in their own persons went down in that debacle. Progress had marched as it seemed invincible about the earth, never now to rest again. For three hundred years and more the long steadily accelerated diastole of Europeanised civilisation had been in progress: towns had been multiplying, populations increasing, values rising, new countries developing; thought, literature, knowledge unfolding and spreading. It seemed but a part of the process that every year the instruments of war were vaster and more powerful, and that armies and explosives outgrew all other growing things....

Three hundred years of diastole, and then came the swift and unexpected systole, like the closing of a fist. They could not understand it was systole.

They could not think of it as anything but a jolt, a hitch, a mere oscillatory indication of the swiftness of their progress. Collapse, though it happened all about them, remained incredible. Presently some falling mass smote them down, or the ground opened beneath their feet. They died incredulous....

These men in the store made a minute, remote group under this immense canopy of disaster. They turned from one little aspect to another. What chiefly concerned them was defence against Asiatic raiders swooping for petrol or to destroy weapons or communications. Everywhere levies were being formed at that time to defend the plant of the railroads day and night in the hope that communication would speedily be restored. The land war was still far away. A man with a flat voice distinguished himself by a display of knowledge and cunning. He told them all with confidence just what had been wrong with the German drachenflieger and the

American aeroplanes, just what advantage the Japanese flyers possessed. He launched out into a romantic description of the Butteridge machine and riveted Bert's attention. "I SEE that," said Bert, and was smitten silent by a thought. The man with the flat voice talked on, without heeding him, of the strange irony of Butteridge's death. At that Bert had a little twinge of relief — he would never meet Butteridge again. It appeared Butteridge had died suddenly, very suddenly.

"And his secret, sir, perished with him! When they came to look for the parts — none could find them. He had hidden them all too well."

"But couldn't he tell?" asked the man in the straw hat. "Did he die so suddenly as that?"

"Struck down, sir. Rage and apoplexy. At a place called Dymchurch in England."

"That's right," said Laurier. "I remember a page about it in the Sunday American. At the time they said it was a German spy had stolen his balloon."

"Well, sir," said the flat-voiced man, "that fit of apoplexy at Dyrnchurch was the worst thing — absolutely the worst thing that ever happened to the world. For if it had not been for the death of Mr. Butteridge—"

"No one knows his secret?"

"Not a soul. It's gone. His balloon, it appears, was lost at sea, with all the plans. Down it went, and they went with it."

Pause.

"With machines such as he made we could fight these Asiatic fliers on more than equal terms. We could outfly and beat down those scarlet humming-birds wherever they appeared. But it's gone, it's gone, and there's no time to reinvent it now. We got to fight with what we got — and the odds are against us. THAT won't stop us fightin'. No! but just think of it!"

Bert was trembling violently. He cleared his throat hoarsely.

"I say," he said, "look here, I—"

Nobody regarded him. The man with the flat voice was opening a new branch of the subject.

"I allow—" he began.

Bert became violently excited. He stood up.

He made clawing motions with his hands. “I say!” he exclaimed, “Mr. Laurier. Look ‘ere — I want — about that Butteridge machine — .”

Mr. Laurier, sitting on an adjacent table, with a magnificent gesture, arrested the discourse of the flat-voiced man. “What’s HE saying?” said he.

Then the whole company realised that something was happening to Bert; either he was suffocating or going mad. He was spluttering.

“Look ‘ere! I say! ‘Old on a bit!” and trembling and eagerly unbuttoning himself.

He tore open his collar and opened vest and shirt. He plunged into his interior and for an instant it seemed he was plucking forth his liver. Then as he struggled with buttons on his shoulder they perceived this flattened horror was in fact a terribly dirty flannel chest-protector. In an other moment Bert, in a state of irregular decolletage, was standing over the table displaying a sheaf of papers.

“These!” he gasped. “These are the plans!... You know! Mr. Butteridge — his machine! What died! I was the chap that went off in that balloon!”

For some seconds every one was silent. They stared from these papers to Bert’s white face and blazing eyes, and back to the papers on the table. Nobody moved. Then the man with the flat voice spoke.

“Irony!” he said, with a note of satisfaction. “Real rightdown Irony! When it’s too late to think of making ’em any more!”

4

They would all no doubt have been eager to hear Bert’s story over again, but it was it this point that Laurier showed his quality. “No, SIR,” he said, and slid from off his table.

He impounded the dispersing Butteridge plans with one comprehensive sweep of his arm, rescuing them even from the expository finger-marks of the man with the flat voice, and handed them to Bert. “Put those back,” he said, “where you had ‘em. We have a journey before us.”

Bert took them.

“Whar?” said the man in the straw hat.

“Why, sir, we are going to find the President of these States and give these plans over to him. I decline to believe, sir, we are too late.”

“Where is the President?” asked Bert weakly in that pause that followed.

“Logan,” said Laurier, disregarding that feeble inquiry, “you must help us in this.”

It seemed only a matter of a few minutes before Bert and Laurier and the storekeeper were examining a number of bicycles that were stowed in the hinder room of the store. Bert didn’t like any of them very much. They had wood rims and an experience of wood rims in the English climate had taught him to hate them. That, however, and one or two other objections to an immediate start were overruled by Laurier. “But where IS the President?” Bert repeated as they stood behind Logan while he pumped up a deflated tyre.

Laurier looked down on him. “He is reported in the neighbourhood of Albany — out towards the Berkshire Hills. He is moving from place to place and, as far as he can, organising the defence by telegraph and telephones The Asiatic air-fleet is trying to locate him. When they think they have located the seat of government, they throw bombs. This inconveniences him, but so far they have not come within ten miles of him. The Asiatic air-fleet is at present scattered all over the Eastern States, seeking out and destroying gas-works and whatever seems conducive to the building of airships or the transport of troops. Our retaliatory measures are slight in the extreme. But with these machines — Sir, this ride of ours will count among the historical rides of the world!”

He came near to striking an attitude. “We shan’t get to him to-night?” asked Bert.

“No, sir!” said Laurier. “We shall have to ride some days, sure!”

“And suppose we can’t get a lift on a train — or anything?”

“No, sir! There’s been no transit by Tanooda for three days. It is no good waiting. We shall have to get on as well as we can.”

“Startin’ now?”

“Starting now!”

“But ‘ow about — We shan’t be able to do much to-night.”

“May as well ride till we’re fagged and sleep then. So much clear gain. Our road is eastward.”

“Of course,” began Bert, with memories of the dawn upon Goat Island, and left his sentence unfinished.

He gave his attention to the more scientific packing of the chest-protector, for several of the plans flapped beyond his vest.

5

For a week Bert led a life of mixed sensations. Amidst these fatigue in the legs predominated. Mostly he rode, rode with Laurier’s back inexorably ahead, through a land like a larger England, with bigger hills and wider valleys, larger fields, wider roads, fewer hedges, and wooden houses with commodious piazzas. He rode. Laurier made inquiries, Laurier chose the turnings, Laurier doubted, Laurier decided. Now it seemed they were in telephonic touch with the President; now something had happened and he was lost again. But always they had to go on, and always Bert rode. A tyre was deflated. Still he rode. He grew saddle sore. Laurier declared that unimportant. Asiatic flying ships passed overhead, the two cyclists made a dash for cover until the sky was clear. Once a red Asiatic flying-machine came fluttering after them, so low they could distinguish the aeronaut’s head. He followed them for a mile. Now they came to regions of panic, now to regions of destruction; here people were fighting for food, here they seemed hardly stirred from the countryside routine. They spent a day in a deserted and damaged Albany. The Asiatics had descended and cut every wire and made a cinder-heap of the Junction, and our travellers pushed on eastward. They passed a hundred half-heeded incidents, and always Bert was toiling after Laurier’s indefatigable back....

Things struck upon Bert’s attention and perplexed him, and then he passed on with unanswered questionings fading from his mind.

He saw a large house on fire on a hillside to the right, and no man heeding it....

They came to a narrow railroad bridge and presently to a mono-rail train standing in the track on its safety feet. It was a remarkably sumptuous train, the Last Word Trans-Continental Express, and the

passengers were all playing cards or sleeping or preparing a picnic meal on a grassy slope near at hand. They had been there six days....

At one point ten dark-complexioned men were hanging in a string from the trees along the roadside. Bert wondered why....

At one peaceful-looking village where they stopped off to get Bert's tyre mended and found beer and biscuits, they were approached by an extremely dirty little boy without boots, who spoke as follows: —

"Deyse been hanging a Chink in dose woods!"

"Hanging a Chinaman?" said Laurier.

"Sure. Der sleuths got him rubberin' der rail-road sheds!"

"Oh!"

"Dose guys done wase cartridges. Deyse hung him and dey pulled his legs. Deyse doin' all der Chinks dey can fine dat weh! Dey ain't takin' no risks. All der Chinks dey can fine."

Neither Bert nor Laurier made any reply, and presently, after a little skilful expectoration, the young gentleman was attracted by the appearance of two of his friends down the road and shuffled off, whooping weirdly....

That afternoon they almost ran over a man shot through the body and partly decomposed, lying near the middle of the road, just outside Albany. He must have been lying there for some days....

Beyond Albany they came upon a motor car with a tyre burst and a young woman sitting absolutely passive beside the driver's seat. An old man was under the car trying to effect some impossible repairs. Beyond, sitting with a rifle across his knees, with his back to the car, and staring into the woods, was a young man.

The old man crawled out at their approach and still on all-fours accosted Bert and Laurier. The car had broken down overnight. The old man, said he could not understand what was wrong, but he was trying to puzzle it out. Neither he nor his son-in-law had any mechanical aptitude. They had been assured this was a fool-proof car. It was dangerous to have to stop in this place. The party had been attacked by tramps and had had to fight. It was known they had provisions. He mentioned a great name in the world of finance. Would Laurier and Bert stop and help him? He proposed it first hopefully, then urgently, at last in tears and terror.

“No!” said Laurier inexorable. “We must go on! We have something more than a woman to save. We have to save America!”

The girl never stirred.

And once they passed a madman singing.

And at last they found the President hiding in a small saloon upon the outskirts of a place called Pinkerville on the Hudson, and gave the plans of the Butteridge machine into his hands.

CHAPTER XI. THE GREAT COLLAPSE

1

And now the whole fabric of civilisation was bending and giving, and dropping to pieces and melting in the furnace of the war.

The stages of the swift and universal collapse of the financial and scientific civilisation with which the twentieth century opened followed each other very swiftly, so swiftly that upon the foreshortened page of history — they seem altogether to overlap. To begin with, one sees the world nearly at a maximum wealth and prosperity. To its inhabitants indeed it seemed also at a maximum of security. When now in retrospect the thoughtful observer surveys the intellectual history of this time, when one reads its surviving fragments of literature, its scraps of political oratory, the few small voices that chance has selected out of a thousand million utterances to speak to later days, the most striking thing of all this web of wisdom and error is surely that hallucination of security. To men living in our present world state, orderly, scientific and secured, nothing seems so precarious, so giddily dangerous, as the fabric of the social order with which the men of the opening of the twentieth century were content. To us it seems that every institution and relationship was the fruit of haphazard and tradition and the manifest sport of chance, their laws each made for some separate occasion and having no relation to any future needs, their customs illogical, their education aimless and wasteful. Their method of economic exploitation indeed impresses a trained and informed mind as the most frantic and destructive scramble it is possible to conceive; their credit and monetary system resting on an unsubstantial tradition of the worthiness of gold, seems a thing almost fantastically unstable. And they lived in planless cities, for the most part dangerously congested; their rails and roads and population were distributed over the earth in the wanton confusion ten thousand irrevelant considerations had made.

Yet they thought confidently that this was a secure and permanent progressive system, and on the strength of some three hundred years

of change and irregular improvement answered the doubter with, "Things always have gone well. We'll worry through!"

But when we contrast the state of man in the opening of the twentieth century with the condition of any previous period in his history, then perhaps we may begin to understand something of that blind confidence. It was not so much a reasoned confidence as the inevitable consequence of sustained good fortune. By such standards as they possessed, things HAD gone amazingly well for them. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that for the first time in history whole populations found themselves regularly supplied with more than enough to eat, and the vital statistics of the time witness to an amelioration of hygienic conditions rapid beyond all precedent, and to a vast development of intelligence and ability in all the arts that make life wholesome. The level and quality of the average education had risen tremendously; and at the dawn of the twentieth century comparatively few people in Western Europe or America were unable to read or write. Never before had there been such reading masses. There was wide social security. A common man might travel safely over three-quarters of the habitable globe, could go round the earth at a cost of less than the annual earnings of a skilled artisan. Compared with the liberality and comfort of the ordinary life of the time, the order of the Roman Empire under the Antonines was local and limited. And every year, every month, came some new increment to human achievement, a new country opened up, new mines, new scientific discoveries, a new machine!

For those three hundred years, indeed, the movement of the world seemed wholly beneficial to mankind. Men said, indeed, that moral organisation was not keeping pace with physical progress, but few attached any meaning to these phrases, the understanding of which lies at the basis of our present safety. Sustaining and constructive forces did indeed for a time more than balance the malign drift of chance and the natural ignorance, prejudice, blind passion, and wasteful self-seeking of mankind.

The accidental balance on the side of Progress was far slighter and infinitely more complex and delicate in its adjustments than the people of that time suspected; but that did not alter the fact that it was an effective balance. They did not realise that this age of relative

good fortune was an age of immense but temporary opportunity for their kind. They complacently assumed a necessary progress towards which they had no moral responsibility. They did not realise that this security of progress was a thing still to be won — or lost, and that the time to win it was a time that passed. They went about their affairs energetically enough and yet with a curious idleness towards those threatening things. No one troubled over the real dangers of mankind. They, saw their armies and navies grow larger and more portentous; some of their ironclads at the last cost as much as the whole annual expenditure upon advanced education; they accumulated explosives and the machinery of destruction; they allowed their national traditions and jealousies to accumulate; they contemplated a steady enhancement of race hostility as the races drew closer without concern or understanding, and they permitted the growth in their midst of an evil-spirited press, mercenary and unscrupulous, incapable of good, and powerful for evil. The State had practically no control over the press at all. Quite heedlessly they allowed this torch-paper to lie at the door of their war magazine for any spark to fire. The precedents of history were all one tale of the collapse of civilisations, the dangers of the time were manifest. One is incredulous now to believe they could not see.

Could mankind have prevented this disaster of the War in the Air?

An idle question that, as idle as to ask could mankind have prevented the decay that turned Assyria and Babylon to empty deserts or the slow decline and fall, the gradual social disorganisation, phase by phase, that closed the chapter of the Empire of the West! They could not, because they did not, they had not the will to arrest it. What mankind could achieve with a different will is a speculation as idle as it is magnificent. And this was no slow decadence that came to the Europeanised world; those other civilisations rotted and crumbled down, the Europeanised civilisation was, as it were, blown up. Within the space of five years it was altogether disintegrated and destroyed. Up to the very eve of the War in the Air one sees a spacious spectacle of incessant advance, a world-wide security, enormous areas with highly organised industry and settled populations, gigantic cities spreading gigantically, the seas and oceans dotted with shipping, the land netted with rails, and

open ways. Then suddenly the German air-fleets sweep across the scene, and we are in the beginning of the end.

2

This story has already told of the swift rush upon New York of the first German air-fleet and of the wild, inevitable orgy of inconclusive destruction that ensued. Behind it a second air-fleet was already swelling at its gasometers when England and France and Spain and Italy showed their hands. None of these countries had prepared for aeronautic warfare on the magnificent scale of the Germans, but each guarded secrets, each in a measure was making ready, and a common dread of German vigour and that aggressive spirit Prince Karl Albert embodied, had long been drawing these powers together in secret anticipation of some such attack. This rendered their prompt co-operation possible, and they certainly co-operated promptly. The second aerial power in Europe at this time was France; the British, nervous for their Asiatic empire, and sensible of the immense moral effect of the airship upon half-educated populations, had placed their aeronautic parks in North India, and were able to play but a subordinate part in the European conflict. Still, even in England they had nine or ten big navigables, twenty or thirty smaller ones, and a variety of experimental aeroplanes. Before the fleet of Prince Karl Albert had crossed England, while Bert was still surveying Manchester in bird's-eye view, the diplomatic exchanges were going on that led to an attack upon Germany. A heterogeneous collection of navigable balloons of all sizes and types gathered over the Bernese Oberland, crushed and burnt the twenty-five Swiss air-ships that unexpectedly resisted this concentration in the battle of the Alps, and then, leaving the Alpine glaciers and valleys strewn with strange wreckage, divided into two fleets and set itself to terrorise Berlin and destroy the Franconian Park, seeking to do this before the second air-fleet could be inflated.

Both over Berlin and Franconia the assailants with their modern explosives effected great damage before they were driven off. In Franconia twelve fully distended and five partially filled and manned giants were able to make head against and at last, with the help of a

squadron of drachenflieger from Hamburg, defeat and pursue the attack and to relieve Berlin, and the Germans were straining every nerve to get an overwhelming fleet in the air, and were already raiding London and Paris when the advance fleets from the Asiatic air-parks, the first intimation of a new factor in the conflict, were reported from Burmah and Armenia.

Already the whole financial fabric of the world was staggering when that occurred. With the destruction of the American fleet in the North Atlantic, and the smashing conflict that ended the naval existence of Germany in the North Sea, with the burning and wrecking of billions of pounds' worth of property in the four cardinal cities of the world, the fact of the hopeless costliness of war came home for the first time, came, like a blow in the face, to the consciousness of mankind. Credit went down in a wild whirl of selling. Everywhere appeared a phenomenon that had already in a mild degree manifested itself in preceding periods of panic; a desire to SECURE AND HOARD GOLD before prices reached bottom. But now it spread like wild-fire, it became universal. Above was visible conflict and destruction; below something was happening far more deadly and incurable to the flimsy fabric of finance and commercialism in which men had so blindly put their trust. As the airships fought above, the visible gold supply of the world vanished below. An epidemic of private cornering and universal distrust swept the world. In a few weeks, money, except for depreciated paper, vanished into vaults, into holes, into the walls of houses, into ten million hiding-places. Money vanished, and at its disappearance trade and industry came to an end. The economic world staggered and fell dead. It was like the stroke of some disease it was like the water vanishing out of the blood of a living creature; it was a sudden, universal coagulation of intercourse....

And as the credit system, that had been the living fortress of the scientific civilisation, reeled and fell upon the millions it had held together in economic relationship, as these people, perplexed and helpless, faced this marvel of credit utterly destroyed, the airships of Asia, countless and relentless, poured across the heavens, swooped eastward to America and westward to Europe. The page of history becomes a long crescendo of battle. The main body of the British-

Indian air-fleet perished upon a pyre of blazing antagonists in Burmah; the Germans were scattered in the great battle of the Carpathians; the vast peninsula of India burst into insurrection and civil war from end to end, and from Gobi to Morocco rose the standards of the "Jehad." For some weeks of warfare and destruction it seemed as though the Confederation of Eastern Asia must needs conquer the world, and then the jerry-built "modern" civilisation of China too gave way under the strain. The teeming and peaceful population of China had been "westernised" during the opening years of the twentieth century with the deepest resentment and reluctance; they had been dragooned and disciplined under Japanese and European — influence into an acquiescence with sanitary methods, police controls, military service, and wholesale process of exploitation against which their whole tradition rebelled. Under the stresses of the war their endurance reached the breaking point, the whole of China rose in incoherent revolt, and the practical destruction of the central government at Pekin by a handful of British and German airships that had escaped from the main battles rendered that revolt invincible. In Yokohama appeared barricades, the black flag and the social revolution. With that the whole world became a welter of conflict.

So that a universal social collapse followed, as it were a logical consequence, upon world-wide war. Wherever there were great populations, great masses of people found themselves without work, without money, and unable to get food. Famine was in every working-class quarter in the world within three weeks of the beginning of the war. Within a month there was not a city anywhere in which the ordinary law and social procedure had not been replaced by some form of emergency control, in which firearms and military executions were not being used to keep order and prevent violence. And still in the poorer quarters, and in the populous districts, and even here and there already among those who had been wealthy, famine spread.

3

So what historians have come to call the Phase of the Emergency

Committees sprang from the opening phase and from the phase of social collapse. Then followed a period of vehement and passionate conflict against disintegration; everywhere the struggle to keep order and to keep fighting went on. And at the same time the character of the war altered through the replacement of the huge gas-filled airships by flying-machines as the instruments of war. So soon as the big fleet engagements were over, the Asiatics endeavoured to establish in close proximity to the more vulnerable points of the countries against which they were acting, fortified centres from which flying-machine raids could be made. For a time they had everything their own way in this, and then, as this story has told, the lost secret of the Butteridge machine came to light, and the conflict became equalized and less conclusive than ever. For these small flying-machines, ineffectual for any large expedition or conclusive attack, were horribly convenient for guerilla warfare, rapidly and cheaply made, easily used, easily hidden. The design of them was hastily copied and printed in Pinkerville and scattered broadcast over the United States and copies were sent to Europe, and there reproduced. Every man, every town, every parish that could, was exhorted to make and use them. In a little while they were being constructed not only by governments and local authorities, but by robber bands, by insurgent committees, by every type of private person. The peculiar social destructiveness of the Butteridge machine lay in its complete simplicity. It was nearly as simple as a motor-bicycle. The broad outlines of the earlier stages of the war disappeared under its influence, the spacious antagonism of nations and empires and races vanished in a seething mass of detailed conflict. The world passed at a stride from a unity and simplicity broader than that of the Roman Empire at its best, to as social fragmentation as complete as the robber-baron period of the Middle Ages. But this time, for a long descent down gradual slopes of disintegration, comes a fall like a fall over a cliff. Everywhere were men and women perceiving this and struggling desperately to keep as it were a hold upon the edge of the cliff.

A fourth phase follows. Through the struggle against Chaos, in the wake of the Famine, came now another old enemy of humanity — the Pestilence, the Purple Death. But the war does not pause. The

flags still fly. Fresh air-fleets rise, new forms of airship, and beneath their swooping struggles the world darkens — scarcely heeded by history.

It is not within the design of this book to tell what further story, to tell how the War in the Air kept on through the sheer inability of any authorities to meet and agree and end it, until every organised government in the world was as shattered and broken as a heap of china beaten with a stick. With every week of those terrible years history becomes more detailed and confused, more crowded and uncertain. Not without great and heroic resistance was civilisation borne down. Out of the bitter social conflict below rose patriotic associations, brotherhoods of order, city mayors, princes, provisional committees, trying to establish an order below and to keep the sky above. The double effort destroyed them. And as the exhaustion of the mechanical resources of civilisation clears the heavens of airships at last altogether, Anarchy, Famine and Pestilence are discovered triumphant below. The great nations and empires have become but names in the mouths of men. Everywhere there are ruins and unburied dead, and shrunken, yellow-faced survivors in a mortal apathy. Here there are robbers, here vigilance committees, and here guerilla bands ruling patches of exhausted territory, strange federations and brotherhoods form and dissolve, and religious fanaticisms begotten of despair gleam in famine-bright eyes. It is a universal dissolution. The fine order and welfare of the earth have crumpled like an exploded bladder. In five short years the world and the scope of human life have undergone a retrogressive change as great as that between the age of the Antonines and the Europe of the ninth century....

4

Across this sombre spectacle of disaster goes a minute and insignificant person for whom perhaps the readers of this story have now some slight solicitude. Of him there remains to be told just one single and miraculous thing. Through a world darkened and lost, through a civilisation in its death agony, our little Cockney errant went and found his Edna! He found his Edna!

He got back across the Atlantic partly by means of an order from the President and partly through his own good luck. He contrived to get himself aboard a British brig in the timber trade that put out from Boston without cargo, chiefly, it would seem, because its captain had a vague idea of "getting home" to South Shields. Bert was able to ship himself upon her mainly because of the seamanlike appearance of his rubber boots. They had a long, eventful voyage; they were chased, or imagined themselves to be chased, for some hours by an Asiatic ironclad, which was presently engaged by a British cruiser. The two ships fought for three hours, circling and driving southward as they fought, until the twilight and the cloud-drift of a rising gale swallowed them up. A few days later Bert's ship lost her rudder and mainmast in a gale. The crew ran out of food and subsisted on fish. They saw strange air-ships going eastward near the Azores and landed to get provisions and repair the rudder at Teneriffe. There they found the town destroyed and two big liners, with dead still aboard, sunken in the harbour. From there they got canned food and material for repairs, but their operations were greatly impeded by the hostility of a band of men amidst the ruins of the town, who sniped them and tried to drive them away.

At Mogador, they stayed and sent a boat ashore for water, and were nearly captured by an Arab ruse. Here too they got the Purple Death aboard, and sailed with it incubating in their blood. The cook sickened first, and then the mate, and presently every one was down and three in the forecastle were dead. It chanced to be calm weather, and they drifted helplessly and indeed careless of their fate backwards towards the Equator. The captain doctored them all with rum. Nine died all together, and of the four survivors none understood navigation; when at last they took heart again and could handle a sail, they made a course by the stars roughly northward and were already short of food once more when they fell in with a petrol-driven ship from Rio to Cardiff, shorthanded by reason of the Purple Death and glad to take them aboard. So at last, after a year of wandering Bert reached England. He landed in bright June weather, and found the Purple Death was there just beginning its ravages.

The people were in a state of panic in Cardiff and many had fled to the hills, and directly the steamer came to the harbour she was

boarded and her residue of food impounded by some unauthenticated Provisional Committee. Bert tramped through a country disorganised by pestilence, foodless, and shaken to the very base of its immemorial order. He came near death and starvation many times, and once he was drawn into scenes of violence that might have ended his career. But the Bert Smallways who tramped from Cardiff to London vaguely "going home," vaguely seeking something of his own that had no tangible form but Edna, was a very different person from the Desert Dervish who was swept out of England in Mr. Butteridge's balloon a year before. He was brown and lean and enduring, steady-eyed and pestilence-salted, and his mouth, which had once hung open, shut now like a steel trap. Across his brow ran a white scar that he had got in a fight on the brig. In Cardiff he had felt the need of new clothes and a weapon, and had, by means that would have shocked him a year ago, secured a flannel shirt, a corduroy suit, and a revolver and fifty cartridges from an abandoned pawnbroker's. He also got some soap and had his first real wash for thirteen months in a stream outside the town. The Vigilance bands that had at first shot plunderers very freely were now either entirely dispersed by the plague, or busy between town and cemetery in a vain attempt to keep pace with it. He prowled on the outskirts of the town for three or four days, starving, and then went back to join the Hospital Corps for a week, and so fortified himself with a few square meals before he started eastward.

The Welsh and English countryside at that time presented the strangest mingling of the assurance and wealth of the opening twentieth century with a sort of Dureresque medievalism. All the gear, the houses and mono-rails, the farm hedges and power cables, the roads and pavements, the sign-posts and advertisements of the former order were still for the most part intact. Bankruptcy, social collapse, famine, and pestilence had done nothing to damage these, and it was only to the great capitals and ganglionic centres, as it were, of this State, that positive destruction had come. Any one dropped suddenly into the country would have noticed very little difference. He would have remarked first, perhaps, that all the hedges needed clipping, that the roadside grass grew rank, that the road-tracks were unusually rainworn, and that the cottages by the wayside

seemed in many cases shut up, that a telephone wire had dropped here, and that a cart stood abandoned by the wayside. But he would still find his hunger whetted by the bright assurance that Wilder's Canned Peaches were excellent, or that there was nothing so good for the breakfast table as Gobble's Sausages. And then suddenly would come the Dureresque element; the skeleton of a horse, or some crumpled mass of rags in the ditch, with gaunt extended feet and a yellow, purple-blotched skin and face, or what had been a face, gaunt and glaring and devastated. Then here would be a field that had been ploughed and not sown, and here a field of corn carelessly trampled by beasts, and here a hoarding torn down across the road to make a fire.

Then presently he would meet a man or a woman, yellow-faced and probably negligently dressed and armed — prowling for food. These people would have the complexions and eyes and expressions of tramps or criminals, and often the clothing of prosperous middle-class or upper-class people. Many of these would be eager for news, and willing to give help and even scraps of queer meat, or crusts of grey and doughy bread, in return for it. They would listen to Bert's story with avidity, and attempt to keep him with them for a day or so. The virtual cessation of postal distribution and the collapse of all newspaper enterprise had left an immense and aching gap in the mental life of this time. Men had suddenly lost sight of the ends of the earth and had still to recover the rumour-spreading habits of the Middle Ages. In their eyes, in their bearing, in their talk, was the quality of lost and deoriented souls.

As Bert travelled from parish to parish, and from district to district, avoiding as far as possible those festering centres of violence and despair, the larger towns, he found the condition of affairs varying widely. In one parish he would find the large house burnt, the vicarage wrecked, evidently in violent conflict for some suspected and perhaps imaginary store of food unburied dead everywhere, and the whole mechanism of the community at a standstill. In another he would find organising forces stoutly at work, newly-painted notice boards warning off vagrants, the roads and still cultivated fields policed by armed men, the pestilence under control, even nursing going on, a store of food husbanded, the cattle and

sheep well guarded, and a group of two or three justices, the village doctor or a farmer, dominating the whole place; a reversion, in fact, to the autonomous community of the fifteenth century. But at any time such a village would be liable to a raid of Asiatics or Africans or such-like air-pirates, demanding petrol and alcohol or provisions. The price of its order was an almost intolerable watchfulness and tension.

Then the approach to the confused problems of some larger centre of population and the presence of a more intricate conflict would be marked by roughly smeared notices of "Quarantine" or "Strangers Shot," or by a string of decaying plunderers dangling from the telephone poles at the roadside. About Oxford big boards were put on the roofs warning all air wanderers off with the single word, "Guns."

Taking their risks amidst these things, cyclists still kept abroad, and once or twice during Bert's long tramp powerful motor cars containing masked and goggled figures went tearing past him. There were few police in evidence, but ever and again squads of gaunt and tattered soldier-cyclists would come drifting along, and such encounters became more frequent as he got out of Wales into England. Amidst all this wreckage they were still campaigning. He had had some idea of resorting to the workhouses for the night if hunger pressed him too closely, but some of these were closed and others converted into temporary hospitals, and one he came up to at twilight near a village in Gloucestershire stood with all its doors and windows open, silent as the grave, and, as he found to his horror by stumbling along evil-smelling corridors, full of unburied dead.

From Gloucestershire Bert went northward to the British aeronautic park outside Birmingham, in the hope that he might be taken on and given food, for there the Government, or at any rate the War Office, still existed as an energetic fact, concentrated amidst collapse and social disaster upon the effort to keep the British flag still flying in the air, and trying to brisk up mayor and mayor and magistrate and magistrate in a new effort of organisation. They had brought together all the best of the surviving artisans from that region, they had provisioned the park for a siege, and they were urgently building a larger type of Butteridge machine. Bert could get

no footing at this work: he was not sufficiently skilled, and he had drifted to Oxford when the great fight occurred in which these works were finally wrecked. He saw something, but not very much, of the battle from a place called Boar Hill. He saw the Asiatic squadron coming up across the hills to the south-west, and he saw one of their airships circling southward again chased by two aeroplanes, the one that was ultimately overtaken, wrecked and burnt at Edge Hill. But he never learnt the issue of the combat as a whole.

He crossed the Thames from Eton to Windsor and made his way round the south of London to Bun Hill, and there he found his brother Tom, looking like some dark, defensive animal in the old shop, just recovering from the Purple Death, and Jessica upstairs delirious, and, as it seemed to him, dying grimly. She raved of sending out orders to customers, and scolded Tom perpetually lest he should be late with Mrs. Thompson's potatoes and Mrs. Hopkins' cauliflower, though all business had long since ceased and Tom had developed a quite uncanny skill in the snaring of rats and sparrows and the concealment of certain stores of cereals and biscuits from plundered grocers' shops. Tom received his brother with a sort of guarded warmth.

"Lor!" he said, "it's Bert. I thought you'd be coming back some day, and I'm glad to see you. But I carn't arst you to eat anything, because I 'aven't got anything to eat.... Where you been, Bert, all this time?"

Bert reassured his brother by a glimpse of a partly eaten swede, and was still telling his story in fragments and parentheses, when he discovered behind the counter a yellow and forgotten note addressed to himself. "What's this?" he said, and found it was a year-old note from Edna. "She came 'ere," said Tom, like one who recalls a trivial thing, "arstin' for you and arstin' us to take 'er in. That was after the battle and settin' Clapham Rise afire. I was for takin' 'er in, but Jessica wouldn't 'ave it — and so she borrowed five shillings of me quiet like and went on. I dessay she's tole you—"

She had, Bert found. She had gone on, she said in her note, to an aunt and uncle who had a brickfield near Horsham. And there at last, after another fortnight of adventurous journeying, Bert found her.

When Bert and Edna set eyes on one another, they stared and laughed foolishly, so changed they were, and so ragged and surprised. And then they both fell weeping.

"Oh! Bertie, boy!" she cried. "You've come — you've come!" and put out her arms and staggered. "I told 'im. He said he'd kill me if I didn't marry him."

But Edna was not married, and when presently Bert could get talk from her, she explained the task before him. That little patch of lonely agricultural country had fallen under the power of a band of bullies led by a chief called Bill Gore who had begun life as a butcher boy and developed into a prize-fighter and a professional sport. They had been organised by a local nobleman of former eminence upon the turf, but after a time he had disappeared, no one quite knew how and Bill had succeeded to the leadership of the countryside, and had developed his teacher's methods with considerable vigour. There had been a strain of advanced philosophy about the local nobleman, and his mind ran to "improving the race" and producing the Over-Man, which in practice took the form of himself especially and his little band in moderation marrying with some frequency. Bill followed up the idea with an enthusiasm that even trenched upon his popularity with his followers. One day he had happened upon Edna tending her pigs, and had at once fallen a-wooing with great urgency among the troughs of slush. Edna had made a gallant resistance, but he was still vigorously about and extraordinarily impatient. He might, she said, come at any time, and she looked Bert in the eyes. They were back already in the barbaric stage when a man must fight for his love.

And here one deplores the conflicts of truth with the chivalrous tradition. One would like to tell of Bert sallying forth to challenge his rival, of a ring formed and a spirited encounter, and Bert by some miracle of pluck and love and good fortune winning. But indeed nothing of the sort occurred. Instead, he reloaded his revolver very carefully, and then sat in the best room of the cottage by the derelict brickfield, looking anxious and perplexed, and listening to talk about Bill and his ways, and thinking, thinking. Then suddenly Edna's

aunt, with a thrill in her voice, announced the appearance of that individual. He was coming with two others of his gang through the garden gate. Bert got up, put the woman aside, and looked out. They presented remarkable figures. They wore a sort of uniform of red golfing jackets and white sweaters, football singlet, and stockings and boots and each had let his fancy play about his head-dress. Bill had a woman's hat full of cock's feathers, and all had wild, slouching cowboy brims.

Bert sighed and stood up, deeply thoughtful, and Edna watched him, marvelling. The women stood quite still. He left the window, and went out into the passage rather slowly, and with the careworn expression of a man who gives his mind to a complex and uncertain business. "Edna!" he called, and when she came he opened the front door.

He asked very simply, and pointing to the foremost of the three, "That 'im?... Sure?"... and being told that it was, shot his rival instantly and very accurately through the chest. He then shot Bill's best man much less tidily in the head, and then shot at and winged the third man as he fled. The third gentleman yelped, and continued running with a comical end-on twist.

Then Bert stood still meditating, with the pistol in his hand, and quite regardless of the women behind him.

So far things had gone well.

It became evident to him that if he did not go into politics at once, he would be hanged as an assassin and accordingly, and without a word to the women, he went down to the village public-house he had passed an hour before on his way to Edna, entered it from the rear, and confronted the little band of ambiguous roughs, who were drinking in the tap-room and discussing matrimony and Bill's affection in a facetious but envious manner, with a casually held but carefully reloaded revolver, and an invitation to join what he called, I regret to say, a "Vigilance Committee" under his direction. "It's wanted about 'ere, and some of us are gettin' it up." He presented himself as one having friends outside, though indeed, he had no friends at all in the world but Edna and her aunt and two female cousins.

There was a quick but entirely respectful discussion of the

situation. They thought him a lunatic who had tramped into, this neighbourhood ignorant of Bill. They desired to temporise until their leader came. Bill would settle him. Some one spoke of Bill.

"Bill's dead, I jest shot 'im," said Bert. "We don't need reckon with 'IM. 'E's shot, and a red-'aired chap with a squint, 'E'S shot. We've settled up all that. There ain't going to be no more Bill, ever. 'E'd got wrong ideas about marriage and things. It's 'is sort of chap we're after."

That carried the meeting.

Bill was perfunctorily buried, and Bert's Vigilance Committee (for so it continued to be called) reigned in his stead.

That is the end of this story so far as Bert Smallways is concerned. We leave him with his Edna to become squatters among the clay and oak thickets of the Weald, far away from the stream of events. From that time forth life became a succession of peasant encounters, an affair of pigs and hens and small needs and little economies and children, until Clapham and Bun Hill and all the life of the Scientific Age became to Bert no more than the fading memory of a dream. He never knew how the War in the Air went on, nor whether it still went on. There were rumours of airships going and coming, and of happenings Londonward. Once or twice their shadows fell on him as he worked, but whence they came or whither they went he could not tell. Even his desire to tell died out for want of food. At times came robbers and thieves, at times came diseases among the beasts and shortness of food, once the country was worried by a pack of boar-hounds he helped to kill; he went through many inconsecutive, irrelevant adventures. He survived them all.

Accident and death came near them both ever and again and passed them by, and they loved and suffered and were happy, and she bore him many children — eleven children — one after the other, of whom only four succumbed to the necessary hardships of their simple life. They lived and did well, as well was understood in those days. They went the way of all flesh, year by year.

THE EPILOGUE

It happened that one bright summer's morning exactly thirty years after the launching of the first German air-fleet, an old man took a small boy to look for a missing hen through the ruins of Bun Hill and out towards the splintered pinnacles of the Crystal Palace. He was not a very old man; he was, as a matter of fact, still within a few weeks of sixty-three, but constant stooping over spades and forks and the carrying of roots and manure, and exposure to the damps of life in the open-air without a change of clothing, had bent him into the form of a sickle. Moreover, he had lost most of his teeth and that had affected his digestion and through that his skin and temper. In face and expression he was curiously like that old Thomas Smallways who had once been coachman to Sir Peter Bone, and this was just as it should be, for he was Tom Smallways the son, who formerly kept the little green-grocer's shop under the straddle of the mono-rail viaduct in the High Street of Bun Hill. But now there were no green-grocer's shops, and Tom was living in one of the derelict villas hard by that unoccupied building site that had been and was still the scene of his daily horticulture. He and his wife lived upstairs, and in the drawing and dining rooms, which had each French windows opening on the lawn, and all about the ground floor generally, Jessica, who was now a lean and lined and baldish but still very efficient and energetic old woman, kept her three cows and a multitude of gawky hens. These two were part of a little community of stragglers and returned fugitives, perhaps a hundred and fifty souls of them all together, that had settled down to the new conditions of things after the Panic and Famine and Pestilence that followed in the wake of the War. They had come back from strange refuges and hiding-places and had squatted down among the familiar houses and begun that hard struggle against nature for food which was now the chief interest of their lives. They were by sheer preoccupation with that a peaceful people, more particularly after Wilkes, the house agent, driven by some obsolete dream of acquisition, had been drowned in the pool by the ruined gas-works for making inquiries into title and displaying a litigious turn of mind. (He had not been murdered, you

understand, but the people had carried an exemplary ducking ten minutes or so beyond its healthy limits.)

This little community had returned from its original habits of suburban parasitism to what no doubt had been the normal life of humanity for nearly immemorial years, a life of homely economies in the most intimate contact with cows and hens and patches of ground, a life that breathes and exhales the scent of cows and finds the need for stimulants satisfied by the activity of the bacteria and vermin it engenders. Such had been the life of the European peasant from the dawn of history to the beginning of the Scientific Era, so it was the large majority of the people of Asia and Africa had always been wont to live. For a time it had seemed that, by virtue of machines, and scientific civilisation, Europe was to be lifted out of this perpetual round of animal drudgery, and that America was to evade it very largely from the outset. And with the smash of the high and dangerous and splendid edifice of mechanical civilisation that had arisen so marvellously, back to the land came the common man, back to the manure.

The little communities, still haunted by ten thousand memories of a greater state, gathered and developed almost tacitly a customary law and fell under the guidance of a medicine man or a priest. The world rediscovered religion and the need of something to hold its communities together. At Bun Hill this function was entrusted to an old Baptist minister. He taught a simple but adequate faith. In his teaching a good principle called the Word fought perpetually against a diabolical female influence called the Scarlet Woman and an evil being called Alcohol. This Alcohol had long since become a purely spiritualised conception deprived of any element of material application; it had no relation to the occasional finds of whiskey and wine in Londoners' cellars that gave Bun Hill its only holidays. He taught this doctrine on Sundays, and on weekdays he was an amiable and kindly old man, distinguished by his quaint disposition to wash his hands, and if possible his face, daily, and with a wonderful genius for cutting up pigs. He held his Sunday services in the old church in the Beckenham Road, and then the countryside came out in a curious reminiscence of the urban dress of Edwardian times. All the men without exception wore frock coats, top hats, and white shirts,

though many had no boots. Tom was particularly distinguished on these occasions because he wore a top hat with gold lace about it and a green coat and trousers that he had found upon a skeleton in the basement of the Urban and District Bank. The women, even Jessica, came in jackets and immense hats extravagantly trimmed with artificial flowers and exotic birds' feather's — of which there were abundant supplies in the shops to the north — and the children (there were not many children, because a large proportion of the babies born in Bun Hill died in a few days' time of inexplicable maladies) had similar clothes cut down to accommodate them; even Stringer's little grandson of four wore a large top hat.

That was the Sunday costume of the Bun Hill district, a curious and interesting survival of the genteel traditions of the Scientific Age. On a weekday the folk were dingily and curiously hung about with dirty rags of housecloth and scarlet flannel, sacking, curtain serge, and patches of old carpet, and went either bare-footed or on rude wooden sandals. These people, the reader must understand, were an urban population sunken back to the state of a barbaric peasantry, and so without any of the simple arts a barbaric peasantry would possess. In many ways they were curiously degenerate and incompetent. They had lost any idea of making textiles, they could hardly make up clothes when they had material, and they were forced to plunder the continually dwindling supplies of the ruins about them for cover.

All the simple arts they had ever known they had lost, and with the breakdown of modern drainage, modern water supply, shopping, and the like, their civilised methods were useless. Their cooking was worse than primitive. It was a feeble muddling with food over wood fires in rusty drawing-room fireplaces; for the kitcheners burnt too much. Among them all no sense of baking or brewing or metal-working was to be found.

Their employment of sacking and such-like coarse material for work-a-day clothing, and their habit of tying it on with string and of thrusting wadding and straw inside it for warmth, gave these people an odd, "packed" appearance, and as it was a week-day when Tom took his little nephew for the hen-seeking excursion, so it was they were attired.

“So you’ve really got to Bun Hill at last, Teddy,” said old Tom, beginning to talk and slackening his pace so soon as they were out of range of old Jessica. “You’re the last of Bert’s boys for me to see. Wat I’ve seen, young Bert I’ve seen, Sissie and Matt, Tom what’s called after me, and Peter. The traveller people brought you along all right, eh?”

“I managed,” said Teddy, who was a dry little boy.

“Didn’t want to eat you on the way?”

“They was all right,” said Teddy, “and on the way near Leatherhead we saw a man riding on a bicycle.”

“My word!” said Tom, “there ain’t many of those about nowadays. Where was he going?”

“Said ‘e was going to Dorking if the High Road was good enough. But I doubt if he got there. All about Burford it was flooded. We came over the hill, uncle — what they call the Roman Road. That’s high and safe.”

“Don’t know it,” said old Tom. “But a bicycle! You’re sure it was a bicycle? Had two wheels?”

“It was a bicycle right enough.”

“Why! I remember a time, Teddy, where there was bicycles no end, when you could stand just here — the road was as smooth as a board then — and see twenty or thirty coming and going at the same time, bicycles and moty-bicycles; moty cars, all sorts of whirly things.”

“No!” said Teddy.

“I do. They’d keep on going by all day,— ‘undreds and ‘undreds.”

“But where was they all going?” asked Teddy.

“Tearin’ off to Brighton — you never seen Brighton, I expect — it’s down by the sea, used to be a moce ‘mazing place — and coming and going from London.”

“Why?”

“They did.”

“But why?”

“Lord knows why, Teddy. They did. Then you see that great thing there like a great big rusty nail sticking up higher than all the houses, and that one yonder, and that, and how something’s fell in between

’em among the houses. They was parts of the mono-rail. They went down to Brighton too and all day and night there was people going, great cars as big as ‘ouses full of people.”

The little boy regarded the rusty evidences acrosss the narrow muddy ditch of cow-droppings that had once been a High Street. He was clearly disposed to be sceptical, and yet there the ruins were! He grappled with ideas beyond the strength of his imagination.

“What did they go for?” he asked, “all of ‘em?”

“They ‘AD to. Everything was on the go those days — everything.”

“Yes, but where did they come from?”

“All round ‘ere, Teddy, there was people living in those ‘ouses, and up the road more ‘ouses and more people. You’d ‘ardly believe me, Teddy, but it’s Bible truth. You can go on that way for ever and ever, and keep on coming on ‘ouses, more ‘ouses, and more. There’s no end to ‘em. No end. They get bigger and bigger.” His voice dropped as though he named strange names.

“It’s LONDON,” he said.

“And it’s all empty now and left alone. All day it’s left alone. You don’t find ‘ardly a man, you won’t find nothing but dogs and cats after the rats until you get round by Bromley and Beckenham, and there you find the Kentish men herding swine. (Nice rough lot they are too!) I tell you that so long as the sun is up it’s as still as the grave. I been about by day — orfen and orfen.” He paused.

“And all those ‘ouses and streets and ways used to be full of people before the War in the Air and the Famine and the Purple Death. They used to be full of people, Teddy, and then came a time when they was full of corpses, when you couldn’t go a mile that way before the stink of ’em drove you back. It was the Purple Death ‘ad killed ’em every one. The cats and dogs and ‘ens and vermin caught it. Everything and every one ‘ad it. Jest a few of us ‘appened to live. I pulled through, and your aunt, though it made ‘er lose ‘er ‘air. Why, you find the skeletons in the ‘ouses now. This way we been into all the ‘ouses and took what we wanted and buried moce of the people, but up that way, Norwood way, there’s ‘ouses with the glass in the windows still, and the furniture not touched — all dusty and falling to pieces — and the bones of the people lying, some in bed, some

about the ‘ouse, jest as the Purple Death left ’em five-and-twenty years ago. I went into one — me and old Higgins las’ year — and there was a room with books, Teddy — you know what I mean by books, Teddy?”

“I seen ‘em. I seen ’em with pictures.”

“Well, books all round, Teddy, ‘undreds of books, beyond-rhyme or reason, as the saying goes, green-mouldy and dry. I was for leaven’ ’em alone — I was never much for reading — but ole Higgins he must touch em. ‘I believe I could read one of ’em NOW,’ ‘e says.

“‘Not it,’ I says.

“‘I could,’ ‘e says, laughing and takes one out and opens it.

“I looked, and there, Teddy, was a cullud picture, oh, so lovely! It was a picture of women and serpents in a garden. I never see anything like it.

“‘This suits me,’ said old Higgins, ‘to rights.’

“And then kind of friendly he gave the book a pat —

Old Tom Smallways paused impressively.

“And then?” said Teddy.

“It all fell to dus’. White dus’!” He became still more impressive. “We didn’t touch no more of them books that day. Not after that.”

For a long time both were silent. Then Tom, playing with a subject that attracted him with a fatal fascination, repeated, “All day long they lie — still as the grave.”

Teddy took the point at last. “Don’t they lie o’ nights?” he asked.

Old Tom shook his head. “Nobody knows, boy, nobody knows.”

“But what could they do?”

“Nobody knows. Nobody ain’t seen to tell not nobody.”

“Nobody?”

“They tell tales,” said old Tom. “They tell tales, but there ain’t no believing ‘em. I gets ‘ome about sundown, and keeps indoors, so I can’t say nothing, can I? But there’s them that thinks some things and them as thinks others. I’ve ‘eard it’s unlucky to take clo’es off of ’em unless they got white bones. There’s stories—”

The boy watched his uncle sharply. “WOT stories?” he said.

“Stories of moonlight nights and things walking about. But I take no stock in ‘em. I keeps in bed. If you listen to stories — Lord!

You'll get afraid of yourself in a field at midday."

The little boy looked round and ceased his questions for a space.

"They say there's a 'og man in Beck'n'am what was lost in London three days and three nights. 'E went up after whiskey to Cheapside, and lorst 'is way among the ruins and wandered. Three days and three nights 'e wandered about and the streets kep' changing so's he couldn't get 'ome. If 'e 'adn't remembered some words out of the Bible 'e might 'ave been there now. All day 'e went and all night — and all day long it was still. It was as still as death all day long, until the sunset came and the twilight thickened, and then it began to rustle and whisper and go pit-a-pat with a sound like 'urrying feet."

He paused.

"Yes," said the little boy breathlessly. "Go on. What then?"

"A sound of carts and 'orses there was, and a sound of cabs and omnibuses, and then a lot of whistling, shrill whistles, whistles that froze 'is marrer. And directly the whistles began things begun to show, people in the streets 'urrying, people in the 'ouses and shops busying themselves, moty cars in the streets, a sort of moonlight in all the lamps and winders. People, I say, Teddy, but they wasn't people. They was the ghosts of them that was overtook, the ghosts of them that used to crowd those streets. And they went past 'im and through 'im and never 'eeded 'im, went by like fogs and vapours, Teddy. And sometimes they was cheerful and sometimes they was 'orrible, 'orrible beyond words. And once 'e come to a place called Piccadilly, Teddy, and there was lights blazing like daylight and ladies and gentlemen in splendid clo'es crowding the pavement, and taxicabs follering along the road. And as 'e looked, they all went evil — evil in the face, Teddy. And it seemed to 'im SUDDENLY THEY SAW 'IM, and the women began to look at 'im and say things to 'im — 'orrible — wicked things. One come very near 'im, Teddy, right up to 'im, and looked into 'is face — close. And she 'adn't got a face to look with, only a painted skull, and then 'e see; they was all painted skulls. And one after another they crowded on 'im saying 'orrible things, and catchin' at 'im and threatenin' and coaxing 'im, so that 'is 'eart near left 'is body for fear."

"Yes," gasped Teddy in an unendurable pause.

“Then it was he remembered the words of Scripture and saved himself alive. ‘The Lord is my ‘Elper, ‘e says, ‘therefore I will fear nothing,’ and straightaway there came a cock-crowing and the street was empty from end to end. And after that the Lord was good to ‘im and guided ‘im ‘ome.”

Teddy stared and caught at another question. “But who was the people,” he asked, “who lived in all these ‘ouses? What was they?”

“Gent’men in business, people with money — leastways we thought it was money till everything smashed up, and then seemingly it was jes’ paper — all sorts. Why, there was ‘undreds of thousands of them. There was millions. I’ve seen that ‘I Street there regular so’s you couldn’t walk along the pavements, shoppin’ time, with women and people shoppin’.”

“But where’d they get their food and things?”

“Bort ’em in shops like I used to ‘ave. I’ll show you the place, Teddy, if we go back. People nowadays ‘aven’t no idee of a shop — no idee. Plate-glass winders — it’s all Greek to them. Why, I’ve ‘ad as much as a ton and a ‘arf of petaties to ‘andle all at one time. You’d open your eyes till they dropped out to see jes’ what I used to ‘ave in my shop. Baskets of pears ‘eaped up, marrers, apples and pears, d’licious great nuts.” His voice became luscious— “Benanas, oranges.”

“What’s benanas?” asked the boy, “and oranges?”

“Fruits they was. Sweet, juicy, d’licious fruits. Foreign fruits. They brought ’em from Spain and N’ York and places. In ships and things. They brought ’em to me from all over the world, and I sold ’em in my shop. *I* sold ‘em, Teddy! me what goes about now with you, dressed up in old sacks and looking for lost ‘ens. People used to come into my shop, great beautiful ladies like you’d ‘ardly dream of now, dressed up to the nines, and say, ‘Well, Mr. Smallways, what you got ‘smorning?’ and I’d say, ‘Well, I got some very nice C’nadian apples, ‘or p’raps I got custed marrers. See? And they’d buy ‘em. Right off they’d say, ‘Send me some up.’ Lord! what a life that was. The business of it, the bussel, the smart things you saw, moty cars going by, kerridges, people, organ-grinders, German bands. Always something going past — always. If it wasn’t for those empty ‘ouses, I’d think it all a dream.”

“But what killed all the people, uncle?” asked Teddy.

“It was a smash-up,” said old Tom. “Everything was going right until they started that War. Everything was going like clock-work. Everybody was busy and everybody was ‘appy and everybody got a good square meal every day.”

He met incredulous eyes. “Everybody,” he said firmly. “If you couldn’t get it anywhere else, you could get it in the workhuss, a nice ‘ot bowl of soup called skilly, and bread better’n any one knows ‘ow to make now, reg’lar WHITE bread, gov’ment bread.”

Teddy marvelled, but said nothing. It made him feel deep longings that he found it wisest to fight down.

For a time the old man resigned himself to the pleasures of gustatory reminiscence. His lips moved. “Pickled Sammin!” he whispered, “an’ vinegar.... Dutch cheese, BEER! A pipe of terbakker.”

“But ‘OW did the people get killed?” asked Teddy presently.

“There was the War. The War was the beginning of it. The War banged and flummocked about, but it didn’t really KILL many people. But it upset things. They came and set fire to London and burnt and sank all the ships there used to be in the Thames — we could see the smoke and steam for weeks — and they threw a bomb into the Crystal Palace and made a bust-up, and broke down the rail lines and things like that. But as for killin’ people, it was just accidental if they did. They killed each other more. There was a great fight all hereabout one day, Teddy — up in the air. Great things bigger than fifty ‘ouses, bigger than the Crystal Palace — bigger, bigger than anything, flying about up in the air and whacking at each other and dead men fallin’ off ‘em. T’riffic! But, it wasn’t so much the people they killed as the business they stopped. There wasn’t any business doin’, Teddy, there wasn’t any money about, and nothin’ to buy if you ‘ad it.”

“But ‘ow did the people get KILLED?” said the little boy in the pause.

“I’m tellin’ you, Teddy,” said the old man. “It was the stoppin’ of business come next. Suddenly there didn’t seem to be any money. There was cheques — they was a bit of paper written on, and they was jes’ as good as money — jes’ as good if they come from

customers you knew. Then all of a sudden they wasn't. I was left with three of 'em and two I'd given' change. Then it got about that five-pun' notes were no good, and then the silver sort of went off. Gold you 'couldn't get for love or — anything. The banks in London 'ad got it, and the banks was all smashed up. Everybody went bankrup'. Everybody was thrown out of work. Everybody!"

He paused, and scrutinised his hearer. The small boy's intelligent face expressed hopeless perplexity.

"That's 'ow it 'appened," said old Tom. He sought for some means of expression. "It was like stoppin' a clock," he said. "Things were quiet for a bit, deadly quiet, except for the air-ships fighting about in the sky, and then people begun to get excited. I remember my lars' customer, the very lars' customer that ever I 'ad. He was a Mr. Moses Gluckstein, a city gent and very pleasant and fond of sparrowgrass and chokes, and 'e cut in — there 'adn't been no customers for days — and began to talk very fast, offerin' me for anything I 'ad, anything, petaties or anything, its weight in gold. 'E said it was a little speculation 'e wanted to try. 'E said it was a sort of bet reely, and very likely 'e'd lose; but never mind that, 'e wanted to try. 'E always 'ad been a gambler, 'e said. 'E said I'd only got to weigh it out and 'e'd give me 'is cheque right away. Well, that led to a bit of a argument, perfect respectful it was, but a argument about whether a cheque was still good, and while 'e was explaining there come by a lot of these here unemployed with a great banner they 'ad for every one to read — every one could read those days— 'We want Food.' Three or four of 'em suddenly turns and comes into my shop.

"'Got any food?' says one.

"'No,' I says, 'not to sell. I wish I 'ad. But if I 'ad, I'm afraid I couldn't let you have it. This gent, 'e's been offerin' me—'

"Mr. Gluckstein 'e tried to stop me, but it was too late.

"'What's 'e been offerin' you?' says a great big chap with a 'atchet; 'what's 'e been offerin you?' I 'ad to tell.

"'Boys,' 'e said, ''ere's another feenancier!' and they took 'im out there and then, and 'ung 'im on a lam'pose down the street. 'E never lifted a finger to resist. After I tole on 'im 'e never said a word...."

Tom meditated for a space. "First chap I ever sin 'ung!" he said.

"Ow old was you?" asked Teddy.

“‘Bout thirty,” said old Tom.

“Why! I saw free pig-stealers ‘ung before I was six,” said Teddy. “Father took me because of my birfday being near. Said I ought to be blooded....”

“Well, you never saw no-one killed by a moty car, any’ow,” said old Tom after a moment of chagrin. “And you never saw no dead men carried into a chemis’ shop.”

Teddy’s momentary triumph faded. “No,” he said, “I ‘aven’t.”

“Nor won’t. Nor won’t. You’ll never see the things I’ve seen, never. Not if you live to be a ‘undred... Well, as I was saying, that’s how the Famine and Riotin’ began. Then there was strikes and Socialism, things I never did ‘old with, worse and worse. There was fightin’ and shootin’ down, and burnin’ and plundering. They broke up the banks up in London and got the gold, but they couldn’t make food out of gold. ‘Ow did WE get on? Well, we kep’ quiet. We didn’t interfere with no-one and no-one didn’t interfere with us. We ‘ad some old ‘tatoes about, but mocely we lived on rats. Ours was a old ‘ouse, full of rats, and the famine never seemed to bother ‘em. Orfen we got a rat. Orfen. But moce of the people who lived hereabouts was too tender stummicked for rats. Didn’t seem to fancy ‘em. They’d been used to all sorts of fallals, and they didn’t take to ‘onest feeding, not till it was too late. Died rather.

“It was the famine began to kill people. Even before the Purple Death came along they was dying like flies at the end of the summer. ‘Ow I remember it all! I was one of the first to ‘ave it. I was out, seein’ if I mightn’t get ‘old of a cat or somethin’, and then I went round to my bit of ground to see whether I couldn’t get up some young turnips I’d forgot, and I was took something awful. You’ve no idee the pain, Teddy — it doubled me up pretty near. I jes’ lay down by ‘at there corner, and your aunt come along to look for me and dragged me ‘ome like a sack.

“I’d never ‘ave got better if it ‘adn’t been for your aunt. ‘Tom,’ she says to me, ‘you got to get well,’ and I ‘AD to. Then SHE sickened. She sickened but there ain’t much dyin’ about your aunt. ‘Lor!’ she says, ‘as if I’d leave you to go muddlin’ along alone!’ That’s what she says. She’s got a tongue, ‘as your aunt. But it took ‘er ‘air off — and arst though I might, she’s never cared for the wig I

got ‘er — orf the old lady what was in the vicarage garden.

“Well, this ‘ere Purple Death, — it jes’ wiped people out, Teddy. You couldn’t bury ‘em. And it took the dogs and the cats too, and the rats and ‘orses. At last every house and garden was full of dead bodies. London way, you couldn’t go for the smell of there, and we ‘ad to move out of the ‘I street into that villa we got. And all the water run short that way. The drains and underground tunnels took it. Gor’ knows where the Purple Death come from; some say one thing and some another. Some said it come from eatin’ rats and some from eatin’ nothin’. Some say the Asiatics brought it from some ‘I place, Thibet, I think, where it never did nobody much ‘arm. All I know is it come after the Famine. And the Famine come after the Penic and the Penic come after the War.”

Teddy thought. “What made the Purple Death?” he asked.

“‘Aven’t I tole you!”

“But why did they ‘ave a Penic?”

“They ‘ad it.”

“But why did they start the War?”

“They couldn’t stop theirselves. ‘Aving them airships made ‘em.”

“And ‘ow did the War end?”

“Lord knows if it’s ended, boy,” said old Tom. “Lord knows if it’s ended. There’s been travellers through ‘ere — there was a chap only two summers ago — say it’s goin’ on still. They say there’s bands of people up north who keep on with it and people in Germany and China and ‘Merica and places. ‘E said they still got flying-machines and gas and things. But we ‘aven’t seen nothin’ in the air now for seven years, and nobody ‘asn’t come nigh of us. Last we saw was a crumpled sort of airship going away — over there. It was a littleish-sized thing and lopsided, as though it ‘ad something the matter with it.”

He pointed, and came to a stop at a gap in the fence, the vestiges of the old fence from which, in the company of his neighbour Mr. Stringer the milkman, he had once watched the South of England Aero Club’s Saturday afternoon ascents. Dim memories, it may be, of that particular afternoon returned to him.

“There, down there, where all that rus’ looks so red and bright, that’s the gas-works.”

“What’s gas?” asked the little boy.

“Oh, a hairy sort of nothin’ what you put in balloons to make ’em go up. And you used to burn it till the ‘lectricity come.”

The little boy tried vainly to imagine gas on the basis of these particulars. Then his thoughts reverted to a previous topic.

“But why didn’t they end the War?”

“Obstinacy. Everybody was getting ‘urt, but everybody was ‘urtin’ and everybody was ‘igh-spirited and patriotic, and so they smeshed up things instead. They jes’ went on smeshin’. And afterwards they jes’ got desp’rite and savige.”

“It ought to ‘ave ended,” said the little boy.

“It didn’t ought to ‘ave begun,” said old Tom, “But people was proud. People was la-dy-da-ish and uppish and proud. Too much meat and drink they ‘ad. Give in — not them! And after a bit nobody arst ’em to give in. Nobody arst ‘em....”

He sucked his old gums thoughtfully, and his gaze strayed away across the valley to where the shattered glass of the Crystal Palace glittered in the sun. A dim large sense of waste and irrevocable lost opportunities pervaded his mind. He repeated his ultimate judgment upon all these things, obstinately, slowly, and conclusively, his final saying upon the matter.

“You can say what you like,” he said. “It didn’t ought ever to ‘ave begun.”

He said it simply — somebody somewhere ought to have stopped something, but who or how or why were all beyond his ken.

TONO-BUNGAY

Wells considered this 1909 novel to be his masterpiece. The title refers to a patent medicine, which the story's narrator, George Ponderevo, is persuaded to help sell to a naive public. This is merely the starting point, however, for a complete anatomy of Edwardian England, with George's Uncle Edward (the creator of Tono-Bungay) providing an opportunity to satirise the relentless pursuit of money and pleasure that Wells saw as the driving social force of early-twentieth-century Britain. These forces threaten to stifle the narrator's personal development and subsume humanity in an empty, superficial sham, which the useless product of the title neatly encapsulates, as an example of a consumable item that has no purpose other than to be manufactured and sold in order to generate wealth. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was met with mixed reviews by the contemporary press – but it remains a classic of Edwardian literature, comparable to the best work of John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett, who tackled similar themes in their own fiction.

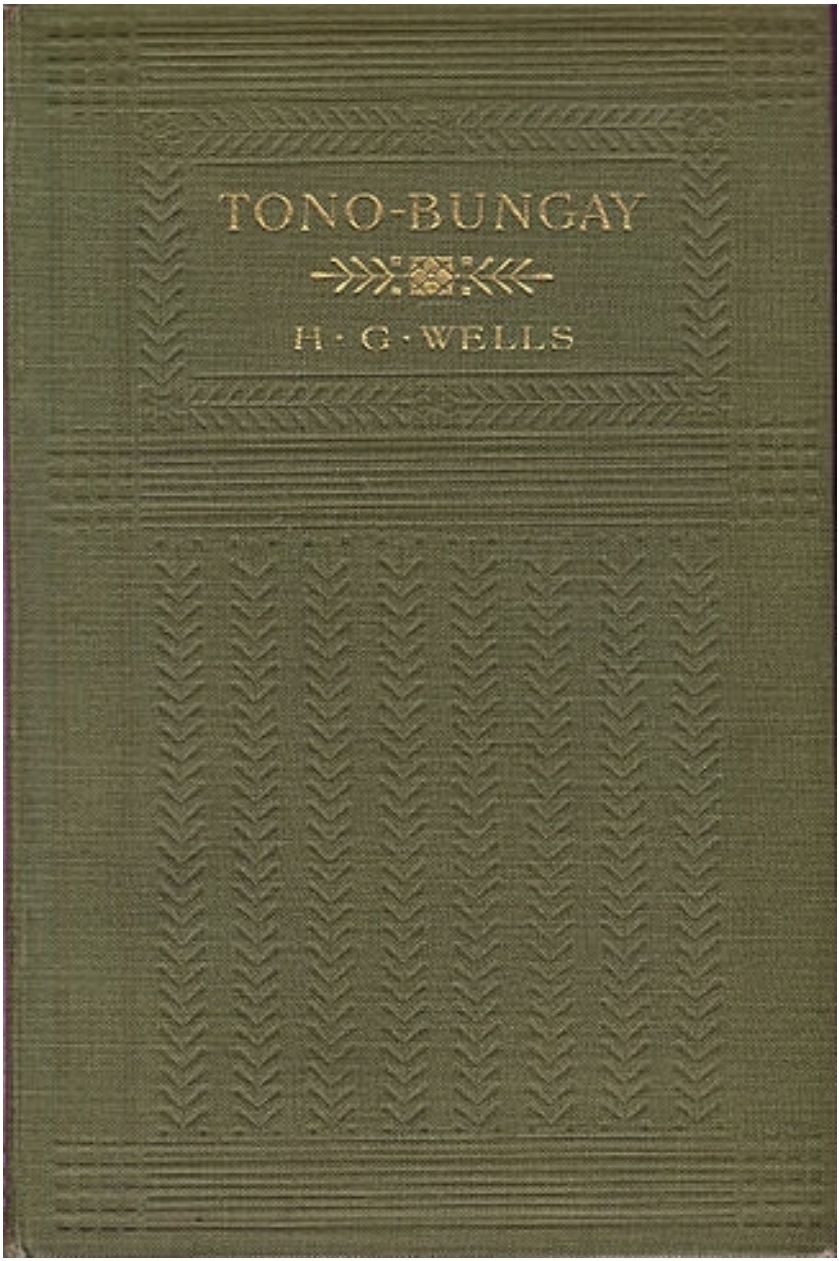

Cover of the first edition

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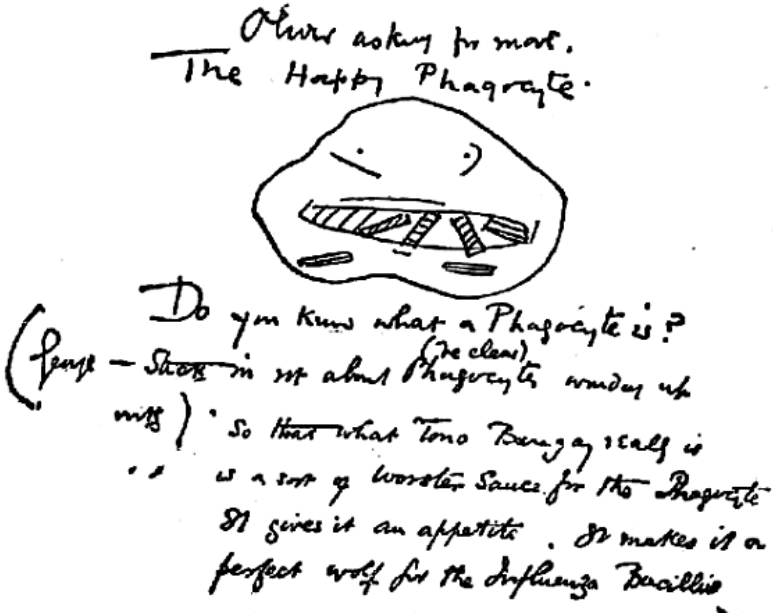

A drawing, by Wells, from the novel – 'The Happy Phagocyte'

BOOK THE FIRST

THE DAYS BEFORE TONO-BUNGAY WAS INVENTED

CHAPTER THE FIRST

OF BLADESOVER HOUSE, AND MY MOTHER; AND THE CONSTITUTION OF SOCIETY

I

Most people in this world seem to live "in character"; they have a beginning, a middle and an end, and the three are congruous one with another and true to the rules of their type. You can speak of them as being of this sort of people or that. They are, as theatrical people say, no more (and no less) than "character actors." They have a class, they have a place, they know what is becoming in them and what is due to them, and their proper size of tombstone tells at last how properly they have played the part. But there is also another kind of life that is not so much living as a miscellaneous tasting of life. One gets hit by some unusual transverse force, one is jerked out of one's stratum and lives crosswise for the rest of the time, and, as it were, in a succession of samples. That has been my lot, and that is what has set me at last writing something in the nature of a novel. I have got an unusual series of impressions that I want very urgently to tell. I have seen life at very different levels, and at all these levels I have seen it with a sort of intimacy and in good faith. I have been a native in many social countries. I have been the unwelcome guest of a working baker, my cousin, who has since died in the Chatham infirmary; I have eaten illegal snacks — the unjustifiable gifts of footmen — in pantries, and been despised for my want of style (and subsequently married and divorced) by the daughter of a gasworks clerk; and — to go to my other extreme — I was once — oh, glittering days! — an item in the house-party of a countess. She was, I admit, a countess with a financial aspect, but still, you know, a countess. I've seen these people at various angles. At the dinner-table I've met not simply the titled but the great. On one occasion — it is my brightest memory — I upset my champagne over the trousers of the greatest statesman in the empire — Heaven forbid I should be so invidious as to name him! — in the warmth of our mutual

admiration.

And once (though it is the most incidental thing in my life) I murdered a man....

Yes, I've seen a curious variety of people and ways of living altogether. Odd people they all are great and small, very much alike at bottom and curiously different on their surfaces. I wish I had ranged just a little further both up and down, seeing I have ranged so far. Royalty must be worth knowing and very great fun. But my contacts with princes have been limited to quite public occasions, nor at the other end of the scale have I had what I should call an inside acquaintance with that dusty but attractive class of people who go about on the high-roads drunk but enfamille (so redeeming the minor lapse), in the summertime, with a perambulator, lavender to sell, sun-brown children, a smell, and ambiguous bundles that fire the imagination. Navvies, farm-labourers, sailormen and stokers, all such as sit in 1834 beer-houses, are beyond me also, and I suppose must remain so now for ever. My intercourse with the ducal rank too has been negligible; I once went shooting with a duke, and in an outburst of what was no doubt snobbishness, did my best to get him in the legs. But that failed.

I'm sorry I haven't done the whole lot though....

You will ask by what merit I achieved this remarkable social range, this extensive cross-section of the British social organism. It was the Accident of Birth. It always is in England.

Indeed, if I may make the remark so cosmic, everything is. But that is by the way. I was my uncle's nephew, and my uncle was no less a person than Edward Ponderevo, whose comet-like transit of the financial heavens happened — it is now ten years ago! Do you remember the days of Ponderevo, the great days, I mean, of Ponderevo? Perhaps you had a trifle in some world-shaking enterprise! Then you know him only too well. Astraddle on Tono-Bungay, he flashed athwart the empty heavens — like a comet — rather, like a stupendous rocket! — and overawed investors spoke of his star. At his zenith he burst into a cloud of the most magnificent promotions. What a time that was! The Napoleon of domestic conveniences!

I was his nephew, his peculiar and intimate nephew. I was

hanging on to his coat-tails all the way through. I made pills with him in the chemist's shop at Wimblehurst before he began. I was, you might say, the stick of his rocket; and after our tremendous soar, after he had played with millions, a golden rain in the sky, after my bird's-eye view of the modern world, I fell again, a little scarred and blistered perhaps, two and twenty years older, with my youth gone, my manhood eaten in upon, but greatly edified, into this Thames-side yard, into these white heats and hammerings, amidst the fine realites of steel — to think it all over in my leisure and jot down the notes and inconsecutive observations that make this book. It was more, you know, than a figurative soar. The zenith of that career was surely our flight across the channel in the Lord Roberts B....

I warn you this book is going to be something of an agglomeration. I want to trace my social trajectory (and my uncle's) as the main line of my story, but as this is my first novel and almost certainly my last, I want to get in, too, all sorts of things that struck me, things that amused me and impressions I got — even although they don't minister directly to my narrative at all. I want to set out my own queer love experiences too, such as they are, for they troubled and distressed and swayed me hugely, and they still seem to me to contain all sorts of irrational and debatable elements that I shall be the clearer-headed for getting on paper. And possibly I may even flow into descriptions of people who are really no more than people seen in transit, just because it amuses me to recall what they said and did to us, and more particularly how they behaved in the brief but splendid glare of Tono-Bungay and its still more glaring offspring. It lit some of them up, I can assure you! Indeed, I want to get in all sorts of things. My ideas of a novel all through are comprehensive rather than austere....

Tono-Bungay still figures on the hoardings, it stands in rows in every chemist's storeroom, it still assuages the coughs of age and brightens the elderly eye and loosens the elderly tongue; but its social glory, its financial illumination, have faded from the world for ever. And I, sole scorched survivor from the blaze, sit writing of it here in an air that is never still for the clang and thunder of machines, on a table littered with working drawings, and amid fragments of models and notes about velocities and air and water pressures and

trajectories — of an altogether different sort from that of Tono-Bungay.

II

I write that much and look at it, and wonder whether, after all, this is any fair statement of what I am attempting in this book. I've given, I see, an impression that I want to make simply a hotch-potch of anecdotes and experiences with my uncle swimming in the middle as the largest lump of victual. I'll own that here, with the pen already started, I realise what a fermenting mass of things learnt and emotions experienced and theories formed I've got to deal with, and how, in a sense, hopeless my book must be from the very outset. I suppose what I'm really trying to render is nothing more nor less than Life — as one man has found it. I want to tell — MYSELF, and my impressions of the thing as a whole, to say things I have come to feel intensely of the laws, traditions, usages, and ideas we call society, and how we poor individuals get driven and lured and stranded among these windy, perplexing shoals and channels. I've got, I suppose, to a time of life when things begin to take on shapes that have an air of reality, and become no longer material for dreaming, but interesting in themselves. I've reached the criticising, novel-writing age, and here I am writing mine — my one novel — without having any of the discipline to refrain and omit that I suppose the regular novel-writer acquires.

I've read an average share of novels and made some starts before this beginning, and I've found the restraints and rules of the art (as I made them out) impossible for me. I like to write, I am keenly interested in writing, but it is not my technique. I'm an engineer with a patent or two and a set of ideas; most of whatever artist there is in me has been given to turbine machines and boat building and the problem of flying, and do what I will I fail to see how I can be other than a lax, undisciplined story-teller. I must sprawl and flounder, comment and theorise, if I am to get the thing out I have in mind. And it isn't a constructed tale I have to tell, but unmanageable realities. My love-story — and if only I can keep up the spirit of truth-telling all through as strongly as I have now, you shall have it

all — falls into no sort of neat scheme of telling. It involves three separate feminine persons. It's all mixed up with the other things....

But I've said enough, I hope, to excuse myself for the method or want of method in what follows, and I think I had better tell without further delay of my boyhood and my early impressions in the shadow of Bladesover House.

III

There came a time when I realised that Bladesover House was not all it seemed, but when I was a little boy I took the place with the entirest faith as a complete authentic microcosm. I believed that the Bladesover system was a little working-model — and not so very little either — of the whole world.

Let me try and give you the effect of it.

Bladesover lies up on the Kentish Downs, eight miles perhaps from Ashborough; and its old pavilion, a little wooden parody of the temple of Vesta at Tibur, upon the hill crest behind the house, commands in theory at least a view of either sea, of the Channel southward and the Thames to the northeast. The park is the second largest in Kent, finely wooded with well-placed beeches, many elms and some sweet chestnuts, abounding in little valleys and hollows of bracken, with springs and a stream and three fine ponds and multitudes of fallow deer. The house was built in the eighteenth century, it is of pale red brick in the style of a French chateau, and save for one pass among the crests which opens to blue distances, to minute, remote, oast-set farm-houses and copses and wheat fields and the occasional gleam of water, its hundred and seventeen windows look on nothing but its own wide and handsome territories. A semi-circular screen of great beeches masks the church and village, which cluster picturesquely about the high road along the skirts of the great park. Northward, at the remotest corner of that enclosure, is a second dependent village, Ropedean, less fortunate in its greater distance and also on account of a rector. This divine was indeed rich, but he was vindictively economical because of some shrinkage of his tithes; and by reason of his use of the word Eucharist for the Lord's Supper he had become altogether estranged from the great ladies of

Bladesover. So that Ropedean was in the shadows through all that youthful time.

Now the unavoidable suggestion of that wide park and that fair large house, dominating church, village and the country side, was that they represented the thing that mattered supremely in the world, and that all other things had significance only in relation to them. They represented the Gentry, the Quality, by and through and for whom the rest of the world, the farming folk and the labouring folk, the trades-people of Ashborough, and the upper servants and the lower servants and the servants of the estate, breathed and lived and were permitted. And the Quality did it so quietly and thoroughly, the great house mingled so solidly and effectually earth and sky, the contrast of its spacious hall and saloon and galleries, its airy housekeeper's room and warren of offices with the meagre dignities of the vicar, and the pinched and stuffy rooms of even the post-office people and the grocer, so enforced these suggestions, that it was only when I was a boy of thirteen or fourteen and some queer inherited strain of scepticism had set me doubting whether Mr. Bartlett, the vicar, did really know with certainty all about God, that as a further and deeper step in doubting I began to question the final rightness of the gentlefolks, their primary necessity in the scheme of things. But once that scepticism had awakened it took me fast and far. By fourteen I had achieved terrible blasphemies and sacrilege; I had resolved to marry a viscount's daughter, and I had blacked the left eye — I think it was the left — of her half-brother, in open and declared rebellion.

But of that in its place.

The great house, the church, the village, and the labourers and the servants in their stations and degrees, seemed to me, I say, to be a closed and complete social system. About us were other villages and great estates, and from house to house, interlacing, correlated, the Gentry, the fine Olympians, came and went. The country towns seemed mere collections of ships, marketing places for the tenantry, centres for such education as they needed, as entirely dependent on the gentry as the village and scarcely less directly so. I thought this was the order of the whole world. I thought London was only a greater country town where the gentle-folk kept town-houses and did

their greater shopping under the magnificent shadow of the greatest of all fine gentlewomen, the Queen. It seemed to be in the divine order. That all this fine appearance was already sapped, that there were forces at work that might presently carry all this elaborate social system in which my mother instructed me so carefully that I might understand my "place," to Limbo, had scarcely dawned upon me even by the time that Tono-Bungay was fairly launched upon the world.

There are many people in England to-day upon whom it has not yet dawned. There are times when I doubt whether any but a very inconsiderable minority of English people realise how extensively this ostensible order has even now passed away. The great houses stand in the parks still, the cottages cluster respectfully on their borders, touching their eaves with their creepers, the English countryside — you can range through Kent from Bladesover northward and see persists obstinately in looking what it was. It is like an early day in a fine October. The hand of change rests on it all, unfelt, unseen; resting for awhile, as it were half reluctantly, before it grips and ends the thing for ever. One frost and the whole face of things will be bare, links snap, patience end, our fine foliage of pretences lie glowing in the mire.

For that we have still to wait a little while. The new order may have gone far towards shaping itself, but just as in that sort of lantern show that used to be known in the village as the "Dissolving Views," the scene that is going remains upon the mind, traceable and evident, and the newer picture is yet enigmatical long after the lines that are to replace those former ones have grown bright and strong, so that the new England of our children's children is still a riddle to me. The ideas of democracy, of equality, and above all of promiscuous fraternity have certainly never really entered into the English mind. But what IS coming into it? All this book, I hope, will bear a little on that. Our people never formulates; it keeps words for jests and ironies. In the meanwhile the old shapes, the old attitudes remain, subtly changed and changing still, sheltering strange tenants. Bladesover House is now let furnished to Sir Reuben Lichtenstein, and has been since old Lady Drew died; it was my odd experience to visit there, in the house of which my mother had been housekeeper,

when my uncle was at the climax of Tono-Bungay. It was curious to notice then the little differences that had come to things with this substitution. To borrow an image from my mineralogical days, these Jews were not so much a new British gentry as "pseudomorphous" after the gentry. They are a very clever people, the Jews, but not clever enough to suppress their cleverness. I wished I could have gone downstairs to savour the tone of the pantry. It would have been very different I know. Hawksnest, over beyond, I noted, had its pseudomorph too; a newspaper proprietor of the type that hustles along with stolen ideas from one loud sink-or-swim enterprise to another, had bought the place outright; Redgrave was in the hands of brewers.

But the people in the villages, so far as I could detect, saw no difference in their world. Two little girls bobbed and an old labourer touched his hat convulsively as I walked through the village. He still thought he knew his place — and mine. I did not know him, but I would have liked dearly to have asked him if he remembered my mother, if either my uncle or old Lichtenstein had been man enough to stand being given away like that.

In that English countryside of my boyhood every human being had a "place." It belonged to you from your birth like the colour of your eyes, it was inextricably your destiny. Above you were your betters, below you were your inferiors, and there were even an unstable questionable few, cases so disputable that you might for the rough purposes of every day at least, regard them as your equals. Head and centre of our system was Lady Drew, her "leddyship," shrivelled, garrulous, with a wonderful memory for genealogies and very, very old, and beside her and nearly as old, Miss Somerville, her cousin and companion. These two old souls lived like dried-up kernels in the great shell of Bladesover House, the shell that had once been gaily full of fops, of fine ladies in powder and patches and courtly gentlemen with swords; and when there was no company they spent whole days in the corner parlour just over the housekeeper's room, between reading and slumber and caressing their two pet dogs. When I was a boy I used always to think of these two poor old creatures as superior beings living, like God, somewhere through the ceiling. Occasionally they bumped about a

bit and one even heard them overhead, which gave them a greater effect of reality without mitigating their vertical predominance. Sometimes too I saw them. Of course if I came upon them in the park or in the shrubbery (where I was a trespasser) I hid or fled in pious horror, but I was upon due occasion taken into the Presence by request. I remember her "leddyship" then as a thing of black silks and a golden chain, a quavering injunction to me to be a good boy, a very shrunken loose-skinned face and neck, and a ropy hand that trembled a halfcrown into mine. Miss Somerville hovered behind, a paler thing of broken lavender and white and black, with screwed up, sandy-lashed eyes. Her hair was yellow and her colour bright, and when we sat in the housekeeper's room of a winter's night warming our toes and sipping elder wine, her maid would tell us the simple secrets of that belated flush.... After my fight with young Garvell I was of course banished, and I never saw those poor old painted goddesses again.

Then there came and went on these floors over our respectful heads, the Company; people I rarely saw, but whose tricks and manners were imitated and discussed by their maids and valets in the housekeeper's room and the steward's room — so that I had them through a medium at second hand. I gathered that none of the company were really Lady Drew's equals, they were greater and lesser after the manner of all things in our world. Once I remember there was a Prince, with a real live gentleman in attendance, and that was a little above our customary levels and excited us all, and perhaps raised our expectations unduly. Afterwards, Rabbits, the butler, came into my mother's room downstairs, red with indignation and with tears in his eyes. "Look at that!" gasped Rabbits. My mother was speechless with horror. That was a sovereign, a mere sovereign, such as you might get from any commoner!

After Company, I remember, came anxious days, for the poor old women upstairs were left tired and cross and vindictive, and in a state of physical and emotional indigestion after their social efforts....

On the lowest fringe of these real Olympians hung the vicarage people, and next to them came those ambiguous beings who are neither quality nor subjects. The vicarage people certainly hold a place by themselves in the typical English scheme; nothing is more

remarkable than the progress the Church has made — socially — in the last two hundred years. In the early eighteenth century the vicar was rather under than over the house-steward, and was deemed a fitting match for the housekeeper or any not too morally discredited discard. The eighteenth century literature is full of his complaints that he might not remain at table to share the pie. He rose above these indignities because of the abundance of younger sons. When I meet the large assumptions of the contemporary cleric, I am apt to think of these things. It is curious to note that to-day that down-trodden, organ-playing creature, the Church of England village Schoolmaster, holds much the same position as the seventeenth century parson. The doctor in Bladesover ranked below the vicar but above the "vet," artists and summer visitors squeezed in above or below this point according to their appearance and expenditure, and then in a carefully arranged scale came the tenantry, the butler and housekeeper, the village shopkeeper, the head keeper, the cook, the publican, the second keeper, the blacksmith (whose status was complicated by his daughter keeping the post-office — and a fine hash she used to make of telegrams too!) the village shopkeeper's eldest son, the first footman, younger sons of the village shopkeeper, his first assistant, and so forth.

All these conceptions and applications of a universal precedence and much else I drank in at Bladesover, as I listened to the talk of valets, ladies'-maids, Rabbits the butler and my mother in the much-cupboarded, white-painted, chintz-brightened housekeeper's room where the upper servants assembled, or of footmen and Rabbits and estate men of all sorts among the green baize and Windsor chairs of the pantry — where Rabbits, being above the law, sold beer without a license or any compunction — or of housemaids and still-room maids in the bleak, matting-carpeted still-room or of the cook and her kitchen maids and casual friends among the bright copper and hot glow of the kitchens.

Of course their own ranks and places came by implication to these people, and it was with the ranks and places of the Olympians that the talk mainly concerned itself. There was an old peerage and a Crockford together with the books of recipes, the Whitaker's Almanack, the Old Moore's Almanack, and the eighteenth century

dictionary, on the little dresser that broke the cupboards on one side of my mother's room; there was another peerage, with the covers off, in the pantry; there was a new peerage in the billiard-room, and I seem to remember another in the anomalous apartment that held the upper servants' bagatelle board and in which, after the Hall dinner, they partook of the luxury of sweets. And if you had asked any of those upper servants how such and such a Prince of Battenberg was related to, let us say, Mr. Cunninghame Graham or the Duke of Argyle, you would have been told upon the nail. As a boy, I heard a great deal of that sort of thing, and if to this day I am still a little vague about courtesy titles and the exact application of honorifics, it is, I can assure you, because I hardened my heart, and not from any lack of adequate opportunity of mastering these succulent particulars.

Dominating all these memories is the figure of my mother — my mother who did not love me because I grew liker my father every day — and who knew with inflexible decision her place and the place of every one in the world — except the place that concealed my father — and in some details mine. Subtle points were put to her. I can see and hear her saying now, "No, Miss Fison, peers of England go in before peers of the United Kingdom, and he is merely a peer of the United Kingdom." She had much exercise in placing people's servants about her tea-table, where the etiquette was very strict. I wonder sometimes if the etiquette of housekeepers' rooms is as strict to-day, and what my mother would have made of a chauffeur....

On the whole I am glad that I saw so much as I did of Bladesover — if for no other reason than because seeing it when I did, quite naively, believing in it thoroughly, and then coming to analyse it, has enabled me to understand much that would be absolutely incomprehensible in the structure of English society. Bladesover is, I am convinced, the clue to almost all that is distinctively British and perplexing to the foreign inquirer in England and the English-speaking peoples. Grasp firmly that England was all Bladesover two hundred years ago; that it has had Reform Acts indeed, and such — like changes of formula, but no essential revolution since then; that all that is modern and different has come in as a thing intruded or as a gloss upon this predominant formula, either impertinently or apologetically; and you will perceive at once the reasonableness, the

necessity, of that snobbishness which is the distinctive quality of English thought. Everybody who is not actually in the shadow of a Bladesover is as it were perpetually seeking after lost orientations. We have never broken with our tradition, never even symbolically hewed it to pieces, as the French did in quivering fact in the Terror. But all the organizing ideas have slackened, the old habitual bonds have relaxed or altogether come undone. And America too, is, as it were, a detached, outlying part of that estate which has expanded in queer ways. George Washington, Esquire, was of the gentlefolk, and he came near being a King. It was Plutarch, you know, and nothing intrinsically American that prevented George Washington being a King....

IV

I hated teatime in the housekeeper's room more than anything else at Bladesover. And more particularly I hated it when Mrs. Mackridge and Mrs. Booch and Mrs. Latude-Fernay were staying in the house. They were, all three of them, pensioned-off servants.

Old friends of Lady Drew's had rewarded them posthumously for a prolonged devotion to their minor comforts, and Mrs. Booch was also trustee for a favourite Skye terrier. Every year Lady Drew gave them an invitation — a reward and encouragement of virtue with especial reference to my mother and Miss Fison, the maid. They sat about in black and shiny and flouncey clothing adorned with gimp and beads, eating great quantities of cake, drinking much tea in a stately manner and reverberating remarks.

I remember these women as immense. No doubt they were of negotiable size, but I was only a very little chap and they have assumed nightmare proportions in my mind. They loomed, they bulged, they impended. Mrs. Mackridge was large and dark; there was a marvel about her head, inasmuch as she was bald. She wore a dignified cap, and in front of that upon her brow, hair was PAINTED. I have never seen the like since. She had been maid to the widow of Sir Roderick Blenderhasset Impey, some sort of governor or such-like portent in the East Indies, and from her remains — in Mrs. Mackridge — I judge Lady Impey was a very stupendous and

crushing creature indeed. Lady Impey had been of the Juno type, haughty, unapproachable, given to irony and a caustic wit. Mrs. Mackridge had no wit, but she had acquired the caustic voice and gestures along with the old satins and trimmings of the great lady. When she told you it was a fine morning, she seemed also to be telling you you were a fool and a low fool to boot; when she was spoken to, she had a way of acknowledging your poor tinkle of utterance with a voluminous, scornful "Haw!" that made you want to burn her alive. She also had a way of saying "Indade!" with a droop of the eyelids.

Mrs. Booch was a smaller woman, brown haired, with queer little curls on either side of her face, large blue eyes and a small set of stereotyped remarks that constituted her entire mental range. Mrs. Latude-Fernay has left, oddly enough, no memory at all except her name and the effect of a green-grey silk dress, all set with gold and blue buttons. I fancy she was a large blonde. Then there was Miss Fison, the maid who served both Lady Drew and Miss Somerville, and at the end of the table opposite my mother, sat Rabbits the butler. Rabbits, for a butler, was an unassuming man, and at tea he was not as you know butlers, but in a morning coat and a black tie with blue spots. Still, he was large, with side whiskers, even if his clean-shaven mouth was weak and little. I sat among these people on a high, hard, early Gregorian chair, trying to exist, like a feeble seedling amidst great rocks, and my mother sat with an eye upon me, resolute to suppress the slightest manifestation of vitality. It was hard on me, but perhaps it was also hard upon these rather over-fed, ageing, pretending people, that my youthful restlessness and rebellious unbelieving eyes should be thrust in among their dignities.

Tea lasted for nearly three-quarters of an hour, and I sat it out perforce; and day after day the talk was exactly the same.

"Sugar, Mrs. Mackridge?" my mother used to ask.

"Sugar, Mrs. Latude-Fernay?"

The word sugar would stir the mind of Mrs. Mackridge. "They say," she would begin, issuing her proclamation — at least half her sentences began "they say"— "sugar is fatt-an-ing, nowadays. Many of the best people do not take it at all."

"Not with their tea, ma'am," said Rabbits intelligently.

“Not with anything,” said Mrs. Mackridge, with an air of crushing repartee, and drank.

“What won’t they say next?” said Miss Fison.

“They do say such things!” said Mrs. Booch.

“They say,” said Mrs. Mackridge, inflexibly, “the doctors are not recomm-an-ding it now.”

My Mother: “No, ma’am?”

Mrs. Mackridge: “No, ma’am.”

Then, to the table at large: “Poor Sir Roderick, before he died, consumed great quan-ta-ties of sugar. I have sometimes fancied it may have hastened his end.”

This ended the first skirmish. A certain gloom of manner and a pause was considered due to the sacred memory of Sir Roderick.

“George,” said my mother, “don’t kick the chair!”

Then, perhaps, Mrs. Booch would produce a favourite piece from her repertoire. “The evenings are drawing out nicely,” she would say, or if the season was decadent, “How the evenings draw in!” It was an invaluable remark to her; I do not know how she would have got along without it.

My mother, who sat with her back to the window, would always consider it due to Mrs. Booch to turn about and regard the evening in the act of elongation or contraction, whichever phase it might be.

A brisk discussion of how long we were to the longest or shortest day would ensue, and die away at last exhausted.

Mrs. Mackridge, perhaps, would reopen. She had many intelligent habits; among others she read the paper — The Morning Post. The other ladies would at times tackle that sheet, but only to read the births, marriages, and deaths on the front page. It was, of course, the old Morning Post that cost threepence, not the brisk coruscating young thing of to-day. “They say,” she would open, “that Lord Tweedums is to go to Canada.”

“Ah!” said Mr. Rabbits; “dew they?”

“Isn’t he,” said my mother, “the Earl of Slumgold’s cousin?” She knew he was; it was an entirely irrelevant and unnecessary remark, but still, something to say.

“The same, ma’am,” said Mrs. Mackridge. “They say he was extremelay popular in New South Wales. They looked up to him

greatlay. I knew him, ma'am, as a young man. A very nice pleasant young fella."

Interlude of respect.

"'Is predecessor," said Rabbits, who had acquired from some clerical model a precise emphatic articulation without acquiring at the same time the aspirates that would have graced it, "got into trouble at Sydney."

"Haw!" said Mrs. Mackridge, scornfully, "so am tawled."

"'E came to Templemorton after 'e came back, and I remember them talking 'im over after 'e'd gone again."

"Haw?" said Mrs. Mackridge, interrogatively.

"'Is fuss was quotin' poetry, ma'am. 'E said — what was it 'e said — 'They lef' their country for their country's good,' — which in some way was took to remind them of their being originally convic's, though now reformed. Every one I 'eard speak, agreed it was takless of 'im."

"Sir Roderick used to say," said Mrs. Mackridge, "that the First Thing," — here Mrs. Mackridge paused and looked dreadfully at me — "and the Second Thing" — here she fixed me again— "and the Third Thing" — now I was released— "needed in a colonial governor is Tact." She became aware of my doubts again, and added predominantly, "It has always struck me that that was a Singularly True Remark."

I resolved that if ever I found this polypus of Tact growing up in my soul, I would tear it out by the roots, throw it forth and stamp on it.

"They're queer people — colonials," said Rabbits, "very queer. When I was at Templemorton I see something of 'em. Queer fellows, some of 'em. Very respectful of course, free with their money in a spasammy sort of way, but — Some of 'em, I must confess, make me nervous. They have an eye on you. They watch you — as you wait. They let themselves appear to be lookin' at you..."

My mother said nothing in that discussion. The word colonies always upset her. She was afraid, I think, that if she turned her mind in that direction my errant father might suddenly and shockingly be discovered, no doubt conspicuously bigamic and altogether offensive and revolutionary. She did not want to rediscover my father at all.

It is curious that when I was a little listening boy I had such an idea of our colonies that I jeered in my heart at Mrs. Mackridge's colonial ascendancy. These brave emancipated sunburnt English of the open, I thought, suffer these aristocratic invaders as a quaint anachronism, but as for being gratified — !

I don't jeer now. I'm not so sure.

V

It is a little difficult to explain why I did not come to do what was the natural thing for any one in my circumstances to do, and take my world for granted. A certain innate scepticism, I think, explains it and a certain inaptitude for sympathetic assimilation. My father, I believe, was a sceptic; my mother was certainly a hard woman.

I was an only child, and to this day I do not know whether my father is living or dead. He fled my mother's virtues before my distincter memories began. He left no traces in his flight, and she, in her indignation, destroyed every vestige that she could of him. Never a photograph nor a scrap of his handwriting have I seen; and it was, I know, only the accepted code of virtue and discretion that prevented her destroying her marriage certificate and me, and so making a clean sweep of her matrimonial humiliation. I suppose I must inherit something of the moral stupidity that would enable her to make a holocaust of every little personal thing she had of him. There must have been presents made by him as a lover, for example — books with kindly inscriptions, letters perhaps, a flattened flower, a ring, or such-like gage. She kept her wedding-ring, of course, but all the others she destroyed. She never told me his christian name or indeed spoke a word to me of him; though at times I came near daring to ask her: add what I have of him — it isn't much — I got from his brother, my hero, my uncle Ponderevo. She wore her ring; her marriage certificate she kept in a sealed envelope in the very bottom of her largest trunk, and me she sustained at a private school among the Kentish hills. You must not think I was always at Bladesover — even in my holidays. If at the time these came round, Lady Drew was vexed by recent Company, or for any other reason wished to take it out of my mother, then she used to ignore the customary reminder

my mother gave her, and I “stayed on” at the school.

But such occasions were rare, and I suppose that between ten and fourteen I averaged fifty days a year at Bladesover.

Don’t imagine I deny that was a fine thing for me. Bladesover, in absorbing the whole countryside, had not altogether missed greatness. The Bladesover system has at least done one good thing for England, it has abolished the peasant habit of mind. If many of us still live and breathe pantry and housekeeper’s room, we are quit of the dream of living by economising parasitically on hens and pigs.... About that park there were some elements of a liberal education; there was a great space of greensward not given over to manure and food grubbing; there was mystery, there was matter for the imagination. It was still a park of deer. I saw something of the life of these dappled creatures, heard the belling of stags, came upon young fawns among the bracken, found bones, skulls, and antlers in lonely places. There were corners that gave a gleam of meaning to the word forest, glimpses of unstudied natural splendour. There was a slope of bluebells in the broken sunlight under the newly green beeches in the west wood that is now precious sapphire in my memory; it was the first time that I knowingly met Beauty.

And in the house there were books. The rubbish old Lady Drew read I never saw; stuff of the Maria Monk type, I have since gathered, had a fascination for her; but back in the past there had been a Drew of intellectual enterprise, Sir Cuthbert, the son of Sir Matthew who built the house; and thrust away, neglected and despised, in an old room upstairs, were books and treasures of his that my mother let me rout among during a spell of wintry wet. Sitting under a dormer window on a shelf above great stores of tea and spices, I became familiar with much of Hogarth in a big portfolio, with Raphael, there was a great book of engravings from the stanzas of Raphael in the Vatican — and with most of the capitals of Europe as they had looked about 1780, by means of several pig iron-moulded books of views. There was also a broad eighteenth century atlas with huge wandering maps that instructed me mightily. It had splendid adornments about each map title; Holland showed a fisherman and his boat; Russia a Cossack; Japan, remarkable people attired in pagodas — I say it deliberately,

“pagodas.” There were Terrae Incognitae in every continent then, Poland, Sarmatia, lands since lost; and many a voyage I made with a blunted pin about that large, incorrect and dignified world. The books in that little old closet had been banished, I suppose, from the saloon during the Victorian revival of good taste and emasculated orthodoxy, but my mother had no suspicion of their character. So I read and understood the good sound rhetoric of Tom Paine’s “Rights of Man,” and his “Common Sense,” excellent books, once praised by bishops and since sedulously lied about. Gulliver was there unexpurgated, strong meat for a boy perhaps but not too strong I hold — I have never regretted that I escaped niceness in these affairs. The satire of Traldragdubh made my blood boil as it was meant to do, but I hated Swift for the Houyhnhnms and never quite liked a horse afterwards. Then I remember also a translation of Voltaire’s “Candide,” and “Rasselas;” and, vast book though it was, I really believe I read, in a muzzy sort of way of course, from end to end, and even with some reference now and then to the Atlas, Gibbon — in twelve volumes.

These readings whetted my taste for more, and surreptitiously I raided the bookcases in the big saloon. I got through quite a number of books before my sacrilegious temerity was discovered by Ann, the old head-housemaid. I remember that among others I tried a translation of Plato’s “Republic” then, and found extraordinarily little interest in it; I was much too young for that; but “Vathek”— “Vathek” was glorious stuff. That kicking affair! When everybody HAD to kick!

The thought of “Vathek” always brings back with it my boyish memory of the big saloon at Bladesover.

It was a huge long room with many windows opening upon the park, and each window — there were a dozen or more reaching from the floor up — had its elaborate silk or satin curtains, heavily fringed, a canopy (is it?) above, its completely white shutters folding into the deep thickness of the wall. At either end of that great still place was an immense marble chimney-piece; the end by the bookcase showed the wolf and Romulus and Remus, with Homer and Virgil for supporters; the design of the other end I have forgotten. Frederick, Prince of Wales, swaggered flatly over the one, twice life-size, but

mellowed by the surface gleam of oil; and over the other was an equally colossal group of departed Drews as sylvan deities, scantily clad, against a storm-rent sky. Down the centre of the elaborate ceiling were three chandeliers, each bearing some hundreds of dangling glass lustres, and over the interminable carpet — it impressed me as about as big as Sarmatia in the store-room Atlas — were islands and archipelagoes of chintz-covered chairs and couches, tables, great Sevres vases on pedestals, a bronze man and horse. Somewhere in this wilderness one came, I remember, upon — a big harp beside a lyre-shaped music stand, and a grand piano....

The book-borrowing raid was one of extraordinary dash and danger.

One came down the main service stairs — that was legal, and illegality began in a little landing when, very cautiously, one went through a red baize door. A little passage led to the hall, and here one reconnoitered for Ann, the old head-housemaid — the younger housemaids were friendly and did not count. Ann located, came a dash across the open space at the foot of that great staircase that has never been properly descended since powder went out of fashion, and so to the saloon door. A beast of an oscillating Chinaman in china, as large as life, grimaced and quivered to one's lightest steps. That door was the perilous place; it was double with the thickness of the wall between, so that one could not listen beforehand for the whisk of the feather-brush on the other side. Oddly rat-like, is it not, this darting into enormous places in pursuit of the abandoned crumbs of thought?

And I found Langhorne's "Plutarch" too, I remember, on those shelves. It seems queer to me now to think that I acquired pride and self-respect, the idea of a state and the germ of public spirit, in such a furtive fashion; queer, too, that it should rest with an old Greek, dead these eighteen hundred years to teach that.

VI

The school I went to was the sort of school the Bladesover system permitted. The public schools that add comic into existence in the brief glow of the Renascence had been taken possession of by the

ruling class; the lower classes were not supposed to stand in need of schools, and our middle stratum got the schools it deserved, private schools, schools any unqualified pretender was free to establish. Mine was kept by a man who had had the energy to get himself a College of Preceptors diploma, and considering how cheap his charges were, I will readily admit the place might have been worse. The building was a dingy yellow-brick residence outside the village, with the schoolroom as an outbuilding of lath and plaster.

I do not remember that my school-days were unhappy — indeed I recall a good lot of fine mixed fun in them — but I cannot without grave risk of misinterpretation declare that we were at all nice and refined. We fought much, not sound formal fighting, but "scrapping" of a sincere and murderous kind, into which one might bring one's boots — it made us tough at any rate — and several of us were the sons of London publicans, who distinguished "scraps" where one meant to hurt from ordered pugilism, practising both arts, and having, moreover, precocious linguistic gifts. Our cricket-field was bald about the wickets, and we played without style and disputed with the umpire; and the teaching was chiefly in the hands of a lout of nineteen, who wore ready-made clothes and taught despicably. The head-master and proprietor taught us arithmetic, algebra, and Euclid, and to the older boys even trigonometry, himself; he had a strong mathematical bias, and I think now that by the standard of a British public school he did rather well by us.

We had one inestimable privilege at that school, and that was spiritual neglect. We dealt with one another with the forcible simplicity of natural boys, we "cheeked," and "punched" and "clouted"; we thought ourselves Red Indians and cowboys and such-like honourable things, and not young English gentlemen; we never felt the strain of "Onward Christian soldiers," nor were swayed by any premature piety in the cold oak pew of our Sunday devotions. All that was good. We spent our rare pennies in the uncensored reading matter of the village dame's shop, on the Boys of England, and honest penny dreadfuls — ripping stuff, stuff that anticipated Haggard and Stevenson, badly printed and queerly illustrated, and very very good for us. On our half-holidays we were allowed the unusual freedom of rambling in twos and threes wide and far about

the land, talking experimentally, dreaming wildly. There was much in those walks! To this day the landscape of the Kentish world, with its low broad distances, its hop gardens and golden stretches of wheat, its oasts and square church towers, its background of downland and hangers, has for me a faint sense of adventure added to the pleasure of its beauty. We smoked on occasion, but nobody put us up to the proper "boyish" things to do; we never "robbed an orchard" for example, though there were orchards all about us, we thought stealing was sinful, we stole incidental apples and turnips and strawberries from the fields indeed, but in a criminal inglorious fashion, and afterwards we were ashamed. We had our days of adventure, but they were natural accidents, our own adventures. There was one hot day when several of us, walking out towards Maidstone, were incited by the devil to despise ginger beer, and we fuddled ourselves dreadfully with ale; and a time when our young minds were infected to the pitch of buying pistols, by the legend of the Wild West. Young Roots from Highbury came back with a revolver and cartridges, and we went off six strong to live a free wild life one holiday afternoon. We fired our first shot deep in the old flint mine at Chiselstead, and nearly burst our ear drums; then we fired in a primrose studded wood by Pickthorn Green, and I gave a false alarm of "keeper," and we fled in disorder for a mile. After which Roots suddenly shot at a pheasant in the high road by Chiselstead, and then young Barker told lies about the severity of the game laws and made Roots sore afraid, and we hid the pistol in a dry ditch outside the school field. A day or so after we got in again, and ignoring a certain fouling and rusting of the barrel, tried for a rabbit at three hundred yards. Young Roots blew a molehill at twenty paces into a dust cloud, burnt his fingers, and scorched his face; and the weapon having once displayed this strange disposition to flame back upon the shooter, was not subsequently fired.

One main source of excitement for us was "cheeking" people in vans and carts upon the Goudhurst road; and getting myself into a monstrous white mess in the chalk pits beyond the village, and catching yellow jaundice as a sequel to bathing stark naked with three other Adamites, old Ewart leading that function, in the rivulet across Hickson's meadows, are among my memorabilia. Those free

imaginative afternoons! how much they were for us! how much they did for us! All streams came from the then undiscovered "sources of the Nile" in those days, all thickets were Indian jungles, and our best game, I say it with pride, I invented. I got it out of the Bladesover saloon. We found a wood where "Trespassing" was forbidden, and did the "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" through it from end to end, cutting our way bravely through a host of nettle beds that barred our path, and not forgetting to weep and kneel when at last we emerged within sight of the High Road Sea. So we have burst at times, weeping and rejoicing, upon startled wayfarers. Usually I took the part of that distinguished general Xenophen — and please note the quantity of the o. I have all my classical names like that, — Socrates rhymes with Bates for me, and except when the bleak eye of some scholar warns me of his standards of judgment, I use those dear old mispronunciations still. The little splash into Latin made during my days as a chemist washed off nothing of the habit. Well, — if I met those great gentlemen of the past with their accents carelessly adjusted I did at least meet them alive, as an equal, and in a living tongue. Altogether my school might easily have been worse for me, and among other good things it gave me a friend who has lasted my life out.

This was Ewart, who is now a monumental artist at Woking, after many vicissitudes. Dear chap, how he did stick out of his clothes to be sure! He was a longlimbed lout, ridiculously tall beside my more youth full compactness, and, except that there was no black moustache under his nose blob, he had the same round knobby face as he has to-day, the same bright and active hazel brown eyes, the stare, the meditative moment, the insinuating reply. Surely no boy ever played the fool as Bob Ewart used to play it, no boy had a readier knack of mantling the world with wonder. Commonness vanished before Ewart, at his expository touch all things became memorable and rare. From him I first heard tell of love, but only after its barbs were already sticking in my heart. He was, I know now the bastard of that great improvident artist, Rickmann Ewart; he brought the light of a lax world that at least had not turned its back upon beauty, into the growing fermentation of my mind.

I won his heart by a version of Vathek, and after that we were

inseparable yarning friends. We merged our intellectual stock so completely that I wonder sometimes how much I did not become Ewart, how much Ewart is not vicariously and derivatively me.

VII

And then when I had newly passed my fourteenth birthday, came my tragic disgrace.

It was in my midsummer holidays that the thing happened, and it was through the Honourable Beatrice Normandy. She had "come into my life," as they say, before I was twelve.

She descended unexpectedly into a peaceful interlude that followed the annual going of those Three Great Women. She came into the old nursery upstairs, and every day she had tea with us in the housekeeper's room. She was eight, and she came with a nurse called Nannie; and to begin with, I did not like her at all.

Nobody liked this irruption into the downstairs rooms; the two "gave trouble," — a dire offence; Nannie's sense of duty to her charge led to requests and demands that took my mother's breath away. Eggs at unusual times, the reboiling of milk, the rejection of an excellent milk pudding — not negotiated respectfully but dictated as of right. Nannie was a dark, longfeatured, taciturn woman in a grey dress; she had a furtive inflexibility of manner that finally dismayed and crushed and overcame. She conveyed she was "under orders" — like a Greek tragedy. She was that strange product of the old time, a devoted, trusted servant; she had, as it were, banked all her pride and will with the greater, more powerful people who employed her, in return for a life-long security of servitude — the bargain was nonetheless binding for being implicit. Finally they were to pension her, and she would die the hated treasure of a boarding-house. She had built up in herself an enormous habit of reference to these upstairs people, she had curbed down all discordant murmurings of her soul, her very instincts were perverted or surrendered. She was sexless, her personal pride was all transferred, she mothered another woman's child with a hard, joyless devotion that was at least entirely compatible with a stoical separation. She treated us all as things that counted for nothing save to fetch and

carry for her charge. But the Honourable Beatrice could condescend.

The queer chances of later years come between me and a distinctly separated memory of that childish face. When I think of Beatrice, I think of her as I came to know her at a later time, when at last I came to know her so well that indeed now I could draw her, and show a hundred little delicate things you would miss in looking at her. But even then I remember how I noted the infinite delicacy of her childish skin and the fine eyebrow, finer than the finest feather that ever one felt on the breast of a bird. She was one of those elfin, rather precocious little girls, quick coloured, with dark hair, naturally curling dusky hair that was sometimes astray over her eyes, and eyes that were sometimes impishly dark, and sometimes a clear brown yellow. And from the very outset, after a most cursory attention to Rabbits, she decided that the only really interesting thing at the tea-table was myself.

The elders talked in their formal dull way — telling Nannie the trite old things about the park and the village that they told every one, and Beatrice watched me across the table with a pitiless little curiosity that made me uncomfortable.

"Nannie," she said, pointing, and Nannie left a question of my mother's disregarded to attend to her; "is he a servant boy?"

"S-s-sh," said Nannie. "He's Master Ponderevo."

"Is he a servant boy?" repeated Beatrice.

"He's a schoolboy," said my mother.

"Then may I talk to him, Nannie?"

Nannie surveyed me with brutal inhumanity. "You mustn't talk too much," she said to her charge, and cut cake into fingers for her.

"No," she added decisively, as Beatrice made to speak.

Beatrice became malignant. Her eyes explored me with unjustifiable hostility. "He's got dirty hands," she said, stabbing at the forbidden fruit. "And there's a fray to his collar."

Then she gave herself up to cake with an appearance of entire forgetfulness of me that filled me with hate and a passionate desire to compel her to admire me.... And the next day before tea, I did for the first time in my life, freely, without command or any compulsion, wash my hands.

So our acquaintance began, and presently was deepened by a

whim of hers. She had a cold and was kept indoors, and confronted Nannie suddenly with the alternative of being hopelessly naughty, which in her case involved a generous amount of screaming unsuitable for the ears of an elderly, shaky, rich aunt, or having me up to the nursery to play with her all the afternoon. Nannie came downstairs and borrowed me in a careworn manner; and I was handed over to the little creature as if I was some large variety of kitten. I had never had anything to do with a little girl before, I thought she was more beautiful and wonderful and bright than anything else could possibly be in life, and she found me the gentlest of slaves — though at the same time, as I made evident, fairly strong. And Nannie was amazed to find the afternoon slip cheerfully and rapidly away. She praised my manners to Lady Drew and to my mother, who said she was glad to hear well of me, and after that I played with Beatrice several times. The toys she had remain in my memory still as great splendid things, gigantic to all my previous experience of toys, and we even went to the great doll's house on the nursery landing to play discreetly with that, the great doll's house that the Prince Regent had given Sir Harry Drew's first-born (who died at five), that was a not ineffectual model of Bladesover itself, and contained eighty-five dolls and had cost hundreds of pounds. I played under imperious direction with that toy of glory.

I went back to school when that holiday was over, dreaming of beautiful things, and got Ewart to talk to me of love; and I made a great story out of the doll's house, a story that, taken over into Ewart's hands, speedily grew to an island doll's city all our own.

One of the dolls, I privately decided, was like Beatrice.

One other holiday there was when I saw something of her — oddly enough my memory of that second holiday in which she played a part is vague — and then came a gap of a year, and then my disgrace.

VIII

Now I sit down to write my story and tell over again things in their order, I find for the first time how inconsecutive and irrational a thing the memory can be. One recalls acts and cannot recall motives; one

recalls quite vividly moments that stand out inexplicably — things adrift, joining on to nothing, leading nowhere. I think I must have seen Beatrice and her half-brother quite a number of times in my last holiday at Bladesover, but I really cannot recall more than a little of the quality of the circumstances. That great crisis of my boyhood stands out very vividly as an effect, as a sort of cardinal thing for me, but when I look for details, particularly details that led up to the crisis — I cannot find them in any developing order at all. This halfbrother, Archie Garvell, was a new factor in the affair. I remember him clearly as a fair-haired, supercilious looking, weedily-lank boy, much taller than I, but I should imagine very little heavier, and that we hated each other by a sort of instinct from the beginning; and yet I cannot remember my first meeting with him at all.

Looking back into these past things — it is like rummaging in a neglected attic that has experienced the attentions of some whimsical robber — I cannot even account for the presence of these children at Bladesover. They were, I know, among the innumerable cousins of Lady Drew, and according to the theories of downstairs candidates for the ultimate possession of Bladesover. If they were, their candidature was unsuccessful. But that great place, with all its faded splendour, its fine furniture, its large traditions, was entirely at the old lady's disposition; and I am inclined to think it is true that she used this fact to torment and dominate a number of eligible people. Lord Osprey was among the number of these, and she showed these hospitalities to his motherless child and step-child, partly, no doubt, because he was poor, but quite as much, I nowadays imagine, in the dim hope of finding some affectionate or imaginative outcome of contact with them. Nannie had dropped out of the world this second time, and Beatrice was in the charge of an extremely amiable and ineffectual poor army-class young woman whose name I never knew. They were, I think, two remarkably illmanaged and enterprising children. I seem to remember too, that it was understood that I was not a fit companion for them, and that our meetings had to be as unostentatious as possible. It was Beatrice who insisted upon our meeting.

I am certain I knew quite a lot about love at fourteen and that I was quite as much in love with Beatrice then as any impassioned

adult could be, and that Beatrice was, in her way, in love with me. It is part of the decent and useful pretences of our world that children of the age at which we were, think nothing, feel nothing, know nothing of love. It is wonderful what people the English are for keeping up pretences. But indeed I cannot avoid telling that Beatrice and I talked of love and kissed and embraced one another.

I recall something of one talk under the overhanging bushes of the shrubbery — I on the park side of the stone wall, and the lady of my worship a little inelegantly astride thereon. Inelegantly do I say? you should have seen the sweet imp as I remember her. Just her poise on the wall comes suddenly clear before me, and behind her the light various branches of the bushes of the shrubbery that my feet might not profane, and far away and high behind her, dim and stately, the cornice of the great facade of Bladesover rose against the dappled sky. Our talk must have been serious and business-like, for we were discussing my social position.

"I don't love Archie," she had said, apropos of nothing; and then in a whisper, leaning forward with the hair about her face, "I love YOU!"

But she had been a little pressing to have it clear that I was not and could not be a servant.

"You'll never be a servant — ever!"

I swore that very readily, and it is a vow I have kept by nature.

"What will you be?" said she.

I ran my mind hastily over the professions.

"Will you be a soldier?" she asked.

"And be bawled at by duffers? No fear!" said I. "Leave that to the plough-boys."

"But an officer?"

"I don't know," I said, evading a shameful difficulty.

"I'd rather go into the navy."

"Wouldn't you like to fight?"

"I'd like to fight," I said. "But a common soldier it's no honour to have to be told to fight and to be looked down upon while you do it, and how could I be an officer?"

"Couldn't you be?" she said, and looked at me doubtfully; and the spaces of the social system opened between us.

Then, as became a male of spirit, I took upon myself to brag and lie my way through this trouble. I said I was a poor man, and poor men went into the navy; that I "knew" mathematics, which no army officer did; and I claimed Nelson for an exemplar, and spoke very highly of my outlook upon blue water. "He loved Lady Hamilton," I said, "although she was a lady — and I will love you."

We were somewhere near that when the egregious governess became audible, calling "Beeee-atrice! Beeee-e-atrice!"

"Snifty beast!" said my lady, and tried to get on with the conversation; but that governess made things impossible.

"Come here!" said my lady suddenly, holding out a grubby hand; and I went very close to her, and she put her little head down upon the wall until her black fog of hair tickled my cheek.

"You are my humble, faithful lover," she demanded in a whisper, her warm flushed face near touching mine, and her eyes very dark and lustrous.

"I am your humble, faithful lover," I whispered back.

And she put her arm about my head and put out her lips and we kissed, and boy though I was, I was all atremble. So we two kissed for the first time.

"Beeee-e-e-a-trice!" fearfully close.

My lady had vanished, with one wild kick of her black-stocking leg. A moment after, I heard her sustaining the reproaches of her governess, and explaining her failure to answer with an admirable lucidity and disingenuousness.

I felt it was unnecessary for me to be seen just then, and I vanished guiltily round the corner into the West Wood, and so to love-dreams and single-handed play, wandering along one of those meandering bracken valleys that varied Bladesover park. And that day and for many days that kiss upon my lips was a seal, and by night the seed of dreams.

Then I remember an expedition we made — she, I, and her half-brother — into those West Woods — they two were supposed to be playing in the shrubbery — and how we were Indians there, and made a wigwam out of a pile of beech logs, and how we stalked deer, crept near and watched rabbits feeding in a glade, and almost got a squirrel. It was play seasoned with plentiful disputing between me

and young Garvell, for each firmly insisted upon the leading roles, and only my wider reading — I had read ten stories to his one — gave me the ascendency over him. Also I scored over him by knowing how to find the eagle in a bracken stem. And somehow — I don't remember what led to it at all — I and Beatrice, two hot and ruffled creatures, crept in among the tall bracken and hid from him. The great fronds rose above us, five feet or more, and as I had learnt how to wriggle through that undergrowth with the minimum of betrayal by tossing greenery above, I led the way. The ground under bracken is beautifully clear and faintly scented in warm weather; the stems come up black and then green; if you crawl flat, it is a tropical forest in miniature. I led the way and Beatrice crawled behind, and then as the green of the further glade opened before us, stopped. She crawled up to me, her hot little face came close to mine; once more she looked and breathed close to me, and suddenly she flung her arm about my neck and dragged me to earth beside her, and kissed me and kissed me again. We kissed, we embraced and kissed again, all without a word; we desisted, we stared and hesitated — then in a suddenly damped mood and a little perplexed at ourselves, crawled out, to be presently run down and caught in the tamest way by Archie.

That comes back very clearly to me, and other vague memories — I know old Hall and his gun, out shooting at jackdaws, came into our common experiences, but I don't remember how; and then at last, abruptly, our fight in the Warren stands out. The Warren, like most places in England that have that name, was not particularly a warren, it was a long slope of thorns and beeches through which a path ran, and made an alternative route to the downhill carriage road between Bladesover and Ropedean. I don't know how we three got there, but I have an uncertain fancy it was connected with a visit paid by the governess to the Ropedean vicarage people. But suddenly Archie and I, in discussing a game, fell into a dispute for Beatrice. I had made him the fairest offer: I was to be a Spanish nobleman, she was to be my wife, and he was to be a tribe of Indians trying to carry her off. It seems to me a fairly attractive offer to a boy to be a whole tribe of Indians with a chance of such a booty. But Archie suddenly took offence.

“No,” he said; “we can’t have that!”

“Can’t have what?”

“You can’t be a gentleman, because you aren’t. And you can’t play Beatrice is your wife. It’s — it’s impertinent.”

“But” I said, and looked at her.

Some earlier grudge in the day’s affairs must have been in Archie’s mind. “We let you play with us,” said Archie; “but we can’t have things like that.”

“What rot!” said Beatrice. “He can if he likes.”

But he carried his point. I let him carry it, and only began to grow angry three or four minutes later. Then we were still discussing play and disputing about another game. Nothing seemed right for all of us.

“We don’t want you to play with us at all,” said Archie.

“Yes, we do,” said Beatrice.

“He drops his aitches like anything.”

“No, ‘e doesn’t,” said I, in the heat of the moment.

“There you go!” he cried. “E, he says. E! E! E!”

He pointed a finger at me. He had struck to the heart of my shame. I made the only possible reply by a rush at him. “Hello!” he cried, at my blackavised attack. He dropped back into an attitude that had some style in it, parried my blow, got back at my cheek, and laughed with surprise and relief at his own success. Whereupon I became a thing of murderous rage. He could box as well or better than I — he had yet to realise I knew anything of that at all — but I had fought once or twice to a finish with bare fists. I was used to inflicting and enduring savage hurting, and I doubt if he had ever fought. I hadn’t fought ten seconds before I felt this softness in him, realised all that quality of modern upper-class England that never goes to the quick, that hedges about rules and those petty points of honour that are the ultimate comminution of honour, that claims credit for things demonstrably half done. He seemed to think that first hit of his and one or two others were going to matter, that I ought to give in when presently my lip bled and dripped blood upon my clothes. So before we had been at it a minute he had ceased to be aggressive except in momentary spurts, and I was knocking him about almost as I wanted to do; and demanding breathlessly and fiercely, after our school

manner, whether he had had enough, not knowing that by his high code and his soft training it was equally impossible for him to either buck-up and beat me, or give in.

I have a very distinct impression of Beatrice dancing about us during the affair in a state of unladylike appreciation, but I was too preoccupied to hear much of what she was saying. But she certainly backed us both, and I am inclined to think now — it may be the disillusionment of my ripened years — whichever she thought was winning.

Then young Garvell, giving way before my slogging, stumbled and fell over a big flint, and I, still following the tradition of my class and school, promptly flung myself on him to finish him. We were busy with each other on the ground when we became aware of a dreadful interruption.

"Shut up, you FOOL!" said Archie.

"Oh, Lady Drew!" I heard Beatrice cry. "They're fighting! They're fighting something awful!"

I looked over my shoulder. Archie's wish to get up became irresistible, and my resolve to go on with him vanished altogether.

I became aware of the two old ladies, presences of black and purple silk and fur and shining dark things; they had walked up through the Warren, while the horses took the hill easily, and so had come upon us. Beatrice had gone to them at once with an air of taking refuge, and stood beside and a little behind them. We both rose dejectedly. The two old ladies were evidently quite dreadfully shocked, and peering at us with their poor old eyes; and never had I seen such a tremblement in Lady Drew's lorgnettes.

"You've never been fighting?" said Lady Drew.

"You have been fighting."

"It wasn't proper fighting," snapped Archie, with accusing eyes on me.

"It's Mrs. Ponderevo's George!" said Miss Somerville, so adding a conviction for ingratitude to my evident sacrilege.

"How could he DARE?" cried Lady Drew, becoming very awful.

"He broke the rules" said Archie, sobbing for breath. "I slipped, and — he hit me while I was down. He knelt on me."

"How could you DARE?" said Lady Drew.

I produced an experienced handkerchief rolled up into a tight ball, and wiped the blood from my chin, but I offered no explanation of my daring. Among other things that prevented that, I was too short of breath.

"He didn't fight fair," sobbed Archie.

Beatrice, from behind the old ladies, regarded me intently and without hostility. I am inclined to think the modification of my face through the damage to my lip interested her. It became dimly apparent to my confused intelligence that I must not say these two had been playing with me. That would not be after the rules of their game. I resolved in this difficult situation upon a sulky silence, and to take whatever consequences might follow.

IX

The powers of justice in Bladesover made an extraordinary mess of my case.

I have regretfully to admit that the Honourable Beatrice Normandy did, at the age of ten, betray me, abandon me, and lie most abominably about me. She was, as a matter of fact, panic-stricken about me, conscience stricken too; she bolted from the very thought of my being her affianced lover and so forth, from the faintest memory of kissing; she was indeed altogether disgraceful and human in her betrayal. She and her half-brother lied in perfect concord, and I was presented as a wanton assailant of my social betters. They were waiting about in the Warren, when I came up and spoke to them, etc.

On the whole, I now perceive Lady Drew's decisions were, in the light of the evidence, reasonable and merciful.

They were conveyed to me by my mother, who was, I really believe, even more shocked by the grossness of my social insubordination than Lady Drew. She dilated on her ladyship's kindnesses to me, on the effrontery and wickedness of my procedure, and so came at last to the terms of my penance. "You must go up to young Mr. Garvell, and beg his pardon."

"I won't beg his pardon," I said, speaking for the first time.

My mother paused, incredulous.

I folded my arms on her table-cloth, and delivered my wicked little ultimatum. “I won’t beg his pardon nohow,” I said. “See?”

“Then you will have to go off to your uncle Frapp at Chatham.”

“I don’t care where I have to go or what I have to do, I won’t beg his pardon,” I said.

And I didn’t.

After that I was one against the world. Perhaps in my mother’s heart there lurked some pity for me, but she did not show it. She took the side of the young gentleman; she tried hard, she tried very hard, to make me say I was sorry I had struck him. Sorry!

I couldn’t explain.

So I went into exile in the dog-cart to Redwood station, with Jukes the coachman, coldly silent, driving me, and all my personal belongings in a small American cloth portmanteau behind.

I felt I had much to embitter me; the game had and the beginnings of fairness by any standards I knew.... But the thing that embittered me most was that the Honourable Beatrice Normandy should have repudiated and fled from me as though I was some sort of leper, and not even have taken a chance or so, to give me a good-bye. She might have done that anyhow! Supposing I had told on her! But the son of a servant counts as a servant. She had forgotten and now remembered.

I solaced myself with some extraordinary dream of coming back to Bladesover, stern, powerful, after the fashion of Coriolanus. I do not recall the details, but I have no doubt I displayed great magnanimity...

Well, anyhow I never said I was sorry for pounding young Garvell, and I am not sorry to this day.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

OF MY LAUNCH INTO THE WORLD AND THE LAST I SAW OF BLADESOVER

I

When I was thus banished from Bladesover House, as it was then thought for good and all, I was sent by my mother in a vindictive spirit, first to her cousin Nicodemus Frapp, and then, as a fully indentured apprentice, to my uncle Ponderevo.

I ran away from the care of my cousin Nicodemus back to Bladesover House.

My cousin Nicodemus Frapp was a baker in a back street — a slum rather — just off that miserable narrow mean high road that threads those exquisite beads, Rochester and Chatham. He was, I must admit, a shock to me, much dominated by a young, plump, prolific, malingering wife; a bent, slow-moving, unwilling dark man with flour in his hair and eyelashes, in the lines of his face and the seams of his coat. I've never had a chance to correct my early impression of him, and he still remains an almost dreadful memory, a sort of caricature of incompetent simplicity. As I remember him, indeed, he presented the servile tradition perfected. He had no pride in his person; fine clothes and dressing up wasn't "for the likes of" him, so that he got his wife, who was no artist at it, to cut his black hair at irregular intervals, and let his nails become disagreeable to the fastidious eye; he had no pride in his business nor any initiative; his only virtues were not doing certain things and hard work. "Your uncle," said my mother — all grown-up cousins were uncles by courtesy among the Victorian middle-class— "isn't much to look at or talk to, but he's a Good Hard-Working Man." There was a sort of base honourableness about toil, however needless, in that system of inversion. Another point of honour was to rise at or before dawn, and then laboriously muddle about.

It was very distinctly impressed on my mind that the Good Hard-Working Man would have thought it "fal-lallish" to own a pocket

handkerchief. Poor old Frapp — dirty and crushed by, product of, Bladesover's magnificence! He made no fight against the world at all, he was floundering in small debts that were not so small but that finally they overwhelmed him, whenever there was occasion for any exertion his wife fell back upon pains and her "condition," and God sent them many children, most of whom died, and so, by their coming and going, gave a double exercise in the virtues of submission.

Resignation to God's will was the common device of these people in the face of every duty and every emergency. There were no books in the house; I doubt if either of them had retained the capacity for reading consecutively for more than a minute or so, and it was with amazement that day after day, over and above stale bread, one beheld food and again more food amidst the litter that held permanent session on the living-room table.

One might have doubted if either of them felt discomfort in this dusty darkness of existence, if it was not that they did visibly seek consolation. They sought this and found it of a Sunday, not in strong drink and raving, but in imaginary draughts of blood. They met with twenty or thirty other darkened and unclean people, all dressed in dingy colours that would not show the dirt, in a little brick-built chapel equipped with a spavined roarer of a harmonium, and there solaced their minds on the thought that all that was fair and free in life, all that struggled, all that planned and made, all pride and beauty and honour, all fine and enjoyable things, were irrevocably damned to everlasting torments. They were the self-appointed confidants of God's mockery of his own creation. So at any rate they stick in my mind. Vaguer, and yet hardly less agreeable than this cosmic jest, this coming "Yah, clever!" and general serving out and "showing up" of the lucky, the bold, and the cheerful, was their own predestination to Glory.

> "There is a Fountain, filled with Blood
> Drawn from Emmanuel's Veins,"

so they sang. I hear the drone and wheeze of that hymn now. I hated them with the bitter uncharitable condemnation of boyhood, and a twinge of that hate comes back to me. As I write the words, the sounds and then the scene return, these obscure, undignified people, a

fat woman with asthma, an old Welsh milk-seller with a tumour on his bald head, who was the intellectual leader of the sect, a huge-voiced haberdasher with a big black beard, a white-faced, extraordinarily pregnant woman, his wife, a spectacled rate collector with a bent back.... I hear the talk about souls, the strange battered old phrases that were coined ages ago in the seaports of the sun-dry Levant, of balm of Gilead and manna in the desert, of gourds that give shade and water in a thirsty land; I recall again the way in which at the conclusion of the service the talk remained pious in form but became medical in substance, and how the women got together for obstetric whisperings. I, as a boy, did not matter, and might overhear.

If Bladesover is my key for the explanation of England, I think my invincible persuasion that I understand Russia was engendered by the circle of Uncle Frapp.

I slept in a dingy sheeted bed with the two elder survivors of Frapp fecundity, and spent my week days in helping in the laborious disorder of the shop and bakehouse, in incidental deliveries of bread and so forth, and in parrying the probings of my uncle into my relations with the Blood, and his confidential explanations that ten shillings a week — which was what my mother paid him — was not enough to cover my accommodation. He was very anxious to keep that, but also he wanted more. There were neither books nor any seat nor corner in that house where reading was possible, no newspaper ever brought the clash of worldly things into its heavenward seclusion; horror of it all grew in me daily, and whenever I could I escaped into the streets and tramped about Chatham. The news shops appealed to me particularly. One saw there smudgy illustrated sheets, the Police News in particular, in which vilely drawn pictures brought home to the dullest intelligence an interminable succession of squalid crimes, women murdered and put into boxes, buried under floors, old men bludgeoned at midnight by robbers, people thrust suddenly out of trains, happy lovers shot, vitrioled and so forth by rivals. I got my first glimpse of the life of pleasure in foully drawn pictures of “police raids” on this and that. Interspersed with these sheets were others in which Sloper, the urban John Bull, had his fling with gin bottle and obese umbrella, or the kindly empty faces of the Royal Family appeared and reappeared, visiting this, opening that, getting married,

getting offspring, lying in state, doing everything but anything, a wonderful, good-meaning, impenetrable race apart.

I have never revisited Chatham; the impression it has left on my mind is one of squalid compression, unlit by any gleam of a maturer charity. All its effects arranged themselves as antithetical to the Bladesover effects. They confirmed and intensified all that Bladesover suggested. Bladesover declared itself to be the land, to be essentially England; I have already told how its airy spaciousness, its wide dignity, seemed to thrust village, church, and vicarage into corners, into a secondary and conditional significance. Here one gathered the corollary of that. Since the whole wide country of Kent was made up of contiguous Bladesovers and for the gentlefolk, the surplus of population, all who were not good tenants nor good labourers, Church of England, submissive and respectful, were necessarily thrust together, jostled out of sight, to fester as they might in this place that had the colours and even the smells of a well-packed dustbin. They should be grateful even for that; that, one felt, was the theory of it all.

And I loafed about this wilderness of crowded dinginess, with young, receptive, wide-open eyes, and through the blessing (or curse) of some fairy godmother of mine, asking and asking again: "But after all, WHY—"

I wandered up through Rochester once, and had a glimpse of the Stour valley above the town, all horrible with cement works and foully smoking chimneys and rows of workmen's cottages, minute, ugly, uncomfortable, and grimy. So I had my first intimation of how industrialism must live in a landlord's land. I spent some hours, too, in the streets that give upon the river, drawn by the spell of the sea. But I saw barges and ships stripped of magic and mostly devoted to cement, ice, timber, and coal. The sailors looked to me gross and slovenly men, and the shipping struck me as clumsy, ugly, old, and dirty. I discovered that most sails don't fit the ships that hoist them, and that there may be as pitiful and squalid a display of poverty with a vessel as with a man. When I saw colliers unloading, watched the workers in the hold filling up silly little sacks and the succession of blackened, half-naked men that ran to and fro with these along a plank over a thirty-foot drop into filth and mud, I was first seized

with admiration of their courage and toughness and then, “But after all, WHY — ?” and the stupid ugliness of all this waste of muscle and endurance came home to me. Among other things it obviously wasted and deteriorated the coal.... And I had imagined great things of the sea!

Well, anyhow, for a time that vocation was stilled.

But such impressions came into my leisure, and of that I had no excess. Most of my time was spent doing things for Uncle Frapp, and my evenings and nights perforce in the company of the two eldest of my cousins. He was errand boy at an oil shop and fervently pious, and of him I saw nothing until the evening except at meals; the other was enjoying the midsummer holidays without any great elation; a singularly thin and abject, stunted creature he was, whose chief liveliness was to pretend to be a monkey, and who I am now convinced had some secret disease that drained his vitality away. If I met him now I should think him a pitiful little creature and be extremely sorry for him. Then I felt only a wondering aversion. He sniffed horribly, he was tired out by a couple of miles of loafing, he never started any conversation, and he seemed to prefer his own company to mine. His mother, poor woman, said he was the “thoughtful one.”

Serious trouble came suddenly out of a conversation we held in bed one night. Some particularly pious phrase of my elder cousin’s irritated me extremely, and I avowed outright my entire disbelief in the whole scheme of revealed religion. I had never said a word about my doubts to any one before, except to Ewart who had first evolved them. I had never settled my doubts until at this moment when I spoke. But it came to me then that the whole scheme of salvation of the Frappes was not simply doubtful, but impossible. I fired this discovery out into the darkness with the greatest promptitude.

My abrupt denials certainly scared my cousin amazingly.

At first they could not understand what I was saying, and when they did I fully believe they expected an instant answer in thunderbolts and flames. They gave me more room in the bed forthwith, and then the elder sat up and expressed his sense of my awfulness. I was already a little frightened at my temerity, but when he asked me categorically to unsay what I had said, what could I do

but confirm my repudiation?

"There's no hell," I said, "and no eternal punishment. No God would be such a fool as that."

My elder cousin cried aloud in horror, and the younger lay scared, but listening. "Then you mean," said my elder cousin, when at last he could bring himself to argue, "you might do just as you liked?"

"If you were cad enough," said I.

Our little voices went on interminably, and at one stage my cousin got out of bed and made his brother do likewise, and knelt in the night dimness and prayed at me. That I found trying, but I held out valiantly. "Forgive him," said my cousin, "he knows not what he sayeth."

"You can pray if you like," I said, "but if you're going to cheek me in your prayers I draw the line."

The last I remember of that great discussion was my cousin deploring the fact that he "should ever sleep in the same bed with an Infidel!"

The next day he astonished me by telling the whole business to his father. This was quite outside all my codes. Uncle Nicodemus sprang it upon me at the midday meal.

"You been sayin' queer things, George," he said abruptly. "You better mind what you're saying."

"What did he say, father?" said Mrs. Frapp.

"Things I couldn't' repeat," said he.

"What things?" I asked hotly.

"Ask 'IM," said my uncle, pointing with his knife to his informant, and making me realise the nature of my offence. My aunt looked at the witness. "Not — ?" she framed a question.

"Wuss," said my uncle. "Blarsphemy."

My aunt couldn't touch another mouthful. I was already a little troubled in my conscience by my daring, and now I began to feel the black enormity of the course upon which I had embarked.

"I was only talking sense," I said.

I had a still more dreadful moment when presently I met my cousin in the brick alley behind the yard, that led back to his grocer's shop.

"You sneak!" I said, and smacked his face hard forthwith. "Now

then," said I.

He started back, astonished and alarmed. His eyes met mine, and I saw a sudden gleam of resolution. He turned his other cheek to me.

"'It 'it," he said."'It 'it. I'LL forgive you."

I felt I had never encountered a more detestable way of evading a licking. I shoved him against the wall and left him there, forgiving me, and went back into the house.

"You better not speak to your cousins, George," said my aunt, "till you're in a better state of mind."

I became an outcast forthwith. At supper that night a gloomy silence was broken by my cousin saying,

"'E 'it me for telling you, and I turned the other cheek, muvver."

"'E's got the evil one be'ind 'im now, a ridin' on 'is back," said my aunt, to the grave discomfort of the eldest girl, who sat beside me.

After supper my uncle, in a few ill-chosen words, prayed me to repent before I slept.

"Suppose you was took in your sleep, George," he said; "where'd you be then? You jest think of that me boy." By this time I was thoroughly miserable and frightened, and this suggestion unnerved me dreadfully but I kept up an impenitent front. "To wake in 'ell," said Uncle Nicodemus, in gentle tones. "You don't want to wake in 'ell, George, burnin' and screamin' for ever, do you? You wouldn't like that?"

He tried very hard to get me to "jest 'ave a look at the bake'ouse fire" before I retired. "It might move you," he said.

I was awake longest that night. My cousins slept, the sleep of faith on either side of me. I decided I would whisper my prayers, and stopped midway because I was ashamed, and perhaps also because I had an idea one didn't square God like that.

"No," I said, with a sudden confidence, "damn me if you're coward enough.... But you're not. No! You couldn't be!"

I woke my cousins up with emphatic digs, and told them as much, triumphantly, and went very peacefully to sleep with my act of faith accomplished.

I slept not only through that night, but for all my nights since then. So far as any fear of Divine injustice goes, I sleep soundly, and shall,

I know, to the end of things. That declaration was an epoch in my spiritual life.

II

But I didn't expect to have the whole meeting on Sunday turned on to me.

It was. It all comes back to me, that convergence of attention, even the faint leathery smell of its atmosphere returns, and the coarse feel of my aunt's black dress beside me in contact with my hand. I see again the old Welsh milkman "wrestling" with me, they all wrestled with me, by prayer or exhortation. And I was holding out stoutly, though convinced now by the contagion of their universal conviction that by doing so I was certainly and hopelessly damned. I felt that they were right, that God was probably like them, and that on the whole it didn't matter. And to simplify the business thoroughly I had declared I didn't believe anything at all. They confuted me by texts from Scripture which I now perceive was an illegitimate method of reply. When I got home, still impenitent and eternally lost and secretly very lonely and miserable and alarmed, Uncle Nicodemus docked my Sunday pudding.

One person only spoke to me like a human being on that day of wrath, and that was the younger Frapp. He came up to me in the afternoon while I was confined upstairs with a Bible and my own thoughts.

"'Ello," he said, and fretted about.

"D'you mean to say there isn't — no one," he said, funking the word.

"No one?"

"No one watching yer — always."

"Why should there be?" I asked.

"You can't 'elp thoughts," said my cousin, "anyhow. You mean —" He stopped hovering. "I s'pose I oughtn't to be talking to you."

He hesitated and flitted away with a guilty back glance over his shoulder....

The following week made life quite intolerable for me; these people forced me at last into an Atheism that terrified me. When I

learnt that next Sunday the wrestling was to be resumed, my courage failed me altogether.

I happened upon a map of Kent in a stationer's window on Saturday, and that set me thinking of one form of release. I studied it intently for half an hour perhaps, on Saturday night, got a route list of villages well fixed in my memory, and got up and started for Bladesover about five on Sunday morning while my two bed mates were still fast asleep.

III

I remember something, but not so much of it as I should like to recall, of my long tramp to Bladesover House. The distance from Chatham is almost exactly seventeen miles, and it took me until nearly one. It was very interesting and I do not think I was very fatigued, though I got rather pinched by one boot.

The morning must have been very clear, because I remember that near Itchinstow Hall I looked back and saw the estuary of the Thames, that river that has since played so large a part in my life. But at the time I did not know it was the Thames, I thought this great expanse of mud flats and water was the sea, which I had never yet seen nearly. And out upon it stood ships, sailing ships and a steamer or so, going up to London or down out into the great seas of the world. I stood for a long time watching these and thinking whether after all I should not have done better to have run away to sea.

The nearer I drew to Bladesover, the more doubtful I grew of the duality of my reception, and the more I regretted that alternative. I suppose it was the dirty clumsiness of the shipping I had seen nearly, that put me out of mind of that. I took a short cut through the Warren across the corner of the main park to intercept the people from the church. I wanted to avoid meeting any one before I met my mother, and so I went to a place where the path passed between banks, and without exactly hiding, stood up among the bushes. This place among other advantages eliminated any chance of seeing Lady Drew, who would drive round by the carriage road.

Standing up to waylay in this fashion I had a queer feeling of brigandage, as though I was some intrusive sort of bandit among

these orderly things. It is the first time I remember having that outlaw feeling distinctly, a feeling that has played a large part in my subsequent life. I felt there existed no place for me that I had to drive myself in.

Presently, down the hill, the servants appeared, straggling by twos and threes, first some of the garden people and the butler's wife with them, then the two laundry maids, odd inseparable old creatures, then the first footman talking to the butler's little girl, and at last, walking grave and breathless beside old Ann and Miss Fison, the black figure of my mother.

My boyish mind suggested the adoption of a playful form of appearance. "Coo-ee, mother" said I, coming out against the sky, "Coo-ee!"

My mother looked up, went very white, and put her hand to her bosom.

I suppose there was a fearful fuss about me. And of course I was quite unable to explain my reappearance. But I held out stoutly, "I won't go back to Chatham; I'll drown myself first." The next day my mother carried me off to Wimblehurst, took me fiercely and aggressively to an uncle I had never heard of before, near though the place was to us. She gave me no word as to what was to happen, and I was too subdued by her manifest wrath and humiliation at my last misdemeanour to demand information. I don't for one moment think Lady Drew was "nice" about me. The finality of my banishment was endorsed and underlined and stamped home. I wished very much now that I had run away to sea, in spite of the coal dust and squalour Rochester had revealed to me. Perhaps over seas one came to different lands.

IV

I do not remember much of my journey to Wimblehurst with my mother except the image of her as sitting bolt upright, as rather disdaining the third-class carriage in which we traveled, and how she looked away from me out of the window when she spoke of my uncle. "I have not seen your uncle," she said, "since he was a boy...." She added grudgingly, "Then he was supposed to be clever."

She took little interest in such qualities as cleverness.

"He married about three years ago, and set up for himself in Wimblehurst.... So I suppose she had some money."

She mused on scenes she had long dismissed from her mind. "Teddy," she said at last in the tone of one who has been feeling in the dark and finds. "He was called Teddy... about your age.... Now he must be twenty-six or seven."

I thought of my uncle as Teddy directly I saw him; there was something in his personal appearance that in the light of that memory phrased itself at once as Teddiness — a certain Teddidity. To describe it in and other terms is more difficult. It is nimbleness without grace, and alertness without intelligence. He whisked out of his shop upon the pavement, a short figure in grey and wearing grey carpet slippers; one had a sense of a young fattish face behind gilt glasses, wiry hair that stuck up and forward over the forehead, an irregular nose that had its aquiline moments, and that the body betrayed an equatorial laxity, an incipient "bow window" as the image goes. He jerked out of the shop, came to a stand on the pavement outside, regarded something in the window with infinite appreciation, stroked his chin, and, as abruptly, shot sideways into the door again, charging through it as it were behind an extended hand.

"That must be him," said my mother, catching at her breath.

We came past the window whose contents I was presently to know by heart, a very ordinary chemist's window except that there was a frictional electrical machine, an air pump and two or three tripods and retorts replacing the customary blue, yellow, and red bottles above. There was a plaster of Paris horse to indicate veterinary medicines among these breakables, and below were scent packets and diffusers and sponges and soda-water syphons and such-like things. Only in the middle there was a rubricated card, very neatly painted by hand, with these words —

Buy Ponderevo's Cough Linctus NOW.
NOW!
WHY?
Twopence Cheaper than in Winter.
You Store apples! why not the Medicine

You are Bound to Need?

in which appeal I was to recognise presently my uncle's distinctive note.

My uncle's face appeared above a card of infant's comforters in the glass pane of the door. I perceived his eyes were brown, and that his glasses creased his nose. It was manifest he did not know us from Adam. A stare of scrutiny allowed an expression of commercial deference to appear in front of it, and my uncle flung open the door.

"You don't know me?" panted my mother.

My uncle would not own he did not, but his curiosity was manifest. My mother sat down on one of the little chairs before the soap and patent medicine-piled counter, and her lips opened and closed.

"A glass of water, madam," said my uncle, waved his hand in a sort of curve and shot away.

My mother drank the water and spoke. "That boy," she said, "takes after his father. He grows more like him every day.... And so I have brought him to you."

"His father, madam?"

"George."

For a moment the chemist was still at a loss. He stood behind the counter with the glass my mother had returned to him in his hand. Then comprehension grew.

"By Gosh!" he said. "Lord!" he cried. His glasses fell off. He disappeared replacing them, behind a pile of boxed-up bottles of blood mixture. "Eleven thousand virgins!" I heard him cry. The glass was banged down. "O-ri-ental Gums!"

He shot away out of the shop through some masked door. One heard his voice. "Susan! Susan!"

Then he reappeared with an extended hand. "Well, how are you?" he said. "I was never so surprised in my life. Fancy!... You!"

He shook my mother's impassive hand and then mine very warmly holding his glasses on with his left forefinger.

"Come right in!" he cried— "come right in! Better late than never!" and led the way into the parlour behind the shop.

After Bladesover that apartment struck me as stuffy and petty, but it was very comfortable in comparison with the Frapp living-room. It

had a faint, disintegrating smell of meals about it, and my most immediate impression was of the remarkable fact that something was hung about or wrapped round or draped over everything. There was bright-patterned muslin round the gas-bracket in the middle of the room, round the mirror over the mantel, stuff with ball-fringe along the mantel and casing in the fireplace, — I first saw ball-fringe here — and even the lamp on the little bureau wore a shade like a large muslin hat. The table-cloth had ball-fringe and so had the window curtains, and the carpet was a bed of roses. There were little cupboards on either side of the fireplace, and in the recesses, ill-made shelves packed with books, and enriched with pinked American cloth. There was a dictionary lying face downward on the table, and the open bureau was littered with foolscap paper and the evidences of recently abandoned toil. My eye caught "The Ponderevo Patent Flat, a Machine you can Live in," written in large firm letters. My uncle opened a little door like a cupboard door in the corner of this room, and revealed the narrowest twist of staircase I had ever set eyes upon. "Susan!" he bawled again. "Wantje. Some one to see you. Surprisin'."

There came an inaudible reply, and a sudden loud bump over our heads as of some article of domestic utility pettishly flung aside, then the cautious steps of someone descending the twist, and then my aunt appeared in the doorway with her hand upon the jamb.

"It's Aunt Ponderevo," cried my uncle. "George's wife — and she's brought over her son!" His eye roamed about the room. He darted to the bureau with a sudden impulse, and turned the sheet about the patent flat face down. Then he waved his glasses at us, "You know, Susan, my elder brother George. I told you about 'im lots of times."

He fretted across to the hearthrug and took up a position there, replaced his glasses and coughed.

My aunt Susan seemed to be taking it in. She was then rather a pretty slender woman of twenty-three or four, I suppose, and I remember being struck by the blueness of her eyes and the clear freshness of her complexion. She had little features, a button nose, a pretty chin and a long graceful neck that stuck out of her pale blue cotton morning dress. There was a look of half-assumed perplexity

on her face, a little quizzical wrinkle of the brow that suggested a faintly amused attempt to follow my uncle's mental operations, a vain attempt and a certain hopelessness that had in succession become habitual. She seemed to be saying, "Oh Lord! What's he giving me THIS time?" And as came to know her better I detected, as a complication of her effort of apprehension, a subsidiary riddle to "What's he giving me?" and that was — to borrow a phrase from my schoolboy language "Is it keeps?" She looked at my mother and me, and back to her husband again.

"You know," he said. "George."

"Well," she said to my mother, descending the last three steps of the staircase and holding out her hand! "you're welcome. Though it's a surprise.... I can't ask you to HAVE anything, I'm afraid, for there isn't anything in the house." She smiled, and looked at her husband banteringly. "Unless he makes up something with his old chemicals, which he's quite equal to doing."

My mother shook hands stiffly, and told me to kiss my aunt....

"Well, let's all sit down," said my uncle, suddenly whistling through his clenched teeth, and briskly rubbing his hands together. He put up a chair for my mother, raised the blind of the little window, lowered it again, and returned to his hearthrug. "I'm sure," he said, as one who decides, "I'm very glad to see you."

V

As they talked I gave my attention pretty exclusively to my uncle.

I noted him in great detail. I remember now his partially unbuttoned waistcoat, as though something had occurred to distract him as he did it up, and a little cut upon his chin. I liked a certain humour in his eyes. I watched, too, with the fascination that things have for an observant boy, the play of his lips — they were a little oblique, and there was something "slipshod," if one may strain a word so far, about his mouth, so that he lisped and sibilated ever and again and the coming and going of a curious expression, triumphant in quality it was, upon his face as he talked. He fingered his glasses, which did not seem to fit his nose, fretted with things in his waistcoat pockets or put his hands behind him, looked over our heads, and ever

and again rose to his toes and dropped back on his heels. He had a way of drawing air in at times through his teeth that gave a whispering zest to his speech It's a sound I can only represent as a soft Zzzz.

He did most of the talking. My mother repeated what she had already said in the shop, "I have brought George over to you," and then desisted for a time from the real business in hand. "You find this a comfortable house?" she asked; and this being affirmed: "It looks — very convenient.... Not too big to be a trouble — no. You like Wimblehurst, I suppose?"

My uncle retorted with some inquiries about the great people of Bladesover, and my mother answered in the character of a personal friend of Lady Drew's. The talk hung for a time, and then my uncle embarked upon a dissertation upon Wimblehurst.

"This place," he began, "isn't of course quite the place I ought to be in."

My mother nodded as though she had expected that.

"It gives me no Scope," he went on. "It's dead-and-alive. Nothing happens."

"He's always wanting something to happen," said my aunt Susan. "Some day he'll get a shower of things and they'll be too much for him."

"Not they," said my uncle, buoyantly.

"Do you find business — slack?" asked my mother.

"Oh! one rubs along. But there's no Development — no growth. They just come along here and buy pills when they want 'em — and a horseball or such. They've got to be ill before there's a prescription. That sort they are. You can't get 'em to launch out, you can't get 'em to take up anything new. For instance, I've been trying lately — induce them to buy their medicines in advance, and in larger quantities. But they won't look for it! Then I tried to float a little notion of mine, sort of an insurance scheme for colds; you pay so much a week, and when you've got a cold you get a bottle of Cough Linctus so long as you can produce a substantial sniff. See? But Lord! they've no capacity for ideas, they don't catch on; no Jump about the place, no Life. Live! — they trickle, and what one has to do here is to trickle too — Zzzz."

“Ah!” said my mother.

“It doesn’t suit me,” said my uncle. “I’m the cascading sort.”

“George was that,” said my mother after a pondering moment.

My aunt Susan took up the parable with an affectionate glance at her husband.

“He’s always trying to make his old business jump,” she said. “Always putting fresh cards in the window, or getting up to something. You’d hardly believe. It makes ME jump sometimes.”

“But it does no good,” said my uncle.

“It does no good,” said his wife. “It’s not his miloo...”

Presently they came upon a wide pause.

From the beginning of their conversation there had been the promise of this pause, and I pricked my ears. I knew perfectly what was bound to come; they were going to talk of my father. I was enormously strengthened in my persuasion when I found my mother’s eyes resting thoughtfully upon me in the silence, and than my uncle looked at me and then my aunt. I struggled unavailingly to produce an expression of meek stupidity.

“I think,” said my uncle, “that George will find it more amusing to have a turn in the market-place than to sit here talking with us. There’s a pair of stocks there, George — very interesting. Old-fashioned stocks.”

“I don’t mind sitting here,” I said.

My uncle rose and in the most friendly way led me through the shop. He stood on his doorstep and jerked amiable directions to me.

“Ain’t it sleepy, George, eh? There’s the butcher’s dog over there, asleep in the road-half an hour from midday! If the last Trump sounded I don’t believe it would wake. Nobody would wake! The chaps up there in the churchyard — they’d just turn over and say: ‘Naar — you don’t catch us, you don’t! See?’.... Well, you’ll find the stocks just round that corner.”

He watched me out of sight.

So I never heard what they said about my father after all.

VI

When I returned, my uncle had in some remarkable way become

larger and central. “Tha’chu, George?” he cried, when the shop-door bell sounded. “Come right through”; and I found him, as it were, in the chairman’s place before the draped grate.

The three of them regarded me.

“We have been talking of making you a chemist, George,” said my uncle.

My mother looked at me. “I had hoped,” she said, “that Lady Drew would have done something for him—” She stopped.

“In what way?” said my uncle.

“She might have spoken to some one, got him into something perhaps....” She had the servant’s invincible persuasion that all good things are done by patronage.

“He is not the sort of boy for whom things are done,” she added, dismissing these dreams. “He doesn’t accommodate himself. When he thinks Lady Drew wishes a thing, he seems not to wish it. Towards Mr. Redgrave, too, he has been — disrespectful — he is like his father.”

“Who’s Mr. Redgrave?”

“The Vicar.”

“A bit independent?” said my uncle, briskly.

“Disobedient,” said my mother. “He has no idea of his place. He seems to think he can get on by slighting people and flouting them. He’ll learn perhaps before it is too late.”

My uncle stroked his cut chin and me. “Have you learnt any Latin?” he asked abruptly.

I said I had not.

“He’ll have to learn a little Latin,” he explained to my mother, “to qualify. H’m. He could go down to the chap at the grammar school here — it’s just been routed into existence again by the Charity Commissioners and have lessons.”

“What, me learn Latin!” I cried, with emotion.

“A little,” he said.

“I’ve always wanted” I said and; “LATIN!”

I had long been obsessed by the idea that having no Latin was a disadvantage in the world, and Archie Garvell had driven the point of this pretty earnestly home. The literature I had read at Bladesover had all tended that way. Latin had had a quality of emancipation for

me that I find it difficult to convey. And suddenly, when I had supposed all learning was at an end for me, I heard this!

"It's no good to you, of course," said my uncle, "except to pass exams with, but there you are!"

"You'll have to learn Latin because you have to learn Latin," said my mother, "not because you want to. And afterwards you will have to learn all sorts of other things...."

The idea that I was to go on learning, that to read and master the contents of books was still to be justifiable as a duty, overwhelmed all other facts. I had had it rather clear in my mind for some weeks that all that kind of opportunity might close to me for ever. I began to take a lively interest in this new project.

"Then shall I live here?" I asked, "with you, and study... as well as work in the shop?"

"That's the way of it," said my uncle.

I parted from my mother that day in a dream, so sudden and important was this new aspect of things to me. I was to learn Latin! Now that the humiliation of my failure at Bladesover was past for her, now that she had a little got over her first intense repugnance at this resort to my uncle and contrived something that seemed like a possible provision for my future, the tenderness natural to a parting far more significant than any of our previous partings crept into her manner.

She sat in the train to return, I remember, and I stood at the open door of her compartment, and neither of us knew how soon we should cease for ever to be a trouble to one another.

"You must be a good boy, George," she said. "You must learn.... And you mustn't set yourself up against those who are above you and better than you.... Or envy them."

"No, mother," I said.

I promised carelessly. Her eyes were fixed upon me. I was wondering whether I could by any means begin Latin that night.

Something touched her heart then, some thought, some memory; perhaps some premonition.... The solitary porter began slamming carriage doors.

"George" she said hastily, almost shamefully, "kiss me!"

I stepped up into her compartment as she bent downward.

She caught me in her arms quite eagerly, she pressed me to her — a strange thing for her to do. I perceived her eyes were extraordinarily bright, and then this brightness burst along the lower lids and rolled down her cheeks.

For the first and last time in my life I saw my mother's tears. Then she had gone, leaving me discomforted and perplexed, forgetting for a time even that I was to learn Latin, thinking of my mother as of something new and strange.

The thing recurred though I sought to dismiss it, it stuck itself into my memory against the day of fuller understanding. Poor, proud, habitual, sternly narrow soul! poor difficult and misunderstanding son! it was the first time that ever it dawned upon me that my mother also might perhaps feel.

VII

My mother died suddenly and, it was thought by Lady Drew, inconsiderately, the following spring. Her ladyship instantly fled to Folkestone with Miss Somerville and Fison, until the funeral should be over and my mother's successor installed.

My uncle took me over to the funeral. I remember there was a sort of prolonged crisis in the days preceding this because, directly he heard of my loss, he had sent a pair of check trousers to the Judkins people in London to be dyed black, and they did not come back in time. He became very excited on the third day, and sent a number of increasingly fiery telegrams without any result whatever, and succumbed next morning with a very ill grace to my aunt Susan's insistence upon the resources of his dress-suit. In my memory those black legs of his, in a particularly thin and shiny black cloth — for evidently his dress-suit dated from adolescent and slenderer days — straddle like the Colossus of Rhodes over my approach to my mother's funeral. Moreover, I was inconvenienced and distracted by a silk hat he had bought me, my first silk hat, much ennobled, as his was also, by a deep mourning band.

I remember, but rather indistinctly, my mother's white paneled housekeeper's room and the touch of oddness about it that she was not there, and the various familiar faces made strange by black, and I

seem to recall the exaggerated self-consciousness that arose out of their focussed attention. No doubt the sense of the new silk hat came and went and came again in my emotional chaos. Then something comes out clear and sorrowful, rises out clear and sheer from among all these rather base and inconsequent things, and once again I walk before all the other mourners close behind her coffin as it is carried along the churchyard path to her grave, with the old vicar's slow voice saying regretfully and unconvincingly above me, triumphant solemn things.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Never die! The day was a high and glorious morning in spring, and all the trees were budding and bursting into green. Everywhere there were blossoms and flowers; the pear trees and cherry trees in the sexton's garden were sunlit snow, there were nodding daffodils and early tulips in the graveyard beds, great multitudes of daisies, and everywhere the birds seemed singing. And in the middle was the brown coffin end, tilting on men's shoulders and half occluded by the vicar's Oxford hood.

And so we came to my mother's waiting grave.

For a time I was very observant, watching the coffin lowered, hearing the words of the ritual. It seemed a very curious business altogether.

Suddenly as the service drew to its end, I felt something had still to be said which had not been said, realised that she had withdrawn in silence, neither forgiving me nor hearing from me — those now lost assurances. Suddenly I knew I had not understood. Suddenly I saw her tenderly; remembered not so much tender or kindly things of her as her crossed wishes and the ways in which I had thwarted her. Surprisingly I realised that behind all her hardness and severity she had loved me, that I was the only thing she had ever loved and that until this moment I had never loved her. And now she was there and deaf and blind to me, pitifully defeated in her designs for me, covered from me so that she could not know....

I dug my nails into the palms of my hands, I set my teeth, but tears blinded me, sobs would have choked me had speech been

required of me. The old vicar read on, there came a mumbled response — and so on to the end. I wept as it were internally, and only when we had come out of the churchyard could I think and speak calmly again.

Stamped across this memory are the little black figures of my uncle and Rabbits, telling Avebury, the sexton and undertaker, that "it had all passed off very well — very well indeed."

VIII

That is the last I shall tell of Bladesover. The dropscene falls on that, and it comes no more as an actual presence into this novel. I did indeed go back there once again, but under circumstances quite immaterial to my story. But in a sense Bladesover has never left me; it is, as I said at the outset, one of those dominant explanatory impressions that make the framework of my mind. Bladesover illuminates England; it has become all that is spacious, dignified pretentious, and truly conservative in English life. It is my social datum. That is why I have drawn it here on so large a scale.

When I came back at last to the real Bladesover on an inconsequent visit, everything was far smaller than I could have supposed possible. It was as though everything had shivered and shrivelled a little at the Lichtenstein touch. The harp was still in the saloon, but there was a different grand piano with a painted lid and a metrostyle pianola, and an extraordinary quantity of artistic litter and bric-a-brac scattered about. There was the trail of the Bond Street showroom over it all. The furniture was still under chintz, but it wasn't the same sort of chintz although it pretended to be, and the lustre-dangling chandeliers had passed away. Lady Lichtenstein's books replaced the brown volumes I had browsed among — they were mostly presentation copies of contemporary novels and the National Review and the Empire Review, and the Nineteenth Century and after jostled current books on the tables — English new books in gaudy catchpenny "artistic" covers, French and Italian novels in yellow, German art handbooks of almost incredible ugliness. There were abundant evidences that her ladyship was playing with the Keltic renascence, and a great number of ugly cats

made of china — she “collected” china and stoneware cats — stood about everywhere — in all colours, in all kinds of deliberately comic, highly glazed distortion.

It is nonsense to pretend that finance makes any better aristocrats than rent. Nothing can make an aristocrat but pride, knowledge, training, and the sword. These people were no improvement on the Drews, none whatever. There was no effect of a beneficial replacement of passive unintelligent people by active intelligent ones. One felt that a smaller but more enterprising and intensely undignified variety of stupidity had replaced the large dullness of the old gentry, and that was all. Bladesover, I thought, had undergone just the same change between the seventies and the new century that had overtaken the dear old Times, and heaven knows how much more of the decorous British fabric. These Lichtensteins and their like seem to have no promise in them at all of any fresh vitality for the kingdom. I do not believe in their intelligence or their power — they have nothing new about them at all, nothing creative nor rejuvenescent, no more than a disorderly instinct of acquisition; and the prevalence of them and their kind is but a phase in the broad slow decay of the great social organism of England. They could not have made Bladesover they cannot replace it; they just happen to break out over it — saprophytically.

Well — that was my last impression of Bladesover.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE WIMBLEHURST APPRENTICESHIP

I

So far as I can remember now, except for that one emotional phase by the graveside, I passed through all these experiences rather callously. I had already, with the facility of youth, changed my world, ceased to think at all of the old school routine and put Bladesover aside for digestion at a latter stage. I took up my new world in Wimblehurst with the chemist's shop as its hub, set to work at Latin and materia medica, and concentrated upon the present with all my heart. Wimblehurst is an exceptionally quiet and grey Sussex town rare among south of England towns in being largely built of stone. I found something very agreeable and picturesque in its clean cobbled streets, its odd turnings and abrupt corners; and in the pleasant park that crowds up one side of the town. The whole place is under the Eastry dominion and it was the Eastry influence and dignity that kept its railway station a mile and three-quarters away. Eastry House is so close that it dominates the whole; one goes across the marketplace (with its old lock-up and stocks), past the great pre-reformation church, a fine grey shell, like some empty skull from which the life has fled, and there at once are the huge wrought-iron gates, and one peeps through them to see the facade of this place, very white and large and fine, down a long avenue of yews. Eastry was far greater than Bladesover and an altogether completer example of the eighteenth century system. It ruled not two villages, but a borough, that had sent its sons and cousins to parliament almost as a matter of right so long as its franchise endured. Every one was in the system, every one — except my uncle. He stood out and complained.

My uncle was the first real breach I found in the great front of Bladesover the world had presented me, for Chatham was not so much a breach as a confirmation. But my uncle had no respect for Bladesover and Eastry — none whatever. He did not believe in them. He was blind even to what they were. He propounded strange

phrases about them, he exfoliated and wagged about novel and incredible ideas.

"This place," said my uncle, surveying it from his open doorway in the dignified stillness of a summer afternoon, "wants Waking Up!"

I was sorting up patent medicines in the corner.

"I'd like to let a dozen young Americans loose into it," said my uncle. "Then we'd see."

I made a tick against Mother Shipton's Sleeping Syrup. We had cleared our forward stock.

"Things must be happening SOMEWHERE, George," he broke out in a querulously rising note as he came back into the little shop. He fiddled with the piled dummy boxes of fancy soap and scent and so forth that adorned the end of the counter, then turned about petulantly, stuck his hands deeply into his pockets and withdrew one to scratch his head. "I must do SOMETHING," he said. "I can't stand it.

"I must invent something. And shove it.... I could.

"Or a play. There's a deal of money in a play, George. What would you think of me writing a play eh?... There's all sorts of things to be done.

"Or the stog-igschange."

He fell into that meditative whistling of his.

"Sac-ramental wine!" he swore, "this isn't the world — it's Cold Mutton Fat! That's what Wimblehurst is! Cold Mutton Fat! — dead and stiff! And I'm buried in it up to the arm pits. Nothing ever happens, nobody wants things to happen 'scept me! Up in London, George, things happen. America! I wish to Heaven, George, I'd been born American — where things hum.

"What can one do here? How can one grow? While we're sleepin' here with our Capital oozing away into Lord Eastry's pockets for rent-men are up there...." He indicated London as remotely over the top of the dispensing counter, and then as a scene of great activity by a whirl of the hand and a wink and a meaning smile at me.

"What sort of things do they do?" I asked.

"Rush about," he said. "Do things! Somethin' glorious. There's cover gambling. Ever heard of that, George?" He drew the air in through his teeth. "You put down a hundred say, and buy ten

thousand pounds worth. See? That's a cover of one per cent. Things go up one, you sell, realise cent per cent; down, whiff, it's gone! Try again! Cent per cent, George, every day. Men are made or done for in an hour. And the shoutin'! Zzzz.... Well, that's one way, George. Then another way — there's Corners!"

"They're rather big things, aren't they?" I ventured.

"Oh, if you go in for wheat or steel — yes. But suppose you tackled a little thing, George. Just some little thing that only needed a few thousands. Drugs for example. Shoved all you had into it — staked your liver on it, so to speak. Take a drug — take ipecac, for example. Take a lot of ipecac. Take all there is! See? There you are! There aren't unlimited supplies of ipecacuanha — can't be! — and it's a thing people must have. Then quinine again! You watch your chance, wait for a tropical war breaking out, let's say, and collar all the quinine. Where ARE they? Must have quinine, you know. Eh? Zzzz.

"Lord! there's no end of things — no end of little things. Dill-water — all the suffering babes yowling for it. Eucalyptus again — cascara — witch hazel — menthol — all the toothache things. Then there's antiseptics, and curare, cocaine...."

"Rather a nuisance to the doctors," I reflected.

"They got to look out for themselves. By Jove, yes. They'll do you if they can, and you do them. Like brigands. That makes it romantic. That's the Romance of Commerce, George. You're in the mountains there! Think of having all the quinine in the world, and some millionaire's pampered wife gone ill with malaria, eh? That's a squeeze, George, eh? Eh? Millionaire on his motor car outside, offering you any price you liked. That 'ud wake up Wimblehurst.... Lord! You haven't an Idea down here. Not an idea. Zzzz."

He passed into a rapt dream, from which escaped such fragments as: "Fifty per cent. advance sir; security — to-morrow. Zzzz."

The idea of cornering a drug struck upon my mind then as a sort of irresponsible monkey trick that no one would ever be permitted to do in reality. It was the sort of nonsense one would talk to make Ewart laugh and set him going on to still odder possibilities. I thought it was part of my uncle's way of talking. But I've learnt differently since. The whole trend of modern money-making is to

foresee something that will presently be needed and put it out of reach, and then to haggle yourself wealthy. You buy up land upon which people will presently want to build houses, you secure rights that will bar vitally important developments, and so on, and so on. Of course the naive intelligence of a boy does not grasp the subtler developments of human inadequacy. He begins life with a disposition to believe in the wisdom of grown-up people, he does not realise how casual and disingenuous has been the development of law and custom, and he thinks that somewhere in the state there is a power as irresistible as a head master's to check mischievous and foolish enterprises of every sort. I will confess that when my uncle talked of cornering quinine, I had a clear impression that any one who contrived to do that would pretty certainly go to jail. Now I know that any one who could really bring it off would be much more likely to go to the House of Lords!

My uncle ranged over the gilt labels of his bottles and drawers for a while, dreaming of corners in this and that. But at last he reverted to Wimblehurst again.

"You got to be in London when these things are in hand. Down here — !

"Jee-rusalem!" he cried. "Why did I plant myself here? Everything's done. The game's over. Here's Lord Eastry, and he's got everything, except what his lawyers get, and before you get any more change this way you'll have to dynamite him — and them. HE doesn't want anything more to happen. Why should he? Any chance 'ud be a loss to him. He wants everything to burble along and burble along and go on as it's going for the next ten thousand years, Eastry after Eastry, one parson down another come, one grocer dead, get another! Any one with any ideas better go away. They HAVE gone away! Look at all these blessed people in this place! Look at 'em! All fast asleep, doing their business out of habit — in a sort of dream, Stuffed men would do just as well — just. They've all shook down into their places. THEY don't want anything to happen either. They're all broken in. There you are! Only what are they all alive for?...

"Why can't they get a clockwork chemist?"

He concluded as he often concluded these talks. "I must invent

something, — that's about what I must do. Zzzz. Some convenience. Something people want.... Strike out.... You can't think, George, of anything everybody wants and hasn't got? I mean something you could turn out retail under a shilling, say? Well, YOU think, whenever you haven't got anything better to do. See?"

II

So I remember my uncle in that first phase, young, but already a little fat, restless, fretful, garrulous, putting in my fermenting head all sorts of discrepant ideas. Certainly he was educational....

For me the years at Wimblehurst were years of pretty active growth. Most of my leisure and much of my time in the shop I spent in study. I speedily mastered the modicum of Latin necessary for my qualifying examinations, and — a little assisted by the Government Science and Art Department classes that were held in the Grammar School — went on with my mathematics. There were classes in physics, in chemistry, in mathematics and machine drawing, and I took up these subjects with considerable avidity. Exercise I got chiefly in the form of walks. There was some cricket in the summer and football in the winter sustained by young men's clubs that levied a parasitic blackmail of the big people and the sitting member, but I was never very keen at these games. I didn't find any very close companions among the youths of Wimblehurst. They struck me, after my cockney schoolmates, as loutish and slow, servile and furtive, spiteful and mean. WE used to swagger, but these countrymen dragged their feet and hated an equal who didn't; we talked loud, but you only got the real thoughts of Wimblehurst in a knowing undertone behind its hand. And even then they weren't much in the way of thoughts.

No, I didn't like those young countrymen, and I'm no believer in the English countryside under the Bladesover system as a breeding ground for honourable men. One hears a frightful lot of nonsense about the Rural Exodus and the degeneration wrought by town life upon our population. To my mind, the English townsman, even in the slums, is infinitely better spiritually, more courageous, more imaginative and cleaner, than his agricultural cousin. I've seen them

both when they didn't think they were being observed, and I know. There was something about my Wimblehurst companions that disgusted me. It's hard to define. Heaven knows that at that cockney boarding-school at Goudhurst we were coarse enough; the Wimblehurst youngsters had neither words nor courage for the sort of thing we used to do — for our bad language, for example; but, on the other hand, they displayed a sort of sluggish, real lewdness, lewdness is the word — a baseness of attitude. Whatever we exiled urbans did at Goudhurst was touched with something, however coarse, of romantic imagination. We had read the Boys of England, and told each other stories. In the English countryside there are no books at all, no songs, no drama, no valiant sin even; all these things have never come or they were taken away and hidden generations ago, and the imagination aborts and bestialises. That, I think, is where the real difference against the English rural man lies. It is because I know this that I do not share in the common repinings because our countryside is being depopulated, because our population is passing through the furnace of the towns. They starve, they suffer, no doubt, but they come out of it hardened, they come out of it with souls.

Of an evening the Wimblehurst blade, shiny-faced from a wash and with some loud finery, a coloured waistcoat or a vivid tie, would betake himself to the Eastry Arms billiard-room, or to the bar parlour of some minor pub where nap could be played. One soon sickened of his slow knowingness, the cunning observation of his deadened eyes, his idea of a "good story," always, always told in undertones, poor dirty worm! his shrewd, elaborate maneuvers for some petty advantage, a drink to the good or such-like deal. There rises before my eyes as I write, young Hopley Dodd, the son of the Wimblehurst auctioneer, the pride of Wimblehurst, its finest flower, with his fur waistcoat and his bulldog pipe, his riding breeches — he had no horse — and his gaiters, as he used to sit, leaning forward and watching the billiard-table from under the brim of his artfully tilted hat. A half-dozen phrases constituted his conversation: "hard lines!" he used to say, and "Good baazness," in a bass bleat. Moreover, he had a long slow whistle that was esteemed the very cream of humorous comment. Night after night he was there.

Also you knew he would not understand that *I* could play billiards, and regarded every stroke I made as a fluke. For a beginner I didn't play so badly, I thought. I'm not so sure now; that was my opinion at the time. But young Dodd's scepticism and the "good baazness" finally cured me of my disposition to frequent the Eastry Arms, and so these noises had their value in my world.

I made no friends among the young men of the place at all, and though I was entering upon adolescence I have no love-affair to tell of here. Not that I was not waking up to that aspect of life in my middle teens I did, indeed, in various slightly informal ways scrape acquaintance with casual Wimblehurst girls; with a little dressmaker's apprentice I got upon shyly speaking terms, and a pupil teacher in the National School went further and was "talked about" in connection with me but I was not by any means touched by any reality of passion for either of these young people; love — love as yet came to me only in my dreams. I only kissed these girls once or twice. They rather disconcerted than developed those dreams. They were so clearly not "it." I shall have much to say of love in this story, but I may break it to the reader now that it is my role to be a rather ineffectual lover. Desire I knew well enough — indeed, too well; but love I have been shy of. In all my early enterprises in the war of the sexes, I was torn between the urgency of the body and a habit of romantic fantasy that wanted every phase of the adventure to be generous and beautiful. And I had a curiously haunting memory of Beatrice, of her kisses in the bracken and her kiss upon the wall, that somehow pitched the standard too high for Wimblehurst's opportunities. I will not deny I did in a boyish way attempt a shy, rude adventure or so in love-making at Wimblehurst; but through these various influences, I didn't bring things off to any extent at all. I left behind me no devastating memories, no splendid reputation. I came away at last, still inexperienced and a little thwarted, with only a natural growth of interest and desire in sexual things.

If I fell in love with any one in Wimblehurst it was with my aunt. She treated me with a kindliness that was only half maternal — she petted my books, she knew about my certificates, she made fun of me in a way that stirred my heart to her. Quite unconsciously I grew fond of her....

My adolescent years at Wimblehurst were on the whole laborious, uneventful years that began in short jackets and left me in many ways nearly a man, years so uneventful that the Calculus of Variations is associated with one winter, and an examination in Physics for Science and Art department Honours marks an epoch. Many divergent impulses stirred within me, but the master impulse was a grave young disposition to work and learn and thereby in some not very clearly defined way get out of the Wimblehurst world into which I had fallen. I wrote with some frequency to Ewart, self-conscious, but, as I remember them, not intelligent letters, dated in Latin and with lapses into Latin quotation that roused Ewart to parody. There was something about me in those days more than a little priggish. But it was, to do myself justice, something more than the petty pride of learning. I had a very grave sense of discipline and preparation that I am not ashamed at all to remember. I was serious. More serious than I am at the present time. More serious, indeed, than any adult seems to be. I was capable then of efforts — of nobilities.... They are beyond me now. I don't see why, at forty, I shouldn't confess I respect my own youth. I had dropped being a boy quite abruptly. I thought I was presently to go out into a larger and quite important world and do significant things there. I thought I was destined to do something definite to a world that had a definite purpose. I did not understand then, as I do now, that life was to consist largely in the world's doing things to me. Young people never do seem to understand that aspect of things. And, as I say, among my educational influences my uncle, all unsuspected, played a leading part, and perhaps among other things gave my discontent with Wimblehurst, my desire to get away from that clean and picturesque emptiness, a form and expression that helped to emphasise it. In a way that definition made me patient. "Presently I shall get to London," I said, echoing him.

I remember him now as talking, always talking, in those days. He talked to me of theology, he talked of politics, of the wonders of science and the marvels of art, of the passions and the affections, of the immortality of the soul and the peculiar actions of drugs; but predominantly and constantly he talked of getting on, of enterprises, of inventions and great fortunes, of Rothschilds, silver kings,

Vanderbilts, Goulds, flotations, realisations and the marvelous ways of Chance with men — in all localities, that is to say, that are not absolutely sunken to the level of Cold Mutton Fat.

When I think of those early talks, I figure him always in one of three positions. Either we were in the dispensing lair behind a high barrier, he pounding up things in a mortar perhaps, and I rolling pill-stuff into long rolls and cutting it up with a sort of broad, fluted knife, or he stood looking out of the shop door against the case of sponges and spray-diffusers, while I surveyed him from behind the counter, or he leant against the little drawers behind the counter, and I hovered dusting in front. The thought of those early days brings back to my nostrils the faint smell of scent that was always in the air, marbled now with streaks of this drug and now of that, and to my eyes the rows of jejune glass bottles with gold labels, mirror-reflected, that stood behind him. My aunt, I remember, used sometimes to come into the shop in a state of aggressive sprightliness, a sort of connubial ragging expedition, and get much fun over the abbreviated Latinity of those gilt inscriptions. "Ol Amjig, George," she would read derisively, "and he pretends it's almond oil! Snap! — and that's mustard. Did you ever, George?

"Look at him, George, looking dignified. I'd like to put an old label on to him round the middle like his bottles are, with Ol Pondo on it. That's Latin for Impostor, George MUST be. He'd look lovely with a stopper."

"YOU want a stopper," said my uncle, projecting his face....

My aunt, dear soul, was in those days quite thin and slender, with a delicate rosebud completion and a disposition to connubial badinage, to a sort of gentle skylarking. There was a silvery ghost of lisping in her speech. She was a great humourist, and as the constraint of my presence at meals wore off, I became more and more aware of a filmy but extensive net of nonsense she had woven about her domestic relations until it had become the reality of her life. She affected a derisive attitude to the world at large and applied the epithet "old" to more things than I have ever heard linked to it before or since. "Here's the old news-paper," she used to say — to my uncle. "Now don't go and get it in the butter, you silly old Sardine!"

“What’s the day of the week, Susan?” my uncle would ask.

“Old Monday, Sossidge,” she would say, and add, “I got all my Old Washing to do. Don’t I KNOW it!”...

She had evidently been the wit and joy of a large circle of schoolfellows, and this style had become a second nature with her. It made her very delightful to me in that quiet place. Her customary walk even had a sort of hello! in it. Her chief preoccupation in life was, I believe, to make my uncle laugh, and when by some new nickname, some new quaintness or absurdity, she achieved that end, she was, behind a mask of sober amazement, the happiest woman on earth. My uncle’s laugh when it did come, I must admit was, as Baedeker says, “rewarding.” It began with gusty blowings and snortings, and opened into a clear “Ha ha!” but in fullest development it included, in those youthful days, falling about anyhow and doubling up tightly, and whackings of the stomach, and tears and cries of anguish. I never in my life heard my uncle laugh to his maximum except at her; he was commonly too much in earnest for that, and he didn’t laugh much at all, to my knowledge, after those early years. Also she threw things at him to an enormous extent in her resolve to keep things lively in spite of Wimblehurst; sponges out of stock she threw, cushions, balls of paper, clean washing, bread; and once up the yard when they thought that I and the errand boy and the diminutive maid of all work were safely out of the way, she smashed a boxful of eight-ounce bottles I had left to drain, assaulting my uncle with a new soft broom. Sometimes she would shy things at me — but not often. There seemed always laughter round and about her — all three of us would share hysterics at times — and on one occasion the two of them came home from church shockingly ashamed of themselves, because of a storm of mirth during the sermon. The vicar, it seems, had tried to blow his nose with a black glove as well as the customary pocket-handkerchief. And afterwards she had picked up her own glove by the finger, and looking innocently but intently sideways, had suddenly by this simple expedient exploded my uncle altogether. We had it all over again at dinner.

“But it shows you,” cried my uncle, suddenly becoming grave, “what Wimblehurst is, to have us all laughing at a little thing like

that! We weren't the only ones that giggled. Not by any means! And, Lord! it was funny!"

Socially, my uncle and aunt were almost completely isolated. In places like Wimblehurst the tradesmen's lives always are isolated socially, all of them, unless they have a sister or a bosom friend among the other wives, but the husbands met in various bar-parlours or in the billiard-room of the Eastry Arms. But my uncle, for the most part, spent his evenings at home. When first he arrived in Wimblehurst I think he had spread his effect of abounding ideas and enterprise rather too aggressively; and Wimblehurst, after a temporary subjugation, had rebelled and done its best to make a butt of him. His appearance in a public-house led to a pause in any conversation that was going on.

"Come to tell us about everything, Mr. Pond'revo?" some one would say politely.

"You wait," my uncle used to answer, disconcerted, and sulk for the rest of his visit.

Or some one with an immense air of innocence would remark to the world generally, "They're talkin' of rebuildin' Wimblehurst all over again, I'm told. Anybody heard anything of it? Going to make it a reg'lar smartgoin', enterprisin' place — kind of Crystal Pallas."

"Earthquake and a pestilence before you get that," my uncle would mutter, to the infinite delight of every one, and add something inaudible about "Cold Mutton Fat."...

III

We were torn apart by a financial accident to my uncle of which I did not at first grasp the full bearings. He had developed what I regarded as an innocent intellectual recreation which he called stock-market meteorology. I think he got the idea from one use of curves in the graphic presentation of associated variations that he saw me plotting. He secured some of my squared paper and, having cast about for a time, decided to trace the rise and fall of certain lines and railways. "There's something in this, George," he said, and I little dreamt that among other things that were in it, was the whole of his spare money and most of what my mother had left to him in trust for me.

“It’s as plain as can be,” he said. “See, here’s one system of waves and here’s another! These are prices for Union Pacifics — extending over a month. Now next week, mark my words, they’ll be down one whole point. We’re getting near the steep part of the curve again. See? It’s absolutely scientific. It’s verifiable. Well, and apply it! You buy in the hollow and sell on the crest, and there you are!”

I was so convinced of the triviality of this amusement that to find at last that he had taken it in the most disastrous earnest overwhelmed me.

He took me for a long walk to break it to me, over the hills towards Yare and across the great gorse commons by Hazelbrow.

“There are ups and downs in life, George,” he said — halfway across that great open space, and paused against the sky.... “I left out one factor in the Union Pacific analysis.”

“DID you?” I said, struck by the sudden chance in his voice. “But you don’t mean?”

I stopped and turned on him in the narrow sandy rut of pathway and he stopped likewise.

“I do, George. I DO mean. It’s bust me! I’m a bankrupt here and now.”

“Then — ?”

“The shop’s bust too. I shall have to get out of that.”

“And me?”

“Oh, you! — YOU’RE all right. You can transfer your apprenticeship, and — er — well, I’m not the sort of man to be careless with trust funds, you can be sure. I kept that aspect in mind. There’s some of it left George — trust me! — quite a decent little sum.”

“But you and aunt?”

“It isn’t QUITE the way we meant to leave Wimblehurst, George; but we shall have to go. Sale; all the things shoved about and ticketed — lot a hundred and one. Ugh!... It’s been a larky little house in some ways. The first we had. Furnishing — a spree in its way.... Very happy...” His face winced at some memory. “Let’s go on, George,” he said shortly, near choking, I could see.

I turned my back on him, and did not look round again for a little while.

“That’s how it is, you see, George.” I heard him after a time.

When we were back in the high road again he came alongside, and for a time we walked in silence.

“Don’t say anything home yet,” he said presently. “Fortunes of War. I got to pick the proper time with Susan — else she’ll get depressed. Not that she isn’t a first-rate brick whatever comes along.”

“All right,” I said, “I’ll be careful”; and it seemed to me for the time altogether too selfish to bother him with any further inquiries about his responsibility as my trustee. He gave a little sigh of relief at my note of assent, and was presently talking quite cheerfully of his plans.... But he had, I remember, one lapse into moodiness that came and went suddenly. “Those others!” he said, as though the thought had stung him for the first time.

“What others?” I asked.

“Damn them!” said he.

“But what others?”

“All those damned stick-in-the-mud-and-die-slowly tradespeople: Ruck, the butcher, Marbel, the grocer. Snape! Gord! George, HOW they’ll grin!”

I thought him over in the next few weeks, and I remember now in great detail the last talk we had together before he handed over the shop and me to his successor. For he had the good luck to sell his business, “lock, stock, and barrel” — in which expression I found myself and my indentures included. The horrors of a sale by auction of the furniture even were avoided.

I remember that either coming or going on that occasion, Ruck, the butcher, stood in his doorway and regarded us with a grin that showed his long teeth.

“You half-witted hog!” said my uncle. “You grinning hyaena”; and then, “Pleasant day, Mr. Ruck.”

“Goin’ to make your fortun’ in London, then?” said Mr. Ruck, with slow enjoyment.

That last excursion took us along the causeway to Beeching, and so up the downs and round almost as far as Steadhurst, home. My moods, as we went, made a mingled web. By this time I had really grasped the fact that my uncle had, in plain English, robbed me; the little accumulations of my mother, six hundred pounds and more,

that would have educated me and started me in business, had been eaten into and was mostly gone into the unexpected hollow that ought to have been a crest of the Union Pacific curve, and of the remainder he still gave no account. I was too young and inexperienced to insist on this or know how to get it, but the thought of it all made streaks of decidedly black anger in that scheme of interwoven feelings. And you know, I was also acutely sorry for him — almost as sorry as I was for my aunt Susan. Even then I had quite found him out. I knew him to be weaker than myself; his incurable, irresponsible childishness was as clear to me then as it was on his deathbed, his redeeming and excusing imaginative silliness. Through some odd mental twist perhaps I was disposed to exonerate him even at the cost of blaming my poor old mother who had left things in his untrustworthy hands.

I should have forgiven him altogether, I believe, if he had been in any manner apologetic to me; but he wasn't that. He kept reassuring me in a way I found irritating. Mostly, however, his solicitude was for Aunt Susan and himself.

"It's these Crises, George," he said, "try Character. Your aunt's come out well, my boy."

He made meditative noises for a space.

"Had her cry of course," — the thing had been only too painfully evident to me in her eyes and swollen face— "who wouldn't? But now — buoyant again!... She's a Corker.

"We'll be sorry to leave the little house of course. It's a bit like Adam and Eve, you know. Lord! what a chap old Milton was!

"'The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.'

"It sounds, George.... Providence their guide!... Well — thank goodness there's no imeedgit prospect of either Cain or Abel!"

"After all, it won't be so bad up there. Not the scenery, perhaps, or the air we get here, but — LIFE! We've got very comfortable little rooms, very comfortable considering, and I shall rise. We're not done yet, we're not beaten; don't think that, George. I shall pay twenty shillings in the pound before I've done — you mark my words, George, — twenty — five to you.... I got this situation within twenty-four hours — others offered. It's an important firm — one of the best

in London. I looked to that. I might have got four or five shillings a week more — elsewhere. Quarters I could name. But I said to them plainly, wages to go on with, but opportunity's my game — development. We understood each other."

He threw out his chest, and the little round eyes behind his glasses rested valiantly on imaginary employers.

We would go on in silence for a space while he revised and restated that encounter. Then he would break out abruptly with some banal phrase.

"The Battle of Life, George, my boy," he would cry, or "Ups and Downs!"

He ignored or waived the poor little attempts I made to ascertain my own position. "That's all right," he would say; or, "Leave all that to me. I'LL look after them." And he would drift away towards the philosophy and moral of the situation. What was I to do?

"Never put all your resources into one chance, George; that's the lesson I draw from this. Have forces in reserve. It was a hundred to one, George, that I was right — a hundred to one. I worked it out afterwards. And here we are spiked on the off-chance. If I'd have only kept back a little, I'd have had it on U.P. next day, like a shot, and come out on the rise. There you are!"

His thoughts took a graver turn.

"It's where you'll bump up against Chance like this, George, that you feel the need of religion. Your hard-and-fast scientific men — your Spencers and Huxleys — they don't understand that. I do. I've thought of it a lot lately — in bed and about. I was thinking of it this morning while I shaved. It's not irreverent for me to say it, I hope — but God comes in on the off-chance, George. See? Don't you be too cocksure of anything, good or bad. That's what I make out of it. I could have sworn. Well, do you think I — particular as I am — would have touched those Union Pacifics with trust money at all, if I hadn't thought it a thoroughly good thing — good without spot or blemish?... And it was bad!

"It's a lesson to me. You start in to get a hundred percent. and you come out with that. It means, in a way, a reproof for Pride. I've thought of that, George — in the Night Watches. I was thinking this morning when I was shaving, that that's where the good of it all

comes in. At the bottom I'm a mystic in these affairs. You calculate you're going to do this or that, but at bottom who knows at all WHAT he's doing? When you most think you're doing things, they're being done right over your head. YOU'RE being done — in a sense. Take a hundred-to one chance, or one to a hundred — what does it matter? You're being Led."

It's odd that I heard this at the time with unutterable contempt, and now that I recall it — well, I ask myself, what have I got better?

"I wish," said I, becoming for a moment outrageous, "YOU were being Led to give me some account of my money, uncle."

"Not without a bit of paper to figure on, George, I can't. But you trust me about that never fear. You trust me."

And in the end I had to.

I think the bankruptcy hit my aunt pretty hard. There was, so far as I can remember now, a complete cessation of all those cheerful outbreaks of elasticity, no more skylarking in the shop nor scampering about the house. But there was no fuss that I saw, and only little signs in her complexion of the fits of weeping that must have taken her. She didn't cry at the end, though to me her face with its strain of self-possession was more pathetic than any weeping. "Well" she said to me as she came through the shop to the cab, "Here's old orf, George! Orf to Mome number two! Good-bye!" And she took me in her arms and kissed me and pressed me to her. Then she dived straight for the cab before I could answer her.

My uncle followed, and he seemed to me a trifle too valiant and confident in his bearing for reality. He was unusually white in the face. He spoke to his successor at the counter. "Here we go!" he said. "One down, the other up. You'll find it a quiet little business so long as you run it on quiet lines — a nice quiet little business. There's nothing more? No? Well, if you want to know anything write to me. I'll always explain fully. Anything — business, place or people. You'll find Pil Antibil. a little overstocked by-the-by, I found it soothed my mind the day before yesterday making 'em, and I made 'em all day. Thousands! And where's George? Ah! there you are! I'll write to you, George, FULLY, about all that affair. Fully!"

It became clear to me as if for the first time, that I was really parting from my aunt Susan. I went out on to the pavement and saw

her head craned forward, her wide-open blue eyes and her little face intent on the shop that had combined for her all the charms of a big doll's house and a little home of her very own. "Good-bye!" she said to it and to me. Our eyes met for a moment — perplexed. My uncle bustled out and gave a few totally unnecessary directions to the cabman and got in beside her. "All right?" asked the driver. "Right," said I; and he woke up the horse with a flick of his whip. My aunt's eyes surveyed me again. "Stick to your old science and things, George, and write and tell me when they make you a Professor," she said cheerfully.

She stared at me for a second longer with eyes growing wider and brighter and a smile that had become fixed, glanced again at the bright little shop still saying "Ponderevo" with all the emphasis of its fascia, and then flopped back hastily out of sight of me into the recesses of the cab. Then it had gone from before me and I beheld Mr. Snape, the hairdresser, inside his store regarding its departure with a quiet satisfaction and exchanging smiles and significant headshakes with Mr. Marbel.

IV

I was left, I say, as part of the lock, stock, and barrel, at Wimblehurst with my new master, a Mr. Mantell; who plays no part in the progress of this story except in so far as he effaced my uncle's traces. So soon as the freshness of this new personality faded, I began to find Wimblehurst not only a dull but a lonely place, and to miss my aunt Susan immensely. The advertisements of the summer terms for Cough Linctus were removed; the bottles of coloured water — red, green, and yellow — restored to their places; the horse announcing veterinary medicine, which my uncle, sizzling all the while, had coloured in careful portraiture of a Goodwood favourite, rewhitened; and I turned myself even more resolutely than before to Latin (until the passing of my preliminary examination enabled me to drop that), and then to mathematics and science.

There were classes in Electricity and Magnetism at the Grammar School. I took a little "elementary" prize in that in my first year and a medal in my third; and in Chemistry and Human Physiology and

Sound, Light and Heat, I did well. There was also a lighter, more discursive subject called Physiography, in which one ranged among the sciences and encountered Geology as a process of evolution from Eozoon to Eastry House, and Astronomy as a record of celestial movements of the most austere and invariable integrity. I learnt out of badly-written, condensed little text-books, and with the minimum of experiment, but still I learnt. Only thirty years ago it was, and I remember I learnt of the electric light as an expensive, impracticable toy, the telephone as a curiosity, electric traction as a practical absurdity. There was no argon, no radium, no phagocytes — at least to my knowledge, and aluminium was a dear, infrequent metal. The fastest ships in the world went then at nineteen knots, and no one but a lunatic here and there ever thought it possible that men might fly.

Many things have happened since then, but the last glance I had of Wimblehurst two years ago remarked no change whatever in its pleasant tranquillity. They had not even built any fresh houses — at least not actually in the town, though about the station there had been some building. But it was a good place to do work in, for all its quiescence. I was soon beyond the small requirements of the Pharmaceutical Society's examination, and as they do not permit candidates to sit for that until one and twenty, I was presently filling up my time and preventing my studies becoming too desultory by making an attack upon the London University degree of Bachelor of Science, which impressed me then as a very splendid but almost impossible achievement. The degree in mathematics and chemistry appealed to me as particularly congenial — albeit giddily inaccessible. I set to work. I had presently to arrange a holiday and go to London to matriculate, and so it was I came upon my aunt and uncle again. In many ways that visit marked an epoch. It was my first impression of London at all. I was then nineteen, and by a conspiracy of chances my nearest approach to that human wilderness had been my brief visit to Chatham. Chatham too had been my largest town. So that I got London at last with an exceptional freshness of effect, as the sudden revelation of a whole unsuspected other side to life.

I came to it on a dull and smoky day by the South Eastern Railway, and our train was half an hour late, stopping and going on and stopping again. I marked beyond Chiselhurst the growing

multitude of villas, and so came stage by stage through multiplying houses and diminishing interspaces of market garden and dingy grass to regions of interlacing railway lines, big factories, gasometers and wide reeking swamps of dingy little homes, more of them and more and more. The number of these and their dinginess and poverty increased, and here rose a great public house and here a Board School and there a gaunt factory; and away to the east there loomed for a time a queer, incongruous forest of masts and spars. The congestion of houses intensified and piled up presently into tenements; I marveled more and more at this boundless world of dingy people; whiffs of industrial smell, of leather, of brewing, drifted into the carriage; the sky darkened, I rumbled thunderously over bridges, van-crowded streets, peered down on and crossed the Thames with an abrupt eclat of sound. I got an effect of tall warehouses, of grey water, barge crowded, of broad banks of indescribable mud, and then I was in Cannon Street Station — a monstrous dirty cavern with trains packed across its vast floor and more porters standing along the platform than I had ever been in my life before. I alighted with my portmanteau and struggled along, realising for the first time just how small and weak I could still upon occasion feel. In this world, I felt, an Honours medal in Electricity and magnetism counted for nothing at all.

Afterwards I drove in a cab down a canon of rushing street between high warehouses, and peeped up astonished at the blackened greys of Saint Paul's. The traffic of Cheapside — it was mostly in horse omnibuses in those days — seemed stupendous, its roar was stupendous; I wondered where the money came from to employ so many cabs, what industry could support the endless jostling stream of silk-hatted, frock-coated, hurrying men. Down a turning I found the Temperance Hotel Mr. Mantell had recommended to me. The porter in a green uniform who took over my portmanteau, seemed, I thought, to despise me a good deal.

V

Matriculation kept me for four full days and then came an afternoon to spare, and I sought out Tottenham Court Road through a

perplexing network of various and crowded streets. But this London was vast! it was endless! it seemed the whole world had changed into packed frontages and hoardings and street spaces. I got there at last and made inquiries, and I found my uncle behind the counter of the pharmacy he managed, an establishment that did not impress me as doing a particularly high-class trade. “Lord!” he said at the sight of me, “I was wanting something to happen!”

He greeted me warmly. I had grown taller, and he, I thought, had grown shorter and smaller and rounder but otherwise he was unchanged. He struck me as being rather shabby, and the silk hat he produced and put on, when, after mysterious negotiations in the back premises he achieved his freedom to accompany me, was past its first youth; but he was as buoyant and confident as ever.

“Come to ask me about all THAT,” he cried. “I’ve never written yet.”

“Oh, among other things,” said I, with a sudden regrettable politeness, and waived the topic of his trusteeship to ask after my aunt Susan.

“We’ll have her out of it,” he said suddenly; “we’ll go somewhere. We don’t get you in London every day.”

“It’s my first visit,” I said, “I’ve never seen London before”; and that made him ask me what I thought of it, and the rest of the talk was London, London, to the exclusion of all smaller topics. He took me up the Hampstead Road almost to the Cobden statue, plunged into some back streets to the left, and came at last to a blistered front door that responded to his latch-key, one of a long series of blistered front doors with fanlights and apartment cards above. We found ourselves in a drab-coloured passage that was not only narrow and dirty but desolatingly empty, and then he opened a door and revealed my aunt sitting at the window with a little sewing-machine on a bamboo occasional table before her, and “work” — a plum-coloured walking dress I judged at its most analytical stage — scattered over the rest of the apartment.

At the first glance I judged my aunt was plumper than she had been, but her complexion was just as fresh and her China blue eye as bright as in the old days.

“London,” she said, didn’t “get blacks” on her.

She still “cheeked” my uncle, I was pleased to find. “What are you old Poking in for at THIS time — Gubbitt?” she said when he appeared, and she still looked with a practised eye for the facetious side of things. When she saw me behind him, she gave a little cry and stood up radiant. Then she became grave.

I was surprised at my own emotion in seeing her. She held me at arm’s length for a moment, a hand on each shoulder, and looked at me with a sort of glad scrutiny. She seemed to hesitate, and then pecked little kiss off my cheek.

“You’re a man, George,” she said, as she released me, and continued to look at me for a while.

Their menage was one of a very common type in London. They occupied what is called the dining-room floor of a small house, and they had the use of a little inconvenient kitchen in the basement that had once been scullery. The two rooms, bedroom behind and living room in front, were separated by folding-doors that were never now thrown back, and indeed, in the presence of a visitor, not used at all. There was of course no bathroom or anything of that sort available, and there was no water supply except to the kitchen below. My aunt did all the domestic work, though she could have afforded to pay for help if the build of the place had not rendered that inconvenient to the pitch of impossibility. There was no sort of help available except that of indoor servants, for whom she had no accommodation. The furniture was their own; it was partly secondhand, but on the whole it seemed cheerful to my eye, and my aunt’s bias for cheap, gay-figured muslin had found ample score. In many ways I should think it must have been an extremely inconvenient and cramped sort of home, but at the time I took it, as I was taking everything, as being there and in the nature of things. I did not see the oddness of solvent decent people living in a habitation so clearly neither designed nor adapted for their needs, so wasteful of labour and so devoid of beauty as this was, and it is only now as I describe this that I find myself thinking of the essential absurdity of an intelligent community living in such makeshift homes. It strikes me now as the next thing to wearing second-hand clothes.

You see it was a natural growth, part of that system to which Bladesover, I hold, is the key. There are wide regions of London,

miles of streets of houses, that appear to have been originally designed for prosperous-middle-class homes of the early Victorian type. There must have been a perfect fury of such building in the thirties, forties, and fifties. Street after street must have been rushed into being, Campden Town way, Pentonville way, Brompton way, West Kensington way in the Victoria region and all over the minor suburbs of the south side.

I am doubtful if many of these houses had any long use as the residences of single families if from the very first almost their tenants did not makeshift and take lodgers and sublet. They were built with basements, in which their servants worked and lived — servants of a more submissive and troglodytic generation who did not mind stairs. The dining-room (with folding doors) was a little above the ground level, and in that the wholesome boiled and roast with damp boiled potatoes and then pie to follow, was consumed and the numerous family read and worked in the evening, and above was the drawing-room (also with folding doors), where the infrequent callers were received. That was the vision at which those industrious builders aimed. Even while these houses were being run up, the threads upon the loom of fate were shaping to abolish altogether the type of household that would have fitted them. Means of transit were developing to carry the moderately prosperous middle-class families out of London, education and factory employment were whittling away at the supply of rough, hardworking, obedient girls who would stand the subterranean drudgery of these places, new classes of hard-up middle-class people such as my uncle, employees of various types, were coming into existence, for whom no homes were provided. None of these classes have ideas of what they ought to be, or fit in any legitimate way into the Bladesover theory that dominates our minds. It was nobody's concern to see them housed under civilised conditions, and the beautiful laws of supply and demand had free play. They had to squeeze in. The landlords came out financially intact from their blundering enterprise. More and more these houses fell into the hands of married artisans, or struggling widows or old servants with savings, who became responsible for the quarterly rent and tried to sweat a living by sub-letting furnished or unfurnished apartments.

I remember now that a poor grey-haired old woman who had an air of having been roused from a nap in the dust bin, came out into the area and looked up at us as we three went out from the front door to "see London" under my uncle's direction. She was the sub-letting occupier; she squeezed out a precarious living by taking the house whole and sub-letting it in detail and she made her food and got the shelter of an attic above and a basement below by the transaction. And if she didn't chance to "let" steadily, out she went to pauperdom and some other poor, sordid old adventurer tried in her place....

It is a foolish community that can house whole classes, useful and helpful, honest and loyal classes, in such squalidly unsuitable dwellings. It is by no means the social economy it seems, to use up old women, savings and inexperience in order to meet the landlord's demands. But any one who doubts this thing is going on right up to to-day need only spend an afternoon in hunting for lodgings in any of the regions of London I have named.

But where has my story got to? My uncle, I say, decided I must be shown London, and out we three went as soon as my aunt had got her hat on, to catch all that was left of the day.

VI

It pleased my uncle extremely to find I had never seen London before. He took possession of the metropolis forthwith. "London, George," he said, "takes a lot of understanding. It's a great place. Immense. The richest town in the world, the biggest port, the greatest manufacturing town, the Imperial city — the centre of civilisation, the heart of the world! See those sandwich men down there! That third one's hat! Fair treat! You don't see poverty like that in Wimblehurst George! And many of them high Oxford honour men too. Brought down by drink! It's a wonderful place, George — a whirlpool, a maelstrom! whirls you up and whirls you down."

I have a very confused memory of that afternoon's inspection of London. My uncle took us to and fro showing us over his London, talking erratically, following a route of his own. Sometimes we were walking, sometimes we were on the tops of great staggering horse omnibuses in a heaving jumble of traffic, and at one point we had tea

in an Aerated Bread Shop. But I remember very distinctly how we passed down Park Lane under an overcast sky, and how my uncle pointed out the house of this child of good fortune and that with succulent appreciation.

I remember, too, that as he talked I would find my aunt watching my face as if to check the soundness of his talk by my expression.

"Been in love yet, George?" she asked suddenly, over a bun in the tea-shop.

"Too busy, aunt," I told her.

She bit her bun extensively, and gesticulated with the remnant to indicate that she had more to say.

"How are YOU going to make your fortune?" she said so soon as she could speak again. "You haven't told us that."

"'Lectricity," said my uncle, taking breath after a deep draught of tea.

"If I make it at all," I said. "For my part I think shall be satisfied with something less than a fortune."

"We're going to make ours — suddenly," she said.

"So HE old says." She jerked her head at my uncle.

"He won't tell me when — so I can't get anything ready. But it's coming. Going to ride in our carriage and have a garden. Garden — like a bishop's."

She finished her bun and twiddled crumbs from her fingers. "I shall be glad of the garden," she said. "It's going to be a real big one with rosaries and things. Fountains in it. Pampas grass. Hothouses."

"You'll get it all right," said my uncle, who had reddened a little.

"Grey horses in the carriage, George," she said. "It's nice to think about when one's dull. And dinners in restaurants often and often. And theatres — in the stalls. And money and money and money."

"You may joke," said my uncle, and hummed for a moment.

"Just as though an old Porpoise like him would ever make money," she said, turning her eyes upon his profile with a sudden lapse to affection. "He'll just porpoise about."

"I'll do something," said my uncle, "you bet! Zzzz!" and rapped with a shilling on the marble table.

"When you do you'll have to buy me a new pair of gloves," she said, "anyhow. That finger's past mending. Look! you Cabbage —

you.” And she held the split under his nose, and pulled a face of comical fierceness.

My uncle smiled at these sallies at the time, but afterwards, when I went back with him to the Pharmacy — the low-class business grew brisker in the evening and they kept open late — he reverted to it in a low expository tone. “Your aunt’s a bit impatient, George. She gets at me. It’s only natural.... A woman doesn’t understand how long it takes to build up a position. No.... In certain directions now — I am — quietly — building up a position. Now here.... I get this room. I have my three assistants. Zzzz. It’s a position that, judged by the criterion of imeedjit income, isn’t perhaps so good as I deserve, but strategically — yes. It’s what I want. I make my plans. I rally my attack.”

“What plans,” I said, “are you making?”

“Well, George, there’s one thing you can rely upon, I’m doing nothing in a hurry. I turn over this one and that, and I don’t talk — indiscreetly. There’s — No! I don’t think I can tell you that. And yet, why NOT?”

He got up and closed the door into the shop. “I’ve told no one,” he remarked, as he sat down again. “I owe you something.”

His face flushed slightly, he leant forward over the little table towards me.

“Listen!” he said.

I listened.

“Tono-Bungay,” said my uncle very slowly and distinctly.

I thought he was asking me to hear some remote, strange noise. “I don’t hear anything,” I said reluctantly to his expectant face. He smiled undefeated. “Try again,” he said, and repeated, “Tono-Bungay.”

“Oh, THAT!” I said.

“Eh?” said he.

“But what is it?”

“Ah!” said my uncle, rejoicing and expanding. “What IS it? That’s what you got to ask? What won’t it be?” He dug me violently in what he supposed to be my ribs. “George,” he cried— “George, watch this place! There’s more to follow.”

And that was all I could get from him.

That, I believe, was the very first time that the words Tono-Bungay ever heard on earth — unless my uncle indulged in monologues in his chamber — a highly probable thing. Its utterance certainly did not seem to me at the time to mark any sort of epoch, and had I been told this word was the Open Sesame to whatever pride and pleasure the grimy front of London hid from us that evening, I should have laughed aloud.

"Coming now to business," I said after a pause, and with a chill sense of effort; and I opened the question of his trust.

My uncle sighed, and leant back in his chair. "I wish I could make all this business as clear to you as it is to me," he said. "However — Go on! Say what you have to say."

VII

After I left my uncle that evening I gave way to a feeling of profound depression. My uncle and aunt seemed to me to be leading — I have already used the word too often, but I must use it again — DINGY lives. They seemed to be adrift in a limitless crowd of dingy people, wearing shabby clothes, living uncomfortably in shabby second-hand houses, going to and fro on pavements that had always a thin veneer of greasy, slippery mud, under grey skies that showed no gleam of hope of anything for them but dinginess until they died. It seemed absolutely clear to me that my mother's little savings had been swallowed up and that my own prospect was all too certainly to drop into and be swallowed up myself sooner or later by this dingy London ocean. The London that was to be an adventurous escape from the slumber of Wimblehurst, had vanished from my dreams. I saw my uncle pointing to the houses in Park Lane and showing a frayed shirt-cuff as he did so. I heard my aunt: "I'm to ride in my carriage then. So he old says."

My feelings towards my uncle were extraordinarily mixed. I was intensely sorry not only for my aunt Susan but for him — for it seemed indisputable that as they were living then so they must go on — and at the same time I was angry with the garrulous vanity and illness that had elipped all my chance of independent study, and imprisoned her in those grey apartments. When I got back to

Wimblehurst I allowed myself to write him a boyishly sarcastic and sincerely bitter letter. He never replied. Then, believing it to be the only way of escape for me, I set myself far more grimly and resolutely to my studies than I had ever done before. After a time I wrote to him in more moderate terms, and he answered me evasively. And then I tried to dismiss him from my mind and went on working.

Yes, that first raid upon London under the moist and chilly depression of January had an immense effect upon me. It was for me an epoch-making disappointment. I had thought of London as a large, free, welcoming, adventurous place, and I saw it slovenly and harsh and irresponsive.

I did not realise at all what human things might be found behind those grey frontages, what weakness that whole forbidding facade might presently confess. It is the constant error of youth to over-estimate the Will in things. I did not see that the dirt, the discouragement, the discomfort of London could be due simply to the fact that London was a witless old giantess of a town, too slack and stupid to keep herself clean and maintain a brave face to the word. No! I suffered from the sort of illusion that burnt witches in the seventeenth century. I endued her grubby disorder with a sinister and magnificent quality of intention.

And my uncle's gestures and promises filled me with doubt and a sort of fear for him. He seemed to me a lost little creature, too silly to be silent, in a vast implacable condemnation. I was full of pity and a sort of tenderness for my aunt Susan, who was doomed to follow his erratic fortunes mocked by his grandiloquent promises.

I was to learn better. But I worked with the terror of the grim underside of London in my soul during all my last year at Wimblehurst.

BOOK THE SECOND

THE RISE OF TONO-BUNGAY

CHAPTER THE FIRST

HOW I BECAME A LONDON STUDENT AND WENT ASTRAY

I came to live in London, as I shall tell you, when I was nearly twenty-two. Wimblehurst dwindles in perspective, is now in this book a little place far off, Bladesover no more than a small pinkish speck of frontage among the distant Kentish hills; the scene broadens out, becomes multitudinous and limitless, full of the sense of vast irrelevant movement. I do not remember my second coming to London as I do my first, for my early impressions, save that an October memory of softened amber sunshine stands out, amber sunshine falling on grey house fronts I know not where. That, and a sense of a large tranquillity.

I could fill a book, I think, with a more or less imaginary account of how I came to apprehend London, how first in one aspect and then in another it grew in my mind. Each day my accumulating impressions were added to and qualified and brought into relationship with new ones; they fused inseparably with others that were purely personal and accidental. I find myself with a certain comprehensive perception of London, complete indeed, incurably indistinct in places and yet in some way a whole that began with my first visit and is still being mellowed and enriched.

London!

At first, no doubt, it was a chaos of streets and people and buildings and reasonless going to and fro. I do not remember that I ever struggled very steadily to understand it, or explored it with any but a personal and adventurous intention. Yet in time there has grown up in me a kind of theory of London; I do think I see lines of an ordered structure out of which it has grown, detected a process that is something more than a confusion of casual accidents though indeed it may be no more than a process of disease.

I said at the outset of my first book that I find in Bladesover the clue to all England. Well, I certainly imagine it is the clue to the structure of London. There have been no revolutions no deliberate

restatements or abandonments of opinion in England since the days of the fine gentry, since 1688 or thereabouts, the days when Bladesover was built; there have been changes, dissolving forest replacing forest, if you will; but then it was that the broad lines of the English system set firmly. And as I have gone to and fro in London in certain regions constantly the thought has recurred this is Bladesover House, this answers to Bladesover House. The fine gentry may have gone; they have indeed largely gone, I think; rich merchants may have replaced them, financial adventurers or what not. That does not matter; the shape is still Bladesover.

I am most reminded of Bladesover and Eastry by all those regions round about the West End parks; for example, estate parks, each more or less in relation to a palace or group of great houses. The roads and back ways of Mayfair and all about St. James's again, albeit perhaps of a later growth in point of time, were of the very spirit and architectural texture of the Bladesover passages and yards; they had the same smells, the space, the large cleanest and always going to and fro where one met unmistakable Olympians and even more unmistakable valets, butlers, footmen in mufti. There were moments when I seemed to glimpse down areas the white panelling, the very chintz of my mother's room again.

I could trace out now on a map what I would call the Great-House region; passing south-westward into Belgravia, becoming diffused and sporadic westward, finding its last systematic outbreak round and about Regent's Park. The Duke of Devonshire's place in Piccadilly, in all its insolent ugliness, pleases me particularly; it is the quintessence of the thing; Apsley House is all in the manner of my theory, Park Lane has its quite typical mansions, and they run along the border of the Green Park and St. James's. And I struck out a truth one day in Cromwell Road quite suddenly, as I looked over the Natural History Museum "By Jove," said I "but this is the little assemblage of cases of stuffed birds and animals upon the Bladesover staircase grown enormous, and yonder as the corresponding thing to the Bladesover curios and porcelain is the Art Museume and there in the little observatories in Exhibition Road is old Sir Cuthbert's Gregorian telescope that I hunted out in the storeroom and put together." And diving into the Art Museum under

this inspiration, I came to a little reading-room and found as I had inferred, old brown books!

It was really a good piece of social comparative anatomy I did that day; all these museums and libraries that are dotted over London between Piccadilly and West Kensington, and indeed the museum and library movement throughout the world, sprang from the elegant leisure of the gentlemen of taste. Theirs were the first libraries, the first houses of culture; by my rat-like raids into the Bladesover saloon I became, as it were, the last dwindled representative of such a man of letters as Swift. But now these things have escaped out of the Great House altogether, and taken on a strange independent life of their own.

It is this idea of escaping parts from the seventeenth century system of Bladesover, of proliferating and overgrowing elements from the Estates, that to this day seems to me the best explanation, not simply of London, but of all England. England is a country of great Renascence landed gentlefolk who have been unconsciously outgrown and overgrown. The proper shops for Bladesover custom were still to be found in Regent Street and Bond Street in my early London days in those days they had been but lightly touched by the American's profaning hand — and in Piccadilly. I found the doctor's house of the country village or country town up and down Harley Street, multiplied but not otherwise different, and the family solicitor (by the hundred) further eastward in the abandoned houses of a previous generation of gentlepeople, and down in Westminster, behind Palladian fronts, the public offices sheltered in large Bladesoverish rooms and looked out on St. James's Park. The Parliament Houses of lords and gentlemen, the parliament house that was horrified when merchants and brewers came thrusting into it a hundred years ago, stood out upon its terrace gathering the whole system together into a head.

And the more I have paralleled these things with my Bladesover-Eastry model, the more evident it has become to me that the balance is not the same, and the more evident is the presence of great new forces, blind forces of invasion, of growth. The railway termini on the north side of London have been kept as remote as Eastry had kept the railway-station from Wimblehurst, they stop on the very outskirts

of the estates, but from the south, the South Eastern railway had butted its great stupid rusty iron head of Charing Cross station, that great head that came smashing down in 1905 — clean across the river, between Somerset House and Whitehall. The south side had no protecting estate. Factory chimneys smoke right over against Westminster with an air of carelessly not having permission, and the whole effect of industrial London and of all London east of Temple Bar and of the huge dingy immensity of London port is to me of something disproportionately large, something morbidly expanded, without plan or intention, dark and sinister toward the clean clear social assurance of the West End. And south of this central London, south-east, south-west, far west, north-west, all round the northern hills, are similar disproportionate growths, endless streets of undistinguished houses, undistinguished industries, shabby families, second-rate shops, inexplicable people who in a once fashionable phrase do not "exist." All these aspects have suggested to my mind at times, do suggest to this day, the unorganised, abundant substance of some tumorous growth-process, a process which indeed bursts all the outlines of the affected carcass and protrudes such masses as ignoble comfortable Croydon, as tragic impoverished West Ham. To this day I ask myself will those masses ever become structural, will they indeed shape into anything new whatever, or is that cancerous image their true and ultimate diagnosis?...

Moreover, together with this hypertrophy there is an immigration of elements that have never understood and never will understand the great tradition, wedges of foreign settlement embedded in the heart of this yeasty English expansion. One day I remember wandering eastward out of pure curiosity — it must have been in my early student days — and discovering a shabbily bright foreign quarter, shops displaying Hebrew placards and weird, unfamiliar commodities and a concourse of bright-eyed, eagle-nosed people talking some incomprehensible gibberish between the shops and the barrows. And soon I became quite familiar with the devious, vicious, dirtily-pleasant eroticism of Soho. I found those crowded streets a vast relief from the dull grey exterior of Brompton where I lodged and lived my daily life. In Soho, indeed, I got my first inkling of the factor of replacement that is so important in both the English and the

American process.

Even in the West End, in Mayfair and the square, about Pall Mall, Ewart was presently to remind me the face of the old aristocratic dignity was fairer than its substance; here were actors and actresses, here money lenders and Jews, here bold financial adventurers, and I thought of my uncle's frayed cuff as he pointed out this house in Park Lane and that. That was so and so's who made a corner in borax, and that palace belonged to that hero among modern adventurers, Barmentrude, who used to be an I.D.B., — an illicit diamond buyer that is to say. A city of Bladesovers, the capital of a kingdom of Bladesovers, all much shaken and many altogether in decay, parasitically occupied, insidiously replaced by alien, unsympathetic and irresponsible elements; and with a ruling an adventitious and miscellaneous empire of a quarter of this daedal earth complex laws, intricate social necessities, disturbing insatiable suggestions, followed from this. Such was the world into which I had come, into which I had in some way to thrust myself and fit my problem, my temptations, my efforts, my patriotic instinct, all my moral instincts, my physical appetites, my dreams and my sanity.

London! I came up to it, young and without advisers, rather priggish, rather dangerously open-minded and very open-eyed, and with something — it is, I think, the common gift of imaginative youth, and I claim it unblushingly — fine in me, finer than the world and seeking fine responses. I did not want simply to live or simply to live happily or well; I wanted to serve and do and make — with some nobility. It was in me. It is in half the youth of the world.

II

I had come to London as a scholar. I had taken the Vincent Bradley scholarship of the Pharmaceutical Society, but I threw this up when I found that my work of the Science and Art Department in mathematics, physics and chemistry had given me one of the minor Technical Board Scholarships at the Consolidated Technical Schools at South Kensington. This latter was in mechanics and metallurgy; and I hesitated between the two. The Vincent Bradley gave me L70 a year and quite the best start-off a pharmaceutical chemist could have;

the South Kensington thing was worth about twenty-two shillings a week, and the prospects it opened were vague. But it meant far more scientific work than the former, and I was still under the impulse of that great intellectual appetite that is part of the adolescence of men of my type. Moreover it seemed to lead towards engineering, in which I imagined — I imagine to this day — my particular use is to be found. I took its greater uncertainty as a fair risk. I came up very keen, not doubting that the really hard and steady industry that had carried me through Wimblehurst would go on still in the new surroundings.

Only from the very first it didn't....

When I look back now at my Wimblehurst days, I still find myself surprised at the amount of steady grinding study, of strenuous self-discipline that I maintained throughout my apprenticeship. In many ways I think that time was the most honourable period in my life. I wish I could say with a certain mind that my motives in working so well were large and honourable too. To a certain extent they were so; there was a fine sincere curiosity, a desire for the strength and power of scientific knowledge and a passion for intellectual exercise; but I do not think those forces alone would have kept me at it so grimly and closely if Wimblehurst had not been so dull, so limited and so observant. Directly I came into the London atmosphere, tasting freedom, tasting irresponsibility and the pull of new forces altogether, my discipline fell from me like a garment. Wimblehurst to a youngster in my position offered no temptations worth counting, no interests to conflict with study, no vices — such vices as it offered were coarsely stripped of any imaginative glamourfull drunkenness, clumsy leering shameful lust, no social intercourse even to waste one's time, and on the other hand it would minister greatly to the self-esteem of a conspicuously industrious student. One was marked as "clever," one played up to the part, and one's little accomplishment stood out finely in one's private reckoning against the sunlit small ignorance of that agreeable place. One went with an intent rush across the market square, one took one's exercise with as dramatic a sense of an ordered day as an Oxford don, one burnt the midnight oil quite consciously at the rare respectful, benighted passer-by. And one stood out finely in the local paper with one's

unapproachable yearly harvest of certificates. Thus I was not only a genuinely keen student, but also a little of a prig and poseur in those days — and the latter kept the former at it, as London made clear.

Moreover Wimblehurst had given me no outlet in any other direction.

But I did not realise all this when I came to London, did not perceive how the change of atmosphere began at once to warp and distribute my energies. In the first place I became invisible. If I idled for a day, no one except my fellow-students (who evidently had no awe for me) remarked it. No one saw my midnight taper; no one pointed me out as I crossed the street as an astonishing intellectual phenomenon. In the next place I became inconsiderable. In Wimblehurst I felt I stood for Science; nobody there seemed to have so much as I and to have it so fully and completely. In London I walked ignorant in an immensity, and it was clear that among my fellow-students from the midlands and the north I was ill-equipped and under-trained. With the utmost exertion I should only take a secondary position among them. And finally, in the third place, I was distracted by voluminous new interests; London took hold of me, and Science, which had been the universe, shrank back to the dimensions of tiresome little formulae compacted in a book. I came to London in late September, and it was a very different London from that great greyly-overcast, smoke-stained house-wilderness of my first impressions. I reached it by Victoria and not by Cannon Street, and its centre was now in Exhibition Road. It shone, pale amber, blue-grey and tenderly spacious and fine under clear autumnal skies, a London of hugely handsome buildings and vistas and distances, a London of gardens and labyrinthine tall museums, of old trees and remote palaces and artificial waters. I lodged near by in West Brompton at a house in a little square.

So London faced me the second time, making me forget altogether for a while the grey, drizzling city visage that had first looked upon me. I settled down and went to and fro to my lectures and laboratory; in the beginning I worked hard, and only slowly did the curiosity that presently possessed me to know more of this huge urban province arise, the desire to find something beyond mechanism that I could serve, some use other than learning. With this was a

growing sense of loneliness, a desire for adventure and intercourse. I found myself in the evenings poring over a map of London I had bought, instead of copying out lecture notes — and on Sundays I made explorations, taking omnibus rides east and west and north and south, and to enlarging and broadening the sense of great swarming hinterlands of humanity with whom I had no dealings, of whom I knew nothing....

The whole illimitable place teemed with suggestions of indefinite and sometimes outrageous possibility, of hidden but magnificent meanings.

It wasn't simply that I received a vast impression of space and multitude and opportunity; intimate things also were suddenly dragged from neglected, veiled and darkened corners into an acute vividness of perception. Close at hand in the big art museum I came for the first time upon the beauty of nudity, which I had hitherto held to be a shameful secret, flaunted and gloried in; I was made aware of beauty as not only permissible, but desirable and frequent and of a thousand hitherto unsuspected rich aspects of life. One night in a real rapture, I walked round the upper gallery of the Albert Hall and listened for the first time to great music; I believe now that it was a rendering of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony....

My apprehension of spaces and places was reinforced by a quickened apprehension of persons. A constant stream of people passed by me, eyes met and challenged mine and passed — more and more I wanted then to stay — if I went eastward towards Piccadilly, women who seemed then to my boyish inexperience softly splendid and alluring, murmured to me as they passed. Extraordinarily life unveiled. The very hoardings clamoured strangely at one's senses and curiosities. One bought pamphlets and papers full of strange and daring ideas transcending one's boldest; in the parks one heard men discussing the very existence of God, denying the rights of property, debating a hundred things that one dared not think about in Wimblehurst. And after the ordinary overcast day, after dull mornings, came twilight, and London lit up and became a thing of white and yellow and red jewels of light and wonderful floods of golden illumination and stupendous and unfathomable shadows — and there were no longer any mean or shabby people — but a great

mysterious movement of unaccountable beings....

Always I was coming on the queerest new aspects. Late one Saturday night I found myself one of a great slow-moving crowd between the blazing shops and the flaring barrows in the Harrow Road; I got into conversation with two bold-eyed girls, bought them boxes of chocolate, made the acquaintance of father and mother and various younger brothers and sisters, sat in a public-house hilariously with them all, standing and being stood drinks, and left them in the small hours at the door of "home," never to see them again. And once I was accosted on the outskirts of a Salvation Army meeting in one of the parks by a silk-hatted young man of eager and serious discourse, who argued against scepticism with me, invited me home to tea into a clean and cheerful family of brothers and sisters and friends, and there I spent the evening singing hymns to the harmonium (which reminded me of half-forgotten Chatham), and wishing all the sisters were not so obviously engaged....

Then on the remote hill of this boundless city-world I found Ewart.

III

How well I remember the first morning, a bright Sunday morning in early October, when I raided in upon Ewart! I found my old schoolfellow in bed in a room over an oil-shop in a back street at the foot of Highgate Hill. His landlady, a pleasant, dirty young woman with soft-brown eyes, brought down his message for me to come up; and up I went. The room presented itself as ample and interesting in detail and shabby with a quite commendable shabbiness. I had an impression of brown walls — they were papered with brown paper — of a long shelf along one side of the room, with dusty plaster casts and a small cheap lay figure of a horse, of a table and something of grey wax partially covered with a cloth, and of scattered drawings. There was a gas stove in one corner, and some enameled ware that had been used for overnight cooking. The oilcloth on the floor was streaked with a peculiar white dust. Ewart himself was not in the first instance visible, but only a fourfold canvas screen at the end of the room from which shouts proceeded of "Come on!" then his wiry

black hair, very much rumpled, and a staring red-brown eye and his stump of a nose came round the edge of this at a height of about three feet from the ground "It's old Ponderevo!" he said, "the Early bird! And he's caught the worm! By Jove, but it's cold this morning! Come round here and sit on the bed!"

I walked round, wrung his hand, and we surveyed one another.

He was lying on a small wooden fold-up bed, the scanty covering of which was supplemented by an overcoat and an elderly but still cheerful pair of check trousers, and he was wearing pajamas of a virulent pink and green. His neck seemed longer and more stringy than it had been even in our schooldays, and his upper lip had a wiry black moustache. The rest of his ruddy, knobby countenance, his erratic hair and his general hairy leanness had not even — to my perceptions grown.

"By Jove!" he said, "you've got quite decent-looking, Ponderevo! What do you think of me?"

"You're all right. What are you doing here?"

"Art, my son — sculpture! And incidentally—" He hesitated. "I ply a trade. Will you hand me that pipe and those smoking things? So! You can't make coffee, eh? Well, try your hand. Cast down this screen — no — fold it up and so we'll go into the other room. I'll keep in bed all the same. The fire's a gas stove. Yes. Don't make it bang. too loud as you light it — I can't stand it this morning. You won't smoke ... Well, it does me good to see you again, Ponderevo. Tell me what you're doing, and how you're getting on."

He directed me in the service of his simple hospitality, and presently I came back to his bed and sat down and smiled at him there, smoking comfortably, with his hands under his head, surveying me.

"How's Life's Morning, Ponderevo? By Jove, it must be nearly six years since we met! They've got moustaches. We've fleshed ourselves a bit, eh? And you?"

I felt a pipe was becoming after all, and that lit, I gave him a favourable sketch of my career.

"Science! And you've worked like that! While I've been potting round doing odd jobs for stone-masons and people, and trying to get to sculpture. I've a sort of feeling that the chisel — I began with

painting, Ponderevo, and found I was colour-blind, colour-blind enough to stop it. I've drawn about and thought about — thought more particularly. I give myself three days a week as an art student, and the rest of the time I've a sort of trade that keeps me. And we're still in the beginning of things, young men starting. Do you remember the old times at Goudhurst, our doll's-house island, the Retreat of the Ten Thousand Young Holmes and the rabbits, eh? It's surprising, if you think of it, to find we are still young. And we used to talk of what we would be, and we used to talk of love! I suppose you know all about that now, Ponderevo?"

I finished and hesitated on some vague foolish lie, "No," I said, a little ashamed of the truth. "Do you? I've been too busy."

"I'm just beginning — just as we were then. Things happen."

He sucked at his pipe for a space and stared at the plaster cast of a flayed hand that hung on the wall.

"The fact is, Ponderevo, I'm beginning to find life a most extraordinary queer set-out; the things that pull one, the things that don't. The wants — This business of sex. It's a net. No end to it, no way out of it, no sense in it. There are times when women take possession of me, when my mind is like a painted ceiling at Hampton Court with the pride of the flesh sprawling all over it. WHY?... And then again sometimes when I have to encounter a woman, I am overwhelmed by a terror of tantalising boredom — I fly, I hide, I do anything. You've got your scientific explanations perhaps; what's Nature and the universe up to in that matter?"

"It's her way, I gather, of securing the continuity of the species."

"But it doesn't," said Ewart. "That's just it! No. I have succumbed to — dissipation — down the hill there. Euston Road way. And it was damned ugly and mean, and I hate having done it. And the continuity of the species — Lord!... And why does Nature make a man so infernally ready for drinks? There's no sense in that anyhow." He sat up in bed, to put this question with the greater earnestness. "And why has she given me a most violent desire towards sculpture and an equally violent desire to leave off work directly I begin it, eh?... Let's have some more coffee. I put it to you, these things puzzle me, Ponderevo. They dishearten me. They keep me in bed."

He had an air of having saved up these difficulties for me for some time. He sat with his chin almost touching his knees, sucking at his pipe.

"That's what I mean," he went on, "when I say life is getting on to me as extraordinarily queer, I don't see my game, nor why I was invited. And I don't make anything of the world outside either. What do you make of it?"

"London," I began. "It's — so enormous!"

"Isn't it! And it's all up to nothing. You find chaps keeping grocers' shops — why the DEVIL, Ponderevo, do they keep grocers' shops? They all do it very carefully, very steadily, very meanly. You find people running about and doing the most remarkable things being policemen, for example, and burglars. They go about these businesses quite gravely and earnestly. I somehow — can't go about mine. Is there any sense in it at all — anywhere?"

"There must be sense in it," I said. "We're young."

"We're young — yes. But one must inquire. The grocer's a grocer because, I suppose, he sees he comes in there. Feels that on the whole it amounts to a call.... But the bother is I don't see where I come in at all. Do you?"

"Where you come in?"

"No, where you come in."

"Not exactly, yet," I said. "I want to do some good in the world — something — something effectual, before I die. I have a sort of idea my scientific work — I don't know."

"Yes," he mused. "And I've got a sort of idea my sculpture, — but now it is to come in and WHY, — I've no idea at all." He hugged his knees for a space. "That's what puzzles me, Ponderevo, no end."

He became animated. "If you will look in that cupboard," he said, "you will find an old respectable looking roll on a plate and a knife somewhere and a gallipot containing butter. You give them me and I'll make my breakfast, and then if you don't mind watching me paddle about at my simple toilet I'll get up. Then we'll go for a walk and talk about this affair of life further. And about Art and Literature and anything else that crops up on the way.... Yes, that's the gallipot. Cockroach got in it? Chuck him out — damned interloper...."

So in the first five minutes of our talk, as I seem to remember it

now, old Ewart struck the note that ran through all that morning's intercourse....

To me it was a most memorable talk because it opened out quite new horizons of thought. I'd been working rather close and out of touch with Ewart's free gesticulating way. He was pessimistic that day and sceptical to the very root of things. He made me feel clearly, what I had not felt at all before, the general adventurousness of life, particularly of life at the stage we had reached, and also the absence of definite objects, of any concerted purpose in the lives that were going on all round us. He made me feel, too, how ready I was to take up commonplace assumptions. Just as I had always imagined that somewhere in social arrangements there was certainly a Head-Master who would intervene if one went too far, so I had always had a sort of implicit belief that in our England there were somewhere people who understood what we were all, as a nation, about. That crumpled into his pit of doubt and vanished.

He brought out, sharply cut and certain, the immense effect of purposelessness in London that I was already indistinctly feeling. We found ourselves at last returning through Highgate Cemetery and Waterlow Park — and Ewart was talking.

"Look at it there," he said, stopping and pointing to the great vale of London spreading wide and far. "It's like a sea — and we swim in it. And at last down we go, and then up we come — washed up here." He swung his arms to the long slopes about us, tombs and headstones in long perspectives, in limitless rows.

"We're young, Ponderevo, but sooner or later our whitened memories will wash up on one of these beaches, on some such beach as this. George Ponderevo, F.R.S., Sidney Ewart, R.I.P. Look at the rows of 'em!"

He paused. "Do you see that hand? The hand, I mean, pointing upward, on the top of a blunted obelisk. Yes. Well, that's what I do for a living — when I'm not thinking, or drinking, or prowling, or making love, or pretending I'm trying to be a sculptor without either the money or the morals for a model. See? And I do those hearts afire and those pensive angel guardians with the palm of peace. Damned well I do 'em and damned cheap! I'm a sweated victim, Ponderevo..."

That was the way of it, anyhow. I drank deep of talk that day; we went into theology, into philosophy; I had my first glimpse of socialism. I felt as though I had been silent in a silence since I and he had parted. At the thought of socialism Ewart's moods changed for a time to a sort of energy. "After all, all this confounded vagueness might be altered. If you could get men to work together..."

It was a good talk that rambled through all the universe. I thought I was giving my mind refreshment, but indeed it was dissipation. All sorts of ideas, even now, carry me back as it were to a fountain-head, to Waterlow Park and my resuscitated Ewart. There stretches away south of us long garden slopes and white gravestones and the wide expanse of London, and somewhere in the picture is a red old wall, sun-warmed, and a great blaze of Michaelmas daisies set off with late golden sunflowers and a drift of mottled, blood-red, fallen leaves. It was with me that day as though I had lifted my head suddenly out of dull and immediate things and looked at life altogether.... But it played the very devil with the copying up of my arrears of notes to which I had vowed the latter half of that day.

After that reunion Ewart and I met much and talked much, and in our subsequent encounters his monologue was interrupted and I took my share. He had exercised me so greatly that I lay awake at nights thinking him over, and discoursed and answered him in my head as I went in the morning to the College. I am by nature a doer and only by the way a critic; his philosophical assertion of the incalculable vagueness of life which fitted his natural indolence roused my more irritable and energetic nature to active protests. "It's all so pointless," I said, "because people are slack and because it's in the ebb of an age. But you're a socialist. Well, let's bring that about! And there's a purpose. There you are!"

Ewart gave me all my first conceptions of socialism; in a little while I was an enthusiastic socialist and he was a passive resister to the practical exposition of the theories he had taught me. "We must join some organisation," I said. "We ought to do things.... We ought to go and speak at street corners. People don't know."

You must figure me a rather ill-dressed young man in a state of great earnestness, standing up in that shabby studio of his and saying these things, perhaps with some gesticulations, and Ewart with a

clay-smudged face, dressed perhaps in a flannel shirt and trousers, with a pipe in his mouth, squatting philosophically at a table, working at some chunk of clay that never got beyond suggestion.

"I wonder why one doesn't want to," he said.

It was only very slowly I came to gauge Ewart's real position in the scheme of things, to understand how deliberate and complete was this detachment of his from the moral condemnation and responsibilities that played so fine a part in his talk. His was essentially the nature of an artistic appreciator; he could find interest and beauty in endless aspects of things that I marked as evil, or at least as not negotiable; and the impulse I had towards self-deception, to sustained and consistent self-devotion, disturbed and detached and pointless as it was at that time, he had indeed a sort of admiration for but no sympathy. Like many fantastic and ample talkers he was at bottom secretive, and he gave me a series of little shocks of discovery throughout our intercourse.

The first of these came in the realisation that he quite seriously meant to do nothing in the world at all towards reforming the evils he laid bare in so easy and dexterous a manner. The next came in the sudden appearance of a person called "Milly" — I've forgotten her surname — whom I found in his room one evening, simply attired in a blue wrap — the rest of her costume behind the screen — smoking cigarettes and sharing a flagon of an amazingly cheap and self-assertive grocer's wine Ewart affected, called "Canary Sack." "Hullo!" said Ewart, as I came in. "This is Milly, you know. She's been being a model — she IS a model really.... (keep calm, Ponderevo!) Have some sack?"

Milly was a woman of thirty, perhaps, with a broad, rather pretty face, a placid disposition, a bad accent and delightful blond hair that waved off her head with an irrepressible variety of charm; and whenever Ewart spoke she beamed at him. Ewart was always sketching this hair of hers and embarking upon clay statuettes of her that were never finished. She was, I know now, a woman of the streets, whom Ewart had picked up in the most casual manner, and who had fallen in love with him, but my inexperience in those days was too great for me to place her then, and Ewart offered no elucidations. She came to him, he went to her, they took holidays

together in the country when certainly she sustained her fair share of their expenditure. I suspect him now even of taking money from her. Odd old Ewart! It was a relationship so alien to my orderly conceptions of honour, to what I could imagine any friend of mine doing, that I really hardly saw it with it there under my nose. But I see it and I think I understand it now....

Before I fully grasped the discursive manner in which Ewart was committed to his particular way in life, I did, I say, as the broad constructive ideas of socialism took hold of me, try to get him to work with me in some definite fashion as a socialist.

"We ought to join on to other socialists," I said.

"They've got something."

"Let's go and look at some first."

After some pains we discovered the office of the Fabian Society, lurking in a cellar in Clement's Inn; and we went and interviewed a rather discouraging secretary who stood astraddle in front of a fire and questioned us severely and seemed to doubt the integrity of our intentions profoundly. He advised us to attend the next open meeting in Clifford's Inn and gave us the necessary data. We both contrived to get to the affair, and heard a discursive gritty paper on Trusts and one of the most inconclusive discussions you can imagine. Three-quarters of the speakers seemed under some jocular obsession which took the form of pretending to be conceited. It was a sort of family joke, and as strangers to the family we did not like it.... As we came out through the narrow passage from Clifford's Inn to the Strand, Ewart suddenly pitched upon a wizened, spectacled little man in a vast felt hat and a large orange tie.

"How many members are there in this Fabian Society of yours?" he asked.

The little man became at once defensive in his manner.

"About seven hundred," he said; "perhaps eight."

"Like — like the ones here?"

The little man gave a nervous self-satisfied laugh. "I suppose they're up to sample," he said.

The little man dropped out of existence and we emerged upon the Strand. Ewart twisted his arm into a queerly eloquent gesture that gathered up all the tall facades of the banks, the business places, the

projecting clock and towers of the Law Courts, the advertisements, the luminous signs, into one social immensity, into a capitalistic system gigantic and invincible.

"These socialists have no sense of proportion," he said. "What can you expect of them?"

IV

Ewart, as the embodiment of talk, was certainly a leading factor in my conspicuous failure to go on studying. Social theory in its first crude form of Democratic Socialism gripped my intelligence more and more powerfully. I argued in the laboratory with the man who shared my bench until we quarreled and did not speak and also I fell in love.

The ferment of sex had been creeping into my being like a slowly advancing tide through all my Wimblehurst days, the stimulus of London was like the rising of a wind out of the sea that brings the waves in fast and high. Ewart had his share in that. More and more acutely and unmistakably did my perception of beauty, form and sound, my desire for adventure, my desire for intercourse, converge on this central and commanding business of the individual life. I had to get me a mate.

I began to fall in love faintly with girls I passed in the street, with women who sat before me in trains, with girl fellow-students, with ladies in passing carriages, with loiterers at the corners, with neat-handed waitresses in shops and tea-rooms, with pictures even of girls and women. On my rare visits to the theatre I always became exalted, and found the actresses and even the spectators about me mysterious, attractive, creatures of deep interest and desire. I had a stronger and stronger sense that among these glancing, passing multitudes there was somewhere one who was for me. And in spite of every antagonistic force in the world, there was something in my very marrow that insisted: "Stop! Look at this one! Think of her! Won't she do? This signifies — this before all things signifies! Stop! Why are you hurrying by? This may be the predestined person — before all others."

It is odd that I can't remember when first I saw Marion, who

became my wife — whom I was to make wretched, who was to make me wretched, who was to pluck that fine generalised possibility of love out of my early manhood and make it a personal conflict. I became aware of her as one of a number of interesting attractive figures that moved about in my world, that glanced back at my eyes, that flitted by with a kind of averted watchfulness. I would meet her coming through the Art Museum, which was my short cut to the Brompton Road, or see her sitting, reading as I thought, in one of the bays of the Education Library. But really, as I found out afterwards, she never read. She used to come there to eat a bun in quiet. She was a very gracefully-moving figure of a girl then, very plainly dressed, with dark brown hair I remember, in a knot low on her neck behind that confessed the pretty roundness of her head and harmonised with the admirable lines of ears and cheek, the grave serenity of mouth and brow.

She stood out among the other girls very distinctly because they dressed more than she did, struck emphatic notes of colour, startled one by novelties in hats and bows and things. I've always hated the rustle, the disconcerting colour boundaries, the smart unnatural angles of women's clothes. Her plain black dress gave her a starkness....

I do remember, though, how one afternoon I discovered the peculiar appeal of her form for me. I had been restless with my work and had finally slipped out of the Laboratory and come over to the Art Museum to lounge among the pictures. I came upon her in an odd corner of the Sheepshanks gallery, intently copying something from a picture that hung high. I had just been in the gallery of casts from the antique, my mind was all alive with my newly awakened sense of line, and there she stood with face upturned, her body drooping forward from the hips just a little — memorably graceful — feminine.

After that I know I sought to see her, felt a distinctive emotion at her presence, began to imagine things about her. I no longer thought of generalised womanhood or of this casual person or that. I thought of her.

An accident brought us together. I found myself one Monday morning in an omnibus staggering westward from Victoria — I was

returning from a Sunday I'd spent at Wimblehurst in response to a unique freak of hospitality on the part of Mr. Mantell. She was the sole other inside passenger. And when the time came to pay her fare, she became an extremely scared, disconcerted and fumbling young woman; she had left her purse at home.

Luckily I had some money.

She looked at me with startled, troubled brown eyes; she permitted my proffered payment to the conductor with a certain ungraciousness that seemed a part of her shyness, and then as she rose to go, she thanked me with an obvious affectation of ease.

"Thank you so much," she said in a pleasant soft voice; and then less gracefully, "Awfully kind of you, you know."

I fancy I made polite noises. But just then I wasn't disposed to be critical. I was full of the sense of her presence; her arm was stretched out over me as she moved past me, the gracious slenderness of her body was near me. The words we used didn't seem very greatly to matter. I had vague ideas of getting out with her — and I didn't.

That encounter, I have no doubt, exercised me enormously. I lay awake at night rehearsing it, and wondering about the next phase of our relationship. That took the form of the return of my twopence. I was in the Science Library, digging something out of the Encyclopedia Britannica, when she appeared beside me and placed on the open page an evidently premeditated thin envelope, bulgingly confessing the coins within.

"It was so very kind of you," she said, "the other day. I don't know what I should have done, Mr.—"

I supplied my name. "I knew," I said, "you were a student here."

"Not exactly a student. I—"

"Well, anyhow, I knew you were here frequently. And I'm a student myself at the Consolidated Technical Schools."

I plunged into autobiography and questionings, and so entangled her in a conversation that got a quality of intimacy through the fact that, out of deference to our fellow-readers, we were obliged to speak in undertones. And I have no doubt that in substance it was singularly banal. Indeed I have an impression that all our early conversations were incredibly banal. We met several times in a manner half-accidental, half furtive and wholly awkward. Mentally I

didn't take hold of her. I never did take hold of her mentally. Her talk, I now know all too clearly, was shallow, pretentious, evasive. Only — even to this day — I don't remember it as in any way vulgar. She was, I could see quite clearly, anxious to overstate or conceal her real social status, a little desirous to be taken for a student in the art school and a little ashamed that she wasn't. She came to the museum to "copy things," and this, I gathered, had something to do with some way of partially earning her living that I wasn't to inquire into. I told her things about myself, vain things that I felt might appeal to her, but that I learnt long afterwards made her think me "conceited." We talked of books, but there she was very much on her guard and secretive, and rather more freely of pictures. She "liked" pictures. I think from the outset I appreciated and did not for a moment resent that hers was a commonplace mind, that she was the unconscious custodian of something that had gripped my most intimate instinct, that she embodied the hope of a possibility, was the careless proprietor of a physical quality that had turned my head like strong wine. I felt I had to stick to our acquaintance, flat as it was. Presently we should get through these irrelevant exterior things, and come to the reality of love beneath.

I saw her in dreams released, as it were, from herself, beautiful, worshipful, glowing. And sometimes when we were together, we would come on silences through sheer lack of matter, and then my eyes would feast on her, and the silence seemed like the drawing back of a curtain — her superficial self. Odd, I confess. Odd, particularly, the enormous hold of certain things about her upon me, a certain slight rounded duskiness of skin, a certain perfection of modelling in her lips, her brow, a certain fine flow about the shoulders. She wasn't indeed beautiful to many people — these things are beyond explaining. She had manifest defects of form and feature, and they didn't matter at all. Her complexion was bad, but I don't think it would have mattered if it had been positively unwholesome. I had extraordinarily limited, extraordinarily painful, desires. I longed intolerably to kiss her lips.

V

The affair was immensely serious and commanding to me. I don't remember that in these earlier phases I had any thought of turning back at all. It was clear to me that she regarded me with an eye entirely more critical than I had for her, that she didn't like my scholarly untidiness, my want of even the most commonplace style. "Why do you wear collars like that?" she said, and sent me in pursuit of gentlemanly neckwear. I remember when she invited me a little abruptly one day to come to tea at her home on the following Sunday and meet her father and mother and aunt, that I immediately doubted whether my hitherto unsuspected best clothes would create the impression she desired me to make on her belongings. I put off the encounter until the Sunday after, to get myself in order. I had a morning coat made and I bought a silk hat, and had my reward in the first glance of admiration she ever gave me. I wonder how many of my sex are as preposterous. I was, you see, abandoning all my beliefs, my conventions unasked. I was forgetting myself immensely. And there was a conscious shame in it all. Never a word — did I breathe to Ewart — to any living soul of what was going on.

Her father and mother and aunt struck me as the dismalest of people, and her home in Walham Green was chiefly notable for its black and amber tapestry carpets and curtains and table-cloths, and the age and irrelevance of its books, mostly books with faded gilt on the covers. The windows were fortified against the intrusive eye by cheap lace curtains and an "art pot" upon an unstable octagonal table. Several framed Art School drawings of Marion's, bearing official South Kensington marks of approval, adorned the room, and there was a black and gilt piano with a hymn-book on the top of it. There were draped mirrors over all the mantels, and above the sideboard in the dining-room in which we sat at tea was a portrait of her father, villainously truthful after the manner of such works. I couldn't see a trace of the beauty I found in her in either parent, yet she somehow contrived to be like them both.

These people pretended in a way that reminded me of the Three Great Women in my mother's room, but they had not nearly so much social knowledge and did not do it nearly so well. Also, I remarked, they did it with an eye on Marion. They had wanted to thank me, they said, for the kindness to their daughter in the matter of the 'bus

fare, and so accounted for anything unusual in their invitation. They posed as simple gentlefolk, a little hostile to the rush and gadding-about of London, preferring a secluded and unpretentious quiet.

When Marion got out the white table-cloth from the sideboard-drawer for tea, a card bearing the word "APARTMENTS" fell to the floor. I picked it up and gave it to her before I realised from her quickened colour that I should not have seen it; that probably had been removed from the window in honour of my coming.

Her father spoke once in a large remote way of he claims of business engagements, and it was only long afterwards I realised that he was a supernumerary clerk in the Walham Green Gas Works and otherwise a useful man at home. He was a large, loose, fattish man with unintelligent brown eyes magnified by spectacles; he wore an ill-fitting frock-coat and a paper collar, and he showed me, as his great treasure and interest, a large Bible which he had grangerised with photographs of pictures. Also he cultivated the little garden-yard behind the house, and he had a small greenhouse with tomatoes. "I wish I 'ad 'eat," he said. "One can do such a lot with 'eat. But I suppose you can't 'ave everything you want in this world."

Both he and Marion's mother treated her with a deference that struck me as the most natural thing in the world. Her own manner changed, became more authoritative and watchful, her shyness disappeared. She had taken a line of her own I gathered, draped the mirror, got the second-hand piano, and broken her parents in.

Her mother must once have been a pretty woman; she had regular features and Marion's hair without its lustre, but she was thin and careworn. The aunt, Miss Ramboat, was a large, abnormally shy person very like her brother, and I don't recall anything she said on this occasion.

To begin with there was a good deal of tension, Marion was frightfully nervous and every one was under the necessity of behaving in a mysteriously unreal fashion until I plunged, became talkative and made a certain ease and interest. I told them of the schools, of my lodgings, of Wimblehurst and my apprenticeship days. "There's a lot of this Science about nowadays," Mr. Ramboat reflected; "but I sometimes wonder a bit what good it is?"

I was young enough to be led into what he called "a bit of a

discussion," which Marion truncated before our voices became unduly raised. "I dare say," she said, "there's much to be said on both sides."

I remember Marion's mother asked me what church I attended, and that I replied evasively. After tea there was music and we sang hymns. I doubted if I had a voice when this was proposed, but that was held to be a trivial objection, and I found sitting close beside the sweep of hair from Marion's brow had many compensations. I discovered her mother sitting in the horsehair armchair and regarding us sentimentally. I went for a walk with Marion towards Putney Bridge, and then there was more singing and a supper of cold bacon and pie, after which Mr. Ramboat and I smoked. During that walk, I remember, she told me the import of her sketchings and copyings in the museum. A cousin of a friend of hers whom she spoke of as Smithie, had developed an original business in a sort of tea-gown garment which she called a Persian Robe, a plain sort of wrap with a gaily embroidered yoke, and Marion went there and worked in the busy times. In the times that weren't busy she designed novelties in yokes by an assiduous use of eyes and note-book in the museum, and went home and traced out the captured forms on the foundation material. "I don't get much," said Marion, "but it's interesting, and in the busy times we work all day. Of course the workgirls are dreadfully common, but we don't say much to them. And Smithie talks enough for ten."

I quite understood the workgirls were dreadfully common.

I don't remember that the Walham Green menage and the quality of these people, nor the light they threw on Marion, detracted in the slightest degree at that time from the intent resolve that held me to make her mine. I didn't like them. But I took them as part of the affair. Indeed, on the whole, I think they threw her up by an effect of contrast; she was so obviously controlling them, so consciously superior to them.

More and more of my time did I give to this passion that possessed me. I began to think chiefly of ways of pleasing Marion, of acts of devotion, of treats, of sumptuous presents for her, of appeals she would understand. If at times she was manifestly unintelligent, in her ignorance became indisputable, I told myself her simple instincts

were worth all the education and intelligence in the world. And to this day I think I wasn't really wrong about her. There was something extraordinarily fine about her, something simple and high, that flickered in and out of her ignorance and commonness and limitations like the tongue from the mouth of a snake....

One night I was privileged to meet her and bring her home from an entertainment at the Birkbeck Institute. We came back on the underground railway and we travelled first-class — that being the highest class available. We were alone in the carriage, and for the first time I ventured to put my arm about her.

"You mustn't," she said feebly.

"I love you," I whispered suddenly with my heart beating wildly, drew her to me, drew all her beauty to me and kissed her cool and unresisting lips.

"Love me?" she said, struggling away from me, "Don't!" and then, as the train ran into a station, "You must tell no one.... I don't know.... You shouldn't have done that...."

Then two other people got in with us and terminated my wooing for a time.

When we found ourselves alone together, walking towards Battersea, she had decided to be offended. I parted from her unforgiven and terribly distressed.

When we met again, she told me I must never say "that" again.

I had dreamt that to kiss her lips was ultimate satisfaction. But it was indeed only the beginning of desires. I told her my one ambition was to marry her.

"But," she said, "you're not in a position — What's the good of talking like that?"

I stared at her. "I mean to," I said.

"You can't," she answered. "It will be years"

"But I love you," I insisted.

I stood not a yard from the sweet lips I had kissed; I stood within arm's length of the inanimate beauty I desired to quicken, and I saw opening between us a gulf of years, toil, waiting, disappointments and an immense uncertainty.

"I love you," I said. "Don't you love me?"

She looked me in the face with grave irresponsive eyes.

“I don’t know,” she said. “I LIKE you, of course.... One has to be sensibl...”

I can remember now my sense of frustration by her unresilient reply. I should have perceived then that for her my ardour had no quickening fire. But how was I to know? I had let myself come to want her, my imagination endowed her with infinite possibilities. I wanted her and wanted her, stupidly and instinctively....

“But,” I said “Love — !”

“One has to be sensible,” she replied. “I like going about with you. Can’t we keep as we are?”’

VI

Well, you begin to understand my breakdown now, I have been copious enough with these apologia. My work got more and more spiritless, my behaviour degenerated, my punctuality declined; I was more and more outclassed in the steady grind by my fellow-students. Such supplies of moral energy as I still had at command shaped now in the direction of serving Marion rather than science.

I fell away dreadfully, more and more I shirked and skulked; the humped men from the north, the pale men with thin, clenched minds, the intent, hard-breathing students I found against me, fell at last from keen rivalry to moral contempt. Even a girl got above me upon one of the lists. Then indeed I made it a point of honour to show by my public disregard of every rule that I really did not even pretend to try.

So one day I found myself sitting in a mood of considerable astonishment in Kensington Gardens, reacting on a recent heated interview with the school Registrar in which I had displayed more spirit than sense. I was astonished chiefly at my stupendous falling away from all the militant ideals of unflinching study I had brought up from Wimblehurst. I had displayed myself, as the Registrar put it, “an unmitigated rotter.” My failure to get marks in the written examination had only been equalled by the insufficiency of my practical work.

“I ask you,” the Registrar had said, “what will become of you when your scholarship runs out?”

It certainly was an interesting question. What was going to become of me?

It was clear there would be nothing for me in the schools as I had once dared to hope; there seemed, indeed, scarcely anything in the world except an illpaid assistantship in some provincial organized Science School or grammar school. I knew that for that sort of work, without a degree or any qualification, one earned hardly a bare living and had little leisure to struggle up to anything better. If only I had even as little as fifty pounds I might hold out in London and take my B.Sc. degree, and quadruple my chances! My bitterness against my uncle returned at the thought. After all, he had some of my money still, or ought to have. Why shouldn't I act within my rights, threaten to 'take proceedings'? I meditated for a space on the idea, and then returned to the Science Library and wrote him a very considerable and occasionally pungent letter.

That letter to my uncle was the nadir of my failure. Its remarkable consequences, which ended my student days altogether, I will tell in the next chapter.

I say "my failure." Yet there are times when I can even doubt whether that period was a failure at all, when I become defensively critical of those exacting courses I did not follow, the encyclopaedic process of scientific exhaustion from which I was distracted. My mind was not inactive, even if it fed on forbidden food. I did not learn what my professors and demonstrators had resolved I should learn, but I learnt many things. My mind learnt to swing wide and to swing by itself.

After all, those other fellows who took high places in the College examinations and were the professor's model boys haven't done so amazingly. Some are professors themselves, some technical experts; not one can show things done such as I, following my own interest, have achieved. For I have built boats that smack across the water like whiplashes; no one ever dreamt of such boats until I built them; and I have surprised three secrets that are more than technical discoveries, in the unexpected hiding-places of Nature. I have come nearer flying than any man has done. Could I have done as much if I had had a turn for obeying those rather mediocre professors at the college who proposed to train my mind? If I had been trained in research — that

ridiculous contradiction in terms — should I have done more than produce additions to the existing store of little papers with blunted conclusions, of which there are already too many? I see no sense in mock modesty upon this matter. Even by the standards of worldly success I am, by the side of my fellow-students, no failure. I had my F.R.S. by the time I was thirty-seven, and if I am not very wealthy poverty is as far from me as the Spanish Inquisition. Suppose I had stamped down on the head of my wandering curiosity, locked my imagination in a box just when it wanted to grow out to things, worked by so-and-so's excellent method and so-and-so's indications, where should I be now?

I may be all wrong in this. It may be I should be a far more efficient man than I am if I had cut off all those divergent expenditures of energy, plugged up my curiosity about society with more currently acceptable rubbish or other, abandoned Ewart, evaded Marion instead of pursuing her, concentrated. But I don't believe it!

However, I certainly believed it completely and was filled with remorse on that afternoon when I sat dejectedly in Kensington Gardens and reviewed, in the light of the Registrar's pertinent questions my first two years in London.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE DAWN COMES, AND MY UNCLE APPEARS IN A NEW SILK HAT

I

Throughout my student days I had not seen my uncle. I refrained from going to him in spite of an occasional regret that in this way I estranged myself from my aunt Susan, and I maintained a sulky attitude of mind towards him. And I don't think that once in all that time I gave a thought to that mystic word of his that was to alter all the world for us. Yet I had not altogether forgotten it. It was with a touch of memory, dim transient perplexity if no more — why did this thing seem in some way personal? — that I read a new inscription upon the hoardings:

THE SECRET OF VIGOUR,
TONO-BUNGAY.

That was all. It was simple and yet in some way arresting. I found myself repeating the word after I had passed; it roused one's attention like the sound of distant guns. "Tono" — what's that? and deep, rich, unhurrying;— "BUN — gay!"

Then came my uncle's amazing telegram, his answer to my hostile note: "Come to me at once you are wanted three hundred a year certain tono-bungay."

"By Jove!" I cried, "of course!

"It's something — . A patent-medicine! I wonder what he wants with me."

In his Napoleonic way my uncle had omitted to give an address. His telegram had been handed in at Farringdon Road, and after complex meditations I replied to Ponderevo, Farringdon Road, trusting to the rarity of our surname to reach him.

"Where are you?" I asked.

His reply came promptly:

"192A, Raggett Street, E.C."

The next day I took an unsanctioned holiday after the morning's

lecture. I discovered my uncle in a wonderfully new silk hat — oh, a splendid hat! with a rolling brim that went beyond the common fashion. It was decidedly too big for him — that was its only fault. It was stuck on the back of his head, and he was in a white waistcoat and shirt sleeves. He welcomed me with a forgetfulness of my bitter satire and my hostile abstinence that was almost divine. His glasses fell off at the sight of me. His round inexpressive eyes shone brightly. He held out his plump short hand.

"Here we are, George! What did I tell you? Needn't whisper it now, my boy. Shout it — LOUD! spread it about! Tell every one! Tono — TONO — , TONO-BUNGAY!"

Raggett Street, you must understand, was a thoroughfare over which some one had distributed large quantities of cabbage stumps and leaves. It opened out of the upper end of Farringdon Street, and 192A was a shop with the plate-glass front coloured chocolate, on which several of the same bills I had read upon the hoardings had been stuck. The floor was covered by street mud that had been brought in on dirty boots, and three energetic young men of the hooligan type, in neck-wraps and caps, were packing wooden cases with papered-up bottles, amidst much straw and confusion. The counter was littered with these same swathed bottles, of a pattern then novel but now amazingly familiar in the world, the blue paper with the coruscating figure of a genially nude giant, and the printed directions of how under practically all circumstances to take Tono-Bungay. Beyond the counter on one side opened a staircase down which I seem to remember a girl descending with a further consignment of bottles, and the rest of the background was a high partition, also chocolate, with "Temporary Laboratory" inscribed upon it in white letters, and over a door that pierced it, "Office." Here I rapped, inaudible amid much hammering, and then entered unanswered to find my uncle, dressed as I have described, one hand gripping a sheath of letters, and the other scratching his head as he dictated to one of three toiling typewriter girls. Behind him was a further partition and a door inscribed "ABSOLUTELY PRIVATE — NO ADMISSION," thereon. This partition was of wood painted the universal chocolate, up to about eight feet from the ground, and then of glass. Through the glass I saw dimly a crowded suggestion of

crucibles and glass retorts, and — by Jove! — yes! — the dear old Wimblehurst air-pump still! It gave me quite a little thrill — that air-pump! And beside it was the electrical machine — but something — some serious trouble — had happened to that. All these were evidently placed on a shelf just at the level to show.

"Come right into the sanctum," said my uncle, after he had finished something about "esteemed consideration," and whisked me through the door into a room that quite amazingly failed to verify the promise of that apparatus. It was papered with dingy wall-paper that had peeled in places; it contained a fireplace, an easy-chair with a cushion, a table on which stood two or three big bottles, a number of cigar-boxes on the mantel, whisky Tantalus and a row of soda syphons. He shut the door after me carefully.

"Well, here we are!" he said. "Going strong! Have a whisky, George? No! — Wise man! Neither will I! You see me at it! At it — hard!"

"Hard at what?"

"Read it," and he thrust into my hand a label — that label that has now become one of the most familiar objects of the chemist's shop, the greenish-blue rather old-fashioned bordering, the legend, the name in good black type, very clear, and the strong man all set about with lightning flashes above the double column of skilful lies in red — the label of Tono-Bungay. "It's afloat," he said, as I stood puzzling at this. "It's afloat. I'm afloat!" And suddenly he burst out singing in that throaty tenor of his —

"I'm afloat, I'm afloat on the fierce flowing tide, The ocean's my home and my bark is my bride!

"Ripping song that is, George. Not so much a bark as a solution, but still — it does! Here we are at it! By-the-by! Half a mo'! I've thought of a thing." He whisked out, leaving me to examine this nuclear spot at leisure while his voice became dictatorial without. The den struck me as in its large grey dirty way quite unprecedented and extraordinary. The bottles were all labelled simply A, B, C, and so forth, and that dear old apparatus above, seen from this side, was even more patiently "on the shelf" than when it had been used to impress Wimblehurst. I saw nothing for it but to sit down in the chair and await my uncle's explanations. I remarked a frock-coat with

satin lapels behind the door; there was a dignified umbrella in the corner and a clothes-brush and a hat-brush stood on a side-table. My uncle returned in five minutes looking at his watch — a gold watch — "Gettin' lunch-time, George," he said. "You'd better come and have lunch with me!"

"How's Aunt Susan?" I asked.

"Exuberant. Never saw her so larky. This has bucked her up something wonderful — all this."

"All what?"

"Tono-Bungay."

"What is Tono-Bungay?" I asked.

My uncle hesitated. "Tell you after lunch, George," he said. "Come along!" and having locked up the sanctum after himself, led the way along a narrow dirty pavement, lined with barrows and swept at times by avalanche-like porters bearing burthens to vans, to Farringdon Street. He hailed a passing cab superbly, and the cabman was infinitely respectful. "Schafer's," he said, and off we went side by side — and with me more and more amazed at all these things — to Schafer's Hotel, the second of the two big places with huge lace curtain-covered windows, near the corner of Blackfriars Bridge.

I will confess I felt a magic charm in our relative proportions as the two colossal, pale-blue-and-red liveried porters of Schafers' held open the inner doors for us with a respectful salutation that in some manner they seemed to confine wholly to my uncle. Instead of being about four inches taller, I felt at least the same size as he, and very much slenderer. Still more respectful — waiters relieved him of the new hat and the dignified umbrella, and took his orders for our lunch. He gave them with a fine assurance.

He nodded to several of the waiters.

"They know me, George, already," he said. "Point me out. Live place! Eye for coming men!"

The detailed business of the lunch engaged our attention for a while, and then I leant across my plate. "And NOW?" said I.

"It's the secret of vigour. Didn't you read that label?"

"Yes, but—"

"It's selling like hot cakes."

"And what is it?" I pressed.

“Well,” said my uncle, and then leant forward and spoke softly under cover of his hand, “It’s nothing more or less than...”

(But here an unfortunate scruple intervenes. After all, Tono-Bungay is still a marketable commodity and in the hands of purchasers, who bought it from — among other vendors — me. No! I am afraid I cannot give it away —)

“You see,” said my uncle in a slow confidential whisper, with eyes very wide and a creased forehead, “it’s nice because of the” (here he mentioned a flavouring matter and an aromatic spirit), “it’s stimulating because of” (here he mentioned two very vivid tonics, one with a marked action on the kidney.) “And the” (here he mentioned two other ingredients) “makes it pretty intoxicating. Cocks their tails. Then there’s” (but I touch on the essential secret.) “And there you are. I got it out of an old book of recipes — all except the” (here he mentioned the more virulent substance, the one that assails the kidneys), “which is my idea! Modern touch! There you are!”

He reverted to the direction of our lunch.

Presently he was leading the way to the lounge — sumptuous piece in red morocco and yellow glazed crockery, with incredible vistas of settees and sofas and things, and there I found myself grouped with him in two excessively upholstered chairs with an earthenware Moorish table between us bearing coffee and Benedictine, and I was tasting the delights of a tenpenny cigar. My uncle smoked a similar cigar in an habituated manner, and he looked energetic and knowing and luxurious and most unexpectedly a little bounder, round the end of it. It was just a trivial flaw upon our swagger, perhaps that we both were clear our cigars had to be “mild.” He got obliquely across the spaces of his great armchair so as to incline confidentially to my ear, he curled up his little legs, and I, in my longer way, adopted a corresponding receptive obliquity. I felt that we should strike an unbiased observer as a couple of very deep and wily and developing and repulsive persons.

“I want to let you into this” — puff— “George,” said my uncle round the end of his cigar. “For many reasons.”

His voice grew lower and more cunning. He made explanations that to my inexperience did not completely explain. I retain an

impression of a long credit and a share with a firm of wholesale chemists, of a credit and a prospective share with some pirate printers, of a third share for a leading magazine and newspaper proprietor.

"I played 'em off one against the other," said my uncle. I took his point in an instant. He had gone to each of them in turn and said the others had come in.

"I put up four hundred pounds," said my uncle, "myself and my all. And you know—"

He assumed a brisk confidence. "I hadn't five hundred pence. At least—"

For a moment he really was just a little embarrassed. "I DID" he said, "produce capital. You see, there was that trust affair of yours — I ought, I suppose — in strict legality — to have put that straight first. Zzzz....

"It was a bold thing to do," said my uncle, shifting the venue from the region of honour to the region of courage. And then with a characteristic outburst of piety, "Thank God it's all come right!

"And now, I suppose, you ask where do YOU come in? Well, fact is I've always believed in you, George. You've got — it's a sort of dismal grit. Bark your shins, rouse you, and you'll go! You'd rush any position you had a mind to rush. I know a bit about character, George — trust me. You've got—" He clenched his hands and thrust them out suddenly, and at the same time said, with explosive violence, "Wooosh! Yes. You have! The way you put away that Latin at Wimblehurst; I've never forgotten it.

"Wo-oo-oo-osh! Your science and all that! Wo-oo-oo-osh! I know my limitations. There's things I can do, and" (he spoke in a whisper, as though this was the first hint of his life's secret) "there's things I can't. Well, I can create this business, but I can't make it go. I'm too voluminous — I'm a boiler-over, not a simmering stick-at-it. You keep on HOTTING UP AND HOTTING UP. Papin's digester. That's you, steady and long and piling up, — then, wo-oo-oo-oo-osh. Come in and stiffen these niggers. Teach them that wo-oo-oo-oo-osh. There you are! That's what I'm after. You! Nobody else believes you're more than a boy. Come right in with me and be a man. Eh, George? Think of the fun of it — a thing on the go — a Real Live

Thing! Wooshing it up! Making it buzz and spin! Whoo-oo-oo." — He made alluring expanding circles in the air with his hand. "Eh?"

His proposal, sinking to confidential undertones again, took more definite shape. I was to give all my time and energy to developing and organising. "You shan't write a single advertisement, or give a single assurance" he declared. "I can do all that." And the telegram was no flourish; I was to have three hundred a year. Three hundred a year. ("That's nothing," said my uncle, "the thing to freeze on to, when the time comes, is your tenth of the vendor's share.")

Three hundred a year certain, anyhow! It was an enormous income to me. For a moment I was altogether staggered. Could there be that much money in the whole concern? I looked about me at the sumptuous furniture of Schafer's Hotel. No doubt there were many such incomes.

My head was spinning with unwonted Benedictine and Burgundy.

"Let me go back and look at the game again," I said. "Let me see upstairs and round about."

I did.

"What do you think of it all?" my uncle asked at last.

"Well, for one thing," I said, "why don't you have those girls working in a decently ventilated room? Apart from any other consideration, they'd work twice as briskly. And they ought to cover the corks before labelling round the bottle."

"Why?" said my uncle.

"Because — they sometimes make a mucker of the cork job, and then the label's wasted."

"Come and change it, George," said my uncle, with sudden fervour "Come here and make a machine of it. You can. Make it all slick, and then make it woosh. I know you can. Oh! I know you can."

II

I seem to remember very quick changes of mind after that lunch. The muzzy exaltation of the unaccustomed stimulants gave way very rapidly to a model of pellucid and impartial clairvoyance which is one of my habitual mental states. It is intermittent; it leaves me for weeks together, I know, but back it comes at last like justice on

circuit, and calls up all my impression, all my illusions, all my willful and passionate proceedings. We came downstairs again into that inner room which pretended to be a scientific laboratory through its high glass lights, and indeed was a lurking place. My uncle pressed a cigarette on me, and I took it and stood before the empty fireplace while he propped his umbrella in the corner, deposited the new silk hat that was a little too big for him on the table, blew copiously and produced a second cigar.

It came into my head that he had shrunken very much in size since the Wimblehurst days, that the cannon ball he had swallowed was rather more evident and shameless than it had been, his skin less fresh and the nose between his glasses, which still didn't quite fit, much redder. And just then he seemed much laxer in his muscles and not quite as alertly quick in his movements. But he evidently wasn't aware of the degenerative nature of his changes as he sat there, looking suddenly quite little under my eyes.

"Well, George!" he said, quite happily unconscious of my silent criticism, "what do you think of it all?"

"Well," I said, "in the first place — it's a damned swindle!"

"Tut! tut!" said my uncle. "It's as straight as — It's fair trading!"

"So much the worse for trading," I said.

"It's the sort of thing everybody does. After all, there's no harm in the stuff — and it may do good. It might do a lot of good — giving people confidence, f'rinstance, against an epidemic. See? Why not? don't see where your swindle comes in."

"H'm," I said. "It's a thing you either see or don't see."

"I'd like to know what sort of trading isn't a swindle in its way. Everybody who does a large advertised trade is selling something common on the strength of saying it's uncommon. Look at Chickson — they made him a baronet. Look at Lord Radmore, who did it on lying about the alkali in soap! Rippin' ads those were of his too!"

"You don't mean to say you think doing this stuff up in bottles and swearing it's the quintessence of strength and making poor devils buy it at that, is straight?"

"Why not, George? How do we know it mayn't be the quintessence to them so far as they're concerned?"

"Oh!" I said, and shrugged my shoulders.

“There’s Faith. You put Faith in ‘em.... I grant our labels are a bit emphatic. Christian Science, really. No good setting people against the medicine. Tell me a solitary trade nowadays that hasn’t to be — emphatic. It’s the modern way! Everybody understands it — everybody allows for it.”

“But the world would be no worse and rather better, if all this stuff of yours was run down a conduit into the Thames.”

“Don’t see that, George, at all. ‘Mong other things, all our people would be out of work. Unemployed! I grant you Tono-Bungay MAY be — not QUITE so good a find for the world as Peruvian bark, but the point is, George — it MAKES TRADE! And the world lives on trade. Commerce! A romantic exchange of commodities and property. Romance. ‘Magination. See? You must look at these things in a broad light. Look at the wood — and forget the trees! And hang it, George! we got to do these things! There’s no way unless you do. What do YOU mean to do — anyhow?”

“There’s ways of living,” I said, “Without either fraud or lying.”

“You’re a bit stiff, George. There’s no fraud in this affair, I’ll bet my hat. But what do you propose to do? Go as chemist to some one who IS running a business, and draw a salary without a share like I offer you. Much sense in that! It comes out of the swindle as you call it — just the same.”

“Some businesses are straight and quiet, anyhow; supply a sound article that is really needed, don’t shout advertisements.”

“No, George. There you’re behind the times. The last of that sort was sold up ‘bout five years ago.”

“Well, there’s scientific research.”

“And who pays for that? Who put up that big City and Guilds place at South Kensington? Enterprising business men! They fancy they’ll have a bit of science going on, they want a handy Expert ever and again, and there you are! And what do you get for research when you’ve done it? Just a bare living and no outlook. They just keep you to make discoveries, and if they fancy they’ll use ’em they do.”

“One can teach.”

“How much a year, George? How much a year? I suppose you must respect Carlyle! Well, you take Carlyle’s test — solvency. (Lord! what a book that French Revolution of his is!) See what the

world pays teachers and discoverers and what it pays business men! That shows the ones it really wants. There's a justice in these big things, George, over and above the apparent injustice. I tell you it wants trade. It's Trade that makes the world go round! Argosies! Venice! Empire!"

My uncle suddenly rose to his feet.

"You think it over, George. You think it over! And come up on Sunday to the new place — we got rooms in Gower Street now — and see your aunt. She's often asked for you, George often and often, and thrown it up at me about that bit of property — though I've always said and always will, that twenty-five shillings in the pound is what I'll pay you and interest up to the nail. And think it over. It isn't me I ask you to help. It's yourself. It's your aunt Susan. It's the whole concern. It's the commerce of your country. And we want you badly. I tell you straight, I know my limitations. You could take this place, you could make it go! I can see you at it — looking rather sour. Woosh is the word, George."

And he smiled endearingly.

"I got to dictate a letter," he said, ending the smile, and vanished into the outer room.

III

I didn't succumb without a struggle to my uncle's allurements. Indeed, I held out for a week while I contemplated life and my prospects. It was a crowded and muddled contemplation. It invaded even my sleep.

My interview with the Registrar, my talk with my uncle, my abrupt discovery of the hopeless futility of my passion for Marion, had combined to bring me to sense of crisis. What was I going to do with life?

I remember certain phases of my indecisions very well.

I remember going home from our talk. I went down Farringdon Street to the Embankment because I thought to go home by Holborn and Oxford Street would be too crowded for thinking.... That piece of Embankment from Blackfriars to Westminster still reminds me of that momentous hesitation.

You know, from first to last, I saw the business with my eyes open, I saw its ethical and moral values quite clearly. Never for a moment do I remember myself faltering from my persuasion that the sale of Tono-Bungay was a thoroughly dishonest proceeding. The stuff was, I perceived, a mischievous trash, slightly stimulating, aromatic and attractive, likely to become a bad habit and train people in the habitual use of stronger tonics and insidiously dangerous to people with defective kidneys. It would cost about sevenpence the large bottle to make, including bottling, and we were to sell it at half a crown plus the cost of the patent medicine stamp. A thing that I will confess deterred me from the outset far more than the sense of dishonesty in this affair, was the supreme silliness of the whole concern. I still clung to the idea that the world of men was or should be a sane and just organisation, and the idea that I should set myself gravely, just at the fine springtime of my life, to developing a monstrous bottling and packing warehouse, bottling rubbish for the consumption of foolish, credulous and depressed people, had in it a touch of insanity. My early beliefs still clung to me. I felt assured that somewhere there must be a hitch in the fine prospect of ease and wealth under such conditions; that somewhere, a little overgrown, perhaps, but still traceable, lay a neglected, wasted path of use and honour for me.

My inclination to refuse the whole thing increased rather than diminished at first as I went along the Embankment. In my uncle's presence there had been a sort of glamour that had prevented an outright refusal. It was a revival of affection for him I felt in his presence, I think, in part, and in part an instinctive feeling that I must consider him as my host. But much more was it a curious persuasion he had the knack of inspiring — a persuasion not so much of his integrity and capacity as of the reciprocal and yielding foolishness of the world. One felt that he was silly and wild, but in some way silly and wild after the fashion of the universe. After all, one must live somehow. I astonished him and myself by temporising.

"No," said I, "I'll think it over!"

And as I went along the embankment the first effect was all against my uncle. He shrank — for a little while he continued to shrink — in perspective until he was only a very small shabby little

man in a dirty back street, sending off a few hundred bottles of rubbish to foolish buyers. The great buildings on the right of us, the Inns and the School Board place — as it was then — Somerset House, the big hotels, the great bridges, Westminster's outlines ahead, had an effect of grey largeness that reduced him to the proportions of a busy black beetle in a crack in the floor.

And then my eye caught the advertisements on the south side of "Sorber's Food," of "Cracknell's Ferric Wine," very bright and prosperous signs, illuminated at night, and I realised how astonishingly they looked at home there, how evidently part they were in the whole thing.

I saw a man come charging out of Palace Yard — the policeman touched his helmet to him — with a hat and a bearing astonishingly like my uncle's. After all, — didn't Cracknell himself sit in the House?

Tono-Bungay shouted at me from a hoarding near Adelphi Terrace; I saw it afar off near Carfax Street; it cried out again upon me in Kensington High Street, and burst into a perfect clamour; six or seven times I saw it as I drew near my diggings. It certainly had an air of being something more than a dream.

Yes, I thought it over — thoroughly enough.... Trade rules the world. Wealth rather than trade! The thing was true, and true too was my uncle's proposition that the quickest way to get wealth is to sell the cheapest thing possible in the dearest bottle. He was frightfully right after all. Pecunnia non olet, — a Roman emperor said that. Perhaps my great heroes in Plutarch were no more than such men, fine now only because they are distant; perhaps after all this Socialism to which I had been drawn was only a foolish dream, only the more foolish because all its promises were conditionally true. Morris and these others played with it wittingly; it gave a zest, a touch of substance, to their aesthetic pleasures. Never would there be good faith enough to bring such things about. They knew it; every one, except a few young fools, knew it. As I crossed the corner of St. James's Park wrapped in thought, I dodged back just in time to escape a prancing pair of greys. A stout, common-looking woman, very magnificently dressed, regarded me from the carriage with a scornful eye. "No doubt," thought I, "a pill-vendor's wife...."

Running through all my thoughts, surging out like a refrain, was my uncle's master-stroke, his admirable touch of praise: "Make it all slick — and then make it go Woosh. I know you can! Oh! I KNOW you can!"

IV

Ewart as a moral influence was unsatisfactory. I had made up my mind to put the whole thing before him, partly to see how he took it, and partly to hear how it sounded when it was said. I asked him to come and eat with me in an Italian place near Panton Street where one could get a curious, interesting, glutting sort of dinner for eighteen-pence. He came with a disconcerting black-eye that he wouldn't explain. "Not so much a black-eye," he said, "as the aftermath of a purple patch.... What's your difficulty?"

"I'll tell you with the salad," I said.

But as a matter of fact I didn't tell him. I threw out that I was doubtful whether I ought to go into trade, or stick to teaching in view of my deepening socialist proclivities; and he, warming with the unaccustomed generosity of a sixteen-penny Chianti, ran on from that without any further inquiry as to my trouble.

His utterances roved wide and loose.

"The reality of life, my dear Ponderevo," I remember him saying very impressively and punctuating with the nut-crackers as he spoke, "is Chromatic Conflict ... and Form. Get hold of that and let all these other questions go. The Socialist will tell you one sort of colour and shape is right, the Individualist another. What does it all amount to? What DOES it all amount to? NOTHING! I have no advice to give anyone, — except to avoid regrets. Be yourself, seek after such beautiful things as your own sense determines to be beautiful. And don't mind the headache in the morning.... For what, after all, is a morning, Ponderevo? It isn't like the upper part of a day!"

He paused impressively.

"What Rot!" I cried, after a confused attempt to apprehend him.

"Isn't it! And it's my bedrock wisdom in the matter! Take it or leave it, my dear George; take it or leave it."... He put down the nut-crackers out of my reach and lugged a greasy-looking note-book

from his pocket. “I’m going to steal this mustard pot,” he said.

I made noises of remonstrance.

“Only as a matter of design. I’ve got to do an old beast’s tomb.

“Wholesale grocer. I’ll put it on his corners, — four mustard pots. I dare say he’d be glad of a mustard plaster now to cool him, poor devil, where he is. But anyhow, — here goes!”

V

It came to me in the small hours that the real moral touchstone for this great doubting of mind was Marion. I lay composing statements of my problem and imagined myself delivering them to her — and she, goddess-like and beautiful; giving her fine, simply-worded judgment.

“You see, it’s just to give one’s self over to the Capitalistic System,” I imagined myself saying in good Socialist jargon; “it’s surrendering all one’s beliefs. We MAY succeed, we MAY grow rich, but where would the satisfaction be?”

Then she would say, “No! That wouldn’t be right.”

“But the alternative is to wait!”

Then suddenly she would become a goddess. She would turn upon me frankly and nobly, with shining eyes, with arms held out. “No,” she would say, “we love one another. Nothing ignoble shall ever touch us. We love one another. Why wait to tell each other that, dear? What does it matter that we are poor and may keep poor?”

But indeed the conversation didn’t go at all in that direction. At the sight of her my nocturnal eloquence became preposterous and all the moral values altered altogether. I had waited for her outside the door of the Parsian-robe establishment in Kensington High Street and walked home with her thence. I remember how she emerged into the warm evening light and that she wore a brown straw hat that made her, for once not only beautiful but pretty.

“I like that hat,” I said by way of opening; and she smiled her rare delightful smile at me.

“I love you,” I said in an undertone, as we jostled closer on the pavement.

She shook her head forbiddingly, but she still smiled. Then— “Be

sensible!”

The High Street pavement is too narrow and crowded for conversation and we were some way westward before we spoke again.

“Look here,” I said; “I want you, Marion. Don’t you understand? I want you.”

“Now!” she cried warningly.

I do not know if the reader will understand how a passionate lover, an immense admiration and desire, can be shot with a gleam of positive hatred. Such a gleam there was in me at the serene self-complacency of that “NOW!” It vanished almost before I felt it. I found no warning in it of the antagonisms latent between us.

“Marion,” I said, “this isn’t a trifling matter to me. I love you; I would die to get you.... Don’t you care?”

“But what is the good?”

“You don’t care,” I cried. “You don’t care a rap!”

“You know I care,” she answered. “If I didn’t — If I didn’t like you very much, should I let you come and meet me — go about with you?”

“Well then,” I said, “promise to marry me!”

“If I do, what difference will it make?”

We were separated by two men carrying a ladder who drove between us unawares.

“Marion,” I asked when we got together again, “I tell you I want you to marry me.”

“We can’t.”

“Why not?”

“We can’t marry — in the street.”

“We could take our chance!”

“I wish you wouldn’t go on talking like this. What is the good?”

She suddenly gave way to gloom. “It’s no good marrying” she said. “One’s only miserable. I’ve seen other girls. When one’s alone one has a little pocket-money anyhow, one can go about a little. But think of being married and no money, and perhaps children — you can’t be sure....”

She poured out this concentrated philosophy of her class and type in jerky uncompleted sentences, with knitted brows, with

discontented eyes towards the westward glow — forgetful, it seemed, for a moment even of me.

"Look here, Marion," I said abruptly, "what would you marry on?"

"What IS the good?" she began.

"Would you marry on three hundred a year?"

She looked at me for a moment. "That's six pounds a week," she said. "One could manage on that, easily. Smithie's brother — No, he only gets two hundred and fifty. He married a typewriting girl."

"Will you marry me if I get three hundred a year?"

She looked at me again, with a curious gleam of hope.

"IF!" she said.

I held out my hand and looked her in the eyes. "It's a bargain," I said.

She hesitated and touched my hand for an instant. "It's silly," she remarked as she did so. "It means really we're—" She paused.

"Yes?" said I.

"Engaged. You'll have to wait years. What good can it do you?"

"Not so many years." I answered.

For a moment she brooded.

Then she glanced at me with a smile, half-sweet, half-wistful, that has stuck in my memory for ever.

"I like you!" she said. "I shall like to be engaged to you."

And, faint on the threshold of hearing, I caught her ventured "dear!" It's odd that in writing this down my memory passed over all that intervened and I feel it all again, and once again I'm Marion's boyish lover taking great joy in such rare and little things.

VI

At last I went to the address my uncle had given me in Gower Street, and found my aunt Susan waiting tea for him.

Directly I came into the room I appreciated the change in outlook that the achievement of Tono-Bungay had made almost as vividly as when I saw my uncle's new hat. The furniture of the room struck upon my eye as almost stately. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz which gave it a dim, remote flavour of Bladesover; the

mantel, the cornice, the gas pendant were larger and finer than the sort of thing I had grown accustomed to in London. And I was shown in by a real housemaid with real tails to her cap, and great quantities of reddish hair. There was my aunt too looking bright and pretty, in a blue-patterned tea-wrap with bows that seemed to me the quintessence of fashion. She was sitting in a chair by the open window with quite a pile of yellow-labelled books on the occasional table beside her. Before the large, paper-decorated fireplace stood a three-tiered cake-stand displaying assorted cakes, and a tray with all the tea equipage except the teapot, was on the large centre-table. The carpet was thick, and a spice of adventure was given it by a number of dyed sheep-skin mats.

"Hello!" said my aunt as I appeared. "It's George!"

"Shall I serve the tea now, Mem?" said the real housemaid, surveying our greeting coldly.

"Not till Mr. Ponderevo comes, Meggie," said my aunt, and grimaced with extraordinary swiftness and virulence as the housemaid turned her back.

"Meggie she calls herself," said my aunt as the door closed, and left me to infer a certain want of sympathy.

"You're looking very jolly, aunt," said I.

"What do you think of all this old Business he's got?" asked my aunt.

"Seems a promising thing," I said.

"I suppose there is a business somewhere?"

"Haven't you seen it?"

"'Fraid I'd say something AT it George, if I did. So he won't let me. It came on quite suddenly. Brooding he was and writing letters and sizzling something awful — like a chestnut going to pop. Then he came home one day saying Tono-Bungay till I thought he was clean off his onion, and singing — what was it?"

"'I'm afloat, I'm afloat,'" I guessed.

"The very thing. You've heard him. And saying our fortunes were made. Took me out to the Ho'burm Restaurant, George, — dinner, and we had champagne, stuff that blows up the back of your nose and makes you go SO, and he said at last he'd got things worthy of me — and we moved here next day. It's a swell house, George. Three

pounds a week for the rooms. And he says the Business'll stand it."

She looked at me doubtfully.

"Either do that or smash," I said profoundly.

We discussed the question for a moment mutely with our eyes. My aunt slapped the pile of books from Mudie's.

"I've been having such a Go of reading, George. You never did!"

"What do you think of the business?" I asked.

"Well, they've let him have money," she said, and thought and raised her eyebrows.

"It's been a time," she went on. "The flapping about! Me sitting doing nothing and him on the go like a rocket. He's done wonders. But he wants you, George — he wants you. Sometimes he's full of hope — talks of when we're going to have a carriage and be in society — makes it seem so natural and topsy-turvy, I hardly know whether my old heels aren't up here listening to him, and my old head on the floor.... Then he gets depressed. Says he wants restraint. Says he can make a splash but can't keep on. Says if you don't come in everything will smash — But you are coming in?"

She paused and looked at me.

"Well—"

"You don't say you won't come in!"

"But look here, aunt," I said, "do you understand quite?... It's a quack medicine. It's trash."

"There's no law against selling quack medicine that I know of," said my aunt. She thought for a minute and became unusually grave. "It's our only chance, George," she said. "If it doesn't go..."

There came the slamming of a door, and a loud bellowing from the next apartment through the folding doors. "Here-er Shee Rulk lies Poo Tom Bo — oling."

"Silly old Concertina! Hark at him, George!" She raised her voice. "Don't sing that, you old Walrus, you! Sing 'I'm afloat!'"

One leaf of the folding doors opened and my uncle appeared.

"Hullo, George! Come along at last? Gossome tea-cake, Susan?"

"Thought it over George?" he said abruptly.

"Yes," said I.

"Coming in?"

I paused for a last moment and nodded yes.

“Ah!” he cried. “Why couldn’t you say that a week ago?”

“I’ve had false ideas about the world,” I said. “Oh! they don’t matter now! Yes, I’ll come, I’ll take my chance with you, I won’t hesitate again.”

And I didn’t. I stuck to that resolution for seven long years.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

HOW WE MADE TONO-BUNGAY HUM

I

So I made my peace with my uncle, and we set out upon this bright enterprise of selling slightly injurious rubbish at one-and-three-halfpence and two-and-nine a bottle, including the Government stamp. We made Tono-Bungay hum! It brought us wealth, influence, respect, the confidence of endless people. All that my uncle promised me proved truth and understatement; Tono-Bungay carried me to freedoms and powers that no life of scientific research, no passionate service of humanity could ever have given me....

It was my uncle's genius that did it. No doubt he needed me, — I was, I will admit, his indispensable right hand; but his was the brain to conceive. He wrote every advertisement; some of them even he sketched. You must remember that his were the days before the Time took to enterprise and the vociferous hawking of that antiquated Encyclopedia. That alluring, button-holing, let-me -just-tell-you-quite-soberly-something-you-ought-to-know style of newspaper advertisement, with every now and then a convulsive jump of some attractive phrase into capitals, was then almost a novelty. "Many people who are MODERATELY well think they are QUITE well," was one of his early efforts. The jerks in capitals were, "DO NOT NEED DRUGS OR MEDICINE," and "SIMPLY A PROPER REGIMEN TO GET YOU IN TONE." One was warned against the chemist or druggist who pushed "much-advertised nostrums" on one's attention. That trash did more harm than good. The thing needed was regimen — and Tono-Bungay!

Very early, too, was that bright little quarter column, at least it was usually a quarter column in the evening papers: "HILARITY — Tono-Bungay. Like Mountain Air in the Veins." The penetrating trio of questions: "Are you bored with your Business? Are you bored with your Dinner. Are you bored with your Wife?" — that, too, was in our Gower Street days. Both these we had in our first campaign

when we worked London south central, and west; and then, too, we had our first poster — the HEALTH, BEAUTY, AND STRENGTH one. That was his design; I happen still to have got by me the first sketch he made for it. I have reproduced it here with one or two others to enable the reader to understand the mental quality that initiated these familiar ornaments of London.

(The second one is about eighteen months later, the germ of the well-known "Fog" poster; the third was designed for an influenza epidemic, but never issued.)

These things were only incidental in my department.

I had to polish them up for the artist and arrange the business of printing and distribution, and after my uncle had had a violent and needless quarrel with the advertising manager of the Daily Regulator about the amount of display given to one of his happy thoughts, I also took up the negotiations of advertisements for the press.

We discussed and worked out distribution together first in the drawing-room floor in Gower Street with my aunt sometimes helping very shrewdly, and then, with a steadily improving type of cigar and older and older whisky, in his smuggery at their first house, the one in Beckenham. Often we worked far into the night sometimes until dawn.

We really worked infernally hard, and, I recall, we worked with a very decided enthusiasm, not simply on my uncle's part but mine, It was a game, an absurd but absurdly interesting game, and the points were scored in cases of bottles. People think a happy notion is enough to make a man rich, that fortunes can be made without toil. It's a dream, as every millionaire (except one or two lucky gamblers) can testify; I doubt if J.D. Rockefeller in the early days of Standard Oil, worked harder than we did. We worked far into the night — and we also worked all day. We made a rule to be always dropping in at the factory unannounced to keep things right — for at first we could afford no properly responsible underlings — and we traveled London, pretending to be our own representatives and making all sorts of special arrangements.

But none of this was my special work, and as soon as we could get other men in, I dropped the traveling, though my uncle found it particularly interesting and kept it up for years. "Does me good,

George, to see the chaps behind their counters like I was once," he explained. My special and distinctive duty was to give Tono-Bungay substance and an outward and visible bottle, to translate my uncle's great imaginings into the creation of case after case of labelled bottles of nonsense, and the punctual discharge of them by railway, road and steamer towards their ultimate goal in the Great Stomach of the People. By all modern standards the business was, as my uncle would say, "absolutely bona fide." We sold our stuff and got the money, and spent the money honestly in lies and clamour to sell more stuff. Section by section we spread it over the whole of the British Isles; first working the middle-class London suburbs, then the outer suburbs, then the home counties, then going (with new bills and a more pious style of "ad") into Wales, a great field always for a new patent-medicine, and then into Lancashire.

My uncle had in his inner office a big map of England, and as we took up fresh sections of the local press and our consignments invaded new areas, flags for advertisements and pink underlines for orders showed our progress.

"The romance of modern commerce, George!" my uncle would say, rubbing his hands together and drawing in air through his teeth. "The romance of modern commerce, eh? Conquest. Province by province. Like sogers."

We subjugated England and Wales; we rolled over the Cheviots with a special adaptation containing eleven per cent. of absolute alcohol; "Tono-Bungay: Thistle Brand." We also had the Fog poster adapted to a kilted Briton in a misty Highland scene.

Under the shadow of our great leading line we were presently taking subsidiary specialties into action; "Tono-Bungay Hair Stimulant" was our first supplement. Then came "Concentrated Tono-Bungay" for the eyes. That didn't go, but we had a considerable success with the Hair Stimulant. We broached the subject, I remember, in a little catechism beginning: "Why does the hair fall out? Because the follicles are fagged. What are the follicles?..." So it went on to the climax that the Hair Stimulant contained all "The essential principles of that most reviving tonic, Tono-Bungay, together with an emollient and nutritious oil derived from crude Neat's Foot Oil by a process of refinement, separation

and deodorization.... It will be manifest to any one of scientific attainments that in Neat's Foot Oil derived from the hoofs and horns of beasts, we must necessarily have a natural skin and hair lubricant."

And we also did admirable things with our next subsidiaries, "Tono-Bungay Lozenges," and "Tono-Bungay Chocolate." These we urged upon the public for their extraordinary nutritive and recuperative value in cases of fatigue and strain. We gave them posters and illustrated advertisements showing climbers hanging from marvelously vertical cliffs, cyclist champions upon the track, mounted messengers engaged in Aix-to-Ghent rides, soldiers lying out in action under a hot sun. "You can GO for twenty-four hours," we declared, "on Tono-Bungay Chocolate." We didn't say whether you could return on the same commodity. We also showed a dreadfully barristerish barrister, wig, side-whiskers, teeth, a horribly life-like portrait of all existing barristers, talking at a table, and beneath, this legend: "A Four Hours' Speech on Tono-Bungay Lozenges, and as fresh as when he began." Then brought in regiments of school-teachers, revivalist ministers, politicians and the like. I really do believe there was an element of "kick" in the strychnine in these lozenges, especially in those made according to our earlier formula. For we altered all our formulae — invariably weakening them enormously as sales got ahead.

In a little while — so it seems to me now — we were employing travelers and opening up Great Britain at the rate of a hundred square miles a day. All the organisation throughout was sketched in a crude, entangled, half-inspired fashion by my uncle, and all of it had to be worked out into a practicable scheme of quantities and expenditure by me. We had a lot of trouble finding our travelers; in the end at least half of them were Irish-Americans, a wonderful breed for selling medicine. We had still more trouble over our factory manager, because of the secrets of the inner room, and in the end we got a very capable woman, Mrs. Hampton Diggs, who had formerly managed a large millinery workroom, whom we could trust to keep everything in good working order without finding out anything that wasn't put exactly under her loyal and energetic nose. She conceived a high opinion of Tono-Bungay and took it in all forms and large quantities so long as I knew her. It didn't seem to do her any harm.

And she kept the girls going quite wonderfully.

My uncle's last addition to the Tono-Bungay group was the Tono-Bungay Mouthwash. The reader has probably read a hundred times that inspiring inquiry of his, "You are Young Yet, but are you Sure Nothing has Aged your Gums?"

And after that we took over the agency for three or four good American lines that worked in with our own, and could be handled with it; Texan Embrocation, and "23 — to clear the system" were the chief....

I set down these bare facts. To me they are all linked with the figure of my uncle. In some of the old seventeenth and early eighteenth century prayerbooks at Bladesover there used to be illustrations with long scrolls coming out of the mouths of the wood-cut figures. I wish I could write all this last chapter on a scroll coming out of the head of my uncle, show it all the time as unfolding and pouring out from a short, fattening, small-legged man with stiff cropped hair, disobedient glasses on a perky little nose, and a round stare behind them. I wish I could show you him breathing hard and a little through his nose as his pen scrabbled out some absurd inspiration for a poster or a picture page, and make you hear his voice, charged with solemn import like the voice of a squeaky prophet, saying, "George! list'n! I got an ideer. I got a notion! George!"

I should put myself into the same picture. Best setting for us, I think, would be the Beckenham snuggery, because there we worked hardest. It would be the lamplit room of the early nineties, and the clock upon the mantel would indicate midnight or later. We would be sitting on either side of the fire, I with a pipe, my uncle with a cigar or cigarette. There would be glasses standing inside the brass fender. Our expressions would be very grave. My uncle used to sit right back in his armchair; his toes always turned in when he was sitting down and his legs had a way of looking curved, as though they hadn't bones or joints but were stuffed with sawdust.

"George, whad'yer think of T.B. for sea-sickness?" he would say.

"No good that I can imagine."

"Oom! No harm TRYING, George. We can but try."

I would suck my pipe. "Hard to get at. Unless we sold our stuff

specially at the docks. Might do a special at Cook's office, or in the Continental Bradshaw."

"It 'ud give 'em confidence, George."

He would Zzzz, with his glasses reflecting the red of the glowing coals.

"No good hiding our light under a Bushel," he would remark.

I never really determined whether my uncle regarded Tono-Bungay as a fraud, or whether he didn't come to believe in it in a kind of way by the mere reiteration of his own assertions. I think that his average attitude was one of kindly, almost parental, toleration. I remember saying on one occasion, "But you don't suppose this stuff ever did a human being the slightest good all?" and how his face assumed a look of protest, as of one reproving harshness and dogmatism.

"You've a hard nature, George," he said. "You're too ready to run things down. How can one TELL? How can one venture to TELL!..."

I suppose any creative and developing game would have interested me in those years. At any rate, I know I put as much zeal into this Tono-Bungay as any young lieutenant could have done who suddenly found himself in command of a ship. It was extraordinarily interesting to me to figure out the advantage accruing from this shortening of the process or that, and to weigh it against the capital cost of the alteration. I made a sort of machine for sticking on the labels, that I patented; to this day there is a little trickle of royalties to me from that. I also contrived to have our mixture made concentrated, got the bottles, which all came sliding down a guarded slant-way, nearly filled with distilled water at one tap, and dripped our magic ingredients in at the next. This was an immense economy of space for the inner sanctum. For the bottling we needed special taps, and these, too, I invented and patented.

We had a sort of endless band of bottles sliding along an inclined glass trough made slippery with running water. At one end a girl held them up to the light, put aside any that were imperfect and placed the others in the trough; the filling was automatic; at the other end a girl slipped in the cork and drove it home with a little mallet. Each tank, the little one for the vivifying ingredients and the big one for distilled water, had a level indicator, and inside I had a float arrangement that

stopped the slide whenever either had sunk too low. Another girl stood ready with my machine to label the corked bottles and hand them to the three packers, who slipped them into their outer papers and put them, with a pad of corrugated paper between each pair, into a little groove from which they could be made to slide neatly into position in our standard packing-case. It sounds wild, I know, but I believe I was the first man in the city of London to pack patent medicines through the side of the packing-case, to discover there was a better way in than by the lid. Our cases packed themselves, practically; had only to be put into position on a little wheeled tray and when full pulled to the lift that dropped them to the men downstairs, who padded up the free space and nailed on top and side. Our girls, moreover, packed with corrugated paper and matchbook-wood box partitions when everybody else was using expensive young men to pack through the top of the box with straw, many breakages and much waste and confusion.

II

As I look back at them now, those energetic years seem all compacted to a year or so; from the days of our first hazardous beginning in Farringdon Street with barely a thousand pounds' worth of stuff or credit all told — and that got by something perilously like snatching — to the days when my uncle went to the public on behalf of himself and me (one-tenth share) and our silent partners, the drug wholesalers and the printing people and the owner of that group of magazines and newspapers, to ask with honest confidence for L150,000. Those silent partners were remarkably sorry, I know, that they had not taken larger shares and given us longer credit when the subscriptions came pouring in. My uncle had a clear half to play with (including the one-tenth understood to be mine).

L150,000 — think of it! — for the goodwill in a string of lies and a trade in bottles of mitigated water! Do you realise the madness of the world that sanctions such a thing? Perhaps you don't. At times use and wont certainly blinded me. If it had not been for Ewart, I don't think I should have had an inkling of the wonderfulness of this development of my fortunes; I should have grown accustomed to it,

fallen in with all its delusions as completely as my uncle presently did. He was immensely proud of the flotation. “They’ve never been given such value,” he said, “for a dozen years.” But Ewart, with his gesticulating hairy hands and bony wrists, his single-handed chorus to all this as it played itself over again in my memory, and he kept my fundamental absurdity illuminated for me during all this astonishing time.

“It’s just on all fours with the rest of things,” he remarked; “only more so. You needn’t think you’re anything out of the way.”

I remember one disquisition very distinctly. It was just after Ewart had been to Paris on a mysterious expedition to “rough in” some work for a rising American sculptor. This young man had a commission for an allegorical figure of Truth (draped, of course) for his State Capitol, and he needed help. Ewart had returned with his hair cut en brosse and with his costume completely translated into French. He wore, I remember, a bicycling suit of purplish-brown, baggy beyond ageing — the only creditable thing about it was that it had evidently not been made for him — a voluminous black tie, a decadent soft felt hat and several French expletives of a sinister description. “Silly clothes, aren’t they?” he said at the sight of my startled eye. “I don’t know why I got’m. They seemed all right over there.”

He had come down to our Raggett Street place to discuss a benevolent project of mine for a poster by him, and he scattered remarkable discourse over the heads (I hope it was over the heads) of our bottlers.

“What I like about it all, Ponderevo, is its poetry.... That’s where we get the pull of the animals. No animal would ever run a factory like this. Think!... One remembers the Beaver, of course. He might very possibly bottle things, but would he stick a label round ’em and sell ‘em? The Beaver is a dreamy fool, I’ll admit, him and his dams, but after all there’s a sort of protection about ‘em, a kind of muddy practicality! They prevent things getting at him. And it’s not your poetry only. It’s the poetry of the customer too. Poet answering to poet — soul to soul. Health, Strength and Beauty — in a bottle — the magic philtre! Like a fairy tale....

“Think of the people to whom your bottles of footle go! (I’m

calling it footle, Ponderevo, out of praise," he said in parenthesis.)

"Think of the little clerks and jaded women and overworked people. People overstrained with wanting to do, people overstrained with wanting to be.... People, in fact, overstrained.... The real trouble of life, Ponderevo, isn't that we exist — that's a vulgar error; the real trouble is that we DON'T really exist and we want to. That's what this — in the highest sense — just stands for! The hunger to be — for once — really alive — to the finger tips!...

"Nobody wants to do and be the things people are — nobody. YOU don't want to preside over this — this bottling; I don't want to wear these beastly clothes and be led about by you; nobody wants to keep on sticking labels on silly bottles at so many farthings a gross. That isn't existing! That's — sus — substratum. None of us want to be what we are, or to do what we do. Except as a sort of basis. What do we want? You know. I know. Nobody confesses. What we all want to be is something perpetually young and beautiful — young Joves — young Joves, Ponderevo" — his voice became loud, harsh and declamatory— "pursuing coy half-willing nymphs through everlasting forests."...

There was a just-perceptible listening hang in the work about us.

"Come downstairs," I interrupted, "we can talk better there."

"I can talk better here," he answered.

He was just going on, but fortunately the implacable face of Mrs. Hampton Diggs appeared down the aisle of bottling machines.

"All right," he said, "I'll come."

In the little sanctum below, my uncle was taking a digestive pause after his lunch and by no means alert. His presence sent Ewart back to the theme of modern commerce, over the excellent cigar my uncle gave him. He behaved with the elaborate deference due to a business magnate from an unknown man.

"What I was pointing out to your nephew, sir," said Ewart, putting both elbows on the table, "was the poetry of commerce. He doesn't, you know, seem to see it at all."

My uncle nodded brightly. "Whad I tell 'im," he said round his cigar.

"We are artists. You and I, sir, can talk, if you will permit me, as one artist to another. It's advertisement has — done it.

Advertisement has revolutionised trade and industry; it is going to revolutionise the world. The old merchant used to tote about commodities; the new one creates values. Doesn't need to tote. He takes something that isn't worth anything — or something that isn't particularly worth anything — and he makes it worth something. He takes mustard that is just like anybody else's mustard, and he goes about saying, shouting, singing, chalking on walls, writing inside people's books, putting it everywhere, 'Smith's Mustard is the Best.' And behold it is the best!"

"True," said my uncle, chubbily and with a dreamy sense of mysticism; "true!"

"It's just like an artist; he takes a lump of white marble on the verge of a lime-kiln, he chips it about, he makes — he makes a monument to himself — and others — a monument the world will not willingly let die. Talking of mustard, sir, I was at Clapham Junction the other day, and all the banks are overgrown with horse radish that's got loose from a garden somewhere. You know what horseradish is — grows like wildfire — spreads — spreads. I stood at the end of the platform looking at the stuff and thinking about it. 'Like fame,' I thought, 'rank and wild where it isn't wanted. Why don't the really good things in life grow like horseradish?' I thought. My mind went off in a peculiar way it does from that to the idea that mustard costs a penny a tin — I bought some the other day for a ham I had. It came into my head that it would be ripping good business to use horseradish to adulterate mustard. I had a sort of idea that I could plunge into business on that, get rich and come back to my own proper monumental art again. And then I said, 'But why adulterate? I don't like the idea of adulteration.'"

"Shabby," said my uncle, nodding his head. "Bound to get found out!"

"And totally unnecessary, too! Why not do up a mixture — three-quarters pounded horseradish and a quarter mustard — give it a fancy name — and sell it at twice the mustard price. See? I very nearly started the business straight away, only something happened. My train came along."

"Jolly good ideer," said my uncle. He looked at me. "That really is an ideer, George," he said.

“Take shavin’s, again! You know that poem of Longfellow’s, sir, that sounds exactly like the first declension. What is it?— ‘Marr’s a maker, men say!’”

My uncle nodded and gurgled some quotation that died away.

“Jolly good poem, George,” he said in an aside to me.

“Well, it’s about a carpenter and a poetic Victorian child, you know, and some shavin’s. The child made no end out of the shavin’s. So might you. Powder ‘em. They might be anything. Soak ’em in jipper, — Xylo-tobacco! Powder’em and get a little tar and turpentinous smell in, — wood-packing for hot baths — a Certain Cure for the scourge of Influenza! There’s all these patent grain foods, — what Americans call cereals. I believe I’m right, sir, in saying they’re sawdust.”

“No!” said my uncle, removing his cigar; “as far as I can find out it’s really grain, — spoilt grain.... I’ve been going into that.”

“Well, there you are!” said Ewart. “Say it’s spoilt grain. It carried out my case just as well. Your modern commerce is no more buying and selling than sculpture. It’s mercy — it’s salvation. It’s rescue work! It takes all sorts of fallen commodities by the hand and raises them. Cana isn’t in it. You turn water — into Tono-Bungay.”

“Tono-Bungay’s all right,” said my uncle, suddenly grave. “We aren’t talking of Tono-Bungay.”

“Your nephew, sir, is hard; he wants everything to go to a sort of predestinated end; he’s a Calvinist of Commerce. Offer him a dustbin full of stuff; he calls it refuse — passes by on the other side. Now YOU, sir you’d make cinders respect themselves.”

My uncle regarded him dubiously for a moment. But there was a touch of appreciation in his eye.

“Might make ’em into a sort of sanitary brick,” he reflected over his cigar end.

“Or a friable biscuit. Why NOT? You might advertise: ‘Why are Birds so Bright? Because they digest their food perfectly! Why do they digest their food so perfectly? Because they have a gizzard! Why hasn’t man a gizzard? Because he can buy Ponderevo’s Asphalt Triturating, Friable Biscuit — Which is Better.’”

He delivered the last words in a shout, with his hairy hand flourished in the air....

“Damn clever fellow,” said my uncle, after he had one. “I know a man when I see one. He’d do. But drunk, I should say. But that only makes some chap brighter. If he WANTS to do that poster, he can. Zzzz. That ideer of his about the horseradish. There’s something in that, George. I’m going to think over that....”

I may say at once that my poster project came to nothing in the end, though Ewart devoted an interesting week to the matter. He let his unfortunate disposition to irony run away with him. He produced a picture of two beavers with a subtle likeness, he said, to myself and my uncle — the likeness to my uncle certainly wasn’t half bad — and they were bottling rows and rows of Tono-Bungay, with the legend “Modern commerce.” It certainly wouldn’t have sold a case, though he urged it on me one cheerful evening on the ground that it would “arouse curiosity.” In addition he produced a quite shocking study of my uncle, excessively and needlessly nude, but, so far as I was able to judge, an admirable likeness, engaged in feats of strength of a Gargantuan type before an audience of deboshed and shattered ladies. The legend, “Health, Beauty, Strength,” below, gave a needed point to his parody. This he hung up in the studio over the oil shop, with a flap of brown paper; by way of a curtain over it to accentuate its libellous offence.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

MARION I

As I look back on those days in which we built up the great Tono-Bungay property out of human hope and credit for bottles and rent and printing, I see my life as it were arranged in two parallel columns of unequal width, a wider, more diffused, eventful and various one which continually broadens out, the business side of my life, and a narrow, darker and darkling one shot ever and again with a gleam of happiness, my home-life with Marion. For, of course, I married Marion.

I didn't, as a matter of fact, marry her until a year after Tono-Bungay was thoroughly afloat, and then only after conflicts and discussions of a quite strenuous sort. By that time I was twenty-four. It seems the next thing to childhood now. We were both in certain directions unusually ignorant and simple; we were temperamentally antagonistic, and we hadn't — I don't think we were capable of — an idea in common. She was young and extraordinarily conventional — she seemed never to have an idea of her own but always the idea of her class — and I was young and sceptical, enterprising and passionate; the two links that held us together were the intense appeal her physical beauty had for me, and her appreciation of her importance in my thoughts. There can be no doubt of my passion for her. In her I had discovered woman desired. The nights I have lain awake on account of her, writhing, biting my wrists in a fever of longing! ...

I have told how I got myself a silk hat and black coat to please her on Sunday — to the derision of some of my fellow-students who charged to meet me, and how we became engaged. But that was only the beginning of our difference. To her that meant the beginning of a not unpleasant little secrecy, an occasional use of verbal endearments, perhaps even kisses. It was something to go on indefinitely, interfering in no way with her gossiping spells of work at Smithie's. To me it was a pledge to come together into the utmost intimacy of soul and body so soon as we could contrive it....

I don't know if it will strike the reader that I am setting out to discuss the queer, unwise love relationship and my bungle of a marriage with excessive solemnity. But to me it seems to reach out to vastly wider issues than our little personal affair. I've thought over my life. In these last few years I've tried to get at least a little wisdom out of it. And in particular I've thought over this part of my life. I'm enormously impressed by the ignorant, unguided way in which we two entangled ourselves with each other. It seems to me the queerest thing in all this network of misunderstandings and misstatements and faulty and ramshackle conventions which makes up our social order as the individual meets it, that we should have come together so accidentally and so blindly. Because we were no more than samples of the common fate. Love is not only the cardinal fact in the individual life, but the most important concern of the community; after all, the way in which the young people of this generation pair off determines the fate of the nation; all the other affairs of the State are subsidiary to that. And we leave it to flushed and blundering youth to stumble on its own significance, with nothing to guide in but shocked looks and sentimental twaddle and base whisperings and cant-smeared examples.

I have tried to indicate something of my own sexual development in the preceding chapter. Nobody was ever frank and decent with me in this relation; nobody, no book, ever came and said to me thus and thus is the world made, and so and so is necessary. Everything came obscurely, indefinitely, perplexingly; and all I knew of law or convention in the matter had the form of threatenings and prohibitions. Except through the furtive, shameful talk of my coevals at Goudhurst and Wimblehurst, I was not even warned against quite horrible dangers. My ideas were made partly of instinct, partly of a romantic imagination, partly woven out of a medley of scraps of suggestion that came to me haphazard. I had read widely and confusedly "Vathek," Shelley, Tom Paine, Plutarch, Carlyle, Haeckel, William Morris, the Bible, the Freethinker, the Clarion, "The Woman Who Did," — I mention the ingredients that come first to mind. All sorts of ideas were jumbled up in me and never a lucid explanation. But it was evident to me that the world regarded Shelley, for example, as a very heroic as well as beautiful person;

and that to defy convention and succumb magnificently to passion was the proper thing to do to gain the respect and affection of all decent people.

And the make-up of Marion's mind in the matter was an equally irrational affair. Her training had been one, not simply of silences, but suppressions. An enormous force of suggestion had so shaped her that the intense natural fastidiousness of girlhood had developed into an absolute perversion of instinct. For all that is cardinal in this essential business of life she had one inseparable epithet— "horrid." Without any such training she would have been a shy lover, but now she was an impossible one. For the rest she had derived, I suppose, partly from the sort of fiction she got from the Public Library, and partly from the workroom talk at Smithie's. So far as the former origin went, she had an idea of love as a state of worship and service on the part of the man and of condescension on the part of the woman. There was nothing "horrid" about it in any fiction she had read. The man gave presents, did services, sought to be in every way delightful. The woman "went out" with him, smiled at him, was kissed by him in decorous secrecy, and if he chanced to offend, denied her countenance and presence. Usually she did something "for his good" to him, made him go to church, made him give up smoking or gambling, smartened him up. Quite at the end of the story came a marriage, and after that the interest ceased.

That was the tenor of Marion's fiction; but I think the work-table conversation at Smithie's did something to modify that. At Smithie's it was recognised, I think, that a "fellow" was a possession to be desired; that it was better to be engaged to a fellow than not; that fellows had to be kept — they might be mislaid, they might even be stolen. There was a case of stealing at Smithie's, and many tears.

Smithie I met before we were married, and afterwards she became a frequent visitor to our house at Ealing. She was a thin, bright-eyed, hawk-nosed girl of thirtyodd, with prominent teeth, a high-pitched, eager voice and a disposition to be urgently smart in her dress. Her hats were startling and various, but invariably disconcerting, and she talked in a rapid, nervous flow that was hilarious rather than witty, and broken by little screams of "Oh, my dear!" and "you never did!" She was the first woman I ever met who used scent. Poor old

Smithie! What a harmless, kindly soul she really was, and how heartily I detested her! Out of the profits on the Persian robes she supported a sister's family of three children, she "helped" a worthless brother, and overflowed in help even to her workgirls, but that didn't weigh with me in those youthfully-narrow times. It was one of the intense minor irritations of my married life that Smithie's whirlwind chatter seemed to me to have far more influence with Marion than anything I had to say. Before all things I coveted her grip upon Marion's inaccessible mind.

In the workroom at Smithie's, I gathered, they always spoke of me demurely as "A Certain Person." I was rumoured to be dreadfully "clever," and there were doubts — not altogether without justification — of the sweetness of my temper.

II

Well, these general explanations will enable the reader to understand the distressful times we two had together when presently I began to feel on a footing with Marion and to fumble conversationally for the mind and the wonderful passion I felt, obstinately and stupidity, must be in her. I think she thought me the maddest of sane men; "clever," in fact, which at Smithie's was, I suppose, the next thing to insanity, a word intimating incomprehensible and incalculable motives.... She could be shocked at anything, she misunderstood everything, and her weapon was a sulky silence that knitted her brows, spoilt her mouth and robbed her face of beauty. "Well, if we can't agree, I don't see why you should go on talking," she used to say. That would always enrage me beyond measure. Or, "I'm afraid I'm not clever enough to understand that."

Silly little people! I see it all now, but then I was no older than she and I couldn't see anything but that Marion, for some inexplicable reason, wouldn't come alive.

We would contrive semi-surreptitious walks on Sunday, and part speechless with the anger of indefinable offences. Poor Marion! The things I tried to put before her, my fermenting ideas about theology, about Socialism, about aesthetics — the very words appalled her, gave her the faint chill of approaching impropriety, the terror of a

very present intellectual impossibility. Then by an enormous effort I would suppress myself for a time and continue a talk that made her happy, about Smithie's brother, about the new girl who had come to the workroom, about the house we would presently live in. But there we differed a little. I wanted to be accessible to St. Paul's or Cannon Street Station, and she had set her mind quite resolutely upon Eating.... It wasn't by any means quarreling all the time, you understand. She liked me to play the lover "nicely"; she liked the effect of going about — we had lunches, we went to Earl's Court, to Kew, to theatres and concerts, but not often to concerts, because, though Marion "liked" music, she didn't like "too much of it," to picture shows — and there was a nonsensical sort of babytalk I picked up — I forget where now — that became a mighty peacemaker.

Her worst offence for me was an occasional excursion into the Smithie style of dressing, debased West Kensington. For she had no sense at all of her own beauty. She had no comprehension whatever of beauty of the body, and she could slash her beautiful lines to rags with hat-brims and trimmings. Thank Heaven! a natural refinement, a natural timidity, and her extremely slender purse kept her from the real Smithie efflorescence! Poor, simple, beautiful, kindly limited Marion! Now that I am forty-five, I can look back at her with all my old admiration and none of my old bitterness with a new affection and not a scrap of passion, and take her part against the equally stupid, drivingly-energetic, sensuous, intellectual sprawl I used to be. I was a young beast for her to have married — a hound beast. With her it was my business to understand and control — and I exacted fellowship, passion....

We became engaged, as I have told; we broke it off and joined again. We went through a succession of such phases. We had no sort of idea what was wrong with us. Presently we were formally engaged. I had a wonderful interview with her father, in which he was stupendously grave and H — less, wanted to know about my origins and was tolerant (exasperatingly tolerant) because my mother was a servant, and afterwards her mother took to kissing me, and I bought a ring. But the speechless aunt, I gathered, didn't approve — having doubts of my religiosity. Whenever we were estranged we

could keep apart for days; and to begin with, every such separation was a relief. And then I would want her; a restless longing would come upon me. I would think of the flow of her arms, of the soft, gracious bend of her body. I would lie awake or dream of a transfigured Marion of light and fire. It was indeed Dame Nature driving me on to womankind in her stupid, inexorable way; but I thought it was the need of Marion that troubled me. So I always went back to Marion at last and made it up and more or less conceded or ignored whatever thing had parted us, and more and more I urged her to marry me....

In the long run that became a fixed idea. It entangled my will and my pride; I told myself I was not going to be beaten. I hardened to the business. I think, as a matter of fact, my real passion for Marion had waned enormously long before we were married, that she had lived it down by sheer irresponsiveness. When I felt sure of my three hundred a year she stipulated for delay, twelve months' delay, "to see how things would turn out." There were times when she seemed simply an antagonist holding out irritatingly against something I had to settle. Moreover, I began to be greatly distracted by the interest and excitement of Tono-Bungay's success, by the change and movement in things, the going to and fro. I would forget her for days together, and then desire her with an irritating intensity at last, one Saturday afternoon, after a brooding morning, I determined almost savagely that these delays must end.

I went off to the little home at Walham Green, and made Marion come with me to Putney Common. Marion wasn't at home when I got there and I had to fret for a time and talk to her father, who was just back from his office, he explained, and enjoying himself in his own way in the greenhouse.

"I'm going to ask your daughter to marry me!" I said. "I think we've been waiting long enough."

"I don't approve of long engagements either," said her father. "But Marion will have her own way about it, anyhow. Seen this new powdered fertiliser?"

I went in to talk to Mrs. Ramboat. "She'll want time to get her things," said Mrs. Ramboat....

I and Marion sat down together on a little seat under some trees at

the top of Putney Hill, and I came to my point abruptly.

"Look here, Marion," I said, "are you going to marry me or are you not?"

She smiled at me. "Well," she said, "we're engaged — aren't we?"

"That can't go on for ever. Will you marry me next week?"

She looked me in the face. "We can't," she said.

"You promised to marry me when I had three hundred a year."

She was silent for a space. "Can't we go on for a time as we are? We COULD marry on three hundred a year. But it means a very little house. There's Smithie's brother. They manage on two hundred and fifty, but that's very little. She says they have a semi-detached house almost on the road, and hardly a bit of garden. And the wall to next-door is so thin they hear everything. When her baby cries — they rap. And people stand against the railings and talk.... Can't we wait? You're doing so well."

An extraordinary bitterness possessed me at this invasion of the stupendous beautiful business of love by sordid necessity. I answered her with immense restraint.

"If," I said, "we could have a double-fronted, detached house — at Ealing, say — with a square patch of lawn in front and a garden behind — and — and a tiled bathroom."

"That would be sixty pounds a year at least."

"Which means five hundred a year.... Yes, well, you see, I told my uncle I wanted that, and I've got it."

"Got what?"

"Five hundred pounds a year."

"Five hundred pounds!"

I burst into laughter that had more than a taste of bitterness.

"Yes," I said, "really! and NOW what do you think?"

"Yes," she said, a little flushed; "but be sensible! Do you really mean you've got a Rise, all at once, of two hundred a year?"

"To marry on — yes."

She scrutinised me a moment. "You've done this as a surprise!" she said, and laughed at my laughter. She had become radiant, and that made me radiant, too.

"Yes," I said, "yes," and laughed no longer bitterly.

She clasped her hands and looked me in the eyes.

She was so pleased that I forgot absolutely my disgust of a moment before. I forgot that she had raised her price two hundred pounds a year and that I had bought her at that.

“Come!” I said, standing up; “let’s go towards the sunset, dear, and talk about it all. Do you know — this is a most beautiful world, an amazingly beautiful world, and when the sunset falls upon you it makes you into shining gold. No, not gold — into golden glass.... Into something better that either glass or gold.”...

And for all that evening I wooed her and kept her glad. She made me repeat my assurances over again and still doubted a little.

We furnished that double-fronted house from attic — it ran to an attic — to cellar, and created a garden.

“Do you know Pampas Grass?” said Marion. “I love Pampas Grass... if there is room.”

“You shall have Pampas Grass,” I declared. And there were moments as we went in imagination about that house together, when my whole being cried out to take her in my arms — now. But I refrained. On that aspect of life I touched very lightly in that talk, very lightly because I had had my lessons. She promised to marry me within two months’ time. Shyly, reluctantly, she named a day, and next afternoon, in heat and wrath, we “broke it off” again for the last time. We split upon procedure. I refused flatly to have a normal wedding with wedding cake, in white favours, carriages and the rest of it. It dawned upon me suddenly in conversation with her and her mother, that this was implied. I blurted out my objection forthwith, and this time it wasn’t any ordinary difference of opinion; it was a “row.” I don’t remember a quarter of the things we flung out in that dispute. I remember her mother reiterating in tones of gentle remonstrance: “But, George dear, you must have a cake — to send home.” I think we all reiterated things. I seem to remember a refrain of my own: “A marriage is too sacred a thing, too private a thing, for this display. Her father came in and stood behind me against the wall, and her aunt appeared beside the sideboard and stood with arms, looking from speaker to speaker, a sternly gratified prophetess. It didn’t occur to me then! How painful it was to Marion for these people to witness my rebellion.

“But, George,” said her father, “what sort of marriage do you want? You don’t want to go to one of those there registry offices?”

“That’s exactly what I’d like to do. Marriage is too private a thing —”

“I shouldn’t feel married,” said Mrs. Ramboat.

“Look here, Marion,” I said; “we are going to be married at a registry office. I don’t believe in all these fripperies and superstitions, and I won’t submit to them. I’ve agreed to all sorts of things to please you.”

“What’s he agreed to?” said her father — unheeded.

“I can’t marry at a registry office,” said Marion, sallow-white.

“Very well,” I said. “I’ll marry nowhere else.”

“I can’t marry at a registry office.”

“Very well,” I said, standing up, white and tense and it amazed me, but I was also exultant; “then we won’t marry at all.”

She leant forward over the table, staring blankly. But presently her half-averted face began to haunt me as she had sat at the table, and her arm and the long droop of her shoulder.

III

The next day I did an unexampled thing. I sent a telegram to my uncle, “Bad temper not coming to business,” and set off for Highgate and Ewart. He was actually at work — on a bust of Millie, and seemed very glad for any interruption.

“Ewart, you old Fool,” I said, “knock off and come for a day’s gossip. I’m rotten. There’s a sympathetic sort of lunacy about you. Let’s go to Staines and paddle up to Windsor.”

“Girl?” said Ewart, putting down a chisel.

“Yes.”

That was all I told him of my affair.

“I’ve got no money,” he remarked, to clear up ambiguity in my invitation.

We got a jar of shandy-gaff, some food, and, on Ewart’s suggestion, two Japanese sunshades in Staines; we demanded extra cushions at the boathouse and we spent an enormously soothing day in discourse and meditation, our boat moored in a shady place this

side of Windsor. I seem to remember Ewart with a cushion forward, only his heels and sunshade and some black ends of hair showing, a voice and no more, against the shining, smoothly-streaming mirror of the trees and bushes.

"It's not worth it," was the burthen of the voice. "You'd better get yourself a Millie, Ponderevo, and then you wouldn't feel so upset."

"No," I said decidedly, "that's not my way."

A thread of smoke ascended from Ewart for a while, like smoke from an altar.

"Everything's a muddle, and you think it isn't. Nobody knows where we are — because, as a matter of fact we aren't anywhere. Are women property — or are they fellow-creatures? Or a sort of proprietary goddesses? They're so obviously fellow-creatures. You believe in the goddess?"

"No," I said, "that's not my idea."

"What is your idea?"

"Well"

"H'm," said Ewart, in my pause.

"My idea," I said, "is to meet one person who will belong to me — to whom I shall belong — body and soul. No half-gods! Wait till she comes. If she comes at all.... We must come to each other young and pure."

"There's no such thing as a pure person or an impure person.... Mixed to begin with."

This was so manifestly true that it silenced me altogether.

"And if you belong to her and she to you, Ponderevo — which end's the head?"

I made no answer except an impatient "oh!"

For a time we smoked in silence....

"Did I tell you, Ponderevo, of a wonderful discovery I've made?" Ewart began presently.

"No," I said, "what is it?"

"There's no Mrs. Grundy."

"No?"

"No! Practically not. I've just thought all that business out. She's merely an instrument, Ponderevo. She's borne the blame. Grundy's a man. Grundy unmasked. Rather lean and out of sorts. Early middle

age. With bunchy black whiskers and a worried eye. Been good so far, and it's fretting him! Moods! There's Grundy in a state of sexual panic, for example,— 'For God's sake cover it up! They get together — they get together! It's too exciting! The most dreadful things are happening!' Rushing about — long arms going like a windmill. 'They must be kept apart!' Starts out for an absolute obliteration of everything absolute separations. One side of the road for men, and the other for women, and a hoarding — without posters between them. Every boy and girl to be sewed up in a sack and sealed, just the head and hands and feet out until twenty-one. Music abolished, calico garments for the lower animals! Sparrows to be suppressed — ab-so-lutely."

I laughed abruptly.

"Well, that's Mr. Grundy in one mood — and it puts Mrs. Grundy — She's a much-maligned person, Ponderevo — a rake at heart — and it puts her in a most painful state of fluster — most painful! She's an amenable creature. When Grundy tells her things are shocking, she's shocked — pink and breathless. She goes about trying to conceal her profound sense of guilt behind a haughty expression....

"Grundy, meanwhile, is in a state of complete whirlabout. Long lean knuckly hands pointing and gesticulating! 'They're still thinking of things — thinking of things! It's dreadful. They get it out of books. I can't imagine where they get it! I must watch! There're people over there whispering! Nobody ought to whisper! — There's something suggestive in the mere act! Then, pictures! In the museum — things too dreadful for words. Why can't we have pure art — with the anatomy all wrong and pure and nice — and pure fiction pure poetry, instead of all this stuff with allusions — allusions?... Excuse me! There's something up behind that locked door! The keyhole! In the interests of public morality — yes, Sir, as a pure good man — I insist — I'LL look — it won't hurt me — I insist on looking my duty — M'm'm — the keyhole!'"

He kicked his legs about extravagantly, and I laughed again.

"That's Grundy in one mood, Ponderevo. It isn't Mrs. Grundy. That's one of the lies we tell about women. They're too simple. Simple! Woman ARE simple! They take on just what men tell 'em."

Ewart meditated for a space. “Just exactly as it’s put to them,” he said, and resumed the moods of Mr. Grundy.

“Then you get old Grundy in another mood. Ever caught him nosing, Ponderevo? Mad with the idea of mysterious, unknown, wicked, delicious things. Things that aren’t respectable. Wow! Things he mustn’t do!... Any one who knows about these things, knows there’s just as much mystery and deliciousness about Grundy’s forbidden things as there is about eating ham. Jolly nice if it’s a bright morning and you’re well and hungry and having breakfast in the open air. Jolly unattractive if you’re off colour. But Grundy’s covered it all up and hidden it and put mucky shades and covers over it until he’s forgotten it. Begins to fester round it in his mind. Has dreadful struggles — with himself about impure thoughts.... Then you set Grundy with hot ears, — curious in undertones. Grundy on the loose, Grundy in a hoarse whisper and with furtive eyes and convulsive movements — making things indecent. Evolving — in dense vapours — indecency!

“Grundy sins. Oh, yes, he’s a hypocrite. Sneaks round a corner and sins ugly. It’s Grundy and his dark corners that make vice, vice! We artists — we have no vices.

“And then he’s frantic with repentance. And wants to be cruel to fallen women and decent harmless sculptors of the simple nude — like me — and so back to his panic again.”

“Mrs. Grundy, I suppose, doesn’t know he sins,” I remarked.

“No? I’m not so sure.... But, bless her heart she’s a woman.... She’s a woman. Then again you get Grundy with a large greasy smile — like an accident to a butter tub — all over his face, being Liberal Minded — Grundy in his Anti-Puritan moments, ‘trying not to see Harm in it’ — Grundy the friend of innocent pleasure. He makes you sick with the Harm he’s trying not to see in it...

“And that’s why everything’s wrong, Ponderevo. Grundy, damn him! stands in the light, and we young people can’t see. His moods affect us. We catch his gusts of panic, his disease of nosing, his greasiness. We don’t know what we may think, what we may say, he does his silly utmost to prevent our reading and seeing the one thing, the one sort of discussion we find — quite naturally and properly — supremely interesting. So we don’t adolescence; we blunder up to

sex. Dare — dare to look — and he may dirt you for ever! The girls are terror-stricken to silence by his significant whiskers, by the bleary something in his eyes."

Suddenly Ewart, with an almost Jack-in-the-box effect, sat up.

"He's about us everywhere, Ponderevo," he said, very solemnly. "Sometimes — sometimes I think he is — in our blood. In MINE."

He regarded me for my opinion very earnestly, with his pipe in the corner of his mouth.

"You're the remotest cousin he ever had," I said.

I reflected. "Look here, Ewart," I asked, "how would you have things different?"

He wrinkled up his queer face, regarded the wait and made his pipe gurgle for a space, thinking deeply.

"There are complications, I admit. We've grown up under the terror of Grundy and that innocent but docile and — yes — formidable lady, his wife. I don't know how far the complications aren't a disease, a sort of bleaching under the Grundy shadow.... It is possible there are things I have still to learn about women.... Man has eaten of the Tree of Knowledge. His innocence is gone. You can't have your cake and eat it. We're in for knowledge; let's have it plain and straight. I should begin, I think, by abolishing the ideas of decency and indecency...."

"Grundy would have fits!" I injected.

"Grundy, Ponderevo, would have cold douches — publicly — if the sight was not too painful — three times a day.... But I don't think, mind you, that I should let the sexes run about together. No. The fact behind the sexes — is sex. It's no good humbugging. It trails about — even in the best mixed company. Tugs at your ankle. The men get showing off and quarrelling — and the women. Or they're bored. I suppose the ancestral males have competed for the ancestral females ever since they were both some sort of grubby little reptile. You aren't going to alter that in a thousand years or so.... Never should you have a mixed company, never — except with only one man or only one woman. How would that be?...

"Or duets only?...

"How to manage it? Some rule of etiquette, perhaps."... He became portentously grave.

Then his long hand went out in weird gestures.

"I seem to see — I seem to see — a sort of City of Women, Ponderevo. Yes.... A walled enclosure — good stone-mason's work — a city wall, high as the walls of Rome, going about a garden. Dozens of square miles of garden — trees — fountains — arbours — lakes. Lawns on which the women play, avenues in which they gossip, boats.... Women like that sort of thing. Any woman who's been to a good eventful girls' school lives on the memory of it for the rest of her life. It's one of the pathetic things about women — the superiority of school and college — to anything they get afterwards. And this city-garden of women will have beautiful places for music, places for beautiful dresses, places for beautiful work. Everything a woman can want. Nurseries. Kindergartens. Schools. And no man — except to do rough work, perhaps — ever comes in. The men live in a world where they can hunt and engineer, invent and mine and manufacture, sail ships, drink deep and practice the arts, and fight—"

"Yes," I said, "but—"

He stilled me with a gesture.

"I'm coming to that. The homes of the women, Ponderevo, will be set in the wall of their city; each woman will have her own particular house and home, furnished after her own heart in her own manner — with a little balcony on the outside wall. Built into the wall — and a little balcony. And there she will go and look out, when the mood takes her, and all round the city there will be a broad road and seats and great shady trees. And men will stroll up and down there when they feel the need of feminine company; when, for instance, they want to talk about their souls or their characters or any of the things that only women will stand.... The women will lean over and look at the men and smile and talk to them as they fancy. And each woman will have this; she will have a little silken ladder she can let down if she chooses — if she wants to talk closer..."

"The men would still be competing."

"There perhaps — yes. But they'd have to abide by the women's decisions."

I raised one or two difficulties, and for a while we played with this idea.

"Ewart," I said, "this is like Doll's Island.

“Suppose,” I reflected, “an unsuccessful man laid siege to a balcony and wouldn’t let his rival come near it?”

“Move him on,” said Ewart, “by a special regulation. As one does organ-grinders. No difficulty about that. And you could forbid it — make it against the etiquette. No life is decent without etiquette.... And people obey etiquette sooner than laws...”

“H’m,” I said, and was struck by an idea that is remote in the world of a young man. “How about children?” I asked; “in the City? Girls are all very well. But boys, for example — grow up.”

“Ah!” said Ewart. “Yes. I forgot. They mustn’t grow up inside.... They’d turn out the boys when they were seven. The father must come with a little pony and a little gun and manly wear, and take the boy away. Then one could come afterwards to one’s mother’s balcony.... It must be fine to have a mother. The father and the son...”

“This is all very pretty in its way,” I said at last, “but it’s a dream. Let’s come back to reality. What I want to know is, what are you going to do in Brompton, let us say, or Walham Green NOW?”

“Oh! damn it!” he remarked, “Walham Green! What a chap you are, Ponderevo!” and he made an abrupt end to his discourse. He wouldn’t even reply to my tentatives for a time.

“While I was talking just now,” he remarked presently,

“I had a quite different idea.”

“What?”

“For a masterpiece. A series. Like the busts of the Caesars. Only not heads, you know. We don’t see the people who do things to us nowadays...”

“How will you do it, then?”

“Hands — a series of hands! The hands of the Twentieth Century. I’ll do it. Some day some one will discover it — go there — see what I have done, and what is meant by it.”

“See it where?”

“On the tombs. Why not? The Unknown Master of the Highgate Slope! All the little, soft feminine hands, the nervous ugly males, the hands of the flops, and the hands of the snatchers! And Grundy’s loose, lean, knuckly affair — Grundy the terror! — the little wrinkles and the thumb! Only it ought to hold all the others together — in a slightly disturbing squeeze....Like Rodin’s great Hand — you know

the thing!”

IV

I forget how many days intervened between that last breaking off of our engagement and Marion’s surrender. But I recall now the sharpness of my emotion, the concentrated spirit of tears and laughter in my throat as I read the words of her unexpected letter— “I have thought over everything, and I was selfish....” I rushed off to Walham Green that evening to give back all she had given me, to beat her altogether at giving. She was extraordinarily gentle and generous that time, I remember, and when at last I left her, she kissed me very sweetly.

So we were married.

We were married with all the customary incongruity. I gave — perhaps after a while not altogether ungrudgingly — and what I gave, Marion took, with a manifest satisfaction. After all, I was being sensible. So that we had three livery carriages to the church (one of the pairs of horses matched) and coachmen — with improvised flavour and very shabby silk hats — bearing white favours on their whips, and my uncle intervened with splendour and insisted upon having a wedding breakfast sent in from a caterer’s in Hammersmith. The table had a great display of chrysanthemums, and there was orange blossom in the significant place and a wonderful cake. We also circulated upwards of a score of wedges of that accompanied by silver-printed cards in which Marion’s name of Ramboat was stricken out by an arrow in favour of Ponderevo. We had a little rally of Marion’s relations, and several friends and friends’ friends from Smithie’s appeared in the church and drifted vestry-ward. I produced my aunt and uncle a select group of two. The effect in that shabby little house was one of exhilarating congestion. The side-board, in which lived the table-cloth and the “Apartments” card, was used for a display of the presents, eked out by the unused balance of the silver-printed cards.

Marion wore the white raiment of a bride, white silk and satin, that did not suit her, that made her seem large and strange to me; she obtruded bows and unfamiliar contours. She went through all this

strange ritual of an English wedding with a sacramental gravity that I was altogether too young and egotistical to comprehend. It was all extraordinarily central and important to her; it was no more than an offensive, complicated, and disconcerting intrusion of a world I was already beginning to criticise very bitterly, to me. What was all this fuss for? The mere indecent advertisement that I had been passionately in love with Marion! I think, however, that Marion was only very remotely aware of my smouldering exasperation at having in the end behaved "nicely." I had played — up to the extent of dressing my part; I had an admirably cut frock — coat, a new silk hat, trousers as light as I could endure them — lighter, in fact — a white waistcoat, night tie, light gloves. Marion, seeing me despondent had the unusual enterprise to whisper to me that I looked lovely; I knew too well I didn't look myself. I looked like a special coloured supplement to Men's Wear, or The Tailor and Cutter, Full Dress For Ceremonial Occasions. I had even the disconcerting sensations of an unfamiliar collar. I felt lost — in a strange body, and when I glanced down myself for reassurance, the straight white abdomen, the alien legs confirmed that impression.

My uncle was my best man, and looked like a banker — a little banker — in flower. He wore a white rose in his buttonhole. He wasn't, I think, particularly talkative. At least I recall very little from him.

"George" he said once or twice, "this is a great occasion for you — a very great occasion." He spoke a little doubtfully.

You see I had told him nothing about Marion until about a week before the wedding; both he and my aunt had been taken altogether by surprise. They couldn't, as people say, "make it out." My aunt was intensely interested, much more than my uncle; it was then, I think, for the first time that I really saw that she cared for me. She got me alone, I remember, after I had made my announcement. "Now, George," she said, "tell me everything about her. Why didn't you tell — ME at least — before?"

I was surprised to find how difficult it was to tell her about Marion. I perplexed her.

"Then is she beautiful?" she asked at last.

"I don't know what you'll think of her," I parried. "I think—"

“Yes?”

“I think she might be the most beautiful person in the world.”

“And isn’t she? To you?”

“Of course,” I said, nodding my head. “Yes. She IS...”

And while I don’t remember anything my uncle said or did at the wedding, I do remember very distinctly certain little things, scrutiny, solicitude, a curious rare flash of intimacy in my aunt’s eyes. It dawned on me that I wasn’t hiding anything from her at all. She was dressed very smartly, wearing a big-plumed hat that made her neck seem longer and slenderer than ever, and when she walked up the aisle with that rolling stride of hers and her eye all on Marion, perplexed into self-forgetfulness, it wasn’t somehow funny. She was, I do believe, giving my marriage more thought than I had done, she was concerned beyond measure at my black rage and Marion’s blindness, she was looking with eyes that knew what loving is — for love.

In the vestry she turned away as we signed, and I verily believe she was crying, though to this day I can’t say why she should have cried, and she was near crying too when she squeezed my hand at parting — and she never said a word or looked at me, but just squeezed my hand....

If I had not been so grim in spirit, I think I should have found much of my wedding amusing. I remember a lot of ridiculous detail that still declines to be funny in my memory. The officiating clergyman had a cold, and turned his “n’s” to “d’s,” and he made the most mechanical compliment conceivable about the bride’s age when the register was signed. Every bride he had ever married had had it, one knew. And two middle-aged spinsters, cousins of Marion’s and dressmakers at Barking, stand out. They wore marvellously bright and gay blouses and dim old skirts, and had an immense respect for Mr. Ramboat. They threw rice; they brought a whole bag with them and gave handfuls away to unknown little boys at the church door and so created a Lilliputian riot; and one had meant to throw a slipper. It was a very warm old silk slipper, I know, because she dropped it out of a pocket in the aisle — there was a sort of jumble in the aisle — and I picked it up for her. I don’t think she actually threw it, for as we drove away from the church I saw her in a dreadful, and,

it seemed to me, hopeless, struggle with her pocket; and afterwards my eye caught the missile of good fortune lying, it or its fellow, most obviously mislaid, behind the umbrella-stand in the hall....

The whole business was much more absurd, more incoherent, more human than I had anticipated, but I was far too young and serious to let the latter quality atone for its shortcomings. I am so remote from this phase of my youth that I can look back at it all as dispassionately as one looks at a picture — at some wonderful, perfect sort of picture that is inexhaustible; but at the time these things filled me with unspeakable resentment. Now I go round it all, look into its details, generalise about its aspects. I'm interested, for example, to square it with my Bladesover theory of the British social scheme. Under stress of tradition we were all of us trying in the fermenting chaos of London to carry out the marriage ceremonies of a Bladesover tenant or one of the chubby middling sort of people in some dependent country town. There a marriage is a public function with a public significance. There the church is to a large extent the gathering-place of the community, and your going to be married a thing of importance to every one you pass on the road. It is a change of status that quite legitimately interests the whole neighbourhood. But in London there are no neighbours, nobody knows, nobody cares. An absolute stranger in an office took my notice, and our banns were proclaimed to ears that had never previously heard our names. The clergyman, even, who married us had never seen us before, and didn't in any degree intimate that he wanted to see us again.

Neighbours in London! The Ramboats did not know the names of the people on either side of them. As I waited for Marion before we started off upon our honeymoon flight, Mr. Ramboat, I remember, came and stood beside me and stared out of the window.

"There was a funeral over there yesterday," he said, by way of making conversation, and moved his head at the house opposite. "Quite a smart affair it was with a glass 'earse...."

And our little procession of three carriages with white-favour-adorned horses and drivers, went through all the huge, noisy, indifferent traffic like a lost china image in the coal-chute of an ironclad. Nobody made way for us, nobody cared for us; the driver of

an omnibus jeered; for a long time we crawled behind an unamiable dust-cart. The irrelevant clatter and tumult gave a queer flavour of indecency to this public coming together of lovers. We seemed to have obtruded ourselves shamelessly. The crowd that gathered outside the church would have gathered in the same spirit and with greater alacrity for a street accident....

At Charing Cross — we were going to Hastings — the experienced eye of the guard detected the significance of our unusual costume and he secured us a compartment.

"Well," said I, as the train moved out of the station, "That's all over!" And I turned to Marion — a little unfamiliar still, in her unfamiliar clothes — and smiled.

She regarded me gravely, timidly.

"You're not cross?" she asked.

"Cross! Why?"

"At having it all proper."

"My dear Marion!" said I, and by way of answer took and kissed her white-gloved, leather-scented hand....

I don't remember much else about the journey, an hour or so it was of undistinguished time — for we were both confused and a little fatigued and Marion had a slight headache and did not want caresses. I fell into a reverie about my aunt, and realised as if it were a new discovery, that I cared for her very greatly. I was acutely sorry I had not told her earlier of my marriage.

But you will not want to hear the history of my honeymoon. I have told all that was needed to serve my present purpose. Thus and thus it was the Will in things had its way with me. Driven by forces I did not understand, diverted altogether from the science, the curiosities and work to which I had once given myself, I fought my way through a tangle of traditions, customs, obstacles and absurdities, enraged myself, limited myself, gave myself to occupations I saw with the clearest vision were dishonourable and vain, and at last achieved the end of purblind Nature, the relentless immediacy of her desire, and held, far short of happiness, Marion weeping and reluctant in my arms.

V

Who can tell the story of the slow estrangement of two married people, the weakening of first this bond and then that of that complex contact? Least of all can one of the two participants. Even now, with an interval of fifteen years to clear it up for me, I still find a mass of impressions of Marion as confused, as discordant, as unsystematic and self-contradictory as life. I think of this thing and love her, of that and hate her — of a hundred aspects in which I can now see her with an unimpassioned sympathy. As I sit here trying to render some vision of this infinitely confused process, I recall moments of hard and fierce estrangement, moments of clouded intimacy, the passage of transition all forgotten. We talked a little language together whence were "friends," and I was "Mutney" and she was "Ming," and we kept up such an outward show that till the very end Smithie thought our household the most amiable in the world.

I cannot tell to the full how Marion thwarted me and failed in that life of intimate emotions which is the kernel of love. That life of intimate emotions is made up of little things. A beautiful face differs from an ugly one by a difference of surfaces and proportions that are sometimes almost infinitesimally small. I find myself setting down little things and little things; none of them do more than demonstrate those essential temperamental discords I have already sought to make clear. Some readers will understand — to others I shall seem no more than an unfeeling brute who couldn't make allowances.... It's easy to make allowances now; but to be young and ardent and to make allowances, to see one's married life open before one, the life that seemed in its dawn a glory, a garden of roses, a place of deep sweet mysteries and heart throbs and wonderful silences, and to see it a vista of tolerations and baby-talk; a compromise, the least effectual thing in all one's life.

Every love romance I read seemed to mock our dull intercourse, every poem, every beautiful picture reflected upon the uneventful succession of grey hours we had together. I think our real difference was one of aesthetic sensibility.

I do still recall as the worst and most disastrous aspect of all that time, her absolute disregard of her own beauty. It's the pettiest thing to record, I know, but she could wear curl-papers in my presence. It was her idea, too, to "wear out" her old clothes and her failures at

home when “no one was likely to see her”— “no one” being myself. She allowed me to accumulate a store of ungracious and slovenly memories....

All our conceptions of life differed. I remember how we differed about furniture. We spent three or four days in Tottenham Court Road, and she chose the things she fancied with an inexorable resolution, — sweeping aside my suggestions with— “Oh, YOU want such queer things.” She pursued some limited, clearly seen and experienced ideal — that excluded all other possibilities. Over every mantel was a mirror that was draped, our sideboard was wonderfully good and splendid with beveled glass, we had lamps on long metal stalks and cozy corners and plants in grog-tubs. Smithie approved it all. There wasn’t a place where one could sit and read in the whole house. My books went upon shelves in the dining-room recess. And we had a piano though Marion’s playing was at an elementary level.

You know, it was the cruelest luck for Marion that I, with my restlessness, my scepticism, my constantly developing ideas, had insisted on marriage with her. She had no faculty of growth or change; she had taken her mould, she had set in the limited ideas of her peculiar class. She preserved her conception of what was right in drawing-room chairs and in marriage ceremonial and in every relation of life with a simple and luminous honesty and conviction, with an immense unimaginative inflexibility — as a tailor-bird builds its nest or a beaver makes its dam.

Let me hasten over this history of disappointments and separation. I might tell of waxings and waning of love between us, but the whole was waning. Sometimes she would do things for me, make me a tie or a pair of slippers, and fill me with none the less gratitude because the things were absurd. She ran our home and our one servant with a hard, bright efficiency. She was inordinately proud of house and garden. Always, by her lights, she did her duty by me.

Presently the rapid development of Tono-Bungay began to take me into the provinces, and I would be away sometimes for a week together. This she did not like; it left her “dull,” she said, but after a time she began to go to Smithie’s again and to develop an independence of me. At Smithie’s she was now a woman with a position; she had money to spend. She would take Smithie to theatres

and out to lunch and talk interminably of the business, and Smithie became a sort of permanent weekender with us. Also Marion got a spaniel and began to dabble with the minor arts, with poker-work and a Kodak and hyacinths in glasses. She called once on a neighbour. Her parents left Walham Green — her father severed his connection with the gas-works — and came to live in a small house I took for them near us, and they were much with us.

Odd the littleness of the things that exasperate when the fountains of life are embittered! My father-in-law was perpetually catching me in moody moments and urging me to take to gardening. He irritated me beyond measure.

"You think too much," he would say. "If you was to let in a bit with a spade, you might soon 'ave that garden of yours a Vision of Flowers. That's better than thinking, George."

Or in a torrent of exasperation, "I CARN'T think, George, why you don't get a bit of glass 'ere. This sunny corner you c'd do wonders with a bit of glass."

And in the summer time he never came in without performing a sort of conjuring trick in the hall, and taking cucumbers and tomatoes from unexpected points of his person. "All out o' MY little bit," he'd say in exemplary tones. He left a trail of vegetable produce in the most unusual places, on mantel boards, sideboards, the tops of pictures. Heavens! how the sudden unexpected tomato could annoy me!...

It did much to widen our estrangement that Marion and my aunt failed to make friends, became, by a sort of instinct, antagonistic.

My aunt, to begin with, called rather frequently, for she was really anxious to know Marion. At first she would arrive like a whirlwind and pervade the house with an atmosphere of hello! She dressed already with that cheerfully extravagant abandon that signalised her accession to fortune, and dressed her best for these visits.

She wanted to play the mother to me, I fancy, to tell Marion occult secrets about the way I wore out my boots and how I never could think to put on thicker things in cold weather. But Marion received her with that defensive suspiciousness of the shy person, thinking only of the possible criticism of herself; and my aunt, perceiving this, became nervous and slangy...

“She says such queer things,” said Marion once, discussing her. “But I suppose it’s witty.”

“Yes,” I said; “it IS witty.”

“If I said things like she does—”

The queer things my aunt said were nothing to the queer things she didn’t say. I remember her in our drawing-room one day, and how she cocked her eye — it’s the only expression — at the India-rubber plant in a Doulton-ware pot which Marion had placed on the corner of the piano.

She was on the very verge of speech. Then suddenly she caught my expression, and shrank up like a cat that has been discovered looking at the milk.

Then a wicked impulse took her.

“Didn’t say an old word, George,” she insisted, looking me full in the eye.

I smiled. “You’re a dear,” I said, “not to,” as Marion came lowering into the room to welcome her. But I felt extraordinarily like a traitor — to the India-rubber plant, I suppose — for all that nothing had been said...

“Your aunt makes Game of people,” was Marion’s verdict, and, open-mindedly: “I suppose it’s all right... for her.”

Several times we went to the house in Beckenham for lunch, and once or twice to dinner. My aunt did her peculiar best to be friends, but Marion was implacable. She was also, I know, intensely uncomfortable, and she adopted as her social method, an exhausting silence, replying compactly and without giving openings to anything that was said to her.

The gaps between my aunt’s visits grew wider and wider.

My married existence became at last like a narrow deep groove in the broad expanse of interests in which I was living. I went about the world; I met a great number of varied personalities; I read endless books in trains as I went to and fro. I developed social relationships at my uncle’s house that Marion did not share. The seeds of new ideas poured in upon me and grew in me. Those early and middle years of one’s third decade are, I suppose, for a man the years of greatest mental growth. They are restless years and full of vague enterprise.

Each time I returned to Ealing, life there seemed more alien, narrow, and unattractive — and Marion less beautiful and more limited and difficult — until at last she was robbed of every particle of her magic. She gave me always a cooler welcome, I think, until she seemed entirely apathetic. I never asked myself then what heartaches she might hide or what her discontents might be.

I would come home hoping nothing, expecting nothing.

This was my fated life, and I had chosen it. I became more sensitive to the defects I had once disregarded altogether; I began to associate her sallow complexion with her temperamental insufficiency, and the heavier lines of her mouth and nostril with her moods of discontent. We drifted apart; wider and wider the gap opened. I tired of baby-talk and stereotyped little fondlings; I tired of the latest intelligence from those wonderful workrooms, and showed it all too plainly; we hardly spoke when we were alone together. The mere unreciprocated physical residue of my passion remained — an exasperation between us.

No children came to save us. Marion had acquired at Smithie's a disgust and dread of maternity. All that was the fruition and quintessence of the "horrid" elements in life, a disgusting thing, a last indignity that overtook unwary women. I doubt indeed a little if children would have saved us; we should have differed so fatally about their upbringing.

Altogether, I remember my life with Marion as a long distress, now hard, now tender. It was in those days that I first became critical of my life and burdened with a sense of error and maladjustment. I would lie awake in the night, asking myself the purpose of things, reviewing my unsatisfying, ungainly home-life, my days spent in rascal enterprise and rubbish-selling, contrasting all I was being and doing with my adolescent ambitions, my Wimblehurst dreams. My circumstances had an air of finality, and I asked myself in vain why I had forced myself into them.

VI

The end of our intolerable situation came suddenly and unexpectedly, but in a way that I suppose was almost inevitable.

My alienated affections wandered, and I was unfaithful to Marion.

I won't pretend to extenuate the quality of my conduct. I was a young and fairly vigorous male; all my appetite for love had been roused and whetted and none of it had been satisfied by my love affair and my marriage. I had pursued an elusive gleam of beauty to the disregard of all else, and it had failed me. It had faded when I had hoped it would grow brighter. I despaired of life and was embittered. And things happened as I am telling. I don't draw any moral at all in the matter, and as for social remedies, I leave them to the social reformer. I've got to a time of life when the only theories that interest me are generalisations about realities.

To go to our inner office in Raggett Street I had to walk through a room in which the typists worked. They were the correspondence typists; our books and invoicing had long since overflowed into the premises we had had the luck to secure on either side of us. I was, I must confess, always in a faintly cloudily-emotional way aware of that collection of for the most part round-shouldered femininity, but presently one of the girls detached herself from the others and got a real hold upon my attention. I appreciated her at first as a straight little back, a neater back than any of the others; as a softly rounded neck with a smiling necklace of sham pearls; as chestnut hair very neatly done — and as a side-long glance; presently as a quickly turned face that looked for me.

My eye would seek her as I went through on business things — I dictated some letters to her and so discovered she had pretty, soft-looking hands with pink nails. Once or twice, meeting casually, we looked one another for the flash of a second in the eyes.

That was all. But it was enough in the mysterious free-masonry of sex to say essential things. We had a secret between us.

One day I came into Raggett Street at lunch time and she was alone, sitting at her desk. She glanced up as I entered, and then became very still, with a downcast face and her hands clenched on the table. I walked right by her to the door of the inner office, stopped, came back and stood over her.

We neither of us spoke for quite a perceptible time. I was trembling violently.

"Is that one of the new typewriters?" I asked at last for the sake of

speaking.

She looked up at me without a word, with her face flushed and her eyes alight, and I bent down and kissed her lips. She leant back to put an arm about me, drew my face to her and kissed me again and again. I lifted her and held her in my arms. She gave a little smothered cry to feel herself so held.

Never before had I known the quality of passionate kisses.

Somebody became audible in the shop outside.

We started back from one another with flushed faces and bright and burning eyes.

"We can't talk here," I whispered with a confident intimacy. "Where do you go at five?"

"Along the Embankment to Charing Cross," she answered as intimately. "None of the others go that way..."

"About half-past five?"

"Yes, half-past five..."

The door from the shop opened, and she sat down very quickly.

"I'm glad," I said in a commonplace voice, "that these new typewriters are all right."

I went into the inner office and routed out the paysheet in order to find her name — Effie Rink. And did no work at all that afternoon. I fretted about that dingy little den like a beast in a cage.

When presently I went out, Effie was working with an extraordinary appearance of calm — and there was no look for me at all....

We met and had our talk that evening, a talk in whispers when there was none to overhear; we came to an understanding. It was strangely unlike any dream of romance I had ever entertained.

VII

I came back after a week's absence to my home again — a changed man. I had lived out my first rush of passion for Effie, had come to a contemplation of my position. I had gauged Effie's place in the scheme of things, and parted from her for a time. She was back in her place at Raggett Street after a temporary indisposition. I did not feel in any way penitent or ashamed, I know, as I opened the little cast-

iron gate that kept Marion's front grader and Pampas Grass from the wandering dog. Indeed, if anything, I felt as if I had vindicated some right that had been in question. I came back to Marion with no sense of wrong-doing at all with, indeed, a new friendliness towards her. I don't know how it may be proper to feel on such occasions; that is how I felt.

I followed her in our drawing-room, standing beside the tall lamp-stand that half filled the bay as though she had just turned from watching for me at the window. There was something in her pale face that arrested me. She looked as if she had not been sleeping. She did not come forward to greet me.

"You've come home," she said.

"As I wrote to you."

She stood very still, a dusky figure against the bright window.

"Where have you been?" she asked.

"East Coast," I said easily.

She paused for a moment. "I KNOW," she said.

I stared at her. It was the most amazing moment in any life....

"By Jove!" I said at last, "I believe you do!"

"And then you come home to me!"

I walked to the hearthrug and stood quite still there regarding this new situation.

"I didn't dream," she began. "How could you do such a thing?"

It seemed a long interval before either of us spoke another word.

"Who knows about it?" I asked at last.

"Smithie's brother. They were at Cromer."

"Confound Cromer! Yes!"

"How could you bring yourself"

I felt a spasm of petulant annoyance at this unexpected catastrophe.

"I should like to wring Smithie's brother's neck," I said....

Marion spoke in dry, broken fragments of sentences. "You... I'd always thought that anyhow you couldn't deceive me... I suppose all men are horrid — about this."

"It doesn't strike me as horrid. It seems to me the most necessary consequence — and natural thing in the world."

I became aware of some one moving about in the passage, and

went and shut the door of the room, then I walked back to the hearthrug and turned.

"It's rough on you," I said. "But I didn't mean you to know. You've never cared for me. I've had the devil of a time. Why should you mind?"

She sat down in a draped armchair. "I HAVE cared for you," she said.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I suppose," she said, "SHE cares for you?"

I had no answer.

"Where is she now?"

"Oh! does it matter to you?... Look here, Marion! This — this I didn't anticipate. I didn't mean this thing to smash down on you like this. But, you know, something had to happen. I'm sorry — sorry to the bottom of my heart that things have come to this between us. But indeed, I'm taken by surprise. I don't know where I am — I don't know how we got here. Things took me by surprise. I found myself alone with her one day. I kissed her. I went on. It seemed stupid to go back. And besides — why should I have gone back? Why should I? From first to last, I've hardly thought of it as touching you.... Damn!"

She scrutinised my face, and pulled at the ball-fringe of the little table beside her.

"To think of it," she said. "I don't believe I can ever touch you again."

We kept a long silence. I was only beginning to realise in the most superficial way the immense catastrophe that had happened between us. Enormous issues had rushed upon us. I felt unprepared and altogether inadequate. I was unreasonably angry. There came a rush of stupid expressions to my mind that my rising sense of the supreme importance of the moment saved me from saying. The gap of silence widened until it threatened to become the vast memorable margin of some one among a thousand trivial possibilities of speech that would vex our relations for ever.

Our little general servant tapped at the door — Marion always liked the servant to tap — and appeared.

"Tea, M'm," she said — and vanished, leaving the door open.

"I will go upstairs," said I, and stopped. "I will go upstairs" I

repeated, “and put my bag in the spare room.”

We remained motionless and silent for a few seconds.

“Mother is having tea with us to-day,” Marion remarked at last, and dropped the worried end of ball-fringe and stood up slowly....

And so, with this immense discussion of our changed relations hanging over us, we presently had tea with the unsuspecting Mrs. Ramboat and the spaniel. Mrs. Ramboat was too well trained in her position to remark upon our somber preoccupation. She kept a thin trickle of talk going, and told us, I remember, that Mr. Ramboat was “troubled” about his cannas.

“They don’t come up and they won’t come up. He’s been round and had an explanation with the man who sold him the bulbs — and he’s very heated and upset.”

The spaniel was a great bore, begging and doing small tricks first at one and then at the other of us. Neither of us used his name. You see we had called him Miggles, and made a sort of trio in the baby-talk of Mutney and Miggles and Ming.

VIII

Then presently we resumed our monstrous, momentous dialogue. I can’t now make out how long that dialogue went on. It spread itself, I know, in heavy fragments over either three days or four. I remember myself grouped with Marion, talking sitting on our bed in her room, talking standing in our dining-room, saving this thing or that. Twice we went for long walks. And we had a long evening alone together, with jaded nerves and hearts that fluctuated between a hard and dreary recognition of facts and, on my part at least, a strange unwonted tenderness; because in some extraordinary way this crisis had destroyed our mutual apathy and made us feel one another again.

It was a dialogue that had discrepant parts that fell into lumps of talk that failed to join on to their predecessors, that began again at a different level, higher or lower, that assumed new aspects in the intervals and assimilated new considerations. We discussed the fact that we two were no longer lovers; never before had we faced that. It seems a strange thing to write, but as I look back, I see clearly that

those several days were the time when Marion and I were closest together, looked for the first and last time faithfully and steadfastly into each other's soul. For those days only, there were no pretences, I made no concessions to her nor she to me; we concealed nothing, exaggerated nothing. We had done with pretending. We had it out plainly and soberly with each other. Mood followed mood and got its stark expression.

Of course there was quarreling between us, bitter quarreling, and we said things to one another — long pent-up things that bruised and crushed and cut. But over it all in my memory now is an effect of deliberate confrontation, and the figure of Marion stands up, pale, melancholy, tear-stained, injured, implacable and dignified.

"You love her?" she asked once, and jerked that doubt into my mind.

I struggled with tangled ideas and emotions. "I don't know what love is. It's all sorts of things — it's made of a dozen strands twisted in a thousand ways."

"But you want her? You want her now — when you think of her?"

"Yes," I reflected. "I want her — right enough."

"And me? Where do I come in?"

"I suppose you come in here."

"Well, but what are you going to do?"

"Do!" I said with the exasperation of the situation growing upon me. "What do you want me to do?"

As I look back upon all that time — across a gulf of fifteen active years — I find I see it with an understanding judgment. I see it as if it were the business of some one else — indeed of two other people — intimately known yet judged without passion. I see now that this shock, this sudden immense disillusionment, did in real fact bring out a mind and soul in Marion; that for the first time she emerged from habits, timidities, imitations, phrases and a certain narrow will-impulse, and became a personality.

Her ruling motive at first was, I think, an indignant and outraged pride. This situation must end. She asked me categorically to give up Effie, and I, full of fresh and glowing memories, absolutely refused.

"It's too late, Marion," I said. "It can't be done like that."

“Then we can’t very well go on living together,” she said. “Can we?”

“Very well,” I deliberated “if you must have it so.”

“Well, can we?”

“Can you stay in this house? I mean — if I go away?”

“I don’t know.... I don’t think I could.”

“Then — what do you want?”

Slowly we worked our way from point to point, until at last the word “divorce” was before us.

“If we can’t live together we ought to be free,” said Marion.

“I don’t know anything of divorce,” I said— “if you mean that. I don’t know how it is done. I shall have to ask somebody — or look it up.... Perhaps, after all, it is the thing to do. We may as well face it.”

We began to talk ourselves into a realisation of what our divergent futures might be. I came back on the evening of that day with my questions answered by a solicitor.

“We can’t as a matter of fact,” I said, “get divorced as things are. Apparently, so far as the law goes you’ve got to stand this sort of thing. It’s silly but that is the law. However, it’s easy to arrange a divorce. In addition to adultery there must be desertion or cruelty. To establish cruelty I should have to strike you, or something of that sort, before witnesses. That’s impossible — but it’s simple to desert you legally. I have to go away from you; that’s all. I can go on sending you money — and you bring a suit, what is it? — for Restitution of Conjugal Rights. The Court orders me to return. I disobey. Then you can go on to divorce me. You get a Decree Nisi, and once more the Court tries to make me come back. If we don’t make it up within six months and if you don’t behave scandalously the Decree is made absolute. That’s the end of the fuss. That’s how one gets unmarried. It’s easier, you see, to marry than unmarry.”

“And then — how do I live? What becomes of me?”

“You’ll have an income. They call it alimony. From a third to a half of my present income — more if you like — I don’t mind — three hundred a year, say. You’ve got your old people to keep and you’ll need all that.”

“And then — then you’ll be free?”

“Both of us.”

“And all this life you’ve hated”

I looked up at her wrung and bitter face. “I haven’t hated it,” I lied, my voice near breaking with the pain of it all. “Have you?”

IX

The perplexing thing about life is the irresolvable complexity of reality, of things and relations alike. Nothing is simple. Every wrong done has a certain justice in it, and every good deed has dregs of evil. As for us, young still, and still without self-knowledge, resounded a hundred discordant notes in the harsh angle of that shock. We were furiously angry with each other, tender with each other, callously selfish, generously self-sacrificing.

I remember Marion saying innumerable detached things that didn’t hang together one with another, that contradicted one another, that were, nevertheless, all in their places profoundly true and sincere. I see them now as so many vain experiments in her effort to apprehend the crumpled confusions of our complex moral landslide. Some I found irritating beyond measure. I answered her — sometimes quite abominably.

“Of course,” she would say again and again, “my life has been a failure.”

“I’ve besieged you for three years,” I would retort “asking it not to be. You’ve done as you pleased. If I’ve turned away at last—”

Or again she would revive all the stresses before our marriage.

“How you must hate me! I made you wait. Well now — I suppose you have your revenge.”

“REVENGE!” I echoed.

Then she would try over the aspects of our new separated lives.

“I ought to earn my own living,” she would insist.

“I want to be quite independent. I’ve always hated London. Perhaps I shall try a poultry farm and bees. You won’t mind at first my being a burden. Afterwards—”

“We’ve settled all that,” I said.

“I suppose you will hate me anyhow...”

There were times when she seemed to regard our separation with absolute complacency, when she would plan all sorts of freedoms

and characteristic interests.

"I shall go out a lot with Smithie," she said.

And once she said an ugly thing that I did indeed hate her for that I cannot even now quite forgive her.

"Your aunt will rejoice at all this. She never cared for me..."

Into my memory of these pains and stresses comes the figure of Smithie, full-charged with emotion, so breathless in the presence of the horrid villain of the piece that she could make no articulate sounds. She had long tearful confidences with Marion, I know, sympathetic close clingings. There were moments when only absolute speechlessness prevented her giving me a stupendous "talking-to" — I could see it in her eye. The wrong things she would have said! And I recall, too, Mrs. Ramboat's slow awakening to something in, the air, the growing expression of solicitude in her eye, only her well-trained fear of Marion keeping her from speech.

And at last through all this welter, like a thing fated and altogether beyond our control, parting came to Marion and me.

I hardened my heart, or I could not have gone. For at the last it came to Marion that she was parting from me for ever. That overbore all other things, had turned our last hour to anguish. She forgot for a time the prospect of moving into a new house, she forgot the outrage on her proprietorship and pride. For the first time in her life she really showed strong emotions in regard to me, for the first time, perhaps, they really came to her. She began to weep slow, reluctant tears. I came into her room, and found her asprawl on the bed, weeping.

"I didn't know," she cried. "Oh! I didn't understand!"

"I've been a fool. All my life is a wreck!

"I shall be alone!...MUTNEY! Mutney, don't leave me! Oh! Mutney! I didn't understand."

I had to harden my heart indeed, for it seemed to me at moments in those last hours together that at last, too late, the longed-for thing had happened and Marion had come alive. A new-born hunger for me lit her eyes.

"Don't leave me!" she said, "don't leave me!" She clung to me; she kissed me with tear-salt lips.

I was promised now and pledged, and I hardened my heart against

this impossible dawn. Yet it seems to me that there were moments when it needed but a cry, but one word to have united us again for all our lives. Could we have united again? Would that passage have enlightened us for ever or should we have fallen back in a week or so into the old estrangement, the old temperamental opposition?

Of that there is now no telling. Our own resolve carried us on our predestined way. We behaved more and more like separating lovers, parting inexorably, but all the preparations we had set going worked on like a machine, and we made no attempt to stop them. My trunks and boxes went to the station. I packed my bag with Marion standing before me. We were like children who had hurt each other horribly in sheer stupidity, who didn't know now how to remedy it. We belonged to each other immensely — immensely. The cab came to the little iron gate.

"Good-bye!" I said.

"Good-bye."

For a moment we held one another in each other's arms and kissed — incredibly without malice. We heard our little servant in the passage going to open the door. For the last time we pressed ourselves to one another. We were not lovers nor enemies, but two human souls in a frank community of pain. I tore myself from her.

"Go away," I said to the servant, seeing that Marion had followed me down.

I felt her standing behind me as I spoke to the cab man.

I got into the cab, resolutely not looking back, and then as it started jumped up, craned out and looked at the door.

It was wide open, but she had disappeared....

I wonder — I suppose she ran upstairs.

X

So I parted from Marion at an extremity of perturbation and regret, and went, as I had promised and arranged, to Effie, who was waiting for me in apartments near Orpington. I remember her upon the station platform, a bright, flitting figure looking along the train for me, and our walk over the fields in the twilight. I had expected an immense sense of relief where at last the stresses of separation were

over, but now I found I was beyond measure wretched and perplexed, full of the profoundest persuasion of irreparable error. The dusk and somber Marion were so alike, her sorrow seemed to be all about me. I had to hold myself to my own plans, to remember that I must keep faith with Effie, with Effie who had made no terms, exacted no guarantees, but flung herself into my hands.

We went across the evening fields in silence, towards a sky of deepening gold and purple, and Effie was close beside me always, very close, glancing up ever and again at my face.

Certainly she knew I grieved for Marion, that ours was now no joyful reunion. But she showed no resentment and no jealousy. Extraordinarily, she did not compete against Marion. Never once in all our time together did she say an adverse word of Marion....

She set herself presently to dispel the shadow that brooded over me with the same instinctive skill that some women will show with the trouble of a child. She made herself my glad and pretty slave and handmaid; she forced me at last to rejoice in her. Yet at the back of it all Marion remained, stupid and tearful and infinitely distressful, so that I was almost intolerably unhappy for her — for her and the dead body of my married love.

It is all, as I tell it now, unaccountable to me. I go back into these remote parts, these rarely visited uplands and lonely tares of memory, and it seems to me still a strange country. I had thought I might be going to some sensuous paradise with Effie, but desire which fills the universe before its satisfaction, vanishes utterly like the going of daylight — with achievement. All the facts and forms of life remain darkling and cold. It was an upland of melancholy questionings, a region from which I saw all the world at new angles and in new aspects; I had outflanked passion and romance.

I had come into a condition of vast perplexities. For the first time in my life, at least so it seems to me now in this retrospect, I looked at my existence as a whole.

Since this was nothing, what was I doing? What was I for?

I was going to and fro about Tono-Bungay — the business I had taken up to secure Marion and which held me now in spite of our intimate separation — and snatching odd week-ends and nights for Orpington, and all the while I struggled with these obstinate

interrogations. I used to fall into musing in the trains, I became even a little inaccurate and forgetful about business things. I have the clearest memory of myself sitting thoughtful in the evening sunlight on a grassy hillside that looked toward Seven Oaks and commanded a wide sweep of country, and that I was thinking out my destiny. I could almost write my thought down now, I believe, as they came to me that afternoon. Effie, restless little cockney that she was, rustled and struggled in a hedgerow below, gathering flowers, discovering flowers she had never seen before. I had. I remember, a letter from Marion in my pocket. I had even made some tentatives for return, for a reconciliation; Heaven knows now how I had put it! but her cold, ill-written letter repelled me. I perceived I could never face that old inconclusive dullness of life again, that stagnant disappointment. That, anyhow, wasn't possible. But what was possible? I could see no way of honour or fine living before me at all.

"What am I to do with life?" that was the question that besieged me.

I wondered if all the world was even as I, urged to this by one motive and to that by another, creatures of chance and impulse and unmeaning traditions. Had I indeed to abide by what I had said and done and chosen? Was there nothing for me in honour but to provide for Effie, go back penitent to Marion and keep to my trade in rubbish — or find some fresh one — and so work out the residue of my days? I didn't accept that for a moment. But what else was I to do? I wondered if my case was the case of many men, whether in former ages, too, men had been so guideless, so uncharted, so haphazard in their journey into life. In the Middle Ages, in the old Catholic days, one went to a priest, and he said with all the finality of natural law, this you are and this you must do. I wondered whether even in the Middle Ages I should have accepted that ruling without question.

I remember too very distinctly how Effie came and sat beside me on a little box: that was before the casement window of our room.

"Gloomkins," said she.

I smiled and remained head on hand, looking out of the window forgetful of her.

"Did you love your wife so well?" she whispered softly.

"Oh!" I cried, recalled again; "I don't know. I don't understand

these things. Life is a thing that hurts, my dear! It hurts without logic or reason. I've blundered! I didn't understand. Anyhow — there is no need to go hurting you, is there?"

And I turned about and drew her to me, and kissed her ear....

Yes, I had a very bad time — I still recall. I suffered, I suppose, from a sort of ennui of the imagination. I found myself without an object to hold my will together. I sought. I read restlessly and discursively. I tried Ewart and got no help from him. As I regard it all now in this retrospect, it seems to me as if in those days of disgust and abandoned aims I discovered myself for the first time. Before that I had seen only the world and things in it, had sought them self-forgetful of all but my impulse. Now I found myself GROUPED with a system of appetites and satisfactions, with much work to do — and no desire, it seemed, left in me.

There were moments when I thought of suicide. At times my life appeared before me in bleak, relentless light, a series of ignorances, crude blunderings, degradation and cruelty. I had what the old theologians call a "conviction of sin." I sought salvation — not perhaps in the formula a Methodist preacher would recognise but salvation nevertheless.

Men find their salvation nowadays in many ways. Names and forms don't, I think, matter very much; the real need is something that we can hold and that holds one. I have known a man find that determining factor in a dry-plate factory, and another in writing a history of the Manor. So long as it holds one, it does not matter. Many men and women nowadays take up some concrete aspect of Socialism or social reform. But Socialism for me has always been a little bit too human, too set about with personalities and foolishness. It isn't my line. I don't like things so human. I don't think I'm blind to the fun, the surprises, the jolly little coarsenesses and insufficiency of life, to the "humour of it," as people say, and to adventure, but that isn't the root of the matter with me. There's no humour in my blood. I'm in earnest in warp and woof. I stumble and flounder, but I know that over all these merry immediate things, there are other things that are great and serene, very high, beautiful things — the reality. I haven't got it, but it's there nevertheless. I'm a spiritual guttersnipe in love with unimaginable goddesses. I've never seen the goddesses

nor ever shall — but it takes all the fun out of the mud — and at times I fear it takes all the kindliness, too.

But I'm talking of things I can't expect the reader to understand, because I don't half understand them myself. There is something links things for me, a sunset or so, a mood or so, the high air, something there was in Marion's form and colour, something I find and lose in Mantegna's pictures, something in the lines of these boats I make. (You should see X2, my last and best!)

I can't explain myself, I perceive. Perhaps it all comes to this, that I am a hard and morally limited cad with a mind beyond my merits. Naturally I resist that as a complete solution. Anyhow, I had a sense of inexorable need, of distress and insufficiency that was unendurable, and for a time this aeronautical engineering allayed it....

In the end of this particular crisis of which I tell so badly, I idealised Science. I decided that in power and knowledge lay the salvation of my life, the secret that would fill my need; that to these things I would give myself.

I emerged at last like a man who has been diving in darkness, clutching at a new resolve for which he had groped desperately and long.

I came into the inner office suddenly one day — it must have been just before the time of Marion's suit for restitution — and sat down before my uncle.

"Look here," I said, "I'm sick of this."

"HulLO!" he answered, and put some papers aside.

"What's up, George?"

"Things are wrong."

"As how?"

"My life," I said, "it's a mess, an infinite mess."

"She's been a stupid girl, George," he said; "I partly understand. But you're quit of her now, practically, and there's just as good fish in the sea—"

"Oh! it's not that!" I cried. "That's only the part that shows. I'm sick — I'm sick of all this damned rascality."

"Eh? Eh?" said my uncle. "WHAT — rascality?"

"Oh, YOU know. I want some STUFF, man. I want something to hold on to. I shall go amok if I don't get it. I'm a different sort of

beast from you. You float in all this bunkum. *I* feel like a man floundering in a universe of soapsuds, up and downs, east and west. I can't stand it. I must get my foot on something solid or — I don't know what."

I laughed at the consternation in his face.

"I mean it," I said. "I've been thinking it over. I've made up my mind. It's no good arguing. I shall go in for work — real work. No! this isn't work; it's only laborious cheating. But I've got an idea! It's an old idea — I thought of years ago, but it came back to me. Look here! Why should I fence about with you? I believe the time has come for flying to be possible. Real flying!"

"Flying!"

I stuck to that, and it helped me through the worst time in my life. My uncle, after some half-hearted resistance and a talk with my aunt, behaved like the father of a spoilt son. He fixed up an arrangement that gave me capital to play with, released me from too constant a solicitude for the newer business developments — this was in what I may call the later Moggs period of our enterprises — and I went to work at once with grim intensity.

But I will tell of my soaring and flying machines in the proper place. I've been leaving the story of my uncle altogether too long. I wanted merely to tell how it was I took to this work. I took to these experiments after I had sought something that Marion in some indefinable way had seemed to promise. I toiled and forgot myself for a time, and did many things. Science too has been something of an irresponsive mistress since, though I've served her better than I served Marion. But at the time Science, with her order, her inhuman distance, yet steely certainties, saved me from despair.

Well, I have still to fly; but incidentally I have invented the lightest engines in the world.

I am trying to tell of all the things that happened to me. It's hard enough simply to get it put down in the remotest degree right. But this is a novel, not a treatise. Don't imagine that I am coming presently to any sort of solution of my difficulties. Here among my drawings and hammerings NOW, I still question unanswering problems. All my life has been at bottom, SEEKING, disbelieving always, dissatisfied always with the thing seen and the thing

believed, seeking something in toil, in force, in danger, something whose name and nature I do not clearly understand, something beautiful, worshipful, enduring, mine profoundly and fundamentally, and the utter redemption of myself; I don't know — all I can tell is that it is something I have ever failed to find.

XI

But before I finish this chapter and book altogether and go on with the great adventure of my uncle's career. I may perhaps tell what else remains to tell of Marion and Effie, and then for a time set my private life behind me.

For a time Marion and I corresponded with some regularity, writing friendly but rather uninforming letters about small business things. The clumsy process of divorce completed itself.

She left the house at Ealing and went into the country with her aunt and parents, taking a small farm near Lewes in Sussex. She put up glass, she put in heat for her father, happy man! and spoke of figs and peaches. The thing seemed to promise well throughout a spring and summer, but the Sussex winter after London was too much for the Ramboats. They got very muddy and dull; Mr. Ramboat killed a cow by improper feeding, and that disheartened them all. A twelvemonth saw the enterprise in difficulties. I had to help her out of this, and then they returned to London and she went into partnership with Smithie at Streatham, and ran a business that was intimated on the firm's stationery as "Robes." The parents and aunt were stowed away in a cottage somewhere. After that the letters became infrequent. But in one I remember a postscript that had a little stab of our old intimacy: "Poor old Miggles is dead."

Nearly eight years slipped by. I grew up. I grew in experience, in capacity, until I was fully a man, but with many new interests, living on a larger scale in a wider world than I could have dreamt of in my Marion days. Her letters become rare and insignificant. At last came a gap of silence that made me curious. For eighteen months or more I had nothing from Marion save her quarterly receipts through the bank. Then I damned at Smithie, and wrote a card to Marion.

"Dear Marion," I said, "how goes it?"

She astonished me tremendously by telling me she had married again— “a Mr. Wachorn, a leading agent in the paper-pattern trade.” But she still wrote on the Ponderevo and Smith (Robes) notepaper, from the Ponderevo and Smith address.

And that, except for a little difference of opinion about the continuance of alimony which gave me some passages of anger, and the use of my name by the firm, which also annoyed me, is the end of Marion’s history for me, and she vanishes out of this story. I do not know where she is or what she is doing. I do not know whether she is alive or dead. It seems to me utterly grotesque that two people who have stood so close to one another as she and I should be so separated, but so it is between us.

Effie, too, I have parted from, though I still see her at times. Between us there was never any intention of marriage nor intimacy of soul. She had a sudden, fierce, hot-blooded passion for me and I for her, but I was not her first lover nor her last. She was in another world from Marion. She had a queer, delightful nature; I’ve no memory of ever seeing her sullen or malicious. She was — indeed she was magnificently — eupeptic. That, I think, was the central secret of her agreeableness, and, moreover, that she was infinitely kind-hearted. I helped her at last into an opening she coveted, and she amazed me by a sudden display of business capacity. She has now a typewriting bureau in Riffle’s Inn, and she runs it with a brisk vigour and considerable success, albeit a certain plumpness has overtaken her. And she still loves her kind. She married a year or so ago a boy half her age — a wretch of a poet, a wretched poet, and given to drugs, a thing with lank fair hair always getting into his blue eyes, and limp legs. She did it, she said, because he needed nursing....

But enough of this disaster of my marriage and of my early love affairs; I have told all that is needed for my picture to explain how I came to take up aeroplane experiments and engineering science; let me get back to my essential story, to Tono-Bungay and my uncle’s promotions and to the vision of the world these things have given me.

BOOK THE THIRD

THE GREAT DAYS OF TONO-BUNGAY

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE HARDINGHAM HOTEL, AND HOW WE BECAME BIG PEOPLE

I

But now that I resume the main line of my story it may be well to describe the personal appearance of my uncle as I remember him during those magnificent years that followed his passage from trade to finance. The little man plumped up very considerably during the creation of the Tono-Bungay property, but with the increasing excitements that followed that first flotation came dyspepsia and a certain flabbiness and falling away. His abdomen — if the reader will pardon my taking his features in the order of their value — had at first a nice full roundness, but afterwards it lost tone without, however, losing size. He always went as though he was proud of it and would make as much of it as possible. To the last his movements remained quick and sudden, his short firm legs, as he walked, seemed to twinkle rather than display the scissors-stride of common humanity, and he never seemed to have knees, but instead, a dispersed flexibility of limb.

There was, I seem to remember, a secular intensification of his features; his nose developed character, became aggressive, stuck out at the world more and more; the obliquity of his mouth, I think, increased. From the face that returns to my memory projects a long cigar that is sometimes cocked jauntily up from the higher corner, that sometimes droops from the lower; — it was as eloquent as a dog's tail, and he removed it only for the more emphatic modes of speech. He assumed a broad black ribbon for his glasses, and wore them more and more askew as time went on. His hair seemed to stiffen with success, but towards the climax it thinned greatly over the crown, and he brushed it hard back over his ears where, however, it stuck out fiercely. It always stuck out fiercely over his forehead, up and forward.

He adopted an urban style of dressing with the onset of Tono-

Bungay and rarely abandoned it. He preferred silk hats with ample rich brims, often a trifle large for him by modern ideas, and he wore them at various angles to his axis; his taste in trouserings was towards fairly emphatic stripes and his trouser cut was neat; he liked his frock-coat long and full, although that seemed to shorten him. He displayed a number of valuable rings, and I remember one upon his left little finger with a large red stone bearing Gnostic symbols. "Clever chaps, those Gnostics, George," he told me. "Means a lot. Lucky!" He never had any but a black mohair watch-chair. In the country he affected grey and a large grey cloth top-hat, except when motoring; then he would have a brown deer-stalker cap and a fur suit of esquimaux cut with a sort of boot-end to the trousers. Of an evening he would wear white waistcoats and plain gold studs. He hated diamonds. "Flashy," he said they were. "Might as well wear — an income tax-receipt. All very well for Park Lane. Unsold stock. Not my style. Sober financier, George."

So much for his visible presence. For a time it was very familiar to the world, for at the crest of the boom he allowed quite a number of photographs and at least one pencil sketch to be published in the sixpenny papers.

His voice declined during those years from his early tenor to a flat rich quality of sound that my knowledge of music is inadequate to describe. His Zzz-ing inrush of air became less frequent as he ripened, but returned in moments of excitement. Throughout his career, in spite of his increasing and at last astounding opulence, his more intimate habits remained as simple as they had been at Wimblehurst. He would never avail himself of the services of a valet; at the very climax of his greatness his trousers were folded by a housemaid and his shoulders brushed as he left his house or hotel. He became wary about breakfast as life advanced, and at one time talked much of Dr. Haig and uric acid. But for other meals he remained reasonably omnivorous. He was something of a gastronome, and would eat anything he particularly liked in an audible manner, and perspire upon his forehead. He was a studiously moderate drinker — except when the spirit of some public banquet or some great occasion caught him and bore him beyond his wariness — there he would, as it were, drink inadvertently and become flushed and talkative —

about everything but his business projects.

To make the portrait complete one wants to convey an effect of sudden, quick bursts of movement like the jumps of a Chinese-cracker to indicate that his pose whatever it is, has been preceded and will be followed by a rush. If I were painting him, I should certainly give him for a background that distressed, uneasy sky that was popular in the eighteenth century, and at a convenient distance a throbbing motor-car, very big and contemporary, a secretary hurrying with papers, and an alert chauffeur.

Such was the figure that created and directed the great property of Tono-Bungay, and from the successful reconstruction of that company passed on to a slow crescendo of magnificent creations and promotions until the whole world of investors marveled. I have already I think, mentioned how, long before we offered Tono Bungay to the public, we took over the English agency of certain American specialties. To this was presently added our exploitation of Moggs' Domestic Soap, and so he took up the Domestic Convenience Campaign that, coupled with his equatorial rotundity and a certain resolute convexity in his bearings won my uncle his Napoleonic title.

II

It illustrates the romantic element in modern commerce that my uncle met young Moggs at a city dinner — I think it was the Bottle-makers' Company — when both were some way advanced beyond the initial sobriety of the occasion. This was the grandson of the original Moggs, and a very typical instance of an educated, cultivated, degenerate plutocrat. His people had taken him about in his youth as the Ruskins took their John and fostered a passion for history in him, and the actual management of the Moggs' industry had devolved upon a cousin and a junior partner.

Mr. Moggs, being of a studious and refined disposition, had just decided — after a careful search for a congenial subject in which he would not be constantly reminded of soap — to devote himself to the History of the Thebaid, when this cousin died suddenly and precipitated responsibilities upon him. In the frankness of conviviality, Moggs bewailed the uncongenial task thus thrust into

his hands, and my uncle offered to lighten his burden by a partnership then and there. They even got to terms — extremely muzzy terms, but terms nevertheless.

Each gentleman wrote the name and address of the other on his cuff, and they separated in a mood of brotherly carelessness, and next morning neither seems to have thought to rescue his shirt from the wash until it was too late. My uncle made a painful struggle — it was one of my business mornings — to recall name and particulars.

"He was an aquarium-faced, long, blond sort of chap, George, with glasses and a genteel accent," he said.

I was puzzled. "Aquarium-faced?"

"You know how they look at you. His stuff was soap, I'm pretty nearly certain. And he had a name — And the thing was the straightest Bit-of-All-right you ever. I was clear enough to spot that..."

We went out at last with knitted brows, and wandered up into Finsbury seeking a good, well-stocked looking grocer. We called first on a chemist for a pick-me-up for my uncle, and then we found the shop we needed.

"I want," said my uncle, "half a pound of every sort of soap you got. Yes, I want to take them now. Wait a moment, George.... Now what sort of soap d'you call THAT?"

At the third repetition of that question the young man said, "Moggs' Domestic."

"Right," said my uncle. "You needn't guess again. Come along, George, let's go to a telephone and get on to Moggs. Oh — the order? Certainly. I confirm it. Send it all — send it all to the Bishop of London; he'll have some good use for it — (First-rate man, George, he is — charities and all that) — and put it down to me, here's a card — Ponderevo — Tono-Bungay."

Then we went on to Moggs and found him in a camel-hair dressing-jacket in a luxurious bed, drinking China tea, and got the shape of everything but the figures fixed by lunch time.

Young Moggs enlarged my mind considerably; he was a sort of thing I hadn't met before; he seemed quite clean and well-informed and he assured me to never read newspapers nor used soap in any form at all, "Delicate skin," he said.

“No objection to our advertising you wide and free?” said my uncle.

“I draw the line at railway stations,” said Moggs, “south-coast cliffs, theatre programmes, books by me and poetry generally — scenery — oh! — and the Mercure de France.”

“We’ll get along,” said my uncle.

“So long as you don’t annoy me,” said Moggs, lighting a cigarette, “you can make me as rich as you like.”

We certainly made him no poorer. His was the first firm that was advertised by a circumstantial history; we even got to illustrated magazine articles telling of the quaint past of Moggs. We concocted Moggsiana. Trusting to our partner’s preoccupation with the uncommercial aspects of life, we gave graceful history — of Moggs the First, Moggs the Second, Moggs the Third, and Moggs the Fourth. You must, unless you are very young, remember some of them and our admirable block of a Georgian shop window. My uncle brought early nineteenth-century memoirs, soaked himself in the style, and devised stories about old Moggs the First and the Duke of Wellington, George the Third and the soap dealer (“almost certainly old Moggs”). Very soon we had added to the original Moggs’ Primrose several varieties of scented and superfatted, a “special nurseries used in the household of the Duke of Kent and for the old Queen in Infancy,” a plate powder, “the Paragon,” and a knife powder. We roped in a good little second-rate black-lead firm, and carried their origins back into the mists of antiquity. It was my uncle’s own unaided idea that we should associate that commodity with the Black Prince. He became industriously curious about the past of black-lead. I remember his button-holing the president of the Pepys Society.

“I say, is there any black-lead in Pepys? You know — black-lead — for grates! OR DOES HE PASS IT OVER AS A MATTER OF COURSE?”

He became in those days the terror of eminent historians. “Don’t want your drum and trumpet history — no fear,” he used to say. “Don’t want to know who was who’s mistress, and why so-and-so devastated such a province; that’s bound to be all lies and upsy-down anyhow. Not my affair. Nobody’s affair now. Chaps who did it didn’t

clearly know.... What I want to know is, in the Middle Ages, did they do anything for Housemaid's Knee? What did they put in their hot baths after jousting, and was the Black Prince — you know the Black Prince — was he enameled or painted, or what? I think myself, black-leaded — very likely — like pipe-clay — but DID they use blacking so early?"

So it came about that in designing and writing those Moggs' Soap Advertisements, that wrought a revolution in that department of literature, my uncle was brought to realise not only the lost history, but also the enormous field for invention and enterprise that lurked among the little articles, the dustpans and mincers, the mousetraps and carpet-sweepers that fringe the shops of the oilman and domestic ironmonger. He was recalled to one of the dreams of his youth, to his conception of the Ponderevo Patent Flat that had been in his mind so early as the days before I went to serve him at Wimblehurst. "The Home, George," he said, "wants straightening up. Silly muddle! Things that get in the way. Got to organise it."

For a time he displayed something like the zeal of a genuine social reformer in relation to these matters.

"We've got to bring the Home Up to Date? That's my idee, George. We got to make a civilised domestic machine out of these relics of barbarism. I'm going to hunt up inventors, make a corner in d'mestic ideas. Everything. Balls of string that won't dissolve into a tangle, and gum that won't dry into horn. See? Then after conveniences — beauty. Beauty, George! All these few things ought to be made fit to look at; it's your aunt's idea, that. Beautiful jam-pots! Get one of those new art chaps to design all the things they make ugly now. Patent carpet-sweepers by these greenwood chaps, housemaid's boxes it'll be a pleasure to fall over — rich coloured house-flannels. Zzzz. Pails, f'rinstance. Hang 'em up on the walls like warming-pans. All the polishes and things in such tins — you'll want to cuddle 'em, George! See the notion? 'Sted of all the silly ugly things we got."...

We had some magnificent visions; they so affected me that when I passed ironmongers and oil-shops they seemed to me as full of promise as trees in late winter, flushed with the effort to burst into leaf and flower.... And really we did do much towards that very

brightness these shops display. They were dingy things in the eighties compared to what our efforts have made them now, grey quiet displays.

Well, I don't intend to write down here the tortuous financial history of Moggs' Limited, which was our first development of Moggs and Sons; nor will I tell very much of how from that we spread ourselves with a larger and larger conception throughout the chandlery and minor ironmongery, how we became agents for this little commodity, partners in that, got a tentacle round the neck of a specialised manufacturer or so, secured a pull upon this or that supply of raw material, and so prepared the way for our second flotation, Domestic Utilities; "Do it," they reordered it in the city. And then came the reconstruction of Tono-Bungay, and then "Household services" and the Boom!

That sort of development is not to be told in detail in a novel. I have, indeed, told much of it elsewhere. It is to be found set out at length, painfully at length, in my uncle's examination and mine in the bankruptcy proceedings, and in my own various statements after his death. Some people know everything in that story, some know it all too well, most do not want the details, it is the story of a man of imagination among figures, and unless you are prepared to collate columns of pounds, shillings and pence, compare dates and check additions, you will find it very unmeaning and perplexing. And after all, you wouldn't find the early figures so much wrong as STRAINED. In the matter of Moggs and Do Ut, as in the first Tono-Bungay promotion and in its reconstruction, we left the court by city standards without a stain on our characters. The great amalgamation of Household Services was my uncle's first really big-scale enterprise and his first display of bolder methods: for this we bought back Do Ut, Moggs (going strong with a seven per cent. dividend) and acquired Skinnerton's polishes, the Riffleshaw properties and the Runcorn's mincer and coffee-mill business. To that Amalgamation I was really not a party; I left it to my uncle because I was then beginning to get keen upon the soaring experiments I had taken on from the results then to hand of Lilienthal, Pilcher and the Wright brothers. I was developing a glider into a flyer. I meant to apply power to this glider as soon as I could work out one or two residual

problems affecting the longitudinal stability. I knew that I had a sufficiently light motor in my own modification of Bridger's light turbine, but I knew too that until I had cured my aeroplane of a tendency demanding constant alertness from me, a tendency to jerk up its nose at unexpected moments and slide back upon me, the application of an engine would be little short of suicide.

But that I will tell about later. The point I was coming to was that I did not realise until after the crash how recklessly my uncle had kept his promise of paying a dividend of over eight per cent. on the ordinary shares of that hugely over-capitalised enterprise, Household Services.

I drifted out of business affairs into my research much more than either I or my uncle had contemplated. Finance was much less to my taste than the organisation of the Tono-Bungay factory. In the new field of enterprise there was a great deal of bluffing and gambling, of taking chances and concealing material facts — and these are hateful things to the scientific type of mind. It wasn't fear I felt so much as an uneasy inaccuracy. I didn't realise dangers, I simply disliked the sloppy, relaxing quality of this new sort of work. I was at last constantly making excuses not to come up to him in London. The latter part of his business career recedes therefore beyond the circle of any particular life. I lived more or less with him; I talked, I advised, I helped him at times to fight his Sunday crowd at Crest Hill, but I did not follow nor guide him. From the Do Ut time onward he rushed up the financial world like a bubble in water and left me like some busy water-thing down below in the deeps.

Anyhow, he was an immense success. The public was, I think, particularly attracted by the homely familiarity of his field of work — you never lost sight of your investment they felt, with the name on the house-flannel and shaving-strop — and its allegiance was secured by the Egyptian solidity of his apparent results. Tono-Bungay, after its reconstruction, paid thirteen, Moggs seven, Domestic Utilities had been a safe-looking nine; here was Household Services with eight; on such a showing he had merely to buy and sell Roeburn's Antiseptic fluid, Razor soaks and Bath crystals in three weeks to clear twenty thousand pounds.

I do think that as a matter of fact Roeburn's was good value at the

price at which he gave it to the public, at least until it was strained by ill-conserved advertisement. It was a period of expansion and confidence; much money was seeking investment and "Industrials" were the fashion. Prices were rising all round. There remained little more for my uncle to do therefore, in his climb to the high unstable crest of Financial Greatness but, as he said, to "grasp the cosmic oyster, George, while it gaped," which, being translated, meant for him to buy respectable businesses confidently and courageously at the vendor's estimate, add thirty or forty thousand to the price and sell them again. His sole difficulty indeed was the tactful management of the load of shares that each of these transactions left upon his hands. But I thought so little of these later things that I never fully appreciated the peculiar inconveniences of that until it was too late to help him.

III

When I think of my uncle near the days of his Great Boom and in connection with the actualities of his enterprises, I think of him as I used to see him in the suite of rooms he occupied in the Hardingham Hotel, seated at a great old oak writing-table, smoking, drinking, and incoherently busy; that was his typical financial aspect — our evenings, our mornings, our holidays, our motor-car expeditions, Lady Grove and Crest Hill belong to an altogether different set of memories.

These rooms in the Hardingham were a string of apartments along one handsome thick-carpeted corridor. All the doors upon the corridor were locked except the first; and my uncle's bedroom, breakfast-room and private sanctum were the least accessible and served by an entrance from the adjacent passage, which he also used at times as a means of escape from importunate callers. The most eternal room was a general waiting-room and very business-like in quality; it had one or two uneasy sofas, a number of chairs, a green baize table, and a collection of the very best Moggs and Tone posters: and the plush carpets normal to the Hardingham had been replaced by a grey-green cork linoleum; Here I would always find a remarkable miscellany of people presided over by a peculiarly

faithful and ferocious looking commissioner, Ropper, who guarded the door that led a step nearer my uncle. Usually there would be a parson or so, and one or two widows; hairy, eyeglassy, middle-aged gentlemen, some of them looking singularly like Edward Ponderevos who hadn't come off, a variety of young and youngish men more or less attractively dressed, some with papers protruding from their pockets, others with their papers decently concealed. And wonderful, incidental, frowsy people.

All these persons maintained a practically hopeless siege — sometimes for weeks together; they had better have stayed at home. Next came a room full of people who had some sort of appointment, and here one would find smart-looking people, brilliantly dressed, nervous women hiding behind magazines, nonconformist divines, clergy in gaiters, real business men, these latter for the most part gentlemen in admirable morning dress who stood up and scrutinised my uncle's taste in water colours manfully and sometimes by the hour together. Young men again were here of various social origins, young Americans, treasonable clerks from other concerns, university young men, keen-looking, most of them, resolute, reserved, but on a sort of hair trigger, ready at any moment to be most voluble, most persuasive.

This room had a window, too, looking out into the hotel courtyard with its fern-set fountains and mosaic pavement, and the young men would stand against this and sometimes even mutter. One day I heard one repeating in all urgent whisper as I passed "But you don't quite see, Mr. Ponderevo, the full advantages, the FULL advantages—" I met his eye and he was embarrassed.

Then came a room with a couple of secretaries — no typewriters, because my uncle hated the clatter — and a casual person or two sitting about, projectors whose projects were being entertained. Here and in a further room nearer the private apartments, my uncle's correspondence underwent an exhaustive process of pruning and digestion before it reached him. Then the two little rooms in which my uncle talked; my magic uncle who had got the investing public — to whom all things were possible. As one came in we would find him squatting with his cigar up and an expression of dubious beatitude upon his face, while some one urged him to grow still

richer by this or that.

"That'ju, George?" he used to say. "Come in. Here's a thing. Tell him — Mister — over again. Have a drink, George? No! Wise man! Liss'n."

I was always ready to listen. All sorts of financial marvels came out of the Hardingham, more particularly during my uncle's last great flurry, but they were nothing to the projects that passed in. It was the little brown and gold room he sat in usually. He had had it redecorated by Bordingly and half a dozen Sussex pictures by Webster hung about it. Latterly he wore a velveteen jacket of a golden-brown colour in this apartment that I think over-emphasised its esthetic intention, and he also added some gross Chinese bronzes.

He was, on the whole, a very happy man throughout all that wildly enterprising time. He made and, as I shall tell in its place, spent great sums of money. He was constantly in violent motion, constantly stimulated mentally and physically and rarely tired. About him was an atmosphere of immense deference much of his waking life was triumphal and all his dreams. I doubt if he had any dissatisfaction with himself at all until the crash bore him down. Things must have gone very rapidly with him.... I think he must have been very happy.

As I sit here writing about all these things, jerking down notes and throwing them aside in my attempt to give some literary form to the tale of our promotions, the marvel of it all comes to me as if it came for the first time the supreme unreason of it. At the climax of his Boom, my uncle at the most sparing estimate must have possessed in substance and credit about two million pounds'-worth of property to set off against his vague colossal liabilities, and from first to last he must have had a controlling influence in the direction of nearly thirty millions.

This irrational muddle of a community in which we live gave him that, paid him at that rate for sitting in a room and scheming and telling it lies. For he created nothing, he invented nothing, he economised nothing. I cannot claim that a single one of the great businesses we organised added any real value to human life at all. Several like Tono-Bungay were unmitigated frauds by any honest standard, the giving of nothing coated in advertisements for money.

And the things the Hardingham gave out, I repeat, were nothing to the things that came in. I think of the long procession of people who sat down before us and propounded this and that. Now it was a device for selling bread under a fancy name and so escaping the laws as to weight — this was afterwards floated as the Decorticated Health-Bread Company and bumped against the law — now it was a new scheme for still more strident advertisement, now it was a story of unsuspected deposits of minerals, now a cheap and nasty substitute for this or that common necessity, now the treachery of a too well-informed employee, anxious to become our partner. It was all put to us tentatively, persuasively. Sometimes one had a large pink blusterous person trying to carry us off our feet by his pseudo-boyish frankness, now some dyspeptically yellow whisperer, now some earnest, specially dressed youth with an eye-glass and a buttonhole, now some homely-speaking, shrewd Manchester man or some Scotchman eager to be very clear and full.

Many came in couples or trios, often in tow of an explanatory solicitor. Some were white and earnest, some flustered beyond measure at their opportunity. Some of them begged and prayed to be taken up. My uncle chose what he wanted and left the rest. He became very autocratic to these applicants.

He felt he could make them, and they felt so too. He had but to say "No!" and they faded out of existence.... He had become a sort of vortex to which wealth flowed of its own accord. His possessions increased by heaps; his shares, his leaseholds and mortgages and debentures.

Behind his first-line things he found it necessary at last, and sanctioned by all the precincts, to set up three general trading companies, the London and African Investment Company, the British Traders' Loan Company, and Business Organisations Limited. This was in the culminating time when I had least to do with affairs. I don't say that with any desire to exculpate myself; I admit I was a director of all three, and I will confess I was willfully incurious in that capacity. Each of these companies ended its financial year solvent by selling great holdings of shares to one or other of its sisters, and paying a dividend out of the proceeds. I sat at the table and agreed. That was our method of equilibrium at the

iridescent climax of the bubble.

You perceive now, however, the nature of the services for which this fantastic community have him unmanageable wealth and power and real respect. It was all a monstrous payment for courageous fiction, a gratuity in return for the one reality of human life — illusion. We gave them a feeling of hope and profit; we sent a tidal wave of water and confidence into their stranded affairs. “We mint Faith, George,” said my uncle one day. “That’s what we do. And by Jove we got to keep minting! We been making human confidence ever since I drove the first cork of Tono-Bungay.”

“Coining” would have been a better word than minting! And yet, you know, in a sense he was right. Civilisation is possible only through confidence, so that we can bank our money and go unarmed about the streets. The bank reserve or a policeman keeping order in a jostling multitude of people, are only slightly less impudent bluffs than my uncle’s prospectuses. They couldn’t for a moment “make good” if the quarter of what they guarantee was demanded of them. The whole of this modern mercantile investing civilisation is indeed such stuff as dreams are made of. A mass of people swelters and toils, great railway systems grow, cities arise to the skies and spread wide and far, mines are opened, factories hum, foundries roar, ships plough the seas, countries are settled; about this busy striving world the rich owners go, controlling all, enjoying all, confident and creating the confidence that draws us all together into a reluctant, nearly unconscious brotherhood. I wonder and plan my engines. The flags flutter, the crowds cheer, the legislatures meet. Yet it seems to me indeed at times that all this present commercial civilisation is no more than my poor uncle’s career writ large, a swelling, thinning bubble of assurances; that its arithmetic is just as unsound, its dividends as ill-advised, its ultimate aim as vague and forgotten; that it all drifts on perhaps to some tremendous parallel to his individual disaster...

Well, so it was we Boomed, and for four years and a half we lived a life of mingled substance and moonshine. Until our particular unsoundness overtook us we went about in the most magnificent of motor-cars upon tangible high roads, made ourselves conspicuous and stately in splendid houses, ate sumptuously and had a perpetual

stream of notes and money trickling into our pockets; hundreds of thousands of men and women respected us, saluted us and gave us toil and honour; I asked, and my worksheets rose, my aeroplanes swooped out of nothingness to scare the downland pe-wits; my uncle waved his hand and Lady Grove and all its associations of chivalry and ancient peace were his; waved again, and architects were busy planning the great palace he never finished at Crest Hill and an army of folkmen gathered to do his bidding, blue marble came from Canada, and timber from New Zealand; and beneath it all, you know, there was nothing but fictitious values as evanescent as rainbow gold.

IV

I pass the Hardingham ever and again and glance aside through the great archway at the fountain and the ferns, and think of those receding days when I was so near the centre of our eddy of greed and enterprise. I see again my uncle's face, white and intent, and hear him discourse, hear him make consciously Napoleonic decisions, "grip" his nettles, put his "finger on the spot," "bluff," say "snap." He became particularly addicted to the last idiom. Towards the end every conceivable act took the form of saying "snap!"

The odd fish that came to us! And among others came Gordon-Nasmyth, that queer blend of romance and illegality who was destined to drag me into the most irrelevant adventure in my life the Mordet Island affair; and leave me, as they say, with blood upon my hands. It is remarkable how little it troubles my conscience and how much it stirs my imagination, that particular memory of the life I took. The story of Mordet Island has been told in a government report and told all wrong; there are still excellent reasons for leaving it wrong in places, but the liveliest appeals of discretion forbid my leaving it out altogether.

I've still the vividest memory of Gordon-Nasmyth's appearance in the inner sanctum, a lank, sunburnt person in tweeds with a yellow-brown hatchet face and one faded blue eye — the other was a closed and sunken lid — and how he told us with a stiff affectation of ease his incredible story of this great heap of quap that lay abandoned or undiscovered on the beach behind Mordet's Island

among white dead mangroves and the black ooze of brackish water.

"What's quap?" said my uncle on the fourth repetition of the word.

"They call it quap, or quab, or quabb," said Gordon-Nasmyth; "but our relations weren't friendly enough to get the accent right....

"But there the stuff is for the taking. They don't know about it. Nobody knows about it. I got down to the damned place in a canoe alone. The boys wouldn't come. I pretended to be botanising." ...

To begin with, Gordon-Nasmyth was inclined to be dramatic.

"Look here," he said when he first came in, shutting the door rather carefully behind him as he spoke, "do you two men — yes or no — want to put up six thousand — for — a clear good chance of fifteen hundred per cent. on your money in a year?"

"We're always getting chances like that," said my uncle, cocking his cigar offensively, wiping his glasses and tilting his chair back. "We stick to a safe twenty."

Gordon-Nasmyth's quick temper showed in a slight stiffening of his attitude.

"Don't you believe him," said I, getting up before he could reply. "You're different, and I know your books. We're very glad you've come to us. Confound it, uncle! Its Gordon-Nasmyth! Sit down. What is it? Minerals?"

"Quap," said Gordon-Nasmyth, fixing his eye on me, "in heaps."

"In heaps," said my uncle softly, with his glasses very oblique.

"You're only fit for the grocery," said Gordon-Nasmyth scornfully, sitting down and helping himself to one of my uncle's cigars. "I'm sorry I came. But, still, now I'm here.... And first as to quap; quap, sir, is the most radio-active stuff in the world. That's quap! It's a festering mass of earths and heavy metals, polonium, radium, ythorium, thorium, carium, and new things, too. There's a stuff called Xk — provisionally. There they are, mucked up together in a sort of rotting sand. What it is, how it got made, I don't know. It's like as if some young creator had been playing about there. There it lies in two heaps, one small, one great, and the world for miles about it is blasted and scorched and dead. You can have it for the getting. You've got to take it — that's all!"

"That sounds all right," said I. "Have you samples?"

“Well — should I? You can have anything — up to two ounces.”

“Where is it?”...

His blue eye smiled at me and scrutinised me. He smoked and was fragmentary for a time, fending off my questions; then his story began to piece itself together. He conjured up a vision of this strange forgotten kink in the world’s littoral, of the long meandering channels that spread and divaricate and spend their burden of mud and silt within the thunderbelt of Atlantic surf, of the dense tangled vegetation that creeps into the shimmering water with root and sucker. He gave a sense of heat and a perpetual reek of vegetable decay, and told how at last comes a break among these things, an arena fringed with bone-white dead trees, a sight of the hard-blue sea line beyond the dazzling surf and a wide desolation of dirty shingle and mud, bleached and scarred.... A little way off among charred dead weeds stands the abandoned station, — abandoned because every man who stayed two months at that station stayed to die, eaten up mysteriously like a leper with its dismantled sheds and its decaying pier of wormrotten and oblique piles and planks, still insecurely possible.

And in the midst, two clumsy heaps shaped like the backs of hogs, one small, one great, sticking out under a rib of rock that cuts the space across, — quap!

“There it is,” said Gordon-Nasmyth, “worth three pounds an ounce, if it’s worth a penny; two great heaps of it, rotten stuff and soft, ready to shovel and wheel, and you may get it by the ton!”

“How did it get there?”

“God knows! ... There it is — for the taking! In a country where you mustn’t trade. In a country where the company waits for good kind men to find it riches and then take ’em away from ‘em. There you have it — derelict.”

“Can’t you do any sort of deal?”

“They’re too damned stupid. You’ve got to go and take it. That’s all.”

“They might catch you.”

“They might, of course. But they’re not great at catching.”

We went into the particulars of that difficulty. “They wouldn’t catch me, because I’d sink first. Give me a yacht,” said Gordon-

Nasmyth; “that’s all I need.”

“But if you get caught,” said my uncle.

I am inclined to think Gordon-Nasmyth imagined we would give him a cheque for six thousand pounds on the strength of his talk. It was very good talk, but we didn’t do that. I stipulated for samples of his stuff for analysis, and he consented — reluctantly.

I think, on the whole, he would rather I didn’t examine samples. He made a motion pocketwards, that gave us an invincible persuasion that he had a sample upon him, and that at the last instant he decided not to produce it prematurely.

There was evidently a curious strain of secretiveness in him. He didn’t like to give us samples, and he wouldn’t indicate within three hundred miles the position of this Mordet Island of his. He had it clear in his mind that he had a secret of immense value, and he had no idea at all of just how far he ought to go with business people. And so presently, to gain time for these hesitations of his, he began to talk of other things. He talked very well. He talked of the Dutch East Indies and of the Congo, of Portuguese East Africa and Paraguay, of Malays and rich Chinese merchants, Dyaks and negroes and the spread of the Mahometan world in Africa to-day. And all this time he was trying to judge if we were good enough to trust with his adventure. Our cosy inner office became a little place, and all our business cold and lifeless exploits beside his glimpses of strange minglings of men, of slayings unavenged and curious customs, of trade where no writs run, and the dark treacheries of eastern ports and uncharted channels.

We had neither of us gone abroad except for a few vulgar raids on Paris; our world was England, are the places of origin of half the raw material of the goods we sold had seemed to us as remote as fairyland or the forest of Arden. But Gordon-Nasmyth made it so real and intimate for us that afternoon — for me, at any rate — that it seemed like something seen and forgotten and now again remembered.

And in the end he produced his sample, a little lump of muddy clay speckled with brownish grains, in a glass bottle wrapped about with lead and flannel — red flannel it was, I remember — a hue which is, I know, popularly supposed to double all the mystical

efficacies of flannel.

"Don't carry it about on you," said Gordon-Nasmyth. "It makes a sore."

I took the stuff to Thorold, and Thorold had the exquisite agony of discovering two new elements in what was then a confidential analysis. He has christened them and published since, but at the time Gordon-Nasmyth wouldn't hear for a moment of our publication of any facts at all; indeed, he flew into a violent passion and abused me mercilessly even for showing the stuff to Thorold. "I thought you were going to analyse it yourself," he said with the touching persuasion of the layman that a scientific man knows and practises at the sciences.

I made some commercial inquiries, and there seemed even then much truth in Gordon-Nasmyth's estimate of the value of the stuff. It was before the days of Capern's discovery of the value of canadium and his use of it in the Capern filament, but the cerium and thorium alone were worth the money he extracted for the gas-mantles then in vogue. There were, however, doubts. Indeed, there were numerous doubts. What were the limits of the gas-mantle trade? How much thorium, not to speak of cerium, could they take at a maximum. Suppose that quantity was high enough to justify our shipload, came doubts in another quarter. Were the heaps up to sample? Were they as big as he said? Was Gordon-Nasmyth — imaginative? And if these values held, could we after all get the stuff? It wasn't ours. It was on forbidden ground. You see, there were doubts of every grade and class in the way of this adventure.

We went some way, nevertheless, in the discussion of his project, though I think we tried his patience. Then suddenly he vanished from London, and I saw no more of him for a year and a half.

My uncle said that was what he had expected, and when at last Gordon-Nasmyth reappeared and mentioned in an incidental way that he had been to Paraguay on private (and we guessed passionate) affairs, the business of the "quap" expedition had to be begun again at the beginning. My uncle was disposed to be altogether sceptical, but I wasn't so decided. I think I was drawn by its picturesque aspects. But we neither of us dreamt of touching it seriously until Capern's discovery.

Nasmyth's story had laid hold of my imagination like one small, intense picture of tropical sunshine hung on a wall of grey business affairs. I kept it going during Gordon-Nasmyth's intermittent appearances in England. Every now and then he and I would meet and reinforce its effect. We would lunch in London, or he would cone to see my gliders at Crest Hill, and make new projects for getting at those heaps again now with me, now alone.

At times they became a sort of fairy-story with us, an imaginative exercise. And there came Capern's discovery of what he called the ideal filament and with it an altogether less problematical quality about the business side of quap. For the ideal filament needed five per cent. of canadium, and canadium was known to the world only as a newly separated constituent of a variety of the rare mineral rutile. But to Thorold it was better known as an element in a mysterious sample brought to him by me, and to me it was known as one of the elements in quap. I told my uncle, and we jumped on to the process at once. We found that Gordon-Nasmyth, still unaware of the altered value of the stuff, and still thinking of the experimental prices of radium and the rarity value of cerium, had got hold of a cousin named Pollack, made some extraordinary transaction about his life insurance policy, and was buying a brig. We put in, put down three thousand pounds, and forthwith the life insurance transaction and the Pollack side of this finance vanished into thin air, leaving Pollack, I regret to say, in the brig and in the secret — except so far as canadium and the filament went — as residuum. We discussed earnestly whether we should charter a steamer or go on with the brig, but we decided on the brig as a less conspicuous instrument for an enterprise that was after all, to put it plainly, stealing.

But that was one of our last enterprises before our great crisis, and I will tell of it in its place.

So it was quap came into our affairs, came in as a fairy-tale and became real. More and more real it grew until at last it was real, until at last I saw with my eyes the heaps my imagination had seen for so long, and felt between my fingers again that half-gritty, half soft texture of quap, like sanded moist-sugar mixed with clay in which there stirs something —

One must feel it to understand.

V

All sorts of things came to the Hardingham and offered themselves to my uncle. Gordon-Nasmyth stands but only because he played a part at last in the crisis of our fortunes. So much came to us that it seemed to me at times as though the whole world of human affairs was ready to prostitute itself to our real and imaginary millions. As I look back, I am still dazzled and incredulous to think of the quality of our opportunities.

We did the most extraordinary things; things that it seems absurd to me to leave to any casual man of wealth and enterprise who cares to do them. I had some amazing perceptions of just how modern thought and the supply of fact to the general mind may be controlled by money. Among other things that my uncle offered for, he tried very hard to buy the British Medical Journal and the Lancet, and run them on what he called modern lines, and when they resisted him he talked very vigorously for a time of organising a rival enterprise. That was a very magnificent idea indeed in its way; it would have given a tremendous advantage in the handling of innumerable specialties and indeed I scarcely know how far it would not have put the medical profession in our grip. It still amazes me — I shall die amazed — that such a thing can be possible in the modern state. If my uncle failed to bring the thing off, some one else may succeed. But I doubt, even if he had got both these weeklies, whether his peculiar style would have suited them. The change of purpose would have shown. He would have found it difficult to keep up their dignity.

He certainly did not keep up the dignity of the Sacred Grove, an important critical organ which he acquired one day — by saying "snap" — for eight hundred pounds. He got it "lock, stock and barrel" — under one or other of which three aspects the editor was included. Even at that price it didn't pay. If you are a literary person you will remember the bright new cover he gave that representative organ of British intellectual culture, and how his sound business instincts jarred with the exalted pretensions of a vanishing age. One old wrapper I discovered the other day runs: —

"THE SACRED GROVE."

Weekly Magazine of Art, Philosophy, Science and Belles Lettres.

HAVE YOU A NASTY TASTE IN YOUR MOUTH?
IT IS LIVER.

YOU NEED ONE TWENTY-THREE PILL.

(JUST ONE.)

NOT A DRUG BUT A LIVE AMERICAN REMEDY.

CONTENTS.

A Hitherto Unpublished Letter from Walter Pater.
Charlotte Bronte's Maternal Great Aunt.
A New Catholic History of England.
The Genius of Shakespeare.
Correspondence: — The Mendelian Hypothesis; The Split Infinitive;

"Commence," or "Begin;" Claverhouse; Socialism and the

Individual; The Dignity of Letters.
Folk-lore Gossip.
The Stage; the Paradox of Acting.
Travel Biography, Verse, Fiction, etc.

THE BEST PILL IN THE WORLD FOR AN IRREGULAR LIVER

I suppose it is some lingering traces of the Bladesover tradition to

me that makes this combination of letters and pills seem so incongruous, just as I suppose it is a lingering trace of Plutarch and my ineradicable boyish imagination that at bottom our State should be wise, sane and dignified, that makes me think a country which leaves its medical and literary criticism, or indeed any such vitally important criticism, entirely to private enterprise and open to the advances of any purchaser must be in a frankly hopeless condition. These are ideal conceptions of mine.

As a matter of fact, nothing would be more entirely natural and representative of the relations of learning, thought and the economic situation in the world at the present time than this cover of the Sacred Grove — the quiet conservatism of the one element embedded in the aggressive brilliance of the other; the contrasted notes of bold physiological experiment and extreme mental immobility.

VI

There comes back, too, among these Hardingham memories, an impression of a drizzling November day, and how we looked out of the windows upon a procession of the London unemployed.

It was like looking down a well into some momentarily revealed nether world. Some thousands of needy ineffectual men had been raked together to trail their spiritless misery through the West Eire with an appeal that was also in its way a weak and insubstantial threat: "It is Work we need, not Charity."

There they were, half-phantom through the fog, a silent, foot-dragging, interminable, grey procession. They carried wet, dirty banners, they rattled boxes for pence; these men who had not said "snap" in the right place, the men who had "snapped" too eagerly, the men who had never said "snap," the men who had never had a chance of saying "snap." A shambling, shameful stream they made, oozing along the street, the gutter waste of competitive civilisation. And we stood high out of it all, as high as if we looked godlike from another world, standing in a room beautifully lit and furnished, skillfully warmed, filled with costly things.

"There," thought I, "but for the grace of God, go George and Edward Ponderevo."

But my uncle's thoughts ran in a different channel, and he made that vision the test of a spirited but inconclusive harangue upon Tariff Reform.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

OUR PROGRESS FROM CAMDEN TOWN TO CREST HILL

I

So far my history of my aunt and uncle has dealt chiefly with his industrial and financial exploits. But side by side with that history of inflation from the infinitesimal to the immense is another development, the change year by year from the shabby impecuniosity of the Camden Town lodging to the lavish munificence of the Crest Hill marble staircase and my aunt's golden bed, the bed that was facsimiled from Fontainebleau. And the odd thing is that as I come to this nearer part of my story I find it much more difficult to tell than the clear little perspective memories of the earlier days. Impressions crowd upon one another and overlap one another; I was presently to fall in love again, to be seized by a passion to which I still faintly respond, a passion that still clouds my mind. I came and went between Ealing and my aunt and uncle, and presently between Effie and clubland, and then between business and a life of research that became far more continuous, infinitely more consecutive and memorable than any of these other sets of experiences. I didn't witness a regular social progress therefore; my aunt and uncle went up in the world, so far as I was concerned, as if they were displayed by an early cinematograph, with little jumps and flickers.

As I recall this side of our life, the figure of my round-eyes, button-nosed, pink-and-white Aunt Susan tends always to the central position. We drove the car and sustained the car, she sat in it with a magnificent variety of headgear poised upon her delicate neck, and always with that faint ghost of a lisp no misspelling can render — commented on and illuminated the new aspects.

I've already sketched the little home behind the Wimblehurst chemist's shop, the lodging near the Cobden statue, and the apartments in Gower Street. Thence my aunt and uncle went into a flat in Redgauntlet Mansions. There they lived when I married. It was a compact flat, with very little for a woman to do in it In those

days my aunt, I think, used to find the time heavy upon her hands, and so she took to books and reading, and after a time even to going to lectures in the afternoon. I began to find unexpected books upon her table: sociological books, travels, Shaw's plays. "Hullo!" I said, at the sight of some volume of the latter.

"I'm keeping a mind, George," she explained.

"Eh?"

"Keeping a mind. Dogs I never cared for. It's been a toss-up between setting up a mind and setting up a soul. It's jolly lucky for Him and you it's a mind. I've joined the London Library, and I'm going in for the Royal Institution and every blessed lecture that comes along next winter. You'd better look out."...

And I remember her coming in late one evening with a note-book in her hand.

"Where ya been, Susan?" said my uncle.

"Birkbeck — Physiology. I'm getting on." She sat down and took off her gloves. "You're just glass to me," she sighed, and then in a note of grave reproach: "You old PACKAGE! I had no idea! The Things you've kept from me!"

Presently they were setting; up the house at Beckengham, and my aunt intermitted her intellectual activities. The house at Beckengham was something of an enterprise for them at that time, a reasonably large place by the standards of the early years of Tono-Bungay. It was a big, rather gaunt villa, with a conservatory and a shrubbery, a tennis-lawn, a quite considerable vegetable garden, and a small disused coach-house. I had some glimpses of the excitements of its inauguration, but not many because of the estrangement between my aunt and Marion.

My aunt went into that house with considerable zest, and my uncle distinguished himself by the thoroughness with which he did the repainting and replumbing. He had all the drains up and most of the garden with them, and stood administrative on heaps — administrating whisky to the workmen. I found him there one day, most Napoleonic, on a little Elba of dirt, in an atmosphere that defies print. He also, I remember, chose what he considered cheerful contrasts of colours for the painting of the woodwork. This exasperated my aunt extremely — she called him a "Pestilential old

Splosher" with an unusual note of earnestness — and he also enraged her into novelties of abuse by giving each bedroom the name of some favourite hero — Cliff, Napoleon, Caesar, and so forth — and having it painted on the door in gilt letters on a black label. "Martin Luther" was kept for me. Only her respect for domestic discipline, she said, prevented her retaliating with "Old Pondo" on the housemaid's cupboard.

Also he went and ordered one of the completest sets of garden requisites I have ever seen — and had them all painted a hard clear blue. My aunt got herself large tins of a kindlier hued enamel and had everything secretly recoated, and this done, she found great joy in the garden and became an ardent rose grower and herbaceous borderer, leaving her Mind, indeed, to damp evenings and the winter months. When I think of her at Beckenham, I always think first of her as dressed in that blue cotton stuff she affected, with her arms in huge gauntleted gardening gloves, a trowel in one hand and a small but no doubt hardy and promising annual, limp and very young-looking and sheepish, in the other.

Beckenham, in the persons of a vicar, a doctor's wife, and a large proud lady called Hogberry, "called" on my uncle and aunt almost at once, so soon in fact as the lawn was down again, and afterwards my aunt made friends with a quiet gentlewoman next door, a propos of an overhanging cherry tree and the need of repairing the party fence. So she resumed her place in society from which she had fallen with the disaster of Wimblehurst. She made a partially facetious study of the etiquette of her position, had cards engraved and retaliated calls. And then she received a card for one of Mrs. Hogberry's At Homes, gave an old garden party herself, participated in a bazaar and sale of work, and was really becoming quite cheerfully entangled in Beckenham society when she was suddenly taken up by the roots again by my uncle and transplanted to Chiselhurst.

"Old Trek, George," she said compactly, "Onward and Up," when I found her superintending the loading of two big furniture vans. "Go up and say good-bye to 'Martin Luther,' and then I'll see what you can do to help me."

II

I look into the jumbled stores of the middle distance of memory, and Beckenham seems to me a quite transitory phase. But really they were there several years; through nearly all my married life, in fact, and far longer than the year and odd months we lived together at Wimblehurst. But the Wimblehurst time with them is fuller in my memory by far then the Beckenham period. There comes back to me with a quite considerable amount of detail the effect of that garden party of my aunt's and of a little social misbehaviour of which I was guilty on that occasion. It's like a scrap from another life. It's all set in what is for me a kind of cutaneous feeling, the feeling of rather ill-cut city clothes, frock coat and grey trousers, and of a high collar and tie worn in sunshine among flowers. I have still a quite vivid memory of the little trapezoidal lawn, of the gathering, and particularly of the hats and feathers of the gathering, of the parlour-maid and the blue tea-cups, and of the magnificent presence of Mrs. Hogberry and of her clear, resonant voice. It was a voice that would have gone with a garden party on a larger scale; it went into adjacent premises; it included the gardener who was far up the vegetable patch and technically out of play. The only other men were my aunt's doctor, two of the clergy, amiable contrasted men, and Mrs. Hogberry's imperfectly grown-up son, a youth just bursting into collar. The rest were women, except for a young girl or so in a state of speechless good behaviour. Marion also was there.

Marion and I had arrived a little estranged, and I remember her as a silent presence, a shadow across all that sunlit emptiness of intercourse. We had embittered each other with one of those miserable little disputes that seemed so unavoidable between us. She had, with the help of Smithie, dressed rather elaborately for the occasion, and when she saw me prepared to accompany her in, I think it was a grey suit, she protested that silk hat and frock coat were imperative. I was recalcitrant, she quoted an illustrated paper showing a garden party with the King present, and finally I capitulated — but after my evil habit, resentfully.... Eh, dear! those old quarrels, how pitiful they were, how trivial! And how sorrowful they are to recall! I think they grow more sorrowful as I grow older, and all the small passionate reasons for our mutual anger fade and fade out of memory.

The impression that Beckenham company has left on my mind is one of a modest unreality; they were all maintaining a front of unspecified social pretension, and evading the display of the economic facts of the case. Most of the husbands were "in business" off stage, it would have been outrageous to ask what the business was — and the wives were giving their energies to produce, with the assistance of novels and the illustrated magazines, a moralised version of the afternoon life of the aristocratic class. They hadn't the intellectual or moral enterprise of the upper-class woman, they had no political interests, they had no views about anything, and consequently they were, I remember, extremely difficult to talk to. They all sat about in the summer-house and in garden-chairs, and were very hatty and ruffley and sunshady. Three ladies and the curate played croquet with a general immense gravity, broken by occasional loud cries of feigned distress from the curate. "Oh! Whacking me about again! Augh!"

The dominant social fact that afternoon was Mrs. Hogberry; she took up a certain position commanding the croquet and went on, as my aunt said to me in an incidental aside, "like an old Roundabout." She talked of the way in which Beckenham society was getting mixed, and turned on to a touching letter she had recently received from her former nurse at Little Gossdean. Followed a loud account of Little Gossdean and how much she and her eight sisters had been looked up to there. "My poor mother was quite a little Queen there," she said. "And such NICE Common people! People say the country labourers are getting disrespectful nowadays. It isn't so — not if they're properly treated. Here of course in Beckenham it's different. I won't call the people we get here a Poor — they're certainly not a proper Poor. They're Masses. I always tell Mr. Bugshoot they're Masses, and ought to be treated as such."...

Dim memories of Mrs. Mackridge floated through my mind as I listened to her....

I was whirled on this roundabout for a bit, and then had the fortune to fall off into a tete-a-tete with a lady whom my aunt introduced as Mrs. Mumble — but then she introduced everybody to me as Mumble that afternoon, either by way of humour or necessity.

That must have been one of my earliest essays in the art of polite

conversation, and I remember that I began by criticising the local railway service, and that at the third sentence or thereabouts Mrs. Mumble said in a distinctly bright and encouraging way that she feared I was a very “frivolous” person.

I wonder now what it was I said that was “frivolous.”

I don’t know what happened to end that conversation, or if it had an end. I remember talking to one of the clergy for a time rather awkwardly, and being given a sort of topographical history of Beckenham, which he assured me time after time was “Quite an old place. Quite an old place.” As though I had treated it as new and he meant to be very patient but very convincing. Then we hung up in a distinct pause, and my aunt rescued me. “George,” she said in a confidential undertone, “keep the pot a-boiling.” And then audibly, “I say, will you both old trot about with tea a bit?”

“Only too delighted to TROT for you, Mrs. Ponderevo,” said the clergyman, becoming fearfully expert and in his elements; “only too delighted.”

I found we were near a rustic table, and that the housemaid was behind us in a suitable position to catch us on the rebound with the tea things.

“Trot!” repeated the clergyman to me, much amused; “excellent expression!” And I just saved him from the tray as he turned about.

We handed tea for a while....

“Give ’em cakes,” said my aunt, flushed, but well in hand. “Helps ’em to talk, George. Always talk best after a little nourishment. Like throwing a bit of turf down an old geyser.”

She surveyed the gathering with a predominant blue eye and helped herself to tea.

“They keep on going stiff,” she said in an undertone.... “I’ve done my best.”

“It’s been a huge success,” I said encouragingly.

“That boy has had his legs crossed in that position and hasn’t spoken for ten minutes. Stiffer and stiffer. Brittle. He’s beginning a dry cough — always a bad sign, George.... Walk ’em about, shall I? — rub their noses with snow?”

Happily she didn’t. I got myself involved with the gentlewoman from next door, a pensive, languid-looking little woman with a low

voice, and fell talking; our topic, Cats and Dogs, and which it was we liked best.

"I always feel," said the pensive little woman, "that there's something about a dog — A cat hasn't got it."

"Yes," I found myself admitting with great enthusiasm, "there is something. And yet again—"

"Oh! I know there's something about a cat, too. But it isn't the same."

"Not quite the same," I admitted; "but still it's something."

"Ah! But such a different something!"

"More sinuous."

"Much more."

"Ever so much more."

"It makes all the difference, don't you think?"

"Yes," I said, "ALL."

She glanced at me gravely and sighed a long, deeply felt "Yes." A long pause.

The thing seemed to me to amount to a stale-mate. Fear came into my heart and much perplexity.

"The — er — Roses," I said. I felt like a drowning man. "Those roses — don't you think they are — very beautiful flowers?"

"Aren't they!" she agreed gently. "There seems to be something in roses — something — I don't know how to express it."

"Something," I said helpfully.

"Yes," she said, "something. Isn't there?"

"So few people see it," I said; "more's the pity!"

She sighed and said again very softly, "Yes."...

There was another long pause. I looked at her and she was thinking dreamily. The drowning sensation returned, the fear and enfeeblement. I perceived by a sort of inspiration that her tea-cup was empty.

"Let me take your cup," I said abruptly, and, that secured, made for the table by the summer-house. I had no intention then of deserting my aunt. But close at hand the big French window of the drawing-room yawned inviting and suggestive. I can feel all that temptation now, and particularly the provocation of my collar. In an instant I was lost. I would — Just for a moment!

I dashed in, put down the cup on the keys of the grand piano and fled upstairs, softly, swiftly, three steps at a time, to the sanctuary of my uncle's study, his snuggery. I arrived there breathless, convinced there was no return for me. I was very glad and ashamed of myself, and desperate. By means of a penknife I contrived to break open his cabinet of cigars, drew a chair to the window, took off my coat, collar and tie, and remained smoking guiltily and rebelliously, and peeping through the blind at the assembly on the lawn until it was altogether gone....

The clergymen, I thought, were wonderful.

III

A few such pictures of those early days at Beckenham stand out, and then I find myself among the Chiselhurst memories. The Chiselhurst mansion had "grounds" rather than a mere garden, and there was a gardener's cottage and a little lodge at the gate. The ascendant movement was always far more in evidence there than at Beckenham. The velocity was increasing.

One night picks itself out as typical, as, in its way, marking an epoch. I was there, I think, about some advertisement stuff, on some sort of business anyhow, and my uncle and aunt had come back in a fly from a dinner at the Runcorns. (Even there he was nibbling at Runcorn with the idea of our great Amalgamation budding in his mind.) I got down there, I suppose, about eleven. I found the two of them sitting in the study, my aunt on a chair-arm with a whimsical pensiveness on her face, regarding my uncle, and he, much extended and very rotund, in the low arm-chair drawn up to the fender.

"Look here, George," said my uncle, after my first greetings. "I just been saying: We aren't Oh Fay!"

"Eh?"

"Not Oh Fay! Socially!"

"Old FLY, he means, George — French!"

"Oh! Didn't think of French. One never knows where to have him. What's gone wrong to-night?"

"I been thinking. It isn't any particular thing. I ate too much of that fishy stuff at first, like salt frog spawn, and was a bit confused by

olives; and — well, I didn't know which wine was which. Had to say THAT each time. It puts your talk all wrong. And she wasn't in evening dress, not like the others. We can't go on in that style, George — not a proper ad."

"I'm not sure you were right," I said, "in having a fly."

"We got to do it all better," said my uncle, "we got to do it in Style. Smart business, smart men. She tries to pass it off as humorous" — my aunt pulled a grimace— "it isn't humorous! See! We're on the up-grade now, fair and square. We're going to be big. We aren't going to be laughed at as Poovenoos, see!"

"Nobody laughed at you," said my aunt. "Old Bladder!"

"Nobody isn't going to laugh at me," said my uncle, glancing at his contours and suddenly sitting up.

My aunt raised her eyebrows slightly, swung her foot, and said nothing.

"We aren't keeping pace with our own progress, George. We got to. We're bumping against new people, and they set up to be gentlefolks — etiquette dinners and all the rest of it. They give themselves airs and expect us to be fish-out-of-water. We aren't going to be. They think we've no Style. Well, we give them Style for our advertisements, and we're going to give 'em Style all through.... You needn't be born to it to dance well on the wires of the Bond Street tradesmen. See?"

I handed him the cigar-box.

"Runcorn hadn't cigars like these," he said, truncating one lovingly. "We beat him at cigars. We'll beat him all round."

My aunt and I regarded him, full of apprehensions.

"I got idees," he said darkly to the cigar, deepening our dread.

He pocketed his cigar-cutter and spoke again.

"We got to learn all the rotten little game first. See, F'rinstance, we got to get samples of all the blessed wines there are — and learn 'em up. Stern, Smoor, Burgundy, all of 'em! She took Stern to-night — and when she tasted it first — you pulled a face, Susan, you did. I saw you. It surprised you. You bunched your nose. We got to get used to wine and not do that. We got to get used to wearing evening dress — YOU, Susan, too."

"Always have had a tendency to stick out of my clothes," said my

aunt. “However — Who cares?” She shrugged her shoulders.

I had never seen my uncle so immensely serious.

“Got to get the hang of etiquette,” he went on to the fire. “Horses even. Practise everything. Dine every night in evening dress.... Get a brougham or something. Learn up golf and tennis and things. Country gentleman. Oh Fay. It isn’t only freedom from Goochery.”

“Eh?” I said.

“Oh! — Gawshery, if you like!”

“French, George,” said my aunt. “But I’M not ol’ Gooch. I made that face for fun.”

“It isn’t only freedom from Gawshery. We got to have Style. See! Style! Just all right and one better. That’s what I call Style. We can do it, and we will.”

He mumbled his cigar and smoked for a space, leaning forward and looking into the fire.

“What is it,” he asked, “after all? What is it? Tips about eating; tips about drinking. Clothes. How to hold yourself, and not say jes’ the few little things they know for certain are wrong — jes’ the shibboleth things.”

He was silent again, and the cigar crept up from the horizontal towards the zenith as the confidence of his mouth increased.

“Learn the whole bag of tricks in six months.” he said, becoming more cheerful. “Ah, Susan? Beat it out! George, you in particular ought to get hold of it. Ought to get into a good club, and all that.”

“Always ready to learn!” I said. “Ever since you gave me the chance of Latin. So far we don’t seem to have hit upon any Latin-speaking stratum in the population.”

“We’ve come to French,” said my aunt, “anyhow.”

“It’s a very useful language,” said my uncle. “Put a point on things. Zzzz. As for accent, no Englishman has an accent. No Englishman pronounces French properly. Don’t you tell ME. It’s a Bluff. — It’s all a Bluff. Life’s a Bluff — practically. That’s why it’s so important, Susan, for us to attend to Style. Le Steel Say Lum. The Style it’s the man. Whad you laughing at, Susan? George, you’re not smoking. These cigars are good for the mind.... What do YOU think of it all? We got to adapt ourselves. We have — so far.... Not going to be beat by these silly things.”

IV

"What do you think of it, George?" he insisted.

What I said I thought of it I don't now recall. Only I have very distinctly the impression of meeting for a moment my aunt's impenetrable eye. And anyhow he started in with his accustomed energy to rape the mysteries of the Costly Life, and become the calmest of its lords. On the whole, I think he did it — thoroughly. I have crowded memories, a little difficult to disentangle, of his experimental stages, his experimental proceedings. It's hard at times to say which memory comes in front of which. I recall him as presenting on the whole a series of small surprises, as being again and again, unexpectedly, a little more self-confident, a little more polished, a little richer and finer, a little more aware of the positions and values of things and men.

There was a time — it must have been very early — when I saw him deeply impressed by the splendours of the dining-room of the National Liberal Club. Heaven knows who our host was or what that particular little "feed" was about now! — all that sticks is the impression of our straggling entry, a string of six or seven guests, and my uncle looking about him at the numerous bright red-shaded tables, at the exotics in great Majolica jars, at the shining ceramic columns and pilasters, at the impressive portraits of Liberal statesmen and heroes, and all that contributes to the ensemble of that palatial spectacle. He was betrayed into a whisper to me, "This is all Right, George!" he said. That artless comment seems almost incredible as I set it down; there came a time so speedily when not even the clubs of New York could have overawed my uncle, and when he could walk through the bowing magnificence of the Royal Grand Hotel to his chosen table in that aggressively exquisite gallery upon the river, with all the easy calm of one of earth's legitimate kings.

The two of them learnt the new game rapidly and well; they experimented abroad, they experimented at home. At Chiselhurst, with the aid of a new, very costly, but highly instructive cook, they tried over everything they heard of that roused their curiosity and had any reputation for difficulty, from asparagus to plover's eggs. They

afterwards got a gardener who could wait at table — and he brought the soil home to one. Then there came a butler.

I remember my aunt's first dinner-gown very brightly, and how she stood before the fire in the drawing-room confessing once unsuspected pretty arms with all the courage she possessed, and looking over her shoulder at herself in a mirror.

"A ham," she remarked reflectively, "must feel like this. Just a necklace."...

I attempted, I think, some commonplace compliment.

My uncle appeared at the door in a white waistcoat and with his hands in his trouser pockets; he halted and surveyed her critically.

"Couldn't tell you from a duchess, Susan," he remarked. "I'd like to have you painted, standin' at the fire like that. Sargent! You look — spirited, somehow. Lord! — I wish some of those damned tradesmen at Wimblehurst could see you."...

They did a lot of week-ending at hotels, and sometimes I went down with them. We seemed to fall into a vast drifting crowd of social learners. I don't know whether it is due simply to my changed circumstances, but it seems to me there have been immensely disproportionate developments of the hotel-frequenting and restaurant-using population during the last twenty years. It is not only, I think, that there are crowds of people who, like we were, are in the economically ascendant phase, but whole masses of the prosperous section of the population must be altering its habits, giving up high-tea for dinner and taking to evening dress, using the week-end hotels as a practise-ground for these new social arts. A swift and systematic conversion to gentility has been going on, I am convinced, throughout the whole commercial upper-middle class since I was twenty-one. Curiously mixed was the personal quality of the people one saw in these raids. There were conscientiously refined and low-voiced people reeking with proud bashfulness; there were aggressively smart people using pet diminutives for each other loudly and seeking fresh occasions for brilliant rudeness; there were awkward husbands and wives quarrelling furtively about their manners and ill at ease under the eye of the waiter; cheerfully amiable and often discrepant couples with a disposition to inconspicuous corners, and the jolly sort, affecting an unaffected

ease; plump happy ladies who laughed too loud, and gentlemen in evening dress who subsequently "got their pipes." And nobody, you knew, was anybody, however expensively they dressed and whatever rooms they took.

I look back now with a curious remoteness of spirit to those crowded dining-rooms with their dispersed tables and their inevitable red-shaded lights and the unsympathetic, unskillful waiters, and the choice of "Thig or Glear, Sir?" I've not dined in that way, in that sort of place, now for five years — it must be quite five years, so specialised and narrow is my life becoming.

My uncle's earlier motor-car phases work in with these associations, and there stands out a little bright vignette of the hall of the Magnificent, Bexhill-on-Sea, and people dressed for dinner and sitting about amidst the scarlet furniture — satin and white-enameled woodwork until the gong should gather them; and my aunt is there, very marvelously wrapped about in a dust cloak and a cage-like veil, and there are hotel porters and under-porters very alert, and an obsequious manager; and the tall young lady in black from the office is surprised into admiration, and in the middle of the picture is my uncle, making his first appearance in that Esquimaux costume I have already mentioned, a short figure, compactly immense, hugely goggled, wearing a sort of brown rubber proboscis, and surmounted by a table-land of motoring cap.

V

So it was we recognised our new needs as fresh invaders of the upper levels of the social system, and set ourselves quite consciously to the acquisition of Style and Savoir Faire. We became part of what is nowadays quite an important element in the confusion of our world, that multitude of economically ascendant people who are learning how to spend money. It is made up of financial people, the owners of the businesses that are eating up their competitors, inventors of new sources of wealth, such as ourselves; it includes nearly all America as one sees it on the European stage. It is a various multitude having only this in common: they are all moving, and particularly their womankind are moving, from conditions in which means were

insistently finite, things were few, and customs simple, towards a limitless expenditure and the sphere of attraction of Bond Street, Fifth Avenue, and Paris. Their general effect is one of progressive revolution, of limitless rope.

They discover suddenly indulgences their moral code never foresaw and has no provision for, elaborations, ornaments, possessions beyond their wildest dreams. With an immense astonished zest they begin shopping begin a systematic adaptation to a new life crowded and brilliant with things shopped, with jewels, maids, butlers, coachmen, electric broughams, hired town and country houses. They plunge into it as one plunges into a career; as a class, they talk, think, and dream possessions. Their literature, their Press, turns all on that; immense illustrated weeklies of unsurpassed magnificence guide them in domestic architecture, in the art of owning a garden, in the achievement of the sumptuous in motor-cars, in an elaborate sporting equipment, in the purchase and control of their estates, in travel and stupendous hotels. Once they begin to move they go far and fast. Acquisition becomes the substance of their lives. They find a world organised to gratify that passion. In a brief year or so they are connoisseurs. They join in the plunder of the eighteenth century, buy rare old books, fine old pictures, good old furniture. Their first crude conception of dazzling suites of the newly perfect is replaced almost from the outset by a jackdaw dream of accumulating costly discrepant old things.

I seem to remember my uncle taking to shopping quite suddenly. In the Beckenham days and in the early Chiselhurst days he was chiefly interested in getting money, and except for his onslaught on the Beckenham house, bothered very little about his personal surroundings and possessions. I forget now when the change came and he began to spend. Some accident must have revealed to him this new source of power, or some subtle shifting occurred in the tissues of his brain. He began to spend and “shop.” So soon as he began to shop, he began to shop violently. He began buying pictures, and then, oddly enough, old clocks. For the Chiselhurst house he bought nearly a dozen grandfather clocks and three copper warming pans. After that he bought much furniture. Then he plunged into art patronage, and began to commission pictures and to make presents to

churches and institutions. His buying increased with a regular acceleration. Its development was a part of the mental changes that came to him in the wild excitements of the last four years of his ascent. Towards the climax he was a furious spender; he shopped with large unexpected purchases, he shopped like a mind seeking expression, he shopped to astonish and dismay; shopped crescendo, shopped fortissimo, con molto espressione until the magnificent smash of Crest Hill eroded his shopping for ever. Always it was he who shopped. My aunt did not shine as a purchaser. It is a curious thing, due to I know not what fine strain in her composition, that my aunt never set any great store upon possessions. She plunged through that crowded bazaar of Vanity Fair during those feverish years, spending no doubt freely and largely, but spending with detachment and a touch of humorous contempt for the things, even the "old" things, that money can buy. It came to me suddenly one afternoon just how detached she was, as I saw her going towards the Hardingham, sitting up, as she always did, rather stiffly in her electric brougham, regarding the glittering world with interested and ironically innocent blue eyes from under the brim of a hat that defied comment. "No one," I thought, "would sit so apart if she hadn't dreams — and what are her dreams?"

I'd never thought.

And I remember, too, an outburst of scornful description after she had lunched with a party of women at the Imperial Cosmic Club. She came round to my rooms on the chance of finding me there, and I gave her tea. She professed herself tired and cross, and flung herself into my chair....

"George," she cried, "the Things women are! Do *I* stink of money?"

"Lunching?" I asked.

She nodded.

"Plutocratic ladies?"

"Yes."

"Oriental type?"

"Oh! Like a burst hareem!... Bragging of possessions.... They feel you. They feel your clothes, George, to see if they are good!"

I soothed her as well as I could. "They ARE Good aren't they?" I

said.

"It's the old pawnshop in their blood," she said, drinking tea; and then in infinite disgust, "They run their hands over your clothes — they paw you."

I had a moment of doubt whether perhaps she had not been discovered in possession of unsuspected forgeries. I don't know. After that my eyes were quickened, and I began to see for myself women running their hands over other women's furs, scrutinising their lace, even demanding to handle jewelry, appraising, envying, testing. They have a kind of etiquette. The woman who feels says, "What beautiful sables?" "What lovely lace?" The woman felt admits proudly: "It's Real, you know," or disavows pretension modestly and hastily, "It's Rot Good." In each other's houses they peer at the pictures, handle the selvage of hangings, look at the bottoms of china....

I wonder if it IS the old pawnshop in the blood.

I doubt if Lady Drew and the Olympians did that sort of thing, but here I may be only clinging to another of my former illusions about aristocracy and the State. Perhaps always possessions have been Booty, and never anywhere has there been such a thing as house and furnishings native and natural to the women and men who made use of them....

VI

For me, at least, it marked an epoch in my uncle's career when I learnt one day that he had "shopped" Lady Grove. I realised a fresh, wide, unpreluded step. He took me by surprise with the sudden change of scale from such portable possessions as jewels and motor-cars to a stretch of countryside. The transaction was Napoleonic; he was told of the place; he said "snap"; there were no preliminary desirings or searchings. Then he came home and said what he had done. Even my aunt was for a day or so measurably awestricken by this exploit in purchase, and we both went down with him to see the house in a mood near consternation. It struck us then as a very lordly place indeed. I remember the three of us standing on the terrace that looked westward, surveying the sky-reflecting windows of the house,

and a feeling of unwarrantable intrusion comes back to me.

Lady Grove, you know, is a very beautiful house indeed, a still and gracious place, whose age-long seclusion was only effectively broken with the toot of the coming of the motor-car. An old Catholic family had died out in it, century by century, and was now altogether dead. Portions of the fabric are thirteenth century, and its last architectural revision was Tudor; within, it is for the most part dark and chilly, save for two or three favoured rooms and its tall-windowed, oak-galleried hall. Its terrace is its noblest feature; a very wide, broad lawn it is, bordered by a low stone battlement, and there is a great cedar in one corner under whose level branches one looks out across the blue distances of the Weald, blue distances that are made extraordinarily Italian in quality by virtue of the dark masses of that single tree. It is a very high terrace; southward one looks down upon the tops of wayfaring trees and spruces, and westward on a steep slope of beechwood, through which the road comes. One turns back to the still old house, and sees a grey and lichenous facade with a very finely arched entrance. It was warmed by the afternoon light and touched with the colour of a few neglected roses and a pyracanthus. It seemed to me that the most modern owner conceivable in this serene fine place was some bearded scholarly man in a black cassock, gentle-voiced and white-handed, or some very soft-robed, grey gentlewoman. And there was my uncle holding his goggles in a sealskin glove, wiping the glass with a pocket-handkerchief, and asking my aunt if Lady Grove wasn't a "Bit of all Right."

My aunt made him no answer.

"The man who built this," I speculated, "wore armour and carried a sword."

"There's some of it inside still," said my uncle.

We went inside. An old woman with very white hair was in charge of the place and cringed rather obviously to the new master. She evidently found him a very strange and frightful apparition indeed, and was dreadfully afraid of him. But if the surviving present bowed down to us, the past did not. We stood up to the dark, long portraits of the extinguished race — one was a Holbein — and looked them in their sidelong eyes. They looked back at us. We all, I

know, felt the enigmatical quality in them. Even my uncle was momentarily embarrassed, I think, by that invincibly self-complacent expression. It was just as though, after all, he had not bought them up and replaced them altogether; as though that, secretly, they knew better and could smile at him.

The spirit of the place was akin to Bladesover, but touched with something older and remoter. That armour that stood about had once served in tilt-yards, if indeed it had not served in battle, and this family had sent its blood and treasure, time after time, upon the most romantic quest in history, to Palestine. Dreams, loyalties, place and honour, how utterly had it all evaporated, leaving, at last, the final expression of its spirit, these quaint painted smiles, these smiles of triumphant completion! It had evaporated, indeed, long before the ultimate Durgan had died, and in his old age he had cumbered the place with Early Victorian cushions and carpets and tapestry table-cloths and invalid appliances of a type even more extinct, it seemed to us, than the crusades.... Yes, it was different from Bladesover.

"Bit stuffy, George," said my uncle. "They hadn't much idea of ventilation when this was built."

One of the panelled rooms was half-filled with presses and a four-poster bed. "Might be the ghost room," said my uncle; but it did not seem to me that so retiring a family as the Durgans, so old and completely exhausted a family as the Durgans, was likely to haunt anybody. What living thing now had any concern with their honour and judgments and good and evil deeds? Ghosts and witchcraft were a later innovation — that fashion came from Scotland with the Stuarts.

Afterwards, prying for epitaphs, we found a marble crusader with a broken nose, under a battered canopy of fretted stone, outside the restricted limits of the present Duffield church, and half buried in nettles. "Ichabod," said my uncle. "Eh? We shall be like that, Susan, some day.... I'm going to clean him up a bit and put a railing to keep off the children."

"Old saved at the eleventh hour," said my aunt, quoting one of the less successful advertisements of Tono-Bungay.

But I don't think my uncle heard her.

It was by our captured crusader that the vicar found us. He came

round the corner at us briskly, a little out of breath. He had an air of having been running after us since the first toot of our horn had warned the village of our presence. He was an Oxford man, clean-shaven, with a cadaverous complexion and a guardedly respectful manner, a cultivated intonation, and a general air of accommodation to the new order of things. These Oxford men are the Greeks of our plutocratic empire. He was a Tory in spirit, and what one may call an adapted Tory by stress of circumstances; that is to say, he was no longer a legitimist; he was prepared for the substitution of new lords for old. We were pill vendors he knew, and no doubt horribly vulgar in soul; but then it might have been some polygamous Indian rajah, a great strain on a good man's tact, or some Jew with an inherited expression of contempt. Anyhow, we were English, and neither Dissenters nor Socialists, and he was cheerfully prepared to do what he could to make gentlemen of both of us. He might have preferred Americans for some reasons; they are not so obviously taken from one part of the social system and dumped down in another, and they are more teachable; but in this world we cannot always be choosers. So he was very bright and pleasant with us, showed us the church, gossiped informingly about our neighbours on the countryside — Tux, the banker; Lord Boom, the magazine and newspaper proprietor; Lord Carnaby, that great sportsman, and old Lady Osprey. And finally he took us by way of a village lane — three children bobbed convulsively with eyes of terror for my uncle — through a meticulous garden to a big, slovenly Vicarage with faded Victorian furniture and a faded Victorian wife, who gave us tea and introduced us to a confusing family dispersed among a lot of disintegrating basket chairs upon the edge of a well-used tennis lawn.

These people interested me. They were a common type, no doubt, but they were new to me. There were two lank sons who had been playing singles at tennis, red-eared youths growing black moustaches, and dressed in conscientiously untidy tweeds and unbuttoned and ungirt Norfolk jackets. There were a number of ill-nourished-looking daughters, sensible and economical in their costume, the younger still with long, brown-stockinged legs, and the eldest present — there were, we discovered, one or two hidden away — displaying a large gold cross and other aggressive ecclesiastical

symbols; there were two or three fox-terriers, a retrieverish mongrel, and an old, bloody-eyed and very evil-smelling St. Bernard. There was a jackdaw. There was, moreover, an ambiguous, silent lady that my aunt subsequently decided must be a very deaf paying guest. Two or three other people had concealed themselves at our coming and left unfinished teas behind them. Rugs and cushions lay among the chairs, and two of the latter were, I noted, covered with Union Jacks.

The vicar introduced us sketchily, and the faded Victorian wife regarded my aunt with a mixture of conventional scorn and abject respect, and talked to her in a languid, persistent voice about people in the neighbourhood whom my aunt could not possibly know.

My aunt received these personalia cheerfully, with her blue eyes flitting from point to point, and coming back again and again to the pinched faces of the daughters and the cross upon the eldest's breast. Encouraged by my aunt's manner, the vicar's wife grew patronising and kindly, and made it evident that she could do much to bridge the social gulf between ourselves and the people of family about us.

I had just snatches of that conversation. "Mrs. Merridew brought him quite a lot of money. Her father, I believe, had been in the Spanish wine trade — quite a lady though. And after that he fell off his horse and cracked his brain pan and took to fishing and farming. I'm sure you'll like to know them. He's most amusing.... The daughter had a disappointment and went to China as a missionary and got mixed up in a massacre."...

"The most beautiful silks and things she brought back, you'd hardly believe!"

"Yes, they gave them to propitiate her. You see, they didn't understand the difference, and they thought that as they'd been massacring people, THEY'D be massacred. They didn't understand the difference Christianity makes."...

"Seven bishops they've had in the family!"

"Married a Papist and was quite lost to them."...

"He failed some dreadful examination and had to go into the militia."...

"So she bit his leg as hard as ever she could and he let go."...

"Had four of his ribs amputated."...

"Caught meningitis and was carried off in a week."

“Had to have a large piece of silver tube let into his throat, and if he wants to talk he puts his finger on it. It makes him so interesting, I think. You feel he’s sincere somehow. A most charming man in every way.”

“Preserved them both in spirits very luckily, and there they are in his study, though of course he doesn’t show them to everybody.”

The silent lady, unperturbed by these apparently exciting topics, scrutinised my aunt’s costume with a singular intensity, and was visibly moved when she unbuttoned her dust cloak and flung it wide. Meanwhile we men conversed, one of the more spirited daughters listened brightly, and the youths lay on the grass at our feet. My uncle offered them cigars, but they both declined, — out of bashfulness, it seemed to me, whereas the vicar, I think, accepted out of tact. When we were not looking at them directly, these young men would kick each other furtively.

Under the influence of my uncle’s cigar, the vicar’s mind had soared beyond the limits of the district. “This Socialism,” he said, “seems making great headway.”

My uncle shook his head. “We’re too individualistic in this country for that sort of nonsense,” he said “Everybody’s business is nobody’s business. That’s where they go wrong.”

“They have some intelligent people in their ranks, I am told,” said the vicar, “writers and so forth. Quite a distinguished playwright, my eldest daughter was telling me — I forget his name.

“Milly, dear! Oh! she’s not here. Painters, too, they have. This Socialist, it seems to me, is part of the Unrest of the Age.... But, as you say, the spirit of the people is against it. In the country, at any rate. The people down here are too sturdily independent in their small way — and too sensible altogether.”...

“It’s a great thing for Duffield to have Lady Grove occupied again,” he was saying when my wandering attention came back from some attractive casualty in his wife’s discourse. “People have always looked up to the house and considering all things, old Mr. Durgan really was extraordinarily good — extraordinarily good. You intend to give us a good deal of your time here, I hope.”

“I mean to do my duty by the Parish,” said my uncle.

“I’m sincerely glad to hear it — sincerely. We’ve missed — the

house influence. An English village isn't complete — People get out of hand. Life grows dull. The young people drift away to London."

He enjoyed his cigar gingerly for a moment.

"We shall look to you to liven things up," he said, poor man!

My uncle cocked his cigar and removed it from his mouth.

"What you think the place wants?" he asked.

He did not wait for an answer. "I been thinking while you been talking — things one might do. Cricket — a good English game — sports. Build the chaps a pavilion perhaps. Then every village ought to have a miniature rifle range."

"Ye-ees," said the vicar. "Provided, of course, there isn't a constant popping."...

"Manage that all right," said my uncle. "Thing'd be a sort of long shed. Paint it red. British colour. Then there's a Union Jack for the church and the village school. Paint the school red, too, p'raps. Not enough colour about now. Too grey. Then a maypole."

"How far our people would take up that sort of thing—" began the vicar.

"I'm all for getting that good old English spirit back again," said my uncle. "Merrymakings. Lads and lasses dancing on the village green. Harvest home. Fairings. Yule Log — all the rest of it."

"How would old Sally Glue do for a May Queen?" asked one of the sons in the slight pause that followed.

"Or Annie Glassbound?" said the other, with the huge virile guffaw of a young man whose voice has only recently broken.

"Sally Glue is eighty-five," explained the vicar, "and Annie Glassbound is well — a young lady of extremely generous proportions. And not quite right, you know. Not quite right — here." He tapped his brow.

"Generous proportions!" said the eldest son, and the guffaws were renewed.

"You see," said the vicar, "all the brisker girls go into service in or near London. The life of excitement attracts them. And no doubt the higher wages have something to do with it. And the liberty to wear finery. And generally — freedom from restraint. So that there might be a little difficulty perhaps to find a May Queen here just at present who was really young and er — pretty.... Of course I couldn't

think of any of my girls — or anything of that sort."

"We got to attract 'em back," said my uncle. "That's what I feel about it. We got to Buck-Up the country. The English country is a going concern still; just as the Established Church — if you'll excuse me saying it, is a going concern. Just as Oxford is — or Cambridge. Or any of those old, fine old things. Only it wants fresh capital, fresh idees and fresh methods. Light railways, f'rinstance — scientific use of drainage. Wire fencing machinery — all that."

The vicar's face for one moment betrayed dismay. Perhaps he was thinking of his country walks amids the hawthorns and honeysuckle.

"There's great things," said my uncle, "to be done on Mod'un lines with Village Jam and Pickles — boiled in the country."

It was the reverberation of this last sentence in my mind, I think, that sharpened my sentimental sympathy as we went through the straggling village street and across the trim green on our way back to London. It seemed that afternoon the most tranquil and idyllic collection of creeper-sheltered homes you can imagine; thatch still lingered on a whitewashed cottage or two, pyracanthus, wall-flowers, and daffodils abounded, and an unsystematic orchard or so was white with blossom above and gay with bulbs below. I noted a row of straw beehives, beehive-shaped, beehives of the type long since condemned as inefficient by all progressive minds, and in the doctor's acre of grass a flock of two whole sheep was grazing, — no doubt he'd taken them on account. Two men and one old woman made gestures of abject vassalage, and my uncle replied with a lordly gesture of his great motoring glove....

"England's full of Bits like this," said my uncle, leaning over the front seat and looking back with great satisfaction. The black glare of his goggles rested for a time on the receding turrets of Lady Grove just peeping over the trees.

"I shall have a flagstaff, I think," he considered. "Then one could show when one is in residence. The villagers will like to know."...

I reflected. "They will" I said. "They're used to liking to know."...

My aunt had been unusually silent. Suddenly she spoke. "He says Snap," she remarked; "he buys that place. And a nice old job of Housekeeping he gives me! He sails through the village swelling like an old turkey. And who'll have to scoot the butler? Me! Who's got to

forget all she ever knew and start again? Me! Who's got to trek from Chiselhurst and be a great lady? Me! ... You old Bother! Just when I was settling down and beginning to feel at home."

My uncle turned his goggles to her. "Ah! THIS time it is home, Susan.... We got there."

VII

It seems to me now but a step from the buying of Lady Grove to the beginning of Crest Hill, from the days when the former was a stupendous achievement to the days when it was too small and dark and inconvenient altogether for a great financier's use. For me that was a period of increasing detachment from our business and the great world of London; I saw it more and more in broken glimpses, and sometimes I was working in my little pavilion above Lady Grove for a fortnight together; even when I came up it was often solely for a meeting of the aeronautical society or for one of the learned societies or to consult literature or employ searchers or some such special business. For my uncle it was a period of stupendous inflation. Each time I met him I found him more confident, more comprehensive, more consciously a factor in great affairs. Soon he was no longer an associate of merely business men; he was big enough for the attentions of greater powers.

I grew used to discovering some item of personal news about him in my evening paper, or to the sight of a full-page portrait of him in a sixpenny magazine. Usually the news was of some munificent act, some romantic piece of buying or giving or some fresh rumour of reconstruction. He saved, you will remember, the Parbury Reynolds for the country. Or at times, it would be an interview or my uncle's contribution to some symposium on the "Secret of Success," or such-like topic. Or wonderful tales of his power of work, of his wonderful organisation to get things done, of his instant decisions and remarkable power of judging his fellow-men. They repeated his great mot: "Eight hour working day — I want eighty hours!"

He became modestly but resolutely "public." They cartooned him in Vanity Fair. One year my aunt, looking indeed a very gracious, slender lady, faced the portrait of the King in the great room at

Burlington House, and the next year saw a medallion of my uncle by Ewart, looking out upon the world, proud and imperial, but on the whole a trifle too prominently convex, from the walls of the New Gallery.

I shared only intermittently in his social experiences. People knew of me, it is true, and many of them sought to make through me a sort of flank attack upon him, and there was a legend, owing, very unreasonably, partly to my growing scientific reputation and partly to an element of reserve in my manner, that I played a much larger share in planning his operations than was actually the case. This led to one or two very intimate private dinners, to my inclusion in one or two house parties and various odd offers of introductions and services that I didn't for the most part accept. Among other people who sought me in this way was Archie Garvell, now a smart, impecunious soldier of no particular distinction, who would, I think, have been quite prepared to develop any sporting instincts I possessed, and who was beautifully unaware of our former contact. He was always offering me winners; no doubt in a spirit of anticipatory exchange for some really good thing in our more scientific and certain method of getting something for nothing....

In spite of my preoccupation with my experiments, work, I did, I find now that I come to ransack my impressions, see a great deal of the great world during those eventful years; I had a near view of the machinery by which an astounding Empire is run, rubbed shoulders and exchanged experiences with bishops and statesmen, political women and women who were not political, physicians and soldiers, artists and authors, the directors of great journals, philanthropists and all sorts of eminent, significant people. I saw the statesmen without their orders and the bishops with but a little purple silk left over from their canonicals, inhaling, not incense, but cigar smoke. I could look at them all the better because, for the most part, they were not looking at me but at my uncle, and calculating consciously or unconsciously how they might use him and assimilate him to their system, the most unpremeditated, subtle, successful and aimless plutocracy that ever encumbered the destinies of mankind. Not one of them, so far as I could see, until disaster overtook him, resented his lies, his almost naked dishonesty of method, the disorderly

disturbance of this trade and that, caused by his spasmodic operations. I can see them now about him, see them polite, watchful, various; his stiff compact little figure always a centre of attention, his wiry hair, his brief nose, his under-lip, electric with self-confidence. Wandering marginally through distinguished gatherings, I would catch the whispers: "That's Mr. Ponderevo!"

"The little man?"

"Yes, the little bounder with the glasses."

"They say he's made—"...

Or I would see him on some parterre of a platform beside my aunt's hurraying hat, amidst titles and costumes, "holding his end up," as he would say, subscribing heavily to obvious charities, even at times making brief convulsive speeches in some good cause before the most exalted audiences. "Mr. Chairman, your Royal Highness, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen,"`he would begin amidst subsiding applause and adjust those obstinate glasses and thrust back the wings of his frock-coat and rest his hands upon his hips and speak his fragment with ever and again an incidental Zzzz. His hands would fret about him as he spoke, fiddle his glasses, feel in his waistcoat pockets; ever and again he would rise slowly to his toes as a sentence unwound jerkily like a clockwork snake, and drop back on his heels at the end. They were the very gestures of our first encounter when he had stood before the empty fireplace in his minute draped parlour and talked of my future to my mother.

In those measurelessly long hot afternoons in the little shop at Wimblehurst he had talked and dreamt of the Romance of Modern Commerce. Here, surely, was his romance come true.

VIII

People say that my uncle lost his head at the crest of his fortunes, but if one may tell so much truth of a man one has in a manner loved, he never had very much head to lose. He was always imaginative, erratic, inconsistent, recklessly inexact, and his inundation of wealth merely gave him scope for these qualities. It is true, indeed, that towards the climax he became intensely irritable at times and impatient of contradiction, but that, I think, was rather the gnawing

uneasiness of sanity than any mental disturbance. But I find it hard either to judge him or convey the full development of him to the reader. I saw too much of him; my memory is choked with disarranged moods and aspects. Now he is distended with megalomania, now he is deflated, now he is quarrelsome, now impenetrably self-satisfied, but always he is sudden, jerky, fragmentary, energetic, and — in some subtle fundamental way that I find difficult to define — absurd.

There stands out — because of the tranquil beauty of its setting perhaps — a talk we had in the veranda of the little pavilion near my worksheds behind Crest Hill in which my aeroplanes and navigable balloons were housed. It was one of many similar conversations, and I do not know why it in particular should survive its fellows. It happens so. He had come up to me after his coffee to consult me about a certain chalice which in a moment of splendour and under the importunity of a countess he had determined to give to a deserving church in the east-end. I, in a moment of even rasher generosity, had suggested Ewart as a possible artist. Ewart had produced at once an admirable sketch for the sacred vessel surrounded by a sort of wreath of Millies with open arms and wings and had drawn fifty pounds on the strength of it. After that came a series of vexatious delays. The chalice became less and less of a commercial man's chalice, acquired more and more the elusive quality of the Holy Grail, and at last even the drawing receded.

My uncle grew restive.... "You see, George, they'll begin to want the blasted thing!"

"What blasted thing?"

"That chalice, damn it! They're beginning to ask questions. It isn't Business, George."

"It's art," I protested, "and religion."

"That's all very well. But it's not a good ad for us, George, to make a promise and not deliver the goods.... I'll have to write off your friend Ewart as a bad debt, that's what it comes to, and go to a decent firm."...

We sat outside on deck chairs in the veranda of the pavilion, smoked, drank whisky, and, the chalice disposed of, meditated. His temporary annoyance passed. It was an altogether splendid summer

night, following a blazing, indolent day. Full moonlight brought out dimly the lines of the receding hills, one wave beyond another; far beyond were the pin-point lights of Leatherhead, and in the foreground the little stage from which I used to start upon my gliders gleamed like wet steel. The season must have been high June, for down in the woods that hid the lights of the Lady Grove windows, I remember the nightingales thrilled and gurgled....

"We got here, George," said my uncle, ending a long pause. "Didn't I say?"

"Say! — when?" I asked.

"In that hole in the To'nem Court Road, eh? It's been a Straight Square Fight, and here we are!"

I nodded.

"'Member me telling you — Tono-Bungay?.... Well.... I'd just that afternoon thought of it!"

"I've fancied at times;" I admitted.

"It's a great world, George, nowadays, with a fair chance for every one who lays hold of things. The career ouvert to the Talons — eh? Tono-Bungay. Think of it! It's a great world and a growing world, and I'm glad we're in it — and getting a pull. We're getting big people, George. Things come to us. Eh? This Palestine thing."...

He meditated for a time and Zzzzed softly. Then he became still.

His theme was taken up by a cricket in the grass until he himself was ready to resume it. The cricket too seemed to fancy that in some scheme of its own it had got there. "Chirrrrrrup" it said; "chirrrrrrup."

"Lord, what a place that was at Wimblehurst!" he broke out. "If ever I get a day off we'll motor there, George, and run over that dog that sleeps in the High Street. Always was a dog asleep there — always. Always... I'd like to see the old shop again. I daresay old Ruck still stands between the sheep at his door, grinning with all his teeth, and Marbel, silly beggar! comes out with his white apron on and a pencil stuck behind his ear, trying to look awake... Wonder if they know it's me? I'd like 'em somehow to know it's me."

"They'll have had the International Tea Company and all sorts of people cutting them up," I said. "And that dog's been on the pavement this six years — can't sleep even there, poor dear, because

of the motor-horns and its shattered nerves."

"Movin' everywhere," said my uncle. "I expect you're right.... It's a big time we're in, George. It's a big Progressive On-coming Imperial Time. This Palestine business — the daring of it.... It's, it's a Process, George. And we got our hands on it. Here we sit — with our hands on it, George. Entrusted.

"It seems quiet to — night. But if we could see and hear." He waved his cigar towards Leatherhead and London.

"There they are, millions, George. Jes' think of what they've been up to to-day — those ten millions — each one doing his own particular job. You can't grasp it. It's like old Whitman says — what is it he says? Well, anyway it's like old Whitman. Fine chap, Whitman! Fine old chap! Queer, you can't quote him. ... And these millions aren't anything. There's the millions over seas, hundreds of millions, Chinese, M'rocco, Africa generally, 'Merica.... Well, here we are, with power, with leisure, picked out — because we've been energetic, because we've seized opportunities, because we've made things hum when other people have waited for them to hum. See? Here we are — with our hands on it. Big people. Big growing people. In a sort of way, — Forces."

He paused. "It's wonderful, George," he said.

"Anglo-Saxon energy," I said softly to the night.

"That's it, George — energy. It's put things in our grip — threads, wires, stretching out and out, George, from that little office of ours, out to West Africa, out to Egypt, out to Inja, out east, west, north and south. Running the world practically. Running it faster and faster. Creative. There's that Palestine canal affair. Marvellous idee! Suppose we take that up, suppose we let ourselves in for it, us and the others, and run that water sluice from the Mediterranean into the Dead Sea Valley — think of the difference it will make! All the desert blooming like a rose, Jericho lost for ever, all the Holy Places under water.... Very likely destroy Christianity."...

He mused for a space. "Cuttin' canals," murmured my uncle. "Making tunnels.... New countries.... New centres.... Zzzz.... Finance.... Not only Palestine.

"I wonder where we shall get before we done, George? We got a lot of big things going. We got the investing public sound and sure. I

don't see why in the end we shouldn't be very big. There's difficulties but I'm equal to them. We're still a bit soft in our bones, but they'll harden all right.... I suppose, after all, I'm worth something like a million, George, cleared up and settled. If I got out of things now. It's a great time, George, a wonderful time!"...

I glanced through the twilight at his convexity and I must confess it struck me that on the whole he wasn't particularly good value.

"We got our hands on things, George, us big people. We got to hang together, George run the show. Join up with the old order like that mill-wheel of Kipling's. (Finest thing he ever wrote, George; I jes' been reading it again. Made me buy Lady Grove.) Well, we got to run the country, George. It's ours. Make it a Scientific Organised Business Enterprise. Put idees into it. 'Lectrify it. Run the Press. Run all sorts of developments. All sorts of developments. I been talking to Lord Boom. I been talking to all sorts of people. Great things. Progress. The world on business lines. Only jes' beginning."...

He fell into a deep meditation.

He Zzzzed for a time and ceased.

"YES," he said at last in the tone of a man who has at last emerged with ultimate solutions to the profoundest problems.

"What?" I said after a seemly pause.

My uncle hung fire for a moment and it seemed to me the fate of nations trembled in the balance. Then he spoke as one who speaks from the very bottom of his heart — and I think it was the very bottom of his heart.

"I'd jes' like to drop into the Eastry Arms, jes' when all those beggars in the parlour are sittin' down to whist, Ruck and Marbel and all, and give 'em ten minutes of my mind, George. Straight from the shoulder. Jes' exactly what I think of them. It's a little thing, but I'd like to do it jes' once before I die."...

He rested on that for some time Zzzz-ing.

Then he broke out at a new place in a tone of detached criticism.

"There's Boom," he reflected.

"It's a wonderful system this old British system, George. It's staid and stable and yet it has a place for new men. We come up and take our places. It's almost expected. We take a hand. That's where our Democracy differs from America. Over there a man succeeds; all he

gets is money. Here there's a system open to every one — practically.... Chaps like Boom — come from nowhere."

His voice ceased. I reflected upon the spirit of his words. Suddenly I kicked my feet in the air, rolled on my side and sat up suddenly on my deck chair with my legs down.

"You don't mean it!" I said.

"Mean what, George?"

"Subscription to the party funds. Reciprocal advantage. Have we got to that?"

"Whad you driving at, George?"

"You know. They'd never do it, man!"

"Do what?" he said feebly; and, "Why shouldn't they?"

"They'd not even go to a baronetcy. NO!.... And yet, of course, there's Boom! And Collingshead and Gorver. They've done beer, they've done snippets! After all Tono-Bungay — it's not like a turf commission agent or anything like that!... There have of course been some very gentlemanly commission agents. It isn't like a fool of a scientific man who can't make money!"

My uncle grunted; we'd differed on that issue before.

A malignant humour took possession of me. "What would they call you?" I speculated. "The vicar would like Duffield. Too much like Duffer! Difficult thing, a title." I ran my mind over various possibilities. "Why not take a leaf from a socialist tract I came upon yesterday. Chap says we're all getting delocalised. Beautiful word — delocalised! Why not be the first delocalised peer? That gives you — Tono-Bungay! There is a Bungay, you know. Lord Tono of Bungay — in bottles everywhere. Eh?"

My uncle astonished me by losing his temper.

"Damn it. George, you don't seem to see I'm serious! You're always sneering at Tono-Bungay! As though it was some sort of swindle. It was perfec'ly legitimate trade, perfec'ly legitimate. Good value and a good article.... When I come up here and tell you plans and exchange idees — you sneer at me. You do. You don't see — it's a big thing. It's a big thing. You got to get used to new circumstances. You got to face what lies before us. You got to drop that tone."

IX

My uncle was not altogether swallowed up in business and ambition. He kept in touch with modern thought. For example, he was, I know, greatly swayed by what he called "This Overman idee, Nietzsche — all that stuff."

He mingled those comforting suggestions of a potent and exceptional human being emancipated from the pettier limitations of integrity with the Napoleonic legend. It gave his imagination a considerable outlet. That Napoleonic legend! The real mischief of Napoleon's immensely disastrous and accidental career began only when he was dead and the romantic type of mind was free to elaborate his character. I do believe that my uncle would have made a far less egregious smash if there had been no Napoleonic legend to misguide him. He was in many ways better and infinitely kinder than his career. But when in doubt between decent conduct and a base advantage, that cult came in more and more influentially: "think of Napoleon; think what the inflexibly-wilful Napoleon would have done with such scruples as yours;" that was the rule, and the end was invariably a new step in dishonour.

My uncle was in an unsystematic way a collector of Napoleonic relics; the bigger the book about his hero the more readily he bought it; he purchased letters and tinsel and weapons that bore however remotely upon the Man of Destiny, and he even secured in Geneva, though he never brought home, an old coach in which Buonaparte might have ridden; he crowded the quiet walls of Lady Grove with engravings and figures of him, preferring, my aunt remarked, the more convex portraits with the white vest and those statuettes with the hands behind the back which threw forward the figure. The Durgans watched him through it all, sardonically.

And he would stand after breakfast at times in the light of the window at Lady Grove, a little apart, with two fingers of one hand stuck between his waistcoat-buttons and his chin sunken, thinking, — the most preposterous little fat man in the world. It made my aunt feel, she said, "like an old Field Marshal — knocks me into a cocked hat, George!"

Perhaps this Napoleonic bias made him a little less frequent with

his cigars than he would otherwise have been, but of that I cannot be sure, and it certainly caused my aunt a considerable amount of vexation after he had read Napoleon and the Fair Sex, because for a time that roused him to a sense of a side of life he had in his commercial preoccupations very largely forgotten. Suggestion plays so great a part in this field. My uncle took the next opportunity and had an "affair"!

It was not a very impassioned affair, and the exact particulars never of course reached me. It is quite by chance I know anything of it at all. One evening I was surprised to come upon my uncle in a mixture of Bohemia and smart people at an At Home in the flat of Robbert, the R.A. who painted my aunt, and he was standing a little apart in a recess, talking or rather being talked to in undertones by a plump, blond little woman in pale blue, a Helen Scrymgeour who wrote novels and was organising a weekly magazine. I elbowed a large lady who was saying something about them, but I didn't need to hear the thing she said to perceive the relationship of the two. It hit me like a placard on a hoarding. I was amazed the whole gathering did not see it. Perhaps they did. She was wearing a remarkably fine diamond necklace, much too fine for journalism, and regarding him with that quality of questionable proprietorship, of leashed but straining intimacy, that seems inseparable from this sort of affair. It is so much more palpable than matrimony. If anything was wanted to complete my conviction it was my uncles's eyes when presently he became aware of mine, a certain embarrassment and a certain pride and defiance. And the next day he made an opportunity to praise the lady's intelligence to me concisely, lest I should miss the point of it all.

After that I heard some gossip — from a friend of the lady's. I was much too curious to do anything but listen. I had never in all my life imagined my uncle in an amorous attitude. It would appear that she called him her "God in the Car" — after the hero in a novel of Anthony Hope's. It was essential to the convention of their relations that he should go relentlessly whenever business called, and it was generally arranged that it did call. To him women were an incident, it was understood between them; Ambition was the master-passion. A great world called him and the noble hunger for Power. I have never

been able to discover just how honest Mrs. Scrymgeour was in all this, but it is quite possible the immense glamour of his financial largeness prevailed with her and that she did bring a really romantic feeling to their encounters. There must have been some extraordinary moments....

I was a good deal exercised and distressed about my aunt when I realised what was afoot. I thought it would prove a terrible humiliation to her. I suspected her of keeping up a brave front with the loss of my uncle's affections fretting at her heart, but there I simply underestimated her. She didn't hear for some time and when she did hear she was extremely angry and energetic. The sentimental situation didn't trouble her for a moment. She decided that my uncle "wanted smacking." She accentuated herself with an unexpected new hat, went and gave him an inconceivable talking-to at the Hardingham, and then came round to "blow-up" me for not telling her what was going on before....

I tried to bring her to a proper sense of the accepted values in this affair, but my aunt's originality of outlook was never so invincible. "Men don't tell on one another in affairs of passion," I protested, and such-like worldly excuses.

"Women!" she said in high indignation, "and men! It isn't women and men — it's him and me, George! Why don't you talk sense?

"Old passion's all very well, George, in its way, and I'm the last person to be jealous. But this is old nonsense.... I'm not going to let him show off what a silly old lobster he is to other women.... I'll mark every scrap of his underclothes with red letters, 'Ponderevo-Private' — every scrap.

"Going about making love indeed, — in abdominal belts! — at his time of life!"

I cannot imagine what passed between her and my uncle. But I have no doubt that for once her customary badinage was laid aside. How they talked then I do not know, for I who knew them so well had never heard that much of intimacy between them. At any rate it was a concerned and preoccupied "God in the Car" I had to deal with in the next few days, unusually Zzzz-y and given to slight impatient gestures that had nothing to do with the current conversation. And it was evident that in all directions he was finding things unusually

difficult to explain.

All the intimate moments in this affair were hidden from me, but in the end my aunt triumphed. He did not so much throw as jerk over Mrs. Scrymgeour, and she did not so much make a novel of it as upset a huge pailful of attenuated and adulterated female soul upon this occasion. My aunt did not appear in that, even remotely. So that it is doubtful if the lady knew the real causes of her abandonment. The Napoleonic hero was practically unmarried, and he threw over his lady as Napoleon threw over Josephine for a great alliance.

It was a triumph for my aunt, but it had its price. For some time it was evident things were strained between them. He gave up the lady, but he resented having to do so, deeply. She had meant more to his imagination than one could have supposed. He wouldn't for a long time "come round." He became touchy and impatient and secretive towards my aunt, and she, I noted, after an amazing check or so, stopped that stream of kindly abuse that had flowed for so long and had been so great a refreshment in their lives. They were both the poorer for its cessation, both less happy. She devoted herself more and more to Lady Grove and the humours and complications of its management. The servants took to her — as they say — she god-mothered three Susans during her rule, the coachman's, the gardener's, and the Up Hill gamekeeper's. She got together a library of old household books that were in the vein of the place. She revived the still-room, and became a great artist in jellies and elder and cowslip wine.

X

And while I neglected the development of my uncle's finances — and my own, in my scientific work and my absorbing conflict with the difficulties of flying, — his schemes grew more and more expansive and hazardous, and his spending wilder and laxer. I believe that a haunting sense of the intensifying unsoundness of his position accounts largely for his increasing irritability and his increasing secretiveness with my aunt and myself during these crowning years. He dreaded, I think, having to explain, he feared our jests might pierce unwittingly to the truth. Even in the privacy of his

mind he would not face the truth. He was accumulating unrealisable securities in his safes until they hung a potential avalanche over the economic world. But his buying became a fever, and his restless desire to keep it up with himself that he was making a triumphant progress to limitless wealth gnawed deeper and deeper. A curious feature of this time with him was his buying over and over again of similar things. His ideas seemed to run in series. Within a twelve-month he bought five new motor-cars, each more swift and powerful than its predecessor, and only the repeated prompt resignation of his chief chauffeur at each moment of danger, prevented his driving them himself. He used them more and more. He developed a passion for locomotion for its own sake.

Then he began to chafe at Lady Grove, fretted by a chance jest he had overheard at a dinner. "This house, George," he said. "It's a misfit. There's no elbow-room in it; it's choked with old memories. And I can't stand all these damned Durgans!

"That chap in the corner, George. No! the other corner! The man in a cherry-coloured coat. He watched you! He'd look silly if I stuck a poker through his Gizzard!"

"He'd look," I reflected, "much as he does now. As though he was amused."

He replaced his glasses, which had fallen at his emotion, and glared at his antagonists. "What are they? What are they all, the lot of 'em? Dead as Mutton! They just stuck in the mud. They didn't even rise to the Reformation. The old out-of-date Reformation! Move with the times! — they moved against the times.

"Just a Family of Failure, — they never even tried!

"They're jes', George, exactly what I'm not. Exactly. It isn't suitable.... All this living in the Past.

"And I want a bigger place too, George. I want air and sunlight and room to move about and more service. A house where you can get a Move on things! Zzzz. Why! it's like a discord — it jars — even to have the telephone.... There's nothing, nothing except the terrace, that's worth a Rap. It's all dark and old and dried up and full of old-fashioned things — musty old idees — fitter for a silver-fish than a modern man.... I don't know how I got here."

He broke out into a new grievance. "That damned vicar," he

complained, “thinks I ought to think myself lucky to get this place! Every time I meet him I can see him think it.... One of these days, George I’ll show him what a Mod’un house is like!”

And he did.

I remember the day when he declared, as Americans say, for Crest Hill. He had come up to see my new gas plant, for I was then only just beginning to experiment with auxiliary collapsible balloons, and all the time the shine of his glasses was wandering away to the open down beyond. “Let’s go back to Lady Grove over the hill,” he said. “Something I want to show you. Something fine!”

It was an empty sunlit place that summer evening, sky and earth warm with sundown, and a pe-wit or so just accentuating the pleasant stillness that ends a long clear day. A beautiful peace, it was, to wreck for ever. And there was my uncle, the modern man of power, in his grey top-hat and his grey suit and his black-ribboned glasses, short, thin-legged, large-stomached, pointing and gesticulating, threatening this calm.

He began with a wave of his arm. “That’s the place, George,” he said. “See?”

“Eh!” I cried — for I had been thinking of remote things.

“I got it.”

“Got what?”

“For a house! — a Twentieth Century house! That’s the place for it!”

One of his characteristic phrases was begotten in him.

“Four-square to the winds of heaven, George!” he said. “Eh? Four-square to the winds of heaven!”

“You’ll get the winds up here,” I said.

“A mammoth house it ought to be, George — to suit these hills.”

“Quite,” I said.

“Great galleries and things — running out there and there — See? I been thinking of it, George! Looking out all this way — across the Weald. With its back to Lady Grove.”

“And the morning sun in its eye.”

“Like an eagle, George, — like an eagle!”

So he broached to me what speedily became the leading occupation of his culminating years, Crest Hill. But all the world has

heard of that extravagant place which grew and changed its plans as it grew, and bubbled like a salted snail, and burgeoned and bulged and evermore grew. I know not what delirium of pinnacles and terraces and arcades and corridors glittered at last upon the uplands of his mind; the place, for all that its expansion was terminated abruptly by our collapse, is wonderful enough as it stands, — that empty instinctive building of a childless man. His chief architect was a young man named Westminster, whose work he had picked out in the architecture room of the Royal Academy on account of a certain grandiose courage in it, but with him he associated from time to time a number of fellow professionals, stonemasons, sanitary engineers, painters, sculptors, scribes, metal workers, wood carvers, furniture designers, ceramic specialists, landscape gardeners, and the man who designs the arrangement and ventilation of the various new houses in the London Zoological Gardens. In addition he had his own ideas. The thing occupied his mind at all times, but it held it completely from Friday night to Monday morning. He would come down to Lady Grove on Friday night in a crowded motor-car that almost dripped architects. He didn't, however, confine himself to architects; every one was liable to an invitation to week-end and view Crest Hill, and many an eager promoter, unaware of how Napoleonically and completely my uncle had departmentalised his mind, tried to creep up to him by way of tiles and ventilators and new electric fittings. Always on Sunday mornings, unless the weather was vile, he would, so soon as breakfast and his secretaries were disposed of, visit the site with a considerable retinue, and alter and develop plans, making modifications, Zzzz-ing, giving immense new orders verbally — an unsatisfactory way, as Westminster and the contractors ultimately found.

There he stands in my memory, the symbol of this age for me, the man of luck and advertisement, the current master of the world. There he stands upon the great outward sweep of the terrace before the huge main entrance, a little figure, ridiculously disproportionate to that forty-foot arch, with the granite ball behind him — the astronomical ball, brass coopered, that represented the world, with a little adjustable tube of lenses on a gun-metal arm that focussed the sun upon just that point of the earth on which it chanced to be

shining vertically. There he stands, Napoleonically grouped with his retinue men in tweeds and golfing-suits, a little solicitor, whose name I forget, in grey trousers and a black jacket, and Westminster in Jaeger underclothing, a floriferous tie, and peculiar brown cloth of his own.

The downland breeze flutters my uncle's coat-tails, disarranges his stiff hair, and insists on the evidence of undisciplined appetites in face and form, as he points out this or that feature in the prospect to his attentive collaborator.

Below are hundreds of feet of wheeling-planks, ditches, excavations, heaps of earth, piles of garden stone from the Wealden ridges. On either hand the walls of his irrelevant unmeaning palace rise at one time he had working in that place — disturbing the economic balance of the whole countryside by their presence — upwards of three thousand men....

So he poses for my picture amidst the raw beginnings that were never to be completed. He did the strangest things about that place, things more and more detached from any conception of financial scale, things more and more apart from sober humanity. He seemed to think himself, at last, released from any such limitations. He moved a quite considerable hill, and nearly sixty mature trees were moved with it to open his prospect eastward, moved it about two hundred feet to the south. At another time he caught a suggestion from some city restaurant and made a billiard-room roofed with plate glass beneath the waters of his ornamental lake. He furnished one wing while its roof still awaited completion. He had a swimming bath thirty feet square next to his bedroom upstairs, and to crown it all he commenced a great wall to hold all his dominions together, free from the invasion of common men. It was a ten-foot wall, glass surmounted, and had it been completed as he intended it, it would have had a total length of nearly eleven miles. Some of it towards the last was so dishonestly built that it collapsed within a year upon its foundations, but some miles of it still stand. I never think of it now but what I think of the hundreds of eager little investors who followed his "star," whose hopes and lives, whose wives' security and children's prospects are all mixed up beyond redemption with that flaking mortar....

It is curious how many of these modern financiers of chance and bluff have ended their careers by building. It was not merely my uncle. Sooner or later they all seem to bring their luck to the test of realisation, try to make their fluid opulence coagulate out as bricks and mortar, bring moonshine into relations with a weekly wages-sheet. Then the whole fabric of confidence and imagination totters — and down they come....

When I think of that despoiled hillside, that colossal litter of bricks and mortar, and crude roads and paths, the scaffolding and sheds, the general quality of unforeseeing outrage upon the peace of nature, I am reminded of a chat I had with the vicar one bleak day after he had witnessed a glide. He talked to me of aeronautics as I stood in jersey and shorts beside my machine, fresh from alighting, and his cadaverous face failed to conceal a peculiar desolation that possessed him.

"Almost you convince me," he said, coming up to me, "against my will.... A marvellous invention! But it will take you a long time, sir, before you can emulate that perfect mechanism — the wing of a bird."

He looked at my sheds.

"You've changed the look of this valley, too," he said.

"Temporary defilements," I remarked, guessing what was in his mind.

"Of course. Things come and go. Things come and go. But — H'm. I've just been up over the hill to look at Mr. Edward Ponderevo's new house. That — that is something more permanent. A magnificent place! — in many ways. Imposing. I've never somehow brought myself to go that way before. Things are greatly advanced.... We find — the great number of strangers introduced into the villages about here by these operations, working-men chiefly, a little embarrassing. It put us out. They bring a new spirit into the place; betting — ideas — all sorts of queer notions. Our publicans like it, of course. And they come and sleep in one's outhouses — and make the place a little unsafe at nights. The other morning I couldn't sleep — a slight dyspepsia — and I looked out of the window. I was amazed to see people going by on bicycles. A silent procession. I counted ninety-seven — in the dawn. All going up to the new road

for Crest Hill. Remarkable I thought it. And so I've been up to see what they were doing."

"They would have been more than remarkable thirty years ago," I said.

"Yes, indeed. Things change. We think nothing of it now at all — comparatively. And that big house—"

He raised his eyebrows. "Really stupendous! Stupendous.

"All the hillside — the old turf — cut to ribbons!"

His eye searched my face. "We've grown so accustomed to look up to Lady Grove," he said, and smiled in search of sympathy. "It shifts our centre of gravity."

"Things will readjust themselves," I lied.

He snatched at the phrase. "Of course," he said.

"They'll readjust themselves — settle down again. Must. In the old way. It's bound to come right again — a comforting thought. Yes. After all, Lady Grove itself had to be built once upon a time — was — to begin with — artificial."

His eye returned to my aeroplane. He sought to dismiss his graver preoccupations. "I should think twice," he remarked, "before I trusted myself to that concern.... But I suppose one grows accustomed to the motion."

He bade me good morning and went his way, bowed and thoughtful....

He had kept the truth from his mind a long time, but that morning it had forced its way to him with an aspect that brooked no denial that this time it was not just changes that were coming in his world, but that all his world lay open and defenceless, conquered and surrendered, doomed so far as he could see, root and branch, scale and form alike, to change.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

SOARING

I

For nearly all the time that my uncle was incubating and hatching Crest Hill I was busy in a little transverse valley between that great beginning and Lady Grove with more and more costly and ambitious experiments in aerial navigation. This work was indeed the main substance of my life through all the great time of the Tono-Bungay symphony.

I have told already how I came to devote myself to this system of inquiries, how in a sort of disgust with the common adventure of life I took up the dropped ends of my college studies, taking them up again with a man's resolution instead of a boy's ambition. From the first I did well at this work. It — was, I think, largely a case of special aptitude, of a peculiar irrelevant vein of faculty running through my mind. It is one of those things men seem to have by chance, that has little or nothing to do with their general merit, and which it is ridiculous to be either conceited or modest about. I did get through a very big mass of work in those years, working for a time with a concentrated fierceness that left little of such energy or capacity as I possess unused. I worked out a series of problems connected with the stability of bodies pitching in the air and the internal movements of the wind, and I also revolutionised one leading part at last of the theory of explosive engines. These things are to be found in the Philosophical Transactions, the Mathematical Journal, and less frequently in one or two other such publications, and they needn't detain us here. Indeed, I doubt if I could write about them here. One acquires a sort of shorthand for one's notes and mind in relation to such special work. I have never taught; nor lectured, that is to say, I have never had to express my thoughts about mechanical things in ordinary everyday language, and I doubt very much if I could do so now without extreme tedium.

My work was, to begin with, very largely theoretical. I was able to

attack such early necessities of verification as arose with quite little models, using a turntable to get the motion through the air, and cane, whalebone and silk as building material. But a time came when incalculable factors crept in, factors of human capacity and factors of insufficient experimental knowledge, when one must needs guess and try. Then I had to enlarge the scale of my operations, and soon I had enlarged them very greatly. I set to work almost concurrently on the balance and stability of gliders and upon the steering of inflated bags, the latter a particularly expensive branch of work. I was no doubt moved by something of the same spirit of lavish expenditure that was running away with my uncle in these developments. Presently my establishment above Lady Grove had grown to a painted wood chalet big enough to accommodate six men, and in which I would sometimes live for three weeks together; to a gasometer, to a motor-house, to three big corrugated-roofed sheds and lock-up houses, to a stage from which to start gliders, to a workshop and so forth. A rough road was made. We brought up gas from Cheaping and electricity from Woking, which place I found also afforded a friendly workshop for larger operations than I could manage. I had the luck also to find a man who seemed my heaven-sent second-in-command — Cothope his name was. He was a self-educated-man; he had formerly been a sapper and he was one of the best and handiest working engineers alive. Without him I do not think I could have achieved half what I have done. At times he has been not so much my assistant as my collaborator, and has followed my fortunes to this day. Other men came and went as I needed them.

I do not know how far it is possible to convey to any one who has not experienced it, the peculiar interest, the peculiar satisfaction that lies in a sustained research when one is not hampered by want of money. It is a different thing from any other sort of human effort. You are free from the exasperating conflict with your fellow-creatures altogether — at least so far as the essential work goes; that for me is its peculiar merit. Scientific truth is the remotest of mistresses; she hides in strange places, she is attained by tortuous and laborious roads, but SHE IS ALWAYS THERE! Win to her and she will not fail you; she is yours and mankind's for ever. She is reality, the one reality I have found in this strange disorder of

existence. She will not sulk with you nor misunderstand you nor cheat you of your reward upon some petty doubt. You cannot change her by advertisement or clamour, nor stifle her in vulgarities. Things grow under your hands when you serve her, things that are permanent as nothing else is permanent in the whole life of man. That, I think, is the peculiar satisfaction of science and its enduring reward....

The taking up of experimental work produced a great change in my personal habits. I have told how already once in my life at Wimblehurst I had a period of discipline and continuous effort, and how, when I came to South Kensington, I became demoralised by the immense effect of London, by its innumerable imperative demands upon my attention and curiosity. And I parted with much of my personal pride when I gave up science for the development of Tono-Bungay. But my poverty kept me abstinent and my youthful romanticism kept me chaste until my married life was well under way. Then in all directions I relaxed. I did a large amount of work, but I never troubled to think whether it was my maximum nor whether the moods and indolences that came to me at times were avoidable things. With the coming of plenty I ate abundantly and foolishly, drank freely and followed my impulses more and more carelessly. I felt no reason why I should do anything else. Never at any point did I use myself to the edge of my capacity. The emotional crisis of my divorce did not produce any immediate change in these matters of personal discipline. I found some difficulty at first in concentrating my mind upon scientific work, it was so much more exacting than business, but I got over that difficulty by smoking. I became an inordinate cigar smoker; it gave me moods of profound depression, but I treated these usually by the homeopathic method, — by lighting another cigar. I didn't realise at all how loose my moral and nervous fibre had become until I reached the practical side of my investigations and was face to face with the necessity of finding out just how it felt to use a glider and just what a man could do with one.

I got into this relaxed habit of living in spite of very real tendencies in my nature towards discipline. I've never been in love with self-indulgence. That philosophy of the loose lip and the lax

paunch is one for which I've always had an instinctive distrust. I like bare things, stripped things, plain, austere and continent things, fine lines and cold colours. But in these plethoric times when there is too much coarse stuff for everybody and the struggle for life takes the form of competitive advertisement and the effort to fill your neighbour's eye, when there is no urgent demand either for personal courage, sound nerves or stark beauty, we find ourselves by accident. Always before these times the bulk of the people did not over-eat themselves, because they couldn't, whether they wanted to do so or not, and all but a very few were kept "fit" by unavoidable exercise and personal danger. Now, if only he pitch his standard low enough and keep free from pride, almost any one can achieve a sort of excess. You can go through contemporary life fudging and evading, indulging and slacking, never really hungry nor frightened nor passionately stirred, your highest moment a mere sentimental orgasm, and your first real contact with primary and elemental necessities, the sweat of your death-bed. So I think it was with my uncle; so, very nearly, it was with me.

But the glider brought me up smartly. I had to find out how these things went down the air, and the only way to find out is to go down with one. And for a time I wouldn't face it.

There is something impersonal about a book, I suppose. At any rate I find myself able to write down here just the confession I've never been able to make to any one face to face, the frightful trouble it was to me to bring myself to do what I suppose every other coloured boy in the West Indies could do without turning a hair, and that is to fling myself off for my first soar down the wind. The first trial was bound to be the worst; it was an experiment I made with life, and the chance of death or injury was, I supposed, about equal to the chance of success. I believed that with a dawn-like lucidity. I had begun with a glider that I imagined was on the lines of the Wright brothers' aeroplane, but I could not be sure. It might turn over. I might upset it. It might burrow its nose at the end and smash itself and me. The conditions of the flight necessitated alert attention; it wasn't a thing to be done by jumping off and shutting one's eyes or getting angry or drunk to do it. One had to use one's weight to balance. And when at last I did it it was horrible — for ten seconds.

For ten seconds or so, as I swept down the air flattened on my infernal framework and with the wind in my eyes, the rush of the ground beneath me filled me with sick and helpless terror; I felt as though some violent oscillatory current was throbbing in brain and back bone, and I groaned aloud. I set my teeth and groaned. It was a groan wrung out of me in spite of myself. My sensations of terror swooped to a climax. And then, you know, they ended!

Suddenly my terror was over and done with. I was soaring through the air right way up, steadily, and no mischance had happened. I felt intensely alive and my nerves were strung like a bow. I shifted a limb, swerved and shouted between fear and triumph as I recovered from the swerve and heeled the other way and steadied myself.

I thought I was going to hit a rook that was flying athwart me, — it was queer with what projectile silence that jumped upon me out of nothingness, and I yelled helplessly, "Get out of the way!" The bird doubled itself up like a partly inverted V, flapped, went up to the right abruptly and vanished from my circle of interest. Then I saw the shadow of my aeroplane keeping a fixed distance before me and very steady, and the turf as it seemed streaming out behind it. The turf! — it wasn't after all streaming so impossibly fast.

When I came gliding down to the safe spread of level green I had chosen, I was as cool and ready as a city clerk who drops off an omnibus in motion, and I had learnt much more than soaring. I tilted up her nose at the right moment, levelled again and grounded like a snowflake on a windless day. I lay flat for an instant and then knelt up and got on my feet atremble, but very satisfied with myself. Cothope was running down the hill to me. ...

But from that day I went into training, and I kept myself in training for many months. I had delayed my experiments for very nearly six weeks on various excuses because of my dread of this first flight, because of the slackness of body and spirit that had come to me with the business life. The shame of that cowardice spurred me none the less because it was probably altogether my own secret. I felt that Cothope at any rate might suspect. Well, — he shouldn't suspect again.

It is curious that I remember that shame and self accusation and

its consequences far more distinctly than I recall the weeks of vacillation before I soared. For a time I went altogether without alcohol, I stopped smoking altogether and ate very sparingly, and every day I did something that called a little upon my nerves and muscles. I soared as frequently as I could. I substituted a motor-bicycle for the London train and took my chances in the southward traffic, and I even tried what thrills were to be got upon a horse. But they put me on made horses, and I conceived a perhaps unworthy contempt for the certitudes of equestrian exercise in comparison with the adventures of mechanism. Also I walked along the high wall at the back of Lady Grove garden, and at last brought myself to stride the gap where the gate comes. If I didn't altogether get rid of a certain giddy instinct by such exercises, at least I trained my will until it didn't matter. And soon I no longer dreaded flight, but was eager to go higher into the air, and I came to esteem soaring upon a glider, that even over the deepest dip in the ground had barely forty feet of fall beneath it, a mere mockery of what flight might be. I began to dream of the keener freshness in the air high above the beechwoods, and it was rather to satisfy that desire than as any legitimate development of my proper work that presently I turned a part of my energies and the bulk of my private income to the problem of the navigable balloon.

II

I had gone far beyond that initial stage; I had had two smashes and a broken rib which my aunt nursed with great energy, and was getting some reputation in the aeronautic world when, suddenly, as though she had never really left it, the Honourable Beatrice Normandy, dark-eyed, and with the old disorderly wave of the hair from her brow, came back into my life. She came riding down a grass path in the thickets below Lady Grove, perched up on a huge black horse, and the old Earl of Carnaby and Archie Garvell, her half-brother, were with her. My uncle had been bothering me about the Crest Hill hot-water pipes, and we were returning by a path transverse to theirs and came out upon them suddenly. Old Carnaby was trespassing on our ground, and so he hailed us in a friendly fashion and pulled up to talk

to us.

I didn't note Beatrice at all at first. I was interested in Lord Carnaby, that remarkable vestige of his own brilliant youth. I had heard of him, but never seen him. For a man of sixty-five who had sinned all the sins, so they said, and laid waste the most magnificent political debut of any man of his generation, he seemed to me to be looking remarkably fit and fresh. He was a lean little man with grey-blue eyes in his brown face, and his cracked voice was the worst thing in his effect.

"Hope you don't mind us coming this way, Ponderevo," he cried; and my uncle, who was sometimes a little too general and generous with titles, answered, "Not at all, my lord, not at all! Glad you make use of it!"

"You're building a great place over the hill," said Carnaby.

"Thought I'd make a show for once," said my uncle. "It looks big because it's spread out for the sun."

"Air and sunlight," said the earl. "You can't have too much of them. But before our time they used to build for shelter and water and the high road."

Then I discovered that the silent figure behind the earl was Beatrice.

I'd forgotten her sufficiently to think for a moment that she hadn't changed at all since she had watched me from behind the skirts of Lady Drew. She was looking at me, and her dainty brow under her broad brimmed hat — she was wearing a grey hat and loose unbuttoned coat — was knit with perplexity, trying, I suppose, to remember where she had seen me before. Her shaded eyes met mine with that mute question....

It seemed incredible to me she didn't remember.

"Well," said the earl and touched his horse.

Garvell was patting the neck of his horse, which was inclined to fidget, and disregarding me. He nodded over his shoulder and followed. His movement seemed to release a train of memories in her. She glanced suddenly at him and then back at me with a flash of recognition that warmed instantly to a faint smile. She hesitated as if to speak to me, smiled broadly and understandingly and turned to follow the others. All three broke into a canter and she did not look

back. I stood for a second or so at the crossing of the lanes, watching her recede, and then became aware that my uncle was already some paces off and talking over his shoulder in the belief that I was close behind. I turned about and strode to overtake him. My mind was full of Beatrice and this surprise. I remembered her simply as a Normandy. I'd clean forgotten that Garvell was the son and she the step-daughter of our neighbour, Lady Osprey. Indeed, I'd probably forgotten at that time that we had Lady Osprey as a neighbour. There was no reason at all for remembering it. It was amazing to find her in this Surrey countryside, when I'd never thought of her as living anywhere in the world but at Bladesover Park, near forty miles and twenty years away. She was so alive — so unchanged! The same quick warm blood was in her cheeks. It seemed only yesterday that we had kissed among the bracken stems....

"Eh?" I said.

"I say he's good stuff," said my uncle. "You can say what you like against the aristocracy, George; Lord Carnaby's rattling good stuff. There's a sort of Savoir Faire, something — it's an old-fashioned phrase, George, but a good one there's a Bong-Tong.... It's like the Oxford turf, George, you can't grow it in a year. I wonder how they do it. It's living always on a Scale, George. It's being there from the beginning."...

"She might," I said to myself, "be a picture by Romney come alive!"

"They tell all these stories about him," said my uncle, "but what do they all amount to?"

"Gods!" I said to myself; "but why have I forgotten for so long? Those queer little brows of hers, the touch of mischief in her eyes — the way she breaks into a smile!"

"I don't blame him," said my uncle. "Mostly it's imagination. That and leisure, George. When I was a young man I was kept pretty busy. So were you. Even then — !"

What puzzled me more particularly was the queer trick of my memory that had never recalled anything vital of Beatrice whatever when I met Garvell again that had, indeed, recalled nothing except a boyish antagonism and our fight. Now when my senses were full of her, it seemed incredible that I could ever have forgotten....

III

"Oh, Crikey!" said my aunt, reading a letter behind her coffee-machine. "HERE'S a young woman, George!"

We were breakfasting together in the big window bay at Lady Grove that looks upon the iris beds; my uncle was in London.

I sounded an interrogative note and decapitated an egg.

"Who's Beatrice Normandy?" asked my aunt. "I've not heard of her before."

"She the young woman?"

"Yes. Says she knows you. I'm no hand at old etiquette, George, but her line is a bit unusual. Practically she says she's going to make her mother—"

"Eh? Step-mother, isn't it?"

"You seem to know a lot about her. She says 'mother' — Lady Osprey. They're to call on me, anyhow, next Wednesday week at four, and there's got to be you for tea."

"Eh?"

"You — for tea.

"H'm. She had rather — force of character. When I knew her before."

I became aware of my aunt's head sticking out obliquely from behind the coffee-machine and regarding me with wide blue curiosity. I met her gaze for a moment, flinched, coloured, and laughed.

"I've known her longer than I've known you," I said, and explained at length.

My aunt kept her eye on me over and round the coffee-machine as I did so. She was greatly interested, and asked several elucidatory questions.

"Why didn't you tell me the day you saw her? You've had her on your mind for a week," she said.

"It IS odd I didn't tell you," I admitted.

"You thought I'd get a Down on her," said my aunt conclusively. "That's what you thought" and opened the rest of her letters.

The two ladies came in a pony-carriage with conspicuous punctuality, and I had the unusual experience of seeing my aunt

entertaining callers. We had tea upon the terrace under the cedar, but old Lady Osprey, being an embittered Protestant, had never before seen the inside of the house, and we made a sort of tour of inspection that reminded me of my first visit to the place. In spite of my preoccupation with Beatrice, I stored a queer little memory of the contrast between the two other women; my aunt, tall, slender and awkward, in a simple blue homekeeping dress, an omnivorous reader and a very authentic wit, and the lady of pedigree, short and plump, dressed with Victorian fussiness, living at the intellectual level of palmistry and genteel fiction, pink in the face and generally flustered by a sense of my aunt's social strangeness and disposed under the circumstances to behave rather like an imitation of the more queenly moments of her own cook. The one seemed made of whalebone, the other of dough. My aunt was nervous, partly through the intrinsic difficulty of handling the lady and partly because of her passionate desire to watch Beatrice and me, and her nervousness took a common form with her, a wider clumsiness of gesture and an exacerbation of her habitual oddity of phrase which did much to deepen the pink perplexity of the lady of title. For instance, I heard my aunt admit that one of the Stuart Durgan ladies did look a bit "balmy on the crumpet"; she described the knights of the age of chivalry as "korvorting about on the off-chance of a dragon"; she explained she was "always old mucking about the garden," and instead of offering me a Garibaldi biscuit, she asked me with that faint lisp of hers, to "have some squashed flies, George." I felt convinced Lady Osprey would describe her as "a most eccentric person" on the very first opportunity;— "a most eccentric person." One could see her, as people say, "shaping" for that.

Beatrice was dressed very quietly in brown, with a simple but courageous broad-brimmed hat, and an unexpected quality of being grown-up and responsible. She guided her step-mother through the first encounter, scrutinised my aunt, and got us all well in movement through the house, and then she turned her attention to me with a quick and half-confident smile.

"We haven't met," she said, "since—"

"It was in the Warren."

"Of course," she said, "the Warren! I remembered it all except

just the name.... I was eight.”

Her smiling eyes insisted on my memories being thorough. I looked up and met them squarely, a little at a loss for what I should say.

“I gave you away pretty completely,” she said, meditating upon my face. “And afterwards I gave way Archie.”

She turned her face away from the others, and her voice fell ever so little.

“They gave him a licking for telling lies!” she said, as though that was a pleasant memory. “And when it was all over I went to our wigwam. You remember the wigwam?”

“Out in the West Wood?”

“Yes — and cried — for all the evil I had done you, I suppose.... I’ve often thought of it since.”...

Lady Osprey stopped for us to overtake her. “My dear!” she said to Beatrice. “Such a beautiful gallery!” Then she stared very hard at me, puzzled in the most naked fashion to understand who I might be.

“People say the oak staircase is rather good,” said my aunt, and led the way.

Lady Osprey, with her skirts gathered for the ascent to the gallery and her hand on the newel, turned and addressed a look full of meaning overflowing indeed with meanings — at her charge. The chief meaning no doubt was caution about myself, but much of it was just meaning at large. I chanced to catch the response in a mirror and detected Beatrice with her nose wrinkled into a swift and entirely diabolical grimace. Lady Osprey became a deeper shade of pink and speechless with indignation — it was evident she disavowed all further responsibility, as she followed my aunt upstairs.

“It’s dark, but there’s a sort of dignity,” said Beatrice very distinctly, regarding the hall with serene tranquillity, and allowing the unwilling feet on the stairs to widen their distance from us. She stood a step up, so that she looked down a little upon me and over me at the old hall.

She turned upon me abruptly when she thought her step-mother was beyond ear-shot.

“But how did you get here?” she asked.

“Here?”

“All this.” She indicated space and leisure by a wave of the hand at hall and tall windows and sunlit terrace. “Weren’t you the housekeeper’s son?”

“I’ve adventured. My uncle has become — a great financier. He used to be a little chemist about twenty miles from Bladesover. We’re promoters now, amalgamators, big people on the new model.”

“I understand.” She regarded me with interested eyes, visibly thinking me out.

“And you recognised me?” I asked.

“After a second or so. I saw you recognised me. I couldn’t place you, but I knew I knew you. Then Archie being there helped me to remember.”

“I’m glad to meet again,” I ventured. “I’d never forgotten you.”

“One doesn’t forget those childish things.”

We regarded one another for a moment with a curiously easy and confident satisfaction in coming together again. I can’t explain our ready zest in one another. The thing was so. We pleased each other, we had no doubt in our minds that we pleased each other. From the first we were at our ease with one another. “So picturesque, so very picturesque,” came a voice from above, and then: “Bee-atrice!”

“I’ve a hundred things I want to know about you,” she said with an easy intimacy, as we went up the winding steps....

As the four of us sat at tea together under the cedar on the terrace she asked questions about my aeronautics. My aunt helped with a word or so about my broken ribs. Lady Osprey evidently regarded flying as a most indesirable and improper topic — a blasphemous intrusion upon the angels. “It isn’t flying,” I explained. “We don’t fly yet.”

“You never will,” she said compactly. “You never will.”

“Well,” I said, “we do what we can.”

The little lady lifted a small gloved hand and indicated a height of about four feet from the ground. “Thus far,” she said, “thus far — AND NO FARTHER! No!”

She became emphatically pink. “NO,” she said again quite conclusively, and coughed shortly. “Thank you,” she said to her ninth or tenth cake. Beatrice burst into cheerful laughter with her eye on me. I was lying on the turf, and this perhaps caused a slight

confusion about the primordial curse in Lady Osprey's mind.

"Upon his belly shall he go," she said with quiet distinctness, "all the days of his life."

After which we talked no more of aeronautics.

Beatrice sat bunched together in a chair and regarded me with exactly the same scrutiny, I thought, the same adventurous aggression, that I had faced long ago at the tea-table in my mother's room. She was amazingly like that little Princess of my Bladesover memories, the wilful misbehaviours of her hair seemed the same — her voice; things one would have expected to be changed altogether. She formed her plans in the same quick way, and acted with the same irresponsible decision.

She stood up abruptly.

"What is there beyond the terrace?" she said, and found me promptly beside her.

I invented a view for her.

At the further corner from the cedar she perched herself up upon the parapet and achieved an air of comfort among the lichenous stones. "Now tell me," she said, "all about yourself. Tell me about yourself; I know such duffers of men! They all do the same things. How did you get — here? All my men WERE here. They couldn't have got here if they hadn't been here always. They wouldn't have thought it right. You've climbed."

"If it's climbing," I said.

She went off at a tangent. "It's — I don't know if you'll understand — interesting to meet you again. I've remembered you. I don't know why, but I have. I've used you as a sort of lay figure — when I've told myself stories. But you've always been rather stiff and difficult in my stories — in ready-made clothes — a Labour Member or a Bradlaugh, or something like that. You're not like that a bit. And yet you ARE!"

She looked at me. "Was it much of a fight? They make out it is."

"I don't know why."

"I was shot up here by an accident," I said. "There was no fight at all. Except to keep honest, perhaps and I made no great figure in that. I and my uncle mixed a medicine and it blew us up. No merit in that! But you've been here all the time. Tell me what you have done first."

“One thing we didn’t do.” She meditated for a moment.

“What?” said I.

“Produce a little half-brother for Bladesover. So it went to the Phillbrick gang. And they let it! And I and my step-mother — we let, too. And live in a little house.”

She nodded her head vaguely over her shoulder and turned to me again. “Well, suppose it was an accident. Here you are! Now you’re here, what are you going to do? You’re young. Is it to be Parliament? heard some men the other day talking about you. Before I knew you were you. They said that was what you ought to do.”...

She put me through my intentions with a close and vital curiosity. It was just as she had tried to imagine me a soldier and place me years ago. She made me feel more planless and incidental than ever. “You want to make a flying-machine,” she pursued, “and when you fly? What then? Would it be for fighting?”

I told her something of my experimental work. She had never heard of the soaring aeroplane, and was excited by the thought, and keen to hear about it. She had thought all the work so far had been a mere projecting of impossible machines. For her Pilcher and Lilienthal had died in vain. She did not know such men had lived in the world.

“But that’s dangerous!” she said, with a note of discovery.

“Oh! — it’s dangerous.”

“Bee-atrice!” Lady Osprey called.

Beatrice dropped from the wall to her feet.

“Where do you do this soaring?”

“Beyond the high Barrows. East of Crest Hill and the wood.”

“Do you mind people coming to see?”

“Whenever you please. Only let me know”

“I’ll take my chance some day. Some day soon.” She looked at me thoughtfully, smiled, and our talk was at an end.

IV

All my later work in aeronautics is associated in my memory with the quality of Beatrice, with her incidental presence, with things she said and did and things I thought of that had reference to her.

In the spring of that year I had got to a flying machine that lacked nothing but longitudinal stability. My model flew like a bird for fifty or a hundred yards or so, and then either dived and broke its nose or, what was commoner, reared up, slid back and smashed its propeller. The rhythm of the pitching puzzled me. I felt it must obey some laws not yet quite clearly stated. I became therefore a student of theory and literature for a time; I hit upon the string of considerations that led me to what is called Ponderevo's Principle and my F.R.S., and I worked this out in three long papers. Meanwhile I made a lot of turn-table and glider models and started in upon an idea of combining gas-bags and gliders. Balloon work was new to me. I had made one or two ascents in the balloons of the Aero Club before I started my gasometer and the balloon shed and gave Cothope a couple of months with Sir Peter Rumchase. My uncle found part of the money for these developments; he was growing interested and competitive in this business because of Lord Boom's prize and the amount of reclame involved, and it was at his request that I named my first navigable balloon Lord Roberts Alpha.

Lord Roberts A very nearly terminated all my investigations. My idea both in this and its more successful and famous younger brother, Lord Roberts B, was to utilise the idea of a contractile balloon with a rigid flat base, a balloon shaped rather like an inverted boat that should almost support the apparatus, but not quite. The gas-bag was of the chambered sort used for these long forms, and not with an internal balloonette. The trouble was to make the thing contractile. This I sought to do by fixing a long, fine-meshed silk net over it that was fastened to be rolled up on two longitudinal rods. Practically I contracted my sausage gas-bag by netting it down. The ends were too complex for me to describe here, but I thought them out elaborately and they were very carefully planned. Lord Roberts A was furnished with a single big screw forward, and there was a rudder aft. The engine was the first one to be, so to speak, right in the plane of the gas-bag. I lay immediately under the balloon on a sort of glider framework, far away from either engine or rudder, controlling them by wire-pulls constructed on the principle of the well-known Bowden brake of the cyclist.

But Lord Roberts A has been pretty exhaustively figured and

described in various aeronautical publications. The unforeseen defect was the badness of the work in the silk netting. It tore aft as soon as I began to contract the balloon, and the last two segments immediately bulged through the hole, exactly as an inner tube will bulge through the ruptured outer cover of a pneumatic tire, and then the sharp edge of the torn net cut the oiled-silk of the distended last segment along a weak seam and burst it with a loud report.

Up to that point the whole thing had been going on extremely well. As a navigable balloon and before I contracted it, the Lord Roberts A was an unqualified success. It had run out of the shed admirably at nine or ten miles an hour or more, and although there was a gentle southwester blowing, it had gone up and turned and faced it as well as any craft of the sort I have ever seen.

I lay in my customary glider position, horizontal and face downward, and the invisibility of all the machinery gave an extraordinary effect of independent levitation. Only by looking up, as it were, and turning my head back could I see the flat aeroplane bottom of the balloon and the rapid successive passages, swish, swish, swish of the vans of the propeller. I made a wide circle over Lady Grove and Duffield and out towards Effingham and came back quite successfully to the starting-point.

Down below in the October sunlight were my sheds and the little group that had been summoned to witness the start, their faces craned upward and most of them scrutinising my expression through field-glasses. I could see Carnaby and Beatrice on horseback, and two girls I did not know with them; Cothope and three or four workmen I employed; my aunt and Mrs. Levinstein, who was staying with her, on foot, and Dimmock, the veterinary surgeon, and one or two others. My shadow moved a little to the north of them like the shadow of a fish. At Lady Grove the servants were out on the lawn, and the Duffield school playground swarmed with children too indifferent to aeronautics to cease their playing. But in the Crest Hill direction — the place looked extraordinarily squat and ugly from above — there were knots and strings of staring workmen everywhere — not one of them working, but all agape. (But now I write it, it occurs to me that perhaps it was their dinner hour; it was certainly near twelve.) I hung for a moment or so enjoying the soar,

then turned about to face a clear stretch of open down, let the engine out to full speed and set my rollers at work rolling in the net, and so tightening the gas-bags. Instantly the pace quickened with the diminished resistance...

In that moment before the bang I think I must have been really flying. Before the net ripped, just in the instant when my balloon was at its systole, the whole apparatus was, I am convinced, heavier than air. That, however, is a claim that has been disputed, and in any case this sort of priority is a very trivial thing.

Then came a sudden retardation, instantly followed by an inexpressibly disconcerting tilt downward of the machine. That I still recall with horror. I couldn't see what was happening at all and I couldn't imagine. It was a mysterious, inexplicable dive. The thing, it seemed, without rhyme or reason, was kicking up its heels in the air. The bang followed immediately, and I perceived I was falling rapidly.

I was too much taken by surprise to think of the proper cause of the report. I don't even know what I made of it. I was obsessed, I suppose, by that perpetual dread of the modern aeronaut, a flash between engine and balloon. Yet obviously I wasn't wrapped in flames. I ought to have realised instantly it wasn't that. I did, at any rate, whatever other impressions there were, release the winding of the outer net and let the balloon expand again, and that no doubt did something to break my fall. I don't remember doing that. Indeed, all I do remember is the giddy effect upon the landscape of falling swiftly upon it down a flat spiral, the hurried rush of fields and trees and cottages on my left shoulder and the overhung feeling as if the whole apparatus was pressing down the top of my head. I didn't stop or attempt to stop the screw. That was going on, swish, swish, swish all the time.

Cothope really knows more about the fall than I do. He describes the easterly start, the tilt, and the appearance and bursting of a sort of bladder aft. Then down I swooped, very swiftly, but not nearly so steeply as I imagined I was doing. "Fifteen or twenty degrees," said Cothope, "to be exact." From him it was that I learnt that I let the nets loose again, and so arrested my fall. He thinks I was more in control of myself than I remember.

But I do not see why I should have forgotten so excellent a resolution. His impression is that I was really steering and trying to drop into the Farthing Down beeches. “You hit the trees,” he said, “and the whole affair stood on its nose among them, and then very slowly crumpled up. I saw you’d been jerked out, as I thought, and I didn’t stay for more. I rushed for my bicycle.”

As a matter of fact, it was purely accidental that I came down in the woods. I am reasonably certain that I had no more control then than a thing in a parcel. I remember I felt a sort of wincing, “Now it comes!” as the trees rushed up to me. If I remember that, I should remember steering. Then the propeller smashed, everything stopped with a jerk, and I was falling into a mass of yellowing leaves, and Lord Roberts A, so it seemed to me, was going back into the sky.

I felt twigs and things hit me in the face, but I didn’t feel injured at the time; I clutched at things that broke, tumbled through a froth of green and yellow into a shadowy world of great bark-covered arms, and there, snatching wildly, got a grip on a fair round branch, and hung.

I became intensely alert and clear-headed. I held by that branch for a moment and then looked about me, and caught at another, and then found myself holding to a practicable fork. I swung forward to that and got a leg around it below its junction, and so was able presently to clamber down, climbing very coolly and deliberately. I dropped ten feet or so from the lowest branch and fell on my feet. “That’s all right,” I said, and stared up through the tree to see what I could of the deflated and crumpled remains that had once been Lord Roberts A festooned on the branches it had broken. “Gods!” I said, “what a tumble!”

I wiped something that trickled from my face and was shocked to see my hand covered with blood. I looked at myself and saw what seemed to me an astonishing quantity of blood running down my arm and shoulder. I perceived my mouth was full of blood. It’s a queer moment when one realises one is hurt, and perhaps badly hurt, and has still to discover just how far one is hurt. I explored my face carefully and found unfamiliar contours on the left side. The broken end of a branch had driven right through my cheek, damaging my cheek and teeth and gums, and left a splinter of itself stuck, like an

explorer's fartherest-point flag, in the upper maxillary. That and a sprained wrist were all my damage. But I bled as though I had been chopped to pieces, and it seemed to me that my face had been driven in. I can't describe just the horrible disgust I felt at that.

"This blood must be stopped, anyhow," I said, thickheadedly.

"I wonder where there's a spider's web" — an odd twist for my mind to take. But it was the only treatment that occurred to me.

I must have conceived some idea of going home unaided, because I was thirty yards from the tree before I dropped.

Then a kind of black disc appeared in the middle of the world and rushed out to the edge of things and blotted them out. I don't remember falling down. I fainted from excitement, disgust at my injury and loss of blood, and lay there until Cothope found me.

He was the first to find me, scorching as he did over the downland turf, and making a wide course to get the Carnaby plantations at their narrowest. Then presently, while he was trying to apply the methodical teachings of the St. John's Ambulance classes to a rather abnormal case, Beatrice came galloping through the trees full-tilt, with Lord Carnaby hard behind her, and she was hatless, muddy from a fall, and white as death. "And cool as a cucumber, too," said Cothope, turning it over in his mind as he told me.

("They never seem quite to have their heads, and never seem quite to lose 'em," said Cothope, generalising about the sex.)

Also he witnessed she acted with remarkable decision. The question was whether I should be taken to the house her step-mother occupied at Bedley Corner, the Carnaby dower house, or down to Carnaby's place at Easting. Beatrice had no doubt in the matter, for she meant to nurse me. Carnaby didn't seem to want that to happen. "She WOULD have it wasn't half so far," said Cothope. "She faced us out....

"I hate to be faced out of my opinion, so I've taken a pedometer over it since. It's exactly forty-three yards further.

"Lord Carnaby looked at her pretty straight," said Cothope, finishing the picture; "and then he give in."

But my story has made a jump from June to October, and during that time my relations with Beatrice and the countryside that was her setting had developed in many directions. She came and went, moving in an orbit for which I had no data, going to London and Paris, into Wales and Northampton, while her stepmother, on some independent system of her own, also vanished and recurred intermittently. At home they obeyed the rule of an inflexible old maid, Charlotte, and Beatrice exercised all the rights of proprietorship in Carnaby's extensive stables. Her interest in me was from the first undisguised. She found her way to my worksheds and developed rapidly, in spite of the sincere discouragement of Cothope, into a keen amateur of aeronautics. She would come sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon, sometimes afoot with an Irish terrier, sometimes riding. She would come for three or four days every day, vanish for a fortnight or three weeks, return.

It was not long before I came to look for her. From the first I found her immensely interesting. To me she was a new feminine type altogether — I have made it plain, I think, how limited was my knowledge of women. But she made me not simply interested in her, but in myself. She became for me something that greatly changes a man's world. How shall I put it? She became an audience. Since I've emerged from the emotional developments of the affair I have thought it out in a hundred aspects, and it does seem to me that this way in which men and women make audiences for one another is a curiously influential force in their lives. For some it seems an audience is a vital necessity, they seek audiences as creatures seek food; others again, my uncle among them, can play to an imaginary audience. I, I think, have lived and can live without one. In my adolescence I was my own audience and my own court of honour. And to have an audience in one's mind is to play a part, to become self-conscious and dramatic. For many years I had been self-forgetful and scientific. I had lived for work and impersonal interests until I found scrutiny, applause and expectation in Beatrice's eyes. Then I began to live for the effect I imagined I made upon her, to make that very soon the principal value in my life. I played to her. I did things for the look of them. I began to dream more and more of beautiful situations and fine poses and groupings with her and for her.

I put these things down because they puzzle me. I think I was in love with Beatrice, as being in love is usually understood; but it was quite a different state altogether from my passionate hunger for Marion, or my keen, sensuous desire for and pleasure in Effie. These were selfish, sincere things, fundamental and instinctive, as sincere as the leap of a tiger. But until matters drew to a crisis with Beatrice, there was an immense imaginative insurgence of a quite different quality. I am setting down here very gravely, and perhaps absurdly, what are no doubt elementary commonplaces for innumerable people. This love that grew up between Beatrice and myself was, I think — I put it quite tentatively and rather curiously — romantic love. That unfortunate and truncated affair of my uncle and the Scrymgeour lady was really of the same stuff, if a little different in quality. I have to admit that. The factor of audience was of primary importance in either else.

Its effect upon me was to make me in many respects adolescent again. It made me keener upon the point of honour, and anxious and eager to do high and splendid things, and in particular, brave things. So far it ennobled and upheld me. But it did also push me towards vulgar and showy things. At bottom it was disingenuous; it gave my life the quality of stage scenery, with one side to the audience, another side that wasn't meant to show, and an economy of substance. It certainly robbed my work of high patience and quality. I cut down the toil of research in my eagerness and her eagerness for fine flourishes in the air, flights that would tell. I shirked the longer road.

And it robbed me, too, of any fine perception of absurdity.

Yet that was not everything in our relationship. The elemental thing was there also. It came in very suddenly.

It was one day in the summer, though I do not now recall without reference to my experimental memoranda whether it was in July or August. I was working with a new and more bird-like aeroplane with wing curvatures studied from Lilienthal, Pilcher and Phillips, that I thought would give a different rhythm for the pitching oscillations than anything I'd had before. I was soaring my long course from the framework on the old barrow by my sheds down to Tinker's Corner. It is a clear stretch of downland, except for two or three thickets of

box and thorn to the right of my course; one transverse trough, in which there is bush and a small rabbit warren, comes in from the east. I had started, and was very intent on the peculiar long swoop with which any new arrangement flew. Then, without any sort of notice, right ahead of me appeared Beatrice, riding towards Tinker's Corner to waylay and talk to me. She looked round over her shoulder, saw me coming, touched her horse to a gallop, and then the brute bolted right into the path of my machine.

There was a queer moment of doubt whether we shouldn't all smash together. I had to make up my mind very quickly whether I would pitch-up and drop backward at once and take my chance of falling undamaged — a poor chance it would have been — in order to avoid any risk to her, or whether I would lift against the wind and soar right over her. This latter I did. She had already got her horse in hand when I came up to her. Her woman's body lay along his neck, and she glanced up as I, with wings aspread, and every nerve in a state of tension, swept over her.

Then I had landed, and was going back to where her horse stood still and trembling.

We exchanged no greetings. She slid from her saddle into my arms, and for one instant I held her.

"Those great wings," she said, and that was all.

She lay in my arms, and I thought for a moment she had fainted.

"Very near a nasty accident," said Cothope, coming up and regarding our grouping with disfavour. He took her horse by the bridle. "Very dangerous thing coming across us like that."

Beatrice disengaged herself from me, stood for a moment trembling, and then sat down on the turf "I'll just sit down for a moment," she said.

"Oh!" she said.

She covered her face with her hands, while Cothope looked at her with an expression between suspicion and impatience.

For some moments nobody moved. Then Cothope remarked that perhaps he'd better get her water.

As for me, I was filled with a new outrageous idea, begotten I scarcely know how from this incident, with its instant contacts and swift emotions, and that was that I must make love to and possess

Beatrice. I see no particular reason why that thought should have come to me in that moment, but it did. I do not believe that before then I had thought of our relations in such terms at all. Suddenly, as I remember it, the factor of passion came. She crouched there, and I stood over her, and neither of us said a word. But it was just as though something had been shouted from the sky.

Cothope had gone twenty paces perhaps when she uncovered her face. “I shan’t want any water,” she said. “Call him back.”

VI

After that the spirit of our relations changed. The old ease had gone. She came to me less frequently, and when she came she would have some one with her, usually old Carnaby, and he would do the bulk of the talking. All through September she was away. When we were alone together there was a curious constraint. We became clouds of inexpressible feeling towards one another; we could think of nothing that was not too momentous for words.

Then came the smash of Lord Roberts A, and I found myself with a bandaged face in a bedroom in the Bedley Corner dower-house with Beatrice presiding over an inefficient nurse, Lady Osprey very pink and shocked in the background, and my aunt jealously intervening.

My injuries were much more showy than serious, and I could have been taken to Lady Grove next day, but Beatrice would not permit that, and kept me at Bedley Corner three clear days. In the afternoon of the second day she became extremely solicitous for the proper aeration of the nurse, packed her off for an hour in a brisk rain, and sat by me alone.

I asked her to marry me.

All the whole I must admit it was not a situation that lent itself to eloquence. I lay on my back and talked through bandages, and with some little difficulty, for my tongue and mouth had swollen. But I was feverish and in pain, and the emotional suspense I had been in so long with regard to her became now an unendurable impatience.

“Comfortable?” she asked.

“Yes.”

“Shall I read to you?”

“No. I want to talk.”

“You can’t. I’d better talk to you.”

“No,” I said, “I want to talk to you.”

She came and stood by my bedside and looked me in the eyes. “I don’t — I don’t want you to talk to me,” she said. “I thought you couldn’t talk.”

“I get few chances — of you.”

“You’d better not talk. Don’t talk now. Let me chatter instead. You ought not to talk.”

“It isn’t much,” I said.

“I’d rather you didn’t.”

“I’m not going to be disfigured,” I said. “Only a scar.”

“Oh!” she said, as if she had expected something quite different. “Did you think you’d become a sort of gargoyle?”

“L’Homme qui Rit! — I didn’t know. But that’s all right. Jolly flowers those are!”

“Michaelmas daisies,” she said. “I’m glad you’r not disfigured, and those are perennial sunflowers. Do you know no flowers at all? When I saw you on the ground I certainly thought you were dead. You ought to have been, by all the rules of the game.”

She said some other things, but I was thinking of my next move.

“Are we social equals?” I said abruptly.

She stared at me. “Queer question,” she said.

“But are we?”

“H’m. Difficult to say. But why do you ask? Is the daughter of a courtesy Baron who died — of general disreputableness, I believe — before his father — ? I give it up. Does it matter?”

“No. My mind is confused. I want to know if you will marry me.”

She whitened and said nothing. I suddenly felt I must plead with her. “Damn these bandages!” I said, breaking into ineffectual febrile rage.

She roused herself to her duties as nurse. “What are you doing? Why are you trying to sit up? Sit down! Don’t touch your bandages. I told you not to talk.”

She stood helpless for a moment, then took me firmly by the shoulders and pushed me back upon the pillow. She gripped the wrist

of the hand I had raised to my face.

"I told you not to talk," she whispered close to my face. "I asked you not to talk. Why couldn't you do as I asked you?"

"You've been avoiding me for a month," I said.

"I know. You might have known. Put your hand back — down by your side."

I obeyed. She sat on the edge of the bed. A flush had come to her cheeks, and her eyes were very bright. "I asked you," she repeated, "not to talk."

My eyes questioned her mutely.

She put her hand on my chest. Her eyes were tormented.

"How can I answer you now?" she said.

"How can I say anything now?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

She made no answer.

"Do you mean it must be 'No'?"

She nodded.

"But" I said, and my whole soul was full of accusations.

"I know," she said. "I can't explain. I can't. But it has to be 'No!' It can't be. It's utterly, finally, for ever impossible.... Keep your hands still!"

"But," I said, "when we met again—"

"I can't marry. I can't and won't."

She stood up. "Why did you talk?" she cried, "couldn't you SEE?"

She seemed to have something it was impossible to say.

She came to the table beside my bed and pulled the Michaelmas daisies awry. "Why did you talk like that?" she said in a tone of infinite bitterness. "To begin like that!"

"But what is it?" I said. "Is it some circumstance — my social position?"

"Oh, DAMN your social position!" she cried.

She went and stood at the further window, staring out at the rain. For a long time we were absolutely still. The wind and rain came in little gusts upon the pane. She turned to me abruptly.

"You didn't ask me if I loved you," she said.

"Oh, if it's THAT!" said I.

“It’s not that,” she said. “But if you want to know—” She paused.

“I do,” she said.

We stared at one another.

“I do — with all my heart, if you want to know.”

“Then, why the devil — ?” I asked.

She made no answer. She walked across the room to the piano and began to play, rather noisily and rapidly, with odd gusts of emphasis, the shepherd’s pipe music from the last act in “Tristan and Isolde.” Presently she missed a note, failed again, ran her finger heavily up the scale, struck the piano passionately with her fist, making a feeble jar in the treble, jumped up, and went out of the room....

The nurse found me still wearing my helmet of bandages, partially dressed, and pottering round the room to find the rest of my clothes. I was in a state of exasperated hunger for Beatrice, and I was too inflamed and weakened to conceal the state of my mind. I was feebly angry because of the irritation of dressing, and particularly of the struggle to put on my trousers without being able to see my legs. I was staggering about, and once I had fallen over a chair and I had upset the jar of Michaelmas daisies.

I must have been a detestable spectacle. “I’ll go back to bed,” said I, “if I may have a word with Miss Beatrice. I’ve got something to say to her. That’s why I’m dressing.”

My point was conceded, but there were long delays. Whether the household had my ultimatum or whether she told Beatrice directly I do not know, and what Lady Osprey can have made of it in the former case I don’t imagine.

At last Beatrice came and stood by my bedside. “Well?” she said.

“All I want to say,” I said with the querulous note of a misunderstood child, “is that I can’t take this as final. I want to see you and talk when I’m better, and write. I can’t do anything now. I can’t argue.”

I was overtaken with self-pity and began to snivel, “I can’t rest. You see? I can’t do anything.”

She sat down beside me again and spoke softly. “I promise I will talk it all over with you again. When you are well. I promise I will meet you somewhere so that we can talk. You can’t talk now.

“I asked you not to talk now. All you want to know you shall

know... Will that do?"

"I'd like to know"

She looked round to see the door was closed, stood up and went to it.

Then she crouched beside me and began whispering very softly and rapidly with her face close to me.

"Dear," she said, "I love you. If it will make you happy to marry me, I will marry you. I was in a mood just now — a stupid, inconsiderate mood. Of course I will marry you. You are my prince, my king. Women are such things of mood — or I would have behaved differently. We say 'No' when we mean 'Yes' — and fly into crises. So now, Yes — yes — yes. I will. I can't even kiss you. Give me your hand to kiss that. Understand, I am yours. Do you understand? I am yours just as if we had been married fifty years. Your wife — Beatrice. Is that enough? Now — now will you rest?"

"Yes," I said, "but why?"

"There are complications. There are difficulties. When you are better you will be able to — understand them. But now they don't matter. Only you know this must be secret — for a time. Absolutely secret between us. Will you promise that?"

"Yes," I said, "I understand. I wish I could kiss you."

She laid her head down beside mine for a moment and then she kissed my hand.

"I don't care what difficulties there are," I said, and I shut my eyes.

VII

But I was only beginning to gauge the unaccountable elements in Beatrice. For a week after my return to Lady Grove I had no sign of her, and then she called with Lady Osprey and brought a huge bunch of perennial sunflowers and Michaelmas daisies, "just the old flowers there were in your room," said my aunt, with a relentless eye on me. I didn't get any talk alone with Beatrice then, and she took occasion to tell us she was going to London for some indefinite number of weeks. I couldn't even pledge her to write to me, and when she did it was a brief, enigmatical, friendly letter with not a word of the reality

between us.

I wrote back a love letter — my first love letter — and she made no reply for eight days. Then came a scrawl: “I can’t write letters. Wait till we can talk. Are you better?”

I think the reader would be amused if he could see the papers on my desk as I write all this, the mangled and disfigured pages, the experimental arrangements of notes, the sheets of suggestions balanced in constellations, the blottesque intellectual battlegrounds over which I have been fighting. I find this account of my relations to Beatrice quite the most difficult part of my story to write. I happen to be a very objective-minded person, I forget my moods, and this was so much an affair of moods. And even such moods and emotions as I recall are very difficult to convey. To me it is about as difficult as describing a taste or a scent.

Then the objective story is made up of little things that are difficult to set in a proper order. And love in an hysterical passion, now high, now low, now exalted, and now intensely physical. No one has ever yet dared to tell a love story completely, its alternations, its comings and goings, its debased moments, its hate. The love stories we tell, tell only the net consequence, the ruling effect....

How can I rescue from the past now the mystical quality of Beatrice; my intense longing for her; the overwhelming, irrational, formless desire? How can I explain how intimately that worship mingled with a high, impatient resolve to make her mine, to take her by strength and courage, to do my loving in a violent heroic manner? And then the doubts, the puzzled arrest at the fact of her fluctuations, at her refusal to marry me, at the fact that even when at last she returned to Bedley Corner she seemed to evade me?

That exasperated me and perplexed me beyond measure.

I felt that it was treachery. I thought of every conceivable explanation, and the most exalted and romantic confidence in her did not simply alternate, but mingled with the basest misgivings.

And into the tangle of memories comes the figure of Carnaby, coming out slowly from the background to a position of significance, as an influence, as a predominant strand in the nets that kept us apart, as a rival. What were the forces that pulled her away from me when it was so clearly manifest she loved me? Did she think of marrying

him? Had I invaded some long-planned scheme? It was evident he did not like me, that in some way I spoilt the world for him. She returned to Bedley Corner, and for some weeks she was flitting about me, and never once could I have talk with her alone. When she came to my sheds Carnaby was always with her, jealously observant. (Why the devil couldn't she send him about his business?) The days slipped by and my anger gathered.

All this mingles with the making of Lord Roberts B. I had resolved upon that one night as I lay awake at Bedley Corner; I got it planned out before the bandages were off my face. I conceived this second navigable balloon in a grandiose manner. It was to be a second Lord Roberts A, only more so; it was to be three times as big, large enough to carry three men, and it was to be an altogether triumphant vindication of my claims upon the air. The framework was to be hollow like a bird's bones, airtight, and the air pumped in or out, and the weight of fuel I carried changed. I talked much and boasted to Cothope — whom I suspected of scepticisms about this new type — of what it would do, and it progressed — slowly. It progressed slowly because I was restless and uncertain. At times I would go away to London to snatch some chance of seeing Beatrice there, at times nothing but a day of gliding and hard and dangerous exercise would satisfy me. And now in the newspapers, in conversation, in everything about me, arose a new invader of my mental states. Something was happening to the great schemes of my uncle's affairs; people were beginning to doubt, to question. It was the first quiver of his tremendous insecurity, the first wobble of that gigantic credit top he had kept spinning so long.

There were comings and goings, November and December slipped by. I had two unsatisfactory meetings with Beatrice, meetings that had no privacy — in which we said things of the sort that need atmosphere, baldly and furtively. I wrote to her several times and she wrote back notes that I would sometimes respond to altogether, sometimes condemn as insincere evasions. "You don't understand. I can't just now explain. Be patient with me. Leave things a little while to me." She wrote.

I would talk aloud to these notes and wrangle over them in my workroom — while the plans of Lord Roberts B waited.

“You don’t give me a chance!” I would say. “Why don’t you let me know the secret? That’s what I’m for — to settle difficulties! to tell difficulties to!”

And at last I could hold out no longer against these accumulating pressures.

I took an arrogant, outrageous line that left her no loopholes; I behaved as though we were living in a melodrama.

“You must come and talk to me,” I wrote, “or I will come and take you. I want you — and the time runs away.”

We met in a ride in the upper plantations. It must have been early in January, for there was snow on the ground and on the branches of the trees. We walked to and fro for an hour or more, and from the first I pitched the key high in romance and made understandings impossible. It was our worst time together. I boasted like an actor, and she, I know not why, was tired and spiritless.

Now I think over that talk in the light of all that has happened since, I can imagine how she came to me full of a human appeal I was too foolish to let her make. I don’t know. I confess I have never completely understood Beatrice. I confess I am still perplexed at many things she said and did. That afternoon, anyhow, I was impossible. I posed and scolded. I was — I said it — for “taking the Universe by the throat!”

“If it was only that,” she said, but though I heard, I did not heed her.

At last she gave way to me and talked no more. Instead she looked at me — as a thing beyond her controlling, but none the less interesting — much as she had looked at me from behind the skirts of Lady Drew in the Warren when we were children together.

Once even I thought she smiled faintly.

“What are the difficulties” I cried, “there’s no difficulty I will not overcome for you! Do your people think I’m no equal for you? Who says it? My dear, tell me to win a title! I’ll do it in five years!...

“Here am I just grown a man at the sight of you. I have wanted something to fight for. Let me fight for you!...

“I’m rich without intending it. Let me mean it, give me an honourable excuse for it, and I’ll put all this rotten old Warren of England at your feet!”

I said such things as that. I write them down here in all their resounding base pride. I said these empty and foolish things, and they are part of me. Why should I still cling to pride and be ashamed? I shouted her down.

I passed from such megalomania to petty accusations.

"You think Carnaby is a better man than I?" I said.

"No!" she cried, stung to speech. "No!"

"You think we're unsubstantial. You've listened to all these rumours Boom has started because we talked of a newspaper of our own. When you are with me you know I'm a man; when you get away from me you think I'm a cheat and a cad.... There's not a word of truth in the things they say about us. I've been slack. I've left things. But we have only to exert ourselves. You do not know how wide and far we have spread our nets. Even now we have a coup — an expedition — in hand. It will put us on a footing."...

Her eyes asked mutely and asked in vain that I would cease to boast of the very qualities she admired in me.

In the night I could not sleep for thinking of that talk and the vulgar things I had said in it. I could not understand the drift my mind had taken. I was acutely disgusted. And my unwonted doubts about myself spread from a merely personal discontent to our financial position. It was all very well to talk as I had done of wealth and power and peerages, but what did I know nowadays of my uncle's position? Suppose in the midst of such boasting and confidence there came some turn I did not suspect, some rottenness he had concealed from me? I resolved I had been playing with aeronautics long enough; that next morning I would go to him and have things clear between us.

I caught an early train and went up to the Hardingham.

I went up to the Hardingham through a dense London fog to see how things really stood. Before I had talked to my uncle for ten minutes I felt like a man who has just awakened in a bleak, inhospitable room out of a grandiose dream.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

HOW I STOLE THE HEAPS OF QUAP FROM MORDET ISLAND

I

"We got to make a fight for it," said my uncle. "We got to face the music!"

I remember that even at the sight of him I had a sense of impending calamity. He sat under the electric light with the shadow of his hair making bars down his face. He looked shrunken, and as though his skin had suddenly got loose and yellow. The decorations of the room seemed to have lost freshness, and outside the blinds were up — there was not so much fog as a dun darkness. One saw the dingy outlines of the chimneys opposite quite distinctly, and then a sky of such brown as only London can display.

"I saw a placard," I said: "'More Ponderevity.'"

"That's Boom," he said. "Boom and his damned newspapers. He's trying to fight me down. Ever since I offered to buy the Daily Decorator he's been at me. And he thinks consolidating Do Ut cut down the ads. He wants everything, damn him! He's got no sense of dealing. I'd like to bash his face!"

"Well," I said, "what's to be done?"

"Keep going," said my uncle.

"I'll smash Boom yet," he said, with sudden savagery.

"Nothing else?" I asked.

"We got to keep going. There's a scare on. Did you notice the rooms? Half the people out there this morning are reporters. And if I talk they touch it up!... They didn't used to touch things up! Now they put in character touches — insulting you. Don't know what journalism's coming to. It's all Boom's doing."

He cursed Lord Boom with considerable imaginative vigour.

"Well," said I, "what can he do?"

"Shove us up against time, George; make money tight for us. We been handling a lot of money — and he tightens us up."

“We’re sound?”

“Oh, we’re sound, George. Trust me for that! But all the same — There’s such a lot of imagination in these things.... We’re sound enough. That’s not it.”

He blew. “Damn Boom!” he said, and his eyes over his glasses met mine defiantly.

“We can’t, I suppose, run close hauled for a bitstop expenditure?”

“Where?”

“Well, — Crest Hill”

“What!” he shouted. “Me stop Crest Hill for Boom!” He waved a fist as if to hit his inkpot, and controlled himself with difficulty. He spoke at last in a reasonable voice. “If I did,” he said, “he’d kick up a fuss. It’s no good, even if I wanted to. Everybody’s watching the place. If I was to stop building we’d be down in a week.”

He had an idea. “I wish I could do something to start a strike or something. No such luck. Treat those workmen a sight too well. No, sink or swim, Crest Hill goes on until we’re under water.”

I began to ask questions and irritated him instantly.

“Oh, dash these explanations, George!” he cried; “You only make things look rottener than they are. It’s your way. It isn’t a case of figures. We’re all right — there’s only one thing we got to do.”

“Yes?”

“Show value, George. That’s where this quap comes in; that’s why I fell in so readily with what you brought to me week before last. Here we are, we got our option on the perfect filament, and all we want’s canadium. Nobody knows there’s more canadium in the world than will go on the edge of a sixpence except me and you. Nobody has an idee the perfect filament’s more than just a bit of theorising. Fifty tons of quap and we’d turn that bit of theorising into something. We’d make the lamp trade sit on its tail and howl. We’d put Ediswan and all of ’em into a parcel without last year’s trousers and a hat, and swap ’em off for a pot of geraniums. See? We’d do it through Business Organisations, and there you are! See? Capern’s Patent Filament!

“The Ideal and the Real! George, we’ll do it! We’ll bring it off! And then we’ll give such a facer to Boom, he’ll think for fifty years. He’s laying up for our London and African meeting. Let him. He can

turn the whole paper on to us. He says the Business Organisations shares aren't worth fifty-two and we quote 'em at eighty-four. Well, here we are gettin' ready for him — loading our gun."

His pose was triumphant.

"Yes," I said, "that's all right. But I can't help thinking where should we be if we hadn't just by accident got Capern's Perfect Filament. Because, you know it was an accident — my buying up that."

He crumpled up his nose into an expression of impatient distaste at my unreasonableness.

"And after all, the meeting's in June, and you haven't begun to get the quap! After all, we've still got to load our gun."

"They start on Toosday."

"Have they got the brig?"

"They've got a brig."

"Gordon-Nasmyth!" I doubted.

"Safe as a bank," he said. "More I see of that man the more I like him. All I wish is we'd got a steamer instead of a sailing ship."

"And," I went on, "you seem to overlook what used to weigh with us a bit. This canadium side of the business and the Capern chance has rushed you off your legs. After all — it's stealing, and in its way an international outrage. They've got two gunboats on the coast."

I jumped up and went and stared out at the fog.

"And, by Jove, it's about our only chance! I didn't dream."

I turned on him. "I've been up in the air," I said.

"Heaven knows where I haven't been. And here's our only chance — and you give it to that adventurous lunatic to play in his own way — in a brig!"

"Well, you had a voice—"

"I wish I'd been in this before. We ought to have run out a steamer to Lagos or one of those West Coast places and done it from there. Fancy a brig in the channel at this time of year, if it blows southwest!"

"I dessay you'd have shoved it, George. Still you know, George.... I believe in him."

"Yes," I said. "Yes, I believe in him, too. In a way. Still—"

We took up a telegram that was lying on his desk and opened it.

His face became a livid yellow. He put the flimsy paper down with a slow, reluctant movement and took off his glasses.

"George," he said, "the luck's against us."

"What?"

He grimaced with his mouth — in the queerest way at the telegram.

"That."

I took it up and read:

"Motor smash compound fracture of the leg gordon nasmyth what price mordet now"

For a moment neither of us spoke.

"That's all right," I said at last.

"Eh?" said my uncle.

"I'M going. I'll get that quap or bust."

II

I had a ridiculous persuasion that I was "saving the situation."

"I'm going," I said quite consciously and dramatically. I saw the whole affair — how shall I put it? — in American colours.

I sat down beside him. "Give me all the data you've got," I said, "and I'll pull this thing off."

"But nobody knows exactly where—"

"Nasmyth does, and he'll tell me."

"He's been very close," said my uncle, and regarded me.

"He'll tell me all right, now he's smashed."

He thought. "I believe he will."

"George," he said, "if you pull this thing off — Once or twice before you've stepped in — with that sort of Woosh of yours—"

He left the sentence unfinished.

"Give me that note-book," I said, "and tell me all you know. Where's the ship? Where's Pollack? And where's that telegram from? If that quap's to be got, I'll get it or bust. If you'll hold on here until I get back with it."...

And so it was I jumped into the wildest adventure of my life.

I requisitioned my uncle's best car forthwith. I went down that night to the place of despatch named on Nasmyth's telegram,

Bampton S.O. Oxon, routed him out with a little trouble from that centre, made things right with him and got his explicit directions; and I was inspecting the Maud Mary with young Pollack, his cousin and aide, the following afternoon. She was rather a shock to me and not at all in my style, a beast of a brig inured to the potato trade, and she reeked from end to end with the faint, subtle smell of raw potatoes so that it prevailed even over the temporary smell of new paint. She was a beast of a brig, all hold and dirty framework, and they had ballasted her with old iron and old rails and iron sleepers, and got a miscellaneous lot of spades and iron wheelbarrows against the loading of the quap. I thought her over with Pollack, one of those tall blond young men who smoke pipes and don't help much, and then by myself, and as a result I did my best to sweep Gravesend clean of wheeling planks, and got in as much cord and small rope as I could for lashing. I had an idea we might need to run up a jetty. In addition to much ballast she held, remotely hidden in a sort of inadvertent way a certain number of ambiguous cases which I didn't examine, but which I gathered were a provision against the need of a trade.

The captain was a most extraordinary creature, under the impression we were after copper ore; he was a Roumanian Jew, with twitching, excitable features, who had made his way to a certificate after some preliminary naval experiences in the Black Sea. The mate was an Essex man of impenetrable reserve. The crew were astoundingly ill-clad and destitute and dirty; most of them youths, unwashed, out of colliers. One, the cook was a mulatto; and one, the best-built fellow of them all, was a Breton. There was some subterfuge about our position on board — I forget the particulars now — I was called the supercargo and Pollack was the steward. This added to the piratical flavour that insufficient funds and Gordon-Nasmyth's original genius had already given the enterprise.

Those two days of bustle at Gravesend, under dingy skies, in narrow, dirty streets, were a new experience for me. It is like nothing else in my life. I realised that I was a modern and a civilised man. I found the food filthy and the coffee horrible; the whole town stank in my nostrils, the landlord of the Good Intent on the quay had a stand-up quarrel with us before I could get even a hot bath, and the bedroom I slept in was infested by a quantity of exotic but voracious

flat parasites called locally “bugs,” in the walls, in the woodwork, everywhere. I fought them with insect powder, and found them comatose in the morning. I was dipping down into the dingy underworld of the contemporary state, and I liked it no better than I did my first dip into it when I stayed with my Uncle Nicodemus Frapp at the bakery at Chatham — where, by-the-by, we had to deal with cockroaches of a smaller, darker variety, and also with bugs of sorts.

Let me confess that through all this time before we started I was immensely self-conscious, and that Beatrice played the part of audience in my imagination throughout. I was, as I say, “saving the situation,” and I was acutely aware of that. The evening before we sailed, instead of revising our medicine-chest as I had intended, I took the car and ran across country to Lady Grove to tell my aunt of the journey I was making, dress, and astonish Lady Osprey by an after dinner call.

The two ladies were at home and alone beside a big fire that seemed wonderfully cheerful after the winter night. I remember the effect of the little parlour in which they sat as very bright and domestic. Lady Osprey, in a costume of mauve and lace, sat on a chintz sofa and played an elaborately spread-out patience by the light of a tall shaded lamp; Beatrice, in a whiteness that showed her throat, smoked a cigarette in an armchair and read with a lamp at her elbow. The room was white-panelled and chintz-curtained. About those two bright centres of light were warm dark shadow, in which a circular mirror shone like a pool of brown water. I carried off my raid by behaving like a slave of etiquette. There were moments when I think I really made Lady Osprey believe that my call was an unavoidable necessity, that it would have been negligent of me not to call just how and when I did. But at the best those were transitory moments.

They received me with disciplined amazement. Lady Osprey was interested in my face and scrutinised the scar. Beatrice stood behind her solicitude. Our eyes met, and in hers I could see startled interrogations.

“I’m going,” I said, “to the west coast of Africa.”

They asked questions, but it suited my mood to be vague.

“We’ve interests there. It is urgent I should go. I don’t know when

I may return.”

After that I perceived Beatrice surveyed me steadily.

The conversation was rather difficult. I embarked upon lengthy thanks for their kindness to me after my accident. I tried to understand Lady Osprey’s game of patience, but it didn’t appear that Lady Osprey was anxious for me to understand her patience. I came to the verge of taking my leave.

“You needn’t go yet,” said Beatrice, abruptly.

She walked across to the piano, took a pile of music from the cabinet near, surveyed Lady Osprey’s back, and with a gesture to me dropped it all deliberately on to the floor.

“Must talk,” she said, kneeling close to me as I helped her to pick it up. “Turn my pages. At the piano.”

“I can’t read music.”

“Turn my pages.”

Presently we were at the piano, and Beatrice was playing with noisy inaccuracy. She glanced over her shoulder and Lady Osprey had resumed her patience. The old lady was very pink, and appeared to be absorbed in some attempt to cheat herself without our observing it.

“Isn’t West Africa a vile climate?” “Are you going to live there?” “Why are you going?”

Beatrice asked these questions in a low voice and gave me no chance to answer. Then taking a rhythm from the music before her, she said —

“At the back of the house is a garden — a door in the wall — on the lane. Understand?”

I turned over the pages without any effect on her playing.

“When?” I asked.

She dealt in chords. “I wish I COULD play this!” she said. “Midnight.”

She gave her attention to the music for a time.

“You may have to wait.”

“I’ll wait.”

She brought her playing to an end by — as school boys say— “stashing it up.”

“I can’t play to-night,” she said, standing up and meeting my

eyes. “I wanted to give you a parting voluntary.”

“Was that Wagner, Beatrice?” asked Lady Osprey looking up from her cards. “It sounded very confused.”

I took my leave. I had a curious twinge of conscience as I parted from Lady Osprey. Either a first intimation of middle-age or my inexperience in romantic affairs was to blame, but I felt a very distinct objection to the prospect of invading this good lady’s premises from the garden door. I motored up to the pavilion, found Cothope reading in bed, told him for the first time of West Africa, spent an hour with him in settling all the outstanding details of Lord Roberts B, and left that in his hands to finish against my return. I sent the motor back to Lady Grove, and still wearing my fur coat — for the January night was damp and bitterly cold — walked to Bedley Corner. I found the lane to the back of the Dower House without any difficulty, and was at the door in the wall with ten minutes to spare. I lit a cigar and fell to walking up and down. This queer flavour of intrigue, this nocturnal garden-door business, had taken me by surprise and changed my mental altitudes. I was startled out of my egotistical pose and thinking intently of Beatrice, of that elfin quality in her that always pleased me, that always took me by surprise, that had made her for example so instantly conceive this meeting.

She came within a minute of midnight; the door opened softly and she appeared, a short, grey figure in a motor-coat of sheepskin, bareheaded to the cold drizzle. She flitted up to me, and her eyes were shadows in her dusky face.

“Why are you going to West Africa?” she asked at once.

“Business crisis. I have to go.”

“You’re not going — ? You’re coming back?”

“Three or four months,” I said, “at most.”

“Then, it’s nothing to do with me?”

“Nothing,” I said. “Why should it have?”

“Oh, that’s all right. One never knows what people think or what people fancy.” She took me by the arm, “Let’s go for a walk,” she said.

I looked about me at darkness and rain.

“That’s all right,” she laughed. “We can go along the lane and into the Old Woking Road. Do you mind? Of course you don’t. My

head. It doesn't matter. One never meets anybody."

"How do you know?"

"I've wandered like this before.... Of course. Did you think" — she nodded her head back at her home— "that's all?"

"No, by Jove!" I cried; "it's manifest it isn't."

She took my arm and turned me down the lane. "Night's my time," she said by my side. "There's a touch of the werewolf in my blood. One never knows in these old families.... I've wondered often.... Here we are, anyhow, alone in the world. Just darkness and cold and a sky of clouds and wet. And we — together.

"I like the wet on my face and hair, don't you? When do you sail?"

I told her to-morrow.

"Oh, well, there's no to-morrow now. You and I!" She stopped and confronted me.

"You don't say a word except to answer!"

"No," I said.

"Last time you did all the talking."

"Like a fool. Now—"

We looked at each other's two dim faces. "You're glad to be here?"

"I'm glad — I'm beginning to be — it's more than glad."

She put her hands on my shoulders and drew me down to kiss her.

"Ah!" she said, and for a moment or so we just clung to one another.

"That's all," she said, releasing herself. "What bundles of clothes we are to-night. I felt we should kiss some day again. Always. The last time was ages ago."

"Among the fern stalks."

"Among the bracken. You remember. And your lips were cold. Were mine? The same lips — after so long — after so much!... And now let's trudge through this blotted-out world together for a time. Yes, let me take your arm. Just trudge. See? Hold tight to me because I know the way — and don't talk — don't talk. Unless you want to talk.... Let me tell you things! You see, dear, the whole world is blotted out — it's dead and gone, and we're in this place. This dark wild place.... We're dead. Or all the world is dead. No! We're dead.

No one can see us. We're shadows. We've got out of our positions, out of our bodies — and together. That's the good thing of it — together. But that's why the world can't see us and why we hardly see the world. Sssh! Is it all right?"

"It's all right," I said.

We stumbled along for a time in a close silence. We passed a dim-lit, rain-veiled window.

"The silly world," she said, "the silly world! It eats and sleeps. If the wet didn't patter so from the trees we'd hear it snoring. It's dreaming such stupid things — stupid judgments. It doesn't know we are passing, we two — free of it — clear of it. You and I!"

We pressed against each other reassuringly.

"I'm glad we're dead," she whispered. "I'm glad we're dead. I was tired of it, dear. I was so tired of it, dear, and so entangled."

She stopped abruptly.

We splashed through a string of puddles. I began to remember things I had meant to say.

"Look here!" I cried. "I want to help you beyond measure. You are entangled. What is the trouble? I asked you to marry me. You said you would. But there's something."

My thoughts sounded clumsy as I said them.

"Is it something about my position?... Or is it something — perhaps — about some other man?"

There was an immense assenting silence.

"You've puzzled me so. At first — I mean quite early — I thought you meant to make me marry you."

"I did."

"And then?"

"To-night," she said after a long pause, "I can't explain. No! I can't explain. I love you! But — explanations! To-night my dear, here we are in the world alone — and the world doesn't matter. Nothing matters. Here I am in the cold with you and my bed away there deserted. I'd tell you — I will tell you when things enable me to tell you, and soon enough they will. But to-night — I won't — I won't."

She left my side and went in front of me.

She turned upon me. "Look here," she said, "I insist upon your

being dead. Do you understand? I'm not joking. To-night you and I are out of life. It's our time together. There may be other times, but this we won't spoil. We're — in Hades if you like. Where there's nothing to hide and nothing to tell. No bodies even. No bothers. We loved each other — down there — and were kept apart, but now it doesn't matter. It's over.... If you won't agree to that — I will go home."

"I wanted," I began.

"I know. Oh! my dear, if you'd only understand I understand. If you'd only not care — and love me to-night."

"I do love you," I said.

"Then LOVE me," she answered, "and leave all the things that bother you. Love me! Here I am!"

"But!—"

"No!" she said.

"Well, have your way."

So she carried her point, and we wandered into the night together and Beatrice talked to me of love....

I'd never heard a woman before in all my life who could talk of love, who could lay bare and develop and touch with imagination all that mass of fine emotion every woman, it may be, hides. She had read of love, she had thought of love, a thousand sweet lyrics had sounded through her brain and left fine fragments in her memory; she poured it out, all of it, shamelessly, skilfully, for me. I cannot give any sense of that talk, I cannot even tell how much of the delight of it was the magic of her voice, the glow of her near presence. And always we walked swathed warmly through a chilly air, along dim, interminable greasy roads — with never a soul abroad it seemed to us, never a beast in the fields.

"Why do people love each other?" I said.

"Why not?"

"But why do I love you? Why is your voice better than any voice, your face sweeter than any face?"

"And why do I love you?" she asked; "not only what is fine in you, but what isn't? Why do I love your dullness, your arrogance? For I do. To — night I love the very raindrops on the fur of your coat!"...

So we talked; and at last very wet, still glowing but a little tired, we parted at the garden door. We had been wandering for two hours in our strange irrational community of happiness, and all the world about us, and particularly Lady Osprey and her household, had been asleep — and dreaming of anything rather than Beatrice in the night and rain.

She stood in the doorway, a muffled figure with eyes that glowed.

"Come back," she whispered. "I shall wait for you."

She hesitated.

She touched the lapel of my coat. "I love you NOW," she said, and lifted her face to mine.

I held her to me and was atremble from top to toe. "O God!" I cried. "And I must go!"

She slipped from my arms and paused, regarding me. For an instant the world seemed full of fantastic possibilities.

"Yes, GO!" she said, and vanished and slammed the door upon me, leaving me alone like a man new fallen from fairyland in the black darkness of the night.

III

That expedition to Mordet Island stands apart from all the rest of my life, detached, a piece by itself with an atmosphere of its own. It would, I suppose, make a book by itself — it has made a fairly voluminous official report — but so far as this novel of mine goes it is merely an episode, a contributory experience, and I mean to keep it at that.

Vile weather, an impatient fretting against unbearable slowness and delay, sea — sickness, general discomfort and humiliating self — revelation are the master values of these memories.

I was sick all through the journey out. I don't know why. It was the only time I was ever sea-sick, and I have seen some pretty bad weather since I became a boat-builder. But that phantom smell of potatoes was peculiarly vile to me. Coming back on the brig we were all ill, every one of us, so soon as we got to sea, poisoned, I firmly believe, by quap. On the way out most of the others recovered in a few days, but the stuffiness below, the coarse food, the cramped dirty

accommodation kept me, if not actually sea-sick, in a state of acute physical wretchedness the whole time. The ship abounded in cockroaches and more intimate vermin. I was cold all the time until after we passed Cape Verde, then I became steamily hot; I had been too preoccupied with Beatrice and my keen desire to get the Maud Mary under way at once, to consider a proper wardrobe for myself, and in particular I lacked a coat. Heavens! how I lacked that coat! And, moreover, I was cooped up with two of the worst bores in Christendom, Pollack and the captain. Pollack, after conducting his illness in a style better adapted to the capacity of an opera house than a small compartment, suddenly got insupportably well and breezy, and produced a manly pipe in which he smoked a tobacco as blond as himself, and divided his time almost equally between smoking it and trying to clean it. "There's only three things you can clean a pipe with," he used to remark with a twist of paper in hand. "The best's a feather, the second's a straw, and the third's a girl's hairpin. I never see such a ship. You can't find any of 'em. Last time I came this way I did find hairpins anyway, and found 'em on the floor of the captain's cabin. Regular deposit. Eh?... Feelin' better?"

At which I usually swore.

"Oh, you'll be all right soon. Don't mind my puffin' a bit? Eh?"

He never tired of asking me to "have a hand at Nap. Good game. Makes you forget it, and that's half the battle."

He would sit swaying with the rolling of the ship and suck at his pipe of blond tobacco and look with an inexpressibly sage but somnolent blue eye at the captain by the hour together. "Captain's a Card," he would say over and over again as the outcome of these meditations. "He'd like to know what we're up to. He'd like to know — no end."

That did seem to be the captain's ruling idea. But he also wanted to impress me with the notion that he was a gentleman of good family and to air a number of views adverse to the English, to English literature, to the English constitution, and the like.

He had learnt the sea in the Roumanian navy, and English out of a book; he would still at times pronounce the e's at the end of "there" and "here"; he was a naturalised Englishman, and he drove me into a reluctant and uncongenial patriotism by his everlasting carping at

things English. Pollack would set himself to “draw him out.” Heaven alone can tell how near I came to murder.

Fifty-three days I had outward, cooped up with these two and a shy and profoundly depressed mate who read the Bible on Sundays and spent the rest of his leisure in lethargy, three and fifty days of life cooped up in a perpetual smell, in a persistent sick hunger that turned from the sight of food, in darkness, cold and wet, in a lightly ballasted ship that rolled and pitched and swayed. And all the time the sands in the hour-glass of my uncle’s fortunes were streaming out. Misery! Amidst it all I remember only one thing brightly, one morning of sunshine in the Bay of Biscay and a vision of frothing waves, sapphire green, a bird following our wake and our masts rolling about the sky. Then wind and rain close in on us again.

You must not imagine they were ordinary days, days, I mean, of an average length; they were not so much days as long damp slabs of time that stretched each one to the horizon, and much of that length was night. One paraded the staggering deck in a borrowed sou’-wester hour after hour in the chilly, windy, splashing and spitting darkness, or sat in the cabin, bored and ill, and looked at the faces of those inseparable companions by the help of a lamp that gave smell rather than light. Then one would see going up, up, up, and then sinking down, down, down, Pollack, extinct pipe in mouth, humorously observant, bringing his mind slowly to the seventy-seventh decision that the captain was a Card, while the words flowed from the latter in a nimble incessant good. “Dis England eet is not a country aristocratic, no! Eet is a glorified bourgeoisie! Eet is plutocratic. In England dere is no aristocracy since de Wars of Roses. In the rest of Europe east of the Latins, yes; in England, no.

“Eet is all middle-class, youra England. Everything you look at, middle-class. Respectable! Everything good — eet is, you say, shocking. Madame Grundy! Eet is all limited and computing and self-seeking. Dat is why your art is so limited, youra fiction, your philosophin, why you are all so inartistic. You want nothing but profit! What will pay! What would you?”...

He had all those violent adjuncts to speech we Western Europeans have abandoned, shruggings of the shoulders, waving of the arms, thrusting out of the face, wonderful grimaces and twiddlings of the

hands under your nose until you wanted to hit them away. Day after day it went on, and I had to keep any anger to myself, to reserve myself for the time ahead when it would be necessary to see the quap was got aboard and stowed — knee deep in this man's astonishment. I knew he would make a thousand objections to all we had before us. He talked like a drugged man. It ran glibly over his tongue. And all the time one could see his seamanship fretting him, he was gnawed by responsibility, perpetually uneasy about the ship's position, perpetually imagining dangers. If a sea hit us exceptionally hard he'd be out of the cabin in an instant making an outcry of inquiries, and he was pursued by a dread of the hold, of ballast shifting, of insidious wicked leaks. As we drew near the African coast his fear of rocks and shoals became infectious.

"I do not know dis coast," he used to say. "I cama hera because Gordon-Nasmyth was coming too. Den he does not come!"

"Fortunes of war," I said, and tried to think in vain if any motive but sheer haphazard could have guided Gordon-Nasmyth in the choice of these two men. I think perhaps Gordon-Nasmyth had the artistic temperament and wanted contrasts, and also that the captain helped him to express his own malignant Anti-Britishism.

He was indeed an exceptionally inefficient captain. On the whole I was glad I had come even at the eleventh hour to see to things.

(The captain, by-the-by, did at last, out of sheer nervousness, get aground at the end of Mordet's Island, but we got off in an hour or so with a swell and a little hard work in the boat.)

I suspected the mate of his opinion of the captain long before he expressed it. He was, I say, a taciturn man, but one day speech broke through him. He had been sitting at the table with his arms folded on it, musing drearily, pipe in mouth, and the voice of the captain drifted down from above.

The mate lifted his heavy eyes to me and regarded me for a moment. Then he began to heave with the beginnings of speech. He disembarrassed himself of his pipe. I cowered with expectation. Speech was coming at last. Before he spoke he nodded reassuringly once or twice.

"E—"

He moved his head strangely and mysteriously, but a child might

have known he spoke of the captain.

"E's a foreigner."

He regarded me doubtfully for a time, and at last decided for the sake of lucidity to clench the matter.

"That's what E is — a DAGO!"

He nodded like a man who gives a last tap to a nail, and I could see he considered his remark well and truly laid. His face, though still resolute, became as tranquil and uneventful as a huge hall after a public meeting has dispersed out of it, and finally he closed and locked it with his pipe.

"Roumanian Jew, isn't he?" I said.

He nodded darkly and almost forbiddingly.

More would have been too much. The thing was said. But from that time forth I knew I could depend upon him and that he and I were friends. It happens I never did have to depend upon him, but that does not affect our relationship.

Forward the crew lived lives very much after the fashion of ours, more crowded, more cramped and dirty, wetter, steamier, more verminous. The coarse food they had was still not so coarse but that they did not think they were living "like fighting cocks." So far as I could make out they were all nearly destitute men; hardly any of them had a proper sea outfit, and what small possessions they had were a source of mutual distrust. And as we pitched and floundered southward they gambled and fought, were brutal to one another, argued and wrangled loudly, until we protested at the uproar.

There's no romance about the sea in a small sailing ship as I saw it. The romance is in the mind of the landsman dreamer. These brigs and schooners and brigantines that still stand out from every little port are relics from an age of petty trade, as rotten and obsolescent as a Georgian house that has sunken into a slum. They are indeed just floating fragments of slum, much as icebergs are floating fragments of glacier. The civilised man who has learnt to wash, who has developed a sense of physical honour, of cleanly temperate feeding, of time, can endure them no more. They pass, and the clanking coal-wasting steamers will follow them, giving place to cleaner, finer things....

But so it was I made my voyage to Africa, and came at last into a

world of steamy fogs and a hot smell of vegetable decay, and into sound and sight of surf and distant intermittent glimpses of the coast. I lived a strange concentrated life through all that time, such a life as a creature must do that has fallen in a well. All my former ways ceased, all my old vistas became memories.

The situation I was saving was very small and distant now; I felt its urgency no more. Beatrice and Lady Grove, my uncle and the Hardingham, my soaring in the air and my habitual wide vision of swift effectual things, became as remote as if they were in some world I had left for ever....

IV

All these African memories stand by themselves. It was for me an expedition into the realms of undisciplined nature out of the world that is ruled by men, my first bout with that hot side of our mother that gives you the jungle — that cold side that gives you the air-eddy I was beginning to know passing well. They are memories woven upon a fabric of sunshine and heat and a constant warm smell of decay. They end in rain — such rain as I had never seen before, a vehement, a frantic downpouring of water, but our first slow passage through the channels behind Mordet's Island was in incandescent sunshine.

There we go in my memory still, a blistered dirty ship with patched sails and a battered mermaid to present Maud Mary, sounding and taking thought between high ranks of forest whose trees come out knee-deep at last in the water. There we go with a little breeze on our quarter, Mordet Island rounded and the quap, it might be within a day of us.

Here and there strange blossoms woke the dank intensities of green with a trumpet call of colour. Things crept among the jungle and peeped and dashed back rustling into stillness. Always in the sluggishly drifting, opaque water were eddyings and stirrings; little rushes of bubbles came chuckling up light-heartedly from this or that submerged conflict and tragedy; now and again were crocodiles like a stranded fleet of logs basking in the sun. Still it was by day, a dreary stillness broken only by insect sounds and the creaking and

flapping of our progress, by the calling of the soundings and the captain's confused shouts; but in the night as we lay moored to a clump of trees the darkness brought a thousand swampy things to life and out of the forest came screaming and howlings, screaming and yells that made us glad to be afloat. And once we saw between the tree stems long blazing fires. We passed two or three villages landward, and brown-black women and children came and stared at us and gesticulated, and once a man came out in a boat from a creek and hailed us in an unknown tongue; and so at last we came to a great open place, a broad lake rimmed with a desolation of mud and bleached refuse and dead trees, free from crocodiles or water birds or sight or sound of any living thing, and saw far off, even as Nasmyth had described, the ruins of the deserted station, and hard by two little heaps of buff-hued rubbish under a great rib of rock, the quap! The forest receded. The land to the right of us fell away and became barren, and far on across notch in its backbone was surf and the sea.

We took the ship in towards those heaps and the ruined jetty slowly and carefully. The captain came and talked.

"This is eet?" he said.

"Yes," said I.

"Is eet for trade we have come?"

This was ironical.

"No," said I.

"Gordon-Nasmyth would haf told me long ago what it ees for we haf come."

"I'll tell you now," I said. "We are going to lay in as close as we can to those two heaps of stuff — you see them? — under the rock. Then we are going to chuck all our ballast overboard and take those in. Then we're going home."

"May I presume to ask — is eet gold?"

"No," I said incivilly, "it isn't."

"Then what is it?"

"It's stuff — of some commercial value."

"We can't do eet," he said.

"We can," I answered reassuringly.

"We can't," he said as confidently. "I don't mean what you mean. You know so liddle — But — dis is forbidden country."

I turned on him suddenly angry and met bright excited eyes. For a minute we scrutinised one another. Then I said, “That’s our risk. Trade is forbidden. But this isn’t trade.... This thing’s got to be done.”

His eyes glittered and he shook his head....

The brig stood in slowly through the twilight toward this strange scorched and blistered stretch of beach, and the man at the wheel strained his ears to listening the low-voiced angry argument that began between myself and the captain, that was presently joined by Pollack. We moored at last within a hundred yards of our goal, and all through our dinner and far into the night we argued intermittently and fiercely with the captain about our right to load just what we pleased. “I will haf nothing to do with eet,” he persisted. “I wash my hands.” It seemed that night as though we argued in vain. “If it is not trade,” he said, “it is prospecting and mining. That is worse. Any one who knows anything — outside England — knows that is worse.”

We argued and I lost my temper and swore at him. Pollack kept cooler and chewed his pipe watchfully with that blue eye of his upon the captain’s gestures. Finally I went on deck to cool. The sky was overcast I discovered all the men were in a knot forward, staring at the faint quivering luminosity that had spread over the heaps of quap, a phosphorescence such as one sees at times on rotting wood. And about the beach east and west there were patches and streaks of something like diluted moonshine....

In the small hours I was still awake and turning over scheme after scheme in my mind whereby I might circumvent the captain’s opposition. I meant to get that quap aboard if I had to kill some one to do it. Never in my life had I been so thwarted! After this intolerable voyage! There came a rap at my cabin door and then it opened and I made out a bearded face. “Come in,” I said, and a black voluble figure I could just see obscurely came in to talk in my private ear and fill my cabin with its whisperings and gestures. It was the captain. He, too, had been awake and thinking things over. He had come to explain — enormously. I lay there hating him and wondering if I and Pollack could lock him in his cabin and run the ship without him. “I do not want to spoil dis expedition,” emerged from a cloud of protestations, and then I was able to disentangle “a

commission — shush a small commission — for special risks!" "Special risks" became frequent. I let him explain himself out. It appeared he was also demanding an apology for something I had said. No doubt I had insulted him generously. At last came definite offers. I broke my silence and bargained.

"Pollack!" I cried and hammered the partition.

"What's up?" asked Pollack.

I stated the case concisely.

There came a silence.

"He's a Card," said Pollack. "Let's give him his commission. I don't mind."

"Eh?" I cried.

"I said he was a Card, that's all," said Pollack. "I'm coming."

He appeared in my doorway a faint white figure joined our vehement whisperings.

We had to buy the captain off; we had to promise him ten per cent. of our problematical profits. We were to give him ten per cent. on what we sold the cargo for over and above his legitimate pay, and I found in my out-bargained and disordered state small consolation in the thought that I, as the Gordon-Nasmyth expedition, was to sell the stuff to myself as Business Organisations. And he further exasperated me by insisting on having our bargain in writing. "In the form of a letter," he insisted.

"All right," I acquiesced, "in the form of a letter. Here goes! Get a light!"

"And the apology," he said, folding up the letter.

"All right," I said; "Apology."

My hand shook with anger as I wrote, and afterwards I could not sleep for hate of him. At last I got up. I suffered, I found, from an unusual clumsiness. I struck my toe against my cabin door, and cut myself as I shaved. I found myself at last pacing the deck under the dawn in a mood of extreme exasperation. The sun rose abruptly and splashed light blindingly into my eyes and I swore at the sun. I found myself imagining fresh obstacles with the men and talking aloud in anticipatory rehearsal of the consequent row.

The malaria of the quap was already in my blood.

V

Sooner or later the ridiculous embargo that now lies upon all the coast eastward of Mordet Island will be lifted and the reality of the deposits of quap ascertained. I am sure that we were merely taking the outcrop of a stratum of nodulated deposits that dip steeply seaward. Those heaps were merely the crumbled out contents of two irregular cavities in the rock; they are as natural as any talus or heap of that kind, and the mud along the edge of the water for miles is mixed with quap, and is radio-active and lifeless and faintly phosphorescent at night. But the reader will find the full particulars of my impression of all this in the Geological Magazine for October, 1905, and to that I must refer him. There, too, he will find my unconfirmed theories of its nature. If I am right it is something far more significant from the scientific point of view than those incidental constituents of various rare metals, pitchblende, rutile, and the like, upon which the revolutionary discoveries of the last decade are based. Those are just little molecular centres of disintegration, of that mysterious decay and rotting of those elements, elements once regarded as the most stable things in nature. But there is something — the only word that comes near it is CANCEROUS — and that is not very near, about the whole of quap, something that creeps and lives as a disease lives by destroying; an elemental stirring and disarrangement, incalculably maleficent and strange.

This is no imaginative comparison of mine. To my mind radio-activity is a real disease of matter. Moreover, it is a contagious disease. It spreads. You bring those debased and crumbling atoms near others and those too presently catch the trick of swinging themselves out of coherent existence. It is in matter exactly what the decay of our old culture is in society, a loss of traditions and distinctions and assured reactions. When I think of these inexplicable dissolvent centres that have come into being in our globe — these quap heaps are surely by far the largest that have yet been found in the world; the rest as yet mere specks in grains and crystals — I am haunted by a grotesque fancy of the ultimate eating away and dry-rotting and dispersal of all our world. So that while man still struggles and dreams his very substance will change and crumble

from beneath him. I mention this here as a queer persistent fancy. Suppose, indeed, that is to be the end of our planet; no splendid climax and finale, no towering accumulation of achievements, but just — atomic decay! I add that to the ideas of the suffocating comet, the dark body out of space, the burning out of the sun, the distorted orbit, as a new and far more possible end — as Science can see ends — to this strange by-play of matter that we call human life. I do not believe this can be the end; no human soul can believe in such an end and go on living, but to it science points as a possible thing, science and reason alike. If single human beings — if one single ricketty infant — can be born as it were by accident and die futile, why not the whole race? These are questions I have never answered, that now I never attempt to answer, but the thought of quap and its mysteries brings them back to me.

I can witness that the beach and mud for two miles or more either way was a lifeless beach — lifeless as I could have imagined no tropical mud could ever be, and all the dead branches and leaves and rotting dead fish and so forth that drifted ashore became presently shrivelled and white. Sometimes crocodiles would come up out of the water and bask, and now and then water birds would explore the mud and rocky ribs that rose out of it, in a mood of transitory speculation. That was its utmost admiration. And the air felt at once hot and austere, dry and blistering, and altogether different the warm moist embrace that had met us at our first African landfall and to which we had grown accustomed.

I believe that the primary influence of the quap upon us was to increase the conductivity of our nerves, but that is a mere unjustifiable speculation on my part. At any rate it gave a sort of east wind effect to life. We all became irritable, clumsy, languid and disposed to be impatient with our languor. We moored the brig to the rocks with difficulty, and got aground on mud and decided to stick there and tow off when we had done — the bottom was as greasy as butter. Our efforts to fix up planks and sleepers in order to wheel the quap aboard were as ill-conceived as that sort of work can be — and that sort of work can at times be very ill-conceived. The captain had a superstitious fear of his hold: he became wildly gesticulatory and expository and incompetent at the bare thought of it. His shouts still

echo in my memory, becoming as each crisis approached less and less like any known tongue.

But I cannot now write the history of those days of blundering and toil: of how Milton, one of the boys, fell from a plank to the beach, thirty feet perhaps, with his barrow and broke his arm and I believe a rib, of how I and Pollack set the limb and nursed him through the fever that followed, of how one man after another succumbed to a feverish malaria, and how I — by virtue of my scientific reputation — was obliged to play the part of doctor and dose them with quinine, and then finding that worse than nothing, with rum and small doses of Easton's Syrup, of which there chanced to be a case of bottles aboard — Heaven and Gordon-Nasmyth know why. For three long days we lay in misery and never shipped a barrow-load. Then, when they resumed, the men's hands broke out into sores. There were no gloves available; and I tried to get them, while they shovelled and wheeled, to cover their hands with stockings or greased rags. They would not do this on account of the heat and discomfort. This attempt of mine did, however, direct their attention to the quap as the source of their illness and precipitated what in the end finished our lading, an informal strike. "We've had enough of this," they said, and they meant it. They came aft to say as much. They cowed the captain.

Through all these days the weather was variously vile, first a furnace heat under a sky of a scowling intensity of blue, then a hot fog that stuck in one's throat like wool and turned the men on the planks into colourless figures of giants, then a wild burst of thunderstorms, mad elemental uproar and rain. Through it all, against illness, heat, confusion of mind, one master impetus prevailed with me, to keep the shipping going, to maintain one motif at least, whatever else arose or ceased, the chuff of the spades, the squeaking and shriek of the barrows, the pluppa, pluppa, pluppa, as the men came trotting along the swinging high planks, and then at last, the dollop, dollop, as the stuff shot into the hold. "Another barrow-load, thank God! Another fifteen hundred, or it may be two thousand pounds, for the saving of Ponderevo!..."

I found out many things about myself and humanity in those weeks of effort behind Mordet Island. I understand now the heart of

the sweater, of the harsh employer, of the nigger-driver. I had brought these men into a danger they didn't understand, I was fiercely resolved to overcome their opposition and bend and use them for my purpose, and I hated the men. But I hated all humanity during the time that the quap was near me.

And my mind was pervaded, too, by a sense of urgency and by the fear that we should be discovered and our proceedings stopped. I wanted to get out to sea again — to be beating up northward with our plunder. I was afraid our masts showed to seaward and might betray us to some curious passer on the high sea. And one evening near the end I saw a canoe with three natives far off down the lake; I got field-glasses from the captain and scrutinised them, and I could see them staring at us. One man might have been a half-breed and was dressed in white. They watched us for some time very quietly and then paddled off into some channel in the forest shadows.

And for three nights running, so that it took a painful grip upon my inflamed imagination, I dreamt of my uncle's face, only that it was ghastly white like a clown's, and the throat was cut from ear to ear — a long ochreous cut. "Too late," he said; "Too late!..."

VI

A day or so after we had got to work upon the quap I found myself so sleepless and miserable that the ship became unendurable. Just before the rush of sunrise I borrowed Pollack's gun, walked down the planks, clambered over the quap heaps and prowled along the beach. I went perhaps a mile and a half that day and some distance beyond the ruins of the old station. I became interested in the desolation about me, and found when I returned that I was able to sleep for nearly an hour. It was delightful to have been alone for so long, — no captain, no Pollack, no one. Accordingly I repeated this expedition the next morning and the next until it became a custom with me. There was little for me to do once the digging and wheeling was organised, and so these prowlings of mine grew longer and longer, and presently I began to take food with me.

I pushed these walks far beyond the area desolated by the quap. On the edges of that was first a zone of stunted vegetation, then a sort

of swampy jungle that was difficult to penetrate, and then the beginnings of the forest, a scene of huge tree stems and tangled creeper ropes and roots mingled with oozy mud. Here I used to loaf in a state between botanising and reverie — always very anxious to know what was up above in the sunlight — and here it was I murdered a man.

It was the most unmeaning and purposeless murder imaginable. Even as I write down its well-remembered particulars there comes again the sense of its strangeness, its pointlessness, its incompatibility with any of the neat and definite theories people hold about life and the meaning of the world. I did this thing and I want to tell of my doing it, but why I did it and particularly why I should be held responsible for it I cannot explain.

That morning I had come upon a track in the forest, and it had occurred to me as a disagreeable idea that this was a human pathway. I didn't want to come upon any human beings. The less our expedition saw of the African population the better for its prospects. Thus far we had been singularly free from native pestering. So I turned back and was making my way over mud and roots and dead fronds and petals scattered from the green world above when abruptly I saw my victim.

I became aware of him perhaps forty feet off standing quite still and regarding me.

He wasn't by any means a pretty figure. He was very black and naked except for a dirty loin-cloth, his legs were ill-shaped and his toes spread wide and the upper edge of his cloth and a girdle of string cut his clumsy abdomen into folds. His forehead was low, his nose very flat and his lower lip swollen and purplish-red. His hair was short and fuzzy, and about his neck was a string and a little purse of skin. He carried a musket, and a powder-flask was stuck in his girdle. It was a curious confrontation. There opposed to him stood I, a little soiled, perhaps, but still a rather elaborately civilised human being, born, bred and trained in a vague tradition. In my hand was an unaccustomed gun. And each of us was essentially a teeming, vivid brain, tensely excited by the encounter, quite unaware of the other's mental content or what to do with him.

He stepped back a pace or so, stumbled and turned to run.

“Stop,” I cried; “stop, you fool!” and started to run after him, shouting such things in English. But I was no match for him over the roots and mud.

I had a preposterous idea. “He mustn’t get away and tell them!”

And with that instantly I brought both feet together, raised my gun, aimed quite coolly, drew the trigger carefully and shot him neatly in the back.

I saw, and saw with a leap of pure exaltation, the smash of my bullet between his shoulder blades. “Got him,” said I, dropping my gun and down he flopped and died without a groan. “By Jove!” I cried with note of surprise, “I’ve killed him!” I looked about me and then went forward cautiously, in a mood between curiosity and astonishment, to look at this man whose soul I had flung so unceremoniously out of our common world. I went to him, not as one goes to something one has made or done, but as one approaches something found.

He was frightfully smashed out in front; he must have died in the instant. I stooped and raised him by his shoulder and realised that. I dropped him, and stood about and peered about me through the trees. “My word!” I said. He was the second dead human being — apart, I mean, from surgical properties and mummies and common shows of that sort — that I have ever seen. I stood over him wondering, wondering beyond measure.

A practical idea came into that confusion. Had any one heard the gun?

I reloaded.

After a time I felt securer, and gave my mind again to the dead I had killed. What must I do?

It occurred to me that perhaps I ought to bury him. At any rate, I ought to hide him. I reflected coolly, and then put my gun within easy reach and dragged him by the arm towards a place where the mud seemed soft, and thrust him in. His powder-flask slipped from his loin-cloth, and I went back to get it. Then I pressed him down with the butt of my rifle.

Afterwards this all seemed to me most horrible, but at the time it was entirely a matter-of-fact transaction. I looked round for any other visible evidence of his fate, looked round as one does when one

packs one's portmanteau in an hotel bedroom.

When I got my bearings, and carefully returned towards the ship. I had the mood of grave concentration of a boy who has lapsed into poaching. And the business only began to assume proper proportions for me as I got near the ship, to seem any other kind of thing than the killing of a bird or rabbit.

In the night, however, it took on enormous and portentous forms. "By God!" I cried suddenly, starting wide awake; "but it was murder!"

I lay after that wide awake, staring at my memories. In some odd way these visions mixed up with my dream of in my uncle in his despair. The black body which saw now damaged and partly buried, but which, nevertheless, I no longer felt was dead but acutely alive and perceiving, I mixed up with the ochreous slash under my uncle's face. I tried to dismiss this horrible obsession from my mind, but it prevailed over all my efforts.

The next day was utterly black with my sense of that ugly creature's body. I am the least superstitious of men, but it drew me. It drew me back into those thickets to the very place where I had hidden him.

Some evil and detestable beast had been at him, and he lay disinterred.

Methodically I buried his swollen and mangled carcass again, and returned to the ship for another night of dreams. Next day for all the morning I resisted the impulse to go to him, and played nap with Pollack with my secret gnawing at me, and in the evening started to go and was near benighted. I never told a soul of them of this thing I had done.

Next day I went early, and he had gone, and there were human footmarks and ugly stains round the muddy hole from which he had been dragged.

I returned to the ship, disconcerted and perplexed. That day it was the men came aft, with blistered hands and faces, and sullen eyes. When they proclaimed, through Edwards, their spokesman, "We've had enough of this, and we mean it," I answered very readily, "So have I. Let's go."

VII

We were none too soon. People had been reconnoitring us, the telegraph had been at work, and we were not four hours at sea before we ran against the gunboat that had been sent down the coast to look for us and that would have caught us behind the island like a beast in a trap. It was a night of driving cloud that gave intermittent gleams of moonlight; the wind and sea were strong and we were rolling along through a drift of rails and mist. Suddenly the world was white with moonshine. The gunboat came out as a long dark shape wallowing on the water to the east.

She sighted the Maud Mary at once, and fired some sort of popgun to arrest us.

The mate turned to me.

"Shall I tell the captain?"

"The captain be damned" said I, and we let him sleep through two hours of chase till a rainstorm swallowed us up. Then we changed our course and sailed right across them, and by morning only her smoke was showing.

We were clear of Africa — and with the booty aboard I did not see what stood between us and home.

For the first time since I had fallen sick in the Thames my spirits rose. I was sea-sick and physically disgusted, of course, but I felt kindly in spite of my qualms. So far as I could calculate then the situation was saved. I saw myself returning triumphantly into the Thames, and nothing on earth to prevent old Capern's Perfect Filament going on the market in fortnight. I had the monopoly of electric lamps beneath my feet.

I was released from the spell of that bloodstained black body all mixed up with grey-black mud. I was going back to baths and decent food and aeronautics and Beatrice. I was going back to Beatrice and my real life again — out of this well into which I had fallen. It would have needed something more than sea-sickness and quap fever to prevent my spirits rising.

I told the captain that I agreed with him that the British were the scum of Europe, the westward drift of all the people, a disgusting rabble, and I lost three pounds by attenuated retail to Pollack at

ha'penny nap and euchre.

And then you know, as we got out into the Atlantic this side of Cape Verde, the ship began to go to pieces. I don't pretend for one moment to understand what happened. But I think Greiffenhagen's recent work on the effects of radium upon ligneous tissue does rather carry out my idea that emanations from quap have rapid rotting effect upon woody fibre.

From the first there had been a different feel about the ship, and as the big winds and waves began to strain her she commenced leaking. Soon she was leaking — not at any particular point, but everywhere. She did not spring a leak, I mean, but water came in first of all near the decaying edges of her planks, and then through them.

I firmly believe the water came through the wood. First it began to ooze, then to trickle. It was like trying to carry moist sugar in a thin paper bag. Soon we were taking in water as though we had opened a door in her bottom.

Once it began, the thing went ahead beyond all fighting. For a day or so we did our best, and I can still remember in my limbs and back the pumping — the fatigue in my arms and the memory of a clear little dribble of water that jerked as one pumped, and of knocking off and the being awakened to go on again, and of fatigue piling up upon fatigue. At last we ceased to think of anything but pumping; one became a thing of torment enchanted, doomed to pump for ever. I still remember it as pure relief when at last Pollack came to me pipe in mouth.

"The captain says the damned thing's going down right now;" he remarked, chewing his mouthpiece. "Eh?"

"Good idea!" I said. "One can't go on pumping for ever."

And without hurry or alacrity, sullenly and wearily we got into the boats and pulled away from the Maud Mary until we were clear of her, and then we stayed resting on our oars, motionless upon a glassy sea, waiting for her to sink. We were all silent, even the captain was silent until she went down. And then he spoke quite mildly in an undertone.

"Dat is the first ship I haf ever lost.... And it was not a fair game! It wass not a cargo any man should take. No!"

I stared at the slow eddies that circled above the departed Maud

Mary, and the last chance of Business Organisations. I felt weary beyond emotion. I thought of my heroics to Beatrice and my uncle, of my prompt "I'LL go," and of all the ineffectual months I had spent after this headlong decision. I was moved to laughter at myself and fate.

But the captain and the men did not laugh. The men scowled at me and rubbed their sore and blistered hands, and set themselves to row....

As all the world knows we were picked up by the Union Castle liner, Portland Castle.

The hairdresser aboard was a wonderful man, and he even improvised me a dress suit, and produced a clean shirt and warm underclothing. I had a hot bath, and dressed and dined and drank a bottle of Burgundy.

"Now," I said, "are there any newspapers? I want to know what's been happening in the world."

My steward gave me what he had, but I landed at Plymouth still largely ignorant of the course of events. I shook off Pollack, and left the captain and mate in an hotel, and the men in a Sailor's Home until I could send to pay them off, and I made my way to the station.

The newspapers I bought, the placards I saw, all England indeed resounded to my uncle's bankruptcy.

BOOK THE FOURTH

THE AFTERMATH OF TONO-BUNGAY

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE STICK OF THE ROCKET

I

That evening I talked with my uncle in the Hardingham for the last time. The atmosphere of the place had altered quite shockingly. Instead of the crowd of importunate courtiers there were just half a dozen uninviting men, journalists waiting for an interview. Ropper the big commissionaire was still there, but now indeed he was defending my uncle from something more than time-wasting intrusions. I found the little man alone in the inner office pretending to work, but really brooding. He was looking yellow and deflated.

"Lord!" he said at the sight of me. "You're lean, George. It makes that scar of yours show up."

We regarded each other gravely for a time.

"Quap," I said, "is at the bottom of the Atlantic. There's some bills — We've got to pay the men."

"Seen the papers?"

"Read 'em all in the train."

"At bay," he said. "I been at bay for a week.... Yelping round me.... And me facing the music. I'm feelin' a bit tired."

He blew and wiped his glasses.

"My stomack isn't what it was," he explained. "One finds it — these times. How did it all happen, George? Your Marconigram — it took me in the wind a bit."

I told him concisely. He nodded to the paragraphs of my narrative and at the end he poured something from a medicine bottle into a sticky little wineglass and drank it. I became aware of the presence of drugs, of three or four small bottles before him among his disorder of papers, of a faint elusively familiar odour in the room.

"Yes," he said, wiping his lips and recorking the bottle. "You've done your best, George. The luck's been against us."

He reflected, bottle in hand. "Sometimes the luck goes with you and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it doesn't. And then where are

you? Grass in the oven! Fight or no fight."

He asked a few questions and then his thoughts came back to his own urgent affairs. I tried to get some comprehensive account of the situation from him, but he would not give it.

"Oh, I wish I'd had you. I wish I'd had you, George. I've had a lot on my hands. You're clear headed at times."

"What has happened?"

"Oh! Boom! — infernal things."

"Yes, but — how? I'm just off the sea, remember."

"It'd worry me too much to tell you now. It's tied up in a skein."

He muttered something to himself and mused darkly, and roused himself to say —

"Besides — you'd better keep out of it. It's getting tight. Get 'em talking. Go down to Crest Hill and fly. That's YOUR affair."

For a time his manner set free queer anxieties in my brain again.

I will confess that that Mordet Island nightmare of mine returned, and as I looked at him his hand went out for the drug again. "Stomach, George," he said.

"I been fightin' on that. Every man fights on some thing — gives way somewheres — head, heart, liver — something. Zzzz. Gives way somewhere. Napoleon did at last. All through the Waterloo campaign, his stomach — it wasn't a stomach! Worse than mine, no end."

The mood of depression passed as the drug worked within him. His eyes brightened. He began to talk big. He began to dress up the situation for my eyes, to recover what he had admitted to me. He put it as a retreat from Russia. There were still the chances of Leipzig.

"It's a battle, George — a big fight. We're fighting for millions. I've still chances. There's still a card or so. I can't tell all my plans — like speaking on the stroke."

"You might," I began.

"I can't, George. It's like asking to look at some embryo. You got to wait. I know. In a sort of way, I know. But to tell it — No! You been away so long. And everything's got complicated."

My perception of disastrous entanglements deepened with the rise of his spirits. It was evident that I could only help to tie him up in whatever net was weaving round his mind by forcing questions and

explanations upon him. My thoughts flew off at another angle. “How’s Aunt Susan?” said I.

I had to repeat the question. His busy whispering lips stopped for a moment, and he answered in the note of one who repeats a formula.

“She’d like to be in the battle with me. She’d like to be here in London. But there’s corners I got to turn alone.” His eye rested for a moment on the little bottle beside him. “And things have happened.

“You might go down now and talk to her,” he said, in a directer voice. “I shall be down to-morrow night, I think.”

He looked up as though he hoped that would end our talk.

“For the week-end?” I asked.

“For the week-end. Thank God for week-ends, George!”

II

My return home to Lady Grove was a very different thing from what I had anticipated when I had got out to sea with my load of quap and fancied the Perfect-Filament was safe within my grasp. As I walked through the evening light along the downs, the summer stillness seemed like the stillness of something newly dead. There were no lurking workmen any more, no cyclists on the high road.

Cessation was manifest everywhere. There had been, I learnt from my aunt, a touching and quite voluntary demonstration when the Crest Hill work had come to an end and the men had drawn their last pay; they had cheered my uncle and hooted the contractors and Lord Boom.

I cannot now recall the manner in which my aunt and I greeted one another. I must have been very tired there, but whatever impression was made has gone out of my memory. But I recall very clearly how we sat at the little round table near the big window that gave on the terrace, and dined and talked. I remember her talking of my uncle.

She asked after him, and whether he seemed well. “I wish I could help,” she said. “But I’ve never helped him much, never. His way of doing things was never mine. And since — since — . Since he began to get so rich, he’s kept things from me. In the old days — it was different....

“There he is — I don’t know what he’s doing. He won’t have me near him....

“More’s kept from me than anyone. The very servants won’t let me know. They try and stop the worst of the papers — Boom’s things — from coming upstairs.... I suppose they’ve got him in a corner, George. Poor old Teddy! Poor old Adam and Eve we are! Ficial Receivers with flaming swords to drive us out of our garden! I’d hoped we’d never have another Trek. Well — anyway, it won’t be Crest Hill.... But it’s hard on Teddy. He must be in such a mess up there. Poor old chap. I suppose we can’t help him. I suppose we’d only worry him. Have some more soup George — while there is some?...”

The next day was one of those days of strong perception that stand out clear in one’s memory when the common course of days is blurred. I can recall now the awakening in the large familiar room that was always kept for me, and how I lay staring at its chintz-covered chairs, its spaced fine furniture, its glimpse of the cedars without, and thought that all this had to end.

I have never been greedy for money, I have never wanted to be rich, but I felt now an immense sense of impending deprivation. I read the newspapers after breakfast — I and my aunt together — and then I walked up to see what Cothope had done in the matter of Lord Roberts B. Never before had I appreciated so acutely the ample brightness of the Lady Grove gardens, the dignity and wide peace of all about me. It was one of those warm mornings in late May that have won all the glory of summer without losing the gay delicacy of spring. The shrubbery was bright with laburnum and lilac, the beds swarmed with daffodils and narcissi and with lilies of the valley in the shade.

I went along the well-kept paths among the rhododendra and through the private gate into the woods where the bluebells and common orchid were in profusion. Never before had I tasted so completely the fine sense of privilege and ownership. And all this has to end, I told myself, all this has to end.

Neither my uncle nor I had made any provision for disaster; all we had was in the game, and I had little doubt now of the completeness of our ruin. For the first time in my life since he had sent me that

wonderful telegram of his I had to consider that common anxiety of mankind, — Employment. I had to come off my magic carpet and walk once more in the world.

And suddenly I found myself at the cross drives where I had seen Beatrice for the first time after so many years. It is strange, but so far as I can recollect I had not thought of her once since I had landed at Plymouth. No doubt she had filled the background of my mind, but I do not remember one definite, clear thought. I had been intent on my uncle and the financial collapse.

It came like a blow in the face now; all that, too, had to end!

Suddenly I was filled with the thought of her and a great longing for her. What would she do when she realised our immense disaster? What would she do? How would she take it? It filled me with astonishment to realise how little I could tell....

Should I perhaps presently happen upon her?

I went on through the plantations and out upon the downs, and thence I saw Cothope with a new glider of his own design soaring down wind to my old familiar "grounding" place. To judge by its long rhythm it was a very good glider. "Like Cothope's cheek," thought I, "to go on with the research. I wonder if he's keeping notes.... But all this will have to stop."

He was sincerely glad to see me. "It's been a rum go," he said.

He had been there without wages for a month, a man forgotten in the rush of events.

"I just stuck on and did what I could with the stuff. I got a bit of money of my own — and I said to myself, 'Well, here you are with the gear and no one to look after you. You won't get such a chance again, my boy, not in all your born days. Why not make what you can with it? '"

"How's Lord Roberts B?"

Cothope lifted his eyebrows. "I've had to refrain," he said. "But he's looking very handsome."

"Gods!" I said, "I'd like to get him up just once before we smash. You read the papers? You know we're going to smash?"

"Oh! I read the papers. It's scandalous, sir, such work as ours should depend on things like that. You and I ought to be under the State, sir, if you'll excuse me."

“Nothing to excuse,” I said. “I’ve always been a Socialist — of a sort — in theory. Let’s go and have a look at him. How is he? Deflated?”

“Just about quarter full. That last oil glaze of yours holds the gas something beautiful. He’s not lost a cubic metre a week.”...

Cothope returned to Socialism as we went toward the sheds.

“Glad to think you’re a Socialist, sir,” he said, “it’s the only civilised state. I been a Socialist some years — off the Clarion. It’s a rotten scramble, this world. It takes the things we make and invent and it plays the silly fool with ‘em. We scientific people, we’ll have to take things over and stop all this financing and advertisement and that. It’s too silly. It’s a noosance. Look at us!”

Lord Roberts B, even in his partially deflated condition in his shed, was a fine thing to stare up at. I stood side by side with Cothope regarding him, and it was borne in upon me more acutely than ever that all this had to end. I had a feeling just like the feeling of a boy who wants to do wrong, that I would use up the stuff while I had it before the creditors descended. I had a queer fancy, too, I remember, that if I could get into the air it would advertise my return to Beatrice.

“We’ll fill her,” I said concisely.

“It’s all ready,” said Cothope, and added as an afterthought, “unless they cut off the gas.”...

I worked and interested myself with Cothope all the morning and for a time forgot my other troubles. But the thought of Beatrice flooded me slowly and steadily. It became an unintelligent sick longing to see her. I felt that I could not wait for the filling of Lord Roberts B, that I must hunt her up and see her soon. I got everything forward and lunched with Cothope, and then with the feeblest excuses left him in order to prowl down through the woods towards Bedley Corner. I became a prey to wretched hesitations and diffidence. Ought I to go near her now? I asked myself, reviewing all the social abasements of my early years. At last, about five, I called at the Dower House. I was greeted by their Charlotte — with a forbidding eye and a cold astonishment.

Both Beatrice and Lady Osprey were out.

There came into my head some prowling dream of meeting her. I

went along the lane towards Woking, the lane down which we had walked five months ago in the wind and rain.

I mooned for a time in our former footsteps, then swore and turned back across the fields, and then conceived a distaste for Cothope and went Downward. At last I found myself looking down on the huge abandoned masses of the Crest Hill house.

That gave my mind a twist into a new channel. My uncle came uppermost again. What a strange, melancholy emptiness of intention that stricken enterprise seemed in the even evening sunlight, what vulgar magnificence and crudity and utter absurdity! It was as idiotic as the pyramids. I sat down on the stile, staring at it as though I had never seen that forest of scaffold poles, that waste of walls and bricks and plaster and shaped stones, that wilderness of broken soil and wheeling tracks and dumps before. It struck me suddenly as the compactest image and sample of all that passes for Progress, of all the advertisement-inflated spending, the aimless building up and pulling down, the enterprise and promise of my age. This was our fruit, this was what he had done, I and my uncle, in the fashion of our time. We were its leaders and exponents, we were the thing it most flourishingly produced. For this futility in its end, for an epoch of such futility, the solemn scroll of history had unfolded....

"Great God!" I cried, "but is this Life?"

For this the armies drilled, for this the Law was administered and the prisons did their duty, for this the millions toiled and perished in suffering, in order that a few of us should build palaces we never finished, make billiard-rooms under ponds, run imbecile walls round irrational estates, scorch about the world in motor-cars, devise flying-machines, play golf and a dozen such foolish games of ball, crowd into chattering dinner parties, gamble and make our lives one vast, dismal spectacle of witless waste! So it struck me then, and for a time I could think of no other interpretation. This was Life! It came to me like a revelation, a revelation at once incredible and indisputable of the abysmal folly of our being.

III

I was roused from such thoughts by the sound of footsteps behind

me.

I turned half hopeful — so foolish is a lover's imagination, and stopped amazed. It was my uncle. His face was white — white as I had seen it in my dream.

"Hullo!" I said, and stared. "Why aren't you in London?"

"It's all up," he said....

"Adjudicated?"

"No!"

I stared at him for a moment, and then got off the stile.

We stood swaying and then came forward with a weak motion of his arms like a man who cannot see distinctly, and caught at and leant upon the stile. For a moment we were absolutely still. He made a clumsy gesture towards the great futility below and choked. I discovered that his face was wet with tears, that his wet glasses blinded him. He put up his little fat hand and clawed them off clumsily, felt inefficiently for his pocket-handkerchief, and then, to my horror, as he clung to me, he began to weep aloud, this little, old worldworn swindler. It wasn't just sobbing or shedding tears, it was crying as a child cries. It was oh! terrible!

"It's cruel," he blubbered at last. "They asked me questions. They KEP' asking me questions, George."

He sought for utterance, and spluttered.

"The Bloody bullies!" he shouted. "The Bloody Bullies."

He ceased to weep. He became suddenly rapid and explanatory.

"It's not a fair game, George. They tire you out. And I'm not well. My stomach's all wrong. And I been and got a cold. I always been li'ble to cold, and this one's on my chest. And then they tell you to speak up. They bait you — and bait you, and bait you. It's torture. The strain of it. You can't remember what you said. You're bound to contradict yourself. It's like Russia, George.... It isn't fair play.... Prominent man. I've been next at dinners with that chap, Neal; I've told him stories — and he's bitter! Sets out to ruin me. Don't ask a civil question — bellows." He broke down again. "I've been bellowed at, I been bullied, I been treated like a dog. Dirty cads they are! Dirty cads! I'd rather be a Three-Card Sharper than a barrister; I'd rather sell cat's-meat in the streets.

"They sprung things on me this morning, things I didn't expect.

They rushed me! I'd got it all in my hands and then I was jumped. By Neal! Neal I've given city tips to! Neal! I've helped Neal....

"I couldn't swallow a mouthful — not in the lunch hour. I couldn't face it. It's true, George — I couldn't face it. I said I'd get a bit of air and slipped out and down to the Embankment, and there I took a boat to Richmond. Some idee. I took a rowing boat when I got there and I rowed about on the river for a bit. A lot of chaps and girls there was on the bank laughed at my shirt-sleeves and top hat. Dessay they thought it was a pleasure trip. Fat lot of pleasure! I rowed round for a bit and came in. Then I came on here. Windsor way. And there they are in London doing what they like with me.... I don't care!"

"But" I said, looking down at him, perplexed.

"It's abscondin'. They'll have a warrant."

"I don't understand," I said.

"It's all up, George — all up and over.

"And I thought I'd live in that place, George and die a lord! It's a great place, reely, an imperial — if anyone has the sense to buy it and finish it. That terrace—"

I stood thinking him over.

"Look here!" I said. "What's that about — a warrant? Are you sure they'll get a warrant? I'm sorry uncle; but what have you done?"

"Haven't I told you?"

"Yes, but they won't do very much to you for that. They'll only bring you up for the rest of your examination."

He remained silent for a time. At last he spoke — speaking with difficulty.

"It's worse than that. I've done something. They're bound to get it out. Practically they HAVE got it out."

"What?"

"Writin' things down — I done something."

For the first time in his life, I believe, he felt and looked ashamed. It filled me with remorse to see him suffer so.

"We've all done things," I said. "It's part of the game the world makes us play. If they want to arrest you — and you've got no cards in your hand — ! They mustn't arrest you."

"No. That's partly why I went to Richmond. But I never thought

__”

His little bloodshot eyes stared at Crest Hill.

“That chap Wittaker Wright,” he said, “he had his stuff ready. I haven’t. Now you got it, George. That’s the sort of hole I’m in.”

IV

That memory of my uncle at the gate is very clear and full. I am able to recall even the undertow of my thoughts while he was speaking. I remember my pity and affection for him in his misery growing and stirring within me, my realisation that at any risk I must help him. But then comes indistinctness again. I was beginning to act. I know I persuaded him to put himself in my hands, and began at once to plan and do. I think that when we act most we remember least, that just in the measure that the impulse of our impressions translates itself into schemes and movements, it ceases to record itself in memories. I know I resolved to get him away at once, and to use the Lord Roberts B in effecting that. It was clear he was soon to be a hunted man, and it seemed to me already unsafe for him to try the ordinary Continental routes in his flight. I had to evolve some scheme, and evolve it rapidly, how we might drop most inconspicuously into the world across the water. My resolve to have one flight at least in my airship fitted with this like hand to glove. It seemed to me we might be able to cross over the water in the night, set our airship adrift, and turn up as pedestrian tourists in Normandy or Brittany, and so get away. That, at any rate, was my ruling idea.

I sent off Cothope with a dummy note to Woking, because I did not want to implicate him, and took my uncle to the pavilion. I went down to my aunt, and made a clean breast of the situation. She became admirably competent. We went into his dressing-room and ruthlessly broke his locks. I got a pair of brown boots, a tweed suit and a cap of his, and indeed a plausible walking outfit, and a little game bag for his pedestrian gear; and, in addition, a big motoring overcoat and a supply of rugs to add to those I had at the pavilion. I also got a flask of brandy, and she made sandwiches. I don’t remember any servants appearing, and I forget where she got those sandwiches. Meanwhile we talked. Afterwards I thought with what a

sure confidence we talked to each other.

"What's he done?" she said.

"D'you mind knowing?"

"No conscience left, thank God!"

"I think — forgery!"

There was just a little pause. "Can you carry this bundle?" she asked.

I lifted it.

"No woman ever has respected the law — ever," she said. "It's too silly.... The things it lets you do! And then pulls you up — like a mad nurse minding a child."

She carried some rugs for me through the shrubbery in the darkling.

"They'll think we're going mooning," she said, jerking her head at the household. "I wonder what they make of us — criminals." ... An immense droning note came as if in answer to that. It startled us both for a moment. "The dears!" she said. "It's the gong for dinner!... But I wish I could help little Teddy, George. It's awful to think of him there with hot eyes, red and dry. And I know — the sight of me makes him feel sore. Things I said, George. If I could have seen, I'd have let him have an omnibusful of Scrymgeours. I cut him up. He'd never thought I meant it before.... I'll help all I can, anyhow."

I turned at something in her voice, and got a moon light gleam of tears upon her face.

"Could SHE have helped?" she asked abruptly.

"SHE?"

"That woman."

"My God!" I cried, "HELPED! Those — things don't help!"

"Tell me again what I ought to do," she said after a silence.

I went over the plans I had made for communicating, and the things I thought she might do. I had given her the address of a solicitor she might put some trust in.

"But you must act for yourself," I insisted.

"Roughly," I said, "it's a scramble. You must get what you can for us, and follow as you can."

She nodded.

She came right up to the pavilion and hovered for a time shyly,

and then went away.

I found my uncle in my sitting-room in an arm-chair, with his feet upon the fender of the gas stove, which he had lit, and now he was feebly drunken with my whisky, and very weary in body and spirit, and inclined to be cowardly.

"I lef' my drops," he said.

He changed his clothes slowly and unwillingly. I had to bully him, I had almost to shove him to the airship and tuck him up upon its wicker flat. Single-handed I made but a clumsy start; we scraped along the roof of the shed and bent a van of the propeller, and for a time I hung underneath without his offering a hand to help me to clamber up. If it hadn't been for a sort of anchoring trolley device of Cothope's, a sort of slip anchor running on a rail, we should never have got clear at all.

V

The incidents of our flight in Lord Roberts B do not arrange themselves in any consecutive order. To think of that adventure is like dipping haphazard into an album of views. One is reminded first of this and then of that. We were both lying down on a horizontal plate of basketwork; for Lord Roberts B had none of the elegant accommodation of a balloon. I lay forward, and my uncle behind me in such a position that he could see hardly anything of our flight. We were protected from rolling over simply by netting between the steel stays. It was impossible for us to stand up at all; we had either to lie or crawl on all fours over the basket work. Amidships were lockers made of Watson's Aulite material, — and between these it was that I had put my uncle, wrapped in rugs. I wore sealskin motoring boots and gloves, and a motoring fur coat over my tweeds, and I controlled the engine by Bowden wires and levers forward.

The early part of that night's experience was made up of warmth, of moonlit Surrey and Sussex landscape, and of a rapid and successful flight, ascending and swooping, and then ascending again southward. I could not watch the clouds because the airship overhung me; I could not see the stars nor gauge the meteorological happening, but it was fairly clear to me that a wind shifting between north and

northeast was gathering strength, and after I had satisfied myself by a series of entirely successful expansions and contractions of the real air-worthiness of Lord Roberts B, I stopped the engine to save my petrol, and let the monster drift, checking its progress by the dim landscape below. My uncle lay quite still behind me, saying little and staring in front of him, and I was left to my own thoughts and sensations.

My thoughts, whatever they were, have long since faded out of memory, and my sensations have merged into one continuous memory of an countryside lying, as it seemed, under snow, with square patches of dimness, white phantoms of roads, rents and pools of velvety blackness, and lamp-jewelled houses. I remember a train boring its way like a hastening caterpillar of fire across the landscape, and how distinctly I heard its clatter. Every town and street was buttoned with street lamps. I came quite close to the South Downs near Lewes, and all the lights were out in the houses, and the people gone to bed. We left the land a little to the east of Brighton, and by that time Brighton was well abed. and the brightly lit sea-front deserted. Then I let out the gas chamber to its fullest extent and rose. I like to be high above water.

I do not clearly know what happened in the night. I think I must have dozed, and probably my uncle slept. I remember that once or twice I heard him talking in an eager, muffled voice to himself, or to an imaginary court. But there can be no doubt the wind changed right round into the east, and that we were carried far down the Channel without any suspicion of the immense leeway we were making. I remember the kind of stupid perplexity with which I saw the dawn breaking over a grey waste of water, below, and realised that something was wrong. I was so stupid that it was only after the sunrise I really noticed the trend of the foam caps below, and perceived we were in a severe easterly gale. Even then, instead of heading southeasterly, I set the engine going, headed south, and so continued a course that must needs have either just hit Ushant, or carry us over the Bay of Biscay. I thought I was east of Cherbourg, when I was far to the west and stopped my engine in that belief, and then set it going again. I did actually sight the coast of Brittany to the southeast in the late afternoon, and that it was woke me up to the

gravity of our position. I discovered it by accident in the southeast, when I was looking for it in the southwest. I turned about east and faced the wind for some time, and finding I had no chance in its teeth, went high, where it seemed less violent, and tried to make a course southeast. It was only then that I realised what a gale I was in. I had been going westward, and perhaps even in gusts north of west, at a pace of fifty or sixty miles an hour.

Then I began what I suppose would be called a Fight against the east wind. One calls it a Fight, but it was really almost as unlike a fight as plain sewing. The wind tried to drive me westwardly, and I tried to get as much as I could eastwardly, with the wind beating and rocking us irregularly, but by no means unbearably, for about twelve hours. My hope lay in the wind abating, and our keeping in the air and eastward of Finisterre until it did, and the chief danger was the exhaustion of our petrol. It was a long and anxious and almost meditative time; we were fairly warm, and only slowly getting hungry, and except that my uncle grumbled a little and produced some philosophical reflections, and began to fuss about having a temperature, we talked very little. I was tired and sulky, and chiefly worried about the engine. I had to resist a tendency to crawl back and look at it. I did not care to risk contracting our gas chamber for fear of losing gas. Nothing was less like a fight. I know that in popular magazines, and so forth, all such occasions as this are depicted in terms of hysteria. Captains save their ships engineers complete their bridges, generals conduct their battles, in a state of dancing excitement, foaming recondite technicalities at the lips. I suppose that sort of thing works up the reader, but so far as it professes to represent reality, I am convinced it is all childish nonsense, schoolboys of fifteen, girls of eighteen, and literary men all their lives, may have these squealing fits, but my own experience is that most exciting scenes are not exciting, and most of the urgent moments in life are met by steady-headed men.

Neither I nor my uncle spent the night in ejaculations, nor in humorous allusions, nor any of these things. We remained lumpish.

My uncle stuck in his place and grumbled about his stomach, and occasionally rambled off into expositions of his financial position and denunciations of Neal — he certainly struck out one or two good

phrases for Neal — and I crawled about at rare intervals in a vague sort of way and grunted, and our basketwork creaked continually, and the wind on our quarter made a sort of ruffled flapping in the wall of the gas chamber. For all our wraps we got frightfully cold as the night wore on.

I must have dozed, and it was still dark when I realised with a start that we were nearly due south of, and a long way from, a regularly-flashing lighthouse, standing out before the glow of some great town, and then that the thing that had awakened me was the cessation of our engine, and that we were driving back to the west.

Then, indeed, for a time I felt the grim thrill of life. I crawled forward to the cords of the release valves, made my uncle crawl forward too, and let out the gas until we were falling down through the air like a clumsy glider towards the vague greyness that was land.

Something must have intervened here that I have forgotten.

I saw the lights of Bordeaux when it was quite dark, a nebulous haze against black; of that I am reasonably sure. But certainly our fall took place in the cold, uncertain light of early dawn. I am, at least, equally sure of that. And Mimizan, near where we dropped, is fifty miles from Bordeaux, whose harbour lights I must have seen.

I remember coming down at last with a curious indifference, and actually rousing myself to steer. But the actual coming to earth was exciting enough. I remember our prolonged dragging landfall, and the difficulty I had to get clear, and how a gust of wind caught Lord Roberts B as my uncle stumbled away from the ropes and litter, and dropped me heavily, and threw me on to my knees. Then came the realisation that the monster was almost consciously disentangling itself for escape, and then the light leap of its rebound. The rope slipped out of reach of my hand. I remember running knee-deep in a salt pool in hopeless pursuit of the airship.

As it dragged and rose seaward, and how only after it had escaped my uttermost effort to recapture it, did I realise that this was quite the best thing that could have happened. It drove swiftly over the sandy dunes, lifting and falling, and was hidden by a clump of windbitten trees. Then it reappeared much further off, and still receding. It soared for a time, and sank slowly, and after that I saw it no more. I suppose it fell into the sea and got wetted with salt water and heavy,

and so became deflated and sank.

It was never found, and there was never a report of anyone seeing it after it escaped from me.

VI

But if I find it hard to tell the story of our long flight through the air overseas, at least that dawn in France stands cold and clear and full. I see again almost as if I saw once more with my bodily eyes the ridges of sand rising behind ridges of sand, grey and cold and black-browed, with an insufficient grass. I feel again the clear, cold chill of dawn, and hear the distant barking of a dog. I find myself asking again, "What shall we do now?" and trying to scheme with brain tired beyond measure.

At first my uncle occupied my attention. He was shivering a good deal, and it was all I could do to resist my desire to get him into a comfortable bed at once. But I wanted to appear plausibly in this part of the world. I felt it would not do to turn up anywhere at dawn and rest, it would be altogether too conspicuous; we must rest until the day was well advanced, and then appear as road-stained pedestrians seeking a meal. I gave him most of what was left of the biscuits, emptied our flasks, and advised him to sleep, but at first it was too cold, albeit I wrapped the big fur rug around him.

I was struck now by the flushed weariness of his face, and the look of age the grey stubble on his unshaved chin gave him. He sat crumpled up, shivering and coughing, munching reluctantly, but drinking eagerly, and whimpering a little, a dreadfully pitiful figure to me. But we had to go through with it; there was no way out for us.

Presently the sun rose over the pines, and the sand grew rapidly warm. My uncle had done eating, and sat with his wrists resting on his knees, the most hopeless looking of lost souls.

"I'm ill," he said, "I'm damnably ill! I can feel it in my skin!"

Then — it was horrible to me — he cried, "I ought to be in bed; I ought to be in bed... instead of flying about," and suddenly he burst into tears.

I stood up. "Go to sleep, man!" I said, and took the rug from him, and spread it out and rolled him up in it.

“It’s all very well,” he protested; “I’m not young enough—”

“Lift up your head,” I interrupted, and put his knapsack under it.

“They’ll catch us here, just as much as in an inn,” he grumbled and then lay still.

Presently, after a long time, I perceived he was asleep. His breath came with peculiar wheezings, and every now and again he would cough. I was very stiff and tired myself, and perhaps I dozed. I don’t remember. I remember only sitting, as it seemed, nigh interminably, beside him, too weary even to think in that sandy desolation.

No one came near us; no creature, not even a dog. I roused myself at last, feeling that it was vain to seek to seem other than abnormal, and with an effort that was like lifting a sky of lead, we made our way through the wearisome sand to a farmhouse. There I feigned even a more insufficient French than I possess naturally, and let it appear that we were pedestrians from Biarritz who had lost our way along the shore and got benighted.

This explained us pretty well, I thought, and we got most heartening coffee and a cart to a little roadside station. My uncle grew more and more manifestly ill with every stage of our journey. I got him to Bayonne, where he refused at first to eat, and was afterwards very sick, and then took him shivering and collapsed up a little branch line to a frontier place called Luzon Gare.

We found one homely inn with two small bedrooms, kept by a kindly Basque woman. I got him to bed, and that night shared his room, and after an hour or so of sleep he woke up in a raging fever and with a wandering mind, cursing Neal and repeating long, inaccurate lists of figures. He was manifestly a case for a doctor, and in the morning we got one in. He was a young man from Montpelier, just beginning to practise, and very mysterious and technical and modern and unhelpful. He spoke of cold and exposure, and la grippe and pneumonia. He gave many explicit and difficult directions.... I perceived it devolved upon me to organise nursing and a sick-room. I installed a religieuse in the second bedroom of the inn, and took a room for myself in the inn of Port de Luzon, a quarter of a mile away.

VII

And now my story converges on what, in that queer corner of refuge out of the world, was destined to be my uncle's deathbed. There is a background of the Pyrenees, of blue hills and sunlit houses, of the old castle of Luzon and a noisy cascading river, and for a foreground the dim, stuffy room whose windows both the religieuse and hostess conspired to shut, with its waxed floor, its four-poster bed, its characteristically French chairs and fireplace, its champagne bottles and dirty basins and used towels and packets of Somatose on the table. And in the sickly air of the confined space in behind the curtains of the bed lay my little uncle, with an effect of being enthroned and secluded, or sat up, or writhed and tossed in his last dealings of life. One went and drew back the edge of the curtains if one wanted to speak to him or look at him.

Usually he was propped up against pillows, because so he breathed more easily. He slept hardly at all.

I have a confused memory of vigils and mornings and afternoons spent by that bedside, and how the religieuse hovered about me, and how meek and good and inefficient she was, and how horribly black were her nails. Other figures come and go, and particularly the doctor, a young man plumply rococo, in bicycling dress, with fine waxen features, a little pointed beard, and the long black frizzy hair and huge tie of a minor poet. Bright and clear-cut and irrelevant are memories of the Basque hostess of my uncle's inn and of the family of Spanish people who entertained me and prepared the most amazingly elaborate meals for me, with soup and salad and chicken and remarkable sweets. They were all very kind and sympathetic people, systematically so. And constantly, without attracting attention, I was trying to get newspapers from home.

My uncle is central to all these impressions.

I have tried to make you picture him, time after time, as the young man of the Wimblehurst chemist's shop, as the shabby assistant in Tottenham Court Road, as the adventurer of the early days of Tono-Bungay, as the confident, preposterous plutocrat. And now I have to tell of him strangely changed under the shadow of oncoming death, with his skin lax and yellow and glistening with sweat, his eyes large and glassy, his countenance unfamiliar through the growth of a beard, his nose pinched and thin. Never had he looked so small as

now. And he talked to me in a whispering, strained voice of great issues, of why his life had been, and whither he was going. Poor little man! that last phase is, as it were, disconnected from all the other phases. It was as if he crawled out from the ruins of his career, and looked about him before he died. For he had quite clear-minded states in the intervals of his delirium.

He knew he was almost certainly dying. In a way that took the burthen of his cares off his mind. There was no more Neal to face, no more flights or evasions, no punishments.

"It has been a great career, George," he said, "but I shall be glad to rest. Glad to rest!... Glad to rest."

His mind ran rather upon his career, and usually, I am glad to recall, with a note of satisfaction and approval. In his delirious phases he would most often exaggerate this self-satisfaction, and talk of his splendours. He would pluck at the sheet and stare before him, and whisper half-audible fragments of sentences.

"What is this great place, these cloud-capped towers, these any pinnacles?... Ilion. Sky-pointing.... Ilion House, the residence of one of our great merchant princes.... Terrace above terrace. Reaching to the heavens.... Kingdoms Caesar never knew.... A great poet, George. Zzzz. Kingdoms Caesar never knew.... Under entirely new management.

"Greatness....Millions... Universities.... He stands on the terrace — on the upper terrace — directing — directing — by the globe — directing — the trade."

It was hard at times to tell when his sane talk ceased and his delirium began. The secret springs of his life, the vain imaginations were revealed. I sometimes think that all the life of man sprawls abed, careless and unkempt, until it must needs clothe and wash itself and come forth seemly in act and speech for the encounter with one's fellow-men. I suspect that all things unspoken in our souls partake somewhat of the laxity of delirium and dementia. Certainly from those slimy, tormented lips above the bristling grey beard came nothing but dreams and disconnected fancies....

Sometimes he raved about Neal, threatened Neal. "What has he got invested?" he said. "Does he think he can escape me?... If I followed him up.... Ruin. Ruin.... One would think *I* had taken his

money."

And sometimes he reverted to our airship flight. "It's too long, George, too long and too cold. I'm too old a man — too old — for this sort of thing.... You know you're not saving — you're killing me."

Towards the end it became evident our identity was discovered. I found the press, and especially Boom's section of it, had made a sort of hue and cry for us, sent special commissioners to hunt for us, and though none of these emissaries reached us until my uncle was dead, one felt the forewash of that storm of energy. The thing got into the popular French press. People became curious in their manner towards us, and a number of fresh faces appeared about the weak little struggle that went on in the closeness behind the curtains of the bed. The young doctor insisted on consultations, and a motor-car came up from Biarritz, and suddenly odd people with questioning eyes began to poke in with inquiries and help. Though nothing was said, I could feel that we were no longer regarded as simple middle-class tourists; about me, as I went, I perceived almost as though it trailed visibly, the prestige of Finance and a criminal notoriety. Local personages of a plump and prosperous quality appeared in the inn making inquiries, the Luzon priest became helpful, people watched our window, and stared at me as I went to and fro; and then we had a raid from a little English clergyman and his amiable, capable wife in severely Anglican blacks, who swooped down upon us like virtuous but resolute vultures from the adjacent village of Saint Jean de Pollack.

The clergyman was one of those odd types that oscillate between remote country towns in England and the conduct of English Church services on mutual terms in enterprising hotels abroad, a tremulous, obstinate little being with sporadic hairs upon his face, spectacles, a red button nose, and aged black raiment. He was evidently enormously impressed by my uncle's monetary greatness, and by his own inkling of our identity, and he shone and brimmed over with tact and fussy helpfulness. He was eager to share the watching of the bedside with me, he proffered services with both hands, and as I was now getting into touch with affairs in London again, and trying to disentangle the gigantic details of the smash from the papers I had

succeeded in getting from Biarritz, I accepted his offers pretty generously, and began the studies in modern finance that lay before me. I had got so out of touch with the old traditions of religion that I overlooked the manifest possibility of his attacking my poor, sinking vestiges of an uncle with theological solicitudes. My attention was called to that, however, very speedily by a polite but urgent quarrel between himself and the Basque landlady as to the necessity of her hanging a cheap crucifix in the shadow over the bed, where it might catch my uncle's eye, where, indeed, I found it had caught his eye.

"Good Lord!" I cried; "is THAT still going on!"

That night the little clergyman watched, and in the small hours he raised a false alarm that my uncle was dying, and made an extraordinary fuss. He raised the house. I shall never forget that scene, I think, which began with a tapping at my bedroom door just after I had fallen asleep, and his voice —

"If you want to see your uncle before he goes, you must come now."

The stuffy little room was crowded when I reached it, and lit by three flickering candles. I felt I was back in the eighteenth century. There lay my poor uncle amidst indescribably tumbled bedclothes, weary of life beyond measure, weary and rambling, and the little clergyman trying to hold his hand and his attention, and repeating over and over again:

"Mr. Ponderevo, Mr. Ponderevo, it is all right. It is all right.

"Only Believe! 'Believe on me, and ye shall be saved'!"

Close at hand was the doctor with one of those cruel and idiotic injection needles modern science puts in the hands of these half-educated young men, keeping my uncle flickeringly alive for no reason whatever. The religieuse hovered sleepily in the background with an overdue and neglected dose. In addition, the landlady had not only got up herself, but roused an aged crone of a mother and a partially imbecile husband, and there was also a fattish, stolid man in grey alpaca, with an air of importance — who he was and how he got there, I don't know. I rather fancy the doctor explained him to me in French I did not understand. And they were all there, wearily nocturnal, hastily and carelessly dressed, intent upon the life that flickered and sank, making a public and curious show of its going,

queer shapes of human beings lit by three uncertain candles, and every soul of them keenly and avidly resolved to be in at the death. The doctor stood, the others were all sitting on chairs the landlady had brought in and arranged for them.

And my uncle spoilt the climax, and did not die.

I replaced the little clergyman on the chair by the bedside, and he hovered about the room.

"I think," he whispered to me mysteriously, as he gave place to me, "I believe — it is well with him."

I heard him trying to render the stock phrases of Low Church piety into French for the benefit of the stolid man in grey alpaca. Then he knocked a glass off the table, and scrabbled for the fragments. From the first I doubted the theory of an immediate death. I consulted the doctor in urgent whispers. I turned round to get champagne, and nearly fell over the clergyman's legs. He was on his knees at the additional chair the Basque landlady had got on my arrival, and he was praying aloud, "Oh, Heavenly Father, have mercy on this thy Child...." I hustled him up and out of the way, and in another minute he was down at another chair praying again, and barring the path of the religieuse, who had found me the corkscrew. Something put into my head that tremendous blasphemy of Carlyle's about "the last mew of a drowning kitten." He found a third chair vacant presently; it was as if he was playing a game.

"Good Heavens!" I said, "we must clear these people out," and with a certain urgency I did.

I had a temporary lapse of memory, and forgot all my French. I drove them out mainly by gesture, and opened the window, to the universal horror. I intimated the death scene was postponed, and, as a matter of fact, my uncle did not die until the next night.

I did not let the little clergyman come near him again, and I was watchful for any sign that his mind had been troubled. But he made none. He talked once about "that parson chap."

"Didn't bother you?" I asked.

"Wanted something," he said.

I kept silence, listening keenly to his mutterings. I understood him to say, "They wanted too much." His face puckered like a child's going to cry. "You can't get a safe six per cent.," he said. I had for a

moment a wild suspicion that those urgent talks had not been altogether spiritual, but that, I think, was a quite unworthy and unjust suspicion. The little clergyman was as simple and honest as the day. My uncle was simply generalising about his class.

But it may have been these talks that set loose some long dormant string of ideas in my uncle's brain, ideas the things of this world had long suppressed and hidden altogether. Near the end he suddenly became clearminded and lucid, albeit very weak, and his voice was little, but clear.

"George," he said.

"I'm here," I said, "close beside you."

"George. You have always been responsible for the science. George. You know better than I do. Is — Is it proved?"

"What proved?"

"Either way?"

"I don't understand."

"Death ends all. After so much — Such splendid beginnin's. Somewhere. Something."

I stared at him amazed. His sunken eyes were very grave.

"What do you expect?" I said in wonder.

He would not answer. "Aspirations," he whispered. He fell into a broken monologue, regardless of me. "Trailing clouds of glory," he said, and "first-rate poet, first-rate....George was always hard. Always."

For a long time there was silence.

Then he made a gesture that he wished to speak.

"Seems to me, George"

I bent my head down, and he tried to lift his hand to my shoulder. I raised him a little on his pillows, and listened.

"It seems to me, George, always — there must be something in me — that won't die."

He looked at me as though the decision rested with me.

"I think," he said; " — something."

Then, for a moment, his mind wandered. "Just a little link," he whispered almost pleadingly, and lay quite still, but presently he was uneasy again.

"Some other world"

“Perhaps,” I said. “Who knows?”

“Some other world.”

“Not the same scope for enterprise,” I said.

“No.”

He became silent. I sat leaning down to him, and following out my own thoughts, and presently the religieuse resumed her periodic conflict with the window fastening. For a time he struggled for breath.... It seemed such nonsense that he should have to suffer so — poor silly little man!

“George,” he whispered, and his weak little hand came out. “PERHAPS—”

He said no more, but I perceived from the expression of his eyes that he thought the question had been put.

“Yes, I think so;” I said stoutly.

“Aren’t you sure?”

“Oh — practically sure,” said I, and I think he tried to squeeze my hand. And there I sat, holding his hand tight, and trying to think what seeds of immortality could be found in all his being, what sort of ghost there was in him to wander out into the bleak immensities. Queer fancies came to me.... He lay still for a long time, save for a brief struggle or so for breath and ever and again I wiped his mouth and lips.

I fell into a pit of thought. I did not remark at first the change that was creeping over his face. He lay back on his pillow, made a faint zzzing sound that ceased, and presently and quite quietly he died — greatly comforted by my assurance. I do not know when he died. His hand relaxed insensibly. Suddenly, with a start, with a shock, I found that his mouth had fallen open, and that he was dead....

VIII

It was dark night when I left his deathbed and went back to my own inn down the straggling street of Luzon.

That return to my inn sticks in my memory also as a thing apart, as an experience apart. Within was a subdued bustle of women, a flitting of lights, and the doing of petty offices to that queer, exhausted thing that had once been my active and urgent little uncle.

For me those offices were irksome and impertinent. I slammed the door, and went out into the warm, foggy drizzle of the village street lit by blurred specks of light in great voids of darkness, and never a soul abroad. That warm veil of fog produced an effect of vast seclusion. The very houses by the roadside peered through it as if from another world. The stillness of the night was marked by an occasional remote baying of dogs; all these people kept dogs because of the near neighbourhood of the frontier.

Death!

It was one of those rare seasons of relief, when for a little time one walks a little outside of and beside life. I felt as I sometimes feel after the end of a play. I saw the whole business of my uncle's life as something familiar and completed. It was done, like a play one leaves, like a book one closes. I thought of the push and the promotions, the noise of London, the crowded, various company of people through which our lives had gone, the public meetings, the excitements, the dinners and disputations, and suddenly it appeared to me that none of these things existed.

It came to me like a discovery that none of these things existed.

Before and after I have thought and called life a phantasmagoria, but never have I felt its truth as I did that night.... We had parted; we two who had kept company so long had parted. But there was, I knew, no end to him or me. He had died a dream death, and ended a dream; his pain dream was over. It seemed to me almost as though I had died, too. What did it matter, since it was unreality, all of it, the pain and desire, the beginning and the end? There was no reality except this solitary road, this quite solitary road, along which one went rather puzzled, rather tired....

Part of the fog became a big mastiff that came towards me and stopped and slunk round me, growling, barked gruffly, and shortly and presently became fog again.

My mind swayed back to the ancient beliefs and fears of our race. My doubts and disbeliefs slipped from me like a loosely fitting garment. I wondered quite simply what dogs bayed about the path of that other walker in the darkness, what shapes, what lights, it might be, loomed about him as he went his way from our last encounter on earth — along the paths that are real, and the way that endures for

ever?

IX

Last belated figure in that grouping round my uncle's deathbed is my aunt. When it was beyond all hope that my uncle could live I threw aside whatever concealment remained to us and telegraphed directly to her. But she came too late to see him living. She saw him calm and still, strangely unlike his habitual garrulous animation, an unfamiliar inflexibility.

"It isn't like him," she whispered, awed by this alien dignity.

I remember her chiefly as she talked and wept upon the bridge below the old castle. We had got rid of some amateurish reporters from Biarritz, and had walked together in the hot morning sunshine down through Port Luzon. There, for a time, we stood leaning on the parapet of the bridge and surveying the distant peeks, the rich blue masses of the Pyrenees. For a long time we said nothing, and then she began talking.

"Life's a rum Go, George!" she began. "Who would have thought, when I used to darn your stockings at old Wimblehurst, that this would be the end of the story? It seems far away now — that little shop, his and my first home. The glow of the bottles, the big coloured bottles! Do you remember how the light shone on the mahogany drawers? The little gilt letters! Ol Amjig, and Snap! I can remember it all — bright and shining — like a Dutch picture. Real! And yesterday. And here we are in a dream. You a man — and me an old woman, George. And poor little Teddy, who used to rush about and talk — making that noise he did — Oh!"

She choked, and the tears flowed unrestrained. She wept, and I was glad to see her weeping.

She stood leaning over the bridge; her tear-wet handkerchief gripped in her clenched hand.

"Just an hour in the old shop again — and him talking. Before things got done. Before they got hold of him. And fooled him.

"Men oughtn't to be so tempted with business and things....

"They didn't hurt him, George?" she asked suddenly.

For a moment I was puzzled.

“Here, I mean,” she said.

“No,” I lied stoutly, suppressing the memory of that foolish injection needle I had caught the young doctor using.

“I wonder, George, if they’ll let him talk in Heaven....”

She faced me. “Oh! George, dear, my heart aches, and I don’t know what I say and do. Give me your arm to lean on — it’s good to have you, dear, and lean upon you.... Yes, I know you care for me. That’s why I’m talking. We’ve always loved one another, and never said anything about it, and you understand, and I understand. But my heart’s torn to pieces by this, torn to rags, and things drop out I’ve kept in it. It’s true he wasn’t a husband much for me at the last. But he was my child, George, he was my child and all my children, my silly child, and life has knocked him about for me, and I’ve never had a say in the matter; never a say; it’s puffed him up and smashed him — like an old bag — under my eyes. I was clever enough to see it, and not clever enough to prevent it, and all I could do was to jeer. I’ve had to make what I could of it. Like most people. Like most of us.... But it wasn’t fair, George. It wasn’t fair. Life and Death — great serious things — why couldn’t they leave him alone, and his lies and ways? If WE could see the lightness of it —

“Why couldn’t they leave him alone?” she repeated in a whisper as we went towards the inn.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

LOVE AMONG THE WRECKAGE

I

When I came back I found that my share in the escape and death of my uncle had made me for a time a notorious and even popular character. For two weeks I was kept in London "facing the music," as he would have said, and making things easy for my aunt, and I still marvel at the consideration with which the world treated me. For now it was open and manifest that I and my uncle were no more than specimens of a modern species of brigand, wasting the savings of the public out of the sheer wantonness of enterprise. I think that in a way, his death produced a reaction in my favour and my flight, of which some particulars now appeared stuck in the popular imagination. It seemed a more daring and difficult feat than it was, and I couldn't very well write to the papers to sustain my private estimate. There can be little doubt that men infinitely prefer the appearance of dash and enterprise to simple honesty. No one believed I was not an arch plotter in his financing. Yet they favoured me. I even got permission from the trustee to occupy my chalet for a fortnight while I cleared up the mass of papers, calculations, notes of work, drawings and the like, that I left in disorder when I started on that impulsive raid upon the Mordet quap heaps.

I was there alone. I got work for Cothope with the Ilchesters, for whom I now build these destroyers. They wanted him at once, and he was short of money, so I let him go and managed very philosophically by myself.

But I found it hard to fix my attention on aeronautics, I had been away from the work for a full half-year and more, a half-year crowded with intense disconcerting things. For a time my brain refused these fine problems of balance and adjustment altogether; it wanted to think about my uncle's dropping jaw, my aunt's reluctant tears, about dead negroes and pestilential swamps, about the evident realities of cruelty and pain, about life and death. Moreover, it was

weary with the frightful pile of figures and documents at the Hardingham, a task to which this raid to Lady Grove was simply an interlude. And there was Beatrice.

On the second morning, as I sat out upon the veranda recalling memories and striving in vain to attend to some too succinct pencil notes of Cothope's, Beatrice rode up suddenly from behind the pavilion, and pulled rein and became still; Beatrice, a little flushed from riding and sitting on a big black horse.

I did not instantly rise. I stared at her. "YOU!" I said.

She looked at me steadily. "Me," she said

I did not trouble about any civilities. I stood up and asked point blank a question that came into my head.

"Whose horse is that?" I said.

She looked me in the eyes. "Carnaby's," she answered.

"How did you get here — this way?"

"The wall's down."

"Down? Already?"

"A great bit of it between the plantations."

"And you rode through, and got here by chance?"

"I saw you yesterday. And I rode over to see you." I had now come close to her, and stood looking up into her face.

"I'm a mere vestige," I said.

She made no answer, but remained regarding me steadfastly with a curious air of proprietorship.

"You know I'm the living survivor now of the great smash. I'm rolling and dropping down through all the scaffolding of the social system.... It's all a chance whether I roll out free at the bottom, or go down a crack into the darkness out of sight for a year or two."

"The sun," she remarked irrelevantly, "has burnt you.... I'm getting down."

She swung herself down into my arms, and stood beside me face to face.

"Where's Cothope?" she asked.

"Gone."

Her eyes flitted to the pavilion and back to me. We stood close together, extraordinarily intimate, and extraordinarily apart.

"I've never seen this cottage of yours," she said, "and I want to."

She flung the bridle of her horse round the veranda post, and I helped her tie it.

"Did you get what you went for to Africa?" she asked.

"No," I said, "I lost my ship."

"And that lost everything?"

"Everything."

She walked before me into the living-room of the chalet, and I saw that she gripped her riding-whip very tightly in her hand. She looked about her for a moment, — and then at me.

"It's comfortable," she remarked.

Our eyes met in a conversation very different from the one upon our lips. A sombre glow surrounded us, drew us together; an unwonted shyness kept us apart. She roused herself, after an instant's pause, to examine my furniture.

"You have chintz curtains. I thought men were too feckless to have curtains without a woman. But, of course, your aunt did that! And a couch and a brass fender, and — is that a pianola? That is your desk. I thought men's desks were always untidy, and covered with dust and tobacco ash."

She flitted to my colour prints and my little case of books. Then she went to the pianola. I watched her intently.

"Does this thing play?" she said.

"What?" I asked.

"Does this thing play?"

I roused myself from my preoccupation.

"Like a musical gorilla with fingers all of one length. And a sort of soul.... It's all the world of music to me."

"What do you play?"

"Beethoven, when I want to clear up my head while I'm working. He is — how one would always like to work. Sometimes Chopin and those others, but Beethoven. Beethoven mainly. Yes."

Silence again between us. She spoke with an effort.

"Play me something." She turned from me and explored the rack of music rolls, became interested and took a piece, the first part of the Kreutzer Sonata, hesitated. "No," she said, "that!"

She gave me Brahms' Second Concerto, O, and curled up on the sofa watching me as I set myself slowly to play....

“I say,” he said when I had done, “that’s fine. I didn’t know those things could play like that. I’m all astir...”

She came and stood over me, looking at me. “I’m going to have a concert,” she said abruptly, and laughed uneasily and hovered at the pigeon-holes. “Now — now what shall I have?” She chose more of Brahms. Then we came to the Kreutzer Sonata. It is queer how Tolstoy has loaded that with suggestions, debauched it, made it a scandalous and intimate symbol. When I had played the first part of that, she came up to the pianola and hesitated over me. I sat stiffly — waiting.

Suddenly she seized my downcast head and kissed my hair. She caught at my face between her hands and kissed my lips. I put my arms about her and we kissed together. I sprang to my feet and clasped her.

“Beatrice!” I said. “Beatrice!”

“My dear,” she whispered, nearly breathless, with her arms about me. “Oh! my dear!”

II

Love, like everything else in this immense process of social disorganisation in which we live, is a thing adrift, a fruitless thing broken away from its connexions. I tell of this love affair here because of its irrelevance, because it is so remarkable that it should mean nothing, and be nothing except itself. It glows in my memory like some bright casual flower starting up amidst the debris of a catastrophe. For nearly a fortnight we two met and made love together. Once more this mighty passion, that our aimless civilisation has fettered and maimed and sterilised and debased, gripped me and filled me with passionate delights and solemn joys — that were all, you know, futile and purposeless. Once more I had the persuasion “This matters. Nothing else matters so much as this.” We were both infinitely grave in such happiness as we had. I do not remember any laughter at all between us.

Twelve days it lasted from that encounter in my chalet until our parting.

Except at the end, they were days of supreme summer, and there

was a waxing moon. We met recklessly day by day. We were so intent upon each other at first so intent upon expressing ourselves to each other, and getting at each other, that we troubled very little about the appearance of our relationship. We met almost openly.... We talked of ten thousand things, and of ourselves. We loved. We made love. There is no prose of mine that can tell of hours transfigured. The facts are nothing. Everything we touched, the meanest things, became glorious. How can I render bare tenderness and delight and mutual possession? I sit here at my desk thinking of untellable things.

I have come to know so much of love that I know now what love might be. We loved, scarred and stained; we parted — basely and inevitably, but at least I met love.

I remember as we sat in a Canadian canoe, in a reedy, bush-masked shallow we had discovered operating out of that pine-shaded Woking canal, how she fell talking of the things that happened to her before she met me again....

She told me things, and they so joined and welded together other things that lay disconnected in my memory, that it seemed to me I had always known what she told me. And yet indeed I had not known nor suspected it, save perhaps for a luminous, transitory suspicion ever and again.

She made me see how life had shaped her. She told me of her girlhood after I had known her. “We were poor and pretending and managing. We hacked about on visits and things. I ought to have married. The chances I had weren’t particularly good chances. I didn’t like ‘em.”

She paused. “Then Carnaby came along.”

I remained quite still. She spoke now with downcast eyes, and one finger just touching the water.

“One gets bored, bored beyond redemption. One does about to these huge expensive houses I suppose — the scale’s immense. One makes one’s self useful to the other women, and agreeable to the men. One has to dress.... One has food and exercise and leisure, It’s the leisure, and the space, and the blank opportunity it seems a sin not to fill. Carnaby isn’t like the other men. He’s bigger.... They go about making love. Everybody’s making love. I did.... And I don’t do

things by halves."

She stopped.

"You knew?" — she asked, looking up, quite steadily. I nodded.

"Since when?"

"Those last days.... It hasn't seemed to matter really. I was a little surprised."

She looked at me quietly. "Cothope knew," she said. "By instinct. I could feel it."

"I suppose," I began, "once, this would have mattered immensely. Now—"

"Nothing matters," she said, completing me. "I felt I had to tell you. I wanted you to understand why I didn't marry you — with both hands. I have loved you" — she paused— "have loved you ever since the day I kissed you in the bracken. Only — I forgot."

And suddenly she dropped her face upon her hands, and sobbed passionately —

"I forgot — I forgot," she cried, and became still....

I dabbled my paddle in the water. "Look here!" I said; "forget again! Here am I — a ruined man. Marry me."

She shook her head without looking up.

We were still for a long time. "Marry me!" I whispered.

She looked up, twined back a whisp of hair, and answered dispassionately —

"I wish I could. Anyhow, we have had this time. It has been a fine time — has it been — for you also? I haven't nudged you all I had to give. It's a poor gift — except for what it means and might have been. But we are near the end of it now."

"Why?" I asked. "Marry me! Why should we two—"

"You think," she said, "I could take courage and come to you and be your everyday wife — while you work and are poor?"

"Why not?" said I.

She looked at me gravely, with extended finger. "Do you really think that — of me? Haven't you seen me — all?"

I hesitated.

"Never once have I really meant marrying you," she insisted. "Never once. I fell in love with you from the first. But when you seemed a successful man, I told myself I wouldn't. I was love-sick

for you, and you were so stupid, I came near it then. But I knew I wasn't good enough. What could I have been to you? A woman with bad habits and bad associations, a woman smirched. And what could I do for you or be to you? If I wasn't good enough to be a rich man's wife, I'm certainly not good enough to be a poor one's. Forgive me for talking sense to you now, but I wanted to tell you this somehow."

She stopped at my gesture. I sat up, and the canoe rocked with my movement.

"I don't care," I said. "I want to marry you and make you my wife!"

"No," she said, "don't spoil things. That is impossible!"

"Impossible!"

"Think! I can't do my own hair! Do you mean you will get me a maid?"

"Good God!" I cried, disconcerted beyond measure, "won't you learn to do your own hair for me? Do you mean to say you can love a man—"

She flung out her hands at me. "Don't spoil it," she cried. "I have given you all I have, I have given you all I can. If I could do it, if I was good enough to do it, I would. But I am a woman spoilt and ruined, dear, and you are a ruined man. When we are making love we're lovers — but think of the gulf between us in habits and ways of thought, in will and training, when we are not making love. Think of it — and don't think of it! Don't think of it yet. We have snatched some hours. We still may have some hours!"

She suddenly knelt forward toward me, with a glowing darkness in her eyes. "Who cares if it upsets?" she cried. "If you say another word I will kiss you. And go to the bottom clutching you.

"I'm not afraid of that. I'm not a bit afraid of that. I'll die with you. Choose a death, and I'll die with you — readily. Do listen to me! I love you. I shall always love you. It's because I love you that I won't go down to become a dirty familiar thing with you amidst the grime. I've given all I can. I've had all I can.... Tell me," and she crept nearer, "have I been like the dusk to you, like the warm dusk? Is there magic still? Listen to the ripple of water from your paddle. Look at the warm evening light in the sky. Who cares if the canoe upsets? Come nearer to me. Oh, my love! come near! So."

She drew me to her and our lips met.

III

I asked her to marry me once again.

It was our last morning together, and we had met very early, about sunrise, knowing that we were to part. No sun shone that day. The sky was overcast, the morning chilly and lit by a clear, cold, spiritless light. A heavy dampness in the air verged close on rain. When I think of that morning, it has always the quality of greying ashes wet with rain.

Beatrice too had changed. The spring had gone out of her movement; it came to me, for the first time, that some day she might grow old. She had become one flesh with the rest of common humanity; the softness had gone from her voice and manner, the dusky magic of her presence had gone. I saw these things with perfect clearness, and they made me sorry for them and for her. But they altered my love not a whit, abated it nothing. And when we had talked awkwardly for half a dozen sentences, I came dully to my point.

"And now," I cried, "will you marry me?"

"No," she said, "I shall keep to my life here."

I asked her to marry me in a year's time. She shook her head.

"This world is a soft world," I said, "in spite of my present disasters. I know now how to do things. If I had you to work for — in a year I could be a prosperous man."

"No," she said, "I will put it brutally, I shall go back to Carnaby."

"But — !" I did not feel angry. I had no sort of jealousy, no wounded pride, no sense of injury. I had only a sense of grey desolation, of hopeless cross-purposes.

"Look here," she said. "I have been awake all night and every night. I have been thinking of this — every moment when we have not been together. I'm not answering you on an impulse. I love you. I love you. I'll say that over ten thousand times. But here we are—"

"The rest of life together," I said.

"It wouldn't be together. Now we are together. Now we have been together. We are full of memories I do not feel I can ever forget a

single one."

"Nor I."

"And I want to close it and leave it at that. You see, dear, what else is there to do?"

She turned her white face to me. "All I know of love, all I have ever dreamt or learnt of love I have packed into these days for you. You think we might live together and go on loving. No! For you I will have no vain repetitions. You have had the best and all of me. Would you have us, after this, meet again in London or Paris or somewhere, scuffle to some wretched dressmaker's, meet in a cabinet particulier?"

"No," I said. "I want you to marry me. I want you to play the game of life with me as an honest woman should. Come and live with me. Be my wife and squaw. Bear me children."

I looked at her white, drawn face, and it seemed to me I might carry her yet. I spluttered for words.

"My God! Beatrice!" I cried; "but this is cowardice and folly! Are you afraid of life? You of all people! What does it matter what has been or what we were? Here we are with the world before us! Start clean and new with me. We'll fight it through! I'm not such a simple lover that I'll not tell you plainly when you go wrong, and fight our difference out with you. It's the one thing I want, the one thing I need — to have you, and more of you and more! This love-making — it's love-making. It's just a part of us, an incident—"

She shook her head and stopped me abruptly. "It's all," she said.

"All!" I protested.

"I'm wiser than you. Wiser beyond words." She turned her eyes to me and they shone with tears.

"I wouldn't have you say anything — but what you're saying," she said. "But it's nonsense, dear. You know it's nonsense as you say it."

I tried to keep up the heroic note, but she would not listen to it.

"It's no good," she cried almost petulantly. "This little world has made us what we are. Don't you see — don't you see what I am? I can make love. I can make love and be loved, prettily. Dear, don't blame me. I have given you all I have. If I had anything more — I have gone through it all over and over again — thought it out. This

morning my head aches, my eyes ache.

"The light has gone out of me and I am a sick and tired woman. But I'm talking wisdom — bitter wisdom. I couldn't be any sort of helper to you, any sort of wife, any sort of mother. I'm spoilt.

"I'm spoilt by this rich idle way of living, until every habit is wrong, every taste wrong. The world is wrong. People can be ruined by wealth just as much as by poverty. Do you think I wouldn't face life with you if I could, if I wasn't absolutely certain I should be down and dragging in the first half-mile of the journey? Here I am — damned! Damned! But I won't damn you. You know what I am! You know. You are too clear and simple not to know the truth. You try to romance and hector, but you know the truth. I am a little cad — sold and done. I'm — . My dear, you think I've been misbehaving, but all these days I've been on my best behaviour.... You don't understand, because you're a man.

"A woman, when she's spoilt, is SPOILT. She's dirty in grain. She's done."

She walked on weeping.

"You're a fool to want me," she said. "You're a fool to want me — for my sake just as much as yours. We've done all we can. It's just romancing—"

She dashed the tears from her eyes and turned upon me. "Don't you understand?" she challenged. "Don't you know?"

We faced one another in silence for a moment.

"Yes," I said, "I know."

For a long time we spoke never a word, but walked on together, slowly and sorrowfully, reluctant to turn about towards our parting. When at last we did, she broke silence again.

"I've had you," she said.

"Heaven and hell," I said, "can't alter that."

"I've wanted—" she went on. "I've talked to you in the nights and made up speeches. Now when I want to make them I'm tongue-tied. But to me it's just as if the moments we have had lasted for ever. Moods and states come and go. To-day my light is out..."

To this day I cannot determine whether she said or whether I imagined she said "chloral." Perhaps a half-conscious diagnosis flashed it on my brain. Perhaps I am the victim of some perverse

imaginative freak of memory, some hinted possibility that scratched and seared. There the word stands in my memory, as if it were written in fire.

We came to the door of Lady Osprey's garden at last, and it was beginning to drizzle.

She held out her hands and I took them.

"Yours," she said, in a weary unimpassioned voice; "all that I had — such as it was. Will you forget?"

"Never," I answered.

"Never a touch or a word of it?"

"No."

"You will," she said.

We looked at one another in silence, and her face full of fatigue and misery.

What could I do? What was there to do?

"I wish—" I said, and stopped.

"Good-bye."

IV

That should have been the last I saw of her, but, indeed, I was destined to see her once again. Two days after I was at Lady Grove, I forget altogether upon what errand, and as I walked back to the station believing her to be gone away she came upon me, and she was riding with Carnaby, just as I had seen them first. The encounter jumped upon us unprepared. She rode by, her eyes dark in her white face, and scarcely noticed me. She winced and grew stiff at the sight of me and bowed her head. But Carnaby, because he thought I was a broken and discomfited man, saluted me with an easy friendliness, and shouted some genial commonplace to me.

They passed out of sight and left me by the roadside....

And then, indeed, I tasted the ultimate bitterness of life. For the first time I felt utter futility, and was wrung by emotion that begot no action, by shame and pity beyond words. I had parted from her dully and I had seen my uncle break and die with dry eyes and a steady mind, but this chance sight of my lost Beatrice brought me to tears. My face was wrung, and tears came pouring down my cheeks. All

the magic she had for me had changed to wild sorrow. “Oh God!” I cried, “this is too much,” and turned my face after her and made appealing gestures to the beech trees and cursed at fate. I wanted to do preposterous things, to pursue her, to save her, to turn life back so that she might begin again. I wonder what would have happened had I overtaken them in pursuit, breathless with running, uttering incoherent words, weeping, expostulatory. I came near to doing that.

There was nothing in earth or heaven to respect my curses or weeping. In the midst of it a man who had been trimming the opposite hedge appeared and stared at me.

Abruptly, ridiculously, I dissembled before him and went on and caught my train....

But the pain I felt then I have felt a hundred times; it is with me as I write. It haunts this book, I see, that is what haunts this book, from end to end.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

NIGHT AND THE OPEN SEA

I

I have tried throughout all this story to tell things as they happened to me. In the beginning — the sheets are still here on the table, grimy and dogs-eared and old-looking — I said I wanted to tell MYSELF and the world in which I found myself, and I have done my best. But whether I have succeeded I cannot imagine. All this writing is grey now and dead and trite and unmeaning to me; some of it I know by heart. I am the last person to judge it.

As I turn over the big pile of manuscript before me certain things become clearer to me, and particularly the immense inconsequences of my experiences. It is, I see now that I have it all before me, a story of activity and urgency and sterility. I have called it Tono-Bungay, but I had far better have called it Waste. I have told of childless Marion, of my childless aunt, of Beatrice wasted and wasteful and futile. What hope is there for a people whose women become fruitless? I think of all the energy I have given to vain things. I think of my industrious scheming with my uncle, of Crest Hill's vast cessation, of his resonant strenuous career. Ten thousand men have envied him and wished to live as he lived. It is all one spectacle of forces running to waste, of people who use and do not replace, the story of a country hectic with a wasting aimless fever of trade and money-making and pleasure-seeking. And now I build destroyers!

Other people may see this country in other terms; this is how I have seen it. In some early chapter in this heap I compared all our present colour and abundance to October foliage before the frosts nip down the leaves. That I still feel was a good image. Perhaps I see wrongly. It may be I see decay all about me because I am, in a sense, decay. To others it may be a scene of achievement and construction radiant with hope. I, too, have a sort of hope, but it is a remote hope, a hope that finds no promise in this Empire or in any of the great things of our time.

How they will look in history I do not know, how time and chance will prove them I cannot guess; that is how they have mirrored themselves on one contemporary mind.

II

Concurrently with writing the last chapter of this book I have been much engaged by the affairs of a new destroyer we have completed. It has been an oddly complementary alternation of occupations. Three weeks or so ago this novel had to be put aside in order that I might give all my time day and night to the fitting and finishing of the engines. Last Thursday X 2, for so we call her, was done and I took her down the Thames and went out nearly to Texel for a trial of speed.

It is curious how at times one's impressions will all fuse and run together into a sort of unity and become continuous with things that have hitherto been utterly alien and remote. That rush down the river became mysteriously connected with this book.

As I passed down the Thames I seemed in a new and parallel manner to be passing all England in review. I saw it then as I had wanted my readers to see it. The thought came to me slowly as I picked my way through the Pool; it stood out clear as I went dreaming into the night out upon the wide North Sea.

It wasn't so much thinking at the time as a sort of photographic thought that came and grew clear. X2 went ripping through the dirty oily water as scissors rip through canvas, and the front of my mind was all intent with getting her through under the bridges and in and out among the steam-boats and barges and rowing-boats and piers. I lived with my hands and eyes hard ahead. I thought nothing then of any appearances but obstacles, but for all that the back of my mind took the photographic memory of it complete and vivid....

"This," it came to me, "is England. That is what I wanted to give in my book. This!"

We started in the late afternoon. We throbbed out of our yard above Hammersmith Bridge, fussed about for a moment, and headed down stream. We came at an easy rush down Craven Reach, past Fulham and Hurlingham, past the long stretches of muddy meadow

And muddy suburb to Battersea and Chelsea, round the cape of tidy frontage that is Grosvenor Road and under Vauxhall Bridge, and Westminster opened before us. We cleared a string of coal barges and there on the left in the October sunshine stood the Parliament houses, and the flag was flying and Parliament was sitting.

I saw it at the time unseeingly; afterwards it came into my mind as the centre of the whole broad panoramic effect of that afternoon. The stiff square lace of Victorian Gothic with its Dutch clock of a tower came upon me suddenly and stared and whirled past in a slow half pirouette and became still, I know, behind me as if watching me recede. "Aren't you going to respect me, then?" it seemed to say.

Not I! There in that great pile of Victorian architecture the landlords and the lawyers, the bishops, the railway men and the magnates of commerce go to and fro — in their incurable tradition of commercialised Bladesovery, of meretricious gentry and nobility sold for riches. I have been near enough to know. The Irish and the Labour-men run about among their feet, making a fuss, effecting little, they've got no better plans that I can see. Respect it indeed! There's a certain paraphernalia of dignity, but whom does it deceive? The King comes down in a gilt coach to open the show and wears long robes and a crown; and there's a display of stout and slender legs in white stockings and stout and slender legs in black stockings and artful old gentlemen in ermine. I was reminded of one congested afternoon I had spent with my aunt amidst a cluster of agitated women's hats in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords and how I saw the King going to open Parliament, and the Duke of Devonshire looking like a gorgeous pedlar and terribly bored with the cap of maintenance on a tray before him hung by slings from his shoulder. A wonderful spectacle!

It is quaint, no doubt, this England — it is even dignified in places — and full of mellow associations. That does not alter the quality of the realities these robes conceal. The realities are greedy trade, base profit — seeking, bold advertisement; and kingship and chivalry, spite of this wearing of treasured robes, are as dead among it all as that crusader my uncle championed against the nettles outside the Duffield church.

I have thought much of that bright afternoon's panorama.

To run down the Thames so is to run one's hand over the pages in the book of England from end to end. One begins in Craven Reach and it is as if one were in the heart of old England. Behind us are Kew and Hampton Court with their memories of Kings and Cardinals, and one runs at first between Fulham's episcopal garden parties and Hurlingham's playground for the sporting instinct of our race. The whole effect is English. There is space, there are old trees and all the best qualities of the home-land in that upper reach. Putney, too, looks Anglican on a dwindling scale. And then for a stretch the newer developments slop over, one misses Bladesover and there come first squalid stretches of mean homes right and left and then the dingy industrialism of the south side, and on the north bank the polite long front of nice houses, artistic, literary, administrative people's residences, that stretches from Cheyne Walk nearly to Westminster and hides a wilderness of slums. What a long slow crescendo that is, mile after mile, with the houses crowding closelier, the multiplying succession of church towers, the architectural moments, the successive bridges, until you come out into the second movement of the piece with Lambeth's old palace under your quarter and the houses of Parliament on your bow! Westminster Bridge is ahead of you then, and through it you flash, and in a moment the round-faced clock tower cranes up to peer at you again and New Scotland Yard squares at you, a fat beef-eater of a policeman disguised miraculously as a Bastille.

For a stretch you have the essential London; you have Charing Cross railway station, heart of the world, and the Embankment on the north side with its new hotels overshadowing its Georgian and Victorian architecture, and mud and great warehouses and factories, chimneys, shot towers, advertisements on the south. The northward skyline grows more intricate and pleasing, and more and more does one thank God for Wren. Somerset House is as picturesque as the civil war, one is reminded again of the original England, one feels in the fretted sky the quality of Restoration Lace.

And then comes Astor's strong box and the lawyers' Inns.

(I had a passing memory of myself there, how once I had trudged along the Embankment westward, weighing my uncle's offer of three hundred pounds a year....)

Through that central essential London reach I drove, and X2 bored her nose under the foam regardless of it all like a black hound going through reeds — on what trail even I who made her cannot tell.

And in this reach, too, one first meets the seagulls and is reminded of the sea. Blackfriars one takes — just under these two bridges and just between them is the finest bridge moment in the world — and behold, soaring up, hanging in the sky over a rude tumult of warehouses, over a jostling competition of traders, irrelevantly beautiful and altogether remote, Saint Paul's! "Of course!" one says, "Saint Paul's!" It is the very figure of whatever fineness the old Anglican culture achieved, detached, a more dignified and chastened Saint Peter's, colder, greyer, but still ornate; it has never been over thrown, never disavowed, only the tall warehouses and all the roar of traffic have forgotten it, every one has forgotten it; the steamships, the barges, go heedlessly by regardless of it, intricacies of telephone wires and poles cut blackly into its thin mysteries, and presently, when in a moment the traffic permits you and you look round for it, it has dissolved like a cloud into the grey blues of the London sky.

And then the traditional and ostensible England falls from you altogether. The third movement begins, the last great movement in the London symphony, in which the trim scheme of the old order is altogether dwarfed and swallowed up. Comes London Bridge, and the great warehouses tower up about you, waving stupendous cranes, the gulls circle and scream in your ears, large ships lie among their lighters, and one is in the port of the world. Again and again in this book I have written of England as a feudal scheme overtaken by fatty degeneration and stupendous accidents of hypertrophy.

For the last time I must strike that note as the memory of the dear neat little sunlit ancient Tower of London lying away in a gap among the warehouses comes back to me, that little accumulation of buildings so provincially pleasant and dignified, overshadowed by the vulgarest, most typical exploit of modern England, the sham Gothic casings to the ironwork of the Tower Bridge. That Tower Bridge is the very balance and confirmation of Westminster's dull pinnacles and tower. That sham Gothic bridge; in the very gates of our mother of change, the Sea!

But after that one is in a world of accident and nature. For the third part of the panorama of London is beyond all law, order, and precedence; it is the seaport and the sea. One goes down the widening reaches through a monstrous variety of shipping, great steamers, great sailing-ships, trailing the flags of all the world, a monstrous confusion of lighters, witches' conferences of brown-sailed barges, wallowing tugs, a tumultuous crowding and jostling of cranes and spars, and wharves and stores, and assertive inscriptions. Huge vistas of dock open right and left of one, and here and there beyond and amidst it all are church towers, little patches of indescribably old-fashioned and worn-out houses, riverside pubs and the like, vestiges of townships that were long since torn to fragments and submerged in these new growths. And amidst it all no plan appears, no intention, no comprehensive desire. That is the very key of it all. Each day one feels that the pressure of commerce and traffic grew, grew insensibly monstrous, and first this man made a wharf and that erected a crane, and then this company set to work and then that, and so they jostled together to make this unassimilable enormity of traffic. Through it we dodged and drove eager for the high seas.

I remember how I laughed aloud at the glimpse of the name of a London County Council steamboat that ran across me. Caxton it was called, and another was Pepys, and another was Shakespeare. They seemed so wildly out of place, splashing about in that confusion. One wanted to take them out and wipe them and put them back in some English gentleman's library. Everything was alive about them, flash ing, splashing, and passing, ships moving, tugs panting, hawsers taut, barges going down with men toiling at the sweeps, the water all a-swirl with the wash of shipping, scaling into millions of little wavelets, curling and frothing under the whip of the unceasing wind. Past it all we drove. And at Greenwich to the south, you know, there stands a fine stone frontage where all the victories are recorded in a Painted Hall, and beside it is the "Ship" where once upon a time those gentlemen of Westminster used to have an annual dinner — before the port of London got too much for them altogether. The old facade of the Hospital was just warming to the sunset as we went by, and after that, right and left, the river opened, the sense of the sea increased and prevailed, reach after reach from Northfleet to the

Nore.

And out you come at last with the sun behind you into the eastern sea. You speed up and tear the oily water louder and faster, siroo, siroo-swish-siroo, and the hills of Kent — over which I once fled from the Christian teachings of Nicodemus Frapp — fall away on the right hand and Essex on the left. They fall away and vanish into blue haze, and the tall slow ships behind the tugs, scarce moving ships and wallowing sturdy tugs, are all wrought of wet gold as one goes frothing by. They stand out, bound on strange missions of life and death, to the killing of men in unfamiliar lands. And now behind us is blue mystery and the phantom flash of unseen lights, and presently even these are gone, and I and my destroyer tear out to the unknown across a great grey space. We tear into the great spaces of the future and the turbines fall to talking in unfamiliar tongues. Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass — pass. The river passes — London passes, England passes...

III

This is the note I have tried to emphasise, the note that sounds clear in my mind when I think of anything beyond the purely personal aspects of my story.

It is a note of crumbling and confusion, of change and seemingly aimless swelling, of a bubbling up and medley of futile loves and sorrows. But through the confusion sounds another note. Through the confusion something drives, something that is at once human achievement and the most inhuman of all existing things. Something comes out of it.... How can I express the values of a thing at once so essential and so immaterial. It is something that calls upon such men as I with an irresistible appeal.

I have figured it in my last section by the symbol of my destroyer, stark and swift, irrelevant to most human interests. Sometimes I call this reality Science, sometimes I call it Truth. But it is something we draw by pain and effort ont of the heart of life, that we disentangle

and make clear. Other men serve it, I know, in art, in literature, in social invention, and see it in a thousand different figures, under a hundred names. I see it always as austerity, as beauty. This thing we make clear is the heart of life. It is the one enduring thing. Men and nations, epochs and civilisation pass each making its contribution I do not know what it is, this something, except that it is supreme. It is, a something, a quality, an element, one may find now in colours, now in norms, now in sounds, now in thoughts. It emerges from life with each year one lives and feels, and generation by generation and age by age, but the how and why of it are all beyond the compass of my mind....

Yet the full sense of it was with me all that night as I drove, lonely above the rush and murmur of my engines, out upon the weltering circle of the sea.

Far out to the northeast there came the flicker of a squadron of warships waving white swords of light about the sky. I kept them hull-down, and presently they were mere summer lightning over the watery edge of the globe.... I fell into thought that was nearly formless, into doubts and dreams that have no words, and it seemed good to me to drive ahead and on and or through the windy starlight, over the long black waves.

IV

It was morning and day before I returned with the four sick and starving journalists who had got permission to come with me, up the shining river, and past the old grey Tower....

I recall the back views of those journalists very distinctly, going with a certain damp weariness of movement, along a side street away from the river. They were good men and bore me no malice, and they served me up to the public in turgid degenerate Kiplingese, as a modest button on the complacent stomach of the Empire. Though as a matter of fact, X2 isn't intended for the empire, or indeed for the hands of any European power. We offered it to our own people first, but they would have nothing to do with me, and I have long since ceased to trouble much about such questions. I have come to see myself from the outside, my country from the outside — without

illusions. We make and pass.

We are all things that make and pass striving upon a hidden mission, out to the open sea.

ANN VERONICA

Another of Wells' social realist novels, *Ann Veronica* was first published in 1909. It fits into the 'New Woman' tradition of fiction, popular in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, when the increasing autonomy of women in British society, along with a related demand for female suffrage, led to a series of fictional and journalistic works, which discussed the dilemmas that an 'emancipated' young woman might have to face as she fought against the traditional submissive role expected of her sex (i.e. to place her role as wife and mother before her own personal fulfilment). The novel dramatises these issues through the experiences of its young heroine, who has just come of age. It also includes a chapter that chronicles (in fictional guise) the attempt by suffragettes to storm Parliament in 1908. The novel's progressive attitudes to sexual morality, as well as to female autonomy, proved shocking on first publication — and provide modern readers with a fascinating insight into Edwardian social debate.

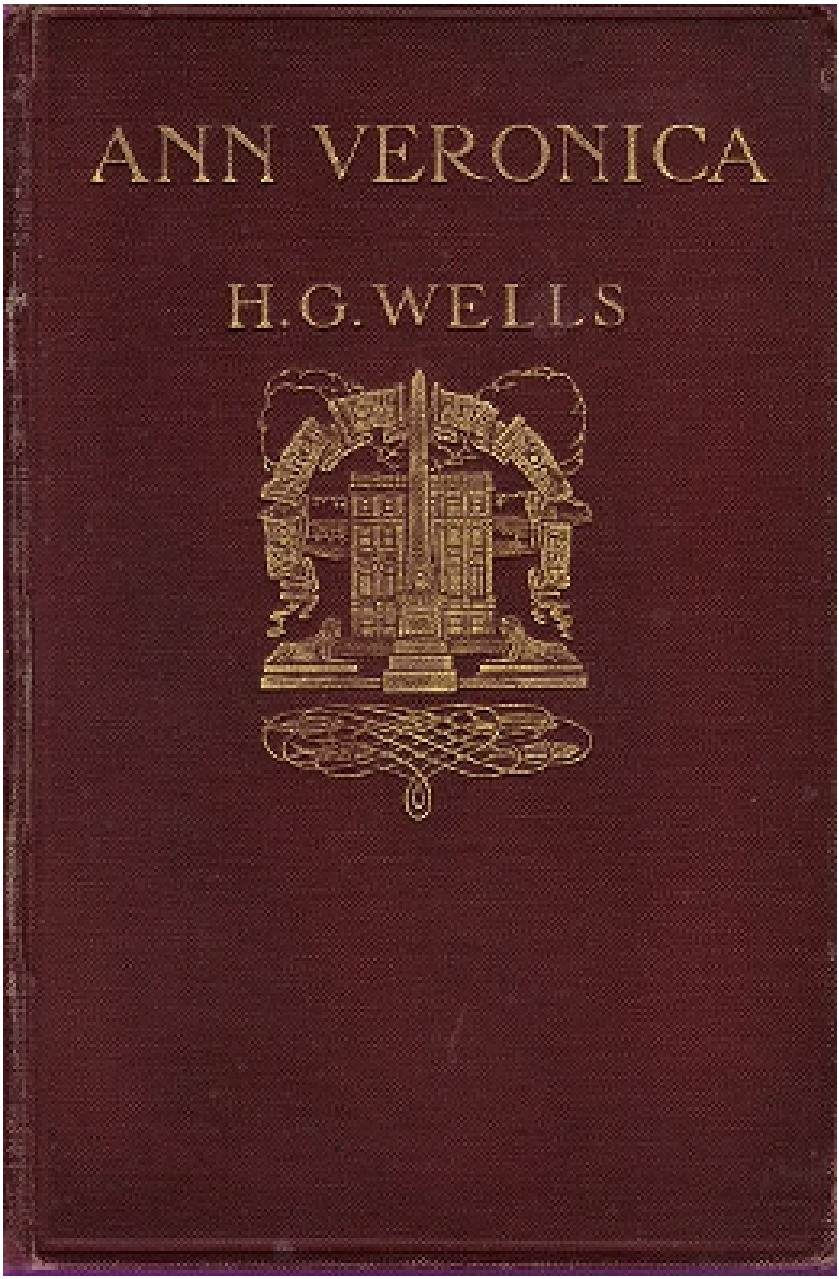

The cover of the first edition

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ANN VERONICA

A MODERN LOVE STORY

BY

H. G. WELLS

AUTHOR OF
TONO-BUNGAY, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Title page of the first American edition

“The art of ignoring is one of the accomplishments of every well-bred girl, so carefully instilled that at last she can even ignore her own thoughts and her own knowledge.”

CHAPTER THE FIRST

ANN VERONICA TALKS TO HER FATHER

Part 1

One Wednesday afternoon in late September, Ann Veronica Stanley came down from London in a state of solemn excitement and quite resolved to have things out with her father that very evening. She had trembled on the verge of such a resolution before, but this time quite definitely she made it. A crisis had been reached, and she was almost glad it had been reached. She made up her mind in the train home that it should be a decisive crisis. It is for that reason that this novel begins with her there, and neither earlier nor later, for it is the history of this crisis and its consequences that this novel has to tell.

She had a compartment to herself in the train from London to Morningside Park, and she sat with both her feet on the seat in an attitude that would certainly have distressed her mother to see, and horrified her grandmother beyond measure; she sat with her knees up to her chin and her hands clasped before them, and she was so lost in thought that she discovered with a start, from a lettered lamp, that she was at Morningside Park, and thought she was moving out of the station, whereas she was only moving in. “Lord!” she said. She jumped up at once, caught up a leather clutch containing notebooks, a fat text-book, and a chocolate-and-yellow-covered pamphlet, and leaped neatly from the carriage, only to discover that the train was slowing down and that she had to traverse the full length of the platform past it again as the result of her precipitation. “Sold again,” she remarked. “Idiot!” She raged inwardly while she walked along with that air of self-contained serenity that is proper to a young lady of nearly two-and-twenty under the eye of the world.

She walked down the station approach, past the neat, obtrusive offices of the coal merchant and the house agent, and so to the wicket-gate by the butcher’s shop that led to the field path to her home. Outside the post-office stood a no-hatted, blond young man in gray flannels, who was elaborately affixing a stamp to a letter. At the

sight of her he became rigid and a singularly bright shade of pink. She made herself serenely unaware of his existence, though it may be it was his presence that sent her by the field detour instead of by the direct path up the Avenue.

"Umph!" he said, and regarded his letter doubtfully before consigning it to the pillar-box. "Here goes," he said. Then he hovered undecidedly for some seconds with his hands in his pockets and his mouth puckered to a whistle before he turned to go home by the Avenue.

Ann Veronica forgot him as soon as she was through the gate, and her face resumed its expression of stern preoccupation. "It's either now or never," she said to herself....

Morningside Park was a suburb that had not altogether, as people say, come off. It consisted, like pre-Roman Gaul, of three parts. There was first the Avenue, which ran in a consciously elegant curve from the railway station into an undeveloped wilderness of agriculture, with big, yellow brick villas on either side, and then there was the pavement, the little clump of shops about the post-office, and under the railway arch was a congestion of workmen's dwellings. The road from Surbiton and Epsom ran under the arch, and, like a bright fungoid growth in the ditch, there was now appearing a sort of fourth estate of little red-and-white rough-cast villas, with meretricious gables and very brassy window-blinds. Behind the Avenue was a little hill, and an iron-fenced path went over the crest of this to a stile under an elm-tree, and forked there, with one branch going back into the Avenue again.

"It's either now or never," said Ann Veronica, again ascending this stile. "Much as I hate rows, I've either got to make a stand or give in altogether."

She seated herself in a loose and easy attitude and surveyed the backs of the Avenue houses; then her eyes wandered to where the new red-and-white villas peeped among the trees. She seemed to be making some sort of inventory. "Ye Gods!" she said at last. "WHAT a place!

"Stuffy isn't the word for it.

"I wonder what he takes me for?"

When presently she got down from the stile a certain note of

internal conflict, a touch of doubt, had gone from her warm-tinted face. She had now the clear and tranquil expression of one whose mind is made up. Her back had stiffened, and her hazel eyes looked steadfastly ahead.

As she approached the corner of the Avenue the blond, no-hatted man in gray flannels appeared. There was a certain air of forced fortuity in his manner. He saluted awkwardly. “Hello, Vee!” he said.

“Hello, Teddy!” she answered.

He hung vaguely for a moment as she passed.

But it was clear she was in no mood for Teddys. He realized that he was committed to the path across the fields, an uninteresting walk at the best of times.

“Oh, dammit!” he remarked, “dammit!” with great bitterness as he faced it.

Part 2

Ann Veronica Stanley was twenty-one and a half years old. She had black hair, fine eyebrows, and a clear complexion; and the forces that had modelled her features had loved and lingered at their work and made them subtle and fine. She was slender, and sometimes she seemed tall, and walked and carried herself lightly and joyfully as one who commonly and habitually feels well, and sometimes she stooped a little and was preoccupied. Her lips came together with an expression between contentment and the faintest shadow of a smile, her manner was one of quiet reserve, and behind this mask she was wildly discontented and eager for freedom and life.

She wanted to live. She was vehemently impatient — she did not clearly know for what — to do, to be, to experience. And experience was slow in coming. All the world about her seemed to be — how can one put it? — in wrappers, like a house when people leave it in the summer. The blinds were all drawn, the sunlight kept out, one could not tell what colors these gray swathings hid. She wanted to

know. And there was no intimation whatever that the blinds would ever go up or the windows or doors be opened, or the chandeliers, that seemed to promise such a blaze of fire, unveiled and furnished and lit. Dim souls flitted about her, not only speaking but it would seem even thinking in undertones....

During her school days, especially her earlier school days, the world had been very explicit with her, telling her what to do, what not to do, giving her lessons to learn and games to play and interests of the most suitable and various kinds. Presently she woke up to the fact that there was a considerable group of interests called being in love and getting married, with certain attractive and amusing subsidiary developments, such as flirtation and "being interested" in people of the opposite sex. She approached this field with her usual liveliness of apprehension. But here she met with a check. These interests her world promptly, through the agency of schoolmistresses, older school-mates, her aunt, and a number of other responsible and authoritative people, assured her she must on no account think about. Miss Moffatt, the history and moral instruction mistress, was particularly explicit upon this score, and they all agreed in indicating contempt and pity for girls whose minds ran on such matters, and who betrayed it in their conversation or dress or bearing. It was, in fact, a group of interests quite unlike any other group, peculiar and special, and one to be thoroughly ashamed of. Nevertheless, Ann Veronica found it a difficult matter not to think of these things. However having a considerable amount of pride, she decided she would disavow these undesirable topics and keep her mind away from them just as far as she could, but it left her at the end of her school days with that wrapped feeling I have described, and rather at loose ends.

The world, she discovered, with these matters barred had no particular place for her at all, nothing for her to do, except a functionless existence varied by calls, tennis, selected novels, walks, and dusting in her father's house. She thought study would be better. She was a clever girl, the best of her year in the High School, and she made a valiant fight for Somerville or Newnham but her father had met and argued with a Somerville girl at a friend's dinner-table and he thought that sort of thing unsexed a woman. He said simply that

he wanted her to live at home. There was a certain amount of disputation, and meanwhile she went on at school. They compromised at length on the science course at the Tredgold Women's College — she had already matriculated into London University from school — she came of age, and she bickered with her aunt for latch-key privileges on the strength of that and her season ticket. Shamefaced curiosities began to come back into her mind, thinly disguised as literature and art. She read voraciously, and presently, because of her aunt's censorship, she took to smuggling any books she thought might be prohibited instead of bringing them home openly, and she went to the theatre whenever she could produce an acceptable friend to accompany her. She passed her general science examination with double honors and specialized in science. She happened to have an acute sense of form and unusual mental lucidity, and she found in biology, and particularly in comparative anatomy, a very considerable interest, albeit the illumination it cast upon her personal life was not altogether direct. She dissected well, and in a year she found herself chafing at the limitations of the lady B. Sc. who retailed a store of faded learning in the Tredgold laboratory. She had already realized that this instructress was hopelessly wrong and foggy — it is the test of the good comparative anatomist — upon the skull. She discovered a desire to enter as a student in the Imperial College at Westminster, where Russell taught, and go on with her work at the fountain-head.

She had asked about that already, and her father had replied, evasively: "We'll have to see about that, little Vee; we'll have to see about that." In that posture of being seen about the matter hung until she seemed committed to another session at the Tredgold College, and in the mean time a small conflict arose and brought the latch-key question, and in fact the question of Ann Veronica's position generally, to an acute issue.

In addition to the various business men, solicitors, civil servants, and widow ladies who lived in the Morningside Park Avenue, there was a certain family of alien sympathies and artistic quality, the Widgetts, with which Ann Veronica had become very friendly. Mr. Widgett was a journalist and art critic, addicted to a greenish-gray tweed suit and "art" brown ties; he smoked corncob pipes in the

Avenue on Sunday morning, travelled third class to London by unusual trains, and openly despised golf. He occupied one of the smaller houses near the station. He had one son, who had been co-educated, and three daughters with peculiarly jolly red hair that Ann Veronica found adorable. Two of these had been her particular intimates at the High School, and had done much to send her mind exploring beyond the limits of the available literature at home. It was a cheerful, irresponsible, shamelessly hard-up family in the key of faded green and flattened purple, and the girls went on from the High School to the Fadden Art School and a bright, eventful life of art student dances, Socialist meetings, theatre galleries, talking about work, and even, at intervals, work; and ever and again they drew Ann Veronica from her sound persistent industry into the circle of these experiences. They had asked her to come to the first of the two great annual Fadden Dances, the October one, and Ann Veronica had accepted with enthusiasm. And now her father said she must not go.

He had "put his foot down," and said she must not go.

Going involved two things that all Ann Veronica's tact had been ineffectual to conceal from her aunt and father. Her usual dignified reserve had availed her nothing. One point was that she was to wear fancy dress in the likeness of a Corsair's bride, and the other was that she was to spend whatever vestiges of the night remained after the dance was over in London with the Widgett girls and a select party in "quite a decent little hotel" near Fitzroy Square.

"But, my dear!" said Ann Veronica's aunt.

"You see," said Ann Veronica, with the air of one who shares a difficulty, "I've promised to go. I didn't realize — I don't see how I can get out of it now."

Then it was her father issued his ultimatum. He had conveyed it to her, not verbally, but by means of a letter, which seemed to her a singularly ignoble method of prohibition. "He couldn't look me in the face and say it," said Ann Veronica.

"But of course it's aunt's doing really."

And thus it was that as Ann Veronica neared the gates of home, she said to herself: "I'll have it out with him somehow. I'll have it out with him. And if he won't—"

But she did not give even unspoken words to the alternative at

that time.

Part 3

Ann Veronica's father was a solicitor with a good deal of company business: a lean, trustworthy, worried-looking, neuralgic, clean-shaven man of fifty-three, with a hard mouth, a sharp nose, iron-gray hair, gray eyes, gold-framed glasses, and a small, circular baldness at the crown of his head. His name was Peter. He had had five children at irregular intervals, of whom Ann Veronica was the youngest, so that as a parent he came to her perhaps a little practised and jaded and inattentive; and he called her his "little Vee," and patted her unexpectedly and disconcertingly, and treated her promiscuously as of any age between eleven and eight-and-twenty. The City worried him a good deal, and what energy he had left over he spent partly in golf, a game he treated very seriously, and partly in the practices of microscopic petrography.

He "went in" for microscopy in the unphilosophical Victorian manner as his "hobby." A birthday present of a microscope had turned his mind to technical microscopy when he was eighteen, and a chance friendship with a Holborn microscope dealer had confirmed that bent. He had remarkably skilful fingers and a love of detailed processes, and he had become one of the most dexterous amateur makers of rock sections in the world. He spent a good deal more money and time than he could afford upon the little room at the top of the house, in producing new lapidary apparatus and new microscopic accessories and in rubbing down slices of rock to a transparent thinness and mounting them in a beautiful and dignified manner. He did it, he said, "to distract his mind." His chief successes he exhibited to the Lowndean Microscopical Society, where their high technical merit never failed to excite admiration. Their scientific value was less considerable, since he chose rocks entirely with a view to their difficulty of handling or their attractiveness at

conversaziones when done. He had a great contempt for the sections the “theorizers” produced. They proved all sorts of things perhaps, but they were thick, unequal, pitiful pieces of work. Yet an indiscriminating, wrong-headed world gave such fellows all sorts of distinctions....

He read but little, and that chiefly healthy light fiction with chromatic titles, The Red Sword, The Black Helmet, The Purple Robe, also in order “to distract his mind.” He read it in winter in the evening after dinner, and Ann Veronica associated it with a tendency to monopolize the lamp, and to spread a very worn pair of dappled fawn-skin slippers across the fender. She wondered occasionally why his mind needed so much distraction. His favorite newspaper was the Times, which he began at breakfast in the morning often with manifest irritation, and carried off to finish in the train, leaving no other paper at home.

It occurred to Ann Veronica once that she had known him when he was younger, but day had followed day, and each had largely obliterated the impression of its predecessor. But she certainly remembered that when she was a little girl he sometimes wore tennis flannels, and also rode a bicycle very dexterously in through the gates to the front door. And in those days, too, he used to help her mother with her gardening, and hover about her while she stood on the ladder and hammered creepers to the scullery wall.

It had been Ann Veronica’s lot as the youngest child to live in a home that became less animated and various as she grew up. Her mother had died when she was thirteen, her two much older sisters had married off — one submissively, one insubordinately; her two brothers had gone out into the world well ahead of her, and so she had made what she could of her father. But he was not a father one could make much of.

His ideas about girls and women were of a sentimental and modest quality; they were creatures, he thought, either too bad for a modern vocabulary, and then frequently most undesirably desirable, or too pure and good for life. He made this simple classification of a large and various sex to the exclusion of all intermediate kinds; he held that the two classes had to be kept apart even in thought and remote from one another. Women are made like the potter’s vessels

— either for worship or contumely, and are withal fragile vessels. He had never wanted daughters. Each time a daughter had been born to him he had concealed his chagrin with great tenderness and effusion from his wife, and had sworn unwontedly and with passionate sincerity in the bathroom. He was a manly man, free from any strong maternal strain, and he had loved his dark-eyed, dainty bright-colored, and active little wife with a real vein of passion in his sentiment. But he had always felt (he had never allowed himself to think of it) that the promptitude of their family was a little indelicate of her, and in a sense an intrusion. He had, however, planned brilliant careers for his two sons, and, with a certain human amount of warping and delay, they were pursuing these. One was in the Indian Civil Service and one in the rapidly developing motor business. The daughters, he had hoped, would be their mother's care.

He had no ideas about daughters. They happen to a man.

Of course a little daughter is a delightful thing enough. It runs about gayly, it romps, it is bright and pretty, it has enormous quantities of soft hair and more power of expressing affection than its brothers. It is a lovely little appendage to the mother who smiles over it, and it does things quaintly like her, gestures with her very gestures. It makes wonderful sentences that you can repeat in the City and are good enough for Punch. You call it a lot of nicknames—"Babs" and "Bibs" and "Viddles" and "Vee"; you whack at it playfully, and it whacks you back. It loves to sit on your knee. All that is jolly and as it should be.

But a little daughter is one thing and a daughter quite another. There one comes to a relationship that Mr. Stanley had never thought out. When he found himself thinking about it, it upset him so that he at once resorted to distraction. The chromatic fiction with which he relieved his mind glanced but slightly at this aspect of life, and never with any quality of guidance. Its heroes never had daughters, they borrowed other people's. The one fault, indeed, of this school of fiction for him was that it had rather a light way with parental rights. His instinct was in the direction of considering his daughters his absolute property, bound to obey him, his to give away or his to keep to be a comfort in his declining years just as he thought fit. About this conception of ownership he perceived and desired a certain

sentimental glamour, he liked everything properly dressed, but it remained ownership. Ownership seemed only a reasonable return for the cares and expenses of a daughter's upbringing. Daughters were not like sons. He perceived, however, that both the novels he read and the world he lived in discountenanced these assumptions. Nothing else was put in their place, and they remained sotto voce, as it were, in his mind. The new and the old cancelled out; his daughters became quasi-independent dependents — which is absurd. One married as he wished and one against his wishes, and now here was Ann Veronica, his little Vee, discontented with her beautiful, safe, and sheltering home, going about with hatless friends to Socialist meetings and art-class dances, and displaying a disposition to carry her scientific ambitions to unwomanly lengths. She seemed to think he was merely the paymaster, handing over the means of her freedom. And now she insisted that she MUST leave the chastened security of the Tredgold Women's College for Russell's unbridled classes, and wanted to go to fancy dress dances in pirate costume and spend the residue of the night with Widgett's ramshackle girls in some indescribable hotel in Soho!

He had done his best not to think about her at all, but the situation and his sister had become altogether too urgent. He had finally put aside The Lilac Sunbonnet, gone into his study, lit the gas fire, and written the letter that had brought these unsatisfactory relations to a head.

Part 4

MY DEAR VEE, he wrote. These daughters! He gnawed his pen and reflected, tore the sheet up, and began again.

"MY DEAR VERONICA, — Your aunt tells me you have involved yourself in some arrangement with the Widgett girls about a Fancy Dress Ball in London. I gather you wish to go up in some fantastic get-up, wrapped about in your opera cloak, and that after the

festivities you propose to stay with these friends of yours, and without any older people in your party, at an hotel. Now I am sorry to cross you in anything you have set your heart upon, but I regret to say—"

"H'm," he reflected, and crossed out the last four words.

" — but this cannot be."

"No," he said, and tried again: "but I must tell you quite definitely that I feel it to be my duty to forbid any such exploit."

"Damn!" he remarked at the defaced letter; and, taking a fresh sheet, he recopied what he had written. A certain irritation crept into his manner as he did so.

"I regret that you should ever have proposed it," he went on.

He meditated, and began a new paragraph.

"The fact of it is, and this absurd project of yours only brings it to a head, you have begun to get hold of some very queer ideas about what a young lady in your position may or may not venture to do. I do not think you quite understand my ideals or what is becoming as between father and daughter. Your attitude to me—"

He fell into a brown study. It was so difficult to put precisely.

" — and your aunt—"

For a time he searched for the mot juste. Then he went on:

" — and, indeed, to most of the established things in life is, frankly, unsatisfactory. You are restless, aggressive, critical with all the crude unthinking criticism of youth. You have no grasp upon the essential facts of life (I pray God you never may), and in your rash ignorance you are prepared to dash into positions that may end in lifelong regret. The life of a young girl is set about with prowling pitfalls."

He was arrested for a moment by an indistinct picture of Veronica reading this last sentence. But he was now too deeply moved to trace a certain unsatisfactoriness to its source in a mixture of metaphors. "Well," he said, argumentatively, "it IS. That's all about it. It's time she knew."

"The life of a young girl is set about with prowling pitfalls, from which she must be shielded at all costs."

His lips tightened, and he frowned with solemn resolution.

"So long as I am your father, so long as your life is entrusted to

my care, I feel bound by every obligation to use my authority to check this odd disposition of yours toward extravagant enterprises. A day will come when you will thank me. It is not, my dear Veronica, that I think there is any harm in you; there is not. But a girl is soiled not only by evil but by the proximity of evil, and a reputation for rashness may do her as serious an injury as really reprehensible conduct. So do please believe that in this matter I am acting for the best."

He signed his name and reflected. Then he opened the study door and called "Mollie!" and returned to assume an attitude of authority on the hearthrug, before the blue flames and orange glow of the gas fire.

His sister appeared.

She was dressed in one of those complicated dresses that are all lace and work and confused patternings of black and purple and cream about the body, and she was in many ways a younger feminine version of the same theme as himself. She had the same sharp nose — which, indeed, only Ann Veronica, of all the family, had escaped. She carried herself well, whereas her brother slouched, and there was a certain aristocratic dignity about her that she had acquired through her long engagement to a curate of family, a scion of the Wiltshire Edmondshaws. He had died before they married, and when her brother became a widower she had come to his assistance and taken over much of the care of his youngest daughter. But from the first her rather old-fashioned conception of life had jarred with the suburban atmosphere, the High School spirit and the memories of the light and little Mrs. Stanley, whose family had been by any reckoning inconsiderable — to use the kindliest term. Miss Stanley had determined from the outset to have the warmest affection for her youngest niece and to be a second mother in her life — a second and a better one; but she had found much to battle with, and there was much in herself that Ann Veronica failed to understand. She came in now with an air of reserved solicitude.

Mr. Stanley pointed to the letter with a pipe he had drawn from his jacket pocket. "What do you think of that?" he asked.

She took it up in her many-ringed hands and read it judicially. He filled his pipe slowly.

"Yes," she said at last, "it is firm and affectionate."

"I could have said more."

"You seem to have said just what had to be said. It seems to me exactly what is wanted. She really must not go to that affair."

She paused, and he waited for her to speak.

"I don't think she quite sees the harm of those people or the sort of life to which they would draw her," she said. "They would spoil every chance."

"She has chances?" he said, helping her out.

"She is an extremely attractive girl," she said; and added, "to some people. Of course, one doesn't like to talk about things until there are things to talk about."

"All the more reason why she shouldn't get herself talked about."

"That is exactly what I feel."

Mr. Stanley took the letter and stood with it in his hand thoughtfully for a time. "I'd give anything," he remarked, "to see our little Vee happily and comfortably married."

He gave the note to the parlormaid the next morning in an inadvertent, casual manner just as he was leaving the house to catch his London train. When Ann Veronica got it she had at first a wild, fantastic idea that it contained a tip.

Part 5

Ann Veronica's resolve to have things out with her father was not accomplished without difficulty.

He was not due from the City until about six, and so she went and played Badminton with the Widgett girls until dinner-time. The atmosphere at dinner was not propitious. Her aunt was blandly amiable above a certain tremulous undertow, and talked as if to a caller about the alarming spread of marigolds that summer at the end of the garden, a sort of Yellow Peril to all the smaller hardy annuals, while her father brought some papers to table and presented himself

as preoccupied with them. “It really seems as if we shall have to put down marigolds altogether next year,” Aunt Molly repeated three times, “and do away with marguerites. They seed beyond all reason.” Elizabeth, the parlormaid, kept coming in to hand vegetables whenever there seemed a chance of Ann Veronica asking for an interview. Directly dinner was over Mr. Stanley, having pretended to linger to smoke, fled suddenly up-stairs to petrography, and when Veronica tapped he answered through the locked door, “Go away, Vee! I’m busy,” and made a lapidary’s wheel buzz loudly.

Breakfast, too, was an impossible occasion. He read the Times with an unusually passionate intentness, and then declared suddenly for the earlier of the two trains he used.

“I’ll come to the station,” said Ann Veronica. “I may as well come up by this train.”

“I may have to run,” said her father, with an appeal to his watch.

“I’ll run, too,” she volunteered.

Instead of which they walked sharply....

“I say, daddy,” she began, and was suddenly short of breath.

“If it’s about that dance project,” he said, “it’s no good, Veronica. I’ve made up my mind.”

“You’ll make me look a fool before all my friends.”

“You shouldn’t have made an engagement until you’d consulted your aunt.”

“I thought I was old enough,” she gasped, between laughter and crying.

Her father’s step quickened to a trot. “I won’t have you quarrelling and crying in the Avenue,” he said. “Stop it!... If you’ve got anything to say, you must say it to your aunt—”

“But look here, daddy!”

He flapped the Times at her with an imperious gesture.

“It’s settled. You’re not to go. You’re NOT to go.”

“But it’s about other things.”

“I don’t care. This isn’t the place.”

“Then may I come to the study to-night — after dinner?”

“I’m — BUSY!”

“It’s important. If I can’t talk anywhere else — I DO want an understanding.”

Ahead of them walked a gentleman whom it was evident they must at their present pace very speedily overtake. It was Ramage, the occupant of the big house at the end of the Avenue. He had recently made Mr. Stanley's acquaintance in the train and shown him one or two trifling civilities. He was an outside broker and the proprietor of a financial newspaper; he had come up very rapidly in the last few years, and Mr. Stanley admired and detested him in almost equal measure. It was intolerable to think that he might overhear words and phrases. Mr. Stanley's pace slackened.

"You've no right to badger me like this, Veronica," he said. "I can't see what possible benefit can come of discussing things that are settled. If you want advice, your aunt is the person. However, if you must air your opinions—"

"To-night, then, daddy!"

He made an angry but conceivably an assenting noise, and then Ramage glanced back and stopped, saluted elaborately, and waited for them to come up. He was a square-faced man of nearly fifty, with iron-gray hair a mobile, clean-shaven mouth and rather protuberant black eyes that now scrutinized Ann Veronica. He dressed rather after the fashion of the West End than the City, and affected a cultured urbanity that somehow disconcerted and always annoyed Ann Veronica's father extremely. He did not play golf, but took his exercise on horseback, which was also unsympathetic.

"Stuffy these trees make the Avenue," said Mr. Stanley as they drew alongside, to account for his own ruffled and heated expression. "They ought to have been lopped in the spring."

"There's plenty of time," said Ramage. "Is Miss Stanley coming up with us?"

"I go second," she said, "and change at Wimbledon."

"We'll all go second," said Ramage, "if we may?"

Mr. Stanley wanted to object strongly, but as he could not immediately think how to put it, he contented himself with a grunt, and the motion was carried. "How's Mrs. Ramage?" he asked.

"Very much as usual," said Ramage. "She finds lying up so much very irksome. But, you see, she HAS to lie up."

The topic of his invalid wife bored him, and he turned at once to Ann Veronica. "And where are YOU going?" he said. "Are you

going on again this winter with that scientific work of yours? It's an instance of heredity, I suppose." For a moment Mr. Stanley almost liked Ramage. "You're a biologist, aren't you?"

He began to talk of his own impressions of biology as a commonplace magazine reader who had to get what he could from the monthly reviews, and was glad to meet with any information from nearer the fountainhead. In a little while he and she were talking quite easily and agreeably. They went on talking in the train — it seemed to her father a slight want of deference to him — and he listened and pretended to read the Times. He was struck disagreeably by Ramage's air of gallant consideration and Ann Veronica's self-possessed answers. These things did not harmonize with his conception of the forthcoming (if unavoidable) interview. After all, it came to him suddenly as a harsh discovery that she might be in a sense regarded as grownup. He was a man who in all things classified without nuance, and for him there were in the matter of age just two feminine classes and no more — girls and women. The distinction lay chiefly in the right to pat their heads. But here was a girl — she must be a girl, since she was his daughter and pat-able — imitating the woman quite remarkably and cleverly. He resumed his listening. She was discussing one of those modern advanced plays with a remarkable, with an extraordinary, confidence.

"His love-making," she remarked, "struck me as unconvincing. He seemed too noisy."

The full significance of her words did not instantly appear to him. Then it dawned. Good heavens! She was discussing love-making. For a time he heard no more, and stared with stony eyes at a Book-War proclamation in leaded type that filled half a column of the Times that day. Could she understand what she was talking about? Luckily it was a second-class carriage and the ordinary fellow-travellers were not there. Everybody, he felt, must be listening behind their papers.

Of course, girls repeat phrases and opinions of which they cannot possibly understand the meaning. But a middle-aged man like Ramage ought to know better than to draw out a girl, the daughter of a friend and neighbor....

Well, after all, he seemed to be turning the subject. "Broddick is a

heavy man," he was saying, "and the main interest of the play was the embezzlement." Thank Heaven! Mr. Stanley allowed his paper to drop a little, and scrutinized the hats and brows of their three fellow-travellers.

They reached Wimbledon, and Ramage whipped out to hand Miss Stanley to the platform as though she had been a duchess, and she descended as though such attentions from middle-aged, but still gallant, merchants were a matter of course. Then, as Ramage readjusted himself in a corner, he remarked: "These young people shoot up, Stanley. It seems only yesterday that she was running down the Avenue, all hair and legs."

Mr. Stanley regarded him through his glasses with something approaching animosity.

"Now she's all hat and ideas," he said, with an air of humor.

"She seems an unusually clever girl," said Ramage.

Mr. Stanley regarded his neighbor's clean-shaven face almost warily. "I'm not sure whether we don't rather overdo all this higher education," he said, with an effect of conveying profound meanings.

Part 6

He became quite sure, by a sort of accumulation of reflection, as the day wore on. He found his youngest daughter intrusive in his thoughts all through the morning, and still more so in the afternoon. He saw her young and graceful back as she descended from the carriage, severely ignoring him, and recalled a glimpse he had of her face, bright and serene, as his train ran out of Wimbledon. He recalled with exasperating perplexity her clear, matter-of-fact tone as she talked about love-making being unconvincing. He was really very proud of her, and extraordinarily angry and resentful at the innocent and audacious self-reliance that seemed to intimate her sense of absolute independence of him, her absolute security without him. After all, she only LOOKED a woman. She was rash and

ignorant, absolutely inexperienced. Absolutely. He began to think of speeches, very firm, explicit speeches, he would make.

He lunched in the Legal Club in Chancery Lane, and met Ogilvy. Daughters were in the air that day. Ogilvy was full of a client's trouble in that matter, a grave and even tragic trouble. He told some of the particulars.

"Curious case," said Ogilvy, buttering his bread and cutting it up in a way he had. "Curious case — and sets one thinking."

He resumed, after a mouthful: "Here is a girl of sixteen or seventeen, seventeen and a half to be exact, running about, as one might say, in London. Schoolgirl. Her family are solid West End people, Kensington people. Father — dead. She goes out and comes home. Afterward goes on to Oxford. Twenty-one, twenty-two. Why doesn't she marry? Plenty of money under her father's will. Charming girl."

He consumed Irish stew for some moments.

"Married already," he said, with his mouth full. "Shopman."

"Good God!" said Mr. Stanley.

"Good-looking rascal she met at Worthing. Very romantic and all that. He fixed it."

"But—"

"He left her alone. Pure romantic nonsense on her part. Sheer calculation on his. Went up to Somerset House to examine the will before he did it. Yes. Nice position."

"She doesn't care for him now?"

"Not a bit. What a girl of sixteen cares for is hair and a high color and moonlight and a tenor voice. I suppose most of our daughters would marry organ-grinders if they had a chance — at that age. My son wanted to marry a woman of thirty in a tobacconist's shop. Only a son's another story. We fixed that. Well, that's the situation. My people don't know what to do. Can't face a scandal. Can't ask the gent to go abroad and condone a bigamy. He misstated her age and address; but you can't get home on him for a thing like that.... There you are! Girl spoilt for life. Makes one want to go back to the Oriental system!"

Mr. Stanley poured wine. "Damned Rascal!" he said. "Isn't there a brother to kick him?"

“Mere satisfaction,” reflected Ogilvy. “Mere sensuality. I rather think they have kicked him, from the tone of some of the letters. Nice, of course. But it doesn’t alter the situation.”

“It’s these Rascals,” said Mr. Stanley, and paused.

“Always has been,” said Ogilvy. “Our interest lies in heading them off.”

“There was a time when girls didn’t get these extravagant ideas.”

“Lydia Languish, for example. Anyhow, they didn’t run about so much.”

“Yes. That’s about the beginning. It’s these damned novels. All this torrent of misleading, spurious stuff that pours from the press. These sham ideals and advanced notions. Women who Dids, and all that kind of thing....”

Ogilvy reflected. “This girl — she’s really a very charming, frank person — had had her imagination fired, so she told me, by a school performance of Romeo and Juliet.”

Mr. Stanley decided to treat that as irrelevant. “There ought to be a Censorship of Books. We want it badly at the present time. Even WITH the Censorship of Plays there’s hardly a decent thing to which a man can take his wife and daughters, a creeping taint of suggestion everywhere. What would it be without that safeguard?”

Ogilvy pursued his own topic. “I’m inclined to think, Stanley, myself that as a matter of fact it was the expurgated Romeo and Juliet did the mischief. If our young person hadn’t had the nurse part cut out, eh? She might have known more and done less. I was curious about that. All they left it was the moon and stars. And the balcony and ‘My Romeo!’”

“Shakespeare is altogether different from the modern stuff. Altogether different. I’m not discussing Shakespeare. I don’t want to Bowdlerize Shakespeare. I’m not that sort I quite agree. But this modern miasma—”

Mr. Stanley took mustard savagely.

“Well, we won’t go into Shakespeare,” said Ogilvy “What interests me is that our young women nowadays are running about as free as air practically, with registry offices and all sorts of accommodation round the corner. Nothing to check their proceedings but a declining habit of telling the truth and the limitations of their

imaginations. And in that respect they stir up one another. Not my affair, of course, but I think we ought to teach them more or restrain them more. One or the other. They're too free for their innocence or too innocent for their freedom. That's my point. Are you going to have any apple-tart, Stanley? The apple-tart's been very good lately — very good!"

Part 7

At the end of dinner that evening Ann Veronica began: "Father!"

Her father looked at her over his glasses and spoke with grave deliberation; "If there is anything you want to say to me," he said, "you must say it in the study. I am going to smoke a little here, and then I shall go to the study. I don't see what you can have to say. I should have thought my note cleared up everything. There are some papers I have to look through to-night — important papers."

"I won't keep you very long, daddy," said Ann Veronica.

"I don't see, Mollie," he remarked, taking a cigar from the box on the table as his sister and daughter rose, "why you and Vee shouldn't discuss this little affair — whatever it is — without bothering me."

It was the first time this controversy had become triangular, for all three of them were shy by habit.

He stopped in mid-sentence, and Ann Veronica opened the door for her aunt. The air was thick with feelings. Her aunt went out of the room with dignity and a rustle, and up-stairs to the fastness of her own room. She agreed entirely with her brother. It distressed and confused her that the girl should not come to her.

It seemed to show a want of affection, to be a deliberate and unmerited disregard, to justify the reprisal of being hurt.

When Ann Veronica came into the study she found every evidence of a carefully foreseen grouping about the gas fire. Both arm-chairs had been moved a little so as to face each other on either side of the fender, and in the circular glow of the green-shaded lamp

there lay, conspicuously waiting, a thick bundle of blue and white papers tied with pink tape. Her father held some printed document in his hand, and appeared not to observe her entry. “Sit down,” he said, and perused— “perused” is the word for it — for some moments. Then he put the paper by. “And what is it all about, Veronica?” he asked, with a deliberate note of irony, looking at her a little quizzically over his glasses.

Ann Veronica looked bright and a little elated, and she disregarded her father’s invitation to be seated. She stood on the mat instead, and looked down on him. “Look here, daddy,” she said, in a tone of great reasonableness, “I MUST go to that dance, you know.”

Her father’s irony deepened. “Why?” he asked, suavely.

Her answer was not quite ready. “Well, because I don’t see any reason why I shouldn’t.”

“You see I do.”

“Why shouldn’t I go?”

“It isn’t a suitable place; it isn’t a suitable gathering.”

“But, daddy, what do you know of the place and the gathering?”

“And it’s entirely out of order; it isn’t right, it isn’t correct; it’s impossible for you to stay in an hotel in London — the idea is preposterous. I can’t imagine what possessed you, Veronica.”

He put his head on one side, pulled down the corners of his mouth, and looked at her over his glasses.

“But why is it preposterous?” asked Ann Veronica, and fiddled with a pipe on the mantel.

“Surely!” he remarked, with an expression of worried appeal.

“You see, daddy, I don’t think it IS preposterous. That’s really what I want to discuss. It comes to this — am I to be trusted to take care of myself, or am I not?”

“To judge from this proposal of yours, I should say not.”

“I think I am.”

“As long as you remain under my roof—” he began, and paused.

“You are going to treat me as though I wasn’t. Well, I don’t think that’s fair.”

“Your ideas of fairness—” he remarked, and discontinued that sentence. “My dear girl,” he said, in a tone of patient reasonableness, “you are a mere child. You know nothing of life, nothing of its

dangers, nothing of its possibilities. You think everything is harmless and simple, and so forth. It isn't. It isn't. That's where you go wrong. In some things, in many things, you must trust to your elders, to those who know more of life than you do. Your aunt and I have discussed all this matter. There it is. You can't go."

The conversation hung for a moment. Ann Veronica tried to keep hold of a complicated situation and not lose her head. She had turned round sideways, so as to look down into the fire.

"You see, father," she said, "it isn't only this affair of the dance. I want to go to that because it's a new experience, because I think it will be interesting and give me a view of things. You say I know nothing. That's probably true. But how am I to know of things?"

"Some things I hope you may never know," he said.

"I'm not so sure. I want to know — just as much as I can."

"Tut!" he said, fuming, and put out his hand to the papers in the pink tape.

"Well, I do. It's just that I want to say. I want to be a human being; I want to learn about things and know about things, and not to be protected as something too precious for life, cooped up in one narrow little corner."

"Cooped up!" he cried. "Did I stand in the way of your going to college? Have I ever prevented you going about at any reasonable hour? You've got a bicycle!"

"H'm!" said Ann Veronica, and then went on "I want to be taken seriously. A girl — at my age — is grown-up. I want to go on with my University work under proper conditions, now that I've done the Intermediate. It isn't as though I haven't done well. I've never muffed an exam yet. Roddy muffed two...."

Her father interrupted. "Now look here, Veronica, let us be plain with each other. You are not going to that infidel Russell's classes. You are not going anywhere but to the Tredgold College. I've thought that out, and you must make up your mind to it. All sorts of considerations come in. While you live in my house you must follow my ideas. You are wrong even about that man's scientific position and his standard of work. There are men in the Lowndean who laugh at him — simply laugh at him. And I have seen work by his pupils myself that struck me as being — well, next door to shameful.

There's stories, too, about his demonstrator, Capes Something or other. The kind of man who isn't content with his science, and writes articles in the monthly reviews. Anyhow, there it is: YOU ARE NOT GOING THERE."

The girl received this intimation in silence, but the face that looked down upon the gas fire took an expression of obstinacy that brought out a hitherto latent resemblance between parent and child. When she spoke, her lips twitched.

"Then I suppose when I have graduated I am to come home?"

"It seems the natural course—"

"And do nothing?"

"There are plenty of things a girl can find to do at home."

"Until some one takes pity on me and marries me?"

He raised his eyebrows in mild appeal. His foot tapped impatiently, and he took up the papers.

"Look here, father," she said, with a change in her voice, "suppose I won't stand it?"

He regarded her as though this was a new idea.

"Suppose, for example, I go to this dance?"

"You won't."

"Well" — her breath failed her for a moment. "How would you prevent it?" she asked.

"But I have forbidden it!" he said, raising his voice.

"Yes, I know. But suppose I go?"

"Now, Veronica! No, no. This won't do. Understand me! I forbid it. I do not want to hear from you even the threat of disobedience." He spoke loudly. "The thing is forbidden!"

"I am ready to give up anything that you show to be wrong."

"You will give up anything I wish you to give up."

They stared at each other through a pause, and both faces were flushed and obstinate.

She was trying by some wonderful, secret, and motionless gymnastics to restrain her tears. But when she spoke her lips quivered, and they came. "I mean to go to that dance!" she blubbered. "I mean to go to that dance! I meant to reason with you, but you won't reason. You're dogmatic."

At the sight of her tears his expression changed to a mingling of

triumph and concern. He stood up, apparently intending to put an arm about her, but she stepped back from him quickly. She produced a handkerchief, and with one sweep of this and a simultaneous gulp had abolished her fit of weeping. His voice now had lost its ironies.

"Now, Veronica," he pleaded, "Veronica, this is most unreasonable. All we do is for your good. Neither your aunt nor I have any other thought but what is best for you."

"Only you won't let me live. Only you won't let me exist!"

Mr. Stanley lost patience. He bullied frankly.

"What nonsense is this? What raving! My dear child, you DO live, you DO exist! You have this home. You have friends, acquaintances, social standing, brothers and sisters, every advantage! Instead of which, you want to go to some mixed classes or other and cut up rabbits and dance about at nights in wild costumes with casual art student friends and God knows who. That — that isn't living! You are beside yourself. You don't know what you ask nor what you say. You have neither reason nor logic. I am sorry to seem to hurt you, but all I say is for your good. You MUST not, you SHALL not go. On this I am resolved. I put my foot down like — like adamant. And a time will come, Veronica, mark my words, a time will come when you will bless me for my firmness to-night. It goes to my heart to disappoint you, but this thing must not be."

He sidled toward her, but she recoiled from him, leaving him in possession of the hearth-rug.

"Well," she said, "good-night, father."

"What!" he asked; "not a kiss?"

She affected not to hear.

The door closed softly upon her. For a long time he remained standing before the fire, staring at the situation. Then he sat down and filled his pipe slowly and thoughtfully....

"I don't see what else I could have said," he remarked.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

ANN VERONICA GATHERS POINTS OF VIEW

Part 1

"Are you coming to the Fadden Dance, Ann Veronica?" asked Constance Widgett.

Ann Veronica considered her answer. "I mean to," she replied.

"You are making your dress?"

"Such as it is."

They were in the elder Widgett girl's bedroom; Hetty was laid up, she said, with a sprained ankle, and a miscellaneous party was gossiping away her tedium. It was a large, littered, self-forgetful apartment, decorated with unframed charcoal sketches by various incipient masters; and an open bookcase, surmounted by plaster casts and the half of a human skull, displayed an odd miscellany of books — Shaw and Swinburne, Tom Jones, Fabian Essays, Pope and Dumas, cheek by jowl. Constance Widgett's abundant copper-red hair was bent down over some dimly remunerative work — stencilling in colors upon rough, white material — at a kitchen table she had dragged up-stairs for the purpose, while on her bed there was seated a slender lady of thirty or so in a dingy green dress, whom Constance had introduced with a wave of her hand as Miss Miniver. Miss Miniver looked out on the world through large emotional blue eyes that were further magnified by the glasses she wore, and her nose was pinched and pink, and her mouth was whimsically petulant. Her glasses moved quickly as her glance travelled from face to face. She seemed bursting with the desire to talk, and watching for her opportunity. On her lapel was an ivory button, bearing the words "Votes for Women." Ann Veronica sat at the foot of the sufferer's bed, while Teddy Widgett, being something of an athlete, occupied the only bed-room chair — a decadent piece, essentially a tripod and largely a formality — and smoked cigarettes, and tried to conceal the fact that he was looking all the time at Ann Veronica's eyebrows. Teddy was the hatless young man who had turned Ann Veronica

aside from the Avenue two days before. He was the junior of both his sisters, co-educated and much broken in to feminine society. A bowl of roses, just brought by Ann Veronica, adorned the communal dressing-table, and Ann Veronica was particularly trim in preparation for a call she was to make with her aunt later in the afternoon.

Ann Veronica decided to be more explicit. “I’ve been,” she said, “forbidden to come.”

“Hul-LO!” said Hetty, turning her head on the pillow; and Teddy remarked with profound emotion, “My God!”

“Yes,” said Ann Veronica, “and that complicates the situation.”

“Auntie?” asked Constance, who was conversant with Ann Veronica’s affairs.

“No! My father. It’s — it’s a serious prohibition.”

“Why?” asked Hetty.

“That’s the point. I asked him why, and he hadn’t a reason.”

“YOU ASKED YOUR FATHER FOR A REASON!” said Miss Miniver, with great intensity.

“Yes. I tried to have it out with him, but he wouldn’t have it out.” Ann Veronica reflected for an instant “That’s why I think I ought to come.”

“You asked your father for a reason!” Miss Miniver repeated.

“We always have things out with OUR father, poor dear!” said Hetty. “He’s got almost to like it.”

“Men,” said Miss Miniver, “NEVER have a reason. Never! And they don’t know it! They have no idea of it. It’s one of their worst traits, one of their very worst.”

“But I say, Vee,” said Constance, “if you come and you are forbidden to come there’ll be the deuce of a row.”

Ann Veronica was deciding for further confidences. Her situation was perplexing her very much, and the Widgett atmosphere was lax and sympathetic, and provocative of discussion. “It isn’t only the dance,” she said.

“There’s the classes,” said Constance, the well-informed.

“There’s the whole situation. Apparently I’m not to exist yet. I’m not to study, I’m not to grow. I’ve got to stay at home and remain in a state of suspended animation.”

“DUSTING!” said Miss Miniver, in a sepulchral voice.

“Until you marry, Vee,” said Hetty.

“Well, I don’t feel like standing it.”

“Thousands of women have married merely for freedom,” said Miss Miniver. “Thousands! Ugh! And found it a worse slavery.”

“I suppose,” said Constance, stencilling away at bright pink petals, “it’s our lot. But it’s very beastly.”

“What’s our lot?” asked her sister.

“Slavery! Downtroddenness! When I think of it I feel all over boot marks — men’s boots. We hide it bravely, but so it is. Damn! I’ve splashed.”

Miss Miniver’s manner became impressive. She addressed Ann Veronica with an air of conveying great open secrets to her. “As things are at present,” she said, “it is true. We live under man-made institutions, and that is what they amount to. Every girl in the world practically, except a few of us who teach or type-write, and then we’re underpaid and sweated — it’s dreadful to think how we are sweated!” She had lost her generalization, whatever it was. She hung for a moment, and then went on, conclusively, “Until we have the vote that is how things WILL be.”

“I’m all for the vote,” said Teddy.

“I suppose a girl MUST be underpaid and sweated,” said Ann Veronica. “I suppose there’s no way of getting a decent income — independently.”

“Women have practically NO economic freedom,” said Miss Miniver, “because they have no political freedom. Men have seen to that. The one profession, the one decent profession, I mean, for a woman — except the stage — is teaching, and there we trample on one another. Everywhere else — the law, medicine, the Stock Exchange — prejudice bars us.”

“There’s art,” said Ann Veronica, “and writing.”

“Every one hasn’t the Gift. Even there a woman never gets a fair chance. Men are against her. Whatever she does is minimized. All the best novels have been written by women, and yet see how men sneer at the lady novelist still! There’s only one way to get on for a woman, and that is to please men. That is what they think we are for!”

“We’re beasts,” said Teddy. “Beasts!”

But Miss Miniver took no notice of his admission.

"Of course," said Miss Miniver — she went on in a regularly undulating voice— "we DO please men. We have that gift. We can see round them and behind them and through them, and most of us use that knowledge, in the silent way we have, for our great ends. Not all of us, but some of us. Too many. I wonder what men would say if we threw the mask aside — if we really told them what WE thought of them, really showed them what WE were." A flush of excitement crept into her cheeks.

"Maternity," she said, "has been our undoing."

From that she opened out into a long, confused emphatic discourse on the position of women, full of wonderful statements, while Constance worked at her stencilling and Ann Veronica and Hetty listened, and Teddy contributed sympathetic noises and consumed cheap cigarettes. As she talked she made weak little gestures with her hands, and she thrust her face forward from her bent shoulders; and she peered sometimes at Ann Veronica and sometimes at a photograph of the Axenstrasse, near Fluelen, that hung upon the wall. Ann Veronica watched her face, vaguely sympathizing with her, vaguely disliking her physical insufficiency and her convulsive movements, and the fine eyebrows were knit with a faint perplexity. Essentially the talk was a mixture of fragments of sentences heard, of passages read, or arguments indicated rather than stated, and all of it was served in a sauce of strange enthusiasm, thin yet intense. Ann Veronica had had some training at the Tredgold College in disentangling threads from confused statements, and she had a curious persuasion that in all this fluent muddle there was something — something real, something that signified. But it was very hard to follow. She did not understand the note of hostility to men that ran through it all, the bitter vindictiveness that lit Miss Miniver's cheeks and eyes, the sense of some at last insupportable wrong slowly accumulated. She had no inkling of that insupportable wrong.

"We are the species," said Miss Miniver, "men are only incidents. They give themselves airs, but so it is. In all the species of animals the females are more important than the males; the males have to please them. Look at the cock's feathers, look at the competition

there is everywhere, except among humans. The stags and oxen and things all have to fight for us, everywhere. Only in man is the male made the most important. And that happens through our maternity; it's our very importance that degrades us.

"While we were minding the children they stole our rights and liberties. The children made us slaves, and the men took advantage of it. It's — Mrs. Shalford says — the accidental conquering the essential. Originally in the first animals there were no males, none at all. It has been proved. Then they appear among the lower things" — she made meticulous gestures to figure the scale of life; she seemed to be holding up specimens, and peering through her glasses at them — "among crustaceans and things, just as little creatures, ever so inferior to the females. Mere hangers on. Things you would laugh at. And among human beings, too, women to begin with were the rulers and leaders; they owned all the property, they invented all the arts.

"The primitive government was the Matriarchate. The Matriarchate! The Lords of Creation just ran about and did what they were told."

"But is that really so?" said Ann Veronica.

"It has been proved," said Miss Miniver, and added, "by American professors."

"But how did they prove it?"

"By science," said Miss Miniver, and hurried on, putting out a rhetorical hand that showed a slash of finger through its glove. "And now, look at us! See what we have become. Toys! Delicate trifles! A sex of invalids. It is we who have become the parasites and toys."

It was, Ann Veronica felt, at once absurd and extraordinarily right. Hetty, who had periods of lucid expression, put the thing for her from her pillow. She charged boldly into the space of Miss Miniver's rhetorical pause.

"It isn't quite that we're toys. Nobody toys with me. Nobody regards Constance or Vee as a delicate trifle."

Teddy made some confused noise, a thoracic street row; some remark was assassinated by a rival in his throat and buried hastily under a cough.

"They'd better not," said Hetty. "The point is we're not toys, toys isn't the word; we're litter. We're handfuls. We're regarded as

inflammable litter that mustn't be left about. We are the species, and maternity is our game; that's all right, but nobody wants that admitted for fear we should all catch fire, and set about fulfilling the purpose of our beings without waiting for further explanations. As if we didn't know! The practical trouble is our ages. They used to marry us off at seventeen, rush us into things before we had time to protest. They don't now. Heaven knows why! They don't marry most of us off now until high up in the twenties. And the age gets higher. We have to hang about in the interval. There's a great gulf opened, and nobody's got any plans what to do with us. So the world is choked with waste and waiting daughters. Hanging about! And they start thinking and asking questions, and begin to be neither one thing nor the other. We're partly human beings and partly females in suspense."

Miss Miniver followed with an expression of perplexity, her mouth shaped to futile expositions. The Widgett method of thought puzzled her weakly rhetorical mind. "There is no remedy, girls," she began, breathlessly, "except the Vote. Give us that—"

Ann Veronica came in with a certain disregard of Miss Miniver. "That's it," she said. "They have no plans for us. They have no ideas what to do with us."

"Except," said Constance, surveying her work with her head on one side, "to keep the matches from the litter."

"And they won't let us make plans for ourselves."

"We will," said Miss Miniver, refusing to be suppressed, "if some of us have to be killed to get it." And she pressed her lips together in white resolution and nodded, and she was manifestly full of that same passion for conflict and self-sacrifice that has given the world martyrs since the beginning of things. "I wish I could make every woman, every girl, see this as clearly as I see it — just what the Vote means to us. Just what it means...."

Part 2

As Ann Veronica went back along the Avenue to her aunt she became aware of a light-footed pursuer running. Teddy overtook her, a little out of breath, his innocent face flushed, his straw-colored hair disordered. He was out of breath, and spoke in broken sentences.

"I say, Vee. Half a minute, Vee. It's like this: You want freedom. Look here. You know — if you want freedom. Just an idea of mine. You know how those Russian students do? In Russia. Just a formal marriage. Mere formality. Liberates the girl from parental control. See? You marry me. Simply. No further responsibility whatever. Without hindrance — present occupation. Why not? Quite willing. Get a license — just an idea of mine. Doesn't matter a bit to me. Do anything to please you, Vee. Anything. Not fit to be dust on your boots. Still — there you are!"

He paused.

Ann Veronica's desire to laugh unrestrainedly was checked by the tremendous earnestness of his expression. "Awfully good of you, Teddy." she said.

He nodded silently, too full for words.

"But I don't see," said Ann Veronica, "just how it fits the present situation."

"No! Well, I just suggested it. Threw it out. Of course, if at any time — see reason — alter your opinion. Always at your service. No offence, I hope. All right! I'm off. Due to play hockey. Jackson's. Horrid snorters! So long, Vee! Just suggested it. See? Nothing really. Passing thought."

"Teddy," said Ann Veronica, "you're a dear!"

"Oh, quite!" said Teddy, convulsively, and lifted an imaginary hat and left her.

Part 3

The call Ann Veronica paid with her aunt that afternoon had at first much the same relation to the Widgett conversation that a plaster

statue of Mr. Gladstone would have to a carelessly displayed interior on a dissecting-room table. The Widgetts talked with a remarkable absence of external coverings; the Palsworthys found all the meanings of life on its surfaces. They seemed the most wrapped things in all Ann Veronica's wrappered world. The Widgett mental furniture was perhaps worn and shabby, but there it was before you, undisguised, fading visibly in an almost pitiless sunlight. Lady Palsworthy was the widow of a knight who had won his spurs in the wholesale coal trade, she was of good seventeenth-century attorney blood, a county family, and distantly related to Aunt Mollie's deceased curate. She was the social leader of Morningside Park, and in her superficial and euphuistic way an extremely kind and pleasant woman. With her lived a Mrs. Pramlay, a sister of the Morningside Park doctor, and a very active and useful member of the Committee of the Impoverished Gentlewomen's Aid Society. Both ladies were on easy and friendly terms with all that was best in Morningside Park society; they had an afternoon once a month that was quite well attended, they sometimes gave musical evenings, they dined out and gave a finish to people's dinners, they had a full-sized croquet lawn and tennis beyond, and understood the art of bringing people together. And they never talked of anything at all, never discussed, never even encouraged gossip. They were just nice.

Ann Veronica found herself walking back down the Avenue that had just been the scene of her first proposal beside her aunt, and speculating for the first time in her life about that lady's mental attitudes. Her prevailing effect was one of quiet and complete assurance, as though she knew all about everything, and was only restrained by her instinctive delicacy from telling what she knew. But the restraint exercised by her instinctive delicacy was very great; over and above coarse or sexual matters it covered religion and politics and any mention of money matters or crime, and Ann Veronica found herself wondering whether these exclusions represented, after all, anything more than suppressions. Was there anything at all in those locked rooms of her aunt's mind? Were they fully furnished and only a little dusty and cobwebby and in need of an airing, or were they stark vacancy except, perhaps, for a cockroach or so or the gnawing of a rat? What was the mental

equivalent of a rat's gnawing? The image was going astray. But what would her aunt think of Teddy's recent off-hand suggestion of marriage? What would she think of the Widgett conversation? Suppose she was to tell her aunt quietly but firmly about the parasitic males of degraded crustacea. The girl suppressed a chuckle that would have been inexplicable.

There came a wild rush of anthropological lore into her brain, a flare of indecorous humor. It was one of the secret troubles of her mind, this grotesque twist her ideas would sometimes take, as though they rebelled and rioted. After all, she found herself reflecting, behind her aunt's complacent visage there was a past as lurid as any one's — not, of course, her aunt's own personal past, which was apparently just that curate and almost incredibly jejune, but an ancestral past with all sorts of scandalous things in it: fire and slaughterings, exogamy, marriage by capture, corroborees, cannibalism! Ancestresses with perhaps dim anticipatory likenesses to her aunt, their hair less neatly done, no doubt, their manners and gestures as yet undisciplined, but still ancestresses in the direct line, must have danced through a brief and stirring life in the woady buff. Was there no echo anywhere in Miss Stanley's pacified brain? Those empty rooms, if they were empty, were the equivalents of astoundingly decorated predecessors. Perhaps it was just as well there was no inherited memory.

Ann Veronica was by this time quite shocked at her own thoughts, and yet they would go on with their freaks. Great vistas of history opened, and she and her aunt were near reverting to the primitive and passionate and entirely indecorous arboreal — were swinging from branches by the arms, and really going on quite dread-fully — when their arrival at the Palsworthys' happily checked this play of fancy, and brought Ann Veronica back to the exigencies of the wrappered life again.

Lady Palsworthy liked Ann Veronica because she was never awkward, had steady eyes, and an almost invariable neatness and dignity in her clothes. She seemed just as stiff and shy as a girl ought to be, Lady Palsworthy thought, neither garrulous nor unready, and free from nearly all the heavy aggressiveness, the overgrown, overblown quality, the egotism and want of consideration of the

typical modern girl. But then Lady Palsworthy had never seen Ann Veronica running like the wind at hockey. She had never seen her sitting on tables nor heard her discussing theology, and had failed to observe that the graceful figure was a natural one and not due to ably chosen stays. She took it for granted Ann Veronica wore stays — mild stays, perhaps, but stays, and thought no more of the matter. She had seen her really only at teas, with the Stanley strain in her uppermost. There are so many girls nowadays who are quite unpresentable at tea, with their untrimmed laughs, their awful dispositions of their legs when they sit down, their slangy disrespect; they no longer smoke, it is true, like the girls of the eighties and nineties, nevertheless to a fine intelligence they have the flavor of tobacco. They have no amenities, they scratch the mellow surface of things almost as if they did it on purpose; and Lady Palsworthy and Mrs. Pramlay lived for amenities and the mellowed surfaces of things. Ann Veronica was one of the few young people — and one must have young people just as one must have flowers — one could ask to a little gathering without the risk of a painful discord. Then the distant relationship to Miss Stanley gave them a slight but pleasant sense of proprietorship in the girl. They had their little dreams about her.

Mrs. Pramlay received them in the pretty chintz drawing-room, which opened by French windows on the trim garden, with its croquet lawn, its tennis-net in the middle distance, and its remote rose alley lined with smart dahlias and flaming sunflowers. Her eye met Miss Stanley's understandingly, and she was if anything a trifle more affectionate in her greeting to Ann Veronica. Then Ann Veronica passed on toward the tea in the garden, which was dotted with the elite of Morningside Park society, and there she was pounced upon by Lady Palsworthy and given tea and led about. Across the lawn and hovering indecisively, Ann Veronica saw and immediately affected not to see Mr. Manning, Lady Palsworthy's nephew, a tall young man of seven-and-thirty with a handsome, thoughtful, impassive face, a full black mustache, and a certain heavy luxuriousness of gesture. The party resolved itself for Ann Veronica into a game in which she manoeuvred unostentatiously and finally unsuccessfully to avoid talking alone with this gentleman.

Mr. Manning had shown on previous occasions that he found Ann Veronica interesting and that he wished to interest her. He was a civil servant of some standing, and after a previous conversation upon aesthetics of a sententious, nebulous, and sympathetic character, he had sent her a small volume, which he described as the fruits of his leisure and which was as a matter of fact rather carefully finished verse. It dealt with fine aspects of Mr. Manning's feelings, and as Ann Veronica's mind was still largely engaged with fundamentals and found no pleasure in metrical forms, she had not as yet cut its pages. So that as she saw him she remarked to herself very faintly but definitely, "Oh, golly!" and set up a campaign of avoidance that Mr. Manning at last broke down by coming directly at her as she talked with the vicar's aunt about some of the details of the alleged smell of the new church lamps. He did not so much cut into this conversation as loom over it, for he was a tall, if rather studiously stooping, man.

The face that looked down upon Ann Veronica was full of amiable intention. "Splendid you are looking to-day, Miss Stanley," he said. "How well and jolly you must be feeling."

He beamed over the effect of this and shook hands with effusion, and Lady Palsworthy suddenly appeared as his confederate and disentangled the vicar's aunt.

"I love this warm end of summer more than words can tell," he said. "I've tried to make words tell it. It's no good. Mild, you know, and boon. You want music."

Ann Veronica agreed, and tried to make the manner of her assent cover a possible knowledge of a probable poem.

"Splendid it must be to be a composer. Glorious! The Pastoral. Beethoven; he's the best of them. Don't you think? Tum, tay, tum, tay."

Ann Veronica did.

"What have you been doing since our last talk? Still cutting up rabbits and probing into things? I've often thought of that talk of ours — often."

He did not appear to require any answer to his question.

"Often," he repeated, a little heavily.

"Beautiful these autumn flowers are," said Ann Veronica, in a

wide, uncomfortable pause.

"Do come and see the Michaelmas daisies at the end of the garden," said Mr. Manning, "they're a dream." And Ann Veronica found herself being carried off to an isolation even remoter and more conspicuous than the corner of the lawn, with the whole of the party aiding and abetting and glancing at them. "Damn!" said Ann Veronica to herself, rousing herself for a conflict.

Mr. Manning told her he loved beauty, and extorted a similar admission from her; he then expatiated upon his own love of beauty. He said that for him beauty justified life, that he could not imagine a good action that was not a beautiful one nor any beautiful thing that could be altogether bad. Ann Veronica hazarded an opinion that as a matter of history some very beautiful people had, to a quite considerable extent, been bad, but Mr. Manning questioned whether when they were bad they were really beautiful or when they were beautiful bad. Ann Veronica found her attention wandering a little as he told her that he was not ashamed to feel almost slavish in the presence of really beautiful people, and then they came to the Michaelmas daisies. They were really very fine and abundant, with a blaze of perennial sunflowers behind them.

"They make me want to shout," said Mr. Manning, with a sweep of the arm.

"They're very good this year," said Ann Veronica, avoiding controversial matter.

"Either I want to shout," said Mr. Manning, "when I see beautiful things, or else I want to weep." He paused and looked at her, and said, with a sudden drop into a confidential undertone, "Or else I want to pray."

"When is Michaelmas Day?" said Ann Veronica, a little abruptly.

"Heaven knows!" said Mr. Manning; and added, "the twenty-ninth."

"I thought it was earlier," said Ann Veronica. "Wasn't Parliament to reassemble?"

He put out his hand and leaned against a tree and crossed his legs. "You're not interested in politics?" he asked, almost with a note of protest.

"Well, rather," said Ann Veronica. "It seems — It's interesting."

“Do you think so? I find my interest in that sort of thing decline and decline.”

“I’m curious. Perhaps because I don’t know. I suppose an intelligent person OUGHT to be interested in political affairs. They concern us all.”

“I wonder,” said Mr. Manning, with a baffling smile.

“I think they do. After all, they’re history in the making.”

“A sort of history,” said Mr. Manning; and repeated, “a sort of history. But look at these glorious daisies!”

“But don’t you think political questions ARE important?”

“I don’t think they are this afternoon, and I don’t think they are to you.”

Ann Veronica turned her back on the Michaelmas daisies, and faced toward the house with an air of a duty completed.

“Just come to that seat now you are here, Miss Stanley, and look down the other path; there’s a vista of just the common sort. Better even than these.”

Ann Veronica walked as he indicated.

“You know I’m old-fashioned, Miss Stanley. I don’t think women need to trouble about political questions.”

“I want a vote,” said Ann Veronica.

“Really!” said Mr. Manning, in an earnest voice, and waved his hand to the alley of mauve and purple. “I wish you didn’t.”

“Why not?” She turned on him.

“It jars. It jars with all my ideas. Women to me are something so serene, so fine, so feminine, and politics are so dusty, so sordid, so wearisome and quarrelsome. It seems to me a woman’s duty to be beautiful, to BE beautiful and to behave beautifully, and politics are by their very nature ugly. You see, I — I am a woman worshipper. I worshipped women long before I found any woman I might ever hope to worship. Long ago. And — the idea of committees, of hustings, of agenda-papers!”

“I don’t see why the responsibility of beauty should all be shifted on to the women,” said Ann Veronica, suddenly remembering a part of Miss Miniver’s discourse.

“It rests with them by the nature of things. Why should you who are queens come down from your thrones? If you can afford it, WE

can't. We can't afford to turn our women, our Madonnas, our Saint Catherines, our Mona Lisas, our goddesses and angels and fairy princesses, into a sort of man. Womanhood is sacred to me. My politics in that matter wouldn't be to give women votes. I'm a Socialist, Miss Stanley."

"WHAT?" said Ann Veronica, startled.

"A Socialist of the order of John Ruskin. Indeed I am! I would make this country a collective monarchy, and all the girls and women in it should be the Queen. They should never come into contact with politics or economics — or any of those things. And we men would work for them and serve them in loyal fealty."

"That's rather the theory now," said Ann Veronica. "Only so many men neglect their duties."

"Yes," said Mr. Manning, with an air of emerging from an elaborate demonstration, "and so each of us must, under existing conditions, being chivalrous indeed to all women, choose for himself his own particular and worshipful queen."

"So far as one can judge from the system in practice," said Ann Veronica, speaking in a loud, common-sense, detached tone, and beginning to walk slowly but resolutely toward the lawn, "it doesn't work."

"Every one must be experimental," said Mr. Manning, and glanced round hastily for further horticultural points of interest in secluded corners. None presented themselves to save him from that return.

"That's all very well when one isn't the material experimented upon," Ann Veronica had remarked.

"Women would — they DO have far more power than they think, as influences, as inspirations."

Ann Veronica said nothing in answer to that.

"You say you want a vote," said Mr. Manning, abruptly.

"I think I ought to have one."

"Well, I have two," said Mr. Manning— "one in Oxford University and one in Kensington." He caught up and went on with a sort of clumsiness: "Let me present you with them and be your voter."

There followed an instant's pause, and then Ann Veronica had

decided to misunderstand.

“I want a vote for myself,” she said. “I don’t see why I should take it second-hand. Though it’s very kind of you. And rather unscrupulous. Have you ever voted, Mr. Manning? I suppose there’s a sort of place like a ticket-office. And a ballot-box—” Her face assumed an expression of intellectual conflict. “What is a ballot-box like, exactly?” she asked, as though it was very important to her.

Mr. Manning regarded her thoughtfully for a moment and stroked his mustache. “A ballot-box, you know,” he said, “is very largely just a box.” He made quite a long pause, and went on, with a sigh: “You have a voting paper given you—”

They emerged into the publicity of the lawn.

“Yes,” said Ann Veronica, “yes,” to his explanation, and saw across the lawn Lady Palsworthy talking to her aunt, and both of them staring frankly across at her and Mr. Manning as they talked.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE MORNING OF THE CRISIS

Part 1

Two days after came the day of the Crisis, the day of the Fadden Dance. It would have been a crisis anyhow, but it was complicated in Ann Veronica's mind by the fact that a letter lay on the breakfast-table from Mr. Manning, and that her aunt focussed a brightly tactful disregard upon this throughout the meal. Ann Veronica had come down thinking of nothing in the world but her inflexible resolution to go to the dance in the teeth of all opposition. She did not know Mr. Manning's handwriting, and opened his letter and read some lines before its import appeared. Then for a time she forgot the Fadden affair altogether. With a well-simulated unconcern and a heightened color she finished her breakfast.

She was not obliged to go to the Tredgold College, because as yet the College had not settled down for the session. She was supposed to be reading at home, and after breakfast she strolled into the vegetable garden, and having taken up a position upon the staging of a disused greenhouse that had the double advantage of being hidden from the windows of the house and secure from the sudden appearance of any one, she resumed the reading of Mr. Manning's letter.

Mr. Manning's handwriting had an air of being clear without being easily legible; it was large and rather roundish, with a lack of definition about the letters and a disposition to treat the large ones as liberal-minded people nowadays treat opinions, as all amounting to the same thing really — a years-smoothed boyish rather than an adult hand. And it filled seven sheets of notepaper, each written only on one side.

"MY DEAR MISS STANLEY," it began,— "I hope you will forgive my bothering you with a letter, but I have been thinking very much over our conversation at Lady Palsworthy's, and I feel there are things I want to say to you so much that I cannot wait until we

meet again. It is the worst of talk under such social circumstances that it is always getting cut off so soon as it is beginning; and I went home that afternoon feeling I had said nothing — literally nothing — of the things I had meant to say to you and that were coursing through my head. They were things I had meant very much to talk to you about, so that I went home vexed and disappointed, and only relieved myself a little by writing a few verses. I wonder if you will mind very much when I tell you they were suggested by you. You must forgive the poet's license I take. Here is one verse. The metrical irregularity is intentional, because I want, as it were, to put you apart: to change the lilt and the mood altogether when I speak of you.

"'A SONG OF LADIES AND MY LADY

"'Saintly white and a lily is Mary,
Margaret's violets, sweet and shy;
Green and dewy is Nellie-bud fairy,
Forget-me-nots live in Gwendolen's eye.
Annabel shines like a star in the darkness,
Rosamund queens it a rose, deep rose;
But the lady I love is like sunshine in April weather,
She gleams and gladdens, she warms — and goes.'

"Crude, I admit. But let that verse tell my secret. All bad verse — originally the epigram was Lang's, I believe — is written in a state of emotion.

"My dear Miss Stanley, when I talked to you the other afternoon of work and politics and such-like things, my mind was all the time resenting it beyond measure. There we were discussing whether you should have a vote, and I remembered the last occasion we met it was about your prospects of success in the medical profession or as a Government official such as a number of women now are, and all the time my heart was crying out within me, 'Here is the Queen of your career.' I wanted, as I have never wanted before, to take you up, to make you mine, to carry you off and set you apart from all the strain and turmoil of life. For nothing will ever convince me that it is not the man's share in life to shield, to protect, to lead and toil and watch and battle with the world at large. I want to be your knight, your servant, your protector, your — I dare scarcely write the word —

your husband. So I come suppliant. I am five-and-thirty, and I have knocked about in the world and tasted the quality of life. I had a hard fight to begin with to win my way into the Upper Division — I was third on a list of forty-seven — and since then I have found myself promoted almost yearly in a widening sphere of social service. Before I met you I never met any one whom I felt I could love, but you have discovered depths in my own nature I had scarcely suspected. Except for a few early ebullitions of passion, natural to a warm and romantic disposition, and leaving no harmful after-effects — ebullitions that by the standards of the higher truth I feel no one can justly cast a stone at, and of which I for one am by no means ashamed — I come to you a pure and unencumbered man. I love you. In addition to my public salary I have a certain private property and further expectations through my aunt, so that I can offer you a life of wide and generous refinement, travel, books, discussion, and easy relations with a circle of clever and brilliant and thoughtful people with whom my literary work has brought me into contact, and of which, seeing me only as you have done alone in Morningside Park, you can have no idea. I have a certain standing not only as a singer but as a critic, and I belong to one of the most brilliant causerie dinner clubs of the day, in which successful Bohemianism, politicians, men of affairs, artists, sculptors, and cultivated noblemen generally, mingle together in the easiest and most delightful intercourse. That is my real milieu, and one that I am convinced you would not only adorn but delight in.

"I find it very hard to write this letter. There are so many things I want to tell you, and they stand on such different levels, that the effect is necessarily confusing and discordant, and I find myself doubting if I am really giving you the thread of emotion that should run through all this letter. For although I must confess it reads very much like an application or a testimonial or some such thing as that, I can assure you I am writing this in fear and trembling with a sinking heart. My mind is full of ideas and images that I have been cherishing and accumulating — dreams of travelling side by side, of lunching quietly together in some jolly restaurant, of moonlight and music and all that side of life, of seeing you dressed like a queen and shining in some brilliant throng — mine; of your looking at flowers

in some old-world garden, our garden — there are splendid places to be got down in Surrey, and a little runabout motor is quite within my means. You know they say, as, indeed, I have just quoted already, that all bad poetry is written in a state of emotion, but I have no doubt that this is true of bad offers of marriage. I have often felt before that it is only when one has nothing to say that one can write easy poetry. Witness Browning. And how can I get into one brief letter the complex accumulated desires of what is now, I find on reference to my diary, nearly sixteen months of letting my mind run on you — ever since that jolly party at Surbiton, where we raced and beat the other boat. You steered and I rowed stroke. My very sentences stumble and give way. But I do not even care if I am absurd. I am a resolute man, and hitherto when I have wanted a thing I have got it; but I have never yet wanted anything in my life as I have wanted you. It isn't the same thing. I am afraid because I love you, so that the mere thought of failure hurts. If I did not love you so much I believe I could win you by sheer force of character, for people tell me I am naturally of the dominating type. Most of my successes in life have been made with a sort of reckless vigor.

"Well, I have said what I had to say, stumblingly and badly, and baldly. But I am sick of tearing up letters and hopeless of getting what I have to say better said. It would be easy enough for me to write an eloquent letter about something else. Only I do not care to write about anything else. Let me put the main question to you now that I could not put the other afternoon. Will you marry me, Ann Veronica?

"Very sincerely yours,

"HUBERT MANNING."

Ann Veronica read this letter through with grave, attentive eyes.

Her interest grew as she read, a certain distaste disappeared. Twice she smiled, but not unkindly. Then she went back and mixed up the sheets in a search for particular passages. Finally she fell into reflection.

"Odd!" she said. "I suppose I shall have to write an answer. It's so different from what one has been led to expect."

She became aware of her aunt, through the panes of the greenhouse, advancing with an air of serene unconsciousness from

among the raspberry canes.

"No you don't!" said Ann Veronica, and walked out at a brisk and business-like pace toward the house.

"I'm going for a long tramp, auntie," she said.

"Alone, dear?"

"Yes, aunt. I've got a lot of things to think about."

Miss Stanley reflected as Ann Veronica went toward the house. She thought her niece very hard and very self-possessed and self-confident. She ought to be softened and tender and confidential at this phase of her life. She seemed to have no idea whatever of the emotional states that were becoming to her age and position. Miss Stanley walked round the garden thinking, and presently house and garden reverberated to Ann Veronica's slamming of the front door.

"I wonder!" said Miss Stanley.

For a long time she surveyed a row of towering holly-hocks, as though they offered an explanation. Then she went in and up-stairs, hesitated on the landing, and finally, a little breathless and with an air of great dignity, opened the door and walked into Ann Veronica's room. It was a neat, efficient-looking room, with a writing-table placed with a business-like regard to the window, and a bookcase surmounted by a pig's skull, a dissected frog in a sealed bottle, and a pile of shiny, black-covered note-books. In the corner of the room were two hockey-sticks and a tennis-racket, and upon the walls Ann Veronica, by means of autotypes, had indicated her proclivities in art. But Miss Stanley took no notice of these things. She walked straight across to the wardrobe and opened it. There, hanging among Ann Veronica's more normal clothing, was a skimpy dress of red canvas, trimmed with cheap and tawdry braid, and short — it could hardly reach below the knee. On the same peg and evidently belonging to it was a black velvet Zouave jacket. And then! a garment that was conceivably a secondary skirt.

Miss Stanley hesitated, and took first one and then another of the constituents of this costume off its peg and surveyed it.

The third item she took with a trembling hand by its waistbelt. As she raised it, its lower portion fell apart into two baggy crimson masses.

"TROUSERS!" she whispered.

Her eyes travelled about the room as if in appeal to the very chairs.

Tucked under the writing-table a pair of yellow and gold Turkish slippers of a highly meretricious quality caught her eye. She walked over to them still carrying the trousers in her hands, and stooped to examine them. They were ingenious disguises of gilt paper destructively gummed, it would seem, to Ann Veronicas' best dancing-slippers.

Then she reverted to the trousers.

"How CAN I tell him?" whispered Miss Stanley.

Part 2

Ann Veronica carried a light but business-like walking-stick. She walked with an easy quickness down the Avenue and through the proletarian portion of Morningside Park, and crossing these fields came into a pretty overhung lane that led toward Caddington and the Downs. And then her pace slackened. She tucked her stick under her arm and re-read Manning's letter.

"Let me think," said Ann Veronica. "I wish this hadn't turned up to-day of all days."

She found it difficult to begin thinking, and indeed she was anything but clear what it was she had to think about. Practically it was most of the chief interests in life that she proposed to settle in this pedestrian meditation. Primarily it was her own problem, and in particular the answer she had to give to Mr. Manning's letter, but in order to get data for that she found that she, having a logical and ordered mind, had to decide upon the general relations of men to women, the objects and conditions of marriage and its bearing upon the welfare of the race, the purpose of the race, the purpose, if any, of everything....

"Frightful lot of things aren't settled," said Ann Veronica. In addition, the Fadden Dance business, all out of proportion, occupied

the whole foreground of her thoughts and threw a color of rebellion over everything. She kept thinking she was thinking about Mr. Manning's proposal of marriage and finding she was thinking of the dance.

For a time her efforts to achieve a comprehensive concentration were dispersed by the passage of the village street of Caddington, the passing of a goggled car-load of motorists, and the struggles of a stable lad mounted on one recalcitrant horse and leading another. When she got back to her questions again in the monotonous high-road that led up the hill, she found the image of Mr. Manning central in her mind. He stood there, large and dark, enunciating, in his clear voice from beneath his large mustache, clear flat sentences, deliberately kindly. He proposed, he wanted to possess her! He loved her.

Ann Veronica felt no repulsion at the prospect. That Mr. Manning loved her presented itself to her bloodlessly, stilled from any imaginative quiver or thrill of passion or disgust. The relationship seemed to have almost as much to do with blood and body as a mortgage. It was something that would create a mutual claim, a relationship. It was in another world from that in which men will die for a kiss, and touching hands lights fires that burn up lives — the world of romance, the world of passionately beautiful things.

But that other world, in spite of her resolute exclusion of it, was always looking round corners and peeping through chinks and crannies, and rustling and raiding into the order in which she chose to live, shining out of pictures at her, echoing in lyrics and music; it invaded her dreams, it wrote up broken and enigmatical sentences upon the passage walls of her mind. She was aware of it now as if it were a voice shouting outside a house, shouting passionate verities in a hot sunlight, a voice that cries while people talk insincerely in a darkened room and pretend not to hear. Its shouting now did in some occult manner convey a protest that Mr. Manning would on no account do, though he was tall and dark and handsome and kind, and thirty-five and adequately prosperous, and all that a husband should be. But there was, it insisted, no mobility in his face, no movement, nothing about him that warmed. If Ann Veronica could have put words to that song they would have been, "Hot-blooded marriage or

none!" but she was far too indistinct in this matter to frame any words at all.

"I don't love him," said Ann Veronica, getting a gleam. "I don't see that his being a good sort matters. That really settles about that.... But it means no end of a row."

For a time she sat on a rail before leaving the road for the downland turf. "But I wish," she said, "I had some idea what I was really up to."

Her thoughts went into solution for a time, while she listened to a lark singing.

"Marriage and mothering," said Ann Veronica, with her mind crystallizing out again as the lark dropped to the nest in the turf. "And all the rest of it perhaps is a song."

Part 3

Her mind got back to the Fadden Ball.

She meant to go, she meant to go, she meant to go. Nothing would stop her, and she was prepared to face the consequences. Suppose her father turned her out of doors! She did not care, she meant to go. She would just walk out of the house and go....

She thought of her costume in some detail and with considerable satisfaction, and particularly of a very jolly property dagger with large glass jewels in the handle, that reposed in a drawer in her room. She was to be a Corsair's Bride. "Fancy stabbing a man for jealousy!" she thought. "You'd have to think how to get in between his bones."

She thought of her father, and with an effort dismissed him from her mind.

She tried to imagine the collective effect of the Fadden Ball; she had never seen a fancy-dress gathering in her life. Mr. Manning came into her thoughts again, an unexpected, tall, dark, self-contained presence at the Fadden. One might suppose him turning up; he knew

a lot of clever people, and some of them might belong to the class. What would he come as?

Presently she roused herself with a guilty start from the task of dressing and re-dressing Mr. Manning in fancy costume, as though he was a doll. She had tried him as a Crusader, in which guise he seemed plausible but heavy— "There IS something heavy about him; I wonder if it's his mustache?" — and as a Hussar, which made him preposterous, and as a Black Brunswicker, which was better, and as an Arab sheik. Also she had tried him as a dragoman and as a gendarme, which seemed the most suitable of all to his severely handsome, immobile profile. She felt he would tell people the way, control traffic, and refuse admission to public buildings with invincible correctness and the very finest explicit feelings possible. For each costume she had devised a suitable form of matrimonial refusal. "Oh, Lord!" she said, discovering what she was up to, and dropped lightly from the fence upon the turf and went on her way toward the crest.

"I shall never marry," said Ann Veronica, resolutely; "I'm not the sort. That's why it's so important I should take my own line now."

Part 4

Ann Veronica's ideas of marriage were limited and unsystematic. Her teachers and mistresses had done their best to stamp her mind with an ineradicable persuasion that it was tremendously important, and on no account to be thought about. Her first intimations of marriage as a fact of extreme significance in a woman's life had come with the marriage of Alice and the elopement of her second sister, Gwen.

These convulsions occurred when Ann Veronica was about twelve. There was a gulf of eight years between her and the youngest of her brace of sisters — an impassable gulf inhabited chaotically by two noisy brothers. These sisters moved in a grown-up world

inaccessible to Ann Veronica's sympathies, and to a large extent remote from her curiosity. She got into rows through meddling with their shoes and tennis-rackets, and had moments of carefully concealed admiration when she was privileged to see them just before her bedtime, rather radiantly dressed in white or pink or amber and prepared to go out with her mother. She thought Alice a bit of a sneak, an opinion her brothers shared, and Gwen rather a snatch at meals. She saw nothing of their love-making, and came home from her boarding-school in a state of decently suppressed curiosity for Alice's wedding.

Her impressions of this cardinal ceremony were rich and confused, complicated by a quite transitory passion that awakened no reciprocal fire for a fat curly headed cousin in black velveteen and a lace collar, who assisted as a page. She followed him about persistently, and succeeded, after a brisk, unchivalrous struggle (in which he pinched and asked her to "cheese it"), in kissing him among the raspberries behind the greenhouse. Afterward her brother Roddy, also strange in velveteen, feeling rather than knowing of this relationship, punched this Adonis's head.

A marriage in the house proved to be exciting but extremely disorganizing. Everything seemed designed to unhinge the mind and make the cat wretched. All the furniture was moved, all the meals were disarranged, and everybody, Ann Veronica included, appeared in new, bright costumes. She had to wear cream and a brown sash and a short frock and her hair down, and Gwen cream and a brown sash and a long skirt and her hair up. And her mother, looking unusually alert and hectic, wore cream and brown also, made up in a more complicated manner.

Ann Veronica was much impressed by a mighty trying on and altering and fussing about Alice's "things" — Alice was being re-costumed from garret to cellar, with a walking-dress and walking-boots to measure, and a bride's costume of the most ravishing description, and stockings and such like beyond the dreams of avarice — and a constant and increasing dripping into the house of irrelevant remarkable objects, such as —

Real lace bedspread;

Gilt travelling clock;

Ornamental pewter plaque;

Salad bowl (silver mounted) and servers;

Madgett's "English Poets" (twelve volumes), bound purple morocco;

Etc., etc.

Through all this flutter of novelty there came and went a solicitous, preoccupied, almost depressed figure. It was Doctor Ralph, formerly the partner of Doctor Stickell in the Avenue, and now with a thriving practice of his own in Wamblesmith. He had shaved his side-whiskers and come over in flannels, but he was still indisputably the same person who had attended Ann Veronica for the measles and when she swallowed the fish-bone. But his role was altered, and he was now playing the bridegroom in this remarkable drama. Alice was going to be Mrs. Ralph. He came in apologetically; all the old "Well, and how ARE we?" note gone; and once he asked Ann Veronica, almost furtively,

"How's Alice getting on, Vee?" Finally, on the Day, he appeared like his old professional self transfigured, in the most beautiful light gray trousers Ann Veronica had ever seen and a new shiny silk hat with a most becoming roll....

It was not simply that all the rooms were rearranged and everybody dressed in unusual fashions, and all the routines of life abolished and put away: people's tempers and emotions also seemed strangely disturbed and shifted about. Her father was distinctly irascible, and disposed more than ever to hide away among the petrological things — the study was turned out. At table he carved in a gloomy but resolute manner. On the Day he had trumpet-like outbreaks of cordiality, varied by a watchful preoccupation. Gwen and Alice were fantastically friendly, which seemed to annoy him, and Mrs. Stanley was throughout enigmatical, with an anxious eye on her husband and Alice.

There was a confused impression of livery carriages and whips with white favors, people fussily wanting other people to get in before them, and then the church. People sat in unusual pews, and a wide margin of hassocky emptiness intervened between the ceremony and the walls.

Ann Veronica had a number of fragmentary impressions of Alice

strangely transfigured in bridal raiment. It seemed to make her sister downcast beyond any precedent. The bridesmaids and pages got rather jumbled in the aisle, and she had an effect of Alice's white back and sloping shoulders and veiled head receding toward the altar. In some incomprehensible way that back view made her feel sorry for Alice. Also she remembered very vividly the smell of orange blossom, and Alice, drooping and spiritless, mumbling responses, facing Doctor Ralph, while the Rev. Edward Bribble stood between them with an open book. Doctor Ralph looked kind and large, and listened to Alice's responses as though he was listening to symptoms and thought that on the whole she was progressing favorably.

And afterward her mother and Alice kissed long and clung to each other. And Doctor Ralph stood by looking considerate. He and her father shook hands manfully.

Ann Veronica had got quite interested in Mr. Bribble's rendering of the service — he had the sort of voice that brings out things — and was still teeming with ideas about it when finally a wild outburst from the organ made it clear that, whatever snivelling there might be down in the chancel, that excellent wind instrument was, in its Mendelssohnian way, as glad as ever it could be. "Pump, pump, per-um-pump, Pum, Pump, Per-um...."

The wedding-breakfast was for Ann Veronica a spectacle of the unreal consuming the real; she liked that part very well, until she was carelessly served against her expressed wishes with mayonnaise. She was caught by an uncle, whose opinion she valued, making faces at Roddy because he had exulted at this.

Of the vast mass of these impressions Ann Veronica could make nothing at the time; there they were — Fact! She stored them away in a mind naturally retentive, as a squirrel stores away nuts, for further digestion. Only one thing emerged with any reasonable clarity in her mind at once, and that was that unless she was saved from drowning by an unmarried man, in which case the ceremony is unavoidable, or totally destitute of under-clothing, and so driven to get a trousseau, in which hardship a trousseau would certainly be "ripping," marriage was an experience to be strenuously evaded.

When they were going home she asked her mother why she and Gwen and Alice had cried.

“Ssh!” said her mother, and then added, “A little natural feeling, dear.”

“But didn’t Alice want to marry Doctor Ralph?”

“Oh, ssh, Vee!” said her mother, with an evasion as patent as an advertisement board. “I am sure she will be very happy indeed with Doctor Ralph.”

But Ann Veronica was by no means sure of that until she went over to Wamblesmith and saw her sister, very remote and domestic and authoritative, in a becoming tea-gown, in command of Doctor Ralph’s home. Doctor Ralph came in to tea and put his arm round Alice and kissed her, and Alice called him “Squiggles,” and stood in the shelter of his arms for a moment with an expression of satisfied proprietorship. She HAD cried, Ann Veronica knew. There had been fusses and scenes dimly apprehended through half-open doors. She had heard Alice talking and crying at the same time, a painful noise. Perhaps marriage hurt. But now it was all over, and Alice was getting on well. It reminded Ann Veronica of having a tooth stopped.

And after that Alice became remoter than ever, and, after a time, ill. Then she had a baby and became as old as any really grown-up person, or older, and very dull. Then she and her husband went off to a Yorkshire practice, and had four more babies, none of whom photographed well, and so she passed beyond the sphere of Ann Veronica’s sympathies altogether.

Part 5

The Gwen affair happened when she was away at school at Marticombe-on-Sea, a term before she went to the High School, and was never very clear to her.

Her mother missed writing for a week, and then she wrote in an unusual key. “My dear,” the letter ran, “I have to tell you that your sister Gwen has offended your father very much. I hope you will always love her, but I want you to remember she has offended your

father and married without his consent. Your father is very angry, and will not have her name mentioned in his hearing. She has married some one he could not approve of, and gone right away....”

When the next holidays came Ann Veronica’s mother was ill, and Gwen was in the sick-room when Ann Veronica returned home. She was in one of her old walking-dresses, her hair was done in an unfamiliar manner, she wore a wedding-ring, and she looked as if she had been crying.

“Hello, Gwen!” said Ann Veronica, trying to put every one at their ease. “Been and married?... What’s the name of the happy man?”

Gwen owned to “Fortescue.”

“Got a photograph of him or anything?” said Ann Veronica, after kissing her mother.

Gwen made an inquiry, and, directed by Mrs. Stanley, produced a portrait from its hiding-place in the jewel-drawer under the mirror. It presented a clean-shaven face with a large Corinthian nose, hair tremendously waving off the forehead and more chin and neck than is good for a man.

“LOOKS all right,” said Ann Veronica, regarding him with her head first on one side and then on the other, and trying to be agreeable. “What’s the objection?”

“I suppose she ought to know?” said Gwen to her mother, trying to alter the key of the conversation.

“You see, Vee,” said Mrs. Stanley, “Mr. Fortescue is an actor, and your father does not approve of the profession.”

“Oh!” said Ann Veronica. “I thought they made knights of actors?”

“They may of Hal some day,” said Gwen. “But it’s a long business.”

“I suppose this makes you an actress?” said Ann Veronica.

“I don’t know whether I shall go on,” said Gwen, a novel note of languorous professionalism creeping into her voice. “The other women don’t much like it if husband and wife work together, and I don’t think Hal would like me to act away from him.”

Ann Veronica regarded her sister with a new respect, but the traditions of family life are strong. “I don’t suppose you’ll be able to

do it much," said Ann Veronica.

Later Gwen's trouble weighed so heavily on Mrs. Stanley in her illness that her husband consented to receive Mr. Fortescue in the drawing-room, and actually shake hands with him in an entirely hopeless manner and hope everything would turn out for the best.

The forgiveness and reconciliation was a cold and formal affair, and afterwards her father went off gloomily to his study, and Mr. Fortescue rambled round the garden with soft, propitiatory steps, the Corinthian nose upraised and his hands behind his back, pausing to look long and hard at the fruit-trees against the wall.

Ann Veronica watched him from the dining-room window, and after some moments of maidenly hesitation rambled out into the garden in a reverse direction to Mr. Fortescue's steps, and encountered him with an air of artless surprise.

"Hello!" said Ann Veronica, with arms akimbo and a careless, breathless manner. "You Mr. Fortescue?"

"At your service. You Ann Veronica?"

"Rather! I say — did you marry Gwen?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

Mr. Fortescue raised his eyebrows and assumed a light-comedy expression. "I suppose I fell in love with her, Ann Veronica."

"Rum," said Ann Veronica. "Have you got to keep her now?"

"To the best of my ability," said Mr. Fortescue, with a bow.

"Have you much ability?" asked Ann Veronica.

Mr. Fortescue tried to act embarrassment in order to conceal its reality, and Ann Veronica went on to ask a string of questions about acting, and whether her sister would act, and was she beautiful enough for it, and who would make her dresses, and so on.

As a matter of fact Mr. Fortescue had not much ability to keep her sister, and a little while after her mother's death Ann Veronica met Gwen suddenly on the staircase coming from her father's study, shockingly dingy in dusty mourning and tearful and resentful, and after that Gwen receded from the Morningside Park world, and not even the begging letters and distressful communications that her father and aunt received, but only a vague intimation of dreadfulness, a leakage of incidental comment, flashes of paternal anger at "that

blackguard," came to Ann Veronica's ears.

Part 6

These were Ann Veronica's leading cases in the question of marriage. They were the only real marriages she had seen clearly. For the rest, she derived her ideas of the married state from the observed behavior of married women, which impressed her in Morningside Park as being tied and dull and inelastic in comparison with the life of the young, and from a remarkably various reading among books. As a net result she had come to think of all married people much as one thinks of insects that have lost their wings, and of her sisters as new hatched creatures who had scarcely for a moment had wings. She evolved a dim image of herself cooped up in a house under the benevolent shadow of Mr. Manning. Who knows? — on the analogy of "Squiggles" she might come to call him "Mangles!"

"I don't think I can ever marry any one," she said, and fell suddenly into another set of considerations that perplexed her for a time. Had romance to be banished from life?...

It was hard to part with romance, but she had never thirsted so keenly to go on with her University work in her life as she did that day. She had never felt so acutely the desire for free initiative, for a life unhampered by others. At any cost! Her brothers had it practically — at least they had it far more than it seemed likely she would unless she exerted herself with quite exceptional vigor. Between her and the fair, far prospect of freedom and self-development manoeuvred Mr. Manning, her aunt and father, neighbors, customs, traditions, forces. They seemed to her that morning to be all armed with nets and prepared to throw them over her directly her movements became in any manner truly free.

She had a feeling as though something had dropped from her eyes, as though she had just discovered herself for the first time —

discovered herself as a sleep-walker might do, abruptly among dangers, hindrances, and perplexities, on the verge of a cardinal crisis.

The life of a girl presented itself to her as something happy and heedless and unthinking, yet really guided and controlled by others, and going on amidst unsuspected screens and concealments.

And in its way it was very well. Then suddenly with a rush came reality, came "growing up"; a hasty imperative appeal for seriousness, for supreme seriousness. The Ralphs and Mannings and Fortescues came down upon the raw inexperience, upon the blinking ignorance of the newcomer; and before her eyes were fairly open, before she knew what had happened, a new set of guides and controls, a new set of obligations and responsibilities and limitations, had replaced the old. "I want to be a Person," said Ann Veronica to the downs and the open sky; "I will not have this happen to me, whatever else may happen in its place."

Ann Veronica had three things very definitely settled by the time when, a little after mid-day, she found herself perched up on a gate between a bridle-path and a field that commanded the whole wide stretch of country between Chalking and Waldersham. Firstly, she did not intend to marry at all, and particularly she did not mean to marry Mr. Manning; secondly, by some measure or other, she meant to go on with her studies, not at the Tredgold Schools but at the Imperial College; and, thirdly, she was, as an immediate and decisive act, a symbol of just exactly where she stood, a declaration of free and adult initiative, going that night to the Fadden Ball.

But the possible attitude of her father she had still to face. So far she had the utmost difficulty in getting on to that vitally important matter. The whole of that relationship persisted in remaining obscure. What would happen when next morning she returned to Morningside Park?

He couldn't turn her out of doors. But what he could do or might do she could not imagine. She was not afraid of violence, but she was afraid of something mean, some secondary kind of force. Suppose he stopped all her allowance, made it imperative that she should either stay ineffectually resentful at home or earn a living for herself at once.... It appeared highly probable to her that he would

stop her allowance.

What can a girl do?

Somewhere at this point Ann Veronica's speculations were interrupted and turned aside by the approach of a horse and rider. Mr. Ramage, that iron-gray man of the world, appeared dressed in a bowler hat and a suit of hard gray, astride of a black horse. He pulled rein at the sight of her, saluted, and regarded her with his rather too protuberant eyes. The girl's gaze met his in interested inquiry.

"You've got my view," he said, after a pensive second. "I always get off here and lean over that rail for a bit. May I do so to-day?"

"It's your gate," she said, amiably; "you got it first. It's for you to say if I may sit on it."

He slipped off the horse. "Let me introduce you to Caesar," he said; and she patted Caesar's neck, and remarked how soft his nose was, and secretly deplored the ugliness of equine teeth. Ramage tethered the horse to the farther gate-post, and Caesar blew heavily and began to investigate the hedge.

Ramage leaned over the gate at Ann Veronica's side, and for a moment there was silence.

He made some obvious comments on the wide view warming toward its autumnal blaze that spread itself in hill and valley, wood and village, below.

"It's as broad as life," said Mr. Ramage, regarding it and putting a well-booted foot up on the bottom rail.

Part 7

"And what are you doing here, young lady," he said, looking up at her face, "wandering alone so far from home?"

"I like long walks," said Ann Veronica, looking down on him.

"Solitary walks?"

"That's the point of them. I think over all sorts of things."

"Problems?"

“Sometimes quite difficult problems.”

“You’re lucky to live in an age when you can do so. Your mother, for instance, couldn’t. She had to do her thinking at home — under inspection.”

She looked down on him thoughtfully, and he let his admiration of her free young poise show in his face.

“I suppose things have changed?” she said.

“Never was such an age of transition.”

She wondered what to. Mr. Ramage did not know. “Sufficient unto me is the change thereof,” he said, with all the effect of an epigram.

“I must confess,” he said, “the New Woman and the New Girl intrigue me profoundly. I am one of those people who are interested in women, more interested than I am in anything else. I don’t conceal it. And the change, the change of attitude! The way all the old clingingness has been thrown aside is amazing. And all the old — the old trick of shrinking up like a snail at a touch. If you had lived twenty years ago you would have been called a Young Person, and it would have been your chief duty in life not to know, never to have heard of, and never to understand.”

“There’s quite enough still,” said Ann Veronica, smiling, “that one doesn’t understand.”

“Quite. But your role would have been to go about saying, ‘I beg your pardon’ in a reproving tone to things you understood quite well in your heart and saw no harm in. That terrible Young Person! she’s vanished. Lost, stolen, or strayed, the Young Person!... I hope we may never find her again.”

He rejoiced over this emancipation. “While that lamb was about every man of any spirit was regarded as a dangerous wolf. We wore invisible chains and invisible blinkers. Now, you and I can gossip at a gate, and {}Honi soit qui mal y pense. The change has given man one good thing he never had before,” he said. “Girl friends. And I am coming to believe the best as well as the most beautiful friends a man can have are girl friends.”

He paused, and went on, after a keen look at her:

“I had rather gossip to a really intelligent girl than to any man alive.”

“I suppose we ARE more free than we were?” said Ann Veronica, keeping the question general.

“Oh, there’s no doubt of it! Since the girls of the eighties broke bounds and sailed away on bicycles — my young days go back to the very beginnings of that — it’s been one triumphant relaxation.”

“Relaxation, perhaps. But are we any more free?”

“Well?”

“I mean we’ve long strings to tether us, but we are bound all the same. A woman isn’t much freer — in reality.”

Mr. Ramage demurred.

“One runs about,” said Ann Veronica.

“Yes.”

“But it’s on condition one doesn’t do anything.”

“Do what?”

“Oh! — anything.”

He looked interrogation with a faint smile.

“It seems to me it comes to earning one’s living in the long run,” said Ann Veronica, coloring faintly. “Until a girl can go away as a son does and earn her independent income, she’s still on a string. It may be a long string, long enough if you like to tangle up all sorts of people; but there it is! If the paymaster pulls, home she must go. That’s what I mean.”

Mr. Ramage admitted the force of that. He was a little impressed by Ann Veronica’s metaphor of the string, which, indeed, she owed to Hetty Widgett. “YOU wouldn’t like to be independent?” he asked, abruptly. “I mean REALLY independent. On your own. It isn’t such fun as it seems.”

“Every one wants to be independent,” said Ann Veronica. “Every one. Man or woman.”

“And you?”

“Rather!”

“I wonder why?”

“There’s no why. It’s just to feel — one owns one’s self.”

“Nobody does that,” said Ramage, and kept silence for a moment.

“But a boy — a boy goes out into the world and presently stands on his own feet. He buys his own clothes, chooses his own company, makes his own way of living.”

“You’d like to do that?”

“Exactly.”

“Would you like to be a boy?”

“I wonder! It’s out of the question, any way.”

Ramage reflected. “Why don’t you?”

“Well, it might mean rather a row.”

“I know—” said Ramage, with sympathy.

“And besides,” said Ann Veronica, sweeping that aspect aside, “what could I do? A boy sails out into a trade or profession. But — it’s one of the things I’ve just been thinking over. Suppose — suppose a girl did want to start in life, start in life for herself—” She looked him frankly in the eyes. “What ought she to do?”

“Suppose you—”

“Yes, suppose I—”

He felt that his advice was being asked. He became a little more personal and intimate. “I wonder what you could do?” he said. “I should think YOU could do all sorts of things....

“What ought you to do?” He began to produce his knowledge of the world for her benefit, jerkily and allusively, and with a strong, rank flavor of “savoir faire.” He took an optimist view of her chances. Ann Veronica listened thoughtfully, with her eyes on the turf, and now and then she asked a question or looked up to discuss a point. In the meanwhile, as he talked, he scrutinized her face, ran his eyes over her careless, gracious poise, wondered hard about her. He described her privately to himself as a splendid girl. It was clear she wanted to get away from home, that she was impatient to get away from home. Why? While the front of his mind was busy warning her not to fall into the hopeless miseries of underpaid teaching, and explaining his idea that for women of initiative, quite as much as for men, the world of business had by far the best chances, the back chambers of his brain were busy with the problem of that “Why?”

His first idea as a man of the world was to explain her unrest by a lover, some secret or forbidden or impossible lover. But he dismissed that because then she would ask her lover and not him all these things. Restlessness, then, was the trouble, simple restlessness: home bored her. He could quite understand the daughter of Mr. Stanley being bored and feeling limited. But was that enough? Dim, formless

suspicions of something more vital wandered about his mind. Was the young lady impatient for experience? Was she adventurous? As a man of the world he did not think it becoming to accept maidenly calm as anything more than a mask. Warm life was behind that always, even if it slept. If it was not an actual personal lover, it still might be the lover not yet incarnate, not yet perhaps suspected....

He had diverged only a little from the truth when he said that his chief interest in life was women. It wasn't so much women as Woman that engaged his mind. His was the Latin turn of thinking; he had fallen in love at thirteen, and he was still capable — he prided himself — of falling in love. His invalid wife and her money had been only the thin thread that held his life together; beaded on that permanent relation had been an inter-weaving series of other feminine experiences, disturbing, absorbing, interesting, memorable affairs. Each one had been different from the others, each had had a quality all its own, a distinctive freshness, a distinctive beauty. He could not understand how men could live ignoring this one predominant interest, this wonderful research into personality and the possibilities of pleasing, these complex, fascinating expeditions that began in interest and mounted to the supremest, most passionate intimacy. All the rest of his existence was subordinate to this pursuit; he lived for it, worked for it, kept himself in training for it.

So while he talked to this girl of work and freedom, his slightly protuberant eyes were noting the gracious balance of her limbs and body across the gate, the fine lines of her chin and neck. Her grave fine face, her warm clear complexion, had already aroused his curiosity as he had gone to and fro in Morningside Park, and here suddenly he was near to her and talking freely and intimately. He had found her in a communicative mood, and he used the accumulated skill of years in turning that to account.

She was pleased and a little flattered by his interest and sympathy. She became eager to explain herself, to show herself in the right light. He was manifestly exerting his mind for her, and she found herself fully disposed to justify his interest.

She, perhaps, displayed herself rather consciously as a fine person unduly limited. She even touched lightly on her father's unreasonableness.

“I wonder,” said Ramage, “that more girls don’t think as you do and want to strike out in the world.”

And then he speculated. “I wonder if you will?”

“Let me say one thing,” he said. “If ever you do and I can help you in any way, by advice or inquiry or recommendation — You see, I’m no believer in feminine incapacity, but I do perceive there is such a thing as feminine inexperience. As a sex you’re a little under-trained — in affairs. I’d take it — forgive me if I seem a little urgent — as a sort of proof of friendliness. I can imagine nothing more pleasant in life than to help you, because I know it would pay to help you. There’s something about you, a little flavor of Will, I suppose, that makes one feel — good luck about you and success....”

And while he talked and watched her as he talked, she answered, and behind her listening watched and thought about him. She liked the animated eagerness of his manner.

His mind seemed to be a remarkably full one; his knowledge of detailed reality came in just where her own mind was most weakly equipped. Through all he said ran one quality that pleased her — the quality of a man who feels that things can be done, that one need not wait for the world to push one before one moved. Compared with her father and Mr. Manning and the men in “fixed” positions generally that she knew, Ramage, presented by himself, had a fine suggestion of freedom, of power, of deliberate and sustained adventure....

She was particularly charmed by his theory of friendship. It was really very jolly to talk to a man in this way — who saw the woman in her and did not treat her as a child. She was inclined to think that perhaps for a girl the converse of his method was the case; an older man, a man beyond the range of anything “nonsensical,” was, perhaps, the most interesting sort of friend one could meet. But in that reservation it may be she went a little beyond the converse of his view....

They got on wonderfully well together. They talked for the better part of an hour, and at last walked together to the junction of highroad and the bridle-path. There, after protestations of friendliness and helpfulness that were almost ardent, he mounted a little clumsily and rode off at an amiable pace, looking his best, making a leg with his riding gaiters, smiling and saluting, while Ann

Veronica turned northward and so came to Micklechesil. There, in a little tea and sweet-stuff shop, she bought and consumed slowly and absent-mindedly the insufficient nourishment that is natural to her sex on such occasions.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE CRISIS

Part 1

We left Miss Stanley with Ann Veronica's fancy dress in her hands and her eyes directed to Ann Veronica's pseudo-Turkish slippers.

When Mr. Stanley came home at a quarter to six — an earlier train by fifteen minutes than he affected — his sister met him in the hall with a hushed expression. "I'm so glad you're here, Peter," she said. "She means to go."

"Go!" he said. "Where?"

"To that ball."

"What ball?" The question was rhetorical. He knew.

"I believe she's dressing up-stairs — now."

"Then tell her to undress, confound her!" The City had been thoroughly annoying that day, and he was angry from the outset.

Miss Stanley reflected on this proposal for a moment.

"I don't think she will," she said.

"She must," said Mr. Stanley, and went into his study. His sister followed. "She can't go now. She'll have to wait for dinner," he said, uncomfortably.

"She's going to have some sort of meal with the Widgetts down the Avenue, and go up with them.

"She told you that?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"At tea."

"But why didn't you prohibit once for all the whole thing? How dared she tell you that?"

"Out of defiance. She just sat and told me that was her arrangement. I've never seen her quite so sure of herself."

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'My dear Veronica! how can you think of such things?'"

"And then?"

“She had two more cups of tea and some cake, and told me of her walk.”

“She’ll meet somebody one of these days — walking about like that.”

“She didn’t say she’d met any one.”

“But didn’t you say some more about that ball?”

“I said everything I could say as soon as I realized she was trying to avoid the topic. I said, ‘It is no use your telling me about this walk and pretend I’ve been told about the ball, because you haven’t. Your father has forbidden you to go!’”

“Well?”

“She said, ‘I hate being horrid to you and father, but I feel it my duty to go to that ball!’”

“Felt it her duty!”

“‘Very well,’ I said, ‘then I wash my hands of the whole business. Your disobedience be upon your own head.’”

“But that is flat rebellion!” said Mr. Stanley, standing on the hearthrug with his back to the unlit gas-fire. “You ought at once — you ought at once to have told her that. What duty does a girl owe to any one before her father? Obedience to him, that is surely the first law. What CAN she put before that?” His voice began to rise. “One would think I had said nothing about the matter. One would think I had agreed to her going. I suppose this is what she learns in her infernal London colleges. I suppose this is the sort of damned rubbish—”

“Oh! Ssh, Peter!” cried Miss Stanley.

He stopped abruptly. In the pause a door could be heard opening and closing on the landing up-stairs. Then light footsteps became audible, descending the staircase with a certain deliberation and a faint rustle of skirts.

“Tell her,” said Mr. Stanley, with an imperious gesture, “to come in here.”

Part 2

Miss Stanley emerged from the study and stood watching Ann Veronica descend.

The girl was flushed with excitement, bright-eyed, and braced for a struggle; her aunt had never seen her looking so fine or so pretty. Her fancy dress, save for the green-gray stockings, the pseudo-Turkish slippers, and baggy silk trousered ends natural to a Corsair's bride, was hidden in a large black-silk-hooded opera-cloak. Beneath the hood it was evident that her rebellious hair was bound up with red silk, and fastened by some device in her ears (unless she had them pierced, which was too dreadful a thing to suppose!) were long brass filigree earrings.

"I'm just off, aunt," said Ann Veronica.

"Your father is in the study and wishes to speak to you."

Ann Veronica hesitated, and then stood in the open doorway and regarded her father's stern presence. She spoke with an entirely false note of cheerful off-handedness. "I'm just in time to say good-bye before I go, father. I'm going up to London with the Widgetts to that ball."

"Now look here, Ann Veronica," said Mr. Stanley, "just a moment. You are NOT going to that ball!"

Ann Veronica tried a less genial, more dignified note.

"I thought we had discussed that, father."

"You are not going to that ball! You are not going out of this house in that get-up!"

Ann Veronica tried yet more earnestly to treat him, as she would treat any man, with an insistence upon her due of masculine respect. "You see," she said, very gently, "I AM going. I am sorry to seem to disobey you, but I am. I wish" — she found she had embarked on a bad sentence— "I wish we needn't have quarrelled."

She stopped abruptly, and turned about toward the front door. In a moment he was beside her. "I don't think you can have heard me, Vee," he said, with intensely controlled fury. "I said you were" — he shouted— "NOT TO GO!"

She made, and overdid, an immense effort to be a princess. She tossed her head, and, having no further words, moved toward the

door. Her father intercepted her, and for a moment she and he struggled with their hands upon the latch. A common rage flushed their faces. “Let go!” she gasped at him, a blaze of anger.

“Veronica!” cried Miss Stanley, warningly, and, “Peter!”

For a moment they seemed on the verge of an altogether desperate scuffle. Never for a moment had violence come between these two since long ago he had, in spite of her mother’s protest in the background, carried her kicking and squalling to the nursery for some forgotten crime. With something near to horror they found themselves thus confronted.

The door was fastened by a catch and a latch with an inside key, to which at night a chain and two bolts were added. Carefully abstaining from thrusting against each other, Ann Veronica and her father began an absurdly desperate struggle, the one to open the door, the other to keep it fastened. She seized the key, and he grasped her hand and squeezed it roughly and painfully between the handle and the ward as she tried to turn it. His grip twisted her wrist. She cried out with the pain of it.

A wild passion of shame and self-disgust swept over her. Her spirit awoke in dismay to an affection in ruins, to the immense undignified disaster that had come to them.

Abruptly she desisted, recoiled, and turned and fled up-stairs.

She made noises between weeping and laughter as she went. She gained her room, and slammed her door and locked it as though she feared violence and pursuit.

“Oh God!” she cried, “Oh God!” and flung aside her opera-cloak, and for a time walked about the room — a Corsair’s bride at a crisis of emotion. “Why can’t he reason with me,” she said, again and again, “instead of doing this?”

Part 3

There presently came a phase in which she said: “I WON’T stand it

even now. I will go to-night."

She went as far as her door, then turned to the window. She opened this and scrambled out — a thing she had not done for five long years of adolescence — upon the leaded space above the built-out bath-room on the first floor. Once upon a time she and Roddy had descended thence by the drain-pipe.

But things that a girl of sixteen may do in short skirts are not things to be done by a young lady of twenty-one in fancy dress and an opera-cloak, and just as she was coming unaided to an adequate realization of this, she discovered Mr. Pragmar, the wholesale druggist, who lived three gardens away, and who had been mowing his lawn to get an appetite for dinner, standing in a fascinated attitude beside the forgotten lawn-mower and watching her intently.

She found it extremely difficult to infuse an air of quiet correctitude into her return through the window, and when she was safely inside she waved clinched fists and executed a noiseless dance of rage.

When she reflected that Mr. Pragmar probably knew Mr. Ramage, and might describe the affair to him, she cried "Oh!" with renewed vexation, and repeated some steps of her dance in a new and more ecstatic measure.

Part 4

At eight that evening Miss Stanley tapped at Ann Veronica's bedroom door.

"I've brought you up some dinner, Vee," she said.

Ann Veronica was lying on her bed in a darkling room staring at the ceiling. She reflected before answering. She was frightfully hungry. She had eaten little or no tea, and her mid-day meal had been worse than nothing.

She got up and unlocked the door.

Her aunt did not object to capital punishment or war, or the

industrial system or casual wards, or flogging of criminals or the Congo Free State, because none of these things really got hold of her imagination; but she did object, she did not like, she could not bear to think of people not having and enjoying their meals. It was her distinctive test of an emotional state, its interference with a kindly normal digestion. Any one very badly moved choked down a few mouthfuls; the symptom of supreme distress was not to be able to touch a bit. So that the thought of Ann Veronica up-stairs had been extremely painful for her through all the silent dinner-time that night. As soon as dinner was over she went into the kitchen and devoted herself to compiling a tray — not a tray merely of half-cooled dinner things, but a specially prepared "nice" tray, suitable for tempting any one. With this she now entered.

Ann Veronica found herself in the presence of the most disconcerting fact in human experience, the kindliness of people you believe to be thoroughly wrong. She took the tray with both hands, gulped, and gave way to tears.

Her aunt leaped unhappily to the thought of penitence.

"My dear," she began, with an affectionate hand on Ann Veronica's shoulder, "I do SO wish you would realize how it grieves your father."

Ann Veronica flung away from her hand, and the pepper-pot on the tray upset, sending a puff of pepper into the air and instantly filling them both with an intense desire to sneeze.

"I don't think you see," she replied, with tears on her cheeks, and her brows knitting, "how it shames and, ah! — disgraces me — AH TISHU!"

She put down the tray with a concussion on her toilet-table.

"But, dear, think! He is your father. SHOOH!"

"That's no reason," said Ann Veronica, speaking through her handkerchief and stopping abruptly.

Niece and aunt regarded each other for a moment over their pocket-handkerchiefs with watery but antagonistic eyes, each far too profoundly moved to see the absurdity of the position.

"I hope," said Miss Stanley, with dignity, and turned doorward with features in civil warfare. "Better state of mind," she gasped....

Ann Veronica stood in the twilight room staring at the door that

had slammed upon her aunt, her pocket-handkerchief rolled tightly in her hand. Her soul was full of the sense of disaster. She had made her first fight for dignity and freedom as a grown-up and independent Person, and this was how the universe had treated her. It had neither succumbed to her nor wrathfully overwhelmed her. It had thrust her back with an undignified scuffle, with vulgar comedy, with an unendurable, scornful grin.

“By God!” said Ann Veronica for the first time in her life. “But I will! I will!”

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE FLIGHT TO LONDON

Part 1

Ann Veronica had an impression that she did not sleep at all that night, and at any rate she got through an immense amount of feverish feeling and thinking.

What was she going to do?

One main idea possessed her: she must get away from home, she must assert herself at once or perish. “Very well,” she would say, “then I must go.” To remain, she felt, was to concede everything. And she would have to go to-morrow. It was clear it must be to-morrow. If she delayed a day she would delay two days, if she delayed two days she would delay a week, and after a week things would be adjusted to submission forever. “I’ll go,” she vowed to the night, “or I’ll die!” She made plans and estimated means and resources. These and her general preparations had perhaps a certain disproportion. She had a gold watch, a very good gold watch that had been her mother’s, a pearl necklace that was also pretty good, some unpretending rings, some silver bangles and a few other such inferior trinkets, three pounds thirteen shillings unspent of her dress and book allowance and a few good salable books. So equipped, she proposed to set up a separate establishment in the world.

And then she would find work.

For most of a long and fluctuating night she was fairly confident that she would find work; she knew herself to be strong, intelligent, and capable by the standards of most of the girls she knew. She was not quite clear how she should find it, but she felt she would. Then she would write and tell her father what she had done, and put their relationship on a new footing.

That was how she projected it, and in general terms it seemed plausible and possible. But in between these wider phases of comparative confidence were gaps of disconcerting doubt, when the universe was presented as making sinister and threatening faces at

her, defying her to defy, preparing a humiliating and shameful overthrow. “I don’t care,” said Ann Veronica to the darkness; “I’ll fight it.”

She tried to plan her proceedings in detail. The only difficulties that presented themselves clearly to her were the difficulties of getting away from Morningside Park, and not the difficulties at the other end of the journey. These were so outside her experience that she found it possible to thrust them almost out of sight by saying they would be “all right” in confident tones to herself. But still she knew they were not right, and at times they became a horrible obsession as of something waiting for her round the corner. She tried to imagine herself “getting something,” to project herself as sitting down at a desk and writing, or as returning after her work to some pleasantly equipped and free and independent flat. For a time she furnished the flat. But even with that furniture it remained extremely vague, the possible good and the possible evil as well!

The possible evil! “I’ll go,” said Ann Veronica for the hundredth time. “I’ll go. I don’t care WHAT happens.”

She awoke out of a doze, as though she had never been sleeping. It was time to get up.

She sat on the edge of her bed and looked about her, at her room, at the row of black-covered books and the pig’s skull. “I must take them,” she said, to help herself over her own incredulity. “How shall I get my luggage out of the house?...”

The figure of her aunt, a little distant, a little propitiatory, behind the coffee things, filled her with a sense of almost catastrophic adventure. Perhaps she might never come back to that breakfast-room again. Never! Perhaps some day, quite soon, she might regret that breakfast-room. She helped herself to the remainder of the slightly congealed bacon, and reverted to the problem of getting her luggage out of the house. She decided to call in the help of Teddy Widgett, or, failing him, of one of his sisters.

Part 2

She found the younger generation of the Widgetts engaged in languid reminiscences, and all, as they expressed it, a "bit decayed." Every one became tremendously animated when they heard that Ann Veronica had failed them because she had been, as she expressed it, "locked in."

"My God!" said Teddy, more impressively than ever.

"But what are you going to do?" asked Hetty.

"What can one do?" asked Ann Veronica. "Would you stand it? I'm going to clear out."

"Clear out?" cried Hetty.

"Go to London," said Ann Veronica.

She had expected sympathetic admiration, but instead the whole Widgett family, except Teddy, expressed a common dismay. "But how can you?" asked Constance. "Who will you stop with?"

"I shall go on my own. Take a room!"

"I say!" said Constance. "But who's going to pay for the room?"

"I've got money," said Ann Veronica. "Anything is better than this — this stifled life down here." And seeing that Hetty and Constance were obviously developing objections, she plunged at once into a demand for help. "I've got nothing in the world to pack with except a toy size portmanteau. Can you lend me some stuff?"

"You ARE a chap!" said Constance, and warmed only slowly from the idea of dissuasion to the idea of help. But they did what they could for her. They agreed to lend her their hold-all and a large, formless bag which they called the communal trunk. And Teddy declared himself ready to go to the ends of the earth for her, and carry her luggage all the way.

Hetty, looking out of the window — she always smoked her after-breakfast cigarette at the window for the benefit of the less advanced section of Morningside Park society — and trying not to raise objections, saw Miss Stanley going down toward the shops.

"If you must go on with it," said Hetty, "now's your time." And Ann Veronica at once went back with the hold-all, trying not to hurry indecently but to keep up her dignified air of being a wronged person doing the right thing at a smart trot, to pack. Teddy went round by

the garden backs and dropped the bag over the fence. All this was exciting and entertaining. Her aunt returned before the packing was done, and Ann Veronica lunched with an uneasy sense of bag and hold-all packed up-stairs and inadequately hidden from chance intruders by the valance of the bed. She went down, flushed and light-hearted, to the Widgetts' after lunch to make some final arrangements and then, as soon as her aunt had retired to lie down for her usual digestive hour, took the risk of the servants having the enterprise to report her proceedings and carried her bag and hold-all to the garden gate, whence Teddy, in a state of ecstatic service, bore them to the railway station. Then she went up-stairs again, dressed herself carefully for town, put on her most businesslike-looking hat, and with a wave of emotion she found it hard to control, walked down to catch the 3.17 up-train.

Teddy handed her into the second-class compartment her season-ticket warranted, and declared she was "simply splendid." "If you want anything," he said, "or get into any trouble, wire me. I'd come back from the ends of the earth. I'd do anything, Vee. It's horrible to think of you!"

"You're an awful brick, Teddy!" she said.

"Who wouldn't be for you?"

The train began to move. "You're splendid!" said Teddy, with his hair wild in the wind. "Good luck! Good luck!"

She waved from the window until the bend hid him.

She found herself alone in the train asking herself what she must do next, and trying not to think of herself as cut off from home or any refuge whatever from the world she had resolved to face. She felt smaller and more adventurous even than she had expected to feel. "Let me see," she said to herself, trying to control a slight sinking of the heart, "I am going to take a room in a lodging-house because that is cheaper.... But perhaps I had better get a room in an hotel to-night and look round....

"It's bound to be all right," she said.

But her heart kept on sinking. What hotel should she go to? If she told a cabman to drive to an hotel, any hotel, what would he do — or say? He might drive to something dreadfully expensive, and not at all the quiet sort of thing she required. Finally she decided that even for

an hotel she must look round, and that meanwhile she would "book" her luggage at Waterloo. She told the porter to take it to the booking-office, and it was only after a disconcerting moment or so that she found she ought to have directed him to go to the cloak-room. But that was soon put right, and she walked out into London with a peculiar exaltation of mind, an exaltation that partook of panic and defiance, but was chiefly a sense of vast unexampled release.

She inhaled a deep breath of air — London air.

Part 3

She dismissed the first hotels she passed, she scarcely knew why, mainly perhaps from the mere dread of entering them, and crossed Waterloo Bridge at a leisurely pace. It was high afternoon, there was no great throng of foot-passengers, and many an eye from omnibus and pavement rested gratefully on her fresh, trim presence as she passed young and erect, with the light of determination shining through the quiet self-possession of her face. She was dressed as English girls do dress for town, without either coquetry or harshness: her collarless blouse confessed a pretty neck, her eyes were bright and steady, and her dark hair waved loosely and graciously over her ears....

It seemed at first the most beautiful afternoon of all time to her, and perhaps the thrill of her excitement did add a distinctive and culminating keenness to the day. The river, the big buildings on the north bank, Westminster, and St. Paul's, were rich and wonderful with the soft sunshine of London, the softest, the finest grained, the most penetrating and least emphatic sunshine in the world. The very carts and vans and cabs that Wellington Street poured out incessantly upon the bridge seemed ripe and good in her eyes. A traffic of copious barges slumbered over the face of the river-barges either altogether stagnant or dreaming along in the wake of fussy tugs; and above circled, urbanely voracious, the London seagulls. She had

never been there before at that hour, in that light, and it seemed to her as if she came to it all for the first time. And this great mellow place, this London, now was hers, to struggle with, to go where she pleased in, to overcome and live in. “I am glad,” she told herself, “I came.”

She marked an hotel that seemed neither opulent nor odd in a little side street opening on the Embankment, made up her mind with an effort, and, returning by Hungerford Bridge to Waterloo, took a cab to this chosen refuge with her two pieces of luggage. There was just a minute’s hesitation before they gave her a room.

The young lady in the bureau said she would inquire, and Ann Veronica, while she affected to read the appeal on a hospital collecting-box upon the bureau counter, had a disagreeable sense of being surveyed from behind by a small, whiskered gentleman in a frock-coat, who came out of the inner office and into the hall among a number of equally observant green porters to look at her and her bags. But the survey was satisfactory, and she found herself presently in Room No. 47, straightening her hat and waiting for her luggage to appear.

“All right so far,” she said to herself....

Part 4

But presently, as she sat on the one antimacassared red silk chair and surveyed her hold-all and bag in that tidy, rather vacant, and dehumanized apartment, with its empty wardrobe and desert toilet-table and pictureless walls and stereotyped furnishings, a sudden blankness came upon her as though she didn’t matter, and had been thrust away into this impersonal corner, she and her gear....

She decided to go out into the London afternoon again and get something to eat in an Aerated Bread shop or some such place, and perhaps find a cheap room for herself. Of course that was what she had to do; she had to find a cheap room for herself and work!

This Room No. 47 was no more than a sort of railway compartment on the way to that.

How does one get work?

She walked along the Strand and across Trafalgar Square, and by the Haymarket to Piccadilly, and so through dignified squares and palatial alleys to Oxford Street; and her mind was divided between a speculative treatment of employment on the one hand, and breezes — zephyr breezes — of the keenest appreciation for London, on the other. The jolly part of it was that for the first time in her life so far as London was concerned, she was not going anywhere in particular; for the first time in her life it seemed to her she was taking London in.

She tried to think how people get work. Ought she to walk into some of these places and tell them what she could do? She hesitated at the window of a shipping-office in Cockspur Street and at the Army and Navy Stores, but decided that perhaps there would be some special and customary hour, and that it would be better for her to find this out before she made her attempt. And, besides, she didn't just immediately want to make her attempt.

She fell into a pleasant dream of positions and work. Behind every one of these myriad fronts she passed there must be a career or careers. Her ideas of women's employment and a modern woman's pose in life were based largely on the figure of Vivie Warren in Mrs. Warren's Profession. She had seen Mrs. Warren's Profession furtively with Hetty Widgett from the gallery of a Stage Society performance one Monday afternoon. Most of it had been incomprehensible to her, or comprehensible in a way that checked further curiosity, but the figure of Vivien, hard, capable, successful, and bullying, and ordering about a veritable Teddy in the person of Frank Gardner, appealed to her. She saw herself in very much Vivie's position — managing something.

Her thoughts were deflected from Vivie Warren by the peculiar behavior of a middle-aged gentleman in Piccadilly. He appeared suddenly from the infinite in the neighborhood of the Burlington Arcade, crossing the pavement toward her and with his eyes upon her. He seemed to her indistinguishably about her father's age. He wore a silk hat a little tilted, and a morning coat buttoned round a

tight, contained figure; and a white slip gave a finish to his costume and endorsed the quiet distinction of his tie. His face was a little flushed perhaps, and his small, brown eyes were bright. He stopped on the curb-stone, not facing her but as if he was on his way to cross the road, and spoke to her suddenly over his shoulder.

"Whither away?" he said, very distinctly in a curiously wheedling voice. Ann Veronica stared at his foolish, propitiatory smile, his hungry gaze, through one moment of amazement, then stepped aside and went on her way with a quickened step. But her mind was ruffled, and its mirror-like surface of satisfaction was not easily restored.

Queer old gentleman!

The art of ignoring is one of the accomplishments of every well-bred girl, so carefully instilled that at last she can even ignore her own thoughts and her own knowledge. Ann Veronica could at the same time ask herself what this queer old gentleman could have meant by speaking to her, and know — know in general terms, at least — what that accosting signified. About her, as she had gone day by day to and from the Tredgold College, she had seen and not seen many an incidental aspect of those sides of life about which girls are expected to know nothing, aspects that were extraordinarily relevant to her own position and outlook on the world, and yet by convention ineffably remote. For all that she was of exceptional intellectual enterprise, she had never yet considered these things with unaverted eyes. She had viewed them askance, and without exchanging ideas with any one else in the world about them.

She went on her way now no longer dreaming and appreciative, but disturbed and unwillingly observant behind her mask of serene contentment.

That delightful sense of free, unembarrassed movement was gone.

As she neared the bottom of the dip in Piccadilly she saw a woman approaching her from the opposite direction — a tall woman who at the first glance seemed altogether beautiful and fine. She came along with the fluttering assurance of some tall ship. Then as she drew nearer paint showed upon her face, and a harsh purpose behind the quiet expression of her open countenance, and a sort of unreality in her splendor betrayed itself for which Ann Veronica

could not recall the right word — a word, half understood, that lurked and hid in her mind, the word "meretricious." Behind this woman and a little to the side of her, walked a man smartly dressed, with desire and appraisal in his eyes. Something insisted that those two were mysteriously linked — that the woman knew the man was there.

It was a second reminder that against her claim to go free and untrammelled there was a case to be made, that after all it was true that a girl does not go alone in the world unchallenged, nor ever has gone freely alone in the world, that evil walks abroad and dangers, and petty insults more irritating than dangers, lurk.

It was in the quiet streets and squares toward Oxford Street that it first came into her head disagreeably that she herself was being followed. She observed a man walking on the opposite side of the way and looking toward her.

"Bother it all!" she swore. "Bother!" and decided that this was not so, and would not look to right or left again.

Beyond the Circus Ann Veronica went into a British Tea-Table Company shop to get some tea. And as she was yet waiting for her tea to come she saw this man again. Either it was an unfortunate recovery of a trail, or he had followed her from Mayfair. There was no mistaking his intentions this time. He came down the shop looking for her quite obviously, and took up a position on the other side against a mirror in which he was able to regard her steadfastly.

Beneath the serene unconcern of Ann Veronica's face was a boiling tumult. She was furiously angry. She gazed with a quiet detachment toward the window and the Oxford Street traffic, and in her heart she was busy kicking this man to death. He HAD followed her! What had he followed her for? He must have followed her all the way from beyond Grosvenor Square.

He was a tall man and fair, with bluish eyes that were rather protuberant, and long white hands of which he made a display. He had removed his silk hat, and now sat looking at Ann Veronica over an untouched cup of tea; he sat gloating upon her, trying to catch her eye. Once, when he thought he had done so, he smiled an ingratiating smile. He moved, after quiet intervals, with a quick little movement, and ever and again stroked his small mustache and coughed a self-

conscious cough.

"That he should be in the same world with me!" said Ann Veronica, reduced to reading the list of good things the British Tea-Table Company had priced for its patrons.

Heaven knows what dim and tawdry conceptions of passion and desire were in that blond cranium, what romance-begotten dreams of intrigue and adventure! but they sufficed, when presently Ann Veronica went out into the darkling street again, to inspire a flitting, dogged pursuit, idiotic, exasperating, indecent.

She had no idea what she should do. If she spoke to a policeman she did not know what would ensue. Perhaps she would have to charge this man and appear in a police-court next day.

She became angry with herself. She would not be driven in by this persistent, sneaking aggression. She would ignore him. Surely she could ignore him. She stopped abruptly, and looked in a flower-shop window. He passed, and came loitering back and stood beside her, silently looking into her face.

The afternoon had passed now into twilight. The shops were lighting up into gigantic lanterns of color, the street lamps were glowing into existence, and she had lost her way. She had lost her sense of direction, and was among unfamiliar streets. She went on from street to street, and all the glory of London had departed. Against the sinister, the threatening, monstrous inhumanity of the limitless city, there was nothing now but this supreme, ugly fact of a pursuit — the pursuit of the undesired, persistent male.

For a second time Ann Veronica wanted to swear at the universe.

There were moments when she thought of turning upon this man and talking to him. But there was something in his face at once stupid and invincible that told her he would go on forcing himself upon her, that he would esteem speech with her a great point gained. In the twilight he had ceased to be a person one could tackle and shame; he had become something more general, a something that crawled and sneaked toward her and would not let her alone....

Then, when the tension was getting unendurable, and she was on the verge of speaking to some casual passer-by and demanding help, her follower vanished. For a time she could scarcely believe he was gone. He had. The night had swallowed him up, but his work on her

was done. She had lost her nerve, and there was no more freedom in London for her that night. She was glad to join in the stream of hurrying homeward workers that was now welling out of a thousand places of employment, and to imitate their driven, preoccupied haste. She had followed a bobbing white hat and gray jacket until she reached the Euston Road corner of Tottenham Court Road, and there, by the name on a bus and the cries of a conductor, she made a guess of her way. And she did not merely affect to be driven — she felt driven. She was afraid people would follow her, she was afraid of the dark, open doorways she passed, and afraid of the blazes of light; she was afraid to be alone, and she knew not what it was she feared.

It was past seven when she got back to her hotel. She thought then that she had shaken off the man of the bulging blue eyes forever, but that night she found he followed her into her dreams. He stalked her, he stared at her, he craved her, he sidled slinking and propitiatory and yet relentlessly toward her, until at last she awoke from the suffocating nightmare nearness of his approach, and lay awake in fear and horror listening to the unaccustomed sounds of the hotel.

She came very near that night to resolving that she would return to her home next morning. But the morning brought courage again, and those first intimations of horror vanished completely from her mind.

Part 5

She had sent her father a telegram from the East Strand post-office worded thus:

All	is	well	with	me
and	quite	safe	Veronica	

and afterward she had dined a la carte upon a cutlet, and had then set herself to write an answer to Mr. Manning's proposal of marriage. But she had found it very difficult.

"DEAR MR. MANNING," she had begun. So far it had been plain sailing, and it had seemed fairly evident to go on: "I find it very difficult to answer your letter."

But after that neither ideas nor phrases had come and she had fallen thinking of the events of the day. She had decided that she would spend the next morning answering advertisements in the papers that abounded in the writing-room; and so, after half an hour's perusal of back numbers of the Sketch in the drawing-room, she had gone to bed.

She found next morning, when she came to this advertisement answering, that it was more difficult than she had supposed. In the first place there were not so many suitable advertisements as she had expected. She sat down by the paper-rack with a general feeling of resemblance to Vivie Warren, and looked through the Morning Post and Standard and Telegraph, and afterward the half-penny sheets. The Morning Post was hungry for governesses and nursery governesses, but held out no other hopes; the Daily Telegraph that morning seemed eager only for skirt hands. She went to a writing-desk and made some memoranda on a sheet of note-paper, and then remembered that she had no address as yet to which letters could be sent.

She decided to leave this matter until the morrow and devote the morning to settling up with Mr. Manning. At the cost of quite a number of torn drafts she succeeded in evolving this:

"DEAR MR. MANNING, — I find it very difficult to answer your letter. I hope you won't mind if I say first that I think it does me an extraordinary honor that you should think of any one like myself so highly and seriously, and, secondly, that I wish it had not been written."

She surveyed this sentence for some time before going on. "I wonder," she said, "why one writes him sentences like that? It'll have to go," she decided, "I've written too many already." She went on, with a desperate attempt to be easy and colloquial:

"You see, we were rather good friends, I thought, and now

perhaps it will be difficult for us to get back to the old friendly footing. But if that can possibly be done I want it to be done. You see, the plain fact of the case is that I think I am too young and ignorant for marriage. I have been thinking these things over lately, and it seems to me that marriage for a girl is just the supremest thing in life. It isn't just one among a number of important things; for her it is the important thing, and until she knows far more than I know of the facts of life, how is she to undertake it? So please; if you will, forget that you wrote that letter, and forgive this answer. I want you to think of me just as if I was a man, and quite outside marriage altogether.

"I do hope you will be able to do this, because I value men friends. I shall be very sorry if I cannot have you for a friend. I think that there is no better friend for a girl than a man rather older than herself.

"Perhaps by this time you will have heard of the step I have taken in leaving my home. Very likely you will disapprove highly of what I have done — I wonder? You may, perhaps, think I have done it just in a fit of childish petulance because my father locked me in when I wanted to go to a ball of which he did not approve. But really it is much more than that. At Morningside Park I feel as though all my growing up was presently to stop, as though I was being shut in from the light of life, and, as they say in botany, etiolated. I was just like a sort of dummy that does things as it is told — that is to say, as the strings are pulled. I want to be a person by myself, and to pull my own strings. I had rather have trouble and hardship like that than be taken care of by others. I want to be myself. I wonder if a man can quite understand that passionate feeling? It is quite a passionate feeling. So I am already no longer the girl you knew at Morningside Park. I am a young person seeking employment and freedom and self-development, just as in quite our first talk of all I said I wanted to be.

"I do hope you will see how things are, and not be offended with me or frightfully shocked and distressed by what I have done.

"Very sincerely yours,

"ANN VERONICA STANLEY."

Part 6

In the afternoon she resumed her search for apartments. The intoxicating sense of novelty had given place to a more business-like mood. She drifted northward from the Strand, and came on some queer and dingy quarters.

She had never imagined life was half so sinister as it looked to her in the beginning of these investigations. She found herself again in the presence of some element in life about which she had been trained not to think, about which she was perhaps instinctively indisposed to think; something which jarred, in spite of all her mental resistance, with all her preconceptions of a clean and courageous girl walking out from Morningside Park as one walks out of a cell into a free and spacious world. One or two landladies refused her with an air of conscious virtue that she found hard to explain. “We don’t let to ladies,” they said.

She drifted, via Theobald’s Road, obliquely toward the region about Titchfield Street. Such apartments as she saw were either scandalously dirty or unaccountably dear, or both. And some were adorned with engravings that struck her as being more vulgar and undesirable than anything she had ever seen in her life. Ann Veronica loved beautiful things, and the beauty of undraped loveliness not least among them; but these were pictures that did but insist coarsely upon the roundness of women’s bodies. The windows of these rooms were obscured with draperies, their floors a carpet patchwork; the china ornaments on their mantels were of a class apart. After the first onset several of the women who had apartments to let said she would not do for them, and in effect dismissed her. This also struck her as odd.

About many of these houses hung a mysterious taint as of something weakly and commonly and dustily evil; the women who negotiated the rooms looked out through a friendly manner as though it was a mask, with hard, defiant eyes. Then one old crone, short-

sighted and shaky-handed, called Ann Veronica “dearie,” and made some remark, obscure and slangy, of which the spirit rather than the words penetrated to her understanding.

For a time she looked at no more apartments, and walked through gaunt and ill-cleaned streets, through the sordid under side of life, perplexed and troubled, ashamed of her previous obtuseness.

She had something of the feeling a Hindoo must experience who has been into surroundings or touched something that offends his caste. She passed people in the streets and regarded them with a quickening apprehension, once or twice came girls dressed in slatternly finery, going toward Regent Street from out these places. It did not occur to her that they at least had found a way of earning a living, and had that much economic superiority to herself. It did not occur to her that save for some accidents of education and character they had souls like her own.

For a time Ann Veronica went on her way gauging the quality of sordid streets. At last, a little way to the northward of Euston Road, the moral cloud seemed to lift, the moral atmosphere to change; clean blinds appeared in the windows, clean doorsteps before the doors, a different appeal in the neatly placed cards bearing the word

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____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ __
 |     APARTMENTS      |
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ __
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in the clear bright windows. At last in a street near the Hampstead Road she hit upon a room that had an exceptional quality of space and order, and a tall woman with a kindly face to show it. “You’re a student, perhaps?” said the tall woman. “At the Tredgold Women’s College,” said Ann Veronica. She felt it would save explanations if she did not state she had left her home and was looking for employment. The room was papered with green, large-patterned paper that was at worst a trifle dingy, and the arm-chair and the seats of the other chairs were covered with the unusual brightness of a large-patterned chintz, which also supplied the window-curtain. There was a round table covered, not with the usual “tapestry” cover, but with a plain green cloth that went passably with the wall-paper. In the recess beside the fireplace were some open bookshelves. The carpet was a quiet drugget and not excessively worn, and the bed in

the corner was covered by a white quilt. There were neither texts nor rubbish on the walls, but only a stirring version of Belshazzar's feast, a steel engraving in the early Victorian manner that had some satisfactory blacks. And the woman who showed this room was tall, with an understanding eye and the quiet manner of the well-trained servant.

Ann Veronica brought her luggage in a cab from the hotel; she tipped the hotel porter sixpence and overpaid the cabman eighteenpence, unpacked some of her books and possessions, and so made the room a little homelike, and then sat down in a by no means uncomfortable arm-chair before the fire. She had arranged for a supper of tea, a boiled egg, and some tinned peaches. She had discussed the general question of supplies with the helpful landlady. "And now," said Ann Veronica surveying her apartment with an unprecedented sense of proprietorship, "what is the next step?"

She spent the evening in writing — it was a little difficult — to her father and — which was easier — to the Widgetts. She was greatly heartened by doing this. The necessity of defending herself and assuming a confident and secure tone did much to dispell the sense of being exposed and indefensible in a huge dingy world that abounded in sinister possibilities. She addressed her letters, meditated on them for a time, and then took them out and posted them. Afterward she wanted to get her letter to her father back in order to read it over again, and, if it tallied with her general impression of it, re-write it.

He would know her address to-morrow. She reflected upon that with a thrill of terror that was also, somehow, in some faint remote way, gleeful.

"Dear old Daddy," she said, "he'll make a fearful fuss. Well, it had to happen somewhen.... Somehow. I wonder what he'll say?"

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

EXPOSTULATIONS

Part 1

The next morning opened calmly, and Ann Veronica sat in her own room, her very own room, and consumed an egg and marmalade, and read the advertisements in the Daily Telegraph. Then began expostulations, preluded by a telegram and headed by her aunt. The telegram reminded Ann Veronica that she had no place for interviews except her bed-sitting-room, and she sought her landlady and negotiated hastily for the use of the ground floor parlor, which very fortunately was vacant. She explained she was expecting an important interview, and asked that her visitor should be duly shown in. Her aunt arrived about half-past ten, in black and with an unusually thick spotted veil. She raised this with the air of a conspirator unmasking, and displayed a tear-flushed face. For a moment she remained silent.

"My dear," she said, when she could get her breath, "you must come home at once."

Ann Veronica closed the door quite softly and stood still.

"This has almost killed your father.... After Gwen!"

"I sent a telegram."

"He cares so much for you. He did so care for you."

"I sent a telegram to say I was all right."

"All right! And I never dreamed anything of the sort was going on. I had no idea!" She sat down abruptly and threw her wrists limply upon the table. "Oh, Veronica!" she said, "to leave your home!"

She had been weeping. She was weeping now. Ann Veronica was overcome by this amount of emotion.

"Why did you do it?" her aunt urged. "Why could you not confide in us?"

"Do what?" said Ann Veronica.

"What you have done."

“But what have I done?”

“Elope! Go off in this way. We had no idea. We had such a pride in you, such hope in you. I had no idea you were not the happiest girl. Everything I could do! Your father sat up all night. Until at last I persuaded him to go to bed. He wanted to put on his overcoat and come after you and look for you — in London. We made sure it was just like Gwen. Only Gwen left a letter on the pincushion. You didn’t even do that Vee; not even that.”

“I sent a telegram, aunt,” said Ann Veronica.

“Like a stab. You didn’t even put the twelve words.”

“I said I was all right.”

“Gwen said she was happy. Before that came your father didn’t even know you were gone. He was just getting cross about your being late for dinner — you know his way — when it came. He opened it — just off-hand, and then when he saw what it was he hit at the table and sent his soup spoon flying and splashing on to the tablecloth. ‘My God!’ he said, ‘I’ll go after them and kill him. I’ll go after them and kill him.’ For the moment I thought it was a telegram from Gwen.”

“But what did father imagine?”

“Of course he imagined! Any one would! ‘What has happened, Peter?’ I asked. He was standing up with the telegram crumpled in his hand. He used a most awful word! Then he said, ‘It’s Ann Veronica gone to join her sister!’ ‘Gone!’ I said. ‘Gone!’ he said. ‘Read that,’ and threw the telegram at me, so that it went into the tureen. He swore when I tried to get it out with the ladle, and told me what it said. Then he sat down again in a chair and said that people who wrote novels ought to be strung up. It was as much as I could do to prevent him flying out of the house there and then and coming after you. Never since I was a girl have I seen your father so moved. ‘Oh! little Vee!’ he cried, ‘little Vee!’ and put his face between his hands and sat still for a long time before he broke out again.”

Ann Veronica had remained standing while her aunt spoke.

“Do you mean, aunt,” she asked, “that my father thought I had gone off — with some man?”

“What else COULD he think? Would any one DREAM you would be so mad as to go off alone?”

“After — after what had happened the night before?”

“Oh, why raise up old scores? If you could see him this morning, his poor face as white as a sheet and all cut about with shaving! He was for coming up by the very first train and looking for you, but I said to him, ‘Wait for the letters,’ and there, sure enough, was yours. He could hardly open the envelope, he trembled so. Then he threw the letter at me. ‘Go and fetch her home,’ he said; ‘it isn’t what we thought! It’s just a practical joke of hers.’ And with that he went off to the City, stern and silent, leaving his bacon on his plate — a great slice of bacon hardly touched. No breakfast, he’s had no dinner, hardly a mouthful of soup — since yesterday at tea.”

She stopped. Aunt and niece regarded each other silently.

“You must come home to him at once,” said Miss Stanley.

Ann Veronica looked down at her fingers on the claret-colored table-cloth. Her aunt had summoned up an altogether too vivid picture of her father as the masterful man, overbearing, emphatic, sentimental, noisy, aimless. Why on earth couldn’t he leave her to grow in her own way? Her pride rose at the bare thought of return.

“I don’t think I CAN do that,” she said. She looked up and said, a little breathlessly, “I’m sorry, aunt, but I don’t think I can.”

Part 2

Then it was the expostulations really began.

From first to last, on this occasion, her aunt expostulated for about two hours. “But, my dear,” she began, “it is Impossible! It is quite out of the Question. You simply can’t.” And to that, through vast rhetorical meanderings, she clung. It reached her only slowly that Ann Veronica was standing to her resolution. “How will you live?” she appealed. “Think of what people will say!” That became a refrain. “Think of what Lady Palsworthy will say! Think of what” — So-and-so— “will say! What are we to tell people?

“Besides, what am I to tell your father?”

At first it had not been at all clear to Ann Veronica that she would refuse to return home; she had had some dream of a capitulation that should leave her an enlarged and defined freedom, but as her aunt put this aspect and that of her flight to her, as she wandered illogically and inconsistently from one urgent consideration to another, as she mingled assurances and aspects and emotions, it became clearer and clearer to the girl that there could be little or no change in the position of things if she returned. “And what will Mr. Manning think?” said her aunt.

“I don’t care what any one thinks,” said Ann Veronica.

“I can’t imagine what has come over you,” said her aunt. “I can’t conceive what you want. You foolish girl!”

Ann Veronica took that in silence. At the back of her mind, dim and yet disconcerting, was the perception that she herself did not know what she wanted. And yet she knew it was not fair to call her a foolish girl.

“Don’t you care for Mr. Manning?” said her aunt.

“I don’t see what he has to do with my coming to London?”

“He — he worships the ground you tread on. You don’t deserve it, but he does. Or at least he did the day before yesterday. And here you are!”

Her aunt opened all the fingers of her gloved hand in a rhetorical gesture. “It seems to me all madness — madness! Just because your father — wouldn’t let you disobey him!”

Part 3

In the afternoon the task of expostulation was taken up by Mr. Stanley in person. Her father’s ideas of expostulation were a little harsh and forcible, and over the claret-colored table-cloth and under the gas chandelier, with his hat and umbrella between them like the mace in Parliament, he and his daughter contrived to have a violent quarrel. She had intended to be quietly dignified, but he was in a

smouldering rage from the beginning, and began by assuming, which alone was more than flesh and blood could stand, that the insurrection was over and that she was coming home submissively. In his desire to be emphatic and to avenge himself for his over-night distresses, he speedily became brutal, more brutal than she had ever known him before.

"A nice time of anxiety you've given me, young lady," he said, as he entered the room. "I hope you're satisfied."

She was frightened — his anger always did frighten her — and in her resolve to conceal her fright she carried a queen-like dignity to what she felt even at the time was a preposterous pitch. She said she hoped she had not distressed him by the course she had felt obliged to take, and he told her not to be a fool. She tried to keep her side up by declaring that he had put her into an impossible position, and he replied by shouting, "Nonsense! Nonsense! Any father in my place would have done what I did."

Then he went on to say: "Well, you've had your little adventure, and I hope now you've had enough of it. So go up-stairs and get your things together while I look out for a hansom."

To which the only possible reply seemed to be, "I'm not coming home."

"Not coming home!"

"No!" And, in spite of her resolve to be a Person, Ann Veronica began to weep with terror at herself. Apparently she was always doomed to weep when she talked to her father. But he was always forcing her to say and do such unexpectedly conclusive things. She feared he might take her tears as a sign of weakness. So she said: "I won't come home. I'd rather starve!"

For a moment the conversation hung upon that declaration. Then Mr. Stanley, putting his hands on the table in the manner rather of a barrister than a solicitor, and regarding her balefully through his glasses with quite undisguised animosity, asked, "And may I presume to inquire, then, what you mean to do? — how do you propose to live?"

"I shall live," sobbed Ann Veronica. "You needn't be anxious about that! I shall contrive to live."

"But I AM anxious," said Mr. Stanley, "I am anxious. Do you

think it's nothing to me to have my daughter running about London looking for odd jobs and disgracing herself?"

"Sha'n't get odd jobs," said Ann Veronica, wiping her eyes.

And from that point they went on to a thoroughly embittering wrangle. Mr. Stanley used his authority, and commanded Ann Veronica to come home, to which, of course, she said she wouldn't; and then he warned her not to defy him, warned her very solemnly, and then commanded her again. He then said that if she would not obey him in this course she should "never darken his doors again," and was, indeed, frightfully abusive. This threat terrified Ann Veronica so much that she declared with sobs and vehemence that she would never come home again, and for a time both talked at once and very wildly. He asked her whether she understood what she was saying, and went on to say still more precisely that she should never touch a penny of his money until she came home again — not one penny. Ann Veronica said she didn't care.

Then abruptly Mr. Stanley changed his key. "You poor child!" he said; "don't you see the infinite folly of these proceedings? Think! Think of the love and affection you abandon! Think of your aunt, a second mother to you. Think if your own mother was alive!"

He paused, deeply moved.

"If my own mother was alive," sobbed Ann Veronica, "she would understand."

The talk became more and more inconclusive and exhausting. Ann Veronica found herself incompetent, undignified, and detestable, holding on desperately to a hardening antagonism to her father, quarrelling with him, wrangling with him, thinking of repartees — almost as if he was a brother. It was horrible, but what could she do? She meant to live her own life, and he meant, with contempt and insults, to prevent her. Anything else that was said she now regarded only as an aspect of or diversion from that.

In the retrospect she was amazed to think how things had gone to pieces, for at the outset she had been quite prepared to go home again upon terms. While waiting for his coming she had stated her present and future relations with him with what had seemed to her the most satisfactory lucidity and completeness. She had looked forward to an explanation. Instead had come this storm, this shouting, this

weeping, this confusion of threats and irrelevant appeals. It was not only that her father had said all sorts of inconsistent and unreasonable things, but that by some incomprehensible infection she herself had replied in the same vein. He had assumed that her leaving home was the point at issue, that everything turned on that, and that the sole alternative was obedience, and she had fallen in with that assumption until rebellion seemed a sacred principle. Moreover, atrociously and inexorably, he allowed it to appear ever and again in horrible gleams that he suspected there was some man in the case.... Some man!

And to conclude it all was the figure of her father in the doorway, giving her a last chance, his hat in one hand, his umbrella in the other, shaken at her to emphasize his point.

"You understand, then," he was saying, "you understand?"

"I understand," said Ann Veronica, tear-wet and flushed with a reciprocal passion, but standing up to him with an equality that amazed even herself, "I understand." She controlled a sob. "Not a penny — not one penny — and never darken your doors again!"

Part 4

The next day her aunt came again and expostulated, and was just saying it was "an unheard-of thing" for a girl to leave her home as Ann Veronica had done, when her father arrived, and was shown in by the pleasant-faced landlady.

Her father had determined on a new line. He put down his hat and umbrella, rested his hands on his hips, and regarded Ann Veronica firmly.

"Now," he said, quietly, "it's time we stopped this nonsense."

Ann Veronica was about to reply, when he went on, with a still more deadly quiet: "I am not here to bandy words with you. Let us have no more of this humbug. You are to come home."

"I thought I explained—"

“I don’t think you can have heard me,” said her father; “I have told you to come home.”

“I thought I explained—”

“Come home!”

Ann Veronica shrugged her shoulders.

“Very well,” said her father.

“I think this ends the business,” he said, turning to his sister.

“It’s not for us to supplicate any more. She must learn wisdom — as God pleases.”

“But, my dear Peter!” said Miss Stanley.

“No,” said her brother, conclusively, “it’s not for a parent to go on persuading a child.”

Miss Stanley rose and regarded Ann Veronica fixedly. The girl stood with her hands behind her back, sulky, resolute, and intelligent, a strand of her black hair over one eye and looking more than usually delicate-featured, and more than ever like an obdurate child.

“She doesn’t know.”

“She does.”

“I can’t imagine what makes you fly out against everything like this,” said Miss Stanley to her niece.

“What is the good of talking?” said her brother. “She must go her own way. A man’s children nowadays are not his own. That’s the fact of the matter. Their minds are turned against him.... Rubbishy novels and pernicious rascals. We can’t even protect them from themselves.”

An immense gulf seemed to open between father and daughter as he said these words.

“I don’t see,” gasped Ann Veronica, “why parents and children... shouldn’t be friends.”

“Friends!” said her father. “When we see you going through disobedience to the devil! Come, Molly, she must go her own way. I’ve tried to use my authority. And she defies me. What more is there to be said? She defies me!”

It was extraordinary. Ann Veronica felt suddenly an effect of tremendous pathos; she would have given anything to have been able to frame and make some appeal, some utterance that should bridge this bottomless chasm that had opened between her and her father,

and she could find nothing whatever to say that was in the least sincere and appealing.

"Father," she cried, "I have to live!"

He misunderstood her. "That," he said, grimly, with his hand on the door-handle, "must be your own affair, unless you choose to live at Morningside Park."

Miss Stanley turned to her. "Vee," she said, "come home. Before it is too late."

"Come, Molly," said Mr. Stanley, at the door.

"Vee!" said Miss Stanley, "you hear what your father says!"

Miss Stanley struggled with emotion. She made a curious movement toward her niece, then suddenly, convulsively, she dabbed down something lumpy on the table and turned to follow her brother. Ann Veronica stared for a moment in amazement at this dark-green object that clashed as it was put down. It was a purse. She made a step forward. "Aunt!" she said, "I can't—"

Then she caught a wild appeal in her aunt's blue eye, halted, and the door clicked upon them.

There was a pause, and then the front door slammed....

Ann Veronica realized that she was alone with the world. And this time the departure had a tremendous effect of finality. She had to resist an impulse of sheer terror, to run out after them and give in.

"Gods," she said, at last, "I've done it this time!"

"Well!" She took up the neat morocco purse, opened it, and examined the contents.

It contained three sovereigns, six and fourpence, two postage stamps, a small key, and her aunt's return half ticket to Morningside Park.

Part 5

After the interview Ann Veronica considered herself formally cut off from home. If nothing else had clinched that, the purse had.

Nevertheless there came a residuum of expostulations. Her brother Roddy, who was in the motor line, came to expostulate; her sister Alice wrote. And Mr. Manning called.

Her sister Alice seemed to have developed a religious sense away there in Yorkshire, and made appeals that had no meaning for Ann Veronica's mind. She exhorted Ann Veronica not to become one of "those unsexed intellectuals, neither man nor woman."

Ann Veronica meditated over that phrase. "That's HIM," said Ann Veronica, in sound, idiomatic English. "Poor old Alice!"

Her brother Roddy came to her and demanded tea, and asked her to state a case. "Bit thick on the old man, isn't it?" said Roddy, who had developed a bluff, straightforward style in the motor shop.

"Mind my smoking?" said Roddy. "I don't see quite what your game is, Vee, but I suppose you've got a game on somewhere.

"Rummy lot we are!" said Roddy. "Alice — Alice gone dotty, and all over kids. Gwen — I saw Gwen the other day, and the paint's thicker than ever. Jim is up to the neck in Mahatmas and Theosophy and Higher Thought and rot — writes letters worse than Alice. And now YOU'RE on the war-path. I believe I'm the only sane member of the family left. The G.V.'s as mad as any of you, in spite of all his respectability; not a bit of him straight anywhere, not one bit."

"Straight?"

"Not a bit of it! He's been out after eight per cent. since the beginning. Eight per cent.! He'll come a cropper one of these days, if you ask me. He's been near it once or twice already. That's got his nerves to rags. I suppose we're all human beings really, but what price the sacred Institution of the Family! Us as a bundle! Eh?... I don't half disagree with you, Vee, really; only thing is, I don't see how you're going to pull it off. A home MAY be a sort of cage, but still — it's a home. Gives you a right to hang on to the old man until he busts — practically. Jolly hard life for a girl, getting a living. Not MY affair."

He asked questions and listened to her views for a time.

"I'd chuck this lark right off if I were you, Vee," he said. "I'm five years older than you, and no end wiser, being a man. What you're after is too risky. It's a damned hard thing to do. It's all very handsome starting out on your own, but it's too damned hard. That's

my opinion, if you ask me. There's nothing a girl can do that isn't sweated to the bone. You square the G.V., and go home before you have to. That's my advice. If you don't eat humble-pie now you may live to fare worse later. *I* can't help you a cent. Life's hard enough nowadays for an unprotected male. Let alone a girl. You got to take the world as it is, and the only possible trade for a girl that isn't sweated is to get hold of a man and make him do it for her. It's no good flying out at that, Vee; *I* didn't arrange it. It's Providence. That's how things are; that's the order of the world. Like appendicitis. It isn't pretty, but we're made so. Rot, no doubt; but we can't alter it. You go home and live on the G.V., and get some other man to live on as soon as possible. It isn't sentiment but it's horse sense. All this Woman-who-Diddery — no damn good. After all, old P. — Providence, I mean — HAS arranged it so that men will keep you, more or less. He made the universe on those lines. You've got to take what you can get."

That was the quintessence of her brother Roddy.

He played variations on this theme for the better part of an hour.

"You go home," he said, at parting; "you go home. It's all very fine and all that, Vee, this freedom, but it isn't going to work. The world isn't ready for girls to start out on their own yet; that's the plain fact of the case. Babies and females have got to keep hold of somebody or go under — anyhow, for the next few generations. You go home and wait a century, Vee, and then try again. Then you may have a bit of a chance. Now you haven't the ghost of one — not if you play the game fair."

Part 6

It was remarkable to Ann Veronica how completely Mr. Manning, in his entirely different dialect, indorsed her brother Roddy's view of things. He came along, he said, just to call, with large, loud apologies, radiantly kind and good. Miss Stanley, it was manifest,

had given him Ann Veronica's address. The kindly faced landlady had failed to catch his name, and said he was a tall, handsome gentleman with a great black mustache. Ann Veronica, with a sigh at the cost of hospitality, made a hasty negotiation for an extra tea and for a fire in the ground-floor apartment, and preened herself carefully for the interview. In the little apartment, under the gas chandelier, his inches and his stoop were certainly very effective. In the bad light he looked at once military and sentimental and studious, like one of Ouida's guardsmen revised by Mr. Haldane and the London School of Economics and finished in the Keltic school.

"It's unforgivable of me to call, Miss Stanley," he said, shaking hands in a peculiar, high, fashionable manner; "but you know you said we might be friends."

"It's dreadful for you to be here," he said, indicating the yellow presence of the first fog of the year without, "but your aunt told me something of what had happened. It's just like your Splendid Pride to do it. Quite!"

He sat in the arm-chair and took tea, and consumed several of the extra cakes which she had sent out for and talked to her and expressed himself, looking very earnestly at her with his deep-set eyes, and carefully avoiding any crumbs on his mustache the while. Ann Veronica sat firelit by her tea-tray with, quite unconsciously, the air of an expert hostess.

"But how is it all going to end?" said Mr. Manning.

"Your father, of course," he said, "must come to realize just how Splendid you are! He doesn't understand. I've seen him, and he doesn't a bit understand. *I* didn't understand before that letter. It makes me want to be just everything I CAN be to you. You're like some splendid Princess in Exile in these Dreadful Dingy apartments!"

"I'm afraid I'm anything but a Princess when it comes to earning a salary," said Ann Veronica. "But frankly, I mean to fight this through if I possibly can."

"My God!" said Manning, in a stage-aside. "Earning a salary!"

"You're like a Princess in Exile!" he repeated, overruling her. "You come into these sordid surroundings — you mustn't mind my calling them sordid — and it makes them seem as though they didn't

matter.... I don't think they do matter. I don't think any surroundings could throw a shadow on you."

Ann Veronica felt a slight embarrassment. "Won't you have some more tea, Mr. Manning?" she asked.

"You know — ," said Mr. Manning, relinquishing his cup without answering her question, "when I hear you talk of earning a living, it's as if I heard of an archangel going on the Stock Exchange — or Christ selling doves.... Forgive my daring. I couldn't help the thought."

"It's a very good image," said Ann Veronica.

"I knew you wouldn't mind."

"But does it correspond with the facts of the case? You know, Mr. Manning, all this sort of thing is very well as sentiment, but does it correspond with the realities? Are women truly such angelic things and men so chivalrous? You men have, I know, meant to make us Queens and Goddesses, but in practice — well, look, for example, at the stream of girls one meets going to work of a morning, round-shouldered, cheap, and underfed! They aren't queens, and no one is treating them as queens. And look, again, at the women one finds letting lodgings.... I was looking for rooms last week. It got on my nerves — the women I saw. Worse than any man. Everywhere I went and rapped at a door I found behind it another dreadful dingy woman — another fallen queen, I suppose — dingier than the last, dirty, you know, in grain. Their poor hands!"

"I know," said Mr. Manning, with entirely suitable emotion.

"And think of the ordinary wives and mothers, with their anxiety, their limitations, their swarms of children!"

Mr. Manning displayed distress. He fended these things off from him with the rump of his fourth piece of cake. "I know that our social order is dreadful enough," he said, "and sacrifices all that is best and most beautiful in life. I don't defend it."

"And besides, when it comes to the idea of queens," Ann Veronica went on, "there's twenty-one and a half million women to twenty million men. Suppose our proper place is a shrine. Still, that leaves over a million shrines short, not reckoning widows who re-marry. And more boys die than girls, so that the real disproportion among adults is even greater."

“I know,” said Mr Manning, “I know these Dreadful Statistics. I know there’s a sort of right in your impatience at the slowness of Progress. But tell me one thing I don’t understand — tell me one thing: How can you help it by coming down into the battle and the mire? That’s the thing that concerns me.”

“Oh, I’m not trying to help it,” said Ann Veronica. “I’m only arguing against your position of what a woman should be, and trying to get it clear in my own mind. I’m in this apartment and looking for work because — Well, what else can I do, when my father practically locks me up?”

“I know,” said Mr. Manning, “I know. Don’t think I can’t sympathize and understand. Still, here we are in this dingy, foggy city. Ye gods! what a wilderness it is! Every one trying to get the better of every one, every one regardless of every one — it’s one of those days when every one bumps against you — every one pouring coal smoke into the air and making confusion worse confounded, motor omnibuses clattering and smelling, a horse down in the Tottenham Court Road, an old woman at the corner coughing dreadfully — all the painful sights of a great city, and here you come into it to take your chances. It’s too valiant, Miss Stanley, too valiant altogether!”

Ann Veronica meditated. She had had two days of employment-seeking now. “I wonder if it is.”

“It isn’t,” said Mr. Manning, “that I mind Courage in a Woman — I love and admire Courage. What could be more splendid than a beautiful girl facing a great, glorious tiger? Una and the Lion again, and all that! But this isn’t that sort of thing; this is just a great, ugly, endless wilderness of selfish, sweating, vulgar competition!”

“That you want to keep me out of?”

“Exactly!” said Mr. Manning.

“In a sort of beautiful garden-close — wearing lovely dresses and picking beautiful flowers?”

“Ah! If one could!”

“While those other girls trudge to business and those other women let lodgings. And in reality even that magic garden-close resolves itself into a villa at Morningside Park and my father being more and more cross and overbearing at meals — and a general feeling of

insecurity and futility."

Mr. Manning relinquished his cup, and looked meaningly at Ann Veronica. "There," he said, "you don't treat me fairly, Miss Stanley. My garden-close would be a better thing than that."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

IDEALS AND A REALITY

Part 1

And now for some weeks Ann Veronica was to test her market value in the world. She went about in a negligent November London that had become very dark and foggy and greasy and forbidding indeed, and tried to find that modest but independent employment she had so rashly assumed. She went about, intent-looking and self-possessed, trim and fine, concealing her emotions whatever they were, as the realities of her position opened out before her. Her little bed-sitting-room was like a lair, and she went out from it into this vast, dun world, with its smoke-gray houses, its glaring streets of shops, its dark streets of homes, its orange-lit windows, under skies of dull copper or muddy gray or black, much as an animal goes out to seek food. She would come back and write letters, carefully planned and written letters, or read some book she had fetched from Mudie's — she had invested a half-guinea with Mudie's — or sit over her fire and think.

Slowly and reluctantly she came to realize that Vivie Warren was what is called an "ideal." There were no such girls and no such positions. No work that offered was at all of the quality she had vaguely postulated for herself. With such qualifications as she possessed, two chief channels of employment lay open, and neither attracted her, neither seemed really to offer a conclusive escape from that subjection to mankind against which, in the person of her father, she was rebelling. One main avenue was for her to become a sort of salaried accessory wife or mother, to be a governess or an assistant schoolmistress, or a very high type of governess-nurse. The other was to go into business — into a photographer's reception-room, for example, or a costumer's or hat-shop. The first set of occupations seemed to her to be altogether too domestic and restricted; for the latter she was dreadfully handicapped by her want of experience. And also she didn't like them. She didn't like the shops, she didn't

like the other women's faces; she thought the smirking men in frock-coats who dominated these establishments the most intolerable persons she had ever had to face. One called her very distinctly "My dear!"

Two secretarial posts did indeed seem to offer themselves in which, at least, there was no specific exclusion of womanhood; one was under a Radical Member of Parliament, and the other under a Harley Street doctor, and both men declined her proffered services with the utmost civility and admiration and terror. There was also a curious interview at a big hotel with a middle-aged, white-powdered woman, all covered with jewels and reeking of scent, who wanted a Companion. She did not think Ann Veronica would do as her companion.

And nearly all these things were fearfully ill-paid. They carried no more than bare subsistence wages; and they demanded all her time and energy. She had heard of women journalists, women writers, and so forth; but she was not even admitted to the presence of the editors she demanded to see, and by no means sure that if she had been she could have done any work they might have given her. One day she desisted from her search and went unexpectedly to the Tredgold College. Her place was not filled; she had been simply noted as absent, and she did a comforting day of admirable dissection upon the tortoise. She was so interested, and this was such a relief from the trudging anxiety of her search for work, that she went on for a whole week as if she was still living at home. Then a third secretarial opening occurred and renewed her hopes again: a position as amanuensis — with which some of the lighter duties of a nurse were combined — to an infirm gentleman of means living at Twickenham, and engaged upon a great literary research to prove that the "Faery Queen" was really a treatise upon molecular chemistry written in a peculiar and picturesquely handled cipher.

Part 2

Now, while Ann Veronica was taking these soundings in the industrial sea, and measuring herself against the world as it is, she was also making extensive explorations among the ideas and attitudes of a number of human beings who seemed to be largely concerned with the world as it ought to be. She was drawn first by Miss Miniver, and then by her own natural interest, into a curious stratum of people who are busied with dreams of world progress, of great and fundamental changes, of a New Age that is to replace all the stresses and disorders of contemporary life.

Miss Miniver learned of her flight and got her address from the Widgetts. She arrived about nine o'clock the next evening in a state of tremulous enthusiasm. She followed the landlady half way upstairs, and called up to Ann Veronica, "May I come up? It's me! You know — Nettie Miniver!" She appeared before Ann Veronica could clearly recall who Nettie Miniver might be.

There was a wild light in her eye, and her straight hair was out demonstrating and suffragetting upon some independent notions of its own. Her fingers were bursting through her gloves, as if to get at once into touch with Ann Veronica. "You're Glorious!" said Miss Miniver in tones of rapture, holding a hand in each of hers and peering up into Ann Veronica's face. "Glorious! You're so calm, dear, and so resolute, so serene!

"It's girls like you who will show them what We are," said Miss Miniver; "girls whose spirits have not been broken!"

Ann Veronica sunned herself a little in this warmth.

"I was watching you at Morningside Park, dear," said Miss Miniver. "I am getting to watch all women. I thought then perhaps you didn't care, that you were like so many of them. NOW it's just as though you had grown up suddenly."

She stopped, and then suggested: "I wonder — I should love — if it was anything *I* said."

She did not wait for Ann Veronica's reply. She seemed to assume that it must certainly be something she had said. "They all catch on," she said. "It spreads like wildfire. This is such a grand time! Such a glorious time! There never was such a time as this! Everything seems so close to fruition, so coming on and leading on! The Insurrection of Women! They spring up everywhere. Tell me all that happened, one

sister-woman to another."

She chilled Ann Veronica a little by that last phrase, and yet the magnetism of her fellowship and enthusiasm was very strong; and it was pleasant to be made out a heroine after so much expostulation and so many secret doubts.

But she did not listen long; she wanted to talk. She sat, crouched together, by the corner of the hearthrug under the bookcase that supported the pig's skull, and looked into the fire and up at Ann Veronica's face, and let herself go. "Let us put the lamp out," she said; "the flames are ever so much better for talking," and Ann Veronica agreed. "You are coming right out into life — facing it all."

Ann Veronica sat with her chin on her hand, red-lit and saying little, and Miss Miniver discoursed. As she talked, the drift and significance of what she was saying shaped itself slowly to Ann Veronica's apprehension. It presented itself in the likeness of a great, gray, dull world — a brutal, superstitious, confused, and wrong-headed world, that hurt people and limited people unaccountably. In remote times and countries its evil tendencies had expressed themselves in the form of tyrannies, massacres, wars, and what not; but just at present in England they shaped as commercialism and competition, silk hats, suburban morals, the sweating system, and the subjection of women. So far the thing was acceptable enough. But over against the world Miss Miniver assembled a small but energetic minority, the Children of Light — people she described as "being in the van," or "altogether in the van," about whom Ann Veronica's mind was disposed to be more sceptical.

Everything, Miss Miniver said, was "working up," everything was "coming on" — the Higher Thought, the Simple Life, Socialism, Humanitarianism, it was all the same really. She loved to be there, taking part in it all, breathing it, being it. Hitherto in the world's history there had been precursors of this Progress at great intervals, voices that had spoken and ceased, but now it was all coming on together in a rush. She mentioned, with familiar respect, Christ and Buddha and Shelley and Nietzsche and Plato. Pioneers all of them. Such names shone brightly in the darkness, with black spaces of unilluminated emptiness about them, as stars shine in the night; but now — now it was different; now it was dawn — the real dawn.

“The women are taking it up,” said Miss Miniver; “the women and the common people, all pressing forward, all roused.”

Ann Veronica listened with her eyes on the fire.

“Everybody is taking it up,” said Miss Miniver. “YOU had to come in. You couldn’t help it. Something drew you. Something draws everybody. From suburbs, from country towns — everywhere. I see all the Movements. As far as I can, I belong to them all. I keep my finger on the pulse of things.”

Ann Veronica said nothing.

“The dawn!” said Miss Miniver, with her glasses reflecting the fire like pools of blood-red flame.

“I came to London,” said Ann Veronica, “rather because of my own difficulty. I don’t know that I understand altogether.”

“Of course you don’t,” said Miss Miniver, gesticulating triumphantly with her thin hand and thinner wrist, and patting Ann Veronica’s knee. “Of course you don’t. That’s the wonder of it. But you will, you will. You must let me take you to things — to meetings and things, to conferences and talks. Then you will begin to see. You will begin to see it all opening out. I am up to the ears in it all — every moment I can spare. I throw up work — everything! I just teach in one school, one good school, three days a week. All the rest — Movements! I can live now on fourpence a day. Think how free that leaves me to follow things up! I must take you everywhere. I must take you to the Suffrage people, and the Tolstoyans, and the Fabians.”

“I have heard of the Fabians,” said Ann Veronica.

“It’s THE Society!” said Miss Miniver. “It’s the centre of the intellectuals. Some of the meetings are wonderful! Such earnest, beautiful women! Such deep-browed men!... And to think that there they are making history! There they are putting together the plans of a new world. Almos light-heartedly. There is Shaw, and Webb, and Wilkins the author, and Toomer, and Doctor Tumpany — the most wonderful people! There you see them discussing, deciding, planning! Just think — THEY ARE MAKING A NEW WORLD!”

“But ARE these people going to alter everything?” said Ann Veronica.

“What else can happen?” asked Miss Miniver, with a little weak

gesture at the glow. “What else can possibly happen — as things are going now?”

Part 3

Miss Miniver let Ann Veronica into her peculiar levels of the world with so enthusiastic a generosity that it seemed ingratitude to remain critical. Indeed, almost insensibly Ann Veronica became habituated to the peculiar appearance and the peculiar manners of the people “in the van.” The shock of their intellectual attitude was over, usage robbed it of the first quaint effect of deliberate unreason. They were in many respects so right; she clung to that, and shirked more and more the paradoxical conviction that they were also somehow, and even in direct relation to that rightness, absurd.

Very central in Miss Miniver’s universe were the Goopes. The Goopes were the oddest little couple conceivable, following a fruitarian career upon an upper floor in Theobald’s Road. They were childless and servantless, and they had reduced simple living to the finest of fine arts. Mr. Goopes, Ann Veronica gathered, was a mathematical tutor and visited schools, and his wife wrote a weekly column in New Ideas upon vegetarian cookery, vivisection, degeneration, the lacteal secretion, appendicitis, and the Higher Thought generally, and assisted in the management of a fruit shop in the Tottenham Court Road. Their very furniture had mysteriously a high-browed quality, and Mr. Goopes when at home dressed simply in a pajama-shaped suit of canvas sacking tied with brown ribbons, while his wife wore a purple djibbah with a richly embroidered yoke. He was a small, dark, reserved man, with a large inflexible-looking convex forehead, and his wife was very pink and high-spirited, with one of those chins that pass insensibly into a full, strong neck. Once a week, every Saturday, they had a little gathering from nine till the small hours, just talk and perhaps reading aloud and fruitarian refreshments — chestnut sandwiches buttered with nut tose, and so

forth — and lemonade and unfermented wine; and to one of these symposia Miss Miniver after a good deal of preliminary solicitude, conducted Ann Veronica.

She was introduced, perhaps a little too obviously for her taste, as a girl who was standing out against her people, to a gathering that consisted of a very old lady with an extremely wrinkled skin and a deep voice who was wearing what appeared to Ann Veronica's inexperienced eye to be an antimacassar upon her head, a shy, blond young man with a narrow forehead and glasses, two undistinguished women in plain skirts and blouses, and a middle-aged couple, very fat and alike in black, Mr. and Mrs. Alderman Dunstable, of the Borough Council of Marylebone. These were seated in an imperfect semicircle about a very copper-adorned fireplace, surmounted by a carved wood inscription:

"DO IT NOW."

And to them were presently added a roguish-looking young man, with reddish hair, an orange tie, and a fluffy tweed suit, and others who, in Ann Veronica's memory, in spite of her efforts to recall details, remained obstinately just "others."

The talk was animated, and remained always brilliant in form even when it ceased to be brilliant in substance. There were moments when Ann Veronica rather more than suspected the chief speakers to be, as school-boys say, showing off at her.

They talked of a new substitute for dripping in vegetarian cookery that Mrs. Goopes was convinced exercised an exceptionally purifying influence on the mind. And then they talked of Anarchism and Socialism, and whether the former was the exact opposite of the latter or only a higher form. The reddish-haired young man contributed allusions to the Hegelian philosophy that momentarily confused the discussion. Then Alderman Dunstable, who had hitherto been silent, broke out into speech and went off at a tangent, and gave his personal impressions of quite a number of his fellow-councillors. He continued to do this for the rest of the evening intermittently, in and out, among other topics. He addressed himself chiefly to Goopes, and spoke as if in reply to long-sustained inquiries on the part of Goopes into the personnel of the Marylebone Borough Council. "If you were to ask me," he would say, "I should say

Blinders is straight. An ordinary type, of course—”

Mrs. Dunstable’s contributions to the conversation were entirely in the form of nods; whenever Alderman Dunstable praised or blamed she nodded twice or thrice, according to the requirements of his emphasis. And she seemed always to keep one eye on Ann Veronica’s dress. Mrs. Goopes disconcerted the Alderman a little by abruptly challenging the roguish-looking young man in the orange tie (who, it seemed, was the assistant editor of New Ideas) upon a critique of Nietzsche and Tolstoy that had appeared in his paper, in which doubts had been cast upon the perfect sincerity of the latter. Everybody seemed greatly concerned about the sincerity of Tolstoy.

Miss Miniver said that if once she lost her faith in Tolstoy’s sincerity, nothing she felt would really matter much any more, and she appealed to Ann Veronica whether she did not feel the same; and Mr. Goopes said that we must distinguish between sincerity and irony, which was often indeed no more than sincerity at the sublimated level.

Alderman Dunstable said that sincerity was often a matter of opportunity, and illustrated the point to the fair young man with an anecdote about Blinders on the Dust Destructor Committee, during which the young man in the orange tie succeeded in giving the whole discussion a daring and erotic flavor by questioning whether any one could be perfectly sincere in love.

Miss Miniver thought that there was no true sincerity except in love, and appealed to Ann Veronica, but the young man in the orange tie went on to declare that it was quite possible to be sincerely in love with two people at the same time, although perhaps on different planes with each individual, and deceiving them both. But that brought Mrs. Goopes down on him with the lesson Titian teaches so beautifully in his “Sacred and Profane Love,” and became quite eloquent upon the impossibility of any deception in the former.

Then they discoursed on love for a time, and Alderman Dunstable, turning back to the shy, blond young man and speaking in undertones of the utmost clearness, gave a brief and confidential account of an unfounded rumor of the bifurcation of the affections of Blinders that had led to a situation of some unpleasantness upon the Borough Council.

The very old lady in the antimacassar touched Ann Veronica's arm suddenly, and said, in a deep, arch voice:

"Talking of love again; spring again, love again. Oh! you young people!"

The young man with the orange tie, in spite of Sisyphus-like efforts on the part of Goopes to get the topic on to a higher plane, displayed great persistence in speculating upon the possible distribution of the affections of highly developed modern types.

The old lady in the antimacassar said, abruptly, "Ah! you young people, you young people, if you only knew!" and then laughed and then mused in a marked manner; and the young man with the narrow forehead and glasses cleared his throat and asked the young man in the orange tie whether he believed that Platonic love was possible. Mrs. Goopes said she believed in nothing else, and with that she glanced at Ann Veronica, rose a little abruptly, and directed Goopes and the shy young man in the handing of refreshments.

But the young man with the orange tie remained in his place, disputing whether the body had not something or other which he called its legitimate claims. And from that they came back by way of the Kreutzer Sonata and Resurrection to Tolstoy again.

So the talk went on. Goopes, who had at first been a little reserved, resorted presently to the Socratic method to restrain the young man with the orange tie, and bent his forehead over him, and brought out at last very clearly from him that the body was only illusion and everything nothing but just spirit and molecules of thought. It became a sort of duel at last between them, and all the others sat and listened — every one, that is, except the Alderman, who had got the blond young man into a corner by the green-stained dresser with the aluminum things, and was sitting with his back to every one else, holding one hand over his mouth for greater privacy, and telling him, with an accent of confidential admission, in whispers of the chronic struggle between the natural modesty and general inoffensiveness of the Borough Council and the social evil in Marylebone.

So the talk went on, and presently they were criticising novelists, and certain daring essays of Wilkins got their due share of attention, and then they were discussing the future of the theatre. Ann Veronica

intervened a little in the novelist discussion with a defence of Esmond and a denial that the Egoist was obscure, and when she spoke every one else stopped talking and listened. Then they deliberated whether Bernard Shaw ought to go into Parliament. And that brought them to vegetarianism and teetotalism, and the young man in the orange tie and Mrs. Goopes had a great set-to about the sincerity of Chesterton and Belloc that was ended by Goopes showing signs of resuming the Socratic method.

And at last Ann Veronica and Miss Miniver came down the dark staircase and out into the foggy spaces of the London squares, and crossed Russell Square, Woburn Square, Gordon Square, making an oblique route to Ann Veronica's lodging. They trudged along a little hungry, because of the fruitarian refreshments, and mentally very active. And Miss Miniver fell discussing whether Goopes or Bernard Shaw or Tolstoy or Doctor Tumpany or Wilkins the author had the more powerful and perfect mind in existence at the present time. She was clear there were no other minds like them in all the world.

Part 4

Then one evening Ann Veronica went with Miss Miniver into the back seats of the gallery at Essex Hall, and heard and saw the giant leaders of the Fabian Society who are re-making the world: Bernard Shaw and Toomer and Doctor Tumpany and Wilkins the author, all displayed upon a platform. The place was crowded, and the people about her were almost equally made up of very good-looking and enthusiastic young people and a great variety of Goopes-like types. In the discussion there was the oddest mixture of things that were personal and petty with an idealist devotion that was fine beyond dispute. In nearly every speech she heard was the same implication of great and necessary changes in the world — changes to be won by effort and sacrifice indeed, but surely to be won. And afterward she saw a very much larger and more enthusiastic gathering, a meeting of

the advanced section of the woman movement in Caxton Hall, where the same note of vast changes in progress sounded; and she went to a soiree of the Dress Reform Association and visited a Food Reform Exhibition, where imminent change was made even alarmingly visible. The women's meeting was much more charged with emotional force than the Socialists'. Ann Veronica was carried off her intellectual and critical feet by it altogether, and applauded and uttered cries that subsequent reflection failed to endorse. "I knew you would feel it," said Miss Miniver, as they came away flushed and heated. "I knew you would begin to see how it all falls into place together."

It did begin to fall into place together. She became more and more alive, not so much to a system of ideas as to a big diffused impulse toward change, to a great discontent with and criticism of life as it is lived, to a clamorous confusion of ideas for reconstruction — reconstruction of the methods of business, of economic development, of the rules of property, of the status of children, of the clothing and feeding and teaching of every one; she developed a quite exaggerated consciousness of a multitude of people going about the swarming spaces of London with their minds full, their talk and gestures full, their very clothing charged with the suggestion of the urgency of this pervasive project of alteration. Some indeed carried themselves, dressed themselves even, rather as foreign visitors from the land of "Looking Backward" and "News from Nowhere" than as the indigenous Londoners they were. For the most part these were detached people: men practising the plastic arts, young writers, young men in employment, a very large proportion of girls and women — self-supporting women or girls of the student class. They made a stratum into which Ann Veronica was now plunged up to her neck; it had become her stratum.

None of the things they said and did were altogether new to Ann Veronica, but now she got them massed and alive, instead of by glimpses or in books — alive and articulate and insistent. The London backgrounds, in Bloomsbury and Marylebone, against which these people went to and fro, took on, by reason of their gray facades, their implacably respectable windows and window-blinds, their reiterated unmeaning iron railings, a stronger and stronger

suggestion of the flavor of her father at his most obdurate phase, and of all that she felt herself fighting against.

She was already a little prepared by her discursive reading and discussion under the Widgett influence for ideas and "movements," though temperamentally perhaps she was rather disposed to resist and criticise than embrace them. But the people among whom she was now thrown through the social exertions of Miss Miniver and the Widgetts — for Teddy and Hetty came up from Morningside Park and took her to an eighteen-penny dinner in Soho and introduced her to some art students, who were also Socialists, and so opened the way to an evening of meandering talk in a studio — carried with them like an atmosphere this implication, not only that the world was in some stupid and even obvious way WRONG, with which indeed she was quite prepared to agree, but that it needed only a few pioneers to behave as such and be thoroughly and indiscriminately "advanced," for the new order to achieve itself.

When ninety per cent. out of the ten or twelve people one meets in a month not only say but feel and assume a thing, it is very hard not to fall into the belief that the thing is so. Imperceptibly almost Ann Veronica began to acquire the new attitude, even while her mind still resisted the felted ideas that went with it. And Miss Miniver began to sway her.

The very facts that Miss Miniver never stated an argument clearly, that she was never embarrassed by a sense of self-contradiction, and had little more respect for consistency of statement than a washerwoman has for wisps of vapor, which made Ann Veronica critical and hostile at their first encounter in Morningside Park, became at last with constant association the secret of Miss Miniver's growing influence. The brain tires of resistance, and when it meets again and again, incoherently active, the same phrases, the same ideas that it has already slain, exposed and dissected and buried, it becomes less and less energetic to repeat the operation. There must be something, one feels, in ideas that achieve persistently a successful resurrection. What Miss Miniver would have called the Higher Truth supervenes.

Yet through these talks, these meetings and conferences, these movements and efforts, Ann Veronica, for all that she went with her

friend, and at times applauded with her enthusiastically, yet went nevertheless with eyes that grew more and more puzzled, and fine eyebrows more and more disposed to knit. She was with these movements — akin to them, she felt it at times intensely — and yet something eluded her. Morningside Park had been passive and defective; all this rushed about and was active, but it was still defective. It still failed in something. It did seem germane to the matter that so many of the people "in the van" were plain people, or faded people, or tired-looking people. It did affect the business that they all argued badly and were egotistical in their manners and inconsistent in their phrases. There were moments when she doubted whether the whole mass of movements and societies and gatherings and talks was not simply one coherent spectacle of failure protecting itself from abjection by the glamour of its own assertions. It happened that at the extremest point of Ann Veronica's social circle from the Widgetts was the family of the Morningside Park horse-dealer, a company of extremely dressy and hilarious young women, with one equestrian brother addicted to fancy waistcoats, cigars, and facial spots. These girls wore hats at remarkable angles and bows to startle and kill; they liked to be right on the spot every time and up to everything that was it from the very beginning and they rendered their conception of Socialists and all reformers by the words "positively frightening" and "weird." Well, it was beyond dispute that these words did convey a certain quality of the Movements in general amid which Miss Miniver disported herself. They WERE weird. And yet for all that —

It got into Ann Veronica's nights at last and kept her awake, the perplexing contrast between the advanced thought and the advanced thinker. The general propositions of Socialism, for example, struck her as admirable, but she certainly did not extend her admiration to any of its exponents. She was still more stirred by the idea of the equal citizenship of men and women, by the realization that a big and growing organization of women were giving form and a generalized expression to just that personal pride, that aspiration for personal freedom and respect which had brought her to London; but when she heard Miss Miniver discoursing on the next step in the suffrage campaign, or read of women badgering Cabinet Ministers, padlocked

to railings, or getting up in a public meeting to pipe out a demand for votes and be carried out kicking and screaming, her soul revolted. She could not part with dignity. Something as yet unformulated within her kept her estranged from all these practical aspects of her beliefs.

"Not for these things, O Ann Veronica, have you revolted," it said; "and this is not your appropriate purpose."

It was as if she faced a darkness in which was something very beautiful and wonderful as yet unimagined. The little pucker in her brows became more perceptible.

Part 5

In the beginning of December Ann Veronica began to speculate privately upon the procedure of pawning. She had decided that she would begin with her pearl necklace. She spent a very disagreeable afternoon and evening — it was raining fast outside, and she had very unwisely left her soundest pair of boots in the boothole of her father's house in Morningside Park — thinking over the economic situation and planning a course of action. Her aunt had secretly sent on to Ann Veronica some new warm underclothing, a dozen pairs of stockings, and her last winter's jacket, but the dear lady had overlooked those boots.

These things illuminated her situation extremely. Finally she decided upon a step that had always seemed reasonable to her, but that hitherto she had, from motives too faint for her to formulate, refrained from taking. She resolved to go into the City to Ramage and ask for his advice. And next morning she attired herself with especial care and neatness, found his address in the Directory at a post-office, and went to him.

She had to wait some minutes in an outer office, wherein three young men of spirited costume and appearance regarded her with ill-concealed curiosity and admiration. Then Ramage appeared with

effusion, and ushered her into his inner apartment. The three young men exchanged expressive glances.

The inner apartment was rather gracefully furnished with a thick, fine Turkish carpet, a good brass fender, a fine old bureau, and on the walls were engravings of two young girls' heads by Greuze, and of some modern picture of boys bathing in a sunlit pool.

"But this is a surprise!" said Ramage. "This is wonderful! I've been feeling that you had vanished from my world. Have you been away from Morningside Park?"

"I'm not interrupting you?"

"You are. Splendidly. Business exists for such interruptions. There you are, the best client's chair."

Ann Veronica sat down, and Ramage's eager eyes feasted on her.

"I've been looking out for you," he said. "I confess it."

She had not, she reflected, remembered how prominent his eyes were.

"I want some advice," said Ann Veronica.

"Yes?"

"You remember once, how we talked — at a gate on the Downs? We talked about how a girl might get an independent living."

"Yes, yes."

"Well, you see, something has happened at home."

She paused.

"Nothing has happened to Mr. Stanley?"

"I've fallen out with my father. It was about — a question of what I might do or might not do. He — In fact, he — he locked me in my room. Practically."

Her breath left her for a moment.

"I SAY!" said Mr. Ramage.

"I wanted to go to an art-student ball of which he disapproved."

"And why shouldn't you?"

"I felt that sort of thing couldn't go on. So I packed up and came to London next day."

"To a friend?"

"To lodgings — alone."

"I say, you know, you have some pluck. You did it on your own?"

Ann Veronica smiled. "Quite on my own," she said.

“It’s magnificent!” He leaned back and regarded her with his head a little on one side. “By Jove!” he said, “there is something direct about you. I wonder if I should have locked you up if I’d been your father. Luckily I’m not. And you started out forthwith to fight the world and be a citizen on your own basis?” He came forward again and folded his hands under him on his desk.

“How has the world taken it?” he asked. “If I was the world I think I should have put down a crimson carpet, and asked you to say what you wanted, and generally walk over me. But the world didn’t do that.”

“Not exactly.”

“It presented a large impenetrable back, and went on thinking about something else.”

“It offered from fifteen to two-and-twenty shillings a week — for drudgery.”

“The world has no sense of what is due to youth and courage. It never has had.”

“Yes,” said Ann Veronica. “But the thing is, I want a job.”

“Exactly! And so you came along to me. And you see, I don’t turn my back, and I am looking at you and thinking about you from top to toe.”

“And what do you think I ought to do?”

“Exactly!” He lifted a paper-weight and dabbed it gently down again. “What ought you to do?”

“I’ve hunted up all sorts of things.”

“The point to note is that fundamentally you don’t want particularly to do it.”

“I don’t understand.”

“You want to be free and so forth, yes. But you don’t particularly want to do the job that sets you free — for its own sake. I mean that it doesn’t interest you in itself.”

“I suppose not.”

“That’s one of our differences. We men are like children. We can get absorbed in play, in games, in the business we do. That’s really why we do them sometimes rather well and get on. But women — women as a rule don’t throw themselves into things like that. As a matter of fact it isn’t their affair. And as a natural consequence, they

don't do so well, and they don't get on — and so the world doesn't pay them. They don't catch on to discursive interests, you see, because they are more serious, they are concentrated on the central reality of life, and a little impatient of its — its outer aspects. At least that, I think, is what makes a clever woman's independent career so much more difficult than a clever man's."

"She doesn't develop a specialty." Ann Veronica was doing her best to follow him.

"She has one, that's why. Her specialty is the central thing in life, it is life itself, the warmth of life, sex — and love."

He pronounced this with an air of profound conviction and with his eyes on Ann Veronica's face. He had an air of having told her a deep, personal secret. She winced as he thrust the fact at her, was about to answer, and checked herself. She colored faintly.

"That doesn't touch the question I asked you," she said. "It may be true, but it isn't quite what I have in mind."

"Of course not," said Ramage, as one who rouses himself from deep preoccupations And he began to question her in a business-like way upon the steps she had taken and the inquiries she had made. He displayed none of the airy optimism of their previous talk over the downland gate. He was helpful, but gravely dubious. "You see," he said, "from my point of view you're grown up — you're as old as all the goddesses and the contemporary of any man alive. But from the — the economic point of view you're a very young and altogether inexperienced person."

He returned to and developed that idea. "You're still," he said, "in the educational years. From the point of view of most things in the world of employment which a woman can do reasonably well and earn a living by, you're unripe and half-educated. If you had taken your degree, for example."

He spoke of secretarial work, but even there she would need to be able to do typing and shorthand. He made it more and more evident to her that her proper course was not to earn a salary but to accumulate equipment. "You see," he said, "you are like an inaccessible gold-mine in all this sort of matter. You're splendid stuff, you know, but you've got nothing ready to sell. That's the flat business situation."

He thought. Then he slapped his hand on his desk and looked up with the air of a man struck by a brilliant idea. “Look here,” he said, protruding his eyes; “why get anything to do at all just yet? Why, if you must be free, why not do the sensible thing? Make yourself worth a decent freedom. Go on with your studies at the Imperial College, for example, get a degree, and make yourself good value. Or become a thorough-going typist and stenographer and secretarial expert.”

“But I can’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“You see, if I do go home my father objects to the College, and as for typing—”

“Don’t go home.”

“Yes, but you forget; how am I to live?”

“Easily. Easily.... Borrow.... From me.”

“I couldn’t do that,” said Ann Veronica, sharply.

“I see no reason why you shouldn’t.”

“It’s impossible.”

“As one friend to another. Men are always doing it, and if you set up to be a man—”

“No, it’s absolutely out of the question, Mr. Ramage.” And Ann Veronica’s face was hot.

Ramage pursed his rather loose lips and shrugged his shoulders, with his eyes fixed steadily upon her. “Well anyhow — I don’t see the force of your objection, you know. That’s my advice to you. Here I am. Consider you’ve got resources deposited with me. Perhaps at the first blush — it strikes you as odd. People are brought up to be so shy about money. As though it was indelicate — it’s just a sort of shyness. But here I am to draw upon. Here I am as an alternative either to nasty work — or going home.”

“It’s very kind of you—” began Ann Veronica.

“Not a bit. Just a friendly polite suggestion. I don’t suggest any philanthropy. I shall charge you five per cent., you know, fair and square.”

Ann Veronica opened her lips quickly and did not speak. But the five per cent. certainly did seem to improve the aspect of Ramage’s suggestion.

“Well, anyhow, consider it open.” He dabbed with his paper-weight again, and spoke in an entirely indifferent tone. “And now tell me, please, how you eloped from Morningside Park. How did you get your luggage out of the house? Wasn’t it — wasn’t it rather in some respects — rather a lark? It’s one of my regrets for my lost youth. I never ran away from anywhere with anybody anywhen. And now — I suppose I should be considered too old. I don’t feel it.... Didn’t you feel rather EVENTFUL — in the train — coming up to Waterloo?”

Part 6

Before Christmas Ann Veronica had gone to Ramage again and accepted this offer she had at first declined.

Many little things had contributed to that decision. The chief influence was her awakening sense of the need of money. She had been forced to buy herself that pair of boots and a walking-skirt, and the pearl necklace at the pawnbrokers’ had yielded very disappointingly. And, also, she wanted to borrow that money. It did seem in so many ways exactly what Ramage said it was — the sensible thing to do. There it was — to be borrowed. It would put the whole adventure on a broader and better footing; it seemed, indeed, almost the only possible way in which she might emerge from her rebellion with anything like success. If only for the sake of her argument with her home, she wanted success. And why, after all, should she not borrow money from Ramage?

It was so true what he said; middle-class people WERE ridiculously squeamish about money. Why should they be?

She and Ramage were friends, very good friends. If she was in a position to help him she would help him; only it happened to be the other way round. He was in a position to help her. What was the objection?

She found it impossible to look her own diffidence in the face. So

she went to Ramage and came to the point almost at once.

"Can you spare me forty pounds?" she said.

Mr. Ramage controlled his expression and thought very quickly.

"Agreed," he said, "certainly," and drew a checkbook toward him.

"It's best," he said, "to make it a good round sum.

"I won't give you a check though — Yes, I will. I'll give you an uncrossed check, and then you can get it at the bank here, quite close by.... You'd better not have all the money on you; you had better open a small account in the post-office and draw it out a fiver at a time. That won't involve references, as a bank account would — and all that sort of thing. The money will last longer, and — it won't bother you."

He stood up rather close to her and looked into her eyes. He seemed to be trying to understand something very perplexing and elusive. "It's jolly," he said, "to feel you have come to me. It's a sort of guarantee of confidence. Last time — you made me feel snubbed."

He hesitated, and went off at a tangent. "There's no end of things I'd like to talk over with you. It's just upon my lunch-time. Come and have lunch with me."

Ann Veronica fenced for a moment. "I don't want to take up your time."

"We won't go to any of these City places. They're just all men, and no one is safe from scandal. But I know a little place where we'll get a little quiet talk."

Ann Veronica for some indefinable reason did not want to lunch with him, a reason indeed so indefinable that she dismissed it, and Ramage went through the outer office with her, alert and attentive, to the vivid interest of the three clerks. The three clerks fought for the only window, and saw her whisked into a hansom. Their subsequent conversation is outside the scope of our story.

"Ritter's!" said Ramage to the driver, "Dean Street."

It was rare that Ann Veronica used hansoms, and to be in one was itself eventful and exhilarating. She liked the high, easy swing of the thing over its big wheels, the quick clatter-patter of the horse, the passage of the teeming streets. She admitted her pleasure to Ramage.

And Ritter's, too, was very amusing and foreign and discreet; a little rambling room with a number of small tables, with red electric

light shades and flowers. It was an overcast day, albeit not foggy, and the electric light shades glowed warmly, and an Italian waiter with insufficient English took Ramage's orders, and waited with an appearance of affection. Ann Veronica thought the whole affair rather jolly. Ritter sold better food than most of his compatriots, and cooked it better, and Ramage, with a fine perception of a feminine palate, ordered Vero Capri. It was, Ann Veronica felt, as a sip or so of that remarkable blend warmed her blood, just the sort of thing that her aunt would not approve, to be lunching thus, tete-a-tete with a man; and yet at the same time it was a perfectly innocent as well as agreeable proceeding.

They talked across their meal in an easy and friendly manner about Ann Veronica's affairs. He was really very bright and clever, with a sort of conversational boldness that was just within the limits of permissible daring. She described the Goopes and the Fabians to him, and gave him a sketch of her landlady; and he talked in the most liberal and entertaining way of a modern young woman's outlook. He seemed to know a great deal about life. He gave glimpses of possibilities. He roused curiosities. He contrasted wonderfully with the empty showing-off of Teddy. His friendship seemed a thing worth having....

But when she was thinking it over in her room that evening vague and baffling doubts came drifting across this conviction. She doubted how she stood toward him and what the restrained gleam of his face might signify. She felt that perhaps, in her desire to play an adequate part in the conversation, she had talked rather more freely than she ought to have done, and given him a wrong impression of herself.

Part 7

That was two days before Christmas Eve. The next morning came a compact letter from her father.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER," it ran,— "Here, on the verge of the

season of forgiveness I hold out a last hand to you in the hope of a reconciliation. I ask you, although it is not my place to ask you, to return home. This roof is still open to you. You will not be taunted if you return and everything that can be done will be done to make you happy.

"Indeed, I must implore you to return. This adventure of yours has gone on altogether too long; it has become a serious distress to both your aunt and myself. We fail altogether to understand your motives in doing what you are doing, or, indeed, how you are managing to do it, or what you are managing on. If you will think only of one trifling aspect — the inconvenience it must be to us to explain your absence — I think you may begin to realize what it all means for us. I need hardly say that your aunt joins with me very heartily in this request.

"Please come home. You will not find me unreasonable with you.

"Your affectionate

"FATHER."

Ann Veronica sat over her fire with her father's note in her hand. "Queer letters he writes," she said. "I suppose most people's letters are queer. Roof open — like a Noah's Ark. I wonder if he really wants me to go home. It's odd how little I know of him, and of how he feels and what he feels."

"I wonder how he treated Gwen."

Her mind drifted into a speculation about her sister. "I ought to look up Gwen," she said. "I wonder what happened."

Then she fell to thinking about her aunt. "I would like to go home," she cried, "to please her. She has been a dear. Considering how little he lets her have."

The truth prevailed. "The unaccountable thing is that I wouldn't go home to please her. She is, in her way, a dear. One OUGHT to want to please her. And I don't. I don't care. I can't even make myself care."

Presently, as if for comparison with her father's letter, she got out Ramage's check from the box that contained her papers. For so far she had kept it uncashed. She had not even endorsed it.

"Suppose I chuck it," she remarked, standing with the mauve slip in her hand— "suppose I chuck it, and surrender and go home! Perhaps, after all, Roddy was right!

“Father keeps opening the door and shutting it, but a time will come —

“I could still go home!”

She held Ramage’s check as if to tear it across. “No,” she said at last; “I’m a human being — not a timid female. What could I do at home? The other’s a crumple-up — just surrender. Funk! I’ll see it out.”

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

BIOLOGY

Part 1

January found Ann Veronica a student in the biological laboratory of the Central Imperial College that towers up from among the back streets in the angle between Euston Road and Great Portland Street. She was working very steadily at the Advanced Course in Comparative Anatomy, wonderfully relieved to have her mind engaged upon one methodically developing theme in the place of the discursive uncertainties of the previous two months, and doing her utmost to keep right in the back of her mind and out of sight the facts, firstly, that she had achieved this haven of satisfactory activity by incurring a debt to Ramage of forty pounds, and, secondly, that her present position was necessarily temporary and her outlook quite uncertain.

The biological laboratory had an atmosphere that was all its own.

It was at the top of the building, and looked clear over a clustering mass of inferior buildings toward Regent's Park. It was long and narrow, a well-lit, well-ventilated, quiet gallery of small tables and sinks, pervaded by a thin smell of methylated spirit and of a mitigated and sterilized organic decay. Along the inner side was a wonderfully arranged series of displayed specimens that Russell himself had prepared. The supreme effect for Ann Veronica was its surpassing relevance; it made every other atmosphere she knew seem discursive and confused. The whole place and everything in it aimed at one thing — to illustrate, to elaborate, to criticise and illuminate, and make ever plainer and plainer the significance of animal and vegetable structure. It dealt from floor to ceiling and end to end with the Theory of the Forms of Life; the very duster by the blackboard was there to do its share in that work, the very washers in the taps; the room was more simply concentrated in aim even than a church. To that, perhaps, a large part of its satisfyingness was due. Contrasted with the confused movement and presences of a Fabian

meeting, or the inexplicable enthusiasm behind the suffrage demand, with the speeches that were partly egotistical displays, partly artful manoeuvres, and partly incoherent cries for unsoundly formulated ends, compared with the comings and goings of audiences and supporters that were like the eddy-driven drift of paper in the street, this long, quiet, methodical chamber shone like a star seen through clouds.

Day after day for a measured hour in the lecture-theatre, with elaborate power and patience, Russell pieced together difficulty and suggestion, instance and counter-instance, in the elaborate construction of the family tree of life. And then the students went into the long laboratory and followed out these facts in almost living tissue with microscope and scalpel, probe and microtome, and the utmost of their skill and care, making now and then a raid into the compact museum of illustration next door, in which specimens and models and directions stood in disciplined ranks, under the direction of the demonstrator Capes. There was a couple of blackboards at each end of the aisle of tables, and at these Capes, with quick and nervous speech that contrasted vividly with Russell's slow, definitive articulation, directed the dissection and made illuminating comments on the structures under examination. Then he would come along the laboratory, sitting down by each student in turn, checking the work and discussing its difficulties, and answering questions arising out of Russell's lecture.

Ann Veronica had come to the Imperial College obsessed by the great figure of Russell, by the part he had played in the Darwinian controversies, and by the resolute effect of the grim-lipped, yellow, leonine face beneath the mane of silvery hair. Capes was rather a discovery. Capes was something superadded. Russell burned like a beacon, but Capes illuminated by darting flashes and threw light, even if it was but momentary light, into a hundred corners that Russell left steadfastly in the shade.

Capes was an exceptionally fair man of two or three-and-thirty, so ruddily blond that it was a mercy he had escaped light eyelashes, and with a minor but by no means contemptible reputation of his own. He talked at the blackboard in a pleasant, very slightly lisping voice with a curious spontaneity, and was sometimes very clumsy in his

exposition, and sometimes very vivid. He dissected rather awkwardly and hurriedly, but, on the whole, effectively, and drew with an impatient directness that made up in significance what it lacked in precision. Across the blackboard the colored chalks flew like flights of variously tinted rockets as diagram after diagram flickered into being.

There happened that year to be an unusual proportion of girls and women in the advanced laboratory, perhaps because the class as a whole was an exceptionally small one. It numbered nine, and four of these were women students. As a consequence of its small size, it was possible to get along with the work on a much easier and more colloquial footing than a larger class would have permitted. And a custom had grown up of a general tea at four o'clock, under the auspices of a Miss Garvice, a tall and graceful girl of distinguished intellectual incompetence, in whom the hostess instinct seemed to be abnormally developed.

Capes would come to these teas; he evidently liked to come, and he would appear in the doorway of the preparation-room, a pleasing note of shyness in his manner, hovering for an invitation.

From the first, Ann Veronica found him an exceptionally interesting man. To begin with, he struck her as being the most variable person she had ever encountered. At times he was brilliant and masterful, talked round and over every one, and would have been domineering if he had not been extraordinarily kindly; at times he was almost monosyllabic, and defeated Miss Garvice's most skilful attempts to draw him out. Sometimes he was obviously irritable and uncomfortable and unfortunate in his efforts to seem at ease. And sometimes he overflowed with a peculiarly malignant wit that played, with devastating effect, upon any topics that had the courage to face it. Ann Veronica's experiences of men had been among more stable types — Teddy, who was always absurd; her father, who was always authoritative and sentimental; Manning, who was always Manning. And most of the others she had met had, she felt, the same steadfastness. Goopes, she was sure was always high-browed and slow and Socratic. And Ramage too — about Ramage there would always be that air of avidity, that air of knowledge and inquiry, the mixture of things in his talk that were rather good with things that

were rather poor. But one could not count with any confidence upon Capes.

The five men students were a mixed company. There was a very white-faced youngster of eighteen who brushed back his hair exactly in Russell's manner, and was disposed to be uncomfortably silent when he was near her, and to whom she felt it was only Christian kindness to be consistently pleasant; and a lax young man of five-and-twenty in navy blue, who mingled Marx and Bebel with the more orthodox gods of the biological pantheon. There was a short, red-faced, resolute youth who inherited an authoritative attitude upon bacteriology from his father; a Japanese student of unassuming manners who drew beautifully and had an imperfect knowledge of English; and a dark, unwashed Scotchman with complicated spectacles, who would come every morning as a sort of volunteer supplementary demonstrator, look very closely at her work and her, tell her that her dissections were "fairish," or "very fairish indeed," or "high above the normal female standard," hover as if for some outbreak of passionate gratitude and with admiring retrospects that made the facetted spectacles gleam like diamonds, return to his own place.

The women, Ann Veronica thought, were not quite so interesting as the men. There were two school-mistresses, one of whom — Miss Klegg — might have been a first cousin to Miss Miniver, she had so many Miniver traits; there was a preoccupied girl whose name Ann Veronica never learned, but who worked remarkably well; and Miss Garvice, who began by attracting her very greatly — she moved so beautifully — and ended by giving her the impression that moving beautifully was the beginning and end of her being.

Part 2

The next few weeks were a time of the very liveliest thought and growth for Ann Veronica. The crowding impressions of the previous

weeks seemed to run together directly her mind left the chaotic search for employment and came into touch again with a coherent and systematic development of ideas. The advanced work at the Central Imperial College was in the closest touch with living interests and current controversies; it drew its illustrations and material from Russell's two great researches — upon the relation of the brachiopods to the echinodermata, and upon the secondary and tertiary mammalian and pseudo-mammalian factors in the free larval forms of various marine organisms. Moreover, a vigorous fire of mutual criticism was going on now between the Imperial College and the Cambridge Mendelians and echoed in the lectures. From beginning to end it was first-hand stuff.

But the influence of the science radiated far beyond its own special field — beyond those beautiful but highly technical problems with which we do not propose for a moment to trouble the naturally terrified reader. Biology is an extraordinarily digestive science. It throws out a number of broad experimental generalizations, and then sets out to bring into harmony or relation with these an infinitely multifarious collection of phenomena. The little streaks upon the germinating area of an egg, the nervous movements of an impatient horse, the trick of a calculating boy, the senses of a fish, the fungus at the root of a garden flower, and the slime upon a sea-wet rock — ten thousand such things bear their witness and are illuminated. And not only did these tentacular generalizations gather all the facts of natural history and comparative anatomy together, but they seemed always stretching out further and further into a world of interests that lay altogether outside their legitimate bounds.

It came to Ann Veronica one night after a long talk with Miss Miniver, as a sudden remarkable thing, as a grotesque, novel aspect, that this slowly elaborating biological scheme had something more than an academic interest for herself. And not only so, but that it was after all, a more systematic and particular method of examining just the same questions that underlay the discussions of the Fabian Society, the talk of the West Central Arts Club, the chatter of the studios and the deep, the bottomless discussions of the simple-life homes. It was the same Bios whose nature and drift and ways and methods and aspects engaged them all. And she, she in her own

person too, was this eternal Bios, beginning again its recurrent journey to selection and multiplication and failure or survival.

But this was but a momentary gleam of personal application, and at this time she followed it up no further.

And now Ann Veronica's evenings were also becoming very busy. She pursued her interest in the Socialist movement and in the Suffragist agitation in the company of Miss Miniver. They went to various central and local Fabian gatherings, and to a number of suffrage meetings. Teddy Widgett hovered on the fringe of all these gatherings, blinking at Ann Veronica and occasionally making a wildly friendly dash at her, and carrying her and Miss Miniver off to drink cocoa with a choice diversity of other youthful and congenial Fabians after the meetings. Then Mr. Manning loomed up ever and again into her world, full of a futile solicitude, and almost always declaring she was splendid, splendid, and wishing he could talk things out with her. Teas he contributed to the commissariat of Ann Veronica's campaign — quite a number of teas. He would get her to come to tea with him, usually in a pleasant tea-room over a fruit-shop in Tottenham Court Road, and he would discuss his own point of view and hint at a thousand devotions were she but to command him. And he would express various artistic sensibilities and aesthetic appreciations in carefully punctuated sentences and a large, clear voice. At Christmas he gave her a set of a small edition of Meredith's novels, very prettily bound in flexible leather, being guided in the choice of an author, as he intimated, rather by her preferences than his own.

There was something markedly and deliberately liberal-minded in his manner in all their encounters. He conveyed not only his sense of the extreme want of correctitude in their unsanctioned meetings, but also that, so far as he was concerned, this irregularity mattered not at all, that he had flung — and kept on flinging — such considerations to the wind.

And, in addition, she was now seeing and talking to Ramage almost weekly, on a theory which she took very gravely, that they were exceptionally friends. He would ask her to come to dinner with him in some little Italian or semi-Bohemian restaurant in the district toward Soho, or in one of the more stylish and magnificent

establishments about Piccadilly Circus, and for the most part she did not care to refuse. Nor, indeed, did she want to refuse. These dinners, from their lavish display of ambiguous hors d'oeuvre to their skimpy ices in dishes of frilled paper, with their Chianti flasks and Parmesan dishes and their polyglot waiters and polyglot clientele, were very funny and bright; and she really liked Ramage, and valued his help and advice. It was interesting to see how different and characteristic his mode of approach was to all sorts of questions that interested her, and it was amusing to discover this other side to the life of a Morningside Park inhabitant. She had thought that all Morningside Park householders came home before seven at the latest, as her father usually did. Ramage talked always about women or some woman's concern, and very much about Ann Veronica's own outlook upon life. He was always drawing contrasts between a woman's lot and a man's, and treating her as a wonderful new departure in this comparison. Ann Veronica liked their relationship all the more because it was an unusual one.

After these dinners they would have a walk, usually to the Thames Embankment to see the two sweeps of river on either side of Waterloo Bridge; and then they would part at Westminster Bridge, perhaps, and he would go on to Waterloo. Once he suggested they should go to a music-hall and see a wonderful new dancer, but Ann Veronica did not feel she cared to see a new dancer. So, instead, they talked of dancing and what it might mean in a human life. Ann Veronica thought it was a spontaneous release of energy expressive of well-being, but Ramage thought that by dancing, men, and such birds and animals as dance, come to feel and think of their bodies.

This intercourse, which had been planned to warm Ann Veronica to a familiar affection with Ramage, was certainly warming Ramage to a constantly deepening interest in Ann Veronica. He felt that he was getting on with her very slowly indeed, but he did not see how he could get on faster. He had, he felt, to create certain ideas and vivify certain curiosities and feelings in her. Until that was done a certain experience of life assured him that a girl is a locked coldness against a man's approach. She had all the fascination of being absolutely perplexing in this respect. On the one hand, she seemed to think plainly and simply, and would talk serenely and freely about

topics that most women have been trained either to avoid or conceal; and on the other she was unconscious, or else she had an air of being unconscious — that was the riddle — to all sorts of personal applications that almost any girl or woman, one might have thought, would have made. He was always doing his best to call her attention to the fact that he was a man of spirit and quality and experience, and she a young and beautiful woman, and that all sorts of constructions upon their relationship were possible, trusting her to go on from that to the idea that all sorts of relationships were possible. She responded with an unfaltering appearance of insensibility, and never as a young and beautiful woman conscious of sex; always in the character of an intelligent girl student.

His perception of her personal beauty deepened and quickened with each encounter. Every now and then her general presence became radiantly dazzling in his eyes; she would appear in the street coming toward him, a surprise, so fine and smiling and welcoming was she, so expanded and illuminated and living, in contrast with his mere expectation. Or he would find something — a wave in her hair, a little line in the contour of her brow or neck, that made an exquisite discovery.

He was beginning to think about her inordinately. He would sit in his inner office and compose conversations with her, penetrating, illuminating, and nearly conclusive — conversations that never proved to be of the slightest use at all with her when he met her face to face. And he began also at times to wake at night and think about her.

He thought of her and himself, and no longer in that vein of incidental adventure in which he had begun. He thought, too, of the fretful invalid who lay in the next room to his, whose money had created his business and made his position in the world.

“I’ve had most of the things I wanted,” said Ramage, in the stillness of the night.

Part 3

For a time Ann Veronica's family had desisted from direct offers of a free pardon; they were evidently waiting for her resources to come to an end. Neither father, aunt, nor brothers made a sign, and then one afternoon in early February her aunt came up in a state between expostulation and dignified resentment, but obviously very anxious for Ann Veronica's welfare. "I had a dream in the night," she said. "I saw you in a sort of sloping, slippery place, holding on by your hands and slipping. You seemed to me to be slipping and slipping, and your face was white. It was really most vivid, most vivid! You seemed to be slipping and just going to tumble and holding on. It made me wake up, and there I lay thinking of you, spending your nights up here all alone, and no one to look after you. I wondered what you could be doing and what might be happening to you. I said to myself at once, 'Either this is a coincidence or the caper sauce.' But I made sure it was you. I felt I MUST do something anyhow, and up I came just as soon as I could to see you."

She had spoken rather rapidly. "I can't help saying it," she said, with the quality of her voice altering, "but I do NOT think it is right for an unprotected girl to be in London alone as you are."

"But I'm quite equal to taking care of myself, aunt."

"It must be most uncomfortable here. It is most uncomfortable for every one concerned."

She spoke with a certain asperity. She felt that Ann Veronica had duped her in that dream, and now that she had come up to London she might as well speak her mind.

"No Christmas dinner," she said, "or anything nice! One doesn't even know what you are doing."

"I'm going on working for my degree."

"Why couldn't you do that at home?"

"I'm working at the Imperial College. You see, aunt, it's the only possible way for me to get a good degree in my subjects, and father won't hear of it. There'd only be endless rows if I was at home. And how could I come home — when he locks me in rooms and all that?"

"I do wish this wasn't going on," said Miss Stanley, after a pause. "I do wish you and your father could come to some agreement."

Ann Veronica responded with conviction: “I wish so, too.”

“Can’t we arrange something? Can’t we make a sort of treaty?”

“He wouldn’t keep it. He would get very cross one evening and no one would dare to remind him of it.”

“How can you say such things?”

“But he would!”

“Still, it isn’t your place to say so.”

“It prevents a treaty.”

“Couldn’t *I* make a treaty?”

Ann Veronica thought, and could not see any possible treaty that would leave it open for her to have quasi-surreptitious dinners with Ramage or go on walking round the London squares discussing Socialism with Miss Miniver toward the small hours. She had tasted freedom now, and so far she had not felt the need of protection. Still, there certainly was something in the idea of a treaty.

“I don’t see at all how you can be managing,” said Miss Stanley, and Ann Veronica hastened to reply, “I do on very little.” Her mind went back to that treaty.

“And aren’t there fees to pay at the Imperial College?” her aunt was saying — a disagreeable question.

“There are a few fees.”

“Then how have you managed?”

“Bother!” said Ann Veronica to herself, and tried not to look guilty. “I was able to borrow the money.”

“Borrow the money! But who lent you the money?”

“A friend,” said Ann Veronica.

She felt herself getting into a corner. She sought hastily in her mind for a plausible answer to an obvious question that didn’t come. Her aunt went off at a tangent. “But my dear Ann Veronica, you will be getting into debt!”

Ann Veronica at once, and with a feeling of immense relief, took refuge in her dignity. “I think, aunt,” she said, “you might trust to my self-respect to keep me out of that.”

For the moment her aunt could not think of any reply to this counterstroke, and Ann Veronica followed up her advantage by a sudden inquiry about her abandoned boots.

But in the train going home her aunt reasoned it out.

“If she is borrowing money,” said Miss Stanley, “she MUST be getting into debt. It’s all nonsense....”

Part 4

It was by imperceptible degrees that Capes became important in Ann Veronica’s thoughts. But then he began to take steps, and, at last, strides to something more and more like predominance. She began by being interested in his demonstrations and his biological theory, then she was attracted by his character, and then, in a manner, she fell in love with his mind.

One day they were at tea in the laboratory and a discussion sprang up about the question of women’s suffrage. The movement was then in its earlier militant phases, and one of the women only, Miss Garvice, opposed it, though Ann Veronica was disposed to be lukewarm. But a man’s opposition always inclined her to the suffrage side; she had a curious feeling of loyalty in seeing the more aggressive women through. Capes was irritatingly judicial in the matter, neither absurdly against, in which case one might have smashed him, or hopelessly undecided, but tepidly sceptical. Miss Klegg and the youngest girl made a vigorous attack on Miss Garvice, who had said she thought women lost something infinitely precious by mingling in the conflicts of life. The discussion wandered, and was punctuated with bread and butter. Capes was inclined to support Miss Klegg until Miss Garvice cornered him by quoting him against himself, and citing a recent paper in the Nineteenth Century, in which, following Atkinson, he had made a vigorous and damaging attack on Lester Ward’s case for the primitive matriarchate and the predominant importance of the female throughout the animal kingdom.

Ann Veronica was not aware of this literary side of her teacher; she had a little tinge of annoyance at Miss Garvice’s advantage. Afterwards she hunted up the article in question, and it seemed to her

quite delightfully written and argued. Capes had the gift of easy, unaffected writing, coupled with very clear and logical thinking, and to follow his written thought gave her the sensation of cutting things with a perfectly new, perfectly sharp knife. She found herself anxious to read more of him, and the next Wednesday she went to the British Museum and hunted first among the half-crown magazines for his essays and then through various scientific quarterlies for his research papers. The ordinary research paper, when it is not extravagant theorizing, is apt to be rather sawdusty in texture, and Ann Veronica was delighted to find the same easy and confident luminosity that distinguished his work for the general reader. She returned to these latter, and at the back of her mind, as she looked them over again, was a very distinct resolve to quote them after the manner of Miss Garvice at the very first opportunity.

When she got home to her lodgings that evening she reflected with something like surprise upon her half-day's employment, and decided that it showed nothing more nor less than that Capes was a really very interesting person indeed.

And then she fell into a musing about Capes. She wondered why he was so distinctive, so unlike other men, and it never occurred to her for some time that this might be because she was falling in love with him.

Part 5

Yet Ann Veronica was thinking a very great deal about love. A dozen shynesses and intellectual barriers were being outflanked or broken down in her mind. All the influences about her worked with her own predisposition and against all the traditions of her home and upbringing to deal with the facts of life in an unabashed manner. Ramage, by a hundred skilful hints had led her to realize that the problem of her own life was inseparably associated with, and indeed only one special case of, the problems of any woman's life, and that

the problem of a woman's life is love.

"A young man comes into life asking how best he may place himself," Ramage had said; "a woman comes into life thinking instinctively how best she may give herself."

She noted that as a good saying, and it germinated and spread tentacles of explanation through her brain. The biological laboratory, perpetually viewing life as pairing and breeding and selection, and again pairing and breeding, seemed only a translated generalization of that assertion. And all the talk of the Miniver people and the Widgett people seemed always to be like a ship in adverse weather on the lee shore of love. "For seven years," said Ann Veronica, "I have been trying to keep myself from thinking about love....

"I have been training myself to look askance at beautiful things."

She gave herself permission now to look at this squarely. She made herself a private declaration of liberty. "This is mere nonsense, mere tongue-tied fear!" she said. "This is the slavery of the veiled life. I might as well be at Morningside Park. This business of love is the supreme affair in life, it is the woman's one event and crisis that makes up for all her other restrictions, and I cower — as we all cower — with a blushing and paralyzed mind until it overtakes me!...

"I'll be hanged if I do."

But she could not talk freely about love, she found, for all that manumission.

Ramage seemed always fencing about the forbidden topic, probing for openings, and she wondered why she did not give him them. But something instinctive prevented that, and with the finest resolve not to be "silly" and prudish she found that whenever he became at all bold in this matter she became severely scientific and impersonal, almost entomological indeed, in her method; she killed every remark as he made it and pinned it out for examination. In the biological laboratory that was their invincible tone. But she disapproved more and more of her own mental austerity. Here was an experienced man of the world, her friend, who evidently took a great interest in this supreme topic and was willing to give her the benefit of his experiences! Why should not she be at her ease with him? Why should not she know things? It is hard enough anyhow for a human being to learn, she decided, but it is a dozen times more

difficult than it need be because of all this locking of the lips and thoughts.

She contrived to break down the barriers of shyness at last in one direction, and talked one night of love and the facts of love with Miss Miniver.

But Miss Miniver was highly unsatisfactory. She repeated phrases of Mrs. Goopes's: "Advanced people," she said, with an air of great elucidation, "tend to GENERALIZE love. 'He prayeth best who loveth best — all things both great and small.' For my own part I go about loving."

"Yes, but men;" said Ann Veronica, plunging; "don't you want the love of men?"

For some seconds they remained silent, both shocked by this question.

Miss Miniver looked over her glasses at her friend almost balefully. "NO!" she said, at last, with something in her voice that reminded Ann Veronica of a sprung tennis-racket.

"I've been through all that," she went on, after a pause.

She spoke slowly. "I have never yet met a man whose intellect I could respect."

Ann Veronica looked at her thoughtfully for a moment, and decided to persist on principle.

"But if you had?" she said.

"I can't imagine it," said Miss Miniver. "And think, think" — her voice sank— "of the horrible coarseness!"

"What coarseness?" said Ann Veronica.

"My dear Vee!" Her voice became very low. "Don't you know?"

"Oh! I know—"

"Well—" Her face was an unaccustomed pink.

Ann Veronica ignored her friend's confusion.

"Don't we all rather humbug about the coarseness? All we women, I mean," said she. She decided to go on, after a momentary halt. "We pretend bodies are ugly. Really they are the most beautiful things in the world. We pretend we never think of everything that makes us what we are."

"No," cried Miss Miniver, almost vehemently. "You are wrong! I did not think you thought such things. Bodies! Bodies! Horrible

things! We are souls. Love lives on a higher plane. We are not animals. If ever I did meet a man I could love, I should love him" — her voice dropped again— "platonically."

She made her glasses glint. "Absolutely platonically," she said.

"Soul to soul."

She turned her face to the fire, gripped her hands upon her elbows, and drew her thin shoulders together in a shrug. "Ugh!" she said.

Ann Veronica watched her and wondered about her.

"We do not want the men," said Miss Miniver; "we do not want them, with their sneers and loud laughter. Empty, silly, coarse brutes. Brutes! They are the brute still with us! Science some day may teach us a way to do without them. It is only the women matter. It is not every sort of creature needs — these males. Some have no males."

"There's green-fly," admitted Ann Veronica. "And even then—"

The conversation hung for a thoughtful moment.

Ann Veronica readjusted her chin on her hand. "I wonder which of us is right," she said. "I haven't a scrap — of this sort of aversion."

"Tolstoy is so good about this," said Miss Miniver, regardless of her friend's attitude. "He sees through it all. The Higher Life and the Lower. He sees men all defiled by coarse thoughts, coarse ways of living cruelties. Simply because they are hardened by — by bestiality, and poisoned by the juices of meat slain in anger and fermented drinks — fancy! drinks that have been swarmed in by thousands and thousands of horrible little bacteria!"

"It's yeast," said Ann Veronica— "a vegetable."

"It's all the same," said Miss Miniver. "And then they are swollen up and inflamed and drunken with matter. They are blinded to all fine and subtle things — they look at life with bloodshot eyes and dilated nostrils. They are arbitrary and unjust and dogmatic and brutish and lustful."

"But do you really think men's minds are altered by the food they eat?"

"I know it," said Miss Miniver. "Experte credo. When I am leading a true life, a pure and simple life free of all stimulants and excitements, I think — I think — oh! with pellucid clearness; but if I so much as take a mouthful of meat — or anything — the mirror is

all blurred.”

Part 6

Then, arising she knew not how, like a new-born appetite, came a craving in Ann Veronica for the sight and sound of beauty.

It was as if her aesthetic sense had become inflamed. Her mind turned and accused itself of having been cold and hard. She began to look for beauty and discover it in unexpected aspects and places. Hitherto she had seen it chiefly in pictures and other works of art, incidentally, and as a thing taken out of life. Now the sense of beauty was spreading to a multitude of hitherto unsuspected aspects of the world about her.

The thought of beauty became an obsession. It interwove with her biological work. She found herself asking more and more curiously, “Why, on the principle of the survival of the fittest, have I any sense of beauty at all?” That enabled her to go on thinking about beauty when it seemed to her right that she should be thinking about biology.

She was very greatly exercised by the two systems of values — the two series of explanations that her comparative anatomy on the one hand and her sense of beauty on the other, set going in her thoughts. She could not make up her mind which was the finer, more elemental thing, which gave its values to the other. Was it that the struggle of things to survive produced as a sort of necessary by-product these intense preferences and appreciations, or was it that some mystical outer thing, some great force, drove life beautyward, even in spite of expediency, regardless of survival value and all the manifest discretions of life? She went to Capes with that riddle and put it to him very carefully and clearly, and he talked well — he always talked at some length when she took a difficulty to him — and sent her to a various literature upon the markings of butterflies, the incomprehensible elaboration and splendor of birds of Paradise

and humming-birds' plumes, the patterning of tigers, and a leopard's spots. He was interesting and inconclusive, and the original papers to which he referred her discursive were at best only suggestive. Afterward, one afternoon, he hovered about her, and came and sat beside her and talked of beauty and the riddle of beauty for some time. He displayed a quite unprofessional vein of mysticism in the matter. He contrasted with Russell, whose intellectual methods were, so to speak, sceptically dogmatic. Their talk drifted to the beauty of music, and they took that up again at tea-time.

But as the students sat about Miss Garvice's tea-pot and drank tea or smoked cigarettes, the talk got away from Capes. The Scotchman informed Ann Veronica that your view of beauty necessarily depended on your metaphysical premises, and the young man with the Russell-like hair became anxious to distinguish himself by telling the Japanese student that Western art was symmetrical and Eastern art asymmetrical, and that among the higher organisms the tendency was toward an external symmetry veiling an internal want of balance. Ann Veronica decided she would have to go on with Capes another day, and, looking up, discovered him sitting on a stool with his hands in his pockets and his head a little on one side, regarding her with a thoughtful expression. She met his eye for a moment in curious surprise.

He turned his eyes and stared at Miss Garvice like one who wakes from a reverie, and then got up and strolled down the laboratory toward his refuge, the preparation-room.

Part 7

Then one day a little thing happened that clothed itself in significance.

She had been working upon a ribbon of microtome sections of the developing salamander, and he came to see what she had made of them. She stood up and he sat down at the microscope, and for a time

he was busy scrutinizing one section after another. She looked down at him and saw that the sunlight was gleaming from his cheeks, and that all over his cheeks was a fine golden down of delicate hairs. And at the sight something leaped within her.

Something changed for her.

She became aware of his presence as she had never been aware of any human being in her life before. She became aware of the modelling of his ear, of the muscles of his neck and the textures of the hair that came off his brow, the soft minute curve of eyelid that she could just see beyond his brow; she perceived all these familiar objects as though they were acutely beautiful things. They WERE, she realized, acutely beautiful things. Her sense followed the shoulders under his coat, down to where his flexible, sensitive-looking hand rested lightly upon the table. She felt him as something solid and strong and trustworthy beyond measure. The perception of him flooded her being.

He got up. "Here's something rather good," he said, and with a start and an effort she took his place at the microscope, while he stood beside her and almost leaning over her.

She found she was trembling at his nearness and full of a thrilling dread that he might touch her. She pulled herself together and put her eye to the eye-piece.

"You see the pointer?" he asked.

"I see the pointer," she said.

"It's like this," he said, and dragged a stool beside her and sat down with his elbow four inches from hers and made a sketch. Then he got up and left her.

She had a feeling at his departure as of an immense cavity, of something enormously gone; she could not tell whether it was infinite regret or infinite relief....

But now Ann Veronica knew what was the matter with her.

Part 8

And as she sat on her bed that night, musing and half-undressed, she began to run one hand down her arm and scrutinize the soft flow of muscle under her skin. She thought of the marvellous beauty of skin, and all the delightfulness of living texture. Oh the back of her arm she found the faintest down of hair in the world. “Etherialized monkey,” she said. She held out her arm straight before her, and turned her hand this way and that.

“Why should one pretend?” she whispered. “Why should one pretend?

“Think of all the beauty in the world that is covered up and overlaid.”

She glanced shyly at the mirror above her dressing-table, and then about her at the furniture, as though it might penetrate to the thoughts that peeped in her mind.

“I wonder,” said Ann Veronica at last, “if I am beautiful? I wonder if I shall ever shine like a light, like a translucent goddess? —

“I wonder —

“I suppose girls and women have prayed for this, have come to this — In Babylon, in Nineveh.

“Why shouldn’t one face the facts of one’s self?”

She stood up. She posed herself before her mirror and surveyed herself with gravely thoughtful, gravely critical, and yet admiring eyes. “And, after all, I am just one common person!”

She watched the throb of the arteries in the stem of her neck, and put her hand at last gently and almost timidly to where her heart beat beneath her breast.

Part 9

The realization that she was in love flooded Ann Veronica’s mind, and altered the quality of all its topics.

She began to think persistently of Capes, and it seemed to her now

that for some weeks at least she must have been thinking persistently of him unawares. She was surprised to find how stored her mind was with impressions and memories of him, how vividly she remembered his gestures and little things that he had said. It occurred to her that it was absurd and wrong to be so continuously thinking of one engrossing topic, and she made a strenuous effort to force her mind to other questions.

But it was extraordinary what seemingly irrelevant things could restore her to the thought of Capes again. And when she went to sleep, then always Capes became the novel and wonderful guest of her dreams.

For a time it really seemed all-sufficient to her that she should love. That Capes should love her seemed beyond the compass of her imagination. Indeed, she did not want to think of him as loving her. She wanted to think of him as her beloved person, to be near him and watch him, to have him going about, doing this and that, saying this and that, unconscious of her, while she too remained unconscious of herself. To think of him as loving her would make all that different. Then he would turn his face to her, and she would have to think of herself in his eyes. She would become defensive — what she did would be the thing that mattered. He would require things of her, and she would be passionately concerned to meet his requirements. Loving was better than that. Loving was self-forgetfulness, pure delighting in another human being. She felt that with Capes near to her she would be content always to go on loving.

She went next day to the schools, and her world seemed all made of happiness just worked up roughly into shapes and occasions and duties. She found she could do her microscope work all the better for being in love. She winced when first she heard the preparation-room door open and Capes came down the laboratory; but when at last he reached her she was self-possessed. She put a stool for him at a little distance from her own, and after he had seen the day's work he hesitated, and then plunged into a resumption of their discussion about beauty.

"I think," he said, "I was a little too mystical about beauty the other day."

"I like the mystical way," she said.

“Our business here is the right way. I’ve been thinking, you know — I’m not sure that primarily the perception of beauty isn’t just intensity of feeling free from pain; intensity of perception without any tissue destruction.”

“I like the mystical way better,” said Ann Veronica, and thought.

“A number of beautiful things are not intense.”

“But delicacy, for example, may be intensely perceived.”

“But why is one face beautiful and another not?” objected Ann Veronica; “on your theory any two faces side by side in the sunlight ought to be equally beautiful. One must get them with exactly the same intensity.”

He did not agree with that. “I don’t mean simply intensity of sensation. I said intensity of perception. You may perceive harmony, proportion, rhythm, intensely. They are things faint and slight in themselves, as physical facts, but they are like the detonator of a bomb: they let loose the explosive. There’s the internal factor as well as the external.... I don’t know if I express myself clearly. I mean that the point is that vividness of perception is the essential factor of beauty; but, of course, vividness may be created by a whisper.”

“That brings us back,” said Ann Veronica, “to the mystery. Why should some things and not others open the deeps?”

“Well, that might, after all, be an outcome of selection — like the preference for blue flowers, which are not nearly so bright as yellow, of some insects.”

“That doesn’t explain sunsets.”

“Not quite so easily as it explains an insect alighting on colored paper. But perhaps if people didn’t like clear, bright, healthy eyes — which is biologically understandable — they couldn’t like precious stones. One thing may be a necessary collateral of the others. And, after all, a fine clear sky of bright colors is the signal to come out of hiding and rejoice and go on with life.”

“H’m!” said Ann Veronica, and shook her head.

Capes smiled cheerfully with his eyes meeting hers. “I throw it out in passing,” he said. “What I am after is that beauty isn’t a special inserted sort of thing; that’s my idea. It’s just life, pure life, life nascent, running clear and strong.”

He stood up to go on to the next student.

“There’s morbid beauty,” said Ann Veronica.

“I wonder if there is!” said Capes, and paused, and then bent down over the boy who wore his hair like Russell.

Ann Veronica surveyed his sloping back for a moment, and then drew her microscope toward her. Then for a time she sat very still. She felt that she had passed a difficult corner, and that now she could go on talking with him again, just as she had been used to do before she understood what was the matter with her....

She had one idea, she found, very clear in her mind — that she would get a Research Scholarship, and so contrive another year in the laboratory.

“Now I see what everything means,” said Ann Veronica to herself; and it really felt for some days as though the secret of the universe, that had been wrapped and hidden from her so obstinately, was at last altogether displayed.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

DISCORDS

Part 1

One afternoon, soon after Ann Veronica's great discovery, a telegram came into the laboratory for her. It ran:

Bored	and	nothing	to	do
will	you	dine	with	me
to-night	somewhere	and	talk	I
shall	be	grateful	Ramage	

Ann Veronica was rather pleased by this. She had not seen Ramage for ten or eleven days, and she was quite ready for a gossip with him. And now her mind was so full of the thought that she was in love — in love! — that marvellous state! that I really believe she had some dim idea of talking to him about it. At any rate, it would be good to hear him saying the sort of things he did — perhaps now she would grasp them better — with this world — shaking secret brandishing itself about inside her head within a yard of him.

She was sorry to find Ramage a little disposed to be melancholy.

"I have made over seven hundred pounds in the last week," he said.

"That's exhilarating," said Ann Veronica.

"Not a bit of it," he said; "it's only a score in a game."

"It's a score you can buy all sorts of things with."

“Nothing that one wants.”

He turned to the waiter, who held a wine-card. “Nothing can cheer me,” he said, “except champagne.” He meditated. “This,” he said, and then: “No! Is this sweeter? Very well.”

“Everything goes well with me,” he said, folding his arms under him and regarding Ann Veronica with the slightly projecting eyes wide open. “And I’m not happy. I believe I’m in love.”

He leaned back for his soup.

Presently he resumed: “I believe I must be in love.”

“You can’t be that,” said Ann Veronica, wisely.

“How do you know?”

“Well, it isn’t exactly a depressing state, is it?”

“YOU don’t know.”

“One has theories,” said Ann Veronica, radiantly.

“Oh, theories! Being in love is a fact.”

“It ought to make one happy.”

“It’s an unrest — a longing — What’s that?” The waiter had intervened. “Parmesan — take it away!”

He glanced at Ann Veronica’s face, and it seemed to him that she really was exceptionally radiant. He wondered why she thought love made people happy, and began to talk of the smilax and pinks that adorned the table. He filled her glass with champagne. “You MUST,” he said, “because of my depression.”

They were eating quails when they returned to the topic of love. “What made you think” he said, abruptly, with the gleam of avidity in his face, “that love makes people happy?”

“I know it must.”

“But how?”

He was, she thought, a little too insistent. “Women know these things by instinct,” she answered.

“I wonder,” he said, “if women do know things by instinct? I have my doubts about feminine instinct. It’s one of our conventional superstitions. A woman is supposed to know when a man is in love with her. Do you think she does?”

Ann Veronica picked among her salad with a judicial expression of face. “I think she would,” she decided.

“Ah!” said Ramage, impressively.

Ann Veronica looked up at him and found him regarding her with eyes that were almost woebegone, and into which, indeed, he was trying to throw much more expression than they could carry. There was a little pause between them, full for Ann Veronica of rapid elusive suspicions and intimations.

"Perhaps one talks nonsense about a woman's instinct," she said. "It's a way of avoiding explanations. And girls and women, perhaps, are different. I don't know. I don't suppose a girl can tell if a man is in love with her or not in love with her." Her mind went off to Capes. Her thoughts took words for themselves. "She can't. I suppose it depends on her own state of mind. If one wants a thing very much, perhaps one is inclined to think one can't have it. I suppose if one were to love some one, one would feel doubtful. And if one were to love some one very much, it's just so that one would be blindest, just when one wanted most to see."

She stopped abruptly, afraid that Ramage might be able to infer Capes from the things she had said, and indeed his face was very eager.

"Yes?" he said.

Ann Veronica blushed. "That's all," she said "I'm afraid I'm a little confused about these things."

Ramage looked at her, and then fell into deep reflection as the waiter came to paragraph their talk again.

"Have you ever been to the opera, Ann Veronica?" said Ramage.

"Once or twice."

"Shall we go now?"

"I think I would like to listen to music. What is there?"

"Tristan."

"I've never heard Tristan and Isolde."

"That settles it. We'll go. There's sure to be a place somewhere."

"It's rather jolly of you," said Ann Veronica.

"It's jolly of you to come," said Ramage.

So presently they got into a hansom together, and Ann Veronica sat back feeling very luxurious and pleasant, and looked at the light and stir and misty glitter of the street traffic from under slightly drooping eyelids, while Ramage sat closer to her than he need have done, and glanced ever and again at her face, and made to speak and

said nothing. And when they got to Covent Garden Ramage secured one of the little upper boxes, and they came into it as the overture began.

Ann Veronica took off her jacket and sat down in the corner chair, and leaned forward to look into the great hazy warm brown cavity of the house, and Ramage placed his chair to sit beside her and near her, facing the stage. The music took hold of her slowly as her eyes wandered from the indistinct still ranks of the audience to the little busy orchestra with its quivering violins, its methodical movements of brown and silver instruments, its brightly lit scores and shaded lights. She had never been to the opera before except as one of a congested mass of people in the cheaper seats, and with backs and heads and women's hats for the frame of the spectacle; there was by contrast a fine large sense of space and ease in her present position. The curtain rose out of the concluding bars of the overture and revealed Isolde on the prow of the barbaric ship. The voice of the young seaman came floating down from the masthead, and the story of the immortal lovers had begun. She knew the story only imperfectly, and followed it now with a passionate and deepening interest. The splendid voices sang on from phase to phase of love's unfolding, the ship drove across the sea to the beating rhythm of the rowers. The lovers broke into passionate knowledge of themselves and each other, and then, a jarring intervention, came King Mark amidst the shouts of the sailormen, and stood beside them.

The curtain came festooning slowly down, the music ceased, the lights in the auditorium glowed out, and Ann Veronica woke out of her confused dream of involuntary and commanding love in a glory of sound and colors to discover that Ramage was sitting close beside her with one hand resting lightly on her waist. She made a quick movement, and the hand fell away.

"By God! Ann Veronica," he said, sighing deeply. "This stirs one."

She sat quite still looking at him.

"I wish you and I had drunk that love potion," he said.

She found no ready reply to that, and he went on: "This music is the food of love. It makes me desire life beyond measure. Life! Life and love! It makes me want to be always young, always strong,

always devoting my life — and dying splendidly."

"It is very beautiful," said Ann Veronica in a low tone.

They said no more for a moment, and each was now acutely aware of the other. Ann Veronica was excited and puzzled, with a sense of a strange and disconcerting new light breaking over her relations with Ramage. She had never thought of him at all in that way before. It did not shock her; it amazed her, interested her beyond measure. But also this must not go on. She felt he was going to say something more — something still more personal and intimate. She was curious, and at the same time clearly resolved she must not hear it. She felt she must get him talking upon some impersonal theme at any cost. She snatched about in her mind. "What is the exact force of a motif?" she asked at random. "Before I heard much Wagnerian music I heard enthusiastic descriptions of it from a mistress I didn't like at school. She gave me an impression of a sort of patched quilt; little bits of patterned stuff coming up again and again."

She stopped with an air of interrogation.

Ramage looked at her for a long and discriminating interval without speaking. He seemed to be hesitating between two courses of action. "I don't know much about the technique of music," he said at last, with his eyes upon her. "It's a matter of feeling with me."

He contradicted himself by plunging into an exposition of motifs.

By a tacit agreement they ignored the significant thing between them, ignored the slipping away of the ground on which they had stood together hitherto....

All through the love music of the second act, until the hunting horns of Mark break in upon the dream, Ann Veronica's consciousness was flooded with the perception of a man close beside her, preparing some new thing to say to her, preparing, perhaps, to touch her, stretching hungry invisible tentacles about her. She tried to think what she should do in this eventuality or that. Her mind had been and was full of the thought of Capes, a huge generalized Capes-lover. And in some incomprehensible way, Ramage was confused with Capes; she had a grotesque disposition to persuade herself that this was really Capes who surrounded her, as it were, with wings of desire. The fact that it was her trusted friend making illicit love to her remained, in spite of all her effort, an insignificant thing in her mind.

The music confused and distracted her, and made her struggle against a feeling of intoxication. Her head swam. That was the inconvenience of it; her head was swimming. The music throbbed into the warnings that preceded the king's irruption.

Abruptly he gripped her wrist. "I love you, Ann Veronica. I love you — with all my heart and soul."

She put her face closer to his. She felt the warm nearness of his. "DON'T!" she said, and wrenched her wrist from his retaining hand.

"My God! Ann Veronica," he said, struggling to keep his hold upon her; "my God! Tell me — tell me now — tell me you love me!"

His expression was as it were rapaciously furtive. She answered in whispers, for there was the white arm of a woman in the next box peeping beyond the partition within a yard of him.

"My hand! This isn't the place."

He released her hand and talked in eager undertones against an auditory background of urgency and distress.

"Ann Veronica," he said, "I tell you this is love. I love the soles of your feet. I love your very breath. I have tried not to tell you — tried to be simply your friend. It is no good. I want you. I worship you. I would do anything — I would give anything to make you mine.... Do you hear me? Do you hear what I am saying?... Love!"

He held her arm and abandoned it again at her quick defensive movement. For a long time neither spoke again.

She sat drawn together in her chair in the corner of the box, at a loss what to say or do — afraid, curious, perplexed. It seemed to her that it was her duty to get up and clamor to go home to her room, to protest against his advances as an insult. But she did not in the least want to do that. These sweeping dignities were not within the compass of her will; she remembered she liked Ramage, and owed things to him, and she was interested — she was profoundly interested. He was in love with her! She tried to grasp all the welter of values in the situation simultaneously, and draw some conclusion from their disorder.

He began to talk again in quick undertones that she could not clearly hear.

"I have loved you," he was saying, "ever since you sat on that

gate and talked. I have always loved you. I don't care what divides us. I don't care what else there is in the world. I want you beyond measure or reckoning...."

His voice rose and fell amidst the music and the singing of Tristan and King Mark, like a voice heard in a badly connected telephone. She stared at his pleading face.

She turned to the stage, and Tristan was wounded in Kurvenal's arms, with Isolde at his feet, and King Mark, the incarnation of masculine force and obligation, the masculine creditor of love and beauty, stood over him, and the second climax was ending in wreaths and reek of melodies; and then the curtain was coming down in a series of short rushes, the music had ended, and the people were stirring and breaking out into applause, and the lights of the auditorium were resuming. The lighting-up pierced the obscurity of the box, and Ramage stopped his urgent flow of words abruptly and sat back. This helped to restore Ann Veronica's self-command.

She turned her eyes to him again, and saw her late friend and pleasant and trusted companion, who had seen fit suddenly to change into a lover, babbling interesting inacceptable things. He looked eager and flushed and troubled. His eyes caught at hers with passionate inquiries. "Tell me," he said; "speak to me." She realized it was possible to be sorry for him — acutely sorry for the situation. Of course this thing was absolutely impossible. But she was disturbed, mysteriously disturbed. She remembered abruptly that she was really living upon his money. She leaned forward and addressed him.

"Mr. Ramage," she said, "please don't talk like this."

He made to speak and did not.

"I don't want you to do it, to go on talking to me. I don't want to hear you. If I had known that you had meant to talk like this I wouldn't have come here."

"But how can I help it? How can I keep silence?"

"Please!" she insisted. "Please not now."

"I MUST talk with you. I must say what I have to say!"

"But not now — not here."

"It came," he said. "I never planned it — And now I have begun —"

She felt acutely that he was entitled to explanations, and as acutely that explanations were impossible that night. She wanted to think.

"Mr. Ramage," she said, "I can't — Not now. Will you please — Not now, or I must go."

He stared at her, trying to guess at the mystery of her thoughts.

"You don't want to go?"

"No. But I must — I ought—"

"I MUST talk about this. Indeed I must."

"Not now."

"But I love you. I love you — unendurably."

"Then don't talk to me now. I don't want you to talk to me now. There is a place — This isn't the place. You have misunderstood. I can't explain—"

They regarded one another, each blinded to the other. "Forgive me," he decided to say at last, and his voice had a little quiver of emotion, and he laid his hand on hers upon her knee. "I am the most foolish of men. I was stupid — stupid and impulsive beyond measure to burst upon you in this way. I — I am a love-sick idiot, and not accountable for my actions. Will you forgive me — if I say no more?"

She looked at him with perplexed, earnest eyes.

"Pretend," he said, "that all I have said hasn't been said. And let us go on with our evening. Why not? Imagine I've had a fit of hysteria — and that I've come round."

"Yes," she said, and abruptly she liked him enormously. She felt this was the sensible way out of this oddly sinister situation.

He still watched her and questioned her.

"And let us have a talk about this — some other time. Somewhere, where we can talk without interruption. Will you?"

She thought, and it seemed to him she had never looked so self-disciplined and deliberate and beautiful. "Yes," she said, "that is what we ought to do." But now she doubted again of the quality of the armistice they had just made.

He had a wild impulse to shout. "Agreed," he said with queer exaltation, and his grip tightened on her hand. "And to-night we are friends?"

“We are friends,” said Ann Veronica, and drew her hand quickly away from him.

“To-night we are as we have always been. Except that this music we have been swimming in is divine. While I have been pestering you, have you heard it? At least, you heard the first act. And all the third act is love-sick music. Tristan dying and Isolde coming to crown his death. Wagner had just been in love when he wrote it all. It begins with that queer piccolo solo. Now I shall never hear it but what this evening will come pouring back over me.”

The lights sank, the prelude to the third act was beginning, the music rose and fell in crowded intimations of lovers separated — lovers separated with scars and memories between them, and the curtain went reefing up to display Tristan lying wounded on his couch and the shepherd crouching with his pipe.

Part 2

They had their explanations the next evening, but they were explanations in quite other terms than Ann Veronica had anticipated, quite other and much more startling and illuminating terms. Ramage came for her at her lodgings, and she met him graciously and kindly as a queen who knows she must needs give sorrow to a faithful liege. She was unusually soft and gentle in her manner to him. He was wearing a new silk hat, with a slightly more generous brim than its predecessor, and it suited his type of face, robbed his dark eyes a little of their aggressiveness and gave him a solid and dignified and benevolent air. A faint anticipation of triumph showed in his manner and a subdued excitement.

“We’ll go to a place where we can have a private room,” he said. “Then — then we can talk things out.”

So they went this time to the Rococo, in Germain Street, and upstairs to a landing upon which stood a bald-headed waiter with whiskers like a French admiral and discretion beyond all limits in his

manner. He seemed to have expected them. He ushered them with an amiable flat hand into a minute apartment with a little gas-stove, a silk crimson-covered sofa, and a bright little table, gay with napery and hot-house flowers.

"Odd little room," said Ann Veronica, dimly apprehending that obtrusive sofa.

"One can talk without undertones, so to speak," said Ramage. "It's — private." He stood looking at the preparations before them with an unusual preoccupation of manner, then roused himself to take her jacket, a little awkwardly, and hand it to the waiter who hung it in the corner of the room. It appeared he had already ordered dinner and wine, and the whiskered waiter waved in his subordinate with the soup forthwith.

"I'm going to talk of indifferent themes," said Ramage, a little fussily, "until these interruptions of the service are over. Then — then we shall be together.... How did you like Tristan?"

Ann Veronica paused the fraction of a second before her reply came.

"I thought much of it amazingly beautiful."

"Isn't it. And to think that man got it all out of the poorest little love-story for a respectable titled lady! Have you read of it?"

"Never."

"It gives in a nutshell the miracle of art and the imagination. You get this queer irascible musician quite impossibly and unfortunately in love with a wealthy patroness, and then out of his brain comes THIS, a tapestry of glorious music, setting out love to lovers, lovers who love in spite of all that is wise and respectable and right."

Ann Veronica thought. She did not want to seem to shrink from conversation, but all sorts of odd questions were running through her mind. "I wonder why people in love are so defiant, so careless of other considerations?"

"The very hares grow brave. I suppose because it IS the chief thing in life." He stopped and said earnestly: "It is the chief thing in life, and everything else goes down before it. Everything, my dear, everything!... But we have got to talk upon indifferent themes until we have done with this blond young gentleman from Bavaria...."

The dinner came to an end at last, and the whiskered waiter

presented his bill and evacuated the apartment and closed the door behind him with an almost ostentatious discretion. Ramage stood up, and suddenly turned the key in the door in an off-hand manner. “Now,” he said, “no one can blunder in upon us. We are alone and we can say and do what we please. We two.” He stood still, looking at her.

Ann Veronica tried to seem absolutely unconcerned. The turning of the key startled her, but she did not see how she could make an objection. She felt she had stepped into a world of unknown usages.

“I have waited for this,” he said, and stood quite still, looking at her until the silence became oppressive.

“Won’t you sit down,” she said, “and tell me what you want to say?” Her voice was flat and faint. Suddenly she had become afraid. She struggled not to be afraid. After all, what could happen?

He was looking at her very hard and earnestly. “Ann Veronica,” he said.

Then before she could say a word to arrest him he was at her side. “Don’t!” she said, weakly, as he had bent down and put one arm about her and seized her hands with his disengaged hand and kissed her — kissed her almost upon her lips. He seemed to do ten things before she could think to do one, to leap upon her and take possession.

Ann Veronica’s universe, which had never been altogether so respectful to her as she could have wished, gave a shout and whirled head over heels. Everything in the world had changed for her. If hate could kill, Ramage would have been killed by a flash of hate. “Mr. Ramage!” she cried, and struggled to her feet.

“My darling!” he said, clasping her resolutely in his arms, “my dearest!”

“Mr. Ramage!” she began, and his mouth sealed hers and his breath was mixed with her breath. Her eye met his four inches away, and his was glaring, immense, and full of resolution, a stupendous monster of an eye.

She shut her lips hard, her jaw hardened, and she set herself to struggle with him. She wrenched her head away from his grip and got her arm between his chest and hers. They began to wrestle fiercely. Each became frightfully aware of the other as a plastic

energetic body, of the strong muscles of neck against cheek, of hands gripping shoulder-blade and waist. “How dare you!” she panted, with her world screaming and grimacing insult at her. “How dare you!”

They were both astonished at the other’s strength. Perhaps Ramage was the more astonished. Ann Veronica had been an ardent hockey player and had had a course of jiu-jitsu in the High School. Her defence ceased rapidly to be in any sense ladylike, and became vigorous and effective; a strand of black hair that had escaped its hairpins came athwart Ramage’s eyes, and then the knuckles of a small but very hardly clinched fist had thrust itself with extreme effectiveness and painfulness under his jawbone and ear.

“Let go!” said Ann Veronica, through her teeth, strenuously inflicting agony, and he cried out sharply and let go and receded a pace.

“NOW!” said Ann Veronica. “Why did you dare to do that?”

Part 3

Each of them stared at the other, set in a universe that had changed its system of values with kaleidoscopic completeness. She was flushed, and her eyes were bright and angry; her breath came sobbing, and her hair was all abroad in wandering strands of black. He too was flushed and ruffled; one side of his collar had slipped from its stud and he held a hand to the corner of his jaw.

“You vixen!” said Mr. Ramage, speaking the simplest first thought of his heart.

“You had no right—” panted Ann Veronica.

“Why on earth,” he asked, “did you hurt me like that?”

Ann Veronica did her best to think she had not deliberately attempted to cause him pain. She ignored his question.

“I never dreamt!” she said.

“What on earth did you expect me to do, then?” he asked.

Part 4

Interpretation came pouring down upon her almost blindingly; she understood now the room, the waiter, the whole situation. She understood. She leaped to a world of shabby knowledge, of furtive base realizations. She wanted to cry out upon herself for the uttermost fool in existence.

"I thought you wanted to have a talk to me," she said.

"I wanted to make love to you.

"You knew it," he added, in her momentary silence.

"You said you were in love with me," said Ann Veronica; "I wanted to explain—"

"I said I loved and wanted you." The brutality of his first astonishment was evaporating. "I am in love with you. You know I am in love with you. And then you go — and half throttle me.... I believe you've crushed a gland or something. It feels like it."

"I am sorry," said Ann Veronica. "What else was I to do?"

For some seconds she stood watching him and both were thinking very quickly. Her state of mind would have seemed altogether discreditable to her grandmother. She ought to have been disposed to faint and scream at all these happenings; she ought to have maintained a front of outraged dignity to veil the sinking of her heart. I would like to have to tell it so. But indeed that is not at all a good description of her attitude. She was an indignant queen, no doubt she was alarmed and disgusted within limits; but she was highly excited, and there was something, some low adventurous strain in her being, some element, subtle at least if base, going about the rioting ways and crowded insurgent meeting-places of her mind declaring that the whole affair was after all — they are the only words that express it — a very great lark indeed. At the bottom of her heart she was not a bit afraid of Ramage. She had unaccountable gleams of sympathy with and liking for him. And the grotesquest fact was that she did not so much loathe, as experience with a quite critical condemnation this

strange sensation of being kissed. Never before had any human being kissed her lips....

It was only some hours after that these ambiguous elements evaporated and vanished and loathing came, and she really began to be thoroughly sick and ashamed of the whole disgraceful quarrel and scuffle.

He, for his part, was trying to grasp the series of unexpected reactions that had so wrecked their tete-a-tete. He had meant to be master of his fate that evening and it had escaped him altogether. It had, as it were, blown up at the concussion of his first step. It dawned upon him that he had been abominably used by Ann Veronica.

"Look here," he said, "I brought you here to make love to you."

"I didn't understand — your idea of making love. You had better let me go again."

"Not yet," he said. "I do love you. I love you all the more for the streak of sheer devil in you.... You are the most beautiful, the most desirable thing I have ever met in this world. It was good to kiss you, even at the price. But, by Jove! you are fierce! You are like those Roman women who carry stilettos in their hair."

"I came here to talk reasonably, Mr. Ramage. It is abominable—"

"What is the use of keeping up this note of indignation, Ann Veronica? Here I am! I am your lover, burning for you. I mean to have you! Don't frown me off now. Don't go back into Victorian respectability and pretend you don't know and you can't think and all the rest of it. One comes at last to the step from dreams to reality. This is your moment. No one will ever love you as I love you now. I have been dreaming of your body and you night after night. I have been imaging—"

"Mr. Ramage, I came here — I didn't suppose for one moment you would dare—"

"Nonsense! That is your mistake! You are too intellectual. You want to do everything with your mind. You are afraid of kisses. You are afraid of the warmth in your blood. It's just because all that side of your life hasn't fairly begun."

He made a step toward her.

"Mr. Ramage," she said, sharply, "I have to make it plain to you. I don't think you understand. I don't love you. I don't. I can't love

you. I love some one else. It is repulsive. It disgusts me that you should touch me."

He stared in amazement at this new aspect of the situation. "You love some one else?" he repeated.

"I love some one else. I could not dream of loving you."

And then he flashed his whole conception of the relations of men and women upon her in one astonishing question. His hand went with an almost instinctive inquiry to his jawbone again. "Then why the devil," he demanded, "do you let me stand you dinners and the opera — and why do you come to a cabinet particuliar with me?"

He became radiant with anger. "You mean to tell me" he said, "that you have a lover? While I have been keeping you! Yes — keeping you!"

This view of life he hurled at her as if it were an offensive missile. It stunned her. She felt she must fly before it and could no longer do so. She did not think for one moment what interpretation he might put upon the word "lover."

"Mr. Ramage," she said, clinging to her one point, "I want to get out of this horrible little room. It has all been a mistake. I have been stupid and foolish. Will you unlock that door?"

"Never!" he said. "Confound your lover! Look here! Do you really think I am going to run you while he makes love to you? No fear! I never heard of anything so cool. If he wants you, let him get you. You're mine. I've paid for you and helped you, and I'm going to conquer you somehow — if I have to break you to do it. Hitherto you've seen only my easy, kindly side. But now confound it! how can you prevent it? I will kiss you."

"You won't!" said Ann Veronica; with the clearest note of determination.

He seemed to be about to move toward her. She stepped back quickly, and her hand knocked a wine-glass from the table to smash noisily on the floor. She caught at the idea. "If you come a step nearer to me," she said, "I will smash every glass on this table."

"Then, by God!" he said, "you'll be locked up!"

Ann Veronica was disconcerted for a moment. She had a vision of policemen, reproving magistrates, a crowded court, public disgrace. She saw her aunt in tears, her father white-faced and hard hit. "Don't

come nearer!" she said.

There was a discreet knocking at the door, and Ramage's face changed.

"No," she said, under her breath, "you can't face it." And she knew that she was safe.

He went to the door. "It's all right," he said, reassuringly to the inquirer without.

Ann Veronica glanced at the mirror to discover a flushed and dishevelled disorder. She began at once a hasty readjustment of her hair, while Ramage parleyed with inaudible interrogations. "A glass slipped from the table," he explained.... "Non. Fas du tout. Non.... Niente.... Bitte!... Oui, dans la note.... Presently. Presently." That conversation ended and he turned to her again.

"I am going," she said grimly, with three hairpins in her mouth.

She took her hat from the peg in the corner and began to put it on. He regarded that perennial miracle of pinning with wrathful eyes.

"Look here, Ann Veronica," he began. "I want a plain word with you about all this. Do you mean to tell me you didn't understand why I wanted you to come here?"

"Not a bit of it," said Ann Veronica stoutly.

"You didn't expect that I should kiss you?"

"How was I to know that a man would — would think it was possible — when there was nothing — no love?"

"How did I know there wasn't love?"

That silenced her for a moment. "And what on earth," he said, "do you think the world is made of? Why do you think I have been doing things for you? The abstract pleasure of goodness? Are you one of the members of that great white sisterhood that takes and does not give? The good accepting woman! Do you really suppose a girl is entitled to live at free quarters on any man she meets without giving any return?"

"I thought," said Ann Veronica, "you were my friend."

"Friend! What have a man and a girl in common to make them friends? Ask that lover of yours! And even with friends, would you have it all Give on one side and all Take on the other?... Does HE know I keep you?... You won't have a man's lips near you, but you'll eat out of his hand fast enough."

Ann Veronica was stung to helpless anger.

"Mr. Ramage," she cried, "you are outrageous! You understand nothing. You are — horrible. Will you let me go out of this room?"

"No," cried Ramage; "hear me out! I'll have that satisfaction, anyhow. You women, with your tricks of evasion, you're a sex of swindlers. You have all the instinctive dexterity of parasites. You make yourself charming for help. You climb by disappointing men. This lover of yours—"

"He doesn't know!" cried Ann Veronica.

"Well, you know."

Ann Veronica could have wept with vexation. Indeed, a note of weeping broke her voice for a moment as she burst out, "You know as well as I do that money was a loan!"

"Loan!"

"You yourself called it a loan!"

"Euphuism. We both understood that."

"You shall have every penny of it back."

"I'll frame it — when I get it."

"I'll pay you if I have to work at shirt-making at threepence an hour."

"You'll never pay me. You think you will. It's your way of glossing over the ethical position. It's the sort of way a woman always does gloss over her ethical positions. You're all dependents — all of you. By instinct. Only you good ones — shirk. You shirk a straightforward and decent return for what you get from us — taking refuge in purity and delicacy and such-like when it comes to payment."

"Mr. Ramage," said Ann Veronica, "I want to go — NOW!"

Part 5

But she did not get away just then.

Ramage's bitterness passed as abruptly as his aggression. "Oh,

Ann Veronica!" he cried, "I cannot let you go like this! You don't understand. You can't possibly understand!"

He began a confused explanation, a perplexing contradictory apology for his urgency and wrath. He loved Ann Veronica, he said; he was so mad to have her that he defeated himself, and did crude and alarming and senseless things. His vicious abusiveness vanished. He suddenly became eloquent and plausible. He did make her perceive something of the acute, tormenting desire for her that had arisen in him and possessed him. She stood, as it were, directed doorward, with her eyes watching every movement, listening to him, repelled by him and yet dimly understanding.

At any rate he made it very clear that night that there was an ineradicable discord in life, a jarring something that must shatter all her dreams of a way of living for women that would enable them to be free and spacious and friendly with men, and that was the passionate predisposition of men to believe that the love of women can be earned and won and controlled and compelled.

He flung aside all his talk of help and disinterested friendship as though it had never been even a disguise between them, as though from the first it was no more than a fancy dress they had put quite understandingly upon their relationship. He had set out to win her, and she had let him start. And at the thought of that other lover — he was convinced that that beloved person was a lover, and she found herself unable to say a word to explain to him that this other person, the person she loved, did not even know of her love — Ramage grew angry and savage once more, and returned suddenly to gibe and insult. Men do services for the love of women, and the woman who takes must pay. Such was the simple code that displayed itself in all his thoughts. He left that arid rule clear of the least mist of refinement or delicacy.

That he should pay forty pounds to help this girl who preferred another man was no less in his eyes than a fraud and mockery that made her denial a maddening and outrageous disgrace to him. And this though he was evidently passionately in love with her.

For a while he threatened her. "You have put all your life in my hands," he declared. "Think of that check you endorsed. There it is — against you. I defy you to explain it away. What do you think

people will make of that? What will this lover of yours make of that?"

At intervals Ann Veronica demanded to go, declaring her undying resolve to repay him at any cost, and made short movements doorward.

But at last this ordeal was over, and Ramage opened the door. She emerged with a white face and wide-open eyes upon a little, red-lit landing. She went past three keenly observant and ostentatiously preoccupied waiters down the thick-carpeted staircase and out of the Hotel Rococo, that remarkable laboratory of relationships, past a tall porter in blue and crimson, into a cool, clear night.

Part 6

When Ann Veronica reached her little bed-sitting-room again, every nerve in her body was quivering with shame and self-disgust.

She threw hat and coat on the bed and sat down before the fire.

"And now," she said, splintering the surviving piece of coal into indignant flame-spurting fragments with one dexterous blow, "what am I to do?

"I'm in a hole! — mess is a better word, expresses it better. I'm in a mess — a nasty mess! a filthy mess! Oh, no end of a mess!

"Do you hear, Ann Veronica? — you're in a nasty, filthy, unforgivable mess!

"Haven't I just made a silly mess of things?

"Forty pounds! I haven't got twenty!"

She got up, stamped with her foot, and then, suddenly remembering the lodger below, sat down and wrenched off her boots.

"This is what comes of being a young woman up to date. By Jove! I'm beginning to have my doubts about freedom!

"You silly young woman, Ann Veronica! You silly young woman! The smeariness of the thing!

"The smeariness of this sort of thing!... Mauled about!"

She fell to rubbing her insulted lips savagely with the back of her hand. “Ugh!” she said.

“The young women of Jane Austen’s time didn’t get into this sort of scrape! At least — one thinks so.... I wonder if some of them did — and it didn’t get reported. Aunt Jane had her quiet moments. Most of them didn’t, anyhow. They were properly brought up, and sat still and straight, and took the luck fate brought them as gentlewomen should. And they had an idea of what men were like behind all their nicety. They knew they were all Bogey in disguise. I didn’t! I didn’t! After all—”

For a time her mind ran on daintiness and its defensive restraints as though it was the one desirable thing. That world of fine printed cambrics and escorted maidens, of delicate secondary meanings and refined allusiveness, presented itself to her imagination with the brightness of a lost paradise, as indeed for many women it is a lost paradise.

“I wonder if there is anything wrong with my manners,” she said. “I wonder if I’ve been properly brought up. If I had been quite quiet and white and dignified, wouldn’t it have been different? Would he have dared?...”

For some creditable moments in her life Ann Veronica was utterly disgusted with herself; she was wrung with a passionate and belated desire to move gently, to speak softly and ambiguously — to be, in effect, prim.

Horrible details recurred to her.

“Why, among other things, did I put my knuckles in his neck — deliberately to hurt him?”

She tried to sound the humorous note.

“Are you aware, Ann Veronica, you nearly throttled that gentleman?”

Then she reviled her own foolish way of putting it.

“You ass and imbecile, Ann Veronica! You female cad! Cad! Cad!... Why aren’t you folded up clean in lavender — as every young woman ought to be? What have you been doing with yourself?...”

She raked into the fire with the poker.

“All of which doesn’t help me in the slightest degree to pay back

that money."

That night was the most intolerable one that Ann Veronica had ever spent. She washed her face with unwonted elaboration before she went to bed. This time, there was no doubt, she did not sleep. The more she disentangled the lines of her situation the deeper grew her self-disgust. Occasionally the mere fact of lying in bed became unendurable, and she rolled out and marched about her room and whispered abuse of herself — usually until she hit against some article of furniture.

Then she would have quiet times, in which she would say to herself, "Now look here! Let me think it all out!"

For the first time, it seemed to her, she faced the facts of a woman's position in the world — the meagre realities of such freedom as it permitted her, the almost unavoidable obligation to some individual man under which she must labor for even a foothold in the world. She had flung away from her father's support with the finest assumption of personal independence. And here she was — in a mess because it had been impossible for her to avoid leaning upon another man. She had thought — What had she thought? That this dependence of women was but an illusion which needed only to be denied to vanish. She had denied it with vigor, and here she was!

She did not so much exhaust this general question as pass from it to her insoluble individual problem again: "What am I to do?"

She wanted first of all to fling the forty pounds back into Ramage's face. But she had spent nearly half of it, and had no conception of how such a sum could be made good again. She thought of all sorts of odd and desperate expedients, and with passionate petulance rejected them all.

She took refuge in beating her pillow and inventing insulting epithets for herself. She got up, drew up her blind, and stared out of window at a dawn-cold vision of chimneys for a time, and then went and sat on the edge of her bed. What was the alternative to going home? No alternative appeared in that darkness.

It seemed intolerable that she should go home and admit herself beaten. She did most urgently desire to save her face in Morningside Park, and for long hours she could think of no way of putting it that would not be in the nature of unconditional admission of defeat.

“I’d rather go as a chorus-girl,” she said.

She was not very clear about the position and duties of a chorus-girl, but it certainly had the air of being a last desperate resort. There sprang from that a vague hope that perhaps she might extort a capitulation from her father by a threat to seek that position, and then with overwhelming clearness it came to her that whatever happened she would never be able to tell her father about her debt. The completest capitulation would not wipe out that trouble. And she felt that if she went home it was imperative to pay. She would always be going to and fro up the Avenue, getting glimpses of Ramage, seeing him in trains....

For a time she promenaded the room.

“Why did I ever take that loan? An idiot girl in an asylum would have known better than that!

“Vulgarity of soul and innocence of mind — the worst of all conceivable combinations. I wish some one would kill Ramage by accident!...

“But then they would find that check endorsed in his bureau....

“I wonder what he will do?” She tried to imagine situations that might arise out of Ramage’s antagonism, for he had been so bitter and savage that she could not believe that he would leave things as they were.

The next morning she went out with her post-office savings bank-book, and telegraphed for a warrant to draw out all the money she had in the world. It amounted to two-and-twenty pounds. She addressed an envelope to Ramage, and scrawled on a half-sheet of paper, “The rest shall follow.” The money would be available in the afternoon, and she would send him four five-pound notes. The rest she meant to keep for her immediate necessities. A little relieved by this step toward reinstatement, she went on to the Imperial College to forget her muddle of problems for a time, if she could, in the presence of Capes.

Part 7

For a time the biological laboratory was full of healing virtue. Her sleepless night had left her languid but not stupefied, and for an hour or so the work distracted her altogether from her troubles.

Then, after Capes had been through her work and had gone on, it came to her that the fabric of this life of hers was doomed to almost immediate collapse; that in a little while these studies would cease, and perhaps she would never set eyes on him again. After that consolations fled.

The overnight nervous strain began to tell; she became inattentive to the work before her, and it did not get on. She felt sleepy and unusually irritable. She lunched at a creamery in Great Portland Street, and as the day was full of wintry sunshine, spent the rest of the lunch-hour in a drowsy gloom, which she imagined to be thought upon the problems of her position, on a seat in Regent's Park. A girl of fifteen or sixteen gave her a handbill that she regarded as a tract until she saw "Votes for Women" at the top. That turned her mind to the more generalized aspects of her perplexities again. She had never been so disposed to agree that the position of women in the modern world is intolerable.

Capes joined the students at tea, and displayed himself in an impish mood that sometimes possessed him. He did not notice that Ann Veronica was preoccupied and heavy-eyed. Miss Klegg raised the question of women's suffrage, and he set himself to provoke a duel between her and Miss Garvice. The youth with the hair brushed back and the spectacled Scotchman joined in the fray for and against the women's vote.

Ever and again Capes appealed to Ann Veronica. He liked to draw her in, and she did her best to talk. But she did not talk readily, and in order to say something she plunged a little, and felt she plunged. Capes scored back with an uncompromising vigor that was his way of complimenting her intelligence. But this afternoon it discovered an unusual vein of irritability in her. He had been reading Belfort Bax, and declared himself a convert. He contrasted the lot of women in general with the lot of men, presented men as patient, self-immolating martyrs, and women as the pampered favorites of Nature.

A vein of conviction mingled with his burlesque.

For a time he and Miss Klegg contradicted one another.

The question ceased to be a tea-table talk, and became suddenly tragically real for Ann Veronica. There he sat, cheerfully friendly in his sex's freedom — the man she loved, the one man she cared should unlock the way to the wide world for her imprisoned feminine possibilities, and he seemed regardless that she stifled under his eyes; he made a jest of all this passionate insurgence of the souls of women against the fate of their conditions.

Miss Garvice repeated again, and almost in the same words she used at every discussion, her contribution to the great question.

She thought that women were not made for the struggle and turmoil of life — their place was the little world, the home; that their power lay not in votes but in influence over men and in making the minds of their children fine and splendid.

"Women should understand men's affairs, perhaps," said Miss Garvice, "but to mingle in them is just to sacrifice that power of influencing they can exercise now."

"There IS something sound in that position," said Capes, intervening as if to defend Miss Garvice against a possible attack from Ann Veronica. "It may not be just and so forth, but, after all, it is how things are. Women are not in the world in the same sense that men are — fighting individuals in a scramble. I don't see how they can be. Every home is a little recess, a niche, out of the world of business and competition, in which women and the future shelter."

"A little pit!" said Ann Veronica; "a little prison!"

"It's just as often a little refuge. Anyhow, that is how things are."

"And the man stands as the master at the mouth of the den."

"As sentinel. You forget all the mass of training and tradition and instinct that go to make him a tolerable master. Nature is a mother; her sympathies have always been feminist, and she has tempered the man to the shorn woman."

"I wish," said Ann Veronica, with sudden anger, "that you could know what it is to live in a pit!"

She stood up as she spoke, and put down her cup beside Miss Garvice's. She addressed Capes as though she spoke to him alone.

"I can't endure it," she said.

Every one turned to her in astonishment.

She felt she had to go on. “No man can realize,” she said, “what that pit can be. The way — the way we are led on! We are taught to believe we are free in the world, to think we are queens.... Then we find out. We find out no man will treat a woman fairly as man to man — no man. He wants you — or he doesn’t; and then he helps some other woman against you.... What you say is probably all true and necessary.... But think of the disillusionment! Except for our sex we have minds like men, desires like men. We come out into the world, some of us—”

She paused. Her words, as she said them, seemed to her to mean nothing, and there was so much that struggled for expression. “Women are mocked,” she said. “Whenever they try to take hold of life a man intervenes.”

She felt, with a sudden horror, that she might weep. She wished she had not stood up. She wondered wildly why she had stood up. No one spoke, and she was impelled to flounder on. “Think of the mockery!” she said. “Think how dumb we find ourselves and stifled! I know we seem to have a sort of freedom.... Have you ever tried to run and jump in petticoats, Mr. Capes? Well, think what it must be to live in them — soul and mind and body! It’s fun for a man to jest at our position.”

“I wasn’t jesting,” said Capes, abruptly.

She stood face to face with him, and his voice cut across her speech and made her stop abruptly. She was sore and overstrung, and it was intolerable to her that he should stand within three yards of her unsuspectingly, with an incalculably vast power over her happiness. She was sore with the perplexities of her preposterous position. She was sick of herself, of her life, of everything but him; and for him all her masked and hidden being was crying out.

She stopped abruptly at the sound of his voice, and lost the thread of what she was saying. In the pause she realized the attention of the others converged upon her, and that the tears were brimming over her eyes. She felt a storm of emotion surging up within her. She became aware of the Scotch student regarding her with stupendous amazement, a tea-cup poised in one hairy hand and his faceted glasses showing a various enlargement of segments of his eye.

The door into the passage offered itself with an irresistible invitation — the one alternative to a public, inexplicable passion of weeping.

Capes flashed to an understanding of her intention, sprang to his feet, and opened the door for her retreat.

Part 8

"Why should I ever come back?" she said to herself, as she went down the staircase.

She went to the post-office and drew out and sent off her money to Ramage. And then she came out into the street, sure only of one thing — that she could not return directly to her lodgings. She wanted air — and the distraction of having moving and changing things about her. The evenings were beginning to draw out, and it would not be dark for an hour. She resolved to walk across the Park to the Zoological gardens, and so on by way of Primrose Hill to Hampstead Heath. There she would wander about in the kindly darkness. And think things out....

Presently she became aware of footsteps hurrying after her, and glanced back to find Miss Klegg, a little out of breath, in pursuit.

Ann Veronica halted a pace, and Miss Klegg came alongside.

"Do YOU go across the Park?"

"Not usually. But I'm going to-day. I want a walk."

"I'm not surprised at it. I thought Mr. Capes most trying."

"Oh, it wasn't that. I've had a headache all day."

"I thought Mr. Capes most unfair," Miss Klegg went on in a small, even voice; "MOST unfair! I'm glad you spoke out as you did."

"I didn't mind that little argument."

"You gave it him well. What you said wanted saying. After you went he got up and took refuge in the preparation-room. Or else *I* would have finished him."

Ann Veronica said nothing, and Miss Klegg went on: “He very often IS — most unfair. He has a way of sitting on people. He wouldn’t like it if people did it to him. He jumps the words out of your mouth; he takes hold of what you have to say before you have had time to express it properly.”

Pause.

“I suppose he’s frightfully clever,” said Miss Klegg.

“He’s a Fellow of the Royal Society, and he can’t be much over thirty,” said Miss Klegg.

“He writes very well,” said Ann Veronica.

“He can’t be more than thirty. He must have married when he was quite a young man.”

“Married?” said Ann Veronica.

“Didn’t you know he was married?” asked Miss Klegg, and was struck by a thought that made her glance quickly at her companion.

Ann Veronica had no answer for a moment. She turned her head away sharply. Some automaton within her produced in a quite unfamiliar voice the remark, “They’re playing football.”

“It’s too far for the ball to reach us,” said Miss Klegg.

“I didn’t know Mr. Capes was married,” said Ann Veronica, resuming the conversation with an entire disappearance of her former lassitude.

“Oh yes,” said Miss Klegg; “I thought every one knew.”

“No,” said Ann Veronica, offhandedly. “Never heard anything of it.”

“I thought every one knew. I thought every one had heard about it.”

“But why?”

“He’s married — and, I believe, living separated from his wife. There was a case, or something, some years ago.”

“What case?”

“A divorce — or something — I don’t know. But I have heard that he almost had to leave the schools. If it hadn’t been for Professor Russell standing up for him, they say he would have had to leave.”

“Was he divorced, do you mean?”

“No, but he got himself mixed up in a divorce case. I forget the particulars, but I know it was something very disagreeable. It was

among artistic people."

Ann Veronica was silent for a while.

"I thought every one had heard," said Miss Klegg. "Or I wouldn't have said anything about it."

"I suppose all men," said Ann Veronica, in a tone of detached criticism, "get some such entanglement. And, anyhow, it doesn't matter to us." She turned abruptly at right angles to the path they followed. "This is my way back to my side of the Park," she said.

"I thought you were coming right across the Park."

"Oh no," said Ann Veronica; "I have some work to do. I just wanted a breath of air. And they'll shut the gates presently. It's not far from twilight."

Part 9

She was sitting brooding over her fire about ten o'clock that night when a sealed and registered envelope was brought up to her.

She opened it and drew out a letter, and folded within it were the notes she had sent off to Ramage that day. The letter began:

"MY DEAREST GIRL, — I cannot let you do this foolish thing —"

She crumpled notes and letter together in her hand, and then with a passionate gesture flung them into the fire. Instantly she seized the poker and made a desperate effort to get them out again. But she was only able to save a corner of the letter. The twenty pounds burned with avidity.

She remained for some seconds crouching at the fender, poker in hand.

"By Jove!" she said, standing up at last, "that about finishes it, Ann Veronica!"

CHAPTER THE TENTH

THE SUFFRAGETTES

Part 1

"There is only one way out of all this," said Ann Veronica, sitting up in her little bed in the darkness and biting at her nails.

"I thought I was just up against Morningside Park and father, but it's the whole order of things — the whole blessed order of things...."

She shivered. She frowned and gripped her hands about her knees very tightly. Her mind developed into savage wrath at the present conditions of a woman's life.

"I suppose all life is an affair of chances. But a woman's life is all chance. It's artificially chance. Find your man, that's the rule. All the rest is humbug and delicacy. He's the handle of life for you. He will let you live if it pleases him....

"Can't it be altered?

"I suppose an actress is free?..."

She tried to think of some altered state of affairs in which these monstrous limitations would be alleviated, in which women would stand on their own feet in equal citizenship with men. For a time she brooded on the ideals and suggestions of the Socialists, on the vague intimations of an Endowment of Motherhood, of a complete relaxation of that intense individual dependence for women which is woven into the existing social order. At the back of her mind there seemed always one irrelevant qualifying spectator whose presence she sought to disregard. She would not look at him, would not think of him; when her mind wavered, then she muttered to herself in the darkness so as to keep hold of her generalizations.

"It is true. It is no good waiving the thing; it is true. Unless women are never to be free, never to be even respected, there must be a generation of martyrs.... Why shouldn't we be martyrs? There's nothing else for most of us, anyhow. It's a sort of blacklegging to want to have a life of one's own...."

She repeated, as if she answered an objector: "A sort of

blacklegging.

"A sex of blacklegging clients."

Her mind diverged to other aspects, and another type of womanhood.

"Poor little Miniver! What can she be but what she is?... Because she states her case in a tangle, drags it through swamps of nonsense, it doesn't alter the fact that she is right."

That phrase about dragging the truth through swamps of nonsense she remembered from Capes. At the recollection that it was his, she seemed to fall through a thin surface, as one might fall through the crust of a lava into glowing depths. She wallowed for a time in the thought of Capes, unable to escape from his image and the idea of his presence in her life.

She let her mind run into dreams of that cloud paradise of an altered world in which the Goopes and Minivers, the Fabians and reforming people believed. Across that world was written in letters of light, "Endowment of Motherhood." Suppose in some complex yet conceivable way women were endowed, were no longer economically and socially dependent on men. "If one was free," she said, "one could go to him.... This vile hovering to catch a man's eye!... One could go to him and tell him one loved him. I want to love him. A little love from him would be enough. It would hurt no one. It would not burden him with any obligation."

She groaned aloud and bowed her forehead to her knees. She floundered deep. She wanted to kiss his feet. His feet would have the firm texture of his hands.

Then suddenly her spirit rose in revolt. "I will not have this slavery," she said. "I will not have this slavery."

She shook her fist ceilingward. "Do you hear!" she said "whatever you are, wherever you are! I will not be slave to the thought of any man, slave to the customs of any time. Confound this slavery of sex! I am a man! I will get this under if I am killed in doing it!"

She scowled into the cold blacknesses about her.

"Manning," she said, and contemplated a figure of inaggressive persistence. "No!" Her thoughts had turned in a new direction.

"It doesn't matter," she said, after a long interval, "if they are absurd. They mean something. They mean everything that women

can mean — except submission. The vote is only the beginning, the necessary beginning. If we do not begin—"

She had come to a resolution. Abruptly she got out of bed, smoothed her sheet and straightened her pillow and lay down, and fell almost instantly asleep.

Part 2

The next morning was as dark and foggy as if it was mid-November instead of early March. Ann Veronica woke rather later than usual, and lay awake for some minutes before she remembered a certain resolution she had taken in the small hours. Then instantly she got out of bed and proceeded to dress.

She did not start for the Imperial College. She spent the morning up to ten in writing a series of unsuccessful letters to Ramage, which she tore up unfinished; and finally she desisted and put on her jacket and went out into the lamp-lit obscurity and slimy streets. She turned a resolute face southward.

She followed Oxford Street into Holborn, and then she inquired for Chancery Lane. There she sought and at last found 107A, one of those heterogeneous piles of offices which occupy the eastern side of the lane. She studied the painted names of firms and persons and enterprises on the wall, and discovered that the Women's Bond of Freedom occupied several contiguous suites on the first floor. She went up-stairs and hesitated between four doors with ground-glass panes, each of which professed "The Women's Bond of Freedom" in neat black letters. She opened one and found herself in a large untidy room set with chairs that were a little disarranged as if by an overnight meeting. On the walls were notice-boards bearing clusters of newspaper slips, three or four big posters of monster meetings, one of which Ann Veronica had attended with Miss Miniver, and a series of announcements in purple copying-ink, and in one corner was a pile of banners. There was no one at all in this room, but

through the half-open door of one of the small apartments that gave upon it she had a glimpse of two very young girls sitting at a littered table and writing briskly.

She walked across to this apartment and, opening the door a little wider, discovered a press section of the movement at work.

"I want to inquire," said Ann Veronica.

"Next door," said a spectacled young person of seventeen or eighteen, with an impatient indication of the direction.

In the adjacent apartment Ann Veronica found a middle-aged woman with a tired face under the tired hat she wore, sitting at a desk opening letters while a dusky, untidy girl of eight-or nine-and-twenty hammered industriously at a typewriter. The tired woman looked up in inquiring silence at Ann Veronica's diffident entry.

"I want to know more about this movement," said Ann Veronica.

"Are you with us?" said the tired woman.

"I don't know," said Ann Veronica; "I think I am. I want very much to do something for women. But I want to know what you are doing."

The tired woman sat still for a moment. "You haven't come here to make a lot of difficulties?" she asked.

"No," said Ann Veronica, "but I want to know."

The tired woman shut her eyes tightly for a moment, and then looked with them at Ann Veronica. "What can you do?" she asked.

"Do?"

"Are you prepared to do things for us? Distribute bills? Write letters? Interrupt meetings? Canvass at elections? Face dangers?"

"If I am satisfied—"

"If we satisfy you?"

"Then, if possible, I would like to go to prison."

"It isn't nice going to prison."

"It would suit me."

"It isn't nice getting there."

"That's a question of detail," said Ann Veronica.

The tired woman looked quietly at her. "What are your objections?" she said.

"It isn't objections exactly. I want to know what you are doing; how you think this work of yours really does serve women."

“We are working for the equal citizenship of men and women,” said the tired woman. “Women have been and are treated as the inferiors of men, we want to make them their equals.”

“Yes,” said Ann Veronica, “I agree to that. But—”

The tired woman raised her eyebrows in mild protest.

“Isn’t the question more complicated than that?” said Ann Veronica.

“You could have a talk to Miss Kitty Brett this afternoon, if you liked. Shall I make an appointment for you?”

Miss Kitty Brett was one of the most conspicuous leaders of the movement. Ann Veronica snatched at the opportunity, and spent most of the intervening time in the Assyrian Court of the British Museum, reading and thinking over a little book upon the feminist movement the tired woman had made her buy. She got a bun and some cocoa in the little refreshment-room, and then wandered through the galleries up-stairs, crowded with Polynesian idols and Polynesian dancing-garments, and all the simple immodest accessories to life in Polynesia, to a seat among the mummies. She was trying to bring her problems to a head, and her mind insisted upon being even more discursive and atmospheric than usual. It generalized everything she put to it.

“Why should women be dependent on men?” she asked; and the question was at once converted into a system of variations upon the theme of “Why are things as they are?”— “Why are human beings viviparous?”— “Why are people hungry thrice a day?”— “Why does one faint at danger?”

She stood for a time looking at the dry limbs and still human face of that desiccated unwrapped mummy from the very beginnings of social life. It looked very patient, she thought, and a little self-satisfied. It looked as if it had taken its world for granted and prospered on that assumption — a world in which children were trained to obey their elders and the wills of women over-ruled as a matter of course. It was wonderful to think this thing had lived, had felt and suffered. Perhaps once it had desired some other human being intolerably. Perhaps some one had kissed the brow that was now so cadaverous, rubbed that sunken cheek with loving fingers, held that stringy neck with passionately living hands. But all of that

was forgotten. “In the end,” it seemed to be thinking, “they embalmed me with the utmost respect — sound spices chosen to endure — the best! I took my world as I found it. THINGS ARE SO!”

Part 3

Ann Veronica’s first impression of Kitty Brett was that she was aggressive and disagreeable; her next that she was a person of amazing persuasive power. She was perhaps three-and-twenty, and very pink and healthy-looking, showing a great deal of white and rounded neck above her business-like but altogether feminine blouse, and a good deal of plump, gesticulating forearm out of her short sleeve. She had animated dark blue-gray eyes under her fine eyebrows, and dark brown hair that rolled back simply and effectively from her broad low forehead. And she was about as capable of intelligent argument as a runaway steam-roller. She was a trained being — trained by an implacable mother to one end.

She spoke with fluent enthusiasm. She did not so much deal with Ann Veronica’s interpolations as dispose of them with quick and use-hardened repartee, and then she went on with a fine directness to sketch the case for her agitation, for that remarkable rebellion of the women that was then agitating the whole world of politics and discussion. She assumed with a kind of mesmeric force all the propositions that Ann Veronica wanted her to define.

“What do we want? What is the goal?” asked Ann Veronica.

“Freedom! Citizenship! And the way to that — the way to everything — is the Vote.”

Ann Veronica said something about a general change of ideas.

“How can you change people’s ideas if you have no power?” said Kitty Brett.

Ann Veronica was not ready enough to deal with that counter-stroke.

“One doesn’t want to turn the whole thing into a mere sex antagonism.”

“When women get justice,” said Kitty Brett, “there will be no sex antagonism. None at all. Until then we mean to keep on hammering away.”

“It seems to me that much of a woman’s difficulties are economic.”

“That will follow,” said Kitty Brett— “that will follow.”

She interrupted as Ann Veronica was about to speak again, with a bright contagious hopefulness. “Everything will follow,” she said.

“Yes,” said Ann Veronica, trying to think where they were, trying to get things plain again that had seemed plain enough in the quiet of the night.

“Nothing was ever done,” Miss Brett asserted, “without a certain element of Faith. After we have got the Vote and are recognized as citizens, then we can come to all these other things.”

Even in the glamour of Miss Brett’s assurance it seemed to Ann Veronica that this was, after all, no more than the gospel of Miss Miniver with a new set of resonances. And like that gospel it meant something, something different from its phrases, something elusive, and yet something that in spite of the superficial incoherence of its phrasing, was largely essentially true. There was something holding women down, holding women back, and if it wasn’t exactly man-made law, man-made law was an aspect of it. There was something indeed holding the whole species back from the imaginable largeness of life....

“The Vote is the symbol of everything,” said Miss Brett.

She made an abrupt personal appeal.

“Oh! please don’t lose yourself in a wilderness of secondary considerations,” she said. “Don’t ask me to tell you all that women can do, all that women can be. There is a new life, different from the old life of dependence, possible. If only we are not divided. If only we work together. This is the one movement that brings women of different classes together for a common purpose. If you could see how it gives them souls, women who have taken things for granted, who have given themselves up altogether to pettiness and vanity....”

“Give me something to do,” said Ann Veronica, interrupting her

persuasions at last. “It has been very kind of you to see me, but I don’t want to sit and talk and use your time any longer. I want to do something. I want to hammer myself against all this that pens women in. I feel that I shall stifle unless I can do something — and do something soon.”

Part 4

It was not Ann Veronica’s fault that the night’s work should have taken upon itself the forms of wild burlesque. She was in deadly earnest in everything she did. It seemed to her the last desperate attack upon the universe that would not let her live as she desired to live, that penned her in and controlled her and directed her and disapproved of her, the same invincible wrappering, the same leaden tyranny of a universe that she had vowed to overcome after that memorable conflict with her father at Morningside Park.

She was listed for the raid — she was informed it was to be a raid upon the House of Commons, though no particulars were given her — and told to go alone to 14, Dexter Street, Westminster, and not to ask any policeman to direct her. 14, Dexter Street, Westminster, she found was not a house but a yard in an obscure street, with big gates and the name of Podgers & Carlo, Carriers and Furniture Removers, thereon. She was perplexed by this, and stood for some seconds in the empty street hesitating, until the appearance of another circumspect woman under the street lamp at the corner reassured her. In one of the big gates was a little door, and she rapped at this. It was immediately opened by a man with light eyelashes and a manner suggestive of restrained passion. “Come right in,” he hissed under his breath, with the true conspirator’s note, closed the door very softly and pointed, “Through there!”

By the meagre light of a gas lamp she perceived a cobbled yard with four large furniture vans standing with horses and lamps alight. A slender young man, wearing glasses, appeared from the shadow of

the nearest van. “Are you A, B, C, or D?” he asked.

“They told me D,” said Ann Veronica.

“Through there,” he said, and pointed with the pamphlet he was carrying.

Ann Veronica found herself in a little stirring crowd of excited women, whispering and tittering and speaking in undertones.

The light was poor, so that she saw their gleaming faces dimly and indistinctly. No one spoke to her. She stood among them, watching them and feeling curiously alien to them. The oblique ruddy lighting distorted them oddly, made queer bars and patches of shadow upon their clothes. “It’s Kitty’s idea,” said one, “we are to go in the vans.”

“Kitty is wonderful,” said another.

“Wonderful!”

“I have always longed for prison service,” said a voice, “always. From the beginning. But it’s only now I’m able to do it.”

A little blond creature close at hand suddenly gave way to a fit of hysterical laughter, and caught up the end of it with a sob.

“Before I took up the Suffrage,” a firm, flat voice remarked, “I could scarcely walk up-stairs without palpitations.”

Some one hidden from Ann Veronica appeared to be marshalling the assembly. “We have to get in, I think,” said a nice little old lady in a bonnet to Ann Veronica, speaking with a voice that quavered a little. “My dear, can you see in this light? I think I would like to get in. Which is C?”

Ann Veronica, with a curious sinking of the heart, regarded the black cavities of the vans. Their doors stood open, and placards with big letters indicated the section assigned to each. She directed the little old woman and then made her way to van D. A young woman with a white badge on her arm stood and counted the sections as they entered their vans.

“When they tap the roof,” she said, in a voice of authority, “you are to come out. You will be opposite the big entrance in Old Palace Yard. It’s the public entrance. You are to make for that and get into the lobby if you can, and so try and reach the floor of the House, crying ‘Votes for Women!’ as you go.”

She spoke like a mistress addressing school-children.

“Don’t bunch too much as you come out,” she added.

“All right?” asked the man with the light eyelashes, suddenly appearing in the doorway. He waited for an instant, wasting an encouraging smile in the imperfect light, and then shut the doors of the van, leaving the women in darkness....

The van started with a jerk and rumbled on its way.

“It’s like Troy!” said a voice of rapture. “It’s exactly like Troy!”

Part 5

So Ann Veronica, enterprising and a little dubious as ever, mingled with the stream of history and wrote her Christian name upon the police-court records of the land.

But out of a belated regard for her father she wrote the surname of some one else.

Some day, when the rewards of literature permit the arduous research required, the Campaign of the Women will find its Carlyle, and the particulars of that marvellous series of exploits by which Miss Brett and her colleagues nagged the whole Western world into the discussion of women’s position become the material for the most delightful and amazing descriptions. At present the world waits for that writer, and the confused record of the newspapers remains the only resource of the curious. When he comes he will do that raid of the pantechnicons the justice it deserves; he will picture the orderly evening scene about the Imperial Legislature in convincing detail, the coming and going of cabs and motor-cabs and broughams through the chill, damp evening into New Palace Yard, the reinforced but untroubled and unsuspecting police about the entries of those great buildings whose square and panelled Victorian Gothic streams up from the glare of the lamps into the murkiness of the night; Big Ben shining overhead, an unassailable beacon, and the incidental traffic of Westminster, cabs, carts, and glowing omnibuses going to and from the bridge. About the Abbey and Abingdon Street

stood the outer pickets and detachments of the police, their attention all directed westward to where the women in Caxton Hall, Westminster, hummed like an angry hive. Squads reached to the very portal of that centre of disturbance. And through all these defences and into Old Palace Yard, into the very vitals of the defenders' position, lumbered the unsuspected vans.

They travelled past the few idle sightseers who had braved the uninviting evening to see what the Suffragettes might be doing; they pulled up unchallenged within thirty yards of those coveted portals.

And then they disgorged.

Were I a painter of subject pictures, I would exhaust all my skill in proportion and perspective and atmosphere upon the august seat of empire, I would present it gray and dignified and immense and respectable beyond any mere verbal description, and then, in vivid black and very small, I would put in those valiantly impertinent vans, squatting at the base of its altitudes and pouring out a swift, straggling rush of ominous little black objects, minute figures of determined women at war with the universe.

Ann Veronica was in their very forefront.

In an instant the expectant calm of Westminster was ended, and the very Speaker in the chair blenched at the sound of the policemen's whistles. The bolder members in the House left their places to go lobbyward, grinning. Others pulled hats over their noses, cowered in their seats, and feigned that all was right with the world. In Old Palace Yard everybody ran. They either ran to see or ran for shelter. Even two Cabinet Ministers took to their heels, grinning insincerely. At the opening of the van doors and the emergence into the fresh air Ann Veronica's doubt and depression gave place to the wildest exhilaration. That same adventurousness that had already buoyed her through crises that would have overwhelmed any normally feminine girl with shame and horror now became uppermost again. Before her was a great Gothic portal. Through that she had to go.

Past her shot the little old lady in the bonnet, running incredibly fast, but otherwise still alertly respectable, and she was making a strange threatening sound as she ran, such as one would use in driving ducks out of a garden— "B-r-r-r-r-r — !" and pawing with

black-gloved hands. The policemen were closing in from the sides to intervene. The little old lady struck like a projectile upon the resounding chest of the foremost of these, and then Ann Veronica had got past and was ascending the steps.

Then most horribly she was clasped about the waist from behind and lifted from the ground.

At that a new element poured into her excitement, an element of wild disgust and terror. She had never experienced anything so disagreeable in her life as the sense of being held helplessly off her feet. She screamed involuntarily — she had never in her life screamed before — and then she began to wriggle and fight like a frightened animal against the men who were holding her.

The affair passed at one leap from a spree to a nightmare of violence and disgust. Her hair got loose, her hat came over one eye, and she had no arm free to replace it. She felt she must suffocate if these men did not put her down, and for a time they would not put her down. Then with an indescribable relief her feet were on the pavement, and she was being urged along by two policemen, who were gripping her wrists in an irresistible expert manner. She was writhing to get her hands loose and found herself gasping with passionate violence, "It's damnable! — damnable!" to the manifest disgust of the fatherly policeman on her right.

Then they had released her arms and were trying to push her away.

"You be off, missie," said the fatherly policeman. "This ain't no place for you."

He pushed her a dozen yards along the greasy pavement with flat, well-trained hands that there seemed to be no opposing. Before her stretched blank spaces, dotted with running people coming toward her, and below them railings and a statue. She almost submitted to this ending of her adventure. But at the word "home" she turned again.

"I won't go home," she said; "I won't!" and she evaded the clutch of the fatherly policeman and tried to thrust herself past him in the direction of that big portal. "Steady on!" he cried.

A diversion was created by the violent struggles of the little old lady. She seemed to be endowed with superhuman strength. A knot

of three policemen in conflict with her staggered toward Ann Veronica's attendants and distracted their attention. "I WILL be arrested! I WON'T go home!" the little old lady was screaming over and over again. They put her down, and she leaped at them; she smote a helmet to the ground.

"You'll have to take her!" shouted an inspector on horseback, and she echoed his cry: "You'll have to take me!" They seized upon her and lifted her, and she screamed. Ann Veronica became violently excited at the sight. "You cowards!" said Ann Veronica, "put her down!" and tore herself from a detaining hand and battered with her fists upon the big red ear and blue shoulder of the policeman who held the little old lady.

So Ann Veronica also was arrested.

And then came the vile experience of being forced and borne along the street to the police-station. Whatever anticipation Ann Veronica had formed of this vanished in the reality. Presently she was going through a swaying, noisy crowd, whose faces grinned and stared pitilessly in the light of the electric standards. "Go it, miss!" cried one. "Kick aht at 'em!" though, indeed, she went now with Christian meekness, resenting only the thrusting policemen's hands. Several people in the crowd seemed to be fighting. Insulting cries became frequent and various, but for the most part she could not understand what was said. "Who'll mind the baby nar?" was one of the night's inspirations, and very frequent. A lean young man in spectacles pursued her for some time, crying "Courage! Courage!" Somebody threw a dab of mud at her, and some of it got down her neck. Immeasurable disgust possessed her. She felt draggled and insulted beyond redemption.

She could not hide her face. She attempted by a sheer act of will to end the scene, to will herself out of it anywhere. She had a horrible glimpse of the once nice little old lady being also borne stationward, still faintly battling and very muddy — one lock of grayish hair straggling over her neck, her face scared, white, but triumphant. Her bonnet dropped off and was trampled into the gutter. A little Cockney recovered it, and made ridiculous attempts to get to her and replace it.

"You must arrest me!" she gasped, breathlessly, insisting insanely

on a point already carried; “you shall!”

The police-station at the end seemed to Ann Veronica like a refuge from unnamable disgraces. She hesitated about her name, and, being prompted, gave it at last as Ann Veronica Smith, 107A, Chancery Lane....

Indignation carried her through that night, that men and the world could so entreat her. The arrested women were herded in a passage of the Panton Street Police-station that opened upon a cell too unclean for occupation, and most of them spent the night standing. Hot coffee and cakes were sent in to them in the morning by some intelligent sympathizer, or she would have starved all day. Submission to the inevitable carried her through the circumstances of her appearance before the magistrate.

He was no doubt doing his best to express the attitude of society toward these wearily heroic defendants, but he seemed to be merely rude and unfair to Ann Veronica. He was not, it seemed, the proper stipendiary at all, and there had been some demur to his jurisdiction that had ruffled him. He resented being regarded as irregular. He felt he was human wisdom prudentially interpolated.... “You silly wimmin,” he said over and over again throughout the hearing, plucking at his blotting-pad with busy hands. “You silly creatures! Ugh! Fie upon you!” The court was crowded with people, for the most part supporters and admirers of the defendants, and the man with the light eyelashes was conspicuously active and omnipresent.

Ann Veronica’s appearance was brief and undistinguished. She had nothing to say for herself. She was guided into the dock and prompted by a helpful police inspector. She was aware of the body of the court, of clerks seated at a black table littered with papers, of policemen standing about stiffly with expressions of conscious integrity, and a murmuring background of the heads and shoulders of spectators close behind her. On a high chair behind a raised counter the stipendiary’s substitute regarded her malevolently over his glasses. A disagreeable young man, with red hair and a loose mouth, seated at the reporter’s table, was only too manifestly sketching her.

She was interested by the swearing of the witnesses. The kissing of the book struck her as particularly odd, and then the policemen gave their evidence in staccato jerks and stereotyped phrases.

“Have you anything to ask the witness?” asked the helpful inspector.

The ribald demons that infested the back of Ann Veronica’s mind urged various facetious interrogations upon her, as, for example, where the witness had acquired his prose style. She controlled herself, and answered meekly, “No.”

“Well, Ann Veronica Smith,” the magistrate remarked when the case was all before him, “you’re a good-looking, strong, respectable gell, and it’s a pity you silly young wimmin can’t find something better to do with your exuberance. Two-and-twenty! I can’t imagine what your parents can be thinking about to let you get into these scrapes.”

Ann Veronica’s mind was filled with confused unutterable replies.

“You are persuaded to come and take part in these outrageous proceedings — many of you, I am convinced, have no idea whatever of their nature. I don’t suppose you could tell me even the derivation of suffrage if I asked you. No! not even the derivation! But the fashion’s been set and in it you must be.”

The men at the reporter’s table lifted their eyebrows, smiled faintly, and leaned back to watch how she took her scolding. One with the appearance of a bald little gnome yawned agonizingly. They had got all this down already — they heard the substance of it now for the fourteenth time. The stipendiary would have done it all very differently.

She found presently she was out of the dock and confronted with the alternative of being bound over in one surety for the sum of forty pounds — whatever that might mean or a month’s imprisonment.

“Second class,” said some one, but first and second were all alike to her. She elected to go to prison.

At last, after a long rumbling journey in a stuffy windowless van, she reached Canongate Prison — for Holloway had its quota already. It was bad luck to go to Canongate.

Prison was beastly. Prison was bleak without spaciousness, and pervaded by a faint, oppressive smell; and she had to wait two hours in the sullenly defiant company of two unclean women thieves before a cell could be assigned to her. Its dreariness, like the filthiness of the police cell, was a discovery for her. She had imagined that prisons

were white-tiled places, reeking of lime-wash and immaculately sanitary. Instead, they appeared to be at the hygienic level of tramps' lodging-houses. She was bathed in turbid water that had already been used. She was not allowed to bathe herself: another prisoner, with a privileged manner, washed her. Conscientious objectors to that process are not permitted, she found, in Canongate. Her hair was washed for her also. Then they dressed her in a dirty dress of coarse serge and a cap, and took away her own clothes. The dress came to her only too manifestly unwashed from its former wearer; even the under-linen they gave her seemed unclean. Horrible memories of things seen beneath the microscope of the baser forms of life crawled across her mind and set her shuddering with imagined irritations. She sat on the edge of the bed — the wardress was too busy with the flood of arrivals that day to discover that she had it down — and her skin was shivering from the contact of these garments. She surveyed accommodation that seemed at first merely austere, and became more and more manifestly inadequate as the moments fled by. She meditated profoundly through several enormous cold hours on all that had happened and all that she had done since the swirl of the suffrage movement had submerged her personal affairs....

Very slowly emerging out of a phase of stupefaction, these personal affairs and her personal problem resumed possession of her mind. She had imagined she had drowned them altogether.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

THOUGHTS IN PRISON

Part 1

The first night in prison she found it impossible to sleep. The bed was hard beyond any experience of hers, the bed-clothes coarse and insufficient, the cell at once cold and stuffy. The little grating in the door, the sense of constant inspection, worried her. She kept opening her eyes and looking at it. She was fatigued physically and mentally, and neither mind nor body could rest. She became aware that at regular intervals a light flashed upon her face and a bodiless eye regarded her, and this, as the night wore on, became a torment....

Capes came back into her mind. He haunted a state between hectic dreaming and mild delirium, and she found herself talking aloud to him. All through the night an entirely impossible and monumental Capes confronted her, and she argued with him about men and women. She visualized him as in a policeman's uniform and quite impassive. On some insane score she fancied she had to state her case in verse. "We are the music and you are the instrument," she said; "we are verse and you are prose.

"For men have reason, women rhyme
A man scores always, all the time."

This couplet sprang into her mind from nowhere, and immediately begot an endless series of similar couplets that she began to compose and address to Capes. They came teeming distressfully through her aching brain:

"A man can kick, his skirts don't tear;
A man scores always, everywhere.

"His dress for no man lays a snare;
A man scores always, everywhere.
For hats that fail and hats that flare;
Toppers their universal wear;
A man scores always, everywhere.

“Men’s waists are neither here nor there;
A man scores always, everywhere.

“A man can manage without hair;
A man scores always, everywhere.

“There are no males at men to stare;
A man scores always, everywhere.

“And children must we women bear —

“Oh, damn!” she cried, as the hundred-and-first couplet or so presented itself in her unwilling brain.

For a time she worried about that compulsory bath and cutaneous diseases.

Then she fell into a fever of remorse for the habit of bad language she had acquired.

“A man can smoke, a man can swear;
A man scores always, everywhere.”

She rolled over on her face, and stuffed her fingers in her ears to shut out the rhythm from her mind. She lay still for a long time, and her mind resumed at a more tolerable pace. She found herself talking to Capes in an undertone of rational admission.

“There is something to be said for the lady-like theory after all,” she admitted. “Women ought to be gentle and submissive persons, strong only in virtue and in resistance to evil compulsion. My dear — I can call you that here, anyhow — I know that. The Victorians over-did it a little, I admit. Their idea of maidenly innocence was just a blank white — the sort of flat white that doesn’t shine. But that doesn’t alter the fact that there IS innocence. And I’ve read, and thought, and guessed, and looked — until MY innocence — it’s smirched.

“Smirched!...

“You see, dear, one IS passionately anxious for something — what is it? One wants to be CLEAN. You want me to be clean. You would want me to be clean, if you gave me a thought, that is....

“I wonder if you give me a thought....

“I’m not a good woman. I don’t mean I’m not a good woman — I mean that I’m not a GOOD woman. My poor brain is so mixed, dear, I hardly know what I am saying. I mean I’m not a good specimen of a woman. I’ve got a streak of male. Things happen to women — proper women — and all they have to do is to take them well. They’ve just got to keep white. But I’m always trying to make things happen. And I get myself dirty...

“It’s all dirt that washes off, dear, but it’s dirt.

“The white unaggressive woman who corrects and nurses and serves, and is worshipped and betrayed — the martyr-queen of men, the white mother.... You can’t do that sort of thing unless you do it over religion, and there’s no religion in me — of that sort — worth a rap.

“I’m not gentle. Certainly not a gentlewoman.

“I’m not coarse — no! But I’ve got no purity of mind — no real purity of mind. A good woman’s mind has angels with flaming swords at the portals to keep out fallen thoughts....

“I wonder if there are any good women really.

“I wish I didn’t swear. I do swear. It began as a joke.... It developed into a sort of secret and private bad manners. It’s got to be at last like tobacco-ash over all my sayings and doings....

“‘Go it, missie,’ they said; “kick aht!’

“I swore at that policeman — and disgusted him. Disgusted him!

“For men policemen never blush;
A man in all things scores so much...

“Damn! Things are getting plainer. It must be the dawn creeping in.

“Now here hath been dawning another blue day;
I’m just a poor woman, please take it away.

“Oh, sleep! Sleep! Sleep! Sleep!”

Part 2

“Now,” said Ann Veronica, after the half-hour of exercise, and sitting on the uncomfortable wooden seat without a back that was her perch by day, “it’s no good staying here in a sort of maze. I’ve got nothing to do for a month but think. I may as well think. I ought to be able to think things out.

“How shall I put the question? What am I? What have I got to do with myself?...

“I wonder if many people HAVE thought things out?

“Are we all just seizing hold of phrases and obeying moods?

“It wasn’t so with old-fashioned people, they knew right from wrong; they had a clear-cut, religious faith that seemed to explain everything and give a rule for everything. We haven’t. I haven’t, anyhow. And it’s no good pretending there is one when there isn’t.... I suppose I believe in God.... Never really thought about Him — people don’t.. .. I suppose my creed is, ‘I believe rather indistinctly in God the Father Almighty, substratum of the evolutionary process, and, in a vein of vague sentimentality that doesn’t give a datum for anything at all, in Jesus Christ, His Son.’...

“It’s no sort of good, Ann Veronica, pretending one does believe when one doesn’t....

“And as for praying for faith — this sort of monologue is about as near as any one of my sort ever gets to prayer. Aren’t I asking — asking plainly now?...

“We’ve all been mixing our ideas, and we’ve got intellectual hot coppers — every blessed one of us....

“A confusion of motives — that’s what I am!...

“There is this absurd craving for Mr. Capes — the ‘Capes crave,’ they would call it in America. Why do I want him so badly? Why do I want him, and think about him, and fail to get away from him?

“It isn’t all of me.

“The first person you love, Ann Veronica, is yourself — get hold of that! The soul you have to save is Ann Veronica’s soul....”

She knelt upon the floor of her cell and clasped her hands, and remained for a long time in silence.

“Oh, God!” she said at last, “how I wish I had been taught to pray!”

Part 3

She had some idea of putting these subtle and difficult issues to the chaplain when she was warned of his advent. But she had not reckoned with the etiquette of Canongate. She got up, as she had been told to do, at his appearance, and he amazed her by sitting down, according to custom, on her stool. He still wore his hat, to show that the days of miracles and Christ being civil to sinners are over forever. She perceived that his countenance was only composed by a great effort, his features severely compressed. He was ruffled, and his ears were red, no doubt from some adjacent controversy. He classified her as he seated himself.

"Another young woman, I suppose," he said, "who knows better than her Maker about her place in the world. Have you anything to ask me?"

Ann Veronica readjusted her mind hastily. Her back stiffened. She produced from the depths of her pride the ugly investigatory note of the modern district visitor. "Are you a special sort of clergyman," she said, after a pause, and looking down her nose at him, "or do you go to the Universities?"

"Oh!" he said, profoundly.

He panted for a moment with unuttered replies, and then, with a scornful gesture, got up and left the cell.

So that Ann Veronica was not able to get the expert advice she certainly needed upon her spiritual state.

Part 4

After a day or so she thought more steadily. She found herself in a phase of violent reaction against the suffrage movement, a phase

greatly promoted by one of those unreasonable objections people of Ann Veronica's temperament take at times — to the girl in the next cell to her own. She was a large, resilient girl, with a foolish smile, a still more foolish expression of earnestness, and a throaty contralto voice. She was noisy and hilarious and enthusiastic, and her hair was always abominably done. In the chapel she sang with an open-lunged gusto that silenced Ann Veronica altogether, and in the exercising-yard slouched round with carelessly dispersed feet. Ann Veronica decided that "hoydenish ragger" was the only phrase to express her. She was always breaking rules, whispering asides, intimating signals. She became at times an embodiment for Ann Veronica of all that made the suffrage movement defective and unsatisfying.

She was always initiating petty breaches of discipline. Her greatest exploit was the howling before the mid-day meal. This was an imitation of the noises made by the carnivora at the Zoological Gardens at feeding-time; the idea was taken up by prisoner after prisoner until the whole place was alive with barkings, yappings, roarings, pelican chatterings, and feline yowlings, interspersed with shrieks of hysterical laughter. To many in that crowded solitude it came as an extraordinary relief. It was better even than the hymn-singing. But it annoyed Ann Veronica.

"Idiots!" she said, when she heard this pandemonium, and with particular reference to this young lady with the throaty contralto next door. "Intolerable idiots!..."

It took some days for this phase to pass, and it left some scars and something like a decision. "Violence won't do it," said Ann Veronica. "Begin violence, and the woman goes under....

"But all the rest of our case is right.... Yes."

As the long, solitary days wore on, Ann Veronica found a number of definite attitudes and conclusions in her mind.

One of these was a classification of women into women who are and women who are not hostile to men. "The real reason why I am out of place here," she said, "is because I like men. I can talk with them. I've never found them hostile. I've got no feminine class feeling. I don't want any laws or freedoms to protect me from a man like Mr. Capes. I know that in my heart I would take whatever he gave....

“A woman wants a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself. She wants that and needs it more than anything else in the world. It may not be just, it may not be fair, but things are so. It isn’t law, nor custom, nor masculine violence settled that. It is just how things happen to be. She wants to be free — she wants to be legally and economically free, so as not to be subject to the wrong man; but only God, who made the world, can alter things to prevent her being slave to the right one.

“And if she can’t have the right one?

“We’ve developed such a quality of preference!”

She rubbed her knuckles into her forehead. “Oh, but life is difficult!” she groaned. “When you loosen the tangle in one place you tie a knot in another.... Before there is any change, any real change, I shall be dead — dead — dead and finished — two hundred years!...”

Part 5

One afternoon, while everything was still, the wardress heard her cry out suddenly and alarmingly, and with great and unmistakable passion, “Why in the name of goodness did I burn that twenty pounds?”

Part 6

She sat regarding her dinner. The meat was coarse and disagreeably served.

“I suppose some one makes a bit on the food,” she said....

“One has such ridiculous ideas of the wicked common people and the beautiful machinery of order that ropes them in. And here are

these places, full of contagion!

"Of course, this is the real texture of life, this is what we refined secure people forget. We think the whole thing is straight and noble at bottom, and it isn't. We think if we just defy the friends we have and go out into the world everything will become easy and splendid. One doesn't realize that even the sort of civilization one has at Morningside Park is held together with difficulty. By policemen one mustn't shock.

"This isn't a world for an innocent girl to walk about in. It's a world of dirt and skin diseases and parasites. It's a world in which the law can be a stupid pig and the police-stations dirty dens. One wants helpers and protectors — and clean water.

"Am I becoming reasonable or am I being tamed?

"I'm simply discovering that life is many-sided and complex and puzzling. I thought one had only to take it by the throat.

"It hasn't GOT a throat!"

Part 7

One day the idea of self-sacrifice came into her head, and she made, she thought, some important moral discoveries.

It came with an extreme effect of re-discovery, a remarkable novelty. "What have I been all this time?" she asked herself, and answered, "Just stark egotism, crude assertion of Ann Veronica, without a modest rag of religion or discipline or respect for authority to cover me!"

It seemed to her as though she had at last found the touchstone of conduct. She perceived she had never really thought of any one but herself in all her acts and plans. Even Capes had been for her merely an excitant to passionate love — a mere idol at whose feet one could enjoy imaginative wallowings. She had set out to get a beautiful life, a free, untrammelled life, self-development, without counting the cost either for herself or others.

“I have hurt my father,” she said; “I have hurt my aunt. I have hurt and snubbed poor Teddy. I’ve made no one happy. I deserve pretty much what I’ve got....

“If only because of the way one hurts others if one kicks loose and free, one has to submit....

“Broken-in people! I suppose the world is just all egotistical children and broken-in people.

“Your little flag of pride must flutter down with the rest of them, Ann Veronica....

“Compromise — and kindness.

“Compromise and kindness.

“Who are YOU that the world should lie down at your feet?

“You’ve got to be a decent citizen, Ann Veronica. Take your half loaf with the others. You mustn’t go clawing after a man that doesn’t belong to you — that isn’t even interested in you. That’s one thing clear.

“You’ve got to take the decent reasonable way. You’ve got to adjust yourself to the people God has set about you. Every one else does.”

She thought more and more along that line. There was no reason why she shouldn’t be Capes’ friend. He did like her, anyhow; he was always pleased to be with her. There was no reason why she shouldn’t be his restrained and dignified friend. After all, that was life. Nothing was given away, and no one came so rich to the stall as to command all that it had to offer. Every one has to make a deal with the world.

It would be very good to be Capes’ friend.

She might be able to go on with biology, possibly even work upon the same questions that he dealt with....

Perhaps her granddaughter might marry his grandson....

It grew clear to her that throughout all her wild raid for independence she had done nothing for anybody, and many people had done things for her. She thought of her aunt and that purse that was dropped on the table, and of many troublesome and ill-requited kindnesses; she thought of the help of the Widgetts, of Teddy’s admiration; she thought, with a new-born charity, of her father, of Manning’s conscientious unselfishness, of Miss Miniver’s devotion.

“And for me it has been Pride and Pride and Pride!

“I am the prodigal daughter. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him —

“I suppose pride and self-assertion are sin? Sinned against heaven — Yes, I have sinned against heaven and before thee....

“Poor old daddy! I wonder if he’ll spend much on the fatted calf?...

“The wrappered life-discipline! One comes to that at last. I begin to understand Jane Austen and chintz covers and decency and refinement and all the rest of it. One puts gloves on one’s greedy fingers. One learns to sit up...

“And somehow or other,” she added, after a long interval, “I must pay Mr. Ramage back his forty pounds.”

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

ANN VERONICA PUTS THINGS IN ORDER

Part 1

Ann Veronica made a strenuous attempt to carry out her good resolutions. She meditated long and carefully upon her letter to her father before she wrote it, and gravely and deliberately again before she despatched it.

"MY DEAR FATHER," she wrote,— "I have been thinking hard about everything since I was sent to this prison. All these experiences have taught me a great deal about life and realities. I see that compromise is more necessary to life than I ignorantly supposed it to be, and I have been trying to get Lord Morley's book on that subject, but it does not appear to be available in the prison library, and the chaplain seems to regard him as an undesirable writer."

At this point she had perceived that she was drifting from her subject.

"I must read him when I come out. But I see very clearly that as things are a daughter is necessarily dependent on her father and bound while she is in that position to live harmoniously with his ideals."

"Bit starchy," said Ann Veronica, and altered the key abruptly. Her concluding paragraph was, on the whole, perhaps, hardly starchy enough.

"Really, daddy, I am sorry for all I have done to put you out. May I come home and try to be a better daughter to you?

"ANN VERONICA."

Part 2

Her aunt came to meet her outside Canongate, and, being a little

confused between what was official and what was merely a rebellious slight upon our national justice, found herself involved in a triumphal procession to the Vindicator Vegetarian Restaurant, and was specifically and personally cheered by a small, shabby crowd outside that rendezvous. They decided quite audibly, “She’s an Old Dear, anyhow. Voting wouldn’t do no ‘arm to ‘er.” She was on the very verge of a vegetarian meal before she recovered her head again. Obeying some fine instinct, she had come to the prison in a dark veil, but she had pushed this up to kiss Ann Veronica and never drawn it down again. Eggs were procured for her, and she sat out the subsequent emotions and eloquence with the dignity becoming an injured lady of good family. The quiet encounter and home-coming Ann Veronica and she had contemplated was entirely disorganized by this misadventure; there were no adequate explanations, and after they had settled things at Ann Veronica’s lodgings, they reached home in the early afternoon estranged and depressed, with headaches and the trumpet voice of the indomitable Kitty Brett still ringing in their ears.

“Dreadful women, my dear!” said Miss Stanley. “And some of them quite pretty and well dressed. No need to do such things. We must never let your father know we went. Why ever did you let me get into that wagonette?”

“I thought we had to,” said Ann Veronica, who had also been a little under the compulsion of the marshals of the occasion. “It was very tiring.”

“We will have some tea in the drawing-room as soon as ever we can — and I will take my things off. I don’t think I shall ever care for this bonnet again. We’ll have some buttered toast. Your poor cheeks are quite sunken and hollow....”

Part 3

When Ann Veronica found herself in her father’s study that evening

it seemed to her for a moment as though all the events of the past six months had been a dream. The big gray spaces of London, the shop-lit, greasy, shining streets, had become very remote; the biological laboratory with its work and emotions, the meetings and discussions, the rides in hansoms with Ramage, were like things in a book read and closed. The study seemed absolutely unaltered, there was still the same lamp with a little chip out of the shade, still the same gas fire, still the same bundle of blue and white papers, it seemed, with the same pink tape about them, at the elbow of the arm-chair, still the same father. He sat in much the same attitude, and she stood just as she had stood when he told her she could not go to the Fadden Dance. Both had dropped the rather elaborate politeness of the dining-room, and in their faces an impartial observer would have discovered little lines of obstinate wilfulness in common; a certain hardness — sharp, indeed, in the father and softly rounded in the daughter — but hardness nevertheless, that made every compromise a bargain and every charity a discount.

"And so you have been thinking?" her father began, quoting her letter and looking over his slanting glasses at her. "Well, my girl, I wish you had thought about all these things before these bothers began."

Ann Veronica perceived that she must not forget to remain eminently reasonable.

"One has to live and learn," she remarked, with a passable imitation of her father's manner.

"So long as you learn," said Mr. Stanley.

Their conversation hung.

"I suppose, daddy, you've no objection to my going on with my work at the Imperial College?" she asked.

"If it will keep you busy," he said, with a faintly ironical smile.

"The fees are paid to the end of the session."

He nodded twice, with his eyes on the fire, as though that was a formal statement.

"You may go on with that work," he said, "so long as you keep in harmony with things at home. I'm convinced that much of Russell's investigations are on wrong lines, unsound lines. Still — you must learn for yourself. You're of age — you're of age."

“The work’s almost essential for the B.Sc. exam.”

“It’s scandalous, but I suppose it is.”

Their agreement so far seemed remarkable, and yet as a home-coming the thing was a little lacking in warmth. But Ann Veronica had still to get to her chief topic. They were silent for a time. “It’s a period of crude views and crude work,” said Mr. Stanley. “Still, these Mendelian fellows seem likely to give Mr. Russell trouble, a good lot of trouble. Some of their specimens — wonderfully selected, wonderfully got up.”

“Daddy,” said Ann Veronica, “these affairs — being away from home has — cost money.”

“I thought you would find that out.”

“As a matter of fact, I happen to have got a little into debt.”

“NEVER!”

Her heart sank at the change in his expression.

“Well, lodgings and things! And I paid my fees at the College.”

“Yes. But how could you get — Who gave you credit?

“You see,” said Ann Veronica, “my landlady kept on my room while I was in Holloway, and the fees for the College mounted up pretty considerably.” She spoke rather quickly, because she found her father’s question the most awkward she had ever had to answer in her life.

“Molly and you settled about the rooms. She said you HAD some money.”

“I borrowed it,” said Ann Veronica in a casual tone, with white despair in her heart.

“But who could have lent you money?”

“I pawned my pearl necklace. I got three pounds, and there’s three on my watch.”

“Six pounds. H’m. Got the tickets? Yes, but then — you said you borrowed?”

“I did, too,” said Ann Veronica.

“Who from?”

She met his eye for a second and her heart failed her. The truth was impossible, indecent. If she mentioned Ramage he might have a fit — anything might happen. She lied. “The Widgetts,” she said.

“Tut, tut!” he said. “Really, Vee, you seem to have advertised our

relations pretty generally!”

“They — they knew, of course. Because of the Dance.”

“How much do you owe them?”

She knew forty pounds was a quite impossible sum for their neighbors. She knew, too, she must not hesitate. “Eight pounds,” she plunged, and added foolishly, “fifteen pounds will see me clear of everything.” She muttered some unlady-like comment upon herself under her breath and engaged in secret additions.

Mr. Stanley determined to improve the occasion. He seemed to deliberate. “Well,” he said at last slowly, “I’ll pay it. I’ll pay it. But I do hope, Vee, I do hope — this is the end of these adventures. I hope you have learned your lesson now and come to see — come to realize — how things are. People, nobody, can do as they like in this world. Everywhere there are limitations.”

“I know,” said Ann Veronica (fifteen pounds!). “I have learned that. I mean — I mean to do what I can.” (Fifteen pounds. Fifteen from forty is twenty-five.)

He hesitated. She could think of nothing more to say.

“Well,” she achieved at last. “Here goes for the new life!”

“Here goes for the new life,” he echoed and stood up. Father and daughter regarded each other warily, each more than a little insecure with the other. He made a movement toward her, and then recalled the circumstances of their last conversation in that study. She saw his purpose and his doubt hesitated also, and then went to him, took his coat lapels, and kissed him on the cheek.

“Ah, Vee,” he said, “that’s better! and kissed her back rather clumsily.

“We’re going to be sensible.”

She disengaged herself from him and went out of the room with a grave, preoccupied expression. (Fifteen pounds! And she wanted forty!)

Part 4

It was, perhaps, the natural consequence of a long and tiring and exciting day that Ann Veronica should pass a broken and distressful night, a night in which the noble and self-subduing resolutions of Canongate displayed themselves for the first time in an atmosphere of almost lurid dismay. Her father's peculiar stiffness of soul presented itself now as something altogether left out of the calculations upon which her plans were based, and, in particular, she had not anticipated the difficulty she would find in borrowing the forty pounds she needed for Ramage. That had taken her by surprise, and her tired wits had failed her. She was to have fifteen pounds, and no more. She knew that to expect more now was like anticipating a gold-mine in the garden. The chance had gone. It became suddenly glaringly apparent to her that it was impossible to return fifteen pounds or any sum less than twenty pounds to Ramage — absolutely impossible. She realized that with a pang of disgust and horror.

Already she had sent him twenty pounds, and never written to explain to him why it was she had not sent it back sharply directly he returned it. She ought to have written at once and told him exactly what had happened. Now if she sent fifteen pounds the suggestion that she had spent a five-pound note in the meanwhile would be irresistible. No! That was impossible. She would have just to keep the fifteen pounds until she could make it twenty. That might happen on her birthday — in August.

She turned about, and was persecuted by visions, half memories, half dreams, of Ramage. He became ugly and monstrous, dunning her, threatening her, assailing her.

"Confound sex from first to last!" said Ann Veronica. "Why can't we propagate by sexless spores, as the ferns do? We restrict each other, we badger each other, friendship is poisoned and buried under it!... I MUST pay off that forty pounds. I MUST."

For a time there seemed no comfort for her even in Capes. She was to see Capes to-morrow, but now, in this state of misery she had achieved, she felt assured he would turn his back upon her, take no notice of her at all. And if he didn't, what was the good of seeing him?

"I wish he was a woman," she said, "then I could make him my friend. I want him as my friend. I want to talk to him and go about

with him. Just go about with him."

She was silent for a time, with her nose on the pillow, and that brought her to: "What's the good of pretending?

"I love him," she said aloud to the dim forms of her room, and repeated it, and went on to imagine herself doing acts of tragically dog-like devotion to the biologist, who, for the purposes of the drama, remained entirely unconscious of and indifferent to her proceedings.

At last some anodyne formed itself from these exercises, and, with eyelashes wet with such feeble tears as only three-o'clock-in-the-morning pathos can distil, she fell asleep.

Part 5

Pursuant to some altogether private calculations she did not go up to the Imperial College until after mid-day, and she found the laboratory deserted, even as she desired. She went to the table under the end window at which she had been accustomed to work, and found it swept and garnished with full bottles of re-agents. Everything was very neat; it had evidently been straightened up and kept for her. She put down the sketch-books and apparatus she had brought with her, pulled out her stool, and sat down. As she did so the preparation-room door opened behind her. She heard it open, but as she felt unable to look round in a careless manner she pretended not to hear it. Then Capes' footsteps approached. She turned with an effort.

"I expected you this morning," he said. "I saw — they knocked off your fetters yesterday."

"I think it is very good of me to come this afternoon."

"I began to be afraid you might not come at all."

"Afraid!"

"Yes. I'm glad you're back for all sorts of reasons." He spoke a little nervously. "Among other things, you know, I didn't understand

quite — I didn't understand that you were so keenly interested in this suffrage question. I have it on my conscience that I offended you—"

"Offended me when?"

"I've been haunted by the memory of you. I was rude and stupid. We were talking about the suffrage — and I rather scoffed."

"You weren't rude," she said.

"I didn't know you were so keen on this suffrage business."

"Nor I. You haven't had it on your mind all this time?"

"I have rather. I felt somehow I'd hurt you."

"You didn't. I — I hurt myself."

"I mean—"

"I behaved like an idiot, that's all. My nerves were in rags. I was worried. We're the hysterical animal, Mr. Capes. I got myself locked up to cool off. By a sort of instinct. As a dog eats grass. I'm right again now."

"Because your nerves were exposed, that was no excuse for my touching them. I ought to have seen—"

"It doesn't matter a rap — if you're not disposed to resent the — the way I behaved."

"*I* resent!"

"I was only sorry I'd been so stupid."

"Well, I take it we're straight again," said Capes with a note of relief, and assumed an easier position on the edge of her table. "But if you weren't keen on the suffrage business, why on earth did you go to prison?"

Ann Veronica reflected. "It was a phase," she said.

He smiled. "It's a new phase in the life history," he remarked. "Everybody seems to have it now. Everybody who's going to develop into a woman."

"There's Miss Garvice."

"She's coming on," said Capes. "And, you know, you're altering us all. I'M shaken. The campaign's a success." He met her questioning eye, and repeated, "Oh! it IS a success. A man is so apt to — to take women a little too lightly. Unless they remind him now and then not to.... YOU did."

"Then I didn't waste my time in prison altogether?"

"It wasn't the prison impressed me. But I liked the things you said

here. I felt suddenly I understood you — as an intelligent person. If you'll forgive my saying that, and implying what goes with it. There's something — puppyish in a man's usual attitude to women. That is what I've had on my conscience.... I don't think we're altogether to blame if we don't take some of your lot seriously. Some of your sex, I mean. But we smirk a little, I'm afraid, habitually when we talk to you. We smirk, and we're a bit — furtive."

He paused, with his eyes studying her gravely. "You, anyhow, don't deserve it," he said.

Their colloquy was ended abruptly by the apparition of Miss Klegg at the further door. When she saw Ann Veronica she stood for a moment as if entranced, and then advanced with outstretched hands. "Veronique!" she cried with a rising intonation, though never before had she called Ann Veronica anything but Miss Stanley, and seized her and squeezed her and kissed her with profound emotion. "To think that you were going to do it — and never said a word! You are a little thin, but except for that you look — you look better than ever. Was it VERY horrible? I tried to get into the police-court, but the crowd was ever so much too big, push as I would....

"I mean to go to prison directly the session is over," said Miss Klegg. "Wild horses — not if they have all the mounted police in London — shan't keep me out."

Part 6

Capes lit things wonderfully for Ann Veronica all that afternoon, he was so friendly, so palpably interested in her, and glad to have her back with him. Tea in the laboratory was a sort of suffragette reception. Miss Garvice assumed a quality of neutrality, professed herself almost won over by Ann Veronica's example, and the Scotchman decided that if women had a distinctive sphere it was, at any rate, an enlarging sphere, and no one who believed in the doctrine of evolution could logically deny the vote to women

“ultimately,” however much they might be disposed to doubt the advisability of its immediate concession. It was a refusal of expediency, he said, and not an absolute refusal. The youth with his hair like Russell cleared his throat and said rather irrelevantly that he knew a man who knew Thomas Bayard Simmons, who had rioted in the Strangers’ Gallery, and then Capes, finding them all distinctly pro-Ann Veronica, if not pro-feminist, ventured to be perverse, and started a vein of speculation upon the Scotchman’s idea — that there were still hopes of women evolving into something higher.

He was unusually absurd and ready, and all the time it seemed to Ann Veronica as a delightful possibility, as a thing not indeed to be entertained seriously, but to be half furtively felt, that he was being so agreeable because she had come back again. She returned home through a world that was as roseate as it had been gray overnight.

But as she got out of the train at Morningside Park Station she had a shock. She saw, twenty yards down the platform, the shiny hat and broad back and inimitable swagger of Ramage. She dived at once behind the cover of the lamp-room and affected serious trouble with her shoe-lace until he was out of the station, and then she followed slowly and with extreme discretion until the bifurcation of the Avenue from the field way insured her escape. Ramage went up the Avenue, and she hurried along the path with a beating heart and a disagreeable sense of unsolved problems in her mind.

“That thing’s going on,” she told herself. “Everything goes on, confound it! One doesn’t change anything one has set going by making good resolutions.”

And then ahead of her she saw the radiant and welcoming figure of Manning. He came as an agreeable diversion from an insoluble perplexity. She smiled at the sight of him, and thereat his radiation increased.

“I missed the hour of your release,” he said, “but I was at the Vindicator Restaurant. You did not see me, I know. I was among the common herd in the place below, but I took good care to see you.”

“Of course you’re converted?” she said.

“To the view that all those Splendid Women in the movement ought to have votes. Rather! Who could help it?”

He towered up over her and smiled down at her in his fatherly

way.

"To the view that all women ought to have votes whether they like it or not."

He shook his head, and his eyes and the mouth under the black mustache wrinkled with his smile. And as he walked by her side they began a wrangle that was none the less pleasant to Ann Veronica because it served to banish a disagreeable preoccupation. It seemed to her in her restored geniality that she liked Manning extremely. The brightness Capes had diffused over the world glorified even his rival.

Part 7

The steps by which Ann Veronica determined to engage herself to marry Manning were never very clear to her. A medley of motives warred in her, and it was certainly not one of the least of these that she knew herself to be passionately in love with Capes; at moments she had a giddy intimation that he was beginning to feel keenly interested in her. She realized more and more the quality of the brink upon which she stood — the dreadful readiness with which in certain moods she might plunge, the unmitigated wrongness and recklessness of such a self-abandonment. "He must never know," she would whisper to herself, "he must never know. Or else — Else it will be impossible that I can be his friend."

That simple statement of the case was by no means all that went on in Ann Veronica's mind. But it was the form of her ruling determination; it was the only form that she ever allowed to see daylight. What else was there lurked in shadows and deep places; if in some mood of reverie it came out into the light, it was presently overwhelmed and hustled back again into hiding. She would never look squarely at these dream forms that mocked the social order in which she lived, never admit she listened to the soft whisperings in her ear. But Manning seemed more and more clearly indicated as a refuge, as security. Certain simple purposes emerged from the

disingenuous muddle of her feelings and desires. Seeing Capes from day to day made a bright eventfulness that hampered her in the course she had resolved to follow. She vanished from the laboratory for a week, a week of oddly interesting days....

When she renewed her attendance at the Imperial College the third finger of her left hand was adorned with a very fine old ring with dark blue sapphires that had once belonged to a great-aunt of Manning's.

That ring manifestly occupied her thoughts a great deal. She kept pausing in her work and regarding it, and when Capes came round to her, she first put her hand in her lap and then rather awkwardly in front of him. But men are often blind to rings. He seemed to be.

In the afternoon she had considered certain doubts very carefully, and decided on a more emphatic course of action. "Are these ordinary sapphires?" she said. He bent to her hand, and she slipped off the ring and gave it to him to examine.

"Very good," he said. "Rather darker than most of them. But I'm generously ignorant of gems. Is it an old ring?" he asked, returning it.

"I believe it is. It's an engagement ring...." She slipped it on her finger, and added, in a voice she tried to make matter-of-fact: "It was given to me last week."

"Oh!" he said, in a colorless tone, and with his eyes on her face.

"Yes. Last week."

She glanced at him, and it was suddenly apparent for one instant of illumination that this ring upon her finger was the crowning blunder of her life. It was apparent, and then it faded into the quality of an inevitable necessity.

"Odd!" he remarked, rather surprisingly, after a little interval.

There was a brief pause, a crowded pause, between them.

She sat very still, and his eyes rested on that ornament for a moment, and then travelled slowly to her wrist and the soft lines of her forearm.

"I suppose I ought to congratulate you," he said. Their eyes met, and his expressed perplexity and curiosity. "The fact is — I don't know why — this takes me by surprise. Somehow I haven't connected the idea with you. You seemed complete — without that."

“Did I?” she said.

“I don’t know why. But this is like — like walking round a house that looks square and complete and finding an unexpected long wing running out behind.”

She looked up at him, and found he was watching her closely. For some seconds of voluminous thinking they looked at the ring between them, and neither spoke. Then Capes shifted his eyes to her microscope and the little trays of unmounted sections beside it. “How is that carmine working?” he asked, with a forced interest.

“Better,” said Ann Veronica, with an unreal alacrity. “But it still misses the nucleolus.”

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

THE SAPPHIRE RING

Part 1

For a time that ring set with sapphires seemed to be, after all, the satisfactory solution of Ann Veronica's difficulties. It was like pouring a strong acid over dulled metal. A tarnish of constraint that had recently spread over her intercourse with Capes vanished again. They embarked upon an open and declared friendship. They even talked about friendship. They went to the Zoological Gardens together one Saturday to see for themselves a point of morphological interest about the toucan's bill — that friendly and entertaining bird — and they spent the rest of the afternoon walking about and elaborating in general terms this theme and the superiority of intellectual fellowship to all merely passionate relationships. Upon this topic Capes was heavy and conscientious, but that seemed to her to be just exactly what he ought to be. He was also, had she known it, more than a little insincere. "We are only in the dawn of the Age of Friendship," he said, "when interest, I suppose, will take the place of passions. Either you have had to love people or hate them — which is a sort of love, too, in its way — to get anything out of them. Now, more and more, we're going to be interested in them, to be curious about them and — quite mildly-experimental with them." He seemed to be elaborating ideas as he talked. They watched the chimpanzees in the new apes' house, and admired the gentle humanity of their eyes— "so much more human than human beings" — and they watched the Agile Gibbon in the next apartment doing wonderful leaps and aerial somersaults.

"I wonder which of us enjoys that most," said Capes— "does he, or do we?"

"He seems to get a zest—"

"He does it and forgets it. We remember it. These joyful bounds just lace into the stuff of my memories and stay there forever. Living's just material."

"It's very good to be alive."

"It's better to know life than be life."

"One may do both," said Ann Veronica.

She was in a very uncritical state that afternoon. When he said, "Let's go and see the wart-hog," she thought no one ever had had so quick a flow of good ideas as he; and when he explained that sugar and not buns was the talisman of popularity among the animals, she marvelled at his practical omniscience.

Finally, at the exit into Regent's Park, they ran against Miss Klegg. It was the expression of Miss Klegg's face that put the idea into Ann Veronica's head of showing Manning at the College one day, an idea which she didn't for some reason or other carry out for a fortnight.

Part 2

When at last she did so, the sapphire ring took on a new quality in the imagination of Capes. It ceased to be the symbol of liberty and a remote and quite abstracted person, and became suddenly and very disagreeably the token of a large and portentous body visible and tangible.

Manning appeared just at the end of the afternoon's work, and the biologist was going through some perplexities the Scotchman had created by a metaphysical treatment of the skulls of Hyrax and a young African elephant. He was clearing up these difficulties by tracing a partially obliterated suture the Scotchman had overlooked when the door from the passage opened, and Manning came into his universe.

Seen down the length of the laboratory, Manning looked a very handsome and shapely gentleman indeed, and, at the sight of his eager advance to his fiancee, Miss Klegg replaced one long-cherished romance about Ann Veronica by one more normal and simple. He carried a cane and a silk hat with a mourning-band in one

gray-gloved hand; his frock-coat and trousers were admirable; his handsome face, his black mustache, his prominent brow conveyed an eager solicitude.

"I want," he said, with a white hand outstretched, "to take you out to tea."

"I've been clearing up," said Ann Veronica, brightly.

"All your dreadful scientific things?" he said, with a smile that Miss Klegg thought extraordinarily kindly.

"All my dreadful scientific things," said Ann Veronica.

He stood back, smiling with an air of proprietorship, and looking about him at the business-like equipment of the room. The low ceiling made him seem abnormally tall. Ann Veronica wiped a scalpel, put a card over a watch-glass containing thin shreds of embryonic guinea-pig swimming in mauve stain, and dismantled her microscope.

"I wish I understood more of biology," said Manning.

"I'm ready," said Ann Veronica, closing her microscope-box with a click, and looking for one brief instant up the laboratory. "We have no airs and graces here, and my hat hangs from a peg in the passage."

She led the way to the door, and Manning passed behind her and round her and opened the door for her. When Capes glanced up at them for a moment, Manning seemed to be holding his arms all about her, and there was nothing but quiet acquiescence in her bearing.

After Capes had finished the Scotchman's troubles he went back into the preparation-room. He sat down on the sill of the open window, folded his arms, and stared straight before him for a long time over the wilderness of tiles and chimney-pots into a sky that was blue and empty. He was not addicted to monologue, and the only audible comment he permitted himself at first upon a universe that was evidently anything but satisfactory to him that afternoon, was one compact and entirely unassigned "Damn!"

The word must have had some gratifying quality, because he repeated it. Then he stood up and repeated it again. "The fool I have been!" he cried; and now speech was coming to him. He tried this sentence with expletives. "Ass!" he went on, still warming. "Muck-headed moral ass! I ought to have done anything.

"I ought to have done anything!

"What's a man for?

"Friendship!"

He doubled up his fist, and seemed to contemplate thrusting it through the window. He turned his back on that temptation. Then suddenly he seized a new preparation bottle that stood upon his table and contained the better part of a week's work — a displayed dissection of a snail, beautifully done — and hurled it across the room, to smash resoundingly upon the cemented floor under the bookcase; then, without either haste or pause, he swept his arm along a shelf of re-agents and sent them to mingle with the debris on the floor. They fell in a diapason of smashes. "H'm!" he said, regarding the wreckage with a calmer visage. "Silly!" he remarked after a pause. "One hardly knows — all the time."

He put his hands in his pockets, his mouth puckered to a whistle, and he went to the door of the outer preparation-room and stood there, looking, save for the faintest intensification of his natural ruddiness, the embodiment of blond serenity.

"Gellett," he called, "just come and clear up a mess, will you? I've smashed some things."

Part 3

There was one serious flaw in Ann Veronica's arrangements for self-rehabilitation, and that was Ramage. He hung over her — he and his loan to her and his connection with her and that terrible evening — a vague, disconcerting possibility of annoyance and exposure. She could not see any relief from this anxiety except repayment, and repayment seemed impossible. The raising of twenty-five pounds was a task altogether beyond her powers. Her birthday was four months away, and that, at its extremist point, might give her another five pounds.

The thing rankled in her mind night and day. She would wake in

the night to repeat her bitter cry: “Oh, why did I burn those notes?”

It added greatly to the annoyance of the situation that she had twice seen Ramage in the Avenue since her return to the shelter of her father’s roof. He had saluted her with elaborate civility, his eyes distended with indecipherable meanings.

She felt she was bound in honor to tell the whole affair to Manning sooner or later. Indeed, it seemed inevitable that she must clear it up with his assistance, or not at all. And when Manning was not about the thing seemed simple enough. She would compose extremely lucid and honorable explanations. But when it came to broaching them, it proved to be much more difficult than she had supposed.

They went down the great staircase of the building, and, while she sought in her mind for a beginning, he broke into appreciation of her simple dress and self-congratulations upon their engagement.

“It makes me feel,” he said, “that nothing is impossible — to have you here beside me. I said, that day at Surbiton, ‘There’s many good things in life, but there’s only one best, and that’s the wild-haired girl who’s pulling away at that oar. I will make her my Grail, and some day, perhaps, if God wills, she shall become my wife!’”

He looked very hard before him as he said this, and his voice was full of deep feeling.

“Grail!” said Ann Veronica, and then: “Oh, yes — of course! Anything but a holy one, I’m afraid.”

“Altogether holy, Ann Veronica. Ah! but you can’t imagine what you are to me and what you mean to me! I suppose there is something mystical and wonderful about all women.”

“There is something mystical and wonderful about all human beings. I don’t see that men need bank it with the women.”

“A man does,” said Manning— “a true man, anyhow. And for me there is only one treasure-house. By Jove! When I think of it I want to leap and shout!”

“It would astonish that man with the barrow.”

“It astonishes me that I don’t,” said Manning, in a tone of intense self-enjoyment.

“I think,” began Ann Veronica, “that you don’t realize—”

He disregarded her entirely. He waved an arm and spoke with a

peculiar resonance. “I feel like a giant! I believe now I shall do great things. Gods! what it must be to pour out strong, splendid verse — mighty lines! mighty lines! If I do, Ann Veronica, it will be you. It will be altogether you. I will dedicate my books to you. I will lay them all at your feet.”

He beamed upon her.

“I don’t think you realize,” Ann Veronica began again, “that I am rather a defective human being.”

“I don’t want to,” said Manning. “They say there are spots on the sun. Not for me. It warms me, and lights me, and fills my world with flowers. Why should I peep at it through smoked glass to see things that don’t affect me?” He smiled his delight at his companion.

“I’ve got bad faults.”

He shook his head slowly, smiling mysteriously.

“But perhaps I want to confess them.”

“I grant you absolution.”

“I don’t want absolution. I want to make myself visible to you.”

“I wish I could make you visible to yourself. I don’t believe in the faults. They’re just a joyous softening of the outline — more beautiful than perfection. Like the flaws of an old marble. If you talk of your faults, I shall talk of your splendors.”

“I do want to tell you things, nevertheless.”

“We’ll have, thank God! ten myriad days to tell each other things. When I think of it—”

“But these are things I want to tell you now!”

“I made a little song of it. Let me say it to you. I’ve no name for it yet. Epithalamy might do.

“Like him who stood on Darien
I view uncharted sea
Ten thousand days, ten thousand nights
Before my Queen and me.

“And that only brings me up to about sixty-five!

“A glittering wilderness of time
That to the sunset reaches
No keel as yet its waves has ploughed
Or gritted on its beaches.

"And we will sail that splendor wide,
From day to day together,
From isle to isle of happiness
Through year's of God's own weather."

"Yes," said his prospective fellow-sailor, "that's very pretty." She stopped short, full of things un-said. Pretty! Ten thousand days, ten thousand nights!

"You shall tell me your faults," said Manning. "If they matter to you, they matter."

"It isn't precisely faults," said Ann Veronica. "It's something that bothers me." Ten thousand! Put that way it seemed so different.

"Then assuredly!" said Manning.

She found a little difficulty in beginning. She was glad when he went on: "I want to be your city of refuge from every sort of bother. I want to stand between you and all the force and vileness of the world. I want to make you feel that here is a place where the crowd does not clamor nor ill-winds blow."

"That is all very well," said Ann Veronica, unheeded.

"That is my dream of you," said Manning, warming. "I want my life to be beaten gold just in order to make it a fitting setting for yours. There you will be, in an inner temple. I want to enrich it with hangings and gladden it with verses. I want to fill it with fine and precious things. And by degrees, perhaps, that maiden distrust of yours that makes you shrink from my kisses, will vanish.... Forgive me if a certain warmth creeps into my words! The Park is green and gray to-day, but I am glowing pink and gold.... It is difficult to express these things."

Part 4

They sat with tea and strawberries and cream before them at a little table in front of the pavilion in Regent's Park. Her confession was still unmade. Manning leaned forward on the table, talking

discursively on the probable brilliance of their married life. Ann Veronica sat back in an attitude of inattention, her eyes on a distant game of cricket, her mind perplexed and busy. She was recalling the circumstances under which she had engaged herself to Manning, and trying to understand a curious development of the quality of this relationship.

The particulars of her engagement were very clear in her memory. She had taken care he should have this momentous talk with her on a garden-seat commanded by the windows of the house. They had been playing tennis, with his manifest intention looming over her.

"Let us sit down for a moment," he had said. He made his speech a little elaborately. She plucked at the knots of her racket and heard him to the end, then spoke in a restrained undertone.

"You ask me to be engaged to you, Mr. Manning," she began.

"I want to lay all my life at your feet."

"Mr. Manning, I do not think I love you.... I want to be very plain with you. I have nothing, nothing that can possibly be passion for you. I am sure. Nothing at all."

He was silent for some moments.

"Perhaps that is only sleeping," he said. "How can you know?"

"I think — perhaps I am rather a cold-blooded person."

She stopped. He remained listening attentively.

"You have been very kind to me," she said.

"I would give my life for you."

Her heart had warmed toward him. It had seemed to her that life might be very good indeed with his kindliness and sacrifice about her. She thought of him as always courteous and helpful, as realizing, indeed, his ideal of protection and service, as chivalrously leaving her free to live her own life, rejoicing with an infinite generosity in every detail of her irresponsive being. She twanged the catgut under her fingers.

"It seems so unfair," she said, "to take all you offer me and give so little in return."

"It is all the world to me. And we are not traders looking at equivalents."

"You know, Mr. Manning, I do not really want to marry."

"No."

“It seems so — so unworthy” — she picked among her phrases “of the noble love you give—”

She stopped, through the difficulty she found in expressing herself.

“But I am judge of that,” said Manning.

“Would you wait for me?”

Manning was silent for a space. “As my lady wills.”

“Would you let me go on studying for a time?”

“If you order patience.”

“I think, Mr. Manning... I do not know. It is so difficult. When I think of the love you give me — One ought to give you back love.”

“You like me?”

“Yes. And I am grateful to you....”

Manning tapped with his racket on the turf through some moments of silence. “You are the most perfect, the most glorious of created things — tender, frank intellectual, brave, beautiful. I am your servitor. I am ready to wait for you, to wait your pleasure, to give all my life to winning it. Let me only wear your livery. Give me but leave to try. You want to think for a time, to be free for a time. That is so like you, Diana — Pallas Athene! (Pallas Athene is better.) You are all the slender goddesses. I understand. Let me engage myself. That is all I ask.”

She looked at him; his face, downcast and in profile, was handsome and strong. Her gratitude swelled within her.

“You are too good for me,” she said in a low voice.

“Then you — you will?”

A long pause.

“It isn’t fair....”

“But will you?”

“YES.”

For some seconds he had remained quite still.

“If I sit here,” he said, standing up before her abruptly, “I shall have to shout. Let us walk about. Tum, tum, tirray, tum, tum, tum, te-tum — that thing of Mendelssohn’s! If making one human being absolutely happy is any satisfaction to you—”

He held out his hands, and she also stood up.

He drew her close up to him with a strong, steady pull. Then

suddenly, in front of all those windows, he folded her in his arms and pressed her to him, and kissed her unresisting face.

"Don't!" cried Ann Veronica, struggling faintly, and he released her.

"Forgive me," he said. "But I am at singing-pitch."

She had a moment of sheer panic at the thing she had done. "Mr. Manning," she said, "for a time — Will you tell no one? Will you keep this — our secret? I'm doubtful — Will you please not even tell my aunt?"

"As you will," he said. "But if my manner tells! I cannot help it if that shows. You only mean a secret for a little time?"

"Just for a little time," she said; "yes...."

But the ring, and her aunt's triumphant eye, and a note of approval in her father's manner, and a novel disposition in him to praise Manning in a just, impartial voice had soon placed very definite qualifications upon that covenanted secrecy.

Part 5

At first the quality of her relationship to Manning seemed moving and beautiful to Ann Veronica. She admired and rather pitied him, and she was unfeignedly grateful to him. She even thought that perhaps she might come to love him, in spite of that faint indefinable flavor of absurdity that pervaded his courtly bearing. She would never love him as she loved Capes, of course, but there are grades and qualities of love. For Manning it would be a more temperate love altogether. Much more temperate; the discreet and joyless love of a virtuous, reluctant, condescending wife. She had been quite convinced that an engagement with him and at last a marriage had exactly that quality of compromise which distinguishes the ways of the wise. It would be the wrappered world almost at its best. She saw herself building up a life upon that — a life restrained, kindly, beautiful, a little pathetic and altogether dignified; a life of great

disciplines and suppressions and extensive reserves...

But the Ramage affair needed clearing up, of course; it was a flaw upon that project. She had to explain about and pay off that forty pounds....

Then, quite insensibly, her queenliness had declined. She was never able to trace the changes her attitude had undergone, from the time when she believed herself to be the pampered Queen of Fortune, the crown of a good man's love (and secretly, but nobly, worshipping some one else), to the time when she realized she was in fact just a mannequin for her lover's imagination, and that he cared no more for the realities of her being, for the things she felt and desired, for the passions and dreams that might move her, than a child cares for the sawdust in its doll. She was the actress his whim had chosen to play a passive part....

It was one of the most educational disillusionments in Ann Veronica's career.

But did many women get anything better?

This afternoon, when she was urgent to explain her hampering and tainting complication with Ramage, the realization of this alien quality in her relationship with Manning became acute. Hitherto it had been qualified by her conception of all life as a compromise, by her new effort to be unexacting of life. But she perceived that to tell Manning of her Ramage adventures as they had happened would be like tarring figures upon a water-color. They were in different key, they had a different timbre. How could she tell him what indeed already began to puzzle herself, why she had borrowed that money at all? The plain fact was that she had grabbed a bait. She had grabbed! She became less and less attentive to his meditative, self-complacent fragments of talk as she told herself this. Her secret thoughts made some hasty, half-hearted excursions into the possibility of telling the thing in romantic tones — Ramage was as a black villain, she as a white, fantastically white, maiden.... She doubted if Manning would even listen to that. He would refuse to listen and absolve her unshriven.

Then it came to her with a shock, as an extraordinary oversight, that she could never tell Manning about Ramage — never.

She dismissed the idea of doing so. But that still left the forty

pounds!...

Her mind went on generalizing. So it would always be between herself and Manning. She saw her life before her robbed of all generous illusions, the wrappered life unwrappered forever, vistas of dull responses, crises of make-believe, years of exacting mutual disregard in a misty garden of fine sentiments.

But did any woman get anything better from a man? Perhaps every woman conceals herself from a man perforce!...

She thought of Capes. She could not help thinking of Capes. Surely Capes was different. Capes looked at one and not over one, spoke to one, treated one as a visible concrete fact. Capes saw her, felt for her, cared for her greatly, even if he did not love her. Anyhow, he did not sentimentalize her. And she had been doubting since that walk in the Zoological Gardens whether, indeed, he did simply care for her. Little things, almost impalpable, had happened to justify that doubt; something in his manner had belied his words. Did he not look for her in the morning when she entered — come very quickly to her? She thought of him as she had last seen him looking down the length of the laboratory to see her go. Why had he glanced up — quite in that way?...

The thought of Capes flooded her being like long-veiled sunlight breaking again through clouds. It came to her like a dear thing rediscovered, that she loved Capes. It came to her that to marry any one but Capes was impossible. If she could not marry him, she would not marry any one. She would end this sham with Manning. It ought never to have begun. It was cheating, pitiful cheating. And then if some day Capes wanted her — saw fit to alter his views upon friendship....

Dim possibilities that she would not seem to look at even to herself gesticulated in the twilight background of her mind.

She leaped suddenly at a desperate resolution, and in one moment had made it into a new self. She flung aside every plan she had in life, every discretion. Of course, why not? She would be honest, anyhow!

She turned her eyes to Manning.

He was sitting back from the table now, with one arm over the back of his green chair and the other resting on the little table. He

was smiling under his heavy mustache, and his head was a little on one side as he looked at her.

"And what was that dreadful confession you had to make?" he was saying. His quiet, kindly smile implied his serene disbelief in any confessible thing. Ann Veronica pushed aside a tea-cup and the vestiges of her strawberries and cream, and put her elbows before her on the table. "Mr. Manning," she said, "I HAVE a confession to make."

"I wish you would use my Christian name," he said.

She attended to that, and then dismissed it as unimportant.

Something in her voice and manner conveyed an effect of unwonted gravity to him. For the first time he seemed to wonder what it might be that she had to confess. His smile faded.

"I don't think our engagement can go on," she plunged, and felt exactly that loss of breath that comes with a dive into icy water.

"But, how," he said, sitting up astonished beyond measure, "not go on?"

"I have been thinking while you have been talking. You see — I didn't understand."

She stared hard at her finger-nails. "It is hard to express one's self, but I do want to be honest with you. When I promised to marry you I thought I could; I thought it was a possible arrangement. I did think it could be done. I admired your chivalry. I was grateful."

She paused.

"Go on," he said.

She moved her elbow nearer to him and spoke in a still lower tone. "I told you I did not love you."

"I know," said Manning, nodding gravely. "It was fine and brave of you."

"But there is something more."

She paused again.

"I — I am sorry — I didn't explain. These things are difficult. It wasn't clear to me that I had to explain.... I love some one else."

They remained looking at each other for three or four seconds. Then Manning flopped back in his chair and dropped his chin like a man shot. There was a long silence between them.

"My God!" he said at last, with tremendous feeling, and then

again, “My God!”

Now that this thing was said her mind was clear and calm. She heard this standard expression of a strong soul wrung with a critical coldness that astonished herself. She realized dimly that there was no personal thing behind his cry, that countless myriads of Mannings had “My God!”-ed with an equal gusto at situations as flatly apprehended. This mitigated her remorse enormously. He rested his brow on his hand and conveyed magnificent tragedy by his pose.

“But why,” he said in the gasping voice of one subduing an agony, and looked at her from under a pain-wrinkled brow, “why did you not tell me this before?”

“I didn’t know — I thought I might be able to control myself.”

“And you can’t?”

“I don’t think I ought to control myself.”

“And I have been dreaming and thinking—”

“I am frightfully sorry....”

“But — This bolt from the blue! My God! Ann Veronica, you don’t understand. This — this shatters a world!”

She tried to feel sorry, but her sense of his immense egotism was strong and clear.

He went on with intense urgency.

“Why did you ever let me love you? Why did you ever let me peep through the gates of Paradise? Oh! my God! I don’t begin to feel and realize this yet. It seems to me just talk; it seems to me like the fancy of a dream. Tell me I haven’t heard. This is a joke of yours.” He made his voice very low and full, and looked closely into her face.

She twisted her fingers tightly. “It isn’t a joke,” she said. “I feel shabby and disgraced.... I ought never to have thought of it. Of you, I mean....”

He fell back in his chair with an expression of tremendous desolation. “My God!” he said again....

They became aware of the waitress standing over them with book and pencil ready for their bill. “Never mind the bill,” said Manning tragically, standing up and thrusting a four-shilling piece into her hand, and turning a broad back on her astonishment. “Let us walk across the Park at least,” he said to Ann Veronica. “Just at present

my mind simply won't take hold of this at all.... I tell you — never mind the bill. Keep it! Keep it!"

Part 6

They walked a long way that afternoon. They crossed the Park to the westward, and then turned back and walked round the circle about the Royal Botanical Gardens and then southwardly toward Waterloo. They trudged and talked, and Manning struggled, as he said, to "get the hang of it all."

It was a long, meandering talk, stupid, shameful, and unavoidable. Ann Veronica was apologetic to the bottom of her soul. At the same time she was wildly exultant at the resolution she had taken, the end she had made to her blunder. She had only to get through this, to solace Manning as much as she could, to put such clumsy plasterings on his wounds as were possible, and then, anyhow, she would be free — free to put her fate to the test. She made a few protests, a few excuses for her action in accepting him, a few lame explanations, but he did not heed them or care for them. Then she realized that it was her business to let Manning talk and impose his own interpretations upon the situation so far as he was concerned. She did her best to do this. But about his unknown rival he was acutely curious.

He made her tell him the core of the difficulty.

"I cannot say who he is," said Ann Veronica, "but he is a married man.... No! I do not even know that he cares for me. It is no good going into that. Only I just want him. I just want him, and no one else will do. It is no good arguing about a thing like that."

"But you thought you could forget him."

"I suppose I must have thought so. I didn't understand. Now I do."

"By God!" said Manning, making the most of the word, "I suppose it's fate. Fate! You are so frank so splendid!

"I'm taking this calmly now," he said, almost as if he apologized,

“because I’m a little stunned.”

Then he asked, “Tell me! has this man, has he DARED to make love to you?”

Ann Veronica had a vicious moment. “I wish he had,” she said.

“But—”

The long inconsecutive conversation by that time was getting on her nerves. “When one wants a thing more than anything else in the world,” she said with outrageous frankness, “one naturally wishes one had it.”

She shocked him by that. She shattered the edifice he was building up of himself as a devoted lover, waiting only his chance to win her from a hopeless and consuming passion.

“Mr. Manning,” she said, “I warned you not to idealize me. Men ought not to idealize any woman. We aren’t worth it. We’ve done nothing to deserve it. And it hampers us. You don’t know the thoughts we have; the things we can do and say. You are a sisterless man; you have never heard the ordinary talk that goes on at a girls’ boarding-school.”

“Oh! but you ARE splendid and open and fearless! As if I couldn’t allow! What are all these little things? Nothing! Nothing! You can’t sully yourself. You can’t! I tell you frankly you may break off your engagement to me — I shall hold myself still engaged to you, yours just the same. As for this infatuation — it’s like some obsession, some magic thing laid upon you. It’s not you — not a bit. It’s a thing that’s happened to you. It is like some accident. I don’t care. In a sense I don’t care. It makes no difference.... All the same, I wish I had that fellow by the throat! Just the virile, unregenerate man in me wishes that....

“I suppose I should let go if I had.

“You know,” he went on, “this doesn’t seem to me to end anything.

“I’m rather a persistent person. I’m the sort of dog, if you turn it out of the room it lies down on the mat at the door. I’m not a lovesick boy. I’m a man, and I know what I mean. It’s a tremendous blow, of course — but it doesn’t kill me. And the situation it makes! — the situation!”

Thus Manning, egotistical, inconsecutive, unreal. And Ann

Veronica walked beside him, trying in vain to soften her heart to him by the thought of how she had ill-used him, and all the time, as her feet and mind grew weary together, rejoicing more and more that at the cost of this one interminable walk she escaped the prospect of — what was it?— "Ten thousand days, ten thousand nights" in his company. Whatever happened she need never return to that possibility.

"For me," Manning went on, "this isn't final. In a sense it alters nothing. I shall still wear your favor — even if it is a stolen and forbidden favor — in my casque.... I shall still believe in you. Trust you."

He repeated several times that he would trust her, though it remained obscure just exactly where the trust came in.

"Look here," he cried out of a silence, with a sudden flash of understanding, "did you mean to throw me over when you came out with me this afternoon?"

Ann Veronica hesitated, and with a startled mind realized the truth. "No," she answered, reluctantly.

"Very well," said Manning. "Then I don't take this as final. That's all. I've bored you or something.... You think you love this other man! No doubt you do love him. Before you have lived—"

He became darkly prophetic. He thrust out a rhetorical hand.

"I will MAKE you love me! Until he has faded — faded into a memory..."

He saw her into the train at Waterloo, and stood, a tall, grave figure, with hat upraised, as the carriage moved forward slowly and hid him. Ann Veronica sat back with a sigh of relief. Manning might go on now idealizing her as much as he liked. She was no longer a confederate in that. He might go on as the devoted lover until he tired. She had done forever with the Age of Chivalry, and her own base adaptations of its traditions to the compromising life. She was honest again.

But when she turned her thoughts to Morningside Park she perceived the tangled skein of life was now to be further complicated by his romantic importunity.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

THE COLLAPSE OF THE PENITENT

Part 1

Spring had held back that year until the dawn of May, and then spring and summer came with a rush together. Two days after this conversation between Manning and Ann Veronica, Capes came into the laboratory at lunch-time and found her alone there standing by the open window, and not even pretending to be doing anything.

He came in with his hands in his trousers pockets and a general air of depression in his bearing. He was engaged in detesting Manning and himself in almost equal measure. His face brightened at the sight of her, and he came toward her.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Ann Veronica, and stared over her shoulder out of the window.

"So am I.... Lassitude?"

"I suppose so."

"*I* can't work."

"Nor I," said Ann Veronica.

Pause.

"It's the spring," he said. "It's the warming up of the year, the coming of the light mornings, the way in which everything begins to run about and begin new things. Work becomes distasteful; one thinks of holidays. This year — I've got it badly. I want to get away. I've never wanted to get away so much."

"Where do you go?"

"Oh! — Alps."

"Climbing?"

"Yes."

"That's rather a fine sort of holiday!"

He made no answer for three or four seconds.

"Yes," he said, "I want to get away. I feel at moments as though I could bolt for it.... Silly, isn't it? Undisciplined."

He went to the window and fidgeted with the blind, looking out to where the tree-tops of Regent's Park showed distantly over the houses. He turned round toward her and found her looking at him and standing very still.

"It's the stir of spring," he said.

"I believe it is."

She glanced out of the window, and the distant trees were a froth of hard spring green and almond blossom. She formed a wild resolution, and, lest she should waver from it, she set about at once to realize it. "I've broken off my engagement," she said, in a matter-of-fact tone, and found her heart thumping in her neck. He moved slightly, and she went on, with a slight catching of her breath: "It's a bother and disturbance, but you see—" She had to go through with it now, because she could think of nothing but her preconceived words. Her voice was weak and flat.

"I've fallen in love."

He never helped her by a sound.

"I — I didn't love the man I was engaged to," she said. She met his eyes for a moment, and could not interpret their expression. They struck her as cold and indifferent.

Her heart failed her and her resolution became water. She remained standing stiffly, unable even to move. She could not look at him through an interval that seemed to her a vast gulf of time. But she felt his lax figure become rigid.

At last his voice came to release her tension.

"I thought you weren't keeping up to the mark. You — It's jolly of you to confide in me. Still—" Then, with incredible and obviously deliberate stupidity, and a voice as flat as her own, he asked, "Who is the man?"

Her spirit raged within her at the dumbness, the paralysis that had fallen upon her. Grace, confidence, the power of movement even, seemed gone from her. A fever of shame ran through her being. Horrible doubts assailed her. She sat down awkwardly and helplessly on one of the little stools by her table and covered her face with her hands.

"Can't you SEE how things are?" she said.

Part 2

Before Capes could answer her in any way the door at the end of the laboratory opened noisily and Miss Klegg appeared. She went to her own table and sat down. At the sound of the door Ann Veronica uncovered a tearless face, and with one swift movement assumed a conversational attitude. Things hung for a moment in an awkward silence.

"You see," said Ann Veronica, staring before her at the window-sash, "that's the form my question takes at the present time."

Capes had not quite the same power of recovery. He stood with his hands in his pockets looking at Miss Klegg's back. His face was white. "It's — it's a difficult question." He appeared to be paralyzed by abstruse acoustic calculations. Then, very awkwardly, he took a stool and placed it at the end of Ann Veronica's table, and sat down. He glanced at Miss Klegg again, and spoke quickly and furtively, with eager eyes on Ann Veronica's face.

"I had a faint idea once that things were as you say they are, but the affair of the ring — of the unexpected ring — puzzled me. Wish SHE" — he indicated Miss Klegg's back with a nod— "was at the bottom of the sea.... I would like to talk to you about this — soon. If you don't think it would be a social outrage, perhaps I might walk with you to your railway station."

"I will wait," said Ann Veronica, still not looking at him, "and we will go into Regent's Park. No — you shall come with me to Waterloo."

"Right!" he said, and hesitated, and then got up and went into the preparation-room.

Part 3

For a time they walked in silence through the back streets that lead southward from the College. Capes bore a face of infinite perplexity.

"The thing I feel most disposed to say, Miss Stanley," he began at last, "is that this is very sudden."

"It's been coming on since first I came into the laboratory."

"What do you want?" he asked, bluntly.

"You!" said Ann Veronica.

The sense of publicity, of people coming and going about them, kept them both unemotional. And neither had any of that theatricality which demands gestures and facial expression.

"I suppose you know I like you tremendously?" he pursued.

"You told me that in the Zoological Gardens."

She found her muscles a-tremble. But there was nothing in her bearing that a passer-by would have noted, to tell of the excitement that possessed her.

"I" — he seemed to have a difficulty with the word— "I love you. I've told you that practically already. But I can give it its name now. You needn't be in any doubt about it. I tell you that because it puts us on a footing...."

They went on for a time without another word.

"But don't you know about me?" he said at last.

"Something. Not much."

"I'm a married man. And my wife won't live with me for reasons that I think most women would consider sound.... Or I should have made love to you long ago."

There came a silence again.

"I don't care," said Ann Veronica.

"But if you knew anything of that—"

"I did. It doesn't matter."

"Why did you tell me? I thought — I thought we were going to be friends."

He was suddenly resentful. He seemed to charge her with the ruin of their situation. "Why on earth did you TELL me?" he cried.

"I couldn't help it. It was an impulse. I HAD to."

"But it changes things. I thought you understood."

"I had to," she repeated. "I was sick of the make-believe. I don't care! I'm glad I did. I'm glad I did."

“Look here!” said Capes, “what on earth do you want? What do you think we can do? Don’t you know what men are, and what life is? — to come to me and talk to me like this!”

“I know — something, anyhow. But I don’t care; I haven’t a spark of shame. I don’t see any good in life if it hasn’t got you in it. I wanted you to know. And now you know. And the fences are down for good. You can’t look me in the eyes and say you don’t care for me.”

“I’ve told you,” he said.

“Very well,” said Ann Veronica, with an air of concluding the discussion.

They walked side by side for a time.

“In that laboratory one gets to disregard these passions,” began Capes. “Men are curious animals, with a trick of falling in love readily with girls about your age. One has to train one’s self not to. I’ve accustomed myself to think of you — as if you were like every other girl who works at the schools — as something quite outside these possibilities. If only out of loyalty to co-education one has to do that. Apart from everything else, this meeting of ours is a breach of a good rule.”

“Rules are for every day,” said Ann Veronica. “This is not every day. This is something above all rules.”

“For you.”

“Not for you?”

“No. No; I’m going to stick to the rules.... It’s odd, but nothing but cliche seems to meet this case. You’ve placed me in a very exceptional position, Miss Stanley.” The note of his own voice exasperated him. “Oh, damn!” he said.

She made no answer, and for a time he debated some problems with himself.

“No!” he said aloud at last.

“The plain common-sense of the case,” he said, “is that we can’t possibly be lovers in the ordinary sense. That, I think, is manifest. You know, I’ve done no work at all this afternoon. I’ve been smoking cigarettes in the preparation-room and thinking this out. We can’t be lovers in the ordinary sense, but we can be great and intimate friends.”

“We are,” said Ann Veronica.

“You’ve interested me enormously....”

He paused with a sense of ineptitude. “I want to be your friend,” he said. “I said that at the Zoo, and I mean it. Let us be friends — as near and close as friends can be.”

Ann Veronica gave him a pallid profile.

“What is the good of pretending?” she said.

“We don’t pretend.”

“We do. Love is one thing and friendship quite another. Because I’m younger than you.... I’ve got imagination.... I know what I am talking about. Mr. Capes, do you think... do you think I don’t know the meaning of love?”

Part 4

Capes made no answer for a time.

“My mind is full of confused stuff,” he said at length. “I’ve been thinking — all the afternoon. Oh, and weeks and months of thought and feeling there are bottled up too.... I feel a mixture of beast and uncle. I feel like a fraudulent trustee. Every rule is against me — Why did I let you begin this? I might have told—”

“I don’t see that you could help—”

“I might have helped—”

“You couldn’t.”

“I ought to have — all the same.

“I wonder,” he said, and went off at a tangent. “You know about my scandalous past?”

“Very little. It doesn’t seem to matter. Does it?”

“I think it does. Profoundly.”

“How?”

“It prevents our marrying. It forbids — all sorts of things.”

“It can’t prevent our loving.”

“I’m afraid it can’t. But, by Jove! it’s going to make our loving a

fiercely abstract thing."

"You are separated from your wife?"

"Yes, but do you know how?"

"Not exactly."

"Why on earth — ? A man ought to be labelled. You see, I'm separated from my wife. But she doesn't and won't divorce me. You don't understand the fix I am in. And you don't know what led to our separation. And, in fact, all round the problem you don't know and I don't see how I could possibly have told you before. I wanted to, that day in the Zoo. But I trusted to that ring of yours."

"Poor old ring!" said Ann Veronica.

"I ought never have gone to the Zoo, I suppose. I asked you to go. But a man is a mixed creature.... I wanted the time with you. I wanted it badly."

"Tell me about yourself," said Ann Veronica.

"To begin with, I was — I was in the divorce court. I was — I was a co-respondent. You understand that term?"

Ann Veronica smiled faintly. "A modern girl does understand these terms. She reads novels — and history — and all sorts of things. Did you really doubt if I knew?"

"No. But I don't suppose you can understand."

"I don't see why I shouldn't."

"To know things by name is one thing; to know them by seeing them and feeling them and being them quite another. That is where life takes advantage of youth. You don't understand."

"Perhaps I don't."

"You don't. That's the difficulty. If I told you the facts, I expect, since you are in love with me, you'd explain the whole business as being very fine and honorable for me — the Higher Morality, or something of that sort.... It wasn't."

"I don't deal very much," said Ann Veronica, "in the Higher Morality, or the Higher Truth, or any of those things."

"Perhaps you don't. But a human being who is young and clean, as you are, is apt to ennoble — or explain away."

"I've had a biological training. I'm a hard young woman."

"Nice clean hardness, anyhow. I think you are hard. There's something — something ADULT about you. I'm talking to you now

as though you had all the wisdom and charity in the world. I'm going to tell you things plainly. Plainly. It's best. And then you can go home and think things over before we talk again. I want you to be clear what you're really and truly up to, anyhow."

"I don't mind knowing," said Ann Veronica.

"It's precious unromantic."

"Well, tell me."

"I married pretty young," said Capes. "I've got — I have to tell you this to make myself clear — a streak of ardent animal in my composition. I married — I married a woman whom I still think one of the most beautiful persons in the world. She is a year or so older than I am, and she is, well, of a very serene and proud and dignified temperament. If you met her you would, I am certain, think her as fine as I do. She has never done a really ignoble thing that I know of — never. I met her when we were both very young, as young as you are. I loved her and made love to her, and I don't think she quite loved me back in the same way."

He paused for a time. Ann Veronica said nothing.

"These are the sort of things that aren't supposed to happen. They leave them out of novels — these incompatibilities. Young people ignore them until they find themselves up against them. My wife doesn't understand, doesn't understand now. She despises me, I suppose.... We married, and for a time we were happy. She was fine and tender. I worshipped her and subdued myself."

He left off abruptly. "Do you understand what I am talking about? It's no good if you don't."

"I think so," said Ann Veronica, and colored. "In fact, yes, I do."

"Do you think of these things — these matters — as belonging to our Higher Nature or our Lower?"

"I don't deal in Higher Things, I tell you," said Ann Veronica, "or Lower, for the matter of that. I don't classify." She hesitated. "Flesh and flowers are all alike to me."

"That's the comfort of you. Well, after a time there came a fever in my blood. Don't think it was anything better than fever — or a bit beautiful. It wasn't. Quite soon, after we were married — it was just within a year — I formed a friendship with the wife of a friend, a woman eight years older than myself.... It wasn't anything splendid,

you know. It was just a shabby, stupid, furtive business that began between us. Like stealing. We dressed it in a little music.... I want you to understand clearly that I was indebted to the man in many small ways. I was mean to him.... It was the gratification of an immense necessity. We were two people with a craving. We felt like thieves. We WERE thieves.... We LIKED each other well enough. Well, my friend found us out, and would give no quarter. He divorced her. How do you like the story?"

"Go on," said Ann Veronica, a little hoarsely, "tell me all of it."

"My wife was astounded — wounded beyond measure. She thought me — filthy. All her pride raged at me. One particularly humiliating thing came out — humiliating for me. There was a second co-respondent. I hadn't heard of him before the trial. I don't know why that should be so acutely humiliating. There's no logic in these things. It was."

"Poor you!" said Ann Veronica.

"My wife refused absolutely to have anything more to do with me. She could hardly speak to me; she insisted relentlessly upon a separation. She had money of her own — much more than I have — and there was no need to squabble about that. She has given herself up to social work."

"Well—"

"That's all. Practically all. And yet — Wait a little, you'd better have every bit of it. One doesn't go about with these passions allayed simply because they have made wreckage and a scandal. There one is! The same stuff still! One has a craving in one's blood, a craving roused, cut off from its redeeming and guiding emotional side. A man has more freedom to do evil than a woman. Irregularly, in a quite inglorious and unromantic way, you know, I am a vicious man. That's — that's my private life. Until the last few months. It isn't what I have been but what I am. I haven't taken much account of it until now. My honor has been in my scientific work and public discussion and the things I write. Lots of us are like that. But, you see, I'm smirched. For the sort of love-making you think about. I've muddled all this business. I've had my time and lost my chances. I'm damaged goods. And you're as clean as fire. You come with those clear eyes of yours, as valiant as an angel...."

He stopped abruptly.

"Well?" she said.

"That's all."

"It's so strange to think of you — troubled by such things. I didn't think — I don't know what I thought. Suddenly all this makes you human. Makes you real."

"But don't you see how I must stand to you? Don't you see how it bars us from being lovers — You can't — at first. You must think it over. It's all outside the world of your experience."

"I don't think it makes a rap of difference, except for one thing. I love you more. I've wanted you — always. I didn't dream, not even in my wildest dreaming, that — you might have any need of me."

He made a little noise in his throat as if something had cried out within him, and for a time they were both too full for speech.

They were going up the slope into Waterloo Station.

"You go home and think of all this," he said, "and talk about it tomorrow. Don't, don't say anything now, not anything. As for loving you, I do. I do — with all my heart. It's no good hiding it any more. I could never have talked to you like this, forgetting everything that parts us, forgetting even your age, if I did not love you utterly. If I were a clean, free man — We'll have to talk of all these things. Thank goodness there's plenty of opportunity! And we two can talk. Anyhow, now you've begun it, there's nothing to keep us in all this from being the best friends in the world. And talking of every conceivable thing. Is there?"

"Nothing," said Ann Veronica, with a radiant face.

"Before this there was a sort of restraint — a make-believe. It's gone."

"It's gone."

"Friendship and love being separate things. And that confounded engagement!"

"Gone!"

They came upon a platform, and stood before her compartment.

He took her hand and looked into her eyes and spoke, divided against himself, in a voice that was forced and insincere.

"I shall be very glad to have you for a friend," he said, "loving friend. I had never dreamed of such a friend as you."

She smiled, sure of herself beyond any pretending, into his troubled eyes. Hadn't they settled that already?

"I want you as a friend," he persisted, almost as if he disputed something.

Part 5

The next morning she waited in the laboratory at the lunch-hour in the reasonable certainty that he would come to her.

"Well, you have thought it over?" he said, sitting down beside her.

"I've been thinking of you all night," she answered.

"Well?"

"I don't care a rap for all these things."

He said nothing for a space.

"I don't see there's any getting away from the fact that you and I love each other," he said, slowly. "So far you've got me and I you.... You've got me. I'm like a creature just wakened up. My eyes are open to you. I keep on thinking of you. I keep on thinking of little details and aspects of your voice, your eyes, the way you walk, the way your hair goes back from the side of your forehead. I believe I have always been in love with you. Always. Before ever I knew you."

She sat motionless, with her hand tightening over the edge of the table, and he, too, said no more. She began to tremble violently.

He stood up abruptly and went to the window.

"We have," he said, "to be the utmost friends."

She stood up and held her arms toward him. "I want you to kiss me," she said.

He gripped the window-sill behind him.

"If I do," he said.... "No! I want to do without that. I want to do without that for a time. I want to give you time to think. I am a man — of a sort of experience. You are a girl with very little. Just sit

down on that stool again and let's talk of this in cold blood. People of your sort — I don't want the instincts to — to rush our situation. Are you sure what it is you want of me?"

"I want you. I want you to be my lover. I want to give myself to you. I want to be whatever I can to you." She paused for a moment. "Is that plain?" she asked.

"If I didn't love you better than myself," said Capes, "I wouldn't fence like this with you.

"I am convinced you haven't thought this out," he went on. "You do not know what such a relation means. We are in love. Our heads swim with the thought of being together. But what can we do? Here am I, fixed to respectability and this laboratory; you're living at home. It means... just furtive meetings."

"I don't care how we meet," she said.

"It will spoil your life."

"It will make it. I want you. I am clear I want you. You are different from all the world for me. You can think all round me. You are the one person I can understand and feel — feel right with. I don't idealize you. Don't imagine that. It isn't because you're good, but because I may be rotten bad; and there's something — something living and understanding in you. Something that is born anew each time we meet, and pines when we are separated. You see, I'm selfish. I'm rather scornful. I think too much about myself. You're the only person I've really given good, straight, unselfish thought to. I'm making a mess of my life — unless you come in and take it. I am. In you — if you can love me — there is salvation. Salvation. I know what I am doing better than you do. Think — think of that engagement!"

Their talk had come to eloquent silences that contradicted all he had to say.

She stood up before him, smiling faintly.

"I think we've exhausted this discussion," she said.

"I think we have," he answered, gravely, and took her in his arms, and smoothed her hair from her forehead, and very tenderly kissed her lips.

Part 6

They spent the next Sunday in Richmond Park, and mingled the happy sensation of being together uninterruptedly through the long sunshine of a summer's day with the ample discussion of their position. "This has all the clean freshness of spring and youth," said Capes; "it is love with the down on; it is like the glitter of dew in the sunlight to be lovers such as we are, with no more than one warm kiss between us. I love everything to-day, and all of you, but I love this, this — this innocence upon us most of all.

"You can't imagine," he said, "what a beastly thing a furtive love affair can be.

"This isn't furtive," said Ann Veronica.

"Not a bit of it. And we won't make it so.... We mustn't make it so."

They loitered under trees, they sat on mossy banks they gossiped on friendly benches, they came back to lunch at the "Star and Garter," and talked their afternoon away in the garden that looks out upon the crescent of the river. They had a universe to talk about — two universes.

"What are we going to do?" said Capes, with his eyes on the broad distances beyond the ribbon of the river.

"I will do whatever you want," said Ann Veronica.

"My first love was all blundering," said Capes.

He thought for a moment, and went on: "Love is something that has to be taken care of. One has to be so careful.... It's a beautiful plant, but a tender one.... I didn't know. I've a dread of love dropping its petals, becoming mean and ugly. How can I tell you all I feel? I love you beyond measure. And I'm afraid.... I'm anxious, joyfully anxious, like a man when he has found a treasure."

"YOU know," said Ann Veronica. "I just came to you and put myself in your hands."

"That's why, in a way, I'm prudish. I've — dreads. I don't want to tear at you with hot, rough hands."

"As you will, dear lover. But for me it doesn't matter. Nothing is

wrong that you do. Nothing. I am quite clear about this. I know exactly what I am doing. I give myself to you."

"God send you may never repent it!" cried Capes.

She put her hand in his to be squeezed.

"You see," he said, "it is doubtful if we can ever marry. Very doubtful. I have been thinking — I will go to my wife again. I will do my utmost. But for a long time, anyhow, we lovers have to be as if we were no more than friends."

He paused. She answered slowly. "That is as you will," she said.

"Why should it matter?" he said.

And then, as she answered nothing, "Seeing that we are lovers."

Part 7

It was rather less than a week after that walk that Capes came and sat down beside Ann Veronica for their customary talk in the lunch hour. He took a handful of almonds and raisins that she held out to him — for both these young people had given up the practice of going out for luncheon — and kept her hand for a moment to kiss her finger-tips. He did not speak for a moment.

"Well?" she said.

"I say!" he said, without any movement. "Let's go."

"Go!" She did not understand him at first, and then her heart began to beat very rapidly.

"Stop this — this humbugging," he explained. "It's like the Picture and the Bust. I can't stand it. Let's go. Go off and live together — until we can marry. Dare you?"

"Do you mean NOW?"

"At the end of the session. It's the only clean way for us. Are you prepared to do it?"

Her hands clenched. "Yes," she said, very faintly. And then: "Of course! Always. It is what I have wanted, what I have meant all along."

She stared before her, trying to keep back a rush of tears.

Capes kept obstinately stiff, and spoke between his teeth.

“There’s endless reasons, no doubt, why we shouldn’t,” he said. “Endless. It’s wrong in the eyes of most people. For many of them it will smirch us forever.... You DO understand?”

“Who cares for most people?” she said, not looking at him.

“I do. It means social isolation — struggle.”

“If you dare — I dare,” said Ann Veronica. “I was never so clear in all my life as I have been in this business.” She lifted steadfast eyes to him. “Dare!” she said. The tears were welling over now, but her voice was steady. “You’re not a man for me — not one of a sex, I mean. You’re just a particular being with nothing else in the world to class with you. You are just necessary to life for me. I’ve never met any one like you. To have you is all important. Nothing else weighs against it. Morals only begin when that is settled. I sha’n’t care a rap if we can never marry. I’m not a bit afraid of anything — scandal, difficulty, struggle.... I rather want them. I do want them.”

“You’ll get them,” he said. “This means a plunge.”

“Are you afraid?”

“Only for you! Most of my income will vanish. Even unbelieving biological demonstrators must respect decorum; and besides, you see — you were a student. We shall have — hardly any money.”

“I don’t care.”

“Hardship and danger.”

“With you!”

“And as for your people?”

“They don’t count. That is the dreadful truth. This — all this swamps them. They don’t count, and I don’t care.”

Capes suddenly abandoned his attitude of meditative restraint. “By Jove!” he broke out, “one tries to take a serious, sober view. I don’t quite know why. But this is a great lark, Ann Veronica! This turns life into a glorious adventure!”

“Ah!” she cried in triumph.

“I shall have to give up biology, anyhow. I’ve always had a sneaking desire for the writing-trade. That is what I must do. I can.”

“Of course you can.”

“And biology was beginning to bore me a bit. One research is

very like another.... Latterly I've been doing things.... Creative work appeals to me wonderfully. Things seem to come rather easily.... But that, and that sort of thing, is just a day-dream. For a time I must do journalism and work hard.... What isn't a day-dream is this: that you and I are going to put an end to flummery — and go!"

"Go!" said Ann Veronica, clenching her hands.

"For better or worse."

"For richer or poorer."

She could not go on, for she was laughing and crying at the same time. "We were bound to do this when you kissed me," she sobbed through her tears. "We have been all this time — Only your queer code of honor — Honor! Once you begin with love you have to see it through."

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH

THE LAST DAYS AT HOME

Part 1

They decided to go to Switzerland at the session's end. "We'll clean up everything tidy," said Capes....

For her pride's sake, and to save herself from long day-dreams and an unappeasable longing for her lover, Ann Veronica worked hard at her biology during those closing weeks. She was, as Capes had said, a hard young woman. She was keenly resolved to do well in the school examination, and not to be drowned in the seas of emotion that threatened to submerge her intellectual being.

Nevertheless, she could not prevent a rising excitement as the dawn of the new life drew near to her — a thrilling of the nerves, a secret and delicious exaltation above the common circumstances of existence. Sometimes her straying mind would become astonishingly active — embroidering bright and decorative things that she could say to Capes; sometimes it passed into a state of passive acquiescence, into a radiant, formless, golden joy. She was aware of people — her aunt, her father, her fellow-students, friends, and neighbors — moving about outside this glowing secret, very much as an actor is aware of the dim audience beyond the barrier of the footlights. They might applaud, or object, or interfere, but the drama was her very own. She was going through with that, anyhow.

The feeling of last days grew stronger with her as their number diminished. She went about the familiar home with a clearer and clearer sense of inevitable conclusions. She became exceptionally considerate and affectionate with her father and aunt, and more and more concerned about the coming catastrophe that she was about to precipitate upon them. Her aunt had a once exasperating habit of interrupting her work with demands for small household services, but now Ann Veronica rendered them with a queer readiness of anticipatory propitiation. She was greatly exercised by the problem of confiding in the Widgetts; they were dears, and she talked away

two evenings with Constance without broaching the topic; she made some vague intimations in letters to Miss Miniver that Miss Miniver failed to mark. But she did not bother her head very much about her relations with these sympathizers.

And at length her penultimate day in Morningside Park dawned for her. She got up early, and walked about the garden in the dewy June sunshine and revived her childhood. She was saying good-bye to childhood and home, and her making; she was going out into the great, multitudinous world; this time there would be no returning. She was at the end of girlhood and on the eve of a woman's crowning experience. She visited the corner that had been her own little garden — her forget-me-nots and candytuft had long since been elbowed into insignificance by weeds; she visited the raspberry-canes that had sheltered that first love affair with the little boy in velvet, and the greenhouse where she had been wont to read her secret letters. Here was the place behind the shed where she had used to hide from Roddy's persecutions, and here the border of herbaceous perennials under whose stems was fairyland. The back of the house had been the Alps for climbing, and the shrubs in front of it a Terai. The knots and broken pale that made the garden-fence scalable, and gave access to the fields behind, were still to be traced. And here against a wall were the plum-trees. In spite of God and wasps and her father, she had stolen plums; and once because of discovered misdeeds, and once because she had realized that her mother was dead, she had lain on her face in the unmown grass, beneath the elm-trees that came beyond the vegetables, and poured out her soul in weeping.

Remote little Ann Veronica! She would never know the heart of that child again! That child had loved fairy princes with velvet suits and golden locks, and she was in love with a real man named Capes, with little gleams of gold on his cheek and a pleasant voice and firm and shapely hands. She was going to him soon and certainly, going to his strong, embracing arms. She was going through a new world with him side by side. She had been so busy with life that, for a vast gulf of time, as it seemed, she had given no thought to those ancient, imagined things of her childhood. Now, abruptly, they were real again, though very distant, and she had come to say farewell to them

across one sundering year.

She was unusually helpful at breakfast, and unselfish about the eggs: and then she went off to catch the train before her father's. She did this to please him. He hated travelling second-class with her — indeed, he never did — but he also disliked travelling in the same train when his daughter was in an inferior class, because of the look of the thing. So he liked to go by a different train. And in the Avenue she had an encounter with Ramage.

It was an odd little encounter, that left vague and dubitable impressions in her mind. She was aware of him — a silk-hatted, shiny-black figure on the opposite side of the Avenue; and then, abruptly and startlingly, he crossed the road and saluted and spoke to her.

"I MUST speak to you," he said. "I can't keep away from you."

She made some inane response. She was struck by a change in his appearance. His eyes looked a little bloodshot to her; his face had lost something of its ruddy freshness.

He began a jerky, broken conversation that lasted until they reached the station, and left her puzzled at its drift and meaning. She quickened her pace, and so did he, talking at her slightly averted ear. She made lumpish and inadequate interruptions rather than replies. At times he seemed to be claiming pity from her; at times he was threatening her with her check and exposure; at times he was boasting of his inflexible will, and how, in the end, he always got what he wanted. He said that his life was boring and stupid without her. Something or other — she did not catch what — he was damned if he could stand. He was evidently nervous, and very anxious to be impressive; his projecting eyes sought to dominate. The crowning aspect of the incident, for her mind, was the discovery that he and her indiscretion with him no longer mattered very much. Its importance had vanished with her abandonment of compromise. Even her debt to him was a triviality now.

And of course! She had a brilliant idea. It surprised her she hadn't thought of it before! She tried to explain that she was going to pay him forty pounds without fail next week. She said as much to him. She repeated this breathlessly.

"I was glad you did not send it back again," he said.

He touched a long-standing sore, and Ann Veronica found herself vainly trying to explain — the inexplicable. “It’s because I mean to send it back altogether,” she said.

He ignored her protests in order to pursue some impressive line of his own.

“Here we are, living in the same suburb,” he began. “We have to be — modern.”

Her heart leaped within her as she caught that phrase. That knot also would be cut. Modern, indeed! She was going to be as primordial as chipped flint.

Part 2

In the late afternoon, as Ann Veronica was gathering flowers for the dinner-table, her father came strolling across the lawn toward her with an affectation of great deliberation.

“I want to speak to you about a little thing, Vee,” said Mr. Stanley.

Ann Veronica’s tense nerves started, and she stood still with her eyes upon him, wondering what it might be that impended.

“You were talking to that fellow Ramage to-day — in the Avenue. Walking to the station with him.”

So that was it!

“He came and talked to me.”

“Ye — e — es.” Mr. Stanley considered. “Well, I don’t want you to talk to him,” he said, very firmly.

Ann Veronica paused before she answered. “Don’t you think I ought to?” she asked, very submissively.

“No.” Mr. Stanley coughed and faced toward the house. “He is not — I don’t like him. I think it inadvisable — I don’t want an intimacy to spring up between you and a man of that type.”

Ann Veronica reflected. “I HAVE — had one or two talks with him, daddy.”

“Don’t let there be any more. I — In fact, I dislike him extremely.”

“Suppose he comes and talks to me?”

“A girl can always keep a man at a distance if she cares to do it. She — She can snub him.”

Ann Veronica picked a cornflower.

“I wouldn’t make this objection,” Mr. Stanley went on, “but there are things — there are stories about Ramage. He’s — He lives in a world of possibilities outside your imagination. His treatment of his wife is most unsatisfactory. Most unsatisfactory. A bad man, in fact. A dissipated, loose-living man.”

“I’ll try not to see him again,” said Ann Veronica. “I didn’t know you objected to him, daddy.”

“Strongly,” said Mr. Stanley, “very strongly.”

The conversation hung. Ann Veronica wondered what her father would do if she were to tell him the full story of her relations with Ramage.

“A man like that taints a girl by looking at her, by his mere conversation.” He adjusted his glasses on his nose. There was another little thing he had to say. “One has to be so careful of one’s friends and acquaintances,” he remarked, by way of transition. “They mould one insensibly.” His voice assumed an easy detached tone. “I suppose, Vee, you don’t see much of those Widgetts now?”

“I go in and talk to Constance sometimes.”

“Do you?”

“We were great friends at school.”

“No doubt.... Still — I don’t know whether I quite like — Something ramshackle about those people, Vee. While I am talking about your friends, I feel — I think you ought to know how I look at it.” His voice conveyed studied moderation. “I don’t mind, of course, your seeing her sometimes, still there are differences — differences in social atmospheres. One gets drawn into things. Before you know where you are you find yourself in a complication. I don’t want to influence you unduly — But — They’re artistic people, Vee. That’s the fact about them. We’re different.”

“I suppose we are,” said Vee, rearranging the flowers in her hand.

“Friendships that are all very well between school-girls don’t

always go on into later life. It's — it's a social difference."

"I like Constance very much."

"No doubt. Still, one has to be reasonable. As you admitted to me — one has to square one's self with the world. You don't know. With people of that sort all sorts of things may happen. We don't want things to happen."

Ann Veronica made no answer.

A vague desire to justify himself ruffled her father. "I may seem unduly — anxious. I can't forget about your sister. It's that has always made me — SHE, you know, was drawn into a set — didn't discriminate Private theatricals."

Ann Veronica remained anxious to hear more of her sister's story from her father's point of view, but he did not go on. Even so much allusion as this to that family shadow, she felt, was an immense recognition of her ripening years. She glanced at him. He stood a little anxious and fussy, bothered by the responsibility of her, entirely careless of what her life was or was likely to be, ignoring her thoughts and feelings, ignorant of every fact of importance in her life, explaining everything he could not understand in her as nonsense and perversity, concerned only with a terror of bothers and undesirable situations. "We don't want things to happen!" Never had he shown his daughter so clearly that the womenkind he was persuaded he had to protect and control could please him in one way, and in one way only, and that was by doing nothing except the punctual domestic duties and being nothing except restful appearances. He had quite enough to see to and worry about in the City without their doing things. He had no use for Ann Veronica; he had never had a use for her since she had been too old to sit upon his knee. Nothing but the constraint of social usage now linked him to her. And the less "anything" happened the better. The less she lived, in fact, the better. These realizations rushed into Ann Veronica's mind and hardened her heart against him. She spoke slowly. "I may not see the Widgetts for some little time, father," she said. "I don't think I shall."

"Some little tiff?"

"No; but I don't think I shall see them."

Suppose she were to add, "I am going away!"

“I’m glad to hear you say it,” said Mr. Stanley, and was so evidently pleased that Ann Veronica’s heart smote her.

“I am very glad to hear you say it,” he repeated, and refrained from further inquiry. “I think we are growing sensible,” he said. “I think you are getting to understand me better.”

He hesitated, and walked away from her toward the house. Her eyes followed him. The curve of his shoulders, the very angle of his feet, expressed relief at her apparent obedience. “Thank goodness!” said that retreating aspect, “that’s said and over. Vee’s all right. There’s nothing happened at all!” She didn’t mean, he concluded, to give him any more trouble ever, and he was free to begin a fresh chromatic novel — he had just finished the Blue Lagoon, which he thought very beautiful and tender and absolutely irrelevant to Morningside Park — or work in peace at his microtome without bothering about her in the least.

The immense disillusionment that awaited him! The devastating disillusionment! She had a vague desire to run after him, to state her case to him, to wring some understanding from him of what life was to her. She felt a cheat and a sneak to his unsuspecting retreating back.

“But what can one do?” asked Ann Veronica.

Part 3

She dressed carefully for dinner in a black dress that her father liked, and that made her look serious and responsible. Dinner was quite uneventful. Her father read a draft prospectus warily, and her aunt dropped fragments of her projects for managing while the cook had a holiday. After dinner Ann Veronica went into the drawing-room with Miss Stanley, and her father went up to his den for his pipe and pensive petrography. Later in the evening she heard him whistling, poor man!

She felt very restless and excited. She refused coffee, though she

knew that anyhow she was doomed to a sleepless night. She took up one of her father's novels and put it down again, fretted up to her own room for some work, sat on her bed and meditated upon the room that she was now really abandoning forever, and returned at length with a stocking to darn. Her aunt was making herself cuffs out of little slips of insertion under the newly lit lamp.

Ann Veronica sat down in the other arm-chair and darned badly for a minute or so. Then she looked at her aunt, and traced with a curious eye the careful arrangement of her hair, her sharp nose, the little drooping lines of mouth and chin and cheek.

Her thought spoke aloud. "Were you ever in love, aunt?" she asked.

Her aunt glanced up startled, and then sat very still, with hands that had ceased to work. "What makes you ask such a question, Vee?" she said.

"I wondered."

Her aunt answered in a low voice: "I was engaged to him, dear, for seven years, and then he died."

Ann Veronica made a sympathetic little murmur.

"He was in holy orders, and we were to have been married when he got a living. He was a Wiltshire Edmondshaw, a very old family."

She sat very still.

Ann Veronica hesitated with a question that had leaped up in her mind, and that she felt was cruel. "Are you sorry you waited, aunt?" she said.

Her aunt was a long time before she answered. "His stipend forbade it," she said, and seemed to fall into a train of thought. "It would have been rash and unwise," she said at the end of a meditation. "What he had was altogether insufficient."

Ann Veronica looked at the mildly pensive gray eyes and the comfortable, rather refined face with a penetrating curiosity. Presently her aunt sighed deeply and looked at the clock. "Time for my Patience," she said. She got up, put the neat cuffs she had made into her work-basket, and went to the bureau for the little cards in the morocco case. Ann Veronica jumped up to get her the card-table. "I haven't seen the new Patience, dear," she said. "May I sit beside you?"

“It’s a very difficult one,” said her aunt. “Perhaps you will help me shuffle?”

Ann Veronica did, and also assisted nimbly with the arrangements of the rows of eight with which the struggle began. Then she sat watching the play, sometimes offering a helpful suggestion, sometimes letting her attention wander to the smoothly shining arms she had folded across her knees just below the edge of the table. She was feeling extraordinarily well that night, so that the sense of her body was a deep delight, a realization of a gentle warmth and strength and elastic firmness. Then she glanced at the cards again, over which her aunt’s many-ringed hand played, and then at the rather weak, rather plump face that surveyed its operations.

It came to Ann Veronica that life was wonderful beyond measure. It seemed incredible that she and her aunt were, indeed, creatures of the same blood, only by a birth or so different beings, and part of that same broad interlacing stream of human life that has invented the fauns and nymphs, Astarte, Aphrodite, Freya, and all the twining beauty of the gods. The love-songs of all the ages were singing in her blood, the scent of night stock from the garden filled the air, and the moths that beat upon the closed frames of the window next the lamp set her mind dreaming of kisses in the dusk. Yet her aunt, with a ringed hand flitting to her lips and a puzzled, worried look in her eyes, deaf to all this riot of warmth and flitting desire, was playing Patience — playing Patience, as if Dionysius and her curate had died together. A faint buzz above the ceiling witnessed that petrography, too, was active. Gray and tranquil world! Amazing, passionless world! A world in which days without meaning, days in which “we don’t want things to happen” followed days without meaning — until the last thing happened, the ultimate, unavoidable, coarse, “disagreeable.” It was her last evening in that wrappered life against which she had rebelled. Warm reality was now so near her she could hear it beating in her ears. Away in London even now Capes was packing and preparing; Capes, the magic man whose touch turned one to trembling fire. What was he doing? What was he thinking? It was less than a day now, less than twenty hours. Seventeen hours, sixteen hours. She glanced at the soft-ticking clock with the exposed brass pendulum upon the white marble mantel, and made a rapid

calculation. To be exact, it was just sixteen hours and twenty minutes. The slow stars circled on to the moment of their meeting. The softly glittering summer stars! She saw them shining over mountains of snow, over valleys of haze and warm darkness.... There would be no moon.

“I believe after all it’s coming out!” said Miss Stanley. “The aces made it easy.”

Ann Veronica started from her reverie, sat up in her chair, became attentive. “Look, dear,” she said presently, “you can put the ten on the Jack.”

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

IN THE MOUNTAINS

Part 1

Next day Ann Veronica and Capes felt like newborn things. It seemed to them they could never have been really alive before, but only dimly anticipating existence. They sat face to face beneath an experienced-looking rucksack and a brand new portmanteau and a leather handbag, in the afternoon-boat train that goes from Charing Cross to Folkestone for Boulogne. They tried to read illustrated papers in an unconcerned manner and with forced attention, lest they should catch the leaping exultation in each other's eyes. And they admired Kent sedulously from the windows.

They crossed the Channel in sunshine and a breeze that just ruffled the sea to glittering scales of silver. Some of the people who watched them standing side by side thought they must be newly wedded because of their happy faces, and others that they were an old-established couple because of their easy confidence in each other.

At Boulogne they took train to Basle; next morning they breakfasted together in the buffet of that station, and thence they caught the Interlaken express, and so went by way of Spies to Frutigen. There was no railway beyond Frutigen in those days; they sent their baggage by post to Kandersteg, and walked along the mule path to the left of the stream to that queer hollow among the precipices, Blau See, where the petrifying branches of trees lie in the blue deeps of an icy lake, and pine-trees clamber among gigantic boulders. A little inn flying a Swiss flag nestles under a great rock, and there they put aside their knapsacks and lunched and rested in the mid-day shadow of the gorge and the scent of resin. And later they paddled in a boat above the mysterious deeps of the See, and peered down into the green-blues and the blue-greens together. By that time it seemed to them they had lived together twenty years.

Except for one memorable school excursion to Paris, Ann Veronica had never yet been outside England. So that it seemed to

her the whole world had changed — the very light of it had changed. Instead of English villas and cottages there were chalets and Italian-built houses shining white; there were lakes of emerald and sapphire and clustering castles, and such sweeps of hill and mountain, such shining uplands of snow, as she had never seen before. Everything was fresh and bright, from the kindly manners of the Frutigen cobbler, who hammered mountain nails into her boots, to the unfamiliar wild flowers that spangled the wayside. And Capes had changed into the easiest and jolliest companion in the world. The mere fact that he was there in the train alongside her, helping her, sitting opposite to her in the dining-car, presently sleeping on a seat within a yard of her, made her heart sing until she was afraid their fellow passengers would hear it. It was too good to be true. She would not sleep for fear of losing a moment of that sense of his proximity. To walk beside him, dressed akin to him, rucksacked and companionable, was bliss in itself; each step she took was like stepping once more across the threshold of heaven.

One trouble, however, shot its slanting bolts athwart the shining warmth of that opening day and marred its perfection, and that was the thought of her father.

She had treated him badly; she had hurt him and her aunt; she had done wrong by their standards, and she would never persuade them that she had done right. She thought of her father in the garden, and of her aunt with her Patience, as she had seen them — how many ages was it ago? Just one day intervened. She felt as if she had struck them unawares. The thought of them distressed her without subtracting at all from the oceans of happiness in which she swam. But she wished she could put the thing she had done in some way to them so that it would not hurt them so much as the truth would certainly do. The thought of their faces, and particularly of her aunt's, as it would meet the fact — disconcerted, unfriendly, condemning, pained — occurred to her again and again.

"Oh! I wish," she said, "that people thought alike about these things."

Capes watched the limpid water dripping from his oar. "I wish they did," he said, "but they don't."

"I feel — All this is the rightest of all conceivable things. I want

to tell every one. I want to boast myself."

"I know."

"I told them a lie. I told them lies. I wrote three letters yesterday and tore them up. It was so hopeless to put it to them. At last — I told a story."

"You didn't tell them our position?"

"I implied we had married."

"They'll find out. They'll know."

"Not yet."

"Sooner or later."

"Possibly — bit by bit.... But it was hopelessly hard to put. I said I knew he disliked and distrusted you and your work — that you shared all Russell's opinions: he hates Russell beyond measure — and that we couldn't possibly face a conventional marriage. What else could one say? I left him to suppose — a registry perhaps...."

Capes let his oar smack on the water.

"Do you mind very much?"

He shook his head.

"But it makes me feel inhuman," he added.

"And me...."

"It's the perpetual trouble," he said, "of parent and child. They can't help seeing things in the way they do. Nor can we. WE don't think they're right, but they don't think we are. A deadlock. In a very definite sense we are in the wrong — hopelessly in the wrong. But — It's just this: who was to be hurt?"

"I wish no one had to be hurt," said Ann Veronica. "When one is happy — I don't like to think of them. Last time I left home I felt as hard as nails. But this is all different. It is different."

"There's a sort of instinct of rebellion," said Capes. "It isn't anything to do with our times particularly. People think it is, but they are wrong. It's to do with adolescence. Long before religion and Society heard of Doubt, girls were all for midnight coaches and Gretna Green. It's a sort of home-leaving instinct."

He followed up a line of thought.

"There's another instinct, too," he went on, "in a state of suppression, unless I'm very much mistaken; a child-expelling instinct.... I wonder.... There's no family uniting instinct, anyhow;

it's habit and sentiment and material convenience hold families together after adolescence. There's always friction, conflict, unwilling concessions. Always! I don't believe there is any strong natural affection at all between parents and growing-up children. There wasn't, I know, between myself and my father. I didn't allow myself to see things as they were in those days; now I do. I bored him. I hated him. I suppose that shocks one's ideas.... It's true.... There are sentimental and traditional deferences and reverences, I know, between father and son; but that's just exactly what prevents the development of an easy friendship. Father-worshipping sons are abnormal — and they're no good. No good at all. One's got to be a better man than one's father, or what is the good of successive generations? Life is rebellion, or nothing."

He rowed a stroke and watched the swirl of water from his oar broaden and die away. At last he took up his thoughts again: "I wonder if, some day, one won't need to rebel against customs and laws? If this discord will have gone? Some day, perhaps — who knows? — the old won't coddle and hamper the young, and the young won't need to fly in the faces of the old. They'll face facts as facts, and understand. Oh, to face facts! Gods! what a world it might be if people faced facts! Understanding! Understanding! There is no other salvation. Some day older people, perhaps, will trouble to understand younger people, and there won't be these fierce disruptions; there won't be barriers one must defy or perish.... That's really our choice now, defy — or futility.... The world, perhaps, will be educated out of its idea of fixed standards.... I wonder, Ann Veronica, if, when our time comes, we shall be any wiser?"

Ann Veronica watched a water-beetle fussing across the green depths. "One can't tell. I'm a female thing at bottom. I like high tone for a flourish and stars and ideas; but I want my things."

Part 2

Capes thought.

"It's odd — I have no doubt in my mind that what we are doing is wrong," he said. "And yet I do it without compunction."

"I never felt so absolutely right," said Ann Veronica.

"You ARE a female thing at bottom," he admitted. "I'm not nearly so sure as you. As for me, I look twice at it.... Life is two things, that's how I see it; two things mixed and muddled up together. Life is morality — life is adventure. Squire and master. Adventure rules, and morality — looks up the trains in the Bradshaw. Morality tells you what is right, and adventure moves you. If morality means anything it means keeping bounds, respecting implications, respecting implicit bounds. If individuality means anything it means breaking bounds — adventure.

"Will you be moral and your species, or immoral and yourself? We've decided to be immoral. We needn't try and give ourselves airs. We've deserted the posts in which we found ourselves, cut our duties, exposed ourselves to risks that may destroy any sort of social usefulness in us.... I don't know. One keeps rules in order to be one's self. One studies Nature in order not to be blindly ruled by her. There's no sense in morality, I suppose, unless you are fundamentally immoral."

She watched his face as he traced his way through these speculative thickets.

"Look at our affair," he went on, looking up at her. "No power on earth will persuade me we're not two rather disreputable persons. You desert your home; I throw up useful teaching, risk every hope in your career. Here we are absconding, pretending to be what we are not; shady, to say the least of it. It's not a bit of good pretending there's any Higher Truth or wonderful principle in this business. There isn't. We never started out in any high-browed manner to scandalize and Shelleyfy. When first you left your home you had no idea that *I* was the hidden impulse. I wasn't. You came out like an ant for your nuptial flight. It was just a chance that we in particular hit against each other — nothing predestined about it. We just hit against each other, and here we are flying off at a tangent, a little surprised at what we are doing, all our principles abandoned, and tremendously and quite unreasonably proud of ourselves. Out of all

this we have struck a sort of harmony.... And it's gorgeous!"

"Glorious!" said Ann Veronica.

"Would YOU like us — if some one told you the bare outline of our story? — and what we are doing?"

"I shouldn't mind," said Ann Veronica.

"But if some one else asked your advice? If some one else said, 'Here is my teacher, a jaded married man on the verge of middle age, and he and I have a violent passion for one another. We propose to disregard all our ties, all our obligations, all the established prohibitions of society, and begin life together afresh.' What would you tell her?"

"If she asked advice, I should say she wasn't fit to do anything of the sort. I should say that having a doubt was enough to condemn it."

"But waive that point."

"It would be different all the same. It wouldn't be you."

"It wouldn't be you either. I suppose that's the gist of the whole thing." He stared at a little eddy. "The rule's all right, so long as there isn't a case. Rules are for established things, like the pieces and positions of a game. Men and women are not established things; they're experiments, all of them. Every human being is a new thing, exists to do new things. Find the thing you want to do most intensely, make sure that's it, and do it with all your might. If you live, well and good; if you die, well and good. Your purpose is done.... Well, this is OUR thing."

He woke the glassy water to swirling activity again, and made the deep-blue shapes below writhe and shiver.

"This is MY thing," said Ann Veronica, softly, with thoughtful eyes upon him.

Then she looked up the sweep of pine-trees to the towering sunlit cliffs and the high heaven above and then back to his face. She drew in a deep breath of the sweet mountain air. Her eyes were soft and grave, and there was the faintest of smiles upon her resolute lips.

Part 3

Later they loitered along a winding path above the inn, and made love to one another. Their journey had made them indolent, the afternoon was warm, and it seemed impossible to breathe a sweeter air. The flowers and turf, a wild strawberry, a rare butterfly, and suchlike little intimate things had become more interesting than mountains. Their flitting hands were always touching. Deep silences came between them....

"I had thought to go on to Kandersteg," said Capes, "but this is a pleasant place. There is not a soul in the inn but ourselves. Let us stay the night here. Then we can loiter and gossip to our heart's content."

"Agreed," said Ann Veronica.

"After all, it's our honeymoon."

"All we shall get," said Ann Veronica.

"This place is very beautiful."

"Any place would be beautiful," said Ann Veronica, in a low voice.

For a time they walked in silence.

"I wonder," she began, presently, "why I love you — and love you so much?... I know now what it is to be an abandoned female. I AM an abandoned female. I'm not ashamed — of the things I'm doing. I want to put myself into your hands. You know — I wish I could roll my little body up small and squeeze it into your hand and grip your fingers upon it. Tight. I want you to hold me and have me SO.... Everything. Everything. It's a pure joy of giving — giving to YOU. I have never spoken of these things to any human being. Just dreamed — and ran away even from my dreams. It is as if my lips had been sealed about them. And now I break the seals — for you. Only I wish — I wish to-day I was a thousand times, ten thousand times more beautiful."

Capes lifted her hand and kissed it.

"You are a thousand times more beautiful," he said, "than anything else could be.... You are you. You are all the beauty in the world. Beauty doesn't mean, never has meant, anything — anything at all but you. It heralded you, promised you...."

Part 4

They lay side by side in a shallow nest of turf and mosses among bowlders and stunted bushes on a high rock, and watched the day sky deepen to evening between the vast precipices overhead and looked over the tree-tops down the widening gorge. A distant suggestion of chalets and a glimpse of the road set them talking for a time of the world they had left behind.

Capes spoke casually of their plans for work. “It’s a flabby, loose-willed world we have to face. It won’t even know whether to be scandalized at us or forgiving. It will hold aloof, a little undecided whether to pelt or not—”

“That depends whether we carry ourselves as though we expected pelting,” said Ann Veronica.

“We won’t.”

“No fear!”

“Then, as we succeed, it will begin to sidle back to us. It will do its best to overlook things—”

“If we let it, poor dear.”

“That’s if we succeed. If we fail,” said Capes, “then—”

“We aren’t going to fail,” said Ann Veronica.

Life seemed a very brave and glorious enterprise to Ann Veronica that day. She was quivering with the sense of Capes at her side and glowing with heroic love; it seemed to her that if they put their hands jointly against the Alps and pushed they would be able to push them aside. She lay and nibbled at a sprig of dwarf rhododendron.

“FAIL!” she said.

Part 5

Presently it occurred to Ann Veronica to ask about the journey he had planned. He had his sections of the Siegfried map folded in his pocket, and he squatted up with his legs crossed like an Indian idol while she lay prone beside him and followed every movement of his indicatory finger.

"Here," he said, "is this Blau See, and here we rest until to-morrow. I think we rest here until to-morrow?"

There was a brief silence.

"It is a very pleasant place," said Ann Veronica, biting a rhododendron stalk through, and with that faint shadow of a smile returning to her lips....

"And then?" said Ann Veronica.

"Then we go on to this place, the Oeschinensee. It's a lake among precipices, and there is a little inn where we can stay, and sit and eat our dinner at a pleasant table that looks upon the lake. For some days we shall be very idle there among the trees and rocks. There are boats on the lake and shady depths and wildernesses of pine-wood. After a day or so, perhaps, we will go on one or two little excursions and see how good your head is — a mild scramble or so; and then up to a hut on a pass just here, and out upon the Blumlis-alp glacier that spreads out so and so."

She roused herself from some dream at the word. "Glaciers?" she said.

"Under the Wilde Frau — which was named after you."

He bent and kissed her hair and paused, and then forced his attention back to the map. "One day," he resumed, "we will start off early and come down into Kandersteg and up these zigzags and here and here, and so past this Daubensee to a tiny inn — it won't be busy yet, though; we may get it all to ourselves — on the brim of the steepest zigzag you can imagine, thousands of feet of zigzag; and you will sit and eat lunch with me and look out across the Rhone Valley and over blue distances beyond blue distances to the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa and a long regiment of sunny, snowy mountains. And when we see them we shall at once want to go to them — that's the way with beautiful things — and down we shall go, like flies down a wall, to Leukerbad, and so to Leuk Station, here, and then by train up the Rhone Valley and this little side valley to

Stalden; and there, in the cool of the afternoon, we shall start off up a gorge, torrents and cliffs below us and above us, to sleep in a half-way inn, and go on next day to Saas Fee, Saas of the Magic, Saas of the Pagan People. And there, about Saas, are ice and snows again, and sometimes we will loiter among the rocks and trees about Saas or peep into Samuel Butler's chapels, and sometimes we will climb up out of the way of the other people on to the glaciers and snow. And, for one expedition at least, we will go up this desolate valley here to Mattmark, and so on to Monte Moro. There indeed you see Monte Rosa. Almost the best of all."

"Is it very beautiful?"

"When I saw it there it was very beautiful. It was wonderful. It was the crowned queen of mountains in her robes of shining white. It towered up high above the level of the pass, thousands of feet, still, shining, and white, and below, thousands of feet below, was a floor of little woolly clouds. And then presently these clouds began to wear thin and expose steep, deep slopes, going down and down, with grass and pine-trees, down and down, and at last, through a great rent in the clouds, bare roofs, shining like very minute pin-heads, and a road like a fibre of white silk-Macugnana, in Italy. That will be a fine day — it will have to be, when first you set eyes on Italy.... That's as far as we go."

"Can't we go down into Italy?"

"No," he said; "it won't run to that now. We must wave our hands at the blue hills far away there and go back to London and work."

"But Italy—"

"Italy's for a good girl," he said, and laid his hand for a moment on her shoulder. "She must look forward to Italy."

"I say," she reflected, "you ARE rather the master, you know."

The idea struck him as novel. "Of course I'm manager for this expedition," he said, after an interval of self-examination.

She slid her cheek down the tweed sleeve of his coat. "Nice sleeve," she said, and came to his hand and kissed it.

"I say!" he cried. "Look here! Aren't you going a little too far? This — this is degradation — making a fuss with sleeves. You mustn't do things like that."

"Why not?"

“Free woman — and equal.”

“I do it — of my own free will,” said Ann Veronica, kissing his hand again. “It’s nothing to what I WILL do.”

“Oh, well!” he said, a little doubtfully, “it’s just a phase,” and bent down and rested his hand on her shoulder for a moment, with his heart beating and his nerves a-quiver. Then as she lay very still, with her hands clinched and her black hair tumbled about her face, he came still closer and softly kissed the nape of her neck....

Part 6

Most of the things that he had planned they did. But they climbed more than he had intended because Ann Veronica proved rather a good climber, steady-headed and plucky, rather daring, but quite willing to be cautious at his command.

One of the things that most surprised him in her was her capacity for blind obedience. She loved to be told to do things.

He knew the circle of mountains about Saas Fee fairly well: he had been there twice before, and it was fine to get away from the straggling pedestrians into the high, lonely places, and sit and munch sandwiches and talk together and do things together that were just a little difficult and dangerous. And they could talk, they found; and never once, it seemed, did their meaning and intention hitch. They were enormously pleased with one another; they found each other beyond measure better than they had expected, if only because of the want of substance in mere expectation. Their conversation degenerated again and again into a strain of self-congratulation that would have irked an eavesdropper.

“You’re — I don’t know,” said Ann Veronica. “You’re splendid.”

“It isn’t that you’re splendid or I,” said Capes. “But we satisfy one another. Heaven alone knows why. So completely! The oddest fitness! What is it made of? Texture of skin and texture of mind? Complexion and voice. I don’t think I’ve got illusions, nor you.... If I

had never met anything of you at all but a scrap of your skin binding a book, Ann Veronica, I know I would have kept that somewhere near to me.... All your faults are just jolly modelling to make you real and solid."

"The faults are the best part of it," said Ann Veronica; "why, even our little vicious strains run the same way. Even our coarseness."

"Coarse?" said Capes, "We're not coarse."

"But if we were?" said Ann Veronica.

"I can talk to you and you to me without a scrap of effort," said Capes; "that's the essence of it. It's made up of things as small as the diameter of hairs and big as life and death.... One always dreamed of this and never believed it. It's the rarest luck, the wildest, most impossible accident. Most people, every one I know else, seem to have mated with foreigners and to talk uneasily in unfamiliar tongues, to be afraid of the knowledge the other one has, of the other one's perpetual misjudgment and misunderstandings.

"Why don't they wait?" he added.

Ann Veronica had one of her flashes of insight.

"One doesn't wait," said Ann Veronica.

She expanded that. "*I* shouldn't have waited," she said. "I might have muddled for a time. But it's as you say. I've had the rarest luck and fallen on my feet."

"We've both fallen on our feet! We're the rarest of mortals! The real thing! There's not a compromise nor a sham nor a concession between us. We aren't afraid; we don't bother. We don't consider each other; we needn't. That wrappered life, as you call it — we've burned the confounded rags! Danced out of it! We're stark!"

"Stark!" echoed Ann Veronica.

Part 7

As they came back from that day's climb — it was up the Mittaghorn — they had to cross a shining space of wet, steep rocks between two

grass slopes that needed a little care. There were a few loose, broken fragments of rock to reckon with upon the ledges, and one place where hands did as much work as toes. They used the rope — not that a rope was at all necessary, but because Ann Veronica's exalted state of mind made the fact of the rope agreeably symbolical; and, anyhow, it did insure a joint death in the event of some remotely possibly mischance. Capes went first, finding footholds and, where the drops in the strata-edges came like long, awkward steps, placing Ann Veronica's feet. About half-way across this interval, when everything seemed going well, Capes had a shock.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Ann Veronica, with extraordinary passion. "My God!" and ceased to move.

Capes became rigid and adhesive. Nothing ensued. "All right?" he asked.

"I'll have to pay it."

"Eh?"

"I've forgotten something. Oh, cuss it!"

"Eh?"

"He said I would."

"What?"

"That's the devil of it!"

"Devil of what?... You DO use vile language!"

"Forget about it like this."

"Forget WHAT?"

"And I said I wouldn't. I said I'd do anything. I said I'd make shirts."

"Shirts?"

"Shirts at one — and — something a dozen. Oh, goodness! Bilking! Ann Veronica, you're a bilker!"

Pause.

"Will you tell me what all this is about?" said Capes.

"It's about forty pounds."

Capes waited patiently.

"G. I'm sorry.... But you've got to lend me forty pounds."

"It's some sort of delirium," said Capes. "The rarefied air? I thought you had a better head."

"No! I'll explain lower. It's all right. Let's go on climbing now.

It's a thing I've unaccountably overlooked. All right really. It can wait a bit longer. I borrowed forty pounds from Mr. Ramage. Thank goodness you'll understand. That's why I chucked Manning.... All right, I'm coming. But all this business has driven it clean out of my head.... That's why he was so annoyed, you know."

"Who was annoyed?"

"Mr. Ramage — about the forty pounds." She took a step. "My dear," she added, by way of afterthought, "you DO obliterate things!"

Part 8

They found themselves next day talking love to one another high up on some rocks above a steep bank of snow that overhung a precipice on the eastern side of the Fee glacier. By this time Capes' hair had bleached nearly white, and his skin had become a skin of red copper shot with gold. They were now both in a state of unprecedented physical fitness. And such skirts as Ann Veronica had had when she entered the valley of Saas were safely packed away in the hotel, and she wore a leather belt and loose knickerbockers and puttees — a costume that suited the fine, long lines of her limbs far better than any feminine walking-dress could do. Her complexion had resisted the snow-glare wonderfully; her skin had only deepened its natural warmth a little under the Alpine sun. She had pushed aside her azure veil, taken off her snow-glasses, and sat smiling under her hand at the shining glories — the lit cornices, the blue shadows, the softly rounded, enormous snow masses, the deep places full of quivering luminosity — of the Taschhorn and Dom. The sky was cloudless, effulgent blue.

Capes sat watching and admiring her, and then he fell praising the day and fortune and their love for each other.

"Here we are," he said, "shining through each other like light through a stained-glass window. With this air in our blood, this

sunlight soaking us.... Life is so good. Can it ever be so good again?"

Ann Veronica put out a firm hand and squeezed his arm. "It's very good," she said. "It's glorious good!"

"Suppose now — look at this long snow-slope and then that blue deep beyond — do you see that round pool of color in the ice — a thousand feet or more below? Yes? Well, think — we've got to go but ten steps and lie down and put our arms about each other. See? Down we should rush in a foam — in a cloud of snow — to flight and a dream. All the rest of our lives would be together then, Ann Veronica. Every moment. And no ill-chances."

"If you tempt me too much," she said, after a silence, "I shall do it. I need only just jump up and throw myself upon you. I'm a desperate young woman. And then as we went down you'd try to explain. And that would spoil it.... You know you don't mean it."

"No, I don't. But I liked to say it."

"Rather! But I wonder why you don't mean it?"

"Because, I suppose, the other thing is better. What other reason could there be? It's more complex, but it's better. THIS, this glissade, would be damned scoundrelism. You know that, and I know that, though we might be put to it to find a reason why. It would be swindling. Drawing the pay of life and then not living. And besides — We're going to live, Ann Veronica! Oh, the things we'll do, the life we'll lead! There'll be trouble in it at times — you and I aren't going to run without friction. But we've got the brains to get over that, and tongues in our heads to talk to each other. We sha'n't hang up on any misunderstanding. Not us. And we're going to fight that old world down there. That old world that had shoved up that silly old hotel, and all the rest of it.... If we don't live it will think we are afraid of it.... Die, indeed! We're going to do work; we're going to unfold about each other; we're going to have children."

"Girls!" cried Ann Veronica.

"Boys!" said Capes.

"Both!" said Ann Veronica. "Lots of 'em!"

Capes chuckled. "You delicate female!"

"Who cares," said Ann Veronica, "seeing it's you? Warm, soft little wonders! Of course I want them."

Part 9

“All sorts of things we’re going to do,” said Capes; “all sorts of times we’re going to have. Sooner or later we’ll certainly do something to clean those prisons you told me about — limewash the underside of life. You and I. We can love on a snow cornice, we can love over a pail of whitewash. Love anywhere. Anywhere! Moonlight and music — pleasing, you know, but quite unnecessary. We met dissecting dogfish.... Do you remember your first day with me?... Do you indeed remember? The smell of decay and cheap methylated spirit!... My dear! we’ve had so many moments! I used to go over the times we’d had together, the things we’d said — like a rosary of beads. But now it’s beads by the cask — like the hold of a West African trader. It feels like too much gold-dust clutched in one’s hand. One doesn’t want to lose a grain. And one must — some of it must slip through one’s fingers.”

“I don’t care if it does,” said Ann Veronica. “I don’t care a rap for remembering. I care for you. This moment couldn’t be better until the next moment comes. That’s how it takes me. Why should WE hoard? We aren’t going out presently, like Japanese lanterns in a gale. It’s the poor dears who do, who know they will, know they can’t keep it up, who need to clutch at way-side flowers. And put ’em in little books for remembrance. Flattened flowers aren’t for the likes of us. Moments, indeed! We like each other fresh and fresh. It isn’t illusions — for us. We two just love each other — the real, identical other — all the time.”

“The real, identical other,” said Capes, and took and bit the tip of her little finger.

“There’s no delusions, so far as I know,” said Ann Veronica.

“I don’t believe there is one. If there is, it’s a mere wrapping — there’s better underneath. It’s only as if I’d begun to know you the day before yesterday or there-abouts. You keep on coming truer, after you have seemed to come altogether true. You... brick!”

Part 10

"To think," he cried, "you are ten years younger than I!... There are times when you make me feel a little thing at your feet — a young, silly, protected thing. Do you know, Ann Veronica, it is all a lie about your birth certificate; a forgery — and fooling at that. You are one of the Immortals. Immortal! You were in the beginning, and all the men in the world who have known what love is have worshipped at your feet. You have converted me to — Lester Ward! You are my dear friend, you are a slip of a girl, but there are moments when my head has been on your breast, when your heart has been beating close to my ears, when I have known you for the goddess, when I have wished myself your slave, when I have wished that you could kill me for the joy of being killed by you. You are the High Priestess of Life...."

"Your priestess," whispered Ann Veronica, softly. "A silly little priestess who knew nothing of life at all until she came to you."

Part 11

They sat for a time without speaking a word, in an enormous shining globe of mutual satisfaction.

"Well," said Capes, at length, "we've to go down, Ann Veronica. Life waits for us."

He stood up and waited for her to move.

"Gods!" cried Ann Veronica, and kept him standing. "And to think that it's not a full year ago since I was a black-hearted rebel school-girl, distressed, puzzled, perplexed, not understanding that this great force of love was bursting its way through me! All those nameless discontents — they were no more than love's birth-pangs. I

felt — I felt living in a masked world. I felt as though I had bandaged eyes. I felt — wrapped in thick cobwebs. They blinded me. They got in my mouth. And now — Dear! Dear! The dayspring from on high hath visited me. I love. I am loved. I want to shout! I want to sing! I am glad! I am glad to be alive because you are alive! I am glad to be a woman because you are a man! I am glad! I am glad! I am glad! I thank God for life and you. I thank God for His sunlight on your face. I thank God for the beauty you love and the faults you love. I thank God for the very skin that is peeling from your nose, for all things great and small that make us what we are. This is grace I am saying! Oh! my dear! all the joy and weeping of life are mixed in me now and all the gratitude. Never a new-born dragon-fly that spread its wings in the morning has felt as glad as I!”

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH

IN PERSPECTIVE

Part 1

About four years and a quarter later — to be exact, it was four years and four months — Mr. and Mrs. Capes stood side by side upon an old Persian carpet that did duty as a hearthrug in the dining-room of their flat and surveyed a shining dinner-table set for four people, lit by skilfully-shaded electric lights, brightened by frequent gleams of silver, and carefully and simply adorned with sweet-pea blossom. Capes had altered scarcely at all during the interval, except for a new quality of smartness in the cut of his clothes, but Ann Veronica was nearly half an inch taller; her face was at once stronger and softer, her neck firmer and rounder, and her carriage definitely more womanly than it had been in the days of her rebellion. She was a woman now to the tips of her fingers; she had said good-bye to her girlhood in the old garden four years and a quarter ago. She was dressed in a simple evening gown of soft creamy silk, with a yoke of dark old embroidery that enhanced the gentle gravity of her style, and her black hair flowed off her open forehead to pass under the control of a simple ribbon of silver. A silver necklace enhanced the dusky beauty of her neck. Both husband and wife affected an unnatural ease of manner for the benefit of the efficient parlor-maid, who was putting the finishing touches to the sideboard arrangements.

"It looks all right," said Capes.

"I think everything's right," said Ann Veronica, with the roaming eye of a capable but not devoted house-mistress.

"I wonder if they will seem altered," she remarked for the third time.

"There I can't help," said Capes.

He walked through a wide open archway, curtained with deep-blue curtains, into the apartment that served as a reception-room. Ann Veronica, after a last survey of the dinner appointments, followed him, rustling, came to his side by the high brass fender, and

touched two or three ornaments on the mantel above the cheerful fireplace.

"It's still a marvel to me that we are to be forgiven," she said, turning.

"My charm of manner, I suppose. But, indeed, he's very human."

"Did you tell him of the registry office?"

"No — o — certainly not so emphatically as I did about the play."

"It was an inspiration — your speaking to him?"

"I felt impudent. I believe I am getting impudent. I had not been near the Royal Society since — since you disgraced me. What's that?"

They both stood listening. It was not the arrival of the guests, but merely the maid moving about in the hall.

"Wonderful man!" said Ann Veronica, reassured, and stroking his cheek with her finger.

Capes made a quick movement as if to bite that aggressive digit, but it withdrew to Ann Veronica's side.

"I was really interested in his stuff. I WAS talking to him before I saw his name on the card beside the row of microscopes. Then, naturally, I went on talking. He — he has rather a poor opinion of his contemporaries. Of course, he had no idea who I was."

"But how did you tell him? You've never told me. Wasn't it — a little bit of a scene?"

"Oh! let me see. I said I hadn't been at the Royal Society soiree for four years, and got him to tell me about some of the fresh Mendelian work. He loves the Mendelians because he hates all the big names of the eighties and nineties. Then I think I remarked that science was disgracefully under-endowed, and confessed I'd had to take to more profitable courses. 'The fact of it is,' I said, 'I'm the new playwright, Thomas More. Perhaps you've heard — ?' Well, you know, he had."

"Fame!"

"Isn't it? 'I've not seen your play, Mr. More,' he said, 'but I'm told it's the most amusing thing in London at the present time. A friend of mine, Ogilvy' — I suppose that's Ogilvy & Ogilvy, who do so many divorces, Vee?— 'was speaking very highly of it — very highly!'" He smiled into her eyes.

“You are developing far too retentive a memory for praises,” said Ann Veronica.

“I’m still new to them. But after that it was easy. I told him instantly and shamelessly that the play was going to be worth ten thousand pounds. He agreed it was disgraceful. Then I assumed a rather portentous manner to prepare him.”

“How? Show me.”

“I can’t be portentous, dear, when you’re about. It’s my other side of the moon. But I was portentous, I can assure you. ‘My name’s NOT More, Mr. Stanley,’ I said. ‘That’s my pet name.’”

“Yes?”

“I think — yes, I went on in a pleasing blend of the casual and sotto voce, ‘The fact of it is, sir, I happen to be your son-in-law, Capes. I do wish you could come and dine with us some evening. It would make my wife very happy.’”

“What did he say?”

“What does any one say to an invitation to dinner point-blank? One tries to collect one’s wits. ‘She is constantly thinking of you,’ I said.”

“And he accepted meekly?”

“Practically. What else could he do? You can’t kick up a scene on the spur of the moment in the face of such conflicting values as he had before him. With me behaving as if everything was infinitely matter-of-fact, what could he do? And just then Heaven sent old Manningtree — I didn’t tell you before of the fortunate intervention of Manningtree, did I? He was looking quite infernally distinguished, with a wide crimson ribbon across him — what IS a wide crimson ribbon? Some sort of knight, I suppose. He is a knight. ‘Well, young man,’ he said, ‘we haven’t seen you lately,’ and something about ‘Bateson & Co.’ — he’s frightfully anti-Mendelian — having it all their own way. So I introduced him to my father-in-law like a shot. I think that WAS decision. Yes, it was Manningtree really secured your father. He—”

“Here they are!” said Ann Veronica as the bell sounded.

Part 2

They received the guests in their pretty little hall with genuine effusion. Miss Stanley threw aside a black cloak to reveal a discreet and dignified arrangement of brown silk, and then embraced Ann Veronica with warmth. “So very clear and cold,” she said. “I feared we might have a fog.” The housemaid’s presence acted as a useful restraint. Ann Veronica passed from her aunt to her father, and put her arms about him and kissed his cheek. “Dear old daddy!” she said, and was amazed to find herself shedding tears. She veiled her emotion by taking off his overcoat. “And this is Mr. Capes?” she heard her aunt saying.

All four people moved a little nervously into the drawing-room, maintaining a sort of fluttered amiability of sound and movement.

Mr. Stanley professed a great solicitude to warm his hands. “Quite unusually cold for the time of year,” he said. “Everything very nice, I am sure,” Miss Stanley murmured to Capes as he steered her to a place upon the little sofa before the fire. Also she made little pussy-like sounds of a reassuring nature.

“And let’s have a look at you, Vee!” said Mr. Stanley, standing up with a sudden geniality and rubbing his hands together.

Ann Veronica, who knew her dress became her, dropped a curtsy to her father’s regard.

Happily they had no one else to wait for, and it heartened her mightily to think that she had ordered the promptest possible service of the dinner. Capes stood beside Miss Stanley, who was beaming unnaturally, and Mr. Stanley, in his effort to seem at ease, took entire possession of the hearthrug.

“You found the flat easily?” said Capes in the pause. “The numbers are a little difficult to see in the archway. They ought to put a lamp.”

Her father declared there had been no difficulty.

“Dinner is served, m’m,” said the efficient parlor-maid in the archway, and the worst was over.

“Come, daddy,” said Ann Veronica, following her husband and

Miss Stanley; and in the fulness of her heart she gave a friendly squeeze to the parental arm.

"Excellent fellow!" he answered a little irrelevantly. "I didn't understand, Vee."

"Quite charming apartments," Miss Stanley admired; "charming! Everything is so pretty and convenient."

The dinner was admirable as a dinner; nothing went wrong, from the golden and excellent clear soup to the delightful iced marrons and cream; and Miss Stanley's praises died away to an appreciative acquiescence. A brisk talk sprang up between Capes and Mr. Stanley, to which the two ladies subordinated themselves intelligently. The burning topic of the Mendelian controversy was approached on one or two occasions, but avoided dexterously; and they talked chiefly of letters and art and the censorship of the English stage. Mr. Stanley was inclined to think the censorship should be extended to the supply of what he styled latter-day fiction; good wholesome stories were being ousted, he said, by "vicious, corrupting stuff" that "left a bad taste in the mouth." He declared that no book could be satisfactory that left a bad taste in the mouth, however much it seized and interested the reader at the time. He did not like it, he said, with a significant look, to be reminded of either his books or his dinners after he had done with them. Capes agreed with the utmost cordiality.

"Life is upsetting enough, without the novels taking a share," said Mr. Stanley.

For a time Ann Veronica's attention was diverted by her aunt's interest in the salted almonds.

"Quite particularly nice," said her aunt. "Exceptionally so."

When Ann Veronica could attend again she found the men were discussing the ethics of the depreciation of house property through the increasing tumult of traffic in the West End, and agreeing with each other to a devastating extent. It came into her head with real emotional force that this must be some particularly fantastic sort of dream. It seemed to her that her father was in some inexplicable way meaner-looking than she had supposed, and yet also, as unaccountably, appealing. His tie had demanded a struggle; he ought to have taken a clean one after his first failure. Why was she noting

things like this? Capes seemed self-possessed and elaborately genial and commonplace, but she knew him to be nervous by a little occasional clumsiness, by the faintest shadow of vulgarity in the urgency of his hospitality. She wished he could smoke and dull his nerves a little. A gust of irrational impatience blew through her being. Well, they'd got to the pheasants, and in a little while he would smoke. What was it she had expected? Surely her moods were getting a little out of hand.

She wished her father and aunt would not enjoy their dinner with such quiet determination. Her father and her husband, who had both been a little pale at their first encounter, were growing now just faintly flushed. It was a pity people had to eat food.

"I suppose," said her father, "I have read at least half the novels that have been at all successful during the last twenty years. Three a week is my allowance, and, if I get short ones, four. I change them in the morning at Cannon Street, and take my book as I come down."

It occurred to her that she had never seen her father dining out before, never watched him critically as an equal. To Capes he was almost deferential, and she had never seen him deferential in the old time, never. The dinner was stranger than she had ever anticipated. It was as if she had grown right past her father into something older and of infinitely wider outlook, as if he had always been unsuspectedly a flattened figure, and now she had discovered him from the other side.

It was a great relief to arrive at last at that pause when she could say to her aunt, "Now, dear?" and rise and hold back the curtain through the archway. Capes and her father stood up, and her father made a belated movement toward the curtain. She realized that he was the sort of man one does not think much about at dinners. And Capes was thinking that his wife was a supremely beautiful woman. He reached a silver cigar and cigarette box from the sideboard and put it before his father-in-law, and for a time the preliminaries of smoking occupied them both. Then Capes flittered to the hearthrug and poked the fire, stood up, and turned about. "Ann Veronica is looking very well, don't you think?" he said, a little awkwardly.

"Very," said Mr. Stanley. "Very," and cracked a walnut appreciatively.

“Life — things — I don’t think her prospects now — Hopeful outlook.”

“You were in a difficult position,” Mr. Stanley pronounced, and seemed to hesitate whether he had not gone too far. He looked at his port wine as though that tawny ruby contained the solution of the matter. “All’s well that ends well,” he said; “and the less one says about things the better.”

“Of course,” said Capes, and threw a newly lit cigar into the fire through sheer nervousness. “Have some more port wine, sir?”

“It’s a very sound wine,” said Mr. Stanley, consenting with dignity.

“Ann Veronica has never looked quite so well, I think,” said Capes, clinging, because of a preconceived plan, to the suppressed topic.

Part 3

At last the evening was over, and Capes and his wife had gone down to see Mr. Stanley and his sister into a taxicab, and had waved an amiable farewell from the pavement steps.

“Great dears!” said Capes, as the vehicle passed out of sight.

“Yes, aren’t they?” said Ann Veronica, after a thoughtful pause. And then, “They seem changed.”

“Come in out of the cold,” said Capes, and took her arm.

“They seem smaller, you know, even physically smaller,” she said.

“You’ve grown out of them.... Your aunt liked the pheasant.”

“She liked everything. Did you hear us through the archway, talking cookery?”

They went up by the lift in silence.

“It’s odd,” said Ann Veronica, re-entering the flat.

“What’s odd?”

“Oh, everything!”

She shivered, and went to the fire and poked it. Capes sat down in the arm-chair beside her.

"Life's so queer," she said, kneeling and looking into the flames. "I wonder — I wonder if we shall ever get like that."

She turned a firelit face to her husband. "Did you tell him?"

Capes smiled faintly. "Yes."

"How?"

"Well — a little clumsily."

"But how?"

"I poured him out some port wine, and I said — let me see — oh, 'You are going to be a grandfather!'"

"Yes. Was he pleased?"

"Calmly! He said — you won't mind my telling you?"

"Not a bit."

"He said, 'Poor Alice has got no end!'"

"Alice's are different," said Ann Veronica, after an interval. "Quite different. She didn't choose her man.... Well, I told aunt.... Husband of mine, I think we have rather overrated the emotional capacity of those — those dears."

"What did your aunt say?"

"She didn't even kiss me. She said" — Ann Veronica shivered again—"'I hope it won't make you uncomfortable, my dear' — like that— 'and whatever you do, do be careful of your hair!' I think — I judge from her manner — that she thought it was just a little indelicate of us — considering everything; but she tried to be practical and sympathetic and live down to our standards."

Capes looked at his wife's unsmiling face.

"Your father," he said, "remarked that all's well that ends well, and that he was disposed to let bygones be bygones. He then spoke with a certain fatherly kindliness of the past...."

"And my heart has ached for him!"

"Oh, no doubt it cut him at the time. It must have cut him."

"We might even have — given it up for them!"

"I wonder if we could."

"I suppose all IS well that ends well. Somehow to-night — I don't know."

"I suppose so. I'm glad the old sore is assuaged. Very glad. But if

we had gone under — !”

They regarded one another silently, and Ann Veronica had one of her penetrating flashes.

“We are not the sort that goes under,” said Ann Veronica, holding her hands so that the red reflections vanished from her eyes. “We settled long ago — we’re hard stuff. We’re hard stuff!”

Then she went on: “To think that is my father! Oh, my dear! He stood over me like a cliff; the thought of him nearly turned me aside from everything we have done. He was the social order; he was law and wisdom. And they come here, and they look at our furniture to see if it is good; and they are not glad, it does not stir them, that at last, at last we can dare to have children.”

She dropped back into a crouching attitude and began to weep. “Oh, my dear!” she cried, and suddenly flung herself, kneeling, into her husband’s arms.

“Do you remember the mountains? Do you remember how we loved one another? How intensely we loved one another! Do you remember the light on things and the glory of things? I’m greedy, I’m greedy! I want children like the mountains and life like the sky. Oh! and love — love! We’ve had so splendid a time, and fought our fight and won. And it’s like the petals falling from a flower. Oh, I’ve loved love, dear! I’ve loved love and you, and the glory of you; and the great time is over, and I have to go carefully and bear children, and — take care of my hair — and when I am done with that I shall be an old woman. The petals have fallen — the red petals we loved so. We’re hedged about with discretions — and all this furniture — and successes! We are successful at last! Successful! But the mountains, dear! We won’t forget the mountains, dear, ever. That shining slope of snow, and how we talked of death! We might have died! Even when we are old, when we are rich as we may be, we won’t forget the tune when we cared nothing for anything but the joy of one another, when we risked everything for one another, when all the wrappings and coverings seemed to have fallen from life and left it light and fire. Stark and stark! Do you remember it all?... Say you will never forget! That these common things and secondary things sha’n’t overwhelm us. These petals! I’ve been wanting to cry all the evening, cry here on your shoulder for my petals. Petals!... Silly

woman!... I've never had these crying fits before...."

"Blood of my heart!" whispered Capes, holding her close to him. "I know. I understand."

THE HISTORY OF MR. POLLY

This 1910 comedy novel depicts the misadventures of its eponymous protagonist, whose life experiences are partly based on those of Wells himself, who, like Mr. Polly, began his career as a draper's assistant in a small town in Kent – a situation in which he, like Mr. Polly, was thoroughly miserable.

Wells also uses Mr. Polly to portray the struggles of an autodidact, one of the chief themes being his inability to achieve sufficient confidence in his own intellectual abilities, which leads him to trust in his immediate first impressions of things rather than in his ability to examine them in a detached, analytical manner – all of this despite the fact that Polly is well-read and has a good basic education. This reflects Wells' own belief both that lower-middle-class readers should avoid escapism and read in a manner that would help them to understand the social, moral and scientific nature of the world around them; and that authors (even of fictional works) should provide their readers with books that would help them achieve this more sophisticated level of engagement with the real world and the problems of daily life. *The History of Mr. Polly*, with its complex and ironic morality and its explicit engagement with contemporary social problems thus fulfils Wells' criteria of what a novel should be.

THE HISTORY OF MR. POLLY

By H. G. WELLS

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A view of Sandgate in Kent, thought to be the basis for Mr. Polly's hometown in the novel

Lee Evans as Mr. Polly in the 1997 TV adaptation

Chapter the First

Beginnings, and the Bazaar

I

"Hole!" said Mr. Polly, and then for a change, and with greatly increased emphasis: "'Ole!" He paused, and then broke out with one of his private and peculiar idioms. "Oh! Beastly Silly Wheeze of a Hole!"

He was sitting on a stile between two threadbare looking fields, and suffering acutely from indigestion.

He suffered from indigestion now nearly every afternoon in his life, but as he lacked introspection he projected the associated discomfort upon the world. Every afternoon he discovered afresh that life as a whole and every aspect of life that presented itself was "beastly." And this afternoon, lured by the delusive blueness of a sky that was blue because the wind was in the east, he had come out in the hope of snatching something of the joyousness of spring. The mysterious alchemy of mind and body refused, however, to permit any joyousness whatever in the spring.

He had had a little difficulty in finding his cap before he came out. He wanted his cap — the new golf cap — and Mrs. Polly must needs fish out his old soft brown felt hat. "'*Ere's* your 'at," she said in a tone of insincere encouragement.

He had been routing among the piled newspapers under the kitchen dresser, and had turned quite hopefully and taken the thing. He put it on. But it didn't feel right. Nothing felt right. He put a trembling hand upon the crown of the thing and pressed it on his head, and tried it askew to the right and then askew to the left.

Then the full sense of the indignity offered him came home to him. The hat masked the upper sinister quarter of his face, and he spoke with a wrathful eye regarding his wife from under the brim. In a voice thick with fury he said: "I s'pose you'd like me to wear that silly Mud Pie for ever, eh? I tell you I won't. I'm sick of it. I'm pretty near sick of everything, comes to that.... Hat!"

He clutched it with quivering fingers. “Hat!” he repeated. Then he flung it to the ground, and kicked it with extraordinary fury across the kitchen. It flew up against the door and dropped to the ground with its ribbon band half off.

“Shan’t go out!” he said, and sticking his hands into his jacket pockets discovered the missing cap in the right one.

There was nothing for it but to go straight upstairs without a word, and out, slamming the shop door hard.

“Beauty!” said Mrs. Polly at last to a tremendous silence, picking up and dusting the rejected headdress. “Tantrums,” she added. “I ‘aven’t patience.” And moving with the slow reluctance of a deeply offended woman, she began to pile together the simple apparatus of their recent meal, for transportation to the scullery sink.

The repast she had prepared for him did not seem to her to justify his ingratitude. There had been the cold pork from Sunday and some nice cold potatoes, and Rashdall’s Mixed Pickles, of which he was inordinately fond. He had eaten three gherkins, two onions, a small cauliflower head and several capers with every appearance of appetite, and indeed with avidity; and then there had been cold suet pudding to follow, with treacle, and then a nice bit of cheese. It was the pale, hard sort of cheese he liked; red cheese he declared was indigestible. He had also had three big slices of greyish baker’s bread, and had drunk the best part of the jugful of beer.... But there seems to be no pleasing some people.

“Tantrums!” said Mrs. Polly at the sink, struggling with the mustard on his plate and expressing the only solution of the problem that occurred to her.

And Mr. Polly sat on the stile and hated the whole scheme of life — which was at once excessive and inadequate as a solution. He hated Foxbourne, he hated Foxbourne High Street, he hated his shop and his wife and his neighbours — every blessed neighbour — and with indescribable bitterness he hated himself.

“Why did I ever get in this silly Hole?” he said. “Why did I ever?”

He sat on the stile, and looked with eyes that seemed blurred with impalpable flaws at a world in which even the spring buds were wilted, the sunlight metallic and the shadows mixed with blue-black ink.

To the moralist I know he might have served as a figure of sinful discontent, but that is because it is the habit of moralists to ignore material circumstances, — if indeed one may speak of a recent meal as a circumstance, — with Mr. Polly *circum*. Drink, indeed, our teachers will criticise nowadays both as regards quantity and quality, but neither church nor state nor school will raise a warning finger between a man and his hunger and his wife's catering. So on nearly every day in his life Mr. Polly fell into a violent rage and hatred against the outer world in the afternoon, and never suspected that it was this inner world to which I am with such masterly delicacy alluding, that was thus reflecting its sinister disorder upon the things without. It is a pity that some human beings are not more transparent. If Mr. Polly, for example, had been transparent or even passably translucent, then perhaps he might have realised from the Laocoon struggle he would have glimpsed, that indeed he was not so much a human being as a civil war.

Wonderful things must have been going on inside Mr. Polly. Oh! wonderful things. It must have been like a badly managed industrial city during a period of depression; agitators, acts of violence, strikes, the forces of law and order doing their best, rushings to and fro, upheavals, the *Marseillaise*, tumbrils, the rumble and the thunder of the tumbrils....

I do not know why the east wind aggravates life to unhealthy people. It made Mr. Polly's teeth seem loose in his head, and his skin feel like a misfit, and his hair a dry, stringy exasperation....

Why cannot doctors give us an antidote to the east wind?

"Never have the sense to get your hair cut till it's too long," said Mr. Polly catching sight of his shadow, "you blighted, degenerated Paintbrush! Ugh!" and he flattened down the projecting tails with an urgent hand.

II

Mr. Polly's age was exactly thirty-five years and a half. He was a short, compact figure, and a little inclined to a localised *embonpoint*. His face was not unpleasing; the features fine, but a trifle too pointed about the nose to be classically perfect. The corners of his sensitive

mouth were depressed. His eyes were ruddy brown and troubled, and the left one was round with more of wonder in it than its fellow. His complexion was dull and yellowish. That, as I have explained, on account of those civil disturbances. He was, in the technical sense of the word, clean shaved, with a small sallow patch under the right ear and a cut on the chin. His brow had the little puckerings of a thoroughly discontented man, little wrinklings and lumps, particularly over his right eye, and he sat with his hands in his pockets, a little askew on the stile and swung one leg. "Hole!" he repeated presently.

He broke into a quavering song. "Ro-o-o-tten Be-e-astly Silly Hole!"

His voice thickened with rage, and the rest of his discourse was marred by an unfortunate choice of epithets.

He was dressed in a shabby black morning coat and vest; the braid that bound these garments was a little loose in places; his collar was chosen from stock and with projecting corners, technically a "wing-poke"; that and his tie, which was new and loose and rich in colouring, had been selected to encourage and stimulate customers — for he dealt in gentlemen's outfitting. His golf cap, which was also from stock and aslant over his eye, gave his misery a desperate touch. He wore brown leather boots — because he hated the smell of blacking.

Perhaps after all it was not simply indigestion that troubled him.

Behind the superficialities of Mr. Polly's being, moved a larger and vaguer distress. The elementary education he had acquired had left him with the impression that arithmetic was a fluky science and best avoided in practical affairs, but even the absence of book-keeping and a total inability to distinguish between capital and interest could not blind him for ever to the fact that the little shop in the High Street was not paying. An absence of returns, a constriction of credit, a depleted till, the most valiant resolves to keep smiling, could not prevail for ever against these insistent phenomena. One might bustle about in the morning before dinner, and in the afternoon after tea and forget that huge dark cloud of insolvency that gathered and spread in the background, but it was part of the desolation of these afternoon periods, these grey spaces of time after meals, when

all one's courage had descended to the unseen battles of the pit, that life seemed stripped to the bone and one saw with a hopeless clearness.

Let me tell the history of Mr. Polly from the cradle to these present difficulties.

"First the infant, mewling and puking in its nurse's arms."

There had been a time when two people had thought Mr. Polly the most wonderful and adorable thing in the world, had kissed his toe-nails, saying "myum, myum," and marvelled at the exquisite softness and delicacy of his hair, had called to one another to remark the peculiar distinction with which he bubbled, had disputed whether the sound he had made was *just da da*, or truly and intentionally dadda, had washed him in the utmost detail, and wrapped him up in soft, warm blankets, and smothered him with kisses. A regal time that was, and four and thirty years ago; and a merciful forgetfulness barred Mr. Polly from ever bringing its careless luxury, its autocratic demands and instant obedience, into contrast with his present condition of life. These two people had worshipped him from the crown of his head to the soles of his exquisite feet. And also they had fed him rather unwisely, for no one had ever troubled to teach his mother anything about the mysteries of a child's upbringing — though of course the monthly nurse and her charwoman gave some valuable hints — and by his fifth birthday the perfect rhythms of his nice new interior were already darkened with perplexity ....

His mother died when he was seven.

He began only to have distinctive memories of himself in the time when his education had already begun.

I remember seeing a picture of Education — in some place. I think it was Education, but quite conceivably it represented the Empire teaching her Sons, and I have a strong impression that it was a wall painting upon some public building in Manchester or Birmingham or Glasgow, but very possibly I am mistaken about that. It represented a glorious woman with a wise and fearless face stooping over her children and pointing them to far horizons. The sky displayed the pearly warmth of a summer dawn, and all the painting was marvellously bright as if with the youth and hope of the delicately beautiful children in the foreground. She was telling them,

one felt, of the great prospect of life that opened before them, of the spectacle of the world, the splendours of sea and mountain they might travel and see, the joys of skill they might acquire, of effort and the pride of effort and the devotions and nobilities it was theirs to achieve. Perhaps even she whispered of the warm triumphant mystery of love that comes at last to those who have patience and unblemished hearts.... She was reminding them of their great heritage as English children, rulers of more than one-fifth of mankind, of the obligation to do and be the best that such a pride of empire entails, of their essential nobility and knighthood and the restraints and the charities and the disciplined strength that is becoming in knights and rulers....

The education of Mr. Polly did not follow this picture very closely. He went for some time to a National School, which was run on severely economical lines to keep down the rates by a largely untrained staff, he was set sums to do that he did not understand, and that no one made him understand, he was made to read the catechism and Bible with the utmost industry and an entire disregard of punctuation or significance, and caused to imitate writing copies and drawing copies, and given object lessons upon sealing wax and silk-worms and potato bugs and ginger and iron and such like things, and taught various other subjects his mind refused to entertain, and afterwards, when he was about twelve, he was jerked by his parent to "finish off" in a private school of dingy aspect and still dingier pretensions, where there were no object lessons, and the studies of book-keeping and French were pursued (but never effectually overtaken) under the guidance of an elderly gentleman who wore a nondescript gown and took snuff, wrote copperplate, explained nothing, and used a cane with remarkable dexterity and gusto.

Mr. Polly went into the National School at six and he left the private school at fourteen, and by that time his mind was in much the same state that you would be in, dear reader, if you were operated upon for appendicitis by a well-meaning, boldly enterprising, but rather over-worked and under-paid butcher boy, who was superseded towards the climax of the operation by a left-handed clerk of high principles but intemperate habits, — that is to say, it was in a thorough mess. The nice little curiosities and willingnesses of a child

were in a jumbled and thwarted condition, hacked and cut about — the operators had left, so to speak, all their sponges and ligatures in the mangled confusion — and Mr. Polly had lost much of his natural confidence, so far as figures and sciences and languages and the possibilities of learning things were concerned. He thought of the present world no longer as a wonderland of experiences, but as geography and history, as the repeating of names that were hard to pronounce, and lists of products and populations and heights and lengths, and as lists and dates — oh! and boredom indescribable. He thought of religion as the recital of more or less incomprehensible words that were hard to remember, and of the Divinity as of a limitless Being having the nature of a schoolmaster and making infinite rules, known and unknown rules, that were always ruthlessly enforced, and with an infinite capacity for punishment and, most horrible of all to think of! limitless powers of espial. (So to the best of his ability he did not think of that unrelenting eye.) He was uncertain about the spelling and pronunciation of most of the words in our beautiful but abundant and perplexing tongue, — that especially was a pity because words attracted him, and under happier conditions he might have used them well — he was always doubtful whether it was eight sevens or nine eights that was sixty-three — (he knew no method for settling the difficulty) and he thought the merit of a drawing consisted in the care with which it was "lined in." "Lining in" bored him beyond measure.

But the *indigestions* of mind and body that were to play so large a part in his subsequent career were still only beginning. His liver and his gastric juice, his wonder and imagination kept up a fight against the things that threatened to overwhelm soul and body together. Outside the regions devastated by the school curriculum he was still intensely curious. He had cheerful phases of enterprise, and about thirteen he suddenly discovered reading and its joys. He began to read stories voraciously, and books of travel, provided they were also adventurous. He got these chiefly from the local institute, and he also "took in," irregularly but thoroughly, one of those inspiring weeklies that dull people used to call "penny dreadfuls," admirable weeklies crammed with imagination that the cheap boys' "comics" of to-day have replaced. At fourteen, when he emerged from the valley of the

shadow of education, there survived something, indeed it survived still, obscured and thwarted, at five and thirty, that pointed — not with a visible and prevailing finger like the finger of that beautiful woman in the picture, but pointed nevertheless — to the idea that there was interest and happiness in the world. Deep in the being of Mr. Polly, deep in that darkness, like a creature which has been beaten about the head and left for dead but still lives, crawled a persuasion that over and above the things that are jolly and "bits of all right," there was beauty, there was delight, that somewhere — magically inaccessible perhaps, but still somewhere, were pure and easy and joyous states of body and mind.

He would sneak out on moonless winter nights and stare up at the stars, and afterwards find it difficult to tell his father where he had been.

He would read tales about hunters and explorers, and imagine himself riding mustangs as fleet as the wind across the prairies of Western America, or coming as a conquering and adored white man into the swarming villages of Central Africa. He shot bears with a revolver — a cigarette in the other hand — and made a necklace of their teeth and claws for the chief's beautiful young daughter. Also he killed a lion with a pointed stake, stabbing through the beast's heart as it stood over him.

He thought it would be splendid to be a diver and go down into the dark green mysteries of the sea.

He led stormers against well-nigh impregnable forts, and died on the ramparts at the moment of victory. (His grave was watered by a nation's tears.)

He rammed and torpedoed ships, one against ten.

He was beloved by queens in barbaric lands, and reconciled whole nations to the Christian faith.

He was martyred, and took it very calmly and beautifully — but only once or twice after the Revivalist week. It did not become a habit with him.

He explored the Amazon, and found, newly exposed by the fall of a great tree, a rock of gold.

Engaged in these pursuits he would neglect the work immediately in hand, sitting somewhat slackly on the form and projecting himself

in a manner tempting to a schoolmaster with a cane.... And twice he had books confiscated.

Recalled to the realities of life, he would rub himself or sigh deeply as the occasion required, and resume his attempts to write as good as copperplate. He hated writing; the ink always crept up his fingers and the smell of ink offended him. And he was filled with unexpressed doubts. *Why* should writing slope down from right to left? *Why* should downstrokes be thick and upstrokes thin? *Why* should the handle of one's pen point over one's right shoulder?

His copy books towards the end foreshadowed his destiny and took the form of commercial documents. "*Dear Sir*," they ran, "*Referring to your esteemed order of the 26th ult., we beg to inform you*," and so on.

The compression of Mr. Polly's mind and soul in the educational institutions of his time, was terminated abruptly by his father between his fourteenth and fifteenth birthday. His father — who had long since forgotten the time when his son's little limbs seemed to have come straight from God's hand, and when he had kissed five minute toe-nails in a rapture of loving tenderness — remarked:

"It's time that dratted boy did something for a living."

And a month or so later Mr. Polly began that career in business that led him at last to the sole proprietorship of a bankrupt outfitter's shop — and to the stile on which he was sitting.

III

Mr. Polly was not naturally interested in hosiery and gentlemen's outfitting. At times, indeed, he urged himself to a spurious curiosity about that trade, but presently something more congenial came along and checked the effort. He was apprenticed in one of those large, rather low-class establishments which sell everything, from pianos and furniture to books and millinery, a department store in fact, The Port Burdock Drapery Bazaar at Port Burdock, one of the three townships that are grouped around the Port Burdock naval dockyards. There he remained six years. He spent most of the time inattentive to business, in a sort of uncomfortable happiness, increasing his indigestion.

On the whole he preferred business to school; the hours were longer but the tension was not nearly so great. The place was better aired, you were not kept in for no reason at all, and the cane was not employed. You watched the growth of your moustache with interest and impatience, and mastered the beginnings of social intercourse. You talked, and found there were things amusing to say. Also you had regular pocket money, and a voice in the purchase of your clothes, and presently a small salary. And there were girls. And friendship! In the retrospect Port Burdock sparkled with the facets of quite a cluster of remembered jolly times.

("Didn't save much money though," said Mr. Polly.)

The first apprentices' dormitory was a long bleak room with six beds, six chests of drawers and looking glasses and a number of boxes of wood or tin; it opened into a still longer and bleaker room of eight beds, and this into a third apartment with yellow grained paper and American cloth tables, which was the dining-room by day and the men's sitting-and smoking-room after nine. Here Mr. Polly, who had been an only child, first tasted the joys of social intercourse. At first there were attempts to bully him on account of his refusal to consider face washing a diurnal duty, but two fights with the apprentices next above him, established a useful reputation for choler, and the presence of girl apprentices in the shop somehow raised his standard of cleanliness to a more acceptable level. He didn't of course have very much to do with the feminine staff in his department, but he spoke to them casually as he traversed foreign parts of the Bazaar, or got out of their way politely, or helped them to lift down heavy boxes, and on such occasions he felt their scrutiny. Except in the course of business or at meal times the men and women of the establishment had very little opportunity of meeting; the men were in their rooms and the girls in theirs. Yet these feminine creatures, at once so near and so remote, affected him profoundly. He would watch them going to and fro, and marvel secretly at the beauty of their hair or the roundness of their necks or the warm softness of their cheeks or the delicacy of their hands. He would fall into passions for them at dinner time, and try and show devotions by his manner of passing the bread and margarine at tea. There was a very fair-haired, fair-skinned apprentice in the adjacent

haberdashery to whom he said “good-morning” every morning, and for a period it seemed to him the most significant event in his day. When she said, “I *do* hope it will be fine to-morrow,” he felt it marked an epoch. He had had no sisters, and was innately disposed to worship womankind. But he did not betray as much to Platt and Parsons.

To Platt and Parsons he affected an attitude of seasoned depravity towards womankind. Platt and Parsons were his contemporary apprentices in departments of the drapery shop, and the three were drawn together into a close friendship by the fact that all their names began with P. They decided they were the Three Ps, and went about together of an evening with the bearing of desperate dogs. Sometimes, when they had money, they went into public houses and had drinks. Then they would become more desperate than ever, and walk along the pavement under the gas lamps arm in arm singing. Platt had a good tenor voice, and had been in a church choir, and so he led the singing; Parsons had a serviceable bellow, which roared and faded and roared again very wonderfully; Mr. Polly’s share was an extraordinary lowing noise, a sort of flat recitative which he called “singing seconds.” They would have sung catches if they had known how to do it, but as it was they sang melancholy music hall songs about dying soldiers and the old folks far away.

They would sometimes go into the quieter residential quarters of Port Burdock, where policemen and other obstacles were infrequent, and really let their voices soar like hawks and feel very happy. The dogs of the district would be stirred to hopeless emulation, and would keep it up for long after the Three Ps had been swallowed up by the night. One jealous brute of an Irish terrier made a gallant attempt to bite Parsons, but was beaten by numbers and solidarity.

The Three Ps took the utmost interest in each other and found no other company so good. They talked about everything in the world, and would go on talking in their dormitory after the gas was out until the other men were reduced to throwing boots; they skulked from their departments in the slack hours of the afternoon to gossip in the packing-room of the warehouse; on Sundays and Bank holidays they went for long walks together, talking.

Platt was white-faced and dark, and disposed to undertones and

mystery and a curiosity about society and the *demi-monde*. He kept himself *au courant* by reading a penny paper of infinite suggestion called *Modern Society*. Parsons was of an ampler build, already promising fatness, with curly hair and a lot of rolling, rollicking, curly features, and a large blob-shaped nose. He had a great memory and a real interest in literature. He knew great portions of Shakespeare and Milton by heart, and would recite them at the slightest provocation. He read everything he could get hold of, and if he liked it he read it aloud. It did not matter who else liked it. At first Mr. Polly was disposed to be suspicious of this literature, but was carried away by Parsons' enthusiasm. The Three Ps went to a performance of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Port Burdock Theatre Royal, and hung over the gallery fascinated. After that they made a sort of password of: "Do you bite your thumbs at Us, Sir?"

To which the countersign was: "We bite our thumbs."

For weeks the glory of Shakespeare's Verona lit Mr. Polly's life. He walked as though he carried a sword at his side, and swung a mantle from his shoulders. He went through the grimy streets of Port Burdock with his eye on the first floor windows — looking for balconies. A ladder in the yard flooded his mind with romantic ideas. Then Parsons discovered an Italian writer, whose name Mr. Polly rendered as "Bocashieu," and after some excursions into that author's remains the talk of Parsons became infested with the word "*amours*," and Mr. Polly would stand in front of his hosiery fixtures trifling with paper and string and thinking of perennial picnics under dark olive trees in the everlasting sunshine of Italy.

And about that time it was that all Three Ps adopted turn-down collars and large, loose, artistic silk ties, which they tied very much on one side and wore with an air of defiance. And a certain swashbuckling carriage.

And then came the glorious revelation of that great Frenchman whom Mr. Polly called "Rabooloose." The Three Ps thought the birth feast of Gargantua the most glorious piece of writing in the world, and I am not certain they were wrong, and on wet Sunday evenings where there was danger of hymn singing they would get Parsons to read it aloud.

Towards the several members of the Y. M. C. A. who shared the

dormitory, the Three Ps always maintained a sarcastic and defiant attitude.

"We got a perfect right to do what we like in our corner," Platt maintained. "You do what you like in yours."

"But the language!" objected Morrison, the white-faced, earnest-eyed improver, who was leading a profoundly religious life under great difficulties.

"*Language*, man!" roared Parsons, "why, it's Literature!"

"Sunday isn't the time for Literature."

"It's the only time we've got. And besides—"

The horrors of religious controversy would begin....

Mr. Polly stuck loyally to the Three Ps, but in the secret places of his heart he was torn. A fire of conviction burnt in Morrison's eyes and spoke in his urgent persuasive voice; he lived the better life manifestly, chaste in word and deed, industrious, studiously kindly. When the junior apprentice had sore feet and homesickness Morrison washed the feet and comforted the heart, and he helped other men to get through with their work when he might have gone early, a superhuman thing to do. Polly was secretly a little afraid to be left alone with this man and the power of the spirit that was in him. He felt watched.

Platt, also struggling with things his mind could not contrive to reconcile, said "that confounded hypocrite."

"He's no hypocrite," said Parsons, "he's no hypocrite, O' Man. But he's got no blessed Joy de Vive; that's what's wrong with him. Let's go down to the Harbour Arms and see some of those blessed old captains getting drunk."

"Short of sugar, O' Man," said Mr. Polly, slapping his trouser pocket.

"Oh, *carm* on," said Parsons. "Always do it on tuppence for a bitter."

"Lemme get my pipe on," said Platt, who had recently taken to smoking with great ferocity. "Then I'm with you."

Pause and struggle.

"Don't ram it down, O' Man," said Parsons, watching with knitted brows. "Don't ram it down. Give it Air. Seen my stick, O' Man? Right O."

And leaning on his cane he composed himself in an attitude of sympathetic patience towards Platt's incendiary efforts.

IV

Jolly days of companionship they were for the incipient bankrupt on the stile to look back upon.

The interminable working hours of the Bazaar had long since faded from his memory — except for one or two conspicuous rows and one or two larks — but the rare Sundays and holidays shone out like diamonds among pebbles. They shone with the mellow splendour of evening skies reflected in calm water, and athwart them all went old Parsons bellowing an interpretation of life, gesticulating, appreciating and making appreciate, expounding books, talking of that mystery of his, the "Joy de Vive."

There were some particularly splendid walks on Bank holidays. The Three Ps would start on Sunday morning early and find a room in some modest inn and talk themselves asleep, and return singing through the night, or having an "argy bargy" about the stars, on Monday evening. They would come over the hills out of the pleasant English country-side in which they had wandered, and see Port Burdock spread out below, a network of interlacing street lamps and shifting tram lights against the black, beacon-gemmed immensity of the harbour waters.

"Back to the collar, O' Man," Parsons would say. There is no satisfactory plural to O' Man, so he always used it in the singular.

"Don't mention it," said Platt.

And once they got a boat for the whole summer day, and rowed up past the moored ironclads and the black old hulks and the various shipping of the harbour, past a white troopship and past the trim front and the ships and interesting vistas of the dockyard to the shallow channels and rocky weedy wildernesses of the upper harbour. And Parsons and Mr. Polly had a great dispute and quarrel that day as to how far a big gun could shoot.

The country over the hills behind Port Burdock is all that an old-fashioned, scarcely disturbed English country-side should be. In those days the bicycle was still rare and costly and the motor car had

yet to come and stir up rural serenities. The Three Ps would take footpaths haphazard across fields, and plunge into unknown winding lanes between high hedges of honeysuckle and dogrose. Greatly daring, they would follow green bridle paths through primrose studded undergrowths, or wander waist deep in the bracken of beech woods. About twenty miles from Port Burdock there came a region of hop gardens and hoast crowned farms, and further on, to be reached only by cheap tickets at Bank Holiday times, was a sterile ridge of very clean roads and red sand pits and pines and gorse and heather. The Three Ps could not afford to buy bicycles and they found boots the greatest item of their skimpy expenditure. They threw appearances to the winds at last and got ready-made workingmen's hob-nails. There was much discussion and strong feeling over this step in the dormitory.

There is no country-side like the English country-side for those who have learnt to love it; its firm yet gentle lines of hill and dale, its ordered confusion of features, its deer parks and downland, its castles and stately houses, its hamlets and old churches, its farms and ricks and great barns and ancient trees, its pools and ponds and shining threads of rivers; its flower-starred hedgerows, its orchards and woodland patches, its village greens and kindly inns. Other country-sides have their pleasant aspects, but none such variety, none that shine so steadfastly throughout the year. Picardy is pink and white and pleasant in the blossom time, Burgundy goes on with its sunshine and wide hillsides and cramped vineyards, a beautiful tune repeated and repeated, Italy gives salitas and wayside chapels and chestnuts and olive orchards, the Ardennes has its woods and gorges — Touraine and the Rhineland, the wide Campagna with its distant Apennines, and the neat prosperities and mountain backgrounds of South Germany, all clamour their especial merits at one's memory. And there are the hills and fields of Virginia, like an England grown very big and slovenly, the woods and big river sweeps of Pennsylvania, the trim New England landscape, a little bleak and rather fine like the New England mind, and the wide rough country roads and hills and woodland of New York State. But none of these change scene and character in three miles of walking, nor have so mellow a sunlight nor so diversified a cloudland, nor confess the

perpetual refreshment of the strong soft winds that blow from off the sea as our Mother England does.

It was good for the Three Ps to walk through such a land and forget for a time that indeed they had no footing in it all, that they were doomed to toil behind counters in such places as Port Burdock for the better part of their lives. They would forget the customers and shopwalkers and department buyers and everything, and become just happy wanderers in a world of pleasant breezes and song birds and shady trees.

The arrival at the inn was a great affair. No one, they were convinced, would take them for drapers, and there might be a pretty serving girl or a jolly old lady, or what Parsons called a "bit of character" drinking in the bar.

There would always be weighty enquiries as to what they could have, and it would work out always at cold beef and pickles, or fried ham and eggs and shandygaff, two pints of beer and two bottles of ginger beer foaming in a huge round-bellied jug.

The glorious moment of standing lordly in the inn doorway, and staring out at the world, the swinging sign, the geese upon the green, the duck-pond, a waiting waggon, the church tower, a sleepy cat, the blue heavens, with the sizzle of the frying audible behind one! The keen smell of the bacon! The trotting of feet bearing the repast; the click and clatter as the tableware is finally arranged! A clean white cloth!

"Ready, Sir!" or "Ready, Gentlemen." Better hearing that than "Forward Polly! look sharp!"

The going in! The sitting down! The falling to!

"Bread, O' Man?"

"Right O! Don't bag all the crust, O' Man."

Once a simple mannered girl in a pink print dress stayed and talked with them as they ate; led by the gallant Parsons they professed to be all desperately in love with her, and courted her to say which she preferred of them, it was so manifest she did prefer one and so impossible to say which it was held her there, until a distant maternal voice called her away. Afterwards as they left the inn she waylaid them at the orchard corner and gave them, a little shyly, three keen yellow-green apples — and wished them to come

again some day, and vanished, and reappeared looking after them as they turned the corner — waving a white handkerchief. All the rest of that day they disputed over the signs of her favour, and the next Sunday they went there again.

But she had vanished, and a mother of forbidding aspect afforded no explanations.

If Platt and Parsons and Mr. Polly live to be a hundred, they will none of them forget that girl as she stood with a pink flush upon her, faintly smiling and yet earnest, parting the branches of the hedgerows and reaching down apple in hand. Which of them was it, had caught her spirit to attend to them?...

And once they went along the coast, following it as closely as possible, and so came at last to Foxbourne, that easternmost suburb of Brayling and Hampsted-on-the-Sea.

Foxbourne seemed a very jolly little place to Mr. Polly that afternoon. It has a clean sandy beach instead of the mud and pebbles and coaly *défilements* of Port Burdock, a row of six bathing machines, and a shelter on the parade in which the Three Ps sat after a satisfying but rather expensive lunch that had included celery. Rows of verandahed villas proffered apartments, they had feasted in an hotel with a porch painted white and gay with geraniums above, and the High Street with the old church at the head had been full of an agreeable afternoon stillness.

"Nice little place for business," said Platt sagely from behind his big pipe.

It stuck in Mr. Polly's memory.

V

Mr. Polly was not so picturesque a youth as Parsons. He lacked richness in his voice, and went about in those days with his hands in his pockets looking quietly speculative.

He specialised in slang and the disuse of English, and he played the rôle of an appreciative stimulant to Parsons. Words attracted him curiously, words rich in suggestion, and he loved a novel and striking phrase. His school training had given him little or no mastery of the mysterious pronunciation of English and no confidence in himself.

His schoolmaster indeed had been both unsound and variable. New words had terror and fascination for him; he did not acquire them, he could not avoid them, and so he plunged into them. His only rule was not to be misled by the spelling. That was no guide anyhow. He avoided every recognised phrase in the language and mispronounced everything in order that he shouldn't be suspected of ignorance, but whim.

"Sesquippledan," he would say. "Sesquippledan verboojuice."

"Eh?" said Platt.

"Eloquent Rapsodooce."

"Where?" asked Platt.

"In the warehouse, O' Man. All among the table-cloths and blankets. Carlyle. He's reading aloud. Doing the High Froth. Spuming! Windmilling! Waw, waw! It's a sight worth seeing. He'll bark his blessed knuckles one of these days on the fixtures, O' Man."

He held an imaginary book in one hand and waved an eloquent gesture. "So too shall every Hero inasmuch as notwithstanding for evermore come back to Reality," he parodied the enthusiastic Parsons, "so that in fashion and thereby, upon things and not *under* things articulariously He stands."

"I should laugh if the Governor dropped on him," said Platt. "He'd never hear him coming."

"The O' Man's drunk with it — fair drunk," said Polly. "I never did. It's worse than when he got on to Raboloose."

Chapter the Second

The Dismissal of Parsons

I

Suddenly Parsons got himself dismissed.

He got himself dismissed under circumstances of peculiar violence, that left a deep impression on Mr. Polly's mind. He wondered about it for years afterwards, trying to get the rights of the case.

Parsons' apprenticeship was over; he had reached the status of an Improver, and he dressed the window of the Manchester department. By all the standards available he dressed it very well. By his own standards he dressed it wonderfully. "Well, O' Man," he used to say, "there's one thing about my position here, — I *can* dress a window."

And when trouble was under discussion he would hold that "little Fluffums" — which was the apprentices' name for Mr. Garvace, the senior partner and managing director of the Bazaar — would think twice before he got rid of the only man in the place who could make a windowful of Manchester goods *tell*.

Then like many a fellow artist he fell a prey to theories.

"The art of window dressing is in its infancy, O' Man — in its blooming Infancy. All balance and stiffness like a blessed Egyptian picture. No Joy in it, no blooming Joy! Conventional. A shop window ought to get hold of people, *grip* 'em as they go along. It stands to reason. Grip!"

His voice would sink to a kind of quiet bellow. "*Do* they grip?"

Then after a pause, a savage roar; "*Naw*!"

"He's got a Heavy on," said Mr. Polly. "Go it, O' Man; let's have some more of it."

"Look at old Morrison's dress-stuff windows! Tidy, tasteful, correct, I grant you, but Bleak!" He let out the word reinforced to a shout; "Bleak!"

"Bleak!" echoed Mr. Polly.

"Just pieces of stuff in rows, rows of tidy little puffs, perhaps one

bit just unrolled, quiet tickets."

"Might as well be in church, O' Man," said Mr. Polly.

"A window ought to be exciting," said Parsons; "it ought to make you say: El-*lo*! when you see it."

He paused, and Platt watched him over a snorting pipe.

"Rockcockyo," said Mr. Polly.

"We want a new school of window dressing," said Parsons, regardless of the comment. "A New School! The Port Burdock school. Day after tomorrow I change the Fitzallan Street stuff. This time, it's going to be a change. I mean to have a crowd or bust!"

And as a matter of fact he did both.

His voice dropped to a note of self-reproach. "I've been timid, O' Man. I've been holding myself in. I haven't done myself Justice. I've kept down the simmering, seething, teeming ideas.... All that's over now."

"Over," gulped Polly.

"Over for good and all, O' Man."

II

Platt came to Polly, who was sorting up collar boxes. "O' Man's doing his Blooming Window."

"What window?"

"What he said."

Polly remembered.

He went on with his collar boxes with his eye on his senior, Mansfield. Mansfield was presently called away to the counting house, and instantly Polly shot out by the street door, and made a rapid transit along the street front past the Manchester window, and so into the silkroom door. He could not linger long, but he gathered joy, a swift and fearful joy, from his brief inspection of Parsons' unconscious back. Parsons had his tail coat off and was working with vigour; his habit of pulling his waistcoat straps to the utmost brought out all the agreeable promise of corpulence in his youthful frame. He was blowing excitedly and running his fingers through his hair, and then moving with all the swift eagerness of a man inspired. All about his feet and knees were scarlet blankets, not folded, not formally

unfolded, but — the only phrase is — shied about. And a great bar sinister of roller towelling stretched across the front of the window on which was a ticket, and the ticket said in bold black letters: "LOOK!"

So soon as Mr. Polly got into the silk department and met Platt he knew he had not lingered nearly long enough outside. "Did you see the boards at the back?" said Platt.

He hadn't. "The High Egrugious is fairly On," he said, and dived down to return by devious subterranean routes to the outfitting department.

Presently the street door opened and Platt, with an air of intense devotion to business assumed to cover his adoption of that unusual route, came in and made for the staircase down to the warehouse. He rolled up his eyes at Polly. "Oh *Lor*!" he said and vanished.

Irresistible curiosity seized Polly. Should he go through the shop to the Manchester department, or risk a second transit outside?

He was impelled to make a dive at the street door.

"Where are you going?" asked Mansfield.

"Lill Dog," said Polly with an air of lucid explanation, and left him to get any meaning he could from it.

Parsons was worth the subsequent trouble. Parsons really was extremely rich. This time Polly stopped to take it in.

Parsons had made a huge symmetrical pile of thick white and red blankets twisted and rolled to accentuate their woolly richness, heaped up in a warm disorder, with large window tickets inscribed in blazing red letters: "Cosy Comfort at Cut Prices," and "Curl up and Cuddle below Cost." Regardless of the daylight he had turned up the electric light on that side of the window to reflect a warm glow upon the heap, and behind, in pursuit of contrasted bleakness, he was now hanging long strips of grey silesia and chilly coloured linen dusterings.

It was wonderful, but —

Mr. Polly decided that it was time he went in. He found Platt in the silk department, apparently on the verge of another plunge into the exterior world. "Cosy Comfort at Cut Prices," said Polly. "Allittritions Artful Aid."

He did not dare go into the street for the third time, and he was

hovering feverishly near the window when he saw the governor, Mr. Garvace, that is to say, the managing director of the Bazaar, walking along the pavement after his manner to assure himself all was well with the establishment he guided.

Mr. Garvace was a short stout man, with that air of modest pride that so often goes with corpulence, choleric and decisive in manner, and with hands that looked like bunches of fingers. He was red-haired and ruddy, and after the custom of such *complexions*, hairs sprang from the tip of his nose. When he wished to bring the power of the human eye to bear upon an assistant, he projected his chest, knitted one brow and partially closed the left eyelid.

An expression of speculative wonder overspread the countenance of Mr. Polly. He felt he must *see*. Yes, whatever happened he must *see*.

"Want to speak to Parsons, Sir," he said to Mr. Mansfield, and deserted his post hastily, dashed through the intervening departments and was in position behind a pile of Bolton sheeting as the governor came in out of the street.

"What on Earth do you think you are doing with that window, Parsons?" began Mr. Garvace.

Only the legs of Parsons and the lower part of his waistcoat and an intervening inch of shirt were visible. He was standing inside the window on the steps, hanging up the last strip of his background from the brass rail along the ceiling. Within, the Manchester shop window was cut off by a partition rather like the partition of an old-fashioned church pew from the general space of the shop. There was a panelled barrier, that is to say, with a little door like a pew door in it. Parsons' face appeared, staring with round eyes at his employer.

Mr. Garvace had to repeat his question.

"Dressing it, Sir — on new lines."

"Come out of it," said Mr. Garvace.

Parsons stared, and Mr. Garvace had to repeat his command.

Parsons, with a dazed expression, began to descend the steps slowly.

Mr. Garvace turned about. "Where's Morrison? Morrison!"

Morrison appeared.

"Take this window over," said Mr. Garvace pointing his bunch of

fingers at Parsons. “Take all this muddle out and dress it properly.”

Morrison advanced and hesitated.

“I beg your pardon, Sir,” said Parsons with an immense politeness, “but this is *my* window.”

“Take it all out,” said Mr. Garvace, turning away.

Morrison advanced. Parsons shut the door with a click that arrested Mr. Garvace.

“Come out of that window,” he said. “You can’t dress it. If you want to play the fool with a window — —”

“This window’s All Right,” said the genius in window dressing, and there was a little pause.

“Open the door and go right in,” said Mr. Garvace to Morrison.

“You leave that door alone, Morrison,” said Parsons.

Polly was no longer even trying to hide behind the stack of Bolton sheetings. He realised he was in the presence of forces too stupendous to heed him.

“Get him out,” said Mr. Garvace.

Morrison seemed to be thinking out the ethics of his position. The idea of loyalty to his employer prevailed with him. He laid his hand on the door to open it; Parsons tried to disengage his hand. Mr. Garvace joined his effort to Morrison’s. Then the heart of Polly leapt and the world blazed up to wonder and splendour. Parsons disappeared behind the partition for a moment and reappeared instantly, gripping a thin cylinder of rolled huckaback. With this he smote at Morrison’s head. Morrison’s head ducked under the resounding impact, but he clung on and so did Mr. Garvace. The door came open, and then Mr. Garvace was staggering back, hand to head; his autocratic, his sacred baldness, smitten. Parsons was beyond all control — a strangeness, a marvel. Heaven knows how the artistic struggle had strained that richly endowed temperament. “Say I can’t dress a window, you thundering old Humbug,” he said, and hurled the huckaback at his master. He followed this up by hurling first a blanket, then an armful of silesia, then a window support out of the window into the shop. It leapt into Polly’s mind that Parsons hated his own effort and was glad to demolish it. For a crowded second Polly’s mind was concentrated upon Parsons, infuriated, active, like a figure of earthquake with its coat off, shying

things headlong.

Then he perceived the back of Mr. Garvace and heard his gubernatorial voice crying to no one in particular and everybody in general: “Get him out of the window. He’s mad. He’s dangerous. Get him out of the window.”

Then a crimson blanket was for a moment over the head of Mr. Garvace, and his voice, muffled for an instant, broke out into unwonted expletive.

Then people had arrived from all parts of the Bazaar. Luck, the ledger clerk, blundered against Polly and said, “Help him!” Somerville from the silks vaulted the counter, and seized a chair by the back. Polly lost his head. He clawed at the Bolton sheeting before him, and if he could have detached a piece he would certainly have hit somebody with it. As it was he simply upset the pile. It fell away from Polly, and he had an impression of somebody squeaking as it went down. It was the sort of impression one disregards. The collapse of the pile of goods just sufficed to end his subconscious efforts to get something to hit somebody with, and his whole attention focussed itself upon the struggle in the window. For a splendid instant Parsons towered up over the active backs that clustered about the shop window door, an active whirl of gesture, tearing things down and throwing them, and then he went under. There was an instant’s furious struggle, a crash, a second crash and the crack of broken plate glass. Then a stillness and heavy breathing.

Parsons was overpowered....

Polly, stepping over scattered pieces of Bolton sheeting, saw his transfigured friend with a dark cut, that was not at present bleeding, on the forehead, one arm held by Somerville and the other by Morrison.

“You — you — you — you annoyed me,” said Parsons, sobbing for breath.

III

There are events that detach themselves from the general stream of occurrences and seem to partake of the nature of revelations. Such was this Parsons affair. It began by seeming grotesque; it ended

disconcertingly. The fabric of Mr. Polly's daily life was torn, and beneath it he discovered depths and terrors.

Life was not altogether a lark.

The calling in of a policeman seemed at the moment a pantomime touch. But when it became manifest that Mr. Garvace was in a fury of vindictiveness, the affair took on a different complexion. The way in which the policeman made a note of everything and aspirated nothing impressed the sensitive mind of Polly profoundly. Polly presently found himself straightening up ties to the refrain of "'E then 'It you on the 'Ed and — —"

In the dormitory that night Parsons had become heroic. He sat on the edge of the bed with his head bandaged, packing very slowly and insisting over and again: "He ought to have left my window alone, O' Man. He didn't ought to have touched my window."

Polly was to go to the police court in the morning as a witness. The terror of that ordeal almost overshadowed the tragic fact that Parsons was not only summoned for assault, but "swapped," and packing his box. Polly knew himself well enough to know he would make a bad witness. He felt sure of one fact only, namely, that "'E then 'It 'Im on the 'Ed and—" All the rest danced about in his mind now, and how it would dance about on the morrow Heaven only knew. Would there be a cross-examination? Is it perjoocery to make a slip? People did sometimes perjuice themselves. Serious offence.

Platt was doing his best to help Parsons, and inciting public opinion against Morrison. But Parsons would not hear of anything against Morrison. "He was all right, O' Man — according to his lights," said Parsons. "It isn't him I complain of."

He speculated on the morrow. "I shall '*ave* to pay a fine," he said. "No good trying to get out of it. It's true I hit him. I hit him" — he paused and seemed to be seeking an exquisite accuracy. His voice sank to a confidential note;— "On the head — about here."

He answered the suggestion of a bright junior apprentice in a corner of the dormitory. "What's the Good of a Cross summons?" he replied; "with old Corks, the chemist, and Mottishead, the house agent, and all that lot on the Bench? Humble Pie, that's my meal to-morrow, O' Man. Humble Pie."

Packing went on for a time.

“But Lord! what a Life it is!” said Parsons, giving his deep notes scope. “Ten-thirty-five a man trying to do his Duty, mistaken perhaps, but trying his best; ten-forty — Ruined! Ruined!” He lifted his voice to a shout. “Ruined!” and dropped it to “Like an earthquake.”

“Heated altaclation,” said Polly.

“Like a blooming earthquake!” said Parsons, with the notes of a rising wind.

He meditated gloomily upon his future and a colder chill invaded Polly’s mind. “Likely to get another crib, ain’t I — with assaulted the guvnor on my reference. I suppose, though, he won’t give me refs. Hard enough to get a crib at the best of times,” said Parsons.

“You ought to go round with a show, O’ Man,” said Mr. Polly.

Things were not so dreadful in the police court as Mr. Polly had expected. He was given a seat with other witnesses against the wall of the court, and after an interesting larceny case Parsons appeared and stood, not in the dock, but at the table. By that time Mr. Polly’s legs, which had been tucked up at first under his chair out of respect to the court, were extended straight before him and his hands were in his trouser pockets. He was inventing names for the four magistrates on the bench, and had got to “the Grave and Reverend Signor with the palatial Boko,” when his thoughts were recalled to gravity by the sound of his name. He rose with alacrity and was fielded by an expert policeman from a brisk attempt to get into the vacant dock. The clerk to the Justices repeated the oath with incredible rapidity.

“Right O,” said Mr. Polly, but quite respectfully, and kissed the book.

His evidence was simple and quite audible after one warning from the superintendent of police to “speak up.” He tried to put in a good word for Parsons by saying he was “naturally of a choleraic disposition,” but the start and the slow grin of enjoyment upon the face of the grave and Reverend Signor with the palatial Boko suggested that the word was not so good as he had thought it. The rest of the bench was frankly puzzled and there were hasty consultations.

“You mean ‘E ‘As a ‘Ot temper,” said the presiding magistrate.

“I mean ‘E ‘As a ‘Ot temper,” replied Polly, magically incapable

of aspirates for the moment.

"You don't mean 'E ketches cholera."

"I mean — he's easily put out."

"Then why can't you say so?" said the presiding magistrate.

Parsons was bound over.

He came for his luggage while every one was in the shop, and Garvace would not let him invade the business to say good-by. When Mr. Polly went upstairs for margarine and bread and tea, he slipped on into the dormitory at once to see what was happening further in the Parsons case. But Parsons had vanished. There was no Parsons, no trace of Parsons. His cubicle was swept and garnished. For the first time in his life Polly had a sense of irreparable loss.

A minute or so after Platt dashed in.

"Ugh!" he said, and then discovered Polly. Polly was leaning out of the window and did not look around. Platt went up to him.

"He's gone already," said Platt. "Might have stopped to say good-by to a chap."

There was a little pause before Polly replied. He thrust his finger into his mouth and gulped.

"Bit on that beastly tooth of mine," he said, still not looking at Platt. "It's made my eyes water, something chronic. Any one might think I'd been doing a blooming Pipe, by the look of me."

Chapter the Third

Cribs

I

Port Burdock was never the same place for Mr. Polly after Parsons had left it. There were no chest notes in his occasional letters, and little of the "Joy de Vive" got through by them. Parsons had gone, he said, to London, and found a place as warehouseman in a cheap outfitting shop near St. Paul's Churchyard, where references were not required. It became apparent as time passed that new interests were absorbing him. He wrote of socialism and the rights of man, things that had no appeal for Mr. Polly. He felt strangers had got hold of his Parsons, were at work upon him, making him into someone else, something less picturesque.... Port Burdock became a dreariness full of faded memories of Parsons and work a bore. Platt revealed himself alone as a tiresome companion, obsessed by romantic ideas about intrigues and vices and "society women."

Mr. Polly's depression manifested itself in a general slackness. A certain impatience in the manner of Mr. Garvace presently got upon his nerves. Relations were becoming strained. He asked for a rise of salary to test his position, and gave notice to leave when it was refused.

It took him two months to place himself in another situation, and during that time he had quite a disagreeable amount of loneliness, disappointment, anxiety and humiliation.

He went at first to stay with a married cousin who had a house at Easewood. His widowed father had recently given up the music and bicycle shop (with the post of organist at the parish church) that had sustained his home, and was living upon a small annuity as a guest with this cousin, and growing a little tiresome on account of some mysterious internal discomfort that the local practitioner diagnosed as imagination. He had aged with mysterious rapidity and become excessively irritable, but the cousin's wife was a born manager, and contrived to get along with him. Our Mr. Polly's status was that of a

guest pure and simple, but after a fortnight of congested hospitality in which he wrote nearly a hundred letters beginning:

Sir:

Referring to your advt. in the "Christian World" for an improver in Gents' outfitting I beg to submit myself for the situation. Have had six years' experience....

and upset a bottle of ink over a toilet cover and the bedroom carpet, his cousin took him for a walk and pointed out the superior advantages of apartments in London from which to swoop upon the briefly yawning vacancy.

"Helpful," said Mr. Polly; "very helpful, O' Man indeed. I might have gone on there for weeks," and packed.

He got a room in an institution that was partly a benevolent hostel for men in his circumstances and partly a high minded but forbidding coffee house and a centre for pleasant Sunday afternoons. Mr. Polly spent a critical but pleasant Sunday afternoon in a back seat, inventing such phrases as:

"Soulful Owner of the Exorbiant Largenial Development." — An Adam's Apple being in question.

"Earnest Joy."

"Exultant, Urgent Loogoobuosity."

A manly young curate, marking and misunderstanding his preoccupied face and moving lips, came and sat by him and entered into conversation with the idea of making him feel more at home. The conversation was awkward and disconnected for a minute or so, and then suddenly a memory of the Port Burdock Bazaar occurred to Mr. Polly, and with a baffling whisper of "Lill' dog," and a reassuring nod, he rose up and escaped, to wander out relieved and observant into the varied London streets.

He found the collection of men he found waiting about in wholesale establishments in Wood Street and St. Paul's Churchyard (where they interview the buyers who have come up from the country) interesting and stimulating, but far too strongly charged with the suggestion of his own fate to be really joyful. There were men in all degrees between confidence and distress, and in every stage between extravagant smartness and the last stages of decay. There were sunny young men full of an abounding and elbowing

energy, before whom the soul of Polly sank in hate and dismay. “Smart Juniors,” said Polly to himself, “full of Smart Juniosity. The Shoveacious Cult.” There were hungry looking individuals of thirty-five or so that he decided must be “Proletelerians” — he had often wanted to find someone who fitted that attractive word. Middle-aged men, “too Old at Forty,” discoursed in the waiting-rooms on the outlook in the trade; it had never been so bad, they said, while Mr. Polly wondered if “De-juiced” was a permissible epithet. There were men with an overweening sense of their importance, manifestly annoyed and angry to find themselves still disengaged, and inclined to suspect a plot, and men so faint-hearted one was terrified to imagine their behaviour when it came to an interview. There was a fresh-faced young man with an unintelligent face who seemed to think himself equipped against the world beyond all misadventure by a collar of exceptional height, and another who introduced a note of gaiety by wearing a flannel shirt and a check suit of remarkable virulence. Every day Mr. Polly looked round to mark how many of the familiar faces had gone, and the deepening anxiety (reflecting his own) on the faces that remained, and every day some new type joined the drifting shoal. He realised how small a chance his poor letter from Easewood ran against this hungry cluster of competitors at the fountain head.

At the back of Mr. Polly’s mind while he made his observations was a disagreeable flavour of dentist’s parlour. At any moment his name might be shouted, and he might have to haul himself into the presence of some fresh specimen of employer, and to repeat once more his passionate protestation of interest in the business, his possession of a capacity for zeal — zeal on behalf of anyone who would pay him a yearly salary of twenty-six pounds a year.

The prospective employer would unfold his ideals of the employee. “I want a smart, willing young man, thoroughly willing — who won’t object to take trouble. I don’t want a slacker, the sort of fellow who has to be pushed up to his work and held there. I’ve got no use for him.”

At the back of Mr. Polly’s mind, and quite beyond his control, the insubordinate phrasemaker would be proffering such combinations as “Chubby Chops,” or “Chubby Charmer,” as suitable for the

gentleman, very much as a hat salesman proffers hats.

"I don't think you'd find much slackness about *me*, sir," said Mr. Polly brightly, trying to disregard his deeper self.

"I want a young man who means getting on."

"Exactly, sir. Excelsior."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I said excelsior, sir. It's a sort of motto of mine. From Longfellow. Would you want me to serve through?"

The chubby gentleman explained and reverted to his ideals, with a faint air of suspicion. "Do *you* mean getting on?" he asked.

"I hope so, sir," said Mr. Polly.

"Get on or get out, eh?"

Mr. Polly made a rapturous noise, nodded appreciation, and said indistinctly— "*Quite* my style."

"Some of my people have been with me twenty years," said the employer. "My Manchester buyer came to me as a boy of twelve. You're a Christian?"

"Church of England," said Mr. Polly.

"H'm," said the employer a little checked. "For good all round business work I should have preferred a Baptist. Still—"

He studied Mr. Polly's tie, which was severely neat and businesslike, as became an aspiring outfitter. Mr. Polly's conception of his own pose and expression was rendered by that uncontrollable phrasemonger at the back as "Obsequies Deference."

"I am inclined," said the prospective employer in a conclusive manner, "to look up your reference."

Mr. Polly stood up abruptly.

"Thank you," said the employer and dismissed him.

"Chump chops! How about chump chops?" said the phrasemonger with an air of inspiration.

"I hope then to hear from you, sir," said Mr. Polly in his best salesman manner.

"If everything is satisfactory," said the prospective employer.

II

A man whose brain devotes its hinterland to making odd phrases and

nicknames out of ill-conceived words, whose conception of life is a lump of auriferous rock to which all the value is given by rare veins of unbusinesslike joy, who reads Boccaccio and Rabelais and Shakespeare with gusto, and uses “Stertoraneous Shover” and “Smart Junior” as terms of bitterest opprobrium, is not likely to make a great success under modern business conditions. Mr. Polly dreamt always of picturesque and mellow things, and had an instinctive hatred of the strenuous life. He would have resisted the spell of ex-President Roosevelt, or General Baden Powell, or Mr. Peter Keary, or the late Dr. Samuel Smiles, quite easily; and he loved Falstaff and Hudibras and coarse laughter, and the old England of Washington Irving and the memory of Charles the Second’s courtly days. His progress was necessarily slow. He did not get rises; he lost situations; there was something in his eye employers did not like; he would have lost his places oftener if he had not been at times an exceptionally brilliant salesman, rather carefully neat, and a slow but very fair window-dresser.

He went from situation to situation, he invented a great wealth of nicknames, he conceived enmities and made friends — but none so richly satisfying as Parsons. He was frequently but mildly and discursively in love, and sometimes he thought of that girl who had given him a yellow-green apple. He had an idea, amounting to a flattering certainty, whose youthful freshness it was had stirred her to self-forgetfulness. And sometimes he thought of Foxbourne sleeping prosperously in the sun. And he began to have moods of discomfort and lassitude and ill-temper due to the beginnings of indigestion.

Various forces and suggestions came into his life and swayed him for longer and shorter periods.

He went to Canterbury and came under the influence of Gothic architecture. There was a blood affinity between Mr. Polly and the Gothic; in the middle ages he would no doubt have sat upon a scaffolding and carved out penetrating and none too flattering portraits of church dignitaries upon the capitals, and when he strolled, with his hands behind his back, along the cloisters behind the cathedral, and looked at the rich grass plot in the centre, he had the strangest sense of being at home — far more than he had ever been at home before. “Portly *capóns*,” he used to murmur to himself,

under the impression that he was naming a characteristic type of medieval churchman.

He liked to sit in the nave during the service, and look through the great gates at the candles and choristers, and listen to the organ-sustained voices, but the transepts he never penetrated because of the charge for admission. The music and the long vista of the fretted roof filled him with a vague and mystical happiness that he had no words, even mispronounceable words, to express. But some of the smug monuments in the aisles got a wreath of epithets: "Metrorious urnfuls," "funererial claims," "dejected angelosity," for example. He wandered about the precincts and speculated about the people who lived in the ripe and cosy houses of grey stone that cluster there so comfortably. Through green doors in high stone walls he caught glimpses of level lawns and blazing flower beds; mullioned windows revealed shaded reading lamps and disciplined shelves of brown bound books. Now and then a dignitary in gaiters would pass him, "Portly capon," or a drift of white-robed choir boys cross a distant arcade and vanish in a doorway, or the pink and cream of some girlish dress flit like a butterfly across the cool still spaces of the place. Particularly he responded to the ruined arches of the Benedictine's Infirmary and the view of Bell Harry tower from the school buildings. He was stirred to read the Canterbury Tales, but he could not get on with Chaucer's old-fashioned English; it fatigued his attention, and he would have given all the story telling very readily for a few adventures on the road. He wanted these nice people to live more and yarn less. He liked the Wife of Bath very much. He would have liked to have known that woman.

At Canterbury, too, he first to his knowledge saw Americans.

His shop did a good class trade in Westgate Street, and he would see them go by on the way to stare at Chaucer's "Chequers," and then turn down Mercery Lane to Prior Goldstone's gate. It impressed him that they were always in a kind of quiet hurry, and very determined and methodical people, — much more so than any English he knew.

"Cultured Rapacicity," he tried.

"Vorocious Return to the Heritage."

He would expound them incidentally to his attendant apprentices.

He had overheard a little lady putting her view to a friend near the Christchurch gate. The accent and intonation had hung in his memory, and he would reproduce them more or less accurately. “Now does this Marlowe monument really and truly *matter*?” he had heard the little lady enquire. “We’ve no time for side shows and second rate stunts, Mamie. We want just the Big Simple Things of the place, just the Broad Elemental Canterbury praposition. What is it saying to us? I want to get right hold of that, and then have tea in the very room that Chaucer did, and hustle to get that four-eighteen train back to London.”

He would go over these precious phrases, finding them full of an indescribable flavour. “Just the Broad Elemental Canterbury praposition,” he would repeat....

He would try to imagine Parsons confronted with Americans. For his own part he knew himself to be altogether inadequate....

Canterbury was the most congenial situation Mr. Polly ever found during these wander years, albeit a very desert so far as companionship went.

III

It was after Canterbury that the universe became really disagreeable to Mr. Polly. It was brought home to him, not so much vividly as with a harsh and ungainly insistence, that he was a failure in his trade. It was not the trade he ought to have chosen, though what trade he ought to have chosen was by no means clear.

He made great but irregular efforts and produced a forced smartness that, like a cheap dye, refused to stand sunshine. He acquired a sort of parsimony also, in which acquisition he was helped by one or two phases of absolute impecuniosity. But he was hopeless in competition against the naturally gifted, the born hustlers, the young men who meant to get on.

He left the Canterbury place very regretfully. He and another commercial gentleman took a boat one Sunday afternoon at Sturry-on-the-Stour, when the wind was in the west, and sailed it very happily eastward for an hour. They had never sailed a boat before and it seemed simple and wonderful. When they turned they found

the river too narrow for tacking and the tide running out like a sluice. They battled back to Sturry in the course of six hours (at a shilling the first hour and six-pence for each hour afterwards) rowing a mile in an hour and a half or so, until the turn of the tide came to help them, and then they had a night walk to Canterbury, and found themselves remorselessly locked out.

The Canterbury employer was an amiable, religious-spirited man and he would probably not have dismissed Mr. Polly if that unfortunate tendency to phrase things had not shocked him. "A Tide's a Tide, Sir," said Mr. Polly, feeling that things were not so bad. "I've no lune-attic power to alter that."

It proved impossible to explain to the Canterbury employer that this was not a highly disrespectful and blasphemous remark.

"And besides, what good are you to me this morning, do you think?" said the Canterbury employer, "with your arms pulled out of their sockets?"

So Mr. Polly resumed his observations in the Wood Street warehouses once more, and had some dismal times. The shoal of fish waiting for the crumbs of employment seemed larger than ever.

He took counsel with himself. Should he "chuck" the outfitting? It wasn't any good for him now, and presently when he was older and his youthful smartness had passed into the dulness of middle age it would be worse. What else could he do?

He could think of nothing. He went one night to a music hall and developed a vague idea of a comic performance; the comic men seemed violent rowdies and not at all funny; but when he thought of the great pit of the audience yawning before him he realised that his was an altogether too delicate talent for such a use. He was impressed by the charm of selling vegetables by auction in one of those open shops near London Bridge, but admitted upon reflection his general want of technical knowledge. He made some enquiries about emigration, but none of the colonies were in want of shop assistants without capital. He kept up his attendance in Wood Street.

He subdued his ideal of salary by the sum of five pounds a year, and was taken at that into a driving establishment in Clapham, which dealt chiefly in ready-made suits, fed its assistants in an underground dining-room and kept them until twelve on Saturdays. He found it

hard to be cheerful there. His fits of indigestion became worse, and he began to lie awake at night and think. Sunshine and laughter seemed things lost for ever; picnics and shouting in the moonlight.

The chief shopwalker took a dislike to him and nagged him. “Nar then Polly!” “Look alive Polly!” became the burthen of his days. “As smart a chap as you could have,” said the chief shopwalker, “but no *Zest*. No *Zest*! No *Vim*! What’s the matter with you?”

During his night vigils Mr. Polly had a feeling — A young rabbit must have very much the feeling, when after a youth of gambolling in sunny woods and furtive jolly raids upon the growing wheat and exciting triumphant bolts before ineffectual casual dogs, it finds itself at last for a long night of floundering effort and perplexity, in a net — for the rest of its life.

He could not grasp what was wrong with him. He made enormous efforts to diagnose his case. Was he really just a “lazy slacker” who ought to “buck up”? He couldn’t find it in him to believe it. He blamed his father a good deal — it is what fathers are for — in putting him to a trade he wasn’t happy to follow, but he found it impossible to say what he ought to have followed. He felt there had been something stupid about his school, but just where that came in he couldn’t say. He made some perfectly sincere efforts to “buck up” and “shove” ruthlessly. But that was infernal — impossible. He had to admit himself miserable with all the misery of a social misfit, and with no clear prospect of more than the most incidental happiness ahead of him. And for all his attempts at self-reproach or self-discipline he felt at bottom that he wasn’t at fault.

As a matter of fact all the elements of his troubles had been adequately diagnosed by a certain high-browed, spectacled gentleman living at Highbury, wearing a gold *pince-nez*, and writing for the most part in the beautiful library of the Reform Club. This gentleman did not know Mr. Polly personally, but he had dealt with him generally as “one of those ill-adjusted units that abound in a society that has failed to develop a collective intelligence and a collective will for order, commensurate with its complexities.”

But phrases of that sort had no appeal for Mr. Polly.

Chapter the Fourth

Mr. Polly an Orphan

I

Then a great change was brought about in the life of Mr. Polly by the death of his father. His father had died suddenly — the local practitioner still clung to his theory that it was imagination he suffered from, but compromised in the certificate with the appendicitis that was then so fashionable — and Mr. Polly found himself heir to a debateable number of pieces of furniture in the house of his cousin near Easewood Junction, a family Bible, an engraved portrait of Garibaldi and a bust of Mr. Gladstone, an invalid gold watch, a gold locket formerly belonging to his mother, some minor jewelry and *bric-a-brac*, a quantity of nearly valueless old clothes and an insurance policy and money in the bank amounting altogether to the sum of three hundred and ninety-five pounds.

Mr. Polly had always regarded his father as an immortal, as an eternal fact, and his father being of a reserved nature in his declining years had said nothing about the insurance policy. Both wealth and bereavement therefore took Mr. Polly by surprise and found him a little inadequate. His mother's death had been a childish grief and long forgotten, and the strongest affection in his life had been for Parsons. An only child of sociable tendencies necessarily turns his back a good deal upon home, and the aunt who had succeeded his mother was an economist and furniture polisher, a knuckle rapper and sharp silencer, no friend for a slovenly little boy. He had loved other little boys and girls transitorily, none had been frequent and familiar enough to strike deep roots in his heart, and he had grown up with a tattered and dissipated affectionateness that was becoming wildly shy. His father had always been a stranger, an irritable stranger with exceptional powers of intervention and comment, and an air of being disappointed about his offspring. It was shocking to lose him; it was like an unexpected hole in the universe, and the writing of "Death" upon the sky, but it did not tear Mr. Polly's

heartstrings at first so much as rouse him to a pitch of vivid attention.

He came down to the cottage at Easewood in response to an urgent telegram, and found his father already dead. His cousin Johnson received him with much solemnity and ushered him upstairs, to look at a stiff, straight, shrouded form, with a face unwontedly quiet and, as it seemed, with its pinched nostrils, scornful.

"Looks peaceful," said Mr. Polly, disregarding the scorn to the best of his ability.

"It was a merciful relief," said Mr. Johnson.

There was a pause.

"Second — Second Departed I've ever seen. Not counting mummies," said Mr. Polly, feeling it necessary to say something.

"We did all we could."

"No doubt of it, O' Man," said Mr. Polly.

A second long pause followed, and then, much to Mr. Polly's great relief, Johnson moved towards the door.

Afterwards Mr. Polly went for a solitary walk in the evening light, and as he walked, suddenly his dead father became real to him. He thought of things far away down the perspective of memory, of jolly moments when his father had skylarked with a wildly excited little boy, of a certain annual visit to the Crystal Palace pantomime, full of trivial glittering incidents and wonders, of his father's dread back while customers were in the old, minutely known shop. It is curious that the memory which seemed to link him nearest to the dead man was the memory of a fit of passion. His father had wanted to get a small sofa up the narrow winding staircase from the little room behind the shop to the bedroom above, and it had jammed. For a time his father had coaxed, and then groaned like a soul in torment and given way to blind fury, had sworn, kicked and struck at the offending piece of furniture and finally wrenched it upstairs, with considerable incidental damage to lath and plaster and one of the castors. That moment when self-control was altogether torn aside, the shocked discovery of his father's perfect humanity, had left a singular impression on Mr. Polly's queer mind. It was as if something extravagantly vital had come out of his father and laid a warmly passionate hand upon his heart. He remembered that now

very vividly, and it became a clue to endless other memories that had else been dispersed and confusing.

A weakly wilful being struggling to get obdurate things round impossible corners — in that symbol Mr. Polly could recognise himself and all the trouble of humanity.

He hadn't had a particularly good time, poor old chap, and now it was all over. Finished....

Johnson was the sort of man who derives great satisfaction from a funeral, a melancholy, serious, practical-minded man of five and thirty, with great powers of advice. He was the up-line ticket clerk at Easewood Junction, and felt the responsibilities of his position. He was naturally thoughtful and reserved, and greatly sustained in that by an innate rectitude of body and an overhanging and forward inclination of the upper part of his face and head. He was pale but freckled, and his dark grey eyes were deeply set. His lightest interest was cricket, but he did not take that lightly. His chief holiday was to go to a cricket match, which he did as if he was going to church, and he watched critically, applauded sparingly, and was darkly offended by any unorthodox play. His convictions upon all subjects were taciturnly inflexible. He was an obstinate player of draughts and chess, and an earnest and persistent reader of the *British Weekly*. His wife was a pink, short, wilfully smiling, managing, ingratiating, talkative woman, who was determined to be pleasant, and take a bright hopeful view of everything, even when it was not really bright and hopeful. She had large blue expressive eyes and a round face, and she always spoke of her husband as Harold. She addressed sympathetic and considerate remarks about the deceased to Mr. Polly in notes of brisk encouragement. "He was really quite cheerful at the end," she said several times, with congratulatory gusto, "quite cheerful."

She made dying seem almost agreeable.

Both these people were resolved to treat Mr. Polly very well, and to help his exceptional incompetence in every possible way, and after a simple supper of ham and bread and cheese and pickles and cold apple tart and small beer had been cleared away, they put him into the armchair almost as though he was an invalid, and sat on chairs that made them look down on him, and opened a directive discussion

of the arrangements for the funeral. After all a funeral is a distinct social opportunity, and rare when you have no family and few relations, and they did not want to see it spoilt and wasted.

"You'll have a hearse of course," said Mrs. Johnson. "Not one of them combinations with the driver sitting on the coffin. Disrespectful I think they are. I can't fancy how people can bring themselves to be buried in combinations." She flattened her voice in a manner she used to intimate aesthetic feeling. "I *do* like them glass hearses," she said. "So refined and nice they are."

"Podger's hearse you'll have," said Johnson conclusively. "It's the best in Easewood."

"Everything that's right and proper," said Mr. Polly.

"Podger's ready to come and measure at any time," said Johnson.

"Then you'll want a mourner's carriage or two, according as to whom you're going to invite," said Mr. Johnson.

"Didn't think of inviting any one," said Polly.

"Oh! you'll *have* to ask a few friends," said Mr. Johnson. "You can't let your father go to his grave without asking a few friends."

"Funerial baked meats like," said Mr. Polly.

"Not baked, but of course you'll have to give them something. Ham and chicken's very suitable. You don't want a lot of cooking with the ceremony coming into the middle of it. I wonder who Alfred ought to invite, Harold. Just the immediate relations; one doesn't want a great crowd of people and one doesn't want not to show respect."

"But he hated our relations — most of them."

"He's not hating them *now*," said Mrs. Johnson, "you may be sure of that. It's just because of that I think they ought to come — all of them — even your Aunt Mildred."

"Bit vulturial, isn't it?" said Mr. Polly unheeded.

"Wouldn't be more than twelve or thirteen people if they *all* came," said Mr. Johnson.

"We could have everything put out ready in the back room and the gloves and whiskey in the front room, and while we were all at the ceremony, Bessie could bring it all into the front room on a tray and put it out nice and proper. There'd have to be whiskey and sherry or port for the ladies...."

“Where’ll you get your mourning?” asked Johnson abruptly.

Mr. Polly had not yet considered this by-product of sorrow. “Haven’t thought of it yet, O’ Man.”

A disagreeable feeling spread over his body as though he was blackening as he sat. He hated black garments.

“I suppose I must have mourning,” he said.

“Well!” said Johnson with a solemn smile.

“Got to see it through,” said Mr. Polly indistinctly.

“If I were you,” said Johnson, “I should get ready-made trousers. That’s all you really want. And a black satin tie and a top hat with a deep mourning band. And gloves.”

“Jet cuff links he ought to have — as chief mourner,” said Mrs. Johnson.

“Not obligatory,” said Johnson.

“It shows respect,” said Mrs. Johnson.

“It shows respect of course,” said Johnson.

And then Mrs. Johnson went on with the utmost gusto to the details of the “casket,” while Mr. Polly sat more and more deeply and droopingly into the armchair, assenting with a note of protest to all they said. After he had retired for the night he remained for a long time perched on the edge of the sofa which was his bed, staring at the prospect before him. “Chasing the O’ Man about up to the last,” he said.

He hated the thought and elaboration of death as a healthy animal must hate it. His mind struggled with unwonted social problems.

“Got to put ’em away somehow, I suppose,” said Mr. Polly.

“Wish I’d looked him up a bit more while he was alive,” said Mr. Polly.

II

Bereavement came to Mr. Polly before the realisation of opulence and its anxieties and responsibilities. That only dawned upon him on the morrow — which chanced to be Sunday — as he walked with Johnson before church time about the tangle of struggling building enterprise that constituted the rising urban district of Easewood. Johnson was off duty that morning, and devoted the time very

generously to the admonitory discussion of Mr. Polly's worldly outlook.

"Don't seem to get the hang of the business somehow," said Mr. Polly. "Too much blooming humbug in it for my way of thinking."

"If I were you," said Mr. Johnson, "I should push for a first-class place in London — take almost nothing and live on my reserves. That's what I should do."

"Come the Heavy," said Mr. Polly.

"Get a better class reference."

There was a pause. "Think of investing your money?" asked Johnson.

"Hardly got used to the idea of having it yet, O' Man."

"You'll have to do something with it. Give you nearly twenty pounds a year if you invest it properly."

"Haven't seen it yet in that light," said Mr. Polly defensively.

"There's no end of things you could put it into."

"It's getting it out again I shouldn't feel sure of. I'm no sort of Fiancianier. Sooner back horses."

"I wouldn't do that if I were you."

"Not my style, O' Man."

"It's a nest egg," said Johnson.

Mr. Polly made an indeterminate noise.

"There's building societies," Johnson threw out in a speculative tone. Mr. Polly, with detached brevity, admitted there were.

"You might lend it on mortgage," said Johnson. "Very safe form of investment."

"Shan't think anything about it — not till the O' Man's underground," said Mr. Polly with an inspiration.

They turned a corner that led towards the junction.

"Might do worse," said Johnson, "than put it into a small shop."

At the moment this remark made very little appeal to Mr. Polly. But afterwards it developed. It fell into his mind like some small obscure seed, and germinated.

"These shops aren't in a bad position," said Johnson.

The row he referred to gaped in the late painful stage in building before the healing touch of the plasterer assuages the roughness of the brickwork. The space for the shop yawned an oblong gap below,

framed above by an iron girder; “windows and fittings to suit tenant,” a board at the end of the row promised; and behind was the door space and a glimpse of stairs going up to the living rooms above. “Not a bad position,” said Johnson, and led the way into the establishment. “Room for fixtures there,” he said, pointing to the blank wall. The two men went upstairs to the little sitting-room or best bedroom (it would have to be) above the shop. Then they descended to the kitchen below.

“Rooms in a new house always look a bit small,” said Johnson.

They came out of the house again by the prospective back door, and picked their way through builder’s litter across the yard space to the road again. They drew nearer the junction to where a pavement and shops already open and active formed the commercial centre of Easewood. On the opposite side of the way the side door of a flourishing little establishment opened, and a man and his wife and a little boy in a sailor suit came into the street. The wife was a pretty woman in brown with a floriferous straw hat, and the group was altogether very Sundayfied and shiny and spick and span. The shop itself had a large plate-glass window whose contents were now veiled by a buff blind on which was inscribed in scrolly letters: “Rymer, Pork Butcher and Provision Merchant,” and then with voluptuous elaboration: “The World-Famed Easewood Sausage.”

Greetings were exchanged between Mr. Johnson and this distinguished comestible.

“Off to church already?” said Johnson.

“Walking across the fields to Little Dorington,” said Mr. Rymer.

“Very pleasant walk,” said Johnson.

“Very,” said Mr. Rymer.

“Hope you’ll enjoy it,” said Mr. Johnson.

“That chap’s done well,” said Johnson *sotto voce* as they went on. “Came here with nothing — practically, four years ago. And as thin as a lath. Look at him now!

“He’s worked hard of course,” said Johnson, improving the occasion.

Thought fell between the cousins for a space.

“Some men can do one thing,” said Johnson, “and some another.... For a man who sticks to it there’s a lot to be done in a

shop.”

III

All the preparations for the funeral ran easily and happily under Mrs. Johnson’s skilful hands. On the eve of the sad event she produced a reserve of black sateen, the kitchen steps and a box of tin-tacks, and decorated the house with festoons and bows of black in the best possible taste. She tied up the knocker with black crape, and put a large bow over the corner of the steel engraving of Garibaldi, and swathed the bust of Mr. Gladstone, that had belonged to the deceased, with inky swathings. She turned the two vases that had views of Tivoli and the Bay of Naples round, so that these rather brilliant landscapes were hidden and only the plain blue enamel showed, and she anticipated the long-contemplated purchase of a tablecloth for the front room, and substituted a violet purple cover for the now very worn and faded raptures and roses in plushette that had hitherto done duty there. Everything that loving consideration could do to impart a dignified solemnity to her little home was done.

She had released Mr. Polly from the irksome duty of issuing invitations, and as the moments of assembly drew near she sent him and Mr. Johnson out into the narrow long strip of garden at the back of the house, to be free to put a finishing touch or so to her preparations. She sent them out together because she had a queer little persuasion at the back of her mind that Mr. Polly wanted to bolt from his sacred duties, and there was no way out of the garden except through the house.

Mr. Johnson was a steady, successful gardener, and particularly good with celery and peas. He walked slowly along the narrow path down the centre pointing out to Mr. Polly a number of interesting points in the management of peas, wrinkles neatly applied and difficulties wisely overcome, and all that he did for the comfort and propitiation of that fitful but rewarding vegetable. Presently a sound of nervous laughter and raised voices from the house proclaimed the arrival of the earlier guests, and the worst of that anticipatory tension was over.

When Mr. Polly re-entered the house he found three entirely

strange young women with pink faces, demonstrative manners and emphatic mourning, engaged in an incoherent conversation with Mrs. Johnson. All three kissed him with great gusto after the ancient English fashion. “These are your cousins Larkins,” said Mrs. Johnson; “that’s Annie (unexpected hug and smack), that’s Miriam (resolute hug and smack), and that’s Minnie (prolonged hug and smack).”

“Right-O,” said Mr. Polly, emerging a little crumpled and breathless from this hearty introduction. “I see.”

“Here’s Aunt Larkins,” said Mrs. Johnson, as an elderly and stouter edition of the three young women appeared in the doorway.

Mr. Polly backed rather faint-heartedly, but Aunt Larkins was not to be denied. Having hugged and kissed her nephew resoundingly she gripped him by the wrists and scanned his features. She had a round, sentimental, freckled face. “I should ‘*ave* known ‘im anywhere,” she said with fervour.

“Hark at mother!” said the cousin called Annie. “Why, she’s never set eyes on him before!”

“I should ‘*ave* known ‘im anywhere,” said Mrs. Larkins, “for Lizzie’s child. You’ve got her eyes! It’s a Resemblance! And as for *never seeing ‘im* — I’ve *dandled* him, Miss Imperence. I’ve dandled him.”

“You couldn’t dandle him now, Ma!” Miss Annie remarked with a shriek of laughter.

All the sisters laughed at that. “The things you say, Annie!” said Miriam, and for a time the room was full of mirth.

Mr. Polly felt it incumbent upon him to say something. “*My* dandling days are over,” he said.

The reception of this remark would have convinced a far more modest character than Mr. Polly that it was extremely witty.

Mr. Polly followed it up by another one almost equally good. “My turn to dandle,” he said, with a sly look at his aunt, and convulsed everyone.

“Not me,” said Mrs. Larkins, taking his point, “*thank* you,” and achieved a climax.

It was queer, but they seemed to be easy people to get on with anyhow. They were still picking little ripples and giggles of mirth

from the idea of Mr. Polly dandling Aunt Larkins when Mr. Johnson, who had answered the door, ushered in a stooping figure, who was at once hailed by Mrs. Johnson as "Why! Uncle Pentstemon!" Uncle Pentstemon was rather a shock. His was an aged rather than venerable figure; Time had removed the hair from the top of his head and distributed a small dividend of the plunder in little bunches carelessly and impartially over the rest of his features; he was dressed in a very big old frock coat and a long cylindrical top hat, which he had kept on; he was very much bent, and he carried a rush basket from which protruded coy intimations of the lettuces and onions he had brought to grace the occasion. He hobbled into the room, resisting the efforts of Johnson to divest him of his various encumbrances, halted and surveyed the company with an expression of profound hostility, breathing hard. Recognition quickened in his eyes.

"*You* here," he said to Aunt Larkins and then; "You *would* be.... These your gals?"

"They are," said Aunt Larkins, "and better gals — —"

"That Annie?" asked Uncle Pentstemon, pointing a horny thumb-nail.

"Fancy your remembering her name!"

"She mucked up my mushroom bed, the baggage!" said Uncle Pentstemon ungenially, "and I give it to her to rights. Trounced her I did — fairly. I remember her. Here's some green stuff for you, Grace. Fresh it is and wholesome. I shall be wanting the basket back and mind you let me have it.... Have you nailed him down yet? You always was a bit in front of what was needful."

His attention was drawn inward by a troublesome tooth, and he sucked at it spitefully. There was something potent about this old man that silenced everyone for a moment or so. He seemed a fragment from the ruder agricultural past of our race, like a lump of soil among things of paper. He put his basket of vegetables very deliberately on the new violet tablecloth, removed his hat carefully and dabbled his brow, and wiped out his hat brim with a crimson and yellow pocket handkerchief.

"I'm glad you were able to come, Uncle," said Mrs. Johnson.

"Oh, I *came*" said Uncle Pentstemon. "I *came*."

He turned on Mrs. Larkins. “Gals in service?” he asked.

“They aren’t and they won’t be,” said Mrs. Larkins.

“No,” he said with infinite meaning, and turned his eye on Mr. Polly.

“You Lizzie’s boy?” he said.

Mr. Polly was spared much self-exposition by the tumult occasioned by further arrivals.

“Ah! here’s May Punt!” said Mrs. Johnson, and a small woman dressed in the borrowed mourning of a large woman and leading a very small long-haired observant little boy — it was his first funeral — appeared, closely followed by several friends of Mrs. Johnson who had come to swell the display of respect and made only vague, confused impressions upon Mr. Polly’s mind. (Aunt Mildred, who was an unexplained family scandal, had declined Mrs. Johnson’s hospitality.)

Everybody was in profound mourning, of course, mourning in the modern English style, with the dyer’s handiwork only too apparent, and hats and jackets of the current cut. There was very little crape, and the costumes had none of the goodness and specialisation and genuine enjoyment of mourning for mourning’s sake that a similar continental gathering would have displayed. Still that congestion of strangers in black sufficed to stun and confuse Mr. Polly’s impressionable mind. It seemed to him much more extraordinary than anything he had expected.

“Now, gals,” said Mrs. Larkins, “see if you can help,” and the three daughters became confusingly active between the front room and the back.

“I hope everyone’ll take a glass of sherry and a biscuit,” said Mrs. Johnson. “We don’t stand on ceremony,” and a decanter appeared in the place of Uncle Pentstemon’s vegetables.

Uncle Pentstemon had refused to be relieved of his hat; he sat stiffly down on a chair against the wall with that venerable headdress between his feet, watching the approach of anyone jealously. “Don’t you go squashing my hat,” he said. Conversation became confused and general. Uncle Pentstemon addressed himself to Mr. Polly. “You’re a little chap,” he said, “a puny little chap. I never did agree to Lizzie marrying him, but I suppose by-gones must be bygones

now. I suppose they made you a clerk or something."

"Outfitter," said Mr. Polly.

"I remember. Them girls pretend to be dressmakers."

"They *are* dressmakers," said Mrs. Larkins across the room.

"I *will* take a glass of sherry. They 'old to it, you see."

He took the glass Mrs. Johnson handed him, and poised it critically between a horny finger and thumb. "You'll be paying for this," he said to Mr. Polly. "Here's *to* you.... Don't you go treading on my hat, young woman. You brush your skirts against it and you take a shillin' off its value. It ain't the sort of 'at you see nowadays."

He drank noisily.

The sherry presently loosened everybody's tongue, and the early coldness passed.

"There ought to have been a *post-mortem*," Polly heard Mrs. Punt remarking to one of Mrs. Johnson's friends, and Miriam and another were lost in admiration of Mrs. Johnson's decorations. "So very nice and refined," they were both repeating at intervals.

The sherry and biscuits were still being discussed when Mr. Podger, the undertaker, arrived, a broad, cheerfully sorrowful, clean-shaven little man, accompanied by a melancholy-faced assistant. He conversed for a time with Johnson in the passage outside; the sense of his business stilled the rising waves of chatter and carried off everyone's attention in the wake of his heavy footsteps to the room above.

IV

Things crowded upon Mr. Polly. Everyone, he noticed, took sherry with a solemn avidity, and a small portion even was administered sacramentally to the Punt boy. There followed a distribution of black kid gloves, and much trying on and humouring of fingers. "*Good* gloves," said one of Mrs. Johnson's friends. "There's a little pair there for Willie," said Mrs. Johnson triumphantly. Everyone seemed gravely content with the amazing procedure of the occasion. Presently Mr. Podger was picking Mr. Polly out as Chief Mourner to go with Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Larkins and Annie in the first mourning carriage.

“Right O,” said Mr. Polly, and repented instantly of the alacrity of the phrase.

“There’ll have to be a walking party,” said Mrs. Johnson cheerfully. “There’s only two coaches. I daresay we can put in six in each, but that leaves three over.”

There was a generous struggle to be pedestrian, and the two other Larkins girls, confessing coyly to tight new boots and displaying a certain eagerness, were added to the contents of the first carriage.

“It’ll be a squeeze,” said Annie.

“*I* don’t mind a squeeze,” said Mr. Polly.

He decided privately that the proper phrase for the result of that remark was “Hysterial catechunations.”

Mr. Podger re-entered the room from a momentary supervision of the bumping business that was now proceeding down the staircase.

“Bearing up,” he said cheerfully, rubbing his hands together. “Bearing up!”

That stuck very vividly in Mr. Polly’s mind, and so did the close-wedged drive to the churchyard, bunched in between two young women in confused dull and shiny black, and the fact that the wind was bleak and that the officiating clergyman had a cold, and sniffed between his sentences. The wonder of life! The wonder of everything! What had he expected that this should all be so astoundingly different.

He found his attention converging more and more upon the Larkins cousins. The interest was reciprocal. They watched him with a kind of suppressed excitement and became risible with his every word and gesture. He was more and more aware of their personal quality. Annie had blue eyes and a red, attractive mouth, a harsh voice and a habit of extreme liveliness that even this occasion could not suppress; Minnie was fond, extremely free about the touching of hands and suchlike endearments; Miriam was quieter and regarded him earnestly. Mrs. Larkins was very happy in her daughters, and they had the naïve affectionateness of those who see few people and find a strange cousin a wonderful outlet. Mr. Polly had never been very much kissed, and it made his mind swim. He did not know for the life of him whether he liked or disliked all or any of the Larkins cousins. It was rather attractive to make them laugh; they laughed at

anything.

There they were tugging at his mind, and the funeral tugging at his mind, too, and the sense of himself as Chief Mourner in a brand new silk hat with a broad mourning band. He watched the ceremony and missed his responses, and strange feelings twisted at his heartstrings.

V

Mr. Polly walked back to the house because he wanted to be alone. Miriam and Minnie would have accompanied him, but finding Uncle Pentstemon beside the Chief Mourner they went on in front.

"You're wise," said Uncle Pentstemon.

"Glad you think so," said Mr. Polly, rousing himself to talk.

"I likes a bit of walking before a meal," said Uncle Pentstemon, and made a kind of large hiccup. "That sherry rises," he remarked. "Grocer's stuff, I expect."

He went on to ask how much the funeral might be costing, and seemed pleased to find Mr. Polly didn't know.

"In that case," he said impressively, "it's pretty certain to cost more'n you expect, my boy."

He meditated for a time. "I've seen a mort of undertakers," he declared; "a mort of undertakers."

The Larkins girls attracted his attention.

"Let's lodgin's and chars," he commented. "Leastways she goes out to cook dinners. And look at 'em!

"Dressed up to the nines. If it ain't borryd clothes, that is. And they goes out to work at a factory!"

"Did you know my father much, Uncle Pentstemon?" asked Mr. Polly.

"Couldn't stand Lizzie throwin' herself away like that," said Uncle Pentstemon, and repeated his hiccup on a larger scale.

"That *weren't* good sherry," said Uncle Pentstemon with the first note of pathos Mr. Polly had detected in his quavering voice.

The funeral in the rather cold wind had proved wonderfully appetising, and every eye brightened at the sight of the cold collation that was now spread in the front room. Mrs. Johnson was very brisk,

and Mr. Polly, when he re-entered the house found everybody sitting down. “Come along, Alfred,” cried the hostess cheerfully. “We can’t very well begin without you. Have you got the bottled beer ready to open, Betsy? Uncle, you’ll have a drop of whiskey, I expect.”

“Put it where I can mix for myself,” said Uncle Pentstemon, placing his hat very carefully out of harm’s way on the bookcase.

There were two cold boiled chickens, which Johnson carved with great care and justice, and a nice piece of ham, some brawn and a steak and kidney pie, a large bowl of salad and several sorts of pickles, and afterwards came cold apple tart, jam roll and a good piece of Stilton cheese, lots of bottled beer, some lemonade for the ladies and milk for Master Punt; a very bright and satisfying meal. Mr. Polly found himself seated between Mrs. Punt, who was much preoccupied with Master Punt’s table manners, and one of Mrs. Johnson’s school friends, who was exchanging reminiscences of school days and news of how various common friends had changed and married with Mrs. Johnson. Opposite him was Miriam and another of the Johnson circle, and also he had brawn to carve and there was hardly room for the helpful Betsy to pass behind his chair, so that altogether his mind would have been amply distracted from any mortuary broodings, even if a wordy warfare about the education of the modern young woman had not sprung up between Uncle Pentstemon and Mrs. Larkins and threatened for a time, in spite of a word or so in season from Johnson, to wreck all the harmony of the sad occasion.

The general effect was after this fashion:

First an impression of Mrs. Punt on the right speaking in a refined undertone: “You didn’t, I suppose, Mr. Polly, think to ‘*ave* your poor dear father post-mortemed—”

Lady on the left side breaking in: “I was just reminding Grace of the dear dead days beyond recall—”

Attempted reply to Mrs. Punt: “Didn’t think of it for a moment. Can’t give you a piece of this brawn, can I?”

Fragment from the left: “Grace and Beauty they used to call us and we used to sit at the same desk—”

Mrs. Punt, breaking out suddenly: “Don’t *swaller* your fork, Willy. You see, Mr. Polly, I used to ‘*ave* a young gentleman, a

medical student, lodging with me—”

Voice from down the table: “‘Am, Alfred? I didn’t give you very much.”

Bessie became evident at the back of Mr. Polly’s chair, struggling wildly to get past. Mr. Polly did his best to be helpful. “Can you get past? Lemme sit forward a bit. Urr-oo! Right O.”

Lady to the left going on valiantly and speaking to everyone who cares to listen, while Mrs. Johnson beams beside her: “There she used to sit as bold as brass, and the fun she used to make of things no one *could* believe — knowing her now. She used to make faces at the mistress through the—”

Mrs. Punt keeping steadily on: “The contents of the stummik at any rate *ought* to be examined.”

Voice of Mr. Johnson. “Elfrid, pass the mustid down.”

Miriam leaning across the table: “Elfrid!”

“Once she got us all kept in. The whole school!”

Miriam, more insistently: “Elfrid!”

Uncle Pentstemon, raising his voice defiantly: “Trounce ‘er again I would if she did as much now. That I would! Dratted mischief!”

Miriam, catching Mr. Polly’s eye: “Elfrid! This lady knows Canterbury. I been telling her you been there.”

Mr. Polly: “Glad you know it.”

The lady shouting: “I like it.”

Mrs. Larkins, raising her voice: “I won’t ‘*ave* my girls spoken of, not by nobody, old or young.”

Pop! imperfectly located.

Mr. Johnson at large: “*Ain’t* the beer up! It’s the ‘eated room.”

Bessie: “Scuse me, sir, passing so soon again, but—” Rest inaudible. Mr. Polly, accommodating himself: “Urr-oo! Right? Right O.”

The knives and forks, probably by some secret common agreement, clash and clatter together and drown every other sound.

“Nobody ‘ad the least idea ‘ow ‘E died, — nobody.... Willie, don’t *golp* so. You ain’t in a ‘urry, are you? You don’t want to ketch a train or anything, — golping like that!”

“D’you remember, Grace, ‘ow one day we ‘ad writing lesson....”

“Nicer girls no one ever ‘ad — though I say it who shouldn’t.”

Mrs. Johnson in a shrill clear hospitable voice: “Harold, won’t Mrs. Larkins ‘*ave* a teeny bit more fowl?”

Mr. Polly rising to the situation. “Or some brawn, Mrs. Larkins?” Catching Uncle Pentstemon’s eye: “Can’t send *you* some brawn, sir?”

“Elfrid!”

Loud hiccup from Uncle Pentstemon, momentary consternation followed by giggle from Annie.

The narration at Mr. Polly’s elbow pursued a quiet but relentless course. “Directly the new doctor came in he said: ‘Everything must be took out and put in spirits — everything.’”

Willie, — audible ingurgitation.

The narration on the left was flourishing up to a climax. “Ladies,” she sez, “dip their pens *in* their ink and keep their noses out of it!”

“Elfrid!” — persuasively.

“Certain people may cast snacks at other people’s daughters, never having had any of their own, though two poor souls of wives dead and buried through their goings on—”

Johnson ruling the storm: “We don’t want old scores dug up on such a day as this—”

“Old scores you may call them, but worth a dozen of them that put them to their rest, poor dears.”

“Elfrid!” — with a note of remonstrance.

“If you choke yourself, my lord, not another mouthful do you ‘*ave*. No nice puddin’! Nothing!”

“And kept us in, she did, every afternoon for a week!”

It seemed to be the end, and Mr. Polly replied with an air of being profoundly impressed: “Really!”

“Elfrid!” — a little disheartened.

“And then they ‘ad it! They found he’d swallowed the very key to unlock the drawer—”

“Then don’t let people go casting snacks!”

“*Who’s* casting snacks!”

“Elfrid! This lady wants to *know*, ‘*ave* the Prossers left Canterbury?”

“No wish to make myself disagreeable, not to God’s ‘umblest worm—”

“Alf, you aren’t very busy with that brawn up there!”

And so on for the hour.

The general effect upon Mr. Polly at the time was at once confusing and exhilarating; but it led him to eat copiously and carelessly, and long before the end, when after an hour and a quarter a movement took the party, and it pushed away its cheese plates and rose sighing and stretching from the remains of the repast, little streaks and bands of dyspeptic irritation and melancholy were darkening the serenity of his mind.

He stood between the mantel shelf and the window — the blinds were up now — and the Larkins sisters clustered about him. He battled with the oncoming depression and forced himself to be extremely facetious about two noticeable rings on Annie’s hand. “They ain’t real,” said Annie coquettishly. “Got ’em out of a prize packet.”

“Prize packet in trousers, I expect,” said Mr. Polly, and awakened inextinguishable laughter.

“Oh! the things you say!” said Minnie, slapping his shoulder.

Suddenly something he had quite extraordinarily forgotten came into his head.

“Bless my heart!” he cried, suddenly serious.

“What’s the matter?” asked Johnson.

“Ought to have gone back to shop — three days ago. They’ll make no end of a row!”

“Lor, you *are* a Treat!” said cousin Annie, and screamed with laughter at a delicious idea. “You’ll get the Chuck,” she said.

Mr. Polly made a convulsing grimace at her.

“I’ll die!” she said. “I don’t believe you care a bit!”

Feeling a little disorganized by her hilarity and a shocked expression that had come to the face of cousin Miriam, he made some indistinct excuse and went out through the back room and scullery into the little garden. The cool air and a very slight drizzle of rain was a relief — anyhow. But the black mood of the replete dyspeptic had come upon him. His soul darkened hopelessly. He walked with his hands in his pockets down the path between the rows of exceptionally cultured peas and unreasonably, overwhelmingly, he was smitten by sorrow for his father. The heady noise and muddle

and confused excitement of the feast passed from him like a curtain drawn away. He thought of that hot and angry and struggling creature who had tugged and sworn so foolishly at the sofa upon the twisted staircase, and who was now lying still and hidden, at the bottom of a wall-sided oblong pit beside the heaped gravel that would presently cover him. The stillness of it! the wonder of it! the infinite reproach! Hatred for all these people — all of them — possessed Mr. Polly's soul.

"Hen-witted gigglers," said Mr. Polly.

He went down to the fence, and stood with his hands on it staring away at nothing. He stayed there for what seemed a long time. From the house came a sound of raised voices that subsided, and then Mrs. Johnson calling for Bessie.

"Gowlish gusto," said Mr. Polly. "Jumping it in. Funererial Games. Don't hurt *him* of course. Doesn't matter to *him*...."

Nobody missed Mr. Polly for a long time.

When at last he reappeared among them his eye was almost grim, but nobody noticed his eye. They were looking at watches, and Johnson was being omniscient about trains. They seemed to discover Mr. Polly afresh just at the moment of parting, and said a number of more or less appropriate things. But Uncle Pentstemon was far too worried about his rush basket, which had been carelessly mislaid, he seemed to think with larcenous intentions, to remember Mr. Polly at all. Mrs. Johnson had tried to fob him off with a similar but inferior basket, — his own had one handle mended with string according to a method of peculiar virtue and inimitable distinction known only to himself — and the old gentleman had taken her attempt as the gravest reflection upon his years and intelligence. Mr. Polly was left very largely to the Larkins trio. Cousin Minnie became shameless and kept kissing him good-by — and then finding out it wasn't time to go. Cousin Miriam seemed to think her silly, and caught Mr. Polly's eye sympathetically. Cousin Annie ceased to giggle and lapsed into a nearly sentimental state. She said with real feeling that she had enjoyed the funeral more than words could tell.

Chapter the Fifth

Mr. Polly Takes a Vacation

I

Mr. Polly returned to Clapham from the funeral celebration prepared for trouble, and took his dismissal in a manly spirit.

"You've merely anti-*separated* me by a hair," he said politely.

And he told them in the dormitory that he meant to take a little holiday before his next crib, though a certain inherited reticence suppressed the fact of the legacy.

"You'll do that all right," said Ascough, the head of the boot shop. "It's quite the fashion just at present. Six Weeks in Wonderful Wood Street. They're running excursions...."

"A little holiday"; that was the form his sense of wealth took first, that it made a little holiday possible. Holidays were his life, and the rest merely adulterated living. And now he might take a little holiday and have money for railway fares and money for meals and money for inns. But — he wanted someone to take the holiday with.

For a time he cherished a design of hunting up Parsons, getting him to throw up his situation, and going with him to Stratford-on-Avon and Shrewsbury and the Welsh mountains and the Wye and a lot of places like that, for a really gorgeous, careless, illimitable old holiday of a month. But alas! Parsons had gone from the St. Paul's Churchyard outfitter's long ago, and left no address.

Mr. Polly tried to think he would be almost as happy wandering alone, but he knew better. He had dreamt of casual encounters with delightfully interesting people by the wayside — even romantic encounters. Such things happened in Chaucer and "Bocashiew," they happened with extreme facility in Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's very detrimental book, *The Quest of the Golden Girl*, which he had read at Canterbury, but he had no confidence they would happen in England — to him.

When, a month later, he came out of the Clapham side door at last into the bright sunshine of a fine London day, with a dazzling sense

of limitless freedom upon him, he did nothing more adventurous than order the cabman to drive to Waterloo, and there take a ticket for Easewood.

He wanted — what *did* he want most in life? I think his distinctive craving is best expressed as fun — fun in companionship. He had already spent a pound or two upon three select feasts to his fellow assistants, sprat suppers they were, and there had been a great and very successful Sunday pilgrimage to Richmond, by Wandsworth and Wimbledon's open common, a trailing garrulous company walking about a solemnly happy host, to wonderful cold meat and salad at the Roebuck, a bowl of punch, punch! and a bill to correspond; but now it was a weekday, and he went down to Easewood with his bag and portmanteau in a solitary compartment, and looked out of the window upon a world in which every possible congenial seemed either toiling in a situation or else looking for one with a gnawing and hopelessly preoccupying anxiety. He stared out of the window at the exploitation roads of suburbs, and rows of houses all very much alike, either emphatically and impatiently to let or full of rather busy unsocial people. Near Wimbledon he had a glimpse of golf links, and saw two elderly gentlemen who, had they chosen, might have been gentlemen of grace and leisure, addressing themselves to smite little hunted white balls great distances with the utmost bitterness and dexterity. Mr. Polly could not understand them.

Every road he remarked, as freshly as though he had never observed it before, was bordered by inflexible palings or iron fences or severely disciplined hedges. He wondered if perhaps abroad there might be beautifully careless, unenclosed high roads. Perhaps after all the best way of taking a holiday is to go abroad.

He was haunted by the memory of what was either a half-forgotten picture or a dream; a carriage was drawn up by the wayside and four beautiful people, two men and two women graciously dressed, were dancing a formal ceremonious dance full of bows and curtseys, to the music of a wandering fiddler they had encountered. They had been driving one way and he walking another — a happy encounter with this obvious result. They might have come straight out of happy Theleme, whose motto is: "Do what thou wilt." The driver had taken his two sleek horses out; they grazed unchallenged;

and he sat on a stone clapping time with his hands while the fiddler played. The shade of the trees did not altogether shut out the sunshine, the grass in the wood was lush and full of still daffodils, the turf they danced on was starred with daisies.

Mr. Polly, dear heart! firmly believed that things like that could and did happen — somewhere. Only it puzzled him that morning that he never saw them happening. Perhaps they happened south of Guilford. Perhaps they happened in Italy. Perhaps they ceased to happen a hundred years ago. Perhaps they happened just round the corner — on weekdays when all good Mr. Pollys are safely shut up in shops. And so dreaming of delightful impossibilities until his heart ached for them, he was rattled along in the suburban train to Johnson's discreet home and the briskly stimulating welcome of Mrs. Johnson.

II

Mr. Polly translated his restless craving for joy and leisure into Harold Johnsonese by saying that he meant to look about him for a bit before going into another situation. It was a decision Johnson very warmly approved. It was arranged that Mr. Polly should occupy his former room and board with the Johnsons in consideration of a weekly payment of eighteen shillings. And the next morning Mr. Polly went out early and reappeared with a purchase, a safety bicycle, which he proposed to study and master in the sandy lane below the Johnsons' house. But over the struggles that preceded his mastery it is humane to draw a veil.

And also Mr. Polly bought a number of books, Rabelais for his own, and "The Arabian Nights," the works of Sterne, a pile of "Tales from Blackwood," cheap in a second-hand bookshop, the plays of William Shakespeare, a second-hand copy of Belloc's "Road to Rome," an odd volume of "Purchas his Pilgrimes" and "The Life and Death of Jason."

"Better get yourself a good book on bookkeeping," said Johnson, turning over perplexing pages.

A belated spring was now advancing with great strides to make up for lost time. Sunshine and a stirring wind were poured out over the

land, fleets of towering clouds sailed upon urgent tremendous missions across the blue seas of heaven, and presently Mr. Polly was riding a little unstably along unfamiliar Surrey roads, wondering always what was round the next corner, and marking the blackthorn and looking out for the first white flower-buds of the may. He was perplexed and distressed, as indeed are all right thinking souls, that there is no may in early May.

He did not ride at the even pace sensible people use who have marked out a journey from one place to another, and settled what time it will take them. He rode at variable speeds, and always as though he was looking for something that, missing, left life attractive still, but a little wanting in significance. And sometimes he was so unreasonably happy he had to whistle and sing, and sometimes he was incredibly, but not at all painfully, sad. His indigestion vanished with air and exercise, and it was quite pleasant in the evening to stroll about the garden with Johnson and discuss plans for the future. Johnson was full of ideas. Moreover, Mr. Polly had marked the road that led to Stamton, that rising populous suburb; and as his bicycle legs grew strong his wheel with a sort of inevitableness carried him towards the row of houses in a back street in which his Larkins cousins made their home together.

He was received with great enthusiasm.

The street was a dingy little street, a *cul-de-sac* of very small houses in a row, each with an almost flattened bow window and a blistered brown door with a black knocker. He poised his bright new bicycle against the window, and knocked and stood waiting, and felt himself in his straw hat and black serge suit a very pleasant and prosperous-looking figure. The door was opened by cousin Miriam. She was wearing a bluish print dress that brought out a kind of sallow warmth in her skin, and although it was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon, her sleeves were tucked up, as if for some domestic work, above the elbows, showing her rather slender but very shapely yellowish arms. The loosely pinned bodice confessed a delicately rounded neck.

For a moment she regarded him with suspicion and a faint hostility, and then recognition dawned in her eyes.

"Why!" she said, "it's cousin Elfrid!"

“Thought I’d look you up,” he said.

“Fancy! you coming to see us like this!” she answered.

They stood confronting one another for a moment, while Miriam collected herself for the unexpected emergency.

“Explorations menanderings,” said Mr. Polly, indicating the bicycle.

Miriam’s face betrayed no appreciation of the remark.

“Wait a moment,” she said, coming to a rapid decision, “and I’ll tell Ma.”

She closed the door on him abruptly, leaving him a little surprised in the street. “Ma!” he heard her calling, and swift speech followed, the import of which he didn’t catch. Then she reappeared. It seemed but an instant, but she was changed; the arms had vanished into sleeves, the apron had gone, a certain pleasing disorder of the hair had been at least reproved.

“I didn’t mean to shut you out,” she said, coming out upon the step. “I just told Ma. How are you, Elfrid? You *are* looking well. I didn’t know you rode a bicycle. Is it a new one?”

She leaned upon his bicycle. “Bright it is!” she said. “What a trouble you must have to keep it clean!”

Mr. Polly was aware of a rustling transit along the passage, and of the house suddenly full of hushed but strenuous movement.

“It’s plated mostly,” said Mr. Polly.

“What do you carry in that little bag thing?” she asked, and then branched off to: “We’re all in a mess to-day you know. It’s my cleaning up day to-day. I’m not a bit tidy I know, but I *do* like to ‘*ave* a go in at things now and then. You got to take us as you find us, Elfrid. Mercy we wasn’t all out.” She paused. She was talking against time. “I *am* glad to see you again,” she repeated.

“Couldn’t keep away,” said Mr. Polly gallantly. “Had to come over and see my pretty cousins again.”

Miriam did not answer for a moment. She coloured deeply. “You *do say* things!” she said.

She stared at Mr. Polly, and his unfortunate sense of fitness made him nod his head towards her, regard her firmly with a round brown eye, and add impressively: “I don’t say *which* of them.”

Her answering expression made him realise for an instant the

terrible dangers he trifled with. Avidity flared up in her eyes. Minnie's voice came happily to dissolve the situation.

"'Ello, Elfrid!" she said from the doorstep.

Her hair was just passably tidy, and she was a little effaced by a red blouse, but there was no mistaking the genuine brightness of her welcome.

He was to come in to tea, and Mrs. Larkins, exuberantly genial in a floriferous but dingy flannel dressing gown, appeared to confirm that. He brought in his bicycle and put it in the narrow, empty passage, and everyone crowded into a small untidy kitchen, whose table had been hastily cleared of the *débris* of the midday repast.

"You must come in 'ere," said Mrs. Larkins, "for Miriam's turning out the front room. I never did see such a girl for cleanin' up. Miriam's 'oliday's a scrub. You've caught us on the 'Op as the sayin' is, but Welcome all the same. Pity Annie's at work to-day; she won't be 'ome till seven."

Miriam put chairs and attended to the fire, Minnie edged up to Mr. Polly and said: "I *am* glad to see you again, Elfrid," with a warm contiguous intimacy that betrayed a broken tooth. Mrs. Larkins got out tea things, and descanted on the noble simplicity of their lives, and how he "mustn't mind our simple ways." They enveloped Mr. Polly with a geniality that intoxicated his amiable nature; he insisted upon helping lay the things, and created enormous laughter by pretending not to know where plates and knives and cups ought to go. "Who'm I going to sit next?" he said, and developed voluminous amusement by attempts to arrange the plates so that he could rub elbows with all three. Mrs. Larkins had to sit down in the windsor chair by the grandfather clock (which was dark with dirt and not going) to laugh at her ease at his well-acted perplexity.

They got seated at last, and Mr. Polly struck a vein of humour in telling them how he learnt to ride the bicycle. He found the mere repetition of the word "wabble" sufficient to produce almost inextinguishable mirth.

"No foreseeing little accidentulous misadventures," he said, "none whatever."

(Giggle from Minnie.)

"Stout elderly gentleman — shirt sleeves — large straw

wastepaper basket sort of hat — starts to cross the road — going to the oil shop — prodic refreshment of oil can—"

"Don't say you run 'im down," said Mrs. Larkins, gasping. "Don't say you run 'im down, Elfrid!"

"Run 'im down! Not me, Madam. I never run anything down. Wabble. Ring the bell. Wabble, wabble—"

(Laughter and tears.)

"No one's going to run him down. Hears the bell! Wabble. Gust of wind. Off comes the hat smack into the wheel. Wabble. *Lord! what's* going to happen? Hat across the road, old gentleman after it, bell, shriek. He ran into me. Didn't ring his bell, hadn't *got* a bell — just ran into me. Over I went clinging to his venerable head. Down he went with me clinging to him. Oil can blump, blump into the road."

(Interlude while Minnie is attended to for crumb in the windpipe.)

"Well, what happened to the old man with the oil can?" said Mrs. Larkins.

"We sat about among the debreece and had a bit of an argument. I told him he oughtn't to come out wearing such a dangerous hat — flying at things. Said if he couldn't control his hat he ought to leave it at home. High old jawbacious argument we had, I tell you. 'I tell you, sir—' 'I tell *you*, sir.' Waw-waw-waw. Infuriacious. But that's the sort of thing that's constantly happening you know — on a bicycle. People run into you, hens and cats and dogs and things. Everything seems to have its mark on you; everything."

"*You* never run into anything."

"Never. Swelpme," said Mr. Polly very solemnly.

"Never, 'E say!" squealed Minnie. "Hark at 'im!" and relapsed into a condition that urgently demanded back thumping. "Don't be so silly," said Miriam, thumping hard.

Mr. Polly had never been such a social success before. They hung upon his every word — and laughed. What a family they were for laughter! And he loved laughter. The background he apprehended dimly; it was very much the sort of background his life had always had. There was a threadbare tablecloth on the table, and the slop basin and teapot did not go with the cups and saucers, the plates were different again, the knives worn down, the butter lived in a greenish

glass dish of its own. Behind was a dresser hung with spare and miscellaneous crockery, with a workbox and an untidy work-basket, there was an ailing musk plant in the window, and the tattered and blotched wallpaper was covered by bright-coloured grocers' almanacs. Feminine wrappings hung from pegs upon the door, and the floor was covered with a varied collection of fragments of oilcloth. The Windsor chair he sat in was unstable — which presently afforded material for humour. "Steady, old nag," he said; "whoa, my friskiacious palfry!"

"The things he says! You never know what he won't say next!"

III

"You ain't talkin' of goin'!" cried Mrs. Larkins.

"Supper at eight."

"Stay to supper with *us*, now you '*ave* come over," said Mrs. Larkins, with corroborating cries from Minnie. "'Ave a bit of a walk with the gals, and then come back to supper. You might all go and meet Annie while I straighten up, and lay things out."

"You're not to go touching the front room mind," said Miriam.

"*Who's* going to touch yer front room?" said Mrs. Larkins, apparently forgetful for a moment of Mr. Polly.

Both girls dressed with some care while Mrs. Larkins sketched the better side of their characters, and then the three young people went out to see something of Stamton. In the streets their risible mood gave way to a self-conscious propriety that was particularly evident in Miriam's bearing. They took Mr. Polly to the Stamton Wreckeryation ground — that at least was what they called it — with its handsome custodian's cottage, its asphalt paths, its Jubilee drinking fountain, its clumps of wallflower and daffodils, and so to the new cemetery and a distant view of the Surrey hills, and round by the gasworks to the canal to the factory, that presently disgorged a surprised and radiant Annie.

"El-*lo*" said Annie.

It is very pleasant to every properly constituted mind to be a centre of amiable interest for one's fellow creatures, and when one is a young man conscious of becoming mourning and a certain wit, and

the fellow creatures are three young and ardent and sufficiently expressive young women who dispute for the honour of walking by one's side, one may be excused a secret exaltation. They did dispute.

"I'm going to '*ave* 'im now," said Annie. "You two've been 'aving 'im all the afternoon. Besides, I've got something to say to him."

She had something to say to him. It came presently. "I say," she said abruptly. "I *did* get them rings out of a prize packet."

"What rings?" asked Mr. Polly.

"What you saw at your poor father's funeral. You made out they meant something. They didn't — straight."

"Then some people have been very remiss about their chances," said Mr. Polly, understanding.

"They haven't had any chances," said Annie. "I don't believe in making oneself too free with people."

"Nor me," said Mr. Polly.

"I may be a bit larky and cheerful in my manner," Annie admitted. "But it don't *mean* anything. I ain't that sort."

"Right O," said Mr. Polly.

IV

It was past ten when Mr. Polly found himself riding back towards Easewood in a broad moonlight with a little Japanese lantern dangling from his handle bar and making a fiery circle of pinkish light on and round about his front wheel. He was mightily pleased with himself and the day. There had been four-ale to drink at supper mixed with gingerbeer, very free and jolly in a jug. No shadow fell upon the agreeable excitement of his mind until he faced the anxious and reproachful face of Johnson, who had been sitting up for him, smoking and trying to read the odd volume of "Purchas his Pilgrimes," — about the monk who went into Sarmatia and saw the Tartar carts.

"Not had an accident, Elfrid?" said Johnson.

The weakness of Mr. Polly's character came out in his reply. "Not much," he said. "Pedal got a bit loose in Stamton, O' Man. Couldn't ride it. So I looked up the cousins while I waited."

“Not the Larkins lot?”

“Yes.”

Johnson yawned hugely and asked for and was given friendly particulars. “Well,” he said, “better get to bed. I have been reading that book of yours — rum stuff. Can’t make it out quite. Quite out of date I should say if you asked me.”

“That’s all right, O’ Man,” said Mr. Polly.

“Not a bit of use for anything I can see.”

“Not a bit.”

“See any shops in Stamton?”

“Nothing to speak of,” said Mr. Polly. “Goo-night, O’ Man.”

Before and after this brief conversation his mind ran on his cousins very warmly and prettily in the vein of high spring. Mr. Polly had been drinking at the poisoned fountains of English literature, fountains so unsuited to the needs of a decent clerk or shopman, fountains charged with the dangerous suggestion that it becomes a man of gaiety and spirit to make love, gallantly and rather carelessly. It seemed to him that evening to be handsome and humorous and practicable to make love to all his cousins. It wasn’t that he liked any of them particularly, but he liked something about them. He liked their youth and femininity, their resolute high spirits and their interest in him.

They laughed at nothing and knew nothing, and Minnie had lost a tooth and Annie screamed and shouted, but they were interesting, intensely interesting.

And Miriam wasn’t so bad as the others. He had kissed them all and had been kissed in addition several times by Minnie,— “oscoolatory exercise.”

He buried his nose in his pillow and went to sleep — to dream of anything rather than getting on in the world, as a sensible young man in his position ought to have done.

V

And now Mr. Polly began to lead a divided life. With the Johnsons he professed to be inclined, but not so conclusively inclined as to be inconvenient, to get a shop for himself, to be, to use the phrase he

preferred, “looking for an opening.” He would ride off in the afternoon upon that research, remarking that he was going to “cast a strategetical eye” on Chertsey or Weybridge. But if not all roads, still a great majority of them, led by however devious ways to Stamton, and to laughter and increasing familiarity. Relations developed with Annie and Minnie and Miriam. Their various characters were increasingly interesting. The laughter became perceptibly less abundant, something of the fizz had gone from the first opening, still these visits remained wonderfully friendly and upholding. Then back he would come to grave but evasive discussions with Johnson.

Johnson was really anxious to get Mr. Polly “into something.” His was a reserved honest character, and he would really have preferred to see his lodger doing things for himself than receive his money for housekeeping. He hated waste, anybody’s waste, much more than he desired profit. But Mrs. Johnson was all for Mr. Polly’s loitering. She seemed much the more human and likeable of the two to Mr. Polly.

He tried at times to work up enthusiasm for the various avenues to well-being his discussion with Johnson opened. But they remained disheartening prospects. He imagined himself wonderfully smartened up, acquiring style and value in a London shop, but the picture was stiff and unconvincing. He tried to rouse himself to enthusiasm by the idea of his property increasing by leaps and bounds, by twenty pounds a year or so, let us say, each year, in a well-placed little shop, the corner shop Johnson favoured. There was a certain picturesque interest in imagining cut-throat economies, but his heart told him there would be little in practising them.

And then it happened to Mr. Polly that real Romance came out of dreamland into life, and intoxicated and gladdened him with sweetly beautiful suggestions — and left him. She came and left him as that dear lady leaves so many of us, alas! not sparing him one jot or one tittle of the hollowness of her retreating aspect.

It was all the more to Mr. Polly’s taste that the thing should happen as things happen in books.

In a resolute attempt not to get to Stamton that day, he had turned due southward from Easewood towards a country where the abundance of bracken jungles, lady’s smock, stitchwork, bluebells and grassy stretches by the wayside under shady trees does much to

compensate the lighter type of mind for the absence of promising "openings." He turned aside from the road, wheeled his machine along a faintly marked attractive trail through bracken until he came to a heap of logs against a high old stone wall with a damaged coping and wallflower plants already gone to seed. He sat down, balanced the straw hat on a convenient lump of wood, lit a cigarette, and abandoned himself to agreeable musings and the friendly observation of a cheerful little brown and grey bird his stillness presently encouraged to approach him. "This is All Right," said Mr. Polly softly to the little brown and grey bird. "Business — later."

He reflected that he might go on this way for four or five years, and then be scarcely worse off than he had been in his father's lifetime.

"Vile Business," said Mr. Polly.

Then Romance appeared. Or to be exact, Romance became audible.

Romance began as a series of small but increasingly vigorous movements on the other side of the wall, then as a voice murmuring, then as a falling of little fragments on the hither side and as ten pink finger tips, scarcely apprehended before Romance became startling and emphatically a leg, remained for a time a fine, slender, actively struggling limb, brown stockinged and wearing a brown toe-worn shoe, and then — . A handsome red-haired girl wearing a short dress of blue linen was sitting astride the wall, panting, considerably disarranged by her climbing, and as yet unaware of Mr. Polly....

His fine instincts made him turn his head away and assume an attitude of negligent contemplation, with his ears and mind alive to every sound behind him.

"Goodness!" said a voice with a sharp note of surprise.

Mr. Polly was on his feet in an instant. "Dear me! Can I be of any assistance?" he said with deferential gallantry.

"I don't know," said the young lady, and regarded him calmly with clear blue eyes.

"I didn't know there was anyone here," she added.

"Sorry," said Mr. Polly, "if I am intrudaceous. I didn't know you didn't want me to be here."

She reflected for a moment on the word. "It isn't that," she said,

surveying him.

"I oughtn't to get over the wall," she explained. "It's out of bounds. At least in term time. But this being holidays—"

Her manner placed the matter before him.

"Holidays is different," said Mr. Polly.

"I don't want to actually *break* the rules," she said.

"Leave them behind you," said Mr. Polly with a catch of the breath, "where they are safe"; and marvelling at his own wit and daring, and indeed trembling within himself, he held out a hand for her.

She brought another brown leg from the unknown, and arranged her skirt with a dexterity altogether feminine. "I think I'll stay on the wall," she decided. "So long as some of me's in bounds—"

She continued to regard him with eyes that presently joined dancing in an irresistible smile of satisfaction. Mr. Polly smiled in return.

"You bicycle?" she said.

Mr. Polly admitted the fact, and she said she did too.

"All my people are in India," she explained. "It's beastly rot — I mean it's frightfully dull being left here alone."

"All *my* people," said Mr. Polly, "are in Heaven!"

"I say!"

"Fact!" said Mr. Polly. "Got nobody."

"And that's why—" she checked her artless comment on his mourning. "I say," she said in a sympathetic voice, "I *am* sorry. I really am. Was it a fire or a ship — or something?"

Her sympathy was very delightful. He shook his head. "The ordinary table of mortality," he said. "First one and then another."

Behind his outward melancholy, delight was dancing wildly. "Are *you* lonely?" asked the girl.

Mr. Polly nodded.

"I was just sitting there in melancholy rectrospectatiousness," he said, indicating the logs, and again a swift thoughtfulness swept across her face.

"There's no harm in our talking," she reflected.

"It's a kindness. Won't you get down?"

She reflected, and surveyed the turf below and the scene around

and him.

"I'll stay on the wall," she said. "If only for bounds' sake."

She certainly looked quite adorable on the wall. She had a fine neck and pointed chin that was particularly admirable from below, and pretty eyes and fine eyebrows are never so pretty as when they look down upon one. But no calculation of that sort, thank Heaven, was going on beneath her ruddy shock of hair.

VI

"Let's talk," she said, and for a time they were both tongue-tied.

Mr. Polly's literary proclivities had taught him that under such circumstances a strain of gallantry was demanded. And something in his blood repeated that lesson.

"You make me feel like one of those old knights," he said, "who rode about the country looking for dragons and beautiful maidens and chivalresque adventures."

"Oh!" she said. "Why?"

"Beautiful maiden," he said.

She flushed under her freckles with the quick bright flush those pretty red-haired people have. "Nonsense!" she said.

"You are. I'm not the first to tell you that. A beautiful maiden imprisoned in an enchanted school."

"*You* wouldn't think it enchanted!"

"And here am I — clad in steel. Well, not exactly, but my fiery war horse is anyhow. Ready to absquatulate all the dragons and rescue you."

She laughed, a jolly laugh that showed delightfully gleaming teeth. "I wish you could *see* the dragons," she said with great enjoyment. Mr. Polly felt they were a sun's distance from the world of everyday.

"Fly with me!" he dared.

She stared for a moment, and then went off into peals of laughter. "You *are* funny!" she said. "Why, I haven't known you five minutes."

"One doesn't — in this medevial world. My mind is made up, anyhow."

He was proud and pleased with his joke, and quick to change his key neatly. “I wish one could,” he said.

“I wonder if people ever did!”

“If there were people like you.”

“We don’t even know each other’s names,” she remarked with a descent to matters of fact.

“Yours is the prettiest name in the world.”

“How do you know?”

“It must be — anyhow.”

“It *is* rather pretty you know — it’s Christabel.”

“What did I tell you?”

“And yours?”

“Poorer than I deserve. It’s Alfred.”

“*I* can’t call you Alfred.”

“Well, Polly.”

“It’s a girl’s name!”

For a moment he was out of tune. “I wish it was!” he said, and could have bitten out his tongue at the Larkins sound of it.

“I shan’t forget it,” she remarked consolingly.

“I say,” she said in the pause that followed. “Why are you riding about the country on a bicycle?”

“I’m doing it because I like it.”

She sought to estimate his social status on her limited basis of experience. He stood leaning with one hand against the wall, looking up at her and tingling with daring thoughts. He was a littleish man, you must remember, but neither mean-looking nor unhandsome in those days, sunburnt by his holiday and now warmly flushed. He had an inspiration to simple speech that no practised trifler with love could have bettered. “There *is* love at first sight,” he said, and said it sincerely.

She stared at him with eyes round and big with excitement.

“I think,” she said slowly, and without any signs of fear or retreat, “I ought to get back over the wall.”

“It needn’t matter to you,” he said. “I’m just a nobody. But I know you are the best and most beautiful thing I’ve ever spoken to.” His breath caught against something. “No harm in telling you that,” he said.

“I should have to go back if I thought you were serious,” she said after a pause, and they both smiled together.

After that they talked in a fragmentary way for some time. The blue eyes surveyed Mr. Polly with kindly curiosity from under a broad, finely modelled brow, much as an exceptionally intelligent cat might survey a new sort of dog. She meant to find out all about him. She asked questions that riddled the honest knight in armour below, and probed ever nearer to the hateful secret of the shop and his normal servitude. And when he made a flourish and mispronounced a word a thoughtful shade passed like the shadow of a cloud across her face.

“Boom!” came the sound of a gong.

“Lordy!” cried the girl and flashed a pair of brown legs at him and was gone.

Then her pink finger tips reappeared, and the top of her red hair. “Knight!” she cried from the other side of the wall. “Knight there!”

“Lady!” he answered.

“Come again to-morrow!”

“At your command. But — —”

“Yes?”

“Just one finger.”

“What do you mean?”

“To kiss.”

The rustle of retreating footsteps and silence....

But after he had waited next day for twenty minutes she reappeared, a little out of breath with the effort to surmount the wall — and head first this time. And it seemed to him she was lighter and more daring and altogether prettier than the dreams and enchanted memories that had filled the interval.

VII

From first to last their acquaintance lasted ten days, but into that time Mr. Polly packed ten years of dreams.

“He don’t seem,” said Johnson, “to take a serious interest in anything. That shop at the corner’s bound to be snapped up if he don’t look out.”

The girl and Mr. Polly did not meet on every one of those ten days; one was Sunday and she could not come, and on the eighth the school reassembled and she made vague excuses. All their meetings amounted to this, that she sat on the wall, more or less in bounds as she expressed it, and let Mr. Polly fall in love with her and try to express it below. She sat in a state of irresponsible exaltation, watching him and at intervals prodding a vivisecting point of encouragement into him — with that strange passive cruelty which is natural to her sex and age.

And Mr. Polly fell in love, as though the world had given way beneath him and he had dropped through into another, into a world of luminous clouds and of desolate hopeless wildernesses of desiring and of wild valleys of unreasonable ecstasies, a world whose infinite miseries were finer and in some inexplicable way sweeter than the purest gold of the daily life, whose joys — they were indeed but the merest remote glimpses of joy — were brighter than a dying martyr's vision of heaven. Her smiling face looked down upon him out of heaven, her careless pose was the living body of life. It was senseless, it was utterly foolish, but all that was best and richest in Mr. Polly's nature broke like a wave and foamed up at that girl's feet, and died, and never touched her. And she sat on the wall and marvelled at him and was amused, and once, suddenly moved and wrung by his pleading, she bent down rather shamefacedly and gave him a freckled, tennis-blistered little paw to kiss. And she looked into his eyes and suddenly felt a perplexity, a curious swimming of the mind that made her recoil and stiffen, and wonder afterwards and dream....

And then with some dim instinct of self-protection, she went and told her three best friends, great students of character all, of this remarkable phenomenon she had discovered on the other side of the wall.

"Look here," said Mr. Polly, "I'm wild for the love of you! I can't keep up this gesticulations game any more! I'm not a Knight. Treat me as a human man. You may sit up there smiling, but I'd die in torments to have you mine for an hour. I'm nobody and nothing. But look here! Will you wait for me for five years? You're just a girl yet, and it wouldn't be hard."

“Shut up!” said Christabel in an aside he did not hear, and something he did not see touched her hand.

“I’ve always been just dilletentytating about till now, but I could work. I’ve just woke up. Wait till I’ve got a chance with the money I’ve got.”

“But you haven’t got much money!”

“I’ve got enough to take a chance with, some sort of a chance. I’d find a chance. I’ll do that anyhow. I’ll go away. I mean what I say — I’ll stop trifling and shirking. If I don’t come back it won’t matter. If I do — —”

Her expression had become uneasy. Suddenly she bent down towards him.

“Don’t!” she said in an undertone.

“Don’t — what?”

“Don’t go on like this! You’re different! Go on being the knight who wants to kiss my hand as his — what did you call it?” The ghost of a smile curved her face. “Gurdrum!”

“But —— !”

Then through a pause they both stared at each other, listening.

A muffled tumult on the other side of the wall asserted itself.

“Shut *up*, Rosie!” said a voice.

“I tell you I will see! I can’t half hear. Give me a leg up!”

“You Idiot! He’ll see you. You’re spoiling everything.”

The bottom dropped out of Mr. Polly’s world. He felt as people must feel who are going to faint.

“You’ve got someone—” he said aghast.

She found life inexpressible to Mr. Polly. She addressed some unseen hearers. “You filthy little Beasts!” she cried with a sharp note of agony in her voice, and swung herself back over the wall and vanished. There was a squeal of pain and fear, and a swift, fierce altercation.

For a couple of seconds he stood agape.

Then a wild resolve to confirm his worst sense of what was on the other side of the wall made him seize a log, put it against the stones, clutch the parapet with insecure fingers, and lug himself to a momentary balance on the wall.

Romance and his goddess had vanished.

A red-haired girl with a pigtail was wringing the wrist of a schoolfellow who shrieked with pain and cried: “Mercy! mercy! Ooo! Christabel!”

“You idiot!” cried Christabel. “You giggling Idiot!”

Two other young ladies made off through the beech trees from this outburst of savagery.

Then the grip of Mr. Polly’s fingers gave, and he hit his chin against the stones and slipped clumsily to the ground again, scraping his cheek against the wall and hurting his shin against the log by which he had reached the top. Just for a moment he crouched against the wall.

He swore, staggered to the pile of logs and sat down.

He remained very still for some time, with his lips pressed together.

“Fool,” he said at last; “you Blithering Fool!” and began to rub his shin as though he had just discovered its bruises.

Afterwards he found his face was wet with blood — which was none the less red stuff from the heart because it came from slight abrasions.

Chapter the Sixth

Miriam

I

It is an illogical consequence of one human being's ill-treatment that we should fly immediately to another, but that is the way with us. It seemed to Mr. Polly that only a human touch could assuage the smart of his humiliation. Moreover it had for some undefined reason to be a feminine touch, and the number of women in his world was limited.

He thought of the Larkins family — the Larkins whom he had not been near now for ten long days. Healing people they seemed to him now — healing, simple people. They had good hearts, and he had neglected them for a mirage. If he rode over to them he would be able to talk nonsense and laugh and forget the whirl of memories and thoughts that was spinning round and round so unendurably in his brain.

"Law!" said Mrs. Larkins, "come in! You're quite a stranger, Elfrid!"

"Been seeing to business," said the unveracious Polly.

"None of 'em ain't at 'ome, but Miriam's just out to do a bit of shopping. Won't let me shop, she won't, because I'm so keerless. She's a wonderful manager, that girl. Minnie's got some work at the carpet place. 'Ope it won't make 'er ill again. She's a loving deliket sort, is Minnie.... Come into the front parlour. It's a bit untidy, but you got to take us as you find us. Wot you been doing to your face?"

"Bit of a scrase with the bicycle," said Mr. Polly.

"Trying to pass a carriage on the on side, and he drew up and ran me against a wall."

Mrs. Larkins scrutinised it. "You ought to '*ave* someone look after your scrases," she said. "That's all red and rough. It ought to be cold-creamed. Bring your bicycle into the passage and come in."

She "straightened up a bit," that is to say she increased the dislocation of a number of scattered articles, put a workbasket on the top of several books, swept two or three dogs'-eared numbers of the

Lady's Own Novelist from the table into the broken armchair, and proceeded to sketch together the tea-things with various such interpolations as: "Law, if I ain't forgot the butter!" All the while she talked of Annie's good spirits and cleverness with her millinery, and of Minnie's affection and Miriam's relative love of order and management. Mr. Polly stood by the window uneasily and thought how good and sincere was the Larkins tone. It was well to be back again.

"You're a long time finding that shop of yours," said Mrs. Larkins.

"Don't do to be precipitous," said Mr. Polly.

"No," said Mrs. Larkins, "once you got it you got it. Like choosing a 'usband. You better see you got it good. I kept Larkins 'esitating two years I did, until I felt sure of him. A 'ansom man 'e was as you can see by the looks of the girls, but 'ansom is as 'ansom does. You'd like a bit of jam to your tea, I expect? I 'ope they'll keep *their* men waiting when the time comes. I tell them if they think of marrying it only shows they don't know when they're well off. Here's Miriam!"

Miriam entered with several parcels in a net, and a peevish expression. "Mother," she said, "you might '*ave* prevented my going out with the net with the broken handle. I've been cutting my fingers with the string all the way 'ome." Then she discovered Mr. Polly and her face brightened.

"Ello, Elfrid!" she said. "Where you been all this time?"

"Looking round," said Mr. Polly.

"Found a shop?"

"One or two likely ones. But it takes time."

"You've got the wrong cups, Mother."

She went into the kitchen, disposed of her purchases, and returned with the right cups. "What you done to your face, Elfrid?" she asked, and came and scrutinised his scratches. "All rough it is."

He repeated his story of the accident, and she was sympathetic in a pleasant homely way.

"You are quiet today," she said as they sat down to tea.

"Meditatious," said Mr. Polly.

Quite by accident he touched her hand on the table, and she

answered his touch.

"Why not?" thought Mr. Polly, and looking up, caught Mrs. Larkins' eye and flushed guiltily. But Mrs. Larkins, with unusual restraint, said nothing. She merely made a grimace, enigmatical, but in its essence friendly.

Presently Minnie came in with some vague grievance against the manager of the carpet-making place about his method of estimating piece work. Her account was redundant, defective and highly technical, but redeemed by a certain earnestness. "I'm never within sixpence of what I reckon to be," she said. "It's a bit too 'ot." Then Mr. Polly, feeling that he was being conspicuously dull, launched into a description of the shop he was looking for and the shops he had seen. His mind warmed up as he talked.

"Found your tongue again," said Mrs. Larkins. He had. He began to embroider the subject and work upon it. For the first time it assumed picturesque and desirable qualities in his mind. It stimulated him to see how readily and willingly they accepted his sketches. Bright ideas appeared in his mind from nowhere. He was suddenly enthusiastic.

"When I get this shop of mine I shall have a cat. Must make a home for a cat, you know."

"What, to catch the mice?" said Mrs. Larkins.

"No — sleep in the window. A venerable *signor* of a cat. Tabby. Cat's no good if it isn't tabby. Cat I'm going to have, and a canary! Didn't think of that before, but a cat and a canary seem to go, you know. Summer weather I shall sit at breakfast in the little room behind the shop, sun streaming in the window to rights, cat on a chair, canary singing and — Mrs. Polly...."

"Ello!" said Mrs. Larkins.

"Mrs. Polly frying an extra bit of bacon. Bacon singing, cat singing, canary singing. Kettle singing. Mrs. Polly—"

"But who's Mrs. Polly going to be?" said Mrs. Larkins.

"Figment of the imagination, ma'am," said Mr. Polly. "Put in to fill up picture. No face to figure as yet. Still, that's how it will be, I can assure you. I think I must have a bit of garden. Johnson's the man for a garden of course," he said, going off at a tangent, "but I don't mean a fierce sort of garden. Earnest industry. Anxious

moments. Fervous digging. Shan't go in for that sort of garden, ma'am. No! Too much backache for me. My garden will be just a patch of 'sturtiums and sweet pea. Red brick yard, clothes' line. Trellis put up in odd time. Humorous wind vane. Creeper up the back of the house."

"Virginia creeper?" asked Miriam.

"Canary creeper," said Mr. Polly.

"You *will* '*ave* it nice," said Miriam, desirously.

"Rather," said Mr. Polly. "Ting-a-ling-a-ling. *Shop!*"

He straightened himself up and then they all laughed.

"Smart little shop," he said. "Counter. Desk. All complete. Umbrella stand. Carpet on the floor. Cat asleep on the counter. Ties and hose on a rail over the counter. All right."

"I wonder you don't set about it right off," said Miriam.

"Mean to get it exactly right, m'am," said Mr. Polly.

"Have to have a tomcat," said Mr. Polly, and paused for an expectant moment. "Wouldn't do to open shop one morning, you know, and find the window full of kittens. Can't sell kittens...."

When tea was over he was left alone with Minnie for a few minutes, and an odd intimation of an incident occurred that left Mr. Polly rather scared and shaken. A silence fell between them — an uneasy silence. He sat with his elbows on the table looking at her. All the way from Easewood to Stamton his erratic imagination had been running upon neat ways of proposing marriage. I don't know why it should have done, but it had. It was a kind of secret exercise that had not had any definite aim at the time, but which now recurred to him with extraordinary force. He couldn't think of anything in the world that wasn't the gambit to a proposal. It was almost irresistibly fascinating to think how immensely a few words from him would excite and revolutionise Minnie. She was sitting at the table with a workbasket among the tea things, mending a glove in order to avoid her share of clearing away.

"I like cats," said Minnie after a thoughtful pause. "I'm always saying to mother, 'I wish we 'ad a cat.' But we couldn't '*ave* a cat 'ere — not with no yard."

"Never had a cat myself," said Mr. Polly. "No!"

"I'm fond of them," said Minnie.

“I like the look of them,” said Mr. Polly. “Can’t exactly call myself fond.”

“I expect I shall get one some day. When about you get your shop.”

“I shall have my shop all right before long,” said Mr. Polly. “Trust me. Canary bird and all.”

She shook her head. “I shall get a cat first,” she said. “You never mean anything you say.”

“Might get ’em together,” said Mr. Polly, with his sense of a neat thing outrunning his discretion.

“Why! ‘ow d’you mean?” said Minnie, suddenly alert.

“Shop and cat thrown in,” said Mr. Polly in spite of himself, and his head swam and he broke out into a cold sweat as he said it.

He found her eyes fixed on him with an eager expression. “Mean to say—” she began as if for verification. He sprang to his feet, and turned to the window. “Little dog!” he said, and moved doorward hastily. “Eating my bicycle tire, I believe,” he explained. And so escaped.

He saw his bicycle in the hall and cut it dead.

He heard Mrs. Larkins in the passage behind him as he opened the front door.

He turned to her. “Thought my bicycle was on fire,” he said. “Outside. Funny fancy! All right, reely. Little dog outside.... Miriam ready?”

“What for?”

“To go and meet Annie.”

Mrs. Larkins stared at him. “You’re stopping for a bit of supper?”

“If I may,” said Mr. Polly.

“You’re a rum un,” said Mrs. Larkins, and called: “Miriam!”

Minnie appeared at the door of the room looking infinitely perplexed. “There ain’t a little dog anywhere, Elfrid,” she said.

Mr. Polly passed his hand over his brow. “I had a most curious sensation. Felt exactly as though something was up somewhere. That’s why I said Little Dog. All right now.”

He bent down and pinched his bicycle tire.

“You was saying something about a cat, Elfrid,” said Minnie.

“Give you one,” he answered without looking up. “The very day

my shop is opened."

He straightened himself up and smiled reassuringly. "Trust me," he said.

II

When, after imperceptible manoeuvres by Mrs. Larkins, he found himself starting circuitously through the inevitable recreation ground with Miriam to meet Annie, he found himself quite unable to avoid the topic of the shop that had now taken such a grip upon him. A sense of danger only increased the attraction. Minnie's persistent disposition to accompany them had been crushed by a novel and violent and urgently expressed desire on the part of Mrs. Larkins to see her do something in the house sometimes....

"You really think you'll open a shop?" asked Miriam.

"I hate cribs," said Mr. Polly, adopting a moderate tone. "In a shop there's this drawback and that, but one is one's own master."

"That wasn't all talk?"

"Not a bit of it."

"After all," he went on, "a little shop needn't be so bad."

"It's a 'ome," said Miriam.

"It's a home."

Pause.

"There's no need to keep accounts and that sort of thing if there's no assistant. I daresay I could run a shop all right if I wasn't interfered with."

"I should like to see you in your shop," said Miriam. "I expect you'd keep everything tremendously neat."

The conversation flagged.

"Let's sit down on one of those seats over there," said Miriam. "Where we can see those blue flowers."

They did as she suggested, and sat down in a corner where a triangular bed of stock and delphinium brightened the asphalted traceries of the Recreation Ground.

"I wonder what they call those flowers," she said. "I always like them. They're handsome."

"Delphicums and larkspurs," said Mr. Polly. "They used to be in

the park at Port Burdock.

"Floriferous corner," he added approvingly.

He put an arm over the back of the seat, and assumed a more comfortable attitude. He glanced at Miriam, who was sitting in a lax, thoughtful pose with her eyes on the flowers. She was wearing her old dress, she had not had time to change, and the blue tones of her old dress brought out a certain warmth in her skin, and her pose exaggerated whatever was feminine in her rather lean and insufficient body, and rounded her flat chest delusively. A little line of light lay along her profile. The afternoon was full of transfiguring sunshine, children were playing noisily in the adjacent sandpit, some Judas trees were brightly abloom in the villa gardens that bordered the Recreation Ground, and all the place was bright with touches of young summer colour. It all merged with the effect of Miriam in Mr. Polly's mind.

Her thoughts found speech. "One did ought to be happy in a shop," she said with a note of unusual softness in her voice.

It seemed to him that she was right. One did ought to be happy in a shop. Folly not to banish dreams that made one ache of townless woods and bracken tangles and red-haired linen-clad figures sitting in dappled sunshine upon grey and crumbling walls and looking queenly down on one with clear blue eyes. Cruel and foolish dreams they were, that ended in one's being laughed at and made a mock of. There was no mockery here.

"A shop's such a respectable thing to be," said Miriam thoughtfully.

"*I* could be happy in a shop," he said.

His sense of effect made him pause.

"If I had the right company," he added.

She became very still.

Mr. Polly swerved a little from the conversational ice-run upon which he had embarked.

"I'm not such a blooming Geezer," he said, "as not to be able to sell goods a bit. One has to be nosy over one's buying of course. But I shall do all right."

He stopped, and felt falling, falling through the aching silence that followed.

“If you get the right company,” said Miriam.

“I shall get that all right.”

“You don’t mean you’ve got someone—”

He found himself plunging.

“I’ve got someone in my eye, this minute,” he said.

“Elfrid!” she said, turning on him. “You don’t mean—”

Well, *did* he mean? “I do!” he said.

“Not reely!” She clenched her hands to keep still.

He took the conclusive step.

“Well, you and me, Miriam, in a little shop — with a cat and a canary—” He tried too late to get back to a hypothetical note. “Just suppose it!”

“You mean,” said Miriam, “you’re in love with me, Elfrid?”

What possible answer can a man give to such a question but “Yes!”

Regardless of the public park, the children in the sandpit and everyone, she bent forward and seized his shoulder and kissed him on the lips. Something lit up in Mr. Polly at the touch. He put an arm about her and kissed her back, and felt an irrevocable act was sealed. He had a curious feeling that it would be very satisfying to marry and have a wife — only somehow he wished it wasn’t Miriam. Her lips were very pleasant to him, and the feel of her in his arm.

They recoiled a little from each other and sat for a moment, flushed and awkwardly silent. His mind was altogether incapable of controlling its confusion.

“I didn’t dream,” said Miriam, “you cared — . Sometimes I thought it was Annie, sometimes Minnie—”

“Always liked you better than them,” said Mr. Polly.

“I loved you, Elfrid,” said Miriam, “since ever we met at your poor father’s funeral. Leastways I *would* have done, if I had thought. You didn’t seem to mean anything you said.

“I *can’t* believe it!” she added.

“Nor I,” said Mr. Polly.

“You mean to marry me and start that little shop—”

“Soon as ever I find it,” said Mr. Polly.

“I had no more idea when I came out with you—”

“Nor me!”

“It’s like a dream.”

They said no more for a little while.

“I got to pinch myself to think it’s real,” said Miriam. “What they’ll do without me at ‘ome I can’t imagine. When I tell them—”

For the life of him Mr. Polly could not tell whether he was fullest of tender anticipations or regretful panic.

“Mother’s no good at managing — not a bit. Annie don’t care for ‘ouse work and Minnie’s got no ‘ed for it. What they’ll do without me I can’t imagine.”

“They’ll have to do without you,” said Mr. Polly, sticking to his guns.

A clock in the town began striking.

“Lor’!” said Miriam, “we shall miss Annie — sitting ‘ere and love-making!”

She rose and made as if to take Mr. Polly’s arm. But Mr. Polly felt that their condition must be nakedly exposed to the ridicule of the world by such a linking, and evaded her movement.

Annie was already in sight before a flood of hesitation and terrors assailed Mr. Polly.

“Don’t tell anyone yet a bit,” he said.

“Only mother,” said Miriam firmly.

III

Figures are the most shocking things in the world. The prettiest little squiggles of black — looked at in the right light, and yet consider the blow they can give you upon the heart. You return from a little careless holiday abroad, and turn over the page of a newspaper, and against the name of that distant, vague-conceived railway in mortgages upon which you have embarked the bulk of your capital, you see instead of the familiar, persistent 95-6 (varying at most to 93 *ex. div.*) this slightly richer arrangement of marks: 76 1/2 — 78 1/2.

It is like the opening of a pit just under your feet!

So, too, Mr. Polly’s happy sense of limitless resources was obliterated suddenly by a vision of this tracery:

“298”

instead of the

he had come to regard as the fixed symbol of his affluence.

It gave him a disagreeable feeling about the diaphragm, akin in a remote degree to the sensation he had when the perfidy of the red-haired schoolgirl became plain to him. It made his brow moist.

“Going down a vortex!” he whispered.

By a characteristic feat of subtraction he decided that he must have spent sixty-two pounds.

“Funererial baked meats,” he said, recalling possible items.

The happy dream in which he had been living of long warm days, of open roads, of limitless unchecked hours, of infinite time to look about him, vanished like a thing enchanted. He was suddenly back in the hard old economic world, that exacts work, that limits range, that discourages phrasing and dispels laughter. He saw Wood Street and its fearful suspenses yawning beneath his feet.

And also he had promised to marry Miriam, and on the whole rather wanted to.

He was distraught at supper. Afterwards, when Mrs. Johnson had gone to bed with a slight headache, he opened a conversation with Johnson.

“It’s about time, O’ Man, I saw about doing something,” he said. “Riding about and looking at shops, all very debonnairious, O’ Man, but it’s time I took one for keeps.”

“What did I tell you?” said Johnson.

“How do you think that corner shop of yours will figure out?” Mr. Polly asked.

“You’re really meaning it?”

“If it’s a practable proposition, O’ Man. Assuming it’s practable. What’s your idea of the figures?”

Johnson went to the chiffonier, got out a letter and tore off the back sheet. “Let’s figure it out,” he said with solemn satisfaction. “Let’s see the lowest you could do it on.”

He squared himself to the task, and Mr. Polly sat beside him like a pupil, watching the evolution of the grey, distasteful figures that were to dispose of his little hoard.

“What running expenses have we got to provide for?” said Johnson, wetting his pencil. “Let’s have them first. Rent?...”

At the end of an hour of hideous speculations, Johnson decided: “It’s close. But you’ll have a chance.”

“M’m,” said Mr. Polly. “What more does a brave man want?”

“One thing you can do quite easily. I’ve asked about it.”

“What’s that, O’ Man?” said Mr. Polly.

“Take the shop without the house above it.”

“I suppose I might put my head in to mind it,” said Mr. Polly, “and get a job with my body.”

“Not exactly that. But I thought you’d save a lot if you stayed on here — being all alone as you are.”

“Never thought of that, O’ Man,” said Mr. Polly, and reflected silently upon the needlessness of Miriam.

“We were talking of eighty pounds for stock,” said Johnson. “Of course seventy-five is five pounds less, isn’t it? Not much else we can cut.”

“No,” said Mr. Polly.

“It’s very interesting, all this,” said Johnson, folding up the half sheet of paper and unfolding it. “I wish sometimes I had a business of my own instead of a fixed salary. You’ll have to keep books of course.”

“One wants to know where one is.”

“I should do it all by double entry,” said Johnson. “A little troublesome at first, but far the best in the end.”

“Lemme see that paper,” said Mr. Polly, and took it with the feeling of a man who takes a nauseating medicine, and scrutinised his cousin’s neat figures with listless eyes.

“Well,” said Johnson, rising and stretching. “Bed! Better sleep on it, O’ Man.”

“Right O,” said Mr. Polly without moving, but indeed he could as well have slept upon a bed of thorns.

He had a dreadful night. It was like the end of the annual holiday, only infinitely worse. It was like a newly arrived prisoner’s backward glance at the trees and heather through the prison gates. He had to go back to harness, and he was as fitted to go in harness as the ordinary domestic cat. All night, Fate, with the quiet complacency, and indeed at times the very face and gestures of Johnson, guided him towards that undesired establishment at the corner near the station. “Oh

Lord!" he cried, "I'd rather go back to cribs. I *should* keep my money anyhow." Fate never winced.

"Run away to sea," whispered Mr. Polly, but he knew he wasn't man enough.

"Cut my blooming throat."

Some braver strain urged him to think of Miriam, and for a little while he lay still....

"Well, O' Man?" said Johnson, when Mr. Polly came down to breakfast, and Mrs. Johnson looked up brightly. Mr. Polly had never felt breakfast so unattractive before.

"Just a day or so more, O' Man — to turn it over in my mind," he said.

"You'll get the place snapped up," said Johnson.

There were times in those last few days of coyness with his destiny when his engagement seemed the most negligible of circumstances, and times — and these happened for the most part at nights after Mrs. Johnson had indulged everybody in a Welsh rarebit — when it assumed so sinister and portentous an appearance as to make him think of suicide. And there were times too when he very distinctly desired to be married, now that the idea had got into his head, at any cost. Also he tried to recall all the circumstances of his proposal, time after time, and never quite succeeded in recalling what had brought the thing off. He went over to Stamton with a becoming frequency, and kissed all his cousins, and Miriam especially, a great deal, and found it very stirring and refreshing. They all appeared to know; and Minnie was tearful, but resigned. Mrs. Larkins met him, and indeed enveloped him, with unwonted warmth, and there was a big pot of household jam for tea. And he could not make up his mind to sign his name to anything about the shop, though it crawled nearer and nearer to him, though the project had materialised now to the extent of a draft agreement with the place for his signature indicated in pencil.

One morning, just after Mr. Johnson had gone to the station, Mr. Polly wheeled his bicycle out into the road, went up to his bedroom, packed his long white nightdress, a comb, and a toothbrush in a manner that was as offhand as he could make it, informed Mrs. Johnson, who was manifestly curious, that he was "off for a day or

two to clear his head," and fled forthright into the road, and mounting turned his wheel towards the tropics and the equator and the south coast of England, and indeed more particularly to where the little village of Fishbourne slumbers and sleeps.

When he returned four days later, he astonished Johnson beyond measure by remarking so soon as the shop project was reopened:

"I've took a little contraption at Fishbourne, O' Man, that I fancy suits me better."

He paused, and then added in a manner, if possible, even more offhand:

"Oh! and I'm going to have a bit of a nuptial over at Stamton with one of the Larkins cousins."

"Nuptial!" said Johnson.

"Wedding bells, O' Man. Benedictine collapse."

On the whole Johnson showed great self-control. "It's your own affair, O' Man," he said, when things had been more clearly explained, "and I hope you won't feel sorry when it's too late."

But Mrs. Johnson was first of all angrily silent, and then reproachful. "I don't see what we've done to be made fools of like this," she said. "After all the trouble we've 'ad to make you comfortable and see after you. Out late and sitting up and everything. And then you go off as sly as sly without a word, and get a shop behind our backs as though you thought we meant to steal your money. I 'aven't patience with such deceitfulness, and I didn't think it of you, Elfrid. And now the letting season's 'arf gone by, and what I shall do with that room of yours I've no idea. Frank is frank, and fair play fair play; so *I* was told any'ow when I was a girl. Just as long as it suits you to stay 'ere you stay 'ere, and then it's off and no thank you whether we like it or not. Johnson's too easy with you. 'E sits there and doesn't say a word, and night after night 'e's been addin' and thinkin' for you, instead of seeing to his own affairs—"

She paused for breath.

"Unfortunate amoor," said Mr. Polly, apologetically and indistinctly. "Didn't expect it myself."

IV

Mr. Polly's marriage followed with a certain inevitableness.

He tried to assure himself that he was acting upon his own forceful initiative, but at the back of his mind was the completest realisation of his powerlessness to resist the gigantic social forces he had set in motion. He had got to marry under the will of society, even as in times past it has been appointed for other sunny souls under the will of society that they should be led out by serious and unavoidable fellow-creatures and ceremoniously drowned or burnt or hung. He would have preferred infinitely a more observant and less conspicuous rôle, but the choice was no longer open to him. He did his best to play his part, and he procured some particularly neat check trousers to do it in. The rest of his costume, except for some bright yellow gloves, a grey and blue mixture tie, and that the broad crape hat-band was changed for a livelier piece of silk, were the things he had worn at the funeral of his father. So nearly akin are human joy and sorrow.

The Larkins sisters had done wonders with grey sateen. The idea of orange blossom and white veils had been abandoned reluctantly on account of the expense of cabs. A novelette in which the heroine had stood at the altar in "a modest going-away dress" had materially assisted this decision. Miriam was frankly tearful, and so indeed was Annie, but with laughter as well to carry it off. Mr. Polly heard Annie say something vague about never getting a chance because of Miriam always sticking about at home like a cat at a mouse-hole, that became, as people say, food for thought. Mrs. Larkins was from the first flushed, garrulous, and wet and smeared by copious weeping; an incredibly soaked and crumpled and used-up pocket handkerchief never left the clutch of her plump red hand. "Goo' girls, all of them," she kept on saying in a tremulous voice; "such-goo-goo-goo-girls!" She wetted Mr. Polly dreadfully when she kissed him. Her emotion affected the buttons down the back of her bodice, and almost the last filial duty Miriam did before entering on her new life was to close that gaping orifice for the eleventh time. Her bonnet was small and ill-balanced, black adorned with red roses, and first it got over her right eye until Annie told her of it, and then she pushed it over her left eye and looked ferocious for a space, and after that baptismal kissing of Mr. Polly the delicate millinery took fright and climbed

right up to the back part of her head and hung on there by a pin, and flapped piteously at all the larger waves of emotion that filled the gathering. Mr. Polly became more and more aware of that bonnet as time went on, until he felt for it like a thing alive. Towards the end it had yawning fits.

The company did not include Mrs. Johnson, but Johnson came with a manifest surreptitiousness and backed against walls and watched Mr. Polly with doubt and speculation in his large grey eyes and whistled noiselessly and doubtful on the edge of things. He was, so to speak, to be best man, *sotto voce*. A sprinkling of girls in gay hats from Miriam's place of business appeared in church, great nudgers all of them, but only two came on afterwards to the house. Mrs. Punt brought her son with his ever-widening mind, it was his first wedding, and a Larkins uncle, a Mr. Voules, a licenced victualler, very kindly drove over in a gig from Sommershill with a plump, well-dressed wife to give the bride away. One or two total strangers drifted into the church and sat down observantly far away.

This sprinkling of people seemed only to enhance the cool brown emptiness of the church, the rows and rows of empty pews, disengaged prayerbooks and abandoned hassocks. It had the effect of a preposterous misfit. Johnson consulted with a thin-legged, short-skirted verger about the disposition of the party. The officiating clergy appeared distantly in the doorway of the vestry, putting on his surplice, and relapsed into a contemplative cheek-scratching that was manifestly habitual. Before the bride arrived Mr. Polly's sense of the church found an outlet in whispered criticisms of ecclesiastical architecture with Johnson. "Early Norman arches, eh?" he said, "or Perpendicular."

"Can't say," said Johnson.

"Telessated pavements, all right."

"It's well laid anyhow."

"Can't say I admire the altar. Scrappy rather with those flowers."

He coughed behind his hand and cleared his throat. At the back of his mind he was speculating whether flight at this eleventh hour would be criminal or merely reprehensible bad taste. A murmur from the nudgers announced the arrival of the bridal party.

The little procession from a remote door became one of the

enduring memories of Mr. Polly's life. The little verger had bustled to meet it, and arrange it according to tradition and morality. In spite of Mrs. Larkins' "Don't take her from me yet!" he made Miriam go first with Mr. Voules, the bridesmaids followed and then himself hopelessly unable to disentangle himself from the whispering maternal anguish of Mrs. Larkins. Mrs. Voules, a compact, rounded woman with a square, expressionless face, imperturbable dignity, and a dress of considerable fashion, completed the procession.

Mr. Polly's eye fell first upon the bride; the sight of her filled him with a curious stir of emotion. Alarm, desire, affection, respect — and a queer element of reluctant dislike all played their part in that complex eddy. The grey dress made her a stranger to him, made her stiff and commonplace, she was not even the rather drooping form that had caught his facile sense of beauty when he had proposed to her in the Recreation Ground. There was something too that did not please him in the angle of her hat, it was indeed an ill-conceived hat with large aimless rosettes of pink and grey. Then his mind passed to Mrs. Larkins and the bonnet that was to gain such a hold upon him; it seemed to be flag-signalling as she advanced, and to the two eager, unrefined sisters he was acquiring.

A freak of fancy set him wondering where and when in the future a beautiful girl with red hair might march along some splendid aisle. Never mind! He became aware of Mr. Voules.

He became aware of Mr. Voules as a watchful, blue eye of intense forcefulness. It was the eye of a man who has got hold of a situation. He was a fat, short, red-faced man clad in a tight-fitting tail coat of black and white check with a coquettish bow tie under the lowest of a number of crisp little red chins. He held the bride under his arm with an air of invincible championship, and his free arm flourished a grey top hat of an equestrian type. Mr. Polly instantly learnt from the eye that Mr. Voules knew all about his longing for flight. Its azure pupil glowed with disciplined resolution. It said: "I've come to give this girl away, and give her away I will. I'm here now and things have to go on all right. So don't think of it any more" — and Mr. Polly didn't. A faint phantom of a certain "lill' dog" that had hovered just beneath the threshold of consciousness vanished into black impossibility. Until the conclusive moment of the service was

attained the eye of Mr. Voules watched Mr. Polly relentlessly, and then instantly he relieved guard, and blew his nose into a voluminous and richly patterned handkerchief, and sighed and looked round for the approval and sympathy of Mrs. Voules, and nodded to her brightly like one who has always foretold a successful issue to things. Mr. Polly felt then like a marionette that has just dropped off its wire. But it was long before that release arrived.

He became aware of Miriam breathing close to him.

"Hullo!" he said, and feeling that was clumsy and would meet the eye's disapproval: "Grey dress — suits you no end."

Miriam's eyes shone under her hat-brim.

"Not reely!" she whispered.

"You're all right," he said with the feeling of observation and criticism stiffening his lips. He cleared his throat.

The verger's hand pushed at him from behind. Someone was driving Miriam towards the altar rail and the clergyman. "We're in for it," said Mr. Polly to her sympathetically. "Where? Here? Right O." He was interested for a moment or so in something indescribably habitual in the clergyman's pose. What a lot of weddings he must have seen! Sick he must be of them!

"Don't let your attention wander," said the eye.

"Got the ring?" whispered Johnson.

"Pawned it yesterday," answered Mr. Polly and then had a dreadful moment under that pitiless scrutiny while he felt in the wrong waistcoat pocket....

The officiating clergy sighed deeply, began, and married them wearily and without any hitch.

"*D'b'loved, we gath'd 'gether sight o' Gard 'n face this con'gation join 'gather Man, Worn' Holy Mat'my which is on'bl state stooted by Gard in times man's innocency....*"

Mr. Polly's thoughts wandered wide and far, and once again something like a cold hand touched his heart, and he saw a sweet face in sunshine under the shadow of trees.

Someone was nudging him. It was Johnson's finger diverted his eyes to the crucial place in the prayer-book to which they had come.

"Wiltou lover, cumfer, oner, keeper sickness and health..."

"Say 'I will.'"

Mr. Polly moistened his lips. “I will,” he said hoarsely.

Miriam, nearly inaudible, answered some similar demand.

Then the clergyman said: “Who gifs Worn married to this man?”

“Well, *I’m* doing that,” said Mr. Voules in a refreshingly full voice and looking round the church. “You see, me and Martha Larkins being cousins—”

He was silenced by the clergyman’s rapid grip directing the exchange of hands.

“Pete arf me,” said the clergyman to Mr. Polly. “Take thee Mirum wed wife—”

“Take thee Mirum wed’ wife,” said Mr. Polly.

“Have hold this day ford.”

“Have hold this day ford.”

“Betworse, richpoo’—”

“Bet worsh, richpoo’....”

Then came Miriam’s turn.

“Lego hands,” said the clergyman; “got the ring? No! On the book. So! Here! Pete arf me, ‘withis ring Ivy wed.’”

“Withis ring Ivy wed—”

So it went on, blurred and hurried, like the momentary vision of an utterly beautiful thing seen through the smoke of a passing train....

“Now, my boy,” said Mr. Voules at last, gripping Mr. Polly’s elbow tightly, “you’ve got to sign the registry, and there you are! Done!”

Before him stood Miriam, a little stiffly, the hat with a slight rake across her forehead, and a kind of questioning hesitation in her face. Mr. Voules urged him past her.

It was astounding. She was his wife!

And for some reason Miriam and Mrs. Larkins were sobbing, and Annie was looking grave. Hadn’t they after all wanted him to marry her? Because if that was the case — !

He became aware for the first time of the presence of Uncle Pentstemon in the background, but approaching, wearing a tie of a light mineral blue colour, and grinning and sucking enigmatically and judiciously round his principal tooth.

It was in the vestry that the force of Mr. Voules' personality began to show at its true value. He seemed to open out and spread over things directly the restraints of the ceremony were at an end.

"Everything," he said to the clergyman, "excellent." He also shook hands with Mrs. Larkins, who clung to him for a space, and kissed Miriam on the cheek. "First kiss for me," he said, "anyhow."

He led Mr. Polly to the register by the arm, and then got chairs for Mrs. Larkins and his wife. He then turned on Miriam. "Now, young people," he said. "One! or *I* shall again."

"That's right!" said Mr. Voules. "Same again, Miss."

Mr. Polly was overcome with modest confusion, and turning, found a refuge from this publicity in the arms of Mrs. Larkins. Then in a state of profuse moisture he was assaulted and kissed by Annie and Minnie, who were immediately kissed upon some indistinctly stated grounds by Mr. Voules, who then kissed the entirely impassive Mrs. Voules and smacked his lips and remarked: "Home again safe and sound!" Then with a strange harrowing cry Mrs. Larkins seized upon and bedewed Miriam with kisses, Annie and Minnie kissed each other, and Johnson went abruptly to the door of the vestry and stared into the church — no doubt with ideas of sanctuary in his mind. "Like a bit of a kiss round sometimes," said Mr. Voules, and made a kind of hissing noise with his teeth, and suddenly smacked his hands together with great *éclat* several times. Meanwhile the clergyman scratched his cheek with one hand and fiddled the pen with the other and the verger coughed protestingly.

"The dog cart's just outside," said Mr. Voules. "No walking home to-day for the bride, Mam."

"Not going to drive us?" cried Annie.

"The happy pair, Miss. *Your* turn soon."

"Get out!" said Annie. "I shan't marry — ever."

"You won't be able to help it. You'll have to do it — just to disperse the crowd." Mr. Voules laid his hand on Mr. Polly's shoulder. "The bridegroom gives his arm to the bride. Hands across and down the middle. Prump. Prump, Perump-pump-pump-pump."

Mr. Polly found himself and the bride leading the way towards the western door.

Mrs. Larkins passed close to Uncle Pentstemon, sobbing too

earnestly to be aware of him. “Such a goo-goo-goo-girl!” she sobbed.

“Didn’t think *I’d* come, did you?” said Uncle Pentstemon, but she swept past him, too busy with the expression of her feelings to observe him.

“She didn’t think I’d come, I lay,” said Uncle Pentstemon, a little foiled, but effecting an auditory lodgment upon Johnson.

“I don’t know,” said Johnson uncomfortably.

“I suppose you were asked. How are you getting on?”

“I was *arst*,” said Uncle Pentstemon, and brooded for a moment.

“I goes about seeing wonders,” he added, and then in a sort of enhanced undertone: “One of ‘er girls gettin’ married. That’s what I mean by wonders. Lord’s goodness! Wow!”

“Nothing the matter?” asked Johnson.

“Got it in the back for a moment. Going to be a change of weather I suppose,” said Uncle Pentstemon. “I brought ‘er a nice present, too, what I got in this passel. Vallyble old tea caddy that uset’ be my mother’s. What I kep’ my baccy in for years and years — till the hinge at the back got broke. It ain’t been no use to me particular since, so thinks I, drat it! I may as well give it ‘er as not....”

Mr. Polly found himself emerging from the western door.

Outside, a crowd of half-a-dozen adults and about fifty children had collected, and hailed the approach of the newly wedded couple with a faint, indeterminate cheer. All the children were holding something in little bags, and his attention was caught by the expression of vindictive concentration upon the face of a small big-eared boy in the foreground. He didn’t for the moment realise what these things might import. Then he received a stinging handful of rice in the ear, and a great light shone.

“Not yet, you young fool!” he heard Mr. Voules saying behind him, and then a second handful spoke against his hat.

“Not yet,” said Mr. Voules with increasing emphasis, and Mr. Polly became aware that he and Miriam were the focus of two crescents of small boys, each with the light of massacre in his eyes and a grubby fist clutching into a paper bag for rice; and that Mr. Voules was warding off probable discharges with a large red hand.

The dog cart was in charge of a loafer, and the horse and the whip were adorned with white favours, and the back seat was confused but

not untenable with hampers. “Up we go,” said Mr. Voules, “old birds in front and young ones behind.” An ominous group of ill-restrained rice-throwers followed them up as they mounted.

“Get your handkerchief for your face,” said Mr. Polly to his bride, and took the place next the pavement with considerable heroism, held on, gripped his hat, shut his eyes and prepared for the worst. “Off!” said Mr. Voules, and a concentrated fire came stinging Mr. Polly’s face.

The horse shied, and when the bridegroom could look at the world again it was manifest the dog cart had just missed an electric tram by a hairsbreadth, and far away outside the church railings the verger and Johnson were battling with an active crowd of small boys for the life of the rest of the Larkins family. Mrs. Punt and her son had escaped across the road, the son trailing and stumbling at the end of a remorseless arm, but Uncle Pentstemon, encumbered by the tea-caddy, was the centre of a little circle of his own, and appeared to be dratting them all very heartily. Remoter, a policeman approached with an air of tranquil unconsciousness.

“Steady, you idiot. Stead-y!” cried Mr. Voules, and then over his shoulder: “I brought that rice! I like old customs! Whoa! Stead-y.”

The dog cart swerved violently, and then, evoking a shout of groundless alarm from a cyclist, took a corner, and the rest of the wedding party was hidden from Mr. Polly’s eyes.

VI

“We’ll get the stuff into the house before the old gal comes along,” said Mr. Voules, “if you’ll hold the hoss.”

“How about the key?” asked Mr. Polly.

“I got the key, coming.”

And while Mr. Polly held the sweating horse and dodged the foam that dripped from its bit, the house absorbed Miriam and Mr. Voules altogether. Mr. Voules carried in the various hampers he had brought with him, and finally closed the door behind him.

For some time Mr. Polly remained alone with his charge in the little blind alley outside the Larkins’ house, while the neighbours scrutinised him from behind their blinds. He reflected that he was a

married man, that he must look very like a fool, that the head of a horse is a silly shape and its eye a bulger; he wondered what the horse thought of him, and whether it really liked being held and patted on the neck or whether it only submitted out of contempt. Did it know he was married? Then he wondered if the clergyman had thought him much of an ass, and then whether the individual lurking behind the lace curtains of the front room next door was a man or a woman. A door opened over the way, and an elderly gentleman in a kind of embroidered fez appeared smoking a pipe with a quiet satisfied expression. He regarded Mr. Polly for some time with mild but sustained curiosity. Finally he called: "Hi!"

"Hullo!" said Mr. Polly.

"You needn't 'old that '*orse*," said the old gentleman.

"Spirited beast," said Mr. Polly. "And," — with some faint analogy to ginger beer in his mind— "he's up today."

"'E won't turn 'isself round," said the old gentleman, "anyow. And there ain't no way through for 'im to go."

"*Verbum* sap," said Mr. Polly, and abandoned the horse and turned, to the door. It opened to him just as Mrs. Larkins on the arm of Johnson, followed by Annie, Minnie, two friends, Mrs. Punt and her son and at a slight distance Uncle Pentstemon, appeared round the corner.

"They're coming," he said to Miriam, and put an arm about her and gave her a kiss.

She was kissing him back when they were startled violently by the shying of two empty hampers into the passage. Then Mr. Voules appeared holding a third.

"Here! you'll '*ave* plenty of time for that presently," he said, "get these hampers away before the old girl comes. I got a cold collation here to make her sit up. My eye!"

Miriam took the hampers, and Mr. Polly under compulsion from Mr. Voules went into the little front room. A profuse pie and a large ham had been added to the modest provision of Mrs. Larkins, and a number of select-looking bottles shouldered the bottle of sherry and the bottle of port she had got to grace the feast. They certainly went better with the iced wedding cake in the middle. Mrs. Voules, still impassive, stood by the window regarding these things with a faint

approval.

"Makes it look a bit thicker, eh?" said Mr. Voules, and blew out both his cheeks and smacked his hands together violently several times. "Surprise the old girl no end."

He stood back and smiled and bowed with arms extended as the others came clustering at the door.

"Why, *Un-clé* Voules!" cried Annie, with a rising note.

It was his reward.

And then came a great wedging and squeezing and crowding into the little room. Nearly everyone was hungry, and eyes brightened at the sight of the pie and the ham and the convivial array of bottles. "Sit down everyone," cried Mr. Voules, "leaning against anything counts as sitting, and makes it easier to shake down the grub!"

The two friends from Miriam's place of business came into the room among the first, and then wedged themselves so hopelessly against Johnson in an attempt to get out again and take off their things upstairs that they abandoned the attempt. Amid the struggle Mr. Polly saw Uncle Pentstemon relieve himself of his parcel by giving it to the bride. "Here!" he said and handed it to her. "Weddin' present," he explained, and added with a confidential chuckle, "*I* never thought I'd '*ave* to give you one — ever."

"Who says steak and kidney pie?" bawled Mr. Voules. "Who says steak and kidney pie? You '*ave* a drop of old Tommy, Martha. That's what you want to steady you.... Sit down everyone and don't all speak at once. Who says steak and kidney pie?..."

"Vocificeratious," whispered Mr. Polly. "Convivial vocificerations."

"Bit of 'am with it," shouted Mr. Voules, poising a slice of ham on his knife. "Anyone '*ave* a bit of 'am with it? Won't that little man of yours, Mrs. Punt — won't 'e '*ave* a bit of 'am?..."

"And now ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Voules, still standing and dominating the crammed roomful, "now you got your plates filled and something I can warrant you good in your glasses, wot about drinking the 'ealth of the bride?"

"Eat a bit fust," said Uncle Pentstemon, speaking with his mouth full, amidst murmurs of applause. "Eat a bit fust."

So they did, and the plates clattered and the glasses chinked.

Mr. Polly stood shoulder to shoulder with Johnson for a moment.

"In for it," said Mr. Polly cheeringly. "Cheer up, O' Man, and peck a bit. No reason why *you* shouldn't eat, you know."

The Punt boy stood on Mr. Polly's boots for a minute, struggling violently against the compunction of Mrs. Punt's grip.

"Pie," said the Punt boy, "Pie!"

"You sit 'ere and '*ave* 'am, my lord!" said Mrs. Punt, prevailing. "Pie you can't '*ave* and you won't."

"Lor bless my heart, Mrs. Punt!" protested Mr. Voules, "let the boy '*ave* a bit if he wants it — wedding and all!"

"You 'aven't 'ad 'im sick on your 'ands, Uncle Voules," said Mrs. Punt. "Else you wouldn't want to humour his fancies as you do...."

"I can't help feeling it's a mistake, O' Man," said Johnson, in a confidential undertone. "I can't help feeling you've been Rash. Let's hope for the best."

"Always glad of good wishes, O' Man," said Mr. Polly. "You'd better have a drink of something. Anyhow, sit down to it."

Johnson subsided gloomily, and Mr. Polly secured some ham and carried it off and sat himself down on the sewing machine on the floor in the corner to devour it. He was hungry, and a little cut off from the rest of the company by Mrs. Voules' hat and back, and he occupied himself for a time with ham and his own thoughts. He became aware of a series of jangling concussions on the table. He craned his neck and discovered that Mr. Voules was standing up and leaning forward over the table in the manner distinctive of after-dinner speeches, tapping upon the table with a black bottle. "Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Voules, raising his glass solemnly in the empty desert of sound he had made, and paused for a second or so. "Ladies and gentlemen, — The Bride." He searched his mind for some suitable wreath of speech, and brightened at last with discovery. "Here's Luck to her!" he said at last.

"Here's Luck!" said Johnson hopelessly but resolutely, and raised his glass. Everybody murmured: "Here's luck."

"Luck!" said Mr. Polly, unseen in his corner, lifting a forkful of ham.

"That's all right," said Mr. Voules with a sigh of relief at having

brought off a difficult operation. “And now, who’s for a bit more pie?”

For a time conversation was fragmentary again. But presently Mr. Voules rose from his chair again; he had subsided with a contented smile after his first oratorical effort, and produced a silence by renewed hammering. “Ladies and gents,” he said, “fill up for the second toast: — the happy Bridegroom!” He stood for half a minute searching his mind for the apt phrase that came at last in a rush. “Here’s (hic) luck to *him*,” said Mr. Voules.

“Luck to him!” said everyone, and Mr. Polly, standing up behind Mrs. Voules, bowed amiably, amidst enthusiasm.

“He may say what he likes,” said Mrs. Larkins, “he’s *got* luck. That girl’s a treasure of treasures, and always has been ever since she tried to nurse her own little sister, being but three at the time, and fell the full flight of stairs from top to bottom, no hurt that any outward eye ‘as even seen, but always ready and helpful, always tidying and busy. A treasure, I must say, and a treasure I will say, giving no more than her due....”

She was silenced altogether by a rapping sound that would not be denied. Mr. Voules had been struck by a fresh idea and was standing up and hammering with the bottle again.

“The third Toast, ladies and gentlemen,” he said; “fill up, please. The Mother of the bride. I — er.... Uoo.... Ere!... Ladies and gem, ‘Ere’s Luck to ‘er!...”

VII

The dingy little room was stuffy and crowded to its utmost limit, and Mr. Polly’s skies were dark with the sense of irreparable acts. Everybody seemed noisy and greedy and doing foolish things. Miriam, still in that unbecoming hat — for presently they had to start off to the station together — sat just beyond Mrs. Punt and her son, doing her share in the hospitalities, and ever and again glancing at him with a deliberately encouraging smile. Once she leant over the back of the chair to him and whispered cheeringly: “Soon be together now.” Next to her sat Johnson, profoundly silent, and then Annie, talking vigorously to a friend. Uncle Pentstemon was eating

voraciously opposite, but with a kindling eye for Annie. Mrs. Larkins sat next to Mr. Voules. She was unable to eat a mouthful, she declared, it would choke her, but ever and again Mr. Voules wooed her to swallow a little drop of liquid refreshment.

There seemed a lot of rice upon everybody, in their hats and hair and the folds of their garments.

Presently Mr. Voules was hammering the table for the fourth time in the interests of the Best Man....

All feasts come to an end at last, and the breakup of things was precipitated by alarming symptoms on the part of Master Punt. He was taken out hastily after a whispered consultation, and since he had got into the corner between the fireplace and the cupboard, that meant everyone moving to make way for him. Johnson took the opportunity to say, "Well — so long," to anyone who might be listening, and disappear. Mr. Polly found himself smoking a cigarette and walking up and down outside in the company of Uncle Pentstemon, while Mr. Voules replaced bottles in hampers and prepared for departure, and the womenkind of the party crowded upstairs with the bride. Mr. Polly felt taciturn, but the events of the day had stirred the mind of Uncle Pentstemon to speech. And so he spoke, discursively and disconnectedly, a little heedless of his listener as wise old men will.

"They do say," said Uncle Pentstemon, "one funeral makes many. This time it's a wedding. But it's all very much of a muchness," said Uncle Pentstemon....

"'Am *do* get in my teeth nowadays," said Uncle Pentstemon, "I can't understand it. 'Tisn't like there was nubbicks or strings or such in 'am. It's a plain food.

"That's better," he said at last.

"You *got* to get married," said Uncle Pentstemon. "Some has. Some hain't. I done it long before I was your age. It hain't for me to blame you. You can't 'elp being the marrying sort any more than me. It's nat'ral-like poaching or drinking or wind on the stummik. You can't 'elp it and there you are! As for the good of it, there ain't no particular good in it as I can see. It's a toss up. The hotter come, the sooner cold, but they all gets tired of it sooner or later.... I hain't no grounds to complain. Two I've 'ad and berried, and might '*ave* '*ad* a

third, and never no worrit with kids — never....

"You done well not to '*ave* the big gal. I will say that for ye. She's a gad-about grinny, she is, if ever was. A gad-about grinny. Mucked up my mushroom bed to rights, she did, and I 'aven't forgot it. Got the feet of a centipede, she 'as — ll over everything and neither with your leave nor by your leave. Like a stray 'en in a pea patch. Cluck! cluck! Trying to laugh it off. *I* laughed 'er off, I did. Dratted lumpin baggage!..."

For a while he mused malevolently upon Annie, and routed out a reluctant crumb from some coy sitting-out place in his tooth.

"Wimmin's a toss up," said Uncle Pentstemon. "Prize packets they are, and you can't tell what's in 'em till you took 'em 'ome and undone 'em. Never was a bachelor married yet that didn't buy a pig in a poke. Never. Marriage seems to change the very natures in 'em through and through. You can't tell what they won't turn into — nohow.

"I seen the nicest girls go wrong," said Uncle Pentstemon, and added with unusual thoughtfulness, "Not that I mean *you* got one of that sort."

He sent another crumb on to its long home with a sucking, encouraging noise.

"The *wust* sort's the grizzler," Uncle Pentstemon resumed. "If ever I'd 'ad a grizzler I'd up and 'it 'er on the 'ed with sumpthin' pretty quick. I don't think I could abide a grizzler," said Uncle Pentstemon. "I'd liefer '*ave* a lump-about like that other gal. I would indeed. I lay I'd make 'er stop laughing after a bit for all 'er airs. And mind where her clumsy great feet went....

"A man's got to tackle 'em, whatever they be," said Uncle Pentstemon, summing up the shrewd observation of an old-world life time. "Good or bad," said Uncle Pentstemon raising his voice fearlessly, "a man's got to tackle 'em."

VIII

At last it was time for the two young people to catch the train for Waterloo *en route* for Fishbourne. They had to hurry, and as a concluding glory of matrimony they travelled second-class, and were

seen off by all the rest of the party except the Punts, Master Punt being now beyond any question unwell.

"Off!" The train moved out of the station.

Mr. Polly remained waving his hat and Mrs. Polly her handkerchief until they were hidden under the bridge. The dominating figure to the last was Mr. Voules. He had followed them along the platform waving the equestrian grey hat and kissing his hand to the bride.

They subsided into their seats.

"Got a compartment to ourselves anyhow," said Mrs. Polly after a pause.

Silence for a moment.

"The rice 'e must '*ave* bought. Pounds and pounds!"

Mr. Polly felt round his collar at the thought.

"Ain't you going to kiss me, Elfrid, now we're alone together?"

He roused himself to sit forward hands on knees, cocked his hat over one eye, and assumed an expression of avidity becoming to the occasion.

"Never!" he said. "Ever!" and feigned to be selecting a place to kiss with great discrimination.

"Come here," he said, and drew her to him.

"Be careful of my 'at," said Mrs. Polly, yielding awkwardly.

Chapter the Seventh

The Little Shop at Fishbourne

I

For fifteen years Mr. Polly was a respectable shopkeeper in Fishbourne.

Years they were in which every day was tedious, and when they were gone it was as if they had gone in a flash. But now Mr. Polly had good looks no more, he was as I have described him in the beginning of this story, thirty-seven and fattish in a not very healthy way, dull and yellowish about the complexion, and with discontented wrinklings round his eyes. He sat on the stile above Fishbourne and cried to the Heavens above him: "Oh! Roo-o-o-tten Be-e-astly Silly Hole!" And he wore a rather shabby black morning coat and vest, and his tie was richly splendid, being from stock, and his golf cap aslant over one eye.

Fifteen years ago, and it might have seemed to you that the queer little flower of Mr. Polly's imagination must be altogether withered and dead, and with no living seed left in any part of him. But indeed it still lived as an insatiable hunger for bright and delightful experiences, for the gracious aspects of things, for beauty. He still read books when he had a chance, books that told of glorious places abroad and glorious times, that wrung a rich humour from life and contained the delight of words freshly and expressively grouped. But alas! there are not many such books, and for the newspapers and the cheap fiction that abounded more and more in the world Mr. Polly had little taste. There was no epithet in them. And there was no one to talk to, as he loved to talk. And he had to mind his shop.

It was a reluctant little shop from the beginning.

He had taken it to escape the doom of Johnson's choice and because Fishbourne had a hold upon his imagination. He had disregarded the ill-built cramped rooms behind it in which he would have to lurk and live, the relentless limitations of its dimensions, the inconvenience of an underground kitchen that must necessarily be

the living-room in winter, the narrow yard behind giving upon the yard of the Royal Fishbourne Hotel, the tiresome sitting and waiting for custom, the restricted prospects of trade. He had visualised himself and Miriam first as at breakfast on a clear bright winter morning amidst a tremendous smell of bacon, and then as having muffins for tea. He had also thought of sitting on the beach on Sunday afternoons and of going for a walk in the country behind the town and picking *marguerites* and poppies. But, in fact, Miriam and he were extremely cross at breakfast, and it didn't run to muffins at tea. And she didn't think it looked well, she said, to go trapesing about the country on Sundays.

It was unfortunate that Miriam never took to the house from the first. She did not like it when she saw it, and liked it less as she explored it. "There's too many stairs," she said, "and the coal being indoors will make a lot of work."

"Didn't think of that," said Mr. Polly, following her round.

"It'll be a hard house to keep clean," said Miriam.

"White paint's all very well in its way," said Miriam, "but it shows the dirt something fearful. Better '*ave* '*ad* it nicely grained."

"There's a kind of place here," said Mr. Polly, "where we might have some flowers in pots."

"Not me," said Miriam. "I've 'ad trouble enough with Minnie and 'er musk...."

They stayed for a week in a cheap boarding house before they moved in. They had bought some furniture in Stamton, mostly second-hand, but with new cheap cutlery and china and linen, and they had supplemented this from the Fishbourne shops. Miriam, relieved from the hilarious associations of home, developed a meagre and serious quality of her own, and went about with knitted brows pursuing some ideal of "'aving everything right." Mr. Polly gave himself to the arrangement of the shop with a certain zest, and whistled a good deal until Miriam appeared and said that it went through her head. So soon as he had taken the shop he had filled the window with aggressive posters announcing in no measured terms that he was going to open, and now he was getting his stuff put out he was resolved to show Fishbourne what window dressing could do. He meant to give them boater straws, imitation Panamas, bathing

dresses with novelties in stripes, light flannel shirts, summer ties, and ready-made flannel trousers for men, youths and boys. Incidentally he watched the small fishmonger over the way, and had a glimpse of the china dealer next door, and wondered if a friendly nod would be out of place. And on the first Sunday in this new life he and Miriam arrayed themselves with great care, he in his wedding-funeral hat and coat and she in her going-away dress, and went processionally to church, a more respectable looking couple you could hardly imagine, and looked about them.

Things began to settle down next week into their places. A few customers came, chiefly for bathing suits and hat guards, and on Saturday night the cheapest straw hats and ties, and Mr. Polly found himself more and more drawn towards the shop door and the social charm of the street. He found the china dealer unpacking a crate at the edge of the pavement, and remarked that it was a fine day. The china dealer gave a reluctant assent, and plunged into the crate in a manner that presented no encouragement to a loquacious neighbour.

"Zealacious commerciality," whispered Mr. Polly to that unfriendly back view....

II

Miriam combined earnestness of spirit with great practical incapacity. The house was never clean nor tidy, but always being frightfully disarranged for cleaning or tidying up, and she cooked because food had to be cooked and with a sound moralist's entire disregard of the quality of the consequences. The food came from her hands done rather than improved, and looking as uncomfortable as savages clothed under duress by a missionary with a stock of out-sizes. Such food is too apt to behave resentfully, rebel and work Obi. She ceased to listen to her husband's talk from the day she married him, and ceased to unwrinkle the kink in her brow at his presence, giving herself up to mental states that had a quality of secret preoccupation. And she developed an idea for which perhaps there was legitimate excuse, that he was lazy. He seemed to stand about in the shop a great deal, to read — an indolent habit — and presently to seek company for talking. He began to attend the bar parlour of the

God's Providence Inn with some frequency, and would have done so regularly in the evening if cards, which bored him to death, had not arrested conversation. But the perpetual foolish variation of the permutations and combinations of two and fifty cards taken five at a time, and the meagre surprises and excitements that ensue had no charms for Mr. Polly's mind, which was at once too vivid in its impressions and too easily fatigued.

It was soon manifest the shop paid only in the least exacting sense, and Miriam did not conceal her opinion that he ought to bestir himself and "do things," though what he was to do was hard to say. You see, when you have once sunken your capital in a shop you do not very easily get it out again. If customers will not come to you cheerfully and freely the law sets limits upon the compulsion you may exercise. You cannot pursue people about the streets of a watering place, compelling them either by threats or importunity to buy flannel trousers. Additional sources of income for a tradesman are not always easy to find. Wintershed at the bicycle and gramaphone shop to the right, played the organ in the church, and Clamp of the toy shop was pew opener and so forth, Gambell, the greengrocer, waited at table and his wife cooked, and Carter, the watchmaker, left things to his wife while he went about the world winding clocks, but Mr. Polly had none of these arts, and wouldn't, in spite of Miriam's quietly persistent protests, get any other. And on summer evenings he would ride his bicycle about the country, and if he discovered a sale where there were books he would as often as not waste half the next day in going again to acquire a job lot of them haphazard, and bring them home tied about with a string, and hide them from Miriam under the counter in the shop. That is a heartbreaking thing for any wife with a serious investigatory turn of mind to discover. She was always thinking of burning these finds, but her natural turn for economy prevailed with her.

The books he read during those fifteen years! He read everything he got except theology, and as he read his little unsuccessful circumstances vanished and the wonder of life returned to him, the routine of reluctant getting up, opening shop, pretending to dust it with zest, breakfasting with a shop egg underdone or overdone or a herring raw or charred, and coffee made Miriam's way and full of

little particles, the return to the shop, the morning paper, the standing, standing at the door saying "How do!" to passers-by, or getting a bit of gossip or watching unusual visitors, all these things vanished as the auditorium of a theatre vanishes when the stage is lit. He acquired hundreds of books at last, old dusty books, books with torn covers and broken covers, fat books whose backs were naked string and glue, an inimical litter to Miriam.

There was, for example, the voyages of La Perouse, with many careful, explicit woodcuts and the frankest revelations of the ways of the eighteenth century sailorman, homely, adventurous, drunken, incontinent and delightful, until he floated, smooth and slow, with all sails set and mirrored in the glassy water, until his head was full of the thought of shining kindly brown-skinned women, who smiled at him and wreathed his head with unfamiliar flowers. He had, too, a piece of a book about the lost palaces of Yucatan, those vast terraces buried in primordial forest, of whose makers there is now no human memory. With La Perouse he linked "The Island Nights Entertainments," and it never palled upon him that in the dusky stabbing of the "Island of Voices" something poured over the stabber's hands "like warm tea." Queer incommunicable joy it is, the joy of the vivid phrase that turns the statement of the horridest fact to beauty!

And another book which had no beginning for him was the second volume of the Travels of the *Abbés* Hue and Gabet. He followed those two sweet souls from their lessons in Thibetan under Sandura the Bearded (who called them donkeys to their infinite benefit and stole their store of butter) through a hundred misadventures to the very heart of Lhassa, and it was a thirst in him that was never quenched to find the other volume and whence they came, and who in fact they were. He read Fenimore Cooper and "Tom Cringle's Log" side by side with Joseph Conrad, and dreamt of the many-hued humanity of the East and West Indies until his heart ached to see those sun-soaked lands before he died. Conrad's prose had a pleasure for him that he was never able to define, a peculiar deep coloured effect. He found too one day among a pile of soiled sixpenny books at Port Burdock, to which place he sometimes rode on his ageing bicycle, Bart Kennedy's "A Sailor Tramp," all written in livid jerks,

and had forever after a kindlier and more understanding eye for every burly rough who slouched through Fishbourne High Street. Sterne he read with a wavering appreciation and some perplexity, but except for the Pickwick Papers, for some reason that I do not understand he never took at all kindly to Dickens. Yet he liked Lever and Thackeray's "Catherine," and all Dumas until he got to the Vicomte de Bragelonne. I am puzzled by his insensibility to Dickens, and I record it as a good historian should, with an admission of my perplexity. It is much more understandable that he had no love for Scott. And I suppose it was because of his ignorance of the proper pronunciation of words that he infinitely preferred any prose to any metrical writing.

A book he browsed over with a recurrent pleasure was Waterton's Wanderings in South America. He would even amuse himself by inventing descriptions of other birds in the Watertonian manner, new birds that he invented, birds with peculiarities that made him chuckle when they occurred to him. He tried to make Rusper, the ironmonger, share this joy with him. He read Bates, too, about the Amazon, but when he discovered that you could not see one bank from the other, he lost, through some mysterious action of the soul that again I cannot understand, at least a tithe of the pleasure he had taken in that river. But he read all sorts of things; a book of old Keltic stories collected by Joyce charmed him, and Mitford's Tales of Old Japan, and a number of paper-covered volumes, *Tales from Blackwood*, he had acquired at Easewood, remained a stand-by. He developed a quite considerable acquaintance with the plays of William Shakespeare, and in his dreams he wore cinque cento or Elizabethan clothes, and walked about a stormy, ruffling, taverning, teeming world. Great land of sublimated things, thou World of Books, happy asylum, refreshment and refuge from the world of everyday!...

The essential thing of those fifteen long years of shopkeeping is Mr. Polly, well athwart the counter of his rather ill-lit shop, lost in a book, or rousing himself with a sigh to attend to business.

Meanwhile he got little exercise, indigestion grew with him until it ruled all his moods, he fattened and deteriorated physically, moods of distress invaded and darkened his skies, little things irritated him

more and more, and casual laughter ceased in him. His hair began to come off until he had a large bald space at the back of his head. Suddenly one day it came to him — forgetful of those books and all he had lived and seen through them — that he had been in his shop for exactly fifteen years, that he would soon be forty, and that his life during that time had not been worth living, that it had been in apathetic and feebly hostile and critical company, ugly in detail and mean in scope — and that it had brought him at last to an outlook utterly hopeless and grey.

III

I have already had occasion to mention, indeed I have quoted, a certain high-browed gentleman living at Highbury, wearing a *golden pince-nez* and writing for the most part in that beautiful room, the library of the Reform Club. There he wrestles with what he calls "social problems" in a bloodless but at times, I think one must admit, an extremely illuminating manner. He has a fixed idea that something called a "collective intelligence" is wanted in the world, which means in practice that you and I and everyone have to think about things frightfully hard and pool the results, and oblige ourselves to be shamelessly and persistently clear and truthful and support and respect (I suppose) a perfect horde of professors and writers and artists and ill-groomed difficult people, instead of using our brains in a moderate, sensible manner to play golf and bridge (pretending a sense of humour prevents our doing anything else with them) and generally taking life in a nice, easy, gentlemanly way, confound him! Well, this dome-headed monster of intellect alleges that Mr. Polly was unhappy entirely through that.

"A rapidly complicating society," he writes, "which as a whole declines to contemplate its future or face the intricate problems of its organisation, is in exactly the position of a man who takes no thought of dietary or regimen, who abstains from baths and exercise and gives his appetites free play. It accumulates useless and aimless lives as a man accumulates fat and morbid products in his blood, it declines in its collective efficiency and vigour and secretes discomfort and misery. Every phase of its evolution is accompanied

by a maximum of avoidable distress and inconvenience and human waste....

"Nothing can better demonstrate the collective dulness of our community, the crying need for a strenuous intellectual renewal than the consideration of that vast mass of useless, uncomfortable, under-educated, under-trained and altogether pitiable people we contemplate when we use that inaccurate and misleading term, the Lower Middle Class. A great proportion of the lower middle class should properly be assigned to the unemployed and the unemployable. They are only not that, because the possession of some small hoard of money, savings during a period of wage earning, an insurance policy or suchlike capital, prevents a direct appeal to the rates. But they are doing little or nothing for the community in return for what they consume; they have no understanding of any relation of service to the community, they have never been trained nor their imaginations touched to any social purpose. A great proportion of small shopkeepers, for example, are people who have, through the inefficiency that comes from inadequate training and sheer aimlessness, or improvements in machinery or the drift of trade, been thrown out of employment, and who set up in needless shops as a method of eking out the savings upon which they count. They contrive to make sixty or seventy per cent, of their expenditure, the rest is drawn from the shrinking capital. Essentially their lives are failures, not the sharp and tragic failure of the labourer who gets out of work and starves, but a slow, chronic process of consecutive small losses which may end if the individual is exceptionally fortunate in an impoverished death bed before actual bankruptcy or destitution supervenes. Their chances of ascendant means are less in their shops than in any lottery that was ever planned. The secular development of transit and communications has made the organisation of distributing businesses upon large and economical lines, inevitable; except in the chaotic confusions of newly opened countries, the day when a man might earn an independent living by unskilled or practically unskilled retailing has gone for ever. Yet every year sees the melancholy procession towards petty bankruptcy and imprisonment for debt go on, and there is no statesmanship in us to avert it. Every issue of

every trade journal has its four or five columns of abridged bankruptcy proceedings, nearly every item in which means the final collapse of another struggling family upon the resources of the community, and continually a fresh supply of superfluous artisans and shop assistants, coming out of employment with savings or 'help' from relations, of widows with a husband's insurance money, of the ill-trained sons of parsimonious fathers, replaces the fallen in the ill-equipped, jerry-built shops that everywhere abound...."

I quote these fragments from a gifted, if unpleasant, contemporary for what they are worth. I feel this has come in here as the broad aspect of this History. I come back to Mr. Polly sitting upon his gate and swearing in the east wind, and I so returning have a sense of floating across unbridged abysses between the General and the Particular. There, on the one hand, is the man of understanding, seeing clearly — I suppose he sees clearly — the big process that dooms millions of lives to thwarting and discomfort and unhappy circumstances, and giving us no help, no hint, by which we may get that better "collective will and intelligence" which would dam the stream of human failure, and, on the other hand, Mr. Polly sitting on his gate, untrained, unwarned, confused, distressed, angry, seeing nothing except that he is, as it were, nettled in greyness and discomfort — with life dancing all about him; Mr. Polly with a capacity for joy and beauty at least as keen and subtle as yours or mine.

IV

I have hinted that our Mother England had equipped Mr. Polly for the management of his internal concerns no whit better than she had for the direction of his external affairs. With a careless generosity she affords her children a variety of foods unparalleled in the world's history, and including many condiments and preserved preparations novel to the human economy. And Miriam did the cooking. Mr. Polly's system, like a confused and ill-governed democracy, had been brought to a state of perpetual clamour and disorder, demanding now evil and unsuitable internal satisfactions, such as pickles and vinegar and the crackling on pork, and now vindictive external

expression, war and bloodshed throughout the world. So that Mr. Polly had been led into hatred and a series of disagreeable quarrels with his landlord, his wholesalers, and most of his neighbours.

Rumbold, the china dealer next door, seemed hostile from the first for no apparent reason, and always unpacked his crates with a full back to his new neighbour, and from the first Mr. Polly resented and hated that uncivil breadth of expressionless humanity, wanted to prod it, kick it, satirise it. But you cannot satirise a hack, if you have no friend to nudge while you do it.

At last Mr. Polly could stand it no longer. He approached and prodded Rumbold.

"Ello!" said Rumbold, suddenly erect and turned about.

"Can't we have some other point of view?" said Mr. Polly. "I'm tired of the end elevation."

"Eh?" said Mr. Rumbold, frankly puzzled.

"Of all the vertebracious animals man alone raises his face to the sky, O' Man. Well, — why invert it?"

Rumbold shook his head with a helpless expression.

"Don't like so much Arreary Pensy."

Rumbold distressed in utter obscurity.

"In fact, I'm sick of your turning your back on me, see?"

A great light shone on Rumbold. "That's what you're talking about!" he said.

"That's it," said Polly.

Rumbold scratched his ear with the three strawy jampots he held in his hand. "Way the wind blows, I expect," he said. "But what's the fuss?"

"No fuss!" said Mr. Polly. "Passing Remark. I don't like it, O' Man, that's all."

"Can't help it, if the wind blows my stror," said Mr. Rumbold, still far from clear about it....

"It isn't ordinary civility," said Mr. Polly.

"Got to unpack 'ow it suits me. Can't unpack with the stror blowing into one's eyes."

"Needn't unpack like a pig rooting for truffles, need you?"

"Truffles?"

"Needn't unpack like a pig."

Mr. Rumbold apprehended something.

"Pig!" he said, impressed. "You calling me a pig?"

"It's the side I seem to get of you."

"'Ere," said Mr. Rumbold, suddenly fierce and shouting and marking his point with gesticulated jampots, "you go indoors. I don't want no row with you, and I don't want you to row with me. I don't know what you're after, but I'm a peaceable man — teetotaller, too, and a good thing if *you* was. See? You go indoors!"

"You mean to say — I'm asking you civilly to stop unpacking — with your back to me."

"Pig ain't civil, and you ain't sober. You go indoors and *lemme go* on unpacking. You — you're excited."

"D'you mean — !" Mr. Polly was foiled.

He perceived an immense solidity about Rumbold.

"Get back to your shop and *lemme* get on with my business," said Mr. Rumbold. "Stop calling me pigs. See? Sweep your pavemint."

"I came here to make a civil request."

"You came 'ere to make a row. I don't want no truck with you. See? I don't like the looks of you. See? And I can't stand 'ere all day arguing. See?"

Pause of mutual inspection.

It occurred to Mr. Polly that probably he was to some extent in the wrong.

Mr. Rumbold, blowing heavily, walked past him, deposited the jampots in his shop with an immense affectation that there was no Mr. Polly in the world, returned, turned a scornful back on Mr. Polly and dived to the interior of the crate. Mr. Polly stood baffled. Should he kick this solid mass before him? Should he administer a resounding kick?

No!

He plunged his hands deeply into his trowser pockets, began to whistle and returned to his own doorstep with an air of profound unconcern. There for a time, to the tune of "Men of Harlech," he contemplated the receding possibility of kicking Mr. Rumbold hard. It would be splendid — and for the moment satisfying. But he decided not to do it. For indefinable reasons he could not do it. He went indoors and straightened up his dress ties very slowly and

thoughtfully. Presently he went to the window and regarded Mr. Rumbold obliquely. Mr. Rumbold was still unpacking....

Mr. Polly had no human intercourse thereafter with Rumbold for fifteen years. He kept up a Hate.

There was a time when it seemed as if Rumbold might go, but he had a meeting of his creditors and then went on unpacking as obtusely as ever.

V

Hinks, the saddler, two shops further down the street, was a different case. Hinks was the aggressor — practically.

Hinks was a sporting man in his way, with that taste for checks in costume and tight trousers which is, under Providence, so mysteriously and invariably associated with equestrian proclivities. At first Mr. Polly took to him as a character, became frequent in the God's Providence Inn under his guidance, stood and was stood drinks and concealed a great ignorance of horses until Hinks became urgent for him to play billiards or bet.

Then Mr. Polly took to evading him, and Hinks ceased to conceal his opinion that Mr. Polly was in reality a softish sort of flat.

He did not, however, discontinue conversation with Mr. Polly; he would come along to him whenever he appeared at his door, and converse about sport and women and fisticuffs and the pride of life with an air of extreme initiation, until Mr. Polly felt himself the faintest underdeveloped intimation of a man that had ever hovered on the verge of non-existence.

So he invented phrases for Hinks' clothes and took Rusper, the ironmonger, into his confidence upon the weaknesses of Hinks. He called him the "Chequered Careerist," and spoke of his patterned legs as "shivery shakys." Good things of this sort are apt to get round to people.

He was standing at his door one day, feeling bored, when Hinks appeared down the street, stood still and regarded him with a strange malignant expression for a space.

Mr. Polly waved a hand in a rather belated salutation.

Mr. Hinks spat on the pavement and appeared to reflect. Then he

came towards Mr. Polly portentously and paused, and spoke between his teeth in an earnest confidential tone.

"You been flapping your mouth about me, I'm told," he said.

Mr. Polly felt suddenly spiritless. "Not that I know of," he answered.

"Not that you know of, be blowed! You been flapping your mouth."

"Don't see it," said Mr. Polly.

"Don't see it, be blowed! You go flapping your silly mouth about me and I'll give you a poke in the eye. See?"

Mr. Hinks regarded the effect of this coldly but firmly, and spat again.

"Understand me?" he enquired.

"Don't recollect," began Mr. Polly.

"Don't recollect, be blowed! You flap your mouth a dam sight too much. This place gets more of your mouth than it wants.... Seen this?"

And Mr. Hinks, having displayed a freckled fist of extraordinary size and pugginess in an ostentatiously familiar manner to Mr. Polly's close inspection by sight and smell, turned it about this way and that and shaken it gently for a moment or so, replaced it carefully in his pocket as if for future use, receded slowly and watchfully for a pace, and then turned away as if to other matters, and ceased to be even in outward seeming a friend....

VI

Mr. Polly's intercourse with all his fellow tradesmen was tarnished sooner or later by some such adverse incident, until not a friend remained to him, and loneliness made even the shop door terrible. Shops bankrupted all about him and fresh people came and new acquaintances sprang up, but sooner or later a discord was inevitable, the tension under which these badly fed, poorly housed, bored and bothered neighbours lived, made it inevitable. The mere fact that Mr. Polly had to see them every day, that there was no getting away from them, was in itself sufficient to make them almost unendurable to his frettingly active mind.

Among other shopkeepers in the High Street there was Chuffles, the grocer, a small, hairy, silently intent polygamist, who was given rough music by the youth of the neighbourhood because of a scandal about his wife's sister, and who was nevertheless totally uninteresting, and Tonks, the second grocer, an old man with an older, very enfeebled wife, both submerged by piety. Tonks went bankrupt, and was succeeded by a branch of the National Provision Company, with a young manager exactly like a fox, except that he barked. The toy and sweetstuff shop was kept by an old woman of repellent manners, and so was the little fish shop at the end of the street. The Berlin-wool shop having gone bankrupt, became a newspaper shop, then fell to a haberdasher in consumption, and finally to a stationer; the three shops at the end of the street wallowed in and out of insolvency in the hands of a bicycle repairer and dealer, a gramaphone dealer, a tobacconist, a sixpenny-halfpenny bazaar-keeper, a shoemaker, a greengrocer, and the exploiter of a cinematograph peep-show — but none of them supplied friendship to Mr. Polly.

These adventurers in commerce were all more or less distraught souls, driving without intelligible comment before the gale of fate. The two milkmen of Fishbourne were brothers who had quarrelled about their father's will, and started in opposition to each other; one was stone deaf and no use to Mr. Polly, and the other was a sporting man with a natural dread of epithet who sided with Hinks. So it was all about him, on every hand it seemed were uncongenial people, uninteresting people, or people who conceived the deepest distrust and hostility towards him, a magic circle of suspicious, preoccupied and dehumanised humanity. So the poison in his system poisoned the world without.

(But Boomer, the wine merchant, and Tashingford, the chemist, be it noted, were fraught with pride, and held themselves to be a cut above Mr. Polly. They never quarrelled with him, preferring to bear themselves from the outset as though they had already done so.)

As his internal malady grew upon Mr. Polly and he became more and more a battle-ground of fermenting foods and warring juices, he came to hate the very sight, as people say, of every one of these neighbours. There they were, every day and all the days, just the

same, echoing his own stagnation. They pained him all round the top and back of his head; they made his legs and arms weary and spiritless. The air was tasteless by reason of them. He lost his human kindliness.

In the afternoons he would hover in the shop bored to death with his business and his home and Miriam, and yet afraid to go out because of his inflamed and magnified dislike and dread of these neighbours. He could not bring himself to go out and run the gauntlet of the observant windows and the cold estranged eyes.

One of his last friendships was with Rusper, the ironmonger. Rusper took over Worthington's shop about three years after Mr. Polly opened. He was a tall, lean, nervous, convulsive man with an upturned, back-thrown, oval head, who read newspapers and the *Review of Reviews* assiduously, had belonged to a Literary Society somewhere once, and had some defect of the palate that at first gave his lightest word a charm and interest for Mr. Polly. It caused a peculiar clicking sound, as though he had something between a giggle and a gas-meter at work in his neck.

His literary admirations were not precisely Mr. Polly's literary admirations; he thought books were written to enshrine Great Thoughts, and that art was pedagogy in fancy dress, he had no sense of phrase or epithet or richness of texture, but still he knew there were books, he did know there were books and he was full of large windy ideas of the sort he called "Modern (kik) Thought," and seemed needlessly and helplessly concerned about "(kik) the Welfare of the Race."

Mr. Polly would dream about that (kik) at nights.

It seemed to that undesirable mind of his that Rusper's head was the most egg-shaped head he had ever seen; the similarity weighed upon him; and when he found an argument growing warm with Rusper he would say: "Boil it some more, O' Man; boil it harder!" or "Six minutes at least," allusions Rusper could never make head or tail of, and got at last to disregard as a part of Mr. Polly's general eccentricity. For a long time that little tendency threw no shadow over their intercourse, but it contained within it the seeds of an ultimate disruption.

Often during the days of this friendship Mr. Polly would leave his

shop and walk over to Mr. Rusper's establishment, and stand in his doorway and enquire: "Well, O' Man, how's the Mind of the Age working?" and get quite an hour of it, and sometimes Mr. Rusper would come into the outfitter's shop with "Heard the (kik) latest?" and spend the rest of the morning.

Then Mr. Rusper married, and he married very inconsiderately a woman who was totally uninteresting to Mr. Polly. A coolness grew between them from the first intimation of her advent. Mr. Polly couldn't help thinking when he saw her that she drew her hair back from her forehead a great deal too tightly, and that her elbows were angular. His desire not to mention these things in the apt terms that welled up so richly in his mind, made him awkward in her presence, and that gave her an impression that he was hiding some guilty secret from her. She decided he must have a bad influence upon her husband, and she made it a point to appear whenever she heard him talking to Rusper.

One day they became a little heated about the German peril.

"I lay (kik) they'll invade us," said Rusper.

"Not a bit of it. William's not the Zerxiacious sort."

"You'll see, O' Man."

"Just what I shan't do."

"Before (kik) five years are out."

"Not it."

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes."

"Oh! Boil it hard!" said Mr. Polly.

Then he looked up and saw Mrs. Rusper standing behind the counter half hidden by a trophy of spades and garden shears and a knife-cleaning machine, and by her expression he knew instantly that she understood.

The conversation paled and presently Mr. Polly withdrew.

After that, estrangement increased steadily.

Mr. Rusper ceased altogether to come over to the outfitter's, and Mr. Polly called upon the ironmonger only with the completest air of casuality. And everything they said to each other led now to flat contradiction and raised voices. Rusper had been warned in vague

and alarming terms that Mr. Polly insulted and made game of him; he couldn't discover exactly where; and so it appeared to him now that every word of Mr. Polly's might be an insult meriting his resentment, meriting it none the less because it was masked and cloaked.

Soon Mr. Polly's calls upon Mr. Rusper ceased also, and then Mr. Rusper, pursuing incomprehensible lines of thought, became afflicted with a specialised shortsightedness that applied only to Mr. Polly. He would look in other directions when Mr. Polly appeared, and his large oval face assumed an expression of conscious serenity and deliberate happy unawareness that would have maddened a far less irritable person than Mr. Polly. It evoked a strong desire to mock and ape, and produced in his throat a cough of singular scornfulness, more particularly when Mr. Rusper also assisted, with an assumed unconsciousness that was all his own.

Then one day Mr. Polly had a bicycle accident.

His bicycle was now very old, and it is one of the concomitants of a bicycle's senility that its free wheel should one day obstinately cease to be free. It corresponds to that epoch in human decay when an old gentleman loses an incisor tooth. It happened just as Mr. Polly was approaching Mr. Rusper's shop, and the untoward chance of a motor car trying to pass a waggon on the wrong side gave Mr. Polly no choice but to get on to the pavement and dismount. He was always accustomed to take his time and step off his left pedal at its lowest point, but the jamming of the free wheel gear made that lowest moment a transitory one, and the pedal was lifting his foot for another revolution before he realised what had happened. Before he could dismount according to his habit the pedal had to make a revolution, and before it could make a revolution Mr. Polly found himself among the various sonorous things with which Mr. Rusper adorned the front of his shop, zinc dustbins, household pails, lawn mowers, rakes, spades and all manner of clattering things. Before he got among them he had one of those agonising moments of helpless wrath and suspense that seem to last ages, in which one seems to perceive everything and think of nothing but words that are better forgotten. He sent a column of pails thundering across the doorway and dismounted with one foot in a sanitary dustbin amidst an

enormous uproar of falling ironmongery.

"Put all over the place!" he cried, and found Mr. Rusper emerging from his shop with the large tranquillities of his countenance puckered to anger, like the frowns in the brow of a reefing sail. He gesticulated speechlessly for a moment.

"Kik — jer doing?" he said at last.

"Tin mantraps!" said Mr. Polly.

"Jer (kik) doing?"

"Dressing all over the pavement as though the blessed town belonged to you! Ugh!"

And Mr. Polly in attempting a dignified movement realised his entanglement with the dustbin for the first time. With a low embittering expression he kicked his foot about in it for a moment very noisily, and finally sent it thundering to the curb. On its way it struck a pail or so. Then Mr. Polly picked up his bicycle and proposed to resume his homeward way. But the hand of Mr. Rusper arrested him.

"Put it (kik) all (kik kik) back (kik)."

"Put it (kik) back yourself."

"You got (kik) put it back."

"Get out of the (kik) way."

Mr. Rusper laid one hand on the bicycle handle, and the other gripped Mr. Polly's collar urgently. Whereupon Mr. Polly said: "Leggo!" and again, "D'you *hear*! Leggo!" and then drove his elbow with considerable force into the region of Mr. Rusper's midriff. Whereupon Mr. Rusper, with a loud impassioned cry, resembling "Woo kik" more than any other combination of letters, released the bicycle handle, seized Mr. Polly by the cap and hair and bore his head and shoulders downward. Thereat Mr. Polly, emitting such words as everyone knows and nobody prints, butted his utmost into the concavity of Mr. Rusper, entwined a leg about him and after terrific moments of swaying instability, fell headlong beneath him amidst the bicycles and pails. There on the pavement these inexpert children of a pacific age, untrained in arms and uninured to violence, abandoned themselves to amateurish and absurd efforts to hurt and injure one another — of which the most palpable consequences were dusty backs, ruffled hair and torn and twisted collars. Mr. Polly, by

accident, got his finger into Mr. Rusper's mouth, and strove earnestly for some time to prolong that aperture in the direction of Mr. Rusper's ear before it occurred to Mr. Rusper to bite him (and even then he didn't bite very hard), while Mr. Rusper concentrated his mind almost entirely on an effort to rub Mr. Polly's face on the pavement. (And their positions bristled with chances of the deadliest sort!) They didn't from first to last draw blood.

Then it seemed to each of them that the other had become endowed with many hands and several voices and great accessions of strength. They submitted to fate and ceased to struggle. They found themselves torn apart and held up by outwardly scandalised and inwardly delighted neighbours, and invited to explain what it was all about.

"Got to (kik) puttem all back!" panted Mr. Rusper in the expert grasp of Hinks. "Merely asked him to (kik) puttem all back."

Mr. Polly was under restraint of little Clamp, of the toy shop, who was holding his hands in a complex and uncomfortable manner that he afterwards explained to Wintershed was a combination of something romantic called "Ju-jitsu" and something else still more romantic called the "Police Grip."

"Pails," explained Mr. Polly in breathless fragments. "All over the road. Pails. Bungs up the street with his pails. Look at them!"

"Deliber (kik) lib (kik) liberately rode into my goods (kik). Constantly (kik) annoying me (kik)!" said Mr. Rusper....

They were both tremendously earnest and reasonable in their manner. They wished everyone to regard them as responsible and intellectual men acting for the love of right and the enduring good of the world. They felt they must treat this business as a profound and publicly significant affair. They wanted to explain and orate and show the entire necessity of everything they had done. Mr. Polly was convinced he had never been so absolutely correct in all his life as when he planted his foot in the sanitary dustbin, and Mr. Rusper considered his clutch at Mr. Polly's hair as the one faultless impulse in an otherwise undistinguished career. But it was clear in their minds they might easily become ridiculous if they were not careful, if for a second they stepped over the edge of the high spirit and pitiless dignity they had hitherto maintained. At any cost they

perceived they must not become ridiculous.

Mr. Chuffles, the scandalous grocer, joined the throng about the principal combatants, mutely as became an outcast, and with a sad, distressed helpful expression picked up Mr. Polly's bicycle. Gambell's summer errand boy, moved by example, restored the dustbin and pails to their self-respect.

"'*E* ought— '*e* ought (kik) pick them up," protested Mr. Rusper.

"What's it all about?" said Mr. Hinks for the third time, shaking Mr. Rusper gently. "As 'e been calling you names?"

"Simply ran into his pails — as anyone might," said Mr. Polly, "and out he comes and scrags me!"

"(Kik) Assault!" said Mr. Rusper.

"He assaulted *me*," said Mr. Polly.

"Jumped (kik) into my dus'bin!" said Mr. Rusper. "That assault? Or isn't it?"

"You better drop it," said Mr. Hinks.

"Great pity they can't be'ave better, both of 'em," said Mr. Chuffles, glad for once to find himself morally unassailable.

"Anyone see it begin?" said Mr. Wintershed.

"*I* was in the shop," said Mrs. Rusper suddenly from the doorstep, piercing the little group of men and boys with the sharp horror of an unexpected woman's voice. "If a witness is wanted I suppose I've got a tongue. I suppose I got a voice in seeing my own 'usband injured. My husband went out and spoke to Mr. Polly, who was jumping off his bicycle all among our pails and things, and immediately 'e butted him in the stomach — immediately — most savagely — butted him. Just after his dinner too and him far from strong. I could have screamed. But Rusper caught hold of him right away, I will say that for Rusper...."

"I'm going," said Mr. Polly suddenly, releasing himself from the Anglo-Japanese grip and holding out his hands for his bicycle.

"Teach you (kik) to leave things alone," said Mr. Rusper with an air of one who has given a lesson.

The testimony of Mrs. Rusper continued relentlessly in the background.

"You'll hear of me through a summons," said Mr. Polly, preparing to wheel his bicycle.

"(Kik) Me too," said Mr. Rusper.

Someone handed Mr. Polly a collar. "This yours?"

Mr. Polly investigated his neck. "I suppose it is. Anyone seen a tie?"

A small boy produced a grimy strip of spotted blue silk.

"Human life isn't safe with you," said Mr. Polly as a parting shot.

"(Kik) Yours isn't," said Mr. Rusper....

And they got small satisfaction out of the Bench, which refused altogether to perceive the relentless correctitude of the behaviour of either party, and reproved the eagerness of Mrs. Rusper — speaking to her gently, firmly but exasperatingly as "My Good Woman" and telling her to "Answer the Question! Answer the Question!"

"Seems a Pity," said the chairman, when binding them over to keep the peace, "you can't behave like Respectable Tradesmen. Seems a Great Pity. Bad Example to the Young and all that. Don't do any Good to the town, don't do any Good to yourselves, don't do any manner of Good, to have all the Tradesmen in the Place scrapping about the Pavement of an Afternoon. Think we're letting you off very easily this time, and hope it will be a Warning to you. Don't expect Men of your Position to come up before us. Very Regrettable Affair. Eh?"

He addressed the latter enquiry to his two colleagues.

"Exactly, exactly," said the colleague to the right.

"Er — (kik)," said Mr. Rusper.

VII

But the disgust that overshadowed Mr. Polly's being as he sat upon the stile, had other and profounder justification than his quarrel with Rusper and the indignity of appearing before the county bench. He was for the first time in his business career short with his rent for the approaching quarter day, and so far as he could trust his own bandling of figures he was sixty or seventy pounds on the wrong side of solvency. And that was the outcome of fifteen years of passive endurance of dulness throughout the best years of his life! What would Miriam say when she learnt this, and was invited to face the prospect of exile — heaven knows what sort of exile! — from their

present home? She would grumble and scold and become limply unhelpful, he knew, and none the less so because he could not help things. She would say he ought to have worked harder, and a hundred such exasperating pointless things. Such thoughts as these require no aid from undigested cold pork and cold potatoes and pickles to darken the soul, and with these aids his soul was black indeed.

"May as well have a bit of a walk," said Mr. Polly at last, after nearly intolerable meditations, and sat round and put a leg over the stile.

He remained still for some time before he brought over the other leg.

"Kill myself," he murmured at last.

It was an idea that came back to his mind nowadays with a continually increasing attractiveness — more particularly after meals. Life he felt had no further happiness to offer him. He hated Miriam, and there was no getting away from her whatever might betide. And for the rest there was toil and struggle, toil and struggle with a failing heart and dwindling courage, to sustain that dreary duologue. "Life's insured," said Mr. Polly; "place is insured. I don't see it does any harm to her or anyone."

He stuck his hands in his pockets. "Needn't hurt much," he said. He began to elaborate a plan.

He found it quite interesting elaborating his plan. His countenance became less miserable and his pace quickened.

There is nothing so good in all the world for melancholia as walking, and the exercise of the imagination in planning something presently to be done, and soon the wrathful wretchedness had vanished from Mr. Polly's face. He would have to do the thing secretly and elaborately, because otherwise there might be difficulties about the life insurance. He began to scheme how he could circumvent that difficulty....

He took a long walk, for after all what is the good of hurrying back to shop when you are not only insolvent but very soon to die? His dinner and the east wind lost their sinister hold upon his soul, and when at last he came back along the Fishbourne High Street, his face was unusually bright and the craving hunger of the dyspeptic

was returning. So he went into the grocer's and bought a ruddily decorated tin of a brightly pink fishlike substance known as "Deep Sea Salmon." This he was resolved to consume regardless of cost with vinegar and salt and pepper as a relish to his supper.

He did, and since he and Miriam rarely talked and Miriam thought honour and his recent behaviour demanded a hostile silence, he ate fast, and copiously and soon gloomily. He ate alone, for she refrained, to mark her sense of his extravagance. Then he prowled into the High Street for a time, thought it an infernal place, tried his pipe and found it foul and bitter, and retired wearily to bed.

He slept for an hour or so and then woke up to the contemplation of Miriam's hunched back and the riddle of life, and this bright attractive idea of ending for ever and ever and ever all the things that were locking him in, this bright idea that shone like a baleful star above all the reek and darkness of his misery....

Chapter the Eighth

Making an End to Things

I

Mr. Polly designed his suicide with considerable care, and a quite remarkable altruism. His passionate hatred for Miriam vanished directly the idea of getting away from her for ever became clear in his mind. He found himself full of solicitude then for her welfare. He did not want to buy his release at her expense. He had not the remotest intention of leaving her unprotected with a painfully dead husband and a bankrupt shop on her hands. It seemed to him that he could contrive to secure for her the full benefit of both his life insurance and his fire insurance if he managed things in a tactful manner. He felt happier than he had done for years scheming out this undertaking, albeit it was perhaps a larger and somberer kind of happiness than had fallen to his lot before. It amazed him to think he had endured his monotony of misery and failure for so long.

But there were some queer doubts and questions in the dim, half-lit background of his mind that he had very resolutely to ignore. "Sick of it," he had to repeat to himself aloud, to keep his determination clear and firm. His life was a failure, there was nothing more to hope for but unhappiness. Why shouldn't he?

His project was to begin the fire with the stairs that led from the ground floor to the underground kitchen and scullery. This he would soak with *paraffine*, and assist with firewood and paper, and a brisk fire in the coal cellar underneath. He would smash a hole or so in the stairs to ventilate the blaze, and have a good pile of boxes and paper, and a convenient chair or so in the shop above. He would have the *paraffine* can upset and the shop lamp, as if awaiting refilling, at a convenient distance in the scullery ready to catch. Then he would smash the house lamp on the staircase, a fall with that in his hand was to be the ostensible cause of the blaze, and then he would cut his throat at the top of the kitchen stairs, which would then become his funeral pyre. He would do all this on Sunday evening while Miriam

was at church, and it would appear that he had fallen downstairs with the lamp, and been burnt to death. There was really no flaw whatever that he could see in the scheme. He was quite sure he knew how to cut his throat, deep at the side and not to saw at the windpipe, and he was reasonably sure it wouldn't hurt him very much. And then everything would be at an end.

There was no particular hurry to get the thing done, of course, and meanwhile he occupied his mind with possible variations of the scheme....

It needed a particularly dry and dusty east wind, a Sunday dinner of exceptional virulence, a conclusive letter from Konk, Maybrick, Ghool and Gabbitas, his principal and most urgent creditors, and a conversation with Miriam arising out of arrears of rent and leading on to mutual character sketching, before Mr. Polly could be brought to the necessary pitch of despair to carry out his plans. He went for an embittering walk, and came back to find Miriam in a bad temper over the tea things, with the brewings of three-quarters of an hour in the pot, and hot buttered muffin gone leathery. He sat eating in silence with his resolution made.

"Coming to church?" said Miriam after she had cleared away.

"Rather. I got a lot to be grateful for," said Mr. Polly.

"You got what you deserve," said Miriam.

"Suppose I have," said Mr. Polly, and went and stared out of the back window at a despondent horse in the hotel yard.

He was still standing there when Miriam came downstairs dressed for church. Something in his immobility struck home to her. "You'd better come to church than mope," she said.

"I shan't mope," he answered.

She remained still for a moment. Her presence irritated him. He felt that in another moment he should say something absurd to her, make some last appeal for that understanding she had never been able to give. "Oh! *go* to church!" he said.

In another moment the outer door slammed upon her. "Good riddance!" said Mr. Polly.

He turned about. "I've had my whack," he said.

He reflected. "I don't see she'll have any cause to holler," he said. "Beastly Home! Beastly Life!"

For a space he remained thoughtful. “Here goes!” he said at last.

II

For twenty minutes Mr. Polly busied himself about the house, making his preparations very neatly and methodically.

He opened the attic windows in order to make sure of a good draught through the house, and drew down the blinds at the back and shut the kitchen door to conceal his arrangements from casual observation. At the end he would open the door on the yard and so make a clean clear draught right through the house. He hacked at, and wedged off, the tread of a stair. He cleared out the coals from under the staircase, and built a neat fire of firewood and paper there, he splashed about *paraffine* and arranged the lamps and can even as he had designed, and made a fine inflammable pile of things in the little parlour behind the shop. “Looks pretty arsonical,” he said as he surveyed it all. “Wouldn’t do to have a caller now. Now for the stairs!”

“Plenty of time,” he assured himself, and took the lamp which was to explain the whole affair, and went to the head of the staircase between the scullery and the parlour. He sat down in the twilight with the unlit lamp beside him and surveyed things. He must light the fire in the coal cellar under the stairs, open the back door, then come up them very quickly and light the *paraffine* puddles on each step, then sit down here again and cut his throat.

He drew his razor from his pocket and felt the edge. It wouldn’t hurt much, and in ten minutes he would be indistinguishable ashes in the blaze.

And this was the end of life for him!

The end! And it seemed to him now that life had never begun for him, never! It was as if his soul had been cramped and his eyes bandaged from the hour of his birth. Why had he lived such a life? Why had he submitted to things, blundered into things? Why had he never insisted on the things he thought beautiful and the things he desired, never sought them, fought for them, taken any risk for them, died rather than abandon them? They were the things that mattered. Safety did not matter. A living did not matter unless there were

things to live for....

He had been a fool, a coward and a fool, he had been fooled too, for no one had ever warned him to take a firm hold upon life, no one had ever told him of the littleness of fear, or pain, or death; but what was the good of going through it now again? It was over and done with.

The clock in the back parlour pinged the half hour.

"Time!" said Mr. Polly, and stood up.

For an instant he battled with an impulse to put it all back, hastily, guiltily, and abandon this desperate plan of suicide for ever.

But Miriam would smell the *paraffine*!

"No way out this time, O' Man," said Mr. Polly; and he went slowly downstairs, matchbox in hand.

He paused for five seconds, perhaps, to listen to noises in the yard of the Royal Fishbourne Hotel before he struck his match. It trembled a little in his hand. The paper blackened, and an edge of blue flame ran outward and spread. The fire burnt up readily, and in an instant the wood was crackling cheerfully.

Someone might hear. He must hurry.

He lit a pool of *paraffine* on the scullery floor, and instantly a nest of snaky, wavering blue flame became agog for prey. He went up the stairs three steps at a time with one eager blue flicker in pursuit of him. He seized the lamp at the top. "Now!" he said and flung it smashing. The chimney broke, but the glass receiver stood the shock and rolled to the bottom, a potential bomb. Old Rumbold would hear that and wonder what it was!... He'd know soon enough!

Then Mr. Polly stood hesitating, razor in hand, and then sat down. He was trembling violently, but quite unafraid.

He drew the blade lightly under one ear. "Lord!" but it stung like a nettle!

Then he perceived a little blue thread of flame running up his leg. It arrested his attention, and for a moment he sat, razor in hand, staring at it. It must be *paraffine* on his trousers that had caught fire on the stairs. Of course his legs were wet with *paraffine*! He smacked the flicker with his hand to put it out, and felt his leg burn as he did so. But his trousers still charred and glowed. It seemed to him necessary that he must put this out before he cut his throat. He put

down the razor beside him to smack with both hands very eagerly. And as he did so a thin tall red flame came up through the hole in the stairs he had made and stood still, quite still as it seemed, and looked at him. It was a strange-looking flame, a flattish salmon colour, redly streaked. It was so queer and quiet mannered that the sight of it held Mr. Polly agape.

"Whuff!" went the can of *paraffine* below, and boiled over with stinking white fire. At the outbreak the salmon-coloured flames shivered and ducked and then doubled and vanished, and instantly all the staircase was noisily ablaze.

Mr. Polly sprang up and backwards, as though the uprushing tongues of fire were a pack of eager wolves.

"Good Lord!" he cried like a man who wakes up from a dream.

He swore sharply and slapped again at a recrudescent flame upon his leg.

"What the Deuce shall I do? I'm soaked with the confounded stuff!"

He had nerved himself for throat-cutting, but this was fire!

He wanted to delay things, to put them out for a moment while he did his business. The idea of arresting all this hurry with water occurred to him.

There was no water in the little parlour and none in the shop. He hesitated for a moment whether he should not run upstairs to the bedrooms and get a ewer of water to throw on the flames. At this rate Rumbold's would be ablaze in five minutes! Things were going all too fast for Mr. Polly. He ran towards the staircase door, and its hot breath pulled him up sharply. Then he dashed out through his shop. The catch of the front door was sometimes obstinate; it was now, and instantly he became frantic. He rattled and stormed and felt the parlour already ablaze behind him. In another moment he was in the High Street with the door wide open.

The staircase behind him was crackling now like horsewhips and pistol shots.

He had a vague sense that he wasn't doing as he had proposed, but the chief thing was his sense of that uncontrolled fire within. What was he going to do? There was the fire brigade station next door but one.

The Fishbourne High Street had never seemed so empty.

Far off at the corner by the God's Providence Inn a group of three stiff hobbledehoys in their black, best clothes, conversed intermittently with Taplow, the policeman.

"Hi!" bawled Mr. Polly to them. "Fire! Fire!" and struck by a horrible thought, the thought of Rumbold's deaf mother-in-law upstairs, began to bang and kick and rattle with the utmost fury at Rumbold's shop door.

"Hi!" he repeated, "*Fire!*"

III

That was the beginning of the great Fishbourne fire, which burnt its way sideways into Mr. Rusper's piles of crates and straw, and backwards to the petrol and stabling of the Royal Fishbourne Hotel, and spread from that basis until it seemed half Fishbourne would be ablaze. The east wind, which had been gathering in strength all that day, fanned the flame; everything was dry and ready, and the little shed beyond Rumbold's in which the local Fire Brigade kept its manual, was alight before the Fishbourne fire hose could be saved from disaster. In marvellously little time a great column of black smoke, shot with red streamers, rose out of the middle of the High Street, and all Fishbourne was alive with excitement.

Much of the more respectable elements of Fishbourne society was in church or chapel; many, however, had been tempted by the blue sky and the hard freshness of spring to take walks inland, and there had been the usual disappearance of loungers and conversationalists from the beach and the back streets when at the hour of six the shooting of bolts and the turning of keys had ended the British Ramadan, that weekly interlude of drought our law imposes. The youth of the place were scattered on the beach or playing in back yards, under threat if their clothes were dirtied, and the adolescent were disposed in pairs among the more secluded corners to be found upon the outskirts of the place. Several godless youths, seasick but fishing steadily, were tossing upon the sea in old Tarbold's, the infidel's, boat, and the Clamps were entertaining cousins from Port Burdock. Such few visitors as Fishbourne could boast in the spring

were at church or on the beach. To all these that column of smoke did in a manner address itself. “Look here!” it said, “this, within limits, is your affair; what are you going to do?”

The three hobbledehoys, had it been a weekday and they in working clothes, might have felt free to act, but the stiffness of black was upon them and they simply moved to the corner by Rusper’s to take a better view of Mr. Polly beating at the door. The policeman was a young, inexpert constable with far too lively a sense of the public house. He put his head inside the Private Bar to the horror of everyone there. But there was no breach of the law, thank Heaven! “Polly’s and Rumbold’s on fire!” he said, and vanished again. A window in the top story over Boomer’s shop opened, and Boomer, captain of the Fire Brigade, appeared, staring out with a blank expression. Still staring, he began to fumble with his collar and tie; manifestly he had to put on his uniform. Hinks’ dog, which had been lying on the pavement outside Wintershed’s, woke up, and having regarded Mr. Polly suspiciously for some time, growled nervously and went round the corner into Granville Alley. Mr. Polly continued to beat and kick at Rumbold’s door.

Then the public houses began to vomit forth the less desirable elements of Fishbourne society, boys and men were moved to run and shout, and more windows went up as the stir increased. Tashingford, the chemist, appeared at his door, in shirt sleeves and an apron, with his photographic plate holders in his hand. And then like a vision of purpose came Mr. Gambell, the greengrocer, running out of Clayford’s Alley and buttoning on his jacket as he ran. His great brass fireman’s helmet was on his head, hiding it all but the sharp nose, the firm mouth, the intrepid chin. He ran straight to the fire station and tried the door, and turned about and met the eye of Boomer still at his upper window. “The key!” cried Mr. Gambell, “the key!”

Mr. Boomer made some inaudible explanation about his trousers and half a minute.

“Seen old Rumbold?” cried Mr. Polly, approaching Mr. Gambell.

“Gone over Downford for a walk,” said Mr. Gambell. “He told me! But look ‘ere! We ‘aven’t got the key!”

“Lord!” said Mr. Polly, and regarded the china shop with open

eyes. He *knew* the old woman must be there alone. He went back to the shop front and stood surveying it in infinite perplexity. The other activities in the street did not interest him. A deaf old lady somewhere upstairs there! Precious moments passing! Suddenly he was struck by an idea and vanished from public vision into the open door of the Royal Fishbourne Tap.

And now the street was getting crowded and people were laying their hands to this and that.

Mr. Rusper had been at home reading a number of tracts upon Tariff Reform, during the quiet of his wife's absence in church, and trying to work out the application of the whole question to ironmongery. He heard a clattering in the street and for a time disregarded it, until a cry of Fire! drew him to the window. He pencilled-marked the tract of Chiozza Money's that he was reading side by side with one by Mr. Holt Schooling, made a hasty note "Bal. of Trade say 12,000,000" and went to look out. Instantly he opened the window and ceased to believe the Fiscal Question the most urgent of human affairs.

"Good (kik) Gud!" said Mr. Rusper.

For now the rapidly spreading blaze had forced the partition into Mr. Rumbold's premises, swept across his cellar, clambered his garden wall by means of his well-tarred mushroom shed, and assailed the engine house. It stayed not to consume, but ran as a thing that seeks a quarry. Polly's shop and upper parts were already a furnace, and black smoke was coming out of Rumbold's cellar gratings. The fire in the engine house showed only as a sudden rush of smoke from the back, like something suddenly blown up. The fire brigade, still much under strength, were now hard at work in the front of the latter building; they had got the door open all too late, they had rescued the fire escape and some buckets, and were now lugging out their manual, with the hose already a dripping mass of molten, flaring, stinking rubber. Boomer was dancing about and swearing and shouting; this direct attack upon his apparatus outraged his sense of chivalry. The rest of the brigade hovered in a disheartened state about the rescued fire escape, and tried to piece Boomer's comments into some tangible instructions.

"Hi!" said Rusper from the window. "Kik! What's up?"

Gambell answered him out of his helmet. “Hose!” he cried. “Hose gone!”

“I (kik) got hose!” cried Rusper.

He had. He had a stock of several thousand feet of garden hose, of various qualities and calibres, and now he felt was the time to use it. In another moment his shop door was open and he was hurling pails, garden syringes, and rolls of garden hose out upon the pavement. “(Kik),” he cried, “undo it!” to the gathering crowd in the roadway.

They did. Presently a hundred ready hands were unrolling and spreading and tangling up and twisting and hopelessly involving Mr. Rusper’s stock of hose, sustained by an unquenchable assurance that presently it would in some manner contain and convey water, and Mr. Rusper, on his knees, (kiking) violently, became incredibly busy with wire and brass junctions and all sorts of mysteries.

“Fix it to the (kik) bathroom tap!” said Mr. Rusper.

Next door to the fire station was Mantell and Throbson’s, the little Fishbourne branch of that celebrated firm, and Mr. Boomer, seeking in a teeming mind for a plan of action, had determined to save this building. “Someone telephone to the Port Burdock and Hampstead-on-Sea fire brigades,” he cried to the crowd and then to his fellows: “Cut away the woodwork of the fire station!” and so led the way into the blaze with a whirling hatchet that effected wonders in no time in ventilation.

But it was not, after all, such a bad idea of his. Mantell and Throbsons was separated from the fire station in front by a covered glass passage, and at the back the roof of a big outhouse sloped down to the fire station leads. The sturdy ‘longshoremen, who made up the bulk of the fire brigade, assailed the glass roof of the passage with extraordinary gusto, and made a smashing of glass that drowned for a time the rising uproar of the flames.

A number of willing volunteers started off to the new telephone office in obedience to Mr. Boomer’s request, only to be told with cold official politeness by the young lady at the exchange that all that had been done on her own initiative ten minutes ago. She parleyed with these heated enthusiasts for a space, and then returned to the window.

And indeed the spectacle was well worth looking at. The dusk

was falling, and the flames were showing brilliantly at half a dozen points. The Royal Fishbourne Hotel Tap, which adjoined Mr. Polly to the west, was being kept wet by the enthusiastic efforts of a string of volunteers with buckets of water, and above at a bathroom window the little German waiter was busy with the garden hose. But Mr. Polly's establishment looked more like a house afire than most houses on fire contrive to look from start to finish. Every window showed eager flickering flames, and flames like serpents' tongues were licking out of three large holes in the roof, which was already beginning to fall in. Behind, larger and abundantly spark-shot gusts of fire rose from the fodder that was now getting alight in the Royal Fishbourne Hotel stables. Next door to Mr. Polly, Mr. Rumbold's house was disgorging black smoke from the gratings that protected its underground windows, and smoke and occasional shivers of flame were also coming out of its first-floor windows. The fire station was better alight at the back than in front, and its woodwork burnt pretty briskly with peculiar greenish flickerings, and a pungent flavour. In the street an inaggressively disorderly crowd clambered over the rescued fire escape and resisted the attempts of the three local constables to get it away from the danger of Mr. Polly's tottering façade, a cluster of busy forms danced and shouted and advised on the noisy and smashing attempt to cut off Mantell and Throbson's from the fire station that was still in ineffectual progress. Further a number of people appeared to be destroying interminable red and grey snakes under the heated direction of Mr. Rusper; it was as if the High Street had a plague of worms, and beyond again the more timid and less active crowded in front of an accumulation of arrested traffic. Most of the men were in Sabbatical black, and this and the white and starched quality of the women and children in their best clothes gave a note of ceremony to the whole affair.

For a moment the attention of the telephone clerk was held by the activities of Mr. Tashingford, the chemist, who, regardless of everyone else, was rushing across the road hurling fire grenades into the fire station and running back for more, and then her eyes lifted to the slanting outhouse roof that went up to a ridge behind the parapet of Mantell and Throbson's. An expression of incredulity came into the telephone operator's eyes and gave place to hard activity. She

flung up the window and screamed out: “Two people on the roof up there! Two people on the roof!”

IV

Her eyes had not deceived her. Two figures which had emerged from the upper staircase window of Mr. Rumbold’s and had got after a perilous paddle in his cistern, on to the fire station, were now slowly but resolutely clambering up the outhouse roof towards the back of the main premises of Messrs. Mantell and Throbson’s. They clambered slowly and one urged and helped the other, slipping and pausing ever and again, amidst a constant trickle of fragments of broken tile.

One was Mr. Polly, with his hair wildly disordered, his face covered with black smudges and streaked with perspiration, and his trouser legs scorched and blackened; the other was an elderly lady, quietly but becomingly dressed in black, with small white frills at her neck and wrists and a Sunday cap of ecru lace enlivened with a black velvet bow. Her hair was brushed back from her wrinkled brow and plastered down tightly, meeting in a small knob behind; her wrinkled mouth bore that expression of supreme resolution common with the toothless aged. She was shaky, not with fear, but with the vibrations natural to her years, and she spoke with the slow quavering firmness of the very aged.

“I don’t mind scrambling,” she said with piping inflexibility, “but I can’t jump and I *wunt* jump.”

“Scramble, old lady, then — scramble!” said Mr. Polly, pulling her arm. “It’s one up and two down on these blessed tiles.”

“It’s not what I’m used to,” she said.

“Stick to it!” said Mr. Polly, “live and learn,” and got to the ridge and grasped at her arm to pull her after him.

“I can’t jump, mind ye,” she repeated, pressing her lips together. “And old ladies like me mustn’t be hurried.”

“Well, let’s get as high as possible anyhow!” said Mr. Polly, urging her gently upward. “Shinning up a water-spout in your line? Near as you’ll get to Heaven.”

“I *can’t* jump,” she said. “I can do anything but jump.”

“Hold on!” said Mr. Polly, “while I give you a boost. That’s — wonderful.”

“So long as it isn’t jumping....”

The old lady grasped the parapet above, and there was a moment of intense struggle.

“Urup!” said Mr. Polly. “Hold on! Gollys! where’s she gone to?...”

Then an ill-mended, wavering, yet very reassuring spring side boot appeared for an instant.

“Thought perhaps there wasn’t any roof there!” he explained, scrambling up over the parapet beside her.

“I’ve never been out on a roof before,” said the old lady. “I’m all disconnected. It’s very bumpy. Especially that last bit. Can’t we sit here for a bit and rest? I’m not the girl I useto be.”

“You sit here ten minutes,” shouted Mr. Polly, “and you’ll pop like a roast chestnut. Don’t understand me? *Roast chestnut!* Roast chestnut! Pop! There ought to be a limit to deafness. Come on round to the front and see if we can find an attic window. Look at this smoke!”

“Nasty!” said the old lady, her eyes following his gesture, puckering her face into an expression of great distaste.

“Come on!”

“Can’t hear a word you say.”

He pulled her arm. “Come on!”

She paused for a moment to relieve herself of a series of entirely unexpected chuckles. “*Sich* goings on!” she said, “I never did! Where’s he going now?” and came along behind the parapet to the front of the drapery establishment.

Below, the street was now fully alive to their presence, and encouraged the appearance of their heads by shouts and cheers. A sort of free fight was going on round the fire escape, order represented by Mr. Boomer and the very young policeman, and disorder by some partially intoxicated volunteers with views of their own about the manipulation of the apparatus. Two or three lengths of Mr. Rusper’s garden hose appeared to have twined themselves round the ladder. Mr. Polly watched the struggle with a certain impatience, and glanced ever and again over his shoulder at the increasing

volume of smoke and steam that was pouring up from the burning fire station. He decided to break an attic window and get in, and so try and get down through the shop. He found himself in a little bedroom, and returned to fetch his charge. For some time he could not make her understand his purpose.

"Got to come at once!" he shouted.

"I hain't '*ad sich* a time for years!" said the old lady.

"We'll have to get down through the house!"

"Can't do no jumpin'," said the old lady. "No!"

She yielded reluctantly to his grasp.

She stared over the parapet. "Runnin' and scurrying about like black beetles in a kitchin," she said.

"We've got to hurry."

"Mr. Rumbold 'E's a very Quiet man. 'E likes everything Quiet. He'll be surprised to see me 'ere! Why! — there 'e is!" She fumbled in her garments mysteriously and at last produced a wrinkled pocket handkerchief and began to wave it.

"Oh, come on!" cried Mr. Polly, and seized her.

He got her into the attic, but the staircase, he found, was full of suffocating smoke, and he dared not venture below the next floor. He took her into a long dormitory, shut the door on those pungent and pervasive fumes, and opened the window to discover the fire escape was now against the house, and all Fishbourne boiling with excitement as an immensely helmeted and active and resolute little figure ascended. In another moment the rescuer stared over the windowsill, heroic, but just a trifle self-conscious and grotesque.

"Lawks a mussy!" said the old lady. "Wonders and Wonders! Why! it's Mr. Gambell! 'Iding 'is 'ed in that thing! I *never* did!"

"Can we get her out?" said Mr. Gambell. "There's not much time."

"He might git stuck in it."

"*You'll* get stuck in it," said Mr. Polly, "come along!"

"Not for jumpin' I don't," said the old lady, understanding his gestures rather than his words. "Not a bit of it. I bain't no good at jumping and I *wunt*."

They urged her gently but firmly towards the window.

"You *lemme* do it my own way," said the old lady at the sill....

"I could do it better if e'd take it off."

"Oh! *carm* on!"

"It's wuss than Carter's stile," she said, "before they mended it. With a cow a-looking at you."

Mr. Gambell hovered protectingly below. Mr. Polly steered her aged limbs from above. An anxious crowd below babbled advice and did its best to upset the fire escape. Within, streamers of black smoke were pouring up through the cracks in the floor. For some seconds the world waited while the old lady gave herself up to reckless mirth again. "*Sich* times!" she said, and "*Poor* Rumbold!"

Slowly they descended, and Mr. Polly remained at the post of danger steadying the long ladder until the old lady was in safety below and sheltered by Mr. Rumbold (who was in tears) and the young policeman from the urgent congratulations of the crowd. The crowd was full of an impotent passion to participate. Those nearest wanted to shake her hand, those remoter cheered.

"The fust fire I was ever in and likely to be my last. It's a scurryin', 'urryin' business, but I'm real glad I haven't missed it," said the old lady as she was borne rather than led towards the refuge of the Temperance Hotel.

Also she was heard to remark: "'E was saying something about 'ot chestnuts. *I* 'aven't 'ad no 'ot chestnuts."

Then the crowd became aware of Mr. Polly awkwardly negotiating the top rungs of the fire escape. "'Ere 'e comes!" cried a voice, and Mr. Polly descended into the world again out of the conflagration he had lit to be his funeral pyre, moist, excited, and tremendously alive, amidst a tempest of applause. As he got lower and lower the crowd howled like a pack of dogs at him. Impatient men unable to wait for him seized and shook his descending boots, and so brought him to earth with a run. He was rescued with difficulty from an enthusiast who wished to slake at his own expense and to his own accompaniment a thirst altogether heroic. He was hauled into the Temperance Hotel and flung like a sack, breathless and helpless, into the tear-wet embrace of Miriam.

V

With the dusk and the arrival of some county constabulary, and first one and presently two other fire engines from Port Burdock and Hampstead-on-Sea, the local talent of Fishbourne found itself forced back into a secondary, less responsible and more observant rôle. I will not pursue the story of the fire to its ashes, nor will I do more than glance at the unfortunate Mr. Rusper, a modern Laocoon, vainly trying to retrieve his scattered hose amidst the tramplings and rushings of the Port Burdock experts.

In a small sitting-room of the Fishbourne Temperance Hotel a little group of Fishbourne tradesmen sat and conversed in fragments and anon went to the window and looked out upon the smoking desolation of their homes across the way, and anon sat down again. They and their families were the guests of old Lady Bargrave, who had displayed the utmost sympathy and interest in their misfortunes. She had taken several people into her own house at Everdean, had engaged the Temperance Hotel as a temporary refuge, and personally superintended the housing of Mantell and Throbson's homeless assistants. The Temperance Hotel became and remained extremely noisy and congested, with people sitting about anywhere, conversing in fragments and totally unable to get themselves to bed. The manager was an old soldier, and following the best traditions of the service saw that everyone had hot cocoa. Hot cocoa seemed to be about everywhere, and it was no doubt very heartening and sustaining to everyone. When the manager detected anyone disposed to be drooping or pensive he exhorted that person at once to drink further hot cocoa and maintain a stout heart.

The hero of the occasion, the centre of interest, was Mr. Polly. For he had not only caused the fire by upsetting a lighted lamp, scorching his trousers and narrowly escaping death, as indeed he had now explained in detail about twenty times, but he had further thought at once of that amiable but helpless old lady next door, had shown the utmost decision in making his way to her over the yard wall of the Royal Fishbourne Hotel, and had rescued her with persistence and vigour in spite of the levity natural to her years. Everyone thought well of him and was anxious to show it, more especially by shaking his hand painfully and repeatedly. Mr. Rumbold, breaking a silence of nearly fifteen years, thanked him profusely, said he had never

understood him properly and declared he ought to have a medal. There seemed to be a widely diffused idea that Mr. Polly ought to have a medal. Hinks thought so. He declared, moreover, and with the utmost emphasis, that Mr. Polly had a crowded and richly decorated interior — or words to that effect. There was something apologetic in this persistence; it was as if he regretted past intimations that Mr. Polly was internally defective and hollow. He also said that Mr. Polly was a "white man," albeit, as he developed it, with a liver of the deepest chromatic satisfactions.

Mr. Polly wandered centrally through it all, with his face washed and his hair carefully brushed and parted, looking modest and more than a little absent-minded, and wearing a pair of black dress trousers belonging to the manager of the Temperance Hotel, — a larger man than himself in every way.

He drifted upstairs to his fellow-tradesmen, and stood for a time staring into the littered street, with its pools of water and extinguished gas lamps. His companions in misfortune resumed a fragmentary disconnected conversation. They touched now on one aspect of the disaster and now on another, and there were intervals of silence. More or less empty cocoa cups were distributed over the table, mantelshelf and piano, and in the middle of the table was a tin of biscuits, into which Mr. Rumbold, sitting round-shoulderedly, dipped ever and again in an absent-minded way, and munched like a distant shooting of coals. It added to the solemnity of the affair that nearly all of them were in their black Sunday clothes; little Clamp was particularly impressive and dignified in a wide open frock coat, a Gladstone-shaped paper collar, and a large white and blue tie. They felt that they were in the presence of a great disaster, the sort of disaster that gets into the papers, and is even illustrated by blurred photographs of the crumbling ruins. In the presence of that sort of disaster all honourable men are lugubrious and sententious.

And yet it is impossible to deny a certain element of elation. Not one of those excellent men but was already realising that a great door had opened, as it were, in the opaque fabric of destiny, that they were to get their money again that had seemed sunken for ever beyond any hope in the deeps of retail trade. Life was already in their imagination rising like a Phoenix from the flames.

“I suppose there’ll be a public subscription,” said Mr. Clamp.

“Not for those who’re insured,” said Mr. Wintershed.

“I was thinking of them assistants from Mantell and Throbson’s. They must have lost nearly everything.”

“They’ll be looked after all right,” said Mr. Rumbold. “Never fear.”

Pause.

“*I’m* insured,” said Mr. Clamp, with unconcealed satisfaction. “Royal Salamander.”

“Same here,” said Mr. Wintershed.

“Mine’s the Glasgow Sun,” Mr. Hinks remarked. “Very good company.”

“You insured, Mr. Polly?”

“He deserves to be,” said Rumbold.

“Ra-ther,” said Hinks. “Blowed if he don’t. Hard lines it *would* be — if there wasn’t something for him.”

“Commercial and General,” answered Mr. Polly over his shoulder, still staring out of the window. “Oh! I’m all right.”

The topic dropped for a time, though manifestly it continued to exercise their minds.

“It’s cleared me out of a lot of old stock,” said Mr. Wintershed; “that’s one good thing.”

The remark was felt to be in rather questionable taste, and still more so was his next comment.

“Rusper’s a bit sick it didn’t reach ‘*im*.”

Everyone looked uncomfortable, and no one was willing to point the reason why Rusper should be a bit sick.

“Rusper’s been playing a game of his own,” said Hinks. “Wonder what he thought he was up to! Sittin’ in the middle of the road with a pair of tweezers he was, and about a yard of wire — mending somethin’. Wonder he warn’t run over by the Port Burdock engine.”

Presently a little chat sprang up upon the causes of fires, and Mr. Polly was moved to tell how it had happened for the one and twentieth time. His story had now become as circumstantial and exact as the evidence of a police witness. “Upset the lamp,” he said. “I’d just lighted it, I was going upstairs, and my foot slipped against where one of the treads was a bit rotten, and down I went. Thing was

aflare in a moment!...”

He yawned at the end of the discussion, and moved doorward.

“So long,” said Mr. Polly.

“Good night,” said Mr. Rumbold. “You played a brave man’s part! If you don’t get a medal—”

He left an eloquent pause.

“‘Ear, ‘ear!” said Mr. Wintershed and Mr. Clamp. “Goo’night, O’ Man,” said Mr. Hinks.

“Goo’night All,” said Mr. Polly ...

He went slowly upstairs. The vague perplexity common to popular heroes pervaded his mind. He entered the bedroom and turned up the electric light. It was quite a pleasant room, one of the best in the Temperance Hotel, with a nice clean flowered wallpaper, and a very large looking-glass. Miriam appeared to be asleep, and her shoulders were humped up under the clothes in a shapeless, forbidding lump that Mr. Polly had found utterly loathsome for fifteen years. He went softly over to the dressing-table and surveyed himself thoughtfully. Presently he hitched up the trousers. “Miles too big for me,” he remarked. “Funny not to have a pair of breeches of one’s own.... Like being born again. Naked came I into the world....”

Miriam stirred and rolled over, and stared at him.

“Hello!” she said.

“Hello.”

“Come to bed?”

“It’s three.”

Pause, while Mr. Polly disrobed slowly.

“I been thinking,” said Miriam, “It isn’t going to be so bad after all. We shall get your insurance. We can easy begin all over again.”

“H’m,” said Mr. Polly.

She turned her face away from him and reflected.

“Get a better house,” said Miriam, regarding the wallpaper pattern. “I’ve always ‘ated them stairs.”

Mr. Polly removed a boot.

“Choose a better position where there’s more doing,” murmured Miriam....

“Not half so bad,” she whispered....

“You *wanted* stirring up,” she said, half asleep....

It dawned upon Mr. Polly for the first time that he had forgotten something.

He ought to have cut his throat!

The fact struck him as remarkable, but as now no longer of any particular urgency. It seemed a thing far off in the past, and he wondered why he had not thought of it before. Odd thing life is! If he had done it he would never have seen this clean and agreeable apartment with the electric light.... His thoughts wandered into a question of detail. Where could he have put the razor down? Somewhere in the little room behind the shop, he supposed, but he could not think where more precisely. Anyhow it didn't matter now.

He undressed himself calmly, got into bed, and fell asleep almost immediately.

Chapter the Ninth

The Potwell Inn

I

But when a man has once broken through the paper walls of everyday circumstance, those unsubstantial walls that hold so many of us securely prisoned from the cradle to the grave, he has made a discovery. If the world does not please you *you can change it*. Determine to alter it at any price, and you can change it altogether. You may change it to something sinister and angry, to something appalling, but it may be you will change it to something brighter, something more agreeable, and at the worst something much more interesting. There is only one sort of man who is absolutely to blame for his own misery, and that is the man who finds life dull and dreary. There are no circumstances in the world that determined action cannot alter, unless perhaps they are the walls of a prison cell, and even those will dissolve and change, I am told, into the infirmary compartment at any rate, for the man who can fast with resolution. I give these things as facts and information, and with no moral intimations. And Mr. Polly lying awake at nights, with a renewed indigestion, with Miriam sleeping sonorously beside him and a general air of inevitableness about his situation, saw through it, understood there was no inevitable any more, and escaped his former despair.

He could, for example, "clear out."

It became a wonderful and alluring phrase to him: "clear out!"

Why had he never thought of clearing out before?

He was amazed and a little shocked at the unimaginative and superfluous criminality in him that had turned old cramped and stagnant Fishbourne into a blaze and new beginnings. (I wish from the bottom of my heart I could add that he was properly sorry.) But something constricting and restrained seemed to have been destroyed by that flare. *Fishbourne wasn't the world*. That was the new, the essential fact of which he had lived so lamentably in ignorance.

Fishbourne as he had known it and hated it, so that he wanted to kill himself to get out of it, *wasn't the world*.

The insurance money he was to receive made everything humane and kindly and practicable. He would "clear out," with justice and humanity. He would take exactly twenty-one pounds, and all the rest he would leave to Miriam. That seemed to him absolutely fair. Without him, she could do all sorts of things — all the sorts of things she was constantly urging him to do.

And he would go off along the white road that led to Garchester, and on to Crogate and so to Tunbridge Wells, where there was a Toad Rock he had heard of, but never seen. (It seemed to him this must needs be a marvel.) And so to other towns and cities. He would walk and loiter by the way, and sleep in inns at night, and get an odd job here and there and talk to strange people. Perhaps he would get quite a lot of work and prosper, and if he did not do so he would lie down in front of a train, or wait for a warm night, and then fall into some smooth, broad river. Not so bad as sitting down to a dentist, not nearly so bad. And he would never open a shop any more. Never!

So the possibilities of the future presented themselves to Mr. Polly as he lay awake at nights.

It was springtime, and in the woods so soon as one got out of reach of the sea wind, there would be anémones and primroses.

II

A month later a leisurely and dusty tramp, plump equatorially and slightly bald, with his hands in his pockets and his lips puckered to a contemplative whistle, strolled along the river bank between Uppingdon and Potwell. It was a profusely budding spring day and greens such as God had never permitted in the world before in human memory (though indeed they come every year), were mirrored vividly in a mirror of equally unprecedented brown. For a time the wanderer stopped and stood still, and even the thin whistle died away from his lips as he watched a water vole run to and fro upon a little headland across the stream. The vole plopped into the water and swam and dived and only when the last ring of its disturbance had vanished did Mr. Polly resume his thoughtful course

to nowhere in particular.

For the first time in many years he had been leading a healthy human life, living constantly in the open air, walking every day for eight or nine hours, eating sparingly, accepting every conversational opportunity, not even disdaining the discussion of possible work. And beyond mending a hole in his coat that he had made while negotiating barbed wire, with a borrowed needle and thread in a lodging house, he had done no work at all. Neither had he worried about business nor about time and seasons. And for the first time in his life he had seen the Aurora Borealis.

So far the holiday had cost him very little. He had arranged it on a plan that was entirely his own. He had started with four five-pound notes and a pound divided into silver, and he had gone by train from Fishbourne to Ashington. At Ashington he had gone to the post-office, obtained a registered letter, and sent his four five-pound notes with a short brotherly note addressed to himself at Gilhampton Post-office. He sent this letter to Gilhampton for no other reason in the world than that he liked the name of Gilhampton and the rural suggestion of its containing county, which was Sussex, and having so despatched it, he set himself to discover, mark down and walk to Gilhampton, and so recover his resources. And having got to Gilhampton at last, he changed his five-pound note, bought four pound postal orders, and repeated his manoeuvre with nineteen pounds.

After a lapse of fifteen years he rediscovered this interesting world, about which so many people go incredibly blind and bored. He went along country roads while all the birds were piping and chirruping and cheeping and singing, and looked at fresh new things, and felt as happy and irresponsible as a boy with an unexpected half-holiday. And if ever the thought of Miriam returned to him he controlled his mind. He came to country inns and sat for unmeasured hours talking of this and that to those sage carters who rest for ever in the taps of country inns, while the big sleek brass jingling horses wait patiently outside with their waggons; he got a job with some van people who were wandering about the country with swings and a steam roundabout and remained with them for three days, until one of their dogs took a violent dislike to him and made his duties

unpleasant; he talked to tramps and wayside labourers, he snoozed under hedges by day and in outhouses and hayricks at night, and once, but only once, he slept in a casual ward. He felt as the etiolated grass and daisies must do when you move the garden roller away to a new place.

He gathered a quantity of strange and interesting memories.

He crossed some misty meadows by moonlight and the mist lay low on the grass, so low that it scarcely reached above his waist, and houses and clumps of trees stood out like islands in a milky sea, so sharply denned was the upper surface of the mistbank. He came nearer and nearer to a strange thing that floated like a boat upon this magic lake, and behold! something moved at the stern and a rope was whisked at the prow, and it had changed into a pensive cow, drowsy-eyed, regarding him....

He saw a remarkable sunset in a new valley near Maidstone, a very red and clear sunset, a wide redness under a pale cloudless heaven, and with the hills all round the edge of the sky a deep purple blue and clear and flat, looking exactly as he had seen mountains painted in pictures. He seemed transported to some strange country, and would have felt no surprise if the old labourer he came upon leaning silently over a gate had addressed him in an unfamiliar tongue....

Then one night, just towards dawn, his sleep upon a pile of brushwood was broken by the distant rattle of a racing motor car breaking all the speed regulations, and as he could not sleep again, he got up and walked into Maidstone as the day came. He had never been abroad in a town at half-past two in his life before, and the stillness of everything in the bright sunrise impressed him profoundly. At one corner was a startling policeman, standing in a doorway quite motionless, like a waxen image. Mr. Polly wished him "good morning" unanswered, and went down to the bridge over the Medway and sat on the parapet very still and thoughtful, watching the town awaken, and wondering what he should do if it didn't, if the world of men never woke again....

One day he found himself going along a road, with a wide space of sprouting bracken and occasional trees on either side, and suddenly this road became strangely, perplexingly familiar. "Lord!"

he said, and turned about and stood. “It can’t be.”

He was incredulous, then left the road and walked along a scarcely perceptible track to the left, and came in half a minute to an old lichenous stone wall. It seemed exactly the bit of wall he had known so well. It might have been but yesterday he was in that place; there remained even a little pile of wood. It became absurdly the same wood. The bracken perhaps was not so high, and most of its fronds still uncoiled; that was all. Here he had stood, it seemed, and there she had sat and looked down upon him. Where was she now, and what had become of her? He counted the years back and marvelled that beauty should have called to him with so imperious a voice — and signified nothing.

He hoisted himself with some little difficulty to the top of the wall, and saw off under the beech trees two schoolgirls — small, insignificant, pig-tailed creatures, with heads of blond and black, with their arms twined about each other’s necks, no doubt telling each other the silliest secrets.

But that girl with the red hair — was she a countess? was she a queen? Children perhaps? Had sorrow dared to touch her?

Had she forgotten altogether?...

A tramp sat by the roadside thinking, and it seemed to the man in the passing motor car he must needs be plotting for another pot of beer. But as a matter of fact what the tramp was saying to himself over and over again was a variant upon a well-known Hebrew word.

“Itchabod,” the tramp was saying in the voice of one who reasons on the side of the inevitable. “It’s Fair Itchabod, O’ Man. There’s no going back to it.”

III

It was about two o’clock in the afternoon one hot day in high May when Mr. Polly, unhurrying and serene, came to that broad bend of the river to which the little lawn and garden of the Potwell Inn run down. He stopped at the sight of the place with its deep tiled roof, nestling under big trees — you never get a decently big, decently shaped tree by the seaside — its sign towards the roadway, its sun-blistered green bench and tables, its shapely white windows and its

row of upshooting hollyhock plants in the garden. A hedge separated it from a buttercup-yellow meadow, and beyond stood three poplars in a group against the sky, three exceptionally tall, graceful and harmonious poplars. It is hard to say what there was about them that made them so beautiful to Mr. Polly; but they seemed to him to touch a pleasant scene to a distinction almost divine. He remained admiring them for a long time. At last the need for coarser aesthetic satisfactions arose in him.

"Provinder," he whispered, drawing near to the Inn. "Cold sirlion for choice. And nut-brown brew and wheaten bread."

The nearer he came to the place the more he liked it. The windows on the ground floor were long and low, and they had pleasing red blinds. The green tables outside were agreeably ringed with memories of former drinks, and an extensive grape vine spread level branches across the whole front of the place. Against the wall was a broken oar, two boat-hooks and the stained and faded red cushions of a pleasure boat. One went up three steps to the glass-panelled door and peeped into a broad, low room with a bar and beer engine, behind which were many bright and helpful looking bottles against mirrors, and great and little pewter measures, and bottles fastened in brass wire upside down with their corks replaced by taps, and a white china cask labelled "Shrub," and cigar boxes and boxes of cigarettes, and a couple of Toby jugs and a beautifully coloured hunting scene framed and glazed, showing the most elegant and beautiful people taking Piper's Cherry Brandy, and cards such as the law requires about the dilution of spirits and the illegality of bringing children into bars, and satirical verses about swearing and asking for credit, and three very bright red-cheeked wax apples and a round-shaped clock.

But these were the mere background to the really pleasant thing in the spectacle, which was quite the plumpest woman Mr. Polly had ever seen, seated in an armchair in the midst of all these bottles and glasses and glittering things, peacefully and tranquilly, and without the slightest loss of dignity, asleep. Many people would have called her a fat woman, but Mr. Polly's innate sense of epithet told him from the outset that plump was the word. She had shapely brows and a straight, well-shaped nose, kind lines and contentment about her

mouth, and beneath it the jolly chins clustered like chubby little cherubim about the feet of an Assumptioning-Madonna. Her plumpness was firm and pink and wholesome, and her hands, dimpled at every joint, were clasped in front of her; she seemed as it were to embrace herself with infinite confidence and kindliness as one who knew herself good in substance, good in essence, and would show her gratitude to God by that ready acceptance of all that he had given her. Her head was a little on one side, not much, but just enough to speak of trustfulness, and rob her of the stiff effect of self-reliance. And she slept.

"*My* sort," said Mr. Polly, and opened the door very softly, divided between the desire to enter and come nearer and an instinctive indisposition to break slumbers so manifestly sweet and satisfying.

She awoke with a start, and it amazed Mr. Polly to see swift terror flash into her eyes. Instantly it had gone again.

"Law!" she said, her face softening with relief, "I thought you were Jim."

"I'm never Jim," said Mr. Polly.

"You've got his sort of hat."

"Ah!" said Mr. Polly, and leant over the bar.

"It just came into my head you was Jim," said the plump lady, dismissed the topic and stood up. "I believe I was having forty winks," she said, "if all the truth was told. What can I do for you?"

"Cold meat?" said Mr. Polly.

"There *is* cold meat," the plump woman admitted.

"And room for it."

The plump woman came and leant over the bar and regarded him judicially, but kindly. "There's some cold boiled beef," she said, and added: "A bit of crisp lettuce?"

"New mustard," said Mr. Polly.

"And a tankard!"

"A tankard."

They understood each other perfectly.

"Looking for work?" asked the plump woman.

"In a way," said Mr. Polly.

They smiled like old friends.

Whatever the truth may be about love, there is certainly such a thing as friendship at first sight. They liked each other's voices, they liked each other's way of smiling and speaking.

"It's such beautiful weather this spring," said Mr. Polly, explaining everything.

"What sort of work do you want?" she asked.

"I've never properly thought that out," said Mr. Polly. "I've been looking round — for Ideas."

"Will you have your beef in the tap or outside? That's the tap."

Mr. Polly had a glimpse of an oaken settle. "In the tap will be handier for you," he said.

"Hear that?" said the plump lady.

"Hear what?"

"Listen."

Presently the silence was broken by a distant howl. "Oooooo-*ver*!" "Eh?" she said.

He nodded.

"That's the ferry. And there isn't a ferryman."

"Could I?"

"Can you punt?"

"Never tried."

"Well — pull the pole out before you reach the end of the punt, that's all. Try."

Mr. Polly went out again into the sunshine.

At times one can tell so much so briefly. Here are the facts then — bare. He found a punt and a pole, got across to the steps on the opposite side, picked up an elderly gentleman in an alpaca jacket and a pith helmet, cruised with him vaguely for twenty minutes, conveyed him tortuously into the midst of a thicket of forget-me-not spangled sedges, splashed some water-weed over him, hit him twice with the punt pole, and finally landed him, alarmed but abusive, in treacherous soil at the edge of a hay meadow about forty yards down stream, where he immediately got into difficulties with a noisy, aggressive little white dog, which was guardian of a jacket.

Mr. Polly returned in a complicated manner to his moorings.

He found the plump woman rather flushed and tearful, and seated at one of the green tables outside.

“I been laughing at you,” she said.

“What for?” asked Mr. Polly.

“I ain’t ‘ad such a laugh since Jim come ‘ome. When you ‘it ‘is ‘ed, it ‘urt my side.”

“It didn’t hurt his head — not particularly.”

She waved her head. “Did you charge him anything?”

“Gratis,” said Mr. Polly. “I never thought of it.”

The plump woman pressed her hands to her sides and laughed silently for a space. “You ought to have charged him sumpthing,” she said. “You better come and have your cold meat, before you do any more puntin’. You and me’ll get on together.”

Presently she came and stood watching him eat. “You eat better than you punt,” she said, and then, “I dessay you could learn to punt.”

“Wax to receive and marble to retain,” said Mr. Polly. “This beef is a Bit of All Right, Ma’m. I could have done differently if I hadn’t been punting on an empty stomach. There’s a lear feeling as the pole goes in—”

“I’ve never held with fasting,” said the plump woman.

“You want a ferryman?”

“I want an odd man about the place.”

“I’m odd, all right. What’s your wages?”

“Not much, but you get tips and pickings. I’ve a sort of feeling it would suit you.”

“I’ve a sort of feeling it would. What’s the duties? Fetch and carry? Ferry? Garden? Wash bottles? *Ceteris paribus?*”

“That’s about it,” said the fat woman.

“Give me a trial.”

“I’ve more than half a mind. Or I wouldn’t have said anything about it. I suppose you’re all right. You’ve got a sort of half-respectable look about you. I suppose you ‘aven’t *done* anything.”

“Bit of Arson,” said Mr. Polly, as if he jested.

“So long as you haven’t the habit,” said the plump woman.

“My first time, M’am,” said Mr. Polly, munching his way through an excellent big leaf of lettuce. “And my last.”

“It’s all right if you haven’t been to prison,” said the plump woman. “It isn’t what a man’s happened to do makes ‘im bad. We all

happen to do things at times. It's bringing it home to him, and spoiling his self-respect does the mischief. You don't *look* a wrong 'un. 'Ave you been to prison?"

"Never."

"Nor a reformatory? Nor any institution?"

"Not me. Do I *look* reformed?"

"Can you paint and carpenter a bit?"

"Well, I'm ripe for it."

"Have a bit of cheese?"

"If I might."

And the way she brought the cheese showed Mr. Polly that the business was settled in her mind.

He spent the afternoon exploring the premises of the Potwell Inn and learning the duties that might be expected of him, such as Stockholm tarring fences, digging potatoes, swabbing out boats, helping people land, embarking, landing and time-keeping for the hirers of two rowing boats and one Canadian canoe, baling out the said vessels and concealing their leaks and defects from prospective hirers, persuading inexperienced hirers to start down stream rather than up, repairing rowlocks and taking inventories of returning boats with a view to supplementary charges, cleaning boots, sweeping chimneys, house-painting, cleaning windows, sweeping out and sanding the tap and bar, cleaning pewter, washing glasses, turpentining woodwork, whitewashing generally, plumbing and engineering, repairing locks and clocks, waiting and tapster's work generally, beating carpets and mats, cleaning bottles and saving corks, taking into the cellar, moving, tapping and connecting beer casks with their engines, blocking and destroying wasps' nests, doing forestry with several trees, drowning superfluous kittens, and dog-fancying as required, assisting in the rearing of ducklings and the care of various poultry, bee-keeping, stabling, baiting and grooming horses and asses, cleaning and "garing" motor cars and bicycles, inflating tires and repairing punctures, recovering the bodies of drowned persons from the river as required, and assisting people in trouble in the water, first-aid and sympathy, improvising and superintending a bathing station for visitors, attending inquests and funerals in the interests of the establishment, scrubbing floors and all

the ordinary duties of a scullion, the ferry, chasing hens and goats from the adjacent cottages out of the garden, making up paths and superintending drainage, gardening generally, delivering bottled beer and soda water syphons in the neighbourhood, running miscellaneous errands, removing drunken and offensive persons from the premises by tact or muscle as occasion required, keeping in with the local policemen, defending the premises in general and the orchard in particular from depredators....

"Can but try it," said Mr. Polly towards tea time. "When there's nothing else on hand I suppose I might do a bit of fishing."

IV

Mr. Polly was particularly charmed by the ducklings.

They were piping about among the vegetables in the company of their foster mother, and as he and the plump woman came down the garden path the little creatures mobbed them, and ran over their boots and in between Mr. Polly's legs, and did their best to be trodden upon and killed after the manner of ducklings all the world over. Mr. Polly had never been near young ducklings before, and their extreme blondness and the delicate completeness of their feet and beaks filled him with admiration. It is open to question whether there is anything more friendly in the world than a very young duckling. It was with the utmost difficulty that he tore himself away to practise punting, with the plump woman coaching from the bank. Punting he found was difficult, but not impossible, and towards four o'clock he succeeded in conveying a second passenger across the sundering flood from the inn to the unknown.

As he returned, slowly indeed, but now one might almost say surely, to the peg to which the punt was moored, he became aware of a singularly delightful human being awaiting him on the bank. She stood with her legs very wide apart, her hands behind her back, and her head a little on one side, watching his gestures with an expression of disdainful interest. She had black hair and brown legs and a buff short frock and very intelligent eyes. And when he had reached a sufficient proximity she remarked: "Hello!"

"Hello," said Mr. Polly, and saved himself in the nick of time

from disaster.

"Silly," said the young lady, and Mr. Polly lunged nearer.

"What are you called?"

"Polly."

"Liar!"

"Why?"

"I'm Polly."

"Then I'm Alfred. But I meant to be Polly."

"I was first."

"All right. I'm going to be the ferryman."

"I see. You'll have to punt better."

"You should have seen me early in the afternoon."

"I can imagine it.... I've seen the others."

"What others?" Mr. Polly had landed now and was fastening up the punt.

"What Uncle Jim has scooted."

"Scooted?"

"He comes and scoots them. He'll scoot you too, I expect."

A mysterious shadow seemed to fall athwart the sunshine and pleasantness of the Potwell Inn.

"I'm not a scooter," said Mr. Polly.

"Uncle Jim is."

She whistled a little flatly for a moment, and threw small stones at a clump of meadow-sweet that sprang from the bank. Then she remarked:

"When Uncle Jim comes back he'll cut your insides out.... P'raps, very likely, he'll let me see."

There was a pause.

"*Who's* Uncle Jim?" Mr. Polly asked in a faded voice.

"Don't you know who Uncle Jim is? He'll show you. He's a scorcher, is Uncle Jim. He only came back just a little time ago, and he's scooted three men. He don't like strangers about, don't Uncle Jim. He *can* swear. He's going to teach me, soon as I can whissle properly."

"Teach you to swear!" cried Mr. Polly, horrified.

"*And* spit," said the little girl proudly. "He says I'm the gamest little beast he ever came across — ever."

For the first time in his life it seemed to Mr. Polly that he had come across something sheerly dreadful. He stared at the pretty thing of flesh and spirit in front of him, lightly balanced on its stout little legs and looking at him with eyes that had still to learn the expression of either disgust or fear.

"I say," said Mr. Polly, "how old are you?"

"Nine," said the little girl.

She turned away and reflected. Truth compelled her to add one other statement.

"He's not what I should call handsome, not Uncle Jim," she said. "But he's a scorcher and no mistake.... Gramma don't like him."

V

Mr. Polly found the plump woman in the big bricked kitchen lighting a fire for tea. He went to the root of the matter at once.

"I say," he asked, "who's Uncle Jim?"

The plump woman blanched and stood still for a moment. A stick fell out of the bundle in her hand unheeded.

"That little granddaughter of mine been saying things?" she asked faintly.

"Bits of things," said Mr. Polly.

"Well, I suppose I must tell you sooner or later. He's — . It's Jim. He's the Drorback to this place, that's what he is. The Drorback. I hoped you mightn't hear so soon.... Very likely he's gone."

"*She* don't seem to think so."

"'E 'asn't been near the place these two weeks and more," said the plump woman.

"But who is he?"

"I suppose I got to tell you," said the plump woman.

"She says he scoots people," Mr. Polly remarked after a pause.

"He's my own sister's son." The plump woman watched the crackling fire for a space. "I suppose I got to tell you," she repeated.

She softened towards tears. "I try not to think of it, and night and day he's haunting me. I try not to think of it. I've been for easy-going all my life. But I'm that worried and afraid, with death and ruin threatened and evil all about me! I don't know what to do! My own

sister's son, and me a widow woman and 'elpless against his doin's!"

She put down the sticks she held upon the fender, and felt for her handkerchief. She began to sob and talk quickly.

"I wouldn't mind nothing else half so much if he'd leave that child alone. But he goes talking to her — if I leave her a moment he's talking to her, teaching her words and giving her ideas!"

"That's a Bit Thick," said Mr. Polly.

"Thick!" cried the plump woman; "it's 'orrible! And what am I to do? He's been here three times now, six days and a week and a part of a week, and I pray to God night and day he may never come again. Praying! Back he's come sure as fate. He takes my money and he takes my things. He won't let no man stay here to protect me or do the boats or work the ferry. The ferry's getting a scandal. They stand and shout and scream and use language.... If I complain they'll say I'm helpless to manage here, they'll take away my license, out I shall go — and it's all the living I can get — and he knows it, and he plays on it, and he don't care. And here I am. I'd send the child away, but I got nowhere to send the child. I buys him off when it comes to that, and back he comes, worse than ever, prowling round and doing evil. And not a soul to help me. Not a soul! I just hoped there might be a day or so. Before he comes back again. I was just hoping — I'm the sort that hopes."

Mr. Polly was reflecting on the flaws and drawbacks that seem to be inseparable from all the more agreeable things in life.

"Biggish sort of man, I expect?" asked Mr. Polly, trying to get the situation in all its bearings.

But the plump woman did not heed him. She was going on with her fire-making, and retailing in disconnected fragments the fearfulness of Uncle Jim.

"There was always something a bit wrong with him," she said, "but nothing you mightn't have hoped for, not till they took him and carried him off and reformed him....

"He was cruel to the hens and chickings, it's true, and stuck a knife into another boy, but then I've seen him that nice to a cat, nobody could have been kinder. I'm sure he didn't do no 'arm to that cat whatever anyone tries to make out of it. I'd never listen to that.... It was that reformatory ruined him. They put him along of a lot of

London boys full of ideas of wickedness, and because he didn't mind pain — and he don't, I will admit, try as I would — they made him think himself a hero. Them boys laughed at the teachers they set over them, laughed and mocked at them — and I don't suppose they was the best teachers in the world; I don't suppose, and I don't suppose anyone sensible does suppose that everyone who goes to be a teacher or a chapl'in or a warder in a Reformatory Home goes and changes right away into an Angel of Grace from Heaven — and Oh, Lord! where was I?"

"What did they send him to the Reformatory for?"

"Playing truant and stealing. He stole right enough — stole the money from an old woman, and what was I to do when it came to the trial but say what I knew. And him like a viper a-looking at me — more like a viper than a human boy. He leans on the bar and looks at me. 'All right, Aunt Flo,' he says, just that and nothing more. Time after time, I've dreamt of it, and now he's come. 'They've Reformed me,' he says, 'and made me a devil, and devil I mean to be to you. So out with it,' he says."

"What did you give him last time?" asked Mr. Polly.

"Three golden pounds," said the plump woman.

"'That won't last very long,' he says. 'But there ain't no hurry. I'll be back in a week about.' If I wasn't one of the hoping sort—"

She left the sentence unfinished.

Mr. Polly reflected. "What sort of a size is he?" he asked. "I'm not one of your Herculaceous sort, if you mean that. Nothing very wonderful bicepitally."

"You'll scoot," said the plump woman with conviction rather than bitterness. "You'd better scoot now, and I'll try and find some money for him to go away again when he comes. It ain't reasonable to expect you to do anything but scoot. But I suppose it's the way of a woman in trouble to try and get help from a man, and hope and hope. I'm the hoping sort."

"How long's he been about?" asked Mr. Polly, ignoring his own outlook.

"Three months it is come the seventh since he come in by that very back door — and I hadn't set eyes on him for seven long years. He stood in the door watchin' me, and suddenly he let off a yelp —

like a dog, and there he was grinning at the fright he'd given me. 'Good old Aunty Flo,' he says, 'ain't you dee-lighted to see me?' he says, 'now I'm Reformed.'"

The plump lady went to the sink and filled the kettle.

"I never did like 'im," she said, standing at the sink. "And seeing him there, with his teeth all black and broken — . P'raps I didn't give him much of a welcome at first. Not what would have been kind to him. 'Lord!' I said, 'it's Jim.'"

"'It's Jim,' he said. 'Like a bad shillin' — like a damned bad shilling. Jim and trouble. You all of you wanted me Reformed and now you got me Reformed. I'm a Reformatory Reformed Character, warranted all right and turned out as such. Ain't you going to ask me in, Aunty dear?'

"'Come in,' I said, 'I won't have it said I wasn't ready to be kind to you!'

"He comes in and shuts the door. Down he sits in that chair. 'I come to torment you!' he says, 'you Old Sumpthing!' and begins at me.... No human being could ever have been called such things before. It made me cry out. 'And now,' he says, 'just to show I ain't afraid of 'urting you,' he says, and ups and twists my wrist."

Mr. Polly gasped.

"I could stand even his vi'lence," said the plump woman, "if it wasn't for the child."

Mr. Polly went to the kitchen window and surveyed his namesake, who was away up the garden path with her hands behind her back, and whisps of black hair in disorder about her little face, thinking, thinking profoundly, about ducklings.

"You two oughtn't to be left," he said.

The plump woman stared at his back with hard hope in her eyes.

"I don't see that it's *my* affair," said Mr. Polly.

The plump woman resumed her business with the kettle.

"I'd like to have a look at him before I go," said Mr. Polly, thinking aloud. And added, "somehow. Not my business, of course."

"Lord!" he cried with a start at a noise in the bar, "who's that?"

"Only a customer," said the plump woman.

Mr. Polly made no rash promises, and thought a great deal.

"It seems a good sort of Crib," he said, and added, "for a chap who's looking for trouble."

But he stayed on and did various things out of the list I have already given, and worked the ferry, and it was four days before he saw anything of Uncle Jim. And so *resistent* is the human mind to things not yet experienced that he could easily have believed in that time that there was no such person in the world as Uncle Jim. The plump woman, after her one outbreak of confidence, ignored the subject, and little Polly seemed to have exhausted her impressions in her first communication, and engaged her mind now with a simple directness in the study and subjugation of the new human being Heaven had sent into her world. The first unfavourable impression of his punting was soon effaced; he could nickname ducklings very amusingly, create boats out of wooden splinters, and stalk and fly from imaginary tigers in the orchard with a convincing earnestness that was surely beyond the power of any other human being. She conceded at last that he should be called Mr. Polly, in honour of her, Miss Polly, even as he desired.

Uncle Jim turned up in the twilight.

Uncle Jim appeared with none of the disruptive violence Mr. Polly had dreaded. He came quite softly. Mr. Polly was going down the lane behind the church that led to the Potwell Inn after posting a letter to the lime-juice people at the post-office. He was walking slowly, after his habit, and thinking discursively. With a sudden tightening of the muscles he became aware of a figure walking noiselessly beside him. His first impression was of a face singularly broad above and with a wide empty grin as its chief feature below, of a slouching body and dragging feet.

"Arf a mo'," said the figure, as if in response to his start, and speaking in a hoarse whisper. "Arf a mo', mister. You the noo bloke at the Potwell Inn?"

Mr. Polly felt evasive. "'Spose I am," he replied hoarsely, and quickened his pace.

"Arf a mo'," said Uncle Jim, taking his arm. "We ain't doing a (sanguinary) Marathon. It ain't a (decorated) cinder track. I want a word with you, mister. See?"

Mr. Polly wriggled his arm free and stopped. “What is it?” he asked, and faced the terror.

“I jest want a (decorated) word wiv you. See? — just a friendly word or two. Just to clear up any blooming errors. That’s all I want. No need to be so (richly decorated) proud, if you *are* the noo bloke at Potwell Inn. Not a bit of it. See?”

Uncle Jim was certainly not a handsome person. He was short, shorter than Mr. Polly, with long arms and lean big hands, a thin and wiry neck stuck out of his grey flannel shirt and supported a big head that had something of the snake in the convergent lines of its broad knotty brow, meanly proportioned face and pointed chin. His almost toothless mouth seemed a cavern in the twilight. Some accident had left him with one small and active and one large and expressionless reddish eye, and wisps of straight hair strayed from under the blue cricket cap he wore pulled down obliquely over the latter. He spat between his teeth and wiped his mouth untidily with the soft side of his fist.

“You got to blurry well shift,” he said. “See?”

“Shift!” said Mr. Polly. “How?”

“‘Cos the Potwell Inn’s *my* beat. See?”

Mr. Polly had never felt less witty. “How’s it your beat?” he asked.

Uncle Jim thrust his face forward and shook his open hand, bent like a claw, under Mr. Polly’s nose. “Not your blooming business,” he said. “You got to shift.”

“S’pose I don’t,” said Mr. Polly.

“You got to shift.”

The tone of Uncle Jim’s voice became urgent and confidential.

“You don’t know who you’re up against,” he said. “It’s a kindness I’m doing to warn you. See? I’m just one of those blokes who don’t stick at things, see? I don’t stick at nuffin’.”

Mr. Polly’s manner became detached and confidential — as though the matter and the speaker interested him greatly, but didn’t concern him over-much. “What do you think you’ll do?” he asked.

“If you don’t clear out?”

“Yes.”

“*Gaw!*” said Uncle Jim. “You’d better. ‘*Ere!*”

He gripped Mr. Polly's wrist with a grip of steel, and in an instant Mr. Polly understood the relative quality of their muscles. He breathed, an uninspiring breath, into Mr. Polly's face.

"What *won't* I do?" he said. "Once I start in on you."

He paused, and the night about them seemed to be listening. "I'll make a mess of you," he said in his hoarse whisper. "I'll do you — injuries. I'll 'urt you. I'll kick you ugly, see? I'll 'urt you in 'orrible ways— 'orrible, ugly ways...."

He scrutinised Mr. Polly's face.

"You'll cry," he said, "to see yourself. See? Cry you will."

"You got no right," began Mr. Polly.

"Right!" His note was fierce. "Ain't the old woman me aunt?"

He spoke still closer. "I'll make a gory mess of you. I'll cut bits orf you—"

He receded a little. "I got no quarrel with *you*," he said.

"It's too late to go to-night," said Mr. Polly.

"I'll be round to-morrer— 'bout eleven. See? And if I finds you —"

He produced a blood-curdling oath.

"H'm," said Mr. Polly, trying to keep things light. "We'll consider your suggestions."

"You better," said Uncle Jim, and suddenly, noiselessly, was going.

His whispering voice sank until Mr. Polly could hear only the dim fragments of sentences. "Orrible things to you— 'orrible things.... Kick yer ugly.... Cut yer — liver out... spread it all about, I will.... Outing doos. See? I don't care a dead rat one way or the uvver."

And with a curious twisting gesture of the arm Uncle Jim receded until his face was a still, dim thing that watched, and the black shadows of the hedge seemed to have swallowed up his body altogether.

VII

Next morning about half-past ten Mr. Polly found himself seated under a clump of fir trees by the roadside and about three miles and a half from the Potwell Inn. He was by no means sure whether he was

taking a walk to clear his mind or leaving that threat-marred Paradise for good and all. His reason pointed a lean, unhesitating finger along the latter course.

For after all, the thing was not *his* quarrel.

That agreeable plump woman, agreeable, motherly, comfortable as she might be, wasn't his affair; that child with the mop of black hair who combined so magically the charm of mouse and butterfly and flitting bird, who was daintier than a flower and softer than a peach, was no concern of his. Good heavens! what were they to him? Nothing!...

Uncle Jim, of course, *had* a claim, a sort of claim.

If it came to duty and chucking up this attractive, indolent, observant, humorous, tramping life, there were those who had a right to him, a legitimate right, a prior claim on his protection and chivalry.

Why not listen to the call of duty and go back to Miriam now?...

He had had a very agreeable holiday....

And while Mr. Polly sat thinking these things as well as he could, he knew that if only he dared to look up the heavens had opened and the clear judgment on his case was written across the sky.

He knew — he knew now as much as a man can know of life. He knew he had to fight or perish.

Life had never been so clear to him before. It had always been a confused, entertaining spectacle, he had responded to this impulse and that, seeking agreeable and entertaining things, evading difficult and painful things. Such is the way of those who grow up to a life that has neither danger nor honour in its texture. He had been muddled and wrapped about and entangled like a creature born in the jungle who has never seen sea or sky. Now he had come out of it suddenly into a great exposed place. It was as if God and Heaven waited over him and all the earth was expectation.

"Not my business," said Mr. Polly, speaking aloud. "Where the devil do *I* come in?"

And again, with something between a whine and a snarl in his voice, "not my blasted business!"

His mind seemed to have divided itself into several compartments, each with its own particular discussion busily in

progress, and quite regardless of the others. One was busy with the detailed interpretation of the phrase “Kick you ugly.” There’s a sort of French wrestling in which you use and guard against feet. Watch the man’s eye, and as his foot comes up, grip and over he goes — at your mercy if you use the advantage right. But how do you use the advantage rightly?

When he thought of Uncle Jim the inside feeling of his body faded away rapidly to a blank discomfort....

“Old cadger! She hadn’t no business to drag me into her quarrels. Ought to go to the police and ask for help! Dragging me into a quarrel that don’t concern me.”

“Wish I’d never set eyes on the rotten inn!”

The reality of the case arched over him like the vault of the sky, as plain as the sweet blue heavens above and the wide spread of hill and valley about him. Man comes into life to seek and find his sufficient beauty, to serve it, to win and increase it, to fight for it, to face anything and dare anything for it, counting death as nothing so long as the dying eyes still turn to it. And fear, and dulness and indolence and appetite, which indeed are no more than fear’s three crippled brothers who make ambushes and creep by night, are against him, to delay him, to hold him off, to hamper and beguile and kill him in that quest. He had but to lift his eyes to see all that, as much a part of his world as the driving clouds and the bending grass, but he kept himself downcast, a grumbling, inglorious, dirty, fattish little tramp, full of dreads and quivering excuses.

“Why the hell was I ever born?” he said, with the truth almost winning him.

What do you do when a dirty man who smells, gets you down and under in the dirt and dust with a knee below your diaphragm and a large hairy hand squeezing your windpipe tighter and tighter in a quarrel that isn’t, properly speaking, yours?

“If I had a chance against him—” protested Mr. Polly.

“It’s no Good, you see,” said Mr. Polly.

He stood up as though his decision was made, and was for an instant struck still by doubt.

There lay the road before him going this way to the east and that to the west.

Westward, one hour away now, was the Potwell Inn. Already things might be happening there....

Eastward was the wise man's course, a road dipping between hedges to a hop garden and a wood and presently no doubt reaching an inn, a picturesque church, perhaps, a village and fresh company. The wise man's course. Mr. Polly saw himself going along it, and tried to see himself going along it with all the self-applause a wise man feels. But somehow it wouldn't come like that. The wise man fell short of happiness for all his wisdom. The wise man had a paunch and round shoulders and red ears and excuses. It was a pleasant road, and why the wise man should not go along it merry and singing, full of summer happiness, was a miracle to Mr. Polly's mind, but confound it! the fact remained, the figure went slinking — slinking was the only word for it — and would not go otherwise than slinking. He turned his eyes westward as if for an explanation, and if the figure was no longer ignoble, the prospect was appalling.

"One kick in the stummick would settle a chap like me," said Mr. Polly.

"Oh, God!" cried Mr. Polly, and lifted his eyes to heaven, and said for the last time in that struggle, "It isn't my affair!"

And so saying he turned his face towards the Potwell Inn.

He went back neither halting nor hastening in his pace after this last decision, but with a mind feverishly busy.

"If I get killed, I get killed, and if he gets killed I get hung. Don't seem just somehow.

"Don't suppose I shall *frighten* him off."

VIII

The private war between Mr. Polly and Uncle Jim for the possession of the Potwell Inn fell naturally into three chief campaigns. There was first of all the great campaign which ended in the triumphant eviction of Uncle Jim from the inn premises, there came next after a brief interval the futile invasions of the premises by Uncle Jim that culminated in the Battle of the Dead Eel, and after some months of involuntary truce there was the last supreme conflict of the Night Surprise. Each of these campaigns merits a section to itself.

Mr. Polly re-entered the inn discreetly. He found the plump woman seated in her bar, her eyes a-stare, her face white and wet with tears. “O God!” she was saying over and over again. “O God!” The air was full of a spirituous reek, and on the sanded boards in front of the bar were the fragments of a broken bottle and an overturned glass.

She turned her despair at the sound of his entry, and despair gave place to astonishment.

“You come back!” she said.

“Ra-ther,” said Mr. Polly.

“He’s — he’s mad drunk and looking for her.”

“Where is she?”

“Locked upstairs.”

“Haven’t you sent to the police?”

“No one to send.”

“I’ll see to it,” said Mr. Polly. “Out this way?”

She nodded.

He went to the crinkly paned window and peered out. Uncle Jim was coming down the garden path towards the house, his hands in his pockets and singing hoarsely. Mr. Polly remembered afterwards with pride and amazement that he felt neither faint nor rigid. He glanced round him, seized a bottle of beer by the neck as an improvised club, and went out by the garden door. Uncle Jim stopped amazed. His brain did not instantly rise to the new posture of things. “You!” he cried, and stopped for a moment. “You — *scoot!*”

“*Your* job,” said Mr. Polly, and advanced some paces.

Uncle Jim stood swaying with wrathful astonishment and then darted forward with clutching hands. Mr. Polly felt that if his antagonist closed he was lost, and smote with all his force at the ugly head before him. Smash went the bottle, and Uncle Jim staggered, half-stunned by the blow and blinded with beer.

The lapses and leaps of the human mind are for ever mysterious. Mr. Polly had never expected that bottle to break. In the instant he felt disarmed and helpless. Before him was Uncle Jim, infuriated and evidently still coming on, and for defence was nothing but the neck of a bottle.

For a time our Mr. Polly has figured heroic. Now comes the fall

again; he sounded abject terror; he dropped that ineffectual scrap of glass and turned and fled round the corner of the house.

"Bolls!" came the thick voice of the enemy behind him as one who accepts a challenge, and bleeding, but indomitable, Uncle Jim entered the house.

"Bolls!" he said, surveying the bar. "Fightin' with bolls! I'll show 'im fightin' with bolls!"

Uncle Jim had learnt all about fighting with bottles in the Reformatory Home. Regardless of his terror-stricken aunt he ranged among the bottled beer and succeeded after one or two failures in preparing two bottles to his satisfaction by knocking off the bottoms, and gripping them dagger-wise by the necks. So prepared, he went forth again to destroy Mr. Polly.

Mr. Polly, freed from the sense of urgent pursuit, had halted beyond the raspberry canes and rallied his courage. The sense of Uncle Jim victorious in the house restored his manhood. He went round by the outhouses to the riverside, seeking a weapon, and found an old paddle boat hook. With this he smote Uncle Jim as he emerged by the door of the tap. Uncle Jim, blaspheming dreadfully and with dire stabbing intimations in either hand, came through the splintering paddle like a circus rider through a paper hoop, and once more Mr. Polly dropped his weapon and fled.

A careless observer watching him sprint round and round the inn in front of the lumbering and reproachful pursuit of Uncle Jim might have formed an altogether erroneous estimate of the issue of the campaign. Certain compensating qualities of the very greatest military value were appearing in Mr. Polly even as he ran; if Uncle Jim had strength and brute courage and the rich toughening experience a Reformatory Home affords, Mr. Polly was nevertheless sober, more mobile and with a mind now stimulated to an almost incredible nimbleness. So that he not only gained on Uncle Jim, but thought what use he might make of this advantage. The word "strategious" flamed red across the tumult of his mind. As he came round the house for the third time, he darted suddenly into the yard, swung the door to behind himself and bolted it, seized the zinc pig's pail that stood by the entrance to the kitchen and had it neatly and resonantly over Uncle Jim's head as he came belatedly in round the

outhouse on the other side. One of the splintered bottles jabbed Mr. Polly's ear — at the time it seemed of no importance — and then Uncle Jim was down and writhing dangerously and noisily upon the yard tiles, with his head still in the pig pail and his bottles gone to splinters, and Mr. Polly was fastening the kitchen door against him.

"Can't go on like this for ever," said Mr. Polly, whooping for breath, and selecting a weapon from among the brooms that stood behind the kitchen door.

Uncle Jim was losing his head. He was up and kicking the door and bellowing unamiable proposals and invitations, so that a strategist emerging silently by the tap door could locate him without difficulty, steal upon him unawares and — !

But before that felling blow could be delivered Uncle Jim's ear had caught a footfall, and he turned. Mr. Polly quailed and lowered his broom, — a fatal hesitation.

"*Now* I got you!" cried Uncle Jim, dancing forward in a disconcerting zigzag.

He rushed to close, and Mr. Polly stopped him neatly, as it were a miracle, with the head of the broom across his chest. Uncle Jim seized the broom with both hands. "Lea-go!" he said, and tugged. Mr. Polly shook his head, tugged, and showed pale, compressed lips. Both tugged. Then Uncle Jim tried to get round the end of the broom; Mr. Polly circled away. They began to circle about one another, both tugging hard, both intensely watchful of the slightest initiative on the part of the other. Mr. Polly wished brooms were longer, twelve or thirteen feet, for example; Uncle Jim was clearly for shortness in brooms. He wasted breath in saying what was to happen shortly, sanguinary, oriental soul-blenching things, when the broom no longer separated them. Mr. Polly thought he had never seen an uglier person. Suddenly Uncle Jim flashed into violent activity, but alcohol slows movement, and Mr. Polly was equal to him. Then Uncle Jim tried jerks, and for a terrible instant seemed to have the broom out of Mr. Polly's hands. But Mr. Polly recovered it with the clutch of a drowning man. Then Uncle Jim drove suddenly at Mr. Polly's midriff, but again Mr. Polly was ready and swept him round in a circle. Then suddenly a wild hope filled Mr. Polly. He saw the river was very near, the post to which the punt was tied not three yards

away. With a wild yell, he sent the broom home into his antagonist's ribs.

"Woosh!" he cried, as the resistance gave.

"Oh! *Gaw*!" said Uncle Jim, going backward helplessly, and Mr. Polly thrust hard and abandoned the broom to the enemy's despairing clutch.

Splash! Uncle Jim was in the water and Mr. Polly had leapt like a cat aboard the ferry punt and grasped the pole.

Up came Uncle Jim spluttering and dripping. "You (unprofitable matter, and printing it would lead to a censorship of novels)! You know I got a weak *chess*!"

The pole took him in the throat and drove him backward and downwards.

"Lea go!" cried Uncle Jim, staggering and with real terror in his once awful eyes.

Splash! Down he fell backwards into a frothing mass of water with Mr. Polly jabbing at him. Under water he turned round and came up again as if in flight towards the middle of the river. Directly his head reappeared Mr. Polly had him between the shoulders and under again, bubbling thickly. A hand clutched and disappeared.

It was stupendous! Mr. Polly had discovered the heel of Achilles. Uncle Jim had no stomach for cold water. The broom floated away, pitching gently on the swell. Mr. Polly, infuriated with victory, thrust Uncle Jim under again, and drove the punt round on its chain in such a manner that when Uncle Jim came up for the fourth time — and now he was nearly out of his depth, too buoyed up to walk and apparently nearly helpless, — Mr. Polly, fortunately for them both, could not reach him. Uncle Jim made the clumsy gestures of those who struggle insecurely in the water. "Keep out," said Mr. Polly. Uncle Jim with a great effort got a footing, emerged until his arm-pits were out of water, until his waistcoat buttons showed, one by one, till scarcely two remained, and made for the camp sheeting.

"Keep out!" cried Mr. Polly, and leapt off the punt and followed the movements of his victim along the shore.

"I tell you I got a weak chess," said Uncle Jim, moistly. "This ain't fair fightin'."

"Keep out!" said Mr. Polly.

“This ain’t fair fightin’,” said Uncle Jim, almost weeping, and all his terrors had gone.

“Keep out!” said Mr. Polly, with an accurately poised pole.

“I tell you I got to land, you Fool,” said Uncle Jim, with a sort of despairing wrathfulness, and began moving down-stream.

“You keep out,” said Mr. Polly in parallel movement. “Don’t you ever land on this place again!...”

Slowly, argumentatively, and reluctantly, Uncle Jim waded down-stream. He tried threats, he tried persuasion, he even tried a belated note of pathos; Mr. Polly remained inexorable, if in secret a little perplexed as to the outcome of the situation. “This cold’s getting to my *marrer*!” said Uncle Jim.

“You want cooling. You keep out in it,” said Mr. Polly.

They came round the bend into sight of Nicholson’s ait, where the backwater runs down to the Potwell Mill. And there, after much parley and several feints, Uncle Jim made a desperate effort and struggled into clutch of the overhanging *osiers* on the island, and so got out of the water with the millstream between them. He emerged dripping and muddy and vindictive. “By *Gaw*!” he said. “I’ll skin you for this!”

“You keep off or I’ll do worse to you,” said Mr. Polly.

The spirit was out of Uncle Jim for the time, and he turned away to struggle through the *osiers* towards the mill, leaving a shining trail of water among the green-grey stems.

Mr. Polly returned slowly and thoughtfully to the inn, and suddenly his mind began to bubble with phrases. The plump woman stood at the top of the steps that led up to the inn door to greet him.

“Law!” she cried as he drew near, “‘asn’t ‘e killed you?”

“Do I look like it?” said Mr. Polly.

“But where’s Jim?”

“Gone off.”

“‘E was mad drunk and dangerous!”

“I put him in the river,” said Mr. Polly. “That toned down his alcolaceous frenzy! I gave him a bit of a doing altogether.”

“Hain’t he ‘urt you?”

“Not a bit of it!”

“Then what’s all that blood beside your ear?”

Mr. Polly felt. “Quite a cut! Funny how one overlooks things! Heated moments! He must have done that when he jabbed about with those bottles. Hullo, Kiddy! You venturing downstairs again?”

“Ain’t he killed you?” asked the little girl.

“Well!”

“I wish I’d seen more of the fighting.”

“Didn’t you?”

“All I saw was you running round the house and Uncle Jim after you.”

There was a little pause. “I was leading him on,” said Mr. Polly.

“Someone’s shouting at the ferry,” she said.

“Right O. But you won’t see any more of Uncle Jim for a bit. We’ve been having a *conversazione* about that.”

“I believe it *is* Uncle Jim,” said the little girl.

“Then he can wait,” said Mr. Polly shortly.

He turned round and listened for the words that drifted across from the little figure on the opposite bank. So far as he could judge, Uncle Jim was making an appointment for the morrow. He replied with a defiant movement of the punt pole. The little figure was convulsed for a moment and then went on its way upstream — fiercely.

So it was the first campaign ended in an insecure victory.

IX

The next day was Wednesday and a slack day for the Potwell Inn. It was a hot, close day, full of the murmuring of bees. One or two people crossed by the ferry, an elaborately equipped fisherman stopped for cold meat and dry ginger ale in the bar parlour, some haymakers came and drank beer for an hour, and afterwards sent jars and jugs by a boy to be replenished; that was all. Mr. Polly had risen early and was busy about the place meditating upon the probable tactics of Uncle Jim. He was no longer strung up to the desperate pitch of the first encounter. But he was grave and anxious. Uncle Jim had shrunken, as all antagonists that are boldly faced shrink, after the first battle, to the negotiable, the vulnerable. Formidable he was no doubt, but not invincible. He had, under Providence, been defeated

once, and he might be defeated altogether.

Mr. Polly went about the place considering the militant possibilities of pacific things, *pokers*, copper sticks, garden implements, kitchen knives, garden nets, barbed wire, oars, clothes lines, blankets, pewter pots, stockings and broken bottles. He prepared a club with a stocking and a bottle inside upon the best East End model. He swung it round his head once, broke an outhouse window with a flying fragment of glass, and ruined the stocking beyond all darning. He developed a subtle scheme with the cellar flap as a sort of pitfall, but he rejected it finally because (A) it might entrap the plump woman, and (B) he had no use whatever for Uncle Jim in the cellar. He determined to wire the garden that evening, burglar fashion, against the possibilities of a night attack.

Towards two o'clock in the afternoon three young men arrived in a capacious boat from the direction of Lammam, and asked permission to camp in the paddock. It was given all the more readily by Mr. Polly because he perceived in their proximity a possible check upon the self-expression of Uncle Jim. But he did not foresee and no one could have foreseen that Uncle Jim, stealing unawares upon the Potwell Inn in the late afternoon, armed with a large rough-hewn stake, should have mistaken the bending form of one of those campers — who was pulling a few onions by permission in the garden — for Mr. Polly's, and crept upon it swiftly and silently and smitten its wide invitation unforgettably and unforgiveably. It was an error impossible to explain; the resounding whack went up to heaven, the cry of amazement, and Mr. Polly emerged from the inn armed with the frying-pan he was cleaning, to take this reckless assailant in the rear. Uncle Jim, realising his error, fled blaspheming into the arms of the other two campers, who were returning from the village with butcher's meat and groceries. They caught him, they smacked his face with steak and punched him with a bursting parcel of lump sugar, they held him though he bit them, and their idea of punishment was to duck him. They were hilarious, strong young stockbrokers' clerks, *Territorials* and seasoned boating men; they ducked him as though it was romping, and all that Mr. Polly had to do was to pick up lumps of sugar for them and wipe them on his sleeve and put them on a plate, and explain that Uncle Jim was a

notorious bad character and not quite right in his head.

"Got a regular obsession that the Missis is his Aunt," said Mr. Polly, expanding it. "Perfect noosance he is."

But he caught a glance of Uncle Jim's eye as he receded before the campers' urgency that boded ill for him, and in the night he had a disagreeable idea that perhaps his luck might not hold for the third occasion.

That came soon enough. So soon, indeed, as the campers had gone.

Thursday was the early closing day at Lammam, and next to Sunday the busiest part of the week at the Potwell Inn. Sometimes as many as six boats all at once would be moored against the ferry punt and hiring rowboats. People could either have a complete tea, a complete tea with jam, cake and eggs, a kettle of boiling water and find the rest, or refreshments *á la carte*, as they chose. They sat about, but usually the boiling water-*ers* had a delicacy about using the tables and grouped themselves humbly on the ground. The *complete* tea-*ers* with jam and eggs got the best tablecloth on the table nearest the steps that led up to the glass-panelled door. The groups about the lawn were very satisfying to Mr. Polly's sense of amenity. To the right were the *complete* tea-*ers* with everything heart could desire, then a small group of three young men in remarkable green and violet and pale-blue shirts, and two girls in mauve and yellow blouses with common teas and gooseberry jam at the green clothless table, then on the grass down by the pollard willow a small family of hot water-*ers* with a hamper, a little troubled by wasps in their jam from the nest in the tree and all in mourning, but happy otherwise, and on the lawn to the right a ginger beer lot of 'prentices without their collars and very jocular and happy. The young people in the rainbow shirts and blouses formed the centre of interest; they were under the leadership of a gold-spectacled senior with a fluting voice and an air of mystery; he ordered everything, and showed a peculiar knowledge of the qualities of the Potwell jams, preferring gooseberry with much insistence. Mr. Polly watched him, christened him the "benifluous influence," glanced at the 'prentices and went inside and down into the cellar in order to replenish the stock of stone ginger beer which the plump woman had allowed to run low

during the preoccupations of the campaign. It was in the cellar that he first became aware of the return of Uncle Jim. He became aware of him as a voice, a voice not only hoarse, but thick, as voices thicken under the influence of alcohol.

"Where's that muddy-faced mongrel?" cried Uncle Jim. "Let 'im come out to me! Where's that blighted whisp with the punt pole — I got a word to say to 'im. Come out of it, you pot-bellied chunk of dirtiness, you! Come out and '*ave* your ugly face wiped. I got a Thing for you.... '*Ear* me?

"'E's 'iding, that's what 'e's doing," said the voice of Uncle Jim, dropping for a moment to sorrow, and then with a great increment of wrathfulness: "Come out of my nest, you blinking cuckoo, you, or I'll cut your silly insides out! Come out of it — you pock-marked rat! Stealing another man's 'ome away from 'im! Come out and look me in the face, you squinting son of a Skunk!..."

Mr. Polly took the ginger beer and went thoughtfully upstairs to the bar.

"'E's back," said the plump woman as he appeared. "I knew 'e'd come back."

"I heard him," said Mr. Polly, and looked about. "Just gimme the old poker handle that's under the beer engine."

The door opened softly and Mr. Polly turned quickly. But it was only the pointed nose and intelligent face of the young man with the gilt spectacles and discreet manner. He coughed and the spectacles fixed Mr. Polly.

"I say," he said with quiet earnestness. "There's a chap out here seems to want someone."

"Why don't he come in?" said Mr. Polly.

"He seems to want you out there."

"What's he want?"

"I *think*," said the spectacled young man after a thoughtful moment, "he appears to have brought you a present of fish."

"Isn't he shouting?"

"He *is* a little boisterous."

"He'd better come in."

The manner of the spectacled young man intensified. "I wish you'd come out and persuade him to go away," he said. "His

language — isn't quite the thing — ladies."

"It never was," said the plump woman, her voice charged with sorrow.

Mr. Polly moved towards the door and stood with his hand on the handle. The gold-spectacled face disappeared.

"Now, my man," came his voice from outside, "be careful what you're saying—"

"Oo in all the World and Hereafter are you to call me, me man?" cried Uncle Jim in the voice of one astonished and pained beyond endurance, and added scornfully: "You gold-eyed Geezer, you!"

"Tut, tut!" said the gentleman in gilt glasses. "Restrain yourself!"

Mr. Polly emerged, poker in hand, just in time to see what followed. Uncle Jim in his shirtsleeves and a state of ferocious decolletage, was holding something — yes! — a dead eel by means of a piece of newspaper about its tail, holding it down and back and a little sideways in such a way as to smite with it upward and hard. It struck the spectacled gentleman under the jaw with a peculiar dead thud, and a cry of horror came from the two seated parties at the sight. One of the girls shrieked piercingly, "Horace!" and everyone sprang up. The sense of helping numbers came to Mr. Polly's aid.

"Drop it!" he cried, and came down the steps waving his poker and thrusting the spectacled gentleman before him as once heroes were wont to wield the ox-hide shield.

Uncle Jim gave ground suddenly, and trod upon the foot of a young man in a blue shirt, who immediately thrust at him violently with both hands.

"Lea go!" howled Uncle Jim. "That's the chap I'm looking for!" and pressing the head of the spectacled gentleman aside, smote hard at Mr. Polly.

But at the sight of this indignity inflicted upon the spectacled gentleman a woman's heart was stirred, and a pink parasol drove hard and true at Uncle Jim's wiry neck, and at the same moment the young man in the blue shirt sought to collar him and lost his grip again.

"Suffragettes," gasped Uncle Jim with the ferule at his throat. "Everywhere!" and aimed a second more successful blow at Mr. Polly.

“Wup!” said Mr. Polly.

But now the jam and egg party was joining in the fray. A stout yet still fairly able-bodied gentleman in white and black checks enquired: “What’s the fellow up to? Ain’t there no police here?” and it was evident that once more public opinion was rallying to the support of Mr. Polly.

“Oh, come on then all the lot of you!” cried Uncle Jim, and backing dexterously whirled the eel round in a destructive circle. The pink sunshade was torn from the hand that gripped it and whirled athwart the complete, but unadorned, tea things on the green table.

“Collar him! Someone get hold of his collar!” cried the gold-spectacled gentleman, coming out of the scrimmage, retreating up the steps to the inn door as if to rally his forces.

“Stand clear, you blessed mantel ornaments!” cried Uncle Jim, “stand clear!” and retired backing, staving off attack by means of the whirling eel.

Mr. Polly, undeterred by a sense of grave damage done to his nose, pressed the attack in front, the two young men in violet and blue skirmished on Uncle Jim’s flanks, the man in white and black checks sought still further outflanking possibilities, and two of the apprentice boys ran for oars. The gold-spectacled gentleman, as if inspired, came down the wooden steps again, seized the tablecloth of the jam and egg party, lugged it from under the crockery with inadequate precautions against breakage, and advanced with compressed lips, curious lateral crouching movements, swift flashings of his glasses, and a general suggestion of bull-fighting in his pose and gestures. Uncle Jim was kept busy, and unable to plan his retreat with any strategic soundness. He was moreover manifestly a little nervous about the river in his rear. He gave ground in a curve, and so came right across the rapidly abandoned camp of the family in mourning, crunching a teacup under his heel, oversetting the teapot, and finally tripping backwards over the hamper. The eel flew out at a tangent from his hand and became a mere looping relic on the sward.

“Hold him!” cried the gentleman in spectacles. “Collar him!” and moving forward with extraordinary promptitude wrapped the best tablecloth about Uncle Jim’s arms and head. Mr. Polly grasped his purpose instantly, the man in checks was scarcely slower, and in

another moment Uncle Jim was no more than a bundle of smothered blasphemy and a pair of wildly active legs.

"Duck him!" panted Mr. Polly, holding on to the earthquake. "Bes' thing — duck him."

The bundle was convulsed by paroxysms of anger and protest. One boot got the hamper and sent it ten yards.

"Go in the house for a clothes line someone!" said the gentleman in gold spectacles. "He'll get out of this in a moment."

One of the apprentices ran.

"Bird nets in the garden," shouted Mr. Polly. "In the garden!"

The apprentice was divided in his purpose. And then suddenly Uncle Jim collapsed and became a limp, dead seeming thing under their hands. His arms were drawn inward, his legs bent up under his person, and so he lay.

"Fainted!" said the man in checks, relaxing his grip.

"A fit, perhaps," said the man in spectacles.

"Keep hold!" said Mr. Polly, too late.

For suddenly Uncle Jim's arms and legs flew out like springs released. Mr. Polly was tumbled backwards and fell over the broken teapot and into the arms of the father in mourning. Something struck his head — dazzingly. In another second Uncle Jim was on his feet and the tablecloth enshrouded the head of the man in checks. Uncle Jim manifestly considered he had done all that honour required of him, and against overwhelming numbers and the possibility of reiterated duckings, flight is no disgrace.

Uncle Jim fled.

Mr. Polly sat up after an interval of an indeterminate length among the ruins of an idyllic afternoon. Quite a lot of things seemed scattered and broken, but it was difficult to grasp it all at once. He stared between the legs of people. He became aware of a voice, speaking slowly and complainingly.

"Someone ought to pay for those tea things," said the father in mourning. "We didn't bring them 'ere to be danced on, not by no manner of means."

There followed an anxious peace for three days, and then a rough man in a blue jersey, in the intervals of trying to choke himself with bread and cheese and pickled onions, broke out abruptly into information.

"Jim's lagged again, Missus," he said.

"What!" said the landlady. "Our Jim?"

"Your Jim," said the man, and after an absolutely necessary pause for swallowing, added: "Stealin' a 'atchet."

He did not speak for some moments, and then he replied to Mr. Polly's enquiries: "Yes, a 'atchet. Down Lammam way — night before last."

"What'd 'e steal a 'atchet for?" asked the plump woman.

"'E said 'e wanted a 'atchet."

"I wonder what he wanted a hatchet for?" said Mr. Polly, thoughtfully.

"I dessay 'e 'ad a use for it," said the gentleman in the blue jersey, and he took a mouthful that amounted to conversational suicide. There was a prolonged pause in the little bar, and Mr. Polly did some rapid thinking.

He went to the window and whistled. "I shall stick it," he whispered at last. "'Atchets or no 'atchets."

He turned to the man with the blue jersey when he thought him clear for speech again. "How much did you say they'd given him?" he asked.

"Three munce," said the man in the blue jersey, and refilled anxiously, as if alarmed at the momentary clearness of his voice.

XI

Those three months passed all too quickly; months of sunshine and warmth, of varied novel exertion in the open air, of congenial experiences, of interest and wholesome food and successful digestion, months that browned Mr. Polly and hardened him and saw the beginnings of his beard, months marred only by one anxiety, an anxiety Mr. Polly did his utmost to suppress. The day of reckoning was never mentioned, it is true, by either the plump woman or himself, but the name of Uncle Jim was written in letters of glaring

silence across their intercourse. As the term of that respite drew to an end his anxiety increased, until at last it even trenched upon his well-earned sleep. He had some idea of buying a revolver. At last he compromised upon a small and very foul and dirty rook rifle which he purchased in Lammam under a pretext of bird scaring, and loaded carefully and concealed under his bed from the plump woman's eye.

September passed away, October came.

And at last came that night in October whose happenings it is so difficult for a sympathetic historian to drag out of their proper nocturnal indistinctness into the clear, hard light of positive statement. A novelist should present characters, not vivisect them publicly....

The best, the kindliest, if not the justest course is surely to leave untold such things as Mr. Polly would manifestly have preferred untold.

Mr. Polly had declared that when the cyclist discovered him he was seeking a weapon that should make a conclusive end to Uncle Jim. That declaration is placed before the reader without comment.

The gun was certainly in possession of Uncle Jim at that time and no human being but Mr. Polly knows how he got hold of it.

The cyclist was a literary man named Warspite, who suffered from insomnia; he had risen and come out of his house near Lammam just before the dawn, and he discovered Mr. Polly partially concealed in the ditch by the Potwell churchyard wall. It is an ordinary dry ditch, full of nettles and overgrown with elder and dogrose, and in no way suggestive of an arsenal. It is the last place in which you would look for a gun. And he says that when he dismounted to see why Mr. Polly was allowing only the latter part of his person to show (and that it would seem by inadvertency), Mr. Polly merely raised his head and advised him to "Look out!" and added: "He's let fly at me twice already." He came out under persuasion and with gestures of extreme caution. He was wearing a white cotton nightgown of the type that has now been so extensively superseded by pyjama sleeping suits, and his legs and feet were bare and much scratched and torn and very muddy.

Mr. Warspite takes that exceptionally lively interest in his fellow-creatures which constitutes so much of the distinctive and complex

charm of your novelist all the world over, and he at once involved himself generously in the case. The two men returned at Mr. Polly's initiative across the churchyard to the Potwell Inn, and came upon the burst and damaged rook rifle near the new monument to Sir Samuel *Harpon* at the corner by the yew.

"That must have been his third go," said Mr. Polly. "It sounded a bit funny."

The sight inspirited him greatly, and he explained further that he had fled to the churchyard on account of the cover afforded by tombstones from the flight of small shot. He expressed anxiety for the fate of the landlady of the Potwell Inn and her grandchild, and led the way with enhanced alacrity along the lane to that establishment.

They found the doors of the house standing open, the bar in some disorder — several bottles of whisky were afterwards found to be missing — and Blake, the village policeman, rapping patiently at the open door. He entered with them. The glass in the bar had suffered severely, and one of the mirrors was starred from a blow from a pewter pot. The till had been forced and ransacked, and so had the bureau in the minute room behind the bar. An upper window was opened and the voice of the landlady became audible making enquiries. They went out and parleyed with her. She had locked herself upstairs with the little girl, she said, and refused to descend until she was assured that neither Uncle Jim nor Mr. Polly's gun were anywhere on the premises. Mr. Blake and Mr. Warspite proceeded to satisfy themselves with regard to the former condition, and Mr. Polly went to his room in search of garments more suited to the brightening dawn. He returned immediately with a request that Mr. Blake and Mr. Warspite would "just come and look." They found the apartment in a state of extraordinary confusion, the bedclothes in a ball in the corner, the drawers all open and ransacked, the chair broken, the lock of the door forced and broken, one door panel slightly scorched and perforated by shot, and the window wide open. None of Mr. Polly's clothes were to be seen, but some garments which had apparently once formed part of a stoker's workaday outfit, two brownish yellow halves of a shirt, and an unsound pair of boots were scattered on the floor. A faint smell of gunpowder still hung in the air, and two or three books Mr. Polly had

recently acquired had been shied with some violence under the bed. Mr. Warspite looked at Mr. Blake, and then both men looked at Mr. Polly. “That’s *his* boots,” said Mr. Polly.

Blake turned his eye to the window. “Some of these tiles ‘*ave* just got broken,” he observed.

“I got out of the window and slid down the scullery tiles,” Mr. Polly answered, omitting much, they both felt, from his explanation....

“Well, we better find ‘im and ‘*ave* a word with ‘im,” said Blake. “That’s about my business now.”

XII

But Uncle Jim had gone altogether....

He did not return for some days. That perhaps was not very wonderful. But the days lengthened to weeks and the weeks to months and still Uncle Jim did not recur. A year passed, and the anxiety of him became less acute; a second healing year followed the first. One afternoon about thirty months after the Night Surprise the plump woman spoke of him.

“I wonder what’s become of Jim,” she said.

“*I* wonder sometimes,” said Mr. Polly.

Chapter the Tenth

Miriam Revisited

I

One summer afternoon about five years after his first coming to the Potwell Inn Mr. Polly found himself sitting under the pollard willow fishing for dace. It was a plumper, browner and healthier Mr. Polly altogether than the miserable bankrupt with whose dyspeptic portrait our novel opened. He was fat, but with a fatness more generally diffused, and the lower part of his face was touched to gravity by a small square beard. Also he was balder.

It was the first time he had found leisure to fish, though from the very outset of his Potwell career he had promised himself abundant indulgence in the pleasures of fishing. Fishing, as the golden page of English literature testifies, is a meditative and retrospective pursuit, and the varied page of memory, disregarded so long for sake of the teeming duties I have already enumerated, began to unfold itself to Mr. Polly's consideration. A speculation about Uncle Jim died for want of material, and gave place to a reckoning of the years and months that had passed since his coming to Potwell, and that to a philosophical review of his life. He began to think about Miriam, remotely and impersonally. He remembered many things that had been neglected by his conscience during the busier times, as, for example, that he had committed arson and deserted a wife. For the first time he looked these long neglected facts in the face.

It is disagreeable to think one has committed Arson, because it is an action that leads to jail. Otherwise I do not think there was a grain of regret for that in Mr. Polly's composition. But deserting Miriam was in a different category. Deserting Miriam was mean.

This is a history and not a glorification of Mr. Polly, and I tell of things as they were with him. Apart from the disagreeable twinge arising from the thought of what might happen if he was found out, he had not the slightest remorse about that fire. Arson, after all, is an artificial crime. Some crimes are crimes in themselves, would be

crimes without any law, the cruelties, mockery, the breaches of faith that astonish and wound, but the burning of things is in itself neither good nor bad. A large number of houses deserve to be burnt, most modern furniture, an overwhelming majority of pictures and books — one might go on for some time with the list. If our community was collectively anything more than a feeble idiot, it would burn most of London and Chicago, for example, and build sane and beautiful cities in the place of these pestilential heaps of rotten private property. I have failed in presenting Mr. Polly altogether if I have not made you see that he was in many respects an artless child of Nature, far more untrained, undisciplined and spontaneous than an ordinary savage. And he was really glad, for all that little drawback of fear, that he had the courage to set fire to his house and fly and come to the Potwell Inn.

But he was not glad he had left Miriam. He had seen Miriam cry once or twice in his life, and it had always reduced him to abject commiseration. He now imagined her crying. He perceived in a perplexed way that he had made himself responsible for her life. He forgot how she had spoilt his own. He had hitherto rested in the faith that she had over a hundred pounds of insurance money, but now, with his eye meditatively upon his float, he realised a hundred pounds does not last for ever. His conviction of her incompetence was unflinching; she was bound to have fooled it away somehow by this time. And then!

He saw her humping her shoulders and sniffing in a manner he had always regarded as detestable at close quarters, but which now became harrowingly pitiful.

"Damn!" said Mr. Polly, and down went his float and he flicked up a victim to destruction and took it off the hook.

He compared his own comfort and health with Miriam's imagined distress.

"Ought to have done something for herself," said Mr. Polly, rebaiting his hook. "She was always talking of doing things. Why couldn't she?"

He watched the float oscillating gently towards quiescence.

"Silly to begin thinking about her," he said. "Damn silly!"

But once he had begun thinking about her he had to go on.

“Oh blow!” cried Mr. Polly presently, and pulled up his hook to find another fish had just snatched at it in the last instant. His handling must have made the poor thing feel itself unwelcome.

He gathered his things together and turned towards the house.

All the Potwell Inn betrayed his influence now, for here indeed he had found his place in the world. It looked brighter, so bright indeed as to be almost skittish, with the white and green paint he had lavished upon it. Even the garden palings were striped white and green, and so were the boats, for Mr. Polly was one of those who find a positive sensuous pleasure in the laying on of paint. Left and right were two large boards which had done much to enhance the inn’s popularity with the lighter-minded variety of pleasure-seekers. Both marked innovations. One bore in large letters the single word “Museum,” the other was as plain and laconic with “Omlets!” The spelling of the latter word was Mr. Polly’s own, but when he had seen a whole boatload of men, intent on Lammam for lunch, stop open-mouthed, and stare and grin and come in and ask in a marked sarcastic manner for “omlets,” he perceived that his inaccuracy had done more for the place than his utmost cunning could have contrived. In a year or so the inn was known both up and down the river by its new name of “Omlets,” and Mr. Polly, after some secret irritation, smiled and was content. And the fat woman’s *omelettes* were things to remember.

(You will note I have changed her epithet. Time works upon us all.)

She stood upon the steps as he came towards the house, and smiled at him richly.

“Caught many?” she asked.

“Got an idea,” said Mr. Polly. “Would it put you out very much if I went off for a day or two for a bit of a holiday? There won’t be much doing now until Thursday.”

II

Feeling recklessly secure behind his beard Mr. Polly surveyed the Fishbourne High Street once again. The north side was much as he had known it except that Rusper had vanished. A row of new shops

replaced the destruction of the great fire. Mantell and Throbson's had risen again upon a more flamboyant pattern, and the new fire station was in the Swiss-Teutonic style and with much red paint. Next door in the place of Rumbold's was a branch of the Colonial Tea Company, and then a Salmon and Gluckstein Tobacco Shop, and then a little shop that displayed sweets and professed a "Tea Room Upstairs." He considered this as a possible place in which to prosecute enquiries about his lost wife, wavering a little between it and the God's Providence Inn down the street. Then his eye caught a name over the window, "Polly," he read, "& Larkins! Well, I'm — astonished!"

A momentary faintness came upon him. He walked past and down the street, returned and surveyed the shop again.

He saw a middle-aged, rather untidy woman standing behind the counter, who for an instant he thought might be Miriam terribly changed, and then recognised as his sister-in-law Annie, filled out and no longer hilarious. She stared at him without a sign of recognition as he entered the shop.

"Can I have tea?" said Mr. Polly.

"Well," said Annie, "you *can*. But our Tea Room's upstairs.... My sister's been cleaning it out — and it's a bit upset."

"It *would* be," said Mr. Polly softly.

"I beg your pardon?" said Annie.

"I said *I* didn't mind. Up here?"

"I daresay there'll be a table," said Annie, and followed him up to a room whose conscientious disorder was intensely reminiscent of Miriam.

"Nothing like turning everything upside down when you're cleaning," said Mr. Polly cheerfully.

"It's my sister's way," said Annie impartially. "She's gone out for a bit of air, but I daresay she'll be back soon to finish. It's a nice light room when it's tidy. Can I put you a table over there?"

"Let *me*," said Mr. Polly, and assisted. He sat down by the open window and drummed on the table and meditated on his next step while Annie vanished to get his tea. After all, things didn't seem so bad with Miriam. He tried over several gambits in imagination.

"Unusual name," he said as Annie laid a cloth before him. Annie

looked interrogation.

“Polly. Polly & Larkins. Real, I suppose?”

“Polly’s my sister’s name. She married a Mr. Polly.”

“Widow I presume?” said Mr. Polly.

“Yes. This five years — come October.”

“Lord!” said Mr. Polly in unfeigned surprise.

“Found drowned he was. There was a lot of talk in the place.”

“Never heard of it,” said Mr. Polly. “I’m a stranger — rather.”

“In the Medway near Maidstone. He must have been in the water for days. Wouldn’t have known him, my sister wouldn’t, if it hadn’t been for the name sewn in his clothes. All whitey and eat away he was.”

“Bless my heart! Must have been rather a shock for her!”

“It *was* a shock,” said Annie, and added darkly: “But sometimes a shock’s better than a long agony.”

“No doubt,” said Mr. Polly.

He gazed with a rapt expression at the preparations before him. “So I’m drowned,” something was saying inside him. “Life insured?” he asked.

“We started the tea rooms with it,” said Annie.

Why, if things were like this, had remorse and anxiety for Miriam been implanted in his soul? No shadow of an answer appeared.

“Marriage is a lottery,” said Mr. Polly.

“*She* found it so,” said Annie. “Would you like some jam?”

“I’d like an egg,” said Mr. Polly. “I’ll have two. I’ve got a sort of feeling — . As though I wanted keeping up.... Wasn’t particularly good sort, this Mr. Polly?”

“He was a *wearing* husband,” said Annie. “I’ve often pitied my sister. He was one of that sort—”

“Dissolute?” suggested Mr. Polly faintly.

“No,” said Annie judiciously; “not exactly dissolute. Feeble’s more the word. Weak, ‘E was. Weak as water. ‘Ow long do you like your eggs boiled?”

“Four minutes exactly,” said Mr. Polly.

“One gets talking,” said Annie.

“One does,” said Mr.-Polly, and she left him to his thoughts.

What perplexed him was his recent remorse and tenderness for

Miriam. Now he was back in her atmosphere all that had vanished, and the old feeling of helpless antagonism returned. He surveyed the piled furniture, the economically managed carpet, the unpleasing pictures on the wall. Why had he felt remorse? Why had he entertained this illusion of a helpless woman crying aloud in the pitiless darkness for him? He peered into the unfathomable mysteries of the heart, and ducked back to a smaller issue. *Was* he feeble?

The eggs came up. Nothing in Annie's manner invited a resumption of the discussion.

"Business brisk?" he ventured to ask.

Annie reflected. "It is," she said, "and it isn't. It's like that."

"Ah!" said Mr. Polly, and squared himself to his egg. "Was there an inquest on that chap?"

"What chap?"

"What was his name? — Polly!"

"Of course."

"You're sure it was him?"

"What you mean?"

Annie looked at him hard, and suddenly his soul was black with terror.

"Who else could it have been — in the very cloes 'e wore?"

"Of course," said Mr. Polly, and began his egg. He was so agitated that he only realised its condition when he was half way through it and Annie safely downstairs.

"Lord!" he said, reaching out hastily for the pepper. "One of Miriam's! Management! I haven't tasted such an egg for five years.... Wonder where she gets them! Picks them out, I suppose!"

He abandoned it for its fellow.

Except for a slight mustiness the second egg was very palatable indeed. He was getting on to the bottom of it as Miriam came in. He looked up. "Nice afternoon," he said at her stare, and perceived she knew him at once by the gesture and the voice. She went white and shut the door behind her. She looked as though she was going to faint. Mr. Polly sprang up quickly and handed her a chair. "My God!" she whispered, and crumpled up rather than sat down.

"It's *you*" she said.

"No," said Mr. Polly very earnestly. "It isn't. It just looks like me.

That's all."

"I *knew* that man wasn't you — all along. I tried to think it was. I tried to think perhaps the water had altered your wrists and feet and the colour of your hair."

"Ah!"

"I'd always feared you'd come back."

Mr. Polly sat down by his egg. "I haven't come back," he said very earnestly. "Don't you think it."

"'Ow we'll pay back the insurance now I *don't* know." She was weeping. She produced a handkerchief and covered her face.

"Look here, Miriam," said Mr. Polly. "I haven't come back and I'm not coming back. I'm — I'm a Visitant from Another World. You shut up about me and I'll shut up about myself. I came back because I thought you might be hard up or in trouble or some silly thing like that. Now I see you again — I'm satisfied. I'm satisfied completely. See? I'm going to absquatulate, see? Hey Presto right away."

He turned to his tea for a moment, finished his cup noisily, stood up.

"Don't you think you're going to see me again," he said, "for you ain't."

He moved to the door.

"That *was* a tasty egg," he said, hovered for a second and vanished.

Annie was in the shop.

"The missus has had a bit of a shock," he remarked. "Got some sort of fancy about a ghost. Can't make it out quite. So Long!"

And he had gone.

III

Mr. Polly sat beside the fat woman at one of the little green tables at the back of the Potwell Inn, and struggled with the mystery of life. It was one of those evenings, serenely luminous, amply and atmospherically still, when the river bend was at its best. A swan floated against the dark green masses of the further bank, the stream flowed broad and shining to its destiny, with scarce a ripple —

except where the reeds came out from the headland — the three poplars rose clear and harmonious against a sky of green and yellow. And it was as if it was all securely within a great warm friendly globe of crystal sky. It was as safe and enclosed and fearless as a child that has still to be born. It was an evening full of the quality of tranquil, unqualified assurance. Mr. Polly's mind was filled with the persuasion that indeed all things whatsoever must needs be satisfying and complete. It was incredible that life has ever done more than seemed to jar, that there could be any shadow in life save such velvet softnesses as made the setting for that silent swan, or any murmur but the ripple of the water as it swirled round the chained and gently swaying punt. And the mind of Mr. Polly, exalted and made tender by this atmosphere, sought gently, but sought, to draw together the varied memories that came drifting, half submerged, across the circle of his mind.

He spoke in words that seemed like a bent and broken stick thrust suddenly into water, destroying the mirror of the shapes they sought. "Jim's not coming back again ever," he said. "He got drowned five years ago."

"Where?" asked the fat woman, surprised.

"Miles from here. In the Medway. Away in Kent."

"Lor!" said the fat woman.

"It's right enough," said Mr. Polly.

"How d'you know?"

"I went to my home."

"Where?"

"Don't matter. I went and found out. He'd been in the water some days. He'd got my clothes and they'd said it was me."

"*They*?"

"It don't matter. I'm not going back to them."

The fat woman regarded him silently for some time. Her expression of scrutiny gave way to a quiet satisfaction. Then her brown eyes went to the river.

"Poor Jim," she said. "'E 'adn't much Tact — ever."

She added mildly: "I can't 'ardly say I'm sorry."

"Nor me," said Mr. Polly, and got a step nearer the thought in him. "But it don't seem much good his having been alive, does it?"

“‘E wasn’t much good,” the fat woman admitted. “Ever.”

“I suppose there were things that were good to him,” Mr. Polly speculated. “They weren’t *our* things.”

His hold slipped again. “I often wonder about life,” he said weakly.

He tried again. “One seems to start in life,” he said, “expecting something. And it doesn’t happen. And it doesn’t matter. One starts with ideas that things are good and things are bad — and it hasn’t much relation to what *is* good and what is bad. I’ve always been the skeptaceous sort, and it’s always seemed rot to me to pretend we know good from evil. It’s just what I’ve *never* done. No Adam’s apple stuck in *my* throat, ma’am. I don’t own to it.”

He reflected.

“I set fire to a house — once.”

The fat woman started.

“I don’t feel sorry for it. I don’t believe it was a bad thing to do — any more than burning a toy like I did once when I was a baby. I nearly killed myself with a razor. Who hasn’t? — anyhow gone as far as thinking of it? Most of my time I’ve been half dreaming. I married like a dream almost. I’ve never really planned my life or set out to live. I happened; things happened to me. It’s so with everyone. Jim couldn’t help himself. I shot at him and tried to kill him. I dropped the gun and he got it. He very nearly had me. I wasn’t a second too soon — ducking.... Awkward — that night was.... M’mm.... But I don’t blame him — come to that. Only I don’t see what it’s all up to....

“Like children playing about in a nursery. Hurt themselves at times....

“There’s something that doesn’t mind us,” he resumed presently. “It isn’t what we try to get that we get, it isn’t the good we think we do is good. What makes us happy isn’t our trying, what makes others happy isn’t our trying. There’s a sort of character people like and stand up for and a sort they won’t. You got to work it out and take the consequences.... Miriam was always trying.”

“Who was Miriam?” asked the fat woman.

“No one you know. But she used to go about with her brows knit trying not to do whatever she wanted to do — if ever she did want to

do anything—”

He lost himself.

“You can’t help being fat,” said the fat woman after a pause, trying to get up to his thoughts.

“*You* can’t,” said Mr. Polly.

“It helps and it hinders.”

“Like my upside down way of talking.”

“The magistrates wouldn’t ‘*ave* kept on the license to me if I ‘adn’t been fat....”

“Then what have we done,” said Mr. Polly, “to get an evening like this? Lord! look at it!” He sent his arm round the great curve of the sky.

“If I was a nigger or an Italian I should come out here and sing. I whistle sometimes, but bless you, it’s singing I’ve got in my mind. Sometimes I think I live for sunsets.”

“I don’t see that it does you any good always looking at sunsets like you do,” said the fat woman.

“Nor me. But I do. Sunsets and things I was made to like.”

“They don’t ‘elp you,” said the fat woman thoughtfully.

“Who cares?” said Mr. Polly.

A deeper strain had come to the fat woman. “You got to die some day,” she said.

“Some things I can’t believe,” said Mr. Polly suddenly, “and one is your being a skeleton....” He pointed his hand towards the neighbour’s hedge. “Look at ’em — against the yellow — and they’re just stingin’ nettles. Nasty weeds — if you count things by their uses. And no help in the life hereafter. But just look at the look of them!”

“It isn’t only looks,” said the fat woman.

“Whenever there’s signs of a good sunset and I’m not too busy,” said Mr. Polly, “I’ll come and sit out here.”

The fat woman looked at him with eyes in which contentment struggled with some obscure reluctant protest, and at last turned them slowly to the black nettle pagodas against the golden sky.

“I wish we could,” she said.

“I will.”

The fat woman’s voice sank nearly to the inaudible.

“Not always,” she said.

Mr. Polly was some time before he replied. “Come here always when I’m a ghost,” he replied.

“Spoil the place for others,” said the fat woman, abandoning her moral solicitudes for a more congenial point of view.

“Not my sort of ghost wouldn’t,” said Mr. Polly, emerging from another long pause. “I’d be a sort of diaphalous feeling — just mellowish and warmish like....”

They said no more, but sat on in the warm twilight until at last they could scarcely distinguish each other’s faces. They were not so much thinking as lost in a smooth, still quiet of the mind. A bat flitted by.

“Time we was going in, O’ Party,” said Mr. Polly, standing up. “Supper to get. It’s as you say, we can’t sit here for ever.”

THE END

THE SLEEPER AWAKES

REVISED EDITION OF WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES

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PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION

When the Sleeper Wakes, whose title I have now altered to *The Sleeper Awakes*, was first published as a book in 1899 after a serial appearance in the *Graphic* and one or two American and colonial periodicals. It is one of the most ambitious and least satisfactory of my books, and I have taken the opportunity afforded by this reprinting to make a number of excisions and alterations. Like most of my earlier work, it was written under considerable pressure; there are marks of haste not only in the writing of the latter part, but in the very construction of the story. Except for certain streaks of a slovenliness which seems to be an almost unavoidable defect in me, there is little to be ashamed of in the writing of the opening portion; but it will be fairly manifest to the critic that instead of being put aside and thought over through a leisurely interlude, the ill-conceived latter part was pushed to its end. I was at that time overworked, and badly in need of a holiday. In addition to various necessary journalistic tasks, I had in hand another book, *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, which had taken a very much stronger hold upon my affections than this present story. My circumstances demanded that one or other should be finished before I took any rest, and so I wound up the Sleeper sufficiently to make it a marketable work, hoping to be able to revise it before the book printers at any rate got hold of it. But fortune was against me. I came back to England from Italy only to fall dangerously ill, and I still remember the impotent rage and strain of my attempt to put some sort of finish to my story of Mr. Lewisham, with my temperature at a hundred and two. I couldn't endure the thought of leaving that book a fragment. I did afterwards contrive to save it from the consequences of that febrile spurt — *Love and Mr. Lewisham* is indeed one of my most carefully balanced books — but the Sleeper escaped me.

It is twelve years now since the Sleeper was written, and that young man of thirty-one is already too remote for me to attempt any very drastic reconstruction of his work. I have played now merely the part of an editorial elder brother: cut out relentlessly a number of long tiresome passages that showed all too plainly the fagged, toiling

brain, the heavy sluggish *driven* pen, and straightened out certain indecisions at the end. Except for that, I have done no more than hack here and there at clumsy phrases and repetitions. The worst thing in the earlier version, and the thing that rankled most in my mind, was the treatment of the relations of Helen Wotton and Graham. Haste in art is almost always vulgarisation, and I slipped into the obvious vulgarity of making what the newspaper syndicates call a "love interest" out of Helen. There was even a clumsy intimation that instead of going up in the flying-machine to fight, Graham might have given in to Ostrog, and married Helen. I have now removed the suggestion of these uncanny connubialities. Not the slightest intimation of any sexual interest could in truth have arisen between these two. They loved and kissed one another, but as a girl and her heroic grandfather might love, and in a crisis kiss. I have found it possible, without any very serious disarrangement, to clear all that objectionable stuff out of the story, and so a little ease my conscience on the score of this ungainly lapse. I have also, with a few strokes of the pen, eliminated certain dishonest and regrettable suggestions that the People beat Ostrog. My Graham dies, as all his kind must die, with no certainty of either victory or defeat.

Who will win — Ostrog or the People? A thousand years hence that will still be just the open question we leave to-day.

H.G. WELLS.

CHAPTER I

INSOMNIA

One afternoon, at low water, Mr. Isbister, a young artist lodging at Boscastle, walked from that place to the picturesque cove of Pentargen, desiring to examine the caves there. Halfway down the precipitous path to the Pentargen beach he came suddenly upon a man sitting in an attitude of profound distress beneath a projecting mass of rock. The hands of this man hung limply over his knees, his eyes were red and staring before him, and his face was wet with tears.

He glanced round at Isbister's footfall. Both men were disconcerted, Isbister the more so, and, to override the awkwardness of his involuntary pause, he remarked, with an air of mature conviction, that the weather was hot for the time of year.

"Very," answered the stranger shortly, hesitated a second, and added in a colourless tone, "I can't sleep."

Isbister stopped abruptly. "No?" was all he said, but his bearing conveyed his helpful impulse.

"It may sound incredible," said the stranger, turning weary eyes to Isbister's face and emphasizing his words with a languid hand, "but I have had no sleep — no sleep at all for six nights."

"Had advice?"

"Yes. Bad advice for the most part. Drugs. My nervous system…. They are all very well for the run of people. It's hard to explain. I dare not take … sufficiently powerful drugs."

"That makes it difficult," said Isbister.

He stood helplessly in the narrow path, perplexed what to do. Clearly the man wanted to talk. An idea natural enough under the circumstances, prompted him to keep the conversation going. "I've never suffered from sleeplessness myself," he said in a tone of commonplace gossip, "but in those cases I have known, people have usually found something—"

"I dare make no experiments."

He spoke wearily. He gave a gesture of rejection, and for a space

both men were silent.

"Exercise?" suggested Isbister diffidently, with a glance from his interlocutor's face of wretchedness to the touring costume he wore.

"That is what I have tried. Unwisely perhaps. I have followed the coast, day after day — from New Quay. It has only added muscular fatigue to the mental. The cause of this unrest was overwork — trouble. There was something—"

He stopped as if from sheer fatigue. He rubbed his forehead with a lean hand. He resumed speech like one who talks to himself.

"I am a lone wolf, a solitary man, wandering through a world in which I have no part. I am wifeless — childless — who is it speaks of the childless as the dead twigs on the tree of life? I am wifeless, childless — I could find no duty to do. No desire even in my heart. One thing at last I set myself to do.

"I said, I *will* do this, and to do it, to overcome the inertia of this dull body, I resorted to drugs. Great God, I've had enough of drugs! I don't know if *you* feel the heavy inconvenience of the body, its exasperating demand of time from the mind — time — life! Live! We only live in patches. We have to eat, and then comes the dull digestive complacencies — or irritations. We have to take the air or else our thoughts grow sluggish, stupid, run into gulfs and blind alleys. A thousand distractions arise from within and without, and then comes drowsiness and sleep. Men seem to live for sleep. How little of a man's day is his own — even at the best! And then come those false friends, those Thug helpers, the alkaloids that stifle natural fatigue and kill rest — black coffee, cocaine—"

"I see," said Isbister.

"I did my work," said the sleepless man with a querulous intonation.

"And this is the price?"

"Yes."

For a little while the two remained without speaking.

"You cannot imagine the craving for rest that I feel — a hunger and thirst. For six long days, since my work was done, my mind has been a whirlpool, swift, unprogressive and incessant, a torrent of thoughts leading nowhere, spinning round swift and steady—" He paused. "Towards the gulf."

“You must sleep,” said Isbister decisively, and with an air of a remedy discovered. “Certainly you must sleep.”

“My mind is perfectly lucid. It was never clearer. But I know I am drawing towards the vortex. Presently—”

“Yes?”

“You have seen things go down an eddy? Out of the light of the day, out of this sweet world of sanity — down—”

“But,” expostulated Isbister.

The man threw out a hand towards him, and his eyes were wild, and his voice suddenly high. “I shall kill myself. If in no other way — at the foot of yonder dark precipice there, where the waves are green, and the white surge lifts and falls, and that little thread of water trembles down. There at any rate is … sleep.”

“That’s unreasonable,” said Isbister, startled at the man’s hysterical gust of emotion. “Drugs are better than that.”

“There at any rate is sleep,” repeated the stranger, not heeding him.

Isbister looked at him. “It’s not a cert, you know,” he remarked. “There’s a cliff like that at Lulworth Cove — as high, anyhow — and a little girl fell from top to bottom. And lives to-day — sound and well.”

“But those rocks there?”

“One might lie on them rather dismally through a cold night, broken bones grating as one shivered, chill water splashing over you. Eh?”

Their eyes met. “Sorry to upset your ideals,” said Isbister with a sense of devil-may-careish brilliance. “But a suicide over that cliff (or any cliff for the matter of that), really, as an artist—” He laughed. “It’s so damned amateurish.”

“But the other thing,” said the sleepless man irritably, “the other thing. No man can keep sane if night after night—”

“Have you been walking along this coast alone?”

“Yes.”

“Silly sort of thing to do. If you’ll excuse my saying so. Alone! As you say; body fag is no cure for brain fag. Who told you to? No wonder; walking! And the sun on your head, heat, fag, solitude, all the day long, and then, I suppose, you go to bed and try very hard —

eh?”

Isbister stopped short and looked at the sufferer doubtfully.

“Look at these rocks!” cried the seated man with a sudden force of gesture. “Look at that sea that has shone and quivered there for ever! See the white spume rush into darkness under that great cliff. And this blue vault, with the blinding sun pouring from the dome of it. It is your world. You accept it, you rejoice in it. It warms and supports and delights you. And for me—”

He turned his head and showed a ghastly face, bloodshot pallid eyes and bloodless lips. He spoke almost in a whisper. “It is the garment of my misery. The whole world … is the garment of my misery.”

Isbister looked at all the wild beauty of the sunlit cliffs about them and back to that face of despair. For a moment he was silent.

He started, and made a gesture of impatient rejection. “You get a night’s sleep,” he said, “and you won’t see much misery out here. Take my word for it.”

He was quite sure now that this was a providential encounter. Only half an hour ago he had been feeling horribly bored. Here was employment the bare thought of which, was righteous self-applause. He took possession forthwith. The first need of this exhausted being was companionship. He flung himself down on the steeply sloping turf beside the motionless seated figure, and threw out a skirmishing line of gossip.

His hearer lapsed into apathy; he stared dismally seaward, and spoke only in answer to Isbister’s direct questions — and not to all of those. But he made no objection to this benevolent intrusion upon his despair.

He seemed even grateful, and when presently Isbister, feeling that his unsupported talk was losing vigour, suggested that they should reascend the steep and return towards Boscastle, alleging the view into Blackapit, he submitted quietly. Halfway up he began talking to himself, and abruptly turned a ghastly face on his helper. “What can be happening?” he asked with a gaunt illustrative hand. “What can be happening? Spin, spin, spin, spin. It goes round and round, round and round for evermore.”

He stood with his hand circling.

“It’s all right, old chap,” said Isbister with the air of an old friend. “Don’t worry yourself. Trust to me,”

The man dropped his hand and turned again. They went over the brow and to the headland beyond Penally, with the sleepless man gesticulating ever and again, and speaking fragmentary things concerning his whirling brain. At the headland they stood by the seat that looks into the dark mysteries of Blackapit, and then he sat down. Isbister had resumed his talk whenever the path had widened sufficiently for them to walk abreast. He was enlarging upon the complex difficulty of making Boscastle Harbour in bad weather, when suddenly and quite irrelevantly his companion interrupted him again.

“My head is not like what it was,” he said, gesticulating for want of expressive phrases. “It’s not like what it was. There is a sort of oppression, a weight. No — not drowsiness, would God it were! It is like a shadow, a deep shadow falling suddenly and swiftly across something busy. Spin, spin into the darkness. The tumult of thought, the confusion, the eddy and eddy. I can’t express it. I can hardly keep my mind on it — steadily enough to tell you.”

He stopped feebly.

“Don’t trouble, old chap,” said Isbister. “I think I can understand. At any rate, it don’t matter very much just at present about telling me, you know.”

The sleepless man thrust his knuckles into his eyes and rubbed them. Isbister talked for awhile while this rubbing continued, and then he had a fresh idea. “Come down to my room,” he said, “and try a pipe. I can show you some sketches of this Blackapit. If you’d care?”

The other rose obediently and followed him down the steep.

Several times Isbister heard him stumble as they came down, and his movements were slow and hesitating. “Come in with me,” said Isbister, “and try some cigarettes and the blessed gift of alcohol. If you take alcohol?”

The stranger hesitated at the garden gate. He seemed no longer

aware of his actions. “I don’t drink,” he said slowly, coming up the garden path, and after a moment’s interval repeated absently, “No — I don’t drink. It goes round. Spin, it goes — spin—”

He stumbled at the doorstep and entered the room with the bearing of one who sees nothing.

Then he sat down heavily in the easy chair, seemed almost to fall into it. He leant forward with his brows on his hands and became motionless. Presently he made a faint sound in his throat.

Isbister moved about the room with the nervousness of an inexperienced host, making little remarks that scarcely required answering. He crossed the room to his portfolio, placed it on the table and noticed the mantel clock.

“I don’t know if you’d care to have supper with me,” he said with an unlighted cigarette in his hand — his mind troubled with ideas of a furtive administration of chloral. “Only cold mutton, you know, but passing sweet. Welsh. And a tart, I believe.” He repeated this after momentary silence.

The seated man made no answer. Isbister stopped, match in hand, regarding him.

The stillness lengthened. The match went out, the cigarette was put down unlit. The man was certainly very still. Isbister took up the portfolio, opened it, put it down, hesitated, seemed about to speak. “Perhaps,” he whispered doubtfully. Presently he glanced at the door and back to the figure. Then he stole on tiptoe out of the room, glancing at his companion after each elaborate pace.

He closed the door noiselessly. The house door was standing open, and he went out beyond the porch, and stood where the monkshood rose at the corner of the garden bed. From this point he could see the stranger through the open window, still and dim, sitting head on hand. He had not moved.

A number of children going along the road stopped and regarded the artist curiously. A boatman exchanged civilities with him. He felt that possibly his circumspect attitude and position looked peculiar and unaccountable. Smoking, perhaps, might seem more natural. He drew pipe and pouch from his pocket, filled the pipe slowly.

“I wonder,” … he said, with a scarcely perceptible loss of complacency. “At any rate one must give him a chance.” He struck a

match in the virile way, and proceeded to light his pipe.

He heard his landlady behind him, coming with his lamp lit from the kitchen. He turned, gesticulating with his pipe, and stopped her at the door of his sitting-room. He had some difficulty in explaining the situation in whispers, for she did not know he had a visitor. She retreated again with the lamp, still a little mystified to judge from her manner, and he resumed his hovering at the corner of the porch, flushed and less at his ease.

Long after he had smoked out his pipe, and when the bats were abroad, curiosity dominated his complex hesitations, and he stole back into his darkling sitting-room. He paused in the doorway. The stranger was still in the same attitude, dark against the window. Save for the singing of some sailors aboard one of the little slate-carrying ships in the harbour the evening was very still. Outside, the spikes of monkshood and delphinium stood erect and motionless against the shadow of the hillside. Something flashed into Isbister's mind; he started, and leaning over the table, listened. An unpleasant suspicion grew stronger; became conviction. Astonishment seized him and became — dread!

No sound of breathing came from the seated figure!

He crept slowly and noiselessly round the table, pausing twice to listen. At last he could lay his hand on the back of the armchair. He bent down until the two heads were ear to ear.

Then he bent still lower to look up at his visitor's face. He started violently and uttered an exclamation. The eyes were void spaces of white.

He looked again and saw that they were open and with the pupils rolled under the lids. He was afraid. He took the man by the shoulder and shook him. "Are you asleep?" he said, with his voice jumping, and again, "Are you asleep?"

A conviction took possession of his mind that this man was dead. He became active and noisy, strode across the room, blundering against the table as he did so, and rang the bell.

"Please bring a light at once," he said in the passage. "There is something wrong with my friend."

He returned to the motionless seated figure, grasped the shoulder, shook it, shouted. The room was flooded with yellow glare as his

landlady entered with the light. His face was white as he turned blinking towards her. “I must fetch a doctor,” he said. “It is either death or a fit. Is there a doctor in the village? Where is a doctor to be found?”

CHAPTER II

THE TRANCE

The state of cataleptic rigour into which this man had fallen, lasted for an unprecedented length of time, and then he passed slowly to the flaccid state, to a lax attitude suggestive of profound repose. Then it was his eyes could be closed.

He was removed from the hotel to the Boscastle surgery, and from the surgery, after some weeks, to London. But he still resisted every attempt at reanimation. After a time, for reasons that will appear later, these attempts were discontinued. For a great space he lay in that strange condition, inert and still — neither dead nor living but, as it were, suspended, hanging midway between nothingness and existence. His was a darkness unbroken by a ray of thought or sensation, a dreamless inanition, a vast space of peace. The tumult of his mind had swelled and risen to an abrupt climax of silence. Where was the man? Where is any man when insensibility takes hold of him?

"It seems only yesterday," said Isbister. "I remember it all as though it happened yesterday — clearer, perhaps, than if it had happened yesterday."

It was the Isbister of the last chapter, but he was no longer a young man. The hair that had been brown and a trifle in excess of the fashionable length, was iron grey and clipped close, and the face that had been pink and white was buff and ruddy. He had a pointed beard shot with grey. He talked to an elderly man who wore a summer suit of drill (the summer of that year was unusually hot). This was Warming, a London solicitor and next of kin to Graham, the man who had fallen into the trance. And the two men stood side by side in a room in a house in London regarding his recumbent figure.

It was a yellow figure lying lax upon a water-bed and clad in a flowing shirt, a figure with a shrunken face and a stubby beard, lean limbs and lank nails, and about it was a case of thin glass. This glass seemed to mark off the sleeper from the reality of life about him, he was a thing apart, a strange, isolated abnormality. The two men stood

close to the glass, peering in.

"The thing gave me a shock," said Isbister. "I feel a queer sort of surprise even now when I think of his white eyes. They were white, you know, rolled up. Coming here again brings it all back to me."

"Have you never seen him since that time?" asked Warming.

"Often wanted to come," said Isbister; "but business nowadays is too serious a thing for much holiday keeping. I've been in America most of the time."

"If I remember rightly," said Warming, "you were an artist?"

"Was. And then I became a married man. I saw it was all up with black and white, very soon — at least for a mediocrity, and I jumped on to process. Those posters on the Cliffs at Dover are by my people."

"Good posters," admitted the solicitor, "though I was sorry to see them there."

"Last as long as the cliffs, if necessary," exclaimed Isbister with satisfaction. "The world changes. When he fell asleep, twenty years ago, I was down at Boscastle with a box of water-colours and a noble, old-fashioned ambition. I didn't expect that some day my pigments would glorify the whole blessed coast of England, from Land's End round again to the Lizard. Luck comes to a man very often when he's not looking."

Warming seemed to doubt the quality of the luck. "I just missed seeing you, if I recollect aright."

"You came back by the trap that took me to Camelford railway station. It was close on the Jubilee, Victoria's Jubilee, because I remember the seats and flags in Westminster, and the row with the cabman at Chelsea."

"The Diamond Jubilee, it was," said Warming; "the second one."

"Ah, yes! At the proper Jubilee — the Fifty Year affair — I was down at Wookey — a boy. I missed all that…. What a fuss we had with him! My landlady wouldn't take him in, wouldn't let him stay — he looked so queer when he was rigid. We had to carry him in a chair up to the hotel. And the Boscastle doctor — it wasn't the present chap, but the G.P. before him — was at him until nearly two, with me and the landlord holding lights and so forth."

"Do you mean — he was stiff and hard?"

“Stiff! — wherever you bent him he stuck. You might have stood him on his head and he’d have stopped. I never saw such stiffness. Of course this” — he indicated the prostrate figure by a movement of his head— “is quite different. And the little doctor — what was his name?”

“Smithers?”

“Smithers it was — was quite wrong in trying to fetch him round too soon, according to all accounts. The things he did! Even now it makes me feel all — ugh! Mustard, snuff, pricking. And one of those beastly little things, not dynamos—”

“Coils.”

“Yes. You could see his muscles throb and jump, and he twisted about. There were just two flaring yellow candles, and all the shadows were shivering, and the little doctor nervous and putting on side, and *him* — stark and squirming in the most unnatural ways. Well, it made me dream.”

Pause.

“It’s a strange state,” said Warming.

“It’s a sort of complete absence,” said Isbister. “Here’s the body, empty. Not dead a bit, and yet not alive. It’s like a seat vacant and marked ‘engaged.’ No feeling, no digestion, no beating of the heart — not a flutter. *That* doesn’t make me feel as if there was a man present. In a sense it’s more dead than death, for these doctors tell me that even the hair has stopped growing. Now with the proper dead, the hair will go on growing—”

“I know,” said Warming, with a flash of pain in his expression.

They peered through the glass again. Graham was indeed in a strange state, in the flaccid phase of a trance, but a trance unprecedented in medical history. Trances had lasted for as much as a year before — but at the end of that time it had ever been a waking or a death; sometimes first one and then the other. Isbister noted the marks the physicians had made in injecting nourishment, for that had been resorted to to postpone collapse; he pointed them out to Warming, who had been trying not to see them.

“And while he has been lying here,” said Isbister, with the zest of a life freely spent, “I have changed my plans in life; married, raised a family, my eldest lad — I hadn’t begun to think of sons then — is an

American citizen, and looking forward to leaving Harvard. There's a touch of grey in my hair. And this man, not a day older nor wiser (practically) than I was in my downy days. It's curious to think of."

Warming turned. "And I have grown old too. I played cricket with him when
I was still only a boy. And he looks a young man still. Yellow perhaps.
But that *is* a young man nevertheless."

"And there's been the War," said Isbister.

"From beginning to end."

"And these Martians."

"I've understood," said Isbister after a pause, "that he had some moderate property of his own?"

"That is so," said Warming. He coughed primly. "As it happens — I have charge of it."

"Ah!" Isbister thought, hesitated and spoke: "No doubt — his keep here is not expensive — no doubt it will have improved — accumulated?"

"It has. He will wake up very much better off — if he wakes — than when he slept."

"As a business man," said Isbister, "that thought has naturally been in my mind. I have, indeed, sometimes thought that, speaking commercially, of course, this sleep may be a very good thing for him. That he knows what he is about, so to speak, in being insensible so long. If he had lived straight on—"

"I doubt if he would have premeditated as much," said Warming. "He was not a far-sighted man. In fact—"

"Yes?"

"We differed on that point. I stood to him somewhat in the relation of a guardian. You have probably seen enough of affairs to recognise that occasionally a certain friction — . But even if that was the case, there is a doubt whether he will ever wake. This sleep exhausts slowly, but it exhausts. Apparently he is sliding slowly, very slowly and tediously, down a long slope, if you can understand me?"

“It will be a pity to lose his surprise. There’s been a lot of change these twenty years. It’s Rip Van Winkle come real.”

“There has been a lot of change certainly,” said Warming. “And, among other changes, I have changed. I am an old man.”

Isbister hesitated, and then feigned a belated surprise. “I shouldn’t have thought it.”

“I was forty-three when his bankers — you remember you wired to his bankers — sent on to me.”

“I got their address from the cheque book in his pocket,” said Isbister.

“Well, the addition is not difficult,” said Warming.

There was another pause, and then Isbister gave way to an unavoidable curiosity. “He may go on for years yet,” he said, and had a moment of hesitation. “We have to consider that. His affairs, you know, may fall some day into the hands of — someone else, you know.”

“That, if you will believe me, Mr. Isbister, is one of the problems most constantly before my mind. We happen to be — as a matter of fact, there are no very trustworthy connexions of ours. It is a grotesque and unprecedented position.”

“Rather,” said Isbister.

“It seems to me it’s a case of some public body, some practically undying guardian. If he really is going on living — as the doctors, some of them, think. As a matter of fact, I have gone to one or two public men about it. But, so far, nothing has been done.”

“It wouldn’t be a bad idea to hand him over to some public body — the British Museum Trustees, or the Royal College of Physicians. Sounds a bit odd, of course, but the whole situation is odd.”

“The difficulty is to induce them to take him.”

“Red tape, I suppose?”

“Partly.”

Pause. “It’s a curious business, certainly,” said Isbister. “And compound interest has a way of mounting up.”

“It has,” said Warming. “And now the gold supplies are running short there is a tendency towards … appreciation.”

“I’ve felt that,” said Isbister with a grimace. “But it makes it better for *him*.”

"*If* he wakes."

"If he wakes," echoed Isbister. "Do you notice the pinched-in look of his nose, and the way in which his eyelids sink?"

Warming looked and thought for a space. "I doubt if he will wake," he said at last.

"I never properly understood," said Isbister, "what it was brought this on. He told me something about overstudy. I've often been curious."

"He was a man of considerable gifts, but spasmodic, emotional. He had grave domestic troubles, divorced his wife, in fact, and it was as a relief from that, I think, that he took up politics of the rabid sort. He was a fanatical Radical — a Socialist — or typical Liberal, as they used to call themselves, of the advanced school. Energetic — flighty — undisciplined. Overwork upon a controversy did this for him. I remember the pamphlet he wrote — a curious production. Wild, whirling stuff. There were one or two prophecies. Some of them are already exploded, some of them are established facts. But for the most part to read such a thesis is to realise how full the world is of unanticipated things. He will have much to learn, much to unlearn, when he wakes. If ever a waking comes."

"I'd give anything to be there," said Isbister, "just to hear what he would say to it all."

"So would I," said Warming. "Aye! so would I," with an old man's sudden turn to self pity. "But I shall never see him wake."

He stood looking thoughtfully at the waxen figure. "He will never awake," he said at last. He sighed. "He will never awake again."

CHAPTER III

THE AWAKENING

But Warming was wrong in that. An awakening came.

What a wonderfully complex thing! this simple seeming unity — the self! Who can trace its reintegration as morning after morning we awaken, the flux and confluence of its countless factors interweaving, rebuilding, the dim first stirrings of the soul, the growth and synthesis of the unconscious to the subconscious, the subconscious to dawning consciousness, until at last we recognise ourselves again. And as it happens to most of us after the night's sleep, so it was with Graham at the end of his vast slumber. A dim cloud of sensation taking shape, a cloudy dreariness, and he found himself vaguely somewhere, recumbent, faint, but alive.

The pilgrimage towards a personal being seemed to traverse vast gulfs, to occupy epochs. Gigantic dreams that were terrible realities at the time, left vague perplexing memories, strange creatures, strange scenery, as if from another planet. There was a distinct impression, too, of a momentous conversation, of a name — he could not tell what name — that was subsequently to recur, of some queer long-forgotten sensation of vein and muscle, of a feeling of vast hopeless effort, the effort of a man near drowning in darkness. Then came a panorama of dazzling unstable confluent scenes….

Graham became aware that his eyes were open and regarding some unfamiliar thing.

It was something white, the edge of something, a frame of wood. He moved his head slightly, following the contour of this shape. It went up beyond the top of his eyes. He tried to think where he might be. Did it matter, seeing he was so wretched? The colour of his thoughts was a dark depression. He felt the featureless misery of one who wakes towards the hour of dawn. He had an uncertain sense of whispers and footsteps hastily receding.

The movement of his head involved a perception of extreme physical weakness. He supposed he was in bed in the hotel at the place in the valley — but he could not recall that white edge. He

must have slept. He remembered now that he had wanted to sleep. He recalled the cliff and Waterfall again, and then recollected something about talking to a passer-by….

How long had he slept? What was that sound of pattering feet? And that rise and fall, like the murmur of breakers on pebbles? He put out a languid hand to reach his watch from the chair whereon it was his habit to place it, and touched some smooth hard surface like glass. This was so unexpected that it startled him extremely. Quite suddenly he rolled over, stared for a moment, and struggled into a sitting position. The effort was unexpectedly difficult, and it left him giddy and weak — and amazed.

He rubbed his eyes. The riddle of his surroundings was confusing but his mind was quite clear — evidently his sleep had benefited him. He was not in a bed at all as he understood the word, but lying naked on a very soft and yielding mattress, in a trough of dark glass. The mattress was partly transparent, a fact he observed with a sense of insecurity, and below it was a mirror reflecting him greyly. About his arm — and he saw with a shock that his skin was strangely dry and yellow — was bound a curious apparatus of rubber, bound so cunningly that it seemed to pass into his skin above and below. And this bed was placed in a case of greenish coloured glass (as it seemed to him), a bar in the white framework of which had first arrested his attention. In the corner of the case was a stand of glittering and delicately made apparatus, for the most part quite strange appliances, though a maximum and minimum thermometer was recognisable.

The slightly greenish tint of the glass-like substance which surrounded him on every hand obscured what lay behind, but he perceived it was a vast apartment of splendid appearance, and with a very large and simple white archway facing him. Close to the walls of the cage were articles of furniture, a table covered with a silvery cloth, silvery like the side of a fish, a couple of graceful chairs, and on the table a number of dishes with substances piled on them, a bottle and two glasses. He realised that he was intensely hungry.

He could see no one, and after a period of hesitation scrambled off the translucent mattress and tried to stand on the clean white floor of his little apartment. He had miscalculated his strength, however, and staggered and put his hand against the glass like pane before him to

steady himself. For a moment it resisted his hand, bending outward like a distended bladder, then it broke with a slight report and vanished — a pricked bubble. He reeled out into the general space of the hall, greatly astonished. He caught at the table to save himself, knocking one of the glasses to the floor — it rang but did not break — and sat down in one of the armchairs.

When he had a little recovered he filled the remaining glass from the bottle and drank — a colourless liquid it was, but not water, with a pleasing faint aroma and taste and a quality of immediate support and stimulus. He put down the vessel and looked about him.

The apartment lost none of its size and magnificence now that the greenish transparency that had intervened was removed. The archway he saw led to a flight of steps, going downward without the intermediation of a door, to a spacious transverse passage. This passage ran between polished pillars of some white-veined substance of deep ultramarine, and along it came the sound of human movements, and voices and a deep undeviating droning note. He sat, now fully awake, listening alertly, forgetting the viands in his attention.

Then with a shock he remembered that he was naked, and casting about him for covering, saw a long black robe thrown on one of the chairs beside him. This he wrapped about him and sat down again, trembling.

His mind was still a surging perplexity. Clearly he had slept, and had been removed in his sleep. But where? And who were those people, the distant crowd beyond the deep blue pillars? Boscastle? He poured out and partially drank another glass of the colourless fluid.

What was this place? — this place that to his senses seemed subtly quivering like a thing alive? He looked about him at the clean and beautiful form of the apartment, unstained by ornament, and saw that the roof was broken in one place by a circular shaft full of light, and, as he looked, a steady, sweeping shadow blotted it out and passed, and came again and passed. “Beat, beat,” that sweeping shadow had a note of its own in the subdued tumult that filled the air.

He would have called out, but only a little sound came into his throat. Then he stood up, and, with the uncertain steps of a drunkard,

made his way towards the archway. He staggered down the steps, tripped on the corner of the black cloak he had wrapped about himself, and saved himself by catching at one of the blue pillars.

The passage ran down a cool vista of blue and purple and ended remotely in a railed space like a balcony brightly lit and projecting into a space of haze, a space like the interior of some gigantic building. Beyond and remote were vast and vague architectural forms. The tumult of voices rose now loud and clear, and on the balcony and with their backs to him, gesticulating and apparently in animated conversation, were three figures, richly dressed in loose and easy garments of bright soft colourings. The noise of a great multitude of people poured up over the balcony, and once it seemed the top of a banner passed, and once some brightly coloured object, a pale blue cap or garment thrown up into the air perhaps, flashed athwart the space and fell. The shouts sounded like English, there was a reiteration of "Wake!" He heard some indistinct shrill cry, and abruptly these three men began laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed one — a red-haired man in a short purple robe. "When the Sleeper wakes — *When*!"

He turned his eyes full of merriment along the passage. His face changed, the whole man changed, became rigid. The other two turned swiftly at his exclamation and stood motionless. Their faces assumed an expression of consternation, an expression that deepened into awe.

Suddenly Graham's knees bent beneath him, his arm against the pillar collapsed limply, he staggered forward and fell upon his face.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUND OF A TUMULT

Graham's last impression before he fainted was of the ringing of bells. He learnt afterwards that he was insensible, hanging between life and death, for the better part of an hour. When he recovered his senses, he was back on his translucent couch, and there was a stirring warmth at heart and throat. The dark apparatus, he perceived, had been removed from his arm, which was bandaged. The white framework was still about him, but the greenish transparent substance that had filled it was altogether gone. A man in a deep violet robe, one of those who had been on the balcony, was looking keenly into his face.

Remote but insistent was a clamour of bells and confused sounds, that suggested to his mind the picture of a great number of people shouting together. Something seemed to fall across this tumult, a door suddenly closed.

Graham moved his head. "What does this all mean?" he said slowly. "Where am I?"

He saw the red-haired man who had been first to discover him. A voice seemed to be asking what he had said, and was abruptly stilled.

The man in violet answered in a soft voice, speaking English with a slightly foreign accent, or so at least it seemed to the Sleeper's ears. "You are quite safe. You were brought hither from where you fell asleep.
It is quite safe. You have been here some time — sleeping. In a trance."

He said, something further that Graham could not hear, and a little phial was handed across to him. Graham felt a cooling spray, a fragrant mist played over his forehead for a moment, and his sense of refreshment increased. He closed his eyes in satisfaction.

“Better?” asked the man in violet, as Graham’s eyes reopened. He was a pleasant-faced man of thirty, perhaps, with a pointed flaxen beard, and a clasp of gold at the neck of his violet robe.

“Yes,” said Graham.

“You have been asleep some time. In a cataleptic trance. You have heard? Catalepsy? It may seem strange to you at first, but I can assure you everything is well.”

Graham did not answer, but these words served their reassuring purpose. His eyes went from face to face of the three people about him. They were regarding him strangely. He knew he ought to be somewhere in Cornwall, but he could not square these things with that impression.

A matter that had been in his mind during his last waking moments at Boscastle recurred, a thing resolved upon and somehow neglected. He cleared his throat.

“Have you wired my cousin?” he asked. “E. Warming, 27, Chancery Lane?”

They were all assiduous to hear. But he had to repeat it. “What an odd *blurr* in his accent!” whispered the red-haired man. “Wire, sir?” said the young man with the flaxen beard, evidently puzzled.

“He means send an electric telegram,” volunteered the third, a pleasant-faced youth of nineteen or twenty. The flaxen-bearded man gave a cry of comprehension. “How stupid of me! You may be sure everything shall be done, sir,” he said to Graham. “I am afraid it would be difficult to — *wire* to your cousin. He is not in London now. But don’t trouble about arrangements yet; you have been asleep a very long time and the important thing is to get over that, sir.” (Graham concluded the word was sir, but this man pronounced it “*Sire*.”)

“Oh!” said Graham, and became quiet.

It was all very puzzling, but apparently these people in unfamiliar dress knew what they were about. Yet they were odd and the room was odd. It seemed he was in some newly established place. He had a sudden flash of suspicion! Surely this wasn’t some hall of public exhibition! If it was he would give Warming a piece of his mind. But it scarcely had that character. And in a place of public exhibition he would not have discovered himself naked.

Then suddenly, quite abruptly, he realised what had happened. There was no perceptible interval of suspicion, no dawn to his knowledge. Abruptly he knew that his trance had lasted for a vast interval; as if by some processes of thought-reading he interpreted the awe in the faces that peered into his. He looked at them strangely, full of intense emotion. It seemed they read his eyes. He framed his lips to speak and could not. A queer impulse to hide his knowledge came into his mind almost at the moment of his discovery. He looked at his bare feet, regarding them silently. His impulse to speak passed. He was trembling exceedingly.

They gave him some pink fluid with a greenish fluorescence and a meaty taste, and the assurance of returning strength grew.

"That — that makes me feel better," he said hoarsely, and there were murmurs of respectful approval. He knew now quite clearly. He made to speak again, and again he could not.

He pressed his throat and tried a third time. "How long?" he asked in a level voice. "How long have I been asleep?"

"Some considerable time," said the flaxen-bearded man, glancing quickly at the others.

"How long?"

"A very long time."

"Yes — yes," said Graham, suddenly testy. "But I want — Is it — it is — some years? Many years? There was something — I forget what. I feel — confused. But you—" He sobbed. "You need not fence with me. How long — ?"

He stopped, breathing irregularly. He squeezed his eyes with his knuckles and sat waiting for an answer.

They spoke in undertones.

"Five or six?" he asked faintly. "More?"

"Very much more than that."

"More!"

"More."

He looked at them and it seemed as though imps were twitching the muscles of his face. He looked his question.

"Many years," said the man with the red beard.

Graham struggled into a sitting position. He wiped a rheumy tear from his face with a lean hand. "Many years!" he repeated. He shut

his eyes tight, opened them, and sat looking about him from one unfamiliar thing to another.

"How many years?" he asked.

"You must be prepared to be surprised."

"Well?"

"More than a gross of years."

He was irritated at the strange word. "More than a *what*?"

Two of them spoke together. Some quick remarks that were made about "decimal" he did not catch.

"How long did you say?" asked Graham. "How long? Don't look like that. Tell me."

Among the remarks in an undertone, his ear caught six words: "More than a couple of centuries."

"*What*?" he cried, turning on the youth who he thought had spoken. "Who says — ? What was that? A couple of *centuries*!"

"Yes," said the man with the red beard. "Two hundred years."

Graham repeated the words. He had been prepared to hear of a vast repose, and yet these concrete centuries defeated him.

"Two hundred years," he said again, with the figure of a great gulf opening very slowly in his mind; and then, "Oh, but — !"

They said nothing.

"You — did you say — ?"

"Two hundred years. Two centuries of years," said the man with the red beard.

There was a pause. Graham looked at their faces and saw that what he had heard was indeed true.

"But it can't be," he said querulously. "I am dreaming. Trances — trances
don't last. That is not right — this is a joke you have played upon me!
Tell me — some days ago, perhaps, I was walking along the coast of Cornwall — ?"

His voice failed him.

The man with the flaxen beard hesitated. "I'm not very strong in history, sir," he said weakly, and glanced at the others.

“That was it, sir,” said the youngster. “Boscastle, in the old Duchy of Cornwall — it’s in the south-west country beyond the dairy meadows. There is a house there still. I have been there.”

“Boscastle!” Graham turned his eyes to the youngster. “That was it — Boscastle. Little Boscastle. I fell asleep — somewhere there. I don’t exactly remember. I don’t exactly remember.”

He pressed his brows and whispered, “More than *two hundred years*!”

He began to speak quickly with a twitching face, but his heart was cold within him. “But if it *is* two hundred years, every soul I know, every human being that ever I saw or spoke to before I went to sleep, must be dead.”

They did not answer him.

“The Queen and the Royal Family, her Ministers, Church and State. High and low, rich and poor, one with another … Is there England still?”

“That’s a comfort! Is there London?”

“This *is* London, eh? And you are my assistant-custodian; assistant-custodian. And these — ? Eh? Assistant-custodians too!”

He sat with a gaunt stare on his face. “But why am I here? No! Don’t talk. Be quiet. Let me—”

He sat silent, rubbed his eyes, and, uncovering them, found another little glass of pinkish fluid held towards him. He took the dose. Directly he had taken it he began to weep naturally and refreshingly.

Presently he looked at their faces, suddenly laughed through his tears, a little foolishly. “But — two — hun — dred — years!” he said. He grimaced hysterically and covered his face again.

After a space he grew calm. He sat up, his hands hanging over his knees in almost precisely the same attitude in which Isbister had found him on the cliff at Pentargen. His attention was attracted by a thick domineering voice, the footsteps of an advancing personage. “What are you doing? Why was I not warned? Surely you could tell? Someone will suffer for this. The man must be kept quiet. Are the doorways closed? All the doorways? He must be kept perfectly quiet. He must not be told. Has he been told anything?”

The man with the fair beard made some inaudible remark, and

Graham looking over his shoulder saw approaching a short, fat, and thickset beardless man, with aquiline nose and heavy neck and chin. Very thick black and slightly sloping eyebrows that almost met over his nose and overhung deep grey eyes, gave his face an oddly formidable expression. He scowled momentarily at Graham and then his regard returned to the man with the flaxen beard. “These others,” he said in a voice of extreme irritation. “You had better go.”

“Go?” said the red-bearded man.

“Certainly — go now. But see the doorways are closed as you go.”

The two men addressed turned obediently, after one reluctant glance at Graham, and instead of going through the archway as he expected, walked straight to the dead wall of the apartment opposite the archway. A long strip of this apparently solid wall rolled up with a snap, hung over the two retreating men and fell again, and immediately Graham was alone with the newcomer and the purple-robed man with the flaxen beard.

For a space the thickset man took not the slightest notice of Graham, but proceeded to interrogate the other — obviously his subordinate — upon the treatment of their charge. He spoke clearly, but in phrases only partially intelligible to Graham. The awakening seemed not only a matter of surprise but of consternation and annoyance to him. He was evidently profoundly excited.

“You must not confuse his mind by telling him things,” he repeated again and again. “You must not confuse his mind.”

His questions answered, he turned quickly and eyed the awakened sleeper with an ambiguous expression.

“Feel queer?” he asked.

“Very.”

“The world, what you see of it, seems strange to you?”

“I suppose I have to live in it, strange as it seems.”

“I suppose so, now.”

“In the first place, hadn’t I better have some clothes?”

“They—” said the thickset man and stopped, and the flaxen-bearded man met his eye and went away. “You will very speedily have clothes,” said the thickset man.

“Is it true indeed, that I have been asleep two hundred — ?” asked

Graham.

"They have told you that, have they? Two hundred and three, as a matter of fact."

Graham accepted the indisputable now with raised eyebrows and depressed mouth. He sat silent for a moment, and then asked a question, "Is there a mill or dynamo near here?" He did not wait for an answer. "Things have changed tremendously, I suppose?" he said.

"What is that shouting?" he asked abruptly.

"Nothing," said the thickset man impatiently. "It's people. You'll understand better later — perhaps. As you say, things have changed." He spoke shortly, his brows were knit, and he glanced about him like a man trying to decide in an emergency. "We must get you clothes and so forth, at any rate. Better wait here until they can be procured. No one will come near you. You want shaving."

Graham rubbed his chin.

The man with the flaxen beard came back towards them, turned suddenly, listened for a moment, lifted his eyebrows at the older man, and hurried off through the archway towards the balcony. The tumult of shouting grew louder, and the thickset man turned and listened also. He cursed suddenly under his breath, and turned his eyes upon Graham with an unfriendly expression. It was a surge of many voices, rising and falling, shouting and screaming, and once came a sound like blows and sharp cries, and then a snapping like the crackling of dry sticks. Graham strained his ears to draw some single thread of sound from the woven tumult.

Then he perceived, repeated again and again, a certain formula. For a time he doubted his ears. But surely these were the words: "Show us the Sleeper! Show us the Sleeper!"

The thickset man rushed suddenly to the archway.

"Wild!" he cried. "How do they know? Do they know? Or is it guessing?"

There was perhaps an answer.

"I can't come," said the thickset man; "I have *him* to see to. But shout from the balcony."

There was an inaudible reply.

"Say he is not awake. Anything! I leave it to you."

He came hurrying back to Graham. "You must have clothes at

once," he said. "You cannot stop here — and it will be impossible to —"

He rushed away, Graham shouting unanswered questions after him. In a moment he was back.

"I can't tell you what is happening. It is too complex to explain. In a moment you shall have your clothes made. Yes — in a moment. And then I can take you away from here. You will find out our troubles soon enough."

"But those voices. They were shouting — ?"

"Something about the Sleeper — that's you. They have some twisted idea. I don't know what it is. I know nothing."

A shrill bell jetted acutely across the indistinct mingling of remote noises, and this brusque person sprang to a little group of appliances in the corner of the room. He listened for a moment, regarding a ball of crystal, nodded, and said a few indistinct words; then he walked to the wall through which the two men had vanished. It rolled up again like a curtain, and he stood waiting.

Graham lifted his arm and was astonished to find what strength the restoratives had given him. He thrust one leg over the side of the couch and then the other. His head no longer swam. He could scarcely credit his rapid recovery. He sat feeling his limbs.

The man with the flaxen beard re-entered from the archway, and as he did so the cage of a lift came sliding down in front of the thickset man, and a lean, grey-bearded man, carrying a roll, and wearing a tightly-fitting costume of dark green, appeared therein.

"This is the tailor," said the thickset man with an introductory gesture. "It will never do for you to wear that black. I cannot understand how it got here. But I shall. I shall. You will be as rapid as possible?" he said to the tailor.

The man in green bowed, and, advancing, seated himself by Graham on the bed. His manner was calm, but his eyes were full of curiosity. "You will find the fashions altered, Sire," he said. He glanced from under his brows at the thickset man.

He opened the roller with a quick movement, and a confusion of brilliant fabrics poured out over his knees. "You lived, Sire, in a period essentially cylindrical — the Victorian. With a tendency to the hemisphere in hats. Circular curves always. Now—" He flicked

out a little appliance the size and appearance of a keyless watch, whirled the knob, and behold — a little figure in white appeared kinetoscope fashion on the dial, walking and turning. The tailor caught up a pattern of bluish white satin. “That is my conception of your immediate treatment,” he said.

The thickset man came and stood by the shoulder of Graham.

“We have very little time,” he said.

“Trust me,” said the tailor. “My machine follows. What do you think of this?”

“What is that?” asked the man from the nineteenth century.

“In your days they showed you a fashion-plate,” said the tailor, “but this is our modern development. See here.” The little figure repeated its evolutions, but in a different costume. “Or this,” and with a click another small figure in a more voluminous type of robe marched on to the dial. The tailor was very quick in his movements, and glanced twice towards the lift as he did these things.

It rumbled again, and a crop-haired anemic lad with features of the Chinese type, clad in coarse pale blue canvas, appeared together with a complicated machine, which he pushed noiselessly on little castors into the room. Incontinently the little kinetoscope was dropped, Graham was invited to stand in front of the machine and the tailor muttered some instructions to the crop-haired lad, who answered in guttural tones and with words Graham did not recognise. The boy then went to conduct an incomprehensible monologue in the corner, and the tailor pulled out a number of slotted arms terminating in little discs, pulling them out until the discs were flat against the body of Graham, one at each shoulder blade, one at the elbows, one at the neck and so forth, so that at last there were, perhaps, two score of them upon his body and limbs. At the same time, some other person entered the room by the lift, behind Graham. The tailor set moving a mechanism that initiated a faint-sounding rhythmic movement of parts in the machine, and in another moment he was knocking up the levers and Graham was released. The tailor replaced his cloak of black, and the man with the flaxen beard proffered him a little glass of some refreshing fluid. Graham saw over the rim of the glass a pale-faced young man regarding him with a singular fixity.

The thickset man had been pacing the room fretfully, and now

turned and went through the archway towards the balcony, from which the noise of a distant crowd still came in gusts and cadences. The crop-headed lad handed the tailor a roll of the bluish satin and the two began fixing this in the mechanism in a manner reminiscent of a roll of paper in a nineteenth century printing machine. Then they ran the entire thing on its easy, noiseless bearings across the room to a remote corner where a twisted cable looped rather gracefully from the wall. They made some connexion and the machine became energetic and swift.

"What is that doing?" asked Graham, pointing with the empty glass to the busy figures and trying to ignore the scrutiny of the new comer. "Is that — some sort of force — laid on?"

"Yes," said the man with the flaxen beard.

"Who is *that*?" He indicated the archway behind him.

The man in purple stroked his little beard, hesitated, and answered in an undertone, "He is Howard, your chief guardian. You see, Sire — it's a little difficult to explain. The Council appoints a guardian and assistants. This hall has under certain restrictions been public. In order that people might satisfy themselves. We have barred the doorways for the first time. But I think — if you don't mind, I will leave him to explain."

"Odd!" said Graham. "Guardian? Council?" Then turning his back on the new comer, he asked in an undertone, "Why is this man *glaring* at me? Is he a mesmerist?"

"Mesmerist! He is a capillotomist."

"Capillotomist!"

"Yes — one of the chief. His yearly fee is sixdoz lions."

It sounded sheer nonsense. Graham snatched at the last phrase with an unsteady mind. "Sixdoz lions?" he said.

"Didn't you have lions? I suppose not. You had the old pounds? They are our monetary units."

"But what was that you said — sixdoz?"

"Yes. Six dozen, Sire. Of course things, even these little things, have altered. You lived in the days of the decimal system, the Arab system — tens, and little hundreds and thousands. We have eleven numerals now. We have single figures for both ten and eleven, two figures for a dozen, and a dozen dozen makes a gross, a great

hundred, you know, a dozen gross a dozand, and a dozand dozand a myriad. Very simple?"

"I suppose so," said Graham. "But about this cap — what was it?"

The man with the flaxen beard glanced over his shoulder.

"Here are your clothes!" he said. Graham turned round sharply and saw the tailor standing at his elbow smiling, and holding some palpably new garments over his arm. The crop-headed boy, by means of one ringer, was impelling the complicated machine towards the lift by which he had arrived. Graham stared at the completed suit. "You don't mean to say — !"

"Just made," said the tailor. He dropped the garments at the feet of Graham, walked to the bed, on which Graham had so recently been lying, flung out the translucent mattress, and turned up the looking-glass. As he did so a furious bell summoned the thickset man to the corner. The man with the flaxen beard rushed across to him and then hurried out by the archway.

The tailor was assisting Graham into a dark purple combination garment, stockings, vest, and pants in one, as the thickset man came back from the corner to meet the man with the flaxen beard returning from the balcony. They began speaking quickly in an undertone, their bearing had an unmistakable quality of anxiety. Over the purple under-garment came a complex garment of bluish white, and Graham, was clothed in the fashion once more and saw himself, sallow-faced, unshaven and shaggy still, but at least naked no longer, and in some indefinable unprecedented way graceful.

"I must shave," he said regarding himself in the glass.

"In a moment," said Howard.

The persistent stare ceased. The young man closed his eyes, reopened them, and with a lean hand extended, advanced on Graham. Then he stopped, with his hand slowly gesticulating, and looked about him.

"A seat," said Howard impatiently, and in a moment the flaxen-bearded man had a chair behind Graham. "Sit down, please," said Howard.

Graham hesitated, and in the other hand of the wild-eyed man he saw the glint of steel.

"Don't you understand, Sire?" cried the flaxen-bearded man with

hurried politeness. “He is going to cut your hair.”

“Oh!” cried Graham enlightened. “But you called him—”

“A capillotomist — precisely! He is one of the finest artists in the world.”

Graham sat down abruptly. The flaxen-bearded man disappeared. The capillotomist came forward, examined Graham’s ears and surveyed him, felt the back of his head, and would have sat down again to regard him but for Howard’s audible impatience. Forthwith with rapid movements and a succession of deftly handled implements he shaved Graham’s chin, clipped his moustache, and cut and arranged his hair. All this he did without a word, with something of the rapt air of a poet inspired. And as soon as he had finished Graham was handed a pair of shoes.

Suddenly a loud voice shouted — it seemed from a piece of machinery in the corner— “At once — at once. The people know all over the city. Work is being stopped. Work is being stopped. Wait for nothing, but come.”

This shout appeared to perturb Howard exceedingly. By his gestures it seemed to Graham that he hesitated between two directions. Abruptly he went towards the corner where the apparatus stood about the little crystal ball. As he did so the undertone of tumultuous shouting from the archway that had continued during all these occurrences rose to a mighty sound, roared as if it were sweeping past, and fell again as if receding swiftly. It drew Graham after it with an irresistible attraction. He glanced at the thickset man, and then obeyed his impulse. In two strides he was down the steps and in the passage, and in a score he was out upon the balcony upon which the three men had been standing.

CHAPTER V

THE MOVING WAYS

He went to the railings of the balcony and stared upward. An exclamation of surprise at his appearance, and the movements of a number of people came from the great area below.

His first impression was of overwhelming architecture. The place into which he looked was an aisle of Titanic buildings, curving spaciously in either direction. Overhead mighty cantilevers sprang together across the huge width of the place, and a tracery of translucent material shut out the sky. Gigantic globes of cool white light shamed the pale sunbeams that filtered down through the girders and wires. Here and there a gossamer suspension bridge dotted with foot passengers flung across the chasm and the air was webbed with slender cables. A cliff of edifice hung above him, he perceived as he glanced upward, and the opposite façade was grey and dim and broken by great archings, circular perforations, balconies, buttresses, turret projections, myriads of vast windows, and an intricate scheme of architectural relief. Athwart these ran inscriptions horizontally and obliquely in an unfamiliar lettering. Here and there close to the roof cables of a peculiar stoutness were fastened, and drooped in a steep curve to circular openings on the opposite side of the space, and even as Graham noted these a remote and tiny figure of a man clad in pale blue arrested his attention. This little figure was far overhead across the space beside the higher fastening of one of these festoons, hanging forward from a little ledge of masonry and handling some well-nigh invisible strings dependent from the line. Then suddenly, with a swoop that sent Graham's heart into his mouth, this man had rushed down the curve and vanished through a round opening on the hither side of the way. Graham had been looking up as he came out upon the balcony, and the things he saw above and opposed to him had at first seized his attention to the exclusion of anything else. Then suddenly he discovered the roadway! It was not a roadway at all, as Graham understood such things, for in the nineteenth century the only roads

and streets were beaten tracks of motionless earth, jostling rivulets of vehicles between narrow footways. But this roadway was three hundred feet across, and it moved; it moved, all save the middle, the lowest part. For a moment, the motion dazzled his mind. Then he understood. Under the balcony this extraordinary roadway ran swiftly to Graham's right, an endless flow rushing along as fast as a nineteenth century express train, an endless platform of narrow transverse overlapping slats with little interspaces that permitted it to follow the curvatures of the street. Upon it were seats, and here and there little kiosks, but they swept by too swiftly for him to see what might be therein. From this nearest and swiftest platform a series of others descended to the centre of the space. Each moved to the right, each perceptibly slower than the one above it, but the difference in pace was small enough to permit anyone to step from any platform to the one adjacent, and so walk uninterruptedly from the swiftest to the motionless middle way. Beyond this middle way was another series of endless platforms rushing with varying pace to Graham's left. And seated in crowds upon the two widest and swiftest platforms, or stepping from one to another down the steps, or swarming over the central space, was an innumerable and wonderfully diversified multitude of people.

"You must not stop here," shouted Howard suddenly at his side. "You must come away at once."

Graham made no answer. He heard without hearing. The platforms ran with a roar and the people were shouting. He perceived women and girls with flowing hair, beautifully robed, with bands crossing between the breasts. These first came out of the confusion. Then he perceived that the dominant note in that kaleidoscope of costume was the pale blue that the tailor's boy had worn. He became aware of cries of "The Sleeper. What has happened to the Sleeper?" and it seemed as though the rushing platforms before him were suddenly spattered with the pale buff of human faces, and then still more thickly. He saw pointing fingers. He perceived that the motionless central area of this huge arcade just opposite to the balcony was densely crowded with blue-clad people. Some sort of struggle had sprung into life. People seemed to be pushed up the running platforms on either side, and carried away against their will.

They would spring off so soon as they were beyond the thick of the confusion, and run back towards the conflict.

"It is the Sleeper. Verily it is the Sleeper," shouted voices. "That is never the Sleeper," shouted others. More and more faces were turned to him. At the intervals along this central area Graham noted openings, pits, apparently the heads of staircases going down with people ascending out of them and descending into them. The struggle it seemed centred about the one of these nearest to him. People were running down the moving platforms to this, leaping dexterously from platform to platform. The clustering people on the higher platforms seemed to divide their interest between this point and the balcony. A number of sturdy little figures clad in a uniform of bright red, and working methodically together, were employed it seemed in preventing access to this descending staircase. About them a crowd was rapidly accumulating. Their brilliant colour contrasted vividly with the whitish-blue of their antagonists, for the struggle was indisputable.

He saw these things with Howard shouting in his ear and shaking his arm.
And then suddenly Howard was gone and he stood alone.

He perceived that the cries of "The Sleeper!" grew in volume, and that the people on the nearer platform were standing up. The nearer platform he perceived was empty to the right of him, and far across the space the platform running in the opposite direction was coming crowded and passing away bare. With incredible swiftness a vast crowd had gathered in the central space before his eyes; a dense swaying mass of people, and the shouts grew from a fitful crying to a voluminous incessant clamour: "The Sleeper! The Sleeper!" and yells and cheers, a waving of garments and cries of "Stop the Ways!" They were also crying another name strange to Graham. It sounded like "Ostrog." The slower platforms were soon thick with active people, running against the movement so as to keep themselves opposite to him.

"Stop the Ways," they cried. Agile figures ran up from the centre to the swift road nearest to him, were borne rapidly past him,

shouting strange, unintelligible things, and ran back obliquely to the central way. One thing he distinguished: “It is indeed the Sleeper. It is indeed the Sleeper,” they testified.

For a space Graham stood motionless. Then he became vividly aware that all this concerned him. He was pleased at his wonderful popularity, he bowed, and, seeking a gesture of longer range, waved his arm. He was astonished at the violence of uproar that this provoked. The tumult about the descending stairway rose to furious violence. He became aware of crowded balconies, of men sliding along ropes, of men in trapeze-like seats hurling athwart the space. He heard voices behind him, a number of people descending the steps through the archway; he suddenly perceived that his guardian Howard was back again and gripping his arm painfully, and shouting inaudibly in his ear.

He turned, and Howard’s face was white. “Come back,” he heard. “They will stop the ways. The whole city will be in confusion.”

He perceived a number of men hurrying along the passage of blue pillars behind Howard, the red-haired man, the man with the flaxen beard, a tall man in vivid vermilion, a crowd of others in red carrying staves, and all these people had anxious eager faces.

“Get him away,” cried Howard.

“But why?” said Graham. “I don’t see—”

“You must come away!” said the man in red in a resolute voice. His face and eyes were resolute, too. Graham’s glances went from face to face, and he was suddenly aware of that most disagreeable flavour in life, compulsion. Someone gripped his arm….

He was being dragged away. It seemed as though the tumult suddenly became two, as if half the shouts that had come in from this wonderful roadway had sprung into the passages of the great building behind him. Marvelling and confused, feeling an impotent desire to resist, Graham was half led, half thrust, along the passage of blue pillars, and suddenly he found himself alone with Howard in a lift and moving swiftly upward.

CHAPTER VI

THE HALL OF THE ATLAS

From the moment when the tailor had bowed his farewell to the moment when Graham found himself in the lift, was altogether barely five minutes. As yet the haze of his vast interval of sleep hung about him, as yet the initial strangeness of his being alive at all in this remote age touched everything with wonder, with a sense of the irrational, with something of the quality of a realistic dream. He was still detached, an astonished spectator, still but half involved in life. What he had seen, and especially the last crowded tumult, framed in the setting of the balcony, had a spectacular turn, like a thing witnessed from the box of a theatre. "I don't understand," he said. "What was the trouble? My mind is in a whirl. Why were they shouting? What is the danger?"

"We have our troubles," said Howard. His eyes avoided Graham's enquiry. "This is a time of unrest. And, in fact, your appearance, your waking just now, has a sort of connexion—"

He spoke jerkily, like a man not quite sure of his breathing. He stopped abruptly.

"I don't understand," said Graham.

"It will be clearer later," said Howard.

He glanced uneasily upward, as though he found the progress of the lift slow.

"I shall understand better, no doubt, when I have seen my way about a little," said Graham puzzled. "It will be — it is bound to be perplexing. At present it is all so strange. Anything seems possible. Anything. In the details even. Your counting, I understand, is different."

The lift stopped, and they stepped out into a narrow but very long passage between high walls, along which ran an extraordinary number of tubes and big cables.

"What a huge place this is!" said Graham. "Is it all one building? What place is it?"

"This is one of the city ways for various public services. Light and

so forth."

"Was it a social trouble — that — in the great roadway place? How are you governed? Have you still a police?"

"Several," said Howard.

"Several?"

"About fourteen."

"I don't understand."

"Very probably not. Our social order will probably seem very complex to you. To tell you the truth, I don't understand it myself very clearly. Nobody does. You will, perhaps — bye and bye. We have to go to the Council."

Graham's attention was divided between the urgent necessity of his inquiries and the people in the passages and halls they were traversing. For a moment his mind would be concentrated upon Howard and the halting answers he made, and then he would lose the thread in response to some vivid unexpected impression. Along the passages, in the halls, half the people seemed to be men in the red uniform. The pale blue canvas that had been so abundant in the aisle of moving ways did not appear. Invariably these men looked at him, and saluted him and Howard as they passed.

He had a clear vision of entering a long corridor, and there were a number of girls sitting on low seats, as though in a class. He saw no teacher, but only a novel apparatus from which he fancied a voice proceeded. The girls regarded him and his conductor, he thought, with curiosity and astonishment. But he was hurried on before he could form a clear idea of the gathering. He judged they knew Howard and not himself, and that they wondered who he was. This Howard, it seemed, was a person of importance. But then he was also merely Graham's guardian. That was odd.

There came a passage in twilight, and into this passage a footway hung so that he could see the feet and ankles of people going to and fro thereon, but no more of them. Then vague impressions of galleries and of casual astonished passers-by turning round to stare after the two of them with their red-clad guard.

The stimulus of the restoratives he had taken was only temporary. He was speedily fatigued by this excessive haste. He asked Howard to slacken his speed. Presently he was in a lift that had a window

upon the great street space, but this was glazed and did not open, and they were too high for him to see the moving platforms below. But he saw people going to and fro along cables and along strange, frail-looking bridges.

Thence they passed across the street and at a vast height above it. They crossed by means of a narrow bridge closed in with glass, so clear that it made him giddy even to remember it. The floor of it also was of glass. From his memory of the cliffs between New Quay and Boscastle, so remote in time, and so recent in his experience, it seemed to him that they must be near four hundred feet above the moving ways. He stopped, looked down between his legs upon the swarming blue and red multitudes, minute and foreshortened, struggling and gesticulating still towards the little balcony far below, a little toy balcony, it seemed, where he had so recently been standing. A thin haze and the glare of the mighty globes of light obscured everything. A man seated in a little openwork cradle shot by from some point still higher than the little narrow bridge, rushing down a cable as swiftly almost as if he were falling. Graham stopped involuntarily to watch this strange passenger vanish below, and then his eyes went back to the tumultuous struggle.

Along one of the faster ways rushed a thick crowd of red spots. This broke up into individuals as it approached the balcony, and went pouring down the slower ways towards the dense struggling crowd on the central area. These men in red appeared to be armed with sticks or truncheons; they seemed to be striking and thrusting. A great shouting, cries of wrath, screaming, burst out and came up to Graham, faint and thin. “Go on,” cried Howard, laying hands on him.

Another man rushed down a cable. Graham suddenly glanced up to see whence he came, and beheld through the glassy roof and the network of cables and girders, dim rhythmically passing forms like the vanes of windmills, and between them glimpses of a remote and pallid sky. Then Howard had thrust him forward across the bridge, and he was in a little narrow passage decorated with geometrical patterns.

“I want to see more of that,” cried Graham, resisting.

“No, no,” cried Howard, still gripping his arm. “This way. You must go this way.” And the men in red following them seemed ready

to enforce his orders.

Some negroes in a curious wasp-like uniform of black and yellow appeared down the passage, and one hastened to throw up a sliding shutter that had seemed a door to Graham, and led the way through it. Graham found himself in a gallery overhanging the end of a great chamber. The attendant in black and yellow crossed this, thrust up a second shutter and stood waiting.

This place had the appearance of an ante-room. He saw a number of people in the central space, and at the opposite end a large and imposing doorway at the top of a flight of steps, heavily curtained but giving a glimpse of some still larger hall beyond. He perceived white men in red and other negroes in black and yellow standing stiffly about those portals.

As they crossed the gallery he heard a whisper from below, “The Sleeper,” and was aware of a turning of heads, a hum of observation. They entered another little passage in the wall of this ante-chamber, and then he found himself on an iron-railed gallery of metal that passed round the side of the great hall he had already seen through the curtains. He entered the place at the corner, so that he received the fullest impression of its huge proportions. The black in the wasp uniform stood aside like a well-trained servant, and closed the valve behind him.

Compared with any of the places Graham had seen thus far, this second hall appeared to be decorated with extreme richness. On a pedestal at the remoter end, and more brilliantly lit than any other object, was a gigantic white figure of Atlas, strong and strenuous, the globe upon his bowed shoulders. It was the first thing to strike his attention, it was so vast, so patiently and painfully real, so white and simple. Save for this figure and for a dais in the centre, the wide floor of the place was a shining vacancy. The dais was remote in the greatness of the area; it would have looked a mere slab of metal had it not been for the group of seven men who stood about a table on it, and gave an inkling of its proportions. They were all dressed in white robes, they seemed to have arisen that moment from their seats, and they were regarding Graham steadfastly. At the end of the table he perceived the glitter of some mechanical appliances.

Howard led him along the end gallery until they were opposite

this mighty labouring figure. Then he stopped. The two men in red who had followed them into the gallery came and stood on either hand of Graham.

"You must remain here," murmured Howard, "for a few moments," and, without waiting for a reply, hurried away along the gallery.

"But, *why* — ?" began Graham.

He moved as if to follow Howard, and found his path obstructed by one of the men in red. "You have to wait here, Sire," said the man in red.

"*Why*?"

"Orders, Sire."

"Whose orders?"

"Our orders, Sire."

Graham looked his exasperation.

"What place is this?" he said presently. "Who are those men?"

"They are the lords of the Council, Sire."

"What Council?"

"*The* Council."

"Oh!" said Graham, and after an equally ineffectual attempt at the other man, went to the railing and stared at the distant men in white, who stood watching him and whispering together.

The Council? He perceived there were now eight, though how the newcomer had arrived he had not observed. They made no gestures of greeting; they stood regarding him as in the nineteenth century a group of men might have stood in the street regarding a distant balloon that had suddenly floated into view. What council could it be that gathered there, that little body of men beneath the significant white Atlas, secluded from every eavesdropper in this impressive spaciousness? And why should he be brought to them, and be looked at strangely and spoken of inaudibly? Howard appeared beneath, walking quickly across the polished floor towards them. As he drew near he bowed and performed certain peculiar movements, apparently of a ceremonious nature. Then he ascended the steps of the dais, and stood by the apparatus at the end of the table.

Graham watched that visible inaudible conversation. Occasionally, one of the white-robed men would glance towards him.

He strained his ears in vain. The gesticulation of two of the speakers became animated. He glanced from them to the passive faces of his attendants…. When he looked again Howard was extending his hands and moving his head like a man who protests. He was interrupted, it seemed, by one of the white-robed men rapping the table.

The conversation lasted an interminable time to Graham's sense. His eyes rose to the still giant at whose feet the Council sat. Thence they wandered to the walls of the hall. It was decorated in long painted panels of a quasi-Japanese type, many of them very beautiful. These panels were grouped in a great and elaborate framing of dark metal, which passed into the metallic caryatidae of the galleries, and the great structural lines of the interior. The facile grace of these panels enhanced the mighty white effort that laboured in the centre of the scheme. Graham's eyes came back to the Council, and Howard was descending the steps. As he drew nearer his features could be distinguished, and Graham saw that he was flushed and blowing out his cheeks. His countenance was still disturbed when presently he reappeared along the gallery.

"This way," he said concisely, and they went on in silence to a little door that opened at their approach. The two men in red stopped on either side of this door. Howard and Graham passed in, and Graham, glancing back, saw the white-robed Council still standing in a close group and looking at him. Then the door closed behind him with a heavy thud, and for the first time since his awakening he was in silence. The floor, even, was noiseless to his feet.

Howard opened another door, and they were in the first of two contiguous chambers furnished in white and green. "What Council was that?" began Graham. "What were they discussing? What have they to do with me?" Howard closed the door carefully, heaved a huge sigh, and said something in an undertone. He walked slantingways across the room and turned, blowing out his cheeks again. "Ugh!" he grunted, a man relieved.

Graham stood regarding him.

"You must understand," began Howard abruptly, avoiding Graham's eyes, "that our social order is very complex. A half explanation, a bare unqualified statement would give you false

impressions. As a matter of fact — it is a case of compound interest partly — your small fortune, and the fortune of your cousin Warming which was left to you — and certain other beginnings — have become very considerable. And in other ways that will be hard for you to understand, you have become a person of significance — of very considerable significance — involved in the world's affairs."

He stopped.

"Yes?" said Graham.

"We have grave social troubles."

"Yes?"

"Things have come to such a pass that, in fact, it is advisable to seclude you here."

"Keep me prisoner!" exclaimed Graham.

"Well — to ask you to keep in seclusion."

Graham turned on him. "This is strange!" he said.

"No harm will be done you."

"No harm!"

"But you must be kept here—"

"While I learn my position, I presume."

"Precisely."

"Very well then. Begin. Why *harm*?"

"Not now."

"Why not?"

"It is too long a story, Sire."

"All the more reason I should begin at once. You say I am a person of importance. What was that shouting I heard? Why is a great multitude shouting and excited because my trance is over, and who are the men in white in that huge council chamber?"

"All in good time, Sire," said Howard. "But not crudely, not crudely. This is one of those flimsy times when no man has a settled mind. Your awakening — no one expected your awakening. The Council is consulting."

"What council?"

"The Council you saw."

Graham made a petulant movement. "This is not right," he said. "I should be told what is happening."

"You must wait. Really you must wait."

Graham sat down abruptly. “I suppose since I have waited so long to resume life,” he said, “that I must wait a little longer.”

“That is better,” said Howard. “Yes, that is much better. And I must leave you alone. For a space. While I attend the discussion in the Council…. I am sorry.”

He went towards the noiseless door, hesitated and vanished.

Graham walked to the door, tried it, found it securely fastened in some way he never came to understand, turned about, paced the room restlessly, made the circuit of the room, and sat down. He remained sitting for some time with folded arms and knitted brow, biting his finger nails and trying to piece together the kaleidoscopic impressions of this first hour of awakened life; the vast mechanical spaces, the endless series of chambers and passages, the great struggle that roared and splashed through these strange ways, the little group of remote unsympathetic men beneath the colossal Atlas, Howard’s mysterious behaviour. There was an inkling of some vast inheritance already in his mind — a vast inheritance perhaps misapplied — of some unprecedented importance and opportunity. What had he to do? And this room’s secluded silence was eloquent of imprisonment!

It came into Graham’s mind with irresistible conviction that this series of magnificent impressions was a dream. He tried to shut his eyes and succeeded, but that time-honoured device led to no awakening.

Presently he began to touch and examine all the unfamiliar appointments of the two small rooms in which he found himself.

In a long oval panel of mirror he saw himself and stopped astonished. He was clad in a graceful costume of purple and bluish white, with a little greyshot beard trimmed to a point, and his hair, its blackness streaked now with bands of grey, arranged over his forehead in an unfamiliar but pleasing manner. He seemed a man of five-and-forty perhaps. For a moment he did not perceive this was himself.

A flash of laughter came with the recognition. “To call on old Warming like this!” he exclaimed, “and make him take me out to lunch!”

Then he thought of meeting first one and then another of the few

familiar acquaintances of his early manhood, and in the midst of his amusement realised that every soul with whom he might jest had died many score of years ago. The thought smote him abruptly and keenly; he stopped short, the expression of his face changed to a white consternation.

The tumultuous memory of the moving platforms and the huge façade of that wonderful street reasserted itself. The shouting multitudes came back clear and vivid, and those remote, inaudible, unfriendly councillors in white. He felt himself a little figure, very small and ineffectual, pitifully conspicuous. And all about him, the world was — *strange*.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE SILENT ROOMS

Presently Graham resumed his examination of his apartments. Curiosity kept him moving in spite of his fatigue. The inner room, he perceived, was high, and its ceiling dome shaped, with an oblong aperture in the centre, opening into a funnel in which a wheel of broad vanes seemed to be rotating, apparently driving the air up the shaft. The faint humming note of its easy motion was the only clear sound in that quiet place. As these vanes sprang up one after the other, Graham could get transient glimpses of the sky. He was surprised to see a star.

This drew his attention to the fact that the bright lighting of these rooms was due to a multitude of very faint glow lamps set about the cornices. There were no windows. And he began to recall that along all the vast chambers and passages he had traversed with Howard he had observed no windows at all. Had there been windows? There were windows on the street indeed, but were they for light? Or was the whole city lit day and night for evermore, so that there was no night there?

And another thing dawned upon him. There was no fireplace in either room. Was the season summer, and were these merely summer apartments, or was the whole city uniformly heated or cooled? He became interested in these questions, began examining the smooth texture of the walls, the simply constructed bed, the ingenious arrangements by which the labour of bedroom service was practically abolished. And over everything was a curious absence of deliberate ornament, a bare grace of form and colour, that he found very pleasing to the eye. There were several very comfortable chairs, a light table on silent runners carrying several bottles of fluids and glasses, and two plates bearing a clear substance like jelly. Then he noticed there were no books, no newspapers, no writing materials. “The world has changed indeed,” he said.

He observed one entire side of the outer room was set with rows of peculiar double cylinders inscribed with green lettering on white

that harmonized with the decorative scheme of the room, and in the centre of this side projected a little apparatus about a yard square and having a white smooth face to the room. A chair faced this. He had a transitory idea that these cylinders might be books, or a modern substitute for books, but at first it did not seem so.

The lettering on the cylinders puzzled him. At first sight it seemed like Russian. Then he noticed a suggestion of mutilated English about certain of the words.

"Thi Man huwdbi Kin" forced itself on him as "The Man who would be King."

"Phonetic spelling," he said. He remembered reading a story with that title, then he recalled the story vividly, one of the best stories in the world. But this thing before him was not a book as he understood it. He puzzled out the titles of two adjacent cylinders. "The Heart of Darkness" he had never heard of before nor "The Madonna of the Future" — no doubt if they were indeed stories, they were by post-Victorian authors.

He puzzled over this peculiar cylinder for some time and replaced it. Then he turned to the square apparatus and examined that. He opened a sort of lid and found one of the double cylinders within, and on the upper edge a little stud like the stud of an electric bell. He pressed this and a rapid clicking began and ceased. He became aware of voices and music, and noticed a play of colour on the smooth front face. He suddenly realised what this might be, and stepped back to regard it.

On the flat surface was now a little picture, very vividly coloured, and in this picture were figures that moved. Not only did they move, but they were conversing in clear small voices. It was exactly like reality viewed through an inverted opera glass and heard through a long tube. His interest was seized at once by the situation, which presented a man pacing up and down and vociferating angry things to a pretty but petulant woman. Both were in the picturesque costume that seemed so strange to Graham. "I have worked," said the man, "but what have you been doing?"

"Ah!" said Graham. He forgot everything else, and sat down in the chair. Within five minutes he heard himself, named, heard "when the Sleeper wakes," used jestingly as a proverb for remote

postponement, and passed himself by, a thing remote and incredible. But in a little while he knew those two people like intimate friends.

At last the miniature drama came to an end, and the square face of the apparatus was blank again.

It was a strange world into which he had been permitted to see, unscrupulous, pleasure seeking, energetic, subtle, a world too of dire economic struggle; there were allusions he did not understand, incidents that conveyed strange suggestions of altered moral ideals, flashes of dubious enlightenment. The blue canvas that bulked so largely in his first impression of the city ways appeared again and again as the costume of the common people. He had no doubt the story was contemporary, and its intense realism was undeniable. And the end had been a tragedy that oppressed him. He sat staring at the blankness.

He started and rubbed his eyes. He had been so absorbed in the latter-day substitute for a novel, that he awoke to the little green and white room with more than a touch of the surprise of his first awakening.

He stood up, and abruptly he was back in his own wonderland. The clearness of the kinetoscope drama passed, and the struggle in the vast place of streets, the ambiguous Council, the swift phases of his waking hour, came back. These people had spoken of the Council with suggestions of a vague universality of power. And they had spoken of the Sleeper; it had not really struck him vividly at the time that he was the Sleeper. He had to recall precisely what they had said….

He walked into the bedroom and peered up through the quick intervals of the revolving fan. As the fan swept round, a dim turmoil like the noise of machinery came in rhythmic eddies. All else was silence. Though the perpetual day still irradiated his apartments, he perceived the little intermittent strip of sky was now deep blue — black almost, with a dust of little stars….

He resumed his examination of the rooms. He could find no way of opening the padded door, no bell nor other means of calling for attendance. His feeling of wonder was in abeyance; but he was curious, anxious for information. He wanted to know exactly how he stood to these new things. He tried to compose himself to wait until

someone came to him. Presently he became restless and eager for information, for distraction, for fresh sensations.

He went back to the apparatus in the other room, and had soon puzzled out the method of replacing the cylinders by others. As he did so, it came into his mind that it must be these little appliances had fixed the language so that it was still clear and understandable after two hundred years. The haphazard cylinders he substituted displayed a musical fantasia. At first it was beautiful, and then it was sensuous. He presently recognised what appeared to him to be an altered version of the story of Tannhauser. The music was unfamiliar. But the rendering was realistic, and with a contemporary unfamiliarity. Tannhauser did not go to a Venusberg, but to a Pleasure City. What was a Pleasure City? A dream, surely, the fancy of a fantastic, voluptuous writer.

He became interested, curious. The story developed with a flavour of strangely twisted sentimentality. Suddenly he did not like it. He liked it less as it proceeded.

He had a revulsion of feeling. These were no pictures, no idealisations, but photographed realities. He wanted no more of the twenty-second century Venusberg. He forgot the part played by the model in nineteenth century art, and gave way to an archaic indignation. He rose, angry and half ashamed at himself for witnessing this thing even in solitude. He pulled forward the apparatus, and with some violence sought for a means of stopping its action. Something snapped. A violet spark stung and convulsed his arm and the thing was still. When he attempted next day to replace these Tannhauser cylinders by another pair, he found the apparatus broken….

He struck out a path oblique to the room and paced to and fro, struggling with intolerable vast impressions. The things he had derived from the cylinders and the things he had seen, conflicted, confused him. It seemed to him the most amazing thing of all that in his thirty years of life he had never tried to shape a picture of these coming times. “We were making the future,” he said, “and hardly any of us troubled to think what future we were making. And here it is!”

“What have they got to, what has been done? How do I come into

the midst of it all?" The vastness of street and house he was prepared for, the multitudes of people. But conflicts in the city ways! And the systematised sensuality of a class of rich men!

He thought of Bellamy, the hero of whose Socialistic Utopia had so oddly anticipated this actual experience. But here was no Utopia, no Socialistic state. He had already seen enough to realise that the ancient antithesis of luxury, waste and sensuality on the one hand and abject poverty on the other, still prevailed. He knew enough of the essential factors of life to understand that correlation. And not only were the buildings of the city gigantic and the crowds in the street gigantic, but the voices he had heard in the ways, the uneasiness of Howard, the very atmosphere spoke of gigantic discontent. What country was he in? Still England it seemed, and yet strangely "un-English." His mind glanced at the rest of the world, and saw only an enigmatical veil.

He prowled about his apartment, examining everything as a caged animal might do. He was very tired, with that feverish exhaustion that does not admit of rest. He listened for long spaces under the ventilator to catch some distant echo of the tumults he felt must be proceeding in the city.

He began to talk to himself. "Two hundred and three years!" he said to himself over and over again, laughing stupidly. "Then I am two hundred and thirty-three years old! The oldest inhabitant. Surely they haven't reversed the tendency of our time and gone back to the rule of the oldest. My claims are indisputable. Mumble, mumble. I remember the Bulgarian atrocities as though it was yesterday. 'Tis a great age! Ha ha!" He was surprised at first to hear himself laughing, and then laughed again deliberately and louder. Then he realised that he was behaving foolishly. "Steady," he said. "Steady!"

His pacing became more regular. "This new world," he said. "I don't understand it. *Why*? … But it is all *why*!"

"I suppose they can fly and do all sorts of things. Let me try and remember just how it began."

He was surprised at first to find how vague the memories of his first thirty years had become. He remembered fragments, for the most part trivial moments, things of no great importance that he had observed. His boyhood seemed the most accessible at first, he

recalled school books and certain lessons in mensuration. Then he revived the more salient features of his life, memories of the wife long since dead, her magic influence now gone beyond corruption, of his rivals and friends and betrayers, of the decision of this issue and that, and then of his last years of misery, of fluctuating resolves, and at last of his strenuous studies. In a little while he perceived he had it all again; dim perhaps, like metal long laid aside, but in no way defective or injured, capable of re-polishing. And the hue of it was a deepening misery. Was it worth re-polishing? By a miracle he had been lifted out of a life that had become intolerable….

He reverted to his present condition. He wrestled with the facts in vain. It became an inextricable tangle. He saw the sky through the ventilator pink with dawn. An old persuasion came out of the dark recesses of his memory. "I must sleep," he said. It appeared as a delightful relief from this mental distress and from the growing pain and heaviness of his limbs. He went to the strange little bed, lay down and was presently asleep….

He was destined to become very familiar indeed with these apartments before he left them, for he remained imprisoned for three days. During that time no one, except Howard, entered the rooms. The marvel of his fate mingled with and in some way minimised the marvel of his survival. He had awakened to mankind it seemed only to be snatched away into this unaccountable solitude. Howard came regularly with subtly sustaining and nutritive fluids, and light and pleasant foods, quite strange to Graham. He always closed the door carefully as he entered. On matters of detail he was increasingly obliging, but the bearing of Graham on the great issues that were evidently being contested so closely beyond the sound-proof walls that enclosed him, he would not elucidate. He evaded, as politely as possible, every question on the position of affairs in the outer world.

And in those three days Graham's incessant thoughts went far and wide. All that he had seen, all this elaborate contrivance to prevent him seeing, worked together in his mind. Almost every possible interpretation of his position he debated — even as it chanced, the right interpretation. Things that presently happened to him, came to him at last credible, by virtue of this seclusion. When at length the moment of his release arrived, it found him prepared….

Howard's bearing went far to deepen Graham's impression of his own strange importance; the door between its opening and closing seemed to admit with him a breath of momentous happening. His enquiries became more definite and searching. Howard retreated through protests and difficulties. The awakening was unforeseen, he repeated; it happened to have fallen in with the trend of a social convulsion. "To explain it I must tell you the history of a gross and a half of years," protested Howard.

"The thing is this," said Graham. "You are afraid of something I shall do. In some way I am arbitrator — I might be arbitrator."

"It is not that. But you have — I may tell you this much — the automatic increase of your property puts great possibilities of interference in your hands. And in certain other ways you have influence, with your eighteenth century notions."

"Nineteenth century," corrected Graham.

"With your old world notions, anyhow, ignorant as you are of every feature of our State."

"Am I a fool?"

"Certainly not."

"Do I seem to be the sort of man who would act rashly?"

"You were never expected to act at all. No one counted on your awakening. No one dreamt you would ever awake. The Council had surrounded you with antiseptic conditions. As a matter of fact, we thought that you were dead — a mere arrest of decay. And — but it is too complex. We dare not suddenly — while you are still half awake."

"It won't do," said Graham. "Suppose it is as you say — why am I not being crammed night and day with facts and warnings and all the wisdom of the time to fit me for my responsibilities? Am I any wiser now than two days ago, if it is two days, when I awoke?"

Howard pulled his lip.

"I am beginning to feel — every hour I feel more clearly — a system of concealment of which you are the face. Is this Council, or committee, or whatever they are, cooking the accounts of my estate? Is that it?"

"That note of suspicion—" said Howard.

"Ugh!" said Graham. "Now, mark my words, it will be ill for

those who have put me here. It will be ill. I am alive. Make no doubt of it, I am alive. Every day my pulse is stronger and my mind clearer and more vigorous. No more quiescence. I am a man come back to life. And I want to *live*—"

"*Live*!"

Howard's face lit with an idea. He came towards Graham and spoke in an easy confidential tone.

"The Council secludes you here for your good. You are restless. Naturally — an energetic man! You find it dull here. But we are anxious
that everything you may desire — every desire — every sort of desire …
There may be something. Is there any sort of company?"

He paused meaningly.

"Yes," said Graham thoughtfully. "There is."

"Ah! *Now*! We have treated you neglectfully."

"The crowds in yonder streets of yours."

"That," said Howard, "I am afraid — But—"

Graham began pacing the room. Howard stood near the door watching him. The implication of Howard's suggestion was only half evident to Graham. Company? Suppose he were to accept the proposal, demand some sort of *company*? Would there be any possibilities of gathering from the conversation of this additional person some vague inkling of the struggle that had broken out so vividly at his waking moment? He meditated again, and the suggestion took colour. He turned on Howard abruptly.

"What do you mean by company?"

Howard raised his eyes and shrugged his shoulders. "Human beings," he said, with a curious smile on his heavy face. "Our social ideas," he said, "have a certain increased liberality, perhaps, in comparison with your times. If a man wishes to relieve such a tedium as this — by feminine society, for instance. We think it no scandal. We have cleared our minds of formulae. There is in our city a class, a necessary class, no longer despised — discreet—"

Graham stopped dead.

“It would pass the time,” said Howard. “It is a thing I should perhaps have thought of before, but, as a matter of fact, so much is happening—”

He indicated the exterior world.

Graham hesitated. For a moment the figure of a possible woman dominated his mind with an intense attraction. Then he flashed into anger.

“*No*!” he shouted.

He began striding rapidly up and down the room. “Everything you say, everything you do, convinces me — of some great issue in which I am concerned. I do not want to pass the time, as you call it. Yes, I know. Desire and indulgence are life in a sense — and Death! Extinction! In my life before I slept I had worked out that pitiful question. I will not begin again. There is a city, a multitude — . And meanwhile I am here like a rabbit in a bag.”

His rage surged high. He choked for a moment and began to wave his clenched fists. He gave way to an anger fit, he swore archaic curses. His gestures had the quality of physical threats.

“I do not know who your party may be. I am in the dark, and you keep me in the dark. But I know this, that I am secluded here for no good purpose. For no good purpose. I warn you, I warn you of the consequences. Once I come at my power—”

He realised that to threaten thus might be a danger to himself. He stopped. Howard stood regarding him with a curious expression.

“I take it this is a message to the Council,” said Howard.

Graham had a momentary impulse to leap upon the man, fell or stun him. It must have shown upon his face; at any rate Howard’s movement was quick. In a second the noiseless door had closed again, and the man from the nineteenth century was alone.

For a moment he stood rigid, with clenched hands half raised. Then he flung them down. “What a fool I have been!” he said, and gave way to his anger again, stamping about the room and shouting curses…. For a long time he kept himself in a sort of frenzy, raging at his position, at his own folly, at the knaves who had imprisoned him. He did this because he did not want to look calmly at his position. He clung to his anger — because he was afraid of fear.

Presently he found himself reasoning with himself. This

imprisonment was unaccountable, but no doubt the legal forms — new legal forms — of the time permitted it. It must, of course, be legal. These people were two hundred years further on in the march of civilisation than the Victorian generation. It was not likely they would be less — humane. Yet they had cleared their minds of formulae! Was humanity a formula as well as chastity?

His imagination set to work to suggest things that might be done to him. The attempts of his reason to dispose of these suggestions, though for the most part logically valid, were quite unavailing. "Why should anything be done to me?"

"If the worst comes to the worst," he found himself saying at last, "I can give up what they want. But what do they want? And why don't they ask me for it instead of cooping me up?"

He returned to his former preoccupation with the Council's possible intentions. He began to reconsider the details of Howard's behaviour, sinister glances, inexplicable hesitations. Then, for a time, his mind circled about the idea of escaping from these rooms; but whither could he escape into this vast, crowded world? He would be worse off than a Saxon yeoman suddenly dropped into nineteenth century London. And besides, how could anyone escape from these rooms?

"How can it benefit anyone if harm should happen to me?"

He thought of the tumult, the great social trouble of which he was so unaccountably the axis. A text, irrelevant enough, and yet curiously insistent, came floating up out of the darkness of his memory. This also a Council had said:

"It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people."

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROOF SPACES

As the fans in the circular aperture of the inner room rotated and permitted glimpses of the night, dim sounds drifted in thereby. And Graham, standing underneath, was startled by the sound of a voice.

He peered up and saw in the intervals of the rotation, dark and dim, the face and shoulders of a man regarding him. Then a dark hand was extended, the swift vane struck it, swung round and beat on with a little brownish patch on the edge of its thin blade, and something began to fall therefrom upon the floor, dripping silently.

Graham looked down, and there were spots of blood at his feet. He looked up again in a strange excitement. The figure had gone.

He remained motionless — his every sense intent upon the flickering patch of darkness. He became aware of some faint, remote, dark specks floating lightly through the outer air. They came down towards him, fitfully, eddyingly, and passed aside out of the uprush from the fan. A gleam of light flickered, the specks flashed white, and then the darkness came again. Warmed and lit as he was, he perceived that it was snowing within a few feet of him.

Graham walked across the room and came back to the ventilator again. He saw the head of a man pass near. There was a sound of whispering. Then a smart blow on some metallic substance, effort, voices, and the vanes stopped. A gust of snowflakes whirled into the room, and vanished before they touched the floor. “Don’t be afraid,” said a voice.

Graham stood under the vane. “Who are you?” he whispered.

For a moment there was nothing but a swaying of the fan, and then the head of a man was thrust cautiously into the opening. His face appeared nearly inverted to Graham; his dark hair was wet with dissolving flakes of snow upon it. His arm went up into the darkness holding something unseen. He had a youthful face and bright eyes, and the veins of his forehead were swollen. He seemed to be exerting himself to maintain his position.

For several seconds neither he nor Graham spoke.

“You were the Sleeper?” said the stranger at last.

“Yes,” said Graham. “What do you want with me?”

“I come from Ostrog, Sire.”

“Ostrog?”

The man in the ventilator twisted his head round so that his profile was towards Graham. He appeared to be listening. Suddenly there was a hasty exclamation, and the intruder sprang back just in time to escape the sweep of the released fan. And when Graham peered up there was nothing visible but the slowly falling snow.

It was perhaps a quarter of an hour before anything returned to the ventilator. But at last came the same metallic interference again; the fans stopped and the face reappeared. Graham had remained all this time in the same place, alert and tremulously excited.

“Who are you? What do you want?” he said.

“We want to speak to you, Sire,” said the intruder. “We want — I can’t hold the thing. We have been trying to find a way to you — these three days.”

“Is it rescue?” whispered Graham. “Escape?”

“Yes, Sire. If you will.”

“You are my party — the party of the Sleeper?”

“Yes, Sire.”

“What am I to do?” said Graham.

There was a struggle. The stranger’s arm appeared, and his hand was bleeding. His knees came into view over the edge of the funnel. “Stand away from me,” he said, and he dropped rather heavily on his hands and one shoulder at Graham’s feet. The released ventilator whirled noisily. The stranger rolled over, sprang up nimbly and stood panting, hand to a bruised shoulder, and with his bright eyes on Graham.

“You are indeed the Sleeper,” he said. “I saw you asleep. When it was the law that anyone might see you.”

“I am the man who was in the trance,” said Graham. “They have imprisoned me here. I have been here since I awoke — at least three days.”

The intruder seemed about to speak, heard something, glanced swiftly at the door, and suddenly left Graham and ran towards it, shouting quick incoherent words. A bright wedge of steel flashed in

his hand, and he began tap, tap, a quick succession of blows upon the hinges. “Mind!” cried a voice. “Oh!” The voice came from above.

Graham glanced up, saw the soles of two feet, ducked, was struck on the shoulder by one of them, and a heavy weight bore him to the earth. He fell on his knees and forward, and the weight went over his head. He knelt up and saw a second man from above seated before him.

“I did not see you, Sire,” panted the man. He rose and assisted Graham to rise. “Are you hurt, Sire?” he panted. A succession of heavy blows on the ventilator began, something fell close to Graham’s face, and a shivering edge of white metal danced, fell over, and lay fiat upon the floor.

“What is this?” cried Graham, confused and looking at the ventilator. “Who are you? What are you going to do? Remember, I understand nothing.”

“Stand back,” said the stranger, and drew him from under the ventilator as another fragment of metal fell heavily.

“We want you to come, Sire,” panted the newcomer, and Graham glancing at his face again, saw a new cut had changed from white to red on his forehead, and a couple of little trickles of blood starting therefrom. “Your people call for you.”

“Come where? My people?”

“To the hall about the markets. Your life is in danger here. We have spies. We learned but just in time. The Council has decided — this very day — either to drug or kill you. And everything is ready. The people are drilled, the Wind-Vane police, the engineers, and half the way-gearers are with us. We have the halls crowded — shouting. The whole city shouts against the Council. We have arms.” He wiped the blood with his hand. “Your life here is not worth—”

“But why arms?”

“The people have risen to protect you, Sire. What?”

He turned quickly as the man who had first come down made a hissing with his teeth. Graham saw the latter start back, gesticulate to them to conceal themselves, and move as if to hide behind the opening door.

As he did so Howard appeared, a little tray in one hand and his heavy face downcast. He started, looked up, the door slammed behind him, the tray tilted side-ways, and the steel wedge struck him behind the ear. He went down like a felled tree, and lay as he fell athwart the floor of the outer room. The man who had struck him bent hastily, studied his face for a moment, rose, and returned to his work at the door.

"Your poison!" said a voice in Graham's ear.

Then abruptly they were in darkness. The innumerable cornice lights had been extinguished. Graham saw the aperture of the ventilator with ghostly snow whirling above it and dark figures moving hastily. Three knelt on the vane. Some dim thing — a ladder — was being lowered through the opening, and a hand appeared holding a fitful yellow light.

He had a moment of hesitation. But the manner of these men, their swift
alacrity, their words, marched so completely with his own fears of the
Council, with his idea and hope of a rescue, that it lasted not a moment.
And his people awaited him!

"I do not understand," he said. "I trust. Tell me what to do."

The man with the cut brow gripped Graham's arm. "Clamber up the ladder," he whispered. "Quick. They will have heard—"

Graham felt for the ladder with extended hands, put his foot on the lower rung, and, turning his head, saw over the shoulder of the nearest man, in the yellow flicker of the light, the first-comer astride over Howard and still working at the door. Graham turned to the ladder again, and was thrust by his conductor and helped up by those above, and then he was standing on something hard and cold and slippery outside the ventilating funnel.

He shivered. He was aware of a great difference in the temperature. Half a dozen men stood about him, and light flakes of snow touched hands and face and melted. For a moment it was dark, then for a flash a ghastly violet white, and then everything was dark

again.

He saw he had come out upon the roof of the vast city structure which had replaced the miscellaneous houses, streets and open spaces of Victorian London. The place upon which he stood was level, with huge serpentine cables lying athwart it in every direction. The circular wheels of a number of windmills loomed indistinct and gigantic through the darkness and snowfall, and roared with a varying loudness as the fitful wind rose and fell. Some way off an intermittent white light smote up from below, touched the snow eddies with a transient glitter, and made an evanescent spectre in the night; and here and there, low down, some vaguely outlined wind-driven mechanism flickered with livid sparks.

All this he appreciated in a fragmentary manner as his rescuers stood about him. Someone threw a thick soft cloak of fur-like texture about him, and fastened it by buckled straps at waist and shoulders. Things were said briefly, decisively. Someone thrust him forward.

Before his mind was yet clear a dark shape gripped his arm. “This way,” said this shape, urging him along, and pointed Graham across the flat roof in the direction of a dim semicircular haze of light. Graham obeyed.

“Mind!” said a voice, as Graham stumbled against a cable. “Between them and not across them,” said the voice. And, “We must hurry.”

“Where are the people?” said Graham. “The people you said awaited me?”

The stranger did not answer. He left Graham’s arm as the path grew narrower, and led the way with rapid strides. Graham followed blindly. In a minute he found himself running. “Are the others coming?” he panted, but received no reply. His companion glanced back and ran on. They came to a sort of pathway of open metal-work, transverse to the direction they had come, and they turned aside to follow this. Graham looked back, but the snowstorm had hidden the others.

“Come on!” said his guide. Running now, they drew near a little windmill spinning high in the air. “Stoop,” said Graham’s guide, and they avoided an endless band running roaring up to the shaft of the vane. “This way!” and they were ankle deep in a gutter full of drifted

thawing snow, between two low walls of metal that presently rose waist high. “I will go first,” said the guide. Graham drew his cloak about him and followed. Then suddenly came a narrow abyss across which the gutter leapt to the snowy darkness of the further side. Graham peeped over the side once and the gulf was black. For a moment he regretted his flight. He dared not look again, and his brain spun as he waded through the half liquid snow.

Then out of the gutter they clambered and hurried across a wide flat space damp with thawing snow, and for half its extent dimly translucent to lights that went to and fro underneath. He hesitated at this unstable looking substance, but his guide ran on unheeding, and so they came to and clambered up slippery steps to the rim of a great dome of glass. Round this they went. Far below a number of people seemed to be dancing, and music filtered through the dome…. Graham fancied he heard a shouting through the snowstorm, and his guide hurried him on with a new spurt of haste. They clambered panting to a space of huge windmills, one so vast that only the lower edge of its vanes came rushing into sight and rushed up again and was lost in the night and the snow. They hurried for a time through the colossal metallic tracery of its supports, and came at last above a place of moving platforms like the place into which Graham had looked from the balcony. They crawled across the sloping transparency that covered this street of platforms, crawling on hands and knees because of the slipperiness of the snowfall.

For the most part the glass was bedewed, and Graham saw only hazy suggestions of the forms below, but near the pitch of the transparent roof the glass was clear, and he found himself looking sheerly down upon it all. For awhile, in spite of the urgency of his guide, he gave way to vertigo and lay spread-eagled on the glass, sick and paralysed. Far below, mere stirring specks and dots, went the people of the unsleeping city in their perpetual daylight, and the moving platforms ran on their incessant journey. Messengers and men on unknown businesses shot along the drooping cables and the frail bridges were crowded with men. It was like peering into a gigantic glass hive, and it lay vertically below him with only a tough glass of unknown thickness to save him from a fall. The street showed warm and lit, and Graham was wet now to the skin with

thawing snow, and his feet were numbed with cold. For a space he could not move. “Come on!” cried his guide, with terror in his voice. “Come on!”

Graham reached the pitch of the roof by an effort.

Over the ridge, following his guide’s example, he turned about and slid backward down the opposite slope very swiftly, amid a little avalanche of snow. While he was sliding he thought of what would happen if some broken gap should come in his way. At the edge he stumbled to his feet ankle deep in slush, thanking heaven for an opaque footing again. His guide was already clambering up a metal screen to a level expanse.

Through the spare snowflakes above this loomed another line of vast windmills, and then suddenly the amorphous tumult of the rotating wheels was pierced with a deafening sound. It was a mechanical shrilling of extraordinary intensity that seemed to come simultaneously from every point of the compass.

“They have missed us already!” cried Graham’s guide in an accent of terror, and suddenly, with a blinding flash, the night became day.

Above the driving snow, from the summits of the wind-wheels, appeared vast masts carrying globes of livid light. They receded in illimitable vistas in every direction. As far as his eye could penetrate the snowfall they glared.

“Get on this,” cried Graham’s conductor, and thrust him forward to a long grating of snowless metal that ran like a band between two slightly sloping expanses of snow. It felt warm to Graham’s benumbed feet, and a faint eddy of steam rose from it.

“Come on!” shouted his guide ten yards off, and, without waiting, ran swiftly through the incandescent glare towards the iron supports of the next range of wind-wheels. Graham, recovering from his astonishment, followed as fast, convinced of his imminent capture….

In a score of seconds they were within a tracery of glare and black shadows shot with moving bars beneath the monstrous wheels. Graham’s conductor ran on for some time, and suddenly darted sideways and vanished into a black shadow in the corner of the foot of a huge support. In another moment Graham was beside him.

They cowered panting and stared out.

The scene upon which Graham looked was very wild and strange. The snow had now almost ceased; only a belated flake passed now and again across the picture. But the broad stretch of level before them was a ghastly white, broken only by gigantic masses and moving shapes and lengthy strips of impenetrable darkness, vast ungainly Titans of shadow. All about them, huge metallic structures, iron girders, inhumanly vast as it seemed to him, interlaced, and the edges of wind-wheels, scarcely moving in the lull, passed in great shining curves steeper and steeper up into a luminous haze. Wherever the snow-spangled light struck down, beams and girders, and incessant bands running with a halting, indomitable resolution, passed upward and downward into the black. And with all that mighty activity, with an omnipresent sense of motive and design, this snow-clad desolation of mechanism seemed void of all human presence save themselves, seemed as trackless and deserted and unfrequented by men as some inaccessible Alpine snowfield.

"They will be chasing us," cried the leader. "We are scarcely halfway there yet. Cold as it is we must hide here for a space — at least until it snows more thickly again."

His teeth chattered in his head.

"Where are the markets?" asked Graham staring out. "Where are all the people?"

The other made no answer.

"*Look*!" whispered Graham, crouched close, and became very still.

The snow had suddenly become thick again, and sliding with the whirling eddies out of the black pit of the sky came something, vague and large and very swift. It came down in a steep curve and swept round, wide wings extended and a trail of white condensing steam behind it, rose with an easy swiftness and went gliding up the air, swept horizontally forward in a wide curve, and vanished again in the steaming specks of snow. And, through the ribs of its body, Graham saw two little men, very minute and active, searching the snowy areas about him, as it seemed to him, with field glasses. For a second they were clear, then hazy through a thick whirl of snow, then small and distant, and in a minute they were gone.

"*Now*!" cried his companion. "Come!"

He pulled Graham's sleeve, and incontinently the two were running headlong down the arcade of iron-work beneath the wind-wheels. Graham, running blindly, collided with his leader, who had turned back on him suddenly. He found himself within a dozen yards of a black chasm. It extended as far as he could see right and left. It seemed to cut off their progress in either direction.

"Do as I do," whispered his guide. He lay down and crawled to the edge, thrust his head over and twisted until one leg hung. He seemed to feel for something with his foot, found it, and went sliding over the edge into the gulf. His head reappeared. "It is a ledge," he whispered. "In the dark all the way along. Do as I did."

Graham hesitated, went down upon all fours, crawled to the edge, and peered into a velvety blackness. For a sickly moment he had courage neither to go on nor retreat, then he sat and hung his leg down, felt his guide's hands pulling at him, had a horrible sensation of sliding over the edge into the unfathomable, splashed, and felt himself in a slushy gutter, impenetrably dark.

"This way," whispered the voice, and he began crawling along the gutter through the trickling thaw, pressing himself against the wall. They continued along it for some minutes. He seemed to pass through a hundred stages of misery, to pass minute after minute through a hundred degrees of cold, damp, and exhaustion. In a little while he ceased to feel his hands and feet.

The gutter sloped downwards. He observed that they were now many feet below the edge of the buildings. Rows of spectral white shapes like the ghosts of blind-drawn windows rose above them. They came to the end of a cable fastened above one of these white windows, dimly visible and dropping into impenetrable shadows. Suddenly his hand came against his guide's. "*Still*!" whispered the latter very softly.

He looked up with a start and saw the huge wings of the flying machine gliding slowly and noiselessly overhead athwart the broad band of snow-flecked grey-blue sky. In a moment it was hidden again.

"Keep still; they were just turning."

For awhile both were motionless, then Graham's companion stood up, and reaching towards the fastenings of the cable fumbled with

some indistinct tackle.

"What is that?" asked Graham.

The only answer was a faint cry. The man crouched motionless. Graham peered and saw his face dimly. He was staring down the long ribbon of sky, and Graham, following his eyes, saw the flying machine small and faint and remote. Then he saw that the wings spread on either side, that it headed towards them, that every moment it grew larger. It was following the edge of the chasm towards them.

The man's movements became convulsive. He thrust two cross bars into Graham's hand. Graham could not see them, he ascertained their form by feeling. They were slung by thin cords to the cable. On the cord were hand grips of some soft elastic substance. "Put the cross between your legs," whispered the guide hysterically, "and grip the holdfasts. Grip tightly, grip!"

Graham did as he was told.

"Jump," said the voice. "In heaven's name, jump!"

For one momentous second Graham could not speak. He was glad afterwards that darkness hid his face. He said nothing. He began to tremble violently. He looked sideways at the swift shadow that swallowed up the sky as it rushed upon him.

"Jump! Jump — in God's name! Or they will have us," cried Graham's guide, and in the violence of his passion thrust him forward.

Graham tottered convulsively, gave a sobbing cry, a cry in spite of himself, and then, as the flying machine swept over them, fell forward into the pit of that darkness, seated on the cross wood and holding the ropes with the clutch of death. Something cracked, something rapped smartly against a wall. He heard the pulley of the cradle hum on its rope. He heard the aeronauts shout. He felt a pair of knees digging into his back…. He was sweeping headlong through the air, falling through the air. All his strength was in his hands. He would have screamed but he had no breath.

He shot into a blinding light that made him grip the tighter. He recognised the great passage with the running ways, the hanging lights and interlacing girders. They rushed upward and by him. He had a momentary impression of a great round mouth yawning to swallow him up.

He was in the dark again, falling, falling, gripping with aching hands, and behold! a clap of sound, a burst of light, and he was in a brightly lit hall with a roaring multitude of people beneath his feet. The people! His people! A proscenium, a stage rushed up towards him, and his cable swept down to a circular aperture to the right of this. He felt he was travelling slower, and suddenly very much slower. He distinguished shouts of "Saved! The Master. He is safe!" The stage rushed up towards him with rapidly diminishing swiftness. Then —

He heard the man clinging behind him shout as if suddenly terrified, and this shout was echoed by a shout from below. He felt that he was no longer gliding along the cable but falling with it. There was a tumult of yells, screams, and cries. He felt something soft against his extended hand, and the impact of a broken fall quivering through his arm….

He wanted to be still and the people were lifting him. He believed afterwards he was carried to the platform and given some drink, but he was never sure. He did not notice what became of his guide. When his mind was clear again he was on his feet; eager hands were assisting him to stand. He was in a big alcove, occupying the position that in his previous experience had been devoted to the lower boxes. If this was indeed a theatre.

A mighty tumult was in his ears, a thunderous roar, the shouting of a countless multitude. "It is the Sleeper! The Sleeper is with us!"

"The Sleeper is with us! The Master — the Owner! The Master is with us.
He is safe."

Graham had a surging vision of a great hall crowded with people. He saw no individuals, he was conscious of a froth of pink faces, of waving arms and garments, he felt the occult influence of a vast crowd pouring over him, buoying him up. There were balconies, galleries, great archways giving remoter perspectives, and everywhere people, a vast arena of people, densely packed and cheering. Across the nearer space lay the collapsed cable like a huge snake. It had been cut by the men of the flying machine at its upper

end, and had crumpled down into the hall. Men seemed to be hauling this out of the way. But the whole effect was vague, the very buildings throbbed and leapt with the roar of the voices.

He stood unsteadily and looked at those about him. Someone supported him by one arm. “Let me go into a little room,” he said, weeping; “a little room,” and could say no more. A man in black stepped forward, took his disengaged arm. He was aware of officious men opening a door before him. Someone guided him to a seat. He staggered. He sat down heavily and covered his face with his hands; he was trembling violently, his nervous control was at an end. He was relieved of his cloak, he could not remember how; his purple hose he saw were black with wet. People were running about him, things were happening, but for some time he gave no heed to them.

He had escaped. A myriad of cries told him that. He was safe. These were the people who were on his side. For a space he sobbed for breath, and then he sat still with his face covered. The air was full of the shouting of innumerable men.

CHAPTER IX

THE PEOPLE MARCH

He became aware of someone urging a glass of clear fluid upon his attention, looked up and discovered this was a dark young man in a yellow garment. He took the dose forthwith, and in a moment he was glowing. A tall man in a black robe stood by his shoulder, and pointed to the half open door into the hall. This man was shouting close to his ear and yet what was said was indistinct because of the tremendous uproar from the great theatre. Behind the man was a girl in a silvery grey robe, whom Graham, even in this confusion, perceived to be beautiful. Her dark eyes, full of wonder and curiosity, were fixed on him, her lips trembled apart. A partially opened door gave a glimpse of the crowded hall, and admitted a vast uneven tumult, a hammering, clapping and shouting that died away and began again, and rose to a thunderous pitch, and so continued intermittently all the time that Graham remained in the little room. He watched the lips of the man in black and gathered that he was making some explanation.

He stared stupidly for some moments at these things and then stood up abruptly; he grasped the arm of this shouting person.

"Tell me!" he cried. "Who am I? Who am I?"

The others came nearer to hear his words. "Who am I?" His eyes searched their faces.

"They have told him nothing!" cried the girl.

"Tell me, tell me!" cried Graham.

"You are the Master of the Earth. You are owner of the world."

He did not believe he heard aright. He resisted the persuasion. He pretended not to understand, not to hear. He lifted his voice again. "I have been awake three days — a prisoner three days. I judge there is some struggle between a number of people in this city — it is London?"

"Yes," said the younger man.

"And those who meet in the great hall with the white Atlas? How does it concern me? In some way it has to do with me. *Why*, I don't

know. Drugs? It seems to me that while I have slept the world has gone mad. I have gone mad…. Who are those Councillors under the Atlas? Why should they try to drug me?"

"To keep you insensible," said the man in yellow. "To prevent your interference."

"But *why*?"

"Because *you* are the Atlas, Sire," said the man in yellow. "The world is on your shoulders. They rule it in your name."

The sounds from the hall had died into a silence threaded by one monotonous voice. Now suddenly, trampling on these last words, came a deafening tumult, a roaring and thundering, cheer crowded on cheer, voices hoarse and shrill, beating, overlapping, and while it lasted the people in the little room could not hear each other shout.

Graham stood, his intelligence clinging helplessly to the thing he had just heard. "The Council," he repeated blankly, and then snatched at a name that had struck him. "But who is Ostrog?" he said.

"He is the organiser — the organiser of the revolt. Our Leader — in your name."

"In my name? — And you? Why is he not here?"

"He — has deputed us. I am his brother — his half-brother, Lincoln. He wants you to show yourself to these people and then come on to him. That is why he has sent. He is at the wind-vane offices directing. The people are marching."

"In your name," shouted the younger man. "They have ruled, crushed, tyrannised. At last even—"

"In my name! My name! Master?"

The younger man suddenly became audible in a pause of the outer thunder, indignant and vociferous, a high penetrating voice under his red aquiline nose and bushy moustache. "No one expected you to wake. No one expected you to wake. They were cunning. Damned tyrants! But they were taken by surprise. They did not know whether to drug you, hypnotise you, kill you."

Again the hall dominated everything.

"Ostrog is at the wind-vane offices ready — . Even now there is a rumour of fighting beginning."

The man who had called himself Lincoln came close to him.

“Ostrog has it planned. Trust him. We have our organisations ready. We shall seize the flying stages — . Even now he may be doing that. Then—”

“This public theatre,” bawled the man in yellow, “is only a contingent.
We have five myriads of drilled men—”

“We have arms,” cried Lincoln. “We have plans. A leader. Their police have gone from the streets and are massed in the—” (inaudible). “It is now or never. The Council is rocking — They cannot trust even their drilled men—”

“Hear the people calling to you!”

Graham’s mind was like a night of moon and swift clouds, now dark and hopeless, now clear and ghastly. He was Master of the Earth, he was a man sodden with thawing snow. Of all his fluctuating impressions the dominant ones presented an antagonism; on the one hand was the White Council, powerful, disciplined, few, the White Council from which he had just escaped; and on the other, monstrous crowds, packed masses of indistinguishable people clamouring his name, hailing him Master. The other side had imprisoned him, debated his death. These shouting thousands beyond the little doorway had rescued him. But why these things should be so he could not understand.

The door opened, Lincoln’s voice was swept away and drowned, and a rash of people followed on the heels of the tumult. These intruders came towards him and Lincoln gesticulating. The voices without explained their soundless lips. “Show us the Sleeper, show us the Sleeper!” was the burden of the uproar. Men were bawling for “Order! Silence!”

Graham glanced towards the open doorway, and saw a tall, oblong picture of the hall beyond, a waving, incessant confusion of crowded, shouting faces, men and women together, waving pale blue garments, extended hands. Many were standing, one man in rags of dark brown, a gaunt figure, stood on the seat and waved a black cloth. He met the wonder and expectation of the girl’s eyes. What did these people expect from him. He was dimly aware that the tumult

outside had changed its character, was in some way beating, marching. His own mind, too, changed. For a space he did not recognise the influence that was transforming him. But a moment that was near to panic passed. He tried to make audible inquiries of what was required of him.

Lincoln was shouting in his ear, but Graham was deafened to that. All the others save the woman gesticulated towards the hall. He perceived what had happened to the uproar. The whole mass of people was chanting together. It was not simply a song, the voices were gathered together and upborne by a torrent of instrumental music, music like the music of an organ, a woven texture of sounds, full of trumpets, full of flaunting banners, full of the march and pageantry of opening war. And the feet of the people were beating time — tramp, tramp.

He was urged towards the door. He obeyed mechanically. The strength of that chant took hold of him, stirred him, emboldened him. The hall opened to him, a vast welter of fluttering colour swaying to the music.

"Wave your arm to them," said Lincoln. "Wave your arm to them."

"This," said a voice on the other side, "he must have this." Arms were about his neck detaining him in the doorway, and a black subtly-folding mantle hung from his shoulders. He threw his arm free of this and followed Lincoln. He perceived the girl in grey close to him, her face lit, her gesture onward. For the instant she became to him, flushed and eager as she was, an embodiment of the song. He emerged in the alcove again. Incontinently the mounting waves of the song broke upon his appearing, and flashed up into a foam of shouting. Guided by Lincoln's hand he marched obliquely across the centre of the stage facing the people.

The hall was a vast and intricate space — galleries, balconies, broad spaces of amphitheatral steps, and great archways. Far away, high up, seemed the mouth of a huge passage full of struggling humanity. The whole multitude was swaying in congested masses. Individual figures sprang out of the tumult, impressed him momentarily, and lost definition again. Close to the platform swayed a beautiful fair woman, carried by three men, her hair across her face

and brandishing a green staff. Next this group an old careworn man in blue canvas maintained his place in the crush with difficulty, and behind shouted a hairless face, a great cavity of toothless mouth. A voice called that enigmatical word “Ostrog.” All his impressions were vague save the massive emotion of that trampling song. The multitude were beating time with their feet — marking time, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. The green weapons waved, flashed and slanted. Then he saw those nearest to him on a level space before the stage were marching in front of him, passing towards a great archway, shouting “To the Council!” Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. He raised his arm, and the roaring was redoubled. He remembered he had to shout “March!” His mouth shaped inaudible heroic words. He waved his arm again and pointed to the archway, shouting “Onward!” They were no longer marking time, they were marching; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. In that host were bearded men, old men, youths, fluttering robed bare-armed women, girls. Men and women of the new age! Rich robes, grey rags fluttered together in the whirl of their movement amidst the dominant blue. A monstrous black banner jerked its way to the right. He perceived a blue-clad negro, a shrivelled woman in yellow, then a group of tall fair-haired, white-faced, blue-clad men pushed theatrically past him. He noted two Chinamen. A tall, sallow, dark-haired, shining-eyed youth, white clad from top to toe, clambered up towards the platform shouting loyally, and sprang down again and receded, looking backward. Heads, shoulders, hands clutching weapons, all were swinging with those marching cadences.

Faces came out of the confusion to him as he stood there, eyes met his and passed and vanished. Men gesticulated to him, shouted inaudible personal things. Most of the faces were flushed, but many were ghastly white. And disease was there, and many a hand that waved to him was gaunt and lean. Men and women of the new age! Strange and incredible meeting! As the broad stream passed before him to the right, tributary gangways from the remote uplands of the hall thrust downward in an incessant replacement of people; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. The unison of the song was enriched and complicated by the massive echoes of arches and passages. Men and women mingled in the ranks; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp. The whole

world seemed marching. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp; his brain was tramping. The garments waved onward, the faces poured by more abundantly.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp; at Lincoln's pressure he turned towards the archway, walking unconsciously in that rhythm, scarcely noticing his movement for the melody and stir of it. The multitude, the gesture and song, all moved in that direction, the flow of people smote downward until the upturned faces were below the level of his feet. He was aware of a path before him, of a suite about him, of guards and dignities, and Lincoln on his right hand. Attendants intervened, and ever and again blotted out the sight of the multitude to the left. Before him went the backs of the guards in black — three and three and three. He was marched along a little railed way, and crossed above the archway, with the torrent dipping to flow beneath, and shouting up to him. He did not know whither he went; he did not want to know. He glanced back across a flaming spaciousness of hall. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

CHAPTER X

THE BATTLE OF THE DARKNESS

He was no longer in the hall. He was marching along a gallery overhanging one of the great streets of the moving platforms that traversed the city. Before him and behind him tramped his guards. The whole concave of the moving ways below was a congested mass of people marching, tramping to the left, shouting, waving hands and arms, pouring along a huge vista, shouting as they came into view, shouting as they passed, shouting as they receded, until the globes of electric light receding in perspective dropped down it seemed and hid the swarming bare heads. Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

The song roared up to Graham now, no longer upborne by music, but coarse and noisy, and the beating of the marching feet, tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, interwove with a thunderous irregularity of footsteps from the undisciplined rabble that poured along the higher ways.

Abruptly he noted a contrast. The buildings on the opposite side of the way seemed deserted, the cables and bridges that laced across the aisle were empty and shadowy. It came into Graham's mind that these also should have swarmed with people.

He felt a curious emotion — throbbing — very fast! He stopped again. The guards before him marched on; those about him stopped as he did. He saw anxiety and fear in their faces. The throbbing had something to do with the lights. He too looked up.

At first it seemed to him a thing that affected the lights simply, an isolated phenomenon, having no bearing on the things below. Each huge globe of blinding whiteness was as it were clutched, compressed in a systole that was followed by a transitory diastole, and again a systole like a tightening grip, darkness, light, darkness, in rapid alternation.

Graham became aware that this strange behaviour of the lights had to do with the people below. The appearance of the houses and ways, the appearance of the packed masses changed, became a confusion of vivid lights and leaping shadows. He saw a multitude of

shadows had sprung into aggressive existence, seemed rushing up, broadening, widening, growing with steady swiftness — to leap suddenly back and return reinforced. The song and the tramping had ceased. The unanimous march, he discovered, was arrested, there were eddies, a flow sideways, shouts of "The lights!" Voices were crying together one thing. "The lights!" cried these voices. "The lights!" He looked down. In this dancing death of the lights the area of the street had suddenly become a monstrous struggle. The huge white globes became purple-white, purple with a reddish glow, flickered, flickered faster and faster, fluttered between light and extinction, ceased to flicker and became mere fading specks of glowing red in a vast obscurity. In ten seconds the extinction was accomplished, and there was only this roaring darkness, a black monstrosity that had suddenly swallowed up those glittering myriads of men.

He felt invisible forms about him; his arms were gripped. Something rapped sharply against his shin. A voice bawled in his ear, "It is all right — all right."

Graham shook off the paralysis of his first astonishment. He struck his forehead against Lincoln's and bawled, "What is this darkness?"

"The Council has cut the currents that light the city. We must wait — stop. The people will go on. They will—"

His voice was drowned. Voices were shouting, "Save the Sleeper. Take care of the Sleeper." A guard stumbled against Graham and hurt his hand by an inadvertent blow of his weapon. A wild tumult tossed and whirled about him, growing, as it seemed, louder, denser, more furious each moment. Fragments of recognisable sounds drove towards him, were whirled away from him as his mind reached out to grasp them. Voices seemed to be shouting conflicting orders, other voices answered. There were suddenly a succession of piercing screams close beneath them.

A voice bawled in his ear, "The red police," and receded forthwith beyond his questions.

A crackling sound grew to distinctness, and therewith a leaping of faint flashes along the edge of the further ways. By their light Graham saw the heads and bodies of a number of men, armed with

weapons like those of his guards, leap into an instant's dim visibility. The whole area began to crackle, to flash with little instantaneous streaks of light, and abruptly the darkness rolled back like a curtain.

A glare of light dazzled his eyes, a vast seething expanse of struggling men confused his mind. A shout, a burst of cheering, came across the ways. He looked up to see the source of the light. A man hung far overhead from the upper part of a cable, holding by a rope the blinding star that had driven the darkness back.

Graham's eyes fell to the ways again. A wedge of red a little way along the vista caught his eye. He saw it was a dense mass of red-clad men jammed on the higher further way, their backs against the pitiless cliff of building, and surrounded by a dense crowd of antagonists. They were fighting. Weapons flashed and rose and fell, heads vanished at the edge of the contest, and other heads replaced them, the little flashes from the green weapons became little jets of smoky grey while the light lasted.

Abruptly the flare was extinguished and the ways were an inky darkness once more, a tumultuous mystery.

He felt something thrusting against him. He was being pushed along the gallery. Someone was shouting — it might be at him. He was too confused to hear. He was thrust against the wall, and a number of people blundered past him. It seemed to him that his guards were struggling with one another.

Suddenly the cable-hung star-holder appeared again, and the whole scene was white and dazzling. The band of red-coats seemed broader and nearer; its apex was half-way down the ways towards the central aisle. And raising his eyes Graham saw that a number of these men had also appeared now in the darkened lower galleries of the opposite building, and were firing over the heads of their fellows below at the boiling confusion of people on the lower ways. The meaning of these things dawned upon him. The march of the people had come upon an ambush at the very outset. Thrown into confusion by the extinction of the lights they were now being attacked by the red police. Then he became aware that he was standing alone, that his guards and Lincoln were along the gallery in the direction along which he had come before the darkness fell. He saw they were gesticulating to him wildly, running back towards him. A great

shouting came from across the ways. Then it seemed as though the whole face of the darkened building opposite was lined and speckled with red-clad men. And they were pointing over to him and shouting. “The Sleeper! Save the Sleeper!” shouted a multitude of throats.

Something struck the wall above his head. He looked up at the impact and saw a star-shaped splash of silvery metal. He saw Lincoln near him. Felt his arm gripped. Then, pat, pat; he had been missed twice.

For a moment he did not understand this. The street was hidden, everything was hidden, as he looked. The second flare had burned out.

Lincoln had gripped Graham by the arm, was lugging him along the gallery. “Before the next light!” he cried. His haste was contagious. Graham’s instinct of self-preservation overcame the paralysis of his incredulous astonishment. He became for a time the blind creature of the fear of death. He ran, stumbling because of the uncertainty of the darkness, blundered into his guards as they turned to run with him. Haste was his one desire, to escape this perilous gallery upon which he was exposed. A third glare came close on its predecessors. With it came a great shouting across the ways, an answering tumult from the ways. The red-coats below, he saw, had now almost gained the central passage. Their countless faces turned towards him, and they shouted. The white façade opposite was densely stippled with red. All these wonderful things concerned him, turned upon him as a pivot. These were the guards of the Council attempting to recapture him.

Lucky it was for him that these shots were the first fired in anger for a hundred and fifty years. He heard bullets whacking over his head, felt a splash of molten metal sting his ear, and perceived without looking that the whole opposite façade, an unmasked ambuscade of red police, was crowded and bawling and firing at him.

Down went one of his guards before him, and Graham, unable to stop, leapt the writhing body.

In another second he had plunged, unhurt, into a black passage, and incontinently someone, coming, it may be, in a transverse direction, blundered violently into him. He was hurling down a staircase in absolute darkness. He reeled, and was struck again, and

came against a wall with his hands. He was crushed by a weight of struggling bodies, whirled round, and thrust to the right. A vast pressure pinned him. He could not breathe, his ribs seemed cracking. He felt a momentary relaxation, and then the whole mass of people moving together, bore him back towards the great theatre from which he had so recently come. There were moments when his feet did not touch the ground. Then he was staggering and shoving. He heard shouts of "They are coming!" and a muffled cry close to him. His foot blundered against something soft, he heard a hoarse scream under foot. He heard shouts of "The Sleeper!" but he was too confused to speak. He heard the green weapons crackling. For a space he lost his individual will, became an atom in a panic, blind, unthinking, mechanical. He thrust and pressed back and writhed in the pressure, kicked presently against a step, and found himself ascending a slope. And abruptly the faces all about him leapt out of the black, visible, ghastly-white and astonished, terrified, perspiring, in a livid glare. One face, a young man's, was very near to him, not twenty inches away. At the time it was but a passing incident of no emotional value, but afterwards it came back to him in his dreams. For this young man, wedged upright in the crowd for a time, had been shot and was already dead.

A fourth white star must have been lit by the man on the cable. Its light came glaring in through vast windows and arches and showed Graham that he was now one of a dense mass of flying black figures pressed back across the lower area of the great theatre. This time the picture was livid and fragmentary, slashed and barred with black shadows. He saw that quite near to him the red guards were fighting their way through the people. He could not tell whether they saw him. He looked for Lincoln and his guards. He saw Lincoln near the stage of the theatre surrounded in a crowd of black-badged revolutionaries, lifted up and staring to and fro as if seeking him. Graham perceived that he himself was near the opposite edge of the crowd, that behind him, separated by a barrier, sloped the now vacant seats of the theatre. A sudden idea came to him, and he began fighting his way towards the barrier. As he reached it the glare came to an end.

In a moment he had thrown off the great cloak that not only

impeded his movements but made him conspicuous, and had slipped it from his shoulders. He heard someone trip in its folds. In another he was scaling the barrier and had dropped into the blackness on the further side. Then feeling his way he came to the lower end of an ascending gangway. In the darkness the sound of firing ceased and the roar of feet and voices lulled. Then suddenly he came to an unexpected step and tripped and fell. As he did so pools and islands amidst the darkness about him leapt to vivid light again, the uproar surged louder and the glare of the fifth white star shone through the vast fenestrations of the theatre walls.

He rolled over among some seats, heard a shouting and the whirring rattle of weapons, struggled up and was knocked back again, perceived that a number of black-badged men were all about him firing at the reds below, leaping from seat to seat, crouching among the seats to reload. Instinctively he crouched amidst the seats, as stray shots ripped the pneumatic cushions and cut bright slashes on their soft metal frames. Instinctively he marked the direction of the gangways, the most plausible way of escape for him so soon as the veil of darkness fell again.

A young man in faded blue garments came vaulting over the seats. “Hullo!” he said, with his flying feet within six inches of the crouching Sleeper’s face.

He stared without any sign of recognition, turned to fire, fired, and shouting, “To hell with the Council!” was about to fire again. Then it seemed to Graham that the half of this man’s neck had vanished. A drop of moisture fell on Graham’s cheek. The green weapon stopped half raised. For a moment the man stood still with his face suddenly expressionless, then he began to slant forward. His knees bent. Man and darkness fell together. At the sound of his fall Graham rose up and ran for his life until a step down to the gangway tripped him. He scrambled to his feet, turned up the gangway and ran on.

When the sixth star glared he was already close to the yawning throat of a passage. He ran on the swifter for the light, entered the passage and turned a corner into absolute night again. He was knocked sideways, rolled over, and recovered his feet. He found himself one of a crowd of invisible fugitives pressing in one direction. His one thought now was their thought also; to escape out

of this fighting. He thrust and struck, staggered, ran, was wedged tightly, lost ground and then was clear again.

For some minutes he was running through the darkness along a winding passage, and then he crossed some wide and open space, passed down a long incline, and came at last down a flight of steps to a level place. Many people were shouting, “They are coming! The guards are coming. They are firing. Get out of the fighting. The guards are firing. It will be safe in Seventh Way. Along here to Seventh Way!” There were women and children in the crowd as well as men.

The crowd converged on an archway, passed through a short throat and emerged on a wider space again, lit dimly. The black figures about him spread out and ran up what seemed in the twilight to be a gigantic series of steps. He followed. The people dispersed to the right and left…. He perceived that he was no longer in a crowd. He stopped near the highest step. Before him, on that level, were groups of seats and a little kiosk. He went up to this and, stopping in the shadow of its eaves, looked about him panting.

Everything was vague and grey, but he recognised that these great steps were a series of platforms of the “ways,” now motionless again. The platform slanted up on either side, and the tall buildings rose beyond, vast dim ghosts, their inscriptions and advertisements indistinctly seen, and up through the girders and cables was a faint interrupted ribbon of pallid sky. A number of people hurried by. From their shouts and voices, it seemed they were hurrying to join the fighting. Other less noisy figures flitted timidly among the shadows.

From very far away down the street he could hear the sound of a struggle. But it was evident to him that this was not the street into which the theatre opened. That former fight, it seemed, had suddenly dropped out of sound and hearing. And they were fighting for him!

For a space he was like a man who pauses in the reading of a vivid book, and suddenly doubts what he has been taking unquestionably. At that time he had little mind for details; the whole effect was a huge astonishment. Oddly enough, while the flight from the Council prison, the great crowd in the hall, and the attack of the red police upon the swarming people were clearly present in his

mind, it cost him an effort to piece in his awakening and to revive the meditative interval of the Silent Rooms. At first his memory leapt these things and took him back to the cascade at Pentargen quivering in the wind, and all the sombre splendours of the sunlit Cornish coast. The contrast touched everything with unreality. And then the gap filled, and he began to comprehend his position.

It was no longer absolutely a riddle, as it had been in the Silent Rooms. At least he had the strange, bare outline now. He was in some way the owner of the world, and great political parties were fighting to possess him. On the one hand was the Council, with its red police, set resolutely, it seemed, on the usurpation of his property and perhaps his murder; on the other, the revolution that had liberated him, with this unseen "Ostrog" as its leader. And the whole of this gigantic city was convulsed by their struggle. Frantic development of his world! "I do not understand," he cried. "I do not understand!"

He had slipped out between the contending parties into this liberty of the twilight. What would happen next? What was happening? He figured the red-clad men as busily hunting him, driving the black-badged revolutionists before them.

At any rate chance had given him a breathing space. He could lurk unchallenged by the passers-by, and watch the course of things. His eye followed up the intricate dim immensity of the twilight buildings, and it came to him as a thing infinitely wonderful, that above there the sun was rising, and the world was lit and glowing with the old familiar light of day. In a little while he had recovered his breath. His clothing had already dried upon him from the snow.

He wandered for miles along these twilight ways, speaking to no one, accosted by no one — a dark figure among dark figures — the coveted man out of the past, the inestimable unintentional owner of the world. Wherever there were lights or dense crowds, or exceptional excitement, he was afraid of recognition, and watched and turned back or went up and down by the middle stairways, into some transverse system of ways at a lower or higher level. And though he came on no more fighting, the whole city stirred with battle. Once he had to run to avoid a marching multitude of men that swept the street. Everyone abroad seemed involved. For the most

part they were men, and they carried what he judged were weapons. It seemed as though the struggle was concentrated mainly in the quarter of the city from which he came. Ever and again a distant roaring, the remote suggestion of that conflict, reached his ears. Then his caution and his curiosity struggled together. But his caution prevailed, and he continued wandering away from the fighting — so far as he could judge. He went unmolested, unsuspected through the dark. After a time he ceased to hear even a remote echo of the battle, fewer and fewer people passed him, until at last the streets became deserted. The frontages of the buildings grew plain, and harsh; he seemed to have come to a district of vacant warehouses. Solitude crept upon him — his pace slackened.

He became aware of a growing fatigue. At times he would turn aside and sit down on one of the numerous benches of the upper ways. But a feverish restlessness, the knowledge of his vital implication in this struggle, would not let him rest in any place for long. Was the struggle on his behalf alone?

And then in a desolate place came the shock of an earthquake — a roaring and thundering — a mighty wind of cold air pouring through the city, the smash of glass, the slip and thud of falling masonry — a series of gigantic concussions. A mass of glass and ironwork fell from the remote roofs into the middle gallery, not a hundred yards away from him, and in the distance were shouts and running. He, too, was startled to an aimless activity, and ran first one way and then as aimlessly back.

A man came running towards him. His self-control returned. “What have they blown up?” asked the man breathlessly. “That was an explosion,” and before Graham could speak he had hurried on.

The great buildings rose dimly, veiled by a perplexing twilight, albeit the rivulet of sky above was now bright with day. He noted many strange features, understanding none at the time; he even spelt out many of the inscriptions in Phonetic lettering. But what profit is it to decipher a confusion of odd-looking letters resolving itself, after painful strain of eye and mind, into “Here is Eadhamite,” or, “Labour Bureau — Little Side”? Grotesque thought, that all these cliff-like houses were his!

The perversity of his experience came to him vividly. In actual

fact he had made such a leap in time as romancers have imagined again and again. And that fact realised, he had been prepared. His mind had, as it were, seated itself for a spectacle. And no spectacle unfolded itself, but a great vague danger, unsympathetic shadows and veils of darkness. Somewhere through the labyrinthine obscurity his death sought him. Would he, after all, be killed before he saw? It might be that even at the next corner his destruction ambushed. A great desire to see, a great longing to know, arose in him.

He became fearful of corners. It seemed to him that there was safety in concealment. Where could he hide to be inconspicuous when the lights returned? At last he sat down upon a seat in a recess on one of the higher ways, conceiving he was alone there.

He squeezed his knuckles into his weary eyes. Suppose when he looked again he found the dark trough of parallel ways and that intolerable altitude of edifice gone. Suppose he were to discover the whole story of these last few days, the awakening, the shouting multitudes, the darkness and the fighting, a phantasmagoria, a new and more vivid sort of dream. It must be a dream; it was so inconsecutive, so reasonless. Why were the people fighting for him? Why should this saner world regard him as Owner and Master?

So he thought, sitting blinded, and then he looked again, half hoping in spite of his ears to see some familiar aspect of the life of the nineteenth century, to see, perhaps, the little harbour of Boscastle about him, the cliffs of Pentargen, or the bedroom of his home. But fact takes no heed of human hopes. A squad of men with a black banner tramped athwart the nearer shadows, intent on conflict, and beyond rose that giddy wall of frontage, vast and dark, with the dim incomprehensible lettering showing faintly on its face.

“It is no dream,” he said, “no dream.” And he bowed his face upon his hands.

CHAPTER XI

THE OLD MAN WHO KNEW EVERYTHING

He was startled by a cough close at hand.

He turned sharply, and peering, saw a small, hunched-up figure sitting a couple of yards off in the shadow of the enclosure.

"Have ye any news?" asked the high-pitched wheezy voice of a very old man.

Graham hesitated. "None," he said.

"I stay here till the lights come again," said the old man. "These blue scoundrels are everywhere — everywhere."

Graham's answer was inarticulate assent. He tried to see the old man but the darkness hid his face. He wanted very much to respond, to talk, but he did not know how to begin.

"Dark and damnable," said the old man suddenly. "Dark and damnable.
Turned out of my room among all these dangers."

"That's hard," ventured Graham. "That's hard on you."

"Darkness. An old man lost in the darkness. And all the world gone mad. War and fighting. The police beaten and rogues abroad. Why don't they bring some negroes to protect us? … No more dark passages for me. I fell over a dead man."

"You're safer with company," said the old man, "if it's company of the right sort," and peered frankly. He rose suddenly and came towards Graham.

Apparently the scrutiny was satisfactory. The old man sat down as if relieved to be no longer alone. "Eh!" he said, "but this is a terrible time! War and fighting, and the dead lying there — men, strong men, dying in the dark. Sons! I have three sons. God knows where they are to-night."

The voice ceased. Then repeated quavering: "God knows where they are to-night."

Graham stood revolving a question that should not betray his ignorance.
Again the old man's voice ended the pause.

"This Ostrog will win," he said. "He will win. And what the world will be like under him no one can tell. My sons are under the wind-vanes, all three. One of my daughters-in-law was his mistress for a while. His mistress! We're not common people. Though they've sent me to wander to-night and take my chance…. I knew what was going on. Before most people. But this darkness! And to fall over a dead body suddenly in the dark!"

His wheezy breathing could be heard.

"Ostrog!" said Graham.

"The greatest Boss the world has ever seen," said the voice.

Graham ransacked his mind. "The Council has few friends among the people," he hazarded.

"Few friends. And poor ones at that. They've had their time. Eh! They should have kept to the clever ones. But twice they held election. And Ostrog — . And now it has burst out and nothing can stay it, nothing can stay it. Twice they rejected Ostrog — Ostrog the Boss. I heard of his rages at the time — he was terrible. Heaven save them! For nothing on earth can now he has raised the Labour Companies upon them. No one else would have dared. All the blue canvas armed and marching! He will go through with it. He will go through."

He was silent for a little while. "This Sleeper," he said, and stopped.

"Yes," said Graham. "Well?"

The senile voice sank to a confidential whisper, the dim, pale face came close. "The real Sleeper—"

"Yes," said Graham.

"Died years ago."

"What?" said Graham, sharply.

"Years ago. Died. Years ago."

"You don't say so!" said Graham.

"I do. I do say so. He died. This Sleeper who's woke up — they changed in the night. A poor, drugged insensible creature. But I

mustn't tell all I know. I mustn't tell all I know."

For a little while he muttered inaudibly. His secret was too much for him. "I don't know the ones that put him to sleep — that was before my time — but I know the man who injected the stimulants and woke him again. It was ten to one — wake or kill. Wake or kill. Ostrog's way."

Graham was so astonished at these things that he had to interrupt, to make the old man repeat his words, to re-question vaguely, before he was sure of the meaning and folly of what he heard. And his awakening had not been natural! Was that an old man's senile superstition, too, or had it any truth in it? Feeling in the dark corners of his memory, he presently came on something that might conceivably be an impression of some such stimulating effect. It dawned upon him that he had happened upon a lucky encounter, that at last he might learn something of the new age. The old man wheezed awhile and spat, and then the piping, reminiscent voice resumed:

"The first time they rejected him. I've followed it all."

"Rejected whom?" said Graham. "The Sleeper?"

"Sleeper? *No*. Ostrog. He was terrible — terrible! And he was promised then, promised certainly the next time. Fools they were — not to be more afraid of him. Now all the city's his millstone, and such as we dust ground upon it. Dust ground upon it. Until he set to work — the workers cut each other's throats, and murdered a Chinaman or a Labour policeman at times, and left the rest of us in peace. Dead bodies! Robbing! Darkness! Such a thing hasn't been this gross of years. Eh! — but 'tis ill on small folks when the great fall out! It's ill."

"Did you say — there had not been — what? — for a gross of years?"

"Eh?" said the old man.

The old man said something about clipping his words, and made him repeat this a third time. "Fighting and slaying, and weapons in hand, and fools bawling freedom and the like," said the old man. "Not in all my life has there been that. These are like the old days — for sure — when the Paris people broke out — three gross of years ago. That's what I mean hasn't been. But it's the world's way. It had

to come back. I know. I know. This five years Ostrog has been working, and there has been trouble and trouble, and hunger and threats and high talk and arms. Blue canvas and murmurs. No one safe. Everything sliding and slipping. And now here we are! Revolt and fighting, and the Council come to its end."

"You are rather well-informed on these things," said Graham.

"I know what I hear. It isn't all Babble Machine with me."

"No," said Graham, wondering what Babble Machine might be. "And you are certain this Ostrog — you are certain Ostrog organised this rebellion and arranged for the waking of the Sleeper? Just to assert himself — because he was not elected to the Council?"

"Everyone knows that, I should think," said the old man. "Except — just fools. He meant to be master somehow. In the Council or not. Everyone who knows anything knows that. And here we are with dead bodies lying in the dark! Why, where have you been if you haven't heard all about the trouble between Ostrog and the Verneys? And what do you think the troubles are about? The Sleeper? Eh? You think the Sleeper's real and woke of his own accord — eh?"

"I'm a dull man, older than I look, and forgetful," said Graham. "Lots of things that have happened — especially of late years — . If I was the Sleeper, to tell you the truth, I couldn't know less about them."

"Eh!" said the voice. "Old, are you? You don't sound so very old! But it's not everyone keeps his memory to my time of life — truly. But these notorious things! But you're not so old as me — not nearly so old as me. Well! I ought not to judge other men by myself, perhaps. I'm young — for so old a man. Maybe you're old for so young."

"That's it," said Graham. "And I've a queer history. I know very little.
And history! Practically I know no history. The Sleeper and Julius Caesar are all the same to me. It's interesting to hear you talk of these things."

"I know a few things," said the old man. "I know a thing or two. But — . Hark!"

The two men became silent, listening. There was a heavy thud, a concussion that made their seat shiver. The passers-by stopped, shouted to one another. The old man was full of questions; he shouted to a man who passed near. Graham, emboldened by his example, got up and accosted others. None knew what had happened.

He returned to the seat and found the old man muttering vague interrogations in an undertone. For a while they said nothing to one another.

The sense of this gigantic struggle, so near and yet so remote, oppressed Graham's imagination. Was this old man right, was the report of the people right, and were the revolutionaries winning? Or were they all in error, and were the red guards driving all before them? At any time the flood of warfare might pour into this silent quarter of the city and seize upon him again. It behoved him to learn all he could while there was time. He turned suddenly to the old man with a question and left it unsaid. But his motion moved the old man to speech again.

"Eh! but how things work together!" said the old man. "This Sleeper that all the fools put their trust in! I've the whole history of it — I was always a good one for histories. When I was a boy — I'm that old — I used to read printed books. You'd hardly think it. Likely you've seen none — they rot and dust so — and the Sanitary Company burns them to make ashlarite. But they were convenient in their dirty way. One learnt a lot. These new-fangled Babble Machines — they don't seem new-fangled to you, eh? — they're easy to hear, easy to forget. But I've traced all the Sleeper business from the first."

"You will scarcely believe it," said Graham slowly, "I'm so ignorant — I've been so preoccupied in my own little affairs, my circumstances have been so odd — I know nothing of this Sleeper's history. Who was he?"

"Eh!" said the old man. "I know, I know. He was a poor nobody, and set on a playful woman, poor soul! And he fell into a trance. There's the old things they had, those brown things — silver photographs — still showing him as he lay, a gross and a half years ago — a gross and a half of years."

"Set on a playful woman, poor soul," said Graham softly to

himself, and then aloud, “Yes — well go on.”

“You must know he had a cousin named Warming, a solitary man without children, who made a big fortune speculating in roads — the first Eadhamite roads. But surely you’ve heard? No? Why? He bought all the patent rights and made a big company. In those days there were grosses of grosses of separate businesses and business companies. Grosses of grosses! His roads killed the railroads — the old things — in two dozen years; he bought up and Eadhamited the tracks. And because he didn’t want to break up his great property or let in shareholders, he left it all to the Sleeper, and put it under a Board of Trustees that he had picked and trained. He knew then the Sleeper wouldn’t wake, that he would go on sleeping, sleeping till he died. He knew that quite well! And plump! a man in the United States, who had lost two sons in a boat accident, followed that up with another great bequest. His trustees found themselves with a dozen myriads of lions’-worth or more of property at the very beginning.”

“What was his name?”

“Graham.”

“No — I mean — that American’s.”

“Isbister.”

“Isbister!” cried Graham. “Why, I don’t even know the name.”

“Of course not,” said the old man. “Of course not. People don’t learn much in the schools nowadays. But I know all about him. He was a rich American who went from England, and he left the Sleeper even more than Warming. How he made it? That I don’t know. Something about pictures by machinery. But he made it and left it, and so the Council had its start. It was just a council of trustees at first.”

“And how did it grow?”

“Eh! — but you’re not up to things. Money attracts money — and twelve brains are better than one. They played it cleverly. They worked politics with money, and kept on adding to the money by working currency and tariffs. They grew — they grew. And for years the twelve trustees hid the growing of the Sleeper’s estate under double names and company titles and all that. The Council spread by title deed, mortgage, share, every political party, every newspaper

they bought. If you listen to the old stories you will see the Council growing and growing. Billions and billions of lions at last — the Sleeper's estate. And all growing out of a whim — out of this Warming's will, and an accident to Isbister's sons.

"Men are strange," said the old man. "The strange thing to me is how the Council worked together so long. As many as twelve. But they worked in cliques from the first. And they've slipped back. In my young days speaking of the Council was like an ignorant man speaking of God. We didn't think they could do wrong. We didn't know of their women and all that! Or else I've got wiser.

"Men are strange," said the old man. "Here are you, young and ignorant, and me — sevendy years old, and I might reasonably before getting — explaining it all to you short and clear.

"Sevendy," he said, "sevendy, and I hear and see — hear better than I see. And reason clearly, and keep myself up to all the happenings of things. Sevendy!

"Life is strange. I was twaindy before Ostrog was a baby. I remember him long before he'd pushed his way to the head of the Wind Vanes Control. I've seen many changes. Eh! I've worn the blue. And at last I've come to see this crush and darkness and tumult and dead men carried by in heaps on the ways. And all his doing! All his doing!"

His voice died away in scarcely articulate praises of Ostrog.

Graham thought. "Let me see," he said, "if I have it right."

He extended a hand and ticked off points upon his fingers. "The Sleeper has been asleep—"

"Changed," said the old man.

"Perhaps. And meanwhile the Sleeper's property grew in the hands of Twelve Trustees, until it swallowed up nearly all the great ownership of the world. The Twelve Trustees — by virtue of this property have become masters of the world. Because they are the paying power — just as the old English Parliament used to be—"

"Eh!" said the old man. "That's so — that's a good comparison. You're not so—"

"And now this Ostrog — has suddenly revolutionised the world by

waking the
Sleeper — whom no one but the superstitious, common people had ever dreamt
would wake again — raising the Sleeper to claim his property from the
Council, after all these years."

The old man endorsed this statement with a cough. "It's strange," he said, "to meet a man who learns these things for the first time to-night."

"Aye," said Graham, "it's strange."

"Have you been in a Pleasure City?" said the old man. "All my life I've longed—" He laughed. "Even now," he said, "I could enjoy a little fun. Enjoy seeing things, anyhow." He mumbled a sentence Graham did not understand.

"The Sleeper — when did he awake?" said Graham suddenly.

"Three days ago."

"Where is he?"

"Ostrog has him. He escaped from the Council not four hours ago. My dear sir, where were you at the time? He was in the hall of the markets — where the fighting has been. All the city was screaming about it. All the Babble Machines. Everywhere it was shouted. Even the fools who speak for the Council were admitting it. Everyone was rushing off to see him — everyone was getting arms. Were you drunk or asleep? And even then! But you're joking! Surely you're pretending. It was to stop the shouting of the Babble Machines and prevent the people gathering that they turned off the electricity — and put this damned darkness upon us. Do you mean to say — ?"

"I had heard the Sleeper was rescued," said Graham. "But — to come back a minute. Are you sure Ostrog has him?"

"He won't let him go," said the old man.

"And the Sleeper. Are you sure he is not genuine? I have never heard—"

"So all the fools think. So they think. As if there wasn't a thousand things that were never heard. I know Ostrog too well for that. Did I tell you? In a way I'm a sort of relation of Ostrog's. A sort of relation. Through my daughter-in-law."

“I suppose—”

“Well?”

“I suppose there’s no chance of this Sleeper asserting himself. I suppose he’s certain to be a puppet — in Ostrog’s hands or the Council’s, as soon as the struggle is over.”

“In Ostrog’s hands — certainly. Why shouldn’t he be a puppet? Look at his position. Everything done for him, every pleasure possible. Why should he want to assert himself?”

“What are these Pleasure Cities?” said Graham, abruptly.

The old man made him repeat the question. When at last he was assured of
Graham’s words, he nudged him violently. “That’s *too* much,” said he.
“You’re poking fun at an old man. I’ve been suspecting you know more than
you pretend.”

“Perhaps I do,” said Graham. “But no! why should I go on acting? No, I do not know what a Pleasure City is.”

The old man laughed in an intimate way.

“What is more, I do not know how to read your letters, I do not know what money you use, I do not know what foreign countries there are. I do not know where I am. I cannot count. I do not know where to get food, nor drink, nor shelter.”

“Come, come,” said the old man, “if you had a glass of drink now, would you put it in your ear or your eye?”

“I want you to tell me all these things.”

“He, he! Well, gentlemen who dress in silk must have their fun.” A withered hand caressed Graham’s arm for a moment. “Silk. Well, well! But, all the same, I wish I was the man who was put up as the Sleeper. He’ll have a fine time of it. All the pomp and pleasure. He’s a queer looking face. When they used to let anyone go to see him, I’ve got tickets and been. The image of the real one, as the photographs show him, this substitute used to be. Yellow. But he’ll get fed up. It’s a queer world. Think of the luck of it. The luck of it. I expect he’ll be sent to Capri. It’s the best fun for a greener.”

His cough overtook him again. Then he began mumbling enviously of pleasures and strange delights. “The luck of it, the luck of it! All my life I’ve been in London, hoping to get my chance.”

“But you don’t know that the Sleeper died,” said Graham, suddenly.

The old man made him repeat his words.

“Men don’t live beyond ten dozen. It’s not in the order of things,” said the old man. “I’m not a fool. Fools may believe it, but not me.”

Graham became angry with the old man’s assurance. “Whether you are a fool or not,” he said, “it happens you are wrong about the Sleeper.”

“Eh?”

“You are wrong about the Sleeper. I haven’t told you before, but I will tell you now. You are wrong about the Sleeper.”

“How do you know? I thought you didn’t know anything — not even about
Pleasure Cities.”

Graham paused.

“You don’t know,” said the old man. “How are you to know? It’s very few men—”

“I *am* the Sleeper.”

He had to repeat it.

There was a brief pause. “There’s a silly thing to say, sir, if you’ll excuse me. It might get you into trouble in a time like this,” said the old man.

Graham, slightly dashed, repeated his assertion.

“I was saying I was the Sleeper. That years and years ago I did, indeed, fall asleep, in a little stone-built village, in the days when there were hedgerows, and villages, and inns, and all the countryside cut up into little pieces, little fields. Have you never heard of those days? And it is I — I who speak to you — who awakened again these four days since.”

“Four days since! — the Sleeper! But they’ve *got* the Sleeper. They have him and they won’t let him go. Nonsense! You’ve been talking sensibly enough up to now. I can see it as though I was there.

There will be Lincoln like a keeper just behind him; they won't let him go about alone. Trust them. You're a queer fellow. One of these fun pokers. I see now why you have been clipping your words so oddly, but—"

He stopped abruptly, and Graham could see his gesture.

"As if Ostrog would let the Sleeper run about alone! No, you're telling that to the wrong man altogether. Eh! as if I should believe. What's your game? And besides, we've been talking of the Sleeper."

Graham stood up. "Listen," he said. "I am the Sleeper."

"You're an odd man," said the old man, "to sit here in the dark, talking clipped, and telling a lie of that sort. But—"

Graham's exasperation fell to laughter. "It is preposterous," he cried. "Preposterous. The dream must end. It gets wilder and wilder. Here am
I — in this damned twilight — I never knew a dream in twilight before — an
anachronism by two hundred years and trying to persuade an old fool that
I am myself, and meanwhile — Ugh!"

He moved in gusty irritation and went striding. In a moment the old man was pursuing him. "Eh! but don't go!" cried the old man. "I'm an old fool, I know. Don't go. Don't leave me in all this darkness."

Graham hesitated, stopped. Suddenly the folly of telling his secret flashed into his mind.

"I didn't mean to offend you — disbelieving you," said the old man coming near. "It's no manner of harm. Call yourself the Sleeper if it pleases you. 'Tis a foolish trick—"

Graham hesitated, turned abruptly and went on his way.

For a time he heard the old man's hobbling pursuit and his wheezy cries receding. But at last the darkness swallowed him, and Graham saw him no more.

CHAPTER XII

OSTROG

Graham could now take a clearer view of his position. For a long time yet he wandered, but after the talk of the old man his discovery of this Ostrog was clear in his mind as the final inevitable decision. One thing was evident, those who were at the headquarters of the revolt had succeeded very admirably in suppressing the fact of his disappearance. But every moment he expected to hear the report of his death or of his recapture by the Council.

Presently a man stopped before him. “Have you heard?” he said.

“No!” said Graham, starting.

“Near a dozand,” said the man, “a dozand men!” and hurried on.

A number of men and a girl passed in the darkness, gesticulating and shouting: “Capitulated! Given up!” “A dozand of men.” “Two dozand of men.” “Ostrog, Hurrah! Ostrog, Hurrah!” These cries receded, became indistinct.

Other shouting men followed. For a time his attention was absorbed in the fragments of speech he heard. He had a doubt whether all were speaking English. Scraps floated to him, scraps like Pigeon English, like “nigger” dialect, blurred and mangled distortions. He dared accost no one with questions. The impression the people gave him jarred altogether with his preconceptions of the struggle and confirmed the old man’s faith in Ostrog. It was only slowly he could bring himself to believe that all these people were rejoicing at the defeat of the Council, that the Council which had pursued him with such power and vigour was after all the weaker of the two sides in conflict. And if that was so, how did it affect him? Several times he hesitated on the verge of fundamental questions. Once he turned and walked for a long way after a little man of rotund inviting outline, but he was unable to master confidence to address him.

It was only slowly that it came to him that he might ask for the “wind-vane offices” whatever the “wind-vane offices” might be. His first enquiry simply resulted in a direction to go on towards

Westminster. His second led to the discovery of a short cut in which he was speedily lost. He was told to leave the ways to which he had hitherto confined himself — knowing no other means of transit — and to plunge down one of the middle staircases into the blackness of a cross-way. Thereupon came some trivial adventures; chief of these an ambiguous encounter with a gruff-voiced invisible creature speaking in a strange dialect that seemed at first a strange tongue, a thick flow of speech with the drifting corpses of English Words therein, the dialect of the latter-day vile. Then another voice drew near, a girl's voice singing, "tralala tralala." She spoke to Graham, her English touched with something of the same quality. She professed to have lost her sister, she blundered needlessly into him he thought, caught hold of him and laughed. But a word of vague remonstrance sent her into the unseen again.

The sounds about him increased. Stumbling people passed him, speaking excitedly. "They have surrendered!" "The Council! Surely not the Council!" "They are saying so in the Ways." The passage seemed wider. Suddenly the wall fell away. He was in a great space and people were stirring remotely. He inquired his way of an indistinct figure. "Strike straight across," said a woman's voice. He left his guiding wall, and in a moment had stumbled against a little table on which were utensils of glass. Graham's eyes, now attuned to darkness, made out a long vista with tables on either side. He went down this. At one or two of the tables he heard a clang of glass and a sound of eating. There were people then cool enough to dine, or daring enough to steal a meal in spite of social convulsion and darkness. Far off and high up he presently saw a pallid light of a semi-circular shape. As he approached this, a black edge came up and hid it. He stumbled at steps and found himself in a gallery. He heard a sobbing, and found two scared little girls crouched by a railing. These children became silent at the near sound of feet. He tried to console them, but they were very still until he left them. Then as he receded he could hear them sobbing again.

Presently he found himself at the foot of a staircase and near a wide opening. He saw a dim twilight above this and ascended out of the blackness into a street of moving ways again. Along this a disorderly swarm of people marched shouting. They were singing

snatches of the song of the revolt, most of them out of tune. Here and there torches flared creating brief hysterical shadows. He asked his way and was twice puzzled by that same thick dialect. His third attempt won an answer he could understand. He was two miles from the wind-vane offices in Westminster, but the way was easy to follow.

When at last he did approach the district of the wind-vane offices it seemed to him, from the cheering processions that came marching along the Ways, from the tumult of rejoicing, and finally from the restoration of the lighting of the city, that the overthrow of the Council must already be accomplished. And still no news of his absence came to his ears.

The re-illumination of the city came with startling abruptness. Suddenly he stood blinking, all about him men halted dazzled, and the world was incandescent. The light found him already upon the outskirts of the excited crowds that choked the ways near the wind-vane offices, and the sense of visibility and exposure that came with it turned his colourless intention of joining Ostrog to a keen anxiety.

For a time he was jostled, obstructed, and endangered by men hoarse and weary with cheering his name, some of them bandaged and bloody in his cause. The frontage of the wind-vane offices was illuminated by some moving picture, but what it was he could not see, because in spite of his strenuous attempts the density of the crowd prevented his approaching it. From the fragments of speech he caught, he judged it conveyed news of the fighting about the Council House. Ignorance and indecision made him slow and ineffective in his movements. For a time he could not conceive how he was to get within the unbroken façade of this place. He made his way slowly into the midst of this mass of people, until he realised that the descending staircase of the central way led to the interior of the buildings. This gave him a goal, but the crowding in the central path was so dense that it was long before he could reach it. And even then he encountered intricate obstruction, and had an hour of vivid argument first in this guard room and then in that before he could get a note taken to the one man of all men who was most eager to see him. His story was laughed to scorn at one place, and wiser for that, when at last he reached a second stairway he professed simply to

have news of extraordinary importance for Ostrog. What it was he would not say. They sent his note reluctantly. For a long time he waited in a little room at the foot of the lift shaft, and thither at last came Lincoln, eager, apologetic, astonished. He stopped in the doorway scrutinising Graham, then rushed forward effusively.

"Yes," he cried. "It is you. And you are not dead!"

Graham made a brief explanation.

"My brother is waiting," explained Lincoln. "He is alone in the wind-vane offices. We feared you had been killed in the theatre. He doubted — and things are very urgent still in spite of what we are telling them *there* — or he would have come to you."

They ascended a lift, passed along a narrow passage, crossed a great hall, empty save for two hurrying messengers, and entered a comparatively little room, whose only furniture was a long settee and a large oval disc of cloudy, shifting grey, hung by cables from the wall. There Lincoln left Graham for a space, and he remained alone without understanding the smoky shapes that drove slowly across this disc.

His attention was arrested by a sound that began abruptly. It was cheering, the frantic cheering of a vast but very remote crowd, a roaring exultation. This ended as sharply as it had begun, like a sound heard between the opening and shutting of a door. In the outer room was a noise of hurrying steps and a melodious clinking as if a loose chain was running over the teeth of a wheel.

Then he heard the voice of a woman, the rustle of unseen garments. "It is Ostrog!" he heard her say. A little bell rang fitfully, and then everything was still again.

Presently came voices, footsteps and movement without. The footsteps of some one person detached itself from the other sounds, and drew near, firm, evenly measured steps. The curtain lifted slowly. A tall, white-haired man, clad in garments of cream-coloured silk, appeared, regarding Graham from under his raised arm.

For a moment the white form remained holding the curtain, then dropped it and stood before it. Graham's first impression was of a very broad forehead, very pale blue eyes deep sunken under white brows, an aquiline nose, and a heavily-lined resolute mouth. The folds of flesh over the eyes, the drooping of the corners of the mouth

contradicted the upright bearing, and said the man was old. Graham rose to his feet instinctively, and for a moment the two men stood in silence, regarding each other.

"You are Ostrog?" said Graham.

"I am Ostrog."

"The Boss?"

"So I am called."

Graham felt the inconvenience of the silence. "I have to thank you chiefly, I understand, for my safety," he said presently.

"We were afraid you were killed," said Ostrog. "Or sent to sleep again — for ever. We have been doing everything to keep our secret — the secret of your disappearance. Where have you been? How did you get here?"

Graham told him briefly.

Ostrog listened in silence.

He smiled faintly. "Do you know what I was doing when they came to tell me you had come?"

"How can I guess?"

"Preparing your double."

"My double?"

"A man as like you as we could find. We were going to hypnotise him, to save him the difficulty of acting. It was imperative. The whole of this revolt depends on the idea that you are awake, alive, and with us. Even now a great multitude of people has gathered in the theatre clamouring to see you. They do not trust…. You know, of course — something of your position?"

"Very little," said Graham.

"It is like this." Ostrog walked a pace or two into the room and turned.

"You are absolute owner," he said, "of the world. You are King of the Earth. Your powers are limited in many intricate ways, but you are the figure-head, the popular symbol of government. This White Council, the Council of Trustees as it is called—"

“I have heard the vague outline of these things.”

“I wondered.”

“I came upon a garrulous old man.”

“I see…. Our masses — the word comes from your days — you know, of course, that we still have masses — regard you as our actual ruler. Just as a great number of people in your days regarded the Crown as the ruler. They are discontented — the masses all over the earth — with the rule of your Trustees. For the most part it is the old discontent, the old quarrel of the common man with his commonness — the misery of work and discipline and unfitness. But your Trustees have ruled ill. In certain matters, in the administration of the Labour Companies, for example, they have been unwise. They have given endless opportunities. Already we of the popular party were agitating for reforms — when your waking came. Came! If it had been contrived it could not have come more opportunely.” He smiled. “The public mind, making no allowance for your years of quiescence, had already hit on the thought of waking you and appealing to you, and — Flash!”

He indicated the outbreak by a gesture, and Graham moved his head to show that he understood.

“The Council muddled — quarrelled. They always do. They could not decide what to do with you. You know how they imprisoned you?”

“I see. I see. And now — we win?”

“We win. Indeed we win. To-night, in five swift hours. Suddenly we struck everywhere. The wind-vane people, the Labour Company and its millions, burst the bonds. We got the pull of the aeroplanes.”

“Yes,” said Graham.

“That was, of course, essential. Or they could have got away. All the city rose, every third man almost was in it! All the blue, all the public services, save only just a few aeronauts and about half the red police. You were rescued, and their own police of the ways — not half of them could be massed at the Council House — have been broken up, disarmed or killed. All London is ours — now. Only the Council House remains.

“Half of those who remain to them of the red police were lost in that foolish attempt to recapture you. They lost their heads when they

lost you. They flung all they had at the theatre. We cut them off from the Council House there. Truly to-night has been a night of victory. Everywhere your star has blazed. A day ago — the White Council ruled as it has ruled for a gross of years, for a century and a half of years, and then, with only a little whispering, a covert arming here and there, suddenly — So!"

"I am very ignorant," said Graham. "I suppose — I do not clearly understand the conditions of this fighting. If you could explain. Where is the Council? Where is the fight?"

Ostrog stepped across the room, something clicked, and suddenly, save for an oval glow, they were in darkness. For a moment Graham was puzzled.

Then he saw that the cloudy grey disc had taken depth and colour, had assumed the appearance of an oval window looking out upon a strange unfamiliar scene.

At the first glance he was unable to guess what this scene might be. It was a daylight scene, the daylight of a wintry day, grey and clear. Across the picture, and halfway as it seemed between him and the remoter view, a stout cable of twisted white wire stretched vertically. Then he perceived that the rows of great wind-wheels he saw, the wide intervals, the occasional gulfs of darkness, were akin to those through which he had fled from the Council House. He distinguished an orderly file of red figures marching across an open space between files of men in black, and realised before Ostrog spoke that he was looking down on the upper surface of latter-day London. The overnight snows had gone. He judged that this mirror was some modern replacement of the camera obscura, but that matter was not explained to him. He saw that though the file of red figures was trotting from left to right, yet they were passing out of the picture to the left. He wondered momentarily, and then saw that the picture was passing slowly, panorama fashion, across the oval.

"In a moment you will see the fighting," said Ostrog at his elbow. "Those fellows in red you notice are prisoners. This is the roof space of London — all the houses are practically continuous now. The streets and public squares are covered in. The gaps and chasms of your time have disappeared."

Something out of focus obliterated half the picture. Its form

suggested a man. There was a gleam of metal, a flash, something that swept across the oval, as the eyelid of a bird sweeps across its eye, and the picture was clear again. And now Graham beheld men running down among the wind-wheels, pointing weapons from which jetted out little smoky flashes. They swarmed thicker and thicker to the right, gesticulating — it might be they were shouting, but of that the picture told nothing. They and the wind-wheels passed slowly and steadily across the field of the mirror.

"Now," said Ostrog, "comes the Council House," and slowly a black edge crept into view and gathered Graham's attention. Soon it was no longer an edge but a cavity, a huge blackened space amidst the clustering edifices, and from it thin spires of smoke rose into the pallid winter sky. Gaunt ruinous masses of the building, mighty truncated piers and girders, rose dismally out of this cavernous darkness. And over these vestiges of some splendid place, countless minute men were clambering, leaping, swarming.

"This is the Council House," said Ostrog. "Their last stronghold. And the fools wasted enough ammunition to hold out for a month in blowing up the buildings all about them — to stop our attack. You heard the smash? It shattered half the brittle glass in the city."

And while he spoke, Graham saw that beyond this area of ruins, overhanging it and rising to a great height, was a ragged mass of white building. This mass had been isolated by the ruthless destruction of its surroundings. Black gaps marked the passages the disaster had torn apart; big halls had been slashed open and the decoration of their interiors showed dismally in the wintry dawn, and down the jagged walls hung festoons of divided cables and twisted ends of lines and metallic rods. And amidst all the vast details moved little red specks, the red-clothed defenders of the Council. Every now and then faint flashes illuminated the bleak shadows. At the first sight it seemed to Graham that an attack upon this isolated white building was in progress, but then he perceived that the party of the revolt was not advancing, but sheltered amidst the colossal wreckage that encircled this last ragged stronghold of the red-garbed men, was keeping up a fitful firing.

And not ten hours ago he had stood beneath the ventilating fans in a little chamber within that remote building wondering what was

happening in the world!

Looking more attentively as this warlike episode moved silently across the centre of the mirror, Graham saw that the white building was surrounded on every side by ruins, and Ostrog proceeded to describe in concise phrases how its defenders had sought by such destruction to isolate themselves from a storm. He spoke of the loss of men that huge downfall had entailed in an indifferent tone. He indicated an improvised mortuary among the wreckage, showed ambulances swarming like cheese-mites along a ruinous groove that had once been a street of moving ways. He was more interested in pointing out the parts of the Council House, the distribution of the besiegers. In a little while the civil contest that had convulsed London was no longer a mystery to Graham. It was no tumultuous revolt had occurred that night, no equal warfare, but a splendidly organised *coup d'état*. Ostrog's grasp of details was astonishing; he seemed to know the business of even the smallest knot of black and red specks that crawled amidst these places.

He stretched a huge black arm across the luminous picture, and showed the room whence Graham had escaped, and across the chasm of ruins the course of his flight. Graham recognised the gulf across which the gutter ran, and the wind-wheels where he had crouched from the flying machine. The rest of his path had succumbed to the explosion. He looked again at the Council House, and it was already half hidden, and on the right a hillside with a cluster of domes and pinnacles, hazy, dim and distant, was gliding into view.

"And the Council is really overthrown?" he said.

"Overthrown," said Ostrog.

"And I — . Is it indeed true that I — ?"

"You are Master of the World."

"But that white flag—"

"That is the flag of the Council — the flag of the Rule of the World. It will fall. The fight is over. Their attack on the theatre was their last frantic struggle. They have only a thousand men or so, and some of these men will be disloyal. They have little ammunition. And we are reviving the ancient arts. We are casting guns."

"But — help. Is this city the world?"

"Practically this is all they have left to them of their empire.

Abroad the cities have either revolted with us or wait the issue. Your awakening has perplexed them, paralysed them."

"But haven't the Council flying machines? Why is there no fighting with them?"

"They had. But the greater part of the aeronauts were in the revolt with us. They wouldn't take the risk of fighting on our side, but they would not stir against us. We *had* to get a pull with the aeronauts. Quite half were with us, and the others knew it. Directly they knew you had got away, those looking for you dropped. We killed the man who shot at you — an hour ago. And we occupied the flying stages at the outset in every city we could, and so stopped and captured the greater aeroplanes, and as for the little flying machines that turned out — for some did — we kept up too straight and steady a fire for them to get near the Council House. If they dropped they couldn't rise again, because there's no clear space about there for them to get up. Several we have smashed, several others have dropped and surrendered, the rest have gone off to the Continent to find a friendly city if they can before their fuel runs out. Most of these men were only too glad to be taken prisoner and kept out of harm's way. Upsetting in a flying machine isn't a very attractive prospect. There's no chance for the Council that way. Its days are done."

He laughed and turned to the oval reflection again to show Graham what he meant by flying stages. Even the four nearer ones were remote and obscured by a thin morning haze. But Graham could perceive they were very vast structures, judged even by the standard of the things about them.

And then as these dim shapes passed to the left there came again the sight of the expanse across which the disarmed men in red had been marching. And then the black ruins, and then again the beleaguered white fastness of the Council. It appeared no longer a ghostly pile, but glowing amber in the sunlight, for a cloud shadow had passed. About it the pigmy struggle still hung in suspense, but now the red defenders were no longer firing.

So, in a dusky stillness, the man from the nineteenth century saw the closing scene of the great revolt, the forcible establishment of his rule. With a quality of startling discovery it came to him that this was his world, and not that other he had left behind; that this was no

spectacle to culminate and cease; that in this world lay whatever life was still before him, lay all his duties and dangers and responsibilities. He turned with fresh questions. Ostrog began to answer them, and then broke off abruptly. “But these things I must explain more fully later. At present there are — duties. The people are coming by the moving ways towards this ward from every part of the city — the markets and theatres are densely crowded. You are just in time for them. They are clamouring to see you. And abroad they want to see you. Paris, New York, Chicago, Denver, Capri — thousands of cities are up and in a tumult, undecided, and clamouring to see you. They have clamoured that you should be awakened for years, and now it is done they will scarcely believe—”

“But surely — I can’t go …”

Ostrog answered from the other side of the room, and the picture on the oval disc paled and vanished as the light jerked back again. “There are kineto-telephoto-graphs,” he said. “As you bow to the people here — all over the world myriads of myriads of people, packed and still in darkened halls, will see you also. In black and white, of course — not like this. And you will hear their shouts reinforcing the shouting in the hall.

“And there is an optical contrivance we shall use,” said Ostrog, “used by some of the posturers and women dancers. It may be novel to you. You stand in a very bright light, and they see not you but a magnified image of you thrown on a screen — so that even the furtherest man in the remotest gallery can, if he chooses, count your eyelashes.”

Graham clutched desperately at one of the questions in his mind. “What is the population of London?” he said.

“Eight and twaindy myriads.”

“Eight and what?”

“More than thirty-three millions.”

These figures went beyond Graham’s imagination.

“You will be expected to say something,” said Ostrog. “Not what you used to call a Speech, but what our people call a word — just one sentence, six or seven words. Something formal. If I might suggest— ‘I have awakened and my heart is with you.’ That is the sort of thing they want.”

“What was that?” asked Graham.

“‘I am awakened and my heart is with you.’ And bow — bow royally. But first we must get you black robes — for black is your colour. Do you mind? And then they will disperse to their homes.”

Graham hesitated. “I am in your hands,” he said.

Ostrog was clearly of that opinion. He thought for a moment, turned to the curtain and called brief directions to some unseen attendants. Almost immediately a black robe, the very fellow of the black robe Graham had worn in the theatre, was brought. And as he threw it about his shoulders there came from the room without the shrilling of a high-pitched bell. Ostrog turned in interrogation to the attendant, then suddenly seemed to change his mind, pulled the curtain aside and disappeared.

For a moment Graham stood with the deferential attendant listening to Ostrog’s retreating steps. There was a sound of quick question and answer and of men running. The curtain was snatched back and Ostrog reappeared, his massive face glowing with excitement. He crossed the room in a stride, clicked the room into darkness, gripped Graham’s arm and pointed to the mirror.

“Even as we turned away,” he said.

Graham saw his index finger, black and colossal, above the mirrored Council House. For a moment he did not understand. And then he perceived that the flagstaff that had carried the white banner was bare.

“Do you mean — ?” he began.

“The Council has surrendered. Its rule is at an end for evermore.”

“Look!” and Ostrog pointed to a coil of black that crept in little jerks up the vacant flagstaff, unfolding as it rose.

The oval picture paled as Lincoln pulled the curtain aside and entered.

“They are clamorous,” he said.

Ostrog kept his grip of Graham’s arm.

“We have raised the people,” he said. “We have given them arms. For to-day at least their wishes must be law.”

Lincoln held the curtain open for Graham and Ostrog to pass through….

On his way to the markets Graham had a transitory glance of a

long narrow white-walled room in which men in the universal blue canvas were carrying covered things like biers, and about which men in medical purple hurried to and fro. From this room came groans and wailing. He had an impression of an empty blood-stained couch, of men on other couches, bandaged and blood-stained. It was just a glimpse from a railed footway and then a buttress hid the place and they were going on towards the markets….

The roar of the multitude was near now: it leapt to thunder. And, arresting his attention, a fluttering of black banners, the waving of blue canvas and brown rags, and the swarming vastness of the theatre near the public markets came into view down a long passage. The picture opened out. He perceived they were entering the great theatre of his first appearance, the great theatre he had last seen as a chequer-work of glare and blackness in his flight from the red police. This time he entered it along a gallery at a level high above the stage. The place was now brilliantly lit again. His eyes sought the gangway up which he had fled, but he could not tell it from among its dozens of fellows; nor could he see anything of the smashed seats, deflated cushions, and such like traces of the fight because of the density of the people. Except the stage the whole place was closely packed. Looking down the effect was a vast area of stippled pink, each dot a still upturned face regarding him. At his appearance with Ostrog the cheering died away, the singing died away, a common interest stilled and unified the disorder. It seemed as though every individual of those myriads was watching him.

CHAPTER XIII

THE END OF THE OLD ORDER

So far as Graham was able to judge, it was near midday when the white banner of the Council fell. But some hours had to elapse before it was possible to effect the formal capitulation, and so after he had spoken his "Word" he retired to his new apartments in the wind-vane offices. The continuous excitement of the last twelve hours had left him inordinately fatigued, even his curiosity was exhausted; for a space he sat inert and passive with open eyes, and for a space he slept. He was roused by two medical attendants, come prepared with stimulants to sustain him through the next occasion. After he had taken their drugs and bathed by their advice in cold water, he felt a rapid return of interest and energy, and was presently able and willing to accompany Ostrog through several miles (as it seemed) of passages, lifts, and slides to the closing scene of the White Council's rule.

The way ran deviously through a maze of buildings. They came at last to a passage that curved about, and showed broadening before him an oblong opening, clouds hot with sunset, and the ragged skyline of the ruinous Council House. A tumult of shouts came drifting up to him. In another moment they had come out high up on the brow of the cliff of torn buildings that overhung the wreckage. The vast area opened to Graham's eyes, none the less strange and wonderful for the remote view he had had of it in the oval mirror.

This rudely amphitheatral space seemed now the better part of a mile to its outer edge. It was gold lit on the left hand, catching the sunlight, and below and to the right clear and cold in the shadow. Above the shadowy grey Council House that stood in the midst of it, the great black banner of the surrender still hung in sluggish folds against the blazing sunset. Severed rooms, halls and passages gaped strangely, broken masses of metal projected dismally from the complex wreckage, vast masses of twisted cable dropped like tangled seaweed, and from its base came a tumult of innumerable voices, violent concussions, and the sound of trumpets. All about this great

white pile was a ring of desolation; the smashed and blackened masses, the gaunt foundations and ruinous lumber of the fabric that had been destroyed by the Council's orders, skeletons of girders, Titanic masses of wall, forests of stout pillars. Amongst the sombre wreckage beneath, running water flashed and glistened, and far away across the space, out of the midst of a vague vast mass of buildings, there thrust the twisted end of a water-main, two hundred feet in the air, thunderously spouting a shining cascade. And everywhere great multitudes of people.

Wherever there was space and foothold, people swarmed, little people, small and minutely clear, except where the sunset touched them to indistinguishable gold. They clambered up the tottering walls, they clung in wreaths and groups about the high-standing pillars. They swarmed along the edges of the circle of ruins. The air was full of their shouting, and they were pressing and swaying towards the central space.

The upper storeys of the Council House seemed deserted, not a human being was visible. Only the drooping banner of the surrender hung heavily against the light. The dead were within the Council House, or hidden by the swarming people, or carried away. Graham could see only a few neglected bodies in gaps and corners of the ruins, and amidst the flowing water.

"Will you let them see you, Sire?" said Ostrog. "They are very anxious to see you."

Graham hesitated, and then walked forward to where the broken verge of wall dropped sheer. He stood looking down, a lonely, tall, black figure against the sky.

Very slowly the swarming ruins became aware of him. And as they did so little bands of black-uniformed men appeared remotely, thrusting through the crowds towards the Council House. He saw little black heads become pink, looking at him, saw by that means a wave of recognition sweep across the space. It occurred to him that he should accord them some recognition. He held up his arm, then pointed to the Council House and dropped his hand. The voices below became unanimous, gathered volume, came up to him as multitudinous wavelets of cheering.

The western sky was a pallid bluish green, and Jupiter shone high

in the south, before the capitulation was accomplished. Above was a slow insensible change, the advance of night serene and beautiful; below was hurry, excitement, conflicting orders, pauses, spasmodic developments of organisation, a vast ascending clamour and confusion. Before the Council came out, toiling perspiring men, directed by a conflict of shouts, carried forth hundreds of those who had perished in the hand-to-hand conflict within those long passages and chambers….

Guards in black lined the way that the Council would come, and as far as the eye could reach into the hazy blue twilight of the ruins, and swarming now at every possible point in the captured Council House and along the shattered cliff of its circumadjacent buildings, were innumerable people, and their voices, even when they were not cheering, were as the soughing of the sea upon a pebble beach. Ostrog had chosen a huge commanding pile of crushed and overthrown masonry, and on this a stage of timbers and metal girders was being hastily constructed. Its essential parts were complete, but humming and clangorous machinery still glared fitfully in the shadows beneath this temporary edifice.

The stage had a small higher portion on which Graham stood with Ostrog and Lincoln close beside him, a little in advance of a group of minor officers. A broader lower stage surrounded this quarter-deck, and on this were the black-uniformed guards of the revolt armed with the little green weapons whose very names Graham still did not know. Those standing about him perceived that his eyes wandered perpetually from the swarming people in the twilight ruins about him to the darkling mass of the White Council House, whence the Trustees would presently come, and to the gaunt cliffs of ruin that encircled him, and so back to the people. The voices of the crowd swelled to a deafening tumult.

He saw the Councillors first afar off in the glare of one of the temporary lights that marked their path, a little group of white figures in a black archway. In the Council House they had been in darkness. He watched them approaching, drawing nearer past first this blazing electric star and then that; the minatory roar of the crowd over whom their power had lasted for a hundred and fifty years marched along beside them. As they drew still nearer their faces came out weary,

white, and anxious. He saw them blinking up through the glare about him and Ostrog. He contrasted their strange cold looks in the Hall of Atlas…. Presently he could recognise several of them; the man who had rapped the table at Howard, a burly man with a red beard, and one delicate-featured, short, dark man with a peculiarly long skull. He noted that two were whispering together and looking behind him at Ostrog. Next there came a tall, dark and handsome man, walking downcast. Abruptly he glanced up, his eyes touched Graham for a moment, and passed beyond him to Ostrog. The way that had been made for them was so contrived that they had to march past and curve about before they came to the sloping path of planks that ascended to the stage where their surrender was to be made.

"The Master, the Master! God and the Master," shouted the people. "To hell with the Council!" Graham looked at their multitudes, receding beyond counting into a shouting haze, and then at Ostrog beside him, white and steadfast and still. His eye went again to the little group of White Councillors. And then he looked up at the familiar quiet stars overhead. The marvellous element in his fate was suddenly vivid. Could that be his indeed, that little life in his memory two hundred years gone by — and this as well?

CHAPTER XIV

FROM THE CROW'S NEST

And so after strange delays and through an avenue of doubt and battle, this man from the nineteenth century came at last to his position at the head of that complex world.

At first when he rose from the long deep sleep that followed his rescue and the surrender of the Council, he did not recognise his surroundings. By an effort he gained a clue in his mind, and all that had happened came back to him, at first with a quality of insincerity like a story heard, like something read out of a book. And even before his memories were clear, the exultation of his escape, the wonder of his prominence were back in his mind. He was owner of the world; Master of the Earth. This new great age was in the completest sense his. He no longer hoped to discover his experiences a dream; he became anxious now to convince himself that they were real.

An obsequious valet assisted him to dress under the direction of a dignified chief attendant, a little man whose face proclaimed him Japanese, albeit he spoke English like an Englishman. From the latter he learnt something of the state of affairs. Already the revolution was an accepted fact; already business was being resumed throughout the city. Abroad the downfall of the Council had been received for the most part with delight. Nowhere was the Council popular, and the thousand cities of Western America, after two hundred years still jealous of New York, London, and the East, had risen almost unanimously two days before at the news of Graham's imprisonment. Paris was fighting within itself. The rest of the world hung in suspense.

While he was breaking his fast, the sound of a telephone bell jetted from a corner, and his chief attendant called his attention to the voice of Ostrog making polite enquiries. Graham interrupted his refreshment to reply. Very shortly Lincoln arrived, and Graham at once expressed a strong desire to talk to people and to be shown more of the new life that was opening before him. Lincoln informed

him that in three hours' time a representative gathering of officials and their wives would be held in the state apartments of the wind-vane Chief. Graham's desire to traverse the ways of the city was, however, at present impossible, because of the enormous excitement of the people. It was, however, quite possible for him to take a bird's-eye view of the city from the crow's nest of the wind-vane keeper. To this accordingly Graham was conducted by his attendant. Lincoln; with a graceful compliment to the attendant, apologised for not accompanying them, on account of the present pressure of administrative work.

Higher even than the most gigantic, wind-wheels hung this crow's nest, a clear thousand feet above the roofs, a little disc-shaped speck on a spear of metallic filigree, cable stayed. To its summit Graham was drawn in a little wire-hung cradle. Halfway down the frail-seeming stem was a light gallery about which hung a cluster of tubes — minute they looked from above — rotating slowly on the ring of its outer rail. These were the specula, *en rapport* with the wind-vane keeper's mirrors, in one of which Ostrog had shown him the coming of his rule. His Japanese attendant ascended before him and they spent nearly an hour asking and answering questions.

It was a day full of the promise and quality of spring. The touch of the wind warmed. The sky was an intense blue and the vast expanse of London shone dazzling under the morning sun. The air was clear of smoke and haze, sweet as the air of a mountain glen.

Save for the irregular oval of ruins about the House of the Council and the black flag of the surrender that fluttered there, the mighty city seen from above showed few signs of the swift revolution that had, to his imagination, in one night and one day, changed the destinies of the world. A multitude of people still swarmed over these ruins, and the huge openwork stagings in the distance from which started in times of peace the service of aeroplanes to the various great cities of Europe and America, were also black with the victors. Across a narrow way of planking raised on trestles that crossed the ruins a crowd of workmen were busy restoring the connection between the cables and wires of the Council House and the rest of the city, preparatory to the transfer thither of Ostrog's headquarters from the Wind-Vane buildings.

For the rest the luminous expanse was undisturbed. So vast was its serenity in comparison with the areas of disturbance, that presently Graham, looking beyond them, could almost forget the thousands of men lying out of sight in the artificial glare within the quasi-subterranean labyrinth, dead or dying of the overnight wounds, forget the improvised wards with the hosts of surgeons, nurses, and bearers feverishly busy, forget, indeed, all the wonder, consternation and novelty under the electric lights. Down there in the hidden ways of the anthill he knew that the revolution triumphed, that black everywhere carried the day, black favours, black banners, black festoons across the streets. And out here, under the fresh sunlight, beyond the crater of the fight, as if nothing had happened to the earth, the forest of wind vanes that had grown from one or two while the Council had ruled, roared peacefully upon their incessant duty.

Far away, spiked, jagged and indented by the wind vanes, the Surrey Hills rose blue and faint; to the north and nearer, the sharp contours of Highgate and Muswell Hill were similarly jagged. And all over the countryside, he knew, on every crest and hill, where once the hedges had interlaced, and cottages, churches, inns, and farm houses had nestled among their trees, wind-wheels similar to those he saw and bearing like them vast advertisements, gaunt and distinctive symbols of the new age, cast their whirling shadows and stored incessantly the energy that flowed away incessantly through all the arteries of the city. And underneath these wandered the countless flocks and herds of the British Food Trust, his property, with their lonely guards and keepers.

Not a familiar outline anywhere broke the cluster of gigantic shapes below. St. Paul's he knew survived, and many of the old buildings in Westminster, embedded out of sight, arched over and covered in among the giant growths of this great age. The Thames, too, made no fall and gleam of silver to break the wilderness of the city; the thirsty water mains drank up every drop of its waters before they reached the walls. Its bed and estuary, scoured and sunken, was now a canal of sea water, and a race of grimy bargemen brought the heavy materials of trade from the Pool thereby beneath the very feet of the workers. Faint and dim in the eastward between earth and sky hung the clustering masts of the colossal shipping in the Pool. For all

the heavy traffic, for which there was no need of haste, came in gigantic sailing ships from the ends of the earth, and the heavy goods for which there was urgency in mechanical ships of a smaller swifter sort.

And to the south over the hills came vast aqueducts with sea water for the sewers, and in three separate directions ran pallid lines — the roads, stippled with moving grey specks. On the first occasion that offered he was determined to go out and see these roads. That would come after the flying ship he was presently to try. His attendant officer described them as a pair of gently curving surfaces a hundred yards wide, each one for the traffic going in one direction, and made of a substance called Eadhamite — an artificial substance, so far as he could gather, resembling toughened glass. Along this shot a strange traffic of narrow rubber-shod vehicles, great single wheels, two and four wheeled vehicles, sweeping along at velocities of from one to six miles a minute. Railroads had vanished; a few embankments remained as rust-crowned trenches here and there. Some few formed the cores of Eadhamite ways.

Among the first things to strike his attention had been the great fleets of advertisement balloons and kites that receded in irregular vistas northward and southward along the lines of the aeroplane journeys. No great aeroplanes were to be seen. Their passages had ceased, and only one little-seeming monoplane circled high in the blue distance above the Surrey Hills, an unimpressive soaring speck.

A thing Graham had already learnt, and which he found very hard to imagine, was that nearly all the towns in the country, and almost all the villages, had disappeared. Here and there only, he understood, some gigantic hotel-like edifice stood amid square miles of some single cultivation and preserved the name of a town — as Bournemouth, Wareham, or Swanage. Yet the officer had speedily convinced him how inevitable such a change had been. The old order had dotted the country with farmhouses, and every two or three miles was the ruling landlord's estate, and the place of the inn and cobbler, the grocer's shop and church — the village. Every eight miles or so was the country town, where lawyer, corn merchant, wool-stapler, saddler, veterinary surgeon, doctor, draper, milliner and so forth lived. Every eight miles — simply because that eight mile marketing

journey, four there and back, was as much as was comfortable for the farmer. But directly the railways came into play, and after them the light railways, and all the swift new motor cars that had replaced waggons and horses, and so soon as the high roads began to be made of wood, and rubber, and Eadhamite, and all sorts of elastic durable substances — the necessity of having such frequent market towns disappeared. And the big towns grew. They drew the worker with the gravitational force of seemingly endless work, the employer with their suggestion of an infinite ocean of labour.

And as the standard of comfort rose, as the complexity of the mechanism of living increased, life in the country had become more and more costly, or narrow and impossible. The disappearance of vicar and squire, the extinction of the general practitioner by the city specialist; had robbed the village of its last touch of culture. After telephone, kinematograph and phonograph had replaced newspaper, book, schoolmaster, and letter, to live outside the range of the electric cables was to live an isolated savage. In the country were neither means of being clothed nor fed (according to the refined conceptions of the time), no efficient doctors for an emergency, no company and no pursuits.

Moreover, mechanical appliances in agriculture made one engineer the equivalent of thirty labourers. So, inverting the condition of the city clerk in the days when London was scarce inhabitable because of the coaly foulness of its air, the labourers now came to the city and its life and delights at night to leave it again in the morning. The city had swallowed up humanity; man had entered upon a new stage in his development. First had come the nomad, the hunter, then had followed the agriculturist of the agricultural state, whose towns and cities and ports were but the headquarters and markets of the countryside. And now, logical consequence of an epoch of invention, was this huge new aggregation of men.

Such things as these, simple statements of fact though they were to contemporary men, strained Graham's imagination to picture. And when he glanced "over beyond there" at the strange things that existed on the Continent, it failed him altogether.

He had a vision of city beyond city; cities on great plains, cities beside great rivers, vast cities along the sea margin, cities girdled by

snowy mountains. Over a great part of the earth the English tongue was spoken; taken together with its Spanish American and Hindoo and Negro and "Pidgin" dialects, it was the everyday-language of two-thirds of humanity. On the Continent, save as remote and curious survivals, three other languages alone held sway — German, which reached to Antioch and Genoa and jostled Spanish-English at Cadiz; a Gallicised Russian which met the Indian English in Persia and Kurdistan and the "Pidgin" English in Pekin; and French still clear and brilliant, the language of lucidity, which shared the Mediterranean with the Indian English and German and reached through a negro dialect to the Congo.

And everywhere now through the city-set earth, save in the administered "black belt" territories of the tropics, the same cosmopolitan social organisation prevailed, and everywhere from Pole to Equator his property and his responsibilities extended. The whole world was civilised; the whole world dwelt in cities; the whole world was his property….

Out of the dim south-west, glittering and strange, voluptuous, and in some way terrible, shone those Pleasure Cities of which the kinematograph-phonograph and the old man in the street had spoken. Strange places reminiscent of the legendary Sybaris, cities of art and beauty, mercenary art and mercenary beauty, sterile wonderful cities of motion and music, whither repaired all who profited by the fierce, inglorious, economic struggle that went on in the glaring labyrinth below.

Fierce he knew it was. How fierce he could judge from the fact that these latter-day people referred back to the England of the nineteenth century as the figure of an idyllic easy-going life. He turned his eyes to the scene immediately before him again, trying to conceive the big factories of that intricate maze….

CHAPTER XV

PROMINENT PEOPLE

The state apartments of the Wind Vane Keeper would have astonished Graham had he entered them fresh from his nineteenth century life, but already he was growing accustomed to the scale of the new time. He came out through one of the now familiar sliding panels upon a plateau of landing at the head of a flight of very broad and gentle steps, with men and women far more brilliantly dressed than any he had hitherto seen, ascending and descending. From this position he looked down a vista of subtle and varied ornament in lustreless white and mauve and purple, spanned by bridges that seemed wrought of porcelain and filigree, and terminating far off in a cloudy mystery of perforated screens.

Glancing upward, he saw tier above tier of ascending galleries with faces looking down upon him. The air was full of the babble of innumerable voices and of a music that descended from above, a gay and exhilarating music whose source he did not discover.

The central aisle was thick with people, but by no means uncomfortably crowded; altogether that assembly must have numbered many thousands. They were brilliantly, even fantastically dressed, the men as fancifully as the women, for the sobering influence of the Puritan conception of dignity upon masculine dress had long since passed away. The hair of the men, too, though it was rarely worn long, was commonly curled in a manner that suggested the barber, and baldness had vanished from the earth. Frizzy straight-cut masses that would have charmed Rossetti abounded, and one gentleman, who was pointed out to Graham under the mysterious title of an "amorist," wore his hair in two becoming plaits *à la* Marguerite. The pigtail was in evidence; it would seem that citizens of Chinese extraction were no longer ashamed of their race. There was little uniformity of fashion apparent in the forms of clothing worn. The more shapely men displayed their symmetry in trunk hose, and here were puffs and slashes, and there a cloak and there a robe. The fashions of the days of Leo the Tenth were perhaps the

prevailing influence, but the aesthetic conceptions of the far east were also patent. Masculine embonpoint, which, in Victorian times, would have been subjected to the buttoned perils, the ruthless exaggeration of tight-legged tight-armed evening dress, now formed but the basis of a wealth of dignity and drooping folds. Graceful slenderness abounded also. To Graham, a typically stiff man from a typically stiff period, not only did these men seem altogether too graceful in person, but altogether too expressive in their vividly expressive faces. They gesticulated, they expressed surprise, interest, amusement, above all, they expressed the emotions excited in their minds by the ladies about them with astonishing frankness. Even at the first glance it was evident that women were in a great majority.

The ladies in the company of these gentlemen displayed in dress, bearing and manner alike, less emphasis and more intricacy. Some affected a classical simplicity of robing and subtlety of fold, after the fashion of the First French Empire, and flashed conquering arms and shoulders as Graham passed. Others had closely-fitting dresses without seam or belt at the waist, sometimes with long folds falling from the shoulders. The delightful confidences of evening dress had not been diminished by the passage of two centuries.

Everyone's movements seemed graceful. Graham remarked to Lincoln that he saw men as Raphael's cartoons walking, and Lincoln told him that the attainment of an appropriate set of gestures was part of every rich person's education. The Master's entry was greeted with a sort of tittering applause, but these people showed their distinguished manners by not crowding upon him nor annoying him by any persistent scrutiny, as he descended the steps towards the floor of the aisle.

He had already learnt from Lincoln that these were the leaders of existing London society; almost every person there that night was either a powerful official or the immediate connexion of a powerful official. Many had returned from the European Pleasure Cities expressly to welcome him. The aeronautic authorities, whose defection had played a part in the overthrow of the Council only second to Graham's, were very prominent, and so, too, was the Wind Vane Control. Amongst others there were several of the more prominent officers of the Food Department; the controller of the

European Piggeries had a particularly melancholy and interesting countenance and a daintily cynical manner. A bishop in full canonicals passed athwart Graham's vision, conversing with a gentleman dressed exactly like the traditional Chaucer, including even the laurel wreath.

"Who is that?" he asked almost involuntarily.

"The Bishop of London," said Lincoln.

"No — the other, I mean."

"Poet Laureate."

"You still — ?"

"He doesn't make poetry, of course. He's a cousin of Wotton — one of the Councillors. But he's one of the Red Rose Royalists — a delightful club — and they keep up the tradition of these things."

"Asano told me there was a King."

"The King doesn't belong. They had to expel him. It's the Stuart blood, I suppose; but really—"

"Too much?"

"Far too much."

Graham did not quite follow all this, but it seemed part of the general inversion of the new age. He bowed condescendingly to his first introduction. It was evident that subtle distinctions of class prevailed even in this assembly, that only to a small proportion of the guests, to an inner group, did Lincoln consider it appropriate to introduce him. This first introduction was the Master Aeronaut, a man whose sun-tanned face contrasted oddly with the delicate complexions about him. Just at present his critical defection from the Council made him a very important person indeed.

His manner contrasted very favourably, according to Graham's ideas, with the general bearing. He offered a few commonplace remarks, assurances of loyalty and frank inquiries about the Master's health. His manner was breezy, his accent lacked the easy staccato of latter-day English. He made it admirably clear to Graham that he was a bluff "aerial dog" — he used that phrase — that there was no nonsense about him, that he was a thoroughly manly fellow and old-fashioned at that, that he didn't profess to know much, and that what he did not know was not worth knowing. He made a curt bow, ostentatiously free from obsequiousness, and passed.

“I am glad to see that type endures,” said Graham.

“Phonographs and kinematographs,” said Lincoln, a little spitefully. “He has studied from the life.” Graham glanced at the burly form again. It was oddly reminiscent.

“As a matter of fact we bought him,” said Lincoln. “Partly. And partly he was afraid of Ostrog. Everything rested with him.”

He turned sharply to introduce the Surveyor-General of the Public Schools. This person was a willowy figure in a blue-grey academic gown, he beamed down upon Graham through *pince-nez* of a Victorian pattern, and illustrated his remarks by gestures of a beautifully manicured hand. Graham was immediately interested in this gentleman’s functions, and asked him a number of singularly direct questions. The Surveyor-General seemed quietly amused at the Master’s fundamental bluntness. He was a little vague as to the monopoly of education his Company possessed; it was done by contract with the syndicate that ran the numerous London Municipalities, but he waxed enthusiastic over educational progress since the Victorian times. “We have conquered Cram,” he said, “completely conquered Cram — there is not an examination left in the world. Aren’t you glad?”

“How do you get the work done?” asked Graham.

“We make it attractive — as attractive as possible. And if it does not attract then — we let it go. We cover an immense field.”

He proceeded to details, and they had a lengthy conversation. Graham learnt that University Extension still existed in a modified form. “There is a certain type of girl, for example,” said the Surveyor-General, dilating with a sense of his usefulness, “with a perfect passion for severe studies — when they are not too difficult you know. We cater for them by the thousand. At this moment,” he said with a Napoleonic touch, “nearly five hundred phonographs are lecturing in different parts of London on the influence exercised by Plato and Swift on the love affairs of Shelley, Hazlitt, and Burns. And afterwards they write essays on the lectures, and the names in order of merit are put in conspicuous places. You see how your little germ has grown? The illiterate middle-class of your days has quite passed away.”

“About the public elementary schools,” said Graham. “Do you

control them?”

The Surveyor-General did, “entirely.” Now, Graham, in his later democratic days, had taken a keen interest in these and his questioning quickened. Certain casual phrases that had fallen from the old man with whom he had talked in the darkness recurred to him. The Surveyor-General, in effect, endorsed the old man’s words. “We try and make the elementary schools very pleasant for the little children. They will have to work so soon. Just a few simple principles — obedience — industry.”

“You teach them very little?”

“Why should we? It only leads to trouble and discontent. We amuse them. Even as it is — there are troubles — agitations. Where the labourers get the ideas, one cannot tell. They tell one another. There are socialistic dreams — anarchy even! Agitators *will* get to work among them. I take it — I have always taken it — that my foremost duty is to fight against popular discontent. Why should people be made unhappy?”

“I wonder,” said Graham thoughtfully. “But there are a great many things
I want to know.”

Lincoln, who had stood watching Graham’s face throughout the conversation, intervened. “There are others,” he said in an undertone.

The Surveyor-General of schools gesticulated himself away. “Perhaps,” said Lincoln, intercepting a casual glance, “you would like to know some of these ladies?”

The daughter of the Manager of the Piggeries was a particularly charming little person with red hair and animated blue eyes. Lincoln left him awhile to converse with her, and she displayed herself as quite an enthusiast for the “dear old days,” as she called them, that had seen the beginning of his trance. As she talked she smiled, and her eyes smiled in a manner that demanded reciprocity.

“I have tried,” she said, “countless times — to imagine those old romantic days. And to you — they are memories. How strange and crowded the world must seem to you! I have seen photographs and pictures of the past, the little isolated houses built of bricks made out

of burnt mud and all black with soot from your fires, the railway bridges, the simple advertisements, the solemn savage Puritanical men in strange black coats and those tall hats of theirs, iron railway trains on iron bridges overhead, horses and cattle, and even dogs running half wild about the streets. And suddenly, you have come into this!"

"Into this," said Graham.

"Out of your life — out of all that was familiar."

"The old life was not a happy one," said Graham. "I do not regret that."

She looked at him quickly. There was a brief pause. She sighed encouragingly. "No?"

"No," said Graham. "It was a little life — and unmeaning. But this — We thought the world complex and crowded and civilised enough. Yet I see — although in this world I am barely four days old — looking back on my own time, that it was a queer, barbaric time — the mere beginning of this new order. The mere beginning of this new order. You will find it hard to understand how little I know."

"You may ask me what you like," she said, smiling at him.

"Then tell me who these people are. I'm still very much in the dark about them. It's puzzling. Are there any Generals?"

"Men in hats and feathers?"

"Of course not. No. I suppose they are the men who control the great public businesses. Who is that distinguished looking man?"

"That? He's a most important officer. That is Morden. He is managing director of the Antibilious Pill Department. I have heard that his workers sometimes turn out a myriad myriad pills a day in the twenty-four hours. Fancy a myriad myriad!"

"A myriad myriad. No wonder he looks proud," said Graham. "Pills! What a wonderful time it is! That man in purple?"

"He is not quite one of the inner circle, you know. But we like him. He is really clever and very amusing. He is one of the heads of the Medical Faculty of our London University. All medical men, you know, wear that purple. But, of course, people who are paid by fees for *doing* something—" She smiled away the social pretensions of all such people.

"Are any of your great artists or authors here?"

“No authors. They are mostly such queer people — and so preoccupied about themselves. And they quarrel so dreadfully! They will fight, some of them, for precedence on staircases! Dreadful, isn’t it? But I think Wraysbury, the fashionable capillotomist, is here. From Capri.”

“Capillotomist,” said Graham. “Ah! I remember. An artist! Why not?”

“We have to cultivate him,” she said apologetically. “Our heads are in his hands.” She smiled.

Graham hesitated at the invited compliment, but his glance was expressive. “Have the arts grown with the rest of civilised things?” he said. “Who are your great painters?”

She looked at him doubtfully. Then laughed. “For a moment,” she said, “I thought you meant—” She laughed again. “You mean, of course, those good men you used to think so much of because they could cover great spaces of canvas with oil-colours? Great oblongs. And people used to put the things in gilt frames and hang them up in rows in their square rooms. We haven’t any. People grew tired of that sort of thing.”

“But what did you think I meant?”

She put a finger significantly on a cheek whose glow was above suspicion, and smiled and looked very arch and pretty and inviting. “And here,” and she indicated her eyelid.

Graham had an adventurous moment. Then a grotesque memory of a picture he had somewhere seen of Uncle Toby and the widow flashed across his mind. An archaic shame came upon him. He became acutely aware that he was visible to a great number of interested people. “I see,” he remarked inadequately. He turned awkwardly away from her fascinating facility. He looked about him to meet a number of eyes that immediately occupied themselves with other things. Possibly he coloured a little. “Who is that talking with the lady in saffron?” he asked, avoiding her eyes.

The person in question he learnt was one of the great organisers of the American theatres just fresh from a gigantic production at Mexico. His face reminded Graham of a bust of Caligula. Another striking looking man was the Black Labour Master. The phrase at the time made no deep impression, but afterwards it recurred; — the

Black Labour Master? The little lady in no degree embarrassed, pointed out to him a charming little woman as one of the subsidiary wives of the Anglican Bishop of London. She added encomiums on the episcopal courage — hitherto there had been a rule of clerical monogamy— "neither a natural nor an expedient condition of things. Why should the natural development of the affections be dwarfed and restricted because a man is a priest?"

"And, bye the bye," she added, "are you an Anglican?" Graham was on the verge of hesitating inquiries about the status of a "subsidiary wife," apparently an euphemistic phrase, when Lincoln's return broke off this very suggestive and interesting conversation. They crossed the aisle to where a tall man in crimson, and two charming persons in Burmese costume (as it seemed to him) awaited him diffidently. From their civilities he passed to other presentations.

In a little while his multitudinous impressions began to organise themselves into a general effect. At first the glitter of the gathering had raised all the democrat in Graham; he had felt hostile and satirical. But it is not in human nature to resist an atmosphere of courteous regard. Soon the music, the light, the play of colours, the shining arms and shoulders about him, the touch of hands, the transient interest of smiling faces, the frothing sound of skilfully modulated voices, the atmosphere of compliment, interest and respect, had woven together into a fabric of indisputable pleasure. Graham for a time forgot his spacious resolutions. He gave way insensibly to the intoxication of the position that was conceded him, his manner became more convincingly regal, his feet walked assuredly, the black robe fell with a bolder fold and pride ennobled his voice. After all, this was a brilliant interesting world.

He looked up and saw passing across a bridge of porcelain and looking down upon him, a face that was almost immediately hidden, the face of the girl he had seen overnight in the little room beyond the theatre after his escape from the Council. And she was watching him.

For the moment he did not remember when he had seen her, and then came a vague memory of the stirring emotions of their first encounter. But the dancing web of melody about him kept the air of that great marching song from his memory.

The lady to whom he talked repeated her remark, and Graham recalled himself to the quasi-regal flirtation upon which he was engaged.

Yet, unaccountably, a vague restlessness, a feeling that grew to dissatisfaction, came into his mind. He was troubled as if by some half forgotten duty, by the sense of things important slipping from him amidst this light and brilliance. The attraction that these ladies who crowded about him were beginning to exercise ceased. He no longer gave vague and clumsy responses to the subtly amorous advances that he was now assured were being made to him, and his eyes wandered for another sight of the girl of the first revolt.

Where, precisely, had he seen her?…

Graham was in one of the upper galleries in conversation with a bright-eyed lady on the subject of Eadhamite — the subject was his choice and not hers. He had interrupted her warm assurances of personal devotion with a matter-of-fact inquiry. He found her, as he had already found several other latter-day women that night, less well informed than charming. Suddenly, struggling against the eddying drift of nearer melody, the song of the Revolt, the great song he had heard in the Hall, hoarse and massive, came beating down to him.

Ah! Now he remembered!

He glanced up startled, and perceived above him an *oeil de boeuf* through which this song had come, and beyond, the upper courses of cable, the blue haze, and the pendant fabric of the lights of the public ways. He heard the song break into a tumult of voices and cease. He perceived quite clearly the drone and tumult of the moving platforms and a murmur of many people. He had a vague persuasion that he could not account for, a sort of instinctive feeling that outside in the ways a huge crowd must be watching this place in which their Master amused himself.

Though the song had stopped so abruptly, though the special music of this gathering reasserted itself, the *motif* of the marching song, once it had begun, lingered in his mind.

The bright-eyed lady was still struggling with the mysteries of Eadhamite when he perceived the girl he had seen in the theatre again. She was coming now along the gallery towards him; he saw

her first before she saw him. She was dressed in a faintly luminous grey, her dark hair about her brows was like a cloud, and as he saw her the cold light from the circular opening into the ways fell upon her downcast face.

The lady in trouble about the Eadhamite saw the change in his expression, and grasped her opportunity to escape. “Would you care to know that girl, Sire?” she asked boldly. “She is Helen Wotton — a niece of Ostrog’s. She knows a great many serious things. She is one of the most serious persons alive. I am sure you will like her.”

In another moment Graham was talking to the girl, and the bright-eyed lady had fluttered away.

“I remember you quite well,” said Graham. “You were in that little room.
When all the people were singing and beating time with their feet. Before
I walked across the Hall.”

Her momentary embarrassment passed. She looked up at him, and her face was steady. “It was wonderful,” she said, hesitated, and spoke with a sudden effort. “All those people would have died for you, Sire. Countless people did die for you that night.”

Her face glowed. She glanced swiftly aside to see that no other heard her words.

Lincoln appeared some way off along the gallery, making his way through the press towards them. She saw him and turned to Graham strangely eager, with a swift change to confidence and intimacy. “Sire,” she said quickly, “I cannot tell you now and here. But the common people are very unhappy; they are oppressed — they are misgoverned. Do not forget the people, who faced death — death that you might live.”

“I know nothing—” began Graham.

“I cannot tell you now.”

Lincoln’s face appeared close to them. He bowed an apology to the girl.

“You find the new world amusing, Sire?” asked Lincoln, with smiling deference, and indicating the space and splendour of the

gathering by one comprehensive gesture. “At any rate, you find it changed.”

“Yes,” said Graham, “changed. And yet, after all, not so greatly changed.”

“Wait till you are in the air,” said Lincoln. “The wind has fallen; even now an aeroplane awaits you.”

The girl’s attitude awaited dismissal.

Graham glanced at her face, was on the verge of a question, found a warning in her expression, bowed to her and turned to accompany Lincoln.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MONOPLANE

The Flying Stages of London were collected together in an irregular crescent on the southern side of the river. They formed three groups of two each and retained the names of ancient suburban hills or villages. They were named in order, Roehampton, Wimbledon Park, Streatham, Norwood, Blackheath, and Shooter's Hill. They were uniform structures rising high above the general roof surfaces. Each was about four thousand yards long and a thousand broad, and constructed of the compound of aluminum and iron that had replaced iron in architecture. Their higher tiers formed an openwork of girders through which lifts and staircases ascended. The upper surface was a uniform expanse, with portions — the starting carriers — that could be raised and were then able to run on very slightly inclined rails to the end of the fabric.

Graham went to the flying stages by the public ways. He was accompanied by Asano, his Japanese attendant. Lincoln was called away by Ostrog, who was busy with his administrative concerns. A strong guard of the Wind-Vane police awaited the Master outside the Wind-Vane offices, and they cleared a space for him on the upper moving platform. His passage to the flying stages was unexpected, nevertheless a considerable crowd gathered and followed him to his destination. As he went along, he could hear the people shouting his name, and saw numberless men and women and children in blue come swarming up the staircases in the central path, gesticulating and shouting. He could not hear what they shouted. He was struck again by the evident existence of a vulgar dialect among the poor of the city. When at last he descended, his guards were immediately surrounded by a dense excited crowd. Afterwards it occurred to him that some had attempted to reach him with petitions. His guards cleared a passage for him with difficulty.

He found a monoplane in charge of an aeronaut awaiting him on the westward stage. Seen close this mechanism was no longer small. As it lay on its launching carrier upon the wide expanse of the flying

stage, its aluminum body skeleton was as big as the hull of a twenty-ton yacht. Its lateral supporting sails braced and stayed with metal nerves almost like the nerves of a bee's wing, and made of some sort of glassy artificial membrane, cast their shadow over many hundreds of square yards. The chairs for the engineer and his passenger hung free to swing by a complex tackle, within the protecting ribs of the frame and well abaft the middle. The passenger's chair was protected by a wind-guard and guarded about with metallic rods carrying air cushions. It could, if desired, be completely closed in, but Graham was anxious for novel experiences, and desired that it should be left open. The aeronaut sat behind a glass that sheltered his face. The passenger could secure himself firmly in his seat, and this was almost unavoidable on landing, or he could move along by means of a little rail and rod to a locker at the stem of the machine, where his personal luggage, his wraps and restoratives were placed, and which also with the seats, served as a makeweight to the parts of the central engine that projected to the propeller at the stern.

The flying stage about him was empty save for Asano and their suite of attendants. Directed by the aeronaut he placed himself in his seat. Asano stepped through the bars of the hull, and stood below on the stage waving his hand. He seemed to slide along the stage to the right and vanish.

The engine was humming loudly, the propeller spinning, and for a second the stage and the buildings beyond were gliding swiftly and horizontally past Graham's eye; then these things seemed to tilt up abruptly. He gripped the little rods on either side of him instinctively. He felt himself moving upward, heard the air whistle over the top of the wind screen. The propeller screw moved round with powerful rhythmic impulses — one, two, three, pause; one, two, three — which the engineer controlled very delicately. The machine began a quivering vibration that continued throughout the flight, and the roof areas seemed running away to starboard very quickly and growing rapidly smaller. He looked from the face of the engineer through the ribs of the machine. Looking sideways, there was nothing very startling in what he saw — a rapid funicular railway might have given the same sensations. He recognised the Council House and the Highgate Ridge. And then he looked straight down between his feet.

For a moment physical terror possessed him, a passionate sense of insecurity. He held tight. For a second or so he could not lift his eyes. Some hundred feet or more sheer below him was one of the big wind-vanes of south-west London, and beyond it the southernmost flying stage crowded with little black dots. These things seemed to be falling away from him. For a second he had an impulse to pursue the earth. He set his teeth, he lifted his eyes by a muscular effort, and the moment of panic passed.

He remained for a space with his teeth set hard, his eyes staring into the sky. Throb, throb, throb — beat, went the engine; throb, throb, throb — beat. He gripped his bars tightly, glanced at the aeronaut, and saw a smile upon his sun-tanned face. He smiled in return — perhaps a little artificially. "A little strange at first," he shouted before he recalled his dignity. But he dared not look down again for some time. He stared over the aeronaut's head to where a rim of vague blue horizon crept up the sky. For a little while he could not banish the thought of possible accidents from his mind. Throb, throb, throb — beat; suppose some trivial screw went wrong in that supporting engine! Suppose — ! He made a grim effort to dismiss all such suppositions. After a while they did at least abandon the foreground of his thoughts. And up he went steadily, higher and higher into the clear air.

Once the mental shock of moving unsupported through the air was over, his sensations ceased to be unpleasant, became very speedily pleasurable. He had been warned of air sickness. But he found the pulsating movement of the monoplane as it drove up the faint south-west breeze was very little in excess of the pitching of a boat head on to broad rollers in a moderate gale, and he was constitutionally a good sailor. And the keenness of the more rarefied air into which they ascended produced a sense of lightness and exhilaration. He looked up and saw the blue sky above fretted with cirrus clouds. His eye came cautiously down through the ribs and bars to a shining flight of white birds that hung in the lower sky. For a space he watched these. Then going lower and less apprehensively, he saw the slender figure of the Wind-Vane keeper's crow's nest shining golden in the sunlight and growing smaller every moment. As his eye fell with more confidence now, there came a blue line of

hills, and then London, already to leeward, an intricate space of roofing. Its near edge came sharp and clear, and banished his last apprehensions in a shock of surprise. For the boundary of London was like a wall, like a cliff, a steep fall of three or four hundred feet, a frontage broken only by terraces here and there, a complex decorative façade.

That gradual passage of town into country through an extensive sponge of suburbs, which was so characteristic a feature of the great cities of the nineteenth century, existed no longer. Nothing remained of it here but a waste of ruins, variegated and dense with thickets of the heterogeneous growths that had once adorned the gardens of the belt, interspersed among levelled brown patches of sown ground, and verdant stretches of winter greens. The latter even spread among the vestiges of houses. But for the most part the reefs and skerries of ruins, the wreckage of suburban villas, stood among their streets and roads, queer islands amidst the levelled expanses of green and brown, abandoned indeed by the inhabitants years since, but too substantial, it seemed, to be cleared out of the way of the wholesale horticultural mechanisms of the time.

The vegetation of this waste undulated and frothed amidst the countless cells of crumbling house walls, and broke along the foot of the city wall in a surf of bramble and holly and ivy and teazle and tall grasses. Here and there gaudy pleasure palaces towered amidst the puny remains of Victorian times, and cable ways slanted to them from the city. That winter day they seemed deserted. Deserted, too, were the artificial gardens among the ruins. The city limits were indeed as sharply defined as in the ancient days when the gates were shut at nightfall and the robber foeman prowled to the very walls. A huge semi-circular throat poured out a vigorous traffic upon the Eadhamite Bath Road. So the first prospect of the world beyond the city flashed on Graham, and dwindled. And when at last he could look vertically downward again, he saw below him the vegetable fields of the Thames valley — innumerable minute oblongs of ruddy brown, intersected by shining threads, the sewage ditches.

His exhilaration increased rapidly, became a sort of intoxication. He found himself drawing deep breaths of air, laughing aloud, desiring to shout. After a time that desire became too strong for him,

and he shouted. They curved about towards the south. They drove with a slight list to leeward, and with a slow alternation of movement, first a short, sharp ascent and then a long downward glide that was very swift and pleasing. During these downward glides the propeller was inactive altogether. These ascents gave Graham a glorious sense of successful effort; the descents through the rarefied air were beyond all experience. He wanted never to leave the upper air again.

For a time he was intent upon the landscape that ran swiftly northward beneath him. Its minute, clear detail pleased him exceedingly. He was impressed by the ruin of the houses that had once dotted the country, by the vast treeless expanse of country from which all farms and villages had gone, save for crumbling ruins. He had known the thing was so, but seeing it so was an altogether different matter. He tried to make out familiar places within the hollow basin of the world below, but at first he could distinguish no data now that the Thames valley was left behind. Soon, however, they were driving over a sharp chalk hill that he recognised as the Guildford Hog's Back, because of the familiar outline of the gorge at its eastward end, and because of the ruins of the town that rose steeply on either lip of this gorge. And from that he made out other points, Leith Hill, the sandy wastes of Aldershot, and so forth. Save where the broad Eadhamite Portsmouth Road, thickly dotted with rushing shapes, followed the course of the old railway, the gorge of the wey was choked with thickets.

The whole expanse of the Downs escarpment, so far as the grey haze permitted him to see, was set with wind-wheels to which the largest of the city was but a younger brother. They stirred with a stately motion before the south-west wind. And here and there were patches dotted with the sheep of the British Food Trust, and here and there a mounted shepherd made a spot of black. Then rushing under the stern of the monoplane came the Wealden Heights, the line of Hindhead, Pitch Hill, and Leith Hill, with a second row of wind-wheels that seemed striving to rob the downland whirlers of their share of breeze. The purple heather was speckled with yellow gorse, and on the further side a drove of black oxen stampeded before a couple of mounted men. Swiftly these swept behind, and dwindled

and lost colour, and became scarce moving specks that were swallowed up in haze.

And when these had vanished in the distance Graham heard a peewit wailing close at hand. He perceived he was now above the South Downs, and staring over his shoulder saw the battlements of Portsmouth Landing Stage towering over the ridge of Portsdown Hill. In another moment there came into sight a spread of shipping like floating cities, the little white cliffs of the Needles dwarfed and sunlit, and the grey and glittering waters of the narrow sea. They seemed to leap the Solent in a moment, and in a few seconds the Isle of Wight was running past, and then beneath him spread a wider and wider extent of sea, here purple with the shadow of a cloud, here grey, here a burnished mirror, and here a spread of cloudy greenish blue. The Isle of Wight grew smaller and smaller. In a few more minutes a strip of grey haze detached itself from other strips that were clouds, descended out of the sky and became a coast-line — sunlit and pleasant — the coast of northern France. It rose, it took colour, became definite and detailed, and the counterpart of the Downland of England was speeding by below.

In a little time, as it seemed, Paris came above the horizon, and hung there for a space, and sank out of sight again as the monoplane circled about to the north. But he perceived the Eiffel Tower still standing, and beside it a huge dome surmounted by a pin-point Colossus. And he perceived, too, though he did not understand it at the time, a slanting drift of smoke. The aeronaut said something about “trouble in the under-ways,” that Graham did not heed. But he marked the minarets and towers and slender masses that streamed skyward above the city wind-vanes, and knew that in the matter of grace at least Paris still kept in front of her larger rival. And even as he looked a pale blue shape ascended very swiftly from the city like a dead leaf driving up before a gale. It curved round and soared towards them, growing rapidly larger and larger. The aeronaut was saying something. “What?” said Graham, loth to take his eyes from this. “London aeroplane, Sire,” bawled the aeronaut, pointing.

They rose and curved about northward as it drew nearer. Nearer it came and nearer, larger and larger. The throb, throb, throb — beat, of the monoplane’s flight, that had seemed so potent, and so swift,

suddenly appeared slow by comparison with this tremendous rush. How great the monster seemed, how swift and steady! It passed quite closely beneath them, driving along silently, a vast spread of wire-netted translucent wings, a thing alive. Graham had a momentary glimpse of the rows and rows of wrapped-up passengers, slung in their little cradles behind wind-screens, of a white-clothed engineer crawling against the gale along a ladder way, of spouting engines beating together, of the whirling wind screw, and of a wide waste of wing. He exulted in the sight. And in an instant the thing had passed.

It rose slightly and their own little wings swayed in the rush of its flight. It fell and grew smaller. Scarcely had they moved, as it seemed, before it was again only a flat blue thing that dwindled in the sky. This was the aeroplane that went to and fro between London and Paris. In fair weather and in peaceful times it came and went four times a day.

They beat across the Channel, slowly as it seemed now to Graham's enlarged ideas, and Beachy Head rose greyly to the left of them.

"Land," called the aeronaut, his voice small against the whistling of the air over the wind-screen.

"Not yet," bawled Graham, laughing. "Not land yet. I want to learn more of this machine."

"I meant—" said the aeronaut.

"I want to learn more of this machine," repeated Graham.

"I'm coming to you," he said, and had flung himself free of his chair and taken a step along the guarded rail between them. He stopped for a moment, and his colour changed and his hands tightened. Another step and he was clinging close to the aeronaut. He felt a weight on his shoulder, the pressure of the air. His hat was a whirling speck behind. The wind came in gusts over his wind-screen and blew his hair in streamers past his cheek. The aeronaut made some hasty adjustments for the shifting of the centres of gravity and pressure.

"I want to have these things explained," said Graham. "What do you do when you move that engine forward?"

The aeronaut hesitated. Then he answered, "They are complex, Sire."

“I don’t mind,” shouted Graham. “I don’t mind.”

There was a moment’s pause. “Aeronautics is the secret — the privilege—”

“I know. But I’m the Master, and I mean to know.” He laughed, full of this novel realisation of power that was his gift from the upper air.

The monoplane curved about, and the keen fresh wind cut across Graham’s face and his garment lugged at his body as the stem pointed round to the west. The two men looked into each other’s eyes.

“Sire, there are rules—”

“Not where I am concerned,” said Graham, “You seem to forget.”

The aeronaut scrutinised his face “No,” he said. “I do not forget, Sire. But in all the earth — no man who is not a sworn aeronaut — has ever a chance. They come as passengers—”

“I have heard something of the sort. But I’m not going to argue these points. Do you know why I have slept two hundred years? To fly!”

“Sire,” said the aeronaut, “the rules — if I break the rules—”

Graham waved the penalties aside.

“Then if you will watch me—”

“No,” said Graham, swaying and gripping tight as the machine lifted its nose again for an ascent. “That’s not my game. I want to do it myself. Do it myself if I smash for it! No! I will. See I am going to clamber by this — to come and share your seat. Steady! I mean to fly of my own accord if I smash at the end of it. I will have something to pay for my sleep. Of all other things — . In my past it was my dream to fly. Now — keep your balance.”

“A dozen spies are watching me, Sire!”

Graham’s temper was at end. Perhaps he chose it should be. He swore. He swung himself round the intervening mass of levers and the monoplane swayed.

“Am I Master of the earth?” he said. “Or is your Society? Now. Take your hands off those levers, and hold my wrists. Yes — so. And now, how do we turn her nose down to the glide?”

“Sire,” said the aeronaut.

“What is it?”

“You will protect me?”

“Lord! Yes! If I have to burn London. Now!”

And with that promise Graham bought his first lesson in aerial navigation. “It’s clearly to your advantage, this journey,” he said with a loud laugh — for the air was like strong wine— “to teach me quickly and well. Do I pull this? Ah! So! Hullo!”

“Back, Sire! Back!”

“Back — right. One — two — three — good God! Ah! Up she goes! But this is living!”

And now the machine began to dance the strangest figures in the air. Now it would sweep round a spiral of scarcely a hundred yards diameter, now rush up into the air and swoop down again, steeply, swiftly, falling like a hawk, to recover in a rushing loop that swept it high again. In one of these descents it seemed driving straight at the drifting park of balloons in the southeast, and only curved about and cleared them by a sudden recovery of dexterity. The extraordinary swiftness and smoothness of the motion, the extraordinary effect of the rarefied air upon his constitution, threw Graham into a careless fury.

But at last a queer incident came to sober him, to send him flying down once more to the crowded life below with all its dark insoluble riddles. As he swooped, came a tap and something flying past, and a drop like a drop of rain. Then as he went on down he saw something like a white rag whirling down in his wake. “What was that?” he asked. “I did not see.”

The aeronaut glanced, and then clutched at the lever to recover, for they were sweeping down. When the monoplane was rising again he drew a deep breath and replied, “That,” and he indicated the white thing still fluttering down, “was a swan.”

“I never saw it,” said Graham.

The aeronaut made no answer, and Graham saw little drops upon his forehead.

They drove horizontally while Graham clambered back to the passenger’s place out of the lash of the wind. And then came a swift rush down, with the wind-screw whirling to check their fall, and the flying stage growing broad and dark before them. The sun, sinking over the chalk hills in the west, fell with them, and left the sky a

blaze of gold.

Soon men could be seen as little specks. He heard a noise coming up to meet him, a noise like the sound of waves upon a pebbly beach, and saw that the roofs about the flying stage were dense with his people rejoicing over his safe return. A black mass was crushed together under the stage, a darkness stippled with innumerable faces, and quivering with the minute oscillation of waved white handkerchiefs and waving hands.

CHAPTER XVII

THREE DAYS

Lincoln awaited Graham in an apartment beneath the flying stages. He seemed curious to learn all that had happened, pleased to hear of the extraordinary delight and interest which Graham took in flying. Graham was in a mood of enthusiasm. “I must learn to fly,” he cried. “I must master that. I pity all poor souls who have died without this opportunity. The sweet swift air! It is the most wonderful experience in the world.”

“You will find our new times full of wonderful experiences,” said Lincoln. “I do not know what you will care to do now. We have music that may seem novel.”

“For the present,” said Graham, “flying holds me. Let me learn more of that. Your aeronaut was saying there is some trades union objection to one’s learning.”

“There is, I believe,” said Lincoln. “But for you — ! If you would like to occupy yourself with that, we can make you a sworn aeronaut to-morrow.”

Graham expressed his wishes vividly and talked of his sensations for a while. “And as for affairs,” he asked abruptly. “How are things going on?”

Lincoln waved affairs aside. “Ostrog will tell you that to-morrow,” he said. “Everything is settling down. The Revolution accomplishes itself all over the world. Friction is inevitable here and there, of course; but your rule is assured. You may rest secure with things in Ostrog’s hands.”

“Would it be possible for me to be made a sworn aeronaut, as you call it, forthwith — before I sleep?” said Graham, pacing. “Then I could be at it the very first thing to-morrow again….”

“It would be possible,” said Lincoln thoughtfully. “Quite possible. Indeed, it shall be done.” He laughed. “I came prepared to suggest amusements, but you have found one for yourself. I will telephone to the aeronautical offices from here and we will return to your apartments in the Wind-Vane Control. By the time you have dined

the aeronauts will be able to come. You don't think that after you have dined you might prefer — ?" He paused.

"Yes," said Graham.

"We had prepared a show of dancers — they have been brought from the
Capri theatre."

"I hate ballets," said Graham, shortly. "Always did. That other — . That's not what I want to see. We had dancers in the old days. For the matter of that, they had them in ancient Egypt. But flying—"

"True," said Lincoln. "Though our dancers—"

"They can afford to wait," said Graham; "they can afford to wait. I know. I'm not a Latin. There's questions I want to ask some expert — about your machinery. I'm keen. I want no distractions."

"You have the world to choose from," said Lincoln; "whatever you want is yours."

Asano appeared, and under the escort of a strong guard they returned through the city streets to Graham's apartments. Far larger crowds had assembled to witness his return than his departure had gathered, and the shouts and cheering of these masses of people sometimes drowned Lincoln's answers to the endless questions Graham's aerial journey had suggested. At first Graham had acknowledged the cheering and cries of the crowd by bows and gestures, but Lincoln warned him that such a recognition would be considered incorrect behaviour. Graham, already a little wearied by rhythmic civilities, ignored his subjects for the remainder of his public progress.

Directly they arrived at his apartments Asano departed in search of kinematographic renderings of machinery in motion, and Lincoln despatched Graham's commands for models of machines and small machines to illustrate the various mechanical advances of the last two centuries. The little group of appliances for telegraphic communication attracted the Master so strongly that his delightfully prepared dinner, served by a number of charmingly dexterous girls, waited for a space. The habit of smoking had almost ceased from the face of the earth, but when he expressed a wish for that indulgence,

enquiries were made and some excellent cigars were discovered in Florida, and sent to him by pneumatic despatch while the dinner was still in progress. Afterwards came the aeronauts, and a feast of ingenious wonders in the hands of a latter-day engineer. For the time, at any rate, the neat dexterity of counting and numbering machines, building machines, spinning engines, patent doorways, explosive motors, grain and water elevators, slaughter-house machines and harvesting appliances, was more fascinating to Graham than any bayadère. "We were savages," was his refrain, "we were savages. We were in the stone age — compared with this…. And what else have you?"

There came also practical psychologists with some very interesting developments in the art of hypnotism. The names of Milne Bramwell, Fechner, Liebault, William James, Myers and Gurney, he found, bore a value now that would have astonished their contemporaries. Several practical applications of psychology were now in general use; it had largely superseded drugs, antiseptics and anesthetics in medicine; was employed by almost all who had any need of mental concentration. A real enlargement of human faculty seemed to have been effected in this direction. The feats of "calculating boys," the wonders, as Graham had been wont to regard them, of mesmerisers, were now within the range of anyone who could afford the services of a skilled hypnotist. Long ago the old examination methods in education had been destroyed by these expedients. Instead of years of study, candidates had substituted a few weeks of trances, and during the trances expert coaches had simply to repeat all the points necessary for adequate answering, adding a suggestion of the post-hypnotic recollection of these points. In process mathematics particularly, this aid had been of singular service, and it was now invariably invoked by such players of chess and games of manual dexterity as were still to be found. In fact, all operations conducted under finite rules, of a quasi-mechanical sort that is, were now systematically relieved from the wanderings of imagination and emotion, and brought to an unexampled pitch of accuracy. Little children of the labouring classes, so soon as they were of sufficient age to be hypnotised, were thus converted into beautifully punctual and trustworthy machine minders, and released

forthwith from the long, long thoughts of youth. Aeronautical pupils, who gave way to giddiness, could be relieved from their imaginary terrors. In every street were hypnotists ready to print permanent memories upon the mind. If anyone desired to remember a name, a series of numbers, a song or a speech, it could be done by this method, and conversely memories could be effaced, habits removed, and desires eradicated — a sort of psychic surgery was, in fact, in general use. Indignities, humbling experiences, were thus forgotten, widows would obliterate their previous husbands, angry lovers release themselves from their slavery. To graft desires, however, was still impossible, and the facts of thought transference were yet unsystematised. The psychologists illustrated their expositions with some astounding experiments in mnemonics made through the agency of a troupe of pale-faced children in blue.

Graham, like most of the people of his former time, distrusted the hypnotist, or he might then and there have eased his mind of many painful preoccupations. But in spite of Lincoln's assurances he held to the old theory that to be hypnotised was in some way the surrender of his personality, the abdication of his will. At the banquet of wonderful experiences that was beginning, he wanted very keenly to remain absolutely himself.

The next day, and another day, and yet another day passed in such interests as these. Each day Graham spent many hours in the glorious entertainment of flying. On the third, he soared across middle France, and within sight of the snow-clad Alps. These vigorous exercises gave him restful sleep; he recovered almost wholly from the spiritless anemia of his first awakening. And whenever he was not in the air, and awake, Lincoln was assiduous in the cause of his amusement; all that was novel and curious in contemporary invention was brought to him, until at last his appetite for novelty was well-nigh glutted. One might fill a dozen inconsecutive volumes with the strange things they exhibited. Each afternoon he held his court for an hour or so. He found his interest in his contemporaries becoming personal and intimate. At first he had been alert chiefly for unfamiliarity and peculiarity; any foppishness in their dress, any discordance with his preconceptions of nobility in their status and manners had jarred upon him, and it was remarkable to him how

soon that strangeness and the faint hostility that arose from it, disappeared; how soon he came to appreciate the true perspective of his position, and see the old Victorian days remote and quaint. He found himself particularly amused by the red-haired daughter of the Manager of the European Piggeries. On the second day after dinner he made the acquaintance of a latter-day dancing girl, and found her an astonishing artist. And after that, more hypnotic wonders. On the third day Lincoln was moved to suggest that the Master should repair to a Pleasure City, but this Graham declined, nor would he accept the services of the hypnotists in his aeronautical experiments. The link of locality held him to London; he found a delight in topographical identifications that he would have missed abroad. "Here — or a hundred feet below here," he could say, "I used to eat my midday cutlets during my London University days. Underneath here was Waterloo and the tiresome hunt for confusing trains. Often have I stood waiting down there, bag in hand, and stared up into the sky above the forest of signals, little thinking I should walk some day a hundred yards in the air. And now in that very sky that was once a grey smoke canopy, I circle in a monoplane."

During those three days Graham was so occupied with these distractions that the vast political movements in progress outside his quarters had but a small share of his attention. Those about him told him little. Daily came Ostrog, the Boss, his Grand Vizier, his mayor of the palace, to report in vague terms the steady establishment of his rule; "a little trouble" soon to be settled in this city, "a slight disturbance" in that. The song of the social revolt came to him no more; he never learned that it had been forbidden in the municipal limits; and all the great emotions of the crow's nest slumbered in his mind.

But on the second and third of the three days he found himself, in spite of his interest in the daughter of the Pig Manager, or it may be by reason of the thoughts her conversation suggested, remembering the girl Helen Wotton, who had spoken to him so oddly at the Wind-Vane Keeper's gathering. The impression, she had made was a deep one, albeit the incessant surprise of novel circumstances had kept him from brooding upon it for a space. But now her memory was coming to its own. He wondered what she had meant by those

broken half-forgotten sentences; the picture of her eyes and the earnest passion of her face became more vivid as his mechanical interests faded. Her slender beauty came compellingly between him and certain immediate temptations of ignoble passion. But he did not see her again until three full days were past.

CHAPTER XVIII

GRAHAM REMEMBERS

She came upon him at last in a little gallery that ran from the Wind-Vane Offices toward his state apartments. The gallery was long and narrow, with a series of recesses, each with an arched fenestration that looked upon a court of palms. He came upon her suddenly in one of these recesses. She was seated. She turned her head at the sound of his footsteps and started at the sight of him. Every touch of colour vanished from her face. She rose instantly, made a step toward him as if to address him, and hesitated. He stopped and stood still, expectant. Then he perceived that a nervous tumult silenced her, perceived, too, that she must have sought speech with him to be waiting for him in this place.

He felt a regal impulse to assist her. “I have wanted to see you,” he said. “A few days ago you wanted to tell me something — you wanted to tell me of the people. What was it you had to tell me?”

She looked at him with troubled eyes.

“You said the people were unhappy?”

For a moment she was silent still.

“It must have seemed strange to you,” she said abruptly.

“It did. And yet—”

“It was an impulse.”

“Well?”

“That is all.”

She looked at him with a face of hesitation. She spoke with an effort. “You forget,” she said, drawing a deep breath.

“What?”

“The people—”

“Do you mean — ?”

“You forget the people.”

He looked interrogative.

“Yes. I know you are surprised. For you do not understand what you are.
You do not know the things that are happening.”

“Well?”

“You do not understand.”

“Not clearly, perhaps. But — tell me.”

She turned to him with sudden resolution. “It is so hard to explain. I have meant to, I have wanted to. And now — I cannot. I am not ready with words. But about you — there is something. It is wonder. Your sleep — your awakening. These things are miracles. To me at least — and to all the common people. You who lived and suffered and died, you who were a common citizen, wake again, live again, to find yourself Master almost of the earth.”

“Master of the earth,” he said. “So they tell me. But try and imagine how little I know of it.”

“Cities — Trusts — the Labour Department—”

“Principalities, powers, dominions — the power and the glory. Yes, I have heard them shout. I know. I am Master. King, if you wish. With Ostrog, the Boss—”

He paused.

She turned upon him and surveyed his face with a curious scrutiny.
“Well?”

He smiled. “To take the responsibility.”

“That is what we have begun to fear.” For a moment she said no more. “No,” she said slowly. “*You* will take the responsibility. You will take the responsibility. The people look to you.”

She spoke softly. “Listen! For at least half the years of your sleep — in every generation — multitudes of people, in every generation greater multitudes of people, have prayed that you might awake — *prayed*.”

Graham moved to speak and did not.

She hesitated, and a faint colour crept back to her cheek. “Do you know that you have been to myriads — King Arthur, Barbarossa — the King who would come in his own good time and put the world

right for them?”

“I suppose the imagination of the people—”

“Have you not heard our proverb, ‘When the Sleeper wakes’? While you lay insensible and motionless there — thousands came. Thousands. Every first of the month you lay in state with a white robe upon you and the people filed by you. When I was a little girl I saw you like that, with your face white and calm.”

She turned her face from him and looked steadfastly at the painted wall before her. Her voice fell. “When I was a little girl I used to look at your face…. It seemed to me fixed and waiting, like the patience of God.”

“That is what we thought of you,” she said. “That is how you seemed to us.”

She turned shining eyes to him, her voice was clear and strong. “In the city, in the earth, a myriad myriad men and women are waiting to see what you will do, full of strange incredible expectations.”

“Yes?”

“Ostrog — no one — can take that responsibility.”

Graham looked at her in surprise, at her face lit with emotion. She seemed at first to have spoken with an effort, and to have fired herself by speaking.

“Do you think,” she said, “that you who have lived that little life so far away in the past, you who have fallen into and risen out of this miracle of sleep — do you think that the wonder and reverence and hope of half the world has gathered about you only that you may live another little life?… That you may shift the responsibility to any other man?”

“I know how great this kingship of mine is,” he said haltingly. “I know how great it seems. But is it real? It is incredible — dreamlike. Is it real, or is it only a great delusion?”

“It is real,” she said; “if you dare.”

“After all, like all kingship, my kingship is Belief. It is an illusion in the minds of men.”

“If you dare!” she said.

“But—”

“Countless men,” she said, “and while it is in their minds — they

will obey."

"But I know nothing. That is what I had in mind. I know nothing. And these others — the Councillors, Ostrog. They are wiser, cooler, they know so much, every detail. And, indeed, what are these miseries of which you speak? What am I to know? Do you mean—"

He stopped blankly.

"I am still hardly more than a girl," she said. "But to me the world seems full of wretchedness. The world has altered since your day, altered very strangely. I have prayed that I might see you and tell you these things. The world has changed. As if a canker had seized it — and robbed life of — everything worth having."

She turned a flushed face upon him, moving suddenly. "Your days were the days of freedom. Yes — I have thought. I have been made to think, for my life — has not been happy. Men are no longer free — no greater, no better than the men of your time. That is not all. This city — is a prison. Every city now is a prison. Mammon grips the key in his hand. Myriads, countless myriads, toil from the cradle to the grave. Is that right? Is that to be — for ever? Yes, far worse than in your time. All about us, beneath us, sorrow and pain. All the shallow delight of such life as you find about you, is separated by just a little from a life of wretchedness beyond any telling. Yes, the poor know it — they know they suffer. These countless multitudes who faced death for you two nights since — ! You owe your life to them."

"Yes," said Graham, slowly. "Yes. I owe my life to them."

"You come," she said, "from the days when this new tyranny of the cities was scarcely beginning. It is a tyranny — a tyranny. In your days the feudal war lords had gone, and the new lordship of wealth had still to come. Half the men in the world still lived out upon the free countryside. The cities had still to devour them. I have heard the stories out of the old books — there was nobility! Common men led lives of love and faithfulness then — they did a thousand things. And you — you come from that time."

"It was not — . But never mind. How is it now — ?"

"Gain and the Pleasure Cities! Or slavery — unthanked, unhonoured, slavery."

"Slavery!" he said.

“Slavery.”

“You don’t mean to say that human beings are chattels.”

“Worse. That is what I want you to know, what I want you to see. I know you do not know. They will keep things from you, they will take you presently to a Pleasure City. But you have noticed men and women and children in pale blue canvas, with thin yellow faces and dull eyes?”

“Everywhere.”

“Speaking a horrible dialect, coarse and weak.”

“I have heard it.”

“They are the slaves — your slaves. They are the slaves of the Labour
Department you own.”

“The Labour Department! In some way — that is familiar. Ah! now I remember. I saw it when I was wandering about the city, after the lights returned, great fronts of buildings coloured pale blue. Do you really mean — ?”

“Yes. How can I explain it to you? Of course the blue uniform struck you.
Nearly a third of our people wear it — more assume it now every day. This
Labour Department has grown imperceptibly.”

“What *is* this Labour Department?” asked Graham.

“In the old times, how did you manage with starving people?”

“There was the workhouse — which the parishes maintained.”

“Workhouse! Yes — there was something. In our history lessons. I remember now. The Labour Department ousted the workhouse. It grew — partly — out of something — you, perhaps, may remember it — an emotional religious organisation called the Salvation Army — that became a business company. In the first place it was almost a charity. To save people from workhouse rigours. There had been a great agitation against the workhouse. Now I come to think of it, it was one of the earliest properties your Trustees acquired. They

bought the Salvation Army and reconstructed it as this. The idea in the first place was to organise the labour of starving homeless people."

"Yes."

"Nowadays there are no workhouses, no refuges and charities, nothing but that Department. Its offices are everywhere. That blue is its colour. And any man, woman or child who comes to be hungry and weary and with neither home nor friend nor resort, must go to the Department in the end — or seek some way of death. The Euthanasy is beyond their means — for the poor there is no easy death. And at any hour in the day or night there is food, shelter and a blue uniform for all comers — that is the first condition of the Department's incorporation — and in return for a day's shelter the Department extracts a day's work, and then returns the visitor's proper clothing and sends him or her out again."

"Yes?"

"Perhaps that does not seem so terrible to you. In your time men starved in your streets. That was bad. But they died — *men*. These people in blue — . The proverb runs: 'Blue canvas once and ever.' The Department trades in their labour, and it has taken care to assure itself of the supply. People come to it starving and helpless — they eat and sleep for a night and day, they work for a day, and at the end of the day they go out again. If they have worked well they have a penny or so — enough for a theatre or a cheap dancing place, or a kinematograph story, or a dinner or a bet. They wander about after that is spent. Begging is prevented by the police of the ways. Besides, no one gives. They come back again the next day or the day after — brought back by the same incapacity that brought them first. At last their proper clothing wears out, or their rags get so shabby that they are ashamed. Then they must work for months to get fresh. If they want fresh. A great number of children are born under the Department's care. The mother owes them a month thereafter — the children they cherish and educate until they are fourteen, and they pay two years' service. You may be sure these children are educated for the blue canvas. And so it is the Department works."

"And none are destitute in the city?"

"None. They are either in blue canvas or in prison. We have

abolished destitution. It is engraved upon the Department's checks."

"If they will not work?"

"Most people will work at that pitch, and the Department has powers. There are stages of unpleasantness in the work — stoppage of food — and a man or woman who has refused to work once is known by a thumb-marking system in the Department's offices all over the world. Besides, who can leave the city poor? To go to Paris costs two Lions. And for insubordination there are the prisons — dark and miserable — out of sight below. There are prisons now for many things."

"And a third of the people wear this blue canvas?"

"More than a third. Toilers, living without pride or delight or hope, with the stories of Pleasure Cities ringing in their ears, mocking their shameful lives, their privations and hardships. Too poor even for the Euthanasy, the rich man's refuge from life. Dumb, crippled millions, countless millions, all the world about, ignorant of anything but limitations and unsatisfied desires. They are born, they are thwarted and they die. That is the state to which we have come."

For a space Graham sat downcast.

"But there has been a revolution," he said. "All these things will be changed. Ostrog—"

"That is our hope. That is the hope of the world. But Ostrog will not do it. He is a politician. To him it seems things must be like this. He does not mind. He takes it for granted. All the rich, all the influential, all who are happy, come at last to take these miseries for granted. They use the people in their politics, they live in ease by their degradation. But you — you who come from a happier age — it is to you the people look. To you."

He looked at her face. Her eyes were bright with unshed tears. He felt a rush of emotion. For a moment he forgot this city, he forgot the race, and all those vague remote voices, in the immediate humanity of her beauty.

"But what am I to do?" he said with his eyes upon her.

"Rule," she answered, bending towards him and speaking in a low tone. "Rule the world as it has never been ruled, for the good and happiness of men. For you might rule it — you could rule it.

"The people are stirring. All over the world the people are stirring.

It wants but a word — but a word from you — to bring them all together. Even the middle sort of people are restless — unhappy.

"They are not telling you the things that are happening. The people will not go back to their drudgery — they refuse to be disarmed. Ostrog has awakened something greater than he dreamt of — he has awakened hopes."

His heart was beating fast. He tried to seem judicial, to weigh considerations.

"They only want their leader," she said.

"And then?"

"You could do what you would; — the world is yours."

He sat, no longer regarding her. Presently he spoke. "The old dreams, and the thing I have dreamt, liberty, happiness. Are they dreams? Could one man — *one man* — ?" His voice sank and ceased.

"Not one man, but all men — give them only a leader to speak the desire of their hearts."

He shook his head, and for a time there was silence.

He looked up suddenly, and their eyes met. "I have not your faith," he said, "I have not your youth. I am here with power that mocks me. No — let me speak. I want to do — not right — I have not the strength for that — but something rather right than wrong. It will bring no millennium, but I am resolved now, that I will rule. What you have said has awakened me… You are right. Ostrog must know his place. And I will learn — …. One thing I promise you. This Labour slavery shall end."

"And you will rule?"

"Yes. Provided — . There is one thing."

"Yes?"

"That you will help me."

"*I* — a girl!"

"Yes. Does it not occur to you I am absolutely alone?"

She started and for an instant her eyes had pity. "Need you ask whether I will help you?" she said.

There came a tense silence, and then the beating of a clock striking the hour. Graham rose.

“Even now,” he said, “Ostrog will be waiting.” He hesitated, facing her.
“When I have asked him certain questions — . There is much I do not know.
It may be, that I will go to see with my own eyes the things of which you
have spoken. And when I return — ?”

“I shall know of your going and coming. I will wait for you here again.”

They regarded one another steadfastly, questioningly, and then he turned from her towards the Wind-Vane office.

CHAPTER XIX

OSTROG'S POINT OF VIEW

Graham found Ostrog waiting to give a formal account of his day's stewardship. On previous occasions he had passed over this ceremony as speedily as possible, in order to resume his aerial experiences, but now he began to ask quick short questions. He was very anxious to take up his empire forthwith. Ostrog brought flattering reports of the development of affairs abroad. In Paris and Berlin, Graham perceived that he was saying, there had been trouble, not organised resistance indeed, but insubordinate proceedings. "After all these years," said Ostrog, when Graham pressed enquiries; "the Commune has lifted its head again. That is the real nature of the struggle, to be explicit." But order had been restored in these cities. Graham, the more deliberately judicial for the stirring emotions he felt, asked if there had been any fighting. "A little," said Ostrog. "In one quarter only. But the Senegalese division of our African agricultural police — the Consolidated African Companies have a very well drilled police — was ready, and so were the aeroplanes. We expected a little trouble in the continental cities, and in America. But things are very quiet in America. They are satisfied with the overthrow of the Council. For the time."

"Why should you expect trouble?" asked Graham abruptly.

"There is a lot of discontent — social discontent."

"The Labour Department?"

"You are learning," said Ostrog with a touch of surprise. "Yes. It is chiefly the discontent with the Labour Department. It was that discontent supplied the motive force of this overthrow — that and your awakening."

"Yes?"

Ostrog smiled. He became explicit. "We had to stir up their discontent, we had to revive the old ideals of universal happiness — all men equal — all men happy — no luxury that everyone may not share — ideas that have slumbered for two hundred years. You know that? We had to revive these ideals, impossible as they are — in

order to overthrow the Council. And now—"

"Well?"

"Our revolution is accomplished, and the Council is overthrown, and people whom we have stirred up — remain surging. There was scarcely enough fighting…. We made promises, of course. It is extraordinary how violently and rapidly this vague out-of-date humanitarianism has revived and spread. We who sowed the seed even, have been astonished. In Paris, as I say — we have had to call in a little external help."

"And here?"

"There is trouble. Multitudes will not go back to work. There is a general strike. Half the factories are empty and the people are swarming in the ways. They are talking of a Commune. Men in silk and satin have been insulted in the streets. The blue canvas is expecting all sorts of things from you…. Of course there is no need for you to trouble. We are setting the Babble Machines to work with counter suggestions in the cause of law and order. We must keep the grip tight; that is all."

Graham thought. He perceived a way of asserting himself. But he spoke with restraint.

"Even to the pitch of bringing a negro police," he said.

"They are useful," said Ostrog. "They are fine loyal brutes, with no wash of ideas in their heads — such as our rabble has. The Council should have had them as police of the ways, and things might have been different. Of course, there is nothing to fear except rioting and wreckage. You can manage your own wings now, and you can soar away to Capri if there is any smoke or fuss. We have the pull of all the great things; the aeronauts are privileged and rich, the closest trades union in the world, and so are the engineers of the wind-vanes. We have the air, and the mastery of the air is the mastery of the earth. No one of any ability is organising against us. They have no leaders — only the sectional leaders of the secret society we organised before your very opportune awakening. Mere busybodies and sentimentalists they are and bitterly jealous of each other. None of them is man enough for a central figure. The only trouble will be a disorganised upheaval. To be frank — that may happen. But it won't interrupt your aeronautics. The days when the

People could make revolutions are past."

"I suppose they are," said Graham. "I suppose they are." He mused. "This world of yours has been full of surprises to me. In the old days we dreamt of a wonderful democratic life, of a time when all men would be equal and happy."

Ostrog looked at him steadfastly. "The day of democracy is past," he said. "Past for ever. That day began with the bowmen of Creçy, it ended when marching infantry, when common men in masses ceased to win the battles of the world, when costly cannon, great ironclads, and strategic railways became the means of power. To-day is the day of wealth. Wealth now is power as it never was power before — it commands earth and sea and sky. All power is for those who can handle wealth. On your behalf…. You must accept facts, and these are facts. The world for the Crowd! The Crowd as Ruler! Even in your days that creed had been tried and condemned. To-day it has only one believer — a multiplex, silly one — the man in the Crowd."

Graham did not answer immediately. He stood lost in sombre preoccupations.

"No," said Ostrog. "The day of the common man is past. On the open countryside one man is as good as another, or nearly as good. The earlier aristocracy had a precarious tenure of strength and audacity. They were tempered — tempered. There were insurrections, duels, riots. The first real aristocracy, the first permanent aristocracy, came in with castles and armour, and vanished before the musket and bow. But this is the second aristocracy. The real one. Those days of gunpowder and democracy were only an eddy in the stream. The common man now is a helpless unit. In these days we have this great machine of the city, and an organisation complex beyond his understanding."

"Yet," said Graham, "there is something resists, something you are holding down — something that stirs and presses."

"You will see," said Ostrog, with a forced smile that would brush these difficult questions aside. "I have not roused the force to destroy myself — trust me."

"I wonder," said Graham.

Ostrog stared.

"*Must* the world go this way?" said Graham with his emotions at

the speaking point. “Must it indeed go in this way? Have all our hopes been vain?”

“What do you mean?” said Ostrog. “Hopes?”

“I come from a democratic age. And I find an aristocratic tyranny!”

“Well, — but you are the chief tyrant.”

Graham shook his head.

“Well,” said Ostrog, “take the general question. It is the way that change has always travelled. Aristocracy, the prevalence of the best — the suffering and extinction of the unfit, and so to better things.”

“But aristocracy! those people I met—”

“Oh! not *those*!” said Ostrog. “But for the most part they go to their death. Vice and pleasure! They have no children. That sort of stuff will die out. If the world keeps to one road, that is, if there is no turning back. An easy road to excess, convenient Euthanasia for the pleasure seekers singed in the flame, that is the way to improve the race!”

“Pleasant extinction,” said Graham. “Yet — .” He thought for an instant. “There is that other thing — the Crowd, the great mass of poor men. Will that die out? That will not die out. And it suffers, its suffering is a force that even you—”

Ostrog moved impatiently, and when he spoke, he spoke rather less evenly than before.

“Don’t trouble about these things,” he said. “Everything will be settled in a few days now. The Crowd is a huge foolish beast. What if it does not die out? Even if it does not die, it can still be tamed and driven. I have no sympathy with servile men. You heard those people shouting and singing two nights ago. They were *taught* that song. If you had taken any man there in cold blood and asked why he shouted, he could not have told you. They think they are shouting for you, that they are loyal and devoted to you. Just then they were ready to slaughter the Council. To-day — they are already murmuring against those who have overthrown the Council.”

“No, no,” said Graham. “They shouted because their lives were dreary, without joy or pride, and because in me — in me — they hoped.”

“And what was their hope? What is their hope? What right have

they to hope? They work ill and they want the reward of those who work well. The hope of mankind — what is it? That some day the Over-man may come, that some day the inferior, the weak and the bestial may be subdued or eliminated. Subdued if not eliminated. The world is no place for the bad, the stupid, the enervated. Their duty — it's a fine duty too! — is to die. The death of the failure! That is the path by which the beast rose to manhood, by which man goes on to higher things."

Ostrog took a pace, seemed to think, and turned on Graham. "I can imagine how this great world state of ours seems to a Victorian Englishman. You regret all the old forms of representative government — their spectres still haunt the world, the voting councils, and parliaments and all that eighteenth century tomfoolery. You feel moved against our Pleasure Cities. I might have thought of that, — had I not been busy. But you will learn better. The people are mad with envy — they would be in sympathy with you. Even in the streets now, they clamour to destroy the Pleasure Cities. But the Pleasure Cities are the excretory organs of the State, attractive places that year after year draw together all that is weak and vicious, all that is lascivious and lazy, all the easy roguery of the world, to a graceful destruction. They go there, they have their time, they die childless, all the pretty silly lascivious women die childless, and mankind is the better. If the people were sane they would not envy the rich their way of death. And you would emancipate the silly brainless workers that we have enslaved, and try to make their lives easy and pleasant again. Just as they have sunk to what they are fit for." He smiled a smile that irritated Graham oddly. "You will learn better. I know those ideas; in my boyhood I read your Shelley and dreamt of Liberty. There is no liberty, save wisdom and self-control. Liberty is within — not without. It is each man's own affair. Suppose — which is impossible — that these swarming yelping fools in blue get the upper hand of us, what then? They will only fall to other masters. So long as there are sheep Nature will insist on beasts of prey. It would mean but a few hundred years' delay. The coming of the aristocrat is fatal and assured. The end will be the Over-man — for all the mad protests of humanity. Let them revolt, let them win and kill me and my like. Others will arise — other masters. The end will be the

same.”

“I wonder,” said Graham doggedly.

For a moment he stood downcast.

“But I must see these things for myself,” he said, suddenly assuming a tone of confident mastery. “Only by seeing can I understand. I must learn. That is what I want to tell you, Ostrog. I do not want to be King in a Pleasure City; that is not my pleasure. I have spent enough time with aeronautics — and those other things. I must learn how people live now, how the common life has developed. Then I shall understand these things better. I must learn how common people live — the labour people more especially — how they work, marry, bear children, die—”

“You get that from our realistic novelists,” suggested Ostrog, suddenly preoccupied.

“I want reality,” said Graham.

“There are difficulties,” said Ostrog, and thought. “On the whole —”

“I did not expect—”

“I had thought — . And yet perhaps — . You say you want to go through the ways of the city and see the common people.”

Suddenly he came to some conclusion. “You would need to go disguised,” he said. “The city is intensely excited, and the discovery of your presence among them might create a fearful tumult. Still this wish of yours to go into this city — this idea of yours — . Yes, now I think the thing over, it seems to me not altogether — . It can be contrived. If you would really find an interest in that! You are, of course, Master. You can go soon if you like. A disguise Asano will be able to manage. He would go with you. After all it is not a bad idea of yours.”

“You will not want to consult me in any matter?” asked Graham suddenly, struck by an odd suspicion.

“Oh, dear no! No! I think you may trust affairs to me for a time, at any rate,” said Ostrog, smiling. “Even if we differ—”

Graham glanced at him sharply.

“There is no fighting likely to happen soon?” he asked abruptly.

“Certainly not.”

“I have been thinking about these negroes. I don’t believe the

people intend any hostility to me, and, after all, I am the Master. I do not want any negroes brought to London. It is an archaic prejudice perhaps, but I have peculiar feelings about Europeans and the subject races. Even about Paris—"

Ostrog stood watching him from under his drooping brows. "I am not bringing negroes to London," he said slowly. "But if—"

"You are not to bring armed negroes to London, whatever happens," said
Graham. "In that matter I am quite decided."

Ostrog resolved not to speak, and bowed deferentially.

CHAPTER XX

IN THE CITY WAYS

And that night, unknown and unsuspected, Graham, dressed in the costume of an inferior wind-vane official keeping holiday, and accompanied by Asano in Labour Department canvas, surveyed the city through which he had wandered when it was veiled in darkness. But now he saw it lit and waking, a whirlpool of life. In spite of the surging and swaying of the forces of revolution, in spite of the unusual discontent, the mutterings of the greater struggle of which the first revolt was but the prelude, the myriad streams of commerce still flowed wide and strong. He knew now something of the dimensions and quality of the new age, but he was not prepared for the infinite surprise of the detailed view, for the torrent of colour and vivid impressions that poured past him.

This was his first real contact with the people of these latter days. He realised that all that had gone before, saving his glimpses of the public theatres and markets, had had its element of seclusion, had been a movement within the comparatively narrow political quarter, that all his previous experiences had revolved immediately about the question of his own position. But here was the city at the busiest hours of night, the people to a large extent returned to their own immediate interests, the resumption of the real informal life, the common habits of the new time.

They emerged at first into a street whose opposite ways were crowded with the blue canvas liveries. This swarm Graham saw was a portion of a procession — it was odd to see a procession parading the city *seated*. They carried banners of coarse black stuff with red letters. “No disarmament,” said the banners, for the most part in crudely daubed letters and with variant spelling, and “Why should we disarm?” “No disarming.” “No disarming.” Banner after banner went by, a stream of banners flowing past, and at last at the end, the song of the revolt and a noisy band of strange instruments. “They all ought to be at work,” said Asano. “They have had no food these two days, or they have stolen it.”

Presently Asano made a detour to avoid the congested crowd that gaped upon the occasional passage of dead bodies from hospital to a mortuary, the gleanings after death's harvest of the first revolt.

That night few people were sleeping, everyone was abroad. A vast excitement, perpetual crowds perpetually changing, surrounded Graham; his mind was confused and darkened by an incessant tumult, by the cries and enigmatical fragments of the social struggle that was as yet only beginning. Everywhere festoons and banners of black and strange decorations, intensified the quality of his popularity. Everywhere he caught snatches of that crude thick dialect that served the illiterate class, the class, that is, beyond the reach of phonograph culture, in their commonplace intercourse. Everywhere this trouble of disarmament was in the air, with a quality of immediate stress of which he had no inkling during his seclusion in the Wind-Vane quarter. He perceived that as soon as he returned he must discuss this with Ostrog, this and the greater issues of which it was the expression, in a far more conclusive way than he had so far done. Perpetually that night, even in the earlier hours of their wanderings about the city, the spirit of unrest and revolt swamped his attention, to the exclusion of countless strange things he might otherwise have observed.

This preoccupation made his impressions fragmentary. Yet amidst so much that was strange and vivid, no subject, however personal and insistent, could exert undivided sway. There were spaces when the revolutionary movement passed clean out of his mind, was drawn aside like a curtain from before some startling new aspect of the time. Helen had swayed his mind to this intense earnestness of enquiry, but there came times when she, even, receded beyond his conscious thoughts. At one moment, for example, he found they were traversing the religious quarter, for the easy transit about the city afforded by the moving ways rendered sporadic churches and chapels no longer necessary — and his attention was vividly arrested by the façade of one of the Christian sects.

They were travelling seated on one of the swift upper ways, the place leapt upon them at a bend and advanced rapidly towards them. It was covered with inscriptions from top to base, in vivid white and blue, save where a vast and glaring kinematograph transparency

presented a realistic New Testament scene, and where a vast festoon of black to show that the popular religion followed the popular politics, hung across the lettering. Graham had already become familiar with the phonotype writing and these inscriptions arrested him, being to his sense for the most part almost incredible blasphemy. Among the less offensive were "Salvation on the First Floor and turn to the Right." "Put your Money on your Maker." "The Sharpest Conversion in London, Expert Operators! Look Slippy!" "What Christ would say to the Sleeper; — Join the Up-to-date Saints!" "Be a Christian — without hindrance to your present Occupation." "All the Brightest Bishops on the Bench to-night and Prices as Usual." "Brisk Blessings for Busy Business Men."

"But this is appalling!" said Graham, as that deafening scream of mercantile piety towered above them.

"What is appalling?" asked his little officer, apparently seeking vainly for anything unusual in this shrieking enamel.

"*This*! Surely the essence of religion is reverence."

"Oh *that*!" Asano looked at Graham. "Does it shock you?" he said in the tone of one who makes a discovery. "I suppose it would, of course. I had forgotten. Nowadays the competition for attention is so keen, and people simply haven't the leisure to attend to their souls, you know, as they used to do." He smiled. "In the old days you had quiet Sabbaths and the countryside. Though somewhere I've read of Sunday afternoons that—"

"But *that*," said Graham, glancing back at the receding blue and white.

"That is surely not the only—"

"There are hundreds of different ways. But, of course, if a sect doesn't *tell* it doesn't pay. Worship has moved with the times. There are high class sects with quieter ways — costly incense and personal attentions and all that. These people are extremely popular and prosperous. They pay several dozen lions for those apartments to the Council — to you, I should say."

Graham still felt a difficulty with the coinage, and this mention of a dozen lions brought him abruptly to that matter. In a moment the

screaming temples and their swarming touts were forgotten in this new interest. A turn of a phrase suggested, and an answer confirmed the idea that gold and silver were both demonetised, that stamped gold which had begun its reign amidst the merchants of Phoenicia was at last dethroned. The change had been graduated but swift, brought about by an extension of the system of cheques that had even in his previous life already practically superseded gold in all the larger business transactions. The common traffic of the city, the common currency indeed of all the world, was conducted by means of the little brown, green and pink council cheques for small amounts, printed with a blank payee. Asano had several with him, and at the first opportunity he supplied the gaps in his set. They were printed not on tearable paper, but on a semi-transparent fabric of silken flexibility, interwoven with silk. Across them all sprawled a facsimile of Graham's signature, his first encounter with the curves and turns of that familiar autograph for two hundred and three years.

Some intermediary experiences made no impression sufficiently vivid to prevent the matter of the disarmament claiming his thoughts again; a blurred picture of a Theosophist temple that promised MIRACLES in enormous letters of unsteady fire was least submerged perhaps, but then came the view of the dining hall in Northumberland Avenue. That interested him very greatly.

By the energy and thought of Asano he was able to view this place from a little screened gallery reserved for the attendants of the tables. The building was pervaded by a distant muffled hooting, piping and bawling, of which he did not at first understand the import, but which recalled a certain mysterious leathery voice he had heard after the resumption of the lights on the night of his solitary wandering.

He had grown accustomed to vastness and great numbers of people, nevertheless this spectacle held him for a long time. It was as he watched the table service more immediately beneath, and interspersed with many questions and answers concerning details, that the realisation of the full significance of the feast of several thousand people came to him.

It was his constant surprise to find that points that one might have expected to strike vividly at the very outset never occurred to him

until some trivial detail suddenly shaped as a riddle and pointed to the obvious thing he had overlooked. He discovered only now that this continuity of the city, this exclusion of weather, these vast halls and ways, involved the disappearance of the household; that the typical Victorian "Home," the little brick cell containing kitchen and scullery, living rooms and bedrooms, had, save for the ruins that diversified the countryside, vanished as surely as the wattle hut. But now he saw what had indeed been manifest from the first, that London, regarded as a living place, was no longer an aggregation of houses but a prodigious hotel, an hotel with a thousand classes of accommodation, thousands of dining halls, chapels, theatres, markets and places of assembly, a synthesis of enterprises, of which he chiefly was the owner. People had their sleeping rooms, with, it might be, antechambers, rooms that were always sanitary at least whatever the degree of comfort and privacy, and for the rest they lived much as many people had lived in the new-made giant hotels of the Victorian days, eating, reading, thinking, playing, conversing, all in places of public resort, going to their work in the industrial quarters of the city or doing business in their offices in the trading section.

He perceived at once how necessarily this state of affairs had developed from the Victorian city. The fundamental reason for the modern city had ever been the economy of co-operation. The chief thing to prevent the merging of the separate households in his own generation was simply the still imperfect civilisation of the people, the strong barbaric pride, passions, and prejudices, the jealousies, rivalries, and violence of the middle and lower classes, which had necessitated the entire separation of contiguous households. But the change, the taming of the people, had been in rapid progress even then. In his brief thirty years of previous life he had seen an enormous extension of the habit of consuming meals from home, the casually patronised horse-box coffee-house had given place to the open and crowded Aerated Bread Shop for instance, women's clubs had had their beginning, and an immense development of reading rooms, lounges and libraries had witnessed to the growth of social confidence. These promises had by this time attained to their complete fulfilment. The locked and barred household had passed

away.

These people below him belonged, he learnt, to the lower middle class, the class just above the blue labourers, a class so accustomed in the Victorian period to feed with every precaution of privacy that its members, when occasion confronted them with a public meal, would usually hide their embarrassment under horseplay or a markedly militant demeanour. But these gaily, if lightly dressed people below, albeit vivacious, hurried and uncommunicative, were dexterously mannered and certainly quite at their ease with regard to one another.

He noted a slight significant thing; the table, as far as he could see, was and remained delightfully neat, there was nothing to parallel the confusion, the broadcast crumbs, the splashes of viand and condiment, the overturned drink and displaced ornaments, which would have marked the stormy progress of the Victorian meal. The table furniture was very different. There were no ornaments, no flowers, and the table was without a cloth, being made, he learnt, of a solid substance having the texture and appearance of damask. He discerned that this damask substance was patterned with gracefully designed trade advertisements.

In a sort of recess before each diner was a complex apparatus of porcelain and metal. There was one plate of white porcelain, and by means of taps for hot and cold volatile fluids the diner washed this himself between the courses; he also washed his elegant white metal knife and fork and spoon as occasion required.

Soup and the chemical wine that was the common drink were delivered by similar taps, and the remaining covers travelled automatically in tastefully arranged dishes down the table along silver rails. The diner stopped these and helped himself at his discretion. They appeared at a little door at one end of the table, and vanished at the other. That turn of democratic sentiment in decay, that ugly pride of menial souls, which renders equals loth to wait on one another, was very strong he found among these people. He was so preoccupied with these details that it was only as he was leaving the place that he remarked the huge advertisement dioramas that marched majestically along the upper walls and proclaimed the most remarkable commodities.

Beyond this place they came into a crowded hall, and he discovered the cause of the noise that had perplexed him. They paused at a turnstile at which a payment was made.

Graham's attention was immediately arrested by a violent, loud hoot, followed by a vast leathery voice. "The Master is sleeping peacefully," it vociferated. "He is in excellent health. He is going to devote the rest of his life to aeronautics. He says women are more beautiful than ever. Galloop! Wow! Our wonderful civilisation astonishes him beyond measure. Beyond all measure. Galloop. He puts great trust in Boss Ostrog, absolute confidence in Boss Ostrog. Ostrog is to be his chief minister; is authorised to remove or reinstate public officers — all patronage will be in his hands. All patronage in the hands of Boss Ostrog! The Councillors have been sent back to their own prison above the Council House."

Graham stopped at the first sentence, and, looking up, beheld a foolish trumpet face from which this was brayed. This was the General Intelligence Machine. For a space it seemed to be gathering breath, and a regular throbbing from its cylindrical body was audible. Then it trumpeted "Galloop, Galloop," and broke out again.

"Paris is now pacified. All resistance is over. Galloop! The black police hold every position of importance in the city. They fought with great bravery, singing songs written in praise of their ancestors by the poet Kipling. Once or twice they got out of hand, and tortured and mutilated wounded and captured insurgents, men and women. Moral — don't go rebelling. Haha! Galloop, Galloop! They are lively fellows. Lively brave fellows. Let this be a lesson to the disorderly banderlog of this city. Yah! Banderlog! Filth of the earth! Galloop, Galloop!"

The voice ceased. There was a confused murmur of disapproval among the crowd. "Damned niggers." A man began to harangue near them. "Is this the Master's doing, brothers? Is this the Master's doing?"

"Black police!" said Graham. "What is that? You don't mean—"

Asano touched his arm and gave him a warning look, and forthwith another of these mechanisms screamed deafeningly and gave tongue in a shrill voice. "Yahaha, Yahah, Yap! Hear a live paper yelp! Live paper. Yaha! Shocking outrage in Paris. Yahahah!

The Parisians exasperated by the black police to the pitch of assassination. Dreadful reprisals. Savage times come again. Blood! Blood! Yaha!" The nearer Babble Machine hooted stupendously, "Galloop, Galloop," drowned the end of the sentence, and proceeded in a rather flatter note than before with novel comments on the horrors of disorder. "Law and order must be maintained," said the nearer Babble Machine.

"But," began Graham.

"Don't ask questions here," said Asano, "or you will be involved in an argument."

"Then let us go on," said Graham, "for I want to know more of this."

As he and his companion pushed their way through the excited crowd that swarmed beneath these voices, towards the exit, Graham conceived more clearly the proportion and features of this room. Altogether, great and small, there must have been nearly a thousand of these erections, piping, hooting, bawling and gabbling in that great space, each with its crowd of excited listeners, the majority of them men dressed in blue canvas. There were all sizes of machines, from the little gossiping mechanisms that chuckled out mechanical sarcasm in odd corners, through a number of grades to such fifty-foot giants as that which had first hooted over Graham.

This place was unusually crowded, because of the intense public interest in the course of affairs in Paris. Evidently the struggle had been much more savage than Ostrog had represented it. All the mechanisms were discoursing upon that topic, and the repetition of the people made the huge hive buzz with such phrases as "Lynched policemen," "Women burnt alive," "Fuzzy Wuzzy." "But does the Master allow such things?" asked a man near him. "Is *this* the beginning of the Master's rule?"

Is *this* the beginning of the Master's rule? For a long time after he had left the place, the hooting, whistling and braying of the machines pursued him; "Galloop, Galloop," "Yahahah, Yaha, Yap! Yaha!" Is *this* the beginning of the Master's rule?

Directly they were out upon the ways he began to question Asano closely on the nature of the Parisian struggle. "This disarmament! What was their trouble? What does it all mean?" Asano seemed

chiefly anxious to reassure him that it was “all right.”

“But these outrages!”

“You cannot have an omelette,” said Asano, “without breaking eggs. It is only the rough people. Only in one part of the city. All the rest is all right. The Parisian labourers are the wildest in the world, except ours.”

“What! the Londoners?”

“No, the Japanese. They have to be kept in order.”

“But burning women alive!”

“A Commune!” said Asano. “They would rob you of your property. They would do away with property and give the world over to mob rule. You are Master, the world is yours. But there will be no Commune here. There is no need for black police here.

“And every consideration has been shown. It is their own negroes — French speaking negroes. Senegal regiments, and Niger and Timbuctoo.”

“Regiments?” said Graham, “I thought there was only one—”

“No,” said Asano, and glanced at him. “There is more than one.”

Graham felt unpleasantly helpless.

“I did not think,” he began and stopped abruptly. He went off at a tangent to ask for information about these Babble Machines. For the most part, the crowd present had been shabbily or even raggedly dressed, and Graham learnt that so far as the more prosperous classes were concerned, in all the more comfortable private apartments of the city were fixed Babble Machines that would speak directly a lever was pulled. The tenant of the apartment could connect this with the cables of any of the great News Syndicates that he preferred. When he learnt this presently, he demanded the reason of their absence from his own suite of apartments. Asano was embarrassed. “I never thought,” he said. “Ostrog must have had them removed.”

Graham stared. “How was I to know?” he exclaimed.

“Perhaps he thought they would annoy you,” said Asano.

“They must be replaced directly I return,” said Graham after an interval.

He found a difficulty in understanding that this news room and the dining hall were not great central places, that such establishments were repeated almost beyond counting all over the city. But ever and

again during the night's expedition his ears would pick out from the tumult of the ways the peculiar hooting of the organ of Boss Ostrog, "Galloop, Galloop!" or the shrill "Yahaha, Yaha Yap! — Hear a live paper yelp!" of its chief rival.

Repeated, too, everywhere, were such *crèches* as the one he now entered. It was reached by a lift, and by a glass bridge that flung across the dining hall and traversed the ways at a slight upward angle. To enter the first section of the place necessitated the use of his solvent signature under Asano's direction. They were immediately attended to by a man in a violet robe and gold clasp, the insignia of practising medical men. He perceived from this man's manner that his identity was known, and proceeded to ask questions on the strange arrangements of the place without reserve.

On either side of the passage, which was silent and padded, as if to deaden the footfall, were narrow little doors, their size and arrangement suggestive of the cells of a Victorian prison. But the upper portion of each door was of the same greenish transparent stuff that had enclosed him at his awakening, and within, dimly seen, lay, in every case, a very young baby in a little nest of wadding. Elaborate apparatus watched the atmosphere and rang a bell far away in the central office at the slightest departure from the optimum of temperature and moisture. A system of such *crèches* had almost entirely replaced the hazardous adventures of the old-world nursing. The attendant presently called Graham's attention to the wet nurses, a vista of mechanical figures, with arms, shoulders, and breasts of astonishingly realistic modelling, articulation, and texture, but mere brass tripods below, and having in the place of features a flat disc bearing advertisements likely to be of interest to mothers.

Of all the strange things that Graham came upon that night, none jarred more upon his habits of thought than this place. The spectacle of the little pink creatures, their feeble limbs swaying uncertainly in vague first movements, left alone, without embrace or endearment, was wholly repugnant to him. The attendant doctor was of a different opinion. His statistical evidence showed beyond dispute that in the Victorian times the most dangerous passage of life was the arms of the mother, that there human mortality had ever been most terrible. On the other hand this *crèche* company, the International Crèche

Syndicate, lost not one-half per cent, of the million babies or so that formed its peculiar care. But Graham's prejudice was too strong even for those figures.

Along one of the many passages of the place they presently came upon a young couple in the usual blue canvas peering through the transparency and laughing hysterically at the bald head of their first-born. Graham's face must have showed his estimate of them, for their merriment ceased and they looked abashed. But this little incident accentuated his sudden realisation of the gulf between his habits of thought and the ways of the new age. He passed on to the crawling rooms and the Kindergarten, perplexed and distressed. He found the endless long playrooms were empty! the latter-day children at least still spent their nights in sleep. As they went through these, the little officer pointed out the nature of the toys, developments of those devised by that inspired sentimentalist Froebel. There were nurses here, but much was done by machines that sang and danced and dandled.

Graham was still not clear upon many points. "But so many orphans," he said perplexed, reverting to a first misconception, and learnt again that they were not orphans.

So soon as they had left the *crèche* he began to speak of the horror the babies in their incubating cases had caused him. "Is motherhood gone?" he said. "Was it a cant? Surely it was an instinct. This seems so unnatural — abominable almost."

"Along here we shall come to the dancing place," said Asano by way of reply. "It is sure to be crowded. In spite of all the political unrest it will be crowded. The women take no great interest in politics — except a few here and there. You will see the mothers — most young women in London are mothers. In that class it is considered a creditable thing to have one child — a proof of animation. Few middle class people have more than one. With the Labour Department it is different. As for motherhood! They still take an immense pride in the children. They come here to look at them quite often."

"Then do you mean that the population of the World — ?"

"Is falling? Yes. Except among the people under the Labour Department. In spite of scientific discipline they are reckless—"

The air was suddenly dancing with music, and down a way they approached obliquely, set with gorgeous pillars as it seemed of clear amethyst, flowed a concourse of gay people and a tumult of merry cries and laughter. He saw curled heads, wreathed brows, and a happy intricate flutter of gamboge pass triumphant across the picture.

"You will see," said Asano with a faint smile. "The world has changed. In a moment you will see the mothers of the new age. Come this way. We shall see those yonder again very soon."

They ascended a certain height in a swift lift, and changed to a slower one. As they went on the music grew upon them, until it was near and full and splendid, and, moving with its glorious intricacies they could distinguish the beat of innumerable dancing feet. They made a payment at a turnstile, and emerged upon the wide gallery that overlooked the dancing place, and upon the full enchantment of sound and sight.

"Here," said Asano, "are the fathers and mothers of the little ones you saw."

The hall was not so richly decorated as that of the Atlas, but saving that, it was, for its size, the most splendid Graham had seen. The beautiful white-limbed figures that supported the galleries reminded him once more of the restored magnificence of sculpture; they seemed to writhe in engaging attitudes, their faces laughed. The source of the music that filled the place was hidden, and the whole vast shining floor was thick with dancing couples. "Look at them," said the little officer, "see how much they show of motherhood."

The gallery they stood upon ran along the upper edge of a huge screen that cut the dancing hall on one side from a sort of outer hall that showed through broad arches the incessant onward rush of the city ways. In this outer hall was a great crowd of less brilliantly dressed people, as numerous almost as those who danced within, the great majority wearing the blue uniform of the Labour Department that was now so familiar to Graham. Too poor to pass the turnstiles to the festival, they were yet unable to keep away from the sound of its seductions. Some of them even had cleared spaces, and were dancing also, fluttering their rags in the air. Some shouted as they danced, jests and odd allusions Graham did not understand. Once someone began whistling the refrain of the revolutionary song, but it

seemed as though that beginning was promptly suppressed. The corner was dark and Graham could not see. He turned to the hall again. Above the caryatids were marble busts of men whom that age esteemed great moral emancipators and pioneers; for the most part their names were strange to Graham, though he recognised Grant Allen, Le Gallienne, Nietzsche, Shelley and Goodwin. Great black festoons and eloquent sentiments reinforced the huge inscription that partially defaced the upper end of the dancing place, and asserted that "The Festival of the Awakening" was in progress.

"Myriads are taking holiday or staying from work because of that, quite apart from the labourers who refuse to go back," said Asano. "These people are always ready for holidays."

Graham walked to the parapet and stood leaning over, looking down at the dancers. Save for two or three remote whispering couples, who had stolen apart, he and his guide had the gallery to themselves. A warm breath of scent and vitality came up to him. Both men and women below were lightly clad, bare-armed, open-necked, as the universal warmth of the city permitted. The hair of the men was often a mass of effeminate curls, their chins were always shaven, and many of them had flushed or coloured cheeks. Many of the women were very pretty, and all were dressed with elaborate coquetry. As they swept by beneath, he saw ecstatic faces with eyes half closed in pleasure.

"What sort of people are these?" he asked abruptly.

"Workers — prosperous workers. What you would have called the middle class. Independent tradesmen with little separate businesses have vanished long ago, but there are store servers, managers, engineers of a hundred sorts. To-night is a holiday of course, and every dancing place in the city will be crowded, and every place of worship."

"But — the women?"

"The same. There's a thousand forms of work for women now. But you had the beginning of the independent working-woman in your days. Most women are independent now. Most of these are married more or less — there are a number of methods of contract — and that gives them more money, and enables them to enjoy themselves."

“I see,” said Graham, looking at the flushed faces, the flash and swirl of movement, and still thinking of that nightmare of pink helpless limbs. “And these are — mothers.”

“Most of them.”

“The more I see of these things the more complex I find your problems.
This, for instance, is a surprise. That news from Paris was a surprise.”

In a little while he spoke again:

“These are mothers. Presently, I suppose, I shall get into the modern way of seeing things. I have old habits of mind clinging about me — habits based, I suppose, on needs that are over and done with. Of course, in our time, a woman was supposed not only to bear children, but to cherish them, to devote herself to them, to educate them — all the essentials of moral and mental education a child owed its mother. Or went without. Quite a number, I admit, went without. Nowadays, clearly, there is no more need for such care than if they were butterflies. I see that! Only there was an ideal — that figure of a grave, patient woman, silently and serenely mistress of a home, mother and maker of men — to love her was a sort of worship —”

He stopped and repeated, “A sort of worship.”

“Ideals change,” said the little man, “as needs change.”

Graham awoke from an instant reverie and Asano repeated his words.
Graham’s mind returned to the thing at hand.

“Of course I see the perfect reasonableness of this. Restraint, soberness, the matured thought, the unselfish act, they are necessities of the barbarous state, the life of dangers. Dourness is man’s tribute to unconquered nature. But man has conquered nature now for all practical purposes — his political affairs are managed by Bosses with a black police — and life is joyous.”

He looked at the dancers again. “Joyous,” he said.

“There are weary moments,” said the little officer, reflectively.

“They all look young. Down there I should be visibly the oldest man. And in my own time I should have passed as middle-aged.”

“They are young. There are few old people in this class in the work cities.”

“How is that?”

“Old people’s lives are not so pleasant as they used to be, unless they are rich to hire lovers and helpers. And we have an institution called Euthanasy.”

“Ah! that Euthanasy!” said Graham. “The easy death?”

“The easy death. It is the last pleasure. The Euthanasy Company does it well. People will pay the sum — it is a costly thing — long beforehand, go off to some pleasure city and return impoverished and weary, very weary.”

“There is a lot left for me to understand,” said Graham after a pause. “Yet I see the logic of it all. Our array of angry virtues and sour restraints was the consequence of danger and insecurity. The Stoic, the Puritan, even in my time, were vanishing types. In the old days man was armed against Pain, now he is eager for Pleasure. There lies the difference. Civilisation has driven pain and danger so far off — for well-to-do people. And only well-to-do people matter now. I have been asleep two hundred years.”

For a minute they leant on the balustrading, following the intricate evolution of the dance. Indeed the scene was very beautiful.

“Before God,” said Graham, suddenly, “I would rather be a wounded sentinel freezing in the snow than one of these painted fools!”

“In the snow,” said Asano, “one might think differently.”

“I am uncivilised,” said Graham, not heeding him. “That is the trouble. I am primitive — Paleolithic. *Their* fountain of rage and fear and anger is sealed and closed, the habits of a lifetime make them cheerful and easy and delightful. You must bear with my nineteenth century shocks and disgusts. These people, you say, are skilled workers and so forth. And while these dance, men are fighting — men are dying in Paris to keep the world — that they may dance.”

Asano smiled faintly. “For that matter, men are dying in London,” he said.

There was a moment's silence.

"Where do these sleep?" asked Graham.

"Above and below — an intricate warren."

"And where do they work? This is — the domestic life."

"You will see little work to-night. Half the workers are out or under arms. Half these people are keeping holiday. But we will go to the work places if you wish it."

For a time Graham watched the dancers, then suddenly turned away. "I want to see the workers. I have seen enough of these," he said.

Asano led the way along the gallery across the dancing hall. Presently they came to a transverse passage that brought a breath of fresher, colder air.

Asano glanced at this passage as they went past, stopped, went back to it, and turned to Graham with a smile. "Here, Sire," he said, "is something — will be familiar to you at least — and yet — . But I will not tell you. Come!"

He led the way along a closed passage that presently became cold. The reverberation of their feet told that this passage was a bridge. They came into a circular gallery that was glazed in from the outer weather, and so reached a circular chamber which seemed familiar, though Graham could not recall distinctly when he had entered it before. In this was a ladder — the first ladder he had seen since his awakening — up which they went, and came into a high, dark, cold place in which was another almost vertical ladder. This they ascended, Graham still perplexed.

But at the top he understood, and recognised the metallic bars to which he clung. He was in the cage under the ball of St. Paul's. The dome rose but a little way above the general contour of the city, into the still twilight, and sloped away, shining greasily under a few distant lights, into a circumambient ditch of darkness.

Out between the bars he looked upon the wind-clear northern sky and saw the starry constellations all unchanged. Capella hung in the west, Vega was rising, and the seven glittering points of the Great Bear swept overhead in their stately circle about the Pole.

He saw these stars in a clear gap of sky. To the east and south the great circular shapes of complaining wind-wheels blotted out the

heavens, so that the glare about the Council House was hidden. To the southwest hung Orion, showing like a pallid ghost through a tracery of iron-work and interlacing shapes above a dazzling coruscation of lights. A bellowing and siren screaming that came from the flying stages warned the world that one of the aeroplanes was ready to start. He remained for a space gazing towards the glaring stage. Then his eyes went back to the northward constellations.

For a long time he was silent. “This,” he said at last, smiling in the shadow, “seems the strangest thing of all. To stand in the dome of St. Paul’s and look once more upon these familiar, silent stars!”

Thence Graham was taken by Asano along devious ways to the great gambling and business quarters where the bulk of the fortunes in the city were lost and made. It impressed him as a well-nigh interminable series of very high halls, surrounded by tiers upon tiers of galleries into which opened thousands of offices, and traversed by a complicated multitude of bridges, footways, aerial motor rails, and trapeze and cable leaps. And here more than anywhere the note of vehement vitality, of uncontrollable, hasty activity, rose high. Everywhere was violent advertisement, until his brain swam at the tumult of light and colour. And Babble Machines of a peculiarly rancid tone were abundant and filled the air with strenuous squealing and an idiotic slang. “Skin your eyes and slide,” “Gewhoop, Bonanza,” “Gollipers come and hark!”

The place seemed to him to be dense with people either profoundly agitated or swelling with obscure cunning, yet he learnt that the place was comparatively empty, that the great political convulsion of the last few days had reduced transactions to an unprecedented minimum. In one huge place were long avenues of roulette tables, each with an excited, undignified crowd about it; in another a yelping Babel of white-faced women and red-necked leathery-lunged men bought and sold the shares of an absolutely fictitious business undertaking which, every five minutes, paid a dividend of ten per cent, and cancelled a certain proportion of its shares by means of a lottery wheel.

These business activities were prosecuted with an energy that readily passed into violence, and Graham approaching a dense crowd

found at its centre a couple of prominent merchants in violent controversy with teeth and nails on some delicate point of business etiquette. Something still remained in life to be fought for. Further he had a shock at a vehement announcement in phonetic letters of scarlet flame, each twice the height of a man, that "WE ASSURE THE PROPRAIET'R. WE ASSURE THE PROPRAIET'R."

"Who's the proprietor?" he asked.

"You."

"But what do they assure me?" he asked. "What do they assure me?"

"Didn't you have assurance?"

Graham thought. "Insurance?"

"Yes — Insurance. I remember that was the older word. They are insuring your life. Dozands of people are taking out policies, myriads of lions are being put on you. And further on other people are buying annuities. They do that on everybody who is at all prominent. Look there!"

A crowd of people surged and roared, and Graham saw a vast black screen suddenly illuminated in still larger letters of burning purple. "Anuetes on the Propraiet'r — x 5 pr. G." The people began to boo and shout at this, a number of hard breathing, wild-eyed men came running past, clawing with hooked fingers at the air. There was a furious crush about a little doorway.

Asano did a brief, inaccurate calculation. "Seventeen per cent, per annum is their annuity on you. They would not pay so much per cent, if they could see you now, Sire. But they do not know. Your own annuities used to be a very safe investment, but now you are sheer gambling, of course. This is probably a desperate bid. I doubt if people will get their money."

The crowd of would-be annuitants grew so thick about them that for some time they could move neither forward nor backward. Graham noticed what appeared to him to be a high proportion of women among the speculators, and was reminded again of the economic independence of their sex. They seemed remarkably well able to take care of themselves in the crowd, using their elbows with particular skill, as he learnt to his cost. One curly-headed person caught in the pressure for a space, looked steadfastly at him several

times, almost as if she recognised him, and then, edging deliberately towards him, touched his hand with her arm in a scarcely accidental manner, and made it plain by a look as ancient as Chaldea that he had found favour in her eyes. And then a lank, grey-bearded man, perspiring copiously in a noble passion of self-help, blind to all earthly things save that glaring bait, thrust between them in a cataclysmal rush towards that alluring "X 5 pr. G."

"I want to get out of this," said Graham to Asano. "This is not what I came to see. Show me the workers. I want to see the people in blue. These parasitic lunatics—"

He found himself wedged into a straggling mass of people.

CHAPTER XXI

THE UNDER-SIDE

From the Business Quarter they presently passed by the running ways into a remote quarter of the city, where the bulk of the manufactures was done. On their way the platforms crossed the Thames twice, and passed in a broad viaduct across one of the great roads that entered the city from the North. In both cases his impression was swift and in both very vivid. The river was a broad wrinkled glitter of black sea water, overarched by buildings, and vanishing either way into a blackness starred with receding lights. A string of black barges passed seaward, manned by blue-clad men. The road was a long and very broad and high tunnel, along which big-wheeled machines drove noiselessly and swiftly. Here, too, the distinctive blue of the Labour Department was in abundance. The smoothness of the double tracks, the largeness and the lightness of the big pneumatic wheels in proportion to the vehicular body, struck Graham most vividly. One lank and very high carriage with longitudinal metallic rods hung with the dripping carcasses of many hundred sheep arrested his attention unduly. Abruptly the edge of the archway cut and blotted out the picture.

Presently they left the way and descended by a lift and traversed a passage that sloped downward, and so came to a descending lift again. The appearance of things changed. Even the pretence of architectural ornament disappeared, the lights diminished in number and size, the architecture became more and more massive in proportion to the spaces as the factory quarters were reached. And in the dusty biscuit-making place of the potters, among the felspar mills, in the furnace rooms of the metal workers, among the incandescent lakes of crude Eadhamite, the blue canvas clothing was on man, woman and child.

Many of these great and dusty galleries were silent avenues of machinery, endless raked out ashen furnaces testified to the revolutionary dislocation, but wherever there was work it was being done by slow-moving workers in blue canvas. The only people not in

blue canvas were the overlookers of the work-places and the orange-clad Labour Police. And fresh from the flushed faces of the dancing halls, the voluntary vigours of the business quarter, Graham could note the pinched faces, the feeble muscles, and weary eyes of many of the latter-day workers. Such as he saw at work were noticeably inferior in physique to the few gaily dressed managers and forewomen who were directing their labours. The burly labourers of the old Victorian times had followed that dray horse and all such living force producers, to extinction; the place of his costly muscles was taken by some dexterous machine. The latter-day labourer, male as well as female, was essentially a machine-minder and feeder, a servant and attendant, or an artist under direction.

The women, in comparison with those Graham remembered, were as a class distinctly plain and flat-chested. Two hundred years of emancipation from the moral restraints of Puritanical religion, two hundred years of city life, had done their work in eliminating the strain of feminine beauty and vigour from the blue canvas myriads. To be brilliant physically or mentally, to be in any way attractive or exceptional, had been and was still a certain way of emancipation to the drudge, a line of escape to the Pleasure City and its splendours and delights, and at last to the Euthanasy and peace. To be steadfast against such inducements was scarcely to be expected of meanly nourished souls. In the young cities of Graham's former life, the newly aggregated labouring mass had been a diverse multitude, still stirred by the tradition of personal honour and a high morality; now it was differentiating into an instinct class, with a moral and physical difference of its own — even with a dialect of its own.

They penetrated downward, ever downward, towards the working places. Presently they passed underneath one of the streets of the moving ways, and saw its platforms running on their rails far overhead, and chinks of white lights between the transverse slits. The factories that were not working were sparsely lighted; to Graham they and their shrouded aisles of giant machines seemed plunged in gloom, and even where work was going on the illumination was far less brilliant than upon the public ways.

Beyond the blazing lakes of Eadhamite he came to the warren of the jewellers, and, with some difficulty and by using his signature,

obtained admission to these galleries. They were high and dark, and rather cold. In the first a few men were making ornaments of gold filigree, each man at a little bench by himself, and with a little shaded light. The long vista of light patches, with the nimble fingers brightly lit and moving among the gleaming yellow coils, and the intent face like the face of a ghost, in each shadow, had the oddest effect.

The work was beautifully executed, but without any strength of modelling or drawing, for the most part intricate grotesques or the ringing of the changes on a geometrical *motif*. These workers wore a peculiar white uniform without pockets or sleeves. They assumed this on coming to work, but at night they were stripped and examined before they left the premises of the Department. In spite of every precaution, the Labour policeman told them in a depressed tone, the Department was not infrequently robbed.

Beyond was a gallery of women busied in cutting and setting slabs of artificial ruby, and next these were men and women working together upon the slabs of copper net that formed the basis of *cloisonné* tiles. Many of these workers had lips and nostrils a livid white, due to a disease caused by a peculiar purple enamel that chanced to be much in fashion. Asano apologised to Graham for this offensive sight, but excused himself on the score of the convenience of this route. "This is what I wanted to see," said Graham; "this is what I wanted to see," trying to avoid a start at a particularly striking disfigurement.

"She might have done better with herself than that," said Asano.

Graham made some indignant comments.

"But, Sire, we simply could not stand that stuff without the purple," said Asano. "In your days people could stand such crudities, they were nearer the barbaric by two hundred years."

They continued along one of the lower galleries of this *cloisonné* factory, and came to a little bridge that spanned a vault. Looking over the parapet, Graham saw that beneath was a wharf under yet more tremendous archings than any he had seen. Three barges, smothered in floury dust, were being unloaded of their cargoes of powdered felspar by a multitude of coughing men, each guiding a little truck; the dust filled the place with a choking mist, and turned the electric glare yellow. The vague shadows of these workers

gesticulated about their feet, and rushed to and fro against a long stretch of white-washed wall. Every now and then one would stop to cough.

A shadowy, huge mass of masonry rising out of the inky water, brought to Graham's mind the thought of the multitude of ways and galleries and lifts that rose floor above floor overhead between him and the sky. The men worked in silence under the supervision of two of the Labour Police; their feet made a hollow thunder on the planks along which they went to and fro. And as he looked at this scene, some hidden voice in the darkness began to sing.

"Stop that!" shouted one of the policemen, but the order was disobeyed, and first one and then all the white-stained men who were working there had taken up the beating refrain, singing it defiantly — the Song of the Revolt. The feet upon the planks thundered now to the rhythm of the song, tramp, tramp, tramp. The policeman who had shouted glanced at his fellow, and Graham saw him shrug his shoulders. He made no further effort to stop the singing.

And so they went through these factories and places of toil, seeing many painful and grim things. That walk left on Graham's mind a maze of memories, fluctuating pictures of swathed halls, and crowded vaults seen through clouds of dust, of intricate machines, the racing threads of looms, the heavy beat of stamping machinery, the roar and rattle of belt and armature, of ill-lit subterranean aisles of sleeping places, illimitable vistas of pin-point lights. Here was the smell of tanning, and here the reek of a brewery, and here unprecedented reeks. Everywhere were pillars and cross archings of such a massiveness as Graham had never before seen, thick Titans of greasy, shining brickwork crushed beneath the vast weight of that complex city world, even as these anemic millions were crushed by its complexity. And everywhere were pale features, lean limbs, disfigurement and degradation.

Once and again, and again a third time, Graham heard the song of the revolt during his long, unpleasant research in these places, and once he saw a confused struggle down a passage, and learnt that a number of these serfs had seized their bread before their work was done. Graham was ascending towards the ways again when he saw a number of blue-clad children running down a transverse passage, and

presently perceived the reason of their panic in a company of the Labour Police armed with clubs, trotting towards some unknown disturbance. And then came a remote disorder. But for the most part this remnant that worked, worked hopelessly. All the spirit that was left in fallen humanity was above in the streets that night, calling for the Master, and valiantly and noisily keeping its arms.

They emerged from these wanderings and stood blinking in the bright light of the middle passage of the platforms again. They became aware of the remote hooting and yelping of the machines of one of the General Intelligence Offices, and suddenly came men running, and along the platforms and about the ways everywhere was a shouting and crying. Then a woman with a face of mute white terror, and another who gasped and shrieked as she ran.

"What has happened now?" said Graham, puzzled, for he could not understand their thick speech. Then he heard it in English and perceived that the thing that everyone was shouting, that men yelled to one another, that women took up screaming, that was passing like the first breeze of a thunderstorm, chill and sudden through the city, was this: "Ostrog has ordered the Black Police to London. The Black Police are coming from South Africa…. The Black Police. The Black Police."

Asano's face was white and astonished; he hesitated, looked at Graham's face, and told him the thing he already knew. "But how can they know?" asked Asano.

Graham heard someone shouting. "Stop all work. Stop all work," and a swarthy hunchback, ridiculously gay in green and gold, came leaping down the platforms toward him, bawling again and again in good English, "This is Ostrog's doing, Ostrog the Knave! The Master is betrayed." His voice was hoarse and a thin foam dropped from his ugly shouting mouth. He yelled an unspeakable horror that the Black Police had done in Paris, and so passed shrieking, "Ostrog the Knave!"

For a moment Graham stood still, for it had come upon him again that these things were a dream. He looked up at the great cliff of buildings on either side, vanishing into blue haze at last above the lights, and down to the roaring tiers of platforms, and the shouting, running people who were gesticulating past. "The Master is

betrayed!" they cried. "The Master is betrayed!"

Suddenly the situation shaped itself in his mind real and urgent. His heart began to beat fast and strong.

"It has come," he said. "I might have known. The hour has come."

He thought swiftly. "What am I to do?"

"Go back to the Council House," said Asano.

"Why should I not appeal — ? The people are here."

"You will lose time. They will doubt if it is you. But they will mass about the Council House. There you will find their leaders. Your strength is there — with them."

"Suppose this is only a rumour?"

"It sounds true," said Asano.

"Let us have the facts," said Graham.

Asano shrugged his shoulders. "We had better get towards the Council House," he cried. "That is where they will swarm. Even now the ruins may be impassable."

Graham regarded him doubtfully and followed him.

They went up the stepped platforms to the swiftest one, and there Asano accosted a labourer. The answers to his questions were in the thick, vulgar speech.

"What did he say?" asked Graham.

"He knows little, but he told me that the Black Police would have arrived here before the people knew — had not someone in the Wind-Vane Offices learnt. He said a girl."

"A girl? Not — ?"

"He said a girl — he did not know who she was. Who came out from the
Council House crying aloud, and told the men at work among the ruins."

And then another thing was shouted, something that turned an aimless tumult into determinate movements, it came like a wind along the street. "To your wards, to your wards. Every man get arms. Every man to his ward!"

CHAPTER XXII

THE STRUGGLE IN THE COUNCIL HOUSE

As Asano and Graham hurried along to the ruins about the Council House, they saw everywhere the excitement of the people rising. “To your wards! To your wards!” Everywhere men and women in blue were hurrying from unknown subterranean employments, up the staircases of the middle path; at one place Graham saw an arsenal of the revolutionary committee besieged by a crowd of shouting men, at another a couple of men in the hated yellow uniform of the Labour Police, pursued by a gathering crowd, fled precipitately along the swift way that went in the opposite direction.

The cries of “To your wards!” became at last a continuous shouting as they drew near the Government quarter. Many of the shouts were unintelligible. “Ostrog has betrayed us,” one man bawled in a hoarse voice, again and again, dinning that refrain into Graham’s ear until it haunted him. This person stayed close beside Graham and Asano on the swift way, shouting to the people who swarmed on the lower platforms as he rushed past them. His cry about Ostrog alternated with some incomprehensible orders. Presently he went leaping down and disappeared.

Graham’s mind was filled with the din. His plans were vague and unformed. He had one picture of some commanding position from which he could address the multitudes, another of meeting Ostrog face to face. He was full of rage, of tense muscular excitement, his hands gripped, his lips were pressed together.

The way to the Council House across the ruins was impassable, but Asano met that difficulty and took Graham into the premises of the central post-office. The post-office was nominally at work, but the blue-clothed porters moved sluggishly or had stopped to stare through the arches of their galleries at the shouting men who were going by outside. “Every man to his ward! Every man to his ward!” Here, by Asano’s advice, Graham revealed his identity.

They crossed to the Council House by a cable cradle. Already in the brief interval since the capitulation of the Councillors a great

change had been wrought in the appearance of the ruins. The spurting cascades of the ruptured sea-water mains had been captured and tamed, and huge temporary pipes ran overhead along a flimsy looking fabric of girders. The sky was laced with restored cables and wires that served the Council House, and a mass of new fabric with cranes and other building machines going to and fro upon it projected to the left of the white pile.

The moving ways that ran across this area had been restored, albeit for once running under the open sky. These were the ways that Graham had seen from the little balcony in the hour of his awakening, not nine days since, and the hall of his Trance had been on the further side, where now shapeless piles of smashed and shattered masonry were heaped together.

It was already high day and the sun was shining brightly. Out of their tall caverns of blue electric light came the swift ways crowded with multitudes of people, who poured off them and gathered ever denser over the wreckage and confusion of the ruins. The air was full of their shouting, and they were pressing and swaying towards the central building. For the most part that shouting mass consisted of shapeless swarms, but here and there Graham could see that a rude discipline struggled to establish itself. And every voice clamoured for order in the chaos. “To your wards! Every man to his ward!”

The cable carried them into a hall which Graham recognised as the ante-chamber to the Hall of the Atlas, about the gallery of which he had walked days ago with Howard to show himself to the Vanished Council, an hour from his awakening. Now the place was empty except for two cable attendants. These men seemed hugely astonished to recognise the Sleeper in the man who swung down from the cross seat.

“Where is Ostrog?” he demanded. “I must see Ostrog forthwith. He has disobeyed me. I have come back to take things out of his hands.” Without waiting for Asano, he went straight across the place, ascended the steps at the further end, and, pulling the curtain aside, found himself facing the perpetually labouring Titan.

The hall was empty. Its appearance had changed very greatly since his first sight of it. It had suffered serious injury in the violent struggle of the first outbreak. On the right hand side of the great

figure the upper half of the wall had been torn away for nearly two hundred feet of its length, and a sheet of the same glassy film that had enclosed Graham at his awakening had been drawn across the gap. This deadened, but did not altogether exclude the roar of the people outside. “Wards! Wards! Wards!” they seemed to be saying. Through it there were visible the beams and supports of metal scaffoldings that rose and fell according to the requirements of a great crowd of workmen. An idle building machine, with lank arms of red painted metal stretched gauntly across this green tinted picture. On it were still a number of workmen staring at the crowd below. For a moment he stood regarding these things, and Asano overtook him.

“Ostrog,” said Asano, “will be in the small offices beyond there.” The little man looked livid now and his eyes searched Graham’s face.

They had scarcely advanced ten paces from the curtain before a little panel to the left of the Atlas rolled up, and Ostrog, accompanied by Lincoln and followed by two black and yellow clad negroes, appeared crossing the remote corner of the hall, towards a second panel that was raised and open. “Ostrog,” shouted Graham, and at the sound of his voice the little party turned astonished.

Ostrog said something to Lincoln and advanced alone.

Graham was the first to speak. His voice was loud and dictatorial. “What is this I hear?” he asked. “Are you bringing negroes here — to keep the people down?”

“It is none too soon,” said Ostrog. “They have been getting out of hand more and more, since the revolt. I under-estimated—”

“Do you mean that these infernal negroes are on the way?”

“On the way. As it is, you have seen the people — outside?”

“No wonder! But — after what was said. You have taken too much on yourself, Ostrog.”

Ostrog said nothing, but drew nearer.

“These negroes must not come to London,” said Graham. “I am Master and they shall not come.”

Ostrog glanced at Lincoln, who at once came towards them with his two attendants close behind him. “Why not?” asked Ostrog.

“White men must be mastered by white men. Besides—”

“The negroes are only an instrument.”

“But that is not the question. I am the Master. I mean to be the Master.
And I tell you these negroes shall not come.”

“The people—”

“I believe in the people.”

“Because you are an anachronism. You are a man out of the Past — an accident. You are Owner perhaps of the world. Nominally — legally. But you are not Master. You do not know enough to be Master.”

He glanced at Lincoln again. “I know now what you think — I can guess something of what you mean to do. Even now it is not too late to warn you. You dream of human equality — of some sort of socialistic order — you have all those worn-out dreams of the nineteenth century fresh and vivid in your mind, and you would rule this age that you do not understand.”

“Listen!” said Graham. “You can hear it — a sound like the sea. Not voices — but a voice. Do *you* altogether understand?”

“We taught them that,” said Ostrog.

“Perhaps. Can you teach them to forget it? But enough of this! These negroes must not come.”

There was a pause and Ostrog looked him in the eyes.

“They will,” he said.

“I forbid it,” said Graham.

“They have started.”

“I will not have it.”

“No,” said Ostrog. “Sorry as I am to follow the method of the Council — . For your own good — you must not side with — Disorder. And now that you are here — . It was kind of you to come here.”

Lincoln laid his hand on Graham’s shoulder. Abruptly Graham realised the enormity of his blunder in coming to the Council House. He turned towards the curtains that separated the hall from the ante-chamber. The clutching hand of Asano intervened. In another moment Lincoln had grasped Graham’s cloak.

He turned and struck at Lincoln’s face, and incontinently a negro had him by collar and arm. He wrenched himself away, his sleeve

tore noisily, and he stumbled back, to be tripped by the other attendant. Then he struck the ground heavily and he was staring at the distant ceiling of the hall.

He shouted, rolled over, struggling fiercely, clutched an attendant's leg and threw him headlong, and struggled to his feet.

Lincoln appeared before him, went down heavily again with a blow under the point of the jaw and lay still. Graham made two strides, stumbled. And then Ostrog's arm was round his neck, he was pulled over backward, fell heavily, and his arms were pinned to the ground. After a few violent efforts he ceased to struggle and lay staring at Ostrog's heaving throat.

"You — are — a prisoner," panted Ostrog, exulting. "You — were rather a fool — to come back."

Graham turned his head about and perceived through the irregular green window in the walls of the hall the men who had been working the building cranes gesticulating excitedly to the people below them. They had seen!

Ostrog followed his eyes and started. He shouted something to Lincoln, but Lincoln did not move. A bullet smashed among the mouldings above the Atlas. The two sheets of transparent matter that had been stretched across this gap were rent, the edges of the torn aperture darkened, curved, ran rapidly towards the framework, and in a moment the Council chamber stood open to the air. A chilly gust blew in by the gap, bringing with it a war of voices from the ruinous spaces without, an elvish babblement, "Save the Master!" "What are they doing to the Master?" "The Master is betrayed!"

And then he realised that Ostrog's attention was distracted, that Ostrog's grip had relaxed, and, wrenching his arms free, he struggled to his knees. In another moment he had thrust Ostrog back, and he was on one foot, his hand gripping Ostrog's throat, and Ostrog's hands clutching the silk about his neck.

But now men were coming towards them from the dais — men whose intentions he misunderstood. He had a glimpse of someone running in the distance towards the curtains of the antechamber, and then Ostrog had slipped from him and these newcomers were upon him. To his infinite astonishment, they seized him. They obeyed the shouts of Ostrog.

He was lugged a dozen yards before he realised that they were not friends — that they were dragging him towards the open panel. When he saw this he pulled back, he tried to fling himself down, he shouted for help with all his strength. And this time there were answering cries.

The grip upon his neck relaxed, and behold! in the lower corner of the rent upon the wall, first one and then a number of little black figures appeared shouting and waving arms. They came leaping down from the gap into the light gallery that had led to the Silent Rooms. They ran along it, so near were they that Graham could see the weapons in their hands. Then Ostrog was shouting in his ear to the men who held him, and once more he was struggling with all his strength against their endeavours to thrust him towards the opening that yawned to receive him. “They can’t come down,” panted Ostrog. “They daren’t fire. It’s all right. We’ll save him from them yet.”

For long minutes as it seemed to Graham that inglorious struggle continued. His clothes were rent in a dozen places, he was covered in dust, one hand had been trodden upon. He could hear the shouts of his supporters, and once he heard shots. He could feel his strength giving way, feel his efforts wild and aimless. But no help came, and surely, irresistibly, that black, yawning opening came nearer.

The pressure upon him relaxed and he struggled up. He saw Ostrog’s grey head receding and perceived that he was no longer held. He turned about and came full into a man in black. One of the green weapons cracked close to him, a drift of pungent smoke came into his face, and a steel blade flashed. The huge chamber span about him.

He saw a man in pale blue stabbing one of the black and yellow attendants not three yards from his face. Then hands were upon him again.

He was being pulled in two directions now. It seemed as though people were shouting to him. He wanted to understand and could not. Someone was clutching about his thighs, he was being hoisted in spite of his vigorous efforts. He understood suddenly, he ceased to struggle. He was lifted up on men’s shoulders and carried away from that devouring panel. Ten thousand throats were cheering.

He saw men in blue and black hurrying after the retreating

Ostrogites and firing. Lifted up, he saw now across the whole expanse of the hall beneath the Atlas image, saw that he was being carried towards the raised platform in the centre of the place. The far end of the hall was already full of people running towards him. They were looking at him and cheering.

He became aware that a bodyguard surrounded him. Active men about him shouted vague orders. He saw close at hand the black moustached man in yellow who had been among those who had greeted him in the public theatre, shouting directions. The hall was already densely packed with swaying people, the little metal gallery sagged with a shouting load, the curtains at the end had been torn away, and the antechamber was revealed densely crowded. He could scarcely make the man near him hear for the tumult about them. "Where has Ostrog gone?" he asked.

The man he questioned pointed over the heads towards the lower panels about the hall on the side opposite the gap. They stood open, and armed men, blue clad with black sashes, were running through them and vanishing into the chambers and passages beyond. It seemed to Graham that a sound of firing drifted through the riot. He was carried in a staggering curve across the great hall towards an opening beneath the gap.

He perceived men working with a sort of rude discipline to keep the crowd off him, to make a space clear about him. He passed out of the hall, and saw a crude, new wall rising blankly before him topped by blue sky. He was swung down to his feet; someone gripped his arm and guided him. He found the man in yellow close at hand. They were taking him up a narrow stairway of brick, and close at hand rose the great red painted masses, the cranes and levers and the still engines of the big building machine.

He was at the top of the steps. He was hurried across a narrow railed footway, and suddenly with a vast shouting the amphitheatre of ruins opened again before him. "The Master is with us! The Master! The Master!" The shout swept athwart the lake of faces like a wave, broke against the distant cliff of ruins, and came back in a welter of cries. "The Master is on our side!"

Graham perceived that he was no longer encompassed by people, that he was standing upon a little temporary platform of white metal,

part of a flimsy seeming scaffolding that laced about the great mass of the Council House. Over all the huge expanse of the ruins swayed and eddied the shouting people; and here and there the black banners of the revolutionary societies ducked and swayed and formed rare nuclei of organisation in the chaos. Up the steep stairs of wall and scaffolding by which his rescuers had reached the opening in the Atlas Chamber clung a solid crowd, and little energetic black figures clinging to pillars and projections were strenuous to induce these congested, masses to stir. Behind him, at a higher point on the scaffolding, a number of men struggled upwards with the flapping folds of a huge black standard. Through the yawning gap in the walls below him he could look down upon the packed attentive multitudes in the Hall of the Atlas. The distant flying stages to the south came out bright and vivid, brought nearer as it seemed by an unusual translucency of the air. A solitary monoplane beat up from the central stage as if to meet the coming aeroplanes.

"What has become of Ostrog?" asked Graham, and even as he spoke he saw that all eyes were turned from him towards the crest of the Council House building. He looked also in this direction of universal attention. For a moment he saw nothing but the jagged corner of a wall, hard and clear against the sky. Then in the shadow he perceived the interior of a room and recognised with a start the green and white decorations of his former prison. And coming quickly across this opened room and up to the very verge of the cliff of the ruins came a little white clad figure followed by two other smaller seeming figures in black and yellow. He heard the man beside him exclaim "Ostrog," and turned to ask a question. But he never did, because of the startled exclamation of another of those who were with him and a lank finger suddenly pointing. He looked, and behold! the monoplane that had been rising from the flying stage when last he had looked in that direction, was driving towards them. The swift steady flight was still novel enough to hold his attention.

Nearer it came, growing rapidly larger and larger, until it had swept over the further edge of the ruins and into view of the dense multitudes below. It drooped across the space and rose and passed overhead, rising to clear the mass of the Council House, a filmy translucent shape with the solitary aeronaut peering down through its

ribs. It vanished beyond the skyline of the ruins.

Graham transferred his attention to Ostrog. He was signalling with his hands, and his attendants were busy breaking down the wall beside him. In another moment the monoplane came into view again, a little thing far away, coming round in a wide curve and going slower.

Then suddenly the man in yellow shouted: “What are they doing? What are the people doing? Why is Ostrog left there? Why is he not captured? They will lift him — the monoplane will lift him! Ah!”

The exclamation was echoed by a shout from the ruins. The rattling sound of the green weapons drifted across the intervening gulf to Graham, and, looking down, he saw a number of black and yellow uniforms running along one of the galleries that lay open to the air below the promontory upon which Ostrog stood. They fired as they ran at men unseen, and then emerged a number of pale blue figures in pursuit. These minute fighting figures had the oddest effect; they seemed as they ran like little model soldiers in a toy. This queer appearance of a house cut open gave that struggle amidst furniture and passages a quality of unreality. It was perhaps two hundred yards away from him, and very nearly fifty above the heads in the ruins below. The black and yellow men ran into an open archway, and turned and fired a volley. One of the blue pursuers striding forward close to the edge, flung up his arms, staggered sideways, seemed to Graham’s sense to hang over the edge for several seconds, and fell headlong down. Graham saw him strike a projecting corner, fly out, head over heels, head over heels, and vanish behind the red arm of the building machine.

And then a shadow came between Graham and the sun. He looked up and the sky was clear, but he knew the little monoplane had passed. Ostrog had vanished. The man in yellow thrust before him, zealous and perspiring, pointing and blatant.

“They are grounding!” cried the man in yellow. “They are grounding. Tell the people to fire at him. Tell them to fire at him!”

Graham could not understand. He heard loud voices repeating these enigmatical orders.

Suddenly he saw the prow of the monoplane come gliding over the edge of the ruins and stop with a jerk. In a moment Graham

understood that the thing had grounded in order that Ostrog might escape by it. He saw a blue haze climbing out of the gulf, perceived that the people below him were now firing up at the projecting stem.

A man beside him cheered hoarsely, and he saw that the blue rebels had gained the archway that had been contested by the men in black and yellow a moment before, and were running in a continual stream along the open passage.

And suddenly the monoplane slipped over the edge of the Council House and fell like a diving swallow. It dropped, tilting at an angle of forty-five degrees, so steeply that it seemed to Graham, it seemed perhaps to most of those below, that it could not possibly rise again.

It fell so closely past him that he could see Ostrog clutching the guides of the seat, with his grey hair streaming; see the white-faced aeronaut wrenching over the lever that turned the machine upward. He heard the apprehensive vague cry of innumerable men below.

Graham clutched the railing before him and gasped. The second seemed an age. The lower vane of the monoplane passed within an ace of touching the people, who yelled and screamed and trampled one another below.

And then it rose.

For a moment it looked as if it could not possibly clear the opposite cliff, and then that it could not possibly clear the wind-wheel that rotated beyond.

And behold! it was clear and soaring, still heeling sideways, upward, upward into the wind-swept sky.

The suspense of the moment gave place to a fury of exasperation as the swarming people realised that Ostrog had escaped them. With belated activity they renewed their fire, until the rattling wove into a roar, until the whole area became dim and blue and the air pungent with the thin smoke of their weapons.

Too late! The flying machine dwindled smaller and smaller, and curved about and swept gracefully downward to the flying stage from which it had so lately risen. Ostrog had escaped.

For a while a confused babblement arose from the ruins, and then the universal attention came back to Graham, perched high among the scaffolding. He saw the faces of the people turned towards him, heard their shouts at his rescue. From the throat of the ways came the

song of the revolt spreading like a breeze across that swaying sea of men.

The little group of men about him shouted congratulations on his escape. The man in yellow was close to him, with a set face and shining eyes. And the song was rising, louder and louder; tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp.

Slowly the realisation came of the full meaning of these things to him, the perception of the swift change in his position. Ostrog, who had stood beside him whenever he had faced that shouting multitude before, was beyond there — the antagonist. There was no one to rule for him any longer. Even the people about him, the leaders and organisers of the multitude, looked to see what he would do, looked to him to act, awaited his orders. He was king indeed. His puppet reign was at an end.

He was very intent to do the thing that was expected of him. His nerves and muscles were quivering, his mind was perhaps a little confused, but he felt neither fear nor anger. His hand that had been trodden upon throbbed and was hot. He was a little nervous about his bearing. He knew he was not afraid, but he was anxious not to seem afraid. In his former life he had often been more excited in playing games of skill. He was desirous of immediate action, he knew he must not think too much in detail of the huge complexity of the struggle about him lest be should be paralysed by the sense of its intricacy.

Over there those square blue shapes, the flying stages, meant Ostrog; against Ostrog, who was so clear and definite and decisive, he who was so vague and undecided, was fighting for the whole future of the world.

CHAPTER XXIII

GRAHAM SPEAKS HIS WORD

For a time the Master of the Earth was not even master of his own mind. Even his will seemed a will not his own, his own acts surprised him and were but a part of the confusion of strange experiences that poured across his being. These things were definite, the negroes were coming, Helen Wotton had warned the people of their coming, and he was Master of the Earth. Each of these facts seemed struggling for complete possession of his thoughts. They protruded from a background of swarming halls, elevated passages, rooms jammed with ward leaders in council, kinematograph and telephone rooms, and windows looking out on a seething sea of marching men. The men in yellow, and men whom he fancied were called Ward Leaders, were either propelling him forward or following him obediently; it was hard to tell. Perhaps they were doing a little of both. Perhaps some power unseen and unsuspected propelled them all. He was aware that he was going to make a proclamation to the People of the Earth, aware of certain grandiose phrases floating in his mind as the thing he meant to say. Many little things happened, and then he found himself with the man in yellow entering a little room where this proclamation of his was to be made.

This room was grotesquely latter-day in its appointments. In the centre was a bright oval lit by shaded electric lights from above. The rest was in shadow, and the double finely fitting doors through which he came from the swarming Hall of the Atlas made the place very still. The dead thud of these as they closed behind him, the sudden cessation of the tumult in which he had been living for hours, the quivering circle of light, the whispers and quick noiseless movements of vaguely visible attendants in the shadows, had a strange effect upon Graham. The huge ears of a phonographic mechanism gaped in a battery for his words, the black eyes of great photographic cameras awaited his beginning, beyond metal rods and coils glittered dimly, and something whirled about with a droning hum. He walked into the centre of the light, and his shadow drew

together black and sharp to a little blot at his feet.

The vague shape of the thing he meant to say was already in his mind. But this silence, this isolation, the withdrawal from that contagious crowd, this audience of gaping, glaring machines, had not been in his anticipation. All his supports seemed withdrawn together; he seemed to have dropped into this suddenly, suddenly to have discovered himself. In a moment he was changed. He found that he now feared to be inadequate, he feared to be theatrical, he feared the quality of his voice, the quality of his wit; astonished, he turned to the man in yellow with a propitiatory gesture. “For a moment,” he said, “I must wait. I did not think it would be like this. I must think of the thing I have to say.”

While he was still hesitating there came an agitated messenger with news that the foremost aeroplanes were passing over Madrid.

“What news of the flying stages?” he asked.

“The people of the south-west wards are ready.”

“Ready!”

He turned impatiently to the blank circles of the lenses again.

“I suppose it must be a sort of speech. Would to God I knew certainly the thing that should be said! Aeroplanes at Madrid! They must have started before the main fleet.

“Oh! what can it matter whether I speak well or ill?” he said, and felt the light grow brighter.

He had framed some vague sentence of democratic sentiment when suddenly doubts overwhelmed him. His belief in his heroic quality and calling he found had altogether lost its assured conviction. The picture of a little strutting futility in a windy waste of incomprehensible destinies replaced it. Abruptly it was perfectly clear to him that this revolt against Ostrog was premature, foredoomed to failure, the impulse of passionate inadequacy against inevitable things. He thought of that swift flight of aeroplanes like the swoop of Fate towards him. He was astonished that he could have seen things in any other light. In that final emergency he debated, thrust debate resolutely aside, determined at all costs to go through with the thing he had undertaken. And he could find no word to begin. Even as he stood, awkward, hesitating, with an indiscreet apology for his inability trembling on his lips, came the noise of

many people crying out, the running to and fro of feet. “Wait,” cried someone, and a door opened. Graham turned, and the watching lights waned.

Through the open doorway he saw a slight girlish figure approaching. His heart leapt. It was Helen Wotton. The man in yellow came out of the nearer shadows into the circle of light.

“This is the girl who told us what Ostrog had done,” he said.

She came in very quietly, and stood still, as if she did not want to interrupt Graham’s eloquence…. But his doubts and questionings fled before her presence. He remembered the things that he had meant to say. He faced the cameras again and the light about him grew brighter. He turned back to her.

“You have helped me,” he said lamely— “helped me very much…. This is very difficult.”

He paused. He addressed himself to the unseen multitudes who stared upon him through those grotesque black eyes. At first he spoke slowly.

“Men and women of the new age,” he said; “you have arisen to do battle for the race!… There is no easy victory before us.”

He stopped to gather words. He wished passionately for the gift of moving speech.

“This night is a beginning,” he said. “This battle that is coming, this battle that rushes upon us to-night, is only a beginning. All your lives, it may be, you must fight. Take no thought though I am beaten, though I am utterly overthrown. I think I may be overthrown.”

He found the thing in his mind too vague for words. He paused momentarily, and broke into vague exhortations, and then a rush of speech came upon him. Much that he said was but the humanitarian commonplace of a vanished age, but the conviction of his voice touched it to vitality. He stated the case of the old days to the people of the new age, to the girl at his side.

“I come out of the past to you,” he said, “with the memory of an age that hoped. My age was an age of dreams — of beginnings, an age of noble hopes; throughout the world we had made an end of slavery; throughout the world we had spread the desire and anticipation that wars might cease, that all men and women might live nobly, in freedom and peace…. So we hoped in the days that are

past. And what of those hopes? How is it with man after two hundred years?

"Great cities, vast powers, a collective greatness beyond our dreams. For that we did not work, and that has come. But how is it with the little lives that make up this greater life? How is it with the common lives? As it has ever been — sorrow and labour, lives cramped and unfulfilled, lives tempted by power, tempted by wealth, and gone to waste and folly. The old faiths have faded and changed, the new faith — . Is there a new faith?

"Charity and mercy," he floundered; "beauty and the love of beautiful things — effort and devotion! Give yourselves as I would give myself — as Christ gave Himself upon the Cross. It does not matter if you understand. It does not matter if you seem to fail. You *know* — in the core of your hearts you *know*. There is no promise, there is no security — nothing to go upon but Faith. There is no faith but faith — faith which is courage…."

Things that he had long wished to believe, he found that he believed. He spoke gustily, in broken incomplete sentences, but with all his heart and strength, of this new faith within him. He spoke of the greatness of self-abnegation, of his belief in an immortal life of Humanity in which we live and move and have our being. His voice rose and fell, and the recording appliances hummed as he spoke, dim attendants watched him out of the shadow….

His sense of that silent spectator beside him sustained his sincerity. For a few glorious moments he was carried away; he felt no doubt of his heroic quality, no doubt of his heroic words, he had it all straight and plain. His eloquence limped no longer. And at last he made an end to speaking. "Here and now," he cried, "I make my will. All that is mine in the world I give to the people of the world. All that is mine in the world I give to the people of the world. To all of you. I give it to you, and myself I give to you. And as God wills to-night, I will live for you, or I will die."

He ended. He found the light of his present exaltation reflected in the face of the girl. Their eyes met; her eyes were swimming with tears of enthusiasm.

"I knew," she whispered. "Oh! Father of the World — *Sire*! I knew you would say these things…."

“I have said what I could,” he answered lamely and grasped and clung to her outstretched hands.

CHAPTER XXIV

WHILE THE AEROPLANES WERE COMING

The man in yellow was beside them. Neither had noted his coming. He was saying that the south-west wards were marching. “I never expected it so soon,” he cried. “They have done wonders. You must send them a word to help them on their way.”

Graham stared at him absent-mindedly. Then with a start he returned to his previous preoccupation about the flying stages.

“Yes,” he said. “That is good, that is good.” He weighed a message. “Tell them; — well done South West.”

He turned his eyes to Helen Wotton again. His face expressed his struggle between conflicting ideas. “We must capture the flying stages,” he explained. “Unless we can do that they will land negroes. At all costs we must prevent that.”

He felt even as he spoke that this was not what had been in his mind before the interruption. He saw a touch of surprise in her eyes. She seemed about to speak and a shrill bell drowned her voice.

It occurred to Graham that she expected him to lead these marching people, that that was the thing he had to do. He made the offer abruptly. He addressed the man in yellow, but he spoke to her. He saw her face respond. “Here I am doing nothing,” he said.

“It is impossible,” protested the man in yellow. “It is a fight in a warren. Your place is here.”

He explained elaborately. He motioned towards the room where Graham must wait, he insisted no other course was possible. “We must know where you are,” he said. “At any moment a crisis may arise needing your presence and decision.”

A picture had drifted through his mind of such a vast dramatic struggle as the masses in the ruins had suggested. But here was no spectacular battle-field such as he imagined. Instead was seclusion — and suspense. It was only as the afternoon wore on that he pieced together a truer picture of the fight that was raging, inaudibly and invisibly, within four miles of him, beneath the Roehampton stage. A strange and unprecedented contest it was, a battle that was a hundred

thousand little battles, a battle in a sponge of ways and channels, fought out of sight of sky or sun under the electric glare, fought out in a vast confusion by multitudes untrained in arms, led chiefly by acclamation, multitudes dulled by mindless labour and enervated by the tradition of two hundred years of servile security against multitudes demoralised by lives of venial privilege and sensual indulgence. They had no artillery, no differentiation into this force or that; the only weapon on either side was the little green metal carbine, whose secret manufacture and sudden distribution in enormous quantities had been one of Ostrog's culminating moves against the Council. Few had had any experience with this weapon, many had never discharged one, many who carried it came unprovided with ammunition; never was wilder firing in the history of warfare. It was a battle of amateurs, a hideous experimental warfare, armed rioters fighting armed rioters, armed rioters swept forward by the words and fury of a song, by the tramping sympathy of their numbers, pouring in countless myriads towards the smaller ways, the disabled lifts, the galleries slippery with blood, the halls and passages choked with smoke, beneath the flying stages, to learn there when retreat was hopeless the ancient mysteries of warfare. And overhead save for a few sharpshooters upon the roof spaces and for a few bands and threads of vapour that multiplied and darkened towards the evening, the day was a clear serenity. Ostrog it seems had no bombs at command and in all the earlier phases of the battle the flying machines played no part. Not the smallest cloud was there to break the empty brilliance of the sky. It seemed as though it held itself vacant until the aeroplanes should come.

Ever and again there was news of these, drawing nearer, from this Spanish town and then that, and presently from France. But of the new guns that Ostrog had made and which were known to be in the city came no news in spite of Graham's urgency, nor any report of successes from the dense felt of fighting strands about the flying stages. Section after section of the Labour-Societies reported itself assembled, reported itself marching, and vanished from knowledge into the labyrinth of that warfare. What was happening there? Even the busy ward leaders did not know. In spite of the opening and closing of doors, the hasty messengers, the ringing of bells and the

perpetual clitter-clack of recording implements, Graham felt isolated, strangely inactive, inoperative.

His isolation seemed at times the strangest, the most unexpected of all the things that had happened since his awakening. It had something of the quality of that inactivity that comes in dreams. A tumult, the stupendous realisation of a world struggle between Ostrog and himself, and then this confined quiet little room with its mouthpieces and bells and broken mirror!

Now the door would be closed and Graham and Helen were alone together; they seemed sharply marked off then from all the unprecedented world storm that rushed together without, vividly aware of one another, only concerned with one another. Then the door would open again, messengers would enter, or a sharp bell would stab their quiet privacy, and it was like a window in a well built brightly lit house flung open suddenly to a hurricane. The dark hurry and tumult, the stress and vehemence of the battle rushed in and overwhelmed them. They were no longer persons but mere spectators, mere impressions of a tremendous convulsion. They became unreal even to themselves, miniatures of personality, indescribably small, and the two antagonistic realities, the only realities in being were first the city, that throbbed and roared yonder in a belated frenzy of defence and secondly the aeroplanes hurling inexorably towards them over the round shoulder of the world.

There came a sudden stir outside, a running to and fro, and cries. The girl stood up, speechless, incredulous.

Metallic voices were shouting “Victory!” Yes it was “Victory!”

Bursting through the curtains appeared the man in yellow, startled and dishevelled with excitement, “Victory,” he cried, “victory! The people are winning. Ostrog’s people have collapsed.”

She rose. “Victory?”

“What do you mean?” asked Graham. “Tell me! *What*?”

“We have driven them out of the under galleries at Norwood, Streatham is afire and burning wildly, and Roehampton is ours. *Ours*! — and we have taken the monoplane that lay thereon.”

A shrill bell rang. An agitated grey-headed man appeared from the room of the Ward Leaders. “It is all over,” he cried.

“What matters it now that we have Roehampton? The aeroplanes

have been sighted at Boulogne!”

“The Channel!” said the man in yellow. He calculated swiftly. “Half an hour.”

“They still have three of the flying stages,” said the old man.

“Those guns?” cried Graham.

“We cannot mount them — in half an hour.”

“Do you mean they are found?”

“Too late,” said the old man.

“If we could stop them another hour!” cried the man in yellow.

“Nothing can stop them now,” said the old man. “They have near a hundred aeroplanes in the first fleet.”

“Another hour?” asked Graham.

“To be so near!” said the Ward Leader. “Now that we have found those guns. To be so near — . If once we could get them out upon the roof spaces.”

“How long would that take?” asked Graham suddenly.

“An hour — certainly.”

“Too late,” cried the Ward Leader, “too late.”

“*Is* it too late?” said Graham. “Even now — . An hour!”

He had suddenly perceived a possibility. He tried to speak calmly, but his face was white. “There is are chance. You said there was a monoplane — ?”

“On the Roehampton stage, Sire.”

“Smashed?”

“No. It is lying crossways to the carrier. It might be got upon the guides — easily. But there is no aeronaut — .”

Graham glanced at the two men and then at Helen. He spoke after a long pause. “*We* have no aeronauts?”

“None.”

He turned suddenly to Helen. His decision was made. “I must do it.”

“Do what?”

“Go to this flying stage — to this machine.”

“What do you mean?”

“I am an aeronaut. After all — . Those days for which you

reproached me were not altogether wasted.”

He turned to the old man in yellow. “Tell them to put it upon the guides.”

The man in yellow hesitated.

“What do you mean to do?” cried Helen.

“This monoplane — it is a chance — .”

“You don’t mean — ?”

“To fight — yes. To fight in the air. I have thought before — . A big aeroplane is a clumsy thing. A resolute man — !”

“But — never since flying began—” cried the man in yellow.

“There has been no need. But now the time has come. Tell them now — send them my message — to put it upon the guides. I see now something to do. I see now why I am here!”

The old man dumbly interrogated the man in yellow nodded, and hurried out.

Helen made a step towards Graham. Her face was white. “But, Sire! — How can one fight? You will be killed.”

“Perhaps. Yet, not to do it — or to let some one else attempt it — .”

“You will be killed,” she repeated.

“I’ve said my word. Do you not see? It may save — London!”

He stopped, he could speak no more, he swept the alternative aside by a gesture, and they stood looking at one another.

They were both clear that he must go. There was no step back from these towering heroisms.

Her eyes brimmed with tears. She came towards him with a curious movement of her hands, as though she felt her way and could not see; she seized his hand and kissed it.

“To wake,” she cried, “for this!”

He held her clumsily for a moment, and kissed the hair of her bowed head, and then thrust her away, and turned towards the man in yellow.

He could not speak. The gesture of his arm said “Onward.”

CHAPTER XXV

THE COMING OF THE AEROPLANES

Two men in pale blue were lying in the irregular line that stretched along the edge of the captured Roehampton stage from end to end, grasping their carbines and peering into the shadows of the stage called Wimbledon Park. Now and then they spoke to one another. They spoke the mutilated English of their class and period. The fire of the Ostrogites had dwindled and ceased, and few of the enemy had been seen for some time. But the echoes of the fight that was going on now far below in the lower galleries of that stage, came every now and then between the staccato of shots from the popular side. One of these men was describing to the other how he had seen a man down below there dodge behind a girder, and had aimed at a guess and hit him cleanly as he dodged too far. "He's down there still," said the marksman. "See that little patch. Yes. Between those bars."

A few yards behind them lay a dead stranger, face upward to the sky, with the blue canvas of his jacket smouldering in a circle about the neat bullet hole on his chest. Close beside him a wounded man, with a leg swathed about, sat with an expressionless face and watched the progress of that burning. Behind them, athwart the carrier lay the captured monoplane.

"I can't see him *now*," said the second man in a tone of provocation.

The marksman became foul-mouthed and high-voiced in his earnest endeavour to make things plain. And suddenly, interrupting him, came a noisy shouting from the substage.

"What's going on now?" he said, and raised himself on one arm to survey the stairheads in the central groove of the stage. A number of blue figures were coming up these, and swarming across the stage.

"We don't want all these fools," said his friend. "They only crowd up and spoil shots. What are they after?"

"Ssh! — they're shouting something."

The two men listened. The new-comers had crowded densely about the machine. Three Ward Leaders, conspicuous by their black

mantles and badges, clambered into the body and appeared above it. The rank and file flung themselves upon the vans, gripping hold of the edges, until the entire outline of the thing was manned, in some places three deep. One of the marksmen knelt up. “They’re putting it on the carrier — that’s what they’re after.”

He rose to his feet, his friend rose also. “What’s the good?” said his friend. “We’ve got no aeronauts.”

“That’s what they’re doing anyhow.” He looked at his rifle, looked at the struggling crowd, and suddenly turned to the wounded man. “Mind these, mate,” he said, handing his carbine and cartridge belt; and in a moment he was running towards the monoplane. For a quarter of an hour he was lugging, thrusting, shouting and heeding shouts, and then the thing was done, and he stood with a multitude of others cheering their own achievement. By this time he knew, what indeed everyone in the city knew, that the Master, raw learner though he was, intended to fly this machine himself, was coming even now to take control of it, would let no other man attempt it.

“He who takes the greatest danger, he who bears the heaviest burden, that man is King,” so the Master was reported to have spoken. And even as this man cheered, and while the beads of sweat still chased one another from the disorder of his hair, he heard the thunder of a greater tumult, and in fitful snatches the beat and impulse of the revolutionary song. He saw through a gap in the people that a thick stream of heads still poured up the stairway. “The Master is coming,” shouted voices, “the Master is coming,” and the crowd about him grew denser and denser. He began to thrust himself towards the central groove. “The Master is coming!” “The Sleeper, the Master!” “God and the Master!” roared the voices.

And suddenly quite close to him were the black uniforms of the revolutionary guard, and for the first and last time in his life he saw Graham, saw him quite nearly. A tall, dark man in a flowing black robe he was, with a white, resolute face and eyes fixed steadfastly before him; a man who for all the little things about him had neither ears nor eyes nor thoughts….

For all his days that man remembered the passing of Graham’s bloodless face. In a moment it had gone and he was fighting in the swaying crowd. A lad weeping with terror thrust against him,

pressing towards the stairways, yelling “Clear for the start, you fools!” The bell that cleared the flying stage became a loud unmelodious clanging.

With that clanging in his ears Graham drew near the monoplane, marched into the shadow of its tilting wing. He became aware that a number of people about him were offering to accompany him, and waved their offers aside. He wanted to think how one started the engine. The bell clanged faster and faster, and the feet of the retreating people roared faster and louder. The man in yellow was assisting him to mount through the ribs of the body. He clambered into the aeronaut’s place, fixing himself very carefully and deliberately. What was it? The man in yellow was pointing to two small flying machines driving upward in the southern sky. No doubt they were looking for the coming aeroplanes. That — presently — the thing to do now was to start. Things were being shouted at him, questions, warnings. They bothered him. He wanted to think about the machine, to recall every item of his previous experience. He waved the people from him, saw the man in yellow dropping off through the ribs, saw the crowd cleft down the line of the girders by his gesture.

For a moment he was motionless, staring at the levers, the wheel by which the engine shifted, and all the delicate appliances of which he knew so little. His eye caught a spirit level with the bubble towards him, and he remembered something, spent a dozen seconds in swinging the engine forward until the bubble floated in the centre of the tube. He noted that the people were not shouting, knew they watched his deliberation. A bullet smashed on the bar above his head. Who fired? Was the line clear of people? He stood up to see and sat down again.

In another second the propeller was spinning and he was rushing down the guides. He gripped the wheel and swung the engine back to lift the stem. Then it was the people shouted. In a moment he was throbbing with the quiver of the engine, and the shouts dwindled swiftly behind, rushed down to silence. The wind whistled over the edges of the screen, and the world sank away from him very swiftly.

Throb, throb, throb — throb, throb, throb; up he drove. He fancied himself free of all excitement, felt cool and deliberate. He lifted the

stem still more, opened one valve on his left wing and swept round and up. He looked down with a steady head, and up. One of the Ostrogite monoplanes was driving across his course, so that he drove obliquely towards it and would pass below it at a steep angle. Its little aeronauts were peering down at him. What did they mean to do? His mind became active. One, he saw held a weapon pointing, seemed prepared to fire. What did they think he meant to do? In a moment he understood their tactics, and his resolution was taken. His momentary lethargy was past. He opened two more valves to his left, swung round, end on to this hostile machine, closed his valves, and shot straight at it, stem and wind-screen shielding him from the shot. They tilted a little as if to clear him. He flung up his stem.

Throb, throb, throb — pause — throb, throb — he set his teeth, his face into an involuntary grimace, and crash! He struck it! He struck upward beneath the nearer wing.

Very slowly the wing of his antagonist seemed to broaden as the impetus of his blow turned it up. He saw the full breadth of it and then it slid downward out of his sight.

He felt his stem going down, his hands tightened on the levers, whirled and rammed the engine back. He felt the jerk of a clearance, the nose of the machine jerked upward steeply, and for a moment he seemed to be lying on his back. The machine was reeling and staggering, it seemed to be dancing on its screw. He made a huge effort, hung for a moment on the levers, and slowly the engine came forward again. He was driving upward but no longer so steeply. He gasped for a moment and flung himself at the levers again. The wind whistled about him. One further effort and he was almost level. He could breathe. He turned his head for the first time to see what had become of his antagonists. Turned back to the levers for a moment and looked again. For a moment he could have believed they were annihilated. And then he saw between the two stages to the east was a chasm, and down this something, a slender edge, fell swiftly and vanished, as a sixpence falls down a crack.

At first he did not understand, and then a wild joy possessed him. He shouted at the top of his voice, an inarticulate shout, and drove higher and higher up the sky. Throb, throb, throb, pause, throb, throb, throb. “Where was the other?” he thought. “They too — .” As he

looked round the empty heavens he had a momentary fear that this second machine had risen above him, and then he saw it alighting on the Norwood stage. They had meant shooting. To risk being rammed headlong two thousand feet in the air was beyond their latter-day courage….

For a little while he circled, then swooped in a steep descent towards the westward stage. Throb throb throb, throb throb throb. The twilight was creeping on apace, the smoke from the Streatham stage that had been so dense and dark, was now a pillar of fire, and all the laced curves of the moving ways and the translucent roofs and domes and the chasms between the buildings were glowing softly now, lit by the tempered radiance of the electric light that the glare of the day overpowered. The three efficient stages that the Ostrogites held — for Wimbledon Park was useless because of the fire from Roehampton, and Streatham was a furnace — were glowing with guide lights for the coming aeroplanes. As he swept over the Roehampton stage he saw the dark masses of the people thereon. He heard a clap of frantic cheering, heard a bullet from the Wimbledon Park stage tweet through the air, and went beating up above the Surrey wastes. He felt a breath of wind from the southwest, and lifted his westward wing as he had learnt to do, and so drove upward heeling into the rare swift upper air. Whirr, whirr, whirr.

Up he drove and up, to that pulsating rhythm, until the country beneath was blue and indistinct, and London spread like a little map traced in light, like the mere model of a city near the brim of the horizon. The southwest was a sky of sapphire over the shadowy rim of the world, and ever as he drove upward the multitude of stars increased.

And behold! In the southward, low down and glittering swiftly nearer, were two little patches of nebulous light. And then two more, and then a glow of swiftly driving shapes. Presently he could count them. There were four and twenty. The first fleet of aeroplanes had come! Beyond appeared a yet greater glow.

He swept round in a half circle, staring at this advancing fleet. It flew in a wedge-like shape, a triangular flight of gigantic phosphorescent shapes sweeping nearer through the lower air. He made a swift calculation of their pace, and spun the little wheel that

brought the engine forward. He touched a lever and the throbbing effort of the engine ceased. He began to fall, fell swifter and swifter. He aimed at the apex of the wedge. He dropped like a stone through the whistling air. It seemed scarce a second from that soaring moment before he struck the foremost aeroplane.

No man of all that black multitude saw the coming of his fate, no man among them dreamt of the hawk that struck downward upon him out of the sky. Those who were not limp in the agonies of air-sickness, were craning their black necks and staring to see the filmy city that was rising out of the haze, the rich and splendid city to which "Massa Boss" had brought their obedient muscles. Bright teeth gleamed and the glossy faces shone. They had heard of Paris. They knew they were to have lordly times among the poor white trash.

Suddenly Graham hit them.

He had aimed at the body of the aeroplane, but at the very last instant a better idea had flashed into his mind. He twisted about and struck near the edge of the starboard wing with all his accumulated weight. He was jerked back as he struck. His prow went gliding across its smooth expanse towards the rim. He felt the forward rush of the huge fabric sweeping him and his monoplane along with it, and for a moment that seemed an age he could not tell what was happening. He heard a thousand throats yelling, and perceived that his machine was balanced on the edge of the gigantic float, and driving down, down; glanced over his shoulder and saw the backbone of the aeroplane and the opposite float swaying up. He had a vision through the ribs of sliding chairs, staring faces, and hands clutching at the tilting guide bars. The fenestrations in the further float flashed open as the aeronaut tried to right her. Beyond, he saw a second aeroplane leaping steeply to escape the whirl of its heeling fellow. The broad area of swaying wings seemed to jerk upward. He felt he had dropped clear, that the monstrous fabric, clean overturned, hung like a sloping wall above him.

He did not clearly understand that he had struck the side float of the aeroplane and slipped off, but he perceived that he was flying free on the down glide and rapidly nearing earth. What had he done? His heart throbbed like a noisy engine in his throat and for a perilous

instant he could not move his levers because of the paralysis of his hands. He wrenched the levers to throw his engine back, fought for two seconds against the weight of it, felt himself righting, driving horizontally, set the engine beating again.

He looked upward and saw two aeroplanes glide shouting far overhead, looked back, and saw the main body of the fleet opening out and rushing upward and outward; saw the one he had struck fall edgewise on and strike like a gigantic knife-blade along the wind-wheels below it.

He put down his stern and looked again. He drove up heedless of his direction as he watched. He saw the wind-vanes give, saw the huge fabric strike the earth, saw its downward vanes crumple with the weight of its descent, and then the whole mass turned over and smashed, upside down, upon the sloping wheels. Then from the heaving wreckage a thin tongue of white fire licked up towards the zenith. He was aware of a huge mass flying through the air towards him, and turned upwards just in time to escape the charge — if it was a charge — of a second aeroplane. It whirled by below, sucked him down a fathom, and nearly turned him over in the gust of its close passage.

He became aware of three others rushing towards him, aware of the urgent necessity of beating above them. Aeroplanes were all about him, circling wildly to avoid him, as it seemed. They drove past him, above, below, eastward and westward. Far away to the westward was the sound of a collision, and two falling flares. Far away to the southward a second squadron was coming. Steadily he beat upward. Presently all the aeroplanes were below him, but for a moment he doubted the height he had of them, and did not swoop again. And then he came down upon a second victim and all its load of soldiers saw him coming. The big machine heeled and swayed as the fear-maddened men scrambled to the stern for their weapons. A score of bullets sung through the air, and there flashed a star in the thick glass wind-screen that protected him. The aeroplane slowed and dropped to foil his stroke, and dropped too low. Just in time he saw the wind-wheels of Bromley hill rushing up towards him, and spun about and up as the aeroplane he had chased crashed among them. All its voices wove into a felt of yelling. The great fabric

seemed to be standing on end for a second among the heeling and splintering vans, and then it flew to pieces. Huge splinters came flying through the air, its engines burst like shells. A hot rush of flame shot overhead into the darkling sky.

"*Two*!" he cried, with a bomb from overhead bursting as it fell, and forthwith he was beating up again. A glorious exhilaration possessed him now, a giant activity. His troubles about humanity, about his inadequacy, were gone for ever. He was a man in battle rejoicing in his power. Aeroplanes seemed radiating from him in every direction, intent only upon avoiding him, the yelling of their packed passengers came in short gusts as they swept by. He chose his third quarry, struck hastily and did but turn it on edge. It escaped him, to smash against the tall cliff of London wall. Flying from that impact he skimmed the darkling ground so nearly he could see a frightened rabbit bolting up a slope. He jerked up steeply, and found himself driving over south London with the air about him vacant. To the right of him a wild riot of signal rockets from the Ostrogites banged tumultuously in the sky. To the south the wreckage of half a dozen air ships flamed, and east and west and north they fled before him. They drove away to the east and north, and went about in the south, for they could not pause in the air. In their present confusion any attempt at evolution would have meant disastrous collisions.

He passed two hundred feet or so above the Roehampton stage. It was black with people and noisy with their frantic shouting. But why was the Wimbledon Park stage black and cheering, too? The smoke and flame of Streatham now hid the three further stages. He curved about and rose to see them and the northern quarters. First came the square masses of Shooter's Hill into sight, from behind the smoke, lit and orderly with the aeroplane that had landed and its disembarking negroes. Then came Blackheath, and then under the corner of the reek the Norwood stage. On Blackheath no aeroplane had landed. Norwood was covered by a swarm of little figures running to and fro in a passionate confusion. Why? Abruptly he understood. The stubborn defence of the flying stages was over, the people were pouring into the under-ways of these last strongholds of Ostrog's usurpation. And then, from far away on the northern border of the city, full of glorious import to him, came a sound, a signal, a note of

triumph, the leaden thud of a gun. His lips fell apart, his face was disturbed with emotion.

He drew an immense breath. “They win,” he shouted to the empty air; “the people win!” The sound of a second gun came like an answer. And then he saw the monoplane on Blackheath was running down its guides to launch. It lifted clean and rose. It shot up into the air, driving straight southward and away from him.

In an instant it came to him what this meant. It must needs be Ostrog in flight. He shouted and dropped towards it. He had the momentum of his elevation and fell slanting down the air and very swiftly. It rose steeply at his approach. He allowed for its velocity and drove straight upon it.

It suddenly became a mere flat edge, and behold! he was past it, and driving headlong down with all the force of his futile blow.

He was furiously angry. He reeled the engine back along its shaft and went circling up. He saw Ostrog’s machine beating up a spiral before him. He rose straight towards it, won above it by virtue of the impetus of his swoop and by the advantage and weight of a man. He dropped headlong — dropped and missed again! As he rushed past he saw the face of Ostrog’s aeronaut confident and cool and in Ostrog’s attitude a wincing resolution. Ostrog was looking steadfastly away from him — to the south. He realized with a gleam of wrath how bungling his flight must be. Below he saw the Croydon hills. He jerked upward and once more he gained on his enemy.

He glanced over his shoulder and his attention was arrested. The eastward stage, the one on Shooter’s Hill, appeared to lift; a flash changing to a tall grey shape, a cowled figure of smoke and dust, jerked into the air. For a moment this cowled figure stood motionless, dropping huge masses of metal from its shoulders, and then it began to uncoil a dense head of smoke. The people had blown it up, aeroplane and all! As suddenly a second flash and grey shape sprang up from the Norwood stage. And even as he stared at this came a dead report; and the air wave of the first explosion struck him. He was flung up and sideways.

For a moment his monoplane fell nearly edgewise with her nose down, and seemed to hesitate whether to overset altogether. He stood on his wind-shield, wrenching the wheel that swayed up over his

head. And then the shock of the second explosion took his machine sideways.

He found himself clinging to one of the ribs of his machine, and the air was blowing past him and *upward*. He seemed to be hanging quite still in the air, with the wind blowing up past him. It occurred to him that he was falling. Then he was sure that he was falling. He could not look down.

He found himself recapitulating with incredible swiftness all that had happened since his awakening, the days of doubt, the days of Empire, and at last the tumultuous discovery of Ostrog's calculated treachery.

The vision had a quality of utter unreality. Who was he? Why was he holding so tightly with his hands? Why could he not let go? In such a fall as this countless dreams have ended. But in a moment he would wake….

His thoughts ran swifter and swifter. He wondered if he should see Helen again. It seemed so unreasonable that he should not see her again. It *must* be a dream! Yet surely he would meet her. She at least was real. She was real. He would wake and meet her.

Although he could not look at it, he was suddenly aware that the earth was very near.

THE END

THE NEW MACHIAVELLI

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BOOK THE FIRST: THE MAKING OF A MAN

CHAPTER THE FIRST ~~ CONCERNING A BOOK THAT WAS NEVER WRITTEN

1

Since I came to this place I have been very restless, wasting my energies in the futile beginning of ill-conceived books. One does not settle down very readily at two and forty to a new way of living, and I have found myself with the teeming interests of the life I have abandoned still buzzing like a swarm of homeless bees in my head. My mind has been full of confused protests and justifications. In any case I should have found difficulties enough in expressing the complex thing I have to tell, but it has added greatly to my trouble that I have a great analogue, that a certain Niccolo Machiavelli chanced to fall out of politics at very much the age I have reached, and wrote a book to engage the restlessness of his mind, very much as I have wanted to do. He wrote about the relation of the great constructive spirit in politics to individual character and weaknesses, and so far his achievement lies like a deep rut in the road of my intention. It has taken me far astray. It is a matter of many weeks now — diversified indeed by some long drives into the mountains behind us and a memorable sail to Genoa across the blue and purple waters that drowned Shelley — since I began a laboured and futile imitation of "The Prince." I sat up late last night with the jumbled accumulation; and at last made a little fire of olive twigs and burnt it all, sheet by sheet — to begin again clear this morning.

But incidentally I have re-read most of Machiavelli, not excepting those scandalous letters of his to Vettori, and it seems to me, now that I have released myself altogether from his literary precedent, that he still has his use for me. In spite of his vast prestige I claim kindred with him and set his name upon my title-page, in partial intimation of the matter of my story. He takes me with sympathy not only by reason of the dream he pursued and the humanity of his politics, but by the mixture of his nature. His vices come in, essential to my issue. He is dead and gone, all his immediate correlations to party and faction have faded to insignificance, leaving only on the one hand his

broad method and conceptions, and upon the other his intimate living personality, exposed down to its salacious corners as the soul of no contemporary can ever be exposed. Of those double strands it is I have to write, of the subtle protesting perplexing play of instinctive passion and desire against too abstract a dream of statesmanship. But things that seemed to lie very far apart in Machiavelli's time have come near to one another; it is no simple story of white passions struggling against the red that I have to tell.

The state-making dream is a very old dream indeed in the world's history. It plays too small a part in novels. Plato and Confucius are but the highest of a great host of minds that have had a kindred aspiration, have dreamt of a world of men better ordered, happier, finer, securer. They imagined cities grown more powerful and peoples made rich and multitudinous by their efforts, they thought in terms of harbours and shining navies, great roads engineered marvellously, jungles cleared and deserts conquered, the ending of muddle and diseases and dirt and misery; the ending of confusions that waste human possibilities; they thought of these things with passion and desire as other men think of the soft lines and tender beauty of women. Thousands of men there are to-day almost mastered by this white passion of statecraft, and in nearly every one who reads and thinks you could find, I suspect, some sort of answering response. But in every one it presents itself extraordinarily entangled and mixed up with other, more intimate things.

It was so with Machiavelli. I picture him at San Casciano as he lived in retirement upon his property after the fall of the Republic, perhaps with a twinge of the torture that punished his conspiracy still lurking in his limbs. Such twinges could not stop his dreaming. Then it was "The Prince" was written. All day he went about his personal affairs, saw homely neighbours, dealt with his family, gave vent to everyday passions. He would sit in the shop of Donato del Corno gossiping curiously among vicious company, or pace the lonely woods of his estate, book in hand, full of bitter meditations. In the evening he returned home and went to his study. At the entrance, he says, he pulled off his peasant clothes covered with the dust and dirt of that immediate life, washed himself, put on his "noble court dress," closed the door on the world of toiling and getting, private

loving, private hating and personal regrets, sat down with a sigh of contentment to those wider dreams.

I like to think of him so, with brown books before him lit by the light of candles in silver candlesticks, or heading some new chapter of "The Prince," with a grey quill in his clean fine hand.

So writing, he becomes a symbol for me, and the less none because of his animal humour, his queer indecent side, and because of such lapses into utter meanness as that which made him sound the note of the begging-letter writer even in his "Dedication," reminding His Magnificence very urgently, as if it were the gist of his matter, of the continued malignity of fortune in his affairs. These flaws complete him. They are my reason for preferring him as a symbol to Plato, of whose indelicate side we know nothing, and whose correspondence with Dionysius of Syracuse has perished; or to Confucius who travelled China in search of a Prince he might instruct, with lapses and indignities now lost in the mists of ages. They have achieved the apotheosis of individual forgetfulness, and Plato has the added glory of that acquired beauty, that bust of the Indian Bacchus which is now indissolubly mingled with his tradition. They have passed into the world of the ideal, and every humbug takes his freedoms with their names. But Machiavelli, more recent and less popular, is still all human and earthly, a fallen brother — and at the same time that nobly dressed and nobly dreaming writer at the desk.

That vision of the strengthened and perfected state is protagonist in my story. But as I re-read "The Prince" and thought out the manner of my now abandoned project, I came to perceive how that stir and whirl of human thought one calls by way of embodiment the French Revolution, has altered absolutely the approach to such a question. Machiavelli, like Plato and Pythagoras and Confucius two hundred odd decades before him, saw only one method by which a thinking man, himself not powerful, might do the work of state building, and that was by seizing the imagination of a Prince. Directly these men turned their thoughts towards realisation, their attitudes became — what shall I call it? — secretarial. Machiavelli, it is true, had some little doubts about the particular Prince he wanted, whether it was Caesar Borgia of Giuliano or Lorenzo, but a Prince it

had to be. Before I saw clearly the differences of our own time I searched my mind for the modern equivalent of a Prince. At various times I redrafted a parallel dedication to the Prince of Wales, to the Emperor William, to Mr. Evesham, to a certain newspaper proprietor who was once my schoolfellow at City Merchants', to Mr. J. D. Rockefeller — all of them men in their several ways and circumstances and possibilities, princely. Yet in every case my pen bent of its own accord towards irony because — because, although at first I did not realise it, I myself am just as free to be a prince. The appeal was unfair. The old sort of Prince, the old little principality has vanished from the world. The commonweal is one man's absolute estate and responsibility no more. In Machiavelli's time it was indeed to an extreme degree one man's affair. But the days of the Prince who planned and directed and was the source and centre of all power are ended. We are in a condition of affairs infinitely more complex, in which every prince and statesman is something of a servant and every intelligent human being something of a Prince. No magnificent pensive Lorenzos remain any more in this world for secretarial hopes.

In a sense it is wonderful how power has vanished, in a sense wonderful how it has increased. I sit here, an unarmed discredited man, at a small writing-table in a little defenceless dwelling among the vines, and no human being can stop my pen except by the deliberate self-immolation of murdering me, nor destroy its fruits except by theft and crime. No King, no council, can seize and torture me; no Church, no nation silence me. Such powers of ruthless and complete suppression have vanished. But that is not because power has diminished, but because it has increased and become multitudinous, because it has dispersed itself and specialised. It is no longer a negative power we have, but positive; we cannot prevent, but we can do. This age, far beyond all previous ages, is full of powerful men, men who might, if they had the will for it, achieve stupendous things.

The things that might be done to-day! The things indeed that are being done! It is the latter that give one so vast a sense of the former. When I think of the progress of physical and mechanical science, of medicine and sanitation during the last century, when I measure the

increase in general education and average efficiency, the power now available for human service, the merely physical increment, and compare it with anything that has ever been at man's disposal before, and when I think of what a little straggling, incidental, undisciplined and uncoordinated minority of inventors, experimenters, educators, writers and organisers has achieved this development of human possibilities, achieved it in spite of the disregard and aimlessness of the huge majority, and the passionate resistance of the active dull, my imagination grows giddy with dazzling intimations of the human splendours the justly organised state may yet attain. I glimpse for a bewildering instant the heights that may be scaled, the splendid enterprises made possible.

But the appeal goes out now in other forms, in a book that catches at thousands of readers for the eye of a Prince diffused. It is the old appeal indeed for the unification of human effort, the ending of confusions, but instead of the Machiavellian deference to a flattered lord, a man cries out of his heart to the unseen fellowship about him. The last written dedication of all those I burnt last night, was to no single man, but to the socially constructive passion — in any man....

There is, moreover, a second great difference in kind between my world and Machiavelli's. We are discovering women. It is as if they had come across a vast interval since his time, into the very chamber of the statesman.

2

In Machiavelli's outlook the interest of womanhood was in a region of life almost infinitely remote from his statecraft. They were the vehicle of children, but only Imperial Rome and the new world of to-day have ever had an inkling of the significance that might give them in the state. They did their work, he thought, as the ploughed earth bears its crops. Apart from their function of fertility they gave a humorous twist to life, stimulated worthy men to toil, and wasted the hours of Princes. He left the thought of women outside with his other dusty things when he went into his study to write, dismissed them from his mind. But our modern world is burthened with its sense of the immense, now half articulate, significance of women. They stand

now, as it were, close beside the silver candlesticks, speaking as Machiavelli writes, until he stays his pen and turns to discuss his writing with them.

It is this gradual discovery of sex as a thing collectively portentous that I have to mingle with my statecraft if my picture is to be true which has turned me at length from a treatise to the telling of my own story. In my life I have paralleled very closely the slow realisations that are going on in the world about me. I began life ignoring women, they came to me at first perplexing and dishonouring; only very slowly and very late in my life and after misadventure, did I gauge the power and beauty of the love of man and woman and learnt how it must needs frame a justifiable vision of the ordered world. Love has brought me to disaster, because my career had been planned regardless of its possibility and value. But Machiavelli, it seems to me, when he went into his study, left not only the earth of life outside but its unsuspected soul.

3

Like Machiavelli at San Casciano, if I may take this analogy one step further, I too am an exile. Office and leading are closed to me. The political career that promised so much for me is shattered and ended for ever.

I look out from this vine-wreathed veranda under the branches of a stone pine; I see wide and far across a purple valley whose sides are terraced and set with houses of pine and ivory, the Gulf of Liguria gleaming sapphire blue, and cloud-like baseless mountains hanging in the sky, and I think of lank and coaly steamships heaving on the grey rollers of the English Channel and darkling streets wet with rain, I recall as if I were back there the busy exit from Charing Cross, the cross and the money-changers' offices, the splendid grime of giant London and the crowds going perpetually to and fro, the lights by night and the urgency and eventfulness of that great rain-swept heart of the modern world.

It is difficult to think we have left that — for many years if not for ever. In thought I walk once more in Palace Yard and hear the clink and clatter of hansoms and the quick quiet whirr of motors; I go in

vivid recent memories through the stir in the lobbies, I sit again at eventful dinners in those old dining-rooms like cellars below the House — dinners that ended with shrill division bells, I think of huge clubs swarming and excited by the bulletins of that electoral battle that was for me the opening opportunity. I see the stencilled names and numbers go up on the green baize, constituency after constituency, amidst murmurs or loud shouting....

It is over for me now and vanished. That opportunity will come no more. Very probably you have heard already some crude inaccurate version of our story and why I did not take office, and have formed your partial judgement on me. And so it is I sit now at my stone table, half out of life already, in a warm, large, shadowy leisure, splashed with sunlight and hung with vine tendrils, with paper before me to distil such wisdom as I can, as Machiavelli in his exile sought to do, from the things I have learnt and felt during the career that has ended now in my divorce.

I climbed high and fast from small beginnings. I had the mind of my party. I do not know where I might not have ended, but for this red blaze that came out of my unguarded nature and closed my career for ever.

CHAPTER THE SECOND ~~ BROMSTEAD AND MY FATHER

1

I dreamt first of states and cities and political things when I was a little boy in knickerbockers.

When I think of how such things began in my mind, there comes back to me the memory of an enormous bleak room with its ceiling going up to heaven and its floor covered irregularly with patched and defective oilcloth and a dingy mat or so and a "surround" as they call it, of dark stained wood. Here and there against the wall are trunks and boxes. There are cupboards on either side of the fireplace and bookshelves with books above them, and on the wall and rather tattered is a large yellow-varnished geological map of the South of England. Over the mantel is a huge lump of white coral rock and several big fossil bones, and above that hangs the portrait of a brainy gentleman, sliced in half and displaying an interior of intricate detail and much vigour of coloring. It is the floor I think of chiefly; over the oilcloth of which, assumed to be land, spread towns and villages and forts of wooden bricks; there are steep square hills (geologically, volumes of Orr's CYCLOPAEDIA OF THE SCIENCES) and the cracks and spaces of the floor and the bare brown surround were the water channels and open sea of that continent of mine.

I still remember with infinite gratitude the great-uncle to whom I owe my bricks. He must have been one of those rare adults who have not forgotten the chagrins and dreams of childhood. He was a prosperous west of England builder; including my father he had three nephews, and for each of them he caused a box of bricks to be made by an out-of-work carpenter, not the insufficient supply of the toyshop, you understand, but a really adequate quantity of bricks made out of oak and shaped and smoothed, bricks about five inches by two and a half by one, and half-bricks and quarter-bricks to correspond. There were hundreds of them, many hundreds. I could build six towers as high as myself with them, and there seemed quite enough for every engineering project I could undertake. I could build

whole towns with streets and houses and churches and citadels; I could bridge every gap in the oilcloth and make causeways over crumpled spaces (which I feigned to be morasses), and on a keel of whole bricks it was possible to construct ships to push over the high seas to the remotest port in the room. And a disciplined population, that rose at last by sedulous begging on birthdays and all convenient occasions to well over two hundred, of lead sailors and soldiers, horse, foot and artillery, inhabited this world.

Justice has never been done to bricks and soldiers by those who write about toys. The praises of the toy theatre have been a common theme for essayists, the planning of the scenes, the painting and cutting out of the caste, penny plain twopence coloured, the stink and glory of the performance and the final conflagration. I had such a theatre once, but I never loved it nor hoped for much from it; my bricks and soldiers were my perpetual drama. I recall an incessant variety of interests. There was the mystery and charm of the complicated buildings one could make, with long passages and steps and windows through which one peeped into their intricacies, and by means of slips of card one could make slanting ways in them, and send marbles rolling from top to base and thence out into the hold of a waiting ship. Then there were the fortresses and gun emplacements and covered ways in which one's soldiers went. And there was commerce; the shops and markets and store-rooms full of nasturtium seed, thrift seed, lupin beans and suchlike provender from the garden; such stuff one stored in match-boxes and pill-boxes, or packed in sacks of old glove fingers tied up with thread and sent off by waggons along the great military road to the beleaguered fortress on the Indian frontier beyond the worn places that were dismal swamps. And there were battles on the way.

That great road is still clear in my memory. I was given, I forget by what benefactor, certain particularly fierce red Indians of lead — I have never seen such soldiers since — and for these my father helped me to make tepees of brown paper, and I settled them in a hitherto desolate country under the frowning nail-studded cliffs of an ancient trunk. Then I conquered them and garrisoned their land. (Alas! they died, no doubt through contact with civilisation — one my mother trod on — and their land became a wilderness again and was ravaged

for a time by a clockwork crocodile of vast proportions.) And out towards the coal-scuttle was a region near the impassable thickets of the ragged hearthrug where lived certain china Zulus brandishing spears, and a mountain country of rudely piled bricks concealing the most devious and enchanting caves and several mines of gold and silver paper. Among these rocks a number of survivors from a Noah's Ark made a various, dangerous, albeit frequently invalid and crippled fauna, and I was wont to increase the uncultivated wildness of this region further by trees of privet-twigs from the garden hedge and box from the garden borders. By these territories went my Imperial Road carrying produce to and fro, bridging gaps in the oilcloth, tunnelling through Encyclopaedic hills — one tunnel was three volumes long — defended as occasion required by camps of paper tents or brick blockhouses, and ending at last in a magnificently engineered ascent to a fortress on the cliffs commanding the Indian reservation.

My games upon the floor must have spread over several years and developed from small beginnings, incorporating now this suggestion and now that. They stretch, I suppose, from seven to eleven or twelve. I played them intermittently, and they bulk now in the retrospect far more significantly than they did at the time. I played them in bursts, and then forgot them for long periods; through the spring and summer I was mostly out of doors, and school and classes caught me early. And in the retrospect I see them all not only magnified and transfigured, but fore-shortened and confused together. A clockwork railway, I seem to remember, came and went; one or two clockwork boats, toy sailing ships that, being keeled, would do nothing but lie on their beam ends on the floor; a detestable lot of cavalrymen, undersized and gilt all over, given me by a maiden aunt, and very much what one might expect from an aunt, that I used as Nero used his Christians to ornament my public buildings; and I finally melted some into fratricidal bullets, and therewith blew the rest to flat splashes of lead by means of a brass cannon in the garden.

I find this empire of the floor much more vivid and detailed in my memory now than many of the owners of the skirts and legs and boots that went gingerly across its territories. Occasionally, alas! they stooped to scrub, abolishing in one universal destruction the

slow growth of whole days of civilised development. I still remember the hatred and disgust of these catastrophes. Like Noah I was given warnings. Did I disregard them, coarse red hands would descend, plucking garrisons from fortresses and sailors from ships, jumbling them up in their wrong boxes, clumsily so that their rifles and swords were broken, sweeping the splendid curves of the Imperial Road into heaps of ruins, casting the jungle growth of Zululand into the fire.

"Well, Master Dick," the voice of this cosmic calamity would say, "you ought to have put them away last night. No! I can't wait until you've sailed them all away in ships. I got my work to do, and do it I will."

And in no time all my continents and lands were swirling water and swiping strokes of house-flannel.

That was the worst of my giant visitants, but my mother too, dear lady, was something of a terror to this microcosm. She wore spring-sided boots, a kind of boot now vanished, I believe, from the world, with dull bodies and shiny toes, and a silk dress with flounces that were very destructive to the more hazardous viaducts of the Imperial Road. She was always, I seem to remember, fetching me; fetching me for a meal, fetching me for a walk or, detestable absurdity! fetching me for a wash and brush up, and she never seemed to understand anything whatever of the political Systems across which she came to me. Also she forbade all toys on Sundays except the bricks for church-building and the soldiers for church parade, or a Scriptural use of the remains of the Noah's Ark mixed up with a wooden Swiss dairy farm. But she really did not know whether a thing was a church or not unless it positively bristled with cannon, and many a Sunday afternoon have I played Chicago (with the fear of God in my heart) under an infidel pretence that it was a new sort of ark rather elaborately done.

Chicago, I must explain, was based upon my father's description of the pig slaughterings in that city and certain pictures I had seen. You made your beasts — which were all the ark lot really, provisionally conceived as pigs — go up elaborate approaches to a central pen, from which they went down a cardboard slide four at a time, and dropped most satisfyingly down a brick shaft, and pitter-

litter over some steep steps to where a head slaughterman (ne Noah) strung a cotton loop round their legs and sent them by pin hooks along a wire to a second slaughterman with a chipped foot (formerly Mrs. Noah) who, if I remember rightly, converted them into Army sausage by means of a portion of the inside of an old alarum clock.

My mother did not understand my games, but my father did. He wore bright-coloured socks and carpet slippers when he was indoors — my mother disliked boots in the house — and he would sit down on my little chair and survey the microcosm on the floor with admirable understanding and sympathy.

It was he who gave me most of my toys and, I more than suspect, most of my ideas. "Here's some corrugated iron," he would say, "suitable for roofs and fencing," and hand me a lump of that stiff crinkled paper that is used for packing medicine bottles. Or, "Dick, do you see the tiger loose near the Imperial Road? — won't do for your cattle ranch." And I would find a bright new lead tiger like a special creation at large in the world, and demanding a hunting expedition and much elaborate effort to get him safely housed in the city menagerie beside the captured dragon crocodile, tamed now, and his key lost and the heart and spring gone out of him.

And to the various irregular reading of my father I owe the inestimable blessing of never having a boy's book in my boyhood except those of Jules Verne. But my father used to get books for himself and me from the Bromstead Institute, Fenimore Cooper and Mayne Reid and illustrated histories; one of the Russo-Turkish war and one of Napier's expedition to Abyssinia I read from end to end; Stanley and Livingstone, lives of Wellington, Napoleon and Garibaldi, and back volumes of PUNCH, from which I derived conceptions of foreign and domestic politics it has taken years of adult reflection to correct. And at home permanently we had Wood's NATURAL HISTORY, a brand-new illustrated Green's HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE, Irving's COMPANIONS OF COLUMBUS, a great number of unbound parts of some geographical work, a VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD I think it was called, with pictures of foreign places, and Clarke's NEW TESTAMENT with a map of Palestine, and a variety of other informing books bought at sales. There was a Sowerby's BOTANY

also, with thousands of carefully tinted pictures of British plants, and one or two other important works in the sitting-room. I was allowed to turn these over and even lie on the floor with them on Sundays and other occasions of exceptional cleanliness.

And in the attic I found one day a very old forgotten map after the fashion of a bird's-eye view, representing the Crimea, that fascinated me and kept me for hours navigating its waters with a pin.

2

My father was a lank-limbed man in easy shabby tweed clothes and with his hands in his trouser pockets. He was a science teacher, taking a number of classes at the Bromstead Institute in Kent under the old Science and Art Department, and "visiting" various schools; and our resources were eked out by my mother's income of nearly a hundred pounds a year, and by his inheritance of a terrace of three palatial but structurally unsound stucco houses near Bromstead Station.

They were big clumsy residences in the earliest Victorian style, interminably high and with deep damp basements and downstairs coal-cellars and kitchens that suggested an architect vindictively devoted to the discomfort of the servant class. If so, he had overreached himself and defeated his end, for no servant would stay in them unless for exceptional wages or exceptional tolerance of inefficiency or exceptional freedom in repartee. Every storey in the house was from twelve to fifteen feet high (which would have been cool and pleasant in a hot climate), and the stairs went steeply up, to end at last in attics too inaccessible for occupation. The ceilings had vast plaster cornices of classical design, fragments of which would sometimes fall unexpectedly, and the wall-papers were bold and gigantic in pattern and much variegated by damp and ill-mended rents.

As my father was quite unable to let more than one of these houses at a time, and that for the most part to eccentric and undesirable tenants, he thought it politic to live in one of the two others, and devote the rent he received from the let one, when it was let, to the incessant necessary repairing of all three. He also did some

of the repairing himself and, smoking a bull-dog pipe the while, which my mother would not allow him to do in the house, he cultivated vegetables in a sketchy, unpunctual and not always successful manner in the unoccupied gardens. The three houses faced north, and the back of the one we occupied was covered by a grape-vine that yielded, I remember, small green grapes for pies in the spring, and imperfectly ripe black grapes in favourable autumns for the purposes of dessert. The grape-vine played an important part in my life, for my father broke his neck while he was pruning it, when I was thirteen.

My father was what is called a man of ideas, but they were not always good ideas. My grandfather had been a private schoolmaster and one of the founders of the College of Preceptors, and my father had assisted him in his school until increasing competition and diminishing attendance had made it evident that the days of small private schools kept by unqualified persons were numbered. Thereupon my father had roused himself and had qualified as a science teacher under the Science and Art Department, which in these days had charge of the scientific and artistic education of the mass of the English population, and had thrown himself into science teaching and the earning of government grants therefor with great if transitory zeal and success.

I do not remember anything of my father's earlier and more energetic time. I was the child of my parents' middle years; they married when my father was thirty-five and my mother past forty, and I saw only the last decadent phase of his educational career.

The Science and Art Department has vanished altogether from the world, and people are forgetting it now with the utmost readiness and generosity. Part of its substance and staff and spirit survive, more or less completely digested into the Board of Education.

The world does move on, even in its government. It is wonderful how many of the clumsy and limited governing bodies of my youth and early manhood have given place now to more scientific and efficient machinery. When I was a boy, Bromstead, which is now a borough, was ruled by a strange body called a Local Board — it was the Age of Boards — and I still remember indistinctly my father rejoicing at the breakfast-table over the liberation of London from

the corrupt and devastating control of a Metropolitan Board of Works. Then there were also School Boards; I was already practically in politics before the London School Board was absorbed by the spreading tentacles of the London County Council.

It gives a measure of the newness of our modern ideas of the State to remember that the very beginnings of public education lie within my father's lifetime, and that many most intelligent and patriotic people were shocked beyond measure at the State doing anything of the sort. When he was born, totally illiterate people who could neither read a book nor write more than perhaps a clumsy signature, were to be found everywhere in England; and great masses of the population were getting no instruction at all. Only a few schools flourished upon the patronage of exceptional parents; all over the country the old endowed grammar schools were to be found sinking and dwindling; many of them had closed altogether. In the new great centres of population multitudes of children were sweated in the factories, darkly ignorant and wretched and the under-equipped and under-staffed National and British schools, supported by voluntary contributions and sectarian rivalries, made an ineffectual fight against this festering darkness. It was a condition of affairs clamouring for remedies, but there was an immense amount of indifference and prejudice to be overcome before any remedies were possible. Perhaps some day some industrious and lucid historian will disentangle all the muddle of impulses and antagonisms, the commercialism, utilitarianism, obstinate conservatism, humanitarian enthusiasm, out of which our present educational organisation arose. I have long since come to believe it necessary that all new social institutions should be born in confusion, and that at first they should present chiefly crude and ridiculous aspects. The distrust of government in the Victorian days was far too great, and the general intelligence far too low, to permit the State to go about the new business it was taking up in a businesslike way, to train teachers, build and equip schools, endow pedagogic research, and provide properly written school-books. These things it was felt MUST be provided by individual and local effort, and since it was manifest that it was individual and local effort that were in default, it was reluctantly agreed to stimulate them by money payments. The State

set up a machinery of examination both in Science and Art and for the elementary schools; and payments, known technically as grants, were made in accordance with the examination results attained, to such schools as Providence might see fit to send into the world. In this way it was felt the Demand would be established that would, according to the beliefs of that time, inevitably ensure the Supply. An industry of "Grant earning" was created, and this would give education as a necessary by-product.

In the end this belief was found to need qualification, but Grant-earning was still in full activity when I was a small boy. So far as the Science and Art Department and my father are concerned, the task of examination was entrusted to eminent scientific men, for the most part quite unaccustomed to teaching. You see, if they also were teaching similar classes to those they examined, it was feared that injustice might be done. Year after year these eminent persons set questions and employed subordinates to read and mark the increasing thousands of answers that ensued, and having no doubt the national ideal of fairness well developed in their minds, they were careful each year to re-read the preceding papers before composing the current one, in order to see what it was usual to ask. As a result of this, in the course of a few years the recurrence and permutation of questions became almost calculable, and since the practical object of the teaching was to teach people not science, but how to write answers to these questions, the industry of Grant-earning assumed a form easily distinguished from any kind of genuine education whatever.

Other remarkable compromises had also to be made with the spirit of the age. The unfortunate conflict between Religion and Science prevalent at this time was mitigated, if I remember rightly, by making graduates in arts and priests in the established church Science Teachers EX OFFICIO, and leaving local and private enterprise to provide schools, diagrams, books, material, according to the conceptions of efficiency prevalent in the district. Private enterprise made a particularly good thing of the books. A number of competing firms of publishers sprang into existence specialising in Science and Art Department work; they set themselves to produce text-books that should supply exactly the quantity and quality of

knowledge necessary for every stage of each of five and twenty subjects into which desirable science was divided, and copies and models and instructions that should give precisely the method and gestures esteemed as proficiency in art. Every section of each book was written in the idiom found to be most satisfactory to the examiners, and test questions extracted from papers set in former years were appended to every chapter. By means of these last the teacher was able to train his class to the very highest level of grant-earning efficiency, and very naturally he cast all other methods of exposition aside. First he posed his pupils with questions and then dictated model replies.

That was my father's method of instruction. I attended his classes as an elementary grant-earner from the age of ten until his death, and it is so I remember him, sitting on the edge of a table, smothering a yawn occasionally and giving out the infallible formulae to the industriously scribbling class sitting in rows of desks before him. Occasionally he would slide to his feet and go to a blackboard on an easel and draw on that very slowly and deliberately in coloured chalks a diagram for the class to copy in coloured pencils, and sometimes he would display a specimen or arrange an experiment for them to see. The room in the Institute in which he taught was equipped with a certain amount of apparatus prescribed as necessary for subject this and subject that by the Science and Art Department, and this my father would supplement with maps and diagrams and drawings of his own.

But he never really did experiments, except that in the class in systematic botany he sometimes made us tease common flowers to pieces. He did not do experiments if he could possibly help it, because in the first place they used up time and gas for the Bunsen burner and good material in a ruinous fashion, and in the second they were, in his rather careless and sketchy hands, apt to endanger the apparatus of the Institute and even the lives of his students. Then thirdly, real experiments involved washing up. And moreover they always turned out wrong, and sometimes misled the too observant learner very seriously and opened demoralising controversies. Quite early in life I acquired an almost ineradicable sense of the unscientific perversity of Nature and the impassable gulf that is fixed

between systematic science and elusive fact. I knew, for example, that in science, whether it be subject XII., Organic Chemistry, or subject XVII., Animal Physiology, when you blow into a glass of lime-water it instantly becomes cloudy, and if you continue to blow it clears again, whereas in truth you may blow into the stuff from the lime-water bottle until you are crimson in the face and painful under the ears, and it never becomes cloudy at all. And I knew, too, that in science if you put potassium chlorate into a retort and heat it over a Bunsen burner, oxygen is disengaged and may be collected over water, whereas in real life if you do anything of the sort the vessel cracks with a loud report, the potassium chlorate descends sizzling upon the flame, the experimenter says "Oh! Damn!" with astonishing heartiness and distinctness, and a lady student in the back seats gets up and leaves the room.

Science is the organised conquest of Nature, and I can quite understand that ancient libertine refusing to co-operate in her own undoing. And I can quite understand, too, my father's preference for what he called an illustrative experiment, which was simply an arrangement of the apparatus in front of the class with nothing whatever by way of material, and the Bunsen burner clean and cool, and then a slow luminous description of just what you did put in it when you were so ill-advised as to carry the affair beyond illustration, and just exactly what ought anyhow to happen when you did. He had considerable powers of vivid expression, so that in this way he could make us see all he described. The class, freed from any unpleasant nervous tension, could draw this still life without flinching, and if any part was too difficult to draw, then my father would produce a simplified version on the blackboard to be copied instead. And he would also write on the blackboard any exceptionally difficult but grant-earning words, such as "empyreumatic" or "botryoidal."

Some words in constant use he rarely explained. I remember once sticking up my hand and asking him in the full flow of description, "Please, sir, what is flocculent?"

"The precipitate is."

"Yes, sir, but what does it mean?"

"Oh! flocculent!" said my father, "flocculent! Why—" he

extended his hand and arm and twiddled his fingers for a second in the air. “Like that,” he said.

I thought the explanation sufficient, but he paused for a moment after giving it. “As in a flock bed, you know,” he added and resumed his discourse.

3

My father, I am afraid, carried a natural incompetence in practical affairs to an exceptionally high level. He combined practical incompetence, practical enterprise and a thoroughly sanguine temperament, in a manner that I have never seen paralleled in any human being. He was always trying to do new things in the briskest manner, under the suggestion of books or papers or his own spontaneous imagination, and as he had never been trained to do anything whatever in his life properly, his futilities were extensive and thorough. At one time he nearly gave up his classes for intensive culture, so enamoured was he of its possibilities; the peculiar pungency of the manure he got, in pursuit of a chemical theory of his own, has scarred my olfactory memories for a lifetime. The intensive culture phase is very clear in my memory; it came near the end of his career and when I was between eleven and twelve. I was mobilised to gather caterpillars on several occasions, and assisted in nocturnal raids upon the slugs by lantern-light that wrecked my preparation work for school next day. My father dug up both lawns, and trenched and manured in spasms of immense vigour alternating with periods of paralysing distaste for the garden. And for weeks he talked about eight hundred pounds an acre at every meal.

A garden, even when it is not exasperated by intensive methods, is a thing as exacting as a baby, its moods have to be watched; it does not wait upon the cultivator’s convenience, but has times of its own. Intensive culture greatly increases this disposition to trouble mankind; it makes a garden touchy and hysterical, a drugged and demoralised and over-irritated garden. My father got at cross purposes with our two patches at an early stage. Everything grew wrong from the first to last, and if my father’s manures intensified nothing else, they certainly intensified the Primordial Curse. The

peas were eaten in the night before they were three inches high, the beans bore nothing but blight, the only apparent result of a spraying of the potatoes was to develop a PENCHANT in the cat for being ill indoors, the cucumber frames were damaged by the catapulting of boys going down the lane at the back, and all your cucumbers were mysteriously embittered. That lane with its occasional passers-by did much to wreck the intensive scheme, because my father always stopped work and went indoors if any one watched him. His special manure was apt to arouse a troublesome spirit of inquiry in hardy natures.

In digging his rows and shaping his patches he neglected the guiding string and trusted to his eye altogether too much, and the consequent obliquity and the various wind-breaks and scare-crows he erected, and particularly an irrigation contrivance he began and never finished by which everything was to be watered at once by means of pieces of gutter from the roof and outhouses of Number 2, and a large and particularly obstinate clump of elder-bushes in the abolished hedge that he had failed to destroy entirely either by axe or by fire, combined to give the gardens under intensive culture a singularly desolate and disorderly appearance. He took steps towards the diversion of our house drain under the influence of the Sewage Utilisation Society; but happily he stopped in time. He hardly completed any of the operations he began; something else became more urgent or simply he tired; a considerable area of the Number 2 territory was never even dug up.

In the end the affair irritated him beyond endurance. Never was a man less horticulturally-minded. The clamour of these vegetables he had launched into the world for his service and assistance, wore out his patience. He would walk into the garden the happiest of men after a day or so of disregard, talking to me of history perhaps or social organisation, or summarising some book he had read. He talked to me of anything that interested him, regardless of my limitations. Then he would begin to note the growth of the weeds. “This won’t do,” he would say and pull up a handful.

More weeding would follow and the talk would become fragmentary. His hands would become earthy, his nails black, weeds would snap off in his careless grip, leaving the roots behind. The

world would darken. He would look at his fingers with disgusted astonishment. “CURSE these weeds!” he would say from his heart. His discourse was at an end.

I have memories, too, of his sudden unexpected charges into the tranquillity of the house, his hands and clothes intensively enriched. He would come in like a whirlwind. “This damned stuff all over me and the Agricultural Chemistry Class at six! Bah! AAAAAAH!”

My mother would never learn not to attempt to break him of swearing on such occasions. She would remain standing a little stiffly in the scullery refusing to assist him to the adjectival towel he sought.

“If you say such things—”

He would dance with rage and hurl the soap about. “The towel!” he would cry, flicking suds from big fingers in every direction; “the towel! I’ll let the blithering class slide if you don’t give me the towel! I’ll give up everything, I tell you — everything!”...

At last with the failure of the lettuces came the breaking point. I was in the little arbour learning Latin irregular verbs when it happened. I can see him still, his peculiar tenor voice still echoes in my brain, shouting his opinion of intensive culture for all the world to hear, and slashing away at that abominable mockery of a crop with a hoe. We had tied them up with bast only a week or so before, and now half were rotten and half had shot up into tall slender growths. He had the hoe in both hands and slogged. Great wipes he made, and at each stroke he said, “Take that!”

The air was thick with flying fragments of abortive salad. It was a fantastic massacre. It was the French Revolution of that cold tyranny, the vindictive overthrow of the pampered vegetable aristocrats. After he had assuaged his passion upon them, he turned for other prey; he kicked holes in two of our noblest marrows, flicked off the heads of half a row of artichokes, and shied the hoe with a splendid smash into the cucumber frame. Something of the awe of that moment returns to me as I write of it.

“Well, my boy,” he said, approaching with an expression of beneficent happiness, “I’ve done with gardening. Let’s go for a walk like reasonable beings. I’ve had enough of this” — his face was convulsed for an instant with bitter resentment— “Pandering to

cabbages.”

4

That afternoon’s walk sticks in my memory for many reasons. One is that we went further than I had ever been before; far beyond Keston and nearly to Seven-oaks, coming back by train from Dunton Green, and the other is that my father as he went along talked about himself, not so much to me as to himself, and about life and what he had done with it. He monologued so that at times he produced an effect of weird world-forgetfulness. I listened puzzled, and at that time not understanding many things that afterwards became plain to me. It is only in recent years that I have discovered the pathos of that monologue; how friendless my father was and uncompanioned in his thoughts and feelings, and what a hunger he may have felt for the sympathy of the undeveloped youngster who trotted by his side.

“I’m no gardener,” he said, “I’m no anything. Why the devil did I start gardening?

“I suppose man was created to mind a garden... But the Fall let us out of that! What was I created for? God! what was I created for?...

“Slaves to matter! Minding inanimate things! It doesn’t suit me, you know. I’ve got no hands and no patience. I’ve mucked about with life. Mucked about with life.” He suddenly addressed himself to me, and for an instant I started like an eavesdropper discovered. “Whatever you do, boy, whatever you do, make a Plan. Make a good Plan and stick to it. Find out what life is about — I never have — and set yourself to do whatever you ought to do. I admit it’s a puzzle....

“Those damned houses have been the curse of my life. Stucco white elephants! Beastly cracked stucco with stains of green — black and green. Conferva and soot.... Property, they are!... Beware of Things, Dick, beware of Things! Before you know where you are you are waiting on them and minding them. They’ll eat your life up. Eat up your hours and your blood and energy! When those houses came to me, I ought to have sold them — or fled the country. I ought to have cleared out. Sarcophagi — eaters of men! Oh! the hours and days of work, the nights of anxiety those vile houses have cost me!

The painting! It worked up my arms; it got all over me. I stank of it. It made me ill. It isn't living — it's minding....

"Property's the curse of life. Property! Ugh! Look at this country all cut up into silly little parallelograms, look at all those villas we passed just now and those potato patches and that tarred shanty and the hedge! Somebody's minding every bit of it like a dog tied to a cart's tail. Patching it and bothering about it. Bothering! Yapping at every passer-by. Look at that notice-board! One rotten worried little beast wants to keep us other rotten little beasts off HIS patch, — God knows why! Look at the weeds in it. Look at the mended fence!... There's no property worth having, Dick, but money. That's only good to spend. All these things. Human souls buried under a cartload of blithering rubbish....

"I'm not a fool, Dick. I have qualities, imagination, a sort of go. I ought to have made a better thing of life.

"I'm sure I could have done things. Only the old people pulled my leg. They started me wrong. They never started me at all. I only began to find out what life was like when I was nearly forty.

"If I'd gone to a university; if I'd had any sort of sound training, if I hadn't slipped into the haphazard places that came easiest....

"Nobody warned me. Nobody. It isn't a world we live in, Dick; it's a cascade of accidents; it's a chaos exasperated by policemen! YOU be warned in time, Dick. You stick to a plan. Don't wait for any one to show you the way. Nobody will. There isn't a way till you make one. Get education, get a good education. Fight your way to the top. It's your only chance. I've watched you. You'll do no good at digging and property minding. There isn't a neighbour in Bromstead won't be able to skin you at suchlike games. You and I are the brainy unstable kind, topside or nothing. And if ever those blithering houses come to you — don't have 'em. Give them away! Dynamite 'em — and off! LIVE, Dick! I'll get rid of them for you if I can, Dick, but remember what I say."...

So it was my father discoursed, if not in those particular words, yet exactly in that manner, as he slouched along the southward road, with resentful eyes becoming less resentful as he talked, and flinging out clumsy illustrative motions at the outskirts of Bromstead as we passed along them. That afternoon he hated Bromstead, from its foot-

tiring pebbles up. He had no illusions about Bromstead or himself. I have the clearest impression of him in his garden-stained tweeds with a deer-stalker hat on the back of his head and presently a pipe sometimes between his teeth and sometimes in his gesticulating hand, as he became diverted by his talk from his original exasperation....

This particular afternoon is no doubt mixed up in my memory with many other afternoons; all sorts of things my father said and did at different times have got themselves referred to it; it filled me at the time with a great unprecedented sense of fellowship and it has become the symbol now for all our intercourse together. If I didn't understand the things he said, I did the mood he was in. He gave me two very broad ideas in that talk and the talks I have mingled with it; he gave them to me very clearly and they have remained fundamental in my mind; one a sense of the extraordinary confusion and waste and planlessness of the human life that went on all about us; and the other of a great ideal of order and economy which he called variously Science and Civilisation, and which, though I do not remember that he ever used that word, I suppose many people nowadays would identify with Socialism, — as the Fabians expound it.

He was not very definite about this Science, you must understand, but he seemed always to be waving his hand towards it, — just as his contemporary Tennyson seems always to be doing — he belonged to his age and mostly his talk was destructive of the limited beliefs of his time, he led me to infer rather than actually told me that this Science was coming, a spirit of light and order, to the rescue of a world groaning and travailing in muddle for the want of it....

5

When I think of Bromstead nowadays I find it inseparably bound up with the disorders of my father's gardening, and the odd patchings and paintings that disfigured his houses. It was all of a piece with that.

Let me try and give something of the quality of Bromstead and something of its history. It is the quality and history of a thousand places round and about London, and round and about the other great

centres of population in the world. Indeed it is in a measure the quality of the whole of this modern world from which we who have the statesman's passion struggle to evolve, and dream still of evolving order.

First, then, you must think of Bromstead a hundred and fifty years ago, as a narrow irregular little street of thatched houses strung out on the London and Dover Road, a little mellow sample unit of a social order that had a kind of completeness, at its level, of its own. At that time its population numbered a little under two thousand people, mostly engaged in agricultural work or in trades serving agriculture. There was a blacksmith, a saddler, a chemist, a doctor, a barber, a linen-draper (who brewed his own beer); a veterinary surgeon, a hardware shop, and two capacious inns. Round and about it were a number of pleasant gentlemen's seats, whose owners went frequently to London town in their coaches along the very tolerable high-road. The church was big enough to hold the whole population, were people minded to go to church, and indeed a large proportion did go, and all who married were married in it, and everybody, to begin with, was christened at its font and buried at last in its yew-shaded graveyard. Everybody knew everybody in the place. It was, in fact, a definite place and a real human community in those days. There was a pleasant old market-house in the middle of the town with a weekly market, and an annual fair at which much cheerful merry making and homely intoxication occurred; there was a pack of hounds which hunted within five miles of London Bridge, and the local gentry would occasionally enliven the place with valiant cricket matches for a hundred guineas a side, to the vast excitement of the entire population. It was very much the same sort of place that it had been for three or four centuries. A Bromstead Rip van Winkle from 1550 returning in 1750 would have found most of the old houses still as he had known them, the same trades a little improved and differentiated one from the other, the same roads rather more carefully tended, the Inns not very much altered, the ancient familiar market-house. The occasional wheeled traffic would have struck him as the most remarkable difference, next perhaps to the swaggering painted stone monuments instead of brasses and the protestant severity of the communion-table in the parish church, — both from

the material point of view very little things. A Rip van Winkle from 1350, again, would have noticed scarcely greater changes; fewer clergy, more people, and particularly more people of the middling sort; the glass in the windows of many of the houses, the stylish chimneys springing up everywhere would have impressed him, and suchlike details. The place would have had the same boundaries, the same broad essential features, would have been still itself in the way that a man is still himself after he has "filled out" a little and grown a longer beard and changed his clothes.

But after 1750 something got hold of the world, something that was destined to alter the scale of every human affair.

That something was machinery and a vague energetic disposition to improve material things. In another part of England ingenious people were beginning to use coal in smelting iron, and were producing metal in abundance and metal castings in sizes that had hitherto been unattainable. Without warning or preparation, increment involving countless possibilities of further increment was coming to the strength of horses and men. "Power," all unsuspected, was flowing like a drug into the veins of the social body.

Nobody seems to have perceived this coming of power, and nobody had calculated its probable consequences. Suddenly, almost inadvertently, people found themselves doing things that would have amazed their ancestors. They began to construct wheeled vehicles much more easily and cheaply than they had ever done before, to make up roads and move things about that had formerly been esteemed too heavy for locomotion, to join woodwork with iron nails instead of wooden pegs, to achieve all sorts of mechanical possibilities, to trade more freely and manufacture on a larger scale, to send goods abroad in a wholesale and systematic way, to bring back commodities from overseas, not simply spices and fine commodities, but goods in bulk. The new influence spread to agriculture, iron appliances replaced wooden, breeding of stock became systematic, paper-making and printing increased and cheapened. Roofs of slate and tile appeared amidst and presently prevailed over the original Bromstead thatch, the huge space of Common to the south was extensively enclosed, and what had been an ill-defined horse-track to Dover, only passable by adventurous

coaches in dry weather, became the Dover Road, and was presently the route first of one and then of several daily coaches. The High Street was discovered to be too tortuous for these awakening energies, and a new road cut off its worst contortions. Residential villas appeared occupied by retired tradesmen and widows, who esteemed the place healthy, and by others of a strange new unoccupied class of people who had money invested in joint-stock enterprises. First one and then several boys' boarding-schools came, drawing their pupils from London, — my grandfather's was one of these. London, twelve miles to the north-west, was making itself felt more and more.

But this was only the beginning of the growth period, the first trickle of the coming flood of mechanical power. Away in the north they were casting iron in bigger and bigger forms, working their way to the production of steel on a large scale, applying power in factories. Bromstead had almost doubted in size again long before the railway came; there was hardly any thatch left in the High Street, but instead were houses with handsome brass-knockered front doors and several windows, and shops with shop-fronts all of square glass panes, and the place was lighted publicly now by oil lamps — previously only one flickering lamp outside each of the coaching inns had broken the nocturnal darkness. And there was talk, it long remained talk, — of gas. The gasworks came in 1834, and about that date my father's three houses must have been built convenient for the London Road. They mark nearly the beginning of the real suburban quality; they were let at first to City people still engaged in business.

And then hard on the gasworks had come the railway and cheap coal; there was a wild outbreak of brickfields upon the claylands to the east, and the Great Growth had begun in earnest. The agricultural placidities that had formerly come to the very borders of the High Street were broken up north, west and south, by new roads. This enterprising person and then that began to "run up" houses, irrespective of every other enterprising person who was doing the same thing. A Local Board came into existence, and with much hesitation and penny-wise economy inaugurated drainage works. Rates became a common topic, a fact of accumulating importance. Several chapels of zinc and iron appeared, and also a white new

church in commercial Gothic upon the common, and another of red brick in the residential district out beyond the brickfields towards Chessington.

The population doubled again and doubled again, and became particularly teeming in the prolific "working-class" district about the deep-rutted, muddy, coal-blackened roads between the gasworks, Blodgett's laundries, and the railway goods-yard. Weekly properties, that is to say small houses built by small property owners and let by the week, sprang up also in the Cage Fields, and presently extended right up the London Road. A single national school in an inconvenient situation set itself inadequately to collect subscriptions and teach the swarming, sniffing, grimy offspring of this dingy new population to read. The villages of Beckington, which used to be three miles to the west, and Blamely four miles to the east of Bromstead, were experiencing similar distensions and proliferations, and grew out to meet us. All effect of locality or community had gone from these places long before I was born; hardly any one knew any one; there was no general meeting place any more, the old fairs were just common nuisances haunted by gypsies, van showmen, Cheap Jacks and London roughs, the churches were incapable of a quarter of the population. One or two local papers of shameless veniality reported the proceedings of the local Bench and the local Board, compelled tradesmen who were interested in these affairs to advertise, used the epithet "Bromstedian" as one expressing peculiar virtues, and so maintained in the general mind a weak tradition of some local quality that embraced us all. Then the parish graveyard filled up and became a scandal, and an ambitious area with an air of appetite was walled in by a Bromstead Cemetery Company, and planted with suitably high-minded and sorrowful varieties of conifer. A stonemason took one of the earlier villas with a front garden at the end of the High Street, and displayed a supply of urns on pillars and headstones and crosses in stone, marble, and granite, that would have sufficed to commemorate in elaborate detail the entire population of Bromstead as one found it in 1750.

The cemetery was made when I was a little boy of five or six; I was in the full tide of building and growth from the first; the second railway with its station at Bromstead North and the drainage

followed when I was ten or eleven, and all my childish memories are of digging and wheeling, of woods invaded by building, roads gashed open and littered with iron pipes amidst a fearful smell of gas, of men peeped at and seen toiling away deep down in excavations, of hedges broken down and replaced by planks, of wheelbarrows and builders' sheds, of rivulets overtaken and swallowed up by drain-pipes. Big trees, and especially elms, cleared of undergrowth and left standing amid such things, acquired a peculiar tattered dinginess rather in the quality of needy widow women who have seen happier days.

The Ravensbrook of my earlier memories was a beautiful stream. It came into my world out of a mysterious Beyond, out of a garden, splashing brightly down a weir which had once been the weir of a mill. (Above the weir and inaccessible there were bulrushes growing in splendid clumps, and beyond that, pampas grass, yellow and crimson spikes of hollyhock, and blue suggestions of wonderland.) From the pool at the foot of this initial cascade it flowed in a leisurely fashion beside a footpath, — there were two pretty thatched cottages on the left, and here were ducks, and there were willows on the right, — and so came to where great trees grew on high banks on either hand and bowed closer, and at last met overhead. This part was difficult to reach because of an old fence, but a little boy might glimpse that long cavern of greenery by wading. Either I have actually seen kingfishers there, or my father has described them so accurately to me that he inserted them into my memory. I remember them there anyhow. Most of that overhung part I never penetrated at all, but followed the field path with my mother and met the stream again, where beyond there were flat meadows, Roper's meadows. The Ravensbrook went meandering across the middle of these, now between steep banks, and now with wide shallows at the bends where the cattle waded and drank. Yellow and purple loose-strife and ordinary rushes grew in clumps along the bank, and now and then a willow. On rare occasions of rapture one might see a rat cleaning his whiskers at the water's edge. The deep places were rich with tangled weeds, and in them fishes lurked — to me they were big fishes — water-boatmen and water-beetles traversed the calm surface of these still deeps; in one pool were yellow lilies and water-soldiers, and in

the shoaly places hovering fleets of small fry basked in the sunshine — to vanish in a flash at one's shadow. In one place, too, were Rapids, where the stream woke with a start from a dreamless brooding into foaming panic and babbled and hastened. Well do I remember that half-mile of rivulet; all other rivers and cascades have their reference to it for me. And after I was eleven, and before we left Bromstead, all the delight and beauty of it was destroyed.

The volume of its water decreased abruptly — I suppose the new drainage works that linked us up with Beckington, and made me first acquainted with the geological quality of the London clay, had to do with that — until only a weak uncleansing trickle remained. That at first did not strike me as a misfortune. An adventurous small boy might walk dryshod in places hitherto inaccessible. But hard upon that came the pegs, the planks and carts and devastation. Roper's meadows, being no longer in fear of floods, were now to be slashed out into parallelograms of untidy road, and built upon with rows of working-class cottages. The roads came, — horribly; the houses followed. They seemed to rise in the night. People moved into them as soon as the roofs were on, mostly workmen and their young wives, and already in a year some of these raw houses stood empty again from defaulting tenants, with windows broken and wood-work warping and rotting. The Ravensbrook became a dump for old iron, rusty cans, abandoned boots and the like, and was a river only when unusual rains filled it for a day or so with an inky flood of surface water....

That indeed was my most striking perception in the growth of Bromstead. The Ravensbrook had been important to my imaginative life; that way had always been my first choice in all my walks with my mother, and its rapid swamping by the new urban growth made it indicative of all the other things that had happened just before my time, or were still, at a less dramatic pace, happening. I realised that building was the enemy. I began to understand why in every direction out of Bromstead one walked past scaffold-poles into litter, why fragments of broken brick and cinder mingled in every path, and the significance of the universal notice-boards, either white and new or a year old and torn and battered, promising sites, proffering houses to be sold or let, abusing and intimidating passers-by for fancied

trespass, and protecting rights of way.

It is difficult to disentangle now what I understood at this time and what I have since come to understand, but it seems to me that even in those childish days I was acutely aware of an invading and growing disorder. The serene rhythms of the old established agriculture, I see now, were everywhere being replaced by cultivation under notice and snatch crops; hedges ceased to be repaired, and were replaced by cheap iron railings or chunks of corrugated iron; more and more hoardings sprang up, and contributed more and more to the nomad tribes of filthy paper scraps that flew before the wind and overspread the country. The outskirts of Bromstead were a maze of exploitation roads that led nowhere, that ended in tarred fences studded with nails (I don't remember barbed wire in those days; I think the Zeitgeist did not produce that until later), and in trespass boards that used vehement language. Broken glass, tin cans, and ashes and paper abounded. Cheap glass, cheap tin, abundant fuel, and a free untaxed Press had rushed upon a world quite unprepared to dispose of these blessings when the fulness of enjoyment was past.

I suppose one might have persuaded oneself that all this was but the replacement of an ancient tranquillity, or at least an ancient balance, by a new order. Only to my eyes, quickened by my father's intimations, it was manifestly no order at all. It was a multitude of incoordinated fresh starts, each more sweeping and destructive than the last, and none of them ever really worked out to a ripe and satisfactory completion. Each left a legacy of products, houses, humanity, or what not, in its wake. It was a sort of progress that had bolted; it was change out of hand, and going at an unprecedented pace nowhere in particular.

No, the Victorian epoch was not the dawn of a new era; it was a hasty, trial experiment, a gigantic experiment of the most slovenly and wasteful kind. I suppose it was necessary; I suppose all things are necessary. I suppose that before men will discipline themselves to learn and plan, they must first see in a hundred convincing forms the folly and muddle that come from headlong, aimless and haphazard methods. The nineteenth century was an age of demonstrations, some of them very impressive demonstrations, of the powers that have come to mankind, but of permanent achievement, what will our

descendants cherish? It is hard to estimate what grains of precious metal may not be found in a mud torrent of human production on so large a scale, but will any one, a hundred years from now, consent to live in the houses the Victorians built, travel by their roads or railways, value the furnishings they made to live among or esteem, except for curious or historical reasons, their prevalent art and the clipped and limited literature that satisfied their souls?

That age which bore me was indeed a world full of restricted and undisciplined people, overtaken by power, by possessions and great new freedoms, and unable to make any civilised use of them whatever; stricken now by this idea and now by that, tempted first by one possession and then another to ill-considered attempts; it was my father's exploitation of his villa gardens on the wholesale level. The whole of Bromstead as I remember it, and as I saw it last — it is a year ago now — is a dull useless boiling-up of human activities, an immense clustering of futilities. It is as unfinished as ever; the builders' roads still run out and end in mid-field in their old fashion; the various enterprises jumble in the same hopeless contradiction, if anything intensified. Pretentious villas jostle slums, and public-house and tin tabernacle glower at one another across the cat-haunted lot that intervenes. Roper's meadows are now quite frankly a slum; back doors and sculleries gape towards the railway, their yards are hung with tattered washing unashamed; and there seem to be more boards by the railway every time I pass, advertising pills and pickles, tonics and condiments, and suchlike solicitudes of a people with no natural health nor appetite left in them....

Well, we have to do better. Failure is not failure nor waste wasted if it sweeps away illusion and lights the road to a plan.

6

Chaotic indiscipline, ill-adjusted effort, spasmodic aims, these give the quality of all my Bromstead memories. The crowning one of them all rises to desolating tragedy. I remember now the wan spring sunshine of that Sunday morning, the stiff feeling of best clothes and aggressive cleanliness and formality, when I and my mother returned from church to find my father dead. He had been pruning the grape

vine. He had never had a ladder long enough to reach the sill of the third-floor windows — at house-painting times he had borrowed one from the plumber who mixed his paint — and he had in his own happy-go-lucky way contrived a combination of the garden fruit ladder with a battered kitchen table that served all sorts of odd purposes in an outhouse. He had stayed up this arrangement by means of the garden roller, and the roller had at the critical moment — rolled. He was lying close by the garden door with his head queerly bent back against a broken and twisted rainwater pipe, an expression of pacific contentment on his face, a bamboo curtain rod with a tableknife tied to end of it, still gripped in his hand. We had been rapping for some time at the front door unable to make him hear, and then we came round by the door in the side trellis into the garden and so discovered him.

"Arthur!" I remember my mother crying with the strangest break in her voice, "What are you doing there? Arthur! And — SUNDAY!"

I was coming behind her, musing remotely, when the quality of her voice roused me. She stood as if she could not go near him. He had always puzzled her so, he and his ways, and this seemed only another enigma. Then the truth dawned on her, she shrieked as if afraid of him, ran a dozen steps back towards the trellis door and stopped and clasped her ineffectual gloved hands, leaving me staring blankly, too astonished for feeling, at the carelessly flung limbs.

The same idea came to me also. I ran to her. "Mother!" I cried, pale to the depths of my spirit, "IS HE DEAD?"

I had been thinking two minutes before of the cold fruit pie that glorified our Sunday dinner-table, and how I might perhaps get into the tree at the end of the garden to read in the afternoon. Now an immense fact had come down like a curtain and blotted out all my childish world. My father was lying dead before my eyes.... I perceived that my mother was helpless and that things must be done.

"Mother!" I said, "we must get Doctor Beaseley, — and carry him indoors."

CHAPTER THE THIRD ~~ SCHOLASTIC

1

My formal education began in a small preparatory school in Bromstead. I went there as a day boy. The charge for my instruction was mainly set off by the periodic visits of my father with a large bag of battered fossils to lecture to us upon geology. I was one of those fortunate youngsters who take readily to school work, I had a good memory, versatile interests and a considerable appetite for commendation, and when I was barely twelve I got a scholarship at the City Merchants School and was entrusted with a scholar's railway season ticket to Victoria. After my father's death a large and very animated and solidly built uncle in tweeds from Staffordshire, Uncle Minter, my mother's sister's husband, with a remarkable accent and remarkable vowel sounds, who had plunged into the Bromstead home once or twice for the night but who was otherwise unknown to me, came on the scene, sold off the three gaunt houses with the utmost gusto, invested the proceeds and my father's life insurance money, and got us into a small villa at Penge within sight of that immense facade of glass and iron, the Crystal Palace. Then he retired in a mood of good-natured contempt to his native habitat again. We stayed at Penge until my mother's death.

School became a large part of the world to me, absorbing my time and interest, and I never acquired that detailed and intimate knowledge of Penge and the hilly villadom round about, that I have of the town and outskirts of Bromstead.

It was a district of very much the same character, but it was more completely urbanised and nearer to the centre of things; there were the same unfinished roads, the same occasional disconcerted hedges and trees, the same butcher's horse grazing under a builder's notice-board, the same incidental lapses into slum. The Crystal Palace grounds cut off a large part of my walking radius to the west with impassable fences and forbiddingly expensive turnstiles, but it added to the ordinary spectacle of meteorology a great variety of gratuitous fireworks which banged and flared away of a night after supper and

drew me abroad to see them better. Such walks as I took, to Croydon, Wembledon, West Wickham and Greenwich, impressed upon me the interminable extent of London's residential suburbs; mile after mile one went, between houses, villas, rows of cottages, streets of shops, under railway arches, over railway bridges. I have forgotten the detailed local characteristics — if there were any — of much of that region altogether. I was only there two years, and half my perambulations occurred at dusk or after dark. But with Penge I associate my first realisations of the wonder and beauty of twilight and night, the effect of dark walls reflecting lamplight, and the mystery of blue haze-veiled hillsides of houses, the glare of shops by night, the glowing steam and streaming sparks of railway trains and railway signals lit up in the darkness. My first rambles in the evening occurred at Penge — I was becoming a big and independent-spirited boy — and I began my experience of smoking during these twilight prowls with the threepenny packets of American cigarettes then just appearing in the world.

My life centred upon the City Merchants School. Usually I caught the eight-eighteen for Victoria, I had a midday meal and tea; four nights a week I stayed for preparation, and often I was not back home again until within an hour of my bedtime. I spent my half holidays at school in order to play cricket and football. This, and a pretty voracious appetite for miscellaneous reading which was fostered by the Penge Middleton Library, did not leave me much leisure for local topography. On Sundays also I sang in the choir at St. Martin's Church, and my mother did not like me to walk out alone on the Sabbath afternoon, she herself slumbered, so that I wrote or read at home. I must confess I was at home as little as I could contrive.

Home, after my father's death, had become a very quiet and uneventful place indeed. My mother had either an unimaginative temperament or her mind was greatly occupied with private religious solicitudes, and I remember her talking to me but little, and that usually upon topics I was anxious to evade. I had developed my own view about low-Church theology long before my father's death, and my meditation upon that event had finished my secret estrangement from my mother's faith. My reason would not permit even a remote

chance of his being in hell, he was so manifestly not evil, and this religion would not permit him a remote chance of being out yet. When I was a little boy my mother had taught me to read and write and pray and had done many things for me, indeed she persisted in washing me and even in making my clothes until I rebelled against these things as indignities. But our minds parted very soon. She never began to understand the mental processes of my play, she never interested herself in my school life and work, she could not understand things I said; and she came, I think, quite insensibly to regard me with something of the same hopeless perplexity she had felt towards my father.

Him she must have wedded under considerable delusions. I do not think he deceived her, indeed, nor do I suspect him of mercenariness in their union; but no doubt he played up to her requirements in the half ingenuous way that was and still is the quality of most wooing, and presented himself as a very brisk and orthodox young man. I wonder why nearly all love-making has to be fraudulent. Afterwards he must have disappointed her cruelly by letting one aspect after another of his careless, sceptical, experimental temperament appear. Her mind was fixed and definite, she embodied all that confidence in church and decorum and the assurances of the pulpit which was characteristic of the large mass of the English people — for after all, the rather low-Church section WAS the largest single mass — in early Victorian times. She had dreams, I suspect, of going to church with him side by side; she in a little poke bonnet and a large flounced crinoline, all mauve and magenta and starched under a little lace-trimmed parasol, and he in a tall silk hat and peg-top trousers and a roll-collar coat, and looking rather like the Prince Consort, — white angels almost visibly raining benedictions on their amiable progress. Perhaps she dreamt gently of much-belaced babies and an interestingly pious (but not too dissenting or fanatical) little girl or boy or so, also angel-haunted. And I think, too, she must have seen herself ruling a seemly "home of taste," with a vivarium in the conservatory that opened out of the drawing-room, or again, making preserves in the kitchen. My father's science-teaching, his diagrams of disembowelled humanity, his pictures of prehistoric beasts that contradicted the Flood, his disposition towards soft shirts and loose

tweed suits, his inability to use a clothes brush, his spasmodic reading fits and his bulldog pipes, must have jarred cruelly with her rather unintelligent anticipations. His wild moments of violent temper when he would swear and smash things, absurd almost lovable storms that passed like summer thunder, must have been starkly dreadful to her. She was constitutionally inadaptable, and certainly made no attempt to understand or tolerate these outbreaks. She tried them by her standards, and by her standards they were wrong. Her standards hid him from her. The blazing things he said rankled in her mind unforgettably.

As I remember them together they chafed constantly. Her attitude to nearly all his moods and all his enterprises was a sceptical disapproval. She treated him as something that belonged to me and not to her. "YOUR father," she used to call him, as though I had got him for her.

She had married late and she had, I think, become mentally self-subsisting before her marriage. Even in those Herne Hill days I used to wonder what was going on in her mind, and I find that old speculative curiosity return as I write this. She took a considerable interest in the housework that our generally servantless condition put upon her — she used to have a charwoman in two or three times a week — but she did not do it with any great skill. She covered most of our furniture with flouncey ill-fitting covers, and she cooked plainly and without very much judgment. The Penge house, as it contained nearly all our Bromstead things, was crowded with furniture, and is chiefly associated in my mind with the smell of turpentine, a condiment she used very freely upon the veneered mahogany pieces. My mother had an equal dread of "blacks" by day and the "night air," so that our brightly clean windows were rarely open.

She took a morning paper, and she would open it and glance at the headlines, but she did not read it until the afternoon and then, I think, she was interested only in the more violent crimes, and in railway and mine disasters and in the minutest domesticities of the Royal Family. Most of the books at home were my father's, and I do not think she opened any of them. She had one or two volumes that dated from her own youth, and she tried in vain to interest me in them;

there was Miss Strickland's QUEENS OF ENGLAND, a book I remember with particular animosity, and QUEECHY and the WIDE WIDE WORLD. She made these books of hers into a class apart by sewing outer covers upon them of calico and figured muslin. To me in these habiliments they seemed not so much books as confederated old ladies.

My mother was also very punctual with her religious duties, and rejoiced to watch me in the choir.

On winter evenings she occupied an armchair on the other side of the table at which I sat, head on hand reading, and she would be darning stockings or socks or the like. We achieved an effect of rather stuffy comfortableness that was soporific, and in a passive way I think she found these among her happy times. On such occasions she was wont to put her work down on her knees and fall into a sort of thoughtless musing that would last for long intervals and rouse my curiosity. For like most young people I could not imagine mental states without definite forms.

She carried on a correspondence with a number of cousins and friends, writing letters in a slanting Italian hand and dealing mainly with births, marriages and deaths, business starts (in the vaguest terms) and the distresses of bankruptcy.

And yet, you know, she did have a curious intimate life of her own that I suspected nothing of at the time, that only now becomes credible to me. She kept a diary that is still in my possession, a diary of fragmentary entries in a miscellaneous collection of pocket books. She put down the texts of the sermons she heard, and queer stiff little comments on casual visitors,— "Miss G. and much noisy shrieking talk about games and such frivolities and CROQUAY. A. delighted and VERY ATTENTIVE." Such little human entries abound. She had an odd way of never writing a name, only an initial; my father is always "A.," and I am always "D." It is manifest she followed the domestic events in the life of the Princess of Wales, who is now Queen Mother, with peculiar interest and sympathy. "Pray G. all may be well," she writes in one such crisis.

But there are things about myself that I still find too poignant to tell easily, certain painful and clumsy circumstances of my birth in very great detail, the distresses of my infantile ailments. Then later I

find such things as this: “Heard D. s —— .” The “s” is evidently “swear “— “G. bless and keep my boy from evil.” And again, with the thin handwriting shaken by distress: “D. would not go to church, and hardened his heart and said wicked infidel things, much disrespect of the clergy. The anthem is tiresome!!! That men should set up to be wiser than their maker!!!” Then trebly underlined: “I FEAR HIS FATHER’S TEACHING.” Dreadful little tangle of misapprehensions and false judgments! More comforting for me to read, “D. very kind and good. He grows more thoughtful every day.” I suspect myself of forgotten hypocrisies.

At just one point my mother’s papers seem to dip deeper. I think the death of my father must have stirred her for the first time for many years to think for herself. Even she could not go on living in any peace at all, believing that he had indeed been flung headlong into hell. Of this gnawing solicitude she never spoke to me, never, and for her diary also she could find no phrases. But on a loose half-sheet of notepaper between its pages I find this passage that follows, written very carefully. I do not know whose lines they are nor how she came upon them. They run: —

> “And if there be no meeting past the grave;
> If all is darkness, silence, yet ’tis rest.
> Be not afraid ye waiting hearts that weep,
> For God still giveth His beloved sleep,
> And if an endless sleep He wills, so best.”

That scrap of verse amazed me when I read it. I could even wonder if my mother really grasped the import of what she had copied out. It affected me as if a stone-deaf person had suddenly turned and joined in a whispered conversation. It set me thinking how far a mind in its general effect quite hopelessly limited, might range. After that I went through all her diaries, trying to find something more than a conventional term of tenderness for my father. But I found nothing. And yet somehow there grew upon me the realisation that there had been love.... Her love for me, on the other hand, was abundantly expressed.

I knew nothing of that secret life of feeling at the time; such expression as it found was all beyond my schoolboy range. I did not know when I pleased her and I did not know when I distressed her.

Chiefly I was aware of my mother as rather dull company, as a mind thorny with irrational conclusions and incapable of explication, as one believing quite wilfully and irritatingly in impossible things. So I suppose it had to be; life was coming to me in new forms and with new requirements. It was essential to our situation that we should fail to understand. After this space of years I have come to realisations and attitudes that dissolve my estrangement from her, I can pierce these barriers, I can see her and feel her as a loving and feeling and desiring and muddle-headed person. There are times when I would have her alive again, if only that I might be kind to her for a little while and give her some return for the narrow intense affection, the tender desires, she evidently lavished so abundantly on me. But then again I ask how I could make that return? And I realise the futility of such dreaming. Her demand was rigid, and to meet it I should need to act and lie.

So she whose blood fed me, whose body made me, lies in my memory as I saw her last, fixed, still, infinitely intimate, infinitely remote....

My own case with my mother, however, does not awaken the same regret I feel when I think of how she misjudged and irked my father, and turned his weaknesses into thorns for her own tormenting. I wish I could look back without that little twinge to two people who were both in their different quality so good. But goodness that is narrow is a pedestrian and ineffectual goodness. Her attitude to my father seems to me one of the essentially tragic things that have come to me personally, one of those things that nothing can transfigure, that REMAIN sorrowful, that I cannot soothe with any explanation, for as I remember him he was indeed the most lovable of weak spasmodic men. But my mother had been trained in a hard and narrow system that made evil out of many things not in the least evil, and inculcated neither kindliness nor charity. All their estrangement followed from that.

These cramping cults do indeed take an enormous toll of human love and happiness, and not only that but what we Machiavellians must needs consider, they make frightful breaches in human solidarity. I suppose I am a deeply religious man, as men of my quality go, but I hate more and more, as I grow older, the shadow of

intolerance cast by religious organisations. All my life has been darkened by irrational intolerance, by arbitrary irrational prohibitions and exclusions. Mahometanism with its fierce proselytism, has, I suppose, the blackest record of uncharitableness, but most of the Christian sects are tainted, tainted to a degree beyond any of the anterior paganisms, with this same hateful quality. It is their exclusive claim that sends them wrong, the vain ambition that inspires them all to teach a uniform one-sided God and be the one and only gateway to salvation. Deprecation of all outside the household of faith, an organised undervaluation of heretical goodness and lovableness, follows, necessarily. Every petty difference is exaggerated to the quality of a saving grace or a damning defect. Elaborate precautions are taken to shield the believer's mind against broad or amiable suggestions; the faithful are deterred by dark allusions, by sinister warnings, from books, from theatres, from worldly conversation, from all the kindly instruments that mingle human sympathy. For only by isolating its flock can the organisation survive.

Every month there came to my mother a little magazine called, if I remember rightly, the HOME CHURCHMAN, with the combined authority of print and clerical commendation. It was the most evil thing that ever came into the house, a very devil, a thin little pamphlet with one woodcut illustration on the front page of each number; now the uninviting visage of some exponent of the real and only doctrine and attitudes, now some coral strand in act of welcoming the missionaries of God's mysterious preferences, now a new church in the Victorian Gothic. The vile rag it was! A score of vices that shun the policeman have nothing of its subtle wickedness. It was an outrage upon the natural kindliness of men. The contents were all admirably adjusted to keep a spirit in prison. Their force of sustained suggestion was tremendous. There would be dreadful intimations of the swift retribution that fell upon individuals for Sabbath-breaking, and upon nations for weakening towards Ritualism, or treating Roman Catholics as tolerable human beings; there would be great rejoicings over the conversion of alleged Jews, and terrible descriptions of the death-beds of prominent infidels with boldly invented last words, — the most unscrupulous lying; there

would be the appallingly edifying careers of “early piety” lusciously described, or stories of condemned criminals who traced their final ruin unerringly to early laxities of the kind that leads people to give up subscribing to the HOME CHURCHMAN.

Every month that evil spirit brought about a slump in our mutual love. My mother used to read the thing and become depressed and anxious for my spiritual welfare, used to be stirred to unintelligent pestering....

2

A few years ago I met the editor of this same HOME CHURCHMAN. It was at one of the weekly dinners of that Fleet Street dining club, the Blackfriars.

I heard the paper’s name with a queer little shock and surveyed the man with interest. No doubt he was only a successor of the purveyor of discords who darkened my boyhood. It was amazing to find an influence so terrible embodied in a creature so palpably petty. He was seated some way down a table at right angles to the one at which I sat, a man of mean appearance with a greyish complexion, thin, with a square nose, a heavy wiry moustache and a big Adam’s apple sticking out between the wings of his collar. He ate with considerable appetite and unconcealed relish, and as his jaw was underhung, he chummed and made the moustache wave like reeds in the swell of a steamer. It gave him a conscientious look. After dinner he a little forced himself upon me. At that time, though the shadow of my scandal was already upon me, I still seemed to be shaping for great successes, and he was glad to be in conversation with me and anxious to intimate political sympathy and support. I tried to make him talk of the HOME CHURCHMAN and the kindred publications he ran, but he was manifestly ashamed of his job so far as I was concerned.

“One wants,” he said, pitching himself as he supposed in my key, “to put constructive ideas into our readers, but they are narrow, you know, very narrow. Very.” He made his moustache and lips express judicious regret. “One has to consider them carefully, one has to respect their attitudes. One dare not go too far with them. One has to

feel one's way."

He chummed and the moustache bristled.

A hireling, beyond question, catering for a demand. I gathered there was a home in Tufnell Park, and three boys to be fed and clothed and educated....

I had the curiosity to buy a copy of his magazine afterwards, and it seemed much the same sort of thing that had worried my mother in my boyhood. There was the usual Christian hero, this time with mutton-chop whiskers and a long bare upper lip. The Jesuits, it seemed, were still hard at it, and Heaven frightfully upset about the Sunday opening of museums and the falling birth-rate, and as touchy and vindictive as ever. There were two vigorous paragraphs upon the utter damnableness of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, a contagious damnableness I gathered, one wasn't safe within a mile of Holborn Viaduct, and a foul-mouthed attack on poor little Wilkins the novelist — who was being baited by the moralists at that time for making one of his big women characters, not being in holy wedlock, desire a baby and say so....

The broadening of human thought is a slow and complex process. We do go on, we do get on. But when one thinks that people are living and dying now, quarrelling and sulking, misled and misunderstanding, vaguely fearful, condemning and thwarting one another in the close darknesses of these narrow cults — Oh, God! one wants a gale out of Heaven, one wants a great wind from the sea!

3

While I lived at Penge two little things happened to me, trivial in themselves and yet in their quality profoundly significant. They had this in common, that they pierced the texture of the life I was quietly taking for granted and let me see through it into realities — realities I had indeed known about before but never realised. Each of these experiences left me with a sense of shock, with all the values in my life perplexingly altered, attempting readjustment. One of these disturbing and illuminating events was that I was robbed of a new pocket-knife and the other that I fell in love. It was altogether surprising to me to be robbed. You see, as an only child I had always

been fairly well looked after and protected, and the result was an amazing confidence in the practical goodness of the people one met in the world. I knew there were robbers in the world, just as I knew there were tigers; that I was ever likely to meet robber or tiger face to face seemed equally impossible.

The knife as I remember it was a particularly jolly one with all sorts of instruments in it, tweezers and a thing for getting a stone out of the hoof of a horse, and a corkscrew; it had cost me a carefully accumulated half-crown, and amounted indeed to a new experience in knives. I had had it for two or three days, and then one afternoon I dropped it through a hole in my pocket on a footpath crossing a field between Penge and Anerley. I heard it fall in the way one does without at the time appreciating what had happened, then, later, before I got home, when my hand wandered into my pocket to embrace the still dear new possession I found it gone, and instantly that memory of something hitting the ground sprang up into consciousness. I went back and commenced a search. Almost immediately I was accosted by the leader of a little gang of four or five extremely dirty and ragged boys of assorted sizes and slouching carriage who were coming from the Anerley direction.

"Lost anythink, Matey?" said he.

I explained.

"'E's dropped 'is knife," said my interlocutor, and joined in the search.

"What sort of 'andle was it, Matey?" said a small white-faced sniffing boy in a big bowler hat.

I supplied the information. His sharp little face scrutinised the ground about us.

"GOT it," he said, and pounced.

"Give it 'ere," said the big boy hoarsely, and secured it.

I walked towards him serenely confident that he would hand it over to me, and that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

"No bloomin' fear!" he said, regarding me obliquely. "Oo said it was your knife?"

Remarkable doubts assailed me. "Of course it's my knife," I said. The other boys gathered round me.

“This ain’t your knife,” said the big boy, and spat casually.

“I dropped it just now.”

“Findin’s keepin’s, I believe,” said the big boy.

“Nonsense,” I said. “Give me my knife.”

“‘Ow many blades it got?”

“Three.”

“And what sort of ‘andle?”

“Bone.”

“Got a corkscrew like?”

“Yes.”

“Ah! This ain’t your knife no’ow. See?”

He made no offer to show it to me. My breath went.

“Look here!” I said. “I saw that kid pick it up. It IS my knife.”

“Rot!” said the big boy, and slowly, deliberately put my knife into his trouser pocket.

I braced my soul for battle. All civilisation was behind me, but I doubt if it kept the colour in my face. I buttoned my jacket and clenched my fists and advanced on my antagonist — he had, I suppose, the advantage of two years of age and three inches of height. “Hand over that knife,” I said.

Then one of the smallest of the band assailed me with extraordinary vigour and swiftness from behind, had an arm round my neck and a knee in my back before I had the slightest intimation of attack, and so got me down. “I got ‘im, Bill,” squeaked this amazing little ruffian. My nose was flattened by a dirty hand, and as I struck out and hit something like sacking, some one kicked my elbow. Two or three seemed to be at me at the same time. Then I rolled over and sat up to discover them all making off, a ragged flight, footballing my cap, my City Merchants’ cap, amongst them. I leapt to my feet in a passion of indignation and pursued them.

But I did not overtake them. We are beings of mixed composition, and I doubt if mine was a single-minded pursuit. I knew that honour required me to pursue, and I had a vivid impression of having just been down in the dust with a very wiry and active and dirty little antagonist of disagreeable odour and incredible and incalculable unscrupulousness, kneeling on me and gripping my arm and neck. I wanted of course to be even with him, but also I doubted if catching

him would necessarily involve that. They kicked my cap into the ditch at the end of the field, and made off compactly along a cinder lane while I turned aside to recover my dishonoured headdress. As I knocked the dust out of that and out of my jacket, and brushed my knees and readjusted my very crumpled collar, I tried to focus this startling occurrence in my mind.

I had vague ideas of going to a policeman or of complaining at a police station, but some boyish instinct against informing prevented that. No doubt I entertained ideas of vindictive pursuit and murderous reprisals. And I was acutely enraged whenever I thought of my knife. The thing indeed rankled in my mind for weeks and weeks, and altered all the flavour of my world for me. It was the first time I glimpsed the simple brute violence that lurks and peeps beneath our civilisation. A certain kindly complacency of attitude towards the palpably lower classes was qualified for ever.

4

But the other experience was still more cardinal. It was the first clear intimation of a new motif in life, the sex motif, that was to rise and increase and accumulate power and enrichment and interweave with and at last dominate all my life.

It was when I was nearly fifteen this happened. It is inseparably connected in my mind with the dusk of warm September evenings. I never met the girl I loved by daylight, and I have forgotten her name. It was some insignificant name.

Yet the peculiar quality of the adventure keeps it shining darkly like some deep coloured gem in the common setting of my memories. It came as something new and strange, something that did not join on to anything else in my life or connect with any of my thoughts or beliefs or habits; it was a wonder, a mystery, a discovery about myself, a discovery about the whole world. Only in after years did sexual feeling lose that isolation and spread itself out to illuminate and pervade and at last possess the whole broad vision of life.

It was in that phase of an urban youth's development, the phase of the cheap cigarette, that this thing happened. One evening I came by

chance on a number of young people promenading by the light of a row of shops towards Beckington, and, with all the glory of a glowing cigarette between my lips, I joined their strolling number. These twilight parades of young people, youngsters chiefly of the lower middle-class, are one of the odd social developments of the great suburban growths — unkindly critics, blind to the inner meanings of things, call them, I believe, Monkeys' Parades — the shop apprentices, the young work girls, the boy clerks and so forth, stirred by mysterious intimations, spend their first-earned money upon collars and ties, chiffon hats, smart lace collars, walking-sticks, sunshades or cigarettes, and come valiantly into the vague transfiguring mingling of gaslight and evening, to walk up and down, to eye meaningly, even to accost and make friends. It is a queer instinctive revolt from the narrow limited friendless homes in which so many find themselves, a going out towards something, romance if you will, beauty, that has suddenly become a need — a need that hitherto has lain dormant and unsuspected. They promenade.

Vulgar! — it is as vulgar as the spirit that calls the moth abroad in the evening and lights the body of the glow-worm in the night. I made my way through the throng, a little contemptuously as became a public schoolboy, my hands in my pockets — none of your cheap canes for me! — and very careful of the lie of my cigarette upon my lips. And two girls passed me, one a little taller than the other, with dim warm-tinted faces under clouds of dark hair and with dark eyes like pools reflecting stars.

I half turned, and the shorter one glanced back at me over her shoulder — I could draw you now the pose of her cheek and neck and shoulder — and instantly I was as passionately in love with the girl as I have ever been before or since, as any man ever was with any woman. I turned about and followed them, I flung away my cigarette ostentatiously and lifted my school cap and spoke to them.

The girl answered shyly with her dark eyes on my face. What I said and what she said I cannot remember, but I have little doubt it was something absolutely vapid. It really did not matter; the thing was we had met. I felt as I think a new-hatched moth must feel when suddenly its urgent headlong searching brings it in tremulous amazement upon its mate.

We met, covered from each other, with all the nets of civilisation keeping us apart. We walked side by side.

It led to scarcely more than that. I think we met four or five times altogether, and always with her nearly silent elder sister on the other side of her. We walked on the last two occasions arm in arm, furtively caressing each other's hands, we went away from the glare of the shops into the quiet roads of villadom, and there we whispered instead of talking and looked closely into one another's warm and shaded face. "Dear," I whispered very daringly, and she answered, "Dear!" We had a vague sense that we wanted more of that quality of intimacy and more. We wanted each other as one wants beautiful music again or to breathe again the scent of flowers.

And that is all there was between us. The events are nothing, the thing that matters is the way in which this experience stabbed through the common stuff of life and left it pierced, with a light, with a huge new interest shining through the rent.

When I think of it I can recall even now the warm mystery of her face, her lips a little apart, lips that I never kissed, her soft shadowed throat, and I feel again the sensuous stir of her proximity....

Those two girls never told me their surname nor let me approach their house. They made me leave them at the corner of a road of small houses near Penge Station. And quite abruptly, without any intimation, they vanished and came to the meeting place no more, they vanished as a moth goes out of a window into the night, and left me possessed of an intolerable want....

The affair pervaded my existence for many weeks. I could not do my work and I could not rest at home. Night after night I promenaded up and down that Monkeys' Parade full of an unappeasable desire, with a thwarted sense of something just begun that ought to have gone on. I went backwards and forwards on the way to the vanishing place, and at last explored the forbidden road that had swallowed them up. But I never saw her again, except that later she came to me, my symbol of womanhood, in dreams. How my blood was stirred! I lay awake of nights whispering in the darkness for her. I prayed for her.

Indeed that girl, who probably forgot the last vestiges of me when her first real kiss came to her, ruled and haunted me, gave a Queen to

my imagination and a texture to all my desires until I became a man.

I generalised her at last. I suddenly discovered that poetry was about her and that she was the key to all that had hitherto seemed nonsense about love. I took to reading novels, and if the heroine could not possibly be like her, dusky and warm and starlike, I put the book aside....

I hesitate and add here one other confession. I want to tell this thing because it seems to me we are altogether too restrained and secretive about such matters. The cardinal thing in life sneaks in to us darkly and shamefully like a thief in the night.

One day during my Cambridge days — it must have been in my first year before I knew Hatherleigh — I saw in a print-shop window near the Strand an engraving of a girl that reminded me sharply of Penge and its dusky encounter. It was just a half length of a bare-shouldered, bare-breasted Oriental with arms akimbo, smiling faintly. I looked at it, went my way, then turned back and bought it. I felt I must have it. The odd thing is that I was more than a little shamefaced about it. I did not have it framed and hung in my room open to the criticism of my friends, but I kept it in the drawer of my writing-table. And I kept that drawer locked for a year. It speedily merged with and became identified with the dark girl of Penge. That engraving became in a way my mistress. Often when I had sported my oak and was supposed to be reading, I was sitting with it before me.

Obeying some instinct I kept the thing very secret indeed. For a time nobody suspected what was locked in my drawer nor what was locked in me. I seemed as sexless as my world required.

5

These things stabbed through my life, intimations of things above and below and before me. They had an air of being no more than incidents, interruptions.

The broad substance of my existence at this time was the City Merchants School. Home was a place where I slept and read, and the mooning explorations of the south-eastern postal district which occupied the restless evenings and spare days of my vacations mere

interstices, giving glimpses of enigmatical lights and distant spaces between the woven threads of a school-boy's career. School life began for me every morning at Herne Hill, for there I was joined by three or four other boys and the rest of the way we went together. Most of the streets and roads we traversed in our morning's walk from Victoria are still intact, the storms of rebuilding that have submerged so much of my boyhood's London have passed and left them, and I have revived the impression of them again and again in recent years as I have clattered dinnerward in a hansom or hummed along in a motor cab to some engagement. The main gate still looks out with the same expression of ancient well-proportioned kindliness upon St. Margaret's Close. There are imposing new science laboratories in Chambers Street indeed, but the old playing fields are unaltered except for the big electric trams that go droning and spitting blue flashes along the western boundary. I know Ratten, the new Head, very well, but I have not been inside the school to see if it has changed at all since I went up to Cambridge.

I took all they put before us very readily as a boy, for I had a mind of vigorous appetite, but since I have grown mentally to man's estate and developed a more and more comprehensive view of our national process and our national needs, I am more and more struck by the oddity of the educational methods pursued, their aimless disconnectedness from the constructive forces in the community. I suppose if we are to view the public school as anything more than an institution that has just chanced to happen, we must treat it as having a definite function towards the general scheme of the nation, as being in a sense designed to take the crude young male of the more or less responsible class, to correct his harsh egotisms, broaden his outlook, give him a grasp of the contemporary developments he will presently be called upon to influence and control, and send him on to the university to be made a leading and ruling social man. It is easy enough to carp at schoolmasters and set up for an Educational Reformer, I know, but still it is impossible not to feel how infinitely more effectually — given certain impossibilities perhaps — the job might be done.

My memory of school has indeed no hint whatever of that quality of elucidation it seems reasonable to demand from it. Here all about

me was London, a vast inexplicable being, a vortex of gigantic forces, that filled and overwhelmed me with impressions, that stirred my imagination to a perpetual vague enquiry; and my school not only offered no key to it, but had practically no comment to make upon it at all. We were within three miles of Westminster and Charing Cross, the government offices of a fifth of mankind were all within an hour's stroll, great economic changes were going on under our eyes, now the hoardings flamed with election placards, now the Salvation Army and now the unemployed came trailing in procession through the winter-grey streets, now the newspaper placards outside news-shops told of battles in strange places, now of amazing discoveries, now of sinister crimes, abject squalor and poverty, imperial splendour and luxury, Buckingham Palace, Rotten Row, Mayfair, the slums of Pimlico, garbage-littered streets of bawling costermongers, the inky silver of the barge-laden Thames — such was the background of our days. We went across St. Margaret's Close and through the school gate into a quiet puerile world apart from all these things. We joined in the earnest acquirement of all that was necessary for Greek epigrams and Latin verse, and for the rest played games. We dipped down into something clear and elegantly proportioned and time-worn and for all its high resolve of stalwart virility a little feeble, like our blackened and decayed portals by Inigo Jones.

Within, we were taught as the chief subjects of instruction, Latin and Greek. We were taught very badly because the men who taught us did not habitually use either of these languages, nobody uses them any more now except perhaps for the Latin of a few Levantine monasteries. At the utmost our men read them. We were taught these languages because long ago Latin had been the language of civilisation; the one way of escape from the narrow and localised life had lain in those days through Latin, and afterwards Greek had come in as the vehicle of a flood of new and amazing ideas. Once these two languages had been the sole means of initiation to the detached criticism and partial comprehension of the world. I can imagine the fierce zeal of our first Heads, Gardener and Roper, teaching Greek like passionate missionaries, as a progressive Chinaman might teach English to the boys of Pekin, clumsily, impatiently, with rod and

harsh urgency, but sincerely, patriotically, because they felt that behind it lay revelations, the irresistible stimulus to a new phase of history. That was long ago. A new great world, a vaster Imperialism had arisen about the school, had assimilated all these amazing and incredible ideas, had gone on to new and yet more amazing developments of its own. But the City Merchants School still made the substance of its teaching Latin and Greek, still, with no thought of rotating crops, sowed in a dream amidst the harvesting.

There is no fierceness left in the teaching now. Just after I went up to Trinity, Gates, our Head, wrote a review article in defence of our curriculum. In this, among other indiscretions, he asserted that it was impossible to write good English without an illuminating knowledge of the classic tongues, and he split an infinitive and failed to button up a sentence in saying so. His main argument conceded every objection a reasonable person could make to the City Merchants' curriculum. He admitted that translation had now placed all the wisdom of the past at a common man's disposal, that scarcely a field of endeavour remained in which modern work had not long since passed beyond the ancient achievement. He disclaimed any utility. But there was, he said, a peculiar magic in these grammatical exercises no other subjects of instruction possessed. Nothing else provided the same strengthening and orderly discipline for the mind.

He said that, knowing the Senior Classics he did, himself a Senior Classic!

Yet in a dim confused way I think he was making out a case. In schools as we knew them, and with the sort of assistant available, the sort of assistant who has been trained entirely on the old lines, he could see no other teaching so effectual in developing attention, restraint, sustained constructive effort and various yet systematic adjustment. And that was as far as his imagination could go.

It is infinitely easier to begin organised human affairs than end them; the curriculum and the social organisation of the English public school are the crowning instances of that. They go on because they have begun. Schools are not only immortal institutions but reproductive ones. Our founder, Jabez Arvon, knew nothing, I am sure, of Gates' pedagogic values and would, I feel certain, have dealt with them disrespectfully. But public schools and university colleges

sprang into existence correlated, the scholars went on to the universities and came back to teach the schools, to teach as they themselves had been taught, before they had ever made any real use of the teaching; the crowd of boys herded together, a crowd perpetually renewed and unbrokenly the same, adjusted itself by means of spontaneously developed institutions. In a century, by its very success, this revolutionary innovation of Renascence public schools had become an immense tradition woven closely into the fabric of the national life. Intelligent and powerful people ceased to talk Latin or read Greek, they had got what was wanted, but that only left the schoolmaster the freer to elaborate his point. Since most men of any importance or influence in the country had been through the mill, it was naturally a little difficult to persuade them that it was not quite the best and most ennobling mill the wit of man could devise. And, moreover, they did not want their children made strange to them. There was all the machinery and all the men needed to teach the old subjects, and none to teach whatever new the critic might propose. Such science instruction as my father gave seemed indeed the uninviting alternative to the classical grind. It was certainly an altogether inferior instrument at that time.

So it was I occupied my mind with the exact study of dead languages for seven long years. It was the strangest of detachments. We would sit under the desk of such a master as Topham like creatures who had fallen into an enchanted pit, and he would do his considerable best to work us up to enthusiasm for, let us say, a Greek play. If we flagged he would lash himself to revive us. He would walk about the class-room mouthing great lines in a rich roar, and asking us with a flushed face and shining eyes if it was not "GLORIOUS." The very sight of Greek letters brings back to me the dingy, faded, ink-splashed quality of our class-room, the banging of books, Topham's disordered hair, the sheen of his alpaca gown, his deep unmusical intonations and the wide striding of his creaking boots. Glorious! And being plastic human beings we would consent that it was glorious, and some of us even achieved an answering reverberation and a sympathetic flush. I at times responded freely. We all accepted from him unquestioningly that these melodies, these strange sounds, exceeded any possibility of beauty that lay in the

Gothic intricacy, the splash and glitter, the jar and recovery, the stabbing lights, the heights and broad distances of our English tongue. That indeed was the chief sin of him. It was not that he was for Greek and Latin, but that he was fiercely against every beauty that was neither classic nor deferred to classical canons.

And what exactly did we make of it, we seniors who understood it best? We visualised dimly through that dust and the grammatical difficulties, the spectacle of the chorus chanting grotesquely, helping out protagonist and antagonist, masked and buskined, with the telling of incomprehensible parricides, of inexplicable incest, of gods faded beyond symbolism, of that Relentless Law we did not believe in for a moment, that no modern western European can believe in. We thought of the characters in the unconvincing wigs and costumes of our school performance. No Gilbert Murray had come as yet to touch these things to life again. It was like the ghost of an antiquarian's toy theatre, a ghost that crumbled and condensed into a gritty dust of construing as one looked at it.

Marks, shindies, prayers and punishments, all flavoured with the leathery stuffiness of time-worn Big Hall....

And then out one would come through our grey old gate into the evening light and the spectacle of London hurrying like a cataract, London in black and brown and blue and gleaming silver, roaring like the very loom of Time. We came out into the new world no teacher has yet had the power and courage to grasp and expound. Life and death sang all about one, joys and fears on such a scale, in such an intricacy as never Greek nor Roman knew. The interminable procession of horse omnibuses went lumbering past, bearing countless people we knew not whence, we knew not whither. Hansoms clattered, foot passengers jostled one, a thousand appeals of shop and boarding caught the eye. The multi-coloured lights of window and street mingled with the warm glow of the declining day under the softly flushing London skies; the ever-changing placards, the shouting news-vendors, told of a kaleidoscopic drama all about the globe. One did not realise what had happened to us, but the voice of Topham was suddenly drowned and lost, he and his minute, remote gesticulations....

That submerged and isolated curriculum did not even join on to

living interests where it might have done so. We were left absolutely to the hints of the newspapers, to casual political speeches, to the cartoons of the comic papers or a chance reading of some Socialist pamphlet for any general ideas whatever about the huge swirling world process in which we found ourselves. I always look back with particular exasperation to the cessation of our modern history at the year 1815. There it pulled up abruptly, as though it had come upon something indelicate....

But, after all, what would Topham or Flack have made of the huge adjustments of the nineteenth century? Flack was the chief cricketer on the staff; he belonged to that great cult which pretends that the place of this or that county in the struggle for the championship is a matter of supreme importance to boys. He obliged us to affect a passionate interest in the progress of county matches, to work up unnatural enthusiasms. What a fuss there would be when some well-trained boy, panting as if from Marathon, appeared with an evening paper! "I say, you chaps, Middlesex all out for a hundred and five!"

Under Flack's pressure I became, I confess, a cricket humbug of the first class. I applied myself industriously year by year to mastering scores and averages; I pretended that Lords or the Oval were the places nearest Paradise for me. (I never went to either.) Through a slight mistake about the county boundary I adopted Surrey for my loyalty, though as a matter of fact we were by some five hundred yards or so in Kent. It did quite as well for my purposes. I bowled rather straight and fast, and spent endless hours acquiring the skill to bowl Flack out. He was a bat in the Corinthian style, rich and voluminous, and succumbed very easily to a low shooter or an unexpected Yorker, but usually he was caught early by long leg. The difficulty was to bowl him before he got caught. He loved to lift a ball to leg. After one had clean bowled him at the practice nets one deliberately gave him a ball to leg just to make him feel nice again.

Flack went about a world of marvels dreaming of leg hits. He has been observed, going across the Park on his way to his highly respectable club in Piccadilly, to break from profound musings into a strange brief dance that ended with an imaginary swipe with his umbrella, a roofer, over the trees towards Buckingham Palace. The

hit accomplished, Flack resumed his way.

Inadequately instructed foreigners would pass him in terror, needlessly alert.

6

These schoolmasters move through my memory as always a little distant and more than a little incomprehensible. Except when they wore flannels, I saw them almost always in old college caps and gowns, a uniform which greatly increased their detachment from the world of actual men. Gates, the head, was a lean loose-limbed man, rather stupid I discovered when I reached the Sixth and came into contact with him, but honest, simple and very eager to be liberal-minded. He was bald, with an almost conical baldness, with a grizzled pointed beard, small featured and, under the stresses of a Zeitgeist that demanded liberality, with an expression of puzzled but resolute resistance to his own unalterable opinions. He made a tall dignified figure in his gown. In my junior days he spoke to me only three or four times, and then he annoyed me by giving me a wrong surname; it was a sore point because I was an outsider and not one of the old school families, the Shoesmiths, the Naylors, the Marklows, the Tophams, the Pevises and suchlike, who came generation after generation. I recall him most vividly against the background of faded brown book-backs in the old library in which we less destructive seniors were trusted to work, with the light from the stained-glass window falling in coloured patches on his face. It gave him the appearance of having no colour of his own. He had a habit of scratching the beard on his cheek as he talked, and he used to come and consult us about things and invariably do as we said. That, in his phraseology, was "maintaining the traditions of the school."

He had indeed an effect not of a man directing a school, but of a man captured and directed by a school. Dead and gone Elizabethans had begotten a monster that could carry him about in its mouth.

Yet being a man, as I say, with his hair a little stirred by a Zeitgeist that made for change, Gates did at times display a disposition towards developments. City Merchants had no modern side, and utilitarian spirits were carping in the PALL MALL

GAZETTE and elsewhere at the omissions from our curriculum, and particularly at our want of German. Moreover, four classes still worked together with much clashing and uproar in the old Big Hall that had once held in a common tumult the entire school. Gates used to come and talk to us older fellows about these things.

"I don't wish to innovate unduly," he used to say. "But we ought to get in some German, you know, — for those who like it. The army men will be wanting it some of these days."

He referred to the organisation of regular evening preparation for the lower boys in Big Hall as a "revolutionary change," but he achieved it, and he declared he began the replacement of the hacked wooden tables, at which the boys had worked since Tudor days, by sloping desks with safety inkpots and scientifically adjustable seats, "with grave misgivings." And though he never birched a boy in his life, and was, I am convinced, morally incapable of such a scuffle, he retained the block and birch in the school through all his term of office, and spoke at the Headmasters' Conference in temperate approval of corporal chastisement, comparing it, dear soul! to the power of the sword....

I wish I could, in some measure and without tediousness, convey the effect of his discourses to General Assembly in Big Hall. But that is like trying to draw the obverse and reverse of a sixpence worn to complete illegibility. His tall fine figure stood high on the days, his thoughtful tenor filled the air as he steered his hazardous way through sentences that dragged inconclusive tails and dropped redundant prepositions. And he pleaded ever so urgently, ever so finely, that what we all knew for Sin was sinful, and on the whole best avoided altogether, and so went on with deepening notes and even with short arresting gestures of the right arm and hand, to stir and exhort us towards goodness, towards that modern, unsectarian goodness, goodness in general and nothing in particular, which the Zeitgeist seemed to indicate in those transitional years.

7

The school never quite got hold of me. Partly I think that was because I was a day-boy and so freer than most of the boys, partly

because of a temperamental disposition to see things in my own way and have my private dreams, partly because I was a little antagonised by the family traditions that ran through the school. I was made to feel at first that I was a rank outsider, and I never quite forgot it. I suffered very little bullying, and I never had a fight — in all my time there were only three fights — but I followed my own curiosities. I was already a very keen theologian and politician before I was fifteen. I was also intensely interested in modern warfare. I read the morning papers in the Reading Room during the midday recess, never missed the illustrated weeklies, and often when I could afford it I bought a PALL MALL GAZETTE on my way home.

I do not think that I was very exceptional in that; most intelligent boys, I believe, want naturally to be men, and are keenly interested in men's affairs. There is not the universal passion for a magnified puerility among them it is customary to assume. I was indeed a voracious reader of everything but boys' books — which I detested — and fiction. I read histories, travel, popular science and controversy with particular zest, and I loved maps. School work and school games were quite subordinate affairs for me. I worked well and made a passable figure at games, and I do not think I was abnormally insensitive to the fine quality of our school, to the charm of its mediaeval nucleus, its Gothic cloisters, its scraps of Palladian and its dignified Georgian extensions; the contrast of the old quiet, that in spite of our presence pervaded it everywhere, with the rushing and impending London all about it, was indeed a continual pleasure to me. But these things were certainly not the living and central interests of my life.

I had to conceal my wider outlook to a certain extent — from the masters even more than from the boys. Indeed I only let myself go freely with one boy, Britten, my especial chum, the son of the Agent-General for East Australia. We two discovered in a chance conversation A PROPOS of a map in the library that we were both of us curious why there were Malays in Madagascar, and how the Mecca pilgrims came from the East Indies before steamships were available. Neither of us had suspected that there was any one at all in the school who knew or cared a rap about the Indian Ocean, except as water on the way to India. But Britten had come up through the

Suez Canal, and his ship had spoken a pilgrim ship on the way. It gave him a startling quality of living knowledge. From these pilgrims we got to a comparative treatment of religions, and from that, by a sudden plunge, to entirely sceptical and disrespectful confessions concerning Gates' last outbreak of simple piety in School Assembly. We became congenial intimates from that hour.

The discovery of Britten happened to me when we were both in the Lower Fifth. Previously there had been a watertight compartment between the books I read and the thoughts they begot on the one hand and human intercourse on the other. Now I really began my higher education, and aired and examined and developed in conversation the doubts, the ideas, the interpretations that had been forming in my mind. As we were both day-boys with a good deal of control over our time we organised walks and expeditions together, and my habit of solitary and rather vague prowling gave way to much more definite joint enterprises. I went several times to his house, he was the youngest of several brothers, one of whom was a medical student and let us assist at the dissection of a cat, and once or twice in vacation time he came to Penge, and we went with parcels of provisions to do a thorough day in the grounds and galleries of the Crystal Palace, ending with the fireworks at close quarters. We went in a river steamboat down to Greenwich, and fired by that made an excursion to Margate and back; we explored London docks and Bethnal Green Museum, Petticoat Lane and all sorts of out-of-the-way places together.

We confessed shyly to one another a common secret vice, "Phantom warfare." When we walked alone, especially in the country, we had both developed the same practice of fighting an imaginary battle about us as we walked. As we went along we were generals, and our attacks pushed along on either side, crouching and gathering behind hedges, cresting ridges, occupying copses, rushing open spaces, fighting from house to house. The hillsides about Penge were honeycombed in my imagination with the pits and trenches I had created to check a victorious invader coming out of Surrey. For him West Kensington was chiefly important as the scene of a desperate and successful last stand of insurrectionary troops (who had seized the Navy, the Bank and other advantages) against a

royalist army — reinforced by Germans — advancing for reasons best known to themselves by way of Harrow and Ealing. It is a secret and solitary game, as we found when we tried to play it together. We made a success of that only once. All the way down to Margate we schemed defences and assailed and fought them as we came back against the sunset. Afterwards we recapitulated all that conflict by means of a large scale map of the Thames and little paper ironclads in plan cut out of paper.

A subsequent revival of these imaginings was brought about by Britten's luck in getting, through a friend of his father's, admission for us both to the spectacle of volunteer officers fighting the war game in Caxton Hall. We developed a war game of our own at Britten's home with nearly a couple of hundred lead soldiers, some excellent spring cannons that shot hard and true at six yards, hills of books and a constantly elaborated set of rules. For some months that occupied an immense proportion of our leisure. Some of our battles lasted several days. We kept the game a profound secret from the other fellows. They would not have understood.

And we also began, it was certainly before we were sixteen, to write, for the sake of writing. We liked writing. We had discovered Lamb and the best of the middle articles in such weeklies as the SATURDAY GAZETTE, and we imitated them. Our minds were full of dim uncertain things we wanted to drag out into the light of expression. Britten had got hold of IN MEMORIAM, and I had disinterred Pope's ESSAY ON MAN and RABBI BEN EZRA, and these things had set our theological and cosmic solicitudes talking. I was somewhere between sixteen and eighteen, I know, when he and I walked along the Thames Embankment confessing shamefully to one another that we had never read Lucretius. We thought every one who mattered had read Lucretius.

When I was nearly sixteen my mother was taken ill very suddenly, and died of some perplexing complaint that involved a post-mortem examination; it was, I think, the trouble that has since those days been recognised as appendicitis. This led to a considerable change in my circumstances; the house at Penge was given up, and my Staffordshire uncle arranged for me to lodge during school terms with a needy solicitor and his wife in Vicars Street, S. W., about a

mile and a half from the school. So it was I came right into London; I had almost two years of London before I went to Cambridge.

Those were our great days together. Afterwards we were torn apart; Britten went to Oxford, and our circumstances never afterwards threw us continuously together until the days of the BLUE WEEKLY.

As boys, we walked together, read and discussed the same books, pursued the same enquiries. We got a reputation as inseparables and the nickname of the Rose and the Lily, for Britten was short and thick-set with dark close curling hair and a ruddy Irish type of face; I was lean and fair-haired and some inches taller than he. Our talk ranged widely and yet had certain very definite limitations. We were amazingly free with politics and religion, we went to that little meeting-house of William Morris's at Hammersmith and worked out the principles of Socialism pretty thoroughly, and we got up the Darwinian theory with the help of Britten's medical-student brother and the galleries of the Natural History Museum in Cromwell Road. Those wonderful cases on the ground floor illustrating mimicry, dimorphism and so forth, were new in our times, and we went through them with earnest industry and tried over our Darwinism in the light of that. Such topics we did exhaustively. But on the other hand I do not remember any discussion whatever of human sex or sexual relationships. There, in spite of intense secret curiosities, our lips were sealed by a peculiar shyness. And I do not believe we ever had occasion either of us to use the word "love." It was not only that we were instinctively shy of the subject, but that we were mightily ashamed of the extent of our ignorance and uncertainty in these matters. We evaded them elaborately with an assumption of exhaustive knowledge.

We certainly had no shyness about theology. We marked the emancipation of our spirits from the frightful teachings that had oppressed our boyhood, by much indulgence in blasphemous wit. We had a secret literature of irreverent rhymes, and a secret art of theological caricature. Britten's father had delighted his family by reading aloud from Dr. Richard Garnett's TWILIGHT OF THE GODS, and Britten conveyed the precious volume to me. That and the BAB BALLADS were the inspiration of some of our earliest

lucubrations.

For an imaginative boy the first experience of writing is like a tiger's first taste of blood, and our literary flowerings led very directly to the revival of the school magazine, which had been comatose for some years. But there we came upon a disappointment.

8

In that revival we associated certain other of the Sixth Form boys, and notably one for whom our enterprise was to lay the foundations of a career that has ended in the House of Lords, Arthur Cossington, now Lord Paddockhurst. Cossington was at that time a rather heavy, rather good-looking boy who was chiefly eminent in cricket, an outsider even as we were and preoccupied no doubt, had we been sufficiently detached to observe him, with private imaginings very much of the same quality and spirit as our own. He was, we were inclined to think, rather a sentimentalist, rather a poseur, he affected a concise emphatic style, played chess very well, betrayed a belief in will-power, and earned Britten's secret hostility, Britten being a sloven, by the invariable neatness of his collars and ties. He came into our magazine with a vigour that we found extremely surprising and unwelcome.

Britten and I had wanted to write. We had indeed figured our project modestly as a manuscript magazine of satirical, liberal and brilliant literature by which in some rather inexplicable way the vague tumult of ideas that teemed within us was to find form and expression; Cossington, it was manifest from the outset, wanted neither to write nor writing, but a magazine. I remember the inaugural meeting in Shoesmith major's study — we had had great trouble in getting it together — and how effectually Cossington bolted with the proposal.

"I think we fellows ought to run a magazine," said Cossington. "The school used to have one. A school like this ought to have a magazine."

"The last one died in '84," said Shoesmith from the hearthrug. "Called the OBSERVER. Rot rather."

"Bad title," said Cossington.

“There was a TATLER before that,” said Britten, sitting on the writing table at the window that was closed to deaden the cries of the Lower School at play, and clashing his boots together.

“We want something suggestive of City Merchants.”

“CITY MERCHANDIZE,” said Britten.

“Too fanciful. What of ARVONIAN? Richard Arvon was our founder, and it seems almost a duty—”

“They call them all -usians or -onians,” said Britten.

“I like CITY MERCHANDIZE,” I said. “We could probably find a quotation to suggest — oh! mixed good things.”

Cossington regarded me abstractedly.

“Don’t want to put the accent on the City, do we?” said Shoesmith, who had a feeling for county families, and Naylor supported him by a murmur of approval.

“We ought to call it the ARVONIAN,” decided Cossington, “and we might very well have underneath, ‘With which is incorporated the OBSERVER.’ That picks up the old traditions, makes an appeal to old boys and all that, and it gives us something to print under the title.”

I still held out for CITY MERCHANDIZE, which had taken my fancy. “Some of the chaps’ people won’t like it,” said Naylor, “certain not to. And it sounds Rum.”

“Sounds Weird,” said a boy who had not hitherto spoken.

“We aren’t going to do anything Queer,” said Shoesmith, pointedly not looking at Britten.

The question of the title had manifestly gone against us. “Oh! HAVE it ARVONIAN,” I said.

“And next, what size shall we have?” said Cossington.

“Something like MACMILLAN’S MAGAZINE — or LONGMANS’; LONGMANS’ is better because it has a whole page, not columns. It makes no end of difference to one’s effects.”

“What effects?” asked Shoesmith abruptly.

“Oh! a pause or a white line or anything. You’ve got to write closer for a double column. It’s nuggetty. You can’t get a swing on your prose.” I had discussed this thoroughly with Britten.

“If the fellows are going to write—” began Britten.

“We ought to keep off fine writing,” said Shoesmith. “It’s cheek. I

vote we don't have any."

"We sha'n't get any," said Cossington, and then as an olive branch to me, "unless Remington does a bit. Or Britten. But it's no good making too much space for it."

"We ought to be very careful about the writing," said Shoesmith. "We don't want to give ourselves away."

"I vote we ask old Topham to see us through," said Naylor.

Britten groaned aloud and every one regarded him. "Greek epigrams on the fellows' names," he said. "Small beer in ancient bottles. Let's get a stuffed broody hen to SIT on the magazine."

"We might do worse than a Greek epigram," said Cossington. "One in each number. It — it impresses parents and keeps up our classical tradition. And the masters CAN help. We don't want to antagonise them. Of course — we've got to departmentalise. Writing is only one section of the thing. The ARVONIAN has to stand for the school. There's questions of space and questions of expense. We can't turn out a great chunk of printed prose like — like wet cold toast and call it a magazine."

Britten writhed, appreciating the image.

"There's to be a section of sports. YOU must do that."

"I'm not going to do any fine writing," said Shoesmith.

"What you've got to do is just to list all the chaps and put a note to their play:— 'Naylor minor must pass more. Football isn't the place for extreme individualism.' 'Ammersham shapes well as half-back.' Things like that."

"I could do that all right," said Shoesmith, brightening and manifestly becoming pregnant with judgments.

"One great thing about a magazine of this sort," said Cossington, "is to mention just as many names as you can in each number. It keeps the interest alive. Chaps will turn it over looking for their own little bit. Then it all lights up for them."

"Do you want any reports of matches?" Shoesmith broke from his meditation.

"Rather. With comments."

"Naylor surpassed himself and negotiated the lemon safely home," said Shoesmith.

"Shut it," said Naylor modestly.

“Exactly,” said Cossington. “That gives us three features,” touching them off on his fingers, “Epigram, Literary Section, Sports. Then we want a section to shove anything into, a joke, a notice of anything that’s going on. So on. Our Note Book.”

“Oh, Hell!” said Britten, and clashed his boots, to the silent disapproval of every one.

“Then we want an editorial.”

“A WHAT?” cried Britten, with a note of real terror in his voice.

“Well, don’t we? Unless we have our Note Book to begin on the front page. It gives a scrappy effect to do that. We want something manly and straightforward and a bit thoughtful, about Patriotism, say, or ESPRIT DE CORPS, or After-Life.”

I looked at Britten. Hitherto we had not considered Cossington mattered very much in the world.

He went over us as a motor-car goes over a dog. There was a sort of energy about him, a new sort of energy to us; we had never realised that anything of the sort existed in the world. We were hopelessly at a disadvantage. Almost instantly we had developed a clear and detailed vision of a magazine made up of everything that was most acceptable in the magazines that flourished in the adult world about us, and had determined to make it a success. He had by a kind of instinct, as it were, synthetically plagiarised every successful magazine and breathed into this dusty mixture the breath of life. He was elected at his own suggestion managing director, with the earnest support of Shoesmith and Naylor, and conducted the magazine so successfully and brilliantly that he even got a whole back page of advertisements from the big sports shop in Holborn, and made the printers pay at the same rate for a notice of certain books of their own which they said they had inserted by inadvertency to fill up space. The only literary contribution in the first number was a column by Topham in faultless stereotyped English in depreciation of some fancied evil called Utilitarian Studies and ending with that noble old quotation: —

“To the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome.”

And Flack crowded us out of number two with a bright little paper on the “Humours of Cricket,” and the Head himself was profusely thoughtful all over the editorial under the heading of “The School

Chapel; and How it Seems to an Old Boy."

Britten and I found it difficult to express to each other with any grace or precision what we felt about that magazine.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH ~~ ADOLESCENCE

1

I find it very difficult to trace how form was added to form and interpretation followed interpretation in my ever-spreading, ever-deepening, ever-multiplying and enriching vision of this world into which I had been born. Every day added its impressions, its hints, its subtle explications to the growing understanding. Day after day the living interlacing threads of a mind weave together. Every morning now for three weeks and more (for to-day is Thursday and I started on a Tuesday) I have been trying to convey some idea of the factors and early influences by which my particular scrap of subjective tapestry was shaped, to show the child playing on the nursery floor, the son perplexed by his mother, gazing aghast at his dead father, exploring interminable suburbs, touched by first intimations of the sexual mystery, coming in with a sort of confused avidity towards the centres of the life of London. It is only by such an effort to write it down that one realises how marvellously crowded, how marvellously analytical and synthetic those ears must be. One begins with the little child to whom the sky is a roof of blue, the world a screen of opaque and disconnected facts, the home a thing eternal, and "being good" just simple obedience to unquestioned authority; and one comes at last to the vast world of one's adult perception, pierced deep by flaring searchlights of partial understanding, here masked by mists, here refracted and distorted through half translucent veils, here showing broad prospects and limitless vistas and here impenetrably dark.

I recall phases of deep speculation, doubts and even prayers by night, and strange occasions when by a sort of hypnotic contemplation of nothingness I sought to pierce the web of appearances about me. It is hard to measure these things in receding perspective, and now I cannot trace, so closely has mood succeeded and overlaid and obliterated mood, the phases by which an utter horror of death was replaced by the growing realisation of its necessity and dignity. Difficulty of the imagination with infinite

space, infinite time, entangled my mind; and moral distress for the pain and suffering of bygone ages that made all thought of reformation in the future seem but the grimmest irony upon now irreparable wrongs. Many an intricate perplexity of these broadening years did not so much get settled as cease to matter. Life crowded me away from it.

I have confessed myself a temerarious theologian, and in that passage from boyhood to manhood I ranged widely in my search for some permanently satisfying Truth. That, too, ceased after a time to be urgently interesting. I came at last into a phase that endures to this day, of absolute tranquillity, of absolute confidence in whatever that Incomprehensible Comprehensive which must needs be the substratum of all things, may be. Feeling OF IT, feeling BY IT, I cannot feel afraid of it. I think I had got quite clearly and finally to that adjustment long before my Cambridge days were done. I am sure that the evil in life is transitory and finite like an accident or distress in the nursery; that God is my Father and that I may trust Him, even though life hurts so that one must needs cry out at it, even though it shows no consequence but failure, no promise but pain....

But while I was fearless of theology I must confess it was comparatively late before I faced and dared to probe the secrecies of sex. I was afraid of sex. I had an instinctive perception that it would be a large and difficult thing in my life, but my early training was all in the direction of regarding it as an irrelevant thing, as something disconnected from all the broad significances of life, as hostile and disgraceful in its quality. The world was never so emasculated in thought, I suppose, as it was in the Victorian time....

I was afraid to think either of sex or (what I have always found inseparable from a kind of sexual emotion) beauty. Even as a boy I knew the thing as a haunting and alluring mystery that I tried to keep away from. Its dim presence obsessed me none the less for all the extravagant decency, the stimulating silences of my upbringing....

The plaster Venuses and Apollos that used to adorn the vast aisle and huge grey terraces of the Crystal Palace were the first intimations of the beauty of the body that ever came into my life. As I write of it I feel again the shameful attraction of those gracious forms. I used to look at them not simply, but curiously and askance. Once at least in

my later days at Penge, I spent a shilling in admission chiefly for the sake of them....

The strangest thing of all my odd and solitary upbringing seems to me now that swathing up of all the splendours of the flesh, that strange combination of fanatical terrorism and shyness that fenced me about with prohibitions. It caused me to grow up, I will not say blankly ignorant, but with an ignorance blurred and dishonoured by shame, by enigmatical warnings, by cultivated aversions, an ignorance in which a fascinated curiosity and desire struggled like a thing in a net. I knew so little and I felt so much. There was indeed no Aphrodite at all in my youthful Pantheon, but instead there was a mysterious and minatory gap. I have told how at last a new Venus was born in my imagination out of gas lamps and the twilight, a Venus with a cockney accent and dark eyes shining out of the dusk, a Venus who was a warm, passion-stirring atmosphere rather than incarnate in a body. And I have told, too, how I bought a picture.

All this was a thing apart from the rest of my life, a locked avoided chamber....

It was not until my last year at Trinity that I really broke down the barriers of this unwholesome silence and brought my secret broodings to the light of day. Then a little set of us plunged suddenly into what we called at first sociological discussion. I can still recall even the physical feeling of those first tentative talks. I remember them mostly as occurring in the rooms of Ted Hatherleigh, who kept at the corner by the Trinity great gate, but we also used to talk a good deal at a man's in King's, a man named, if I remember rightly, Redmayne. The atmosphere of Hatherleigh's rooms was a haze of tobacco smoke against a background brown and deep. He professed himself a socialist with anarchistic leanings — he had suffered the martyrdom of ducking for it — and a huge French May-day poster displaying a splendid proletarian in red and black on a barricade against a flaring orange sky, dominated his decorations. Hatherleigh affected a fine untidiness, and all the place, even the floor, was littered with books, for the most part open and face downward; deeper darknesses were supplied by a discarded gown and our caps, all conscientiously battered, Hatherleigh's flopped like an elephant's ear and inserted quill pens supported the corners of mine; the

highlights of the picture came chiefly as reflections from his chequered blue mugs full of audit ale. We sat on oak chairs, except the four or five who crowded on a capacious settle, we drank a lot of beer and were often fuddled, and occasionally quite drunk, and we all smoked reckless-looking pipes, — there was a transient fashion among us for corn cobs for which Mark Twain, I think, was responsible. Our little excesses with liquor were due far more to conscience than appetite, indicated chiefly a resolve to break away from restraints that we suspected were keeping us off the instructive knife-edges of life. Hatherleigh was a good Englishman of the premature type with a red face, a lot of hair, a deep voice and an explosive plunging manner, and it was he who said one evening — Heaven knows how we got to it— "Look here, you know, it's all Rot, this Shutting Up about Women. We OUGHT to talk about them. What are we going to do about them? It's got to come. We're all festering inside about it. Let's out with it. There's too much Decency altogether about this Infernal University!"

We rose to his challenge a little awkwardly and our first talk was clumsy, there were flushed faces and red ears, and I remember Hatherleigh broke out into a monologue on decency. "Modesty and Decency," said Hatherleigh, "are Oriental vices. The Jews brought them to Europe. They're Semitic, just like our monasticism here and the seclusion of women and mutilating the dead on a battlefield. And all that sort of thing."

Hatherleigh's mind progressed by huge leaps, leaps that were usually wildly inaccurate, and for a time we engaged hotly upon the topic of those alleged mutilations and the Semitic responsibility for decency. Hatherleigh tried hard to saddle the Semitic race with the less elegant war customs of the Soudan and the northwest frontier of India, and quoted Doughty, at that time a little-known author, and Cunninghame Graham to show that the Arab was worse than a county-town spinster in his regard for respectability. But his case was too preposterous, and Esmeer, with his shrill penetrating voice and his way of pointing with all four long fingers flat together, carried the point against him. He quoted Cato and Roman law and the monasteries of Thibet.

"Well, anyway," said Hatherleigh, escaping from our hands like

an intellectual frog, “Semitic or not, I’ve got no use for decency.”

We argued points and Hatherleigh professed an unusually balanced and tolerating attitude. “I don’t mind a certain refinement and dignity,” he admitted generously. “What I object to is this spreading out of decency until it darkens the whole sky, until it makes a man’s father afraid to speak of the most important things, until it makes a man afraid to look a frank book in the face or think — even think! until it leads to our coming to — to the business at last with nothing but a few prohibitions, a few hints, a lot of dirty jokes and, and “ — he waved a hand and seemed to seek and catch his image in the air— “oh, a confounded buttered slide of sentiment, to guide us. I tell you I’m going to think about it and talk about it until I see a little more daylight than I do at present. I’m twenty-two. Things might happen to me anywhen. You men can go out into the world if you like, to sin like fools and marry like fools, not knowing what you are doing and ashamed to ask. You’ll take the consequences, too, I expect, pretty meekly, sniggering a bit, sentimentalising a bit, like — like Cambridge humorists.... I mean to know what I’m doing.”

He paused to drink, and I think I cut in with ideas of my own. But one is apt to forget one’s own share in a talk, I find, more than one does the clear-cut objectivity of other people’s, and I do not know how far I contributed to this discussion that followed. I am, however, pretty certain that it was then that ideal that we were pleased to call aristocracy and which soon became the common property of our set was developed. It was Esmeer, I know, who laid down and maintained the proposition that so far as minds went there were really only two sorts of man in the world, the aristocrat and the man who subdues his mind to other people’s.

“‘I couldn’t THINK of it, Sir,’” said Esmeer in his elucidatory tones; “that’s what a servant says. His mind even is broken in to run between fences, and he admits it. WE’VE got to be able to think of anything. And ‘such things aren’t for the Likes of Us!’ That’s another servant’s saying. Well, everything IS for the Likes of Us. If we see fit, that is.”

A small fresh-coloured man in grey objected.

“Well,” exploded Hatherleigh, “if that isn’t so what the deuce are

we up here for? Instead of working in mines? If some things aren't to be thought about ever! We've got the privilege of all these extra years for getting things straight in our heads, and then we won't use 'em. Good God! what do you think a university's for?"...

Esmeer's idea came with an effect of real emancipation to several of us. We were not going to be afraid of ideas any longer, we were going to throw down every barrier of prohibition and take them in and see what came of it. We became for a time even intemperately experimental, and one of us, at the bare suggestion of an eminent psychic investigator, took hashish and very nearly died of it within a fortnight of our great elucidation.

The chief matter of our interchanges was of course the discussion of sex. Once the theme had been opened it became a sore place in our intercourse; none of us seemed able to keep away from it. Our imaginations got astir with it. We made up for lost time and went round it and through it and over it exhaustively. I recall prolonged discussion of polygamy on the way to Royston, muddy November tramps to Madingley, when amidst much profanity from Hatherleigh at the serious treatment of so obsolete a matter, we weighed the reasons, if any, for the institution of marriage. The fine dim night-time spaces of the Great Court are bound up with the inconclusive finales of mighty hot-eared wrangles; the narrows of Trinity Street and Petty Cury and Market Hill have their particular associations for me with that spate of confession and free speech, that almost painful goal delivery of long pent and crappled and sometimes crippled ideas.

And we went on a reading party that Easter to a place called Pulborough in Sussex, where there is a fishing inn and a river that goes under a bridge. It was a late Easter and a blazing one, and we boated and bathed and talked of being Hellenic and the beauty of the body until at moments it seemed to us that we were destined to restore the Golden Age, by the simple abolition of tailors and outfitters.

Those undergraduate talks! how rich and glorious they seemed, how splendidly new the ideas that grew and multiplied in our seething minds! We made long afternoon and evening raids over the Downs towards Arundel, and would come tramping back through the

still keen moonlight singing and shouting. We formed romantic friendships with one another, and grieved more or less convincingly that there were no splendid women fit to be our companions in the world. But Hatherleigh, it seemed, had once known a girl whose hair was gloriously red. “My God!” said Hatherleigh to convey the quality of her; just simply and with projectile violence: “My God!”

Benton had heard of a woman who lived with a man refusing to be married to him — we thought that splendid beyond measure, — I cannot now imagine why. She was “like a tender goddess,” Benton said. A sort of shame came upon us in the dark in spite of our liberal intentions when Benton committed himself to that. And after such talk we would fall upon great pauses of emotional dreaming, and if by chance we passed a girl in a governess cart, or some farmer’s daughter walking to the station, we became alertly silent or obstreperously indifferent to her. For might she not be just that one exception to the banal decency, the sickly pointless conventionality, the sham modesty of the times in which we lived?

We felt we stood for a new movement, not realising how perennially this same emancipation returns to those ancient courts beside the Cam. We were the anti-decency party, we discovered a catch phrase that we flourished about in the Union and made our watchword, namely, “stark fact.” We hung nude pictures in our rooms much as if they had been flags, to the earnest concern of our bedders, and I disinterred my long-kept engraving and had it framed in fumed oak, and found for it a completer and less restrained companion, a companion I never cared for in the slightest degree....

This efflorescence did not prevent, I think indeed it rather helped, our more formal university work, for most of us took firsts, and three of us got Fellowships in one year or another. There was Benton who had a Research Fellowship and went to Tubingen, there was Esmeer and myself who both became Residential Fellows. I had taken the Mental and Moral Science Tripos (as it was then), and three years later I got a lectureship in political science. In those days it was disguised in the cloak of Political Economy.

It was our affectation to be a little detached from the main stream of undergraduate life. We worked pretty hard, but by virtue of our beer, our socialism and suchlike heterodoxy, held ourselves to be differentiated from the swatting reading man. None of us, except Baxter, who was a rowing blue, a rather abnormal blue with an appetite for ideas, took games seriously enough to train, and on the other hand we intimated contempt for the rather mediocre, deliberately humorous, consciously gentlemanly and consciously wild undergraduate men who made up the mass of Cambridge life. After the manner of youth we were altogether too hard on our contemporaries. We battered our caps and tore our gowns lest they should seem new, and we despised these others extremely for doing exactly the same things; we had an idea of ourselves and resented beyond measure a similar weakness in these our brothers.

There was a type, or at least there seemed to us to be a type — I'm a little doubtful at times now whether after all we didn't create it — for which Hatherleigh invented the nickname the "Pinky Dinkys," intending thereby both contempt and abhorrence in almost equal measure. The Pinky Dinky summarised all that we particularly did not want to be, and also, I now perceive, much of what we were and all that we secretly dreaded becoming.

But it is hard to convey the Pinky Dinky idea, for all that it meant so much to us. We spent one evening at least during that reading party upon the Pinky Dinky; we sat about our one fire after a walk in the rain — it was our only wet day — smoked our excessively virile pipes, and elaborated the natural history of the Pinky Dinky. We improvised a sort of Pinky Dinky litany, and Hatherleigh supplied deep notes for the responses.

"The Pinky Dinky extracts a good deal of amusement from life," said some one.

"Damned prig!" said Hatherleigh.

"The Pinky Dinky arises in the Union and treats the question with a light gay touch. He makes the weird ones mad. But sometimes he cannot go on because of the amusement he extracts."

"I want to shy books at the giggling swine," said Hatherleigh.

"The Pinky Dinky says suddenly while he is making the tea, 'We're all being frightfully funny. It's time for you to say something

now.'"

"The Pinky Dinky shakes his head and says: 'I'm afraid I shall never be a responsible being.' And he really IS frivolous."

"Frivolous but not vulgar," said Esmeer.

"Pinky Dinkys are chaps who've had their buds nipped," said Hatherleigh. "They're Plebs and they know it. They haven't the Guts to get hold of things. And so they worry up all those silly little jokes of theirs to carry it off."...

We tried bad ones for a time, viciously flavoured.

Pinky Dinkys are due to over-production of the type that ought to keep outfitters' shops. Pinky Dinkys would like to keep outfitters' shops with whimsy 'scriptions on the boxes and make your bill out funny, and not be snobs to customers, no! — not even if they had titles."

"Every Pinky Dinky's people are rather good people, and better than most Pinky Dinky's people. But he does not put on side."

"Pinky Dinkys become playful at the sight of women."

"'Croquet's my game,' said the Pinky Dinky, and felt a man condescended."

"But what the devil do they think they're up to, anyhow?" roared old Hatherleigh suddenly, dropping plump into bottomless despair.

We felt we had still failed to get at the core of the mystery of the Pinky Dinky.

We tried over things about his religion. "The Pinky Dinky goes to King's Chapel, and sits and feels in the dusk. Solemn things! Oh HUSH! He wouldn't tell you—"

"He COULDN'T tell you."

"Religion is so sacred to him he never talks about it, never reads about it, never thinks about it. Just feels!"

"But in his heart of hearts, oh! ever so deep, the Pinky Dinky has a doubt—"

Some one protested.

"Not a vulgar doubt," Esmeer went on, "but a kind of hesitation whether the Ancient of Days is really exactly what one would call good form.... There's a lot of horrid coarseness got into the world somehow. SOMEBODY put it there.... And anyhow there's no particular reason why a man should be seen about with Him. He's

jolly Awful of course and all that—"

"The Pinky Dinky for all his fun and levity has a clean mind."

"A thoroughly clean mind. Not like Esmeer's — the Pig!"

"If once he began to think about sex, how could he be comfortable at croquet?"

"It's their Damned Modesty," said Hatherleigh suddenly, "that's what's the matter with the Pinky Dinky. It's Mental Cowardice dressed up as a virtue and taking the poor dears in. Cambridge is soaked with it; it's some confounded local bacillus. Like the thing that gives a flavour to Havana cigars. He comes up here to be made into a man and a ruler of the people, and he thinks it shows a nice disposition not to take on the job! How the Devil is a great Empire to be run with men like him?"

"All his little jokes and things," said Esmeer regarding his feet on the fender, "it's just a nervous sniggering — because he's afraid.... Oxford's no better."

"What's he afraid of?" said I.

"God knows!" exploded Hatherleigh and stared at the fire.

"LIFE!" said Esmeer. "And so in a way are we," he added, and made a thoughtful silence for a time.

"I say," began Carter, who was doing the Natural Science Tripos, "what is the adult form of the Pinky Dinky?"

But there we were checked by our ignorance of the world.

"What is the adult form of any of us?" asked Benton, voicing the thought that had arrested our flow.

3

I do not remember that we ever lifted our criticism to the dons and the organisation of the University. I think we took them for granted. When I look back at my youth I am always astonished by the multitude of things that we took for granted. It seemed to us that Cambridge was in the order of things, for all the world like having eyebrows or a vermiform appendix. Now with the larger scepticism of middle age I can entertain very fundamental doubts about these old universities. Indeed I had a scheme —

I do not see what harm I can do now by laying bare the purpose of

the political combinations I was trying to effect.

My educational scheme was indeed the starting-point of all the big project of conscious public reconstruction at which I aimed. I wanted to build up a new educational machine altogether for the governing class out of a consolidated system of special public service schools. I meant to get to work upon this whatever office I was given in the new government. I could have begun my plan from the Admiralty or the War Office quite as easily as from the Education Office. I am firmly convinced it is hopeless to think of reforming the old public schools and universities to meet the needs of a modern state, they send their roots too deep and far, the cost would exceed any good that could possibly be effected, and so I have sought a way round this invincible obstacle. I do think it would be quite practicable to side-track, as the Americans say, the whole system by creating hardworking, hard-living, modern and scientific boys' schools, first for the Royal Navy and then for the public service generally, and as they grew, opening them to the public without any absolute obligation to subsequent service. Simultaneously with this it would not be impossible to develop a new college system with strong faculties in modern philosophy, modern history, European literature and criticism, physical and biological science, education and sociology.

We could in fact create a new liberal education in this way, and cut the umbilicus of the classical languages for good and all. I should have set this going, and trusted it to correct or kill the old public schools and the Oxford and Cambridge tradition altogether. I had men in my mind to begin the work, and I should have found others. I should have aimed at making a hard-trained, capable, intellectually active, proud type of man. Everything else would have been made subservient to that. I should have kept my grip on the men through their vacation, and somehow or other I would have contrived a young woman to match them. I think I could have seen to it effectually enough that they didn't get at croquet and tennis with the vicarage daughters and discover sex in the Peeping Tom fashion I did, and that they realised quite early in life that it isn't really virile to reek of tobacco. I should have had military manoeuvres, training ships, aeroplane work, mountaineering and so forth, in the place of the

solemn trivialities of games, and I should have fed and housed my men clean and very hard — where there wasn't any audit ale, no credit tradesmen, and plenty of high pressure douches....

I have revisited Cambridge and Oxford time after time since I came down, and so far as the Empire goes, I want to get clear of those two places....

Always I renew my old feelings, a physical oppression, a sense of lowness and dampness almost exactly like the feeling of an underground room where paper moulders and leaves the wall, a feeling of ineradicable contagion in the Gothic buildings, in the narrow ditch-like rivers, in those roads and roads of stuffy little villas. Those little villas have destroyed all the good of the old monastic system and none of its evil....

Some of the most charming people in the world live in them, but their collective effect is below the quality of any individual among them. Cambridge is a world of subdued tones, of excessively subtle humours, of prim conduct and free thinking; it fears the Parent, but it has no fear of God; it offers amidst surroundings that vary between disguises and antiquarian charm the inflammation of literature's purple draught; one hears there a peculiar thin scandal like no other scandal in the world — a covetous scandal — so that I am always reminded of Ibsen in Cambridge. In Cambridge and the plays of Ibsen alone does it seem appropriate for the heroine before the great crisis of life to "enter, take off her overshoes, and put her wet umbrella upon the writing desk."...

We have to make a new Academic mind for modern needs, and the last thing to make it out of, I am convinced, is the old Academic mind. One might as soon try to fake the old VICTORY at Portsmouth into a line of battleship again. Besides which the old Academic mind, like those old bathless, damp Gothic colleges, is much too delightful in its peculiar and distinctive way to damage by futile patching.

My heart warms to a sense of affectionate absurdity as I recall dear old Codger, surely the most "unleaderly" of men. No more than from the old Schoolmen, his kindred, could one get from him a School for Princes. Yet apart from his teaching he was as curious and adorable as a good Netsuke. Until quite recently he was a power in

Cambridge, he could make and bar and destroy, and in a way he has become the quintessence of Cambridge in my thoughts.

I see him on his way to the morning's lecture, with his plump childish face, his round innocent eyes, his absurdly non-prehensile fat hand carrying his cap, his grey trousers braced up much too high, his feet a trifle inturned, and going across the great court with a queer tripping pace that seemed cultivated even to my naive undergraduate eye. Or I see him lecturing. He lectured walking up and down between the desks, talking in a fluting rapid voice, and with the utmost lucidity. If he could not walk up and down he could not lecture. His mind and voice had precisely the fluid quality of some clear subtle liquid; one felt it could flow round anything and overcome nothing. And its nimble eddies were wonderful! Or again I recall him drinking port with little muscular movements in his neck and cheek and chin and his brows knit — very judicial, very concentrated, preparing to say the apt just thing; it was the last thing he would have told a lie about.

When I think of Codger I am reminded of an inscription I saw on some occasion in Regent's Park above two eyes scarcely more limpidly innocent than his— "Born in the Menagerie." Never once since Codger began to display the early promise of scholarship at the age of eight or more, had he been outside the bars. His utmost travel had been to lecture here and lecture there. His student phase had culminated in papers of quite exceptional brilliance, and he had gone on to lecture with a cheerful combination of wit and mannerism that had made him a success from the beginning. He has lectured ever since. He lectures still. Year by year he has become plumper, more rubicund and more and more of an item for the intelligent visitor to see. Even in my time he was pointed out to people as part of our innumerable enrichments, and obviously he knew it. He has become now almost the leading Character in a little donnish world of much too intensely appreciated Characters.

He boasted he took no exercise, and also of his knowledge of port wine. Of other wines he confessed quite frankly he had no "special knowledge." Beyond these things he had little pride except that he claimed to have read every novel by a woman writer that had ever entered the Union Library. This, however, he held to be remarkable

rather than ennobling, and such boasts as he made of it were tinged with playfulness. Certainly he had a scholar's knowledge of the works of Miss Marie Corelli, Miss Braddon, Miss Elizabeth Glyn and Madame Sarah Grand that would have astonished and flattered those ladies enormously, and he loved nothing so much in his hours of relaxation as to propound and answer difficult questions upon their books. Tusher of King's was his ineffectual rival in this field, their bouts were memorable and rarely other than glorious for Codger; but then Tusher spread himself too much, he also undertook to rehearse whole pages out of Bradshaw, and tell you with all the changes how to get from any station to any station in Great Britain by the nearest and cheapest routes....

Codger lodged with a little deaf innocent old lady, Mrs. Araminta Mergle, who was understood to be herself a very redoubtable Character in the Gyp-Bedder class; about her he related quietly absurd anecdotes. He displayed a marvellous invention in ascribing to her plausible expressions of opinion entirely identical in import with those of the Oxford and Harvard Pragmatists, against whom he waged a fierce obscure war....

It was Codger's function to teach me philosophy, philosophy! the intimate wisdom of things. He dealt in a variety of Hegelian stuff like nothing else in the world, but marvellously consistent with itself. It was a wonderful web he spun out of that queer big active childish brain that had never lusted nor hated nor grieved nor feared nor passionately loved, — a web of iridescent threads. He had luminous final theories about Love and Death and Immortality, odd matters they seemed for him to think about! and all his woven thoughts lay across my perception of the realities of things, as flimsy and irrelevant and clever and beautiful, oh! — as a dew-wet spider's web slung in the morning sunshine across the black mouth of a gun....

4

All through those years of development I perceive now there must have been growing in me, slowly, irregularly, assimilating to itself all the phrases and forms of patriotism, diverting my religious impulses, utilising my esthetic tendencies, my dominating idea, the

statesman's idea, that idea of social service which is the protagonist of my story, that real though complex passion for Making, making widely and greatly, cities, national order, civilisation, whose interplay with all those other factors in life I have set out to present. It was growing in me — as one's bones grow, no man intending it.

I have tried to show how, quite early in my life, the fact of disorderliness, the conception of social life as being a multitudinous confusion out of hand, came to me. One always of course simplifies these things in the telling, but I do not think I ever saw the world at large in any other terms. I never at any stage entertained the idea which sustained my mother, and which sustains so many people in the world, — the idea that the universe, whatever superficial discords it may present, is as a matter of fact "all right," is being steered to definite ends by a serene and unquestionable God. My mother thought that Order prevailed, and that disorder was just incidental and foredoomed rebellion; I feel and have always felt that order rebels against and struggles against disorder, that order has an up-hill job, in gardens, experiments, suburbs, everything alike; from the very beginnings of my experience I discovered hostility to order, a constant escaping from control.

The current of living and contemporary ideas in which my mind was presently swimming made all in the same direction; in place of my mother's attentive, meticulous but occasionally extremely irascible Providence, the talk was all of the Struggle for Existence and the survival not of the Best — that was nonsense, but of the fittest to survive.

The attempts to rehabilitate Faith in the form of the Individualist's LAISSEZ FAIRE never won upon me. I disliked Herbert Spencer all my life until I read his autobiography, and then I laughed a little and loved him. I remember as early as the City Merchants' days how Britten and I scoffed at that pompous question-begging word "Evolution," having, so to speak, found it out. Evolution, some illuminating talker had remarked at the Britten lunch table, had led not only to man, but to the liver-fluke and skunk, obviously it might lead anywhere; order came into things only through the struggling mind of man. That lit things wonderfully for us. When I went up to Cambridge I was perfectly clear that life was a various and splendid

disorder of forces that the spirit of man sets itself to tame. I have never since fallen away from that persuasion.

I do not think I was exceptionally precocious in reaching these conclusions and a sort of religious finality for myself by eighteen or nineteen. I know men and women vary very much in these matters, just as children do in learning to talk. Some will chatter at eighteen months and some will hardly speak until three, and the thing has very little to do with their subsequent mental quality. So it is with young people; some will begin their religious, their social, their sexual interests at fourteen, some not until far on in the twenties. Britten and I belonged to one of the precocious types, and Cossington very probably to another. It wasn't that there was anything priggish about any of us; we should have been prigs to have concealed our spontaneous interests and ape the theoretical boy.

The world of man centred for my imagination in London, it still centres there; the real and present world, that is to say, as distinguished from the wonder-lands of atomic and microscopic science and the stars and future time. I had travelled scarcely at all, I had never crossed the Channel, but I had read copiously and I had formed a very good working idea of this round globe with its mountains and wildernesses and forests and all the sorts and conditions of human life that were scattered over its surface. It was all alive, I felt, and changing every day; how it was changing, and the changes men might bring about, fascinated my mind beyond measure.

I used to find a charm in old maps that showed The World as Known to the Ancients, and I wish I could now without any suspicion of self-deception write down compactly the world as it was known to me at nineteen. So far as extension went it was, I fancy, very like the world I know now at forty-two; I had practically all the mountains and seas, boundaries and races, products and possibilities that I have now. But its intension was very different. All the interval has been increasing and deepening my social knowledge, replacing crude and second-hand impressions by felt and realised distinctions.

In 1895 — that was my last year with Britten, for I went up to Cambridge in September — my vision of the world had much the same relation to the vision I have to-day that an ill-drawn daub of a

mask has to the direct vision of a human face. Britten and I looked at our world and saw — what did we see? Forms and colours side by side that we had no suspicion were interdependent. We had no conception of the roots of things nor of the reaction of things. It did not seem to us, for example, that business had anything to do with government, or that money and means affected the heroic issues of war. There were no wagons in our war game, and where there were guns, there it was assumed the ammunition was gathered together. Finance again was a sealed book to us; we did not so much connect it with the broad aspects of human affairs as regard it as a sort of intrusive nuisance to be earnestly ignored by all right-minded men. We had no conception of the quality of politics, nor how "interests" came into such affairs; we believed men were swayed by purely intellectual convictions and were either right or wrong, honest or dishonest (in which case they deserved to be shot), good or bad. We knew nothing of mental inertia, and could imagine the opinion of a whole nation changed by one lucid and convincing exposition. We were capable of the most incongruous transfers from the scroll of history to our own times, we could suppose Brixton ravaged and Hampstead burnt in civil wars for the succession to the throne, or Cheapside a lane of death and the front of the Mansion House set about with guillotines in the course of an accurately transposed French Revolution. We rebuilt London by Act of Parliament, and once in a mood of hygienic enterprise we transferred its population EN MASSE to the North Downs by an order of the Local Government Board. We thought nothing of throwing religious organisations out of employment or superseding all the newspapers by freely distributed bulletins. We could contemplate the possibility of laws abolishing whole classes; we were equal to such a dream as the peaceful and orderly proclamation of Communism from the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, after the passing of a simply worded bill, — a close and not unnaturally an exciting division carrying the third reading. I remember quite distinctly evolving that vision. We were then fully fifteen and we were perfectly serious about it. We were not fools; it was simply that as yet we had gathered no experience at all of the limits and powers of legislation and conscious collective intention....

I think this statement does my boyhood justice, and yet I have my doubts. It is so hard now to say what one understood and what one did not understand. It isn't only that every day changed one's general outlook, but also that a boy fluctuates between phases of quite adult understanding and phases of tawdrily magnificent puerility. Sometimes I myself was in those tumbrils that went along Cheapside to the Mansion House, a Sydney Cartonesque figure, a white defeated Mirabean; sometimes it was I who sat judging and condemning and ruling (sleeping in my clothes and feeding very simply) the soul and autocrat of the Provisional Government, which occupied, of all inconvenient places! the General Post Office at St. Martin's-le-Grand!...

I cannot trace the development of my ideas at Cambridge, but I believe the mere physical fact of going two hours' journey away from London gave that place for the first time an effect of unity in my imagination. I got outside London. It became tangible instead of being a frame almost as universal as sea and sky.

At Cambridge my ideas ceased to live in a duologue; in exchange for Britten, with whom, however, I corresponded lengthily, stylishly and self-consciously for some years, I had now a set of congenial friends. I got talk with some of the younger dons, I learnt to speak in the Union, and in my little set we were all pretty busily sharpening each other's wits and correcting each other's interpretations. Cambridge made politics personal and actual. At City Merchants' we had had no sense of effective contact; we boasted, it is true, an under secretary and a colonial governor among our old boys, but they were never real to us; such distinguished sons as returned to visit the old school were allusive and pleasant in the best Pinky Dinky style, and pretended to be in earnest about nothing but our football and cricket, to mourn the abolition of "water," and find a shuddering personal interest in the ancient swishing block. At Cambridge I felt for the first time that I touched the thing that was going on. Real living statesmen came down to debate in the Union, the older dons had been their college intimates, their sons and nephews expounded them to us and made them real to us. They invited us to entertain ideas; I found myself for the first time in my life expected to read and think and discuss, my secret vice had become a virtue.

That combination-room world is at last larger and more populous and various than the world of schoolmasters. The Shoesmiths and Naylors who had been the aristocracy of City Merchants' fell into their place in my mind; they became an undistinguished mass on the more athletic side of Pinky Dinkyism, and their hostility to ideas and to the expression of ideas ceased to limit and trouble me. The brighter men of each generation stay up; these others go down to propagate their tradition, as the fathers of families, as mediocre professional men, as assistant masters in schools. Cambridge which perfects them is by the nature of things least oppressed by them, — except when it comes to a vote in Convocation.

We were still in those days under the shadow of the great Victorians. I never saw Gladstone (as I never set eyes on the old Queen), but he had resigned office only a year before I went up to Trinity, and the Combination Rooms were full of personal gossip about him and Disraeli and the other big figures of the gladiatorial stage of Parlimentary history, talk that leaked copiously into such sets as mine. The ceiling of our guest chamber at Trinity was glorious with the arms of Sir William Harcourt, whose Death Duties had seemed at first like a socialist dawn. Mr. Evesham we asked to come to the Union every year, Masters, Chamberlain and the old Duke of Devonshire; they did not come indeed, but their polite refusals brought us all, as it were, within personal touch of them. One heard of cabinet councils and meetings at country houses. Some of us, pursuing such interests, went so far as to read political memoirs and the novels of Disraeli and Mrs. Humphry Ward. From gossip, example and the illustrated newspapers one learnt something of the way in which parties were split, coalitions formed, how permanent officials worked and controlled their ministers, how measures were brought forward and projects modified.

And while I was getting the great leading figures on the political stage, who had been presented to me in my schooldays not so much as men as the pantomimic monsters of political caricature, while I was getting them reduced in my imagination to the stature of humanity, and their motives to the quality of impulses like my own, I was also acquiring in my Tripos work a constantly developing and enriching conception of the world of men as a complex of economic,

intellectual and moral processes....

5

Socialism is an intellectual Proteus, but to the men of my generation it came as the revolt of the workers. Rodbertus we never heard of and the Fabian Society we did not understand; Marx and Morris, the Chicago Anarchists, JUSTICE and Social Democratic Federation (as it was then) presented socialism to our minds. Hatherleigh was the leading exponent of the new doctrines in Trinity, and the figure upon his wall of a huge-muscled, black-haired toiler swaggering sledgehammer in hand across a revolutionary barricade, seemed the quintessence of what he had to expound. Landlord and capitalist had robbed and enslaved the workers, and were driving them quite automatically to inevitable insurrection. They would arise and the capitalist system would flee and vanish like the mists before the morning, like the dews before the sunrise, giving place in the most simple and obvious manner to an era of Right and Justice and Virtue and Well Being, and in short a Perfectly Splendid Time.

I had already discussed this sort of socialism under the guidance of Britten, before I went up to Cambridge. It was all mixed up with ideas about freedom and natural virtue and a great scorn for kings, titles, wealth and officials, and it was symbolised by the red ties we wore. Our simple verdict on existing arrangements was that they were "all wrong." The rich were robbers and knew it, kings and princes were usurpers and knew it, religious teachers were impostors in league with power, the economic system was an elaborate plot on the part of the few to expropriate the many. We went about feeling scornful of all the current forms of life, forms that esteemed themselves solid, that were, we knew, no more than shapes painted on a curtain that was presently to be torn aside....

It was Hatherleigh's poster and his capacity for overstating things, I think, that first qualified my simple revolutionary enthusiasm. Perhaps also I had met with Fabian publications, but if I did I forget the circumstances. And no doubt my innate constructiveness with its practical corollary of an analytical treatment of the material supplied, was bound to push me on beyond this melodramatic interpretation of

human affairs.

I compared that Working Man of the poster with any sort of working man I knew. I perceived that the latter was not going to change, and indeed could not under any stimulus whatever be expected to change, into the former. It crept into my mind as slowly and surely as the dawn creeps into a room that the former was not, as I had at first rather glibly assumed, an "ideal," but a complete misrepresentation of the quality and possibilities of things.

I do not know now whether it was during my school-days or at Cambridge that I first began not merely to see the world as a great contrast of rich and poor, but to feel the massive effect of that multitudinous majority of people who toil continually, who are for ever anxious about ways and means, who are restricted, ill clothed, ill fed and ill housed, who have limited outlooks and continually suffer misadventures, hardships and distresses through the want of money. My lot had fallen upon the fringe of the possessing minority; if I did not know the want of necessities I knew shabbiness, and the world that let me go on to a university education intimated very plainly that there was not a thing beyond the primary needs that my stimulated imagination might demand that it would not be an effort for me to secure. A certain aggressive radicalism against the ruling and propertied classes followed almost naturally from my circumstances. It did not at first connect itself at all with the perception of a planless disorder in human affairs that had been forced upon me by the atmosphere of my upbringing, nor did it link me in sympathy with any of the profounder realities of poverty. It was a personal independent thing. The dingier people one saw in the back streets and lower quarters of Bromstead and Penge, the drift of dirty children, ragged old women, street loafers, grimy workers that made the social background of London, the stories one heard of privation and sweating, only joined up very slowly with the general propositions I was making about life. We could become splendidly eloquent about the social revolution and the triumph of the Proletariat after the Class war, and it was only by a sort of inspiration that it came to me that my bedder, a garrulous old thing with a dusty black bonnet over one eye and an ostentatiously clean apron outside the dark mysteries that clothed her, or the cheeky little ruffians who

yelled papers about the streets, were really material to such questions.

Directly any of us young socialists of Trinity found ourselves in immediate contact with servants or cadgers or gyps or bedders or plumbers or navvies or cabmen or railway porters we became unconsciously and unthinkingly aristocrats. Our voices altered, our gestures altered. We behaved just as all the other men, rich or poor, swatters or sportsmen or Pinky Dinkys, behaved, and exactly as we were expected to behave. On the whole it is a population of poor quality round about Cambridge, rather stunted and spiritless and very difficult to idealise. That theoretical Working Man of ours! — if we felt the clash at all we explained it, I suppose, by assuming that he came from another part of the country; Esmeer, I remember, who lived somewhere in the Fens, was very eloquent about the Cornish fishermen, and Hatherleigh, who was a Hampshire man, assured us we ought to know the Scottish miner. My private fancy was for the Lancashire operative because of his co-operative societies, and because what Lancashire thinks to-day England thinks to-morrow.... And also I had never been in Lancashire.

By little increments of realisation it was that the profounder verities of the problem of socialism came to me. It helped me very much that I had to go down to the Potteries several times to discuss my future with my uncle and guardian; I walked about and saw Bursley Wakes and much of the human aspects of organised industrialism at close quarters for the first time. The picture of a splendid Working Man cheated out of his innate glorious possibilities, and presently to arise and dash this scoundrelly and scandalous system of private ownership to fragments, began to give place to a limitless spectacle of inefficiency, to a conception of millions of people not organised as they should be, not educated as they should be, not simply prevented from but incapable of nearly every sort of beauty, mostly kindly and well meaning, mostly incompetent, mostly obstinate, and easily humbugged and easily diverted. Even the tragic and inspiring idea of Marx, that the poor were nearing a limit of painful experience, and awakening to a sense of intolerable wrongs, began to develop into the more appalling conception that the poor were simply in a witless uncomfortable

inconclusive way— “muddling along”; that they wanted nothing very definitely nor very urgently, that mean fears enslaved them and mean satisfactions decoyed them, that they took the very gift of life itself with a spiritless lassitude, hoarding it, being rather anxious not to lose it than to use it in any way whatever.

The complete development of that realisation was the work of many years. I had only the first intimations at Cambridge. But I did have intimations. Most acutely do I remember the doubts that followed the visit of Chris Robinson. Chris Robinson was heralded by such heroic anticipations, and he was so entirely what we had not anticipated.

Hatherleigh got him to come, arranged a sort of meeting for him at Redmayne’s rooms in King’s, and was very proud and proprietorial. It failed to stir Cambridge at all profoundly. Beyond a futile attempt to screw up Hatherleigh made by some inexpert duffers who used nails instead of screws and gimlets, there was no attempt to rag. Next day Chris Robinson went and spoke at Bennett Hall in Newnham College, and left Cambridge in the evening amidst the cheers of twenty men or so. Socialism was at such a low ebb politically in those days that it didn’t even rouse men to opposition.

And there sat Chris under that flamboyant and heroic Worker of the poster, a little wrinkled grey-bearded apologetic man in ready-made clothes, with watchful innocent brown eyes and a persistent and invincible air of being out of his element. He sat with his stout boots tucked up under his chair, and clung to a teacup and saucer and looked away from us into the fire, and we all sat about on tables and chair-arms and windowsills and boxes and anywhere except upon chairs after the manner of young men. The only other chair whose seat was occupied was the one containing his knitted woollen comforter and his picturesque old beach-photographer’s hat. We were all shy and didn’t know how to take hold of him now we had got him, and, which was disconcertingly unanticipated, he was manifestly having the same difficulty with us. We had expected to be gripped.

“I’ll not be knowing what to say to these Chaps,” he repeated with a north-country quality in his speech.

We made reassuring noises.

The Ambassador of the Workers stirred his tea earnestly through an uncomfortable pause.

"I'd best tell 'em something of how things are in Lancashire, what with the new machines and all that," he speculated at last with red reflections in his thoughtful eyes.

We had an inexcusable dread that perhaps he would make a mess of the meeting.

But when he was no longer in the unaccustomed meshes of refined conversation, but speaking with an audience before him, he became a different man. He declared he would explain to us just exactly what socialism was, and went on at once to an impassioned contrast of social conditions. "You young men," he said "come from homes of luxury; every need you feel is supplied—"

We sat and stood and sprawled about him, occupying every inch of Redmayne's floor space except the hearthrug-platform, and we listened to him and thought him over. He was the voice of wrongs that made us indignant and eager. We forgot for a time that he had been shy and seemed not a little incompetent, his provincial accent became a beauty of his earnest speech, we were carried away by his indignations. We looked with shining eyes at one another and at the various dons who had dropped in and were striving to maintain a front of judicious severity. We felt more and more that social injustice must cease, and cease forthwith. We felt we could not sleep upon it. At the end we clapped and murmured our applause and wanted badly to cheer.

Then like a lancet stuck into a bladder came the heckling. Denson, that indolent, liberal-minded sceptic, did most of the questioning. He lay contorted in a chair, with his ugly head very low, his legs crossed and his left boot very high, and he pointed his remarks with a long thin hand and occasionally adjusted the unstable glasses that hid his watery eyes. "I don't want to carp," he began. "The present system, I admit, stands condemned. Every present system always HAS stood condemned in the minds of intelligent men. But where it seems to me you get thin, is just where everybody has been thin, and that's when you come to the remedy."

"Socialism," said Chris Robinson, as if it answered everything, and Hatherleigh said "Hear! Hear!" very resolutely.

“I suppose I OUGHT to take that as an answer,” said Denson, getting his shoulder-blades well down to the seat of his chair; “but I don’t. I don’t, you know. It’s rather a shame to cross-examine you after this fine address of yours” — Chris Robinson on the hearthrug made acquiescent and inviting noises— “but the real question remains how exactly are you going to end all these wrongs? There are the administrative questions. If you abolish the private owner, I admit you abolish a very complex and clumsy way of getting businesses run, land controlled and things in general administered, but you don’t get rid of the need of administration, you know.”

“Democracy,” said Chris Robinson.

“Organised somehow,” said Denson. “And it’s just the How perplexes me. I can quite easily imagine a socialist state administered in a sort of scrambling tumult that would be worse than anything we have got now.

“Nothing could be worse than things are now,” said Chris Robinson. “I have seen little children—”

“I submit life on an ill-provisioned raft, for example, could easily be worse — or life in a beleagured town.”

Murmurs.

They wrangled for some time, and it had the effect upon me of coming out from the glow of a good matinee performance into the cold daylight of late afternoon. Chris Robinson did not shine in conflict with Denson; he was an orator and not a dialectician, and he missed Denson’s points and displayed a disposition to plunge into untimely pathos and indignation. And Denson hit me curiously hard with one of his shafts. “Suppose,” he said, “you found yourself prime minister—”

I looked at Chris Robinson, bright-eyed and his hair a little ruffled and his whole being rhetorical, and measured him against the huge machine of government muddled and mysterious. Oh! but I was perplexed!

And then we took him back to Hatherleigh’s rooms and drank beer and smoked about him while he nursed his knee with hairy wristed hands that protruded from his flannel shirt, and drank lemonade under the cartoon of that emancipated Worker, and we had a great discursive talk with him.

“Eh! you should see our big meetings up north?” he said.

Denson had ruffled him and worried him a good deal, and ever and again he came back to that discussion. “It’s all very easy for your learned men to sit and pick holes,” he said, “while the children suffer and die. They don’t pick holes up north. They mean business.”

He talked, and that was the most interesting part of it all, of his going to work in a factory when he was twelve— “when you Chaps were all with your mammies “ — and how he had educated himself of nights until he would fall asleep at his reading.

“It’s made many of us keen for all our lives,” he remarked, “all that clemming for education. Why! I longed all through one winter to read a bit of Darwin. I must know about this Darwin if I die for it, I said. And I could no’ get the book.”

Hatherleigh made an enthusiastic noise and drank beer at him with round eyes over the mug.

“Well, anyhow I wasted no time on Greek and Latin,” said Chris Robinson. “And one learns to go straight at a thing without splitting straws. One gets hold of the Elementals.”

(Well, did they? That was the gist of my perplexity.)

“One doesn’t quibble,” he said, returning to his rankling memory of Denson, “while men decay and starve.”

“But suppose,” I said, suddenly dropping into opposition, “the alternative is to risk a worse disaster — or do something patently futile.”

“I don’t follow that,” said Chris Robinson. “We don’t propose anything futile, so far as I can see.”

6

The prevailing force in my undergraduate days was not Socialism but Kiplingism. Our set was quite exceptional in its socialistic professions. And we were all, you must understand, very distinctly Imperialists also, and professed a vivid sense of the “White Man’s Burden.”

It is a little difficult now to get back to the feelings of that period; Kipling has since been so mercilessly and exhaustively mocked, criticised and torn to shreds; — never was a man so violently exalted

and then, himself assisting, so relentlessly called down. But in the middle nineties this spectacled and moustached little figure with its heavy chin and its general effect of vehement gesticulation, its wild shouts of boyish enthusiasm for effective force, its lyric delight in the sounds and colours, in the very odours of empire, its wonderful discovery of machinery and cotton waste and the under officer and the engineer, and "shop" as a poetic dialect, became almost a national symbol. He got hold of us wonderfully, he filled us with tinkling and haunting quotations, he stirred Britten and myself to futile imitations, he coloured the very idiom of our conversation. He rose to his climax with his "Recessional," while I was still an undergraduate.

What did he give me exactly?

He helped to broaden my geographical sense immensely, and he provided phrases for just that desire for discipline and devotion and organised effort the Socialism of our time failed to express, that the current socialist movement still fails, I think, to express. The sort of thing that follows, for example, tore something out of my inmost nature and gave it a shape, and I took it back from him shaped and let much of the rest of him, the tumult and the bullying, the hysteria and the impatience, the incoherence and inconsistency, go uncriticised for the sake of it: —

"Keep ye the Law — be swift in all obedience — Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford, Make ye sure to each his own That he reap where he hath sown; By the peace among Our peoples let men know we serve the Lord!"

And then again, and for all our later criticism, this sticks in my mind, sticks there now as quintessential wisdom:

> "The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an' stone;
> 'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own;
> 'E keeps 'is side-arms awful: 'e leaves 'em all about
> An' then comes up the regiment an' pokes the 'eathen out.
>
> All along o' dirtiness, all along o' mess,
> All along o' doin' things rather-more-or-less,
> All along of abby-nay, kul, an' hazar-ho,
> Mind you keep your rifle an' yourself jus' so!"

It is after all a secondary matter that Kipling, not having been

born and brought up in Bromstead and Penge, and the war in South Africa being yet in the womb of time, could quite honestly entertain the now remarkable delusion that England had her side-arms at that time kept anything but "awful." He learnt better, and we all learnt with him in the dark years of exasperating and humiliating struggle that followed, and I do not see that we fellow learners are justified in turning resentfully upon him for a common ignorance and assumption....

South Africa seems always painted on the back cloth of my Cambridge memories. How immense those disasters seemed at the time, disasters our facile English world has long since contrived in any edifying or profitable sense to forget! How we thrilled to the shouting newspaper sellers as the first false flush of victory gave place to the realisation of defeat. Far away there our army showed itself human, mortal and human in the sight of all the world, the pleasant officers we had imagined would change to wonderful heroes at the first crackling of rifles, remained the pleasant, rather incompetent men they had always been, failing to imagine, failing to plan and co-operate, failing to grip. And the common soldiers, too, they were just what our streets and country-side had made them, no sudden magic came out of the war bugles for them. Neither splendid nor disgraceful were they, — just ill-trained and fairly plucky and wonderfully good-tempered men — paying for it. And how it lowered our vitality all that first winter to hear of Nicholson's Nek, and then presently close upon one another, to realise the bloody waste of Magersfontein, the shattering retreat from Stormberg, Colenso — Colenso, that blundering battle, with White, as it seemed, in Ladysmith near the point of surrender! and so through the long unfolding catalogue of bleak disillusionments, of aching, unconcealed anxiety lest worse should follow. To advance upon your enemy singing about his lack of cleanliness and method went out of fashion altogether! The dirty retrogressive Boer vanished from our scheme of illusion.

All through my middle Cambridge period, the guns boomed and the rifles crackled away there on the veldt, and the horsemen rode and the tale of accidents and blundering went on. Men, mules, horses, stores and money poured into South Africa, and the

convalescent wounded streamed home. I see it in my memory as if I had looked at it through a window instead of through the pages of the illustrated papers; I recall as if I had been there the wide open spaces, the ragged hillsides, the open order attacks of helmeted men in khaki, the scarce visible smoke of the guns, the wrecked trains in great lonely places, the burnt isolated farms, and at last the blockhouses and the fences of barbed wire uncoiling and spreading for endless miles across the desert, netting the elusive enemy until at last, though he broke the meshes again and again, we had him in the toils. If one's attention strayed in the lecture-room it wandered to those battle-fields.

And that imagined panorama of war unfolds to an accompaniment of yelling newsboys in the narrow old Cambridge streets, of the flicker of papers hastily bought and torn open in the twilight, of the doubtful reception of doubtful victories, and the insensate rejoicings at last that seemed to some of us more shameful than defeats....

7

A book that stands out among these memories, that stimulated me immensely so that I forced it upon my companions, half in the spirit of propaganda and half to test it by their comments, was Meredith's ONE OF OUR CONQUERORS. It is one of the books that have made me. In that I got a supplement and corrective of Kipling. It was the first detached and adverse criticism of the Englishman I had ever encountered. It must have been published already nine or ten years when I read it. The country had paid no heed to it, had gone on to the expensive lessons of the War because of the dull aversion our people feel for all such intimations, and so I could read it as a book justified. The war endorsed its every word for me, underlined each warning indication of the gigantic dangers that gathered against our system across the narrow seas. It discovered Europe to me, as watching and critical.

But while I could respond to all its criticisms of my country's intellectual indolence, of my country's want of training and discipline and moral courage, I remember that the idea that on the continent there were other peoples going ahead of us, mentally alert

while we fumbled, disciplined while we slouched, aggressive and preparing to bring our Imperial pride to a reckoning, was extremely novel and distasteful to me. It set me worrying of nights. It put all my projects for social and political reconstruction upon a new uncomfortable footing. It made them no longer merely desirable but urgent. Instead of pride and the love of making one might own to a baser motive. Under Kipling's sway I had a little forgotten the continent of Europe, treated it as a mere envious echo to our own world-wide display. I began now to have a disturbing sense as it were of busy searchlights over the horizon....

One consequence of the patriotic chagrin Meredith produced in me was an attempt to belittle his merit. "It isn't a good novel, anyhow," I said.

The charge I brought against it was, I remember, a lack of unity. It professed to be a study of the English situation in the early nineties, but it was all deflected, I said, and all the interest was confused by the story of Victor Radnor's fight with society to vindicate the woman he had loved and never married. Now in the retrospect and with a mind full of bitter enlightenment, I can do Meredith justice, and admit the conflict was not only essential but cardinal in his picture, that the terrible inflexibility of the rich aunts and the still more terrible claim of Mrs. Burman Radnor, the "infernal punctilio," and Dudley Sowerby's limitations, were the central substance of that inalertness the book set itself to assail. So many things have been brought together in my mind that were once remotely separated. A people that will not valiantly face and understand and admit love and passion can understand nothing whatever. But in those days what is now just obvious truth to me was altogether outside my range of comprehension....

8

As I seek to recapitulate the interlacing growth of my apprehension of the world, as I flounder among the half-remembered developments that found me a crude schoolboy and left me a man, there comes out, as if it stood for all the rest, my first holiday abroad. That did not happen until I was twenty-two. I was a fellow of Trinity, and the

Peace of Vereeniging had just been signed.

I went with a man named Willersley, a man some years senior to myself, who had just missed a fellowship and the higher division of the Civil Service, and who had become an enthusiastic member of the London School Board, upon which the cumulative vote and the support of the "advanced" people had placed him. He had, like myself, a small independent income that relieved him of any necessity to earn a living, and he had a kindred craving for social theorising and some form of social service. He had sought my acquaintance after reading a paper of mine (begotten by the visit of Chris Robinson) on the limits of pure democracy. It had marched with some thoughts of his own.

We went by train to Spiez on the Lake of Thun, then up the Gemmi, and thence with one or two halts and digressions and a little modest climbing we crossed over by the Antrona pass (on which we were benighted) into Italy, and by way of Domo D'ossola and the Santa Maria Maggiore valley to Cannobio, and thence up the lake to Locarno (where, as I shall tell, we stayed some eventful days) and so up the Val Maggia and over to Airolo and home.

As I write of that long tramp of ours, something of its freshness and enlargement returns to me. I feel again the faint pleasant excitement of the boat train, the trampling procession of people with hand baggage and laden porters along the platform of the Folkestone pier, the scarcely perceptible swaying of the moored boat beneath our feet. Then, very obvious and simple, the little emotion of standing out from the homeland and seeing the long white Kentish cliffs recede. One walked about the boat doing one's best not to feel absurdly adventurous, and presently a movement of people directed one's attention to a white lighthouse on a cliff to the east of us, coming up suddenly; and then one turned to scan the little different French coast villages, and then, sliding by in a pale sunshine came a long wooden pier with oddly dressed children upon it, and the clustering town of Boulogne.

One took it all with the outward calm that became a young man of nearly three and twenty, but one was alive to one's finger-tips with pleasing little stimulations. The custom house examination excited one, the strangeness of a babble in a foreign tongue; one found the

French of City Merchants' and Cambridge a shy and viscous flow, and then one was standing in the train as it went slowly through the rail-laid street to Boulogne Ville, and one looked out at the world in French, porters in blouses, workmen in enormous purple trousers, police officers in peaked caps instead of helmets and romantically cloaked, big carts, all on two wheels instead of four, green shuttered casements instead of sash windows, and great numbers of neatly dressed women in economical mourning.

"Oh! there's a priest!" one said, and was betrayed into suchlike artless cries.

It was a real other world, with different government and different methods, and in the night one was roused from uneasy slumbers and sat blinking and surly, wrapped up in one's couverture and with one's oreiller all awry, to encounter a new social phenomenon, the German official, so different in manner from the British; and when one woke again after that one had come to Bale, and out one tumbled to get coffee in Switzerland....

I have been over that route dozens of times since, but it still revives a certain lingering youthfulness, a certain sense of cheerful release in me.

I remember that I and Willersley became very sociological as we ran on to Spiez, and made all sorts of generalisations from the steeply sloping fields on the hillsides, and from the people we saw on platforms and from little differences in the way things were done.

The clean prosperity of Bale and Switzerland, the big clean stations, filled me with patriotic misgivings, as I thought of the vast dirtiness of London, the mean dirtiness of Cambridgeshire. It came to me that perhaps my scheme of international values was all wrong, that quite stupendous possibilities and challenges for us and our empire might be developing here — and I recalled Meredith's Skepsey in France with a new understanding.

Willersley had dressed himself in a world-worn Norfolk suit of greenish grey tweeds that ended unfamiliarly at his rather impending, spectacled, intellectual visage. I didn't, I remember, like the contrast of him with the drilled Swiss and Germans about us. Convict coloured stockings and vast hobnail boots finished him below, and all his luggage was a borrowed rucksac that he had tied askew. He

did not want to shave in the train, but I made him at one of the Swiss stations — I dislike these Oxford slovenlinesses — and then confound him! he cut himself and bled....

Next morning we were breathing a thin exhilarating air that seemed to have washed our very veins to an incredible cleanliness, and eating hard-boiled eggs in a vast clear space of rime-edged rocks, snow-mottled, above a blue-gashed glacier. All about us the monstrous rock surfaces rose towards the shining peaks above, and there were winding moraines from which the ice had receded, and then dark clustering fir trees far below.

I had an extraordinary feeling of having come out of things, of being outside.

"But this is the round world!" I said, with a sense of never having perceived it before; "this is the round world!"

9

That holiday was full of big comprehensive effects; the first view of the Rhone valley and the distant Valaisian Alps, for example, which we saw from the shoulder of the mountain above the Gemmi, and the early summer dawn breaking over Italy as we moved from our night's crouching and munched bread and chocolate and stretched our stiff limbs among the tumbled and precipitous rocks that hung over Lake Cingolo, and surveyed the winding tiring rocky track going down and down to Antronapiano.

And our thoughts were as comprehensive as our impressions. Willersley's mind abounded in historical matter; he had an inaccurate abundant habit of topographical reference; he made me see and trace and see again the Roman Empire sweep up these winding valleys, and the coming of the first great Peace among the warring tribes of men....

In the retrospect each of us seems to have been talking about our outlook almost continually. Each of us, you see, was full of the same question, very near and altogether predominant to us, the question: "What am I going to do with my life?" He saw it almost as importantly as I, but from a different angle, because his choice was largely made and mine still hung in the balance.

“I feel we might do so many things,” I said, “and everything that calls one, calls one away from something else.”

Willersley agreed without any modest disavowals.

“We have got to think out,” he said, “just what we are and what we are up to. We’ve got to do that now. And then — it’s one of those questions it is inadvisable to reopen subsequently.”

He beamed at me through his glasses. The sententious use of long words was a playful habit with him, that and a slight deliberate humour, habits occasional Extension Lecturing was doing very much to intensify.

“You’ve made your decision?”

He nodded with a peculiar forward movement of his head.

“How would you put it?”

“Social Service — education. Whatever else matters or doesn’t matter, it seems to me there is one thing we MUST have and increase, and that is the number of people who can think a little — and have” — he beamed again— “an adequate sense of causation.”

“You’re sure it’s worth while.”

“For me — certainly. I don’t discuss that any more.”

“I don’t limit myself too narrowly,” he added. “After all, the work is all one. We who know, we who feel, are building the great modern state, joining wall to wall and way to way, the new great England rising out of the decaying old... we are the real statesmen — I like that use of ‘statesmen.’...”

“Yes,” I said with many doubts. “Yes, of course....”

Willersley is middle-aged now, with silver in his hair and a deepening benevolence in his always amiable face, and he has very fairly kept his word. He has lived for social service and to do vast masses of useful, undistinguished, fertilising work. Think of the days of arid administrative plodding and of contention still more arid and unrewarded, that he must have spent! His little affectations of gesture and manner, imitative affectations for the most part, have increased, and the humorous beam and the humorous intonations have become a thing he puts on every morning like an old coat. His devotion is mingled with a considerable whimsicality, and they say he is easily flattered by subordinates and easily offended into opposition by colleagues; he has made mistakes at times and followed wrong

courses, still there he is, a flat contradiction to all the ordinary doctrine of motives, a man who has foregone any chances of wealth and profit, foregone any easier paths to distinction, foregone marriage and parentage, in order to serve the community. He does it without any fee or reward except his personal self-satisfaction in doing this work, and he does it without any hope of future joys and punishments, for he is an implacable Rationalist. No doubt he idealises himself a little, and dreams of recognition. No doubt he gets his pleasure from a sense of power, from the spending and husbanding of large sums of public money, and from the inevitable proprietorship he must feel in the fair, fine, well-ordered schools he has done so much to develop. "But for me," he can say, "there would have been a Job about those diagrams, and that subject or this would have been less ably taught."...

The fact remains that for him the rewards have been adequate, if not to content at any rate to keep him working. Of course he covets the notice of the world he has served, as a lover covets the notice of his mistress. Of course he thinks somewhere, somewhen, he will get credit. Only last year I heard some men talking of him, and they were noting, with little mean smiles, how he had shown himself self-conscious while there was talk of some honorary degree-giving or other; it would, I have no doubt, please him greatly if his work were to flower into a crimson gown in some Academic parterre. Why shouldn't it? But that is incidental vanity at the worst; he goes on anyhow. Most men don't.

But we had our walk twenty years and more ago now. He was oldish even then as a young man, just as he is oldish still in middle age. Long may his industrious elderliness flourish for the good of the world! He lectured a little in conversation then; he lectures more now and listens less, toilsomely disentangling what you already understand, giving you in detail the data you know; these are things like callosities that come from a man's work.

Our long three weeks' talk comes back to me as a memory of ideas and determinations slowly growing, all mixed up with a smell of wood smoke and pine woods and huge precipices and remote gleams of snow-fields and the sound of cascading torrents rushing through deep gorges far below. It is mixed, too, with gossips with

waitresses and fellow travellers, with my first essays in colloquial German and Italian, with disputes about the way to take, and other things that I will tell of in another section. But the white passion of human service was our dominant theme. Not simply perhaps nor altogether unselfishly, but quite honestly, and with at least a frequent self-forgetfulness, did we want to do fine and noble things, to help in their developing, to lessen misery, to broaden and exalt life. It is very hard — perhaps it is impossible — to present in a page or two the substance and quality of nearly a month's conversation, conversation that is casual and discursive in form, that ranges carelessly from triviality to immensity, and yet is constantly resuming a constructive process, as workmen on a wall loiter and jest and go and come back, and all the while build.

We got it more and more definite that the core of our purpose beneath all its varied aspects must needs be order and discipline. "Muddle," said I, "is the enemy." That remains my belief to this day. Clearness and order, light and foresight, these things I know for Good. It was muddle had just given us all the still freshly painful disasters and humiliations of the war, muddle that gives us the visibly sprawling disorder of our cities and industrial country-side, muddle that gives us the waste of life, the limitations, wretchedness and unemployment of the poor. Muddle! I remember myself quoting Kipling —

> "All along o' dirtiness, all along o' mess,
> All along o' doin' things rather-more-or-less."

"We build the state," we said over and over again. "That is what we are for — servants of the new reorganisation!"

We planned half in earnest and half Utopianising, a League of Social Service.

We talked of the splendid world of men that might grow out of such unpaid and ill-paid work as we were setting our faces to do. We spoke of the intricate difficulties, the monstrous passive resistances, the hostilities to such a development as we conceived our work subserved, and we spoke with that underlying confidence in the invincibility of the causes we adopted that is natural to young and scarcely tried men.

We talked much of the detailed life of politics so far as it was

known to us, and there Willersley was more experienced and far better informed than I; we discussed possible combinations and possible developments, and the chances of some great constructive movement coming from the heart-searchings the Boer war had occasioned. We would sink to gossip — even at the Suetonius level. Willersley would decline towards illuminating anecdotes that I capped more or less loosely from my private reading. We were particularly wise, I remember, upon the management of newspapers, because about that we knew nothing whatever. We perceived that great things were to be done through newspapers. We talked of swaying opinion and moving great classes to massive action.

Men are egotistical even in devotion. All our splendid projects were thickset with the first personal pronoun. We both could write, and all that we said in general terms was reflected in the particular in our minds; it was ourselves we saw, and no others, writing and speaking that moving word. We had already produced manuscript and passed the initiations of proof reading; I had been a frequent speaker in the Union, and Willersley was an active man on the School Board. Our feet were already on the lower rungs that led up and up. He was six and twenty, and I twenty-two. We intimated our individual careers in terms of bold expectation. I had prophetic glimpses of walls and hoardings clamorous with "Vote for Remington," and Willersley no doubt saw himself chairman of this committee and that, saying a few slightly ironical words after the declaration of the poll, and then sitting friendly beside me on the government benches. There was nothing impossible in such dreams. Why not the Board of Education for him? My preference at that time wavered between the Local Government Board — I had great ideas about town-planning, about revisions of municipal areas and re-organised internal transit — and the War Office. I swayed strongly towards the latter as the journey progressed. My educational bias came later.

The swelling ambitions that have tramped over Alpine passes! How many of them, like mine, have come almost within sight of realisation before they failed?

There were times when we posed like young gods (of unassuming exterior), and times when we were full of the absurdest little

solicitudes about our prospects. There were times when one surveyed the whole world of men as if it was a little thing at one's feet, and by way of contrast I remember once lying in bed — it must have been during this holiday, though I cannot for the life of me fix where — and speculating whether perhaps some day I might not be a K. C. B., Sir Richard Remington, K. C. B., M. P.

But the big style prevailed....

We could not tell from minute to minute whether we were planning for a world of solid reality, or telling ourselves fairy tales about this prospect of life. So much seemed possible, and everything we could think of so improbable. There were lapses when it seemed to me I could never be anything but just the entirely unimportant and undistinguished young man I was for ever and ever. I couldn't even think of myself as five and thirty.

Once I remember Willersley going over a list of failures, and why they had failed — but young men in the twenties do not know much about failures.

10

Willersley and I professed ourselves Socialists, but by this time I knew my Rodbertus as well as my Marx, and there was much in our socialism that would have shocked Chris Robinson as much as anything in life could have shocked him. Socialism as a simple democratic cry we had done with for ever. We were socialists because Individualism for us meant muddle, meant a crowd of separated, undisciplined little people all obstinately and ignorantly doing things jarringly, each one in his own way. "Each," I said quoting words of my father's that rose apt in my memory, "snarling from his own little bit of property, like a dog tied to a cart's tail."

"Essentially," said Willersley, "essentially we're for conscription, in peace and war alike. The man who owns property is a public official and has to behave as such. That's the gist of socialism as I understand it."

"Or be dismissed from his post," I said, "and replaced by some better sort of official. A man's none the less an official because he's irresponsible. What he does with his property affects people just the

same. Private! No one is really private but an outlaw....”

Order and devotion were the very essence of our socialism, and a splendid collective vigour and happiness its end. We projected an ideal state, an organised state as confident and powerful as modern science, as balanced and beautiful as a body, as beneficent as sunshine, the organised state that should end muddle for ever; it ruled all our ideals and gave form to all our ambitions.

Every man was to be definitely related to that, to have his predominant duty to that. Such was the England renewed we had in mind, and how to serve that end, to subdue undisciplined worker and undisciplined wealth to it, and make the Scientific Commonweal, King, was the continuing substance of our intercourse.

11

Every day the wine of the mountains was stronger in our blood, and the flush of our youth deeper. We would go in the morning sunlight along some narrow Alpine mule-path shouting large suggestions for national reorganisation, and weighing considerations as lightly as though the world was wax in our hands. “Great England,” we said in effect, over and over again, “and we will be among the makers! England renewed! The country has been warned; it has learnt its lesson. The disasters and anxieties of the war have sunk in. England has become serious.... Oh! there are big things before us to do; big enduring things!”

One evening we walked up to the loggia of a little pilgrimage church, I forget its name, that stands out on a conical hill at the head of a winding stair above the town of Locarno. Down below the houses clustered amidst a confusion of heat-bitten greenery. I had been sitting silently on the parapet, looking across to the purple mountain masses where Switzerland passes into Italy, and the drift of our talk seemed suddenly to gather to a head.

I broke into speech, giving form to the thoughts that had been accumulating. My words have long since passed out of my memory, the phrases of familiar expression have altered for me, but the substance remains as clear as ever. I said how we were in our measure emperors and kings, men undriven, free to do as we pleased

with life; we classed among the happy ones, our bread and common necessities were given us for nothing, we had abilities, — it wasn't modesty but cowardice to behave as if we hadn't — and Fortune watched us to see what we might do with opportunity and the world.

"There are so many things to do, you see," began Willersley, in his judicial lecturer's voice.

"So many things we may do," I interrupted, "with all these years before us.... We're exceptional men. It's our place, our duty, to do things."

"Here anyhow," I said, answering the faint amusement of his face; "I've got no modesty. Everything conspires to set me up. Why should I run about like all those grubby little beasts down there, seeking nothing but mean little vanities and indulgencies — and then take credit for modesty? I KNOW I am capable. I KNOW I have imagination. Modesty! I know if I don't attempt the very biggest things in life I am a damned shirk. The very biggest! Somebody has to attempt them. I feel like a loaded gun that is only a little perplexed because it has to find out just where to aim itself...."

The lake and the frontier villages, a white puff of steam on the distant railway to Luino, the busy boats and steamers trailing triangular wakes of foam, the long vista eastward towards battlemented Bellinzona, the vast mountain distances, now tinged with sunset light, behind this nearer landscape, and the southward waters with remote coast towns shining dimly, waters that merged at last in a luminous golden haze, made a broad panoramic spectacle. It was as if one surveyed the world, — and it was like the games I used to set out upon my nursery floor. I was exalted by it; I felt larger than men. So kings should feel.

That sense of largeness came to me then, and it has come to me since, again and again, a splendid intimation or a splendid vanity. Once, I remember, when I looked at Genoa from the mountain crest behind the town and saw that multitudinous place in all its beauty of width and abundance and clustering human effort, and once as I was steaming past the brown low hills of Staten Island towards the towering vigour and clamorous vitality of New York City, that mood rose to its quintessence. And once it came to me, as I shall tell, on Dover cliffs. And a hundred times when I have thought of England as

our country might be, with no wretched poor, no wretched rich, a nation armed and ordered, trained and purposeful amidst its vales and rivers, that emotion of collective ends and collective purposes has returned to me. I felt as great as humanity. For a brief moment I was humanity, looking at the world I had made and had still to make....

12

And mingled with these dreams of power and patriotic service there was another series of a different quality and a different colour, like the antagonistic colour of a shot silk. The white life and the red life, contrasted and interchanged, passing swiftly at a turn from one to another, and refusing ever to mingle peacefully one with the other. I was asking myself openly and distinctly: what are you going to do for the world? What are you going to do with yourself? and with an increasing strength and persistence Nature in spite of my averted attention was asking me in penetrating undertones: what are you going to do about this other fundamental matter, the beauty of girls and women and your desire for them?

I have told of my sisterless youth and the narrow circumstances of my upbringing. It made all women-kind mysterious to me. If it had not been for my Staffordshire cousins I do not think I should have known any girls at all until I was twenty. Of Staffordshire I will tell a little later. But I can remember still how through all those ripening years, the thought of women's beauty, their magic presence in the world beside me and the unknown, untried reactions of their intercourse, grew upon me and grew, as a strange presence grows in a room when one is occupied by other things. I busied myself and pretended to be wholly occupied, and there the woman stood, full half of life neglected, and it seemed to my averted mind sometimes that she was there clad and dignified and divine, and sometimes Aphrodite shining and commanding, and sometimes that Venus who stoops and allures.

This travel abroad seemed to have released a multitude of things in my mind; the clear air, the beauty of the sunshine, the very blue of the glaciers made me feel my body and quickened all those disregarded dreams. I saw the sheathed beauty of women's forms all

about me, in the cheerful waitresses at the inns, in the pedestrians one encountered in the tracks, in the chance fellow travellers at the hotel tables. “Confound it!” said I, and talked all the more zealously of that greater England that was calling us.

I remember that we passed two Germans, an old man and a tall fair girl, father and daughter, who were walking down from Saas. She came swinging and shining towards us, easy and strong. I worshipped her as she approached.

“Gut Tag!” said Willersley, removing his hat.

“Morgen!” said the old man, saluting.

I stared stockishly at the girl, who passed with an indifferent face.

That sticks in my mind as a picture remains in a room, it has kept there bright and fresh as a thing seen yesterday, for twenty years....

I flirted hesitatingly once or twice with comely serving girls, and was a little ashamed lest Willersley should detect the keen interest I took in them, and then as we came over the pass from Santa Maria Maggiore to Cannobio, my secret preoccupation took me by surprise and flooded me and broke down my pretences.

The women in that valley are very beautiful — women vary from valley to valley in the Alps and are plain and squat here and divinities five miles away — and as we came down we passed a group of five or six of them resting by the wayside. Their burthens were beside them, and one like Ceres held a reaping hook in her brown hand. She watched us approaching and smiled faintly, her eyes at mine.

There was some greeting, and two of them laughed together.

We passed.

“Glorious girls they were,” said Willersley, and suddenly an immense sense of boredom enveloped me. I saw myself striding on down that winding road, talking of politics and parties and bills of parliament and all sorts of dessicated things. That road seemed to me to wind on for ever down to dust and infinite dreariness. I knew it for a way of death. Reality was behind us.

Willersley set himself to draw a sociological moral. “I’m not so sure,” he said in a voice of intense discriminations, “after all, that agricultural work isn’t good for women.”

“Damn agricultural work!” I said, and broke out into a vigorous

cursing of all I held dear. “Fettered things we are!” I cried. “I wonder why I stand it!”

“Stand what?”

“Why don’t I go back and make love to those girls and let the world and you and everything go hang? Deep breasts and rounded limbs — and we poor emasculated devils go tramping by with the blood of youth in us!...”

“I’m not quite sure, Remington,” said Willersley, looking at me with a deliberately quaint expression over his glasses, “that picturesque scenery is altogether good for your morals.”

That fever was still in my blood when we came to Locarno.

13

Along the hot and dusty lower road between the Orrido of Traffiume and Cannobio Willersley had developed his first blister. And partly because of that and partly because there was a bag at the station that gave us the refreshment of clean linen and partly because of the lazy lower air into which we had come, we decided upon three or four days’ sojourn in the Empress Hotel.

We dined that night at a table-d’hote, and I found myself next to an Englishwoman who began a conversation that was resumed presently in the hotel lounge. She was a woman of perhaps thirty-three or thirty-four, slenderly built, with a warm reddish skin and very abundant fair golden hair, the wife of a petulant-looking heavy-faced man of perhaps fifty-three, who smoked a cigar and dozed over his coffee and presently went to bed. “He always goes to bed like that,” she confided startlingly. “He sleeps after all his meals. I never knew such a man to sleep.”

Then she returned to our talk, whatever it was.

We had begun at the dinner table with itineraries and the usual topographical talk, and she had envied our pedestrian travel. “My husband doesn’t walk,” she said. “His heart is weak and he cannot manage the hills.”

There was something friendly and adventurous in her manner; she conveyed she liked me, and when presently Willersley drifted off to write letters our talk sank at once to easy confidential undertones. I

felt enterprising, and indeed it is easy to be daring with people one has never seen before and may never see again. I said I loved beautiful scenery and all beautiful things, and the pointing note in my voice made her laugh. She told me I had bold eyes, and so far as I can remember I said she made them bold. “Blue they are,” she remarked, smiling archly. “I like blue eyes.” Then I think we compared ages, and she said she was the Woman of Thirty, “George Moore’s Woman of Thirty.”

I had not read George Moore at the time, but I pretended to understand.

That, I think, was our limit that evening. She went to bed, smiling good-night quite prettily down the big staircase, and I and Willersley went out to smoke in the garden. My head was full of her, and I found it necessary to talk about her. So I made her a problem in sociology. “Who the deuce are these people?” I said, “and how do they get a living? They seem to have plenty of money. He strikes me as being — Willersley, what is a drysalter? I think he’s a retired drysalter.”

Willersley theorised while I thought of the woman and that provocative quality of dash she had displayed. The next day at lunch she and I met like old friends. A huge mass of private thinking during the interval had been added to our effect upon one another. We talked for a time of insignificant things.

“What do you do,” she asked rather quickly, “after lunch? Take a siesta?”

“Sometimes,” I said, and hung for a moment eye to eye.

We hadn’t a doubt of each other, but my heart was beating like a steamer propeller when it lifts out of the water.

“Do you get a view from your room?” she asked after a pause.

“It’s on the third floor, Number seventeen, near the staircase. My friend’s next door.”

She began to talk of books. She was interested in Christian Science, she said, and spoke of a book. I forget altogether what that book was called, though I remember to this day with the utmost exactness the purplish magenta of its cover. She said she would lend it to me and hesitated.

Willersley wanted to go for an expedition across the lake that

afternoon, but I refused. He made some other proposals that I rejected abruptly. “I shall write in my room,” I said.

“Why not write down here?”

“I shall write in my room,” I snarled like a thwarted animal, and he looked at me curiously. “Very well,” he said; “then I’ll make some notes and think about that order of ours out under the magnolias.”

I hovered about the lounge for a time buying postcards and feverishly restless, watching the movements of the other people. Finally I went up to my room and sat down by the windows, staring out. There came a little tap at the unlocked door and in an instant, like the go of a taut bowstring, I was up and had it open.

“Here is that book,” she said, and we hesitated.

“COME IN!” I whispered, trembling from head to foot.

“You’re just a boy,” she said in a low tone.

I did not feel a bit like a lover, I felt like a burglar with the safe-door nearly opened. “Come in,” I said almost impatiently, for anyone might be in the passage, and I gripped her wrist and drew her towards me.

“What do you mean?” she answered with a faint smile on her lips, and awkward and yielding.

I shut the door behind her, still holding her with one hand, then turned upon her — she was laughing nervously — and without a word drew her to me and kissed her. And I remember that as I kissed her she made a little noise almost like the purring miaow with which a cat will greet one and her face, close to mine, became solemn and tender.

She was suddenly a different being from the discontented wife who had tapped a moment since on my door, a woman transfigured....

That evening I came down to dinner a monster of pride, for behold! I was a man. I felt myself the most wonderful and unprecedented of adventurers. It was hard to believe that any one in the world before had done as much. My mistress and I met smiling, we carried things off admirably, and it seemed to me that Willersley was the dullest old dog in the world. I wanted to give him advice. I wanted to give him derisive pokes. After dinner and coffee in the

lounge I was too excited and hilarious to go to bed, I made him come with me down to the cafe under the arches by the pier, and there drank beer and talked extravagant nonsense about everything under the sun, in order not to talk about the happenings of the afternoon. All the time something shouted within me: “I am a man! I am a man!”...

“What shall we do to-morrow?” said he.

“I’m for loafing,” I said. “Let’s row in the morning and spend to-morrow afternoon just as we did to-day.”

“They say the church behind the town is worth seeing.”

“We’ll go up about sunset; that’s the best time for it. We can start about five.”

We heard music, and went further along the arcade to discover a place where girls in operatic Swiss peasant costume were singing and dancing on a creaking, protesting little stage. I eyed their generous display of pink neck and arm with the seasoned eye of a man who has lived in the world. Life was perfectly simple and easy, I felt, if one took it the right way.

Next day Willersley wanted to go on, but I delayed. Altogether I kept him back four days. Then abruptly my mood changed, and we decided to start early the following morning. I remember, though a little indistinctly, the feeling of my last talk with that woman whose surname, odd as it may seem, either I never learnt or I have forgotten. (Her christian name was Milly.) She was tired and rather low-spirited, and disposed to be sentimental, and for the first time in our intercourse I found myself liking her for the sake of her own personality. There was something kindly and generous appearing behind the veil of naive and uncontrolled sensuality she had worn. There was a curious quality of motherliness in her attitude to me that something in my nature answered and approved. She didn’t pretend to keep it up that she had yielded to my initiative. “I’ve done you no harm,” she said a little doubtfully, an odd note for a man’s victim! And, “we’ve had a good time. You have liked me, haven’t you?”

She interested me in her lonely dissatisfied life; she was childless and had no hope of children, and her husband was the only son of a rich meat salesman, very mean, a mighty smoker— “he reeks of it,” she said, “always” — and interested in nothing but golf, billiards

(which he played very badly), pigeon shooting, convivial Free Masonry and Stock Exchange punting. Mostly they drifted about the Riviera. Her mother had contrived her marriage when she was eighteen. They were the first samples I ever encountered of the great multitude of functionless property owners which encumbers modern civilisation — but at the time I didn't think much of that aspect of them....

I tell all this business as it happened without comment, because I have no comment to make. It was all strange to me, strange rather than wonderful, and, it may be, some dream of beauty died for ever in those furtive meetings; it happened to me, and I could scarcely have been more irresponsible in the matter or controlled events less if I had been suddenly pushed over a cliff into water. I swam, of course — finding myself in it. Things tested me, and I reacted, as I have told. The bloom of my innocence, if ever there had been such a thing, was gone. And here is the remarkable thing about it; at the time and for some days I was over-weeningly proud; I have never been so proud before or since; I felt I had been promoted to virility; I was unable to conceal my exultation from Willersley. It was a mood of shining shameless ungracious self-approval. As he and I went along in the cool morning sunshine by the rice fields in the throat of the Val Maggia a silence fell between us.

"You know?" I said abruptly,— "about that woman?"

Willersley did not answer for a moment. He looked at me over the corner of his spectacles.

"Things went pretty far?" he asked.

"Oh! all the way!" and I had a twinge of fatuous pride in my unpremeditated achievement.

"She came to your room?"

I nodded.

"I heard her. I heard her whispering.... The whispering and rustling and so on. I was in my room yesterday.... Any one might have heard you."

I went on with my head in the air.

"You might have been caught, and that would have meant endless trouble. You might have incurred all sorts of consequences. What did you know about her?... We have wasted four days in that hot close

place. When we found that League of Social Service we were talking about," he said with a determined eye upon me, "chastity will be first among the virtues prescribed."

"I shall form a rival league," I said a little damped. "I'm hanged if I give up a single desire in me until I know why."

He lifted his chin and stared before him through his glasses at nothing. "There are some things," he said, "that a man who means to work — to do great public services — MUST turn his back upon. I'm not discussing the rights or wrongs of this sort of thing. It happens to be the conditions we work under. It will probably always be so. If you want to experiment in that way, if you want even to discuss it, — out you go from political life. You must know that's so.... You're a strange man, Remington, with a kind of kink in you. You've a sort of force. You might happen to do immense things.... Only—"

He stopped. He had said all that he had forced himself to say.

"I mean to take myself as I am," I said. "I'm going to get experience for humanity out of all my talents — and bury nothing."

Willersley twisted his face to its humorous expression. "I doubt if sexual proclivities," he said drily, "come within the scope of the parable."

I let that go for a little while. Then I broke out. "Sex!" said I, "is a fundamental thing in life. We went through all this at Trinity. I'm going to look at it, experience it, think about it — and get it square with the rest of life. Career and Politics must take their chances of that. It's part of the general English slackness that they won't look this in the face. Gods! what a muffled time we're coming out of! Sex means breeding, and breeding is a necessary function in a nation. The Romans broke up upon that. The Americans fade out amidst their successes. Eugenics—"

"THAT wasn't Eugenics," said Willersley.

"It was a woman," I said after a little interval, feeling oddly that I had failed altogether to answer him, and yet had a strong dumb case against him.

BOOK THE SECOND: MARGARET

CHAPTER THE FIRST ~~ MARGARET IN STAFFORDSHIRE

1

I must go back a little way with my story. In the previous book I have described the kind of education that happens to a man of my class nowadays, and it has been convenient to leap a phase in my experience that I must now set out at length. I want to tell in this second hook how I came to marry, and to do that I must give something of the atmosphere in which I first met my wife and some intimations of the forces that went to her making. I met her in Staffordshire while I was staying with that uncle of whom I have already spoken, the uncle who sold my father's houses and settled my mother in Penge. Margaret was twenty then and I was twenty-two.

It was just before the walking tour in Switzerland that opened up so much of the world to me. I saw her once, for an afternoon, and circumstances so threw her up in relief that I formed a very vivid memory of her. She was in the sharpest contrast with the industrial world about her; she impressed me as a dainty blue flower might do, come upon suddenly on a clinker heap. She remained in my mind at once a perplexing interrogation and a symbol....

But first I must tell of my Staffordshire cousins and the world that served as a foil for her.

2

I first went to stay with my cousins when I was an awkward youth of sixteen, wearing deep mourning for my mother. My uncle wanted to talk things over with me, he said, and if he could, to persuade me to go into business instead of going up to Cambridge.

I remember that visit on account of all sorts of novel things, but chiefly, I think, because it was the first time I encountered anything that deserves to be spoken of as wealth. For the first time in my life I had to do with people who seemed to have endless supplies of

money, unlimited good clothes, numerous servants; whose daily life was made up of things that I had hitherto considered to be treats or exceptional extravagances. My cousins of eighteen and nineteen took cabs, for instance, with the utmost freedom, and travelled first-class in the local trains that run up and down the district of the Five Towns with an entire unconsciousness of the magnificence, as it seemed to me, of such a proceeding.

The family occupied a large villa in Newcastle, with big lawns before it and behind, a shrubbery with quite a lot of shrubs, a coach house and stable, and subordinate dwelling-places for the gardener and the coachman. Every bedroom contained a gas heater and a canopied brass bedstead, and had a little bathroom attached equipped with the porcelain baths and fittings my uncle manufactured, bright and sanitary and stamped with his name, and the house was furnished throughout with chairs and tables in bright shining wood, soft and prevalently red Turkish carpets, cosy corners, curtained archways, gold-framed landscapes, overmantels, a dining-room sideboard like a palace with a large Tantalus, and electric light fittings of a gay and expensive quality. There was a fine billiard-room on the ground floor with three comfortable sofas and a rotating bookcase containing an excellent collection of the English and American humorists from THREE MEN IN A BOAT to the penultimate Mark Twain. There was also a conservatory opening out of the dining-room, to which the gardener brought potted flowers in their season....

My aunt was a little woman with a scared look and a cap that would get over one eye, not very like my mother, and nearly eight years her junior; she was very much concerned with keeping everything nice, and unmercifully bullied by my two cousins, who took after their father and followed the imaginations of their own hearts. They were tall, dark, warmly flushed girls handsome rather than pretty. Gertrude, the eldest and tallest, had eyes that were almost black; Sibyl was of a stouter build, and her eyes, of which she was shamelessly proud, were dark blue. Sibyl's hair waved, and Gertrude's was severely straight. They treated me on my first visit with all the contempt of the adolescent girl for a boy a little younger and infinitely less expert in the business of life than herself. They were very busy with the writings of notes and certain mysterious

goings and comings of their own, and left me very much to my own devices. Their speech in my presence was full of unfathomable allusions. They were the sort of girls who will talk over and through an uninitiated stranger with the pleasantest sense of superiority.

I met them at breakfast and at lunch and at the half-past six o'clock high tea that formed the third chief meal of the day. I heard them rattling off the compositions of Chaminade and Moskowski, with great decision and effect, and hovered on the edge of tennis foursomes where it was manifest to the dullest intelligence that my presence was unnecessary. Then I went off to find some readable book in the place, but apart from miscellaneous popular novels, some veterinary works, a number of comic books, old bound volumes of THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS and a large, popular illustrated History of England, there was very little to be found. My aunt talked to me in a casual feeble way, chiefly about my mother's last illness. The two had seen very little of each other for many years; she made no secret of it that the ineligible qualities of my father were the cause of the estrangement. The only other society in the house during the day was an old and rather decayed Skye terrier in constant conflict with what were no doubt imaginary fleas. I took myself off for a series of walks, and acquired a considerable knowledge of the scenery and topography of the Potteries.

It puzzled my aunt that I did not go westward, where it was country-side and often quite pretty, with hedgerows and fields and copses and flowers. But always I went eastward, where in a long valley industrialism smokes and sprawls. That was the stuff to which I turned by nature, to the human effort, and the accumulation and jar of men's activities. And in such a country as that valley social and economic relations were simple and manifest. Instead of the limitless confusion of London's population, in which no man can trace any but the most slender correlation between rich and poor, in which everyone seems disconnected and adrift from everyone, you can see here the works, the potbank or the ironworks or what not, and here close at hand the congested, meanly-housed workers, and at a little distance a small middle-class quarter, and again remoter, the big house of the employer. It was like a very simplified diagram — after the untraceable confusion of London.

I prowled alone, curious and interested, through shabby back streets of mean little homes; I followed canals, sometimes canals of mysteriously heated waters with ghostly wisps of steam rising against blackened walls or a distant prospect of dustbin-fed vegetable gardens, I saw the women pouring out from the potbanks, heard the hooters summoning the toilers to work, lost my way upon slag heaps as big as the hills of the south country, dodged trains at manifestly dangerous level crossings, and surveyed across dark intervening spaces, the flaming uproar, the gnome-like activities of iron foundries. I heard talk of strikes and rumours of strikes, and learnt from the columns of some obscure labour paper I bought one day, of the horrors of the lead poisoning that was in those days one of the normal risks of certain sorts of pottery workers. Then back I came, by the ugly groaning and clanging steam train of that period, to my uncle's house and lavish abundance of money and more or less furtive flirtations and the tinkle of Moskowski and Chaminade. It was, I say, diagrammatic. One saw the expropriator and the expropriated — as if Marx had arranged the picture. It was as jumbled and far more dingy and disastrous than any of the confusions of building and development that had surrounded my youth at Bromstead and Penge, but it had a novel quality of being explicable. I found great virtue in the word "exploitation."

There stuck in my mind as if it was symbolical of the whole thing the twisted figure of a man, whose face had been horribly scalded — I can't describe how, except that one eye was just expressionless white — and he ground at an organ bearing a card which told in weak and bitterly satirical phrasing that he had been scalded by the hot water from the tuyeres of the blast furnace of Lord Pandram's works. He had been scalded and quite inadequately compensated and dismissed. And Lord Pandram was worth half a million.

That upturned sightless white eye of his took possession of my imagination. I don't think that even then I was swayed by any crude melodramatic conception of injustice. I was quite prepared to believe the card wasn't a punctiliously accurate statement of fact, and that a case could be made out for Lord Pandram. Still there in the muddy gutter, painfully and dreadfully, was the man, and he was smashed and scalded and wretched, and he ground his dismal hurdygurdy with

a weary arm, calling upon Heaven and the passer-by for help, for help and some sort of righting — one could not imagine quite what. There he was as a fact, as a by-product of the system that heaped my cousins with trinkets and provided the comic novels and the abundant cigars and spacious billiard-room of my uncle's house. I couldn't disconnect him and them.

My uncle on his part did nothing to conceal the state of war that existed between himself and his workers, and the mingled contempt and animosity he felt from them.

3

Prosperity had overtaken my uncle. So quite naturally he believed that every man who was not as prosperous as he was had only himself to blame. He was rich and he had left school and gone into his father's business at fifteen, and that seemed to him the proper age at which everyone's education should terminate. He was very anxious to dissuade me from going up to Cambridge, and we argued intermittently through all my visit.

I had remembered him as a big and buoyant man, striding destructively about the nursery floor of my childhood, and saluting my existence by slaps, loud laughter, and questions about half herrings and half eggs subtly framed to puzzle and confuse my mind. I didn't see him for some years until my father's death, and then he seemed rather smaller, though still a fair size, yellow instead of red and much less radiantly aggressive. This altered effect was due not so much to my own changed perspectives, I fancy, as to the facts that he was suffering for continuous cigar smoking, and being taken in hand by his adolescent daughters who had just returned from school.

During my first visit there was a perpetual series of — the only word is rows, between them and him. Up to the age of fifteen or thereabouts, he had maintained his ascendancy over them by simple old-fashioned physical chastisement. Then after an interlude of a year it had dawned upon them that power had mysteriously departed from him. He had tried stopping their pocket money, but they found their mother financially amenable; besides which it was fundamental to my uncle's attitude that he should give them money freely. Not to

do so would seem like admitting a difficulty in making it. So that after he had stopped their allowances for the fourth time Sybil and Gertrude were prepared to face beggary without a qualm. It had been his pride to give them the largest allowance of any girls at the school, not even excepting the granddaughter of Fladden the Borax King, and his soul recoiled from this discipline as it had never recoiled from the ruder method of the earlier phase. Both girls had developed to a high pitch in their mutual recriminations a gift for damaging retort, and he found it an altogether deadlier thing than the power of the raised voice that had always cowed my aunt. Whenever he became heated with them, they frowned as if involuntarily, drew in their breath sharply, said: "Daddy, you really must not say—" and corrected his pronunciation. Then, at a great advantage, they resumed the discussion....

My uncle's views about Cambridge, however, were perfectly clear and definite. It was waste of time and money. It was all damned foolery. Did they make a man a better business man? Not a bit of it. He gave instances. It spoilt a man for business by giving him "false ideas." Some men said that at college a man formed useful friendships. What use were friendships to a business man? He might get to know lords, but, as my uncle pointed out, a lord's requirements in his line of faience were little greater than a common man's. If college introduced him to hotel proprietors there might be something in it. Perhaps it helped a man into Parliament, Parliament still being a confused retrogressive corner in the world where lawyers and suchlike sheltered themselves from the onslaughts of common-sense behind a fog of Latin and Greek and twaddle and tosh; but I wasn't the sort to go into Parliament, unless I meant to be a lawyer. Did I mean to be a lawyer? It cost no end of money, and was full of uncertainties, and there were no judges nor great solicitors among my relations. "Young chaps think they get on by themselves," said my uncle. "It isn't so. Not unless they take their coats off. I took mine off before I was your age by nigh a year."

We were at cross purposes from the outset, because I did not think men lived to make money; and I was obtuse to the hints he was throwing out at the possibilities of his own potbank, not willfully obtuse, but just failing to penetrate his meaning. Whatever City

Merchants had or had not done for me, Flack, Topham and old Gates had certainly barred my mistaking the profitable production and sale of lavatory basins and bathroom fittings for the highest good. It was only upon reflection that it dawned upon me that the splendid chance for a young fellow with my uncle, "me, having no son of my own," was anything but an illustration for comparison with my own chosen career.

I still remember very distinctly my uncle's talk, — he loved to speak "reet Staffordshire" — his rather flabby face with the mottled complexion that told of crude ill-regulated appetites, his clumsy gestures — he kept emphasising his points by prodding at me with his finger — the ill-worn, costly, grey tweed clothes, the watch chain of plain solid gold, and soft felt hat thrust back from his head. He tackled me first in the garden after lunch, and then tried to raise me to enthusiasm by taking me to his potbank and showing me its organisation, from the dusty grinding mills in which whitened men worked and coughed, through the highly ventilated glazing room in which strangely masked girls looked ashamed of themselves,— "They'll risk death, the fools, to show their faces to a man," said my uncle, quite audibly — to the firing kilns and the glazing kilns, and so round the whole place to the railway siding and the gratifying spectacle of three trucks laden with executed orders.

Then we went up a creaking outside staircase to his little office, and he showed off before me for a while, with one or two subordinates and the telephone.

"None of your Gas," he said, "all this. It's Real every bit of it. Hard cash and hard glaze."

"Yes," I said, with memories of a carelessly read pamphlet in my mind, and without any satirical intention, "I suppose you MUST use lead in your glazes?"

Whereupon I found I had tapped the ruling grievance of my uncle's life. He hated leadless glazes more than he hated anything, except the benevolent people who had organised the agitation for their use. "Leadless glazes ain't only fit for buns," he said. "Let me tell you, my boy—"

He began in a voice of bland persuasiveness that presently warmed to anger, to explain the whole matter. I hadn't the rights of

the matter at all. Firstly, there was practically no such thing as lead poisoning. Secondly, not everyone was liable to lead poisoning, and it would be quite easy to pick out the susceptible types — as soon as they had it — and put them to other work. Thirdly, the evil effects of lead poisoning were much exaggerated. Fourthly, and this was in a particularly confidential undertone, many of the people liked to get lead poisoning, especially the women, because it caused abortion. I might not believe it, but he knew it for a fact. Fifthly, the work-people simply would not learn the gravity of the danger, and would eat with unwashed hands, and incur all sorts of risks, so that as my uncle put it: "the fools deserve what they get." Sixthly, he and several associated firms had organised a simple and generous insurance scheme against lead-poisoning risks. Seventhly, he never wearied in rational (as distinguished from excessive, futile and expensive) precautions against the disease. Eighthly, in the ill-equipped shops of his minor competitors lead poisoning was a frequent and virulent evil, and people had generalised from these exceptional cases. The small shops, he hazarded, looking out of the cracked and dirty window at distant chimneys, might be advantageously closed....

"But what's the good of talking?" said my uncle, getting off the table on which he had been sitting. "Seems to me there'll come a time when a master will get fined if he don't run round the works blowing his girls noses for them. That's about what it'll come to."

He walked to the black mantelpiece and stood on the threadbare rug, and urged me not to be misled by the stories of prejudiced and interested enemies of our national industries.

"They'll get a strike one of these days, of employers, and then we'll see a bit," he said. "They'll drive Capital abroad and then they'll whistle to get it back again."...

He led the way down the shaky wooden steps and cheered up to tell me of his way of checking his coal consumption. He exchanged a ferocious greeting with one or two workpeople, and so we came out of the factory gates into the ugly narrow streets, paved with a peculiarly hard diapered brick of an unpleasing inky-blue colour, and bordered with the mean and squalid homes of his workers. Doors stood open and showed grimy interiors, and dirty ill-clad children

played in the kennel.

We passed a sickly-looking girl with a sallow face, who dragged her limbs and peered at us dimly with painful eyes. She stood back, as partly blinded people will do, to allow us to pass, although there was plenty of room for us.

I glanced back at her.

“THAT’S ploombism,” said my uncle casually.

“What?” said I.

“Ploombism. And the other day I saw a fool of a girl, and what d’you think? She’d got a basin that hadn’t been fired, a cracked piece of biscuit it was, up on the shelf over her head, just all over glaze, killing glaze, man, and she was putting up her hand if you please, and eating her dinner out of it. Got her dinner in it!

“Eating her dinner out of it,” he repeated in loud and bitter tones, and punched me hard in the ribs.

“And then they comes to THAT — and grumbles. And the fools up in Westminster want you to put in fans here and fans there — the Longton fools have.... And then eating their dinners out of it all the time!”...

At high tea that night — my uncle was still holding out against evening dinner — Sibyl and Gertrude made what was evidently a concerted demand for a motor-car.

“You’ve got your mother’s brougham,” he said, “that’s good enough for you.” But he seemed shaken by the fact that some Burslem rival was launching out with the new invention. “He spoils his girls,” he remarked. “He’s a fool,” and became thoughtful.

Afterwards he asked me to come to him into his study; it was a room with a writing-desk and full of pieces of earthenware and suchlike litter, and we had our great row about Cambridge.

“Have you thought things over, Dick?” he said.

“I think I’ll go to Trinity, Uncle,” I said firmly. “I want to go to Trinity. It is a great college.”

He was manifestly chagrined. “You’re a fool,” he said.

I made no answer.

“You’re a damned fool,” he said. “But I suppose you’ve got to do it. You could have come here — That don’t matter, though, now... You’ll have your time and spend your money, and be a poor half-

starved clergyman, mucking about with the women all the day and afraid to have one of your own ever, or you'll be a schoolmaster or some such fool for the rest of your life. Or some newspaper chap. That's what you'll get from Cambridge. I'm half a mind not to let you. Eh? More than half a mind...."

"You've got to do the thing you can," he said, after a pause, "and likely it's what you're fitted for."

4

I paid several short visits to Staffordshire during my Cambridge days, and always these relations of mine produced the same effect of hardness. My uncle's thoughts had neither atmosphere nor mystery. He lived in a different universe from the dreams of scientific construction that filled my mind. He could as easily have understood Chinese poetry. His motives were made up of intense rivalries with other men of his class and kind, a few vindictive hates springing from real and fancied slights, a habit of acquisition that had become a second nature, a keen love both of efficiency and display in his own affairs. He seemed to me to have no sense of the state, no sense and much less any love of beauty, no charity and no sort of religious feeling whatever. He had strong bodily appetites, he ate and drank freely, smoked a great deal, and occasionally was carried off by his passions for a "bit of a spree" to Birmingham or Liverpool or Manchester. The indulgences of these occasions were usually followed by a period of reaction, when he was urgent for the suppression of nudity in the local Art Gallery and a harsh and forcible elevation of the superficial morals of the valley. And he spoke of the ladies who ministered to the delights of his jolly-dog period, when he spoke of them at all, by the unprintable feminine equivalent. My aunt he treated with a kindly contempt and considerable financial generosity, but his daughters tore his heart; he was so proud of them, so glad to find them money to spend, so resolved to own them, so instinctively jealous of every man who came near them.

My uncle has been the clue to a great number of men for me. He was an illuminating extreme. I have learnt what not to expect from

them through him, and to comprehend resentments and dangerous sudden antagonisms I should have found incomprehensible in their more complex forms, if I had not first seen them in him in their feral state.

With his soft felt hat at the back of his head, his rather heavy, rather mottled face, his rationally thick boots and slouching tweed-clad form, a little round-shouldered and very obstinate looking, he strolls through all my speculations sucking his teeth audibly, and occasionally throwing out a shrewd aphorism, the intractable unavoidable ore of the new civilisation.

Essentially he was simple. Generally speaking, he hated and despised in equal measure whatever seemed to suggest that he personally was not the most perfect human being conceivable. He hated all education after fifteen because he had had no education after fifteen, he hated all people who did not have high tea until he himself under duress gave up high tea, he hated every game except football, which he had played and could judge, he hated all people who spoke foreign languages because he knew no language but Staffordshire, he hated all foreigners because he was English, and all foreign ways because they were not his ways. Also he hated particularly, and in this order, Londoner's, Yorkshiremen, Scotch, Welch and Irish, because they were not "reet Staffordshire," and he hated all other Staffordshire men as insufficiently "reet." He wanted to have all his own women inviolate, and to fancy he had a call upon every other woman in the world. He wanted to have the best cigars and the best brandy in the world to consume or give away magnificently, and every one else to have inferior ones. (His billiard table was an extra large size, specially made and very inconvenient.) And he hated Trade Unions because they interfered with his autocratic direction of his works, and his workpeople because they were not obedient and untiring mechanisms to do his bidding. He was, in fact, a very naive, vigorous human being. He was about as much civilised, about as much tamed to the ideas of collective action and mutual consideration as a Central African negro.

There are hordes of such men as he throughout all the modern industrial world. You will find the same type with the slightest modifications in the Pas de Calais or Rhenish Prussia or New Jersey

or North Italy. No doubt you would find it in New Japan. These men have raised themselves up from the general mass of untrained, uncultured, poorish people in a hard industrious selfish struggle. To drive others they have had first to drive themselves. They have never yet had occasion nor leisure to think of the state or social life as a whole, and as for dreams or beauty, it was a condition of survival that they should ignore such cravings. All the distinctive qualities of my uncle can be thought of as dictated by his conditions; his success and harshness, the extravagances that expressed his pride in making money, the uncongenial luxury that sprang from rivalry, and his self-reliance, his contempt for broad views, his contempt for everything that he could not understand.

His daughters were the inevitable children of his life. Queer girls they were! Curiously "spirited" as people phrase it, and curiously limited. During my Cambridge days I went down to Staffordshire several times. My uncle, though he still resented my refusal to go into his business, was also in his odd way proud of me. I was his nephew and poor relation, and yet there I was, a young gentleman learning all sorts of unremunerative things in the grandest manner, "Latin and mook," while the sons of his neighhours, not nephews merely, but sons, stayed unpolished in their native town. Every time I went down I found extensive changes and altered relations, and before I had settled down to them off I went again. I don't think I was one person to them; I was a series of visitors. There is a gulf of ages between a gaunt schoolboy of sixteen in unbecoming mourning and two vividly self-conscious girls of eighteen and nineteen, but a Cambridge "man" of two and twenty with a first and good tennis and a growing social experience, is a fair contemporary for two girls of twenty-three and twenty-four.

A motor-car appeared, I think in my second visit, a bottle-green affair that opened behind, had dark purple cushions, and was controlled mysteriously by a man in shiny black costume and a flat cap. The high tea had been shifted to seven and rechristened dinner, but my uncle would not dress nor consent to have wine; and after one painful experiment, I gathered, and a scene, he put his foot down and prohibited any but high-necked dresses.

"Daddy's perfectly impossible," Sybil told me.

The foot had descended vehemently! “My own daughters!” he had said, “dressed up like—” — and had arrested himself and fumbled and decided to say— “actresses, and showin’ their fat arms for every fool to stare at!” Nor would he have any people invited to dinner. He didn’t, he had explained, want strangers poking about in his house when he came home tired. So such calling as occurred went on during his absence in the afternoon.

One of the peculiarities of the life of these ascendant families of the industrial class to which wealth has come, is its tremendous insulations. There were no customs of intercourse in the Five Towns. All the isolated prosperities of the district sprang from economising, hard driven homes, in which there was neither time nor means for hospitality. Social intercourse centred very largely upon the church or chapel, and the chapels were better at bringing people together than the Establishment to which my cousins belonged. Their chief outlet to the wider world lay therefore through the acquaintances they had formed at school, and through two much less prosperous families of relations who lived at Longton and Hanley. A number of gossiping friendships with old school mates were “kept up,” and my cousins would “spend the afternoon” or even spend the day with these; such occasions led to other encounters and interlaced with the furtive correspondences and snatched meetings that formed the emotional thread of their lives. When the billiard table had been new, my uncle had taken to asking in a few approved friends for an occasional game, but mostly the billiard-room was for glory and the girls. Both of them played very well. They never, so far as I know, dined out, and when at last after bitter domestic conflicts they began to go to dances, they went with the quavering connivance of my aunt, and changed into ball frocks at friends’ houses on the way. There was a tennis club that formed a convenient afternoon rendezvous, and I recall that in the period of my earlier visits the young bloods of the district found much satisfaction in taking girls for drives in dog-carts and suchlike high-wheeled vehicles, a disposition that died in tangled tandems at the apparition of motor-car’s.

My aunt and uncle had conceived no plans in life for their daughters at all. In the undifferentiated industrial community from which they had sprung, girls got married somehow, and it did not

occur to them that the concentration of property that had made them wealthy, had cut their children off from the general social sea in which their own awkward meeting had occurred, without necessarily opening any other world in exchange. My uncle was too much occupied with the works and his business affairs and his private vices to philosophise about his girls; he wanted them just to keep girls, preferably about sixteen, and to be a sort of animated flowers and make home bright and be given things. He was irritated that they would not remain at this, and still more irritated that they failed to suppress altogether their natural interest in young men. The tandems would be steered by weird and devious routes to evade the bare chance of his bloodshot eye. My aunt seemed to have no ideas whatever about what was likely to happen to her children. She had indeed no ideas about anything; she took her husband and the days as they came.

I can see now the pathetic difficulty of my cousins' position in life; the absence of any guidance or instruction or provision for their development. They supplemented the silences of home by the conversation of schoolfellows and the suggestions of popular fiction. They had to make what they could out of life with such hints as these. The church was far too modest to offer them any advice. It was obtruded upon my mind upon my first visit that they were both carrying on correspondences and having little furtive passings and seeings and meetings with the mysterious owners of certain initials, S. and L. K., and, if I remember rightly, "the R. N." brothers and cousins, I suppose, of their friends. The same thing was going on, with a certain intensification, at my next visit, excepting only that the initials were different. But when I came again their methods were maturer or I was no longer a negligible quantity, and the notes and the initials were no longer flaunted quite so openly in my face.

My cousins had worked it out from the indications of their universe that the end of life is to have a "good time." They used the phrase. That and the drives in dog-carts were only the first of endless points of resemblance between them and the commoner sort of American girl. When some years ago I paid my first and only visit to America I seemed to recover my cousins' atmosphere as soon as I entered the train at Euston. There were three girls in my

compartment supplied with huge decorated cases of sweets, and being seen off by a company of friends, noisily arch and eager about the "steamer letters" they would get at Liverpool; they were the very soul-sisters of my cousins. The chief elements of a good time, as my cousins judged it, as these countless thousands of rich young women judge it, are a petty eventfulness, laughter, and to feel that you are looking well and attracting attention. Shopping is one of its leading joys. You buy things, clothes and trinkets for yourself and presents for your friends. Presents always seemed to be flying about in that circle; flowers and boxes of sweets were common currency. My cousins were always getting and giving, my uncle caressed them with parcels and cheques. They kissed him and he exuded sovereigns as a stroked APHIS exudes honey. It was like the new language of the Academy of Lagado to me, and I never learnt how to express myself in it, for nature and training make me feel encumbered to receive presents and embarrassed in giving them. But then, like my father, I hate and distrust possessions.

Of the quality of their private imagination I never learnt anything; I suppose it followed the lines of the fiction they read and was romantic and sentimental. So far as marriage went, the married state seemed at once very attractive and dreadfully serious to them, composed in equal measure of becoming important and becoming old. I don't know what they thought about children. I doubt if they thought about them at all. It was very secret if they did.

As for the poor and dingy people all about them, my cousins were always ready to take part in a Charitable Bazaar. They were unaware of any economic correlation of their own prosperity and that circumambient poverty, and they knew of Trade Unions simply as disagreeable external things that upset my uncle's temper. They knew of nothing wrong in social life at all except that there were "Agitators." It surprised them a little, I think, that Agitators were not more drastically put down. But they had a sort of instinctive dread of social discussion as of something that might breach the happiness of their ignorance....

My cousins did more than illustrate Marx for me; they also undertook a stage of my emotional education. Their method in that as in everything else was extremely simple, but it took my inexperience by surprise.

It must have been on my third visit that Sybil took me in hand. Hitherto I seemed to have seen her only in profile, but now she became almost completely full face, manifestly regarded me with those violet eyes of hers. She passed me things I needed at breakfast — it was the first morning of my visit — before I asked for them.

When young men are looked at by pretty cousins, they become intensely aware of those cousins. It seemed to me that I had always admired Sybil's eyes very greatly, and that there was something in her temperament congenial to mine. It was odd I had not noted it on my previous visits.

We walked round the garden somewhen that morning, and talked about Cambridge. She asked quite a lot of questions about my work and my ambitions. She said she had always felt sure I was clever.

The conversation languished a little, and we picked some flowers for the house. Then she asked if I could run. I conceded her various starts and we raced up and down the middle garden path. Then, a little breathless, we went into the new twenty-five guinea summer-house at the end of the herbaceous border.

We sat side by side, pleasantly hidden from the house, and she became anxious about her hair, which was slightly and prettily disarranged, and asked me to help her with the adjustment of a hairpin. I had never in my life been so near the soft curly hair and the dainty eyebrow and eyelid and warm soft cheek of a girl, and I was stirred —

It stirs me now to recall it.

I became a battleground of impulses and inhibitions.

"Thank you," said my cousin, and moved a little away from me.

She began to talk about friendship, and lost her thread and forgot the little electric stress between us in a rather meandering analysis of her principal girl friends.

But afterwards she resumed her purpose.

I went to bed that night with one proposition overshadowing everything else in my mind, namely, that kissing my cousin Sybil

was a difficult, but not impossible, achievement. I do not recall any shadow of a doubt whether on the whole it was worth doing. The thing had come into my existence, disturbing and interrupting its flow exactly as a fever does. Sybil had infected me with herself.

The next day matters came to a crisis in the little upstairs sitting-room which had been assigned me as a study during my visit. I was working up there, or rather trying to work in spite of the outrageous capering of some very primitive elements in my brain, when she came up to me, under a transparent pretext of looking for a book.

I turned round and then got up at the sight of her. I quite forget what our conversation was about, but I know she led me to believe I might kiss her. Then when I attempted to do so she averted her face.

"How COULD you?" she said; "I didn't mean that!"

That remained the state of our relations for two days. I developed a growing irritation with and resentment against cousin Sybil, combined with an intense desire to get that kiss for which I hungered and thirsted. Cousin Sybil went about in the happy persuasion that I was madly in love with her, and her game, so far as she was concerned, was played and won. It wasn't until I had fretted for two days that I realised that I was being used for the commonest form of excitement possible to a commonplace girl; that dozens perhaps of young men had played the part of Tantalus at cousin Sybil's lips. I walked about my room at nights, damning her and calling her by terms which on the whole she rather deserved, while Sybil went to sleep pitying "poor old Dick!"

"Damn it!" I said, "I WILL be equal with you."

But I never did equalise the disadvantage, and perhaps it's as well, for I fancy that sort of revenge cuts both people too much for a rational man to seek it....

"Why are men so silly?" said cousin Sybil next morning, wriggling back with down-bent head to release herself from what should have been a compelling embrace.

"Confound it!" I said with a flash of clear vision. "You STARTED this game."

"Oh!"

She stood back against a hedge of roses, a little flushed and excited and interested, and ready for the delightful defensive if I

should renew my attack.

"Beastly hot for scuffling," I said, white with anger. "I don't know whether I'm so keen on kissing you, Sybil, after all. I just thought you wanted me to."

I could have whipped her, and my voice stung more than my words.

Our eyes met; a real hatred in hers leaping up to meet mine.

"Let's play tennis," I said, after a moment's pause.

"No," she answered shortly, "I'm going indoors."

"Very well."

And that ended the affair with Sybil.

I was still in the full glare of this disillusionment when Gertrude awoke from some preoccupation to an interest in my existence. She developed a disposition to touch my hand by accident, and let her fingers rest in contact with it for a moment, — she had pleasant soft hands; — she began to drift into summer houses with me, to let her arm rest trustfully against mine, to ask questions about Cambridge. They were much the same questions that Sybil had asked. But I controlled myself and maintained a profile of intelligent and entirely civil indifference to her blandishments.

What Gertrude made of it came out one evening in some talk — I forget about what — with Sybil.

"Oh, Dick!" said Gertrude a little impatiently, "Dick's Pi."

And I never disillusioned her by any subsequent levity from this theory of my innate and virginal piety.

6

It was against this harsh and crude Staffordshire background that I think I must have seen Margaret for the first time. I say I think because it is quite possible that we had passed each other in the streets of Cambridge, no doubt with that affectation of mutual disregard which was once customary between undergraduates and Newnham girls. But if that was so I had noted nothing of the slender graciousness that shone out so pleasingly against the bleaker midland surroundings.

She was a younger schoolfellow of my cousins', and the step-

daughter of Seddon, a prominent solicitor of Burslem. She was not only not in my cousins' generation but not in their set, she was one of a small hardworking group who kept immaculate note-books, and did as much as is humanly possible of that insensate pile of written work that the Girls' Public School movement has inflicted upon school-girls. She really learnt French and German admirably and thoroughly, she got as far in mathematics as an unflinching industry can carry any one with no great natural aptitude, and she went up to Bennett Hall, Newnham, after the usual conflict with her family, to work for the History Tripos.

There in her third year she made herself thoroughly ill through overwork, so ill that she had to give up Newnham altogether and go abroad with her stepmother. She made herself ill, as so many girls do in those university colleges, through the badness of her home and school training. She thought study must needs be a hard straining of the mind. She worried her work, she gave herself no leisure to see it as a whole, she felt herself not making headway and she cut her games and exercise in order to increase her hours of toil, and worked into the night. She carried a knack of laborious thoroughness into the blind alleys and inessentials of her subject. It didn't need the badness of the food for which Bennett Hall is celebrated and the remarkable dietary of nocturnal cocoa, cakes and soft biscuits with which the girls have supplemented it, to ensure her collapse. Her mother brought her home, fretting and distressed, and then finding her hopelessly unhappy at home, took her and her half-brother, a rather ailing youngster of ten who died three years later, for a journey to Italy.

Italy did much to assuage Margaret's chagrin. I think all three of them had a very good time there. At home Mr. Seddon, her step-father, played the part of a well-meaning blight by reason of the moods that arose from nervous dyspepsia. They went to Florence, equipped with various introductions and much sound advice from sympathetic Cambridge friends, and having acquired an ease in Italy there, went on to Siena, Orvieto, and at last Rome. They returned, if I remember rightly, by Pisa, Genoa, Milan and Paris. Six months or more they had had abroad, and now Margaret was back in Burslem, in health again and consciously a very civilised person.

New ideas were abroad, it was Maytime and a spring of abundant flowers — daffodils were particularly good that year — and Mrs. Seddon celebrated her return by giving an afternoon reception at short notice, with the clear intention of letting every one out into the garden if the weather held.

The Seddons had a big old farmhouse modified to modern ideas of comfort on the road out towards Misterton, with an orchard that had been rather pleasantly subdued from use to ornament. It had rich blossoming cherry and apple trees. Large patches of grass full of nodding yellow trumpets had been left amidst the not too precisely mown grass, which was as it were grass path with an occasional lapse into lawn or glade. And Margaret, hatless, with the fair hair above her thin, delicately pink face very simply done, came to meet our rather too consciously dressed party, — we had come in the motor four strong, with my aunt in grey silk. Margaret wore a soft flowing flowered blue dress of diaphanous material, all unconnected with the fashion and tied with pretty ribbons, like a slenderer, unbountiful Primavera.

It was one of those May days that ape the light and heat of summer, and I remember disconnectedly quite a number of brightly lit figures and groups walking about, and a white gate between orchard and garden and a large lawn with an oak tree and a red Georgian house with a verandah and open French windows, through which the tea drinking had come out upon the moss-edged flagstones even as Mrs. Seddon had planned.

The party was almost entirely feminine except for a little curate with a large head, a good voice and a radiant manner, who was obviously attracted by Margaret, and two or three young husbands still sufficiently addicted to their wives to accompany them. One of them I recall as a quite romantic figure with abundant blond curly hair on which was poised a grey felt hat encircled by a refined black band. He wore, moreover, a loose rich shot silk tie of red and purple, a long frock coat, grey trousers and brown shoes, and presently he removed his hat and carried it in one hand. There were two tennis-playing youths besides myself. There was also one father with three daughters in anxious control, a father of the old school scarcely half broken in, reluctant, rebellious and consciously and conscientiously

“reet Staffordshire.” The daughters were all alert to suppress the possible plungings, the undesirable humorous impulses of this almost feral guest. They nipped his very gestures in the bud. The rest of the people were mainly mothers with daughters — daughters of all ages, and a scattering of aunts, and there was a tendency to clotting, parties kept together and regarded parties suspiciously. Mr. Seddon was in hiding, I think, all the time, though not formally absent.

Matters centred upon the tea in the long room of the French windows, where four trim maids went to and fro busily between the house and the clumps of people seated or standing before it; and tennis and croquet were intermittently visible and audible beyond a bank of rockwork rich with the spikes and cups and bells of high spring.

Mrs. Seddon presided at the tea urn, and Margaret partly assisted and partly talked to me and my cousin Sibyl — Gertrude had found a disused and faded initial and was partnering him at tennis in a state of gentle revival — while their mother exercised a divided chaperonage from a seat near Mrs. Seddon. The little curate, stirring a partially empty cup of tea, mingled with our party, and preluded, I remember, every observation he made by a vigorous resumption of stirring.

We talked of Cambridge, and Margaret kept us to it. The curate was a Selwyn man and had taken a pass degree in theology, but Margaret had come to Gaylord’s lecturers in Trinity for a term before her breakdown, and understood these differences. She had the eagerness of an exile to hear the old familiar names of places and personalities. We capped familiar anecdotes and were enthusiastic about Kings’ Chapel and the Backs, and the curate, addressing himself more particularly to Sibyl, told a long confused story illustrative of his disposition to reckless devilry (of a pure-minded kindly sort) about upsetting two canoes quite needlessly on the way to Grantchester.

I can still see Margaret as I saw her that afternoon, see her fresh fair face, with the little obliquity of the upper lip, and her brow always slightly knitted, and her manner as of one breathlessly shy but determined. She had rather open blue eyes, and she spoke in an even musical voice with the gentlest of stresses and the ghost of a lisp.

And it was true, she gathered, that Cambridge still existed. “I went to Grantchester,” she said, “last year, and had tea under the apple-blossom. I didn’t think then I should have to come down.” (It was that started the curate upon his anecdote.)

“I’ve seen a lot of pictures, and learnt a lot about them — at the Pitti and the Brera, — the Brera is wonderful — wonderful places, — but it isn’t like real study,” she was saying presently.... “We bought bales of photographs,” she said.

I thought the bales a little out of keeping.

But fair-haired and quite simply and yet graciously and fancifully dressed, talking of art and beautiful things and a beautiful land, and with so much manifest regret for learning denied, she seemed a different kind of being altogether from my smart, hard, high-coloured, black-haired and resolutely hatted cousin; she seemed translucent beside Gertrude. Even the little twist and droop of her slender body was a grace to me.

I liked her from the moment I saw her, and set myself to interest and please her as well as I knew how.

We recalled a case of ragging that had rustled the shrubs of Newnham, and then Chris Robinson’s visit — he had given a talk to Bennett Hall also — and our impression of him.

“He disappointed me, too,” said Margaret.

I was moved to tell Margaret something of my own views in the matter of social progress, and she listened — oh! with a kind of urged attention, and her brow a little more knitted, very earnestly. The little curate desisted from the appendices and refuse heaps and general debris of his story, and made himself look very alert and intelligent.

“We did a lot of that when I was up in the eighties,” he said. “I’m glad Imperialism hasn’t swamped you fellows altogether.”

Gertrude, looking bright and confident, came to join our talk from the shrubbery; the initial, a little flushed and evidently in a state of refreshed relationship, came with her, and a cheerful lady in pink and more particularly distinguished by a pink bonnet joined our little group. Gertrude had been sipping admiration and was not disposed to play a passive part in the talk.

“Socialism!” she cried, catching the word. “It’s well Pa isn’t here.

He has Fits when people talk of socialism. Fits!"

The initial laughed in a general kind of way.

The curate said there was socialism AND socialism, and looked at Margaret to gauge whether he had been too bold in this utterance. But she was all, he perceived, for broad-mindness, and he stirred himself (and incidentally his tea) to still more liberality of expression. He said the state of the poor was appalling, simply appalling; that there were times when he wanted to shatter the whole system, "only," he said, turning to me appealingly, "What have we got to put in its place?"

"The thing that exists is always the more evident alternative," I said.

The little curate looked at it for a moment. "Precisely," he said explosively, and turned stirring and with his head a little on one side, to hear what Margaret was saying.

Margaret was saying, with a swift blush and an effect of daring, that she had no doubt she was a socialist.

"And wearing a gold chain!" said Gertrude, "And drinking out of eggshell! I like that!"

I came to Margaret's rescue. "It doesn't follow that because one's a socialist one ought to dress in sackcloth and ashes."

The initial coloured deeply, and having secured my attention by prodding me slightly with the wrist of the hand that held his teacup, cleared his throat and suggested that "one ought to be consistent."

I perceived we were embarked upon a discussion of the elements. We began an interesting little wrangle one of those crude discussions of general ideas that are dear to the heart of youth. I and Margaret supported one another as socialists, Gertrude and Sybil and the initial maintained an anti-socialist position, the curate attempted a cross-bench position with an air of intending to come down upon us presently with a casting vote. He reminded us of a number of useful principles too often overlooked in argument, that in a big question like this there was much to be said on both sides, that if every one did his or her duty to every one about them there would be no difficulty with social problems at all, that over and above all enactments we needed moral changes in people themselves. My cousin Gertrude was a difficult controversialist to manage, being

unconscious of inconsistency in statement and absolutely impervious to reply. Her standpoint was essentially materialistic; she didn't see why she shouldn't have a good time because other people didn't; they would have a good time, she was sure, if she didn't. She said that if we did give up everything we had to other people, they wouldn't very likely know what to do with it. She asked if we were so fond of work-people, why we didn't go and live among them, and expressed the inflexible persuasion that if we HAD socialism, everything would be just the same again in ten years' time. She also threw upon us the imputation of ingratitude for a beautiful world by saying that so far as she was concerned she didn't want to upset everything. She was contented with things as they were, thank you.

The discussion led in some way that I don't in the least recall now, and possibly by abrupt transitions, to a croquet foursome in which Margaret involved the curate without involving herself, and then stood beside me on the edge of the lawn while the others played. We watched silently for a moment.

"I HATE that sort of view," she said suddenly in a confidential undertone, with her delicate pink flush returning.

"It's want of imagination," I said.

"To think we are just to enjoy ourselves," she went on; "just to go on dressing and playing and having meals and spending money!" She seemed to be referring not simply to my cousins, but to the whole world of industry and property about us. "But what is one to do?" she asked. "I do wish I had not had to come down. It's all so pointless here. There seems to be nothing going forward, no ideas, no dreams. No one here seems to feel quite what I feel, the sort of need there is for MEANING in things. I hate things without meaning."

"Don't you do — local work?"

"I suppose I shall. I suppose I must find something. Do you think — if one were to attempt some sort of propaganda?"

"Could you — ?" I began a little doubtfully.

"I suppose I couldn't," she answered, after a thoughtful moment. "I suppose it would come to nothing. And yet I feel there is so much to be done for the world, so much one ought to be doing.... I want to do something for the world."

I can see her now as she stood there with her brows nearly

frowning, her blue eyes looking before her, her mouth almost petulant. “One feels that there are so many things going on — out of one’s reach,” she said.

I went back in the motor-car with my mind full of her, the quality of delicate discontent, the suggestion of exile. Even a kind of weakness in her was sympathetic. She told tremendously against her background. She was, I say, like a protesting blue flower upon a cinder heap. It is curious, too, how she connects and mingles with the furious quarrel I had with my uncle that very evening. That came absurdly. Indirectly Margaret was responsible. My mind was running on ideas she had revived and questions she had set clamouring, and quite inadvertently in my attempt to find solutions I talked so as to outrage his profoundest feelings....

7

What a preposterous shindy that was!

I sat with him in the smoking-room, propounding what I considered to be the most indisputable and non-contentious propositions conceivable — until, to my infinite amazement, he exploded and called me a “damned young puppy.”

It was seismic.

“Tremendously interesting time,” I said, “just in the beginning of making a civilisation.”

“Ah!” he said, with an averted face, and nodded, leaning forward over his cigar.

I had not the remotest thought of annoying him.

“Monstrous muddle of things we have got,” I said, “jumbled streets, ugly population, ugly factories—”

“You’d do a sight better if you had to do with it,” said my uncle, regarding me askance.

“Not me. But a world that had a collective plan and knew where it meant to be going would do a sight better, anyhow. We’re all swimming in a flood of ill-calculated chances—”

“You’ll be making out I organised that business down there — by chance — next,” said my uncle, his voice thick with challenge.

I went on as though I was back in Trinity.

“There’s a lot of chance in the making of all great businesses,” I said.

My uncle remarked that that showed how much I knew about businesses. If chance made businesses, why was it that he always succeeded and grew while those fools Ackroyd and Sons always took second place? He showed a disposition to tell the glorious history of how once Ackroyd’s overshadowed him, and how now he could buy up Ackroyd’s three times over. But I wanted to get out what was in my mind.

“Oh!” I said, “as between man and man and business and business, some of course get the pull by this quality or that — but it’s forces quite outside the individual case that make the big part of any success under modern conditions. YOU never invented pottery, nor any process in pottery that matters a rap in your works; it wasn’t YOUR foresight that joined all England up with railways and made it possible to organise production on an altogether different scale. You really at the utmost can’t take credit for much more than being the sort of man who happened to fit what happened to be the requirements of the time, and who happened to be in a position to take advantage of them—”

It was then my uncle cried out and called me a damned young puppy, and became involved in some unexpected trouble of his own.

I woke up as it were from my analysis of the situation to discover him bent over a splendid spittoon, cursing incoherently, retching a little, and spitting out the end of his cigar which he had bitten off in his last attempt at self-control, and withal fully prepared as soon as he had cleared for action to give me just all that he considered to be the contents of his mind upon the condition of mine.

Well, why shouldn’t I talk my mind to him? He’d never had an outside view of himself for years, and I resolved to stand up to him. We went at it hammer and tongs! It became clear that he supposed me to be a Socialist, a zealous, embittered hater of all ownership — and also an educated man of the vilest, most pretentiously superior description. His principal grievance was that I thought I knew everything; to that he recurred again and again....

We had been maintaining an armed truce with each other since my resolve to go up to Cambridge, and now we had out all that had

accumulated between us. There had been stupendous accumulations....

The particular things we said and did in that bawling encounter matter nothing at all in this story. I can't now estimate how near we came to fisticuffs. It ended with my saying, after a pungent reminder of benefits conferred and remembered, that I didn't want to stay another hour in his house. I went upstairs, in a state of puerile fury, to pack and go off to the Railway Hotel, while he, with ironical civility, telephoned for a cab.

"Good riddance!" shouted my uncle, seeing me off into the night.

On the face of it our row was preposterous, but the underlying reality of our quarrel was the essential antagonism, it seemed to me, in all human affairs, the antagonism between ideas and the established method, that is to say, between ideas and the rule of thumb. The world I hate is the rule-of-thumb world, the thing I and my kind of people exist for primarily is to battle with that, to annoy it, disarrange it, reconstruct it. We question everything, disturb anything that cannot give a clear justification to our questioning, because we believe inherently that our sense of disorder implies the possibility of a better order. Of course we are detestable. My uncle was of that other vaster mass who accept everything for the thing it seems to be, hate enquiry and analysis as a tramp hates washing, dread and resist change, oppose experiment, despise science. The world is our battleground; and all history, all literature that matters, all science, deals with this conflict of the thing that is and the speculative "if" that will destroy it.

But that is why I did not see Margaret Seddon again for five years.

CHAPTER THE SECOND ~~ MARGARET IN LONDON

1

I was twenty-seven when I met Margaret again, and the intervening five years had been years of vigorous activity for me, if not of very remarkable growth. When I saw her again, I could count myself a grown man. I think, indeed, I counted myself more completely grown than I was. At any rate, by all ordinary standards, I had "got on" very well, and my ideas, if they had not changed very greatly, had become much more definite and my ambitions clearer and bolder.

I had long since abandoned my fellowship and come to London. I had published two books that had been talked about, written several articles, and established a regular relationship with the WEEKLY REVIEW and the EVENING GAZETTE. I was a member of the Eighty Club and learning to adapt the style of the Cambridge Union to larger uses. The London world had opened out to me very readily. I had developed a pleasant variety of social connections. I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Evesham, who had been attracted by my NEW RULER, and who talked about it and me, and so did a very great deal to make a way for me into the company of prominent and amusing people. I dined out quite frequently. The glitter and interest of good London dinner parties became a common experience. I liked the sort of conversation one got at them extremely, the little glow of duologues burning up into more general discussions, the closing-in of the men after the going of the women, the sage, substantial masculine gossiping, the later resumption of effective talk with some pleasant woman, graciously at her best. I had a wide range of houses; Cambridge had linked me to one or two correlated sets of artistic and literary people, and my books and Mr. Evesham and opened to me the big vague world of "society." I wasn't aggressive nor particularly snobbish nor troublesome, sometimes I talked well, and if I had nothing interesting to say I said as little as possible, and I had a youthful gravity of manner that was liked by hostesses. And the other

side of my nature that first flared through the cover of restraints at Locarno, that too had had opportunity to develop along the line London renders practicable. I had had my experiences and secrets and adventures among that fringe of ill-mated or erratic or discredited women the London world possesses. The thing had long ago ceased to be a matter of magic or mystery, and had become a question of appetites and excitement, and among other things the excitement of not being found out.

I write rather doubtfully of my growing during this period. Indeed I find it hard to judge whether I can say that I grew at all in any real sense of the word, between three and twenty and twenty-seven. It seems to me now to have been rather a phase of realisation and clarification. All the broad lines of my thought were laid down, I am sure, by the date of my Locarno adventure, but in those five years I discussed things over and over again with myself and others, filled out with concrete fact forms I had at first apprehended sketchily and conversationally, measured my powers against my ideals and the forces in the world about me. It was evident that many men no better than myself and with no greater advantages than mine had raised themselves to influential and even decisive positions in the worlds of politics and thought. I was gathering the confidence and knowledge necessary to attack the world in the large manner; I found I could write, and that people would let me write if I chose, as one having authority and not as the scribes. Socially and politically and intellectually I knew myself for an honest man, and that quite without any deliberation on my part this showed and made things easy for me. People trusted my good faith from the beginning — for all that I came from nowhere and had no better position than any adventurer.

But the growth process was arrested, I was nothing bigger at twenty-seven than at twenty-two, however much saner and stronger, and any one looking closely into my mind during that period might well have imagined growth finished altogether. It is particularly evident to me now that I came no nearer to any understanding of women during that time. That Locarno affair was infinitely more to me than I had supposed. It ended something — nipped something in the bud perhaps — took me at a stride from a vague, fine, ignorant,

closed world of emotion to intrigue and a perfectly definite and limited sensuality. It ended my youth, and for a time it prevented my manhood. I had never yet even peeped at the sweetest, profoundest thing in the world, the heart and meaning of a girl, or dreamt with any quality of reality of a wife or any such thing as a friend among womanhood. My vague anticipation of such things in life had vanished altogether. I turned away from their possibility. It seemed to me I knew what had to be known about womankind. I wanted to work hard, to get on to a position in which I could develop and forward my constructive projects. Women, I thought, had nothing to do with that. It seemed clear I could not marry for some years; I was attractive to certain types of women, I had vanity enough to give me an agreeable confidence in love-making, and I went about seeking a convenient mistress quite deliberately, some one who should serve my purpose and say in the end, like that kindly first mistress of mine, "I've done you no harm," and so release me. It seemed the only wise way of disposing of urgencies that might otherwise entangle and wreck the career I was intent upon.

I don't apologise for, or defend my mental and moral phases. So it was I appraised life and prepared to take it, and so it is a thousand ambitious men see it to-day....

For the rest these five years were a period of definition. My political conceptions were perfectly plain and honest. I had one constant desire ruling my thoughts. I meant to leave England and the empire better ordered than I found it, to organise and discipline, to build up a constructive and controlling State out of my world's confusions. We had, I saw, to suffuse education with public intention, to develop a new better-living generation with a collectivist habit of thought, to link now chaotic activities in every human affair, and particularly to catch that escaped, world-making, world-ruining, dangerous thing, industrial and financial enterprise, and bring it back to the service of the general good. I had then the precise image that still serves me as a symbol for all I wish to bring about, the image of an engineer building a lock in a swelling torrent — with water pressure as his only source of power. My thoughts and acts were habitually turned to that enterprise; it gave shape and direction to all my life. The problem that most engaged my mind

during those years was the practical and personal problem of just where to apply myself to serve this almost innate purpose. How was I, a child of this confusion, struggling upward through the confusion, to take hold of things? Somewhere between politics and literature my grip must needs be found, but where? Always I seem to have been looking for that in those opening years, and disregarding everything else to discover it.

2

The Baileys, under whose auspices I met Margaret again, were in the sharpest contrast with the narrow industrialism of the Staffordshire world. They were indeed at the other extreme of the scale, two active self-centred people, excessively devoted to the public service. It was natural I should gravitate to them, for they seemed to stand for the maturer, more disciplined, better informed expression of all I was then urgent to attempt to do. The bulk of their friends were politicians or public officials, they described themselves as publicists — a vague yet sufficiently significant term. They lived and worked in a hard little house in Chambers Street, Westminster, and made a centre for quite an astonishing amount of political and social activity.

Willersley took me there one evening. The place was almost pretentiously matter-of-fact and unassuming. The narrow passage-hall, papered with some ancient yellowish paper, grained to imitate wood, was choked with hats and cloaks and an occasional feminine wrap. Motioned rather than announced by a tall Scotch servant woman, the only domestic I ever remember seeing there, we made our way up a narrow staircase past the open door of a small study packed with blue-books, to discover Altiora Bailey receiving before the fireplace in her drawing-room. She was a tall commanding figure, splendid but a little untidy in black silk and red beads, with dark eyes that had no depths, with a clear hard voice that had an almost visible prominence, aquiline features and straight black hair that was apt to get astray, that was now astray like the head feathers of an eagle in a gale. She stood with her hands behind her back, and talked in a high tenor of a projected Town Planning Bill with Blupp, who was practically in those days the secretary of the local Government

Board. A very short broad man with thick ears and fat white hands writhing intertwined behind him, stood with his back to us, eager to bark interruptions into Altiora's discourse. A slender girl in pale blue, manifestly a young political wife, stood with one foot on the fender listening with an expression of entirely puzzled propitiation. A tall sandy-bearded bishop with the expression of a man in a trance completed this central group.

The room was one of those long apartments once divided by folding doors, and reaching from back to front, that are common upon the first floors of London houses. Its walls were hung with two or three indifferent water colours, there was scarcely any furniture but a sofa or so and a chair, and the floor, severely carpeted with matting, was crowded with a curious medley of people, men predominating. Several were in evening dress, but most had the morning garb of the politician; the women were either severely rational or radiantly magnificent. Willersley pointed out to me the wife of the Secretary of State for War, and I recognised the Duchess of Clynes, who at that time cultivated intellectuality. I looked round, identifying a face here or there, and stepping back trod on some one's toe, and turned to find it belonged to the Right Hon. G. B. Mottisham, dear to the PUNCH caricaturists. He received my apology with that intentional charm that is one of his most delightful traits, and resumed his discussion. Beside him was Esmeer of Trinity, whom I had not seen since my Cambridge days....

Willersley found an ex-member of the School Board for whom he had affinities, and left me to exchange experiences and comments upon the company with Esmeer. Esmeer was still a don; but he was nibbling, he said, at certain negotiations with the TIMES that might bring him down to London. He wanted to come to London. "We peep at things from Cambridge," he said.

"This sort of thing," I said, "makes London necessary. It's the oddest gathering."

"Every one comes here," said Esmeer. "Mostly we hate them like poison — jealousy — and little irritations — Altiora can be a horror at times — but we HAVE to come."

"Things are being done?"

"Oh! — no doubt of it. It's one of the parts of the British

machinery — that doesn't show.... But nobody else could do it.

"Two people," said Esmeer, "who've planned to be a power — in an original way. And by Jove! they've done it!"

I did not for some time pick out Oscar Bailey, and then Esmeer showed him to me in elaborately confidential talk in a corner with a distinguished-looking stranger wearing a ribbon. Oscar had none of the fine appearance of his wife; he was a short sturdy figure with a rounded protruding abdomen and a curious broad, flattened, clean-shaven face that seemed nearly all forehead. He was of Anglo-Hungarian extraction, and I have always fancied something Mongolian in his type. He peered up with reddish swollen-looking eyes over gilt-edged glasses that were divided horizontally into portions of different refractive power, and he talking in an ingratiating undertone, with busy thin lips, an eager lisp and nervous movements of the hand.

People say that thirty years before at Oxford he was almost exactly the same eager, clever little man he was when I first met him. He had come up to Balliol bristling with extraordinary degrees and prizes captured in provincial and Irish and Scotch universities — and had made a name for himself as the most formidable dealer in exact fact the rhetoricians of the Union had ever had to encounter. From Oxford he had gone on to a position in the Higher Division of the Civil Service, I think in the War Office, and had speedily made a place for himself as a political journalist. He was a particularly neat controversialist, and very full of political and sociological ideas. He had a quite astounding memory for facts and a mastery of detailed analysis, and the time afforded scope for these gifts. The later eighties were full of politico-social discussion, and he became a prominent name upon the contents list of the NINETEENTH CENTURY, the FORTNIGHTLY and CONTEMPORARY chiefly as a half sympathetic but frequently very damaging critic of the socialism of that period. He won the immense respect of every one specially interested in social and political questions, he soon achieved the limited distinction that is awarded such capacity, and at that I think he would have remained for the rest of his life if he had not encountered Altiora.

But Altiora Macvitie was an altogether exceptional woman, an

extraordinary mixture of qualities, the one woman in the world who could make something more out of Bailey than that. She had much of the vigour and handsomeness of a slender impudent young man, and an unscrupulousness altogether feminine. She was one of those women who are waiting in — what is the word? — muliebrity. She had courage and initiative and a philosophical way of handling questions, and she could be bored by regular work like a man. She was entirely unfitted for her sex's sphere. She was neither uncertain, coy nor hard to please, and altogether too stimulating and aggressive for any gentleman's hours of ease. Her cookery would have been about as sketchy as her handwriting, which was generally quite illegible, and she would have made, I feel sure, a shocking bad nurse. Yet you mustn't imagine she was an inelegant or unbeautiful woman, and she is inconceivable to me in high collars or any sort of masculine garment. But her soul was bony, and at the base of her was a vanity gaunt and greedy! When she wasn't in a state of personal untidiness that was partly a protest against the waste of hours exacted by the toilet and partly a natural disinclination, she had a gypsy splendour of black and red and silver all her own. And somewhen in the early nineties she met and married Bailey.

I know very little about her early years. She was the only daughter of Sir Deighton Macvitie, who applied the iodoform process to cotton, and only his subsequent unfortunate attempts to become a Cotton King prevented her being a very rich woman. As it was she had a tolerable independence. She came into prominence as one of the more able of the little shoal of young women who were led into politico-philanthropic activities by the influence of the earlier novels of Mrs. Humphry Ward — the Marcella crop. She went "slumming" with distinguished vigour, which was quite usual in those days — and returned from her experiences as an amateur flower girl with clear and original views about the problem — which is and always had been unusual. She had not married, I suppose because her standards were high, and men are cowards and with an instinctive appetite for muliebrity. She had kept house for her father by speaking occasionally to the housekeeper, butler and cook her mother had left her, and gathering the most interesting dinner parties she could, and had married off four orphan nieces in a harsh and successful manner.

After her father's smash and death she came out as a writer upon social questions and a scathing critic of the Charity Organisation Society, and she was three and thirty and a little at loose ends when she met Oscar Bailey, so to speak, in the CONTEMPORARY REVIEW. The lurking woman in her nature was fascinated by the ease and precision with which the little man rolled over all sorts of important and authoritative people, she was the first to discover a sort of imaginative bigness in his still growing mind, the forehead perhaps carried him off physically, and she took occasion to meet and subjugate him, and, so soon as he had sufficiently recovered from his abject humility and a certain panic at her attentions, marry him.

This had opened a new phase in the lives of Bailey and herself. The two supplemented each other to an extraordinary extent. Their subsequent career was, I think, almost entirely her invention. She was aggressive, imaginative, and had a great capacity for ideas, while he was almost destitute of initiative, and could do nothing with ideas except remember and discuss them. She was, if not exact, at least indolent, with a strong disposition to save energy by sketching — even her handwriting showed that — while he was inexhaustibly industrious with a relentless invariable calligraphy that grew larger and clearer as the years passed by. She had a considerable power of charming; she could be just as nice to people — and incidentally just as nasty — as she wanted to be. He was always just the same, a little confidential and SOTTO VOCE, artlessly rude and egoistic in an undignified way. She had considerable social experience, good social connections, and considerable social ambition, while he had none of these things. She saw in a flash her opportunity to redeem his defects, use his powers, and do large, novel, rather startling things. She ran him. Her marriage, which shocked her friends and relations beyond measure — for a time they would only speak of Bailey as "that gnome" — was a stroke of genius, and forthwith they proceeded to make themselves the most formidable and distinguished couple conceivable. P. B. P., she boasted, was engraved inside their wedding rings, Pro Bono Publico, and she meant it to be no idle threat. She had discovered very early that the last thing influential people will do is to work. Everything in their lives tends to make them dependent

upon a supply of confidently administered detail. Their business is with the window and not the stock behind, and in the end they are dependent upon the stock behind for what goes into the window. She linked with that the fact that Bailey had a mind as orderly as a museum, and an invincible power over detail. She saw that if two people took the necessary pains to know the facts of government and administration with precision, to gather together knowledge that was dispersed and confused, to be able to say precisely what had to be done and what avoided in this eventuality or that, they would necessarily become a centre of reference for all sorts of legislative proposals and political expedients, and she went unhesitatingly upon that.

Bailey, under her vigorous direction, threw up his post in the Civil Service and abandoned sporadic controversies, and they devoted themselves to the elaboration and realisation of this centre of public information she had conceived as their role. They set out to study the methods and organisation and realities of government in the most elaborate manner. They did the work as no one had ever hitherto dreamt of doing it. They planned the research on a thoroughly satisfying scale, and arranged their lives almost entirely for it. They took that house in Chambers Street and furnished it with severe economy, they discovered that Scotch domestic who is destined to be the guardian and tyrant of their declining years, and they set to work. Their first book, "The Permanent Official," fills three plump volumes, and took them and their two secretaries upwards of four years to do. It is an amazingly good book, an enduring achievement. In a hundred directions the history and the administrative treatment of the public service was clarified for all time....

They worked regularly every morning from nine to twelve, they lunched lightly but severely, in the afternoon they "took exercise" or Bailey attended meetings of the London School Board, on which he served, he said, for the purposes of study — he also became a railway director for the same end. In the late afternoon Altiora was at home to various callers, and in the evening came dinner or a reception or both.

Her dinners and gatherings were a very important feature in their scheme. She got together all sorts of interesting people in or about

the public service, she mixed the obscurely efficient with the ill-instructed famous and the rudderless rich, got together in one room more of the factors in our strange jumble of a public life than had ever met easily before. She fed them with a shameless austerity that kept the conversation brilliant, on a soup, a plain fish, and mutton or boiled fowl and milk pudding, with nothing to drink but whisky and soda, and hot and cold water, and milk and lemonade. Everybody was soon very glad indeed to come to that. She boasted how little her housekeeping cost her, and sought constantly for fresh economies that would enable her, she said, to sustain an additional private secretary. Secretaries were the Baileys' one extravagance, they loved to think of searches going on in the British Museum, and letters being cleared up and precis made overhead, while they sat in the little study and worked together, Bailey with a clockwork industry, and Altiora in splendid flashes between intervals of cigarettes and meditation. "All efficient public careers," said Altiora, "consist in the proper direction of secretaries."

"If everything goes well I shall have another secretary next year," Altiora told me. "I wish I could refuse people dinner napkins. Imagine what it means in washing! I dare most things.... But as it is, they stand a lot of hardship here."

"There's something of the miser in both these people," said Esmeer, and the thing was perfectly true. For, after all, the miser is nothing more than a man who either through want of imagination or want of suggestion misapplies to a base use a natural power of concentration upon one end. The concentration itself is neither good nor evil, but a power that can be used in either way. And the Baileys gathered and reinvested usuriously not money, but knowledge of the utmost value in human affairs. They produced an effect of having found themselves — completely. One envied them at times extraordinarily. I was attracted, I was dazzled — and at the same time there was something about Bailey's big wrinkled forehead, his lisping broad mouth, the gestures of his hands and an uncivil preoccupation I could not endure....

Their effect upon me was from the outset very considerable.

Both of them found occasion on that first visit of mine to talk to me about my published writings and particularly about my then just published book THE NEW RULER, which had interested them very much. It fell in indeed so closely with their own way of thinking that I doubt if they ever understood how independently I had arrived at my conclusions. It was their weakness to claim excessively. That irritation, however, came later. We discovered each other immensely; for a time it produced a tremendous sense of kindred and co-operation.

Altiora, I remember, maintained that there existed a great army of such constructive-minded people as ourselves — as yet undiscovered by one another.

"It's like boring a tunnel through a mountain," said Oscar, "and presently hearing the tapping of the workers from the other end."

"If you didn't know of them beforehand," I said, "it might be a rather badly joined tunnel."

"Exactly," said Altiora with a high note, "and that's why we all want to find out each other...."

They didn't talk like that on our first encounter, but they urged me to lunch with them next day, and then it was we went into things. A woman Factory Inspector and the Educational Minister for New Banksland and his wife were also there, but I don't remember they made any contribution to the conversation. The Baileys saw to that. They kept on at me in an urgent litigious way.

"We have read your book," each began — as though it had been a joint function. "And we consider—"

"Yes," I protested, "I think—"

That was a secondary matter.

"They did not consider," said Altiora, raising her voice and going right over me, "that I had allowed sufficiently for the inevitable development of an official administrative class in the modern state."

"Nor of its importance," echoed Oscar.

That, they explained in a sort of chorus, was the cardinal idea of their lives, what they were up to, what they stood for. "We want to suggest to you," they said — and I found this was a stock opening of theirs— "that from the mere necessities of convenience elected

bodies MUST avail themselves more and more of the services of expert officials. We have that very much in mind. The more complicated and technical affairs become, the less confidence will the elected official have in himself. We want to suggest that these expert officials must necessarily develop into a new class and a very powerful class in the community. We want to organise that. It may be THE power of the future. They will necessarily have to have very much of a common training. We consider ourselves as amateur unpaid precursors of such a class.”...

The vision they displayed for my consideration as the aim of public-spirited endeavour, seemed like a harder, narrower, more specialised version of the idea of a trained and disciplined state that Willersley and I had worked out in the Alps. They wanted things more organised, more correlated with government and a collective purpose, just as we did, but they saw it not in terms of a growing collective understanding, but in terms of functionaries, legislative change, and methods of administration....

It wasn’t clear at first how we differed. The Baileys were very anxious to win me to co-operation, and I was quite prepared at first to identify their distinctive expressions with phrases of my own, and so we came very readily into an alliance that was to last some years, and break at last very painfully. Altiora manifestly liked me, I was soon discussing with her the perplexity I found in placing myself efficiently in the world, the problem of how to take hold of things that occupied my thoughts, and she was sketching out careers for my consideration, very much as an architect on his first visit sketches houses, considers requirements, and puts before you this example and that of the more or less similar thing already done....

4

It is easy to see how much in common there was between the Baileys and me, and how natural it was that I should become a constant visitor at their house and an ally of theirs in many enterprises. It is not nearly so easy to define the profound antagonism of spirit that also held between us. There was a difference in texture, a difference in quality. How can I express it? The shapes of our thoughts were the

same, but the substance quite different. It was as if they had made in china or cast iron what I had made in transparent living matter. (The comparison is manifestly from my point of view.) Certain things never seemed to show through their ideas that were visible, refracted perhaps and distorted, but visible always through mine.

I thought for a time the essential difference lay in our relation to beauty. With me beauty is quite primary in life; I like truth, order and goodness, wholly because they are beautiful or lead straight to beautiful consequences. The Baileys either hadn't got that or they didn't see it. They seemed at times to prefer things harsh and ugly. That puzzled me extremely. The esthetic quality of many of their proposals, the "manners" of their work, so to speak, were at times as dreadful as — well, War Office barrack architecture. A caricature by its exaggerated statements will sometimes serve to point a truth by antagonising falsity and falsity. I remember talking to a prominent museum official in need of more public funds for the work he had in hand. I mentioned the possibility of enlisting Bailey's influence.

"Oh, we don't want Philistines like that infernal Bottle-Imp running us," he said hastily, and would hear of no concerted action for the end he had in view. "I'd rather not have the extension.

"You see," he went on to explain, "Bailey's wanting in the essentials."

"What essentials?" said I.

"Oh! he'd be like a nasty oily efficient little machine for some merely subordinate necessity among all my delicate stuff. He'd do all we wanted no doubt in the way of money and powers — and he'd do it wrong and mess the place for ever. Hands all black, you know. He's just a means. Just a very aggressive and unmanageable means. This isn't a plumber's job...."

I stuck to my argument.

"I don't LIKE him," said the official conclusively, and it seemed to me at the time he was just blind prejudice speaking....

I came nearer the truth of the matter as I came to realise that our philosophies differed profoundly. That isn't a very curable difference, — once people have grown up. Theirs was a philosophy devoid of FINESSE. Temperamentally the Baileys were specialised, concentrated, accurate, while I am urged either by some Inner force

or some entirely assimilated influence in my training, always to round off and shadow my outlines. I hate them hard. I would sacrifice detail to modelling always, and the Baileys, it seemed to me, loved a world as flat and metallic as Sidney Cooper's cows. If they had the universe in hand I know they would take down all the trees and put up stamped tin green shades and sunlight accumulators. Altiora thought trees hopelessly irregular and sea cliffs a great mistake.... I got things clearer as time went on. Though it was an Hegelian mess of which I had partaken at Codger's table by way of a philosophical training, my sympathies have always been Pragmatist. I belong almost by nature to that school of Pragmatism that, following the medieval Nominalists, bases itself upon a denial of the reality of classes, and of the validity of general laws. The Baileys classified everything. They were, in the scholastic sense — which so oddly contradicts the modern use of the word "Realists." They believed classes were REAL and independent of their individuals. This is the common habit of all so-called educated people who have no metaphysical aptitude and no metaphysical training. It leads them to a progressive misunderstanding of the world. It was a favourite trick of Altiora's to speak of everybody as a "type"; she saw men as samples moving; her dining-room became a chamber of representatives. It gave a tremendously scientific air to many of their generalisations, using "scientific" in its nineteenth-century uncritical Herbert Spencer sense, an air that only began to disappear when you thought them over again in terms of actuality and the people one knew....

At the Baileys' one always seemed to be getting one's hands on the very strings that guided the world. You heard legislation projected to affect this "type" and that; statistics marched by you with sin and shame and injustice and misery reduced to quite manageable percentages, you found men who were to frame or amend bills in grave and intimate exchange with Bailey's omniscience, you heard Altiora canvassing approaching resignations and possible appointments that might make or mar a revolution in administrative methods, and doing it with a vigorous directness that manifestly swayed the decision; and you felt you were in a sort of signal box with levers all about you, and the world outside there,

albeit a little dark and mysterious beyond the window, running on its lines in ready obedience to these unhesitating lights, true and steady to trim termini.

And then with all this administrative fizzle, this pseudo-scientific administrative chatter, dying away in your head, out you went into the limitless grimy chaos of London streets and squares, roads and avenues lined with teeming houses, each larger than the Chambers Street house and at least equally alive, you saw the chaotic clamour of hoardings, the jumble of traffic, the coming and going of mysterious myriads, you heard the rumble of traffic like the noise of a torrent; a vague incessant murmur of cries and voices, wanton crimes and accidents bawled at you from the placards; imperative unaccountable fashions swaggered triumphant in dazzling windows of the shops; and you found yourself swaying back to the opposite conviction that the huge formless spirit of the world it was that held the strings and danced the puppets on the Bailey stage....

Under the lamps you were jostled by people like my Staffordshire uncle out for a spree, you saw shy youths conversing with prostitutes, you passed young lovers pairing with an entire disregard of the social suitability of the "types" they might blend or create, you saw men leaning drunken against lamp-posts whom you knew for the "type" that will charge with fixed bayonets into the face of death, and you found yourself unable to imagine little Bailey achieving either drunkenness or the careless defiance of annihilation. You realised that quite a lot of types were underrepresented in Chambers Street, that feral and obscure and altogether monstrous forces must be at work, as yet altogether unassimilated by those neat administrative reorganisations.

5

Altiora, I remember, preluded Margaret's reappearance by announcing her as a "new type."

I was accustomed to go early to the Baileys' dinners in those days, for a preliminary gossip with Altiora in front of her drawing-room fire. One got her alone, and that early arrival was a little sign of appreciation she valued. She had every woman's need of followers

and servants.

"I'm going to send you down to-night," she said, "with a very interesting type indeed — one of the new generation of serious gals. Middle-class origin — and quite well off. Rich in fact. Her step-father was a solicitor and something of an ENTREPRENEUR towards the end, I fancy — in the Black Country. There was a little brother died, and she's lost her mother quite recently. Quite on her own, so to speak. She's never been out into society very much, and doesn't seem really very anxious to go.... Not exactly an intellectual person, you know, but quiet, and great force of character. Came up to London on her own and came to us — someone had told her we were the sort of people to advise her — to ask what to do. I'm sure she'll interest you."

"What CAN people of that sort do?" I asked. "Is she capable of investigation?"

Altiora compressed her lips and shook her head. She always did shake her head when you asked that of anyone.

"Of course what she ought to do," said Altiora, with her silk dress pulled back from her knee before the fire, and with a lift of her voice towards a chuckle at her daring way of putting things, "is to marry a member of Parliament and see he does his work.... Perhaps she will. It's a very exceptional gal who can do anything by herself — quite exceptional. The more serious they are — without being exceptional — the more we want them to marry."

Her exposition was truncated by the entry of the type in question.

"Well!" cried Altiora turning, and with a high note of welcome, "HERE you are!"

Margaret had gained in dignity and prettiness by the lapse of five years, and she was now very beautifully and richly and simply dressed. Her fair hair had been done in some way that made it seem softer and more abundant than it was in my memory, and a gleam of purple velvet-set diamonds showed amidst its mist of little golden and brown lines. Her dress was of white and violet, the last trace of mourning for her mother, and confessed the gracious droop of her tall and slender body. She did not suggest Staffordshire at all, and I was puzzled for a moment to think where I had met her. Her sweetly shaped mouth with the slight obliquity of the lip and the little kink in

her brow were extraordinarily familiar to me. But she had either been prepared by Altiora or she remembered my name. “We met,” she said, “while my step-father was alive — at Misterton. You came to see us”; and instantly I recalled the sunshine between the apple blossom and a slender pale blue girlish shape among the daffodils, like something that had sprung from a bulb itself. I recalled at once that I had found her very interesting, though I did not clearly remember how it was she had interested me.

Other guests arrived — it was one of Altiora’s boldly blended mixtures of people with ideas and people with influence or money who might perhaps be expected to resonate to them. Bailey came down late with an air of hurry, and was introduced to Margaret and said absolutely nothing to her — there being no information either to receive or impart and nothing to do — but stood snatching his left cheek until I rescued him and her, and left him free to congratulate the new Lady Snape on her husband’s K. C. B.

I took Margaret down. We achieved no feats of mutual expression, except that it was abundantly clear we were both very pleased and interested to meet again, and that we had both kept memories of each other. We made that Misterton tea-party and the subsequent marriages of my cousins and the world of Burslem generally, matter for quite an agreeable conversation until at last Altiora, following her invariable custom, called me by name imperatively out of our duologue. “Mr. Remington,” she said, “we want your opinion—” in her entirely characteristic effort to get all the threads of conversation into her own hands for the climax that always wound up her dinners. How the other women used to hate those concluding raids of hers! I forget most of the other people at that dinner, nor can I recall what the crowning rally was about. It didn’t in any way join on to my impression of Margaret.

In the drawing-room of the matting floor I rejoined her, with Altiora’s manifest connivance, and in the interval I had been thinking of our former meeting.

“Do you find London,” I asked, “give you more opportunity for doing things and learning things than Burslem?”

She showed at once she appreciated my allusion to her former confidences. “I was very discontented then,” she said and paused.

“I’ve really only been in London for a few months. It’s so different. In Burslem, life seems all business and getting — without any reason. One went on and it didn’t seem to mean anything. At least anything that mattered.... London seems to be so full of meanings — all mixed up together.”

She knitted her brows over her words and smiled appealingly at the end as if for consideration for her inadequate expression, appealingly and almost humorously.

I looked understandingly at her. “We have all,” I agreed, “to come to London.”

“One sees so much distress,” she added, as if she felt she had completely omitted something, and needed a codicil.

“What are you doing in London?”

“I’m thinking of studying. Some social question. I thought perhaps I might go and study social conditions as Mrs. Bailey did, go perhaps as a work-girl or see the reality of living in, but Mrs. Bailey thought perhaps it wasn’t quite my work.”

“Are you studying?”

“I’m going to a good many lectures, and perhaps I shall take up a regular course at the Westminster School of Politics and Sociology. But Mrs. Bailey doesn’t seem to believe very much in that either.”

Her faintly whimsical smile returned. “I seem rather indefinite,” she apologised, “but one does not want to get entangled in things one can’t do. One — one has so many advantages, one’s life seems to be such a trust and such a responsibility—”

She stopped.

“A man gets driven into work,” I said.

“It must be splendid to be Mrs. Bailey,” she replied with a glance of envious admiration across the room.

“SHE has no doubts, anyhow,” I remarked.

“She HAD,” said Margaret with the pride of one who has received great confidences.

6

“You’ve met before?” said Altiora, a day or so later.

I explained when.

"You find her interesting?"

I saw in a flash that Altiora meant to marry me to Margaret.

Her intention became much clearer as the year developed. Altiora was systematic even in matters that evade system. I was to marry Margaret, and freed from the need of making an income I was to come into politics — as an exponent of Baileyism. She put it down with the other excellent and advantageous things that should occupy her summer holiday. It was her pride and glory to put things down and plan them out in detail beforehand, and I'm not quite sure that she did not even mark off the day upon which the engagement was to be declared. If she did, I disappointed her. We didn't come to an engagement, in spite of the broadest hints and the glaring obviousness of everything, that summer.

Every summer the Baileys went out of London to some house they hired or borrowed, leaving their secretaries toiling behind, and they went on working hard in the mornings and evenings and taking exercise in the open air in the afternoon. They cycled assiduously and went for long walks at a trot, and raided and studied (and incidentally explained themselves to) any social "types" that lived in the neighbourhood. One invaded type, resentful under research, described them with a dreadful aptness as Donna Quixote and Sancho Panza — and himself as a harmless windmill, hurting no one and signifying nothing. She did rather tilt at things. This particular summer they were at a pleasant farmhouse in level country near Pangbourne, belonging to the Hon. Wilfrid Winchester, and they asked me to come down to rooms in the neighbourhood — Altiora took them for a month for me in August — and board with them upon extremely reasonable terms; and when I got there I found Margaret sitting in a hammock at Altiora's feet. Lots of people, I gathered, were coming and going in the neighbourhood, the Ponts were in a villa on the river, and the Rickhams' houseboat was to moor for some days; but these irruptions did not impede a great deal of duologue between Margaret and myself.

Altiora was efficient rather than artistic in her match-making. She sent us off for long walks together — Margaret was a fairly good walker — she exhumed some defective croquet things and incited us to croquet, not understanding that detestable game is the worst

stimulant for lovers in the world. And Margaret and I were always getting left about, and finding ourselves for odd half-hours in the kitchen-garden with nothing to do except talk, or we were told with a wave of the hand to run away and amuse each other.

Altiora even tried a picnic in canoes, knowing from fiction rather than imagination or experience the conclusive nature of such excursions. But there she fumbled at the last moment, and elected at the river's brink to share a canoe with me. Bailey showed so much zeal and so little skill — his hat fell off and he became miraculously nothing but paddle-clutching hands and a vast wrinkled brow — that at last he had to be paddled ignominiously by Margaret, while Altiora, after a phase of rigid discretion, as nearly as possible drowned herself — and me no doubt into the bargain — with a sudden lateral gesture of the arm to emphasise the high note with which she dismissed the efficiency of the Charity Organisation Society. We shipped about an inch of water and sat in it for the rest of the time, an inconvenience she disregarded heroically. We had difficulties in landing Oscar from his frail craft upon the ait of our feasting, — he didn't balance sideways and was much alarmed, and afterwards, as Margaret had a pain in her back, I took him in my canoe, let him hide his shame with an ineffectual but not positively harmful paddle, and towed the other by means of the joined painters. Still it was the fault of the inadequate information supplied in the books and not of Altiora that that was not the date of my betrothal.

I find it not a little difficult to state what kept me back from proposing marriage to Margaret that summer, and what urged me forward at last to marry her. It is so much easier to remember one's resolutions than to remember the moods and suggestions that produced them.

Marrying and getting married was, I think, a pretty simple affair to Altiora; it was something that happened to the adolescent and unmarried when you threw them together under the circumstances of health, warmth and leisure. It happened with the kindly and approving smiles of the more experienced elders who had organised these proximities. The young people married, settled down, children ensued, and father and mother turned their minds, now decently and properly disillusioned, to other things. That to Altiora was the normal

sexual life, and she believed it to be the quality of the great bulk of the life about her.

One of the great barriers to human understanding is the wide temperamental difference one finds in the values of things relating to sex. It is the issue upon which people most need training in charity and imaginative sympathy. Here are no universal standards at all, and indeed for no single man nor woman does there seem to be any fixed standard, so much do the accidents of circumstances and one's physical phases affect one's interpretations. There is nothing in the whole range of sexual fact that may not seem supremely beautiful or humanly jolly or magnificently wicked or disgusting or trivial or utterly insignificant, according to the eye that sees or the mood that colours. Here is something that may fill the skies and every waking hour or be almost completely banished from a life. It may be everything on Monday and less than nothing on Saturday. And we make our laws and rules as though in these matters all men and women were commensurable one with another, with an equal steadfast passion and an equal constant duty....

I don't know what dreams Altiora may have had in her schoolroom days, I always suspected her of suppressed and forgotten phases, but certainly her general effect now was of an entirely passionless worldliness in these matters. Indeed so far as I could get at her, she regarded sexual passion as being hardly more legitimate in a civilised person than — let us say — homicidal mania. She must have forgotten — and Bailey too. I suspect she forgot before she married him. I don't suppose either of them had the slightest intimation of the dimensions sexual love can take in the thoughts of the great majority of people with whom they come in contact. They loved in their way — an intellectual way it was and a fond way — but it had no relation to beauty and physical sensation — except that there seemed a decree of exile against these things. They got their glow in high moments of altruistic ambition — and in moments of vivid worldly success. They sat at opposite ends of their dinner table with so and so "captured," and so and so, flushed with a mutual approval. They saw people in love forgetful and distraught about them, and just put it down to forgetfulness and distraction. At any rate Altiora manifestly viewed my situation and Margaret's with an

abnormal and entirely misleading simplicity. There was the girl, rich, with an acceptable claim to be beautiful, shiningly virtuous, quite capable of political interests, and there was I, talented, ambitious and full of political and social passion, in need of just the money, devotion and regularisation Margaret could provide. We were both unmarried — white sheets of uninscribed paper. Was there ever a simpler situation? What more could we possibly want?

She was even a little offended at the inconclusiveness that did not settle things at Pangbourne. I seemed to her, I suspect, to reflect upon her judgment and good intentions.

7

I didn't see things with Altiora's simplicity.

I admired Margaret very much, I was fully aware of all that she and I might give each other; indeed so far as Altiora went we were quite in agreement. But what seemed solid ground to Altiora and the ultimate footing of her emasculated world, was to me just the superficial covering of a gulf — oh! abysses of vague and dim, and yet stupendously significant things.

I couldn't dismiss the interests and the passion of sex as Altiora did. Work, I agreed, was important; career and success; but deep unanalysable instincts told me this preoccupation was a thing quite as important; dangerous, interfering, destructive indeed, but none the less a dominating interest in life. I have told how flittingly and uninvited it came like a moth from the outer twilight into my life, how it grew in me with my manhood, how it found its way to speech and grew daring, and led me at last to experience. After that adventure at Locarno sex and the interests and desires of sex never left me for long at peace. I went on with my work and my career, and all the time it was like — like someone talking ever and again in a room while one tries to write.

There were times when I could have wished the world a world all of men, so greatly did this unassimilated series of motives and curiosities hamper me; and times when I could have wished the world all of women. I seemed always to be seeking something in women, in girls, and I was never clear what it was I was seeking. But

never — even at my coarsest — was I moved by physical desire alone. Was I seeking help and fellowship? Was I seeking some intimacy with beauty? It was a thing too formless to state, that I seemed always desiring to attain and never attaining. Waves of gross sensuousness arose out of this preoccupation, carried me to a crisis of gratification or disappointment that was clearly not the needed thing; they passed and left my mind free again for a time to get on with the permanent pursuits of my life. And then presently this solicitude would have me again, an irrelevance as it seemed, and yet a constantly recurring demand.

I don't want particularly to dwell upon things that are disagreeable for others to read, but I cannot leave them out of my story and get the right proportions of the forces I am balancing. I was no abnormal man, and that world of order we desire to make must be built of such stuff as I was and am and can beget. You cannot have a world of Baileys; it would end in one orderly generation. Humanity is begotten in Desire, lives by Desire.

> "Love which is lust, is the Lamp in the Tomb;
> Love which is lust, is the Call from the Gloom."

I echo Henley.

I suppose the life of celibacy which the active, well-fed, well-exercised and imaginatively stirred young man of the educated classes is supposed to lead from the age of nineteen or twenty, when Nature certainly meant him to marry, to thirty or more, when civilisation permits him to do so, is the most impossible thing in the world. We deal here with facts that are kept secret and obscure, but I doubt for my own part if more than one man out of five in our class satisfies that ideal demand. The rest are even as I was, and Hatherleigh and Esmeer and all the men I knew. I draw no lessons and offer no panacea; I have to tell the quality of life, and this is how it is. This is how it will remain until men and women have the courage to face the facts of life.

I was no systematic libertine, you must understand; things happened to me and desire drove me. Any young man would have served for that Locarno adventure, and after that what had been a mystic and wonderful thing passed rapidly into a gross, manifestly misdirected and complicating one. I can count a meagre tale of five

illicit loves in the days of my youth, to include that first experience, and of them all only two were sustained relationships. Besides these five "affairs," on one or two occasions I dipped so low as the inky dismal sensuality of the streets, and made one of those pairs of correlated figures, the woman in her squalid finery sailing homeward, the man modestly aloof and behind, that every night in the London year flit by the score of thousands across the sight of the observant....

How ugly it is to recall; ugly and shameful now without qualification! Yet at the time there was surely something not altogether ugly in it — something that has vanished, some fine thing mortally ailing.

One such occasion I recall as if it were a vision deep down in a pit, as if it had happened in another state of existence to someone else. And yet it is the sort of thing that has happened, once or twice at least, to half the men in London who have been in a position to make it possible. Let me try and give you its peculiar effect. Man or woman, you ought to know of it.

Figure to yourself a dingy room, somewhere in that network of streets that lies about Tottenham Court Road, a dingy bedroom lit by a solitary candle and carpeted with scraps and patches, with curtains of cretonne closing the window, and a tawdry ornament of paper in the grate. I sit on a bed beside a weary-eyed, fair-haired, sturdy young woman, half undressed, who is telling me in broken German something that my knowledge of German is at first inadequate to understand....

I thought she was boasting about her family, and then slowly the meaning came to me. She was a Lett from near Libau in Courland, and she was telling me — just as one tells something too strange for comment or emotion — how her father had been shot and her sister outraged and murdered before her eyes.

It was as if one had dipped into something primordial and stupendous beneath the smooth and trivial surfaces of life. There was I, you know, the promising young don from Cambridge, who wrote quite brilliantly about politics and might presently get into Parliament, with my collar and tie in my hand, and a certain sense of shameful adventure fading out of my mind.

"Ach Gott!" she sighed by way of comment, and mused deeply

for a moment before she turned her face to me, as to something forgotten and remembered, and assumed the half-hearted meretricious smile.

"Bin ich eine hubsche?" she asked like one who repeats a lesson.

I was moved to crave her pardon and come away.

"Bin ich eine hubsche?" she asked a little anxiously, laying a detaining hand upon me, and evidently not understanding a word of what I was striving to say.

8

I find it extraordinarily difficult to recall the phases by which I passed from my first admiration of Margaret's earnestness and unconscious daintiness to an intimate acquaintance. The earlier encounters stand out clear and hard, but then the impressions become crowded and mingle not only with each other but with all the subsequent developments of relationship, the enormous evolutions of interpretation and comprehension between husband and wife. Dipping into my memories is like dipping into a ragbag, one brings out this memory or that, with no intimation of how they came in time or what led to them and joined them together. And they are all mixed up with subsequent associations, with sympathies and discords, habits of intercourse, surprises and disappointments and discovered misunderstandings. I know only that always my feelings for Margaret were complicated feelings, woven of many and various strands.

It is one of the curious neglected aspects of life how at the same time and in relation to the same reality we can have in our minds streams of thought at quite different levels. We can be at the same time idealising a person and seeing and criticising that person quite coldly and clearly, and we slip unconsciously from level to level and produce all sorts of inconsistent acts. In a sense I had no illusions about Margaret; in a sense my conception of Margaret was entirely poetic illusion. I don't think I was ever blind to certain defects of hers, and quite as certainly they didn't seem to matter in the slightest degree. Her mind had a curious want of vigour, "flatness" is the only word; she never seemed to escape from her phrase; her way of

thinking, her way of doing was indecisive; she remained in her attitude, it did not flow out to easy, confirmatory action.

I saw this quite clearly, and when we walked and talked together I seemed always trying for animation in her and never finding it. I would state my ideas. “I know,” she would say, “I know.”

I talked about myself and she listened wonderfully, but she made no answering revelations. I talked politics, and she remarked with her blue eyes wide and earnest: “Every WORD you say seems so just.”

I admired her appearance tremendously but — I can only express it by saying I didn’t want to touch her. Her fair hair was always delectably done. It flowed beautifully over her pretty small ears, and she would tie its fair coilings with fillets of black or blue velvet that carried pretty buckles of silver and paste. The light, the faint down on her brow and cheek was delightful. And it was clear to me that I made her happy.

My sense of her deficiencies didn’t stand in the way of my falling at last very deeply in love with her. Her very shortcomings seemed to offer me something....

She stood in my mind for goodness — and for things from which it seemed to me my hold was slipping.

She seemed to promise a way of escape from the deepening opposition in me between physical passions and the constructive career, the career of wide aims and human service, upon which I had embarked. All the time that I was seeing her as a beautiful, fragile, rather ineffective girl, I was also seeing her just as consciously as a shining slender figure, a radiant reconciliation, coming into my darkling disorders of lust and impulse. I could understand clearly that she was incapable of the most necessary subtleties of political thought, and yet I could contemplate praying to her and putting all the intricate troubles of my life at her feet.

Before the reappearance of Margaret in my world at all an unwonted disgust with the consequences and quality of my passions had arisen in my mind. Among other things that moment with the Lettish girl haunted me persistently. I would see myself again and again sitting amidst those sluttish surroundings, collar and tie in hand, while her heavy German words grouped themselves to a slowly apprehended meaning. I would feel again with a fresh stab of

remorse, that this was not a flash of adventure, this was not seeing life in any permissible sense, but a dip into tragedy, dishonour, hideous degradation, and the pitiless cruelty of a world as yet uncontrolled by any ordered will.

"Good God!" I put it to myself, "that I should finish the work those Cossacks had begun! I who want order and justice before everything! There's no way out of it, no decent excuse! If I didn't think, I ought to have thought!"...

"How did I get to it?"... I would ransack the phases of my development from the first shy unveiling of a hidden wonder to the last extremity as a man will go through muddled account books to find some disorganising error....

I was also involved at that time — I find it hard to place these things in the exact order of their dates because they were so disconnected with the regular progress of my work and life — in an intrigue, a clumsy, sensuous, pretentious, artificially stimulated intrigue, with a Mrs. Larrimer, a woman living separated from her husband. I will not go into particulars of that episode, nor how we quarrelled and chafed one another. She was at once unfaithful and jealous and full of whims about our meetings; she was careless of our secret, and vulgarised our relationship by intolerable interpretations; except for some glowing moments of gratification, except for the recurrent and essentially vicious desire that drew us back to each other again, we both fretted at a vexatious and unexpectedly binding intimacy. The interim was full of the quality of work delayed, of time and energy wasted, of insecure precautions against scandal and exposure. Disappointment is almost inherent in illicit love. I had, and perhaps it was part of her recurrent irritation also, a feeling as though one had followed something fine and beautiful into a net — into bird lime! These furtive scuffles, this sneaking into shabby houses of assignation, was what we had made out of the suggestion of pagan beauty; this was the reality of our vision of nymphs and satyrs dancing for the joy of life amidst incessant sunshine. We had laid hands upon the wonder and glory of bodily love and wasted them....

It was the sense of waste, of finely beautiful possibilities getting entangled and marred for ever that oppressed me. I had missed, I had lost. I did not turn from these things after the fashion of the Baileys,

as one turns from something low and embarrassing. I felt that these great organic forces were still to be wrought into a harmony with my constructive passion. I felt too that I was not doing it. I had not understood the forces in this struggle nor its nature, and as I learnt I failed. I had been started wrong, I had gone on wrong, in a world that was muddled and confused, full of false counsel and erratic shames and twisted temptations. I learnt to see it so by failures that were perhaps destroying any chance of profit in my lessons. Moods of clear keen industry alternated with moods of relapse and indulgence and moods of dubiety and remorse. I was not going on as the Baileys thought I was going on. There were times when the blindness of the Baileys irritated me intensely. Beneath the ostensible success of those years, between twenty-three and twenty-eight, this rottenness, known to scarcely any one but myself, grew and spread. My sense of the probability of a collapse intensified. I knew indeed now, even as Willersley had prophesied five years before, that I was entangling myself in something that might smother all my uses in the world. Down there among those incommunicable difficulties, I was puzzled and blundering. I was losing my hold upon things; the chaotic and adventurous element in life was spreading upward and getting the better of me, over-mastering me and all my will to rule and make.... And the strength, the drugging urgency of the passion!

Margaret shone at times in my imagination like a radiant angel in a world of mire and disorder, in a world of cravings, hot and dull red like scars inflamed....

I suppose it was because I had so great a need of such help as her whiteness proffered, that I could ascribe impossible perfections to her, a power of intellect, a moral power and patience to which she, poor fellow mortal, had indeed no claim. If only a few of us WERE angels and freed from the tangle of effort, how easy life might be! I wanted her so badly, so very badly, to be what I needed. I wanted a woman to save me. I forced myself to see her as I wished to see her. Her tepidities became infinite delicacies, her mental vagueness an atmospheric realism. The harsh precisions of the Baileys and Altiora's blunt directness threw up her fineness into relief and made a grace of every weakness.

Mixed up with the memory of times when I talked with Margaret

as one talks politely to those who are hopelessly inferior in mental quality, explaining with a false lucidity, welcoming and encouraging the feeblest response, when possible moulding and directing, are times when I did indeed, as the old phrase goes, worship the ground she trod on. I was equally honest and unconscious of inconsistency at each extreme. But in neither phase could I find it easy to make love to Margaret. For in the first I did not want to, though I talked abundantly to her of marriage and so forth, and was a little puzzled at myself for not going on to some personal application, and in the second she seemed inaccessible, I felt I must make confessions and put things before her that would be the grossest outrage upon the noble purity I attributed to her.

9

I went to Margaret at last to ask her to marry me, wrought up to the mood of one who stakes his life on a cast. Separated from her, and with the resonance of an evening of angry recriminations with Mrs. Larrimer echoing in my mind, I discovered myself to be quite passionately in love with Margaret. Last shreds of doubt vanished. It has always been a feature of our relationship that Margaret absent means more to me than Margaret present; her memory distils from its dross and purifies in me. All my criticisms and qualifications of her vanished into some dark corner of my mind. She was the lady of my salvation; I must win my way to her or perish.

I went to her at last, for all that I knew she loved me, in passionate self-abasement, white and a-tremble. She was staying with the Rockleys at Woking, for Shena Rockley had been at Bennett Hall with her and they had resumed a close intimacy; and I went down to her on an impulse, unheralded. I was kept waiting for some minutes, I remember, in a little room upon which a conservatory opened, a conservatory full of pots of large mauve-edged, white cyclamens in flower. And there was a big lacquer cabinet, a Chinese thing, I suppose, of black and gold against the red-toned wall. To this day the thought of Margaret is inseparably bound up with the sight of a cyclamen's back-turned petals.

She came in, looking pale and drooping rather more than usual. I

suddenly realised that Altiora's hint of a disappointment leading to positive illness was something more than a vindictive comment. She closed the door and came across to me and took and dropped my hand and stood still. "What is it you want with me?" she asked.

The speech I had been turning over and over in my mind on the way vanished at the sight of her.

"I want to talk to you," I answered lamely.

For some seconds neither of us said a word.

"I want to tell you things about my life," I began.

She answered with a scarcely audible "yes."

"I almost asked you to marry me at Pangbourne," I plunged. "I didn't. I didn't because — because you had too much to give me."

"Too much!" she echoed, "to give you!" She had lifted her eyes to my face and the colour was coming into her cheeks.

"Don't misunderstand me," I said hastily. "I want to tell you things, things you don't know. Don't answer me. I want to tell you."

She stood before the fireplace with her ultimate answer shining through the quiet of her face. "Go on," she said, very softly. It was so pitilessly manifest she was resolved to idealise the situation whatever I might say. I began walking up and down the room between those cyclamens and the cabinet. There were little gold fishermen on the cabinet fishing from little islands that each had a pagoda and a tree, and there were also men in boats or something, I couldn't determine what, and some obscure sub-office in my mind concerned itself with that quite intently. Yet I seem to have been striving with all my being to get words for the truth of things. "You see," I emerged, "you make everything possible to me. You can give me help and sympathy, support, understanding. You know my political ambitions. You know all that I might do in the world. I do so intensely want to do constructive things, big things perhaps, in this wild jumble.... Only you don't know a bit what I am. I want to tell you what I am. I'm complex.... I'm streaked."

I glanced at her, and she was regarding me with an expression of blissful disregard for any meaning I was seeking to convey.

"You see," I said, "I'm a bad man."

She sounded a note of valiant incredulity.

Everything seemed to be slipping away from me. I pushed on to

the ugly facts that remained over from the wreck of my interpretation. “What has held me back,” I said, “is the thought that you could not possibly understand certain things in my life. Men are not pure as women are. I have had love affairs. I mean I have had affairs. Passion — desire. You see, I have had a mistress, I have been entangled—”

She seemed about to speak, but I interrupted. “I’m not telling you,” I said, “what I meant to tell you. I want you to know clearly that there is another side to my life, a dirty side. Deliberately I say, dirty. It didn’t seem so at first—”

I stopped blankly. “Dirty,” I thought, was the most idiotic choice of words to have made.

I had never in any tolerable sense of the word been dirty.

“I drifted into this — as men do,” I said after a little pause and stopped again.

She was looking at me with her wide blue eyes.

“Did you imagine,” she began, “that I thought you — that I expected—”

“But how can you know?”

“I know. I do know.”

“But—” I began.

“I know,” she persisted, dropping her eyelids. “Of course I know,” and nothing could have convinced me more completely that she did not know.

“All men—” she generalised. “A woman does not understand these temptations.”

I was astonished beyond measure at her way of taking my confession. ...

“Of course,” she said, hesitating a little over a transparent difficulty, “it is all over and past.”

“It’s all over and past,” I answered.

There was a little pause.

“I don’t want to know,” she said. “None of that seems to matter now in the slightest degree.”

She looked up and smiled as though we had exchanged some acceptable commonplaces. “Poor dear!” she said, dismissing everything, and put out her arms, and it seemed to me that I could

hear the Lettish girl in the background — doomed safety valve of purity in this intolerable world — telling something in indistinguishable German — I know not what nor why....

I took Margaret in my arms and kissed her. Her eyes were wet with tears. She clung to me and was near, I felt, to sobbing.

“I have loved you,” she whispered presently, “Oh! ever since we met in Misterton — six years and more ago.”

CHAPTER THE THIRD ~~ MARGARET IN VENICE

1

There comes into my mind a confused memory of conversations with Margaret; we must have had dozens altogether, and they mix in now for the most part inextricably not only with one another, but with later talks and with things we discussed at Pangbourne. We had the immensest anticipations of the years and opportunities that lay before us. I was now very deeply in love with her indeed. I felt not that I had cleaned up my life but that she had. We called each other "confederate" I remember, and made during our brief engagement a series of visits to the various legislative bodies in London, the County Council, the House of Commons, where we dined with Villiers, and the St. Pancras Vestry, where we heard Shaw speaking. I was full of plans and so was she of the way in which we were to live and work. We were to pay back in public service whatever excess of wealth beyond his merits old Seddon's economic advantage had won for him from the toiling people in the potteries. The end of the Boer War was so recent that that blessed word "efficiency" echoed still in people's minds and thoughts. Lord Roseberry in a memorable oration had put it into the heads of the big outer public, but the Baileys with a certain show of justice claimed to have set it going in the channels that took it to him — if as a matter of fact it was taken to him. But then it was their habit to make claims of that sort. They certainly did their share to keep "efficient" going. Altiora's highest praise was "thoroughly efficient." We were to be a "thoroughly efficient" political couple of the "new type." She explained us to herself and Oscar, she explained us to ourselves, she explained us to the people who came to her dinners and afternoons until the world was highly charged with explanation and expectation, and the proposal that I should be the Liberal candidate for the Kinghamstead Division seemed the most natural development in the world.

I was full of the ideal of hard restrained living and relentless

activity, and throughout a beautiful November at Venice, where chiefly we spent our honeymoon, we turned over and over again and discussed in every aspect our conception of a life tremendously focussed upon the ideal of social service.

Most clearly there stands out a picture of ourselves talking in a gondola on our way to Torcella. Far away behind us the smoke of Murano forms a black stain upon an immense shining prospect of smooth water, water as unruffled and luminous as the sky above, a mirror on which rows of posts and distant black high-stemmed, swan-necked boats with their minutely clear swinging gondoliers, float aerially. Remote and low before us rises the little tower of our destination. Our men swing together and their oars swirl leisurely through the water, hump back in the rowlocks, splash sharply and go swishing back again. Margaret lies back on cushions, with her face shaded by a holland parasol, and I sit up beside her.

"You see," I say, and in spite of Margaret's note of perfect acquiescence I feel myself reasoning against an indefinable antagonism, "it is so easy to fall into a slack way with life. There may seem to be something priggish in a meticulous discipline, but otherwise it is so easy to slip into indolent habits — and to be distracted from one's purpose. The country, the world, wants men to serve its constructive needs, to work out and carry out plans. For a man who has to make a living the enemy is immediate necessity; for people like ourselves it's — it's the constant small opportunity of agreeable things."

"Frittering away," she says, "time and strength."

"That is what I feel. It's so pleasant to pretend one is simply modest, it looks so foolish at times to take one's self too seriously. We've GOT to take ourselves seriously."

She endorses my words with her eyes.

"I feel I can do great things with life."

"I KNOW you can."

"But that's only to be done by concentrating one's life upon one main end. We have to plan our days, to make everything subserve our scheme."

"I feel," she answers softly, "we ought to give — every hour."

Her face becomes dreamy. "I WANT to give every hour," she

adds.

2

That holiday in Venice is set in my memory like a little artificial lake in uneven confused country, as something very bright and skylike, and discontinuous with all about it. The faded quality of the very sunshine of that season, the mellow discoloured palaces and places, the huge, time-ripened paintings of departed splendours, the whispering, nearly noiseless passage of hearse-black gondolas, for the horrible steam launch had not yet ruined Venice, the stilled magnificences of the depopulated lagoons, the universal autumn, made me feel altogether in recess from the teeming uproars of reality. There was not a dozen people all told, no Americans and scarcely any English, to dine in the big cavern of a dining-room, with its vistas of separate tables, its distempered walls and its swathed chandeliers. We went about seeing beautiful things, accepting beauty on every hand, and taking it for granted that all was well with ourselves and the world. It was ten days or a fortnight before I became fretful and anxious for action; a long tranquillity for such a temperament as mine.

Our pleasures were curiously impersonal, a succession of shared aesthetic appreciation threads all that time. Our honeymoon was no exultant coming together, no mutual shout of "YOU!" We were almost shy with one another, and felt the relief of even a picture to help us out. It was entirely in my conception of things that I should be very watchful not to shock or distress Margaret or press the sensuous note. Our love-making had much of the tepid smoothness of the lagoons. We talked in delicate innuendo of what should be glorious freedoms. Margaret had missed Verona and Venice in her previous Italian journey — fear of the mosquito had driven her mother across Italy to the westward route — and now she could fill up her gaps and see the Titians and Paul Veroneses she already knew in colourless photographs, the Carpaccios, (the St. George series delighted her beyond measure,) the Basaitis and that great statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni that Ruskin praised.

But since I am not a man to look at pictures and architectural

effects day after day, I did watch Margaret very closely and store a thousand memories of her. I can see her now, her long body drooping a little forward, her sweet face upraised to some discovered familiar masterpiece and shining with a delicate enthusiasm. I can hear again the soft cadences of her voice murmuring commonplace comments, for she had no gift of expressing the shapeless satisfaction these things gave her.

Margaret, I perceived, was a cultivated person, the first cultivated person with whom I had ever come into close contact. She was cultivated and moral, and I, I now realise, was never either of these things. She was passive, and I am active. She did not simply and naturally look for beauty but she had been incited to look for it at school, and took perhaps a keener interest in books and lectures and all the organisation of beautiful things than she did in beauty itself; she found much of her delight in being guided to it. Now a thing ceases to be beautiful to me when some finger points me out its merits. Beauty is the salt of life, but I take my beauty as a wild beast gets its salt, as a constituent of the meal....

And besides, there was that between us that should have seemed more beautiful than any picture....

So we went about Venice tracking down pictures and spiral staircases and such-like things, and my brains were busy all the time with such things as a comparison of Venice and its nearest modern equivalent, New York, with the elaboration of schemes of action when we returned to London, with the development of a theory of Margaret.

Our marriage had done this much at least, that it had fused and destroyed those two independent ways of thinking about her that had gone on in my mind hitherto. Suddenly she had become very near to me, and a very big thing, a sort of comprehensive generalisation behind a thousand questions, like the sky or England. The judgments and understandings that had worked when she was, so to speak, miles away from my life, had now to be altogether revised. Trifling things began to matter enormously, that she had a weak and easily fatigued back, for example, or that when she knitted her brows and stammered a little in talking, it didn't really mean that an exquisite significance struggled for utterance.

We visited pictures in the mornings chiefly. In the afternoon, unless we were making a day-long excursion in a gondola, Margaret would rest for an hour while I prowled about in search of English newspapers, and then we would go to tea in the Piazza San Marco and watch the drift of people feeding the pigeons and going into the little doors beneath the sunlit arches and domes of Saint Mark's. Then perhaps we would stroll on the Piazzetta, or go out into the sunset in a gondola. Margaret became very interested in the shops that abound under the colonnades and decided at last to make an extensive purchase of table glass. "These things," she said, "are quite beautiful, and far cheaper than anything but the most ordinary looking English ware." I was interested in her idea, and a good deal charmed by the delightful qualities of tinted shape, slender handle and twisted stem. I suggested we should get not simply tumblers and wineglasses but bedroom waterbottles, fruit- and sweet-dishes, water-jugs, and in the end we made quite a business-like afternoon of it.

I was beginning now to long quite definitely for events. Energy was accumulating in me, and worrying me for an outlet. I found the TIMES and the DAILY TELEGRAPH and the other papers I managed to get hold of, more and more stimulating. I nearly wrote to the former paper one day in answer to a letter by Lord Grimthorpe — I forget now upon what point. I chafed secretly against this life of tranquil appreciations more and more. I found my attitudes of restrained and delicate affection for Margaret increasingly difficult to sustain. I surprised myself and her by little gusts of irritability, gusts like the catspaws before a gale. I was alarmed at these symptoms.

One night when Margaret had gone up to her room, I put on a light overcoat, went out into the night and prowled for a long time through the narrow streets, smoking and thinking. I returned and went and sat on the edge of her bed to talk to her.

"Look here, Margaret," I said; "this is all very well, but I'm restless."

"Restless!" she said with a faint surprise in her voice.

"Yes. I think I want exercise. I've got a sort of feeling — I've never had it before — as though I was getting fat."

"My dear!" she cried.

“I want to do things; — ride horses, climb mountains, take the devil out of myself.”

She watched me thoughtfully.

“Couldn’t we DO something?” she said.

Do what?

“I don’t know. Couldn’t we perhaps go away from here soon — and walk in the mountains — on our way home.”

I thought. “There seems to be no exercise at all in this place.”

“Isn’t there some walk?”

“I wonder,” I answered. “We might walk to Chioggia perhaps, along the Lido.” And we tried that, but the long stretch of beach fatigued Margaret’s back, and gave her blisters, and we never got beyond Malamocco....

A day or so after we went out to those pleasant black-robed, bearded Armenians in their monastery at Saint Lazzaro, and returned towards sundown. We fell into silence. “PIU LENTO,” said Margaret to the gondolier, and released my accumulated resolution.

“Let us go back to London,” I said abruptly.

Margaret looked at me with surprised blue eyes.

“This is beautiful beyond measure, you know,” I said, sticking to my point, “but I have work to do.”

She was silent for some seconds. “I had forgotten,” she said.

“So had I,” I sympathised, and took her hand. “Suddenly I have remembered.”

She remained quite still. “There is so much to be done,” I said, almost apologetically.

She looked long away from me across the lagoon and at last sighed, like one who has drunk deeply, and turned to me.

“I suppose one ought not to be so happy,” she said. “Everything has been so beautiful and so simple and splendid. And clean. It has been just With You — the time of my life. It’s a pity such things must end. But the world is calling you, dear.... I ought not to have forgotten it. I thought you were resting — and thinking. But if you are rested. — Would you like us to start to-morrow?”

She looked at once so fragile and so devoted that on the spur of the moment I relented, and we stayed in Venice four more days.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH ~~ THE HOUSE IN WESTMINSTER

1

Margaret had already taken a little house in Radnor Square, Westminster, before our marriage, a house that seemed particularly adaptable to our needs as public-spirited efficients; it had been very pleasantly painted and papered under Margaret's instructions, white paint and clean open purples and green predominating, and now we set to work at once upon the interesting business of arranging and — with our Venetian glass as a beginning — furnishing it. We had been fairly fortunate with our wedding presents, and for the most part it was open to us to choose just exactly what we would have and just precisely where we would put it.

Margaret had a sense of form and colour altogether superior to mine, and so quite apart from the fact that it was her money equipped us, I stood aside from all these matters and obeyed her summons to a consultation only to endorse her judgment very readily. Until everything was settled I went every day to my old rooms in Vincent Square and worked at a series of papers that were originally intended for the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW, the papers that afterwards became my fourth book, "New Aspects of Liberalism."

I still remember as delightful most of the circumstances of getting into 79, Radnor Square. The thin flavour of indecision about Margaret disappeared altogether in a shop; she had the precisest ideas of what she wanted, and the devices of the salesman did not sway her. It was very pleasant to find her taking things out of my hands with a certain masterfulness, and showing the distinctest determination to make a house in which I should be able to work in that great project of "doing something for the world."

"And I do want to make things pretty about us," she said. "You don't think it wrong to have things pretty?"

"I want them so."

"Altiora has things hard."

"Altiora," I answered, "takes a pride in standing ugly and

uncomfortable things. But I don't see that they help her. Anyhow they won't help me."

So Margaret went to the best shops and got everything very simple and very good. She bought some pictures very well indeed; there was a little Sussex landscape, full of wind and sunshine, by Nicholson, for my study, that hit my taste far better than if I had gone out to get some such expression for myself.

"We will buy a picture just now and then," she said, "sometimes — when we see one."

I would come back through the January mire or fog from Vincent Square to the door of 79, and reach it at last with a quite childish appreciation of the fact that its solid Georgian proportions and its fine brass furnishings belonged to MY home; I would use my latchkey and discover Margaret in the warm-lit, spacious hall with a partially opened packing-case, fatigued but happy, or go up to have tea with her out of the right tea things, "come at last," or be told to notice what was fresh there. It wasn't simply that I had never had a house before, but I had really never been, except in the most transitory way, in any house that was nearly so delightful as mine promised to be. Everything was fresh and bright, and softly and harmoniously toned. Downstairs we had a green dining-room with gleaming silver, dark oak, and English colour-prints; above was a large drawing-room that could be made still larger by throwing open folding doors, and it was all carefully done in greys and blues, for the most part with real Sheraton supplemented by Sheraton so skilfully imitated by an expert Margaret had discovered as to be indistinguishable except to a minute scrutiny. And for me, above this and next to my bedroom, there was a roomy study, with specially thick stair-carpet outside and thick carpets in the bedroom overhead and a big old desk for me to sit at and work between fire and window, and another desk specially made for me by that expert if I chose to stand and write, and open bookshelves and bookcases and every sort of convenient fitting. There were electric heaters beside the open fire, and everything was put for me to make tea at any time — electric kettle, infuser, biscuits and fresh butter, so that I could get up and work at any hour of the day or night. I could do no work in this apartment for a long time, I was so interested in the perfection of

its arrangements. And when I brought in my books and papers from Vincent Square, Margaret seized upon all the really shabby volumes and had them re-bound in a fine official-looking leather.

I can remember sitting down at that desk and looking round me and feeling with a queer effect of surprise that after all even a place in the Cabinet, though infinitely remote, was nevertheless in the same large world with these fine and quietly expensive things.

On the same floor Margaret had a "den," a very neat and pretty den with good colour-prints of Botticellis and Carpaccios, and there was a third apartment for sectarial purposes should the necessity for them arise, with a severe-looking desk equipped with patent files. And Margaret would come flitting into the room to me, or appear noiselessly standing, a tall gracefully drooping form, in the wide open doorway. "Is everything right, dear?" she would ask.

"Come in," I would say, "I'm sorting out papers."

She would come to the hearthrug.

"I mustn't disturb you," she would remark.

"I'm not busy yet."

"Things are getting into order. Then we must make out a time-table as the Baileys do, and BEGIN!"

Altiora came in to see us once or twice, and a number of serious young wives known to Altiora called and were shown over the house, and discussed its arrangements with Margaret. They were all tremendously keen on efficient arrangements.

"A little pretty," said Altiora, with the faintest disapproval, "still —"

It was clear she thought we should grow out of that. From the day of our return we found other people's houses open to us and eager for us. We went out of London for week-ends and dined out, and began discussing our projects for reciprocating these hospitalities. As a single man unattached, I had had a wide and miscellaneous social range, but now I found myself falling into place in a set. For a time I acquiesced in this. I went very little to my clubs, the Climax and the National Liberal, and participated in no bachelor dinners at all. For a time, too, I dropped out of the garrulous literary and journalistic circles I had frequented. I put up for the Reform, not so much for the use of the club as a sign of serious and substantial political standing.

I didn't go up to Cambridge, I remember, for nearly a year, so occupied was I with my new adjustments.

The people we found ourselves among at this time were people, to put it roughly, of the Parliamentary candidate class, or people already actually placed in the political world. They ranged between very considerable wealth and such a hard, bare independence as old Willersley and the sister who kept house for him possessed. There were quite a number of young couples like ourselves, a little younger and more artless, or a little older and more established. Among the younger men I had a sort of distinction because of my Cambridge reputation and my writing, and because, unlike them, I was an adventurer and had won and married my way into their circles instead of being naturally there. They couldn't quite reckon upon what I should do; they felt I had reserves of experience and incalculable traditions. Close to us were the Cramptons, Willie Crampton, who has since been Postmaster-General, rich and very important in Rockshire, and his younger brother Edward, who has specialised in history and become one of those unimaginative men of letters who are the glory of latter-day England. Then there was Lewis, further towards Kensington, where his cousins the Solomons and the Hartsteins lived, a brilliant representative of his race, able, industrious and invariably uninspired, with a wife a little in revolt against the racial tradition of feminine servitude and inclined to the suffragette point of view, and Bunting Harblow, an old blue, and with an erratic disposition well under the control of the able little cousin he had married. I had known all these men, but now (with Altiora floating angelically in benediction) they opened their hearts to me and took me into their order. They were all like myself, prospective Liberal candidates, with a feeling that the period of wandering in the wilderness of opposition was drawing near its close. They were all tremendously keen upon social and political service, and all greatly under the sway of the ideal of a simple, strenuous life, a life finding its satisfactions in political achievements and distinctions. The young wives were as keen about it as the young husbands, Margaret most of all, and I — whatever elements in me didn't march with the attitudes and habits of this set were very much in the background during that time.

We would give little dinners and have evening gatherings at which everything was very simple and very good, with a slight but perceptible austerity, and there was more good fruit and flowers and less perhaps in the way of savouries, patties and entrees than was customary. Sherry we banished, and Marsala and liqueurs, and there was always good home-made lemonade available. No men waited, but very expert parlourmaids. Our meat was usually Welsh mutton — I don't know why, unless that mountains have ever been the last refuge of the severer virtues. And we talked politics and books and ideas and Bernard Shaw (who was a department by himself and supposed in those days to be ethically sound at bottom), and mingled with the intellectuals — I myself was, as it were, a promoted intellectual.

The Cramptons had a tendency to read good things aloud on their less frequented receptions, but I have never been able to participate submissively in this hyper-digestion of written matter, and generally managed to provoke a disruptive debate. We were all very earnest to make the most of ourselves and to be and do, and I wonder still at times, with an unassuaged perplexity, how it is that in that phase of utmost earnestness I have always seemed to myself to be most remote from reality.

2

I look back now across the detaching intervention of sixteen crowded years, critically and I fancy almost impartially, to those beginnings of my married life. I try to recall something near to their proper order the developing phases of relationship. I am struck most of all by the immense unpremeditated, generous-spirited insincerities upon which Margaret and I were building.

It seems to me that here I have to tell perhaps the commonest experience of all among married educated people, the deliberate, shy, complex effort to fill the yawning gaps in temperament as they appear, the sustained, failing attempt to bridge abysses, level barriers, evade violent pressures. I have come these latter years of my life to believe that it is possible for a man and woman to be absolutely real with one another, to stand naked souled to each other, unashamed

and unafraid, because of the natural all-glorifying love between them. It is possible to love and be loved untroubling, as a bird flies through the air. But it is a rare and intricate chance that brings two people within sight of that essential union, and for the majority marriage must adjust itself on other terms. Most coupled people never really look at one another. They look a little away to preconceived ideas. And each from the first days of love-making HIDES from the other, is afraid of disappointing, afraid of offending, afraid of discoveries in either sense. They build not solidly upon the rock of truth, but upon arches and pillars and queer provisional supports that are needed to make a common foundation, and below in the imprisoned darknesses, below the fine fabric they sustain together begins for each of them a cavernous hidden life. Down there things may be prowling that scarce ever peep out to consciousness except in the grey half-light of sleepless nights, passions that flash out for an instant in an angry glance and are seen no more, starved victims and beautiful dreams bricked up to die. For the most of us there is no jail delivery of those inner depths, and the life above goes on to its honourable end.

I have told how I loved Margaret and how I came to marry her. Perhaps already unintentionally I have indicated the quality of the injustice our marriage did us both. There was no kindred between us and no understanding. We were drawn to one another by the unlikeness of our quality, by the things we misunderstood in each other. I know a score of couples who have married in that fashion.

Modern conditions and modern ideas, and in particular the intenser and subtler perceptions of modern life, press more and more heavily upon a marriage tie whose fashion comes from an earlier and less discriminating time. When the wife was her husband's subordinate, meeting him simply and uncritically for simple ends, when marriage was a purely domestic relationship, leaving thought and the vivid things of life almost entirely to the unencumbered man, mental and temperamental incompatibilities mattered comparatively little. But now the wife, and particularly the loving childless wife, unpremeditatedly makes a relentless demand for a complete association, and the husband exacts unthought of delicacies of understanding and co-operation. These are stupendous demands.

People not only think more fully and elaborately about life than they ever did before, but marriage obliges us to make that ever more accidented progress a three-legged race of carelessly assorted couples....

Our very mental texture was different. I was rough-minded, to use the phrase of William James, primary and intuitive and illogical; she was tender-minded, logical, refined and secondary. She was loyal to pledge and persons, sentimental and faithful; I am loyal to ideas and instincts, emotional and scheming. My imagination moves in broad gestures; her's was delicate with a real dread of extravagance. My quality is sensuous and ruled by warm impulses; hers was discriminating and essentially inhibitory. I like the facts of the case and to mention everything; I like naked bodies and the jolly smells of things. She abounded in reservations, in circumlocutions and evasions, in keenly appreciated secondary points. Perhaps the reader knows that Tintoretto in the National Gallery, the Origin of the Milky Way. It is an admirable test of temperamental quality. In spite of my early training I have come to regard that picture as altogether delightful; to Margaret it has always been "needlessly offensive." In that you have our fundamental breach. She had a habit, by no means rare, of damning what she did not like or find sympathetic in me on the score that it was not my "true self," and she did not so much accept the universe as select from it and do her best to ignore the rest. And also I had far more initiative than had she. This is no catalogue of rights and wrongs, or superiorities and inferiorities; it is a catalogue of differences between two people linked in a relationship that constantly becomes more intolerant of differences.

This is how we stood to each other, and none of it was clear to either of us at the outset. To begin with, I found myself reserving myself from her, then slowly apprehending a jarring between our minds and what seemed to me at first a queer little habit of misunderstanding in her....

It did not hinder my being very fond of her....

Where our system of reservation became at once most usual and most astounding was in our personal relations. It is not too much to say that in that regard we never for a moment achieved sincerity with one another during the first six years of our life together. It goes even

deeper than that, for in my effort to realise the ideal of my marriage I ceased even to attempt to be sincere with myself. I would not admit my own perceptions and interpretations. I tried to fit myself to her thinner and finer determinations. There are people who will say with a note of approval that I was learning to conquer myself. I record that much without any note of approval....

For some years I never deceived Margaret about any concrete fact nor, except for the silence about my earlier life that she had almost forced upon me, did I hide any concrete fact that seemed to affect her, but from the outset I was guilty of immense spiritual concealments, my very marriage was based, I see now, on a spiritual subterfuge; I hid moods from her, pretended feelings....

3

The interest and excitement of setting-up a house, of walking about it from room to room and from floor to floor, or sitting at one's own dinner table and watching one's wife control conversation with a pretty, timid resolution, of taking a place among the secure and free people of our world, passed almost insensibly into the interest and excitement of my Parliamentary candidature for the Kinghamstead Division, that shapeless chunk of agricultural midland between the Great Western and the North Western railways. I was going to "take hold" at last, the Kinghamstead Division was my appointed handle. I was to find my place in the rather indistinctly sketched constructions that were implicit in the minds of all our circle. The precise place I had to fill and the precise functions I had to discharge were not as yet very clear, but all that, we felt sure, would become plain as things developed.

A few brief months of vague activities of "nursing" gave place to the excitements of the contest that followed the return of Mr. Camphell-Bannerman to power in 1905. So far as the Kinghamstead Division was concerned it was a depressed and tepid battle. I went about the constituency making three speeches that were soon threadbare, and an odd little collection of people worked for me; two solicitors, a cheap photographer, a democratic parson, a number of dissenting ministers, the Mayor of Kinghamstead, a Mrs. Bulger, the

widow of an old Chartist who had grown rich through electric traction patents, Sir Roderick Newton, a Jew who had bought Calersham Castle, and old Sir Graham Rivers, that sturdy old soldier, were among my chief supporters. We had headquarters in each town and village, mostly there were empty shops we leased temporarily, and there at least a sort of fuss and a coming and going were maintained. The rest of the population stared in a state of suspended judgment as we went about the business. The country was supposed to be in a state of intellectual conflict and deliberate decision, in history it will no doubt figure as a momentous conflict. Yet except for an occasional flare of bill-sticking or a bill in a window or a placard-plastered motor-car or an argumentative group of people outside a public-house or a sluggish movement towards the schoolroom or village hall, there was scarcely a sign that a great empire was revising its destinies. Now and then one saw a canvasser on a doorstep. For the most part people went about their business with an entirely irresponsible confidence in the stability of the universe. At times one felt a little absurd with one's flutter of colours and one's air of saving the country.

My opponent was a quite undistinguished Major-General who relied upon his advocacy of Protection, and was particularly anxious we should avoid "personalities" and fight the constituency in a gentlemanly spirit. He was always writing me notes, apologising for excesses on the part of his supporters, or pointing out the undesirability of some course taken by mine.

My speeches had been planned upon broad lines, but they lost touch with these as the polling approached. To begin with I made a real attempt to put what was in my mind before the people I was to supply with a political voice. I spoke of the greatness of our empire and its destinies, of the splendid projects and possibilities of life and order that lay before the world, of all that a resolute and constructive effort might do at the present time. "We are building a state," I said, "secure and splendid, we are in the dawn of the great age of mankind." Sometimes that would get a solitary "'Ear! 'ear!" Then having created, as I imagined, a fine atmosphere, I turned upon the history of the last Conservative administration and brought it into contrast with the wide occasions of the age; discussed its failure to

control the grasping financiers in South Africa, its failure to release public education from sectarian squabbles, its misconduct of the Boer War, its waste of the world's resources....

It soon became manifest that my opening and my general spaciousness of method bored my audiences a good deal. The richer and wider my phrases the thinner sounded my voice in these non-resonating gatherings. Even the platform supporters grew restive unconsciously, and stirred and coughed. They did not recognise themselves as mankind. Building an empire, preparing a fresh stage in the history of humanity, had no appeal for them. They were mostly everyday, toiling people, full of small personal solicitudes, and they came to my meetings, I think, very largely as a relaxation. This stuff was not relaxing. They did not think politics was a great constructive process, they thought it was a kind of dog-fight. They wanted fun, they wanted spice, they wanted hits, they wanted also a chance to say "'Ear', 'ear!" in an intelligent and honourable manner and clap their hands and drum with their feet. The great constructive process in history gives so little scope for clapping and drumming and saying "'Ear, 'ear!" One might as well think of hounding on the solar system.

So after one or two attempts to lift my audiences to the level of the issues involved, I began to adapt myself to them. I cut down my review of our imperial outlook and destinies more and more, and developed a series of hits and anecdotes and — what shall I call them?— "crudifications" of the issue. My helper's congratulated me on the rapid improvement of my platform style. I ceased to speak of the late Prime Minister with the respect I bore him, and began to fall in with the popular caricature of him as an artful rabbit-witted person intent only on keeping his leadership, in spite of the vigorous attempts of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain to oust him therefrom. I ceased to qualify my statement that Protection would make food dearer for the agricultural labourer. I began to speak of Mr. Alfred Lyttelton as an influence at once insane and diabolical, as a man inspired by a passionate desire to substitute manacled but still criminal Chinese for honest British labourers throughout the world. And when it came to the mention of our own kindly leader, of Mr. John Burns or any one else of any prominence at all on our side I fell more and more into

the intonation of one who mentions the high gods. And I had my reward in brighter meetings and readier and readier applause.

One goes on from phase to phase in these things.

"After all," I told myself, "if one wants to get to Westminster one must follow the road that leads there," but I found the road nevertheless rather unexpectedly distasteful. "When one gets there," I said, "then it is one begins."

But I would lie awake at nights with that sore throat and headache and fatigue which come from speaking in ill-ventilated rooms, and wondering how far it was possible to educate a whole people to great political ideals. Why should political work always rot down to personalities and personal appeals in this way? Life is, I suppose, to begin with and end with a matter of personalities, from personalities all our broader interests arise and to personalities they return. All our social and political effort, all of it, is like trying to make a crowd of people fall into formation. The broader lines appear, but then come a rush and excitement and irrelevancy, and forthwith the incipient order has vanished and the marshals must begin the work over again!

My memory of all that time is essentially confusion. There was a frightful lot of tiresome locomotion in it; for the Kinghamstead Division is extensive, abounding in ill-graded and badly metalled cross-roads and vicious little hills, and singularly unpleasing to the eye in a muddy winter. It is sufficiently near to London to have undergone the same process of ill-regulated expansion that made Bromstead the place it is. Several of its overgrown villages have developed strings of factories and sidings along the railway lines, and there is an abundance of petty villas. There seemed to be no place at which one could take hold of more than this or that element of the population. Now we met in a meeting-house, now in a Masonic Hall or Drill Hall; I also did a certain amount of open-air speaking in the dinner hour outside gas-works and groups of factories. Some special sort of people was, as it were, secreted in response to each special appeal. One said things carefully adjusted to the distinctive limitations of each gathering. Jokes of an incredible silliness and shallowness drifted about us. Our advisers made us declare that if we were elected we would live in the district, and one hasty agent had bills printed, "If Mr. Remington is elected he will

live here." The enemy obtained a number of these bills and stuck them on outhouses, pigstyes, dog-kennels; you cannot imagine how irksome the repetition of that jest became. The vast drifting indifference in between my meetings impressed me more and more. I realised the vagueness of my own plans as I had never done before I brought them to the test of this experience. I was perplexed by the riddle of just how far I was, in any sense of the word, taking hold at all, how far I wasn't myself flowing into an accepted groove.

Margaret was troubled by no such doubts. She was clear I had to go into Parliament on the side of Liberalism and the light, as against the late Government and darkness. Essential to the memory of my first contest, is the memory of her clear bright face, very resolute and grave, helping me consciously, steadfastly, with all her strength. Her quiet confidence, while I was so dissatisfied, worked curiously towards the alienation of my sympathies. I felt she had no business to be so sure of me. I had moments of vivid resentment at being thus marched towards Parliament.

I seemed now always to be discovering alien forces of character in her. Her way of taking life diverged from me more and more. She sounded amazing, independent notes. She bought some particularly costly furs for the campaign that roused enthusiasm whenever she appeared. She also made me a birthday present in November of a heavily fur-trimmed coat and this she would make me remove as I went on to the platform, and hold over her arm until I was ready to resume it. It was fearfully heavy for her and she liked it to be heavy for her. That act of servitude was in essence a towering self-assertion. I would glance sideways while some chairman floundered through his introduction and see the clear blue eye with which she regarded the audience, which existed so far as she was concerned merely to return me to Parliament. It was a friendly eye, provided they were not silly or troublesome. But it kindled a little at the hint of a hostile question. After we had come so far and taken so much trouble!

She constituted herself the dragoman of our political travels. In hotels she was serenely resolute for the quietest and the best, she rejected all their proposals for meals and substituted a severely nourishing dietary of her own, and even in private houses she

astonished me by her tranquil insistence upon special comforts and sustenance. I can see her face now as it would confront a hostess, a little intent, but sweetly resolute and assured.

Since our marriage she had read a number of political memoirs, and she had been particularly impressed by the career of Mrs. Gladstone. I don't think it occurred to her to compare and contrast my quality with that of Mrs. Gladstone's husband. I suspect her of a deliberate intention of achieving parallel results by parallel methods. I was to be Gladstonised. Gladstone it appeared used to lubricate his speeches with a mixture — if my memory serves me right — of egg beaten up in sherry, and Margaret was very anxious I should take a leaf from that celebrated book. She wanted, I know, to hold the glass in her hand while I was speaking.

But here I was firm. "No," I said, very decisively, "simply I won't stand that. It's a matter of conscience. I shouldn't feel — democratic. I'll take my chance of the common water in the carafe on the chairman's table."

"I DO wish you wouldn't," she said, distressed.

It was absurd to feel irritated; it was so admirable of her, a little childish, infinitely womanly and devoted and fine — and I see now how pathetic. But I could not afford to succumb to her. I wanted to follow my own leading, to see things clearly, and this reassuring pose of a high destiny, of an almost terribly efficient pursuit of a fixed end when as a matter of fact I had a very doubtful end and an aim as yet by no means fixed, was all too seductive for dalliance....

4

And into all these things with the manner of a trifling and casual incident comes the figure of Isabel Rivers. My first impressions of her were of a rather ugly and ungainly, extraordinarily interesting schoolgirl with a beautiful quick flush under her warm brown skin, who said and did amusing and surprising things. When first I saw her she was riding a very old bicycle downhill with her feet on the fork of the frame — it seemed to me to the public danger, but afterwards I came to understand the quality of her nerve better — and on the third occasion she was for her own private satisfaction climbing a tree. On

the intervening occasion we had what seems now to have been a long sustained conversation about the political situation and the books and papers I had written.

I wonder if it was.

What a delightful mixture of child and grave woman she was at that time, and how little I reckoned on the part she would play in my life! And since she has played that part, how impossible it is to tell now of those early days! Since I wrote that opening paragraph to this section my idle pen has been, as it were, playing by itself and sketching faces on the blotting pad — one impish wizened visage is oddly like little Bailey — and I have been thinking cheek on fist amidst a limitless wealth of memories. She sits below me on the low wall under the olive trees with our little child in her arms. She is now the central fact in my life. It still seems a little incredible that that should be so. She has destroyed me as a politician, brought me to this belated rebeginning of life. When I sit down and try to make her a girl again, I feel like the Arabian fisherman who tried to put the genius back into the pot from which it had spread gigantic across the skies....

I have a very clear vision of her rush downhill past our labouring ascendant car — my colours fluttered from handle-bar and shoulder-knot — and her waving hand and the sharp note of her voice. She cried out something, I don't know what, some greeting.

"What a pretty girl!" said Margaret.

Parvill, the cheap photographer, that industrious organiser for whom by way of repayment I got those magic letters, that knighthood of the underlings, "J. P." was in the car with us and explained her to us. "One of the best workers you have," he said....

And then after a toilsome troubled morning we came, rather cross from the strain of sustained amiability, to Sir Graham Rivers' house. It seemed all softness and quiet — I recall dead white panelling and oval mirrors horizontally set and a marble fireplace between white marble-blind Homer and marble-blind Virgil, very grave and fine — and how Isabel came in to lunch in a shapeless thing like a blue smock that made her bright quick-changing face seem yellow under her cloud of black hair. Her step-sister was there, Miss Gamer, to whom the house was to descend, a well-dressed lady of thirty,

amiably disavowing responsibility for Isabel in every phrase and gesture. And there was a very pleasant doctor, an Oxford man, who seemed on excellent terms with every one. It was manifest that he was in the habit of sparring with the girl, but on this occasion she wasn't sparring and refused to be teased into a display in spite of the taunts of either him or her father. She was, they discovered with rising eyebrows, shy. It seemed an opportunity too rare for them to miss. They proclaimed her enthusiasm for me in a way that brought a flush to her cheek and a look into her eye between appeal and defiance. They declared she had read my books, which I thought at the time was exaggeration, their dry political quality was so distinctly not what one was accustomed to regard as schoolgirl reading. Miss Gamer protested to protect her, "When once in a blue moon Isabel is well-behaved....!"

Except for these attacks I do not remember much of the conversation at table; it was, I know, discursive and concerned with the sort of topographical and social and electioneering fact natural to such a visit. Old Rivers struck me as a delightful person, modestly unconscious of his doubly-earned V. C. and the plucky defence of Kardin-Bergat that won his baronetcy. He was that excellent type, the soldier radical, and we began that day a friendship that was only ended by his death in the hunting-field three years later. He interested Margaret into a disregard of my plate and the fact that I had secured the illegal indulgence of Moselle. After lunch we went for coffee into another low room, this time brown panelled and looking through French windows on a red-walled garden, graceful even in its winter desolation. And there the conversation suddenly picked up and became good. It had fallen to a pause, and the doctor, with an air of definitely throwing off a mask and wrecking an established tranquillity, remarked: "Very probably you Liberals will come in, though I'm not sure you'll come in so mightily as you think, but what you do when you do come in passes my comprehension."

"There's good work sometimes," said Sir Graham, "in undoing."

"You can't govern a great empire by amending and repealing the Acts of your predecessors," said the doctor.

There came that kind of pause that happens when a subject is broached too big and difficult for the gathering. Margaret's blue eyes

regarded the speaker with quiet disapproval for a moment, and then came to me in the not too confident hope that I would snub him out of existence with some prompt rhetorical stroke. A voice spoke out of the big armchair.

"We'll do things," said Isabel.

The doctor's eye lit with the joy of the fisherman who strikes his fish at last. "What will you do?" he asked her.

"Every one knows we're a mixed lot," said Isabel.

"Poor old chaps like me!" interjected the general.

"But that's not a programme," said the doctor.

"But Mr. Remington has published a programme," said Isabel.

The doctor cocked half an eye at me.

"In some review," the girl went on. "After all, we're not going to elect the whole Liberal party in the Kinghamstead Division. I'm a Remington-ite!"

"But the programme," said the doctor, "the programme—"

"In front of Mr. Remington!"

"Scandal always comes home at last," said the doctor. "Let him hear the worst."

"I'd like to hear," I said. "Electioneering shatters convictions and enfeebles the mind."

"Not mine," said Isabel stoutly. "I mean — Well, anyhow I take it Mr. Remington stands for constructing a civilised state out of this muddle."

"THIS muddle," protested the doctor with an appeal of the eye to the beautiful long room and the ordered garden outside the bright clean windows.

"Well, THAT muddle, if you like! There's a slum within a mile of us already. The dust and blacks get worse and worse, Sissie?"

"They do," agreed Miss Gamer.

"Mr. Remington stands for construction, order, education, discipline."

"And you?" said the doctor.

"I'm a good Remington-ite."

"Discipline!" said the doctor.

"Oh!" said Isabel. "At times one has to be — Napoleonic. They want to libel me, Mr. Remington. A political worker can't always be

in time for meals, can she? At times one has to make — splendid cuts."

Miss Gamer said something indistinctly.

"Order, education, discipline," said Sir Graham. "Excellent things! But I've a sort of memory — in my young days — we talked about something called liberty."

"Liberty under the law," I said, with an unexpected approving murmur from Margaret, and took up the defence. "The old Liberal definition of liberty was a trifle uncritical. Privilege and legal restrictions are not the only enemies of liberty. An uneducated, underbred, and underfed propertyless man is a man who has lost the possibility of liberty. There's no liberty worth a rap for him. A man who is swimming hopelessly for life wants nothing but the liberty to get out of the water; he'll give every other liberty for it — until he gets out."

Sir Graham took me up and we fell into a discussion of the changing qualities of Liberalism. It was a good give-and-take talk, extraordinarily refreshing after the nonsense and crowding secondary issues of the electioneering outside. We all contributed more or less except Miss Gamer; Margaret followed with knitted brows and occasional interjections. "People won't SEE that," for example, and "It all seems so plain to me." The doctor showed himself clever but unsubstantial and inconsistent. Isabel sat back with her black mop of hair buried deep in the chair looking quickly from face to face. Her colour came and went with her vivid intellectual excitement; occasionally she would dart a word, usually a very apt word, like a lizard's tongue into the discussion. I remember chiefly that a chance illustration betrayed that she had read Bishop Burnet....

After that it was not surprising that Isabel should ask for a lift in our car as far as the Lurky Committee Room, and that she should offer me quite sound advice EN ROUTE upon the intellectual temperament of the Lurky gasworkers.

On the third occasion that I saw Isabel she was, as I have said, climbing a tree — and a very creditable tree — for her own private satisfaction. It was a lapse from the high seriousness of politics, and I perceived she felt that I might regard it as such and attach too much importance to it. I had some difficulty in reassuring her. And it's odd

to note now — it has never occurred to me before — that from that day to this I do not think I have ever reminded Isabel of that encounter.

And after that memory she seems to be flickering about always in the election, an inextinguishable flame; now she flew by on her bicycle, now she dashed into committee rooms, now she appeared on doorsteps in animated conversation with dubious voters; I took every chance I could to talk to her — I had never met anything like her before in the world, and she interested me immensely — and before the polling day she and I had become, in the frankest simplicity, fast friends....

That, I think, sets out very fairly the facts of our early relationship. But it is hard to get it true, either in form or texture, because of the bright, translucent, coloured, and refracting memories that come between. One forgets not only the tint and quality of thoughts and impressions through that intervening haze, one forgets them altogether. I don't remember now that I ever thought in those days of passionate love or the possibility of such love between us. I may have done so again and again. But I doubt it very strongly. I don't think I ever thought of such aspects. I had no more sense of any danger between us, seeing the years and things that separated us, than I could have had if she had been an intelligent bright-eyed bird. Isabel came into my life as a new sort of thing; she didn't join on at all to my previous experiences of womanhood. They were not, as I have laboured to explain, either very wide or very penetrating experiences, on the whole, "strangled dinginess" expresses them, but I do not believe they were narrower or shallower than those of many other men of my class. I thought of women as pretty things and beautiful things, pretty rather than beautiful, attractive and at times disconcertingly attractive, often bright and witty, but, because of the vast reservations that hid them from me, wanting, subtly and inevitably wanting, in understanding. My idealisation of Margaret had evaporated insensibly after our marriage. The shrine I had made for her in my private thoughts stood at last undisguisedly empty. But Isabel did not for a moment admit of either idealisation or interested contempt. She opened a new sphere of womanhood to me. With her steady amber-brown eyes, her unaffected interest in impersonal

things, her upstanding waistless blue body, her energy, decision and courage, she seemed rather some new and infinitely finer form of boyhood than a feminine creature, as I had come to measure femininity. She was my perfect friend. Could I have foreseen, had my world been more wisely planned, to this day we might have been such friends.

She seemed at that time unconscious of sex, though she has told me since how full she was of protesting curiosities and restrained emotions. She spoke, as indeed she has always spoken, simply, clearly, and vividly; schoolgirl slang mingled with words that marked ample voracious reading, and she moved quickly with the free directness of some graceful young animal. She took many of the easy freedoms a man or a sister might have done with me. She would touch my arm, lay a hand on my shoulder as I sat, adjust the lapel of a breast-pocket as she talked to me. She says now she loved me always from the beginning. I doubt if there was a suspicion of that in her mind those days. I used to find her regarding me with the clearest, steadiest gaze in the world, exactly like the gaze of some nice healthy innocent animal in a forest, interested, inquiring, speculative, but singularly untroubled....

5

Polling day came after a last hoarse and dingy crescendo. The excitement was not of the sort that makes one forget one is tired out. The waiting for the end of the count has left a long blank mark on my memory, and then everyone was shaking my hand and repeating: "Nine hundred and seventy-six."

My success had been a foregone conclusion since the afternoon, but we all behaved as though we had not been anticipating this result for hours, as though any other figures but nine hundred and seventy-six would have meant something entirely different. "Nine hundred and seventy-six!" said Margaret. "They didn't expect three hundred."

"Nine hundred and seventy-six," said a little short man with a paper. "It means a big turnover. Two dozen short of a thousand, you know."

A tremendous hullaboo began outside, and a lot of fresh people

came into the room.

Isabel, flushed but not out of breath, Heaven knows where she had sprung from at that time of night! was running her hand down my sleeve almost caressingly, with the innocent bold affection of a girl. “Got you in!” she said. “It’s been no end of a lark.”

“And now,” said I, “I must go and be constructive.”

“Now you must go and be constructive,” she said.

“You’ve got to live here,” she added.

“By Jove! yes,” I said. “We’ll have to house hunt.”

“I shall read all your speeches.”

She hesitated.

“I wish I was you,” she said, and said it as though it was not exactly the thing she was meaning to say.

“They want you to speak,” said Margaret, with something unsaid in her face.

“You must come out with me,” I answered, putting my arm through hers, and felt someone urging me to the French windows that gave on the balcony.

“If you think—” she said, yielding gladly

“Oh, RATHER!” said I.

The Mayor of Kinghamstead, a managing little man with no great belief in my oratorical powers, was sticking his face up to mine.

“It’s all over,” he said, “and you’ve won. Say all the nice things you can and say them plainly.”

I turned and handed Margaret out through the window and stood looking over the Market-place, which was more than half filled with swaying people. The crowd set up a roar of approval at the sight of us, tempered by a little booing. Down in one corner of the square a fight was going on for a flag, a fight that even the prospect of a speech could not instantly check. “Speech!” cried voices, “Speech!” and then a brief “boo-oo-oo” that was drowned in a cascade of shouts and cheers. The conflict round the flag culminated in the smashing of a pane of glass in the chemist’s window and instantly sank to peace.

“Gentlemen voters of the Kinghamstead Division,” I began.

“Votes for Women!” yelled a voice, amidst laughter — the first time I remember hearing that memorable war-cry.

“Three cheers for Mrs. Remington!”

“Mrs. Remington asks me to thank you,” I said, amidst further uproar and reiterated cries of “Speech!”

Then silence came with a startling swiftness.

Isabel was still in my mind, I suppose. “I shall go to Westminster,” I began. I sought for some compelling phrase and could not find one. “To do my share,” I went on, “in building up a great and splendid civilisation.”

I paused, and there was a weak gust of cheering, and then a renewal of booing.

“This election,” I said, “has been the end and the beginning of much. New ideas are abroad—”

“Chinese labour,” yelled a voice, and across the square swept a wildfire of booting and bawling.

It is one of the few occasions when I quite lost my hold on a speech. I glanced sideways and saw the Mayor of Kinghamstead speaking behind his hand to Parvill. By a happy chance Parvill caught my eye.

“What do they want?” I asked.

“Eh?”

“What do they want?”

“Say something about general fairness — the other side,” prompted Parvill, flattered but a little surprised by my appeal. I pulled myself hastily into a more popular strain with a gross eulogy of my opponent’s good taste.

“Chinese labour!” cried the voice again.

“You’ve given that notice to quit,” I answered.

The Market-place roared delight, but whether that delight expressed hostility to Chinamen or hostility to their practical enslavement no student of the General Election of 1906 has ever been able to determine. Certainly one of the most effective posters on our side displayed a hideous yellow face, just that and nothing more. There was not even a legend to it. How it impressed the electorate we did not know, but that it impressed the electorate profoundly there can be no disputing.

Kinghamstead was one of the earliest constituencies fought, and we came back — it must have been Saturday — triumphant but very tired, to our house in Radnor Square. In the train we read the first intimations that the victory of our party was likely to be a sweeping one.

Then came a period when one was going about receiving and giving congratulations and watching the other men arrive, very like a boy who has returned to school with the first batch after the holidays. The London world reeked with the General Election; it had invaded the nurseries. All the children of one's friends had got big maps of England cut up into squares to represent constituencies and were busy sticking gummed blue labels over the conquered red of Unionism that had hitherto submerged the country. And there were also orange labels, if I remember rightly, to represent the new Labour party, and green for the Irish. I engaged myself to speak at one or two London meetings, and lunched at the Reform, which was fairly tepid, and dined and spent one or two tumultuous evenings at the National Liberal Club, which was in active eruption. The National Liberal became feverishly congested towards midnight as the results of the counting came dropping in. A big green-baize screen had been fixed up at one end of the large smoking-room with the names of the constituencies that were voting that day, and directly the figures came to hand, up they went, amidst cheers that at last lost their energy through sheer repetition, whenever there was record of a Liberal gain. I don't remember what happened when there was a Liberal loss; I don't think that any were announced while I was there.

How packed and noisy the place was, and what a reek of tobacco and whisky fumes we made! Everybody was excited and talking, making waves of harsh confused sound that beat upon one's ears, and every now and then hoarse voices would shout for someone to speak. Our little set was much in evidence. Both the Cramptons were in, Lewis, Bunting Harblow. We gave brief addresses attuned to this excitement and the late hour, amidst much enthusiasm.

"Now we can DO things!" I said amidst a rapture of applause. Men I did not know from Adam held up glasses and nodded to me in solemn fuddled approval as I came down past them into the crowd again.

Men were betting whether the Unionists would lose more or less than two hundred seats.

"I wonder just what we shall do with it all," I heard one sceptic speculating....

After these orgies I would get home very tired and excited, and find it difficult to get to sleep. I would lie and speculate about what it was we WERE going to do. One hadn't anticipated quite such a tremendous accession to power for one's party. Liberalism was swirling in like a flood....

I found the next few weeks very unsatisfactory and distressing. I don't clearly remember what it was I had expected; I suppose the fuss and strain of the General Election had built up a feeling that my return would in some way put power into my hands, and instead I found myself a mere undistinguished unit in a vast but rather vague majority. There were moments when I felt very distinctly that a majority could be too big a crowd altogether. I had all my work still before me, I had achieved nothing as yet but opportunity, and a very crowded opportunity it was at that. Everyone about me was chatting Parliament and appointments; one breathed distracting and irritating speculations as to what would be done and who would be asked to do it. I was chiefly impressed by what was unlikely to be done and by the absence of any general plan of legislation to hold us all together. I found the talk about Parliamentary procedure and etiquette particularly trying. We dined with the elder Cramptons one evening, and old Sir Edward was lengthily sage about what the House liked, what it didn't like, what made a good impression and what a bad one. "A man shouldn't speak more than twice in his first session, and not at first on too contentious a topic," said Sir Edward. "No."

"Very much depends on manner. The House hates a lecturer. There's a sort of airy earnestness—"

He waved his cigar to eke out his words.

"Little peculiarities of costume count for a great deal. I could name one man who spent three years living down a pair of spatterdashers. On the other hand — a thing like that — if it catches the eye of the PUNCH man, for example, may be your making."

He went off into a lengthy speculation of why the House had come to like an originally unpopular Irishman named Biggar....

The opening of Parliament gave me some peculiar moods. I began to feel more and more like a branded sheep. We were sworn in in batches, dozens and scores of fresh men, trying not to look too fresh under the inspection of policemen and messengers, all of us carrying new silk hats and wearing magisterial coats. It is one of my vivid memories from this period, the sudden outbreak of silk hats in the smoking-room of the National Liberal Club. At first I thought there must have been a funeral. Familiar faces that one had grown to know under soft felt hats, under bowlers, under liberal-minded wide brims, and above artistic ties and tweed jackets, suddenly met one, staring with the stern gaze of self-consciousness, from under silk hats of incredible glossiness. There was a disposition to wear the hat much too forward, I thought, for a good Parliamentary style.

There was much play with the hats all through; a tremendous competition to get in first and put hats on coveted seats. A memory hangs about me of the House in the early afternoon, an inhumane desolation inhabited almost entirely by silk hats. The current use of cards to secure seats came later. There were yards and yards of empty green benches with hats and hats and hats distributed along them, resolute-looking top hats, lax top hats with a kind of shadowy grin under them, sensible top bats brim upward, and one scandalous incontinent that had rolled from the front Opposition bench right to the middle of the floor. A headless hat is surely the most soulless thing in the world, far worse even than a skull....

At last, in a leisurely muddled manner we got to the Address; and I found myself packed in a dense elbowing crowd to the right of the Speaker's chair; while the attenuated Opposition, nearly leaderless after the massacre, tilted its brim to its nose and sprawled at its ease amidst its empty benches.

There was a tremendous hullaboo about something, and I craned to see over the shoulder of the man in front. "Order, order, order!"

"What's it about?" I asked.

The man in front of me was clearly no better informed, and then I gathered from a slightly contemptuous Scotchman beside me that it was Chris Robinson had walked between the honourable member in possession of the house and the Speaker. I caught a glimpse of him blushingly whispering about his misadventure to a colleague. He was

just that same little figure I had once assisted to entertain at Cambridge, but grey-haired now, and still it seemed with the same knitted muffler he had discarded for a reckless half-hour while he talked to us in Hatherleigh's rooms.

It dawned upon me that I wasn't particularly wanted in the House, and that I should get all I needed of the opening speeches next day from the TIMES.

I made my way out and was presently walking rather aimlessly through the outer lobby.

I caught myself regarding the shadow that spread itself out before me, multiplied itself in blue tints of various intensity, shuffled itself like a pack of cards under the many lights, the square shoulders, the silk hat, already worn with a parliamentary tilt backward; I found I was surveying this statesmanlike outline with a weak approval. "A MEMBER!" I felt the little cluster of people that were scattered about the lobby must be saying.

"Good God!" I said in hot reaction, "what am I doing here?"

It was one of those moments infinitely trivial in themselves, that yet are cardinal in a man's life. It came to me with extreme vividness that it wasn't so much that I had got hold of something as that something had got hold of me. I distinctly recall the rebound of my mind. Whatever happened in this Parliament, I at least would attempt something. "By God!" I said, "I won't be overwhelmed. I am here to do something, and do something I will!"

But I felt that for the moment I could not remain in the House.

I went out by myself with my thoughts into the night. It was a chilling night, and rare spots of rain were falling. I glanced over my shoulder at the lit windows of the Lords. I walked, I remember, westward, and presently came to the Grosvenar Embankment and followed it, watching the glittering black rush of the river and the dark, dimly lit barges round which the water swirled. Across the river was the hunched sky-line of Doulton's potteries, and a kiln flared redly. Dimly luminous trams were gliding amidst a dotted line of lamps, and two little trains crawled into Waterloo station. Mysterious black figures came by me and were suddenly changed to the commonplace at the touch of the nearer lamps. It was a big confused world, I felt, for a man to lay his hands upon.

I remember I crossed Vauxhall Bridge and stood for a time watching the huge black shapes in the darkness under the gas-works. A shoal of coal barges lay indistinctly on the darkly shining mud and water below, and a colossal crane was perpetually hauling up coal into mysterious blacknesses above, and dropping the empty clutch back to the barges. Just one or two minute black featureless figures of men toiled amidst these monster shapes. They did not seem to be controlling them but only moving about among them. These gas-works have a big chimney that belches a lurid flame into the night, a livid shivering bluish flame, shot with strange crimson streaks....

On the other side of Lambeth Bridge broad stairs go down to the lapping water of the river; the lower steps are luminous under the lamps and one treads unwarned into thick soft Thames mud. They seem to be purely architectural steps, they lead nowhere, they have an air of absolute indifference to mortal ends.

Those shapes and large inhuman places — for all of mankind that one sees at night about Lambeth is minute and pitiful beside the industrial monsters that snort and toil there — mix up inextricably with my memories of my first days as a legislator. Black figures drift by me, heavy vans clatter, a newspaper rough tears by on a motor bicycle, and presently, on the Albert Embankment, every seat has its one or two outcasts huddled together and slumbering.

"These things come, these things go," a whispering voice urged upon me, "as once those vast unmeaning Saurians whose bones encumber museums came and went rejoicing noisily in fruitless lives."...

Fruitless lives! — was that the truth of it all?...

Later I stood within sight of the Houses of Parliament in front of the colonnades of St Thomas's Hospital. I leant on the parapet close by a lamp-stand of twisted dolphins — and I prayed!

I remember the swirl of the tide upon the water, and how a string of barges presently came swinging and bumping round as high-water turned to ebb. That sudden change of position and my brief perplexity at it, sticks like a paper pin through the substance of my thoughts. It was then I was moved to prayer. I prayed that night that life might not be in vain, that in particular I might not live in vain. I prayed for strength and faith, that the monstrous blundering forces in

life might not overwhelm me, might not beat me back to futility and a meaningless acquiescence in existent things. I knew myself for the weakling I was, I knew that nevertheless it was set for me to make such order as I could out of these disorders, and my task cowed me, gave me at the thought of it a sense of yielding feebleness.

"Break me, O God," I prayed at last, "disgrace me, torment me, destroy me as you will, but save me from self-complacency and little interests and little successes and the life that passes like the shadow of a dream."

BOOK THE THIRD: THE HEART OF POLITICS

CHAPTER THE FIRST ~~ THE RIDDLE FOR THE STATESMAN

1

I have been planning and replanning, writing and rewriting, this next portion of my book for many days. I perceive I must leave it raw edged and ill joined. I have learnt something of the impossibility of History. For all I have had to tell is the story of one man's convictions and aims and how they reacted upon his life; and I find it too subtle and involved and intricate for the doing. I find it taxes all my powers to convey even the main forms and forces in that development. It is like looking through moving media of changing hue and variable refraction at something vitally unstable. Broad theories and generalisations are mingled with personal influences, with prevalent prejudices; and not only coloured but altered by phases of hopefulness and moods of depression. The web is made up of the most diverse elements, beyond treatment multitudinous.... For a week or so I desisted altogether, and walked over the mountains and returned to sit through the warm soft mornings among the shaded rocks above this little perched-up house of ours, discussing my difficulties with Isabel and I think on the whole complicating them further in the effort to simplify them to manageable and stateable elements.

Let me, nevertheless, attempt a rough preliminary analysis of this confused process. A main strand is quite easily traceable. This main strand is the story of my obvious life, my life as it must have looked to most of my acquaintances. It presents you with a young couple, bright, hopeful, and energetic, starting out under Altiora's auspices to make a career. You figure us well dressed and active, running about in motor-cars, visiting in great people's houses, dining amidst brilliant companies, going to the theatre, meeting in the lobby. Margaret wore hundreds of beautiful dresses. We must have had an air of succeeding meritoriously during that time.

We did very continually and faithfully serve our joint career. I thought about it a great deal, and did and refrained from doing ten

thousand things for the sake of it. I kept up a solicitude for it, as it were by inertia, long after things had happened and changes occurred in me that rendered its completion impossible. Under certain very artless pretences, we wanted steadfastly to make a handsome position in the world, achieve respect, SUCCEED. Enormous unseen changes had been in progress for years in my mind and the realities of my life, before our general circle could have had any inkling of their existence, or suspected the appearances of our life. Then suddenly our proceedings began to be deflected, our outward unanimity visibly strained and marred by the insurgence of these so long-hidden developments.

That career had its own hidden side, of course; but when I write of these unseen factors I do not mean that but something altogether broader. I do not mean the everyday pettinesses which gave the cynical observer scope and told of a narrower, baser aspect of the fair but limited ambitions of my ostensible self. This "sub-careerist" element noted little things that affected the career, made me suspicious of the rivalry of so-and-so, propitiatory to so-and-so, whom, as a matter of fact, I didn't respect or feel in the least sympathetic towards; guarded with that man, who for all his charm and interest wasn't helpful, and a little touchy at the appearance of neglect from that. No, I mean something greater and not something smaller when I write of a hidden life.

In the ostensible self who glowed under the approbation of Altiora Bailey, and was envied and discussed, praised and depreciated, in the House and in smoking-room gossip, you really have as much of a man as usually figures in a novel or an obituary notice. But I am tremendously impressed now in the retrospect by the realisation of how little that frontage represented me, and just how little such frontages do represent the complexities of the intelligent contemporary. Behind it, yet struggling to disorganise and alter it, altogether, was a far more essential reality, a self less personal, less individualised, and broader in its references. Its aims were never simply to get on; it had an altogether different system of demands and satisfactions. It was critical, curious, more than a little unfeeling — and relentlessly illuminating.

It is just the existence and development of this more generalised

self-behind-the-frontage that is making modern life so much more subtle and intricate to render, and so much more hopeful in its relations to the perplexities of the universe. I see this mental and spiritual hinterland vary enormously in the people about me, from a type which seems to keep, as people say, all its goods in the window, to others who, like myself, come to regard the ostensible existence more and more as a mere experimental feeder and agent for that greater personality behind. And this back-self has its history of phases, its crises and happy accidents and irrevocable conclusions, more or less distinct from the adventures and achievements of the ostensible self. It meets persons and phrases, it assimilates the spirit of a book, it is startled into new realisations by some accident that seems altogether irrelevant to the general tenor of one's life. Its increasing independence of the ostensible career makes it the organ of corrective criticism; it accumulates disturbing energy. Then it breaks our overt promises and repudiates our pledges, coming down at last like an overbearing mentor upon the small engagements of the pupil.

In the life of the individual it takes the role that the growth of philosophy, science, and creative literature may play in the development of mankind.

2

It is curious to recall how Britten helped shatter that obvious, lucidly explicable presentation of myself upon which I had embarked with Margaret. He returned to revive a memory of adolescent dreams and a habit of adolescent frankness; he reached through my shallow frontage as no one else seemed capable of doing, and dragged that back-self into relation with it.

I remember very distinctly a dinner and a subsequent walk with him which presents itself now as altogether typical of the quality of his influence.

I had come upon him one day while lunching with Somers and Sutton at the Playwrights' Club, and had asked him to dinner on the spur of the moment. He was oddly the same curly-headed, red-faced ventriloquist, and oddly different, rather seedy as well as untidy, and

at first a little inclined to make comparisons with my sleek successfulness. But that disposition presently evaporated, and his talk was good and fresh and provocative. And something that had long been straining at its checks in my mind flapped over, and he and I found ourselves of one accord.

Altiora wasn't at this dinner. When she came matters were apt to become confusedly strenuous. There was always a slight and ineffectual struggle at the end on the part of Margaret to anticipate Altiora's overpowering tendency to a rally and the establishment of some entirely unjustifiable conclusion by a COUP-DE-MAIN. When, however, Altiora was absent, the quieter influence of the Cramptons prevailed; temperance and information for its own sake prevailed excessively over dinner and the play of thought.... Good Lord! what bores the Cramptons were! I wonder I endured them as I did. They had all of them the trick of lying in wait conversationally; they had no sense of the self-exposures, the gallant experiments in statement that are necessary for good conversation. They would watch one talking with an expression exactly like peeping through bushes. Then they would, as it were, dash out, dissent succinctly, contradict some secondary fact, and back to cover. They gave one twilight nerves. Their wives were easier but still difficult at a stretch; they talked a good deal about children and servants, but with an air caught from Altiora of making observations upon sociological types. Lewis gossiped about the House in an entirely finite manner. He never raised a discussion; nobody ever raised a discussion. He would ask what we thought of Evesham's question that afternoon, and Edward would say it was good, and Mrs. Willie, who had been behind the grille, would think it was very good, and then Willie, parting the branches, would say rather conclusively that he didn't think it was very much good, and I would deny hearing the question in order to evade a profitless statement of views in that vacuum, and then we would cast about in our minds for some other topic of equal interest....

On this occasion Altiora was absent, and to qualify our Young Liberal bleakness we had Mrs. Millingham, with her white hair and her fresh mind and complexion, and Esmeer. Willie Crampton was with us, but not his wife, who was having her third baby on

principle; his brother Edward was present, and the Lewises, and of course the Bunting Harblows. There was also some other lady. I remember her as pale blue, but for the life of me I cannot remember her name.

Quite early there was a little breeze between Edward Crampton and Esmeer, who had ventured an opinion about the partition of Poland. Edward was at work then upon the seventh volume of his monumental Life of Kosciusko, and a little impatient with views perhaps not altogether false but betraying a lamentable ignorance of accessible literature. At any rate, his correction of Esmeer was magisterial. After that there was a distinct and not altogether delightful pause, and then some one, it may have been the pale-blue lady, asked Mrs. Lewis whether her aunt Lady Carmixter had returned from her rest-and-sun-cure in Italy. That led to a rather anxiously sustained talk about regimen, and Willie told us how he had profited by the no-breakfast system. It had increased his power of work enormously. He could get through ten hours a day now without inconvenience.

"What do you do?" said Esmeer abruptly.

"Oh! no end of work. There's all the estate and looking after things."

"But publicly?"

"I asked three questions yesterday. And for one of them I had to consult nine books!"

We were drifting, I could see, towards Doctor Haig's system of dietary, and whether the exclusion or inclusion of fish and chicken were most conducive to high efficiency, when Britten, who had refused lemonade and claret and demanded Burgundy, broke out, and was discovered to be demanding in his throat just what we Young Liberals thought we were up to?

"I want," said Britten, repeating his challenge a little louder, "to hear just exactly what you think you are doing in Parliament?"

Lewis laughed nervously, and thought we were "Seeking the Good of the Community."

"HOW?"

"Beneficient Legislation," said Lewis.

"Beneficient in what direction?" insisted Britten. "I want to know

where you think you are going."

"Amelioration of Social Conditions," said Lewis.

"That's only a phrase!"

"You wouldn't have me sketch bills at dinner?"

"I'd like you to indicate directions," said Britten, and waited.

"Upward and On," said Lewis with conscious neatness, and turned to ask Mrs. Bunting Harblow about her little boy's French.

For a time talk frothed over Britten's head, but the natural mischief in Mrs. Millingham had been stirred, and she was presently echoing his demand in lisping, quasi-confidential undertones. "What ARE we Liberals doing?" Then Esmeer fell in with the revolutionaries.

To begin with, I was a little shocked by this clamour for fundamentals — and a little disconcerted. I had the experience that I suppose comes to every one at times of discovering oneself together with two different sets of people with whom one has maintained two different sets of attitudes. It had always been, I perceived, an instinctive suppression in our circle that we shouldn't be more than vague about our political ideals. It had almost become part of my morality to respect this convention. It was understood we were all working hard, and keeping ourselves fit, tremendously fit, under Altiora's inspiration, Pro Bono Publico. Bunting Harblow had his under-secretaryship, and Lewis was on the verge of the Cabinet, and these things we considered to be in the nature of confirmations.... It added to the discomfort of the situation that these plunging enquiries were being made in the presence of our wives.

The rebel section of our party forced the talk.

Edward Crampton was presently declaring — I forget in what relation: "The country is with us."

My long-controlled hatred of the Cramptons' stereotyped phrases about the Country and the House got the better of me. I showed my cloven hoof to my friends for the first time.

"We don't respect the Country as we used to do," I said. "We haven't the same belief we used to have in the will of the people. It's no good, Crampton, trying to keep that up. We Liberals know as a matter of fact — nowadays every one knows — that the monster that brought us into power has, among other deficiencies, no head. We've

got to give it one — if possible with brains and a will. That lies in the future. For the present if the country is with us, it means merely that we happen to have hold of its tether."

Lewis was shocked. A "mandate" from the Country was sacred to his system of pretences.

Britten wasn't subdued by his first rebuff; presently he was at us again. There were several attempts to check his outbreak of interrogation; I remember the Cramptons asked questions about the welfare of various cousins of Lewis who were unknown to the rest of us, and Margaret tried to engage Britten in a sympathetic discussion of the Arts and Crafts exhibition. But Britten and Esmeer were persistent, Mrs. Millingham was mischievous, and in the end our rising hopes of Young Liberalism took to their thickets for good, while we talked all over them of the prevalent vacuity of political intentions. Margaret was perplexed by me. It is only now I perceive just how perplexing I must have been. "Of course, she said with that faint stress of apprehension in her eyes, one must have aims." And, "it isn't always easy to put everything into phrases." "Don't be long," said Mrs. Edward Crampton to her husband as the wives trooped out. And afterwards when we went upstairs I had an indefinable persuasion that the ladies had been criticising Britten's share in our talk in an altogether unfavourable spirit. Mrs. Edward evidently thought him aggressive and impertinent, and Margaret with a quiet firmness that brooked no resistance, took him at once into a corner and showed him Italian photographs by Coburn. We dispersed early.

I walked with Britten along the Chelsea back streets towards Battersea Bridge — he lodged on the south side.

"Mrs. Millingham's a dear," he began.

"She's a dear."

"I liked her demand for a hansom because a four-wheeler was too safe."

"She was worked up," I said. "She's a woman of faultless character, but her instincts, as Altiora would say, are anarchistic — when she gives them a chance."

"So she takes it out in hansom cabs."

"Hansom cabs."

“She’s wise,” said Britten....

“I hope, Remington,” he went on after a pause, “I didn’t rag your other guests too much. I’ve a sort of feeling at moments — Remington, those chaps are so infernally not — not bloody. It’s part of a man’s duty sometimes at least to eat red beef and get drunk. How is he to understand government if he doesn’t? It scares me to think of your lot — by a sort of misapprehension — being in power. A kind of neuralgia in the head, by way of government. I don’t understand where YOU come in. Those others — they’ve no lusts. Their ideal is anaemia. You and I, we had at least a lust to take hold of life and make something of it. They — they want to take hold of life and make nothing of it. They want to cut out all the stimulants. Just as though life was anything else but a reaction to stimulation!”...

He began to talk of his own life. He had had ill-fortune through most of it. He was poor and unsuccessful, and a girl he had been very fond of had been attacked and killed by a horse in a field in a very horrible manner. These things had wounded and tortured him, but they hadn’t broken him. They had, it seemed to me, made a kind of crippled and ugly demigod of him. He was, I began to perceive, so much better than I had any right to expect. At first I had been rather struck by his unkempt look, and it made my reaction all the stronger. There was about him something, a kind of raw and bleeding faith in the deep things of life, that stirred me profoundly as he showed it. My set of people had irritated him and disappointed him. I discovered at his touch how they irritated him. He reproached me boldly. He made me feel ashamed of my easy acquiescences as I walked in my sleek tall neatness beside his rather old coat, his rather battered hat, his sturdier shorter shape, and listened to his denunciations of our self-satisfied New Liberalism and Progressivism.

“It has the same relation to progress — the reality of progress — that the things they paint on door panels in the suburbs have to art and beauty. There’s a sort of filiation.... Your Altiora’s just the political equivalent of the ladies who sell traced cloth for embroidery; she’s a dealer in Refined Social Reform for the Parlour. The real progress, Remington, is a graver thing and a painfuller thing and a slower thing altogether. Look! THAT” — and he pointed to

where under a boarding in the light of a gas lamp a dingy prostitute stood lurking— "was in Babylon and Nineveh. Your little lot make believe there won't be anything of the sort after this Parliament! They're going to vanish at a few top notes from Altiora Bailey! Remington! — it's foolery. It's prigs at play. It's make-believe, make-believe! Your people there haven't got hold of things, aren't beginning to get hold of things, don't know anything of life at all, shirk life, avoid life, get in little bright clean rooms and talk big over your bumpers of lemonade while the Night goes by outside — untouched. Those Crampton fools slink by all this," — he waved at the woman again— "pretend it doesn't exist, or is going to be banished root and branch by an Act to keep children in the wet outside public-houses. Do you think they really care, Remington? I don't. It's make-believe. What they want to do, what Lewis wants to do, what Mrs. Bunting Harblow wants her husband to do, is to sit and feel very grave and necessary and respected on the Government benches. They think of putting their feet out like statesmen, and tilting shiny hats with becoming brims down over their successful noses. Presentation portrait to a club at fifty. That's their Reality. That's their scope. They don't, it's manifest, WANT to think beyond that. The things there ARE, Remington, they'll never face! the wonder and the depth of life, — lust, and the night-sky, — pain."

"But the good intention," I pleaded, "the Good Will!"

"Sentimentality," said Britten. "No Good Will is anything but dishonesty unless it frets and burns and hurts and destroys a man. That lot of yours have nothing but a good will to think they have good will. Do you think they lie awake of nights searching their hearts as we do? Lewis? Crampton? Or those neat, admiring, satisfied little wives? See how they shrank from the probe!"

"We all," I said, "shrink from the probe."

"God help us!" said Britten....

"We are but vermin at the best, Remington," he broke out, "and the greatest saint only a worm that has lifted its head for a moment from the dust. We are damned, we are meant to be damned, coral animalculae building upward, upward in a sea of damnation. But of all the damned things that ever were damned, your damned shirking, temperate, sham-efficient, self-satisfied, respectable, make-believe,

Fabian-spirited Young Liberal is the utterly damnedest." He paused for a moment, and resumed in an entirely different note: "Which is why I was so surprised, Remington, to find YOU in this set!"

"You're just the old plunger you used to be, Britten," I said. "You're going too far with all your might for the sake of the damns. Like a donkey that drags its cart up a bank to get thistles. There's depths in Liberalism—"

"We were talking about Liberals."

"Liberty!"

"Liberty! What do YOOR little lot know of liberty?"

"What does any little lot know of liberty?"

"It waits outside, too big for our understanding. Like the night and the stars. And lust, Remington! lust and bitterness! Don't I know them? with all the sweetness and hope of life bitten and trampled, the dear eyes and the brain that loved and understood — and my poor mumble of a life going on! I'm within sight of being a drunkard, Remington! I'm a failure by most standards! Life has cut me to the bone. But I'm not afraid of it any more. I've paid something of the price, I've seen something of the meaning."

He flew off at a tangent. "I'd rather die in Delirium Tremens," he cried, "than be a Crampton or a Lewis...."

"Make-believe. Make-believe." The phrase and Britten's squat gestures haunted me as I walked homeward alone. I went to my room and stood before my desk and surveyed papers and files and Margaret's admirable equipment of me.

I perceived in the lurid light of Britten's suggestions that so it was Mr. George Alexander would have mounted a statesman's private room....

3

I was never at any stage a loyal party man. I doubt if party will ever again be the force it was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Men are becoming increasingly constructive and selective, less patient under tradition and the bondage of initial circumstances. As education becomes more universal and liberating, men will sort themselves more and more by their intellectual temperaments and

less and less by their accidental associations. The past will rule them less; the future more. It is not simply party but school and college and county and country that lose their glamour. One does not hear nearly as much as our forefathers did of the "old Harrovian," "old Arvonian," "old Etonian" claim to this or that unfair advantage or unearnt sympathy. Even the Scotch and the Devonians weaken a little in their clannishness. A widening sense of fair play destroys such things. They follow freemasonry down — freemasonry of which one is chiefly reminded nowadays in England by propitiatory symbols outside shady public-houses....

There is, of course, a type of man which clings very obstinately to party ties. These are the men with strong reproductive imaginations and no imaginative initiative, such men as Cladingbowl, for example, or Dayton. They are the scholars-at-large in life. For them the fact that the party system has been essential in the history of England for two hundred years gives it an overwhelming glamour. They have read histories and memoirs, they see the great grey pile of Westminster not so much for what it is as for what it was, rich with dramatic memories, populous with glorious ghosts, phrasing itself inevitably in anecdotes and quotations. It seems almost scandalous that new things should continue to happen, swamping with strange qualities the savour of these old associations.

That Mr. Ramsay Macdonald should walk through Westminster Hall, thrust himself, it may be, through the very piece of space that once held Charles the Martyr pleading for his life, seems horrible profanation to Dayton, a last posthumous outrage; and he would, I think, like to have the front benches left empty now for ever, or at most adorned with laureated ivory tablets: "Here Dizzy sat," and "On this Spot William Ewart Gladstone made his First Budget Speech." Failing this, he demands, if only as signs of modesty and respect on the part of the survivors, meticulous imitation. "Mr. G.," he murmurs, "would not have done that," and laments a vanished subtlety even while Mr. Evesham is speaking. He is always gloomily disposed to lapse into wonderings about what things are coming to, wonderings that have no grain of curiosity. His conception of perfect conduct is industrious persistence along the worn-down, well-marked grooves of the great recorded days. So infinitely more important to

him is the documented, respected thing than the elusive present.

Cladingbowl and Dayton do not shine in the House, though Cladingbowl is a sound man on a committee, and Dayton keeps the OLD COUNTRY GAZETTE, the most gentlemanly paper in London. They prevail, however, in their clubs at lunch time. There, with the pleasant consciousness of a morning's work free from either zeal or shirking, they mingle with permanent officials, prominent lawyers, even a few of the soberer type of business men, and relax their minds in the discussion of the morning paper, of the architecture of the West End, and of the latest public appointments, of golf, of holiday resorts, of the last judicial witticisms and forensic "crushers." The New Year and Birthday honours lists are always very sagely and exhaustively considered, and anecdotes are popular and keenly judged. They do not talk of the things that are really active in their minds, but in the formal and habitual manner they suppose to be proper to intelligent but still honourable men. Socialism, individual money matters, and religion are forbidden topics, and sex and women only in so far as they appear in the law courts. It is to me the strangest of conventions, this assumption of unreal loyalties and traditional respects, this repudiation and concealment of passionate interests. It is like wearing gloves in summer fields, or bathing in a gown, or falling in love with the heroine of a novel, or writing under a pseudonym, or becoming a masked Tuareg....

It is not, I think, that men of my species are insensitive to the great past that is embodied in Westminster and its traditions; we are not so much wanting in the historical sense as alive to the greatness of our present opportunities and the still vaster future that is possible to us. London is the most interesting, beautiful, and wonderful city in the world to me, delicate in her incidental and multitudinous littleness, and stupendous in her pregnant totality; I cannot bring myself to use her as a museum or an old bookshop. When I think of Whitehall that little affair on the scaffold outside the Banqueting Hall seems trivial and remote in comparison with the possibilities that offer themselves to my imagination within the great grey Government buildings close at hand.

It gives me a qualm of nostalgia even to name those places now. I

think of St. Stephen's tower streaming upwards into the misty London night and the great wet quadrangle of New Palace Yard, from which the hansom cabs of my first experiences were ousted more and more by taxicabs as the second Parliament of King Edward the Seventh aged; I think of the Admiralty and War office with their tall Marconi masts sending out invisible threads of direction to the armies in the camps, to great fleets about the world. The crowded, darkly shining river goes flooding through my memory once again, on to those narrow seas that part us from our rival nations; I see quadrangles and corridors of spacious grey-toned offices in which undistinguished little men and little files of papers link us to islands in the tropics, to frozen wildernesses gashed for gold, to vast temple-studded plains, to forest worlds and mountain worlds, to ports and fortresses and lighthouses and watch-towers and grazing lands and corn lands all about the globe. Once more I traverse Victoria Street, grimy and dark, where the Agents of the Empire jostle one another, pass the big embassies in the West End with their flags and scutcheons, follow the broad avenue that leads to Buckingham Palace, witness the coming and going of troops and officials and guests along it from every land on earth.... Interwoven in the texture of it all, mocking, perplexing, stimulating beyond measure, is the gleaming consciousness, the challenging knowledge: "You and your kind might still, if you could but grasp it here, mould all the destiny of Man!"

4

My first three years in Parliament were years of active discontent. The little group of younger Liberals to which I belonged was very ignorant of the traditions and qualities of our older leaders, and quite out of touch with the mass of the party. For a time Parliament was enormously taken up with moribund issues and old quarrels. The early Educational legislation was sectarian and unenterprising, and the Licensing Bill went little further than the attempted rectification of a Conservative mistake. I was altogether for the nationalisation of the public-houses, and of this end the Bill gave no intimations. It was just beer-baiting. I was recalcitrant almost from the beginning, and

spoke against the Government so early as the second reading of the first Education Bill, the one the Lords rejected in 1906. I went a little beyond my intention in the heat of speaking, — it is a way with inexperienced man. I called the Bill timid, narrow, a mere sop to the jealousies of sects and little-minded people. I contrasted its aim and methods with the manifest needs of the time.

I am not a particularly good speaker; after the manner of a writer I worry to find my meaning too much; but this was one of my successes. I spoke after dinner and to a fairly full House, for people were already a little curious about me because of my writings. Several of the Conservative leaders were present and stayed, and Mr. Evesham, I remember, came ostentatiously to hear me, with that engaging friendliness of his, and gave me at the first chance an approving "Hear, Hear!" I can still recall quite distinctly my two futile attempts to catch the Speaker's eye before I was able to begin, the nervous quiver of my rather too prepared opening, the effect of hearing my own voice and my subconscious wonder as to what I could possibly be talking about, the realisation that I was getting on fairly well, the immense satisfaction afterwards of having on the whole brought it off, and the absurd gratitude I felt for that encouraging cheer.

Addressing the House of Commons is like no other public speaking in the world. Its semi-colloquial methods give it an air of being easy, but its shifting audience, the comings and goings and hesitations of members behind the chair — not mere audience units, but men who matter — the desolating emptiness that spreads itself round the man who fails to interest, the little compact, disciplined crowd in the strangers' gallery, the light, elusive, flickering movements high up behind the grill, the wigged, attentive, weary Speaker, the table and the mace and the chapel-like Gothic background with its sombre shadows, conspire together, produce a confused, uncertain feeling in me, as though I was walking upon a pavement full of trap-doors and patches of uncovered morass. A misplaced, well-meant "Hear, Hear!" is apt to be extraordinarily disconcerting, and under no other circumstances have I had to speak with quite the same sideways twist that the arrangement of the House imposes. One does not recognise one's own voice threading out into

the stirring brown. Unless I was excited or speaking to the mind of some particular person in the house, I was apt to lose my feeling of an auditor. I had no sense of whither my sentences were going, such as one has with a public meeting well under one's eye. And to lose one's sense of an auditor is for a man of my temperament to lose one's sense of the immediate, and to become prolix and vague with qualifications.

5

My discontents with the Liberal party and my mental exploration of the quality of party generally is curiously mixed up with certain impressions of things and people in the National Liberal Club. The National Liberal Club is Liberalism made visible in the flesh — and Doultonware. It is an extraordinary big club done in a bold, wholesale, shiny, marbled style, richly furnished with numerous paintings, steel engravings, busts, and full-length statues of the late Mr. Gladstone; and its spacious dining-rooms, its long, hazy, crowded smoking-room with innumerable little tables and groups of men in armchairs, its magazine room and library upstairs, have just that undistinguished and unconcentrated diversity which is for me the Liberal note. The pensive member sits and hears perplexing dialects and even fragments of foreign speech, and among the clustering masses of less insistent whites his roving eye catches profiles and complexions that send his mind afield to Calcutta or Rangoon or the West Indies or Sierra Leone or the Cape....

I was not infrequently that pensive member. I used to go to the Club to doubt about Liberalism.

About two o'clock in the day the great smoking-room is crowded with countless little groups. They sit about small round tables, or in circles of chairs, and the haze of tobacco seems to prolong the great narrow place, with its pillars and bays, to infinity. Some of the groups are big, as many as a dozen men talk in loud tones; some are duologues, and there is always a sprinkling of lonely, dissociated men. At first one gets an impression of men going from group to group and as it were linking them, but as one watches closely one finds that these men just visit three or four groups at the outside, and

know nothing of the others. One begins to perceive more and more distinctly that one is dealing with a sort of human mosaic; that each patch in that great place is of a different quality and colour from the next and never to be mixed with it. Most clubs have a common link, a lowest common denominator in the Club Bore, who spares no one, but even the National Liberal bores are specialised and sectional. As one looks round one sees here a clump of men from the North Country or the Potteries, here an island of South London politicians, here a couple of young Jews ascendant from Whitechapel, here a circle of journalists and writers, here a group of Irish politicians, here two East Indians, here a priest or so, here a clump of old-fashioned Protestants, here a little knot of eminent Rationalists indulging in a blasphemous story SOTTO VOCE. Next them are a group of anglicised Germans and highly specialised chess-players, and then two of the oddest-looking persons — bulging with documents and intent upon extraordinary business transactions over long cigars....

I would listen to a stormy sea of babblement, and try to extract some constructive intimations. Every now and then I got a whiff of politics. It was clear they were against the Lords — against plutocrats — against Cossington's newspapers — against the brewers.... It was tremendously clear what they were against. The trouble was to find out what on earth they were for!...

As I sat and thought, the streaked and mottled pillars and wall, the various views, aspects, and portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, the partitions of polished mahogany, the yellow-vested waiters, would dissolve and vanish, and I would have a vision of this sample of miscellaneous men of limited, diverse interests and a universal littleness of imagination enlarged, unlimited, no longer a sample but a community, spreading, stretching out to infinity — all in little groups and duologues and circles, all with their special and narrow concerns, all with their backs to most of the others.

What but a common antagonism would ever keep these multitudes together? I understood why modern electioneering is more than half of it denunciation. Let us condemn, if possible, let us obstruct and deprive, but not let us do. There is no real appeal to the commonplace mind in "Let us do." That calls for the creative imagination, and few have been accustomed to respond to that call.

The other merely needs jealousy and bate, of which there are great and easily accessible reservoirs in every human heart....

I remember that vision of endless, narrow, jealous individuality very vividly. A seething limitlessness it became at last, like a waste place covered by crawling locusts that men sweep up by the sackload and drown by the million in ditches....

Grotesquely against it came the lean features, the sidelong shy movements of Edward Crampton, seated in a circle of talkers close at hand. I had a whiff of his strained, unmusical voice, and behold! he was saying something about the "Will of the People...."

The immense and wonderful disconnectednesses of human life! I forgot the smoke and jabber of the club altogether; I became a lonely spirit flung aloft by some queer accident, a stone upon a ledge in some high and rocky wilderness, and below as far as the eye could reach stretched the swarming infinitesimals of humanity, like grass upon the field, like pebbles upon unbounded beaches. Was there ever to be in human life more than that endless struggling individualism? Was there indeed some giantry, some immense valiant synthesis, still to come — or present it might be and still unseen by me, or was this the beginning and withal the last phase of mankind?...

I glimpsed for a while the stupendous impudence of our ambitions, the tremendous enterprise to which the modern statesman is implicitly addressed. I was as it were one of a little swarm of would-be reef builders looking back at the teeming slime upon the ocean floor. All the history of mankind, all the history of life, has been and will be the story of something struggling out of the indiscriminated abyss, struggling to exist and prevail over and comprehend individual lives — an effort of insidious attraction, an idea of invincible appeal. That something greater than ourselves, which does not so much exist as seek existence, palpitating between being and not-being, how marvellous it is! It has worn the form and visage of ten thousand different gods, sought a shape for itself in stone and ivory and music and wonderful words, spoken more and more clearly of a mystery of love, a mystery of unity, dabbling meanwhile in blood and cruelty beyond the common impulses of men. It is something that comes and goes, like a light that shines and is withdrawn, withdrawn so completely that one doubts if it has ever

been....

6

I would mark with a curious interest the stray country member of the club up in town for a night or so. My mind would be busy with speculations about him, about his home, his family, his reading, his horizons, his innumerable fellows who didn't belong and never came up. I would fill in the outline of him with memories of my uncle and his Staffordshire neighbours. He was perhaps Alderman This or Councillor That down there, a great man in his ward, J. P. within seven miles of the boundary of the borough, and a God in his home. Here he was nobody, and very shy, and either a little too arrogant or a little too meek towards our very democratic mannered but still livened waiters. Was he perhaps the backbone of England? He over-ate himself lest he should appear mean, went through our Special Dinner conscientiously, drank, unless he was teetotal, of unfamiliar wines, and did his best, in spite of the rules, to tip. Afterwards, in a state of flushed repletion, he would have old brandy, black coffee, and a banded cigar, or in the name of temperance omit the brandy and have rather more coffee, in the smoking-room. I would sit and watch that stiff dignity of self-indulgence, and wonder, wonder....

An infernal clairvoyance would come to me. I would have visions of him in relation to his wife, checking always, sometimes bullying, sometimes being ostentatiously "kind"; I would see him glance furtively at his domestic servants upon his staircase, or stiffen his upper lip against the reluctant, protesting business employee. We imaginative people are base enough, heaven knows, but it is only in rare moods of bitter penetration that we pierce down to the baser lusts, the viler shames, the everlasting lying and muddle-headed self-justification of the dull.

I would turn my eyes down the crowded room and see others of him and others. What did he think he was up to? Did he for a moment realise that his presence under that ceramic glory of a ceiling with me meant, if it had any rational meaning at all, that we were jointly doing something with the nation and the empire and mankind?... How on earth could any one get hold of him, make any

noble use of him? He didn't read beyond his newspaper. He never thought, but only followed imaginings in his heart. He never discussed. At the first hint of discussion his temper gave way. He was, I knew, a deep, thinly-covered tank of resentments and quite irrational moral rages. Yet withal I would have to resist an impulse to go over to him and nudge him and say to him, "Look here! What indeed do you think we are doing with the nation and the empire and mankind? You know — MANKIND!"

I wonder what reply I should have got.

So far as any average could be struck and so far as any backbone could be located, it seemed to me that this silent, shy, replete, sub-angry, middle-class sentimentalist was in his endless species and varieties and dialects the backbone of our party. So far as I could be considered as representing anything in the House, I pretended to sit for the elements of HIM....

7

For a time I turned towards the Socialists. They at least had an air of coherent intentions. At that time Socialism had come into politics again after a period of depression and obscurity, with a tremendous ECLAT. There was visibly a following of Socialist members to Chris Robinson; mysteriously uncommunicative gentlemen in soft felt hats and short coats and square-toed boots who replied to casual advances a little surprisingly in rich North Country dialects. Members became aware of a "seagreen incorruptible," as Colonel Marlow put it to me, speaking on the Address, a slender twisted figure supporting itself on a stick and speaking with a fire that was altogether revolutionary. This was Philip Snowden, the member for Blackburn. They had come in nearly forty strong altogether, and with an air of presently meaning to come in much stronger. They were only one aspect of what seemed at that time a big national movement. Socialist societies, we gathered, were springing up all over the country, and every one was inquiring about Socialism and discussing Socialism. It had taken the Universities with particular force, and any youngster with the slightest intellectual pretension was either actively for or brilliantly against. For a time our Young Liberal group was

ostentatiously sympathetic....

When I think of the Socialists there comes a vivid memory of certain evening gatherings at our house....

These gatherings had been organised by Margaret as the outcome of a discussion at the Baileys'. Altiora had been very emphatic and uncharitable upon the futility of the Socialist movement. It seemed that even the leaders fought shy of dinner-parties.

"They never meet each other," said Altiora, "much less people on the other side. How can they begin to understand politics until they do that?"

"Most of them have totally unpresentable wives," said Altiora, "totally!" and quoted instances, "and they WILL bring them. Or they won't come! Some of the poor creatures have scarcely learnt their table manners. They just make holes in the talk...."

I thought there was a great deal of truth beneath Altiora's outburst. The presentation of the Socialist case seemed very greatly crippled by the want of a common intimacy in its leaders; the want of intimacy didn't at first appear to be more than an accident, and our talk led to Margaret's attempt to get acquaintance and easy intercourse afoot among them and between them and the Young Liberals of our group. She gave a series of weekly dinners, planned, I think, a little too accurately upon Altiora's model, and after each we had as catholic a reception as we could contrive.

Our receptions were indeed, I should think, about as catholic as receptions could be. Margaret found herself with a weekly houseful of insoluble problems in intercourse. One did one's best, but one got a nightmare feeling as the evening wore on.

It was one of the few unanimities of these parties that every one should be a little odd in appearance, funny about the hair or the tie or the shoes or more generally, and that bursts of violent aggression should alternate with an attitude entirely defensive. A number of our guests had an air of waiting for a clue that never came, and stood and sat about silently, mildly amused but not a bit surprised that we did not discover their distinctive Open-Sesames. There was a sprinkling of manifest seers and prophetesses in shapeless garments, far too many, I thought, for really easy social intercourse, and any conversation at any moment was liable to become oracular. One was

in a state of tension from first to last; the most innocent remark seemed capable of exploding resentment, and replies came out at the most unexpected angles. We Young Liberals went about puzzled but polite to the gathering we had evoked. The Young Liberals' tradition is on the whole wonderfully discreet, superfluous steam is let out far away from home in the Balkans or Africa, and the neat, stiff figures of the Cramptons, Bunting Harblow, and Lewis, either in extremely well-cut morning coats indicative of the House, or in what is sometimes written of as "faultless evening dress," stood about on those evenings, they and their very quietly and simply and expensively dressed little wives, like a datum line amidst lakes and mountains.

I didn't at first see the connection between systematic social reorganisation and arbitrary novelties in dietary and costume, just as I didn't realise why the most comprehensive constructive projects should appear to be supported solely by odd and exceptional personalities. On one of these evenings a little group of rather jolly-looking pretty young people seated themselves for no particular reason in a large circle on the floor of my study, and engaged, so far as I could judge, in the game of Hunt the Meaning, the intellectual equivalent of Hunt the Slipper. It must have been that same evening I came upon an unbleached young gentleman before the oval mirror on the landing engaged in removing the remains of an anchovy sandwich from his protruded tongue — visible ends of cress having misled him into the belief that he was dealing with doctrinally permissible food. It was not unusual to be given hand-bills and printed matter by our guests, but there I had the advantage over Lewis, who was too tactful to refuse the stuff, too neatly dressed to pocket it, and had no writing-desk available upon which he could relieve himself in a manner flattering to the giver. So that his hands got fuller and fuller. A relentless, compact little woman in what Margaret declared to be an extremely expensive black dress has also printed herself on my memory; she had set her heart upon my contributing to a weekly periodical in the lentil interest with which she was associated, and I spent much time and care in evading her.

Mingling with the more hygienic types were a number of Anti-Puritan Socialists, bulging with bias against temperance, and

breaking out against austere methods of living all over their faces. Their manner was packed with heartiness. They were apt to choke the approaches to the little buffet Margaret had set up downstairs, and there engage in discussions of Determinism — it always seemed to be Determinism — which became heartier and noisier, but never acrimonious even in the small hours. It seemed impossible to settle about this Determinism of theirs — ever. And there were worldly Socialists also. I particularly recall a large, active, buoyant, lady-killing individual with an eyeglass borne upon a broad black ribbon, who swam about us one evening. He might have been a slightly frayed actor, in his large frock-coat, his white waistcoat, and the sort of black and white check trousers that twinkle. He had a high-pitched voice with aristocratic intonations, and he seemed to be in a perpetual state of interrogation. "What are we all he-a for?" he would ask only too audibly. "What are we doing he-a? What's the connection?"

What WAS the connection?

We made a special effort with our last assembly in June, 1907. We tried to get something like a representative collection of the parliamentary leaders of Socialism, the various exponents of Socialist thought and a number of Young Liberal thinkers into one room. Dorvil came, and Horatio Bulch; Featherstonehaugh appeared for ten minutes and talked charmingly to Margaret and then vanished again; there was Wilkins the novelist and Toomer and Dr. Tumpany. Chris Robinson stood about for a time in a new comforter, and Magdeberg and Will Pipes and five or six Labour members. And on our side we had our particular little group, Bunting Harblow, Crampton, Lewis, all looking as broad-minded and open to conviction as they possibly could, and even occasionally talking out from their bushes almost boldly. But the gathering as a whole refused either to mingle or dispute, and as an experiment in intercourse the evening was a failure. Unexpected dissociations appeared between Socialists one had supposed friendly. I could not have imagined it was possible for half so many people to turn their backs on everybody else in such small rooms as ours. But the unsaid things those backs expressed broke out, I remarked, with refreshed virulence in the various organs of the various sections of the party

next week.

I talked, I remember, with Dr. Tumpany, a large young man in a still larger professional frock-coat, and with a great shock of very fair hair, who was candidate for some North Country constituency. We discussed the political outlook, and, like so many Socialists at that time, he was full of vague threatenings against the Liberal party. I was struck by a thing in him that I had already observed less vividly in many others of these Socialist leaders, and which gave me at last a clue to the whole business. He behaved exactly like a man in possession of valuable patent rights, who wants to be dealt with. He had an air of having a corner in ideas. Then it flashed into my head that the whole Socialist movement was an attempted corner in ideas....

8

Late that night I found myself alone with Margaret amid the debris of the gathering.

I sat before the fire, hands in pockets, and Margaret, looking white and weary, came and leant upon the mantel.

"Oh, Lord!" said Margaret.

I agreed. Then I resumed my meditation.

"Ideas," I said, "count for more than I thought in the world."

Margaret regarded me with that neutral expression behind which she was accustomed to wait for clues.

"When you think of the height and depth and importance and wisdom of the Socialist ideas, and see the men who are running them," I explained.... "A big system of ideas like Socialism grows up out of the obvious common sense of our present conditions. It's as impersonal as science. All these men — They've given nothing to it. They're just people who have pegged out claims upon a big intellectual No-Man's-Land — and don't feel quite sure of the law. There's a sort of quarrelsome uneasiness.... If we professed Socialism do you think they'd welcome us? Not a man of them! They'd feel it was burglary...."

"Yes," said Margaret, looking into the fire. "That is just what I felt about them all the evening.... Particularly Dr. Tumpany."

“We mustn’t confuse Socialism with the Socialists,” I said; “that’s the moral of it. I suppose if God were to find He had made a mistake in dates or something, and went back and annihilated everybody from Owen onwards who was in any way known as a Socialist leader or teacher, Socialism would be exactly where it is and what it is to-day — a growing realisation of constructive needs in every man’s mind, and a little corner in party politics. So, I suppose, it will always be.... But they WERE a damned lot, Margaret!”

I looked up at the little noise she made. “TWICE!” she said, smiling indulgently, “to-day!” (Even the smile was Altiora’s.)

I returned to my thoughts. They WERE a damned human lot. It was an excellent word in that connection....

But the ideas marched on, the ideas marched on, just as though men’s brains were no more than stepping-stones, just as though some great brain in which we are all little cells and corpuscles was thinking them!...

“I don’t think there is a man among them who makes me feel he is trustworthy,” said Margaret; “unless it is Featherstonehaugh.”

I sat taking in this proposition.

“They’ll never help us, I feel,” said Margaret.

“Us?”

“The Liberals.”

“Oh, damn the Liberals!” I said. “They’ll never even help themselves.”

“I don’t think I could possibly get on with any of those people,” said Margaret, after a pause.

She remained for a time looking down at me and, I could feel, perplexed by me, but I wanted to go on with my thinking, and so I did not look up, and presently she stooped to my forehead and kissed me and went rustling softly to her room.

I remained in my study for a long time with my thoughts crystallising out....

It was then, I think, that I first apprehended clearly how that opposition to which I have already alluded of the immediate life and the mental hinterland of a man, can be applied to public and social affairs. The ideas go on — and no person or party succeeds in embodying them. The reality of human progress never comes to the

surface, it is a power in the deeps, an undertow. It goes on in silence while men think, in studies where they write self-forgetfully, in laboratories under the urgency of an impersonal curiosity, in the rare illumination of honest talk, in moments of emotional insight, in thoughtful reading, but not in everyday affairs. Everyday affairs and whatever is made an everyday affair, are transactions of the ostensible self, the being of habits, interests, usage. Temper, vanity, hasty reaction to imitation, personal feeling, are their substance. No man can abolish his immediate self and specialise in the depths; if he attempt that, he simply turns himself into something a little less than the common man. He may have an immense hinterland, but that does not absolve him from a frontage. That is the essential error of the specialist philosopher, the specialist teacher, the specialist publicist. They repudiate frontage; claim to be pure hinterland. That is what bothered me about Codger, about those various schoolmasters who had prepared me for life, about the Baileys and their dream of an official ruling class. A human being who is a philosopher in the first place, a teacher in the first place, or a statesman in the first place, is thereby and inevitably, though he bring God-like gifts to the pretence — a quack. These are attempts to live deep-side shallow, inside out. They produce merely a new pettiness. To understand Socialism, again, is to gain a new breadth of outlook; to join a Socialist organisation is to join a narrow cult which is not even tolerably serviceable in presenting or spreading the ideas for which it stands....

I perceived I had got something quite fundamental here. It had taken me some years to realise the true relation of the great constructive ideas that swayed me not only to political parties, but to myself. I had been disposed to identify the formulae of some one party with social construction, and to regard the other as necessarily anti-constructive, just as I had been inclined to follow the Baileys in the self-righteousness of supposing myself to be wholly constructive. But I saw now that every man of intellectual freedom and vigour is necessarily constructive-minded nowadays, and that no man is disinterestedly so. Each one of us repeats in himself the conflict of the race between the splendour of its possibilities and its immediate associations. We may be shaping immortal things, but we must sleep and answer the dinner gong, and have our salt of flattery and self-

approval. In politics a man counts not for what he is in moments of imaginative expansion, but for his common workaday, selfish self; and political parties are held together not by a community of ultimate aims, but by the stabler bond of an accustomed life. Everybody almost is for progress in general, and nearly everybody is opposed to any change, except in so far as gross increments are change, in his particular method of living and behaviour. Every party stands essentially for the interests and mental usages of some definite class or group of classes in the exciting community, and every party has its scientific-minded and constructive leading section, with well-defined hinterlands formulating its social functions in a public-spirited form, and its superficial-minded following confessing its meannesses and vanities and prejudices. No class will abolish itself, materially alter its way of life, or drastically reconstruct itself, albeit no class is indisposed to co-operate in the unlimited socialisation of any other class. In that capacity for aggression upon other classes lies the essential driving force of modern affairs. The instincts, the persons, the parties, and vanities sway and struggle. The ideas and understandings march on and achieve themselves for all — in spite of every one....

The methods and traditions of British politics maintain the form of two great parties, with rider groups seeking to gain specific ends in the event of a small Government majority. These two main parties are more or less heterogeneous in composition. Each, however, has certain necessary characteristics. The Conservative Party has always stood quite definitely for the established propertied interests. The land-owner, the big lawyer, the Established Church, and latterly the huge private monopoly of the liquor trade which has been created by temperance legislation, are the essential Conservatives. Interwoven now with the native wealthy are the families of the great international usurers, and a vast miscellaneous mass of financial enterprise. Outside the range of resistance implied by these interests, the Conservative Party has always shown itself just as constructive and collectivist as any other party. The great landowners have been as well-disposed towards the endowment of higher education, and as willing to co-operate with the Church in protective and mildly educational legislation for children and the working class, as any

political section. The financiers, too, are adventurous-spirited and eager for mechanical progress and technical efficiency. They are prepared to spend public money upon research, upon ports and harbours and public communications, upon sanitation and hygienic organisation. A certain rude benevolence of public intention is equally characteristic of the liquor trade. Provided his comfort leads to no excesses of temperance, the liquor trade is quite eager to see the common man prosperous, happy, and with money to spend in a bar. All sections of the party are aggressively patriotic and favourably inclined to the idea of an upstanding, well-fed, and well-exercised population in uniform. Of course there are reactionary landowners and old-fashioned country clergy, full of localised self-importance, jealous even of the cottager who can read, but they have neither the power nor the ability to retard the constructive forces in the party as a whole. On the other hand, when matters point to any definitely confiscatory proposal, to the public ownership and collective control of land, for example, or state mining and manufactures, or the nationalisation of the so-called public-house or extended municipal enterprise, or even to an increase of the taxation of property, then the Conservative Party presents a nearly adamantine bar. It does not stand for, it IS, the existing arrangement in these affairs.

Even more definitely a class party is the Labour Party, whose immediate interest is to raise wages, shorten hours of labor, increase employment, and make better terms for the working-man tenant and working-man purchaser. Its leaders are no doubt constructive minded, but the mass of the following is naturally suspicious of education and discipline, hostile to the higher education, and — except for an obvious antagonism to employers and property owners — almost destitute of ideas. What else can it be? It stands for the expropriated multitude, whose whole situation and difficulty arise from its individual lack of initiative and organising power. It favours the nationalisation of land and capital with no sense of the difficulties involved in the process; but, on the other hand, the equally reasonable socialisation of individuals which is implied by military service is steadily and quite naturally and quite illogically opposed by it. It is only in recent years that Labour has emerged as a separate

party from the huge hospitable caravanserai of Liberalism, and there is still a very marked tendency to step back again into that multitudinous assemblage.

For multitudinousness has always been the Liberal characteristic. Liberalism never has been nor ever can be anything but a diversified crowd. Liberalism has to voice everything that is left out by these other parties. It is the party against the predominating interests. It is at once the party of the failing and of the untried; it is the party of decadence and hope. From its nature it must be a vague and planless association in comparison with its antagonist, neither so constructive on the one hand, nor on the other so competent to hinder the inevitable constructions of the civilised state. Essentially it is the party of criticism, the "Anti" party. It is a system of hostilities and objections that somehow achieves at times an elusive common soul. It is a gathering together of all the smaller interests which find themselves at a disadvantage against the big established classes, the leasehold tenant as against the landowner, the retail tradesman as against the merchant and the moneylender, the Nonconformist as against the Churchman, the small employer as against the demoralising hospitable publican, the man without introductions and broad connections against the man who has these things. It is the party of the many small men against the fewer prevailing men. It has no more essential reason for loving the Collectivist state than the Conservatives; the small dealer is doomed to absorption in that just as much as the large owner; but it resorts to the state against its antagonists as in the middle ages common men pitted themselves against the barons by siding with the king. The Liberal Party is the party against "class privilege" because it represents no class advantages, but it is also the party that is on the whole most set against Collective control because it represents no established responsibility. It is constructive only so far as its antagonism to the great owner is more powerful than its jealousy of the state. It organises only because organisation is forced upon it by the organisation of its adversaries. It lapses in and out of alliance with Labour as it sways between hostility to wealth and hostility to public expenditure....

Every modern European state will have in some form or other

these three parties: the resistent, militant, authoritative, dull, and unsympathetic party of establishment and success, the rich party; the confused, sentimental, spasmodic, numerous party of the small, struggling, various, undisciplined men, the poor man's party; and a third party sometimes detaching itself from the second and sometimes reuniting with it, the party of the altogether expropriated masses, the proletarians, Labour. Change Conservative and Liberal to Republican and Democrat, for example, and you have the conditions in the United States. The Crown or a dethroned dynasty, the Established Church or a dispossessed church, nationalist secessions, the personalities of party leaders, may break up, complicate, and confuse the self-expression of these three necessary divisions in the modern social drama, the analyst will make them out none the less for that....

And then I came back as if I came back to a refrain; — the ideas go on — as though we are all no more than little cells and corpuscles in some great brain beyond our understanding....

So it was I sat and thought my problem out.... I still remember my satisfaction at seeing things plainly at last. It was like clouds dispersing to show the sky. Constructive ideas, of course, couldn't hold a party together alone, "interests and habits, not ideas," I had that now, and so the great constructive scheme of Socialism, invading and inspiring all parties, was necessarily claimed only by this collection of odds and ends, this residuum of disconnected and exceptional people. This was true not only of the Socialist idea, but of the scientific idea, the idea of veracity — of human confidence in humanity — of all that mattered in human life outside the life of individuals.... The only real party that would ever profess Socialism was the Labour Party, and that in the entirely one-sided form of an irresponsible and non-constructive attack on property. Socialism in that mutilated form, the teeth and claws without the eyes and brain, I wanted as little as I wanted anything in the world.

Perfectly clear it was, perfectly clear, and why hadn't I seen it before?... I looked at my watch, and it was half-past two.

I yawned, stretched, got up and went to bed.

My ideas about statecraft have passed through three main phases to the final convictions that remain. There was the first immediacy of my dream of ports and harbours and cities, railways, roads, and administered territories — the vision I had seen in the haze from that little church above Locarno. Slowly that had passed into a more elaborate legislative constructiveness, which had led to my uneasy association with the Baileys and the professedly constructive Young Liberals. To get that ordered life I had realised the need of organisation, knowledge, expertness, a wide movement of co-ordinated methods. On the individual side I thought that a life of urgent industry, temperance, and close attention was indicated by my perception of these ends. I married Margaret and set to work. But something in my mind refused from the outset to accept these determinations as final. There was always a doubt lurking below, always a faint resentment, a protesting criticism, a feeling of vitally important omissions.

I arrived at last at the clear realisation that my political associates, and I in my association with them, were oddly narrow, priggish, and unreal, that the Socialists with whom we were attempting co-operation were preposterously irrelevant to their own theories, that my political life didn't in some way comprehend more than itself, that rather perplexingly I was missing the thing I was seeking. Britten's footnotes to Altiora's self-assertions, her fits of energetic planning, her quarrels and rallies and vanities, his illuminating attacks on Cramptonism and the heavy-spirited triviality of such Liberalism as the Children's Charter, served to point my way to my present conclusions. I had been trying to deal all along with human progress as something immediate in life, something to be immediately attacked by political parties and groups pointing primarily to that end. I now began to see that just as in my own being there was the rather shallow, rather vulgar, self-seeking careerist, who wore an admirable silk hat and bustled self-consciously through the lobby, and a much greater and indefinitely growing unpublished personality behind him — my hinterland, I have called it — so in human affairs generally the permanent reality is also a hinterland, which is never really immediate, which draws continually upon human experience and influences human action more and more, but

which is itself never the actual player upon the stage. It is the unseen dramatist who never takes a call. Now it was just through the fact that our group about the Baileys didn't understand this, that with a sort of frantic energy they were trying to develop that sham expert officialdom of theirs to plan, regulate, and direct the affairs of humanity, that the perplexing note of silliness and shallowness that I had always felt and felt now most acutely under Britten's gibes, came in. They were neglecting human life altogether in social organisation.

In the development of intellectual modesty lies the growth of statesmanship. It has been the chronic mistake of statecraft and all organising spirits to attempt immediately to scheme and arrange and achieve. Priests, schools of thought, political schemers, leaders of men, have always slipped into the error of assuming that they can think out the whole — or at any rate completely think out definite parts — of the purpose and future of man, clearly and finally; they have set themselves to legislate and construct on that assumption, and, experiencing the perplexing obduracy and evasions of reality, they have taken to dogma, persecution, training, pruning, secretive education; and all the stupidities of self-sufficient energy. In the passion of their good intentions they have not hesitated to conceal fact, suppress thought, crush disturbing initiatives and apparently detrimental desires. And so it is blunderingly and wastefully, destroying with the making, that any extension of social organisation is at present achieved.

Directly, however, this idea of an emancipation from immediacy is grasped, directly the dominating importance of this critical, less personal, mental hinterland in the individual and of the collective mind in the race is understood, the whole problem of the statesman and his attitude towards politics gain a new significance, and becomes accessible to a new series of solutions. He wants no longer to "fix up," as people say, human affairs, but to devote his forces to the development of that needed intellectual life without which all his shallow attempts at fixing up are futile. He ceases to build on the sands, and sets himself to gather foundations.

You see, I began in my teens by wanting to plan and build cities and harbours for mankind; I ended in the middle thirties by desiring

only to serve and increase a general process of thought, a process fearless, critical, real-spirited, that would in its own time give cities, harbours, air, happiness, everything at a scale and quality and in a light altogether beyond the match-striking imaginations of a contemporary mind. I wanted freedom of speech and suggestion, vigour of thought, and the cultivation of that impulse of veracity that lurks more or less discouraged in every man. With that I felt there must go an emotion. I hit upon a phrase that became at last something of a refrain in my speech and writings, to convey the spirit that I felt was at the very heart of real human progress — love and fine thinking.

(I suppose that nowadays no newspaper in England gets through a week without the repetition of that phrase.)

My convictions crystallised more and more definitely upon this. The more of love and fine thinking the better for men, I said; the less, the worse. And upon this fresh basis I set myself to examine what I as a politician might do. I perceived I was at last finding an adequate expression for all that was in me, for those forces that had rebelled at the crude presentations of Bromstead, at the secrecies and suppressions of my youth, at the dull unrealities of City Merchants, at the conventions and timidities of the Pinky Dinkys, at the philosophical recluse of Trinity and the phrases and tradition-worship of my political associates. None of these things were half alive, and I wanted life to be intensely alive and awake. I wanted thought like an edge of steel and desire like a flame. The real work before mankind now, I realised once and for all, is the enlargement of human expression, the release and intensification of human thought, the vivider utilisation of experience and the invigoration of research — and whatever one does in human affairs has or lacks value as it helps or hinders that.

With that I had got my problem clear, and the solution, so far as I was concerned, lay in finding out the point in the ostensible life of politics at which I could most subserve these ends. I was still against the muddles of Bromstead, but I had hunted them down now to their essential form. The jerry-built slums, the roads that went nowhere, the tarred fences, litigious notice-boards and barbed wire fencing, the litter and the heaps of dump, were only the outward appearances

whose ultimate realities were jerry-built conclusions, hasty purposes, aimless habits of thought, and imbecile bars and prohibitions in the thoughts and souls of men. How are we through politics to get at that confusion?

We want to invigorate and reinvigorate education. We want to create a sustained counter effort to the perpetual tendency of all educational organisations towards classicalism, secondary issues, and the evasion of life.

We want to stimulate the expression of life through art and literature, and its exploration through research.

We want to make the best and finest thought accessible to every one, and more particularly to create and sustain an enormous free criticism, without which art, literature, and research alike degenerate into tradition or imposture.

Then all the other problems which are now so insoluble, destitution, disease, the difficulty of maintaining international peace, the scarcely faced possibility of making life generally and continually beautiful, become — EASY....

It was clear to me that the most vital activities in which I could engage would be those which most directly affected the Church, public habits of thought, education, organised research, literature, and the channels of general discussion. I had to ask myself how my position as Liberal member for Kinghamstead squared with and conduced to this essential work.

CHAPTER THE SECOND ~~ SEEKING ASSOCIATES

1

I have told of my gradual abandonment of the pretensions and habits of party Liberalism. In a sense I was moving towards aristocracy. Regarding the development of the social and individual mental hinterland as the essential thing in human progress, I passed on very naturally to the practical assumption that we wanted what I may call "hinterlanders." Of course I do not mean by aristocracy the changing unorganised medley of rich people and privileged people who dominate the civilised world of to-day, but as opposed to this, a possibility of co-ordinating the will of the finer individuals, by habit and literature, into a broad common aim. We must have an aristocracy — not of privilege, but of understanding and purpose — or mankind will fail. I find this dawning more and more clearly when I look through my various writings of the years between 1903 and 1910. I was already emerging to plain statements in 1908.

I reasoned after this fashion. The line of human improvement and the expansion of human life lies in the direction of education and finer initiatives. If humanity cannot develop an education far beyond anything that is now provided, if it cannot collectively invent devices and solve problems on a much richer, broader scale than it does at the present time, it cannot hope to achieve any very much finer order or any more general happiness than it now enjoys. We must believe, therefore, that it CAN develop such a training and education, or we must abandon secular constructive hope. And here my peculiar difficulty as against crude democracy comes in. If humanity at large is capable of that high education and those creative freedoms our hope demands, much more must its better and more vigorous types be so capable. And if those who have power and leisure now, and freedom to respond to imaginative appeals, cannot be won to the idea of collective self-development, then the whole of humanity cannot be won to that. From that one passes to what has become my general conception in politics, the conception of the constructive imagination

working upon the vast complex of powerful people, clever people, enterprising people, influential people, amidst whom power is diffused to-day, to produce that self-conscious, highly selective, open-minded, devoted aristocratic culture, which seems to me to be the necessary next phase in the development of human affairs. I see human progress, not as the spontaneous product of crowds of raw minds swayed by elementary needs, but as a natural but elaborate result of intricate human interdependencies, of human energy and curiosity liberated and acting at leisure, of human passions and motives, modified and redirected by literature and art....

But now the reader will understand how it came about that, disappointed by the essential littleness of Liberalism, and disillusioned about the representative quality of the professed Socialists, I turned my mind more and more to a scrutiny of the big people, the wealthy and influential people, against whom Liberalism pits its forces. I was asking myself definitely whether, after all, it was not my particular job to work through them and not against them. Was I not altogether out of my element as an Anti-? Weren't there big bold qualities about these people that common men lack, and the possibility of far more splendid dreams? Were they really the obstacles, might they not be rather the vehicles of the possible new braveries of life?

2

The faults of the Imperialist movement were obvious enough. The conception of the Boer War had been clumsy and puerile, the costly errors of that struggle appalling, and the subsequent campaign of Mr. Chamberlain for Tariff Reform seemed calculated to combine the financial adventurers of the Empire in one vast conspiracy against the consumer. The cant of Imperialism was easy to learn and use; it was speedily adopted by all sorts of base enterprises and turned to all sorts of base ends. But a big child is permitted big mischief, and my mind was now continually returning to the persuasion that after all in some development of the idea of Imperial patriotism might be found that wide, rough, politically acceptable expression of a constructive dream capable of sustaining a great educational and philosophical

movement such as no formula of Liberalism supplied. The fact that it readily took vulgar forms only witnessed to its strong popular appeal. Mixed in with the noisiness and humbug of the movement there appeared a real regard for social efficiency, a real spirit of animation and enterprise. There suddenly appeared in my world — I saw them first, I think, in 1908 — a new sort of little boy, a most agreeable development of the slouching, cunning, cigarette-smoking, town-bred youngster, a small boy in a khaki hat, and with bare knees and athletic bearing, earnestly engaged in wholesome and invigorating games up to and occasionally a little beyond his strength — the Boy Scout. I liked the Boy Scout, and I find it difficult to express how much it mattered to me, with my growing bias in favour of deliberate national training, that Liberalism hadn't been able to produce, and had indeed never attempted to produce, anything of this kind.

3

In those days there existed a dining club called — there was some lost allusion to the exorcism of party feeling in its title — the Pentagram Circle. It included Bailey and Dayton and myself, Sir Herbert Thorns, Lord Charles Kindling, Minns the poet, Gerbault the big railway man, Lord Gane, fresh from the settlement of Framboya, and Rumbold, who later became Home Secretary and left us. We were men of all parties and very various experiences, and our object was to discuss the welfare of the Empire in a disinterested spirit. We dined monthly at the Mermaid in Westminster, and for a couple of years we kept up an average attendance of ten out of fourteen. The dinner-time was given up to desultory conversation, and it is odd how warm and good the social atmosphere of that little gathering became as time went on; then over the dessert, so soon as the waiters had swept away the crumbs and ceased to fret us, one of us would open with perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes' exposition of some specially prepared question, and after him we would deliver ourselves in turn, each for three or four minutes. When every one present had spoken once talk became general again, and it was rare we emerged upon Hendon Street before midnight. Sometimes, as my house was conveniently near, a knot of men would come home with

me and go on talking and smoking in my dining-room until two or three. We had Fred Neal, that wild Irish journalist, among us towards the end, and his stupendous flow of words materially prolonged our closing discussions and made our continuance impossible.

I learned very much and very many things at those dinners, but more particularly did I become familiarised with the habits of mind of such men as Neal, Crupp, Gane, and the one or two other New Imperialists who belonged to us. They were nearly all like Bailey Oxford men, though mostly of a younger generation, and they were all mysteriously and inexplicably advocates of Tariff Reform, as if it were the principal instead of at best a secondary aspect of constructive policy. They seemed obsessed by the idea that streams of trade could be diverted violently so as to link the parts of the Empire by common interests, and they were persuaded, I still think mistakenly, that Tariff Reform would have an immense popular appeal. They were also very keen on military organisation, and with a curious little martinet twist in their minds that boded ill for that side of public liberty. So much against them. But they were disposed to spend money much more generously on education and research of all sorts than our formless host of Liberals seemed likely to do; and they were altogether more accessible than the Young Liberals to bold, constructive ideas affecting the universities and upper classes. The Liberals are abjectly afraid of the universities. I found myself constantly falling into line with these men in our discussions, and more and more hostile to Dayton's sentimentalising evasions of definite schemes and Minns' trust in such things as the "Spirit of our People" and the "General Trend of Progress." It wasn't that I thought them very much righter than their opponents; I believe all definite party "sides" at any time are bound to be about equally right and equally lop-sided; but that I thought I could get more out of them and what was more important to me, more out of myself if I co-operated with them. By 1908 I had already arrived at a point where I could be definitely considering a transfer of my political allegiance.

These abstract questions are inseparably interwoven with my memory of a shining long white table, and our hock bottles and burgundy bottles, and bottles of Perrier and St. Galmier and the disturbed central trophy of dessert, and scattered glasses and nut-

shells and cigarette-ends and menu-cards used for memoranda. I see old Dayton sitting back and cocking his eye to the ceiling in a way he had while he threw warmth into the ancient platitudes of Liberalism, and Minns leaning forward, and a little like a cockatoo with a taste for confidences, telling us in a hushed voice of his faith in the Destiny of Mankind. Thorns lounges, rolling his round face and round eyes from speaker to speaker and sounding the visible depths of misery whenever Neal begins. Gerbault and Gane were given to conversation in undertones, and Bailey pursued mysterious purposes in lisping whispers. It was Crupp attracted me most. He had, as people say, his eye on me from the beginning. He used to speak at me, and drifted into a custom of coming home with me very regularly for an after-talk.

He opened his heart to me.

"Neither of us," he said, "are dukes, and neither of us are horny-handed sons of toil. We want to get hold of the handles, and to do that, one must go where the power is, and give it just as constructive a twist as we can. That's MY Toryism."

"Is it Kindling's — or Gerbault's?"

"No. But theirs is soft, and mine's hard. Mine will wear theirs out. You and I and Bailey are all after the same thing, and why aren't we working together?"

"Are you a Confederate?" I asked suddenly.

"That's a secret nobody tells," he said.

"What are the Confederates after?"

"Making aristocracy work, I suppose. Just as, I gather, you want to do."...

The Confederates were being heard of at that time. They were at once attractive and repellent to me, an odd secret society whose membership nobody knew, pledged, it was said, to impose Tariff Reform and an ample constructive policy upon the Conservatives. In the press, at any rate, they had an air of deliberately organised power. I have no doubt the rumour of them greatly influenced my ideas....

In the end I made some very rapid decisions, but for nearly two years I was hesitating. Hesitations were inevitable in such a matter. I was not dealing with any simple question of principle, but with elusive and fluctuating estimates of the trend of diverse forces and of

the nature of my own powers. All through that period I was asking over and over again: how far are these Confederates mere dreamers? How far — and this was more vital — are they rendering lip-service to social organisations? Is it true they desire war because it confirms the ascendency of their class? How far can Conservatism be induced to plan and construct before it resists the thrust towards change. Is it really in bulk anything more than a mass of prejudice and conceit, cynical indulgence, and a hard suspicion of and hostility to the expropriated classes in the community?

That is a research which yields no statistics, an enquiry like asking what is the ruling colour of a chameleon. The shadowy answer varied with my health, varied with my mood and the conduct of the people I was watching. How fine can people be? How generous? — not incidentally, but all round? How far can you educate sons beyond the outlook of their fathers, and how far lift a rich, proud, self-indulgent class above the protests of its business agents and solicitors and its own habits and vanity? Is chivalry in a class possible? — was it ever, indeed, or will it ever indeed be possible? Is the progress that seems attainable in certain directions worth the retrogression that may be its price?

4

It was to the Pentagram Circle that I first broached the new conceptions that were developing in my mind. I count the evening of my paper the beginning of the movement that created the BLUE WEEKLY and our wing of the present New Tory party. I do that without any excessive egotism, because my essay was no solitary man's production; it was my reaction to forces that had come to me very large through my fellow-members; its quick reception by them showed that I was, so to speak, merely the first of the chestnuts to pop. The atmospheric quality of the evening stands out very vividly in my memory. The night, I remember, was warmly foggy when after midnight we went to finish our talk at my house.

We had recently changed the rules of the club to admit visitors, and so it happened that I had brought Britten, and Crupp introduced Arnold Shoesmith, my former schoolfellow at City Merchants, and

now the wealthy successor of his father and elder brother. I remember his heavy, inexpressively handsome face lighting to his rare smile at the sight of me, and how little I dreamt of the tragic entanglement that was destined to involve us both. Gane was present, and Esmeer, a newly-added member, but I think Bailey was absent. Either he was absent, or he said something so entirely characteristic and undistinguished that it has left no impression on my mind.

I had broken a little from the traditions of the club even in my title, which was deliberately a challenge to the liberal idea: it was, "The World Exists for Exceptional People." It is not the title I should choose now — for since that time I have got my phrase of "mental hinterlander" into journalistic use. I should say now, "The World Exists for Mental Hinterland."

The notes I made of that opening have long since vanished with a thousand other papers, but some odd chance has preserved and brought with me to Italy the menu for the evening; its back black with the scrawled notes I made of the discussion for my reply. I found it the other day among some letters from Margaret and a copy of the 1909 Report of the Poor Law Commission, also rich with pencilled marginalia.

My opening was a criticism of the democratic idea and method, upon lines such as I have already sufficiently indicated in the preceding sections. I remember how old Dayton fretted in his chair, and tushed and pished at that, even as I gave it, and afterwards we were treated to one of his platitudinous harangues, he sitting back in his chair with that small obstinate eye of his fixed on the ceiling, and a sort of cadaverous glow upon his face, repeating — quite regardless of all my reasoning and all that had been said by others in the debate — the sacred empty phrases that were his soul's refuge from reality. "You may think it very clever," he said with a nod of his head to mark his sense of his point, "not to Trust in the People. I do." And so on. Nothing in his life or work had ever shown that he did trust in the people, but that was beside the mark. He was the party Liberal, and these were the party incantations.

After my preliminary attack on vague democracy I went on to show that all human life was virtually aristocratic; people must either recognise aristocracy in general or else follow leaders, which is

aristocracy in particular, and so I came to my point that the reality of human progress lay necessarily through the establishment of freedoms for the human best and a collective receptivity and understanding. There was a disgusted grunt from Dayton, “Superman rubbish — Nietzsche. Shaw! Ugh!” I sailed on over him to my next propositions. The prime essential in a progressive civilisation was the establishment of a more effective selective process for the privilege of higher education, and the very highest educational opportunity for the educable. We were too apt to patronise scholarship winners, as though a scholarship was toffee given as a reward for virtue. It wasn’t any reward at all; it was an invitation to capacity. We had no more right to drag in virtue, or any merit but quality, than we had to involve it in a search for the tallest man. We didn’t want a mere process for the selection of good as distinguished from gifted and able boys— “No, you DON’T,” from Dayton — we wanted all the brilliant stuff in the world concentrated upon the development of the world. Just to exasperate Dayton further I put in a plea for gifts as against character in educational, artistic, and legislative work. “Good teaching,” I said, “is better than good conduct. We are becoming idiotic about character.”

Dayton was too moved to speak. He slewed round upon me an eye of agonised aversion.

I expatiated on the small proportion of the available ability that is really serving humanity to-day. “I suppose to-day all the thought, all the art, all the increments of knowledge that matter, are supplied so far as the English-speaking community is concerned by — how many? — by three or four thousand individuals. (‘Less,’ said Thorns.) To be more precise, by the mental hinterlands of three or four thousand individuals. We who know some of the band entertain no illusions as to their innate rarity. We know that they are just the few out of many, the few who got in our world of chance and confusion, the timely stimulus, the apt suggestion at the fortunate moment, the needed training, the leisure. The rest are lost in the crowd, fail through the defects of their qualities, become commonplace workmen and second-rate professional men, marry commonplace wives, are as much waste as the driftage of superfluous pollen in a pine forest is waste.”

“Decent honest lives!” said Dayton to his bread-crumbs, with his chin in his necktie. “WASTE!”

“And the people who do get what we call opportunity get it usually in extremely limited and cramping forms. No man lives a life of intellectual productivity alone; he needs not only material and opportunity, but helpers, resonators. Round and about what I might call the REAL men, you want the sympathetic cooperators, who help by understanding. It isn’t that our — SALT of three or four thousand is needlessly rare; it is sustained by far too small and undifferentiated a public. Most of the good men we know are not really doing the very best work of their gifts; nearly all are a little adapted, most are shockingly adapted to some second-best use. Now, I take it, this is the very centre and origin of the muddle, futility, and unhappiness that distresses us; it’s the cardinal problem of the state — to discover, develop, and use the exceptional gifts of men. And I see that best done — I drift more and more away from the common stuff of legislative and administrative activity — by a quite revolutionary development of the educational machinery, but by a still more unprecedented attempt to keep science going, to keep literature going, and to keep what is the necessary spur of all science and literature, an intelligent and appreciative criticism going. You know none of these things have ever been kept going hitherto; they’ve come unexpectedly and inexplicably.”

“Hear, hear!” from Dayton, cough, nodding of the head, and an expression of mystical profundity.

“They’ve lit up a civilisation and vanished, to give place to darkness again. Now the modern state doesn’t mean to go back to darkness again — and so it’s got to keep its light burning.” I went on to attack the present organisation of our schools and universities, which seemed elaborately designed to turn the well-behaved, uncritical, and uncreative men of each generation into the authoritative leaders of the next, and I suggested remedies upon lines that I have already indicated in the earlier chapters of this story....

So far I had the substance of the club with me, but I opened new ground and set Crupp agog by confessing my doubt from which party or combination of groups these developments of science and literature and educational organisation could most reasonably be

expected. I looked up to find Crupp's dark little eye intent upon me.

There I left it to them.

We had an astonishingly good discussion; Neal burst once, but we emerged from his flood after a time, and Dayton had his interlude. The rest was all close, keen examination of my problem.

I see Crupp now with his arm bent before him on the table in a way we had, as though it was jointed throughout its length like a lobster's antenna, his plump, short-fingered hand crushing up a walnut shell into smaller and smaller fragments. "Remington," he said, "has given us the data for a movement, a really possible movement. It's not only possible, but necessary — urgently necessary, I think, if the Empire is to go on."

"We're working altogether too much at the social basement in education and training," said Gane. "Remington is right about our neglect of the higher levels."

Britten made a good contribution with an analysis of what he called the spirit of a country and what made it. "The modern community needs its serious men to be artistic and its artists to be taken seriously," I remember his saying. "The day has gone by for either dull responsibility or merely witty art."

I remember very vividly how Shoesmith harped on an idea I had thrown out of using some sort of review or weekly to express and elaborate these conceptions of a new, severer, aristocratic culture.

"It would have to be done amazingly well," said Britten, and my mind went back to my school days and that ancient enterprise of ours, and how Cossington had rushed it. Well, Cossington had too many papers nowadays to interfere with us, and we perhaps had learnt some defensive devices.

"But this thing has to be linked to some political party," said Crupp, with his eye on me. "You can't get away from that. The Liberals," he added, "have never done anything for research or literature."

"They had a Royal Commission on the Dramatic Censorship," said Thorns, with a note of minute fairness. "It shows what they were made of," he added.

"It's what I've told Remington again and again," said Crupp, "we've got to pick up the tradition of aristocracy, reorganise it, and

make it work. But he's certainly suggested a method."

"There won't be much aristocracy to pick up," said Dayton, darkly to the ceiling, "if the House of Lords throws out the Budget."

"All the more reason for picking it up," said Neal. "For we can't do without it."

"Will they go to the bad, or will they rise from the ashes, aristocrats indeed — if the Liberals come in overwhelmingly?" said Britten.

"It's we who might decide that," said Crupp, insidiously.

"I agree," said Gane.

"No one can tell," said Thorns. "I doubt if they will get beaten."

It was an odd, fragmentary discussion that night. We were all with ideas in our minds at once fine and imperfect. We threw out suggestions that showed themselves at once far inadequate, and we tried to qualify them by minor self-contradictions. Britten, I think, got more said than any one. "You all seem to think you want to organise people, particular groups and classes of individuals," he insisted. "It isn't that. That's the standing error of politicians. You want to organise a culture. Civilisation isn't a matter of concrete groupings; it's a matter of prevailing ideas. The problem is how to make bold, clear ideas prevail. The question for Remington and us is just what groups of people will most help this culture forward."

"Yes, but how are the Lords going to behave?" said Crupp. "You yourself were asking that a little while ago."

"If they win or if they lose," Gane maintained, "there will be a movement to reorganise aristocracy — Reform of the House of Lords, they'll call the political form of it."

"Bailey thinks that," said some one.

"The labour people want abolition," said some one. "Let 'em," said Thorns.

He became audible, sketching a possibility of action.

"Suppose all of us were able to work together. It's just one of those indeterminate, confused, eventful times ahead when a steady jet of ideas might produce enormous results."

"Leave me out of it," said Dayton, "IF you please."

"We should," said Thorns under his breath.

I took up Crupp's initiative, I remember, and expanded it.

“I believe we could do — extensive things,” I insisted.

“Revivals and revisions of Toryism have been tried so often,” said Thorns, “from the Young England movement onward.”

“Not one but has produced its enduring effects,” I said. “It’s the peculiarity of English conservatism that it’s persistently progressive and rejuvenescent.”

I think it must have been about that point that Dayton fled our presence, after some clumsy sentence that I decided upon reflection was intended to remind me of my duty to my party.

Then I remember Thorns firing doubts at me obliquely across the table. “You can’t run a country through its spoilt children,” he said. “What you call aristocrats are really spoilt children. They’ve had too much of everything, except bracing experience.”

“Children can always be educated,” said Crupp.

“I said SPOILT children,” said Thorns.

“Look here, Thorns!” said I. “If this Budget row leads to a storm, and these big people get their power clipped, what’s going to happen? Have you thought of that? When they go out lock, stock, and barrel, who comes in?”

“Nature abhors a Vacuum,” said Crupp, supporting me.

“Bailey’s trained officials,” suggested Gane.

“Quacks with a certificate of approval from Altiora,” said Thorns. “I admit the horrors of the alternative. There’d be a massacre in three years.”

“One may go on trying possibilities for ever,” I said. “One thing emerges. Whatever accidents happen, our civilisation needs, and almost consciously needs, a culture of fine creative minds, and all the necessary tolerances, opennesses, considerations, that march with that. For my own part, I think that is the Most Vital Thing. Build your ship of state as you will; get your men as you will; I concentrate on what is clearly the affair of my sort of man, — I want to ensure the quality of the quarter deck.”

“Hear, hear!” said Shoesmith, suddenly — his first remark for a long time. “A first-rate figure,” said Shoesmith, gripping it.

“Our danger is in missing that,” I went on. “Muddle isn’t ended by transferring power from the muddle-headed few to the muddle-headed many, and then cheating the many out of it again in the

interests of a bureaucracy of sham experts. But that seems the limit of the liberal imagination. There is no real progress in a country, except a rise in the level of its free intellectual activity. All other progress is secondary and dependant. If you take on Bailey's dreams of efficient machinery and a sort of fanatical discipline with no free-moving brains behind it, confused ugliness becomes rigid ugliness, — that's all. No doubt things are moving from looseness to discipline, and from irresponsible controls to organised controls — and also and rather contrariwise everything is becoming as people say, democratised; but all the more need in that, for an ark in which the living element may be saved."

"Hear, hear!" said Shoesmith, faint but pursuing.

It must have been in my house afterwards that Shoesmith became noticeable. He seemed trying to say something vague and difficult that he didn't get said at all on that occasion. "We could do immense things with a weekly," he repeated, echoing Neal, I think. And there he left off and became a mute expressiveness, and it was only afterwards, when I was in bed, that I saw we had our capitalist in our hands....

We parted that night on my doorstep in a tremendous glow — but in that sort of glow one doesn't act upon without much reconsideration, and it was some months before I made my decision to follow up the indications of that opening talk.

5

I find my thoughts lingering about the Pentagram Circle. In my developments it played a large part, not so much by starting new trains of thought as by confirming the practicability of things I had already hesitatingly entertained. Discussion with these other men so prominently involved in current affairs endorsed views that otherwise would have seemed only a little less remote from actuality than the guardians of Plato or the labour laws of More. Among other questions that were never very distant from our discussions, that came apt to every topic, was the true significance of democracy, Tariff Reform as a method of international hostility, and the imminence of war. On the first issue I can still recall little Bailey,

glib and winking, explaining that democracy was really just a dodge for getting assent to the ordinances of the expert official by means of the polling booth. “If they don’t like things,” said he, “they can vote for the opposition candidate and see what happens then — and that, you see, is why we don’t want proportional representation to let in the wild men.” I opened my eyes — the lids had dropped for a moment under the caress of those smooth sounds — to see if Bailey’s artful forefinger wasn’t at the side of his predominant nose.

The international situation exercised us greatly. Our meetings were pervaded by the feeling that all things moved towards a day of reckoning with Germany, and I was largely instrumental in keeping up the suggestion that India was in a state of unstable equilibrium, that sooner or later something must happen there — something very serious to our Empire. Dayton frankly detested these topics. He was full of that old Middle Victorian persuasion that whatever is inconvenient or disagreeable to the English mind could be annihilated by not thinking about it. He used to sit low in his chair and look mulish. “Militarism,” he would declare in a tone of the utmost moral fervour, “is a curse. It’s an unmitigated curse.” Then he would cough shortly and twitch his head back and frown, and seem astonished beyond measure that after this conclusive statement we could still go on talking of war.

All our Imperialists were obsessed by the thought of international conflict, and their influence revived for a time those uneasinesses that had been aroused in me for the first time by my continental journey with Willersley and by Meredith’s “One of Our Conquerors.” That quite justifiable dread of a punishment for all the slackness, mental dishonesty, presumption, mercenary respectability and sentimentalised commercialism of the Victorian period, at the hands of the better organised, more vigorous, and now far more highly civilised peoples of Central Europe, seemed to me to have both a good and bad series of consequences. It seemed the only thing capable of bracing English minds to education, sustained constructive effort and research; but on the other hand it produced the quality of a panic, hasty preparation, impatience of thought, a wasteful and sometimes quite futile immediacy. In 1909, for example, there was a vast clamour for eight additional Dreadnoughts

—

"We want eight
And we won't wait,"

but no clamour at all about our national waste of inventive talent, our mean standard of intellectual attainment, our disingenuous criticism, and the consequent failure to distinguish men of the quality needed to carry on the modern type of war. Almost universally we have the wrong men in our places of responsibility and the right men in no place at all, almost universally we have poorly qualified, hesitating, and resentful subordinates, because our criticism is worthless and, so habitually as to be now almost unconsciously, dishonest. Germany is beating England in every matter upon which competition is possible, because she attended sedulously to her collective mind for sixty pregnant years, because in spite of tremendous defects she is still far more anxious for quality in achievement than we are. I remember saying that in my paper. From that, I remember, I went on to an image that had flashed into my mind. "The British Empire," I said, "is like some of those early vertebrated monsters, the Brontosaurus and the Atlantosaurus and such-like; it sacrifices intellect to character; its backbone, that is to say, — especially in the visceral region — is bigger than its cranium. It's no accident that things are so. We've worked for backbone. We brag about backbone, and if the joints are anchylosed so much the better. We're still but only half awake to our error. You can't change that suddenly."

"Turn it round and make it go backwards," interjected Thorns.

"It's trying to do that," I said, "in places."

And afterwards Crupp declared I had begotten a nightmare which haunted him of nights; he was trying desperately and belatedly to blow a brain as one blows soap-bubbles on such a mezoroic saurian as I had conjured up, while the clumsy monster's fate, all teeth and brains, crept nearer and nearer....

I've grown, I think, since those days out of the urgency of that apprehension. I still think a European war, and conceivably a very humiliating war for England, may occur at no very distant date, but I do not think there is any such heroic quality in our governing class as will make that war catastrophic. The prevailing spirit in English life

— it is one of the essential secrets of our imperial endurance — is one of underbred aggression in prosperity and diplomatic compromise in moments of danger; we bully haughtily where we can and assimilate where we must. It is not for nothing that our upper and middle-class youth is educated by teachers of the highest character, scholars and gentlemen, men who can pretend quite honestly that Darwinism hasn't upset the historical fall of man, that cricket is moral training, and that Socialism is an outrage upon the teachings of Christ. A sort of dignified dexterity of evasion is the national reward. Germany, with a larger population, a vigorous and irreconcilable proletariat, a bolder intellectual training, a harsher spirit, can scarcely fail to drive us at last to a realisation of intolerable strain. So we may never fight at all. The war of preparations that has been going on for thirty years may end like a sham-fight at last in an umpire's decision. We shall proudly but very firmly take the second place. For my own part, since I love England as much as I detest her present lethargy of soul, I pray for a chastening war — I wouldn't mind her flag in the dirt if only her spirit would come out of it. So I was able to shake off that earlier fear of some final and irrevocable destruction truncating all my schemes. At the most, a European war would be a dramatic episode in the reconstruction I had in view.

In India, too, I no longer foresee, as once I was inclined to see, disaster. The English rule in India is surely one of the most extraordinary accidents that has ever happened in history. We are there like a man who has fallen off a ladder on to the neck of an elephant, and doesn't know what to do or how to get down. Until something happens he remains. Our functions in India are absurd. We English do not own that country, do not even rule it. We make nothing happen; at the most we prevent things happening. We suppress our own literature there. Most English people cannot even go to this land they possess; the authorities would prevent it. If Messrs. Perowne or Cook organised a cheap tour of Manchester operatives, it would be stopped. No one dare bring the average English voter face to face with the reality of India, or let the Indian native have a glimpse of the English voter. In my time I have talked to English statesmen, Indian officials and ex-officials, viceroys, soldiers, every one who might be supposed to know what India

signifies, and I have prayed them to tell me what they thought we were up to there. I am not writing without my book in these matters. And beyond a phrase or so about "even-handed justice" — and look at our sedition trials! — they told me nothing. Time after time I have heard of that apocryphal native ruler in the north-west, who, when asked what would happen if we left India, replied that in a week his men would be in the saddle, and in six months not a rupee nor a virgin would be left in Lower Bengal. That is always given as our conclusive justification. But is it our business to preserve the rupees and virgins of Lower Bengal in a sort of magic inconclusiveness? Better plunder than paralysis, better fire and sword than futility. Our flag is spread over the peninsula, without plans, without intentions — a vast preventive. The sum total of our policy is to arrest any discussion, any conferences that would enable the Indians to work out a tolerable scheme of the future for themselves. But that does not arrest the resentment of men held back from life. Consider what it must be for the educated Indian sitting at the feast of contemporary possibilities with his mouth gagged and his hands bound behind him! The spirit of insurrection breaks out in spite of espionage and seizures. Our conflict for inaction develops stupendous absurdities. The other day the British Empire was taking off and examining printed cotton stomach wraps for seditious emblems and inscriptions....

In some manner we shall have to come out of India. We have had our chance, and we have demonstrated nothing but the appalling dulness of our national imagination. We are not good enough to do anything with India. Codger and Flack, and Gates and Dayton, Cladingbowl in the club, and the HOME CHURCHMAN in the home, cant about "character," worship of strenuous force and contempt of truth; for the sake of such men and things as these, we must abandon in fact, if not in appearance, that empty domination. Had we great schools and a powerful teaching, could we boast great men, had we the spirit of truth and creation in our lives, then indeed it might be different. But a race that bears a sceptre must carry gifts to justify it.

It does not follow that we shall be driven catastrophically from India. That was my earlier mistake. We are not proud enough in our

bones to be ruined by India as Spain was by her empire. We may be able to abandon India with an air of still remaining there. It is our new method. We train our future rulers in the public schools to have a very wholesome respect for strength, and as soon as a power arises in India in spite of us, be it a man or a culture, or a native state, we shall be willing to deal with it. We may or may not have a war, but our governing class will be quick to learn when we are beaten. Then they will repeat our South African diplomacy, and arrange for some settlement that will abandon the reality, such as it is, and preserve the semblance of power. The conqueror DE FACTO will become the new "loyal Briton," and the democracy at home will be invited to celebrate our recession — triumphantly. I am no believer in the imminent dissolution of our Empire; I am less and less inclined to see in either India or Germany the probability of an abrupt truncation of those slow intellectual and moral constructions which are the essentials of statecraft.

6

I sit writing in this little loggia to the sound of dripping water — this morning we had rain, and the roof of our little casa is still not dry, there are pools in the rocks under the sweet chestnuts, and the torrent that crosses the salita is full and boastful, — and I try to recall the order of my impressions during that watching, dubious time, before I went over to the Conservative Party. I was trying — chaotic task — to gauge the possibilities inherent in the quality of the British aristocracy. There comes a broad spectacular effect of wide parks, diversified by woods and bracken valleys, and dappled with deer; of great smooth lawns shaded by ancient trees; of big facades of sunlit buildings dominating the country side; of large fine rooms full of handsome, easy-mannered people. As a sort of representative picture to set off against those other pictures of Liberals and of Socialists I have given, I recall one of those huge assemblies the Duchess of Clynes inaugurated at Stamford House. The place itself is one of the vastest private houses in London, a huge clustering mass of white and gold saloons with polished floors and wonderful pictures, and staircases and galleries on a Gargantuan scale. And there she sought

to gather all that was most representative of English activities, and did, in fact, in those brilliant nocturnal crowds, get samples of nearly every section of our social and intellectual life, with a marked predominance upon the political and social side.

I remember sitting in one of the recesses at the end of the big saloon with Mrs. Redmondson, one of those sharp-minded, beautiful rich women one meets so often in London, who seem to have done nothing and to be capable of everything, and we watched the crowd — uniforms and splendours were streaming in from a State ball — and exchanged information. I told her about the politicians and intellectuals, and she told me about the aristocrats, and we sharpened our wit on them and counted the percentage of beautiful people among the latter, and wondered if the general effect of tallness was or was not an illusion.

They were, we agreed, for the most part bigger than the average of people in London, and a handsome lot, even when they were not subtly individualised. "They look so well nurtured," I said, "well cared for. I like their quiet, well-trained movements, their pleasant consideration for each other."

"Kindly, good tempered, and at bottom utterly selfish," she said, "like big, rather carefully trained, rather pampered children. What else can you expect from them?"

"They are good tempered, anyhow," I witnessed, "and that's an achievement. I don't think I could ever be content under a bad-tempered, sentimentalism, strenuous Government. That's why I couldn't stand the Roosevelt REGIME in America. One's chief surprise when one comes across these big people for the first time is their admirable easiness and a real personal modesty. I confess I admire them. Oh! I like them. I wouldn't at all mind, I believe, giving over the country to this aristocracy — given SOMETHING —"

"Which they haven't got."

"Which they haven't got — or they'd be the finest sort of people in the world."

"That something?" she inquired.

"I don't know. I've been puzzling my wits to know. They've done all sorts of things—"

“That’s Lord Wrassleton,” she interrupted, “whose leg was broken — you remember? — at Spion Kop.”

“It’s healed very well. I like the gold lace and the white glove resting, with quite a nice awkwardness, on the sword. When I was a little boy I wanted to wear clothes like that. And the stars! He’s got the V. C. Most of these people here have at any rate shown pluck, you know — brought something off.”

“Not quite enough,” she suggested.

“I think that’s it,” I said. “Not quite enough — not quite hard enough,” I added.

She laughed and looked at me. “You’d like to make us,” she said.

“What?”

“Hard.”

“I don’t think you’ll go on if you don’t get hard.”

“We shan’t be so pleasant if we do.”

“Well, there my puzzled wits come in again. I don’t see why an aristocracy shouldn’t be rather hard trained, and yet kindly. I’m not convinced that the resources of education are exhausted. I want to better this, because it already looks so good.”

“How are we to do it?” asked Mrs. Redmondson.

“Oh, there you have me! I’ve been spending my time lately in trying to answer that! It makes me quarrel with” — I held up my fingers and ticked the items off— “the public schools, the private tutors, the army exams, the Universities, the Church, the general attitude of the country towards science and literature—”

“We all do,” said Mrs. Redmondson. “We can’t begin again at the beginning,” she added.

“Couldn’t one,” I nodded at the assembly in general, start a movement?

“There’s the Confederates,” she said, with a faint smile that masked a gleam of curiosity.... “You want,” she said, “to say to the aristocracy, ‘Be aristocrats. NOBLESSE OBLIGE.’ Do you remember what happened to the monarch who was told to ‘Be a King’?”

“Well,” I said, “I want an aristocracy.”

“This,” she said, smiling, “is the pick of them. The backwoodsmen are off the stage. These are the brilliant ones — the

smart and the blues.... They cost a lot of money, you know."

So far Mrs. Redmondson, but the picture remained full of things not stated in our speech. They were on the whole handsome people, charitable minded, happy, and easy. They led spacious lives, and there was something free and fearless about their bearing that I liked extremely. The women particularly were wide-reading, fine-thinking. Mrs. Redmondson talked as fully and widely and boldly as a man, and with those flashes of intuition, those startling, sudden delicacies of perception few men display. I liked, too, the relations that held between women and men, their general tolerance, their antagonism to the harsh jealousies that are the essence of the middle-class order....

After all, if one's aim resolved itself into the development of a type and culture of men, why shouldn't one begin at this end?

It is very easy indeed to generalise about a class or human beings, but much harder to produce a sample. Was old Lady Forthundred, for instance, fairly a sample? I remember her as a smiling, magnificent presence, a towering accumulation of figure and wonderful shimmering blue silk and black lace and black hair, and small fine features and chins and chins and chins, disposed in a big cane chair with wraps and cushions upon the great terrace of Champneys. Her eye was blue and hard, and her accent and intonation were exactly what you would expect from a rather commonplace dressmaker pretending to be aristocratic. I was, I am afraid, posing a little as the intelligent but respectful inquirer from below investigating the great world, and she was certainly posing as my informant. She affected a cynical coarseness. She developed a theory on the governance of England, beautifully frank and simple. "Give 'um all a peerage when they get twenty thousand a year," she maintained. "That's my remedy."

In my new role of theoretical aristocrat I felt a little abashed.

"Twenty thousand," she repeated with conviction.

It occurred to me that I was in the presence of the aristocratic theory currently working as distinguished from my as yet unformulated intentions.

"You'll get a lot of loafers and scamps among 'um," said Lady Forthundred. "You get loafers and scamps everywhere, but you'll get a lot of men who'll work hard to keep things together, and that's

what we're all after, isn't ut?

"It's not an ideal arrangement."

"Tell me anything better," said Lady Forthundred.

On the whole, and because she refused emphatically to believe in education, Lady Forthundred scored.

We had been discussing Cossington's recent peerage, for Cossington, my old schoolfellow at City Merchants', and my victor in the affair of the magazine, had clambered to an amazing wealth up a piled heap of energetically pushed penny and halfpenny magazines, and a group of daily newspapers. I had expected to find the great lady hostile to the new-comer, but she accepted him, she gloried in him.

"We're a peerage," she said, "but none of us have ever had any nonsense about nobility."

She turned and smiled down on me. "We English," she said, "are a practical people. We assimilate 'um."

"Then, I suppose, they don't give trouble?"

"Then they don't give trouble."

"They learn to shoot?"

"And all that," said Lady Forthundred. "Yes. And things go on. Sometimes better than others, but they go on — somehow. It depends very much on the sort of butler who pokes 'um about."

I suggested that it might be possible to get a secure twenty thousand a year by at least detrimental methods — socially speaking.

"We must take the bad and the good of 'um," said Lady Forthundred, courageously....

Now, was she a sample? It happened she talked. What was there in the brains of the multitude of her first, second, third, fourth, and fifth cousins, who didn't talk, who shone tall, and bearing themselves finely, against a background of deft, attentive maids and valets, on every spacious social scene? How did things look to them?

7

Side by side with Lady Forthundred, it is curious to put Evesham with his tall, bent body, his little-featured almost elvish face, his unequal mild brown eyes, his gentle manner, his sweet, amazing oratory. He led all these people wonderfully. He was always curious

and interested about life, wary beneath a pleasing frankness — and I tormented my brain to get to the bottom of him. For a long time he was the most powerful man in England under the throne; he had the Lords in his hand, and a great majority in the Commons, and the discontents and intrigues that are the concomitants of an overwhelming party advantage broke against him as waves break against a cliff. He foresaw so far in these matters that it seemed he scarcely troubled to foresee. He brought political art to the last triumph of naturalness. Always for me he has been the typical aristocrat, so typical and above the mere forms of aristocracy, that he remained a commoner to the end of his days.

I had met him at the beginning of my career; he read some early papers of mine, and asked to see me, and I conceived a flattered liking for him that strengthened to a very strong feeling indeed. He seemed to me to stand alone without an equal, the greatest man in British political life. Some men one sees through and understands, some one cannot see into or round because they are of opaque clay, but about Evesham I had a sense of things hidden as it were by depth and mists, because he was so big and atmospheric a personality. No other contemporary has had that effect upon me. I've sat beside him at dinners, stayed in houses with him — he was in the big house party at Champneys — talked to him, sounded him, watching him as I sat beside him. I could talk to him with extraordinary freedom and a rare sense of being understood. Other men have to be treated in a special manner; approached through their own mental dialect, flattered by a minute regard for what they have said and done. Evesham was as widely and charitably receptive as any man I have ever met. The common politicians beside him seemed like rows of stuffy little rooms looking out upon the sea.

And what was he up to? What did HE think we were doing with Mankind? That I thought worth knowing.

I remember his talking on one occasion at the Hartsteins', at a dinner so tremendously floriferous and equipped that we were almost forced into duologues, about the possible common constructive purpose in politics.

"I feel so much," he said, "that the best people in every party converge. We don't differ at Westminster as they do in the country

towns. There's a sort of extending common policy that goes on under every government, because on the whole it's the right thing to do, and people know it. Things that used to be matters of opinion become matters of science — and cease to be party questions."

He instanced education.

"Apart," said I, "from the religious question."

"Apart from the religious question."

He dropped that aspect with an easy grace, and went on with his general theme that political conflict was the outcome of uncertainty. "Directly you get a thing established, so that people can say, 'Now this is Right,' with the same conviction that people can say water is a combination of oxygen and hydrogen, there's no more to be said. The thing has to be done...."

And to put against this effect of Evesham, broad and humanely tolerant, posing as the minister of a steadily developing constructive conviction, there are other memories.

Have I not seen him in the House, persistent, persuasive, indefatigable, and by all my standards wickedly perverse, leaning over the table with those insistent movements of his hand upon it, or swaying forward with a grip upon his coat lapel, fighting with a diabolical skill to preserve what are in effect religious tests, tests he must have known would outrage and humiliate and injure the consciences of a quarter — and that perhaps the best quarter — of the youngsters who come to the work of elementary education?

In playing for points in the game of party advantage Evesham displayed at times a quite wicked unscrupulousness in the use of his subtle mind. I would sit on the Liberal benches and watch him, and listen to his urbane voice, fascinated by him. Did he really care? Did anything matter to him? And if it really mattered nothing, why did he trouble to serve the narrowness and passion of his side? Or did he see far beyond my scope, so that this petty iniquity was justified by greater, remoter ends of which I had no intimation?

They accused him of nepotism. His friends and family were certainly well cared for. In private life he was full of an affectionate intimacy; he pleased by being charmed and pleased. One might think at times there was no more of him than a clever man happily circumstanced, and finding an interest and occupation in politics.

And then came a glimpse of thought, of imagination, like the sight of a soaring eagle through a staircase skylight. Oh, beyond question he was great! No other contemporary politician had his quality. In no man have I perceived so sympathetically the great contrast between warm, personal things and the white dream of statecraft. Except that he had it seemed no hot passions, but only interests and fine affections and indolences, he paralleled the conflict of my life. He saw and thought widely and deeply; but at times it seemed to me his greatness stood over and behind the reality of his life, like some splendid servant, thinking his own thoughts, who waits behind a lesser master's chair....

8

Of course, when Evesham talked of this ideal of the organised state becoming so finely true to practicability and so clearly stated as to have the compelling conviction of physical science, he spoke quite after my heart. Had he really embodied the attempt to realise that, I could have done no more than follow him blindly. But neither he nor I embodied that, and there lies the gist of my story. And when it came to a study of others among the leading Tories and Imperialists the doubt increased, until with some at last it was possible to question whether they had any imaginative conception of constructive statecraft at all; whether they didn't opaquely accept the world for what it was, and set themselves single-mindedly to make a place for themselves and cut a figure in it.

There were some very fine personalities among them: there were the great peers who had administered Egypt, India, South Africa, Framboya — Cromer, Kitchener, Curzon, Milner, Gane, for example. So far as that easier task of holding sword and scales had gone, they had shown the finest qualities, but they had returned to the perplexing and exacting problem of the home country, a little glorious, a little too simply bold. They wanted to arm and they wanted to educate, but the habit of immediate necessity made them far more eager to arm than to educate, and their experience of heterogeneous controls made them overrate the need for obedience in a homogeneous country. They didn't understand raw men, ill-trained

men, uncertain minds, and intelligent women; and these are the things that matter in England.... There were also the great business adventurers, from Cranber to Cossington (who was now Lord Paddockhurst). My mind remained unsettled, and went up and down the scale between a belief in their far-sighted purpose and the perception of crude vanities, coarse ambitions, vulgar competitiveness, and a mere habitual persistence in the pursuit of gain. For a time I saw a good deal of Cossington — I wish I had kept a diary of his talk and gestures, to mark how he could vary from day to day between a POSEUR, a smart tradesman, and a very bold and wide-thinking political schemer. He had a vanity of sweeping actions, motor car pounces, Napoleonic rushes, that led to violent ineffectual changes in the policy of his papers, and a haunting pursuit by parallel columns in the liberal press that never abashed him in the slightest degree. By an accident I plumbed the folly in him — but I feel I never plumbed his wisdom. I remember him one day after a lunch at the Barhams' saying suddenly, out of profound meditation over the end of a cigar, one of those sentences that seem to light the whole interior being of a man. "Some day," he said softly, rather to himself than to me, and A PROPOS of nothing— "some day I will raise the country."

"Why not?" I said, after a pause, and leant across him for the little silver spirit-lamp, to light my cigarette....

Then the Tories had for another section the ancient creations, and again there were the financial peers, men accustomed to reserve, and their big lawyers, accustomed to — well, qualified statement. And below the giant personalities of the party were the young bloods, young, adventurous men of the type of Lord Tarvrille, who had seen service in South Africa, who had travelled and hunted; explorers, keen motorists, interested in aviation, active in army organisation. Good, brown-faced stuff they were, but impervious to ideas outside the range of their activities, more ignorant of science than their chauffeurs, and of the quality of English people than welt-politicians; contemptuous of school and university by reason of the Gateses and Flacks and Codgers who had come their way, witty, light-hearted, patriotic at the Kipling level, with a certain aptitude for bullying. They varied in insensible gradations between the noble sportsmen on

the one hand, and men like Gane and the Tories of our Pentagram club on the other. You perceive how a man might exercise his mind in the attempt to strike an average of public serviceability in this miscellany! And mixed up with these, mixed up sometimes in the same man, was the pure reactionary, whose predominant idea was that the village schools should confine themselves to teaching the catechism, hat-touching and courtesying, and be given a holiday whenever beaters were in request....

I find now in my mind as a sort of counterpoise to Evesham the figure of old Lord Wardingham, asleep in the largest armchair in the library of Stamford Court after lunch. One foot rested on one of those things — I think they are called gout stools. He had been playing golf all the morning and wearied a weak instep; at lunch he had sat at my table and talked in the overbearing manner permitted to irascible important men whose insteps are painful. Among other things he had flouted the idea that women would ever understand statecraft or be more than a nuisance in politics, denied flatly that Hindoos were capable of anything whatever except excesses in population, regretted he could not censor picture galleries and circulating libraries, and declared that dissenters were people who pretended to take theology seriously with the express purpose of upsetting the entirely satisfactory compromise of the Established Church. “No sensible people, with anything to gain or lose, argue about religion,” he said. “They mean mischief.” Having delivered his soul upon these points, and silenced the little conversation to the left of him from which they had arisen, he became, after an appreciative encounter with a sanguinary woodcock, more amiable, responded to some respectful initiatives of Crupp’s, and related a number of classical anecdotes of those blighting snubs, vindictive retorts and scandalous miscarriages of justice that are so dear to the forensic mind. Now he reposed. He was breathing heavily with his mouth a little open and his head on one side. One whisker was turned back against the comfortable padding. His plump strong hands gripped the arms of his chair, and his frown was a little assuaged. How tremendously fed up he looked! Honours, wealth, influence, respect, he had them all. How scornful and hard it had made his unguarded expression!

I note without comment that it didn’t even occur to me then to

wake him up and ask him what HE was up to with mankind.

9

One countervailing influence to my drift to Toryism in those days was Margaret's quite religious faith in the Liberals. I realised that slowly and with a mild astonishment. It set me, indeed, even then questioning my own change of opinion. We came at last incidentally, as our way was, to an exchange of views. It was as nearly a quarrel as we had before I came over to the Conservative side. It was at Champneys, and I think during the same visit that witnessed my exploration of Lady Forthundred. It arose indirectly, I think, out of some comments of mine upon our fellow-guests, but it is one of those memories of which the scene and quality remain more vivid than the things said, a memory without any very definite beginning or end. It was afternoon, in the pause between tea and the dressing bell, and we were in Margaret's big silver-adorned, chintz-bright room, looking out on the trim Italian garden.... Yes, the beginning of it has escaped me altogether, but I remember it as an odd exceptional little wrangle.

At first we seem to have split upon the moral quality of the aristocracy, and I had an odd sense that in some way too feminine for me to understand our hostess had aggrieved her. She said, I know, that Champneys distressed her; made her "eager for work and reality again."

"But aren't these people real?"

"They're so superficial, so extravagant!"

I said I was not shocked by their unreality. They seemed the least affected people I had ever met. "And are they really so extravagant?" I asked, and put it to her that her dresses cost quite as much as any other woman's in the house.

"It's not only their dresses," Margaret parried. "It's the scale and spirit of things."

I questioned that. "They're cynical," said Margaret, staring before her out of the window.

I challenged her, and she quoted the Brabants, about whom there had been an ancient scandal. She'd heard of it from Altiora, and it

was also Altiora who'd given her a horror of Lord Carnaby, who was also with us. "You know his reputation," said Margaret. "That Normandy girl. Every one knows about it. I shiver when I look at him. He seems — oh! like something not of OUR civilisation. He WILL come and say little things to me."

"Offensive things?"

"No, politenesses and things. Of course his manners are — quite right. That only makes it worse, I think. It shows he might have helped — all that happened. I do all I can to make him see I don't like him. But none of the others make the slightest objection to him."

"Perhaps these people imagine something might be said for him."

"That's just it," said Margaret.

"Charity," I suggested.

"I don't like that sort of toleration."

I was oddly annoyed. "Like eating with publicans and sinners," I said. "No!..."

But scandals, and the contempt for rigid standards their condonation displayed, weren't more than the sharp edge of the trouble. "It's their whole position, their selfish predominance, their class conspiracy against the mass of people," said Margaret. "When I sit at dinner in that splendid room, with its glitter and white reflections and candlelight, and its flowers and its wonderful service and its candelabra of solid gold, I seem to feel the slums and the mines and the over-crowded cottages stuffed away under the table."

I reminded Margaret that she was not altogether innocent of unearned increment.

"But aren't we doing our best to give it back?" she said.

I was moved to question her. "Do you really think," I asked, "that the Tories and peers and rich people are to blame for social injustice as we have it to-day? Do you really see politics as a struggle of light on the Liberal side against darkness on the Tory?"

"They MUST know," said Margaret.

I found myself questioning that. I see now that to Margaret it must have seemed the perversest carping against manifest things, but at the time I was concentrated simply upon the elucidation of her view and my own; I wanted to get at her conception in the sharpest, hardest lines that were possible. It was perfectly clear that she saw Toryism

as the diabolical element in affairs. The thing showed in its hopeless untruth all the clearer for the fine, clean emotion with which she gave it out to me. My sleeping peer in the library at Stamford Court and Evesham talking luminously behind the Hartstein flowers embodied the devil, and my replete citizen sucking at his cigar in the National Liberal Club, Willie Crampton discussing the care and management of the stomach over a specially hygienic lemonade, and Dr. Tumpany in his aggressive frock-coat pegging out a sort of copyright in Socialism, were the centre and wings of the angelic side. It was nonsense. But how was I to put the truth to her?

"I don't see things at all as you do," I said. "I don't see things in the same way."

"Think of the poor," said Margaret, going off at a tangent.

"Think of every one," I said. "We Liberals have done more mischief through well-intentioned benevolence than all the selfishness in the world could have done. We built up the liquor interest."

"WE!" cried Margaret. "How can you say that? It's against us."

"Naturally. But we made it a monopoly in our clumsy efforts to prevent people drinking what they liked, because it interfered with industrial regularity—"

"Oh!" cried Margaret, stung; and I could see she thought I was talking mere wickedness.

"That's it," I said.

"But would you have people drink whatever they pleased?"

"Certainly. What right have I to dictate to other men and women?"

"But think of the children!"

"Ah! there you have the folly of modern Liberalism, its half-cunning, half-silly way of getting at everything in a roundabout fashion. If neglecting children is an offence, and it IS an offence, then deal with it as such, but don't go badgering and restricting people who sell something that may possibly in some cases lead to a neglect of children. If drunkenness is an offence, punish it, but don't punish a man for selling honest drink that perhaps after all won't make any one drunk at all. Don't intensify the viciousness of the public-house by assuming the place isn't fit for women and children. That's either

spite or folly. Make the public-house FIT for women and children. Make it a real public-house. If we Liberals go on as we are going, we shall presently want to stop the sale of ink and paper because those things tempt men to forgery. We do already threaten the privacy of the post because of betting tout's letters. The drift of all that kind of thing is narrow, unimaginative, mischievous, stupid...."

I stopped short and walked to the window and surveyed a pretty fountain, facsimile of one in Verona, amidst trim-cut borderings of yew. Beyond, and seen between the stems of ilex trees, was a great blaze of yellow flowers....

"But prevention," I heard Margaret behind me, "is the essence of our work."

I turned. "There's no prevention but education. There's no antiseptics in life but love and fine thinking. Make people fine, make fine people. Don't be afraid. These Tory leaders are better people individually than the average; why cast them for the villains of the piece? The real villain in the piece — in the whole human drama — is the muddle-headedness, and it matters very little if it's virtuous-minded or wicked. I want to get at muddle-headedness. If I could do that I could let all that you call wickedness in the world run about and do what it jolly well pleased. It would matter about as much as a slightly neglected dog — in an otherwise well-managed home."

My thoughts had run away with me.

"I can't understand you," said Margaret, in the profoundest distress. "I can't understand how it is you are coming to see things like this."

10

The moods of a thinking man in politics are curiously evasive and difficult to describe. Neither the public nor the historian will permit the statesman moods. He has from the first to assume he has an Aim, a definite Aim, and to pretend to an absolute consistency with that. Those subtle questionings about the very fundamentals of life which plague us all so relentlessly nowadays are supposed to be silenced. He lifts his chin and pursues his Aim explicitly in the sight of all men. Those who have no real political experience can scarcely

imagine the immense mental and moral strain there is between one's everyday acts and utterances on the one hand and the "thinking-out" process on the other. It is perplexingly difficult to keep in your mind, fixed and firm, a scheme essentially complex, to keep balancing a swaying possibility while at the same time under jealous, hostile, and stupid observation you tread your part in the platitudinous, quarrelsome, ill-presented march of affairs....

The most impossible of all autobiographies is an intellectual autobiography. I have thrown together in the crudest way the elements of the problem I struggled with, but I can give no record of the subtle details; I can tell nothing of the long vacillations between Protean values, the talks and re-talks, the meditations, the bleak lucidities of sleepless nights....

And yet these things I have struggled with must be thought out, and, to begin with, they must be thought out in this muddled, experimenting way. To go into a study to think about statecraft is to turn your back on the realities you are constantly needing to feel and test and sound if your thinking is to remain vital; to choose an aim and pursue it in despite of all subsequent questionings is to bury the talent of your mind. It is no use dealing with the intricate as though it were simple, to leap haphazard at the first course of action that presents itself; the whole world of politicians is far too like a man who snatches a poker to a failing watch. It is easy to say he wants to "get something done," but the only sane thing to do for the moment is to put aside that poker and take thought and get a better implement....

One of the results of these fundamental preoccupations of mine was a curious irritability towards Margaret that I found difficult to conceal. It was one of the incidental cruelties of our position that this should happen. I was in such doubt myself, that I had no power to phrase things for her in a form she could use. Hitherto I had stage-managed our "serious" conversations. Now I was too much in earnest and too uncertain to go on doing this. I avoided talk with her. Her serene, sustained confidence in vague formulae and sentimental aspirations exasperated me; her want of sympathetic apprehension made my few efforts to indicate my changing attitudes distressing and futile. It wasn't that I was always thinking right, and that she was

always saying wrong. It was that I was struggling to get hold of a difficult thing that was, at any rate, half true, I could not gauge how true, and that Margaret's habitual phrasing ignored these elusive elements of truth, and without premeditation fitted into the weaknesses of my new intimations, as though they had nothing but weaknesses. It was, for example, obvious that these big people, who were the backbone of Imperialism and Conservatism, were temperamentally lax, much more indolent, much more sensuous, than our deliberately virtuous Young Liberals. I didn't want to be reminded of that, just when I was in full effort to realise the finer elements in their composition. Margaret classed them and disposed of them. It was our incurable differences in habits and gestures of thought coming between us again.

The desert of misunderstanding widened. I was forced back upon myself and my own secret councils. For a time I went my way alone; an unmixed evil for both of us. Except for that Pentagram evening, a series of talks with Isabel Rivers, who was now becoming more and more important in my intellectual life, and the arguments I maintained with Crupp, I never really opened my mind at all during that period of indecisions, slow abandonments, and slow acquisitions.

CHAPTER THE THIRD ~~ SECESSION

1

At last, out of a vast accumulation of impressions, decision distilled quite suddenly. I succumbed to Evesham and that dream of the right thing triumphant through expression. I determined I would go over to the Conservatives, and use my every gift and power on the side of such forces on that side as made for educational reorganisation, scientific research, literature, criticism, and intellectual development. That was in 1909. I judged the Tories were driving straight at a conflict with the country, and I thought them bound to incur an electoral defeat. I under-estimated their strength in the counties. There would follow, I calculated, a period of profound reconstruction in method and policy alike. I was entirely at one with Crupp in perceiving in this an immense opportunity for the things we desired. An aristocracy quickened by conflict and on the defensive, and full of the idea of justification by reconstruction, might prove altogether more apt for thought and high professions than Mrs. Redmondson's spoilt children. Behind the now inevitable struggle for a reform of the House of Lords, there would be great heart searchings and educational endeavour. On that we reckoned....

At last we talked it out to the practical pitch, and Crupp and Shoesmith, and I and Gane, made our definite agreement together....

I emerged from enormous silences upon Margaret one evening.

She was just back from the display of some new musicians at the Hartsteins. I remember she wore a dress of golden satin, very rich-looking and splendid. About her slender neck there was a rope of gold-set amber beads. Her hair caught up and echoed and returned these golden notes. I, too, was in evening dress, but where I had been escapes me, — some forgotten dinner, I suppose. I went into her room. I remember I didn't speak for some moments. I went across to the window and pulled the blind aside, and looked out upon the railed garden of the square, with its shrubs and shadowed turf gleaming pallidly and irregularly in the light of the big electric standard in the corner.

“Margaret,” I said, “I think I shall break with the party.”

She made no answer. I turned presently, a movement of enquiry.

“I was afraid you meant to do that,” she said.

“I’m out of touch,” I explained. “Altogether.”

“Oh! I know.”

“It places me in a difficult position,” I said.

Margaret stood at her dressing-table, looking steadfastly at herself in the glass, and with her fingers playing with a litter of stoppered bottles of tinted glass. “I was afraid it was coming to this,” she said.

“In a way,” I said, “we’ve been allies. I owe my seat to you. I couldn’t have gone into Parliament....”

“I don’t want considerations like that to affect us,” she interrupted.

There was a pause. She sat down in a chair by her dressing-table, lifted an ivory hand-glass, and put it down again.

“I wish,” she said, with something like a sob in her voice, “it were possible that you shouldn’t do this.” She stopped abruptly, and I did not look at her, because I could feel the effort she was making to control herself.

“I thought,” she began again, “when you came into Parliament—”

There came another silence. “It’s all gone so differently,” she said. “Everything has gone so differently.”

I had a sudden memory of her, shining triumphant after the Kinghampstead election, and for the first time I realised just how perplexing and disappointing my subsequent career must have been to her.

“I’m not doing this without consideration,” I said.

“I know,” she said, in a voice of despair, “I’ve seen it coming. But — I still don’t understand it. I don’t understand how you can go over.”

“My ideas have changed and developed,” I said.

I walked across to her bearskin hearthrug, and stood by the mantel.

“To think that you,” she said; “you who might have been leader —” She could not finish it. “All the forces of reaction,” she threw out.

“I don’t think they are the forces of reaction,” I said. “I think I can find work to do — better work on that side.”

“Against us!” she said. “As if progress wasn’t hard enough! As if it didn’t call upon every able man!”

“I don’t think Liberalism has a monopoly of progress.”

She did not answer that. She sat quite still looking in front of her. “WHY have you gone over?” she asked abruptly as though I had said nothing.

There came a silence that I was impelled to end. I began a stiff dissertation from the hearthrug. “I am going over, because I think I may join in an intellectual renascence on the Conservative side. I think that in the coming struggle there will be a partial and altogether confused and demoralising victory for democracy, that will stir the classes which now dominate the Conservative party into an energetic revival. They will set out to win back, and win back. Even if my estimate of contemporary forces is wrong and they win, they will still be forced to reconstruct their outlook. A war abroad will supply the chastening if home politics fail. The effort at renascence is bound to come by either alternative. I believe I can do more in relation to that effort than in any other connexion in the world of politics at the present time. That’s my case, Margaret.”

She certainly did not grasp what I said. “And so you will throw aside all the beginnings, all the beliefs and pledges—” Again her sentence remained incomplete. “I doubt if even, once you have gone over, they will welcome you.”

“That hardly matters.”

I made an effort to resume my speech.

“I came into Parliament, Margaret,” I said, “a little prematurely. Still — I suppose it was only by coming into Parliament that I could see things as I do now in terms of personality and imaginative range....” I stopped. Her stiff, unhappy, unlistening silence broke up my disquisition.

“After all,” I remarked, “most of this has been implicit in my writings.”

She made no sign of admission.

“What are you going to do?” she asked.

“Keep my seat for a time and make the reasons of my breach clear. Then either I must resign or — probably this new Budget will lead to a General Election. It’s evidently meant to strain the Lords

and provoke a quarrel."

"You might, I think, have stayed to fight for the Budget."

"I'm not," I said, "so keen against the Lords."

On that we halted.

"But what are you going to do?" she asked.

"I shall make my quarrel over some points in the Budget. I can't quite tell you yet where my chance will come. Then I shall either resign my seat — or if things drift to dissolution I shall stand again."

"It's political suicide."

"Not altogether."

"I can't imagine you out of Parliament again. It's just like — like undoing all we have done. What will you do?"

"Write. Make a new, more definite place for myself. You know, of course, there's already a sort of group about Crupp and Gane."

Margaret seemed lost for a time in painful thought.

"For me," she said at last, "our political work has been a religion — it has been more than a religion."

I heard in silence. I had no form of protest available against the implications of that.

"And then I find you turning against all we aimed to do — talking of going over, almost lightly — to those others."...

She was white-lipped as she spoke. In the most curious way she had captured the moral values of the situation. I found myself protesting ineffectually against her fixed conviction. "It's because I think my duty lies in this change that I make it," I said.

"I don't see how you can say that," she replied quietly.

There was another pause between us.

"Oh!" she said and clenched her hand upon the table. "That it should have come to this!"

She was extraordinarily dignified and extraordinarily absurd. She was hurt and thwarted beyond measure. She had no place in her ideas, I thought, for me. I could see how it appeared to her, but I could not make her see anything of the intricate process that had brought me to this divergence. The opposition of our intellectual temperaments was like a gag in my mouth. What was there for me to say? A flash of intuition told me that behind her white dignity was a passionate disappointment, a shattering of dreams that needed before

everything else the relief of weeping.

"I've told you," I said awkwardly, "as soon as I could."

There was another long silence. "So that is how we stand," I said with an air of having things defined. I walked slowly to the door.

She had risen and stood now staring in front of her.

"Good-night," I said, making no movement towards our habitual kiss.

"Good-night," she answered in a tragic note....

I closed the door softly. I remained for a moment or so on the big landing, hesitating between my bedroom and my study. As I did so I heard the soft rustle of her movement and the click of the key in her bedroom door. Then everything was still....

She hid her tears from me. Something gripped my heart at the thought.

"Damnation!" I said wincing. "Why the devil can't people at least THINK in the same manner?"

2

And that insufficient colloquy was the beginning of a prolonged estrangement between us. It was characteristic of our relations that we never reopened the discussion. The thing had been in the air for some time; we had recognised it now; the widening breach between us was confessed. My own feelings were curiously divided. It is remarkable that my very real affection for Margaret only became evident to me with this quarrel. The changes of the heart are very subtle changes. I am quite unaware how or when my early romantic love for her purity and beauty and high-principled devotion evaporated from my life; but I do know that quite early in my parliamentary days there had come a vague, unconfessed resentment at the tie that seemed to hold me in servitude to her standards of private living and public act. I felt I was caught, and none the less so because it had been my own act to rivet on my shackles. So long as I still held myself bound to her that resentment grew. Now, since I had broken my bonds and taken my line it withered again, and I could think of Margaret with a returning kindliness.

But I still felt embarrassment with her. I felt myself dependent

upon her for house room and food and social support, as it were under false pretences. I would have liked to have separated our financial affairs altogether. But I knew that to raise the issue would have seemed a last brutal indelicacy. So I tried almost furtively to keep my personal expenditure within the scope of the private income I made by writing, and we went out together in her motor brougham, dined and made appearances, met politely at breakfast — parted at night with a kiss upon her cheek. The locking of her door upon me, which at that time I quite understood, which I understand now, became for a time in my mind, through some obscure process of the soul, an offence. I never crossed the landing to her room again.

In all this matter, and, indeed, in all my relations with Margaret, I perceive now I behaved badly and foolishly. My manifest blunder is that I, who was several years older than she, much subtler and in many ways wiser, never in any measure sought to guide and control her. After our marriage I treated her always as an equal, and let her go her way; held her responsible for all the weak and ineffective and unfortunate things she said and did to me. She wasn't clever enough to justify that. It wasn't fair to expect her to sympathise, anticipate, and understand. I ought to have taken care of her, roped her to me when it came to crossing the difficult places. If I had loved her more, and wiselier and more tenderly, if there had not been the consciousness of my financial dependence on her always stiffening my pride, I think she would have moved with me from the outset, and left the Liberals with me. But she did not get any inkling of the ends I sought in my change of sides. It must have seemed to her inexplicable perversity. She had, I knew — for surely I knew it then — an immense capacity for loyalty and devotion. There she was with these treasures untouched, neglected and perplexed. A woman who loves wants to give. It is the duty and business of the man she has married for love to help her to help and give. But I was stupid. My eyes had never been opened. I was stiff with her and difficult to her, because even on my wedding morning there had been, deep down in my soul, voiceless though present, something weakly protesting, a faint perception of wrong-doing, the infinitesimally small, slow-multiplying germs of shame.

I made my breach with the party on the Budget.

In many ways I was disposed to regard the 1909 Budget as a fine piece of statecraft. Its production was certainly a very unexpected display of vigour on the Liberal side. But, on the whole, this movement towards collectivist organisation on the part of the Liberals rather strengthened than weakened my resolve to cross the floor of the house. It made it more necessary, I thought, to leaven the purely obstructive and reactionary elements that were at once manifest in the opposition. I assailed the land taxation proposals in one main speech, and a series of minor speeches in committee. The line of attack I chose was that the land was a great public service that needed to be controlled on broad and far-sighted lines. I had no objection to its nationalisation, but I did object most strenuously to the idea of leaving it in private hands, and attempting to produce beneficial social results through the pressure of taxation upon the land-owning class. That might break it up in an utterly disastrous way. The drift of the government proposals was all in the direction of sweating the landowner to get immediate values from his property, and such a course of action was bound to give us an irritated and vindictive land-owning class, the class upon which we had hitherto relied — not unjustifiably — for certain broad, patriotic services and an influence upon our collective judgments that no other class seemed prepared to exercise. Abolish landlordism if you will, I said, buy it out, but do not drive it to a defensive fight, and leave it still sufficiently strong and wealthy to become a malcontent element in your state. You have taxed and controlled the brewer and the publican until the outraged Liquor Interest has become a national danger. You now propose to do the same thing on a larger scale. You turn a class which has many fine and truly aristocratic traditions towards revolt, and there is nothing in these or any other of your proposals that shows any sense of the need for leadership to replace these traditional leaders you are ousting. This was the substance of my case, and I hammered at it not only in the House, but in the press....

The Kinghampstead division remained for some time insensitive

to my defection.

Then it woke up suddenly, and began, in the columns of the KINGSHAMPSTEAD GUARDIAN, an indignant, confused outcry. I was treated to an open letter, signed "Junius Secundus," and I replied in provocative terms. There were two thinly attended public meetings at different ends of the constituency, and then I had a correspondence with my old friend Parvill, the photographer, which ended in my seeing a deputation.

My impression is that it consisted of about eighteen or twenty people. They had had to come upstairs to me and they were manifestly full of indignation and a little short of breath. There was Parvill himself, J.P., dressed wholly in black — I think to mark his sense of the occasion — and curiously suggestive in his respect for my character and his concern for the honourableness of the KINGHAMPSTEAD GUARDIAN editor, of Mark Antony at the funeral of Cesar. There was Mrs. Bulger, also in mourning; she had never abandoned the widow's streamers since the death of her husband ten years ago, and her loyalty to Liberalism of the severest type was part as it were of her weeds. There was a nephew of Sir Roderick Newton, a bright young Hebrew of the graver type, and a couple of dissenting ministers in high collars and hats that stopped halfway between the bowler of this world and the shovel-hat of heaven. There was also a young solicitor from Lurky done in the horsey style, and there was a very little nervous man with a high brow and a face contracting below as though the jawbones and teeth had been taken out and the features compressed. The rest of the deputation, which included two other public-spirited ladies and several ministers of religion, might have been raked out of any omnibus going Strandward during the May meetings. They thrust Parvill forward as spokesman, and manifested a strong disposition to say "Hear, hear!" to his more strenuous protests provided my eye wasn't upon them at the time.

I regarded this appalling deputation as Parvill's apologetic but quite definite utterances drew to an end. I had a moment of vision. Behind them I saw the wonderful array of skeleton forces that stand for public opinion, that are as much public opinion as exists indeed at the present time. The whole process of politics which bulks so

solidly in history seemed for that clairvoyant instant but a froth of petty motives above abysms of indifference....

Some one had finished. I perceived I had to speak.

"Very well," I said, "I won't keep you long in replying. I'll resign if there isn't a dissolution before next February, and if there is I shan't stand again. You don't want the bother and expense of a bye-election (approving murmurs) if it can be avoided. But I may tell you plainly now that I don't think it will be necessary for me to resign, and the sooner you find my successor the better for the party. The Lords are in a corner; they've got to fight now or never, and I think they will throw out the Budget. Then they will go on fighting. It is a fight that will last for years. They have a sort of social discipline, and you haven't. You Liberals will find yourselves with a country behind you, vaguely indignant perhaps, but totally unprepared with any ideas whatever in the matter, face to face with the problem of bringing the British constitution up-to-date. Anything may happen, provided only that it is sufficiently absurd. If the King backs the Lords — and I don't see why he shouldn't — you have no Republican movement whatever to fall back upon. You lost it during the Era of Good Taste. The country, I say, is destitute of ideas, and you have no ideas to give it. I don't see what you will do.... For my own part, I mean to spend a year or so between a window and my writing-desk."

I paused. "I think, gentlemen," began Parvill, "that we hear all this with very great regret...."

4

My estrangement from Margaret stands in my memory now as something that played itself out within the four walls of our house in Radnor Square, which was, indeed, confined to those limits. I went to and fro between my house and the House of Commons, and the dining-rooms and clubs and offices in which we were preparing our new developments, in a state of aggressive and energetic dissociation, in the nascent state, as a chemist would say. I was free now, and greedy for fresh combination. I had a tremendous sense of released energies. I had got back to the sort of thing I could do, and

to the work that had been shaping itself for so long in my imagination. Our purpose now was plain, bold, and extraordinarily congenial. We meant no less than to organise a new movement in English thought and life, to resuscitate a Public Opinion and prepare the ground for a revised and renovated ruling culture.

For a time I seemed quite wonderfully able to do whatever I wanted to do. Shoesmith responded to my first advances. We decided to create a weekly paper as our nucleus, and Crupp and I set to work forthwith to collect a group of writers and speakers, including Esmeer, Britten, Lord Gane, Neal, and one or two younger men, which should constitute a more or less definite editorial council about me, and meet at a weekly lunch on Tuesday to sustain our general co-operations. We marked our claim upon Toryism even in the colour of our wrapper, and spoke of ourselves collectively as the Blue Weeklies. But our lunches were open to all sorts of guests, and our deliberations were never of a character to control me effectively in my editorial decisions. My only influential councillor at first was old Britten, who became my sub-editor. It was curious how we two had picked up our ancient intimacy again and resumed the easy give and take of our speculative dreaming schoolboy days.

For a time my life centred altogether upon this journalistic work. Britten was an experienced journalist, and I had most of the necessary instincts for the business. We meant to make the paper right and good down to the smallest detail, and we set ourselves at this with extraordinary zeal. It wasn't our intention to show our political motives too markedly at first, and through all the dust storm and tumult and stress of the political struggle of 1910, we made a little intellectual oasis of good art criticism and good writing. It was the firm belief of nearly all of us that the Lords were destined to be beaten badly in 1910, and our game was the longer game of reconstruction that would begin when the shouting and tumult of that immediate conflict were over. Meanwhile we had to get into touch with just as many good minds as possible.

As we felt our feet, I developed slowly and carefully a broadly conceived and consistent political attitude. As I will explain later, we were feminist from the outset, though that caused Shoesmith and Gane great searching of heart; we developed Esmeer's House of

Lords reform scheme into a general cult of the aristocratic virtues, and we did much to humanise and liberalise the narrow excellencies of that Break-up of the Poor Law agitation, which had been organised originally by Beatrice and Sidney Webb. In addition, without any very definite explanation to any one but Esmeer and Isabel Rivers, and as if it was quite a small matter, I set myself to secure a uniform philosophical quality in our columns.

That, indeed, was the peculiar virtue and characteristic of the BLUE WEEKLY. I was now very definitely convinced that much of the confusion and futility of contemporary thought was due to the general need of metaphysical training.... The great mass of people — and not simply common people, but people active and influential in intellectual things — are still quite untrained in the methods of thought and absolutely innocent of any criticism of method; it is scarcely a caricature to call their thinking a crazy patchwork, discontinuous and chaotic. They arrive at conclusions by a kind of accident, and do not suspect any other way may be found to their attainment. A stage above this general condition stands that minority of people who have at some time or other discovered general terms and a certain use for generalisations. They are — to fall back on the ancient technicality — Realists of a crude sort. When I say Realist of course I mean Realist as opposed to Nominalist, and not Realist in the almost diametrically different sense of opposition to Idealist. Such are the Baileys; such, to take their great prototype, was Herbert Spencer (who couldn't read Kant); such are whole regiments of prominent and entirely self-satisfied contemporaries. They go through queer little processes of definition and generalisation and deduction with the completest belief in the validity of the intellectual instrument they are using. They are Realists — Cocksurists — in matter of fact; sentimentalists in behaviour. The Baileys having got to this glorious stage in mental development — it is glorious because it has no doubts — were always talking about training "Experts" to apply the same simple process to all the affairs of mankind. Well, Realism isn't the last word of human wisdom. Modest-minded people, doubtful people, subtle people, and the like — the kind of people William James writes of as "tough-minded," go on beyond this methodical happiness, and are forever after critical of premises

and terms. They are truer — and less confident. They have reached scepticism and the artistic method. They have emerged into the new Nominalism.

Both Isabel and I believe firmly that these differences of intellectual method matter profoundly in the affairs of mankind, that the collective mind of this intricate complex modern state can only function properly upon neo-Nominalist lines. This has always been her side of our mental co-operation rather than mine. Her mind has the light movement that goes so often with natural mental power; she has a wonderful art in illustration, and, as the reader probably knows already, she writes of metaphysical matters with a rare charm and vividness. So far there has been no collection of her papers published, but they are to be found not only in the BLUE WEEKLY columns but scattered about the monthlies; many people must be familiar with her style. It was an intention we did much to realise before our private downfall, that we would use the BLUE WEEKLY to maintain a stream of suggestion against crude thinking, and at last scarcely a week passed but some popular distinction, some large imposing generalisation, was touched to flaccidity by her pen or mine....

I was at great pains to give my philosophical, political, and social matter the best literary and critical backing we could get in London. I hunted sedulously for good descriptive writing and good criticism; I was indefatigable in my readiness to hear and consider, if not to accept advice; I watched every corner of the paper, and had a dozen men alert to get me special matter of the sort that draws in the unattached reader. The chief danger on the literary side of a weekly is that it should fall into the hands of some particular school, and this I watched for closely. It seems impossible to get vividness of apprehension and breadth of view together in the same critic. So it falls to the wise editor to secure the first and impose the second. Directly I detected the shrill partisan note in our criticism, the attempt to puff a poor thing because it was “in the right direction,” or damn a vigorous piece of work because it wasn’t, I tackled the man and had it out with him. Our pay was good enough for that to matter a good deal....

Our distinctive little blue and white poster kept up its neat

persistent appeal to the public eye, and before 1911 was out, the BLUE WEEKLY was printing twenty pages of publishers' advertisements, and went into all the clubs in London and three-quarters of the country houses where week-end parties gather together. Its sale by newsagents and bookstalls grew steadily. One got more and more the reassuring sense of being discussed, and influencing discussion.

5

Our office was at the very top of a big building near the end of Adelphi Terrace; the main window beside my desk, a big undivided window of plate glass, looked out upon Cleopatra's Needle, the corner of the Hotel Cecil, the fine arches of Waterloo Bridge, and the long sweep of south bank with its shot towers and chimneys, past Bankside to the dimly seen piers of the great bridge below the Tower. The dome of St. Paul's just floated into view on the left against the hotel facade. By night and day, in every light and atmosphere, it was a beautiful and various view, alive as a throbbing heart; a perpetual flow of traffic ploughed and splashed the streaming silver of the river, and by night the shapes of things became velvet black and grey, and the water a shining mirror of steel, wearing coruscating gems of light. In the foreground the Embankment trams sailed glowing by, across the water advertisements flashed and flickered, trains went and came and a rolling drift of smoke reflected unseen fires. By day that spectacle was sometimes a marvel of shining wet and wind-cleared atmosphere, sometimes a mystery of drifting fog, sometimes a miracle of crowded details, minutely fine.

As I think of that view, so variously spacious in effect, I am back there, and this sunlit paper might be lamp-lit and lying on my old desk. I see it all again, feel it all again. In the foreground is a green shaded lamp and crumpled galley slips and paged proofs and letters, two or three papers in manuscript, and so forth. In the shadows are chairs and another table bearing papers and books, a rotating bookcase dimly seen, a long window seat black in the darkness, and then the cool unbroken spectacle of the window. How often I would watch some tram-car, some string of barges go from me slowly out

of sight. The people were black animalculae by day, clustering, collecting, dispersing, by night, they were phantom face-specks coming, vanishing, stirring obscurely between light and shade.

I recall many hours at my desk in that room before the crisis came, hours full of the peculiar happiness of effective strenuous work. Once some piece of writing went on, holding me intent and forgetful of time until I looked up from the warm circle of my electric lamp to see the eastward sky above the pale silhouette of the Tower Bridge, flushed and banded brightly with the dawn.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH ~~ THE BESETTING OF SEX

1

Art is selection and so is most autobiography. But I am concerned with a more tangled business than selection, I want to show a contemporary man in relation to the state and social usage, and the social organism in relation to that man. To tell my story at all I have to simplify. I have given now the broad lines of my political development, and how I passed from my initial liberal-socialism to the conception of a constructive aristocracy. I have tried to set that out in the form of a man discovering himself. Incidentally that self-development led to a profound breach with my wife. One has read stories before of husband and wife speaking severally two different languages and coming to an understanding. But Margaret and I began in her dialect, and, as I came more and more to use my own, diverged.

I had thought when I married that the matter of womankind had ended for me. I have tried to tell all that sex and women had been to me up to my married life with Margaret and our fatal entanglement, tried to show the queer, crippled, embarrassed and limited way in which these interests break upon the life of a young man under contemporary conditions. I do not think my lot was a very exceptional one. I missed the chance of sisters and girl playmates, but that is not an uncommon misadventure in an age of small families; I never came to know any woman at all intimately until I was married to Margaret. My earlier love affairs were encounters of sex, under conditions of furtiveness and adventure that made them things in themselves, restricted and unilluminating. From a boyish disposition to be mystical and worshipping towards women I had passed into a disregardful attitude, as though women were things inferior or irrelevant, disturbers in great affairs. For a time Margaret had blotted out all other women; she was so different and so near; she was like a person who stands suddenly in front of a little window through which one has been surveying a crowd. She didn't become

womankind for me so much as eliminate womankind from my world.... And then came this secret separation....

Until this estrangement and the rapid and uncontrollable development of my relations with Isabel which chanced to follow it, I seemed to have solved the problem of women by marriage and disregard. I thought these things were over. I went about my career with Margaret beside me, her brow slightly knit, her manner faintly strenuous, helping, helping; and if we had not altogether abolished sex we had at least so circumscribed and isolated it that it would not have affected the general tenor of our lives in the slightest degree if we had.

And then, clothing itself more and more in the form of Isabel and her problems, this old, this fundamental obsession of my life returned. The thing stole upon my mind so that I was unaware of its invasion and how it was changing our long intimacy. I have already compared the lot of the modern publicist to Machiavelli writing in his study; in his day women and sex were as disregarded in these high affairs as, let us say, the chemistry of air or the will of the beasts in the fields; in ours the case has altogether changed, and woman has come now to stand beside the tall candles, half in the light, half in the mystery of the shadows, besetting, interrupting, demanding unrelentingly an altogether unprecedented attention. I feel that in these matters my life has been almost typical of my time. Woman insists upon her presence. She is no longer a mere physical need, an aesthetic bye-play, a sentimental background; she is a moral and intellectual necessity in a man's life. She comes to the politician and demands, Is she a child or a citizen? Is she a thing or a soul? She comes to the individual man, as she came to me and asks, Is she a cherished weakling or an equal mate, an unavoidable helper? Is she to be tried and trusted or guarded and controlled, bond or free? For if she is a mate, one must at once trust more and exact more, exacting toil, courage, and the hardest, most necessary thing of all, the clearest, most shameless, explicitness of understanding....

2

In all my earlier imaginings of statecraft I had tacitly assumed either

that the relations of the sexes were all right or that anyhow they didn't concern the state. It was a matter they, whoever "they" were, had to settle among themselves. That sort of disregard was possible then. But even before 1906 there were endless intimations that the dams holding back great reservoirs of discussion were crumbling. We political schemers were ploughing wider than any one had ploughed before in the field of social reconstruction. We had also, we realised, to plough deeper. We had to plough down at last to the passionate elements of sexual relationship and examine and decide upon them.

The signs multiplied. In a year or so half the police of the metropolis were scarce sufficient to protect the House from one clamorous aspect of the new problem. The members went about Westminster with an odd, new sense of being beset. A good proportion of us kept up the pretence that the Vote for Women was an isolated fad, and the agitation an epidemic madness that would presently pass. But it was manifest to any one who sought more than comfort in the matter that the streams of women and sympathisers and money forthcoming marked far deeper and wider things than an idle fancy for the franchise. The existing laws and conventions of relationship between Man and Woman were just as unsatisfactory a disorder as anything else in our tumbled confusion of a world, and that also was coming to bear upon statecraft.

My first parliament was the parliament of the Suffragettes. I don't propose to tell here of that amazing campaign, with its absurdities and follies, its courage and devotion. There were aspects of that unquenchable agitation that were absolutely heroic and aspects that were absolutely pitiful. It was unreasonable, unwise, and, except for its one central insistence, astonishingly incoherent. It was amazingly effective. The very incoherence of the demand witnessed, I think, to the forces that lay behind it. It wasn't a simple argument based on a simple assumption; it was the first crude expression of a great mass and mingling of convergent feelings, of a widespread, confused persuasion among modern educated women that the conditions of their relations with men were oppressive, ugly, dishonouring, and had to be altered. They had not merely adopted the Vote as a symbol of equality; it was fairly manifest to me that, given it, they meant to

use it, and to use it perhaps even vindictively and blindly, as a weapon against many things they had every reason to hate....

I remember, with exceptional vividness, that great night early in the session of 1909, when — I think it was — fifty or sixty women went to prison. I had been dining at the Barham's, and Lord Barham and I came down from the direction of St. James's Park into a crowd and a confusion outside the Caxton Hall. We found ourselves drifting with an immense multitude towards Parliament Square and parallel with a silent, close-packed column of girls and women, for the most part white-faced and intent. I still remember the effect of their faces upon me. It was quite different from the general effect of staring about and divided attention one gets in a political procession of men. There was an expression of heroic tension.

There had been a pretty deliberate appeal on the part of the women's organisers to the Unemployed, who had been demonstrating throughout that winter, to join forces with the movement, and the result was shown in the quality of the crowd upon the pavement. It was an ugly, dangerous-looking crowd, but as yet good-tempered and sympathetic. When at last we got within sight of the House the square was a seething seat of excited people, and the array of police on horse and on foot might have been assembled for a revolutionary outbreak. There were dense masses of people up Whitehall, and right on to Westminster Bridge. The scuffle that ended in the arrests was the poorest explosion to follow such stupendous preparations....

3

Later on in that year the women began a new attack. Day and night, and all through the long nights of the Budget sittings, at all the piers of the gates of New Palace Yard and at St. Stephen's Porch, stood women pickets, and watched us silently and reproachfully as we went to and fro. They were women of all sorts, though, of course, the independent worker-class predominated. There were grey-headed old ladies standing there, sturdily charming in the rain; battered-looking, ambiguous women, with something of the desperate bitterness of battered women showing in their eyes; north-country factory girls;

cheaply-dressed suburban women; trim, comfortable mothers of families; valiant-eyed girl graduates and undergraduates; lank, hungry-looking creatures, who stirred one's imagination; one very dainty little woman in deep mourning, I recall, grave and steadfast, with eyes fixed on distant things. Some of those women looked defiant, some timidly aggressive, some full of the stir of adventure, some drooping with cold and fatigue. The supply never ceased. I had a mortal fear that somehow the supply might halt or cease. I found that continual siege of the legislature extraordinarily impressive — infinitely more impressive than the feeble-forcible "ragging" of the more militant section. I thought of the appeal that must be going through the country, summoning the women from countless scattered homes, rooms, colleges, to Westminster.

I remember too the petty little difficulty I felt whether I should ignore these pickets altogether, or lift a hat as I hurried past with averted eyes, or look them in the face as I did so. Towards the end the House evoked an etiquette of salutation.

4

There was a tendency, even on the part of its sympathisers, to treat the whole suffrage agitation as if it were a disconnected issue, irrelevant to all other broad developments of social and political life. We struggled, all of us, to ignore the indicating finger it thrust out before us. "Your schemes, for all their bigness," it insisted to our reluctant, averted minds, "still don't go down to the essential things...."

We have to go deeper, or our inadequate children's insufficient children will starve amidst harvests of earless futility. That conservatism which works in every class to preserve in its essentials the habitual daily life is all against a profounder treatment of political issues. The politician, almost as absurdly as the philosopher, tends constantly, in spite of magnificent preludes, vast intimations, to specialise himself out of the reality he has so stupendously summoned — he bolts back to littleness. The world has to be moulded anew, he continues to admit, but without, he adds, any risk of upsetting his week-end visits, his morning cup of tea....

The discussion of the relations of men and women disturbs every one. It reacts upon the private life of every one who attempts it. And at any particular time only a small minority have a personal interest in changing the established state of affairs. Habit and interest are in a constantly recruited majority against conscious change and adjustment in these matters. Drift rules us. The great mass of people, and an overwhelming proportion of influential people, are people who have banished their dreams and made their compromise. Wonderful and beautiful possibilities are no longer to be thought about. They have given up any aspirations for intense love, their splendid offspring, for keen delights, have accepted a cultivated kindliness and an uncritical sense of righteousness as their compensation. It's a settled affair with them, a settled, dangerous affair. Most of them fear, and many hate, the slightest reminder of those abandoned dreams. As Dayton once said to the Pentagram Circle, when we were discussing the problem of a universal marriage and divorce law throughout the Empire, "I am for leaving all these things alone." And then, with a groan in his voice, "Leave them alone! Leave them all alone!"

That was his whole speech for the evening, in a note of suppressed passion, and presently, against all our etiquette, he got up and went out.

For some years after my marriage, I too was for leaving them alone. I developed a dread and dislike for romance, for emotional music, for the human figure in art — turning my heart to landscape. I wanted to sneer at lovers and their ecstasies, and was uncomfortable until I found the effective sneer. In matters of private morals these were my most uncharitable years. I didn't want to think of these things any more for ever. I hated the people whose talk or practice showed they were not of my opinion. I wanted to believe that their views were immoral and objectionable and contemptible, because I had decided to treat them as at that level. I was, in fact, falling into the attitude of the normal decent man.

And yet one cannot help thinking! The sensible moralised man finds it hard to escape the stream of suggestion that there are still dreams beyond these commonplace acquiescences, — the appeal of beauty suddenly shining upon one, the mothlike stirrings of serene

summer nights, the sweetness of distant music....

It is one of the paradoxical factors in our public life at the present time, which penalises abandonment to love so abundantly and so heavily, that power, influence and control fall largely to unencumbered people and sterile people and people who have married for passionless purposes, people whose very deficiency in feeling has left them free to follow ambition, people beautyblind, who don't understand what it is to fall in love, what it is to desire children or have them, what it is to feel in their blood and bodies the supreme claim of good births and selective births above all other affairs in life, people almost of necessity averse from this most fundamental aspect of existence....

5

It wasn't, however, my deepening sympathy with and understanding of the position of women in general, or the change in my ideas about all these intimate things my fast friendship with Isabel was bringing about, that led me to the heretical views I have in the last five years dragged from the region of academic and timid discussion into the field of practical politics. Those influences, no doubt, have converged to the same end, and given me a powerful emotional push upon my road, but it was a broader and colder view of things that first determined me in my attempt to graft the Endowment of Motherhood in some form or other upon British Imperialism. Now that I am exiled from the political world, it is possible to estimate just how effectually that grafting has been done.

I have explained how the ideas of a trained aristocracy and a universal education grew to paramount importance in my political scheme. It is but a short step from this to the question of the quantity and quality of births in the community, and from that again to these forbidden and fear-beset topics of marriage, divorce, and the family organisation. A sporadic discussion of these aspects had been going on for years, a Eugenic society existed, and articles on the Falling Birth Rate, and the Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit were staples of the monthly magazines. But beyond an intermittent scolding of prosperous childless people in general — one never addressed them

in particular — nothing was done towards arresting those adverse processes. Almost against my natural inclination, I found myself forced to go into these things. I came to the conclusion that under modern conditions the isolated private family, based on the existing marriage contract, was failing in its work. It wasn't producing enough children, and children good enough and well trained enough for the demands of the developing civilised state. Our civilisation was growing outwardly, and decaying in its intimate substance, and unless it was presently to collapse, some very extensive and courageous reorganisation was needed. The old haphazard system of pairing, qualified more and more by worldly discretions, no longer secures a young population numerous enough or good enough for the growing needs and possibilities of our Empire. Statecraft sits weaving splendid garments, no doubt, but with a puny, ugly, insufficient baby in the cradle.

No one so far has dared to take up this problem as a present question for statecraft, but it comes unheralded, unadvocated, and sits at every legislative board. Every improvement is provisional except the improvement of the race, and it became more and more doubtful to me if we were improving the race at all! Splendid and beautiful and courageous people must come together and have children, women with their fine senses and glorious devotion must be freed from the net that compels them to be celibate, compels them to be childless and useless, or to bear children ignobly to men whom need and ignorance and the treacherous pressure of circumstances have forced upon them. We all know that, and so few dare even to whisper it for fear that they should seem, in seeking to save the family, to threaten its existence. It is as if a party of pigmies in a not too capacious room had been joined by a carnivorous giant — and decided to go on living happily by cutting him dead....

The problem the developing civilised state has to solve is how it can get the best possible increase under the best possible conditions. I became more and more convinced that the independent family unit of to-day, in which the man is master of the wife and owner of the children, in which all are dependent upon him, subordinated to his enterprises and liable to follow his fortunes up or down, does not supply anything like the best conceivable conditions. We want to

modernise the family footing altogether. An enormous premium both in pleasure and competitive efficiency is put upon voluntary childlessness, and enormous inducements are held out to women to subordinate instinctive and selective preferences to social and material considerations.

The practical reaction of modern conditions upon the old tradition of the family is this: that beneath the pretence that nothing is changing, secretly and with all the unwholesomeness of secrecy everything is changed. Offspring fall away, the birth rate falls and falls most among just the most efficient and active and best adapted classes in the community. The species is recruited from among its failures and from among less civilised aliens. Contemporary civilisations are in effect burning the best of their possible babies in the furnaces that run the machinery. In the United States the native Anglo-American strain has scarcely increased at all since 1830, and in most Western European countries the same is probably true of the ablest and most energetic elements in the community. The women of these classes still remain legally and practically dependent and protected, with the only natural excuse for their dependence gone....

The modern world becomes an immense spectacle of unsatisfactory groupings; here childless couples bored to death in the hopeless effort to sustain an incessant honeymoon, here homes in which a solitary child grows unsocially, here small two or three-child homes that do no more than continue the culture of the parents at a great social cost, here numbers of unhappy educated but childless married women, here careless, decivilised fecund homes, here orphanages and asylums for the heedlessly begotten. It is just the disorderly proliferation of Bromstead over again, in lives instead of in houses.

What is the good, what is the common sense, of rectifying boundaries, pushing research and discovery, building cities, improving all the facilities of life, making great fleets, waging wars, while this aimless decadence remains the quality of the biological outlook?...

It is difficult now to trace how I changed from my early aversion until I faced this mass of problems. But so far back as 1910 I had it clear in my mind that I would rather fail utterly than participate in all

the surrenders of mind and body that are implied in Dayton's snarl of "Leave it alone; leave it all alone!" Marriage and the begetting and care of children, is the very ground substance in the life of the community. In a world in which everything changes, in which fresh methods, fresh adjustments and fresh ideas perpetually renew the circumstances of life, it is preposterous that we should not even examine into these matters, should rest content to be ruled by the uncriticised traditions of a barbaric age.

Now, it seems to me that the solution of this problem is also the solution of the woman's individual problem. The two go together, are right and left of one question. The only conceivable way out from our IMPASSE lies in the recognition of parentage, that is to say of adequate mothering, as no longer a chance product of individual passions but a service rendered to the State. Women must become less and less subordinated to individual men, since this works out in a more or less complete limitation, waste, and sterilisation of their essentially social function; they must become more and more subordinated as individually independent citizens to the collective purpose. Or, to express the thing by a familiar phrase, the highly organised, scientific state we desire must, if it is to exist at all, base itself not upon the irresponsible man-ruled family, but upon the matriarchal family, the citizen-ship and freedom of women and the public endowment of motherhood.

After two generations of confused and experimental revolt it grows clear to modern women that a conscious, deliberate motherhood and mothering is their special function in the State, and that a personal subordination to an individual man with an unlimited power of control over this intimate and supreme duty is a degradation. No contemporary woman of education put to the test is willing to recognise any claim a man can make upon her but the claim of her freely-given devotion to him. She wants the reality of her choice and she means "family" while a man too often means only possession. This alters the spirit of the family relationships fundamentally. Their form remains just what it was when woman was esteemed a pretty, desirable, and incidentally a child-producing, chattel. Against these time-honoured ideas the new spirit of womanhood struggles in shame, astonishment, bitterness, and tears....

I confess myself altogether feminist. I have no doubts in the matter. I want this coddling and browbeating of women to cease. I want to see women come in, free and fearless, to a full participation in the collective purpose of mankind. Women, I am convinced, are as fine as men; they can be as wise as men; they are capable of far greater devotion than men. I want to see them citizens, with a marriage law framed primarily for them and for their protection and the good of the race, and not for men's satisfactions. I want to see them bearing and rearing good children in the State as a generously rewarded public duty and service, choosing their husbands freely and discerningly, and in no way enslaved by or subordinated to the men they have chosen. The social consciousness of women seems to me an unworked, an almost untouched mine of wealth for the constructive purpose of the world. I want to change the respective values of the family group altogether, and make the home indeed the women's kingdom and the mother the owner and responsible guardian of her children.

It is no use pretending that this is not novel and revolutionary; it is. The Endowment of Motherhood implies a new method of social organization, a rearrangement of the social unit, untried in human experience — as untried as electric traction was or flying in 1800. Of course, it may work out to modify men's ideas of marriage profoundly. To me that is a secondary consideration. I do not believe that particular assertion myself, because I am convinced that a practical monogamy is a psychological necessity to the mass of civilised people. But even if I did believe it I should still keep to my present line, because it is the only line that will prevent a highly organised civilisation from ending in biological decay. The public Endowment of Motherhood is the only possible way which will ensure the permanently developing civilised state at which all constructive minds are aiming. A point is reached in the life-history of a civilisation when either this reconstruction must be effected or the quality and MORALE of the population prove insufficient for the needs of the developing organisation. It is not so much moral decadence that will destroy us as moral inadaptability. The old code fails under the new needs. The only alternative to this profound reconstruction is a decay in human quality and social collapse. Either

this unprecedented rearrangement must be achieved by our civilisation, or it must presently come upon a phase of disorder and crumble and perish, as Rome perished, as France declines, as the strain of the Pilgrim Fathers dwindles out of America. Whatever hope there may be in the attempt therefore, there is no alternative to the attempt.

6

I wanted political success now dearly enough, but not at the price of constructive realities. These questions were no doubt monstrously dangerous in the political world; there wasn't a politician alive who didn't look scared at the mention of "The Family," but if raising these issues were essential to the social reconstructions on which my life was set, that did not matter. It only implied that I should take them up with deliberate caution. There was no release because of risk or difficulty.

The question of whether I should commit myself to some open project in this direction was going on in my mind concurrently with my speculations about a change of party, like bass and treble in a complex piece of music. The two drew to a conclusion together. I would not only go over to Imperialism, but I would attempt to biologise Imperialism.

I thought at first that I was undertaking a monstrous uphill task. But as I came to look into the possibilities of the matter, a strong persuasion grew up in my mind that this panic fear of legislative proposals affecting the family basis was excessive, that things were much riper for development in this direction than old-experienced people out of touch with the younger generation imagined, that to phrase the thing in a parliamentary fashion, "something might be done in the constituencies" with the Endowment of Motherhood forthwith, provided only that it was made perfectly clear that anything a sane person could possibly intend by "morality" was left untouched by these proposals.

I went to work very carefully. I got Roper of the DAILY TELEPHONE and Burkett of the DIAL to try over a silly-season discussion of State Help for Mothers, and I put a series of articles on

eugenics, upon the fall in the birth-rate, and similar topics in the BLUE WEEKLY, leading up to a tentative and generalised advocacy of the public endowment of the nation's children. I was more and more struck by the acceptance won by a sober and restrained presentation of this suggestion.

And then, in the fourth year of the BLUE WEEKLY'S career, came the Handitch election, and I was forced by the clamour of my antagonist, and very willingly forced, to put my convictions to the test. I returned triumphantly to Westminster with the Public Endowment of Motherhood as part of my open profession and with the full approval of the party press. Applauding benches of Imperialists cheered me on my way to the table between the whips.

That second time I took the oath I was not one of a crowd of new members, but salient, an event, a symbol of profound changes and new purposes in the national life.

Here it is my political book comes to an end, and in a sense my book ends altogether. For the rest is but to tell how I was swept out of this great world of political possibilities. I close this Third Book as I opened it, with an admission of difficulties and complexities, but now with a pile of manuscript before me I have to confess them unsurmounted and still entangled.

Yet my aim was a final simplicity. I have sought to show my growing realisation that the essential quality of all political and social effort is the development of a great race mind behind the interplay of individual lives. That is the collective human reality, the basis of morality, the purpose of devotion. To that our lives must be given, from that will come the perpetual fresh release and further ennoblement of individual lives....

I have wanted to make that idea of a collective mind play in this book the part United Italy plays in Machiavelli's PRINCE. I have called it the hinterland of reality, shown it accumulating a dominating truth and rightness which must force men's now sporadic motives more and more into a disciplined and understanding relation to a plan. And I have tried to indicate how I sought to serve this great clarification of our confusions....

Now I come back to personality and the story of my self-betrayal, and how it is I have had to leave all that far-reaching scheme of

mine, a mere project and beginning for other men to take or leave as it pleases them.

BOOK THE FOURTH: ISABEL

CHAPTER THE FIRST ~~ LOVE AND SUCCESS

1

I come to the most evasive and difficult part of my story, which is to tell how Isabel and I have made a common wreck of our joint lives.

It is not the telling of one simple disastrous accident. There was a vein in our natures that led to this collapse, gradually and at this point and that it crept to the surface. One may indeed see our destruction — for indeed politically we could not be more extinct if we had been shot dead — in the form of a catastrophe as disconnected and conclusive as a meteoric stone falling out of heaven upon two friends and crushing them both. But I do not think that is true to our situation or ourselves. We were not taken by surprise. The thing was in us and not from without, it was akin to our way of thinking and our habitual attitudes; it had, for all its impulsive effect, a certain necessity. We might have escaped no doubt, as two men at a hundred yards may shoot at each other with pistols for a considerable time and escape. But it isn't particularly reasonable to talk of the contrariety of fate if they both get hit.

Isabel and I were dangerous to each other for several years of friendship, and not quite unwittingly so.

In writing this, moreover, there is a very great difficulty in steering my way between two equally undesirable tones in the telling. In the first place I do not want to seem to confess my sins with a penitence I am very doubtful if I feel. Now that I have got Isabel we can no doubt count the cost of it and feel unquenchable regrets, but I am not sure whether, if we could be put back now into such circumstances as we were in a year ago, or two years ago, whether with my eyes fully open I should not do over again very much as I did. And on the other hand I do not want to justify the things we have done. We are two bad people — if there is to be any classification of good and bad at all, we have acted badly, and quite apart from any other considerations we've largely wasted our own very great possibilities. But it is part of a queer humour that underlies

all this, that I find myself slipping again and again into a sentimental treatment of our case that is as unpremeditated as it is insincere. When I am a little tired after a morning's writing I find the faint suggestion getting into every other sentence that our blunders and misdeeds embodied, after the fashion of the prophet Hosea, profound moral truths. Indeed, I feel so little confidence in my ability to keep this altogether out of my book that I warn the reader here that in spite of anything he may read elsewhere in the story, intimating however shyly an esoteric and exalted virtue in our proceedings, the plain truth of this business is that Isabel and I wanted each other with a want entirely formless, inconsiderate, and overwhelming. And though I could tell you countless delightful and beautiful things about Isabel, were this a book in her praise, I cannot either analyse that want or account for its extreme intensity.

I will confess that deep in my mind there is a belief in a sort of wild rightness about any love that is fraught with beauty, but that eludes me and vanishes again, and is not, I feel, to be put with the real veracities and righteousnesses and virtues in the paddocks and menageries of human reason....

We have already a child, and Margaret was childless, and I find myself prone to insist upon that, as if it was a justification. But, indeed, when we became lovers there was small thought of Eugenics between us. Ours was a mutual and not a philoprogenitive passion. Old Nature behind us may have had such purposes with us, but it is not for us to annex her intentions by a moralising afterthought. There isn't, in fact, any decent justification for us whatever — at that the story must stand.

But if there is no justification there is at least a very effective excuse in the mental confusedness of our time. The evasion of that passionately thorough exposition of belief and of the grounds of morality, which is the outcome of the mercenary religious compromises of the late Vatican period, the stupid suppression of anything but the most timid discussion of sexual morality in our literature and drama, the pervading cultivated and protected muddle-headedness, leaves mentally vigorous people with relatively enormous possibilities of destruction and little effective help. They find themselves confronted by the habits and prejudices of manifestly

commonplace people, and by that extraordinary patched-up Christianity, the cult of a “Bromsteadised” deity, diffused, scattered, and aimless, which hides from examination and any possibility of faith behind the plea of good taste. A god about whom there is delicacy is far worse than no god at all. We are FORCED to be laws unto ourselves and to live experimentally. It is inevitable that a considerable fraction of just that bolder, more initiatory section of the intellectual community, the section that can least be spared from the collective life in a period of trial and change, will drift into such emotional crises and such disaster as overtook us. Most perhaps will escape, but many will go down, many more than the world can spare. It is the unwritten law of all our public life, and the same holds true of America, that an honest open scandal ends a career. England in the last quarter of a century has wasted half a dozen statesmen on this score; she would, I believe, reject Nelson now if he sought to serve her. Is it wonderful that to us fretting here in exile this should seem the cruellest as well as the most foolish elimination of a necessary social element? It destroys no vice; for vice hides by nature. It not only rewards dullness as if it were positive virtue, but sets an enormous premium upon hypocrisy. That is my case, and that is why I am telling this side of my story with so much explicitness.

2

Ever since the Kinghamstead election I had maintained what seemed a desultory friendship with Isabel. At first it was rather Isabel kept it up than I. Whenever Margaret and I went down to that villa, with its three or four acres of garden and shrubbery about it, which fulfilled our election promise to live at Kinghamstead, Isabel would turn up in a state of frank cheerfulness, rejoicing at us, and talk all she was reading and thinking to me, and stay for all the rest of the day. In her shameless liking for me she was as natural as a savage. She would exercise me vigorously at tennis, while Margaret lay and rested her back in the afternoon, or guide me for some long ramble that dodged the suburban and congested patches of the constituency with amazing skill. She took possession of me in that unabashed, straight-minded way a girl will sometimes adopt with a man, chose my path or

criticised my game with a motherly solicitude for my welfare that was absurd and delightful. And we talked. We discussed and criticised the stories of novels, scraps of history, pictures, social questions, socialism, the policy of the Government. She was young and most unevenly informed, but she was amazingly sharp and quick and good. Never before in my life had I known a girl of her age, or a woman of her quality. I had never dreamt there was such talk in the world. Kinghamstead became a lightless place when she went to Oxford. Heaven knows how much that may not have precipitated my abandonment of the seat!

She went to Ridout College, Oxford, and that certainly weighed with me when presently after my breach with the Liberals various little undergraduate societies began to ask for lectures and discussions. I favoured Oxford. I declared openly I did so because of her. At that time I think we neither of us suspected the possibility of passion that lay like a coiled snake in the path before us. It seemed to us that we had the quaintest, most delightful friendship in the world; she was my pupil, and I was her guide, philosopher, and friend. People smiled indulgently — even Margaret smiled indulgently — at our attraction for one another.

Such friendships are not uncommon nowadays — among easy-going, liberal-minded people. For the most part, there's no sort of harm, as people say, in them. The two persons concerned are never supposed to think of the passionate love that hovers so close to the friendship, or if they do, then they banish the thought. I think we kept the thought as permanently in exile as any one could do. If it did in odd moments come into our heads we pretended elaborately it wasn't there.

Only we were both very easily jealous of each other's attention, and tremendously insistent upon each other's preference.

I remember once during the Oxford days an intimation that should have set me thinking, and I suppose discreetly disentangling myself. It was one Sunday afternoon, and it must have been about May, for the trees and shrubs of Ridout College were gay with blossom, and fresh with the new sharp greens of spring. I had walked talking with Isabel and a couple of other girls through the wide gardens of the place, seen and criticised the new brick pond, nodded to the daughter

of this friend and that in the hammocks under the trees, and picked a way among the scattered tea-parties on the lawn to our own circle on the grass under a Siberian crab near the great bay window. There I sat and ate great quantities of cake, and discussed the tactics of the Suffragettes. I had made some comments upon the spirit of the movement in an address to the men in Pembroke, and it had got abroad, and a group of girls and women dons were now having it out with me.

I forget the drift of the conversation, or what it was made Isabel interrupt me. She did interrupt me. She had been lying prone on the ground at my right hand, chin on fists, listening thoughtfully, and I was sitting beside old Lady Evershead on a garden seat. I turned to Isabel's voice, and saw her face uplifted, and her dear cheeks and nose and forehead all splashed and barred with sunlight and the shadows of the twigs of the trees behind me. And something — an infinite tenderness, stabbed me. It was a keen physical feeling, like nothing I had ever felt before. It had a quality of tears in it. For the first time in my narrow and concentrated life another human being had really thrust into my being and gripped my very heart.

Our eyes met perplexed for an extraordinary moment. Then I turned back and addressed myself a little stiffly to the substance of her intervention. For some time I couldn't look at her again.

From that time forth I knew I loved Isabel beyond measure.

Yet it is curious that it never occurred to me for a year or so that this was likely to be a matter of passion between us. I have told how definitely I put my imagination into harness in those matters at my marriage, and I was living now in a world of big interests, where there is neither much time nor inclination for deliberate love-making. I suppose there is a large class of men who never meet a girl or a woman without thinking of sex, who meet a friend's daughter and decide: "Mustn't get friendly with her — wouldn't DO," and set invisible bars between themselves and all the wives in the world. Perhaps that is the way to live. Perhaps there is no other method than this effectual annihilation of half — and the most sympathetic and attractive half — of the human beings in the world, so far as any frank intercourse is concerned. I am quite convinced anyhow that such a qualified intimacy as ours, such a drifting into the sense of

possession, such untrammeled conversation with an invisible, implacable limit set just where the intimacy glows, it is no kind of tolerable compromise. If men and women are to go so far together, they must be free to go as far as they may want to go, without the vindictive destruction that has come upon us. On the basis of the accepted codes the jealous people are right, and the liberal-minded ones are playing with fire. If people are not to love, then they must be kept apart. If they are not to be kept apart, then we must prepare for an unprecedented toleration of lovers.

Isabel was as unforeseeing as I to begin with, but sex marches into the life of an intelligent girl with demands and challenges far more urgent than the mere call of curiosity and satiable desire that comes to a young man. No woman yet has dared to tell the story of that unfolding. She attracted men, and she encouraged them, and watched them, and tested them, and dismissed them, and concealed the substance of her thoughts about them in the way that seems instinctive in a natural-minded girl. There was even an engagement — amidst the protests and disapproval of the college authorities. I never saw the man, though she gave me a long history of the affair, to which I listened with a forced and insincere sympathy. She struck me oddly as taking the relationship for a thing in itself, and regardless of its consequences. After a time she became silent about him, and then threw him over; and by that time, I think, for all that she was so much my junior, she knew more about herself and me than I was to know for several years to come.

We didn't see each other for some months after my resignation, but we kept up a frequent correspondence. She said twice over that she wanted to talk to me, that letters didn't convey what one wanted to say, and I went up to Oxford pretty definitely to see her — though I combined it with one or two other engagements — somewhere in February. Insensibly she had become important enough for me to make journeys for her.

But we didn't see very much of one another on that occasion. There was something in the air between us that made a faint embarrassment; the mere fact, perhaps, that she had asked me to come up.

A year before she would have dashed off with me quite

unscrupulously to talk alone, carried me off to her room for an hour with a minute of chaperonage to satisfy the rules. Now there was always some one or other near us that it seemed impossible to exorcise.

We went for a walk on the Sunday afternoon with old Fortescue, K. C., who'd come up to see his two daughters, both great friends of Isabel's, and some mute inglorious don whose name I forget, but who was in a state of marked admiration for her. The six of us played a game of conversational entanglements throughout, and mostly I was impressing the Fortescue girls with the want of mental concentration possible in a rising politician. We went down Carfex, I remember, to Folly Bridge, and inspected the Barges, and then back by way of Merton to the Botanic Gardens and Magdalen Bridge. And in the Botanic Gardens she got almost her only chance with me.

"Last months at Oxford," she said.

"And then?" I asked.

"I'm coming to London," she said.

"To write?"

She was silent for a moment. Then she said abruptly, with that quick flush of hers and a sudden boldness in her eyes: "I'm going to work with you. Why shouldn't I?"

3

Here, again, I suppose I had a fair warning of the drift of things. I seem to remember myself in the train to Paddington, sitting with a handful of papers — galley proofs for the BLUE WEEKLY, I suppose — on my lap, and thinking about her and that last sentence of hers, and all that it might mean to me.

It is very hard to recall even the main outline of anything so elusive as a meditation. I know that the idea of working with her gripped me, fascinated me. That my value in her life seemed growing filled me with pride and a kind of gratitude. I was already in no doubt that her value in my life was tremendous. It made it none the less, that in those days I was obsessed by the idea that she was transitory, and bound to go out of my life again. It is no good trying to set too fine a face upon this complex business, there is gold and clay and

sunlight and savagery in every love story, and a multitude of elvish elements peeped out beneath the fine rich curtain of affection that masked our future. I've never properly weighed how immensely my vanity was gratified by her clear preference for me. Nor can I for a moment determine how much deliberate intention I hide from myself in this affair.

Certainly I think some part of me must have been saying in the train: "Leave go of her. Get away from her. End this now." I can't have been so stupid as not to have had that in my mind....

If she had been only a beautiful girl in love with me, I think I could have managed the situation. Once or twice since my marriage and before Isabel became of any significance in my life, there had been incidents with other people, flashes of temptation — no telling is possible of the thing resisted. I think that mere beauty and passion would not have taken me. But between myself and Isabel things were incurably complicated by the intellectual sympathy we had, the jolly march of our minds together. That has always mattered enormously. I should have wanted her company nearly as badly if she had been some crippled old lady; we would have hunted shoulder to shoulder, as two men. Only two men would never have had the patience and readiness for one another we two had. I had never for years met any one with whom I could be so carelessly sure of understanding or to whom I could listen so easily and fully. She gave me, with an extraordinary completeness, that rare, precious effect of always saying something fresh, and yet saying it so that it filled into and folded about all the little recesses and corners of my mind with an infinite, soft familiarity. It is impossible to explain that. It is like trying to explain why her voice, her voice heard speaking to any one — heard speaking in another room — pleased my ears.

She was the only Oxford woman who took a first that year. She spent the summer in Scotland and Yorkshire, writing to me continually of all she now meant to do, and stirring my imagination. She came to London for the autumn session. For a time she stayed with old Lady Colbeck, but she fell out with her hostess when it became clear she wanted to write, not novels, but journalism, and then she set every one talking by taking a flat near Victoria and installing as her sole protector an elderly German governess she had

engaged through a scholastic agency. She began writing, not in that copious flood the undisciplined young woman of gifts is apt to produce, but in exactly the manner of an able young man, experimenting with forms, developing the phrasing of opinions, taking a definite line. She was, of course, tremendously discussed. She was disapproved of, but she was invited out to dinner. She got rather a reputation for the management of elderly distinguished men. It was an odd experience to follow Margaret's soft rustle of silk into some big drawing-room and discover my snub-nosed girl in the blue sack transformed into a shining creature in the soft splendour of pearls and ivory-white and lace, and with a silver band about her dusky hair.

For a time we did not meet very frequently, though always she professed an unblushing preference for my company, and talked my views and sought me out. Then her usefulness upon the BLUE WEEKLY began to link us closelier. She would come up to the office, and sit by the window, and talk over the proofs of the next week's articles, going through my intentions with a keen investigatory scalpel. Her talk always puts me in mind of a steel blade. Her writing became rapidly very good; she had a wit and a turn of the phrase that was all her own. We seemed to have forgotten the little shadow of embarrassment that had fallen over our last meeting at Oxford. Everything seemed natural and easy between us in those days; a little unconventional, but that made it all the brighter.

We developed something like a custom of walks, about once a week or so, and letters and notes became frequent. I won't pretend things were not keenly personal between us, but they had an air of being innocently mental. She used to call me "Master" in our talks, a monstrous and engaging flattery, and I was inordinately proud to have her as my pupil. Who wouldn't have been? And we went on at that distance for a long time — until within a year of the Handitch election.

After Lady Colbeck threw her up as altogether too "intellectual" for comfortable control, Isabel was taken up by the Balfes in a less formal and compromising manner, and week-ended with them and their cousin Leonora Sparling, and spent large portions of her summer with them in Herefordshire. There was a lover or so in that

time, men who came a little timidly at this brilliant young person with the frank manner and the Amazonian mind, and, she declared, received her kindly refusals with manifest relief. And Arnold Shoesmith struck up a sort of friendship that oddly imitated mine. She took a liking to him because he was clumsy and shy and inexpressive; she embarked upon the dangerous interest of helping him to find his soul. I had some twinges of jealousy about that. I didn't see the necessity of him. He invaded her time, and I thought that might interfere with her work. If their friendship stole some hours from Isabel's writing, it did not for a long while interfere with our walks or our talks, or the close intimacy we had together.

4

Then suddenly Isabel and I found ourselves passionately in love.

The change came so entirely without warning or intention that I find it impossible now to tell the order of its phases. What disturbed pebble started the avalanche I cannot trace. Perhaps it was simply that the barriers between us and this masked aspect of life had been wearing down unperceived.

And there came a change in Isabel. It was like some change in the cycle of nature, like the onset of spring — a sharp brightness, an uneasiness. She became restless with her work; little encounters with men began to happen, encounters not quite in the quality of the earlier proposals; and then came an odd incident of which she told me, but somehow, I felt, didn't tell me completely. She told me all she was able to tell me. She had been at a dance at the Ropers', and a man, rather well known in London, had kissed her. The thing amazed her beyond measure. It was the sort of thing immediately possible between any man and any woman, that one never expects to happen until it happens. It had the surprising effect of a judge generally known to be bald suddenly whipping off his wig in court. No absolutely unexpected revelation could have quite the same quality of shock. She went through the whole thing to me with a remarkable detachment, told me how she had felt — and the odd things it seemed to open to her.

"I WANT to be kissed, and all that sort of thing," she avowed. "I

suppose every woman does."

She added after a pause: "And I don't want any one to do it."

This struck me as queerly expressive of the woman's attitude to these things. "Some one presently will — solve that," I said.

"Some one will perhaps."

I was silent.

"Some one will," she said, almost viciously. "And then we'll have to stop these walks and talks of ours, dear Master.... I'll be sorry to give them up."

"It's part of the requirements of the situation," I said, "that he should be — oh, very interesting! He'll start, no doubt, all sorts of new topics, and open no end of attractive vistas.... You can't, you know, always go about in a state of pupillage."

"I don't think I can," said Isabel. "But it's only just recently I've begun to doubt about it."

I remember these things being said, but just how much we saw and understood, and just how far we were really keeping opaque to each other then, I cannot remember. But it must have been quite soon after this that we spent nearly a whole day together at Kew Gardens, with the curtains up and the barriers down, and the thing that had happened plain before our eyes. I don't remember we ever made any declaration. We just assumed the new footing....

It was a day early in that year — I think in January, because there was thin, crisp snow on the grass, and we noted that only two other people had been to the Pagoda that day. I've a curious impression of greenish colour, hot, moist air and huge palm fronds about very much of our talk, as though we were nearly all the time in the Tropical House. But I also remember very vividly looking at certain orange and red spray-like flowers from Patagonia, which could not have been there. It is a curious thing that I do not remember we made any profession of passionate love for one another; we talked as though the fact of our intense love for each other had always been patent between us. There was so long and frank an intimacy between us that we talked far more like brother and sister or husband and wife than two people engaged in the war of the sexes. We wanted to know what we were going to do, and whatever we did we meant to do in the most perfect concert. We both felt an extraordinary accession of

friendship and tenderness then, and, what again is curious, very little passion. But there was also, in spite of the perplexities we faced, an immense satisfaction about that day. It was as if we had taken off something that had hindered our view of each other, like people who unvizored to talk more easily at a masked ball.

I've had since to view our relations from the standpoint of the ordinary observer. I find that vision in the most preposterous contrast with all that really went on between us. I suppose there I should figure as a wicked seducer, while an unprotected girl succumbed to my fascinations. As a matter of fact, it didn't occur to us that there was any personal inequality between us. I knew her for my equal mentally; in so many things she was beyond comparison cleverer than I; her courage outwent mine. The quick leap of her mind evoked a flash of joy in mine like the response of an induction wire; her way of thinking was like watching sunlight reflected from little waves upon the side of a boat, it was so bright, so mobile, so variously and easily true to its law. In the back of our minds we both had a very definite belief that making love is full of joyous, splendid, tender, and exciting possibilities, and we had to discuss why we shouldn't be to the last degree lovers.

Now, what I should like to print here, if it were possible, in all the screaming emphasis of red ink, is this: that the circumstances of my upbringing and the circumstances of Isabel's upbringing had left not a shadow of belief or feeling that the utmost passionate love between us was in itself intrinsically WRONG. I've told with the fullest particularity just all that I was taught or found out for myself in these matters, and Isabel's reading and thinking, and the fierce silences of her governesses and the breathless warnings of teachers, and all the social and religious influences that had been brought to bear upon her, had worked out to the same void of conviction. The code had failed with us altogether. We didn't for a moment consider anything but the expediency of what we both, for all our quiet faces and steady eyes, wanted most passionately to do.

Well, here you have the state of mind of whole brigades of people, and particularly of young people, nowadays. The current morality hasn't gripped them; they don't really believe in it at all. They may render it lip-service, but that is quite another thing. There

are scarcely any tolerable novels to justify its prohibitions; its prohibitions do, in fact, remain unjustified amongst these ugly suppressions. You may, if you choose, silence the admission of this in literature and current discussion; you will not prevent it working out in lives. People come up to the great moments of passion crudely unaware, astoundingly unprepared as no really civilised and intelligently planned community would let any one be unprepared. They find themselves hedged about with customs that have no organic hold upon them, and mere discretions all generous spirits are disposed to despise.

Consider the infinite absurdities of it! Multitudes of us are trying to run this complex modern community on a basis of "Hush" without explaining to our children or discussing with them anything about love and marriage at all. Doubt and knowledge creep about in enforced darknesses and silences. We are living upon an ancient tradition which everybody doubts and nobody has ever analysed. We affect a tremendous and cultivated shyness and delicacy about imperatives of the most arbitrary appearance. What ensues? What did ensue with us, for example? On the one hand was a great desire, robbed of any appearance of shame and grossness by the power of love, and on the other hand, the possible jealousy of so and so, the disapproval of so and so, material risks and dangers. It is only in the retrospect that we have been able to grasp something of the effectual case against us. The social prohibition lit by the intense glow of our passion, presented itself as preposterous, irrational, arbitrary, and ugly, a monster fit only for mockery. We might be ruined! Well, there is a phase in every love affair, a sort of heroic hysteria, when death and ruin are agreeable additions to the prospect. It gives the business a gravity, a solemnity. Timid people may hesitate and draw back with a vague instinctive terror of the immensity of the oppositions they challenge, but neither Isabel nor I are timid people.

We weighed what was against us. We decided just exactly as scores of thousands of people have decided in this very matter, that if it were possible to keep this thing to ourselves, there was nothing against it. And so we took our first step. With the hunger of love in us, it was easy to conclude we might be lovers, and still keep everything to ourselves. That cleared our minds of the one persistent

obstacle that mattered to us — the haunting presence of Margaret.

And then we found, as all those scores of thousands of people scattered about us have found, that we could not keep it to ourselves. Love will out. All the rest of this story is the chronicle of that. Love with sustained secrecy cannot be love. It is just exactly the point people do not understand.

5

But before things came to that pass, some months and many phases and a sudden journey to America intervened.

"This thing spells disaster," I said. "You are too big and I am too big to attempt this secrecy. Think of the intolerable possibility of being found out! At any cost we have to stop — even at the cost of parting."

"Just because we may be found out!"

"Just because we may be found out."

"Master, I shouldn't in the least mind being found out with you. I'm afraid — I'd be proud."

"Wait till it happens."

There followed a struggle of immense insincerity between us. It is hard to tell who urged and who resisted.

She came to me one night to the editorial room of the BLUE WEEKLY, and argued and kissed me with wet salt lips, and wept in my arms; she told me that now passionate longing for me and my intimate life possessed her, so that she could not work, could not think, could not endure other people for the love of me....

I fled absurdly. That is the secret of the futile journey to America that puzzled all my friends.

I ran away from Isabel. I took hold of the situation with all my strength, put in Britten with sketchy, hasty instructions to edit the paper, and started headlong and with luggage, from which, among other things, my shaving things were omitted, upon a tour round the world.

Preposterous flight that was! I remember as a thing almost farcical my explanations to Margaret, and how frantically anxious I was to prevent the remote possibility of her coming with me, and how I

crossed in the TUSCAN, a bad, wet boat, and mixed seasickness with ungovernable sorrow. I wept — tears. It was inexpressibly queer and ridiculous — and, good God! how I hated my fellow-passengers!

New York inflamed and excited me for a time, and when things slackened, I whirled westward to Chicago — eating and drinking, I remember, in the train from shoals of little dishes, with a sort of desperate voracity. I did the queerest things to distract myself — no novelist would dare to invent my mental and emotional muddle. Chicago also held me at first, amazing lapse from civilisation that the place is! and then abruptly, with hosts expecting me, and everything settled for some days in Denver, I found myself at the end of my renunciations, and turned and came back headlong to London.

Let me confess it wasn't any sense of perfect and incurable trust and confidence that brought me back, or any idea that now I had strength to refrain. It was a sudden realisation that after all the separation might succeed; some careless phrasing in one of her jealously read letters set that idea going in my mind — the haunting perception that I might return to London and find it empty of the Isabel who had pervaded it. Honour, discretion, the careers of both of us, became nothing at the thought. I couldn't conceive my life resuming there without Isabel. I couldn't, in short, stand it.

I don't even excuse my return. It is inexcusable. I ought to have kept upon my way westward — and held out. I couldn't. I wanted Isabel, and I wanted her so badly now that everything else in the world was phantom-like until that want was satisfied. Perhaps you have never wanted anything like that. I went straight to her.

But here I come to untellable things. There is no describing the reality of love. The shapes of things are nothing, the actual happenings are nothing, except that somehow there falls a light upon them and a wonder. Of how we met, and the thrill of the adventure, the curious bright sense of defiance, the joy of having dared, I can't tell — I can but hint of just one aspect, of what an amazing LARK — it's the only word — it seemed to us. The beauty which was the essence of it, which justifies it so far as it will bear justification, eludes statement.

What can a record of contrived meetings, of sundering difficulties

evaded and overcome, signify here? Or what can it convey to say that one looked deep into two dear, steadfast eyes, or felt a heart throb and beat, or gripped soft hair softly in a trembling hand? Robbed of encompassing love, these things are of no more value than the taste of good wine or the sight of good pictures, or the hearing of music, — just sensuality and no more. No one can tell love — we can only tell the gross facts of love and its consequences. Given love — given mutuality, and one has effected a supreme synthesis and come to a new level of life — but only those who know can know. This business has brought me more bitterness and sorrow than I had ever expected to bear, but even now I will not say that I regret that wilful home-coming altogether. We loved — to the uttermost. Neither of us could have loved any one else as we did and do love one another. It was ours, that beauty; it existed only between us when we were close together, for no one in the world ever to know save ourselves.

My return to the office sticks out in my memory with an extreme vividness, because of the wild eagle of pride that screamed within me. It was Tuesday morning, and though not a soul in London knew of it yet except Isabel, I had been back in England a week. I came in upon Britten and stood in the doorway.

"GOD!" he said at the sight of me.

"I'm back," I said.

He looked at my excited face with those red-brown eyes of his. Silently I defied him to speak his mind.

"Where did you turn back?" he said at last.

6

I had to tell what were, so far as I can remember my first positive lies to Margaret in explaining that return. I had written to her from Chicago and again from New York, saying that I felt I ought to be on the spot in England for the new session, and that I was coming back — presently. I concealed the name of my boat from her, and made a calculated prevarication when I announced my presence in London. I telephoned before I went back for my rooms to be prepared. She was, I knew, with the Bunting Harblows in Durham, and when she came back to Radnor Square I had been at home a day.

I remember her return so well.

My going away and the vivid secret of the present had wiped out from my mind much of our long estrangement. Something, too, had changed in her. I had had some hint of it in her letters, but now I saw it plainly. I came out of my study upon the landing when I heard the turmoil of her arrival below, and she came upstairs with a quickened gladness. It was a cold March, and she was dressed in unfamiliar dark furs that suited her extremely and reinforced the delicate flush of her sweet face. She held out both her hands to me, and drew me to her unhesitatingly and kissed me.

"So glad you are back, dear," she said. "Oh! so very glad you are back."

I returned her kiss with a queer feeling at my heart, too undifferentiated to be even a definite sense of guilt or meanness. I think it was chiefly amazement — at the universe — at myself.

"I never knew what it was to be away from you," she said.

I perceived suddenly that she had resolved to end our estrangement. She put herself so that my arm came caressingly about her.

"These are jolly furs," I said.

"I got them for you."

The parlourmaid appeared below dealing with the maid and the luggage cab.

"Tell me all about America," said Margaret. "I feel as though you'd been away six year's."

We went arm in arm into our little sitting-room, and I took off the fur's for her and sat down upon the chintz-covered sofa by the fire. She had ordered tea, and came and sat by me. I don't know what I had expected, but of all things I had certainly not expected this sudden abolition of our distances.

"I want to know all about America," she repeated, with her eyes scrutinising me. "Why did you come back?"

I repeated the substance of my letters rather lamely, and she sat listening.

"But why did you turn back — without going to Denver?"

"I wanted to come back. I was restless."

"Restlessness," she said, and thought. "You were restless in

Venice. You said it was restlessness took you to America."

Again she studied me. She turned a little awkwardly to her tea things, and poured needless water from the silver kettle into the teapot. Then she sat still for some moments looking at the equipage with expressionless eyes. I saw her hand upon the edge of the table tremble slightly. I watched her closely. A vague uneasiness possessed me. What might she not know or guess?

She spoke at last with an effort. "I wish you were in Parliament again," she said. "Life doesn't give you events enough."

"If I was in Parliament again, I should be on the Conservative side."

"I know," she said, and was still more thoughtful.

"Lately," she began, and paused. "Lately I've been reading — you."

I didn't help her out with what she had to say. I waited.

"I didn't understand what you were after. I had misjudged. I didn't know. I think perhaps I was rather stupid." Her eyes were suddenly shining with tears. "You didn't give me much chance to understand."

She turned upon me suddenly with a voice full of tears.

"Husband," she said abruptly, holding her two hands out to me, "I want to begin over again!"

I took her hands, perplexed beyond measure. "My dear!" I said.

"I want to begin over again."

I bowed my head to hide my face, and found her hand in mine and kissed it.

"Ah!" she said, and slowly withdrew her hand. She leant forward with her arm on the sofa-back, and looked very intently into my face. I felt the most damnable scoundrel in the world as I returned her gaze. The thought of Isabel's darkly shining eyes seemed like a physical presence between us....

"Tell me," I said presently, to break the intolerable tension, "tell me plainly what you mean by this."

I sat a little away from her, and then took my teacup in hand, with an odd effect of defending myself. "Have you been reading that old book of mine?" I asked.

"That and the paper. I took a complete set from the beginning

down to Durham with me. I have read it over, thought it over. I didn't understand — what you were teaching."

There was a little pause.

"It all seems so plain to me now," she said, "and so true."

I was profoundly disconcerted. I put down my teacup, stood up in the middle of the hearthrug, and began talking. "I'm tremendously glad, Margaret, that you've come to see I'm not altogether perverse," I began. I launched out into a rather trite and windy exposition of my views, and she sat close to me on the sofa, looking up into my face, hanging on my words, a deliberate and invincible convert.

"Yes," she said, "yes."...

I had never doubted my new conceptions before; now I doubted them profoundly. But I went on talking. It's the grim irony in the lives of all politicians, writers, public teachers, that once the audience is at their feet, a new loyalty has gripped them. It isn't their business to admit doubt and imperfections. They have to go on talking. And I was now so accustomed to Isabel's vivid interruptions, qualifications, restatements, and confirmations....

Margaret and I dined together at home. She made me open out my political projects to her. "I have been foolish," she said. "I want to help."

And by some excuse I have forgotten she made me come to her room. I think it was some book I had to take her, some American book I had brought back with me, and mentioned in our talk. I walked in with it, and put it down on the table and turned to go.

"Husband!" she cried, and held out her slender arms to me. I was compelled to go to her and kiss her, and she twined them softly about my neck and drew me to her and kissed me. I disentangled them very gently, and took each wrist and kissed it, and the backs of her hands.

"Good-night," I said. There came a little pause. "Good-night, Margaret," I repeated, and walked very deliberately and with a kind of sham preoccupation to the door.

I did not look at her, but I could feel her standing, watching me. If I had looked up, she would, I knew, have held out her arms to me....

At the very outset that secret, which was to touch no one but Isabel and myself, had reached out to stab another human being.

The whole world had changed for Isabel and me; and we tried to pretend that nothing had changed except a small matter between us. We believed quite honestly at that time that it was possible to keep this thing that had happened from any reaction at all, save perhaps through some magically enhanced vigour in our work, upon the world about us! Seen in retrospect, one can realise the absurdity of this belief; within a week I realised it; but that does not alter the fact that we did believe as much, and that people who are deeply in love and unable to marry will continue to believe so to the very end of time. They will continue to believe out of existence every consideration that separates them until they have come together. Then they will count the cost, as we two had to do.

I am telling a story, and not propounding theories in this book; and chiefly I am telling of the ideas and influences and emotions that have happened to me — me as a sort of sounding board for my world. The moralist is at liberty to go over my conduct with his measure and say, "At this point or at that you went wrong, and you ought to have done" — so-and-so. The point of interest to the statesman is that it didn't for a moment occur to us to do so-and-so when the time for doing it came. It amazes me now to think how little either of us troubled about the established rights or wrongs of the situation. We hadn't an atom of respect for them, innate or acquired. The guardians of public morals will say we were very bad people; I submit in defence that they are very bad guardians — provocative guardians.... And when at last there came a claim against us that had an effective validity for us, we were in the full tide of passionate intimacy.

I had a night of nearly sleepless perplexity after Margaret's return. She had suddenly presented herself to me like something dramatically recalled, fine, generous, infinitely capable of feeling. I was amazed how much I had forgotten her. In my contempt for vulgarised and conventionalised honour I had forgotten that for me there was such a reality as honour. And here it was, warm and near to me, living, breathing, unsuspecting. Margaret's pride was my honour, that I had had no right even to imperil.

I do not now remember if I thought at that time of going to Isabel and putting this new aspect of the case before her. Perhaps I did. Perhaps I may have considered even then the possibility of ending what had so freshly and passionately begun. If I did, it vanished next day at the sight of her. Whatever regrets came in the darkness, the daylight brought an obstinate confidence in our resolution again. We would, we declared, "pull the thing off." Margaret must not know. Margaret should not know. If Margaret did not know, then no harm whatever would be done. We tried to sustain that....

For a brief time we had been like two people in a magic cell, magically cut off from the world and full of a light of its own, and then we began to realise that we were not in the least cut off, that the world was all about us and pressing in upon us, limiting us, threatening us, resuming possession of us. I tried to ignore the injury to Margaret of her unreciprocated advances. I tried to maintain to myself that this hidden love made no difference to the now irreparable breach between husband and wife. But I never spoke of it to Isabel or let her see that aspect of our case. How could I? The time for that had gone....

Then in new shapes and relations came trouble. Distressful elements crept in by reason of our unavoidable furtiveness; we ignored them, hid them from each other, and attempted to hide them from ourselves. Successful love is a thing of abounding pride, and we had to be secret. It was delightful at first to be secret, a whispering, warm conspiracy; then presently it became irksome and a little shameful. Her essential frankness of soul was all against the masks and falsehoods that many women would have enjoyed. Together in our secrecy we relaxed, then in the presence of other people again it was tiresome to have to watch for the careless, too easy phrase, to snatch back one's hand from the limitless betrayal of a light, familiar touch.

Love becomes a poor thing, at best a poor beautiful thing, if it develops no continuing and habitual intimacy. We were always meeting, and most gloriously loving and beginning — and then we had to snatch at remorseless ticking watches, hurry to catch trains, and go back to this or that. That is all very well for the intrigues of idle people perhaps, but not for an intense personal relationship. It is

like lighting a candle for the sake of lighting it, over and over again, and each time blowing it out. That, no doubt, must be very amusing to children playing with the matches, but not to people who love warm light, and want it in order to do fine and honourable things together. We had achieved — I give the ugly phrase that expresses the increasing discolouration in my mind— "illicit intercourse." To end at that, we now perceived, wasn't in our style. But where were we to end?...

Perhaps we might at this stage have given it up. I think if we could have seen ahead and around us we might have done so. But the glow of our cell blinded us.... I wonder what might have happened if at that time we had given it up.... We propounded it, we met again in secret to discuss it, and our overpowering passion for one another reduced that meeting to absurdity....

Presently the idea of children crept between us. It came in from all our conceptions of life and public service; it was, we found, in the quality of our minds that physical love without children is a little weak, timorous, more than a little shameful. With imaginative people there very speedily comes a time when that realisation is inevitable. We hadn't thought of that before — it isn't natural to think of that before. We hadn't known. There is no literature in English dealing with such things.

There is a necessary sequence of phases in love. These came in their order, and with them, unanticipated tarnishings on the first bright perfection of our relations. For a time these developing phases were no more than a secret and private trouble between us, little shadows spreading by imperceptible degrees across that vivid and luminous cell.

8

The Handitch election flung me suddenly into prominence.

It is still only two years since that struggle, and I will not trouble the reader with a detailed history of events that must be quite sufficiently present in his mind for my purpose already. Huge stacks of journalism have dealt with Handitch and its significance. For the reader very probably, as for most people outside a comparatively

small circle, it meant my emergence from obscurity. We obtruded no editor's name in the BLUE WEEKLY; I had never as yet been on the London hoardings. Before Handitch I was a journalist and writer of no great public standing; after Handitch, I was definitely a person, in the little group of persons who stood for the Young Imperialist movement. Handitch was, to a very large extent, my affair. I realised then, as a man comes to do, how much one can still grow after seven and twenty. In the second election I was a man taking hold of things; at Kinghamstead I had been simply a young candidate, a party unit, led about the constituency, told to do this and that, and finally washed in by the great Anti-Imperialist flood, like a starfish rolling up a beach.

My feminist views had earnt the mistrust of the party, and I do not think I should have got the chance of Handitch or indeed any chance at all of Parliament for a long time, if it had not been that the seat with its long record of Liberal victories and its Liberal majority of 3642 at the last election, offered a hopeless contest. The Liberal dissensions and the belated but by no means contemptible Socialist candidate were providential interpositions. I think, however, the conduct of Gane, Crupp, and Tarvrille in coming down to fight for me, did count tremendously in my favour. "We aren't going to win, perhaps," said Crupp, "but we are going to talk." And until the very eve of victory, we treated Handitch not so much as a battlefield as a hoarding. And so it was the Endowment of Motherhood as a practical form of Eugenics got into English politics.

Plutus, our agent, was scared out of his wits when the thing began.

"They're ascribing all sorts of queer ideas to you about the Family," he said.

"I think the Family exists for the good of the children," I said; "is that queer?"

"Not when you explain it — but they won't let you explain it. And about marriage — ?"

"I'm all right about marriage — trust me."

"Of course, if YOU had children," said Plutus, rather inconsiderately....

They opened fire upon me in a little electioneering rag call the HANDITCH SENTINEL, with a string of garbled quotations and

misrepresentations that gave me an admirable text for a speech. I spoke for an hour and ten minutes with a more and more crumpled copy of the SENTINEL in my hand, and I made the fullest and completest exposition of the idea of endowing motherhood that I think had ever been made up to that time in England. Its effect on the press was extraordinary. The Liberal papers gave me quite unprecedented space under the impression that I had only to be given rope to hang myself; the Conservatives cut me down or tried to justify me; the whole country was talking. I had had a pamphlet in type upon the subject, and I revised this carefully and put it on the book-stalls within three days. It sold enormously and brought me bushels of letters. We issued over three thousand in Handitch alone. At meeting after meeting I was heckled upon nothing else. Long before polling day Plutus was converted.

"It's catching on like old age pensions," he said. "We've dished the Liberals! To think that such a project should come from our side!"

But it was only with the declaration of the poll that my battle was won. No one expected more than a snatch victory, and I was in by over fifteen hundred. At one bound Cossington's papers passed from apologetics varied by repudiation to triumphant praise. "A renascent England, breeding men," said the leader in his chief daily on the morning after the polling, and claimed that the Conservatives had been ever the pioneers in sanely bold constructive projects.

I came up to London with a weary but rejoicing Margaret by the night train.

CHAPTER THE SECOND ~~ THE IMPOSSIBLE POSITION

1

To any one who did not know of that glowing secret between Isabel and myself, I might well have appeared at that time the most successful and enviable of men. I had recovered rapidly from an uncongenial start in political life; I had become a considerable force through the BLUE WEEKLY, and was shaping an increasingly influential body of opinion; I had re-entered Parliament with quite dramatic distinction, and in spite of a certain faltering on the part of the orthodox Conservatives towards the bolder elements in our propaganda, I had loyal and unenvious associates who were making me a power in the party. People were coming to our group, understandings were developing. It was clear we should play a prominent part in the next general election, and that, given a Conservative victory, I should be assured of office. The world opened out to me brightly and invitingly. Great schemes took shape in my mind, always more concrete, always more practicable; the years ahead seemed falling into order, shining with the credible promise of immense achievement.

And at the heart of it all, unseen and unsuspected, was the secret of my relations with Isabel — like a seed that germinates and thrusts, thrusts relentlessly.

From the onset of the Handitch contest onward, my meetings with her had been more and more pervaded by the discussion of our situation. It had innumerable aspects. It was very present to us that we wanted to be together as much as possible — we were beginning to long very much for actual living together in the same house, so that one could come as it were carelessly — unawares — upon the other, busy perhaps about some trivial thing. We wanted to feel each other in the daily atmosphere. Preceding our imperatively sterile passion, you must remember, outside it, altogether greater than it so far as our individual lives were concerned, there had grown and still grew an enormous affection and intellectual sympathy between us.

We brought all our impressions and all our ideas to each other, to see them in each other's light. It is hard to convey that quality of intellectual unison to any one who has not experienced it. I thought more and more in terms of conversation with Isabel; her possible comments upon things would flash into my mind, oh! — with the very sound of her voice.

I remember, too, the odd effect of seeing her in the distance going about Handitch, like any stranger canvasser; the queer emotion of her approach along the street, the greeting as she passed. The morning of the polling she vanished from the constituency. I saw her for an instant in the passage behind our Committee rooms.

"Going?" said I.

She nodded.

"Stay it out. I want you to see the fun. I remember — the other time."

She didn't answer for a moment or so, and stood with face averted.

"It's Margaret's show," she said abruptly. "If I see her smiling there like a queen by your side — ! She did — last time. I remember." She caught at a sob and dashed her hand across her face impatiently. "Jealous fool, mean and petty, jealous fool!... Good luck, old man, to you! You're going to win. But I don't want to see the end of it all the same...."

"Good-bye!" said I, clasping her hand as some supporter appeared in the passage....

I came back to London victorious, and a little flushed and coarse with victory; and so soon as I could break away I went to Isabel's flat and found her white and worn, with the stain of secret weeping about her eyes. I came into the room to her and shut the door.

"You said I'd win," I said, and held out my arms.

She hugged me closely for a moment.

"My dear," I whispered, "it's nothing — without you — nothing!"

We didn't speak for some seconds. Then she slipped from my hold. "Look!" she said, smiling like winter sunshine. "I've had in all the morning papers — the pile of them, and you — resounding."

"It's more than I dared hope."

"Or I."

She stood for a moment still smiling bravely, and then she was sobbing in my arms. “The bigger you are — the more you show,” she said— “the more we are parted. I know, I know—”

I held her close to me, making no answer.

Presently she became still. “Oh, well,” she said, and wiped her eyes and sat down on the little sofa by the fire; and I sat down beside her.

“I didn’t know all there was in love,” she said, staring at the coals, “when we went love-making.”

I put my arm behind her and took a handful of her dear soft hair in my hand and kissed it.

“You’ve done a great thing this time,” she said. “Handitch will make you.”

“It opens big chances,” I said. “But why are you weeping, dear one?”

“Envy,” she said, “and love.”

“You’re not lonely?”

“I’ve plenty to do — and lots of people.”

“Well?”

“I want you.”

“You’ve got me.”

She put her arm about me and kissed me. “I want you,” she said, “just as if I had nothing of you. You don’t understand — how a woman wants a man. I thought once if I just gave myself to you it would be enough. It was nothing — it was just a step across the threshold. My dear, every moment you are away I ache for you — ache! I want to be about when it isn’t love-making or talk. I want to be doing things for you, and watching you when you’re not thinking of me. All those safe, careless, intimate things. And something else —” She stopped. “Dear, I don’t want to bother you. I just want you to know I love you....”

She caught my head in her hands and kissed it, then stood up abruptly.

I looked up at her, a little perplexed.

“Dear heart,” said I, “isn’t this enough? You’re my councillor, my colleague, my right hand, the secret soul of my life—”

“And I want to darn your socks,” she said, smiling back at me.

“You’re insatiable.”

She smiled “No,” she said. “I’m not insatiable, Master. But I’m a woman in love. And I’m finding out what I want, and what is necessary to me — and what I can’t have. That’s all.”

“We get a lot.”

“We want a lot. You and I are greedy people for the things we like, Master. It’s very evident we’ve got nearly all we can ever have of one another — and I’m not satisfied.”

“What more is there?

“For you — very little. I wonder. For me — every thing. Yes — everything. You didn’t mean it, Master; you didn’t know any more than I did when I began, but love between a man and a woman is sometimes very one-sided. Fearfully one-sided! That’s all....”

“Don’t YOU ever want children?” she said abruptly.

“I suppose I do.”

“You don’t!”

“I haven’t thought of them.”

“A man doesn’t, perhaps. But I have.... I want them — like hunger. YOUR children, and home with you. Really, continually you! That’s the trouble.... I can’t have ‘em, Master, and I can’t have you.”

She was crying, and through her tears she laughed.

“I’m going to make a scene,” she said, “and get this over. I’m so discontented and miserable; I’ve got to tell you. It would come between us if I didn’t. I’m in love with you, with everything — with all my brains. I’ll pull through all right. I’ll be good, Master, never you fear. But to-day I’m crying out with all my being. This election — You’re going up; you’re going on. In these papers — you’re a great big fact. It’s suddenly come home to me. At the back of my mind I’ve always had the idea I was going to have you somehow presently for myself — I mean to have you to go long tramps with, to keep house for, to get meals for, to watch for of an evening. It’s a sort of habitual background to my thought of you. And it’s nonsense — utter nonsense!” She stopped. She was crying and choking. “And the child, you know — the child!”

I was troubled beyond measure, but Handitch and its intimations were clear and strong.

“We can’t have that,” I said.

“No,” she said, “we can’t have that.”

“We’ve got our own things to do.”

“YOUR things,” she said.

“Aren’t they yours too?”

“Because of you,” she said.

“Aren’t they your very own things?”

“Women don’t have that sort of very own thing. Indeed, it’s true! And think! You’ve been down there preaching the goodness of children, telling them the only good thing in a state is happy, hopeful children, working to free mothers and children—”

“And we give our own children to do it?” I said.

“Yes,” she said. “And sometimes I think it’s too much to give — too much altogether.... Children get into a woman’s brain — when she mustn’t have them, especially when she must never hope for them. Think of the child we might have now! — the little creature with soft, tender skin, and little hands and little feet! At times it haunts me. It comes and says, Why wasn’t I given life? I can hear it in the night.... The world is full of such little ghosts, dear lover — little things that asked for life and were refused. They clamour to me. It’s like a little fist beating at my heart. Love children, beautiful children. Little cold hands that tear at my heart! Oh, my heart and my lord!” She was holding my arm with both her hands and weeping against it, and now she drew herself to my shoulder and wept and sobbed in my embrace. “I shall never sit with your child on my knee and you beside me-never, and I am a woman and your lover!...”

2

But the profound impossibility of our relation was now becoming more and more apparent to us. We found ourselves seeking justification, clinging passionately to a situation that was coldly, pitilessly, impossible and fated. We wanted quite intensely to live together and have a child, but also we wanted very many other things that were incompatible with these desires. It was extraordinarily difficult to weigh our political and intellectual ambitions against those intimate wishes. The weights kept altering according as one

found oneself grasping this valued thing or that. It wasn't as if we could throw everything aside for our love, and have that as we wanted it. Love such as we bore one another isn't altogether, or even chiefly, a thing in itself — it is for the most part a value set upon things. Our love was interwoven with all our other interests; to go out of the world and live in isolation seemed to us like killing the best parts of each other; we loved the sight of each other engaged finely and characteristically, we knew each other best as activities. We had no delusions about material facts; we didn't want each other alive or dead, we wanted each other fully alive. We wanted to do big things together, and for us to take each other openly and desperately would leave us nothing in the world to do. We wanted children indeed passionately, but children with every helpful chance in the world, and children born in scandal would be handicapped at every turn. We wanted to share a home, and not a solitude.

And when we were at this stage of realisation, began the intimations that we were found out, and that scandal was afoot against us....

I heard of it first from Esmeer, who deliberately mentioned it, with that steady grey eye of his watching me, as an instance of the preposterous falsehoods people will circulate. It came to Isabel almost simultaneously through a married college friend, who made it her business to demand either confirmation or denial. It filled us both with consternation. In the surprise of the moment Isabel admitted her secret, and her friend went off "reserving her freedom of action."

Discovery broke out in every direction. Friends with grave faces and an atmosphere of infinite tact invaded us both. Other friends ceased to invade either of us. It was manifest we had become — we knew not how — a private scandal, a subject for duologues, an amazement, a perplexity, a vivid interest. In a few brief weeks it seemed London passed from absolute unsuspiciousness to a chattering exaggeration of its knowledge of our relations.

It was just the most inappropriate time for that disclosure. The long smouldering antagonism to my endowment of motherhood ideas had flared up into an active campaign in the EXPURGATOR, and it would be altogether disastrous to us if I should be convicted of any personal irregularity. It was just because of the manifest and

challenging respectability of my position that I had been able to carry the thing as far as I had done. Now suddenly my fortunes had sprung a leak, and scandal was pouring in.... It chanced, too, that a wave of moral intolerance was sweeping through London, one of those waves in which the bitterness of the consciously just finds an ally in the panic of the undiscovered. A certain Father Blodgett had been preaching against social corruption with extraordinary force, and had roused the Church of England people to a kind of competition in denunciation. The old methods of the Anti-Socialist campaign had been renewed, and had offered far too wide a scope and too tempting an opportunity for private animosity, to be restricted to the private affairs of the Socialists. I had intimations of an extensive circulation of "private and confidential" letters....

I think there can be nothing else in life quite like the unnerving realisation that rumour and scandal are afoot about one. Abruptly one's confidence in the solidity of the universe disappears. One walks silenced through a world that one feels to be full of inaudible accusations. One cannot challenge the assault, get it out into the open, separate truth and falsehood. It slinks from you, turns aside its face. Old acquaintances suddenly evaded me, made extraordinary excuses; men who had presumed on the verge of my world and pestered me with an intrusive enterprise, now took the bold step of flat repudiation. I became doubtful about the return of a nod, retracted all those tentacles of easy civility that I had hitherto spread to the world. I still grow warm with amazed indignation when I recall that Edward Crampton, meeting me full on the steps of the Climax Club, cut me dead. "By God!" I cried, and came near catching him by the throat and wringing out of him what of all good deeds and bad, could hearten him, a younger man than I and empty beyond comparison, to dare to play the judge to me. And then I had an open slight from Mrs. Millingham, whom I had counted on as one counts upon the sunrise. I had not expected things of that sort; they were disconcerting beyond measure; it was as if the world were giving way beneath my feet, as though something failed in the essential confidence of life, as though a hand of wet ice had touched my heart. Similar things were happening to Isabel. Yet we went on working, visiting, meeting, trying to ignore this gathering of

implacable forces against us.

For a time I was perplexed beyond measure to account for this campaign. Then I got a clue. The centre of diffusion was the Bailey household. The Baileys had never forgiven me my abandonment of the young Liberal group they had done so much to inspire and organise; their dinner-table had long been a scene of hostile depreciation of the BLUE WEEKLY and all its allies; week after week Altiora proclaimed that I was "doing nothing," and found other causes for our bye-election triumphs; I counted Chambers Street a dangerous place for me. Yet, nevertheless, I was astonished to find them using a private scandal against me. They did. I think Handitch had filled up the measure of their bitterness, for I had not only abandoned them, but I was succeeding beyond even their power of misrepresentation. Always I had been a wasp in their spider's web, difficult to claim as a tool, uncritical, antagonistic. I admired their work and devotion enormously, but I had never concealed my contempt for a certain childish vanity they displayed, and for the frequent puerility of their political intrigues. I suppose contempt galls more than injuries, and anyhow they had me now. They had me. Bailey, I found, was warning fathers of girls against me as a "reckless libertine," and Altiora, flushed, roguish, and dishevelled, was sitting on her fender curb after dinner, and pledging little parties of five or six women at a time with infinite gusto not to let the matter go further. Our cell was open to the world, and a bleak, distressful daylight streaming in.

I had a gleam of a more intimate motive in Altiora from the reports that came to me. Isabel had been doing a series of five or six articles in the POLITICAL REVIEW in support of our campaign, the POLITICAL REVIEW which had hitherto been loyally Baileyite. Quite her best writing up to the present, at any rate, is in those papers, and no doubt Altiora had had not only to read her in those invaded columns, but listen to her praises in the mouths of the tactless influential. Altiora, like so many people who rely on gesture and vocal insistence in conversation, writes a poor and slovenly prose and handles an argument badly; Isabel has her University training behind her and wrote from the first with the stark power of a clear-headed man. "Now we know," said Altiora, with just a gleam

of malice showing through her brightness, “now we know who helps with the writing!”

She revealed astonishing knowledge.

For a time I couldn’t for the life of me discover her sources. I had, indeed, a desperate intention of challenging her, and then I bethought me of a youngster named Curmain, who had been my supplemental typist and secretary for a time, and whom I had sent on to her before the days of our breach. “Of course!” said I, “Curmain!” He was a tall, drooping, sidelong youth with sandy hair, a little forward head, and a long thin neck. He stole stamps, and, I suspected, rifled my private letter drawer, and I found him one day on a turn of the stairs looking guilty and ruffled with a pretty Irish housemaid of Margaret’s manifestly in a state of hot indignation. I saw nothing, but I felt everything in the air between them. I hate this pestering of servants, but at the same time I didn’t want Curmain wiped out of existence, so I had packed him off without unnecessary discussion to Altiora. He was quick and cheap anyhow, and I thought her general austerity ought to redeem him if anything could; the Chambers Street housemaid wasn’t for any man’s kissing and showed it, and the stamps and private letters were looked after with an efficiency altogether surpassing mine. And Altiora, I’ve no doubt left now whatever, pumped this young undesirable about me, and scenting a story, had him to dinner alone one evening to get to the bottom of the matter. She got quite to the bottom of it, — it must have been a queer duologue. She read Isabel’s careless, intimate letters to me, so to speak, by this proxy, and she wasn’t ashamed to use this information in the service of the bitterness that had sprung up in her since our political breach. It was essentially a personal bitterness; it helped no public purpose of theirs to get rid of me. My downfall in any public sense was sheer waste, — the loss of a man. She knew she was behaving badly, and so, when it came to remonstrance, she behaved worse. She’d got names and dates and places; the efficiency of her information was irresistible. And she set to work at it marvellously. Never before, in all her pursuit of efficient ideals, had Altiora achieved such levels of efficiency. I wrote a protest that was perhaps ill-advised and angry, I went to her and tried to stop her. She wouldn’t listen, she wouldn’t think, she denied and lied, she behaved

like a naughty child of six years old which has made up its mind to be hurtful. It wasn't only, I think, that she couldn't bear our political and social influence; she also — I realised at that interview couldn't bear our loving. It seemed to her the sickliest thing, — a thing quite unendurable. While such things were, the virtue had gone out of her world.

I've the vividest memory of that call of mine. She'd just come in and taken off her hat, and she was grey and dishevelled and tired, and in a business-like dress of black and crimson that didn't suit her and was muddy about the skirts; she'd a cold in her head and sniffed penetratingly, she avoided my eye as she talked and interrupted everything I had to say; she kept stabbing fiercely at the cushions of her sofa with a long hat-pin and pretending she was overwhelmed with grief at the DEBACLE she was deliberately organising.

"Then part," she cried, "part. If you don't want a smashing up, — part! You two have got to be parted. You've got never to see each other ever, never to speak." There was a zest in her voice. "We're not circulating stories," she denied. "No! And Curmain never told us anything — Curmain is an EXCELLENT young man; oh! a quite excellent young man. You misjudged him altogether."...

I was equally unsuccessful with Bailey. I caught the little wretch in the League Club, and he wriggled and lied. He wouldn't say where he had got his facts, he wouldn't admit he had told any one. When I gave him the names of two men who had come to me astonished and incredulous, he attempted absurdly to make me think they had told HIM. He did his horrible little best to suggest that honest old Quackett, who had just left England for the Cape, was the real scandalmonger. That struck me as mean, even for Bailey. I've still the odd vivid impression of his fluting voice, excusing the inexcusable, his big, shifty face evading me, his perspiration-beaded forehead, the shrugging shoulders, and the would-be exculpatory gestures — Houndsditch gestures — of his enormous ugly hands.

"I can assure you, my dear fellow," he said; "I can assure you we've done everything to shield you — everything."...

Isabel came after dinner one evening and talked in the office. She made a white-robed, dusky figure against the deep blues of my big window. I sat at my desk and tore a quill pen to pieces as I talked.

"The Baileys don't intend to let this drop," I said. "They mean that every one in London is to know about it."

"I know."

"Well!" I said.

"Dear heart," said Isabel, facing it, "it's no good waiting for things to overtake us; we're at the parting of the ways."

"What are we to do?"

"They won't let us go on."

"Damn them!"

"They are ORGANISING scandal."

"It's no good waiting for things to overtake us," I echoed; "they have overtaken us." I turned on her. "What do you want to do?"

"Everything," she said. "Keep you and have our work. Aren't we Mates?"

"We can't."

"And we can't!"

"I've got to tell Margaret," I said.

"Margaret!"

"I can't bear the idea of any one else getting in front with it. I've been wincing about Margaret secretly—"

"I know. You'll have to tell her — and make your peace with her."

She leant back against the bookcases under the window.

"We've had some good times, Master;" she said, with a sigh in her voice.

And then for a long time we stared at one another in silence.

"We haven't much time left," she said.

"Shall we bolt?" I said.

"And leave all this?" she asked, with her eyes going round the room. "And that?" And her head indicated Westminster. "No!"

I said no more of bolting.

"We've got to screw ourselves up to surrender," she said.

"Something."

"A lot."

“Master,” she said, “it isn’t all sex and stuff between us?”

“No!”

“I can’t give up the work. Our work’s my life.”

We came upon another long pause.

“No one will believe we’ve ceased to be lovers — if we simply do,” she said.

“We shouldn’t.”

“We’ve got to do something more parting than that.”

I nodded, and again we paused. She was coming to something.

“I could marry Shoesmith,” she said abruptly.

“But—” I objected.

“He knows. It wasn’t fair. I told him.”

“Oh, that explains,” I said. “There’s been a kind of sulkiness — But — you told him?”

She nodded. “He’s rather badly hurt,” she said. “He’s been a good friend to me. He’s curiously loyal. But something, something he said one day — forced me to let him know.... That’s been the beastliness of all this secrecy. That’s the beastliness of all secrecy. You have to spring surprises on people. But he keeps on. He’s steadfast. He’d already suspected. He wants me very badly to marry him....”

“But you don’t want to marry him?”

“I’m forced to think of it.”

“But does he want to marry you at that? Take you as a present from the world at large? — against your will and desire?... I don’t understand him.”

“He cares for me.”

“How?”

“He thinks this is a fearful mess for me. He wants to pull it straight.”

We sat for a time in silence, with imaginations that obstinately refused to take up the realities of this proposition.

“I don’t want you to marry Shoesmith,” I said at last.

“Don’t you like him?”

“Not as your husband.”

“He’s a very clever and sturdy person — and very generous and devoted to me.”

“And me?”

“You can’t expect that. He thinks you are wonderful — and, naturally, that you ought not to have started this.”

“I’ve a curious dislike to any one thinking that but myself. I’m quite ready to think it myself.”

“He’d let us be friends — and meet.”

“Let us be friends!” I cried, after a long pause. “You and me!”

“He wants me to be engaged soon. Then, he says, he can go round fighting these rumours, defending us both — and force a quarrel on the Baileys.”

“I don’t understand him,” I said, and added, “I don’t understand you.”

I was staring at her face. It seemed white and set in the dimness.

“Do you really mean this, Isabel?” I asked.

“What else is there to do, my dear? — what else is there to do at all? I’ve been thinking day and night. You can’t go away with me. You can’t smash yourself suddenly in the sight of all men. I’d rather die than that should happen. Look what you are becoming in the country! Look at all you’ve built up! — me helping. I wouldn’t let you do it if you could. I wouldn’t let you — if it were only for Margaret’s sake. THIS... closes the scandal, closes everything.”

“It closes all our life together,” I cried.

She was silent.

“It never ought to have begun,” I said.

She winced. Then abruptly she was on her knees before me, with her hands upon my shoulder and her eyes meeting mine.

“My dear,” she said very earnestly, “don’t misunderstand me! Don’t think I’m retreating from the things we’ve done! Our love is the best thing I could ever have had from life. Nothing can ever equal it; nothing could ever equal the beauty and delight you and I have had together. Never! You have loved me; you do love me....”

No one could ever know how to love you as I have loved you; no one could ever love me as you have loved me, my king. And it’s just because it’s been so splendid, dear; it’s just because I’d die rather than have a tithe of all this wiped out of my life again — for it’s made me, it’s all I am — dear, it’s years since I began loving you — it’s just because of its goodness that I want not to end in wreckage now, not to end in the smashing up of all the big things I understand

in you and love in you....

"What is there for us if we keep on and go away?" she went on. "All the big interests in our lives will vanish — everything. We shall become specialised people — people overshadowed by a situation. We shall be an elopement, a romance — all our breadth and meaning gone! People will always think of it first when they think of us; all our work and aims will be warped by it and subordinated to it. Is it good enough, dear? Just to specialise.... I think of you. We've got a case, a passionate case, the best of cases, but do we want to spend all our lives defending it and justifying it? And there's that other life. I know now you care for Margaret — you care more than you think you do. You have said fine things of her. I've watched you about her. Little things have dropped from you. She's given her life for you; she's nothing without you. You feel that to your marrow all the time you are thinking about these things. Oh, I'm not jealous, dear. I love you for loving her. I love you in relation to her. But there it is, an added weight against us, another thing worth saving."

Presently, I remember, she sat back on her heels and looked up into my face. "We've done wrong — and parting's paying. It's time to pay. We needn't have paid, if we'd kept to the track.... You and I, Master, we've got to be men."

"Yes," I said; "we've got to be men."

4

I was driven to tell Margaret about our situation by my intolerable dread that otherwise the thing might come to her through some stupid and clumsy informant. She might even meet Altiora, and have it from her.

I can still recall the feeling of sitting at my desk that night in that large study of mine in Radnor Square, waiting for Margaret to come home. It was oddly like the feeling of a dentist's reception-room; only it was for me to do the dentistry with clumsy, cruel hands. I had left the door open so that she would come in to me.

I heard her silken rustle on the stairs at last, and then she was in the doorway. "May I come in?" she said.

"Do," I said, and turned round to her.

“Working?” she said.

“Hard,” I answered. “Where have YOU been?”

“At the Vallerys’. Mr. Evesham was talking about you. They were all talking. I don’t think everybody knew who I was. Just Mrs. Mumble I’d been to them. Lord Wardenham doesn’t like you.”

“He doesn’t.”

“But they all feel you’re rather big, anyhow. Then I went on to Park Lane to hear a new pianist and some other music at Eva’s.”

“Yes.”

“Then I looked in at the Brabants’ for some midnight tea before I came on here. They’d got some writers — and Grant was there.”

“You HAVE been flying round....”

There was a little pause between us.

I looked at her pretty, unsuspecting face, and at the slender grace of her golden-robed body. What gulfs there were between us! “You’ve been amused,” I said.

“It’s been amusing. You’ve been at the House?”

“The Medical Education Bill kept me.”...

After all, why should I tell her? She’d got to a way of living that fulfilled her requirements. Perhaps she’d never hear. But all that day and the day before I’d been making up my mind to do the thing.

“I want to tell you something,” I said. “I wish you’d sit down for a moment or so.”...

Once I had begun, it seemed to me I had to go through with it.

Something in the quality of my voice gave her an intimation of unusual gravity. She looked at me steadily for a moment and sat down slowly in my armchair.

“What is it?” she said.

I went on awkwardly. “I’ve got to tell you — something extraordinarily distressing,” I said.

She was manifestly altogether unaware.

“There seems to be a good deal of scandal abroad — I’ve only recently heard of it — about myself — and Isabel.”

“Isabel!”

I nodded.

“What do they say?” she asked.

It was difficult, I found, to speak.

“They say she’s my mistress.”

“Oh! How abominable!”

She spoke with the most natural indignation. Our eyes met.

“We’ve been great friends,” I said.

“Yes. And to make THAT of it. My poor dear! But how can they?” She paused and looked at me. “It’s so incredible. How can any one believe it? I couldn’t.”

She stopped, with her distressed eyes regarding me. Her expression changed to dread. There was a tense stillness for a second, perhaps.

I turned my face towards the desk, and took up and dropped a handful of paper fasteners.

“Margaret,” I said, “I’m afraid you’ll have to believe it.”

5

Margaret sat very still. When I looked at her again, her face was very white, and her distressed eyes scrutinised me. Her lips quivered as she spoke. “You really mean — THAT?” she said.

I nodded.

“I never dreamt.”

“I never meant you to dream.”

“And that is why — we’ve been apart?”

I thought. “I suppose it is.”

“Why have you told me now?”

“Those rumours. I didn’t want any one else to tell you.”

“Or else it wouldn’t have mattered?”

“No.”

She turned her eyes from me to the fire. Then for a moment she looked about the room she had made for me, and then quite silently, with a childish quivering of her lips, with a sort of dismayed distress upon her face, she was weeping. She sat weeping in her dress of cloth of gold, with her bare slender arms dropped limp over the arms of her chair, and her eyes averted from me, making no effort to stay or staunch her tears. “I am sorry, Margaret,” I said. “I was in love.... I did not understand....”

Presently she asked: “What are you going to do?”

“You see, Margaret, now it’s come to be your affair — I want to know what you — what you want.”

“You want to leave me?”

“If you want me to, I must.”

“Leave Parliament — leave all the things you are doing, — all this fine movement of yours?”

“No.” I spoke sullenly. “I don’t want to leave anything. I want to stay on. I’ve told you, because I think we — Isabel and I, I mean — have got to drive through a storm of scandal anyhow. I don’t know how far things may go, how much people may feel, and I can’t, I can’t have you unconscious, unarmed, open to any revelation—”

She made no answer.

“When the thing began — I knew it was stupid but I thought it was a thing that wouldn’t change, wouldn’t be anything but itself, wouldn’t unfold — consequences.... People have got hold of these vague rumours.... Directly it reached any one else but — but us two — I saw it had to come to you.”

I stopped. I had that distressful feeling I have always had with Margaret, of not being altogether sure she heard, of being doubtful if she understood. I perceived that once again I had struck at her and shattered a thousand unsubstantial pinnacles. And I couldn’t get at her, to help her, or touch her mind! I stood up, and at my movement she moved. She produced a dainty little handkerchief, and made an effort to wipe her face with it, and held it to her eyes. “Oh, my Husband!” she sobbed.

“What do you mean to do?” she said, with her voice muffled by her handkerchief.

“We’re going to end it,” I said.

Something gripped me tormentingly as I said that. I drew a chair beside her and sat down. “You and I, Margaret, have been partners,” I began. “We’ve built up this life of ours together; I couldn’t have done it without you. We’ve made a position, created a work—”

She shook her head. “You,” she said.

“You helping. I don’t want to shatter it — if you don’t want it shattered. I can’t leave my work. I can’t leave you. I want you to have — all that you have ever had. I’ve never meant to rob you. I’ve made an immense and tragic blunder. You don’t know how things

took us, how different they seemed! My character and accident have conspired — We'll pay — in ourselves, not in our public service."

I halted again. Margaret remained very still.

"I want you to understand that the thing is at an end. It is definitely at an end. We — we talked — yesterday. We mean to end it altogether." I clenched my hands. "She's — she's going to marry Arnold Shoesmith."

I wasn't looking now at Margaret any more, but I heard the rustle of her movement as she turned on me.

"It's all right," I said, clinging to my explanation. "We're doing nothing shabby. He knows. He will. It's all as right — as things can be now. We're not cheating any one, Margaret. We're doing things straight — now. Of course, you know.... We shall — we shall have to make sacrifices. Give things up pretty completely. Very completely.... We shall have not to see each other for a time, you know. Perhaps not a long time. Two or three years. Or write — or just any of that sort of thing ever—"

Some subconscious barrier gave way in me. I found myself crying uncontrollably — as I have never cried since I was a little child. I was amazed and horrified at myself. And wonderfully, Margaret was on her knees beside me, with her arms about me, mingling her weeping with mine. "Oh, my Husband!" she cried, "my poor Husband! Does it hurt you so? I would do anything! Oh, the fool I am! Dear, I love you. I love you over and away and above all these jealous little things!"

She drew down my head to her as a mother might draw down the head of a son. She caressed me, weeping bitterly with me. "Oh! my dear," she sobbed, "my dear! I've never seen you cry! I've never seen you cry. Ever! I didn't know you could. Oh! my dear! Can't you have her, my dear, if you want her? I can't bear it! Let me help you, dear. Oh! my Husband! My Man! I can't bear to have you cry!" For a time she held me in silence.

"I've thought this might happen, I dreamt it might happen. You two, I mean. It was dreaming put it into my head. When I've seen you together, so glad with each other.... Oh! Husband mine, believe me! believe me! I'm stupid, I'm cold, I'm only beginning to realise how stupid and cold, but all I want in all the world is to give my life

to you.”...

6

“We can’t part in a room,” said Isabel.

“We’ll have one last talk together,” I said, and planned that we should meet for a half a day between Dover and Walmer and talk ourselves out. I still recall that day very well, recall even the curious exaltation of grief that made our mental atmosphere distinctive and memorable. We had seen so much of one another, had become so intimate, that we talked of parting even as we parted with a sense of incredible remoteness. We went together up over the cliffs, and to a place where they fall towards the sea, past the white, quaint-lanterned lighthouses of the South Foreland. There, in a kind of niche below the crest, we sat talking. It was a spacious day, serenely blue and warm, and on the wrinkled water remotely below a black tender and six hooded submarines came presently, and engaged in mysterious manoeuvers. Shrieking gulls and chattering jackdaws circled over us and below us, and dived and swooped; and a skerry of weedy, fallen chalk appeared, and gradually disappeared again, as the tide fell and rose.

We talked and thought that afternoon on every aspect of our relations. It seems to me now we talked so wide and far that scarcely an issue in the life between man and woman can arise that we did not at least touch upon. Lying there at Isabel’s feet, I have become for myself a symbol of all this world-wide problem between duty and conscious, passionate love the world has still to solve. Because it isn’t solved; there’s a wrong in it either way.. .. The sky, the wide horizon, seemed to lift us out of ourselves until we were something representative and general. She was womanhood become articulate, talking to her lover.

“I ought,” I said, “never to have loved you.”

“It wasn’t a thing planned,” she said.

“I ought never to have let our talk slip to that, never to have turned back from America.”

“I’m glad we did it,” she said. “Don’t think I repent.”

I looked at her.

“I will never repent,” she said. “Never!” as though she clung to her life in saying it.

I remember we talked for a long time of divorce. It seemed to us then, and it seems to us still, that it ought to have been possible for Margaret to divorce me, and for me to marry without the scandalous and ugly publicity, the taint and ostracism that follow such a readjustment. We went on to the whole perplexing riddle of marriage. We criticised the current code, how muddled and conventionalised it had become, how modified by subterfuges and concealments and new necessities, and the increasing freedom of women. “It’s all like Bromstead when the building came,” I said; for I had often talked to her of that early impression of purpose dissolving again into chaotic forces. “There is no clear right in the world any more. The world is Byzantine. The justest man to-day must practise a tainted goodness.”

These questions need discussion — a magnificent frankness of discussion — if any standards are again to establish an effective hold upon educated people. Discretions, as I have said already, will never hold any one worth holding — longer than they held us. Against every “shalt not” there must be a “why not” plainly put, — the “why not” largest and plainest, the law deduced from its purpose. “You and I, Isabel,” I said, “have always been a little disregardful of duty, partly at least because the idea of duty comes to us so ill-clad. Oh! I know there’s an extravagant insubordinate strain in us, but that wasn’t all. I wish humbugs would leave duty alone. I wish all duty wasn’t covered with slime. That’s where the real mischief comes in. Passion can always contrive to clothe itself in beauty, strips itself splendid. That carried us. But for all its mean associations there is this duty....

“Don’t we come rather late to it?”

“Not so late that it won’t be atrociously hard to do.”

“It’s queer to think of now,” said Isabel. “Who could believe we did all we have done honestly? Well, in a manner honestly. Who could believe we thought this might be hidden? Who could trace it all step by step from the time when we found that a certain boldness in our talk was pleasing? We talked of love.... Master, there’s not much for us to do in the way of Apologia that any one will credit.

And yet if it were possible to tell the very heart of our story....

"Does Margaret really want to go on with you?" she asked— "shield you — knowing of... THIS?"

"I'm certain. I don't understand — just as I don't understand Shoesmith, but she does. These people walk on solid ground which is just thin air to us. They've got something we haven't got. Assurances? I wonder."...

Then it was, or later, we talked of Shoesmith, and what her life might be with him.

"He's good," she said; "he's kindly. He's everything but magic. He's the very image of the decent, sober, honourable life. You can't say a thing against him or I — except that something — something in his imagination, something in the tone of his voice — fails for me. Why don't I love him? — he's a better man than you! Why don't you? IS he a better man than you? He's usage, he's honour, he's the right thing, he's the breed and the tradition, — a gentleman. You're your erring, incalculable self. I suppose we women will trust this sort and love your sort to the very end of time...."

We lay side by side and nibbled at grass stalks as we talked. It seemed enormously unreasonable to us that two people who had come to the pitch of easy and confident affection and happiness that held between us should be obliged to part and shun one another, or murder half the substance of their lives. We felt ourselves crushed and beaten by an indiscriminating machine which destroys happiness in the service of jealousy. "The mass of people don't feel these things in quite the same manner as we feel them," she said. "Is it because they're different in grain, or educated out of some primitive instinct?"

"It's because we've explored love a little, and they know no more than the gateway," I said. "Lust and then jealousy; their simple conception — and we have gone past all that and wandered hand in hand...."

I remember that for a time we watched two of that larger sort of gull, whose wings are brownish-white, circle and hover against the blue. And then we lay and looked at a band of water mirror clear far out to sea, and wondered why the breeze that rippled all the rest should leave it so serene.

“And in this State of ours,” I resumed.

“Eh!” said Isabel, rolling over into a sitting posture and looking out at the horizon. “Let’s talk no more of things we can never see. Talk to me of the work you are doing and all we shall do — after we have parted. We’ve said too little of that. We’ve had our red life, and it’s over. Thank Heaven! — though we stole it! Talk about your work, dear, and the things we’ll go on doing — just as though we were still together. We’ll still be together in a sense — through all these things we have in common.”

And so we talked of politics and our outlook. We were interested to the pitch of self-forgetfulness. We weighed persons and forces, discussed the probabilities of the next general election, the steady drift of public opinion in the north and west away from Liberalism towards us. It was very manifest that in spite of Wardenham and the EXPURGATOR, we should come into the new Government strongly. The party had no one else, all the young men were formally or informally with us; Esmeer would have office, Lord Tarvrille, I... and very probably there would be something for Shoesmith. “And for my own part,” I said, “I count on backing on the Liberal side. For the last two years we’ve been forcing competition in constructive legislation between the parties. The Liberals have not been long in following up our Endowment of Motherhood lead. They’ll have to give votes and lip service anyhow. Half the readers of the BLUE WEEKLY, they say, are Liberals....

“I remember talking about things of this sort with old Willersley,” I said, “ever so many years ago. It was some place near Locarno, and we looked down the lake that shone weltering — just as now we look over the sea. And then we dreamt in an indistinct featureless way of all that you and I are doing now.”

“I!” said Isabel, and laughed.

“Well, of some such thing,” I said, and remained for awhile silent, thinking of Locarno.

I recalled once more the largeness, the release from small personal things that I had felt in my youth; statecraft became real and wonderful again with the memory, the gigantic handling of gigantic problems. I began to talk out my thoughts, sitting up beside her, as I could never talk of them to any one but Isabel; began to recover

again the purpose that lay under all my political ambitions and adjustments and anticipations. I saw the State, splendid and wide as I had seen it in that first travel of mine, but now it was no mere distant prospect of spires and pinnacles, but populous with fine-trained, bold-thinking, bold-doing people. It was as if I had forgotten for a long time and now remembered with amazement.

At first, I told her, I had been altogether at a loss how I could do anything to battle against the aimless muddle of our world; I had wanted a clue — until she had come into my life questioning, suggesting, unconsciously illuminating. "But I have done nothing," she protested. I declared she had done everything in growing to education under my eyes, in reflecting again upon all the processes that had made myself, so that instead of abstractions and blue-books and bills and devices, I had realised the world of mankind as a crowd needing before all things fine women and men. We'd spoilt ourselves in learning that, but anyhow we had our lesson. Before her I was in a nineteenth-century darkness, dealing with the nation as if it were a crowd of selfish men, forgetful of women and children and that shy wild thing in the hearts of men, love, which must be drawn upon as it has never been drawn upon before, if the State is to live. I saw now how it is possible to bring the loose factors of a great realm together, to create a mind of literature and thought in it, and the expression of a purpose to make it self-conscious and fine. I had it all clear before me, so that at a score of points I could presently begin. The BLUE WEEKLY was a centre of force. Already we had given Imperialism a criticism, and leavened half the press from our columns. Our movement consolidated and spread. We should presently come into power. Everything moved towards our hands. We should be able to get at the schools, the services, the universities, the church; enormously increase the endowment of research, and organise what was sorely wanted, a criticism of research; contrive a closer contact between the press and creative intellectual life; foster literature, clarify, strengthen the public consciousness, develop social organisation and a sense of the State. Men were coming to us every day, brilliant young peers like Lord Dentonhill, writers like Carnot and Cresswell. It filled me with pride to win such men. "We stand for so much more than we seem to stand for," I said. I opened my heart

to her, so freely that I hesitate to open my heart even to the reader, telling of projects and ambitions I cherished, of my consciousness of great powers and widening opportunities....

Isabel watched me as I talked.

She too, I think, had forgotten these things for a while. For it is curious and I think a very significant thing that since we had become lovers, we had talked very little of the broader things that had once so strongly gripped our imaginations.

"It's good," I said, "to talk like this to you, to get back to youth and great ambitions with you. There have been times lately when politics has seemed the pettiest game played with mean tools for mean ends — and none the less so that the happiness of three hundred million people might be touched by our follies. I talk to no one else like this.... And now I think of parting, I think but of how much more I might have talked to you."...

Things drew to an end at last, but after we had spoken of a thousand things.

"We've talked away our last half day," I said, staring over my shoulder at the blazing sunset sky behind us. "Dear, it's been the last day of our lives for us.... It doesn't seem like the last day of our lives. Or any day."

"I wonder how it will feel?" said Isabel.

"It will be very strange at first — not to be able to tell you things."

"I've a superstition that after — after we've parted — if ever I go into my room and talk, you'll hear. You'll be — somewhere."

"I shall be in the world — yes."

"I don't feel as though these days ahead were real. Here we are, here we remain."

"Yes, I feel that. As though you and I were two immortals, who didn't live in time and space at all, who never met, who couldn't part, and here we lie on Olympus. And those two poor creatures who did meet, poor little Richard Remington and Isabel Rivers, who met and loved too much and had to part, they part and go their ways, and we lie here and watch them, you and I. She'll cry, poor dear."

"She'll cry. She's crying now!"

"Poor little beasts! I think he'll cry too. He winces. He could — for tuppence. I didn't know he had lachrymal glands at all until a

little while ago. I suppose all love is hysterical — and a little foolish. Poor mites! Silly little pitiful creatures! How we have blundered! Think how we must look to God! Well, we'll pity them, and then we'll inspire him to stiffen up again — and do as we've determined he shall do. We'll see it through, — we who lie here on the cliff. They'll be mean at times, and horrid at times; we know them! Do you see her, a poor little fine lady in a great house, — she sometimes goes to her room and writes."

"She writes for his BLUE WEEKLY still."

"Yes. Sometimes — I hope. And he's there in the office with a bit of her copy in his hand."

"Is it as good as if she still talked it over with him before she wrote it? Is it?"

"Better, I think. Let's play it's better — anyhow. It may be that talking over was rather mixed with love-making. After all, love-making is joy rather than magic. Don't let's pretend about that even.... Let's go on watching him. (I don't see why her writing shouldn't be better. Indeed I don't.) See! There he goes down along the Embankment to Westminster just like a real man, for all that he's smaller than a grain of dust. What is running round inside that speck of a head of his? Look at him going past the Policemen, specks too — selected large ones from the country. I think he's going to dinner with the Speaker — some old thing like that. Is his face harder or commoner or stronger? — I can't quite see.... And now he's up and speaking in the House. Hope he'll hold on to the thread. He'll have to plan his speeches to the very end of his days — and learn the headings."

"Isn't she up in the women's gallery to hear him?"

"No. Unless it's by accident."

"She's there," she said.

"Well, by accident it happens. Not too many accidents, Isabel. Never any more adventures for us, dear, now. No!... They play the game, you know. They've begun late, but now they've got to. You see it's not so very hard for them since you and I, my dear, are here always, always faithfully here on this warm cliff of love accomplished, watching and helping them under high heaven. It isn't so VERY hard. Rather good in some ways. Some people HAVE to

be broken a little. Can you see Altiora down there, by any chance?”

“She’s too little to be seen,” she said.

“Can you see the sins they once committed?”

“I can only see you here beside me, dear — for ever. For all my life, dear, till I die. Was that — the sin?”...

I took her to the station, and after she had gone I was to drive to Dover, and cross to Calais by the night boat. I couldn’t, I felt, return to London. We walked over the crest and down to the little station of Martin Mill side by side, talking at first in broken fragments, for the most part of unimportant things.

“None of this,” she said abruptly, “seems in the slightest degree real to me. I’ve got no sense of things ending.”

“We’re parting,” I said.

“We’re parting — as people part in a play. It’s distressing. But I don’t feel as though you and I were really never to see each other again for years. Do you?”

I thought. “No,” I said.

“After we’ve parted I shall look to talk it over with you.”

“So shall I.”

“That’s absurd.”

“Absurd.”

“I feel as if you’d always be there, just about where you are now. Invisible perhaps, but there. We’ve spent so much of our lives joggling elbows.”...

“Yes. Yes. I don’t in the least realise it. I suppose I shall begin to when the train goes out of the station. Are we wanting in imagination, Isabel?”

“I don’t know. We’ve always assumed it was the other way about.”

“Even when the train goes out of the station — ! I’ve seen you into so many trains.”

“I shall go on thinking of things to say to you — things to put in your letters. For years to come. How can I ever stop thinking in that way now? We’ve got into each other’s brains.”

“It isn’t real,” I said; “nothing is real. The world’s no more than a fantastic dream. Why are we parting, Isabel?”

“I don’t know. It seems now supremely silly. I suppose we have

to. Can't we meet? — don't you think we shall meet even in dreams?"

"We'll meet a thousand times in dreams," I said.

"I wish we could dream at the same time," said Isabel.... "Dream walks. I can't believe, dear, I shall never have a walk with you again."

"If I'd stayed six months in America," I said, "we might have walked long walks and talked long talks for all our lives."

"Not in a world of Baileys," said Isabel. "And anyhow—"

She stopped short. I looked interrogation.

"We've loved," she said.

I took her ticket, saw to her luggage, and stood by the door of the compartment. "Good-bye," I said a little stiffly, conscious of the people upon the platform. She bent above me, white and dusky, looking at me very steadfastly.

"Come here," she whispered. "Never mind the porters. What can they know? Just one time more — I must."

She rested her hand against the door of the carriage and bent down upon me, and put her cold, moist lips to mine.

CHAPTER THE THIRD ~~ THE BREAKING POINT

1

And then we broke down. We broke our faith with both Margaret and Shoesmith, flung career and duty out of our lives, and went away together.

It is only now, almost a year after these events, that I can begin to see what happened to me. At the time it seemed to me I was a rational, responsible creature, but indeed I had not parted from her two days before I became a monomaniac to whom nothing could matter but Isabel. Every truth had to be squared to that obsession, every duty. It astounds me to think how I forgot Margaret, forgot my work, forgot everything but that we two were parted. I still believe that with better chances we might have escaped the consequences of the emotional storm that presently seized us both. But we had no foresight of that, and no preparation for it, and our circumstances betrayed us. It was partly Shoesmith's unwisdom in delaying his marriage until after the end of the session — partly my own amazing folly in returning within four days to Westminster. But we were all of us intent upon the defeat of scandal and the complete restoration of appearances. It seemed necessary that Shoesmith's marriage should not seem to be hurried, still more necessary that I should not vanish inexplicably. I had to be visible with Margaret in London just as much as possible; we went to restaurants, we visited the theatre; we could even contemplate the possibility of my presence at the wedding. For that, however, we had schemed a weekend visit to Wales, and a fictitious sprained ankle at the last moment which would justify my absence....

I cannot convey to you the intolerable wretchedness and rebellion of my separation from Isabel. It seemed that in the past two years all my thoughts had spun commisures to Isabel's brain and I could think of nothing that did not lead me surely to the need of the one intimate I had found in the world. I came back to the House and the office and my home, I filled all my days with appointments and duty, and it did

not save me in the least from a lonely emptiness such as I had never felt before in all my life. I had little sleep. In the daytime I did a hundred things, I even spoke in the House on two occasions, and by my own low standards spoke well, and it seemed to me that I was going about in my own brain like a hushed survivor in a house whose owner lies dead upstairs.

I came to a crisis after that wild dinner of Tarvrille's. Something in that stripped my soul bare.

It was an occasion made absurd and strange by the odd accident that the house caught fire upstairs while we were dining below. It was a men's dinner— "A dinner of all sorts," said Tarvrille, when he invited me; "everything from Evesham and Gane to Wilkins the author, and Heaven knows what will happen!" I remember that afterwards Tarvrille was accused of having planned the fire to make his dinner a marvel and a memory. It was indeed a wonderful occasion, and I suppose if I had not been altogether drenched in misery, I should have found the same wild amusement in it that glowed in all the others. There were one or two university dons, Lord George Fester, the racing man, Panmure, the artist, two or three big City men, Weston Massinghay and another prominent Liberal whose name I can't remember, the three men Tarvrille had promised and Esmeer, Lord Wrassleton, Waulsort, the member for Monckton, Neal and several others. We began a little coldly, with duologues, but the conversation was already becoming general — so far as such a long table permitted — when the fire asserted itself.

It asserted itself first as a penetrating and emphatic smell of burning rubber, — it was caused by the fusing of an electric wire. The reek forced its way into the discussion of the Pekin massacres that had sprung up between Evesham, Waulsort, and the others at the end of the table. "Something burning," said the man next to me.

"Something must be burning," said Panmure.

Tarvrille hated undignified interruptions. He had a particularly imperturbable butler with a cadaverous sad face and an eye of rigid disapproval. He spoke to this individual over his shoulder. "Just see, will you," he said, and caught up the pause in the talk to his left.

Wilkins was asking questions, and I, too, was curious. The story of the siege of the Legations in China in the year 1900 and all that

followed upon that, is just one of those disturbing interludes in history that refuse to join on to that general scheme of protestation by which civilisation is maintained. It is a break in the general flow of experience as disconcerting to statecraft as the robbery of my knife and the scuffle that followed it had been to me when I was a boy at Penge. It is like a tear in a curtain revealing quite unexpected backgrounds. I had never given the business a thought for years; now this talk brought back a string of pictures to my mind; how the reliefs arrived and the plundering began, how section after section of the International Army was drawn into murder and pillage, how the infection spread upward until the wives of Ministers were busy looting, and the very sentinels stripped and crawled like snakes into the Palace they were set to guard. It did not stop at robbery, men were murdered, women, being plundered, were outraged, children were butchered, strong men had found themselves with arms in a lawless, defenceless city, and this had followed. Now it was all recalled.

"Respectable ladies addicted to district visiting at home were as bad as any one," said Panmure. "Glazebrook told me of one — flushed like a woman at a bargain sale, he said — and when he pointed out to her that the silk she'd got was bloodstained, she just said, 'Oh, bother!' and threw it aside and went back...."

We became aware that Tarvrille's butler had returned. We tried not to seem to listen.

"Beg pardon, m'lord," he said. "The house IS on fire, m'lord."

"Upstairs, m'lord."

"Just overhead, m'lord."

"The maids are throwing water, m'lord, and I've telephoned FIRE."

"No, m'lord, no immediate danger."

"It's all right," said Tarvrille to the table generally. "Go on! It's not a general conflagration, and the fire brigade won't be five minutes. Don't see that it's our affair. The stuff's insured. They say old Lady Paskershortly was dreadful. Like a harpy. The Dowager Empress had shown her some little things of hers. Pet things — hidden away. Susan went straight for them — used to take an umbrella for the silks. Born shoplifter."

It was evident he didn't want his dinner spoilt, and we played up loyally.

"This is recorded history," said Wilkins,— "practically. It makes one wonder about unrecorded history. In India, for example."

But nobody touched that.

"Thompson," said Tarvrille to the imperturbable butler, and indicating the table generally, "champagne. Champagne. Keep it going."

"M'lord," and Thompson marshalled his assistants.

Some man I didn't know began to remember things about Mandalay. "It's queer," he said, "how people break out at times;" and told his story of an army doctor, brave, public-spirited, and, as it happened, deeply religious, who was caught one evening by the excitement of plundering — and stole and hid, twisted the wrist of a boy until it broke, and was afterwards overcome by wild remorse.

I watched Evesham listening intently. "Strange," he said, "very strange. We are such stuff as thieves are made of. And in China, too, they murdered people — for the sake of murdering. Apart, so to speak, from mercenary considerations. I'm afraid there's no doubt of it in certain cases. No doubt at all. Young soldiers fresh from German high schools and English homes!"

"Did OUR people?" asked some patriot.

"Not so much. But I'm afraid there were cases.... Some of the Indian troops were pretty bad."

Gane picked up the tale with confirmations.

It is all printed in the vividest way as a picture upon my memory, so that were I a painter I think I could give the deep rich browns and warm greys beyond the brightly lit table, the various distinguished faces, strongly illuminated, interested and keen, above the black and white of evening dress, the alert menservants with their heavier, clean-shaved faces indistinctly seen in the dimness behind. Then this was coloured emotionally for me by my aching sense of loss and sacrifice, and by the chance trend of our talk to the breaches and unrealities of the civilised scheme. We seemed a little transitory circle of light in a universe of darkness and violence; an effect to which the diminishing smell of burning rubber, the trampling of feet overhead, the swish of water, added enormously. Everybody —

unless, perhaps, it was Evesham — drank rather carelessly because of the suppressed excitement of our situation, and talked the louder and more freely.

"But what a flimsy thing our civilisation is!" said Evesham; "a mere thin net of habits and associations!"

"I suppose those men came back," said Wilkins.

"Lady Paskershortly did!" chuckled Evesham.

"How do they fit it in with the rest of their lives?" Wilkins speculated. "I suppose there's Pekin-stained police officers, Pekin-stained J. P.'s — trying petty pilferers in the severest manner."...

Then for a time things became preposterous. There was a sudden cascade of water by the fireplace, and then absurdly the ceiling began to rain upon us, first at this point and then that. "My new suit!" cried some one. "Perrrrrr-up pe-rr" — a new vertical line of blackened water would establish itself and form a spreading pool upon the gleaming cloth. The men nearest would arrange catchment areas of plates and flower bowls. "Draw up!" said Tarvrille, "draw up. That's the bad end of the table!" He turned to the imperturbable butler. "Take round bath towels," he said; and presently the men behind us were offering — with inflexible dignity— "Port wine, Sir. Bath towel, Sir!" Waulsort, with streaks of blackened water on his forehead, was suddenly reminded of a wet year when he had followed the French army manoeuvres. An animated dispute sprang up between him and Neal about the relative efficiency of the new French and German field guns. Wrassleton joined in and a little drunken shrivelled Oxford don of some sort with a black-splashed shirt front who presently silenced them all by the immensity and particularity of his knowledge of field artillery. Then the talk drifted to Sedan and the effect of dead horses upon drinking-water, which brought Wrassleton and Weston Massinghay into a dispute of great vigour and emphasis. "The trouble in South Africa," said Weston Massinghay, "wasn't that we didn't boil our water. It was that we didn't boil our men. The Boers drank the same stuff we did. THEY didn't get dysentery."

That argument went on for some time. I was attacked across the table by a man named Burshort about my Endowment of Motherhood schemes, but in the gaps of that debate I could still hear

Weston Massinghay at intervals repeat in a rather thickened voice: "THEY didn't get dysentery."

I think Evesham went early. The rest of us clustered more and more closely towards the drier end of the room, the table was pushed along, and the area beneath the extinguished conflagration abandoned to a tinkling, splashing company of pots and pans and bowls and baths. Everybody was now disposed to be hilarious and noisy, to say startling and aggressive things; we must have sounded a queer clamour to a listener in the next room. The devil inspired them to begin baiting me. "Ours isn't the Tory party any more," said Burshort. "Remington has made it the Obstetric Party."

"That's good!" said Weston Massinghay, with all his teeth gleaming; "I shall use that against you in the House!"

"I shall denounce you for abusing private confidences if you do," said Tarvrille.

"Remington wants us to give up launching Dreadnoughts and launch babies instead," Burshort urged. "For the price of one Dreadnought—"

The little shrivelled don who had been omniscient about guns joined in the baiting, and displayed himself a venomous creature. Something in his eyes told me he knew Isabel and hated me for it. "Love and fine thinking," he began, a little thickly, and knocking over a wine-glass with a too easy gesture. "Love and fine thinking. Two things don't go together. No philosophy worth a damn ever came out of excesses of love. Salt Lake City — Piggott — Ag — Agapemone again — no works to matter."

Everybody laughed.

"Got to rec'nise these facts," said my assailant. "Love and fine think'n pretty phrase — attractive. Suitable for p'litical dec'rations. Postcard, Christmas, gilt lets, in a wreath of white flow's. Not oth'wise valu'ble."

I made some remark, I forget what, but he overbore me.

Real things we want are Hate — Hate and COARSE think'n. I b'long to the school of Mrs. F's Aunt—"

"What?" said some one, intent.

"In 'Little Dorrit,'" explained Tarvrille; "go on!"

"Hate a fool," said my assailant.

Tarvrille glanced at me. I smiled to conceal the loss of my temper.

"Hate," said the little man, emphasising his point with a clumsy fist. "Hate's the driving force. What's m'rality? — hate of rotten goings on. What's patriotism? — hate of int'loping foreigners. What's Radicalism? — hate of lords. What's Toryism? — hate of disturbance. It's all hate — hate from top to bottom. Hate of a mess. Remington owned it the other day, said he hated a mu'll. There you are! If you couldn't get hate into an election, damn it (hic) people wou'n't poll. Poll for love! — no' me!"

He paused, but before any one could speak he had resumed.

"Then this about fine thinking. Like going into a bear pit armed with a tagle — talgent — talgent galv'nometer. Like going to fight a mad dog with Shasepear and the Bible. Fine thinking — what we want is the thickes' thinking we can get. Thinking that stands up alone. Taf Reform means work for all, thassort of thing."

The gentleman from Cambridge paused. "YOU a flag!" he said. "I'd as soon go to ba'ell und' wet tissue paper!"

My best answer on the spur of the moment was:

"The Japanese did." Which was absurd.

I went on to some other reply, I forget exactly what, and the talk of the whole table drew round me. It was an extraordinary revelation to me. Every one was unusually careless and outspoken, and it was amazing how manifestly they echoed the feeling of this old Tory spokesman. They were quite friendly to me, they regarded me and the BLUE WEEKLY as valuable party assets for Toryism, but it was clear they attached no more importance to what were my realities than they did to the remarkable therapeutic claims of Mrs. Eddy. They were flushed and amused, perhaps they went a little too far in their resolves to draw me, but they left the impression on my mind of men irrevocably set upon narrow and cynical views of political life. For them the political struggle was a game, whose counters were human hate and human credulity; their real aim was just every one's aim, the preservation of the class and way of living to which their lives were attuned. They did not know how tired I was, how exhausted mentally and morally, nor how cruel their convergent attack on me chanced to be. But my temper gave way, I became tart and fierce, perhaps my replies were a trifle absurd, and Tarvrille,

with that quick eye and sympathy of his, came to the rescue. Then for a time I sat silent and drank port wine while the others talked. The disorder of the room, the still dripping ceiling, the noise, the displaced ties and crumpled shirts of my companions, jarred on my tormented nerves....

It was long past midnight when we dispersed. I remember Tarvrille coming with me into the hall, and then suggesting we should go upstairs to see the damage. A manservant carried up two flickering candles for us. One end of the room was gutted, curtains, hangings, several chairs and tables were completely burnt, the panelling was scorched and warped, three smashed windows made the candles flare and gutter, and some scraps of broken china still lay on the puddled floor.

As we surveyed this, Lady Tarvrille appeared, back from some party, a slender, white-cloaked, satin-footed figure with amazed blue eyes beneath her golden hair. I remember how stupidly we laughed at her surprise.

2

I parted from Panmure at the corner of Aldington Street, and went my way alone. But I did not go home, I turned westward and walked for a long way, and then struck northward aimlessly. I was too miserable to go to my house.

I wandered about that night like a man who has discovered his Gods are dead. I can look back now detached yet sympathetic upon that wild confusion of moods and impulses, and by it I think I can understand, oh! half the wrongdoing and blundering in the world.

I do not feel now the logical force of the process that must have convinced me then that I had made my sacrifice and spent my strength in vain. At no time had I been under any illusion that the Tory party had higher ideals than any other party, yet it came to me like a thing newly discovered that the men I had to work with had for the most part no such dreams, no sense of any collective purpose, no atom of the faith I held. They were just as immediately intent upon personal ends, just as limited by habits of thought, as the men in any other group or party. Perhaps I had slipped unawares for a time into

the delusions of a party man — but I do not think so.

No, it was the mood of profound despondency that had followed upon the abrupt cessation of my familiar intercourse with Isabel, that gave this fact that had always been present in my mind its quality of devastating revelation. It seemed as though I had never seen before nor suspected the stupendous gap between the chaotic aims, the routine, the conventional acquiescences, the vulgarisations of the personal life, and that clearly conscious development and service of a collective thought and purpose at which my efforts aimed. I had thought them but a little way apart, and now I saw they were separated by all the distance between earth and heaven. I saw now in myself and every one around me, a concentration upon interests close at hand, an inability to detach oneself from the provocations, tendernesses, instinctive hates, dumb lusts and shy timidities that touched one at every point; and, save for rare exalted moments, a regardlessness of broader aims and remoter possibilities that made the white passion of statecraft seem as unearthly and irrelevant to human life as the story an astronomer will tell, half proven but altogether incredible, of habitable planets and answering intelligences, suns' distances uncounted across the deep. It seemed to me I had aspired too high and thought too far, had mocked my own littleness by presumption, had given the uttermost dear reality of life for a theoriser's dream.

All through that wandering agony of mine that night a dozen threads of thought interwove; now I was a soul speaking in protest to God against a task too cold and high for it, and now I was an angry man, scorned and pointed upon, who had let life cheat him of the ultimate pride of his soul. Now I was the fool of ambition, who opened his box of gold to find blank emptiness, and now I was a spinner of flimsy thoughts, whose web tore to rags at a touch. I realised for the first time how much I had come to depend upon the mind and faith of Isabel, how she had confirmed me and sustained me, how little strength I had to go on with our purposes now that she had vanished from my life. She had been the incarnation of those great abstractions, the saving reality, the voice that answered back. There was no support that night in the things that had been. We were alone together on the cliff for ever more! — that was very pretty in

its way, but it had no truth whatever that could help me now, no ounce of sustaining value. I wanted Isabel that night, no sentiment or memory of her, but Isabel alive, — to talk to me, to touch me, to hold me together. I wanted unendurably the dusky gentleness of her presence, the consolation of her voice.

We were alone together on the cliff! I startled a passing cabman into interest by laughing aloud at that magnificent and characteristic sentimentality. What a lie it was, and how satisfying it had been! That was just where we shouldn't remain. We of all people had no distinction from that humanity whose lot is to forget. We should go out to other interests, new experiences, new demands. That tall and intricate fabric of ambitious understandings we had built up together in our intimacy would be the first to go; and last perhaps to endure with us would be a few gross memories of sights and sounds, and trivial incidental excitements....

I had a curious feeling that night that I had lost touch with life for a long time, and had now been reminded of its quality. That infernal little don's parody of my ruling phrase, "Hate and coarse thinking," stuck in my thoughts like a poisoned dart, a centre of inflammation. Just as a man who is debilitated has no longer the vitality to resist an infection, so my mind, slackened by the crisis of my separation from Isabel, could find no resistance to his emphatic suggestion. It seemed to me that what he had said was overpoweringly true, not only of contemporary life, but of all possible human life. Love is the rare thing, the treasured thing; you lock it away jealously and watch, and well you may; hate and aggression and force keep the streets and rule the world. And fine thinking is, in the rough issues of life, weak thinking, is a balancing indecisive process, discovers with disloyal impartiality a justice and a defect on each disputing side. "Good honest men," as Dayton calls them, rule the world, with a way of thinking out decisions like shooting cartloads of bricks, and with a steadfast pleasure in hostility. Dayton liked to call his antagonists "blaggards and scoundrels" — it justified his opposition — the Lords were "scoundrels," all people richer than he were "scoundrels," all Socialists, all troublesome poor people; he liked to think of jails and justice being done. His public spirit was saturated with the sombre joys of conflict and the pleasant thought of condign punishment for

all recalcitrant souls. That was the way of it, I perceived. That had survival value, as the biologists say. He was fool enough in politics to be a consistent and happy politician....

Hate and coarse thinking; how the infernal truth of the phrase beat me down that night! I couldn't remember that I had known this all along, and that it did not really matter in the slightest degree. I had worked it all out long ago in other terms, when I had seen how all parties stood for interests inevitably, and how the purpose in life achieves itself, if it achieves itself at all, as a bye product of the war of individuals and classes. Hadn't I always known that science and philosophy elaborate themselves in spite of all the passion and narrowness of men, in spite of the vanities and weakness of their servants, in spite of all the heated disorder of contemporary things? Wasn't it my own phrase to speak of "that greater mind in men, in which we are but moments and transitorily lit cells?" Hadn't I known that the spirit of man still speaks like a thing that struggles out of mud and slime, and that the mere effort to speak means choking and disaster? Hadn't I known that we who think without fear and speak without discretion will not come to our own for the next two thousand years?

It was the last was most forgotten of all that faith mislaid. Before mankind, in my vision that night, stretched new centuries of confusion, vast stupid wars, hastily conceived laws, foolish temporary triumphs of order, lapses, set-backs, despairs, catastrophes, new beginnings, a multitudinous wilderness of time, a nigh plotless drama of wrong-headed energies. In order to assuage my parting from Isabel we had set ourselves to imagine great rewards for our separation, great personal rewards; we had promised ourselves success visible and shining in our lives. To console ourselves in our separation we had made out of the BLUE WEEKLY and our young Tory movement preposterously enormous things-as though those poor fertilising touches at the soil were indeed the germinating seeds of the millennium, as though a million lives such as ours had not to contribute before the beginning of the beginning. That poor pretence had failed. That magnificent proposition shrivelled to nothing in the black loneliness of that night.

I saw that there were to be no such compensations. So far as my

real services to mankind were concerned I had to live an unrecognised and unrewarded life. If I made successes it would be by the way. Our separation would alter nothing of that. My scandal would cling to me now for all my life, a thing affecting relationships, embarrassing and hampering my spirit. I should follow the common lot of those who live by the imagination, and follow it now in infinite loneliness of soul; the one good comforter, the one effectual familiar, was lost to me for ever; I should do good and evil together, no one caring to understand; I should produce much weary work, much bad-spirited work, much absolute evil; the good in me would be too often ill-expressed and missed or misinterpreted. In the end I might leave one gleaming flake or so amidst the slag heaps for a moment of postmortem sympathy. I was afraid beyond measure of my derelict self. Because I believed with all my soul in love and fine thinking that did not mean that I should necessarily either love steadfastly or think finely. I remember how I fell talking to God — I think I talked out loud. "Why do I care for these things?" I cried, "when I can do so little! Why am I apart from the jolly thoughtless fighting life of men? These dreams fade to nothingness, and leave me bare!"

I scolded. "Why don't you speak to a man, show yourself? I thought I had a gleam of you in Isabel, — and then you take her away. Do you really think I can carry on this game alone, doing your work in darkness and silence, living in muddled conflict, half living, half dying?"

Grotesque analogies arose in my mind. I discovered a strange parallelism between my now tattered phrase of "Love and fine thinking" and the "Love and the Word" of Christian thought. Was it possible the Christian propaganda had at the outset meant just that system of attitudes I had been feeling my way towards from the very beginning of my life? Had I spent a lifetime making my way back to Christ? It mocks humanity to think how Christ has been overlaid. I went along now, recalling long-neglected phrases and sentences; I had a new vision of that great central figure preaching love with hate and coarse thinking even in the disciples about Him, rising to a tidal wave at last in that clamour for Barabbas, and the public satisfaction in His fate....

It's curious to think that hopeless love and a noisy disordered

dinner should lead a man to these speculations, but they did. “He DID mean that!” I said, and suddenly thought of what a bludgeon they’d made of His Christianity. Athwart that perplexing, patient enigma sitting inaudibly among publicans and sinners, danced and gibbered a long procession of the champions of orthodoxy. “He wasn’t human,” I said, and remembered that last despairing cry, “My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

“Oh, HE forsakes every one,” I said, flying out as a tired mind will, with an obvious repartee....

I passed at a bound from such monstrous theology to a towering rage against the Baileys. In an instant and with no sense of absurdity I wanted — in the intervals of love and fine thinking — to fling about that strenuously virtuous couple; I wanted to kick Keyhole of the PEEPSHOW into the gutter and make a common massacre of all the prosperous rascaldom that makes a trade and rule of virtue. I can still feel that transition. In a moment I had reached that phase of weakly decisive anger which is for people of my temperament the concomitant of exhaustion.

“I will have her,” I cried. “By Heaven! I WILL have her! Life mocks me and cheats me. Nothing can be made good to me again.... Why shouldn’t I save what I can? I can’t save myself without her....”

I remember myself — as a sort of anti-climax to that — rather tediously asking my way home. I was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Holland Park....

It was then between one and two. I felt that I could go home now without any risk of meeting Margaret. It had been the thought of returning to Margaret that had sent me wandering that night. It is one of the ugliest facts I recall about that time of crisis, the intense aversion I felt for Margaret. No sense of her goodness, her injury and nobility, and the enormous generosity of her forgiveness, sufficed to mitigate that. I hope now that in this book I am able to give something of her silvery splendour, but all through this crisis I felt nothing of that. There was a triumphant kindliness about her that I found intolerable. She meant to be so kind to me, to offer unstinted consolation, to meet my needs, to supply just all she imagined Isabel had given me.

When I left Tarvrille’s, I felt I could anticipate exactly how she

would meet my homecoming. She would be perplexed by my crumpled shirt front, on which I had spilt some drops of wine; she would overlook that by an effort, explain it sentimentally, resolve it should make no difference to her. She would want to know who had been present, what we had talked about, show the alertest interest in whatever it was — it didn't matter what.... No, I couldn't face her.

So I did not reach my study until two o'clock.

There, I remember, stood the new and very beautiful old silver candlesticks that she had set there two days since to please me — the foolish kindliness of it! But in her search for expression, Margaret heaped presents upon me. She had fitted these candlesticks with electric lights, and I must, I suppose, have lit them to write my note to Isabel. "Give me a word — the world aches without you," was all I scrawled, though I fully meant that she should come to me. I knew, though I ought not to have known, that now she had left her flat, she was with the Balfes — she was to have been married from the Balfes — and I sent my letter there. And I went out into the silent square and posted the note forthwith, because I knew quite clearly that if I left it until morning I should never post it at all.

3

I had a curious revulsion of feeling that morning of our meeting. (Of all places for such a clandestine encounter she had chosen the bridge opposite Buckingham Palace.) Overnight I had been full of self pity, and eager for the comfort of Isabel's presence. But the ill-written scrawl in which she had replied had been full of the suggestion of her own weakness and misery. And when I saw her, my own selfish sorrows were altogether swept away by a wave of pitiful tenderness. Something had happened to her that I did not understand. She was manifestly ill. She came towards me wearily, she who had always borne herself so bravely; her shoulders seemed bent, and her eyes were tired, and her face white and drawn. All my life has been a narrow self-centred life; no brothers, no sisters or children or weak things had ever yet made any intimate appeal to me, and suddenly — I verily believe for the first time in my life! — I felt a great passion of protective ownership; I felt that here was something that I could

die to shelter, something that meant more than joy or pride or splendid ambitions or splendid creation to me, a new kind of hold upon me, a new power in the world. Some sealed fountain was opened in my breast. I knew that I could love Isabel broken, Isabel beaten, Isabel ugly and in pain, more than I could love any sweet or delightful or glorious thing in life. I didn't care any more for anything in the world but Isabel, and that I should protect her. I trembled as I came near her, and could scarcely speak to her for the emotion that filled me....

"I had your letter," I said.

"I had yours."

"Where can we talk?"

I remember my lame sentences. "We'll have a boat. That's best here."

I took her to the little boat-house, and there we hired a boat, and I rowed in silence under the bridge and into the shade of a tree. The square grey stone masses of the Foreign Office loomed through the twigs, I remember, and a little space of grass separated us from the pathway and the scrutiny of passers-by. And there we talked.

"I had to write to you," I said.

"I had to come."

"When are you to be married?"

"Thursday week."

"Well?" I said. "But — can we?"

She leant forward and scrutinised my face with eyes wide open. "What do you mean?" she said at last in a whisper.

"Can we stand it? After all?"

I looked at her white face. "Can you?" I said.

She whispered. "Your career?"

Then suddenly her face was contorted, — she wept silently, exactly as a child tormented beyond endurance might suddenly weep....

"Oh! I don't care," I cried, "now. I don't care. Damn the whole system of things! Damn all this patching of the irrevocable! I want to take care of you, Isabel! and have you with me."

"I can't stand it," she blubbered.

"You needn't stand it. I thought it was best for you.... I thought

indeed it was best for you. I thought even you wanted it like that."

"Couldn't I live alone — as I meant to do?"

"No," I said, "you couldn't. You're not strong enough. I've thought of that; I've got to shelter you."

"And I want you," I went on. "I'm not strong enough — I can't stand life without you."

She stopped weeping, she made a great effort to control herself, and looked at me steadfastly for a moment. "I was going to kill myself," she whispered. "I was going to kill myself quietly — somehow. I meant to wait a bit and have an accident. I thought — you didn't understand. You were a man, and couldn't understand...."

"People can't do as we thought we could do," I said. "We've gone too far together."

"Yes," she said, and I stared into her eyes.

"The horror of it," she whispered. "The horror of being handed over. It's just only begun to dawn upon me, seeing him now as I do. He tries to be kind to me.... I didn't know. I felt adventurous before.... It makes me feel like all the women in the world who have ever been owned and subdued.... It's not that he isn't the best of men, it's because I'm a part of you.... I can't go through with it. If I go through with it, I shall be left — robbed of pride — outraged — a woman beaten...."

"I know," I said, "I know."

"I want to live alone.... I don't care for anything now but just escape. If you can help me...."

"I must take you away. There's nothing for us but to go away together."

"But your work," she said; "your career! Margaret! Our promises!"

"We've made a mess of things, Isabel — or things have made a mess of us. I don't know which. Our flags are in the mud, anyhow. It's too late to save those other things! They have to go. You can't make terms with defeat. I thought it was Margaret needed me most. But it's you. And I need you. I didn't think of that either. I haven't a doubt left in the world now. We've got to leave everything rather than leave each other. I'm sure of it. Now we have gone so far. We've got to go right down to earth and begin again.... Dear, I

WANT disgrace with you....”

So I whispered to her as she sat crumpled together on the faded cushions of the boat, this white and weary young woman who had been so valiant and careless a girl. “I don’t care,” I said. “I don’t care for anything, if I can save you out of the wreckage we have made together.”

4

The next day I went to the office of the BLUE WEEKLY in order to get as much as possible of its affairs in working order before I left London with Isabel. I just missed Shoesmith in the lower office. Upstairs I found Britten amidst a pile of outside articles, methodically reading the title of each and sometimes the first half-dozen lines, and either dropping them in a growing heap on the floor for a clerk to return, or putting them aside for consideration. I interrupted him, squatted on the window-sill of the open window, and sketched out my ideas for the session.

“You’re far-sighted,” he remarked at something of mine which reached out ahead.

“I like to see things prepared,” I answered.

“Yes,” he said, and ripped open the envelope of a fresh aspirant.

I was silent while he read.

“You’re going away with Isabel Rivers,” he said abruptly.

“Well!” I said, amazed.

“I know,” he said, and lost his breath. “Not my business. Only—”

It was queer to find Britten afraid to say a thing.

“It’s not playing the game,” he said.

“What do you know?”

“Everything that matters.”

“Some games,” I said, “are too hard to play.”

There came a pause between us.

“I didn’t know you were watching all this,” I said.

“Yes,” he answered, after a pause, “I’ve watched.”

“Sorry — sorry you don’t approve.”

“It means smashing such an infernal lot of things, Remington.”

I did not answer.

“You’re going away then?”

“Yes.”

“Soon?”

“Right away.”

“There’s your wife.”

“I know.”

“Shoesmith — whom you’re pledged to in a manner. You’ve just picked him out and made him conspicuous. Every one will know. Oh! of course — it’s nothing to you. Honour—”

“I know.”

“Common decency.”

I nodded.

“All this movement of ours. That’s what I care for most.... It’s come to be a big thing, Remington.”

“That will go on.”

“We have a use for you — no one else quite fills it. No one.... I’m not sure it will go on.”

“Do you think I haven’t thought of all these things?”

He shrugged his shoulders, and rejected two papers unread.

“I knew,” he remarked, “when you came back from America. You were alight with it.” Then he let his bitterness gleam for a moment. “But I thought you would stick to your bargain.”

“It’s not so much choice as you think,” I said.

“There’s always a choice.”

“No,” I said.

He scrutinised my face.

“I can’t live without her — I can’t work. She’s all mixed up with this — and everything. And besides, there’s things you can’t understand. There’s feelings you’ve never felt.... You don’t understand how much we’ve been to one another.”

Britten frowned and thought.

“Some things one’s GOT to do,” he threw out.

“Some things one can’t do.”

“These infernal institutions—”

“Some one must begin,” I said.

He shook his head. “Not YOU,” he said. “No!”

He stretched out his hands on the desk before him, and spoke

again.

"Remington," he said, "I've thought of this business day and night too. It matters to me. It matters immensely to me. In a way — it's a thing one doesn't often say to a man — I've loved you. I'm the sort of man who leads a narrow life.... But you've been something fine and good for me, since that time, do you remember? when we talked about Mecca together."

I nodded.

"Yes. And you'll always be something fine and good for me anyhow. I know things about you, — qualities — no mere act can destroy them.. .. Well, I can tell you, you're doing wrong. You're going on now like a man who is hypnotised and can't turn round. You're piling wrong on wrong. It was wrong for you two people ever to be lovers."

He paused.

"It gripped us hard," I said.

"Yes! — but in your position! And hers! It was vile!"

"You've not been tempted."

"How do you know? Anyhow — having done that, you ought to have stood the consequences and thought of other people. You could have ended it at the first pause for reflection. You didn't. You blundered again. You kept on. You owed a certain secrecy to all of us! You didn't keep it. You were careless. You made things worse. This engagement and this publicity! — Damn it, Remington!"

"I know," I said, with smarting eyes. "Damn it! with all my heart! It came of trying to patch.... You CAN'T patch."

"And now, as I care for anything under heaven, Remington, you two ought to stand these last consequences — and part. You ought to part. Other people have to stand things! Other people have to part. You ought to. You say — what do you say? It's loss of so much life to lose each other. So is losing a hand or a leg. But it's what you've incurred. Amputate. Take your punishment — After all, you chose it."

"Oh, damn!" I said, standing up and going to the window.

"Damn by all means. I never knew a topic so full of justifiable damns. But you two did choose it. You ought to stick to your undertaking."

I turned upon him with a snarl in my voice. “My dear Britten!” I cried. “Don’t I KNOW I’m doing wrong? Aren’t I in a net? Suppose I don’t go! Is there any right in that? Do you think we’re going to be much to ourselves or any one after this parting? I’ve been thinking all last night of this business, trying it over and over again from the beginning. How was it we went wrong? Since I came back from America — I grant you THAT — but SINCE, there’s never been a step that wasn’t forced, that hadn’t as much right in it or more, as wrong. You talk as though I was a thing of steel that could bend this way or that and never change. You talk as though Isabel was a cat one could give to any kind of owner.... We two are things that change and grow and alter all the time. We’re — so interwoven that being parted now will leave us just misshapen cripples.... You don’t know the motives, you don’t know the rush and feel of things, you don’t know how it was with us, and how it is with us. You don’t know the hunger for the mere sight of one another; you don’t know anything.”

Britten looked at his finger-nails closely. His red face puckered to a wry frown. “Haven’t we all at times wanted the world put back?” he grunted, and looked hard and close at one particular nail.

There was a long pause.

“I want her,” I said, “and I’m going to have her. I’m too tired for balancing the right or wrong of it any more. You can’t separate them. I saw her yesterday.... She’s — ill.... I’d take her now, if death were just outside the door waiting for us.”

“Torture?”

I thought. “Yes.”

“For her?”

“There isn’t,” I said.

“If there was?”

I made no answer.

“It’s blind Want. And there’s nothing ever been put into you to stand against it. What are you going to do with the rest of your lives?”

“No end of things.”

“Nothing.”

“I don’t believe you are right,” I said. “I believe we can save something—”

Britten shook his head. “Some scraps of salvage won’t excuse you,” he said.

His indignation rose. “In the middle of life!” he said. “No man has a right to take his hand from the plough!”

He leant forward on his desk and opened an argumentative palm. “You know, Remington,” he said, “and I know, that if this could be fended off for six months — if you could be clapped in prison, or got out of the way somehow, — until this marriage was all over and settled down for a year, say — you know then you two could meet, curious, happy, as friends. Saved! You KNOW it.”

I turned and stared at him. “You’re wrong, Britten,” I said. “And does it matter if we could?”

I found that in talking to him I could frame the apologetics I had not been able to find for myself alone.

“I am certain of one thing, Britten. It is our duty not to hush up this scandal.”

He raised his eyebrows. I perceived now the element of absurdity in me, but at the time I was as serious as a man who is burning.

“It’s our duty,” I went on, “to smash now openly in the sight of every one. Yes! I’ve got that as clean and plain — as prison whitewash. I am convinced that we have got to be public to the uttermost now — I mean it — until every corner of our world knows this story, knows it fully, adds it to the Parnell story and the Ashton Dean story and the Carmel story and the Witterslea story, and all the other stories that have picked man after man out of English public life, the men with active imaginations, the men of strong initiative. To think this tottering old-woman ridden Empire should dare to waste a man on such a score! You say I ought to be penitent—”

Britten shook his head and smiled very faintly.

“I’m boiling with indignation,” I said. “I lay in bed last night and went through it all. What in God’s name was to be expected of us but what has happened? I went through my life bit by bit last night, I recalled all I’ve had to do with virtue and women, and all I was told and how I was prepared. I was born into cowardice and debasement. We all are. Our generation’s grimy with hypocrisy. I came to the most beautiful things in life — like peeping Tom of Coventry. I was never given a light, never given a touch of natural manhood by all

this dingy, furtive, canting, humbugging English world. Thank God! I'll soon be out of it! The shame of it! The very savages in Australia initiate their children better than the English do to-day. Neither of us was ever given a view of what they call morality that didn't make it show as shabby subservience, as the meanest discretion, an abject submission to unreasonable prohibitions! meek surrender of mind and body to the dictation of pedants and old women and fools. We weren't taught — we were mumbled at! And when we found that the thing they called unclean, unclean, was Pagan beauty — God! it was a glory to sin, Britten, it was a pride and splendour like bathing in the sunlight after dust and grime!"

"Yes," said Britten. "That's all very well—"

I interrupted him. "I know there's a case — I'm beginning to think it a valid case against us; but we never met it! There's a steely pride in self restraint, a nobility of chastity, but only for those who see and think and act — untrammeled and unafraid. The other thing, the current thing, why! it's worth as much as the chastity of a monkey kept in a cage by itself!" I put my foot in a chair, and urged my case upon him. "This is a dirty world, Britten, simply because it is a muddled world, and the thing you call morality is dirtier now than the thing you call immorality. Why don't the moralists pick their stuff out of the slime if they care for it, and wipe it? — damn them! I am burning now to say: 'Yes, we did this and this,' to all the world. All the world!... I will!"

Britten rubbed the palm of his hand on the corner of his desk. "That's all very well, Remington," he said. "You mean to go."

He stopped and began again. "If you didn't know you were in the wrong you wouldn't be so damned rhetorical. You're in the wrong. It's as plain to you as it is to me. You're leaving a big work, you're leaving a wife who trusted you, to go and live with your jolly mistress.... You won't see you're a statesman that matters, that no single man, maybe, might come to such influence as you in the next ten years. You're throwing yourself away and accusing your country of rejecting you."

He swung round upon his swivel at me. "Remington," he said, "have you forgotten the immense things our movement means?"

I thought. "Perhaps I am rhetorical," I said.

“But the things we might achieve! If you’d only stay now — even now! Oh! you’d suffer a little socially, but what of that? You’d be able to go on — perhaps all the better for hostility of the kind you’d get. You know, Remington — you KNOW.”

I thought and went back to his earlier point. “If I am rhetorical, at any rate it’s a living feeling behind it. Yes, I remember all the implications of our aims — very splendid, very remote. But just now it’s rather like offering to give a freezing man the sunlit Himalayas from end to end in return for his camp-fire. When you talk of me and my jolly mistress, it isn’t fair. That misrepresents everything. I’m not going out of this — for delights. That’s the sort of thing men like Snuffles and Keyhole imagine — that excites them! When I think of the things these creatures think! Ugh! But YOU know better? You know that physical passion that burns like a fire — ends clean. I’m going for love, Britten — if I sinned for passion. I’m going, Britten, because when I saw her the other day she HURT me. She hurt me damnably, Britten.... I’ve been a cold man — I’ve led a rhetorical life — you hit me with that word! — I put things in a windy way, I know, but what has got hold of me at last is her pain. She’s ill. Don’t you understand? She’s a sick thing — a weak thing. She’s no more a goddess than I’m a god.... I’m not in love with her now; I’m RAW with love for her. I feel like a man that’s been flayed. I have been flayed.... You don’t begin to imagine the sort of helpless solicitude.... She’s not going to do things easily; she’s ill. Her courage fails.... It’s hard to put things when one isn’t rhetorical, but it’s this, Britten — there are distresses that matter more than all the delights or achievements in the world.... I made her what she is — as I never made Margaret. I’ve made her — I’ve broken her.... I’m going with my own woman. The rest of my life and England, and so forth, must square itself to that....”

For a long time, as it seemed, we remained silent and motionless. We’d said all we had to say. My eyes caught a printed slip upon the desk before him, and I came back abruptly to the paper.

I picked up this galley proof. It was one of Winter’s essays. “This man goes on doing first-rate stuff,” I said. “I hope you will keep him going.”

He did not answer for a moment or so. “I’ll keep him going,” he

said at last with a sigh.

5

I have a letter Margaret wrote me within a week of our flight. I cannot resist transcribing some of it here, because it lights things as no word of mine can do. It is a string of nearly inconsecutive thoughts written in pencil in a fine, tall, sprawling hand. Its very inconsecutiveness is essential. Many words are underlined. It was in answer to one from me; but what I wrote has passed utterly from my mind....

"Certainly," she says, "I want to hear from you, but I do not want to see you. There's a sort of abstract YOU that I want to go on with. Something I've made out of you.... I want to know things about you — but I don't want to see or feel or imagine. When some day I have got rid of my intolerable sense of proprietorship, it may be different. Then perhaps we may meet again. I think it is even more the loss of our political work and dreams that I am feeling than the loss of your presence. Aching loss. I thought so much of the things we were DOING for the world — had given myself so unreservedly. You've left me with nothing to DO. I am suddenly at loose ends....

"We women are trained to be so dependent on a man. I've got no life of my own at all. It seems now to me that I wore my clothes even for you and your schemes....

"After I have told myself a hundred times why this has happened, I ask again, 'Why did he give things up? Why did he give things up?'...

"It is just as though you were wilfully dead....

"Then I ask again and again whether this thing need have happened at all, whether if I had had a warning, if I had understood better, I might not have adapted myself to your restless mind and made this catastrophe impossible....

"Oh, my dear! why hadn't you the pluck to hurt me at the beginning, and tell me what you thought of me and life? You didn't give me a chance; not a chance. I suppose you couldn't. All these things you and I stood away from. You let my first repugnances repel you....

“It is strange to think after all these years that I should be asking myself, do I love you? have I loved you? In a sense I think I HATE you. I feel you have taken my life, dragged it in your wake for a time, thrown it aside. I am resentful. Unfairly resentful, for why should I exact that you should watch and understand my life, when clearly I have understood so little of yours. But I am savage — savage at the wrecking of all you were to do.

“Oh, why — why did you give things up?

“No human being is his own to do what he likes with. You were not only pledged to my tiresome, ineffectual companionship, but to great purposes. They ARE great purposes....

“If only I could take up your work as you leave it, with the strength you had — then indeed I feel I could let you go — you and your young mistress.... All that matters so little to me....

“Yet I think I must indeed love you yourself in my slower way. At times I am mad with jealousy at the thought of all I hadn’t the wit to give you.... I’ve always hidden my tears from you — and what was in my heart. It’s my nature to hide — and you, you want things brought to you to see. You are so curious as to be almost cruel. You don’t understand reserves. You have no mercy with restraints and reservations. You are not really a CIVILISED man at all. You hate pretences — and not only pretences but decent coverings....

“It’s only after one has lost love and the chance of loving that slow people like myself find what they might have done. Why wasn’t I bold and reckless and abandoned? It’s as reasonable to ask that, I suppose, as to ask why my hair is fair....

“I go on with these perhapses over and over again here when I find myself alone....

“My dear, my dear, you can’t think of the desolation of things — I shall never go back to that house we furnished together, that was to have been the laboratory (do you remember calling it a laboratory?) in which you were to forge so much of the new order....

“But, dear, if I can help you — even now — in any way — help both of you, I mean.... It tears me when I think of you poor and discredited. You will let me help you if I can — it will be the last wrong not to let me do that....

“You had better not get ill. If you do, and I hear of it — I shall

come after you with a troupe of doctor's and nurses. If I am a failure as a wife, no one has ever said I was anything but a success as a district visitor...."

There are other sheets, but I cannot tell whether they were written before or after the ones from which I have quoted. And most of them have little things too intimate to set down. But this oddly penetrating analysis of our differences must, I think, be given.

"There are all sorts of things I can't express about this and want to. There's this difference that has always been between us, that you like nakedness and wildness, and I, clothing and restraint. It goes through everything. You are always TALKING of order and system, and the splendid dream of the order that might replace the muddled system you hate, but by a sort of instinct you seem to want to break the law. I've watched you so closely. Now I want to obey laws, to make sacrifices, to follow rules. I don't want to make, but I do want to keep. You are at once makers and rebels, you and Isabel too. You're bad people — criminal people, I feel, and yet full of something the world must have. You're so much better than me, and so much viler. It may be there is no making without destruction, but it seems to me sometimes that it is nothing but an instinct for lawlessness that drives you. You remind me — do you remember? — of that time we went from Naples to Vesuvius, and walked over the hot new lava there. Do you remember how tired I was? I know it disappointed you that I was tired. One walked there in spite of the heat because there was a crust; like custom, like law. But directly a crust forms on things, you are restless to break down to the fire again. You talk of beauty, both of you, as something terrible, mysterious, imperative. YOUR beauty is something altogether different from anything I know or feel. It has pain in it. Yet you always speak as though it was something I ought to feel and am dishonest not to feel. MY beauty is a quiet thing. You have always laughed at my feeling for old-fashioned chintz and blue china and Sheraton. But I like all these familiar USED things. My beauty is STILL beauty, and yours, is excitement. I know nothing of the fascination of the fire, or why one should go deliberately out of all the decent fine things of life to run dangers and be singed and tormented and destroyed. I don't understand...."

I remember very freshly the mood of our departure from London, the platform of Charing Cross with the big illuminated clock overhead, the bustle of porters and passengers with luggage, the shouting of newsboys and boys with flowers and sweets, and the groups of friends seeing travellers off by the boat train. Isabel sat very quiet and still in the compartment, and I stood upon the platform with the door open, with a curious reluctance to take the last step that should sever me from London's ground. I showed our tickets, and bought a handful of red roses for her. At last came the guards crying: "Take your seats," and I got in and closed the door on me. We had, thank Heaven! a compartment to ourselves. I let down the window and stared out.

There was a bustle of final adieux on the platform, a cry of "Stand away, please, stand away!" and the train was gliding slowly and smoothly out of the station.

I looked out upon the river as the train rumbled with slowly gathering pace across the bridge, and the bobbing black heads of the pedestrians in the footway, and the curve of the river and the glowing great hotels, and the lights and reflections and blacknesses of that old, familiar spectacle. Then with a common thought, we turned our eyes westward to where the pinnacles of Westminster and the shining clock tower rose hard and clear against the still, luminous sky.

"They'll be in Committee on the Reformatory Bill to-night," I said, a little stupidly.

"And so," I added, "good-bye to London!"

We said no more, but watched the south-side streets below — bright gleams of lights and movement, and the dark, dim, monstrous shapes of houses and factories. We ran through Waterloo Station, London Bridge, New Cross, St. John's. We said never a word. It seemed to me that for a time we had exhausted our emotions. We had escaped, we had cut our knot, we had accepted the last penalty of that headlong return of mine from Chicago a year and a half ago. That was all settled. That harvest of feelings we had reaped. I thought now only of London, of London as the symbol of all we were leaving and all we had lost in the world. I felt nothing now but an enormous and

overwhelming regret....

The train swayed and rattled on its way. We ran through old Bromstead, where once I had played with cities and armies on the nursery floor. The sprawling suburbs with their scattered lights gave way to dim tree-set country under a cloud-veiled, intermittently shining moon. We passed Cardcaster Place. Perhaps old Wardingham, that pillar of the old Conservatives, was there, fretting over his unsuccessful struggle with our young Toryism. Little he recked of this new turn of the wheel and how it would confirm his contempt of all our novelties. Perhaps some faint intimation drew him to the window to see behind the stems of the young fir trees that bordered his domain, the little string of lighted carriage windows gliding southward....

Suddenly I began to realise just what it was we were doing.

And now, indeed, I knew what London had been to me, London where I had been born and educated, the slovenly mother of my mind and all my ambitions, London and the empire! It seemed to me we must be going out to a world that was utterly empty. All our significance fell from us — and before us was no meaning any more. We were leaving London; my hand, which had gripped so hungrily upon its complex life, had been forced from it, my fingers left their hold. That was over. I should never have a voice in public affairs again. The inexorable unwritten law which forbids overt scandal sentenced me. We were going out to a new life, a life that appeared in that moment to be a mere shrivelled remnant of me, a mere residuum of sheltering and feeding and seeing amidst alien scenery and the sound of unfamiliar tongues. We were going to live cheaply in a foreign place, so cut off that I meet now the merest stray tourist, the commonest tweed-clad stranger with a mixture of shyness and hunger.... And suddenly all the schemes I was leaving appeared fine and adventurous and hopeful as they had never done before. How great was this purpose I had relinquished, this bold and subtle remaking of the English will! I had doubted so many things, and now suddenly I doubted my unimportance, doubted my right to this suicidal abandonment. Was I not a trusted messenger, greatly trusted and favoured, who had turned aside by the way? Had I not, after all, stood for far more than I had thought; was I not filching from that

dear great city of my birth and life, some vitally necessary thing, a key, a link, a reconciling clue in her political development, that now she might seek vaguely for in vain? What is one life against the State? Ought I not to have sacrificed Isabel and all my passion and sorrow for Isabel, and held to my thing — stuck to my thing?

I heard as though he had spoken it in the carriage Britten's "It WAS a good game." No end of a game. And for the first time I imagined the faces and voices of Crupp and Esmeer and Gane when they learnt of this secret flight, this flight of which they were quite unwarned. And Shoesmith might be there in the house, — Shoesmith who was to have been married in four days — the thing might hit him full in front of any kind of people. Cruel eyes might watch him. Why the devil hadn't I written letters to warn them all? I could have posted them five minutes before the train started. I had never thought to that moment of the immense mess they would be in; how the whole edifice would clatter about their ears. I had a sudden desire to stop the train and go back for a day, for two days, to set that negligence right. My brain for a moment brightened, became animated and prolific of ideas. I thought of a brilliant line we might have taken on that confounded Reformatory Bill....

That sort of thing was over....

What indeed wasn't over? I passed to a vaguer, more multitudinous perception of disaster, the friends I had lost already since Altiora began her campaign, the ampler remnant whom now I must lose. I thought of people I had been merry with, people I had worked with and played with, the companions of talkative walks, the hostesses of houses that had once glowed with welcome for us both. I perceived we must lose them all. I saw life like a tree in late autumn that had once been rich and splendid with friends — and now the last brave dears would be hanging on doubtfully against the frosty chill of facts, twisting and tortured in the universal gale of indignation, trying to evade the cold blast of the truth. I had betrayed my party, my intimate friend, my wife, the wife whose devotion had made me what I was. For awhile the figure of Margaret, remote, wounded, shamed, dominated my mind, and the thought of my immense ingratitude. Damn them! they'd take it out of her too. I had a feeling that I wanted to go straight back and grip some one by the throat,

some one talking ill of Margaret. They'd blame her for not keeping me, for letting things go so far.... I wanted the whole world to know how fine she was. I saw in imagination the busy, excited dinner tables at work upon us all, rather pleasantly excited, brightly indignant, merciless.

Well, it's the stuff we are!...

Then suddenly, stabbing me to the heart, came a vision of Margaret's tears and the sound of her voice saying, "Husband mine! Oh! husband mine! To see you cry!"...

I came out of a cloud of thoughts to discover the narrow compartment, with its feeble lamp overhead, and our rugs and hand-baggage swaying on the rack, and Isabel, very still in front of me, gripping my wilting red roses tightly in her bare and ringless hand.

For a moment I could not understand her attitude, and then I perceived she was sitting bent together with her head averted from the light to hide the tears that were streaming down her face. She had not got her handkerchief out for fear that I should see this, but I saw her tears, dark drops of tears, upon her sleeve....

I suppose she had been watching my expression, divining my thoughts.

For a time I stared at her and was motionless, in a sort of still and weary amazement. Why had we done this injury to one another? WHY? Then something stirred within me.

"ISABEL!" I whispered.

She made no sign.

"Isabel!" I repeated, and then crossed over to her and crept closely to her, put my arm about her, and drew her wet cheek to mine.

MARRIAGE

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“And the Poor Dears haven’t the shadow of a doubt they will live happily ever afterwards.” — *From a Private Letter*.

BOOK THE FIRST. MARJORIE MARRIES

CHAPTER THE FIRST

A Day with the Popes

§ 1

An extremely pretty girl occupied a second-class compartment in one of those trains which percolate through the rural tranquillities of middle England from Ganford in Oxfordshire to Rumbold Junction in Kent. She was going to join her family at Buryhamstreet after a visit to some Gloucestershire friends. Her father, Mr. Pope, once a leader in the coach-building world and now by retirement a gentleman, had taken the Buryhamstreet vicarage furnished for two months (beginning on the fifteenth of July) at his maximum summer rental of seven guineas a week. His daughter was on her way to this retreat.

At first she had been an animated traveller, erect and keenly regardful of every detail upon the platforms of the stations at which her conveyance lingered, but the tedium of the journey and the warmth of the sunny afternoon had relaxed her pose by imperceptible degrees, and she sat now comfortably in the corner, with her neat toes upon the seat before her, ready to drop them primly at the first sign of a fellow-traveller. Her expression lapsed more and more towards an almost somnolent reverie. She wished she had not taken a second-class ticket, because then she might have afforded a cup of tea at Reading,-4- and so fortified herself against this insinuating indolence.

She was travelling second class, instead of third as she ought to have done, through one of those lapses so inevitable to young people in her position. The two Carmel boys and a cousin, two greyhounds and a chow had come to see her off; they had made a brilliant and prosperous group on the platform and extorted the manifest admiration of two youthful porters, and it had been altogether too much for Marjorie Pope to admit it was the family custom — except when her father's nerves had to be considered — to go third class. So she had made a hasty calculation — she knew her balance to a penny

because of the recent tipping — and found it would just run to it. Fourpence remained, — and there would be a porter at Buryhamstreet!

Her mother had said: “You will have Ample.” Well, opinions of amplitude vary. With numerous details fresh in her mind, Marjorie decided it would be wiser to avoid financial discussion during her first few days at Buryhamstreet.

There was much in Marjorie’s equipment in the key of travelling second class at the sacrifice of afternoon tea. There was, for example, a certain quiet goodness of style about her clothes, though the skirt betrayed age, and an entire absence of style about her luggage, which was all in the compartment with her, and which consisted of a distended hold-all, a very good tennis racquet in a stretcher, a portmanteau of cheap white basketwork held together by straps, and a very new, expensive-looking and meretricious dressing-bag of imitation morocco, which had been one of her chief financial errors at Oxbridge. The collection was eloquent indeed of incompatible standards....

Marjorie had a chin that was small in size if-5- resolute in form, and a mouth that was not noticeably soft and weak because it was conspicuously soft and pretty. Her nose was delicately aquiline and very subtly and finely modelled, and she looked out upon the world with steady, grey-blue eyes beneath broad, level brows that contradicted in a large measure the hint of weakness below. She had an abundance of copper-red hair, which flowed back very prettily from her broad, low forehead and over her delicate ears, and she had that warm-tinted clear skin that goes so well with reddish hair. She had a very dainty neck, and the long slender lines of her body were full of the promise of a riper beauty. She had the good open shoulders of a tennis-player and a swimmer. Some day she was to be a tall, ruddy, beautiful woman. She wore simple clothes of silvery grey and soft green, and about her waist was a belt of grey leather in which there now wilted two creamy-petalled roses.

That was the visible Marjorie. Somewhere out of time and space was an invisible Marjorie who looked out on the world with those steady eyes, and smiled or drooped with the soft red lips, and dreamt, and wondered, and desired.

§ 2

What a queer thing the invisible human being would appear if, by some discovery as yet inconceivable, some spiritual X-ray photography, we could flash it into sight! Long ago I read a book called "Soul Shapes" that was full of ingenious ideas, but I doubt very much if the thing so revealed would have any shape, any abiding solid outline at all. It is something more fluctuating and discursive than that — at any rate, for every one young enough not to-6- have set and hardened. Things come into it and become it, things drift out of it and cease to be it, things turn upside down in it and change and colour and dissolve, and grow and eddy about and blend into each other. One might figure it, I suppose, as a preposterous jumble animated by a will; a floundering disconnectedness through which an old hump of impulse rises and thrusts unaccountably; a river beast of purpose wallowing in a back eddy of mud and weeds and floating objects and creatures drowned. Now the sunshine of gladness makes it all vivid, now it is sombre and grimly insistent under the sky of some darkling mood, now an emotional gale sweeps across it and it is one confused agitation....

And surely these invisible selves of men were never so jumbled, so crowded, complicated, and stirred about as they are at the present time. Once I am told they had a sort of order, were sphered in religious beliefs, crystal clear, were arranged in a cosmogony that fitted them as hand fits glove, were separated by definite standards of right and wrong which presented life as planned in all its essential aspects from the cradle to the grave. Things are so no longer. That sphere is broken for most of us; even if it is tied about and mended again, it is burst like a seed case; things have fallen out and things have fallen in....

Can I convey in any measure how it was with Marjorie?

What was her religion?

In college forms and returns, and suchlike documents, she would describe herself as "Church of England." She had been baptized according to the usages of that body, but she had hitherto evaded confirmation into it, and although it is a large,-7- wealthy, and powerful organization with many minds to serve it, it had never

succeeded in getting into her quick and apprehensive intelligence any lucid and persuasive conception of what it considered God and the universe were up to with her. It had failed to catch her attention and state itself to her. A number of humorous and other writers and the general trend of talk around her, and perhaps her own shrewd little observation of superficial things, had, on the other hand, created a fairly definite belief in her that it wasn't as a matter of fact up to very much at all, that what it said wasn't said with that absolute honesty which is a logical necessity in every religious authority, and that its hierarchy had all sorts of political and social considerations confusing its treatment of her immortal soul....

Marjorie followed her father in abstaining from church. He too professed himself "Church of England," but he was, if we are to set aside merely superficial classifications, an irascible atheist with a respect for usage and Good Taste, and an abject fear of the disapproval of other gentlemen of his class. For the rest he secretly disliked clergymen on account of the peculiarity of their collars, and a certain influence they had with women. When Marjorie at the age of fourteen had displayed a hankering after ecclesiastical ceremony and emotional religion, he had declared: "We don't want any of *that* nonsense," and sent her into the country to a farm where there were young calves and a bottle-fed lamb and kittens. At times her mother went to church and displayed considerable orthodoxy and punctilio, at times the good lady didn't, and at times she thought in a broad-minded way that there was a Lot in Christian Science, and subjected herself to the ministrations of an American named Silas Root. But his ministrations-8- were too expensive for continuous use, and so the old faith did not lose its hold upon the family altogether.

At school Marjorie had been taught what I may best describe as Muffled Christianity — a temperate and discreet system designed primarily not to irritate parents, in which the painful symbol of the crucifixion and the riddle of what Salvation was to save her from, and, indeed, the coarser aspects of religion generally, were entirely subordinate to images of amiable perambulations, and a rich mist of finer feelings. She had been shielded, not only from arguments against her religion, but from arguments for it — the two things go

together — and I do not think it was particularly her fault if she was now growing up like the great majority of respectable English people, with her religious faculty as it were, artificially faded, and an acquired disposition to regard any speculation of why she was, and whence and whither, as rather foolish, not very important, and in the very worst possible taste.

And so, the crystal globe being broken which once held souls together, you may expect to find her a little dispersed and inconsistent in her motives, and with none of that assurance a simpler age possessed of the exact specification of goodness or badness, the exact delimitation of right and wrong. Indeed, she did not live in a world of right and wrong, or anything so stern; "horrid" and "jolly" had replaced these archaic orientations. In a world where a mercantile gentility has conquered passion and God is neither blasphemed nor adored, there necessarily arises this generation of young people, a little perplexed, indeed, and with a sense of something missing, but feeling their way inevitably at last to the great releasing-9- question, "Then why shouldn't we have a good time?"

Yet there was something in Marjorie, as in most human beings, that demanded some general idea, some aim, to hold her life together. A girl upon the borders of her set at college was fond of the phrase "living for the moment," and Marjorie associated with it the speaker's lax mouth, sloe-like eyes, soft, quick-flushing, boneless face, and a habit of squawking and bouncing in a forced and graceless manner. Marjorie's natural disposition was to deal with life in a steadier spirit than that. Yet all sorts of powers and forces were at work in her, some exalted, some elvish, some vulgar, some subtle. She felt keenly and desired strongly, and in effect she came perhaps nearer the realization of that offending phrase than its original exponent. She had a clean intensity of feeling that made her delight in a thousand various things, in sunlight and textures, and the vividly quick acts of animals, in landscape, and the beauty of other girls, in wit, and people's voices, and good strong reasoning, and the desire and skill of art. She had a clear, rapid memory that made her excel perhaps a little too easily at school and college, an eagerness of sympathetic interest that won people very quickly and led to

disappointments, and a very strong sense of the primary importance of Miss Marjorie Pope in the world. And when any very definite dream of what she would like to be and what she would like to do, such as being the principal of a ladies' college, or the first woman member of Parliament, or the wife of a barbaric chief in Borneo, or a great explorer, or the wife of a millionaire and a great social leader, or George Sand, or Saint Teresa, had had possession of her imagination for a few weeks, an entirely contrasted and equally attractive-10- dream would presently arise beside it and compete with it and replace it. It wasn't so much that she turned against the old one as that she was attracted by the new, and she forgot the old dream rather than abandoned it, simply because she was only one person, and hadn't therefore the possibility of realizing both.

In certain types Marjorie's impressionability aroused a passion of proselytism. People of the most diverse kinds sought to influence her, and they invariably did so. Quite a number of people, including her mother and the principal of her college, believed themselves to be the leading influence in her life. And this was particularly the case with her aunt Plessington. Her aunt Plessington was devoted to social and political work of an austere and aggressive sort (in which Mr. Plessington participated); she was childless, and had a Movement of her own, the Good Habits Movement, a progressive movement of the utmost scope and benevolence which aimed at extensive interferences with the food and domestic intimacies of the more defenceless lower classes by means ultimately of legislation, and she had Marjorie up to see her, took her for long walks while she influenced with earnestness and vigour, and at times had an air of bequeathing her mantle, movement and everything, quite definitely to her "little Madge." She spoke of training her niece to succeed her, and bought all the novels of Mrs. Humphry Ward for her as they appeared, in the hope of quickening in her that flame of politico-social ambition, that insatiable craving for dinner-parties with important guests, which is so distinctive of the more influential variety of English womanhood. It was due rather to her own habit of monologue than to any reserve on the part of Marjorie that she entertained the belief that her niece was entirely acquiescent in these projects.-11- They went into Marjorie's mind and passed. For nearly

a week, it is true, she had dramatized herself as the angel and inspiration of some great modern statesman, but this had been ousted by a far more insistent dream, begotten by a picture she had seen in some exhibition, of a life of careless savagery, whose central and constantly recurrent incident was the riding of barebacked horses out of deep-shadowed forest into a foamy sunlit sea — in a costume that would certainly have struck Aunt Plessington as a mistake.

If you could have seen Marjorie in her railway compartment, with the sunshine, sunshine mottled by the dirty window, tangled in her hair and creeping to and fro over her face as the train followed the curves of the line, you would certainly have agreed with me that she was pretty, and you might even have thought her beautiful. But it was necessary to fall in love with Marjorie before you could find her absolutely beautiful. You might have speculated just what business was going on behind those drowsily thoughtful eyes. If you are — as people say— "Victorian," you might even have whispered "Day Dreams," at the sight of her....

She *was* dreaming, and in a sense she was thinking of beautiful things. But only mediately. She was thinking how very much she would enjoy spending freely and vigorously, quite a considerable amount of money, — heaps of money.

You see, the Carmels, with whom she had just been staying, were shockingly well off. They had two motor cars with them in the country, and the boys had the use of the second one as though it was just an old bicycle. Marjorie had had a cheap white dinner-dress, made the year before by a Chelsea French girl, a happy find of her mother's, and it was-12- shapely and simple and not at all bad, and she had worn her green beads and her Egyptian necklace of jade; but Kitty Carmel and her sister had had a new costume nearly every night, and pretty bracelets, and rubies, big pearls, and woven gold, and half a score of delightful and precious things for neck and hair. Everything in the place was bright and good and abundant, the servants were easy and well-mannered, without a trace of hurry or resentment, and one didn't have to be sharp about the eggs and things at breakfast in the morning, or go without. All through the day, and even when they had gone to bathe from the smart little white and green shed on the upper lake, Marjorie had been made to

feel the insufficiency of her equipment. Kitty Carmel, being twenty-one, possessed her own cheque-book and had accounts running at half a dozen West-end shops; and both sisters had furnished their own rooms according to their taste, with a sense of obvious effect that had set Marjorie speculating just how a room might be done by a girl with a real eye for colour and a real brain behind it....

The train slowed down for the seventeenth time. Marjorie looked up and read "Buryhamstreet."

§ 3

Her reverie vanished, and by a complex but almost instantaneous movement she had her basket off the rack and the carriage door open. She became teeming anticipations. There, advancing in a string, were Daffy, her elder sister, Theodore, her younger brother, and the dog Toupee. Sydney and Rom hadn't come. Daffy was not copper red like her sister, but really quite coarsely red-haired; she was bigger than Marjorie, and with irregular teeth instead of Marjorie's neat row;-13- she confessed them in a broad simple smile of welcome. Theodore was hatless, rustily fuzzy-headed, and now a wealth of quasi-humorous gesture. The dog Toupee was straining at a leash, and doing its best in a yapping, confused manner, to welcome the wrong people by getting its lead round their legs.

"Toupee!" cried Marjorie, waving the basket. "Toupee!"

They all called it Toupee because it was like one, but the name was forbidden in her father's hearing. Her father had decided that the proper name for a family dog in England is Towser, and did his utmost to suppress a sobriquet that was at once unprecedented and not in the best possible taste. Which was why the whole family, with the exception of Mrs. Pope, of course, stuck to Toupee....

Marjorie flashed a second's contrast with the Carmel splendours.

"Hullo, old Daffy. What's it like?" she asked, handing out the basket as her sister came up.

"It's a lark," said Daffy. "Where's the dressing-bag?"

"Thoddy," said Marjorie, following up the dressing-bag with the hold-all. "Lend a hand."

"Stow it, Toupee," said Theodore, and caught the hold-all in time.

In another moment Marjorie was out of the train, had done the swift kissing proper to the occasion, and rolled a hand over Toupee's head — Toupee, who, after a passionate lunge at a particularly savoury drover from the next compartment, was now frantically trying to indicate that Marjorie was the one human being he had ever cared for. Brother and sister were both sketching out the state of affairs at Buryhamstreet Vicarage in rapid competitive-14- jerks, each eager to tell things first — and the whole party moved confusedly towards the station exit. Things pelted into Marjorie's mind.

"We've got an old donkey-cart. I thought we shouldn't get here — ever.... Madge, we can go up the church tower whenever we like, only old Daffy won't let me shin up the flagstaff. It's *perfectly* safe — you couldn't fall off if you tried.... Had positively to get out at the level crossing and *pull* him over.... There's a sort of moat in the garden.... You never saw such furniture, Madge! And the study! It's hung with texts, and stuffed with books about the Scarlet Woman.... Piano's rather good, it's a Broadwood.... The Dad's got a war on about the tennis net. Oh, frightful! You'll see. It won't keep up. He's had a letter kept waiting by the *Times* for a fortnight, and it's a terror at breakfast. Says the motor people have used influence to silence him. Says that's a game two can play at.... Old Sid got herself upset stuffing windfalls. Rather a sell for old Sid, considering how refined she's getting...."

There was a brief lull as the party got into the waiting governess cart. Toupee, after a preliminary refusal to enter, made a determined attempt on the best seat, from which he would be able to bark in a persistent, official manner at anything that passed. That suppressed, and Theodore's proposal to drive refused, they were able to start, and attention was concentrated upon Daffy's negotiation of the station approach. Marjorie turned on her brother with a smile of warm affection.

"How are you, old Theodore?"

"I'm all right, old Madge."

"Mummy?"

"Every one's all right," said Theodore; "if it-15- wasn't for that damned infernal net — —"

“Ssssh!” cried both sisters together.

“*He* says it,” said Theodore.

Both sisters conveyed a grave and relentless disapproval.

“Pretty bit of road,” said Marjorie. “I like that little house at the corner.”

A pause and the eyes of the sisters met.

“*He’s* here,” said Daffy.

Marjorie affected ignorance.

“Who’s here?”

“*Il vostro senior Miraculoso*.”

“Just as though a fellow couldn’t understand your kiddy little Italian,” said Theodore, pulling Toupee’s ear.

“Oh well, I thought he might be,” said Marjorie, regardless of her brother.

“Oh!” said Daffy. “I didn’t know — —”

Both sisters looked at each other, and then both glanced at Theodore. He met Marjorie’s eyes with a grimace of profound solemnity.

“Little brothers,” he said, “shouldn’t know. Just as though they didn’t! Rot! But let’s change the subject, my dears, all the same. Lemme see. There are a new sort of flea on Toupee, Madge, that he gets from the hens.”

“*Is* a new sort,” corrected Daffy. “He’s horrider than ever, Madge. He leaves his soap in soak now to make us think he has used it. This is the village High Street. Isn’t it jolly?”

“Corners don’t *bite* people,” said Theodore, with a critical eye to the driving.

Marjorie surveyed the High Street, while Daffy devoted a few moments to Theodore.

The particular success of the village was its-16- brace of chestnut trees which, with that noble disregard of triteness which is one of the charms of villages the whole world over, shadowed the village smithy. On either side of the roadway between it and the paths was a careless width of vivid grass protected by white posts, which gave way to admit a generous access on either hand to a jolly public house, leering over red blinds, and swinging a painted sign against its competitor. Several of the cottages had real thatch and most had

porches; they had creepers nailed to their faces, and their gardens, crowded now with flowers, marigolds, begonias, snapdragon, delphiniums, white foxgloves, and monkshood, seemed almost too good to be true. The doctor's house was pleasantly Georgian, and the village shop, which was also a post and telegraph office, lay back with a slight air of repletion, keeping its bulging double shop-windows wide open in a manifest attempt not to fall asleep. Two score of shock-headed boys and pinafored girls were drilling upon a bald space of ground before the village school, and near by, the national emotion at the ever-memorable Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria had evoked an artistic drinking-fountain of grey stone. Beyond the subsequent green — there were the correctest geese thereon — the village narrowed almost to a normal road again, and then, recalling itself with a start, lifted a little to the churchyard wall about the grey and ample church. "It's just like all the villages that ever were," said Marjorie, and gave a cry of delight when Daffy, pointing to the white gate between two elm trees that led to the vicarage, remarked: "That's us."

In confirmation of which statement, Sydney and Rom, the two sisters next in succession to Marjorie, and with a strong tendency to be twins in spite of the-17- year between them, appeared in a state of vociferous incivility opening the way for the donkey-carriage. Sydney was Sydney, and Rom was just short for Romola — one of her mother's favourite heroines in fiction.

"Old Madge," they said; and then throwing respect to the winds, "Old Gargoo!" which was Marjorie's forbidden nickname, and short for gargoyle (though surely only Victorian Gothic, ever produced a gargoyle that had the remotest right to be associated with the neat brightness of Marjorie's face).

She overlooked the offence, and the pseudo-twins boarded the cart from behind, whereupon the already overburthened donkey, being old and in a manner wise, quickened his pace for the house to get the whole thing over.

"It's really an avenue," said Daffy; but Marjorie, with her mind strung up to the Carmel standards, couldn't agree. It was like calling a row of boy-scouts Potsdam grenadiers. The trees were at irregular distances, of various ages, and mostly on one side. Still it was a

shady, pleasant approach.

And the vicarage was truly very interesting and amusing. To these Londoners accustomed to live in a state of compression, elbows practically touching, in a tall, narrow fore-and-aft stucco house, all window and staircase, in a despondent Brompton square, there was an effect of maundering freedom about the place, of enlargement almost to the pitch of adventure and sunlight to the pitch of intoxication. The house itself was long and low, as if a London house holidaying in the country had flung itself asprawl; it had two disconnected and roomy staircases, and when it had exhausted itself completely as a house, it turned to the right and began again as rambling, empty stables, coach house, cart sheds, men's bedrooms up ladders, and outhouses of the most various kinds.-18- On one hand was a neglected orchard, in the front of the house was a bald, worried-looking lawn area capable of simultaneous tennis and croquet, and at the other side a copious and confused vegetable and flower garden full of roses, honesty, hollyhocks, and suchlike herbaceous biennials and perennials, lapsed at last into shrubbery, where a sickle-shaped, weedy lagoon of uncertain aims, which had evidently, as a rustic bridge and a weeping willow confessed, aspired to be an "ornamental water," declined at last to ducks. And there was access to the church, and the key of the church tower, and one went across the corner of the lawn, and by a little iron gate into the churchyard to decipher inscriptions, as if the tombs of all Buryhamstreet were no more than a part of the accommodation relinquished by the vicar's household.

Marjorie was hurried over the chief points of all this at a breakneck pace by Sydney and Rom, and when Sydney was called away to the horrors of practice — for Sydney in spite of considerable reluctance was destined by her father to be "the musical one" — Rom developed a copious affection, due apparently to some occult æsthetic influence in Marjorie's silvery-grey and green, and led her into the unlocked vestry, and there prayed in a whisper that she might be given "one good hug, just *one*" — and so they came out with their arms about each other very affectionately to visit the lagoon again. And then Rom remembered that Marjorie hadn't seen either the walnut-tree in the orchard, or the hen with nine chicks....

Somewhere among all these interests came tea and Mrs. Pope.

Mrs. Pope kissed her daughter with an air of having really wanted to kiss her half an hour ago,-19- but of having been distracted since. She was a fine-featured, anxious-looking little woman, with a close resemblance to all her children, in spite of the fact that they were markedly dissimilar one to the other, except only that they took their ruddy colourings from their father. She was dressed in a neat blue dress that had perhaps been hurriedly chosen, and her method of doing her hair was a manifest compromise between duty and pleasure. She embarked at once upon an exposition of the bedroom arrangements, which evidently involved difficult issues. Marjorie was to share a room with Daffy — that was the gist of it — as the only other available apartment, originally promised to Marjorie, had been secured by Mr. Pope for what he called his "matutinal ablutions, *videlicet* tub."

"Then, when your Aunt Plessington comes, you won't have to move," said Mrs. Pope with an air of a special concession. "Your father's looking forward to seeing you, but he mustn't be disturbed just yet. He's in the vicar's study. He's had his tea in there. He's writing a letter to the *Times* answering something they said in a leader, and also a private note calling attention to their delay in printing his previous communication, and he wants to be delicately ironical without being in any way offensive. He wants to hint without actually threatening that very probably he will go over to the *Spectator* altogether if they do not become more attentive. The *Times* used to print his letters punctually, but latterly these automobile people seem to have got hold of it.... He has the window on the lawn open, so that I think, perhaps, we'd better not stay out here — for fear our voices might disturb him."

"Better get right round the other side of the-20- church," said Daffy.

"He'd hear far less of us if we went indoors," said Mrs. Pope.

§ 4

The vicarage seemed tight packed with human interest for Marjorie and her mother and sisters. Going over houses is one of the

amusements proper to her sex, and she and all three sisters and her mother, as soon as they had finished an inaudible tea, went to see the bedroom she was to share with Daffy, and then examined, carefully and in order, the furniture and decoration of the other bedrooms, went through the rooms downstairs, always excepting and avoiding very carefully and closing as many doors as possible on, and hushing their voices whenever they approached the study in which her father was being delicately ironical without being offensive to the *Times*. None of them had seen any of the vicarage people at all — Mr. Pope had come on a bicycle and managed all the negotiations — and it was curious to speculate about the individuals whose personalities pervaded the worn and faded furnishings of the place.

The Popes' keen-eyed inspection came at times, I think, dangerously near prying. The ideals of decoration and interests of the vanished family were so absolutely dissimilar to the London standards as to arouse a sort of astonished wonder in their minds. Some of the things they decided were perfectly hideous, some quaint, some were simply and weakly silly. Everything was different from Hartstone Square. Daffy was perhaps more inclined to contempt, and Mrs. Pope to refined amusement and witty appreciation than Marjorie. Marjorie felt there was something in these people that she didn't begin to-21- understand, she needed some missing clue that would unlock the secret of their confused peculiarity. She was one of those people who have an almost instinctive turn for decoration in costume and furniture; she had already had a taste of how to do things in arranging her rooms at Bennett College, Oxbridge, where also she was in great demand among the richer girls as an adviser. She knew what it was to try and fail as well as to try and succeed, and these people, she felt, hadn't tried for anything she comprehended. She couldn't quite see why it was that there was at the same time an attempt at ornament and a disregard of beauty, she couldn't quite do as her mother did and dismiss it as an absurdity and have done with it. She couldn't understand, too, why everything should be as if it were faded and weakened from something originally bright and clear.

All the rooms were thick with queer little objects that indicated a quite beaver-like industry in the production of "work." There were

embroidered covers for nearly every article on the wash-hand-stand, and mats of wool and crochet wherever anything stood on anything; there were “tidies” everywhere, and odd little brackets covered with gilded and varnished fir cones and bearing framed photographs and little jars and all sorts of colourless, dusty little objects, and everywhere on the walls tacks sustained crossed fans with badly painted flowers or transfer pictures. There was a jar on the bedroom mantel covered with varnished postage stamps and containing grey-haired dried grasses. There seemed to be a moral element in all this, for in the room Sydney shared with Rom there was a decorative piece of lettering which declared that —

“Something attempted, something done, Has earned a night’s repose.” -22-

There were a great number of texts that set Marjorie’s mind stirring dimly with intimations of a missed significance. Over her own bed, within the lattice of an Oxford frame, was the photograph of a picture of an extremely composed young woman in a trailing robe, clinging to the Rock of Ages in the midst of histrionically aggressive waves, and she had a feeling, rather than a thought, that perhaps for all the oddity of the presentation it did convey something acutely desirable, that she herself had had moods when she would have found something very comforting in just such an impassioned grip. And on a framed, floriferous card, these incomprehensible words:

Thy Grace is Sufficient for Me.

seemed to be saying something to her tantalizingly just outside her range of apprehension.

Did all these things light up somehow to those dispossessed people — from some angle she didn’t attain? Were they living and moving realities when those others were at home again?

The drawing-room had no texts; it was altogether more pretentious and less haunted by the faint and faded flavour of religion that pervaded the bedrooms. It had, however, evidences of travel in Switzerland and the Mediterranean. There was a piano in black and gold, a little out of tune, and surmounted by a Benares brass jar, enveloping a scarlet geranium in a pot. There was a Japanese screen of gold wrought upon black, that screened nothing. There was a

framed chromo-lithograph of Jerusalem hot in the sunset, and another of Jerusalem cold under a sub-tropical-23- moon, and there were gourds, roses of Jericho, sandalwood rosaries and kindred trash from the Holy Land in no little profusion upon a what-not. Such books as the room had contained had been arranged as symmetrically as possible about a large, pink-shaded lamp upon the claret-coloured cloth of a round table, and were to be replaced, Mrs. Pope said, at their departure. At present they were piled on a side-table. The girls had been through them all, and were ready with the choicer morsels for Marjorie's amusement. There was "Black Beauty," the sympathetic story of a soundly Anglican horse, and a large Bible extra-illustrated with photographs of every well-known scriptural picture from Michael Angelo to Doré, and a book of injunctions to young ladies upon their behaviour and deportment that Rom and Sydney found particularly entertaining. Marjorie discovered that Sydney had picked up a new favourite phrase. "I'm afraid we're all dreadfully cynical," said Sydney, several times.

A more advanced note was struck by a copy of "Aurora Leigh," richly underlined in pencil, but with exclamation marks at some of the bolder passages....

And presently, still avoiding the open study window very elaborately, this little group of twentieth century people went again into the church — the church whose foundations were laid in A.D. 912 — foundations of rubble and cement that included flat Roman bricks from a still remoter basilica. Their voices dropped instinctively, as they came into its shaded quiet from the exterior sunshine. Marjorie went a little apart and sat in a pew that gave her a glimpse of the one good stained-glass window. Rom followed her, and perceiving her mood to be restful, sat a yard away. Syd began a whispered dispute-24- with her mother whether it wasn't possible to try the organ, and whether Theodore might not be bribed to blow. Daffy discovered relics of a lepers' squint and a holy-water stoup, and then went to scrutinize the lettering of the ten commandments of the Mosaic law that shone black and red on gold on either side of the I.H.S. monogram behind the white-clothed communion table that had once been the altar. Upon a notice board hung about the waist of the portly pulpit were the numbers of hymns that had been sung three

days ago. The sound Protestantism of the vicar had banished superfluous crosses from the building; the Bible reposed upon the wings of a great brass eagle; shining blue and crimson in the window, Saint Christopher carried his Lord. What a harmonized synthesis of conflicts a country church presents! What invisible mysteries of filiation spread between these ancient ornaments and symbols and the new young minds from the whirlpool of the town that looked upon them now with such bright, keen eyes, wondering a little, feeling a little, missing so much?

It was all so very cool and quiet now — with something of the immobile serenity of death.

§ 5

When Mr. Pope had finished his letter to the *Times*, he got out of the window of the study, treading on a flower-bed as he did so — he was the sort of man who treads on flower-beds — partly with the purpose of reading his composition aloud to as many members of his family as he could assemble for the purpose, and so giving them a chance of appreciating the nuances of his irony more fully than if they saw it just in cold print without the advantage of his-25- intonation, and partly with the belated idea of welcoming Marjorie. The law presented a rather discouraging desolation. Then he became aware that the church tower frothed with his daughters. In view of his need of an audience, he decided after a brief doubt that their presence there was unobjectionable, and waved his MS. amiably. Marjorie flapped a handkerchief in reply....

The subsequent hour was just the sort of hour that gave Mr. Pope an almost meteorological importance to his family. He began with an amiability that had no fault, except, perhaps, that it was a little forced after the epistolary strain in the study, and his welcome to Marjorie was more than cordial. “Well, little Madge-cat!” he said, giving her an affectionate but sound and heavy thump on the left shoulder-blade, “got a kiss for the old daddy?”

Marjorie submitted a cheek.

“That’s right,” said Mr. Pope; “and now I just want you all to advise me — —”

He led the way to a group of wicker garden chairs. “You’re coming, mummy?” he said, and seated himself comfortably and drew out a spectacle case, while his family grouped itself dutifully. It made a charming little picture of a Man and his Womankind. “I don’t often flatter myself,” he said, “but this time I think I’ve been neat — neat’s the word for it.”

He cleared his throat, put on his spectacles, and emitted a long, flat preliminary note, rather like the sound of a child’s trumpet. “Er — ‘Dear Sir!’”

“Rom,” said Mrs. Pope, “don’t creak your chair.”

“It’s Daffy, mother,” said Rom.

“Oh, *Rom!*” said Daffy.

Mr. Pope paused, and looked with a warning eye-26- over his left spectacle-glass at Rom.

“Don’t creak your chair, Rom,” he said, “when your mother tells you.”

“I was *not* creaking my chair,” said Rom.

“I heard it,” said Mr. Pope, suavely.

“It was Daffy.”

“Your mother does not think so,” said Mr. Pope.

“Oh, all right! I’ll sit on the ground,” said Rom, crimson to the roots of her hair.

“Me too,” said Daffy. “I’d rather.”

Mr. Pope watched the transfer gravely. Then he readjusted his glasses, cleared his throat again, trumpeted, and began. “Er— ‘Dear Sir,’”

“Oughtn’t it to be simply ‘Sir,’ father, for an editor?” said Marjorie.

“Perhaps I didn’t explain, Marjorie,” said her father, with the calm of great self-restraint, and dabbing his left hand on the manuscript in his right, “that this is a *private* letter — a private letter.”

“I didn’t understand,” said Marjorie.

“It would have been evident as I went on,” said Mr. Pope, and prepared to read again.

This time he was allowed to proceed, but the interruptions had ruffled him, and the gentle stresses that should have lifted the subtleties of his irony into prominence missed the words, and he had

to go back and do his sentences again. Then Rom suddenly, horribly, uncontrollably, was seized with hiccups. At the second hiccup Mr. Pope paused, and looked very hard at his daughter with magnified eyes; as he was about to resume, the third burst its way through the unhappy child's utmost effort.

Mr. Pope rose with an awful resignation. "That's enough," he said. He regarded the pseudo-twin vindictively. "You haven't the self-control of a child-27- of six," he said. Then very touchingly to Mrs. Pope: "Mummy, shall we try a game of tennis with the New Generation?"

"Can't you read it after supper?" asked Mrs. Pope.

"It must go by the eight o'clock post," said Mr. Pope, putting the masterpiece into his breast pocket, the little masterpiece that would now perhaps never be read aloud to any human being. "Daffy, dear, do you mind going in for the racquets and balls?"

The social atmosphere was now sultry, and overcast, and Mr. Pope's decision to spend the interval before Daffy returned in seeing whether he couldn't do something to the net, which was certainly very unsatisfactory, did not improve matters. Then, unhappily, Marjorie, who had got rather keen upon tennis at the Carmels', claimed her father's first two services as faults, contrary to the etiquette of the family. It happened that Mr. Pope had a really very good, hard, difficult, smart-looking serve, whose only defect was that it always went either too far or else into the net, and so a feeling had been fostered and established by his wife that, on the whole, it was advisable to regard the former variety as a legitimate extension of a father's authority. Naturally, therefore, Mr. Pope was nettled at Marjorie's ruling, and his irritation increased when his next two services to Daffy perished in the net. ("Damn that net! Puts one's eye out.") Then Marjorie gave him an unexpected soft return which he somehow muffed, and then Daffy just dropped a return over the top of the net. (Love-game.) It was then Marjorie's turn to serve, which she did with a new twist acquired from the eldest Carmel boy that struck Mr. Pope as un-English. "Go on," he said concisely. "Fifteen love."

She was gentle with her mother and they got their-28- first rally, and when it was over Mr. Pope had to explain to Marjorie that if she

returned right up into his corner of the court he would have to run backwards very fast and might fall over down the silly slope at that end. She would have to consider him and the court. One didn't get everything out of a game by playing merely to win. She said "All right, Daddy," rather off-handedly, and immediately served to him again, and he, taken a little unawares, hit the ball with the edge of his racquet and sent it out, and then he changed racquets with Daffy — it seemed he had known all along she had taken his, but he had preferred to say nothing — uttered a word of advice to his wife just on her stroke, and she, failing to grasp his intention as quickly as she ought to have done, left the score forty-fifteen. He felt better when he returned Marjorie's serve, and then before she could control herself she repeated her new unpleasant trick of playing into the corner again, whereupon, leaping back with an agility that would have shamed many a younger man, Mr. Pope came upon disaster. He went spinning down the treacherous slope behind, twisted his ankle painfully and collapsed against the iron railings of the shrubbery. It was too much, and he lost control of himself. His daughters had one instant's glimpse of the linguistic possibilities of a strong man's agony. "I told her," he went on as if he had said nothing. "*Tennis!*"

For a second perhaps he seemed to hesitate upon a course of action. Then as if by a great effort he took his coat from the net post and addressed himself houseward, incarnate Grand Dudgeon — limping.

"Had enough of it, Mummy," he said, and added some happily inaudible comment on Marjorie's new style of play.

The evening's exercise was at an end.-29-

The three ladies regarded one another in silence for some moments.

"I will take in the racquets, dear," said Mrs. Pope.

"I think the other ball is at your end," said Daffy....

The apparatus put away, Marjorie and her sister strolled thoughtfully away from the house.

"There's croquet here too," said Daffy. "We've not had the things out yet!"....

"He'll play, I suppose."

"He wants to play."...

“Of course,” said Marjorie after a long pause, “there’s no *reasoning* with Dad!”

§ 6

Character is one of England’s noblest and most deliberate products, but some Englishmen have it to excess. Mr. Pope had.

He was one of that large and representative class which imparts a dignity to national commerce by inheriting big businesses from its ancestors. He was a coach-builder by birth, and a gentleman by education and training. He had been to City Merchant’s and Cambridge.

Throughout the earlier half of the nineteenth century the Popes had been the princes of the coach-building world. Mr. Pope’s great-grandfather had been a North London wheelwright of conspicuous dexterity and integrity, who had founded the family business; his son, Mr. Pope’s grandfather, had made that business the occupation of his life and brought it to the pinnacle of pre-eminence; his son, who was Marjorie’s grandfather, had displayed a lesser enthusiasm,-30- left the house at the works for a home ten miles away and sent a second son into the Church. It was in the days of the third Pope that the business ceased to expand, and began to suffer severely from the competition of an enterprising person who had originally supplied the firm with varnish, gradually picked up the trade in most other materials and accessories needed in coach-building, and passed on by almost imperceptible stages to delivering the article complete — dispensing at last altogether with the intervention of Pope and Son — to the customer. Marjorie’s father had succeeded in the fulness of time to the inheritance this insurgent had damaged.

Mr. Pope was a man of firm and resentful temper, with an admiration for Cato, Brutus, Cincinnatus, Cromwell, Washington, and the sterner heroes generally, and by nature a little ill-used and offended at things. He suffered from indigestion and extreme irritability. He found himself in control of a business where more flexible virtues were needed. The Popes based their fame on a heavy, proud type of vehicle, which the increasing luxury and triviality of

the age tended to replace by lighter forms of carriage, carriages with diminutive and apologetic names. As these lighter forms were not only lighter but less expensive, Mr. Pope with a pathetic confidence in the loyalty of the better class of West End customer, determined to "make a stand" against them. He was the sort of man to whom making a stand is in itself a sombre joy. If he had had to choose his pose for a portrait, he would certainly have decided to have one foot advanced, the other planted like a British oak behind, the arms folded and the brows corrugated, — making a stand.

Unhappily the stars in their courses and the general improvement of roads throughout the country-31- fought against him. The lighter carriages, and especially the lighter carriages of that varnish-selling firm, which was now absorbing businesses right and left, prevailed over Mr. Pope's resistance. For crossing a mountain pass or fording a river, for driving over the scene of a recent earthquake or following a retreating army, for being run away with by frantic horses or crushing a personal enemy, there can be no doubt the Pope carriages remained to the very last the best possible ones and fully worth the inflexible price demanded. Unhappily all carriages in a civilization essentially decadent are not subjected to these tests, and the manufactures of his rivals were not only much cheaper, but had a sort of meretricious smartness, a disingenuous elasticity, above all a levity, hateful indeed to the spirit of Mr. Pope yet attractive to the wanton customer. Business dwindled. Nevertheless the habitual element in the good class customer did keep things going, albeit on a shrinking scale, until Mr. Pope came to the unfortunate decision that he would make a stand against automobiles. He regarded them as an intrusive nuisance which had to be seen only to be disowned by the landed gentry of England. Rather than build a car he said he would go out of business. He went out of business. Within five years of this determination he sold out the name, good will, and other vestiges of his concern to a mysterious buyer who turned out to be no more than an agent for these persistently expanding varnish makers, and he retired with a genuine grievance upon the family accumulations — chiefly in Consols and Home Railways.

He refused however to regard his defeat as final, put great faith in the approaching exhaustion of the petrol supply, and talked in a

manner that should have made the Automobile Association uneasy, of-32- devoting the rest of his days to the purification of England from these aggressive mechanisms. “It was a mistake,” he said, “to let them in.” He became more frequent at his excellent West End club, and directed a certain portion of his capital to largely indecisive but on the whole unprofitable speculations in South African and South American enterprises. He mingled a little in affairs. He was a tough conventional speaker, rich in established phrases and never abashed by hearing himself say commonplace things, and in addition to his campaign against automobiles he found time to engage also in quasi-political activities, taking chairs, saying a few words and so on, cherishing a fluctuating hope that his eloquence might ultimately win him an invitation to contest a constituency in the interests of reaction and the sounder elements in the Liberal party.

He had a public-spirited side, and he was particularly attracted by that mass of modern legislative proposals which aims at a more systematic control of the lives of lower class persons for their own good by their betters. Indeed, in the first enthusiasm of his proprietorship of the Pope works at East Purblow, he had organized one of those benevolent industrial experiments that are now so common. He felt strongly against the drink evil, that is to say, the unrestricted liberty of common people to drink what they prefer, and he was acutely impressed by the fact that working-class families do not spend their money in the way that seems most desirable to upper middle-class critics. Accordingly he did his best to replace the dangerous freedoms of money by that ideal of the social reformer, Payment in Kind. To use his invariable phrase, the East Purblow experiment did “no mean service” to the cause of social reform. Unhappily it came to an end through a-33- prosecution under the Truck Act, that blot upon the Statute Book, designed, it would appear, even deliberately to vitiate man’s benevolent control of his fellow man. The lessons to be drawn from that experience, however, grew if anything with the years. He rarely spoke without an allusion to it, and it was quite remarkable how readily it could be adapted to illuminate a hundred different issues in the hospitable columns of the *Spectator*....

§ 7

At seven o'clock Marjorie found herself upstairs changing into her apple-green frock. She had had a good refreshing wash in cold soft water, and it was pleasant to change into thinner silk stockings and dainty satin slippers and let down and at last brush her hair and dress loiteringly after the fatigues of her journey and the activities of her arrival. She looked out on the big church and the big trees behind it against the golden quiet of a summer evening with extreme approval.

"I suppose those birds are rooks," she said.

But Daffy had gone to see that the pseudo-twins had done themselves justice in their muslin frocks and pink sashes; they were apt to be a little sketchy with their less accessible buttons.

Marjorie became aware of two gentlemen with her mother on the lawn below.

One was her almost affianced lover, Will Magnet, the humorous writer. She had been doing her best not to think about him all day, but now he became an unavoidable central fact. She regarded him with an almost perplexed scrutiny, and wondered vividly why she had been so excited and pleased by his attentions during the previous summer.

Mr. Magnet was one of those quiet, deliberately-34- unassuming people who do not even attempt to be beautiful. Not for him was it to pretend, but to prick the bladder of pretence. He was a fairish man of forty, pale, with a large protuberant, observant grey eye — I speak particularly of the left — and a face of quiet animation warily alert for the wit's opportunity. His nose and chin were pointed, and his lips thin and quaintly pressed together. He was dressed in grey, with a low-collared silken shirt showing a thin neck, and a flowing black tie, and he carried a grey felt hat in his joined hands behind his back. She could hear the insinuating cadences of his voice as he talked in her mother's ear. The other gentleman, silent on her mother's right, must, she knew, be Mr. Wintersloan, whom Mr. Magnet had proposed to bring over. His dress betrayed that modest gaiety of disposition becoming in an artist, and indeed he was one of Mr. Magnet's favourite illustrators. He was in a dark bluish-grey suit; a black tie that was quite unusually broad went twice around his neck

before succumbing to the bow, and his waistcoat appeared to be of some gaily-patterned orange silk. Marjorie's eyes returned to Mr. Magnet. Hitherto she had never had an opportunity of remarking that his hair was more than a little attenuated towards the crown. It was funny how his tie came out under his chin to the right.

What an odd thing men's dress had become, she thought. Why did they wear those ridiculous collars and ties? Why didn't they always dress in flannels and look as fine and slender and active as the elder Carmel boy for example? Mr. Magnet couldn't be such an ill-shaped man. Why didn't every one dress to be just as beautiful and splendid as possible? — instead of wearing queer things!

"Coming down?" said Daffy, a vision of sulphur-yellow,-35-appearing in the doorway.

"Let *them* go first," said Marjorie, with a finer sense of effect. "And Theodore. We don't want to make part of a comic entry with Theodore, Daffy."

Accordingly, the two sisters watched discreetly — they had to be wary on account of Mr. Magnet's increasingly frequent glances at the windows — and when at last all the rest of the family had appeared below, they decided their cue had come. Mr. Pope strolled into the group, with no trace of his recent debacle except a slight limp. He was wearing a jacket of damson-coloured velvet, which he affected in the country, and all traces of his Grand Dudgeon were gone. But then he rarely had Grand Dudgeon except in the sanctities of family life, and hardly ever when any other man was about.

"Well," his daughters heard him say, with a witty allusiveness that was difficult to follow, "so the Magnet has come to the Mountain again — eh?"

"Come on, Madge," said Daffy, and the two sisters emerged harmoniously together from the house.

It would have been manifest to a meaner capacity than any present that evening that Mr. Magnet regarded Marjorie with a distinguished significance. He had two eyes, but he had that mysterious quality so frequently associated with a bluish-grey iris which gives the effect of looking hard with one large orb, a sort of grey searchlight effect, and he used this eye ray now to convey a respectful but firm admiration in the most unequivocal manner. He saluted Daffy courteously, and

then allowed himself to retain Marjorie's hand for just a second longer than was necessary as he said — very simply— "I am very pleased indeed to meet you again — very."

A slight embarrassment fell between them.

"You are staying near here, Mr. Magnet?"-36-

"At the inn," said Mr. Magnet, and then, "I chose it because it would be near you."

His eye pressed upon her again for a moment.

"Is it comfortable?" said Marjorie.

"So charmingly simple," said Mr. Magnet. "I love it."

A tinkling bell announced the preparedness of supper, and roused the others to the consciousness that they were silently watching Mr. Magnet and Marjorie.

"It's quite a simple farmhouse supper," said Mrs. Pope.

§ 8

There were ducks, green peas, and adolescent new potatoes for supper, and afterwards stewed fruit and cream and junket and cheese, bottled beer, Gilbey's Burgundy, and home-made lemonade. Mrs. Pope carved, because Mr. Pope splashed too much, and bones upset him and made him want to show up chicken in the *Times*. So he sat at the other end and rallied his guests while Mrs. Pope distributed the viands. He showed not a trace of his recent umbrage. Theodore sat between Daffy and his mother because of his table manners, and Marjorie was on her father's right hand and next to Mr. Wintersloan, while Mr. Magnet was in the middle of the table on the opposite side in a position convenient for looking at her. Both maids waited.

The presence of Magnet invariably stirred the latent humorist in Mr. Pope. He felt that he who talks to humorists should himself be humorous, and it was his private persuasion that with more attention he might have been, to use a favourite form of expression, "no mean jester." Quite a lot of little-37- things of his were cherished as "Good" both by himself and, with occasional inaccuracies, by Mrs. Pope. He opened out now in a strain of rich allusiveness.

"What will you drink, Mr. Wintersloan?" he said. "Wine of the country, yclept beer, red wine from France, or my wife's potent brew

from the golden lemon?”

Mr. Wintersloan thought he would take Burgundy. Mr. Magnet preferred beer.

“I’ve heard there’s iron in the Beer, And I believe it,”

misquoted Mr. Pope, and nodded as it were to the marker to score. “Daffy and Marjorie are still in the lemonade stage. Will you take a little Burgundy to-night, Mummy?”

Mrs. Pope decided she would, and was inspired to ask Mr. Wintersloan if he had been in that part of the country before. Topography ensued. Mr. Wintersloan had a style of his own, and spoke of the Buryhamstreet district as a “pooty little country — pooty little hills, with a swirl in them.”

This pleased Daffy and Marjorie, and their eyes met for a moment.

Then Mr. Magnet, with a ray full on Marjorie, said he had always been fond of Surrey. “I think if ever I made a home in the country I should like it to be here.”

Mr. Wintersloan said Surrey would tire him, it was too bossy and curly, too flocculent; he would prefer to look on broader, simpler lines, with just a sudden catch in the breath in them — if you understand me?

Marjorie did, and said so.

“A sob — such as you get at the break of a pinewood-38- on a hill.”

This baffled Mr. Pope, but Marjorie took it. “Or the short dry cough of a cliff,” she said.

“Exactly,” said Mr. Wintersloan, and having turned a little deliberate close-lipped smile on her for a moment, resumed his wing.

“So long as a landscape doesn’t *sneeze*” said Mr. Magnet, in that irresistible dry way of his, and Rom and Sydney, at any rate, choked.

“Now is the hour when Landscapes yawn,” mused Mr. Pope, coming in all right at the end.

Then Mrs. Pope asked Mr. Wintersloan, about his route to Buryhamstreet, and then Mr. Pope asked Mr. Magnet whether he was playing at a new work or working at a new play.

Mr. Magnet said he was dreaming over a play. He wanted to bring out the more serious side of his humour, go a little deeper into things

than he had hitherto done.

"Mingling smiles and tears," said Mr. Pope approvingly.

Mr. Magnet said very quietly that all true humour did that.

Then Mrs. Pope asked what the play was to be about, and Mr. Magnet, who seemed disinclined to give an answer, turned the subject by saying he had to prepare an address on humour for the next dinner of the *Literati*. "It's to be a humourist's dinner, and they've made me the guest of the evening — by way of a joke to begin with," he said with that dry smile again.

Mrs. Pope said he shouldn't say things like that. She then said "Syd!" quietly but sharply to Sydney, who was making a disdainful, squinting face at Theodore, and told the parlourmaid to clear the plates-39- for sweets. Mr. Magnet professed great horror of public speaking. He said that whenever he rose to make an after-dinner speech all the ices he had ever eaten seemed to come out of the past, and sit on his backbone.

The talk centered for awhile on Mr. Magnet's address, and apropos of Tests of Humour Mr. Pope, who in his way was "no mean raconteur," related the story of the man who took the salad dressing with his hand, and when his host asked why he did that, replied: "Oh! I thought it was spinach!"

"Many people," added Mr. Pope, "wouldn't see the point of that. And if they don't see the point they can't — and the more they try the less they do."

All four girls hoped secretly and not too confidently that their laughter had not sounded hollow.

And then for a time the men told stories as they came into their heads in an easy, irresponsible way. Mr. Magnet spoke of the humour of the omnibus-driver who always dangled and twiddled his badge "by way of a joke" when he passed the conductor whose father had been hanged, and Mr. Pope, perhaps, a little irrelevantly, told the story of the little boy who was asked his father's last words, and said "mother was with him to the end," which particularly amused Mrs. Pope. Mr. Wintersloan gave the story of the woman who was taking her son to the hospital with his head jammed into a saucepan, and explained to the other people in the omnibus: "You see, what makes it so annoying, it's me only saucepan!" Then they came back to the

Sense of Humour with the dentist who shouted with laughter, and when asked the reason by his patient, choked out: “Wrong tooth!” and then Mr. Pope reminded them of the heartless husband who, suddenly informed that his-40- mother-in-law was dead, exclaimed “Oh, don’t make me laugh, please, I’ve got a split lip....”

§ 9

The conversation assumed a less anecdotal quality with the removal to the drawing-room. On Mr. Magnet’s initiative the gentlemen followed the ladies almost immediately, and it was Mr. Magnet who remembered that Marjorie could sing.

Both the elder sisters indeed had sweet clear voices, and they had learnt a number of those jolly songs the English made before the dull Hanoverians came. Syd accompanied, and Rom sat back in the low chair in the corner and fell deeply in love with Mr. Wintersloan. The three musicians in their green and sulphur-yellow and white made a pretty group in the light of the shaded lamp against the black and gold Broadwood, the tawdry screen, its pattern thin glittering upon darkness, and the deep shadows behind. Marjorie loved singing, and forgot herself as she sang.

“I love, and he loves me again, Yet dare I not tell who; For if the nymphs should know my swain, I fear they’d love him too,”

she sang, and Mr. Magnet could not conceal the intensity of his admiration.

Mr. Pope had fallen into a pleasant musing; several other ripe old yarns, dear delicious old things, had come into his mind that he felt he might presently recall when this unavoidable display of accomplishments was overpast, and it was with one of them almost on his lips that he glanced across at his guest.-41- He was surprised to see Mr. Magnet’s face transfigured. He was sitting forward, looking up at Marjorie, and he had caught something of the expression of those blessed boys who froth at the feet of an Assumption. For an instant Mr. Pope did not understand.

Then he understood. It was Marjorie! He had a twinge of surprise, and glanced at his own daughter as though he had never seen her before. He perceived in a flash for the first time that this troublesome,

clever, disrespectful child was tall and shapely and sweet, and indeed quite a beautiful young woman. He forgot his anecdotes. His being was suffused with pride and responsibility and the sense of virtue rewarded. He did not reflect for a moment that Marjorie embodied in almost equal proportions the very best points in his mother and his mother-in-law, and avoided his own more salient characteristics with so neat a dexterity that from top to toe, except for the one matter of colour, not only did she not resemble him but she scarcely even alluded to him. He thought simply that she was his daughter, that she derived from him, that her beauty was his. She was the outcome of his meritorious preparations. He recalled all the moments when he had been kind and indulgent to her, all the bills he had paid for her; all the stresses and trials of the coach-building collapse, all the fluctuations of his speculative adventures, became things he had faced patiently and valiantly for her sake. He forgot the endless times when he had been viciously cross with her, all the times when he had pished and tushed and sworn in her hearing. He had on provocation and in spite of her mother's protests slapped her pretty vigorously, but such things are better forgotten; nor did he recall how bitterly he had opposed the college education which-42- had made her now so clear in eye and thought, nor the frightful shindy, only three months since, about that identical green dress in which she now stood delightful. He forgot these petty details, as an idealist should. There she was, his daughter. An immense benevolence irradiated his soul — for Marjorie — for Magnet. His eyes were suffused with a not ignoble tenderness. The man, he knew, was worth at least thirty-five thousand pounds, a discussion of investments had made that clear, and he must be making at least five thousand a year! A beautiful girl, a worthy man! A good fellow, a sound good fellow, a careful fellow too — as these fellows went!

Old Daddy would lose his treasure of course.

Well, a father must learn resignation, and he for one would not stand in the way of his girl's happiness. A day would come when, very beautifully and tenderly, he would hand her over to Magnet, his favourite daughter to his trusted friend. "Well, my boy, there's no one in all the world — —" he would begin.

It would be a touching parting. "Don't forget your old father,

Maggots," he would say. At such a moment that quaint nickname would surely not be resented....

He reflected how much he had always preferred Marjorie to Daffy. She was brighter — more like him. Daffy was unresponsive, with a touch of bitterness under her tongue....

He was already dreaming he was a widower, rather infirm, the object of Magnet's and Marjorie's devoted care, when the song ceased, and the wife he had for the purpose of reveries just consigned so carelessly to the cemetery proposed that they should have a little game that every one could play at. A number of pencils and slips of paper appeared in her hands.-43- She did not want the girls to exhaust their repertory on this first occasion — and besides, Mr. Pope liked games in which one did things with pencils and strips of paper. Mr. Magnet wished the singing to go on, he said, but he was overruled.

So for a time every one played a little game in which Mr. Pope was particularly proficient. Indeed, it was rare that any one won but Mr. Pope. It was called "The Great Departed," and it had such considerable educational value that all the children had to play at it whenever he wished.

It was played in this manner; one of the pseudo twins opened a book and dabbed a finger on the page, and read out the letter immediately at the tip of her finger, then all of them began to write as hard as they could, writing down the names of every great person they could think of, whose name began with that letter. At the end of five minutes Mr. Pope said Stop! and then began to read his list out, beginning with the first name. Everybody who had that name crossed it out and scored one, and after his list was exhausted all the surviving names on the next list were read over in the same way, and so on. The names had to be the names of dead celebrated people, only one monarch of the same name of the same dynasty was allowed, and Mr. Pope adjudicated on all doubtful cases. It was great fun.

The first two games were won as usual by Mr. Pope, and then Mr. Wintersloan, who had been a little distraught in his manner, brightened up and scribbled furiously.

The letter was *D*, and after Mr. Pope had rehearsed a tale of nine

and twenty names, Mr. Wintersloan read out his list in that curious voice of his which suggested nothing so much as some mobile drink glucking out of the neck of a bottle held upside down.

"Dahl," he began.-44-

"Who was Dahl?" asked Mr. Pope.

"'Vented dahlias," said Mr. Wintersloan, with a sigh. "Danton."

"Forgot him," said Mr. Pope.

"Davis."

"Davis?"

"Davis Straits. Doe."

"Who?"

"John Doe, Richard Roe."

"Legal fiction, I'm afraid," said Mr. Pope.

"Dam," said Mr. Wintersloan, and added after a slight pause: "Anthony van."

Mr. Pope made an interrogative noise.

"Painter — eighteenth century — Dutch. Dam, Jan van, his son. Dam, Frederich van. Dam, Wilhelm van. Dam, Diedrich van. Dam, Wilhelmina, wood engraver, gifted woman. Diehl."

"Who?"

"Painter — dead — famous. See Düsseldorf. It's all painters now — all guaranteed dead, all good men. Deeds of Norfolk, the aquarellist, Denton, Dibbs."

"Er?" said Mr. Pope.

"The Warwick Claude, *you* know. Died 1823."

"Dickson, Dunting, John Dickery. Peter Dickery, William Dock — I beg your pardon?"

Mr. Pope was making a protesting gesture, but Mr. Wintersloan's bearing was invincible, and he proceeded.

In the end he emerged triumphant with forty-nine names, mostly painters for whose fame he answered, but whose reputations were certainly new to every one else present. "I can go on like that," said Mr. Wintersloan, "with any letter," and turned that hard little smile full on Marjorie. "I didn't see how to do it at first. I just cast about.-45- But I know a frightful lot of painters. No end. Shall we try again?"

Marjorie glanced at her father. Mr. Wintersloan's methods were

all too evident to her. A curious feeling pervaded the room that Mr. Pope didn't think Mr. Wintersloan's conduct honourable, and that he might even go some way towards saying so.

So Mrs. Pope became very brisk and stirring, and said she thought that now perhaps a charade would be more amusing. It didn't do to keep on at a game too long. She asked Rom and Daphne and Theodore and Mr. Wintersloan to go out, and they all agreed readily, particularly Rom. "Come on!" said Rom to Mr. Wintersloan. Everybody else shifted into an audience-like group between the piano and the what-not. Mr. Magnet sat at Marjorie's feet, while Syd played a kind of voluntary, and Mr. Pope leant back in his chair, with his brows knit and lips moving, trying to remember something.

The charade *was* very amusing. The word was Catarrh, and Mr. Wintersloan, as the patient in the last act being given gruel, surpassed even the children's very high expectations. Rom, as his nurse, couldn't keep her hands off him. Then the younger people kissed round and were packed off to bed, and the rest of the party went to the door upon the lawn and admired the night. It was a glorious summer night, deep blue, and rimmed warmly by the afterglow, moonless, and with a few big lamp-like stars above the black still shapes of trees.

Mrs. Pope said they would all accompany their guests to the gate at the end of the avenue — in spite of the cockchafers.

Mr. Pope's ankle, however, excused him; the cordiality of his parting from Mr. Wintersloan seemed-46- a trifle forced, and he limped thoughtfully and a little sombrely towards the study to see if he could find an Encyclopædia or some such book of reference that would give the names of the lesser lights of Dutch, Italian, and English painting during the last two centuries.

He felt that Mr. Wintersloan had established an extraordinarily bad precedent.

§ 10

Marjorie discovered that she and Mr. Magnet had fallen a little behind the others. She would have quickened her pace, but Mr. Magnet stopped short and said: "Marjorie!"

“When I saw you standing there and singing,” said Mr. Magnet, and was short of breath for a moment.

Marjorie’s natural gift for interruption failed her altogether.

“I felt I would rather be able to call you mine — than win an empire.”

The pause seemed to lengthen, between them, and Marjorie’s remark when she made it at last struck her even as she made it as being but poorly conceived. She had some weak idea of being self-depreciatory.

“I think you had better win an empire, Mr. Magnet,” she said meekly.

Then, before anything more was possible, they had come up to Daffy and Mr. Wintersloan and her mother at the gate....

As they returned Mrs. Pope was loud in the praises of Will Magnet. She had a little clear-cut voice, very carefully and very skilfully controlled, and she dilated on his modesty, his quiet helpfulness-47- at table, his ready presence of mind. She pointed out instances of those admirable traits, incidents small in themselves but charming in their implications. When somebody wanted junket, he had made no fuss, he had just helped them to junket. “So modest and unassuming,” sang Mrs. Pope. “You’d never dream he was quite rich and famous. Yet every book he writes is translated into Russian and German and all sorts of languages. I suppose he’s almost the greatest humorist we have. That play of his; what is it called? — *Our Owd Woman* — has been performed nearly twelve hundred times! I think that is the most wonderful of gifts. Think of the people it has made happy.”

The conversation was mainly monologue. Both Marjorie and Daffy were unusually thoughtful.

§ 11

Marjorie ended the long day in a worldly mood.

“Penny for your thoughts,” said Daffy abruptly, brushing the long firelit rapids of her hair.

“Not for sale,” said Marjorie, and roused herself. “I’ve had a long day.”

“It’s always just the time I particularly wish I was a man,” she remarked after a brief return to meditation. “Fancy, no hair-pins, no brushing, no tie-up to get lost about, no strings. I suppose they haven’t strings?”

“They haven’t,” said Daffy with conviction.

She met Marjorie’s interrogative eye. “Father would swear at them,” she explained. “He’d naturally tie himself up — and we should hear of it.”

“I didn’t think of that,” said Marjorie, and stuck out her chin upon her fists. “Sound induction.”-48-

She forgot this transitory curiosity.

“Suppose one had a maid, Daffy — a real maid ... a maid who mended your things ... did your hair while you read....”

“Oh! here goes,” and she stood up and grappled with the task of undressing.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

The Two Proposals of Mr. Magnet

§ 1

It was presently quite evident to Marjorie that Mr.-49- Magnet intended to propose marriage to her, and she did not even know whether she wanted him to do so.

She had met him first the previous summer while she had been staying with the Petley-Cresthams at High Windower, and it had been evident that he found her extremely attractive. She had never had a real grown man at her feet before, and she had found it amazingly entertaining. She had gone for a walk with him the morning before she came away — a frank and ingenuous proceeding that made Mrs. Petley-Crestham say the girl knew what she was about, and she had certainly coquetted with him in an extraordinary manner at golf-croquet. After that Oxbridge had swallowed her up, and though he had called once on her mother while Marjorie was in London during the Christmas vacation, he hadn't seen her again. He had written — which was exciting — a long friendly humorous letter about nothing in particular, with an air of its being quite the correct thing for him to do, and she had answered, and there had been other exchanges. But all sorts of things had happened in the interval, and Marjorie had let him get into quite a back place in her thoughts — the fact that he was a member of her father's club had seemed somehow to remove him from a great range of possibilities — until a drift in her mother's talk towards him and a letter from him with an indefinable change in tone towards intimacy, had restored him to importance.-50- Now here he was in the foreground of her world again, evidently more ardent than ever, and with a portentous air of being about to do something decisive at the very first opportunity. What was he going to do? What had her mother been hinting at? And what, in fact, did the whole thing amount to?

Marjorie was beginning to realize that this was going to be a very serious affair indeed for her — and that she was totally unprepared to

meet it.

It had been very amusing, very amusing indeed, at the Petley-Cresthams', but there were moments now when she felt towards Mr. Magnet exactly as she would have felt if he had been one of the Oxbridge tradesmen hovering about her with a "little account," full of apparently exaggerated items....

Her thoughts and feelings were all in confusion about this business. Her mind was full of scraps, every sort of idea, every sort of attitude contributed something to that Twentieth Century jumble. For example, and so far as its value went among motives, it was by no means a trivial consideration; she wanted a proposal for its own sake. Daffy had had a proposal last year, and although it wasn't any sort of eligible proposal, still there it was, and she had given herself tremendous airs. But Marjorie would certainly have preferred some lighter kind of proposal than that which now threatened her. She felt that behind Mr. Magnet were sanctions; that she wasn't free to deal with this proposal as she liked. He was at Buryhamstreet almost with the air of being her parents' guest.

Less clear and more instinctive than her desire for a proposal was her inclination to see just all that Mr. Magnet was disposed to do, and hear all that he was disposed to say. She was curious. He didn't behave in the least as she had expected a lover to behave.-51- But then none of the boys, the "others" with whom she had at times stretched a hand towards the hem of emotion, had ever done that. She had an obscure feeling that perhaps presently Mr. Magnet must light up, be stirred and stirring. Even now his voice changed very interestingly when he was alone with her. His breath seemed to go — as though something had pricked his lung. If it hadn't been for that new, disconcerting realization of an official pressure behind him, I think she would have been quite ready to experiment extensively with his emotions....

But she perceived as she lay awake next morning that she wasn't free for experiments any longer. What she might say or do now would be taken up very conclusively. And she had no idea what she wanted to say or do.

Marriage regarded in the abstract — that is to say, with Mr. Magnet out of focus — was by no means an unattractive proposal to

her. It was very much at the back of Marjorie's mind that after Oxbridge, unless she was prepared to face a very serious row indeed and go to teach in a school — and she didn't feel any call whatever to teach in a school — she would probably have to return to Hartstone Square and share Daffy's room again, and assist in the old collective, wearisome task of propitiating her father. The freedoms of Oxbridge had enlarged her imagination until that seemed an almost unendurably irksome prospect. She had tasted life as it could be in her father's absence, and she was beginning to realize just what an impossible person he was. Marriage was escape from all that; it meant not only respectful parents but a house of her very own, furniture of her choice, great freedom of movement, an authority, an importance. She had seen what it meant to be a-52- prosperously married young woman in the person of one or two resplendent old girls revisiting Bennett College, scattering invitations, offering protections and opportunities....

Of course there is love.

Marjorie told herself, as she had been trained to tell herself, to be sensible, but something within her repeated: *there is love*.

Of course she liked Mr. Magnet. She really did like Mr. Magnet very much. She had had her girlish dreams, had fallen in love with pictures of men and actors and a music master and a man who used to ride by as she went to school; but wasn't this desolating desire for self-abandonment rather silly? — something that one left behind with much else when it came to putting up one's hair and sensible living, something to blush secretly about and hide from every eye?

Among other discrepant views that lived together in her mind as cats and rats and parrots and squirrels and so forth used to live together in those Happy Family cages unseemly men in less well-regulated days were wont to steer about our streets, was one instilled by quite a large proportion of the novels she had read, that a girl was a sort of self-giving prize for high moral worth. Mr. Magnet she knew was good, was kind, was brave with that truer courage, moral courage, which goes with his type of physique; he was modest, unassuming, well off and famous, and very much in love with her. His True Self, as Mrs. Pope had pointed out several times, must be really very beautiful, and in some odd way a line of Shakespeare had

washed up in her consciousness as being somehow effectual on his behalf:

"Love looks not with the eye but with the mind."

She felt she ought to look with the mind. Nice-53- people surely never looked in any other way. It seemed from this angle almost her duty to love him....

Perhaps she did love him, and mistook the symptoms. She did her best to mistake the symptoms. But if she did truly love him, would it seem so queer and important and antagonistic as it did that his hair was rather thin upon the crown of his head?

She wished she hadn't looked down on him....

Poor Marjorie! She was doing her best to be sensible, and she felt herself adrift above a clamorous abyss of feared and forbidden thoughts. Down there she knew well enough it wasn't thus that love must come. Deep in her soul, the richest thing in her life indeed and the best thing she had to give humanity, was a craving for beauty that at times became almost intolerable, a craving for something other than beauty and yet inseparably allied with it, a craving for deep excitement, for a sort of glory in adventure, for passion — for things akin to great music and heroic poems and bannered traditions of romance. She had hidden away in her an immense tumultuous appetite for life, an immense tumultuous capacity for living. To be loved beautifully was surely the crown and climax of her being.

She did not dare to listen to these deeps, yet these insurgent voices filled her. Even while she drove her little crocodile of primly sensible thoughts to their sane appointed conclusion, her blood and nerves and all her being were protesting that Mr. Magnet would not do, that whatever other worthiness was in him, regarded as a lover he was preposterous and flat and foolish and middle-aged, and that it were better never to have lived than to put the treasure of her life to his meagre lips and into his hungry, unattractive-54- arms. "The ugliness of it! The spiritless horror of it!" so dumbly and formlessly the rebel voices urged.

"One has to be sensible," said Marjorie to herself, suddenly putting down Shaw's book on Municipal Trading, which she imagined she had been reading....

(Perhaps all marriage was horrid, and one had to get over it.)

That was rather what her mother had conveyed to her.

§ 2

Mr. Magnet made his first proposal in form three days later, after coming twice to tea and staying on to supper. He had played croquet with Mr. Pope, he had been beaten twelve times in spite of twinges in the sprained ankle — heroically borne — had had three victories lucidly explained away, and heard all the particulars of the East Purblow experiment three times over, first in relation to the new Labour Exchanges, then regarded at rather a different angle in relation to female betting, tally-men, and the sanctities of the home generally, and finally in a more exhaustive style, to show its full importance from every side and more particularly as demonstrating the gross injustice done to Mr. Pope by the neglect of its lessons, a neglect too systematic to be accidental, in the social reform literature of the time. Moreover, Mr. Magnet had been made to understand thoroughly how several later quasi-charitable attempts of a similar character had already become, or must inevitably become, unsatisfactory through their failure to follow exactly in the lines laid down by Mr. Pope.

Mr. Pope was really very anxious to be pleasant and agreeable to Mr. Magnet, and he could think of no surer way of doing so than by giving him an-55- unrestrained intimacy of conversation that prevented anything more than momentary intercourse between his daughter and her admirer. And not only did Mr. Magnet find it difficult to get away from Mr. Pope without offence, but whenever by any chance Mr. Pope was detached for a moment Mr. Magnet discovered that Marjorie either wasn't to be seen, or if she was she wasn't to be isolated by any device he could contrive, before the unappeasable return of Mr. Pope.

Mr. Magnet did not get his chance therefore until Lady Petchworth's little gathering at Summerhay Park.

Lady Petchworth was Mrs. Pope's oldest friend, and one of those brighter influences which save our English country-side from lassitude. She had been more fortunate than Mrs. Pope, for while Mr. Pope with that aptitude for disadvantage natural to his temperament

had, he said, been tied to a business that never gave him a chance, Lady Petchworth's husband had been a reckless investor of exceptional good-luck. In particular, led by a dream, he had put most of his money into a series of nitrate deposits in caves in Saghalien haunted by benevolent penguins, and had been rewarded beyond the dreams of avarice. His foresight had received the fitting reward of a knighthood, and Sir Thomas, after restoring the Parish Church at Summerhay in a costly and destructive manner, spent his declining years in an enviable contentment with Lady Petchworth and the world at large, and died long before infirmity made him really troublesome.

Good fortune had brought out Lady Petchworth's social aptitudes. Summerhay Park was everything that a clever woman, inspired by that gardening literature which has been so abundant in the opening years of the twentieth century, could make it. It had-56- rosaries and rock gardens, sundials and yew hedges, pools and ponds, lead figures and stone urns, box borderings and wilderness corners and hundreds and hundreds of feet of prematurely-aged red-brick wall with broad herbaceous borders; the walks had primroses, primulas and cowslips in a quite disingenuous abundance, and in spring the whole extent of the park was gay, here with thousands of this sort of daffodil just bursting out and here with thousands of that sort of narcissus just past its prime, and every patch ready to pass itself off in its naturalized way as the accidental native flower of the field, if only it hadn't been for all the other different varieties coming on or wilting-off in adjacent patches....

Her garden was only the beginning of Lady Petchworth's activities. She had a model dairy, and all her poultry was white, and so far as she was able to manage it she made Summerhay a model village. She overflowed with activities, it was astonishing in one so plump and blonde, and meeting followed meeting in the artistic little red-brick and green-stained timber village hall she had erected. Now it was the National Theatre and now it was the National Mourning; now it was the Break Up of the Poor Law, and now the Majority Report, now the Mothers' Union, and now Socialism, and now Individualism, but always something progressive and beneficial. She did her best to revive the old village life, and brought her very

considerable powers of compulsion to make the men dance in simple old Morris dances, dressed up in costumes they secretly abominated, and to induce the mothers to dress their children in art-coloured smocks instead of the prints and blue serge frocks they preferred. She did not despair, she said, of creating a spontaneous peasant art movement in the district, springing from the people-57- and expressing the people, but so far it had been necessary to import not only instructors and material, but workers to keep the thing going, so sluggish had the spontaneity of our English countryside become.

Her little gatherings were quite distinctive of her. They were a sort of garden party extending from mid-day to six or seven; there would be a nucleus of house guests, and the highways and byeways on every hand would be raided to supply persons and interests. She had told her friend to "bring the girls over for the day," and flung an invitation to Mr. Pope, who had at once excused himself on the score of his ankle. Mr. Pope was one of those men who shun social gatherings — ostensibly because of a sterling simplicity of taste, but really because his intolerable egotism made him feel slighted and neglected on these occasions. He told his wife he would be far happier with a book at home, exhorted her not to be late, and was seen composing himself to read the "Vicar of Wakefield" — whenever they published a new book Mr. Pope pretended to read an old one — as the hired waggonette took the rest of his family — Theodore very unhappy in buff silk and a wide Stuart collar — down the avenue.

They found a long lunch table laid on the lawn beneath the chestnuts, and in full view of the poppies and forget-me-nots around the stone obelisk, a butler and three men servants with brass buttons and red and white striped waistcoats gave dignity to the scene, and beyond, on the terrace amidst abundance of deckchairs, cane chairs, rugs, and cushions, a miscellaneous and increasing company seethed under Lady Petchworth's plump but entertaining hand. There were, of course, Mr. Magnet, and his friend Mr. Wintersloan — Lady Petchworth had been given-58- to understand how the land lay; and there was Mr. Bunford Paradise the musician, who was doing his best to teach a sullen holiday class in the village schoolroom to sing the artless old folk songs of Surrey again, in spite of the invincible

persuasion of everybody in the class that the songs were rather indelicate and extremely silly; there were the Rev. Jopling Baynes, and two Cambridge undergraduates in flannels, and a Doctor something or other from London. There was also the Hon. Charles Muskett, Lord Pottinger's cousin and estate agent, in tweeds and very helpful. The ladies included Mrs. Raff, the well-known fashion writer, in a wonderful costume, the anonymous doctor's wife, three or four neighbouring mothers with an undistinguished daughter or so, and two quiet-mannered middle-aged ladies, whose names Marjorie could not catch, and whom Lady Petchworth, in that well-controlled voice of hers, addressed as Kate and Julia, and seemed on the whole disposed to treat as humorous. There was also Fraulein Schmidt in charge of Lady Petchworth's three tall and already abundant children, Prunella, Prudence, and Mary, and a young, newly-married couple of cousins, who addressed each other in soft undertones and sat apart. These were the chief items that became distinctive in Marjorie's survey; but there were a number of other people who seemed to come and go, split up, fuse, change their appearance slightly, and behave in the way inadequately apprehended people do behave on these occasions.

Marjorie very speedily found her disposition to take a detached and amused view of the entertainment in conflict with more urgent demands. From the outset Mr. Magnet loomed upon her — he loomed nearer and nearer. He turned his eye upon her as-59- she came up to the wealthy expanse of Lady Petchworth's presence, like some sort of obsolescent iron-clad turning a dull-grey, respectful, loving searchlight upon a fugitive torpedo boat, and thereafter he seemed to her to be looking at her without intermission, relentlessly, and urging himself towards her. She wished he wouldn't. She hadn't at all thought he would on this occasion.

At first she relied upon her natural powers of evasion, and the presence of a large company. Then gradually it became apparent that Lady Petchworth and her mother, yes — and the party generally, and the gardens and the weather and the stars in their courses were of a mind to co-operate in giving opportunity for Mr. Magnet's unmistakable intentions.

And Marjorie with that instability of her sex which has been a

theme for masculine humour in all ages, suddenly and with an extraordinary violence didn't want to make up her mind about Mr. Magnet. She didn't want to accept him; and as distinctly she didn't want to refuse him. She didn't even want to be thought about as making up her mind about him — which was, so to speak, an enlargement of her previous indisposition. She didn't even want to seem to avoid him, or to be thinking about him, or aware of his existence.

After the greeting of Lady Petchworth she had succeeded very clumsily in not seeing Mr. Magnet, and had addressed herself to Mr. Wintersloan, who was standing a little apart, looking under his hand, with one eye shut, at the view between the tree stems towards Buryhamstreet. He told her that he thought he had found something "pooty" that hadn't been done, and she did her best to share his artistic interests with a vivid sense of Mr. Magnet's tentative incessant approach behind her.

He joined them, and she made a desperate attempt-60- to entangle Mr. Wintersloan in a three-cornered talk in vain. He turned away at the first possible opportunity, and left her to an embarrassed and eloquently silent *tête-à-tête*. Mr. Magnet's professional wit had deserted him. "It's nice to see you again," he said after an immense interval. "Shall we go and look at the aviary?"

"I hate to see birds in cages," said Marjorie, "and it's frightfully jolly just here. Do you think Mr. Wintersloan will paint this? He does paint, doesn't he?"

"I know him best in black and white," said Mr. Magnet.

Marjorie embarked on entirely insincere praises of Mr. Wintersloan's manner and personal effect; Magnet replied tepidly, with an air of reserving himself to grapple with the first conversational opportunity.

"It's a splendid day for tennis," said Marjorie. "I think I shall play tennis all the afternoon."

"I don't play well enough for this publicity."

"It's glorious exercise," said Marjorie. "Almost as good as dancing," and she decided to stick to that resolution. "I never lose a chance of tennis if I can help it."

She glanced round and detected a widening space between

themselves and the next adjacent group.

"They're looking at the goldfish," she said. "Let us join them."

Everyone moved away as they came up to the little round pond, but then Marjorie had luck, and captured Prunella, and got her to hold hands and talk, until Fraulein Schmidt called the child away. And then Marjorie forced Mr. Magnet to introduce her to Mr. Bunford Paradise. She had a bright idea-61- of sitting between Prunella and Mary at the lunch table, but a higher providence had assigned her to a seat at the end between Julia — or was it Kate? — and Mr. Magnet. However, one of the undergraduates was opposite, and she saved herself from undertones by talking across to him boldly about Newnham, though she hadn't an idea of his name or college. From that she came to tennis. To her inflamed imagination he behaved as if she was under a Taboo, but she was desperate, and had pledged him and his friend to a foursome before the meal was over.

"Don't *you* play?" said the undergraduate to Mr. Magnet.

"Very little," said Mr. Magnet. "Very little—"

At the end of an hour she was conspicuously and publicly shepherded from the tennis court by Mrs. Pope.

"Other people want to play," said her mother in a clear little undertone.

Mr. Magnet fielded her neatly as she came off the court.

"You play tennis like — a wild bird," he said, taking possession of her.

Only Marjorie's entire freedom from Irish blood saved him from a vindictive repartee.

§ 3

"Shall we go and look at the aviary?" said Mr. Magnet, reverting to a favourite idea of his, and then remembered she did not like to see caged birds.

"Perhaps we might see the Water Garden?" he said. "The Water Garden is really very delightful indeed — anyhow. You ought to see that."

On the spur of the moment, Marjorie could think of no objection

to the Water Garden, and he led her off.

"I often think of that jolly walk we had last-62- summer," said Mr. Magnet, "and how you talked about your work at Oxbridge."

Marjorie fell into a sudden rapture of admiration for a butterfly.

Twice more was Mr. Magnet baffled, and then they came to the little pool of water lilies with its miniature cascade of escape at the head and source of the Water Garden. "One of Lady Petchworth's great successes," said Mr. Magnet.

"I suppose the lotus is like the water-lily," said Marjorie, with no hope of staving off the inevitable ——

She stood very still by the little pool, and in spite of her pensive regard of the floating blossoms, stiffly and intensely aware of his relentless regard.

"Marjorie," came his voice at last, strangely softened. "There is something I want to say to you."

She made no reply.

"Ever since we met last summer — —"

A clear cold little resolution not to stand this, had established itself in Marjorie's mind. If she must decide, she *would* decide. He had brought it upon himself.

"Marjorie," said Mr. Magnet, "I love you."

She lifted a clear unhesitating eye to his face. "I'm sorry, Mr. Magnet," she said.

"I wanted to ask you to marry me," he said.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Magnet," she repeated.

They looked at one another. She felt a sort of scared exultation at having done it; her mother might say what she liked.

"I love you very much," he said, at a loss.

"I'm sorry," she repeated obstinately.

"I thought you cared for me a little."

She left that unanswered. She had a curious-63- feeling that there was no getting away from this splashing, babbling pool, that she was fixed there until Mr. Magnet chose to release her, and that he didn't mean to release her yet. In which case she would go on refusing.

"I'm disappointed," he said.

Marjorie could only think that she was sorry again, but as she had already said that three times, she remained awkwardly silent.

“Is it because — —” he began and stopped.

“It isn’t because of anything. Please let’s go back to the others, Mr. Magnet. I’m sorry if I’m disappointing.”

And by a great effort she turned about.

Mr. Magnet remained regarding her — I can only compare it to the searching preliminary gaze of an artistic photographer. For a crucial minute in his life Marjorie hated him. “I don’t understand,” he said at last.

Then with a sort of naturalness that ought to have touched her he said: “Is it possible, Marjorie — that I might hope? — that I have been inopportune?”

She answered at once with absolute conviction.

“I don’t think so, Mr. Magnet.”

“I’m sorry,” he said, “to have bothered you.”

“*I’m* sorry,” said Marjorie.

A long silence followed.

“I’m sorry too,” he said.

They said no more, but began to retrace their steps. It was over. Abruptly, Mr. Magnet’s bearing had become despondent — conspicuously despondent. “I had hoped,” he said, and sighed.

With a thrill of horror Marjorie perceived he meant to *look* rejected, let every one see he had been rejected — after encouragement.

What would they think? How would they look?-64- What conceivably might they not say? Something of the importance of the thing she had done, became manifest to her. She felt first intimations of regret. They would all be watching, Mother, Daffy, Lady Petchworth. She would reappear with this victim visibly suffering beside her. What could she say to straighten his back and lift his chin? She could think of nothing. Ahead at the end of the shaded path she could see the copious white form, the agitated fair wig and red sunshade of Lady Petchworth ——

§ 4

Mrs. Pope’s eye was relentless; nothing seemed hidden from it; nothing indeed was hidden from it; Mr. Magnet’s back was

diagrammatic. Marjorie was a little flushed and bright-eyed, and professed herself eager, with an unnatural enthusiasm, to play golf-croquet. It was eloquently significant that Mr. Magnet did not share her eagerness, declined to play, and yet when she had started with the Rev. Jopling Baynes as partner, stood regarding the game with a sort of tender melancholy from the shade of the big chestnut-tree.

Mrs. Pope joined him unobtrusively.

"You're not playing, Mr. Magnet," she remarked.

"I'm a looker-on, this time," he said with a sigh.

"Marjorie's winning, I think," said Mrs. Pope.

He made no answer for some seconds.

"She looks so charming in that blue dress," he remarked at last, and sighed from the lowest deeps.

"That bird's-egg blue suits her," said Mrs. Pope, ignoring the sigh. "She's clever in her girlish way,-65- she chooses all her own dresses, — colours, material, everything."

(And also, though Mrs. Pope had not remarked it, she concealed her bills.)

There came a still longer interval, which Mrs. Pope ended with the slightest of shivers. She perceived Mr. Magnet was heavy for sympathy and ripe to confide. "I think," she said, "it's a little cool here. Shall we walk to the Water Garden, and see if there are any white lilies?"

"There are," said Mr. Magnet sorrowfully, "and they are very beautiful — *quite* beautiful."

He turned to the path along which he had so recently led Marjorie.

He glanced back as they went along between Lady Petchworth's herbaceous border and the poppy beds. "She's so full of life," he said, with a sigh in his voice.

Mrs. Pope knew she must keep silent.

"I asked her to marry me this afternoon," Mr. Magnet blurted out. "I couldn't help it."

Mrs. Pope made her silence very impressive.

"I know I ought not to have done so without consulting you" — he went on lamely; "I'm very much in love with her. It's —— It's done no harm."

Mrs. Pope's voice was soft and low. "I had no idea, Mr.

Magnet.... You know she is very young. Twenty. A mother — —”

“I know,” said Magnet. “I can quite understand. But I’ve done no harm. She refused me. I shall go away to-morrow. Go right away for ever.... I’m sorry.”

Another long silence.

“To me, of course, she’s just a child,” Mrs. Pope said at last. “She *is* only a child, Mr. Magnet. She-66- could have had no idea that anything of the sort was in your mind — —”

Her words floated away into the stillness.

For a time they said no more. The lilies came into sight, dreaming under a rich green shade on a limpid pool of brown water, water that slept and brimmed over as it were, unconsciously into a cool splash and ripple of escape. “How beautiful!” cried Mrs. Pope, for a moment genuine.

“I spoke to her here,” said Mr. Magnet.

The fountains of his confidence were unloosed.

“Now I’ve spoken to you about it, Mrs. Pope,” he said, “I can tell you just how I — oh, it’s the only word — adore her. She seems so sweet and easy — so graceful — —”

Mrs. Pope turned on him abruptly, and grasped his hands; she was deeply moved. “I can’t tell you,” she said, “what it means to a mother to hear such things — —”

Words failed her, and for some moments they engaged in a mutual pressure.

“Ah!” said Mr. Magnet, and had a queer wish it was the mother he had to deal with.

“Are you sure, Mr. Magnet,” Mrs. Pope went on as their emotions subsided, “that she really meant what she said? Girls are very strange creatures — —”

“She seems so clear and positive.”

“Her manner is always clear and positive.”

“Yes. I know.”

“I know she *has* cared for you.”

“No!”

“A mother sees. When your name used to be mentioned —— . But these are not things to talk about. There is something — something sacred — —”

“Yes,” he said. “Yes. Only —— Of course, one thing — —”

Mrs. Pope seemed lost in the contemplation of-67- water-lilies.

“I wondered,” said Mr. Magnet, and paused again.

Then, almost breathlessly, “I wondered if there should be perhaps — some one else?”

She shook her head slowly. “I should know,” she said.

“Are you sure?”

“I know I should know.”

“Perhaps recently?”

“I am sure I should know. A mother’s intuition — —”

Memories possessed her for awhile. “A girl of twenty is a mass of contradictions. I can remember myself as if it was yesterday. Often one says no, or yes — out of sheer nervousness.... I am sure there is no other attachment — —”

It occurred to her that she had said enough. “What a dignity that old gold-fish has!” she remarked. “He waves his tail — as if he were a beadle waving little boys out of church.”

§ 5

Mrs. Pope astonished Marjorie by saying nothing about the all too obvious event of the day for some time, but her manner to her second daughter on their way home was strangely gentle. It was as if she had realized for the first time that regret and unhappiness might come into that young life. After supper, however, she spoke. They had all gone out just before the children went to bed to look for the new moon; Daffy was showing the pseudo-twins the old moon in the new moon’s arms, and Marjorie found herself standing by her mother’s side. “I hope-68- dear,” said Mrs. Pope, “that it’s all for the best — and that you’ve done wisely, dear.”

Marjorie was astonished and moved by her mother’s tone.

“It’s so difficult to know what *is* for the best,” Mrs. Pope went on.

“I had to do — as I did,” said Marjorie.

“I only hope you may never find you have made a Great Mistake, dear. He cares for you very, very much.”

“Oh! we see it now!” cried Rom, “we see it now! Mummy, have you seen it? Like a little old round ghost being nursed!”

When Marjorie said “Good-night,” Mrs. Pope kissed her with an unaccustomed effusion.

It occurred to Marjorie that after all her mother had no selfish end to serve in this affair.

§ 6

The idea that perhaps after all she had made a Great Mistake, the Mistake of her Life it might be, was quite firmly established in its place among all the other ideas in Marjorie’s mind by the time she had dressed next morning. Subsequent events greatly intensified this persuasion. A pair of new stockings she had trusted sprang a bad hole as she put them on. She found two unmistakable bills from Oxbridge beside her plate, and her father was “horrid” at breakfast.

Her father, it appeared, had bought the ordinary shares of a Cuban railway very extensively, on the distinct understanding that they would improve. In a decent universe, with a proper respect for meritorious gentlemen, these shares would have improved accordingly, but the weather had seen fit to shatter the wisdom of Mr. Pope altogether. The sugar crop had collapsed, the bears were at work, and every-69- morning now saw his nominal capital diminished by a dozen pounds or so. I do not know what Mr. Pope would have done if he had not had his family to help him bear his trouble. As it was he relieved his tension by sending Theodore from the table for dropping a knife, telling Rom when she turned the plate round to pick the largest banana that she hadn’t the self-respect of a child of five, and remarking sharply from behind the *Times* when Daffy asked Marjorie if she was going to sketch: “Oh, for God’s sake don’t *whisper!*” Then when Mrs. Pope came round the table and tried to take his coffee cup softly to refill it without troubling him, he snatched at it, wrenched it roughly out of her hand, and said with his mouth full, and strangely in the manner of a snarling beast: “No’ ready yet. Half foo’.”

Marjorie wanted to know why every one didn’t get up and leave the room. She glanced at her mother and came near to speaking.

And very soon she would have to come home and live in the midst of this again — indefinitely!

After breakfast she went to the tumbledown summer-house by the duckpond, and contemplated the bills she had not dared to open at table. One was boots, nearly three pounds, the other books, over seven. “I *know* that’s wrong,” said Marjorie, and rested her chin on her hand, knitted her brows and tried to remember the details of orders and deliveries....

Marjorie had fallen into the net prepared for our sons and daughters by the delicate modesty of the Oxbridge authorities in money matters, and she was, for her circumstances, rather heavily in debt. But I must admit that in Marjorie’s nature the Oxbridge conditions had found an eager and adventurous streak that rendered her particularly apt to these temptations.

I doubt if reticence is really a virtue in a teacher.-70- But this is a fearful world, and the majority of those who instruct our youth have the painful sensitiveness of the cloistered soul to this spirit of terror in things. The young need particularly to be told truthfully and fully all we know of three fundamental things: the first of which is God, the next their duty towards their neighbours in the matter of work and money, and the third Sex. These things, and the adequate why of them, and some sort of adequate how, make all that matters in education. But all three are obscure and deeply moving topics, topics for which the donnish mind has a kind of special ineptitude, and which it evades with the utmost skill and delicacy. The middle part of this evaded triad was now being taken up in Marjorie’s case by the Oxbridge tradespeople.

The Oxbridge shopkeeper is peculiar among shopkeepers in the fact that he has to do very largely with shy and immature customers with an extreme and distinctive ignorance of most commercial things. They are for the most part short of cash, but with vague and often large probabilities of credit behind them, for most people, even quite straitened people, will pull their sons and daughters out of altogether unreasonable debts at the end of their university career; and so the Oxbridge shopkeeper becomes a sort of propagandist of the charms and advantages of insolvency. Alone among retailers he dislikes the sight of cash, declines it, affects to regard it as a coarse ignorant truncation of a budding relationship, begs to be permitted to wait. So the youngster just up from home discovers that money may

stay in the pocket, be used for cab and train fares and light refreshments; all the rest may be had for the asking. Marjorie, with her innate hunger for good-71- fine things, with her quite insufficient pocket-money, and the irregular habits of expenditure a spasmodically financed, hard-up home is apt to engender, fell very readily into this new, delightful custom of having it put down (whatever it happened to be). She had all sorts of things put down. She and the elder Carmel girl used to go shopping together, having things put down. She brightened her rooms with colour-prints and engravings, got herself pretty and becoming clothes, acquired a fitted dressing-bag already noted in this story, and one or two other trifles of the sort, revised her foot-wear, created a very nice little bookshelf, and although at times she felt a little astonished and scared at herself, resolutely refused to estimate the total of accumulated debt she had attained. Indeed until the bills came in it was impossible to do that, because, following the splendid example of the Carmel girl, she hadn't even inquired the price of quite a number of things....

She didn't dare think now of the total. She lied even to herself about that. She had fixed on fifty pounds as the unendurable maximum. "It is less than fifty pounds," she said, and added: "*must* be." But something in her below the threshold of consciousness knew that it was more.

And now she was in her third year, and the Oxbridge tradesman, generally satisfied with the dimensions of her account, and no longer anxious to see it grow, was displaying the less obsequious side of his character. He wrote remarks at the bottom of his account, remarks about settlement, about having a bill to meet, about having something to go on with. He asked her to give the matter her "early attention." She had a disagreeable persuasion that if she wanted many more things anywhere she would have to pay ready money for them. She was particularly-72- short of stockings. She had overlooked stockings recently.

Daffy, unfortunately, was also short of stockings.

And now, back with her family again, everything conspired to remind Marjorie of the old stringent habits from which she had had so delightful an interlude. She saw Daffy eye her possessions, reflect. This morning something of the awfulness of her position came to

her....

At Oxbridge she had made rather a joke of her debts.

"I'd *swear* I haven't had three pairs of house shoes," said Marjorie. "But what can one do?"

And about the whole position the question was, "what can one do?"

She proceeded with tense nervous movements to tear these two distasteful demands into very minute pieces. Then she collected them all together in the hollow of her hand, and buried them in the loose mould in a corner of the summer-house.

"Madge," said Theodore, appearing in the sunshine of the doorway. "Aunt Plessington's coming! She's sent a wire. Someone's got to meet her by the twelve-forty train."

§ 7

Aunt Plessington's descent was due to her sudden discovery that Buryhamstreet was in close proximity to Summerhay Park, indeed only three miles away. She had promised a lecture on her movement for Lady Petchworth's village room in Summerhay, and she found that with a slight readjustment of dates she could combine this engagement with her promised visit to her husband's sister, and an evening or so of influence for her little Madge. So she had sent Hubert to telegraph at once, and "here," she said-73- triumphantly on the platform, after a hard kiss at Marjorie's cheek, "we are again."

There, at any rate, she was, and Uncle Hubert was up the platform seeing after the luggage, in his small anxious way.

Aunt Plessington was a tall lean woman, with firm features, a high colour and a bright eye, who wore hats to show she despised them, and carefully dishevelled hair. Her dress was always good, but extremely old and grubby, and she commanded respect chiefly by her voice. Her voice was the true governing-class voice, a strangulated contralto, abundant and authoritative; it made everything she said clear and important, so that if she said it was a fine morning it was like leaded print in the *Times*, and she had over her large front teeth lips that closed quietly and with a slight effort after her speeches, as if the words she spoke tasted well and left a peaceful, secure

sensation in the mouth.

Uncle Hubert was a less distinguished figure, and just a little reminiscent of the small attached husbands one finds among the lower crustacea: he was much shorter and rounder than his wife, and if he had been left to himself, he would probably have been comfortably fat in his quiet little way. But Aunt Plessington had made him a Haigite, which is one of the fiercer kinds of hygienist, just in the nick of time. He had round shoulders, a large nose, and glasses that made him look astonished — and she said he had a great gift for practical things, and made him see after everything in that line while she did the lecturing. His directions to the porter finished, he came up to his niece. "Hello, Marjorie!" he said, in a peculiar voice that sounded as though his mouth was-74- full (though of course, poor dear, it wasn't), "how's the First Class?"

"A second's good enough for me, Uncle Hubert," said Marjorie, and asked if they would rather walk or go in the donkey cart, which was waiting outside with Daffy. Aunt Plessington, with an air of great *bonhomie* said she'd ride in the donkey cart, and they did. But no pseudo-twins or Theodore came to meet this arrival, as both uncle and aunt had a way of asking how the lessons were getting on that they found extremely disagreeable. Also, their aunt measured them, and incited them with loud encouraging noises to grow one against the other in an urgent, disturbing fashion.

Aunt Plessington's being was consumed by thoughts of getting on. She was like Bernard Shaw's life force, and she really did not seem to think there was anything in existence but shoving. She had no idea what a lark life can be, and occasionally how beautiful it can be when you do not shove, if only, which becomes increasingly hard each year, you can get away from the shovers. She was one of an energetic family of eight sisters who had maintained themselves against a mutual pressure by the use of their elbows from the cradle. They had all married against each other, all sorts of people; two had driven their husbands into bishoprics and made quite typical bishop's wives, one got a leading barrister, one a high war-office official, and one a rich Jew, and Aunt Plessington, after spending some years in just missing a rich and only slightly demented baronet, had pounced — it's the only word for it — on Uncle Hubert. "A woman is nothing

without a husband," she said, and took him. He was a fairly comfortable Oxford don in his furtive way, and bringing him out and using him as a basis, she specialized in intellectual-75- philanthropy and evolved her Movement. It was quite remarkable how rapidly she overhauled her sisters again.

What the Movement was, varied considerably from time to time, but it was always aggressively beneficial towards the lower strata of the community. Among its central ideas was her belief that these lower strata can no more be trusted to eat than they can to drink, and that the licensing monopoly which has made the poor man's beer thick, lukewarm and discreditable, and so greatly minimized its consumption, should be extended to the solid side of his dietary. She wanted to place considerable restrictions upon the sale of all sorts of meat, upon groceries and the less hygienic and more palatable forms of bread (which do not sufficiently stimulate the coatings of the stomach), to increase the present difficulties in the way of tobacco purchasers, and to put an end to that wanton and deleterious consumption of sweets which has so bad an effect upon the enamel of the teeth of the younger generation. Closely interwoven with these proposals was an adoption of the principle of the East Purblow Experiment, the principle of Payment in Kind. She was quite in agreement with Mr. Pope that poor people, when they had money, frittered it away, and so she proposed very extensive changes in the Truck Act, which could enable employers, under suitable safeguards, and with the advice of a small body of spinster inspectors, to supply hygienic housing, approved clothing of moral and wholesome sort, various forms of insurance, edifying rations, cuisine, medical aid and educational facilities as circumstances seemed to justify, in lieu of the wages the employees handled so ill....

As no people in England will ever admit they-76- belong to the lower strata of society, Aunt Plessington's Movement attracted adherents from every class in the community.

She now, as they drove slowly to the vicarage, recounted to Marjorie — she had the utmost contempt for Daffy because of her irregular teeth and a general lack of progressive activity — the steady growth of the Movement, and the increasing respect shown for her and Hubert in the world of politico-social reform. Some of the

meetings she had addressed had been quite full, various people had made various remarks about her, hostile for the most part and yet insidiously flattering, and everybody seemed quite glad to come to the little dinners she gave in order, she said, to gather social support for her reforms. She had been staying with the Mastersteins, who were keenly interested, and after she had polished off Lady Petchworth she was to visit Lady Rosenbaum. It was all going on swimmingly, these newer English gentry were eager to learn all she had to teach in the art of breaking in the Anglo-Saxon villagers, and now, how was Marjorie going on, and what was *she* going to do in the world?

Marjorie said she was working for her final.

"And what then?" asked Aunt Plessington.

"Not very clear, Aunt, yet."

"Looking around for something to take up?"

"Yes, Aunt."

"Well, you've time yet. And it's just as well to see how the land lies before you begin. It saves going back. You'll have to come up to London with me for a little while, and see things, and be seen a little."

"I should love to."

"I'll give you a good time," said Aunt Plessington,-77- nodding promisingly. "Theodore getting on in school?"

"He's had his remove."

"And how's Sydney getting on with the music?"

"Excellently."

"And Rom. Rom getting on?"

Marjorie indicated a more restrained success.

"And what's Daffy doing?"

"Oh! *get* on!" said Daffy and suddenly whacked the donkey rather hard. "I beg your pardon, Aunt?"

"I asked what *you* were up to, Daffy?"

"Dusting, Aunt — and the virtues," said Daffy.

"You ought to find something better than that."

"Father tells me a lot about the East Purblow Experiment," said Daffy after a perceptible interval.

"Ah!" cried Aunt Plessington with a loud encouraging note, but

evidently making the best of it, "*that's* better. Sociological observation."

"Yes, Aunt," said Daffy, and negotiated a corner with exceptional care.

§ 8

Mrs. Pope, who had an instinctive disposition to pad when Aunt Plessington was about, had secured the presence at lunch of Mr. Magnet (who was after all staying on in Buryhamstreet) and the Rev. Jopling Baynes. Aunt Plessington liked to meet the clergy, and would always if she could win them over to an interest in the Movement. She opened the meal with a brisk attack upon him. "Come, Mr. Baynes," she said, "what do your people eat here? Hubert and I are making a study of the gluttonous side of village life, and we find that no one knows so much of that as the vicar — not even the doctor."

The Reverend Jopling Baynes was a clergyman-78- of the evasive type with a quite distinguished voice. He pursed his lips and made his eyes round. "Well, Mrs. Plessington," he said and fingered his glass, "it's the usual dietary. The usual dietary."

"Too much and too rich, badly cooked and eaten too fast," said Aunt Plessington. "And what do you think is the remedy?"

"We make an Effort," said the Rev. Jopling Baynes, "we make an Effort. A Hint here, a Word there."

"Nothing organized?"

"No," said the Rev. Jopling Baynes, and shook his head with a kind of resignation.

"We are going to alter all that," said Aunt Plessington briskly, and went on to expound the Movement and the diverse way in which it might be possible to control and improve the domestic expenditure of the working classes.

The Rev. Jopling Baynes listened sympathetically across the table and tried to satisfy a healthy appetite with as abstemious an air as possible while he did so. Aunt Plessington passed rapidly from general principles, to a sketch of the success of the movement, and Hubert, who had hitherto been busy with his lunch, became audible

from behind the exceptionally large floral trophy that concealed him from his wife, bubbling confirmatory details. She was very bright and convincing as she told of this prominent man met and subdued, that leading antagonist confuted, and how the Bishops were coming in. She made it clear in her swift way that an intelligent cleric resolved to get on in this world *en route* for a better one hereafter, might do worse than take up her Movement. And this touched in, she turned her mind to Mr. Magnet.

(That floral trophy, I should explain, by the by,-79- was exceptionally large because of Mrs. Pope's firm conviction that Aunt Plessington starved her husband. Accordingly, she masked him, and so was able to heap second and third helpings upon his plate without Aunt Plessington discovering his lapse. The avidity with which Hubert ate confirmed her worst suspicions and evinced, so far as anything ever did evince, his gratitude.)

"Well, Mr. Magnet," she said, "I wish I had your sense of humour."

"I wish you had," said Mr. Magnet.

"I should write tracts," said Aunt Plessington.

"I knew it was good for something," said Mr. Magnet, and Daffy laughed in a tentative way.

"I mean it," said Aunt Plessington brightly. "Think if we had a Dickens — and you are the nearest man alive to Dickens — on the side of social reform to-day!"

Mr. Magnet's light manner deserted him. "We do what we can, Mrs. Plessington," he said.

"How much more might be done," said Aunt Plessington, "if humour could be organized."

"Hear, hear!" said Mr. Pope.

"If all the humorists of England could be induced to laugh at something together."

"They do — at times," said Mr. Magnet, but the atmosphere was too serious for his light touch.

"They could laugh it out of existence," said Aunt Plessington.

It was evident Mr. Magnet was struck by the idea.

"Of course," he said, "in *Punch*, to which I happen to be an obscure occasional contributor — —"

Mrs. Pope was understood to protest that he should not say such things.

"We *do* remember just what we can do either in-80- the way of advertising or injury. I don't think you'll find us up against any really *solid* institutions."

"But do you think, Mr. Magnet, you are sufficiently kind to the New?" Aunt Plessington persisted.

"I think we are all grateful to *Punch*," said the Rev. Jopling Baynes suddenly and sonorously, "for its steady determination to direct our mirth into the proper channels. I do not think that any one can accuse its editor of being unmindful of his great responsibilities — —"

Marjorie found it a very interesting conversation.

She always met her aunt again with a renewal of a kind of admiration. That loud authoritative rudeness, that bold thrusting forward of the Movement until it became the sole criterion of worth or success, this annihilation by disregard of all that Aunt Plessington wasn't and didn't and couldn't, always in the intervals seemed too good to be true. Of course this really was the way people got on and made a mark, but she felt it must be almost as trying to the nerves as aeronautics. Suppose, somewhere up there your engine stopped! How Aunt Plessington dominated the table! Marjorie tried not to catch Daffy's eye. Daffy was unostentatiously keeping things going, watching the mustard, rescuing the butter, restraining Theodore, and I am afraid not listening very carefully to Aunt Plessington. The children were marvellously silent and jumpily well-behaved, and Mr. Pope, in a very unusual state of subdued amiability, sat at the end of the table with the East Purblow experiment on the tip of his tongue. He liked Aunt Plessington, and she was good for him. They had the same inherent distrust of the intelligence and good intentions of their fellow creatures, and she-81- had the knack of making him feel that he too was getting on, that she was saying things on his behalf in influential quarters, and in spite of the almost universal conspiracy (based on jealousy) to ignore his stern old-world virtues, he might still be able to battle his way to the floor of the House of Commons and there deliver himself before he died of a few sorely needed home-truths about motor cars, decadence and frivolity generally....

§ 9

After lunch Aunt Plessington took her little Madge for an energetic walk, and showed herself far more observant than the egotism of her conversation at that meal might have led one to suppose. Or perhaps she was only better informed. Aunt Plessington loved a good hard walk in the afternoon; and if she could get any one else to accompany her, then Hubert stayed at home, and curled up into a ball on a sofa somewhere, and took a little siesta that made him all the brighter for the intellectual activities of the evening. The thought of a young life, new, untarnished, just at the outset, just addressing itself to the task of getting on, always stimulated her mind extremely, and she talked to Marjorie with a very real and effectual desire to help her to the utmost of her ability.

She talked of a start in life, and the sort of start she had had. She showed how many people who began with great advantages did not shove sufficiently, and so dropped out of things and weren't seen and mentioned. She defended herself for marrying Hubert, and showed what a clever shoving thing it had been to do. It startled people a little, and made them realize that here was a woman who wanted something more in a man than a handsome organ-grinder. She-82-made it clear that she thought a clever marriage, if not a startlingly brilliant one, the first duty of a girl. It was a girl's normal gambit. She branched off to the things single women might do, in order to justify this view. She did not think single women could do very much. They might perhaps shove as suffragettes, but even there a husband helped tremendously — if only by refusing to bail you out. She ran over the cases of a number of prominent single women.

"And what," said Aunt Plessington, "do they all amount to? A girl is so hampered and an old maid is so neglected," said Aunt Plessington.

She paused.

"Why don't you up and marry Mr. Magnet, Marjorie?" she said, with her most brilliant flash.

"It takes two to make a marriage, aunt," said Marjorie after a slight hesitation.

"My dear child! he worships the ground you tread on!" said Aunt

Plessington.

"He's rather — grown up," said Marjorie.

"Not a bit of it. He's not forty. He's just the age."

"I'm afraid it's a little impossible."

"Impossible?"

"You see I've refused him, aunt."

"Naturally — the first time! But I wouldn't send him packing the second."

There was an interval.

Marjorie decided on a blunt question. "Do you really think, aunt, I should do well to marry Mr. Magnet?"

"He'd give you everything a clever woman needs," said Aunt Plessington. "Everything."

With swift capable touches she indicated the sort of life the future Mrs. Magnet might enjoy. "He's-83- evidently a man who wants helping to a position," she said. "Of course his farces and things, I'm told, make no end of money, but he's just a crude gift by himself. Money like that is nothing. With a clever wife he might be all sorts of things. Without one he'll just subside — you know the sort of thing this sort of man does. A rather eccentric humorous house in the country, golf, croquet, horse-riding, rose-growing, queer hats."

"Isn't that rather what he would like to do, aunt?" said Marjorie.

"That's not *our* business, Madge," said Aunt Plessington with humorous emphasis.

She began to sketch out a different and altogether smarter future for the fortunate humorist. There would be a house in a good central position in London where Marjorie would have bright successful lunches and dinners, very unpretending and very good, and tempt the clever smart with the lure of the interestingly clever; there would be a bright little country cottage in some pretty accessible place to which Aunt and Uncle Plessington and able and influential people generally could be invited for gaily recreative and yet extremely talkative and helpful week-ends. Both places could be made centres of intrigue; conspiracies for getting on and helping and exchanging help could be organized, people could be warned against people whose getting-on was undesirable. In the midst of it all, dressed with all the natural wit she had and an enlarging experience, would be

Marjorie, shining like a rising planet. It wouldn't be long, if she did things well, before she had permanent officials and young cabinet ministers mingling with her salad of writers and humorists and the Plessington connexion.

"Then," said Aunt Plessington with a joyous lift in her voice, "you'll begin to *weed* a little."

For a time the girl's mind resisted her.-84-

But Marjorie was of the impressionable sex at an impressionable age, and there was something overwhelming in the undeviating conviction of her aunt, in the clear assurance of her voice, that this life which interested her was the real life, the only possible successful life. The world reformed itself in Marjorie's fluent mind, until it was all a scheme of influence and effort and ambition and triumphs. Dinner-parties and receptions, men wearing orders, cabinet ministers more than a little in love asking her advice, beautiful robes, a great blaze of lights; why! she might be, said Aunt Plessington rising to enthusiasm, "another Marcella." The life was not without its adventurous side; it wasn't in any way dull. Aunt Plessington to illustrate that point told amusing anecdotes of how two almost impudent invitations on her part had succeeded, and how she had once scored off her elder sister by getting a coveted celebrity through their close family resemblance. "After accepting he couldn't very well refuse because I wasn't somebody else," she ended gleefully. "So he came — and stayed as long as anybody."

What else was there for Marjorie to contemplate? If she didn't take this by no means unattractive line, what was the alternative? Some sort of employment after a battle with her father, a parsimonious life, and even then the Oxbridge tradesmen and their immortal bills....

Aunt Plessington was so intent upon her theme that she heeded nothing of the delightful little flowers she trampled under foot across the down, nor the jolly squirrel with an artistic temperament who saw fit to give an uninvited opinion upon her personal appearance from the security of a beech-tree in the-85- wood. But Marjorie, noting quite a number of such things with the corner of her mind, and being now well under the Plessington sway, wished she had more concentration....

In the evening after supper the customary games were suspended, and Mr. and Mrs. Plessington talked about getting on, and work and efficiency generally, and explained how so-and-so had spoilt his chances in life, and why so-and-so was sure to achieve nothing, and how this man ate too much and that man drank too much, and on the contrary what promising and capable people the latest adherents of and subscribers to the Movement were, until two glasses of hot water came — Aunt Plessington had been told it was good for her digestion and she thought it just as well that Hubert should have some too — and it was time for every one to go to bed.

§ 10

Next morning an atmosphere of getting on and strenuosity generally prevailed throughout the vicarage. The Plessingtons were preparing a memorandum on their movement for the "Reformer's Year Book," every word was of importance and might win or lose adherents and subscribers, and they secured the undisturbed possession of the drawing-room, from which the higher notes of Aunt Plessington's voice explaining the whole thing to Hubert, who had to write it out, reached, a spur to effort, into every part of the house.

Their influence touched every one.

Marjorie, struck by the idea that she was not perhaps getting on at Oxbridge so fast as she ought to do, went into the summer-house with Marshall's "Principles of Economics," read for two hours, and did not think about her bills for more than a quarter-86- of the time. Rom, who had already got up early and read through about a third of "Aurora Leigh," now set herself with dogged determination to finish that great poem. Syd practised an extra ten minutes — for Aunt Plessington didn't mind practice so long as there wasn't a tune. Mrs. Pope went into the kitchen and made a long-needed fuss about the waste of rice. Mr. Pope began the pamphlet he had had in contemplation for some time upon the advantages to public order of Payment in Kind. Theodore, who had washed behind his ears and laced his boots in all the holes, went into the yard before breakfast and hit a tennis ball against the wall and back, five hundred and twenty-two times — a record. He would have resumed this after

breakfast, but his father came round the corner of the house with a pen in his mouth, and asked him indistinctly, but fiercely, what the *devil* he was doing. So he went away, and after a fretful interval set himself to revise his Latin irregular verbs. By twelve he had done wonders.

Later in the day the widening circle of aggressive urgency reached the kitchen, and at two the cook gave notice in order, she said, to better herself.

Lunch, unconscious of this impending shadow, was characterized by a virtuous cheerfulness, and Aunt Plessington told in detail how her seven and twenty nephews and nieces, the children of her various sisters, were all getting on. On the whole, they were not getting on so brilliantly as they might have done (which indeed is apt to be the case with the children of people who have loved not well but too wisely), and it was borne in upon the mind of the respectfully listening Marjorie that, to borrow an easy colloquialism of her aunt's, she might "take the shine out of the lot of them" with a very little zeal and effort — and of course Mr. Magnet.

The lecture in the evening at Summerhay was a-87- great success.

The chair was taken by the Rev. Jopling Baynes, Lady Petchworth was enthroned behind the table, Hubert was in charge of his wife's notes — if notes should be needed — and Mr. Pope, expectant of an invitation at the end to say a few words about the East Purblow experiment, also occupied a chair on the platform. Lady Petchworth, with her abundant soft blond hair, brightly blond still in spite of her fifty-five years, her delicate features, her plump hands, her numerous chins and her entirely inaudible voice, made a pleasing contrast with Aunt Plessington's resolute personality. She had perhaps an even greater assurance of authority, but it was a quiet assurance; you felt that she knew that if she spoke in her sleep she would be obeyed, that it was quite unnecessary to make herself heard. The two women, indeed, the one so assertive, the other so established, were at the opposite poles of authoritative British womanhood, and harmonized charmingly. The little room struck the note of a well-regulated brightness at every point, it had been decorated in a Keltic but entirely respectful style by one of Lady Petchworth's artistic discoveries, it was lit by paraffin lamps that smelt hardly at all, and it

was gay with colour prints illustrating the growth of the British Empire from the battle of Ethandune to the surrender of Cronje. The hall was fairly full. Few could afford to absent themselves from these brightening occasions, but there was a tendency on the part of the younger and the less thoughtful section of the village manhood to accumulate at the extreme back and rumble in what appeared to be a slightly ironical spirit, so far as it had any spirit, with its feet.

The Rev. Jopling Baynes opened proceedings-88- with a few well-chosen remarks, in which he complimented every one present either singly or collectively according to their rank and importance, and then Aunt Plessington came forward to the centre of the platform amidst a hectic flush of applause, and said "Haw!" in a loud clear ringing tone.

She spoke without resorting to the notes in Hubert's little fist, very freely and easily. Her strangulated contralto went into every corner of the room and positively seemed to look for and challenge inattentive auditors. She had come over, she said, and she had been very glad to come over and talk to them that night, because it meant not only seeing them but meeting her very dear delightful friend Lady Petchworth (loud applause) and staying for a day or so with her brother-in-law Mr. Pope (unsupported outburst of applause from Mr. Magnet), to whom she and social reform generally owed so much. She had come to talk to them that night about the National Good Habits Movement, which was attracting so much attention and which bore so closely on our National Life and Character; she happened to be — here Aunt Plessington smiled as she spoke — a humble person connected with that movement, just a mere woman connected with it; she was going to explain to them as well as she could in her womanly way and in the time at her disposal just what it was and just what it was for, and just what means it adopted and just what ends it had in view. Well, they all knew what Habits were, and that there were Good Habits and Bad Habits, and she supposed that the difference between a good man and a bad man was just that the good man had good habits and the bad one had bad habits. Everybody she supposed wanted to get on. If a man had good habits he got-89- on, and if he had bad habits he didn't get on, and she supposed it was the same with a country, if its people had good habits they got on, and if

its people had bad habits they didn't get on. For her own part she and her husband (Hubert gave a little self-conscious jump) had always cultivated good habits, and she had to thank him with all her heart for his help in doing so. (Applause from the front seats.) Now, the whole idea of her movement was to ask, how can we raise the standard of the national habits? how can we get rid of bad habits and cultivate good ones?... (Here there was a slight interruption due to some one being suddenly pushed off the end of a form at the back, and coming to the floor with audible violence, after which a choked and obstructed tittering continued intermittently for some time.)

Some of her audience, she remarked, had not yet acquired the habit of sitting still.

(Laughter, and a coarse vulgar voice: "Good old Billy Punt!")

Well, to resume, she and her husband had made a special and careful study of habits; they had consulted all sorts of people and collected all sorts of statistics, in fact they had devoted themselves to this question, and the conclusion to which they came was this, that Good Habits were acquired by Training and Bad Habits came from neglect and carelessness and leaving people, who weren't fit for such freedom, to run about and do just whatever they liked. And so, she went on with a note of complete demonstration, the problem resolved itself into the question of how far they could get more Training into the national life, and how they could check extravagant and unruly and wasteful and unwise ways of living. (Hear, hear! from Mr. Pope.) And this was the problem she and her husband had set themselves to solve.

(Scuffle, and a boy's voice at the back, saying:-90- "Oh, *shut* it, Nuts! Shut it!")

Well, she and her husband had worked the thing out, and they had come to the conclusion that what was the matter with the great mass of English people was first that they had rather too much loose money, and secondly that they had rather too much loose time. (A voice: "What O!" and the Rev. Jopling Baynes suddenly extended his neck, knitted his brows, and became observant of the interrupter.) She did not say they had too much money (a second voice: "Not Arf!"), but too much *loose* money. She did not say they had too much time but too much loose time, that is to say, they had money

and time they did not know how to spend properly. And so they got into mischief. A great number of people in this country, she maintained, and this was especially true of the lower classes, did not know how to spend either money or time; they bought themselves wasteful things and injurious things, and they frittered away their hours in all sorts of foolish, unprofitable ways. And, after the most careful and scientific study of this problem, she and her husband had come to the conclusion that two main principles must underlie any remedial measures that were attempted, the first of which was the Principle of Payment in Kind, which had already had so interesting a trial at the great carriage works of East Purblow, and the second, the Principle of Continuous Occupation, which had been recognized long ago in popular wisdom by that admirable proverb — or rather quotation — she believed it was a quotation, though she gave, she feared, very little time to poetry ("Better employed," from Mr. Pope) —

"Satan finds some mischief still For idle hands to do." -91-

(Irrepressible outbreak of wild and sustained applause from the back seats, and in a sudden lull a female voice asking in a flattened, thwarted tone: "Ain't there to be no lantern then?")

The lecturer went on to explain what was meant by either member of what perhaps they would permit her to call this double-barrelled social remedy.

It was an admirable piece of lucid exposition. Slowly the picture of a better, happier, more disciplined England grew upon the minds of the meeting. First she showed the new sort of employer her movement would evoke, an employer paternal, philanthropic, vaguely responsible for the social order of all his dependants. (Lady Petchworth was seen to nod her head slowly at this.) Only in the last resort, and when he was satisfied that his worker and his worker's family were properly housed, hygienically clothed and fed, attending suitable courses of instruction and free from any vicious inclinations, would he pay wages in cash. In the discharge of the duties of payment he would have the assistance of expert advice, and the stimulus of voluntary inspectors of his own class. He would be the natural clan-master, the captain and leader, adviser and caretaker of his banded employees. Responsibility would stimulate him, and if

responsibility did not stimulate him, inspectors (both men and women inspectors) would. The worker, on the other hand, would be enormously more healthy and efficient under the new régime. His home, designed by qualified and officially recognized architects, would be prettier as well as more convenient and elevating to his taste, his children admirably trained and dressed in the new and more beautiful clothing with which Lady Petchworth (applause) had done so much to make them familiar, his vital statistics compared with current-92- results would be astonishingly good, his mind free from any anxiety but the proper anxiety of a man in his position, to get his work done properly and earn recognition from those competent and duly authorized to judge it. Of all this she spoke with the inspiring note of absolute conviction. All this would follow Payment in Kind and Continuous Occupation as days follow sunrise. And there would always, — and here Aunt Plessington's voice seemed to brighten — be something for the worker to get on with, something for him to do; lectures, classes, reading-rooms, improving entertainments. His time would be filled. The proper authorities would see that it was filled — and filled in the right way. Never for a moment need he be bored. He would never have an excuse for being bored. That was the second great idea, the complementary idea to the first. "And here it is," she said, turning a large encouraging smile on Lady Petchworth, "that the work of a National Theatre, instructive, stimulating, well regulated, and morally sustaining, would come in." He wouldn't, of course, be *compelled* to go, but there would be his seat, part of his payment in kind, and the public-house would be shut, most other temptations would be removed....

The lecture reached its end at last with only one other interruption. Some would-be humorist suddenly inquired, *à propos* of nothing: "What's the fare to America, Billy?" and a voice, presumably Billy's, answered him: "Mor'n *you'll* ev 'av in *you'* pocket."

The Rev. Jopling Baynes, before he called upon Mr. Pope for his promised utterance about East Purblow, could not refrain from pointing out how silly "in every sense of the word" these wanton interruptions were. What, he asked, had English social reform to do with the fare to America? — and-93- having roused the meeting to

an alert silence by the length of his pause, answered in a voice of ringing contempt: “Nothing — *whatsoever*.” Then Mr. Pope made his few remarks about East Purblow with the ease and finish that comes from long practice; much, he said, had to be omitted “in view of” the restricted time at his disposal, but he did not grudge that, the time had been better filled. (“No, no,” from Aunt Plessington.) Yes, yes, — by the lucid and delightful lecture they had all enjoyed, and he not least among them. (Applause.)...

§ 11

They came out into a luminous blue night, with a crescent young moon high overhead. It was so fine that the Popes and the Plessingtons and Mr. Magnet declined Lady Petchworth’s proffered car, and walked back to Buryhamstreet across the park through a sleeping pallid cornfield, and along by the edge of the pine woods. Mr. Pope would have liked to walk with Mr. Magnet and explain all that the pressure on his time had caused him to omit from his speech, and why it was he had seen fit to omit this part and include that. Some occult power, however, baffled this intention, and he found himself going home in the company of his brother-in-law and Daffy, with Aunt Plessington and his wife like a barrier between him and his desire. Marjorie, on the other hand, found Mr. Magnet’s proximity inevitable. They fell a little behind and were together again for the first time since her refusal.

He behaved, she thought, with very great restraint, and indeed he left her a little doubtful on that occasion whether he had not decided to take-94- her decision as final. He talked chiefly about the lecture, which had impressed him very deeply. Mrs. Plessington, he said, was so splendid — made him feel trivial. He felt stirred up by her, wanted to help in this social work, this picking up of helpless people from the muddle in which they wallowed.

He seemed not only extraordinarily modest but extraordinarily gentle that night, and the warm moonshine gave his face a shadowed earnestness it lacked in more emphatic lights. She felt the profound change in her feelings towards him that had followed her rejection of him. It had cleared away his effect of oppression upon her. She had

no longer any sense of entanglement and pursuit, and all the virtues his courtship had obscured shone clear again. He was kindly, he was patient — and she felt something about him a woman is said always to respect, he gave her an impression of ability. After all, he could banish the trouble that crushed and overwhelmed her with a movement of his little finger. Of all her load of debt he could earn the payment in a day.

"Your aunt goes to-morrow?" he said.

Marjorie admitted it.

"I wish I could talk to her more. She's so inspiring."

"You know of our little excursion for Friday?" he asked after a pause.

She had not heard. Friday was Theodore's birthday; she knew it only too well because she had had to part with her stamp collection — which very luckily had chanced to get packed and come to Buryhamstreet — to meet its demand. Mr. Magnet explained he had thought it might be fun to give a picnic in honour of the anniversary.

"How jolly of you!" said Marjorie.-95-

"There's a pretty bit of river between Wamping and Friston Hanger — I've wanted you to see it for a long time, and Friston Hanger church has the prettiest view. The tower gets the bend of the river."

He told her all he meant to do as if he submitted his plans for her approval. They would drive to Wamping and get a very comfortable little steam launch one could hire there. Wintersloan was coming down again; an idle day of this kind just suited his temperament. Theodore would like it, wouldn't he?

"Theodore will think he is King of Surrey!"

"I'll have a rod and line if he wants to fish. I don't want to forget anything. I want it to be *his* day really and truly."

The slightest touch upon the pathetic note? She could not tell.

But that evening brought Marjorie nearer to loving Magnet than she had ever been. Before she went to sleep that night she had decided he was quite a tolerable person again; she had been too nervous and unjust with him. After all, his urgency and awkwardness had been just a part of his sincerity. Perhaps the faint doubt whether he would make his request again gave the zest of uncertainty to his

devotion. Of course, she told herself, he would ask again. And then the blissful air of limitless means she might breathe. The blessed release....

She was suddenly fast asleep.

§ 12

Friday was after all not so much Theodore's day as Mr. Magnet's.

Until she found herself committed there was no-96- shadow of doubt in Marjorie's mind of what she meant to do. "Before I see you again," said Aunt Plessington at the parting kiss, "I hope you'll have something to tell me." She might have been Hymen thinly disguised as an aunt, waving from the departing train. She continued by vigorous gestures and unstinted display of teeth and a fluttering handkerchief to encourage Marjorie to marry Mr. Magnet, until the curve of the cutting hid her from view....

Fortune favoured Mr. Magnet with a beautiful day, and the excursion was bright and successful from the outset. It was done well, and what perhaps was more calculated to impress Marjorie, it was done with lavish generosity. From the outset she turned a smiling countenance upon her host. She did her utmost to suppress a reviving irrational qualm in her being, to maintain clearly and simply her overnight decision, that he should propose again and that she should accept him.

Yet the festival was just a little dreamlike in its quality to her perceptions. She found she could not focus clearly on its details.

Two waggonettes came from Wamping; there was room for everybody and to spare, and Wamping revealed itself a pleasant small country town with stocks under the market hall, and just that tint of green paint and that loafing touch the presence of a boating river gives.

The launch was brilliantly smart with abundant crimson cushions and a tasselled awning, and away to the left was a fine old bridge that dated in its essentials from Plantagenet times.

They started with much whistling and circling,-97- and went away up river under overhanging trees that sometimes swished the funnel, splashing the meadow path and making the reeds and bulrushes

dance with their wash. They went through a reluctant lock, steamed up a long reach, they passed the queerly painted Potwell Inn with its picturesque group of poplars and its absurd new notice-board of "Omlets." ... Theodore was five stone of active happiness; he and the pseudo-twins, strictly under his orders as the universal etiquette of birthdays prescribes, clambered round and round the boat, clutching the awning rail and hanging over the water in an entirely secure and perilous looking manner. No one, unless his father happened to be upset by something, would check him, he knew, on this auspicious day. Mr. Magnet sat with the grey eye on Marjorie and listened a little abstractedly to Mr. Pope, who was telling very fully what he would say if the Liberal party were to ask his advice at the present juncture. Mrs. Pope attended discreetly, and Daffy and Marjorie with a less restrained interest, to Mr. Wintersloan, who showed them how to make faces out of a fist tied up in a pocket-handkerchief, how to ventriloquize, how to conjure with halfpence — which he did very amusingly — and what the buttons on a man's sleeve were for; Theodore clambering at his back discovered what he was at, and by right of birthday made him do all the faces and tricks over again. Then Mr. Wintersloan told stories of all the rivers along which, he said, he had travelled in steamboats; the Rhine, the Danube, the Hoogly and the Fall River, and particularly how he had been bitten by a very young crocodile. "It's the smell of the oil brings it all back to me," he said. "And the kind of sway it gives you."

He made sinuous movements of his hand, and-98- looked at Marjorie with that wooden yet expressive smile.

Friston Hanger proved to be even better than Wamping. It had a character of its own because it was built very largely of a warm buff coloured local rock instead of the usual brick, and the outhouses at least of the little inn at which they landed were thatched. Most of the cottages had casement windows with diamond panes, and the streets were cobbled and very up-and-down hill. The place ran to high walls richly suggestive of hidden gardens, overhung by big trees and pierced by secretive important looking doors. And over it all rose an unusually big church, with a tall buttressed tower surmounted by a lantern of pierced stone.

"We'll go through the town and look at the ruins of the old castle

beyond the church," said Mr. Magnet to Marjorie, "and then I want you to see the view from the church tower."

And as they went through the street, he called her attention again to the church tower in a voice that seemed to her to be inexplicably charged with significance. "I want you to go up there," he said.

"How about something to eat, Mr. Magnet?" remarked Theodore suddenly, and everybody felt a little surprised when Mr. Magnet answered: "Who wants things to eat on your birthday, Theodore?"

But they saw the joke of that when they reached the castle ruins and found in the old tilting yard, with its ivy-covered arch framing a view of the town and stream, a table spread with a white cloth that shone in the sunshine, glittering with glass and silver and gay with a bowl of salad and flowers and cold pies and a jug of claret-cup and an ice pail — a silver pail! containing two promising looking bottles, in the charge of two real live waiters, in evening dress as-99- waiters should be, but with straw hats to protect them from the sun and weather. "Oh!" cried Mrs. Pope, "what a *splendid* idea, Mr. Magnet," when the destination of the feast was perfectly clear, and even Theodore seemed a little overawed — almost as if he felt his birthday was being carried too far and might provoke a judgment later. Manifestly Mr. Magnet must have ordered this in London, and have had it sent down, waiters and all! Theodore knew he was a very wonderful little boy in spite of the acute criticism of four devoted sisters, and Mr. Magnet had noticed him before at times, but this was, well, rather immense! "Look at the pie-crusts, old man!" And on the pie-crusts, and on the icing of the cake, their munificent host had caused to be done in little raised letters of dough and chocolate the word "Theodore."

"Oh, *Mr.* Magnet!" said Marjorie — his eye so obviously invited her to say something. Mr. Pope tried a nebulous joke about "groaning boards of Frisky Hanger," and only Mr. Wintersloan restrained his astonishment and admiration. "You could have got those chaps in livery," he said — unheeded. The lunch was as a matter of fact his idea; he had refused to come unless it was provided, and he had somehow counted on blue coats, brass buttons, and yellow waistcoats — but everybody else of course ascribed the whole invention to Mr. Magnet.

“Well,” said Mr. Pope with a fine air of epigram, “the only thing I can say is — to eat it,” and prepared to sit down.

“Melon,” cried Mr. Magnet to the waiters, “we’ll begin with the melon. Have you ever tried melon with pepper and salt, Mrs. Pope?”

“You put salt in everything,” admired Mr. Pope.-100- “Salt from those attics of yours — Attic salt.”

“Or there’s ginger!” said Mr. Magnet, after a whisper from the waiter.

Mr. Pope said something classical about “ginger hot in the mouth.”

“Some of these days,” said Mr. Wintersloan, “when I have exhausted all other sensations, I mean to try melon and mustard.”

Rom made a wonderful face at him.

“I can think of worse things than that,” said Mr. Wintersloan with a hard brightness.

“Not till after lunch, Mr. Wintersloan!” said Rom heartily.

“The claret cup’s all right for Theodore, Mrs. Pope,” said Magnet. “It’s a special twelve year old brand.” (He thought of everything!)

“Mummy,” said Mr. Pope. “You’d better carve this pie, I think.”

“I want very much,” said Mr. Magnet in Marjorie’s ear and very confidentially, “to show you the view from the church tower. I think — it will appeal to you.”

“Rom!” said Theodore, uncontrollably, in a tremendous stage whisper. “There’s peaches!... *There!* on the hamper!”

“Champagne, m’am?” said the waiter suddenly in Mrs. Pope’s ear, wiping ice-water from the bottle.

(But what could it have cost him?)

§ 13

Marjorie would have preferred that Mr. Magnet should not have decided with such relentless determination to make his second proposal on the church tower. His purpose was luminously clear to her from-101- the beginning of lunch onward, and she could feel her nerves going under the strain of that long expectation. She tried to pull herself together, tried not to think about it, tried to be amused by the high spirits and nonsense of Mr. Wintersloan and Syd and Rom

and Theodore; but Mr. Magnet was very pervasive, and her mother didn't ever look at her, looked past her and away from her and all round her, in a profoundly observant manner. Marjorie felt chiefly anxious to get to the top of that predestinate tower and have the whole thing over, and it was with a start that she was just able to prevent one of the assiduous waiters filling her glass with champagne for the third time.

There was a little awkwardness in dispersing after lunch. Mr. Pope, his heart warmed by the champagne and mellowed by a subsequent excellent cigar, wanted very much to crack what he called a "postprandial jest" or so with the great humorist, while Theodore also, deeply impressed with the discovery that there was more in Mr. Magnet than he had supposed, displayed a strong disposition to attach himself more closely than he had hitherto done to this remarkable person, and study his quiet but enormous possibilities with greater attention. Mrs. Pope with a still alertness did her best to get people adjusted, but Syd and Rom had conceived a base and unnatural desire to subjugate the affections of the youngest waiter, and wouldn't listen to her proposal that they should take Theodore away into the town; Mr. Wintersloan displayed extraordinary cunning and resource in evading a *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Pope that would have released Mr. Magnet. Now Mrs. Pope came to think of it, Mr. Wintersloan never had had the delights of a good talk with Mr. Pope, he knew practically nothing about the East-102-Purblow experiment except for what Mr. Magnet might have retailed to him, and she was very greatly puzzled to account for his almost manifest reluctance to go into things thoroughly. Daffy remained on hand, available but useless, and Mrs. Pope, smiling at the landscape and a prey to Management within, was suddenly inspired to take her eldest daughter into her confidence. "Daffy," she said, with a guileful finger extended and pointing to the lower sky as though she was pointing out the less obvious and more atmospheric beauties of Surrey, "get Theodore away from Mr. Magnet if you can. He wants to talk to Marjorie."

Daffy looked round. "Shall I call him?" she said.

"No," said Mrs. Pope, "do it — just — quietly."

"I'll try," said Daffy and stared at her task, and Mrs. Pope, feeling

that this might or might not succeed but that anyhow she had done what she could, strolled across to her husband and laid a connubial touch upon his shoulder. “All the young people,” she said, “are burning to climb the church tower. I never *can* understand this activity after lunch.”

“Not me,” said Mr. Pope. “Eh, Magnet?”

“*I’m* game,” said Theodore. “Come along, Mr. Magnet.”

“I think,” said Mr. Magnet looking at Marjorie, “I shall go up. I want to show Marjorie the view.”

“We’ll stay here, Mummy, eh?” said Mr. Pope, with a quite unusual geniality, and suddenly put his arm round Mrs. Pope’s waist. Her motherly eye sought Daffy’s, and indicated her mission. “I’ll come with you, Theodore,” said Daffy. “There isn’t room for everyone at once up that tower.”

“I’ll go with Mr. Magnet,” said Theodore, relying firmly on the privileges of the day....

For a time they played for position, with the-103- intentions of Mr. Magnet showing more and more starkly through the moves of the game. At last Theodore was lured down a side street by the sight of a huge dummy fish dangling outside a tackle and bait shop, and Mr. Magnet and Marjorie, already with a dreadful feeling of complicity, made a movement so rapid it seemed to her almost a bolt for the church tower. Whatever Mr. Magnet desired to say, and whatever elasticity his mind had once possessed with regard to it, there can be no doubt that it had now become so rigid as to be sayable only in that one precise position, and in the exact order he had determined upon. But when at last they got to that high serenity, Mr. Magnet was far too hot and far too much out of breath to say anything at all for a time except an almost explosive gust or so of approbation of the scenery. “Shor’ breath!” he said, “win’ey stairs always — that ‘fect on me — buful sceny — Suwy — like it always.”

Marjorie found herself violently disposed to laugh; indeed she had never before been so near the verge of hysterics.

“It’s a perfectly lovely view,” she said. “No wonder you wanted me to see it.”

“Naturally,” said Mr. Magnet, “wanted you to see it.”

Marjorie, with a skill her mother might have envied, wriggled into a half-sitting position in an embrasure and concentrated herself upon the broad wooded undulations that went about the horizon, and Mr. Magnet mopped his face with surreptitious gestures, and took deep restoring breaths.

"I've always wanted to bring you here," he said, "ever since I found it in the spring."-104-

"It was very kind of you, Mr. Magnet," said Marjorie.

"You see," he explained, "whenever I see anything fine or rich or splendid or beautiful now, I seem to want it for you." His voice quickened as though he were repeating something that had been long in his mind. "I wish I could give you all this country. I wish I could put all that is beautiful in the world at your feet."

He watched the effect of this upon her for a moment.

"Marjorie," he said, "did you really mean what you told me the other day, that there was indeed no hope for me? I have a sort of feeling I bothered you that day, that perhaps you didn't mean all — —"

He stopped short.

"I don't think I knew what I meant," said Marjorie, and Magnet gave a queer sound of relief at her words. "I don't think I know what I mean now. I don't think I can say I love you, Mr. Magnet. I would if I could. I like you very much indeed, I think you are awfully kind, you're more kind and generous than anyone I have ever known...."

Saying he was kind and generous made her through some obscure association of ideas feel that he must have understanding. She had an impulse to put her whole case before him frankly. "I wonder," she said, "if you can understand what it is to be a girl."

Then she saw the absurdity of her idea, of any such miracle of sympathy. He was entirely concentrated upon the appeal he had come prepared to make.

"Marjorie," he said, "I don't ask you to love me yet. All I ask is that you shouldn't decide *not* to love me."

Marjorie became aware of Theodore, hotly followed-105- by Daffy, in the churchyard below. "I *know* he's up there," Theodore was manifestly saying.

Marjorie faced her lover gravely.

“Mr. Magnet,” she said, “I will certainly promise you that.”

“I would rather be your servant, rather live for your happiness, than do anything else in all the world,” said Mr. Magnet. “If you would trust your life to me, if you would deign — .” He paused to recover his thread. “If you would deign to let me make life what it should be for you, take every care from your shoulders, face every responsibility — —”

Marjorie felt she had to hurry. She could almost feel the feet of Theodore coming up that tower.

“Mr. Magnet,” she said, “you don’t understand. You don’t realize what I am. You don’t know how unworthy I am — what a mere ignorant child — —”

“Let me be judge of that!” cried Mr. Magnet.

They paused almost like two actors who listen for the prompter. It was only too obvious that both were aware of a little medley of imperfectly subdued noises below. Theodore had got to the ladder that made the last part of the ascent, and there Daffy had collared him. “*My* birthday,” said Theodore. “Come down! You *shan’t* go up there!” said Daffy. “You *mustn’t*, Theodore!” “Why not?” There was something like a scuffle, and whispers. Then it would seem Theodore went — reluctantly and with protests. But the conflict receded.

“Marjorie!” said Mr. Magnet, as though there had been no pause, “if you would consent only to make an experiment, if you would try to love me. Suppose you *tried* an engagement. I do not care how long I waited....”

He paused. “Will you try?” he urged upon her-106- distressed silence.

She felt as though she forced the word. “*Yes!*” she said in a very low voice.

Then it seemed to her that Mr. Magnet leapt upon her. She felt herself pulled almost roughly from the embrasure, and he had kissed her. She struggled in his embrace. “Mr. Magnet!” she said. He lifted her face and kissed her lips. “Marjorie!” he said, and she had partly released herself.

“Oh *don’t* kiss me,” she cried, “don’t kiss me yet!”

“But a kiss!”

“I don’t like it.”

“I beg your pardon!” he said. “I forgot —— . But you.... You.... I couldn’t help it.”

She was suddenly wildly sorry for what she had done. She felt she was going to cry, to behave absurdly.

“I want to go down,” she said.

“Marjorie, you have made me the happiest of men! All my life, all my strength I will spend in showing you that you have made no mistake in trusting me — —”

“Yes,” she said, “yes,” and wondered what she could say or do. It seemed to him that her shrinking pose was the most tenderly modest thing he had ever seen.

“Oh my dear!” he said, and restrained himself and took her passive hand and kissed it.

“I want to go down to them!” she insisted.

He paused on the topmost rungs of the ladder, looking unspeakable things at her. Then he turned to go down, and for the second time in her life she saw that incipient thinness....

“I am sure you will never be sorry,” he said....

They found Mr. and Mrs. Pope in the churchyard.-107- Mr. Pope was reading with amusement for the third time an epitaph that had caught his fancy —

“Lands ever bright, days ever fair, And yet we weep that *he* is there.”

he read. “You know that’s really Good. That ought to be printed somewhere.”

Mrs. Pope glanced sharply at her daughter’s white face, and found an enigma. Then she looked at Mr. Magnet.

There was no mistake about Mr. Magnet. Marjorie had accepted him, whatever else she had felt or done.

§ 14

Marjorie’s feelings for the rest of the day are only to be accounted for on the supposition that she was overwrought. She had a preposterous reaction. She had done this thing with her eyes open after days of deliberation, and now she felt as though she was caught in a trap. The clearest thing in her mind was that Mr. Magnet had

taken hold of her and kissed her, kissed her on the lips, and that presently he would do it again. And also she was asking herself with futile reiteration why she had got into debt at Oxbridge? Why she had got into debt? For such silly little things too!

Nothing definite was said in her hearing about the engagement, but everybody seemed to understand. Mr. Pope was the most demonstrative, he took occasion to rap her hard upon the back, his face crinkled with a resolute kindliness. “Ah!” he said, “Sly Maggots!”

He also administered several resounding blows-108- to Magnet’s shoulder blades, and irradiated the party with a glow of benevolent waggery. Marjorie submitted without an answer to these paternal intimations. Mrs. Pope did no more than watch her daughter. Invisible but overwhelming forces were busy in bringing Marjorie and her glowing lover alone together again. It happened at last, as he was departing; she was almost to her inflamed imagination thrust out upon him, had to take him to the gate; and there in the shadows of the trees he kissed her “good night” with passionate effusion.

“Madge,” he said, “Madge!”

She made no answer. She submitted passively to his embrace, and then suddenly and dexterously disengaged herself from him, ran in, and without saying good-night to anyone went to her room to bed.

Mr. Pope was greatly amused by this departure from the customary routine of life, and noted it archly.

When Daffy came up Marjorie was ostentatiously going to sleep....

As she herself was dropping off Daffy became aware of an odd sound, somehow familiar, and yet surprising and disconcerting.

Suddenly wide awake again, she started up. Yes there was no mistake about it! And yet it was very odd.

“Madge, what’s up?”

No answer.

“I say! you aren’t crying, Madge, are you?”

Then after a long interval: “*Madge!*”

An answer came in a muffled voice, almost as if Marjorie had something in her mouth. “Oh shut it, old Daffy.”

“But Madge?” said Daffy after reflection.-109-

“Shut it. *Do* shut it! Leave me alone, I say! Can’t you leave me alone? Oh!” — and for a moment she let her sobs have way with her — “Daffy, don’t worry me. Old Daffy! *Please!*”

Daffy sat up for a long time in the stifled silence that ensued, and then like a sensible sister gave it up, and composed herself again to slumber....

Outside watching the window in a state of nebulous ecstasy, was Mr. Magnet, moonlit and dewy. It was a high serene night with a growing moon and a scattered company of major stars, and if no choir of nightingales sang there was at least a very active nightjar. “More than I hoped,” whispered Mr. Magnet, “more than I dared to hope.” He was very sleepy, but it seemed to him improper to go to bed on such a night — on such an occasion.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

The Man Who Fell Out of the Sky

§ 1

For the next week Marjorie became more nearly-110- introspective than she had ever been in her life before. She began to doubt her hitherto unshaken conviction that she was a single, consistent human being. She found such discords and discrepancies between mood and mood, between the conviction of this hour and the feeling of that, that it seemed to her she was rather a collection of samples of emotion and attitude than anything so simple as an individual.

For example, there can be no denying there was one Marjorie in the bundle who was immensely set up by the fact that she was engaged, and going to be at no very remote date mistress of a London house. She was profoundly Plessingtonian, and quite the vulgarest of the lot. The new status she had attained and the possibly beautiful house and the probably successful dinner-parties and the arrangements and the importance of such a life was the substance of this creature's thought. She designed some queenly dresses. This was the Marjorie most in evidence when it came to talking with her mother and Daphne. I am afraid she patronized Daphne, and ignored the fact that Daphne, who had begun with a resolute magnanimity, was becoming annoyed and resentful.

And she thought of things she might buy, and the jolly feeling of putting them about and making fine effects with them. One thing she told Daphne, she had clearly resolved upon; the house should be always full and brimming over with beautiful flowers. "I've always wished mother would have more flowers — and-111- not keep them so long when she has them...."

Another Marjorie in the confusion of her mind was doing her sincerest, narrow best to appreciate and feel grateful for and return the devotion of Mr. Magnet. This Marjorie accepted and even elaborated his views, laid stress on his voluntary subjection, harped upon his goodness, brought her to kiss him.

“I don’t deserve all this love,” this side of Marjorie told Magnet. “But I mean to learn to love you — —”

“My dear one!” cried Magnet, and pressed her hand....

A third Marjorie among the many was an altogether acuter and less agreeable person. She was a sprite of pure criticism, and in spite of the utmost efforts to suppress her, she declared night and day in the inner confidences of Marjorie’s soul that she did not believe in Mr. Magnet’s old devotion at all. She was anti-Magnet, a persistent insurgent. She was dreadfully unsettling. It was surely this Marjorie that wouldn’t let the fact of his baldness alone, and who discovered and insisted upon a curious unbeautiful flatness in his voice whenever he was doing his best to speak from the heart. And as for this devotion, what did it amount to? A persistent unimaginative besetting of Marjorie, a growing air of ownership, an expansive, indulgent, smiling disposition to thwart and control. And he was always touching her! Whenever he came near her she would wince at the freedoms a large, kind hand might take with her elbow or wrist, at a possible sudden, clumsy pat at some erring strand of hair.

Then there was an appraising satisfaction in his eye.

On the third day of their engagement he began, quite abruptly, to call her “Magsy.” “We’ll end-112- this scandal of a Girl Pope,” he said. “Magsy Magnet, you’ll be — M.M. No women M.P.’s for *us*, Magsy....”

She became acutely critical of his intellectual quality. She listened with a new alertness to the conversations at the dinner-table, the bouts of wit with her father. She carried off utterances and witticism for maturer reflection. She was amazed to find how little they could withstand the tests and acids of her mind. So many things, such wide and interesting fields, he did not so much think about as cover with a large enveloping shallowness....

He came strolling around the vicarage into the garden one morning about eleven, though she had not expected him until lunch-time; and she was sitting with her feet tucked up on the aged but still practicable garden-seat reading Shaw’s “Common Sense of Municipal Trading.” He came and leant over the back of the seat, and she looked up, said “Good morning. Isn’t it perfectly lovely?” and indicated by a book still open that her interest in it remained alive.

“What’s the book, Magsy?” he asked, took it out of her slightly resisting hand, closed it and read the title. “Um,” he said; “Isn’t this a bit stiff for little women’s brains?”

All the rebel Marjories were up in arms at that.

“Dreadful word, ‘Municipal.’ I *don’t* like it.” He shook his head with a grimace of humorous distaste.

“I suppose women have as good brains as men,” said Marjorie, “if it comes to that.”

“Better,” said Magnet. “That’s why they shouldn’t trouble about horrid things like Municipal and Trading.... On a day like this!”

“Don’t you think this sort of thing is interesting?”-113-

“Oh!” he said, and flourished the book. “Come! And besides — *Shaw!*”

“He makes a very good case.”

“But he’s such a — mountebank.”

“Does that matter? He isn’t a mountebank there.”

“He’s not sincere. I doubt if you had a serious book on Municipal Trading, Magsy, whether you’d make head or tail of it. It’s a stiff subject. Shaw just gets his chance for a smart thing or so.... I’d rather you read a good novel.”

He really had the air of taking her reading in hand.

“You think I ought not to read an intelligent book.”

“I think we ought to leave those things to the people who understand.”

“But we ought to understand.”

He smiled wisely. “There’s a lot of things *you* have to understand,” he said, “nearer home than this.”

Marjorie was ablaze now. “What a silly thing to say!” she cried, with an undergraduate’s freedom. “Really, you are talking nonsense! I read that book because it interests me. If I didn’t, I should read something else. Do you mean to suggest that I’m reading like a child, who holds a book upside down?”

She was so plainly angry that he was taken aback. “I don’t mean to suggest—” he began, and turned to greet the welcome presence, the interrogative eye of Mrs. Pope.

“Here we are!” he said, “having a quarrel!”

“Marjorie!” said Mrs. Pope.

“Oh, it’s serious!” said Mr. Magnet, and added-114- with a gleam: “It’s about Municipal Trading!”

Mrs. Pope knew the wicked little flicker in Marjorie’s eye better than Mr. Magnet. She had known it from the nursery, and yet she had never quite mastered its meaning. She had never yet realized it was Marjorie, she had always regarded it as something Marjorie, some other Marjorie, ought to keep under control. So now she adopted a pacificatory tone.

“Oh! lovers’ quarrels,” she said, floating over the occasion. “Lovers’ quarrels. You mustn’t ask *me* to interfere!”

Marjorie, already a little ashamed of her heat, thought for an instant she ought to stand that, and then decided abruptly with a return to choler that she would not do so. She stood up, and held out her hand for her book.

“Mr. Magnet,” she said to her mother with remarkable force and freedom as she took it, “has been talking unutterable nonsense. I don’t call that a lovers’ quarrel — anyhow.”

Then, confronted with a double astonishment, and having no more to say, she picked up her skirt quite unnecessarily, and walked with a heavenward chin indoors.

“I’m afraid,” explained Mr. Magnet, “I was a little too free with one of Magsy’s favourite authors.”

“Which is the favourite author now?” asked Mrs. Pope, after a reflective pause, with a mother’s indulgent smile.

“Shaw.” He raised amused eyebrows. “It’s just the age, I suppose.”

“She’s frightfully loyal while it lasts,” said Mrs. Pope. “No one dare say a word against them.”

“I think it’s adorable of her,” said Mr. Magnet — with an answering loyalty and gusto.

§ 2-115-

The aviation accident occurred while Mrs. Pope, her two eldest daughters, and Mr. Magnet were playing golf-croquet upon the vicarage lawn. It was a serene, hot afternoon, a little too hot to take a game seriously, and the four little figures moved slowly over the

green and grouped and dispersed as the game required. Mr. Magnet was very fond of golf-croquet, he displayed a whimsical humour and much invention at this game, it was not too exacting physically; and he could make his ball jump into the air in the absurdest manner. Occasionally he won a laugh from Marjorie or Daffy. No one else was in sight; the pseudo-twins and Theodore and Toupee were in the barn, and Mr. Pope was six miles away at Wamping, lying prone, nibbling grass blades and watching a county cricket match, as every good Englishman, who knows what is expected of him, loves to do.... Click went ball and mallet, and then after a long interval, click. It seemed incredible that anything could possibly happen before tea.

But this is no longer the world it was. Suddenly this tranquil scene was slashed and rent by the sound and vision of a monoplane tearing across the heavens.

A purring and popping arrested Mr. Magnet in mid jest, and the monster came sliding up the sky over the trees beside the church to the east, already near enough to look big, a great stiff shape, big buff sails stayed with glittering wire, and with two odd little wheels beneath its body. It drove up the sky, rising with a sort of upward heaving, until the croquet players could see the driver and a passenger perched behind him quite clearly. It passed a little to the right of the church tower and only a few yards above the level of the flagstaff, there wasn't fifty feet of clearance altogether, and as it did so Marjorie-116- could see both driver and passenger making hasty movements. It became immense and over-shadowing, and every one stood rigid as it swept across the sun above the vicarage chimneys. Then it seemed to drop twenty feet or so abruptly, and then both the men cried out as it drove straight for the line of poplars between the shrubbery and the meadow. "Oh, oh, OH!" cried Mrs. Pope and Daffy. Evidently the aviator was trying to turn sharply; the huge thing banked, but not enough, and came about and slipped away until its wing was slashing into the tree tops with a thrilling swish of leaves and the snapping of branches and stays.

"Run!" cried Magnet, and danced about the lawn, and the three ladies rushed sideways as the whole affair slouched down on them. It came on its edge, hesitated whether to turn over as a whole, then crumpled, and amidst a volley of smashing and snapping came to rest

amidst ploughed-up turf, a clamorous stench of petrol, and a cloud of dust and blue smoke within twenty yards of them. The two men had jumped to clear the engine, had fallen headlong, and were now both covered by the fabric of the shattered wing.

It was all too spectacular for word or speech until the thing lay still. Even then the croquet players stood passive for awhile waiting for something to happen. It took some seconds to reconcile their minds to this sudden loss of initiative in a monster that had been so recently and threateningly full of go. It seemed quite a long time before it came into Marjorie's head that she ought perhaps to act in some way. She saw a tall young man wriggling on all fours from underneath the wreckage of fabric. He stared at her rather blankly. She went forward with a vague idea of helping him. He stood up,-117- swayed doubtfully on his legs, turned, and became energetic, struggling mysteriously with the edge of the left wing. He gasped and turned fierce blue eyes over his shoulder.

"Help me to hold the confounded thing up!" he cried, with a touch of irritation in his voice at her attitude.

Marjorie at once seized the edge of the plane and pushed. The second man, in a peculiar button-shaped head-dress, was lying crumpled up underneath, his ear and cheek were bright with blood, and there was a streak of blood on the ground near his head.

"That's right. Can you hold it if I use only one hand?"

Marjorie gasped "Yes," with a terrific weight as it seemed suddenly on her wrists.

"Right O," and the tall young man had thrust himself backwards under the plane until it rested on his back, and collared the prostrate man. "Keep it up!" he said fiercely when Marjorie threatened to give way. He seemed to assume that she was there to obey orders, and with much grunting and effort he had dragged his companion clear of the wreckage.

The man's face was a mass of blood, and he was sickeningly inert to his companion's lugging.

"Let it go," said the tall young man, and Marjorie thanked heaven as the broken wing flapped down again.

She came helpfully to his side, and became aware of Daffy and her mother a few paces off. Magnet — it astonished her — was

retreating hastily. But he had to go away because the sight of blood upset him — so much that it was always wiser for him to go away.

"Is he hurt?" cried Mrs. Pope.-118-

"We both are," said the tall young man, and then as though these other people didn't matter and he and Marjorie were old friends, he said: "Can we turn him over?"

"I think so." Marjorie grasped the damaged man's shoulder and got him over skilfully.

"Will you get some water?" said the tall young man to Daffy and Mrs. Pope, in a way that sent Daffy off at once for a pail.

"He wants water," she said to the parlourmaid who was hurrying out of the house.

The tall young man had gone down on his knees by his companion, releasing his neck, and making a hasty first examination of his condition. "The pneumatic cap must have saved his head," he said, throwing the thing aside. "Lucky he had it. He can't be badly hurt. Just rubbed his face along the ground. Silly thing to have come as we did."

He felt the heart, and tried the flexibility of an arm.

"*That's* all right," he said.

He became judicial and absorbed over the problems of his friend's side. "Um," he remarked. He knelt back and regarded Marjorie for the first time. "Thundering smash," he said. His face relaxed into an agreeable smile. "He only bought it last week."

"Is he hurt?"

"Rib, I think — or two ribs perhaps. Stunned rather. All *this* — just his nose."

He regarded Marjorie and Marjorie him for a brief space. He became aware of Mrs. Pope on his right hand. Then at a clank behind, he turned round to see Daphne advancing with a pail of water. The two servants were now on the spot, and the odd-job man, and the old lady who did out the church, and Magnet hovered doubtfully in the distance. Suddenly-119- with shouts and barks of sympathetic glee the pseudo-twins, Theodore and Toupee shot out of the house. New thoughts were stirring in the young aviator. He rose, wincing a little as he did so. "I'm afraid I'm a little rude," he said.

"I do hope your friend isn't hurt," said Mrs. Pope, feeling the duty

of a hostess.

“He’s not hurt *much* — so far as I can see. Haven’t we made rather a mess of your lawn?”

“Oh, not at all!” said Mrs. Pope.

“We have. If that is your gardener over there, it would be nice if he kept back the people who seem to be hesitating beyond those trees. There will be more presently. I’m afraid I must throw myself on your hands.” He broke into a chuckle for a moment. “I have, you know. Is it possible to get a doctor? My friend’s not hurt so very much, but still he wants expert handling. He’s Sir Rupert Solomonson, from” — he jerked his head back— “over beyond Tunbridge Wells. My name’s Trafford.”

“I’m Mrs. Pope and these are my daughters.”

Trafford bowed. “We just took the thing out for a lark,” he said.

Marjorie had been regarding the prostrate man. His mouth was a little open, and he showed beautiful teeth. Apart from the dry blood upon him he was not an ill-looking man. He was manifestly a Jew, a square-rigged Jew (you have remarked of course that there are square-rigged Jews, whose noses are within bounds, and fore-and-aft Jews, whose noses aren’t), with not so much a bullet-head as a round-shot, cropped like the head of a Capuchin monkey. Suddenly she was down and had his head on her knee, with a quick movement that caught Trafford’s eye. “He’s better,” she said. “His eyelids flickered. Daffy, bring the water.”

She had felt a queer little repugnance at first with-120- this helpless man, but now that professional nurse who lurks in the composition of so many women, was uppermost. “Give me your handkerchief,” she said to Trafford, and with Daffy kneeling beside her and also interested, and Mrs. Pope a belated but more experienced and authoritative third, Sir Rupert was soon getting the best of attention.

“Wathall...” said Sir Rupert suddenly, and tried again: “Wathall.” A third effort gave “Wathall about, eh?”

“If we could get him into the shade,” said Marjorie.

“Woosh,” cried Sir Rupert. “Weeeooo!”

“That’s all right,” said Trafford. “It’s only a rib or two.”

“Eeeeeyoooo!” said Sir Rupert.

“Exactly. We’re going to carry you out of the glare.”

“Don’t touch me,” said Sir Rupert. “Gooo.”

It took some little persuasion before Sir Rupert would consent to be moved, and even then he was for a time — oh! crusty. But presently Trafford and the two girls had got him into the shade of a large bush close to where in a circle of rugs and cushions the tea things lay prepared. There they camped. The helpful odd-job man was ordered to stave off intruders from the village; water, towels, pillows were forthcoming. Mr. Magnet reappeared as tentative assistance, and Solomonson became articulate and brave and said he’d nothing but a stitch in his side. In his present position he wasn’t at all uncomfortable. Only he didn’t want any one near him. He enforced that by an appealing smile. The twins, invited to fetch the doctor, declined, proffering Theodore. They had conceived juvenile passions for the tall young man, and did not want to leave him. He certainly-121- had a very nice face. So Theodore after walking twice round the wreckage, tore himself away and departed on Rom’s bicycle. Enquiry centred on Solomonson for a time. His face, hair and neck were wet but no longer bloody, and he professed perfect comfort so long as he wasn’t moved, and no one came too near him. He was very clear about that though perfectly polite, and scrutinized their faces to see if they were equally clear. Satisfied upon this point he closed his eyes and spoke no more. He looked then like a Capuchin monkey lost in pride. There came a pause. Every one was conscious of having risen to an emergency and behaved well under unusual circumstances. The young man’s eye rested on the adjacent tea-things, lacking nothing but the coronation of the teapot.

“Why not,” he remarked, “have tea?”

“If you think your friend — —” began Mrs. Pope.

“Oh! *he’s* all right. Aren’t you, Solomonson? There’s nothing more now until the doctor.”

“Only want to be left alone,” said Solomonson, and closed his heavy eyelids again.

Mrs. Pope told the maids, with an air of dismissal, to get tea.

“We can keep an eye on him,” said Trafford.

Marjorie surveyed her first patient with a pretty unconscious mixture of maternal gravity and girlish interest, and the twins to

avoid too openly gloating upon the good looks of Trafford, chose places and secured cushions round the tea-things, calculating to the best of their ability how they might secure the closest proximity to him. Mr. Magnet and Toupee had gone to stare at the monoplane; they were presently joined by the odd-job man in an interrogative mood. “Pretty complete smash, sir!”-122- said the odd-job man, and then perceiving heads over the hedge by the churchyard, turned back to his duty of sentinel. Daffy thought of the need of more cups and plates and went in to get them, and Mrs. Pope remarked that she did hope Sir Rupert was not badly hurt....

“Extraordinary all this is,” remarked Mr. Trafford. “Now, here we were after lunch, twenty miles away — smoking cigars and with no more idea of having tea with you than — I was going to say — flying. But that’s out of date now. Then we just thought we’d try the thing.... Like a dream.”

He addressed himself to Marjorie: “I never feel that life is quite real until about three days after things have happened. Never. Two hours ago I had not the slightest intention of ever flying again.”

“But haven’t you flown before?” asked Mrs. Pope.

“Not much. I did a little at Sheppey, but it’s so hard for a poor man to get his hands on a machine. And here was Solomonson, with this thing in his hangar, eating its head off. Let’s take it out,” I said, “and go once round the park. And here we are.... I thought it wasn’t wise for him to come....”

Sir Rupert, without opening his eyes, was understood to assent.

“Do you know,” said Trafford, “The sight of your tea makes me feel frightfully hungry.”

“I don’t think the engine’s damaged?” he said cheerfully, “do you?” as Magnet joined them. “The ailerons are in splinters, and the left wing’s not much better. But that’s about all except the wheels. One falls so much lighter than you might suppose — from the smash.... Lucky it didn’t turn over. Then, you know, the engine comes on the top of you, and-123- you’re done.”

§ 3

The doctor arrived after tea, with a bag and a stethoscope in a small

coffin-like box, and the Popes and Mr. Magnet withdrew while Sir Rupert was carefully sounded, tested, scrutinized, questioned, watched and examined in every way known to medical science. The outcome of the conference was presently communicated to the Popes by Mr. Trafford and the doctor. Sir Rupert was not very seriously injured, but he was suffering from concussion and shock, two of his ribs were broken and his wrist sprained, unless perhaps one of the small bones was displaced. He ought to be bandaged up and put to bed....

"Couldn't we—" said Mrs. Pope, but the doctor assured her his own house was quite the best place. There Sir Rupert could stay for some days. At present the cross-country journey over the Downs or by the South Eastern Railway would be needlessly trying and painful. He would with the Popes' permission lie quietly where he was for an hour or so, and then the doctor would come with a couple of men and a carrying bed he had, and take him off to his own house. There he would be, as Mr. Trafford said, "as right as ninepence," and Mr. Trafford could put up either at the Red Lion with Mr. Magnet or in the little cottage next door to the doctor. (Mr. Trafford elected for the latter as closer to his friend.) As for the smashed aeroplane, telegrams would be sent at once to Sir Rupert's engineers at Chesilbury, and they would have all that cleared away by mid-day to-morrow....

The doctor departed; Sir Rupert, after stimulants,-124- closed his eyes, and Mr. Trafford seated himself at the tea-things for some more cake, as though introduction by aeroplane was the most regular thing in the world.

He had very pleasant and easy manners, an entire absence of self-consciousness, and a quick talkative disposition that made him very rapidly at home with everybody. He described all the sensations of flight, his early lessons and experiments, and in the utmost detail the events of the afternoon that had led to this disastrous adventure. He made his suggestion of "trying the thing" seem the most natural impulse in the world. The bulk of the conversation fell on him; Mr. Magnet, save for the intervention of one or two jests, was quietly observant; the rest were well disposed to listen. And as Mr. Trafford talked his eye rested ever and again on Marjorie with the faintest

touch of scrutiny and perplexity, and she, too, found a curious little persuasion growing up in her mind that somewhere, somehow, she and he had met and had talked rather earnestly. But how and where eluded her altogether....

They had sat for an hour — the men from the doctor's seemed never coming — when Mr. Pope returned unexpectedly from his cricket match, which had ended a little prematurely in a rot on an over-dry wicket. He was full of particulars of the day's play, and how Wiper had got a most amazing catch and held it, though he fell; how Jenks had deliberately bowled at a man's head, he believed, and little Gibbs thrown a man out from slip. He was burning to tell all this in the utmost detail to Magnet and his family, so that they might at least share the retrospect of his pleasure. He had thought out rather a good pun on Wiper, and he was naturally a little thwarted to find all this good, rich talk crowded out-125- by a more engrossing topic.

At the sight of a stranger grouped in a popular manner beside the tea-things, he displayed a slight acerbity, which was if anything increased by the discovery of a prostrate person with large brown eyes and an expression of Oriental patience and disdain, in the shade of a bush near by. At first he seemed scarcely to grasp Mrs. Pope's explanations, and regarded Sir Rupert with an expression that bordered on malevolence. Then, when his attention was directed to the smashed machine upon the lawn, he broke out into a loud indignant: "Good God! What next?"

He walked towards the wreckage, disregarding Mr. Trafford beside him. "A man can't go away from his house for an hour!" he complained.

"I can assure you we did all we could to prevent it," said Trafford.

"Ought never to have had it to prevent," said Mr. Pope. "Is your friend hurt?"

"A rib — and shock," said Trafford.

"Well — he deserves it," said Mr. Pope. "Rather than launch myself into the air in one of those infernal things, I'd be stood against a wall and shot."

"Tastes differ, of course," said Trafford, with unruffled urbanity.

"You'll have all this cleared away," said Mr. Pope.

"Mechanics — oh! a complete break-down party — are speeding

to us in fast motors," said Trafford. "Thanks to the kindness of your domestic in taking a telegram for me."

"Hope they won't kill any one," said Mr. Pope, and just for a moment the conversation hung fire. "And your friend?" he asked.

"He goes in the next ten minutes — well, whenever-126- the litter comes from the doctor's. Poor old Solomonson!"

"Solomonson?"

"Sir Rupert."

"Oh!" said Mr. Pope. "Is that the Pigmentation Solomonson?"

"I believe he does do some beastly company of that sort," said Trafford. "Isn't it amazing we didn't smash our engine?"

Sir Rupert Solomonson was indeed a familiar name to Mr. Pope. He had organized the exploitation of a number of pigment and bye-product patents, and the ordinary and deferred shares of his syndicate has risen to so high a price as to fill Mr. Pope with the utmost confidence in their future; indeed he had bought considerably, withdrawing capital to do so from an Argentine railway whose stock had awakened his distaste and a sort of moral aversion by slumping heavily after a bad wheat and linseed harvest. This discovery did much to mitigate his first asperity, his next remark to Trafford was almost neutral, and he was even asking Sir Rupert whether he could do anything to make him comfortable, when the doctor returned with a litter, borne by four hastily compiled bearers.

§ 4

Some brightness seemed to vanish when the buoyant Mr. Trafford, still undauntedly cheerful, limped off after his more injured friend, and disappeared through the gate. Marjorie found herself in a world whose remaining manhood declined to see anything but extreme annoyance in this gay, exciting rupture of the afternoon. "Good God!" said Mr. Pope. "What next? What next?"

"Registration, I hope," said Mr. Magnet,— "and-127- relegation to the desert of Sahara."

"One good thing about it," said Mr. Pope— "it all wastes petrol. And when the petrol supply gives out — they're done."

"Certainly we might all have been killed!" said Mrs. Pope, feeling

she had to bear her witness against their visitors, and added: “If we hadn’t moved out of the way, that is.”

There was a simultaneous movement towards the shattered apparatus, about which a small contingent of villagers, who had availed themselves of the withdrawal of the sentinel, had now assembled.

“Look at it!” said Mr. Pope, with bitter hostility. “Look at it!”

Everyone had anticipated his command.

“They’ll never come to anything,” said Mr. Pope, after a pause of silent hatred.

“But they *have* to come to something,” said Marjorie.

“They’ve come to smash!” said Mr. Magnet, with the true humorist’s air.

“But consider the impudence of this invasion, the wild — objectionableness of it!”

“They’re nasty things,” said Mr. Magnet. “Nasty things!”

A curious spirit of opposition stirred in Marjorie. It seemed to her that men who play golf-croquet and watch cricket matches have no business to contemn men who risk their lives in the air. She sought for some controversial opening.

“Isn’t the engine rather wonderful?” she remarked.

Mr. Magnet regarded the engine with his head a little on one side. “It’s the usual sort,” he said.

“There weren’t engines like that twenty years ago.”

“There weren’t people like *you* twenty years-128- ago,” said Mr. Magnet, smiling wisely and kindly, and turned his back on the thing.

Mr. Pope followed suit. He was filled with the bitter thought that he would never now be able to tell the history of the remarkable match he had witnessed. It was all spoilt for him — spoilt for ever. Everything was disturbed and put out.

“They’ve left us our tennis lawn,” he said, with a not unnatural resentment passing to invitation. “What do you say, Magnet? Now you’ve begun the game you must keep it up?”

“If Marjorie, or Mrs. Pope, or Daffy...?” said Magnet.

Mrs. Pope declared the house required her. And so with the gravest apprehensions, and an insincere compliment to their father’s energy, Daffy and Marjorie made up a foursome for that healthy and

invigorating game. But that evening Mr. Pope got his serve well into the bay of the sagging net almost at once, and with Marjorie in the background taking anything he left her, he won quite easily, and everything became pleasant again. Magnet gloated upon Marjorie and served her like a missionary giving Bibles to heathen children, he seemed always looking at her instead of the ball, and except for a slight disposition on the part of Daffy to slash, nothing could have been more delightful. And at supper Mr. Pope, rather crushing his wife's attempt to recapitulate the more characteristic sayings and doings of Sir Rupert and his friend, did after all succeed in giving every one a very good idea indeed of the more remarkable incidents of the cricket match at Wamping, and made the pun he had been accustomed to use upon the name of Wiper in a new and improved form. A general talk about cricket and the Immense Good of cricket followed. Mr. Pope said-129- he would make cricket-playing compulsory for every English boy.

Everyone it seemed to Marjorie was forgetting that dark shape athwart the lawn, and all the immense implication of its presence, with a deliberate and irrational skill, and she noted that the usual move towards the garden at the end of the evening was not made.

§ 5

In the night time Marjorie had a dream that she was flying about in the world on a monoplane with Mr. Trafford as a passenger.

Then Mr. Trafford disappeared, and she was flying about alone with a curious uneasy feeling that in a minute or so she would be unable any longer to manage the machine.

Then her father and Mr. Magnet appeared very far below, walking about and disapproving of her. Mr. Magnet was shaking his head very, very sagely, and saying: "Rather a stiff job for little Marjorie," and her father was saying she would be steadier when she married. And then, she wasn't clear how, the engine refused to work until her bills were paid, and she began to fall, and fall, and fall towards Mr. Magnet. She tried frantically to pay her bills. She was falling down the fronts of skyscrapers and precipices — and Mr. Magnet was waiting for her below with a quiet kindly smile that grew wider and

wider and wider....

She woke up palpitating.

§ 6

Next morning a curious restlessness came upon Marjorie. Conceivably it was due to the absence of Magnet, who had gone to London to deliver his long-130- promised address on The Characteristics of English Humour to the *Literati* Club. Conceivably she missed his attentions. But it crystallized out in the early afternoon into the oddest form, a powerful craving to go to the little town of Pensting, five miles off, on the other side of Buryhamstreet, to buy silk shoelaces.

She decided to go in the donkey cart. She communicated her intention to her mother, but she did not communicate an equally definite intention to be reminded suddenly of Sir Rupert Solomonson as she was passing the surgery, and make an inquiry on the spur of the moment — it wouldn't surely be anything but a kindly and justifiable impulse to do that. She might see Mr. Trafford perhaps, but there was no particular harm in that.

It is also to be remarked that finding Theodore a little disposed to encumber her vehicle with his presence she expressed her delight at being released from the need of going, and abandoned the whole expedition to him — knowing as she did perfectly well that if Theodore hated anything more than navigating the donkey cart alone, it was going unprotected into a shop to buy articles of feminine apparel — until he chucked the whole project and went fishing — if one can call it fishing when there are no fish and the fisherman knows it — in the decadent ornamental water.

And it is also to be remarked that as Marjorie approached the surgery she was seized with an absurd and powerful shyness, so that not only did she not call at the surgery, she did not even look at the surgery, she gazed almost rigidly straight ahead, telling herself, however, that she merely deferred that kindly impulse until she had bought her laces. And so it happened that about half a mile beyond the end of Buryhamstreet she came round a corner upon-131- Trafford, and by a singular fatality he also was driving a donkey, or,

rather, was tracing a fan-like pattern on the road with a donkey's hoofs. It was a very similar donkey to Marjorie's, but the vehicle was a governess cart, and much smarter than Marjorie's turn-out. His ingenuous face displayed great animation at the sight of her, and as she drew alongside he hailed her with an almost unnatural ease of manner.

"Hullo!" he cried. "I'm taking the air. You seem to be able to drive donkeys forward. How do you do it? I can't. Never done anything so dangerous in my life before. I've just been missed by two motor cars, and hung for a terrible minute with my left wheel on the very verge of an unfathomable ditch. I could hear the little ducklings far, far below, and bits of mould dropping. I tried to count before the splash. Aren't you — *white?*"

"But why are you doing it?"

"One must do something. I'm bandaged up and can't walk. It hurt my leg more than I knew — your doctor says. Solomonson won't talk of anything but how he feels, and *I* don't care a rap how he feels. So I got this thing and came out with it."

Marjorie made her inquiries. There came a little pause.

"Some day no one will believe that men were ever so foolish as to trust themselves to draught animals," he remarked. "Hullo! Look out! The horror of it!"

A large oil van — a huge drum on wheels — motor-driven, had come round the corner, and after a preliminary and quite insufficient hoot, bore down upon them, and missing Trafford as it seemed by a miracle, swept past. Both drivers did wonderful things with whips and reins, and found themselves alone in the-132- road again, with their wheels locked and an indefinite future.

"I leave the situation to you," said Trafford. "Or shall we just sit and talk until the next motor car kills us?"

"We ought to make an effort," said Marjorie, cheerfully, and descended to lead the two beasts.

Assisted by an elderly hedger, who had been taking a disregarded interest in them for some time, she separated the wheels and got the two donkeys abreast. The old hedger's opinion of their safety on the king's highway was expressed by his action rather than his words; he directed the beasts towards a shady lane that opened at right angles to

the road. He stood by their bridles while Marjorie resumed her seat.

"It seems to me clearly a case for compromise," said Trafford. "You want to go that way, I want to go that way. Let us both go *this* way. It is by such arrangements that civilization becomes possible."

He dismissed the hedger generously and resumed his reins.

"Shall we race?" he asked.

"With your leg?" she inquired.

"No; with the donkeys. I say, this *is* rather a lark. At first I thought it was both dangerous and dull. But things have changed. I am in beastly high spirits. I feel there will be a cry before night; but still, I am —— I wanted the companionship of an unbroken person. It's so jolly to meet you again."

"Again?"

"After the year before last."

"After the year before last?"

"You didn't know," said Trafford, "I had met you before? How aggressive I must have seemed! Well, *I* wasn't quite clear. I spent the greater part of last night — my ankle being foolish in the small-133-hours — in trying to remember how and where."

"I don't remember," said Marjorie.

"I remembered you very distinctly, and some things I thought about you, but not where it had happened. Then in the night I got it. It *is* a puzzle, isn't it? You see, I was wearing a black gown, and I had been out of the sunlight for some months — and my eye, I remember it acutely, was bandaged. I'm usually bandaged somewhere.

'I was a King in Babylon And you were a Christian slave'

— I mean a candidate."

Marjorie remembered suddenly. "You're Professor Trafford."

"Not in this atmosphere. But I am at the Romeike College. And as soon as I recalled examining you I remembered it — minutely. You were intelligent, though unsound — about cryo-hydrates it was. Ah, you remember me now. As most young women are correct by rote and unintelligent in such questions, and as it doesn't matter a rap about anything of that sort, whether you are correct or not, as long as the mental gesture is right — —" He paused for a moment, as though tired of his sentence. "I remembered you."

He proceeded in his easy and detached manner, that seemed to make every topic possible, to tell her his first impressions of her, and show how very distinctly indeed he remembered her.

"You set me philosophizing. I'd never examined a girls' school before, and I was suddenly struck by the spectacle of the fifty of you. What's going to become of them all?"

"I thought," he went on, "how bright you were, and how keen and eager you were — *you*, I mean, in particular — and just how certain it was your brightness-134- and eagerness would be swallowed up by some silly ordinariness or other — stuffy marriage or stuffy domestic duties. The old, old story — done over again with a sort of threadbare badness. (Nothing to say against it if it's done well.) I got quite sentimental and pathetic about life's breach of faith with women. Odd, isn't it, how one's mind runs on. But that's what I thought. It's all come back to me."

Marjorie's bright, clear eye came round to him. "I don't see very much wrong with the lot of women," she reflected. "Things are different nowadays. Anyhow — —"

She paused.

"You don't want to be a man?"

"*No!*"

She was emphatic.

"Some of us cut more sharply at life than you think," he said, plumbing her unspoken sense.

She had never met a man before who understood just how a girl can feel the slow obtuseness of his sex. It was almost as if he had found her out at something.

"Oh," she said, "perhaps you do," and looked at him with an increased interest.

"I'm half-feminine, I believe," he said. "For instance, I've got just a woman's joy in textures and little significant shapes. I know how you feel about that. I can spend hours, even now, in crystal gazing — I don't mean to see some silly revelation of some silly person's proceedings somewhere, but just for the things themselves. I wonder if you have ever been in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, and looked at Ruskin's crystal collection? I saw it when I was a boy, and it became — I can't help the word — an obsession.

The inclusions like moss and like trees, and all sorts of fantastic things, and the cleavages and enclosures with little bubbles, and the-135- lights and shimmer — What were we talking about? Oh, about the keen way your feminine perceptions cut into things. And yet somehow I was throwing contempt on the feminine intelligence. I don't do justice to the order of my thoughts. Never mind. We've lost the thread. But I wish you knew my mother."

He went on while Marjorie was still considering the proper response to this.

"You see, I'm her only son and she brought me up, and we know each other — oh! very well. She helps with my work. She understands nearly all of it. She makes suggestions. And to this day I don't know if she's the most original or the most parasitic of creatures. And that's the way with all women and girls, it seems to me. You're as critical as light, and as undiscriminating.... I say, do I strike you as talking nonsense?"

"Not a bit," said Marjorie. "But you do go rather fast."

"I know," he admitted. "But somehow you excite me. I've been with Solomonson a week, and he's dull at all times. It was that made me take out that monoplane of his. But it did him no good."

He paused.

"They told me after the exam.," said Marjorie, "you knew more about crystallography — than anyone."

"Does that strike you as a dull subject?"

"No," said Marjorie, in a tone that invited justifications.

"It isn't. I think — naturally, that the world one goes into when one studies molecular physics is quite the most beautiful of Wonderlands.... I can assure you I work sometimes like a man who is exploring a magic palace.... Do you know anything-136- of molecular physics?"

"You examined me," said Marjorie.

"The sense one has of exquisite and wonderful rhythms — just beyond sound and sight! And there's a taunting suggestion of its being all there, displayed and confessed, if only one were quick enough to see it. Why, for instance, when you change the composition of a felspar almost imperceptibly, do the angles change? What's the correspondence between the altered angle and the

substituted atom? Why does this bit of clear stuff swing the ray of light so much out of its path, and that swing it more? Then what happens when crystals gutter down, and go into solution. The endless launching of innumerable little craft. Think what a clear solution must be if only one had ultra-microscopic eyes and could see into it, see the extraordinary patternings, the swimming circling constellations. And then the path of a ray of polarized light beating through it! It takes me like music. Do you know anything of the effects of polarized light, the sight of a slice of olivine-gabbro for instance between crossed Nicols?"

"I've seen some rock sections," said Marjorie. "I forget the names of the rocks."

"The colours?"

"Oh yes, the colours."

"Is there anything else so rich and beautiful in all the world? And every different mineral and every variety of that mineral has a different palette of colours, a different scheme of harmonies — and is telling you something."

"If only you understood."

"Exactly. All the ordinary stuff of life — you know — the carts and motor cars and dusty roads and — cinder sifting, seems so blank to me — with that persuasion of swing and subtlety beneath it all. As-137- if the whole world was fire and crystal and aquiver — with some sort of cotton wrappers thrown over it...."

"Dust sheets," said Marjorie. "I know."

"Or like a diamond painted over!"

"With that sort of grey paint, very full of body — that lasts."

"Yes." He smiled at her. "I can't help apologetics. Most people think a professor of science is just — —"

"A professor of science."

"Yes. Something all pedantries and phrases. I want to clear my character. As though it is foolish to follow a vortex ring into a vacuum, and wise to whack at a dirty golf ball on a suburban railway bank. Oh, their golf! Under high heaven!... You don't play golf, do you, by any chance?"

"Only the woman's part," said Marjorie.

"And they despise us," he said. "Solomonson can hardly hide how

he despises us. Nothing is more wonderful than the way these people go on despising us who do research, who have this fever of curiosity, who won't be content with — what did you call those wrappers?"

"Dust sheets."

"Yes, dust sheets. What a life! Swaddling bands, dust sheets and a shroud! You know, research and discovery aren't nearly so difficult as people think — if only you have the courage to say a thing or try a thing now and then that it isn't usual to say or try. And after all — —" he went off at a tangent, "these confounded ordinary people aren't justified in their contempt. We keep on throwing them things over our shoulders, electric bells, telephones, Marconigrams. Look at the beautiful electric trains that come towering down the-138-London streets at nightfall, ships of light in full sail! Twenty years ago they were as impossible as immortality. We conquer the seas for these — golfers, puts arms in their hands that will certainly blow them all to bits if ever the idiots go to war with them, come sailing out of the air on them — —"

He caught Marjorie's eye and stopped.

"*Falling* out of the air on them," corrected Marjorie very softly.

"That was only an accident," said Mr. Trafford....

So they began a conversation in the lane where the trees met overhead that went on and went on like a devious path in a shady wood, and touched upon all manner of things....

§ 7

In the end quite a number of people were aggrieved by this dialogue, in the lane that led nowhither....

Sir Rupert Solomonson was the first to complain. Trafford had been away "three mortal hours." No one had come near him, not a soul, and there hadn't been even a passing car to cheer his ear.

Sir Rupert admitted he had to be quiet. "But not so *damned* quiet."

"I'd have been glad," said Sir Rupert, "if a hen had laid an egg and clucked a bit. You might have thought there had been a Resurrection or somethin', and cleared off everybody. Lord! it was deadly. I'd have sung out myself if it hadn't been for these infernal

ribs....”

Mrs. Pope came upon the affair quite by accident.

“Well, Marjorie,” she said as she poured tea for the family, “did you get your laces?”

“Never got there, Mummy,” said Marjorie, and-139- paused fatally.

“Didn’t get there!” said Mrs. Pope. “That’s worse than Theodore! Wouldn’t the donkey go, poor dear?”

There was nothing to colour about, and yet Marjorie felt the warm flow in neck and cheek and brow. She threw extraordinary quantities of candour into her manner. “I had a romantic adventure,” she said rather quietly. “I was going to tell you.”

(Sensation.)

“You see it was like this,” said Marjorie. “I ran against Mr. Trafford....”

She drank tea, and pulled herself together for a lively description of the wheel-locking and the subsequent conversation, a bright ridiculous account which made the affair happen by implication on the high road and not in a byeway, and was adorned with every facetious ornament that seemed likely to get a laugh from the children. But she talked rather fast, and she felt she forced the fun a little. However, it amused the children all right, and Theodore created a diversion by choking with his tea. From first to last Marjorie was extremely careful to avoid the affectionate scrutiny of her mother’s eye. And had this lasted the *whole* afternoon? asked Mrs. Pope. “Oh, they’d talked for half-an-hour,” said Marjorie, or more, and had driven back very slowly together. “He did all the talking. You saw what he was yesterday. And the donkeys seemed too happy together to tear them away.”

“But what was it all about?” asked Daffy curious.

“He asked after you, Daffy, most affectionately,” said Marjorie, and added, “several times.” (Though Trafford had as a matter of fact displayed a quite remarkable disregard of all her family.)

“And,” she went on, getting a plausible idea at-140- last, “he explained all about aeroplanes. And all that sort of thing. Has Daddy gone to Wamping for some more cricket?...”

(But none of this was lost on Mrs. Pope.)

§ 8

Mr. Magnet's return next day was heralded by nearly two-thirds of a column in the *Times*.

The Lecture on the Characteristics of Humour had evidently been quite a serious affair, and a very imposing list of humorists and of prominent people associated with their industry had accepted the hospitality of the *Literati*.

Marjorie ran her eyes over the Chairman's flattering introduction, then with a queer faint flavour of hostility she reached her destined husband's utterance. She seemed to hear the flat full tones of his voice as she read, and automatically the desiccated sentences of the reporter filled out again into those rich quietly deliberate unfoldings of sound that were already too familiar to her ear.

Mr. Magnet had begun with modest disavowals. "There was a story, he said," — so the report began— "whose hallowed antiquity ought to protect it from further exploitation, but he was tempted to repeat it because it offered certain analogies to the present situation. There were three characters in the story, a bluebottle and two Scotsmen. (Laughter.) The bluebottle buzzed on the pane, otherwise a profound silence reigned. This was broken by one of the Scotsmen trying to locate the bluebottle with zoölogical exactitude. Said this Scotsman: 'Sandy, I am thinking if yon fly is a birdie or a beastie.' The other replied: 'Man, don't spoil good whiskey with religious conversation.' (Laughter.) He was tempted, Mr. Magnet resumed, to ask himself and-141- them why it was that they should spoil the aftereffects of a most excellent and admirably served dinner by an academic discussion on British humour. At first he was pained by the thought that they proposed to temper their hospitality with a demand for a speech. A closer inspection showed that he was to introduce a debate and that others were to speak, and that was a new element in their hospitality. Further, he was permitted to choose the subject so that he could bring their speeches within the range of his comprehension. (Laughter.) His was an easy task. He could make it easier; the best thing to do would be to say nothing at all. (Laughter.)"

For a space the reporter seemed to have omitted largely —

perhaps he was changing places with his relief — and the next sentence showed Mr. Magnet engaged as it were in revising a *hortus siccus* of jokes. “There was the humour of facts and situations,” he was saying, “or that humour of expression for which there was no human responsibility, as in the case of Irish humour; he spoke of the humour of the soil which found its noblest utterance in the bull. Humour depended largely on contrast. There was a humour of form and expression which had many local varieties. American humour had been characterized by exaggeration, the suppression of some link in the chain of argument or narrative, and a wealth of simile and metaphor which had been justly defined as the poetry of a pioneer race.”...

Marjorie’s attention slipped its anchor, and caught lower down upon: “In England there was a near kinship between laughter and tears; their mental relations were as close as their physical. Abroad this did not appear to be the case. It was different in France. But perhaps on the whole it would be-142- better to leave the humour of France and what some people still unhappily chose to regard as matters open to controversy — he referred to choice of subject — out of their discussion altogether. (‘Hear, hear,’ and cheers.)”...

Attention wandered again. Then she remarked: — it reminded her in some mysterious way of a dropped hairpin— “It was noticeable that the pun to a great extent had become démodé....”

At this point the flight of Marjorie’s eyes down the column was arrested by her father’s hand gently but firmly taking possession of the *Times*. She yielded it without reluctance, turned to the breakfast table, and never resumed her study of the social relaxations of humorists....

Indeed she forgot it. Her mind was in a state of extreme perplexity. She didn’t know what to make of herself or anything or anybody. Her mind was full of Trafford and all that he had said and done and all that he might have said and done, and it was entirely characteristic that she could not think of Magnet in any way at all except as a bar-like shadow that lay across all her memories and all the bright possibilities of this engaging person.

She thought particularly of the mobile animation of his face, the keen flash of enthusiasm in his thoughts and expressions....

It was perhaps more characteristic of her time than of her that she did not think she was dealing so much with a moral problem as an embarrassment, and that she hadn't as yet felt the first stirrings of self-reproach for the series of disingenuous proceedings that had rendered the yesterday's encounter possible. But she was restless, wildly restless as a bird whose nest is taken. She could abide nowhere. She fretted through the morning, avoided Daffy in a-143-marked manner, and inflicted a stinging and only partially merited rebuke upon Theodore for slouching, humping and — of all trite grievances! — not washing behind his ears. As if any chap washed behind his ears! She thought tennis with the pseudo-twins might assuage her, but she broke off after losing two sets; and then she went into the garden to get fresh flowers, and picked a large bunch and left them on the piano until her mother reminded her of them. She tried a little Shaw. She struggled with an insane wish to walk through the wood behind the village and have an accidental meeting with someone who couldn't possibly appear but whom it would be quite adorable to meet. Anyhow she conquered that.

She had a curious and rather morbid indisposition to go after lunch to the station and meet Mr. Magnet as her mother wished her to do, in order to bring him straight to the vicarage to early tea, but here again reason prevailed and she went.

Mr. Magnet arrived by the 2.27, and to Marjorie's eye his alighting presence had an effect of being not so much covered with laurels as distended by them. His face seemed whiter and larger than ever. He waved a great handful of newspapers.

"Hullo, Magsy!" he said. "They've given me a thumping Press. I'm nearer swelled head than I've ever been, so mind how you touch me!"

"We'll take it down at croquet," said Marjorie.

"They've cleared that thing away?"

"And made up the lawn like a billiard table," she said.

"That makes for skill," he said waggishly. "I shall save my head after all."

For a moment he seemed to loom towards kissing her, but she averted this danger by a business-like-144- concern for his bag. He entrusted this to a porter, and reverted to the triumph of overnight so

soon as they were clear of the station. He was overflowing with kindliness towards his fellow humorists, who had appeared in force and very generously at the banquet, and had said the most charming things — some of which were in one report and some in another, and some the reporters had missed altogether — some of the kindliest.

"It's a pleasant feeling to think that a lot of good fellows think you are a good fellow," said Mr. Magnet.

He became solicitous for her. How had she got on while he was away? She asked him how one was likely to get on at Buryhamstreet; monoplanes didn't fall every day, and as she said that it occurred to her she was behaving meanly. But he was going on to his next topic before she could qualify.

"I've got something in my pocket," he remarked, and playfully: "Guess."

She did, but she wouldn't. She had a curious sinking of the heart.

"I want you to see it before anyone else," he said. "Then if you don't like it, it can go back. It's a sapphire."

He was feeling nervously in his pockets and then the little box was in her hand.

She hesitated to open it. It made everything so dreadfully concrete. And this time the sense of meanness was altogether acuter. He'd bought this in London; he'd brought it down, hoping for her approval. Yes, it was — horrid. But what was she to do?

"It's — awfully pretty," she said with the glittering symbol in her hand, and indeed he had gone to one of those artistic women who are reviving and-145- improving upon the rich old Roman designs. "It's so beautifully made."

"I'm so glad you like it. You really *do* like it?"

"I don't deserve it."

"Oh! But you *do* like it?"

"Enormously."

"Ah! I spent an hour in choosing it."

She could see him. She felt as though she had picked his pocket.

"Only I don't deserve it, Mr. Magnet. Indeed I don't. I feel I am taking it on false pretences."

"Nonsense, Magsy. Nonsense! Slip it on your finger, girl."

"But I don't," she insisted.

He took the box from her, pocketed it and seized her hand. She drew it away from him.

"No!" she said. "I feel like a cheat. You know, I don't — I'm sure I don't love — —"

"I'll love enough for two," he said, and got her hand again. "No!" he said at her gesture, "you'll wear it. Why shouldn't you?"

And so Marjorie came back along the vicarage avenue with his ring upon her hand. And Mr. Pope was evidently very glad to see him....

The family was still seated at tea upon rugs and wraps, and still discussing humorists at play, when Professor Trafford appeared, leaning on a large stick and limping, but resolute, by the church gate. "Pish!" said Mr. Pope. Marjorie tried not to reveal a certain dismay, there was dumb, rich approval in Daphne's eyes, and the pleasure of Theodore and the pseudo-twins was only too scandalously evident. "Hoo-Ray!" said Theodore, with ill-concealed relief.

Mrs. Pope was the incarnate invocation of tact-146- as Trafford drew near.

"I hope," he said, with obvious insincerity, "I don't invade you. But Solomonson is frightfully concerned and anxious about your lawn, and whether his men cleared it up properly and put things right." His eye went about the party and rested on Marjorie. "How are you?" he said, in a friendly voice.

"Well, we seem to have got our croquet lawn back," said Mr. Pope. "And our nerves are recovering. How is Sir Rupert?"

"A little fractious," said Trafford, with the ghost of a smile.

"You'll take some tea?" said Mrs. Pope in the pause that followed.

"Thank you," said Trafford and sat down instantly.

"I saw your jolly address in the *Standard*," he said to Magnet. "I haven't read anything so amusing for some time."

"Rom dear," said Mrs. Pope, "will you take the pot in and get some fresh tea?"

Mr. Trafford addressed himself to the flattery of Magnet with considerable skill. He had detected a lurking hostility in the eyes of the two gentlemen that counselled him to propitiate them if he meant to maintain his footing in the vicarage, and now he talked to them

almost exclusively and ignored the ladies modestly but politely in the way that seems natural and proper in a British middle-class house of the better sort. But as he talked chiefly of the improvement of motor machinery that had recently been shown at the Engineering Exhibition, he did not make that headway with Marjorie's father that he had perhaps anticipated. Mr. Pope fumed quietly for a time, and then suddenly spoke out.

"I'm no lover of machines," he said abruptly,-147- slashing across Mr. Trafford's description. "All our troubles began with villainous saltpetre. I'm an old-fashioned man with a nose — and a neck, and I don't want the one offended or the other broken. No, don't ask me to be interested in your valves and cylinders. What do you say, Magnet? It starts machinery in my head to hear about them...."

On such occasions as this when Mr. Pope spoke out, his horror of an anti-climax or any sort of contradiction was apt to bring the utterance to a culmination not always to be distinguished from a flight. And now he rose to his feet as he delivered himself.

"Who's for a game of tennis?" he said, "in this last uncontaminated patch of air? I and Marjorie will give you a match, Daffy — if Magnet isn't too tired to join you."

Daffy looked at Marjorie for an instant.

"We'll want you, Theodore, to look after the balls in the potatoes," said Mr. Pope lest that ingenuous mind should be corrupted behind his back....

Mrs. Pope found herself left to entertain a slightly disgruntled Trafford. Rom and Syd hovered on the off chance of notice, at the corner of the croquet lawn nearest the tea things. Mrs. Pope had already determined to make certain little matters clearer than they appeared to be to this agreeable but superfluous person, and she was greatly assisted by his opening upon the subject of her daughters. "Jolly tennis looks," he said.

"Don't they?" said Mrs. Pope. "I think it is such a graceful game for a girl."

Mr. Trafford glanced at Mrs. Pope's face, but her expression was impenetrable.

"They both like it and play it so well," she said. "Their father is so skillful and interested in-148- games. Marjorie tells me you were her

examiner a year or so ago."

"Yes. She struck my memory — her work stood out."

"Of course she is clever," said Mrs. Pope. "Or we shouldn't have sent her to Oxbridge. There she's doing quite well — quite well. Everyone says so. I don't know, of course, if Mr. Magnet will let her finish there."

"Mr. Magnet?"

"She's just engaged to him. Of course she's frightfully excited about it, and naturally he wants her to come away and marry. There's very little excuse for a long engagement. No."

Her voice died in a musical little note, and she seemed to be scrutinizing the tennis with an absorbed interest. "They've got new balls," she said, as if to herself.

Trafford had rolled over, and she fancied she detected a change in his voice when it came. "Isn't it rather a waste not to finish a university career?" he said.

"Oh, it wouldn't be wasted. Of course a girl like that will be hand and glove with her husband. She'll be able to help him with the scientific side of his jokes and all that. I sometimes wish it had been Daffy who had gone to college though. I sometimes think we've sacrificed Daffy a little. She's not the bright quickness of Marjorie, but there's something quietly solid about her mind — something *stable*. Perhaps I didn't want her to go away from me.... Mr. Magnet is doing wonders at the net. He's just begun to play — to please Marjorie. Don't you think he's a dreadfully amusing man, Mr. Trafford? He says such *quiet* things."

§ 9

The effect of this *éclaircissement* upon Mr. Trafford-149- was not what it should have been. Properly he ought to have realized at once that Marjorie was for ever beyond his aspirations, and if he found it too difficult to regard her with equanimity, then he ought to have shunned her presence. But instead, after his first shock of incredulous astonishment, his spirit rose in a rebellion against arranged facts that was as un-English as it was ungentlemanly. He went back to Solomonson with a mood of thoughtful depression giving place to a

growing passion of indignation. He presented it to himself in a generalized and altruistic form. “What the deuce is the good of all this talk of Eugenics,” he asked himself aloud, “if they are going to hand over that shining girl to that beastly little area sneak?”

He called Mr. Magnet a “beastly little area sneak!”

Nothing could show more clearly just how much he had contrived to fall in love with Marjorie during his brief sojourn in Buryhamstreet and the acuteness of his disappointment, and nothing could be more eloquent of his forcible and undisciplined temperament. And out of ten thousand possible abusive epithets with which his mind was no doubt stored, this one, I think, had come into his head because of the alert watchfulness with which Mr. Magnet followed a conversation, as he waited his chance for some neat but brilliant flash of comment....

Trafford, like Marjorie, was another of those undisciplined young people our age has produced in such significant quantity. He was just six-and-twenty, but the facts that he was big of build, had as an only child associated much with grown-up people, and was already a conspicuous success in the-150- world of micro-chemical research, had given him the self-reliance and assurance of a much older man. He had still to come his croppers and learn most of the important lessons in life, and, so far, he wasn’t aware of it. He was naturally clean-minded, very busy and interested in his work, and on remarkably friendly and confidential terms with his mother who kept house for him, and though he had had several small love disturbances, this was the first occasion that anything of the kind had ploughed deep into his feelings and desires.

Trafford’s father had died early in life. He had been a brilliant pathologist, one of that splendid group of scientific investigators in the middle Victorian period which shines ever more brightly as our criticism dims their associated splendours, and he had died before he was thirty through a momentary slip of the scalpel. His wife — she had been his wife for five years — found his child and his memory and the quality of the life he had made about her too satisfying for the risks of a second marriage, and she had brought up her son with a passionate belief in the high mission of research and the supreme duty of seeking out and expressing truth finely. And here he was,

calling Mr. Magnet a “beastly little area sneak.”

The situation perplexed him. Marjorie perplexed him. It was, had he known it, the beginning for him of a lifetime of problems and perplexities. He was absolutely certain she didn’t love Magnet. Why, then, had she agreed to marry him? Such pressures and temptations as he could see about her seemed light to him in comparison with such an undertaking.

Were they greater than he supposed?

His method of coming to the issue of that problem-151- was entirely original. He presented himself next afternoon with the air of an invited guest, drove Mr. Pope who was suffering from liver, to expostulatory sulking in the study, and expressed a passionate craving for golf-croquet, in spite of Mrs. Pope’s extreme solicitude for his still bandaged ankle. He was partnered with Daffy, and for a long time he sought speech with Marjorie in vain. At last he was isolated in a corner of the lawn, and with the thinnest pretence of inadvertence, in spite of Daffy’s despairing cry of “She plays next!” he laid up within two yards of her. He walked across to her as she addressed herself to her ball, and speaking in an incredulous tone and with the air of a comment on the game, he said: “I say, are you engaged to that chap Magnet?”

Marjorie was amazed, but remarkably not offended. Something in his tone set her trembling. She forgot to play, and stood with her mallet hanging in her hand.

“Punish him!” came the voice of Magnet from afar.

“Yes,” she said faintly.

His remark came low and clear. It had a note of angry protest. “*Why?*”

Marjorie, by the way of answer, hit her ball so that it jumped and missed his, ricochetted across the lawn and out of the ground on the further side.

“I’m sorry if I’ve annoyed you,” said Trafford, as Marjorie went after her ball, and Daffy thanked heaven aloud for the respite.

They came together no more for a time, and Trafford, observant with every sense, found no clue to the riddle of her grave, intent bearing. She played very badly, and with unusual care and deliberation. He felt he had made a mess of things altogether,-152-

and suddenly found his leg was too painful to go on. “Partner,” he asked, “will you play out my ball for me? I can’t go on. I shall have to go.”

Marjorie surveyed him, while Daffy and Magnet expressed solicitude. He turned to go, mallet in hand, and found Marjorie following him.

“Is that the heavier mallet?” she asked, and stood before him looking into his eyes and weighing a mallet in either hand.

“Mr. Trafford, you’re one of the worst examiners I’ve ever met,” she said.

He looked puzzled.

“I don’t know *why*,” said Marjorie, “I wonder as much as you. But I am”; and seeing the light dawning in his eyes, she turned about, and went back to the debacle of her game.

§ 10

After that Mr. Trafford had one clear desire in his being which ruled all his other desires. He wanted a long, frank, unembarrassed and uninterrupted conversation with Marjorie. He had a very strong impression that Marjorie wanted exactly the same thing. For a week he besieged the situation in vain. After the fourth day Solomonson was only kept in Buryhamstreet by sheer will-power, exerted with a brutality that threatened to end that friendship abruptly. He went home on the sixth day in his largest car, but Trafford stayed on beyond the limits of decency to perform some incomprehensible service that he spoke of as “clearing up.”

“I want,” he said, “to clear up.”

“But what *is* there to clear up, my dear boy?”

“Solomonson, you’re a pampered plutocrat,” said Trafford, as though everything was explained.

“I don’t see any sense in it at all,” said Solomonson,-153- and regarded his friend aslant with thick, black eyebrows raised.

“I’m going to stay,” said Trafford.

And Solomonson said one of those unhappy and entirely disregarded things that ought never to be said.

“There’s some girl in this,” said Solomonson.

“Your bedroom’s always waiting for you at Riplings,” he said, when at last he was going off....

Trafford’s conviction that Marjorie also wanted, with an almost equal eagerness, the same opportunity for speech and explanations that he desired, sustained him in a series of unjustifiable intrusions upon the seclusion of the Popes. But although the manner of Mr. and Mrs. Pope did change considerably for the better after his next visit, it was extraordinary how impossible it seemed for him and Marjorie to achieve their common end of an encounter.

Always something intervened.

In the first place, Mrs. Pope’s disposition to optimism had got the better of her earlier discretions, and a casual glance at Daphne’s face when their visitor reappeared started quite a new thread of interpretations in her mind. She had taken the opportunity of hinting at this when Mr. Pope asked over his shirt-stud that night, “What the devil that — that chauffeur chap meant by always calling in the afternoon.”

“Now that Will Magnet monopolizes Marjorie,” she said, after a little pause and a rustle or so, “I don’t see why Daffy shouldn’t have a little company of her own age.”

Mr. Pope turned round and stared at her. “I didn’t think of that,” he said. “But, anyhow, I don’t like the fellow.”

“He seems to be rather clever,” said Mrs. Pope,-154- “though he certainly talks too much. And after all it was Sir Rupert’s aeroplane. *He* was only driving it to oblige.”

“He’ll think twice before he drives another,” said Mr. Pope, wrenching off his collar....

Once Mrs. Pope had turned her imagination in this more and more agreeable direction, she was rather disposed, I am afraid, to let it bolt with her. And it was a deflection that certainly fell in very harmoniously with certain secret speculations of Daphne’s. Trafford, too, being quite unused to any sort of social furtiveness, did perhaps, in order to divert attention from his preoccupation with Marjorie, attend more markedly to Daphne than he would otherwise have done. And so presently he found Daphne almost continuously on his hands. So far as she was concerned, he might have told her the entire history of his life, and every secret he had in the world, without let or

hindrance. Mrs. Pope, too, showed a growing appreciation of his company, became sympathetic and confidential in a way that invited confidence, and threw a lot of light on her family history and Daffy's character. She had found Daffy a wonderful study, she said. Mr. Pope, too, seemed partly reconciled to him. The idea that, after all, both motor cars and monoplane were Sir Rupert's, and not Trafford's, had produced a reaction in the latter gentleman's favour. Moreover, it had occurred to him that Trafford's accident had perhaps disposed him towards a more thoughtful view of mechanical traction, and that this tendency would be greatly helped by a little genial chaff. So that he ceased to go indoors when Trafford was there, and hung about, meditating and delivering sly digs at this new victim of his ripe, old-fashioned humour.

Nor did it help Trafford in his quest for Marjorie-155- and a free, outspoken delivery that the pseudo-twins considered him a person of very considerable charm, and that Theodore, though indisposed to "suck up" to him publicly — I write here in Theodorese — did so desire intimate and solitary communion with him, more particularly in view of the chances of an adventitious aeroplane ride that seemed to hang about him — as to stalk him persistently — hovering on the verge of groups, playing a waiting game with a tennis ball and an old racquet, strolling artlessly towards the gate of the avenue when the time seemed ripening for his appearance or departure.

On the other hand, Marjorie was greatly entangled by Magnet.

Magnet was naturally an attentive lover; he was full of small encumbering services, and it made him none the less assiduous to perceive that Marjorie seemed to find no sort of pleasure in all the little things he did. He seemed to think that if picking the very best rose he could find for her did not cause a very perceptible brightening in her, then it was all the more necessary quietly to force her racquet from her hand and carry it for her, or help her ineffectually to cross a foot-wide ditch, or offer to read her in a rich, abundant, well modulated voice, some choice passage from "The Forest Lovers" of Mr. Maurice Hewlett. And behind these devotions there was a streak of jealousy. He knew as if by instinct that it was not wise to leave these two handsome young people together; he had a queer little disagreeable sensation whenever they spoke to one

another or looked at one another. Whenever Trafford and Marjorie found themselves in a group, there was Magnet in the midst of them. He knew the value of his Marjorie, and did not mean to lose-156-her....

Being jointly baffled in this way was oddly stimulating to Marjorie's and Trafford's mutual predisposition. If you really want to throw people together, the thing to do — thank God for Ireland! — is to keep them apart. By the fourth day of this emotional incubation, Marjorie was thinking of Trafford to the exclusion of all her reading; and Trafford was lying awake at nights — oh, for half an hour and more — thinking of bold, decisive ways of getting at Marjorie, and bold, decisive things to say to her when he did.

(But why she should be engaged to Magnet continued, nevertheless, to puzzle him extremely. It was a puzzle to which no complete solution was ever to be forthcoming....)

§ 11

At last that opportunity came. Marjorie had come with her mother into the village, and while Mrs. Pope made some purchases at the general shop she walked on to speak to Mrs. Blythe the washerwoman. Trafford suddenly emerged from the Red Lion with a soda syphon under each arm. She came forward smiling.

"I say," he said forthwith, "I want to talk with you — badly."

"And I," she said unhesitatingly, "with you."

"How can we?"

"There's always people about. It's absurd."

"We'll have to meet."

"Yes."

"I have to go away to-morrow. I ought to have gone two days ago. Where *can* we meet?"

She had it all prepared.-157-

"Listen," she said. "There is a path runs from our shrubbery through a little wood to a stile on the main road." He nodded. "Either I will be there at three or about half-past five or — there's one more chance. While father and Mr. Magnet are smoking at nine.... I might get away."

“Couldn’t I write?”

“No. Impossible.”

“I’ve no end of things to say....”

Mrs. Pope appeared outside her shop, and Trafford gesticulated a greeting with the syphons. “All right,” he said to Marjorie. “I’m shopping,” he cried as Mrs. Pope approached.

§ 12

All through the day Marjorie desired to go to Trafford and could not do so. It was some minutes past nine when at last with a swift rustle of skirts that sounded louder than all the world to her, she crossed the dimly lit hall between dining-room and drawing-room and came into the dreamland of moonlight upon the lawn. She had told her mother she was going upstairs; at any moment she might be missed, but she would have fled now to Trafford if an army pursued her. Her heart seemed beating in her throat, and every fibre of her being was aquiver. She flitted past the dining-room window like a ghost, she did not dare to glance aside at the smokers within, and round the lawn to the shrubbery, and so under a blackness of trees to the gate where he stood waiting. And there he was, dim and mysterious and wonderful, holding the gate open for her, and she was breathless, and speechless, and near sobbing. She stood before him for a moment, her face moonlit and laced with the shadows of little twigs, and then his arms-158- came out to her.

“My darling,” he said, “Oh, my darling!”

They had no doubt of one another or of anything in the world. They clung together; their lips came together fresh and untainted as those first lovers’ in the garden.

“I will die for you,” he said, “I will give all the world for you....”

They had thought all through the day of a hundred statements and explanations they would make when this moment came, and never a word of it all was uttered. All their anticipations of a highly strung eventful conversation vanished, phrases of the most striking sort went like phantom leaves before a gale. He held her and she clung to him between laughing and sobbing, and both were swiftly and conclusively assured their lives must never separate again.

Marjorie never knew whether it was a moment or an age before her father came upon them. He had decided to take a turn in the garden when Magnet could no longer restrain himself from joining the ladies, and he chanced to be stick in hand because that was his habit after twilight. So it was he found them. She heard his voice falling through love and moonlight like something that comes out of an immense distance.

"Good God!" he cried, "what next!"

But he still hadn't realized the worst.

"Daffy," he said, "what in the name of goodness —— ?"

Marjorie put her hands before her face too late.

"Good Lord!" he cried with a rising inflection,-159- "it's Madge!"

Trafford found the situation difficult. "I should explain — —"

But Mr. Pope was giving himself up to a towering rage. "You damned scoundrel!" he said. "What the devil are you doing?" He seized Marjorie by the arm and drew her towards him. "My poor misguided girl!" he said, and suddenly she was tensely alive, a little cry of horror in her throat, for her father, at a loss for words and full of heroic rage, had suddenly swung his stick with passionate force, and struck at Trafford's face. She heard the thud, saw Trafford wince and stiffen. For a perfectly horrible moment it seemed to her these men, their faces queerly distorted by the shadows of the branches in the slanting moonlight, might fight. Then she heard Trafford's voice, sounding cool and hard, and she knew that he would do nothing of the kind. In that instant if there had remained anything to win in Marjorie it was altogether won. "I asked your daughter to meet me here," he said.

"Be off with you, sir!" cried Mr. Pope. "Don't tempt me further, sir," and swung his stick again. But now the force had gone out of him. Trafford stood with a hand out ready for him, and watched his face.

"I asked your daughter to meet me here, and she came. I am prepared to give you any explanation — —"

"If you come near this place again — —"

For some moments Marjorie's heart had been held still, now it

was beating violently. She felt this scene must end. “Mr. Trafford,” she said, “will you go. Go now. Nothing shall keep us apart!”

Mr. Pope turned on her. “Silence, girl!” he said.

“I shall come to you to-morrow,” said Trafford.-160-

“Yes,” said Marjorie, “to-morrow.”

“Marjorie!” said Mr. Pope, “*will* you go indoors.”

“I have done nothing — —”

“Be off, sir.”

“I have done nothing — —”

“Will you be off, sir? And you, Marjorie — will you go indoors?”

He came round upon her, and after one still moment of regard for Trafford — and she looked very beautiful in the moonlight with her hair a little disordered and her face alight — she turned to precede her father through the shrubbery.

Mr. Pope hesitated whether he should remain with Trafford.

A perfectly motionless man is very disconcerting.

“Be off, sir,” he said over his shoulder, lowered through a threatening second, and followed her.

But Trafford remained stiffly with a tingling temple down which a little thread of blood was running, until their retreating footsteps had died down into that confused stirring of little sounds which makes the stillness of an English wood at night.

Then he roused himself with a profound sigh, and put a hand to his cut and bruised cheek.

“*Well!*” he said.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

Crisis

§ 1

Crisis prevailed in Buryhamstreet that night. On-161- half a dozen sleepless pillows souls communed with the darkness, and two at least of those pillows were wet with tears.

Not one of those wakeful heads was perfectly clear about the origins and bearings of the trouble; not even Mr. Pope felt absolutely sure of himself. It had come as things come to people nowadays, because they will not think things out, much less talk things out, and are therefore in a hopeless tangle of values that tightens sooner or later to a knot....

What an uncharted perplexity, for example, was the mind of that excellent woman Mrs. Pope!

Poor lady! she hadn't a stable thing in her head. It is remarkable that some queer streak in her composition sympathized with Marjorie's passion for Trafford. But she thought it such a pity! She fought that sympathy down as if it were a wicked thing. And she fought too against other ideas that rose out of the deeps and did not so much come into her mind as cluster at the threshold, the idea that Marjorie was in effect grown up, a dozen queer criticisms of Magnet, and a dozen subtle doubts whether after all Marjorie was going to be happy with him as she assured herself the girl would be. (So far as any one knew Trafford might be an excellent match!) And behind these would-be invaders of her guarded mind prowled even worse ones, doubts, horrible disloyal doubts, about the wisdom and kindness of Mr. Pope.

Quite early in life Mrs. Pope had realized that it-162- is necessary to be very careful with one's thoughts. They lead to trouble. She had clipped the wings of her own mind therefore so successfully that all her conclusions had become evasions, all her decisions compromises. Her profoundest working conviction was a belief that nothing in the world was of value but "tact," and that the art of living was to "tide

things over." But here it seemed almost beyond her strength to achieve any sort of tiding over....

(Why *couldn't* Mr. Pope lie quiet?)

Whatever she said or did had to be fitted to the exigencies of Mr. Pope.

Availing himself of the privileges of matrimony, her husband so soon as Mr. Magnet had gone and they were upstairs together, had explained the situation with vivid simplicity, and had gone on at considerable length and with great vivacity to enlarge upon his daughter's behaviour. He ascribed this moral disaster, — he presented it as a moral disaster of absolutely calamitous dimensions — entirely to Mrs. Pope's faults and negligences. Warming with his theme he had employed a number of homely expressions rarely heard by decent women except in these sacred intimacies, to express the deep indignation of a strong man moved to unbridled speech by the wickedness of those near and dear to him. Still warming, he raised his voice and at last shouted out his more forcible meanings, until she feared the servants and children might hear, waved a clenched fist at imaginary Traffords and scoundrels generally, and giving way completely to his outraged virtue, smote and kicked blameless articles of furniture in a manner deeply impressive to the feminine intelligence.

Finally he sat down in the little arm-chair between-163- her and the cupboard where she was accustomed to hang up her clothes, stuck out his legs very stiffly across the room, and despaired of his family in an obtrusive and impregnable silence for an enormous time.

All of which awakened a deep sense of guilt and unworthiness in Mrs. Pope's mind, and prevented her going to bed, but did not help her in the slightest degree to grasp the difficulties of the situation....

She would have lain awake anyhow, but she was greatly helped in this by Mr. Pope's restlessness. He was now turning over from left to right or from right to left at intervals of from four to seven minutes, and such remarks as "Damned scoundrel! Get out of this!" or "*My* daughter and degrade yourself in this way!" or "Never let me see your face again!" "Plight your troth to one man, and fling yourself shamelessly — I repeat it, Marjorie, shamelessly — into the arms of

another!" kept Mrs. Pope closely in touch with the general trend of his thoughts.

She tried to get together her plans and perceptions rather as though she swept up dead leaves on a gusty day. She knew that the management of the whole situation rested finally on her, and that whatever she did or did not do, or whatever arose to thwart her arrangements, its entire tale of responsibility would ultimately fall upon her shoulders. She wondered what was to be done with Marjorie, with Mr. Magnet? Need he know? Could that situation be saved? Everything at present was raw in her mind. Except for her husband's informal communications she did not even know what had appeared, what Daffy had seen, what Magnet thought of Marjorie's failure to bid him good-night. For example, had Mr. Magnet noticed Mr. Pope's profound disturbance? She had to be ready to put a face on things-164- before morning, and it seemed impossible she could do so. In times of crisis, as every woman knows, it is always necessary to misrepresent everything to everybody, but how she was to dovetail her misrepresentations, get the best effect from them, extract a working system of rights and wrongs from them, she could not imagine....

(Oh! she did so wish Mr. Pope would lie quiet.)

But he had no doubts of what became *him*. He had to maintain a splendid and irrational rage — at any cost — to anybody.

§ 2

A few yards away, a wakeful Marjorie confronted a joyless universe. She had a baffling realization that her life was in a hopeless mess, that she really had behaved disgracefully, and that she couldn't for a moment understand how it had happened. She had intended to make quite sure of Trafford — and then put things straight.

Only her father had spoilt everything.

She regarded her father that night with a want of natural affection terrible to record. Why had he come just when he had, just as he had? Why had he been so violent, so impossible?

Of course, she had no business to be there....

She examined her character with a new unprecedented

detachment. Wasn't she, after all, rather a mean human being? It had never occurred to her before to ask such a question. Now she asked it with only too clear a sense of the answer. She tried to trace how these multiplying threads of meanness had first come into the fabric of a life she had supposed herself to be weaving in extremely bright, honourable, and adventurous colours. She ought, of course,-165- never to have accepted Magnet....

She faced the disagreeable word; was she a liar?

At any rate, she told lies.

And she'd behaved with extraordinary meanness to Daphne. She realized that now. She had known, as precisely as if she had been told, how Daphne felt about Trafford, and she'd never given her an inkling of her own relations. She hadn't for a moment thought of Daphne. No wonder Daffy was sombre and bitter. Whatever she knew, she knew enough. She had heard Trafford's name in urgent whispers on the landing. "I suppose you couldn't leave him alone," Daffy had said, after a long hostile silence. That was all. Just a sentence without prelude or answer flung across the bedroom, revealing a perfect understanding — deeps of angry disillusionment. Marjorie had stared and gasped, and made no answer.

Would she ever see him again? After this horror of rowdy intervention? She didn't deserve to; she didn't deserve anything.... Oh, the tangle of it all! The tangle of it all! And those bills at Oxbridge! She was just dragging Trafford down into her own miserable morass of a life.

Her thoughts would take a new turn. "I love him," she whispered soundlessly. "I would die for him. I would like to lie under his feet — and him not know it."

Her mind hung on that for a long time. "Not know it until afterwards," she corrected.

She liked to be exact, even in despair....

And then in her memory he was struck again, and stood stiff and still. She wanted to kneel to him, imagined herself kneeling....

And so on, quite inconclusively, round and round through the interminable night hours.

§ 3

The young man in the village was, if possible,-166- more perplexed, round-eyed and generally inconclusive than anyone else in this series of nocturnal disturbances. He spent long intervals sitting on his window-sill regarding a world that was scented with nightstock, and seemed to be woven of moonshine and gossamer. Being an inexpert and infrequent soliloquist, his only audible comment on his difficulties was the repetition in varying intonations of his fervent, unalterable conviction that he was damned. But behind this simple verbal mask was a great fury of mental activity.

He had something of Marjorie's amazement at the position of affairs.

He had never properly realized that it was possible for any one to regard Marjorie as a daughter, to order her about and resent the research for her society as criminal. It was a new light in his world. Some day he was to learn the meaning of fatherhood, but in these night watches he regarded it as a hideous survival of mediæval darknesses.

"Of course," he said, entirely ignoring the actual quality of their conversation, "she had to explain about the Magnet affair. Can't one — converse?"

He reflected through great intervals.

"I *will* see her! Why on earth shouldn't I see her?"

"I suppose they can't lock her up!"

For a time he contemplated a writ of Habeas Corpus. He saw reason to regret the gaps in his legal knowledge.

"Can any one get a writ of Habeas Corpus for any one — it doesn't matter whom" — more especially if you are a young man of six-and-twenty, anxious to exchange a few richly charged words with-167- a girl of twenty who is engaged to someone else?

The night had no answer.

It was nearly dawn when he came to the entirely inadvisable conclusion — I use his own word's — to go and have it out with the old ruffian. He would sit down and ask him what he meant by it all — and reason with him. If he started flourishing that stick again, it would have to be taken away.

And having composed a peroration upon the institution of the family of a character which he fondly supposed to be extraordinarily

tolerant, reasonable and convincing, but which was indeed calculated to madden Mr. Pope to frenzy, Mr. Trafford went very peacefully to sleep.

§ 4

Came dawn, with a noise of birds and afterwards a little sleep, and then day, and heavy eyes opened again, and the sound of frying and the smell of coffee recalled our actors to the stage. Mrs. Pope was past her worst despair; always the morning brings courage and a clearer grasp of things, and she could face the world with plans shaped subconsciously during those last healing moments of slumber.

Breakfast was difficult, but not impossible. Mr. Pope loomed like a thundercloud, but Marjorie pleaded a headache very wisely, and was taken a sympathetic cup of tea. The pseudo-twins scented trouble, but Theodore was heedless and over-full of an entertaining noise made by a moorhen as it dived in the ornamental water that morning. You could make it practically *sotto voce*, and it amused Syd. He seemed to think the *Times* opaque to such small sounds, and learnt better only to be dismissed underfed-168- and ignominiously from the table to meditate upon the imperfections of his soul in the schoolroom. There for a time he was silent, and then presently became audible again, playing with a ball and, presumably, Marjorie's tennis racquet.

Directly she could disentangle herself from breakfast Mrs. Pope, with all her plans acute, went up to the girls' room. She found her daughter dressing in a leisurely and meditative manner. She shut the door almost confidentially. "Marjorie," she said, "I want you to tell me all about this."

"I thought I heard father telling you," said Marjorie.

"He was too indignant," said Mrs. Pope, "to explain clearly. You see, Marjorie" — she paused before her effort— "he knows things — about this Professor Trafford."

"What things?" asked Marjorie, turning sharply.

"I don't know, my dear — and I can't imagine."

She looked out of the window, aware of Marjorie's entirely

distrustful scrutiny.

"I don't believe it," said Marjorie.

"Don't believe what, dear?"

"Whatever he says."

"I wish I didn't," said Mrs. Pope, and turned. "Oh, Madge," she cried, "you cannot imagine how all this distresses me! I cannot — I cannot conceive how you came to be in such a position! Surely honour —— ! Think of Mr. Magnet, how good and patient he has been! You don't know that man. You don't know all he is, and all that it means to a girl. He is good and honourable and — pure. He is kindness itself. It seemed to me that you were to be so happy — rich, honoured."

She was overcome by a rush of emotion; she turned-169- to the bed and sat down.

"*There!*" she said desolately. "It's all ruined, shattered, gone."

Marjorie tried not to feel that her mother was right.

"If father hadn't interfered," she said weakly.

"Oh, don't, my dear, speak so coldly of your father! You don't know what he has to put up with. You don't know his troubles and anxieties — all this wretched business." She paused, and her face became portentous. "Marjorie, do you know if these railways go on as they are going he may have to *eat into his capital* this year. Just think of that, and the worry he has! And this last shame and anxiety!"

Her voice broke again. Marjorie listened with an expression that was almost sullen.

"But what is it," she asked, "that father knows about Mr. Trafford?"

"I don't know, dear. I don't know. But it's something that matters — that makes it all different."

"Well, may I speak to Mr. Trafford before he leaves Buryhamstreet?"

"My dear! Never see him, dear — never think of him again! Your father would not dream —— Some day, Marjorie, you will rejoice — you will want to thank your father on your bended knees that he saved you from the clutches of this man...."

"I won't believe anything about Mr. Trafford," she said slowly, "until I know — —"

She left the sentence incomplete.

She made her declaration abruptly. “I love Mr. Trafford,” she said, with a catch in her voice, “and I don’t love Mr. Magnet.”

Mrs. Pope received this like one who is suddenly stabbed. She sat still as if overwhelmed, one hand pressed to her side and her eyes closed. Then she-170- said, as if she gasped involuntarily —

“It’s too dreadful! Marjorie,” she said, “I want to ask you to do something. After all, a mother has *some* claim. Will you wait just a little. Will you promise me to do nothing — nothing, I mean, to commit you — until your father has been able to make inquiries. Don’t *see* him for a little while. Very soon you’ll be one-and-twenty, and then perhaps things may be different. If he cares for you, and you for him, a little separation won’t matter.... Until your father has inquired....”

“Mother,” said Marjorie, “I can’t — —”

Mrs. Pope drew in the air sharply between her teeth, as if in agony.

“But, mother —— Mother, I *must* let Mr. Trafford know that I’m not to see him. I *can’t* suddenly cease.... If I could see him once — —”

“Don’t!” said Mrs. Pope, in a hollow voice.

Marjorie began weeping. “He’d not understand,” she said. “If I might just speak to him!”

“Not alone, Marjorie.”

Marjorie stood still. “Well — before you.”

Mrs. Pope conceded the point. “And then, Marjorie — —” she said.

“I’d keep my word, mother,” said Marjorie, and began to sob in a manner she felt to be absurdly childish— “until — until I am one-and-twenty. I’d promise that.”

Mrs. Pope did a brief calculation. “Marjorie,” she said, “it’s only your happiness I think of.”

“I know,” said Marjorie, and added in a low voice, “and father.”

“My dear, you don’t understand your father.... I believe — I do firmly believe — if anything happened to any of you girls — anything bad — he would kill himself.... And I know he means that you aren’t-171- to go about so much as you used to do, unless we

have the most definite promises. Of course, your father's ideas aren't always my ideas, Marjorie; but it's your duty — You know how hasty he is and — quick. Just as you know how good and generous and kind he is" — she caught Marjorie's eye, and added a little lamely— "at bottom." ... She thought. "I think I could get him to let you say just one word with Mr. Trafford. It would be very difficult, but — —"

She paused for a few seconds, and seemed to be thinking deeply.

"Marjorie," she said, "Mr. Magnet must never know anything of this."

"But, mother —— !"

"Nothing!"

"I can't go on with my engagement!"

Mrs. Pope shook her head inscrutably.

"But how *can* I, mother?"

"You need not tell him *why*, Marjorie."

"But — —"

"Just think how it would humiliate and distress him! You *can't*, Marjorie. You must find some excuse — oh, any excuse! But not the truth — not the truth, Marjorie. It would be too dreadful."

Marjorie thought. "Look here, mother, I *may* see Mr. Trafford again? I *may* really speak to him?"

"Haven't I promised?"

"Then, I'll do as you say," said Marjorie.

§ 5

Mrs. Pope found her husband seated at the desk in the ultra-Protestant study, meditating gloomily.

"I've been talking to her," she said, "She's in a state of terrible distress."

"She ought to be," said Mr. Pope.-172-

"Philip, you don't understand Marjorie."

"I don't."

"You think she was kissing that man."

"Well, she was."

"You can think *that* of her!"

Mr. Pope turned his chair to her. “But I *saw!*”

Mrs. Pope shook her head. “She wasn’t; she was struggling to get away from him. She told me so herself. I’ve been into it with her. You don’t understand, Philip. A man like that has a sort of fascination for a girl. He dazzles her. It’s the way with girls. But you’re quite mistaken.... Quite. It’s a sort of hypnotism. She’ll grow out of it. Of course, she *loves* Mr. Magnet. She does indeed. I’ve not a doubt of it. But — —”

“You’re *sure* she wasn’t kissing him?”

“Positive.”

“Then why didn’t you say so?”

“A girl’s so complex. You didn’t give her a chance. She’s fearfully ashamed of herself — fearfully! but it’s just because she *is* ashamed that she won’t admit it.”

“I’ll make her admit it.”

“You ought to have had all boys,” said Mrs. Pope. “Oh! she’ll admit it some day — readily enough. But I believe a girl of her spirit would rather *die* than begin explaining. You can’t expect it of her. Really you can’t.”

He grunted and shook his head slowly from side to side.

She sat down in the arm-chair beside the desk.

“I want to know just exactly what we are to do about the girl, Philip. I can’t bear to think of her — up there.”

“How?” he asked. “Up there?”-173-

“Yes,” she answered with that skilful inconsecutiveness of hers, and let a brief silence touch his imagination. “Do you think that man means to come here again?” she asked.

“Chuck him out if he does,” said Mr. Pope, grimly.

She pressed her lips together firmly. She seemed to be weighing things painfully. “I wouldn’t,” she said at last.

“What do you mean?” asked Mr. Pope.

“I do not want you to make an open quarrel with Mr. Trafford.”

“*Not* quarrel!”

“Not an open one,” said Mrs. Pope. “Of course I know how nice it would be if you *could* use a horsewhip, dear. There’s such a lot of things — if we only just slash. But — it won’t help. Get him to go away. She’s consented never to see him again — practically. She’s

ready to tell him so herself. Part them against their will — oh! and the thing may go on for no end of time. But treat it as it ought to be treated — She'll be very tragic for a week or so, and then she'll forget him like a dream. He *is* a dream — a girl's dream.... If only we leave it alone, she'll leave it alone."

§ 6

Things were getting straight, Mrs. Pope felt. She had now merely to add a few touches to the tranquillization of Daphne, and the misdirection of the twin's curiosity. These touches accomplished, it seemed that everything was done. After a brief reflection, she dismissed the idea of putting things to Theodore. She ran over the possibilities of the servants eavesdropping, and found them negligible. Yes, everything-174- was done — everything. And yet....

The queer string in her nature between religiosity and superstition began to vibrate. She hesitated. Then she slipped upstairs, fastened the door, fell on her knees beside the bed and put the whole thing as acceptably as possible to Heaven in a silent, simple, but lucidly explanatory prayer....

She came out of her chamber brighter and braver than she had been for eighteen long hours. She could now, she felt, await the developments that threatened with the serenity of one who is prepared at every point. She went almost happily to the kitchen, only about forty-five minutes behind her usual time, to order the day's meals and see with her own eyes that economies prevailed. And it seemed to her, on the whole, consoling, and at any rate a distraction, when the cook informed her that after all she *had* meant to give notice on the day of aunt Plessington's visit.

§ 7

The unsuspecting Magnet, fatigued but happy — for three hours of solid humorous writing (omitting every unpleasant suggestion and mingling in the most acceptable and saleable proportions smiles and tears) had added its quota to the intellectual heritage of England, made a simple light lunch cooked in homely village-inn fashion, lit a

well merited cigar, and turned his steps towards the vicarage. He was preceded at some distance along the avenuesque drive by the back of Mr. Trafford, which he made no attempt to overtake.

Mr. Trafford was admitted and disappeared, and a minute afterwards Magnet reached the door.

Mrs. Pope appeared radiant — about the weather. A rather tiresome man had just called upon Mr. Pope about business matters, she said, and he might-175- be detained five or ten minutes. Marjorie and Daffy were upstairs — resting. They had been disturbed by bats in the night.

"Isn't it charmingly rural?" said Mrs. Pope. "*Bats!*"

She talked about bats and the fear she had of their getting in her hair, and as she talked she led the way brightly but firmly as far as possible out of earshot of the windows of the ultra Protestant study in which Mr. Pope was now (she did so hope temperately) interviewing Mr. Trafford.

§ 8

Directly Mr. Trafford had reached the front door it had opened for him, and closed behind him at once. He had found himself with Mrs. Pope. "You wish to see my husband?" she had said, and had led him to the study forthwith. She had returned at once to intercept Mr. Magnet....

Trafford found Mr. Pope seated sternly at the centre of the writing desk, regarding him with a threatening brow.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Pope breaking the silence, "you have come to offer some explanation — —"

While awaiting this encounter Mr. Pope had not been insensitive to the tactical and scenic possibilities of the occasion. In fact, he had spent the latter half of the morning in intermittent preparations, arranging desks, books, hassocks in advantageous positions, and not even neglecting such small details as the stamp tray, the articles of interest from Jerusalem, and the rock-crystal cenotaph, which he had exhibited in such a manner as was most calculated to damp, chill and subjugate an antagonist in the exposed area-176- towards the window. He had also arranged the chairs in a highly favourable

pattern.

Mr. Trafford was greatly taken aback by Mr. Pope's juridical manner and by this form of address, and he was further put out by Mr. Pope saying with a regal gesture to the best illuminated and most isolated chair: "Be seated, sir."

Mr. Trafford's exordium vanished from his mind, he was at a loss for words until spurred to speech by Mr. Pope's almost truculent: "Well?"

"I am in love sir, with your daughter."

"I am not aware of it," said Mr. Pope, and lifted and dropped the paper-weight. "My daughter, sir, is engaged to marry Mr. Magnet. If you had approached me in a proper fashion before presuming to attempt — to attempt — —" His voice thickened with indignation,— "Liberties with her, you would have been duly informed of her position — and everyone would have been saved" — he lifted the paper-weight. "Everything that has happened." (Bump.)

Mr. Trafford had to adjust himself to the unexpected elements in this encounter. "Oh!" he said.

"Yes," said Mr. Pope, and there was a distinct interval.

"Is your daughter in love with Mr. Magnet?" asked Mr. Trafford in an almost colloquial tone.

Mr. Pope smiled gravely. "I presume so, sir."

"She never gave me that impression, anyhow," said the young man.

"It was neither her duty to give nor yours to receive that impression," said Mr. Pope.

Again Mr. Trafford was at a loss.

"Have you come here, sir, merely to bandy words?" asked Mr. Pope, drumming with ten fingers on the table.

Mr. Trafford thrust his hands into his pockets-177- and assumed a fictitious pose of ease. He had never found any one in his life before quite so provocative of colloquialism as Mr. Pope.

"Look here, sir, this is all very well," he began, "but why can't I fall in love with your daughter? I'm a Doctor of Science and all that sort of thing. I've a perfectly decent outlook. My father was rather a swell in his science. I'm an entirely decent and respectable person."

"I beg to differ," said Mr. Pope.

“But I am.”

“Again,” said Mr. Pope, with great patience, and a slight forward bowing of the head, “I beg to differ.”

“Well — differ. But all the same — —”

He paused and began again, and for a time they argued to no purpose. They generalized about the position of an engaged girl and the rights and privileges of a father. Then Mr. Pope, “to cut all this short,” told him frankly he wasn’t wanted, his daughter did not want him, nobody wanted him; he was an invader, he had to be got rid of — “if possible by peaceful means.” Trafford disputed these propositions, and asked to see Marjorie. Mr. Pope had been leading up to this, and at once closed with that request.

“She is as anxious as any one to end this intolerable siege,” he said. He went to the door and called for Marjorie, who appeared with conspicuous promptitude. She was in a dress of green linen that made her seem very cool as well as very dignified to Trafford; she was tense with restrained excitement, and either — for these things shade into each other — entirely without a disposition to act her part or acting with consummate ability. Trafford rose at the sight of her, and remained standing. Mr. Pope closed the door and walked back to the desk. “Mr.-178- Trafford has to be told,” he said, “that you don’t want him in Buryhamstreet.” He arrested Marjorie’s forward movement towards Trafford by a gesture of the hand, seated himself, and resumed his drumming on the table. “Well?” he said.

“I don’t think you ought to stay in Buryhamstreet, Mr. Trafford,” said Marjorie.

“You don’t want me to?”

“It will only cause trouble — and scenes.”

“You want me to go?”

“Away from here.”

“You really mean that?”

Marjorie did not answer for a little time; she seemed to be weighing the exact force of all she was going to say.

“Mr. Trafford,” she answered, “everything I’ve ever said to you — everything — I’ve *meant*, more than I’ve ever meant anything. Everything!”

A little flush of colour came into Trafford’s cheeks. He regarded

Marjorie with a brightening eye.

"Oh well," he said, "I don't understand. But I'm entirely in your hands, of course."

Marjorie's pose and expression altered. For an instant she was a miracle of instinctive expression, she shone at him, she conveyed herself to him, she assured him. Her eyes met his, she stood warmly flushed and quite unconquered — visibly, magnificently *his*. She poured into him just that riotous pride and admiration that gives a man altogether to a woman.... Then it seemed as if a light passed, and she was just an everyday Marjorie standing there.

"I'll do anything you want me to," said Trafford.

"Then I want you to go."

"Ah!" said Mr. Pope.

"Yes," said Trafford, with his eyes on her self-possession.-179-

"I've promised not to write or send to you, or — think more than I can help of you, until I'm twenty-one — nearly two months from now."

"And then?"

"I don't know. How can I?"

"You hear, sir?" from Mr. Pope, in the pause of mutual scrutiny that followed.

"One question," said Mr. Trafford.

"You've surely asked enough, sir," said Mr. Pope.

"Are you still engaged to Magnet?"

"Sir!"

"Please, father;" said Marjorie, with unusual daring and in her mother's voice. "Mr. Trafford, after what I've told you — you must leave that to me."

"She *is* engaged to Mr. Magnet," said Mr. Pope. "Tell him outright, Marjorie. Make it clear."

"I think I understand," said Trafford, with his eyes on Marjorie.

"I've not seen Mr. Magnet since last night," said Marjorie. "And so — naturally — I'm still engaged to him."

"Precisely!" said Mr. Pope, and turned with a face of harsh interrogation to his importunate caller. Mr. Trafford seemed disposed for further questions. "I don't think we need detain you, Madge," said Mr. Pope, over his shoulder.

The two young people stood facing one another for a moment, and I am afraid that they were both extremely happy and satisfied with each other. It was all right, they were quite sure — all right. Their lips were almost smiling. Then Marjorie made an entirely dignified exit. She closed the door very-180- softly, and Mr. Pope turned to his visitor again with a bleak politeness. “I hope that satisfies you,” he said.

“There is nothing more to be said at present, I admit,” said Mr. Trafford.

“Nothing,” said Mr. Pope.

Both gentlemen bowed. Mr. Pope rose ceremoniously, and Mr. Trafford walked doorward. He had a sense of latent absurdities in these tremendous attitudes. They passed through the hall — processionally. But just at the end some lower strain in Mr. Trafford’s nature touched the fine dignity of the occasion with an inappropriate remark.

“Good-bye, sir,” said Mr. Pope, holding the housedoor wide.

“Good-bye, sir,” said Mr. Trafford, and then added with a note of untimely intimacy in his voice, with an inexcusable levity upon his lips: “You know — there’s nobody — no man in the world — I’d sooner have for a father-in-law than you.”

Mr. Pope, caught unprepared on the spur of the moment, bowed in a cold and distant manner, and then almost immediately closed the door to save himself from violence....

From first to last neither gentleman had made the slightest allusion to a considerable bruise upon Mr. Trafford’s left cheek, and a large abrasion above his ear.

§ 9

That afternoon Marjorie began her difficult task of getting disengaged from Mr. Magnet. It was difficult because she was pledged not to tell him of the one thing that made this line of action not only explicable, but necessary. Magnet, perplexed, and-181- disconcerted, and secretly sustained by her mother’s glancing sidelights on the feminine character and the instability of “girlish whims,” remained at Buryhamstreet until the family returned to

Hartstone Square. The engagement was ended — formally — but in such a manner that Magnet was left a rather pathetic and invincibly assiduous besieger. He lavished little presents upon both sisters, he devised little treats for the entire family, he enriched Theodore beyond the dreams of avarice, and he discussed his love and admiration for Marjorie, and the perplexities and delicacies of the situation not only with Mrs. Pope, but with Daphne. At first he had thought very little of Daphne, but now he was beginning to experience the subtle pleasures of a confidential friendship. She understood, he felt; it was quite wonderful how she understood. He found Daffy much richer in response than Marjorie, and far less disconcerting in reply....

Mr. Pope, for all Marjorie's submission to his wishes, developed a Grand Dudgeon of exceptionally fine proportions when he heard of the breach of the engagement. He ceased to speak to his daughter or admit himself aware of her existence, and the Grand Dudgeon's blighting shadow threw a chill over the life of every one in the house. He made it clear that the Grand Dudgeon would only be lifted by Marjorie's re-engagement to Magnet, and that whatever blight or inconvenience fell on the others was due entirely to Marjorie's wicked obstinacy. Using Mrs. Pope as an intermediary, he also conveyed to Marjorie his decision to be no longer burthened with the charges of her education at Oxbridge, and he made it seem extremely doubtful whether he should remember her approaching twenty-first birthday.

Marjorie received the news of her severance from-182- Oxbridge, Mrs. Pope thought, with a certain hardness.

"I thought he would do that," said Marjorie. "He's always wanted to do that," and said no more.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

A Telephone Call

§ 1

Trafford went back to Solomonson for a day or so,-183- and then to London, to resume the experimental work of the research he had in hand. But he was so much in love with Marjorie that for some days it was a very dazed mind that fumbled with the apparatus — arranged it and rearranged it, and fell into daydreams that gave the utmost concern to Durgan the bottle-washer.

"He's not going straight at things," said Durgan the bottle-washer to his wife. "He usually goes so straight at things it's a pleasure to watch it. He told me he was going down into Kent to think everything out." Mr. Durgan paused impressively, and spoke with a sigh of perplexity. "He hasn't...."

But later Durgan was able to report that Trafford had pulled himself together. The work was moving.

"I was worried for a bit," said Mr. Durgan. "But I *think* it's all right again. I *believe* it's all right again."

§ 2

Trafford was one of those rare scientific men who really ought to be engaged in scientific research.

He could never leave an accepted formula alone. His mind was like some insatiable corrosive, that ate into all the hidden inequalities and plastered weaknesses of accepted theories, and bit its way through every plausibility of appearance. He was extraordinarily-184- fertile in exasperating alternative hypotheses. His invention of destructive test experiments was as happy as the respectful irony with which he brought them into contact with the generalizations they doomed. He was already, at six-and-twenty, hated, abused, obstructed, and respected. He was still outside the Royal Society, of course, and the editors of the scientific periodicals

admired his papers greatly, and delayed publication; but it was fairly certain that that pressure of foreign criticism and competition which prevents English scientific men of good family and social position from maintaining any such national standards as we are able to do in art, literature, and politics, would finally carry him in. And since he had a small professorship worth three hundred a year, which gave him the command of a sufficient research laboratory and the services of Mr. Durgan, a private income of nearly three hundred more, a devoted mother to keep house for him, and an invincible faith in Truth, he had every prospect of winning in his particular struggle to inflict more Truth, new lucidities, and fresh powers upon this fractious and unreasonable universe.

In the world of science now, even more than in the world of literature and political thought, the thing that is alive struggles, half-suffocated, amidst a copious production of things born dead. The endowment of research, the organization of scientific progress, the creation of salaried posts, and the assignment of honours, has attracted to this field just that type of man which is least gifted to penetrate and discover, and least able to admit its own defect or the quality of a superior. Such men are producing great, bulky masses of imitative research, futile inquiries, and monstrous entanglements of technicality about their subjects; and it is to their-185- instinctive antagonism to the idea of a "gift" in such things that we owe the preposterous conception of a training for research, the manufacture of mental blinkers that is to say, to avoid what is the very soul of brilliant inquiry — applicable discursiveness. The trained investigator is quite the absurdest figure in the farce of contemporary intellectual life; he is like a bath-chair perpetually starting to cross the Himalayas by virtue of a licence to do so. For such enterprises one must have wings. Organization and genius are antipathetic. The vivid and creative mind, by virtue of its qualities, is a spasmodic and adventurous mind; it resents blinkers, and the mere implication that it can be driven in harness to the unexpected. It demands freedom. It resents regular attendance from ten to four and punctualities in general and all those paralyzing minor tests of conduct that are vitally important to the imagination of the authoritative dull. Consequently, it is being eliminated from its legitimate field, and it is

only here and there among the younger men that such a figure as Trafford gives any promise of a renewal of that enthusiasm, that intellectual enterprise, which were distinctive of the great age of scientific advance.

Trafford was the only son of his parents. His father had been a young surgeon, more attracted by knowledge than practice, who had been killed by a scratch of the scalpel in an investigation upon ulcerative processes, at the age of twenty-nine. Trafford at that time was three years old, so that he had not the least memory of his father; but his mother, by a thousand almost unpremeditated touches, had built up a figure for him and a tradition that was shaping his life. She had loved her husband passionately, and when he died her love burnt up like a flame released, and made a god of the good she had known with him.-186- She was then a very beautiful and active-minded woman of thirty, and she did her best to reconstruct her life; but she could find nothing so living in the world as the clear courage, the essential simplicity, and tender memories of the man she had lost. And she was the more devoted to him that he had had little weaknesses of temper and bearing, and that an outrageous campaign had been waged against him that did not cease with his death. He had, in some medical periodical, published drawings of a dead dog clamped to display a deformity, and these had been seized upon by a group of anti-vivisection fanatics as the representation of a vivisection. A libel action had been pending when he died; but there is no protection of the dead from libel. That monstrous lie met her on pamphlet cover, on hoardings, in sensational appeals; it seemed immortal, and she would have suffered the pains of a dozen suttees if she could have done so, to show the world how the power and tenderness of this alleged tormentor of helpless beasts had gripped one woman's heart. It counted enormously in her decision to remain a widow and concentrate her life upon her son.

She watched his growth with a care and passionate subtlety that even at six-and-twenty he was still far from suspecting. She dreaded his becoming a mother's pet, she sent him away to school and fretted through long terms alone, that he might be made into a man. She interested herself in literary work and social affairs lest she should press upon him unduly. She listened for the crude expression of

growing thought in him with an intensity that was almost anguish. She was too intelligent to dream of forming his mind, he browsed on every doctrine to find his own, but she did desire most passionately, she prayed, she prayed in the darkness of sleepless nights, that-187- the views, the breadths, the spacious emotions which had ennobled her husband in her eyes should rise again in him.

There were years of doubt and waiting. He was a good boy and a bad boy, now brilliant, now touching, now disappointing, now gloriously reassuring, and now heart-rending as only the children of our blood can be. He had errors and bad moments, lapses into sheer naughtiness, phases of indolence, attacks of contagious vulgarity. But more and more surely she saw him for his father's son; she traced the same great curiosities, the same keen dauntless questioning; whatever incidents might disturb and perplex her, his intellectual growth went on strong and clear and increasing like some sacred flame that is carried in procession, halting perhaps and swaying a little but keeping on, over the heads of a tumultuous crowd.

He went from his school to the Royal College of Science, thence to successes at Cambridge, and thence to Berlin. He travelled a little in Asia Minor and Persia, had a journey to America, and then came back to her and London, sunburnt, moustached, manly, and a little strange. When he had been a boy she had thought his very soul pellucid; it had clouded opaquely against her scrutiny as he passed into adolescence. Then through the period of visits and departures, travel together, separations, he grew into something detached and admirable, a man curiously reminiscent of his father, unexpectedly different. She ceased to feel what he was feeling in his mind, had to watch him, infer, guess, speculate about him. She desired for him and dreaded for him with an undying tenderness, but she no longer had any assurance that she could interfere to help him. He had his father's trick of falling into thought. Her brown eyes would-188- watch him across the flowers and delicate glass and silver of her dinner table when he dined at home with her. Sometimes he seemed to forget she existed, sometimes he delighted in her, talked to amuse her, petted her; sometimes, and then it was she was happiest, he talked of plays and books with her, discussed general questions,

spoke even of that broadly conceived scheme of work which engaged so much of his imagination. She knew that it was distinguished and powerful work. Old friends of her husband spoke of it to her, praised its inspired directness, its beautiful simplicity. Since the days of Wollaston, they said, no one had been so witty an experimenter, no one had got more out of mere scraps of apparatus or contrived more ingenious simplifications.

When he had accepted the minor Professorship which gave him a footing in the world of responsible scientific men, she had taken a house in a quiet street in Chelsea which necessitated a daily walk to his laboratory. It was a little old Georgian house with worn and graceful rooms, a dignified front door and a fine gateway of Sussex ironwork much painted and eaten away. She arranged it with great care; she had kept most of her furniture, and his study had his father's bureau, and the selfsame agate paper-weight that had pressed the unfinished paper he left when he died. She was a woman of persistent friendships, and there came to her, old connections of those early times trailing fresher and younger people in their wake, sons, daughters, nephews, disciples; her son brought home all sorts of interesting men, and it was remarkable to her that amidst the talk and discussion at her table, she discovered aspects of her son and often quite intimate aspects she would never have seen with him alone.

She would not let herself believe that this Indian-189- summer of her life could last for ever. He was no passionless devotee of research, for all his silence and restraints. She had seen him kindle with anger at obstacles and absurdities, and quicken in the presence of beauty. She knew how readily and richly he responded to beauty. Things happened to have run smoothly with him so far, that was all. "Of course," she said, "he must fall in love. It cannot be long before he falls in love."

Once or twice that had seemed to happen, and then it had come to nothing....

She knew that sooner or later this completion of his possibilities must come, that the present steadfastness of purpose was a phase in which forces gathered, that love must sweep into his life as a deep and passionate disturbance. She wondered where it would take him,

whether it would leave him enriched or devastated. She saw at times how young he was; she had, as I suppose most older people have about their juniors, the profoundest doubt whether he was wise enough yet to be trusted with a thing so good as himself. He had flashes of high-spirited indiscretion, and at times a wildfire of humour flared in his talk. So far that had done no worse for him than make an enemy or so in scientific circles. But she had no idea of the limits of his excitability. She would watch him and fear for him — she knew the wreckage love can make — and also she desired that he should lose nothing that life and his nature could give him.

§ 3

In the two months of separation that ensued before Marjorie was one-and-twenty, Trafford's mind went through some remarkable phases. At first the excitement of his passion for Marjorie obscured everything else, then with his return to London and-190- his laboratory the immense inertia of habit and slowly developed purposes, the complex yet convergent system of ideas and problems to which so much of his life had been given, began to reassert itself. His love was vivid and intense, a light in his imagination, a fever in his blood; but it was a new thing; it had not crept into the flesh and bones of his being, it was away there in Surrey; the streets of London, his home, the white-walled chamber with its skylight and high windows and charts of constants, in which his apparatus was arranged, had no suggestion of her. She was outside — an adventure — a perplexing incommensurable with all these things.

He had left Buryhamstreet with Marjorie riotously in possession of his mind. He could think of nothing but Marjorie in the train, and how she had shone at him in the study, and how her voice had sounded when she spoke, and how she stood and moved, and the shape and sensation of her hands, and how it had felt to hold her for those brief moments in the wood and press lips and body to his, and how her face had gleamed in the laced shadows of the moonlight, soft and wonderful.

In fact, he thought of Marjorie.

He thought she was splendid, courageous, wise by instinct. He

had no doubt of her or that she was to be his — when the weeks of waiting had passed by. She was his, and he was Marjorie's; that had been settled from the beginning of the world. It didn't occur to him that anything had happened to alter his life or any of his arrangements in any way, except that they were altogether altered — as the world is altered without displacement when the sun pours up in the east. He was glorified — and everything was glorified.

He wondered how they would meet again, and-191- dreamt a thousand impossible and stirring dreams, but he dreamt them as dreams.

At first, to Durgan's infinite distress, he thought of her all day, and then, as the old familiar interests grappled him again, he thought of her in the morning and the evening and as he walked between his home and the laboratory and at all sorts of incidental times — and even when the close-locked riddles of his research held the foreground and focus of his thoughts, he still seemed to be thinking of her as a radiant background to ions and molecules and atoms and interwoven systems of eddies and quivering oscillations deep down in the very heart of matter.

And always he thought of her as something of the summer. The rich decays of autumn came, the Chelsea roads were littered with variegated leaves that were presently wet and dirty and slippery, the twilight crept down into the day towards five o'clock and four, but in his memory of her the leaves were green, the evenings were long, the warm quiet of rural Surrey in high August filled the air. So that it was with a kind of amazement he found her in London and in November close at hand. He was called to the college telephone one day from a conversation with a proposed research student. It was a middle-aged woman bachelor anxious for the D.Sc., who wished to occupy the further bench in the laboratory; but she had no mental fire, and his mind was busy with excuses and discouragements.

He had no thought of Marjorie when she answered, and for an instant he did not recognize her voice.

"Yes, I'm Mr. Trafford."...

"Who is it?" he reiterated with a note of irascibility. "*Who?*"

The little voice laughed. "Why! I'm Marjorie!" it said.

Then she was back in his life like a lantern suddenly-192- become

visible in a wood at midnight.

It was like meeting her as a china figure, neat and perfect and two inches high. It was her voice, very clear and very bright, and quite characteristic, as though he was hearing it through the wrong end of a telescope. It was her voice, clear as a bell; confident without a shadow.

"It's *me!* Marjorie! I'm twenty-one to-day!"

It was like a little arrow of exquisite light shot into the very heart of his life.

He laughed back. "Are you for meeting me then, Marjorie?"

§ 4

They met in Kensington Gardens with an air of being clandestine and defiant. It was one of those days of amber sunlight, soft air, and tender beauty with which London relieves the tragic glooms of the year's decline. There were still a residue of warm-tinted leaves in puffs and clusters upon the tree branches, a boat or two ruffled the blue Serpentine, and the waterfowl gave colour and animation to the selvage of the water. The sedges were still a greenish yellow.

The two met shyly. They were both a little unfamiliar to each other. Trafford was black-coated, silk-hatted, umbrella-d, a decorous young professor in the place of the cheerful aeronaut who had fallen so gaily out of the sky. Marjorie had a new tailor-made dress of russet-green, and a little cloth toque ruled and disciplined the hair he had known as a ruddy confusion.... They had dreamt, I think, of extended arms and a wild rush to embrace one another. Instead, they shook hands.

"And so," said Trafford, "we meet again!"-193-

"I don't see why we shouldn't meet!" said Marjorie.

There was a slight pause.

"Let's have two of those jolly little green chairs," said Trafford....

They walked across the grass towards the chairs he had indicated, and both were full of the momentous things they were finding it impossible to say.

"There ought to be squirrels here, as there are in New York," he said at last.

They sat down. There was a moment's silence, and then Trafford's spirit rose in rebellion and he plunged at this — this stranger beside him.

"Look here," he said, "do you still love me, Marjorie?"

She looked up into his face with eyes in which surprise and scrutiny passed into something altogether beautiful. "I love you — altogether," she said in a steady, low voice.

And suddenly she was no longer a stranger, but the girl who had flitted to his arms breathless, unhesitating, through the dusk. His blood quickened. He made an awkward gesture as though he arrested an impulse to touch her. "My sweetheart," he said. "My dear one!"

Marjorie's face flashed responses. "It's you," he said.

"Me," she answered.

"Do you remember?"

"Everything!"

"My dear!"

"I want to tell you things," said Marjorie. "What are we to do?"....

He tried afterwards to retrace that conversation. He was chiefly ashamed of his scientific preoccupations-194- during that London interval. He had thought of a thousand things; Marjorie had thought of nothing else but love and him. Her happy assurance, her absolute confidence that his desires would march with hers, reproached and confuted every adverse thought in him as though it was a treachery to love. He had that sense which I suppose comes at times to every man, of entire unworthiness for the straight, unhesitating decision, the clear simplicity of a woman's passion. He had dreamt vaguely, unsubstantially, the while he had arranged his pressures and temperatures and infinitesimal ingredients, and worked with goniometer and trial models and the new calculating machine he had contrived for his research. But she had thought clearly, definitely, fully — of nothing but coming to him. She had thought out everything that bore upon that; reasons for preciptance, reasons for delay, she had weighed the rewards of conformity against the glamour of romance. It became more and more clear to him as they talked, that she was determined to elope with him, to go to Italy, and there have an extraordinarily picturesque and beautiful time. Her definiteness shamed his poverty of anticipation. Her enthusiasm

carried him with her. Of course it was so that things must be done....

When at last they parted under the multiplying lamps of the November twilight, he turned his face eastward. He was afraid of his mother's eyes — he scarcely knew why. He walked along Kensington Gore, and the clustering confused lights of street and house, white and golden and orange and pale lilac, the moving lamps and shining glitter of the traffic, the luminous interiors of omnibuses, the reflection of carriage and hoarding, the fading daylight overhead, the phantom trees to the left, the deepening shadows and blacknesses among the houses on his right, the-195- bobbing heads of wayfarers, were just for him the stir and hue and texture of fairyland. All the world was fairyland. He went to his club and dined there, and divided the evening between geography, as it is condensed in Baedeker and Murray on North Italy, Italian Switzerland and the Italian Riviera, and a study of the marriage laws as they are expounded in "Whitaker's Almanac," the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and other convenient works of reference. He replaced the books as he used them, and went at last from the library into the smoking-room, but seeing a man who might talk to him there, he went out at once into the streets, and fetched a wide compass by Baker Street, Oxford Street, and Hyde Park, home.

He was a little astonished at himself and everything.

But it was going to be — splendid.

(What poor things words can be!)

§ 5

He found his mother still up. She had been re-reading "The Old Wives' Tale," and she sat before a ruddy fire in the shadow beyond the lit circle of a green-shaded electric light thinking, with the book put aside. In the dimness above was his father's portrait. "Time you were in bed, mother," he said reprovingly, and kissed her eyebrow and stood above her. "What's the book?" he asked, and picked it up and put it down, forgotten. Their eyes met. She perceived he had something to say; she did not know what. "Where have you been?" she asked.

He told her, and they lapsed into silence. She asked another

question and he answered her, and the indifferent conversation ended again. The silence lengthened. Then he plunged: “I wonder, mother,-196- if it would put you out very much if I brought home a wife to you?”

So it had come to this — and she had not seen it coming. She looked into the glowing recesses of the fire before her and controlled her voice by an effort. “I’d be glad for you to do it, dear — if you loved her,” she said very quietly. He stared down at her for a moment; then he knelt down beside her and took her hand and kissed it. “*My dear*,” she whispered softly, stroking his head, and her tears came streaming. For a time they said no more.

Presently he put coal on the fire, and then sitting on the hearthrug at her feet and looking away from her into the flames — in an attitude that took her back to his boyhood — he began to tell her brokenly and awkwardly of Marjorie.

“It’s so hard, mother, to explain these things,” he began. “One doesn’t half understand the things that are happening to one. I want to make you in love with her, dear, just as I am. And I don’t see how I can.”

“Perhaps I shall understand, my dear. Perhaps I shall understand better than you think.”

“She’s such a beautiful thing — with something about her —— . You know those steel blades you can bend back to the hilt — and they’re steel! And she’s tender. It’s as if someone had taken tears, mother, and made a spirit out of them — —”

She caressed and stroked his hand. “My dear,” she said, “I know.”

“And a sort of dancing daring in her eyes.”

“Yes,” she said. “But tell me where she comes from, and how you met her — and all the circumstantial things that a sensible old woman can understand.”

He kissed her hand and sat down beside her, with-197- his shoulder against the arm of her chair, his fingers interlaced about his knee. She could not keep her touch from his hair, and she tried to force back the thought in her mind that all these talks must end, that very soon indeed they would end. And she was glad, full of pride and joy too that her son was a lover after her heart, a clean and simple lover as his father had been before him. He loved this unknown

Marjorie, finely, sweetly, bravely, even as she herself could have desired to have been loved. She told herself she did not care very greatly even if this Marjorie should prove unworthy. So long as her son was not unworthy.

He pieced his story together. He gave her a picture of the Popes, Marjorie in her family like a jewel in an ugly setting, so it seemed to him, and the queer dull rage of her father and all that they meant to do. She tried to grasp his perplexities and advise, but chiefly she was filled with the thought that he was in love. If he wanted a girl he should have her, and if he had to take her by force, well, wasn't it his right? She set small store upon the Popes that night — or any circumstances. And since she herself had married on the slightest of security, she was concerned very little that this great adventure was to be attempted on an income of a few hundreds a year. It was outside her philosophy that a wife should be anything but glad to tramp the roads if need be with the man who loved her. He sketched out valiant plans, was for taking Marjorie away in the teeth of all opposition and bringing her back to London. It would have to be done decently, of course, but it would have, he thought, to be done. Mrs. Trafford found the prospect perfect; never before had he sounded and looked so like that dim figure which hung still and sympathetic above them. Ever and again-198- she glanced up at her husband's quiet face....

On one point she was very clear with him.

"You'll live with us, mother?" he said abruptly.

"Not with you. As near as you like. But one house, one woman.... I'll have a little flat of my own — for you both to come to me."

"Oh, nonsense, mother! You'll have to be with us. Living alone, indeed!"

"My dear, I'd *prefer* a flat of my own. You don't understand — everything. It will be better for all of us like that."

There came a little pause between them, and then her hand was on his head again. "Oh, my dear," she said, "I want you to be happy. And life can be difficult. I won't give a chance — for things to go wrong. You're hers, dear, and you've got to be hers — be each other's altogether. I've watched so many people. And that's the best, the very best you can have. There's just the lovers — the real

enduring lovers; and the uncompleted people who've failed to find it."...

§ 6

Trafford's second meeting with Marjorie, which, by the by, happened on the afternoon of the following day, brought them near to conclusive decisions. The stiffness of their first encounter in London had altogether vanished. She was at her prettiest and in the highest spirits — and she didn't care for anything else in the world. A gauzy silk scarf which she had bought and not paid for that day floated atmospherically about her straight trim body; her hair had caught the infection of insurrection and was waving rebelliously about her ears. As he drew near her his grave discretion passed from him as clouds pass from a hillside. She smiled radiantly. He held out both-199- his hands for both of hers, and never did a maiden come so near and yet not get a public and shameless kissing.

One could as soon describe music as tell their conversation. It was a matter of tones and feelings. But the idea of flight together, of the bright awakening in unfamiliar sunshine with none to come between them, had gripped them both. A certain sober gravity of discussion only masked that deeper inebriety. It would be easy for them to get away; he had no lectures until February; he could, he said, make arrangements, leave his research. She dreaded disputation. She was for a simple disappearance, notes on pincushions and defiantly apologetic letters from Boulogne, but his mother's atmosphere had been a gentler one than her home's, with a more powerful disposition to dignity. He still couldn't understand that the cantankerous egotism of Pope was indeed the essential man; it seemed to him a crust of bad manners that reason ought to pierce.

The difference in their atmospheres came out in their talk — in his desire for a handsome and dignified wedding — though the very heavens protested — and her resolve to cut clear of every one, to achieve a sort of gaol delivery of her life, make a new beginning altogether, with the minimum of friction and the maximum of surprise. Unused to fighting, he was magnificently prepared to fight; she, with her intimate knowledge of chronic domestic conflict, was

for the evasion of all the bickerings, scoldings, and misrepresentations his challenge would occasion. He thought in his innocence a case could be stated and discussed; but no family discussion she had ever heard had even touched the realities of the issue that occasioned it.

"I don't like this underhand preparation," he-200- said.

"Nor I," she echoed. "But what can one do?"

"Well, oughtn't I to go to your father and give him a chance? Why shouldn't I? It's — the dignified way."

"It won't be dignified for father," said Marjorie, "anyhow."

"But what right has he to object?"

"He isn't going to discuss his rights with you. He *will* object."

"But *why?*"

"Oh! because he's started that way. He hit you. I haven't forgotten it. Well, if he goes back on that now —— He'd rather die than go back on it. You see, he's ashamed in his heart. It would be like confessing himself wrong not to keep it up that you're the sort of man one hits. He just hates you because he hit you. I haven't been his daughter for twenty-one years for nothing."

"I'm thinking of us," said Trafford. "I don't see we oughtn't to go to him just because he's likely to be — unreasonable."

"My dear, do as you please. He'll forbid and shout, and hit tables until things break. Suppose he locks me up!"

"Oh, Habeas Corpus, and my strong right arm! He's much more likely to turn you out-of-doors."

"Not if he thinks the other will annoy you more. I'll have to bear a storm."

"Not for long."

"He'll bully mother till she cries over me. But do as you please. She'll come and she'll beg me —— Do as you please. Perhaps I'm a coward. I'd far rather I could slip away."

Trafford thought for a moment. "I'd far rather you could," he answered, in a voice that spoke of-201- inflexible determinations.

They turned to the things they meant to do. "*Italy!*" she whispered, "*Italy!*" Her face was alight with her burning expectation of beauty, of love, of the new heaven and the new earth that lay before them. The intensity of that desire blazing through her seemed

to shame his dull discretions. He had to cling to his resolution, lest it should vanish in that contagious intoxication.

"You understand I shall come to your father," he said, as they drew near the gate where it seemed discreet for them to part.

"It will make it harder to get away," she said, with no apparent despondency. "It won't stop us. Oh! do as you please."

She seemed to dismiss the question, and stood hand-in-hand with him in a state of glowing gravity. She wouldn't see him again for four-and-twenty hours. Then a thought came into her head — a point of great practical moment.

"Oh!" she said, "of course, you won't tell father you've seen me."

She met his eye. "Really you mustn't," she said. "You see — he'll make a row with mother for not having watched me better. I don't know what he isn't likely to do. It isn't myself —— This is a confidential communication — all this. No one in this world knows I am meeting you. If you *must* go to him, go to him."

"For myself?"

She nodded, with her open eyes on his — eyes that looked now very blue and very grave, and her lips a little apart.

She surprised him a little, but even this sudden weakness seemed adorable.

"All right," he said.-202-

"You don't think that I'm shirking —— ?" she asked, a little too eagerly.

"You know your father best," he answered. "I'll tell you all he says and all the terror of him here to-morrow afternoon."

§ 7

In the stillness of the night Trafford found himself thinking over Marjorie; it was a new form of mental exercise, which was destined to play a large part in his existence for many subsequent years. There had come a shadow on his confidence in her. She was a glorious person; she had a kind of fire behind her and in her — shining through her, like the lights in a fire-opal, but —— He wished she had not made him promise to conceal their meeting and their close co-operation from her father. Why did she do that? It would spoil his

case with her father, and it could forward things for them in no conceivable way. And from that, in some manner too subtle to trace, he found his mind wandering to another problem, which was destined to reappear with a slowly dwindling importance very often in this procedure of thinking over Marjorie in the small hours. It was the riddle — it never came to him in the daytime, but only in those intercalary and detachedly critical periods of thought — why exactly had she engaged herself to Magnet? Why had she? He couldn't imagine himself, in Marjorie's position, doing anything of the sort. Marjorie had ways of her own; she was different.... Well, anyhow, she was splendid and loving and full of courage.... He had got no further than this when at last he fell asleep.

§ 8

Trafford's little attempt to regularise his position-203- was as creditable to him as it was inevitably futile. He sought out 29, Hartstone Square in the morning on his way to his laboratory, and he found it one of a great row of stucco houses each with a portico and a dining-room window on the ground floor, and each with a railed area from which troglodytic servants peeped. Collectively the terrace might claim a certain ugly dignity of restraint, there was none of your Queen Anne nonsense of art or beauty about it, and the narrow height, the subterranean kitchens of each constituent house, told of a steep relentless staircase and the days before the pampering of the lower classes began. The houses formed a square, as if the British square so famous at Waterloo for its dogged resistance to all the forces of the universe had immortalized itself in buildings, and they stared upon a severely railed garden of hardy shrubs and gravel to which the tenants had the inestimable privilege of access. They did not use it much, that was their affair, but at any rate they had keys and a nice sense of rights assured, and at least it kept other people out.

Trafford turned out of a busy high road full of the mixed exhilarating traffic of our time, and came along a quiet street into this place, and it seemed to him he had come into a corner of defence and retreat, into an atmosphere of obstinate and unteachable resistances.

But this illusion of conservativism in its last ditch was dispelled altogether in Mr. Pope's portico. Youth flashed out of these solemnities like a dart shot from a cave. Trafford was raising his hand to the solid brass knocker when abruptly it was snatched from his fingers, the door was flung open and a small boy with a number of dirty books in a-204- strap flew out and hit him with projectile violence.

"Blow!" said the young gentleman recoiling, and Trafford recovering said: "Hullo, Theodore!"

"Lord!" said Theodore breathless, "It's you! *What* a lark! Your name's never mentioned — no how. What *did* you do?... Wish I could stop and see it! I'm ten minutes late. *Ave atque vale*. So long!"

He vanished with incredible velocity. And Mr. Trafford was alone in possession of the open doorway except for Toupee, who after a violent outbreak of hostility altered his mind and cringed to his feet in abject and affectionate propitiation. A pseudo-twin appeared, said "Hello!" and vanished, and then he had an instant's vision of Mr. Pope, newspaper in hand, appearing from the dining-room. His expression of surprise changed to malevolence, and he darted back into the room from which he had emerged. Trafford decided to take the advice of a small brass plate on his left hand, and "ring also."

A housemaid came out of the bowels of the earth very promptly and ushered him up two flights of stairs into what was manifestly Mr. Pope's study.

It was a narrow, rather dark room lit by two crimson-curtained windows, and with a gas fire before which Mr. Pope's walking boots were warming for the day. The apartment revealed to Trafford's cursory inspection many of the stigmata of an Englishman of active intelligence and literary tastes. There in the bookcase were the collected works of Scott, a good large illustrated Shakespeare in numerous volumes, and a complete set of bound *Punches* from the beginning. A pile of back numbers of the *Times* stood on a cane stool in a corner, and in a little bookcase handy for the occupier of the desk were Whitaker, Wisden and an old peerage. The desk bore-205- traces of recent epistolary activity, and was littered with the printed matter of Aunt Plessington's movements. Two or three recent issues of *The Financial Review of Reviews* were also visible. About the

room hung steel engravings apparently of defunct judges or at any rate of exceedingly grim individuals, and over the mantel were trophies of athletic prowess, a bat witnessing that Mr. Pope had once captained the second eleven at Harrogby.

Mr. Pope entered with a stern expression and a sentence prepared. “Well, sir,” he said with a note of ironical affability, “to what may I ascribe this — intrusion?”

Mr. Trafford was about to reply when Mr. Pope interrupted. “Will you be seated,” he said, and turned his desk chair about for himself, and occupying it, crossed his legs and pressed the finger tips of his two hands together. “Well, sir?” he said.

Trafford remained standing astraddle over the boots before the gas fire.

“Look here, sir,” he said; “I am in love with your daughter. She’s one and twenty, and I want to see her — and in fact — —” He found it hard to express himself. He could think only of a phrase that sounded ridiculous. “I want — in fact — to pay my addresses to her.”

“Well, sir, I don’t want you to do so. That is too mild. I object strongly — very strongly. My daughter has been engaged to a very distinguished and able man, and I hope very shortly to hear that that engagement —— Practically it is still going on. I don’t want you to intrude upon my daughter further.”

“But look here, sir. There’s a certain justice — I mean a certain reasonableness — —”

Mr. Pope held out an arresting hand. “I don’t-206- wish it. Let that be enough.”

“Of course it isn’t enough. I’m in love with her — and she with me. I’m an entirely reputable and decent person — —”

“May I be allowed to judge what is or is not suitable companionship for my daughter — and what may or may not be the present state of her affections?”

“Well, that’s rather the point we are discussing. After all, Marjorie isn’t a baby. I want to do all this — this affair, openly and properly if I can, but, you know, I mean to marry Marjorie — anyhow.”

“There are two people to consult in that matter.”

“I’ll take the risk of that.”

“Permit me to differ.”

A feeling of helplessness came over Trafford. The curious irritation Mr. Pope always roused in him began to get the better of him. His face flushed hotly. “Oh really! really! this is — this is nonsense!” he cried. “I never heard anything so childish and pointless as your objection — —”

“Be careful, sir!” cried Mr. Pope, “be careful!”

“I’m going to marry Marjorie.”

“If she marries you, sir, she shall never darken my doors again!”

“If you had a thing against me!”

“*Haven’t* I!”

“What have you?”

There was a quite perceptible pause before Pope fired his shot.

“Does any decent man want the name of Trafford associated with his daughter. Trafford! Look at the hoardings, sir!”

A sudden blaze of anger lit Trafford. “My God!” he cried and clenched his fists and seemed for a moment ready to fall upon the man before him.-207- Then he controlled himself by a violent effort. “You believe in that libel on my dead father?” he said, with white lips.

“Has it ever been answered?”

“A hundred times. And anyhow! — Confound it! I don’t believe — *you* believe it. You’ve raked it up — as an excuse! You want an excuse for your infernal domestic tyranny! That’s the truth of it. You can’t bear a creature in your household to have a will or preference of her own. I tell you, sir, you are intolerable — intolerable!”

He was shouting, and Pope was standing now and shouting too. “Leave my house, sir. Get out of my house, sir. You come here to insult me, sir!”

A sudden horror of himself and Pope seized the younger man. He stiffened and became silent. Never in his life before had he been in a bawling quarrel. He was amazed and ashamed.

“Leave my house!” cried Pope with an imperious gesture towards the door.

Trafford made an absurd effort to save the situation. “I am sorry, sir, I lost my temper. I had no business to abuse you — —”

“You’ve said enough.”

“I apologise for that. I’ve done what I could to manage things decently.”

“Will you go, sir?” threatened Mr. Pope.

“I’m sorry I came,” said Trafford.

Mr. Pope took his stand with folded arms and an expression of weary patience.

“I did what I could,” said Trafford at the door.

The staircase and passage were deserted. The whole house seemed to have caught from Mr. Pope that same quality of seeing him out....

“Confound it!” said Trafford in the street.-208- “How on earth did all this happen?”...

He turned eastward, and then realized that work would be impossible that day. He changed his direction for Kensington Gardens, and in the flower-bordered walk near the Albert Memorial he sat down on a chair, and lugged at his moustache and wondered. He was extraordinarily perplexed, as well as ashamed and enraged by this uproar. How had it begun? Of course, he had been stupidly abusive, but the insult to his father had been unendurable. Did a man of Pope’s sort quite honestly believe that stuff? If he didn’t, he deserved kicking. If he did, of course he was entitled to have it cleared up. But then he wouldn’t listen! Was there any case for the man at all? Had he, Trafford, really put the thing so that Pope would listen? He couldn’t remember. What was it he had said in reply to Pope? What was it exactly that Pope had said?

It was already vague; it was a confused memory of headlong words and answers; what wasn’t vague, what rang in his ears still, was the hoarse discord of two shouting voices.

Could Marjorie have heard?

§ 9

So Marjorie carried her point. She wasn’t to be married tamely after the common fashion which trails home and all one’s beginnings into the new life. She was to be eloped with, romantically and splendidly, into a glorious new world. She walked on shining clouds, and if she felt some remorse, it was a very tender and satisfactory remorse, and

with a clear conviction below it that in the end she would be forgiven.

They made all their arrangements elaborately and-209- carefully. Trafford got a license to marry her; she was to have a new outfit from top to toe to go away with on that eventful day. It accumulated in the shop, and they marked the clothes *M.T.* She was watched, she imagined, but as her father did not know she had seen Trafford, nothing had been said to her, and no attempt was made to prohibit her going out and coming in. Trafford entered into the conspiracy with a keen interest, a certain amusement, and a queer little feeling of distaste. He hated to hide any act of his from any human being. The very soul of scientific work, you see, is publication. But Marjorie seemed to justify all things, and when his soul turned against furtiveness, he reminded it that the alternative was bawling.

One eventful afternoon he went to the college, and Marjorie slipped round by his arrangement to have tea with Mrs. Trafford....

He returned about seven in a state of nervous apprehension; came upstairs two steps at a time, and stopped breathless on the landing. He gulped as he came in, and his eyes were painfully eager. “She’s been?” he asked.

But Marjorie had won Mrs. Trafford.

“She’s been,” she answered. “Yes, she’s all right, my dear.”

“Oh, mother!” he said.

“She’s a beautiful creature, dear — and such a child! Oh! such a child! And God bless you, dear, God bless you....

“I think all young people are children. I want to take you both in my arms and save you.... I’m talking nonsense, dear.”

He kissed her, and she clung to him as if he were something too precious to release.

§ 10

The elopement was a little complicated by a surprise-210- manœuvre of Mrs. Pope’s. She was more alive to the quality of the situation, poor lady! than her daughter suspected; she was watching, dreading, perhaps even furtively sympathizing and trying to arrange — oh! trying dreadfully to arrange. She had an instinctive understanding of

the deep blue quiet in Marjorie's eyes, and the girl's unusual tenderness with Daffy and the children. She peeped under the blind as Marjorie went out, noted the care in her dress, watched her face as she returned, never plumbed her with a question for fear of the answer. She did not dare to breathe a hint of her suspicions to her husband, but she felt things were adrift in swift, smooth water, and all her soul cried out for delay. So presently there came a letter from Cousin Susan Pendexter at Plymouth. The weather was beautiful, Marjorie must come at once, pack up and come and snatch the last best glow of the dying autumn away there in the west. Marjorie's jerry-built excuses, her manifest chagrin and reluctance, confirmed her mother's worst suspicions.

She submitted and went, and Mrs. Pope and Syd saw her off.

I do not like to tell how a week later Marjorie explained herself and her dressing-bag and a few small articles back to London from Plymouth. Suffice it that she lied desperately and elaborately. Her mother had never achieved such miracles of mis-statement, and she added a vigour that was all her own. It is easier to sympathize with her than exonerate her. She was in a state of intense impatience, and — what is strange — extraordinarily afraid that something would separate her from her lover if she did not secure him. She was in a fever of determination.-211- She could not eat or sleep or attend to anything whatever; she was occupied altogether with the thought of assuring herself to Trafford. He towered in her waking vision over town and land and sea.

He didn't hear the lies she told; he only knew she was magnificently coming back to him. He met her at Paddington, a white-faced, tired, splendidly resolute girl, and they went to the waiting registrar's forthwith.

She bore herself with the intentness and dignity of one who is taking the cardinal step in life. They kissed as though it was a symbol, and were keenly business-like about cabs and luggage and trains. At last they were alone in the train together. They stared at one another.

"We've done it, Mrs. Trafford!" said Trafford.

She snapped like an over-taut string, crumpled, clung to him, and without a word was weeping passionately in his arms.

It surprised him that she could weep as she did, and still more to see her as she walked by his side along the Folkestone pier, altogether recovered, erect, a little flushed and excited like a child. She seemed to miss nothing. “Oh, smell the sea!” she said, “Look at the lights! Listen to the swish of the water below.” She watched the luggage spinning on the wire rope of the giant crane, and he watched her face and thought how beautiful she was. He wondered why her eyes could sometimes be so blue and sometimes dark as night.

The boat cleared the pier and turned about and headed for France. They walked the upper deck together and stood side by side, she very close to him.

“I’ve never crossed the sea before,” she said.

“Old England,” she whispered. “It’s like leaving a nest. A little row of lights and that’s all the-212- world I’ve ever known, shrunken to that already.”

Presently they went forward and peered into the night.

“Look!” she said. “*Italy!* There’s sunshine and all sorts of beautiful things ahead. Warm sunshine, wonderful old ruins, green lizards....” She paused and whispered almost noiselessly: “*love* — —”

They pressed against each other.

“And yet isn’t it strange? All you can see is darkness, and clouds — and big waves that hiss as they come near....”

§ 11

Italy gave all her best to welcome them. It was a late year, a golden autumn, with skies of such blue as Marjorie had never seen before. They stayed at first in a pretty little Italian hotel with a garden on the lake, and later they walked over Salvator to Morcote and by boat to Ponte Tresa, and thence they had the most wonderful and beautiful tramp in the world to Luino, over the hills by Castelrotto. To the left of them all day was a broad valley with low-lying villages swimming in a luminous mist, to the right were purple mountains. They passed through paved streets with houses the colour of flesh and ivory, with balconies hung with corn and gourds, with tall church campaniles rising high, and great archways giving upon the blue lowlands; they

tramped along avenues of sweet chestnut and between stretches of exuberant vineyard, in which men and women were gathering grapes — purple grapes, a hatful for a soldo, that rasped the tongue. Everything was strange and wonderful to Marjorie's eyes; now it would be a wayside shrine and now a yoke of soft-going, dewlapped-213- oxen, now a chapel hung about with *ex votos*, and now some unfamiliar cultivation — or a gipsy-eyed child — or a scorpion that scuttled in the dust. The very names of the villages were like jewels to her, Varasca, Croglio, Ronca, Sesia, Monteggio. They walked, or sat by the wayside and talked, or rested at the friendly table of some kindly albergo. A woman as beautiful as Ceres, with a white neck all open, made them an omelette, and then fetched her baby from its cradle to nurse it while she talked to them as they made their meal. And afterwards she filled their pockets with roasted chestnuts, and sent them with melodious good wishes upon their way. And always high over all against the translucent blue hung the white shape of Monte Rosa, that warmed in colour as the evening came.

Marjorie's head was swimming with happiness and beauty, and with every fresh delight she recurred again to the crowning marvel of this clean-limbed man beside her, who smiled and carried all her luggage in a huge rucksack that did not seem to exist for him, and watched her and caressed her — and was hers, *hers!*

At Baveno there were letters. They sat at a little table outside a café and read them, suddenly mindful of England again. Incipient forgiveness showed through Mrs. Pope's reproaches, and there was also a simple, tender love-letter (there is no other word for it) from old Mrs. Trafford to her son.

From Baveno they set off up Monte Mottarone — whence one may see the Alps from Visto to Ortler Spitz — trusting to find the inn still open, and if it was closed to get down to Orta somehow before night. Or at the worst sleep upon the mountain side.

(Monte Mottarone! Just for a moment taste the-214- sweet Italian name upon your lips.) These were the days before the funicular from Stresa, when one trudged up a rude path through the chestnuts and walnuts.

As they ascended the long windings through the woods, they met

an old poet and his wife, coming down from sunset and sunrise. There was a word or two about the inn, and they went upon their way. The old man turned ever and again to look at them.

“Adorable young people,” he said. “Adorable happy young people....

“Did you notice, dear, how she held that dainty little chin of hers?...

“Pride is such a good thing, my dear, clear, straight pride like theirs — and they were both so proud!...

“Isn’t it good, dear, to think that once you and I may have looked like that to some passer-by. I wish I could bless them — sweet, swift young things! I wish, dear, it was possible for old men to bless young people without seeming to set up for saints....”

BOOK THE SECOND. MARJORIE MARRIED

CHAPTER THE FIRST

Settling Down

§ 1

It was in a boat among reeds upon the lake of Orta-217- that Trafford first became familiarized with the idea that Marjorie was capable of debt.

"Oh, I ought to have told you," she began, apropos of nothing.

Her explanation was airy; she had let the thing slip out of her mind for a time. But there were various debts to Oxbridge tradespeople. How much? Well, rather a lot. Of course, the tradespeople were rather enticing when first one went up —— How much, anyhow?

"Oh, about fifty pounds," said Marjorie, after her manner. "Not *more*. I've not kept all the bills; and some haven't come in. You know how slow they are."

"These things *will* happen," said Trafford, though, as a matter of fact, nothing of the sort had happened in his case. "However, you'll be able to pay as soon as you get home, and get them all off your mind."

"I think fifty pounds will clear me," said Marjorie, clinging to her long-established total, "if you'll let me have that."

"Oh, we don't do things like that," said Trafford. "I'm arranging that my current account will be a sort of joint account, and your signature will be as good as mine — for the purpose of drawing, at least. You'll have your own cheque-book — —"

"I don't understand, quite," said Marjorie.

"You'll have your own cheque-book and write-218- cheques as you want them. That seems the simplest way to me."

"Of course," said Marjorie. "But isn't this — rather unusual? Father always used to allowance mother."

"It's the only decent way according to my ideas," said Trafford. "A man shouldn't marry when he can't trust."

"Of course not," said Marjorie. Something between fear and

compunction wrung her. “Do you think you’d better?” she asked, very earnestly.

“Better?”

“Do this.”

“Why not?”

“It’s — it’s so generous.”

He didn’t answer. He took up an oar and began to push out from among the reeds with something of the shy awkwardness of a boy who becomes apprehensive of thanks. He stole a glance at her presently and caught her expression — there was something very solemn and intent in her eyes — and he thought what a grave, fine thing his Marjorie could be.

But, indeed, her state of mind was quite exceptionally confused. She was disconcerted — and horribly afraid of herself.

“Do you mean that I can spend what I like?” asked Marjorie.

“Just as I may,” he said.

“I wonder,” said Marjorie again, “if I’d better.”

She was tingling with delight at this freedom, and she knew she was not fit for its responsibility. She just came short of a passionate refusal of his proposal. He was still so new to her, and things were so wonderful, or I think she would have made that refusal.

“You’ve got to,” said Trafford, and ended the-219- matter.

So Marjorie was silent — making good resolutions.

§ 2

Perhaps some day it may be possible to tell in English again, in the language of Shakspeare and Herrick, of the passion, the tenderness, the beauty, and the delightful familiarizations of a happy honeymoon; suffice it now, in this delicate period, to record only how our two young lovers found one day that neither had a name for the other. He said she could be nothing better than Marjorie to him; and she, after a number of unsuccessful experiments, settled down to the old school-boy nickname made out of his initials, R. A. G.

“Dick,” she said, “is too bird-like and boy-like. Andrew I can’t abide. Goodwin gives one no chances for current use. Rag you must be. Mag and Rag — poor innocents! Old rag!”

“Mag,” he said, “has its drawbacks! The street-boy in London says, ‘Shut your mag.’ No, I think I shall stick to Marjorie....”

All honeymoons must end at last, so back they came to London, still very bright and happy. And then, Marjorie, whose eyes had changed from flashing stones to darkly shining pools of blue, but whose soul had still perhaps to finds its depths, set herself to the business of decorating and furnishing the little house Mrs. Trafford had found for them within ten minutes of her own. Meanwhile they lived in lodgings.

There can be no denying that Marjorie began her furnishing with severely virtuous intentions. She was very particular to ask Trafford several times what he thought she might spend upon the enterprise. He had-220- already a bedroom and a study equipped, and he threw out three hundred pounds as his conception of an acceptable figure. “Very well,” said Marjorie, with a note of great precision, “now I shall know,” and straightway that sum took a place in her imagination that was at once definitive and protective, just as her estimate of fifty pounds for her Oxbridge debts had always been. She assured herself she was going to do things, and she assured herself she was doing things, on three hundred pounds. At times the astonishment of two or three school friends, who joined her in her shopping, stirred her to a momentary surprise at the way she was managing to keep things within that limit, and following a financial method that had, after all, in spite of some momentary and already nearly forgotten distresses, worked very well at Oxbridge, she refrained from any additions until all the accounts had come to hand.

It was an immense excitement shopping to make a home. There was in her composition a strain of constructive artistry with such concrete things, a strain that had hitherto famished. She was making a beautiful, secure little home for Trafford, for herself, for possibilities — remote perhaps, but already touching her imagination with the anticipation of warm, new, wonderful delights. There should be simplicity indeed in this home, but no bareness, no harshness, never an ugliness nor a discord. She had always loved colour in the skies, in the landscapes, in the texture of stuffs and garments; now out of the chaotic skein of countless shops she could choose and pick and mingle her threads in a glow of feminine self-expression.

On three hundred pounds, that is to say — as a maximum.

The house she had to deal with was, like Mrs.-221- Trafford's, old and rather small; it was partly to its lack of bedroom accommodation, but much more to the invasion of the street by the back premises of Messrs. Siddons & Thrale, the great Chelsea outfitters, that the lowness of the rent was due, a lowness which brought it within the means of Trafford. Marjorie knew very clearly that her father would say her husband had taken her to live in a noisy slum, and that made her all the keener to ensure that every good point in the interior told to its utmost, and that whatever was to be accessible to her family should glow with a refined but warm prosperity. The room downstairs was shapely, and by ripping off the papered canvas of the previous occupier, some very dilapidated but admirably proportioned panelling was brought to light. The dining-room and study door on the ground floor, by a happy accident, were of mahogany, with really very beautiful brass furnishings; and the dining-room window upon the minute but by no means offensive paved garden behind, was curved and had a little shallow balcony of ironwork, half covered by a devitalized but leafy grapevine. Moreover, the previous occupier had equipped the place with electric light and a bathroom of almost American splendour on the landing, glass-shelved, white-tiled, and white painted, so that it was a delight to go into.

Marjorie's mind leapt very rapidly to the possibilities of this little establishment. The panelling must be done and done well, anyhow; that would be no more than a wise economy, seeing it might at any time help them to re-let; it would be painted white, of course, and thus set the key for a clean brightness of colour throughout. The furniture would stand out against the softly shining white, and its line and proportions must be therefore the primary qualities to consider as-222- she bought it. The study was much narrower than the dining-room, and so the passage, which the agent called the hall, was much broader and more commodious behind the happily wide staircase than in front, and she was able to banish out of the sight of the chance visitor all that litter of hat-stand and umbrella-stand, letters, boxes arriving and parcels to post, which had always offended her eye at home. At home there had been often the most unsightly things visible, one of Theo's awful caps, or his school books, and not

infrequently her father's well-worn and all too fatally comfortable house slippers. A good effect at first is half the victory of a well done house, and Marjorie accomplished another of her real economies here by carpeting hall and staircase with a fine-toned, rich-feeling and rather high-priced blue carpet, held down by very thick brass stair-rods. She hung up four well-chosen steel engravings, put a single Chippendale chair in the hall, and a dark old Dutch clock that had turned out to be only five pounds when she had expected the shopman to say eleven or twelve, on the half-landing. That was all. Round the corner by the study door was a mahogany slab, and the litter all went upon a capacious but very simple dark-stained hat-stand and table that were out of the picture entirely until you reached the stairs.

Her dining-room was difficult for some time. She had equipped that with a dark oak Welsh dresser made very bright with a dessert service that was, in view of its extremely decorative quality, remarkably cheap, and with some very pretty silver-topped glass bottles and flasks. This dresser and a number of simple but shapely facsimiles of old chairs, stood out against a nearly primrose paper, very faintly patterned, and a dark blue carpet with a margin of dead black-stained wood. Over the mantel was a German-223- colour-print of waves full of sunlight breaking under cliffs, and between this and the window were dark bookshelves and a few bright-coloured books. On the wall, black-framed, were four very good Japanese prints, rich in greenish-blues and blueish-greys that answered the floor, and the window curtains took up some of the colours of the German print. But something was needed towards the window, she felt, to balance the warmly shining plates upon the dresser. The deep rose-red of the cherries that adorned them was too isolated, usurped too dominating a value. And while this was weighing upon her mind she saw in a window in Regent Street a number of Bokhara hangings very nobly displayed. They were splendid pieces of needlework, particularly glorious in their crimsons and reds, and suddenly it came to her that it was just one of these, one that had great ruby flowers upon it with dead-blue interlacings, that was needed to weld her gay-coloured scheme together. She hesitated, went half-way to Piccadilly Circus, turned back and asked the prices. The prices were towering

prices, ten, fifteen, eighteen guineas, and when at last the shopman produced one with all the charm of colour she sought at eight, it seemed like ten guineas snatched back as they dropped from her hands. And still hesitating, she had three that pleased her most sent home, "on approval," before she decided finally to purchase one of them. But the trial was conclusive. And then, struck with a sudden idea, she carried off a long narrow one she had had no idea of buying before into the little study behind. Suppose, she thought, instead of hanging two curtains as anybody else would do in that window, she ran this glory of rich colour across from one side on a great rod of brass.

She was giving the study the very best of her-224- attention. After she had lapsed in some other part of the house from the standards of rigid economy she had set up, she would as it were restore the balance by adding something to the gracefully dignified arrangement of this den he was to use. And the brass rod of the Bokhara hanging that was to do instead of curtains released her mind somehow to the purchase of certain old candlesticks she had hitherto resisted. They were to stand, bored to carry candle electric lights, on either corner of the low bookcase that faced the window. They were very heavy, very shapely candlesticks, and they cost thirty-five shillings. They looked remarkably well when they were put up, except that a sort of hollowness appeared between them and clamoured for a delightful old brass-footed workbox she had seen in a shop in Baker Street. Enquiry confirmed her quick impression that this was a genuine piece (of quite exceptional genuineness) and that the price — they asked five pounds ten and came down to five guineas — was in accordance with this. It was a little difficult (in spite of the silent hunger between the candlesticks) to reconcile this particular article with her dominating idea of an austerely restrained expenditure, until she hit upon the device of calling it a *hors d'œuvre*, and regarding it not as furniture but as a present from herself to Trafford that happened to fall in very agreeably with the process of house furnishing. She decided she would some day economise its cost out of her dress allowance. The bookcase on which it stood was a happy discovery in Kensington, just five feet high, and with beautiful oval glass fronts, and its capacity was supplemented and any excess in its

price at least morally compensated by a very tall, narrow, distinguished-looking set of open shelves that had been made for some special corner in another house, and which anyhow-225- were really and truly dirt cheap. The desk combined grace and good proportions to an admirable extent, the fender of pierced brass looked as if it had always lived in immediate contact with the shapely old white marble fireplace, and the two arm-chairs were marvels of dignified comfort. By the fireplace were a banner-shaped needlework firescreen, a white sheepskin hearthrug, a little patch and powder table adapted to carry books, and a green-shaded lamp, grouped in a common inaudible demand for a reader in slippers. Trafford, when at last the apartment was ready for his inspection, surveyed these arrangements with a kind of dazzled admiration.

"By Jove!" he said. "How little people know of the homes of the Poor!"

Marjorie was so delighted with his approval that she determined to show Mrs. Trafford next day how prettily at least her son was going to live. The good lady came and admired everything, and particularly the Bokhara hangings. She did not seem to appraise, but something set Marjorie talking rather nervously of a bargain-hunter's good fortune. Mrs. Trafford glanced at the candlesticks and the low bookcase, and returned to the glowing piece of needlework that formed the symmetrical window curtain in the study. She took it in her hand, and whispered, "beautiful!"

"But aren't these rather good?" asked Mrs. Trafford.

Marjorie answered, after a little pause. "They're not too good for *him*," she said.

§ 3

And now these young people had to resume life in London in earnest. The orchestral accompaniment of the world at large began to mingle with their hitherto-226- unsustained duet. It had been inaudible in Italy. In Chelsea it had sounded, faintly perhaps but distinctly, from their very first inspection of the little house. A drawing-room speaks of callers, a dining-room of lunch-parties and dinners. It had swayed Marjorie from the front door inward.

During their honeymoon they had been gloriously unconscious of comment. Now Marjorie began to show herself keenly sensitive to the advent of a score of personalities, and very anxious to show just how completely successful in every sense her romantic disobedience had been. She knew she had been approved of, admired, condemned, sneered at, thoroughly discussed. She felt it her first duty to Trafford, to all who had approved of her flight, to every one, herself included, to make this marriage obviously, indisputably, a success, a success not only by her own standards but by the standards of anyonesoever who chose to sit in judgment on her.

There was Trafford. She felt she had to extort the admission from every one that he was the handsomest, finest, ablest, most promising and most delightful man a prominent humorist was ever jilted for. She wanted them to understand clearly just all that Trafford was — and that involved, she speedily found in practice, making them believe a very great deal that as yet Trafford wasn't. She found it practically impossible not to anticipate his election to the Royal Society and the probability of a more important professorship. She felt that anyhow he was an F.R.S. in the sight of God....

It was almost equally difficult not to indicate a larger income than facts justified.

It was entirely in Marjorie's vein in those early days that she would want to win on every score and by every standard of reckoning. If Marjorie had-227- been a general she would have counted no victory complete if the struggle was not sustained and desperate, and if it left the enemy with a single gun or flag, or herself with so much as a man killed or wounded. The people she wanted to impress varied very widely. She wanted to impress the Carmel girls, and the Carmel girls, she knew, with their racial trick of acute appraisement, were only to be won by the very highest quality all round. They had, she knew, two standards of quality, cost and distinction. As far as possible, she would give them distinction. But whenever she hesitated over something on the verge of cheapness the thought of those impending judgments tipped the balance. The Carmel girls were just two influential representatives of a host. She wanted to impress quite a number of other school and college friends. There were various shy, plastic-spirited, emotional creatures,

of course, for the most part with no confidence in their own appearance, who would be impressed quite adequately enough by Trafford's good looks and witty manner and easy temper. They might perhaps fall in love with him and become slavish to her after the way of their kind, and anyhow they would be provided for, but there were plenty of others of a harder texture whose tests would be more difficult to satisfy. There were girls who were the daughters of prominent men, who must be made to understand that Trafford was prominent, girls who were well connected, who must be made to realize the subtle excellence of Trafford's blood. As she thought of Constance Graham, for example, or Ottiline Winchelsea, she felt the strongest disposition to thicken the by no means well authenticated strands that linked Trafford with the Traffords of Trafford-over-Lea. She went about the house dreaming a little apprehensively of these coming-228- calls, and the pitiless light of criticism they would bring to bear, not indeed upon her happiness — that was assured — but upon her success.

The social side of the position would have to be strained to the utmost, Marjorie felt, with Aunt Plessington. The thought of Aunt Plessington made her peculiarly apprehensive. Aunt Plessington had to the fullest extent that contempt for merely artistic or scientific people which sits so gracefully upon the administrative English. You see people of that sort do not get on in the sense that a young lawyer or barrister gets on. They do not make steps; they boast and quarrel and are jealous perhaps, but that steady patient shove upward seems beyond their intelligence. The energies God manifestly gave them for shoving, they dissipate in the creation of weak beautiful things and unremunerative theories, or in the establishment of views sometimes diametrically opposed to the ideas of influential people. And they are "queer" — socially. They just moon about doing this so-called "work" of theirs, and even when the judgment of eccentric people forces a kind of reputation upon them — Heaven knows why? — they make no public or social use of it. It seemed to Aunt Plessington that the artist and the scientific man were dealt with very neatly and justly in the Parable of the Buried Talent. Moreover their private lives were often scandalous, they married for love instead of interest, often quite disadvantageously, and their relationships had all the

instability that is natural upon such a foundation. And, after all, what good were they? She had never met an artist or a prominent imaginative writer or scientific man that she had not been able to subdue in a minute or so by flat contradiction, and if necessary slightly-229- raising her voice. They had little or no influence even upon their own public appointments....

The thought of the invasion of her agreeable little back street establishment by this Britannic system of judgments filled Marjorie's heart with secret terrors. She felt she had to grapple with and overcome Aunt Plessington, or be for ever fallen — at least, so far as that amiable lady's report went, and she knew it went pretty far. She wandered about the house trying to imagine herself Aunt Plessington.

Immediately she felt the gravest doubts whether the whole thing wasn't too graceful and pretty. A rich and rather massive ugliness, of course, would have been the thing to fetch Aunt Plessington. Happily, it was Aunt Plessington's habit to veil her eyes with her voice. She might not see very much.

The subjugation of Aunt Plessington was difficult, but not altogether hopeless, Marjorie felt, provided her rejection of Magnet had not been taken as an act of personal ingratitude. There was a case on her side. She was discovering, for example, that Trafford had a really very considerable range of acquaintance among quite distinguished people; big figures like Evesham and MacHaldo, for example, were intelligently interested in the trend of his work. She felt this gave her a basis for Plessingtonian justifications. She could produce those people — as one shows one's loot. She could imply, "Oh, Love and all that nonsense! Certainly not! *This* is what I did it for." With skill and care and good luck, and a word here and there in edgeways, she believed she might be able to represent the whole adventure as the well-calculated opening of a campaign on soundly Plessingtonian lines. Her marriage to Trafford, she tried to persuade herself, might be presented as something almost as brilliant and startling as her aunt's swoop-230- upon her undistinguished uncle.

She might pretend that all along she had seen her way to things, to coveted dinner-tables and the familiarity of coveted guests, to bringing people together and contriving arrangements, to influence

and prominence, to culminations and intrigues impossible in the comparatively specialized world of a successful humorist and playwright, and so at last to those high freedoms of authoritative and if necessary offensive utterance in a strangulated contralto, and from a position of secure eminence, which is the goal of all virtuously ambitious Englishwomen of the governing classes — that is to say, of all virtuously ambitious Englishwomen....

§ 4

And while such turbid solicitudes as these were flowing in again from the London world to which she had returned, and fouling the bright, romantic clearness of Marjorie's life, Trafford, in his ampler, less detailed way was also troubled about their coming re-entry into society. He, too, had his old associations.

For example, he was by no means confident of the favourable judgments of his mother upon Marjorie's circle of school and college friends, whom he gathered from Marjorie's talk were destined to play a large part in this new phase of his life. She had given him very ample particulars of some of them; and he found them interesting rather than richly attractive personalities. It is to be noted that while he thought always of Marjorie as a beautiful, grown-up woman, and his mate and equal, he was still disposed to regard her intimate friends as schoolgirls of an advanced and aggressive type....

Then that large circle of distinguished acquaintances-231- which Marjorie saw so easily and amply utilized for the subjugation of Aunt Plessington didn't present itself quite in that service to Trafford's private thoughts. He hadn't that certitude of command over them, nor that confidence in their unhesitating approval of all he said and did. Just as Marjorie wished him to shine in the heavens over all her people, so, in regard to his associates, he was extraordinarily anxious that they should realize, and realize from the outset without qualification or hesitation, how beautiful, brave and delightful she was. And you know he had already begun to be aware of an evasive feeling in his mind that at times she did not altogether do herself justice — he scarcely knew as yet how or why....

She was very young....

One or two individuals stood out in his imagination, representatives and symbols of the rest. Particularly there was that old giant, Sir Roderick Dover, who had been, until recently, the Professor of Physics in the great Oxford laboratories. Dover and Trafford had one of those warm friendships which spring up at times between a rich-minded man whose greatness is assured and a young man of brilliant promise. It was all the more affectionate because Dover had been a friend of Trafford's father. These two and a group of other careless-minded, able, distinguished, and uninfluential men at the Winton Club affected the end of the smoking-room near the conservatory in the hours after lunch, and shared the joys of good talk and fine jesting about the big fireplace there. Under Dover's broad influence they talked more ideas and less gossip than is usual with English club men. Twaddle about appointments, about reputations, topics from the morning's papers, London architecture, and the commerce in "good-232- stories" took refuge at the other end in the window bays or by the further fireplace. Trafford only began to realize on his return to London how large a share this intermittent perennial conversation had contributed to the atmosphere of his existence. Amidst the romantic circumstances of his flight with Marjorie he had forgotten the part these men played in his life and thoughts. Now he was enormously exercised in the search for a reconciliation between these, he felt, incommensurable factors.

He was afraid of what might be Sir Roderick's unspoken judgment on Marjorie and the house she had made — though what was there to be afraid of? He was still more afraid — and this was even more remarkable — of the clear little judgments — hard as loose, small diamonds in a bed — that he thought Marjorie might pronounce on Sir Roderick. He had never disguised from himself that Sir Roderick was fat — nobody who came within a hundred yards of him could be under any illusion about that — and that he drank a good deal, ate with a cosmic spaciousness, loved a cigar, and talked and laughed with a freedom that sometimes drove delicate-minded new members into the corners remotest from the historical fireplace. Trafford knew himself quite definitely that there was a joy in Dover's laugh and voice, a beauty in his face (that was somehow mixed up with his healthy corpulence), and a breadth, a charity, a

leonine courage in his mind (that was somehow mixed up with his careless freedom of speech) that made him an altogether satisfactory person.

But supposing Marjorie didn't see any of that!

Still, he was on the verge of bringing Sir Roderick home when a talk at the club one day postponed that introduction of the two extremes of Trafford's existence for quite a considerable time.

Those were the days of the first enthusiasms of-233- the militant suffrage movement, and the occasional smashing of a Downing Street window or an assault upon a minister kept the question of woman's distinctive intelligence and character persistently before the public. Godley Buzard, the feminist novelist, had been the guest of some member to lunch, and the occasion was too provocative for any one about Dover's fireplace to avoid the topic. Buzard's presence, perhaps, drove Dover into an extreme position on the other side; he forgot Trafford's new-wedded condition, and handled this great argument, an argument which has scarcely progressed since its beginning in the days of Plato and Aristophanes, with the freedoms of an ancient Greek and the explicitness of a modern scientific man.

He opened almost apropos of nothing. "Women," he said, "are inferior — and you can't get away from it."

"You can deny it," said Buzard.

"In the face of the facts," said Sir Roderick. "To begin with, they're several inches shorter, several pounds lighter; they've less physical strength in footpounds."

"More endurance," said Buzard.

"Less sensitiveness merely. All those are demonstrable things — amenable to figures and apparatus. Then they stand nervous tensions worse, the breaking-point comes sooner. They have weaker inhibitions, and inhibition is the test of a creature's position in the mental scale."

He maintained that in the face of Buzard's animated protest. Buzard glanced at their moral qualities. "More moral!" cried Dover, "more self-restraint! Not a bit of it! Their desires and passions are weaker even than their controls; that's all. Weaken restraints and they show their quality. A-234- drunken woman is far worse than a drunken man. And as for their biological significance — —"

“They are the species,” said Buzard, “and we are the accidents.”

“They are the stolon and we are the individualized branches. They are the stem and we are the fruits. Surely it’s better to exist than just transmit existence. And that’s a woman’s business, though we’ve fooled and petted most of ’em into forgetting it....”

He proceeded to an attack on the intellectual quality of women. He scoffed at the woman artist, at feminine research, at what he called the joke of feminine philosophy. Buzard broke in with some sentences of reply. He alleged the lack of feminine opportunity, inferior education.

“You don’t or won’t understand me,” said Dover. “It isn’t a matter of education or opportunity, or simply that they’re of inferior capacity; it lies deeper than that. They don’t *want* to do these things. They’re different.”

“Precisely,” ejaculated Buzard, as if he claimed a score.

“They don’t care for these things. They don’t care for art or philosophy, or literature or anything except the things that touch them directly. That’s their peculiar difference. Hunger they understand, and comfort, and personal vanity and desire, furs and chocolate and husbands, and the extreme importance conferred upon them by having babies at infrequent intervals. But philosophy or beauty for its own sake, or dreams! Lord! no! The Mahometans know they haven’t souls, and they say it. We know, and keep it up that they have. Haven’t all we scientific men had ’em in our laboratories working; don’t we know the papers they turn out? Every sane-235- man of five and forty knows something of the disillusionment of the feminine dream, but we who’ve had the beautiful creatures under us, weighing rather badly, handling rather weakly, invariably missing every fine detail and all the implications of our researches, never flashing, never leaping, never being even thoroughly bad, — we’re specialists in the subject. At the present time there are far more educated young women than educated young men available for research work — and who wants them? Oh, the young professors who’ve still got ideals perhaps. And in they come, and if they’re dull, they just voluminously do nothing, and if they’re bright, they either marry your demonstrator or get him into a mess. And the work —— ? It’s nothing to them. No woman ever painted

for the love of painting, or sang for the sounds she made, or philosophized for the sake of wisdom as men do — —"

Buzard intervened with instances. Dover would have none of them. He displayed astonishing and distinctive knowledge. "Madame Curie," clamoured Buzard, "Madame Curie."

"There was Curie," said Dover. "No woman alone has done such things. I don't say women aren't clever," he insisted. "They're too clever. Give them a man's track or a man's intention marked and defined, they'll ape him to the life — —"

Buzard renewed his protests, talking at the same time as Dover, and was understood to say that women had to care for something greater than art or philosophy. They were custodians of life, the future of the race ——

"And that's my crowning disappointment," cried Dover. "If there was one thing in which you might think women would show a sense of some divine purpose in life, it is in the matter of children — and they-236- show about as much care in that matter, oh! — as rabbits. Yes, rabbits! I stick to it. Look at the things a nice girl will marry; look at the men's children she'll consent to bring into the world. Cheerfully! Proudly! For the sake of the home and the clothes. Nasty little beasts they'll breed without turning a hair. All about us we see girls and women marrying ugly men, dull and stupid men, ill-tempered dyspeptic wrecks, sickly young fools, human rats — *rats!*"

"No, no!" cried Trafford to Dover.

Buzard's voice clamoured that all would be different when women had the vote.

"If ever we get a decent care for Eugenics, it will come from men," said a white-faced little man on the sofa beside Trafford, in the confidential tone of one who tells a secret.

"Doing it cheerfully!" insisted Dover.

Trafford in mid-protest was suddenly stricken into silence by a memory. It was as if the past had thrown a stone at the back of his head and hit it smartly. He nipped his sentence in the bud. He left the case for women to Buzard....

He revived that memory again on his way home. It had been in his mind overlaid by a multitude of newer, fresher things, but now he took it out and looked at it. It was queer, it was really very queer, to

think that once upon a time, not so very long ago, Marjorie had been prepared to marry Magnet. Of course she had hated it, but still —— ....

There is much to be discovered about life, even by a brilliant and rising young Professor of Physics....

Presently Dover, fingering the little glass of yellow chartreuse he had hitherto forgotten in the heat of controversy, took a more personal turn.

"Don't we know," he said, and made the limpid-237- amber vanish in his pause. "Don't we know we've got to manage and control 'em — just as we've got to keep 'em and stand the racket of their misbehaviour? Don't our instincts tell us? Doesn't something tell us all that if we let a woman loose with our honour and trust, some other man will get hold of her? We've tried it long enough now, this theory that a woman's a partner and an equal; we've tried it long enough to see some of the results, and does it work? Does it? A woman's a prize, a possession, a responsibility, something to take care of and be careful about.... You chaps, if you'll forgive me, you advanced chaps, seem to want to have the women take care of you. You seem always to want to force decisions on them, make them answerable for things that you ought to decide and answer for.... If one could, if one could! If!... But they're not helps — that's a dream — they're distractions, gratifications, anxieties, dangers, undertakings...."

Buzard got in his one effective blow at this point. "That's why you've never married, Sir Roderick?" he threw out.

The big man was checked for a moment. Trafford wondered what memory lit that instant's pause. "I've had my science," said Dover.

§ 5

Mrs. Pope was of course among the first to visit the new home so soon as it was open to inspection. She arrived, looking very bright and neat in a new bonnet and some new black furs that suited her, bearing up bravely but obviously in a state of dispersed and miscellaneous emotion....

In many ways Marjorie's marriage had been a-238- great relief to

her mother. Particularly it had been a financial relief. Marjorie had been the most expensive child of her family, and her cessation had led to increments both of Mrs. Pope's and Daphne's all too restricted allowances. Mrs. Pope had been able therefore to relapse from the orthodox Anglicanism into which poverty had driven her, and indulge for an hour weekly in the consolations of Higher Thought. These exercises in emancipated religiosity occurred at the house of Mr. Silas Root, and were greatly valued by a large circle of clients. Essentially they were orgies of vacuity, and they cost six guineas for seven hours. They did her no end of good. All through the precious weekly hour she sat with him in a silent twilight, very, very still and feeling — oh! "higher" than anything, and when she came out she wore an inane smile on her face and was prepared not to worry, to lie with facility, and to take the easiest way in every eventuality in an entirely satisfactory and exalted manner. Moreover he was "treating" her investments. Acting upon his advice, and doing the whole thing quietly with the idea of preparing a pleasant surprise for her husband, she had sold out of certain Home Railway debentures and invested in a company for working the auriferous waste which is so abundant in the drainage of Philadelphia, a company whose shareholders were chiefly higher thought disciples and whose profits therefore would inevitably be greatly enhanced by their concerted mental action. It was to the prospective profits in this that she owed the new black furs she was wearing.

The furs and the bonnet and the previous day's treatment she had had, all helped to brace her up on Marjorie's doorstep for a complex and difficult situation, and to carry her through the first tensions of-239- her call. She was so much to pieces as it was that she could not help feeling how much more to pieces she might have been — but for the grace of Silas Root. She knew she ought to have very strong feelings about Trafford, though it was not really clear to her what feelings she ought to have. On the whole she was inclined to believe she was experiencing moral disapproval mixed up with a pathetic and rather hopeless appeal for the welfare of the tender life that had entrusted itself so recklessly to these brutal and discreditable hands, though indeed if she had really dared to look inside her mind her chief discovery would have been a keenly jealous appreciation of

Trafford's good looks and generous temper, and a feeling of injustice as between her own lot and Marjorie's. However, going on her assumed basis she managed to be very pale, concise and tight-lipped at any mention of her son-in-law, and to put a fervour of helpless devotion into her embraces of her daughter. She surveyed the house with a pained constrained expression, as though she tried in vain to conceal from herself that it was all slightly improper, and even such objects as the Bokhara hangings failed to extort more than an insincere, "Oh, very nice, dear — *very* nice."

In the bedroom, she spoke about Mr. Pope. "He was dreadfully upset," she said. "His first thought was to come after you both with a pistol. If — if *he* hadn't married you — —"

"But dear Mummy, of *course* we meant to marry! We married right away."

"Yes, dear, of course. But if he hadn't — —"

She paused, and Marjorie, with a momentary flush of indignation in her cheeks, did not urge her to conclude her explanation.

"He's *wounded*," said Mrs. Pope. "Some day-240- perhaps he'll come round — you were always his favourite daughter."

"I know," said Marjorie concisely, with a faint flavour of cynicism in her voice.

"I'm afraid dear, at present — he will do nothing for you."

"I don't think Rag would like him to," said Marjorie with an unreal serenity; "*ever*."

"For a time I'm afraid he'll refuse to see you. He just wants to forget —— . Everything."

"Poor old Dad! I wish he wouldn't put himself out like this. Still, I won't bother him, Mummy, if you mean that."

Then suddenly into Mrs. Pope's unsystematic, unstable mind, started perhaps by the ring in her daughter's voice, there came a wave of affectionate feeling. That she had somehow to be hostile and unsympathetic to Marjorie, that she had to pretend that Trafford was wicked and disgusting, and not be happy in the jolly hope and happiness of this bright little house, cut her with a keen swift pain. She didn't know clearly why she was taking this coldly hostile attitude, or why she went on doing so, but the sense of that necessity hurt her none the less. She put out her hands upon her daughter's

shoulders and whimpered: “Oh my dear! I do wish things weren’t so difficult — so very difficult.”

The whimper changed by some inner force of its own to honest sobs and tears.

Marjorie passed through a flash of amazement to a sudden understanding of her mother’s case. “Poor dear Mummy,” she said. “Oh! poor dear Mummy. It’s a shame of us!”

She put her arms about her mother and held her for awhile.

“It *is* a shame,” said her mother in a muffled-241- voice, trying to keep hold of this elusive thing that had somehow both wounded her and won her daughter back. But her poor grasp slipped again. “I knew you’d come to see it,” she said, dabbing with her handkerchief at her eyes. “I knew you would.” And then with the habitual loyalty of years resuming its sway: “He’s always been so good to you.”...

But Mrs. Pope had something more definite to say to Marjorie, and came to it at last with a tactful offhandedness. Marjorie communicated it to Trafford about an hour later on his return from the laboratory. “I say,” she said, “old Daffy’s engaged to Magnet!”

She paused, and added with just the faintest trace of resentment in her voice: “She can have him, as far as I’m concerned.”

“He didn’t wait long,” said Trafford tactlessly.

“No,” said Marjorie; “he didn’t wait long.... Of course she got him on the rebound.”...

§ 6

Mrs. Pope was only a day or so ahead of a cloud of callers. The Carmel girls followed close upon her, tall figures of black fur, with costly-looking muffs and a rich glitter at neck and wrist. Marjorie displayed her house, talking fluently about other things, and watching for effects. The Carmel girls ran their swift dark eyes over her appointments, glanced quickly from side to side of her rooms, saw only too certainly that the house was narrow and small —— . But did they see that it was clever? They saw at any rate that she meant it to be clever, and with true Oriental politeness said as much urgently and extravagantly. Then there were the Rambord girls-242- and their mother, an unobservant lot who chattered about the ice at

Prince's; then Constance Graham came with a thoroughbred but very dirty aunt, and then Ottiline Winchelsea with an American minor poet, who wanted a view of mountains from the windows at the back, and said the bathroom ought to be done in pink. Then Lady Solomonson came; an extremely expensive-looking fair lady with an affectation of cynicism, a keen intelligence, acutely apt conversation, and a queer effect of thinking of something else all the time she was talking. She missed nothing....

Hardly anybody failed to appreciate the charm and decision of Marjorie's use of those Bokhara embroideries.

They would have been cheap at double the price.

§ 7

And then our two young people went out to their first dinner-parties together. They began with Trafford's rich friend Solomonson, who had played so large and so passive a part in their first meeting. He had behaved with a sort of magnanimous triumph over the marriage. He made it almost his personal affair, as though he had brought it about. "I knew there was a girl in it," he insisted, "and you told me there wasn't. O-a-ah! And you kept me in that smell of disinfectant and things — what a chap that doctor was for spilling stuff! — for six blessed days!..."

Marjorie achieved a dress at once simple and good with great facility by not asking the price until it was all over. (There is no half-success with dinner-dresses, either the thing is a success and inestimable, or not worth having at any price at all.) It was blue with a thread of gold, and she had a necklace-243- of blueish moonstones, gold-set, and her hair ceased to be copper and became golden, and her eyes unfathomable blue. She was radiant with health and happiness, no one else there had her clear freshness, and her manner was as restrained and dignified and ready as a proud young wife's can be. Everyone seemed to like her and respect her and be interested in her, and Trafford kissed her flushed cheek in the hansom as they came home again and crowned her happiness. It had been quite a large party, and really much more splendid and brilliant than anything she had ever seen before. There had been one old

gentleman with a coloured button and another with a ribbon; there had been a countess with historical pearls, and half-a-dozen other people one might fairly call distinguished. The house was tremendous in its way, spacious, rich, glowing with lights, abounding in vistas and fine remote backgrounds. In the midst of it all she had a sudden thrill at the memory that less than a year ago she had been ignominiously dismissed from the dinner-table by her father for a hiccup....

A few days after Aunt Plessington suddenly asked the Traffords to one of her less important but still interesting gatherings; not one of those that swayed the world perhaps, but one which Marjorie was given to understand achieved important subordinate wagging. Aunt Plessington had not called, she explained in her note, because of the urgent demands the Movement made upon her time; it was her wonderful hard-breathing way never to call on anyone, and it added tremendously to her reputation; none the less it appeared — though here the scrawl became illegible — she meant to shove and steer her dear niece upward at a tremendous pace. They were even asked to come a little early so that she might make Trafford's acquaintance.-244-

The dress was duly admired, and then Aunt Plessington — assuming the hearthrug and forgetting the little matter of their career — explained quite Napoleonic and wonderful things she was going to do with her Movement, fresh principles, fresh applications, a big committee of all the "names" — they were easy to get if you didn't bother them to do things — a new and more attractive title, "Payment in Kind" was to give way to "Reality of Reward," and she herself was going to have her hair bleached bright white (which would set off her eyes and colour and the general geniality of appearance due to her projecting teeth), and so greatly increase her "platform efficiency." Hubert, she said, was toiling away hard at the detail of these new endeavours. He would be down in a few minutes' time. Marjorie, she said, ought to speak at their meetings. It would help both the Traffords to get on if Marjorie cut a dash at the outset, and there was no such dash to be cut as speaking at Aunt Plessington's meetings. It was catching on; all next season it was sure to be the thing. So many promising girls allowed themselves to

be submerged altogether in marriage for a time, and when they emerged everyone had forgotten the promise of their début. She had an air of rescuing Marjorie from an impending fate by disabusing Trafford from injurious prepossessions....

Presently the guests began to drop in, a vegetarian health specialist, a rising young woman factory inspector, a phrenologist who was being induced to put great talents to better uses under Aunt Plessington's influence, his dumb, obscure, but inevitable wife, a colonial bishop, a baroness with a taste rather than a capacity for intellectual society, a wealthy jam and pickle manufacturer and his wife, who had subscribed-245- largely to the funds of the Movement and wanted to meet the lady of title, and the editor of the Movement's organ, *Upward and On*, a young gentleman of abundant hair and cadaverous silences, whom Aunt Plessington patted on the shoulder and spoke of as "one of our discoveries." And then Uncle Hubert came down, looking ruffled and overworked, with his ready-made dress-tie — he was one of those men who can never master the art of tying a bow — very much askew. The conversation turned chiefly on the Movement; if it strayed Aunt Plessington reached out her voice after it and brought it back in a masterful manner.

Through soup and fish Marjorie occupied herself with the inflexible rigour of the young editor, who had brought her down. When she could give her attention to the general conversation she discovered her husband a little flushed and tackling her aunt with an expression of quiet determination. The phrenologist and the vegetarian health specialist were regarding him with amazement, the jam and pickle manufacturer's wife was evidently deeply shocked. He was refusing to believe in the value of the Movement, and Aunt Plessington was manifestly losing her temper.

"I don't see, Mrs. Plessington," he was saying, "that all this amounts to more than a kind of Glorious District Visiting. That is how I see it. You want to attack people in their homes — before they cry out to you. You want to compel them by this Payment in Kind of yours to do what you want them to do instead of trying to make them want to do it. Now, I think your business is to make them want to do it. You may perhaps increase the amount of milk in babies, and the amount of whitewash in cottages and slums by your methods — I

don't dispute-246- the promise of your statistics — but you're going to do it at a cost of human self-respect that's out of all proportion — —"

Uncle Hubert's voice, with that thick utterance that always suggested a mouthful of plums, came booming down the table. "All these arguments," he said, "have been answered long ago."

"No doubt," said Trafford with a faint asperity. "But tell me the answers."

"It's ridiculous," said Aunt Plessington, "to talk of the self-respect of the kind of people — oh! the very dregs!"

"It's just because the plant is delicate that you've got to handle it carefully," said Trafford.

"Here's Miss Gant," said Aunt Plessington, "*she* knows the strata we are discussing. She'll tell you they have positively *no* self-respect — none at all."

"*My* people," said Miss Gant, as if in conclusive testimony, "actually conspire with their employers to defeat me."

"I don't see the absence of self-respect in that," said Trafford.

"But all their interests — —"

"I'm thinking of their pride."...

The discussion lasted to the end of dinner and made no headway. As soon as the ladies were in the drawing-room, Aunt Plessington, a little flushed from the conflict, turned on Marjorie and said, "I *like* your husband. He's wrong-headed, but he's young, and he's certainly spirited. He *ought* to get on if he wants to. Does he do nothing but his researches?"

"He lectures in the spring term," said Marjorie.

"Ah!" said Aunt Plessington with a triumphant note, "you must alter all that. You must interest him in wider things. You must bring him out of his-247- shell, and let him see what it is to deal with Affairs. Then he wouldn't talk such nonsense about our Work."

Marjory was at a momentary loss for a reply, and in the instant's respite Aunt Plessington turned to the jam and pickle lady and asked in a bright, encouraging note: "Well! And how's the Village Club getting on?"...

She had another lunge at Trafford as he took his leave. "You must come again soon," she said. "I *love* a good wrangle, and Hubert and I

never want to talk about our Movement to any one but unbelievers. You don't know the beginnings of it yet. Only I warn you they have a way of getting converted. I warn you."...

On this occasion there was no kissing in the cab. Trafford was exasperated.

"Of all the intolerable women!" he said, and was silent for a time.

"The astounding part of it is," he burst out, "that this sort of thing, this Movement and all the rest of it, does really give the quality of English public affairs. It's like a sample — dredged. The — the *cheapness* of it! Raised voices, rash assertions, sham investigations, meetings and committees and meetings, that's the stuff of it, and politicians really have to attend to it, and silly, ineffective, irritating bills really get drafted and messed about with and passed on the strength of it. Public affairs are still in the Dark Ages. Nobody now would think of getting together a scratch committee of rich old women and miscellaneous conspicuous people to design an electric tram, and jabbering and jabbering and jabbering, and if any one objects" — a note of personal bitterness came into his voice— "jabbering faster; but nobody thinks it ridiculous to attempt the-248-organization of poor people's affairs in that sort of way. This project of the supersession of Wages by Payment in Kind — oh! it's childish. If it wasn't it would be outrageous and indecent. Your uncle and aunt haven't thought for a moment of any single one of the necessary consequences of these things they say their confounded Movement aims at, effects upon the race, upon public spirit, upon people's habits and motives. They've just a queer craving to feel powerful and influential, which they think they can best satisfy by upsetting the lives of no end of harmless poor people — the only people they dare upset — and that's about as far as they go.... Your aunt's detestable, Marjorie."

Marjorie had never seen him so deeply affected by anything but herself. It seemed to her he was needlessly disturbed by a trivial matter. He sulked for a space, and then broke out again.

"That confounded woman talks of my physical science," he said, "as if research were an amiable weakness, like collecting postage stamps. And it's changed human conditions more in the last ten years than all the parliamentary wire-pullers and legislators and

administrative experts have done in two centuries. And for all that, there's more clerks in Whitehall than professors of physics in the whole of England."...

"I suppose it's the way that sort of thing gets done," said Marjorie, after an interval.

"That sort of thing doesn't get done," snapped Trafford. "All these people burble about with their movements and jobs, and lectures and stuff — and *things happen*. Like some one getting squashed to death in a crowd. Nobody did it, but anybody in the muddle can claim to have done it — if only they've-249- got the cheek of your Aunt Plessington."

He seemed to have finished.

"*Done!*" he suddenly broke out again. "Why! people like your Aunt Plessington don't even know where the handle is. If they ventured to look for it, they'd give the whole show away! Done, indeed!"

"Here we are!" said Marjorie, a little relieved to find the hansom turning out of King's Road into their own side street....

And then Marjorie wore the blue dress with great success at the Carmels'. The girls came and looked at it and admired it — it was no mere politeness. They admitted there was style about it, a quality — there was no explaining. "You're *wonderful*, Madge!" cried the younger Carmel girl.

The Carmel boy, seizing the opportunity of a momentary seclusion in a corner, ended a short but rather portentous silence with "I say, you *do* look ripping," in a voice that implied the keenest regret for the slacknesses of a summer that was now infinitely remote to Marjorie. It was ridiculous that the Carmel boy should have such emotions — he was six years younger than Trafford and only a year older than Marjorie, and yet she was pleased by his manifest wound....

There was only one little thing at the back of her mind that alloyed her sense of happy and complete living that night, and that was the ghost of an addition sum. At home, in her pretty bureau, a little gathering pile of bills, as yet unpaid, and an empty cheque-book with appealing counterfoils, awaited her attention.

Marjorie had still to master the fact that all the fine braveries and

interests and delights of life that offer themselves so amply to the favoured children-250- of civilization, trail and, since the fall of man at any rate, have trailed after them something — something, the justification of morality, the despair of all easy, happy souls, the unavoidable drop of bitterness in the cup of pleasure — the Reckoning.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

The Child of the Ages

§ 1

When the intellectual history of this time comes to-251- be written, nothing I think will stand out more strikingly than the empty gulf in quality between the superb and richly fruitful scientific investigations that are going on and the general thought of other educated sections of the community. I do not mean that the scientific men are as a whole a class of supermen, dealing with and thinking about everything in a way altogether better than the common run of humanity, but that in their own field, they think and work with an intensity, an integrity, a breadth, boldness, patience, thoroughness and faithfulness that (excepting only a few artists) puts their work out of all comparison with any other human activity. Often the field in which the work is done is very narrow, and almost universally the underlying philosophy is felt rather than apprehended. A scientific man may be large and deep-minded, deliberate and personally detached in his work, and hasty, commonplace and superficial in every other relation of life. Nevertheless it is true that in these particular directions the human mind has achieved a new and higher quality of attitude and gesture, a veracity, self-detachment and self-abnegating vigour of criticism that tend to spread out and must ultimately spread out to every other human affair. In these uncontroversial issues at least mankind has learnt the rich rewards that ensue from patience and infinite pains.

The peculiar circumstances of Trafford's birth-252- and upbringing had accentuated his natural disposition toward this new thoroughness of intellectual treatment which has always distinguished the great artist, and which to-day is also the essential quality of the scientific method. He had lived apart from any urgency to produce and compete in the common business of the world; his natural curiosities, fed and encouraged by his natural gifts, had grown into a steady passion for clarity and knowledge. But with him

there was no specialization. He brought out from his laboratory into the everyday affairs of the world the same sceptical restraint of judgment which is the touchstone of scientific truth. This made him a tepid and indeed rather a scornful spectator of political and social life. Party formulae, international rivalries, social customs, and very much of the ordinary law of our state impressed him as a kind of fungoid growth out of a fundamental intellectual muddle. It all maintained itself hazardously, changing and adapting itself unintelligently to unseen conditions. He saw no ultimate truth in this seething welter of human efforts, no tragedy as yet in its defeats, no value in its victories. It had to go on, he believed, until the spreading certitudes of the scientific method pierced its unsubstantial thickets, burst its delusive films, drained away its folly. Aunt Plessington's talk of order and progress and the influence of her Movement impressed his mind very much as the cackle of some larger kind of hen — which cackles because it must. Only Aunt Plessington being human simply imagined the egg. She laid — on the plane of the ideal. When the great nonsensical issues between liberal and conservative, between socialist and individualist, between "Anglo-Saxon" and "Teuton," between the "white race" and the "yellow race" arose in Trafford's company, he would if-253- he felt cheerful take one side or the other as chance or his amusement with his interlocutors determined, and jest and gibe at the opponent's inconsistencies, and if on the other hand he chanced to be irritable he would lose his temper at this "chewing of mesembryanthemum" and sulk into silence. "Chewing mesembryanthemum" was one of Trafford's favourite images, — no doubt the reader knows that abundant fleshy Mediterranean weed and the weakly unpleasant wateriness of its substance. He went back to his laboratory and his proper work after such discussions with a feeling of escape, as if he shut a door upon a dirty and undisciplined market-place crowded with mental defectives. Yet even before he met and married Marjorie, there was a queer little undertow of thought in his mind which insisted that this business could not end with door-slamming, that he didn't altogether leave the social confusion outside his panels when he stood alone before his apparatus, and that sooner or later that babble of voices would force his defences and overcome his

disdain.

His particular work upon the intimate constitution of matter had broadened very rapidly in his hands. The drift of his work had been to identify all colloids as liquid solutions of variable degrees of viscosity, and to treat crystalline bodies as the only solids. He had dealt with oscillating processes in colloid bodies with especial reference to living matter. He had passed from a study of the melting and toughening of glass to the molecular structure of a number of elastic bodies, and so, by a characteristic leap into botanical physiology, to the states of resinous and gummy substances at the moment of secretion. He worked at first upon a false start, and then resumed to discover a growing illumination. He found himself in the presence of phenomena that seemed to-254- him to lie near the still undiscovered threshold to the secret processes of living protoplasm. He was, as it were, breaking into biology by way of molecular physics. He spent many long nights of deep excitement, calculating and arranging the development of these seductive intimations. It was this work which his marriage had interrupted, and to which he was now returning.

He was surprised to find how difficult it was to take it up again. He had been only two months away from it, and yet already it had not a little of the feeling of a relic taken from a drawer. Something had faded. It was at first as if a film had come over his eyes, so that he could no longer see these things clearly and subtly and closely. His senses, his emotions, had been living in a stirring and vivid illumination. Now in this cool quietude bright clouds of coloured memory-stuff swam distractingly before his eyes. Phantom kisses on his lips, the memory of touches and the echoing vibrations of an adorable voice, the thought of a gay delightful fireside and the fresh recollection of a companion intensely felt beside him, effaced the delicate profundities of this dim place. Durgan hovered about him, helpful and a mute reproach. Trafford had to force his attention daily for the better part of two weeks before he had fully recovered the fine enchanting interest of that suspended work.

§ 2

At last one day he had the happiness of possession again. He had exactly the sensation one gets when some hitherto intractable piece of a machine one is putting together, clicks neatly and beyond all hoping, into its place. He found himself working in the old style, with the hours slipping by disregarded.-255- He sent out Durgan to get him tobacco and tea and smoked-salmon sandwiches, and he stayed in the laboratory all night. He went home about half-past five, and found a white-faced, red-eyed Marjorie still dressed, wrapped in a travelling-rug, and crumpled and asleep in his study arm-chair beside the grey ashes of an extinct fire.

In the instant before she awoke he could see what a fragile and pitiful being a healthy and happy young wife can appear. Her pose revealed an unsuspected slender weakness of body, her face something infantile and wistful he had still to reckon with. She awoke with a start and stared at him for a moment, and at the room about her. "Oh, where have you been?" she asked almost querulously. "Where *have* you been?"

"But my dear!" he said, as one might speak to a child, "why aren't you in bed? It's just dawn."

"Oh," she said, "I waited and I waited. It seemed you *must* come. I read a book. And then I fell asleep." And then with a sob of feeble self-pity, "And here I am!" She rubbed the back of her hand into one eye and shivered. "I'm cold," she said, "and I want some tea."

"Let's make some," said Trafford.

"It's been horrible waiting," said Marjorie without moving; "horrible! Where have you been?"

"I've been working. I got excited by my work. I've been at the laboratory. I've had the best spell of work I've ever had since our marriage."

"But I have been up all night!" she cried with her face and voice softening to tears. "How *could* you? How *could* you?"

He was surprised by her weeping. He was still more surprised by the self-abandonment that allowed her to continue. "I've been working," he repeated,-256- and then looked about with a man's helplessness for the tea apparatus. One must have hot water and a teapot and a kettle; he would find those in the kitchen. He strolled thoughtfully out of the room, thinking out the further details of tea-

making all mixed up with amazement at Marjorie, while she sat wiping her eyes with a crumpled pocket-handkerchief. Presently she followed him down with the rug about her like a shawl, and stood watching him as he lit a fire of wood and paper among the ashes in the kitchen fireplace. “It’s been dreadful,” she said, not offering to help.

“You see,” he said, on his knees, “I’d really got hold of my work at last.”

“But you should have sent — —”

“I was thinking of my work. I clean forgot.”

“Forgot?”

“Absolutely.”

“Forgot — *me!*”

“Of course,” said Trafford, with a slightly puzzled air, “you don’t see it as I do.”

The kettle engaged him for a time. Then he threw out a suggestion. “We’ll have to have a telephone.”

“I couldn’t imagine where you were. I thought of all sorts of things. I almost came round — but I was so horribly afraid I mightn’t find you.”

He renewed his suggestion of a telephone.

“So that if I really want you — —” said Marjorie. “Or if I just want to feel you’re there.”

“Yes,” said Trafford slowly, jabbing a piece of firewood into the glow; but it was chiefly present in his mind that much of that elaborate experimenting of his wasn’t at all a thing to be cut athwart by the exasperating gusts of a telephone bell clamouring for attention. Hitherto the laboratory telephone-257- had been in the habit of disconnecting itself early in the afternoon.

And yet after all it was this instrument, the same twisted wire and little quivering tympanum, that had brought back Marjorie into his life.

§ 3

And now Trafford fell into a great perplexity of mind. His banker had called his attention to the fact that his account was overdrawn to

the extent of three hundred and thirteen pounds, and he had been under that vague sort of impression one always has about one's current account that he was a hundred and fifty or so to the good. His first impression was that those hitherto infallible beings, those unseen gnomes of the pass-book whose lucid figures, neat tickings, and unrelenting additions constituted banks to his imagination, must have made a mistake; his second that some one had tampered with a cheque. His third thought pointed to Marjorie and the easy circumstances of his home. For a fortnight now she had been obviously ailing, oddly irritable; he did not understand the change in her, but it sufficed to prevent his taking the thing to her at once and going into it with her as he would have done earlier. Instead he had sent for his pass-book, and in the presence of its neat columns realized for the first time the meaning of Marjorie's "three hundred pounds." Including half-a-dozen cheques to Oxbridge tradesmen for her old debts, she had spent, he discovered, nearly seven hundred and fifty.

He sat before the little bundle of crumpled strips of pink and white, perforated, purple stamped and effaced, in a state of extreme astonishment. It was no small factor in his amazement to note how very carelessly-258- some of those cheques of Marjorie's had been written. Several she had not even crossed. The effect of it all was that she'd just spent his money — freely — with an utter disregard of the consequences.

Up to that moment it had never occurred to Trafford that anybody one really cared for, could be anything but punctilious about money. Now here, with an arithmetical exactitude of demonstration, he perceived that Marjorie wasn't.

It was so tremendous a discovery for him, so disconcerting and startling, that he didn't for two days say a word to her about it. He couldn't think of a word to say. He felt that even to put these facts before her amounted to an accusation of disloyalty and selfishness that he hadn't the courage to make. His work stopped altogether. He struggled hourly with that accusation. Did she realize —— ? There seemed no escape from his dilemma; either she didn't care or she didn't understand!

His thoughts went back to the lake of Orta, when he had put all

his money at her disposal. She had been surprised, and now he perceived she had also been a little frightened. The chief excuse he could find for her was that she was inexperienced — absolutely inexperienced.

Even now, of course, she was drawing fresh cheques....

He would have to pull himself together, and go into the whole thing — for all its infinite disagreeableness — with her....

But it was Marjorie who broached the subject.

He had found work at the laboratory unsatisfactory, and after lunching at his club he had come home and gone to his study in order to think out the discussion he contemplated with her. She came in to him as he sat at his desk. "Busy?" she said. "Not-259- very," he answered, and she came up to him, kissed his head, and stood beside him with her hand on his shoulder.

"Pass-book?" she asked.

He nodded.

"I've been overrunning."

"No end."

The matter was opened. What would she say?

She bent to his ear and whispered. "I'm going to overrun some more."

His voice was resentful. "You *can't*," he said compactly without looking at her. "You've spent — enough."

"There's — things."

"What things?"

Her answer took some time in coming. "We'll have to give a wedding present to Daffy.... I shall want — some more furniture."

Well, he had to go into it now. "I don't think you can have it," he said, and then as she remained silent, "Marjorie, do you know how much money I've got?"

"Six thousand."

"I *had*. But we've spent nearly a thousand pounds. Yes — one thousand pounds — over and above income. We meant to spend four hundred. And now, we've got — hardly anything over five."

"Five thousand," said Marjorie.

"Five thousand."

"And there's your salary."

“Yes, but at this pace — —”

“Dear,” said Marjorie, and her hands came about his neck, “dear — there’s something — —”

She broke off. An unfamiliar quality in her voice struck into him. He turned his head to see her face,-260- rose to his feet staring at her.

This remarkable young woman had become soft and wonderful as April hills across which clouds are sweeping. Her face was as if he had never seen it before; her eyes bright with tears.

“Oh! don’t let’s spoil things by thinking of money,” she said. “I’ve got something — —” Her voice fell to a whisper. “Don’t let’s spoil things by thinking of money.... It’s too good, dear, to be true. It’s too good to be true. It makes everything perfect.... We’ll have to furnish that little room. I didn’t dare to hope it — somehow. I’ve been so excited and afraid. But we’ve got to furnish that little room there — that empty little room upstairs, dear, that we left over.... Oh my *dear!* my *dear!*”

§ 4

The world of Trafford and Marjorie was filled and transfigured by the advent of their child.

For two days of abundant silences he had been preparing a statement of his case for her, he had been full of the danger to his research and all the waste of his life that her extravagance threatened. He wanted to tell her just all that his science meant to him, explain how his income and life had all been arranged to leave him, mind and time and energy, free for these commanding investigations. His life was to him the service of knowledge — or futility. He had perceived that she did not understand this in him; that for her, life was a blaze of eagerly sought experiences and gratifications. So far he had thought out things and had them ready for her. But now all this impending discussion vanished out of his world. Their-261- love was to be crowned by the miracle of parentage. This fact flooded his outlook and submerged every other consideration.

This manifest probability came to him as if it were an unforeseen marvel. It was as if he had never thought of such a thing before, as though a fact entirely novel in the order of the universe had come

into existence. Marjorie became again magical and wonderful for him, but in a manner new and strange, she was grave, solemn, significant. He was filled with a passionate solicitude for her welfare, and a passionate desire to serve her. It seemed impossible to him that only a day or so ago he should have been accusing her in his heart of disloyalty, and searching for excuses and mitigations....

All the freshness of his first love for Marjorie returned, his keen sense of the sweet gallantry of her voice and bearing, his admiration for the swift, falconlike swoop of her decisions, for the grace and poise of her body, and the steady frankness of her eyes; but now it was all charged with his sense of this new joint life germinating at the heart of her slender vigour, spreading throughout her being to change it altogether into womanhood for ever. In this new light his passion for research and all the scheme of his life appeared faded and unworthy, as much egotism as if he had been devoted to hunting or golf or any such aimless preoccupation. Fatherhood gripped him and faced him about. It was manifestly a monstrous thing that he should ever have expected Marjorie to become a mere undisturbing accessory to the selfish intellectualism of his career, to shave and limit herself to a mere bachelor income, and play no part of her own in the movement of the world. He knew better now. Research must fall into its proper place, and for his immediate business he must set to work to-262- supplement his manifestly inadequate resources.

At first he could form no plan at all for doing that. He determined that research must still have his morning hours until lunch-time, and, he privately resolved, some part of the night. The rest of his day, he thought, he would set aside for a time to money-making. But he was altogether inexperienced in the methods of money-making; it was a new problem, and a new sort of problem to him altogether. He discovered himself helpless and rather silly in the matter. The more obvious possibilities seemed to be that he might lecture upon his science or write. He communicated with a couple of lecture agencies, and was amazed at their scepticism; no doubt he knew his science, on that point they were complimentary in a profuse, unconvincing manner, but could he interest like X — and here they named a notorious quack — could he *draw*? He offered Science Notes to a weekly periodical; the editor answered that for the purposes of his

publication he preferred, as between professors and journalists, journalists. “You real scientific men,” he said, “are no doubt a thousand times more accurate and novel and all that, but as no one seems able to understand you — —” He went to his old fellow-student, Gwenn, who was editing *The Scientific Review*, and through him he secured some semi-popular lectures, which involved, he found, travelling about twenty-nine miles weekly at the rate of four-and-sixpence a mile — counting nothing for the lectures. Afterwards Gwenn arranged for some regular notes on physics and micro-chemistry. Trafford made out a weekly time-table, on whose white of dignity, leisure, and the honourable pursuit of knowledge, a diaper of red marked the claims of domestic necessity.

§ 5

It was astonishing how completely this coming-263- child dominated the whole atmosphere and all the circumstances of the Traffords. It became their central fact, to which everything else turned and pointed. Its effect on Marjorie’s circle of school and college friends was prodigious. She was the first of their company to cross the mysterious boundaries of a woman’s life. She became to them a heroine mingled with something of the priestess. They called upon her more abundantly and sat with her, noted the change in her eyes and voice and bearing, talking with a kind of awe and a faint diffidence of the promised new life.

Many of them had been deeply tinged by the women’s suffrage movement, the feminist note was strong among them, and when one afternoon Ottiline Winchelsea brought round Agatha Alimony, the novelist, and Agatha said in that deep-ringing voice of hers: “I hope it will be a girl, so that presently she may fight the battle of her sex,” there was the profoundest emotion. But when Marjorie conveyed that to Trafford he was lacking in response.

“I want a boy,” he said, and, being pressed for a reason, explained: “Oh, one likes to have a boy. I want him with just your quick eyes and ears, my dear, and just my own safe and certain hands.”

Mrs. Pope received the news with that depth and aimless

complexity of emotion which had now become her habitual method with Marjorie. She kissed and clasped her daughter, and thought confusedly over her shoulder, and said: “Of course, dear —— . Oh, I *do* so hope it won’t annoy your father.” Daffy was “nice,” but vague, and sufficiently feminist to wish it a daughter, and the pseudo-twins said “*Hoo*-ray!”-264- and changed the subject at the earliest possible opportunity. But Theodore was deeply moved at the prospect of becoming an uncle, and went apart and mused deeply and darkly thereon for some time. It was difficult to tell just what Trafford’s mother thought, she was complex and subtle, and evidently did not show Marjorie all that was in her mind; but at any rate it was clear the prospect of a grandchild pleased and interested her. And about Aunt Plessington’s views there was no manner of doubt at all. She thought, and remarked judicially, as one might criticize a game of billiards, that on the whole it was just a little bit too soon.

§ 6

Marjorie kept well throughout March and April, and then suddenly she grew unutterably weary and uncomfortable in London. The end of April came hot and close and dry — it might have been July for the heat — the scrap of garden wilted, and the streets were irritating with fine dust and blown scraps of paper and drifting straws. She could think of nothing but the shade of trees, and cornfields under sunlight and the shadows of passing clouds. So Trafford took out an old bicycle and wandered over the home counties for three days, and at last hit upon a little country cottage near Great Missenden, a cottage a couple of girl artists had furnished and now wanted to let. It had a long, untidy vegetable garden and a small orchard and drying-ground, with an old, superannuated humbug of a pear-tree near the centre surrounded by a green seat, and high hedges with the promise of honeysuckle and dog-roses, and gaps that opened into hospitable beechwoods — woods not so thick but that there were glades of bluebells,-265- bracken and, to be exact, in places embattled stinging-nettles. He took it and engaged a minute, active, interested, philoprogenitive servant girl for it, and took Marjorie thither in a taxi-cab. She went out, wrapped in a shawl, and sat under the pear-

tree and cried quietly with weakness and sentiment and the tenderness of afternoon sunshine, and forthwith began to pick up wonderfully, and was presently writing to Trafford to buy her a dog to go for walks with, while he was away in London.

Trafford was still struggling along with his research in spite of a constant gravitation to the cottage and Marjorie's side, but he was also doing his best to grapple with the difficulties of his financial situation. His science notes, which were very uncongenial and difficult to do, and his lecturing, still left his income far behind his expenditure, and the problem of minimising the inevitable fresh inroads on his capital was insistent and distracting. He discovered that he could manage his notes more easily and write a more popular article if he dictated to a typist instead of writing out the stuff in his own manuscript. Dictating made his sentences more copious and open, and the effect of the young lady's by no means acquiescent back was to make him far more explicit than he tended to be pen in hand. With a pen and alone he felt the boredom of the job unendurably, and, to be through with it, became more and more terse, allusive, and compactly technical, after the style of his original papers. One or two articles by him were accepted and published by the monthly magazines, but as he took what the editors sent him, he did not find this led to any excessive opulence....

But his heart was very much with Marjorie through all this time. Hitherto he had taken her health and vigour and companionship for granted,-266- and it changed his attitudes profoundly to find her now an ailing thing, making an invincible appeal for restraint and consideration and help. She changed marvellously, she gained a new dignity, and her complexion took upon itself a fresh, soft beauty. He would spend three or four days out of a week at the cottage, and long hours of that would be at her side, paper and notes of some forthcoming lecture at hand neglected, talking to her consolingly and dreamingly. His thoughts were full of ideas about education; he was obsessed, as are most intelligent young parents of the modern type, by the enormous possibilities of human improvement that might be achieved — if only one could begin with a baby from the outset, on the best lines, with the best methods, training and preparing it — presumably for a cleaned and chastened world. Indeed he made all

the usual discoveries of intelligent modern young parents very rapidly, fully and completely, and overlooked most of those practical difficulties that finally reduce them to human dimensions again in quite the normal fashion.

"I sit and muse sometimes when I ought to be computing," he said. "Old Durgan watches me and grunts. But think, if we take reasonable care, watch its phases, stand ready with a kindergarten toy directly it stretches out its hand — think what we can make of it!"...

"We will make it the most wonderful child in the world," said Marjorie. "Indeed! what else can it be?"

"Your eyes," said Trafford, "and my hands."

"A girl."

"A boy."

He kissed her white and passive wrist.

§ 7

The child was born a little before expectation at-267- the cottage throughout a long summer's night and day in early September. Its coming into the world was a long and painful struggle; the general practitioner who had seemed two days before a competent and worthy person enough, revealed himself as hesitating, old-fashioned, and ill-equipped. He had a lingering theological objection to the use of chloroform, and the nurse from London sulked under his directions and came and discussed his methods scornfully with Trafford. From sundown until daylight Trafford chafed in the little sitting-room and tried to sleep, and hovered listening at the foot of the narrow staircase to the room above. He lived through interminable hours of moaning and suspense....

The dawn and sunrise came with a quality of beautiful horror. For years afterwards that memory stood out among other memories as something peculiarly strange and dreadful. Day followed an interminable night and broke slowly. Things crept out of darkness, awoke as it were out of mysteries and reclothed themselves in unsubstantial shadows and faint-hued forms. All through that slow infiltration of the world with light and then with colour, the universe it seemed was moaning and endeavouring, and a weak and terrible

struggle went on and kept on in that forbidden room whose windows opened upon the lightening world, dying to a sobbing silence, rising again to agonizing cries, fluctuating, a perpetual obstinate failure to achieve a tormenting end. He went out, and behold the sky was a wonder of pink flushed level clouds and golden hope, and nearly every star except the morning star had gone, the supine moon was pale and half-dissolved in blue, and the grass which had been grey and wet, was green-268- again, and the bushes and trees were green. He returned and hovered in the passage, washed his face, listened outside the door for age-long moments, and then went out again to listen under the window....

He went to his room and shaved, sat for a long time thinking, and then suddenly knelt by his bed and prayed. He had never prayed before in all his life....

He returned to the garden, and there neglected and wet with dew was the camp chair Marjorie had sat on the evening before, the shawl she had been wearing, the novel she had been reading. He brought these things in as if they were precious treasures....

Light was pouring into the world again now. He noticed with an extreme particularity the detailed dewy delicacy of grass and twig, the silver edges to the leaves of briar and nettle, the soft clearness of the moss on bank and wall. He noted the woods with the first warmth of autumn tinting their green, the clear, calm sky, with just a wisp or so of purple cloud waning to a luminous pink on the brightening east, the exquisite freshness of the air. And still through the open window, incessant, unbearable, came this sound of Marjorie moaning, now dying away, now reviving, now weakening again....

Was she dying? Were they murdering her? It was incredible this torture could go on. Somehow it must end. Chiefly he wanted to go in and kill the doctor. But it would do no good to kill the doctor!

At last the nurse came out, looking a little scared, to ask him to cycle three miles away and borrow some special sort of needle that the fool of a doctor had forgotten. He went, outwardly meek, and returning was met by the little interested servant, very alert and excited and rather superior — for here was something no man can do — with the news that he had a beautiful-269- little daughter, and that all was well with Marjorie.

He said “Thank God, thank God!” several times, and then went out into the kitchen and began to eat some flabby toast and drink some lukewarm tea he found there. He was horribly fatigued. “Is she all right?” he asked over his shoulder, hearing the doctor’s footsteps on the stairs....

They were very pontifical and official with him.

Presently they brought out a strange, wizened little animal, wailing very stoutly, with a face like a very, very old woman, and reddish skin and hair — it had quite a lot of wet blackish hair of an incredible delicacy of texture. It kicked with a stumpy monkey’s legs and inturned feet. He held it: his heart went out to it. He pitied it beyond measure, it was so weak and ugly. He was astonished and distressed by the fact of its extreme endearing ugliness. He had expected something strikingly pretty. It clenched a fist, and he perceived it had all its complement of fingers and ridiculous, pretentious little finger nails. Inside that fist it squeezed his heart.... He did not want to give it back to them. He wanted to protect it. He felt they could not understand it or forgive, as he could forgive, its unjustifiable feebleness....

Later, for just a little while, he was permitted to see Marjorie — Marjorie so spent, so unspeakably weary, and yet so reassuringly vital and living, so full of gentle pride and gentler courage amidst the litter of surgical precaution, that the tears came streaming down his face and he sobbed shamelessly as he kissed her. “Little daughter,” she whispered and smiled — just as she had always smiled — that sweet, dear smile of hers! — and closed her eyes and said no-270-more....

Afterwards as he walked up and down the garden he remembered their former dispute and thought how characteristic of Marjorie it was to have a daughter in spite of all his wishes.

§ 8

For weeks and weeks this astonishing and unprecedented being filled the Traffords’ earth and sky. Very speedily its minute quaintness passed, and it became a vigorous delightful baby that was, as the nurse explained repeatedly and very explicitly, not only quite

exceptional and distinguished, but exactly everything that a baby should be. Its weight became of supreme importance; there was a splendid week when it put on nine ounces, and an indifferent one when it added only one. And then came a terrible crisis. It was ill; some sort of infection had reached it, an infantile cholera. Its temperature mounted to a hundred and three and a half. It became a flushed misery, wailing with a pathetic feeble voice. Then it ceased to wail. Marjorie became white-lipped and heavy-eyed from want of sleep, and it seemed to Trafford that perhaps his child might die. It seemed to him that the spirit of the universe must be a monstrous calivan since children had to die. He went for a long walk through the October beechwoods, under a windy sky, and in a drift of falling leaves, wondering with a renewed freshness at the haunting futilities of life.... Life was not futile — anything but that, but futility seemed to be stalking it, waiting for it.... When he returned the child was already better, and in a few days it was well again — but very light and thin.

When they were sure of its safety, Marjorie and-271- he confessed the extremity of their fears to one another. They had not dared to speak before, and even now they spoke in undertones of the shadow that had hovered and passed over the dearest thing in their lives.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

The New Phase

§ 1

In the course of the next six months the child of the-272- ages became an almost ordinary healthy baby, and Trafford began to think consecutively about his scientific work again — in the intervals of effort of a more immediately practical sort.

The recall of molecular physics and particularly of the internal condition of colloids to something like their old importance in his life was greatly accelerated by the fact that a young Oxford don named Behrens was showing extraordinary energy in what had been for a time Trafford's distinctive and undisputed field. Behrens was one of those vividly clever energetic people who are the despair of originative men. He had begun as Trafford's pupil and sedulous ape; he had gone on to work that imitated Trafford's in everything except its continual freshness, and now he was ransacking every scrap of suggestion to be found in Trafford's work, and developing it with an intensity of uninspired intelligence that most marvellously simulated originality. He was already being noted as an authority; sometimes in an article his name would be quoted and Trafford's omitted in relation to Trafford's ideas, and in every way his emergence and the manner of his emergence threatened and stimulated his model and master. A great effort had to be made. Trafford revived the drooping spirits of Durgan by a renewed punctuality in the laboratory. He began to stay away from home at night and work late again, now, however, under no imperative inspiration, but simply because it was-273- only by such an invasion of the evening and night that it would be possible to make headway against Behren's unremitting industry. And this new demand upon Trafford's already strained mental and nervous equipment began very speedily to have its effect upon his domestic life.

It is only in romantic fiction that a man can work strenuously to the limit of his power and come home to be sweet, sunny and

entertaining. Trafford's preoccupation involved a certain negligence of Marjorie, a certain indisposition to be amused or interested by trifling things, a certain irritability....

§ 2

And now, indeed, the Traffords were coming to the most difficult and fatal phase in marriage. They had had that taste of defiant adventure which is the crown of a spirited love affair, they had known the sweetness of a maiden passion for a maid, and they had felt all those rich and solemn emotions, those splendid fears and terrible hopes that weave themselves about the great partnership in parentage. And now, so far as sex was concerned, there might be much joy and delight still, but no more wonder, no fresh discoveries of incredible new worlds and unsuspected stars. Love, which had been a new garden, an unknown land, a sunlit sea to launch upon, was now a rich treasure-house of memories. And memories, although they afford a perpetually increasing enrichment to emotion, are not sufficient in themselves for the daily needs of life.

For this, indeed, is the truth of passionate love, that it works outs its purpose and comes to an end. A day arrives in every marriage when the lovers must face each other, disillusioned, stripped of the last-274- shred of excitement — undisguisedly themselves. And our two were married; they had bound themselves together under a penalty of scandalous disgrace, to take the life-long consequences of their passionate association.

It was upon Trafford that this exhaustion of the sustaining magic of love pressed most severely, because it was he who had made the greatest adaptations to the exigencies of their union. He had crippled, he perceived more and more clearly, the research work upon which his whole being had once been set, and his hours were full of tiresome and trivial duties and his mind engaged and worried by growing financial anxieties. He had made these abandonments in a phase of exalted passion for the one woman in the world and her unprecedented child, and now he saw, in spite of all his desire not to see, that she was just a weak human being among human beings, and neither she nor little Margharita so very marvellous.

But while Marjorie shrank to the dimensions of reality, research remained still a luminous and commanding dream. In love one fails or one wins home, but the lure of research is for ever beyond the hills, every victory is a new desire. Science has inexhaustibly fresh worlds to conquer....

He was beginning now to realize the dilemma of his life, the reality of the opposition between Marjorie and child and home on the one hand and on the other this big wider thing, this remoter, severer demand upon his being. He had long perceived these were distinct and different things, but now it appeared more and more inevitable that they should be antagonistic and mutually disregardful things. Each claimed him altogether, it seemed, and suffered compromise impatiently. And this is where the particular-275- stress of his situation came in. Hitherto he had believed that nothing of any importance was secret or inexplicable between himself and Marjorie. His ideal of his relationship had assumed a complete sympathy of feeling, an almost instinctive identity of outlook. And now it was manifest they were living in a state of inadequate understanding, that she knew only in the most general and opaque forms, the things that interested him so profoundly, and had but the most superficial interest in his impassioned curiosities. And missing as she did the strength of his intellectual purpose she missed too, she had no inkling of, the way in which her careless expansiveness pressed upon him. She was unaware that she was destroying an essential thing in his life.

He could not tell how far this antagonism was due to inalterable discords of character, how far it might not be an ineradicable sex difference, a necessary aspect of marriage. The talk of old Sir Roderick Dover at the Winton Club germinated in his mind, a branching and permeating suggestion. And then would come a phase of keen sympathy with Marjorie; she would say brilliant and penetrating things, display a swift cleverness that drove all these intimations of incurable divergence clean out of his head again. Then he would find explanations in the differences between his and Marjorie’s training and early associations. He perceived his own upbringing had had a steadfastness and consistency that had been altogether lacking in hers. He had had the rare advantage of perfect

honesty in the teaching and tradition of his home. There had never been any shams or sentimentalities for him to find out and abandon. From boyhood his mother's hand had pointed steadily to the search for truth as the supreme ennobling fact in life. She had never-276- preached this to him, never delivered discourses upon his father's virtues, but all her conversation and life was saturated with this idea. Compared with this atmosphere of high and sustained direction, the intellectual and moral quality of the Popes, he saw, was the quality of an agitated rag bag. They had thought nothing out, joined nothing together, they seemed to believe everything and nothing, they were neither religious nor irreligious, neither moral nor adventurous. In the place of a religion, and tainting their entire atmosphere, they had the decaying remains of a dead Anglicanism; it was clear they did not believe in its creed, and as clear that they did not want to get rid of it; it afforded them no guidance, but only vague pretensions, and the dismal exercises of Silas Root flourished in its shadows, a fungus, a post-mortem activity of the soul. None of them had any idea of what they were for or what their lives as a whole might mean; they had no standards, but only instincts and an instinctive fear of instincts; Pope wanted to be tremendously respected and complimented by everybody and get six per cent. for his money; Mrs. Pope wanted things to go smoothly; the young people had a general indisposition to do anything that might "look bad," and otherwise "have a good time." But neither Marjorie nor any of them had any test for a good time, and so they fluctuated in their conceptions of what they wanted from day to day. Now it was Plessingtonian standards, now Carmel standards, now the standards of Agatha Alimony; now it was a stimulating novel, now a gleam of æsthetic imaginativeness come, Heaven knows whence, that dominated her mood. He was beginning to understand all this at last, and to see the need of coherence in Marjorie's mood.

He realized the unfairness of keeping his thoughts-277- to himself, the need of putting his case before her, and making her realize their fatal and widening divergence. He wanted to infect her with his scientific passion, to give her his sense of the gravity of their practical difficulties. He would sit amidst his neglected work in his laboratory framing explanatory phrases. He would prepare the most

lucid and complete statements, and go about with these in his mind for days waiting for an opportunity of saying what he felt so urgently had to be said.

But the things that seemed so luminous and effective in the laboratory had a curious way of fading and shrinking beside the bright colours of Marjorie's Bokhara hangings, in the presence of little Margharita pink and warm and entertaining in her bath, or amidst the fluttering rustle of the afternoon tea-parties that were now becoming frequent in his house. And when he was alone with her he discovered they didn't talk now any more — except in terms of a constrained and formal affection.

What had happened to them? What was the matter between himself and Marjorie that he couldn't even intimate his sense of their divergence? He would have liked to discuss the whole thing with his mother, but somehow that seemed disloyal to Marjorie....

One day they quarrelled.

He came in about six in the afternoon, jaded from the delivery of a suburban lecture, and the consequent tedium of suburban travel, and discovered Marjorie examining the effect of a new picture which had replaced the German print of sunlit waves over the dining-room mantelpiece. It was a painting in the post-impressionist manner, and it had arrived after the close of the exhibition in Weldon Street, at which Marjorie had bought it. She had bought it-278- in obedience to a sudden impulse, and its imminence had long weighed upon her conscience. She had gone to the show with Sydney Flor and old Mrs. Flor, Sydney's mother, and a kind of excitement had come upon them at the idea of possessing this particular picture. Mrs. Flor had already bought three Herbins, and her daughter wanted to dissuade her from more. "But they're so delightful," said Mrs. Flor. "You're overrunning your allowance," said Sydney. Disputing the point, they made inquiries for the price, and learnt that this bright epigram in colour was going begging — was even offered at a reduction from the catalogue price. A reduced price always had a strong appeal nowadays to Marjorie's mind. "If you don't get it," she said abruptly, "I shall."

The transition from that attitude to ownership was amazingly rapid. Then nothing remained but to wait for the picture. She had

dreaded a mistake, a blundering discord, but now with the thing hung she could see her quick eye had not betrayed her. It was a mass of reds, browns, purples, and vivid greens and greys; an effect of roof and brick house facing upon a Dutch canal, and it lit up the room and was echoed and reflected by all the rest of her courageous colour scheme, like a coal-fire amidst mahogany and metal. It justified itself to her completely, and she faced her husband with a certain confidence.

"Hullo!" he cried.

"A new picture," she said. "What do you think of it?"

"What is it?"

"A town or something — never mind. Look at the colour. It heartens everything."

Trafford looked at the painting with a reluctant-279- admiration.

"It's brilliant — and impudent. He's an artist — whoever he is. He hits the thing. But — I say — how did you get it?"

"I bought it."

"Bought it! Good Lord! How much?"

"Oh! ten guineas," said Marjorie, with an affectation of ease; "it will be worth thirty in ten years' time."

Trafford's reply was to repeat: "Ten guineas!"

Their eyes met, and there was singularly little tenderness in their eyes.

"It was priced at thirteen," said Marjorie, ending a pause, and with a sinking heart.

Trafford had left her side. He walked to the window and sat down in a chair.

"I think this is too much," he said, and his voice had disagreeable notes in it she had never heard before. "I have just been earning two guineas at Croydon, of all places, administering comminuted science to fools — and here I find — this exploit! Ten guineas' worth of picture. To say we can't afford it is just to waste a mild expression. It's — mad extravagance. It's waste of money — it's — oh! — monstrous disloyalty. Disloyalty!" He stared resentful at the cheerful, unhesitating daubs of the picture for a moment. Its affected carelessness goaded him to fresh words. He spoke in a tone of absolute hostility. "I think this winds me up to something," he said.

“You’ll have to give up your cheque-book, Marjorie.”

“Give up my cheque-book!”

He looked up at her and nodded. There was a warm flush in her cheeks, her lips panted apart, and tears of disappointment and vexation were shining beautifully in her eyes. She mingled the quality of an-280- indignant woman with the distress and unreasonable resentment of a child.

“Because I’ve bought this picture?”

“Can we go on like this?” he asked, and felt how miserably he had bungled in opening this question that had been in his mind so long.

“But it’s *beautiful!*” she said.

He disregarded that. He felt now that he had to go on with these long-premeditated expostulations. He was tired and dusty from his third-class carriage, his spirit was tired and dusty, and he said what he had to say without either breadth or power, an undignified statement of personal grievances, a mere complaint of the burthen of work that falls upon a man. That she missed the high aim in him, and all sense of the greatness they were losing had vanished from his thoughts. He had too heavy a share of the common burthen, and she pressed upon him unthinkingly; that was all he could say. He girded at her with a bitter and loveless truth; it was none the less cruel that in her heart she knew these things he said were true. But he went beyond justice — as every quarrelling human being does; he called the things she had bought and the harmonies she had created, “this litter and rubbish for which I am wasting my life.” That stabbed into her pride acutely and deeply. She knew anyhow that it wasn’t so simple and crude as that. It was not mere witlessness she contributed to their trouble. She tried to indicate her sense of that. But she had no power of ordered reasoning, she made futile interruptions, she was inexpressive of anything but emotion, she felt gagged against his flow of indignant, hostile words. They blistered her.

Suddenly she went to her little desk in the corner,-281- unlocked it with trembling hands, snatched her cheque-book out of a heap of still unsettled bills, and having locked that anti-climax safe away again, turned upon him. “Here it is,” she said, and stood poised for a moment. Then she flung down the little narrow grey cover — nearly empty, it was, of cheques, on the floor before him.

“Take it,” she cried, “take it. I never asked you to give it me.”

A memory of Orta and its reeds and sunshine and love rose like a luminous mist between them....

She ran weeping from the room.

He leapt to his feet as the door closed. “Marjorie!” he cried.

But she did not hear him....

§ 3

The disillusionment about marriage which had discovered Trafford a thwarted, overworked, and worried man, had revealed Marjorie with time on her hands, superabundant imaginative energy, and no clear intimation of any occupation. With them, as with thousands of young couples in London to-day, the breadwinner was overworked, and the spending partner’s duty was chiefly the negative one of not spending. You cannot consume your energies merely in not spending money. Do what she could, Marjorie could not contrive to make house and child fill the waking hours. She was far too active and irritable a being to be beneficial company all day for genial, bubble-blowing little Margharita; she could play with that young lady and lead her into ecstasies of excitement and delight, and she could see with an almost instinctive certainty when anything was going wrong; but for the rest that little life reposed far-282- more beneficially upon the passive acquiescence of May, her pink and wholesome nurse. And the household generally was in the hands of a trustworthy cook-general, who maintained a tolerable routine. Marjorie did not dare to have an idea about food or domestic arrangements; if she touched that routine so much as with her little finger it sent up the bills. She could knock off butcher and greengrocer and do every scrap of household work that she could touch, in a couple of hours a day. She tried to find some work to fill her leisure; she suggested to Trafford that she might help him by writing up his Science Notes from rough pencil memoranda, but when it became clear that the first step to her doing this would be the purchase of a Remington typewriter and a special low table to carry it, he became bluntly discouraging. She thought of literary work, and sat down one day to write a short story and earn guineas, and was surprised to find that she knew nothing of

any sort of human being about whom she could invent a story. She tried a cheap subscription at Mudie's and novels, and they filled her with a thirst for events; she tried needlework, and found her best efforts aesthetically feeble and despicable, and that her mind prowled above the silks and colours like a hungry wolf.

The early afternoons were the worst time, from two to four, before calling began. The devil was given great power over Marjorie's early afternoon. She could even envy her former home life then, and reflect that there, at any rate, one had a chance of a game or a quarrel with Daffy or Syd or Rom or Theodore. She would pull herself together and go out for a walk, and whichever way she went there were shops and shops and shops, a glittering array of tempting opportunities for spending money.-283- Sometimes she would give way to spending exactly as a struggling drunkard decides to tipple. She would fix on some object, some object trivial and a little rare and not too costly, as being needed — when she knew perfectly well it wasn't needed — and choose the most remotest shops and display the exactest insistence upon her requirements. Sometimes she would get home from these raids without buying at all. After four the worst of the day was over; one could call on people or people might telephone and follow up with a call; and there was a chance of Trafford coming home....

One day at the Carmels' she found herself engaged in a vigorous flirtation with young Carmel. She hadn't noticed it coming on, but there she was in a windowseat talking quite closely to him. He said he was writing a play, a wonderful passionate play about St. Francis, and only she could inspire and advise him. Wasn't there some afternoon in the week when she sat and sewed, so that he might come and sit by her and read to her and talk to her? He made his request with a certain confidence, but it filled her with a righteous panic; she pulled him up with an abruptness that was almost inartistic. On her way home she was acutely ashamed of herself; this was the first time she had let any man but Trafford think he might be interesting to her, but once or twice on former occasions she had been on the verge of such provocative intimations. This sort of thing anyhow mustn't happen.

But if she didn't dress with any distinction — because of the cost

— and didn't flirt and trail men in her wake, what was she to do at the afternoon gatherings which were now her chief form of social contact? What was going to bring people to her house? She knew that she was more than ordinarily beautiful-284- and that she could talk well, but that does not count for much if you are rather dowdy, and quite uneventfully virtuous.

It became the refrain of all her thoughts that she must find something to do.

There remained "Movements."

She might take up a movement. She was a rather exceptionally good public speaker. Only her elopement and marriage had prevented her being president of her college Debating Society. If she devoted herself to some movement she would be free to devise an ostentatiously simple dress for herself and stick to it, and she would be able to give her little house a significance of her own, and present herself publicly against what is perhaps quite the best of all backgrounds for a good-looking, clear-voiced, self-possessed woman, a platform. Yes; she had to go in for a Movement.

She reviewed the chief contemporary Movements much as she might have turned over dress fabrics in a draper's shop, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each....

London, of course, is always full of Movements. Essentially they are absorbents of superfluous feminine energy. They have a common flavour of progress and revolutionary purpose, and common features in abundant meetings, officials, and organization generally. Few are expensive, and still fewer produce any tangible results in the world. They direct themselves at the most various ends; the Poor, that favourite butt, either as a whole or in such typical sections as the indigent invalid or the indigent aged, the young, public health, the woman's cause, the prevention of animal food, anti-vivisection, the gratuitous advertisement of Shakespear (that neglected poet), novel but genteel modifications of medical or-285- religious practice, dress reform, the politer aspects of socialism, the encouragement of æronautics, universal military service, garden suburbs, domestic arts, proportional representation, duodecimal arithmetic, and the liberation of the drama. They range in size and importance from campaigns on a Plessingtonian scale to sober little intellectual Beckingham things

that arrange to meet half-yearly, and die quietly before the second assembly. If Heaven by some miracle suddenly gave every Movement in London all it professed to want, our world would be standing on its head and everything would be extremely unfamiliar and disconcerting. But, as Mr. Roosevelt once remarked, the justifying thing about life is the effort and not the goal, and few Movements involve any real and impassioned struggle to get to the ostensible object. They exist as an occupation; they exercise the intellectual and moral activities without undue disturbance of the normal routines of life. In the days when everybody was bicycling an ingenious mechanism called Hacker's Home Bicycle used to be advertised. Hacker's Home Bicycle was a stand bearing small rubber wheels upon which one placed one's bicycle (properly equipped with a cyclometer) in such a way that it could be mounted and ridden without any sensible forward movement whatever. In bad weather, or when the state of the roads made cycling abroad disagreeable Hacker's Home Bicycle could be placed in front of an open window and ridden furiously for any length of time. Whenever the rider tired, he could descend — comfortably at home again — and examine the cyclometer to see how far he had been. In exactly the same way the ordinary London Movement gives scope for the restless and progressive impulse in human nature without the risk of personal entanglements-286- or any inconvenient disturbance of the milieu.

Marjorie considered the Movements about her. She surveyed the accessible aspects of socialism, but that old treasure-house of constructive suggestion had an effect like a rich château which had been stormed and looted by a mob. For a time the proposition that "we are all Socialists nowadays" had prevailed. The blackened and discredited frame remained, the contents were scattered; Aunt Plessington had a few pieces, the Tory Democrats had taken freely, the Liberals were in possession of a hastily compiled collection. There wasn't, she perceived, and there never had been a Socialist Movement; the socialist idea which had now become part of the general consciousness, had always been too big for polite domestication. She weighed Aunt Plessington, too, in the balance, and found her not so much wanting indeed as excessive. She felt that a Movement with Aunt Plessington in it couldn't possibly offer even

elbow-room for anybody else. Philanthropy generally she shunned. The movements that aim at getting poor people into rooms and shouting at them in an improving, authoritative way, aroused an instinctive dislike in her. Her sense of humour, again, would not let her patronize Shakespear or the stage, or raise the artistic level of the country by means of green-dyed deal, and the influence of Trafford on her mind debarred her from attempting the physical and moral regeneration of humanity by means of beans and nut butter. It was indeed rather by the elimination of competing movements than by any positive preference that she found herself declining at last towards Agatha Alimony's section of the suffrage movement.... It was one of the less militant sections, but it held more meetings and passed more resolutions than any-287- two others.

One day Trafford, returning from an afternoon of forced and disappointing work in his laboratory, — his mind had been steadfastly sluggish and inelastic, — discovered Marjorie's dining room crowded with hats and all the rustle and colour which plays so large a part in constituting contemporary feminine personality. Buzard, the feminist writer, and a young man just down from Cambridge who had written a decadent poem, were the only men present. The chairs were arranged meeting-fashion, but a little irregularly to suggest informality; the post-impressionist picture was a rosy benediction on the gathering, and at a table in the window sat Mrs. Pope in the chair, looking quietly tactful in an unusually becoming bonnet, supported by her daughter and Agatha Alimony. Marjorie was in a simple gown of blueish-grey, hatless amidst a froth of foolish bows and feathers, and she looked not only beautiful and dignified but deliberately and conscientiously patient until she perceived the new arrival. Then he noted she was a little concerned for him, and made some futile sign he did not comprehend. The meeting was debating the behaviour of women at the approaching census, and a small, earnest, pale-faced lady with glasses was standing against the fireplace with a crumpled envelope covered with pencil notes in her hand, and making a speech. Trafford wanted his tea badly, but he had not the wit to realize that his study had been converted into a refreshment room for the occasion; he hesitated, and seated himself near the doorway, and so he was caught; he couldn't,

he felt, get away and seem to slight a woman who was giving herself the pains of addressing him.

The small lady in glasses was giving a fancy picture-288- of the mind of Mr. Asquith and its attitude to the suffrage movement, and telling with a sort of inspired intimacy just how Mr. Asquith had hoped to "bully women down," and just how their various attempts to bring home to him the eminent reasonableness of their sex by breaking his windows, interrupting his meetings, booing at him in the streets and threatening his life, had time after time baffled this arrogant hope. There had been many signs lately that Mr. Asquith's heart was failing him. Now here was a new thing to fill him with despair. When Mr. Asquith learnt that women refused to be counted in the census, then at least she was convinced he must give in. When he gave in it would not be long — she had her information upon good authority — before they got the Vote. So what they had to do was not to be counted in the census. That was their paramount duty at the present time. The women of England had to say quietly but firmly to the census man when he came round: "No, we don't count in an election, and we won't count now. Thank you." No one could force a woman to fill in a census paper she didn't want to, and for her own part, said the little woman with the glasses, she'd starve first. (Applause.) For her own part she was a householder with a census paper of her own, and across that she was going to write quite plainly and simply what she thought of Mr. Asquith. Some of those present wouldn't have census papers to fill up; they would be sent to the man, the so-called Head of the House. But the W.S.P.U. had foreseen that. Each householder had to write down the particulars of the people who slept in his house on Sunday night, or who arrived home before mid-day on Monday; the reply of the women of England must be not to sleep in a house that night where census papers were properly-289- filled, and not to go home until the following afternoon. All through that night the women of England must be abroad. She herself was prepared, and her house would be ready. There would be coffee and refreshments enough for an unlimited number of refugees, there would be twenty or thirty sofas and mattresses and piles of blankets for those who chose to sleep safe from all counting. In every quarter of London there would be houses

of refuge like hers. And so they would make Mr. Asquith's census fail, as it deserved to fail, as every census would fail until women managed these affairs in a sensible way. For she supposed they were all agreed that only women could manage these things in a sensible way. That was *her* contribution to this great and important question. (Applause, amidst which the small lady with the glasses resumed her seat.)

Trafford glanced doorward, but before he could move another speaker was in possession of the room. This was a very young, tall, fair, round-shouldered girl who held herself with an unnatural rigidity, fixed her eyes on the floor just in front of the chairwoman, and spoke with knitted brows and an effect of extreme strain. She remarked that some people did not approve of this proposed boycott of the census. She hung silent for a moment, as if ransacking her mind for something mislaid, and then proceeded to remark that she proposed to occupy a few moments in answering that objection — if it could be called an objection. They said that spoiling the census was an illegitimate extension of the woman movement. Well, she objected — she objected fiercely — to every word of that phrase. Nothing was an illegitimate extension of the woman movement. Nothing could be. (Applause.) That was the very principle they had been fighting for all along. So that, examined-290- in this way, this so-called objection resolved itself into a mere question begging phrase. Nothing more. And her reply therefore to those who made it was that they were begging the question, and however well that might do for men, it would certainly not do, they would find, for women. (Applause.) For the freshly awakened consciousness of women. (Further applause.) This was a war in which quarter was neither asked nor given; if it were not so things might be different. She remained silent after that for the space of twenty seconds perhaps, and then remarked that that seemed to be all she had to say, and sat down amidst loud encouragement.

Then with a certain dismay Trafford saw his wife upon her feet. He was afraid of the effect upon himself of what she was going to say, but he need have had no reason for his fear. Marjorie was a seasoned debater, self-possessed, with a voice very well controlled and a complete mastery of that elaborate appearance of

reasonableness which is so essential to good public speaking. She could speak far better than she could talk. And she startled the meeting in her opening sentence by declaring that she meant to stay at home on the census night, and supply her husband with every scrap of information he hadn't got already that might be needed to make the return an entirely perfect return. (Marked absence of applause.)

She proceeded to avow her passionate interest in the feminist movement of which this agitation for the vote was merely the symbol. (A voice: "No!") No one could be more aware of the falsity of woman's position at the present time than she was — she seemed to be speaking right across the room to Trafford — they were neither pets nor partners, but something between the two; now indulged like spoilt children,-291- now blamed like defaulting partners; constantly provoked to use the arts of their sex, constantly mischievous because of that provocation. She caught her breath and stopped for a moment, as if she had suddenly remembered the meeting intervening between herself and Trafford. No, she said, there was no more ardent feminist and suffragist than herself in the room. She wanted the vote and everything it implied with all her heart. With all her heart. But every way to get a thing wasn't the right way, and she felt with every fibre of her being that this petulant hostility to the census was a wrong way and an inconsistent way, and likely to be an unsuccessful way — one that would lose them the sympathy and help of just that class of men they should look to for support, the cultivated and scientific men. (A voice: "*Do* we want them?") What was the commonest charge made by the man in the street against women? — that they were unreasonable and unmanageable, that it was their way to get things by crying and making an irrelevant fuss. And here they were, as a body, doing that very thing! Let them think what the census and all that modern organization of vital statistics of which it was the central feature stood for. It stood for order, for the replacement of guesses and emotional generalization by a clear knowledge of facts, for the replacement of instinctive and violent methods, by which women had everything to lose (a voice: "No!") by reason and knowledge and self-restraint, by which women had everything to gain. To her the advancement of science, the progress of civilization,

and the emancipation of womanhood were nearly synonymous terms. At any rate, they were different phases of one thing. They were different aspects of one wider purpose. When they struck at the census, she felt, they struck at-292- themselves. She glanced at Trafford as if she would convince him that this was the real voice of the suffrage movement, and sat down amidst a brief, polite applause, that warmed to rapture as Agatha Alimony, the deep-voiced, stirring Agatha, rose to reply.

Miss Alimony, who was wearing an enormous hat with three nodding ostrich feathers, a purple bow, a gold buckle and numerous minor ornaments of various origin and substance, said they had all of them listened with the greatest appreciation and sympathy to the speech of their hostess. Their hostess was a newcomer to the movement, she knew she might say this without offence, and was passing through a phase, an early phase, through which many of them had passed. This was the phase of trying to take a reasonable view of an unreasonable situation. (Applause.) Their hostess had spoken of science, and no doubt science was a great thing; but there was something greater than science, and that was the ideal. It was woman's place to idealize. Sooner or later their hostess would discover, as they had all discovered, that it was not to science but the ideal that women must look for freedom. Consider, she said, the scientific men of to-day. Consider, for example, Sir James Crichton-Browne, the physiologist. Was he on their side? On the contrary, he said the most unpleasant things about them on every occasion. He went out of his way to say them. Or consider Sir Almroth Wright, did he speak well of women? Or Sir Ray Lankester, the biologist, who was the chief ornament of the Anti-Suffrage Society. Or Sir Roderick Dover, the physicist, who — forgetting Madame Curie, a far more celebrated physicist than himself, she ventured to say (Applause.) had recently gone outside his province altogether to-293- abuse feminine research. There were your scientific men. Mrs. Trafford had said their anti-census campaign would annoy scientific men; well, under the circumstances, she wanted to annoy scientific men. (Applause.) She wanted to annoy everybody. Until women got the vote (loud applause) the more annoying they were the better. When the whole world was impressed by the idea that voteless

women were an intolerable nuisance, then there would cease to be voteless women. (Enthusiasm.) Mr. Asquith had said —

And so on for quite a long time....

Buzard rose out of waves of subsiding emotion. Buzard was a slender, long-necked, stalk-shaped man with gilt glasses, uneasy movements and a hypersensitive manner. He didn't so much speak as thrill with thought vibrations; he spoke like an entranced but still quite gentlemanly sibyl. After Agatha's deep trumpet calls, he sounded like a solo on the piccolo. He picked out all his more important words with a little stress as though he gave them capitals. He said their hostess's remarks had set him thinking. He thought it was possible to stew the Scientific Argument in its own Juice. There was something he might call the Factuarial Estimate of Values. Well, it was a High Factuarial Value on their side, in his opinion at any rate, when Anthropologists came and told him that the Primitive Human Society was a Matriarchate. ("But it wasn't!" said Trafford to himself.) It had a High Factuarial Value when they assured him that Every One of the Great Primitive Inventions was made by a Woman, and that it was to Women they owed Fire and the early Epics and Sagas. ("Good Lord!" said Trafford.) It had a High Factuarial Value when they not only asserted but proved that for Thousands of Years, and perhaps-294- for Hundreds of Thousands of Years, Women had been in possession of Articulate Speech before men rose to that Level of Intelligence....

It occurred suddenly to Trafford that he could go now; that it would be better to go; that indeed he *must* go; it was no doubt necessary that his mind should have to work in the same world as Buzard's mental processes, but at any rate those two sets of unsympathetic functions need not go on in the same room. Something might give way. He got up, and with those elaborate efforts to be silent that lead to the violent upsetting of chairs, got himself out of the room and into the passage, and was at once rescued by the sympathetic cook-general, in her most generalized form, and given fresh tea in his study — which impressed him as being catastrophically disarranged....

§ 4

When Marjorie was at last alone with him she found him in a state of extreme mental stimulation. “Your speech,” he said, “was all right. I didn’t know you could speak like that, Marjorie. But it soared like the dove above the waters. Waters! I never heard such a flood of rubbish.... You know, it’s a mistake to *mass* women. It brings out something silly.... It affected Buzard as badly as any one. The extraordinary thing is they have a case, if only they’d be quiet. Why did you get them together?”

“It’s our local branch.”

“Yes, but *why?*”

“Well, if they talk about things — Discussions like this clear up their minds.”

“Discussion! It wasn’t discussion.”-295-

“Oh! it was a beginning.”

“Chatter of that sort isn’t the beginning of discussion, it’s the end. It’s the death-rattle. Nobody was meeting the thoughts of any one. I admit Buzard, who’s a man, talked the worst rubbish of all. That Primitive Matriarchate of his! So it isn’t sex. I’ve noticed before that the men in this movement of yours are worse than the women. It isn’t sex. It’s something else. It’s a foolishness. It’s a sort of irresponsible looseness.” He turned on her gravely. “You ought not to get all these people here. It’s contagious. Before you know it you’ll find your own mind liquefy and become enthusiastic and slop about. You’ll begin to talk monomania about Mr. Asquith.”

“But it’s a great movement, Rag, even if incidentally they say and do silly things!”

“My dear! aren’t I feminist? Don’t I want women fine and sane and responsible? Don’t I want them to have education, to handle things, to vote like men and bear themselves with the gravity of men? And these meetings — all hat and flutter! These displays of weak, untrained, hysterical vehemence! These gatherings of open-mouthed impressionable young girls to be trained in incoherence! You can’t go on with it!”

Marjorie regarded him quietly for a moment. “I must go on with something,” she said.

“Well, not this.”

“Then *what?*”

“Something sane.”

“Tell me what.”

“It must come out of yourself.”

Marjorie thought sullenly for a moment. “Nothing comes out of myself,” she said.

“I don’t think you realize a bit what my life has become,” she went on; “how much I’m like some one-296- who’s been put in a pleasant, high-class prison.”

“This house! It’s your own!”

“It doesn’t give me an hour’s mental occupation in the day. It’s all very well to say I might do more in it. I can’t — without absurdity. Or expenditure. I can’t send the girl away and start scrubbing. I can’t make jam or do ornamental needlework. The shops do it better and cheaper, and I haven’t been trained to it. I’ve been trained *not* to do it. I’ve been brought up on games and school-books, and fed on mixed ideas. I can’t sit down and pacify myself with a needle as women used to do. Besides, I not only detest doing needlework but I hate it — the sort of thing a woman of my kind does anyhow — when it’s done. I’m no artist. I’m not sufficiently interested in outside things to spend my time in serious systematic reading, and after four or five novels — oh, these meetings are better than that! You see, you’ve got a life — too much of it — *I* haven’t got enough. I wish almost I could sleep away half the day. Oh! I want something *real*, Rag; something more than I’ve got.” A sudden inspiration came to her. “Will you let me come to your laboratory and work with you?”

She stopped abruptly. She caught up her own chance question and pointed it at him, a vitally important challenge. “Will you let me come to your laboratory and work?” she repeated.

Trafford thought. “No,” he said.

“Why not?”

“Because I’m in love with you. I can’t think of my work when you’re about.... And you’re too much behind. Oh my dear! don’t you see how you’re behind?” He paused. “I’ve been soaking in this stuff of mine for ten long years.”

“Yes,” assented Marjorie flatly.

He watched her downcast face, and then it lifted-297- to him with a helpless appeal in her eyes, and lift in her voice. “But look here,

Rag!" she cried— "what on earth am I to *DO?*"

§ 5

At least there came out of these discussions one thing, a phrase, a purpose, which was to rule the lives of the Traffords for some years. It expressed their realization that instinct and impulse had so far played them false, that life for all its rich gifts of mutual happiness wasn't adjusted between them. "We've got," they said, "to talk all this out between us. We've got to work this out." They didn't mean to leave things at a misfit, and that was certainly their present relation. They were already at the problem of their joint lives, like a tailor with his pins and chalk. Marjorie hadn't rejected a humorist and all his works in order to decline at last to the humorous view of life, that rather stupid, rather pathetic, grin-and-bear-it attitude compounded in incalculable proportions of goodwill, evasion, indolence, slovenliness, and (nevertheless) spite (masquerading indeed as jesting comment), which supplies the fabric of everyday life for untold thousands of educated middle-class people. She hated the misfit. She didn't for a moment propose to pretend that the ungainly twisted sleeve, the puckered back, was extremely jolly and funny. She had married with a passionate anticipation of things fitting and fine, and it was her nature, in great matters as in small, to get what she wanted strenuously before she counted the cost. About both their minds there was something sharp and unrelenting, and if Marjorie had been disposed to take refuge from facts in swathings of aesthetic romanticism, whatever covering she contrived would have been torn to rags very speedily-298- by that fierce and steely veracity which swung down out of the laboratory into her home.

One may want to talk things out long before one hits upon the phrases that will open up the matter.

There were two chief facts in the case between them and so far they had looked only one in the face, the fact that Marjorie was unemployed to a troublesome and distressing extent, and that there was nothing in her nature or training to supply, and something in their circumstances and relations to prevent any adequate use of her energies. With the second fact neither of them cared to come to close

quarters as yet, and neither as yet saw very distinctly how it was linked to the first, and that was the steady excess of her expenditure over their restricted means. She was secretly surprised at her own weakness. Week by week and month by month, they were spending all his income and eating into that little accumulation of capital that had once seemed so sufficient against the world....

And here it has to be told that although Trafford knew that Marjorie had been spending too much money, he still had no idea of just how much money she had spent. She was doing her utmost to come to an understanding with him, and at the same time — I don't explain it, I don't excuse it — she was keeping back her bills from him, keeping back urgent second and third and fourth demands, that she had no cheque-book now to stave off even by the most partial satisfaction. It kept her awake at nights, that catastrophic explanation, that all unsuspected by Trafford hung over their attempts at mutual elucidation; it kept her awake but she could not bring it to the speaking point, and she clung, in spite of her own intelligence, to a persuasion that *after* they had got something really settled and defined then it would be-299- time enough to broach the particulars of this second divergence....

Talking one's relations over isn't particularly easy between husband and wife at any time; we are none of us so sure of one another as to risk loose phrases or make experiments in expression in matters so vital; there is inevitably an excessive caution on the one hand and an abnormal sensitiveness to hints and implications on the other. Marjorie's bills were only an extreme instance of these unavoidable suppressions that always occur. Moreover, when two people are continuously together, it is amazingly hard to know when and where to begin; where intercourse is unbroken it is as a matter of routine being constantly interrupted. You cannot broach these broad personalities while you are getting up in the morning, or over the breakfast-table while you make the coffee, or when you meet again after a multitude of small events at tea, or in the evening when one is rather tired and trivial after the work of the day. Then Miss Margharita Trafford permitted no sustained analysis of life in her presence. She synthesized things fallaciously, but for the time convincingly; she insisted that life wasn't a thing you discussed, but

pink and soft and jolly, which you crowed at and laughed at and addressed as “Goo.” Even without Margharita there were occasions when the Traffords were a forgetfulness to one another. After an ear has been pinched or a hand has been run through a man’s hair, or a pretty bare shoulder kissed, all sorts of broader interests lapse into a temporary oblivion. They found discussion much more possible when they walked together. A walk seemed to take them out of the everyday sequence, isolate them from their household, abstract them a little from one another. They set out one extravagant spring Sunday to Great Missenden,-300- and once in spring also they discovered the Waterlow Park. On each occasion they seemed to get through an enormous amount of talking. But the Great Missenden walk was all mixed up with a sweet keen wind, and beechwoods just shot with spring green and bursting hedges and the extreme earliness of honeysuckle, which Trafford noted for the first time, and a clamorous rejoicing of birds. And in the Waterlow Park there was a great discussion of why the yellow crocus comes before white and purple, and the closest examination of the manner in which daffodils and narcissi thrust their green noses out of the garden beds. Also they found the ugly, ill-served, aggressively propagandist non-alcoholic refreshment-room in that gracious old house a scandal and disappointment, and Trafford scolded at the stupidity of officialdom that can control so fine a thing so ill.

Though they talked on these walks they were still curiously evasive. Indeed, they were afraid of each other. They kept falling away from their private thoughts and intentions. They generalized, they discussed Marriage and George Gissing and Bernard Shaw and the suffrage movement and the agitation for the reform of the divorce laws. They pursued imaginary cases into distant thickets of contingency remotely far from the personal issues between them....

§ 6

One day came an incident that Marjorie found wonderfully illuminating. Trafford had a fit of rage. Stung by an unexpected irritation, he forgot himself, as people say, and swore, and was almost physically violent, and the curious thing was that so he

lit-301- up things for her as no premeditated attempt of his had ever done.

A copy of the *Scientific Bulletin* fired the explosion. He sat down at the breakfast-table with the heaviness of a rather overworked and worried man, tasted his coffee, tore open a letter and crumpled it with his hand, turned to the *Bulletin*, regarded its list of contents with a start, opened it, read for a minute, and expressed himself with an extraordinary heat of manner in these amazing and unprecedented words:

"Oh! Damnation and damnation!"

Then he shied the paper into the corner of the room and pushed his plate from him.

"Damn the whole scheme of things!" he said, and met the blank amazement of Marjorie's eye.

"Behrens!" he said with an air of explanation.

"Behrens?" she echoed with a note of inquiry.

"He's doing my stuff!"

He sat darkling for a time and then hit the table with his fist so hard that the breakfast things seemed to jump together — to Marjorie's infinite amazement. "I can't *stand* it!" he said.

She waited some moments. "I don't understand," she began. "What has he done?"

"Oh!" was Trafford's answer. He got up, recovered the crumpled paper and stood reading. "Fool and thief," he said.

Marjorie was amazed beyond measure. She felt as though she had been effaced from Trafford's life. "Ugh!" he cried and slapped back the *Bulletin* into the corner with quite needless violence. He became aware of Marjorie again.

"He's doing my work," he said.

And then as if he completed the explanation:-302- "And I've got to be in Croydon by half-past ten to lecture to a pack of spinsters and duffers, because they're too stupid to get the stuff from books. It's all in books, — every bit of it."

He paused and went on in tones of unendurable wrong. "It isn't as though he was doing it right. He isn't. He can't. He's a fool. He's a clever, greedy, dishonest fool with a twist. Oh! the pile, the big Pile of silly muddled technicalities he's invented already! The solemn

mess he's making of it! And there he is, I can't get ahead of him, I can't get at him. I've got no time. I've got no room or leisure to swing my mind in! Oh, curse these engagements, curse all these silly fretting entanglements of lecture and article! I never get the time, I can't get the time, I can't get my mind clear! I'm worried! I'm badgered! And meanwhile Behrens —— !"

"Is he discovering what you want to discover?"

"Behrens! *No!* He's going through the breaches I made. He's guessing out what I meant to do. And he's getting it set out all wrong, — misleading terminology, — distinctions made in the wrong place. Oh, the fool he is!"

"But afterwards — —"

"Afterwards I may spend my life — removing the obstacles he's made. He'll be established and I shan't. You don't know anything of these things. You don't understand."

She didn't. Her next question showed as much. "Will it affect your F.R.S.?" she asked.

"Oh! *that's* safe enough, and it doesn't matter anyhow. The F.R.S.! Confound the silly little F.R.S.! As if that mattered. It's seeing all my great openings — misused. It's seeing all I might be doing. This brings it all home to me. Don't you understand, Marjorie? Will you never understand? I'm getting-303- away from all *that!* I'm being hustled away by all this work, this silly everyday work to get money. Don't you see that unless I can have time for thought and research, life is just darkness to me? I've made myself master of that stuff. I had at any rate. No one can do what I can do there. And when I find myself — oh, shut out, shut out! I come near raving. As I think of it I want to rave again." He paused. Then with a swift transition: "I suppose I'd better eat some breakfast. Is that egg boiled?"

She gave him an egg, brought his coffee, put things before him, seated herself at the table. For a little while he ate in silence. Then he cursed Behrens.

"Look here!" she said. "Bad as I am, you've got to reason with me, Rag. I didn't know all this. I didn't understand... I don't know what to do."

"What *is* there to do?"

“I’ve got to do something. I’m beginning to see things. It’s just as though everything had become clear suddenly.” She was weeping. “Oh, my dear! I want to help you. I have so wanted to help you. Always. And it’s come to this!”

“But it’s not *your* fault. I didn’t mean that. It’s — it’s in the nature of things.”

“It’s my fault.”

“It’s not your fault.”

“It is.”

“Confound it, Marjorie. When I swear at Behrens I’m not swearing at you.”

“It’s my fault. All this is my fault. I’m eating you up. What’s the good of your pretending, Rag. You know it is. Oh! When I married you I meant to make you happy, I had no thought but to make you happy, to give myself to you, my body, my brains, everything, to make life beautiful for you — —”

“Well, *haven’t* you?” He thrust out a hand she-304- did not take.

“I’ve broken your back,” she said.

An unwonted resolution came into her face. Her lips whitened. “Don’t you know, Rag,” she said, forcing herself to speak — — “Don’t you guess? You don’t know half! In that bureau there —— In there! It’s stuffed with bills. Unpaid bills.”

She was weeping, with no attempt to wipe the streaming tears away; terror made the expression of her wet face almost fierce. “Bills,” she repeated. “More than a hundred pounds still. Yes! Now. *Now!*”

He drew back, stared at her and with no trace of personal animus, like one who hears of a common disaster, remarked with a quiet emphasis: “Oh, *damn!*”

“I know,” she said, “Damn!” and met his eyes. There was a long silence between them. She produced a handkerchief and wiped her eyes. “That’s what I amount to,” she said.

“It’s your silly upbringing,” he said after a long pause.

“And my silly self.”

She stood up, unlocked and opened her littered desk, turned and held out the key to him.

“Why?” he asked.

“Take it. You gave me a cheque-book of my own and a corner of my own, and they — they are just ambushes — against you.”

He shook his head.

“Take it,” said Marjorie with quiet insistence.

He obeyed. She stood with her eyes on the crumpled heap of bills. They were not even tidily arranged. That seemed to her now an extreme aggravation of her offence.

“I ought to be sent to the chemist’s,” she remarked,-305- “as one sends a worthless cat.”

Trafford weighed this proposition soberly for some moments. “You’re a bother, Marjorie,” he said with his eyes on the desk; “no end of a bother. I’d better have those bills.”

He looked at her, stood up, put his hands on her shoulders, drew her to him and kissed her forehead. He did it without passion, without tenderness, with something like resignation in his manner. She clung to him tightly, as though by clinging she could warm and soften him.

“Rag,” she whispered; “all my heart is yours.... I want to help you.... And this is what I have done.”

“I know,” he said — almost grimly.

He repeated his kiss.

Then he seemed to explode again. “Gods!” he cried, “look at the clock. I shall miss that Croydon lecture!” He pushed her from him. “Where are my boots?...”

§ 7

Marjorie spent the forenoon and the earlier part of the afternoon repeating and reviewing this conversation. Her mind was full of the long disregarded problem of her husband’s state of mind. She thought with a sympathetic astonishment of his swearing, of his startling blow upon the table. She hadn’t so far known he could swear. But this was the real thing, the relief of vehement and destructive words. His voice, saying “damnation and damnation,” echoed and re-echoed in her ears. Somehow she understood that as she had never understood any sober statement of his case. Such women as Marjorie, I think, have an altogether keener understanding

of people who have lost control of themselves than they-306- have of reasoned cases. Perhaps that is because they themselves always reserve something when they state a reasoned case.

She went on to the apprehension of a change in him that hitherto she had not permitted herself to see — a change in his attitude to her. There had been a time when she had seemed able without an effort to nestle inside his heart. Now she felt distinctly for the first time that that hadn't happened. She had instead a sense of her embrace sliding over a rather deliberately contracted exterior.... Of course he had been in a hurry....

She tried to follow him on his journey to Croydon. Now he'd have just passed out of London Bridge. What was he thinking and feeling about her in the train? Now he would be going into the place, wherever it was, where he gave his lecture. Did he think of Behrens and curse her under his breath as he entered that tiresome room?...

It seemed part of the prevailing inconvenience of life that Daffy should see fit to pay an afternoon call.

Marjorie heard the sobs and uproar of an arrested motor, and glanced discreetly from the window to discover the dark green car with its green-clad chauffeur which now adorned her sister's life, and which might under different circumstances, have adorned her own. Wilkins — his name was Wilkins, his hair was sandy and his expression discreet, and he afforded material for much quiet humorous observation — descended smartly and opened the door. Daffy appeared in black velvet, with a huge black fur muff, and an air of being unaware that there were such things as windows in the world.

It was just four, and the cook-general, who ought to have been now in her housemaid's phase, was still upstairs divesting herself of her more culinary characteristics.-307- Marjorie opened the door.

"Hullo, old Daffy!" she said.

"Hullo, old Madge!" and there was an exchange of sisterly kisses and a mutual inspection.

"Nothing wrong?" asked Daffy, surveying her.

"*Wrong?*"

"You look pale and — tired about the eyes," said Daffy, leading the way into the drawing-room. "Thought you might be a bit off it,

that's all. No offence, Madge."

"I'm all right," said Marjorie, getting her back to the light. "Want a holiday, perhaps. How's every one?"

"All right. *We're* off to Lake Garda next week. This new play has taken it out of Will tremendously. He wants a rest and fresh surroundings. It's to be the biggest piece of work he's done — so far, and it's straining him. And people worry him here; receptions, first nights, dinners, speeches. He's so neat, you know, in his speeches.... But it wastes him. He wants to get away. How's Rag?"

"Busy."

"Lecturing?"

"And his Research of course."

"Oh! of course. How's the Babe?"

"Just in. Come up and see the little beast, Daffy! It is getting so pretty, and it talks — —"

Margharita dominated intercourse for a time. She was one of those tactful infants who exactly resemble their fathers and exactly resemble their mothers, and have a charm and individuality quite distinctly their own, and she was now beginning to converse with startling enterprise and intelligence.

"Big, big, bog," she said at the sight of Daffy.

"Remembers you," said Marjorie.

"Bog! Go ta-ta!" said Margharita.-308-

"There!" said Marjorie, and May, the nurse in the background, smiled unlimited appreciation.

"Bably," said Margharita.

"That's herself!" said Marjorie, falling on her knees. "She talks like this all day. Oh de sweetums, den!" *Was* it?

Daffy made amiable gestures and canary-like noises with her lips, and Margharita responded jovially.

"You darling!" cried Marjorie, "you delight of life," kneeling by the cot and giving the crowing, healthy little mite a passionate hug.

"It's really the nicest of babies," Daffy conceded, and reflected....

"I don't know what I should do with a kiddy," said Daffy, as the infant worship came to an end; "I'm really glad we haven't one — yet. He'd love it, I know. But it would be a burthen in some ways. They *are* a tie. As he says, the next few years means so much for

him. Of course, here his reputation is immense, and he's known in Germany, and there are translations into Russian; but he's still got to conquer America, and he isn't really well known yet in France. They read him, of course, and buy him in America, but they're — *restive*. Oh! I do so wish they'd give him the Nobel prize, Madge, and have done with it! It would settle everything. Still, as he says, we mustn't think of that — yet, anyhow. He isn't venerable enough. It's doubtful, he thinks, that they would give the Nobel prize to any humorist now that Mark Twain is dead. Mark Twain was different, you see, because of the German Emperor and all that white hair and everything."

At this point Margharita discovered that the conversation had drifted away from herself, and it was only when they got downstairs again that Daffy-309- could resume the thread of Magnet's career, which had evidently become the predominant interest in her life. She brought out all the worst elements of Marjorie's nature and their sisterly relationship. There were moments when it became nakedly apparent that she was magnifying Magnet to belittle Trafford. Marjorie did her best to counter-brag. She played her chief card in the F. R. S.

"They always ask Will to the Royal Society Dinner," threw out Daffy; "but of course he can't always go. He's asked to so many things."

Five years earlier Marjorie would have kicked her shins for that.

Instead she asked pointedly, offensively, if Magnet was any balder.

"He's not really bald," said Daffy unruffled, and went on to discuss the advisability of a second motor car — purely for town use. "I tell him I don't want it," said Daffy, "but he's frightfully keen upon getting one."

§ 8

When Daffy had at last gone Marjorie went back into Trafford's study and stood on the hearthrug regarding its appointments, with something of the air of one who awakens from a dream. She had developed a new, appalling thought. Was Daffy really a better wife

than herself? It was dawning upon Marjorie that she hadn't been doing the right thing by her husband, and she was as surprised as if it had been suddenly brought home to her that she was neglecting Margharita. This was her husband's study — and it showed just a little dusty in the afternoon sunshine, and everything about it denied the pretensions of serene sustained work that she had always made to herself. Here were the crumpled galley proofs of his-310- science notes; here were unanswered letters. There, she dare not touch them, were computations, under a glass paper-weight. What did they amount to now? On the table under the window were back numbers of the *Scientific Bulletin* in a rather untidy pile, and on the footstool by the arm-chair she had been accustomed to sit at his feet when he stayed at home to work, and look into the fire, and watch him furtively, and sometimes give way to an overmastering tenderness and make love to him. The thought of Magnet, pampered, fenced around, revered in his industrious tiresome repetitions, variations, dramatizations and so forth of the half-dozen dry little old jokes which the British public accepted as his characteristic offering and rewarded him for so highly, contrasted vividly with her new realization of Trafford's thankless work and worried face.

And she loved him, she loved him — *so*. She told herself in the presence of all these facts, and without a shadow of doubt in her mind that all she wanted in the world was to make him happy.

It occurred to her as a rather drastic means to this end that she might commit suicide.

She had already gone some way in the composition of a touching letter of farewell to him, containing a luminous analysis of her own defects, before her common-sense swept away this imaginative exercise.

Meanwhile, as if it had been working at her problem all the time that this exciting farewell epistle had occupied the foreground of her thoughts, her natural lucidity emerged with the manifest conclusion that she had to alter her way of living. She had been extraordinarily regardless of him, she only began to see that, and now she had to take up the problem of his necessities. Her self-examination now that it had begun was thorough. She had always told herself-311- before that she had made a most wonderful and beautiful little home for

him. But had she made it for him? Had he as a matter of fact ever wanted it, except that he was glad to have it through her? No doubt it had given him delight and happiness, it had been a marvellous little casket of love for them, but how far did that outweigh the burthen and limitation it had imposed upon him? She had always assumed he was beyond measure grateful to her for his home, in spite of all her bills, but was he? It was like sticking a knife into herself to ask that, but she was now in a phase heroic enough for the task — was he? She had always seen herself as the giver of bounties; greatest bounty of all was Margharita. She had faced pains and terrors and the shadow of death to give him Margharita. Now with Daffy's illuminating conversation in her mind, she could turn the light upon a haunting doubt that had been lurking in the darkness for a long time. Had he really so greatly wanted Margharita? Had she ever troubled to get to the bottom of that before? Hadn't she as a matter of fact wanted Margharita ten thousand times more than he had done? Hadn't she in effect imposed Margharita upon him, as she had imposed her distinctive and delightful home upon him, regardlessly, because these things were the natural and legitimate developments of herself?

These things were not his ends.

Had she hitherto ever really cared what his ends might be?

A phrase she had heard abundantly enough in current feminist discussion recurred to her mind, "the economic dependence of women," and now for the first time it was charged with meaning. She had imposed these things upon him not because she loved him, but because these things that were the expansions-312- and consequences of her love for him were only obtainable through him. A woman gives herself to a man out of love, and remains clinging parasitically to him out of necessity. Was there no way of evading that necessity?

For a time she entertained dreams of marvellous social reconstructions. Suppose the community kept all its women, suppose all property in homes and furnishings and children vested in them! That was Marjorie's version of that idea of the Endowment of Womanhood which has been creeping into contemporary thought during the last two decades. Then every woman would be a Princess

to the man she loved.... He became more definitely personal. Suppose she herself was rich, then she could play the Princess to Trafford; she could have him free, unencumbered, happy and her lover! Then, indeed, her gifts would be gifts, and all her instincts and motives would but crown his unhampered life! She could not go on from that idea, she lapsed into a golden reverie, from which she was roused by the clock striking five.

In half an hour perhaps Trafford would be home again. She could at least be so much of a princess as to make his home sweet for his home-coming. There should be tea in here, where callers did not trouble. She glanced at an empty copper vase. It ached. There was no light in the room. There would be just time to dash out into High Street and buy some flowers for it before he came....

§ 9

Spring and a renewed and deepened love for her husband were in Marjorie's blood. Her mind worked rapidly during the next few days, and presently she found herself clearly decided upon her course of-313- action. She had to pull herself together and help him, and if that meant a Spartan and strenuous way of living, then manifestly she must be Spartan and strenuous. She must put an end once for all to her recurrent domestic deficits, and since this could only be done by getting rid of May, she must get rid of May and mind the child herself. (Every day, thank Heaven! Margharita became more intelligent, more manageable, and more interesting.) Then she must also make a far more systematic and thorough study of domestic economy than she had hitherto done, and run the shopping and housekeeping on severer lines; she bought fruit carelessly, they had far too many joints; she never seemed able to restrain herself when it came to flowers. And in the evenings, which would necessarily be very frequently lonely evenings if Trafford's researches were to go on, she would typewrite, and either acquire great speed at that or learn shorthand, and so save Trafford's present expenditure on a typist. That unfortunately would mean buying a typewriter.

She found one afternoon in a twopenny book-box, with which she was trying to allay her craving for purchases, a tattered little

pamphlet entitled: “Proposals for the Establishment of an Order of Samurai,” which fell in very exactly with her mood. The title “dated”; it carried her mind back to her middle girlhood and the defeats of Kuropatki and the futile earnest phase in English thought which followed the Boer War. The order was to be a sort of self-appointed nobility serving the world. It shone with the light of a generous dawn, but cast, I fear, the shadow of the prig. Its end was the Agenda Club.... She read and ceased to read — and dreamt.

The project unfolded the picture of a new method-314- of conduct to her, austere, yet picturesque and richly noble. These Samurai, it was intimated, were to lead lives of hard discipline and high effort, under self-imposed rule and restraint. They were to stand a little apart from the excitements and temptations of everyday life, to eat sparingly, drink water, resort greatly to self-criticism and self-examination, and harden their spirits by severe and dangerous exercises. They were to dress simply, work hard, and be the conscious and deliberate salt of the world. They were to walk among mountains. Incidentally, great power was to be given them. Such systematic effort and self-control as this, seemed to Marjorie to give just all she wasn’t and needed to be, to save her life and Trafford’s from a common disaster....

It particularly appealed to her that they were to walk among mountains....

But it is hard to make a change in the colour of one’s life amidst the routine one has already established about oneself, in the house that is grooved by one’s weaknesses, amidst hangings and ornaments living and breathing with the life of an antagonistic and yet insidiously congenial ideal. A great desire came upon Marjorie to go away with Trafford for a time, out of their everyday life into strange and cool and spacious surroundings. She wanted to leave London and its shops, and the home and the movements and the callers and rivalries, and even dimpled little Margharita’s insistent claims, and get free and think. It was the first invasion of their lives by this conception, a conception that was ever afterwards to leave them altogether, of retreat and reconstruction. She knelt upon the white sheepskin hearthrug at Trafford’s feet one night, and told him of her desire. He, too, was tired of his work and his vexations, and ripe for

this suggestion of an altered life. The Easter-315- holiday was approaching, and nearly twenty unencumbered days. Mrs. Trafford, they knew, would come into the house, meanwhile, and care for Margharita. They would go away somewhere together and walk, no luggage but a couple of knapsacks, no hotel but some homely village inn. They would be in the air all day, until they were saturated with sweet air and spirit of clean restraints. They would plan out their new rule, concentrate their aims. “And I could think,” said Trafford, “of this new work I can’t begin here. I might make some notes.” Presently came the question of where the great walk should be. Manifestly, it must be among mountains, manifestly, and Marjorie’s eye saw those mountains with snow upon their summits and cold glaciers on their flanks. Could they get to Switzerland? If they travelled second class throughout, and took the cheaper way, as Samurai should?...

§ 10

That holiday seemed to Marjorie as if they had found a lost and forgotten piece of honeymoon. She had that same sense of fresh beginnings that had made their first walk in Italian Switzerland so unforgettable. She was filled with the happiness of recovering Trafford when he had seemed to be slipping from her. All day they talked of their outlook, and how they might economise away the need of his extra work, and so release him for his search again. For the first time he talked of his work to her, and gave her some intimation of its scope and quality. He became enthusiastic with the sudden invention of experimental devices, so that it seemed to her almost worth while if instead of going on they bolted back, he to his laboratory and she to her nursery, and so at once inaugurated-316- the new régime. But they went on, to finish the holiday out. And the delight of being together again with unfettered hours of association! They rediscovered each other, the same — and a little changed. If their emotions were less bright and intense, their interest was far wider and deeper.

The season was too early for high passes, and the weather was changeable. They started from Fribourg and walked to Thun and then

back to Bulle, and so to Bultigen, Saanen, Montbovon and the Lake of Geneva. They had rain several days, the sweet, soft, windless mountain rain that seemed so tolerable to those who are accustomed to the hard and driven downpours of England, and in places they found mud and receding snow; the inns were at their homeliest, and none the worse for that, and there were days of spring sunshine when a multitude of minute and delightful flowers came out as it seemed to meet them — it was impossible to suppose so great a concourse universal — and spread in a scented carpet before their straying feet. The fruit trees in the valleys were powdered with blossom, and the new grass seemed rather green-tinted sunlight than merely green. And they walked with a sort of stout leisureliness, knapsacks well-hung and cloaks about them, with their faces fresh and bright under the bracing weather, and their lungs deep charged with mountain air, talking of the new austerer life that was now beginning. With great snow-capped mountains in the background, streaming precipices overhead, and a sward of flowers to go upon, that strenuous prospect was altogether delightful. They went as it pleased them, making detours into valleys, coming back upon their steps. The interludes of hot, bright April sunshine made them indolent, and they would loiter and halt where some rock or wall invited, and sit basking like-317-happy, animals, talking very little, for long hours together. Trafford seemed to have forgotten all the strain and disappointment of the past two years, to be amazed but in no wise incredulous at this enormous change in her and in their outlook; it filled her with a passion of pride and high resolve to think that so she could recover and uplift him.

He was now very deeply in love with her again. He talked indeed of his research, but so that it might interest her, and when he thought alone, he thought, not of it, but of her, making again the old discoveries, his intense delight in the quality of her voice, his joy in a certain indescribable gallantry in her bearing. He pitied all men whose wives could not carry themselves, and whose voices failed and broke under the things they had to say. And then again there was the way she moved her arms, the way her hands took hold of things, the alert lucidity of her eyes, and then that faint, soft shadow of a smile upon her lips when she walked thinking or observant, all unaware that he was watching her.

It rained in the morning of their eleventh day and then gave way to warmth and sunshine, so that they arrived at Les Avants in the afternoon a little muddy and rather hot. At one of the tables under the trees outside the Grand Hotel was a small group of people dressed in the remarkable and imposing costume which still in those days distinguished the motorist. They turned from their tea to a more or less frank inspection of the Traffords, and suddenly broke out into cries of recognition and welcome. Solomonson — for the most part brown leather — emerged with extended hands, and behind him, nestling in the midst of immense and costly furs, appeared the kindly salience and brightness of his Lady's face. "Good luck!" cried Solomonson. "Good luck! Come and have tea-318- with us! But this is a happy encounter!"

"We're dirty — but so healthy!" cried Marjorie, saluting Lady Solomonson.

"You look, oh! — splendidly well," that Lady responded.

"We've been walking."

"With just that knapsack!"

"It's been glorious."

"But the courage!" said Lady Solomonson, and did not add, "the tragic hardship!" though her tone conveyed it. She had all the unquestioning belief of her race in the sanity of comfort. She had ingrained in her the most definite ideas of man's position and woman's, and that any one, man or woman, should walk in mud except under dire necessity, was outside the range of her philosophy. She thought Marjorie's thick boots and short skirts quite the most appalling feminine costume she had ever seen. She saw only a ruined complexion and damaged womanhood in Marjorie's rain-washed, sun-bit cheek. Her benevolent heart rebelled at the spectacle. It was dreadful, she thought, that nice young people like the Traffords should have come to this.

The rest of the party were now informally introduced. They were all very splendid and disconcertingly free from mud. One was Christabel Morrison, the actress, a graceful figure in a green baize coat and brown fur, who looked ever so much more charming than her innumerable postcards and illustrated-paper portraits would have led one to expect; her neighbour was Solomonson's cousin Lee, the

organizer of the Theatre Syndicate, a brown-eyed, attenuated, quick-minded little man with an accent that struck Trafford as being on the whole rather Dutch, and the third lady was Lady Solomonson's sister, Mrs. Lee. It appeared they were all staying at Lee's villa above-319- Vevey, part of an amusing assembly of people who were either vividly rich or even more vividly clever, an accumulation which the Traffords in the course of the next twenty minutes were three times invited, with an increasing appreciation and earnestness, to join.

From the first our two young people were not indisposed to do so. For eleven days they had maintained their duologue at the very highest level; seven days remained to them before they must go back to begin the hard new life in England, and there was something very attractive — they did not for a moment seek to discover the elements of that attractiveness — in this proposal of five or six days of luxurious indolence above the lake, a sort of farewell to the worldly side of worldly things, before they set forth upon the high and narrow path they had resolved to tread.

"But we've got no clothes," cried Marjorie, "no clothes at all! We've these hobnail boots and a pair each of heelless slippers."

"My dear!" cried Lady Solomonson in real distress, and as much aside as circumstances permitted, "my dear! My sister can manage all that!" Her voice fell to earnest undertones. "We can really manage all that. The house is packed with things. We'll come to dinner in fancy dress. And Scott, my maid, is so clever."

"But really!" said Marjorie.

"My dear!" said Lady Solomonson. "Everything." And she changed places with Lee in order to be perfectly confidential and explicit. "Rachel!" she cried, and summoned her sister for confirmatory assurances....

"But my husband!" Marjorie became audible.

"We've long Persian robes," said Mrs. Lee, with a glance of undisguised appraisement. "He'll be-320- splendid. He'll look like a Soldan...."

The rest of the company forced a hectic conversation in order not to seem to listen, and presently Lady Solomonson and her sister were triumphant. They packed Marjorie into the motor car, and Trafford

and Solomonson returned to Vevey by train and thence up to the villa by a hired automobile.

§ 11

They didn't go outside the magic confines of the Lees' villa for three days, and when they did they were still surrounded by their host's service and possessions; they made an excursion to Chillon in his motor-cars, and went in his motor-boat to lunch with the Maynards in their lake-side villa close to Geneva. During all that time they seemed lifted off the common earth into a world of fine fabrics, agreeable sounds, noiseless unlimited service, and ample untroubled living. It had an effect of enchantment, and the long healthy arduous journey thither seemed a tale of incredible effort amidst these sunny excesses. The weather had the whim to be serenely fine, sunshine like summer and the bluest of skies shone above the white wall and the ilex thickets and cypresses that bounded them in from the great world of crowded homes and sous and small necessities. And through the texture of it all for Trafford ran a thread of curious new suggestion. An intermittent discussion of economics and socialism was going on between himself and Solomonson and an agreeable little stammering man in brown named Minter, who walked up in the afternoon from Vevey, — he professed to be writing a novel — during the earlier half of the day. Minter displayed the keenest appreciation of everything in his entertainment, and blinked cheerfully-321- and expressed opinions of the extremest socialistic and anarchistic flavour to an accompaniment of grateful self-indulgence. "Your port-wine is wonderful, Lee," he would say, sipping it. "A terrible retribution will fall upon you some day for all this."

The villa had been designed by Lee to please his wife, and if it was neither very beautiful nor very dignified, it was at any rate very pretty and amusing. It might have been built by a Parisian dressmaker — in the châteauesque style. It was of greyish-white stone, with a roof of tiles. It had little balconies and acutely roofed turrets, and almost burlesque buttresses, pierced by doors and gates; and sun-trap loggias, as pleasantly casual as the bows and

embroideries of a woman's dress; and its central hall, with an impluvium that had nothing to do with rain-water, and its dining-room, to which one ascended from this hall between pillars up five broad steps, were entirely irrelevant to all its exterior features. Unobtrusive men-servants in grey with scarlet facings hovered serviceably.

From the little terrace, all set with orange-trees in tubs, one could see, through the branches and stems of evergreens and over a foreground of budding, starting vineyard, the clustering roofs of Vevey below, an agglomeration veiled ever so thinly in the morning by a cobweb of wood smoke, against the blue background of lake with its winged sailing-boats, and sombre Alpine distances. Minter made it all significant by a wave of the hand. "All this," he said, and of the crowded work-a-day life below, "all that."

"All this," with its rich litter of stuffs and ornaments, its fine profusion, its delicacies of flower and food and furniture, its frequent inconsecutive pleasures, its noiseless, ready service, was remarkably novel and yet remarkably familiar to Trafford. For-322- a time he could not understand this undertone of familiarity, and then a sunlit group of hangings in one of the small rooms that looked out upon the lake took his mind back to his own dining-room, and the little inadequate, but decidedly good, Bokhara embroidery that dominated it like a flag, that lit it, and now lit his understanding, like a confessed desire. Of course, Mrs. Lee — happy woman! — was doing just everything that Marjorie would have loved to do. Marjorie had never confessed as much, perhaps she had never understood as much, but now in the presence of Mrs. Lee's æsthetic exuberances, Trafford at least understood. He surveyed the little room, whose harmonies he had at first simply taken for granted, noted the lustre-ware that answered to the gleaming Persian tiles, the inspiration of a metallic thread in the hangings, and the exquisite choice of the deadened paint upon the woodwork, and realized for the first time how little aimless extravagance can be, and all the timid, obstinately insurgent artistry that troubled his wife. He stepped through the open window into a little loggia, and stared unseeingly over glittering, dark-green leaves to the mysteries of distance in the great masses above St. Gingolph, and it seemed for the first time that perhaps in

his thoughts he had done his wife a wrong. He had judged her fickle, impulsive, erratic, perhaps merely because her mind followed a different process from his, because while he went upon the lines of constructive truth, her guide was a more immediate and instinctive sense of beauty.

He was very much alive to her now, and deeply in love with her. He had reached Les Avants with all his sense of their discordance clean washed and walked out of his mind, by rain and sun and a flow of high resolutions, and the brotherly swing of their-323- strides together. They had come to the Lee's villa, mud-splashed, air-sweet comrades, all unaware of the subtle differences of atmosphere they had to encounter. They had no suspicion that it was only about half of each other that had fraternized. Now here they were in a company that was not only altogether alien to their former mood, but extremely interesting and exciting and closely akin to the latent factors in Marjorie's composition. Their hostess and her sister had the keen, quick æsthetic sensibilities of their race, with all that freedom of reading and enfranchisement of mind which is the lot of the Western women. Lee had an immense indulgent affection for his wife, he regarded her arrangements and exploits with an admiration that was almost American. And Mrs. Lee's imagination had run loose in pursuit of beautiful and remarkable people and splendours rather than harmonies of line and colour. Lee, like Solomonson, had that inexplicable alchemy of mind which distils gold from the commerce of the world ("All this," said Minter to Trafford, "is an exhalation from all that"); he accumulated wealth as one grows a beard, and found his interest in his uxorious satisfactions, and so Mrs. Lee, with her bright watchful eyes, quick impulsive movements and instinctive command had the utmost freedom to realize her ideals.

In the world at large Lee and Solomonson seemed both a little short and a little stout, and a little too black and bright for their entirely conventional clothing, but for the dinner and evening of the villa they were now, out of consideration for Trafford, at their ease, and far more dignified in Oriental robes. Trafford was accommodated with a long, black, delicately embroidered garment that reached to his feet, and suited something upstanding and fine in his

bearing;-324- Minter, who had stayed on from an afternoon call, was gorgeous in Chinese embroidery. The rest of the men clung boldly or bashfully to evening dress....

On the evening of his arrival Trafford, bathed and robed, found the rest of the men assembling about an open wood fire in the smaller hall at the foot of the main staircase. Lee was still upstairs, and Solomonson, with a new grace of gesture begotten by his costume, made the necessary introductions; a little man with fine-cut features and a Galway accent was Rex the playwright; a tall, grey-haired, clean-shaven man was Bright from the New York Central Museum; and a bearded giant with a roof of red hair and a remote eye was Radlett Barns, the great portrait-painter, who consents to paint your portrait for posterity as the King confers a knighthood. These were presently joined by Lee and Pacey, the blond-haired musician, and Mottersham, whose patents and inventions control electric lighting and heating all over the world, and then, with the men duly gathered and expectant, the women came down the wide staircase.

The staircase had been planned and lit for these effects, and Mrs. Lee meant to make the most of her new discovery. Her voice could be heard in the unseen corridor above arranging the descent: “You go first, dear. Will you go with Christabel?” The conversation about the fire checked and ceased with the sound of voices above and the faint rustle of skirts. Then came Christabel Morrison, her slender grace beautifully contrasted with the fuller beauties of that great lady of the stage, Marion Rufus. Lady Solomonson descended confidently in a group of three, with Lady Mottersham and sharp-tongued little Mrs. Rex, all very rich and splendid. After a brief interval their hostess preceded Marjorie, and was so much of an artist that she had dressed herself merely as a foil-325- to this new creation. She wore black and scarlet, that made the white face and bright eyes under her sombre hair seem the face of an inspiring spirit. A step behind her and to the right of her came Marjorie, tall and wonderful, as if she were the queen of earth and sunshine, swathed barbarically in gold and ruddy brown, and with her abundant hair bound back by a fillet of bloodstones and gold. Radlett Barns exclaimed at the sight of her. She was full of the manifest consciousness of dignity as she descended, quite conscious and quite unembarrassed; two borrowed

golden circlets glittered on her shining arm, and a thin chain of gold and garnets broke the contrast of the warm, sun-touched neck above, with the unsullied skin below.

She sought and met her husband's astonishment with the faintest, remotest of smiles. It seemed to him that never before had he appreciated her beauty. His daily companion had become this splendour in the sky. She came close by him with hand extended to greet Sir Philip Mottersham. He was sensible of the glow of her, as it were of a scented aura about her. He had a first full intimation of the cult and worship of woman and the magnificence of women, old as the Mediterranean and its goddesses, and altogether novel to his mind....

Christabel Morrison found him a pleasant but not very entertaining or exciting neighbor at the dinner-table, and was relieved when the time came for her to turn an ear to the artistic compliments of Radlett Barns. But Trafford was too interested and amused by the general effect of the dinner to devote himself to the rather heavy business of really exhilarating Christabel. He didn't give his mind to her. He found the transformation of Sir Rupert into a turbanned Oriental who might have come out of a picture by-326-Carpaccio, gently stimulating and altogether delightful. His attention returned again and again to that genial swarthiness. Mrs. Lee on his left lived in her eyes, and didn't so much talk to him as rattle her mind at him almost absent-mindedly, as one might dangle keys at a baby while one talked to its mother. Yet it was evident she liked the look of him. Her glance went from his face to his robe, and up and down the table, at the bright dresses, the shining arms, the glass and light and silver. She asked him to tell her just where he had tramped and just what he had seen, and he had scarcely begun answering her question before her thoughts flew off to three trophies of china and silver, struggling groups of china boys bearing up great silver shells of fruit and flowers that stood down the centre of the table. "What do you think of my chubby boys?" she asked. "They're German work. They came from a show at Düsseldorf last week. Ben saw I liked them, and sent back for them secretly, and here they, are! I thought they might be too colourless. But are they?"

"No," said Trafford, "they're just cool. Under that glow of fruit. Is

this salt-cellar English cut glass?”

“Old Dutch,” said Mrs. Lee. “Isn’t it jolly?” She embarked with a roving eye upon the story of her Dutch glass, which was abundant and admirable, and broke off abruptly to say, “Your wife is wonderful.”

“Her hair goes back,” she said, “like music. You know what I mean — a sort of easy rhythm. You don’t mind my praising your wife?”

Trafford said he didn’t.

“And there’s a sort of dignity about her. All my life, Mr. Trafford, I’ve wanted to be tall. It stopped my growth.”

She glanced off at a tangent. “Tell me, Mr.-327- Trafford,” she asked, “was your wife beautiful like this when you married her? I mean — of course she was a beautiful girl and adorable and all that; but wasn’t she just a slender thing?”

She paused, but if she had a habit of asking disconcerting questions she did not at any rate insist upon answers, and she went on to confess that she believed she would be a happier woman poor than rich— “not that Ben isn’t all he should be” — but that then she would have been a fashionable dressmaker. “People want help,” she said, “so much more help than they get. They go about with themselves — what was it Mr. Radlett Barns said the other night — oh! — like people leading horses they daren’t ride. I think he says such good things at times, don’t you? So wonderful to be clever in two ways like that. Just look *now* at your wife — now I mean, that they’ve drawn that peacock-coloured curtain behind her. My brother-in-law has been telling me you keep the most wonderful and precious secrets locked up in your breast, that you know how to make gold and diamonds and all sorts of things. If I did, — I should make them.”

She pounced suddenly upon Rex at her left with questions about the Keltic Renascence, was it still going on — or what? and Trafford was at liberty for a time to enjoy the bright effects about him, the shadowed profile and black hair of Christabel to the right of him, and the coruscating refractions and reflections of Lady Solomonson across the white and silver and ivory and blossom of the table. Then Mrs. Lee dragged him into a sudden conflict with Rex, by saying

abruptly —

"Of course, Mr. Trafford wouldn't believe that."

He looked perhaps a little lost.

"I was telling Mrs. Lee," said Rex, "that I don't-328- believe there's any economy of human toil in machinery whatever. I mean that the machine itself really embodies all the toil it seems to save, toil that went to the making of it and preparing it and getting coal for it...."

§ 12

Next morning they found their hostess at breakfast in the dining-room and now the sun was streaming through a high triple window that had been curtained overnight, and they looked out through clean, bright plate-glass upon mountains half-dissolved in a luminous mist, and a mist-veiled lake below. Great stone jars upon the terrace bore a blaze of urged and early blossom, and beyond were cypresses. Their hostess presided at one of two round tables, at a side table various breakfast dishes kept warm over spirit lamps, and two men servants dispensed tea and coffee. In the bay of the window was a fruit table, with piled fruit-plates and finger-bowls.

Mrs. Lee waved a welcoming hand, and drew Marjorie to a seat beside her. Rex was consuming trout and Christabel peaches, and Solomonson, all his overnight Orientalism abandoned, was in outspoken tweeds and quite under the impression that he was interested in golf. Trafford got frizzled bacon for Marjorie and himself, and dropped into a desultory conversation, chiefly sustained by Christabel, about the peculiarly exalting effect of beautiful scenery on Christabel's mind. Mrs. Lee was as usual distraught, and kept glancing towards the steps that led up from the hall. Lady Solomonson appeared with a rustle in a wrapper of pink Chinese silk. "I came down after all," she said. "I lay in bed weighing rolls and coffee and relaxed muscles against your-329- English breakfast downstairs. And suddenly I remembered your little sausages!"

She sat down with a distribution of handkerchief, bag, letters, a gold fountain pen and suchlike equipments, and Trafford got her some of the coveted delicacies. Mrs. Lee suddenly cried out, "*Here*

they come! *Here* they come!" and simultaneously the hall resonated with children's voices and the yapping of a Skye terrier.

Then a gay little procession appeared ascending the steps. First came a small but princely little boy of three, with a ruddy face and curly black hair, behind him was a slender, rather awkward girl of perhaps eleven, and a sturdier daughter of Israel of nine. A nurse in artistic purple followed, listening inattentively to some private whisperings of a knickerbockered young man of five, and then came another purple-robed nurse against contingencies, and then a nurse of a different, white-clad, and more elaborately costumed sort, carrying a sumptuous baby of eight or nine months. "Ah! the *darlings!*" cried Christabel, springing up quite beautifully, and Lady Solomonson echoed the cry. The procession broke against the tables and split about the breakfast party. The small boy in petticoats made a confident rush for Marjorie, Christabel set herself to fascinate his elder brother, the young woman of eleven scrutinized Trafford with speculative interest and edged towards him coyly, and Mrs. Lee interviewed her youngest born. The amiable inanities suitable to the occasion had scarcely begun before a violent clapping of hands announced the appearance of Lee.

It was Lee's custom, Mrs. Lee told Marjorie over her massively robed baby, to get up very early and work on rolls and coffee; he never breakfasted nor-330- joined them until the children came. All of them rushed to him for their morning kiss, and it seemed to Trafford that Lee at least was an altogether happy creature as he accepted the demonstrative salutations of this struggling, elbowing armful of offspring, and emerged at last like a man from a dive, flushed and ruffled and smiling, to wish his adult guests good morning.

"Come upstairs with us, daddy," cried the children, tugging at him. "Come upstairs!"

Mrs. Lee ran her eye about her table and rose. "It's the children's hour," she said to Marjorie. "You don't I hope, mind children?"

"But," said Trafford incredulous, and with a friendly arm about his admirer, "is this tall young woman yours?"

The child shot him a glance of passionate appreciation for this scrap of flattery.

“We began young,” said Mrs. Lee, with eyes of uncritical pride for the ungainly one, and smiled at her husband.

“Upstairs,” cried the boy of five and the girl of nine. “Upstairs.”

“May we come?” asked Marjorie.

“May we all come?” asked Christabel, determined to be in the movement.

Rex strolled towards the cigars, with disentanglement obviously in his mind.

“Do you really care?” asked Mrs. Lee. “You know, I’m so proud of their nursery. Would you care —— ? Always I go up at this time.”

“I’ve my little nursery, too,” said Marjorie.

“Of course!” cried Mrs. Lee, “I forgot. Of course;” and overwhelmed Marjorie with inquiries as she followed her husband. Every one joined the nurseryward procession except Rex, who left himself-331- behind with an air of inadvertency, and escaped to the terrace and a cigar....

It was a wonderful nursery, a suite of three bedrooms, a green and white, well-lit schoolroom and a vast playroom, and hovering about the passage Trafford remarked a third purple nurse and a very efficient and serious-looking Swiss governess. The schoolroom and the nursery displayed a triumph of judicious shopping and arrangement, the best of German and French and English things had been blended into a harmony at once hygienic and pedagogic and humanly charming. For once Marjorie had to admire the spending of another woman, and admit to herself that even she could not have done better with the money.

There were clever little desks for the elder children to work at, adjustable desks scientifically lit so that they benefited hands and shoulders and eyes; there were artistically coloured and artistically arranged pictures, and a little library held all the best of Lang and Lucas, rare good things like “Uncle Lubin,” Maurice Baring’s story of “Forget-me-not,” “Johnny Crow’s Garden,” “The Bad Child’s Book of Beasts,” animal books and bird books, costume books and story books, colour books and rhyme books, abundant, yet every one intelligently chosen, no costly meretricious printed rubbish such as silly Gentile mothers buy. Then in the great nursery, with its cork carpet on which any toy would stand or run, was an abundance of

admirable possessions and shelving for everything, and great fat cloth elephants to ride, and go-carts, and hooks for a swing. Marjorie's quick eye saw, and she admired effusively and envied secretly, and Mrs. Lee appreciated her appreciation. A skirmishing romp of the middle children and Lee went on about the two of them, and-332- Trafford was led off by his admirer into a cubby-house in one corner (with real glass windows made to open) and the muslin curtains were drawn while he was shown a secret under vows. Lady Solomonson discovered some soldiers, and was presently on her knees in a corner with the five-year old boy.

"These are like my Teddy's," she was saying. "My Billy has some of these."

Trafford emerged from the cubby-house, which was perhaps a little cramped for him, and surveyed the room, with his admirer lugging at his arm unheeded, and whispering: "Come back with me."

Of course this was the clue to Lee and Solomonson. How extremely happy Lee appeared to be! Enormous vistas of dark philoprogenitive parents and healthy little Jews and Jewesses seemed to open out to Trafford, hygienically reared, exquisitely trained and educated. And he and Marjorie had just one little daughter — with a much poorer educational outlook. She had no cloth elephant to ride, no elaborate cubby-house to get into, only a half-dozen picture books or so, and later she wouldn't when she needed it get that linguistic Swiss.

He wasn't above the normal human vanity of esteeming his own race and type the best, and certain vulgar aspects of what nowadays one calls Eugenics crossed his mind.

§ 13

During those few crowded days of unfamiliar living Trafford accumulated a vast confused mass of thoughts and impressions. He realized acutely the enormous gulf between his attitudes towards women and those of his host and Solomonson — and indeed of all the other men. It had never occurred to him before that there was any other relationship-333- possible between a modern woman and a modern man but a frank comradeship and perfect knowledge,

helpfulness, and honesty. That had been the continual implication of his mother's life, and of all that he had respected in the thought and writing of his time. But not one of these men in their place — with the possible exception of Minter, who remained brilliant but ambiguous — believed anything of the sort. It necessarily involved in practice a share of hardship for women, and it seemed fundamental to them that women should have no hardship. He sought for a word, and hung between chivalry and orientalism. He inclined towards chivalry. Their women were lifted a little off the cold ground of responsibility. Charm was their obligation. "A beautiful woman should be beautifully dressed," said Radlett Barns in the course of the discussion of a contemporary portrait painter. Lee nodded to endorse an obvious truth. "But she ought to dress herself," said Barns. "It ought to be herself to the points of the old lace — chosen and assimilated. It's just through not being that, that so many rich women are — detestable. Heaps of acquisition. Caddis-women...."

Trafford ceased to listen, he helped himself to a cigar and pinched its end and lit it, while his mind went off to gnaw at: "A beautiful woman should be beautifully dressed," as a dog retires with a bone. He couldn't escape from its shining truth, and withal it was devastating to all the purposes of his life.

He rejected the word orientalism; what he was dealing with here was chivalry. "All this," was indeed, under the thinnest of disguises, the castle and the pavilion, and Lee and Solomonson were valiant knights, who entered the lists not indeed with spear and shield but with prospectus and ingenious enterprise, who drew cheques instead of swords for their-334- ladies' honour, who held "all that" in fee and subjection that these exquisite and wonderful beings should flower in rich perfection. All these women lived in a magic security and abundance, far above the mire and adventure of the world; their knights went upon quests for them and returned with villas and pictures and diamonds and historical pearls. And not one of them all was so beautiful a being as his Marjorie, whom he made his squaw, whom he expected to aid and follow him, and suffer uncomplainingly the rough services of the common life. Not one was half so beautiful as Marjorie, nor half so sweet and wonderful....

If such thoughts came in Lee's villa, they returned with redoubled

force when Trafford found himself packed painfully with Marjorie in the night train to Paris. His head ached with the rattle and suffocation of the train, and he knew hers must ache more. The windows of the compartment and the door were all closed, the litigious little commercial traveller in shiny grey had insisted upon that, there was no corner seat either for Marjorie or himself, the dim big package over her head swayed threateningly. The green shade over the light kept opening with the vibration of the train, the pallid old gentleman with the beard had twisted himself into a ghastly resemblance to a broken-necked corpse, and pressed his knees hard and stiffly against Trafford, and the small, sniffing, bow-legged little boy beside the rusty widow woman in the corner smelt mysteriously and penetratingly of Roquefort cheese. For the seventeenth time the little commercial traveller jumped up with an unbecoming expletive, and pulled the shade over the light, and the silent young man in the fourth corner stirred and readjusted his legs.

For a time until the crack of light overhead had-335- widened again every one became a dark head-dangling outline....

He watched the dim shape before him and noted the weary droop of her pose. He wished he had brought water. He was intolerably thirsty, and his thirst gave him the measure of hers. This jolting fœtid compartment was a horrible place for her, an intolerably horrible place. And she was standing it, for all her manifest suffering, with infinite gallantry and patience. What a gallant soul indeed she was! Whatever else she did she never failed to rise to a challenge. Her very extravagance that had tried their lives so sorely was perhaps just one aspect of that same quality. It is so easy to be saving if one is timid; so hard if one is unaccustomed to fear. How beautiful she had shone at times in the lights and glitter of that house behind there, and now she was back in her weather-stained tweeds again, like a shining sword thrust back into a rusty old sheath.

Was it fair that she should come back into the sheath because of this passion of his for a vast inexhaustible research?

He had never asked himself before if it was fair to assume she would follow his purpose and his fortunes. He had taken that for granted. And she too had taken that for granted, which was so generously splendid of her. All her disloyalties had been

unintentional, indeed almost instinctive, breaches of her subordination to this aim which was his alone. These breaches he realized had been the reality of her nature fighting against her profoundest resolutions.

He wondered what Lee must think of this sort of married life. How ugly and selfish it must seem from that point of view.

He perceived for the first time the fundamental-336- incongruity of Marjorie's position, she was made to shine, elaborately prepared and trained to shine, desiring keenly to shine, and then imprisoned and hidden in the faded obscurity of a small, poor home. How conspicuously, how extremely he must be wanting in just that sort of chivalry in which Lee excelled! Those business men lived for their women to an extent he had hitherto scarcely dreamt of doing....

His want of chivalry was beyond dispute. And was there not also an extraordinary egotism in this concentration upon his own purposes, a self-esteem, a vanity? Had her life no rights? Suppose now he were to give her — two years, three years perhaps of his life — altogether. Or even four. Was it too much to grudge her four? Solomonson had been at his old theme with him, a theme the little man had never relinquished since their friendship first began years ago, possibilities of a business alliance and the application of a mind of exceptional freshness and penetration to industrial development. Why shouldn't that be tried? Why not "make money" for a brief strenuous time, and then come back, when Marjorie's pride and comfort were secure?...

(Poor dear, how weary she looked!)

He wondered how much more remained of this appalling night. It would have made so little difference if they had taken the day train and travelled first-class. Wasn't she indeed entitled to travel first-class? Pictures of the immense spaciousness, the softness, cleanliness and dignity of first-class compartments appeared in his mind....

He would have looked at his watch, but to get at it would mean disturbing the silent young man on his left.

Outside in the corridor there broke out a noisy-337- dispute about a missing coupon, a dispute in that wonderful language that is known to the facetious as *entente cordiale*, between an Englishman and the conductor of the train....

§ 14

In Paris there was a dispute with an extortionate cabman, and the crossing from Dieppe to Newhaven was rough and bitterly cold. They were both ill. They reached home very dirty and weary, and among the pile of letters and papers on Trafford's desk was a big bundle of Science Note proofs, and two letters from Croydon and Pinner to alter the hours of his lectures for various plausible and irritating reasons.

The little passage looked very small and rather bare as the door shut behind them, and the worn places that had begun to be conspicuous during the last six months, and which they had forgotten during the Swiss holiday, reasserted themselves. The dining-room, after spacious rooms flooded with sunshine, betrayed how dark it was, and how small. Those Bokhara embroideries that had once shone so splendid, now, after Mrs. Lee's rich and unlimited harmonies, seemed skimpy and insufficient, mere loin-cloths for the artistic nakedness of the home. They felt, too, they were beginning to find out their post-impressionist picture. They had not remembered it as nearly so crude as it now appeared. The hole a flying coal had burnt in the unevenly faded dark-blue carpet looked larger than it had ever done before, and was indeed the only thing that didn't appear faded and shrunken.

§ 15

The atmosphere of the Lees' villa had disturbed-338- Marjorie's feelings and ideas even more than it had Trafford's. She came back struggling to recover those high resolves that had seemed so secure when they had walked down to Les Avantes. There was a curiously tormenting memory of that vast, admirable nursery, and the princely procession of children that would not leave her mind. No effort of her reason could reconcile her to the inferiority of Margharita's equipment. She had a detestable craving for a uniform for May. But May was going....

But indeed she was not so sure that May was going.

She was no longer buoyantly well, she was full of indefinable

apprehensions of weakness and failure. She struggled to control an insurgence of emotions that rose out of the deeps of her being. She had now, she knew, to take on her share of the burden, to become one of the Samurai, to show her love no longer as a demand but as a service. Yet from day to day she procrastinated under the shadow of apprehended things; she forebore to dismiss May, to buy that second-hand typewriter she needed, to take any irrevocable step towards the realization of the new way of living. She tried to think away her fears, but they would not leave her. She felt that Trafford watched her pale face with a furtive solicitude and wondered at her hesitations; she tried in vain to seem cheerful and careless in his presence, with an anxiety, with premonitions that grew daily.

There was no need to worry him unduly....

But soon the matter was beyond all doubting. One night she gathered her courage together suddenly and came down into his study in her dressing-gown with her hair about her shoulders. She opened-339- the door and her heart failed her.

"Rag," she whispered.

"Yes," he said busily from his desk, without looking round.

"I want to speak to you," she answered, and came slowly, and stood beside him silently.

"Well, old Marjorie?" he said presently, drawing a little intricate pattern in the corner of his blotting paper, and wondering whether this was a matter of five pounds or ten.

"I meant so well," she said and caught herself back into silence again.

He started at the thought, at a depth and meaning in her voice, turned his chair about to look at her, and discovered she was weeping and choking noiselessly. He stood up close to her, moving very slowly and silently, his eyes full of this new surmise, and now without word or gesture from her he knew his thought was right. "My dear," he whispered.

She turned her face from him. "I meant so well," she sobbed. "My dear! I meant so well." Still with an averted face her arms came out to him in a desperate, unreasoning appeal for love. He took her and held her close to him. "Never mind, dear," he said. "Don't mind." Her passion now was unconstrained. "I thought—" he began, and left

the thing unsaid.

"But your work," she said; "your research?"

"I must give up research," he said.

"Oh, my dearest!"

"I must give up research," he repeated. "I've been seeing it for days. Clearer and clearer. *This* dear, just settles things. Even — as we were coming home in the train — I was making up my mind. At-340- Vevey I was talking to Solomonson."

"My dear," she whispered, clinging to him.

"I talked to Solomonson. He had ideas — a proposal."

"No," she said.

"Yes," he said. "I've left the thing too long."

He repeated. "I must give up research — for years. I ought to have done it long before."

"I had meant so well," she said. "I meant to work. I meant to deny myself...."

"I'm glad," he whispered. "Glad! Why should you weep?" It seemed nothing to him then, that so he should take a long farewell to the rare, sweet air of that wonderland his mind had loved so dearly. All he remembered was that Marjorie was very dear to him, very dear to him, and that all her being was now calling out for him and his strength. "I had thought anyhow of giving up research," he repeated. "This merely decides. It happens to decide. I love you, dear. I put my research at your feet. Gladly. This is the end, and I do not care, my dear, at all. I do not care at all — seeing I have you...."

He stood beside her for a moment, and then sat down again, sideways, upon his chair.

"It isn't you, my dear, or me," he said, "but life that beats us — that beautiful, irrational mother.... Life does not care for research or knowledge, but only for life. Oh! the world has to go on yet for tens of thousands of years before — before we are free for that. I've got to fight — as other men fight...."

He thought in silence for a time, oddly regardless of her. "But if it was not you," he said, staring at the fireplace with knitted brows, "if I did not love you.... Thank God, I love you, dear! Thank God, our children are love children! I want to live — to my finger-tips, but if I didn't love you — oh! love you!-341- then I think now — I'd be glad

— I'd be glad, I think, to cheat life of her victory."

"Oh, my dear!" she cried, and clung weeping to him, and caught at him and sat herself upon his knees, and put her arms about his head, and kissed him passionately with tear-salt lips, with her hair falling upon his face.

"My dear," she whispered....

§ 16

So soon as Trafford could spare an afternoon amidst his crowded engagements he went to talk to Solomonson, who was now back in London. "Solomonson," he said, "you were talking about rubber at Vevey."

"I remember," said Solomonson with a note of welcome.

"I've thought it over."

"I *thought* you would."

"I've thought things over. I'm going to give up my professorship — and science generally, and come into business — if that is what you are meaning."

Solomonson turned his paper-weight round very carefully before replying. Then he said: "You mustn't give up your professorship yet, Trafford. For the rest — I'm glad."

He reflected, and then his bright eyes glanced up at Trafford. "I knew," he said, "you would."

"I didn't," said Trafford. "Things have happened since."

"Something was bound to happen. You're too good — for what it gave you. I didn't talk to you out there for nothing. I saw things.... Let's go into the other room, and smoke and talk it over." He-342-stood up as he spoke.

"I thought you would," he repeated, leading the way. "I knew you would. You see, — one *has* to. You can't get out of it."

"It was all very well before you were married," said Solomonson, stopping short to say it, "but when a man's married he's got to think. He can't go on devoting himself to his art and his science and all that — not if he's married anything worth having. No. Oh, I understand. He's got to look about him, and forget the distant prospect for a bit. I saw you'd come to it. *I* came to it. Had to. I had ambitions — just as

you have. I've always had an inclination to do a bit of research on my own. I *like* it, you know. Oh! I could have done things. I'm sure I could have done things. I'm not a born money-maker. But —— ." He became very close and confidential. "It's —— *them*. You said good-bye to science for a bit when you flopped me down on that old croquet-lawn, Trafford." He went off to reminiscences. "Lord, how we went over! No more aviation for me, Trafford!"

He arranged chairs, and produced cigars. "After all — this of course — it's interesting. Once you get into the movement of it, it takes hold of you. It's a game."

"I've thought over all you said," Trafford began, using premeditated phrases. "Bluntly — I want three thousand a year, and I don't make eight hundred. It's come home to me. I'm going to have another child."

Solomonson gesticulated a congratulation.

"All the same, I hate dropping research. It's stuff I'm made to do. About that, Solomonson, I'm almost superstitious. I could say I had a call.... It's the maddest state of affairs! Now that I'm doing-343-absolutely my best work for mankind, work I firmly believe no one else can do, I just manage to get six hundred — nearly two hundred of my eight hundred is my own. What does the world think I could do better — that would be worth four times as much."

"The world doesn't think anything at all about it," said Solomonson.

"Suppose it did!"

The thought struck Sir Rupert. He knitted his brows and looked hard obliquely at the smoke of his cigar. "Oh, it won't," he said, rejecting a disagreeable idea. "There isn't any world — not in that sense. That's the mistake you make, Trafford."

"It's not what your work is worth," he explained. "It's what your advantages can get for you. People are always going about supposing — just what you suppose — that people ought to get paid in proportion to the good they do. It's forgetting what the world is, to do that. Very likely some day civilization will get to that, but it hasn't got to it yet. It isn't going to get to it for hundreds and hundreds of years."

His manner became confidential. "Civilization's just a fight,

Trafford — just as savagery is a fight, and being a wild beast is a fight, — only you have paddeder gloves on and there's more rules. We aren't out for everybody, we're out for ourselves — and a few friends perhaps — within limits. It's no good hurrying ahead and pretending civilization's something else, when it isn't. That's where all these socialists and people come a howler. Oh, *I* know the Socialists. I see 'em at my wife's At Homes. They come along with the literary people and the artists' wives and the actors and actresses, and none of them take much account of me because I'm just a business man and-344- rather dark and short, and so I get a chance of looking at them from the side that isn't on show while the other's turned to the women, and they're just as fighting as the rest of us, only they humbug more and they don't seem to me to have a decent respect for any of the common rules. And that's about what it all comes to, Trafford."

Sir Rupert paused, and Trafford was about to speak when the former resumed again, his voice very earnest, his eyes shining with purpose. He liked Trafford, and he was doing his utmost to make a convincing confession of the faith that was in him. "It's when it comes to the women," said Sir Rupert, "that one finds it out. That's where *you've* found it out. You say, I'm going to devote my life to the service of Humanity in general. You'll find Humanity in particular, in the shape of all the fine, beautiful, delightful and desirable women you come across, preferring a narrower turn of devotion. See? That's all. *Caeteris paribus*, of course. That's what I found out, and that's what you've found out, and that's what everybody with any sense in his head finds out, and there you are."

"You put it — graphically," said Trafford.

"I feel it graphically. I may be all sorts of things, but I do know a fact when I see it. I'm here with a few things I want and a woman or so I have and want to keep, and the kids upstairs, bless 'em! and I'm in league with all the others who want the same sort of things. Against any one or anything that upsets us. We stand by the law and each other, and that's what it all amounts to. That's as far as my patch of Humanity goes. Humanity at large! Humanity be blowed! *Look* at it! It isn't that I'm hostile to Humanity, mind you, but that I'm not disposed to go under as I should do if I didn't say that.-345-

So I say it. And that's about all it is, and there you are."

He regarded Trafford over his cigar, drawing fiercely at it for some moments. Then seeing Trafford on the point of speaking, he snatched it from his lips, demanded silence by waving it at his hearer, and went on.

"I say all this in order to dispose of any idea that you can keep up the open-minded tell-everybody-every-thing scientific attitude if you come into business. You can't. Put business in two words and what is it? Keeping something from somebody else, and making him pay for it—"

"Oh, look here!" protested Trafford. "That's not the whole of business."

"There's making him want it, of course, advertisement and all that, but that falls under making him pay for it, really."

"But a business man organizes public services, consolidates, economizes."

Sir Rupert made his mouth look very wide by sucking in the corners. "Incidentally," he said, and added after a judicious pause: "Sometimes... I thought we were talking of making money."

"Go on," said Trafford.

"You set me thinking," said Solomonson. "It's the thing I always like about you. I tell you, Trafford, I don't believe that the majority of people who make money help civilization forward any more than the smoke that comes out of the engine helps the train forward. If you put it to me, I don't. I've got no illusions of that sort. They're about as much help as — fat. They accumulate because things happen to be arranged so."

"Things will be arranged better some day."-346-

"They aren't arranged better now. Grip that! *Now*, it's a sort of paradox. If you've got big gifts and you choose to help forward the world, if you choose to tell all you know and give away everything you can do in the way of work, you've got to give up the ideas of wealth and security, and that means fine women and children. You've got to be a *deprived* sort of man. 'All right,' you say, 'That's me!' But how about your wife being a deprived sort of woman? Eh? That's where it gets you! And meanwhile, you know, while *you* make your sacrifices and do your researches, there'll be little mean

sharp active beasts making money all over you like maggots on a cheese. And if everybody who'd got gifts and altruistic ideas gave themselves up to it, then evidently only the mean and greedy lot would breed and have the glory. They'd get everything. Every blessed thing. There wouldn't be an option they didn't hold. And the other chaps would produce the art and the science and the literature, as far as the men who'd got hold of things would let 'em, and perish out of the earth altogether.... There you are! Still, that's how things are made...."

"But it isn't worth it. It isn't worth extinguishing oneself in order to make a world for those others, anyhow. Them and their children. Is it? Eh? It's like building a temple for flies to buzz in.... There is such a thing as a personal side to Eugenics, you know."

Solomonson reflected over the end of his cigar. "It isn't good enough," he concluded.

"You're infernally right," said Trafford.

"Very well," said Solomonson, "and now we can get to business."

§ 17

The immediate business was the systematic exploitation-347- of the fact that Trafford had worked out the problem of synthesizing indiarubber. He had done so with an entire indifference to the commercial possibilities of the case, because he had been irritated by the enormous publicity given to Behrens' assertion that he had achieved this long-sought end. Of course the production of artificial rubbers and rubber-like substances had been one of the activities of the synthetic chemist for many years, from the appearance of Tilden's isoprene rubber onward, and there was already a formidable list of collaterals, dimethybutadiene, and so forth, by which the coveted goal could be approached. Behrens had boldly added to this list as his own a number of variations upon a theme of Trafford's, originally designed to settle certain curiosities about elasticity. Behrens' products were not only more massively rubber-like than anything that had gone before them, but also extremely cheap to produce, and his bold announcement of success had produced a check in rubber sales and widespread depression in the quiveringly

sensitive market of plantation shares. Solomonson had consulted Trafford about this matter at Vevey, and had heard with infinite astonishment that Trafford had already roughly prepared and was proposing to complete and publish, unpatented and absolutely unprotected, first a smashing demonstration of the unsoundness of Behrens' claim and then a lucid exposition of just what had to be done and what could be done to make an indiarubber absolutely indistinguishable from the natural product. The business man could not believe his ears.

"My dear chap, positively — you mustn't," Solomonson had screamed, and he had opened his fingers-348- and humped his shoulders and for all his public school and university training lapsed undisguisedly into the Oriental. "Don't you *see* all you are throwing away?" he squealed.

"I suppose it's our quality to throw such things away," said Trafford, when at last Solomonson's point of view became clear to him. They had embarked upon a long rambling discussion of that issue of publication, a discussion they were now taking up again. "When men dropped that idea of concealing knowledge, alchemist gave place to chemist," said Trafford, "and all that is worth having in modern life, all that makes it better and safer and more hopeful than the ancient life, began."

"My dear fellow," said Solomonson, "I know, I know. But to give away the synthesis of rubber! To just shove it out of the window into the street! *Gare l'eau!* O! And when you could do with so much too!"....

Now they resumed the divergent threads of that Vevey talk.

Solomonson had always entertained the warmest friendship and admiration for Trafford, and it was no new thing that he should desire a business co-operation. He had been working for that in the old days at Riplings; he had never altogether let the possibility drop out of sight between them in spite of Trafford's repudiations. He believed himself to be a scientific man turned to business, but indeed his whole passion was for organization and finance. He knew he could do everything but originate, and in Trafford he recognized just that rare combination of an obstinate and penetrating simplicity with constructive power which is the essential blend in the making of

great intellectual initiatives. To Trafford belonged the secret of novel and unsuspected solutions;-349- what were fixed barriers and unsurmountable conditions to trained investigators and commonplace minds, would yield to his gift of magic inquiry. He could startle the accepted error into self-betrayal. Other men might play the game of business infinitely better than he — Solomonson knew, indeed, quite well that he himself could play the game infinitely better than Trafford — but it rested with Trafford by right divine of genius to alter the rules. If only he could be induced to alter the rules secretly, unostentatiously, on a business footing, instead of making catastrophic plunges into publicity! And everything that had made Trafford up to the day of his marriage was antagonistic to such strategic reservations. The servant of science has as such no concern with personal consequences; his business is the steady, relentless clarification of knowledge. The human affairs he changes, the wealth he makes or destroys, are no concern of his; once these things weigh with him, become primary, he has lost his honour as a scientific man.

"But you *must* think of consequences," Solomonson had cried during those intermittent talks at Vevey. "Here you are, shying this cheap synthetic rubber of yours into the world — for it's bound to be cheap! any one can see that — like a bomb into a market-place. What's the good of saying you don't care about the market-place, that *your* business is just to make bombs and drop them out of the window? You smash up things just the same. Why! you'll ruin hundreds and thousands of people, people living on rubber shares, people working in plantations, old, inadaptable workers in rubber works...."

Sir Rupert was now still a little incredulous of Trafford's change of purpose, and for a time argued conceded points. Then slowly he came to the conditions-350- and methods of the new relationship. He sketched out a scheme of co-operation and understandings between his firm and Trafford, between them both and his associated group in the city.

Behrens was to have rope and produce his slump in plantation shares, then Trafford was to publish his criticism of Behrens, reserving only that catalytic process which was his own originality, the process that was to convert the inert, theoretically correct

synthetic rubber, with a mysterious difference in the quality of its phases, into the real right thing. With Behrens exploded, plantation shares would recover, and while their friends in the city manipulated that, Trafford would resign his professorship and engage himself to an ostentatious promotion syndicate for the investigation of synthetic rubber. His discovery would follow immediately the group had cleared itself of plantation shares; indeed he could begin planning the necessary works forthwith; the large scale operations in the process were to be protected as far as possible by patents, but its essential feature, the addition of a specific catalytic agent, could be safely dealt with as a secret process.

"I hate secrecy," said Trafford.

"Business," interjected Solomonson, and went on with his exposition of the relative advantages of secrecy and patent rights. It was all a matter of just how many people you had to trust. As that number increased, the more and more advisable did it become to put your cards on the table and risk the complex uncertain protection of the patent law. They went into elaborate calculations, clerks were called upon to hunt up facts and prices, and the table was presently littered with waste arithmetic.

"I believe we can do the stuff at tenpence a-351- pound," said Solomonson, leaning back in his chair at last, and rattling his fountain pen between his teeth, "so soon, that is, as we deal in quantity. Tenpence! We can lower the price and spread the market, sixpence by sixpence. In the end — there won't be any more plantations. Have to grow tea.... I say, let's have an invalid dinner of chicken and champagne, and go on with this. It's fascinating. You can telephone."

They dined together, and Solomonson on champagne rather than chicken. His mind, which had never shown an instant's fatigue, began to glow and sparkle. This enterprise, he declared, was to be only the first of a series of vigorous exploitations. The whole thing warmed him. He would rather make ten thousand by such developments, than a hundred thousand by mere speculation. Trafford had but scratched the surface of his mine of knowledge. "Let's think of other things," said Sir Rupert Solomonson. "Diamonds! No! They've got too many tons stowed away already. A

diamond now — it's an absolutely artificial value. At any time a new discovery and one wild proprietor might bust that show. Lord! — diamonds! Metals? Of course you've worked the colloids chiefly. I suppose there's been more done in metals and alloys than anywhere. There's a lot of other substances. Business has hardly begun to touch substances yet, you know, Trafford — flexible glass, for example, and things like that. So far we've always taken substances for granted. On our side, I mean. It's extraordinary how narrow the outlook of business and finance is — still. It never seems to lead to things, never thinks ahead. In this case of rubber, for example — —"

"When men fight for their own hands and for-352- profit and position in the next ten years or so, I suppose they tend to become narrow."

"I suppose they must." Sir Rupert's face glowed with a new idea, and his voice dropped a little lower. "But what a pull they get, Trafford, if perhaps — they don't, eh?"

"No," said Trafford with a smile and a sigh, "the other sort gets the pull."

"Not *this* time," said Solomonson; "not with you to spot processes and me to figure out the cost—" he waved his hands to the litter that had been removed to a side table— "and generally see how the business end of things is going...."

BOOK THE THIRD

MARJORIE AT LONELY HUT

CHAPTER THE FIRST

Successes

§ 1

I find it hard to trace the accumulation of moods-355- and feelings that led Trafford and Marjorie at last to make their extraordinary raid upon Labrador. In a week more things happen in the thoughts of such a man as Trafford, changes, revocations, deflections, than one can chronicle in the longest of novels. I have already in an earlier passage of this story sought to give an image of the confused content of a modern human mind, but that pool was to represent a girl of twenty, and Trafford now was a man of nearly thirty-five, and touching life at a hundred points for one of the undergraduate Marjorie's. Perhaps that made him less confused, but it certainly made him fuller. Let me attempt therefore only the broad outline of his changes of purpose and activity until I come to the crucial mood that made these two lives a little worth telling about, amidst the many thousands of such lives that people are living to-day....

It took him seven years from his conclusive agreement with Solomonson to become a rich and influential man. It took him only seven years, because already by the mere accidents of intellectual interest he was in possession of knowledge of the very greatest economic importance, and because Solomonson was full of that practical loyalty and honesty that distinguishes his race. I think that in any case Trafford's vigor and subtlety of mind would have achieved the prosperity he had found necessary to himself, but it might have been, under less favorable-356- auspices, a much longer and more tortuous struggle. Success and security were never so abundant nor so easily attained by men with capacity and a sense of proportion as they are in the varied and flexible world of to-day. We live in an affluent age with a nearly incredible continuous fresh increment of power pouring in from mechanical invention, and compared with our own, most other periods have been meagre and anxious and hard-up times. Our problems are constantly less the

problems of submission and consolation and continually more problems of opportunity....

Trafford found the opening campaign, the operation with the plantation shares and his explosion of Behrens' pretensions extremely uncongenial. It left upon his mind a confused series of memories of interviews and talks in offices for the most part dingy and slovenly, of bales of press-cuttings and blue-pencilled financial publications, of unpleasing encounters with a number of bright-eyed, flushed, excitable and extremely cunning men, of having to be reserved and limited in his talk upon all occasions, and of all the worst aspects of Solomonson. All that part of the new treatment of life that was to make him rich gave him sensations as though he had ceased to wash himself mentally, until he regretted his old life in his laboratory as a traveller in a crowded night train among filthy people might regret the bathroom he had left behind him....

But the development of his manufacture of rubber was an entirely different business, and for a time profoundly interesting. It took him into a new astonishing world, the world of large-scale manufacture and industrial organization. The actual planning of the works was not in itself anything essentially new to him. So far as all that went it was scarcely-357- more than the problem of arranging an experiment upon a huge and permanent scale, and all that quick ingenuity, that freshness and directness of mind that had made his purely scientific work so admirable had ample and agreeable scope. Even the importance of cost and economy at every point in the process involved no system of considerations that was altogether novel to him. The British investigator knows only too well the necessity for husbanded material and inexpensive substitutes. But strange factors came in, a new region of interest was opened with the fact that instead of one experimenter working with the alert responsive assistance of Durgan, a multitude of human beings — even in the first drafts of his project they numbered already two hundred, before the handling and packing could be considered — had to watch, control, assist or perform every stage in a long elaborate synthesis. For the first time in his life Trafford encountered the reality of Labour, as it is known to the modern producer.

It will be difficult in the future, when things now subtly or widely

separated have been brought together by the receding perspectives of time, for the historian to realize just how completely out of the thoughts of such a young man as Trafford the millions of people who live and die in organized productive industry had been. That vast world of toil and weekly anxiety, ill-trained and stupidly directed effort and mental and moral feebleness, had been as much beyond the living circle of his experience as the hosts of Genghis Khan or the social life of the Forbidden City. Consider the limitations of his world. In all his life hitherto he had never been beyond a certain prescribed area of London's immensities, except by the most casual and uninstructive straying. He knew Chelsea and Kensington and the north bank-358- and (as a boy) Battersea Park, and all the strip between Kensington and Charing Cross, with some scraps of the Strand as far as the Law Courts, a shop or so in Tottenham Court Road and fragments about the British Museum and Holborn and Regent's Park, a range up Edgware Road to Maida Vale, the routes west and south-west through Uxbridge and Putney to the country, and Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath. He had never been on Hampstead Heath nor visited the Botanical Gardens nor gone down the Thames below London Bridge, nor seen Sydenham nor Epping Forest nor the Victoria Park. Take a map and blot all he knew and see how vast is the area left untouched. All industrial London, all wholesale London, great oceans of human beings fall into that excluded area. The homes he knew were comfortable homes, the poor he knew were the parasitic and dependent poor of the West, the shops, good retail shops, the factories for the most part engaged in dressmaking.

Of course he had been informed about this vast rest of London. He knew that as a matter of fact it existed, was populous, portentous, puzzling. He had heard of "slums," read "Tales of Mean Streets," and marvelled in a shallow transitory way at such wide wildernesses of life, apparently supported by nothing at all in a state of grey, darkling but prolific discomfort. Like the princess who wondered why the people having no bread did not eat cake, he could never clearly understand why the population remained there, did not migrate to more attractive surroundings. He had discussed the problems of those wildernesses as young men do, rather confidently,

very ignorantly, had dismissed them, recurred to them, and forgotten them amidst a press of other interests, but now it all suddenly became real to him-359- with the intensity of a startling and intimate contact. He discovered this limitless, unknown, greater London, this London of the majority, as if he had never thought of it before. He went out to inspect favourable sites in regions whose very names were unfamiliar to him, travelled on dirty little intraurban railway lines to hitherto unimagined railway stations, found parks, churches, workhouses, institutions, public-houses, canals, factories, gas-works, warehouses, foundries and sidings, amidst a multitudinous dinginess of mean houses, shabby back-yards, and ill-kept streets. There seemed to be no limits to this thread-bare side of London, it went on northward, eastward, and over the Thames southward, for mile after mile — endlessly. The factories and so forth clustered in lines and banks upon the means of communication, the homes stretched between, and infinitude of parallelograms of grimy boxes with public-houses at the corners and churches and chapels in odd places, towering over which rose the council schools, big, blunt, truncated-looking masses, the means to an education as blunt and truncated, born of tradition and confused purposes, achieving by accident what they achieve at all.

And about this sordid-looking wilderness went a population that seemed at first as sordid. It was in no sense a tragic population. But it saw little of the sun, felt the wind but rarely, and so had a white, dull skin that looked degenerate and ominous to a West-end eye. It was not naked nor barefooted, but it wore cheap clothes that were tawdry when new, and speedily became faded, discoloured, dusty, and draggled. It was slovenly and almost wilfully ugly in its speech and gestures. And the food it ate was rough and coarse if abundant, the eggs it consumed "tasted" — everything "tasted"; its milk, its beer, its-360- bread was degraded by base adulterations, its meat was hacked red stuff that hung in the dusty air until it was sold; east of the city Trafford could find no place where by his standards he could get a tolerable meal tolerably served. The entertainment of this eastern London was jingle, its religion clap-trap, its reading feeble and sensational rubbish without kindliness or breadth. And if this great industrial multitude was neither tortured nor driven nor cruelly

treated — as the slaves and common people of other days have been — yet it was universally anxious, perpetually anxious about urgent small necessities and petty dissatisfying things....

That was the general effect of this new region in which he had sought out and found the fortunate site for his manufacture of rubber, and against this background it was that he had now to encounter a crowd of selected individuals, and weld them into a harmonious and successful "process." They came out from their millions to him, dingy, clumsy, and at first it seemed without any individuality. Insensibly they took on character, rounded off by unaccustomed methods into persons as marked and distinctive as any he had known.

There was Dowd, for instance, the technical assistant, whom he came to call in his private thoughts Dowd the Disinherited. Dowd had seemed a rather awkward, potentially insubordinate young man of unaccountably extensive and curiously limited attainments. He had begun his career in a crowded home behind and above a baker's shop in Hoxton, he had gone as a boy into the works of a Clerkenwell electric engineer, and there he had developed that craving for knowledge which is so common in poor men of the energetic type. He had gone to classes, read with a sort of fury, feeding his mind on the-361- cheap and adulterated instruction of grant-earning crammers and on stale, meretricious and ill-chosen books; his mental food indeed was the exact parallel of the rough, abundant, cheap and nasty groceries and meat that gave the East-ender his spots and dyspeptic complexion, the cheap text-books were like canned meat and dangerous with intellectual ptomaines, the rascally encyclopædias like weak and whitened bread, and Dowd's mental complexion, too, was leaden and spotted. Yet essentially he wasn't, Trafford found, by any means bad stuff; where his knowledge had had a chance of touching reality it became admirable, and he was full of energy in his work and a sort of honest zeal about the things of the mind. The two men grew from an acute mutual criticism into a mutual respect.

At first it seemed to Trafford that when he met Dowd he was only meeting Dowd, but a time came when it seemed to him that in meeting Dowd he was meeting all that vast new England outside the range of ruling-class dreams, that multitudinous greater England,

cheaply treated, rather out of health, angry, energetic and now becoming intelligent and critical, that England which organized industrialism has created. There were nights when he thought for hours about Dowd. Other figures grouped themselves round him — Markham, the head clerk, the quintessence of East-end respectability, who saw to the packing; Miss Peckover, an ex-telegraph operator, a woman so entirely reliable and unobservant that the most betraying phase of the secret process could be confidently entrusted to her hands. Behind them were clerks, workmen, motor-van men, work-girls, a crowd of wage-earners, from amidst which some individual would assume temporary importance and interest by doing something wrong, getting into-362- trouble, becoming insubordinate, and having contributed a little vivid story to Trafford's gathering impressions of life, drop back again into undistinguished subordination.

Dowd became at last entirely representative.

When first Trafford looked Dowd in the eye, he met something of the hostile interest one might encounter in a swordsman ready to begin a duel. There was a watchfulness, an immense reserve. They discussed the work and the terms of their relationship, and all the while Trafford felt there was something almost threateningly not mentioned.

Presently he learnt from a Silvertown employer what that concealed aspect was. Dowd was "that sort of man who makes trouble," disposed to strike rather than not upon a grievance, with a taste for open-air meetings, a member, obstinately adherent in spite of friendly remonstrance, of the Social Democratic Party. This in spite of his clear duty to a wife and two small white knobby children. For a time he would not talk to Trafford of anything but business — Trafford was so manifestly the enemy, not to be trusted, the adventurous plutocrat, the exploiter — when at last Dowd did open out he did so defiantly, throwing opinions at Trafford as a mob might hurl bricks at windows. At last they achieved a sort of friendship and understanding, an amiability as it were, in hostility, but never from first to last would he talk to Trafford as one gentleman to another; between them, and crossed only by flimsy, temporary bridges, was his sense of incurable grievances and fundamental injustice. He

seemed incapable of forgetting the disadvantages of his birth and upbringing, the inferiority and disorder of the house that sheltered him, the poor food that nourished him, the deadened air he breathed, the limited leisure, the inadequate-363- books. Implicit in his every word and act was the assurance that but for this handicap he could have filled Trafford's place, while Trafford would certainly have failed in his.

For all these things Dowd made Trafford responsible; he held him to that inexorably.

"*You* sweat us," he said, speaking between his teeth; "*you* limit us, *you* stifle us, and away there in the West-end, *you* and the women you keep waste the plunder."

Trafford attempted palliation. "After all," he said, "it's not me so particularly — —"

"But it is," said Dowd.

"It's the system things go upon."

"You're the responsible part of it. *You* have freedom, *you* have power and endless opportunity—"

Trafford shrugged his shoulders.

"It's because your sort wants too much," said Dowd, "that my sort hasn't enough."

"Tell me how to organize things better."

"Much you'd care. They'll organize themselves. Everything is drifting to class separation, the growing discontent, the growing hardship of the masses.... Then you'll see."

"Then what's going to happen?"

"Overthrow. And social democracy."

"How is that going to work?"

Dowd had been cornered by that before. "I don't care if it *doesn't* work," he snarled, "so long as we smash up this. We're getting too sick to care what comes after."

"Dowd," said Trafford abruptly, "*I'm* not so satisfied with things."

Dowd looked at him askance. "You'll get reconciled to it," he said. "It's ugly here — but it's all right there — at the spending end.... Your sort-364- has got to grab, your sort has got to spend — until the thing works out and the social revolution makes an end of you."

“And then?”

Dowd became busy with his work.

Trafford stuck his hands in his pockets and stared out of the dingy factory window.

“I don’t object so much to your diagnosis,” he said, “as to your remedy. It doesn’t strike me as a remedy.”

“It’s an end,” said Dowd, “anyhow. My God! When I think of all the women and shirkers flaunting and frittering away there in the West, while here men and women toil and worry and starve....” He stopped short like one who feels too full for controlled speech.

“Dowd,” said Trafford after a fair pause, “What would you do if you were me?”

“Do?” said Dowd.

“Yes,” said Trafford as one who reconsiders it, “what would you do?”

“Now that’s a curious question, Mr. Trafford,” said Dowd, turning to regard him. “Meaning — if I were in your place?”

“Yes,” said Trafford. “What would you do in my place?”

“I should sell out of this place jolly quick,” he said.

“*Sell!*” said Trafford softly.

“Yes — sell. And start a socialist daily right off. An absolutely independent, unbiassed socialist daily.”

“And what would that do?”

“It would stir people up. Every day it would stir people up.”

“But you see I can’t edit. I haven’t the money-365- for half a year of a socialist daily.... And meanwhile people want rubber.”

Dowd shook his head. “You mean that you and your wife want to have the spending of six or eight thousand a year,” he said.

“I don’t make half of that,” said Trafford.

“Well — half of that,” pressed Dowd. “It’s all the same to me.”

Trafford reflected. “The point where I don’t agree with you,” he said, “is in supposing that my scale of living — over there, is directly connected with the scale of living — about here.”

“Well, isn’t it?”

“‘Directly,’ I said. No. If we just stopped it — over there — there’d be no improvement here. In fact, for a time it would mean dislocations. It might mean permanent, hopeless, catastrophic

dislocation. You know that as well as I do. Suppose the West-end became — Tolstoyan; the East would become chaos."

"Not much likelihood," sneered Dowd.

"That's another question. That we earn together here and that I spend alone over there, it's unjust and bad, but it isn't a thing that admits of any simple remedy. Where we differ, Dowd, is about that remedy. I admit the disease as fully as you do. I, as much as you, want to see the dawn of a great change in the ways of human living. But I don't think the diagnosis is complete and satisfactory; our problem is an intricate muddle of disorders, not one simple disorder, and I don't see what treatment is indicated."

"Socialism," said Dowd, "is indicated."

"You might as well say that health is indicated," said Trafford with a note of impatience in his voice. "Does any one question that if we could have this-366- socialist state in which every one is devoted and every one is free, in which there is no waste and no want, and beauty and brotherhood prevail universally, we wouldn't? But —— . You socialists have no scheme of government, no scheme of economic organization, no intelligible guarantees of personal liberty, no method of progress, no ideas about marriage, no plan — except those little pickpocket plans of the Fabians that you despise as much as I do — for making this order into that other order you've never yet taken the trouble to work out even in principle. Really you know, Dowd, what is the good of pointing at my wife's dresses and waving the red flag at me, and talking of human miseries — —"

"It seems to wake you up a bit," said Dowd with characteristic irrelevance.

§ 2

The accusing finger of Dowd followed Trafford into his dreams.

Behind it was his grey-toned, intelligent, resentful face, his smouldering eyes, his slightly frayed collar and vivid, ill-chosen tie. At times Trafford could almost hear his flat insistent voice, his measured h-less speech. Dowd was so penetratingly right, — and so ignorant of certain essentials, so wrong in his forecasts and ultimates. It was true beyond disputing that Trafford as compared with Dowd

had opportunity, power of a sort, the prospect and possibility of leisure. He admitted the liability that followed on that advantage. It expressed so entirely the spirit of his training that with Trafford the noble maxim of the older socialists; “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need,”-367- received an intuitive acquiescence. He had no more doubt than Dowd that Dowd was the victim of a subtle evasive injustice, innocently and helplessly underbred, underfed, cramped and crippled, and that all his own surplus made him in a sense Dowd’s debtor.

But Dowd’s remedies!

Trafford made himself familiar with the socialist and labor newspapers, and he was as much impressed by their honest resentments and their enthusiastic hopefulness as he was repelled by their haste and ignorance, their cocksure confidence in untried reforms and impudent teachers, their indiscriminating progressiveness, their impulsive lapses into hatred, misrepresentation and vehement personal abuse. He was in no mood for the humours of human character, and he found the ill-masked feuds and jealousies of the leaders, the sham statecraft of G. B. Magdeberg, M.P., the sham Machiavellism of Dorvil, the sham persistent good-heartedness of Will Pipes, discouraging and irritating. Altogether it seemed to him the conscious popular movement in politics, both in and out of Parliament, was a mere formless and indeterminate aspiration. It was a confused part of the general confusion, symptomatic perhaps, but exercising no controls and no direction.

His attention passed from the consideration of this completely revolutionary party to the general field of social reform. With the naïve directness of a scientific man, he got together the published literature of half a dozen flourishing agitations and philanthropies, interviewed prominent and rather embarrassed personages, attended meetings, and when he found the speeches too tiresome to follow watched the audience about him. He even looked up Aunt Plessington’s Movement, and filled her with wild hopes and premature boastings about a promising-368- convert. “Marjorie’s brought him round at last!” said Aunt Plessington. “I knew I could trust my little Madge!” His impression was not the cynic’s impression of these wide shallows of activity. Progress and social

reform are not, he saw, mere cloaks of hypocrisy; a wealth of good intention lies behind them in spite of their manifest futility. There is much dishonesty due to the blundering desire for consistency in people of hasty intention, much artless and a little calculated self-seeking, but far more vanity and amiable feebleness of mind in their general attainment of failure. The Plessingtons struck him as being after all very typical of the publicist at large, quite devoted, very industrious, extremely presumptuous and essentially thin-witted. They would cheat like ill-bred children for example, on some petty point of reputation, but they could be trusted to expend, ineffectually indeed, but with the extremest technical integrity, whatever sums of money their adherents could get together....

He emerged from this inquiry into the proposed remedies and palliatives for Dowd's wrongs with a better opinion of people's hearts and a worse one of their heads than he had hitherto entertained.

Pursuing this line of thought he passed from the politicians and practical workers to the economists and sociologists. He spent the entire leisure of the second summer after the establishment of the factory upon sociological and economic literature. At the end of that bout of reading he attained a vivid realization of the garrulous badness that rules in this field of work, and the prevailing slovenliness and negligence in regard to it. He chanced one day to look up the article on Socialism in the new Encyclopædia Britannica, and found in its entire failure to state the case for or against modern Socialism, to trace-369- its origins, or to indicate any rational development in the movement, a symptom of the universal laxity of interest in these matters. Indeed, the writer did not appear to have heard of modern Socialism at all; he discussed collective and individualist methods very much as a rather ill-read schoolgirl in a hurry for her college debating society might have done. Compared with the treatment of engineering or biological science in the same compilation, this article became almost symbolical of the prevailing habitual incompetence with which all this system of questions is still handled. The sciences were done scantily and carelessly enough, but they admitted at any rate the possibility of completeness; this did not even pretend to thoroughness.

One might think such things had no practical significance. And at the back of it all was Dowd, remarkably more impatient each year, confessing the failure of parliamentary methods, of trades unionism, hinting more and more plainly at the advent of a permanent guerilla war against capital, at the general strike and sabotage.

"It's coming to that," said Dowd; "it's coming to that."

"*What's the good of it?*" he said, echoing Trafford's words. "It's a sort of relief to the feelings. Why shouldn't we?"

§ 3

But you must not suppose that at any time these huge grey problems of our social foundations and the riddle of intellectual confusion one reaches through them, and the yet broader riddles of human purpose that open beyond, constitute the whole of Trafford's life during this time. When he came back to Marjorie-370- and his home, a curtain of unreality fell between him and all these things. It was as if he stepped through such boundaries as Alice passed to reach her Wonderland; the other world became a dream again; as if he closed the pages of a vivid book and turned to things about him. Or again it was as if he drew down the blind of a window that gave upon a landscape, grave, darkling, ominous, and faced the warm realities of a brightly illuminated room....

In a year or so he had the works so smoothly organized and Dowd so reconciled, trained and encouraged that his own daily presence was unnecessary, and he would go only three and then only two mornings a week to conduct those secret phases in the preparation of his catalytic that even Dowd could not be trusted to know. He reverted more and more completely to his own proper world.

And the first shock of discovering that greater London which "isn't in it" passed away by imperceptible degrees. Things that had been as vivid and startling as new wounds became unstimulating and ineffective with repetition. He got used to the change from Belgravia to East Ham, from East Ham to Belgravia. He fell in with the unusual persuasion in Belgravia, that, given a firm and prompt Home Secretary, East Ham could be trusted to go on — for quite a long time anyhow. One cannot sit down for all one's life in the face of

insoluble problems. He had a motor-car now that far outshone Magnet's, and he made the transit from west to east in the minimum of time and with the minimum of friction. It ceased to be more disconcerting that he should have workers whom he could dismiss at a week's notice to want or prostitution than that he should have a servant waiting behind his chair. Things were so. The main current of his life — and the main current of his-371- life flowed through Marjorie and his home — carried him on. Rubber was his, but there were still limitless worlds to conquer. He began to take up, working under circumstances of considerable secrecy at Solomonson's laboratories at Riplings, to which he would now go by motor-car for two or three days at a time, the possibility of a cheap, resilient and very tough substance, rubber glass, that was to be, Solomonson was assured, the road surface of the future.

§ 4

The confidence of Solomonson had made it impossible for Trafford to alter his style of living almost directly upon the conclusion of their agreement. He went back to Marjorie to broach a financially emancipated phase. They took a furnished house at Shackleford, near Godalming in Surrey, and there they lived for nearly a year — using their Chelsea home only as a town apartment for Trafford when business held him in London. And there it was, in the pretty Surrey country, with the sweet air of pine and heather in Marjorie's blood, that their second child was born. It was a sturdy little boy, whose only danger in life seemed to be the superfluous energy with which he resented its slightest disrespect of his small but important requirements.

When it was time for Marjorie to return to London, spring had come round again, and Trafford's conceptions of life were adapting themselves to the new scale upon which they were now to do things. While he was busy creating his factory in the East End, Marjorie was displaying an equal if a less original constructive energy in Sussex Square, near Lancaster Gate, for there it was the new home was to be established. She set herself to furnish and arrange-372- it so as to produce the maximum of surprise and chagrin in Daphne, and she

succeeded admirably. The Magnets now occupied a flat in Whitehall Court, the furniture Magnet had insisted upon buying himself with all the occult cunning of the humorist in these matters, and not even Daphne could blind herself to the superiority both in arrangement and detail of Marjorie's home. That was very satisfactory, and so too was the inevitable exaggeration of Trafford's financial importance. "He can do what he likes in the rubber world," said Marjorie. "In Mincing Lane, where they deal in rubber shares, they used to call him and Sir Rupert the invaders; now they call them the Conquering Heroes.... Of course, it's mere child's play to Godwin, but, as he said, 'We want money.' It won't really interfere with his more important interests...."

I do not know why both those sisters were more vulgarly competitive with each other than with any one else; I have merely to record the fact that they were so.

The effect upon the rest of Marjorie's family was equally gratifying. Mr. Pope came to the house-warming as though he had never had the slightest objection to Trafford's antecedents, and told him casually after dinner that Marjorie had always been his favourite daughter, and that from the first he had expected great things of her. He told Magnet, who was the third man of the party, that he only hoped Syd and Rom would do as well as their elder sisters. Afterwards, in the drawing-room, he whacked Marjorie suddenly and very startlingly on the shoulder-blade — it was the first bruise he had given her since Buryhamstreet days. "You've made a man of him, Maggots," he said.

The quiet smile of the Christian Scientist was-373- becoming now the fixed expression of Mrs. Pope's face, and it scarcely relaxed for a moment as she surveyed her daughter's splendours. She had triumphantly refused to worry over a rather serious speculative disappointment, but her faith in her prophet's spiritual power had been strengthened rather than weakened by the manifest insufficiency of his financial prestidigitations, and she was getting through life quite radiantly now, smiling at (but not, of course, giving way to) beggars, smiling at toothaches and headaches, both her own and other people's, smiling away doubts, smiling away everything that bows the spirit of those who are still in the bonds of the flesh....

Afterwards the children came round, Syd and Rom now with skirts down and hair up, and rather stiff in the fine big rooms, and Theodore in a high collar and very anxious to get Trafford on his side in his ambition to chuck a proposed bank clerkship and go in for professional aviation....

It was pleasant to be respected by her family again, but the mind of Marjorie was soon reaching out to the more novel possibilities of her changed position. She need no longer confine herself to teas and afternoons. She could now, delightful thought! give dinners. Dinners are mere vulgarities for the vulgar, but in the measure of your brains does a dinner become a work of art. There is the happy blending of a modern and distinguished simplicity with a choice of items essentially good and delightful and just a little bit not what was expected. There is the still more interesting and difficult blending and arrangement of the diners. From the first Marjorie resolved on a round table, and the achievement of that rare and wonderful thing, general conversation. She had a clear centre, with a circle of silver bowls filled-374- with short cut flowers and low shaded, old silver candlesticks adapted to the electric light. The first dinner was a nervous experience for her, but happily Trafford seemed unconscious of the importance of the occasion and talked very easily and well; at last she attained her old ambition to see Sir Roderick Dover in her house, and there was Remington, the editor of the *Blue Weekly* and his silent gracious wife; Edward Crampton, the historian, full of surprising new facts about Kosciusko; the Solomonsons and Mrs. Millingham, and Mary Gasthorne the novelist. It was a good talking lot. Remington sparred agreeably with the old Toryism of Dover, flank attacks upon them both were delivered by Mrs. Millingham and Trafford, Crampton instanced Hungarian parallels, and was happily averted by Mary Gasthorne with travel experiences in the Carpathians; the diamonds of Lady Solomonson and Mrs. Remington flashed and winked across the shining table, as their wearers listened with unmistakable intelligence, and when the ladies had gone upstairs Sir Rupert Solomonson told all the men exactly what he thought of the policy of the *Blue Weekly*, a balanced, common-sense judgment. Upstairs Lady Solomonson betrayed a passion of admiration for Mrs. Remington, and Mrs. Millingham mumbled

depreciation of the same lady's intelligence in Mary Gasthorne's unwilling ear. "She's *passive*," said Mrs. Millingham. "She bores him...."

For a time Marjorie found dinner-giving delightful — it is like picking and arranging posies of human flowers — and fruits — and perhaps a little dried grass, and it was not long before she learnt that she was esteemed a success as a hostess. She gathered her earlier bunches in the Carmel and Solomonson circle, with a stiffening from among the literary and-375- scientific friends of Trafford and his mother, and one or two casual and undervalued blossoms from Aunt Plessington's active promiscuities. She had soon a gaily flowering garden of her own to pick from. Its strength and finest display lay in its increasing proportion of political intellectuals, men in and about the House who relaxed their minds from the tense detailed alertness needed in political intrigues by conversation that rose at times to the level of the smarter sort of article in the half-crown reviews. The women were more difficult than the men, and Marjorie found herself wishing at times that girl novelists and playwrights were more abundant, or women writers on the average younger. These talked generally well, and one or two capable women of her own type talked and listened with an effect of talking; so many other women either chattered disturbingly, or else did not listen, with an effect of not talking at all, and so made gaps about the table. Many of these latter had to be asked because they belonged to the class of inevitable wives, *sine-qua-nons*, and through them she learnt the value of that priceless variety of kindly unselfish men who can create the illusion of attentive conversation in the most uncomfortable and suspicious natures without producing backwater and eddy in the general flow of talk.

Indisputably Marjorie's dinners were successful. Of course, the abundance and æsthetic achievements of Mrs. Lee still seemed to her immeasurably out of reach, but it was already possible to show Aunt Plessington how the thing ought really to be done, Aunt Plessington with her narrow, lank, austerely served table, with a sort of quarter-deck at her own end and a subjugated forecastle round Hubert. And accordingly the Plessingtons were invited and shown, and to a party, too, that restrained Aunt Plessington-376- from her usual

conversational prominence....

These opening years of Trafford's commercial phase were full of an engaging activity for Marjorie as for him, and for her far more completely than for him were the profounder solicitudes of life lost sight of in the bright succession of immediate events.

Marjorie did not let her social development interfere with her duty to society in the larger sense. Two years after the vigorous and resentful Godwin came a second son, and a year and a half later a third. "That's enough," said Marjorie, "now we've got to rear them." The nursery at Sussex Square had always been a show part of the house, but it became her crowning achievement. She had never forgotten the Lee display at Vevey, the shining splendours of modern maternity, the books, the apparatus, the space and light and air. The whole second floor was altered to accommodate these four triumphant beings, who absorbed the services of two nurses, a Swiss nursery governess and two housemaids — not to mention those several hundred obscure individuals who were yielding a sustaining profit in the East End. At any rate, they were very handsome and promising children, and little Margharita could talk three languages with a childish fluency, and invent and write a short fable in either French or German — with only as much misspelling as any child of eight may be permitted....

Then there sprang up a competition between Marjorie and the able, pretty wife of Halford Wallace, most promising of under-secretaries. They gave dinners against each other, they discovered young artists against each other, they went to first-nights and dressed against each other. Marjorie was ruddy and tall, Mrs. Halford Wallace dark and animated; Halford Wallace admired Marjorie, Trafford was insensible to Mrs. Halford Wallace. They played for-377- points so vague that it was impossible for any one to say which was winning, but none the less they played like artists, for all they were worth....

Trafford's rapid prosperity and his implicit promise of still wider activities and successes brought him innumerable acquaintances and many friends. He joined two or three distinguished clubs, he derived an uncertain interest from a series of week-end visits to ample, good-mannered households, and for a time he found a distraction in little

flashes of travel to countries that caught at his imagination, Morocco, Montenegro, Southern Russia.

I do not know whether Marjorie might not have been altogether happy during this early Sussex Square period, if it had not been for an unconquerable uncertainty about Trafford. But ever and again she became vaguely apprehensive of some perplexing unreality in her position. She had never had any such profundity of discontent as he experienced. It was nothing clear, nothing that actually penetrated, distressing her. It was at most an uneasiness. For him the whole fabric of life was, as it were, torn and pieced by a provocative sense of depths unplumbed that robbed it of all its satisfactions. For her these glimpses were as yet rare, mere moments of doubt that passed again and left her active and assured.

§ 5

It was only after they had been married six or seven years that Trafford began to realize how widely his attitudes to Marjorie varied. He emerged slowly from a naïve unconsciousness of his fluctuations, — a naïve unconsciousness of inconsistency that for most men and women remains throughout life. His ruling idea that she and he were friends,-378- equals, confederates, knowing everything about each other, co-operating in everything, was very fixed and firm. But indeed that had become the remotest rendering of their relationship. Their lives were lives of intimate disengagement. They came nearest to fellowship in relation to their children; there they shared an immense common pride. Beyond that was a less confident appreciation of their common house and their joint effect. And then they liked and loved each other tremendously. They could play upon each other and please each other in a hundred different ways, and they did so, quite consciously, observing each other with the completest externality. She was still in many ways for him the bright girl he had admired in the examination, still the mysterious dignified transfiguration of that delightful creature on the tragically tender verge of motherhood; these memories were of more power with him than the present realities of her full-grown strength and capacity. He petted and played with the girl still; he was still tender and solicitous

for that early woman. He admired and co-operated also with the capable, narrowly ambitious, beautiful lady into which Marjorie had developed, but those remoter experiences it was that gave the deeper emotions to their relationship.

The conflict of aims that had at last brought Trafford from scientific investigation into business, had left behind it a little scar of hostility. He felt his sacrifice. He felt that he had given something for her that she had had no right to exact, that he had gone beyond the free mutualities of honest love and paid a price for her; he had deflected the whole course of his life for her and he was entitled to repayments. Unconsciously he had become a slightly jealous husband. He resented inattentions-379- and absences. He felt she ought to be with him and orient all her proceedings towards him. He did not like other people to show too marked an appreciation of her. She had a healthy love of admiration, and in addition her social ambitions made it almost inevitable that at times she should use her great personal charm to secure and retain adherents. He was ashamed to betray the resentments thus occasioned, and his silence widened the separation more than any protest could have done....

For his own part he gave her no cause for a reciprocal jealousy. Other women did not excite his imagination very greatly, and he had none of the ready disposition to lapse to other comforters which is so frequent a characteristic of the husband out of touch with his life's companion. He was perhaps an exceptional man in his steadfast loyalty to his wife. He had come to her as new to love as she had been. He had never in his life taken that one decisive illicit step which changes all the aspects of sexual life for a man even more than for a woman. Love for him was a thing solemn, simple, and unspoilt. He perceived that it was not so for most other men, but that did little to modify his own private attitude. In his curious scrutiny of the people about him, he did not fail to note the drift of adventures and infidelities that glimmers along beneath the even surface of our social life. One or two of his intimate friends, Solomonson was one of them, passed through "affairs." Once or twice those dim proceedings splashed upward to the surface in an open scandal. There came Remington's startling elopement with Isabel Rivers, the writer, which took two brilliant and inspiring contemporaries suddenly and

distressingly out of Trafford's world. Trafford felt none of that rage and forced and jealous contempt-380- for the delinquents in these matters which is common in the ill-regulated, virtuous mind. Indeed, he was far more sympathetic with than hostile to the offenders. He had brains and imagination to appreciate the grim pathos of a process that begins as a hopeful quest, full of the suggestion of noble possibilities, full of the craving for missed intensities of fellowship and realization, that loiters involuntarily towards beauties and delights, and ends at last too often after gratification of an appetite, in artificially hideous exposures, and the pelting misrepresentations of the timidly well-behaved vile. But the general effect of pitiful evasions, of unavoidable meannesses, of draggled heroics and tortuously insincere explanations confirmed him in his aversion from this labyrinthine trouble of extraneous love....

But if Trafford was a faithful husband, he ceased to be a happy and confident one. There grew up in him a vast hinterland of thoughts and feelings, an accumulation of unspoken and largely of unformulated things in which his wife had no share. And it was in that hinterland that his essential self had its abiding place....

It came as a discovery; it remained for ever after a profoundly disturbing perplexity that he had talked to Marjorie most carelessly, easily and seriously, during their courtship and their honeymoon. He remembered their early intercourse now as an immense happy freedom in love. Then afterwards a curtain had fallen. That almost delirious sense of escaping from oneself, of having at last found some one from whom there need be no concealment, some one before whom one could stand naked-souled and assured of love as one stands before one's God, faded so that he scarce observed its passing, but only discovered at last that it had gone. He misunderstood and-381- met misunderstanding. He found he could hurt her by the things he said, and be exquisitely hurt by her failure to apprehend the spirit of some ill-expressed intention. And it was so vitally important not to hurt, not to be hurt. At first he only perceived that he reserved himself; then there came the intimation of the question, was she also perhaps in such another hinterland as his, keeping herself from him?

He had perceived the cessation of that first bright outbreak of self-

revelation, this relapse into the secrecies of individuality, quite early in their married life. I have already told of his first efforts to bridge their widening separation by walks and talks in the country, and by the long pilgrimage among the Alps that had ended so unexpectedly at Vevey. In the retrospect the years seemed punctuated with phases when "we must talk" dominated their intercourse, and each time the impulse of that recognized need passed away by insensible degrees again — with nothing said.

§ 6

Marjorie cherished an obstinate hope that Trafford would take up political questions and go into Parliament. It seemed to her that there was something about him altogether graver and wider than most of the active politicians she knew. She liked to think of those gravities assuming a practical form, of Trafford very rapidly and easily coming forward into a position of cardinal significance. It gave her general expenditure a quality of concentration without involving any uncongenial limitation to suppose it aimed at the preparation of a statesman's circle whenever Trafford chose to adopt that assumption. Little men in great positions came to her house and talked with opaque self-confidence at her table; she-382- measured them against her husband while she played the admiring female disciple to their half-confidential talk. She felt that he could take up these questions and measures that they reduced to trite twaddle, open the wide relevancies behind them, and make them magically significant, sweep away the encrusting pettiness, the personalities and arbitrary prejudices. But why didn't he begin to do it? She threw out hints he seemed blind towards, she exercised miracles of patience while he ignored her baits. She came near intrigue in her endeavor to entangle him in political affairs. For a time it seemed to her that she was succeeding — I have already told of his phase of inquiry and interest in socio-political work — and then he relapsed into a scornful restlessness, and her hopes weakened again.

But he could not concentrate his mind, he could not think where to begin. Day followed day, each with its attacks upon his intention, its petty just claims, its attractive novelties of aspect. The telephone

bell rang, the letters flopped into the hall, Malcom the butler seemed always at hand with some distracting oblong on his salver. Dowd was developing ideas for a reconstructed organization of the factory, Solomonson growing enthusiastic about rubber-glass, his house seemed full of women, Marjorie had an engagement for him to keep or the children were coming in to say good-night. To his irritated brain the whole scheme of his life presented itself at last as a tissue of interruptions which prevented his looking clearly at reality. More and more definitely he realized he wanted to get away and think. His former life of research became invested with an effect of immense dignity and of a steadfast singleness of purpose....

But Trafford was following his own lights, upon-383- his own lines. He was returning to that faith in the supreme importance of thought and knowledge, upon which he had turned his back when he left pure research behind him. To that familiar end he came by an unfamiliar route, after his long, unsatisfying examination of social reform movements and social and political theories. Immaturity, haste and presumption vitiated all that region, and it seemed to him less and less disputable that the only escape for mankind from a continuing extravagant futility lay through the attainment of a quite unprecedented starkness and thoroughness of thinking about all these questions. This conception of a needed Renascence obsessed him more and more, and the persuasion, deeply felt if indistinctly apprehended, that somewhere in such an effort there was a part for him to play....

Life is too great for us or too petty. It gives us no tolerable middle way between baseness and greatness. We must die daily on the levels of ignoble compromise or perish tragically among the precipices. On the one hand is a life — unsatisfying and secure, a plane of dulled gratifications, mean advantages, petty triumphs, adaptations, acquiescences and submissions, and on the other a steep and terrible climb, set with sharp stones and bramble thickets and the possibilities of grotesque dislocations, and the snares of such temptation as comes only to those whose minds have been quickened by high desire, and the challenge of insoluble problems and the intimations of issues so complex and great, demanding such a nobility of purpose, such a steadfastness, alertness and openness of

mind, that they fill the heart of man with despair....

There were moods when Trafford would, as people say,-384- pull himself together, and struggle with his gnawing discontent. He would compare his lot with that of other men, reproach himself for a monstrous greed and ingratitude. He remonstrated with himself as one might remonstrate with a pampered child refusing to be entertained by a whole handsome nursery full of toys. Other men did their work in the world methodically and decently, did their duty by their friends and belongings, were manifestly patient through dullness, steadfastly cheerful, ready to meet vexations with a humorous smile, and grateful for orderly pleasures. Was he abnormal? Or was he in some unsuspected way unhealthy? Trafford neglected no possible explanations. Did he want this great Renascence of the human mind because he was suffering from some subtle form of indigestion? He invoked, independently of each other, the aid of two distinguished specialists. They both told him in exactly the same voice and with exactly the same air of guineas well earned: "What you want, Mr. Trafford, is a change."

Trafford brought his mind to bear upon the instances of contentment about him. He developed an opinion that all men and many women were potentially at least as restless as himself. A huge proportion of the usage and education in modern life struck upon him now as being a training in contentment. Or rather in keeping quiet and not upsetting things. The serious and responsible life of an ordinary prosperous man fulfilling the requirements of our social organization fatigues and neither completely satisfies nor completely occupies. Still less does the responsible part of the life of a woman of the prosperous classes engage all her energies or hold her imagination. And there has grown up a great informal organization of employments, games,-385- ceremonies, social routines, travel, to consume these surplus powers and excessive cravings, which might otherwise change or shatter the whole order of human living. He began to understand the forced preoccupation with cricket and golf, the shooting, visiting, and so forth, to which the young people of the economically free classes in the community are trained. He discovered a theory for hobbies and specialized interests. He began to see why people go to Scotland to get away from London, and

come to London to get away from Scotland, why they crowd to and fro along the Riviera, swarm over Switzerland, shoot, yacht, hunt, and maintain an immense apparatus of racing and motoring. Because so they are able to remain reasonably contented with the world as it is. He perceived, too, that a man who has missed or broken through the training to this kind of life, does not again very readily subdue himself to the security of these systematized distractions. His own upbringing had been antipathetic to any such adaptations; his years of research had given him the habit of naked intimacy with truth, filled him with a craving for reality and the destructive acids of a relentless critical method.

He began to understand something of the psychology of vice, to comprehend how small a part mere sensuality, how large a part the spirit of adventure and the craving for illegality, may play, in the career of those who are called evil livers. Mere animal impulses and curiosities it had always seemed possible to him to control, but now he was beginning to apprehend the power of that passion for escape, at any cost, in any way, from the petty, weakly stimulating, competitive motives of low-grade and law-abiding prosperity....

For a time Trafford made an earnest effort to-386- adjust himself to the position in which he found himself, and make a working compromise with his disturbing forces. He tried to pick up the scientific preoccupation of his earlier years. He made extensive schemes, to Solomonson's great concern, whereby he might to a large extent disentangle himself from business. He began to hunt out forgotten note-books and yellowing sheets of memoranda. He found the resumption of research much more difficult than he had ever supposed possible. He went so far as to plan a laboratory, and to make some inquiries as to site and the cost of building, to the great satisfaction not only of Marjorie but of his mother. Old Mrs. Trafford had never expressed her concern at his abandonment of molecular physics for money-making, but now in her appreciation of his return to pure investigation she betrayed her sense of his departure.

But in his heart he felt that this methodical establishment of virtue by limitation would not suffice for him. He said no word of this scepticism as it grew in his mind. Marjorie was still under the impression that he was returning to research, and that she was free to

contrive the steady preparation for that happier day when he should assume his political inheritance. And then presently a queer little dispute sprang up between them. Suddenly, for the first time since he took to business, Trafford found himself limiting her again. She was disposed, partly through the natural growth of her circle and her setting and partly through a movement on the part of Mrs. Halford Wallace, to move from Sussex Square into a larger, more picturesquely built house in a more central position. She particularly desired a good staircase. He met her intimations of this development with a curious and unusual irritation.-387- The idea of moving bothered him. He felt that exaggerated annoyance which is so often a concomitant of overwrought nerves. They had a dispute that was almost a quarrel, and though Marjorie dropped the matter for a time, he could feel she was still at work upon it.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

Trafford Decides to Go

§ 1

A Haunting desire to go away into solitude grew-388- upon Trafford very steadily. He wanted intensely to think, and London and Marjorie would not let him think. He wanted therefore to go away out of London and Marjorie's world. He wanted, he felt, to go away alone and face God, and clear things up in his mind. By imperceptible degrees this desire anticipated its realization. His activities were affected more and more by intimations of a determined crisis. One eventful day it seemed to him that his mind passed quite suddenly from desire to resolve. He found himself with a project, already broadly definite. Hitherto he hadn't been at all clear where he could go. From the first almost he had felt that this change he needed, the change by which he was to get out of the thickets of work and perplexity and distraction that held him captive, must be a physical as well as a mental removal; he must go somewhere, still and isolated, where sustained detached thinking was possible.... His preference, if he had one, inclined him to some solitude among the Himalaya Mountains. That came perhaps from Kim and the precedent of the Hindoo's religious retreat from the world. But this retreat he contemplated was a retreat that aimed at a return, a clarified and strengthened resumption of the world. And then suddenly, as if he had always intended it, Labrador flashed through his thoughts, like a familiar name that had been for a time quite unaccountably forgotten.

The word "Labrador" drifted to him one day-389- from an adjacent table as he sat alone at lunch in the Liberal Union Club. Some bore was reciting the substance of a lecture to a fellow-member. "Seems to be a remarkable country," said the speaker. "Mineral wealth hardly glanced at, you know. Furs and a few score Indians. And at our doors. Practically — at our doors."

Trafford ceased to listen. His mind was taking up this idea of

Labrador. He wondered why he had not thought of Labrador before.

He had two or three streams of thought flowing in his mind, as a man who muses alone is apt to do. Marjorie's desire to move had reappeared; a particular group of houses between Berkeley Square and Park Lane had taken hold of her fancy, she had urged the acquisition of one upon him that morning, and this kept coming up into consciousness like a wrong thread in a tapestry. Moreover, he was watching his fellow-members with a critical rather than a friendly eye. A half-speculative, half-hostile contemplation of his habitual associates was one of the queer aspects of this period of unsettlement. They exasperated him by their massive contentment with the surface of things. They came in one after another patting their ties, or pulling at the lapels of their coats, and looked about them for vacant places with a conscious ease of manner that irritated his nerves. No doubt they were all more or less successful and distinguished men, matter for conversation and food for anecdotes, but why did they trouble to give themselves the air of it? They halted or sat down by friends, enunciated vapid remarks in sonorous voices, and opened conversations in trite phrases, about London architecture, about the political situation or the morning's newspaper, conversations that ought, he felt, to have been-390- thrown away unopened, so stale and needless they seemed to him. They were judges, lawyers of all sorts, bankers, company promoters, railway managers, stockbrokers, pressmen, politicians, men of leisure. He wondered if indeed they were as opaque as they seemed, wondered with the helpless wonder of a man of exceptional mental gifts whether any of them at any stage had had such thoughts as his, had wanted as acutely as he did now to get right out of the world. Did old Booch over there, for example, guzzling oysters, cry at times upon the unknown God in the vast silences of the night? But Booch, of course, was a member or something of the House of Laymen, and very sound on the thirty-nine articles — a man who ate oysters like that could swallow anything — and in the vast silences of the night he was probably heavily and noisily asleep....

Blenkins, the gentlemanly colleague of Denton in the control of the *Old Country Gazette*, appeared on his way to the pay-desk, gesticulating amiably *en-route* to any possible friend. Trafford

returned his salutation, and pulled himself together immediately after in fear that he had scowled, for he hated to be churlish to any human being. Blenkins, too, it might be, had sorrow and remorse and periods of passionate self-distrust and self-examination; maybe Blenkins could weep salt tears, as Blenkins no doubt under suitable sword-play would reveal heart and viscera as quivering and oozy as any man's.

But to Trafford's jaundiced eyes just then, it seemed that if you slashed Blenkins across he would probably cut like a cheese....

Now, in Labrador —— ....

So soon as Blenkins had cleared, Trafford followed him to the pay-desk, and went on upstairs to the smoking-room, thinking of Labrador. Long ago he-391- had read the story of Wallace and Hubbard in that wilderness.

There was much to be said for a winter in Labrador. It was cold, it was clear, infinitely lonely, with a keen edge of danger and hardship and never a letter or a paper.

One could provision a hut and sit wrapped in fur, watching the Northern Lights....

"I'm off to Labrador," said Trafford, and entered the smoking-room.

It was, after all, perfectly easy to go to Labrador. One had just to go....

As he pinched the end of his cigar, he became aware of Blenkins, with a gleam of golden glasses and a flapping white cuff, beckoning across the room to him. With that probable scowl on his conscience Trafford was moved to respond with an unreal warmth, and strolled across to Blenkins and a group of three or four other people, including that vigorous young politician, Weston Massinghay, and Hart, K.C., about the further fireplace. "We were talking of you," said Blenkins. "Come and sit down with us. Why don't you come into Parliament?"

"I've just arranged to go for some months to Labrador."

"Industrial development?" asked Blenkins, all alive.

"No. Holiday."

No Blenkins believes that sort of thing, but of course, if Trafford chose to keep his own counsel ——

“Well, come into Parliament as soon as you get back.”

Trafford had had that old conversation before. He pretended insensibility when Blenkins gestured to a vacant chair. “No,” he said, still standing, “we settled all that. And now I’m up to my neck in — detail-392- about Labrador. I shall be starting — before the month is out.”

Blenkins and Hart simulated interest. “It’s immoral,” said Blenkins, “for a man of your standing to keep out of politics.”

“It’s more than immoral,” said Hart; “it’s American.”

“Solomonson comes in to represent the firm,” smiled Trafford, signalled the waiter for coffee, and presently disentangled himself from their company.

For Blenkins Trafford concealed an exquisite dislike and contempt; and Blenkins had a considerable admiration for Trafford, based on extensive misunderstandings. Blenkins admired Trafford because he was good-looking and well-dressed, with a beautiful and successful wife, because he had become reasonably rich very quickly and easily, was young and a Fellow of the Royal Society with a reputation that echoed in Berlin, and very perceptibly did not return Blenkins’ admiration. All these things filled Blenkins with a desire for Trafford’s intimacy, and to become the associate of the very promising political career that it seemed to him, in spite of Trafford’s repudiations, was the natural next step in a deliberately and honourably planned life. He mistook Trafford’s silences and detachment for the marks of a strong, silent man, who was scheming the immense, vulgar, distinguished-looking achievements that appeal to the Blenkins mind. Blenkins was a sentimentally loyal party Liberal, and as he said at times to Hart and Weston Massinghay: “If those other fellows get hold of him —— !”

Blenkins was the fine flower of Oxford Liberalism and the Tennysonian days. He wanted to be like King Arthur and Sir Galahad, with the merest touch of Launcelot, and to be perfectly upright and splendid-393- and very, very successful. He was a fair, tenoring sort of person with an Arthurian moustache and a disposition to long frock coats. It had been said of him that he didn’t dress like a gentleman, but that he dressed more like a gentleman than a gentleman ought to dress. It might have been added that he

didn't behave like a gentleman, but that he behaved more like a gentleman than a gentleman ought to behave. He didn't think, but he talked and he wrote more thoughtfully in his leaders, and in the little dialogues he wrote in imitation of Sir Arthur Helps, than any other person who didn't think could possibly do. He was an orthodox Churchman, but very, very broad; he held all the doctrines, a distinguished sort of thing to do in an age of doubt, but there was a quality about them as he held them — as though they had been run over by something rather heavy. It was a flattened and slightly obliterated breadth — nothing was assertive, but nothing, under examination, proved to be altogether gone. His profuse thoughtfulness was not confined to his journalistic and literary work, it overflowed into Talks. He was a man for Great Talks, interminable rambling floods of boyish observation, emotional appreciation, and silly, sapient comment. He loved to discuss "Who are the Best Talkers now Alive?" He had written an essay, *Talk in the Past*. He boasted of week-ends when the Talk had gone on from the moment of meeting in the train to the moment of parting at Euston, or Paddington, or Waterloo; and one or two hostesses with embittered memories could verify his boasting. He did his best to make the club a Talking Club, and loved to summon men to a growing circle of chairs....

Trafford had been involved in Talks on one or two occasions, and now, as he sat alone in the corridor and smoked and drank his coffee, he could imagine-394- the Talk he had escaped, the Talk that was going on in the smoking room — the platitudes, the sagacities, the digressions, the sudden revelation of deep, irrational convictions. He reflected upon the various Talks at which he had assisted. His chief impression of them all was of an intolerable fluidity. Never once had he known a Talk thicken to adequate discussion; never had a new idea or a new view come to him in a Talk. He wondered why Blenkins and his like talked at all. Essentially they lived for pose, not for expression; they did not greatly desire to discover, make, or be; they wanted to seem and succeed. Talking perhaps was part of their pose of great intellectual activity, and Blenkins was fortunate to have an easy, unforced running of mind....

Over his cigar Trafford became profoundly philosophical about

Talk. And after the manner of those who become profoundly philosophical he spread out the word beyond its original and proper intentions to all sorts of kindred and parallel things. Blenkins and his miscellany of friends in their circle of chairs were, after all, only a crude rendering of very much of intellectual activity of mankind. Men talked so often as dogs bark. Those Talkers never came to grips, fell away from topic to topic, pretended depth and evaded the devastating horrors of sincerity. Listening was a politeness amongst them that was presently rewarded with utterance. Tremendously like dogs they were, in a dog-fancying neighborhood on a summer week-day afternoon. Fluidity, excessive abundance, inconsecutiveness; these were the things that made Talk hateful to Trafford.

Wasn't most literature in the same class? Wasn't nearly all present philosophical and sociological discussion in the world merely a Blenkins circle on a colossal scale, with every one looming forward to get-395- in a deeply thoughtful word edgeways at the first opportunity? Imagine any one in distress about his soul or about mankind, going to a professor of economics or sociology or philosophy! He thought of the endless, big, expensive, fruitless books, the windy expansions of industrious pedantry that mocked the spirit of inquiry. The fields of physical and biological science alone had been partially rescued from the floods of human inconsecutiveness. There at least a man must, on the whole, join on to the work of other men, stand a searching criticism, justify himself. Philosophically this was an age of relaxed schoolmen. He thought of Doctor Codger at Cambridge, bubbling away with his iridescent Hegelianism like a salted snail; of Doctor Quiller at Oxford, ignoring Bergson and fulminating a preposterous insular Pragmatism. Each contradicted the other fundamentally upon matters of universal concern; neither ever joined issue with the other. Why in the name of humanity didn't some one take hold of those two excellent gentlemen, and bang their busy heads together hard and frequently until they either compromised or cracked?

§ 2

He forgot these rambling speculations as he came out into the spring

sunshine of Pall Mall, and halting for a moment on the topmost step, regarded the tidy pavements, the rare dignified shops, the waiting taxicabs, the pleasant, prosperous passers-by. His mind lapsed back to the thought that he meant to leave all this and go to Labrador. His mind went a step further, and reflected that he would not only go to Labrador, but — it was highly probable — come back again.

And then?-396-

Why, after all, should he go to Labrador at all? Why shouldn't he make a supreme effort here?

Something entirely irrational within him told him with conclusive emphasis that he had to go to Labrador....

He remembered there was this confounded business of the proposed house in Mayfair to consider....

§ 3

It occurred to him that he would go a little out of his way, and look at the new great laboratories at the Romeike College, of which his old bottle-washer Durgan was, he knew, extravagantly proud. Romeike's widow was dead now and her will executed, and her substance half turned already to bricks and stone and glazed tiles and all those excesses of space and appliance which the rich and authoritative imagine must needs give us Science, however ill-selected and underpaid and slighted the users of those opportunities may be. The architects had had great fun with the bequest; a quarter of the site was devoted to a huge square surrounded by dignified, if functionless, colonnades, and adorned with those stone seats of honour which are always so chill and unsatisfactory as resting places in our island climate. The Laboratories, except that they were a little shaded by the colonnades, were everything a laboratory should be; the benches were miracles of convenience, there wasn't anything the industrious investigator might want, steam, high pressures, electric power, that he couldn't get by pressing a button or turning a switch, unless perhaps it was inspiring ideas. And the new library at the end, with its greys and greens, its logarithmic computators at every table, was a miracle of mental-397- convenience.

Durgan showed his old professor the marvels.

“If he *chooses* to do something here,” said Durgan not too hopefully, “a man can....”

“What’s become of the little old room where we two used to work?” asked Trafford.

“They’ll turn ’em all out presently,” said Durgan, “when this part is ready, but just at present it’s very much as you left it. There’s been precious little research done there since you went away — not what *I* call research. Females chiefly — and boys. Playing at it. Making themselves into D.Sc.’s by a baby research instead of a man’s examination. It’s like broaching a thirty-two gallon cask full of Pap to think of it. Lord, sir, the swill! Research! Counting and weighing things! Professor Lake’s all right, I suppose, but his work was mostly mathematical; he didn’t do much of it here. No, the old days ended, sir, when you....”

He arrested himself, and obviously changed his words. “Got busy with other things.”

Trafford surveyed the place; it seemed to him to have shrunken a little in the course of the three years that had intervened since he resigned his position. On the wall at the back there still hung, fly-blown and a little crumpled, an old table of constants he had made for his elasticity researches. Lake had kept it there, for Lake was a man of generous appreciations, and rather proud to follow in the footsteps of an investigator of Trafford’s subtlety and vigor. The old sink in the corner where Trafford had once swilled his watch glasses and filled his beakers had been replaced by one of a more modern construction, and the combustion cupboard was unfamiliar, until Durgan pointed out that it had been enlarged. The ground-glass window at the east end showed still the marks of-398- an explosion that had banished a clumsy student from this sanctuary at the very beginning of Trafford’s career.

“By Jove!” he said after a silence, “but I did some good work here.”

“You did, sir,” said Durgan.

“I wonder — I may take it up again presently.”

“I doubt it, sir,” said Durgan.

“Oh! But suppose I come back?”

“I don’t think you would find yourself coming back, sir,” said

Durgan after judicious consideration.

He adduced no shadow of a reason for his doubt, but some mysterious quality in his words carried conviction to Trafford's mind. He knew that he would never do anything worth doing in molecular physics again. He knew it now conclusively for the first time.

§ 4

He found himself presently in Bond Street. The bright May day had brought out great quantities of people, so that he had to come down from altitudes of abstraction to pick his way among them.

He was struck by the prevailing interest and contentment in the faces he passed. There was no sense of insecurity betrayed, no sense of the deeps and mysteries upon which our being floats like a film. They looked solid, they looked satisfied; surely never before in the history of the world has there been so great a multitude of secure-feeling, satisfied-looking, uninquiring people as there is to-day. All the tragic great things of life seem stupendously remote from them; pain is rare, death is out of sight, religion has shrunken to an inconsiderable, comfortable, reassuring appendage of the daily life. And with the bright small things of immediacy they are so active and-399- alert. Never before has the world seen such multitudes, and a day must come when it will cease to see them for evermore.

As he shouldered his way through the throng before the Oxford Street shop windows he appreciated a queer effect, almost as it were of insanity, about all this rich and abundant and ultimately aimless life, this tremendous spawning and proliferation of uneventful humanity. These individual lives signified no doubt enormously to the individuals, but did all the shining, reflecting, changing existence that went by like bubbles in a stream, signify collectively anything more than the leaping, glittering confusion of shoaling mackerel on a sunlit afternoon? The pretty girl looking into the window schemed picturesque achievements with lace and ribbon, the beggar at the curb was alert for any sympathetic eye, the chauffeur on the waiting taxi-cab watched the twopences ticking on with a quiet satisfaction; each followed a keenly sought immediate end, but altogether? Where

were they going altogether? Until he knew that, where was the sanity of statecraft, the excuse of any impersonal effort, the significance of anything beyond a life of appetites and self-seeking instincts?

He found that perplexing suspicion of priggishness affecting him again. Why couldn't he take the gift of life as it seemed these people took it? Why was he continually lapsing into these sombre, dimly religious questionings and doubts? Why after all should he concern himself with these riddles of some collective and ultimate meaning in things? Was he for all his ability and security so afraid of the accidents of life that on that account he clung to this conception of a larger impersonal issue which the world in general seemed to have abandoned so cheerfully? At any rate he did cling to it — and his sense-400- of it made the abounding active life of this stirring, bristling thoroughfare an almost unendurable perplexity....

By the Marble Arch a little crowd had gathered at the pavement edge. He remarked other little knots towards Paddington, and then still others, and inquiring, found the King was presently to pass. They promised themselves the gratification of seeing the King go by. They would see a carriage, they would see horses and coachmen, perhaps even they might catch sight of a raised hat and a bowing figure. And this would be a gratification to them, it would irradiate the day with a sense of experiences, exceptional and precious. For that some of them had already been standing about for two or three hours.

He thought of these waiting people for a time, and then he fell into a speculation about the King. He wondered if the King ever lay awake at three o'clock in the morning and faced the riddle of the eternities or whether he did really take himself seriously and contentedly as being in himself the vital function of the State, performed his ceremonies, went hither and thither through a wilderness of gaping watchers, slept well on it. Was the man satisfied? Was he satisfied with his empire as it was and himself as he was, or did some vision, some high, ironical intimation of the latent and lost possibilities of his empire and of the world of Things Conceivable that lies beyond the poor tawdry splendours of our present loyalties, ever dawn upon him?

Trafford's imagination conjured up a sleepless King Emperor

agonizing for humanity....

He turned to his right out of Lancaster Gate into Sussex Square, and came to a stop at the pavement edge.

From across the road he surveyed the wide white-401- front and portals of the house that wasn't big enough for Marjorie.

§ 5

He let himself in with his latchkey.

Malcolm, his man, hovered at the foot of the staircase, and came forward for his hat and gloves and stick.

"Mrs. Trafford in?" asked Trafford.

"She said she would be in by four, sir."

Trafford glanced at his watch and went slowly upstairs.

On the landing there had been a rearrangement of the furniture, and he paused to survey it. The alterations had been made to accommodate a big cloisonné jar, that now glowed a wonder of white and tinted whites and luminous blues upon a dark, deep-shining stand. He noted now the curtain of the window had been changed from something — surely it had been a reddish curtain! — to a sharp clear blue with a black border, that reflected upon and sustained and encouraged the jar tremendously. And the wall behind — ? Yes. Its deep brown was darkened to an absolute black behind the jar, and shaded up between the lacquer cabinets on either hand by insensible degrees to the general hue. It was wonderful, perfectly harmonious, and so subtly planned that it seemed it all might have grown, as flowers grow....

He entered the drawing-room and surveyed its long and handsome spaces. Post-impressionism was over and gone; three long pictures by young Rogerson and one of Redwood's gallant bronzes faced the tall windows between the white marble fireplaces at either end. There were two lean jars from India, a young boy's head from Florence, and in a great bowl-402- in the remotest corner a radiant mass of azaleas....

His mood of wondering at familiar things was still upon him. It came to him as a thing absurd and incongruous that this should be his home. It was all wonderfully arranged into one dignified harmony,

but he felt now that at a touch of social earthquake, with a mere momentary lapse towards disorder, it would degenerate altogether into litter, lie heaped together confessed the loot it was. He came to a stop opposite one of the Rogersons, a stiffly self-conscious shop girl in her Sunday clothes, a not unsuccessful emulation of Nicholson's wonderful Mrs. Stafford of Paradise Row. Regarded as so much brown and grey and amber-gold, it was coherent in Marjorie's design, but regarded as a work of art, as a piece of expression, how madly irrelevant was its humour and implications to that room and the purposes of that room! Rogerson wasn't perhaps trying to say much, but at any rate he was trying to say something, and Redwood too was asserting freedom and adventure, and the thought of that Florentine of the bust, and the patient, careful Indian potter, and every maker of all the little casual articles about him, produced an effect of muffled, stifled assertions. Against this subdued and disciplined background of muted, inarticulate cries, — cries for beauty, for delight, for freedom, Marjorie and her world moved and rustled and chattered and competed — wearing the skins of beasts, the love-plumage of birds, the woven cocoon cases of little silkworms....

"Preposterous," he whispered.

He went to the window and stared out; turned about and regarded the gracious variety of that long, well-lit room again, then strolled thoughtfully upstairs. He reached the door of his study, and a sound of voices from the schoolroom — it had recently-403- been promoted from the rank of day nursery to this level — caught his mood. He changed his mind, crossed the landing, and was welcomed with shouts.

The rogues had been dressing up. Margharita, that child of the dreadful dawn, was now a sturdy and domineering girl of eight, and she was attired in a gilt paper mitre and her governess's white muslin blouse so tied at the wrists as to suggest long sleeves, a broad crimson band doing duty as a stole. She was Becket prepared for martyrdom at the foot of the altar. Godwin, his eldest son, was a hot-tempered, pretty-featured pleasantly self-conscious boy of nearly seven and very happy now in a white dragoon's helmet and rude but effective brown paper breastplate and greaves, as the party of

assassin knights. A small acolyte in what was in all human probably one of the governess's more intimate linen garments assisted Becket, while the general congregation of Canterbury was represented by Edward, aged two, and the governess, disguised with a Union Jack tied over her head after the well-known fashion of the middle ages. After the children had welcomed their father and explained the bloody work in hand, they returned to it with solemn earnestness, while Trafford surveyed the tragedy. Godwin slew with admirable gusto, and I doubt if the actual Thomas of Canterbury showed half the stately dignity of Margharita.

The scene finished, they went on to the penance of Henry the Second; and there was a tremendous readjustment of costumes, with much consultation and secrecy. Trafford's eyes went from his offspring to the long, white-painted room, with its gay frieze of ships and gulls and its rug-variegated cork carpet of plain brick red. Everywhere it showed his wife's quick cleverness, the clean serviceable decorativeness of it all, the pretty patterned window curtains, the-404- writing desks, the little library of books, the flowers and bulbs in glasses, the counting blocks and bricks and jolly toys, the blackboard on which the children learnt to draw in bold wide strokes, the big, well-chosen German colour prints upon the walls. And the children did credit to their casket; they were not only full of vitality but full of ideas, even Edward was already a person of conversation. They were good stuff anyhow....

It was fine in a sense, Trafford thought, to have given up his own motives and curiosities to afford this airy pleasantness of upbringing for them, and then came a qualifying thought. Would they in their turn for the sake of another generation have to give up fine occupations for mean occupations, deep thoughts for shallow? Would the world get them in turn? Would the girls be hustled and flattered into advantageous marriages, that dinners and drawing-rooms might still prevail? Would the boys, after this gracious beginning, presently have to swim submerged in another generation of Blenkinses and their Talk, toil in arduous self-seeking, observe, respect and manipulate shams, succeed or fail, and succeeding, beget amidst hope and beautiful emotions yet another generation doomed to insincerities and accommodations, and so die at last — as he must

die?...

He heard his wife's clear voice in the hall below, and went down to meet her. She had gone into the drawing-room, and he followed her in and through the folding doors to the hinder part of the room, where she stood ready to open a small bureau. She turned at his approach, and smiled a pleasant, habitual smile....

She was no longer the slim, quick-moving girl who had come out of the world to him when he crawled from beneath the wreckage of Solomonson's plane,-405- no longer the half-barbaric young beauty who had been revealed to him on the staircase of the Vevey villa. She was now a dignified, self-possessed woman, controlling her house and her life with a skilful, subtle appreciation of her every point and possibility. She was wearing now a simple walking dress of brownish fawn colour, and her hat was touched with a steely blue that made her blue eyes seem handsome and hard, and toned her hair to a merely warm brown. She had, as it were, subdued her fine colours into a sheath in order that she might presently draw them again with more effect.

"Hullo, old man!" she said, "you home?"

He nodded. "The club bored me — and I couldn't work."

Her voice had something of a challenge and defiance in it. "I've been looking at a house," she said. "Alice Carmel told me of it. It isn't in Berkeley Square, but it's near it. It's rather good."

He met her eye. "That's — premature," he said.

"We can't go on living in this one."

"I won't go to another."

"But why?"

"I just won't."

"It isn't the money?"

"No," said Trafford, with sudden fierce resentment. "I've overtaken you and beaten you there, Marjorie."

She stared at the harsh bitterness of his voice. She was about to speak when the door opened, and Malcom ushered in Aunt Plessington and Uncle Hubert. Husband and wife hung for a moment, and then realized their talk was at an end....

Marjorie went forward to greet her aunt, careless now of all that once stupendous Influence might think of her. She had long ceased to

feel even the-406- triumph of victory in her big house, her costly, dignified clothes, her assured and growing social importance. For five years Aunt Plessington had not even ventured to advise; had once or twice admired. All that business of Magnet was — even elaborately — forgotten....

Seven years of feverish self-assertion had left their mark upon both the Plessingtons. She was leaner, more gauntly untidy, more aggressively ill-dressed. She no longer dressed carelessly, she defied the world with her clothes, waved her tattered and dingy banners in its face. Uncle Hubert was no fatter, but in some queer way he had ceased to be thin. Like so many people whose peripheries defy the manifest quaint purpose of Providence, he was in a state of thwarted adiposity, and with all the disconnectedness and weak irritability characteristic of his condition. He had developed a number of nervous movements, chin-strokings, cheek-scratchings, and incredulous pawings at his more salient features.

"Isn't it a lark?" began Aunt Plessington, with something like a note of apprehension in her highpitched voice, and speaking almost from the doorway, "we're making a call together. I and Hubert! It's an attack in force."

Uncle Hubert goggled in the rear and stroked his chin, and tried to get together a sort of facial expression.

The Traffords made welcoming noises, and Marjorie advanced to meet her aunt.

"We want you to do something for us," said Aunt Plessington, taking two hands with two hands....

In the intervening years the Movement had had ups and downs; it had had a boom, which had ended abruptly in a complete loss of voice for Aunt Plessington — she had tried to run it on a patent non-stimulating-407- food, and then it had entangled itself with a new cult of philanthropic theosophy from which it had been extracted with difficulty and in a damaged condition. It had never completely recovered from that unhappy association. Latterly Aunt Plessington had lost her nerve, and she had taken to making calls upon people with considerable and sometimes embarrassing demand for support, urging them to join committees, take chairs, stake reputations, speak and act as foils for her. If they refused she lost her temper very

openly and frankly, and became industriously vindictive. She circulated scandals or created them. Her old assurance had deserted her; the strangulated contralto was losing its magic power, she felt, in this degenerating England it had ruled so long. In the last year or so she had become extremely snappy with Uncle Hubert. She ascribed much of the Movement's futility to the decline of his administrative powers and the increasing awkwardness of his gestures, and she did her utmost to keep him up to the mark. Her only method of keeping him up to the mark was to jerk the bit. She had now come to compel Marjorie to address a meeting that was to inaugurate a new phase in the Movement's history, and she wanted Marjorie because she particularly wanted a daring, liberal, and spiritually amorous bishop, who had once told her with a note of profound conviction that Marjorie was a very beautiful woman. She was so intent upon her purpose that she scarcely noticed Trafford. He slipped from the room unobserved under cover of her playful preliminaries, and went to the untidy little apartment overhead which served in that house as his study. He sat down at the big desk, pushed his methodically arranged papers back, and drummed on the edge with his fingers.

"I'm damned if we have that bigger house," said-408- Trafford.

§ 6

He felt he wanted to confirm and establish this new resolution, to go right away to Labrador for a year. He wanted to tell someone the thing definitely. He would have gone downstairs again to Marjorie, but she was submerged and swimming desperately against the voluble rapids of Aunt Plessington's purpose. It might be an hour before that attack withdrew. Presently there would be other callers. He decided to have tea with his mother and talk to her about this new break in the course of his life.

Except that her hair was now grey and her brown eyes by so much contrast brighter, Mrs. Trafford's appearance had altered very little in the ten years of her only son's marriage. Whatever fresh realizations of the inevitably widening separation between parent and child these years had brought her, she had kept to herself. She had watched her daughter-in-law sometimes with sympathy, sometimes with

perplexity, always with a jealous resolve to let no shadow of jealousy fall between them. Marjorie had been sweet and friendly to her, but after the first outburst of enthusiastic affection, she had neither offered nor invited confidences. Old Mrs. Trafford had talked of Marjorie to her son guardedly, and had marked and respected a growing indisposition on his part to discuss his wife. For a year or so after his marriage she had ached at times with a sense of nearly intolerable loneliness, and then the new interests she had found for herself had won their way against this depression. The new insurrectionary movement of women that had distinguished those years had attacked her by its emotion and repelled her by its crudity, and she had resolved, quite in the spirit of the man who-409- had shaped her life, to make a systematic study of all the contributory strands that met in this difficult tangle. She tried to write, but she found that the poetic gift, the gift of the creative and illuminating phrase which alone justifies writing, was denied to her, and so she sought to make herself wise, to read and hear, and discuss and think over these things, and perhaps at last inspire and encourage writing in others.

Her circle of intimates grew, and she presently remarked with a curious interest that while she had lost the confidences of her own son and his wife, she was becoming the confidant of an increasing number of other people. They came to her, she perceived, because she was receptive and sympathetic and without a claim upon them or any interest to complicate the freedoms of their speech with her. They came to her, because she did not belong to them nor they to her. It is, indeed, the defect of all formal and established relationship, that it embarrasses speech, and taints each phase in intercourse with the flavour of diplomacy. One can be far more easily outspoken to a casual stranger one may never see again than to that inseparable other, who may misinterpret, who may disapprove or misunderstand, and who will certainly in the measure of that discord remember....

It became at last a matter of rejoicing to Mrs. Trafford that the ties of the old instinctive tenderness between herself and her son, the memories of pain and tears and the passionate conflict of childhood, were growing so thin and lax and inconsiderable, that she could even hope some day to talk to him again — almost as she talked to the

young men and young women who drifted out of the unknown to her and sat in her little room and sought to express their perplexities-410- and listened to her advice....

It seemed to her that afternoon the wished-for day had come.

Trafford found her just returned from a walk in Kensington Gardens and writing a note at her desk under the narrow sunlit window that looked upon the High Street. “Finish your letter, little mother,” he said, and took possession of the hearthrug.

When she had sealed and addressed her letter, she turned her head and found him looking at his father’s portrait.

“Done?” he asked, becoming aware of her eyes.

She took her letter into the hall and returned to him, closing the door behind her.

“I’m going away, little mother,” he said with an unconvincing off-handedness. “I’m going to take a holiday.”

“Alone?”

“Yes. I want a change. I’m going off somewhere — untrodden ground as near as one can get it nowadays — Labrador.”

Their eyes met for a moment.

“Is it for long?”

“The best part of a year.”

“I thought you were going on with your research work again.”

“No.” He paused. “I’m going to Labrador.”

“Why?” she asked.

“I’m going to think.”

She found nothing to say for a moment. “It’s good,” she remarked, “to think.” Then, lest she herself should seem to be thinking too enormously, she rang the bell to order the tea that was already on its way.

“It surprises a mother,” she said, when the maid-411- had come and gone, “when her son surprises her.”

“You see,” he repeated, as though it explained everything, “I want to think.”

Then after a pause she asked some questions about Labrador; wasn’t it very cold, very desert, very dangerous and bitter, and he answered informingly. How was he going to stay there? He would go up the country with an expedition, build a hut and remain behind.

Alone? Yes — thinking. Her eyes rested on his face for a time. “It will be — lonely,” she said after a pause.

She saw him as a little still speck against immense backgrounds of snowy wilderness.

The tea-things came before mother and son were back at essentials again. Then she asked abruptly: “Why are you going away like this?”

“I’m tired of all this business and finance,” he said after a pause.

“I thought you would be,” she answered as deliberately.

“Yes. I’ve had enough of things. I want to get clear. And begin again somehow.”

She felt they both hung away from the essential aspect. Either he or she must approach it. She decided that she would, that it was a less difficult thing for her than for him.

“And Marjorie?” she asked.

He looked into his mother’s eyes very quietly. “You see,” he went on deliberately disregarding her question, “I’m beached. I’m aground. I’m spoilt now for the old researches — spoilt altogether. And I don’t like this life I’m leading. I detest it. While I was struggling it had a kind of interest. There was an excitement in piling up the first twenty thousand. But *now* — ! It’s empty, it’s aimless, it’s incessant....”

He paused. She turned to the tea-things, and lit-412- the spirit lamp under the kettle. It seemed a little difficult to do, and her hand trembled. When she turned on him again it was with an effort.

“Does Marjorie like the life you are leading?” she asked, and pressed her lips together tightly.

He spoke with a bitterness in his voice that astonished her. “Oh, *she* likes it.”

“Are you sure?”

He nodded.

“She won’t like it without you.”

“Oh, that’s too much! It’s her world. It’s what she’s done — what she’s made. She can have it; she can keep it. I’ve played my part and got it for her. But now — now I’m free to go. I will go. She’s got everything else. I’ve done my half of the bargain. But my soul’s my own. If I want to go away and think, I will. Not even Marjorie shall

stand in the way of that."

She made no answer to this outburst for a couple of seconds. Then she threw out, "Why shouldn't Marjorie think, too?"

He considered that for some moments. "She doesn't," he said, as though the words came from the roots of his being.

"But you two — —"

"We don't talk. It's astonishing — how we don't. We don't. We can't. We try to, and we can't. And she goes her way, and now — I will go mine."

"And leave her?"

He nodded.

"In London?"

"With all the things she cares for."

"Except yourself."

"I'm only a means — —"

She turned her quiet face to him. "You know,"-413- she said, "that isn't true."...

"No," she repeated, to his silent contradiction.

"I've watched her," she went on. "You're *not* a means. I'd have spoken long ago if I had thought that. Haven't I watched? Haven't I lain awake through long nights thinking about her and you, thinking over every casual mood, every little sign — longing to help — helpless." ... She struggled with herself, for she was weeping. "*It has come to this*," she said in a whisper, and choked back a flood of tears.

Trafford stood motionless, watching her. She became active. She moved round the table. She looked at the kettle, moved the cups needlessly, made tea, and stood waiting for a moment before she poured it out. "It's so hard to talk to you," she said, "and about all this.... I care so much. For her. And for you.... Words don't come, dear.... One says stupid things."

She poured out the tea, and left the cups steaming, and came and stood before him.

"You see," she said, "you're ill. You aren't just. You've come to an end. You don't know where you are and what you want to do. Neither does she, my dear. She's as aimless as you — and less able to help it. Ever so much less able."

"But she doesn't show it. She goes on. She wants things and

wants things — —”

“And you want to go away. It’s the same thing. It’s exactly the same thing. It’s dissatisfaction. Life leaves you empty and craving — leaves you with nothing to do but little immediate things that turn to dust as you do them. It’s her trouble, just as it’s your trouble.”

“But she doesn’t show it.”

“Women don’t. Not so much. Perhaps even-414- she doesn’t know it. Half the women in our world don’t know — and for a woman it’s so much easier to go on — so many little things.”...

Trafford tried to grasp the intention of this. “Mother,” he said, “I mean to go away.”

“But think of her!”

“I’ve thought. Now I’ve got to think of myself.”

“You can’t — without her.”

“I will. It’s what I’m resolved to do.”

“Go right away?”

“Right away.”

“And think?”

He nodded.

“Find out — what it all means, my boy?”

“Yes. So far as I’m concerned.”

“And then —— ?”

“Come back, I suppose. I haven’t thought.”

“To her?”

He didn’t answer. She went and stood beside him, leaning upon the mantel. “Godwin,” she said, “she’d only be further behind.... You’ve got to take her with you.”

He stood still and silent.

“You’ve got to think things out with her. If you don’t — —”

“I can’t.”

“Then you ought to go away with her — —” She stopped.

“For good?” he asked.

“Yes.”

They were both silent for a space. Then Mrs. Trafford gave her mind to the tea that was cooling in the cups, and added milk and sugar. She spoke again with the table between them.

“I’ve thought so much of these things,” she said with the milk-jug

in her hand. “It’s not only you-415- two, but others. And all the movement about us.... Marriage isn’t what it was. It’s become a different thing because women have become human beings. Only —— You know, Godwin, all these things are so difficult to express. Woman’s come out of being a slave, and yet she isn’t an equal.... We’ve had a sort of sham emancipation, and we haven’t yet come to the real one.”

She put down the milk-jug on the tray with an air of grave deliberation. “If you go away from her and make the most wonderful discoveries about life and yourself, it’s no good — unless she makes them too. It’s no good at all.... You can’t live without her in the end, any more than she can live without you. You may think you can, but I’ve watched you. You don’t want to go away from her, you want to go away from the world that’s got hold of her, from the dresses and parties and the competition and all this complicated flatness we have to live in.... It wouldn’t worry you a bit, if it hadn’t got hold of her. You don’t want to get out of it for your own sake. You *are* out of it. You are as much out of it as any one can be. Only she holds you in it, because she isn’t out of it. Your going away will do nothing. She’ll still be in it — and still have her hold on you.... You’ve got to take her away. Or else — if you go away — in the end it will be just like a ship, Godwin, coming back to its moorings.”

She watched his thoughtful face for some moments, then arrested herself just in time in the act of putting a second portion of sugar into each of the cups. She handed her son his tea, and he took it mechanically. “You’re a wise little mother,” he said. “I didn’t see things in that light.... I wonder if you’re right.”

“I know I am,” she said.-416-

“I’ve thought more and more, — it was Marjorie.”

“It’s the world.”

“Women made the world. All the dress and display and competition.”

Mrs. Trafford thought. “Sex made the world. Neither men nor women. But the world has got hold of the women tighter than it has the men. They’re deeper in.” She looked up into his face. “Take her with you,” she said, simply.

“She won’t come,” said Trafford, after considering it.

Mrs. Trafford reflected. “She’ll come — if you make her,” she said.

“She’ll want to bring two housemaids.”

“I don’t think you know Marjorie as well as I do.”

“But she can’t — —”

“She can. It’s you — you’ll want to take two housemaids for her. Even you.... Men are not fair to women.”

Trafford put his untasted tea upon the mantelshelf, and confronted his mother with a question point blank. “Does Marjorie care for me?” he asked.

“You’re the sun of her world.”

“But she goes her way.”

“She’s clever, she’s full of life, full of activities, eager to make and arrange and order; but there’s nothing she is, nothing she makes, that doesn’t centre on you.”

“But if she cared, she’d understand!”

“My dear, do *you* understand?”

He stood musing. “I had everything clear,” he said. “I saw my way to Labrador....”

Her little clock pinged the hour. “Good God!” he said, “I’m to be at dinner somewhere at seven. We’re going to a first night. With the Bernards, I-417- think. Then I suppose we’ll have a supper. Always life is being slashed to tatters by these things. Always. One thinks in snatches of fifty minutes. It’s dementia....”

§ 7

They dined at the Loretto Restaurant with the Bernards and Richard Hampden and Mrs. Godwin Capes, the dark-eyed, quiet-mannered wife of the dramatist, a woman of impulsive speech and long silences, who had subsided from an early romance (Capes had been divorced for her while she was still a mere girl) into a markedly correct and exclusive mother of daughters. Through the dinner Marjorie was watching Trafford and noting the deep preoccupation of his manner. He talked a little to Mrs. Bernard until it was time for Hampden to entertain her, then finding Mrs. Capes was interested in Bernard, he lapsed into thought. Presently Marjorie discovered his

eyes scrutinizing herself.

She hoped the play would catch his mind, but the play seemed devised to intensify his sense of the tawdry unreality of contemporary life. Bernard filled the intervals with a conventional enthusiasm. Capes didn't appear.

"He doesn't seem to care to see his things," his wife explained.

"It's so brilliant," said Bernard.

"He has to do it," said Mrs. Capes slowly, her sombre eyes estimating the crowded stalls below. "It isn't what he cares to do."

The play was in fact an admirable piece of English stagecraft, and it dealt exclusively with that unreal other world of beings the English theatre has for its own purposes developed. Just as Greece-418-through the ages evolved and polished and perfected the idealized life of its Homeric poems, so the British mind has evolved their Stage Land to embody its more honourable dreams, full of heroic virtues, incredible honour, genial worldliness, childish villainies, profound but amiable waiters and domestics, pathetic shepherds and preposterous crimes. Capes, needing an income, had mastered the habits and customs of this imagined world as one learns a language; success endorsed his mastery; he knew exactly how deeply to underline an irony and just when it is fit and proper for a good man to call upon "God!" or cry out "Damn!" In this play he had invented a situation in which a charming and sympathetic lady had killed a gross and drunken husband in self-defence, almost but not quite accidentally, and had then appealed to the prodigious hero for assistance in the resulting complications. At a great cost of mental suffering to himself he had told his First and Only Lie to shield her. Then years after he had returned to England — the first act happened, of course in India — to find her on the eve of marrying, without any of the preliminary confidences common among human beings, an old school friend of his. (In plays all Gentlemen have been at school together, and one has been the other's fag.) The audience had to be interested in the problem of what the prodigious hero was to do in this prodigious situation. Should he maintain a colossal silence, continue his shielding, and let his friend marry the murderess saved by his perjury, or —— ?... The dreadful quandary! Indeed, the absolute — inconvenience!

Marjorie watched Trafford in the corner of the box, as he listened rather contemptuously to the statement of the evening's Problem and then lapsed again into a brooding quiet. She wished she understood-419- his moods better. She felt there was more in this than a mere resentment at her persistence about the new house....

Why didn't he go on with things?...

This darkling mood of his had only become manifest to her during the last three or four years of their life. Previously, of course, he had been irritable at times.

Were they less happy now than they had been in the little house in Chelsea? It had really been a horrible little house. And yet there had been a brightness then — a nearness....

She found her mind wandering away upon a sort of stock-taking expedition. How much of real happiness had she and Trafford had together? They ought by every standard to be so happy....

She declined the Bernard's invitation to a chafing-dish supper, and began to talk so soon as she and Trafford had settled into the car.

"Rag," she said, "something's the matter?"

"Well — yes."

"The house?"

"Yes — the house."

Marjorie considered through a little interval.

"Old man, why are you so prejudiced against a bigger house?"

"Oh, because the one we have bores me, and the next one will bore me more."

"But try it."

"I don't want to."

"Well," she said and lapsed into silence.

"And then," he asked, "what are we going to do?"

"Going to do — when?"

"After the new house — —"

"I'm going to open out," she said.-420-

He made no answer.

"I want to open out. I want you to take your place in the world, the place you deserve."

"A four-footman place?"

"Oh! the house is only a means."

He thought upon that. “A means,” he asked, “to what? Look here, Marjorie, what do you think you are up to with me and yourself? What do you see me doing — in the years ahead?”

She gave him a silent and thoughtful profile for a second or so.

“At first I suppose you are going on with your researches.”

“Well?”

“Then —— I must tell you what I think of you, Rag. Politics — —”

“Good Lord!”

“You’ve a sort of power. You could make things noble.”

“And then? Office?”

“Why not? Look at the little men they are.”

“And then perhaps a still bigger house?”

“You’re not fair to me.”

He pulled up the bearskin over his knees.

“Marjorie!” he said. “You see —— We aren’t going to do any of those things at all.... *No!*...”

“I can’t go on with my researches,” he explained. “That’s what you don’t understand. I’m not able to get back to work. I shall never do any good research again. That’s the real trouble, Marjorie, and it makes all the difference. As for politics —— I can’t touch politics. I despise politics. I think this empire and the monarchy and Lords and Commons and patriotism and social reform and all the rest of it, silly, *silly* beyond words; temporary, accidental, foolish, a mere stop-gap — like a gipsey’s roundabout-421- in a place where one will presently build a house.... You don’t help make the house by riding on the roundabout.... There’s no clear knowledge — no clear purpose.... Only research matters — and expression perhaps — I suppose expression is a sort of research — until we get that — that sufficient knowledge. And you see, I can’t take up my work again. I’ve lost something....”

She waited.

“I’ve got into this stupid struggle for winning money,” he went on, “and I feel like a woman must feel who’s made a success of prostitution. I’ve been prostituted. I feel like some one fallen and diseased.... Business and prostitution; they’re the same thing. All business is a sort of prostitution, all prostitution is a sort of business.

Why should one sell one's brains any more than one sells one's body?... It's so easy to succeed if one has good brains and cares to do it, and doesn't let one's attention or imagination wander — and it's so degrading. Hopelessly degrading.... I'm sick of this life, Marjorie. *I* don't want to buy things. I'm sick of buying. I'm at an end. I'm clean at an end. It's exactly as though suddenly in walking through a great house one came on a passage that ended abruptly in a door, which opened — on nothing! Nothing!"

"This is a mood," she whispered to his pause.

"It isn't a mood, it's a fact.... I've got nothing ahead, and I don't know how to get back. My life's no good to me any more. I've spent myself."

She looked at him with dismayed eyes. "But," she said, "this *is* a mood."

"No," he said, "no mood, but conviction. I *know*...."

He started. The car had stopped at their house,-422- and Malcolm was opening the door of the car. They descended silently, and went upstairs in silence.

He came into her room presently and sat down by her fireside. She had gone to her dressing-table and unfastened a necklace; now with this winking and glittering in her hand she came and stood beside him.

"Rag," she said, "I don't know what to say. This isn't so much of a surprise.... I *felt* that somehow life was disappointing you, that I was disappointing you. I've felt it endless times, but more so lately. I haven't perhaps dared to let myself know just how much.... But isn't it what life is? Doesn't every wife disappoint her husband? We're none of us inexhaustible. After all, we've had a good time; isn't it a little ungrateful to forget?..."

"Look here, Rag," she said. "I don't know what to do. If I did know, I would do it.... What are we to do?"

"Think," he suggested.

"We've got to live as well as think."

"It's the immense troublesome futility of — everything," he said.

"Well — let us cease to be futile. Let us *do*. You say there is no grip for you in research, that you despise politics.... There's no end of trouble and suffering. Cannot we do social work, social reform,

change the lives of others less fortunate than ourselves....”

“Who are we that we should tamper with the lives of others?”

“But one must do something.”

He thought that over.

“No,” he said “that’s the universal blunder nowadays. One must do the right thing. And we don’t know the right thing, Marjorie. That’s the very-423- heart of the trouble.... Does this life satisfy *you?* If it did would you always be so restless?...”

“But,” she said, “think of the good things in life?”

“It’s just the good, the exquisite things in life, that make me rebel against this life we are leading. It’s because I’ve seen the streaks of gold that I know the rest for dirt. When I go cheating and scheming to my office, and come back to find you squandering yourself upon a horde of chattering, overdressed women, when I think that that is our substance and everyday and what we are, then it is I remember most the deep and beautiful things.... It is impossible, dear, it is intolerable that life was made beautiful for us — just for these vulgarities.”

“Isn’t there — —” She hesitated. “Love — still?”

“But —— Has it been love? Love is a thing that grows. But we took it — as people take flowers out of a garden, cut them off, put them in water.... How much of our daily life has been love? How much of it mere consequences of the love we’ve left behind us?... We’ve just cohabited and ‘made love’ — you and I — and thought of a thousand other things....”

He looked up at her. “Oh, I love a thousand things about you,” he said. “But do I love *you*, Marjorie? Have I got you? Haven’t I lost you — haven’t we both lost something, the very heart of it all? Do you think that we were just cheated by instinct, that there wasn’t something in it we felt and thought was there? And where is it now? Where is that brightness and wonder, Marjorie, and the pride and the immense unlimited hope?”

She was still for a moment, then knelt very swiftly before him and held out her arms.

“Oh Rag!” she said, with a face of tender beauty.-424- He took her finger tips in his, dropped them and stood up above her.

“My dear,” he cried, “my dear! why do you always want to turn love into — touches?... Stand up again. Stand up there, my dear;

don't think I've ceased to love you, but stand up there and let me talk to you as one man to another. If we let this occasion slide to embraces...."

He stopped short.

She crouched before the fire at his feet. "Go on," she said, "go on."

"I feel now that all our lives now, Marjorie —— We have come to a crisis. I feel that now —— *now* is the time. Either we shall save ourselves now or we shall never save ourselves. It is as if something had gathered and accumulated and could wait no longer. If we do not seize this opportunity —— Then our lives will go on as they have gone on, will become more and more a matter of small excitements and elaborate comforts and distraction...."

He stopped this halting speech and then broke out again.

"Oh! why *should* the life of every day conquer us? Why should generation after generation of men have these fine beginnings, these splendid dreams of youth, attempt so much, achieve so much and then, then become — *this!* Look at this room, this litter of little satisfactions! Look at your pretty books there, a hundred minds you have pecked at, bright things of the spirit that attracted you as jewels attract a jackdaw. Look at the glass and silver, and that silk from China! And we are in the full tide of our years, Marjorie. Now is the very crown and best of our lives. And this is what we do, we sample, we accumulate. For this we loved, for this we hoped. Do you-425-remember when we were young — that life seemed so splendid — it was intolerable we should ever die?... The splendid dream! The intimations of greatness!... The miserable failure!"

He raised clenched fists. "I won't stand it, Marjorie. I won't endure it. Somehow, in some way, I will get out of this life — and you with me. I have been brooding upon this and brooding, but now I know...."

"But how?" asked Marjorie, with her bare arms about her knees, staring into the fire. "*How?*"

"We must get out of its constant interruptions, its incessant vivid, petty appeals...."

"We might go away — to Switzerland."

"We *went* to Switzerland. Didn't we agree — it was our second

honeymoon. It isn't a honeymoon we need. No, we'll have to go further than that."

A sudden light broke upon Marjorie's mind. She realized he had a plan. She lifted a fire-lit face to him and looked at him with steady eyes and asked ——

"Where?"

"Ever so much further."

"Where?"

"I don't know."

"You do. You've planned something."

"I don't know, Marjorie. At least — I haven't made up my mind. Where it is very lonely. Cold and remote. Away from all this — —" His mind stopped short, and he ended with a cry: "Oh! God! how I want to get out of all this!"

He sat down in her arm-chair, and bowed his face on his hands.

Then abruptly he stood up and went out of the room.

§ 8

When in five minutes' time he came back into her-426- room she was still upon her hearthrug before the fire, with her necklace in her hand, the red reflections of the flames glowing and winking in her jewels and in her eyes. He came and sat again in her chair.

"I have been ranting," he said. "I feel I've been — eloquent. You make me feel like an actor-manager, in a play by Capes.... You are the most difficult person for me to talk to in all the world — because you mean so much to me."

She moved impulsively and checked herself and crouched away from him. "I mustn't touch your hand," she whispered.

"I want to explain."

"You've got to explain."

"I've got quite a definite plan.... But a sort of terror seized me. It was like — shyness."

"I know. I knew you had a plan."

"You see.... I mean to go to Labrador."

He leant forward with his elbows on his knees and his hands extended, explanatory. He wanted intensely that she should

understand and agree and his desire made him clumsy, now slow and awkward, now glibly and unsatisfyingly eloquent. But she comprehended his quality better than he knew. They were to go away to Labrador, this snowy desert of which she had scarcely heard, to camp in the very heart of the wilderness, two hundred miles or more from any human habitation ——

"But how long?" she asked abruptly.

"The better part of a year."

"And we are to talk?"

"Yes," he said, "talk and think ourselves together — oh! — the old phrases carry it all — find God...."

"It is what I dreamt of, Rag, years ago."-427-

"Will you come," he cried, "out of all this?"

She leant across the hearthrug, and seized and kissed his hand....

Then, with one of those swift changes of hers, she was in revolt. "But, Rag," she exclaimed, "this is dreaming. We are not free. There are the children! Rag! We cannot leave the children!"

"We can," he said. "We must."

"But, my dear! — our duty!"

"*Is* it a mother's duty always to keep with her children? They will be looked after, their lives are organized, there is my mother close at hand.... What is the good of having children at all — unless their world is to be better than our world?... What are we doing to save them from the same bathos as this — to which we have come? We give them food and health and pictures and lessons, that's all very well while they are just little children; but we've got no religion to give them, no aim, no sense of a general purpose. What is the good of bread and health — and no worship?... What can we say to them when they ask us why we brought them into the world? — *We* happened — *you* happened. What are we to tell them when they demand the purpose of all this training, all these lessons? When they ask what we are preparing them for? Just that *you*, too, may have children! Is that any answer? Marjorie, it's common-sense to try this over — to make this last supreme effort — just as it will be common-sense to separate if we can't get the puzzle solved together."

"Separate!"

"Separate. Why not? We can afford it. Of course, we shall

separate."

"But Rag! — separate!"

He faced her protest squarely. "Life is not worth living," he said, "unless it has more to hold-428- it together than ours has now. If we cannot escape together, then — *I will go alone*."...

§ 9

They parted that night resolved to go to Labrador together, with the broad outline of their subsequent journey already drawn. Each lay awake far into the small hours thinking of this purpose and of one another, with a strange sense of renewed association. Each woke to a morning of sunshine heavy-eyed. Each found that overnight decision remote and incredible. It was like something in a book or a play that had moved them very deeply. They came down to breakfast, and helped themselves after the wonted fashion of several years, Marjorie with a skilful eye to the large order of her household; the *Times* had one or two characteristic letters which interested them both; there was the usual picturesque irruption of the children and a distribution of early strawberries among them. Trafford had two notes in his correspondence which threw a new light upon the reconstruction of the Norton-Batsford company in which he was interested; he formed a definite conclusion upon the situation, and went quite normally to his study and the telephone to act upon that.

It was only as the morning wore on that it became real to him that he and Marjorie had decided to leave the world. Then, with the Norton-Batsford business settled, he sat at his desk and mused. His apathy passed. His imagination began to present first one picture and then another of his retreat. He walked along Oxford Street to his Club thinking— "soon we shall be out of all this." By the time he was at lunch in his Club, Labrador had become again the magic refuge it had seemed the day before. After-429- lunch he went to work in the library, finding out books about Labrador, and looking up the details of the journey.

But his sense of futility and hopeless oppression had vanished. He walked along the corridor and down the great staircase, and without a trace of the despairful hostility of the previous day, passed Blenkins,

talking grey bosh with infinite thoughtfulness. He nodded easily to Blenkins. He was going out of it all, as a man might do who discovers after years of weary incarceration that the walls of his cell are made of thin paper. The time when Blenkins seemed part of a prison-house of routine and invincible stupidity seemed ten ages ago.

In Pall Mall Trafford remarked Lady Grampians and the Countess of Claridge, two women of great influence, in a big green car, on the way no doubt to create or sustain or destroy; and it seemed to him that it was limitless ages since these poor old dears with their ridiculous hats and their ridiculous airs, their luncheons and dinners and dirty aggressive old minds, had sent tidal waves of competitive anxiety into his home....

He found himself jostling through the shopping crowd on the sunny side of Regent Street. He felt now that he looked over the swarming, preoccupied heads at distant things. He and Marjorie were going out of it all, going clean out of it all. They were going to escape from society and shopping, and petty engagements and incessant triviality — as a bird flies up out of weeds.

§ 10

But Marjorie fluctuated more than he did.

There were times when the expedition for which he was now preparing rapidly and methodically seemed-430- to her the most adventurously-beautiful thing that had ever come to her, and times when it seemed the maddest and most hopeless of eccentricities. There were times when she had devastating premonitions of filth, hunger, strain and fatigue, damp and cold, when her whole being recoiled from the project, when she could even think of staying secure in London and letting him go alone. She developed complicated anxieties for the children; she found reasons for further inquiries, for delay. “Why not,” she suggested, “wait a year?”

“No,” he said, “I won’t. I mean we are to do this, and do it now, and nothing but sheer physical inability to do it will prevent my carrying it out.... And you? Of course you are to come. I can’t drag you shrieking all the way to Labrador; short of that I’m going to *make* you come with me.”

She sat and looked up at him with dark lights in her upturned eyes, and a little added warmth in her cheek. “You’ve never forced my will like this before,” she said, in a low voice. “Never.”

He was too intent upon his own resolve to heed her tones.

“It hasn’t seemed necessary somehow,” he said, considering her statement. “Now it does.”

“This is something final,” she said.

“It is final.”

She found an old familiar phrasing running through her head, as she sat crouched together, looking up at his rather gaunt, very intent face, the speech of another woman echoing to her across a vast space of years: “Whither thou goest I will go — —”

“In Labrador,” he began....

CHAPTER THE THIRD

The Pilgrimage to Lonely Hut

§ 1

Marjorie was surprised to find how easy it was at-431- last to part from her children and go with Trafford.

"I am not sorry," she said, "not a bit sorry — but I am fearfully afraid. I shall dream they are ill.... Apart from that, it's strange how you grip me and they don't...."

In the train to Liverpool she watched Trafford with the queer feeling which comes to all husbands and wives at times that that other partner is indeed an undiscovered stranger, just beginning to show perplexing traits, — full of inconceivable possibilities.

For some reason his tearing her up by the roots in this fashion had fascinated her imagination. She felt a strange new wonder at him that had in it just a pleasant faint flavour of fear. Always before she had felt a curious aversion and contempt for those servile women who are said to seek a master, to want to be mastered, to be eager even for the physical subjugations of brute force. Now she could at least understand, sympathize even with them. Not only Trafford surprised her but herself. She found she was in an unwonted perplexing series of moods. All her feelings struck her now as being incorrect as well as unexpected; not only had life become suddenly full of novelty but she was making novel responses. She felt that she ought to be resentful and tragically sorry for her home and children. She felt this departure ought to have the quality of an immense sacrifice, a desperate and heroic undertaking for Trafford's sake. Instead she could detect little beyond-432- an adventurous exhilaration when presently she walked the deck of the steamer that was to take her to St. John's. She had visited her cabin, seen her luggage stowed away, and now she surveyed the Mersey and its shipping with a renewed freshness of mind. She was reminded of the day, now nearly nine years ago, when she had crossed the sea for the first time — to Italy. Then, too, Trafford had seemed a being of infinitely wonderful

possibilities.... What were the children doing? — that ought to have been her preoccupation. She didn't know; she didn't care! Trafford came and stood beside her, pointed out this and that upon the landing stage, no longer heavily sullen, but alert, interested, almost gay....

Neither of them could find any way to the great discussion they had set out upon, in this voyage to St. John's. But there was plenty of time before them. Plenty of time! They were both the prey of that uneasy distraction which seems the inevitable quality of a passenger steamship. They surveyed and criticized their fellow travellers, and prowled up and down through the long swaying days and the cold dark nights. They slept uneasily amidst fog-horn hootings and the startling sounds of waves swirling against the ports. Marjorie had never had a long sea voyage before; for the first time in her life she saw all the world, through a succession of days, as a circle of endless blue waters, with the stars and planets and sun and moon rising sharply from its rim. Until one has had a voyage no one really understands that old Earth is a watery globe.... They ran into thirty hours of storm, which subsided, and then came a slow time among icebergs, and a hooting, dreary passage through fog. The first three icebergs were marvels, the rest bores; a passing collier out of her-433- course and pitching heavily, a lonely black and dirty ship with a manner almost derelict, filled their thoughts for half a day. Their minds were in a state of tedious inactivity, eager for such small interests and only capable of such small interests. There was no hurry to talk, they agreed, no hurry at all, until they were settled away ahead there among the snows. "There we shall have plenty of time for everything...."

Came the landfall and then St. John's, and they found themselves side by side watching the town draw near. The thought of landing and transference to another ship refreshed them both....

They were going, Trafford said, in search of God, but it was far more like two children starting out upon a holiday.

§ 2

There was trouble and procrastination about the half-breed guides that Trafford had arranged should meet them at St. John's, and it was

three weeks from their reaching Newfoundland before they got themselves and their guides and equipment and general stores aboard the boat for Port Dupré. Thence he had planned they should go in the Gibson schooner to Manivikovik, the Marconi station at the mouth of the Green River, and thence past the new pulp-mills up river to the wilderness. There were delays and a few trivial, troublesome complications in carrying out this scheme, but at last a day came when Trafford could wave good-bye to the seven people and eleven dogs which constituted the population of Peter Hammond's, that last rude outpost of civilization twenty miles above the pulp-mill, and turn his face in good earnest towards the wilderness.

Neither he nor Marjorie looked back at the headland-434- for a last glimpse of the little settlement they were leaving. Each stared ahead over the broad, smooth sweep of water, broken by one transverse bar of foaming shallows, and scanned the low, tree-clad hills beyond that drew together at last in the distant gorge out of which the river came. The morning was warm and full of the promise of a hot noon, so that the veils they wore against the assaults of sand-flies and mosquitoes were already a little inconvenient. It seemed incredible in this morning glow that the wooded slopes along the shore of the lake were the border of a land in which nearly half the inhabitants die of starvation. The deep-laden canoes swept almost noiselessly through the water with a rhythmic alternation of rush and pause as the dripping paddles drove and returned. Altogether there were four long canoes and five Indian breeds in their party, and when they came to pass through shallows both Marjorie and Trafford took a paddle.

They came to the throat of the gorge towards noon, and found strong flowing deep water between its high purple cliffs. All hands had to paddle again, and it was only when they came to rest in a pool to eat a mid-day meal and afterwards to land upon a mossy corner for a stretch and a smoke, that Marjorie discovered the peculiar beauty of the rock about them. On the dull purplish-grey surfaces played the most extraordinary mist of luminous iridescence. It fascinated her. Here was a land whose common substance had this gemlike opalescence. But her attention was very soon withdrawn from these glancing splendours.

She had had to put aside her veil to eat, and presently she felt the vividly painful stabs of the black-fly and discovered blood upon her face. A bigger fly, the size and something of the appearance of a-435- small wasp, with an evil buzz, also assailed her and Trafford. It was a bad corner for flies; the breeds even were slapping their wrists and swearing under the torment, and every one was glad to embark and push on up the winding gorge. It opened out for a time, and then the wooded shores crept in again, and in another half-hour they saw ahead of them a long rush of foaming waters among tumbled rocks that poured down from a brimming, splashing line of light against the sky. They crossed the river, ran the canoes into an eddy under the shelter of a big stone and began to unload. They had reached their first portage.

The rest of the first day was spent in packing and lugging first the cargoes and then the canoes up through thickets and over boulders and across stretches of reindeer moss for the better part of two miles to a camping ground about half-way up the rapids. Marjorie and Trafford tried to help with the carrying, but this evidently shocked and distressed the men too much, so they desisted and set to work cutting wood and gathering moss for the fires and bedding for the camp. When the iron stove was brought up the man who had carried it showed them how to put it up on stakes and start a fire in it, and then Trafford went to the river to get water, and Marjorie made a kind of flour cake in the frying-pan in the manner an American woman from the wilderness had once shown her, and boiled water for tea. The twilight had deepened to night while the men were still stumbling up the trail with the last two canoes.

It gave Marjorie a curiously homeless feeling to stand there in the open with the sunset dying away below the black scrubby outlines of the treetops uphill to the northwest, and to realize the nearest roof was already a day's toilsome journey away. The-436- cool night breeze blew upon her bare face and arms — for now the insects had ceased from troubling and she had cast aside gloves and veil and turned up her sleeves to cook — and the air was full of the tumult of the rapids tearing seaward over the rocks below. Struggling through the bushes towards her was an immense, headless quadruped with unsteady legs and hesitating paces, two of the men carrying the last

canoe. Two others were now assisting Trafford to put up the little tent that was to shelter her, and the fifth was kneeling beside her very solemnly and respectfully cutting slices of bacon for her to fry. The air was very sweet, and she wished she could sleep not in the tent but under the open sky.

It was queer, she thought, how much of the wrappings of civilization had slipped from them already. Every day of the journey from London had released them or deprived them — she hardly knew which — of a multitude of petty comforts and easy accessibilities. The afternoon toil uphill intensified the effect of having clambered up out of things — to this loneliness, this twilight openness, this simplicity.

The men ate apart at a fire they made for themselves, and after Trafford and Marjorie had supped on damper, bacon and tea, he smoked. They were both too healthily tired to talk very much. There was no moon but a frosty brilliance of stars, the air which had been hot and sultry at mid-day grew keen and penetrating, and after she had made him tell her the names of constellations she had forgotten, she suddenly perceived the wisdom of the tent, went into it — it was sweet and wonderful with sprigs of the Labrador tea-shrub — undressed, and had hardly rolled herself up into a cocoon of blankets before she was fast asleep.

She was awakened by a blaze of sunshine pouring-437- into the tent, a smell of fried bacon and Trafford's voice telling her to get up. "They've gone on with the first loads," he said. "Get up, wrap yourself in a blanket, and come and bathe in the river. It's as cold as ice."

She blinked at him. "Aren't you stiff?" she asked.

"I was stiffer before I bathed," he said.

She took the tin he offered her. (They weren't to see china cups again for a year.) "It's woman's work getting tea," she said as she drank.

"You can't be a squaw all at once," said Trafford.

§ 3

After Marjorie had taken her dip, dried roughly behind a bush,

twisted her hair into a pigtail and coiled it under her hat, she amused herself and Trafford as they clambered up through rocks and willows to the tent again by cataloguing her apparatus of bath and toilette at Sussex Square and tracing just when and how she had parted from each item on the way to this place.

"But I *say!*" she cried, with a sudden, sharp note of dismay, "we haven't soap! This is our last cake almost. I never thought of soap."

"Nor I," said Trafford.

He spoke again presently. "We don't turn back for soap," he said.

"We don't turn back for anything," said Marjorie. "Still — I didn't count on a soapless winter."

"I'll manage something," said Trafford, a little doubtfully. "Trust a chemist...."

That day they finished the portage and came out upon a wide lake with sloping shores and a distant view of snow-topped mountains, a lake so shallow that-438- at times their loaded canoes scraped on the glaciated rock below and they had to alter their course. They camped in a lurid sunset; the night was warm and mosquitoes were troublesome, and towards morning came a thunderstorm and wind and rain.

The dawn broke upon a tearing race of waves and a wild drift of slanting rain sweeping across the lake before a gale. Marjorie peered out at this as one peers out under the edge of an umbrella. It was manifestly impossible to go on, and they did nothing that day but run up a canvas shelter for the men and shift the tent behind a thicket of trees out of the full force of the wind. The men squatted stoically, and smoked and yarned. Everything got coldly wet, and for the most part the Traffords sat under the tent and stared blankly at this summer day in Labrador.

"Now," said Trafford, "we ought to begin talking."

"There's nothing much to do else," said Marjorie.

"Only one can't begin," said Trafford.

He was silent for a time. "We're getting out of things," he said....

The next day began with a fine drizzle through which the sun broke suddenly about ten o'clock. They made a start at once, and got a good dozen miles up the lake before it was necessary to camp again. Both Marjorie and Trafford felt stiff and weary and

uncomfortable all day, and secretly a little doubtful now of their own endurance. They camped on an island on turf amidst slippery rocks, and the next day were in a foaming difficult river again, with glittering shallows that obliged every one to get out at times to wade and push. All through the afternoon they were greatly beset by flies. And so they worked their way on through a third days' journey-439- towards the silent inland of Labrador.

Day followed day of toilsome and often tedious travel; they fought rapids, they waited while the men stumbled up long portages under vast loads, going and returning, they camped and discussed difficulties and alternatives. The flies sustained an unrelenting persecution, until faces were scarred in spite of veils and smoke fires, until wrists and necks were swollen and the blood in a fever. As they got higher and higher towards the central plateau, the mid-day heat increased and the nights grew colder, until they would find themselves toiling, wet with perspiration, over rocks that sheltered a fringe of ice beneath their shadows. The first fatigues and lassitudes, the shrinking from cold water, the ache of muscular effort, gave place to a tougher and tougher endurance; skin seemed to have lost half its capacity for pain without losing a tithe of its discrimination, muscles attained a steely resilience; they were getting seasoned. "I don't feel philosophical," said Trafford, "but I feel well."

"We're getting out of things."

"Suppose we are getting out of our problems!..."

One day as they paddled across a mile-long pool, they saw three bears prowling in single file high up on the hillside. "Look," said the man, and pointed with his paddle at the big, soft, furry black shapes, magnified and startling in the clear air. All the canoes rippled to a stop, the men, at first still, whispered softly. One passed a gun to Trafford, who hesitated and looked at Marjorie.

The air of tranquil assurance about these three huge loafing monsters had a queer effect on Marjorie's mind. They made her feel that they were at home and that she was an intruder. She had never-440- in her life seen any big wild animals except in a menagerie. She had developed a sort of unconscious belief that all big wild animals were in menageries nowadays, and this spectacle of beasts entirely at large startled her. There was never a bar between

these creatures, she felt, and her sleeping self. They might, she thought, do any desperate thing to feeble men and women who came their way.

"Shall I take a shot?" asked Trafford.

"No," said Marjorie, pervaded by the desire for mutual toleration. "Let them be."

The big brutes disappeared in a gully, reappeared, came out against the skyline one by one and vanished.

"Too long a shot," said Trafford, handing back the gun....

Their journey lasted altogether a month. Never once did they come upon any human being save themselves, though in one place they passed the poles — for the most part overthrown — of an old Indian encampment. But this desolation was by no means lifeless. They saw great quantities of waterbirds, geese, divers, Arctic partridge and the like, they became familiar with the banshee cry of the loon. They lived very largely on geese and partridge. Then for a time about a string of lakes, the country was alive with migrating deer going south, and the men found traces of a wolf. They killed six caribou, and stayed to skin and cut them up and dry the meat to replace the bacon they had consumed, caught, fried and ate great quantities of trout, and became accustomed to the mysterious dance of the northern lights as the sunset afterglow faded.

Everywhere, except in the river gorges, the country displayed the low hummocky lines and tarn-like pools of intensely glaciated land; everywhere it was carpeted with reindeer moss growing upon peat-441- and variegated by bushes of flowering, sweet-smelling Labrador tea. In places this was starred with little harebells and diversified by tussocks of heather and rough grass, and over the rocks trailed delicate dwarf shrubs and a very pretty and fragrant pink-flowered plant of which neither she nor Trafford knew the name. There was an astonishing amount of wild fruit, raspberries, cranberries, and a white kind of strawberry that was very delightful. The weather, after its first outbreak, remained brightly serene....

And at last it seemed fit to Trafford to halt and choose his winter quarters. He chose a place on the side of a low, razor-hacked rocky mountain ridge, about fifty feet above the river — which had now dwindled to a thirty-foot stream. His site was near a tributary rivulet

that gave convenient water, in a kind of lap that sheltered between two rocky knees, each bearing thickets of willow and balsam. Not a dozen miles away from them now they reckoned was the Height of Land, the low watershed between the waters that go to the Atlantic and those that go to Hudson's Bay. Close beside the site he had chosen a shelf of rock ran out and gave a glimpse up the narrow rocky valley of the Green River's upper waters and a broad prospect of hill and tarn towards the south-east. North and north-east of them the country rose to a line of low crests, with here and there a yellowing patch of last year's snow, and across the valley were slopes covered in places by woods of stunted pine. It had an empty spaciousness of effect; the one continually living thing seemed to be the Green River, hurrying headlong, noisily, perpetually, in an eternal flight from this high desolation. Birds were rare here, and the insects that buzzed and shrilled and tormented among the rocks and willows in the gorge came but sparingly up the-442- slopes to them.

"Here presently," said Trafford, "we shall be in peace."

"It is very lonely," said Marjorie.

"The nearer to God."

"Think! Not one of these hills has ever had a name."

"Well?"

"It might be in some other planet."

"Oh! — we'll christen them. That shall be Marjorie Ridge, and that Rag Valley. This space shall be — oh! Bayswater! Before we've done with it, this place and every feature of it will be as familiar as Sussex Square. More so, — for half the houses there would be stranger to us, if we could see inside them, than anything in this wilderness.... As familiar, say — as your drawing-room. That's better."

Marjorie made no answer, but her eyes went from the reindeer moss and scrub and thickets of the foreground to the low rocky ridges that bounded the view north and east of them. The scattered boulders, the tangles of wood, the barren upper slopes, the dust-soiled survivals of the winter's snowfall, all contributed to an effect at once carelessly desert and hopelessly untidy. She looked westward, and her memory was full of interminable streaming rapids, wastes of ice-striated rocks, tiresome struggles through woods and

wild, wide stretches of tundra and tarn, trackless and treeless, infinitely desolate. It seemed to her that the sea coast was but a step from London and ten thousand miles away from her.

§ 4

The men had engaged to build the framework of hut and store shed before returning, and to this under Trafford's direction they now set themselves. They-443- were all half-breeds, mingling with Indian with Scottish or French blood, sober and experienced men. Three were named Mackenzie, two brothers and a cousin, and another, Raymond Noyes, was a relation and acquaintance of that George Elson who was with Wallace and Leonidas Hubbard, and afterwards guided Mrs. Hubbard in her crossing of Labrador. The fifth was a boy of eighteen named Lean. They were all familiar with the idea of summer travel in this country; quite a number, a score or so that is to say, of adventurous people, including three or four women, had ventured far in the wake of the Hubbards into these great wildernesses during the decade that followed that first tragic experiment in which Hubbard died. But that any one not of Indian or Esquimaux blood should propose to face out the Labrador winter was a new thing to them. They were really very sceptical at the outset whether these two highly civilized-looking people would ever get up to the Height of Land at all, and it was still with manifest incredulity that they set about the building of the hut and the construction of the sleeping bunks for which they had brought up planking. A stream of speculative talk had flowed along beside Marjorie and Trafford ever since they had entered the Green River; and it didn't so much come to an end as get cut off at last by the necessity of their departure.

Noyes would stand, holding a hammer and staring at the narrow little berth he was fixing together.

"You'll not sleep in this," he said.

"I will," replied Marjorie.

"You'll come back with us."

"Not me."

"There'll be wolves come and howl."

"Let 'em."

“They’ll come right up to the door here. Winter-444- makes ’em hidjus bold.”

Marjorie shrugged her shoulders.

“It’s that cold I’ve known a man have his nose froze while he lay in bed,” said Noyes.

“Up here?”

“Down the coast. But they say it’s ‘most as cold up here. Many’s the man it’s starved and froze.”...

He and his companions told stories, — very circumstantial and pitiful stories, of Indian disasters. They were all tales of weariness and starvation, of the cessation of food, because the fishing gave out, because the caribou did not migrate by the customary route, because the man of a family group broke his wrist, and then of the start of all or some of the party to the coast to get help and provisions, of the straining, starving fugitives caught by blizzards, losing the track, devouring small vermin raw, gnawing their own skin garments until they toiled half-naked in the snow, — becoming cannibals, becoming delirious, lying down to die. Once there was an epidemic of influenza, and three families of seven and twenty people just gave up and starved and died in their lodges, and were found, still partly frozen, a patient, pitiful company, by trappers in the spring....

Such they said, were the common things that happened in a Labrador winter. Did the Traffords wish to run such risks?

A sort of propagandist enthusiasm grew up in the men. They felt it incumbent upon them to persuade the Traffords to return. They reasoned with them rather as one does with wilful children. They tried to remind them of the delights and securities of the world they were deserting. Noyes drew fancy pictures of the pleasures of London by way of contrast to the bitter days before them. “You’ve got everything there, everything. Suppose you feel a-445- bit ill, you go out, and every block there’s a drug store got everything — all the new rem’dies — p’raps twenty, thirty sorts of rem’dy. Lit up, nice. And chaps in collars — like gentlemen. Or you feel a bit dully and you go into the streets and there’s people. Why! when I was in New York I used to spend hours looking at the people. Hours! And everything lit up, too. Sky signs! Readin’ everywhere. You can spend hours and hours in New York — —”

“London,” said Marjorie.

“Well, London — just going about and reading the things they stick up. Every blamed sort of thing. Or you say, let’s go somewhere. Let’s go out and be a bit lively. See? Up you get on a car and there you are! Great big restaurants, blazing with lights, and you can’t think of a thing to eat they haven’t got. Waiters all round you, dressed tremendous, fair asking you to have more. Or you say, let’s go to a theatre. Very likely,” said Noyes, letting his imagination soar, “you order up one of these automobillies.”

“By telephone,” helped Trafford.

“By telephone,” confirmed Noyes. “When I was in New York there was a telephone in each room in the hotel. Each room. I didn’t use it ever, except once when they didn’t answer — but there it was. I know about telephones all right....”

Why had they come here? None of the men were clear about that. Marjorie and Trafford would overhear them discussing this question at their fire night after night; they seemed to talk of nothing else. They indulged in the boldest hypotheses, even in the theory that Trafford knew of deposits of diamonds and gold, and would trust no one but his wife with the secret. They seemed also attracted by the idea that our two young people had “done something.”-446- Lean, with memories of some tattered sixpenny novel that had drifted into his hands from England, had even some notion of an elopement, of a pursuing husband or a vindictive wife. He was young and romantic, but it seemed incredible he should suggest that Marjorie was a royal princess. Yet there were moments when his manner betrayed a more than personal respect....

One night after a hard day’s portage Mackenzie was inspired by a brilliant idea. “They got no children,” he said, in a hoarse, exceptionally audible whisper. “It worries them. Them as is Catholics goes pilgrimages, but these ain’t Catholics. See?”

“I can’t stand that,” said Marjorie. “It touches my pride. I’ve stood a good deal. Mr. Mackenzie!... Mr.... Mackenzie.”

The voice at the men’s fire stopped and a black head turned around. “What is it, Mrs. Trafford?” asked Mackenzie.

She held up four fingers. “Four!” she said.

“Eh?”

“Three sons and a daughter,” said Marjorie.

Mackenzie did not take it in until his younger brother had repeated her words.

“And you’ve come from them to *this*.... Sir, what *have* you come for?”

“We want to be here,” shouted Trafford to their listening pause. Their silence was incredulous.

“We wanted to be alone together. There was too much — over there — too much everything.”

Mackenzie, in silhouette against the fire, shook his head, entirely dissatisfied. He could not understand how there could be too much of anything. It was beyond a trapper’s philosophy.

“Come back with us sir,” said Noyes. “You’ll-447- weary of it....”

Noyes clung to the idea of dissuasion to the end. “I don’t care to leave ye,” he said, and made a sort of byword of it that served when there was nothing else to say.

He made it almost his last words. He turned back for another handclasp as the others under their light returning packs were filing down the hill.

“I don’t care to leave ye,” he said.

“Good luck!” said Trafford.

“You’ll need it,” said Noyes, and looked at Marjorie very gravely and intently before he turned about and marched off after his fellows....

Both Marjorie and Trafford felt a queer emotion, a sense of loss and desertion, a swelling in the throat, as that file of men receded over the rocky slopes, went down into a dip, reappeared presently small and remote cresting another spur, going on towards the little wood that hid the head of the rapids. They halted for a moment on the edge of the wood and looked back, then turned again one by one and melted stride by stride into the trees. Noyes was the last to go. He stood, in an attitude that spoke as plainly as words, “I don’t care to leave ye.” Something white waved and flickered; he had whipped out the letters they had given him for England, and he was waving them. Then, as if by an effort, he set himself to follow the others, and the two still watchers on the height above saw him no more.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

Lonely Hut

§ 1

Marjorie and Trafford walked slowly back to the-448- hut. “There is much to do before the weather breaks,” he said, ending a thoughtful silence. “Then we can sit inside there and talk about the things we need to talk about.”

He added awkwardly: “Since we started, there has been so much to hold the attention. I remember a mood — an immense despair. I feel it’s still somewhere at the back of things, waiting to be dealt with. It’s our essential fact. But meanwhile we’ve been busy, looking at fresh things.”

He paused. “Now it will be different perhaps....”

For nearly four weeks indeed they were occupied very closely, and crept into their bunks at night as tired as wholesome animals who drop to sleep. At any time the weather might break; already there had been two overcast days and a frowning conference of clouds in the north. When at last storms began they knew there would be nothing for it but to keep in the hut until the world froze up.

There was much to do to the hut. The absence of anything but stunted and impoverished timber and the limitation of time, had forbidden a log hut, and their home was really only a double framework, rammed tight between inner and outer frame with a mixture of earth and boughs and twigs of willow, pine and balsam. The floor was hammered earth carpeted with balsam twigs and a caribou skin. Outside and within wall and roof were faced with coarse canvas — that-449- was Trafford’s idea — and their bunks occupied two sides of the hut. Heating was done by the sheet-iron stove they had brought with them, and the smoke was carried out to the roof by a thin sheet-iron pipe which had come up outside a roll of canvas. They had made the roof with about the pitch of a Swiss châlet, and it was covered with nailed waterproof canvas, held down

by a large number of big lumps of stone. Much of the canvassing still remained to do when the men went down, and then the Traffords used every scrap of packing-paper and newspaper that had come up with them and was not needed for lining the bunks in covering any crack or join in the canvas wall.

Two decadent luxuries, a rubber bath and two rubber hot-water bottles, hung behind the door. They were almost the only luxuries. Kettles and pans and some provisions stood on a shelf over the stove; there was also a sort of recess cupboard in the opposite corner, reserve clothes were in canvas trunks under the bunks, they kept their immediate supply of wood under the eaves just outside the door, and there was a big can of water between stove and door. When the winter came they would have to bring in ice from the stream.

This was their home. The tent that had sheltered Marjorie on the way up was erected close to this hut to serve as a rude scullery and outhouse, and they also made a long, roughly thatched roof with a canvas cover, supported on stakes, to shelter the rest of the stores. The stuff in tins and cases and jars they left on the ground under this; the rest — the flour, candles, bacon, dried caribou beef, and so forth, they hung, as they hoped, out of the reach of any prowling beast. And finally and most important was the wood pile. This they accumulated to the north and east-450- of the hut, and all day long with a sort of ant-like perseverance Trafford added to it from the thickets below. Once or twice, however, tempted by the appearance of birds, he went shooting, and one day he got five geese that they spent a day upon, plucking, cleaning, boiling and putting up in all their store of empty cans, letting the fat float and solidify on the top to preserve this addition to their provision until the advent of the frost rendered all other preservatives unnecessary. They also tried to catch trout down in the river below, but though they saw many fish the catch was less than a dozen.

It was a discovery to both of them to find how companionable these occupations were, how much more side by side they could be amateurishly cleaning out a goose and disputing about its cooking, than they had ever contrived to be in Sussex Square.

“These things are so infernally interesting,” said Trafford, surveying the row of miscellaneous cans upon the stove he had

packed with disarticulated goose. “But we didn’t come here to picnic. All this is eating us up. I have a memory of some immense tragic purpose — —”

“That tin’s *boiling!*” screamed Marjorie sharply.

He resumed his thread after an active interlude.

“We’ll keep the wolf from the door,” he said.

“Don’t talk of wolves!” said Marjorie.

“It is only when men have driven away the wolf from the door — oh! altogether away, that they find despair in the sky? I wonder — —”

“What?” asked Marjorie in his pause.

“I wonder if there is nothing really in life but this, the food hunt and the love hunt. Is life just all hunger and need, and are we left with nothing — nothing at all — when these things are done?... We’re infernally uncomfortable here.”-451-

“Oh, nonsense!” cried Marjorie.

“Think of your carpets at home! Think of the great, warm, beautiful house that wasn’t big enough! — And yet here, we’re happy.”

“We *are* happy,” said Marjorie, struck by the thought. “Only — —”

“Yes.”

“I’m afraid. And I long for the children. And the wind *nips*.”

“It may be those are good things for us. No! This is just a lark as yet, Marjorie. It’s still fresh and full of distractions. The discomforts are amusing. Presently we’ll get used to it. Then we’ll talk out — what we have to talk out.... I say, wouldn’t it keep and improve this goose of ours if we put in a little brandy?”

§ 2

The weather broke at last. One might say it smashed itself over their heads. There came an afternoon darkness swift and sudden, a wild gale and an icy sleet that gave place in the night to snow, so that Trafford looked out next morning to see a maddening chaos of small white flakes, incredibly swift, against something that was neither darkness nor light. Even with the door but partly ajar a cruelty of

cold put its claw within, set everything that was moveable swaying and clattering, and made Marjorie hasten shuddering to heap fresh logs upon the fire. Once or twice Trafford went out to inspect tent and roof and store-shed, several times wrapped to the nose he battled his way for fresh wood, and for the rest of the blizzard they kept to the hut. It was slumberously stuffy, but comfortingly full of flavours of tobacco and food. There were two days of intermission and-452- a day of gusts and icy sleet again, turning with one extraordinary clap of thunder to a wild downpour of dancing lumps of ice, and then a night when it seemed all Labrador, earth and sky together, was in hysterical protest against inconceivable wrongs.

And then the break was over; the annual freezing-up was accomplished, winter had established itself, the snowfall moderated and ceased, and an ice-bound world shone white and sunlit under a cloudless sky.

§ 3

Through all that time they got no further with the great discussion for which they had faced that solitude. They attempted beginnings.

"Where had we got to when we left England?" cried Marjorie. "You couldn't work, you couldn't rest — you hated our life."

"Yes, I know. I had a violent hatred of the lives we were leading. I thought — we had to get away. To think.... But things don't leave us alone here."

He covered his face with his hands.

"Why did we come here?" he asked.

"You wanted — to get out of things."

"Yes. But with you.... Have we, after all, got out of things at all? I said coming up, perhaps we were leaving our own problem behind. In exchange for other problems — old problems men have had before. We've got nearer necessity; that's all. Things press on us just as much. There's nothing more fundamental in wild nature, nothing profounder — only something earlier. One doesn't get out of life by going here or there.... But I wanted to get you away — from all things that had such a hold on-453- you....

"When one lies awake at nights, then one seems to get down into

things....”

He went to the door, opened it, and stood looking out. Against a wan daylight the snow was falling noiselessly and steadily.

“Everything goes on,” he said.... “Relentlessly....”

§ 4

That was as far as they had got when the storms ceased and they came out again into an air inexpressibly fresh and sharp and sweet, and into a world blindingly clean and golden white under the rays of the morning sun.

“We will build a fire out here,” said Marjorie; “make a great pile. There is no reason at all why we shouldn’t live outside all through the day in such weather as this.”

§ 5

One morning Trafford found the footmarks of some catlike creature in the snow near the bushes where he was accustomed to get firewood; they led away very plainly up the hill, and after breakfast he took his knife and rifle and snowshoes and went after the lynx — for that he decided the animal must be. There was no urgent reason why he should want to kill a lynx, unless perhaps that killing it made the store shed a trifle safer; but it was the first trail of any living thing for many days; it promised excitement; some primordial instinct perhaps urged him.

The morning was a little overcast, and very cold between the gleams of wintry sunshine. “Good-bye, dear wife!” he said, and then as she remembered afterwards came back a dozen yards to kiss her.-454- “I’ll not be long,” he said. “The beast’s prowling, and if it doesn’t get wind of me I ought to find it in an hour.” He hesitated for a moment. “I’ll not be long,” he repeated, and she had an instant’s wonder whether he hid from her the same dread of loneliness that she concealed. Or perhaps he only knew her secret. Up among the tumbled rocks he turned, and she was still watching him. “Good-bye!” he cried and waved, and the willow thickets closed about him.

She forced herself to the petty duties of the day, made up the fire

from the pile he had left for her, set water to boil, put the hut in order, brought out sheets and blankets to air and set herself to wash up. She wished she had been able to go with him. The sky cleared presently, and the low December sun lit all the world about her, but it left her spirit desolate.

She did not expect him to return until mid-day, and she sat herself down on a log before the fire to darn a pair of socks as well as she could. For a time this unusual occupation held her attention and then her hands became slow and at last inactive, and she fell into reverie. She thought at first of her children and what they might be doing, in England across there to the east it would be about five hours later, four o'clock in the afternoon, and the children would be coming home through the warm muggy London sunshine with Fraulein Otto to tea. She wondered if they had the proper clothes, if they were well; were they perhaps quarrelling or being naughty or skylarking gaily across the Park. Of course Fraulein Otto was all right, quite to be trusted, absolutely trustworthy, and their grandmother would watch for a flushed face or an irrational petulance or any of the little signs that herald trouble with more than a mother's instinctive alertness. No need to worry-455- about the children, no need whatever.... The world of London opened out behind these thoughts; it was so queer to think that she was in almost the same latitude as the busy bright traffic of the autumn season in Kensington Gore; that away there in ten thousand cleverly furnished drawing-rooms the ringing tea things were being set out for the rustling advent of smart callers and the quick leaping gossip. And there would be all sorts of cakes and little things; for a while her mind ran on cakes and little things, and she thought in particular whether it wasn't time to begin cooking.... Not yet. What was it she had been thinking about? Ah! the Solomonsons and the Capeses and the Bernards and the Carmels and the Lees. Would they talk of her and Trafford? It would be strange to go back to it all. Would they go back to it all? She found herself thinking intently of Trafford.

What a fine human being he was! And how touchingly human! The thoughts of his moments of irritation, his baffled silences, filled her with a wild passion of tenderness. She had disappointed him; all that life failed to satisfy him. Dear master of her life! what was it he

needed? She too wasn't satisfied with life, but while she had been able to assuage herself with a perpetual series of petty excitements, theatres, new books and new people, meetings, movements, dinners, shows, he had grown to an immense discontent. He had most of the things men sought, wealth, respect, love, children.... So many men might have blunted their heart-ache with — adventures. There were pretty women, clever women, unoccupied women. She felt she wouldn't have minded — *much* — if it made him happy.... It was so wonderful he loved her still.... It wasn't that he lacked occupation; on the whole he overworked. His business interests were big and wide. Ought he to go into politics?-456- Why was it that the researches that had held him once, could hold him now no more? That was the real pity of it. Was she to blame for that? She couldn't state a case against herself, and yet she felt she was to blame. She had taken him away from those things, forced him to make money....

She sat chin on hand staring into the fire, the sock forgotten on her knee.

She could not weigh justice between herself and him. If he was unhappy it was her fault. She knew if he was unhappy it was no excuse that she had not known, had been misled, had a right to her own instincts and purposes. She had got to make him happy. But what was she to do, what was there for her to do?...

Only he could work out his own salvation, and until he had light, all she could do was to stand by him, help him, cease to irritate him, watch, wait. Anyhow she could at least mend his socks as well as possible, so that the threads would not chafe him....

She flashed to her feet. What was that?

It seemed to her she had heard the sound of a shot, and a quick brief wake of echoes. She looked across the icy waste of the river, and then up the tangled slopes of the mountain. Her heart was beating very fast. It must have been up there, and no doubt he had killed his beast. Some shadow of doubt she would not admit crossed that obvious suggestion.

This wilderness was making her as nervously responsive as a creature of the wild.

Came a second shot; this time there was no doubt of it. Then the desolate silence closed about her again.

She stood for a long time staring at the shrubby-457- slopes that rose to the barren rock wilderness of the purple mountain crest. She sighed deeply at last, and set herself to make up the fire and prepare for the mid-day meal. Once far away across the river she heard the howl of a wolf.

Time seemed to pass very slowly that day. She found herself going repeatedly to the space between the day tent and the sleeping hut from which she could see the stunted wood that had swallowed him up, and after what seemed a long hour her watch told her it was still only half-past twelve. And the fourth or fifth time that she went to look out she was set atremble again by the sound of a third shot. And then at regular intervals out of that distant brown purple jumble of thickets against the snow came two more shots. “Something has happened,” she said, “something has happened,” and stood rigid. Then she became active, seized the rifle that was always at hand when she was alone, fired into the sky and stood listening.

Prompt come an answering shot.

“He wants me,” said Marjorie. “Something —— Perhaps he has killed something too big to bring!”

She was for starting at once, and then remembered this was not the way of the wilderness.

She thought and moved very rapidly. Her mind catalogued possible requirements, rifle, hunting knife, the oilskin bag with matches, and some chunks of dry paper, the rucksack — and he would be hungry. She took a saucepan and a huge chunk of cheese and biscuit. Then a brandy flask is sometimes handy — one never knows. Though nothing was wrong, of course. Needles and stout thread, and some cord. Snowshoes. A waterproof cloak could be easily carried. Her light hatchet for wood. She cast about to see if there was anything else. She had almost-458- forgotten cartridges — and a revolver. Nothing more. She kicked a stray brand or so into the fire, put on some more wood, damped the fire with an armful of snow to make it last longer, and set out towards the willows into which he had vanished.

There was a rustling and snapping of branches as she pushed her way through the bushes, a little stir that died insensibly into quiet again; and then the camping place became very still....

Scarcely a sound occurred, except for the little shuddering and stirring of the fire, and the reluctant, infrequent drip from the icicles along the sunny edge of the log hut roof. About one o'clock the amber sunshine faded out altogether, a veil of clouds thickened and became greyly ominous, and a little after two the first flakes of a snowstorm fell hissing into the fire. A wind rose and drove the multiplying snowflakes in whirls and eddies before it. The icicles ceased to drip, but one or two broke and fell with a weak tinkling. A deep soughing, a shuddering groaning of trees and shrubs, came ever and again out of the ravine, and the powdery snow blew like puffs of smoke from the branches.

By four the fire was out, and the snow was piling high in the darkling twilight against tent and hut....

§ 6

Trafford's trail led Marjorie through the thicket of dwarf willows and down to the gully of the rivulet which they had called Marjorie Trickle; it had long since become a trough of snow-covered rotten ice; the trail crossed this and, turning sharply uphill, went on until it was clear of shrubs and trees, and in the windy open of the upper slopes it crossed a ridge and came over the lip of a large desolate valley with slopes-459- of ice and icy snow. Here she spent some time in following his loops back on the homeward trail before she saw what was manifestly the final trail running far away out across the snow, with the spoor of the lynx, a lightly-dotted line, to the right of it. She followed this suggestion of the trail, put on her snowshoes, and shuffled her way across this valley, which opened as she proceeded. She hoped that over the ridge she would find Trafford, and scanned the sky for the faintest discolouration of a fire, but there was none. That seemed odd to her, but the wind was in her face, and perhaps it beat the smoke down. Then as her eyes scanned the hummocky ridge ahead, she saw something, something very intent and still, that brought her heart into her mouth. It was a big, grey wolf, standing with back haunched and head down, watching and winding something beyond there, out of sight.

Marjorie had an instinctive fear of wild animals, and it still

seemed dreadful to her that they should go at large, uncaged. She suddenly wanted Trafford violently, wanted him by her side. Also she thought of leaving the trail, going back to the bushes. She had to take herself in hand. In the wastes one did not fear wild beasts. One had no fear of them. But why not fire a shot to let him know she was near?

The beast flashed round with an animal's instantaneous change of pose, and looked at her. For a couple of seconds, perhaps, woman and brute regarded one another across a quarter of a mile of snowy desolation.

Suppose it came towards her!

She would fire — and she would fire at it. She made a guess at the range and aimed very carefully. She saw the snow fly two yards ahead of the grisly shape, and then in an instant it had vanished over the-460- crest.

She reloaded, and stood for a moment waiting for Trafford's answer. No answer came. "Queer!" she whispered, "queer!" — and suddenly such a horror of anticipation assailed her that she started running and floundering through the snow to escape it. Twice she called his name, and once she just stopped herself from firing a shot.

Over the ridge she would find him. Surely she would find him over the ridge.

She found herself among rocks, and there was a beaten and trampled place where Trafford must have waited and crouched. Then on and down a slope of tumbled boulders. There came a patch where he had either thrown himself down or fallen.

It seemed to her he must have been running....

Suddenly, a hundred feet or so away, she saw a patch of violently disturbed snow — snow stained a dreadful colour, a snow of scarlet crystals! Three strides and Trafford was in sight.

She had a swift conviction he was dead. He was lying in a crumpled attitude on a patch of snow between convergent rocks, and the lynx, a mass of blood smeared silvery fur, was in some way mixed up with him. She saw as she came nearer that the snow was disturbed round about them, and discoloured copiously, yellow widely, and in places bright red, with congealed and frozen blood. She felt no fear now, and no emotion; all her mind was engaged with

the clear, bleak perception of the fact before her. She did not care to call to him again. His head was hidden by the lynx's body, it was as if he was burrowing underneath the creature; his legs were twisted about each other in a queer, unnatural attitude.

Then, as she dropped off a boulder, and came nearer, Trafford moved. A hand came out and gripped the rifle beside him; he suddenly lifted a-461- dreadful face, horribly scarred and torn, and crimson with frozen blood; he pushed the grey beast aside, rose on an elbow, wiped his sleeve across his eyes, stared at her, grunted, and flopped forward. He had fainted.

She was now as clear-minded and as self-possessed as a woman in a shop. In another moment she was kneeling by his side. She saw, by the position of his knife and the huge rip in the beast's body, that he had stabbed the lynx to death as it clawed his head; he must have shot and wounded it and then fallen upon it. His knitted cap was torn to ribbons, and hung upon his neck. Also his leg was manifestly injured; how, she could not tell. It was chiefly evident he must freeze if he lay here. It seemed to her that perhaps he had pulled the dead brute over him to protect his torn skin from the extremity of cold. The lynx was already rigid, its clumsy paws asprawl — the torn skin and clot upon Trafford's face was stiff as she put her hands about his head to raise him. She turned him over on his back — how heavy he seemed! — and forced brandy between his teeth. Then, after a moment's hesitation, she poured a little brandy on his wounds.

She glanced at his leg, which was surely broken, and back at his face. Then she gave him more brandy and his eyelids flickered. He moved his hand weakly. "The blood," he said, "kept getting in my eyes."

She gave him brandy once again, wiped his face and glanced at his leg. Something ought to be done to that she thought. But things must be done in order.

She stared up at the darkling sky with its grey promise of snow, and down the slopes of the mountain. Clearly they must stay the night here. They were too high for wood among these rocks, but three-462- or four hundred yards below there were a number of dwarfed fir trees. She had brought an axe, so that a fire was possible. Should she go back to camp and get the tent?

Trafford was trying to speak again. “I got — —” he said.

“Yes?”

“Got my leg in that crack. Damn — damned nuisance.”

Was he able to advise her? She looked at him, and then perceived she must bind up his head and face. She knelt behind him and raised his head on her knee. She had a thick silk neck muffler, and this she supplemented by a band she cut and tore from her inner vest. She bound this, still warm from her body, about him, wrapped her cloak round him. The next thing was a fire. Five yards away, perhaps, a great mass of purple gabbro hung over a patch of nearly snowless moss. A hummock to the westward offered shelter from the weakly bitter wind, the icy draught, that was soughing down the valley. Always in Labrador, if you can, you camp against a rock surface; it shelters you from the wind, reflects your fire, guards your back.

“Rag!” she said.

“Rotten hole,” said Trafford.

“What?” she cried sharply.

“Got you in a rotten hole,” he said. “Eh?”

“Listen,” she said, and shook his shoulder. “Look! I want to get you up against that rock.”

“Won’t make much difference,” said Trafford, and opened his eyes. “Where?” he asked.

“There.”

He remained quite quiet for a second perhaps. “Listen to me,” he said. “Go back to camp.”

“Yes,” she said.-463-

“Go back to camp. Make a pack of all the strongest food — strenthin’ — strengthrin’ food — you know?” He seemed troubled to express himself.

“Yes,” she said.

“Down the river. Down — down. Till you meet help.”

“Leave you?”

He nodded his head and winced.

“You’re always plucky,” he said. “Look facts in the face. Kiddies. Thought it over while you were coming.” A tear oozed from his eye. “Not be a fool, Madge. Kiss me good-bye. Not be a fool. I’m done. Kids.”

She stared at him and her spirit was a luminous mist of tears. “You old *coward*,” she said in his ear, and kissed the little patch of rough and bloody cheek beneath his eye. Then she knelt up beside him. “*I’m* boss now, old man,” she said. “I want to get you to that place there under the rock. If I drag, can you help?”

He answered obstinately: “You’d better go.”

“I’ll make you comfortable first,” she answered, “anyhow.”

He made an enormous effort, and then with her quick help and with his back to her knee, had raised himself on his elbows.

“And afterwards?” he asked.

“Build a fire.”

“Wood?”

“Down there.”

“Two bits of wood tied on my leg — splints. Then I can drag myself. See? Like a blessed old walrus.”

He smiled, and she kissed his bandaged face again.

“Else it hurts,” he apologized, “more than I can stand.”

She stood up again, thought, put his rifle and-464- knife to his hand for fear of that lurking wolf, abandoning her own rifle with an effort, and went striding and leaping from rock to rock towards the trees below. She made the chips fly, and was presently towing three venerable pine dwarfs, bumping over rock and crevice, back to Trafford. She flung them down, stood for a moment bright and breathless, then set herself to hack off the splints he needed from the biggest stem. “Now,” she said, coming to him.

“A fool,” he remarked, “would have made the splints down there. You’re — *good*, Marjorie.”

She lugged his leg out straight, put it into the natural and least painful pose, padded it with moss and her torn handkerchief, and bound it up. As she did so a handful of snowflakes came whirling about them. She was now braced up to every possibility. “It never rains,” she said grimly, “but it pours,” and went on with her bone-setting. He was badly weakened by pain and shock, and once he swore at her sharply. “Sorry,” he said.

She rolled him over on his chest, and left him to struggle to the shelter of the rock while she went for more wood.

The sky alarmed her. The mountains up the valley were already

hidden by driven rags of slaty snowstorms. This time she found a longer but easier path for dragging her boughs and trees; she determined she would not start the fire until nightfall, nor waste any time in preparing food until then. There were dead boughs for kindling — more than enough. It was snowing quite fast by the time she got up to him with her second load, and a premature twilight already obscured and exaggerated the rocks and mounds about her. She gave some of her cheese to Trafford, and gnawed some herself on her way down to the wood again. She regretted that she had-465-brought neither candles nor lantern, because then she might have kept on until the cold of night stopped her, and she reproached herself bitterly because she had brought no tea. She could forgive herself the lantern, she had never expected to be out after dark, but the tea was inexcusable. She muttered self-reproaches while she worked like two men among the trees, panting puffs of mist that froze upon her lips and iced the knitted wool that covered her chin. Why don't they teach a girl to handle an axe?...

When at last the wolfish cold of the Labrador night had come, it found Trafford and Marjorie seated almost warmly on a bed of pine boughs between the sheltering dark rock behind and a big but well husbanded fire in front, drinking a queer-tasting but not unsavory soup of lynx-flesh, that she had fortified with the remainder of the brandy. Then they tried roast lynx and ate a little, and finished with some scraps of cheese and deep draughts of hot water. Then — oh Tyburnia and Chelsea and all that is becoming! — they smoked Trafford's pipe for alternate minutes, and Marjorie found great comfort in it.

The snowstorm poured incessantly out of the darkness to become flakes of burning fire in the light of the flames, flakes that vanished magically, but it only reached them and wetted them in occasional gusts. What did it matter for the moment if the dim snow-heaps rose and rose about them? A glorious fatigue, an immense self-satisfaction possessed Marjorie; she felt that they had both done well.

"I am not afraid of to-morrow now," she said at last — a thought matured. "*No!*"

Trafford had the pipe and did not speak for a moment. "Nor I," he said at last. "Very likely we'll get through with it." He added after a

pause: “I thought I was done for. A man — loses heart.-466- After a loss of blood.”

“The leg’s better?”

“Hot as fire.” His humour hadn’t left him. “It’s a treat,” he said. “The hottest thing in Labrador.”

“I’ve been a good squaw this time, old man?” she asked suddenly.

He seemed not to hear her; then his lips twitched and he made a feeble movement for her hand. “I cursed you,” he said....

She slept, but on a spring as it were, lest the fire should fall. She replenished it with boughs, tucked in the half-burnt logs, and went to sleep again. Then it seemed to her that some invisible hand was pouring a thin spirit on the flames that made them leap and crackle and spread north and south until they filled the heavens. Her eyes were open and the snowstorm overpast, leaving the sky clear, and all the westward heaven alight with the trailing, crackling, leaping curtains of the Aurora, brighter than she had ever seen them before. Quite clearly visible beyond the smoulder of the fire, a wintry waste of rock and snow, boulder beyond boulder, passed into a dun obscurity. The mountain to the right of them lay long and white and stiff, a shrouded death. All earth was dead and waste and nothing, and the sky alive and coldly marvellous, signalling and astir. She watched the changing, shifting colours, and they made her think of the gathering banners of inhuman hosts, the stir and marshalling of icy giants for ends stupendous and indifferent to all the trivial impertinence of man’s existence....

That night the whole world of man seemed small and shallow and insecure to her, beyond comparison. One came, she thought, but just a little way out of its warm and sociable cities hither, and found this homeless wilderness; one pricked the thin appearances of-467- life with microscope or telescope and came to an equal strangeness. All the pride and hope of human life goes to and fro in a little shell of air between this ancient globe of rusty nickel-steel and the void of space; faint specks we are within a film; we quiver between the atom and the infinite, being hardly more substantial than the glow within an oily skin that drifts upon the water. The wonder and the riddle of it! Here she and Trafford were! Phantasmal shapes of unsubstantial fluid thinly skinned against evaporation and wrapped about with woven

wool and the skins of beasts, that yet reflected and perceived, suffered and sought to understand; that held a million memories, framed thoughts that plumbed the deeps of space and time, — and another day of snow or icy wind might leave them just scattered bones and torn rags gnawed by a famishing wolf!...

She felt a passionate desire to pray....

She glanced at Trafford beside her, and found him awake and staring. His face was very pale and strange in that livid, flickering light. She would have spoken, and then she saw his lips were moving, and something, something she did not understand, held her back from doing so.

§ 7

The bleak, slow dawn found Marjorie intently busy. She had made up the fire, boiled water and washed and dressed Trafford's wounds, and made another soup of lynx. But Trafford had weakened in the night, the stuff nauseated him, he refused it and tried to smoke and was sick, and then sat back rather despairfully after a second attempt to persuade her to leave him there to die. This failure of his spirit distressed her and a little astonished her, but it only-468- made her more resolute to go through with her work. She had awakened cold, stiff and weary, but her fatigue vanished with movement; she toiled for an hour replenishing her pile of fuel, made up the fire, put his gun ready to his hand, kissed him, abused him lovingly for the trouble he gave her until his poor torn face lit in response, and then parting on a note of cheerful confidence set out to return to the hut. She found the way not altogether easy to make out, wind and snow had left scarcely a trace of their tracks, and her mind was full of the stores she must bring and the possibility of moving him nearer to the hut. She was startled to see by the fresh, deep spoor along the ridge how near the wolf had dared approach them in the darkness....

Ever and again Marjorie had to halt and look back to get her direction right. As it was she came through the willow scrub nearly half a mile above the hut, and had to follow the steep bank of the frozen river down. At one place she nearly slipped upon an icy slope of rock.

One possibility she did not dare to think of during that time; a blizzard now would cut her off absolutely from any return to Trafford. Short of that she believed she could get through.

Her quick mind was full of all she had to do. At first she had thought chiefly of his immediate necessities, of food and some sort of shelter. She had got a list of things in her head — meat extract, bandages, corrosive sublimate by way of antiseptic, brandy, a tin of beef, some bread and so forth; she went over that several times to be sure of it, and then for a time she puzzled about a tent. She thought she could manage a bale of blankets on her back, and that she could rig a sleeping tent for herself and Trafford with one and some bent sticks. The big tent would be too-469- much to strike and shift. And then her mind went on to a bolder enterprise, which was to get him home. The nearer she could bring him to the log hut, the nearer they would be to supplies. She cast about for some sort of sledge. The snow was too soft and broken for runners, especially among the trees, but if she could get a flat of smooth wood she thought she might be able to drag him. She decided to try the side of her bunk. She could easily get that off. She would have, of course, to run it edgewise through the thickets and across the ravine, but after that she would have almost clear going until she reached the steep place of broken rocks within two hundred yards of him. The idea of a sledge grew upon her, and she planned to nail a rope along the edge and make a kind of harness for herself.

She found the camping-place piled high with drifted snow, which had invaded tent and hut, and that some beast, a wolverine she guessed, had been into the hut, devoured every candle-end and the uppers of Trafford's well-greased second boots, and had then gone to the corner of the store shed and clambered up to the stores. She made no account of its depredations there, but set herself to make a sledge and get her supplies together. There was a gleam of sunshine, but she did not like the look of the sky, and she was horribly afraid of what might be happening to Trafford. She carried her stuff through the wood and across the ravine, and returned for her improvised sledge. She was still struggling with that among the trees when it began to snow again.

It was hard then not to be frantic in her efforts. As it was, she

packed her stuff so loosely on the planking that she had to repack it, and she started without putting on her snowshoes, and floundered fifty yards before she discovered that omission. The snow was-470- now falling fast, darkling the sky and hiding everything but objects close at hand, and she had to use all her wits to determine her direction; she knew she must go down a long slope and then up to the ridge, and it came to her as a happy inspiration that if she bore to the left she might strike some recognizable vestige of her morning's trail. She had read of people walking in circles when they have no light or guidance, and that troubled her until she bethought herself of the little compass on her watch chain. By that she kept her direction. She wished very much she had timed herself across the waste, so that she could tell when she approached the ridge.

Soon her back and shoulders were aching violently, and the rope across her chest was tugging like some evil-tempered thing. But she did not dare to rest. The snow was now falling thick and fast, the flakes traced white spirals and made her head spin, so that she was constantly falling away to the south-westward and then correcting herself by the compass. She tried to think how this zig-zagging might affect her course, but the snow whirls confused her mind and a growing anxiety would not let her pause to think. She felt blinded; it seemed to be snowing inside her eyes so that she wanted to rub them. Soon the ground must rise to the ridge, she told herself; it must surely rise. Then the sledge came bumping at her heels and she perceived she was going down hill. She consulted the compass, and she found she was facing south. She turned sharply to the right again. The snowfall became a noiseless, pitiless torture to sight and mind.

The sledge behind her struggled to hold her back, and the snow balled under her snowshoes. She wanted to stop and rest, take thought, sit for a moment. She struggled with herself and kept on. She tried walking-471- with shut eyes, and tripped and came near sprawling. "Oh God!" she cried, "oh God!" too stupefied for more articulate prayers.

Would the rise of the ground to the ribs of rock never come?

A figure, black and erect, stood in front of her suddenly, and beyond appeared a group of black, straight antagonists. She staggered on towards them, gripping her rifle with some muddled

idea of defence, and in another moment she was brushing against the branches of a stunted fir, which shed thick lumps of snow upon her feet. What trees were these? Had she ever passed any trees? No! There were no trees on her way to Trafford....

She began whimpering like a tormented child. But even as she wept she turned her sledge about to follow the edge of the wood. She was too much downhill, she thought and she must bear up again.

She left the trees behind, made an angle uphill to the right, and was presently among trees again. Again she left them and again came back to them. She screamed with anger at them and twitched her sledge away. She wiped at the snowstorm with her arm as though she would wipe it away. She wanted to stamp on the universe....

And she ached, she ached....

Something caught her eye ahead, something that gleamed; it was exactly like a long, bare rather pinkish bone standing erect on the ground. Just because it was strange and queer she ran forward to it. Then as she came nearer she perceived it was a streak of barked trunk; a branch had been torn off a pine tree and the bark stripped down to the root. And then her foot hit against a freshly hewn stump, and then came another, poking its pinkish wounds above the snow. And there were chips! This filled her with-472- wonder. Some one had been cutting wood! There must be Indians or trappers near, she thought, and then realized the wood-cutter could be none other than herself.

She turned to the right and saw the rocks rising steeply close at hand. “Oh Rag!” she cried, and fired her rifle in the air.

Ten seconds, twenty seconds, and then so loud and near it amazed her, came his answering shot. It sounded like the hillside bursting.

In another moment she had discovered the trail she had made overnight and that morning by dragging firewood. It was now a shallow soft white trench. Instantly her despair and fatigue had gone from her. Should she take a load of wood with her? she asked herself, in addition to the weight behind her, and had a better idea. She would unload and pile her stuff here, and bring him down on the sledge closer to the wood. She looked about and saw two rocks that diverged with a space between. She flashed schemes. She would trample the snow hard and flat, put her sledge on it, pile boughs and

make a canopy of blanket overhead and behind. Then a fire in front.

She saw her camp admirable. She tossed her provisions down and ran up the broad windings of her pine-tree trail to Trafford, with the unloaded sledge bumping behind her. She ran as lightly as though she had done nothing that day.

She found him markedly recovered, weak and quiet, with snow drifting over his feet, his rifle across his knees, and his pipe alight. “Back already,” he said, “but — —”

He hesitated. “No grub?”

She knelt over him, gave his rough unshaven cheek a swift kiss, and very rapidly explained her plan.

§ 8

In three days’ time they were back at the hut, and-473- the last two days they wore blue spectacles because of the mid-day glare of the sunlit snow.

It amazed Marjorie to discover as she lay awake in the camp on the edge of the ravine close to the hut to which she had lugged Trafford during the second day, that she was deeply happy. It was preposterous that she should be so, but those days of almost despairful stress were irradiated now by a new courage. She was doing this thing, against all Labrador and the snow-driving wind that blew from the polar wilderness, she was winning. It was a great discovery to her that hardship and effort almost to the breaking-point could ensue in so deep a satisfaction. She lay and thought how deep and rich life had become for her, as though in all this effort and struggle some unsuspected veil had been torn away. She perceived again, but now with no sense of desolation, that same infinite fragility of life which she had first perceived when she had watched the Aurora Borealis flickering up the sky. Beneath that realization and carrying it, as a river flood may carry scum, was a sense of herself as something deeper, greater, more enduring than mountain or wilderness or sky, or any of those monstrous forms of nature that had dwarfed her physical self to nothingness.

She had a persuasion of self detachment and illumination, and withal of self-discovery. She saw her life of time and space for what

it was. Away in London the children, with the coldest of noses and the gayest of spirits, would be scampering about their bedrooms in the mild morning sunlight of a London winter; Elsie, the parlourmaid, would be whisking dexterous about the dining-room, the bacon would be cooking and the coffee-mill at work, the letters of the-474- morning delivery perhaps just pattering into the letter-box, and all the bright little household she had made, with all the furniture she had arranged, all the characteristic decoration she had given it, all the clever convenient arrangements, would be getting itself into action for another day — and *it wasn't herself!* It was the extremest of her superficiality.

She had come out of all that, and even so it seemed she had come out of herself; this weary woman lying awake on the balsam boughs with a brain cleared by underfeeding and this continuous arduous bath of toil in snow-washed, frost cleansed, starry air, this, too, was no more than a momentarily clarified window for her unknown and indefinable reality. What was that reality? what was she herself? She became interested in framing an answer to that, and slipped down from the peace of soul she had attained. Her serenity gave way to a reiteration of this question, reiterations increasing and at last oppressing like the snowflakes of a storm, perpetual whirling repetitions that at last confused her and hid the sky....

She fell asleep....

§ 9

With their return to the hut, Marjorie had found herself encountering a new set of urgencies. In their absence that wretched little wolverine had found great plenty and happiness in the tent and store-shed; its traces were manifest nearly everywhere, and it had particularly assailed the candles, after a destructive time among the frozen caribou beef. It had clambered up on the packages of sardines and jumped thence on to a sloping pole that it could claw along into the frame of the roof. She rearranged the packages, but that was no good. She could not leave Trafford-475- in order to track the brute down, and for a night or so she could not think of any way of checking its depredations. It came each night.... Trafford kept her close at home.

She had expected that when he was back in his bunk, secure and warm, he would heal rapidly, but instead he suddenly developed all the symptoms of a severe feverish cold, and his scars, which had seemed healing, became flushed and ugly-looking. Moreover, there was something wrong with his leg, an ominous ache that troubled her mind. Every woman, she decided, ought to know how to set a bone. He was unable to sleep by reason of these miseries, though very desirous of doing so. He became distressingly weak and inert, he ceased to care for food, and presently he began ta talk to himself with a complete disregard of her presence. Hourly she regretted her ignorance of medicine that left her with no conceivable remedy for all the aching and gnawing that worried and weakened him, except bathing with antiseptics and a liberal use of quinine.

And his face became strange to her, for over his flushed and sunken cheeks, under the raw spaces of the scar a blond beard bristled and grew. Presently, Trafford was a bearded man.

Incidentally, however, she killed the wolverine by means of a trap of her own contrivance, a loaded rifle with a bait of what was nearly her last candles, rigged to the trigger.

But this loss of the candles brought home to them the steady lengthening of the nights. Scarcely seven hours of day remained now in the black, cold grip of the darkness. And through those seventeen hours of chill aggression they had no light but the red glow of the stove. She had to close the door of the hut and bar every chink and cranny against the icy air, that became at last a murderous, freezing wind. Not-476- only did she line the hut with every scrap of skin and paper she could obtain, but she went out with the spade toiling for three laborious afternoons in piling and beating snow against the outer frame. And now it was that Trafford talked at last, talked with something of the persistence of delirium, and she sat and listened hour by hour, silently, for he gave no heed to her or to anything she might say. He talked, it seemed, to God....

§ 10

Darkness about a sullen glow of red, and a voice speaking.

The voice of a man, fevered and in pain, wounded and amidst

hardship and danger, struggling with the unrelenting riddle of his being. Ever and again when a flame leapt she would see his face, haggard, bearded, changed, and yet infinitely familiar.

His voice varied, now high and clear, now mumbling, now vexed and expostulating, now rich with deep feeling, now fagged and slow; his matter varied, too; now he talked like one who is inspired, and now like one lost and confused, stupidly repeating phrases, going back upon a misleading argument, painfully, laboriously beginning over and over again. Marjorie sat before the stove watching it burn and sink, replenishing it, preparing food, and outside the bitter wind moaned and blew the powdery snow before it, and the shortening interludes of pallid, diffused daylight which pass for days in such weather, came and went. Intense cold had come now with leaden snowy days and starless nights.

Sometimes his speech filled her mind, seemed to fill all her world; sometimes she ceased to listen, following thoughts of her own. Sometimes she dozed;-477- sometimes she awakened from sleep to find him talking. But slowly she realized a thread in his discourse, a progress and development.

Sometimes he talked of his early researches, and then he would trace computations with his hands as if he were using a blackboard, and became distressed to remember what he had written. Sometimes he would be under the claws of the lynx again, and fighting for his eyes. "Ugh!" he said, "keep those hind legs still. Keep your hind legs still! Knife? Knife? Ah! got it. Gu — u — u, you *Beast!*"

But the gist of his speech was determined by the purpose of his journey to Labrador. At last he was reviewing his life and hers, and all that their life might signify, even as he determined to do. She began to perceive that whatever else drifted into his mind and talk, this recurred and grew, that he returned to the conclusion he had reached, and not to the beginning of the matter, and went on from that....

"You see," he said, "our lives are nothing — nothing in themselves. I know that; I've never had any doubts of that. We individuals just pick up a mixed lot of things out of the powers that begat us, and lay them down again presently a little altered, that's all — heredities, traditions, the finger nails of my grandfather, a great-

aunt's lips, the faith of a sect, the ideas of one's time. We live and then we die, and the threads run, dispersing this way and that. To make other people again. Whatever's immortal isn't that, our looks or our habits, our thoughts or our memories — just the shapes, these are, of one immortal stuff.... One immortal stuff."...

The voice died away as if he was baffled. Then it resumed.

"But we ought to *partake* of immortality; that's my point. We ought to partake of immortality.

"I mean we're like the little elements in a magnet;-478- ought not to lie higgledy-piggledy, ought to point the same way, be polarized —— Something microcosmic, you know, ought to be found in a man.

"Analogies run away with one. Suppose the bar isn't magnetized yet! Suppose purpose has to come; suppose the immortal stuff isn't yet, isn't being but struggling to be. Struggling to be.... Gods! that morning! When the child was born! And afterwards she was there — with a smile on her lips, and a little flushed and proud — as if nothing had happened so very much out of the way. Nothing so wonderful. And we had another life besides our own!..."

Afterwards he came back to that. "That was a good image," he said, "something trying to exist, which isn't substance, doesn't belong to space or time, something stifled and enclosed, struggling to get through. Just confused birth cries, eyes that hardly see, deaf ears, poor little thrusting hands. A thing altogether blind at first, a twitching and thrusting of protoplasm under the waters, and then the plants creeping up the beaches, the insects and reptiles on the margins of the rivers, beasts with a flicker of light in their eyes answering the sun. And at last, out of the long interplay of desire and fear, an ape, an ape that stared and wondered, and scratched queer pictures on a bone...."

He lapsed into silent thought for a time, and Marjorie glanced at his dim face in the shadows.

"I say nothing of ultimates," he said at last.

He repeated that twice before his thoughts would flow again.

"This is as much as I see, in time as I know it and space as I know it — *something struggling to exist*. It's true to the end of my limits. What can I say beyond that? It struggles to exist, becomes

conscious,-479- becomes now conscious of itself. That is where I come in, as a part of it. Above the beast in me is that — the desire to know better, to know — beautifully, and to transmit my knowledge. That's all there is in life for me beyond food and shelter and tidying up. This Being — opening its eyes, listening, trying to comprehend. Every good thing in man is that; — looking and making pictures, listening and making songs, making philosophies and sciences, trying new powers, bridge and engine, spark and gun. At the bottom of my soul, *that*. We began with bone-scratching. We're still — near it. I am just a part of this beginning — mixed with other things. Every book, every art, every religion is that, the attempt to understand and express — mixed with other things. Nothing else matters, nothing whatever. I tell you —— Nothing whatever!

"I've always believed that. All my life I've believed that.

"Only I've forgotten."

"Every man with any brains believes that at the bottom of his heart. Only he gets busy and forgets. He goes shooting lynxes and breaks his leg. Odd, instinctive, brutal thing to do — to go tracking down a lynx to kill it! I grant you that, Marjorie. I grant you that."

"Grant me what?" she cried, startled beyond measure to hear herself addressed.

"Grant you that it is rather absurd to go hunting a lynx. And what big paws it has — disproportionately big! I wonder if that's an adaptation to snow. Tremendous paws they are.... But the real thing, I was saying, the real thing is to get knowledge, and express it. All things lead up to that. Civilization, social order, just for that. Except for that, all the life of man, all his affairs, his laws and police, his morals and manners — nonsense, nonsense,-480- nonsense. Lynx hunts! Just ways of getting themselves mauled and clawed perhaps — into a state of understanding. Who knows?..."

His voice became low and clear.

"Understanding spreading like a dawn....

"Logic and language, clumsy implements, but rising to our needs, rising to our needs, thought clarified, enriched, reaching out to every man alive — some day — presently — touching every man alive, harmonizing acts and plans, drawing men into gigantic co-operations, tremendous co-operations....

“Until man shall stand upon this earth as upon a footstool and reach out his hand among the stars....

“And then I went into the rubber market, and spent seven years of my life driving shares up and down and into a net!... Queer game indeed! Stupid ass Behrens was — at bottom....

“There’s a flaw in it somewhere....”

He came back to that several times before he seemed able to go on from it.

“There *is* a collective mind,” he said, “a growing general consciousness — growing clearer. Something put me away from that, but I know it. My work, my thinking, was a part of it. That’s why I was so mad about Behrens.”

“Behrens?”

“Of course. He’d got a twist, a wrong twist. It makes me angry now. It will take years, it will eat up some brilliant man to clean up after Behrens — —”

“Yes, but the point is” — his voice became acute— “why did I go making money and let Behrens in? Why generally and in all sorts of things does Behrens come in?...”

He was silent for a long time, and then he began to answer himself. “Of course,” he said, “I said it — or-481- somebody said it — about this collective mind being mixed with other things. It’s something arising out of life — not the common stuff of life. An exhalation.... It’s like the little tongues of fire that came at Pentecost.... Queer how one comes drifting back to these images. Perhaps I shall die a Christian yet.... The other Christians won’t like me if I do. What was I saying?... It’s what I reach up to, what I desire shall pervade me, not what I am. Just as far as I give myself purely to knowledge, to making feeling and thought clear in my mind and words, to the understanding and expression of the realities and relations of life, just so far do I achieve Salvation.... Salvation!...

“I wonder, is Salvation the same for every one? Perhaps for one man Salvation is research and thought, and for another expression in art, and for another nursing lepers. Provided he does it in the spirit. He has to do it in the spirit....”

There came a silence as though some difficulty baffled him, and he was feeling back to get his argument again.

“This flame that arises out of life, that redeems life from purposeless triviality, *isn’t* life. Let me get hold of that. That’s a point. That’s a very important point.”

Something had come to him.

“I’ve never talked of this to Marjorie. I’ve lived with her nine years and more, and never talked of religion. Not once. That’s so queer of us. Any other couple in any other time would have talked religion no end.... People ought to.”

Then he stuck out an argumentative hand. “You see, Marjorie *is* life,” he said.

“She took me.”

He spoke slowly, as though he traced things carefully.-482- “Before I met her I suppose I wasn’t half alive. No! Yet I don’t remember I felt particularly incomplete. Women were interesting, of course; they excited me at times, that girl at Yonkers! — H’m. I stuck to my work. It was fine work, I forget half of it now, the half-concealed intimations I mean — queer how one forgets! — but I know I felt my way to wide, deep things. It was like exploring caves — monstrous, limitless caves. Such caves!... Very still — underground. Wonderful and beautiful.... They’re lying there now for other men to seek. Other men will find them.... Then *she* came, as though she was taking possession. The beauty of her, oh! the life and bright eagerness, and the incompatibility! That’s the riddle! I’ve loved her always. When she came to my arms it seemed to me the crown of life. Caves indeed! Old caves! Nothing else seemed to matter. But something did. All sorts of things did. I found that out soon enough. And when that first child was born. That for a time was supreme.... Yes — she’s the quintessence of life, the dear greed of her, the appetite, the clever appetite for things. She grabs. She’s so damned clever! The light in her eyes! Her quick sure hands!... Only my work was crowded out of my life and ended, and she didn’t seem to feel it, she didn’t seem to mind it. There was a sort of disregard. Disregard. As though all that didn’t really matter....”

“*My dear!*” whispered Marjorie unheeded. She wanted to tell him it mattered now, mattered supremely, but she knew he had no ears for her.

His voice flattened. “It’s perplexing,” he said. “The two different

things.”

Then suddenly he cried out harshly: “I ought never to have married her — never, never! I had my task. I gave myself to her. Oh! the high immensities,-483- the great and terrible things open to the mind of man! And we breed children and live in littered houses and play with our food and chatter, chatter, chatter. Oh, the chatter of my life! The folly! The women with their clothes. I can hear them rustle now, whiff the scent of it! The scandals — as though the things they did with themselves and each other mattered a rap; the little sham impromptu clever things, the trying to keep young — and underneath it all that continual cheating, cheating, cheating, damning struggle for money!...

“Marjorie, Marjorie, Marjorie! Why is she so good and no better! Why wasn’t she worth it altogether?...

“No! I don’t want to go on with it any more — ever. I want to go back.

“I want my life over again, and to go back.

“I want research, and the spirit of research that has died in me, and that still, silent room of mine again, that room, as quiet as a cell, and the toil that led to light. Oh! the coming of that light, the uprush of discovery, the solemn joy as the generalization rises like a sun upon the facts — floods them with a common meaning. That is what I want. That is what I have always wanted....

“Give me my time oh God! again; I am sick of this life I have chosen. I am sick of it! This — busy death! Give me my time again.... Why did you make me, and then waste me like this? Why are we made for folly upon folly? Folly! and brains made to scale high heaven, smeared into the dust! Into the dust, into the dust. Dust!...”

He passed into weak, wandering repetitions of disconnected sentences, that died into whispers and silence, and Marjorie watched him and listened to him, and waited with a noiseless dexterity upon his-484- every need.

§ 11

One day, she did not know what day, for she had lost count of the

days, Marjorie set the kettle to boil and opened the door of the hut to look out, and the snow was ablaze with diamonds, and the air was sweet and still. It occurred to her that it would be well to take Trafford out into that brief brightness. She looked at him and found his eyes upon the sunlight quiet and rather wondering eyes.

"Would you like to get out into that?" she asked abruptly.

"Yes," he said, and seemed disposed to get up.

"You've got a broken leg," she cried, to arrest his movement, and he looked at her and answered: "Of course — I forgot."

She was all atremble that he should recognize her and speak to her. She pulled her rude old sledge alongside his bunk, and kissed him, and showed him how to shift and drop himself upon the plank. She took him in her arms and lowered him. He helped weakly but understandingly, and she wrapped him up warmly on the planks and lugged him out and built up a big fire at his feet, wondering, but as yet too fearful to rejoice, at the change that had come to him.

He said no more, but his eyes watched her move about with a kind of tired curiosity. He smiled for a time at the sun, and shut his eyes, and still faintly smiling, lay still. She had a curious fear that if she tried to talk to him this new lucidity would vanish again. She went about the business of the morning, glancing at him ever and again, until suddenly the calm of his upturned face smote her, and she ran to-485- him and crouched down to him between hope and a terrible fear, and found that he was sleeping, and breathing very lightly, sleeping with the deep unconsciousness of a child....

When he awakened the sun was red in the west. His eyes met hers, and he seemed a little puzzled.

"I've been sleeping, Madge?" he said.

She nodded.

"And dreaming? I've a vague sort of memory of preaching and preaching in a kind of black, empty place, where there wasn't anything.... A fury of exposition... a kind of argument.... I say! — Is there such a thing in the world as a new-laid egg — and some bread-and-butter?"

He seemed to reflect. "Of course," he said, "I broke my leg. Gollys! I thought that beast was going to claw my eyes out. Lucky, Madge, it didn't get my eyes. It was just a chance it didn't."

He stared at her.

"I say," he said, "you've had a pretty rough time! How long has this been going on?"

He amazed her by rising himself on his elbow and sitting up.

"Your leg!" she cried.

He put his hand down and felt it. "Pretty stiff," he said. "You get me some food — there *were* some eggs, Madge, frozen new-laid, anyhow — and then we'll take these splints off and feel about a bit. Eh! why not? How did you get me out of that scrape, Madge? I thought I'd got to be froze as safe as eggs. (Those eggs ought to be all right, you know. If you put them on in a saucepan and wait until they boil.) I've a sort of muddled impression.... By Jove, Madge, you've had a time! I say you *have* had a time!"

His eyes, full of a warmth of kindliness she had-486- not seen for long weeks, scrutinized her face. "I say!" he repeated, very softly.

All her strength went from her at his tenderness. "Oh, my dear," she wailed, kneeling at his side, "my dear, dear!" and still regardful of his leg, she yet contrived to get herself weeping into his coveted arms.

He regarded her, he held her, he patted her back! The infinite luxury to her! He'd come back. He'd come back to her.

"How long has it been?" he asked. "Poor dear! Poor dear! How long can it have been?"

§ 12

From that hour Trafford mended. He remained clear-minded, helpful, sustaining. His face healed daily. Marjorie had had to cut away great fragments of gangrenous frozen flesh, and he was clearly destined to have a huge scar over forehead and cheek, but in that pure, clear air, once the healing had begun it progressed swiftly. His leg had set, a little shorter than its fellow and with a lump in the middle of the shin, but it promised to be a good serviceable leg none the less. They examined it by the light of the stove with their heads together, and discussed when it would be wise to try it. How do doctors tell when a man may stand on his broken leg? She had a vague impression you must wait six weeks, but she could not remember why she fixed upon

that time.

"It seems a decent interval," said Trafford. "We'll try it."

She had contrived a crutch for him against that momentous experiment, and he sat up in his bunk, pillowed up by a sack and her rugs, and whittled it smooth, and padded the fork with the skin of that slaughtered wolverine, poor victim of hunger! — while-487- she knelt by the stove feeding it with logs, and gave him an account of their position.

"We're somewhere in the middle of December," she said, "somewhere between the twelfth and the fourteenth, — yes! I'm as out as that! — and I've handled the stores pretty freely. So did that little beast until I got him." She nodded at the skin in his hand. "I don't see myself shooting much now, and so far I've not been able to break the ice to fish. It's too much for me. Even if it isn't too late to fish. This book we've got describes barks and mosses, and that will help, but if we stick here until the birds and things come, we're going to be precious short. We may have to last right into July. I've plans — but it may come to that. We ought to ration all the regular stuff, and trust to luck for a feast. The rations! — I don't know what they'll come to."

"Right O," said Trafford admiring her capable gravity. "Let's ration."

"Marjorie," he asked abruptly, "are you sorry we came?"

Her answer came unhesitatingly. "*No!*"

"Nor I."

He paused. "I've found you out," he said. "Dear dirty living thing!... You *are* dirty, you know."

"I've found myself," she answered, thinking. "I feel as if I've never loved you until this hut. I suppose I have in my way — —"

"Lugano," he suggested. "Don't let's forget good things, Marjorie. Oh! And endless times!"

"Oh, of course! As for *that* —— ! But now — now you're in my bones. We were just two shallow, pretty, young things — loving. It was sweet, dear — sweet as youth — but not this. Unkempt and weary — then one understands love. I suppose I *am* dirty.-488- Think of it! I've lugged you through the snow till my shoulders chafed and bled. I cried with pain, and kept on lugging —— Oh, my

dear! my dear!" He kissed her hair. "I've held you in my arms to keep you from freezing. (I'd have frozen myself first.) We've got to starve together perhaps before the end.... Dear, if I could make you, you should eat me.... I'm — I'm beginning to understand. I've had a light. I've begun to understand. I've begun to see what life has been for you, and how I've wasted — wasted."

"*We've* wasted!"

"No," she said, "it was I."

She sat back on the floor and regarded him. "You don't remember things you said — when you were delirious?"

"No," he answered. "What did I say?"

"Nothing?"

"Nothing clearly. What did I say?"

"It doesn't matter. No, indeed. Only you made me understand. You'd never have told me. You've always been a little weak with me there. But it's plain to me why we didn't keep our happiness, why we were estranged. If we go back alive, we go back — all that settled for good and all."

"What?"

"That discord. My dear, I've been a fool, selfish, ill-trained and greedy. We've both been floundering about, but I've been the mischief of it. Yes, I've been the trouble. Oh, it's had to be so. What are we women — half savages, half pets, unemployed things of greed and desire — and suddenly we want all the rights and respect of souls! I've had your life in my hands from the moment we met together. If I had known.... It isn't that we can make you or guide you — I'm not pretending to be an inspiration — but — but-489- we can release you. We needn't press upon you; we can save you from the instincts and passions that try to waste you altogether on us.... Yes, I'm beginning to understand. Oh, my child, my husband, my man! You talked of your wasted life!... I've been thinking — since first we left the Mersey. I've begun to see what it is to be a woman. For the first time in my life. We're the responsible sex. And we've forgotten it. We think we've done a wonder if we've borne men into the world and smiled a little, but indeed we've got to bear them all our lives.... A woman has to be steadier than a man and more self-sacrificing than a man, because when she plunges she does more harm than a

man.... And what does she achieve if she does plunge? Nothing — nothing worth counting. Dresses and carpets and hangings and pretty arrangements, excitements and satisfactions and competition and more excitements. We can't *do* things. We don't bring things off! And you, you Monster! you Dream! you want to stick your hand out of all that is and make something that isn't, begin to be! That's the man — —"

"Dear old Madge!" he said, "there's all sorts of women and all sorts of men."

"Well, our sort of women, then, and our sort of men."

"I doubt even that."

"I don't. I've found my place. I've been making my master my servant. We women — we've been looting all the good things in the world, and helping nothing. You've carried me on your back until you are loathing life. I've been making you fetch and carry for me, love me, dress me, keep me and my children, minister to my vanities and greeds.... No; let me go on. I'm so penitent, my dear, so penitent I want to kneel down here and marry you all over again,-490- heal up your broken life and begin again."...

She paused.

"One doesn't begin again," she said. "But I want to take a new turn. Dear, you're still only a young man; we've thirty or forty years before us — forty years perhaps or more.... What shall we do with our years? We've loved, we've got children. What remains? Here we can plan it out, work it out, day after day. What shall we do with our lives and life? Tell me, make me your partner; it's you who know, what are we doing with life?"

§ 13

What are we doing with life?

That question overtakes a reluctant and fugitive humanity. The Traffords were but two of a great scattered host of people, who, obeying all the urgencies of need and desire, struggling, loving, begetting, enjoying, do nevertheless find themselves at last unsatisfied. They have lived the round of experience, achieved all that living creatures have sought since the beginning of the world —

security and gratification and offspring — and they find themselves still strong, unsatiated, with power in their hands and years before them, empty of purpose. What are they to do?

The world presents such a spectacle of evasion as it has never seen before. Never was there such a boiling over and waste of vital energy. The Sphinx of our opportunity calls for the uttermost powers of heart and brain to read its riddle — the new, astonishing riddle of excessive power. A few give themselves to those honourable adventures that extend the range of man, they explore untravelled countries, climb remote mountains, conduct researches, risk life and limb-491- in the fantastic experiments of flight, and a monstrous outpouring of labour and material goes on in the strenuous preparation for needless and improbable wars. The rest divert themselves with the dwarfish satisfactions of recognized vice, the meagre routine of pleasure, or still more timidly with sport and games — those new unscheduled perversions of the soul.

We are afraid of our new selves. The dawn of human opportunity appals us. Few of us dare look upon this strange light of freedom and limitless resources that breaks upon our world.

"Think," said Trafford, "while we sit here in this dark hut — think of the surplus life that wastes itself in the world for sheer lack of direction. Away there in England — I suppose that is westward" — he pointed— "there are thousands of men going out to-day to shoot. Think of the beautifully made guns, the perfected ammunition, the excellent clothes, the army of beaters, the carefully preserved woodland, the admirable science of it — all for that idiot massacre of half-tame birds! Just because man once had need to be a hunter! Think of the others again — golfing. Think of the big, elaborate houses from which they come, the furnishings, the service. And the women — dressing! Perpetually dressing. *You*, Marjorie — you've done nothing but dress since we married. No, let me abuse you, dear! It's insane, you know! You dress your minds a little to talk amusingly, you spread your minds out to backgrounds, to households, picturesque and delightful gardens, nurseries. Those nurseries! Think of our tremendously cherished and educated children! And when they grow up, what have we got for them? A feast of futility...."

§ 14

On the evening of the day when Trafford first-492- tried to stand upon his leg, they talked far into the night. It had been a great and eventful day for them, full of laughter and exultation. He had been at first ridiculously afraid; he had clung to her almost childishly, and she had held him about the body with his weight on her strong right arm and his right arm in her left hand, concealing her own dread of a collapse under a mask of taunting courage. The crutch had proved admirable. “It’s my silly knees!” Trafford kept on saying. “The leg’s all right, but I get put out by my silly knees.”

They made the day a feast, a dinner of two whole day’s rations and a special soup instead of supper. “The birds will come,” they explained to each other, “ducks and geese, long before May. May, you know, is the latest.”

Marjorie confessed the habit of sharing his pipe was growing on her. “What shall we do in Tyburnia!” she said, and left it to the imagination.

“If ever we get back there,” he said.

“I don’t much fancy kicking a skirt before my shins again — and I’ll be a black, coarse woman down to my neck at dinner for years to come!...”

Then, as he lay back in his bunk and she crammed the stove with fresh boughs and twigs of balsam that filled the little space about them with warmth and with a faint, sweet smell of burning and with flitting red reflections, he took up a talk about religion they had begun some days before.

“You see,” he said, “I’ve always believed in Salvation. I suppose a man’s shy of saying so — even to his wife. But I’ve always believed more or less distinctly that there was something up to which a life worked — always. It’s been rather vague, I’ll admit.-493- I don’t think I’ve ever believed in individual salvation. You see, I feel these are deep things, and the deeper one gets the less individual one becomes. That’s why one thinks of those things in darkness and loneliness — and finds them hard to tell. One has an individual voice, or an individual birthmark, or an individualized old hat, but the soul — the soul’s different.... It isn’t me talking to you when it

comes to that.... This question of what we are doing with life isn't a question to begin with for you and me as ourselves, but for you and me as mankind. Am I spinning it too fine, Madge?"

"No," she said, intent; "go on."

"You see, when we talk rations here, Marjorie, it's ourselves, but when we talk religion — it's mankind. You've either got to be Everyman in religion or leave it alone. That's my idea. It's no more presumptuous to think for the race than it is for a beggar to pray — though that means going right up to God and talking to Him. Salvation's a collective thing and a mystical thing — or there isn't any. Fancy the Almighty and me sitting up and keeping Eternity together! God and R. A. G. Trafford, F.R.S. — that's silly. Fancy a man in number seven boots, and a tailor-made suit in the nineteen-fourteen fashion, sitting before God! That's caricature. But God and Man! That's sense, Marjorie."...

He stopped and stared at her.

Marjorie sat red-lit, regarding him. "Queer things you say!" she said. "So much of this I've never thought out. I wonder why I've never done so.... Too busy with many things, I suppose. But go on and tell me more of these secrets you've kept from me!"

"Well, we've got to talk of these things as mankind — or just leave them alone, and shoot-494- pheasants."...

"If I could shoot a pheasant now!" whispered Marjorie, involuntarily.

"And where do we stand? What do we need — I mean the whole race of us — kings and beggars together? You know, Marjorie, it's this, — it's Understanding. That's what mankind has got to, the realization that it doesn't understand, that it can't express, that it's purblind. We haven't got eyes for those greater things, but we've got the promise — the intimation of eyes. We've come out of an unsuspecting darkness, brute animal darkness, not into sight, that's been the mistake, but into a feeling of illumination, into a feeling of light shining through our opacity....

"I feel that man has now before all things to know. That's his supreme duty, to feel, realize, see, understand, express himself to the utmost limits of his power."

He sat up, speaking very earnestly to her, and in that flickering

light she realized for the first time how thin he had become, how bright and hollow his eyes, his hair was long over his eyes, and a rough beard flowed down to his chest. “All the religions,” he said, “all the philosophies, have pretended to achieve too much. We’ve no language yet for religious truth or metaphysical truth; we’ve no basis yet broad enough and strong enough on which to build. Religion and philosophy have been impudent and quackish — quackish! They’ve been like the doctors, who have always pretended they could cure since the beginning of things, cure everything, and to this day even they haven’t got more than the beginnings of knowledge on which to base a cure. They’ve lacked humility, they’ve lacked the honour to say they didn’t know; the priests took things of wood and stone, the-495- philosophers took little odd arrangements of poor battered words, metaphors, analogies, abstractions, and said: “That’s it! Think of their silly old Absolute, — ab-solutus, an untied parcel. I heard Haldane at the Aristotelian once, go on for an hour — no! it was longer than an hour — as glib and slick as a well-oiled sausage-machine, about the different sorts of Absolute, and not a soul of us laughed out at him! The vanity of such profundities! They’ve no faith, faith in patience, faith to wait for the coming of God. And since we don’t know God, since we don’t know His will with us, isn’t it plain that all our lives should be a search for Him and it? Can anything else matter, — after we are free from necessity? That is the work now that is before all mankind, to attempt understanding — by the perpetual finding of thought and the means of expression, by perpetual extension and refinement of science, by the research that every artist makes for beauty and significance in his art, by the perpetual testing and destruction and rebirth under criticism of all these things, and by a perpetual extension of this intensifying wisdom to more minds and more minds and more, till all men share in it, and share in the making of it.... There you have my creed, Marjorie; there you have the very marrow of me.”...

He became silent.

“Will you go back to your work?” she said, abruptly. “Go back to your laboratory?”

He stared at her for a moment without speaking. “Never,” he said at last.

“But,” she said, and the word dropped from her like a stone that falls down a well....

“My dear,” he said, at last, “I’ve thought of that. But since I left that dear, dusty little laboratory, and all those exquisite subtle things — I’ve lived. I’ve left that man seven long years behind me. Some-496- other man must go on — I think some younger man — with the riddles I found to work on then. I’ve grown — into something different. It isn’t how atoms swing with one another, or why they build themselves up so and not so, that matters any more to me. I’ve got you and all the world in which we live, and a new set of riddles filling my mind, how thought swings about thought, how one man attracts his fellows, how the waves of motive and conviction sweep through a crowd and all the little drifting crystallizations of spirit with spirit and all the repulsions and eddies and difficulties, that one can catch in that turbulent confusion. I want to do a new sort of work now altogether.... Life has swamped me once, but I don’t think it will get me under again; — I want to study men.”

He paused and she waited, with a face aglow.

“I want to go back to watch and think — and I suppose write. I believe I shall write criticism. But everything that matters is criticism!... I want to get into contact with the men who are thinking. I don’t mean to meet them necessarily, but to get into the souls of their books. Every writer who has anything to say, every artist who matters, is the stronger for every man or woman who responds to him. That’s the great work — the Reality. I want to become a part of this stuttering attempt to express, I want at least to resonate, even if I do not help.... And you with me, Marjorie — you with me! Everything I write I want you to see and think about. I want you to read as I read.... Now after so long, now that, now that we’ve begun to talk, you know, talk again — —”

Something stopped his voice. Something choked them both into silence. He held out a lean hand, and she shuffled on her knees to take it....

“Don’t please make me,” she stumbled through-497- her thoughts, “one of those little parasitic, parroting wives — don’t pretend too much about me — because you want me with you —— . Don’t forget a woman isn’t a man.”

“Old Madge,” he said, “you and I have got to march together. Didn’t I love you from the first, from that time when I was a boy examiner and you were a candidate girl — because your mind was clear?”

“And we will go back,” she whispered, “with a work — —”

“With a purpose,” he said.

She disengaged herself from his arm, and sat close to him upon the floor. “I think I can see what you will do,” she said. She mused. “For the first time I begin to see things as they may be for us. I begin to see a life ahead. For the very first time.”

Queer ideas came drifting into her head. Suddenly she cried out sharply in that high note he loved. “Good heavens!” she said. “The absurdity! The infinite absurdity!”

“But what?”

“I might have married Will Magnet —— . That’s all.”

She sprang to her feet. There came a sound of wind outside, a shifting of snow on the roof, and the door creaked. “Half-past eleven,” she exclaimed looking at the watch that hung in the light of the stove door. “I don’t want to sleep yet; do you? I’m going to brew some tea — make a convivial drink. And then we will go on talking. It’s so good talking to you. So good!... I’ve an idea! Don’t you think on this special day, it might run to a biscuit?” Her face was keenly anxious. He nodded. “One biscuit each,” she said, trying to rob her voice of any note of criminality. “Just one, you know, won’t matter.”

She hovered for some moments close to the stove-498- before she went into the arctic corner that contained the tin of tea. “If we can really live like that!” she said. “When we are home again.”

“Why not?” he answered.

She made no answer, but went across for the tea....

He turned his head at the sound of the biscuit tin and watched her put out the precious discs.

“I shall have another pipe,” he proclaimed, with an agreeable note of excess. “Thank heaven for unstinted tobacco....”

And now Marjorie’s mind was teaming with thoughts of this new conception of a life lived for understanding. As she went about the preparation of the tea, her vividly concrete imagination was active with the realization of the life they would lead on their return. She

could not see it otherwise than framed in a tall, fine room, a study, a study in sombre tones, with high, narrow, tall, dignified bookshelves and rich deep green curtains veiling its windows. There should be a fireplace of white marble, very plain and well proportioned, with furnishings of old brass, and a big desk towards the window beautifully lit by electric light, with abundant space for papers to lie. And she wanted some touch of the wilderness about it; a skin perhaps....

The tea was still infusing when she had determined upon an enormous paper-weight of that iridescent Labradorite that had been so astonishing a feature of the Green River Valley. She would have it polished on one side only — the other should be rough to show the felspar in its natural state....

It wasn't that she didn't feel and understand quite fully the intention and significance of all he had said, but that in these symbols of texture and equipment her mind quite naturally clothed itself. And-499- while this room was coming into anticipatory being in her mind, she was making the tea very deftly and listening to Trafford's every word.

§ 15

That talk marked an epoch to Marjorie. From that day forth her imagination began to shape a new, ordered and purposeful life for Trafford and herself in London, a life not altogether divorced from their former life, but with a faith sustaining it and aims controlling it. She had always known of the breadth and power of his mind, but now as he talked of what he might do, what interests might converge and give results through him, it seemed she really knew him for the first time. In his former researches, so technical and withdrawn, she had seen little of his mind in action: now he was dealing in his own fashion with things she could clearly understand. There were times when his talk affected her like that joy of light one has in emerging into sunshine from a long and tedious cave. He swept things together, flashed unsuspected correlations upon her intelligence, smashed and scattered absurd yet venerated conventions of thought, made undreamt-of courses of action visible in a flare of luminous

necessity. And she could follow him and help him. Just as she had hampered him and crippled him, so now she could release him — she fondled that word. She found a preposterous image in her mind that she hid like a disgraceful secret, that she tried to forget, and yet its stupendous, its dreamlike absurdity had something in it that shaped her delight as nothing else could do; she was, she told herself — hawking with an archangel!...

These were her moods of exaltation. And she-500- was sure she had never loved her man before, that this was indeed her beginning. It was as if she had just found him....

Perhaps, she thought, true lovers keep on finding each other all through their lives.

And he too had discovered her. All the host of Marjories he had known, the shining, delightful, seductive, wilful, perplexing aspects that had so filled her life, gave place altogether for a time to this steady-eyed woman, lean and warm-wrapped with the valiant heart and the frost-roughened skin. What a fine, strong, ruddy thing she was! How glad he was for this wild adventure in the wilderness, if only because it had made him lie among the rocks and think of her and wait for her and despair of her life and God, and at last see her coming back to him, flushed with effort and calling his name to him out of that whirlwind of snow.... And there was at least one old memory mixed up with all these new and overmastering impressions, the memory of her clear unhesitating voice as it had stabbed into his life again long years ago, minute and bright in the telephone: "*It's me, you know. It's Marjorie!*"

Perhaps after all she had not wasted a moment of his life, perhaps every issue between them had been necessary, and it was good altogether to be turned from the study of crystals to the study of men and women....

And now both their minds were Londonward, where all the tides and driftage and currents of human thought still meet and swirl together. They were full of what they would do when they got back. Marjorie sketched that study to him — in general terms and without the paper-weight — and began to shape the world she would have about it. She meant to be his squaw and body-servant first of all, and then — a-501- mother. Children, she said, are none the worse for

being kept a little out of focus. And he was rapidly planning out his approach to the new questions to which he was now to devote his life. “One wants something to hold the work together,” he said, and projected a book. “One cannot struggle at large for plain statement and copious and free and courageous statement, one needs a positive attack.”

He designed a book, which he might write if only for the definition it would give him and with no ultimate publication, which was to be called: “The Limits of Language as a Means of Expression.” ... It was to be a pragmatist essay, a sustained attempt to undermine the confidence of all that scholasticism and logic chopping which still lingers like the *sequelæ* of a disease in our University philosophy. “Those duffers sit in their studies and make a sort of tea of dry old words — and think they’re distilling the spirit of wisdom,” he said.

He proliferated titles for a time, and settled at last on “From Realism to Reality.” He wanted to get at that at once; it fretted him to have to hang in the air, day by day, for want of books to quote and opponents to lance and confute. And he wanted to see pictures, too and plays, read novels he had heard of and never read, in order to verify or correct the ideas that were seething in his mind about the qualities of artistic expression. His thought had come out to a conviction that the line to wider human understandings lies through a huge criticism and cleaning up of the existing methods of formulation, as a preliminary to the wider and freer discussion of those religious and social issues our generation still shrinks from. “It’s grotesque,” he said, “and utterly true that the sanity and happiness of all the world lies in its habits of generalization.” There was not-502- even paper for him to make notes or provisional drafts of the new work. He hobbled about the camp fretting at these deprivations.

“Marjorie,” he said, “we’ve done our job. Why should we wait here on this frosty shelf outside the world? My leg’s getting sounder — if it wasn’t for that feeling of ice in it. Why shouldn’t we make another sledge from the other bunk and start down—”

“To Hammond?”

“Why not?”

“But the way?”

“The valley would guide us. We could do four hours a day before we had to camp. I’m not sure we couldn’t try the river. We could drag and carry all our food....”

She looked down the wide stretches of the valley. There was the hill they had christened Marjorie Ridge. At least it was familiar. Every night before nightfall if they started there would be a fresh camping place to seek among the snow-drifts, a great heap of wood to cut to last the night. Suppose his leg gave out — when they were already some days away, so that he could no longer go on or she drag him back to the stores. Plainly there would be nothing for it then but to lie down and die together....

And a sort of weariness had come to her as a consequence of two months of half-starved days, not perhaps a failure so much as a reluctance of spirit.

“Of course,” she said, with a new aspect drifting before her mind, “then — we *could* eat. We *could* feed up before we started. We could feast almost!”

§ 16

“While you were asleep the other night,” Trafford began one day as they sat spinning out their mid-day meal, “I was thinking how badly I had expressed-503- myself when I talked to you the other day, and what a queer, thin affair I made of the plans I wanted to carry out. As a matter of fact, they’re neither queer nor thin, but they are unreal in comparison with the common things of everyday life, hunger, anger, all the immediate desires. They must be. They only begin when those others are at peace. It’s hard to set out these things; they’re complicated and subtle, and one cannot simplify without falsehood. I don’t want to simplify. The world has gone out of its way time after time through simplifications and short cuts. Save us from epigrams! And when one thinks over what one has said, at a little distance, — one wants to go back to it, and say it all again. I seem to be not so much thinking things out as reviving and developing things I’ve had growing in my mind ever since we met. It’s as though an immense reservoir of thought had filled up in my mind at last and was

beginning to trickle over and break down the embankment between us. This conflict that has been going on between our life together and my — my intellectual life; it's only just growing clear in my own mind. Yet it's just as if one turned up a light on something that had always been there....

"It's a most extraordinary thing to think out, Marjorie, that antagonism. Our love has kept us so close together and always our purposes have been — like that." He spread divergent hands. "I've speculated again and again whether there isn't something incurably antagonistic between women (that's *you* generalized, Marjorie) and men (that's me) directly we pass beyond the conditions of the individualistic struggle. I believe every couple of lovers who've ever married have felt that strain. Yet it's not a difference in kind between us but degree. The big conflict between us has a parallel in a little internal conflict-504- that goes on; there's something of man in every woman and a touch of the feminine in every man. But you're nearer as woman to the immediate personal life of sense and reality than I am as man. It's been so ever since the men went hunting and fighting and the women kept hut, tended the children and gathered roots in the little cultivation close at hand. It's been so perhaps since the female carried and suckled her child and distinguished one male from another. It may be it will always be so. Men were released from that close, continuous touch with physical necessities long before women were. It's only now that women begin to be released. For ages now men have been wandering from field and home and city, over the hills and far away, in search of adventures and fresh ideas and the wells of mystery beyond the edge of the world, but it's only now that the woman comes with them too. Our difference isn't a difference in kind, old Marjorie; it's the difference between the old adventurer and the new feet upon the trail."

"We've got to come," said Marjorie.

"Oh! you've got to come. No good to be pioneers if the race does not follow. The women are the backbone of the race; the men are just the individuals. Into this Labrador and into all the wild and desolate places of thought and desire, if men come you women have to come too — and bring the race with you. Some day."

"A long day, mate of my heart."

“Who knows how long or how far? Aren’t you at any rate here, dear woman of mine.... (*Surely you are here*).”

He went off at a tangent. “There’s all those words that seem to mean something and then don’t seem to mean anything, that keep shifting to and-505- fro from the deepest significance to the shallowest of claptrap, Socialism, Christianity.... You know, — they aren’t anything really, as yet; they are something trying to be.... Haven’t I said that before, Marjorie?”

She looked round at him. “You said something like that when you were delirious,” she answered, after a little pause. “It’s one of the ideas that you’re struggling with. You go on, old man, and *talk*. We’ve months — for repetitions.”

“Well, I mean that all these things are seeking after a sort of co-operation that’s greater than our power even of imaginative realization; that’s what I mean. The kingdom of Heaven, the communion of saints, the fellowship of men; these are things like high peaks far out of the common life of every day, shining things that madden certain sorts of men to climb. Certain sorts of us! I’m a religious man, I’m a socialistic man. These calls are more to me than my daily bread. I’ve got something in me more generalizing than most men. I’m more so than many other men and most other women, I’m more socialistic than you....”

“You know, Marjorie, I’ve always felt you’re a finer individual than me, I’ve never had a doubt of it. You’re more beautiful by far than I, woman for my man. You’ve a keener appetite for things, a firmer grip on the substance of life. I love to see you do things, love to see you move, love to watch your hands; you’ve cleverer hands than mine by far.... And yet — I’m a deeper and bigger thing than you. I reach up to something you don’t reach up to.... You’re in life — and I’m a little out of it, I’m like one of those fish that began to be amphibian, I go out into something where you don’t follow — where you hardly begin to follow.

“That’s the real perplexity between thousands of-506- men and women....

“It seems to me that the primitive socialism of Christianity and all the stuff of modern socialism that matters is really aiming — almost unconsciously, I admit at times — at one simple end, at the release of

the human spirit from the individualistic struggle ——

"You used 'release' the other day, Marjorie? Of course, I remember. It's queer how I go on talking after you have understood."

"It was just a flash," said Marjorie. "We have intimations. Neither of us really understands. We're like people climbing a mountain in a mist, that thins out for a moment and shows valleys and cities, and then closes in again, before we can recognize them or make out where we are."

Trafford thought. "When I talk to you, I've always felt I mustn't be too vague. And the very essence of all this is a vague thing, something we shall never come nearer to it in all our lives than to see it as a shadow and a glittering that escapes again into a mist.... And yet it's everything that matters, everything, the only thing that matters truly and for ever through the whole range of life. And we have to serve it with the keenest thought, the utmost patience, inordinate veracity....

"The practical trouble between your sort and my sort, Marjorie, is the trouble between faith and realization. You demand the outcome. Oh! and I hate to turn aside and realize. I've had to do it for seven years. Damnable years! Men of my sort want to understand. We want to understand, and you ask us to make. We want to understand atoms, ions, molecules, refractions. You ask us to make rubber and diamonds. I suppose it's right that incidentally we should make rubber and diamonds. Finally,-507- I warn you, we will make rubber unnecessary and diamonds valueless. And again we want to understand how people react upon one another to produce social consequences, and you ask us to put it at once into a draft bill for the reform of something or other. I suppose life lies between us somewhere, we're the two poles of truth seeking and truth getting; with me alone it would be nothing but a luminous dream, with you nothing but a scramble in which sooner or later all the lamps would be upset.... But it's ever too much of a scramble yet, and ever too little of a dream. All our world over there is full of the confusion and wreckage of premature realizations. There's no real faith in thought and knowledge yet. Old necessity has driven men so hard that they still rush with a wild urgency — though she goads no more. Greed and haste, and if, indeed, we seem to have a moment's breathing

space, then the Gawdsaker tramples us under."

"My dear!" cried Marjorie, with a sharp note of amusement. "What *is* a Gawdsaker?"

"Oh," said Trafford, "haven't you heard that before? He's the person who gets excited by any deliberate discussion and gets up wringing his hands and screaming, 'For Gawd's sake, let's *do* something *now!*' I think they used it first for Pethick Lawrence, that man who did so much to run the old militant suffragettes and burke the proper discussion of woman's future. You know. You used to have 'em in Chelsea — with their hats. Oh! 'Gawdsaking' is the curse of all progress, the hectic consumption that kills a thousand good beginnings. You see it in small things and in great. You see it in my life; Gawdsaking turned my life-work to cash and promotions, Gawdsaking —— Look at the way the aviators took to flying for prizes and gate-money, the way-508- pure research is swamped by endowments for technical applications! Then that poor ghost-giant of an idea the socialists have; — it's been treated like one of those unborn lambs they kill for the fine skin of it, made into results before ever it was alive. Was there anything more pitiful? The first great dream and then the last phase! when your Aunt Plessington and the district visitors took and used it as a synonym for Payment in Kind.... It's natural, I suppose, for people to be eager for results, personal and immediate results — the last lesson of life is patience. Naturally they want reality, naturally! They want the individual life, something to handle and feel and use and live by, something of their very own before they die, and they want it now. But the thing that matters for the race, Marjorie, is a very different thing; it is to get the emerging thought process clear and to keep it clear — and to let those other hungers go. We've got to go back to England on the side of that delay, that arrest of interruption, that detached, observant, synthesizing process of the mind, that solvent of difficulties and obsolescent institutions, which is the reality of collective human life. We've got to go back on the side of pure science — literature untrammeled by the preconceptions of the social schemers — art free from the urgency of immediate utility — and a new, a regal, a god-like sincerity in philosophy. And, above all, we've got to stop this Jackdaw buying of yours, my dear, which is the essence of all that is

wrong with the world, this snatching at everything, which loses everything worth having in life, this greedy confused realization of our accumulated resources! You're going to be a non-shopping woman now. You're to come out of Bond Street, you and your kind, like Israel leaving the Egyptian flesh-pots. You're going-509- to be my wife and my mate.... Less of this service of things. Investments in comfort, in security, in experience, yes; but not just spending any more...."

He broke off abruptly with: "I want to go back and begin."

"Yes," said Marjorie, "we will go back," and saw minutely and distantly, and yet as clearly and brightly as if she looked into a concave mirror, that tall and dignified study, a very high room indeed, with a man writing before a fine, long-curtained window and a great lump of rich-glowing Labradorite upon his desk before him holding together an accumulation of written sheets....

She knew exactly the shop in Oxford Street where the stuff for the curtains might be best obtained.

§ 17

One night Marjorie had been sitting musing before the stove for a long time, and suddenly she said: "I wonder if we shall fail. I wonder if we shall get into a mess again when we are back in London.... As big a mess and as utter a discontent as sent us here...."

Trafford was scraping out his pipe, and did not answer for some moments. Then he remarked: "What nonsense!"

"But we shall," she said. "Everybody fails. To some extent, we are bound to fail. Because indeed nothing is clear; nothing is a clear issue.... You know — I'm just the old Marjorie really in spite of all these resolutions — the spendthrift, the restless, the eager. I'm a born snatcher and shopper. We're just the same people really."

"No," he said, after thought. "You're all Labrador older."

"I always *have* failed," she considered, "when it-510- came to any special temptations, Rag. I can't *stand* not having a thing!"

He made no answer.

"And you're still the same old Rag, you know," she went on. "Who weakens into kindness if I cry. Who likes me well-dressed.

Who couldn't endure to see me poor."

"Not a bit of it. No! I'm a very different Rag with a very different Marjorie. Yes indeed! Things — are graver. Why! — I'm lame for life — and I've a scar. The very *look* of things is changed...." He stared at her face and said: "You've hidden the looking-glass and you think I haven't noted it — —"

"It keeps on healing," she interrupted. "And if it comes to that — where's my complexion?" She laughed. "These are just the superficial aspects of the case."

"Nothing ever heals completely," he said, answering her first sentence, "and nothing ever goes back to the exact place it held before. We *are* different, you sun-bitten, frost-bitten wife of mine."...

"Character is character," said Marjorie, coming back to her point. "Don't exaggerate conversion, dear. It's not a bit of good pretending we shan't fall away, both of us. Each in our own manner. We shall. We shall, old man. London is still a tempting and confusing place, and you can't alter people fundamentally, not even by half-freezing and half-starving them. You only alter people fundamentally by killing them and replacing them. I shall be extravagant again and forget again, try as I may, and you will work again and fall away again and forgive me again. You know —— It's just as though we were each of us not one person, but a lot of persons, who sometimes meet and shout all together, and then disperse and forget and plot against each-511- other...."

"Oh, things will happen again," said Trafford, in her pause. "But they will happen again with a difference — after this. With a difference. That's the good of it all.... We've found something here — that makes everything different.... We've found each other, too, dear wife."

She thought intently.

"I am afraid," she whispered.

"But what is there to be afraid of?"

"*Myself*."

She spoke after a little pause that seemed to hesitate. "At times I wish — oh, passionately! — that I could pray."

"Why don't you?"

"I don't believe enough — in that. I wish I did."

Trafford thought. “People are always so exacting about prayer,” he said.

“Exacting.”

“You want to pray — and you can’t make terms for a thing you want. I used to think I could. I wanted God to come and demonstrate a bit.... It’s no good, Madge.... If God chooses to be silent — you must pray to the silence. If he chooses to live in darkness, you must pray to the night....”

“Yes,” said Marjorie, “I suppose one must.”

She thought. “I suppose in the end one does,” she said....

§ 18

Mixed up with this entirely characteristic theology of theirs and their elaborate planning-out of a new life in London were other strands of thought. Queer memories of London and old times together would flash with a peculiar brightness across their-512- contemplation of the infinities and the needs of mankind. Out of nowhere, quite disconnectedly, would come the human, finite: “Do you remember —— ?”

Two things particularly pressed into their minds. One was the thought of their children, and I do not care to tell how often in the day now they calculated the time in England, and tried to guess to a half mile or so where those young people might be and what they might be doing. “The shops are bright for Christmas now,” said Marjorie. “This year Dick was to have had his first fireworks. I wonder if he did. I wonder if he burnt his dear little funny stumps of fingers. I hope not.”

“Oh, just a little,” said Trafford. “I remember how a squib made my glove smoulder and singed me, and how my mother kissed me for taking it like a man. It was the best part of the adventure.”

“Dick shall burn his fingers when his mother’s home to kiss him. But spare his fingers now, Dadda....”

The other topic was food.

It was only after they had been doing it for a week or so that they remarked how steadily they gravitated to reminiscences, suggestions, descriptions and long discussions of eatables — sound, solid

eatables. They told over the particulars of dinners they had imagined altogether forgotten; neither hosts nor conversations seemed to matter now in the slightest degree, but every item in the menu had its place. They nearly quarrelled one day about *hors-d'œuvre*. Trafford wanted to dwell on them when Marjorie was eager for the soup.

"It's niggling with food," said Marjorie.

"Oh, but there's no reason," said Trafford, "why you shouldn't take a lot of *hors-d'œuvre*. Three or four sardines, and potato salad and a big piece of-513- smoked salmon, and some of that Norwegian herring, and so on, and keep the olives by you to pick at. It's a beginning."

"It's — it's immoral," said Marjorie, "that's what I feel. If one needs a whet to eat, one shouldn't eat. The proper beginning of a dinner is soup — good, hot, *rich* soup. Thick soup — with things in it, vegetables and meat and things. Bits of oxtail."

"Not peas."

"No, not peas. Pea-soup is tiresome. I never knew anything one tired of so soon. I wish we hadn't relied on it so much."

"Thick soup's all very well," said Trafford, "but how about that clear stuff they give you in the little pavement restaurants in Paris. You know — *Croûte-au-pot*, with lovely great crusts and big leeks and lettuce leaves and so on! Tremendous aroma of onions, and beautiful little beads of fat! And being a clear soup, you see what there is. That's — interesting. Twenty-five centimes, Marjorie. Lord! I'd give a guinea a plate for it. I'd give five pounds for one of those jolly white-metal tureens full — you know, *full*, with little drops all over the outside of it, and the ladle sticking out under the lid."

"Have you ever tasted turtle soup?"

"Rather. They give it you in the City. The fat's — ripping. But they're rather precious with it, you know. For my own part, I don't think soup should be *doled* out. I always liked the soup we used to get at the Harts'; but then they never give you enough, you know — not nearly enough."

"About a tablespoonful," said Marjorie. "It's mocking an appetite."

"Still there's things to follow," said Trafford....

They discussed the proper order of a dinner very carefully. They

decided that sorbets and ices were-514- not only unwholesome, but nasty. “In London,” said Trafford, “one’s taste gets — vitiated.”...

They weighed the merits of French cookery, modern international cookery, and produced alternatives. Trafford became very eloquent about old English food. “Dinners,” said Trafford, “should be feasting, not the mere satisfaction of a necessity. There should be — *amplitude*. I remember a recipe for a pie; I think it was in one of those books that man Lucas used to compile. If I remember rightly, it began with: ‘Take a swine and hew it into gobbets.’ Gobbets! That’s something like a beginning. It was a big pie with tiers and tiers of things, and it kept it up all the way in that key.... And then what could be better than prime British-fed roast beef, reddish, just a shade on the side of underdone, and not too finely cut. Mutton can’t touch it.”

“Beef is the best,” she said.

“Then our English cold meat again. What can equal it? Such stuff as they give in a good country inn, a huge joint of beef — you cut from it yourself, you know as much as you like — with mustard, pickles, celery, a tankard of stout, let us say. Pressed beef, such as they’ll give you at the Reform, too, that’s good eating for a man. With chutney, and then old cheese to follow. And boiled beef, with little carrots and turnips and a dumpling or so. Eh?”

“Of course,” said Marjorie, “one must do justice to a well-chosen turkey, a *fat* turkey.”

“Or a good goose, for the matter of that — with honest, well-thought-out stuffing. I like the little sausages round the dish of a turkey, too; like cherubs they are, round the feet of a Madonna.... There’s much to be said for sausage, Marjorie. It concentrates.”

Sausage led to Germany. “I’m not one of those-515- patriots,” he was saying presently, “who run down other countries by way of glorifying their own. While I was in Germany I tasted many good things. There’s their Leberwurst; it’s never bad, and, at its best, it’s splendid. It’s only a fool would reproach Germany with sausage. Devonshire black-pudding, of course, is the master of any Blutwurst, but there’s all those others on the German side, Frankfurter, big reddish sausage stuff again with great crystalline lumps of white fat. And how well they cook their rich hashes, and the thick gravies they

make. Curious, how much better the cooking of Teutonic peoples is than the cooking of the South Europeans! It's as if one needed a colder climate to brace a cook to his business. The Frenchman and the Italian trifle and stimulate. It's as if they'd never met a hungry man. No German would have thought of *soufflé*. Ugh! it's vicious eating. There's much that's fine, though, in Austria and Hungary. I wish I had travelled in Hungary. Do you remember how once or twice we've lunched at that Viennese place in Regent Street, and how they've given us stuffed Paprika, eh?"

"That was a good place. I remember there was stewed beef once with a lot of barley — such *good* barley!"

"Every country has its glories. One talks of the cookery of northern countries and then suddenly one thinks of curry, with lots of rice."

"And lots of chicken!"

"And lots of hot curry powder, *very* hot. And look at America! Here's a people who haven't any of them been out of Europe for centuries, and yet they have as different a table as you could well imagine. There's a kind of fish, planked shad, that they cook on resinous wood — roast it, I suppose. It's substantial, like nothing else in the world. And how good,-516- too, with turkey are sweet potatoes. Then they have such a multitude of cereal things; stuff like their buckwheat cakes, all swimming in golden syrup. And Indian corn, again!"

"Of course, corn is being anglicized. I've often given you corn — latterly, before we came away."

"That sort of separated grain — out of tins. Like chicken's food! It's not the real thing. You should eat corn on the cob — American fashion! It's fine. I had it when I was in the States. You know, you take it up in your hands by both ends — you've seen the cobs? — and gnaw."

The craving air of Labrador at a temperature of -20° Fahrenheit, and methodically stinted rations, make great changes in the outward qualities of the mind. "*I'd* like to do that," said Marjorie.

Her face flushed a little at a guilty thought, her eyes sparkled. She leant forward and spoke in a confidential undertone.

"*I'd — I'd like to eat a mutton chop like that*," said Marjorie.

§ 20

One morning Marjorie broached something she had had on her mind for several days.

"Old man," she said, "I can't stand it any longer. I'm going to thaw my scissors and cut your hair.... And then you'll have to trim that beard of yours."

"You'll have to dig out that looking-glass."

"I know," said Marjorie. She looked at him. "You'll never be a pretty man again," she said. "But there's a sort of wild splendour.... And I love every inch and scrap of you...."

Their eyes met. "We're a thousand deeps now-517- below the look of things," said Trafford. "We'd love each other minced."

She broke into that smiling laugh of hers. "Oh! it won't come to *that*," she said. "Trust my housekeeping!"

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

The Trail to the Sea

§ 1

One astonishing afternoon in January a man-518- came out of the wilderness to Lonely Hut. He was a French-Indian half-breed, a trapper up and down the Green River and across the Height of Land to Sea Lake. He arrived in a sort of shy silence, and squatted amiably on a log to thaw. “Much snow,” he said, “and little fur.”

After he had sat at their fire for an hour and eaten and drunk, his purpose in coming thawed out. He explained he had just come on to them to see how they were. He was, he said, a planter furring; he had a line of traps, about a hundred and twenty miles in length. The nearest trap in his path before he turned northward over the divide was a good forty miles down the river. He had come on from there. Just to have a look. His name, he said, was Louis Napoleon Partington. He had carried a big pack, a rifle and a dead marten, — they lay beside him — and out of his shapeless mass of caribou skins and woolen clothing and wrappings, peeped a genial, oily, brown face, very dirty, with a strand of blue-black hair across one eye, irregular teeth in its friendly smile, and little, squeezed-up eyes.

Conversation developed. There had been doubts of his linguistic range at first, but he had an understanding expression, and his English seemed guttural rather than really bad.

He was told the tremendous story of Trafford’s leg; was shown it, and felt it; he interpolated thick and whistling noises to show how completely he followed-519- their explanations, and then suddenly he began a speech that made all his earlier taciturnity seem but the dam of a great reservoir of mixed and partly incomprehensible English. He complimented Marjorie so effusively and relentlessly and shamelessly as to produce a pause when he had done. “Yes,” he said, and nodded to button up the whole. He sucked his pipe, well satisfied with his eloquence. Trafford spoke in his silence. “We are coming down,” he said.

(“I thought, perhaps — —” whispered Louis Napoleon.)

“Yes,” said Trafford, “we are coming down with you. Why not? We can get a sledge over the snow now? It’s hard? I mean a flat sledge — like *this*. See? Like this.” He got up and dragged Marjorie’s old arrangement into view. “We shall bring all the stuff we can down with us, grub, blankets — not the tent, it’s too bulky; we’ll leave a lot of the heavy gear.”

“You’d have to leave the tent,” said Louis Napoleon.

“I *said* leave the tent.”

“And you’d have to leave ... some of those tins.”

“Nearly all of them.”

“And the ammunition, there; — except just a little.”

“Just enough for the journey down.”

“Perhaps a gun?”

“No, not a gun. Though, after all, — well, we’d return one of the guns. Give it you to bring back here.”

“Bring back here?”

“If you liked.”

For some moments Louis Napoleon was intently silent. When he spoke his voice was guttural with-520- emotion. “After,” he said thoughtfully and paused, and then resolved to have it over forthwith, “all you leave will be mine? Eh?”

Trafford said that was the idea.

Louis Napoleon’s eye brightened, but his face preserved its Indian calm.

“I will take you right to Hammond’s,” he said, “Where they have dogs. And then I can come back here....”

§ 2

They had talked out nearly every particular of their return before they slept that night; they yarned away three hours over the first generous meal that any one of them had eaten for many weeks. Louis Napoleon stayed in the hut as a matter of course, and reposed with snores and choking upon Marjorie’s sledge and within a yard of her. It struck her as she lay awake and listened that the housemaids in Sussex Square would have thought things a little congested for a

lady's bedroom, and then she reflected that after all it wasn't much worse than a crowded carriage in an all-night train from Switzerland. She tried to count how many people there had been in that compartment, and failed. How stuffy that had been — the smell of cheese and all! And with that, after a dream that she was whaling and had harpooned a particularly short-winded whale she fell very peacefully into oblivion.

Next day was spent in the careful preparation of the two sledges. They intended to take a full provision for six weeks, although they reckoned that with good weather they ought to be down at Hammond's in four.

The day after was Sunday, and Louis Napoleon-521- would not look at the sledges or packing. Instead he held a kind of religious service which consisted partly in making Trafford read aloud out of a very oily old New Testament he produced, a selected passage from the book of Corinthians, and partly in moaning rather than singing several hymns. He was rather disappointed that they did not join in with him. In the afternoon he heated some water, went into the tent with it and it would appear partially washed his face. In the evening, after they had supped, he discussed religion, being curious by this time about their beliefs and procedure.

He spread his mental and spiritual equipment before them very artlessly. Their isolation and their immense concentration on each other had made them sensitive to personal quality, and they listened to the broken English and the queer tangential starts into new topics of this dirty mongrel creature with the keenest appreciation of its quality. It was inconsistent, miscellaneous, simple, honest, and human. It was as touching as the medley in the pocket of a dead schoolboy. He was superstitious and sceptical and sensual and spiritual, and very, very earnest. The things he believed, even if they were just beliefs about the weather or drying venison or filling pipes, he believed with emotion. He flushed as he told them. For all his intellectual muddle they felt he knew how to live honestly and die if need be very finely.

He was more than a little distressed at their apparent ignorance of the truths of revealed religion as it is taught in the Moravian schools upon the coast, and indeed it was manifest that he had had far more

careful and infinitely more sincere religious teaching than either Trafford or Marjorie. For a time the missionary spirit inspired him, and then he quite forgot his solicitude for their conversion in a number-522- of increasingly tall anecdotes about hunters and fishermen, illustrating at first the extreme dangers of any departure from a rigid Sabbatarianism, but presently becoming just stories illustrating the uncertainty of life. Thence he branched off to the general topic of life upon the coast and the relative advantages of "planter" and fisherman.

And then with a kindling eye he spoke of women, and how that some day he would marry. His voice softened, and he addressed himself more particularly to Marjorie. He didn't so much introduce the topic of the lady as allow the destined young woman suddenly to pervade his discourse. She was, it seemed, a servant, an Esquimaux girl at the Moravian Mission station at Manivikovik. He had been plighted to her for nine years. He described a gramophone he had purchased down at Port Dupré and brought back to her three hundred miles up the coast — it seemed to Marjorie an odd gift for an Esquimaux maiden — and he gave his views upon its mechanism. He said God was with the man who invented the gramophone "truly." They would have found one a very great relief to the tediums of their sojourn at Lonely Hut. The gramophone he had given his betrothed possessed records of the Rev. Capel Gumm's preaching and of Madame Melba's singing, a revival hymn called "Sowing the Seed," and a comic song — they could not make out his pronunciation of the title — that made you die with laughter. "It goes gobble, gobble, gobble," he said, with a solemn appreciative reflection of those distant joys.

"It's good to be jolly at times," he said with his bright eyes scanning Marjorie's face a little doubtfully, as if such ideas were better left for week-day expression.

§ 3

Their return was a very different journey from the-523- toilsome ascent of the summer. An immense abundance of snow masked the world, snow that made them regret acutely they had not equipped

themselves with ski. With ski and a good circulation, a man may go about Labrador in winter, six times more easily than by the canoes and slow trudging of summer travel. As it was they were glad of their Canadian snow shoes. One needs only shelters after the Alpine Club hut fashion, and all that vast solitary country would be open in the wintertime. Its shortest day is no shorter than the shortest day in Cumberland or Dublin.

This is no place to tell of the beauty and wonder of snow and ice, the soft contours of gentle slopes, the rippling of fine snow under a steady wind, the long shadow ridges of shining powder on the lee of trees and stones and rocks, the delicate wind streaks over broad surfaces like the marks of a chisel in marble, the crests and cornices, the vivid brightness of edges in the sun, the glowing yellowish light on sunlit surfaces, the long blue shadows, the flush of sunset and sunrise and the pallid unearthly desolation of snow beneath the moon. Nor need the broken snow in woods and amidst tumbled stony slopes be described, nor the vast soft overhanging crests on every outstanding rock beside the icebound river, nor the huge stalactites and stalagmites of green-blue ice below the cliffs, nor trees burdened and broken by frost and snow, nor snow upon ice, nor the blue pools at mid-day upon the surface of the ice-stream. Across the smooth wind-swept ice of the open tarns they would find a growth of ice flowers, six-rayed and complicated, more abundant and more beautiful than the Alpine-524- summer flowers.

But the wind was very bitter, and the sun had scarcely passed its zenith before the thought of fuel and shelter came back into their minds.

As they approached Partington's tilt, at the point where his trapping ground turned out of the Green River gorge, he became greatly obsessed by the thought of his traps. He began to talk of all that he might find in them, all he hoped to find, and the "dallars" that might ensue. They slept the third night, Marjorie within and the two men under the lee of the little cabin, and Partington was up and away before dawn to a trap towards the ridge. He had infected Marjorie and Trafford with a sympathetic keenness, but when they saw his killing of a marten that was still alive in its trap, they suddenly conceived a distaste for trapping.

They insisted they must witness no more. They would wait while he went to a trap....

“Think what he’s doing!” said Trafford, as they sat together under the lee of a rock waiting for him. “We imagined this was a free, simple-souled man leading an unsophisticated life on the very edge of humanity, and really he is as much a dependant of your woman’s world, Marjorie, as any sweated seamstress in a Marylebone slum. Lord! how far those pretty wasteful hands of women reach! All these poor broken and starving beasts he finds and slaughters are, from the point of view of our world, just furs. Furs! Poor little snarling unfortunates! Their pelts will be dressed and prepared because women who have never dreamt of this bleak wilderness desire them. They will get at last into Regent Street shops, and Bond Street shops, and shops in Fifth Avenue and in Paris and Berlin, they will make delightful deep muffs, with scent and little bags and powder puffs and all-525- sorts of things tucked away inside, and long wraps for tall women, and jolly little frames of soft fur for pretty faces, and dainty coats and rugs for expensive little babies in Kensington Gardens.”...

“I wonder,” reflected Marjorie, “if I could buy one perhaps. As a memento.”

He looked at her with eyes of quiet amusement.

“Oh!” she cried, “I didn’t mean to! The old Eve!”

“The old Adam is with her,” said Trafford. “He’s wanting to give it her.... We don’t cease to be human, Madge, you know, because we’ve got an idea now of just where we are. I wonder, which would you like? I dare say we could arrange it.”

“No,” said Marjorie, and thought. “It would be jolly,” she said. “All the same, you know — and just to show you — I’m not going to let you buy me that fur.”

“I’d like to,” said Trafford.

“No,” said Marjorie, with a decision that was almost fierce. “I mean it. I’ve got more to do than you in the way of reforming. It’s just because always I’ve let my life be made up of such little things that I mustn’t. Indeed I mustn’t. Don’t make things hard for me.”

He looked at her for a moment. “Very well,” he said. “But I’d have liked to.”...

“You’re right,” he added, five seconds later.

“Oh! I’m right.”

§ 4

One day Louis Napoleon sent them on along the trail while he went up the mountain to a trap among the trees. He rejoined them — not as his custom was, shouting inaudible conversation for the last hundred-526- yards or so, but in silence. They wondered at that, and at the one clumsy gesture that flourished something darkly grey at them. What had happened to the man? Whatever he had caught he was hugging it as one hugs a cat, and stroking it. “Ugh!” he said deeply, drawing near. “Oh!” A solemn joy irradiated his face, and almost religious ecstasy found expression.

He had got a silver fox, a beautifully marked silver fox, the best luck of Labrador! One goes for years without one, in hope, and when it comes, it pays the trapper’s debts, it clears his life — for years!

They tried poor inadequate congratulation....

As they sat about the fire that night a silence came upon Louis Napoleon. It was manifest that his mind was preoccupied. He got up, walked about, inspected the miracle of fur that had happened to him, returned, regarded them. “‘M’m,” he said, and stroked his chin with his forefinger. A certain diffidence and yet a certain dignity of assurance mingled in his manner. It wasn’t so much a doubt of his own correctness as of some possible ignorance of the finer shades on their part that might embarrass him. He coughed a curt preface, and intimated he had a request to make. Behind the Indian calm of his face glowed tremendous feeling, like the light of a foundry furnace shining through chinks in the door. He spoke in a small flat voice, exercising great self-control. His wish, he said, in view of all that had happened, was a little thing.... This was nearly a perfect day for him, and one thing only remained.... “Well,” he said, and hung. “Well,” said Trafford. He plunged. Just simply this. Would they give him the brandy bottle and let him get drunk? Mr. Grenfell was a good man, a very good man, but he had made brandy dear — dear beyond the reach of common-527- men altogether — along the coast....

He explained, dear bundle of clothes and dirt! that he was always

perfectly respectable when he was drunk.

§ 5

It seemed strange to Trafford that now that Marjorie was going home, a wild impatience to see her children should possess her. So long as it had been probable that they would stay out their year in Labrador, that separation had seemed mainly a sentimental trouble; now at times it was like an animal craving. She would talk of them for hours at a stretch, and when she was not talking he could see her eyes fixed ahead, and knew that she was anticipating a meeting. And for the first time it seemed the idea of possible misadventure troubled her....

They reached Hammond's in one and twenty days from Lonely Hut, three days they had been forced to camp because of a blizzard, and three because Louis Napoleon was rigidly Sabbatarian. They parted from him reluctantly, and the next day Hammond's produced its dogs, twelve stout but extremely hungry dogs, and sent the Traffords on to the Green River pulp-mills, where there were good beds and a copious supply of hot water. Thence they went to Manivikovik, and thence the new Marconi station sent their inquiries home, inquiries that were answered next day with matter-of-fact brevity: "Everyone well, love from all."

When the operator hurried with that to Marjorie she received it off-handedly, glanced at it carelessly, asked him to smoke, remarked that wireless telegraphy was a wonderful thing, and then, in the midst of some unfinished commonplace about the temperature,-528- broke down and wept wildly and uncontrollably....

§ 6

Then came the long, wonderful ride southward day after day along the coast to Port Dupré, a ride from headland to headland across the frozen bays behind long teams of straining, furry dogs, that leapt and yelped as they ran. Sometimes over the land the brutes shirked and loitered and called for the whip; they were a quarrelsome crew to keep waiting; but across the sea-ice they went like the wind, and

downhill the komatic chased their waving tails. The sledges swayed and leapt depressions, and shot athwart icy stretches. The Traffords, spectacled and wrapped to their noses, had all the sensations then of hunting an unknown quarry behind a pack of wolves. The snow blazed under the sun, out to sea beyond the ice the water glittered, and it wasn't so much air they breathed as a sort of joyous hunger.

One day their teams insisted upon racing.

Marjorie's team was the heavier, her driver more skillful, and her sledge the lighter, and she led in that wild chase from start to finish, but ever and again Trafford made wild spurts that brought him almost level. Once, as he came alongside, she heard him laughing joyously.

"Marjorie," he shouted, "d'you remember? Old donkey cart?"

Her team yawed away, and as he swept near again, behind his pack of whimpering, straining, furious dogs, she heard him shouting, "You know, that old cart! Under the overhanging trees! So thick and green they met overhead! You know! When you and I had our first talk together! In the lane. It wasn't-529- so fast as this, eh?"...

§ 7

At Port Dupré they stayed ten days — days that Marjorie could only make tolerable by knitting absurd garments for the children (her knitting was atrocious), and then one afternoon they heard the gun of the *Grenfell*, the new winter steamer from St. John's, signalling as it came in through the fog, very slowly, from that great wasteful world of men and women beyond the seaward grey.

THE END

THE PASSIONATE FRIENDS

This novel, first published in 1913, tackles a number of social issues, most notably the question of whether an ‘open’ sexual relationship is possible. Wells and his wife both endorsed the idea that married couples could have other lovers without sacrificing their own intimate relationship – and the novel addresses the complexities of the idea through a protagonist who is sceptical of the notion, whilst nevertheless finding himself in just such a relationship with a married woman. This protagonist, Stephen Stratton, is also the narrator and, alongside this central love story, the narrative recounts Stratton’s awakening interest in socialism and his attempt to form a Utopian state.

The 1949 film adaptation

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TO L. E. N. S.

CHAPTER THE FIRST

Mr. Stratton to his Son

§ 1

I want very much to set down my thoughts and my experiences of life. I want to do so now that I have come to middle age and now that my attitudes are all defined and my personal drama worked out I feel that the toil of writing and reconsideration may help to clear and fix many things that remain a little uncertain in my thoughts because they have never been fully stated, and I want to discover any lurking inconsistencies and unsuspected gaps. And I have a story. I have lived through things that have searched me. I want to tell that story as well as I can while I am still a clear-headed and active man, and while many details that may presently become blurred and altered are still rawly fresh in my mind. And to one person in particular do I wish to think I am writing, and that is to you, my only son. I want to write my story not indeed to the child you are now, but to the man you are going to be. You are half my blood and temperamentally altogether mine. A day will come when you will realize this, and want to know how life has gone with me, and then it may be altogether too late for me to answer your enquiries. I may have become inaccessible as old people are sometimes inaccessible. And so I think of leaving this book for you — at any rate, I shall write it as if I meant to leave it for you. Afterwards I can consider whether I will indeed leave it....

The idea of writing such a book as this came to me first as I sat by the dead body of your grandfather — my father. It was because I wanted so greatly such a book from him that I am now writing this. He died, you must know, only a few months ago, and I went to his house to bury him and settle all his affairs.

At one time he had been my greatest friend. He had never indeed talked to me about himself or his youth, but he had always showed an extraordinary sympathy and helpfulness for me in all the confusion and perplexities into which I fell. This did not last to the

end of his life. I was the child of his middle years, and suddenly, in a year or less, the curtains of age and infirmity fell between us. There came an illness, an operation, and he rose from it ailing, suffering, dwarfed and altogether changed. Of all the dark shadows upon life I think that change through illness and organic decay in the thoughts and spirits of those who are dear and close to us is the most evil and distressing and inexplicable. Suddenly he was a changeling, a being querulous and pitiful, needing indulgence and sacrifices.

In a little while a new state of affairs was established. I ceased to consider him as a man to whom one told things, of whom one could expect help or advice. We all ceased to consider him at all in that way. We humored him, put pleasant things before him, concealed whatever was disagreeable. A poor old man he was indeed in those concluding years, weakly rebellious against the firm kindliness of my cousin, his housekeeper and nurse. He who had once been so alert was now at times astonishingly apathetic. At times an impish malice I had never known in him before gleamed in little acts and speeches. His talk rambled, and for the most part was concerned with small, long-forgotten contentions. It was indistinct and difficult to follow because of a recent loss of teeth, and he craved for brandy, to restore even for a moment the sense of strength and well-being that ebbed and ebbed away from him. So that when I came to look at his dead face at last, it was with something like amazement I perceived him grave and beautiful — more grave and beautiful than he had been even in the fullness of life.

All the estrangement of the final years was wiped in an instant from my mind as I looked upon his face. There came back a rush of memories, of kind, strong, patient, human aspects of his fatherhood. And I remembered as every son must remember — even you, my dear, will some day remember because it is in the very nature of sonship — insubordinations, struggles, ingratitudes, great benefits taken unthankfully, slights and disregards. It was not remorse I felt, nor repentance, but a tremendous regret that so things had happened and that life should be so. Why is it, I thought, that when a son has come to manhood he cannot take his father for a friend? I had a curious sense of unprecedented communion as I stood beside him now. I felt that he understood my thoughts; his face seemed to

answer with an expression of still and sympathetic patience.

I was sensible of amazing gaps. We had never talked together of love, never of religion.

All sorts of things that a man of twenty-eight would not dream of hiding from a coeval he had hidden from me. For some days I had to remain in his house, I had to go through his papers, handle all those intimate personal things that accumulate around a human being year by year — letters, yellowing scraps of newspaper, tokens, relics kept, accidental vestiges, significant litter. I learnt many things I had never dreamt of. At times I doubted whether I was not prying, whether I ought not to risk the loss of those necessary legal facts I sought, and burn these papers unread. There were love letters, and many such touching things.

My memories of him did not change because of these new lights, but they became wonderfully illuminated. I realized him as a young man, I began to see him as a boy. I found a little half-bound botanical book with stencil-tinted illustrations, a good-conduct prize my father had won at his preparatory school; a rolled-up sheet of paper, carbonized and dry and brittle, revealed itself as a piece of specimen writing, stiff with boyish effort, decorated in ambitious and faltering flourishes and still betraying the pencil rulings his rubber should have erased. Already your writing is better than that. And I found a daguerreotype portrait of him in knickerbockers against a photographer's stile. His face then was not unlike yours. I stood with that in my hand at the little bureau in his bedroom, and looked at his dead face.

The flatly painted portrait of his father, my grandfather, hanging there in the stillness above the coffin, looking out on the world he had left with steady, humorous blue eyes that followed one about the room, — that, too, was revivified, touched into reality and participation by this and that, became a living presence at a conference of lives. Things of his were there also in that life's accumulation....

There we were, three Strattons together, and down in the dining-room were steel engravings to take us back two generations further, and we had all lived full lives, suffered, attempted, signified. I had a

glimpse of the long successions of mankind. What a huge inaccessible lumber-room of thought and experience we amounted to, I thought; how much we are, how little we transmit. Each one of us was but a variation, an experiment upon the Stratton theme. All that I had now under my hands was but the merest hints and vestiges, moving and surprising indeed, but casual and fragmentary, of those obliterated repetitions. Man is a creature becoming articulate, and why should those men have left so much of the tale untold — to be lost and forgotten? Why must we all repeat things done, and come again very bitterly to wisdom our fathers have achieved before us? My grandfather there should have left me something better than the still enigma of his watching face. All my life so far has gone in learning very painfully what many men have learnt before me; I have spent the greater part of forty years in finding a sort of purpose for the uncertain and declining decades that remain. Is it not time the generations drew together and helped one another? Cannot we begin now to make a better use of the experiences of life so that our sons may not waste themselves so much, cannot we gather into books that men may read in an hour or so the gist of these confused and multitudinous realities of the individual career? Surely the time is coming for that, when a new private literature will exist, and fathers and mothers behind their rôles of rulers, protectors, and supporters, will prepare frank and intimate records of their thought and their feeling, told as one tells things to equals, without authority or reserves or discretions, so that, they being dead, their children may rediscover them as contemporaries and friends.

That desire for self-expression is indeed already almost an instinct with many of us. Man is disposed to create a traditional wisdom. For me this book I contemplate is a need. I am just a year and a half from a bitter tragedy and the loss of a friend as dear as life to me. It is very constantly in my mind. She opened her mind to me as few people open their minds to anyone. In a way, little Stephen, she died for you. And I am so placed that I have no one to talk to quite freely about her. The one other person to whom I talk, I cannot talk to about her; it is strange, seeing how we love and trust one another, but so it is; you will understand that the better as this story unfolds. For eight long years before the crisis that culminated in her tragic death I never

saw her; yet, quite apart from the shock and distresses of that time, it has left me extraordinarily lonely and desolate.

And there was a kind of dreadful splendor in that last act of hers, which has taken a great hold upon my imagination; it has interwoven with everything else in my mind, it bears now upon every question. I cannot get away from it, while it is thus pent from utterance.... Perhaps having written this to you I may never show it you or leave it for you to see. But yet I must write it. Of all conceivable persons you, when you have grown to manhood, are the most likely to understand.

§ 2

You did not come to see your dead grandfather, nor did you know very much about the funeral. Nowadays we do not bring the sweet egotisms, the vivid beautiful personal intensities of childhood, into the cold, vast presence of death. I would as soon, my dear, have sent your busy little limbs toiling up the Matterhorn. I have put by a photograph of my father for you as he lay in that last stillness of his, that you will see at a properer time.

Your mother and I wore black only at his funeral and came back colored again into your colored world, and in a very little while your interest in this event that had taken us away for a time turned to other, more assimilable things. But there happened a little incident that laid hold upon me; you forgot it, perhaps, in a week or less, but I shall never forget it; and this incident it was that gathered up the fruits of those moments beside my father's body and set me to write this book. It had the effect of a little bright light held up against the vague dark immensities of thought and feeling that filled my mind because of my father's death.

Now that I come to set it down I see that it is altogether trivial, and I cannot explain how it is that it is to me so piercingly significant. I had to whip you. Your respect for the admirable and patient Mademoiselle Potin, the protectress and companion of your public expeditions, did in some slight crisis suddenly fail you. In the extreme publicity of Kensington Gardens, in the presence of your two little sisters, before a startled world, you expressed an opinion of

her, in two languages and a loud voice, that was not only very unjust, but extremely offensive and improper. It reflected upon her intelligence and goodness; it impeached her personal appearance; it was the kind of outcry no little gentleman should ever permit himself, however deeply he may be aggrieved. You then, so far as I was able to disentangle the evidence, assaulted her violently, hurled a stone at her, and fled her company. You came home alone by a route chosen by yourself, flushed and wrathful, braving the dangers of Kensington High Street. This, after my stern and deliberate edict that, upon pain of corporal punishment, respect and obedience must be paid to Mademoiselle Potin. The logic of the position was relentless.

But where your behavior was remarkable, where the affair begins to touch my imagination, was that you yourself presently put the whole business before me. Alone in the schoolroom, you seem to have come to some realization of the extraordinary dreadfulness of your behavior. Such moments happen in the lives of all small boys; they happened to me times enough, to my dead father, to that grandfather of the portrait which is now in my study, to his father and his, and so on through long series of Strattons, back to inarticulate, shock-haired little sinners slinking fearfully away from the awful wrath, the bellowings and limitless violence of the hairy Old Man of the herd. The bottom goes out of your heart then, you are full of a conviction of sin. So far you did but carry on the experience of the race. But to ask audience of me, to come and look me in the eye, to say you wanted my advice on a pressing matter, that I think marks almost a new phase in the long developing history of father and son. And your account of the fracas struck me as quite reasonably frank and honest. “I didn’t seem able,” you observed, “not to go on being badder and badder.”

We discussed the difficulties of our situation, and you passed sentence upon yourself. I saw to it that the outraged dignity of Mademoiselle Potin was mocked by no mere formality of infliction. You did your best to be stoical, I remember, but at last you yelped and wept. Then, justice being done, you rearranged your costume. The situation was a little difficult until you, still sobbing and buttoning — you are really a shocking bad hand at buttons — and

looking a very small, tender, ruffled, rueful thing indeed, strolled towards my study window. “The pear tree is out next door,” you remarked, without a trace of animosity, and sobbing as one might hiccough.

I suppose there are moments in the lives of all grown men when they come near to weeping aloud. In some secret place within myself I must have been a wild river of tears. I answered, however, with the same admirable detachment from the smarting past that you had achieved, that my study window was particularly adapted to the appreciation of our neighbor’s pear tree, because of its height from the ground. We fell into a conversation about blossom and the setting of fruit, kneeling together upon my window-seat and looking up into the pear tree against the sky, and then down through its black branches into the gardens all quickening with spring. We were on so friendly a footing when presently Mademoiselle Potin returned and placed her dignity or her resignation in my hands, that I doubt if she believed a word of all my assurances until the unmistakable confirmation of your evening bath. Then, as I understood it, she was extremely remorseful to you and indignant against my violence....

But when I knelt with you, little urchin, upon my window-seat, it came to me as a thing almost intolerably desirable that some day you should become my real and understanding friend. I loved you profoundly. I wanted to stretch forward into time and speak to you, man myself to the man you are yet to be. It seemed to me that between us there must needs be peculiar subtleties of sympathy. And I remembered that by the time you were a man fully grown and emerging from the passionately tumultuous openings of manhood, capable of forgiving me all my blundering parentage, capable of perceiving all the justifying fine intention of my ill-conceived disciplines and misdirections, I might be either an old man, shriveling again to an inexplicable egotism, or dead. I saw myself as I had seen my father — first enfeebled and then inaccessibly tranquil. When presently you had gone from my study, I went to my writing-desk and drew a paper pad towards me, and sat thinking and making idle marks upon it with my pen. I wanted to exceed the limits of those frozen silences that must come at last between us, write a book that should lie in your world like a seed, and at last, as your own

being ripened, flower into living understanding by your side.

This book, which before had been only an idea for a book, competing against many other ideas and the demands of that toilsome work for peace and understanding to which I have devoted the daily energies of my life, had become, I felt, an imperative necessity between us.

§ 3

And then there happened one of those crises of dread and apprehension and pain that are like a ploughing of the heart. It was brought home to me that you might die even before the first pages of this book of yours were written. You became feverish, complained of that queer pain you had felt twice before, and for the third time you were ill with appendicitis. Your mother and I came and regarded your touzled head and flushed little face on the pillow as you slept uneasily, and decided that we must take no more risks with you. So soon as your temperature had fallen again we set about the business of an operation.

We told each other that nowadays these operations were as safe as going to sleep in your bed, but we knew better. Our own doctor had lost his son. "That," we said, "was different." But we knew well enough in our hearts that you were going very near to the edge of death, nearer than you had ever been since first you came clucking into the world.

The operation was done at home. A capable, fair-complexioned nurse took possession of us; and my study, because it has the best light, was transfigured into an admirable operating-room. All its furnishings were sent away, every cloth and curtain, and the walls and floor were covered with white sterilized sheets. The high little mechanical table they erected before the window seemed to me like an altar on which I had to offer up my son. There were basins of disinfectants and towels conveniently about, the operator came, took out his array of scalpels and forceps and little sponges from the black bag he carried, put them ready for his hand, and then covered them from your sight with a white cloth, and I brought you down in my arms, wrapped in a blanket, from your bedroom to the anæsthetist.

You were beautifully trustful and submissive and unafraid. I stood by you until the chloroform had done its work, and then left you there, lest my presence should in the slightest degree embarrass the surgeon. The anæsthetic had taken all the color out of your face, and you looked pinched and shrunken and greenish and very small and pitiful. I went into the drawing-room and stood there with your mother and made conversation. I cannot recall what we said, I think it was about the moorland to which we were going for your convalescence. Indeed, we were but the ghosts of ourselves; all our substance seemed listening, listening to the little sounds that came to us from the study.

Then after long ages there was a going to and fro of feet, a bump, the opening of a door, and our own doctor came into the room rubbing his hands together and doing nothing to conceal his profound relief. "Admirable," he said, "altogether successful." I went up to you and saw a tumbled little person in the bed, still heavily insensible and moaning slightly. By the table were bloody towels, and in a shallow glass tray was a small object like a damaged piece of earthworm. "Not a bit too soon," said the surgeon, holding this up in his forceps for my inspection. "It's on the very verge of perforation." I affected a detached and scientific interest, but the prevailing impression in my mind was that this was a fragment from very nearly the centre of your being.

He took it away with him, I know not whither. Perhaps it is now in spirits in a specimen jar, an example to all medical students of what to avoid in an appendix; perhaps it was stained and frozen, and microtomized into transparent sections as they do such things, and mounted on glass slips and distributed about the world for curious histologists to wreak their eyes upon. For a time you lay uneasily still and then woke up to pain. Even then you got a fresh purchase on my heart. It has always been our custom to discourage weeping and outcries, and you did not forget your training. "I shan't mind so much, dadda," you remarked to me, "if I may yelp." So for a day, by special concession, you yelped, and then the sting of those fresh wounds departed.

Within a fortnight, so quickly does an aseptic wound heal up again, you were running about in the sun, and I had come back, as

one comes back to a thing forgotten, to the first beginnings of this chapter on my desk. But for a time I could not go on working at it because of the fear I had felt, and it is only now in June, in this house in France to which we have come for the summer, with you more flagrantly healthy than I have ever known you before, that my heart creeps out of its hole again, and I can go on with my story.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

Boyhood

§ 1

I was a Harbury boy as my father and grandfather were before me and as you are presently to be. I went to Harbury at the age of fourteen. Until then I was educated at home, first by a governess and then by my father's curate, Mr. Siddons, who went from us to St. Philip's in Hampstead, and, succeeding marvellously there, is now Bishop of Exminster. My father became rector of Burnmore when I was nine; my mother had been dead four years, and my second cousin, Jane Stratton, was already his housekeeper. My father held the living until his resignation when I was nearly thirty. So that all the most impressionable years of my life centre upon the Burnmore rectory and the easy spaciousness of Burnmore Park. My boyhood and adolescence alternated between the ivied red-brick and ancient traditions of Harbury (and afterwards Christ-church) and that still untroubled countryside.

I was never a town dweller until I married and we took our present house in Holland Park. I went into London at last as one goes into an arena. It cramps me and wearies me and at times nearly overwhelms me, but there it is that the life of men centres and my work lies. But every summer we do as we have done this year and go to some house in the country, near to forests or moorland or suchlike open and uncultivated country, where one may have the refreshment of freedom among natural and unhurried things. This year we are in a walled garden upon the Seine, about four miles above Château Galliard, and with the forest reaching up to the paddock beyond the orchard close....

You will understand better when I have told you my story why I saw Burnmore for the last time when I was one-and-twenty and why my memories of it shine so crystalline clear. I have a thousand vivid miniatures of it in my mind and all of them are beautiful to me, so that I could quite easily write a whole book of landscapes from the

Park alone. I can still recall quite vividly the warm beauty-soaked sensation of going out into the morning sunshine of the Park, with my lunch in a little green Swiss tin under my arm and the vast interminable day all before me, the gigantic, divinely unconditional day that only boyhood knows, and the Park so great and various that it was more than two hours' going for me to reach its eastern fences. I was only a little older then than you are now. Sometimes I went right up through the woods to the house to companion with Philip and Guy Christian and their sister — I loved her then, and one day I was to love her with all my heart — but in those boyish times I liked most to go alone.

My memories of the Park are all under blue sky and sunshine, with just a thunderstorm or so; on wet days and cold days I was kept to closer limits; and it seems to me now rather an intellectual conviction than a positive memory that save for a few pine-clad patches in the extreme south-east, its soil was all thick clay. That meant for me only beautiful green marshes, a number of vividly interesting meres upon the course of its stream, and a wealth of gigantic oaks. The meres lay at various levels, and the hand of Lady Ladislaw had assisted nature in their enrichment with lilies and water plants. There were places of sedge and scented rush, amidst which were sapphire mists of forget-me-not for long stretches, skirmishing commandoes of yellow iris and wide wastes of floating water-lilies. The gardens passed insensibly into the Park, and beyond the house were broad stretches of grass, sun-lit, barred with the deep-green shadows of great trees, and animated with groups and lines of fallow deer. Near the house was an Italianate garden, with balustradings and statuary, and a great wealth of roses and flowering shrubs.

Then there were bracken wildernesses in which the does lurked with the young fawns, and a hollow, shallow and wide, with the turf greatly attacked by rabbits, and exceptionally threadbare, where a stricken oak, lightning-stripped, spread out its ghastly arms above contorted rotting branches and the mysterious skeletons of I should think five several deer. In the evening-time the woods behind this place of bones — they were woods of straight-growing, rather crowded trees and standing as it were a little aloof — became even under the warmest sunset grey and cold — and as if they waited....

And in the distant corner where the sand was, rose suddenly a steep little hill, surmounted by a wild and splendid group of pines, through which one looked across a vale of cornfields at an ancient town that became strange and magical as the sun went down, so that I was held gazing at it, and afterwards had to flee the twilight across the windy spaces and under the dim and darkling trees. It is only now in the distant retrospect that I identify that far-off city of wonder, and luminous mist with the commonplace little town, through whose narrow streets we drove to the railway station. But, of course, that is what it must have been.

There are persons to be found mixed up in those childish memories, — Lady Ladislaw, tall and gracious, in dresses of floating blue or grey, or thin, subtly folding, flowering stuffs, Philip and his sister, Guy, the old butler, a multitude of fainter figures long become nameless and featureless; they are far less vivid in my memory than the fine solitudes of the Park itself — and the dreams I had there.

I wonder if you dream as I dreamt. I wonder whether indeed I dreamt as now I think I did. Have I, in these latter years, given form and substance and a name to things as vague in themselves as the urgencies of instinct? Did I really go into those woods and waving green places as one keeps a tryst, expectant of a fellowship more free and delicate and delightful than any I knew. Did I know in those days of nymphs and dryads and fauns and all those happy soulless beings with which the desire of man's heart has animated the wilderness. Once certainly I crawled slowly through the tall bracken and at last lay still for an interminable while, convinced that so I should see those shadows populous with fairies, with green little people. How patiently I lay! But the stems creaked and stirred, and my heart would keep on beating like a drum in my throat.

It is incredible that once a furry whispering half-human creature with bright brown eyes came and for a time played with me near where the tall ferns foam in a broad torrent from between the big chestnuts down to the upper mere. That must have been real dreaming, and yet now, with all my sanities and scepticisms, I could half believe it real.

§ 2

You become reserved. Perhaps not exceptionally so, but as all children become reserved. Already you understand that your heart is very preciously your own. You keep it from me and everyone, so much so, so justifiably so, that when by virtue of our kindred and all that we have in common I get sudden glimpses right into your depths, there mixes with the swift spasm of love I feel, a dread — lest you should catch me, as it were, spying into you and that one of us, I know not which, should feel ashamed.

Every child passes into this secret stage; it closes in from its first frankness; it carries off the growing jewel of its consciousness to hide from all mankind.... I think I can see why this should be so, but I cannot tell why in so many cases no jewel is given back again at last, alight, ripened, wonderful, glowing with the deep fires of experience. I think that is what ought to happen; it is what does happen now with true poets and true artists. Someday I think it will be the life of all normal human souls. But usually it does not seem to happen at all. Children pass out of a stage — open, beautiful, exquisitely simple — into silences and discretions beneath an imposed and artificial life. And they are lost. Out of the finished, careful, watchful, restrained and limited man or woman, no child emerges again....

I remember very distinctly how I myself came by imperceptible increments of reservation to withdraw those early delicacies of judgments, those original and personal standards and appreciations, from sight and expression. I can recall specific moments when I perceive now that my little childish figure stood, as it were, obstinately and with a sense of novelty in a doorway denying the self within.

It was partly, I think, a simple instinct that drew that curtain of silences and concealments, it was much more a realization that I had no power of lucidity to save the words and deeds I sought to make expressive from complete misunderstanding. But most of all it was the perception that I was under training and compulsion for ends that were all askew and irrelevant to the trend of my imaginations, the quality of my dreams. There was around me something unfriendly to this inner world — something very ready to pass from unfriendliness to acute hostility; and if, indeed, I succeeded in giving anything of my inner self to others, it was only, as people put it, to give myself

away.

My nurses, my governess, my tutor, my father, the servants about me, seemed all bent upon imposing an artificial personality upon me. Only in a very limited sense did they want me. What they wanted was something that could be made out of me by extensive suppressions and additions. They ignored the fact that I had been born with a shape of my own; they were resolved I should be pressed into a mould and cast.

It was not that they wanted outer conformity to certain needs and standards — that, I think, would be a reasonable thing enough to demand — but they wanted me to subdue my most private thoughts to their ideals. My nurses and my governesses would rate me for my very feelings, would clamor for gratitude and reproach me bitterly for betraying that I did not at some particular moment — love.

(Only yesterday I heard Mademoiselle Potin doing that very same thing to you. “It is that you do not care, Master Steve. It is that you do not care. You do not want to care.”)

They went too far in that invasion of my personal life, but I perceive quite clearly the present need for most of the process of moulding and subjugation that children must undergo. Human society is a new thing upon the earth, an invention of the last ten thousand years. Man is a creature as yet not freely and instinctively gregarious; in his more primordial state he must have been an animal of very small groups and limited associations, an animal rather self-centred and fierce, and he is still but imperfectly adapted either morally or physically to the wider social life his crowding interactions force upon him. He still learns speech and computation and civility and all the devices of this artificially extended and continually broadening tribal life with an extreme reluctance. He has to be shaped in the interests of the species, I admit, to the newer conditions; the growing social order must be protected from the keen edge of his still savage individuality, and he must be trained in his own interests to save himself from the destruction of impossible revolts. But how clumsily is the thing done! How we are caught and jammed and pressed and crippled into citizenship! How excessive and crushing is the suppression, and how inadequate!

Every child feels that, even if every child does not clearly know it.

Every child presently begins to hide itself from the confused tyrannies of the social process, from the searching inspections and injunctions and interferences of parent and priest and teacher.

"I have got to be *so*," we all say deep down in ourselves and more or less distinctly according to the lucidities of our minds; "but in my heart I am *this*."

And in the outcome we all try to seem at least to be *so*, while an ineffectual rebel struggles passionately, like a beast caught in a trap, for ends altogether more deep and dangerous, for the rose and the star and the wildfire, — for beauty and beautiful things. These, we all know in our darkly vital recesses, are the real needs of life, the obediences imposed upon us by our crude necessities and jostling proximities, mere incidentals on our way to those profounder purposes....

And when I write thus of our selves I mean our bodies quite as much as our imaginations; the two sides of us are covered up alike and put alike into disguises and unnatural shapes, we are taught and forced to hide them for the same reasons, from a fear of ourselves and a fear of the people about us. The sense of beauty, the sense of one's body, the freedom of thought and of desire and the wonder of life, are all interwoven strands. I remember that in the Park of Burnmore one great craving I had was to take off my clothes there altogether, and bathe in a clear place among loosestrife and meadowsweet, and afterwards lie wet and naked upon the soft green turf with the sun shining upon me. But I thought also that that was a very wicked and shameful craving to have, and I never dared give way to it.

§ 3

As I think of myself and all these glowing secrecies and hidden fancies within, walking along beside old Siddons, and half listening to his instructive discourse, I see myself as though I was an image of all humanity under tuition for the social life.

I write "old Siddons," for so he seemed to me then. In truth he was scarcely a dozen years older than I, and the other day when I exchanged salutations with his gaitered presence in the Haymarket,

on his way I suppose to the Athenæum, it struck me that he it is who is now the younger man. But at Burnmore he was eighteen inches or more above my head and all the way of school and university beyond me; full of the world they had fitted him for and eager to impart its doctrines. He went along in his tweeds that were studiously untidy, a Norfolk jacket of one clerically-greyish stuff and trousers of another somewhat lighter pattern, in thick boots, the collar of his calling, and a broad-minded hat, bearing his face heavenward as he talked, and not so much aware of me as appreciating the things he was saying. And sometimes he was manifestly talking to himself and airing his outlook. He carried a walking-stick, a manly, homely, knobby, donnish walking-stick.

He forced the pace a little, for his legs were long and he had acquired the habit of strenuous pedestrianism at Oxford with all the other things; he obliged me to go at a kind of skipping trot, and he preferred the high roads towards Wickenham for our walks, because they were flatter and there was little traffic upon them in those days before the motor car, and we could keep abreast and go on talking uninterruptedly. That is to say, he could.

What talk it was!

Of all the virtues that the young should have. He spoke of courage and how splendid it was to accustom oneself not even to feel fear; of truth, and difficult cases when one might conceivably injure others by telling the truth and so perhaps, perhaps qualify the rigor of one's integrity, but how one should never hesitate to injure one's own self in that matter. Then in another phase he talked of belief — and the disagreeableness of dissenters. But here, I remember, there was a discussion. I have forgotten how I put the thing, but in some boyish phrasing or other I must have thrown out the idea that thought is free and beliefs uncontrollable. What of conformity, if the truth was that you doubted? "Not if you make an effort," I remember him saying, "not if you make an effort. I have had my struggles. But if you say firmly to yourself, the Church teaches this. If you dismiss mere carping and say that."

"But suppose you can't," I must have urged.

"You can if you will," he said with a note near enthusiasm. "I have been through all that. I did it. I dismissed doubts. I wouldn't

listen. I felt, *This won't do. All this leads nowhere.*"

And he it was told me the classic story of that presumptuous schoolboy who went to his Head Master and declared himself an atheist. There were no dialectics but a prompt horse-whipping. "In after life," said Mr. Siddons, with unctuous gratification, "he came to recognize that thrashing as the very best thing that had ever happened to him. The kindest thing."

"Yes," urged the obstinate rebel within me, "but — the Truth, that fearless insistence on the Truth!"

I could, however, find nothing effective to say aloud, and Siddons prevailed over me. That story made my blood boil, it filled me with an anticipatory hatred of and hostility to Head Masters, and at the same time there was something in it, brutally truer to the conditions of human association than any argument.

I do not remember the various steps by which I came to be discussing doubts so early in my life. I could not have been much more than thirteen when that conversation occurred. I am I think perhaps exceptionally unconscious about myself. I find I can recall the sayings and even the gestures of other people far more distinctly than the things I said and did myself. Even my dreams and imaginings are more active than my positive thoughts and proceedings. But I was no doubt very much stimulated by the literature lying about my home and the gleans and echoes of controversies that played like summer lightning round and about the horizons of my world. Over my head and after I had gone to bed, my father and Siddons were talking, my cousin was listening with strained apprehensions, there was a new spirit in my father's sermons; it was the storm of Huxley-Darwin controversies that had at last reached Burnmore. I was an intelligent little listener, an eager reader of anything that came to hand, Mr. Siddons had a disposition to fight his battles over again in his monologues to me; and after all at thirteen one isn't a baby. The small boy of the lower classes used in those days to start life for himself long before then.

How dramatic a phase it was in the history of the human mind when science suddenly came into the vicarages, into all the studies and quiet places that had been the fastnesses of conviction and our

ideals, and denied, with all the power of evidence it had been accumulating for so long, and so obscurely and inaggressively, with fossils and strata, with embryology and comparative anatomy, the doctrine of the historical Fall and all the current scheme of orthodoxy that was based on that! What a quickening shock it must have been in countless thousands of educated lives! And my father after a toughly honest resistance was won over to Darwinism, the idea of Evolution got hold of him, the idea that life itself was intolerant of vain repetitions; and he had had to "consider his position" in the church. To him as to innumerable other honest, middle-aged and comfortable men, Darwinism came as a dreadful invitation to go out into the wilderness. Over my head and just out of range of my ears he was debating that issue with Siddons as a foil and my cousin as a horrified antagonist. Slowly he was developing his conception of compromise. And meanwhile he wasn't going out into the wilderness at all, but punctually to and fro, along the edge of the lawn by the bed of hollyhocks and through the little green door in the garden wall, and across the corner of the churchyard to the vestry and the perennial services and sacraments of the church.

But he never talked to me privately of religion. He left that for my cousin and Mr. Siddons to do or not to do as they felt disposed, and in those silences of his I may have found another confirmation of my growing feeling that religion was from one point of view a thing somehow remote and unreal, claiming unjustifiable interventions in the detailed conduct of my life, and from another a peculiar concern of my father's and Mr. Siddons', to which they went — through the vestry, changing into strange garments on the way.

§ 4

I do not want to leave the impression which my last section may have conveyed that at the age of thirteen or thereabouts I walked about with Mr. Siddons discussing doubt in a candid and intelligent manner and maintaining theological positions. That particular conversation, you must imagine with Mr. Siddons somewhat monologuing, addressing himself not only to my present self, but with an unaccustomed valiance to my absent father. What I may have

said or not said, whether I did indeed dispute or merely and by a kind of accident implied objections, I have altogether forgotten long ago.

A boy far more than a man is mentally a discontinuous being. The drifting chaos of his mind makes its experimental beginnings at a hundred different points and in a hundred different spirits and directions; here he flashes into a concrete realization, here into a conviction unconsciously incompatible; here is something originally conceived, here something uncritically accepted. I know that I criticized Mr. Siddons quite acutely, and disbelieved in him. I know also that I accepted all sorts of suggestions from him quite unhesitatingly and that I did my utmost to satisfy his standards and realize his ideals of me.

Like an outer casing to that primordial creature of senses and dreams which came to the surface in the solitudes of the Park was my Siddonsesque self, a high-minded and clean and brave English boy, conscientiously loyal to queen and country, athletic and a good sportsman and acutely alive to good and bad "form." Mr. Siddons made me aware of my clothed self as a visible object, I surveyed my garmented being in mirrors and was trained to feel the "awfulness" of various other small boys who appeared transitorily in the smaller Park when Lady Ladislaw extended her wide hospitality to certain benevolent London associations. Their ill-fitting clothing, their undisciplined outcries, their slouching, their bad throwing and defective aspirates were made matters for detestation in my plastic mind. Those things, I was assured, placed them outside the pale of any common humanity.

"Very unfortunate and all that," said Mr. Siddons, "and uncommonly good of Lady Ladislaw to have them down. But dirty little cads, Stephen, dirty little cads; so don't go near 'em if you can help it."

They played an indecent sort of cricket with coats instead of a wicket!

Mr. Siddons was very grave about games and the strict ritual and proper apparatus for games. He believed that Waterloo was won by the indirect influence of public school cricket — disregarding many other contributory factors. We did not play very much, but we

“practised” sedulously at a net in the paddock with the gardener and the doctor’s almost grown-up sons. I thought missing a possible catch was an impropriety. I studiously maintained the correct attitude, alert and elastic, while I was fielding. Moreover I had a shameful secret, that I did not really know where a ball ought to pitch. I wasn’t clear about it and I did not dare to ask. Also until I was nearly thirteen I couldn’t bowl overarm. Such is the enduring force of early suggestion, my dear son, that I feel a faint twinge of shame as I set this down for your humiliated eyes. But so it was. May you be more precocious!

Then I was induced to believe that I really liked hunting and killing things. In the depths of my being I was a gentle and primitive savage towards animals; I believed they were as subtle and wise as myself and full of a magic of their own, but Mr. Siddons nevertheless got me out into the south Warren, where I had often watched the rabbits setting their silly cock-eared sentinels and lolloping out to feed about sundown, and beguiled me into shooting a furry little fellow-creature — I can still see its eyelid quiver as it died — and carrying it home in triumph. On another occasion I remember I was worked up into a ferocious excitement about the rats in the old barn. We went ratting, just as though I was Tom Brown or Harry East or any other of the beastly little models of cant and cruelty we English boys were trained to imitate. It was great sport. It was a tremendous spree. The distracted movements, the scampering and pawing of the little pink forefeet of one squawking little fugitive, that I hit with a stick and then beat to a shapeless bag of fur, haunted my dreams for years, and then I saw the bowels of another still living victim that had been torn open by one of the terriers, and abruptly I fled out into the yard and was violently sick; the best of the fun was over so far as I was concerned.

My cousin saved me from the uttermost shame of my failure by saying that I had been excited too soon after my dinner....

And also I collected stamps and birds’ eggs.

Mr. Siddons hypnotized me into believing that I really wanted these things; he gave me an egg-cabinet for a birthday present and told me exemplary stories of the wonderful collections other boys

had made. My own natural disposition to watch nests and establish heaven knows what friendly intimacy with the birds — perhaps I dreamt their mother might let me help to feed the young ones — gave place to a feverish artful hunting, a clutch, and then, detestable process, the blowing of the egg. Of course we were very humane; we never took the nest, but just frightened off the sitting bird and grabbed a warm egg or so. And the poor perforated, rather damaged little egg-shells accumulated in the drawers, against the wished-for but never actually realized day of glory when we should meet another collector who wouldn't have — something that we had. So far as it was for anything and not mere imbecile imitativeness, it was for that.

And writing thus of eggs reminds me that I got into a row with Mr. Siddons for cruelty.

I discovered there was the nest of a little tit in a hole between two stones in the rock bank that bordered the lawn. I found it out when I was sitting on the garden seat near by, learning Latin irregular verbs. I saw the minute preposterous round birds going and coming, and I found something so absurdly amiable and confiding about them — they sat balancing and oscillating on a standard rose and cheeped at me to go and then dived nestward and gave away their secret out of sheer impatience — that I could not bring myself to explore further, and kept the matter altogether secret from the enthusiasm of Mr. Siddons. And in a few days there were no more eggs and I could hear the hungry little nestlings making the minutest of fairy hullabaloos, the very finest spun silk of sound; a tremendous traffic in victual began and I was the trusted friend of the family.

Then one morning I was filled with amazement and anguish. There was a rock torn down and lying in the path; a paw had gone up to that little warm place. Across the gravel, shreds of the nest and a wisp or so of down were scattered. I could imagine the brief horrors of that night attack. I started off, picking up stones as I went, to murder that sandy devil, the stable cat. I got her once — alas! that I am still glad to think of it — and just missed her as she flashed, a ginger streak, through the gate into the paddock.

"*Now* Steve! Now!" came Mr. Siddons' voice behind me....

How can one explain things of that sort to a man like Siddons? I

took my lecture on the Utter Caddishness of Wanton Cruelty in a black rebellious silence. The affair and my own emotions were not only far beyond my powers of explanation, but far beyond my power of understanding. Just then my soul was in shapeless and aimless revolt against something greater and higher and deeper and darker than Siddons, and his reproaches were no more than the chattering of a squirrel while a storm uproots great trees. I wanted to kill the cat. I wanted to kill whatever had made that cat.

§ 5

Mr. Siddons it was who first planted the conception of Life as a Career in my mind.

In those talks that did so much towards shaping me into the likeness of a modest, reserved, sporting, seemly, clean and brave, patriotic and decently slangy young Englishman, he was constantly reverting to that view of existence. He spoke of failures and successes, talked of statesmen and administrators, peerages and Westminster Abbey. “Nelson,” he said, “was once a clergyman’s son like you.”

“England has been made by the sons of the clergy.”

He talked of the things that led to failure and the things that had made men prominent and famous.

“Discursiveness ruins a man,” I remember him saying. “Choose your goal and press to it.”

“Never do anything needlessly odd. It’s a sort of impertinence to all the endless leaders of the past who created our traditions. Do not commit yourself hastily to opinions, but once you have done so, stick to them. The world would far rather have a firm man wrong, than a weak man hesitatingly right. Stick to them.”

“One has to remember,” I recall him meditating, far over my head with his face upturned, “that Institutions are more important than Views. Very often one adopts a View only to express one’s belief in an Institution.... Men can do with almost all sorts of Views, but only with certain Institutions. All this Doubt doesn’t touch a truth like that. One does not refuse to live in a house because of the old

symbols one finds upon the door.... If they *are* old symbols....”

Out of such private contemplations he would descend suddenly upon me.

“What are *you* going to do with your life, Steve?” he would ask.

“There is no happiness in life without some form of service. Where do you mean to serve? With your bent for science and natural history, it wouldn’t be difficult for you to get into the I.C.S. I doubt if you’d do anything at the law; it’s a rough game, Steve, though the prizes are big. Big prizes the lawyers get. I’ve known a man in the Privy Council under forty — and that without anything much in the way of a family.... But always one must concentrate. The one thing England will not stand is a loafer, a wool-gatherer, a man who goes about musing and half-awake. It’s our energy. We’re western. It’s that has made us all we are.”

I knew whither that pointed. Never so far as I can remember did Mr. Siddons criticize either myself or my father directly, but I understood with the utmost clearness that he found my father indolent and hesitating, and myself more than a little bit of a mollycoddle, and in urgent need of pulling together.

§ 6

Harbury went on with that process of suppressing, encrusting, hardening, and bracing-up which Mr. Siddons had begun. For a time I pulled myself together very thoroughly. I am not ungrateful nor unfaithful to Harbury; in your turn you will go there, you will have to live your life in this British world of ours and you must learn its language and manners, acquire its reserves and develop the approved toughness and patterning of cuticle. Afterwards if you please you may quarrel with it. But don’t when the time comes quarrel with the present conditions of human association and think it is only with Harbury you quarrel. What man has become and may become beneath the masks and impositions of civilization, in his intimate texture and in the depths of his being, I begin now in my middle age to appreciate. No longer is he an instinctive savage but a creature of almost incredible variability and wonderful new possibilities.

Marvels undreamt of, power still inconceivable, an empire beyond the uttermost stars; such is man's inheritance. But for the present, until we get a mastery of those vague and mighty intimations at once so perplexing and so reassuring, if we are to live at all in the multitudinousness of human society we must submit to some scheme of clumsy compromises and conventions or other, — and for us Strattons the Harbury system is the most convenient. You will have to go to the old school.

I went to Rendle's. I just missed getting into college; I was two places below the lowest successful boy. I was Maxton's fag to begin with, and my chief chum was Raymond, who is your friend also, and who comes so often to this house. I preferred water to land, boats to cricket, because of that difficulty about pitch I have already mentioned. But I was no great sportsman. Raymond and I shared a boat, and spent most of the time we gave to it under the big trees near Dartpool Lock, reading or talking. We would pull up to Sandy Hall perhaps once a week. I never rowed in any of the eights, though I was urged to do so. I swam fairly well, and got my colors on the strength of my diving.

On the whole I found Harbury a satisfactory and amusing place, I was neither bullied nor do I think I greatly bullied, and of all that furtive and puerile lasciviousness of which one hears so many hints nowadays — excitable people talk of it as though it was the most monstrous and singular of vices instead of a slightly debasing but almost unavoidable and very obvious result of heaping boys together under the inefficient control of a timid pretentious class of men — of such uncleanness as I say, scarcely more than a glimpse and a whisper and a vague tentative talk or so reached me. Little more will reach you, for that kind of thing, like the hells of Swedenborg, finds its own.

I had already developed my growing instinct for observance to a very considerable extent under Siddons, and at Harbury I remember myself, and people remember me, as an almost stiffly correct youth. I was pretty good at most of the work, and exceptionally so at history, geology, and the biological side of natural science. I had to restrain my interest in these latter subjects lest I should appear to be a "swat,"

and a modern-side swat at that. I was early in the sixth, and rather a favorite with old Latimer. He incited me to exercise what he called a wholesome influence on the younger boys, and I succeeded in doing this fairly well without any gross interventions. I implied rather than professed soundly orthodox views about things in general, and I was extremely careful to tilt my straw hat forward over my nose so as just not to expose the crown of my head behind, and to turn up my trousers with exactly that width of margin which the judgment of my fellow-creatures had decided was correct. My socks were spirited without being vulgar, and the ties I wore were tied with a studious avoidance of either slovenliness or priggish neatness. I wrote two articles in the Harburonian, became something of a debater in the Literacy and Political, conducted many long conversations with my senior contemporaries upon religion, politics, sport and social life, and concealed my inmost thoughts from every human being. Indeed, so effective had been the training of Harbury and Mr. Siddons, that I think at that time I came very near concealing them from myself. I could suppress wonder, I could pass by beauty as if I did not see it, almost I think I did not see it for a time, and yet I remember it in those years too — a hundred beautiful things.

Harbury itself is a very beautiful place. The country about it has all the charm of river scenery in a settled and ancient land, and the great castle and piled town of Wetmore, cliffs of battlemented grey wall rising above a dense cluster of red roofs, form the background to innumerable gracious prospects of great stream-fed trees, level meadows of buttercups, sweeping curves of osier and rush-rimmed river, the playing fields and the sedgy, lily-spangled levels of Avonlea. The college itself is mostly late Tudor and Stuart brickwork, very ripe and mellow now, but the great grey chapel with its glorious east window floats over the whole like a voice singing in the evening. And the evening cloudscapes of Harbury are a perpetual succession of glorious effects, now serene, now mysteriously threatening and profound, now towering to incredible heights, now revealing undreamt-of distances of luminous color. Assuredly I must have delighted in all those aspects, or why should I remember them so well? But I recall, I mean, no confessed recognition of them; no deliberate going-out of my spirit, open and unashamed, to such

things.

I suppose one's early adolescence is necessarily the period of maximum shyness in one's life. Even to Raymond I attempted no extremities of confidence. Even to myself I tried to be the thing that was expected of me. I professed a modest desire for temperate and tolerable achievement in life, though deep in my lost depths I wanted passionately to excel; I worked hard, much harder than I allowed to appear, and I said I did it for the credit of the school; I affected a dignified loyalty to queen and country and church; I pretended a stoical disdain for appetites and delights and all the arts, though now and then a chance fragment of poetry would light me like a fire, or a lovely picture stir unwonted urgencies, though visions of delight haunted the shadows of my imagination and did not always fly when I regarded them. But on the other hand I affected an interest in games that I was far from feeling. Of some boys I was violently jealous, and this also I masked beneath a generous appreciation. Certain popularities I applauded while I doubted. Whatever my intimate motives I became less and less disposed to obey them until I had translated them into a plausible rendering of the accepted code. If I could not so translate them I found it wise to control them. When I wanted urgently one summer to wander by night over the hills towards Kestering and lie upon heather and look up at the stars and wonder about them, I cast about and at last hit upon the well-known and approved sport of treacling for moths, as a cloak for so strange an indulgence.

I must have known even then what a mask and front I was, because I knew quite well how things were with other people. I listened politely and respected and understood the admirable explanations of my friends. When some fellow got a scholarship unexpectedly and declared it was rotten bad luck on the other chap, seeing the papers he had done, and doubted whether he shouldn't resign, I had an intuitive knowledge that he wouldn't resign, and I do not remember any time in my career as the respectful listener to Mr. Siddons' aspirations for service and devotion, when I did not perceive quite clearly his undeviating eye upon a bishopric. He thought of gaiters though he talked of wings.

How firmly the bonds of an old relationship can hold one! I

remember when a few years ago he reached that toiled-for goal, I wrote in a tone of gratified surprise that in this blatant age, such disinterested effort as his should receive even so belated a recognition. Yet what else was there for me to write? We all have our Siddonses, with whom there are no alternatives but insincerity or a disproportionate destructiveness. I am still largely Siddonsized, little son, and so, I fear, you will have to be.

§ 7

The clue to all the perplexities of law and custom lies in this, that human association is an artificiality. We do not run together naturally and easily as grazing deer do or feeding starlings or a shoal of fish. We are a sort of creature which is only resuming association after a long heredity of extreme separation. We are beings strongly individualized, we are dominated by that passion which is no more and no less than individuality in action, — jealousy. Jealousy is a fierce insistence on ourselves, an instinctive intolerance of our fellow-creatures, ranging between an insatiable aggression as its buoyant phase and a savage defensiveness when it is touched by fear. In our expansive moments we want to dominate and control everyone and destroy every unlikeness to ourselves; in our recessive phases our homes are our castles and we want to be let alone.

Now all law, all social order, all custom, is a patch-up and a concession to this separating passion of self-insistence. It is an evasion of conflict and social death. Human society is as yet only a truce and not an alliance.

When you understand that, you will begin to understand a thousand perplexing things in legislation and social life. You will understand the necessity of all those restrictions that are called "conventionality," and the inevitableness of the general hostility to singularity. To be exceptional is to assert a difference, to disregard the banked-up forces of jealousy and break the essential conditions of the social contract. It invites either resentment or aggression. So we all wear much the same clothing, affect modesty, use the same phrases, respect one another's "rights," and pretend a greater disinterestedness than we feel....

You have to face this reality as you must face all reality. This is the reality of laws and government; this is the reality of customs and institutions; *a convention between jealousies*. This is reality, just as the cat's way with the nestlings was reality, and the squealing rat one smashed in a paroxysm of cruelty and disgust in the barn.

But it isn't the only reality. Equally real is the passionate revolt of my heart against cruelty, and the deep fluctuating impulse not to pretend, to set aside fear and jealousy, to come nakedly out of the compromises and secretive methods of every-day living into the light, into a wide impersonal love, into a new way of living for mankind....

CHAPTER THE THIRD

Intentions and the Lady Mary Christian

§ 1

I know that before the end of my Harbury days I was already dreaming of a Career, of some great and conspicuous usefulness in the world. That has always haunted my mind and haunts it now. I may be cured perhaps of the large and showy anticipations of youth, I may have learnt to drop the "great and conspicuous," but still I find it necessary to believe that I matter, that I play a part no one else can play in a progress, in a universal scheme moving towards triumphant ends.

Almost wholly I think I was dreaming of public service in those days. The Harbury tradition pointed steadfastly towards the state, and all my world was bare of allurements to any other type of ambition. Success in art or literature did not appeal to us, and a Harbury boy would as soon think of being a great tinker as a great philosopher. Science we called "stinks"; our three science masters were *ex officio* ridiculous and the practical laboratory a refuge for oddities. But a good half of our fathers at least were peers or members of parliament, and our sense of politics was close and keen. History, and particularly history as it came up through the eighteenth century to our own times, supplied us with a gallery of intimate models, our great uncles and grandfathers and ancestors at large figured abundantly in the story and furnished the pattern to which we cut our anticipations of life. It was a season of Imperialism, the picturesque Imperialism of the earlier Kipling phase, and we were all of us enthusiasts for the Empire. It was the empire of the White Man's Burthen in those days; the sordid anti-climax of the Tariff Reform Movement was still some years ahead of us. It was easier for us at Harbury to believe then than it has become since, in our own racial and national and class supremacy. We were the Anglo-Saxons, the elect of the earth, leading the world in social organization, in science and economic method. In India and the east more particularly we

were the apostles of even-handed justice, relentless veracity, personal cleanliness, and modern efficiency. In a spirit of adventurous benevolence we were spreading those blessings over a reluctant and occasionally recalcitrant world of people for the most part "colored." Our success in this had aroused the bitter envy and rivalry of various continental nations, and particularly of France, Russia, and Germany. But France had been diverted to North Africa, Russia to Eastern Asia, and Germany was already the most considered antagonist in our path towards an empire over the world.

This was the spacious and by no means ignoble project of the later nineties. Most of us Harbury boys, trained as I had been trained to be uncritical, saw the national outlook in those terms. We knew little or nothing, until the fierce wranglings of the Free Traders and Tariff Reformers a few years later brought it home to us, of the commercial, financial and squalid side of our relations with the vast congeries of exploited new territories and subordinated and subjugated populations. We knew nothing of the social conditions of the mass of people in our own country. We were blankly ignorant of economics. We knew nothing of that process of expropriation and the exploitation of labor which is giving the world the Servile State. The very phrase was twenty years ahead of us. We believed that an Englishman was a better thing in every way than any other sort of man, that English literature, science and philosophy were a shining and unapproachable light to all other peoples, that our soldiers were better than all other soldiers and our sailors than all other sailors. Such civilization and enterprise as existed in Germany for instance we regarded as a shadow, an envious shadow, following our own; it was still generally believed in those days that German trade was concerned entirely with the dishonest imitation of our unapproachable English goods. And as for the United States, well, the United States though blessed with a strain of English blood, were nevertheless "out of it," marooned in a continent of their own and — we had to admit it — corrupt.

Given such ignorance, you know, it wasn't by any means ignoble to be patriotic, to dream of this propagandist Empire of ours spreading its great peace and culture, its virtue and its amazing and unprecedented honesty, — its honesty! — round the world.

§ 2

When I look and try to recover those early intentions of mine I am astonished at the way in which I took them ready-made from the world immediately about me. In some way I seem to have stopped looking — if ever I had begun looking — at the heights and depths above and below that immediate life. I seem to have regarded these profounder realities no more during this phase of concentration than a cow in a field regards the sky. My father's vestments, the Burnmore altar, the Harbury pulpit and Mr. Siddons, stood between me and the idea of God, so that it needed years and much bitter disillusionment before I discovered my need of it. And I was as wanting in subtlety as in depth. We did no logic nor philosophy at Harbury, and at Oxford it was not so much thought we came to deal with as a mistranslation and vulgarization of ancient and alien exercises in thinking. There is no such effective serum against philosophy as the scholarly decoction of a dead philosopher. The philosophical teaching of Oxford at the end of the last century was not so much teaching as a protective inoculation. The stuff was administered with a mysterious gilding of Greek and reverence, old Hegel's monstrous web was the ultimate modernity, and Plato, that intellectual journalist-artist, that bright, restless experimentalist in ideas, was as it were the God of Wisdom, only a little less omniscient (and on the whole more of a scholar and a gentleman) than the God of fact....

So I fell back upon the empire in my first attempts to unify my life. I would serve the empire. That should be my total significance. There was a Roman touch, I perceive, in this devotion. Just how or where I should serve the empire I had not as yet determined. At times I thought of the civil service, in my more ambitious moments I turned my thoughts to politics. But it was doubtful whether my private expectations made the last a reasonable possibility.

I would serve the empire.

§ 3

And all the while that the first attempts to consolidate, to gather

one's life together into a purpose and a plan of campaign, are going on upon the field of the young man's life, there come and go and come again in the sky above him the threatening clouds, the ethereal cirrus, the red dawns and glowing afternoons of that passion of love which is the source and renewal of being. There are times when that solicitude matters no more than a spring-time sky to a runner who wins towards the post, there are times when its passionate urgency dominates every fact in his world.

§ 4

One must have children and love them passionately before one realizes the deep indignity of accident in life. It is not that I mind so much when unexpected and disconcerting things happen to you or your sisters, but that I mind before they happen. My dreams and anticipations of your lives are all marred by my sense of the huge importance mere chance encounters and incalculable necessities will play in them. And in friendship and still more here, in this central business of love, accident rules it seems to me almost altogether. What personalities you will encounter in life, and have for a chief interest in life, is nearly as much a matter of chance as the drift of a grain of pollen in the pine forest. And once the light hazard has blown it has blown, never to drive again. In other schoolrooms and nurseries, in slum living-rooms perhaps or workhouse wards or palaces, round the other side of the earth, in Canada or Russia or China, other little creatures are trying their small limbs, clutching at things about them with infantile hands, who someday will come into your life with a power and magic monstrous and irrational and irresistible. They will break the limits of your concentrating self, call you out to the service of beauty and the service of the race, sound you to your highest and your lowest, give you your chance to be godlike or filthy, divine or utterly ignoble, react together with you upon the very core and essence of your being. These unknowns are the substance of your fate. You will in extreme intimacy love them, hate them, serve them, struggle with them, and in that interaction the vital force in you and the substance of your days will be spent.

And who they may chance to be and their peculiar quality and

effect is haphazard, utterly beyond designing.

Law and custom conspire with the natural circumstances of man to exaggerate every consequence of this accumulating accident, and make it definite and fatal....

I find it quite impossible now to recall the steps and stages by which this power of sex invaded my life. It seems to me now that it began very much as a gale begins, in catspaws upon the water and little rustlings among the leaves, and then stillness and then a distant soughing again and a pause, and then a wider and longer disturbance and so more and more, with a gathering continuity, until at last the stars were hidden, the heavens were hidden; all the heights and depths of life were obscured by stormy impulses and passionate desires. I suppose that quite at the first there were simple curiosities; no doubt they were vivid at the time but they have left scarcely a trace; there were vague first intimations of a peculiar excitement. I do remember more distinctly phases when there was a going-out from myself towards these things, these interests, and then a reaction of shame and concealment.

And these memories were mixed up with others not sexual at all, and particularly with the perception of beauty in things inanimate, with lights seen at twilight and the tender mysteriousness of the dusk and the confused disturbing scents of flowers in the evening and the enigmatical serene animation of stars in the summer sky....

I think perhaps that my boyhood was exceptionally free from vulgarizing influences in this direction. There were few novels in my father's house and I neither saw nor read any plays until I was near manhood, so that I thought naturally about love and not rather artificially round and about love as so many imaginative young people are trained to do. I fell in love once or twice while I was still quite a boy. These earliest experiences rarely got beyond a sort of dumb awe, a vague, vast, ineffectual desire for self-immolation. For a time I remember I worshipped Lady Ladislaw with all my being. Then I talked to a girl in a train — I forget upon what journey — but I remember very vividly her quick color and a certain roguish smile. I spread my adoration at her feet, fresh and frank. I wanted to write to her. Indeed I wanted to devote all my being to her. I begged hard, but there was someone called Auntie who had to be considered, an

Atropos for that thread of romance.

Then there was a photograph in my father's study of the Delphic Sibyl from the Sistine Chapel, that for a time held my heart, and — Yes, there was a girl in a tobacconist's shop in the Harbury High Street. Drawn by an irresistible impulse I used to go and buy cigarettes — and sometimes converse about the weather. But afterwards in solitude I would meditate tremendous conversations and encounters with her. The cigarettes increased the natural melancholy of my state and led to a reproof from old Henson. Almost always I suppose there is that girl in the tobacconist's shop....

I believe if I made an effort I could disinter some dozens of such memories, more and more faded until the marginal ones would be featureless and all but altogether effaced. As I look back at it now I am struck by an absurd image; it is as if a fish nibbled at this bait and then at that.

Given but the slightest aid from accidental circumstances and any of those slight attractions might have become a power to deflect all my life.

The day of decision arrived when, the Lady Mary Christian came smiling out of the sunshine to me into the pavilion at Burnmore. With that the phase of stirrings and intimations was over for ever in my life. All those other impressions went then to the dusty lumber room from which I now so slightingly disinter them.

§ 5

We five had all been playmates together. There were Lord Maxton, who was killed at Paardeberg while I was in Ladysmith, he was my senior by nearly a year, Philip, who is now Earl Ladislaw and who was about eighteen months younger than I, Mary, my contemporary within eight days, and Guy, whom we regarded as a baby and who was called, apparently on account of some early linguistic efforts, "Brugglesmith." He did his best to avenge his juniority as time passed on by an enormous length of limb. I had more imagination than Maxton and was a good deal better read, so that Mary and I dominated most of the games of Indians and warfare and exploration in which we passed our long days together. When the Christians

were at Burnmore, and they usually spent three or four months in the year there, I had a kind of standing invitation to be with them. Sometimes there would also be two Christian cousins to swell our party, and sometimes there would be a raid of the Fawney children with a detestable governess who was perpetually vociferating reproaches, but these latter were absent-minded, lax young persons, and we did not greatly love them.

It is curious how little I remember of Mary's childhood. All that has happened between us since lies between that and my present self like some luminous impenetrable mist. I know we liked each other, that I was taller than she was and thought her legs unreasonably thin, and that once when I knelt by accident on a dead stick she had brought into an Indian camp we had made near the end of the west shrubbery, she flew at me in a sudden fury, smacked my face, scratched me and had to be suppressed, and was suppressed with extreme difficulty by the united manhood of us three elder boys. Then it was I noted first the blazing blueness of her eyes. She was light and very plucky, so that none of us cared to climb against her, and she was as difficult to hold as an eel. But all these traits and characteristics vanished when she was transformed.

For what seems now a long space of time I had not seen her or any of the family except Philip; it was certainly a year or more, probably two; Maxton was at a crammer's and I think the others must have been in Canada with Lord Ladislaw. Then came some sort of estrangement between him and his wife, and she returned with Mary and Guy to Burnmore and stayed there all through the summer.

I was in a state of transition between the infinitely great and the infinitely little. I had just ceased to be that noble and potent being, that almost statesmanlike personage, a sixth form boy at Harbury, and I was going to be an Oxford undergraduate. Philip and I came down together by the same train from Harbury, I shared the Burnmore dog-cart and luggage cart, and he dropped me at the rectory. I was a long-limbed youngster of seventeen, as tall as I am now, and fair, so fair that I was still boyish-faced while most of my contemporaries and Philip (who favored his father) were at least smudgy with moustaches. With the head-master's valediction and the grave elder-brotherliness of old Henson, and the shrill cheers of a

little crowd of juniors still echoing in my head, I very naturally came home in a mood of exalted gravity, and I can still remember pacing up and down the oblong lawn behind the rockery and the fig-tree wall with my father, talking of my outlook with all the tremendous *savoir faire* that was natural to my age, and noting with a secret gratification that our shoulders were now on a level. No doubt we were discussing Oxford and all that I was to do at Oxford; I don't remember a word of our speech though I recall the exact tint of its color and the distinctive feeling of our measured equal paces in the sunshine....

I must have gone up to Burnmore House the following afternoon. I went up alone and I was sent out through the little door at the end of the big gallery into the garden. In those days Lady Ladislaw had made an Indian pavilion under the tall trees at the east end of the house, and here I found her with her cousin Helena Christian entertaining a mixture of people, a carriageful from Hampton End, the two elder Fawneys and a man in brown who had I think ridden over from Chestoxter Castle. Lady Ladislaw welcomed me with ample graciousness — as though I was a personage. "The children" she said were still at tennis, and as she spoke I saw Guy, grown nearly beyond recognition and then a shining being in white, very straight and graceful, with a big soft hat and overshadowed eyes that smiled, come out from the hurried endearments of the sunflakes under the shadows of the great chestnuts, into the glow of summer light before the pavilion.

"Steve arrived!" she cried, and waved a welcoming racquet.

I do not remember what I said to her or what else she said or what anyone said. But I believe I could paint every detail of her effect. I know that when she came out of the brightness into the shadow of the pavilion it was like a regal condescension, and I know that she was wonderfully self-possessed and helpful with her mother's hospitalities, and that I marvelled I had never before perceived the subtler sweetness in the cadence of her voice. I seem also to remember a severe internal struggle for my self-possession, and that I had to recall my exalted position in the sixth form to save myself from becoming tongue-tied and abashed and awkward and utterly shamed.

You see she had her hair up and very prettily dressed, and those aggressive lean legs of hers had vanished, and she was sheathed in muslin that showed her the most delicately slender and beautiful of young women. And she seemed so radiantly sure of herself!

After our first greeting I do not think I spoke to her or looked at her again throughout the meal. I took things that she handed me with an appearance of supreme indifference, was politely attentive to the elder Miss Fawney, and engaged with Lady Ladislaw and the horsey little man in brown in a discussion of the possibility of mechanical vehicles upon the high road. That was in the early nineties. We were all of opinion that it was impossible to make a sufficiently light engine for the purpose. Afterwards Mary confessed to me how she had been looking forward to our meeting, and how snubbed I had made her feel....

Then a little later than this meeting in the pavilion, though I am not clear now whether it was the same or some subsequent afternoon, we are walking in the sunken garden, and great clouds of purple clematis and some less lavish heliotrope-colored creeper, foam up against the ruddy stone balustrading. Just in front of us a fountain gushes out of a grotto of artificial stalagmite and bathes the pedestal of an absurd little statuette of the God of Love. We are talking almost easily. She looks sideways at my face, already with the quiet controlled watchfulness of a woman interested in a man, she smiles and she talks of flowers and sunshine, the Canadian winter — and with an abrupt transition, of old times we've had together in the shrubbery and the wilderness of bracken out beyond. She seems tremendously grown-up and womanly to me. I am talking my best, and glad, and in a manner scared at the thrill her newly discovered beauty gives me, and keeping up my dignity and coherence with an effort. My attention is constantly being distracted to note how prettily she moves, to wonder why it is I never noticed the sweet fall, the faint delightful whisper of a lisp in her voice before.

We agree about the flowers and the sunshine and the Canadian winter — about everything. "I think so often of those games we used to invent," she declares. "So do I," I say, "so do I." And then with a sudden boldness: "Once I broke a stick of yours, a rotten stick you thought a sound one. Do you remember?"

Then we laugh together and seem to approach across a painful, unnecessary distance that has separated us. It vanishes for ever. “I couldn’t now,” she says, “smack your face like that, Stephen.”

That seems to me a brilliantly daring and delightful thing for her to say, and jolly of her to use my Christian name too! “I believe I scratched,” she adds.

“You never scratched,” I assert with warm conviction. “Never.”

“I did,” she insists and I deny. “You couldn’t.”

“We’re growing up,” she cries. “That’s what has happened to us. We shall never fight again with our hands and feet, never — until death do us part.”

“For better, or worse,” I say, with a sense of wit and enterprise beyond all human precedent.

“For richer, or poorer,” she cries, taking up my challenge with a lifting laugh in her voice.

And then to make it all nothing again, she exclaims at the white lilies that rise against masses of sweet bay along the further wall....

How plainly I can recall it all! How plainly and how brightly! As we came up the broad steps at the further end towards the tennis lawn, she turned suddenly upon me and with a novel assurance of command told me to stand still. “*There*,” she said with a hand out and seemed to survey me with her chin up and her white neck at the level of my eyes. “Yes. A whole step,” she estimated, “and more, taller than I. You will look down on me, Stephen, now, for all the rest of our days.”

“I shall always stand,” I answered, “a step or so below you.”

“No,” she said, “come up to the level. A girl should be smaller than a man. You are a man, Stephen — almost.... You must be near six feet.... Here’s Guy with the box of balls.”

She flitted about the tennis court before me, playing with Philip against Guy and myself. She punished some opening condescensions with a wicked vigor — and presently Guy and I were straining every nerve to save the set. She had a low close serve I remember that seemed perfectly straightforward and simple, and was very difficult to return.

§ 6

All that golden summer on the threshold of my manhood was filled by Mary. I loved her with the love of a boy and a man. Either I was with Mary or I was hoping and planning to be with Mary or I was full of some vivid new impression of her or some enigmatical speech, some pregnant nothing, some glance or gesture engaged and perplexed my mind. In those days I slept the profound sweet sleep of youth, but whenever that deep flow broke towards the shallows, as I sank into it at night and came out of it at morning, I passed through dreams of Mary to and from a world of waking thought of her.

There must have been days of friendly intercourse when it seemed we talked nothings and wandered and meandered among subjects, but always we had our eyes on one another. And afterwards I would spend long hours in recalling and analyzing those nothings, questioning their nothingness, making out of things too submerged and impalpable for the rough drags of recollection, promises and indications. I would invent ingenious things to say, things pushing out suddenly from nothingness to extreme significance. I rehearsed a hundred declarations.

It was easy for us to be very much together. We were very free that summer and life was all leisure. Lady Ladislaw was busied with her own concerns; she sometimes went away for two or three days leaving no one but an attenuated governess with even the shadow of a claim to interfere with Mary. Moreover she was used to seeing me with her children at Burnmore; we were still in her eyes no more than children.... And also perhaps she did not greatly mind if indeed we did a little fall in love together. To her that may have seemed a very natural and slight and transitory possibility....

One afternoon of warm shadows in the wood near the red-lacquered Chinese bridge, we two were alone together and we fell silent. I was trembling and full of a wild courage. I can feel now the exquisite surmise, the doubt of that moment. Our eyes met. She looked up at me with an unwonted touch of fear in her expression and I laid my hands on her. She did not recoil, she stood mute with her lips pressed together, looking at me steadfastly. I can feel that moment now as a tremendous hesitation, blank and yet full of light

and life, like a clear sky in the moment before dawn....

She made a little move towards me. Impulsively, with no word said, we kissed.

§ 7

I would like very much to give you a portrait of Mary as she was in those days. Every portrait I ever had of her I burnt in the sincerity of what was to have been our final separation, and now I have nothing of her in my possession. I suppose that in the files of old illustrated weeklies somewhere, a score of portraits must be findable. Yet photographs have a queer quality of falsehood. They have no movement and always there was a little movement about Mary just as there is always a little scent about flowers. She was slender and graceful, so that she seemed taller than she was, she had beautifully shaped arms and a brightness in her face; it seemed to me always that there was light in her face, more than the light that shone upon it. Her fair, very slightly reddish hair — it was warm like Australian gold — flowed with a sort of joyous bravery back from her low broad forehead; the color under her delicate skin was bright and quick, and her mouth always smiled faintly. There was a peculiar charm for me about her mouth, a whimsicality, a sort of humorous resolve in the way in which the upper lip fell upon the lower and in a faint obliquity that increased with her quickening smile. She spoke with a very clear delicate intonation that made one want to hear her speak again; she often said faintly daring things, and when she did, she had that little catch in the breath — of one who dares. She did not talk hastily; often before she spoke came a brief grave pause. Her eyes were brightly blue except when the spirit of mischief took her and then they became black, and there was something about the upper and lower lids that made them not only the prettiest but the sweetest and kindliest eyes in the world. And she moved with a quiet rapidity, without any needless movements, to do whatever she had a mind to do....

But how impossible it is to convey the personal charm of a human being. I catalogue these things and it is as if she moved about silently behind my stumbling enumeration and smiled at me still, with her

eyes a little darkened, mocking me. That phantom will never be gone from my mind. It was all of these things and none of these things that made me hers, as I have never been any other person's....

We grew up together. The girl of nineteen mingles in my memory with the woman of twenty-five.

Always we were equals, or if anything she was the better of us two. I never made love to her in the commoner sense of the word, a sense in which the woman is conceived of as shy, unawakened, younger, more plastic, and the man as tempting, creating responses, persuading and compelling. We made love to each other as youth should, we were friends lit by a passion.... I think that is the best love. If I could wish your future I would have you love someone neither older and stronger nor younger and weaker than yourself. I would have you have neither a toy nor a devotion, for the one makes the woman contemptible and the other the man. There should be something almost sisterly between you. Love neither a goddess nor a captive woman. But I would wish you a better fate in your love than chanced to me.

Mary was not only naturally far more quick-minded, more swiftly understanding than I, but more widely educated. Mine was the stiff limited education of the English public school and university; I could not speak and read and think French and German as she could for all that I had a pedantic knowledge of the older forms of those tongues; and the classics and mathematics upon which I had spent the substance of my years were indeed of little use to me, have never been of any real use to me, they were ladders too clumsy to carry about and too short to reach anything. My general ideas came from the newspapers and the reviews. She on the other hand had read much, had heard no end of good conversation, the conversation of people who mattered, had thought for herself and had picked the brains of her brothers. Her mother had let her read whatever books she liked, partly because she believed that was the proper thing to do, and partly because it was so much less trouble to be liberal in such things.

We had the gravest conversations.

I do not remember that we talked much of love, though we were very much in love. We kissed; sometimes greatly daring we walked

hand in hand; once I took her in my arms and carried her over a swampy place beyond the Killing Wood, and held her closely to me; that was a great event between us; but we were shy of one another, shy even of very intimate words; and a thousand daring and beautiful things I dreamt of saying to her went unsaid. I do not remember any endearing names from that time. But we jested and shared our humors, shaped our developing ideas in quaint forms to amuse one another and talked — as young men talk together.

We talked of religion; I think she was the first person to thaw the private silences that had kept me bound in these matters even from myself for years. I can still recall her face, a little flushed and coming nearer to mine after avowals and comparisons. "But Stephen," she says; "if none of these things are really true, why do they keep on telling them to us? What is true? What are we for? What is Everything for?"

I remember the awkwardness I felt at these indelicate thrusts into topics I had come to regard as forbidden.

"I suppose there's a sort of truth in them," I said, and then more Siddonsesquely: "endless people wiser than we are — —"

"Yes," she said. "But that doesn't matter to us. Endless people wiser than we are have said one thing, and endless people wiser than we are have said exactly the opposite. It's *we* who have to understand — for ourselves.... We don't understand, Stephen."

I was forced to a choice between faith and denial. But I parried with questions. "Don't you," I asked, "feel there is a God?"

She hesitated. "There is something — something very beautiful," she said and stopped as if her breath had gone. "That is all I know, Stephen...."

And I remember too that we talked endlessly about the things I was to do in the world. I do not remember that we talked about the things she was to do, by some sort of instinct and some sort of dexterity she evaded that, from the very first she had reserves from me, but my career and purpose became as it were the form in which we discussed all the purposes of life. I became Man in her imagination, the protagonist of the world. At first I displayed the modest worthy desire for respectable service that Harbury had taught me, but her clear, sceptical little voice pierced and tore all those

pretences to shreds. “Do some decent public work,” I said, or some such phrase.

“But is that All you want?” I hear her asking. “Is that All you want?”

I lay prone upon the turf and dug up a root of grass with my penknife. “Before I met you it was,” I said.

“And now?”

“I want you.”

“I’m nothing to want. I want you to want all the world.... *Why shouldn’t you?*”

I think I must have talked of the greatness of serving the empire. “Yes, but splendidly,” she insisted. “Not doing little things for other people — who aren’t doing anything at all. I want you to conquer people and lead people.... When I see you, Stephen, sometimes — I almost wish I were a man. In order to be able to do all the things that you are going to do.”

“For you,” I said, “for you.”

I stretched out my hand for hers, and my gesture went disregarded.

She sat rather crouched together with her eyes gazing far away across the great spaces of the park.

“That is what women are for,” she said. “To make men see how splendid life can be. To lift them up — out of a sort of timid grubbiness — —” She turned upon me suddenly. “Stephen,” she said, “promise me. Whatever you become, you promise and swear here and now never to be grey and grubby, never to be humpy and snuffy, never to be respectable and modest and dull and a little fat, like — like everybody. Ever.”

“I swear,” I said.

“By me.”

“By you. No book to kiss! Please, give me your hand.”

§ 8

All through that summer we saw much of each other. I was up at the House perhaps every other day; we young people were supposed to be all in a company together down by the tennis lawns, but indeed

we dispersed and came and went by a kind of tacit understanding, Guy and Philip each with one of the Fawney girls and I with Mary. I put all sorts of constructions upon the freedom I was given with her, but I perceive now that we still seemed scarcely more than children to Lady Ladislaw, and that the idea of our marriage was as inconceivable to her as if we had been brother and sister. Matrimonially I was as impossible as one of the stable boys. All the money I could hope to earn for years to come would not have sufficed even to buy Mary clothes. But as yet we thought little of matters so remote, glad in our wonderful new discovery of love, and when at last I went off to Oxford, albeit the parting moved us to much tenderness and vows and embraces, I had no suspicion that never more in all our lives would Mary and I meet freely and gladly without restriction. Yet so it was. From that day came restraints and difficulties; the shadow of furtiveness fell between us; our correspondence had to be concealed.

I went to Oxford as one goes into exile; she to London. I would post to her so that the letters reached Landor House before lunch time when the sun of Lady Ladislaw came over the horizon, but indeed as yet no one was watching her letters. Afterwards as she moved about she gave me other instructions, and for the most part I wrote to her in envelopes addressed for her by one of the Fawney girls, who was under her spell and made no enquiry for what purpose these envelopes were needed.

To me of course Mary wrote without restraint. All her letters to me were destroyed after our crisis, but some of mine to her she kept for many years; at last they came back to me so that I have them now. And for all their occasional cheapness and crudity, I do not find anything in them to be ashamed of. They reflect, they are chiefly concerned with that search for a career of fine service which was then the chief preoccupation of my mind, the bias is all to a large imperialism, but it is manifest that already the first ripples of a rising tide of criticism against the imperialist movement had reached and were exercising me. In one letter I am explaining that imperialism is not a mere aggressiveness, but the establishment of peace and order throughout half the world. “We may never withdraw,” I wrote with all the confidence of a Foreign Secretary, “from all these great

territories of ours, but we shall stay only to raise their peoples ultimately to an equal citizenship with ourselves." And then in the same letter: "and if I do not devote myself to the Empire what else is there that gives anything like the same opportunity of a purpose in life." I find myself in another tolerantly disposed to "accept socialism," but manifestly hostile to "the narrow mental habits of the socialists." The large note of youth! And in another I am clearly very proud and excited and a little mock-modest over the success of my first two speeches in the Union.

On the whole I like the rather boyish, tremendously serious young man of those letters. An egotist, of course, but what youth was ever anything else? I may write that much freely now, for by this time he is almost as much outside my personality as you or my father. He is the young Stratton, one of a line. I like his gravity; if youth is not grave with all the great spectacle of life opening at its feet, then surely no age need be grave. I love and envy his simplicity and honesty. His sham modesty and so forth are so translucent as scarcely to matter. It is clear I was opening my heart to myself as I opened it to Mary. I wasn't acting to her. I meant what I said. And as I remember her answers she took much the same high tone with me, though her style of writing was far lighter than mine, more easy and witty and less continuous. She flashed and flickered. As for confessed love-making there is very little, — I find at the end of one of my notes after the signature, "I love you, I love you." And she was even more restrained. Such little phrases as "Dear Stevenage" — that was one of her odd names for me— "I wish you were here," or "Dear, *dear* Stevenage," were epistolary events, and I would re-read the blessed wonderful outbreak a hundred times....

Our separation lengthened. There was a queer detached unexpected meeting in London in December, for some afternoon gathering. I was shy and the more disconcerted because she was in winter town clothes that made her seem strange and changed. Then came the devastating intimation that all through the next summer the Ladislaws were to be in Scotland.

I did my boyish utmost to get to Scotland. They were at Lankart near Invermoriston, and the nearest thing I could contrive was to join

a reading party in Skye, a reading party of older men who manifestly had no great desire for me. For more than a year we never met at all, and all sorts of new things happened to us both. I perceived they happened to me, but I did not think they happened to her. Of course we changed. Of course in a measure and relatively we forgot. Of course there were weeks when we never thought of each other at all. Then would come phases of hunger. I remember a little note of hers. "Oh Stevenage," it was scrawled, "perhaps next Easter!" Next Easter was an aching desolation. The blinds of Burnmore House remained drawn; the place was empty except for three old servants on board-wages. The Christians went instead to the Canary Isles, following some occult impulse of Lady Ladislaw's. Lord Ladislaw spent the winter in Italy.

What an empty useless beauty the great Park possessed during those seasons of intermission! There were a score of places in it we had made our own....

Her letters to Oxford would cease for weeks, and suddenly revive and become frequent. Now and then would come a love-letter that seemed to shine like stars as I read it; for the most part they were low-pitched, friendly or humorous letters in a roundish girlish writing that was maturing into a squarely characteristic hand. My letters to her too I suppose varied as greatly. We began to be used to living so apart. There were weeks of silence....

Yet always when I thought of my life as a whole, Mary ruled it. With her alone I had talked of my possible work and purpose; to her alone had I confessed to ambitions beyond such modest worthiness as a public school drills us to affect....

Then the whole sky of my life lit up again with a strange light of excitement and hope. I had a note, glad and serenely friendly, to say they were to spend all the summer at Burnmore.

I remember how I handled and scrutinized that letter, seeking for some intimation that our former intimacy was still alive. We were to meet. How should we meet? How would she look at me? What would she think of me?

Of course it was all different. Our first encounter in this new phase had a quality of extreme disillusionment. The warm living creature, who would whisper, who would kiss with wonderful lips, who would say strange daring things, who had soft hair one might touch with a thrilling and worshipful hand, who changed one at a word or a look into a God of pride, became as if she had been no more than a dream. A self-possessed young aristocrat in white and brown glanced at me from amidst a group of brilliant people on the terrace, nodded as it seemed quite carelessly in acknowledgment of my salutation, and resumed her confident conversation with a tall stooping man, no less a person than Evesham, the Prime Minister. He was lunching at Burnmore on his way across country to the Rileys. I heard that dear laugh of hers, as ready and easy as when she laughed with me. I had not heard it for nearly three years — nor any sound that had its sweetness. "But Mr. Evesham," she was saying, "nowadays we don't believe that sort of thing — —"

"There are a lot of things still for you to believe," says Mr. Evesham beaming. "A lot of things! One's capacity increases. It grows with exercise. Justin will bear me out."

Beyond her stood an undersized, brown-clad middle-aged man with a big head, a dark face and expressive brown eyes fixed now in unrestrained admiration on Mary's laughing face. This then was Justin, the incredibly rich and powerful, whose comprehensive operations could make and break a thousand fortunes in a day. He answered Evesham carelessly, with his gaze still on Mary, and in a voice too low for my straining ears. There was some woman in the group also, but she has left nothing upon my mind whatever except an effect of black and a very decorative green sunshade. She greeted Justin's remark, I remember, with the little yelp of laughter that characterized that set. I think too there was someone else in the group; but I cannot clearly recall who....

Presently as I and Philip made unreal conversation together I saw Mary disengage herself and come towards us. It was as if a princess came towards a beggar. Absurd are the changes of phase between women and men. A year or so ago and all of us had been but "the children" together; now here were I and Philip mere youths still, nobodies, echoes and aspirations, crude promises at the best, and

here was Mary in full flower, as glorious and central as the Hampton Court azaleas in spring.

"And this is Stephen," she said, aglow with happy confidence.

I made no memorable reply, and there was a little pause thick with mute questionings.

"After lunch," she said with her eye on mine, "I am going to measure against you on the steps. I'd hoped — when you weren't looking — I might creep up — —"

"I've taken no advantage," I said.

"You've kept your lead."

Justin had followed her towards us, and now held out a hand to Philip. "Well, Philip my boy," he said, and defined our places. Philip made some introductory gesture with a word or so towards me. Justin glanced at me as one might glance at someone's new dog, gave an expressionless nod to my stiff movement of recognition, and addressed himself at once to Mary.

"Lady Mary," he said, "I've wanted to tell you — —"

I caught her quick eye for a moment and knew she had more to say to me, but neither she nor I had the skill and alacrity to get that said.

"I wanted to tell you," said Justin, "I've found a little Japanese who's done exactly what you wanted with that group of dwarf maples."

She clearly didn't understand.

"But what did I want, Mr. Justin?" she asked.

"Don't say that you forget?" cried Justin. "Oh don't tell me you forget! You wanted a little exact copy of a Japanese house —— I've had it done. Beneath the trees...."

"And so you're back in Burnmore, Mr. Stratton," said Lady Ladislaw intervening between me and their duologue. And I never knew how pleased Mary was with this faithful realization of her passing and forgotten fancy. My hostess greeted me warmly and pressed my hand, smiled mechanically and looked over my shoulder all the while to Mr. Evesham and her company generally, and then came the deep uproar of a gong from the house and we were all moving in groups and couples luncheonward.

Justin walked with Lady Mary, and she was I saw an inch taller

than his squat solidity. A tall lady in rose-pink had taken possession of Guy, Evesham and Lady Ladislaw made the two centres of a straggling group who were bandying recondite political allusions. Then came one or two couples and trios with nothing very much to say and active ears. Philip and I brought up the rear silently and in all humility. Even young Guy had gone over our heads. I was too full of a stupendous realization for any words. Of course, during those years, she had been doing — no end of things! And while I had been just drudging with lectures and books and theorizing about the Empire and what I could do with it, and taking exercise, she had learnt, it seemed — the World.

§ 10

Lunch was in the great dining-room. There was a big table and two smaller ones; we sat down anyhow, but the first comers had grouped themselves about Lady Ladislaw and Evesham and Justin and Mary in a central orb, and I had to drift perforce to one of the satellites. I secured a seat whence I could get a glimpse ever and again over Justin's assiduous shoulders of a delicate profile, and I found myself immediately engaged in answering the innumerable impossible questions of Lady Viping, the widow of terrible old Sir Joshua, that devastating divorce court judge who didn't believe in divorces. His domestic confidences had I think corrupted her mind altogether. She cared for nothing but evidence. She was a rustling, incessant, sandy, peering woman with a lorgnette and rapid, confidential lisping undertones, and she wanted to know who everybody was and how they were related. This kept us turning towards the other tables — and when my information failed she would call upon Sir Godfrey Klavier, who was explaining, rather testily on account of her interruptions, to Philip Christian and a little lady in black and the elder Fawney girl just why he didn't believe Lady Ladislaw's new golf course would succeed. There were two or three other casual people at our table; one of the Roden girls, a young guardsman and, I think, some other man whom I don't clearly remember.

"And so that's the great Mr. Justin," rustled Lady Viping and stared across me.

(I saw Evesham, leaning rather over the table to point some remark at Mary, and noted her lips part to reply.)

"What *is* the word?" insisted Lady Viping like a fly in my ear.

I turned on her guiltily.

"Whether it's brachy," said Lady Viping, "or whether it's dolly — *I* can never remember?"

I guessed she was talking of Justin's head. "Oh! — brachycephalic," I said.

I had lost Mary's answer.

"They say he's a woman hater," said Lady Viping. "It hardly looks like it now, does it?"

"Who?" I asked. "What? — oh! — Justin."

"The great financial cannibal. Suppose she turned him into a philanthropist! Stranger things have happened. Look! — now. The man's face is positively tender."

I hated looking, and I could not help but look. It was as if this detestable old woman was dragging me down and down, down far below all dignity to her own level of a peeping observer. Justin was saying something to Mary in an undertone, something that made her glance up swiftly and at me before she answered, and there I was with my head side by side with those quivering dyed curls, that flighty black bonnet, that remorseless observant lorgnette. I could have sworn aloud at the hopeless indignity of my pose.

I saw Mary color quickly before I looked away.

"Charming, isn't she?" said Lady Viping, and I discovered those infernal glasses were for a moment honoring me. They shut with a click. "Ham," said Lady Viping. "I told him no ham — and now I remember — I like ham. Or rather I like spinach. I forgot the spinach. One has the ham for the spinach, — don't you think? Yes, — tell him. She's a perfect Dresden ornament, Mr. Stratton. She's adorable ... (lorgnette and search for fresh topics). Who is the dark lady with the slight moustache — sitting there next to Guy? Sir Godfrey, who is the dark lady? No, I don't mean Mary Fitton. Over there! Mrs. Roperstone. Ooh. *The* Mrs. Roperstone. (Renewed lorgnette and click.) Yes — ham. With spinach. A lot of spinach. There's Mr. Evesham laughing again. He's greatly amused. Unusual

for him to laugh twice. At least, aloud. (Rustle and adjustment of lorgnette.) Mr. Stratton, don't you think? — exactly like a little shepherdess. Only I can't say I think Mr. Justin is like a shepherd. On the whole, more like a large cloisonné jar. Now Guy would do. As a pair they're beautiful. Pity they're brother and sister. Curious how that boy manages to be big and yet delicate. H'm. Mixed mantel ornaments. Sir Godfrey, how old *is* Mrs. Roperstone?... You never know on principle. I think I shall make Mr. Stratton guess. What do you think, Mr. Stratton?... You never guess on principle! Well, we're all very high principled. (Fresh exploratory movements of the lorgnette.) Mr. Stratton, tell me; is that little peaked man near Lady Ladislaw Mr. Roperstone? I thought as much!"

All this chatter is mixed up in my mind with an unusual sense of hovering attentive menservants, who seemed all of them to my heated imagination to be watching me (and particularly one clean-shaven, reddish-haired, full-faced young man) lest I looked too much at the Lady Mary Christian. Of course they were merely watching our plates and glasses, but my nerves and temper were now in such a state that if my man went off to the buffet to get Sir Godfrey the pickled walnuts, I fancied he went to report the progress of my infatuation, and if a strange face appeared with the cider cup, that this was a new observer come to mark the revelation of my behavior. My food embarrassed me. I found hidden meanings in the talk of the Roden girl and her guardsman, and an ironical discovery in Sir Godfrey's eye....

I felt indignant with Mary. I felt she disowned me and deserted me and repudiated me, that she ought in some manner to have recognized me. I gave her no credit for her speech to me before the lunch, or her promise to measure against me again. I blinded myself to all her frank friendliness. I felt she ought not to notice Justin, ought not to answer him....

Clearly she liked those men to flatter her, she liked it....

I remember too, so that I must have noted it and felt it then as a thing perceived for the first time, the large dignity of the room, the tall windows and splendid rich curtains, the darkened Hoppners upon the walls. I noted too the quality and abundance of the table things, and there were grapes and peaches, strawberries, cherries and green

almonds, piled lavishly above the waiting dessert plates with the golden knives and forks, upon a table in the sunshine of the great bay. The very sunshine filtered through the tall narrow panes from the great chestnut trees without, seemed of a different quality from the common light of day....

I felt like a poor relation. I sympathized with Anarchists. We had come out of the Park now finally, both Mary and I — into this....

"Mr. Stratton I am sure agrees with me."

For a time I had been marooned conversationally, and Lady Viping had engaged Sir Godfrey. Evidently he was refractory and she was back at me.

"Look at it now in profile," she said, and directed me once more to that unendurable grouping. Justin again!

"It's a heavy face," I said.

"It's a powerful face. I wouldn't care anyhow to be up against it — as people say." And the lorgnette shut with a click. "What is this? Peaches! — Yes, and give me some cream." ...

I hovered long for that measuring I had been promised on the steps, but either Mary had forgotten or she deemed it wiser to forget.

§ 11

I took my leave of Lady Ladislaw when the departure of Evesham broke the party into dispersing fragments. I started down the drive towards the rectory and then vaulted the railings by the paddock and struck across beyond the mere. I could not go home with the immense burthen of thought and new ideas and emotions that had come upon me. I felt confused and shattered to incoherence by the new quality of Mary's atmosphere. I turned my steps towards the wilder, lonelier part of the park beyond the Killing Wood, and lay down in a wide space of grass between two divergent thickets of bracken, and remained there for a very long time.

There it was in the park that for the first time I pitted myself against life upon a definite issue, and prepared my first experience of defeat. "I *will* have her," I said, hammering at the turf with my fist. "I will. I do not care if I give all my life...."

Then I lay still and bit the sweetness out of joints of grass, and presently thought and planned.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

The Marriage of the Lady Mary Christian

§ 1

For three or four days I could get no word with Mary. I could not now come and go as I had been able to do in the days when we were still "the children." I could not work, I could not rest, I prowled as near as I could to Burnmore House hoping for some glimpse of her, waiting for the moment when I could decently present myself again at the house.

When at last I called, Justin had gone and things had some flavor of the ancient time. Lady Ladislaw received me with an airy intimacy, all the careful responsibility of her luncheon party manner thrown aside. "And how goes Cambridge?" she sang, sailing through the great saloon towards me, and I thought that for the occasion Cambridge instead of Oxford would serve sufficiently well. "You'll find them all at tennis," said Lady Ladislaw, and waved me on to the gardens. There I found all four of them and had to wait until their set was finished.

"Mary," I said at the first chance, "are we never to talk again?"

"It's all different," she said.

"I am dying to talk to you — as we used to talk."

"And I — Stevenage. But —— You see?"

"Next time I come," I said, "I shall bring you a letter. There is so much — —"

"No," she said. "Can't you get up in the morning? Very early — five or six. No one is up until ever so late."

"I'd stay up all night."

"Serve!" said Maxton, who was playing the two of us and had stopped I think to tighten a shoe.

Things conspired against any more intimacy for a time. But we got our moment on the way to tea. She glanced back at Philip, who was loosening the net, and then forward to estimate the distance of

Maxton and Guy. “They’re all three going,” she said, “after Tuesday. Then — before six.”

“Wednesday?”

“Yes.”

“Suppose after all,” she threw out, “I can’t come.”

“Fortunes of war.”

“If I can’t come one morning I may come another,” she spoke hastily, and I perceived that Guy and Maxton had turned and were waiting for us.

“You know the old Ice House?”

“Towards the gardens?”

“Yes. On the further side. Don’t come by the road, come across by the end of the mere. Lie in the bracken until you see me coming.... I’ve not played tennis a dozen times this year. Not half a dozen.”

This last was for the boys.

“You’ve played twenty times at least since you’ve been here,” said Guy, with the simple bluntness of a brother. “I’m certain.”

§ 2

To this day a dewy morning in late August brings back the thought of Mary and those stolen meetings. I have the minutest recollection of the misty bloom upon the turf, and the ragged, filmy carpet of gossamer on either hand, of the warm wetness of every little blade and blossom and of the little scraps and seeds of grass upon my soaking and discolored boots. Our footsteps were dark green upon the dew-grey grass. And I feel the same hungry freshness again at the thought of those stolen meetings. Presently came the sunrise, blinding, warming, dew-dispelling arrows of gold smiting through the tree stems, a flood of light foaming over the bracken and gilding the under sides of the branches. Everything is different and distinctive in those opening hours; everything has a different value from what it has by day. All the little things upon the ground, fallen branches, tussocks, wood-piles, have a peculiar intensity and importance, seem magnified, because of the length of their shadows in the slanting rays, and all the great trees seem lifted above the light

and merged with the sky. And at last, a cool grey outline against the blaze and with a glancing iridescent halo about her, comes Mary, flitting, adventurous, friendly, wonderful.

"Oh Stevenage!" she cries, "to see you again!"

We each hold out both our hands and clasp and hesitate and rather shyly kiss.

"Come!" she says, "we can talk for an hour. It's still not six. And there is a fallen branch where we can sit and put our feet out of the wet. Oh! it's so good to be out of things again — clean out of things — with you. Look! there is a stag watching us."

"You're glad to be with me?" I ask, jealous of the very sunrise.

"I am always glad," she says, "to be with you. Why don't we always get up at dawn, Stevenage, every day of our lives?"

We go rustling through the grass to the prostrate timber she has chosen. (I can remember even the thin bracelet on the wrist of the hand that lifted her skirt.) I help her to clamber into a comfortable fork from which her feet can swing....

Such fragments as this are as bright, as undimmed, as if we had met this morning. But then comes our conversation, and that I find vague and irregularly obliterated. But I think I must have urged her to say she loved me, and beat about the bush of that declaration, too fearful to put my heart's wish to the issue, that she would promise to wait three years for me — until I could prove it was not madness for her to marry me. "I have been thinking of it all night and every night since I have been here," I said. "Somehow I will do something. In some way — I will get hold of things. Believe me! — with all my strength."

I was standing between the forking boughs, and she was looking down upon me.

"Stephen dear," she said, "dear, dear Boy; I have never wanted to kiss you so much in all my life. Dear, come close to me."

She bent her fresh young face down to mine, her fingers were in my hair.

"My Knight," she whispered close to me. "My beautiful young Knight."

I whispered back and touched her dew fresh lips....

“And tell me what you would do to conquer the world for me?” she asked.

I cannot remember now a word of all the vague threatenings against the sundering universe with which I replied. Her hand was on my shoulder as she listened....

But I do know that even on this first morning she left me with a sense of beautiful unreality, of having dipped for some precious moments into heroic gossamer. All my world subjugation seemed already as evanescent as the morning haze and the vanishing dews as I stood, a little hidden in the shadows of the Killing Wood and ready to plunge back at the first hint of an observer, and watched her slender whiteness flit circumspectly towards the house.

§ 3

Our next three or four meetings are not so clearly defined. We did not meet every morning for fear that her early rising should seem too punctual to be no more than a chance impulse, nor did we go to the same place. But there stands out very clearly a conversation in a different mood. We had met at the sham ruins at the far end of the great shrubbery, a huge shattered Corinthian portico of rather damaged stucco giving wide views of the hills towards Alfridsham between its three erect pillars, and affording a dry seat upon its fallen ones. It was an overcast morning, I remember probably the hour was earlier; a kind of twilight clearness made the world seem strange and the bushes and trees between us and the house very heavy and still and dark. And we were at cross purpose, for now it was becoming clear to me that Mary did not mean to marry me, that she dreaded making any promise to me for the future, that all the heroic common cause I wanted with her, was quite alien to her dreams.

“But Mary,” I said looking at her colorless delicate face, “don’t you love me? Don’t you want me?”

“You know I love you, Stevenage,” she said. “You know.”

“But if two people love one another, they want to be always together, they want to belong to each other.”

She looked at me with her face very intent upon her meaning. “Stevenage,” she said after one of those steadfast pauses of hers, “I

want to belong to myself."

"Naturally," I said with an air of disposing of an argument, and then paused.

"Why should one have to tie oneself always to one other human being?" she asked. "Why must it be like that?"

I do not remember how I tried to meet this extraordinary idea. "One loves," I may have said. The subtle scepticisms of her mind went altogether beyond my habits of thinking; it had never occurred to me that there was any other way of living except in these voluntary and involuntary mutual servitudes in which men and women live and die. "If you love me," I urged, "if you love me —— I want nothing better in all my life but to love and serve and keep you and make you happy."

She surveyed me and weighed my words against her own.

"I love meeting you," she said. "I love your going because it means that afterwards you will come again. I love this — this slipping out to you. But up there, there is a room in the house that is *my* place — me — my own. Nobody follows me there. I want to go on living, Stevenage, just as I am living now. I don't want to become someone's certain possession, to be just usual and familiar to anyone. No, not even to you."

"But if you love," I cried.

"To you least of all. Don't you see? — I want to be wonderful to you, Stevenage, more than to anyone. I want — I want always to make your heart beat faster. I want always to be coming to you with my own heart beating faster. Always and always I want it to be like that. Just as it has been on these mornings. It has been beautiful — altogether beautiful."

"Yes," I said, rather helplessly, and struggled with great issues I had never faced before.

"It isn't," I said, "how people live."

"It is how I want to live," said Mary.

"It isn't the way life goes."

"I want it to be. Why shouldn't it be? Why at any rate shouldn't it be for me?"

I made some desperate schemes to grow suddenly rich and powerful, and I learnt for the first time my true economic value. Already my father and I had been discussing my prospects in life and he had been finding me vague and difficult. I was full of large political intentions, but so far I had made no definite plans for a living that would render my political ambitions possible. It was becoming apparent to me that for a poor man in England, the only possible route to political distinction is the bar, and I was doing my best to reconcile myself to the years of waiting and practice that would have to precede my political début.

My father disliked the law. And I do not think it reconciled him to the idea of my being a barrister that afterwards I hoped to become a politician. "It isn't in our temperament, Stephen," he said. "It's a pushing, bullying, cramming, base life. I don't see you succeeding there, and I don't see myself rejoicing even if you do succeed. You have to shout, and Strattons don't shout; you have to be smart and tricky and there's never been a smart and tricky Stratton yet; you have to snatch opportunities and get the better of the people and misrepresent the realities of every case you touch. You're a paid misrepresenter. They say you'll get a fellowship, Stephen. Why not stay up, and do some thinking for a year or so. There'll be enough to keep you. Write a little."

"The bar," I said, "is only a means to an end."

"If you succeed."

"If I succeed. One has to take the chances of life everywhere."

"And what is the end?"

"Constructive statesmanship."

"Not in that way," said my father, pouring himself a second glass of port, and turned over my high-sounding phrase with a faint hint of distaste; "Constructive Statesmanship. No. Once a barrister always a barrister. You'll only be a party politician.... Vulgar men.... Vulgar.... If you succeed that is...."

He criticized me but he did not oppose me, and already in the beginning of the summer we had settled that I should be called to the bar.

Now suddenly I wanted to go back upon all these determinations.

I began to demand in the intellectual slang of the time "more actuality," and to amaze my father with talk about empire makers and the greatness of Lord Strathcona and Cecil Rhodes. Why, I asked, shouldn't I travel for a year in search of opportunity? At Oxford I had made acquaintance with a son of Pramley's, the big Mexican and Borneo man, and to him I wrote, apropos of a half-forgotten midnight talk in the rooms of some common friend. He wrote back with the suggestion that I should go and talk to his father, and I tore myself away from Mary and went up to see that great exploiter of undeveloped possibilities and have one of the most illuminating and humiliating conversations in the world. He was, I remember, a little pale-complexioned, slow-speaking man with a humorous blue eye, a faint, just perceptible northern accent and a trick of keeping silent for a moment after you had finished speaking, and he talked to me as one might talk to a child of eight who wanted to know how one could become a commander-in-chief. His son had evidently emphasized my Union reputation, and he would have been quite willing, I perceived, to give me employment if I had displayed the slightest intelligence or ability in any utilizable direction. But quite dreadfully he sounded my equipment with me and showed me the emptiness of my stores.

"You want some way that gives you a chance of growing rich rapidly," he said. "Aye. It's not a bad idea. But there's others, you know, have tried that game before ye.

"You don't want riches just for riches but for an end. Aye! Aye! It's the spending attracts ye. You'd not have me think you'd the sin of avarice. I'm clear on that about ye.

"Well," he explained, "it's all one of three things we do, you know — prospecting and forestalling and — just stealing, and the only respectable way is prospecting. You'd prefer the respectable way, I suppose?... I knew ye would. Well, let's see what chances ye have."

And he began to probe my practical knowledge. It was like an unfit man stripping for a medical inspection. Did I know anything of oil, of rubber, of sugar, of substances generally, had I studied mineralogy or geology, had I any ideas of industrial processes, of technical chemistry, of rare minerals, of labor problems and the

handling of alien labor, of the economics of railway management or of camping out in dry, thinly populated countries, or again could I maybe speak Spanish or Italian or Russian? The little dons who career about Oxford afoot and awheel, wearing old gowns and mortarboards, giggling over Spooner's latest, and being tremendous "characters" in the intervals of concocting the ruling-class mind, had turned my mind away from such matters altogether. I had left that sort of thing to Germans and east-end Jews and young men from the upper-grade board schools of Sheffield and Birmingham. I was made to realize appalling wildernesses of ignorance....

"You see," said old Pramley, "you don't seem to know anything whatever. It's a deeficulty. It'll stand in your way a little now, though no doubt you'd be quick at the uptake — after all the education they've given ye.... But it stands in your way, if ye think of setting out to do something large and effective, just immediately...."

Moreover it came out, I forget now how, that I hadn't clearly grasped the difference between cumulative and non-cumulative preference shares....

I remember too how I dined alone that evening in a mood between frantic exasperation and utter abasement in the window of the Mediated Universities Club, of which I was a junior member under the undergraduate rule. And I lay awake all night in one of the austere club bedrooms, saying to old Pramley a number of extremely able and penetrating things that had unhappily not occurred to me during the progress of our interview. I didn't go back to Burnmore for several days. I had set my heart on achieving something, on returning with some earnest of the great attack I was to make upon the separating great world between myself and Mary. I am far enough off now from that angry and passionate youngster to smile at the thought that my subjugation of things in general and high finance in particular took at last the form of proposing to go into the office of Bean, Medhurst, Stockton, and Schnadhorst upon half commission terms. I was awaiting my father's reply to this startling new suggestion when I got a telegram from Mary. "We are going to Scotland unexpectedly. Come down and see me." I went home instantly, and told my father I had come to talk things over with him. A note from Mary lay upon the hall-table as I came in and

encountered my father. “I thought it better to come down to you,” I said with my glance roving to find that, and then I met his eye. It wasn’t altogether an unkindly eye, but I winced dishonestly.

“Talking is better for all sorts of things,” said my father, and wanted to know if the weather had been as hot in London as it had been in Burnmore.

Mary’s note was in pencil, scribbled hastily. I was to wait after eleven that night near the great rose bushes behind the pavilion. Long before eleven I was there, on a seat in a thick shadow looking across great lakes of moonlight towards the phantom statuary of the Italianate garden and the dark laurels that partly masked the house. I waited nearly an hour, an hour of stillness and small creepings and cheepings and goings to and fro among the branches.

In the bushes near by me a little green glow-worm shared my vigil.

And then, wrapped about in a dark velvet cloak, still in her white dinner dress, with shining, gleaming, glancing stones about her dear throat, warm and wonderful and glowing and daring, Mary came flitting out of the shadows to me.

“My dear,” she whispered, panting and withdrawing a little from our first passionate embrace, “Oh my dear!... How did I come? Twice before, when I was a girl, I got out this way. By the corner of the conservatory and down the laundry wall. You can’t see from here, but it’s easy — easy. There’s a tree that helps. And now I have come that way to you. *You!*...

“Oh! love me, my Stephen, love me, dear. Love me as if we were never to love again. Am I beautiful, my dear? Am I beautiful in the moonlight? Tell me!...

“Perhaps this is the night of our lives, dear! Perhaps never again will you and I be happy!...

“But the wonder, dear, the beauty! Isn’t it still? It’s as if nothing really stood solid and dry. As if everything floated....

“Everyone in all the world has gone to sleep to-night and left the world to us. Come! Come this way and peep at the house, there. Stoop — under the branches. See, not a light is left! And all its blinds are drawn and its eyes shut. One window is open, *my* little window,

Stephen! but that is in the shadow where that creeper makes everything black.

"Along here a little further is night-stock. Now — Now! Sniff, Stephen! Sniff! The scent of it! It lies — like a bank of scented air.... And Stephen, there! Look!... A star — a star without a sound, falling out of the blue! It's gone!"

There was her dear face close to mine, soft under the soft moonlight, and the breath of her sweet speech mingled with the scent of the night-stock....

That was indeed the most beautiful night of my life, a night of moonlight and cool fragrance and adventurous excitement. We were transported out of this old world of dusty limitations; it was as if for those hours the curse of man was lifted from our lives. No one discovered us, no evil thing came near us. For a long time we lay close in one another's arms upon a bank of thyme. Our heads were close together; her eyelashes swept my cheek, we spoke rarely and in soft whispers, and our hearts were beating, beating. We were as solemn as great mountains and as innocent as sleeping children. Our kisses were kisses of moonlight. And it seemed to me that nothing that had ever happened or could happen afterwards, mattered against that happiness....

It was nearly three when at last I came back into my father's garden. No one had missed me from my room and the house was all asleep, but I could not get in because I had closed a latch behind me, and so I stayed in the little arbor until day, watching the day break upon long beaches of pale cloud over the hills towards Alfridsham. I slept at last with my head upon my arms upon the stone table, until the noise of shooting bolts and doors being unlocked roused me to watch my chance and slip back again into the house, and up the shuttered darkened staircase to my tranquil, undisturbed bedroom.

§ 5

It was in the vein of something evasive in Mary's character that she let me hear first of her engagement to Justin through the *Times*. Away there in Scotland she got I suppose new perspectives, new ideas; the glow of our immediate passion faded. The thing must have

been drawing in upon her for some time. Perhaps she had meant to tell me of it all that night when she had summoned me to Burnmore. Looking back now I am the more persuaded that she did. But the thing came to me in London with the effect of an immense treachery. Within a day or so of the newspaper's announcement she had written me a long letter answering some argument of mine, and saying nothing whatever of the people about her. Even then Justin must have been asking her to marry him. Her mind must have been full of that question. Then came a storm of disappointment, humiliation and anger with this realization. I can still feel myself writing and destroying letters to her, letters of satire, of protest. Oddly enough I cannot recall the letter that at last I sent her, but it is eloquent of the weak boyishness of my position that I sent it in our usual furtive manner, accepted every precaution that confessed the impossibility of our relationship. "No," she scribbled back, "you do not understand. I cannot write. I must talk to you."

We had a secret meeting.

With Beatrice Normandy's connivance she managed to get away for the better part of the day, and we spent a long morning in argument in the Botanical Gardens — that obvious solitude — and afterwards we lunched upon ham and ginger beer at a little open-air restaurant near the Broad Walk and talked on until nearly four. We were so young that I think we both felt, beneath our very real and vivid emotions, a gratifying sense of romantic resourcefulness in this prolonged discussion. There is something ridiculously petty and imitative about youth, something too, naïvely noble and adventurous. I can never determine if older people are less generous and imaginative or merely less absurd. I still recall the autumnal melancholy of that queer, neglected-looking place, in which I had never been before, and which I have never revisited — a memory of walking along narrow garden paths beside queer leaf-choked artificial channels of water under yellow-tinted trees, of rustic bridges going nowhere in particular, and of a kind of brickwork ruined castle, greatly decayed and ivy-grown, in which we sat for a long time looking out upon a lawn and a wide gravel path leading to a colossal frontage of conservatory.

I must have been resentful and bitter in the beginning of that talk.

I do not remember that I had any command of the situation or did anything but protest throughout that day. I was too full of the egotism of the young lover to mark Mary's moods and feelings. It was only afterwards that I came to understand that she was not wilfully and deliberately following the course that was to separate us, that she was taking it with hesitations and regrets. Yet she spoke plainly enough, she spoke with a manifest sincerity of feeling. And while I had neither the grasp nor the subtlety to get behind her mind I perceive now as I think things out that Lady Ladislaw had both watched and acted, had determined her daughter's ideas, sown her mind with suggestions, imposed upon her a conception of her situation that now dominated all her thoughts.

"Dear Stephen," reiterated Mary, "I love you. I do, clearly, definitely, deliberately love you. Haven't I told you that? Haven't I made that plain to you?"

"But you are going to marry Justin!"

"Stephen dear, can I possibly marry you? Can I?"

"Why not? Why not make the adventure of life with me? Dare!"

She looked down on me. She was sitting upon a parapet of the brickwork and I was below her. She seemed to be weighing possibilities.

"Why not?" I cried. "Even now. Why not run away with me, throw our two lives together? Do as lovers have dared to do since the beginning of things! Let us go somewhere together — —"

"But Stephen," she asked softly, "*where*?"

"Anywhere!"

She spoke as an elder might do to a child. "No! tell me where — exactly. Where would it be? Where should we go? How should we live? Tell me. Make me see it, Stephen."

"You are too cruel to me, Mary," I said. "How can I — on the spur of the moment — arrange —— ?"

"But dear, suppose it was somewhere very grimy and narrow! Something — like some of those back streets I came through to get here. Suppose it was some dreadful place. And you had no money. And we were both worried and miserable. One gets ill in such places. If I loved you, Stephen — I mean if you and I — if you and I were to

be together, I should want it to be in sunshine, I should want it to be among beautiful forests and mountains. Somewhere very beautiful....”

“Why not?”

“Because — to-day I know. There are no such places in the world for us. Stephen, they are dreams.”

“For three years now,” I said, “I have dreamed such dreams.

“Oh!” I cried out, stung by my own words, “but this is cowardice! Why should we submit to this old world! Why should we give up — things you have dreamed as well as I! You said once — to hear my voice — calling in the morning.... Let us take each other, Mary, now. *Now!* Let us take each other, and” — I still remember my impotent phrase— “afterwards count the cost!”

“If I were a queen,” said Mary. “But you see I am not a queen.” ...

So we talked in fragments and snatches of argument, and all she said made me see more clearly the large hopelessness of my desire. “At least,” I urged, “do not marry Justin now. Give me a chance. Give me three years, Mary, three short years, to work, to do something!”

She knew so clearly now the quality of her own intentions.

“Dear Stephen,” she explained, “if I were to come away with you and marry you, in just a little time I should cease to be your lover, I should be your squaw. I should have to share your worries and make your coffee — and disappoint you, disappoint you and fail you in a hundred ways. Think! Should I be any good as a squaw? How can one love when one knows the coffee isn’t what it should be, and one is giving one’s lover indigestion? And I don’t *want* to be your squaw. I don’t want that at all. It isn’t how I feel for you. I don’t *want* to be your servant and your possession.”

“But you will be Justin’s — squaw, you are going to marry him!”

“That is all different, Stevenage. Between him and me there will be space, air, dignity, endless servants — —”

“But,” I choked. “You! He! He will make love to you, Mary.”

“You don’t understand, Stephen.”

“He will make love to you, Mary. Mary! don’t you understand? These things —— We’ve never talked of them.... You will bear him children!”

“No,” she said.

“But — —”

“No. He promises. Stephen, — I am to own myself.”

“But — He marries you!”

“Yes. Because he — he admires me. He cannot live without me. He loves my company. He loves to be seen with me. He wants me with him to enjoy all the things he has. Can’t you understand, Stephen?”

“But do you mean —— ?”

Our eyes met.

“Stephen,” she said, “I swear.”

“But —— He hopes.”

“I don’t care. He has promised. I have his promise. I shall be free. Oh! I shall be free — free! He is a different man from you, Stephen. He isn’t so fierce; he isn’t so greedy.”

“But it parts us!”

“Only from impossible things.”

“It parts us.”

“It does not even part us, Stevenage. We shall see one another! we shall talk to one another.”

“I shall lose you.”

“I shall keep you.”

“But I — do you expect me to be content with *this*?”

“I will make you content. Oh! Stephen dear, can’t there be love — love without this clutching, this gripping, this carrying off?”

“You will be carried altogether out of my world.”

“If I thought that, Stephen, indeed I would not marry him.”

But I insisted we should be parted, and parted in the end for ever, and there I was the wiser of the two. I knew the insatiable urgency within myself. I knew that if I continued to meet Mary I should continue to desire her until I possessed her altogether.

§ 6

I cannot reproduce with any greater exactness than this the quality

and gist of our day-long conversation. Between us was a deep affection, and instinctive attraction, and our mental temperaments and our fundamental ideas were profoundly incompatible. We were both still very young in quality, we had scarcely begun to think ourselves out, we were greatly swayed by the suggestion of our circumstances, complex, incoherent and formless emotions confused our minds. But I see now that in us there struggled vast creative forces, forces that through a long future, in forms as yet undreamt of, must needs mould the destiny of our race. Far more than Mary I was accepting the conventions of our time. It seemed to me not merely reasonable but necessary that because she loved me she should place her life in my youthful and inexpert keeping, share my struggles and the real hardships they would have meant for her, devote herself to my happiness, bear me children, be my inspiration in imaginative moments, my squaw, helper and possession through the whole twenty-four hours of every day, and incidentally somehow rear whatever family we happened to produce, and I was still amazed in the depths of my being that she did not reciprocate this simple and comprehensive intention. I was ready enough I thought for equivalent sacrifices. I was prepared to give my whole life, subordinate all my ambitions, to the effort to maintain our home. If only I could have her, have her for my own, I was ready to pledge every hour I had still to live to that service. It seemed mere perversity to me then that she should turn even such vows as that against me.

"But I don't want it, Stevenage," she said. "I don't want it. I want you to go on to the service of the empire, I want to see you do great things, do all the things we've talked about and written about. Don't you see how much better that is for you and for me — and for the world and our lives? I don't want you to become a horrible little specialist in feeding and keeping me."

"Then — then *wait* for me!" I cried.

"But — I want to live myself! I don't want to wait. I want a great house, I want a great position, I want space and freedom. I want to have clothes — and be as splendid as your career is going to be. I want to be a great and shining lady in your life. I can't always live as I do now, dependent on my mother, whirled about by her movements, living in her light. Why should I be just a hard-up Vestal

Virgin, Stephen, in your honor? You will not be able to marry me for years and years and years — unless you neglect your work, unless you throw away everything that is worth having between us in order just to get me."

"But I want *you*, Mary," I cried, drumming at the little green table with my fist. "I want you. I want nothing else in all the world unless it has to do with you."

"You've got me — as much as anyone will ever have me. You'll always have me. Always I will write to you, talk to you, watch you. Why are you so greedy, Stephen? Why are you so ignoble? If I were to come now and marry you, it wouldn't help you. It would turn you into — a wife-keeper, into the sort of uninteresting preoccupied man one sees running after and gloating over the woman he's bought — at the price of his money and his dignity — and everything.... It's not proper for a man to live so for a woman and her children. It's dwarfish. It's enslaving. It's — it's indecent. Stephen! I'd hate you so." ...

§ 7

We parted at last at a cab-rank near a bridge over the Canal at the western end of Park Village. I remember that I made a last appeal to her as we walked towards it, and that we loitered on the bridge, careless of who might see us there, in a final conflict of our wills. "Before it is too late, Mary, dear," I said.

She shook her head, her white lips pressed together.

"But after the things that have happened. That night — the moonlight!"

"It's not fair," she said, "for you to talk of that. It isn't fair."

"But Mary. This is parting. This indeed is parting."

She answered never a word.

"Then at least talk to me again for one time more."

"Afterwards," she said. "Afterwards I will talk to you. Don't make things too hard for me, Stephen."

"If I could I would make this impossible. It's — it's hateful."

She turned to the kerb, and for a second or so we stood there without speaking. Then I beckoned to a hansom.

She told me Beatrice Normandy's address.

I helped her into the cab. "Good-bye," I said with a weak affectation of an everyday separation, and I turned to the cabman with her instructions.

Then again we looked at one another. The cabman waited. "All right, sir?" he asked.

"Go ahead!" I said, and lifted my hat to the little white face within.

I watched the cab until it vanished round the curve of the road. Then I turned about to a world that had become very large and empty and meaningless.

§ 8

I struggled feebly to arrest the course of events. I wrote Mary some violent and bitter letters. I treated her as though she alone were responsible for my life and hers; I said she had diverted my energies, betrayed me, ruined my life. I hinted she was cold-blooded, mercenary, shameless. Someday you, with that quick temper of yours and your power of expression, will understand that impulse to write, to pour out a passionately unjust interpretation of some nearly intolerable situation, and it is not the least of all the things I owe to Mary that she understood my passion and forgave those letters and forgot them. I tried twice to go and see her. But I do not think I need tell you, little son, of these self-inflicted humiliations and degradations. An angry man is none the less a pitiful man because he is injurious. The hope that had held together all the project of my life was gone, and all my thoughts and emotions lay scattered in confusion....

You see, my little son, there are two sorts of love; we use one name for very different things. The love that a father bears his children, that a mother feels, that comes sometimes, a strange brightness and tenderness that is half pain, at the revelation of some touching aspect of one long known to one, at the sight of a wife bent with fatigue and unsuspicious of one's presence, at the wretchedness and perplexity of some wrong-doing brother, or at an old servant's unanticipated tears, that is love — like the love God must bear us.

That is the love we must spread from those of our marrow until it reaches out to all mankind, that will some day reach out to all mankind. But the love of a young man for a woman takes this quality only in rare moments of illumination and complete assurance. My love for Mary was a demand, it was a wanton claim I scored the more deeply against her for every moment of happiness she gave me. I see now that as I emerged from the first abjection of my admiration and began to feel assured of her affection, I meant nothing by her but to possess her, I did not want her to be happy as I want you to be happy even at the price of my life; I wanted her. I wanted her as barbarians want a hunted enemy, alive or dead. It was a flaming jealousy to have her mine. That granted, then I was prepared for all devotions....

This is how men love women. Almost as exclusively and fiercely I think do women love men. And the deepest question before humanity is just how far this jealous greed may be subdued to a more generous passion. The fierce jealousy of men for women and women for men is the very heart of all our social jealousies, the underlying tension of this crowded modern life that has grown out of the ampler, simpler, ancient life of men. That is why we compete against one another so bitterly, refuse association and generous co-operations, keep the struggle for existence hard and bitter, hamper and subordinate the women as they in their turn would if they could hamper and subordinate the men — because each must thoroughly have his own.

And I knew my own heart too well to have any faith in Justin and his word. He was taking what he could, and his mind would never rest until some day he had all. I had seen him only once, but the heavy and resolute profile above his bent back and slender shoulders stuck in my memory.

If he was cruel to Mary, I told her, or broke his least promise to her, I should kill him.

§ 9

My distress grew rather than diminished in the days immediately before her marriage, and that day itself stands out by itself in my

memory, a day of wandering and passionate unrest. My imagination tormented me with thoughts of Justin as a perpetual privileged wooer.

Well, well, — I will not tell you, I will not write the ugly mockeries my imagination conjured up. I was constantly on the verge of talking and cursing aloud to myself, or striking aimlessly at nothing with clenched fists. I was too stupid to leave London, too disturbed for work or any distraction of my mind. I wandered about the streets of London all day. In the morning I came near going to the church and making some preposterous interruptions. And I remember discovering three or four carriages adorned with white favors and a little waiting crowd outside that extinguisher-spired place at the top of Regent Street, and wondering for a moment or so at their common preoccupation, and then understanding. Of course, another marriage! Of all devilish institutions!

What was I to do with my life now? What was to become of my life? I can still recall the sense of blank unanswerableness with which these questions dominated my mind, and associated with it is an effect of myself as a small human being, singular and apart, wandering through a number of London landscapes. At one time I was in a great grey smoke-rimmed autumnal space of park, much cut up by railings and worn by cricket pitches, far away from any idea of the Thames, and in the distance over the tops of trees I discovered perplexingly the clustering masts and spars of ships. I have never seen that place since. Then the Angel at Islington is absurdly mixed up with the distresses of this day. I attempted some great detour thence, and found myself with a dumb irritation returning to the place from another direction. I remember too a wide street over which passes a thundering railway bridge borne upon colossal rounded pillars of iron, and carrying in white and blue some big advertisement, I think of the *Daily Telegraph*. Near there I thought a crowd was gathered about the victim of some accident, and thrusting myself among the people with a vague idea of help, discovered a man selling a remedy for corns. And somewhere about this north region I discovered I was faint with hunger, and got some bread and cheese and beer in a gaudily decorated saloon bar with a sanded floor. I resisted a monstrous impulse to stay in that place and drink

myself into inactivity and stupefaction with beer.

Then for a long time I sat upon an iron seat near some flower beds in a kind of garden that had the headstones of graves arranged in a row against a yellow brick wall. The place was flooded with the amber sunshine of a September afternoon. I shared the seat with a nursemaid in charge of a perambulator and several scuffling uneasy children, and I kept repeating to myself: “By now it is all over. The thing is done.”

My sense of the enormity of London increased with the twilight, and began to prevail a little against my intense personal wretchedness. I remember wastes of building enterprise, interminable vistas of wide dark streets, with passing trams, and here and there at strategic corners coruscating groups of shops. And somewhere I came along a narrow street suddenly upon the distant prospect of a great monstrous absurd place on a steep hill against the last brightness of the evening sky, a burlesque block of building with huge truncated pyramids at either corner, that I have since learnt was the Alexandra Palace. It was so queer and bulky that it arrested and held my attention, struck on my memory with an almost dreamlike quality, so that years afterwards I went to Muswell Hill to see if indeed there really was such a place on earth, or whether I had had a waking nightmare during my wanderings....

I wandered far that night, very far. Some girl accosted me, a thin-faced ruined child younger by a year or so than myself. I remembered how I talked to her, foolish rambling talk. “If you loved a man, and he was poor, you’d wait,” I said, “you’d stick to him. You’d not leave him just to get married to a richer man.”

We prowled talking for a time, and sat upon a seat somewhere near the Regent’s Park canal. I rather think I planned to rescue her from a fallen life, but somehow we dropped that topic. I know she kissed me. I have a queer impression that it came into my head to marry her. I put all my loose money in her hands at last and went away extraordinarily comforted by her, I know not how, leaving her no doubt wondering greatly.

I did not go to bed that night at all, nor to the office next morning. I never showed myself in the office again. Instead I went straight down to my father, and told him I wanted to go to the war forthwith.

I had an indistinct memory of a promise I had made Mary to stay in England, but I felt it was altogether unendurable that I should ever meet her again. My father sat at table over the remains of his lunch, and regarded me with astonishment, with the beginnings of protest.

"I want to get away," I said, and to my own amazement and shame I burst into tears.

"My boy!" he gasped, astonished and terrified. "You've — you've not done — some foolish thing?"

"No," I said, already wiping the tears from my face, "nothing.... But I want to go away."

"You shall do as you please," he said, and sat for a moment regarding his only son with unfathomable eyes.

Then he got up with a manner altogether matter-of-fact, came half-way round the table and mixed me a whisky and soda. "It won't be much of a war, I'm told," he said with the syphon in his hands, breaking a silence. "I sometimes wish — I had seen a bit of soldiering. And this seems to be an almost unavoidable war. Now, at any rate, it's unavoidable.... Drink this and have a biscuit."

He turned to the mantelshelf, and filled his pipe with his broad back to me. "Yes," he said, "you —— You'll be interested in the war. I hope —— I hope you'll have a good time there...."

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

The War in South Africa

§ 1

Mary and I did not meet again for five years, and for nearly all that time I remained in South Africa. I went from England a boy; I came back seasoned into manhood. They had been years of crowded experience, rapid yet complicated growth, disillusionment and thought. Responsibility had come to me. I had seen death, I had seen suffering, and held the lives of men in my hands.

Of course one does not become a soldier on active service at once for the wishing, and there was not at first that ready disposition on the part of the home military authorities which arose later, to send out young enthusiasts. I could ride and shoot fairly well, and accordingly I decided to go on my own account to Durban — for it was manifest that things would begin in Natal — and there attach myself to some of the local volunteer corps that would certainly be raised. This took me out of England at once, a thing that fell in very well with my mood. I would, I was resolved, begin life afresh. I would force myself to think of nothing but the war. I would never if I could help it think of Mary again.

The war had already begun when I reached Durban. The town was seething with the news of a great British victory at Dundee. We came into the port through rain and rough weather and passed a big white liner loaded up feverishly from steam tenders with wealthy refugees going England-ward. From two troopships against the wharves there was a great business of landing horses — the horses of the dragoons and hussars from India. I spent the best part of my first night in South Africa in the streets looking in vain for a bedroom, and was helped at last by a kindly rickshaw Zulu to a shanty where I slept upon three chairs. I remember I felt singularly unwanted.

The next day I set about my volunteering. By midday I had opened communications with that extremely untried and problematical body, the Imperial Light Horse, and in three days more

I was in the company of a mixed batch of men, mostly Australian volunteers, on my way to a place I had never heard of before called Ladysmith, through a country of increasing picturesqueness and along a curious curving little line whose down traffic seemed always waiting in sidings, and consisted of crowded little trains full of pitiful fugitives, white, brown, and black, stifled and starving. They were all clamoring to buy food and drink — and none seemed forthcoming. We shunted once to allow a southbound train to pass, a peculiar train that sent everyone on to the line to see — prisoners of war! There they were, real live enemies, rather glum, looking out at us with faces very like our own — but rather more unshaven. They had come from the battle of Elandslaagte....

I had never been out of England before except for a little mountaineering in the French Alps and one walking excursion in the Black Forest, and the scenery of lower Natal amazed me. I had expected nothing nearly so tropical, so rich and vivid. There were little Mozambique monkeys chattering in the thick-set trees beside the line and a quantity of unfamiliar birds and gaudy flowers amidst the abundant deep greenery. There were aloe and cactus hedges, patches of unfamiliar cultivation upon the hills; bunchy, frondy growths that I learnt were bananas and plantains, and there were barbaric insanitary-looking Kaffir kraals which I supposed had vanished before our civilization. There seemed an enormous quantity of Kaffirs all along the line — and all of them, men, women, and children, were staring at the train. The scenery grew finer and bolder, and more bare and mountainous, until at last we came out into the great basin in which lay this Ladysmith. It seemed a poor unimportant, dusty little street of huts as we approached it, but the great crests beyond struck me as very beautiful in the morning light....

I forgot the beauty of those hills as we drew into the station. It was the morning after the surrender of Nicholson's Nek. I had come to join an army already tremendously astonished and shattered. The sunny prospect of a triumphal procession to Pretoria which had been still in men's minds at Durban had vanished altogether. In rather less than a fortnight of stubborn fighting we had displayed a strategy that was flighty rather than brilliant, and lost a whole battery of guns and

nearly twelve hundred prisoners. We had had compensations, our common soldiers were good stuff at any rate, but the fact was clear that we were fighting an army not only very much bigger than ours but better equipped, with bigger guns, better information, and it seemed superior strategy. We were being shoved back into this Ladysmith and encircled. This confused, disconcerted, and thoroughly bad-tempered army, whose mules and bullocks cumbered the central street of the place, was all that was left of the British Empire in Natal. Behind it was an unprotected country and the line to Pietermaritzburg, Durban, and the sea.

You cannot imagine how amazed I felt at it. I had been prepared for a sort of Kentucky quality in the enemy, illiteracy, pluck, guile and good shooting, but to find them with more modern arms than our own, more modern methods! Weren't we there, after all, to teach *them*! Weren't we the Twentieth and they the Eighteenth Century? The town had been shelled the day before from those very hills I had admired; at any time it might be shelled again. The nose of a big gun was pointed out to me by a blasphemous little private in the Devons. It was a tremendous, a profoundly impressive, black snout. His opinions of the directing wisdom at home were unquotable. The platform was a wild confusion of women and children and colored people, — there was even an invalid lady on a stretcher. Every non-combatant who could be got out of Ladysmith was being hustled out that day. Everyone was smarting with the sense of defeat in progress, everyone was disappointed and worried; one got short answers to one's questions. For a time I couldn't even find out where I had to go....

§ 2

I fired my first shot at a fellow-creature within four days of my arrival. We rode out down the road to the south to search some hills, and found the Boers in fair strength away to the east of us. We were dismounted and pushed up on foot through a wood to a grassy crest. There for the first time I saw the enemy, little respectable-looking unsoldierlike figures, mostly in black, dodging about upon a ridge perhaps a mile away. I took a shot at one of these figures just before

it vanished into a gully. One or two bullets came overhead, and I tried to remember what I had picked up about cover. They made a sound, *whiff-er-whiff*, a kind of tearing whistle, and there was nothing but a distant crackling to give one a hint of their direction until they took effect. I remember the peculiar smell of the grass amidst which I crouched, my sudden disgust to realize I was lying, and had to lie now for an indefinite time, in the open sunlight and far from any shade, and how I wondered whether after all I had wanted to come to this war.

We lay shooting intermittently until the afternoon, I couldn't understand why; we went forward a little, and at last retired upon Ladysmith. On the way down to the horses, I came upon my first dead man. He was lying in a crumpled heap not fifty yards from where I had been shooting. There he lay, the shattered mirror of a world. One side of his skull over the ear had been knocked away by a nearly spent bullet, and he was crumpled up and face upward as though he had struggled to his feet and fallen back. He looked rather horrible, with blue eyes wide open and glassily amazed, and the black flies clustering upon his clotted wound and round his open mouth....

I halted for a moment at the sight, and found the keen scrutiny of a fellow trooper upon me. "No good waiting for him," I said with an affectation of indifference. But all through the night I saw him again, and marvelled at the stupendous absurdity of such a death. I was a little feverish, I remember, and engaged in an interminable theological argument with myself, why when a man is dead he should leave so queer and irrelevant a thing as a body to decay....

I was already very far away from London and Burnmore Park. I doubt if I thought of Mary at all for many days.

§ 3

It isn't my business to write here any consecutive story of my war experiences. Luck and some latent quality in my composition made me a fairly successful soldier. Among other things I have an exceptionally good sense of direction, and that was very useful to me, and in Burnmore Park I suppose I had picked up many of the

qualities of a scout. I did some fair outpost work during the Ladysmith siege, I could report as well as crawl and watch, and I was already a sergeant when we made a night attack and captured and blew up Long Tom. There, after the fight, while we were covering the engineers, I got a queer steel ball about the size of a pea in my arm, a bicycle bearings ball it was, and had my first experience of an army surgeon's knife next day. It was much less painful than I had expected. I was also hit during the big assault on the sixth of January in the left shoulder, but so very slightly that I wasn't technically disabled. They were the only wounds I got in the war, but I went under with dysentery before the relief; and though I was by no means a bad case I was a very yellow-faced, broken-looking convalescent when at last the Boer hosts rolled northward again and Buller's men came riding across the flats....

I had seen some stimulating things during those four months of actual warfare, a hundred intense impressions of death, wounds, anger, patience, brutality, courage, generosity and wasteful destruction — above all, wasteful destruction — to correct the easy optimistic patriotism of my university days. There is a depression in the opening stages of fever and a feebleness in a convalescence on a starvation diet that leads men to broad and sober views. (Heavens! how I hated the horse extract— 'chevril' we called it — that served us for beef tea.) When I came down from Ladysmith to the sea to pick up my strength I had not an illusion left about the serene, divinely appointed empire of the English. But if I had less national conceit, I had certainly more patriotic determination. That grew with every day of returning health. The reality of this war had got hold of my imagination, as indeed for a time it got hold of the English imagination altogether, and I was now almost fiercely keen to learn and do. At the first chance I returned to active service, and now I was no longer a disconsolate lover taking war for a cure, but an earnest, and I think reasonably able, young officer, very alert for chances.

I got those chances soon enough. I rejoined our men beyond Kimberley, on the way to Mafeking, — we were the extreme British left in the advance upon Pretoria — and I rode with Mahon and was ambushed with him in a little affair beyond Koodoosrand. It was a sudden brisk encounter. We got fired into at close quarters, but we

knew our work by that time, and charged home and brought in a handful of prisoners to make up for the men we had lost. A few days later we came into the flattened ruins of the quaintest siege in history....

Three days after we relieved Mafeking I had the luck to catch one of Snyman's retreating guns rather easily, the only big gun that was taken at Mafeking. I came upon it unexpectedly with about twenty men, spotted a clump of brush four hundred yards ahead, galloped into it before the Boers realized the boldness of our game, shot all the draught oxen while they hesitated, and held them up until Chambers arrived on the scene. The incident got perhaps a disproportionate share of attention in the papers at home, because of the way in which Mafeking had been kept in focus. I was mentioned twice again in despatches before we rode across to join Roberts in Pretoria and see what we believed to be the end of the war. We were too late to go on up to Komatipoort, and had some rather blank and troublesome work on the north side of the town. That was indeed the end of the great war; the rest was a struggle with guerillas.

Everyone thought things were altogether over. I wrote to my father discussing the probable date of my return. But there were great chances still to come for an active young officer; the guerilla war was to prolong the struggle yet for a whole laborious, eventful year, and I was to make the most of those later opportunities....

Those years in South Africa are stuck into my mind like — like those pink colored pages about something else one finds at times in a railway *Indicateur*. Chance had put this work in my way, and started me upon it with a reputation that wasn't altogether deserved, and I found I could only live up to it and get things done well by a fixed and extreme concentration of my attention. But the whole business was so interesting that I found it possible to make that concentration. Essentially warfare is a game of elaborate but witty problems in precaution and anticipation, with amazing scope for invention. You so saturate your mind with the facts and possibilities of the situation that intuitions emerge. It did not do to think of anything beyond those facts and possibilities and dodges and counterdodges, for to do so was to let in irrelevant and distracting lights. During all that concluding year of service I was not so much myself as a forced and

artificial thing I made out of myself to meet the special needs of the time. I became a Boer-outwitting animal. When I was tired of this specialized thinking, then the best relief, I found, was some quite trivial occupation — playing poker, yelling in the chorus of some interminable song one of the men would sing, or coining South African Limericks or playing burlesque *bouts-rimés* with Fred Maxim, who was then my second in command....

Yet occasionally thought overtook me. I remember lying one night out upon a huge dark hillside, in a melancholy wilderness of rock-ribbed hills, waiting for one of the flying commandoes that were breaking northward from Cape Colony towards the Orange River in front of Colonel Eustace. We had been riding all day, I was taking risks in what I was doing, and there is something very cheerless in a fireless bivouac. My mind became uncontrollably active.

It was a clear, still night. The young moon set early in a glow of white that threw the jagged contours of a hill to the south-east into strange, weird prominence. The patches of moonshine evaporated from the summits of the nearer hills, and left them hard and dark. Then there was nothing but a great soft black darkness below that jagged edge and above it the stars very large and bright. Somewhere under that enormous serenity to the south of us the hunted Boers must be halting to snatch an hour or so of rest, and beyond them again extended the long thin net of the pursuing British. It all seemed infinitely small and remote, there was no sound of it, no hint of it, no searchlight at work, no faintest streamer of smoke nor the reflection of a solitary fire in the sky....

All this business that had held my mind so long was reduced to insignificance between the blackness of the hills and the greatness of the sky; a little trouble, it seemed of no importance under the Southern Cross. And I fell wondering, as I had not wondered for long, at the forces that had brought me to this occupation and the strangeness of this game of war which had filled the minds and tempered the spirit of a quarter of a million of men for two hard-living years.

I fell thinking of the dead.

No soldier in a proper state of mind ever thinks of the dead. At

times of course one suspects, one catches a man glancing at the pair of boots sticking out stiffly from under a blanket, but at once he speaks of other things. Nevertheless some suppressed part of my being had been stirring up ugly and monstrous memories, of distortion, disfigurement, torment and decay, of dead men in stained and ragged clothes, with their sole-worn boots drawn up under them, of the blood trail of a dying man who had crawled up to a dead comrade rather than die alone, of Kaffirs heaping limp, pitiful bodies together for burial, of the voices of inaccessible wounded in the rain on Waggon Hill crying in the night, of a heap of men we found in a donga three days dead, of the dumb agony of shell-torn horses, and the vast distressful litter and heavy brooding stench, the cans and cartridge-cases and filth and bloody rags of a shelled and captured laager. I will confess I have never lost my horror of dead bodies; they are dreadful to me — dreadful. I dread their stiff attitudes, their terrible intent inattention. To this day such memories haunt me. That night they nearly overwhelmed me.... I thought of the grim silence of the surgeon's tent, the miseries and disordered ravings of the fever hospital, of the midnight burial of a journalist at Ladysmith with the distant searchlight on Bulwana flicking suddenly upon our faces and making the coffin shine silver white. What a vast trail of destruction South Africa had become! I thought of the black scorched stones of burnt and abandoned farms, of wretched natives we had found shot like dogs and flung aside, rottenly amazed, decaying in infinite indignity; of stories of treachery and fierce revenges sweeping along in the trail of the greater fighting. I knew too well of certain atrocities, — one had to believe them incredibly stupid to escape the conviction that they were incredibly evil.

For a time my mind could make no headway against its monstrous assemblage of horror. There was something in that jagged black hill against the moonshine and the gigantic basin of darkness out of which it rose that seemed to gather all these gaunt and grisly effects into one appalling heap of agonizing futility. That rock rose up and crouched like something that broods and watches.

I remember I sat up in the darkness staring at it.

I found myself murmuring: "Get the proportions of things, get the

proportions of things!" I had an absurd impression of a duel between myself and the cavernous antagonism of the huge black spaces below me. I argued that all this pain and waste was no more than the selvedge of a proportionately limitless fabric of sane, interested, impassioned and joyous living. These stiff still memories seemed to refute me. But why us? they seemed to insist. In some way it's essential, — this margin. I stopped at that.

"If all this pain, waste, violence, anguish is essential to life, why does my spirit rise against it? What is wrong with me?" I got from that into a corner of self-examination. Did I respond overmuch to these painful aspects in life? When I was a boy I had never had the spirit even to kill rats. Siddons came into the meditation, Siddons, the essential Englishman, a little scornful, throwing out contemptuous phrases. Soft! Was I a soft? What was a soft? Something not rough, not hearty and bloody! I felt I had to own to the word — after years of resistance. A dreadful thing it is when a great empire has to rely upon soft soldiers.

Was civilization breeding a type of human being too tender to go on living? I stuck for a time as one does on these nocturnal occasions at the word "hypersensitive," going round it and about it....

I do not know now how it was that I passed from a mood so darkened and sunless to one of exceptional exaltation, but I recall very clearly that I did. I believe that I made a crowning effort against this despair and horror that had found me out in the darkness and overcome. I cried in my heart for help, as a lost child cries, to God. I seem to remember a rush of impassioned prayer, not only for myself, not chiefly for myself, but for all those smashed and soiled and spoilt and battered residues of men whose memories tormented me. I prayed to God that they had not lived in vain, that particularly those poor Kaffir scouts might not have lived in vain. "They are like children," I said. "It was a murder of children.... *By children!*"

My horror passed insensibly. I have to feel the dreadfulness of these things, I told myself, because it is good for such a creature as I to feel them dreadful, but if one understood it would all be simple. Not dreadful at all. I clung to that and repeated it,— "it would all be perfectly simple." It would come out no more horrible than the things that used to frighten me as a child, — the shadow on the stairs, the

white moonrise reflected on a barked and withered tree, a peculiar dream of moving geometrical forms, an ugly illustration in the "Arabian Nights." ...

I do not know how long I wrestled with God and prayed that night, but abruptly the shadows broke; and very suddenly and swiftly my spirit seemed to flame up into space like some white beacon that is set alight. Everything became light and clear and confident. I was assured that all was well with us, with us who lived and fought and with the dead who rotted now in fifty thousand hasty graves....

For a long time it seemed I was repeating again and again with soundless lips and finding the deepest comfort in my words:— "And out of our agonies comes victory, out of our agonies comes victory! Have pity on us, God our Father!"

I think that mood passed quite insensibly from waking to a kind of clear dreaming. I have an impression that I fell asleep and was aroused by a gun. Yet I was certainly still sitting up when I heard that gun.

I was astonished to find things darkly visible about me. I had not noted that the stars were growing pale until the sound of this gun very far away called my mind back to the grooves in which it was now accustomed to move. I started into absolute wakefulness. A gun?...

I found myself trying to see my watch.

I heard a slipping and clatter of pebbles near me, and discovered Fred Maxim at my side. "Look!" he said, hoarse with excitement. "Already!" He pointed to a string of dim little figures galloping helter-skelter over the neck and down the gap in the hills towards us.

They came up against the pale western sky, little nodding swaying black dots, and flashed over and were lost in the misty purple groove towards us. They must have been riding through the night — the British following. To them we were invisible. Behind us was the shining east, we were in a shadow still too dark to betray us.

In a moment I was afoot and called out to the men, my philosophy, my deep questionings, all torn out of my mind like a page of scribbled poetry plucked out of a business note-book. Khaki figures were up all about me passing the word and hurrying to their

places. All the dispositions I had made overnight came back clear and sharp into my mind. We hadn't long for preparations....

It seems now there were only a few busy moments before the fighting began. It must have been much longer in reality. By that time we had seen their gun come over and a train of carts. They were blundering right into us. Every moment it was getting lighter, and the moment of contact nearer. Then "Crack!" from down below among the rocks, and there was a sudden stoppage of the trail of dark shapes upon the hillside. "Crack!" came a shot from our extreme left. I damned the impatient men who had shot away the secret of our presence. But we had to keep them at a shooting distance. Would the Boers have the wit to charge through us before the daylight came, or should we hold them? I had a swift, disturbing idea. Would they try a bolt across our front to the left? Had we extended far enough across the deep valley to our left? But they'd hesitate on account of their gun. The gun couldn't go that way because of the gullies and thickets.... But suppose they tried it! I hung between momentous decisions....

Then all up the dim hillside I could make out the Boers halting and riding back. One rifle across there flashed.

We held them!...

We had begun the fight of Pieters Nek which ended before midday with the surrender of Simon Botha and over seven hundred men. It was the crown of all my soldiering.

§ 4

I came back to England at last when I was twenty-six. After the peace of Vereeniging I worked under the Repatriation Commission which controlled the distribution of returning prisoners and concentrated population to their homes; for the most part I was distributing stock and grain, and presently manœuvring a sort of ploughing flying column that the dearth of horses and oxen made necessary, work that was certainly as hard as if far less exciting than war. That particular work of replanting the desolated country with human beings took hold of my imagination, and for a time at least seemed quite straightforward and understandable. The comfort of

ceasing to destroy!

No one has written anything that really conveys the quality of that repatriation process; the queer business of bringing these suspicious, illiterate, despondent people back to their desolated homes, reuniting swarthy fathers and stockish mothers, witnessing their touchingly inexpressive encounters, doing what one could to put heart into their resumption. Memories come back to me of great littered heaps of luggage, bundles, blankets, rough boxes, piled newly purchased stores, ready-made doors, window sashes heaped ready for the waggons, slow-moving, apathetic figures sitting and eating, an infernal squawking of parrots, sometimes a wailing of babies. Repatriation went on to a parrot obligato, and I never hear a parrot squawk without a flash of South Africa across my mind. All the prisoners, I believe, brought back parrots — some two or three. I had to spread these people out, over a country still grassless, with teams of war-worn oxen, mules and horses that died by the dozen on my hands. The end of each individual instance was a handshake, and one went lumbering on, leaving the children one had deposited behind one already playing with old ration-tins or hunting about for cartridge-cases, while adults stared at the work they had to do.

There was something elementary in all that redistribution. I felt at times like a child playing in a nursery and putting out its bricks and soldiers on the floor. There was a kind of greatness too about the process, a quality of atonement. And the people I was taking back, the men anyhow, were for the most part charming and wonderful people, very simple and emotional, so that once a big bearded man, when I wanted him in the face of an overflowing waggon to abandon about half-a-dozen great angular colored West Indian shells he had lugged with him from Bermuda, burst into tears of disappointment. I let him take them, and at the end I saw them placed with joy and reverence in a little parlor, to become the war heirlooms no doubt of a long and bearded family. As we shook hands after our parting coffee he glanced at them with something between gratitude and triumph in his eyes.

Yes, that was a great work, more especially for a ripening youngster such as I was at that time. The memory of long rides and tramps over that limitless veld returns to me, lonely in spite of the

creaking, lumbering waggons and transport riders and Kaffirs that followed behind. South Africa is a country not only of immense spaces but of an immense spaciousness. Everything is far apart; even the grass blades are far apart. Sometimes one crossed wide stony wastes, sometimes came great stretches of tall, yellow-green grass, wheel-high, sometimes a little green patch of returning cultivation drew nearer for an hour or so, sometimes the blundering, toilsome passage of a torrent interrupted our slow onward march. And constantly one saw long lines of torn and twisted barbed wire stretching away and away, and here and there one found archipelagoes as it were in this dry ocean of the skeletons of cattle, and there were places where troops had halted and their scattered ration-tins shone like diamonds in the sunshine. Occasionally I struck talk, some returning prisoner, some group of discharged British soldiers become carpenters or bricklayers again and making their pound a day by the work of rebuilding; always everyone was ready to expatiate upon the situation. Usually, however, I was alone, thinking over this immense now vanished tornado of a war and this equally astonishing work of healing that was following it.

I became keenly interested in all this great business, and thought at first of remaining indefinitely in Africa. Repatriation was presently done and finished. I had won Milner's good opinion, and he was anxious for me to go on working in relation to the labor difficulty that rose now more and more into prominence behind the agricultural re-settlement. But when I faced that I found myself in the middle of a tangle infinitely less simple than putting back an agricultural population upon its land.

§ 5

For the first time in my life I was really looking at the social fundamental of Labor.

There is something astonishingly naïve in the unconsciousness with which people of our class float over the great economic realities. All my life I had been hearing of the Working Classes, of Industrialism, of Labor Problems and the Organization of Labor; but it was only now in South Africa, in this chaotic, crude illuminating

period of putting a smashed and desolated social order together again, that I perceived these familiar phrases represented something — something stupendously real. There were, I began to recognize, two sides to civilization; one traditional, immemorial, universal, the side of the homestead, the side I had been seeing and restoring; and there was another, ancient, too, but never universal, as old at least as the mines of Syracuse and the building of the pyramids, the side that came into view when I emerged from the dusty station and sighted the squat shanties and slender chimneys of Johannesburg, that uprooted side of social life, that accumulation of toilers divorced from the soil, which is Industrialism and Labor and which carries such people as ourselves, and whatever significance and possibilities we have, as an elephant carries its rider.

Now all Johannesburg and Pretoria were discussing Labor and nothing but Labor. Bloemfontein was in conference thereon. Our work of repatriation which had loomed so large on the southernward veld became here a business at once incidental and remote. One felt that a little sooner or a little later all that would resume and go on, as the rains would, and the veld-grass. But this was something less kindred to the succession of the seasons and the soil. This was a hitch in the upper fabric. Here in the great ugly mine-scarred basin of the Rand, with its bare hillsides, half the stamps were standing idle, machinery was eating its head off, time and water were running to waste amidst an immense exasperated disputation. Something had given way. The war had spoilt the Kaffir "boy," he was demanding enormous wages, he was away from Johannesburg, and above all, he would no longer "go underground."

Implicit in all the argument and suggestion about me was this profoundly suggestive fact that some people, quite a lot of people, scores of thousands, had to "go underground." Implicit too always in the discourse was the assumption that the talker or writer in question wasn't for a moment to be expected to go there. Those others, whoever they were, had to do that for us. Before the war it had been the artless Portuguese Kaffir, but he alas! was being diverted to open-air employment at Delagoa Bay. Should we raise wages and go on with the fatal process of "spoiling the workers," should we by imposing a tremendous hut-tax drive the Kaffir into our toils, should

we carry the labor hunt across the Zambesi into Central Africa, should we follow the lead of Lord Kitchener and Mr. Creswell and employ the rather dangerous unskilled white labor (with "ideas" about strikes and socialism) that had drifted into Johannesburg, should we do tremendous things with labor-saving machinery, or were we indeed (desperate yet tempting resort!) to bring in the cheap Indian or Chinese coolie?

Steadily things were drifting towards that last tremendous experiment. There was a vigorous opposition in South Africa and in England (growing there to an outcry), but behind that proposal was the one vitalizing conviction in modern initiative: — indisputably it would pay, *it would pay*!...

The human mind has a much more complex and fluctuating process than most of those explanatory people who write about psychology would have us believe. Instead of that simple, direct movement, like the movement of a point, forward and from here to there, one's thoughts advance like an army, sometimes extended over an enormous front, sometimes in échelon, sometimes bunched in a column throwing out skirmishing clouds of emotion, some flying and soaring, some crawling, some stopping and dying.... In this matter of Labor, for example, I have thought so much, thought over the ground again and again, come into it from this way and from that way, that for the life of me I find it impossible to state at all clearly how much I made of these questions during that Johannesburg time. I cannot get back into those ancient ignorances, revive my old astonishments and discoveries. Certainly I envisaged the whole process much less clearly than I do now, ignored difficulties that have since entangled me, regarded with a tremendous perplexity aspects that have now become lucidly plain. I came back to England confused, and doing what confused people are apt to do, clinging to an inadequate phrase that seemed at any rate to define a course of action. The word "efficiency" had got hold of me. All our troubles came, one assumed, from being "inefficient." One turned towards politics with a bustling air, and was all for fault-finding and renovation.

I sit here at my desk, pen in hand, and trace figures on the blotting-paper, and wonder how much I understood at that time. I came back to England to work on the side of "efficiency," that is

quite certain. A little later I was writing articles and letters about it, so that much is documented. But I think I must have apprehended too by that time some vague outline at least of those wider issues in the sæcular conflict between the new forms of human association and the old, to which contemporary politics and our national fate are no more than transitory eddies and rufflings of the surface waters. It was all so nakedly plain there. On the one hand was the primordial, on the other the rankly new. The farm on the veld stood on the veld, a thing of the veld, a thing rooted and established there and nowhere else. The dusty, crude, brick-field desolation of the Rand on the other hand did not really belong with any particularity to South Africa at all. It was one with our camps and armies. It was part of something else, something still bigger: a monstrous shadowy arm had thrust out from Europe and torn open this country, erected these chimneys, piled these heaps — and sent the ration-tins and cartridge-cases to follow them. It was gigantic kindred with that ancient predecessor which had built the walls of Zimbabwe. And this hungry, impatient demand for myriads of toilers, this threatening inundation of black or brown or yellow bond-serfs was just the natural voice of this colossal system to which I belonged, which had brought me hither, and which I now perceived I did not even begin to understand....

One day when asking my way to some forgotten destination, I had pointed out to me the Grey and Roberts Deep Mine. Some familiarity in the name set me thinking until I recalled that this was the mine in which I had once heard Lady Ladislaw confess large holdings, this mine in which gangs of indentured Chinamen would presently be sweating to pay the wages of the game-keepers and roadmenders in Burnmore Park....

Yes, this was what I was taking in at that time, but it found me — inexpressive; what I was saying on my return to England gave me no intimation of the broad conceptions growing in my mind. I came back to be one of the many scores of energetic and ambitious young men who were parroting "Efficiency," stirring up people and more particularly stirring up themselves with the utmost vigor, — and all the time within their secret hearts more than a little at a loss....

While I had been in South Africa circumstances had conspired to alter my prospects in life very greatly. Unanticipated freedoms and opportunities had come to me, and it was no longer out of the question for me to think of a parliamentary career. Our fortunes had altered. My father had ceased to be rector of Burnmore, and had become a comparatively wealthy man.

My second cousin, Reginald Stratton, had been drowned in Finland, and his father had only survived the shock of his death a fortnight; his sister, Arthur Mason's first wife, had died in giving birth to a stillborn child the year before, and my father found himself suddenly the owner of all that large stretch of developing downland and building land which old Reginald had bought between Shaddock and Golding on the south and West Esher station on the north, and in addition of considerable investments in northern industrials. It was an odd collusion of mortality; we had had only the coldest relations with our cousins, and now abruptly through their commercial and speculative activities, which we had always affected to despise and ignore, I was in a position to attempt the realization of my old political ambitions.

My cousins' house had not been to my father's taste. He had let it, and I came to a new home in a pleasant, plain red-brick house, a hundred and fifty years old perhaps, on an open and sunny hillside, sheltered by trees eastward and northward, a few miles to the south-west of Guildford. It had all the gracious proportions, the dignified simplicity, the roomy comfort of the good building of that time. It looked sunward; we breakfasted in sunshine in the library, and outside was an old wall with peach trees and a row of pillar roses heavily in flower. I had a little feared this place; Burnmore Rectory had been so absolutely home to me with its quiet serenities, its ample familiar garden, its greenhouses and intimately known corners, but I perceived I might have trusted my father's character to preserve his essential atmosphere. He was so much himself as I remembered him that I did not even observe for a day or so that he had not only aged considerably but discarded the last vestiges of clerical costume in his attire. He met me in front of the house and led me into a wide panelled hall and wrung my hand again and again, deeply moved and very inexpressive. "Did you have a good journey?" he asked again

and again, with tears in his eyes. “Did you have a comfortable journey?”

“I’ve not seen the house,” said I. “It looks fine.”

“*You’re* a man,” he said, and patted my shoulder. “Of course! It was at Burnmore.”

“You’re not changed,” I said. “You’re not an atom changed.”

“How could I?” he replied. “Come — come and have something to eat. You ought to have something to eat.”

We talked of the house and what a good house it was, and he took me out into the garden to see the peaches and grape vine and then brought me back without showing them to me in order to greet my cousin. “It’s very like Burnmore,” he said with his eyes devouring me, “very like. A little more space and — no services. No services at all. That makes a gap of course. There’s a little chap about here, you’ll find — his name is Wednesday — who sorts my papers and calls himself my secretary.... Not necessary perhaps but — *I missed the curate*.”

He said he was reading more than he used to do now that the parish was off his hands, and he was preparing material for a book. It was, he explained later, to take the form of a huge essay ostensibly on Secular Canons, but its purport was to be no less than the complete secularization of the Church of England. At first he wanted merely to throw open the cathedral chapters to distinguished laymen, irrespective of their theological opinions, and to make each English cathedral a centre of intellectual activity, a college as it were of philosophers and writers. But afterwards his suggestions grew bolder, the Articles of Religion were to be set aside, the creeds made optional even for the clergy. His dream became more and more richly picturesque until at last he saw Canterbury a realized Thelema, and St. Paul’s a new Academic Grove. He was to work at that remarkable proposal intermittently for many years, and to leave it at last no more than a shapeless mass of memoranda, fragmentary essays, and selected passages for quotation. Yet mere patchwork and scrapbook as it would be, I still have some thought of publishing it. There is a large human charity about it, a sun too broad and warm, a reasonableness too wide and free perhaps for the timid convulsive quality of our time, yet all good as good wine for the wise. Is it

incredible that a day should come when our great grey monuments to the Norman spirit should cease to be occupied by narrow-witted parsons and besieged by narrow-souled dissenters, the soul of our race in exile from the home and place our fathers built for it?...

If he was not perceptibly changed, I thought my cousin Jane had become more than a little sharper and stiffer. She did not like my uncle's own personal secularization, and still less the glimpses she got of the ampler intentions of his book. She missed the proximity to the church and her parochial authority. But she was always a silent woman, and made her comments with her profile and not with her tongue....

"I'm glad you've come back, Stephen," said my father as we sat together after dinner and her departure, with port and tall silver candlesticks and shining mahogany between us. "I've missed you. I've done my best to follow things out there. I've got, I suppose, every press mention there's been of you during the war and since. I've subscribed to two press-cutting agencies, so that if one missed you the other fellow got you. Perhaps you'll like to read them over one of these days.... You see, there's not been a soldier in the family since the Peninsular War, and so I've been particularly interested.... You must tell me all the things you're thinking of, and what you mean to do. This last stuff — this Chinese business — it puzzles me. I want to know what you think of it — and everything."

I did my best to give him my ideas such as they were. And as they were still very vague ideas I have no doubt he found me rhetorical. I can imagine myself talking of the White Man's Burthen, and how in Africa it had seemed at first to sit rather staggeringly upon our under-trained shoulders. I spoke of slackness and planlessness.

"I've come back in search of efficiency." I have no doubt I said that at any rate.

"We're trying to run this big empire," I may have explained, "with under-trained, under-educated, poor-spirited stuff, and we shall come a cropper unless we raise our quality. I'm still Imperialist, more than ever I was. But I'm an Imperialist on a different footing. I've no great illusions left about the Superiority of the Anglo-Saxons. All that has gone. But I do think it will be a monstrous waste, a

disaster to human possibilities if this great liberal-spirited empire sprawls itself asunder for the want of a little gravity and purpose. And it's here the work has to be done, the work of training and bracing up and stimulating the public imagination...."

Yes, that would be the sort of thing I should have said in those days. There's an old *National Review* on my desk as I write, containing an article by me with some of those very phrases in it. I have been looking at it in order to remind myself of my own forgotten eloquence.

"Yes," I remember my father saying. "Yes." And then after reflection, "But those coolies, those Chinese coolies. You can't build up an imperial population by importing coolies."

"I don't like that side of the business myself," I said. "It's detail."

"Perhaps. But the Liberals will turn you out on it next year. And then start badgering public houses and looting the church.... And then this Tariff talk! Everybody on our side seems to be mixing up the unity of the empire with tariffs. It's a pity. Salisbury wouldn't have stood it. Unity! Unity depends on a common literature and a common language and common ideas and sympathies. It doesn't unite people for them to be forced to trade with each other. Trading isn't friendship. I don't trade with my friends and I don't make friends with my tradesmen. Natural enemies — polite of course but antagonists. Are you keen over this Tariff stuff, Steve?"

"Not a bit," I said. "That too seems a detail."

"It doesn't seem to be keeping its place as a detail," said my father. "Very few men can touch tariffs and not get a little soiled. I hate all this international sharping, all these attempts to get artificial advantages, all this making poor people buy inferior goods dear, in the name of the flag. If it comes to that, damn the flag! Custom-houses are ugly things, Stephen; the dirty side of nationality. Dirty things, ignoble, cross, cunning things.... They wake you up in the small hours and rout over your bags.... An imperial people ought to be an urbane people, a civilizing people — above such petty irritating things. I'd as soon put barbed wire along the footpath across that field where the village children go to school. Or claim that our mushrooms are cultivated. Or prosecute a Sunday-Society Cockney for picking my primroses. Custom-houses indeed! It's

Chinese. There are things a Great Country mustn't do, Stephen. A country like ours ought to get along without the manners of a hard-breathing competitive cad.... If it can't I'd rather it didn't get along.... What's the good of a huckster country? — it's like having a wife on the streets. It's no excuse that she brings you money. But since the peace, and that man Chamberlain's visit to Africa, you Imperialists seem to have got this nasty spirit all over you.... The Germans do it, you say!"

My father shut one eye and regarded the color of his port against the waning light. "Let *'em*," he said.... "Fancy! — quoting the *Germans*! When I was a boy, there weren't any Germans. They came up after '70. Statecraft from Germany! And statesmen from Birmingham! German silver and Electroplated Empires.... No."

"It's just a part of our narrow outlook," I answered from the hearthrug, after a pause. "It's because we're so — limited that everyone is translating the greatness of empire into preferential trading and jealousy of Germany. It's for something bigger than that that I've returned."

"Those big things come slowly," said my father. And then with a sigh: "Age after age. They seem at times — to be standing still. Good things go with the bad; bad things come with the good...."

I remember him saying that as though I could still hear him.

It must have been after dinner, for he was sitting, duskily indistinct, against the light, with a voice coming out to him. The candles had not been brought in, and the view one saw through the big plate glass window behind him was very clear and splendid. Those little Wealden hills in Surrey and Sussex assume at times, for all that by Swiss standards they are the merest ridges of earth, the dignity and mystery of great mountains. Now, the crests of Hindhead and Blackdown, purple black against the level gold of the evening sky, might have been some high-flung boundary chain. Nearer there gathered banks and pools of luminous lavender-tinted mist out of which hills of pinewood rose like islands out of the sea. The intervening spaces were magnified to continental dimensions. And the closer lowlier things over which we looked, the cottages below us, were grey and black and dim, pierced by a few luminous orange

windows and with a solitary street lamp shining like a star; the village might have been nestling a mountain's height below instead of a couple of hundred feet.

I left my hearthrug, and walked to the window to survey this.

"Who's got all that land stretching away there; that little blunted sierra of pines and escarpments I mean?"

My father halted for an instant in his answer, and glanced over his shoulder.

"Wardingham and Baxter share all those coppices," he remarked. "They come up to my corner on each side."

"But the dark heather and pine land beyond. With just the gables of a house among the trees."

"Oh? *that*," he said with a careful note of indifference. "That's — Justin. You know Justin. He used to come to Burnmore Park."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

Lady Mary Justin

§ 1

I did not see Lady Mary Justin for nearly seven months after my return to England. Of course I had known that a meeting was inevitable, and I had taken that very carefully into consideration before I decided to leave South Africa. But many things had happened to me during those crowded years, so that it seemed possible that that former magic would no longer sway and distress me. Not only had new imaginative interests taken hold of me but — I had parted from adolescence. I was a man. I had been through a great war, seen death abundantly, seen hardship and passion, and known hunger and shame and desire. A hundred disillusioning revelations of the quality of life had come to me; once for example when we were taking some people to the concentration camps it had been necessary to assist at the premature birth of a child by the wayside, a startlingly gory and agonizing business for a young man to deal with. Heavens! how it shocked me! I could give a score of such grim pictures — and queer pictures....

And it wasn't only the earthlier aspects of the life about me but also of the life within me that I had been discovering. The first wonder and innocence, the worshipping, dawn-clear passion of youth, had gone out of me for ever....

§ 2

We met at a dinner. It was at a house the Tarvrilles had taken for the season in Mayfair. The drawing-room was a big white square apartment with several big pictures and a pane of plate glass above the fireplace in the position in which one usually finds a mirror; this showed another room beyond, containing an exceptionally large, gloriously colored portrait in pastel — larger than I had ever thought pastels could be. Except for the pictures both rooms were almost

colorless. It was a brilliant dinner, with a predominating note of ruby; three of the women wore ruby velvet; and Ellersley was present just back from Arabia, and Ethel Manton, Lady Hendon and the Duchess of Clynes. I was greeted by Lady Tarvrille, spoke to Ellersley and Lady Hendon, and then discovered a lady in a dress of blue and pearls standing quite still under a picture in the opposite corner of the room and regarding me attentively. It was Mary. Some man was beside her, a tall grey man with a broad crimson ribbon, and I think he must have spoken of me to her. It was as if she had just turned to look at me.

Constantly during those intervening months I had been thinking of meeting her. None the less there was a shock, not so much of surprise as of deferred anticipation. There she stood like something amazingly forgotten that was now amazingly recalled. She struck me in that brief crowded instant of recognition as being exactly the person she had been when we had made love in Burnmore Park; there were her eyes, at once frank and sidelong, the old familiar sweep of her hair, the old familiar tilt of the chin, the faint humor of her lip, and at the same time she seemed to be something altogether different from the memories I had cherished, she was something graver, something inherently more splendid than they had recorded. Her face lit now with recognition.

I went across to her at once, with some dull obviousness upon my lips.

“And so you are back from Africa at last,” she said, still unsmiling. “I saw about you in the papers.... You had a good time.”

“I had great good luck,” I replied.

“I never dreamt when we were boy and girl together that you would make a soldier.”

I think I said that luck made soldiers.

Then I think we found a difficulty in going on with our talk, and began a dull little argument that would have been stupidly egotistical on my part if it hadn’t been so obviously merely clumsy, about luck making soldiers or only finding them out. I saw that she had not intended to convey any doubt of my military capacity but only of that natural insensitiveness which is supposed to be needed in a soldier. But our minds were remote from the words upon our lips. We were

like aphasiacs who say one thing while they intend something altogether different. The impulse that had brought me across to her had brought me up to a wall of impossible utterances. It was with a real quality of rescue that our hostess came between us to tell us our partners at the dinner-table, and to introduce me to mine. “You shall have him again on your other side,” she said to Lady Mary with a charming smile for me, treating me as if I was a lion in request instead of the mere outsider I was.

We talked very little at dinner. Both of us I think were quite unequal to the occasion. Whatever meetings we had imagined, certainly neither of us had thought of this very possible encounter, a long disconcerting hour side by side. I began to remember old happenings with an astonishing vividness; there within six inches of me was the hand I had kissed; her voice was the same to its lightest shade, her hair flowed off her forehead with the same amazingly familiar wave. Was she too remembering? But I perhaps had changed altogether....

“Why did you go away as you did?” she asked abruptly, when for a moment we were isolated conversationally. “Why did you never write?”

She had still that phantom lisp.

“What else could I do?”

She turned away from me and answered the man on her left, who had just addressed her....

When the mid-dinner change came we talked a little about indifferent things, making a stiff conversation like a bridge over a torrent of unspoken intimacies. We discussed something; I think Lady Tarvrille’s flowers and the Cape Flora and gardens. She told me she had a Japanese garden with three Japanese gardeners. They were wonderful little men to watch. “Humming-bird gardeners,” she called them. “They wear their native costume.”

“We are your neighbors in Surrey,” she said, going off abruptly from that. “We are quite near to your father.”

She paused with that characteristic effect of deliberation in her closed lips. Then she added: “I can see the trees behind your father’s house from the window of my room.”

“Yes,” I said. “You take all our southward skyline.”

She turned her face to me with the manner of a great lady adding a new acquaintance to her collection. But her eyes met mine very steadily and intimately. “Mr. Stratton,” she said — it was the first time in her life she had called me that— “when we come back to Surrey I want you to come and see me and tell me of all the things you are going to do. Will you?”

§ 3

That meeting, that revival, must have been late in November or early in December. Already by that time I had met your mother. I write to you, little son, not to you as you are now, but to the man you are someday to be. I write to understand myself, and, so far as I can understand, to make you understand. So that I want you to go back with me for a time into the days before your birth, to think not of that dear spirit of love who broods over you three children, that wise, sure mother who rules your life, but of a young and slender girl, Rachel More, younger then than you will be when at last this story comes into your hands. For unless you think of her as being a girl, if you let your present knowledge of her fill out this part in our story, you will fail to understand the proportions of these two in my life. So I shall write of her here as Rachel More, as if she were someone as completely dissociated from yourself as Lady Mary; as if she were someone in the story of my life who had as little to do with yours.

I had met her in September. The house my father lived in is about twelve miles away from your mother’s home at Ridinghanger, and I was taken over by Percy Restall in his motor-car. Restall had just become a convert to this new mode of locomotion, and he was very active with a huge, malignant-looking French car that opened behind, and had a kind of poke bonnet and all sorts of features that have since disappeared from the automobile world. He took everyone that he could lay hands upon for rides, — he called it extending their range, and he called upon everyone else to show off the car; he was responsible for more introduction and social admixture in that part of Surrey than had occurred during the previous century. We punctured in the Ridinghanger drive, Restall did his own repairs, and so it was

we stayed for nearly four hours and instead of a mere caller I became a familiar friend of the family.

Your mother then was still not eighteen, a soft white slip of being, tall, slender, brown-haired and silent, with very still deep dark eyes. She and your three aunts formed a very gracious group of young women indeed; Alice then as now the most assertive, with a gay initiative and a fluent tongue; Molly already a sun-brown gipsy, and Norah still a pig-tailed thing of lank legs and wild embraces and the pinkest of swift pink blushes; your uncle Sidney, with his shy lank moodiness, acted the brotherly part of a foil. There were several stray visitors, young men and maidens, there were always stray visitors in those days at Ridinghanger, and your grandmother, rosy and bright-eyed, maintained a gentle flow of creature comforts and kindly but humorous observations. I do not remember your grandfather on this occasion; probably he wasn't there.

There was tea, and we played tennis and walked about and occasionally visited Restall, who was getting dirtier and dirtier, and crosser and crosser at his repairs, and spreading a continually more remarkable assemblage of parts and instruments over the grass about him. He looked at last more like a pitch in the Caledonian market than a decent country gentleman paying an afternoon call. And then back to more tennis and more talk. We fell into a discussion of Tariff Reform as we sat taking tea. Two of the visitor youths were strongly infected by the new teachings which were overshadowing the outlook of British Imperialism. Some mean phrase about not conquering Africa for the German bagman, some ugly turn of thought that at a touch brought down Empire to the level of a tradesman's advantage, fell from one of them, and stirred me to sudden indignation. I began to talk of things that had been gathering in my mind for some time.

I do not know what I said. It was in the vein of my father's talk no doubt. But I think that for once I may have been eloquent. And in the midst of my demand for ideals in politics that were wider and deeper than artful buying and selling, that looked beyond a vulgar aggression and a churl's dread and hatred of foreign things, while I struggled to say how great and noble a thing empire might be, I saw Rachel's face. This, it was manifest, was a new kind of talk to her.

Her dark eyes were alight with a beautiful enthusiasm for what I was trying to say, and for what in the light of that glowing reception I seemed to be.

I felt that queer shame one feels when one is taken suddenly at the full value of one's utmost expressions. I felt as though I had cheated her, was passing myself off for something as great and splendid as the Empire of my dreams. It is hard to dissociate oneself from the fine things to which one aspires. I stopped almost abruptly. Dumbly her eyes bade me go on, but when I spoke again it was at a lower level....

That look in Rachel's eyes remained with me. My mind had flashed very rapidly from the realization of its significance to the thought that if one could be sure of that, then indeed one could pitch oneself high. Rachel, I felt, had something for me that I needed profoundly, without ever having known before that I needed it. She had the supreme gifts of belief and devotion; in that instant's gleam it seemed she held them out to me.

Never before in my life had it seemed credible to me that anyone could give me that, or that I could hope for such a gift of support and sacrifice. Love as I had known it had been a community and an alliance, a frank abundant meeting; but this was another kind of love that shone for an instant and promised, and vanished shyly out of sight as I and Rachel looked at one another.

Some interruption occurred. Restall came, I think, blackened by progress, to drink a cup of tea and negotiate the loan of a kitchen skewer. A kitchen skewer it appeared was all that was needed to complete his reconstruction in the avenue. Norah darted off for a kitchen skewer, while Restall drank. And then there was a drift to tennis, and Rachel and I were partners. All this time I was in a state of startled attention towards her, full of this astounding impression that something wonderful and unprecedented had flowed out from her towards my life, full too of doubts now whether that shining response had ever occurred, whether some trick of light and my brain had not deceived me. I wanted tremendously to talk to her, and did not know how to begin in any serious fashion. Beyond everything I wanted to see again that deep onset of belief....

"Come again," said your grandmother to me, "come again!" after

she had tried in vain to make Restall stay for an informal supper. I was all for staying, but Restall said darkly, “There are the Lamps.”

“But they will be all right,” said Mrs. More.

“I can’t trust ‘em,” said Restall, with a deepening gloom. “Not after *that*.” The motor-car looked self-conscious and uncomfortable, but said nothing by way of excuse, and Restall took me off in it like one whose sun has set for ever. “I wouldn’t be surprised,” said Restall as we went down the drive, “if the damned thing turned a somersault. It might do — anything.” Those were the brighter days of motoring.

The next time I went over released from Restall’s limitations, and stayed to a jolly family supper. I found remarkably few obstacles in my way to a better acquaintance with Rachel. You see I was an entirely eligible and desirable young man in Mrs. More’s eyes....

§ 4

When I recall these long past emotions again, I am struck by the profound essential difference between my feelings for your mother and for Mary. They were so different that it seems scarcely rational to me that they should be called by the same name. Yet each was love, profoundly deep and sincere. The contrast lies, I think, in our relative ages, and our relative maturity; that altered the quality of all our emotions. The one was the love of a man of six-and-twenty, exceptionally seasoned and experienced and responsible for his years, for a girl still at school, a girl attractively beautiful, mysterious and unknown to him; the other was the love of coevals, who had been playmates and intimate companions, and of whom the woman was certainly as capable and wilful as the man.

Now it is exceptional for men to love women of their own age, it is the commoner thing that they should love maidens younger and often much younger than themselves. This is true more particularly of our own class; the masculine thirties and forties marry the feminine twenties, all the prevailing sentiment and usage between the sexes rises naturally out of that. We treat this seniority as though it were a virile characteristic; we treat the man as though he were a natural senior, we expect a weakness, a timid deference, in the girl. I

and Mary had loved one another as two rivers run together on the way to the sea, we had grown up side by side to the moment when we kissed; but I sought your mother, I watched her and desired her and chose her, very tenderly and worshipfully indeed, to be mine. I do not remember that there was any corresponding intention in my mind to be hers. I do not think that that idea came in at all. She was something to be won, something playing an inferior and retreating part. And I was artificial in all my attitudes to her, I thought of what would interest her, what would please her, I knew from the outset that what she saw in me to rouse that deep, shy glow of exaltation in her face was illusion, illusion it was my business to sustain. And so I won her, and long years had to pass, years of secret loneliness and hidden feelings, of preposterous pretences and covert perplexities, before we escaped from that crippling tradition of inequality and looked into one another's eyes with understanding and forgiveness, a woman and a man.

I made no great secret of the interest and attraction I found in Rachel, and the Mores made none of their entire approval of me. I walked over on the second occasion, and Ridinghanger opened out, a great flower of genial appreciation that I came alone, hiding nothing of its dawning perception that it was Rachel in particular I came to see.

Your grandmother's match-making was as honest as the day. There was the same salad of family and visitors as on the former afternoon, and this time I met Freshman, who was destined to marry Alice; there was tea, tennis, and, by your grandmother's suggestion, a walk to see the sunset from the crest of the hill. Rachel and I walked across the breezy moorland together, while I talked and tempted her to talk.

What, I wonder, did we talk about? English scenery, I think, and African scenery and the Weald about us, and the long history of the Weald and its present and future, and at last even a little of politics. I had never explored the mind of a girl of seventeen before; there was a surprise in all she knew and a delight in all she didn't know, and about herself a candor, a fresh simplicity of outlook that was sweeter than the clear air about us, sweeter than sunshine or the rising song of a lark. She believed so gallantly and beautifully, she was so

perfectly, unaffectedly and certainly prepared to be a brave and noble person — if only life would let her. And she hadn't as yet any suspicion that life might make that difficult....

I went to Ridinghanger a number of times in the spring and early summer. I talked a great deal with Rachel, and still I did not make love to her. It was always in my mind that I would make love to her, the heavens and earth and all her family were propitious, glowing golden with consent and approval, I thought she was the most wonderful and beautiful thing in life, and her eyes, the intonation of her voice, her hurrying color and a hundred little involuntary signs told me how she quickened at my coming. But there was a shyness. I loved her as one loves and admires a white flower or a beautiful child — some stranger's child. I felt that I might make her afraid of me. I had never before thought that to make love is a coarse thing. But still at high summer when I met Mary again no definite thing had been said between myself and Rachel. But we knew, each of us knew, that somewhere in a world less palpable, in fairyland, in dreamland, we had met and made our vows.

§ 5

You see how far my imagination had gone towards readjustment when Mary returned into my life. You see how strange and distant it was to meet her again, changed completely into the great lady she had intended to be, speaking to me with the restrained and practised charm of a woman who is young and beautiful and prominent and powerful and secure. There was no immediate sense of shock in that resumption of our broken intercourse, it seemed to me that night simply that something odd and curious had occurred. I do not remember how we parted that evening or whether we even saw each other after dinner was over, but from that hour forth Mary by insensible degrees resumed her old predominance in my mind. I woke up in the night and thought about her, and next day I found myself thinking of her, remembering things out of the past and recalling and examining every detail of the overnight encounter. How cold and ineffective we had been, both of us! We had been like people resuming a disused and partially forgotten language. Had she

changed towards me? Did she indeed want to see me again or was that invitation a mere demonstration of how entirely unimportant seeing me or not seeing me had become?

Then I would find myself thinking with the utmost particularity of her face. Had it changed at all? Was it altogether changed? I seemed to have forgotten everything and remembered everything; that peculiar slight thickness of her eyelids that gave her eyes their tenderness, that light firmness of her lips. Of course she would want to talk to me, as now I perceived I wanted to talk to her.

Was I in love with her still? It seemed to me then that I was not. It had not been that hesitating fierceness, that pride and demand and doubt, which is passionate love, that had made all my sensations strange to me as I sat beside her. It had been something larger and finer, something great and embracing, a return to fellowship. Here beside me, veiled from me only by our transient embarrassment and the tarnish of separation and silences, was the one person who had ever broken down the crust of shy insincerity which is so incurably my characteristic and talked intimately of the inmost things of life to me. I discovered now for the first time how intense had been my loneliness for the past five years. I discovered now that through all those years I had been hungry for such talk as Mary alone could give me. My mind was filled with talk, filled with things I desired to say to her; that chaos began to take on a multitudinous expression at the touch of her spirit. I began to imagine conversations with her, to prepare reports for her of those new worlds of sensation and activity I had discovered since that boyish parting.

But when at last that talk came it was altogether different from any of those I had invented.

She wrote to me when she came down into Surrey and I walked over to Martens the next afternoon. I found her in her own sitting-room, a beautiful characteristic apartment with tall French windows hung with blue curtains, a large writing-desk and a great litter of books. The room gave upon a broad sunlit terrace with a balustrading of yellowish stone, on which there stood great oleanders. Beyond was a flower garden and then the dark shadows of cypresses. She was standing as I came in to her, as though she had seen me coming across the lawns and had been awaiting my entrance. “I thought you

might come to-day," she said, and told the manservant to deny her to other callers. Again she produced that queer effect of being at once altogether the same and altogether different from the Mary I had known. "Justin," she said, "is in Paris. He comes back on Friday." I saw then that the change lay in her bearing, that for the easy confidence of the girl she had now the deliberate dignity and control of a married woman — a very splendidly and spaciously married woman. Her manner had been purged of impulse. Since we had met she had stood, the mistress of great houses, and had dealt with thousands of people.

"You walked over to me?"

"I walked," I said. "It is nearly a straight path. You know it?"

"You came over the heather beyond our pine wood," she confirmed. And then I think we talked some polite unrealities about Surrey scenery and the weather. It was so formal that by a common impulse we let the topic suddenly die. We stood through a pause, a hesitation. Were we indeed to go on at that altitude of cold civility? She turned to the window as if the view was to serve again.

"Sit down," she said and dropped into a chair against the light, looking away from me across the wide green space of afternoon sunshine. I sat down on a little sofa, at a loss also.

"And so," she said, turning her face to me suddenly, "you come back into my life." And I was amazed to see that the brightness of her eyes was tears. "We've lived — five years."

"You," I said clumsily, "have done all sorts of things. I hear of you — patronizing young artists — organizing experiments in village education."

"Yes," she said, "I've done all sorts of things. One has to. Forced, unreal things for the most part. You I expect have done — all sorts of things also.... But yours have been real things...."

"All things," I remarked sententiously, "are real. And all of them a little unreal. South Africa has been wonderful. And now it is all over one doubts if it really happened. Like that incredulous mood after a storm of passion."

"You've come back for good?"

"For good. I want to do things in England."

"Politics?"

“If I can get into that.”

Again a pause. There came the characteristic moment of deliberation that I remembered so well.

“I never meant you,” she said, “to go away.... You could have written. You never answered the notes I sent.”

“I was frantic,” I said, “with loss and jealousy. I wanted to forget.”

“And you forgot?”

“I did my best.”

“I did my best,” said Mary. “And now —— Have you forgotten?”

“Nothing.”

“Nor I. I thought I had. Until I saw you again. I’ve thought of you endlessly. I’ve wanted to talk to you. We had a way of talking together. But you went away. You turned your back as though all that was nothing — not worth having. You — you drove home my marriage, Stephen. You made me know what a thing of sex a woman is to a man — and how little else....”

She paused.

“You see,” I said slowly. “You had made me, as people say, in love with you.... I don’t know — if you remember everything....”

She looked me in the eyes for a moment.

“I hadn’t been fair,” she said with an abrupt abandonment of accusation. “But you know, Stephen, that night —— I meant to explain. And afterwards.... Things sometimes go as one hasn’t expected them to go, even the things one has planned to say. I suppose — I treated you — disgustingly.”

I protested.

“Yes,” she said. “I treated you as I did — and I thought you would stand it. I *knew*, I knew then as well as you do now that male to my female you wouldn’t stand it, but somehow — I thought there were other things. Things that could override that....”

“Not,” I said, “for a boy of one-and-twenty.”

“But in a man of twenty-six?”

I weighed the question. “Things are different,” I said, and then, “Yes. Anyhow now — if I may come back penitent, — to a friendship.”

We looked at one another gravely. Faintly in our ears sounded the music of past and distant things. We pretended to hear nothing of that, tried honestly to hear nothing of it. I had not remembered how steadfast and quiet her face could be. “Yes,” she said, “a friendship.”

“I’ve always had you in my mind, Stephen,” she said. “When I saw I couldn’t marry you, it seemed to me I had better marry and be free of any further hope. I thought we could get over that. ‘Let’s get it over,’ I thought. Now — at any rate — we have got over that.” Her eyes verified her words a little doubtfully. “And we can talk and you can tell me of your life, and the things you want to do that make life worth living. Oh! life has been *stupid* without you, Stephen, large and expensive and aimless....Tell me of your politics. They say — Justin told me — you think of parliament?”

“I want to do that. I have been thinking —— In fact I am going to stand.” I found myself hesitating on the verge of phrases in the quality of a review article. It was too unreal for her presence. And yet it was this she seemed to want from me. “This,” I said, “is a phase of great opportunities. The war has stirred the Empire to a sense of itself, to a sense of what it might be. Of course this Tariff Reform row is a squalid nuisance; it may kill out all the fine spirit again before anything is done. Everything will become a haggle, a chaffering of figures.... All the more reason why we should try and save things from the commercial traveller. If the Empire is anything at all, it is something infinitely more than a combination in restraint of trade....”

“Yes,” she said. “And you want to take that line. The high line.”

“If one does not take the high line,” I said, “what does one go into politics for?”

“Stephen,” she smiled, “you haven’t lost a sort of simplicity —— People go into politics because it looks important, because other people go into politics, because they can get titles and a sense of influence and — other things. And then there are quarrels, old grudges to serve.”

“These are roughnesses of the surface.”

“Old Stephen!” she cried with the note of a mother. “They will worry you in politics.”

I laughed. “Perhaps I’m not altogether so simple.”

“Oh! you’ll get through. You have a way of going on. But I shall have to watch over you. I see I shall have to watch over you. Tell me of the things you mean to do. Where are you standing?”

I began to tell her a little disjointedly of the probabilities of my Yorkshire constituency....

§ 6

I have a vivid vignette in my memory of my return to my father’s house, down through the pine woods and by the winding path across the deep valley that separated our two ridges. I was thinking of Mary and nothing but Mary in all the world and of the friendly sweetness of her eyes and the clean strong sharpness of her voice. That sweet white figure of Rachel that had been creeping to an ascendancy in my imagination was moonlight to her sunrise. I knew it was Mary I loved and had always loved. I wanted passionately to be as she desired, the friend she demanded, that intimate brother and confederate, but all my heart cried out for her, cried out for her altogether.

I would be her friend, I repeated to myself, I would be her friend. I would talk to her often, plan with her, work with her. I could put my meanings into her life and she should throw her beauty over mine. I began already to dream of the talk of to-morrow’s meeting....

§ 7

And now let me go on to tell at once the thing that changed life for both of us altogether, that turned us out of the courses that seemed set for us, our spacious, successful and divergent ways, she to the tragedy of her death and I from all the prospects of the public career that lay before me to the work that now, toilsomely, inadequately and blunderingly enough, I do. It was to pierce and slash away the appearances of life for me, it was to open my way to infinite disillusionment, and unsuspected truths. Within a few weeks of our second meeting Mary and I were passionately in love with one another; we had indeed become lovers. The arrested attractions of

our former love released again, drew us inevitably to that. We tried to seem outwardly only friends, with this hot glow between us. Our tormented secret was half discovered and half betrayed itself. There followed a tragi-comedy of hesitations and disunited struggle. Within four months the crisis of our two lives was past....

It is not within my purpose to tell you, my son, of the particular events, the particular comings and goings, the chance words, the chance meetings, the fatal momentary misunderstandings that occurred between us. I want to tell of something more general than that. This misadventure is in our strain. It is our inheritance. It is a possibility in the inheritance of all honest and emotional men and women. There are no doubt people altogether cynical and adventurous to whom these passions and desires are at once controllable and permissible indulgences without any radiation of consequences, a secret and detachable part of life, and there may be people of convictions so strong and simple that these disturbances are eliminated, but we Strattons are of a quality neither so low nor so high, we stoop and rise, we are not convinced about our standards, and for many generations to come, with us and with such people as the Christians, and indeed with most of our sort of people, we shall be equally desirous of free and intimate friendship and prone to blaze into passion and disaster at that proximity.

This is one of the essential riddles in the adaptation of such human beings as ourselves to that greater civilized state of which I dream. It is the gist of my story. It is one of the two essential riddles that confront our kind. The servitude of sex and the servitude of labor are the twin conditions upon which human society rests to-day, the two limitations upon its progress towards a greater social order, to that greater community, those uplands of light and happy freedom, towards which that Being who was my father yesterday, who thinks in myself to-day, and who will be you to-morrow and your sons after you, by his very nature urges and must continue to urge the life of mankind. The story of myself and Mary is a mere incident in that gigantic, scarce conscious effort to get clear of toils and confusions and encumbrances, and have our way with life. We are like little figures, dots ascendant upon a vast hillside; I take up our intimacy for an instant and hold it under a lens for you. I become more than

myself then, and Mary stands for innumerable women. It happened yesterday, and it is just a part of that same history that made Edmond Stratton of the Hays elope with Charlotte Anstruther and get himself run through the body at Haddington two hundred years ago, which drove the Laidlaw-Christians to Virginia in '45, gave Stratton Street to the moneylenders when George IV. was Regent, and broke the heart of Margaret Stratton in the days when Charles the First was king. With our individual variations and under changed conditions the old desires and impulses stirred us, the old antagonisms confronted us, the old difficulties and sloughs and impassable places baffled us. There are times when I think of my history among all those widespread repeated histories, until it seems to me that the human Lover is like a creature who struggles for ever through a thicket without an end....

There are no universal laws of affection and desire, but it is manifestly true that for the most of us free talk, intimate association, and any real fellowship between men and women turns with an extreme readiness to love. And that being so it follows that under existing conditions the unrestricted meeting and companionship of men and women in society is a monstrous sham, a merely dangerous pretence of encounters. The safe reality beneath those liberal appearances is that a woman must be content with the easy friendship of other women and of one man only, letting a superficial friendship towards all other men veil impassable abysses of separation, and a man must in the same way have one sole woman intimate. To all other women he must be a little blind, a little deaf, politely inattentive. He must respect the transparent, intangible, tacit purdah about them, respect it but never allude to it. To me that is an intolerable state of affairs, but it is reality. If you live in the spirit of any other understanding you will court social disaster. I suppose it is a particularly intolerable state of affairs to us Strattons because it is in our nature to want things to seem what they are. That translucent yet impassible purdah outrages our veracity. And it is plain to me that our social order cannot stand and is not standing the tensions it creates. The convention that passions and emotions are absent when they are palpably present broke down between Mary and myself, as it breaks down in a thousand other cases, as it breaks down

everywhere. Our social life is honeycombed and rotten with secret hidden relationships. The rigid, the obtuse and the unscrupulously cunning escape; the honest passion sooner or later flares out and destroys.... Here is a difficulty that no bullying imposition of arbitrary rules on the one hand nor any reckless abandonment of law on the other, can solve. Humanity has yet to find its method in sexual things; it has to discover the use and the limitation of jealousy. And before it can even begin to attempt to find, it has to cease its present timid secret groping in shame and darkness and turn on the light of knowledge. None of us knows much and most of us do not even know what is known.

§ 8

The house is very quiet to-day. It is your mother's birthday, and you three children have gone with her and Mademoiselle Potin into the forest to celebrate the occasion. Presently I shall join you. The sunlit garden, with its tall dreaming lilies against the trellised vines upon the wall, the cedars and the grassy space about the sundial, have that distinguished stillness, that definite, palpable and almost outlined emptiness which is so to speak your negative presence. It is like a sheet of sunlit colored paper out of which your figures have been cut. There is a commotion of birds in the jasmine, and your Barker reclines with an infinite tranquillity, a masterless dog, upon the lawn. I take up this writing again after an interval of some weeks. I have been in Paris, attending the Sabotage Conference, and dealing with those intricate puzzles of justice and discipline and the secret sources of contentment that have to be solved if sabotage is ever to vanish from labor struggles again. I think a few points have been made clearer in that curious riddle of reconciliations....

Now I resume this story. I turn over the sheets that were written and finished before my departure, and come to the notes for what is to follow.

Perhaps my days of work in Paris have carried my mind on beyond the point at which I left the narrative. I sit as it were among a pile of memories that are now all disordered and mixed up together, their proper sequences and connexions lost. I cannot trace the phases

through which our mutual passion rode up through the restrained and dignified intentions of our friendship. But I know that presently we were in a white heat of desire. There must have been passages that I now altogether forget, moments of tense transition. I am more and more convinced that our swiftest, intensest, mental changes leave far less vivid memories than impressions one receives when one is comparatively passive. And of this phase in my life of which I am now telling I have clear memories of a time when we talked like brother and sister, or like angels if you will, and hard upon that came a time when we were planning in all our moments together how and when and where we might meet in secret and meet again.

Things drift with a phantom-like uncertainty into my mind and pass again; those fierce motives of our transition have lost now all stable form and feature, but I believe there was a curious tormenting urgency in our jealousy of those others, of Justin on my part and of Rachel on hers. At first we had talked quite freely about Rachel, had discussed my conceivable marriage with her. We had indeed a little forced that topic, as if to reassure ourselves of the honesty of our new footing. But the force that urged us nearer pervaded all our being. It was hard enough to be barred apart, to snatch back our hands from touching, to avoid each other's eyes, to hurry a little out of the dusk towards the lit house and its protecting servants, but the constant presence and suggestion of those others from whom there were no bars, or towards whom bars could be abolished at a look, at an impulse, exacerbated that hardship, roused a fierce insatiable spirit of revolt within us. At times we grew angry with each other's formalism, came near to quarrelling....

I associate these moods with the golden stillnesses of a prolonged and sultry autumn, and with slowly falling leaves....

I will not tell you how that step was taken, it matters very little to my story, nor will I tell which one of us it was first broke the barriers down.

§ 9

But I do want to tell you certain things. I want to tell you them because they are things that affect you closely. There was almost

from the first a difference between Mary and myself in this, that I wanted to be public about our love, I wanted to be open and defiant, and she — hesitated. She wanted to be secret. She wanted to keep me; I sometimes think that she was moved to become my mistress because she wanted to keep me. But she also wanted to keep everything else in her life, — her position, her ample freedoms and wealth and dignity. Our love was to be a secret cavern, Endymion's cave. I was ready enough to do what I could to please her, and for a time I served that secrecy, lied, pretended, agreed to false addresses, assumed names, and tangled myself in a net-work of furtive proceedings. These are things that poison and consume honest love.

You will learn soon enough as you grow to be a man that beneath the respectable assumptions of our social life there is an endless intricate world of subterfuge and hidden and perverted passion, — for all passion that wears a mask is perversion — and that thousands of people of our sort are hiding and shamming about their desires, their gratifications, their true relationships. I do not mean the open offenders, for they are mostly honest and gallant people, but the men and women who sin in the shadows, the people who are not clean and scandalous, but immoral and respectable. This underworld is not for us. I wish that I who have looked into it could in some way inoculate you now against the repetition of my misadventure. We Strattons are daylight men, and if I work now for widened facilities of divorce, for an organized freedom and independence of women, and greater breadth of toleration, it is because I know in my own person the degradations, the falsity, the bitterness, that can lurk beneath the inflexible pretentions of the established code to-day.

And I want to tell you too of something altogether unforeseen that happened to us, and that was this, that from the day that passion carried us and we became in the narrower sense of the word lovers, all the wider interests we had in common, our political intentions, our impersonal schemes, began to pass out of our intercourse. Our situation closed upon us like a trap and hid the sky. Something more intense had our attention by the feet, and we used our wings no more. I do not think that we even had the real happiness and beauty and delight of one another. Because, I tell you, there is no light upon kiss or embrace that is not done with pride. I do not know why it should

be so, but people of our race and quality are a little ashamed of mere gratification in love. Always we seem in my memory to have been whispering with flushed cheeks, and discussing interminably — *situation*. Had something betrayed us, might something betray, was this or that sufficiently cunning? Had we perhaps left a footmark or failed to burn a note, was the second footman who was detailed as my valet even now pausing astonished in the brushing of my clothes with our crumpled secret in his hand? Between myself and the clear vision of this world about me this infernal net-work of precautions spread like a veil.

And it was not only a matter of concealments but of positive deceptions. The figure of Justin comes back to me. It is a curious thing that in spite of our bitter antagonism and the savage jealousy we were to feel for one another, there has always been, and there remains now in my thought of him, a certain liking, a regret at our opposition, a quality of friendliness. His broad face, which the common impression and the caricaturist make so powerful and eagle-like, is really not a brutal or heavy face at all. It is no doubt aquiline, after the fashion of an eagle-owl, the mouth and chin broad and the eyes very far apart, but there is a minute puckering of the brows which combines with that queer streak of brown discoloration that runs across his cheek and into the white of his eyes, to give something faintly plaintive and pitiful to his expression, an effect enhanced by the dark softness of his eyes. They are gentle eyes; it is absurd to suppose them the eyes of a violently forceful man. And indeed they do not belie Justin. It is not by vehemence or pressure that his wealth and power have been attained; it is by the sheer detailed abundance of his mind. In that queer big brain of his there is something of the calculating boy and not a little of the chess champion; he has a kind of financial gift, he must be rich, and grows richer. What else is there for him to do? How many times have I not tried to glance carelessly at his face and scrutinize that look in his eyes, and ask myself was that his usual look, or was it lit by an instinctive jealousy? Did he perhaps begin to suspect? I had become a persistent visitor in the house, he might well be jealous of such minor favors as she showed me, for with him she talked but little and shared no thoughts. His manner with her was tinctured by an

habituated despair. They were extraordinarily polite and friendly with one another....

I tried a hundred sophistications of my treachery to him. I assured myself that a modern woman is mistress and owner of herself; no chattel, and so forth. But he did not think so, and neither she nor I were behaving as though we thought so. In innumerable little things we were doing our best tacitly to reassure him. And so you see me shaking hands with this man, affecting an interest in his topics and affairs, staying in his house, eating his food and drinking his wine, that I might be the nearer to his wife. It is not the first time that has been done in the world, there are esoteric codes to justify all I did; I perceive there are types of men to whom such relationships are attractive by the very reason of their illicit excitement. But we Strattons are honest people, there is no secretive passion in our blood; this is no game for us; never you risk the playing of it, little son, big son as you will be when you read this story. Perhaps, but I hope indeed not, this may reach you too late to be a warning, come to you in mid-situation. Go through with it then, inheritor of mine, and keep as clean as you can, follow the warped honor that is still left to you — and if you can, come out of the tangle....

It is not only Justin haunts the memories of that furtive time, but Rachel More. I see her still as she was then, a straight, white-dressed girl with big brown eyes that regarded me now with perplexity, now with a faint dismay. I still went over to see her, and my manner had changed. I had nothing to say to her now and everything to hide. Everything between us hung arrested, and nothing could occur to make an end.

I told Mary I must cease my visits to the Mores. I tried to make her feel my own sense of an accumulating cruelty to Rachel. “But it explains away so much,” she said. “If you stop going there — everyone will talk. Everything will swing round — and point here.”

“Rachel!” I protested.

“No,” she said, overbearing me, “you must keep on going to Ridinghanger. You must. You must.”...

For a long time I had said nothing to Mary of the burthen these pretences were to me; it had seemed a monstrous ingratitude to find

the slightest flaw in the passionate love and intimacy she had given me. But at last the divergence of our purposes became manifest to us both. A time came when we perceived it clearly and discussed it openly. I have still a vivid recollection of a golden October day when we had met at the edge of the plantation that overlooks Bearshill. She had come through the gardens into the pine-wood, and I had jumped the rusty banked stream that runs down the Bearshill valley, and clambered the barbed wire fence. I came up the steep bank and through a fringe of furze to where she stood in the shade; I kissed her hand, and discovered mine had been torn open by one of the thorns of the wire and was dripping blood. “Mind my dress,” she said, and we laughed as we kissed with my arm held aloof.

We sat down side by side upon the warm pine needles that carpeted the sand, and she made a mothering fuss about my petty wound, and bound it in my handkerchief. We looked together across the steep gorge at the blue ridge of trees beyond. “Anyone,” she said, “might have seen us this minute.”

“I never thought,” I said, and moved a foot away from her.

“It’s too late if they have,” said she, pulling me back to her. “Over beyond there, that must be Hindhead. Someone with a telescope —— !”

“That’s less credible,” I said. And it occurred to me that the grey stretch of downland beyond must be the ridge to the west of Ridinghanger.

“I wish,” I said, “it didn’t matter. I wish I could come and go and fear nobody — and spend long hours with you — oh! at our ease.”

“Now,” she said, “we spend short hours. I wonder if I would like —— It’s no good, Stephen, letting ourselves think of things that can’t be. Here we are. Kiss that hand, my lover, there, just between wrist and thumb — the little hollow. Yes, exactly there.”

But thoughts had been set going in my mind. “Why,” I said presently, “should you always speak of things that can’t be? Why should we take all this as if it were all that there could be? I want long hours. I want you to shine all the day through on my life. Now, dear, it’s as if the sun was shown ever and again, and then put back behind an eclipse. I come to you half-blinded, I go away unsatisfied.

All the world is dark in between, and little phantom *yous* float over it."

She rested her cheek on her hand and looked at me gravely.

"You are hard to satisfy, brother heart," she said.

"I live in snatches of brightness and all the rest of life is waiting and thinking and waiting."

"What else is there? Haven't we the brightness?"

"I want you," I said. "I want *you* altogether."

"After so much?"

"I want the more. Mary, I want you to come away with me. No, listen! this life — don't think I'm not full of the beauty, the happiness, the wonder —— But it's a suspense. It doesn't go on. It's just a dawn, dear, a splendid dawn, a glory of color and brightness and freshness and hope, and — no sun rises. I want the day. Everything else has stopped with me and stopped with you. I do nothing with my politics now, — I pretend. I have no plans in life except plans for meeting you and again meeting you. I want to go on, I want to go on with you and take up work and the world again — you beside me. I want you to come out of all this life — out of all this immense wealthy emptiness of yours — —"

"Stop," she said, "and listen to me, Stephen."

She paused with her lips pressed together, her brows a little knit.

"I won't," she said slowly. "I am going on like this. I and you are going to be lovers — just as we are lovers now — secret lovers. And I am going to help you in all your projects, hold your party together — for you will have a party — my house shall be its centre — —"

"But Justin — —"

"He takes no interest in politics. He will do what pleases me."

I took some time before I answered. "You don't understand how men feel," I said.

She waited for what else I had to say. I lay prone, and gathered together and shaped and reshaped a little heap of pine needles. "You see —— I can't do it. I want you."

She gripped a handful of my hair, and tugged hard between each word. "Haven't you got me?" she asked between her teeth. "What more *could* you have?"

"I want you openly."

She folded her arms beneath her. “*No*,” she said.

For a little while neither of us spoke.

“It’s the trouble of the deceit?” she asked.

“It’s — the deceit.”

“We can stop all that,” she said.

I looked up at her face enquiringly.

“By having no more to hide,” she said, with her eyes full of tears. “If it’s nothing to you — —”

“It’s everything to me,” I said. “It’s overwhelming me. Oh Mary, heart of my life, my dear, come out of this! Come with me, come and be my wife, make a clean thing of it! Let me take you away, and then let me marry you. I know it’s asking you — to come to a sort of poverty — —”

But Mary’s blue eyes were alight with anger. “Isn’t it a clean thing *now*, Stephen?” she was crying. “Do you mean that you and I aren’t clean now? Will you never understand?”

“Oh clean,” I answered, “clean as Eve in the garden. But can we keep clean? Won’t the shadow of our falsehoods darken at all? Come out of it while we are still clean. Come with me. Justin will divorce you. We can stay abroad and marry and come back.”

Mary was kneeling up now with her hands upon her knees.

“Come back to what?” she cried. “Parliament? — after that? You *boy!* you sentimentalist! you — you duffer! Do you think I’d let you do it for your own sake even? Do you think I want you — spoilt? We should come back to mope outside of things, we should come back to fret our lives out. I won’t do it, Stephen, I won’t do it. End *this* if you like, break our hearts and throw them away and go on without them, but to turn all our lives into a scandal, to give ourselves over to the mean and the malicious, a prey to old women — and *you* damned out of everything! A man partly forgiven! A man who went wrong for a woman! *No!*”

She sprang lightly to her feet and stood over me as I knelt before her. “And I came here to be made love to, Stephen! I came here to be loved! And you talk that nonsense! You remind me of everything — wretched!”

She lifted up her hands and then struck down with them, a gesture of infinite impatience. Her face as she bent to me was alive with a friendly anger, her eyes suddenly dark. “You *duffer*!” she repeated....

§ 10

Discovery followed hard upon that meeting. I had come over to Martens with some book as a pretext; the man had told me that Lady Mary awaited me in her blue parlor, and I went unannounced through the long gallery to find her. The door stood a little ajar, I opened it softly so that she did not hear me, and saw her seated at her writing-desk with her back to me, and her cheek and eyebrow just touched by the sunlight from the open terrace window. She was writing a note. I put my hand about her shoulder, and bent to kiss her as she turned. Then as she came round to me she started, was for a moment rigid, then thrust me from her and rose very slowly to her feet.

I turned to the window and became as rigid, facing Justin. He was standing on the terrace, staring at us, with a face that looked stupid and inexpressive and — very white. The sky behind him, appropriately enough, was full of the tattered inky onset of a thunderstorm. So we remained for a lengthy second perhaps, a trite *tableau vivant*. We two seemed to hang helplessly upon Justin, and he was the first of us to move.

He made a queer, incomplete gesture with one hand, as if he wanted to undo the top button of his waistcoat and then thought better of it. He came very slowly into the room. When he spoke his voice had neither rage nor denunciation in it. It was simply conversational. “I felt this was going on,” he said. And then to his wife with the note of one who remarks dispassionately on a peculiar situation. “Yet somehow it seemed wrong and unnatural to think such a thing of you.”

His face took on something of the vexed look of a child who struggles with a difficult task. “Do you mind,” he said to me, “will you go?”

I took a moment for my reply. “No,” I said. “Since you know at last —— There are things to be said.”

“No,” said Mary, suddenly. “Go! Let me talk to him.”

“No,” I said, “my place is here beside you.”

He seemed not to hear me. His eyes were fixed on Mary. He seemed to think he had dismissed me, and that I was no longer there. His mind was not concerned about me, but about her. He spoke as though what he said had been in his mind, and no doubt it had been in his mind, for many days. “I didn’t deserve this,” he said to her. “I’ve tried to make your life as you wanted your life. It’s astonishing to find — I haven’t. You gave no sign. I suppose I ought to have felt all this happening, but it comes upon me surprisingly. I don’t know what I’m to do.” He became aware of me again. “And *you*!” he said. “What am I to do? To think that you — while I have been treating her like some sacred thing....”

The color was creeping back into his face. Indignation had come into his voice, the first yellow lights of rising jealousy showed in his eyes.

“Stephen,” I heard Mary say, “will you leave me to talk to my husband?”

“There is only one thing to do,” I said. “What is the need of talking? We two are lovers, Justin.” I spoke to both of them. “We two must go out into the world, go out now together. This marriage of yours — it’s no marriage, no real marriage....”

I think I said that. I seem to remember saying that; perhaps with other phrases that I have forgotten. But my memory of what we said and did, which is so photographically clear of these earlier passages that I believe I can answer for every gesture and nearly every word that I have set down, becomes suddenly turbid. The high tension of our first confrontation was giving place to a flood of emotional impulse. We all became eager to talk, to impose interpretations and justifications upon our situation. We all three became divided between our partial attention to one another and our urgent necessity to keep hold of our points of view. That I think is the common tragedy of almost all human conflicts, that rapid breakdown from the first cool apprehension of an issue to heat, confusion, and insistence. I do not know if indeed we raised our voices, but my memory has an effect of raised voices, and when at last I went out of the house it seemed to me that the men-servants in the hall were as hushed as

beasts before a thunderstorm, and all of them quite fully aware of the tremendous catastrophe that had come to Martens. And moreover, as I recalled afterwards with astonishment, I went past them and out into the driving rain unprotected, and not one of them stirred a serviceable hand....

What was it we said? I have a vivid sense of declaring not once only but several times that Mary and I were husband and wife "in the sight of God." I was full of the idea that now she must inevitably be mine. I must have spoken to Justin at times as if he had come merely to confirm my view of the long dispute there had been between us. For a while my mind resisted his extraordinary attitude that the matter lay between him and Mary, that I was in some way an interloper. It seemed to me there was nothing for it now but that Mary should stand by my side and face Justin with the world behind him. I remember my confused sense that presently she and I would have to go straight out of Martens. And she was wearing a tea-gown, easy and open, and the flimsiest of slippers. Any packing, any change of clothing, struck me as an incredible anti-climax. I had visions of our going forth, hand in hand. Outside was the soughing of a coming storm, a chill wind drove a tumult of leaves along the terrace, the door slammed and yawned open again, and then came the rain. Justin, I remember, still talking, closed the door. I tried to think how I could get to the station five miles away, and then what we could do in London. We should seem rather odd visitors to an hotel — without luggage. All this was behind my valiant demand that she should come with me, and come now.

And then my mind was lanced by the thin edge of realization that she did not intend to come now, and that Justin was resolved she should not do so. After the first shock of finding herself discovered she had stood pale but uncowed before her bureau, with her eyes rather on him than on me. Her hands, I think, were behind her upon the edge of the writing flap, and she was a little leaning upon them. She had the watchful alert expression of one who faces an unanticipated but by no means overwhelming situation. She cast a remark to me. "But I do not want to come with you," she said. "I have told you I do not want to come with you." All her mind seemed concentrated upon what she should do with Justin. "You must send

him away," he was saying. "It's an abominable thing. It must stop. How can you dream it should go on?"

"But you said when you married me I should be free, I should own myself! You gave me this house — —"

"What! To disgrace myself!"

I was moved to intervene.

"You must choose between us, Mary," I cried. "It is impossible you should stay here! You cannot stay here."

She turned upon me, a creature at bay. "Why shouldn't I stay here? Why must I choose between two men? I want neither of you. I want myself. I'm not a thing. I'm a human being. I'm not your thing, Justin — nor yours, Stephen. Yet you want to quarrel over me — like two dogs over a bone. I am going to stay here — in my house! It's my house. I made it. Every room of it is full of me. Here I am!"

She stood there making this magnificently extravagant claim; her eyes blazing blue, her hair a little dishevelled with a strand across her cheek.

Both I and Justin spoke together, and then turned in helpless anger upon one another. I remember that with the clumsiest of weak gestures he bade me begone from the house, and that I with a now rather deflated rhetoric answered I would go only with Mary at my side. And there she stood, less like a desperate rebel against the most fundamental social relations than an indignant princess, and demanded of us and high heaven, "Why should I be fought for? Why should I be fought for?"

And then abruptly she gathered her skirts in her hand and advanced. "Open that door, Stephen," she said, and was gone with a silken whirl and rustle from our presence.

We were left regarding one another with blank expressions.

Her departure had torn the substance out of our dispute. For the moment we found ourselves left with a new situation for which there is as yet no tradition of behavior. We had become actors in that new human comedy that is just beginning in the world, that comedy in which men still dispute the possession and the manner of the possession of woman according to the ancient rules, while they on their side are determining ever more definitely that they will not be possessed....

We had little to say to one another, — mere echoes and endorsements of our recent declarations. “She must come to me,” said I. And he, “I will save her from that at any cost.”

That was the gist of our confrontation, and then I turned about and walked along the gallery towards the entrance, with Justin following me slowly. I was full of the wrath of baffled heroics; I turned towards him with something of a gesture. Down the perspective of the white and empty gallery he appeared small and perplexed. The panes of the tall French windows were slashed with rain....

§ 11

I forget now absolutely what I may have expected to happen next. I cannot remember my return to my father’s house that day. But I know that what did happen was the most unanticipated and incredible experience of my life. It was as if the whole world of mankind were suddenly to turn upside down and people go about calmly in positions of complete inversion. I had a note from Mary on the morning after this discovery that indeed dealt with that but was otherwise not very different from endless notes I had received before our crisis. It was destroyed, so that I do not know its exact text now, but it did not add anything material to the situation, or give me the faintest shadow to intimate what crept close upon us both. She repeated her strangely thwarting refusal to come away and live with me. She seemed indignant that we had been discovered — as though Justin had indulged in an excess of existence by discovering us. I completed and despatched to her a long letter I had already been writing overnight in which I made clear the hopeless impossibility of her attitude, vowed all my life and strength to her, tried to make some picture of the happiness that was possible for us together, sketched as definitely as I could when and where we might meet and whither we might go. It must have made an extraordinary jumble of protest, persuasion and practicality. It never reached her; it was intercepted by Justin.

I have gathered since that after I left Martens he sent telegrams to Guy and Philip and her cousin Lord Tarvrille. He was I think amazed

beyond measure at this revelation of the possibilities of his cold and distant wife, with a vast passion of jealousy awaking in him, and absolutely incapable of forming any plan to meet the demands of his extraordinary situation. Guy and Philip got to him that night, Tarvrille came down next morning, and Martens became a debate. Justin did not so much express views and intentions as have them extracted from him; it was manifest he was prepared for the amplest forgiveness of his wife if only I could be obliterated from their world. Confronted with her brothers, the two men in the world who could be frankly brutal to her, Mary's dignity suffered; she persisted she meant to go on seeing me, but she was reduced to passionate tears.

Into some such state of affairs I came that morning on the heels of my letter, demanding Lady Mary of a scared evasive butler.

Maxton and Tarvrille appeared: "Hullo, Stratton!" said Tarvrille, with a fine flavor of an agreeable chance meeting. Philip had doubts about his greeting me, and then extended his reluctant hand with a nervous grin to excuse the delay.

"I want to see Lady Mary," said I, stiffly.

"She's not up yet," said Tarvrille, with a hand on my shoulder. "Come and have a talk in the garden."

We went out with Tarvrille expanding the topic of the seasons. "It's a damned good month, November, say what you like about it." Philip walked grimly silent on my other hand.

"And it's a damned awkward situation you've got us into, Stratton," said Tarvrille, "say what you like about it."

"It isn't as though old Justin was any sort of beast," he reflected, "or anything like that, you know. He's a most astonishing decent chap, clean as they make them."

"This isn't a beastly intrigue," I said.

"It never is," said Tarvrille genially.

"We've loved each other a long time. It's just flared out here."

"No doubt of that," said Tarvrille. "It's been like a beacon to all Surrey."

"It's one of those cases where things have to be readjusted. The best thing to do is for Mary and me to go abroad — —"

"Yes, but does Mary think so?"

“Look here!” said Philip in a voice thick with rage. “I won’t have Mary divorced. I won’t. See? I won’t.”

“What the devil’s it got to do with *you*?” I asked with an answering flash of fury.

Tarvrille’s arm ran through mine. “Nobody’s going to divorce Mary,” he said reassuringly. “Not even Justin. He doesn’t want to, and nobody else can, and there you are!”

“But we two — —”

“You two have had a tremendously good time. You’ve got found out — and there you are!”

“This thing has got to stop absolutely now,” said Philip and echoed with a note of satisfaction in his own phrasing, “absolutely *now*.”

“You see, Stratton,” said Tarvrille as if he were expanding Philip’s assertion, “there’s been too many divorces in society. It’s demoralizing people. It’s discrediting us. It’s setting class against class. Everybody is saying why don’t these big people either set about respecting the law or altering it. Common people are getting too infernally clear-headed. Hitherto it’s mattered so little.... But we can’t stand any more of it, Stratton, now. It’s something more than a private issue; it’s a question of public policy. We can’t stand any more divorces.”

He reflected. “We have to consider something more than our own personal inclinations. We’ve got no business to be here at all if we’re not a responsible class. We owe something — to ourselves.”

It was as if Tarvrille was as concerned as I was for this particular divorce, as if he struggled with a lively desire to see me and Mary happily married after the shortest possible interval. And indeed he manifestly wasn’t unsympathetic; he had the strongest proclivity for the romantic and picturesque, and it was largely the romantic picturesqueness of renunciation that he urged upon me. Philip for the most part maintained a resentful silence; he was a clenched anger against me, against Mary, against the flaming possibilities that threatened the sister of Lord Maxton, that most promising and distinguished young man.

Of course their plans must have been definitely made before this talk, probably they had made them overnight, and probably it was

Tarvrille had given them a practicable shape, but he threw over the whole of our talk so satisfying a suggestion of arrest and prolonged discussion that it never occurred to me that I should not be able to come again on the morrow and renew my demand to see Mary. Even when next day I turned my face to Martens and saw the flag had vanished from the flagstaff, it seemed merely a token of that household's perturbation. I thought the house looked oddly blank and sleepy as I drew near, but I did not perceive that this was because all the blinds were drawn. The door upon the lawn was closed, and presently the butler came to open it. He was in an old white jacket, and collarless. "Lady Mary!" he said. "Lady Mary has gone, sir. She and Mr. Justin went yesterday after you called."

"Gone!" said I. "But where?"

"I *think* abroad, sir."

"Abroad!"

"I *think* abroad."

"But —— They've left an address?"

"Only to Mr. Justin's office," said the man. "Any letters will be forwarded from there."

I paused upon the step. He remained stiffly deferential, but with an air of having disposed of me. He reproved me tacitly for forgetting that I ought to conceal my astonishment at this disappearance. He was indeed an admirable man-servant. "Thank you," said I, and dropped away defeated from the door.

I went down the broad steps, walked out up the lawn, and surveyed house and trees and garden and sky. To the heights and the depths and the uttermost, I knew now what it was to be amazed....

§ 12

I had felt myself an actor in a drama, and now I had very much the feeling an actor would have who answers to a cue and finds himself in mid-stage with the scenery and the rest of the cast suddenly vanished behind him. By that mixture of force and persuasion which avails itself of a woman's instinctive and cultivated dread of disputes and raised voices and the betrayal of contention to strangers, by the sheer tiring down of nerves and of sleepless body and by threats of

an immediate divorce and a campaign of ruin against me, these three men had obliged Mary to leave Martens and go with them to Southampton, and thence they took her in Justin's yacht, the *Water-Witch*, to Waterford, and thence by train to a hired house, an adapted old castle at Mirk near Crogham in Mayo. There for all practical purposes she was a prisoner. They took away her purse, and she was four miles from a pillar-box and ten from a telegraph office. This house they had taken furnished without seeing it on the recommendation of a London agent, and in the name of Justin's solicitor. Thither presently went Lady Ladislaw, and an announcement appeared in the *Times* that Justin and Lady Mary had gone abroad for a time and that no letters would be forwarded.

I have never learnt the particulars of that abduction, but I imagine Mary astonished, her pride outraged, humiliated, helpless, perplexed and maintaining a certain outward dignity. Moreover, as I was presently to be told, she was ill. Guy and Philip were, I believe, the moving spirits in the affair; Tarvrille was their apologetic accomplice, Justin took the responsibility for what they did and bore the cost, he was bitterly ashamed to have these compulsions applied to his wife, but full now of a gusty fury against myself. He loved Mary still with a love that was shamed and torn and bleeding, but his ruling passion was that infinitely stronger passion than love in our poor human hearts, jealousy. He was prepared to fight for her now as men fight for a flag, tearing it to pieces in the struggle. He meant now to keep Mary. That settled, he was prepared to consider whether he still loved her or she him....

Now here it may seem to you that we are on the very verge of romance. Here is a beautiful lady carried off and held prisoner in a wild old place, standing out half cut off from the mainland among the wintry breakers of the west coast of Ireland. Here is the lover, baffled but insistent. Here are the fierce brothers and the stern dragon husband, and you have but to make out that the marriage was compulsory, irregular and, on the ground of that irregularity, finally dissoluble, to furnish forth a theme for Marriott Watson in his most admirable and adventurous vein. You can imagine the happy chances that would have guided me to the hiding-place, the trusty friend who would have come with me and told the story, the grim siege of the

place — all as it were *sotto voce* for fear of scandal — the fight with Guy in the little cave, my attempted assassination, the secret passage. Would to heaven life had those rich simplicities, and one could meet one's man at the end of a sword! My siege of Mirk makes a very different story from that.

In the first place I had no trusted friend of so extravagant a friendship as such aid would demand. I had no one whom it seemed permissible to tell of our relations. I was not one man against three or four men in a romantic struggle for a woman. I was one man against something infinitely greater than that, I was one man against nearly all men, one man against laws, traditions, instincts, institutions, social order. Whatever my position had been before, my continuing pursuit of Mary was open social rebellion. And I was in a state of extreme uncertainty how far Mary was a willing agent in this abrupt disappearance. I was disposed to think she had consented far more than she had done to this astonishing step. Carrying off an unwilling woman was outside my imaginative range. It was luminously clear in my mind that so far she had never countenanced the idea of flight with me, and until she did I was absolutely bound to silence about her. I felt that until I saw her face to face again, and was sure she wanted me to release her, that prohibition held. Yet how was I to get at her and hear what she had to say? Clearly it was possible that she was under restraint, but I did not know; I was not certain, I could not prove it. At Guildford station I gathered, after ignominious enquiries, that the Justins had booked to London. I had two days of nearly frantic inactivity at home, and then pretended business that took me to London, for fear that I should break out to my father. I came up revolving a dozen impossible projects of action in my mind. I had to get into touch with Mary, at that my mind hung and stopped. All through the twenty-four hours my nerves jumped at every knock upon my door; this might be the letter, this might be the telegram, this might be herself escaped and come to me. The days passed like days upon a painful sick-bed, grey or foggy London days of an appalling length and emptiness. If I sat at home my imagination tortured me; if I went out I wanted to be back and see if any communication had come. I tried repeatedly to see Tarvrille. I had an idea of obtaining a complete outfit for an elopement, but I was

restrained by my entire ignorance of what a woman may need. I tried to equip myself for a sudden crisis by the completest preparation of every possible aspect. I did some absurd and ill-advised things. I astonished a respectable solicitor in a grimy little office behind a queer little court with trees near Cornhill, by asking him to give advice to an anonymous client and then putting my anonymous case before him. “Suppose,” said I, “it was for the plot of a play.” He nodded gravely.

My case as I stated it struck me as an unattractive one.

“Application for a Writ of Habeas Corpus,” he considered with eyes that tried to remain severely impartial, “by a Wife’s Lover, who wants to find out where she is.... It’s unusual. You will be requiring the husband to produce her Corpus.... I don’t think — speaking in the same general terms as those in which you put the circumstances, it would be likely to succeed.... No.”

Then I overcame a profound repugnance and went to a firm of private detectives. It had occurred to me that if I could have Justin, Tarvrille, Guy or Philip traced I might get a clue to Mary’s hiding-place. I remember a queer little office, a blusterous, frock-coated creature with a pock-marked face, iron-grey hair, an eyeglass and a strained tenor voice, who told me twice that he was a gentleman and several times that he would prefer not to do business than to do it in an ungentlemanly manner, and who was quite obviously ready and eager to blackmail either side in any scandal into which spite or weakness admitted his gesticulating fingers. He alluded vaguely to his staff, to his woman helpers, “some personally attached to me,” to his remarkable underground knowledge of social life— “the illicit side.” What could he do for me? There was nothing, I said, illicit about me. His interest waned a little. I told him that I was interested in certain financial matters, no matter what they were, and that I wanted to have a report of the movements of Justin and his brothers-in-law for the past few weeks and for a little time to come. “You want them watched?” said my private enquiry agent, leaning over the desk towards me and betraying a slight squint. “Exactly,” said I. “I want to know what sort of things they are looking at just at present.”

“Have you any inkling —— ?”

“None.”

“If our agents have to travel — —”

I expressed a reasonable generosity in the matter of expenses, and left him at last with a vague discomfort in my mind. How far mightn’t this undesirable unearth the whole business in the course of his investigations? And then what could he do? Suppose I went back forthwith and stopped his enquiries before they began! I had a disagreeable feeling of meanness that I couldn’t shake off; I felt I was taking up a weapon that Justin didn’t deserve. Yet I argued with myself that the abduction of Mary justified any such course.

As I was still debating this I saw Philip. He was perhaps twenty yards ahead of me, he was paying off a hansom which had just put him down outside Blake’s. “Philip,” I cried, following him up the steps and overtaking him and seizing his arm as the commissionaire opened the door for him. “Philip! What have you people done with Mary? Where is Mary?”

He turned a white face to me. “How dare you,” he said with a catch of the breath, “mention my sister?”

I spoke in an undertone, and stepped a little between him and the man at the door in order that the latter might not hear what I said. “I want to see her,” I expostulated. “I *must* see her. What you are doing is not playing the game. I’ve *got* to see her.”

“Let go of my arm, sir!” cried he, and suddenly I felt a whirlwind of rage answering the rage in his eyes. The pent-up exasperation of three weeks rushed to its violent release. He struck me in the face with the hand that was gripped about his umbrella. He meant to strike me in the face and then escape into his club, but before he could get away from me after his blow I had flung out at him, and had hit him under the jawbone. My blow followed his before guard or counter was possible. I hit with all my being. It was an amazing flare up of animal passion; from the moment that I perceived he was striking at me to the moment when both of us came staggering across the door-mat into the dignified and spacious hall-way of Blake’s, we were back at the ancestral ape, and we did exactly what the ancestral ape would have done. The arms of the commissionaire about my waist, the rush of the astonished porter from his little glass box, two incredibly startled and delighted pages, and an intervening member bawling out “Sir! Sir!” converged to remind us that we were a

million years or so beyond those purely arboreal days....

We seemed for a time to be confronted before an audience that hesitated to interfere. “How dare you name my sister to me?” he shouted at me, and brought to my mind the amazing folly of which he was capable. I perceived Mary’s name flung to the four winds of heaven.

“You idiot, Philip!” I cried. “I don’t *know* your sister. I’ve not seen her — scarcely seen her for years. I ask you — I ask you for a match-box or something and you hit me.”

“If you dare to speak to her —— !”

“You fool!” I cried, going nearer to him and trying to make him understand. But he winced and recoiled defensively. “I’m sorry,” I said to the commissionaire who was intervening. “Lord Maxton has made a mistake.”

“Is he a member?” said someone in the background, and somebody else suggested calling a policeman. I perceived that only a prompt retreat would save the whole story of our quarrel from the newspapers. So far as I could see nobody knew me there except Philip. I had to take the risks of his behavior; manifestly I couldn’t control it. I made no further attempt to explain anything to anybody. Everyone was a little too perplexed for prompt action, and so the advantage in that matter lay with me. I walked through the door, and with what I imagined to be an appearance of the utmost serenity down the steps. I noted an ascending member glance at me with an expression of exceptional interest, but it was only after I had traversed the length of Pall Mall that I realized that my lip and the corner of my nostril were both bleeding profusely. I called a cab when I discovered my handkerchief scarlet, and retreated to my flat and cold ablutions. Then I sat down to write a letter to Tarvrille, with a clamorous “Urgent, Please forward if away” above the address, and tell him at least to suppress Philip. But within the club that blockhead, thinking of nothing but the appearances of our fight and his own credit, was varying his assertion that he had thrashed me, with denunciations of me as a “blackguard,” and giving half a dozen men a highly colored, improvised, and altogether improbable account of my relentless pursuit and persecution of Lady Mary Justin, and how she had left London to avoid me. They listened, no doubt, with

extreme avidity. The matrimonial relations of the Justins had long been a matter for speculative minds.

And while Philip was doing this, Guy, away in Mayo still, was writing a tender, trusting, and all too explicit letter to a well-known and extremely impatient lady in London to account for his continued absence from her house. “So that is it!” said the lady, reading, and was at least in the enviable position of one who had confirmatory facts to impart....

And so quite suddenly the masks were off our situation and we were open to an impertinent world. For some days I did not realize what had happened, and lived in hope that Philip had been willing and able to cover his lapse. I went about with my preoccupation still, as I imagined, concealed, and with an increasing number of typed letters from my private enquiry agent in my pocket containing inaccurate and worthless information about the movements of Justin, which appeared to have been culled for the most part from a communicative young policeman stationed at the corner nearest to the Justins’ house, or expanded from *Who’s Who* and other kindred works of reference. The second letter, I remember, gave some particulars about the financial position of the younger men, and added that Justin’s credit with the west-end tradesmen was “limitless,” points upon which I had no sort of curiosity whatever....

I suppose a couple of hundred people in London knew before I did that Lady Mary Justin had been carried off to Ireland and practically imprisoned there by her husband because I was her lover. The thing reached me at last through little Fred Riddling, who came to my rooms in the morning while I was sitting over my breakfast. “Stratton!” said he, “what is all this story of your shaking Justin by the collar, and threatening to kill him if he didn’t give up his wife to you? And why do you want to fight a duel with Maxton? What’s it all about? Fire-eater you must be! I stood up for you as well as I could, but I heard you abused for a solid hour last night, and there was a chap there simply squirting out facts and dates and names. Got it all.... What have you been up to?”

He stood on my hearthrug with an air of having called for an explanation to which he was entitled, and he very nearly got one. But I just had some scraps of reserve left, and they saved me. “Tell me

first," I said, delaying myself with the lighting of a cigarette, "the particulars ... as you heard them."

Riddling embarked upon a descriptive sketch, and I got a minute or so to think.

"Go on," I said with a note of irony, when he paused. "Go on. Tell me some more. Where did you say they have taken her; let us have it right."

By the time his little store had run out I knew exactly what to do with him. "Riddling," said I, and stood up beside him suddenly and dropped my hand with a little added weight upon his shoulder, "Riddling, do you know the only right and proper thing to do when you hear scandal about a friend?"

"Come straight to him," said Riddling virtuously, "as I have done."

"No. Say you don't believe it. Ask the scandal-monger how he knows and insist on his telling you — insist. And if he won't — be very, very rude to him. Insist up to the quarrelling point. Now who were those people?"

"Well — that's a bit stiff.... One chap I didn't know at all."

"You should have pulled him up and insisted upon knowing who he was, and what right he had to lie about me. For it's lying, Riddling. Listen! It isn't true that I'm besieging Lady Mary Justin. So far from besieging her I didn't even know where she was until you told me. Justin is a neighbor of my father's and a friend of mine. I had tea with him and his wife not a month ago. I had tea with them together. I knew they were going away, but it was a matter of such slight importance to me, such slight importance" — I impressed this on his collarbone— "that I was left with the idea that they were going to the south of France. I believe they are in the south of France. And there you are. I'm sorry to spoil sport, but that's the bleak unromantic truth of the matter."

"You mean to say that there is nothing in it all?"

"Nothing."

He was atrociously disappointed. "But everybody," he said, "everybody has got something."

"Somebody will get a slander case if this goes on. I don't care

what they've got."

"Good Lord!" he said, and stared at the rug. "You'll take your oath — —" He glanced up and met my eye. "Oh, of course it's all right what you say." He was profoundly perplexed. He reflected. "But then, I say Stratton, why did you go for Maxton at Blake's? *That* I had from an eye-witness. You can't deny a scrap like that — in broad daylight. Why did you do that?"

"Oh *that's* it," said I. "I begin to have glimmerings. There's a little matter between myself and Maxton...." I found it a little difficult to improvise a plausible story.

"But he said it was his sister," persisted Riddling. "He said so afterwards, in the club."

"Maxton," said I, losing my temper, "is a fool and a knave and a liar. His sister indeed! Lady Mary! If he can't leave his sister out of this business I'll break every bone of his body." ... I perceived my temper was undoing me. I invented rapidly but thinly. "As a matter of fact, Riddling, it's quite another sort of lady has set us by the ears."

Riddling stuck his chin out, tucked in the corners of his mouth, made round eyes at the breakfast things and, hands in pockets, rocked from heels to toes and from toes to heels. "I see Stratton, yes, I see. Yes, all this makes it very plain, of course. Very plain.... Stupid thing, scandal is.... Thanks! no, I won't have a cigarette."

And he left me presently with an uncomfortable sense that he did see, and didn't for one moment intend to restrain his considerable histrionic skill in handing on his vision to others. For some moments I stood savoring this all too manifest possibility, and then my thoughts went swirling into another channel. At last the curtain was pierced. I was no longer helplessly in the dark. I got out my Bradshaw, and sat with the map spread out over the breakfast things studying the routes to Mayo. Then I rang for Williams, the man I shared with the two adjacent flat-holders, and told him to pack my kit-bag because I was suddenly called away.

Many of the particulars of my journey to Ireland have faded out of my mind altogether. I remember most distinctly my mood of grim elation that at last I had to deal with accessible persons again....

The weather was windy and violent, and I was sea-sick for most of the crossing, and very tired and exhausted when I landed. Williams had thought of my thick over-coat and loaded me with wraps and rugs, and I sat in the corner of a compartment in that state of mental and bodily fatigue that presses on the brows like a painless headache. I got to some little junction at last where I had to wait an hour for a branch-line train. I tasted all the bitterness of Irish hospitality, and such coffee as Ireland alone can produce. Then I went on to a station called Clumber or Clumboye, or some such name, and thence after some difficulty I got a car for my destination. It was a wretched car in which hens had been roosting, and it was drawn by a steaming horse that had sores under its mended harness.

An immense wet wind was blowing as we came over the big hill that lies to the south of Mirk. Everything was wet, the hillside above me was either intensely green sodden turf or great streaming slabs of limestone, seaward was a rocky headland, a ruin of a beehive shape, and beyond a vast waste of tumbling waters unlit by any sun. Not a tree broke that melancholy wilderness, nor any living thing but ourselves. The horse went stumblingly under the incessant stimulation of the driver's lash and tongue....

"Yonder it is," said my man, pointing with his whip, and I twisted round to see over his shoulder, not the Rhine-like castle I had expected, but a long low house of stone upon a headland, backed by a distant mountain that vanished in a wild driven storm of rain as I looked. But at the sight of Mirk my lassitude passed, my nerves tightened, and my will began to march again. Now, thought I, we bring things to an issue. Now we come to something personal and definite. The vagueness is at an end. I kept my eyes upon the place, and thought it more and more like a prison as we drew nearer. Perhaps from that window Mary was looking for me now. Had she wondered why I did not come to her before? Now at any rate I had found her. I sprang off the car, found a bell-handle, and set the house jangling.

The door opened, and a little old man appeared with his fingers

thrust inside his collar as though he were struggling against strangulation. He regarded me for a second, and spoke before I could speak.

"What might you be wanting?" said he, as if he had an answer ready.

"I want to see Lady Mary Justin," I said.

"You can't," he said. "She's gone."

"Gone!"

"The day before yesterday she went to London. You'll have to be getting back there."

"She's gone to London."

"No less."

"Willingly?"

The little old man struggled with his collar. "Anyone would go willingly," he said, and seemed to await my further commands. He eyed me obliquely with a shadow of malice in his eyes.

It was then my heart failed, and I knew that we lovers were beaten. I turned from the door without another word to the janitor. "Back," said I to my driver, and got up behind him.

But it is one thing to decide to go back, and another to do it. At the little station I studied time-tables, and I could not get to England again without a delay of half a day. Somewhere I must wait. I did not want to wait where there was any concourse of people. I decided to stay in the inn by the station for the intervening six hours, and get some sleep before I started upon my return, but when I saw the bedroom I changed my plan and went down out of the village by a steep road towards the shore. I wandered down through the rain and spindrift to the very edge of the sea, and there found a corner among the rocks a little sheltered from the wind, and sat, inert and wretched; my lips salt, my hair stiff with salt, and my body wet and cold; a miserable defeated man. For I had now an irrational and entirely overwhelming conviction of defeat. I saw as if I ought always to have seen that I had been pursuing a phantom of hopeless happiness, that my dream of ever possessing Mary again was fantastic and foolish, and that I had expended all my strength in vain. Over me triumphed a law and tradition more towering than those cliffs and

stronger than those waves. I was overwhelmed by a sense of human weakness, of the infinite feebleness of the individual man against wind and wave and the stress of tradition and the ancient usages of mankind. “We must submit,” I whispered, crouching close, “we must submit.” ...

Far as the eye could reach the waves followed one another in long unhurrying lines, an inexhaustible succession, rolling, hissing, breaking, and tossing white manes of foam, to gather at last for a crowning effort and break thunderously, squirting foam two hundred feet up the streaming faces of the cliffs. The wind tore and tugged at me, and wind and water made together a clamor as though all the evil voices in the world, all the violent passions and all the hasty judgments were seeking a hearing above the more elemental uproar....

§ 14

And while I was in this phase of fatigue and despair in Mayo, the scene was laid and all the other actors were waiting for the last act of my defeat in London. I came back to find two letters from Mary and a little accumulation of telegrams and notes, one written in my flat, from Tarvrille.

Mary’s letters were neither of them very long, and full of a new-born despair. She had not realized how great were the forces against her and against us both. She let fall a phrase that suggested she was ill. She had given in, she said, to save herself and myself and others from the shame and ruin of a divorce, and I must give in too. We had to agree not to meet or communicate for three years, and I was to go out of England. She prayed me to accept this. She knew, she said, she seemed to desert me, but I did not know everything, — I did not know everything, — I must agree; she could not come with me; it was impossible. *Now* certainly it was impossible. She had been weak, but I did not know all. If I knew all I should be the readier to understand and forgive her, but it was part of the conditions that I could not know all. Justin had been generous, in his way.... Justin had everything in his hands, the whole world was behind him against us, and I must give in. Those letters had a quality I had never before

met in her, they were broken-spirited. I could not understand them fully, and they left me perplexed, with a strong desire to see her, to question her, to learn more fully what this change in her might mean.

Tarvrille's notes recorded his repeated attempts to see me, I felt that he alone was capable of clearing up things for me, and I went out again at once and telegraphed to him for an appointment.

He wired to me from that same house in Mayfair in which I had first met Mary after my return. He asked me to come to him in the afternoon, and thither I went through a November fog, and found him in the drawing-room that had the plate glass above the fireplace. But now he was vacating the house, and everything was already covered up, the pictures and their frames were under holland, the fine furniture all in covers of faded stuff, the chandeliers and statues wrapped up, the carpets rolled out of the way. Even the window-curtains were tucked into wrappers, and the blinds, except one he had raised, drawn down. He greeted me and apologized for the cold inhospitality of the house. "It was convenient here," he said. "I came here to clear out my papers and boxes. And there's no chance of interruptions."

He went and stood before the empty fireplace, and plunged into the middle of the matter.

"You know, my dear Stratton, in this confounded business my heart's with you. It has been all along. If I could have seen a clear chance before you — for you and Mary to get away — and make any kind of life of it — though she's my cousin — I'd have helped you. Indeed I would. But there's no sort of chance — not the ghost of a chance...."

He began to explain very fully, quite incontrovertibly, that entire absence of any chance for Mary and myself together. He argued to the converted. "You know as well as I do what that romantic flight abroad, that Ouidaesque casa in some secluded valley, comes to in reality. All round Florence there's no end of such scandalous people, I've been among them, the nine circles of the repenting scandalous, all cutting one another."

"I agree," I said. "And yet — —"

"What?"

"We could have come back."

Tarvrille paused, and then leant forward. “No.”

“But people have done so. It would have been a clean sort of divorce.”

“You don’t understand Justin. Justin would ruin you. If you were to take Mary away.... He’s a queer little man. Everything is in his hands. Everything always is in the husband’s hands in these affairs. If he chooses. And keeps himself in the right. For an injured husband the law sanctifies revenge....

“And you see, you’ve got to take Justin’s terms. He’s changed. He didn’t at first fully realize. He feels — cheated. We’ve had to persuade him. There’s a case for Justin, you know. He’s had to stand — a lot. I don’t wonder at his going stiff at last. No doubt it’s hard for you to see that. But you have to see it. You’ve got to go away as he requires — three years out of England, you’ve got to promise not to correspond, not to meet afterwards — —”

“It’s so extravagant a separation.”

“The alternative is — not for you to have Mary, but for you two to be flung into the ditch together — that’s what it comes to, Stratton. Justin’s got his case. He’s set like — steel. You’re up against the law, up against social tradition, up against money — any one of those a man may fight, but not all three. And she’s ill, Stratton. You owe her consideration. You of all people. That’s no got-up story; she’s truly ill and broken. She can no longer fly with you and fight with you, travel in uncomfortable trains, stay in horrible little inns. You don’t understand. The edge is off her pluck, Stratton.”

“What do you mean?” I asked, and questioned his face.

“Just exactly what I say.”

A gleam of understanding came to me....

“Why can’t I see her?” I broke in, with my voice full of misery and anger. “Why can’t I see her? As if seeing her once more could matter so very greatly now!”

He appeared to weigh something in his mind. “You can’t,” he said.

“How do I know that she’s not being told some story of my abandonment of her? How do I know she isn’t being led to believe I no longer want her to come to me?”

“She isn’t,” said Tarvrille, still with that arrested judicial note in

his voice. “You had her letters?” he said.

“Two.”

“Yes. Didn’t they speak?”

“I want to see her. Damn it, Tarvrille!” I cried with sudden tears in my smarting eyes. “Let *her* send me away. This isn’t —— Not treating us like human beings.”

“Women,” said Tarvrille and looked at his boot toes, “are different from men. You see, Stratton — —”

He paused. “You always strike me, Stratton, as not realizing that women are weak things. We’ve got to take *care* of them. You don’t seem to feel that as I do. Their moods — fluctuate — more than ours do. If you hold ’em to what they say in the same way you hold a man — it isn’t fair....”

He halted as though he awaited my assent to that proposition.

“If you were to meet Mary now, you see, and if you were to say to her, come — come and we’ll jump down Etna together, and you said it in the proper voice and with the proper force, she’d do it, Stratton. You know that. Any man knows a thing like that. And she wouldn’t *want* to do it....”

“You mean that’s why I can’t see her.”

“That’s why you can’t see her.”

“Because we’d become — dramatic.”

“Because you’d become — romantic and uncivilized.”

“Well,” I said sullenly, realizing the bargain we were making, “I won’t.”

“You won’t make any appeal?”

“No.”

He made no answer, and I looked up to discover him glancing over his shoulder through the great glass window into the other room. I stood up very quickly, and there in the further apartment were Guy and Mary, standing side by side. Our eyes met, and she came forward towards the window impulsively, and paused, with that unpitying pane between us....

Then Guy was opening the door for her and she stood in the doorway. She was in dark furs wrapped about her, but in the instant I could see how ill she was and how broken. She came a step or so towards me and then stopped short, and so we stood, shyly and

awkwardly under Guy and Tarvrille's eyes, two yards apart. "You see," she said, and stopped lamely.

"You and I," I said, "have to part, Mary. We —— We are beaten. Is that so?"

"Stephen, there is nothing for us to do. We've offended. We broke the rules. We have to pay."

"By parting?"

"What else is there to do?"

"No," I said. "There's nothing else." ...

"I tried," she said, "that you shouldn't be sent from England."

"That's a detail," I answered.

"But your politics — your work?"

"That does not matter. The great thing is that you are ill and unhappy — that I can't help you. I can't do anything.... I'd go anywhere ... to save you.... All I can do, I suppose, is to part like this and go."

"I shan't be — altogether unhappy. And I shall think of you — —"

She paused, and we stood facing one another, tongue-tied. There was only one word more to say, and neither of us would say it for a moment.

"Good-bye," she whispered at last, and then, "Don't think I deserted you, Stephen my dear. Don't think ill of me. I couldn't come — I couldn't come to you," and suddenly her face changed slowly and she began to weep, my fearless playmate whom I had never seen weeping before; she began to weep as an unhappy child might weep.

"Oh my Mary!" I cried, weeping also, and held out my arms, and we clung together and kissed with tear-wet faces.

"No," cried Guy belatedly, "we promised Justin!"

But Tarvrille restrained his forbidding arm, and then after a second's interval put a hand on my shoulder. "Come," he said....

And so it was Mary and I parted from one another.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

Beginning Again

§ 1

In operas and romances one goes from such a parting in a splendid dignity of gloom. But I am no hero, and I went down the big staircase of Tarvrille's house the empty shuck of an abandoned desire. I was acutely ashamed of my recent tears. In the centre of the hall was a marble figure swathed about with yellow muslin. "On account of the flies," I said, breaking our silence.

My words were far too unexpected for Tarvrille to understand. "The flies," I repeated with an air of explanation.

"You're sure she'll be all right?" I said abruptly.

"You've done the best thing you can for her."

"I suppose I have. I have to go." And then I saw ahead of me a world full of the tiresome need of decisions and arrangements and empty of all interest. "Where the *devil* am I to go, Tarvrille? I can't even get out of things altogether...."

And then with a fresh realization of painful difficulties ahead: "I have to tell this to my father. I've got to explain —— And he thought — he expected — —"

Tarvrille opened the half of the heavy front door for me, hesitated, and came down the broad steps into the chilly grey street and a few yards along the pavement with me. He wanted to say something that he found difficult to say. When at last he did find words they were quite ridiculous in substance, and yet at the time I took them as gravely as he intended them. "It's no good quoting Marcus Aurelius," said Tarvrille, "to a chap with his finger in the crack of a door."

"I suppose it isn't," I said.

"One doesn't want to be a flatulent ass of course," said Tarvrille, "still — —"

He resumed with an air of plunging. "It will sound just rot to you now, Stratton, but after all it comes to this. Behind us is a —

situation — with half-a-dozen particular persons. Out here — I mean here round the world — before you've done with them — there's a thousand million people — men and women."

"Oh! what does that matter to me?" said I.

"Everything," said Tarvrille. "At least — it ought to."

He stopped and held out his hand. "Good-bye, Stratton — good luck to you! Good-bye."

"Yes," I said. "Good-bye."

I turned away from him. The image of Mary crying as a child cries suddenly blinded me and blotted out the world.

§ 2

I want to give you as clearly as I can some impression of the mental states that followed this passion and this collapse. It seems to me one of the most extraordinary aspects of all that literature of speculative attack which is called psychology, that there is no name and no description at all of most of the mental states that make up life. Psychology, like sociology, is still largely in the scholastic stage, it is ignorant and intellectual, a happy refuge for the lazy industry of pedants; instead of experience and accurate description and analysis it begins with the rash assumption of elements and starts out upon ridiculous syntheses. Who with a sick soul would dream of going to a psychologist?...

Now here was I with a mind sore and inflamed. I did not clearly understand what had happened to me. I had blundered, offended, entangled myself; and I had no more conception than a beast in a bog what it was had got me, or the method or even the need of escape. The desires and passionate excitements, the anger and stress and strain and suspicion of the last few months had worn deep grooves in my brain, channels without end or issue, out of which it seemed impossible to keep my thoughts. I had done dishonorable things, told lies, abused the confidence of a friend. I kept wrestling with these intolerable facts. If some momentary distraction released me for a time, back I would fall presently before I knew what was happening, and find myself scheming once more to reverse the accomplished, or eloquently restating things already intolerably overdiscussed in my

mind, justifying the unjustifiable or avenging defeat. I would dream again and again of some tremendous appeal to Mary, some violent return and attack upon the situation....

One very great factor in my mental and moral distress was the uncertain values of nearly every aspect of the case. There is an invincible sense of wild rightness about passionate love that no reasoning and no training will ever altogether repudiate; I had a persuasion that out of that I would presently extract a magic to excuse my deceits and treacheries and assuage my smarting shame. And round these deep central preoccupations were others of acute exasperation and hatred towards secondary people. There had been interventions, judgments upon insufficient evidence, comments, and often quite justifiable comments, that had filled me with an extraordinary savagery of resentment.

I had a persuasion, illogical but invincible, that I was still entitled to all the respect due to a man of unblemished honor. I clung fiercely to the idea that to do dishonorable things isn't necessarily to be dishonorable.... This state of mind I am describing is, I am convinced, the state of every man who has involved himself in any affair at once questionable and passionate. He seems free, but he is not free; he is the slave of the relentless paradox of his position.

And we were all of us more or less in deep grooves we had made for ourselves, Philip, Guy, Justin, the friends involved, and all in the measure of our grooves incapable of tolerance or sympathetic realization. Even when we slept, the clenched fist of the attitudes we had assumed gave a direction to our dreams.

You see the same string of events that had produced all this system of intense preoccupations had also severed me from the possible resumption of those wider interests out of which our intrigue had taken me. I had had to leave England and all the political beginnings I had been planning, and to return to those projects now, those now impossible projects, was to fall back promptly into hopeless exasperation....

And then the longing, the longing that is like a physical pain, that hunger of the heart for some one intolerably dear! The desire for a voice! The arrested habit of phrasing one's thoughts for a hearer who

will listen in peace no more! From that lonely distress even rage, even the concoction of insult and conflict, was a refuge. From that pitiless travail of emptiness I was ready to turn desperately to any offer of excitement and distraction.

From all those things I was to escape at last unhelped, but I want you to understand particularly these phases through which I passed; it falls to many and it may fall to you to pass through such a period of darkness and malign obsession. Make the groove only a little deeper, a little more unclimbable, make the temperament a little less sanguine, and suicide stares you in the face. And things worse than suicide, that suicide of self-respect which turns men to drugs and inflammatory vices and the utmost outrageous defiance of the dreaming noble self that has been so despitefully used. Into these same inky pools I have dipped my feet, where other men have drowned. I understand why they drown. And my taste of misdeed and resentment has given me just an inkling of what men must feel who go to prison. I know what it is to quarrel with a world.

§ 3

My first plan when I went abroad was to change my Harbury French, which was poor stuff and pedantic, into a more colloquial article, and then go into Germany to do the same thing with my German, and then perhaps to remain in Germany studying German social conditions — and the quality of the German army. It seemed to me that when the term of my exile was over I might return to England and re-enter the army. But all these were very anæmic plans conceived by a tired mind, and I set about carrying them out in a mood of slack lassitude. I got to Paris, and in Paris I threw them all overboard and went to Switzerland.

I remember very clearly how I reached Paris. I arrived about sunset — I suppose at St. Lazare or the Gare du Nord — sent my luggage to the little hotel in the Rue d'Antin where I had taken rooms, and dreading their loneliness decided to go direct to a restaurant and dine. I remember walking out into the streets just as shops and windows and street lamps were beginning to light up, and strolling circuitously through the clear bright stir of the Parisian

streets to find a dinner at the Café de la Paix. Some day you will know that peculiar sharp definite excitement of Paris. All cities are exciting, and each I think in a different way. And as I walked down along some boulevard towards the centre of things I saw a woman coming along a side street towards me, a woman with something in her body and something in her carriage that reminded me acutely of Mary. Her face was downcast, and then as we converged she looked up at me, not with the meretricious smile of her class but with a steadfast, friendly look. Her face seemed to me sane and strong. I passed and hesitated. An extraordinary impulse took me. I turned back. I followed this woman across the road and a little way along the opposite pavement. I remember I did that, but I do not remember clearly what was in my mind at the time; I think it was a vague rush towards the flash of companionship in her eyes. There I had seemed to see the glimmer of a refuge from my desolation. Then came amazement and reaction. I turned about and went on my way, and saw her no more.

But afterwards, later, I went out into the streets of Paris bent upon finding that woman. She had become a hope, a desire.

I looked for her for what seemed a long time, half an hour perhaps or two hours. I went along, peering at the women's faces, through the blazing various lights, the pools of shadowy darkness, the flickering reflections and transient glitter, one of a vast stream of slow-moving adventurous human beings. I crossed streams of traffic, paused at luminous kiosks, became aware of dim rows of faces looking down upon me from above the shining enamel of the omnibuses.... My first intentness upon one person, so that I disregarded any distracting intervention, gave place by insensible degrees to a more general apprehension of the things about me. That original woman became as it were diffused. I began to look at the men and women sitting at the little tables behind the panes of the cafés, and even on the terraces — for the weather was still dry and open. I scrutinized the faces I passed, faces for the most part animated by a sort of shallow eagerness. Many were ugly, many vile with an intense vulgarity, but some in that throng were pretty, some almost gracious. There was something pathetic and appealing for me in this great sweeping together of people into a little light, into a weak community of desire

for joy and eventfulness. There came to me a sense of tolerance, of fellowship, of participation. From an outer darkness of unhappiness or at least of joylessness, they had all come hither — as I had come.

I was like a creature that slips back again towards some deep waters out of which long since it came, into the light and air. It was as if old forgotten things, prenatal experiences, some magic of ancestral memories, urged me to mingle again with this unsatisfied passion for life about me....

Then suddenly a wave of feeling between self-disgust and fear poured over me. This vortex was drawing me into deep and unknown things.... I hailed a passing *fiacre*, went straight to my little hotel, settled my account with the proprietor, and caught a night train for Switzerland.

All night long my head ached, and I lay awake swaying and jolting and listening to the rhythms of the wheels, Paris clean forgotten so soon as it was left, and my thoughts circling continually about Justin and Philip and Mary and the things I might have said and done.

§ 4

One day late in February I found myself in Vevey. I had come down with the break-up of the weather from Montana, where I had met some Oxford men I knew and had learned to ski. I had made a few of those vague acquaintances one makes in a winter-sport hotel, but now all these people were going back to England and I was thrown back upon myself once more. I was dull and angry and unhappy still, full of self-reproaches and dreary indignations, and then very much as the sky will sometimes break surprisingly through storm clouds there began in me a new series of moods. They came to me by surprise. One clear bright afternoon I sat upon the wall that runs along under the limes by the lake shore, envying all these people who were going back to England and work and usefulness. I thought of myself, of my career spoilt, my honor tarnished, my character tested and found wanting. So far as English politics went my prospects had closed for ever. Even after three years it was improbable that I should be considered by the party managers again.

And besides, it seemed to me I was a man crippled. My other self, the mate and confirmation of my mind, had gone from me. I was no more than a mutilated man. My life was a thing condemned; I had joined the ranks of loafing, morally-limping, English exiles.

I looked up. The sun was setting, a warm glow fell upon the dissolving mountains of Savoy and upon the shining mirror of the lake. The luminous, tranquil breadth of it caught me and held me. "I am done for." The light upon the lake and upon the mountains, the downward swoop of a bird over the water and something in my heart, gave me the lie.

"What nonsense!" I said, and felt as if some dark cloud that had overshadowed me had been thrust back.

I stared across at Savoy as though that land had spoken. Why should I let all my life be ruled by the blunders and adventures of one short year of adventure? Why should I become the votary of a train of consequences? What had I been dreaming of all this time? Over there were gigantic uplands I had never seen and trodden; and beyond were great plains and cities, and beyond that the sea, and so on, great spaces and multitudinous things all round about the world. What did the things I had done, the things I had failed to do, the hopes crushed out of me, the tears and the anger, matter to *that*? And in some amazing way this thought so took possession of me that the question seemed also to carry with it the still more startling collateral, what then did they matter to me? "Come out of yourself," said the mountains and all the beauty of the world. "Whatever you have done or suffered is nothing to the inexhaustible offer life makes you. We are you, just as much as the past is you."

It was as though I had forgotten and now remembered how infinitely multitudinous life can be. It was as if Tarvrille's neglected words to me had sprouted in the obscurity of my mind and borne fruit....

I cannot explain how that mood came, I am doing my best to describe it, and it is not easy even to describe. And I fear that to you who will have had I hope no experience of such shadows as I had passed through, it is impossible to convey its immense elation.... I remember once I came in a boat out of the caves of Han after two hours in the darkness, and there was the common daylight that is

nothing wonderful at all, and its brightness ahead there seemed like trumpets and cheering, like waving flags and like the sunrise. And so it was with this mood of my release.

There is a phrase of Peter E. Noyes', that queer echo of Emerson whom people are always rediscovering and forgetting again, a phrase that sticks in my mind,— "Every living soul is heir to an empire and has fallen into a pit." It's an image wonderfully apt to describe my change of mental attitude, and render the contrast between those intensely passionate personal entanglements that had held me tight and that wide estate of life that spreads about us all, open to all of us in just the measure that we can scramble out of our individual selves — to a more general self. I seemed to be hanging there at the brim of my stale and painful den, staring at the unthought-of greatness of the world, with an unhoped-for wind out of heaven blowing upon my face.

I suppose the intention of the phrase "finding salvation," as religious people use it, is very much this experience. If it is not the same thing it is something very closely akin. It is as if someone were scrambling out of a pit into a largeness — a largeness that is attainable by every man just in the measure that he realizes it is there.

I leave these fine discriminations to the theologian. I know that I went back to my hotel in Vevey with my mind healed, with my will restored to me, and my ideas running together into plans. And I know that I had come out that day a broken and apathetic man.

§ 5

The next day my mood declined again; it was as if that light, that sense of release that had shone so clear and strong in my mind, had escaped me. I sought earnestly to recover it. But I could not do so, and I found my old narrow preoccupations calling urgently to me again.

I thought that perhaps I might get back those intimations of outlook and relief if I clambered alone into some high solitude and thought. I had a crude attractive vision of myself far above the heat and noise, communing with the sky. It was the worst season for climbing, and on the spur of the moment I could do nothing but get

up the Rochers de Naye on the wrong side, and try and find some eyrie that was neither slippery nor wet. I did not succeed. In one place I slipped down a wet bank for some yards and held at last by a root; if I had slipped much further I should not be writing here now; and I came back a very weary and bruised climber, without any meditation....

Three nights after when I was in bed I became very lucidly awake — it must have been about two or three in the morning — and the vision of life returned to me, with that same effect of enlargement and illumination. It was as if the great stillness that is behind and above and around the world of sense did in some way communicate with me. It bade me rouse my spirit and go on with the thoughts and purposes that had been stirring and proliferating in my mind when I had returned to England from the Cape. "Dismiss your passion." But I urged that that I could not do; there was the thought of Mary subjugated and weeping, the smarting memory of injury and defeat, the stains of subterfuge and discovery, the aching separation. No matter, the stillness answered, in the end all that is just to temper you for your greater uses.... I cannot forget, I insisted. Do not forget, but for the present this leads you no whither; this chapter has ended; dismiss it and turn to those other things. You are not only Stephen Stratton who fell into adultery; in these silences he is a little thing and far away; here and with me you are Man — Everyman — in this round world in which your lot has fallen. But Mary, I urged, to forget Mary is a treason, an ingratitude, seeing that she loved me. But the stillness did not command me to forget her, but only to turn my face now to the great work that lies before mankind. And that work? That work, so far as your share goes, is first to understand, to solve, and then to achieve, to work out in the measure of yourself that torment of pity and that desire for order and justice which together saturate your soul. Go about the world, embrue yourself with life, make use of that confusedly striving brain that I have lifted so painfully out of the deadness of matter....

"But who are you?" I cried out suddenly to the night. "Who are you?"

I sat up on the side of my bed. The dawn was just beginning to break up the featureless blackness of the small hours. "This is just

some odd corner of my brain," I said....

Yet —— How did I come to have this odd corner in my brain? What *is* this lucid stillness?...

§ 6

Let me tell you rather of my thoughts than of my moods, for there at least one comes to something with a form that may be drawn and a substance that is measurable; one ceases to struggle with things indefinable and the effort to convey by metaphors and imaginary voices things that are at once bodiless and soundless and lightless and yet infinitely close and real. And moreover with that mysterious and subtle change of heart in me there came also a change in the quality and range of my ideas. I seemed to rise out of a tangle of immediacies and misconceptions, to see more largely and more freely than I had ever done before.

I have told how in my muddled and wounded phase I had snatched at the dull project of improving my languages, and under the cloak of that spying a little upon German military arrangements. Now my mind set such petty romanticism on one side. It had recovered the strength to look on the whole of life and on my place in it. It could resume the ideas that our storm of passion had for a time thrust into the background of my thoughts. I took up again all those broad generalizations that had arisen out of my experiences in South Africa, and which I had been not so much fitting into as forcing into the formulæ of English politics; I recalled my disillusionment with British Imperialism, my vague but elaborating apprehension of a profound conflict between enterprise and labor, a profound conflict between the life of the farm and the life of trade and finance and wholesale production, as being something far truer to realities than any of the issues of party and patriotism upon which men were spending their lives. So far as this rivalry between England and Germany, which so obsessed the imagination of Europe, went, I found that any faith I may have had in its importance had simply fallen out of my mind. As a danger to civilization, as a conceivable source of destruction and delay, it was a monstrous business enough, but that in the long run it mattered how or when they fought and

which won I did not believe. In the development of mankind the thing was of far less importance than the struggle for Flanders or the wars of France and Burgundy. I was already coming to see Europe as no more than the dog's-eared corner of the page of history, — like most Europeans I had thought it the page — and my recovering mind was eager and open to see the world beyond and form some conception of the greater forces that lay outside our insularities. What is humanity as a whole doing? What is the nature of the world process of which I am a part? Why should I drift from cradle to grave wearing the blinkers of my time and nationality, a mere denizen of Christendom, accepting its beliefs, its stale antagonisms, its unreal purposes? That perhaps had been tolerable while I was still an accepted member of the little world into which my lot had fallen, but now that I was thrust out its absurdity glared. For me the alternative was to be a world-man or no man. I had seemed sinking towards the latter: now I faced about and began to make myself what I still seek to make myself to-day, a son of mankind, a conscious part of that web of effort and perplexity which wraps about our globe....

All this I say came into my mind as if it were a part of that recovery of my mind from its first passionate abjection. And it seemed a simple and obvious part of the same conversion to realize that I was ignorant and narrow, and that, too, in a world which is suffering like a beast in a slime pit by reason of ignorance and narrowness of outlook, and that it was my manifest work and purpose to make myself less ignorant and to see and learn with all my being. It came to me as a clear duty that I should get out of the land of hotels and leisure and go seeking the facts and clues to human inter-relationship nearer the earthy roots of things, and I turned my thoughts to India and China, those vast enigmas of human accumulation, in a spirit extraordinarily like that of some mystic who receives a call. I felt I must go to Asia and from Asia perhaps round the world. But it was the greatness of Asia commanded me. I wanted to see the East not as a spectacle but as the simmering vat in which the greater destiny of man brews and brews....

§ 7

It was necessary to tell my father of my intentions. I made numerous beginnings. I tore up several letters and quarrelled bitterly with the hotel pens. At first I tried to describe the change that had happened to my mind, to give him some impression of the new light, the release that had come to me. But how difficult this present world is with its tainted and poisoned phrases and its tangled misunderstandings! Here was I writing for the first time in my life of something essentially religious and writing it to him whose profession was religion, and I could find no words to convey my meaning to him that did not seem to me fraught with the possibilities of misinterpretation. One evening I made a desperate resolve to let myself go, and scrawled my heart out to him as it seemed that night, a strange, long letter. It was one of the profoundest regrets that came to me when I saw him dead last winter that I did not risk his misunderstanding and post that letter. But when I re-read it in the next morning's daylight it seemed to me so rhetorical, so full of — what shall I call it? — spiritual bombast, it so caricatured and reflected upon the deep feelings sustaining me, that I could not post it for shamefacedness, and I tore it up into little pieces and sent instead the briefest of notes.

"I am doing no good here in Switzerland," I wrote. "Would you mind if I went east? I want to see something of the world outside Europe. I have a fancy I may find something to do beyond there. Of course, it will cost rather more than my present allowance. I will do my best to economize. Don't bother if it bothers you — I've been bother enough to you...."

He replied still more compactly. "By all means. I will send you some circular notes, Poste Restante, Rome. That will be on your way. Good wishes to you, Stephen. I'm glad you want to go east instead of just staying in Switzerland."

I sit here now and wonder, little son, what he thought, what he supposed, what he understood.

I loved my father, and I began to perceive he loved me wonderfully. I can imagine no man I would have sooner had for a priest than him; all priestcraft lays hands if it can, and with an excellent wisdom, upon the titles and dignity of fatherhood; and yet here am I left to guessing — I do not know whether my father ever worshipped, whether he ever prayed with his heart bared to God.

There are times when the inexpressiveness of life comes near to overwhelming me, when it seems to me we are all asleep or entranced, and but a little way above the still cows who stand munching slowly in a field. Why couldn't we and why didn't we talk together?... We fear bathos too much, are shyly decent to the pitch of mania. We have neither the courage of our bodies nor of our souls....

I went almost immediately to Rome. I stayed in Rome some days, getting together an outfit, and incidentally seeing that greater city of the dead in whose embrace the modern city lies. I was now becoming interested in things outside my grooves, though my grooves were still there, deep and receptive, and I went about the place at last almost eagerly, tracing the outlines of that great departed city on whose colossal bones the churches and palaces of the middle ages cluster like weeds in the spaces and ruins of a magnificent garden. I found myself one day in the Forum, thinking of that imperialism that had built the Basilica of Julius Cæsar, and comparing its cramped vestiges with that vaster second administrative effort which has left the world the monstrous arches of Constantine. I sat down over against these last among the ruins of the Vestals' House, and mused on that later reconstruction when the Empire, with its science aborted and its literature and philosophy shrivelled to nothing, its social fabric ruined by the extravagances of financial adventure and its honor and patriotism altogether dead, united itself, in a desperate effort to continue, with all that was most bickeringly intolerant and destructive in Christianity — only to achieve one common vast decay. All Europe to this day is little more than the sequel to that failure. It is the Roman Empire in disintegration. The very churches whose domes rise to the northward of the ancient remains are built of looted stones and look like parasitic and fungoid growths, and the tourists stream through those spaces day by day, stare at the marble fragments, the arches, the fallen carvings and rich capitals, with nothing greater in their minds and nothing clearer....

I discovered I was putting all this into the form of a letter to Mary. I was writing to her in my mind, as many people talk to themselves. And I remember that I wandered upon the Palatine Hill musing over the idea of writing a long letter to her, a long continuous letter to her, a sort of diary of impressions and ideas, that somewhen, years ahead,

I might be able to put into her hands.

One does not carry out such an idea into reality; it is so much easier to leave the letter imagined and unwritten if there lives but little hope of its delivery; yet for many years I kept up an impalpable correspondence in my thoughts, a stream of expression to which no answer came — until at last the habits of public writing and the gathering interests of a new rôle in life diverted it to other ends.

§ 8

One morning on the way from Brindisi to Egypt I came up on deck at dawn because my mind was restless and I could not sleep. Another solitary passenger was already up, so intently watching a pink-lit rocky coast-line away to the north of us that for a time he did not observe me.

"That's Crete," he said, when at last he became aware of me close at hand.

"Crete!" said I.

"Yes," he said, "Crete."

He came nearer to me. "That, sir," he said with a challenging emphasis, "is the most wonderful island I've ever yet set eyes on, — quite the most wonderful."

"Five thousand years ago," he remarked after a pause that seemed to me to be calculated, "they were building palaces there, better than the best we can build to-day. And things — like modern things. They had bathrooms there, beautifully fitted bathrooms — and admirable sanitation — admirable. Practically — American. They had better artists to serve them than your King Edward has, why! Minos would have laughed or screamed at all that Windsor furniture. And the things they made of gold, sir — you couldn't get them done anywhere to-day. Not for any money. There was a Go about them.... They had a kind of writing, too — before the Phœnicians. No man can read it now, and there it is. Fifty centuries ago it was; and to-day — They grow oranges and lemons. And they riot.... Everything else gone.... It's as if men struggled up to a certain pitch and then — grew tired.... All this Mediterranean; it's a tired sea...."

That was the beginning of a curious conversation. He was an

American, a year or so younger than myself, going, he said, “to look at Egypt.”

“In our country,” he explained, “we’re apt to forget all these worked-out regions. Too apt. We don’t get our perspectives. We think the whole blessed world is one everlasting boom. It hit me first down in Yucatan that that wasn’t so. Why! the world’s littered with the remains of booms and swaggering beginnings. Americanism! — there’s always been Americanism. This Mediterranean is just a Museum of old Americas. I guess Tyre and Sidon thought they were licking creation all the time. It’s set me thinking. What’s *really* going on? Why — anywhere, — you’re running about among ruins — anywhere. And ruins of something just as good as anything we’re doing to-day. Better — in some ways. It takes the heart out of you....”

It was Gidding, who is now my close friend and ally. I remember very vividly the flavor of morning freshness as we watched Crete pass away northward and I listened to his talk.

“I was coming out of New York Harbor a month ago and looking back at the skyscrapers,” he said, “and suddenly it hit me in the mind;— ‘That’s just the next ruin,’ I thought.”

I remember that much of our first talk, but the rest of it now is indistinct.

We had however struck up an acquaintance, we were both alone, and until he left me on his way to Abydos we seem now to have been conversing all the time. And almost all the time we were discussing human destiny and the causes of effort and decay, and whether the last few ascendant centuries the world has seen have in them anything more persistent than the countless beginnings that have gone before.

“There’s Science,” said I a little doubtfully.

“At Cnossus there they had Dædalus, sir, fifty centuries ago. Dædalus! He was an F.R.S. all right. I haven’t a doubt he flew. If they hadn’t steel they had brass. We’re too conceited about our little modern things.”

I found something very striking and dramatic in the passage from Europe to Asia. One steams slowly through a desert that comes up close to the ship; the sand stretches away, hillock and mound beyond hillock and mound; one sees camels in the offing stringing out to some ancient destination; one is manifestly passing across a barrier, — the canal has changed nothing of that. Suez is a first dab of tumultuous Orientalism, noisy and vivid. And then, after that gleam of turmoil, one opens out into the lonely dark blue waters of the Red Sea. Right and left the shore is a bitter, sun-scorched desolation; eastward frowns a great rampart of lowering purple mountains towering up to Sinai. It is like no European landscape. The boat goes slowly as if uncharted dangers lurked ahead. It is a new world with a new atmosphere. Then comes wave upon wave of ever more sultry air, and the punkahs begin to swing and the white clothes appear. Everyone casts off Europe, assumes an Asiatic livery. The very sun, rushing up angrily and abruptly after a heated night, is unfamiliar, an Asiatic sun.

And so one goes down that reef-fringed waterway to Aden; it is studded with lonely-looking lighthouses that burn, it seems, untended, and sometimes in their melancholy isolation swing great rhythmic arms of light. And then, land and the last lateen sails of Aden vanishing together, one stands out into the hot thundery monotonies of the Indian Ocean; into imprisonment in a blue horizon across whose Titan ring the engines seem to throb in vain. How one paces the ship day by day, and eats and dozes and eats again, and gossips inanely and thanks Heaven even for a flight of flying fish or a trail of smoke from over the horizon to take one's mind a little out of one's oily quivering prison!... A hot portentous delay; a sinister significant pause; that is the voyage from Europe to India still.

I suppose by the time that you will go to India all this prelude will have vanished, you will rattle through in a train-de-luxe from Calais, by way of Baku or Constantinople; you will have none of this effect of a deliberate sullen approach across limitless miles of sea. But that is how I went to India. Everything seemed to expand; I was coming out of the frequent landfalls, the neighborly intimacies and neighborly conflicts of the Mediterranean into something remoter; into larger seas and greater lands, rarer communications and a vaster

future....

To go from Europe to Asia is like going from Norway to Russia, from something slight and “advanced” to something massive and portentous. I felt that nearly nine years ago; to-day all Asia seems moving forward to justify my feelings....

And I remember too that as I went down the Red Sea and again in the Indian Ocean I had a nearly intolerable passion of loneliness. A wound may heal and still leave pain. I was coming out of Europe as one comes out of a familiar house into something larger and stranger, I seemed but a little speck of life, and behind me, far away and silent and receding, was the one other being to whom my thoughts were open. It seemed very cruel to me that I could not write to her.

Such moods were to come to me again and again, and particularly during the inactivities of voyages and in large empty spaces and at night when I was weary. At other times I could banish and overcome them by forcing myself to be busy and by going to see novel and moving things.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

This Swarming Business of Mankind

§ 1

I do not think I could now arrange into a consecutive history my travellings, my goings and returnings in my wandering effort to see and comprehend the world. And certainly even if I could arrange my facts I should still be at a loss to tell of the growth of ideas that is so much more important than any facts, to trace the increasing light to its innumerable sources, to a chink here, to a glowing reflection there, to a leap of burning light from some long inert darkness close at hand. But steadily the light grew, and this vast world of man, in which our world, little son, is the world of a limited class in a small island, began to take on definite forms, to betray broad universal movements; what seemed at first chaotic, a drift and tangle of passions, traditions, foolish ideas, blundering hostilities, careless tolerances, became confusedly systematic, showed something persistent and generalized at work among its multitudinous perplexity.

I wonder now if I can put before you very briefly the main generalizations that were growing up in my mind during my exile, the simplified picture into which I translated the billions of sights and sounds and — smells, for every part of the world has its distinctive olfactory palette as much as its palette of colors — that rained daily and nightly upon my mind.

Before, my eyes again as I sit here in this quiet walled French garden, the great space before the Jumna Musjid at Delhi reappears, as I saw it in the evening stillness against a glowing sky of gold, and the memory of countless worshippers within, praying with a devotion no European displays. And then comes a memory of that long reef of staircases and temples and buildings, the ghats of Benares, in the blazing morning sun, swarming with a vast multitude of multicolored people and the water also swarming with brown bodies. It has the colors of a bed of extravagantly splendid flowers and the light that is

Indian alone. Even as I sit here these places are alive with happening. It is just past midday here; at this moment the sun sinks in the skies of India, the Jumna Musjid flushes again with the glow of sunset, the smoke of evening fires streams heavenward against its subtle lines, and upon those steps at Benares that come down the hillside between the conquering mosque of Aurangzeb and the shining mirror of the Ganges a thousand silent seated figures fall into meditation. And other memories recur and struggle with one another; the crowded river-streets of Canton, the rafts and houseboats and junks innumerable, riding over inky water, begin now to twinkle with a thousand lights. They are ablaze in Osaka and Yokohama and Tokio, and the swarming staircase streets of Hong Kong glitter with a wicked activity now that night has come. I flash a glimpse of Burmese temples, of villages in Java, of the sombre purple masses of the walls of the Tartar city at Pekin with squat pagoda-guarded gates. How those great outlines lowered at me in the twilight, full of fresh memories and grim anticipations of baseness and violence and bloodshed! I sit here recalling it — feeling it all out beyond the trellised vine-clad wall that bounds my physical vision.... Vast crowded world that I have seen! going from point to point seeking for clues, for generalities, until at last it seems to me that there emerges — something understandable.

I think I have got something understandable out of it all.

What a fantastically courageous thing is this mind of ours! My thoughts seem to me at once presumptuous and inevitable. I do not know why it is that I should dare, that any of us should dream of this attempt to comprehend. But we who think are everyone impelled to this amazing effort to get it all together into some simple generality. It is not reason but a deep-seated instinct that draws our intelligence towards explanations, that sets us perpetually seeking laws, seeking statements that will fit into infinite, incessantly interweaving complexities, and be true of them all! There is I perceive a valiant and magnificent stupidity about the human mind, a disregard of disproportion and insufficiency — like the ferret which will turn from the leveret it has seized to attack even man if he should interfere. By these desperate feats of thinking it is that our species has achieved its victories. By them it survives. By them it must stand

the test of ultimate survival. Some forgotten man in our ancestry — for every begetting man alive was in my individual ancestry and yours three thousand years ago — first dared to think of the world as round, — an astounding temerity. He rolled up the rivers and mountains, the forests and plains and broad horizons that stretched beyond his ken, that seemed to commonsense to go on certainly for ever, into a ball, into a little ball "like an orange." Magnificent feat of the imagination, outdoing Thor's deep draught of the sea! And once he had done it, all do it and no one falters at the deed. You are not yet seven as I write and already you are serenely aware that you live upon a sphere. And in much the same manner it is that we, who are sociologists and economists, publicists and philosophers and what not, are attempting now to roll up the vast world of facts which concern human intercourse, the whole indeed of history and archæology, into some similar imaginable and manageable shape, that presently everyone will be able to grasp.

I suppose there was a time when nobody bothered at all about the shape of the earth, when nobody had even had the idea that the earth could be conceived as having a shape, and similarly it is true that it is only in recent centuries that people have been able to suppose that there was a shape to human history. It is indeed not much more than a century since there was any real emergence from theological assumptions and pure romanticism and accidentalism in these matters. Old Adam Smith it was, probing away at the roots of economics, who set going the construction of ampler propositions. From him spring all those new interpretations which have changed the writing of history from a record of dramatic reigns and wars and crises to an analysis of economic forces. How impossible it would be for anyone now to write that great chapter of Gibbon's in which he sweeps together into one contempt the history of sixty Emperors and six hundred years of time. His note of weariness and futility vanishes directly one's vision penetrates the immediate surface. Those Heraclians and Isaurians and Comneni were not history, a schoolboy nowadays knows that their record is not history, knows them for the mere scum upon the stream.

And still to-day we have our great interpretations to make. Ours is a time of guesses, theories and provisional generalizations. Our phase

corresponds to the cosmography that was still a little divided between discs and domes and spheres and cosmic eggs; that was still a thousand years from measuring and weighing a planet. For a long time my mind hovered about the stimulating theories of Socialism and particularly about those more systematic forms of Socialist teaching that centre about Karl Marx. He rose quite naturally out of those early economists who saw all the world in terms of production and saving. He was a necessary step for me at least, on the way to understanding. For a time I did so shape the world in my mind that it seemed to me no more than a vast enterprise for the organization and exploitation of labor. For a time I thought human life was essentially a labor problem, that working and controlling work and lending and selling and "speculating" made the essential substance of human life, over which the forms of politics ran as the stripes of a tiger's skin run and bend over its living muscles. I followed my period in thinking that. You will find in Ferrero's "Roman Decline," which was published early in this century, and which waits for you in the library, almost exactly the method of interpretation that was recommending itself to me in 1904 and 1905.

Well, the labor problem concerns a great — *substantial*, shall I say? — in human society. It is only I think the basis and matter of society, not its shape and life and reality, but it had to be apprehended before I could get on to more actual things. Insensibly the idea that contemporary political forms mattered very fundamentally to men, was fading out of my mind. The British Empire and the German Empire, the Unity of Italy, and Anglo-Saxon ascendency, the Yellow Peril and all the other vast phantoms of the World-politician's mythology were fading out of my mind in those years, as the Olympic cosmogony must have faded from the mind of some inquiring Greek philosopher in the days of Heraclitus. And I revised my history altogether in the new light. The world had ceased to be chaotic in my mind; it had become a vast if as yet a quite inconclusive drama between employer and employed.

It makes a wonderful history, this history of mankind as a history of Labor, as a history of the perpetual attempts of an intelligent minority to get things done by other people. It does not explain how that aggression of the minority arose nor does it give any conception

of a primordial society which corresponds with our knowledge of the realities of primitive communities. One begins rather in the air with a human society that sells and barters and sustains contracts and permits land to be privately owned, and having as hastily as possible got away from that difficulty of beginnings, having ignored the large areas of the world which remain under a pacific and unprogressive agriculture to this day, the rest of the story becomes extremely convincing and illuminating. It does indeed give a sustaining explanation to a large part of recorded history, this generalization about the proclivity of able and energetic people to make other people do things. One ignores what is being done as if that mattered nothing, and concentrates upon the use and enslavement of men.

One sees that enslavement to labor progressing from crude directness to the most subtly indirect methods. The first expedient of enterprise was the sword and then the whip, and still there are remote and ugly corners of the world, in the Mexican Valle Nazionale or in Portuguese South Africa, where the whip whistles still and the threat of great suffering and death follows hard upon the reluctant toiler. But the larger part of our modern slavery is past the stage of brand and whip. We have fallen into methods at once more subtle and more effective. We stand benevolently in front of our fellow man, offering, almost as if it were food and drink and shelter and love, the work we want him to do; and behind him, we are acutely aware, is necessity, sometimes quite of our making, as when we drive him to work by a hut-tax or a poll tax or a rent, that obliges him to earn money, and sometimes not so obviously of our making, sometimes so little of our making that it is easy to believe we have no power to remove it. Instead of flicking the whip, we groan at last with Harriet Martineau at the inexorable laws of political economy that condemn us to comfort and direction, and those others to toil and hardship and indignity....

And through the consideration of these latter later aspects it was that I came at last to those subtler problems of tacit self-deception, of imperfect and unwilling apprehension, of innocently assumed advantages, of wilfully disregarded unfairness; and also to all those other problems of motive, those forgotten questions of why we make others work for us long after our personal needs are satisfied, why

men aggrandize and undertake, which gradually have become in my mind the essential problems of human relationship, replacing the crude problems of labor altogether in that position, making *them* at last only questions of contrivance and management on the way to greater ends.

I have come to believe now that labor problems are problems merely by the way. They have played their part in a greater scheme. This phase of expropriation and enslavement, this half designed and half unconscious driving of the duller by the clever, of the pacific by the bolder, of those with weak appetites and imaginations by those with stronger appetites and imaginations, has been a necessary phase in human development. With my innate passionate desire to find the whole world purposeful, I cannot but believe that. But however necessary it has been, it is necessary no longer. Strangest of saviors, there rises over the conflicts of mankind the glittering angular promise of the machine. There is no longer any need for slavery, open or disguised. We do not need slaves nor toilers nor mere laborers any more; they are no longer essential to a civilization. Man has ridden on his brother man out of the need of servitude. He struggles through to a new phase, a phase of release, a phase when leisure and an unexampled freedom is possible to every human being. Is possible. And it is there one halts seeing that splendid possibility of aspiration and creation before mankind — and seeing mankind for the most part still downcast, quite unaware or incredulous, following the old rounds, the grooves of ancient and superseded assumptions and subjections....

But here I will not trace in any detail the growth of my conviction that the ancient and heavy obligation to work hard and continually throughout life has already slipped from man's shoulders. Suffice it that now I conceive of the task before mankind as a task essentially of rearrangement, as a problem in relationships, extremely complex and difficult indeed, but credibly solvable. During my Indian and Chinese journey I was still at the Marxist stage. I went about the east looking at labor, watching its organization and direction, seeing great interests and enterprises replace the diffused life of an earlier phase; the disputes and discussions in the Transvaal which had first opened

my mind to these questions came back to me, and steadily I lost my interest in those mere political and national issues with their paraphernalia of kings and flags and governments and parties that had hitherto blinded me to these more fundamental interactions.

§ 2

It happened that in Bombay circumstances conspired to bring the crude facts of labor enslavement vividly before me. I found a vigorous agitation raging in the English press against the horrible sweating that was going on in the cotton mills, I met the journalist most intimately concerned in the business on my second day in India, and before a week was out I was hard at work getting up the question and preparing a memorandum with him on the possibility of immediate legislative intervention. The very name of Bombay, which for most people recalls a spacious and dignified landfall, lateen sails, green islands and jutting precipices, a long city of trees and buildings like a bright and various breakwater between the great harbor and the sea, and then exquisite little temples, painted bullock carriages, Towers of Silence, Parsis, and an amazingly kaleidoscopic population, — is for me a reminder of narrow, fœtid, plague-stricken streets and tall insanitary tenement-houses packed and dripping with humanity, and of terrible throbbing factories working far into the night, blazing with electric light against the velvet-black night-sky of India, damp with the steam-clouds that are maintained to moisten the thread, and swarming with emaciated overworked brown children — for even the adults, spare and small, in those mills seem children to a western eye.

I plunged into this heated dreadful business with a passionate interest and went back to the Yacht Club only when the craving for air and a good bath and clean clothes and space and respect became unendurable. I waded deep in labor, in this process of consuming humanity for gain, chasing my facts through throbbing quivering sheds reeking of sweat and excrement under the tall black-smoking chimneys, — chasing them in very truth, because when we came prying into the mills after the hour when child-labor should cease, there would be a shrill whistle, a patter of feet and a cuffing and

hiding of the naked little creatures we were trying to rescue. They would be hidden under rugs, in boxes, in the most impossible places, and we dragged them out scared and lying. Many of them were perhaps seven years old at most; and the adults — men and women of fourteen that is to say — we could not touch at all, and they worked in that Indian heat, in a noisome air drenched with steam for fourteen and fifteen hours a day. And essential to that general impression is a memory of a slim Parsi mill-manager luminously explaining the inherited passion for toil in the Indian weaver, and a certain bulky Hindu with a lemon-yellow turban and a strip of plump brown stomach showing between his clothes, who was doing very well, he said, with two wives and five children in the mills.

That is my Bombay, that and the columns of crossed circles marking plague cases upon the corners of houses and a peculiar acrid smell, and the polychromatic stir of crowded narrow streets between cliffs of architecture with carved timbers and heavy ornamentations, into which the sun strikes obliquely and lights a thousand vivid hues....

Bombay, the gateway of what silly people were still calling in those days "the immemorial East," Bombay, which is newer than Boston or New York, Bombay which has grown beneath the Englishman's shadow out of a Portuguese fort in the last two hundred years....

§ 3

I came out of these dark corners presently into the sunblaze of India. I was now intensely interested in the whole question of employment and engaged in preparing matter for my first book, "Enterprise and India," and therein you may read how I went first to Assam and then down to Ceylon following up this perplexing and complicated business of human enslavement to toil, exercised by this great spectacle of human labor, and at once attracted by and stimulated by and dissatisfied with those socialist generalizations that would make all this vast harsh spectacle of productive enterprise a kind of wickedness and outrage upon humanity. And behind and about the things I was looking for were other things for which I was not

looking, that slowly came into and qualified the problem. It dawned upon me by degrees that India is not so much one country as a vast spectacle of human development at every stage, in infinite variety. One ranges between naked savages and the most sophisticated of human beings. I pursued my enquiries about great modern enterprises, about railway labor, canal labor, tea-planting, across vast stretches of country where men still lived, illiterate, agricultural, unprogressive and simple, as men lived before the first stirrings of recorded history. One sees by the tanks of those mud-built villages groups of women with brass vessels who are identical in pose and figure and quality with the women modelled in Tanagra figures, and the droning wall-wheel is the same that irrigated the fields of ancient Greece, and the crops and beasts and all the life is as it was in Greece and Italy, Phœnicia and Judea before the very dawn of history.

By imperceptible degrees I came to realize that this matter of expropriation and enslavement and control, which bulks so vastly upon the modern consciousness, which the Socialists treat as though it was the comprehensive present process of mankind, is no more than one aspect of an overlife that struggles out of a massive ancient and traditional common way of living, struggles out again and again — blindly and always so far with a disorderly insuccess....

I began to see in their proper proportion the vast enduring normal human existence, the peasant's agricultural life, unlettered, laborious and essentially unchanging on the one hand, and on the other those excrescences of multitudinous city aggregation, those stormy excesses of productive energy that flare up out of that life, establish for a time great unstable strangenesses of human living, palaces, cities, roads, empires, literatures, and then totter and fall back again into ruin. In India even more than about the Mediterranean all this is spectacular. There the peasant goes about his work according to the usage of fifty thousand years. He has a primitive version of religion, a moral tradition, a social usage, closely adapted by countless years of trial and survival to his needs, and the whole land is littered with the vestiges and abandoned material of those newer, bolder, more experimental beginnings, beginnings that merely began.

It was when I was going through the panther-haunted palaces of Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri that I first felt how tremendously the ruins of

the past may face towards the future; the thing there is like a frozen wave that rose and never broke; and once I had caught that light upon things, I found the same quality in all the ruins I saw, in Amber and Vijayanagar and Chitor, and in all that I have seen or heard of, in ancient Rome and ancient Verona, in Pæstum and Cnossus and ancient Athens. None of these places was ever really finished and done with; the Basilicas of Cæsar and Constantine just as much as the baths and galleries and halls of audience at Fatehpur Sikri express not ends achieved but thwarted intentions of permanence. They embody repulse and rejection. They are trials, abandoned trials, towards ends vaguely apprehended, ends felt rather than known. Even so was I moved by the Bruges-like emptinesses of Pekin, in the vast pretensions of its Forbidden City, which are like a cry, long sustained, that at last dies away in a wail. I saw the place in 1905 in that slack interval after the European looting and before the great awakening that followed the Russo-Japanese war. Pekin in a century or so may be added in its turn to the list of abandoned endeavors. Insensibly the sceptre passes.... Nearer home than any of these places have I imagined the same thing; in Paris it seemed to me I felt the first chill shadow of that same arrest, that impalpable ebb and cessation at the very crest of things, that voice which opposes to all the hasty ambitions and gathering eagerness of men: "It is not here, it is not yet."

Only the other day as I came back from Paris to this quiet place and walked across the fields from the railway station to this house, I saw an old woman, a grandmother, a bent old crone with two children playing about her as she cut grass by the wayside, and she cut it, except that her sickle was steel, exactly as old women were cutting grass before there was writing, before the dawn of history, before men laid the first stones one upon the other of the first city that ever became a ruin....

You see Civilization has never yet existed, it has only continually and obstinately attempted to be. Our Civilization is but the indistinct twilight before the dawn. It is still only a confused attempt, a flourish out of barbarism, and the normal life of men, the toiling earthy life of the field and the byre, goes on still like a stream that at once supports and carries to destruction the experimental ships of some still

imperfect inventor. India gives it all from first to last, and now the modern movement, the latest half-conscious struggle of the New Thing in mankind, throws up Bombay and Calcutta, vast feverish pustules upon the face of the peninsula, bridges the sacred rivers with hideous iron lattice-work and smears the sky of the dusty ruin-girdled city of Delhi, — each ruin is the vestige of an empire, — with the black smoke of factory chimneys.

Altogether scattered over that sun-burnt plain there are the remains of five or six extinguished Delhis, that played their dramas of frustration before the Delhi of the Great Mogul. This present phase of human living — its symbol at Delhi is now, I suppose, a scaffold-bristling pile of neo-Georgian building — is the latest of the constructive synthetic efforts to make a newer and fuller life for mankind. Who dares call it the last? I question myself constantly whether this life we live to-day, whether that too, is more than a trial of these blind constructive forces, more universal perhaps, more powerful perhaps than any predecessor but still a trial, to litter the world with rusting material when the phase of recession recurs.

But yet I can never quite think that is so. This time, surely, it is different. This time may indeed be the beginning of a permanent change; this time there are new elements, new methods and a new spirit at work upon construction that the world has never known before. Mankind may be now in the dawn of a fresh phase of living altogether. It is possible. The forces of construction are proportionally gigantic. There was never so much clear and critical thought in the world as there is now, never so large a body of generally accessible knowledge and suggestion, never anything like the same breadth of outlook, the same universality of imaginative freedom. That is so in spite of infinite turmoil and confusion. Moreover the effort now is less concentrated, less dramatic. There is no one vital center to the modern movement which disaster can strike or decay undermine. If Paris or New York slacken and grow dull and materialist, if Berlin and London conspire for a mutual destruction, Tokio or Baku or Valparaiso or Christiania or Smyrna or Delhi will shelter and continue the onward impetus.

And this time too it is not any one person, any one dynasty, any one cult or race which carries our destiny. Human thought has begun

to free itself from individual entanglements and dramatic necessities and accidental standards. It becomes a collective mind, a collective will towards achievement, greater than individuals or cities or kingdoms or peoples, a mind and will to which we all contribute and which none of us may command nor compromise by our private errors. It ceases to be aristocratic; it detaches itself from persons and takes possession of us all. We are involved as it grows free and dominant, we find ourselves, in spite of ourselves, in spite of quarrels and jealousies and conflicts, helping and serving in the making of a new world-city, a new greater State above our legal States, in which all human life becomes a splendid enterprise, free and beautiful, whose aptest symbol in all our world is a huge Gothic Cathedral lit to flame by the sun, whose scheme is the towering conquest of the universe, whose every little detail is the wrought-out effort of a human soul....

Such were the ideas that grew together in my mind as I went about India and the East, across those vast sunlit plains, where men and women still toil in their dusty fields for a harsh living and live in doorless hovels on floors of trampled cow-dung, persecuted by a hundred hostile beasts and parasites, caught and eaten by tigers and panthers as cats eat mice, and grievously afflicted by periodic famine and pestilence, even as men and women lived before the dawn of history, for untold centuries, for hundreds of thousands of years.

§ 4

How strange we English seem in India, a little scattered garrison. Are we anything more than accidental, anything more than the messenger-boy who has brought the impetus of the new effort towards civilization through the gates of the East? Are we makers or just a means, casually taken up and used by the great forces of God?

I do not know, I have never been able to tell. I have never been able to decide whether we are the greatest or the dullest of peoples.

I think we are an imaginative people with an imagination at once gigantic, heroic and shy, and also we are a strangely restrained and disciplined people who are yet neither subdued nor subordinated.... These are flat contradictions to state, and yet how else can one render

the paradox of the English character and this spectacle of a handful of mute, snobbish, not obviously clever and quite obviously ill-educated men, holding together kingdoms, tongues and races, three hundred millions of them, in a restless fermenting peace? Again and again in India I would find myself in little circles of the official English,-supercilious, pretentious, conventional, carefully "turned out" people, living gawkily, thinking gawkily, talking nothing but sport and gossip, relaxing at rare intervals into sentimentality and levity as mean as a banjo tune, and a kind of despairful disgust would engulf me. And then in some man's work, in some huge irrigation scheme, some feat of strategic foresight, some simple, penetrating realization of deep-lying things, I would find an effect, as if out of a thickly rusted sheath one had pulled a sword and found it — flame....

I recall one evening I spent at a little station in Bengal, between Lucknow and Delhi, an evening given over to private theatricals. The theatre was a huge tent, and the little roughly improvised stage was lit by a row of oil footlights and so small as barely to give a foothold for the actors and actresses in the more crowded scenes. About me were the great people, the colonel's wife, a touring young man of family, officers and the wife of the manager of the big sugar refinery close at hand. Behind were English of a more dubious social position, also connected with the sugar refinery, a Eurasian family or so, very dressy and aggressive and terribly snubbed, and then I think various Portuguese and other nondescripts and groups of non-commissioned officers and men, some with their wives. The play, admirably chosen, was that crystallization of liberal Victorian snobbery, *Caste*, and I remember there was a sub-current of amusement because the young officer who played — what *is* the name of the hero's friend? I forget — had in the haste of his superficiality adopted a moustache that would not keep on and an eyeglass that would not keep in.

Everybody was acting very badly, nobody was word-perfect and a rasping prompter would not keep ahead as he ought to have done; the scenery and the make-ups were daubs, and I was filled with amazement that having quite wantonly undertaken to do this thing these people could then do it so slackly. Then a certain sudden warmth in the applause about me quickened my attention, and I

realized the satirical purport of drunken old father Eccles, and the moral intention of his son-in-law, the plumber. Between them they expressed the whole duty of the workingman as the prosperous Victorians conceived it. He was to work hard always at any job he could find for any wages he could get, and if he didn't he was a "drunken shirker" and the dupe of "paid agitators." A comforting but misleading doctrine. And here were these people a decade on in the twentieth century, with Time, Death, and Judgment close upon them, still eagerly applauding, eager to excuse their minds with this one-sided, ungracious, old-fashioned nonsense, that has done so much to intensify the deepening class antagonisms that strain us now at home almost to the breaking point!

How amazingly, it seemed, those people didn't understand and wouldn't understand any class but their own, any race but their own, any usage other than their use! Covertly I surveyed the colonel's profile. It expressed nothing but entire satisfaction with these disastrous interpretations. What a weather-worn thought-free face that grizzled veteran showed the world!

I was seized with a sudden curiosity to see how the private soldiers behind me were taking old Eccles. I turned round to discover cropped heads and faces as expressionless as masks, and behind them dusky faces watching very alertly, and then other dusky faces, Eurasians, inferiors, servants, natives.

Then at a sharp edge the glare of our lighting ceased and the canvas walls of our narrow world of illusion opened into a vast blue twilight. At the opening stood two white-clad Sikhs, very, very still and attentive, watching the performance, and beyond them was a great space of sky over a dim profile of trees and roofs and a minaret, a sky darkling down to the flushed red memory — such a short memory it is in India — of a day that had gone for ever.

I remained staring at that for some time.

"Isn't old Eccles *good*?" whispered the colonel's wife beside me, and recalled me to the play....

Somehow that picture of a narrow canvas tent in the midst of immensities has become my symbol for the whole life of the governing English, the English of India and Switzerland and the Riviera and the West End and the public services....

But they are not England, they are not the English reality, which is a thing at once bright and illuminating and fitful, a thing humorous and wise and adventurous — Shakespeare, Dickens, Newton, Darwin, Nelson, Bacon, Shelley — English names every one — like the piercing light of lanterns swinging and swaying among the branches of dark trees at night.

§ 5

I went again to Ceylon to look into the conditions of Coolie importation, and then I was going back into Assam once more, still in the wake of indentured labor, when I chanced upon a misadventure. I had my first and only experience of big game shooting in the Garo Hills, I was clawed out of a tree by a wounded panther, he missed his hold and I got back to my branch, but my shoulder was put out, my thigh was badly torn, and my blood was poisoned by the wound. I had an evil uncomfortable time. My injury hampered me greatly, and for a while it seemed likely I should be permanently lamed. I had to keep to vehicles and reasonably good roads. I wound up my convalescence with a voyage to Singapore, and from thence I went on rather disconnectedly to a number of exploratory journeys — excursions rather than journeys — into China. I got to Pekin and then suddenly faced back to Europe, returning overland through Russia.

I wanted now to study the conditions of modern industrialism at its sources, and my disablement did but a little accelerate a return already decided upon. I had got my conception of the East as a whole and of the shape of the historical process. I no longer felt adrift in a formless chaos of forces. I perceived now very clearly that human life is essentially a creative struggle out of the usage of immemorial years, that the synthesis of our contemporary civilization is this creative impulse rising again in its latest and greatest effort, the creative impulse rising again, as a wave rises from the trough of its predecessors, out of the ruins of our parent system, imperial Rome. But this time, and for the first time, the effort is world-wide, and China and Iceland, Patagonia and Central Africa all swing together with us to make — or into another catastrophic failure to make —

the Great State of mankind. All this I had now distinctly in my mind. The new process I perceive had gone further in the west; was most developed in the west. The lighter end lifts first. So back I came away from the great body of mankind, which is Asia, to its head. And since I was still held by my promise from returning to England I betook myself first to the Pas de Calais and then to Belgium and thence into industrial Germany, to study the socialistic movement at its sources.

And I was beginning to see too very clearly by the time of my return that what is confusedly called the labor problem is really not one problem at all, but two. There is the old problem, the problem as old as Zimbabwe and the pyramids, the declining problem, the problem of organizing masses of unskilled labor to the constructive ends of a Great State, and there is the new modification due to machinery, which has rendered unskilled labor and labor of a low grade of skill almost unnecessary to mankind, added coal, oil, wind and water, the elementary school and the printing-press to our sources of power, and superseded the ancient shepherding and driving of men by the possibility of their intelligent and willing co-operation. The two are still mixed in every discussion, even as they are mixed in the practice of life, but inevitably they will be disentangled. We break free from slavery, open or disguised, just as we illuminate and develop this disentanglement....

I have long since ceased to trouble about the economics of human society. Ours are not economic but psychological difficulties. There is enough for everyone, and only a fool can be found to deny it. But our methods of getting and making are still ruled by legal and social traditions from the time before we had tapped these new sources of power, before there was more than enough for everyone, and when a bare supply was only secured by jealous possession and unremitting toil. We have no longer to secure enough by a stern insistence. We have come to a plenty. The problem now is to make that plenty go round, and *keep it enough* while we do.

Our real perplexities are altogether psychological. There are no valid arguments against a great-spirited Socialism but this, that people will not. Indolence, greed, meanness of spirit, the

aggressiveness of authority, and above all jealousy, jealousy for our pride and vanity, jealousy for what we esteem our possessions, jealousy for those upon whom we have set the heavy fetters of our love, a jealousy of criticism and association, these are the real obstacles to those brave large reconstructions, those profitable abnegations and brotherly feats of generosity that will yet turn human life — of which our individual lives are but the momentary parts — into a glad, beautiful and triumphant co-operation all round this sunlit world.

If but humanity could have its imagination touched ——

I was already beginning to see the great problem of mankind as indeed nothing other than a magnification of the little problem of myself, as a problem in escape from grooves, from preoccupations and suspicions, precautions and ancient angers, a problem of escape from these spiritual beasts that prowl and claw, to a new generosity and a new breadth of view.

For all of us, little son, as for each of us, salvation is that. We have to get away from ourselves to a greater thing, to a giant's desire and an unending life, ours and yet not our own.

§ 6

It is a queer experience to be even for a moment in the grip of a great beast. I had been put into the fork of a tree, so that I could shoot with the big stem behind my back. The fork wasn't, I suppose, more than a score of feet from the ground. It was a safe enough place from a tiger, and that is what we expected. We had been misled by our tracker, who had mistaken the pugs of a big leopard for a tiger's, — they were over rocky ground for the most part and he had only the spoor of a chance patch of half-dried mud to go upon. The beast had killed a goat and was beaten out of a thicket near by me in which he had been lying up. The probability had seemed that he would go away along a tempting ravine to where Captain Crosby, who was my host, awaited him; I, as the amateur, was intended to be little more than a spectator. But he broke back towards the wing of the line of beaters and came across the sunlit rocks within thirty yards of my post.

Seen going along in that way, flattened almost to the ground, he wasn't a particularly impressive beast, and I shot at his shoulder as one might blaze away at a rabbit, — perhaps just a little more carefully, feeling as a Lord of Creation should who dispenses a merited death. I expected him either to roll over or bolt.

Then instantly he was coming in huge bounds towards me....

He came so rapidly that he was covered by the big limb of the tree on which I was standing until he was quite beneath me, and my second shot, which I thought in the instant must have missed him, was taken rapidly as he crouched to spring up the trunk.

Then you know came a sort of astonishment, and I think, — because afterwards Crosby picked up a dropped cartridge at the foot of the tree — that I tried to reload. I believe I was completely incredulous that the beast was going to have me until he actually got me. The thing was too completely out of my imaginative picture. I don't believe I thought at all while he was coming up the tree. I merely noted how astonishingly he resembled an angry cat. Then he'd got my leg, he was hanging on to it first by two claws and then by one claw, and the whole weight of him was pulling me down. It didn't seem to be my leg. I wasn't frightened, I felt absolutely nothing, I was amazed. I slipped, tried to get a hold on the tree trunk, felt myself being hauled down, and then got my arm about the branch. I still clung to my unloaded gun as an impoverished aristocrat might cling to his patent of nobility. That was, I felt, my answer for him yet.

I suppose the situation lasted a fraction of a second, though it seemed to me to last an interminable time. Then I could feel my leggings rip and his claw go scoring deeply down my calf. That hurt in a kind of painless, impersonal interesting way. Was my leg coming off? Boot? The weight had gone, that enormous weight!

He'd missed his hold altogether! I heard his claws tear down the bark of the tree and then his heavy, soft fall upon the ground.

I achieved a cat-like celerity. In another second I was back in my fork reloading, my legs tucked up as tightly as possible.

I peered down through the branches ready for him. He wasn't there. Not up the tree again?... Then I saw him making off, with a halting gait, across the scorching rocks some thirty yards away, but I

could not get my gun into a comfortable position before he was out of sight behind a ridge.... I wondered why the sunlight seemed to be flickering like an electric light that fails, was somehow aware of blood streaming from my leg down the tree-stem; it seemed a torrent of blood, and there was a long, loose ribbon of flesh very sickening to see; and then I fainted and fell out of the tree, bruising my arm and cheek badly and dislocating my shoulder in the fall.... Some of the beaters saw me fall, and brought Crosby in sufficient time to improvise a *torniquet* and save my life.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

The Spirit of the New World

§ 1

I met Rachel again in Germany through the devices of my cousin the Fürstin Letzlingen. I had finished seeing what I wanted to see in Westphalia and I was preparing to go to the United States. There I thought I should be able to complete and round off that large view of the human process I had been developing in my mind. But my departure was delayed by an attack of influenza that I picked up at a Socialist Congress in Munich, and the dear Durchlaucht, hearing of this and having her own views of my destiny, descended upon me while I was still in bed there, made me get up and carried me off in her car, to take care of me herself at her villa at Boppard, telling me nothing of any fellow-guests I might encounter.

She had a villa upon the Rhine under a hill of vineyards, where she devoted herself — she was a widow — to matchmaking and belated regrets for the childlessness that necessitated a perpetual borrowing of material for her pursuit. She had a motor-car, a steam-launch, several rowing boats and canoes, a tennis-lawn, a rambling garden, a devious house and a rapid mind, and in fact everything that was necessary for throwing young people together. She made her surprise seem easy and natural, and with returning health I found myself already back upon my old footing of friendly intimacy with Rachel.

I found her a new and yet a familiar Rachel. She had grown up, she was no longer a schoolgirl, crystalline clear with gleams of emotion and understanding, and what she had lost in transparency she had gained in depth. And she had become well-informed, she had been reading very widely and well, I could see, and not simply reading but talking and listening and thinking. She showed a vivid interest in the current of home politics, — at that time the last government of Mr. Balfour was ebbing to its end and my old Transvaal friends, the Chinese coolies, were to avenge themselves on

their importers. The Tariff Reformers my father detested were still struggling to unseat the Premier from his leadership of Conservatism....

It was queer to hear once more, after my Asiatic wanderings and dreamings, those West-End dinner-table politics, those speculations about "Winston's" future and the possibility of Lloyd George or Ramsay Macdonald or Macnamara taking office with the Liberals and whether there might not ultimately be a middle party in which Haldane and Balfour, Grey and the Cecils could meet upon common ground. It seemed now not only very small but very far off. She told me too of the huge popularity of King Edward. He had proved to be interested, curious, understanding and clever, an unexpectedly successful King. She described how he was breaking out of the narrow official limits that had kept his mother in a kind of social bandbox, extending his solvent informality of friendliness to all sorts of men. He had won the heart of Will Crooks, the labor member for Poplar, for example, made John Burns a social success and warmed all France for England.

I surveyed this novel picture of the English throne diffusing amiability.

"I suppose it's what the throne ought to do," said Rachel. "If it can't be inspiration, at any rate it can tolerate and reconcile and take the ill-bred bitterness out of politics."

"My father might have said that."

"I got that from your father," she said; and added after a momentary pause, "I go over and talk to him."

"You talk to my father!"

"I like to. Or rather I listen and take it in. I go over in the afternoon. I go sometimes twice or three times a week."

"That's kind of you."

"Not at all. You see —— It sounds impudent, I know, for a girl to say so, but we've so many interests in common."

§ 2

I was more and more interested by Rachel as the days went on. A man must be stupid who does not know that a woman is happy in his

presence, and for two years now and more I had met no one with a very strong personal feeling for me. And quite apart from that, her mind was extraordinarily interesting to me because it was at once so active and so clear and so limited by her entirely English circumstances. She had the prosperous English outlook. She didn't so much see the wide world as get glimpses of it through the tangle of Westminster and of West End and week-end limitations. She wasn't even aware of that greater unprosperous England, already sulking and darkling outside her political world, that greater England which was presently to make its first audible intimations of discontent in that remarkable anti-climax to King George's Coronation, the Railway Strike. India for her was the land of people's cousins, Germany and the German Dreadnoughts bulked far larger, and all the tremendous gathering forces of the East were beyond the range of her imagination. I set myself to widen her horizons.

I told her something of the intention and range of my travels, and something of the views that were growing out of their experiences.

I have a clear little picture in my mind of an excursion we made to that huge national Denkmal which rears its head out of the amiable vineyards of Assmannshausen and Rudesheim over against Bingen. We landed at the former place, went up its little funicular to eat our lunch and drink its red wine at the pleasant inn above, and then strolled along through the woods to the monument.

The Fürstin fell behind with her unwilling escort, a newly arrived medical student from England, a very pleasant youngster named Berwick, who was all too obviously anxious to change places with me. She devised delays, and meanwhile I, as yet unaware of the state of affairs, went on with Rachel to that towering florid monument with its vast gesticulating Germania, which triumphs over the conquered provinces.

We fell talking of war and the passions and delusions that lead to war. Rachel's thoughts were strongly colored by those ideas of a natural rivalry between Germany and England and of a necessary revenge for France which have for nearly forty years diverted the bulk of European thought and energy to the mere waste of military preparations. I jarred with an edifice of preconceptions when I

scoffed and scolded at these assumptions.

"Our two great peoples are disputing for the leadership of the world," I said, "and meanwhile the whole world sweeps past us. We're drifting into a quarrelsome backwater."

I began to tell of the fermentation and new beginnings that were everywhere perceptible throughout the East, of the vast masses of human ability and energy that were coming into action in China and India, of the unlimited future of both North and South America, of the mere accidentalness of the European advantage. "History," I said, "is already shifting the significance out of Western Europe altogether, and we English cannot see it; we can see no further than Berlin, and these Germans can think of nothing better than to taunt the French with such tawdry effigies as *this*! Europe goes on to-day as India went on in the eighteenth century, making aimless history. And the sands of opportunity run and run...."

I shrugged my shoulders and we stood for a little while looking down on the shining crescent of the Rhine.

"Suppose," said Rachel, "that someone were to say that — in the House."

"The House," I said, "doesn't hear things at my pitch. Bat outcries. Too shrill altogether."

"It might. If *you* — —"

She halted, hesitated for a moment on the question and asked abruptly:

"When are you coming back to England, Mr. Stratton?"

"Certainly not for six months," I said.

A movement of her eyes made me aware of the Fürstin and Berwick emerging from the trees. "And then?" asked Rachel.

I didn't want to answer that question, in which the personal note sounded so clearly. "I am going to America to see America," I said, "and America may be rather a big thing to see."

"You must see it?"

"I want to be sure of it — as something comprehensive. I want to get a general effect of it...."

Rachel hesitated, looked back to measure the distance of the Fürstin and her companion and put her question again, but this time

with a significance that did not seem even to want to hide itself. "*Then* will you come back?" she said.

Her face flamed scarlet, but her eyes met mine boldly. Between us there was a flash of complete understanding.

My answer, if it was lame and ungallant to such a challenge, was at least perfectly honest. "I can't make up my mind," I said. "I've been near making plans — taking steps.... Something holds me back...."

I had no time for an explanation.

"I can't make up my mind," I repeated.

She stood for a moment rather stiffly, staring away towards the blue hills of Alsace.

Then she turned with a smiling and undisturbed countenance to the Fürstin. Her crimson had given place to white. "The triumph of it," she said with a slight gesture to the flamboyant Teutonism that towered over us, and boldly repeating words I had used scarcely five minutes before, "makes me angry. They conquered — ungraciously...."

She had overlooked something in her effort to seem entirely self-possessed. She collapsed. "My dear!" she cried,— "I forgot!"

"Oh! I'm only a German by marriage!" cried the Fürstin. "And I can assure you I quite understand — about the triumph of it...." She surveyed the achievement of her countrymen. "It is — ungracious. But indeed it's only a sort of artlessness if you see the thing properly.... It's not vulgarity — it's childishness.... They've hardly got over it yet — their intense astonishment at being any good at war.... That large throaty Victory! She's not so militant as she seems. She's too plump.... Of course what a German really appreciates is nutrition. But I quite agree with you both.... I'm beginning to want my tea, Mr. Stratton.... Rachel!"

Her eyes had been on Rachel as she chattered. The girl had turned to the distant hills again, and had forgotten even to pretend to listen to the answer she had evoked. Now she came back sharply to the sound of her name.

"Tea?" said the Fürstin.

"Oh!" cried Rachel. "Yes. Yes, certainly. Rather. Tea."

§ 3

It was clear to me that after that I must as people say “have things out” with Rachel. But before I could do anything of the sort the Fürstin pounced upon me. She made me sit up that night after her other guests had gone to their rooms, in the cosy little turret apartment she called her study and devoted to the reading of whatever was most notorious in contemporary British fiction. “Sit down,” said she, “by the fire in that chair there and tell me all about it. It’s no good your pretending you don’t know what I mean. What are you up to with her, and why don’t you go straight to your manifest destiny as a decent man should?”

“Because manifestly it isn’t my destiny,” I said.

“Stuff,” said the Fürstin.

“You know perfectly well why I am out of England.”

“Everybody knows — except of course quite young persons who are being carefully brought up.”

“Does *she* know?”

“She doesn’t seem to.”

“Well, that’s what I want to know.”

“Need she know?”

“Well, it does seem rather essential — —”

“I suppose if you think so — —”

“Will you tell her?”

“Tell her yourself, if she must be told. Down there in Surrey, she *must* have seen things and heard things. But I don’t see that she wants a lot of ancient history.”

“If it is ancient history!”

“Oh! two years and a half, — it’s an Era.”

I made no answer to that, but sat staring into the fire while my cousin watched my face. At length I made my confession. “I don’t think it is ancient history at all,” I said. “I think if I met Mary again now — —”

“You mean Lady Mary Justin?”

“Of course.”

“It would be good for your mind if you remembered to call her by

her proper name.... You think if you met her again you two would begin to carry on. But you see, — you aren't going to meet her. Everybody will see that doesn't happen."

"I mean that I —— Well — —"

"You'd better not say it. Besides, it's nonsense. I doubt if you've given her a thought for weeks and weeks."

"Until I came here perhaps that was almost nearly true. But you've stirred me up, sweet cousin, and old things, old memories and habits have come to the surface again. Mary wrote herself over my life — in all sorts of places.... I can't tell you. I've never talked of her to anyone. I'm not able, very well, to talk about my feelings.... Perhaps a man of my sort — doesn't love twice over."

I disregarded a note of dissent from my cousin. "That was all so magic, all my youth, all my hope, all the splendid adventure of it. Why should one pretend?... I'm giving none of that to Rachel. It isn't there any more to give...."

"One would think," remarked the Fürstin, "there was no gift of healing."

She waited for me to speak, and then irritated by my silence struck at me sharply with that wicked little tongue of hers.

"Do you think that Lady Mary Justin thinks of you — as you think of her? Do you think she hasn't settled down?"

I looked up at her quickly.

"She's just going to have a second child," the Fürstin flung out.

Yes, that did astonish me. I suppose my face showed it.

"That girl," said the Fürstin, "that clean girl would have sooner died — ten thousand deaths.... And she's never — never been anything to you."

I think that for an instant she had been frightened at her own words. She was now quite angry and short of breath. She had contrived a rapid indignation against Mary and myself.

"I didn't know Mary had had any child at all," I said.

"This makes two," said the Fürstin, and held up a brace of fingers, "with scarcely a year and a half between them. Not much more anyhow.... It was natural, I suppose. A natural female indecency. I don't blame her. When a woman gives in she ought to do it

thoroughly. But I don't see that it leaves *you* much scope for philandering, Stephen, does it?... And there you are, and here is Rachel. And why don't you make a clean job of your life?..."

"I didn't understand."

"I wonder what you imagined."

I reflected. "I wonder what I did. I suppose I thought of Mary — just as I had left her — always."

I remained with my mind filled with confused images of Mary, memories, astonishment....

I perceived the Fürstin was talking.

"Maundering about," she was saying, "like a huntsman without a horse.... You've got work to do — blood in your veins. I'm not one of your ignorant women, Stephen. You ought to have a wife...."

"Rachel's too good," I said, at the end of a pause and perceiving I had to say something, "to be that sort of wife."

"No woman's too good for a man," said the Fürstin von Letzlingen with conviction. "It's what God made her for."

§ 4

My visit to Boppard was drawing to an end before I had a clear opportunity to have things out with Rachel. It was in a little garden, under the very shadow of that gracious cathedral at Worms, the sort of little garden to which one is admitted by ringing a bell and tipping a custodian. I think Worms is in many respects one of the most beautiful cathedrals I have ever seen, so perfectly proportioned, so delicately faded, so aloof, so free from pride or presumption, and it rises over this green and flowery peace, a towering, lithe, light brown, sunlit, easy thing, as unconsciously and irrelevantly splendid as a tall ship in the evening glow under a press of canvas. We looked up at it for a time and then went on with the talk to which we had been coming slowly since the Fürstin had packed us off for it, while she went into the town with Berwick to buy toys for her gatekeeper's children. I had talked about myself, and the gradual replacement of my ambition to play a part in imperial politics by wider intentions. "You know," I asked abruptly, "why I left England?"

She thought through the briefest of pauses. "No," she decided at

last.

“I made love,” I said, “to Lady Mary Justin, and we were found out. We couldn’t go away together — —”

“Why not?” she interjected.

“It was impossible.”

For some moments neither of us spoke. “Something,” she said, and then, “Some vague report,” and left these fragments to be her reply.

“We were old playmates; we were children together. We have — something — that draws us to each other. She — she made a mistake in marrying. We were both very young and the situation was difficult. And then afterwards we were thrown together.... But you see that has made a great difference to my life; it’s turned me off the rails on which men of my sort usually run. I’ve had to look to these other things.... They’ve become more to me than to most people if only because of that....”

“You mean these ideas of yours — learning as much as you can about the world, and then doing what you can to help other people to a better understanding.”

“Yes,” I said.

“And that — will fill your life.”

“It ought to.”

“I suppose it ought. I suppose — you find — it does.”

“Don’t you think it ought to fill my life?”

“I wondered if it did.”

“But why shouldn’t it?”

“It’s so — so cold.”

My questioning silence made her attempt to explain.

“One wants life more beautiful than that,” she said. “One wants —— There are things one needs, things nearer one.”

We became aware of a jangling at the janitor’s bell. Our opportunity for talk was slipping away. And we were both still undecided, both blunderingly nervous and insecure. We were hurried into clumsy phrases that afterwards we would have given much to recall.

“But how could life be more beautiful,” I said, “than when it

serves big human ends?”

Her brows were knit. She seemed to be listening for the sound of the unlocking gate.

“But,” she said, and plunged, “one wants to be loved. Surely one needs that.”

“You see, for me — that’s gone.”

“Why should it be gone?”

“It is. One doesn’t begin again. I mean — myself. *You* — can. You’ve never begun. Not when you’ve loved — loved really.” I forced that on her. I over emphasized. “It was real love, you know; the real thing.... I don’t mean the mere imaginative love, blindfold love, but love that sees.... I want you to understand that. I loved — altogether....”

Across the lawn under its trim flowering-trees appeared Berwick loaded with little parcels, and manifestly eager to separate us, and the Fürstin as manifestly putting on the drag.

“There’s a sort of love,” I hurried, “that doesn’t renew itself ever. Don’t let yourself believe it does. Something else may come in its place, but that is different. It’s youth, — a wonderful newness.... Look at that youngster. *He* can love you like that. I’ve watched him. He does. You know he does....”

“Yes,” she said, as hurriedly; “but then, you see, I don’t love him.”

“You don’t?”

“I can’t.”

“But he’s such a fresh clean human being — —”

“That’s not all,” said Rachel. “That’s not all.... You don’t understand.”

The two drew near. “It is so hard to explain,” she said. “Things that one hardly sees for oneself. Sometimes it seems one cannot help oneself. You can’t choose. You are taken....” She seemed about to say something more, and stopped and bit her lip.

In another moment I was standing up, and the Fürstin was calling to us across ten feet of space. “Such amoosin’ little toyshops. We’ve got a heap of things. Just look at him!”

He smiled over his load with anxious eyes upon our faces.

“Ten separate parcels,” he said, appealing for Rachel’s sympathy. “I’m doing my best not to complain.”

And rather adroitly he contrived to let two of them slip, and captured Rachel to assist him.

He didn’t relinquish her again.

§ 5

The Fürstin and I followed them along the broad, pleasant, tree-lined street towards the railway station.

“A boy of that age ought not to marry a girl of that age,” said the Fürstin, breaking a silence.

I didn’t answer.

“Well?” she said, domineering.

“My dear cousin,” I said, “I know all that you have in your mind. I admit — I covet her. You can’t make me more jealous than I am. She’s clean and sweet — it is marvellous how the God of the rest of the world can have made a thing so brave and honest and wonderful. She’s better than flowers. But I think I’m going away to-night, nevertheless.”

“You don’t mean you’re going to carry chivalry to the point of giving that boy a chance — for he hasn’t one while you’re about.”

“No. You see — I want to give Rachel a chance. You know as well as I do — the things in my mind.”

“That you’ve got to forget.”

“That I don’t forget.”

“That you’re bound in honor to forget. And who could help you better?”

“I’m going,” I said and then, wrathfully, “If you think I want to use Rachel as a sort of dressing — for my old sores — —”

I left the sentence unfinished.

“Oh *nonsense*!” cried the Fürstin, and wouldn’t speak to me again until we got to that entirely Teutonic “art” station that is not the least among the sights of Worms.

“Sores, indeed!” said the Fürstin presently, as we walked up the end of the platform.

“There’s nothing,” said the Fürstin, with an unusual note of

petulance, “she’d like better.”

“I can’t think what men are coming to,” she went on. “You’re in love with her, or you wouldn’t be so generous. And she’s head over heels with you. And here you are! I’ll give you one more chance ——”

“I won’t take it,” I interrupted. “It isn’t fair. I tell you I won’t take it. I’ll go two days earlier to prevent you. Unless you promise me —— Of course I see how things are with her. She’s not a sphinx. But it isn’t fair. It isn’t. Not to her, or to him — or myself. *He’s* got some claims. He’s got more right to her than I....”

“A boy like that! No man has any rights about women — until he’s thirty. And as for me and all the pains *I’ve* taken —— Oh! I *hate* Worms. Dust and ashes! Well here thank heaven! comes the train. If nothing else could stir you, Stephen, at least I could have imagined some decent impulse of gratitude to me. Stephen, you’re disgusting. You’ve absolutely spoilt this trip for me — absolutely. When only a little reasonableness on your part —— Oh!”

She left her sentence unfinished.

Berwick and I had to make any conversation that was needed on the way back to Boppard. Rachel did not talk and the Fürstin did not want to.

§ 6

Directly I had parted from Rachel’s questioning eyes I wanted to go back to them. It seems to me now that all the way across to America, in that magnificent German liner I joined at Hamburg, I was thinking in confused alternations of her and of Mary. There are turns of thought that still bring back inseparably with them the faint echo of the airs of the excellent but industrious band that glorified our crossing.

I had been extraordinarily shocked and concerned at the thought of Mary bearing children. It is a grotesque thing to confess but I had never let myself imagine the possibility of such a thing for her who had been so immensely mine....

We are the oddest creatures, little son, beasts and barbarians and

brains, neither one nor the other but all confusedly, and here was I who had given up Mary and resigned her and freed myself from her as I thought altogether, cast back again into my old pit by the most obvious and necessary consequence of her surrender and mine. And it's just there and in that relation that we men and women are so elaborately insecure. We try to love as equals and behave as equals and concede a level freedom, and then comes a crisis, — our laboriously contrived edifice of liberty collapses and we perceive that so far as sex goes the woman remains to the man no more than a possession — capable of loyalty or treachery.

There, still at that barbaric stage, the situation stands. You see I had always wanted to own Mary, and always she had disputed that. That is our whole story, the story of an instinctive subjugation struggling against a passionate desire for fellowship. She had denied herself to me, taken herself away; that much I could endure; but now came this blazing fact that showed her as it seemed in the most material and conclusive way — overcome. I had storms of retrospective passion at the thoroughness of her surrender.... Yes, and that's in everyone of us, — in everyone. I wonder if in all decent law-abiding London there lives a single healthy adult man who has not at times longed to trample and kill....

For once I think the Fürstin miscalculated consequences. I think I should have engaged myself to Rachel before I went to America if it had not been for the Fürstin's revelation, but this so tore me that I could no longer go on falling in love again, naturally and sweetly. No man falls in love if he has just been flayed.... I could no longer think of Rachel except as a foil to Mary. I was moved to marry her by a new set of motives; to fling her so to speak in Mary's face, and from the fierce vulgarity of that at least I recoiled — and let her go as I have told you.

§ 7

I had thought all that was over.

I remember my struggles to recover my peace.

I remember how very late one night I went up to the promenade deck to smoke a cigar before turning in. It was a warm moonlight

night. The broad low waves of ebony water that went seething past below, foamed luminous and were streaked and starred with phosphorescence. The recumbent moon, past its full and sinking westward, seemed bigger than I had ever seen it before, and the roundness of the watery globe was manifest about the edge of the sky. One had that sense so rare on land, so common in the night at sea, of the world as a conceivable sphere, and of interstellar space as of something clear and close at hand.

There came back to me again that feeling I had lost for a time in Germany of being not myself but Man consciously on his little planet communing with God.

But my spirit was saying all the time, “I am still in my pit, in my pit. After all I am still in my pit.”

And then there broke the answer on my mind, that all our lives we must struggle out of our pits, that to struggle out of our pit is this life, there is no individual life but that, and that there comes no escape here, no end to that effort, until the release of death. Continually or frequently we may taste salvation, but never may we achieve it while we are things of substance. Each moment in our lives we come to the test and are lost again or saved again. To be assured of one’s security is to forget and fall away.

And standing at the rail with these thoughts in my mind, suddenly I prayed....

I remember how the engine-throbs beat through me like the beating of a heart, and that far below, among the dim lights that came up from the emigrants in the steerage, there was a tinkling music as I prayed and a man’s voice singing a plaintive air in some strange Slavonic tongue.

That voice of the invisible singer and the spirit of the unknown song-maker and the serenity of the sky, they were all, I perceived, no more and no less than things in myself that I did not understand. They were out beyond the range of understanding. And yet they fell into the completest harmony that night with all that I seemed to understand....

§ 8

The onset of New York was extraordinarily stimulating to me. I write onset. It is indeed that. New York rides up out of the waters, a cliff of man's making; its great buildings at a distance seem like long Chinese banners held up against the sky. From Sandy Hook to the great landing stages and the swirling hooting traffic of the Hudson River there fails nothing in that magnificent crescendo of approach.

And New York keeps the promise of its first appearance. There is no such fulness of life elsewhere in all the world. The common man in the streets is a bigger common man than any Old World city can show, physically bigger; there is hope in his eyes and a braced defiance. New York may be harsh and blusterous and violent, but there is a breeze from the sea and a breeze of fraternity in the streets, and the Americans of all peoples in the world are a nation of still unbroken men.

I went to America curious, balancing between hope and scepticism. The European world is full of the criticism of America, and for the matter of that America too is full of it; hostility and depreciation prevail, — overmuch, for in spite of rawness and vehemence and a scum of blatant, oh! quite asinine folly, the United States of America remains the greatest country in the world and the living hope of mankind. It is the supreme break with the old tradition; it is the freshest and most valiant beginning that has ever been made in human life.

Here was the antithesis of India; here were no peasants whatever, no traditional culture, no castes, no established differences (except for the one schism of color); this amazing place had never had a famine, never a plague; here were no temples and no priesthoods dominating the lives of the people, — old Trinity church embedded amidst towering sky-scrapers was a symbol for as much as they had of all that; and here too there was no crown, no affectations of an ancient loyalty, no visible army, no traditions of hostility, for the old defiance of Britain is a thing now ridiculous and dead; and everyone I met had an air as if he knew that to-morrow must be different from to-day and different and novel and remarkable by virtue of himself and such as himself.

I went about New York, with the incredulous satisfaction of a

man who has long doubted, to find that after all America was coming true. The very clatter pleased me, the crowds, the camp-like slovenliness, a disorder so entirely different from the established and accepted untidiness of China or India. Here was something the old world had never shown me, a new enterprise, a fresh vigor. In the old world there is Change, a mighty wave now of Change, but it drives men before it as if it were a power outside them and not in them; they do not know, they do not believe; but here the change is in the very blood and spirit of mankind. They breathe it in even before the launch has brought their feet to Ellis Island soil. In six months they are Americanized. Does it matter that a thing so gigantic should be a little coarse and blundering in detail, if this stumbling giant of the new time breaks a gracious relic or so in his eager clutch and treads a little on the flowers?

§ 9

And in this setting of energy and activity, towering city life and bracing sea breezes, I met Gidding again, whom I had last seen departing into Egypt to look more particularly at the prehistoric remains and the temples of the first and second dynasty at Abydos. It was at a dinner-party, one of those large gatherings that welcome interesting visitors. It wasn't, of course, I who was the centre of interest, but a distinguished French portrait painter; I was there as just any guest. I hadn't even perceived Gidding until he came round to me in that precious gap of masculine intercourse that ensues upon the departure of the ladies. That gap is one of the rare opportunities for conversation men get in America.

"I don't know whether you will remember me," he said, "but perhaps you remember Crete — in the sunrise."

"And no end of talk afterwards," I said, grasping his hand, "no end — for we didn't half finish. Did you have a good time in Egypt?"

"I'm not going to talk to you about Egypt," said Gidding. "I'm through with ruins. I'm going to ask you — you know what I'm going to ask you."

"What I think of America. It's the same inevitable question. I

think everything of it. It's the stepping-off place. I've come here at last, because it matters most."

"That's what we all want to believe," said Gidding. "That's what we want you to tell us."

He reflected. "It's immense, isn't it, perfectly immense? But —— I am afraid at times we're too disposed to forget just what it's all about. We've got to be reminded. That, you know, is why we keep on asking."

He went on to question me where I had been, what I had done, what I made of things. He'd never, he said, forgotten our two days' gossip in the Levant, and all the wide questions about the world and ourselves that we had broached then and left so open. I soon found myself talking very freely to him. I am not a ready or abundant talker, but Gidding has the knack of precipitating my ideas. He is America to my Europe, and at his touch all that has been hanging in concentrated solution in my mind comes crystallizing out. He has to a peculiar degree that directness and simplicity which is the distinctive American quality. I tried to explain to his solemnly nodding head and entirely intelligent eyes just exactly what I was making of things, of the world, of humanity, of myself....

It was an odd theme for two men to attempt after dinner, servants hovering about them, their two faces a little flushed by wine and good eating, their keen interest masked from the others around them by a gossiping affectation, their hands going out as they talked for matches or cigarette, and before we had gone further than to fling out a few intimations to each other our colloquy was interrupted by our host standing up and by the general stir that preluded our return to feminine society. "We've got more to say than this," said Gidding. "We've got to *talk*." He brought out a little engagement book that at once drew out mine in response. And a couple of days after, we spent a morning and afternoon together and got down to some very intimate conversation. We motored out to lunch at a place called Nyack, above the Palisades, we crossed on a ferry to reach it, and we visited the house of Washington Irving near Yonkers on our way.

I've still a vivid picture in my mind of the little lawn at Irvington that looks out upon the rushing steel of Hudson River, where Gidding opened his heart to me. I can see him now as he leant a little

forward over the table, with his wrists resting upon it, his long clean-shaven face very solemn and earnest and grey against the hard American sunlight in the greenery about us, while he told me in that deliberate American voice of his and with the deliberate American solemnity, of his desire to "do some decent thing with life."

He was very anxious to set himself completely before me, I remember, on that occasion. There was a peculiar mental kinship between us that even the profound differences of our English and American trainings could not mask. And now he told me almost everything material about his life. For the first time I learnt how enormously rich he was, not only by reason of his father's acquisitions, but also because of his own almost instinctive aptitude for business. "I've got," he said, "to begin with, what almost all men spend their whole lives in trying to get. And it amounts to nothing. It leaves me with life like a blank sheet of paper, and nothing in particular to write on it."

"You know," he said, "it's — exasperating. I'm already half-way to three-score and ten, and I'm still wandering about wondering what to do with this piece of life God has given me...."

He had "lived" as people say, he had been in scrapes and scandals, tasted to the full the bitter intensities of the personal life; he had come by a different route to the same conclusions as myself, was as anxious as I to escape from memories and associations and feuds and that excessive vividness of individual feeling which blinds us to the common humanity, the common interest, the gentler, larger reality, which lies behind each tawdrily emphatic self....

"It's a sort of inverted homœopathy I want," he said. "The big thing to cure the little thing...."

But I will say no more of that side of our friendship, because the ideas of it are spread all through this book from the first page to the last.... What concerns me now is not our sympathy and agreement, but that other aspect of our relations in which Gidding becomes impulse and urgency. "Seeing we have these ideas," said he,— "and mind you there must be others who have them or are getting to them, for nobody thinks all alone in this world, — seeing we have these ideas what are we going to *do*?"

That meeting was followed by another before I left New York, and presently Gidding joined me at Denver, where I was trying to measure the true significance of a labor paper called *The Appeal to Reason* that, in spite of a rigid boycott by the ordinary agencies for news distribution went out in the middle west to nearly half a million subscribers, and was filled with such a fierceness of insurrection against labor conditions, such a hatred, blind and impassioned, as I had never known before. Gidding remained with me there and came back with me to Chicago, where I wanted to see something of the Americanization of the immigrant, and my survey of America, the social and economic problem of America, resolved itself more and more into a conference with him.

There is no more fruitless thing in the world than to speculate how life would have gone if this thing or that had not happened. Yet I cannot help but wonder how far I might have travelled along the lines of my present work if I had gone to America and not met Gidding, or if I had met him without visiting America. The man and his country are inextricably interwoven in my mind. Yet I do think that his simplicity and directness, his force of initiative that turned me from a mere enquirer into an active writer and organizer, are qualities less his in particular than America's in general. There is in America a splendid crudity, a directness that cleared my spirit as a bracing wind will sweep the clouds from mountain scenery. Compared with our older continents America is mankind stripped for achievement. So many things are not there at all, need not be considered; no institutional aristocracy, no Kaisers, Czars, nor King-Emperors to maintain a litigious sequel to the Empire of Rome; it has no uneducated immovable peasantry rooted to the soil, indeed it has no rooting to the soil at all; it is, from the Forty-ninth Parallel to the tip of Cape Horn, one triumphant embodiment of freedom and deliberate agreement. For I mean all America, Spanish-speaking as well as English-speaking; they have this detachment from tradition in common. See how the United States, for example, stands flatly on that bare piece of eighteenth-century intellectualism the Constitution, and is by virtue of that a structure either wilful and intellectual or

absurd. That sense of incurable servitude to fate and past traditions, that encumbrance with ruins, pledges, laws and ancient institutions, that perpetual complication of considerations and those haunting memories of preceding human failures which dwarf the courage of destiny in Europe and Asia, vanish from the mind within a week of one's arrival in the New World. Naturally one begins to do things. One is inspired to do things. One feels that one has escaped, one feels that the time is *now*. All America, North and South alike, is one tremendous escape from ancient obsessions into activity and making.

And by the time I had reached America I had already come to see that just as the issues of party politics at home and international politics abroad are mere superficialities above the greater struggle of an energetic minority to organize and exploit the labor of the masses of mankind, so that struggle also is only a huge incident in the still more than half unconscious impulse to replace the ancient way of human living by a more highly organized world-wide social order, by a world civilization embodying itself in a World State. And I saw now how that impulse could neither cease nor could it on the other hand realize itself until it became conscious and deliberate and merciful, free from haste and tyranny, persuasive and sustained by a nearly universal sympathy and understanding. For until that arrives the creative forces must inevitably spend themselves very largely in blind alleys, futile rushes and destructive conflicts. Upon that our two minds were agreed.

"We have," said Gidding, "to understand and make understanding. That is the real work for us to do, Stratton, that is our job. The world, as you say, has been floundering about, half making civilization and never achieving it. Now *we*, I don't mean just you and me, Stratton, particularly, but every intelligent man among us, have got to set to and make it thorough. There is no other sane policy for a man outside his private passions but that. So let's get at it — —"

I find it now impossible to trace the phases by which I reached these broad ideas upon which I rest all my work, but certainly they were present very early in my discussions with Gidding. We two men had been thinking independently but very similarly, and it is hard to say just what completing touches either of us gave to the

other's propositions. We found ourselves rather than arrived at the conception of ourselves as the citizens neither of the United States nor of England but of a state that had still to come into being, a World State, a great unity behind and embracing the ostensible political fabrics of to-day — a unity to be reached by weakening antagonisms, by developing understandings and toleration, by fostering the sense of brotherhood across the ancient bounds.

We believed and we believe that such a creative conception of a human commonweal can be fostered in exactly the same way that the idea of German unity was fostered behind the dukedoms, the free cities and kingdoms of Germany, a conception so creative that it can dissolve traditional hatreds, incorporate narrower loyalties and replace a thousand suspicions and hostilities by a common passion for collective achievement, so creative that at last the national boundaries of to-day may become obstacles as trivial to the amplifying good-will of men as the imaginary line that severs Normandy from Brittany, or Berwick from Northumberland.

And it is not only a great peace about the earth that this idea of a World State means for us, but social justice also. We are both convinced altogether that there survives no reason for lives of toil, for hardship, poverty, famine, infectious disease, for the continuing cruelties of wild beasts and the greater multitude of crimes, but mismanagement and waste, and that mismanagement and waste spring from no other source than ignorance and from stupid divisions and jealousies, base patriotisms, fanaticisms, prejudices and suspicions that are all no more than ignorance a little mingled with viciousness. We have looked closely into this servitude of modern labor, we have seen its injustice fester towards syndicalism and revolutionary socialism, and we know these things for the mere aimless, ignorant resentments they are; punishments, not remedies. We have looked into the portentous threat of modern war, and it is ignorant vanity and ignorant suspicion, the bargaining aggression of the British prosperous and the swaggering vulgarity of the German junker that make and sustain that monstrous European devotion to arms. And we are convinced there is nothing in these evils and conflicts that light may not dispel. We believe that these things can be dispelled, that the great universals, Science which has limitations

neither of race nor class, Art which speaks to its own in every rank and nation, Philosophy and Literature which broaden sympathy and banish prejudice, can flood and submerge and will yet flow over and submerge every one of these separations between man and man.

I will not say that this Great State, this World Republic of civilized men, is our dream, because it is not a dream, it is a manifestly reasonable possibility. It is our intention. It is what we are deliberately making and what in a little while very many men and women will be making. We are secessionists from all contemporary nationalities and loyalties. We have set ourselves with all the capacity and energy at our disposal to create a world-wide common fund of ideas and knowledge, and to evoke a world-wide sense of human solidarity in which the existing limitations of political structure must inevitably melt away.

It was Gidding and his Americanism, his inborn predisposition to innovation and the large freedom of his wealth that turned these ideas into immediate concrete undertakings. I see more and more that it is here that we of the old European stocks, who still grow upon the old wood, differ most from those vigorous grafts of our race in America and Africa and Australia on the one hand and from the renascent peoples of the East on the other: that we have lost the courage of youth and have not yet gained the courage of desperate humiliations, in taking hold of things. To Gidding it was neither preposterous nor insufferably magnificent that we should set about a propaganda of all science, all knowledge, all philosophical and political ideas, round about the habitable globe. His mind began producing concrete projects as a fire-work being lit produces sparks, and soon he was "figuring out" the most colossal of printing and publishing projects, as a man might work out the particulars for an alteration to his bathroom. It was so entirely natural to him, it was so entirely novel to me, to go on from the proposition that understanding was the primary need of humanity to the systematic organization of free publishing, exhaustive discussion, intellectual stimulation. He set about it as a company of pharmacists might organize the distribution of some beneficial cure.

"Say, Stratton," he said, after a conversation that had seemed to me half fantasy; "Let's *do* it."

There are moments still when it seems to me that this life of mine has become the most preposterous of adventures. We two absurd human beings are spending our days and nights in a sustained and growing attempt to do what? To destroy certain obsessions and to give the universal human mind a form and a desire for expression. We have put into the shape of one comprehensive project that force of released wealth that has already dotted America with universities, libraries, institutions for research and enquiry. Already there are others at work with us, and presently there will be a great number. We have started an avalanche above the old politics and it gathers mass and pace....

And there never was an impulse towards endeavor in a human heart that wasn't preposterous. Man is a preposterous animal. Thereby he ceases to be a creature and becomes a creator, he turns upon the powers that made him and subdues them to his service; by his sheer impudence he establishes his claim to possess a soul....

But I need not write at all fully of my work here. This book is not about that but about my coming to that. Long before this manuscript reaches your hands — if ultimately I decide that it shall reach your hands — you will be taking your share, I hope, in this open conspiracy against potentates and prejudices and all the separating powers of darkness.

§ 11

I would if I could omit one thing that I must tell you here, because it goes so close to the very core of all this book has to convey. I wish I could leave it out altogether. I wish I could simplify my story by smoothing out this wrinkle at least and obliterating a thing that was at once very real and very ugly. You see I had at last struggled up to a sustaining idea, to a conception of work and duty to which I could surely give my life. I had escaped from my pit so far. And it was natural that now with something to give I should turn not merely for consolation and service but for help and fellowship to that dear human being across the seas who had offered them to me so straightly and sweetly. All that is brave and good and as you would have me, is it not? Only, dear son, that is not all the truth.

There was still in my mind, for long it remained in my mind, a bitterness against Mary. I had left her, I had lost her, we had parted; but from Germany to America and all through America and home again to my marriage and with me after my marriage, it rankled that she could still go on living a life independent of mine. I had not yet lost my desire to possess her, to pervade and dominate her existence; my resentment that though she loved me she had first not married me and afterwards not consented to come away with me was smouldering under the closed hatches of my mind. And so while the better part of me was laying hold of this work because it gave me the hope of a complete distraction and escape from my narrow and jealous self, that lower being of the pit was also rejoicing in the great enterprises before me and in the marriage upon which I had now determined, because it was a last trampling upon my devotion to Mary, because it defied and denied some lurking claims to empire I could suspect in her. I want to tell you that particularly because so I am made, so you are made, so most of us are made. There is scarcely a high purpose in all the world that has no dwarfish footman at its stirrup, no base intention over which there does not ride at least the phantom of an angel.

Constantly in those days, it seems to me now, I was haunted by my own imagination of Mary amiably reconciled to Justin, bearing him children, forgetful of or repudiating all the sweetness, all the wonder and beauty we had shared.... It was an unjust and ungenerous conception, I knew it for a caricature even as I entertained it, and yet it tormented me. It stung me like a spur. It kept me at work, and if I strayed into indolence brought me back to work with a mind galled and bleeding....

§ 12

And I suppose it is mixed up with all this that I could not make love easily and naturally to Rachel. I could not write love-letters to her. There is a burlesque quality in these scruples, I know, seeing that I was now resolved to marry her, but that is the quality, that is the mixed texture of life. We overcome the greater things and are conscience-stricken by the details.

I wouldn't, even at the price of losing her — and I was now passionately anxious not to lose her — use a single phrase of endearment that did not come out of me almost in spite of myself. At any rate I would not cheat her. And my offer of marriage when at last I sent it to her from Chicago was, as I remember it, almost business-like. I atoned soon enough for that arid letter in ten thousand sweet words that came of themselves to my lips. And she paid me at any rate in my own coin when she sent me her answer by cable, the one word "Yes."

And indeed I was already in love with her long before I wrote. It was only a dread of giving her a single undeserved cheapness that had held me back so long. It was that and the perplexity that Mary still gripped my feelings; my old love for her was there in my heart in spite of my new passion for Rachel, it was blackened perhaps and ruined and changed but it was there. It was as if a new crater burnt now in the ampler circumference of an old volcano, which showed all the more desolate and sorrowful and obsolete for the warm light of the new flames....

How impatiently I came home! Thoughts of England I had not dared to think for three long years might now do what they would in me. I dreamt of the Surrey Hills and the great woods of Burnmore Park, of the changing skies and stirring soft winds of our grey green Motherland. There was fog in the Irish Sea, and we lost the better part of a day hooting our way towards Liverpool while I fretted about the ship with all my luggage packed, staring at the grey waters that weltered under the mist. It was the longest day in my life. My heart was full of desire, my eyes ached for the little fields and golden October skies of England, England that was waiting to welcome me back from my exile with such open arms. I was coming home, — home.

I hurried through London into Surrey and in my father's study, warned by a telegram, I found a bright-eyed, resolute young woman awaiting me, with the quality about her of one who embarks upon a long premeditated adventure. And I found too a family her sisters and her brother all gladly ready for me, my father too was a happy man, and on the eighth of November in 1906 Rachel and I were married in the little church at Shere. We stayed for a week or so in

Hampshire near Ringwood, the season was late that year and the trees still very beautiful; and then we went to Portofino on the Ligurian coast.

There presently Gidding joined us and we began to work out the schemes we had made in America, the schemes that now fill my life.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

Mary Writes

§ 1

It was in the early spring of 1909 that I had a letter from Mary.

By that time my life was set fully upon its present courses, Gidding and I had passed from the stage of talking and scheming to definite undertakings. Indeed by 1909 things were already organized upon their present lines. We had developed a huge publishing establishment with one big printing plant in Barcelona and another in Manchester, and we were studying the peculiar difficulties that might attend the establishment of a third plant in America. Our company was an English company under the name of Alphabet and Mollentrave, and we were rapidly making it the broadest and steadiest flow of publication the world had ever seen. Its streams already reached further and carried more than any single firm had ever managed to do before. We were reprinting, in as carefully edited and revised editions as we could, the whole of the English, Spanish and French literature, and we were only waiting for the release of machinery to attack German, Russian and Italian, and were giving each language not only its own but a very complete series of good translations of the classical writers in every other tongue. We had a little band of editors and translators permanently in our service at each important literary centre. We had, for example, more than a score of men at work translating Bengali fiction and verse into English, — a lot of that new literature is wonderfully illuminating to an intelligent Englishman — and we had a couple of men hunting about for new work in Arabic. We meant to give so good and cheap a book, and to be so comprehensive in our choice of books, excluding nothing if only it was real and living, on account of any inferiority of quality, obscurity of subject or narrowness of demand, that in the long run anybody, anywhere, desiring to read anything would turn naturally and inevitably to our lists.

Ours was to be in the first place a world literature. Then

afterwards upon its broad currents of distribution and in the same forms we meant to publish new work and new thought. We were also planning an encyclopædia. Behind our enterprise of translations and reprints we were getting together and putting out a series of guide-books, gazetteers, dictionaries, text-books and books of reference, and we were organizing a revising staff for these, a staff that should be constantly keeping them up to date. It was our intention to make every copy we printed bear the date of its last revision in a conspicuous place, and we hoped to get the whole line of these books ultimately upon an annual basis, and to sell them upon repurchasing terms that would enable us to issue a new copy and take back and send the old one to the pulping mill at a narrow margin of profit. Then we meant to spread our arms wider, and consolidate and offer our whole line of text-books, guide-books and gazetteers, bibliographies, atlases, dictionaries and directories as a new World Encyclopædia, that should also annually or at longest biennially renew its youth.

So far we had gone in the creation of a huge international organ of information, and of a kind of gigantic modern Bible of world literature, and in the process of its distribution we were rapidly acquiring an immense detailed knowledge of the book and publishing trade, finding congestions here, neglected opportunities there, and devising and drawing up a hundred schemes for relief, assistance, amalgamation and rearrangement. We had branches in China, Japan, Peru, Iceland and a thousand remote places that would have sounded as far off as the moon to an English or American bookseller in the seventies. China in particular was a growing market. We had a subsidiary company running a flourishing line of book shops in the east-end of London, and others in New Jersey, Chicago, Buenos Ayres, the South of France, and Ireland. Incidentally we had bought up some thousands of miles of Labrador forest to ensure our paper supply, and we could believe that before we died there would not be a corner of the world in which any book of interest or value whatever would not be easily attainable by any intelligent person who wanted to read it. And already we were taking up the more difficult and ambitious phase of our self-appointed task, and considering the problem of using these channels we were

mastering and deepening and supplementing for the stimulation and wide diffusion of contemporary thought.

There we went outside the province of Alphabet and Mollentrave and into an infinitely subtler system of interests. We wanted to give sincere and clear-thinking writers encouragement and opportunity, to improve the critical tribunal and make it independent of advertising interests, so that there would be a readier welcome for luminous thinking and writing and a quicker explosion of intellectual imposture. We sought to provide guides and intelligencers to contemporary thought. We had already set up or subsidized or otherwise aided a certain number of magazines and periodicals that seemed to us independent-spirited, out-spoken and well handled, but we had still to devise our present scheme of financing groups of men to create magazines and newspapers, which became their own separate but inalienable property after so many years of success.

But all this I hope you will already have become more or less familiar with when this story reaches your hands, and I hope by the time it does so we shall be far beyond our present stage of experiment and that you will have come naturally to play your part in this most fascinating business of maintaining an onward intellectual movement in the world, a movement not simply independent of but often running counter to all sorts of political and financial interests. I tell you this much here for you to understand that already in 1909 and considering the business side of my activities alone, I was a hard worker and very strenuously employed. And in addition to all this huge network of enterprises I had developed with Gidding, I was still pretty actively a student. I wasn't — I never shall be — absolutely satisfied with my general ideas. I was enquiring keenly and closely into those problems of group and crowd psychology from which all this big publishing work has arisen, and giving particular attention to the war-panics and outbreaks of international hostility that were then passing in deepening waves across Europe. I had already accumulated a mass of notes for the book upon "Group Jealousy in Religious Persecution, Racial Conflicts and War" which I hope to publish the year after next, and which therefore I hope you will have read long before this present book can possibly come to you. And moreover Rachel and I had established our home in London — in the

house we now occupy during the winter and spring — and both you and your little sister had begun your careers as inhabitants of this earth. Your little sister had indeed but just begun.

And then one morning at the breakfast-table I picked a square envelope out of a heap of letters, and saw the half-forgotten and infinitely familiar handwriting of Lady Mary Justin.... The sight of it gave me an odd mixture of sensations. I was startled, I was disturbed, I was a little afraid. I hadn't forgiven her yet; it needed but this touch to tell me how little I had forgotten....

§ 2

I sat with it in my hand for a moment or so before I opened it, hesitating as one hesitates before a door that may reveal a dramatic situation. Then I pushed my chair a little back from the table and ripped the envelope.

It was a far longer letter than Mary had ever written me in the old days, and in a handwriting as fine as ever but now rather smaller. I have it still, and here I open its worn folds and, except for a few trifling omissions, copy it out for you.... A few trifling omissions, I say, — just one there is that is not trifling, but that I must needs make....

You will never see any of these letters because I shall destroy them so soon as this copy is made. It has been difficult — or I should have destroyed them before. But some things can be too hard for us....

This first letter is on the Martens note-paper; its very heading was familiar to me. The handwriting of the earlier sentences is a little stiff and disjointed, and there are one or two scribbled obliterations; it is like someone embarrassed in speaking; and then it passes into her usual and characteristic ease....

And as I read, slowly my long-cherished anger evaporated, and the real Mary, outspoken and simple, whom I had obscured by a cloud of fancied infidelities, returned to me....

"My dear Stephen," she begins, "About six weeks ago I saw in the *Times* that you have a little daughter. It set me thinking, picturing you with a mite of a baby in your arms — what *little* things they are,

Stephen! — and your old face bent over it, so that presently I went to my room and cried. It set me thinking about you so that I have at last written you this letter.... I love to think of you with wife and children about you Stephen, — I heard of your son for the first time about a year ago, but — don't mistake me, — something wrings me too....

"Well, I too have children. Have you ever thought of me as a mother? I am. I wonder how much you know about me now. I have two children and the youngest is just two years old. And somehow it seems to me that now that you and I have both given such earnests of our good behavior, such evidence that *that* side of life anyhow is effectually settled for us, there is no reason remaining why we shouldn't correspond. You are my brother, Stephen, and my friend and my twin and the core of my imagination, fifty babies cannot alter that, we can live but once and then die, and, promise or no promise, I will not be dead any longer in your world when I'm not dead, nor will I have you, if I can help it, a cold unanswering corpse in mine....

"Too much of my life and being, Stephen, has been buried, and I am in rebellion. This is a breach of the tomb if you like, an irregular private premature resurrection from an interment in error. Out of my alleged grave I poke my head and say Hello! to you. Stephen, old friend! dear friend! how are you getting on? What is it like to you? How do you feel? I want to know about you.... I'm not doing this at all furtively, and you can write back to me, Stephen, as openly as your heart desires. I have told Justin I should do this. I rise, you see, blowing my own Trump. Let the other graves do as they please....

"Your letters will be respected, Stephen.... If you choose to rise also and write me a letter.

"Stephen, I've been wanting to do this for — for all the time. If there was thought-reading you would have had a thousand letters. But formerly I was content to submit, and latterly I've chafed more. I think that as what they call passion has faded, the immense friendliness has become more evident, and made the bar less and less justifiable. You and I have had so much between us beyond what somebody the other day — it was in a report in the *Times*, I think — was calling *Materia Matrimoniala*. And of course I hear about you from all sorts of people, and in all sorts of ways — whatever you have done about me I've had a woman's sense of honor about you

and I've managed to learn a great deal without asking forbidden questions. I've pricked up my ears at the faintest echo of your name.

"They say you have become a publisher with an American partner, a sort of Harmsworth and Nelson and Times Book Club and Hooper and Jackson all rolled into one. That seems so extraordinary to me that for that alone I should have had to write to you. I want to know the truth of that. I never see any advertisement of Stratton & Co. or get any inkling of what it is you publish. Are you the power behind the respectable Murgatroyd and the honest Milvain? I know them both and neither has the slightest appearance of being animated by you. And equally perplexing is your being mixed up with an American like that man Gidding in Peace Conferences and Social Reform Congresses and so forth. It's so — Carnegieish. There I'm surer because I've seen your name in reports of meetings and I've read your last two papers in the *Fortnightly*. I can't imagine you of all people, with your touch of reserve, launching into movements and rubbing shoulders with faddists. What does it mean, Stephen? I had expected to find you coming back into English politics — speaking and writing on the lines of your old beginning, taking up that work you dropped — it's six years now ago. I've been accumulating disappointment for two years. Mr. Arthur, you see, on our side," — this you will remember was in 1909— "still steers our devious party courses, and the Tariff Reformers have still to capture us. Weston Massinghay was comparing them the other night, at a dinner at the Clynes', to a crowded piratical galley trying to get alongside a good seaman in rough weather. He was very funny about Leo Maxse in the poop, white and shrieking with passion and the motion, and all the capitalists armed to the teeth and hiding snug in the hold until the grappling-irons were fixed.... Why haven't you come into the game? I'd hoped it if only for the sake of meeting you again. What are you doing out beyond there?

"We are in it so far as I can contrive. But I contrive very little. We are pillars of the Conservative party — on that Justin's mind is firmly settled — and every now and then I clamor urgently that we must do more for it. But Justin's ideas go no further than writing cheques — doing more for the party means writing a bigger cheque — and there are moments when I feel we shall simply bring down a peerage upon

our heads and bury my ancient courtesy title under the ignominy of a new creation. He would certainly accept it. He writes his cheque and turns back at the earliest opportunity to his miniature gardens and the odd little freaks of collecting that attract him. Have you ever heard of chintz oil jars? 'No,' you will say. Nor has anyone else yet except our immediate circle of friends and a few dealers who are no doubt industriously increasing the present scanty supply. We possess three. They are matronly shaped jars about two feet or a yard high, of a kind of terra-cotta with wooden tops surmounted by gilt acorns, and they have been covered with white paint and on this flowers and birds and figures from some very rich old chintz have been stuck very cunningly, and then everything has been varnished — and there you are. Our first and best was bought for seven-and-sixpence, brought home in the car, put upon a console table on the second landing and worshipped. It's really a very pleasant mellow thing to see. Nobody had ever seen the like. Guests, sycophantic people of all sorts were taken to consider it. It was looked at with heads at every angle, one man even kept his head erect and one went a little upstairs and looked at it under his arm. Also the most powerful lenses have been used for a minute examination, and one expert licked the varnish and looked extremely thoughtful and wise at me as he turned the booty over his gifted tongue. And now, God being with us, we mean to possess every specimen in existence — before the Americans get hold of the idea. Yesterday Justin got up and motored sixty miles to look at an alleged fourth....

"Oh my dear! I am writing chatter. You perceive I've reached the chattering stage. It is the fated end of the clever woman in a good social position nowadays, her mind beats against her conditions for the last time and breaks up into this carping talk, this spume of observation and comment, this anecdotal natural history of the restraining husband, as waves burst out their hearts in a foam upon a reef. But it isn't chatter I want to write to you.

"Stephen, I'm intolerably wretched. No creature has ever been gladder to have been born than I was for the first five and twenty years of my life. I was full of hope and I was full, I suppose, of vanity and rash confidence. I thought I was walking on solid earth with my head reaching up to the clouds, and that sea and sky and all

mankind were mine for the smiling. And I am nothing and worse than nothing, I am the ineffectual mother of two children, a daughter whom I adore — but of her I may not tell you — and a son, — a son who is too like his father for any fury of worship, a stolid little creature.... That is all I have done in the world, a mere blink of maternity, and my blue Persian who is scarcely two years old, has already had nine kittens. My husband and I have never forgiven each other the indefinable wrong of not pleasing each other; that embitters more and more; to take it out of each other is our rôle; I have done my duty to the great new line of Justin by giving it the heir it needed, and now a polite and silent separation has fallen between us. We hardly speak except in company. I have not been so much married, Stephen, I find, as collected, and since our tragic misadventure — but there were beautiful moments, Stephen, unforgettable glimpses of beauty in that — thank God, I say impenitently for that — the door of the expensively splendid cabinet that contains me, when it is not locked, is very discreetly — watched. I have no men friends, no social force, no freedom to take my line. My husband is my official obstacle. We barb the limitations of life for one another. A little while ago he sought to chasten me — to rouse me rather — through jealousy, and made me aware indirectly but a little defiantly of a young person of artistic gifts in whose dramatic career he was pretending a conspicuous interest. I was jealous and roused, but scarcely in the way he desired. 'This,' I said quite cheerfully, 'means freedom for *me*, Justin,' — and the young woman vanished from the visible universe with an incredible celerity. I hope she was properly paid off and not simply made away with by a minion, but I become more and more aware of my ignorance of a great financier's methods as I become more and more aware of them....

"Stephen, my dear, my brother, I am intolerably unhappy. I do not know what to do with myself, or what there is to hope for in life. I am like a prisoner in a magic cage and I do not know the word that will release me. How is it with you? Are you unhappy beyond measure or are you not; and if you are not, what are you doing with life? Have you found any secret that makes living tolerable and understandable? Write to me, write to me at least and tell me that.... Please write to me.

“Do you remember how long ago you and I sat in the old Park at Burnmore, and how I kept pestering you and asking you what is all this *for*? And you looked at the question as an obstinate mule looks at a narrow bridge he could cross but doesn’t want to. Well, Stephen, you’ve had nearly — how many years is it now? — to get an answer ready. What *is* it all for? What do you make of it? Never mind my particular case, or the case of Women with a capital *W*, tell me *your* solution. You are active, you keep doing things, you find life worth living. Is publishing a way of peace for the heart? I am prepared to believe even that. But justify yourself. Tell me what you have got there to keep your soul alive.”

§ 3

I read this letter to the end and looked up, and there was my home about me, a room ruddy-brown and familiar, with the row of old pewter things upon the dresser, the steel engravings of former Strattons that came to me from my father, a convex mirror exaggerating my upturned face. And Rachel just risen again sat at the other end of the table, a young mother, fragile and tender-eyed. The clash of these two systems of reality was amazing. It was as though I had not been parted from Mary for a day, as though all that separation and all that cloud of bitter jealousy had been a mere silence between two people in the same room. Indeed it was extraordinarily like that, as if I had been sitting at a desk, imagining myself alone, reading my present life as one reads in a book at a shaded lamp, and then suddenly that silent other had spoken.

And then I looked at the page of my life before me and became again a character in the story.

I met the enquiry in Rachel’s eyes. “It’s a letter from Mary Justin,” I said.

She did not answer for a few moments. She became interested in the flame of the little spirit lamp that kept her coffee hot. She finished what she had to do with that and then remarked, “I thought you two were not to correspond.”

“Yes,” I said, putting the letter down; “that was the understanding.”

There was a little interval of silence, and then I got up and went to the fireplace where the bacon and sausages stood upon a trivet.

"I suppose," said Rachel, "she wants to hear from you again."

"She thinks that now we have children, and that she has two, we can consider what was past, past and closed and done with, and she wants to hear — about me.... Apart from everything else — we were very great friends."

"Of course," said Rachel with lips a little awry, "of course. You must have been great friends. And it's natural for her to write."

"I suppose," she added, "her husband knows."

"She's told him, she says...."

Her eye fell on the letter in my hand for the smallest fraction of a second, and it was as if hastily she snatched away a thought from my observation. I had a moment of illuminating embarrassment. So far we had contrived to do as most young people do when they marry, we had sought to make our lives unreservedly open to one another, we had affected an entire absence of concealments about our movements, our thoughts. If perhaps I had been largely silent to her about Mary it was not so much that I sought to hide things from her as that I myself sought to forget. It is one of the things that we learn too late, the impossibility of any such rapid and wilful coalescences of souls. But we had maintained a convention of infinite communism since our marriage; we had shown each other our letters as a matter of course, shared the secrets of our friends, gone everywhere together as far as we possibly could.

I wanted now to give her the letter in my hand to read — and to do so was manifestly impossible. Something had arisen between us that made out of our unity two abruptly separated figures masked and veiled. Here were things I knew and understood completely and that I could not even describe to Rachel. What would she make of Mary's "Write to me. Write to me"? A mere wish to resume.... I would not risk the exposure of Mary's mind and heart and unhappiness, to her possible misinterpretation....

That letter fell indeed like a pitiless searchlight into all that region of differences ignored, over which we had built the vaulted

convention of our complete mutual understanding. In my memory it seems to me now as though we hung silent for quite a long time over the evasions that were there so abruptly revealed.

Then I put the letter into my pocket with a clumsy assumption of carelessness, and knelt down to the fender and sausages.

"It will be curious," I said, "to write to her again.... To tell her about things...."

And then with immense interest, "Are these Chichester sausages you've got here, Rachel, or some new kind?"

Rachel roused herself to respond with an equal affectation, and we made an eager conversation about bacon and sausages — for after that startling gleam of divergence we were both anxious to get back to the superficialities of life again.

§ 4

I did not answer Mary's letter for seven or eight days.

During that period my mind was full of her to the exclusion of every other interest. I re-read all that she had to say many times, and with each reading the effect of her personality deepened. It was all so intensely familiar, the flashes of insight, the blazing frankness, the quick turns of thought, and her absurd confidence in a sort of sane stupidity that she had always insisted upon my possessing. And her unembarrassed affectionateness. Her quick irregular writing seemed to bring back with it the changing light in her eyes, the intonations of her voice, something of her gesture....

I didn't go on discussing with myself whether we two ought to correspond; that problem disappeared from my thoughts. Her challenge to me to justify myself took possession of my mind. That thrust towards self-examination was the very essence of her ancient influence. How did I justify myself? I was under a peculiar compulsion to answer that to her satisfaction. She had picked me up out of my work and accumulating routines with that demand, made me look at myself and my world again as a whole.... I had a case. I have a case. It is a case of passionate faith triumphing over every doubt and impossibility, a case real enough to understand for those who understand, but very difficult to state. I tried to convey it to her.

I do not remember at all clearly what I wrote to her. It has disappeared from existence. But it was certainly a long letter. Throughout this book I have been trying to tell you the growth of my views of life and its purpose, from my childish dreams and Harbury attitudes to those ideas of human development that have made me undertake the work I do. It is not glorious work I know, as the work of great artists and poets and leaders is glorious, but it is what I find best suits my gifts and my want of gifts. Greater men will come at last to build within my scaffoldings. In some summary phrasing I must have set out the gist of this. I must have explained my sense of the supreme importance of mental clarification in human life. All this is manifest in her reply. And I think too I did my best to tell her plainly the faith that was in me, and why life seemed worth while to me....

Her second letter came after an interval of only a few days from the despatch of mine. She began abruptly.

"I won't praise your letter or your beliefs. They are fine and large — and generous — like you. Just a little artificial (but you will admit that), as though you had felt them *give* here and there and had made up your mind they shouldn't. At times it's oddly like looking at the Alps, the real Alps, and finding that every now and then the mountains have been eked out with a plank and canvas Earl's Court background.... Yes, I like what you say about Faith. I believe you are right. I wish I could — perhaps some day I shall — light up and *feel* you are right. But — but —— That large, *respectable* project, the increase of wisdom and freedom and self-knowledge in the world, the calming of wars, the ending of economic injustice and so on and so on ——

"When I read it first it was like looking at a man in profile and finding him solid and satisfactory, and then afterwards when I thought it all over and looked for the particular things that really matter to me and tried to translate it into myself — nothing is of the slightest importance in the world that one cannot translate into oneself — then I began to realize just how amazingly deficient you are. It was like walking round that person in profile and finding his left side wasn't there — with everything perfect on the right, down to

the buttons. A kind of intellectual Lorelei — sideways. You've planned out your understandings and tolerances and enquiries and clearings-up as if the world were all just men — or citizens — and nothing doing but racial and national and class prejudices and the exacting and shirking of labor, and you seem to ignore altogether that man is a sexual animal first — first, Stephen, first — that he has that in common with all the animals, that it made him indeed because he has it more than they have — and after that, a long way after that, he is the labor-economizing, war-and feud-making creature you make him out to be. A long way after that....

"Man is the most sexual of all the beasts, Stephen. Half of him, womankind, rather more than half, isn't simply human at all, it's specialized, specialized for the young, not only naturally and physically as animals are, but mentally and artificially. Womankind isn't human, it's reduced human. It's 'the sex' as the Victorians used to say, and from the point of view of the Lex Julia and the point of view of Mr. Malthus, and the point of view of biologists and saints and artists and everyone who deals in feeling and emotion — and from the point of view of all us poor specialists, smothered up in our clothes and restrictions — the future of the sex is the centre of the whole problem of the human future, about which you are concerned. All this great world-state of your man's imagination is going to be wrecked by us if you ignore us, we women are going to be the Goths and Huns of another Decline and Fall. We are going to sit in the conspicuous places of the world and *loot* all your patient accumulations. We are going to abolish your offspring and turn the princes among you into undignified slaves. Because, you see, specialized as we are, we are not quite specialized, we are specialized under duress, and at the first glimpse of a chance we abandon our cradles and drop our pots and pans and go for the vast and elegant side possibilities — of our specialization. Out we come, looking for the fun the men are having. Dress us, feed us, play with us! We'll pay you in excitement, — tremendous excitement. The State indeed! All your little triumphs of science and economy, all your little accumulations of wealth that you think will presently make the struggle for life an old story and the millennium possible — *we spend*. And all your dreams of brotherhood! — we will set you by

the ears. We hold ourselves up as my little Christian nephews — Philip's boys — do some coveted object, and say *Quis?* and the whole brotherhood shouts '*Ego!*' to the challenge.... Back you go into Individualism at the word and all your Brotherhood crumbles to dust again.

"How are you going to remedy it, how are you going to protect that Great State of your dreams from this anti-citizenship of sex? You give no hint.

"You are planning nothing, Stephen, nothing to meet this. You are fighting with an army all looting and undisciplined, frantic with the private jealousies that centre about *us*, feuds, cuts, expulsions, revenges, and you are giving out orders for an army of saints. You treat us as a negligible quantity, and we are about as negligible as a fire in the woodwork of a house that is being built....

"I read what I have written, Stephen, and I perceive I have the makings of a fine scold in me. Perhaps under happier conditions —— ... I should certainly have scolded you, constantly, continually.... Never did a man so need scolding.... And like any self-respecting woman I see that I use half my words in the wrong meanings in order to emphasize my point. Of course when I write woman in all that has gone before I don't mean woman. It is a woman's privilege to talk or write incomprehensibly and insist upon being understood. So that I expect you already to understand that what I mean isn't that men are creative and unselfish and brotherly and so forth and that women are spoiling and going to spoil the game — although and notwithstanding that is exactly what I have written — but that humans are creative and unselfish et cetera and so forth, and that it is their sexual, egotistical, passionate side (which is ever so much bigger relatively in a woman than in a man, and that is why I wrote as I did) which is going to upset your noble and beautiful apple-cart. But it is not only that by nature we are more largely and gravely and importantly sexual than men but that men have shifted the responsibility for attraction and passion upon us and made us pay in servitude and restriction and blame for the common defect of the species. So that you see really I was right all along in writing of this as though it was women when it wasn't, and I hope now it is unnecessary for me to make my meaning clearer than it is now and

always has been in this matter. And so, resuming our discourse, Stephen, which only my sense of your invincible literalness would ever have interrupted, what are you going to do with us?

"I gather from a hint rather than accept as a statement that you propose to give us votes.

"Stephen! — do you really think that we are going to bring anything to bear upon public affairs worth having? I know something of the contemporary feminine intelligence. Justin makes no serious objection to a large and various circle of women friends, and over my little sitting-room fire in the winter and in my corners of our various gardens in the summer and in walks over the heather at Martens and in Scotland there are great talks and confessions of love, of mental freedom, of ambitions, and belief and unbelief — more particularly of unbelief. I have sometimes thought of compiling a dictionary of unbelief, a great list of the things that a number of sweet, submissive, value-above-rubies wives have told me they did not believe in. It would amaze their husbands beyond measure. The state of mind of women about these things, Stephen, is dreadful — I mean about all these questions — you know what I mean. The bold striving spirits do air their views a little, and always in a way that makes one realize how badly they need airing — but most of the nicer women are very chary of talk, they have to be drawn out, a hint of opposition makes them start back or prevaricate, and I see them afterwards with their husbands, pretty silken furry feathery jewelled *silences*. All their suppression doesn't keep them orthodox, it only makes them furtive and crumpled and creased in their minds — in just the way that things get crumpled and creased if they are always being shoved back into a drawer. You have only to rout about in their minds for a bit. They pretend at first to be quite correct, and then out comes the nasty little courage of the darkness. Sometimes there is even an apologetic titter. They are quite emancipated, they say; I have misunderstood them. Their emancipation is like those horrid white lizards that grow in the Kentucky caves out of the sunlight. They tell you they don't see why they shouldn't do this or that — mean things, underhand things, cheap, vicious, sensual things.... Are there, I wonder, the same dreadful little caverns in men? I doubt it. And then comes a situation that really tries their quality.... Think of the

quandary I got into with you, Stephen. And for my sex I'm rather a daring person. The way in which I went so far — and then ran away. I had a kind of excuse — in my illness. That illness! Such a queer untimely feminine illness....

"We're all to pieces, Stephen. That's what brought down Rome. The women went to pieces then, and the women are going to pieces to-day. What's the good of having your legions in the Grampians and marching up to Philae, while the wives are talking treason in your houses? It's no good telling us to go back to the Ancient Virtues. The Ancient Virtues haven't *kept*. The Ancient Virtues in an advanced state of decay is what was the matter with Rome and what is the matter with us. You can't tell a woman to go back to the spinning-wheel and the kitchen and the cradle, when you have power-looms, French cooks, hotels, restaurants and modern nurseries. We've overflowed. We've got to go on to a lot of New Virtues. And in all the prospect before me — I can't descry one clear simple thing to do....

"But I'm running on. I want to know, Stephen, why you've got nothing to say about all this. It must have been staring you in the face ever since I spent my very considerable superfluous energies in wrecking your career. Because you know I wrecked it, Stephen. I *knew* I was wrecking it and I wrecked it. I knew exactly what I was doing all the time. I had meant to be so fine a thing for you, a mothering friend, to have that dear consecutive kindly mind of yours steadying mine, to have seen you grow to power over men, me helping, me admiring. It was to have been so fine. So fine! Didn't I urge you to marry Rachel, make you talk of her. Don't you remember that? And one day when I saw you thinking of Rachel, saw a kind of pride in your eyes! — suddenly I couldn't stand it. I went to my room after you had gone and thought of you and her until I wanted to scream. I couldn't bear it. It was intolerable. I was violent to my toilet things. I broke a hand-glass. Your dignified, selfish, self-controlled Mary *smashed* a silver hand-mirror. I never told you that. You know what followed. I pounced on you and took you. Wasn't I — a soft and scented hawk? Was either of us better than some creature of instinct that does what it does because it must? It was like a gust of madness — and I cared, I found, no more for

your career than I cared for any other little thing, for honor, for Rachel, for Justin, that stood between us....

"My dear, wasn't all that time, all that heat and hunger of desire, all that secret futility of passion, the very essence of the situation between men and women now? We are all trying most desperately to be human beings, to walk erect, to work together — what was your phrase?— 'in a multitudinous unity,' to share what you call a common collective thought that shall rule mankind, and this tremendous force which seizes us and says to us: 'Make that other being yours, bodily yours, mentally yours, wholly yours — at any price, no matter the price,' bars all our unifications. It splits the whole world into couples watching each other. Until all our laws, all our customs seem the servants of that. It is the passion of the body swamping the brain; it's an ape that has seized a gun, a beautiful modern gun. Here am I, Justin's captive, and he mine, he mine because at the first escapade of his I get my liberty. Here are we two, I and you, barred for ever from the sight of one another, and I and you writing — I at any rate — in spite of the ill-concealed resentment of my partner. We're just two, peeping through our bars, of a universal multitude. Everywhere this prison of sex. Have you ever thought just all that it means when every woman in the world goes dressed in a costume to indicate her sex, her cardinal fact, so that she dare not even mount a bicycle in knickerbockers, she has her hair grown long to its longest because yours is short, and everything conceivable is done to emphasize and remind us (and you) of the fundamental trouble between us? As if there was need of reminding! Stephen, is there no way out of this? Is there no way at all? Because if there is not, then I had rather go back to the hareem than live as I do now imprisoned in glass — with all of life in sight of me and none in reach. I had rather Justin beat me into submission and mental tranquillity and that I bore him an annual — probably deciduous — child. I can understand so well now that feminine attitude that implies, 'Well, if I must have a master, then the more master the better.' Perhaps that is the way; that Nature will not let us poor humans get away from sex, and I am merely — what is it? — an abnormality — with whiskers of enquiry sprouting from my mind. Yet I don't feel like that....

“I’m pouring into these letters, Stephen, the concentrated venom of years of brooding. My heart is black with rebellion against my lot and against the lot of woman. I have been given life and a fine position in the world, I made one fatal blunder in marrying to make these things secure, and now I can do nothing with it all and I have nothing to do with it. It astounds me to think of the size of our establishments, Stephen, of the extravagant way in which whole counties and great countries pay tribute to pile up the gigantic heap of wealth upon which we two lead our lives of futile entanglement. In this place alone there are fourteen gardeners and garden helps, and this is not one of our garden places. Three weeks ago I spent a thousand pounds on clothes in one great week of shopping, and our yearly expenditure upon personal effect, upon our magnificence and our margins cannot be greatly less than forty-five thousand pounds. I walk about our house and gardens, I take one of the carriages or one of the automobiles and go to some large pointless gathering of hundreds and thousands and thousands of pounds, and we walk about and say empty little things, and the servants don’t laugh at us, the butlers don’t laugh at us, the people in the street tolerate us.... It has an effect of collective insanity.... You know the story of one of those dear Barons of the Cinque Ports — a decent plumber-body from Rye or Winchelsea — one of the six — or eight — who claimed the privilege of carrying the canopy over the King” — she is speaking of King Edward’s coronation of course— “how that he was discovered suddenly to be speaking quite audibly to the sacred presence so near to him: ‘It is very remarkable — we should be here, your majesty — very remarkable.’ And then he subsided — happily unheard — into hopeless embarrassment. That is exactly how I feel, Stephen. I feel I can’t stand it much longer, that presently I shall splutter and spoil the procession....

“Perhaps I don’t properly estimate our position in the fabric, but I can’t get away from the feeling that everything in social life leads up to this — to us, — the ridiculous canopy. If so, then the universe means — *nothing*; it’s blowing great forms and shapes as a swamp blows bubbles; a little while ago it was megatheriums and plesiosauriums — if that’s the name for them — and now it is country-houses and motor-cars and coronation festivals. And in the

end — it is all nonsense, Stephen. It is utter nonsense.

"If it isn't nonsense, tell me what it is. For me at any rate it's nonsense, and for every intelligent woman about me — for I talk to some of them, we indulge in seditious whisperings and wit — and there isn't one who seems to have been able to get to anything solider than I have done. Each of us has had her little fling at maternity — about as much as a washerwoman does in her odd time every two or three years — and that is our uttermost reality. All the rest, — trimmings! We go about the world, Stephen, dressing and meeting each other with immense ceremony, we have our seasonal movements in relation to the ritual of politics and sport, we travel south for the Budget and north for the grouse, we play games to amuse the men who keep us — not a woman would play a game for its own sake — we dabble with social reform and politics, for which few of us care a rap except as an occupation, we 'discover' artists or musicians or lecturers (as though we cared), we try to believe in lovers or, still harder, try to believe in old or new religions, and most of us — I don't — do our best to give the gratifications and exercise the fascinations that are expected of us....

"Something has to be done for women, Stephen. We are the heart of life, birth and begetting, the home where the future grows, and your schemes ignore us and slide about over the superficialities of things. We are spoiling the whole process of progress, we are turning all the achievements of mankind to nothingness. Men invent, create, do miracles with the world, and we translate it all into shopping, into a glitter of dresses and households, into an immense parade of pride and excitement. We excite men, we stir them to get us and keep us. Men turn from their ideas of brotherhood to elaborate our separate cages....

"I am Justin's wife; not a thing in my heavens or my earth that is not subordinated to that.

"Something has to be done for women, Stephen, something — urgently — and nothing is done until that is done, some release from their intolerable subjection to sex, so that for us everything else in life, respect, freedom, social standing, is entirely secondary to that. But what has to be done? We women do not know. Our efforts to know are among the most desolating of spectacles. I read the papers

of those suffrage women; the effect is more like agitated geese upon a common than anything human has a right to be.... That's why I turn to you. Years ago I felt, and now I know, there is about you a simplicity of mind, a foolishness of faith, that is stronger and greater than the cleverness of any woman alive. You are one of those strange men who take high and sweeping views — as larks soar. It isn't that you yourself are high and sweeping.... No, but still I turn to you. In the old days I used to turn to you and shake your mind and make you think about things you seemed too sluggish to think about without my clamor. Once do you remember at Martens I shook you by the ears.... And when I made you think, you thought, as I could never do. Think now — about women.

"Stephen, there are moments when it seems to me that this futility of women, this futility of men's effort *through* women, is a fated futility in the very nature of things. We may be saddled with it as we are with all the animal infirmities we have, with appendixes and suchlike things inside of us, and the passions and rages of apes and a tail — I believe we have a tail curled away somewhere, haven't we? Perhaps mankind is so constituted that badly as they get along now they couldn't get along at all if they let women go free and have their own way with life. Perhaps you can't have *two* sexes loose together. You must shut up one. I've a horrible suspicion that all these anti-suffrage men like Lord Cromer and Sir Ray Lankester must know a lot about life that I do not know. And that other man Sir Something-or-other Wright, who said plainly that men cannot work side by side with women because they get excited.... And yet, you know, women have had glimpses of a freedom that was not mischievous. I could have been happy as a Lady Abbess — I must have space and dignity, Stephen — and those women had things in their hands as no women have things in their hands to-day. They came to the House of Lords. But they lost all that. Was there some sort of natural selection?...

"Stephen, you were made to answer my mind, and if you cannot do it nobody can. What is your outlook for women? Are we to go back to seclusion or will it be possible to minimize sex? If you are going to minimize sex how are you going to do it? Suppression? There is plenty of suppression now. Increase or diminish the pains and penalties? My nephew, Philip's boy, Philip Christian, was

explaining to me the other day that if you boil water in an open bowl it just boils away, and that if you boil it in a corked bottle it bangs everything to pieces, and you have, he says, 'to look out.' But I feel that's a bad image. Boiling-water isn't frantically jealous, and men and women are. But still suppose, suppose you trained people not to make such an awful fuss about things. *Now* you train them to make as much fuss as possible....

"Oh bother it all, Stephen! Where's your mind in these matters? Why haven't you tackled these things? Why do you leave it to *me* to dig these questions into you — like opening a reluctant oyster? Aren't they patent? You up and answer them, Stephen — or this correspondence will become abusive...."

§ 5

It was true that I did ignore or minimize sexual questions as much as I could. I was forced now to think why I did this. That carried me back to those old days of passion, memories I had never stirred for many years. And I wrote to Mary that there was indeed no reason but a reasonable fear, that in fact I had dismissed them because they had been beyond my patience and self-control, because I could not think very much about them without an egotistical reversion to the bitterness of my own case. And in avoiding them I was only doing what the great bulk of men in business and men in affairs find themselves obliged to do. They train themselves not to think of the rights and wrongs of sexual life, not to tolerate liberties even in their private imaginations. They know it is like carrying a torch into a powder magazine. They feel they cannot trust their own minds beyond the experience, tested usages, and conventions of the ages, because they know how many of those who have ventured further have been blinded by mists and clouds of rhetoric, lost in inexplicable puzzles and wrecked disastrously. There in those half explored and altogether unsettled hinterlands, lurk desires that sting like adders and hatreds cruel as hell....

And then I went on — I do not clearly remember now the exact line of argument I adopted — to urge upon her that our insoluble puzzles were not necessarily insoluble puzzles for the world at large,

that no one soldier fights anything but a partial battle, and that it wasn't an absolute condemnation of me to declare that I went on living and working for social construction with the cardinal riddles of social order, so far as they affected her, unsolved. Wasn't I at any rate preparing apparatus for that huge effort at solution that mankind must ultimately make? Wasn't this dredging out and deepening of the channels of thought about the best that we could hope to do at the present time, seeing that to launch a keel of speculation prematurely was only to strand oneself among hopeless reefs and confusions? Better prepare for a voyage to-morrow than sail to destruction to-day.

Whatever I put in that forgotten part of my letter was put less strikingly than my first admissions, and anyhow it was upon these that Mary pounced to the disregard of any other point. "There you are," she wrote, with something like elation, "there is a tiger in the garden and you won't talk or think about it for fear of growing excited. That is my grievance against so much historical and political and social discussion; its hopeless futility because of its hopeless omissions. You plan the world's future, taking the women and children for granted, with Egotistical Sex, as you call it, a prowling monster upsetting everything you do...."

But I will not give you that particular letter in its order, nor its successors. Altogether she wrote me twenty-two letters, and I one or two more than that number to her, and — a thing almost inevitable in a discussion by correspondence — there is a lot of overlapping and recapitulation. Those letters spread over a space of nearly two and a half years. Again and again she insists upon the monstrous exaggeration of the importance of sex in human life and of the need of some reduction of its importance, and she makes the boldest experimental suggestions for the achievement of that end. But she comes slowly to recognize that there is a justification for an indirect attack, that sex and the position of women do not constitute the primary problem in that bristling system of riddles that lies like a hostile army across the path of mankind. And she realized too that through art, through science and literature and the whole enquiring and creative side of man's nature, lies the path by which those positions are to be outflanked, and those eternal-looking impossibles and inconceivables overcome. Here is a fragment — saturated with

the essence of her thought. Three-quarters of her earlier letters are variations on this theme....

"What you call 'social order,' Stephen, all the arrangements seem to me to be *built* on subjection to sex even more than they are built (as you say) on labor subjection. And this is an age of release, you say it is an age of release for the workers and they know it. And so do the women. Just as much. 'Wild hopes' indeed! The workers' hopes are nothing to the women's! It is not only the workers who are saying let us go free, manage things differently so that we may have our lives relieved from this intolerable burthen of constant toil, but the women also are saying let us go free. They are demanding release just as much from their intolerable endless specialization as females. The tramp on the roads who won't work, the swindler and the exploiter who contrive not to work, the strikers who throw down their tools, no longer for twopences and sixpences as you say but because their way of living is no longer tolerable to them, and we women, who don't bear children or work or help; we are all in one movement together. We are part of the General Strike. I have been a striker all my life. We are doing nothing — by the hundred thousand. Your old social machine is working without us and in spite of us, it carries us along with it and we are sand in the bearings. I'm not a wheel, Stephen, I'm grit. What you say about the reactionaries and suppressionists who would stifle the complaints of labor and crush out its struggles to be free, is exactly true about the reactionaries and suppressionists who would stifle the discussion of the woman's position and crush out her hopes of emancipation...."

And here is a page of the peculiar doubt that was as characteristic of her as the quick changes of her eyes. It gives just that pessimistic touch that tempered her valiant adventurousness, that gave a color at last to the tragedy of her death....

"Have you ever thought, Stephen, that perhaps these (repressionist) people are righter than you are — that if the worker gets free he *won't* work and that if the woman gets free she won't furl her sex and stop disturbing things? Suppose she *is* wicked as a sex, suppose she *will* trade on her power of exciting imaginative men. A lot of these new women run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, beguile some poor innocent of a man to ruin them and then

call in fathers, brother, husbands, friends, chivalry, all the rest of it, and make the best of both sides of a sex. Suppose we go on behaving like that. After we've got all our emancipations. Suppose that the liberation of common people simply means loafing, no discipline, nothing being done, an end to labor and the beginning of nothing to replace it, and that the liberation of women simply means the elaboration of mischief. Suppose that it is so. Suppose you are just tumbling the contents of the grate into the middle of the room. Then all this emancipation *is* a decay, even as conservative-minded people say, — it's none the less a decay because we want it, — and the only thing to stop it is to stop it, and to have more discipline and more suppression and say to women and the common people: 'Back to the Sterner Virtues; Back to Servitude!' I wish I hadn't these reactionary streaks in my thoughts, but I have and there you are...."

And then towards the second year her letters began to break away from her preoccupation with her position as a woman and to take up new aspects of life, more general aspects of life altogether. It had an effect not of her having exhausted the subject but as if, despairing of a direct solution, she turned deliberately to the relief of other considerations. She ceased to question her own life, and taking that for granted, wrote more largely of less tangible things. She remembered that she had said that life, if it was no more than its present appearances, was "utter nonsense." She went back to that. "One says things like that," she wrote "and not for a moment does one believe it. I grumble at my life, I seem to be always weakly and fruitlessly fighting my life, and I love it. I would not be willingly dead — for anything. I'd rather be an old match-woman selling matches on a freezing night in the streets than be dead. Nothing nonsensical ever held me so tightly or kept me so interested. I suppose really I am full of that very same formless faith on which you rely. But with me it's not only shapeless but intangible.... I nibble at religion. I am immensely attracted. I stand in the doorway. Only when they come out to persuade me to come in I am like a shy child and I go away. The temples beguile me and the music, but not the men. I feel I want to join *it* and they say 'join *us*.' They are — like vergers. Such small things! Such dreadful little *arguing* men! They don't let you come in, they want you to say they are right. All

the really religious people seem to be outside nowadays and all the pretending, cheating, atheistical, vain and limited people within....

"But the beautiful things religion gives! The beauty! Do you know Saint Paul's, Stephen? Latterly I have been there time after time. It is the most beautiful interior in all the world, so great, so sombrely dignified, so perfectly balanced — and filled with such wonderful music, brimming with music just as crystal water brims in a bowl of crystal. The other day I went there, up into a little gallery high up under the dome, to hear Bach's Passion Music, the St. Matthew Passion. One hangs high and far above the little multitudes below, the white-robed singers, the white-robed musicians, ranks and ranks, the great organ, the rows and rows and rows of congregation, receding this way, that way, into the haze of the aisle and the transepts, and out of it all streams the sound and the singing, it pours up past you like a river, a river that rushes upward to some great sea, some unknown sea. The whole place is music and singing.... I hang on to the railings, Stephen, and weep — I have to weep — and I wonder and wonder....

"One prays then as naturally as one drinks when one is thirsty and cold water comes to hand. I don't know whom I pray to, but I pray; — of course I pray. Latterly, Stephen, I have been reading devotional works and trying to catch that music again. I never do — definitely. Never. But at times I put down the book and it seems to me that surely a moment ago I heard it, that if I sit very still in a moment I shall hear it again. And I can feel it is there, I know it is there, like a bat's cry, pitched too high for my ears. I know it is there, just as I should still know there was poetry somewhere if some poor toothless idiot with no roof to his mouth and no knowledge of any but the commonest words tried to read Shelley to me....

"I wish I could pray with you, Stephen; I wish I could kneel down somewhere with you of all people and pray."

§ 6

Presently our correspondence fell away. The gaps between our letters lengthened out. We never wrote regularly because for that there must be a free exchange upon daily happenings, and neither of us cared to

dwell too closely on our immediate lives. We had a regard for one another that left our backgrounds vague and shadowy. She had made her appeal across the sundering silences to me and I had answered, and we had poured out certain things from our minds. We could not go on discussing. I was a very busy man now, and she did not write except on my replies.

For a gap of nearly four months neither of us had anything to say in a letter at all. I think that in time our correspondence might have altogether died away. Then she wrote again in a more familiar strain to tell me of certain definite changes of relationship and outlook. She said that the estrangement between herself and Justin had increased during the past year; that they were going to live practically apart; she for the most part in the Surrey house where her two children lived with their governesses and maids. But also she meant to snatch weeks and seasons for travel. Upon that they had been disputing for some time. "I know it is well with the children," she wrote; "why should I be in perpetual attendance? I do nothing for them except an occasional kiss, or half-an-hour's romping. Why should one pretend? Justin and I have wrangled over this question of going away, for weeks, but at last feminine persistence has won. I am going to travel in my own fashion and see the world. With periodic appearances at his side in London and Scotland. We have agreed at least on one thing, and that is upon a companion; she is to be my secretary in title, my moral guarantor in fact, and her name which is her crowning glory is Stella Summersley Satchel. She is blonde, erect, huffy-mannered and thoroughly up to both sides of her work. I partly envy her independence and rectitude — partly only. It's odd and quite inconsistent of me that I don't envy her altogether. In theory I insist that a woman should not have charm, — it is our undoing. But when I meet one without it —— !

"I shall also trail a maid, but I guess that young woman will learn what it is to be left behind in half the cities of Europe before I have done with her. I always lose my maids. They are so much more passive and forgettable than luggage — abroad that is. And Justin usually in the old days used to remember about them. And his valet used to see after them, — a most attentive man. Justin cannot, he says, have his wife abroad with merely a companion; people would

talk; maid it must be as well. And so in a week or less I shall start, unusually tailor-made, for South Germany and all that jolly country, companioned and maided. I shall tramp — on the feet God has given me — in stout boots. Miss Summersley Satchel marches, I understand, like the British infantry but on a vegetarian 'basis,' — fancy calling your nourishment a 'basis'! — the maid and so forth by *Èilgut*...."

§ 7

After the letter containing that announcement she wrote to me twice again, once from Oban and then after a long interval from Siena. The former was a scornfully minute description of the English at their holidays and how the conversation went among the women after dinner. "They are like a row of Japanese lanterns, all blown out long ago and swinging about in a wind," she wrote — an extravagant image that yet conveys something of the large, empty, unilluminating effect of a sort of social intercourse very vividly. In the second letter she was concerned chiefly with the natural beauty of Italy and how latterly she had thrice wept at beautiful things, and what this mystery of beauty could be that had such power over her emotions.

"All up the hillside before the window as I write the herbage is thick with anemones. They aren't scattered evenly and anyhow amongst the other things but in little clusters and groups that die away and begin again, like the repetitions of an air in some musical composition. I have been sitting and looking at them for the better part of an hour, loving them more and then more, and the sweet sunlight that is on them and in among them.... How marvellous are these things, Stephen! All these little exquisite things that are so abundant in the world, the gleaming lights and blossoms, the drifting scents! At times these things bring me to weeping.... I can't help it. It is as if God who is so stern and high, so terrible to all our appeals, took pity for a moment and saw fit to speak very softly and tenderly...."

That was the last letter I was ever to have from her.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

The Last Meeting

§ 1

In the summer of 1911 immediately after the coronation of King George there came one of those storms of international suspicion that ever and again threaten Europe with war. It seems to have been brewed by some German adepts at Welt-Politik, those privileged makers of giant bombs who sit at the ears of foreign ministers suggesting idiotic wickedness, and it was brewed with a sublime ignorance of nearly every reality in the case. A German warship without a word of notice seized Agadir on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, within the regions reserved to French influence; an English demand for explanations was uncivilly disregarded and England and France and presently Germany began vigorous preparations for war. All over the world it was supposed that Germany had at last flung down the gauntlet. In England the war party was only too eager to grasp what it considered to be a magnificent opportunity. Heaven knows what the Germans had hoped or intended by their remarkable coup; the amazing thing to note is that they were not prepared to fight, they had not even the necessary money ready and they could not get it; they had perhaps never intended to fight, and the autumn saw the danger disperse again into diplomatic bickerings and insincerely pacific professions. But in the high summer the danger had not dispersed, and in common with every reasonable man I found myself under the shadow of an impending catastrophe that would have been none the less gigantic and tragic because it was an imbecility. It was an occasion when everyone needs must act, however trivially disproportionate his action may be to the danger. I cabled Gidding who was in America to get together whatever influences were available there upon the side of pacific intervention, and I set such British organs as I could control or approach in the same direction. It seemed probable that Italy would be drawn into any conflict that might ensue; it happened that there was to be a

Conference of Peace Societies in Milan early in September, and thither I decided to go in the not very certain hope that out of that assemblage some form of European protest might be evolved.

That August I was very much run down. I had been staying in London through almost intolerably hot weather to attend a Races Congress that had greatly disappointed me. I don't know particularly now why I had been disappointed nor how far the feeling was due to my being generally run down by the pressure of detailed work and the stress of thinking about large subjects in little scraps of time. But I know that a kind of despair came over me as I sat and looked at that multicolored assembly and heard in succession the heavy platitudes of white men, the slick, thin cleverness of Hindoos, the rich-toned florid rhetoric of negroes. I lost sight of any germ of splendid possibility in all those people, and saw all too plainly the vanity, the jealousy, the self-interests that show up so harshly against the professions of every altruistic movement. It seemed all such a windy business against the firm prejudices, the vast accumulated interests that grind race against race. We had no common purpose at all at that conference, no proposal to hold us together. So much of it was like bleating on a hillside....

I wanted a holiday badly, and then came this war crisis and I felt unable to go away for any length of time. Even bleating it seemed to me was better than acquiescence in a crime against humanity. So to get heart to bleat at Milan I snatched at ten days in the Swiss mountains en route. A tour with some taciturn guide involving a few middling climbs and glacier excursions seemed the best way of recuperating. I had never had any time for Switzerland since my first exile there years ago. I took the advice of a man in the club whose name I now forget — if ever I knew it, a dark man with a scar — and went up to the Schwarzegg Hut above Grindelwald, and over the Strahlegg to the Grimsel. I had never been up into the central mass of the Bernese Oberland before, and I was amazed and extraordinarily delighted by the vast lonely beauty of those interminable uplands of ice. I wished I could have lingered up there. But that is the tragedy of those sunlit desolations; one may not stay; one sees and exclaims and then looks at a watch. I wonder no one has ever taken an arctic equipment up into that wilderness, and had a good healing spell of

lonely exaltation. I found the descent from the Strahlegg as much of a climb as I was disposed to undertake; for an hour we were coming down frozen snow that wasn't so much a slope as a slightly inclined precipice....

From the Grimsel I went over the Rhone glacier to the inn on the Furka Pass, and then, paying off my guide and becoming frankly a pedestrian, I made my way round by the Schöllenen gorge to Goeschenen, and over the Susten Joch to the Susten Pass and Stein, meaning to descend to Meiringen.

But I still had four days before I went on to Italy, and so I decided to take one more mountain. I slept at the Stein inn, and started in the morning to do that agreeable first mountain of all, the Titlis, whose shining genial head attracted me. I did not think a guide necessary, but a boy took me up by a track near Gadmen, and left me to my Siegfried map some way up the great ridge of rocks that overlooks the Engstlen Alp. I a little overestimated my mountaineering, and it came about that I was benighted while I was still high above the Joch Pass on my descent. Some of this was steep and needed caution. I had to come down slowly with my folding lantern, in which a reluctant candle went out at regular intervals, and I did not reach the little inn at Engstlen Alp until long after eleven at night. By that time I was very tired and hungry.

They told me I was lucky to get a room, only one stood vacant; I should certainly not have enjoyed sleeping on a billiard table after my day's work, and I ate a hearty supper, smoked for a time, meditated emptily, and went wearily to bed.

But I could not sleep. Usually, I am a good sleeper, but ever and again when I have been working too closely or over-exerting myself I have spells of wakefulness, and that night after perhaps an hour's heavy slumber I became thinly alert and very weary in body and spirit, and I do not think I slept again. The pain in my leg that the panther had torn had been revived by the day's exertion. For the greater part of my life insomnia has not been disagreeable to me. In the night, in the stillness, one has a kind of detachment from reality, one floats there without light, without weight, feeling very little of one's body. One has a certain disembodiment and one can achieve a

magnanimity of thought, forgiveness and self-forgetfulness that are impossible while the body clamors upon one's senses. But that night, because, I suppose, I was so profoundly fatigued, I was melancholy and despondent. I could feel again the weight of the great beast upon me as he clawed me down and I clung — desperately, in that interminable instant before he lost his hold....

Yes, I was extraordinarily wretched that night. I was filled with self-contempt and self-disgust. I felt that I was utterly weak and vain, and all the pretensions and effort of my life mere florid, fruitless pretensions and nothing more. I had lost all control over my mind. Things that had seemed secondary before became primary, difficult things became impossible things. I had been greatly impeded and irritated in London by the manœuvres of a number of people who were anxious to make capital out of the crisis, self-advertising people who wanted at any cost to be lifted into a position of unique protest.... You see, that unfortunate Nobel prize has turned the advocacy of peace into a highly speculative profession; the qualification for the winner is so vaguely defined that a vast multitude of voluntary idealists has been created and a still greater number diverted from the unendowed pursuit of human welfare in other directions. Such a man as myself who is known to command a considerable publicity is necessarily a prey to those moral *entrepreneurs*. All sorts of ridiculous and petty incidents had forced this side of public effort upon me, but hitherto I had been able to say, with a laugh or sigh as the case warranted, "So much is dear old humanity and all of us"; and to remember the great residuum of nobility that remained. Now that last saving consideration refused to be credible. I lay with my body and my mind in pain thinking these people over, thinking myself over too with the rest of my associates, thinking drearily and weakly, recalling spites, dishonesties and vanities, feuds and absurdities, until I was near persuaded that all my dreams of wider human understandings, of great ends beyond the immediate aims and passions of common everyday lives, could be at best no more than the refuge of shy and weak and ineffective people from the failure of their personal lives....

We idealists are not jolly people, not honest simple people; the strain tells upon us; even to ourselves we are unappetizing. Aren't

the burly, bellowing fellows after all righter, with their simple natural hostility to everything foreign, their valiant hatred of everything unlike themselves, their contempt for aspiring weakness, their beer and lush sentiment, their here-to-day-and-gone-tomorrow conviviality and fellowship? Good fellows! While we others, lost in filmy speculations, in moon-and-star snaring and the chase of dreams, stumble where even they walk upright....

You know I have never quite believed in myself, never quite believed in my work or my religion. So it has always been with me and always, I suppose, will be. I know I am purblind, I know I do not see my way clearly nor very far; I have to do with things imperfectly apprehended. I cannot cheat my mind away from these convictions. I have a sort of hesitation of the soul as other men have a limp in their gait. God, I suppose, has a need for lame men. God, I suppose, has a need for blind men and fearful and doubting men, and does not intend life to be altogether swallowed up in staring sight. Some things are to be reached best by a hearing that is not distracted by any clearer senses. But so it is with me, and this is the innermost secret I have to tell you.

I go valiantly for the most part I know, but despair is always near to me. In the common hours of my life it is as near as a shark may be near a sleeper in a ship; the thin effectual plank of my deliberate faith keeps me secure, but in these rare distresses of the darkness the plank seems to become transparent, to be on the verge of dissolution, a sense of life as of an abyssmal flood, full of cruelty, densely futile, blackly aimless, penetrates my defences....

I don't think I can call these stumblings from conviction unbelief; the limping man walks for all his limping, and I go on in spite of my falls. "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him...."

I fell into an inconsecutive review of my life under this light that touched every endeavor with the pale tints of failure. And as that flow of melancholy reflection went on, it was shot more and more frequently with thoughts of Mary. It was not a discursive thinking about Mary but a definite fixed direction of thought towards her. I had not so thought of her for many years. I wanted her, I felt, to come to me and help me out of this distressful pit into which my spirit had fallen. I believed she could. I perceived our separation as

an irreparable loss. She had a harder, clearer quality than I, a more assured courage, a readier, surer movement of the mind. Always she had "lift" for me. And then I had a curious impression that I had heard her voice calling my name, as one might call out in one's sleep. I dismissed it as an illusion, and then I heard it again. So clearly that I sat up and listened — breathless....

Mixed up with all this was the intolerable uproar and talking of a little cascade not fifty yards from the hotel. It is curious how distressing that clamor of running water, which is so characteristic of the Alpine night, can become. At last those sounds can take the likeness of any voice whatever. The water, I decided, had called to me, and now it mocked and laughed at me....

The next morning I descended at some late hour by Swiss reckoning, and discovered two ladies in the morning sunlight awaiting breakfast at a little green table. One rose slowly at the sight of me, and stood and surveyed me with a glad amazement.

§ 2

There she stood real and solid, a little unfamiliar in her tweeds and with her shining eyes intimate and unforgettable, as though I had never ceased to see them for all those intervening years. And bracing us both and holding back our emotion was, quite unmistakably, Miss Summersley Satchel, a blonde business-like young woman with a stumpy nose very cruelly corrugated and inflamed by a pince-nez that savagely did much more than its duty by its name. She remained seated, tilting her chair a little, pushing herself back from the table and regarding me — intelligently.

It was one of those moments in life when one is taken unawares. I think our common realization of the need of masking the reality of our encounter, the hasty search in our minds for some plausible face upon this meeting, must have been very obvious to the lady who observed us. Mary's first thought was for a pseudonym. Mine was to make it plain we met by accident.

"It's Mr. — Stephen!" said Mary.

"It's you!"

"Dropped out of the sky!"

“From over there. I was benighted and go there late.”

“Very late?”

“One gleam of light — and a yawning waiter. Or I should have had to break windows.... And then I meet you!”

Then for a moment or so we were silent, with our sense of the immense gravity of this position growing upon us. A little tow-headed waiter-boy appeared with their coffee and rolls on a tray poised high on his hand.

“You’ll have your coffee out here with us?” said Mary.

“Where else?” said I, as though there was no conceivable alternative, and told the tow-headed waiter.

Belatedly Mary turned to introduce me to her secretary: “My friend Miss Summersley Satchel. Mr. — Stephen.” Miss Satchel and I bowed to each other and agreed that the lake was very beautiful in the morning light. “Mr. Stephen,” said Mary, in entirely unnecessary explanation, “is an old friend of my mother’s. And I haven’t seen him for years. How is Mrs. Stephen — and the children?”

I answered briefly and began to tell of my climb down the Titlis. I addressed myself with unnecessary explicitness to Miss Satchel. I did perhaps over-accentuate the extreme fortuitousness of my appearance.... From where I stood, the whole course of the previous day after I had come over the shoulder was visible. It seemed a soft little shining pathway to the top, but the dangers of the descent had a romantic intensification in the morning light. “The rule of the game,” said I, “is that one stops and waits for daylight. I wonder if anyone keeps that rule.”

We talked for a time of mountains, I still standing a little aloof until my coffee came. Miss Summersley Satchel produced that frequent and most unpleasant bye-product of a British education, an intelligent interest in etymology. “I wonder,” she said, with a brow of ruffled omniscience and eyeing me rather severely with a magnified eye, “why it is *called* Titlis. There must be *some* reason....”

Presently Miss Satchel was dismissed indoors on a transparent excuse and Mary and I were alone together. We eyed one another gravely. Perhaps all the more gravely because of the wild excitement that was quickening our pulse and breathing, and thrilling through our nerves. She pushed back the plate before her and put her dear

elbows on the table and dropped her chin between her hands in an attitude that seemed all made of little memories.

"I suppose," she said, "something of this kind was bound to happen."

She turned her eyes to the mountains shining in the morning light. "I'm glad it has happened in a beautiful place. It might have been — anywhere."

"Last night," I said, "I was thinking of you and wanting to hear your voice again. I thought I did."

"I too. I wonder — if we had some dim perception...."

She scanned my face. "Stephen, you're not much changed. You're looking well.... But your eyes — they're dog-tired eyes. Have you been working too hard?"

"A conference — what did you call them once? — a Carnegieish conference in London. Hot weather and fussing work and endless hours of weak grey dusty speeches, and perhaps that clamber over there yesterday was too much. It *was* too much. In India I damaged a leg.... I had meant to rest here for a day."

"Well, — rest here."

"With you!"

"Why not? Now you are here."

"But —— After all, we've promised."

"It's none of our planning, Stephen."

"It seems to me I ought to go right on — so soon as breakfast is over."

She weighed that with just the same still pause, the same quiet moment of lips and eyes that I recalled so well. It was as things had always been between us that she should make her decision first and bring me to it.

"It isn't natural," she decided, "with the sun rising and the day still freshly beginning that you should go or that I should go. I've wanted to meet you like this and talk about things, — ten thousand times. And as for me Stephen I *won't* go. And I won't let you go if I can help it. Not this morning, anyhow. No. Go later in the day if you will, and let us two take this one talk that God Himself has given us. We've not planned it. It's His doing, not ours."

I sat, yielding. “I am not so sure of God’s participation,” I said. “But I know I am very tired, and glad to be with you. I can’t tell you how glad. So glad —— I think I should weep if I tried to say it....”

“Three, four, five hours perhaps — even if people know. Is it so much worse than thirty minutes? We’ve broken the rules already; we’ve been flung together; it’s not our doing, Stephen. A little while longer — adds so little to the offence and means to us — —”

“Yes,” I said, “but — if Justin knows?”

“He won’t.”

“Your companion?”

There was the briefest moment of reflection. “She’s discretion itself,” she said.

“Still — —”

“If he’s going to know the harm is done. We may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. And he won’t know. No one will know.”

“The people here.”

“Nobody’s here. Not a soul who matters. I doubt if they know my name.... No one ever talks to me.”

I sat in the bright sunshine, profoundly enervated and quite convinced, but still maintaining out of mere indolence a show of hesitation....

“You take the good things God sends you, Stephen — as I do. You stay and talk with me now, before the curtain falls again. We’ve tired of letters. You stay and talk to me.

“Here we are, Stephen, and it’s the one chance that is ever likely to come to us in all our lives. We’ll keep the point of honor; and you shall go to-day. But don’t let’s drive the point of honor into the quick. Go easy Stephen, old friend.... My dear, my dear! What has happened to you? Have you forgotten? Of course! Is it possible for you to go, mute, with so much that we can say.... And these mountains and this sunlight!...”

I looked up to see her with her elbows on the table and her hands clasped under her chin; that face close to mine, her dear blue eyes watching me and her lips a little apart.

No other human being has ever had that effect upon me, so that I seem to feel the life and stir in that other body more than I feel my own.

§ 3

From the moment when I confessed my decision to stay we gave no further thought to the rightfulness or wisdom of spending the next few hours together. We thought only of those hours. Things lent themselves to us. We stood up and walked out in front of the hotel and there moored to a stake at the edge of the water was a little leaky punt, the one vessel on the Engstlen See. We would take food with us as we decided and row out there to where the vast cliffs came sheer from the water, out of earshot or interference and talk for all the time we had. And I remember now how Mary stood and called to Miss Satchel's window to tell her of this intention, and how I discovered again that exquisite slender grace I knew so well.

You know the very rowing out from the shore had in it something sweet and incredible. It was as if we were but dreaming together and might at any moment awaken again, countless miles and a thousand things apart. I rowed slowly with those clumsy Swiss oars that one must thrust forward, breaking the smooth crystal of the lake, and she sat sideways looking forward, saying very little and with much the same sense I think of enchantment and unreality. And I saw now for the first time as I watched her over my oars that her face was changed; she was graver and, I thought, stronger than the Mary I had known.

Even now I can still doubt if that boat and lake were real. And yet I remember even minute and irrelevant details of the day's impressions with an extraordinary and exquisite vividness. Perhaps it is that very luminous distinctness which distinguishes these events from the common experiences of life and puts them so above the quality of things that are ordinarily real.

We rowed slowly past a great headland and into the bay at the upper end of the water. We had not realized at first that we could row beyond the range of the hotel windows. The rock that comes out of the lake is a clear dead white when it is dry, and very faintly tinted, but when it is wetted it lights warmly with flashes and blotches of color, and is seen to be full of the most exquisite and delicate veins. It splinters vertically and goes up in cliffs, very high and sculptured, with a quality almost of porcelain, that at a certain level suddenly

become more rude and massive and begin to overhang. Under the cliffs the water is very deep and blue-green, and runs here and there into narrow clefts. This place where we landed was a kind of beach left by the recession of the ice, all the rocks immediately about us were ice-worn, and the place was paved with ice-worn boulders. Two huge bluffs put their foreheads together above us and hid the glacier from us, but one could feel the near presence of ice in the air. Out between them boiled a little torrent, and spread into a hundred intercommunicating channels amidst the great pebbles. And those pebbles were covered by a network of marvellously gnarled and twisted stems bearing little leaves and blossoms, a network at once very ancient and very fresh, giving a peculiar gentleness and richness to the Alpine severity that had dwarfed and tangled them. It was astounding that any plant could find nourishment among those stones. The great headland, with patches of yellowish old snow still lingering here and there upon its upper masses, had crept insensibly between us and the remote hotel and now hid it altogether. There was nothing to remind us of the world that had separated us, except that old and leaky boat we had drawn up upon the stones at the limpid water's edge.

"It is as if we had come out of life together," she whispered, giving a voice to my thought.

She sat down upon a boulder and I sat on a lower slab a yard or so away, and we looked at one another. "It's still unreal," she said.

I felt awkward and at a loss as I sat there before her, as a man unused to drawing-rooms might feel in the presence of a strange hostess.

"You are so *you*," I said; "so altogether my nearest thing — and so strange too, so far off, that I feel — shy....

"I'm shy," I repeated. "I feel that if I speak loudly all this will vanish...."

I looked about me. "But surely this is the most beautiful place in the whole world! Is it indeed in the world?"

"Stephen, my dear," she began presently, "what a strange thing life is! Strange! The disproportions! The things that will not fit together. The little things that eat us up, and the beautiful things that

might save us and don't save us, don't seem indeed to have any meaning in regard to ordinary sensible affairs.... This *beauty*....

"Do you remember, Stephen, how long ago in the old park you and I talked about immortality and you said then you did not want to know anything of what comes after life. Even now do you want to know? You are too busy and I am not busy enough. I want to be sure, not only to know, but to know that it is so, that this life — no, not *this* life, but that life, is only the bleak twilight of the morning. I think death — just dead death — after the life I have had is the most impossible of ends.... You don't want — particularly? I want to passionately. I *want* to live again — out of this body, Stephen, and all that it carves with it, to be free — as beautiful things are free. To be free as this is free — an exquisite clean freedom....

"I can't believe that the life of this earth is all that there is for us — or why should we ever think it strange? Why should we still find the ordinary matter-of-fact things of everyday strange? We do — because they aren't — *us*.... Eating. Stuffing into ourselves thin slices of what were queer little hot and eager beasts.... The perpetual need to do such things. And all the mad fury of sex, Stephen!... We don't live, we suffocate in our living bodies. They storm and rage and snatch; it isn't *us*, Stephen, really. It can't be us. It's all so excessive — if it is anything more than the first furious rush into existence of beings that will go on — go on at last to quite beautiful real things. Like this perhaps. To-day the world is beautiful indeed with the sun shining and love shining and you, my dear, so near to me.... It's so incredible that you and I must part to-day. It's as if — someone told me the sun was a little mad. It's so perfectly natural to be with you again...."

Her voice sank. She leant a little forward towards me. "Stephen, suppose that you and I were dead to-day. Suppose that when you imagined you were climbing yesterday, you died. Suppose that yesterday you died and that you just thought you were still climbing as you made your way to me. Perhaps you are dead up there on the mountain and I am lying dead in my room in this hotel, and this is the Great Beginning....

"Stephen, I am talking nonsense because I am so happy to be with you here...."

§ 4

For a time we said very little. Then irregularly, disconnectedly, we began to tell each other things about ourselves.

The substance of our lives seemed strangely objective that day; we had as it were come to one another clean out of our common conditions. She told me of her troubles and her secret weaknesses; we bared our spirits and confessed. Both of us had the same tale of mean and angry and hasty impulses, both of us could find kindred inconsistencies, both had an exalted assurance that the other would understand completely and forgive and love. She talked for the most part, she talked much more than I, with a sort of wonder at the things that had happened to her, and for long spaces we did not talk at all nor feel the need of talking, and what seems very strange to me now, seeing that we had been impassioned lovers, we never kissed; we never kissed at all; I do not even remember that I thought of kissing her. We had a shyness between us that kept us a little apart, and I cannot remember that we ever touched one another except that for a time she took me and led me by the hand towards a little place of starry flowers that had drawn her eyes and which she wished me to see. Already for us two our bodies were dead and gone. We were shy, shy of any contact, we were a little afraid of one another, there was a kind of awe between us that we had met again.

And in that strange and beautiful place her fancy that we were dead together had a fitness that I cannot possibly convey to you. I cannot give you by any writing the light and the sweet freshness of that high desolation. You would need to go there. What was lovely in our talk, being said in that setting, would seem but a rambling discourse were I to write it down, — as I believe that even now I could write it down — word for word almost, every thought of it, so fresh does it remain with me....

My dear, some moments are eternal. It seems to me that as I write to tell you of this I am telling you not of something that happened two years ago but of a thing immortal. It is as if I and Mary were together there holding the realities of our lives before us as though they were little sorry tales written in books upon our knees....

§ 5

It was still in the early afternoon that we came down again across the meandering ice-water streams to our old boat, and pushed off and rowed slowly out of that magic corner back to every-day again....

Little we knew to what it was we rowed.

As we glided across the water and rounded the headland and came slowly into view of the hotel again, Mary was reminded of our parting and for a little while she was disposed to make me remain. "If you could stay a little longer," she said,— "Another day? If any harm is done, it's done."

"It has been beautiful," I said, "this meeting. It's just as if — when I was so jaded and discouraged that I could have put my work aside and despaired altogether, — some power had said, 'Have you forgotten the friendship I gave you?' ... But we shall have had our time. We've met, — we've seen one another, we've heard one another. We've hurt no one...."

"You will go?"

"To-day. Before sunset. Isn't it right that I should go?"

"Stay," she whispered, with a light in her eyes.

"No. I dare not."

She did not speak for a long time.

"Of course," she said at last, "you're right. You only said — I would have said it for you if you had not. You're so right, Stephen.... I suppose, poor silly little things, that if you stayed we should certainly begin making love to each other. It would be — necessary. We should fence about a little and then there it would be. No barrier — to stop us. And neither of us wants it to happen. It isn't what we want. You would become urgent, I suppose, and I should be — coquettish. In spite of ourselves that power would make us puppets. As if already we hadn't made love.... I could find it in my heart now.... Stephen I could *make* you stay....

"Oh! Why are we so tormented, Stephen? In the next world we shall meet, and this will trouble us no longer. The love will be there — oh, the love will be there, like something that has at last got itself fully born, got itself free from some queer clinging seed-case....

“We shall be rid of jealousy, Stephen, that inflammation of the mind, that bitterness, that pitiless sore, so that I shan’t be tormented by the thought of Rachel and she will be able to tolerate me. She was so sweet and wonderful a girl — with those dark eyes. And I’ve never done her justice — never. Nor she me. I snatched you from her. I snatched you....

“Someday we shall be different.... All this putting oneself round another person like a fence, against everyone else, almost against everything else; it’s so wicked, so fierce.

“It’s so possible to be different. Sometimes now, sometimes for long parts of a day I have no base passions at all — even in this life. To be like that always! But I can’t see clearly how these things can be; one dreams of them in a kind of luminous mist, and if one looks directly at them, they vanish again....”

§ 6

And at last we came to the landing, and moored the little boat and walked up the winding path to the hotel. The dull pain of separation was already upon us.

I think we had forgotten Miss Summersley Satchel altogether. But she appeared as we sat down to tea at that same table at which we had breakfasted, and joined us as a matter of course. Conceivably she found the two animated friends of the morning had become rather taciturn. Indeed there came a lapse of silence so portentous that I roused myself to effort and told her, all over again, as I realized afterwards, the difficulties that had benighted me upon Titlis. Then Miss Satchel regaled Mary with some particulars of the various comings and goings of the hotel. I became anxious to end this tension and went into the inn to pay my bill and get my knapsack. When I came out Mary stood up.

“I’ll come just a little way with you, Stephen,” she said, and I could have fancied the glasses of the companion flashed to hear the surname of the morning reappear a Christian name in the afternoon....

“Is that woman behind us safe?” I asked, breaking the silence as we went up the mountain-side.

Mary looked over her shoulder for a contemplative second.

"She's always been — discretion itself."

We thought no more of Miss Satchel.

"This parting," said Mary, "is the worst of the price we have to pay.... Now it comes to the end there seem a thousand things one hasn't said...."

And presently she came back to that. "We shan't remember this so much perhaps. It was there we met, over there in the sunlight — among those rocks. I suppose — perhaps — we managed to say something...."

As the ascent grew steeper it became clear that if I was to reach the Melch See Inn by nightfall, our moment for parting had come. And with a "Well," and a white-lipped smile and a glance at the Argus-eyed hotel, she held out her hand to me. "I shall live on this, brother Stephen," she said, "for years."

"I too," I answered....

It was wonderful to stand and face her there, and see her real and living with the warm sunlight on her, and her face one glowing tenderness. We clasped hands; all the warm life of our hands met and clung and parted.

I went on alone up the winding path, — it zigzags up the mountain-side in full sight of the hotel for the better part of an hour — climbing steadily higher and looking back and looking back until she was just a little strip of white — that halted and seemed to wave to me. I waved back and found myself weeping. "You fool!" I said to myself, "Go on"; and it was by an effort that I kept on my way instead of running back to her again. Presently the curvature of the slope came up between us and hid her altogether, hid the hotel, hid the lakes and the cliffs....

It seemed to me that I could not possibly see her any more. It was as if I knew that sun had set for ever.

§ 7

I lay at the Melch See Inn that night, and rose betimes and started

down that wild grey gorge in the early morning light. I walked to Sachseln, caught an early train to Lucerne and went on in the afternoon to Como. And there I stayed in the sunshine taking a boat and rowing alone far up the lake and lying in it, thinking of love and friendship and the accidents and significance of my life, and for the most part not thinking at all but feeling, feeling the glow of our meeting and the finality of our separation, as one feels the clear glow of a sunset when the wind rises and the cold night draws near. Everything was pervaded by the sense of her. Just over those mountains, I thought, is Mary. I was alone in my boat, but her presence filled the sky. It seemed to me that at any moment I could go to her. And the last vestige of any cloud between us for anything we had done or failed to do in these crises of distress and separation, had vanished and gone altogether.

In the afternoon I wrote to Rachel. I had not written to her for three days, and even now I told her nothing of my meeting with Mary. I had not written partly because I could not decide whether I should tell her of that or not; in the end I tried to hide it from her. It seemed a little thing in regard to her, a thing that could not hurt her, a thing as detached from her life and as inconsecutive as a dream in my head.

Three days later I reached Milan, a day before the formal opening of the Peace Congress. But I found a telegram had come that morning to the Poste Restante to banish all thought of my pacific mission from my mind. It came from Paris and its blue ribbon of text ran:

"Come back at once to London. Justin has been told of our meeting and is resolved upon divorce. Will do all in my power to explain and avert but feel you should know at once."

There are some things so monstrously destructive to all we hold dear that for a time it is impossible to believe them. I remember now that as I read that amazing communication through — at the first reading it was a little difficult to understand because the Italian operator had guessed at one or two of the words, no real sense of its meaning came to me. That followed sluggishly. I felt as one might feel when one opens some offensive anonymous letter or hears some preposterous threat.

“What *nonsense*!” I said, faint-heartedly. I stood for a time at my bedroom window trying to shake this fact altogether off my mind. But it stayed, and became more and more real. Suddenly with a start I perceived it was real. I had to do things forthwith.

I rang the bell and asked for an *Orario*. “I shan’t want these rooms. I have to go back to England,” I said. “Yes, — I have had bad news.” ...

§ 8

“We’ve only got to explain,” I told myself a hundred times during that long sleepless journey. The thundering wheels so close beneath my head echoed: “Explain. Oh yes! Explain! Explain! Explain!”

And something, a voice to which I would not listen, urged: “Suppose they do not choose to believe what you explain.”

When I sat face to face with Maxwell Hartington, my solicitor, in his ink-splashed, dirty, yellow-grained room with its rows of black tin boxes, I could no longer ignore that possibility. Maxwell Hartington sat back in his chair after his fashion, listening to my story, breathing noisily through his open mouth, perspiring little beads and looking more out of condition than ever. I never knew a man so wine-sodden and so sharp-witted.

“That’s all very well, Stratton,” he said, “between ourselves. Very unfortunate and all that sort of thing. But it doesn’t satisfy Justin evidently; and we’ve got to put a different look on it if we can, before we go before a jury: You see — —” He seemed to be considering and rejecting unpalatable phrases “They won’t understand.”

“But,” I said, “after all — , a mere chance of the same hotel. There must be more evidence than that.”

“You spent the night in adjacent rooms,” he said dryly.

“Adjacent rooms!” I cried.

He regarded me for a moment with something bordering on admiration. “Didn’t you know?” he said.

“No.”

“They’ve routed that out. You were sleeping with your two heads within a yard of one another anyhow. Thirty-six you had, and she

had thirty-seven."

"But," I said and stopped.

Maxwell Hartington's admiration gave place I think to a slight resentment at my sustained innocence. "And Lady Mary changed rooms with her secretary two nights before — to be near the vacant room. The secretary went into number 12 on the floor below, — a larger room, at thirteen francs a day, and one not exposed to the early daylight...."

He turned over a paper on his desk. "You didn't know, of course," he said. "But what I want to have" — and his voice grew wrathful— "is sure evidence that you didn't know. No jury on earth is going to believe you didn't know. No jury! —— Why," — his mask dropped — "no man on earth is going to believe a yarn like that! If that's all you have, Stratton — —"

§ 9

Our London house was not shut up — two servants were there on board-wages against the possibility of such a temporary return as I was now making — Rachel was away with you three children at Cromingham. I had not told her I was returning to London, and I had put up at one of my clubs. Until I had had a second interview with Maxwell Hartington I still would not let myself think that it was possible that Mary and I would fail with our explanations. We had the common confidence of habitually unchallenged people that our word would be accepted. I had hoped indeed to get the whole affair settled and abolished without anything of it coming to Rachel's ears. Then at my leisure I should be able to tell her exactly how things had come about. But each day made it clearer that things were not going to be settled, that the monstrous and the incredible was going to happen and that Justin had set his mind implacably upon a divorce. My sense of complete innocence had already been shaken by Maxwell Hartington; I had come to perceive that we had been amazingly indiscreet, I was beginning to think we had been criminally indiscreet.

I saw Maxwell Hartington for a second time, and it became clear to me I must abandon any hope of keeping things further from

Rachel. I took my luggage round to my house, to the great astonishment of the two servants, — they had supposed of course that I was in Italy — and then went down on the heels of a telegram to Rachel. I forget the wording of that telegram, but it was as little alarming as possible; I think I said something about "back in London for documents; shall try to get down to you." I did not specify any particular train or indeed state definitely that I was coming that day.

I had never been to Cromingham before. I went to the house you occupied on the Esplanade and learnt that you were all upon the beach. I walked along the sea-wall scrutinizing the various bright groups of children and nursemaids and holiday people that were scattered over the sands. It was a day of blazing sunshine, and, between the bright sky and the silver drabs of the sand stretched the low levels of a sea that had its customary green-grey touched for once with something of the sapphire glow of the Mediterranean. Here and there were gay little umbrella tents or canvas shelters, and a bather or so and pink and white wading children broke the dazzling edge of foam. And I sought you with a kind of reluctance as though finding you would bring nearer the black irrational disaster that hung over us all.

And when I found you at last you were all radiantly happy and healthy, the prettiest of families, and only your mother was touched with any gravity deeper than the joy of sunshine and sea. You and Mademoiselle Potin — in those days her ministrations were just beginning — were busy constructing a great sea-wall that should really and truly stop the advancing tide. Rachel Two was a little apart, making with infinite contentment an endless multitude of conical sand pies with her little tin pail. Margaret, a pink inarticulate lump, scrabbled in the warm sand under Jessica's care. Your mother sat and watched you — thoughtfully. And before any of you knew that I was there my shadow fell across you all.

You accepted my appearance when I ought to have been in Italy with the unquestioning confidence with which you still take all my comings and goings. For you, Italy, America, any place is just round the corner. I was kissed with affection but haste, and you got back to your sand-works as speedily as possible. I inspected Rachel Two's mounds, — she was giving them the names of her various aunts and

uncles — and patted the crowing Margaret, who ignored me. Rachel had sprung to her feet and kissed me and now hovered radiant over me as I caressed you youngsters. It was all so warm, so real, that for an instant the dark threat that hung over us all vanished from my skies, to return with the force of a blow.

"And what has brought you back?" said Rachel. "I had expected a month of widowhood. What can have brought you back?"

The dancing gladness in her eyes vanished swiftly as she waited for an answer to her question. She caught the note of tragedy from my face. "Why have you come back from Italy?" she asked in an altered voice.

"Rachel," I said taking her arm, with a desolating sense of the futility in my gesture of protection; "let us walk along the beach. I want to tell you something —— Something rather complicated."

"Is there going to be war, Stephen?" she asked abruptly.

It seemed then that this question which merely concerned the welfare of a hundred million people or so and pain, destruction and disaster beyond measure, was the most trivial of digressions.

"No," I said. "I haven't thought about the war."

"But I thought — you were thinking of nothing else."

"This has put it out of my head. It's something —— Something disastrous to us."

"Something has happened to our money?"

"I wish that was all."

"Then what is it?" Her mind flashed out. "It has something to do with Mary Justin."

"How did you know that?"

"I guessed."

"Well. It is. You see — in Switzerland we met."

"You *met*!"

"By accident. She had been staying at the hotel on Engstlen Alp."

"You slept there!" cried Rachel.

"I didn't know she was in the hotel until the next day."

"And then you came away!"

"That day."

"But you talked together?"

“Yes.”

“And for some reason —— You never told me, Stephen! You never told me. And you met. But —— Why is this, disaster?”

“Because Justin knows and he means to divorce her — and it may be he will succeed....”

Rachel’s face had become white, for some time she said nothing. Then slowly, “And if he had not known and done that — I should never have known.”

I had no answer to make to that. It was true. Rachel’s face was very still, and her eyes stared at the situation laid bare to her.

“When you began,” she choked presently, “when she wrote — I knew — I felt — —”

She ceased for fear she might weep, and for a time we walked in silence.

“I suppose,” she said desperately at last, “he will get his divorce.”

“I am afraid he will.”

“There’s no evidence — you didn’t....”

“No.”

“And I never dreamt —— !”

Then her passion tore at her. “Stephen my dear,” she wept, “you didn’t? you didn’t? Stephen, indeed you didn’t, did you? You kept faith with me as a husband should. It was an accident — a real accident — and there was no planning for you to meet together. It was as you say? I’ve never doubted your word ever — I’ve never doubted you.”

Well, at any rate I could answer that plainly, and I did.

“And you know, Stephen,” she said, “I believe you. And I *can’t* believe you. My heart is tormented. Why did you write to her? Why did you two write and go on writing? And why did you tell me nothing of that meeting? I believe you because I can’t do anything but believe you. It would kill me not to believe you in a thing that came so near to us. And yet, there it is, like a knife being twisted in my heart — that you met. Should I have known of your meeting, Stephen — ever? I know I’m talking badly for you.... But this thing strikes me suddenly. Out of this clear beautiful sky! And the children there — so happy in the sunshine! I was so happy. So happy. With

you coming.... It will mean shames and law-courts and newspapers, losses of friends, losses of money and freedom.... My mother and my people!... And you and all the work you do!... People will never forget it, never forgive it. They will say you promised.... If she had never written, if she had kept to her bargain — —"

"We should still have met."

"Stephen!... Stephen, you must bear with me...."

"This is a thing," I said, "that falls as you say out of the sky. It seemed so natural — for her to write.... And the meeting ... it is like some tremendous disaster of nature. I do not feel I have deserved it. It is — irrational. But there it is, little Rachel of my heart, and we have to face it. Whatever happens we have to go on. It doesn't alter the work we have to do. If it clips our wings — we have to hop along with clipped wings.... For you — I wish it could spare you. And she — she too is a victim, Rachel."

"She need not have written," said Rachel. "She need not have written. And then if you had met — —"

She could not go on with that.

"It is so hard," I said, "to ask you to be just to her — and me. I wish I could have come to you and married you — without all that legacy — of things remembered.... I was what I was.... One can't shake off a thing in one's blood. And besides — besides — —"

I stopped helplessly.

§ 10

And then Mary came herself to tell me there would be no divorce.

She came to me unexpectedly. I had returned to town that evening, and next morning as I was sitting down in my study to answer some unimportant questions Maxwell Hartington had sent me, my parlormaid appeared. "Can you speak," she asked, "to Lady Mary Justin?"

I stood up to receive my visitor.

She came in, a tall dark figure, and stood facing me in silence until the door had closed behind her. Her face was white and drawn and very grave. She stooped a little, I could see she had had no sleep, never before had I seen her face marked by pain. And she hesitated....

“My dear!” I said; “why have you come to me?”

I put a chair for her and she sat down.

For a moment she controlled herself with difficulty. She put her hand over her eyes, she seemed on the verge of bitter weeping....

“I came,” she said at last.... “I came. I had to come ... to see you.”

I sat down in a chair beside her.

“It wasn’t wise,” I said. “But — never mind. You look so tired, my dear!”

She sat quite still for a little while.

Then she moved her arm as though she felt for me blindly, and I put my arms about her and drew her head to my shoulder and she wept....

“I knew,” she sobbed, “if I came to you....”

Presently her weeping was over.

“Get me a little cold water, Stephen,” she said. “Let me have a little cold water on my face. I’ve got my courage now again. Just then, — I was down too low. Yes — cold water. Because I want to tell you — things you will be glad to hear.”

“You see, Stephen,” she said — and now all her self-possession had returned; “there mustn’t be a divorce. I’ve thought it all out. And there needn’t be a divorce.”

“Needn’t be?”

“No.”

“What do you mean?”

“I can stop it.”

“But how?”

“I can stop it. I can manage —— I can make a bargain.... It’s very sweet, dear Stephen, to be here talking to you again.”

She stood up.

“Sit at your desk, my dear,” she said. “I’m all right now. That water was good. How good cold things can be! Sit down at your desk and let me sit here. And then I will talk to you. I’ve had such a time, my dear. Ah!”

She paused and stuck her elbows on the desk and looked me in the eyes. And suddenly that sweet, frank smile of hers swept like sunshine across the wintry desolation of her face. “We’ve both been having a time,” she said. “This odd little world, — it’s battered us

with its fists. For such a little. And we were both so ridiculously happy. Do you remember it, the rocks and the sunshine and all those twisted and tangled little plants? And how the boat leaked and you baled it out! And the parting, and how you trudged up that winding path away from me! A grey figure that stopped and waved — a little figure — such a virtuous figure! And then, this storm! this *awful* hullabaloo! Lawyers, curses, threats —— . And Stella Summersley Satchel like a Fury of denunciation. What hatred that woman has hidden from me! It must have accumulated.... It's terrible to think, Stephen, how much I must have tried her.... Oh! how far away those Alps are now, Stephen! Like something in another life.... And here we are! — among the consequences."

"But, — you were saying we could stop the divorce."

"Yes. We can. I can. But I wanted to see you, — before I did. Somehow I don't feel lonely with you. I had to see you.... It's good to see you."

She looked me in the face. Her tired eyes lit with a gleam of her former humor.

"Have you thought," she asked, "of all that will happen if there is a divorce?"

"I mean to fight every bit of it."

"They'll beat you."

"We'll see that."

"But they will. And then?"

"Why should one meet disaster half way?"

"Stephen!" she said; "what will happen to you when I am not here to make you look at things? Because I shan't be here. Not within reach of you.... There are times when I feel like a mother to you. Never more than now...."

And then with rapid touches she began to picture the disaster before me. She pictured the Court and our ineffectual denials, she made me realize the storm of hostility that was bound to burst over us. "And think of me," she said. "Stripped I shall be and outcast."

"Not while I live!"

"But what can you do for me? You will have Rachel. How can you stand by me? You can't be cruel to Rachel. You know you can't be cruel to Rachel. Look me in the face, Stephen; tell me. Yes....

Then how can you stand by me?”

“Somehow!” I cried foolishly and stopped.

“They’ll use me to break your back with costs and damages. There’ll be those children of yours to think of....”

“My God!” I cried aloud. “Why do you torment me? Haven’t I thought enough of those things?... Haven’t I seen the ruin and the shame, the hopeless trap, men’s trust in me gone, my work scattered and ended again, my children growing up to hear this and that exaggeration of our story. And you —— . All the bravery of your life scattered and wasted. The thing will pursue us all, cling to us. It will be all the rest of our lives for us....”

I covered my face with my hands.

When I looked up, her face was white and still, and full of a strange tenderness. “I wouldn’t have you, Stephen — I wouldn’t have you be cruel to Rachel.... I just wanted to know — something.... But we’re wandering. We’re talking nonsense. Because as I said, there need be no divorce. There will be no divorce at all. That’s what I came to tell you. I shall have to pay — in a way, Stephen.... Not impossibly. Don’t think it is anything impossible....”

Then she bit her lips and sat still....

“My dear,” I whispered, “if we had taken one another at the beginning....”

But she went on with her own thoughts.

“You love those little children of yours,” she said. “And that trusting girl-wife.... Of course you love them. They’re yours. Oh! they’re so deeply — yours.... Yours....”

“Oh my dear! don’t torture me! I do love them. But I love you too.”

“No,” she said, “not as you do them.”

I made a movement of protest.

“No,” she said, whitely radiant with a serenity I had never seen before in her face. “You love me with your brain. With your soul if you like. I *know*, my poor bleeding Stephen! — Aren’t those tears there? Don’t mind my seeing them, Stephen.... Poor dear! Poor dear!.... You love *them* with your inmost heart. Why should you mind that I see you do?... All my life I’ve been wrong, Stephen, and

now I know too late. It's the things we own we love, the things we buy with our lives.... Always I have been hard, I've been a little hard.... Stephen, my dear, I loved you, always I have loved you, and always I have tried to keep myself.... It's too late.... I don't know why I am talking like this.... But you see I can make a bargain now — it's not an impossible bargain — and save you and save your wife and save your children — —"

"But how?" I said, still doubting.

"Never mind how, Stephen. Don't ask me how now. Nothing very difficult. Easy. But I shall write you no more letters — see you — no more. Never. And that's why I had to come, you see, why I was able to come to you, just to see you and say good-bye to you, and take leave of you, dear Love that I threw away and loved too late...."

She bit her lip and faced me there, a sweet flushed living thing, with a tear coursing down her cheek, and her mouth now firm and steady.

"You can stop this divorce?" I said, "But how, Mary?"

"No, don't ask me how. At a price. It's a bargain. No, no! Don't think that, — a bargain with Justin, but not degrading. Don't, my dear, let the thought of it distress you. I have to give earnests.... Never, dear, never through all the dusty rest of life again will you and I speak together. Never! Even if we come face to face once more — no word...."

"Mary," I said, "what is it you have to do? You speak as if —— What is it Justin demands?"

"No! do not ask me that.... Tell me — you see we've so much to talk about, Stephen — tell me of all you are going to do. Everything. Because I've got to make a great vow of renunciation — of you. Not to think again — not even to think of you again.... No, no. I'm not even to look for you in the papers any more. There's to be no tricks this time. And so you see I want to fill up my mind with you. To store myself with you. Tell me your work is worth it — that it's not like the work of everyone. Tell me, Stephen — *that*. I want to believe that — tremendously. Don't be modest now. That will be cruel. I want to believe that I am at last to do something that is worth doing, something not fruitless...."

"Are you to go into seclusion," I asked suddenly, "to be a nun

—— ?”

“It is something like that,” she said; “very like that. But I have promised — practically — not to tell you that. Tell me your soul, Stephen, now. Give me something I may keep in my mind through — through all those years of waiting....”

“But where?” I cried. “What years of waiting?”

“In a lonely place, my dear — among mountains. High and away. Very beautiful, but lonely. A lake. Great rocks.... Yes, — like that place. So odd.... I shall have so much time to think, and I shall have no papers — no news. I mustn’t talk to you of that. Don’t let me talk to you of that. I want to hear about this world, this world I am going to leave, and how you think you are going on fighting in the hot and dusty struggle — to make the world cool and kind and reasonable, to train minds better, to broaden ideas ... all those things you believe in. All those things you believe in and stick to — even when they are dull. Now I am leaving it, I begin to see how fine it is — to fight as you want to fight. A tiresome inglorious lifelong fight.... You really believe, Stephen?”

§ 11

And then suddenly I read her purpose.

“Mary,” I cried, and stood up and laid my hand upon her arm, “Tell me what is it you mean to do. What do you mean to do?”

She looked up at me defensively and for a moment neither of us spoke.

“Mary,” I said, and could not say what was in my thoughts.

“You are wrong,” she lied at last....

She stood up too and faced me. I held her shoulder and looked into her eyes.

The gong of my little clock broke the silence.

“I must go, Stephen,” she said. “I did not see how the time was slipping by.”

I began to entreat her and she to deny. “You don’t understand,” she said, “you don’t understand. Stephen! — I had hoped you would

understand. You see life, — not as I see it. I wanted — all sorts of splendid things and you — begin to argue. You are shocked, you refuse to understand.... No. No. Take your hands off me, Stephen dear, and let me go. Let me go!"

"But," I said, stupid and persistent, "what are you going to do?"

"I've told you. Stephen. I've told you. As much as I can tell you. And you think — this foolish thing. As though I could do that! Stephen, if I promise, will you let me go?..."

§ 12

My mind leaps from that to the moment in the afternoon, when torn by intolerable distresses and anxiety I knocked and rang, and again knocked at the door of the house she occupied in South Street, with the intention of making one last appeal to her to live — if, indeed, it was death she had in mind. I had let her go from me and instantly a hundred neglected things had come into my head. I could go away with her, I could threaten to die with her; it seemed to me that nothing in all the world mattered if only I could thrust back the dark hand of death to which she had so manifestly turned. I knew, I knew all along that her extorted promise would not bind her. I knew and I let the faintest shadow of uncertainty weaken and restrain me. And I went to her too late. I saw instantly that I was too late when the door opened and showed me the scared face of a young footman whose eyes were red with tears.

"Are you Doctor —— ?" he asked of my silence.

"I want — —" I said. "I must speak to Lady Mary."

He was wordless for a moment. "She — she died, sir," he said. "She's died suddenly." His face quivered, he was blubbering. He couldn't say anything more; he stood snivelling in the doorway.

For some moments I remained confronting him as if I would dispute his words. Some things the mind contests in the face of invincible conviction. One wants to thrust back time....

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

The Arraignment of Jealousy

§ 1

I sit here in this graciously proportioned little room which I shall leave for ever next week, for already your mother begins to pack for England again. I look out upon the neat French garden that I have watched the summer round, and before me is the pile of manuscript that has grown here, the story of my friendship and love for Mary and of its tragic end, and of all the changes of my beliefs and purposes that have arisen out of that. I had meant it to be the story of my life, but how little of my life is in it! It gives, at most, certain acute points, certain salient aspects. I begin to realize for the first time how thin and suggestive and sketchy a thing any novel or biography must be. How we must simplify! How little can we convey the fullness of life, the glittering interests, the interweaving secondary aspects, the dawns and dreams and double refractions of experience! Even Mary, of whom I have labored to tell you, seems not so much expressed as hidden beneath these corrected sheets. She who was so abundantly living, who could love like a burst of sunshine and give herself as God gives the world, is she here at all in this pile of industrious inexpert writing?

Life is so much fuller than any book can be. All this story can be read, I suppose, in a couple of hours or so, but I have been living and reflecting upon and reconsidering the substance of it for over forty years. I do not see how this book can give you any impression but that of a career all strained upon the frame of one tragic relationship, yet no life unless it is a very short young life can have that simplicity. Of all the many things I have found beautiful and wonderful, Mary was the most wonderful to me, she is in my existence like a sunlit lake seen among mountains, of all the edges by which life has wrought me she was the keenest. Nevertheless she was not all my life, nor the form of all my life. For a time after her death I

could endure nothing of my home, I could not bear the presence of your mother or you, I hated the possibility of consolation, I went away into Italy, and it was only by an enormous effort that I could resume my interest in that scheme of work to which my life is given. But it is manifest I still live, I live and work and feel and share beauty....

It seems to me more and more as I live longer, that most poetry and most literature and particularly the literature of the past is discordant with the vastness and variety, the reserves and resources and recuperations of life as we live it to-day. It is the expression of life under cruder and more rigid conditions than ours, lived by people who loved and hated more naïvely, aged sooner and died younger than we do. Solitary persons and single events dominated them as they do not dominate us. We range wider, last longer, and escape more and more from intensity towards understanding. And already this astounding blow begins to take its place among other events, as a thing strange and terrible indeed, but related to all the strangeness and mystery of life, part of the universal mysteries of despair and futility and death that have troubled my consciousness since childhood. For a time the death of Mary obscured her life for me, but now her living presence is more in my mind again. I begin to see that it is the reality of her existence and not the accidents of her end that matter most. It signifies less that she should have flung out of life when it seemed that her living could only have meant disaster to herself and to all she loved, than that all her life should have been hampered and restricted. Through all her life this brave and fine and beautiful being was for the most part of her possibilities, wasted in a splendid setting, magnificently wasted if you will, but wasted.

§ 2

It was that idea of waste that dominated my mind in a strange interview I had with Justin. For it became necessary for me to see Justin in order that we should stamp out the whispers against her that followed her death. He had made it seem an accidental death due to an overdose of the narcotic she employed, but he had not been able to obliterate altogether the beginnings of his divorce proceedings.

There had been talk on the part of clerks and possible witnesses. But of all that I need not tell you here; what matters is that Justin and I could meet without hatred or violence. I met a Justin grey-haired and it seemed to me physically shrunken, more than ever slow-speaking, with his habit of attentive silences more marked and that dark scar spread beyond his brows.

We had come to our parting, we had done our business with an affectation of emotional aloofness, and then suddenly he gripped me by the arm. “Stratton,” he said, “we two —— We killed her. We tore her to pieces between us....”

I made no answer to this outbreak.

“We tore her to pieces,” he repeated. “It’s so damned silly. One gets angry — like an animal.”

I became grotesquely anxious to assure him that, indeed, she and I had been, as they say, innocent throughout our last day together. “You were wrong in all that,” I said. “She kept her faith with you. We never planned to meet and when we met —— . If we had been brother and sister —— . Indeed there was nothing.”

“I suppose,” he said, “I ought to be glad of that. But now it doesn’t seem to matter very much. We killed her.... What does that matter to me now?”

§ 3

And it is upon this effect of sweet and beautiful possibilities, caught in the net of animal jealousies and thoughtless motives and ancient rigid institutions, that I would end this writing. In Mary, it seems to me, I found both womanhood and fellowship, I found what many have dreamt of, love and friendship freely given, and I could do nothing but clutch at her to make her my possession. I would not permit her to live except as a part of my life. I see her now and understand her better than when she was alive, I recall things that she said and wrote and it is clear to me, clearer perhaps than it ever was to her, that she, with her resentment at being in any sense property, her self-reliant thought, her independence of standard, was the very prototype of that sister-lover who must replace the seductive and

abject womanhood, owned, mastered and deceiving, who waste the world to-day. And she was owned, she was mastered, she was forced into concealment. What alternative was there for her? What alternative is there for any woman? She might perhaps have kept her freedom by some ill-paid work and at the price of every other impulse in her swift and eager nature. She might have become one of those poor neuters, an independent woman.... Life was made impossible for her and she was forced to die, according to the fate of all untimely things. She was destroyed, not merely by the unconsidered, undisciplined passions of her husband and her lover, but by the vast tradition that sustains and enforces the subjugation of her sex. What I had from her, and what she was, is but a mere intimation of all that she and I might have made of each other and the world.

And perhaps in this story I have said enough for you to understand why Mary has identified herself with something world-wide, has added to herself a symbolical value, and why it is I find in the whole crowded spectacle of mankind, a quality that is also hers, a sense of fine things entangled and stifled and unable to free themselves from the ancient limiting jealousies which law and custom embody. For I know that a growing multitude of men and women outwear the ancient ways. The blood-stained organized jealousies of religious intolerance, the delusions of nationality and cult and race, that black hatred which simple people and young people and common people cherish against all that is not in the likeness of themselves, cease to be the undisputed ruling forces of our collective life. We want to emancipate our lives from this slavery and these stupidities, from dull hatreds and suspicion. The ripening mind of our race tires of these boorish and brutish and childish things. A spirit that is like hers, arises and increases in human affairs, a spirit that demands freedom and gracious living as our inheritance too long deferred, and I who loved her so blindly and narrowly now love her spirit with a dawning understanding.

I will not be content with that compromise of jealousies which is the established life of humanity to-day. I give myself, and if I can I will give you, to the destruction of jealousy and of the forms and shelters and instruments of jealousy, both in my own self and in the

thought and laws and usage of the world.

THE END

THE WIFE OF SIR ISAAC HARMAN

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CHAPTER THE FIRST

Introduces Lady Harman

§1

The motor-car entered a little white gate, came to a porch under a thick wig of jasmine, and stopped. The chauffeur indicated by a movement of the head that this at last was it. A tall young woman with a big soft mouth, great masses of blue-black hair on either side of a broad, low forehead, and eyes of so dark a brown you might have thought them black, drooped forward and surveyed the house with a mixture of keen appreciation and that gentle apprehension which is the shadow of desire in unassuming natures....

The little house with the white-framed windows looked at her with a sleepy wakefulness from under its blinds, and made no sign. Beyond the corner was a glimpse of lawn, a rank of delphiniums, and the sound of a wheel-barrow.

"Clarence!" the lady called again.

Clarence, with an air of exceeding his duties, decided to hear, descended slowly, and came to the door.

"Very likely — if you were to look for a bell, Clarence...."

Clarence regarded the porch with a hostile air, made no secret that he thought it a fool of a porch, seemed on the point of disobedience, and submitted. His gestures suggested a belief that he would next be asked to boil eggs or do the boots. He found a bell and rang it with the needless violence of a man who has no special knowledge of ringing bells. How was *he* to know? he was a chauffeur. The bell did not so much ring as explode and swamp the place. Sounds of ringing came from all the windows, and even out of the chimneys. It seemed as if once set ringing that bell would never cease....

Clarence went to the bonnet of his machine, and presented his stooping back in a defensive manner against anyone who might come out. He wasn't a footman, anyhow. He'd rung that bell all right, and now he must see to his engine.

"He's rung so *loud!*" said the lady weakly — apparently to God.

The door behind the neat white pillars opened, and a little red-nosed woman, in a cap she had evidently put on without a proper glass, appeared. She surveyed the car and its occupant with disfavour over her also very oblique spectacles.

The lady waved a pink paper to her, a house-agent's order to view. "Is this Black Strands?" she shouted.

The little woman advanced slowly with her eyes fixed malevolently on the pink paper. She seemed to be stalking it.

"This is Black Strands?" repeated the tall lady. "I should be so sorry if I disturbed you — if it isn't; ringing the bell like that — and all. You can't think — —"

"This is Black *Strand*," said the little old woman with a note of deep reproach, and suddenly ceased to look over her glasses and looked through them. She looked no kindlier through them, and her eye seemed much larger. She was now regarding the lady in the car, though with a sustained alertness towards the pink paper. "I suppose," she said, "you've come to see over the place?"

"If it doesn't disturb anyone; if it is quite convenient — —"

"Mr. Brumley is *hout*," said the little old woman. "And if you got an order to view, you got an order to view."

"If you think I might."

The lady stood up in the car, a tall and graceful figure of doubt and desire and glossy black fur. "I'm sure it looks a very charming house."

"It's *clean*," said the little old woman, "from top to toe. Look as you may."

"I'm sure it is," said the tall lady, and put aside her great fur coat from her lithe, slender, red-clad body. (She was permitted by a sudden civility of Clarence's to descend.) "Why! the windows," she said, pausing on the step, "are like crystal."

"These very 'ands," said the little old woman, and glanced up at the windows the lady had praised. The little old woman's initial sternness wrinkled and softened as the skin of a windfall does after a day or so upon the ground. She half turned in the doorway and made a sudden vergerlike gesture. "We enter," she said, "by the 'all.... Them's Mr. Brumley's 'ats and sticks. Every 'at or cap 'as a stick, and every stick 'as a 'at *or* cap, and on the 'all table is the gloves

corresponding. On the right is the door leading to the kitching, on the left is the large droring-room which Mr. Brumley ‘as took as ‘is study.” Her voice fell to lowlier things. “The other door beyond is a small lavatory ‘aving a basing for washing ‘ands.”

“It’s a perfectly delightful hall,” said the lady. “So low and wide-looking. And everything so bright — and lovely. Those long, Italian pictures! And how charming that broad outlook upon the garden beyond!”

“You’ll think it charminger when you see the garding,” said the little old woman. “It was Mrs. Brumley’s especial delight. Much of it — with ‘er own ‘ands.”

“We now enter the droring-room,” she proceeded, and flinging open the door to the right was received with an indistinct cry suggestive of the words, “Oh, *damn* it!” The stout medium-sized gentleman in an artistic green-grey Norfolk suit, from whom the cry proceeded, was kneeling on the floor close to the wide-open window, and he was engaged in lacing up a boot. He had a round, ruddy, rather handsome, amiable face with a sort of bang of brown hair coming over one temple, and a large silk bow under his chin and a little towards one ear, such as artists and artistic men of letters affect. His profile was regular and fine, his eyes expressive, his mouth, a very passable mouth. His features expressed at first only the naïve horror of a shy man unveiled.

Intelligent appreciation supervened.

There was a crowded moment of rapid mutual inspection. The lady’s attitude was that of the enthusiastic house-explorer arrested in full flight, falling swiftly towards apology and retreat. (It was a frightfully attractive room, too, full of the brightest colour, and with a big white cast of a statue — a Venus! — in the window.) She backed over the threshold again.

“I thought you was out by that window, sir,” said the little old woman intimately, and was nearly shutting the door between them and all the beginnings of this story.

But the voice of the gentleman arrested and wedged open the closing door.

“I —— Are you looking at the house?” he said. “I say! Just a moment, Mrs. Rabbit.”

He came down the length of the room with a slight flicking noise due to the scandalized excitement of his abandoned laces. The lady was reminded of her not so very distant schooldays, when it would have been considered a suitable answer to such a question as his to reply, “No, I am walking down Piccadilly on my hands.” But instead she waved that pink paper again. “The agents,” she said. “Recommended — specially. So sorry if I intrude. I ought, I know, to have written first; but I came on an impulse.”

By this time the gentleman in the artistic tie, who had also the artistic eye for such matters, had discovered that the lady was young, delightfully slender, either pretty or beautiful, he could scarcely tell which, and very, very well dressed. “I am glad,” he said, with remarkable decision, “that I was not out. *I* will show you the house.”

“‘Ow *can* you, sir?” intervened the little old woman.

“Oh! show a house! Why not?”

“The kitchings — you don’t understand the range, sir — it’s beyond you. And upstairs. You can’t show a lady upstairs.”

The gentleman reflected upon these difficulties.

“Well, I’m going to show her all I can show her anyhow. And after that, Mrs. Rabbit, you shall come in. You needn’t wait.”

“I’m thinking,” said Mrs. Rabbit, folding stiff little arms and regarding him sternly. “You won’t be much good after tea, you know, if you don’t get your afternoon’s exercise.”

“Rendez-vous in the kitchen, Mrs. Rabbit,” said Mr. Brumley, firmly, and Mrs. Rabbit after a moment of mute struggle disappeared discontentedly.

“I do not want to be the least bit a bother,” said the lady. “I’m intruding, I know, without the least bit of notice. I *do* hope I’m not disturbing you — —” she seemed to make an effort to stop at that, and failed and added— “the least bit. Do please tell me if I am.”

“Not at all,” said Mr. Brumley. “I hate my afternoon’s walk as a prisoner hates the treadmill.”

“She’s such a nice old creature.”

“She’s been a mother — and several aunts — to us ever since my wife died. She was the first servant we ever had.”

“All this house,” he explained to his visitor’s questioning eyes, “was my wife’s creation. It was a little featureless agent’s house on

the edge of these pine-woods. She saw something in the shape of the rooms — and that central hall. We've enlarged it of course. Twice. This was two rooms, that is why there is a step down in the centre."

"That window and window-seat — —"

"That was her addition," said Mr. Brumley. "All this room is — replete — with her personality." He hesitated, and explained further. "When we prepared this house — we expected to be better off — than we subsequently became — and she could let herself go. Much is from Holland and Italy."

"And that beautiful old writing-desk with the little single rose in a glass!"

"She put it there. She even in a sense put the flower there. It is renewed of course. By Mrs. Rabbit. She trained Mrs. Rabbit."

He sighed slightly, apparently at some thought of Mrs. Rabbit.

"You — you write — —" the lady stopped, and then diverted a question that she perhaps considered too blunt, "there?"

"Largely. I am — a sort of author. Perhaps you know my books. Not very important books — but people sometimes read them."

The rose-pink of the lady's cheek deepened by a shade. Within her pretty head, her mind rushed to and fro saying "Brumley? Brumley?" Then she had a saving gleam. "Are you *George* Brumley?" she asked,— "*the* George Brumley?"

"My name *is* George Brumley," he said, with a proud modesty. "Perhaps you know my little Euphemia books? They are still the most read."

The lady made a faint, dishonest assent-like noise; and her rose-pink deepened another shade. But her interlocutor was not watching her very closely just then.

"Euphemia was my wife," he said, "at least, my wife gave her to me — a kind of exhalation. *This*" — his voice fell with a genuine respect for literary associations— "was Euphemia's home."

"I still," he continued, "go on. I go on writing about Euphemia. I have to. In this house. With my tradition.... But it is becoming painful — painful. Curiously more painful now than at the beginning. And I want to go. I want at last to make a break. That is why I am letting or selling the house.... There will be no more Euphemia."

His voice fell to silence.

The lady surveyed the long low clear room so cleverly prepared for life, with its white wall, its Dutch clock, its Dutch dresser, its pretty seats about the open fireplace, its cleverly placed bureau, its sun-trap at the garden end; she could feel the rich intention of living in its every arrangement and a sense of uncertainty in things struck home to her. She seemed to see a woman, a woman like herself — only very, very much cleverer — flitting about the room and making it. And then this woman had vanished — nowhither. Leaving this gentleman — sadly left — in the care of Mrs. Rabbit.

"And she is dead?" she said with a softness in her dark eyes and a fall in her voice that was quite natural and very pretty.

"She died," said Mr. Brumley, "three years and a half ago." He reflected. "Almost exactly."

He paused and she filled the pause with feeling.

He became suddenly very brave and brisk and businesslike. He led the way back into the hall and made explanations. "It is not so much a hall as a hall living-room. We use that end, except when we go out upon the verandah beyond, as our dining-room. The door to the right is the kitchen."

The lady's attention was caught again by the bright long eventful pictures that had already pleased her. "They are copies of two of Carpaccio's St. George series in Venice," he said. "We bought them together there. But no doubt you've seen the originals. In a little old place with a custodian and rather dark. One of those corners — so full of that delightful out-of-the-wayishness which is so characteristic, I think, of Venice. I don't know if you found that in Venice?"

"I've never been abroad," said the lady. "Never. I should love to go. I suppose you and your wife went — ever so much."

He had a transitory wonder that so fine a lady should be untravelled, but his eagerness to display his backgrounds prevented him thinking that out at the time. "Two or three times," he said, "before our little boy came to us. And always returning with something for this place. Look!" he went on, stepped across an exquisite little brick court to a lawn of soft emerald and turning back upon the house. "That Dellia Robbia placque we lugged all the way

back from Florence with us, and that stone bird-bath is from Siena."

"How bright it is!" murmured the lady after a brief still appreciation. "Delightfully bright. As though it would shine even if the sun didn't." And she abandoned herself to the rapture of seeing a house and garden that were for once better even than the agent's superlatives. And within her grasp if she chose — within her grasp.

She made the garden melodious with soft appreciative sounds. She had a small voice for her size but quite a charming one, a little live bird of a voice, bright and sweet. It was a clear unruffled afternoon; even the unseen wheel-barrow had very sensibly ceased to creak and seemed to be somewhere listening....

Only one trivial matter marred their easy explorations; — his boots remained unlaced. No propitious moment came when he could stoop and lace them. He was not a dexterous man with eyelets, and stooping made him grunt and his head swim. He hoped these trailing imperfections went unmarked. He tried subtly to lead this charming lady about and at the same time walk a little behind her. She on her part could not determine whether he would be displeased or not if she noticed this slight embarrassment and asked him to set it right. They were quite long leather laces and they flew about with a sturdy negligence of anything but their own offensive contentment, like a gross man who whistles a vulgar tune as he goes round some ancient church; flick, flock, they went, and flip, flap, enjoying themselves, and sometimes he trod on one and halted in his steps, and sometimes for a moment she felt her foot tether him. But man is the adaptable animal and presently they both became more used to these inconveniences and more mechanical in their efforts to avoid them. They treated those laces then exactly as nice people would treat that gross man; a minimum of polite attention and all the rest pointedly directed away from him....

The garden was full of things that people dream about doing in their gardens and mostly never do. There was a rose garden all blooming in chorus, and with pillar-roses and arches that were not so much growths as overflowing cornucopias of roses, and a neat orchard with shapely trees white-painted to their exact middles, a stone wall bearing clematis and a clothes-line so gay with Mr. Brumley's blue and white flannel shirts that it seemed an essential

part of the design. And then there was a great border of herbaceous perennials backed by delphiniums and monkshood already in flower and budding hollyhocks rising to their duty; a border that reared its blaze of colour against a hill-slope dark with pines. There was no hedge whatever to this delightful garden. It seemed to go straight into the pine-woods; only an invisible netting marked its limits and fended off the industrious curiosity of the rabbits.

"This strip of wood is ours right up to the crest," he said, "and from the crest one has a view. One has two views. If you would care —— ?"

The lady made it clear that she was there to see all she could. She radiated her appetite to see. He carried a fur stole for her over his arm and flicked the way up the hill. Flip, flap, flop. She followed demurely.

"This is the only view I care to show you now," he said at the crest. "There was a better one beyond there. But — it has been defiled.... Those hills! I knew you would like them. The space of it! And ... yet —— . This view — lacks the shining ponds. There are wonderful distant ponds. After all I must show you the other! But you see there is the high-road, and the high-road has produced an abomination. Along here we go. Now. Don't look down please." His gesture covered the foreground. "Look right over the nearer things into the distance. There!"

The lady regarded the wide view with serene appreciation. "I don't see," she said, "that it's in any way ruined. It's perfect."

"You don't see! Ah! you look right over. You look high. I wish I could too. But that screaming board! I wish the man's crusts would choke him."

And indeed quite close at hand, where the road curved about below them, the statement that Staminal Bread, the True Staff of Life, was sold only by the International Bread Shops, was flung out with a vigour of yellow and Prussian blue that made the landscape tame.

His finger directed her questioning eye.

"*Oh!*" said the lady suddenly, as one who is convicted of a stupidity and coloured slightly.

"In the morning of course it is worse. The sun comes directly on

to it. Then really and truly it blots out everything."

The lady stood quite silent for a little time, with her eyes on the distant ponds. Then he perceived that she was blushing. She turned to her interlocutor as a puzzled pupil might turn to a teacher.

"It really is very good bread," she said. "They make it —— Oh! most carefully. With the germ in. And one has to tell people."

Her point of view surprised him. He had expected nothing but a docile sympathy. "But to tell people *here*!" he said.

"Yes, I suppose one oughtn't to tell them here."

"Man does not live by bread alone."

She gave the faintest assent.

"This is the work of one pushful, shoving creature, a man named Harman. Imagine him! Imagine what he must be! Don't you feel his soul defiling us? — this summit of a stupendous pile of — dough, thinking of nothing but his miserable monstrous profits, seeing nothing in the delight of life, the beauty of the world but something that attracts attention, draws eyes, something that gives him his horrible opportunity of getting ahead of all his poor little competitors and inserting — *this!* It's the quintessence of all that is wrong with the world; — squalid, shameless huckstering!" He flew off at a tangent. "Four or five years ago they made this landscape disease, — a knight!"

He looked at her for a sympathetic indignation, and then suddenly something snapped in his brain and he understood. There wasn't an instant between absolute innocence and absolute knowledge.

"You see," she said as responsive as though he had cried out sharply at the horror in his mind, "Sir Isaac is my husband. Naturally ... I ought to have given you my name to begin with. It was silly...."

Mr. Brumley gave one wild glance at the board, but indeed there was not a word to be said in its mitigation. It was the crude advertisement of a crude pretentious thing crudely sold. "My dear lady!" he said in his largest style, "I am desolated! But I have said it! It isn't a pretty board."

A memory of epithets pricked him. "You must forgive — a certain touch of — rhetoric."

He turned about as if to dismiss the board altogether, but she remained with her brows very faintly knit, surveying the cause of his

offence.

"It isn't a *pretty* board," she said. "I've wondered at times.... It isn't."

"I implore you to forget that outbreak — mere petulance — because, I suppose, of a peculiar liking for that particular view. There are — associations — —"

"I've wondered lately," she continued, holding on to her own thoughts, "what people *did* think of them. And it's curious — to hear — —"

For a moment neither spoke, she surveyed the board and he the tall ease of her pose. And he was thinking she must surely be the most beautiful woman he had ever encountered. The whole country might be covered with boards if it gave us such women as this. He felt the urgent need of some phrase, to pull the situation out of this pit into which it had fallen. He was a little unready, his faculties all as it were neglecting his needs and crowding to the windows to stare, and meanwhile she spoke again, with something of the frankness of one who thinks aloud.

"You see," she said, "one *doesn't* hear. One thinks perhaps —— And there it is. When one marries very young one is apt to take so much for granted. And afterwards — —"

She was wonderfully expressive in her inexpressiveness, he thought, but found as yet no saving phrase. Her thought continued to drop from her. "One sees them so much that at last one doesn't see them."

She turned away to survey the little house again; it was visible in bright strips between the red-scarred pine stems. She looked at it chin up, with a still approval — but she was the slenderest loveliness, and with such a dignity! — and she spoke at length as though the board had never existed. "It's like a little piece of another world; so bright and so — perfect."

There was the phantom of a sigh in her voice.

"I think you'll be charmed by our rockery," he said. "It was one of our particular efforts. Every time we two went abroad we came back with something, stonecrop or Alpine or some little bulb from the wayside."

"How can you leave it!"

He was leaving it because it bored him to death. But so intricate is the human mind that it was with perfect sincerity he answered: “It will be a tremendous wrench.... I have to go.”

“And you’ve written most of your books here and lived here!”

The note of sympathy in her voice gave him a sudden suspicion that she imagined his departure due to poverty. Now to be poor as an author is to be unpopular, and he valued his popularity — with the better sort of people. He hastened to explain. “I have to go, because here, you see, here, neither for me nor my little son, is it Life. It’s a place of memories, a place of accomplished beauty. My son already breaks away, — a preparatory school at Margate. Healthier, better, for us to break altogether I feel, wrench though it may. It’s full for us at least — a new tenant would be different of course — but for *us* it’s full of associations we can’t alter, can’t for the life of us change. Nothing you see goes on. And life you know *is* change — change and going on.”

He paused impressively on his generalization.

“But you will want —— You will want to hand it over to — to sympathetic people of course. People,” she faltered, “who will understand.”

Mr. Brumley took an immense stride — conversationally. “I am certain there is no one I would more readily see in that house than yourself,” he said.

“But — —” she protested. “And besides, you don’t know me!”

“One knows some things at once, and I am as sure you would — understand — as if I had known you twenty years. It may seem absurd to you, but when I looked up just now and saw you for the first time, I thought — this, this is the tenant. This is her house.... Not a doubt. That is why I did not go for my walk — came round with you.”

“You really think you would like us to have that house?” she said. “*Still?*”

“No one better,” said Mr. Brumley.

“After the board?”

“After a hundred boards, I let the house to you....”

“My husband of course will be the tenant,” reflected Lady Harman.

She seemed to brighten again by an effort: “I have always wanted something like this, that wasn’t gorgeous, that wasn’t mean. I can’t *make* things. It isn’t every one — can *make* a place....”

§2

Mr. Brumley found their subsequent conversation the fullest realization of his extremest hopes. Behind his amiable speeches, which soon grew altogether easy and confident again, a hundred imps of vanity were patting his back for the intuition, the swift decision that had abandoned his walk so promptly. In some extraordinary way the incident of the board became impossible; it hadn’t happened, he felt, or it had happened differently. Anyhow there was no time to think that over now. He guided the lady to the two little greenhouses, made her note the opening glow of the great autumnal border and brought her to the rock garden. She stooped and loved and almost kissed the soft healthy cushions of pampered saxifrage: she appreciated the cleverness of the moss-bed — where there were droseras; she knelt to the gentians; she had a kindly word for that bank-holiday corner where London Pride still belatedly rejoiced; she cried out at the delicate Iceland poppies that thrust up between the stones of the rough pavement; and so in the most amiable accord they came to the raised seat in the heart of it all, and sat down and took in the whole effect of the place, and backing of woods, the lush borders, the neat lawn, the still neater orchard, the pergola, the nearer delicacies among the stones, and the gable, the shining white rough-cast of the walls, the casement windows, the projecting upper story, the carefully sought-out old tiles of the roof. And everything bathed in that caressing sunshine which does not scorch nor burn but gilds and warms deliciously, that summer sunshine which only northward islands know.

Recovering from his first astonishment and his first misadventure, Mr. Brumley was soon himself again, talkative, interesting, subtly and gently aggressive. For once one may use a hackneyed phrase without the slightest exaggeration; he was charmed...

He was one of those very natural-minded men with active imaginations who find women the most interesting things in a full

and interesting universe. He was an entirely good man and almost professionally on the side of goodness, his pen was a pillar of the home and he was hostile and even actively hostile to all those influences that would undermine and change — anything; but he did find women attractive. He watched them and thought about them, he loved to be with them, he would take great pains to please and interest them, and his mind was frequently dreaming quite actively of them, of championing them, saying wonderful and impressive things to them, having great friendships with them, adoring them and being adored by them. At times he had to ride this interest on the curb. At times the vigour of its urgencies made him inconsistent and secretive.... Comparatively his own sex was a matter of indifference to him. Indeed he was a very normal man. Even such abstractions as Goodness and Justice had rich feminine figures in his mind, and when he sat down to write criticism at his desk, that pretty little slut of a Delphic Sibyl presided over his activities.

So that it was a cultivated as well as an attentive eye that studied the movements of Lady Harman and an experienced ear that weighed the words and cadences of her entirely inadequate and extremely expressive share in their conversation. He had enjoyed the social advantages of a popular and presentable man of letters, and he had met a variety of ladies; but he had never yet met anyone at all like Lady Harman. She was pretty and quite young and fresh; he doubted if she was as much as four-and-twenty; she was as simple-mannered as though she was ever so much younger than that, and dignified as though she was ever so much older; and she had a sort of lustre of wealth about her —— . One met it sometimes in young richly married Jewesses, but though she was very dark she wasn't at all of that type; he was inclined to think she must be Welsh. This manifest spending of great lots of money on the richest, finest and fluffiest things was the only aspect of her that sustained the parvenu idea; and it wasn't in any way carried out by her manners, which were as modest and silent and inaggressive as the very best can be. Personally he liked opulence, he responded to countless-guinea furs....

Soon there was a neat little history in his mind that was reasonably near the truth, of a hard-up professional family, fatherless

perhaps, of a mercenary marriage at seventeen or so — and this....

And while Mr. Brumley's observant and speculative faculties were thus active, his voice was busily engaged. With the accumulated artistry of years he was developing his pose. He did it almost subconsciously. He flung out hint and impulsive confidence and casual statement with the careless assurance of the accustomed performer, until by nearly imperceptible degrees that finished picture of the two young lovers, happy, artistic, a little Bohemian and one of them doomed to die, making their home together in an atmosphere of sunny gaiety, came into being in her mind....

"It must have been beautiful to have begun life like that," she said in a voice that was a sigh, and it flashed joyfully across Mr. Brumley's mind that this wonderful person could envy his Euphemia.

"Yes," he said, "at least we had our Spring."

"To be together," said the lady, "and — so beautifully poor...."

There is a phase in every relationship when one must generalize if one is to go further. A certain practice in this kind of talk with ladies blunted the finer sensibilities of Mr. Brumley. At any rate he was able to produce this sentence without a qualm. "Life," he said, "is sometimes a very extraordinary thing."

Lady Harman reflected upon this statement and then responded with an air of remembered moments: "Isn't it."

"One loses the most precious things," said Mr. Brumley, "and one loses them and it seems as though one couldn't go on. And one goes on."

"And one finds oneself," said Lady Harman, "without all sorts of precious things — —" And she stopped, transparently realizing that she was saying too much.

"There is a sort of vitality about life," said Mr. Brumley, and stopped as if on the verge of profundities.

"I suppose one hopes," said Lady Harman. "And one doesn't think. And things happen."

"Things happen," assented Mr. Brumley.

For a little while their minds rested upon this thought, as chasing butterflies might rest together on a flower.

"And so I am going to leave this," Mr. Brumley resumed. "I am

going up there to London for a time with my boy. Then perhaps we may travel-Germany, Italy, perhaps-in his holidays. It is beginning again, I feel with him. But then even we two must drift apart. I can't deny him a public school sooner or later. His own road...."

"It will be lonely for you," sympathized the lady. "I have my work," said Mr. Brumley with a sort of valiant sadness.

"Yes, I suppose your work — —"

She left an eloquent gap.

"There, of course, one's fortunate," said Mr. Brumley.

"I wish," said Lady Harman, with a sudden frankness and a little quickening of her colour, "that I had some work. Something — that was my own."

"But you have —— There are social duties. There must be all sorts of things."

"There are — all sorts of things. I suppose I'm ungrateful. I have my children."

"You have children, Lady Harman!"

"I've *four*."

He was really astonished, "Your *own*?"

She turned her fawn's eyes on his with a sudden wonder at his meaning. "My own!" she said with the faintest tinge of astonished laughter in her voice. "What else could they be?"

"I thought —— I thought you might have step-children."

"Oh! of course! No! I'm their mother; — all four of them. They're mine as far as that goes. Anyhow."

And her eye questioned him again for his intentions.

But his thought ran along its own path. "You see," he said, "there is something about you — so freshly beginning life. So like — Spring."

"You thought I was too young! I'm nearly six-and-twenty! But all the same, — though they're mine, — *still* —— Why shouldn't a woman have work in the world, Mr. Brumley? In spite of all that."

"But surely — that's the most beautiful work in the world that anyone could possibly have."

Lady Harman reflected. She seemed to hesitate on the verge of some answer and not to say it.

"You see," she said, "it may have been different with you.... When

one has a lot of nurses, and not very much authority."

She coloured deeply and broke back from the impending revelations.

"No," she said, "I would like some work of my own."

§3

At this point their conversation was interrupted by the lady's chauffeur in a manner that struck Mr. Brumley as extraordinary, but which the tall lady evidently regarded as the most natural thing in the world.

Mr. Clarence appeared walking across the lawn towards them, surveying the charms of as obviously a charming garden as one could have, with the disdain and hostility natural to a chauffeur. He did not so much touch his cap as indicate that it was within reach, and that he could if he pleased touch it. "It's time you were going, my lady," he said. "Sir Isaac will be coming back by the five-twelve, and there'll be a nice to-do if you ain't at home and me at the station and everything in order again."

Manifestly an abnormal expedition.

"Must we start at once, Clarence?" asked the lady consulting a bracelet watch. "You surely won't take two hours — —"

"I can give you fifteen minutes more, my lady," said Clarence, "provided I may let her out and take my corners just exactly in my own way."

"And I must give you tea," said Mr. Brumley, rising to his feet. "And there is the kitchen."

"And upstairs! I'm afraid, Clarence, for this occasion only you must — what is it? — let her out."

"And no 'Oh Clarence!' my lady?"

She ignored that.

"I'll tell Mrs. Rabbit at once," said Mr. Brumley, and started to run and trod in some complicated way on one of his loose laces and was precipitated down the rockery steps. "Oh!" cried the lady. "Mind!" and clasped her hands.

He made a sound exactly like the word "damnation" as he fell, but he didn't so much get up as bounce up, apparently in the brightest of

tempers, and laughed, held out two earthy hands for sympathy with a mock rueful grimace, and went on, earthy-green at the knees and a little more carefully towards the house. Clarence, having halted to drink deep satisfaction from this disaster, made his way along a nearly parallel path towards the kitchen, leaving his lady to follow as she chose to the house.

"*You'll* take a cup of tea?" called Mr. Brumley.

"Oh! *I'll* take a cup all right," said Clarence in the kindly voice of one who addresses an amusing inferior....

Mrs. Rabbit had already got the tea-things out upon the cane table in the pretty verandah, and took it ill that she should be supposed not to have thought of these preparations.

Mr. Brumley disappeared for a few minutes into the house.

He returned with a conscious relief on his face, clean hands, brushed knees, and his boots securely laced. He found Lady Harman already pouring out tea.

"You see," she said, to excuse this pleasant enterprise on her part, "my husband has to be met at the station with the car.... And of course he has no idea — —"

She left what it was of which Sir Isaac had no idea to the groping speculations of Mr. Brumley.

§4

That evening Mr. Brumley was quite unable to work. His mind was full of this beautiful dark lady who had come so unexpectedly into his world.

Perhaps there are such things as premonitions. At any rate he had an altogether disproportionate sense of the significance of the afternoon's adventure, — which after all was a very small adventure indeed. A mere talk. His mind refused to leave her, her black furry slenderness, her dark trustful eyes, the sweet firmness of her perfect lips, her appealing simplicity that was yet somehow compatible with the completest self-possession. He went over the incident of the board again and again, scraping his memory for any lurking crumb of detail as a starving man might scrape an insufficient plate. Her dignity, her gracious frank forgiveness; no queen alive in these days

could have touched her.... But it wasn't a mere elaborate admiration. There was something about her, about the quality of their meeting.

Most people know that sort of intimation. This person, it says, so fine, so brave, so distant still in so many splendid and impressive qualities, is yet in ways as yet undefined and unexplored, subtly and abundantly — for *you*. It was that made all her novelty and distinction and high quality and beauty so dominating among Mr. Brumley's thoughts. Without that his interest might have been almost entirely — academic. But there was woven all through her the hints of an imaginable alliance, with *us*, with the things that are Brumley, with all that makes beautiful little cottages and resents advertisements in lovely places, with us as against something over there lurking behind that board, something else, something out of which she came. He vaguely adumbrated what it was out of which she came. A closed narrow life — with horrid vast enviable quantities of money. A life, could one use the word *vulgar*? — so that Carpaccio, Della Robbia, old furniture, a garden unostentatiously perfect, and the atmosphere of *belles-lettres*, seemed things of another more desirable world. (She had never been abroad.) A world, too, that would be so willing, so happy to enfold her, furs, funds, freshness — everything.

And all this was somehow animated by the stirring warmth in the June weather, for spring raised the sap in Mr. Brumley as well as in his trees, had been a restless time for him all his life. This spring particularly had sensitized him, and now a light had shone.

He was so unable to work that for twenty minutes he sat over a pleasant little essay on Shakespear's garden that by means of a concordance and his natural aptitude he was writing for the book of the National Shakespear Theatre, without adding a single fancy to its elegant playfulness. Then he decided he needed his afternoon's walk after all, and he took cap and stick and went out, and presently found himself surveying that yellow and blue board and seeing it from an entirely new point of view....

It seemed to him that he hadn't made the best use of his conversational opportunities, and for a time this troubled him....

Toward the twilight he was walking along the path that runs through the heather along the edge of the rusty dark ironstone lake

opposite the pine-woods. He spoke his thoughts aloud to the discreet bat that flitted about him. “I wonder,” he said, “whether I shall ever set eyes on her again....”

In the small hours when he ought to have been fast asleep he decided she would certainly take the house, and that he would see her again quite a number of times. A long tangle of unavoidable detail for discussion might be improvised by an ingenious man. And the rest of that waking interval passed in such inventions, which became more and more vague and magnificent and familiar as Mr. Brumley lapsed into slumber again....

Next day the garden essay was still neglected, and he wrote a pretty vague little song about an earthly mourner and a fresh presence that set him thinking of the story of Persephone and how she passed in the springtime up from the shadows again, blessing as she passed....

He pulled himself together about midday, cycled over to Gorshott for lunch at the clubhouse and a round with Horace Toomer in the afternoon, re-read the poem after tea, decided it was poor, tore it up and got himself down to his little fantasy about Shakespear’s Garden for a good two hours before supper. It was a sketch of that fortunate poet (whose definitive immortality is now being assured by an influential committee) walking round his Stratford garden with his daughter, quoting himself copiously with an accuracy and inappropriateness that reflected more credit upon his heart than upon his head, and saying in addition many distinctively Brumley things. When Mrs. Rabbit, with a solicitude acquired from the late Mrs. Brumley, asked him how he had got on with his work — the sight of verse on his paper had made her anxious — he could answer quite truthfully, “Like a house afire.”

CHAPTER THE SECOND

The Personality of Sir Isaac

§1

It is to be remarked that two facts, usually esteemed as supremely important in the life of a woman, do not seem to have affected Mr. Brumley's state of mind nearly so much as quite trivial personal details about Lady Harman. The first of these facts was the existence of the lady's four children, and the second, Sir Isaac.

Mr. Brumley did not think very much of either of these two facts; if he had they would have spoilt the portrait in his mind; and when he did think of them it was chiefly to think how remarkably little they were necessary to that picture's completeness.

He spent some little time however trying to recall exactly what it was she had said about her children. He couldn't now succeed in reproducing her words, if indeed it had been by anything so explicit as words that she had conveyed to him that she didn't feel her children were altogether hers. "Incidental results of the collapse of her girlhood," tried Mr. Brumley, "when she married Harman."

Expensive nurses, governesses — the best that money without prestige or training could buy. And then probably a mother-in-law.

And as for Harman —— ?

There Mr. Brumley's mind desisted for sheer lack of material. Given this lady and that board and his general impression of Harman's refreshment and confectionery activity — the data were insufficient. A commonplace man no doubt, a tradesman, energetic perhaps and certainly a little brassy, successful by the chances of that economic revolution which everywhere replaces the isolated shop by the syndicated enterprise, irrationally conceited about it; a man perhaps ultimately to be pitied — with this young goddess finding herself.... Mr. Brumley's mind sat down comfortably to the more congenial theme of a young goddess finding herself, and it was only very gradually in the course of several days that the personality of Sir Isaac began to assume its proper importance in the scheme of his

imaginings.

§2

In the afternoon as he went round the links with Horace Toomer he got some definite lights upon Sir Isaac.

His mind was so full of Lady Harman that he couldn't but talk of her visit. "I've a possible tenant for my cottage," he said as he and Toomer, full of the sunny contentment of English gentlemen who had played a proper game in a proper manner, strolled back towards the clubhouse. "That man Harman."

"Not the International Stores and Staminal Bread man."

"Yes. Odd. Considering my hatred of his board."

"He ought to pay — anyhow," said Toomer. "They say he has a pretty wife and keeps her shut up."

"She came," said Brumley, neglecting to add the trifling fact that she had come alone.

"Pretty?"

"Charming, I thought."

"He's jealous of her. Someone was saying that the chauffeur has orders not to take her into London — only for trips in the country. They live in a big ugly house I'm told on Putney Hill. Did she in any way *look* — as though —— ?"

"Not in the least. If she isn't an absolutely straight young woman I've never set eyes on one."

"*He*," said Toomer, "is a disgusting creature."

"Morally?"

"No, but — generally. Spends his life ruining little tradesmen, for the fun of the thing. He's three parts an invalid with some obscure kidney disease. Sometimes he spends whole days in bed, drinking Contrexéville Water and planning the bankruptcy of decent men.... So the party made a knight of him."

"A party must have funds, Toomer."

"He didn't pay nearly enough. Blapton is an idiot with the honours. When it isn't Mrs. Blapton. What can you expect when —— — —"

(But here Toomer became libellous.)

Toomer was an interesting type. He had a disagreeable disposition profoundly modified by a public school and university training. Two antagonistic forces made him. He was the spirit of scurrility incarnate, that was, as people say, innate; and by virtue of those moulding forces he was doing his best to be an English gentleman. That mysterious impulse which compels the young male to make objectionable imputations against seemly lives and to write rare inelegant words upon clean and decent things burnt almost intolerably within him, and equally powerful now was the gross craving he had acquired for personal association with all that is prominent, all that is successful, all that is of good report. He had found his resultant in the censorious defence of established things. He conducted the *British Critic*, attacking with a merciless energy all that was new, all that was critical, all those fresh and noble tentatives that admit of unsavoury interpretations, and when the urgent Yahoo in him carried him below the pretentious dignity of his accustomed organ he would squirt out his bitterness in a little sham facetious bookstall volume with a bright cover and quaint woodcuts, in which just as many prominent people as possible were mentioned by name and a sauce of general absurdity could be employed to cover and, if need be, excuse particular libels. So he managed to relieve himself and get along. Harman was just on the border-line of the class he considered himself free to revile. Harman was an outsider and aggressive and new, one of Mrs. Blapton's knights, and of no particular weight in society; so far he was fair game; but he was not so new as he had been, he was almost through with the running of the Toomer gauntlet, he had a tremendous lot of money and it was with a modified vehemence that the distinguished journalist and humourist expatiated on his offensiveness to Mr. Brumley. He talked in a gentle, rather weary voice, that came through a moustache like a fringe of light tobacco.

"Personally I've little against the man. A wife too young for him and jealously guarded, but that's all to his credit. Nowadays. If it wasn't for his blatancy in his business.... And the knighthood.... I suppose he can't resist taking anything he can get. Bread made by wholesale and distributed like a newspaper can't, I feel, be the same thing as the loaf of your honest old-fashioned baker — each loaf

made with individual attention — out of wholesome English flour — hand-ground — with a personal touch for each customer. Still, everything drifts on to these hugger-mugger large enterprises; Chicago spreads over the world. One thing goes after another, tobacco, tea, bacon, drugs, bookselling. Decent homes destroyed right and left. Not Harman's affair, I suppose. The girls in his London tea-shops have of course to supplement their wages by prostitution — probably don't object to that nowadays considering the novels we have. And his effect on the landscape —— Until they stopped him he was trying very hard to get Shakespear's Cliff at Dover. He did for a time have the Toad Rock at Tunbridge. Still" — something like a sigh escaped from Toomer,— "his private life appears to be almost as blameless as anybody's can be.... Thanks no doubt to his defective health. I made the most careful enquiries when his knighthood was first discussed. Someone has to. Before his marriage he seems to have lived at home with his mother. At Highbury. Very quietly and inexpensively."

"Then he's not the conventional vulgarian?"

"Much more of the Rockefeller type. Bad health, great concentration, organizing power.... Applied of course to a narrower range of business.... I'm glad I'm not a small confectioner in a town he wants to take up."

"He's — hard?"

"Merciless. Hasn't the beginnings of an idea of fair play.... None at all.... No human give or take.... Are you going to have tea here, or are you walking back now?"

§3

It was fully a week before Mr. Brumley heard anything more of Lady Harman. He began to fear that this shining furry presence would glorify Black Strand no more. Then came a telegram that filled him with the liveliest anticipations. It was worded: "Coming see cottage Saturday afternoon Harman...."

On Saturday morning Mr. Brumley dressed with an apparent ease and unusual care....

He worked rather discursively before lunch. His mind was busy

picking up the ends of their previous conversation and going on with them to all sorts of bright knots, bows and elegant cats' cradling. He planned openings that might give her tempting opportunities of confidences if she wished to confide, and artless remarks and questions that would make for self-betrayal if she didn't. And he thought of her, he thought of her imaginatively, this secluded rare thing so happily come to him, who was so young, so frank and fresh and so unhappily married (he was sure) to a husband at least happily mortal. Yes, dear Reader, even on that opening morning Mr. Brumley's imagination, trained very largely upon Victorian literature and *belles-lettres*, leapt forward to the very ending of this story.... We, of course, do nothing of the sort, our lot is to follow a more pedestrian route.... He lapsed into a vague series of meditations, slower perhaps but essentially similar, after his temperate palatable lunch.

He was apprised of the arrival of his visitor by the sudden indignant yaup followed by the general subdued uproar of a motor-car outside the front door, even before Clarence, this time amazingly prompt, assaulted the bell. Then the whole house was like that poem by Edgar Allan Poe, one magnificent texture of clangour.

At the first toot of the horn Mr. Brumley had moved swiftly into the bay, and screened partly by the life-size Venus of Milo that stood in the bay window, and partly by the artistic curtains, surveyed the glittering vehicle. He was first aware of a vast fur coat enclosing a lean grey-headed obstinate-looking man with a diabetic complexion who was fumbling with the door of the car and preventing Clarence's assistance. Mr. Brumley was able to remark that the gentleman's nose projected to a sharpened point, and that his thin-lipped mouth was all awry and had a kind of habitual compression, the while that his eyes sought eagerly for the other occupant of the car. She was unaccountably invisible. Could it be that that hood really concealed her? Could it be?...

The white-faced gentleman descended, relieved himself tediously of the vast fur coat, handed it to Clarence and turned to the house. Reverentially Clarence placed the coat within the automobile and closed the door. Still the protesting mind of Mr. Brumley refused to believe!...

He heard the house-door open and Mrs. Rabbit in colloquy with a flat masculine voice. He heard his own name demanded and conceded. Then a silence, not the faintest suggestion of a feminine rustle, and then the sound of Mrs. Rabbit at the door-handle. Conviction stormed the last fastness of the disappointed author's mind.

"Oh *damn*!" he shouted with extreme fervour.

He had never imagined it was possible that Sir Isaac could come alone.

§4

But the house had to be let, and it had to be let to Sir Isaac Harman. In another moment an amiable though distinguished man of letters was in the hall interviewing the great *entrepreneur*.

The latter gentleman was perhaps three inches shorter than Mr. Brumley, his hair was grey-shot brown, his face clean-shaven, his features had a thin irregularity, and he was dressed in a neat brown suit with a necktie very exactly matching it. "Sir Isaac Harman?" said Mr. Brumley with a note of gratification.

"That's it," said Sir Isaac. He appeared to be nervous and a little out of breath. "Come," he said, "just to look over it. Just to see it. Probably too small, but if it doesn't put you out — —"

He blew out the skin of his face about his mouth a little.

"Delighted to see you anyhow," said Mr. Brumley, filling the world of unspoken things with singularly lurid curses.

"This. Nice little hall, — very," said Sir Isaac. "Pretty, that bit at the end. Many rooms are there?"

Mr. Brumley answered inexactly and meditated a desperate resignation of the whole job to Mrs. Rabbit. Then he made an effort and began to explain.

"That clock," said Sir Isaac interrupting in the dining-room, "is a fake."

Mr. Brumley made silent interrogations.

"Been there myself," said Sir Isaac. "They sell those brass fittings in Ho'bun."

They went upstairs together. When Mr. Brumley wasn't

explaining or pointing out, Sir Isaac made a kind of whistling between his clenched teeth. “This bathroom wants refitting anyhow,” he said abruptly. “I daresay Lady Harman would like that room with the bay — but it’s all — small. It’s really quite pretty; you’ve done it cleverly, but — the size of it! I’d have to throw out a wing. And that you know might spoil the style. That roof, — a gardener’s cottage?... I thought it might be. What’s this other thing here? Old barn. Empty? That might expand a bit. Couldn’t do only just this anyhow.”

He walked in front of Mr. Brumley downstairs and still emitting that faint whistle led the way into the garden. He seemed to regard Mr. Brumley merely as a source of answers to his questions, and a seller in process of preparation for an offer. It was clear he meant to make an offer. “It’s not the house I should buy if I was alone in this,” he said, “but Lady Harman’s taken a fancy somehow. And it might be adapted....”

From first to last Mr. Brumley never said a single word about Euphemia and the young matrimony and all the other memories this house enshrined. He felt instinctively that it would not affect Sir Isaac one way or the other. He tried simply to seem indifferent to whether Sir Isaac bought the place or not. He tried to make it appear almost as if houses like this often happened to him, and interested him only in the most incidental manner. They had their proper price, he tried to convey, which of course no gentleman would underbid.

In the exquisite garden Sir Isaac said: “One might make a very pretty little garden of this — if one opened it out a bit.”

And of the sunken rock-garden: “That might be dangerous of a dark night.”

“I suppose,” he said, indicating the hill of pines behind, “one could buy or lease some of that. If one wanted to throw it into the place and open out more.

“From my point of view,” he said, “it isn’t a house. It’s — —” He sought in his mind for an expression— “a Cottage Ornay.”

This history declines to record either what Mr. Brumley said or what he did not say.

Sir Isaac surveyed the house thoughtfully for some moments from the turf edging of the great herbaceous border.

“How far,” he asked, “is it from the nearest railway station?...”

Mr. Brumley gave details.

“Four miles. And an infrequent service? Nothing in any way suburban? Better to motor into Guildford and get the Express. H’m.... And what sort of people do we get about here?”

Mr. Brumley sketched.

“Mildly horsey. That’s not bad. No officers about?... Nothing nearer than Aldershot.... That’s eleven miles, is it? H’m. I suppose there aren’t any *literary* people about here, musicians or that kind of thing, no advanced people of that sort?”

“Not when I’ve gone,” said Mr. Brumley, with the faintest flavour of humour.

Sir Isaac stared at him for a moment with eyes vacantly thoughtful.

“It mightn’t be so bad,” said Sir Isaac, and whistled a little between his teeth.

Mr. Brumley was suddenly minded to take his visitor to see the view and the effect of his board upon it. But he spoke merely of the view and left Sir Isaac to discover the board or not as he thought fit. As they ascended among the trees, the visitor was manifestly seized by some strange emotion, his face became very white, he gasped and blew for breath, he felt for his face with a nervous hand.

“Four thousand,” he said suddenly. “An outside price.”

“A minimum,” said Mr. Brumley, with a slight quickening of the pulse.

“You won’t get three eight,” gasped Sir Isaac.

“Not a business man, but my agent tells me — —” panted Mr. Brumley.

“Three eight,” said Sir Isaac.

“We’re just coming to the view,” said Mr. Brumley. “Just coming to the view.”

“Practically got to rebuild the house,” said Sir Isaac.

“There!” said Mr. Brumley, and waved an arm widely.

Sir Isaac regarded the prospect with a dissatisfied face. His pallor had given place to a shiny, flushed appearance, his nose, his ears, and his cheeks were pink. He blew his face out, and seemed to be studying the landscape for defects. “This might be built over at any time,” he complained.

Mr. Brumley was reassuring.

For a brief interval Sir Isaac's eyes explored the countryside vaguely, then his expression seemed to concentrate and run together to a point. "H'm," he said.

"That board," he remarked, "quite wrong there."

"*Well!*" said Mr. Brumley, too surprised for coherent speech.

"Quite," said Sir Isaac Harman. "Don't you see what's the matter?"

Mr. Brumley refrained from an eloquent response.

"They ought to be," Sir Isaac went on, "white and a sort of green. Like the County Council notices on Hampstead Heath. So as to blend.... You see, an ad. that hits too hard is worse than no ad. at all. It leaves a dislike.... Advertisements ought to blend. It ought to seem as though all this view were saying it. Not just that board. Now suppose we had a shade of very light brown, a kind of light khaki — —"

He turned a speculative eye on Mr. Brumley as if he sought for the effect of this latter suggestion on him.

"If the whole board was invisible — —" said Mr. Brumley.

Sir Isaac considered it. "Just the letters showing," he said. "No, — that would be going too far in the other direction."

He made a faint sucking noise with his lips and teeth as he surveyed the landscape and weighed this important matter....

"Queer how one gets ideas," he said at last, turning away. "It was my wife told me about that board."

He stopped to survey the house from the exact point of view his wife had taken nine days before. "I wouldn't give this place a second thought," said Sir Isaac, "if it wasn't for Lady Harman."

He confided. "*She* wants a week-end cottage. But *I* don't see why it *should* be a week-end cottage. I don't see why it shouldn't be made into a nice little country house. Compact, of course. By using up that barn."

He inhaled three bars of a tune. "London," he explained, "doesn't suit Lady Harman."

"Health?" asked Mr. Brumley, all alert.

"It isn't her health exactly," Sir Isaac dropped out. "You see — she's a young woman. She gets ideas."

“You know,” he continued, “I’d like to have a look at that barn again. If we develop that — and a sort of corridor across where the shrubs are — and ran out offices....”

§5

Mr. Brumley’s mind was still vigorously struggling with the flaming implications of Sir Isaac’s remark that Lady Harman “got ideas,” and Sir Isaac was gently whistling his way towards an offer of three thousand nine hundred when they came down out of the pines into the path along the edge of the herbaceous border. And then Mr. Brumley became aware of an effect away between the white-stemmed trees towards the house as if the Cambridge boat-race crew was indulging in a vigorous scrimmage. Drawing nearer this resolved itself into the fluent contours of Lady Beach-Mandarin, dressed in sky-blue and with a black summer straw hat larger than ever and trimmed effusively with marguerites.

“Here,” said Sir Isaac, “can’t I get off? You’ve got a friend.”

“You must have some tea,” said Mr. Brumley, who wanted to suggest that they should agree to Sir Isaac’s figure of three thousand eight hundred, but not as pounds but guineas. It seemed to him a suggestion that might prove insidiously attractive. “It’s a charming lady, my friend Lady Beach-Mandarin. She’ll be delighted — —”

“I don’t think I can,” said Sir Isaac. “Not in the habit — social occasions.”

His face expressed a panic terror of this gallant full-rigged lady ahead of them.

“But you see now,” said Mr. Brumley, with a detaining grip, “it’s unavoidable.”

And the next moment Sir Isaac was mumbling his appreciations of the introduction.

I must admit that Lady Beach-Mandarin was almost as much to meet as one can meet in a single human being, a broad abundant billowing personality with a taste for brims, streamers, pennants, panniers, loose sleeves, sweeping gestures, top notes and the like that made her altogether less like a woman than an occasion of public rejoicing. Even her large blue eyes projected, her chin and brows and

nose all seemed racing up to the front of her as if excited by the clarion notes of her abundant voice, and the pinkness of her complexion was as exuberant as her manners. Exuberance — it was her word. She had evidently been a big, bouncing, bright gaminesque girl at fifteen, and very amusing and very much admired; she had liked the rôle and she had not so much grown older as suffered enlargement — a very considerable enlargement.

"Ah!" she cried, "and so I've caught you at home, Mr. Brumley! And, poor dear, you're at my mercy." And she shook both his hands with both of hers.

That was before Mr. Brumley introduced Sir Isaac, a thing he did so soon as he could get one of his hands loose and wave a surviving digit or so at that gentleman.

"You see, Sir Isaac," she said, taking him in, in the most generous way; "I and Mr. Brumley are old friends. We knew each other of yore. We have our jokes."

Sir Isaac seemed to feel the need of speech but got no further than a useful all-round noise.

"And one of them is that when I want him to do the least little thing for me he hides away! Always. By a sort of instinct. It's such a Small thing, Sir Isaac."

Sir Isaac was understood to say vaguely that they always did. But he had become very indistinct.

"Aren't I always at your service?" protested Mr. Brumley with a responsive playfulness. "And I don't even know what it is you want."

Lady Beach-Mandarin, addressing herself exclusively to Sir Isaac, began a tale of a Shakespear Bazaar she was holding in an adjacent village, and how she knew Mr. Brumley (naughty man) meant to refuse to give her autographed copies of his littlest book for the Book Stall she was organizing. Mr. Brumley confuted her gaily and generously. So discoursing they made their way to the verandah where Lady Harman had so lately "poured."

Sir Isaac was borne along upon the lady's stream of words in a state of mulish reluctance, nodding, saying "Of course" and similar phrases, and wishing he was out of it all with an extreme manifestness. He drank his tea with unmistakable discomfort, and

twice inserted into the conversation an entirely irrelevant remark that he had to be going. But Lady Beach-Mandarin had her purposes with him and crushed these quivering tentatives.

Lady Beach-Mandarin had of course like everybody else at that time her own independent movement in the great national effort to create an official British Theatre upon the basis of William Shakespear, and she saw in the as yet unenlisted resources of Sir Isaac strong possibilities of reinforcement of her own particular contribution to the great Work. He was manifestly shy and sulky and disposed to bolt at the earliest possible moment, and so she set herself now with a swift and concentrated combination of fascination and urgency to commit him to participations. She flattered and cajoled and bribed. She was convinced that even to be called upon by Lady Beach-Mandarin is no light privilege for these new commercial people, and so she made no secret of her intention of decorating the hall of his large but undistinguished house in Putney, with her redeeming pasteboard. She appealed to the instances of Venice and Florence to show that "such men as you, Sir Isaac," who control commerce and industry, have always been the guardians and patrons of art. And who more worthy of patronage than William Shakespear? Also she said that men of such enormous wealth as his owed something to their national tradition. "You have to pay your footing, Sir Isaac," she said with impressive vagueness.

"Putting it in round figures," said Sir Isaac, suddenly and with a white gleam of animosity in his face, the animosity of a trapped animal at the sight of its captors, "what does coming on your Committee mean, Lady Beach-Mandarin?"

"It's your name we want," said the lady, "but I'm sure you'd not be ungenerous. The tribute success owes the arts."

"A hundred?" he threw out, — his ears red.

"Guineas," breathed Lady Beach-Mandarin with a lofty sweetness of consent.

He stood up hastily as if to escape further exaction, and the lady rose too.

"And you'll let me call on Lady Harman," she said, honestly doing her part in the bargain.

"Can't keep the car waiting," was what Brumley could distinguish

in his reply.

"I expect you have a perfectly splendid car, Sir Isaac," said Lady Beach-Mandarin, drawing him out. "Quite the modernest thing."

Sir Isaac replied with the reluctance of an Income Tax Return that it was a forty-five Rolls Royce, good of course but nothing amazing.

"We must see it," she said, and turned his retreat into a procession.

She admired the car, she admired the colour of the car, she admired the lamps of the car and the door of the car and the little fittings of the car. She admired the horn. She admired the twist of the horn. She admired Clarence and the uniform of Clarence and she admired and coveted the great fur coat that he held ready for his employer. (But if she had it, she said, she would wear the splendid fur outside to show every little bit of it.) And when the car at last moved forward and tooted — she admired the note — and vanished softly and swiftly through the gates, she was left in the porch with Mr. Brumley still by sheer inertia admiring and envying. She admired Sir Isaac's car number Z 900. (Such an easy one to remember!) Then she stopped abruptly, as one might discover that the water in the bathroom was running to waste and turn it off.

She had a cynicism as exuberant as the rest of her.

"Well," she said, with a contented sigh and an entire flattening of her tone, "I laid it on pretty thick that time.... I wonder if he'll send me that hundred guineas or whether I shall have to remind him of it...." Her manner changed again to that of a gigantic gamin. "I mean to have that money," she said with bright determination and round eyes....

She reflected and other thoughts came to her. "Plutocracy," she said, "*is* perfectly detestable, don't you think so, Mr. Brumley?" ... And then, "I can't *imagine* how a man who deals in bread and confectionery can manage to go about so completely half-baked."

"He's a very remarkable type," said Mr. Brumley.

He became urgent: "I do hope, dear Lady Beach-Mandarin, you will contrive to call on Lady Harman. She is — in relation to *that* — quite the most interesting woman I have seen."

Presently as they paced the croquet lawn together, the preoccupation of Mr. Brumley's mind drew their conversation back to Lady Harman.

"I wish," he repeated, "you would go and see these people. She's not at all what you might infer from him."

"What could one infer about a wife from a man like that? Except that she'd have a lot to put up with."

"You know, — she's a beautiful person, tall, slender, dark...."

Lady Beach-Mandarin turned her full blue eye upon him.

"*Now!*" she said archly.

"I'm interested in the incongruity."

Lady Beach-Mandarin's reply was silent and singular. She compressed her lips very tightly, fixed her eye firmly on Mr. Brumley's, lifted her finger to the level of her left eyelash, and then shook it at him very deliberately five times. Then with a little sigh and a sudden and complete restoration of manner she remarked that never in any year before had she seen peonies quite so splendid. "I've a peculiar sympathy with peonies," she said. "They're so exactly my style."

CHAPTER THE THIRD

Lady Harman at Home

§1

Exactly three weeks after that first encounter between Lady Beach-Mandarin and Sir Isaac Harman, Mr. Brumley found himself one of a luncheon party at that lady's house in Temperley Square and talking very freely and indiscreetly about the Harmans.

Lady Beach-Mandarin always had her luncheons in a family way at a large round table so that nobody could get out of her range, and she insisted upon conversation being general, except for her mother who was impenetrably deaf and the Swiss governess of her only daughter Phyllis who was incomprehensible in any European tongue. The mother was incalculably old and had been a friend of Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset; she maintained an intermittent monologue about the private lives of those great figures; nobody paid the slightest attention to her but one felt she enriched the table with an undertow of literary associations. A small dark stealthy butler and a convulsive boy with hair (apparently) taking the place of eyes waited. On this occasion Lady Beach-Mandarin had gathered together two cousins, maiden ladies from Perth, wearing valiant hats, Toomer the wit and censor, and Miss Sharsper the novelist (whom Toomer detested), a gentleman named Roper whom she had invited under a misapprehension that he was the Arctic Roper, and Mr. Brumley. She had tried Mr. Roper with questions about penguins, seals, cold and darkness, icebergs and glaciers, Captain Scott, Doctor Cook and the shape of the earth, and all in vain, and feeling at last that something was wrong, she demanded abruptly whether Mr. Brumley had sold his house.

"I'm selling it," said Mr. Brumley, "by almost imperceptible degrees."

"He haggles?"

"Haggles and higgles. He higgles passionately. He goes white and breaks into a cold perspiration. He wants me now to include the

gardener's tools — in whatever price we agree upon."

"A rich man like that ought to be easy and generous," said Lady Beach-Mandarin.

"Then he wouldn't be a rich man like that," said Mr. Toomer.

"But doesn't it distress you highly, Mr. Brumley," one of the Perth ladies asked, "to be leaving Euphemia's Home to strangers? The man may go altering it."

"That — that weighs with me very much," said Mr. Brumley, recalled to his professions. "There — I put my trust in Lady Harman."

"You've seen her again?" asked Lady Beach-Mandarin.

"Yes. She came with him — a few days ago. That couple interests me more and more. So little akin."

"There's eighteen years between them," said Toomer.

"It's one of those cases," began Mr. Brumley with a note of scientific detachment, "where one is really tempted to be ultra-feminist. It's clear, he uses every advantage. He's her owner, her keeper, her obstinate insensitive little tyrant.... And yet there's a sort of effect, as though nothing was decided.... As if she was only just growing up."

"They've been married six or seven years," said Toomer. "She was just eighteen."

"They went over the house together and whenever she spoke he contradicted her with a sort of vicious playfulness. Tried to poke clumsy fun at her. Called her 'Lady Harman.' Only it was quite evident that what she said stuck in his mind.... Very queer — interesting people."

"I wouldn't have anyone allowed to marry until they were five-and-twenty," said Lady Beach-Mandarin.

"Sweet seventeen sometimes contrives to be very marriageable," said the gentleman named Roper.

"Sweet seventeen must contrive to wait," said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "Sweet fourteen has to — and when I was fourteen — I was Ardent! There's no earthly objection to a little harmless flirtation of course. It's the marrying."

"You'd conduce to romance," said Miss Sharsper, "anyhow. Eighteen won't bear restriction and everyone would begin by eloping

— illegally."

"I'd put them back," said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "Oh! remorselessly."

Mr. Roper, who was more and more manifestly not the Arctic one, remarked that she would "give the girls no end of an adolescence...."

Mr. Brumley did not attend very closely to the subsequent conversation. His mind had gone back to Black Strand and the second visit that Lady Harman, this time under her natural and proper protection, had paid him. A little thread from the old lady's discourse drifted by him. She had scented marriage in the air and she was saying, "of course they ought to have let Victor Hugo marry over and over again. He would have made it all so beautiful. He could throw a Splendour over — over almost anything." Mr. Brumley sank out of attention altogether. It was so difficult to express his sense of Lady Harman as a captive, enclosed but unsubdued. She had been as open and shining as a celandine flower in the sunshine on that first invasion, but on the second it had been like overcast weather and her starry petals had been shut and still. She hadn't been in the least subdued or effaced, but closed, inaccessible to conversational bees, that astonishing honey of trust and easy friendship had been hidden in a dignified impenetrable reserve. She had had the effect of being not so much specially shut against Mr. Brumley as habitually shut against her husband, as a protection against his continual clumsy mental interferences. And once when Sir Isaac had made a sudden allusion to price Mr. Brumley had glanced at her and met her eyes....

"Of course," he said, coming up to the conversational surface again, "a woman like that is bound to fight her way out."

"Queen Mary!" cried Miss Sharsper. "Fight her way out!"

"Queen Mary!" said Mr. Brumley, "No! — Lady Harman."

"*I* was talking of Queen Mary," said Miss Sharsper.

"And Mr. Brumley was thinking of Lady Harman!" cried Lady Beach-Mandarin.

"Well," said Mr. Brumley, "I confess I do think about her. She seems to me to be so typical in many ways of — of everything that is weak in the feminine position. As a type — yes, she's perfect."

“I’ve never seen this lady,” said Miss Sharsper. “Is she beautiful?”

“I’ve not seen her myself yet,” said Lady Beach-Mandarin. “She’s Mr. Brumley’s particular discovery.”

“You haven’t called?” he asked with a faint reproach.

“But I’ve been going to — oh! tremendously. And you revive all my curiosity. Why shouldn’t some of us this very afternoon —— ?”

She caught at her own passing idea and held it. “Let’s Go,” she cried. “Let’s visit the wife of this Ogre, the last of the women in captivity. We’ll take the big car and make a party and call *en masse*.”

Mr. Toomer protested he had no morbid curiosities.

“But you, Susan?”

Miss Sharsper declared she would *love* to come. Wasn’t it her business to study out-of-the-way types? Mr. Roper produced a knowing sort of engagement— “I’m provided for already, Lady Beach-Mandarin,” he said, and the cousins from Perth had to do some shopping.

“Then we three will be the expedition,” said the hostess. “And afterwards if we survive we’ll tell you our adventures. It’s a house on Putney Hill, isn’t it, where this Christian maiden, so to speak, is held captive? I’ve had her in my mind, but I’ve always intended to call with Agatha Alimony; she’s so inspiring to down-trodden women.”

“Not exactly down-trodden,” said Mr. Brumley, “not down-trodden. That’s what’s so curious about it.”

“And what shall we do when we get there?” cried Lady Beach-Mandarin. “I feel we ought to do something more than call. Can’t we carry her off right away, Mr. Brumley? I want to go right in to her and say ‘Look here! I’m on your side. Your husband’s a tyrant. I’m help and rescue. I’m all that a woman ought to be — fine and large. Come out from under that unworthy man’s heel!’”

“Suppose she isn’t at all the sort of person you seem to think she is,” said Miss Sharsper. “And suppose she came!”

“Suppose she didn’t,” reflected Mr. Roper.

“I seem to see your flight,” said Mr. Toomer. “And the newspaper placards and head-lines. ‘Lady Beach-Mandarin elopes with the wife of an eminent confectioner. She is stopped at the landing stage by the staff of the Dover Branch establishment. Recapture of the fugitive

after a hot struggle. Brumley, the eminent *littérateur*, stunned by a spent bun....'"

"We're all talking great nonsense," said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "But anyhow we'll make our call. And *I* know! — I'll make her accept an invitation to lunch without him."

"If she won't?" threw out Mr. Roper.

"I *will*," said Lady Beach-Mandarin with roguish determination. "And if I can't — —"

"Not ask him too!" protested Mr. Brumley.

"Why not get her to come to your Social Friends meeting," said Miss Sharsper.

§2

When Mr. Brumley found himself fairly launched upon this expedition he had the grace to feel compunction. The Harmans, he perceived, had inadvertently made him the confidant of their domestic discords and to betray them to these others savoured after all of treachery. And besides much as he had craved to see Lady Harman again, he now realized he didn't in the least want to see her in association with the exuberant volubility of Lady Beach-Mandarin and the hard professional observation, so remarkably like the ferrule of an umbrella being poked with a noiseless persistence into one's eye, of Miss Sharsper. And as he thought these afterthoughts Lady Beach-Mandarin's chauffeur darted and dodged and threaded his way with an alacrity that was almost distressing to Putney.

They ran over the ghost of Swinburne, at the foot of Putney Hill, — or perhaps it was only the rhythm of the engine changed for a moment, and in a couple of minutes more they were outside the Harman residence. "Here we are!" said Lady Beach-Mandarin, more capaciously gaminesque than ever. "We've done it now."

Mr. Brumley had an impression of a big house in the distended stately-homes-of-England style and very necessarily and abundantly covered by creepers and then he was assisting the ladies to descend and the three of them were waiting clustered in the ample Victorian doorway. For some little interval there came no answer to the bell Mr. Brumley had rung, but all three of them had a sense of hurried,

furtive and noiseless readjustments in progress behind the big and bossy oak door. Then it opened and a very large egg-shaped butler with sandy whiskers appeared and looked down himself at them. There was something paternal about this man, his professional deference was touched by the sense of ultimate responsibility. He seemed to consider for a moment whether he should permit Lady Harman to be in, before he conceded that she was.

They were ushered through a hall that resembled most of the halls in the world, it was dominated by a handsome oak staircase and scarcely gave Miss Sharsper a point, and then across a creation of the Victorian architect, a massive kind of conservatory with classical touches — there was an impluvium in the centre and there were arches hung with manifestly costly Syrian rugs, into a large apartment looking through four French windows upon a verandah and a large floriferous garden. At a sideways glance it seemed a very pleasant garden indeed. The room itself was like the rooms of so many prosperous people nowadays; it had an effect of being sedulously and yet irrelevantly over-furnished. It had none of the large vulgarity that Mr. Brumley would have considered proper to a wealthy caterer, but it confessed a compilation of "pieces" very carefully authenticated. Some of them were rather splendid "pieces"; three big bureaus burly and brassy dominated it; there was a Queen Anne cabinet, some exquisite coloured engravings, an ormolu mirror and a couple of large French vases that set Miss Sharsper, who had a keen eye for this traffic, confusedly cataloguing. And a little incongruously in the midst of this exhibit, stood Lady Harman, as if she was trying to conceal the fact that she too was a visitor, in a creamy white dress and dark and defensive and yet entirely unabashed.

The great butler gave his large vague impression of Lady Beach-Mandarin's name, and stood aside and withdrew.

"I've heard so much of you," said Lady Beach-Mandarin advancing with hand upraised. "I had to call. Mr. Brumley — —"

"Lady Beach-Mandarin met Sir Isaac at Black Strand," Mr. Brumley intervened to explain.

Miss Sharsper was as it were introduced by default.

"My vividest anticipations outdone," said Lady Beach-Mandarin,

squeezing Lady Harman's fingers with enthusiasm. "And what a charming garden you have, and what a delightful situation! Such air! And on the very verge of London, high, on this delightful *literary* hill, and ready at any moment to swoop in that enviable great car of yours. I suppose you come a great deal into London, Lady Harman?"

"No," reflected Lady Harman, "not very much." She seemed to weigh the accuracy of this very carefully. "No," she added in confirmation.

"But you should, you ought to; it's your duty. You've no right to hide away from us. I was telling Sir Isaac. We look to him, we look to you. You've no right to bury your talents away from us; you who are rich and young and brilliant and beautiful — —"

"But if I go on I shall begin to flatter you," said Lady Beach-Mandarin with a delicious smile. "I've begun upon Sir Isaac already. I've made him promise a hundred guineas and his name to the Shakespear Dinners Society, — nothing he didn't mention eaten (*you* know) and all the profits to the National movement — and I want your name too. I know you'll let us have your name too. Grant me that, and I'll subside into the ordinariest of callers."

"But surely; isn't his name enough?" asked Lady Harman.

"Without yours, it's only half a name!" cried Lady Beach-Mandarin. "If it were a *business* thing —— ! Different of course. But on my list, I'm like dear old Queen Victoria you know, the wives must come too."

"In that case," hesitated Lady Harman.... "But really I think Sir Isaac — —"

She stopped. And then Mr. Brumley had a psychic experience. It seemed to him as he stood observing Lady Harman with an entirely unnecessary and unpremeditated intentness, that for the briefest interval her attention flashed over Lady Beach-Mandarin's shoulder to the end verandah window; and following her glance, he saw — and then he did not see — the arrested figure, the white face of Sir Isaac, bearing an expression in which anger and horror were extraordinarily intermingled. If it was Sir Isaac he dodged back with amazing dexterity; if it was a phantom of the living it vanished with an air of doing that. Without came the sound of a flower-pot upset and a faint expletive. Mr. Brumley looked very quickly at Lady

Beach-Mandarin, who was entirely unconscious of anything but her own uncoiling and enveloping eloquence, and as quickly at Miss Sharsper. But Miss Sharsper was examining a blackish bureau through her glasses as though she were looking for birthmarks and meant if she could find one to claim the piece as her own long-lost connection. With a mild but gratifying sense of exclusive complicity Mr. Brumley reverted to Lady Harman's entire self-possession.

"But, dear Lady Harman, it's entirely unnecessary you should consult him, — entirely," Lady Beach-Mandarin was saying.

"I'm sure," said Mr. Brumley with a sense that somehow he had to intervene, "that Sir Isaac would not possibly object. I'm sure that if Lady Harman consults him — —"

The sandy-whiskered butler appeared hovering.

"Shall I place the tea-things in the garden, me lady?" he asked, in the tone of one who knows the answer.

"Oh *please* in the garden!" cried Lady Beach-Mandarin. "Please! And how delightful to *have* a garden, a London garden, in which one *can* have tea. Without being smothered in blacks. The south-west wind. The dear *English* wind. All your blacks come to *us*, you know."

She led the way upon the verandah. "Such a wonderful garden! The space, the breadth! Why! you must have Acres!"

She surveyed the garden — comprehensively; her eye rested for a moment on a distant patch of black that ducked suddenly into a group of lilacs. "Is dear Sir Isaac at home?" she asked.

"He's very uncertain," said Lady Harman, with a quiet readiness that pleased Mr. Brumley. "Yes, Snagsby, please, under the big cypress. And tell my mother and sister."

Lady Beach-Mandarin having paused a moment or so upon the verandah admiring the garden as a whole, now prepared to go into details. She gathered her ample skirts together and advanced into the midst of the large lawn, with very much of the effect of a fleet of captive balloons dragging their anchors. Mr. Brumley followed, as it were in attendance upon her and Lady Harman. Miss Sharsper, after one last hasty glance at the room, rather like the last hasty glance of a still unprepared schoolboy at his book, came behind with her powers of observation strainingly alert.

Mr. Brumley was aware of a brief mute struggle between the two ladies of title. It was clear that Lady Harman would have had them go to the left, to where down a vista of pillar roses a single large specimen cypress sounded a faint but recognizable Italian note, and he did his loyal best to support her, but Lady Beach-Mandarin's attraction to that distant clump of lilac on the right was equally great and much more powerful. She flowed, a great and audible tide of socially influential womanhood, across the green spaces of the garden, and drew the others with her. And it seemed to Mr. Brumley — not that he believed his eyes — that beyond those lilacs something ran out, something black that crouched close to the ground and went very swiftly. It flashed like an arrow across a further space of flower-bed, dropped to the ground, became two agitatedly receding boot soles and was gone. Had it ever been? He glanced at Lady Harman, but she was looking back with the naïve anxiety of a hostess to her cypress, — at Lady Beach-Mandarin, but she was proliferating compliments and decorative scrolls and flourishes like the engraved frontispiece to a seventeenth-century book.

"I know I'm inordinately curious," said Lady Beach-Mandarin, "but gardens are my Joy. I want to go into every corner of this. Peep into everything. And I feel somehow" — and here she urged a smile on Lady Harman's attention— "that I shan't begin to know *you*, until I know all your environment."

She turned the flank of the lilacs as she said these words and advanced in echelon with a stately swiftness upon the laurels beyond.

Lady Harman said there was nothing beyond but sycamores and the fence, but Lady Beach-Mandarin would press on through a narrow path that pierced the laurel hedge, in order, she said, that she might turn back and get the whole effect of the grounds.

And so it was they discovered the mushroom shed.

"A mushroom shed!" cried Lady Beach-Mandarin. "And if we look in — shall we see hosts and regiments of mushrooms? I must — I must."

"I *think* it is locked," said Lady Harman.

Mr. Brumley darted forward; tried the door and turned quickly. "It's locked," he said and barred Lady Beach-Mandarin's advance.

“And besides,” said Lady Harman, “there’s no mushrooms there. They won’t come up. It’s one of my husband’s — annoyances.”

Lady Beach-Mandarin had turned round and now surveyed the house. “What a splendid idea,” she cried, “that wistaria! All mixed with the laburnum. I don’t think I have ever seen such a charming combination of blossoms!”

The whole movement of the party swept about and faced cypress-ward. Away there the sandy-whiskered butler and a footman and basket chairs and a tea-table, with a shining white cloth, and two ladies were now grouping themselves....

But the mind of Mr. Brumley gave little heed to these things. His mind was full of a wonder, and the wonder was this, that the mushroom shed had behaved like a living thing. The door of the mushroom shed was not locked and in that matter he had told a lie. The door of the mushroom shed had been unlocked quite recently and the key and padlock had been dropped upon the ground. And when he had tried to open the mushroom shed it had first of all yielded to his hand and then it had closed again with great strength — exactly as a living mussel will behave if one takes it unawares. But in addition to this passionate contraction the mushroom shed had sworn in a hoarse whisper and breathed hard, which is more than your mussel can do....

§3

Mr. Brumley’s interest in Lady Harman was to be almost too crowded by detail before that impulsive call was over. Superposed upon the mystery of the mushroom shed was the vivid illumination of Lady Harman by her mother and sister. They had an effect of having reluctantly become her social inferiors for her own good; the mother — her name he learnt was Mrs. Sawbridge — had all Lady Harman’s tall slenderness, but otherwise resembled her only in the poise of her neck and an occasional gesture; she was fair and with a kind of ignoble and premeditated refinement in her speech and manner. She was dressed with the restraint of a prolonged and attenuated widowhood, in a rich and complicatedly quiet dress of mauve and grey. She was obviously a transitory visitor and not so

much taking the opulence about her and particularly the great butler for granted as pointedly and persistently ignoring it in an effort to seem to take it for granted. The sister, on the other hand, had Lady Harman's pale darkness but none of her fineness of line. She missed altogether that quality of fineness. Her darkness was done with a quite perceptible heaviness, her dignity passed into solidity and her profile was, with an entire want of hesitation, handsome. She was evidently the elder by a space of some years and she was dressed with severity in grey.

These two ladies seemed to Mr. Brumley to offer a certain resistance of spirit to the effusion of Lady Beach-Mandarin, rather as two small anchored vessels might resist the onset of a great and foaming tide, but after a time it was clear they admired her greatly. His attention was, however, a little distracted from them by the fact that he was the sole representative of the more serviceable sex among five women and so in duty bound to stand by Lady Harman and assist with various handings and offerings. The tea equipage was silver and not only magnificent but, as certain quick movements of Miss Sharsper's eyes and nose at its appearance betrayed, very genuine and old.

Lady Beach-Mandarin having praised the house and garden all over again to Mrs. Sawbridge, and having praised the cypress and envied the tea things, resumed her efforts to secure the immediate establishment of permanent social relations with Lady Harman. She reverted to the question of the Shakespear Dinners Society and now with a kind of large skilfulness involved Mrs. Sawbridge in her appeal. "Won't *you* come on our Committee?" said Lady Beach-Mandarin.

Mrs. Sawbridge gave a pinched smile and said she was only staying in London for quite a little time, and when pressed admitted that there seemed no need whatever for consulting Sir Isaac upon so obviously foregone a conclusion as Lady Harman's public adhesion to the great movement.

"I shall put his hundred guineas down to Sir Isaac and Lady Harman," said Lady Beach-Mandarin with an air of conclusion, "and now I want to know, dear Lady Harman, whether we can't have *you* on our Committee of administration. We want — just one other

woman to complete us."

Lady Harman could only parry with doubts of her ability.

"You ought to go on, Ella," said Miss Sawbridge suddenly, speaking for the first time and in a manner richly suggestive of great principles at stake.

"Ella," thought the curious mind of Mr. Brumley. "And is that Eleanor now or Ellen or — is there any other name that gives one Ella? Simply Ella?"

"But what should I have to do?" fenced Lady Harman, resisting but obviously attracted.

Lady Beach-Mandarin invented a lengthy paraphrase for prompt acquiescences.

"I shall be chairwoman," she crowned it with. "I can so easily *see you through* as they say."

"Ella doesn't go out half enough," said Miss Sawbridge suddenly to Miss Sharsper, who was regarding her with furtive intensity — as if she was surreptitiously counting her features.

Miss Sharsper caught in mid observation started and collected her mind. "One ought to go out," she said. "Certainly."

"And independently," said Miss Sawbridge, with meaning.

"Oh independently!" assented Miss Sharsper. It was evident she would now have to watch her chance and begin counting all over again from the beginning.

Mr. Brumley had an impression that Mrs. Sawbridge had said something quite confidential in his ear. He turned perplexed.

"Such charming weather," the lady repeated in the tone of one who doesn't wish so pleasant a little secret to be too generally discussed.

"Never known a better summer," agreed Mr. Brumley.

And then all these minor eddies were submerged in Lady Beach-Mandarin's advance towards her next step, an invitation to lunch. "There," said she, "I'm not Victorian. I always separate husbands and wives — by at least a week. You must come alone."

It was clear to Mr. Brumley that Lady Harman wanted to come alone — and was going to accept, and equally clear that she and her mother and sister regarded this as a very daring thing to do. And when that was settled Lady Beach-Mandarin went on to the

altogether easier topic of her Social Friends, a society of smart and influential women; who devoted a certain fragment of time every week to befriending respectable girls employed in London, in a briskly amiable manner, having them to special teas, having them to special evenings with special light refreshments, knowing their names as far as possible and asking about their relations, and generally making them feel that Society was being very frank and amiable to them and had an eye on them and meant them well, and was better for them than socialism and radicalism and revolutionary ideas. To this also Lady Harman it seemed was to come. It had an effect to Mr. Brumley's imagination as if the painted scene of that lady's life was suddenly bursting out into open doors — everywhere.

"Many of them are *quite* lady-like," echoed Mrs. Sawbridge suddenly, picking up the whole thing instantly and speaking over her tea cup in that quasi-confidential tone of hers to Mr. Brumley.

"Of course they are mostly quite dreadfully Sweated," said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "Especially in the confectionery — —" She thought of her position in time. "In the inferior class of confectioners' establishments," she said and then hurried on to: "Of course when you come to lunch, — Agatha Alimony. I'm most anxious for you and her to meet."

"Is that *the* Agatha Alimony?" asked Miss Sawbridge abruptly.

"The one and only," said Lady Beach-Mandarin, flashing a smile at her. "And what a marvel she is! I do so want you to know her, Lady Harman. She'd be a Revelation to you...."

Everything had gone wonderfully so far. "And now," said Lady Beach-Mandarin, thrusting forward a face of almost exaggerated motherliness and with an unwonted tenderness suffusing her voice, "show me the Chicks."

There was a brief interrogative pause.

"Your Chicks," expanded Lady Beach-Mandarin, on the verge of crooning. "Your *little* Chicks."

"*Oh!*" cried Lady Harman understanding. "The children."

"Lucky woman!" cried Lady Beach-Mandarin. "Yes."

"One hasn't begun to be friends," she added, "until one has seen — them...."

"So *true*," Mrs. Sawbridge confided to Mr. Brumley with a look

that almost languished....

"Certainly," said Mr. Brumley, "rather."

He was a little distraught because he had just seen Sir Isaac step forward in a crouching attitude from beyond the edge of the lilacs, peer at the tea-table with a serpent-like intentness and then dart back convulsively into cover....

If Lady Beach-Mandarin saw him Mr. Brumley felt that anything might happen.

§4

Lady Beach-Mandarin always let herself go about children.

It would be unjust to the general richness of Lady Beach-Mandarin to say that she excelled herself on this occasion. On all occasions Lady Beach-Mandarin excelled herself. But never had Mr. Brumley noted quite so vividly Lady Beach-Mandarin's habitual self-surpassingness. She helped him, he felt, to understand better those stories of great waves that sweep in from the ocean and swamp islands and devastate whole littorals. She poured into the Harman nursery and filled every corner of it. She rose to unprecedented heights therein. It seemed to him at moments that they ought to make marks on the walls, like the marks one sees on the houses in the lower valley of the Main to record the more memorable floods. "The dears!" she cried: "the *little* things!" before the nursery door was fairly opened.

(There should have been a line for that at once on the jamb just below the lintel.)

The nursery revealed itself as a large airy white and green apartment entirely free from old furniture and done rather in the style of an æsthetically designed hospital, with a tremendously humorous decorative frieze of cocks and puppies and very bright-coloured prints on the walls. The dwarfish furniture was specially designed in green-stained wood and the floor was of cork carpet diversified by white furry rugs. The hospital quality was enhanced by the uniformed and disciplined appearance of the middle-aged and reliable head nurse and her subdued but intelligent subordinate.

Three sturdy little girls, with a year step between each of them,

stood up to receive Lady Beach-Mandarin's invasion; an indeterminate baby sprawled regardless of its dignity on a rug. "Aah!" cried Lady Beach-Mandarin, advancing in open order. "Come and be hugged, you dears! Come and be hugged!" Before she knelt down and enveloped their shrinking little persons Mr. Brumley was able to observe that they were pretty little things, but not the beautiful children he could have imagined from Lady Harman. Peeping through their infantile delicacy, hints all too manifest of Sir Isaac's characteristically pointed nose gave Mr. Brumley a peculiar — a eugenic, qualm.

He glanced at Lady Harman and she was standing over the ecstasies of her tremendous visitor, polite, attentive — with an entirely unemotional speculation in her eyes. Miss Sawbridge, stirred by the great waves of violent philoprogenitive enthusiasm that circled out from Lady Beach-Mandarin, had caught up the baby and was hugging it and addressing it in terms of humorous rapture, and the nurse and her assistant were keeping respectful but wary eyes upon the handling of their four charges. Miss Sharsper was taking in the children's characteristics with a quick expertness. Mrs. Sawbridge stood a little in the background and caught Mr. Brumley's eye and proffered a smile of sympathetic tolerance.

Mr. Brumley was moved by a ridiculous impulse, which he just succeeded in suppressing, to say to Mrs. Sawbridge, "Yes, I admit it looks very well. But the essential point, you know, is that it isn't so...."

That it wasn't so, indeed, entirely dominated his impression of that nursery. There was Lady Beach-Mandarin winning Lady Harman's heart by every rule of the game, rejoicing effusively in those crowning triumphs of a woman's being, there was Miss Sawbridge vociferous in support and Mrs. Sawbridge almost offering to join hands in rapturous benediction, and there was Lady Harman wearing her laurels, not indeed with indifference but with a curious detachment. One might imagine her genuinely anxious to understand why Lady Beach-Mandarin was in such a stupendous ebullition. One might have supposed her a mere cold-hearted intellectual if it wasn't that something in her warm beauty absolutely forbade any such interpretation. There came to Mr. Brumley again a thought that had

occurred to him first when Sir Isaac and Lady Harman had come together to Black Strand, which was that life had happened to this woman before she was ready for it, that her mind some years after her body was now coming to womanhood, was teeming with curiosity about all she had hitherto accepted, about Sir Isaac, about her children and all her circumstances....

There was a recapitulation of the invitations, a renewed offering of outlooks and vistas and Agatha Alimony. "You'll not forget," insisted Lady Beach-Mandarin. "You'll not afterwards throw us over."

"No," said Lady Harman, with that soft determination of hers. "I'll certainly come."

"I'm so sorry, so very sorry, not to have seen Sir Isaac," Lady Beach-Mandarin insisted.

The raid had accomplished its every object and was drifting doorward. For a moment Lady Beach-Mandarin desisted from Lady Harman and threw her whole being into an eddying effort to submerge the already subjugated Mrs. Sawbridge. Miss Sawbridge was behind up the oak staircase explaining Sir Isaac's interest in furniture-buying to Miss Sharsper. Mr. Brumley had his one moment with Lady Harman.

"I gather," he said, and abandoned that sentence.

"I hope," he said, "that you will have my little house down there. I like to think of *you* — walking in my garden."

"I shall love that garden," she said. "But I shall feel unworthy."

"There are a hundred little things I want to tell you — about it."

Then all the others seemed to come into focus again, and with a quick mutual understanding — Mr. Brumley was certain of its mutuality — they said no more to one another. He was entirely satisfied he had said enough. He had conveyed just everything that was needed to excuse and explain and justify his presence in that company.... Upon a big table in the hall he noticed that a silk hat and an umbrella had appeared since their arrival. He glanced at Miss Sharsper but she was keenly occupied with the table legs. He began to breathe freely again when the partings were over and he could get back into the automobile. "Toot," said the horn and he made a last grave salutation to the slender white figure on the steps. The great

butler stood at the side of the entrance and a step or so below her, with the air of a man who has completed a difficult task. A small attentive valet hovered out of the shadows behind.

§5

(A fragment of the conversation in Lady Beach-Mandarin's returning automobile may be recorded in a parenthesis here.

"But did you see Sir Isaac?" she cried, abruptly.

"Sir Isaac?" defended the startled Mr. Brumley. "Where?"

"He was dodging about in the garden all the time."

"Dodging about the garden!... I saw a sort of gardener — —"

"I'm sure I saw Him," said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "Positive. He hid away in the mushroom shed. The one you found locked."

"But my *dear* Lady Beach-Mandarin!" protested Mr. Brumley with the air of one who listens to preposterous suggestions. "What can make you think —— ?"

"Oh I *know* I saw him," said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "I know. He seemed all over the place. Like a Boy Scout. Didn't you see him too, Susan?"

Miss Sharsper was roused from deep preoccupation. "What, dear?" she asked.

"See Sir Isaac?"

"Sir Isaac?"

"Dodging about the garden when we went through it."

The novelist reflected. "I didn't notice," she said. "I was busy observing things.")

§6

Lady Beach-Mandarin's car passed through the open gates and was swallowed up in the dusty stream of traffic down Putney Hill; the great butler withdrew, the little manservant vanished, Mrs. Sawbridge and her elder daughter had hovered and now receded from the back of the hall; Lady Harman remained standing thoughtfully in the large Bulwer-Lyttonesque doorway of her house. Her face expressed a vague expectation. She waited to be addressed

from behind.

Then she became aware of the figure of her husband standing before her. He had come out of the laurels in front. His pale face was livid with anger, his hair dishevelled, there was garden mould and greenness upon his knees and upon his extended hands.

She was startled out of her quiet defensiveness. “Why, Isaac!” she cried. “Where have you been?”

It enraged him further to be asked so obviously unnecessary a question. He forgot his knightly chivalry.

“What the Devil do you mean,” he cried, “by chasing me all round the garden?”

“Chasing you? All round the garden?”

“You heard me breaking my shins on that infernal flower-pot you put for me, and out you shot with all your pack of old women and chased me round the garden. What do you mean by it?”

“I didn’t think you were in the garden.”

“Any Fool could have told I was in the garden. Any Fool might have known I was in the garden. If I wasn’t in the garden, then where the Devil was I? Eh? Where else could I be? Of course I was in the garden, and what you wanted was to hunt me down and make a fool of me. And look at me! Look, I say! Look at my hands!”

Lady Harman regarded the lord of her being and hesitated before she answered. She knew what she had to say would enrage him, but she had come to a point in their relationship when a husband’s good temper is no longer a supreme consideration. “You’ve had plenty of time to wash them,” she said.

“Yes,” he shouted. “And instead I kept ’em to show you. I stayed out here to see the last of that crew for fear I might run against ’em in the house. Of all the infernal old women — —”

His lips were providentially deprived of speech. He conveyed his inability to express his estimate of Lady Beach-Mandarin by a gesture of despair.

“If — if anyone calls and I am at home I have to receive them,” said Lady Harman, after a moment’s deliberation.

“Receiving them’s one thing. Making a Fool of yourself — —”

His voice was rising.

“Isaac,” said Lady Harman, leaning forward and then in a low

penetrating whisper, "*Snagsby!*"

(It was the name of the great butler.)

"*Damn* Snagsby!" hissed Sir Isaac, but dropping his voice and drawing near to her. What his voice lost in height it gained in intensity. "What I say is this, Ella, you oughtn't to have brought that old woman out into the garden at all — —"

"She insisted on coming."

"You ought to have snubbed her. You ought to have done — anything. How the Devil was I to get away, once she was through the verandah? There I was! *Bagged!*"

"You could have come forward."

"What! And meet *her*!"

"*I* had to meet her."

Sir Isaac felt that his rage was being frittered away upon details. "If you hadn't gone fooling about looking at houses," he said, and now he stood very close to her and spoke with a confidential intensity, "you wouldn't have got that Holy Terror on our track, see? And now — here we are!"

He walked past her into the hall, and the little manservant suddenly materialised in the middle of the space and came forward to brush him obsequiously. Lady Harman regarded that proceeding for some moments in a preoccupied manner and then passed slowly into the classical conservatory. She felt that in view of her engagements the discussion of Lady Beach-Mandarin was only just beginning.

§7

She reopened it herself in the long drawing-room into which they both drifted after Sir Isaac had washed the mould from his hands. She went to a French window, gathered courage, it seemed, by a brief contemplation of the garden, and turned with a little effort.

"I don't agree," she said, "with you about Lady Beach-Mandarin."

Sir Isaac appeared surprised. He had assumed the incident was closed. "*How?*" he asked compactly.

"I don't agree," said Lady Harman. "She seems friendly and jolly."

"She's a Holy Terror," said Sir Isaac. "I've seen her twice, Lady

Harman."

"A call of that kind," his wife went on, " — when there are cards left and so on — has to be returned."

"You won't," said Sir Isaac.

Lady Harman took a blind-tassel in her hand, — she felt she had to hold on to something. "In any case," she said, "I should have to do that."

"In any case?"

She nodded. "It would be ridiculous not to. We —— It is why we know so few people — because we don't return calls...."

Sir Isaac paused before answering. "We don't *want* to know a lot of people," he said. "And, besides —— Why! anybody could make us go running about all over London calling on them, by just coming and calling on us. No sense in it. She's come and she's gone, and there's an end of it."

"No," said Lady Harman, gripping her tassel more firmly. "I shall have to return that call."

"I tell you, you won't."

"It isn't only a call," said Lady Harman. "You see, I promised to go there to lunch."

"Lunch!"

"And to go to a meeting with her."

"Go to a meeting!"

" — of a society called the Social Friends. And something else. Oh! to go to the committee meetings of her Shakespear Dinners Movement."

"I've heard of that."

"She said you supported it — or else of course...."

Sir Isaac restrained himself with difficulty.

"Well," he said at last, "you'd better write and tell her you can't do any of these things; that's all."

He thrust his hands into his trousers pockets and walked to the French window next to the one in which she stood, with an air of having settled this business completely, and being now free for the tranquil contemplation of horticulture. But Lady Harman had still something to say.

"I am going to *all* these things," she said. "I said I would, and I

will.”

He didn’t seem immediately to hear her. He made the little noise with his teeth that was habitual to him. Then he came towards her. “This is your infernal sister,” he said.

Lady Harman reflected. “No,” she decided. “It’s myself.”

“I might have known when we asked her here,” said Sir Isaac with an habitual disregard of her judgments that was beginning to irritate her more and more. “You can’t take on all these people. They’re not the sort of people we want to know.”

“I want to know them,” said Lady Harman.

“I don’t.”

“I find them interesting,” Lady Harman said. “And I’ve promised.”

“Well you oughtn’t to have promised without consulting me.”

Her reply was the material of much subsequent reflection on the part of Sir Isaac. There was something in her manner....

“You see, Isaac,” she said, “you kept so out of the way....”

In the pause that followed her words, Mrs. Sawbridge appeared from the garden smiling with a determined amiability, and bearing a great bunch of the best roses (which Sir Isaac hated to have picked) in her hands.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

The Beginnings of Lady Harman

§1

Lady Harman had been married when she was just eighteen.

Mrs. Sawbridge was the widow of a solicitor who had been killed in a railway collision while his affairs, as she put it, were unsettled; and she had brought up her two daughters in a villa at Penge upon very little money, in a state of genteel protest. Ellen was the younger. She had been a sturdy dark-eyed doll-dragging little thing and had then shot up very rapidly. She had gone to a boarding-school at Wimbledon because Mrs. Sawbridge thought the Penge day-school had made Georgina opiniated and unladylike, besides developing her muscular system to an unrefined degree. The Wimbledon school was on less progressive lines, and anyhow Ellen grew taller and more feminine than her sister and by seventeen was already womanly, dignified and intensely admired by a number of schoolmates and a large circle of their cousins and brothers. She was generally very good and only now and then broke out with a venturesome enterprise that hurt nobody. She got out of a skylight, for example, and perambulated the roof in the moonshine to see how it felt and did one or two other little things of a similar kind. Otherwise her conduct was admirable and her temper in those days was always contagiously good. That attractiveness which Mr. Brumley felt, was already very manifest, and a little hindered her in the attainment of other distinctions. Most of her lessons were done for her by willing slaves, and they were happy slaves because she abounded in rewarding kindnesses; but on the other hand the study of English literature and music was almost forced upon her by the zeal of the two visiting Professors of these subjects.

And at seventeen, which is the age when girls most despise the boyishness of young men, she met Sir Isaac and filled him with an invincible covetousness....

§2

The school at Wimbledon was a large, hushed, faded place presided over by a lady of hidden motives and great exterior calm named Miss Beeton Clavier. She was handsome without any improper attractiveness, an Associate in Arts of St. Andrew's University and a cousin of Mr. Blenker of the *Old Country Gazette*. She was assisted by several resident mistresses and two very carefully married visiting masters for music and Shakespear, and playground and shrubbery and tennis-lawn were all quite effectively hidden from the high-road. The curriculum included Latin Grammar — nobody ever got to the reading of books in that formidable tongue — French by an English lady who had been in France, Hanoverian German by an irascible native, the more seemly aspects of English history and literature, arithmetic, algebra, political economy and drawing. There was no hockey played within the precincts, science was taught without the clumsy apparatus or objectionable diagrams that are now so common, and stress was laid upon the carriage of the young ladies and the iniquity of speaking in raised voices. Miss Beeton Clavier deprecated the modern "craze for examinations," and released from such pressure her staff did not so much give courses of lessons as circle in a thorough-looking and patient manner about their subjects. This turn-spit quality was reflected in the school idiom; one did not learn algebra or Latin or so-forth, one *did* algebra, one was *put into* Latin....

The girls went through this system of exercises and occupations, evasively and as it were *sotto voce*, making friends, making enemies, making love to one another, following instincts that urged them to find out something about life — in spite of the most earnest discouragement.... None of them believed for a moment that the school was preparing them for life. Most of them regarded it as a long inexplicable passage of blank, grey occupations through which they had to pass. Beyond was the sunshine.

Ellen gathered what came to her. She realized a certain beauty in music in spite of the biographies of great musicians, the technical enthusiasms and the general professionalism of her teacher; the literature master directed her attention to memoirs and through these

she caught gleams of understanding when the characters of history did for brief intervals cease to be rigidly dignified and institutional like Miss Beeton Clavier and became human — like schoolfellows. And one little spectacled mistress, who wore art dresses and adorned her class-room with flowers, took a great fancy to her, talked to her with much vagueness and emotion of High Aims, and lent her with an impressive furtiveness the works of Emerson and Shelley and a pamphlet by Bernard Shaw. It was a little difficult to understand what these writers were driving at, they were so dreadfully clever, but it was clear they reflected criticism upon the silences of her mother and the rigidities of Miss Beeton Clavier.

In that suppressed and evasive life beneath the outer forms and procedures of school and home, there came glimmerings of something that seemed charged with the promise of holding everything together, the key, religion. She was attracted to religion, much more attracted than she would confess even to herself, but every circumstance in her training dissuaded her from a free approach. Her mother treated religion with a reverence that was almost indistinguishable from huffiness. She never named the deity and she did not like the mention of His name: she threw a spell of indelicacy over religious topics that Ellen never thoroughly cast off. She put God among objectionable topics — albeit a sublime one. Miss Beeton Clavier sustained this remarkable suggestion. When she read prayers in school she did so with the balanced impartiality of one who offers no comment. She seemed pained as she read and finished with a sigh. Whatever she intended to convey, she conveyed that even if the divinity was not all He should be, if, indeed, He was a person almost primitive, having neither the restraint nor the self-obliteration of a refined gentlewoman, no word of it should ever pass her lips. And so Ellen as a girl never let her mind go quite easily into this reconciling core of life, and talked of it only very rarely and shyly with a few chosen coevals. It wasn't very profitable talk. They had a guilty feeling, they laughed a little uneasily, they displayed a fatal proclivity to stab the swelling gravity of their souls with some forced and silly jest and so tumble back to ground again before they rose too high....

Yet great possibilities of faith and devotion stirred already in the

girl's heart. She thought little of God by day, but had a strange sense of Him in the starlight; never under the moonlight — that was in no sense divine — but in the stirring darkness of the stars. And it is remarkable that after a course of astronomical enlightenment by a visiting master and descriptions of masses and distances, incredible aching distances, then even more than ever she seemed to feel God among the stars....

A fatal accident to a schoolfellow turned her mind for a time to the dark stillnesses of death. The accident happened away in Wales during the summer holidays; she saw nothing of it, she only knew of its consequence. Hitherto she had assumed it was the function of girls to grow up and go out from the grey intermediate state of school work into freedoms and realities beyond. Death happened, she was aware, to young people, but not she had thought to the people one knew. This termination came with a shock. The girl was no great personal loss to Ellen, they had belonged to different sets and classes, but the conception of her as lying very very still for ever was a haunting one. Ellen felt she did not want to be still for evermore in a confined space, with life and sunshine going on all about her and above her, and it quickened her growing appetite for living to think that she might presently have to be like that. How stifled one would feel!

It couldn't be like that.

She began to speculate about that future life upon which religion insists so much and communicates so little. Was it perhaps in other planets, under those wonderful, many-mooned, silver-banded skies? She perceived more and more a kind of absurdity in the existence all about her. Was all this world a mere make-believe, and would Miss Beeton Clavier and every one about her presently cast aside a veil? Manifestly there was a veil. She had a very natural disposition to doubt whether the actual circumstances of her life were real. Her mother for instance was so lacking in blood and fire, so very like the stiff paper wrapping of something else. But if these things were not real, what was real? What might she not presently do? What might she not presently be? Perhaps death had something to do with that. Was death perhaps no more than the flinging off of grotesque outer garments by the newly arrived guests at the feast of living? She had

that feeling that there might be a feast of living.

These preoccupations were a jealously guarded secret, but they gave her a quality of slight detachment that added a dreaming dignity to her dark tall charm.

There were moments of fine, deep excitement that somehow linked themselves in her mind with these thoughts as being set over against the things of every day. These too were moments quite different and separate in quality from delight, from the keen appreciation of flowers or sunshine or little vividly living things. Daylight seemed to blind her to them, as they blinded her to starshine. They too had a quality of reference to things large and remote, distances, unknown mysteries of light and matter, the thought of mountains, cool white wildernesses and driving snowstorms, or great periods of time. Such were the luminous transfigurations that would come to her at the evening service in church.

The school used to sit in the gallery over against the organist, and for a year and more Ellen had the place at the corner from which she could look down the hazy candle-lit vista of the nave and see the congregation as ranks and ranks of dim faces and vaguely apprehended clothes, ranks that rose with a peculiar deep and spacious rustle to sing, and sang with a massiveness of effect she knew in no other music. Certain hymns in particular seemed to bear her up and carry her into another larger, more wonderful world: "Heart's Abode, Celestial Salem" for example, a world of luminous spiritualized sensuousness. Of such a quality she thought the Heavenly City must surely be, away there and away. But this persuasion differed from those other mystical intimations in its detachment from any sense of the divinity. And remarkably mixed up with it and yet not belonging to it, antagonistic and kindred like a silver dagger stuck through a mystically illuminated parchment, was the angelic figure of a tall fair boy in a surplice who stood out amidst the choir below and sang, it seemed to her, alone.

She herself on these occasions of exaltation would be far too deeply moved to sing. She was inundated by a swimming sense of boundaries nearly transcended, as though she was upon the threshold of a different life altogether, the real enduring life, and as though if

she could only maintain herself long enough in this shimmering exaltation she would get right over; things would happen, things that would draw her into that music and magic and prevent her ever returning to everyday life again. There one would walk through music between great candles under eternal stars, hand-in-hand with a tall white figure. But nothing ever did happen to make her cross that boundary; the hymn ceased, the "Amen" died away, as if a curtain fell. The congregation subsided. Reluctantly she would sink back into her seat....

But all through the sermon, to which she never gave the slightest attention, her mind would feel mute and stilled, and she used to come out of church silent and preoccupied, returning unwillingly to the commonplaces of life....

§3

Ellen met Sir Isaac — in the days before he was Sir Isaac — at the house of a school friend with whom she was staying at Hythe, and afterwards her mother and sister came down and joined her for a fortnight at a Folkstone boarding house. Mr. Harman had caught a chill while inspecting his North Wales branches and had come down with his mother to recuperate. He and his mother occupied a suite of rooms in the most imposing hotel upon the Leas. Ellen's friend's people were partners in a big flour firm and had a pleasant new æsthetic white and green house of rough-cast and slates in the pretty country beyond the Hythe golf links, and Ellen's friend's father was deeply anxious to develop amiable arrangements with Mr. Harman. There was much tennis, much croquet, much cycling to the Hythe sea-wall and bathing from little tents and sitting about in the sunshine, and Mr. Harman had his first automobile with him — they were still something of a novelty in those days — and was urgent to take picnic parties to large lonely places on the downs.

There were only two young men in that circle, one was engaged to Ellen's friend's sister, and the other was bound to a young woman remote in Italy; neither was strikingly attractive and both regarded Harman with that awe tempered by undignified furtive derision which wealth and business capacity so often inspire in the young

male. At first he was quiet and simply looked at her, as it seemed any one might look, then she perceived he looked at her intently and continuously, and was persistently close to her and seemed always to be trying to do things to please her and attract her attention. And then from the general behaviour of the women about her, her mother and Mrs. Harman and her friend's mother and her friend's sister, rather than from any one specific thing they said, it grew upon her consciousness that this important and fabulously wealthy person, who was also it seemed to her so modest and quiet and touchingly benevolent, was in love with her.

"Your daughter," said Mrs. Harman repeatedly to Mrs. Sawbridge, "is charming, perfectly charming."

"She's *such* a child," said Mrs. Sawbridge repeatedly in reply.

And she told Ellen's friend's mother apropos of Ellen's friend's engagement that she wanted all her daughters to marry for love, she didn't care what the man had so long as they loved each other, and meanwhile she took the utmost care that Isaac had undisputed access to the girl, was watchfully ready to fend off anyone else, made her take everything he offered and praised him quietly and steadily to her. She pointed out how modest and unassuming he was, in spite of the fact that he was "controlling an immense business" and in his own particular trade "a perfect Napoleon."

"For all one sees to the contrary he might be just a private gentleman. And he feeds thousands and thousands of people...."

"Sooner or later," said Mrs. Harman, "I suppose Isaac will marry. He's been such a good son to me that I shall feel it dreadfully, and yet, you know, I wish I could see him settled. Then *I* shall settle — in a little house of my own somewhere. Just a little place. I don't believe in coming too much between son and daughter-in-law...."

Harman's natural avidity was tempered by a proper modesty. He thought Ellen so lovely and so infinitely desirable — and indeed she was — that it seemed incredible to him that he could ever get her. And yet he had got most of the things in life he had really and urgently wanted. His doubts gave his love-making an eager, lavish and pathetic delicacy. He watched her minutely in an agony of appreciation. He felt ready to give or promise anything.

She was greatly flattered by his devotion and she liked the

surprises and presents he heaped upon her extremely. Also she was sorry for him beyond measure. In the deep recesses of her heart was an oleographic ideal of a large brave young man with blue eyes, a wave in his fair hair, a wonderful tenor voice and — she could not help it, she tried to look away and not think of it — a broad chest. With him she intended to climb mountains. So clearly she could not marry Mr. Harman. And because of that she tried to be very kind indeed to him, and when he faltered that she could not possibly care for him, she reassured him so vaguely as to fill him with wild gusts of hope and herself with a sense of pledges. He told her one day between two sets of tennis — which he played with a certain tricky skill — that he felt that the very highest happiness he could ever attain would be to die at her feet. Presently her pity and her sense of responsibility had become so large and deep that the dream hero with the blue eyes was largely overlaid and hidden by them.

Then, at first a little indirectly and then urgently and with a voice upon the edge of tears, Harman implored her to marry him. She had never before in the whole course of her life seen a grown-up person on the very verge of tears. She felt that the release of such deep fountains as that must be averted at any cost. She felt that for a mere schoolgirl like herself, a backward schoolgirl who had never really mastered quadratics, to cause these immense and tragic distresses was abominable. She was sure her former headmistress would disapprove very highly of her. “I will make you a queen,” said Harman, “I will give all my life to your happiness.”

She believed he would.

She refused him for the second time but with a weakening certainty in a little white summer-house that gave a glimpse of the sea between green and wooded hills. She sat and stared at the sea after he had left her, through a mist of tears; so pitiful did he seem. He had beaten his poor fists on the stone table and then caught up her hand, kissed it and rushed out.... She had not dreamt that love could hurt like that.

And all that night — that is to say for a full hour before her wet eyelashes closed in slumber — she was sleepless with remorse for the misery she was causing him.

The third time when he said with suicidal conviction that he could

not live without her, she burst into tears of pity and yielded. And instantly, amazingly, with the famished swiftness of a springing panther he caught her body into his arms and kissed her on the lips....

§4

They were married with every circumstance of splendour, with very expensive music, and portraits in the illustrated newspapers and a great glitter of favours and carriages. The bridegroom was most thoughtful and generous about the Sawbridge side of the preparations. Only one thing was a little perplexing. In spite of his impassioned impatience he delayed the wedding. Full of dark hints and a portentous secret, he delayed the wedding for twenty-five whole days in order that it should follow immediately upon the publication of the birthday honours list. And then they understood.

"You will be Lady Harman," he exulted; "*Lady* Harman. I would have given double.... I have had to back the *Old Country Gazette* and I don't care a rap. I'd have done anything. I'd have bought the rotten thing outright.... Lady Harman!"

He remained loverlike until the very eve of their marriage. Then suddenly it seemed to her that all the people she cared for in the world were pushing her away from them towards him, giving her up, handing her over. He became — possessive. His abjection changed to pride. She perceived that she was going to be left tremendously alone with him, with an effect, as if she had stepped off a terrace on to what she believed to be land and had abruptly descended into very deep water....

And while she was still feeling quite surprised by everything and extremely doubtful whether she wanted to go any further with this business, which was manifestly far more serious, out of all proportion more serious, than anything that had ever happened to her before — and *unpleasant*, abounding indeed in crumpling indignities and horrible nervous stresses, it dawned upon her that she was presently to be that strange, grown-up and preoccupied thing, a mother, and that girlhood and youth and vigorous games, mountains and swimming and running and leaping were over for her as far as she could see for ever....

Both the prospective grandmothers became wonderfully kind and helpful and intimate, preparing with gusto and an agreeable sense of delegated responsibility for the child that was to give them all the pride of maternity again and none of its inconveniences.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

The World according to Sir Isaac

§1

Her marriage had carried Ellen out of the narrow world of home and school into another that had seemed at first vastly larger, if only on account of its freedom from the perpetual achievement of small economies. Hitherto the urgent necessity of these had filled life with irksome precautions and clipped the wings of every dream. This new life into which Sir Isaac led her by the hand promised not only that release but more light, more colour, more movement, more people. There was to be at any rate so much in the way of rewards and compensation for her pity of him.

She found the establishment at Putney ready for her. Sir Isaac had not consulted her about it, it had been his secret, he had prepared it for her with meticulous care as a surprise. They returned from a honeymoon in Skye in which the attentions of Sir Isaac and the comforts of a first-class hotel had obscured a marvellous background of sombre mountain and wide stretches of shining sea. Sir Isaac had been very fond and insistent and inseparable, and she was doing her best to conceal a strange distressful jangling of her nerves which she now feared might presently dispose her to scream. Sir Isaac had been goodness itself, but how she craved now for solitude! She was under the impression now that they were going to his mother's house in Highbury. Then she thought he would have to go away to business for part of the day at any rate, and she could creep into some corner and begin to think of all that had happened to her in these short summer months.

They were met at Euston by his motor-car. "*Home*," said Sir Isaac, with a little gleam of excitement, when the more immediate luggage was aboard.

As they hummed through the West-End afternoon Ellen became aware that he was whistling through his teeth. It was his invariable indication of mental activity, and her attention came drifting back

from her idle contemplation of the shoppers and strollers of Piccadilly to link this already alarming symptom with the perplexing fact that they were manifestly travelling west.

"But this," she said presently, "is Knightsbridge."

"Goes to Kensington," he replied with attempted indifference.

"But your mother doesn't live this way."

"*We* do," said Sir Isaac, shining at every point of his face.

"But," she halted. "Isaac! — where are we going?"

"Home," he said.

"You've not taken a house?"

"Bought it."

"But, — it won't be ready!"

"I've seen to that."

"Servants!" she cried in dismay.

"That's all right." His face broke into an excited smile. His little eyes danced and shone. "Everything," he said.

"But the servants!" she said.

"You'll see," he said. "There's a butler — and everything."

"A butler!" He could now no longer restrain himself. "I was weeks," he said, "getting it ready. Weeks and weeks.... It's a house.... I'd had my eye on it before ever I met you. It's a real *good* house, Elly...."

The fortunate girl-wife went on through Brompton to Walham Green with a stunned feeling. So women have felt in tumbrils. A nightmare of butlers, a galaxy of possible butlers, filled her soul.

No one was quite so big and formidable as Snagsby, towering up to receive her, upon the steps of the home her husband was so amazingly giving her.

The reader has already been privileged to see something of this house in the company of Lady Beach-Mandarin. At the top of the steps stood Mrs. Crumble, the new and highly recommended cook-housekeeper in her best black silk flounced and expanded, and behind her peeped several neat maids in caps and aprons. A little valet-like under-butler appeared and tried to balance Snagsby by hovering two steps above him on the opposite side of the Victorian mediæval porch.

Assisted officiously by Snagsby and amidst the deferential

unhelpful gestures of the under-butler, Sir Isaac handed his wife out of the car. “Everything all right, Snagsby?” he asked brusquely if a little breathless.

“Everything in order, Sir Isaac.”

“And here; — this is her ladyship.”

“I ‘ope her ladyship ‘ad a pleasent journey to ‘er new ‘ome. I’m sure if I may presume, Sir Isaac, we shall all be very glad to serve her ladyship.”

(Like all well-trained English servants, Snagsby always dropped as many h’s as he could when conversing with his superiors. He did this as a mark of respect and to prevent social confusion, just as he was always careful to wear a slightly misfitting dress coat and fold his trousers so that they creased at the sides and had a wide flat effect in front.)

Lady Harman bowed a little shyly to his good wishes and was then led up to Mrs. Crumble, in a stiff black silk, who curtseyed with a submissive amiability to her new mistress. “I’m sure, me lady,” she said. “I’m sure — —”

There was a little pause. “Here they are, you see, right and ready,” said Sir Isaac, and then with an inspiration, “Got any tea for us, Snagsby?”

Snagsby addressing his mistress inquired if he should serve tea in the garden or the drawing-room, and Sir Isaac decided for the garden.

“There’s another hall beyond this,” he said, and took his wife’s arm, leaving Mrs. Crumble still bowing amiably before the hall table. And every time she bowed she rustled richly....

“It’s quite a big garden,” said Sir Isaac.

§2

And so the woman who had been a girl three weeks ago, this tall, dark-eyed, slightly perplexed and very young-looking lady, was introduced to the home that had been made for her. She went about it with an alarmed sense of strange responsibilities, not in the least feeling that anything was being given to her. And Sir Isaac led her from point to point full of the pride and joy of new possession — for it was his first own house as well as hers — rejoicing over it and

exacting gratitude.

"It's all right, isn't it?" he asked looking up at her.

"It's wonderful. I'd no idea."

"See," he said, indicating a great brass bowl of perennial sunflowers on the landing, "your favourite flower!"

"My favourite flower?"

"You said it was — in that book. Perennial sunflower."

She was perplexed and then remembered.

She understood now why he had said downstairs, when she had glanced at a big photographic enlargement of a portrait of Doctor Barnardo, "your favourite hero in real life."

He had brought her at Hythe one day a popular Victorian device, a confession album, in which she had had to write down on a neat rose-tinted page, her favourite author, her favourite flower, her favourite colour, her favourite hero in real life, her "pet aversion," and quite a number of such particulars of her subjective existence. She had filled this page in a haphazard manner late one night, and she was disconcerted to find how thoroughly her careless replies had come home to roost. She had put down "pink" as her favourite colour because the page she was writing upon suggested it, and the paper of the room was pale pink, the curtains strong pink with a pattern of paler pink and tied with large pink bows, and the lamp shades, the bedspread, the pillow-cases, the carpet, the chairs, the very crockery — everything but the omnipresent perennial sunflowers — was pink. Confronted with this realization, she understood that pink was the least agreeable of all possible hues for a bedroom. She perceived she had to live now in a chromatic range between rather underdone mutton and salmon. She had said that her favourite musical composers were Bach and Beethoven; she really meant it, and a bust of Beethoven materialized that statement, but she had made Doctor Barnardo her favourite hero in real life because his name also began with a B and she had heard someone say somewhere that he was a very good man. The predominance of George Eliot's pensive rather than delightful countenance in her bedroom and the array of all that lady's works in a lusciously tooled pink leather, was due to her equally reckless choice of a favourite author. She had said too that Nelson was her favourite historical character, but Sir Isaac with a

delicate jealousy had preferred to have this heroic but regrettably immoral personality represented in his home only by an engraving of the Battle of Copenhagen....

She stood surveying this room, and her husband watched her eagerly. She was, he felt, impressed at last!...

Certainly she had never seen such a bedroom in her life. By comparison even with the largest of the hotel apartments they had occupied it was vast; it had writing-tables and a dainty bookcase and a blushing sofa, and dressing-tables and a bureau and a rose-red screen and three large windows. Her thoughts went back to the narrow little bedroom at Penge with which she had hitherto been so entirely content. Her own few little books, a photograph or so, — they'd never dare to come here, even if she dared to bring them.

"Here," said Sir Isaac, flinging open a white door, "is your dressing-room."

She was chiefly aware of a huge white bath standing on a marble slab under a window of crinkled pink-stained glass, and of a wide space of tiled floor with white fur rugs.

"And here," he said, opening a panel that was covered by wall paper, "is *my* door."

"Yes," he said to the question in her eyes, "that's my room. You got this one — for your own. It's how people do now. People of our position.... There's no lock."

He shut the door slowly again and surveyed the splendours he had made with infinite satisfaction.

"All right?" he said, "isn't it?"... He turned to the pearl for which the casket was made, and slipped an arm about her waist. His arm tightened.

"Got a kiss for me, Elly?" he whispered.

At this moment, a gong almost worthy of Snagsby summoned them to tea. It came booming in to them with a vast officious arrogance that brooked no denial. It made one understand the imperatives of the Last Trump, albeit with a greater dignity.... There was a little awkward pause.

"I'm so dirty and trainy," she said, disengaging herself from his arm. "And we ought to go to tea."

§3

The same exceptional aptitude of Sir Isaac for detailed administration that had relieved his wife from the need of furnishing and arranging a home, made the birth of her children and the organization of her nursery an almost detached affair for her. Sir Isaac went about in a preoccupied way, whistling between his teeth and planning with expert advice the equipment of an ideal nursery, and her mother and his mother became as it were voluminous clouds of uncommunicative wisdom and precaution. In addition the conversation of Miss Crump, the extremely skilled and costly nurse, who arrived a full Advent before the child, fresh from the birth of a viscount, did much to generalize whatever had remained individual of this thing that was happening. With so much intelligence focussed, there seemed to Lady Harman no particular reason why she should not do her best to think as little as possible about the impending affair, which meant for her, she now understood quite clearly, more and more discomfort culminating in an agony. The summer promised to be warm, and Sir Isaac took a furnished house for the great event in the hills behind Torquay. The maternal instinct is not a magic thing, it has to be evoked and developed, and I decline to believe it is indicative of any peculiar unwomanliness in Lady Harman that when at last she beheld her newly-born daughter in the hands of the experts, she moaned druggishly, "Oh! please take it away. Oh! Take it — away. Anywhere — anywhere."

It was very red and wrinkled and aged-looking and, except when it opened its mouth to cry, extraordinarily like its father. This resemblance disappeared — along with a crop of darkish red hair — in the course of a day or two, but it left a lurking dislike to its proximity in her mind long after it had become an entirely infantile and engaging baby.

§4

Those early years of their marriage were the happiest period of Sir Isaac's life.

He seemed to have everything that man could desire. He was still

only just forty at his marriage; he had made for himself a position altogether dominant in the world of confectionery and popular refreshment, he had won a title, he had a home after his own heart, a beautiful young wife, and presently delightful children in his own image, and it was only after some years of contentment and serenity and with a certain incredulity that he discovered that something in his wife, something almost in the nature of discontent with her lot, was undermining and threatening all the comfort and beauty of his life.

Sir Isaac was one of those men whom modern England delights to honour, a man of unpretentious acquisitiveness, devoted to business and distracted by no æsthetic or intellectual interests. He was the only son of his mother, the widow of a bankrupt steam-miller, and he had been a delicate child to rear. He left Mr. Gambard's college at Ealing after passing the second-class examination of the College of Preceptors at the age of sixteen, to go into a tea-office as clerk without a salary, a post he presently abandoned for a clerkship in the office of a large refreshment catering firm. He attracted the attention of his employers by suggesting various administrative economies, and he was already drawing a salary of two hundred and fifty pounds a year when he was twenty-one. Many young men would have rested satisfied with so rapid an advancement, and would have devoted themselves to the amusements that are now considered so permissible to youth, but young Harman was made of sterner stuff, and it only spurred him to further efforts. He contrived to save a considerable proportion of his salary for some years, and at the age of twenty-seven he started, in association with a firm of flour millers, the International Bread and Cake Stores, which spread rapidly over the country. They were not in any sense of the word "International," but in a search for inflated and inflating adjectives this word attracted him most, and the success of the enterprise justified his choice. Originally conceived as a syndicated system of baker's shops running a specially gritty and nutritious line of bread, the Staminal Bread, in addition to the ordinary descriptions, it rapidly developed a catering side, and in a little time there were few centres of clerkly employment in London or the Midlands where an International could not be found supplying the midday scone or poached egg, washed

down by a cup of tea, or coffee, or lemonade. It meant hard work for Isaac Harman. It drew lines on his cheeks, sharpened his always rather pointed nose to an extreme efficiency, greyed his hair, and gave an acquired firmness to his rather retreating mouth. All his time was given to the details of this development; always he was inspecting premises, selecting and dismissing managers, making codes of rules and fines for his growing army of employees, organizing and reorganizing his central offices and his central bakeries, hunting up cheaper and cheaper supplies of eggs and flour, and milk and ham, devising advertisements and agency developments. He had something of an artist's passion in these things; he went about, a little bent and peaky, calculating and planning and hissing through his teeth, and feeling not only that he was getting on, but that he was getting on in the most exemplary way. Manifestly, anybody in his line of business who wanted to be leisurely, or to be generous, who possessed any broader interests than the shop, who troubled to think about the nation or the race or any of the deeper mysteries of life, was bound to go down before him. He dealt privately with every appetite — until his marriage no human being could have suspected him of any appetite but business — he disposed of every distracting impulse with unobtrusive decision; and even his political inclination towards Radicalism sprang chiefly from an irritation with the legal advantages of landlordism natural to a man who is frequently leasing shops.

At school Sir Isaac had not been a particularly prominent figure; his disposition at cricket to block and to bowl "sneaks" and "twisters" under-arm had raised his average rather than his reputation; he had evaded fights and dramatic situations, and protected himself upon occasions of unavoidable violence by punching with his white knuckles held in a peculiar and vicious manner. He had always been a little insensitive to those graces of style, in action if not in art, which appeal so strongly to the commoner sort of English mind; he played first for safety, and that assured, for the uttermost advantage. These tendencies became more marked with maturity. When he took up tennis for his health's sake he developed at once an ungracious service that had to be killed like vermin; he developed an instinct for the deadest ball available, and

his returns close up to the net were like assassinations. Indeed, he was inherently incapable of any vision beyond the express prohibitions and permissions of the rules of the games he played, or beyond the laws and institutions under which he lived. His idea of generosity was the undocumented and unqualified purchase of a person by payments made in the form of a gift.

And this being the quality of Sir Isaac's mind, it followed that his interpretations of the relationship of marriage were simple and strict. A woman, he knew, had to be wooed to be won, but when she was won, she was won. He did not understand wooing after that was settled. There was the bargain and her surrender. He on his side had to keep her, dress her, be kind to her, give her the appearances of pride and authority, and in return he had his rights and his privileges and undefined powers of control. That you know, by the existing rules, is the reality of marriage where there are no settlements and no private property of the wife's. That is to say, it is the reality of marriage in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred. And it would have shocked Sir Isaac extremely, and as a matter of fact it did shock him, for any one to suggest the slightest revision of so entirely advantageous an arrangement. He was confident of his good intentions, and resolved to the best of his ability to make his wife the happiest of living creatures, subject only to reasonable acquiescences and general good behaviour.

Never before had he cared for anything so much as he did for her — not even for the International Bread and Cake Stores. He gloated upon her. She distracted him from business. He resolved from the outset to surround her with every luxury and permit her no desire that he had not already anticipated. Even her mother and Georgina, whom he thought extremely unnecessary persons, were frequent visitors to his house. His solicitude for her was so great that she found it difficult even to see her doctor except in his presence. And he bought her a pearl necklace that cost six hundred pounds. He was, in fact, one of those complete husbands who grow rare in these decadent days.

The social circle to which Sir Isaac introduced his wife was not a very extensive one. The business misadventures of his father had naturally deprived his mother of most of her friends; he had made

only acquaintances at school, and his subsequent concentration upon business had permitted very few intimacies. Renewed prosperity had produced a certain revival of cousins, but Mrs. Harman, established in a pleasant house at Highbury, had received their attentions with a well-merited stiffness. His chief associates were his various business allies, and these and their wives and families formed the nucleus of the new world to which Ellen was gradually and temperately introduced. There were a few local callers, but Putney is now too deeply merged with London for this practice of the countryside to have any great effect upon a new-comer's visiting circle.

Perhaps Mr. Charterson might claim to be Sir Isaac's chief friend at the time of that gentleman's marriage. Transactions in sugar had brought them together originally. He was Sir Isaac's best man, and the new knight entertained a feeling of something very like admiration for him. Moreover, Mr. Charterson had very large ears, more particularly was the left one large, extraordinarily large and projecting upper teeth, which he sought vainly to hide beneath an extravagant moustache, and a harsh voice, characteristics that did much to allay the anxieties natural to a newly married man. Mr. Charterson was moreover adequately married to a large, attentive, enterprising, swarthy wife, and possessed a splendid house in Belgravia. Not quite so self-made as Sir Isaac, he was still sufficiently self-made to take a very keen interest in his own social advancement and in social advancement generally, and it was through him that Sir Isaac's attention had been first directed to those developing relations with politics that arise as a business grows to greatness. "I'm for Parliament," said Charterson. "Sugar's in politics, and I'm after it. You'd better come too, Harman. Those chaps up there, they'll play jiggery-pokery with sugar if we aren't careful. And it won't be only sugar, Harman!"

Pressed to expand this latter sentence, he pointed out to his friend that "any amount of interfering with employment" was in the air—"any amount."

"And besides," said Mr. Charterson, "men like us have a stake in the country, Harman. We're getting biggish people. We ought to do our share. I don't see the fun of leaving everything to the landlords and the lawyers. Men of our sort have got to make ourselves felt. We

want a business government. Of course — one pays. So long as I get a voice in calling the tune I don't mind paying the piper a bit. There's going to be a lot of interference with trade. All this social legislation. And there's what you were saying the other day about these leases...."

"I'm not much of a talker," said Harman. "I don't see myself gassing in the House."

"Oh! I don't mean going into Parliament," said Charterson. "That's for some of us, perhaps.... But come into the party, make yourself felt."

Under Charterson's stimulation it was that Harman joined the National Liberal Club, and presently went on to the Climax, and through him he came to know something of that inner traffic of arrangements and bargains which does so much to keep a great historical party together and maintain its vitality. For a time he was largely overshadowed by the sturdy Radicalism of Charterson, but presently as he understood this interesting game better, he embarked upon a line of his own. Charterson wanted a seat, and presently got it; his maiden speech on the Sugar Bounties won a compliment from Mr. Evesham; and Harman, who would have piloted a monoplane sooner than address the House, decided to be one of those silent influences that work outside our national assembly. He came to the help of an embarrassed Liberal weekly, and then, in a Fleet Street crisis, undertook the larger share of backing the *Old Country Gazette*, that important social and intellectual party organ. His knighthood followed almost automatically.

Such political developments introduced a second element into the intermittent social relations of the Harman household. Before his knighthood and marriage Sir Isaac had participated in various public banquets and private parties and little dinners in the vaults of the House and elsewhere, arising out of his political intentions, and with the appearance of a Lady Harman there came a certain urgency on the part of those who maintain in a state of hectic dullness the social activities of the great Liberal party. Horatio Blenker, Sir Isaac's editor, showed a disposition to be socially very helpful, and after Mrs. Blenker had called in a state of worldly instructiveness, there was a little dinner at the Blenkers' to introduce young Lady Harman

to the great political world. It was the first dinner-party of her life, and she found it dazzling rather than really agreeable.

She felt very slender and young and rather unclothed about the arms and neck, in spite of the six hundred pound pearl necklace that had been given to her just as she stood before the mirror in her white-and-gold dinner dress ready to start. She had to look down at that dress ever and again and at her shining arms to remind herself that she wasn't still in schoolgirl clothes, and it seemed to her there was not another woman in the room who was not fairly entitled to send her off to bed at any moment. She had been a little nervous about the details of the dinner, but there was nothing strange or difficult but caviare, and in that case she waited for some one else to begin. The Chartersons were there, which was very reassuring, and the abundant flowers on the table were a sort of protection. The man on her right was very nice, gently voluble, and evidently quite deaf, so that she had merely to make kind respectful faces at him. He talked to her most of the time, and described the peasant costumes in Marken and Walcheren. And Mr. Blenker, with a fine appreciation of Sir Isaac's watchful temperament and his own magnetism, spoke to her three times and never looked at her once all through the entertainment.

A few weeks later they went to dinner at the Chartersons', and then she gave a dinner, which was arranged very skilfully by Sir Isaac and Snagsby and the cook-housekeeper, with a little outside help, and then came a big party reception at Lady Barleypound's, a multitudinous miscellaneous assembly in which the obviously wealthy rubbed shoulders with the obviously virtuous and the not quite so obviously clever. It was a great orgy of standing about and seeing the various Blenkers and the Cramptons and the Weston Massinghays and the Daytons and Mrs. Millingham with her quivering lorgnette and her last tame genius and Lewis, and indeed all the Tapirs and Tadpoles of Liberalism, being tremendously active and influential and important throughout the evening. The house struck Ellen as being very splendid, the great staircase particularly so, and never before had she seen a great multitude of people in evening dress. Lady Barleypound in the golden parlour at the head of the stairs shook hands automatically, lest it would seem in some amiable dream, Mrs. Blapton and a daughter rustled across the

gathering in a hasty vindictive manner and vanished, and a number of handsome, glittering, dark-eyed, splendidly dressed women kept together in groups and were tremendously but occultly amused. The various Blenkers seemed everywhere, Horatio in particular with his large fluent person and his luminous tenor was like a shop-walker taking customers to the departments: one felt he was weaving all these immiscibles together into one great wise Liberal purpose, and that he deserved quite wonderful things from the party; he even introduced five or six people to Lady Harman, looking sternly over her head and restraining his charm as he did so on account of Sir Isaac's feelings. The people he brought up to her were not very interesting people, she thought, but then that was perhaps due to her own dreadful ignorance of politics.

Lady Harman ceased even to dip into the vortex of London society after March, and in June she went with her mother and a skilled nurse to that beautiful furnished house Sir Isaac had found near Torquay, in preparation for the birth of their first little daughter.

§5

It seemed to her husband that it was both unreasonable and ungrateful of her to become a tearful young woman after their union, and for a phase of some months she certainly was a tearful young woman, but his mother made it clear to him that this was quite a correct and permissible phase for her, as she was, and so he expressed his impatience with temperance, and presently she was able to pull herself together and begin to readjust herself to a universe that had seemed for a time almost too shattered for endurance. She resumed the process of growing up that her marriage had for a time so vividly interrupted, and if her schooldays were truncated and the college phase omitted, she had at any rate a very considerable amount of fundamental experience to replace these now customary completions.

Three little girls she brought into the world in the first three years of her married life, then after a brief interval of indifferent health she had a fourth girl baby of a physique quite obviously inferior to its predecessors, and then, after — and perhaps as a consequence of —

much whispered conversation of the two mothers-in-law, protests and tactful explanation on the part of the elderly and trustworthy family doctor and remarks of an extraordinary breadth (and made at table too, almost before the door had closed on Snagsby!) from Ellen's elder sister, there came a less reproductive phase....

But by that time Lady Harman had acquired the habit of reading and the habit of thinking over what she read, and from that it is an easy step to thinking over oneself and the circumstances of one's own life. The one thing trains for the other.

Now the chief circumstance in the life of Lady Harman was Sir Isaac. Indeed as she grew to a clear consciousness of herself and her position, it seemed to her he was not so much a circumstance as a circumvallation. There wasn't a direction in which she could turn without immediately running up against him. He had taken possession of her extremely. And from her first resignation to this as an inevitable fact she had come, she hardly knew how, to a renewed disposition to regard this large and various universe beyond him and outside of him, with something of the same slight adventurousness she had felt before he so comprehensively happened to her. After her first phase of despair she had really done her best to honour the bargain she had rather unwittingly made and to love and to devote herself and be a loyal and happy wife to this clutching, hard-breathing little man who had got her, and it was the insatiable excesses of his demands quite as much as any outer influence that made her realize the impossibility of such a concentration.

His was a supremely acquisitive and possessive character, so that he insulted her utmost subjugations by an obtrusive suspicion and jealousy, he was jealous of her childish worship of her dead father, jealous of her disposition to go to church, jealous of the poet Wordsworth because she liked to read his sonnets, jealous because she loved great music, jealous when she wanted to go out; if she seemed passionless and she seemed more and more passionless he was jealous, and the slightest gleam of any warmth of temperament filled him with a vile and furious dread of dishonouring possibilities. And the utmost resolution to believe in him could not hide from her for ever the fact that his love manifested itself almost wholly as a parade of ownership and a desire, without kindliness, without any

self-forgetfulness. All his devotion, his self-abjection, had been the mere qualms of a craving, the flush of eager courtship. Do as she would to overcome these realizations, forces within her stronger than herself, primordial forces with the welfare of all life in their keeping, cried out upon the meanness of his face, the ugly pointed nose and the thin compressed lips, the weak neck, the clammy hands, the ungainly nervous gestures, the tuneless whistling between the clenched teeth. He would not let her forget a single detail. Whenever she tried to look at any created thing, he thrust himself, like one of his own open-air advertisements, athwart the attraction.

As she grew up to an achieved womanhood — and it was even a physical growing-up, for she added more than an inch of stature after her marriage — her life became more and more consciously like a fencing match in which her vision flashed over his head and under his arms and this side of him and that, while with a toiling industry he fought to intercept it. And from the complete acceptance of her matrimonial submission, she passed on by almost insensible degrees towards a conception of her life as a struggle, that seemed at first entirely lonely and unsupported, to exist — *against* him.

In every novel as in every picture there must be an immense simplification, and so I tell the story of Lady Harman's changing attitude without any of those tangled leapings-forward or harkings-back, those moods and counter moods and relapses which made up the necessary course of her mind. But sometimes she was here and sometimes she was there, sometimes quite back to the beginning an obedient, scrupulously loyal and up-looking young wife, sometimes a wife concealing the humiliation of an unhappy choice in a spurious satisfaction and affection. And mixed up with widening spaces of criticism and dissatisfaction and hostility there were, you must understand, moments of real liking for this outrageous little man and streaks of an absurd maternal tenderness for him. They had been too close together to avoid that. She had a woman's affection of ownership too, and disliked to see him despised or bettered or untidy; even those ridiculous muddy hands had given her a twinge of solicitude....

And all the while she was trying to see the universe also, the great background of their two little lives, and to think what it might mean

for her over and above their too obliterating relationship.

§6

It would be like counting the bacteria of an infection to trace how ideas of insubordination came drifting into Sir Isaac's Paradise. The epidemic is in the air. There is no Tempter nowadays, no definitive apple. The disturbing force has grown subtler, blows in now like a draught, creeps and gathers like the dust, — a disseminated serpent. Sir Isaac brought home his young, beautiful and rather crumpled and astonished Eve and by all his standards he was entitled to be happy ever afterwards. He knew of one danger, but against that he was very watchful. Never once for six long years did she have a private duologue with another male. But Mudie and Sir Jesse Boot sent parcels to the house unchecked, the newspaper drifted in not even censored: the nurses who guided Ellen through the essential incidents of a feminine career talked of something called a "movement." And there was Georgina....

The thing they wanted they called the Vote, but that demand so hollow, so eyeless, had all the terrifying effect of a mask. Behind that mask was a formless invincible discontent with the lot of womanhood. It wanted, — it was not clear what it wanted, but whatever it wanted, all the domestic instincts of mankind were against admitting there was anything it could want. That remarkable agitation had already worked up to the thunderous pitch, there had been demonstrations at Public Meetings, scenes in the Ladies' Gallery and something like rioting in Parliament Square before ever it occurred to Sir Isaac that this was a disturbance that touched his home. He had supposed suffragettes were ladies of all too certain an age with red noses and spectacles and a masculine style of costume, who wished to be hugged by policemen. He said as much rather knowingly and wickedly to Charterson. He could not understand any woman not coveting the privileges of Lady Harman. And then one day while Georgina and her mother were visiting them, as he was looking over the letters at the breakfast table according to his custom before giving them out, he discovered two identical newspaper packets addressed to his wife and his sister-in-law, and upon them

were these words printed very plainly, “Votes for Women.”

“Good Lord!” he cried. “What’s this? It oughtn’t to be allowed.” And he pitched the papers at the wastepaper basket under the sideboard.

“I’ll thank you,” said Georgina, “not to throw away our *Votes for Women*. We subscribe to that.”

“Eh?” cried Sir Isaac.

“We’re subscribers. Snagsby, just give us those papers.” (A difficult moment for Snagsby.) He picked up the papers and looked at Sir Isaac.

“Put ’em down there,” said Sir Isaac, waving to the sideboard and then in an ensuing silence handed two letters of no importance to his mother-in-law. His face was pale and he was breathless. Snagsby with an obvious tactfulness retired.

Sir Isaac watched the door close.

His remark pointedly ignored Georgina.

“What you been thinking about, Elly,” he asked, “subscribing to *that* thing?”

“I wanted to read it.”

“But you don’t hold with all that Rubbish — —”

“*Rubbish!*” said Georgina, helping herself to marmalade.

“Well, rot then, if you like,” said Sir Isaac, unamiably and panting.

With that as Snagsby afterwards put it — for the battle raged so fiercely as to go on even when he presently returned to the room— “the fat was in the fire.” The Harman breakfast-table was caught up into the Great Controversy with heat and fury like a tree that is overtaken by a forest fire. It burnt for weeks, and smouldered still when the first white heats had abated. I will not record the arguments of either side, they were abominably bad and you have heard them all time after time; I do not think that whatever side you have taken in this matter you would find much to please you in Sir Isaac’s goadings or Georgina’s repartees. Sir Isaac would ask if women were prepared to go as soldiers and Georgina would enquire how many years of service he had done or horrify her mother by manifest allusion to the agonies and dangers of maternity, — things like that. It gave a new interest to breakfast for Snagsby; and the peculiarly

lady-like qualities of Mrs. Sawbridge, a gift for silent, pallid stiffness, a disposition, tactful but unsuccessful, to "change the subject," an air of being about to leave the room in disdain, had never shone with such baleful splendour. Our interest here is rather with the effect of these remarkable disputes, which echoed in Sir Isaac's private talk long after Georgina had gone again, upon Lady Harman. He could not leave this topic of feminine emancipation alone, once it had been set going, and though Ellen would always preface her remarks by, "Of course Georgina goes too far," he worried her slowly into a series of definite insurgent positions. Sir Isaac's attacks on Georgina certainly brought out a good deal of absurdity in her positions, and Georgina at times left Sir Isaac without a leg to stand on, and the net result of their disputes as of most human controversies was not conviction for the hearer but release. Her mind escaped between them, and went exploring for itself through the great gaps they had made in the simple obedient assumptions of her girlhood. That question originally put in Paradise, "Why shouldn't we?" came into her mind and stayed there. It is a question that marks a definite stage in the departure from innocence. Things that had seemed opaque and immutable appeared translucent and questionable. She began to read more and more in order to learn things and get a light upon things, and less and less to pass the time. Ideas came to her that seemed at first strange altogether and then grotesquely justifiable and then crept to a sort of acceptance by familiarity. And a disturbing intermittent sense of a general responsibility increased and increased in her.

You will understand this sense of responsibility which was growing up in Lady Harman's mind if you have felt it yourself, but if you have not then you may find it a little difficult to understand. You see it comes, when it comes at all, out of a phase of disillusionment. All children, I suppose, begin by taking for granted the rightness of things in general, the soundness of accepted standards, and many people are at least so happy that they never really grow out of this assumption. They go to the grave with an unbroken confidence that somewhere behind all the immediate injustices and disorders of life, behind the antics of politics, the rigidities of institutions, the pressure of custom and the vagaries of law, there is wisdom and purpose and

adequate provision, they never lose that faith in the human household they acquired amongst the directed securities of home. But for more of us and more there comes a dissolution of these assurances; there comes illumination as the day comes into a candle-lit uncurtained room. The warm lights that once rounded off our world so completely are betrayed for what they are, smoky and guttering candles. Beyond what once seemed a casket of dutiful security is now a limitless and indifferent universe. Ours is the wisdom or there is no wisdom; ours is the decision or there is no decision. That burthen is upon each of us in the measure of our capacity. The talent has been given us and we may not bury it.

§7

And as we reckon up the disturbing influences that were stirring Lady Harman out of that life of acquiescences to which women are perhaps even more naturally disposed than men, we may pick out the conversation of Susan Burnet as something a little apart from the others, as something with a peculiar barbed pointedness of its own that was yet in other respects very representative of a multitude of nudges and nips and pricks and indications that life was giving Lady Harman's awaking mind. Susan Burnet was a woman who came to renovate and generally do up the Putney curtains and furniture and loose covers every spring; she was Mrs. Crumble's discovery, she was sturdy and short and she had open blue eyes and an engaging simplicity of manner that attracted Lady Harman from the outset. She was stuck away in one of the spare bedrooms and there she was available for any one, so long, she explained, as they didn't fluster her when she was cutting out, with a flow of conversation that not even a mouth full of pins seemed to interrupt. And Lady Harman would go and watch Susan Burnet by the hour together and think what an enviably independent young woman she was, and listen with interest and something between horror and admiration to the various impressions of life she had gathered during a hardy and adventurous career.

Their early conversations were about Susan Burnet's business and the general condition of things in that world of upholsterers' young

women in which Susan had lived until she perceived the possibilities of a "connexion," and set up for herself. And the condition of things in that world, as Susan described it, brought home to Lady Harman just how sheltered and limited her own upbringing had been. "It isn't right," said Susan, "the way they send girls out with fellers into empty houses. Naturally the men get persecuting them. They don't seem hardly able to help it, some of them, and I will say this for them, that a lot of the girls go more than half way with them, leading them on. Still there's a sort of man won't leave you alone. One I used to be sent out with and a married man too he was, Oh! — he used to give me a time. Why I've bit his hands before now, bit hard, before he'd leave go of me. It's my opinion the married men are worse than the single. Bolder they are. I pushed him over a scuttle once and he hit his head against a bookcase. I was fair frightened of him. 'You little devil,' he says; 'I'll be even with you yet....' Oh! I've been called worse things than that.... Of course a respectable girl gets through with it, but it's trying and to some it's a sort of temptation...."

"I should have thought," reflected Lady Harman, "you could have told someone."

"It's queer," said Susan; "but it never seemed to me the sort of thing a girl ought to go telling. It's a kind of private thing. And besides, it isn't exactly easy to tell.... I suppose the Firm didn't want to be worried by complaints and disputes about that sort of thing. And it isn't always easy to say just which of the two is to blame."

"But how old are the girls they send out?" asked Lady Harman.

"Some's as young as seventeen or eighteen. It all depends on the sort of work that's wanted to be done...."

"Of course a lot of them have to marry...."

This lurid little picture of vivid happenings in unoccupied houses and particularly of the prim, industrious, capable Susan Burnet, biting aggressive wrists, stuck in Lady Harman's imagination. She seemed to be looking into hitherto unsuspected pits of simple and violent living just beneath her feet. Susan told some upholsteress love tales, real love tales, with a warmth and honesty of passion in them that seemed at once dreadful and fine to Lady Harman's underfed imagination. Under encouragement Susan expanded the

picture, beyond these mere glimpses of workshop and piece-work and furtive lust. It appeared that she was practically the head of her family; there was a mother who had specialized in ill-health, a sister of defective ability who stayed at home, a brother in South Africa who was very good and sent home money, and three younger sisters growing up. And father, — she evaded the subject of father at first. Then presently Lady Harman had some glimpses of an earlier phase in Susan Burnet's life "before any of us were earning money." Father appeared as a kindly, ineffectual, insolvent figure struggling to conduct a baker's and confectioner's business in Walthamstow, mother was already specializing, there were various brothers and sisters being born and dying. "How many were there of you altogether?" asked Lady Harman.

"Thirteen there was. Father always used to laugh and say he'd had a fair baker's dozen. There was Luke to begin with — —"

Susan began to count on her fingers and recite braces of scriptural names.

She could only make up her tale to twelve. She became perplexed. Then she remembered. "Of course!" she cried: "there was Nicodemus. He was still-born. I *always* forget Nicodemus, poor little chap! But he came — was it sixth or seventh? — seventh after Anna."

She gave some glimpses of her father and then there was a collapse of which she fought shy. Lady Harman was too delicate to press her to talk of that.

But one day in the afternoon Susan's tongue ran.

She was telling how first she went to work before she was twelve.

"But I thought the board schools — —" said Lady Harman.

"I had to go before the committee," said Susan. "I had to go before the committee and ask to be let go to work. There they was, sitting round a table in a great big room, and they was as kind as anything, one old gentleman with a great white beard, he was as kind as could be. 'Don't you be frightened, my dear,' he says. 'You tell us why you want to go out working.' 'Well,' I says, '*somebody's* got to earn something,' and that made them laugh in a sort of fatherly way, and after that there wasn't any difficulty. You see it was after Father's Inquest, and everybody was disposed to be kind to us. 'Pity

they can't all go instead of this educational Tommy Rot,' the old gentleman says. 'You learn to work, my dear' — and I did...."

She paused.

"Father's inquest?" said Lady Harman.

Susan seemed to brace herself to the occasion. "Father," she said, "was drowned. I know — I hadn't told you that before. He was drowned in the Lea. It's always been a distress and humiliation to us there had to be an Inquest. And they threw out things.... It's why we moved to Haggerston. It's the worst that ever happened to us in all our lives. Far worse. Worse than having the things sold or the children with scarlet fever and having to burn everything.... I don't like to talk about it. I can't help it but I don't....

"I don't know why I talk to you as I do, Lady Harman, but I don't seem to mind talking to you. I don't suppose I've opened my mouth to anyone about it, not for years — except to one dear friend I've got — her who persuaded me to be a church member. But what I've always said and what I will always say is this, that I don't believe any evil of Father, I don't believe, I won't ever believe he took his life. I won't even believe he was in drink. I don't know how he got in the river, but I'm certain it wasn't so. He was a weak man, was Father, I've never denied he was a weak man. But a harder working man than he was never lived. He worried, anyone would have worried seeing the worries he had. The shop wasn't paying as it was; often we never tasted meat for weeks together, and then there came one of these Internationals, giving overweight and underselling...."

"One of these Internationals?"

"Yes, I don't suppose you've ever heard of them. They're in the poorer neighbourhoods chiefly. They sell teas and things mostly now but they began as bakers' shops and what they did was to come into a place and undersell until all the old shops were ruined and shut up. That was what they tried to do and Father hadn't no more chance amongst them than a mouse in a trap.... It was just like being run over. All the trade that stayed with us after a bit was Bad Debts. You can't blame people I suppose for going where they get more and pay less, and it wasn't till we'd all gone right away to Haggerston that they altered things and put the prices up again. Of course Father lost heart and all that. He didn't know what to do, he'd sunk all he had in

the shop; he just sat and moped about. Really, — he was pitiful. He wasn't able to sleep; he used to get up at nights and go about downstairs. Mother says she found him once sweeping out the bakehouse at two o'clock in the morning. He got it into his head that getting up like that would help him. But I don't believe and I won't believe he wouldn't have seen it through if he could. Not to my dying day will I believe that...."

Lady Harman reflected. "But couldn't he have got work again — as a baker?"

"It's hard after you've had a shop. You see all the younger men've come on. They know the new ways. And a man who's had a shop and failed, he's lost heart. And these stores setting up make everything drivinger. They do things a different way. They make it harder for everyone."

Both Lady Harman and Susan Burnet reflected in silence for a few seconds upon the International Stores. The sewing woman was the first to speak.

"Things like that," she said, "didn't ought to be. One shop didn't ought to be allowed to set out to ruin another. It isn't fair trading, it's a sort of murder. It oughtn't to be allowed. How was father to know?..."

"There's got to be competition," said Lady Harman.

"I don't call that competition," said Susan Burnet.

"But, — I suppose they give people cheaper bread."

"They do for a time. Then when they've killed you they do what they like.... Luke — he's one of those who'll say anything — well, he used to say it was a regular Monopoly. But it's hard on people who've set out to live honest and respectable and bring up a family plain and decent to be pushed out of the way like that."

"I suppose it is," said Lady Harman.

"What was father to *do*?" said Susan, and turned to Sir Isaac's armchair from which this discourse had distracted her.

And then suddenly, in a voice thick with rage, she burst out: "And then Alice must needs go and take their money. That's what sticks in *my* throat."

Still on her knees she faced about to Lady Harman.

"Alice goes into one of their Ho'burn branches as a waitress, do

what I could to prevent her. It makes one mad to think of it. Time after time I've said to her, 'Alice,' I've said, 'sooner than touch their dirty money I'd starve in the street.' And she goes! She says it's all nonsense of me to bear a spite. Laughs at me! 'Alice,' I told her, 'it's a wonder the spirit of poor father don't rise up against you.' And she laughs. Calls that bearing a spite.... Of course she was little when it happened. She can't remember, not as I remember...."

Lady Harman reflected for a time. "I suppose you don't know," she began, addressing Susan's industrious back; "you don't know who — who owns these International Stores?"

"I suppose it's some company," said Susan. "I don't see that it lets them off — being in a company."

§8

We have done much in the last few years to destroy the severe limitations of Victorian delicacy, and all of us, from princesses and prime-ministers' wives downward, talk of topics that would have been considered quite gravely improper in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, some topics have, if anything, become more indelicate than they were, and this is especially true of the discussion of income, of any discussion that tends, however remotely, to inquire, Who is it at the base of everything who really pays in blood and muscle and involuntary submissions for *your* freedom and magnificence? This, indeed, is almost the ultimate surviving indecency. So that it was with considerable private shame and discomfort that Lady Harman pursued even in her privacy the train of thought that Susan Burnet had set going. It had been conveyed into her mind long ago, and it had settled down there and grown into a sort of security, that the International Bread and Cake Stores were a very important contribution to Progress, and that Sir Isaac, outside the gates of his home, was a very useful and beneficial personage, and richly meriting a baronetcy. She hadn't particularly analyzed this persuasion, but she supposed him engaged in a kind of daily repetition, but upon modern scientific lines, of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, feeding a great multitude that would otherwise have gone hungry. She knew, too, from the advertisements that

flowered about her path through life, that this bread in question was exceptionally clean and hygienic; whole front pages of the *Daily Messenger*, headed the "Fauna of Small Bakehouses," and adorned with a bordering of *Blatta orientalis*, the common cockroach, had taught her that, and she knew that Sir Isaac's passion for purity had also led to the *Old Country Gazette's* spirited and successful campaign for a non-party measure securing additional bakehouse regulation and inspection. And her impression had been that the growing and developing refreshment side of the concern was almost a public charity; Sir Isaac gave, he said, a larger, heavier scone, a bigger pat of butter, a more elegant teapot, ham more finely cut and less questionable pork-pies than any other system of syndicated tea-shops. She supposed that whenever he sat late at night going over schemes and papers, or when he went off for days together to Cardiff or Glasgow or Dublin, or such-like centres, or when he became preoccupied at dinner and whistled thoughtfully through his teeth, he was planning to increase the amount or diminish the cost of tea and cocoa-drenched farinaceous food in the stomachs of that section of our national adolescence which goes out daily into the streets of our great cities to be fed. And she knew his vans and catering were indispensable to the British Army upon its manœuvres....

Now the smashing up of the Burnet family by the International Stores was disagreeably not in the picture of these suppositions. And the remarkable thing is that this one little tragedy wouldn't for a moment allow itself to be regarded as an exceptional accident in an otherwise fair vast development. It remained obstinately a specimen — of the other side of the great syndication.

It was just as if she had been doubting subconsciously all along.... In the silence of the night she lay awake and tried to make herself believe that the Burnet case was just a unique overlooked disaster, that it needed only to come to Sir Isaac's attention to be met by the fullest reparation....

After all she did not bring it to Sir Isaac's attention.

But one morning, while this phase of new doubts was still lively in her mind, Sir Isaac told her he was going down to Brighton, and then along the coast road in a car to Portsmouth, to pay a few surprise visits, and see how the machine was working. He would be

away a night, an unusual breach in his habits.

"Are you thinking of any new branches, Isaac?"

"I may have a look at Arundel."

"Isaac." She paused to frame her question carefully. "I suppose there are some shops at Arundel now."

"I've got to see to that."

"If you open —— I suppose the old shops get hurt. What becomes of the people if they do get hurt?"

"That's *their* look-out," said Sir Isaac.

"Isn't it bad for them?"

"Progress is Progress, Elly."

"It *is* bad for them. I suppose —— Wouldn't it be sometimes kinder if you took over the old shop — made a sort of partner of him, or something?"

Sir Isaac shook his head. "I want younger men," he said. "You can't get a move on the older hands."

"But, then, it's rather bad —— I suppose these little men you shut up, — some of them must have families."

"You're theorizing a bit this morning, Elly," said Sir Isaac, looking up over his coffee cup.

"I've been thinking — about these little people."

"Someone's been talking to you about my shops," said Sir Isaac, and stuck out an index finger. "If that's Georgina — —"

"It isn't Georgina," said Lady Harman, but she had it very clear in her mind that she must not say who it was.

"You can't make a business without squeezing somebody," said Sir Isaac. "It's easy enough to make a row about any concern that grows a bit. Some people would like to have every business tied down to a maximum turnover and so much a year profit. I dare say you've been hearing of these articles in the *London Lion*. Pretty stuff it is, too. This fuss about the little shopkeepers; that's a new racket. I've had all that row about the waitresses before, and the yarn about the Normandy eggs, and all that, but I don't see that you need go reading it against me, and bringing it up at the breakfast-table. A business is a business, it isn't a charity, and I'd like to know where you and I would be if we didn't run the concern on business lines.... Why, that *London Lion* fellow came to me with the first two of those

articles before the thing began. I could have had the whole thing stopped if I liked, if I'd chosen to take the back page of his beastly cover. That shows the stuff the whole thing is made of. That shows you. Why! — he's just a blackmailer, that's what he is. Much he cares for my waitresses if he can get the dibs. Little shopkeepers, indeed! I know 'em! Nice martyrs they are! There isn't one wouldn't *skin* all the others if he got half a chance...."

Sir Isaac gave way to an extraordinary fit of nagging anger. He got up and stood upon the hearthrug to deliver his soul the better. It was an altogether unexpected and illuminating outbreak. He was flushed with guilt. The more angry and eloquent he became, the more profoundly thoughtful grew the attentive lady at the head of his table....

When at last Sir Isaac had gone off in the car to Victoria, Lady Harman rang for Snagsby. "Isn't there a paper," she asked, "called the *London Lion*?"

"It isn't one I think your ladyship would like," said Snagsby, gently but firmly.

"I know. But I want to see it. I want copies of all the issues in which there have been articles upon the International Stores."

"They're thoroughly volgar, me lady," said Snagsby, with a large dissuasive smile.

"I want you to go out into London and get them now."

Snagsby hesitated and went. Within five minutes he reappeared with a handful of buff-covered papers.

"There 'appened to be copies in the pantry, me lady," he said. "We can't imagine 'ow they got there; someone must have brought them in, but 'ere they are quite at your service, me lady." He paused for a discreet moment. Something indescribably confidential came into his manner. "I doubt if Sir Isaac will quite like to 'ave them left about, me lady — after you done with them."

She was in a mood of discovery. She sat in the room that was all furnished in pink (her favourite colour) and read a bitter, malicious, coarsely written and yet insidiously credible account of her husband's business methods. Something within herself seemed to answer, "But didn't you know this all along?" That large conviction that her wealth and position were but the culmination of a great and

honourable social service, a conviction that had been her tacit comfort during much distasteful loyalty seemed to shrivel and fade. No doubt the writer was a thwarted blackmailer; even her accustomed mind could distinguish a twang of some such vicious quality in his sentences; but that did not alter the realities he exhibited and exaggerated. There was a description of how Sir Isaac pounced on his managers that was manifestly derived from a manager he had dismissed. It was dreadfully like him. Convincingly like him. There was a statement of the wages he paid his girl assistants and long extracts from his codes of rules and schedules of fines....

When she put down the paper she was suddenly afflicted by a vivid vision of Susan Burnet's father, losing heart and not knowing what to do. She had an unreasonable feeling that Susan Burnet's father must have been a small, kindly, furry, bunnyish, little man. Of course there had to be progress and the survival of the fittest. She found herself weighing what she imagined Susan Burnet's father to be like, against the ferrety face, stooping shoulders and scheming whistle of Sir Isaac.

There were times now when she saw her husband with an extreme distinctness.

§9

As this cold and bracing realization that all was not right with her position, with Sir Isaac's business procedure and the world generally, took possession of Lady Harman's thoughts there came also with it and arising out of it quite a series of new moods and dispositions. At times she was very full of the desire "to do something," something that would, as it were, satisfy and assuage this growing uneasiness of responsibility in her mind. At times her consuming wish was not to assuage but escape from this urgency. It worried her and made her feel helpless, and she wanted beyond anything else to get back to that child's world where all experiences are adventurous and everything is finally right. She felt, I think, that it was a little unfair to her that this something within her should be calling upon her to take all sorts of things gravely — hadn't she been a good wife and brought four

children into the world...?

I am setting down here as clearly as possible what wasn't by any means clear in Lady Harman's mind. I am giving you side by side phases that never came side by side in her thoughts but which followed and ousted and obliterated one another. She had moods of triviality. She had moods of magnificence. She had moods of intense secret hostility to her urgent little husband, and moods of genial tolerance for everything there was in her life. She had moods, and don't we all have moods? — of scepticism and cynicism, much profounder than the conventions and limitations of novel-writing permit us to tell here. And for hardly any of these moods had she terms and recognitions....

It isn't a natural thing to keep on worrying about the morality of one's material prosperity. These are proclivities superinduced by modern conditions of the conscience. There is a natural resistance in every healthy human being to such distressful heart-searchings. Strong instincts battled in Lady Harman against this intermittent sense of responsibility that was beginning to worry her. An immense lot of her was for simply running away from these troublesome considerations, for covering herself up from them, for distraction.

And about this time she happened upon "Elizabeth and her German Garden," and was very greatly delighted and stimulated by that little sister of Montaigne. She was charmed by the book's fresh gaiety, by its gallant resolve to set off all the good things there are in this world, the sunshine and flowers and laughter, against the limitations and thwartings and disappointments of life. For a time it seemed to her that these brave consolations were solutions, and she was stirred by an imitative passion. How stupid had she not been to let life and Sir Isaac overcome her! She felt that she must make herself like Elizabeth, exactly like Elizabeth; she tried forthwith, and a certain difficulty she found, a certain deadness, she ascribed to the square modernity of her house and something in the Putney air. The house was too large, it dominated the garden and controlled her. She felt she must get away to some place that was chiefly exterior, in the sunshine, far from towns and struggling, straining, angry and despairing humanity, from syndicated shops and all the embarrassing challenges of life. Somehow there it would be possible to keep Sir

Isaac at arm's length; and the ghost of Susan Burnet's father could be left behind to haunt the square rooms of the London house. And there she would live, horticultural, bookish, whimsical, witty, defiant, happily careless.

And it was this particular conception of evasion that had set her careering about the countryside in her car, looking for conceivable houses of refuge from this dark novelty of social and personal care, and that had driven her into the low long room of Black Strand and the presence of Mr. Brumley.

Of what ensued and the appearance and influence of Lady Beach-Mandarin and how it led among other things to a lunch invitation from that lady the reader has already been informed.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

The Adventurous Afternoon

§1

You will perhaps remember that before I fell into this extensive digression about Lady Harman's upbringing, we had got to the entry of Mrs. Sawbridge into the house bearing a plunder of Sir Isaac's best roses. She interrupted a conversation of some importance. Those roses at this point are still unwithered and fragrant, and moreover they are arranged according to Mrs. Sawbridge's ideas of elegance about Sir Isaac's home.... And Sir Isaac, when that conversation could be renewed, categorically forbade Lady Harman to go to Lady Beach-Mandarin's lunch and Lady Harman went to Lady Beach-Mandarin's lunch.

She had some peculiar difficulties in getting to that lunch.

It is necessary to tell certain particulars. They are particulars that will distress the delicacy of Mrs. Sawbridge unspeakably if ever she chances to read this book. But a story has to be told. You see Sir Isaac Harman had never considered it advisable to give his wife a private allowance. Whatever she wished to have, he maintained, she could have. The bill would afterwards be paid by his cheque on the first day of the month following the receipt of the bill. He found a generous pleasure in writing these cheques, and Lady Harman was magnificently housed, fed and adorned. Moreover, whenever she chose to ask for money he gave her money, usually double of what she demanded, — and often a kiss or so into the bargain. But after he had forbidden her to go to Lady Beach-Mandarin's so grave an estrangement ensued that she could not ask him for money. A door closed between them. And the crisis had come at an unfortunate moment. She possessed the sum of five shillings and eightpence.

She perceived quite early that this shortness of money would greatly embarrass the rebellion she contemplated. She was exceptionally ignorant of most worldly things, but she knew there was never yet a campaign without a war chest. She felt entitled to

money....

She planned several times to make a demand for replenishment with a haughty dignity; the haughty dignity was easy enough to achieve, but the demand was not. A sensitive dread of her mother's sympathetic curiosity barred all thoughts of borrowing in that direction, — she and her mother "never discussed money matters." She did not want to get Georgina into further trouble. And besides, Georgina was in Devonshire.

Even to get to Lady Beach-Mandarin's became difficult under these circumstances. She knew that Clarence, though he would take her into the country quite freely, had been instructed, on account of Sir Isaac's expressed dread of any accident happening to her while alone, not to plunge with her into the vortex of London traffic. Only under direct orders from Sir Isaac would Clarence take her down Putney Hill; though she might go up and away — to anywhere. She knew nothing of pawnshops or any associated methods of getting cash advances, and the possibility of using the telephone to hire an automobile never occurred to her. But she was fully resolved to go. She had one advantage in the fact that Sir Isaac didn't know the precise date of the disputed engagement. When that arrived she spent a restless morning and dressed herself at last with great care. She instructed Peters, her maid, who participated in these preparations with a mild astonishment, that she was going out to lunch, asked her to inform Mrs. Sawbridge of the fact and, outwardly serene, made a bolt for it down the staircase and across the hall. The great butler appeared; she had never observed how like a large note of interrogation his forward contours could be.

"I shall be out to lunch, Snagsby," she said, and went past him into the sunshine.

She left a discreetly astonished Snagsby behind her.

("Now where are we going out to lunch?" said Snagsby presently to Peters.

"I've never known her so particular with her clothes," said the maid.

"Never before — not in the same way; it's something new and special to this affair," Snagsby reflected, "I wonder now if Sir Isaac...."

“One can’t help observing things,” said the maid, after a pause. “Mute though we be.”)

Lady Harman had the whole five and eightpence with her. She had managed to keep it intact in her jewel case, declaring she had no change when any small demands were made on her.

With an exhilaration so great that she wanted sorely to laugh aloud she walked out through her big open gates and into the general publicity of Putney Hill. Why had she not done as much years ago? How long she had been, working up to this obvious thing! She hadn’t been out in such complete possession of herself since she had been a schoolgirl. She held up a beautifully gloved hand to a private motor-car going downhill and then to an engaged taxi going up, and then with a slightly dashed feeling, picked up her skirt and walked observantly downhill. Her reason dispelled a transitory impression that these two vehicles were on Sir Isaac’s side against her.

There was quite a nice taxi on the rank at the bottom of the hill. The driver, a pleasant-looking young man in a white cap, seemed to have been waiting for her in particular; he met her timid invitation halfway and came across the road to her and jumped down and opened the door. He took her instructions as though they were after his own heart, and right in front of her as she sat was a kind of tin cornucopia full of artificial flowers that seemed like a particular attention to her. His fare was two and eightpence and she gave him four shillings. He seemed quite gratified by her largesse, his manner implied he had always thought as much of her, from first to last their relations had been those of sunny contentment, and it was only as she ascended the steps of Lady Beach-Mandarin’s portico, that it occurred to her that she now had insufficient money for an automobile to take her home. But there were railways and buses and all sorts of possibilities; the day was an adventure; and she entered the drawing-room with a brow that was beautifully unruffled. She wanted to laugh still; it animated her eyes and lips with the pleasantest little stir you can imagine.

“A-a-a-a-a-h!” cried Lady Beach-Mandarin in a high note, and threw out — it had an effect of being quite a number of arms — as though she was one of those brass Indian goddesses one sees.

Lady Harman felt taken in at once to all that capacious bosom

involved and contained....

§2

It was quite an amusing lunch. But any lunch would have been amusing to Lady Harman in the excitement of her first act of deliberate disobedience. She had never been out to lunch alone in all her life before; she experienced a kind of scared happiness, she felt like someone at Lourdes who has just thrown away crutches. She was seated between a pink young man with an eyeglass whose place was labelled "Bertie Trevor" and who was otherwise unexplained, and Mr. Brumley. She was quite glad to see Mr. Brumley again, and no doubt her eyes showed it. She had hoped to see him. Miss Sharsper was sitting nearly opposite to her, a real live novelist pecking observations out of life as a hen pecks seeds amidst scenery, and next beyond was a large-headed inattentive fluffy person who was Mr. Keystone the well-known critic. And there was Agatha Alimony under a rustling vast hat of green-black cock's feathers next to Sir Markham Crosby, with whom she had been having an abusive controversy in the *Times* and to whom quite elaborately she wouldn't speak, and there was Lady Viping with her lorgnette and Adolphus Blenker, Horatio's younger and if possible more gentlemanly brother — Horatio of the *Old Country Gazette* that is — sole reminder that there was such a person as Sir Isaac in the world. Lady Beach-Mandarin's mother and the Swiss governess and the tall but retarded daughter, Phyllis, completed the party. The reception was lively and cheering; Lady Beach-Mandarin enfolded her guests in generosities and kept them all astir like a sea-swell under a squadron, and she introduced Lady Harman to Miss Alimony by public proclamation right across the room because there were two lavish tables of bric-à-brac, a marble bust of old Beach-Mandarin and most of the rest of the party in the way. And at the table conversation was like throwing bread, you never knew whom you might hit or who might hit you. (But Lady Beach-Mandarin produced an effect of throwing whole loaves.) Bertie Trevor was one of those dancing young men who talk to a woman as though they were giving a dog biscuits, and mostly it was Mr. Brumley who did such talking as reached Lady Harman's

ear.

Mr. Brumley was in very good form that day. He had contrived to remind her of all their Black Strand talk while they were still eating *Petites Bouchées à la Reine*. “Have you found that work yet?” he asked and carried her mind to the core of her situation. Then they were snatched up into a general discussion of Bazaars. Sir Markham spoke of a great bazaar that was to be held on behalf of one of the many Shakespear Theatre movements that were then so prevalent. Was Lady Beach-Mandarin implicated? Was anyone? He told of novel features in contemplation. He generalized about bazaars and, with an air of having forgotten the presence of Miss Alimony, glanced at the Suffrage Bazaar — it was a season of bazaars. He thought poorly of the Suffrage Bazaar. The hostess intervened promptly with anecdotes of her own cynical daring as a Bazaar-seller, Miss Sharsper offered fragments of a reminiscence about signing one of her own books for a Bookstall, Blenker told a well-known Bazaar anecdote brightly and well, and the impending skirmish was averted.

While the Bazaar talk still whacked to and fro about the table Mr. Brumley got at Lady Harman’s ear again. “Rather tantalizing these meetings at table,” he said. “It’s like trying to talk while you swim in a rough sea....”

Then Lady Beach-Mandarin intervened with demands for support for her own particular Bazaar project and they were eating salad before there was a chance of another word between them. “I must confess that when I want to talk to people I like to get them alone,” said Mr. Brumley, and gave form to thoughts that were already on the verge of crystallization in her own mind. She had been recalling that she had liked his voice before, noting something very kindly and thoughtful and brotherly about his right profile and thinking how much an hour’s talk with him would help to clear up her ideas.

“But it’s so difficult to get one alone,” said Lady Harman, and suddenly an idea of the utmost daring and impropriety flashed into her mind. She was on the verge of speaking it forthwith and then didn’t, she met something in his eye that answered her own and then Lady Beach-Mandarin was foaming over them like a dam-burst over an American town.

“What do *you* think, Mr. Brumley?” demanded Lady Beach-Mandarin.

“?”

“About Sir Markham’s newspaper symposium. They asked him what allowance he gave his wife. Sent a prepaid reply telegram.”

“But he hasn’t got a wife!”

“They don’t stick at a little thing like that,” said Sir Markham grimly.

“I think a husband and wife ought to have everything in common like the early Christians,” said Lady Beach-Mandarin. “*We* always did,” and so got the discussion afloat again off the sandbank of Mr. Brumley’s inattention.

It was quite a good discussion and Lady Harman contributed an exceptionally alert and intelligent silence. Sir Markham distrusted Lady Beach-Mandarin’s communism and thought that anyhow it wouldn’t do for a financier or business man. He favoured an allowance. “So did Sir Joshua,” said the widow Viping. This roused Agatha Alimony. “Allowance indeed!” she cried. “Is a wife to be on no better footing than a daughter? The whole question of a wife’s financial autonomy needs reconsidering....”

Adolphus Blenker became learned and lucid upon Pin-money and dowry and the customs of savage tribes, and Mr. Brumley helped with corroboration....

Mr. Brumley managed to say just one other thing to Lady Harman before the lunch was over. It struck her for a moment as being irrelevant. “The gardens at Hampton Court,” he said, “are delightful just now. Have you seen them? Autumnal fires. All the September perennials lifting their spears in their last great chorus. It’s the *Götterdämmerung* of the year.”

She was going out of the room before she appreciated his possible intention.

Lady Beach-Mandarin delegated Sir Markham to preside over the men’s cigars and bounced and slapped her four ladies upstairs to the drawing-room. Her mother disappeared and so did Phyllis and the governess. Lady Harman heard a large aside to Lady Viping: “Isn’t she perfectly lovely?” glanced to discover the lorgnette in appreciative action, and then found herself drifting into a secluded

window-seat and a duologue with Miss Agatha Alimony. Miss Alimony was one of that large and increasing number of dusky, grey-eyed ladies who go through life with an air of darkly incomprehensible significance. She led off Lady Harman as though she took her away to reveal unheard-of mysteries and her voice was a contralto undertone that she emphasized in some inexplicable way by the magnetic use of her eyes. Her hat of cock's feathers which rustled like familiar spirits greatly augmented the profundity of her effect. As she spoke she glanced guardedly at the other ladies at the end of the room and from first to last she seemed undecided in her own mind whether she was a conspirator or a prophetess. She had heard of Lady Harman before, she had been longing impatiently to talk to her all through the lunch. "You are just what we want," said Agatha. "What who want?" asked Lady Harman, struggling against the hypnotic influence of her interlocutor. "*We*," said Miss Agatha, "the Cause. The G.S.W.S.

"We want just such people as you," she repeated, and began in panting rhetorical sentences to urge the militant cause.

For her it was manifestly a struggle against "the Men." Miss Alimony had no doubts of her sex. It had nothing to learn, nothing to be forgiven, it was compact of obscured and persecuted marvels, it needed only revelation. "They know Nothing," she said of the antagonist males, bringing deep notes out of the melodious caverns of her voice; "they know *Nothing* of the Deeper Secrets of Woman's Nature." Her discourse of a general feminine insurrection fell in very closely with the spirit of Lady Harman's private revolt. "We want the Vote," said Agatha, "and we want the Vote because the Vote means Autonomy. And then — —"

She paused voluminously. She had already used that word "Autonomy" at the lunch table and it came to her hearer to supply a long-felt want. Now she poured meanings into it, and Lady Harman with each addition realized more clearly that it was still a roomy sack for more. "A woman should be absolute mistress of herself," said Miss Alimony, "absolute mistress of her person. She should be free to develop — —"

Germinating phrases these were in Lady Harman's ear.

She wanted to know about the Suffrage movement from someone

less generously impatient than Georgina, for Georgina always lost her temper about it and to put it fairly *ranted*, this at any rate was serene and confident, and she asked tentative ill-formed questions and felt her way among Miss Alimony's profundities. She had her doubts, her instinctive doubts about this campaign of violence, she doubted its wisdom, she doubted its rightness, and she perceived, but she found it difficult to express her perception, that Miss Alimony wasn't so much answering her objections as trying to swamp her with exalted emotion. And if there was any flaw whatever in her attention to Miss Alimony's stirring talk, it was because she was keeping a little look-out in the tail of her eye for the reappearance of the men, and more particularly for the reappearance of Mr. Brumley with whom she had a peculiar feeling of uncompleted relations. And at last the men came and she caught his glance and saw that her feeling was reciprocated.

She was presently torn from Agatha, who gasped with pain at the parting and pursued her with a sedulous gaze as a doctor might watch an injected patient, she parted with Lady Beach-Mandarin with a vast splash of enthusiasm and mutual invitations, and Lady Viping came and pressed her to come to dinner and rapped her elbow with her lorgnette to emphasize her invitation. And Lady Harman after a still moment for reflection athwart which the word Autonomy flickered, accepted this invitation also.

§3

Mr. Brumley hovered for a few moments in the hall conversing with Lady Beach-Mandarin's butler, whom he had known for some years and helped about a small investment, and who was now being abjectly polite and grateful to him for his attention. It gave Mr. Brumley a nice feudal feeling to establish and maintain such relationships. The furry-eyed boy fumbled with the sticks and umbrellas in the background and wondered if he too would ever climb to these levels of respectful gilt-tipped friendliness. Mr. Brumley hovered the more readily because he knew Lady Harman was with the looking-glass in the little parlour behind the dining-room on her way to the outer world. At last she emerged. It was

instantly manifest to Mr. Brumley that she had expected to find him there. She smiled frankly at him, with the faintest admission of complicity in her smile.

"Taxi, milady?" said the butler.

She seemed to reflect. "No, I will walk." She hesitated over a glove button. "Mr. Brumley, is there a Tube station near here?"

"Not two minutes. But can't I perhaps take you in a taxi?"

"I'd rather walk."

"I will show you — —"

He found himself most agreeably walking off with her.

Still more agreeable things were to follow for Mr. Brumley.

She appeared to meditate upon a sudden idea. She disregarded some conversational opening of his that he forgot in the instant. "Mr. Brumley," she said, "I didn't intend to go directly home."

"I'm altogether at your service," said Mr. Brumley.

"At least," said Lady Harman with that careful truthfulness of hers, "it occurred to me during lunch that I wouldn't go directly home."

Mr. Brumley reined in an imagination that threatened to bolt with him.

"I want," said Lady Harman, "to go to Kensington Gardens, I think. This can't be far from Kensington Gardens — and I want to sit there on a green chair and — meditate — and afterwards I want to find a tube railway or something that will take me back to Putney. There is really no need for me to go directly home.... It's very stupid of me but I don't know my way about London as a rational creature should do. So will you take me and put me in a green chair and — tell me how afterwards I can find the Tube and get home? Do you mind?"

"All my time, so long as you want it, is at your service," said Mr. Brumley with convincing earnestness. "And it's not five minutes to the gardens. And afterwards a taxi-cab — —"

"No," said Lady Harman mindful of her one-and-eightpence, "I prefer a tube. But that we can talk about later. You're sure, Mr. Brumley, I'm not invading your time?"

"I wish you could see into my mind," said Mr. Brumley.

She became almost barefaced. "It is so true," she said, "that at

lunch one can't really talk to anyone. And I've so wanted to talk to you. Ever since we met before."

Mr. Brumley conveyed an unfeigned delight.

"Since then," said Lady Harman, "I've read your *Euphemia* books." Then after a little unskilful pause, "again." Then she blushed and added, "I *had* read one of them, you know, before."

"Exactly," he said with an infinite helpfulness.

"And you seem so sympathetic, so understanding. I feel that all sorts of things that are muddled in my mind would come clear if I could have a really Good Talk. To you...."

They were now through the gates approaching the Albert Memorial. Mr. Brumley was filled with an idea so desirable that it made him fear to suggest it.

"Of course we can talk very comfortably here," he said, "under these great trees. But I do so wish —— Have you seen those great borders at Hampton Court? The whole place is glowing, and in such sunshine as this —— A taxi — will take us there under the hour. If you are free until half-past five."

Why shouldn't she?

The proposal seemed so outrageous to all the world of Lady Harman that in her present mood she felt it was her duty in the cause of womanhood to nerve herself and accept it....

"I mustn't be later than half-past five."

"We could snatch a glimpse of it all and be back before then."

"In that case —— It would be very agreeable."

(*Why shouldn't she?* It would no doubt make Sir Isaac furiously angry — if he heard of it. But it was the sort of thing other women of her class did; didn't all the novels testify? She had a perfect right ——

And besides, Mr. Brumley was so entirely harmless.)

§4

It had been Lady Harman's clear intention to have a luminous and illuminating discussion of the peculiar difficulties and perplexities of her position with Mr. Brumley. Since their first encounter this idea had grown up in her mind. She was one of those women who turn

instinctively to men and away from women for counsel. There was to her perception something wise and kindly and reassuring in him; she felt that he had lived and suffered and understood and that he was ready to help other people to live; his heart she knew from his published works was buried with his dead Euphemia, and he seemed as near a thing to a brother and a friend as she was ever likely to meet. She wanted to tell him all this and then to broach her teeming and tangled difficulties, about her own permissible freedoms, about her social responsibilities, about Sir Isaac's business. But now as their taxi dodged through the traffic of Kensington High Street and went on its way past Olympia and so out westwards, she found it extremely difficult to fix her mind upon the large propositions with which it had been her intention to open. Do as she would to feel that this was a momentous occasion, she could not suppress, she could not ignore an obstinate and entirely undignified persuasion that she was having a tremendous lark. The passing vehicles, various motors, omnibuses, vans, carriages, the thronging pedestrians, the shops and houses, were all so distractingly interesting that at last she had to put it fairly to herself whether she hadn't better resign herself to the sensations of the present and reserve that sustained discussion for an interval she foresaw as inevitable on some comfortable seat under great trees at Hampton Court. You cannot talk well and penetratingly about fundamental things when you are in a not too well-hung taxi which is racing to get ahead of a vast red motor-omnibus....

With a certain discretion Mr. Brumley had instructed the chauffeur to cross the river not at Putney but at Hammersmith, and so they went by Barnes station and up a still almost rural lane into Richmond Park, and there suddenly they were among big trees and bracken and red deer and it might have been a hundred miles from London streets. Mr. Brumley directed the driver to make a detour that gave them quite all the best of the park.

The mind of Mr. Brumley was also agreeably excited and dispersed on this occasion. It was an occasion of which he had been dreaming very frequently of late, he had invented quite remarkable dialogues during those dreams, and now he too was conversationally inadequate and with a similar feeling of unexpected adventure. He was now no more ready to go to the roots of things than Lady

Harman. He talked on the way down chiefly of the route they were following, of the changes in the London traffic due to motor traction and of the charm and amenity of Richmond Park. And it was only after they had arrived at Hampton Court and dismissed the taxi and spent some time upon the borders, that they came at last to a seat under a grove beside a long piece of water bearing water lilies, and sat down and made a beginning with the Good Talk. Then indeed she tried to gather together the heads of her perplexity and Mr. Brumley did his best to do justice to confidence she reposed in him....

It wasn't at all the conversation he had dreamt of; it was halting, it was inconclusive, it was full of a vague dissatisfaction.

The roots of this dissatisfaction lay perhaps more than anything else in her inattention to him — how shall I say it? — as *Him*. Hints have been conveyed to the reader already that for Mr. Brumley the universe was largely a setting, a tangle, a maze, a quest enshrining at the heart of it and adumbrating everywhere, a mystical Her, and his experience of this world had pointed him very definitely to the conclusion that for that large other half of mankind which is woman, the quality of things was reciprocal and centred, for all the appearances and pretences of other interests, in — Him. And he was disposed to believe that the other things in life, not merely the pomp and glories but the faiths and ambitions and devotions, were all demonstrably little more than posings and dressings of this great duality. A large part of his own interests and of the interests of the women he knew best, was the sustained and in some cases recurrent discovery and elaboration of lights and glimpses of Him or Her as the case might be, in various definite individuals; and it was a surprise to him, it perplexed him to find that this lovely person, so beautifully equipped for those mutual researches which constituted, he felt, the heart of life, was yet completely in her manner unaware of this primary sincerity and looking quite simply, as it were, over him and through him at such things as the ethics of the baking, confectionery and refreshment trade and the limits of individual responsibility in these matters. The conclusion that she was "unawakened" was inevitable.

The dream of "awakening" this Sleeping Beauty associated itself in a logical sequence with his interpretations. I do not say that such

thoughts were clear in Mr. Brumley's mind, they were not, but into this shape the forms of his thoughts fell. Such things dimly felt below the clear level of consciousness were in him. And they gave his attempt to take up and answer the question that perplexed her, something of the quality of an attempt to clothe and serve hidden purposes. It could not but be evident to him that the effort of Lady Harman to free herself a little from her husband's circumvallation and to disentangle herself a little from the realities of his commercial life, might lead to such a liberation as would leave her like a nascent element ready to recombine. And it was entirely in the vein of this drift of thought in him that he should resolve upon an assiduous proximity against that moment of release and awakening....

I do not do Mr. Brumley as the human lover justice if I lead you to suppose that he plotted thus clearly and calculatingly. Yet all this was in his mind. All this was in Mr. Brumley, but it wasn't Mr. Brumley. Presented with it as a portrait of his mind, he would have denied it indignantly — and, knowing it was there, have grown a little flushed in his denials. Quite equally in his mind was a simple desire to please her, to do what she wished, to help her because she wanted help. And a quite keen desire to be clean and honest about her and everything connected with her, for his own sake as well as for her sake — for the sake of the relationship....

So you have Mr. Brumley on the green seat under the great trees at Hampton Court, in his neat London clothes, his quite becoming silk-hat, above his neatly handsome and intelligent profile, with his gloves in his hand and one arm over the seat back, going now very earnestly and thoughtfully into the question of the social benefit of the International Bread and Cake Stores and whether it was possible for her to "do anything" to repair any wrongs that might have arisen out of that organization, and you will understand why there is a little flush in his cheek and why his sentences are a trifle disconnected and tentative and why his eye wanders now to the soft raven tresses about Lady Harman's ear, now to the sweet movement of her speaking lips and now to the gracious droop of her pose as she sits forward, elbow upon crossed knee and chin on glove, and jabs her parasol at the ground in her unaccustomed efforts to explain and discuss the difficulties of her position.

And you will understand too why it is that he doesn't deal with the question before him so simply and impartially as he seems to do. Obscuring this extremely interesting problem of a woman growing to man-like sense of responsibility in her social consequences, is the dramatic proclivity that makes him see all this merely as something which must necessarily weaken Lady Harman's loyalty and qualify her submission to Sir Isaac, that makes him want to utilize it and develop it in that direction....

§5

Moreover so complex is the thought of man, there was also another stream of mental activity flowing in the darker recesses of Mr. Brumley's mind. Unobtrusively he was trying to count the money in his pockets and make certain estimates.

It had been his intention to replenish his sovereign purse that afternoon at his club and he was only reminded of this abandoned plan when he paid off his taxi at the gates of Hampton Court. The fare was nine and tenpence and the only piece of gold he had was a half-sovereign. But there was a handful of loose silver in his trouser pocket and so the fare and tip were manageable. "Will you be going back, sir?" asked the driver.

And Mr. Brumley reflected too briefly and committed a fatal error. "No," he said with his mind upon that loose silver. "We shall go back by train."

Now it is the custom with taxi-cabs that take people to such outlying and remote places as Hampton Court, to be paid off and to wait loyally until their original passengers return. Thereby the little machine is restrained from ticking out twopences which should go in the main to the absent proprietor, and a feeling of mutuality is established between the driver and his fare. But of course this cab being released presently found another passenger and went away....

I have written in vain if I have not conveyed to you that Mr. Brumley was a gentleman of great and cultivated delicacy, that he liked the seemly and handsome side of things and dreaded the appearance of any flaw upon his prosperity as only a man trained in an English public school can do. It was intolerable to think of any

hitch in this happy excursion which was to establish he knew not what confidence between himself and Lady Harman. From first to last he felt it had to go with an air — and what was the first class fare from Hampton Court to Putney — which latter station he believed was on the line from Hampton Court to London — and could one possibly pretend it was unnecessary to have tea? And so while Lady Harman talked about her husband's business— "our business" she called it — and shrank from ever saying anything more about the more intimate question she had most in mind, the limits to a wife's obedience, Mr. Brumley listened with these financial solicitudes showing through his expression and giving it a quality of intensity that she found remarkably reassuring. And once or twice they made him miss points in her remarks that forced him back upon that very inferior substitute for the apt answer, a judicious "Um."

(It would be quite impossible to go without tea, he decided. He himself wanted tea quite badly. He would think better when he had had some tea....)

The crisis came at tea. They had tea at the inn upon the green that struck Mr. Brumley as being most likely to be cheap and which he pretended to choose for some trivial charm about the windows. And it wasn't cheap, and when at last Mr. Brumley was faced by the little slip of the bill and could draw his money from his pocket and look at it, he knew the worst and the worst was worse than he had expected. The bill was five shillings (Should he dispute it? Too ugly altogether, a dispute with a probably ironical waiter!) and the money in his hand amounted to four shillings and sixpence.

He acted surprise with the waiter's eye upon him. (Should he ask for credit? They might be frightfully disagreeable in such a cockney resort as this.) "Tut, tut," said Mr. Brumley, and then — a little late for it — resorted to and discovered the emptiness of his sovereign purse. He realized that this was out of the picture at this stage, felt his ears and nose and cheeks grow hot and pink. The waiter's colleague across the room became interested in the proceedings.

"I had no idea," said Mr. Brumley, which was a premeditated falsehood.

"Is anything the matter?" asked Lady Harman with a sisterly interest.

“My dear Lady Harman, I find myself —— Ridiculous position. Might I borrow half a sovereign?”

He felt sure that the two waiters exchanged glances. He looked at them, — a mistake again — and got hotter.

“Oh!” said Lady Harman and regarded him with frank amusement in her eyes. The thing struck her at first in the light of a joke. “I’ve only got one-and-eightpence. I didn’t expect — —”

She blushed as beautifully as ever. Then she produced a small but plutocratic-looking purse and handed it to him.

“Most remarkable — inconvenient,” said Mr. Brumley, opening the precious thing and extracting a shilling. “That will do,” he said and dismissed the waiter with a tip of sixpence. Then with the open purse still in his hand, he spent much of his remaining strength trying to look amused and unembarrassed, feeling all the time that with his flushed face and in view of all the circumstances of the case he must be really looking very silly and fluffy.

“It’s really most inconvenient,” he remarked.

“I never thought of the — of this. It was silly of me,” said Lady Harman.

“Oh no! Oh dear no! The silliness I can assure you is all mine. I can’t tell you how entirely apologetic —— Ridiculous fix. And after I had persuaded you to come here.”

“Still we were able to pay,” she consoled him.

“But you have to get home!”

She hadn’t so far thought of that. It brought Sir Isaac suddenly into the picture. “By half-past five,” she said with just the faintest flavour of interrogation.

Mr. Brumley looked at his watch. It was ten minutes to five.

“Waiter,” he said, “how do the trains run from here to Putney?”

“I don’t *think*, sir, that we have any trains from here to Putney — —”

An A.B.C. Railway Guide was found and Mr. Brumley learnt for the first time that Putney and Hampton Court are upon two distinct and separate and, as far as he could judge by the time-table, mutually hostile branches of the South Western Railway, and that at the earliest they could not get to Putney before six o’clock.

Mr. Brumley was extremely disconcerted. He perceived that he

ought to have kept his taxi. It amounted almost to a debt of honour to deliver this lady secure and untarnished at her house within the next hour. But this reflection did not in the least degree assist him to carry it out and as a matter of fact Mr. Brumley became flurried and did not carry it out. He was not used to being without money, it unnerved him, and he gave way to a kind of hectic *savoir faire*. He demanded a taxi of the waiter. He tried to evolve a taxi by will power alone. He went out with Lady Harman and back towards the gates of Hampton Court to look for taxis. Then it occurred to him that they might be losing the 5.25 up. So they hurried over the bridge of the station.

He had a vague notion that he would be able to get tickets on credit at the booking office if he presented his visiting card. But the clerk in charge seemed to find something uncongenial in his proposal. He did not seem to like what he saw of Mr. Brumley through his little square window and Mr. Brumley found something slighting and unpleasant in his manner. It was one of those little temperamental jars which happen to men of delicate sensibilities and Mr. Brumley tried to be reassuringly overbearing in his manner and then lost his temper and was threatening and so wasted precious moments what time Lady Harman waited on the platform, with a certain shadow of doubt falling upon her confidence in him, and watched the five-twenty-five gather itself together and start Londonward. Mr. Brumley came out of the ticket office resolved to travel without tickets and carry things through with a high hand just as it became impossible to do so by that train, and then I regret to say he returned for some further haughty passages with the ticket clerk upon the duty of public servants to point out such oversights as his, that led to repartee and did nothing to help Lady Harman on her homeward way.

Then he discovered a current time-table and learnt that now even were all the ticket difficulties over-ridden he could not get Lady Harman to Putney before twenty minutes past seven, so completely is the South Western Railway not organized for conveying people from Hampton Court to Putney. He explained this as well as he could to Lady Harman, and then led her out of the station in another last desperate search for a taxi.

“We can always come back for that next train,” he said. “It

doesn't go for half an hour."

"I cannot blame myself sufficiently," he said for the eighth or ninth time....

It was already well past a quarter to six before Mr. Brumley bethought himself of the London County Council tramcars that run from the palace gates. Along these an ample four-pennyworth was surely possible and at the end would be taxis —— There *must* be taxis. The tram took them — but oh! how slowly it seemed! — to Hammersmith by a devious route through interminable roads and streets, and long before they reached that spot twilight had passed into darkness, and all the streets and shops were flowering into light and the sense of night and lateness was very strong. After they were seated in the tram a certain interval of silence came between them and then Lady Harman laughed and Mr. Brumley laughed — there was no longer any need for him to be energetic and fussy — and they began to have that feeling of adventurous amusement which comes on the further side of desperation. But beneath the temporary elation Lady Harman was a prey to grave anxieties and Mr. Brumley could not help thinking he had made a tremendous ass of himself in that ticket clerk dispute....

At Hammersmith they got out, two quite penniless travellers, and after some anxious moments found a taxi. It took them to Putney Hill. Lady Harman descended at the outer gates of her home and walked up the drive in the darkness while Mr. Brumley went on to his club and solvency again. It was five minutes past eight when he entered the hall of his club....

§6

It had been Lady Harman's original intention to come home before four, to have tea with her mother and to inform her husband when he returned from the city of her entirely dignified and correct disobedience to his absurd prohibitions. Then he would have bullied at a disadvantage, she would have announced her intention of dining with Lady Viping and making the various calls and expeditions for which she had arranged and all would have gone well. But you see how far accident and a spirit of enterprise may take a lady from so

worthy a plan, and when at last she returned to the Victorian baronial home in Putney it was very nearly eight and the house blazed with crisis from pantry to nursery. Even the elder three little girls, who were accustomed to be kissed goodnight by their "boofer muvver," were still awake and — catching the subtle influence of the atmosphere of dismay about them — in tears. The very under-housemaids were saying: "Where *ever* can her ladyship 'ave got to?"

Sir Isaac had come home that day at an unusually early hour and with a peculiar pinched expression that filled even Snagsby with apprehensive alertness. Sir Isaac had in fact returned in a state of quite unwonted venom. He had come home early because he wished to vent it upon Ellen, and her absence filled him with something of that sensation one has when one puts out a foot for the floor and instead a step drops one down — it seems abysmally.

"But where's she gone, Snagsby?"

"Her ladyship *said* to lunch, Sir Isaac," said Snagsby.

"Good gracious! Where?"

"Her ladyship didn't *say*, Sir Isaac."

"But where? Where the devil —— ?"

"I have— 'ave no means whatever of knowing, Sir Isaac."

He had a defensive inspiration.

"Perhaps Mrs. Sawbridge, Sir Isaac...."

Mrs. Sawbridge was enjoying the sunshine upon the lawn. She sat in the most comfortable garden chair, held a white sunshade overhead, had the last new novel by Mrs. Humphry Ward upon her lap, and was engaged in trying not to wonder where her daughter might be. She beheld with a distinct blenching of the spirit Sir Isaac advancing towards her. She wondered more than ever where Ellen might be.

"Here!" cried her son-in-law. "Where's Ellen gone?"

Mrs. Sawbridge with an affected off-handedness was sure she hadn't the faintest idea.

"Then you *ought* to have," said Isaac. "She ought to be at home."

Mrs. Sawbridge's only reply was to bridle slightly.

"Where's she got to? Where's she gone? Haven't you any idea at all?"

"I was not favoured by Ellen's confidence," said Mrs. Sawbridge.

“But you *ought* to know,” cried Sir Isaac. “She’s your daughter. Don’t you know anything of *either* of your daughters. I suppose you don’t care where they are, either of them, or what mischief they’re up to. Here’s a man — comes home early to his tea — and no wife! After hearing all I’ve done at the club.”

Mrs. Sawbridge stood up in order to be more dignified than a seated position permitted.

“It is scarcely my business, Sir Isaac,” she said, “to know of the movements of your wife.”

“Nor Georgina’s apparently either. Good God! I’d have given a hundred pounds that this shouldn’t have happened!”

“If you must speak to me, Sir Isaac, will you please kindly refrain from — from the deity — —”

“Oh! shut it!” said Sir Isaac, blazing up to violent rudeness. “Why! Don’t you know, haven’t you an idea? The infernal foolery! Those tickets. She got those women —— Look here, if you go walking away with your nose in the air before I’ve done —— Look here! Mrs. Sawbridge, you listen to me —— Georgina. I’m speaking of Georgina.”

The lady was walking now swiftly and stiffly towards the house, her face very pale and drawn, and Sir Isaac hurrying beside her in a white fury of expostulation. “I tell you,” he cried, “Georgina — —”

There was something maddeningly incurious about her. He couldn’t understand why she didn’t even pause to hear what Georgina had done and what he had to say about it. A person so wrapped up in her personal and private dignity makes a man want to throw stones. Perhaps she knew of Georgina’s misdeeds. Perhaps she sympathized....

A sense of the house windows checked his pursuit of her ear. “Then go,” he said to her retreating back. “*Go!* I don’t care if you go for good. I don’t care if you go altogether. If *you* hadn’t had the upbringing of these two girls — —”

She was manifestly out of earshot and in full yet almost queenly flight for the house. He wanted to say things about her. *To* someone. He was already saying things to the garden generally. What does one marry a wife for? His mind came round to Ellen again. Where had she got to? Even if she had gone out to lunch, it was time she was

back. He went to his study and rang for Snagsby.

"Lady Harman back yet?" he asked grimly.

"No, Sir Isaac."

"Why isn't she back?"

Snagsby did his best. "Perhaps, Sir Isaac, her ladyship has experienced— 'as hexperienced a naxident."

Sir Isaac stared at that idea for a moment. Then he thought, 'Someone would have telephoned,' "No," he said, "she's out. That's where she is. And I suppose I can wait here, as well as I can until she chooses to come home. Degenerate foolish nonsense!..."

He whistled between his teeth like an escape of steam. Snagsby, after the due pause of attentiveness, bowed respectfully and withdrew....

He had barely time to give a brief outline of the interview to the pantry before a violent ringing summoned him again. Sir Isaac wished to speak to Peters, Lady Harman's maid. He wanted to know where Lady Harman had gone; this being impossible, he wanted to know where Lady Harman had seemed to be going.

"Her Ladyship *seemed* to be going out to lunch, Sir Isaac," said Peters, her meek face irradiated by helpful intelligence.

"Oh *get* out!" said Sir Isaac. "*Get* out!"

"Yes, Sir Isaac," said Peters and obeyed....

"He's in a rare bait about her," said Peters to Snagsby downstairs.

"I'm inclined to think her ladyship will catch it pretty hot," said Snagsby.

"He can't *know* anything," said Peters.

"What about?" asked Snagsby.

"Oh, *I* don't know," said Peters. "Don't ask *me* about her...."

About ten minutes later Sir Isaac was heard to break a little china figure of the goddess Kwannon, that had stood upon his study mantel-shelf. The fragments were found afterwards in the fireplace....

The desire for self-expression may become overwhelming. After Sir Isaac had talked to himself about Georgina and Lady Harman for some time in his study, he was seized with a great longing to pour some of this spirited stuff into the entirely unsympathetic ear of Mrs. Sawbridge. So he went about the house and garden looking for her, and being at last obliged to enquire about her, learnt from a scared

defensive housemaid whom he cornered suddenly in the conservatory, that she had retired to her own room. He went and rapped at her door but after one muffled "Who's that?" he could get no further response.

"I want to tell you about Georgina," he said.

He tried the handle but the discreet lady within had turned the key upon her dignity.

"I want," he shouted, "to tell you about Georgina.... GEORGINA! Oh *damn*!"

Silence.

Tea awaited him downstairs. He hovered about the drawing-room, making noises between his teeth.

"Snagsby," said Sir Isaac, "just tell Mrs. Sawbridge I shall be obliged if she will come down to tea."

"Mrs. Sawbridge 'as a '*ead*ache, Sir Isaac," said Mr. Snagsby with extreme blandness. "She asked me to acquaint you. She 'as ordered tea in 'er own apartment."

For a moment Sir Isaac was baffled. Then he had an inspiration. "Just get me the *Times*, Snagsby," he said.

He took the paper and unfolded it until a particular paragraph was thrown into extreme prominence. This he lined about with his fountain pen and wrote above it with a quivering hand, "These women's tickets were got by Georgina under false pretences from me." He handed the paper thus prepared back to Snagsby. "Just take this paper to Mrs. Sawbridge," he said, "and ask her what she thinks of it?"

But Mrs. Sawbridge tacitly declined this proposal for a correspondence *viâ* Snagsby.

§7

There was no excuse for Georgina.

Georgina had obtained tickets from Sir Isaac for the great party reception at Barleypound House, under the shallow pretext that she wanted them for "two spinsters from the country," for whose good behaviour she would answer, and she had handed them over to that organization of disorder which swayed her mind. The historical

outrage upon Mr. Blapton was the consequence.

Two desperate and misguided emissaries had gone to the great reception, dressed and behaving as much as possible like helpful Liberal women; they had made their way towards the brilliant group of leading Liberals of which Mr. Blapton was the centre, assuming an almost Whig-like expression and bearing to mask the fires within, and had then suddenly accosted him. It was one of those great occasions when the rank and file of the popular party is privileged to look upon Court dress. The ministers and great people had come on from Buckingham Palace in their lace and legs. Scarlet and feathers, splendid trains and mysterious ribbons and stars, gave an agreeable intimation of all that it means to be in office to the dazzled wives and daughters of the party stalwarts and fired the ambition of innumerable earnest but earnestly competitive young men. It opened the eyes of the Labour leaders to the higher possibilities of Parliament. And then suddenly came a stir, a rush, a cry of "Tear off his epaulettes!" and outrage was afoot. And two quite nice-looking young women!

It is unhappily not necessary to describe the scene that followed. Mr. Blapton made a brave fight for his epaulettes, fighting chiefly with his cocked hat, which was bent double in the struggle. Mrs. Blapton gave all the assistance true womanliness could offer and, in fact, she boxed the ears of one of his assailants very soundly. The intruders were rescued in an extremely torn and draggled condition from the indignant statesmen who had fallen upon them by tardy but decisive police....

Such scenes sprinkle the recent history of England with green and purple patches and the interest of this particular one for us is only because of Georgina's share in it. That was brought home to Sir Isaac, very suddenly and disagreeably, while he was lunching at the Climax Club with Sir Robert Charterson. A man named Gobbin, an art critic or something of that sort, one of those flimsy literary people who mar the solid worth of so many great clubs, a man with a lot of hair and the sort of loose tie that so often seems to be less of a tie than a detachment from all decent restraints, told him. Charterson was holding forth upon the outrage.

"That won't suit Sir Isaac, Sir Robert," said Gobbin presuming on

his proximity.

Sir Isaac tried to give him a sort of look one gives to an unsatisfactory clerk.

“They went there with Sir Isaac’s tickets,” said Gobbin.

“They *never* —— !”

“Horatio Blenker was looking for you in the hall. Haven’t you seen him? After all the care they took. The poor man’s almost in tears.”

“They never had tickets of mine!” cried Sir Isaac stoutly and indignantly.

And then the thought of Georgina came like a blow upon his heart....

In his flurry he went on denying....

The subsequent conversation in the smoking-room was as red-eared and disagreeable for Sir Isaac as any conversation could be. “But how *could* such a thing have happened?” he asked in a voice that sounded bleached to him. “How could such a thing have come about?” Their eyes were dreadful. Did they guess? Could they guess? Conscience within him was going up and down shouting out, “Georgina, your sister-in-law, Georgina,” so loudly that he felt the whole smoking-room must be hearing it....

§8

As Lady Harman came up through the darkness of the drive to her home, she was already regretting very deeply that she had not been content to talk to Mr. Brumley in Kensington Gardens instead of accepting his picturesque suggestion of Hampton Court. There was an unpleasant waif-like feeling about this return. She was reminded of pictures published in the interests of Doctor Barnardo’s philanthropies, — Dr. Barnardo her favourite hero in real life, — in which wistful little outcasts creep longingly towards brightly lit but otherwise respectable homes. It wasn’t at all the sort of feeling she would have chosen if she had had a choice of feelings. She was tired and dusty and as she came into the hall the bright light was blinding. Snagsby took her wrap. “Sir Isaac, me lady, ‘as been enquiring for your ladyship,” he communicated.

Sir Isaac appeared on the staircase.

"Good gracious, Elly!" he shouted. "Where you been?"

Lady Harman decided against an immediate reply. "I shall be ready for dinner in half an hour," she told Snagsby and went past him to the stairs.

Sir Isaac awaited her. "Where you been?" he repeated as she came up to him.

A housemaid on the staircase and the second nursemaid on the nursery landing above shared Sir Isaac's eagerness to hear her answer. But they did not hear her answer, for Lady Harman with a movement that was all too reminiscent of her mother's in the garden, swept past him towards the door of her own room. He followed her and shut the door on the thwarted listeners.

"Here!" he said, with a connubial absence of restraint. "Where the devil you been? What the deuce do you think you've been getting up to?"

She had been calculating her answers since the moment she had realized that she was to return home at a disadvantage. (It is not my business to blame her for a certain disingenuousness; it is my business simply to record it.) "I went out to lunch at Lady Beach-Mandarin's," she said. "I told you I meant to."

"Lunch!" he cried. "Why, it's eight!"

"I met — some people. I met Agatha Alimony. I have a perfect right to go out to lunch — —"

"You met a nice crew I'll bet. But that don't account for your being out to eight, does it? With all the confounded household doing as it pleases!"

"I went on — to see the borders at Hampton Court."

"With *her*?"

"*Yes*," said Lady Harman....

It wasn't what she had meant to happen. It was an inglorious declension from her contemplated pose of dignified assertion. She was impelled to do her utmost to get away from this lie she had uttered at once, to eliminate Agatha from the argument by an emphatic generalization. "I've a perfect right," she said, suddenly nearly breathless, "to go to Hampton Court with anyone I please, talk about anything I like and stay there as long as I think fit."

He squeezed his thin lips together for a silent moment and then retorted. “You’ve got nothing of the sort, nothing of the sort. You’ve got to do your duty like everybody else in the world, and your duty is to be in this house controlling it — and not gossiping about London just where any silly fancy takes you.”

“I don’t think that *is* my duty,” said Lady Harman after a slight pause to collect her forces.

“Of *course* it’s your duty. You know it’s your duty. You know perfectly well. It’s only these rotten, silly, degenerate, decadent fools who’ve got ideas into you — —” The sentence staggered under its load of adjectives like a camel under the last straw and collapsed. “*See?*” he said.

Lady Harman knitted her brows.

“I do my duty,” she began.

But Sir Isaac was now resolved upon eloquence. His mind was full with the accumulations of an extremely long and bitter afternoon and urgent to discharge. He began to answer her and then a passion of rage flooded him. Suddenly he wanted to shout and use abusive expressions and it seemed to him there was nothing to prevent his shouting and using abusive expressions. So he did. “Call this your duty,” he said, “gadding about with some infernal old suffragette — —”

He paused to gather force. He had never quite let himself go to his wife before; he had never before quite let himself go to anyone. He had always been in every crisis just a little too timid to let himself go. But a wife is privileged. He sought strength and found it in words from which he had hitherto abstained. It was not a discourse to which print could do justice; it flickered from issue to issue. He touched upon Georgina, upon the stiffness of Mrs. Sawbridge’s manner, upon the neurotic weakness of Georgina’s unmarried state, upon the general decay of feminine virtue in the community, upon the laxity of modern literature, upon the dependent state of Lady Harman, upon the unfairness of their relations which gave her every luxury while he spent his days in arduous toil, upon the shame and annoyance in the eyes of his servants that her unexplained absence had caused him.

He emphasized his speech by gestures. He thrust out one rather large ill-shaped hand at her with two vibrating fingers extended. His

ears became red, his nose red, his eyes seemed red and all about these points his face was wrathful white. His hair rose up into stiff scared listening ends. He had his rights, he had some *little* claim to consideration surely, he might be just nobody but he wasn't going to stand this much anyhow. He gave her fair warning. What was she, what did she know of the world into which she wanted to rush? He lapsed into views of Lady Beach-Mandarin — unfavourable views. I wish Lady Beach-Mandarin could have heard him....

Ever and again Lady Harman sought to speak. This incessant voice confused and baffled her; she had a just attentive mind at bottom and down there was a most weakening feeling that there must indeed be some misdeed in her to evoke so impassioned a storm. She had a curious and disconcerting sense of responsibility for his dancing exasperation, she felt she was to blame for it, just as years ago she had felt she was to blame for his tears when he had urged her so desperately to marry him. Some irrational instinct made her want to allay him. It is the supreme feminine weakness, that wish to allay. But she was also clinging desperately to her resolution to proclaim her other forthcoming engagements. Her will hung on to that as a man hangs on to a mountain path in a thunderburst. She stood gripping her dressing-table and ever and again trying to speak. But whenever she did so Sir Isaac lifted a hand and cried almost threateningly: "You hear me out, Elly! You hear me out!" and went on a little faster....

(Limburger in his curious "*Sexuelle Unterschiede der Seele*," points out as a probably universal distinction between the sexes that when a man scolds a woman, if only he scolds loudly enough and long enough, conviction of sin is aroused, while in the reverse case the result is merely a murderous impulse. This he further says is not understood by women, who hope by scolding to produce the similar effect upon men that they themselves would experience. The passage is illustrated by figures of ducking stools and followed by some carefully analyzed statistics of connubial crime in Berlin in the years 1901-2. But in this matter let the student compare the achievement of Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* and reflect upon his own life. And moreover it is difficult to estimate how far the twinges of conscience that Lady Harman was feeling were not due to an entirely different

cause, the falsification of her position by the lie she had just told Sir Isaac.)

And presently upon this noisy scene in the great pink bedroom, with Sir Isaac walking about and standing and turning and gesticulating and Lady Harman clinging on to her dressing-table, and painfully divided between her new connections, her sense of guilty deception and the deep instinctive responsibilities of a woman's nature, came, like one of those rows of dots that are now so frequent and so helpful in the art of fiction, the surging, deep, assuaging note of Snagsby's gong: Booooooom. Boom. Booooom....

"Damn it!" cried Sir Isaac, smiting at the air with both fists clenched and speaking as though this was Ellen's crowning misdeed, "and we aren't even dressed for dinner!"

§9

Dinner had something of the stiffness of court ceremonial.

Mrs. Sawbridge, perhaps erring on the side of discretion, had consumed a little soup and a wing of chicken in her own room. Sir Isaac was down first and his wife found him grimly astride before the great dining-room fire awaiting her. She had had her dark hair dressed with extreme simplicity and had slipped on a blue velvet tea-gown, but she had been delayed by a visit to the nursery, where the children were now flushed and uneasily asleep.

Husband and wife took their places at the genuine Sheraton dining-table — one of the very best pieces Sir Isaac had ever picked up — and were waited on with a hushed, scared dexterity by Snagsby and the footman.

Lady Harman and her husband exchanged no remarks during the meal; Sir Isaac was a little noisy with his soup as became a man who controls honest indignation, and once he complained briefly in a slightly hoarse voice to Snagsby about the state of one of the rolls. Between the courses he leant back in his chair and made faint sounds with his teeth. These were the only breach of the velvety quiet. Lady Harman was surprised to discover herself hungry, but she ate with thoughtful dignity and gave her mind to the attempted digestion of the confusing interview she had just been through.

It was a very indigestible interview.

On the whole her heart hardened again. With nourishment and silence her spirit recovered a little from its abasement, and her resolution to assert her freedom to go hither and thither and think as she chose renewed itself. She tried to plan some way of making her declaration so that she would not again be overwhelmed by a torrent of response. Should she speak to him at the end of dinner? Should she speak to him while Snagsby was in the room? But he might behave badly even with Snagsby in the room and she could not bear to think of him behaving badly to her in the presence of Snagsby. She glanced at him over the genuine old silver bowl of roses in the middle of the table — all the roses were good *new* sorts — and tried to estimate how he might behave under various methods of declaration.

The dinner followed its appointed ritual to the dessert. Came the wine and Snagsby placed the cigars and a little silver lamp beside his master.

She rose slowly with a speech upon her lips. Sir Isaac remained seated looking up at her with a mitigated fury in his little red-brown eyes.

The speech receded from her lips again.

"I think," she said after a strained pause, "I will go and see how mother is now."

"She's only shamming," said Sir Isaac belatedly to her back as she went out of the room.

She found her mother in a wrap before her fire and made her dutiful enquiries.

"It's only quite a *slight* headache," Mrs. Sawbridge confessed. "But Isaac was so upset about Georgina and about" — she flinched— "about — everything, that I thought it better to be out of the way."

"What exactly has Georgina done?"

"It's in the paper, dear. On the table there."

Ellen studied the *Times*.

"Georgina got them the tickets," Mrs. Sawbridge explained. "I wish she hadn't. It was so — so unnecessary of her."

There was a little pause as Lady Harman read. She put down the paper and asked her mother if she could do anything for her.

“I — I suppose it’s all Right, dear, now?” Mrs. Sawbridge asked.

“Quite,” said her daughter. “You’re sure I can do nothing for you, mummy?”

“I’m kept so in the dark about things.”

“It’s quite all right now, mummy.”

“He went on — dreadfully.”

“It was annoying — of Georgina.”

“It makes my position so difficult. I do wish he wouldn’t want to speak to me — about all these things.... Georgina treats me like a Perfect Nonentity and then he comes —— It’s so inconsiderate. Starting Disputes. Do you know, dear, I really think — if I were to go for a little time to Bournemouth —— ?”

Her daughter seemed to find something attractive in the idea. She came to the hearthrug and regarded her mother with maternal eyes.

“Don’t you *worry* about things, mummy,” she said.

“Mrs. Bleckhorn told me of such a nice quiet boarding-house, almost looking on the sea.... One would be safe from Insult there. You know — —” her voice broke for a moment, “he was Insulting, he *meant* to be Insulting. I’m — Upset. I’ve been thinking over it ever since.”

§10

Lady Harman came out upon the landing. She felt absolutely without backing in the world. (If only she hadn’t told a lie!) Then with an effort she directed her course downstairs to the dining-room.

(The lie had been necessary. It was only a detail. It mustn’t blind her to the real issue.)

She entered softly and found her husband standing before the fire plunged in gloomy thoughts. Upon the marble mantel-shelf behind him was a little glass; he had been sipping port in spite of the express prohibition of his doctor and the wine had reddened the veins of his eyes and variegated the normal pallor of his countenance with little flushed areas. “Hel-lo,” he said looking up suddenly as she closed the door behind her.

For a moment there was something in their two expressions like that on the faces of men about to box.

“I want you to understand,” she said, and then; “The way you behaved — —”

There was an uncontrollable break in her voice. She had a dreadful feeling that she might be going to cry. She made a great effort to be cold and clear.

“I don’t think you have a right — just because I am your wife — to control every moment of my time. In fact you haven’t. And I have a right to make engagements.... I want you to know I am going to an afternoon meeting at Lady Beach-Mandarin’s. Next week. And I have promised to go to Miss Alimony’s to tea.”

“Go on,” he encouraged grimly.

“I am going to Lady Viping’s to dinner, too; she asked me and I accepted. Later.”

She stopped.

He seemed to deliberate. Then suddenly he thrust out a face of pinched determination.

“You *won’t*, my lady,” he said. “You bet your life you won’t. *No!* So *now* then!”

And then gripping his hands more tightly behind him, he made a step towards her.

“You’re losing your bearings, Lady Harman,” he said, speaking with much intensity in a low earnest voice. “You don’t seem to be remembering where you are. You come and you tell me you’re going to do this and that. Don’t you know, Lady Harman, that it’s your wifely duty to obey, to do as I say, to behave as I wish?” He brought out a lean index finger to emphasize his remarks. “And I am going to make you do it!” he said.

“I’ve a perfect right,” she repeated.

He went on, regardless of her words. “What do you think you can do, Lady Harman? You’re going to all these places — how? Not in *my* motor-car, not with *my* money. You’ve not a thing that isn’t mine, that *I* haven’t given you. And if you’re going to have a lot of friends I haven’t got, where’re they coming to see you? Not in *my* house! I’ll chuck ’em out if I find ‘em. I won’t have ‘em. I’ll turn ’em out. See?”

“I’m not a slave.”

“You’re a wife — and a wife’s got to do what her husband

wishes. You can't have two heads on a horse. And in *this* horse — this house I mean, the head's — *me*!"

"I'm not a slave and I won't be a slave."

"You're a wife and you'll stick to the bargain you made when you married me. I'm ready in reason to give you anything you want — if you do your duty as a wife should. Why! — I spoil you. But this going about on your own, this highty-flighty go-as-you-please, — no man on earth who's worth calling a man will stand it. I'm not going to begin to stand it.... You try it on. You try it, Lady Harman.... You'll come to your senses soon enough. See? You start trying it on now — straight away. We'll make an experiment. We'll watch how it goes. Only don't expect me to give you any money, don't expect me to help your struggling family, don't expect me to alter my arrangements because of you. Let's keep apart for a bit and you go your way and I'll go mine. And we'll see who's sick of it first, we'll see who wants to cry off."

"I came down here," said Lady Harman, "to give you a reasonable notice — —"

"And you found *I* could reason too," interrupted Sir Isaac in a kind of miniature shout, "you found I could reason too!"

"You think —— Reason! I *won't*," said Lady Harman, and found herself in tears. By an enormous effort she recovered something of her dignity and withdrew. He made no effort to open the door, but stood a little hunchbacked and with a sense of rhetorical victory surveying her retreat.

§11

After Lady Harman's maid had left her that night, she sat for some time in a low easy chair before her fire, trying at first to collect together into one situation all the events of the day and then lapsing into that state of mind which is not so much thinking as resting in the attitude of thought. Presently, in a vaguely conceived future, she would go to bed. She was stunned by the immense dimensions of the row her simple act of defiance had evoked.

And then came an incredible incident, so incredible that next day she still had great difficulty in deciding whether it was an actuality or

a dream. She heard a little very familiar sound. It was the last sound she would have expected to hear and she turned sharply when she heard it. The paper-covered door in the wall of her husband's apartment opened softly, paused, opened some more and his little undignified head appeared. His hair was already tumbled from his pillow.

He regarded her steadfastly for some moments with an expression between shame and curiosity and smouldering rage, and then allowed his body, clad now in purple-striped pyjamas, to follow his head into her room. He advanced guiltily.

"Elly," he whispered. "Elly!"

She caught her dressing-gown about her and stood up.

"What is it, Isaac?" she asked, feeling curiously abashed at this invasion.

"Elly," he said, still in that furtive undertone. "*Make it up!*"

"I want my freedom," she said, after a little pause.

"Don't be *silly*, Elly," he whispered in a tone of remonstrance and advancing slowly towards her. "Make it up. Chuck all these ideas."

She shook her head.

"We've got to get along together. You can't go going about just anywhere. We've got — we've got to be reasonable."

He halted, three paces away from her. His eyes weren't sorrowful eyes, or friendly eyes; they were just shiftily eager eyes. "Look here," he said. "It's all nonsense.... Elly, old girl; let's — let's make it up."

She looked at him and it dawned upon her that she had always imagined herself to be afraid of him and that indeed she wasn't. She shook her head obstinately.

"It isn't reasonable," he said. "Here, we've been the happiest of people —— Anything in reason I'll let you have." He paused with an effect of making an offer.

"I want my autonomy," she said.

"Autonomy!" he echoed. "Autonomy! What's autonomy? Autonomy!"

This strange word seemed first to hold him in distressful suspense and then to infuriate him.

"I come in here to make it up," he said, with a voice charged with

griefs, “after all you’ve done, and you go and you talk of autonomy!”

His feelings passed beyond words. An extremity of viciousness flashed into his face. He gave vent to a snarl of exasperation, “Ya-ap!” he said, he raised his clenched fists and seemed on the verge of assault, and then with a gesture between fury and despair, he wheeled about and the purple-striped pyjamas danced in passionate retreat from her room.

“Autonomy!...”

A slam, a noise of assaulted furniture, and then silence.

Lady Harman stood for some moments regarding the paper-covered door that had closed behind him. Then she bared her white forearm and pinched it — hard.

It wasn’t a dream! This thing had happened.

§12

At a quarter to three in the morning, Lady Harman was surprised to find herself wide awake. It was exactly a quarter to three when she touched the stud of the ingenious little silver apparatus upon the table beside her bed which reflected a luminous clock-face upon the ceiling. And her mind was no longer resting in the attitude of thought but extraordinarily active. It was active, but as she presently began to realize it was not progressing. It was spinning violently round and round the frenzied figure of a little man in purple-striped pyjamas retreating from her presence, whirling away from her like something blown before a gale. That seemed to her to symbolize the completeness of the breach the day had made between her husband and herself.

She felt as a statesman might feel who had inadvertently — while conducting some trivial negotiations — declared war.

She was profoundly alarmed. She perceived ahead of her abundant possibilities of disagreeable things. And she wasn’t by any means as convinced of the righteousness of her cause as a happy warrior should be. She had a natural disposition towards truthfulness and it worried her mind that while she was struggling to assert her right to these common social freedoms she should be tacitly admitting a kind of justice in her husband’s objections by concealing

the fact that her afternoon's companion was a man. She tried not to recognize the existence of a doubt, but deep down in her mind there did indeed lurk a weakening uncertainty about the right of a woman to free conversation with any man but her own. Her reason disowned that uncertainty with scorn. But it wouldn't go away for all her reason. She went about in her mind doing her utmost to cut that doubt dead....

She tried to go back to the beginning and think it all out. And as she was not used to thinking things out, the effort took the form of an imaginary explanation to Mr. Brumley of the difficulties of her position. She framed phrases. "You see, Mr. Brumley," she imagined herself to be saying, "I want to do my duty as a wife, I have to do my duty as a wife. But it's so hard to say just where duty leaves off and being a mere slave begins. I cannot believe that *blind* obedience is any woman's duty. A woman needs — autonomy." Then her mind went off for a time to a wrestle with the exact meaning of autonomy, an issue that had not arisen hitherto in her mind.... And as she planned out such elucidations, there grew more and more distinct in her mind a kind of idealized Mr. Brumley, very grave, very attentive, wonderfully understanding, saying illuminating helpful tonic things, that made everything clear, everything almost easy. She wanted someone of that quality so badly. The night would have been unendurable if she could not have imagined Mr. Brumley of that quality. And imagining him of that quality her heart yearned for him. She felt that she had been terribly inexpressive that afternoon, she had shirked points, misstated points, and yet he had been marvellously understanding. Ever and again his words had seemed to pierce right through what she had been saying to what she had been thinking. And she recalled with peculiar comfort a kind of abstracted calculating look that had come at times into his eyes, as though his thoughts were going ever so much deeper and ever so much further than her blundering questionings could possibly have taken them. He weighed every word, he had a guarded way of saying "Um...."

Her thoughts came back to the dancing little figure in purple-striped pyjamas. She had a scared sense of irrevocable breaches. What would he do to-morrow? What should she do to-morrow? Would he speak to her at breakfast or should she speak first to him?...

She wished she had some money. If she could have foreseen all this she would have got some money before she began....

So her mind went on round and round and the dawn was breaking before she slept again.

§13

Mr. Brumley, also, slept little that night. He was wakefully mournful, recalling each ungraceful incident of the afternoon's failure in turn and more particularly his dispute with the ticket clerk, and thinking over all the things he might have done — if only he hadn't done the things he had done. He had made an atrocious mess of things. He felt he had hopelessly shattered the fair fabric of impressions of him that Lady Harman had been building up, that image of a wise humane capable man to whom a woman would gladly turn; he had been flurried, he had been incompetent, he had been ridiculously incompetent, and it seemed to him that life was a string of desolating inadequacies and that he would never smile again.

The probable reception of Lady Harman by her husband never came within his imaginative scope. Nor did the problems of social responsibility that Lady Harman had been trying to put to him exercise him very greatly. The personal disillusionment was too strong for that.

About half-past four a faint ray of comfort came with the consideration that after all a certain practical incapacity is part of the ensemble of a literary artist, and then he found himself wondering what flowers of wisdom Montaigne might not have culled from such a day's experience; he began an imitative essay in his head and he fell asleep upon this at last at about ten minutes past five in the morning.

There were better things than this in the composition of Mr. Brumley, we shall have to go deep into these reserves before we have done with him, but when he had so recently barked the shins of his self-esteem they had no chance at all.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

Lady Harman learns about Herself

§1

So it was that the great and long incubated quarrel between Lady Harman and her husband broke into active hostilities.

In spite of my ill-concealed bias in favour of Lady Harman I have to confess that she began this conflict rashly, planlessly, with no equipment and no definite end. Particularly I would emphasize that she had no definite end. She had wanted merely to establish a right to go out by herself occasionally, exercise a certain choice of friends, take on in fact the privileges of a grown-up person, and in asserting that she had never anticipated that the participation of the household would be invoked, or that a general breach might open between herself and her husband. It had seemed just a definite little point at issue, but at Sir Isaac's angry touch a dozen other matters that had seemed safely remote, matters she had never yet quite properly thought about, had been drawn into controversy. It was not only that he drew in things from outside; he evoked things within herself. She discovered she was disposed to fight not simply to establish certain liberties for herself but also — which had certainly not been in her mind before — to keep her husband away from herself. Something latent in the situation had surprised her with this effect. It had arisen out of the quarrel like a sharpshooter out of an ambuscade. Her right to go out alone had now only the value of a mere pretext for far more extensive independence. The ultimate extent of these independences, she still dared not contemplate.

She was more than a little scared. She wasn't prepared for so wide a revision of her life as this involved. She wasn't at all sure of the rightfulness of her position. Her conception of the marriage contract at that time was liberal towards her husband. After all, didn't she owe obedience? Didn't she owe him a subordinate's co-operation? Didn't she in fact owe him the whole marriage service contract? When she thought of the figure of him in his purple-striped pyjamas

dancing in a paroxysm of exasperation, that sense of responsibility which was one of her innate characteristics reproached her. She had a curious persuasion that she must be dreadfully to blame for provoking so ridiculous, so extravagant an outbreak....

§2

She heard him getting up tumultuously and when she came down, — after a brief interview with her mother who was still keeping her room, — she found him sitting at the breakfast-table eating toast and marmalade in a greedy malignant manner. The tentative propitiations of his proposal to make things up had entirely disappeared, he was evidently in a far profounder rage with her than he had been overnight. Snagsby too, that seemly domestic barometer, looked extraordinarily hushed and grave. She made a greeting-like noise and Sir Isaac scrunched "morning" up amongst a crowded fierce mouthful of toast. She helped herself to tea and bacon and looking up presently discovered his eye fixed upon her with an expression of ferocious hatred....

He went off in the big car, she supposed to London, about ten and she helped her mother to pack and depart by a train a little after midday. She made a clumsy excuse for not giving that crisp little trifle of financial assistance she was accustomed to, and Mrs. Sawbridge was anxiously tactful about the disappointment. They paid a visit of inspection and farewell to the nursery before the departure. Then Lady Harman was left until lunch to resume her meditation upon this unprecedented breach that had opened between her husband and herself. She was presently moved to write a little note to Lady Beach-Mandarin expressing her intention of attending a meeting of the Social Friends and asking whether the date was the following Wednesday or Thursday. She found three penny stamps in the bureau at which she wrote and this served to remind her of her penniless condition. She spent some time thinking out the possible consequences of that. How after all was she going to do things, with not a penny in the world to do them with?

Lady Harman was not only instinctively truthful but also almost morbidly honourable. In other words, she was simple-minded. The

idea of a community of goods between husband and wife had never established itself in her mind, she took all Sir Isaac's presents in the spirit in which he gave them, presents she felt they were on trust, and so it was that with a six-hundred pound pearl necklace, a diamond tiara, bracelets, lockets, rings, chains and pendants of the most costly kind — there had been a particularly beautiful bracelet when Millicent was born, a necklace on account of Florence, a fan painted by Charles Conder for Annette and a richly splendid set of old Spanish jewellery — yellow sapphires set in gold — to express Sir Isaac's gratitude for the baby — with all sorts of purses, bags, boxes, trinkets and garments, with a bedroom and morning-room rich in admirable loot, and with endless tradespeople willing to give her credit it didn't for some time occur to her that there was any possible means of getting pocket-money except by direct demand from Sir Isaac. She surveyed her balance of two penny stamps and even about these she felt a certain lack of negotiable facility.

She thought indeed that she might perhaps borrow money, but there again her paralyzing honesty made her recoil from the prospect of uncertain repayment. And besides, from whom could she borrow?...

It was on the evening of the second day that a chance remark from Peters turned her mind to the extensive possibilities of liquidation that lay close at hand. She was discussing her dinner dress with Peters, she wanted something very plain and high and unattractive, and Peters, who disapproved of this tendency and was all for female wiles and propitiations, fell into an admiration of the pearl necklace. She thought perhaps by so doing she might induce Lady Harman to wear it, and if she wore it Sir Isaac might be a little propitiated, and if Sir Isaac was a little propitiated it would be much more comfortable for Snagsby and herself and everyone. She was reminded of a story of a lady who sold one and substituted imitation pearls, no one the wiser, and she told this to her mistress out of sheer garrulousness. "But if no one found out," said Lady Harman, "how do you know?"

"Not till her death, me lady," said Peters, brushing, "when all things are revealed. Her husband, they say, made it a present of to another lady and the other lady, me lady, had it valued...."

Once the idea had got into Lady Harman's head it stayed there very obstinately. She surveyed the things on the table before her with a slightly lifted eyebrow. At first she thought the idea of disposing of them an entirely dishonourable idea, and if she couldn't get it out of her head again at least she made it stand in a corner. And while it stood in a corner she began putting a price for the first time in her life first upon this coruscating object and then that. Then somehow she found herself thinking more and more whether among all these glittering possessions there wasn't something that she might fairly regard as absolutely her own. There were for example her engagement ring and, still more debateable, certain other pre-nuptial trinkets Sir Isaac had given her. Then there were things given her on her successive birthdays. A birthday present of all presents is surely one's very own? But selling is an extreme exercise of ownership. Since those early schooldays when she had carried on an unprofitable traffic in stamps she had never sold anything — unless we are to reckon that for once and for all she had sold herself.

Concurrently with these insidious speculations Lady Harman found herself trying to imagine how one sold jewels. She tried to sound Peters by taking up the story of the necklace again. But Peters was uninforming. "But where," asked Lady Harman, "could such a thing be done?"

"There are places, me lady," said Peters.

"But where?"

"In the West End, me lady. The West End is full of places — for things of that sort. There's scarcely anything you can't do there, me lady — if only you know how."

That was really all that Peters could impart.

"How *does* one sell jewels?" Lady Harman became so interested in this side of her perplexities that she did a little lose sight of those subtler problems of integrity that had at first engaged her. Do jewellers buy jewels as well as sell them? And then it came into her head that there were such things as pawnshops. By the time she had thought about pawnshops and tried to imagine one, her original complete veto upon any idea of selling had got lost to sight altogether. Instead there was a growing conviction that if ever she sold anything it would be a certain sapphire and diamond ring which

she didn't like and never wore that Sir Isaac had given her as a birthday present two years ago. But of course she would never dream of selling anything; at the utmost she need but pawn. She reflected and decided that on the whole it would be wiser not to ask Peters how one pawned. It occurred to her to consult the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on the subject, but though she learnt that the Chinese pawnshops must not charge more than three per cent. per annum, that King Edward the Third pawned his jewels in 1338 and that Father Bernardino di Feltre who set up pawnshops in Assisi and Padua and Pavia was afterward canonized, she failed to get any very clear idea of the exact ritual of the process. And then suddenly she remembered that she knew a finished expert in pawnshop work in the person of Susan Burnet. Susan could tell her everything. She found some curtains in the study that needed replacement, consulted Mrs. Crumble and, with a view to economizing her own resources, made that lady send off an urgent letter to Susan bidding her come forthwith.

§3

It has been said that Fate is a plagiarist. Lady Harman's Fate at any rate at this juncture behaved like a benevolent plagiarist who was also a little old-fashioned. This phase of speechless hostility was complicated by the fact that two of the children fell ill, or at least seemed for a couple of days to be falling ill. By all the rules of British sentiment, this ought to have brought about a headlong reconciliation at the tumbled bedside. It did nothing of the sort; it merely wove fresh perplexities into the tangled skein of her thoughts.

On the day after her participation in that forbidden lunch Millicent, her eldest daughter, was discovered with a temperature of a hundred and one, and then Annette, the third, followed suit with a hundred. This carried Lady Harman post haste to the nursery, where to an unprecedented degree she took command. Latterly she had begun to mistrust the physique of her children and to doubt whether the trained efficiency of Mrs. Harblow the nurse wasn't becoming a little blunted at the edges by continual use. And the tremendous quarrel she had afoot made her keenly resolved not to let anything go

wrong in the nursery and less disposed than she usually was to leave things to her husband's servants. She interviewed the doctor herself, arranged for the isolation of the two flushed and cross little girls, saw to the toys and amusements which she discovered had become a little flattened and disused by the servants' imperatives of tidying up and putting away, and spent the greater part of the next two days between the night and day nurseries.

She was a little surprised to find how readily she did this and how easily the once entirely authoritative Mrs. Harblow submitted. It was much the same surprise that growing young people feel when they reach some shelf that has hitherto been inaccessible. The crisis soon passed. At his first visit the doctor was a little doubtful whether the Harman nursery wasn't under the sway of measles, which were then raging in a particularly virulent form in London; the next day he inclined to the view that the trouble was merely a feverish cold, and before night this second view was justified by the disappearance of the "temperatures" and a complete return to normal conditions.

But as for that hushed reconciliation in the fevered presence of the almost sacrificial offspring, it didn't happen. Sir Isaac merely thrust aside the stiff silences behind which he masked his rage to remark: "This is what happens when wimmen go gadding about!"

That much and glaring eyes and compressed lips and emphasizing fingers and then he had gone again.

Indeed rather than healing their widening breach this crisis did much to spread it into strange new regions. It brought Lady Harman to the very verge of realizing how much of instinct and how much of duty held her the servant of the children she had brought into the world, and how little there mingled with that any of those factors of pride and admiration that go to the making of heroic maternal love. She knew what is expected of a mother, the exalted and lyrical devotion, and it was with something approaching terror that she perceived that certain things in these children of hers she *hated*. It was her business she knew to love them blindly; she lay awake at night in infinite dismay realizing she did nothing of the sort. Their weakness held her more than anything else, the invincible pathos of their little limbs in discomfort so that she was ready to die she felt to give them ease. But so she would have been held, she was assured,

by the little children of anybody if they had fallen with sufficient helplessness into her care.

Just how much she didn't really like her children she presently realized when in the feeble irascibility of their sickness they fell quarrelling. They became — horrid. Millicent and Annette being imprisoned in their beds it seemed good to Florence when she came back from the morning's walk, to annex and hide a selection of their best toys. She didn't take them and play with them, she hid them with an industrious earnestness in a box window-seat that was regarded as peculiarly hers, staggering with armfuls across the nursery floor. Then Millicent by some equally mysterious agency divined what was afoot and set up a clamour for a valued set of doll's furniture, which immediately provoked a similar outcry from little Annette for her Teddy Bear. Followed woe and uproar. The invalids insisted upon having every single toy they possessed brought in and put upon their beds; Florence was first disingenuous and then surrendered her loot with passionate howlings. The Teddy Bear was rescued from Baby after a violent struggle in which one furry hind leg was nearly twisted off. It jars upon the philoprogenitive sentiment of our time to tell of these things and still more to record that all four, stirred by possessive passion to the profoundest depths of their beings, betrayed to an unprecedented degree in their little sharp noses, their flushed faces, their earnest eyes, their dutiful likeness to Sir Isaac. He peeped from under Millicent's daintily knitted brows and gestured with Florence's dimpled fists. It was as if God had tried to make him into four cherubim and as if in spite of everything he was working through.

Lady Harman toiled to pacify these disorders, gently, attentively, and with a faint dismay in her dark eyes. She bribed and entreated and marvelled at mental textures so unlike her own. Baby was squared with a brand new Teddy Bear, a rare sort, a white one, which Snagsby went and purchased in the Putney High Street and brought home in his arms, conferring such a lustre upon the deed that the lower orders, the very street-boys, watched him with reverence as he passed. Annette went to sleep amidst a discomfort of small treasures and woke stormily when Mrs. Harblow tried to remove some of the spikier ones. And Lady Harman went back to her large pink bedroom

and meditated for a long time upon these things and tried to remember whether in her own less crowded childhood with Georgina, either of them had been quite so inhumanly hard and grasping as these feverish little mites in her nursery. She tried to think she had been, she tried to think that all children were such little distressed lumps of embittered individuality, and she did what she could to overcome the queer feeling that this particular clutch of offspring had been foisted upon her and weren't at all the children she could now imagine and desire, — gentle children, sweet-spirited children....

§4

Susan Burnet arrived in a gusty mood and brought new matter for Lady Harman's ever broadening consideration of the wifely position. Susan, led by a newspaper placard, had discovered Sir Isaac's relations to the International Bread and Cake Stores.

"At first I thought I wouldn't come," said Susan. "I really did. I couldn't hardly believe it. And then I thought, 'it isn't *her*. It can't be *her*!' But I'd never have dreamt before that I could have been brought to set foot in the house of the man who drove poor father to ruin and despair.... You've been so kind to me...."

Susan's simple right-down mind stopped for a moment with something very like a sob, baffled by the contradictions of the situation.

"So I came," she said, with a forced bright smile.

"I'm glad you came," said Lady Harman. "I wanted to see you. And you know, Susan, I know very little — very little indeed — of Sir Isaac's business."

"I quite believe it, my lady. I've never for one moment thought *you* —— I don't know how to say it, my lady."

"And indeed I'm not," said Lady Harman, taking it as said.

"I knew you weren't," said Susan, relieved to be so understood.

And the two women looked perplexedly at one another over the neglected curtains Susan had come to "see to," and shyness just snatched back Lady Harman from her impulse to give Susan a sisterly kiss. Nevertheless Susan who was full of wise intuitions felt

that kiss that was never given, and in the remote world of unacted deeds returned it with effusion.

"But it's hard," said Susan, "to find one's own second sister mixed up in a strike, and that's what it's come to last week. They've struck, all the International waitresses have struck, and last night in Piccadilly they were standing on the kerb and picketing and her among them. With a crowd cheering.... And me ready to give my right hand to keep that girl respectable!"

And with a volubility that was at once tumultuous and effective, Susan sketched in the broad outlines of the crisis that threatened the dividends and popularity of the International Bread and Cake Stores. The unsatisfied demands of that bright journalistic enterprise, *The London Lion*, lay near the roots of the trouble. *The London Lion* had stirred it up. But it was only too evident that *The London Lion* had merely given a voice and form and cohesion to long smouldering discontents.

Susan's account of the matter had that impartiality which comes from intellectual incoherence, she hadn't so much a judgment upon the whole as a warring mosaic of judgments. It was talking upon Post Impressionist lines, talking in the manner of Picasso. She had the firmest conviction that to strike against employment, however ill-paid or badly conditioned, was a disgraceful combination of folly, ingratitude and general wickedness, and she had an equally strong persuasion that the treatment of the employees of the International Bread and Cake Stores was such as no reasonably spirited person ought to stand. She blamed her sister extremely and sympathized with her profoundly, and she put it all down in turn to *The London Lion*, to Sir Isaac, and to a small round-faced person called Babs Wheeler, who appeared to be the strike leader and seemed always to be standing on tables in the branches, or clambering up to the lions in Trafalgar Square, or being cheered in the streets.

But there could be no mistaking the quality of Sir Isaac's "International" organization as Susan's dabs of speech shaped it out. It was indeed what we all of us see everywhere about us, the work of the base energetic mind, raw and untrained, in possession of the keen instruments of civilization, the peasant mind allied and blended with the Ghetto mind, grasping and acquisitive, clever as a Norman

peasant or a Jew pedlar is clever, and beyond that outrageously stupid and ugly. It was a new view and yet the old familiar view of her husband, but now she saw him not as little eager eyes, a sharp nose, gaunt gestures and a leaden complexion, but as shops and stores and rules and cash registers and harsh advertisements and a driving merciless hurry to get — to get anything and everything, money, monopoly, power, prominence, whatever any other human being seemed to admire or seemed to find desirable, a lust rather than a living soul. Now that her eyes were at last opened Lady Harman, who had seen too little heretofore, now saw too much; she saw all that she had not seen, with an excess of vision, monstrous, caricatured. Susan had already dabbed in the disaster of Sir Isaac's unorganized competitors going to the wall — for charity or the state to neglect or bandage as it might chance — the figure of that poor little "Father," moping hopelessly before his "accident" symbolized that; and now she gave in vivid splotches of allusion, glimpses of the business machine that had replaced those shattered enterprises and carried Sir Isaac to the squalid glory of a Liberal honours list, — the carefully balanced antagonisms and jealousies of the girls and the manageresses, those manageresses who had been obliged to invest little bunches of savings as guarantees and who had to account for every crumb and particle of food stock that came to the branch, and the hunt for cases and inefficiency by the inspectors, who had somehow to justify a salary of two hundred a year, not to mention a percentage of the fines they inflicted.

"There's all that business of the margarine," said Susan. "Every branch gets its butter under weight, — the water squeezes out, — and every branch has over weight margarine. Of course the rules say that mixing's forbidden and if they get caught they go, but they got to pay-in for that butter, and it's setting a snare for their feet. People who've never thought to cheat, when they get it like that, day after day, they cheat, my lady.... And the girls get left food for rations. There's always trouble, it's against what the rules say, but they get it. Of course it's against the rules, but what can a manageress do? — if the waste doesn't fall on them, it falls on her. She's tied there with her savings.... Such driving, my lady, it's against the very spirit of God. It makes scoffers point. It makes people despise law and order.

There's Luke, he gets bitterer and bitterer; he says that it's in the Word we mustn't muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, but these Stores, he says, they'd muzzle the ox and keep it hungry and make it work a little machine, he says, whenever it put down its head in the hope of finding a scrap...."

So Susan, bright-eyed, flushed and voluble, pleading the cause of that vague greatness in humanity that would love, that would loiter, that would think, that would if it could give us art, delight and beauty, that turns blindly and stumblingly towards joy, towards intervals, towards the mysterious things of the spirit, against all this sordid strenuousness, this driving destructive association of hardfisted peasant soul and Ghetto greed, this fool's "efficiency," that rules our world to-day.

Then Susan lunged for a time at the waitress life her sister led. "She has 'er 'ome with us, but some — they haven't homes."

"They make a fuss about all this White Slave Traffic," said Susan, "but if ever there were white slaves it's the girls who work for a living and keep themselves respectable. And nobody wants to make an example of the men who get rich out of *them*...."

And after some hearsay about the pressure in the bake-houses and the accidents to the van-men, who worked on a speeding-up system that Sir Isaac had adopted from an American business specialist, Susan's mental discharge poured out into the particulars of the waitresses' strike and her sister's share in that. "She *would* go into it," said Susan, "she let herself be drawn in. I asked her never to take the place. Better Service, I said, a thousand times. I begged her, I could have begged her on my bended knees...."

The immediate cause of the strike it seemed was the exceptional disagreeableness of one of the London district managers. "He takes advantage of his position," repeated Susan with face aflame, and Lady Harman was already too wise about Susan's possibilities to urge her towards particulars....

Now as Lady Harman listened to all this confused effective picturing of the great catering business which was the other side of her husband and which she had taken on trust so long, she had in her heart a quite unreasonable feeling of shame that she should listen at all, a shyness, as though she was prying, as though this really did not

concern her. She knew she had to listen and still she felt beyond her proper jurisdiction. It is against instinct, it is with an enormous reluctance that women are bringing their quick emotions, their flashing unstable intelligences, their essential romanticism, their inevitable profound generosity into the world of politics and business. If only they could continue believing that all that side of life is grave and wise and admirably managed for them they would. It is not in a day or a generation that we shall un-specialize women. It is a wrench nearly as violent as birth for them to face out into the bleak realization that the man who goes out for them into business, into affairs, and returns so comfortably loaded with housings and wrappings and trappings and toys, isn't, as a matter of fact, engaged in benign creativeness while he is getting these desirable things.

§5

Lady Harman's mind was so greatly exercised by Susan Burnet's voluminous confidences that it was only when she returned to her own morning room that she recalled the pawning problem. She went back to Sir Isaac's study and found Susan with all her measurements taken and on the very edge of departure.

"Oh Susan!" she said.

She found the matter a little difficult to broach. Susan remained in an attitude of respectful expectation.

"I wanted to ask you," said Lady Harman and then broke off to shut the door. Susan's interest increased.

"You know, Susan," said Lady Harman with an air of talking about commonplace things, "Sir Isaac is very rich and — of course — very generous.... But sometimes one feels, one wants a little money of one's own."

"I think I can understand that, my lady," said Susan.

"I knew you would," said Lady Harman and then with a brightness that was slightly forced, "I can't always get money of my own. It's difficult — sometimes."

And then blushing vividly: "I've got lots of *things*.... Susan, have you ever pawned anything?"

And so she broached it.

“Not since I got fairly into work,” said Susan; “I wouldn’t have it. But when I was little we were always pawning things. Why! we’ve pawned kettles!...”

She flashed three reminiscences.

Meanwhile Lady Harman produced a little glittering object and held it between finger and thumb. “If I went into a pawnshop near here,” she said, “it would seem so odd.... This ring, Susan, must be worth thirty or forty pounds. And it seems so silly when I have it that I should really be wanting money....”

Susan displayed a peculiar reluctance to handle the ring. “I’ve never,” she said, “pawned anything valuable — not valuable like that. Suppose — suppose they wanted to know how I had come by it.”

“It’s more than Alice earns in a year,” she said. “It’s — —” she eyed the glittering treasure; “it’s a queer thing for me to have.”

A certain embarrassment arose between them. Lady Harman’s need of money became more apparent. “I’ll do it for you,” said Susan, “indeed I’ll do it. But —— There’s one thing — —”

Her face flushed hotly. “It isn’t that I want to make difficulties. But people in our position — we aren’t like people in your position. It’s awkward sometimes to explain things. You’ve got a good character, but people don’t know it. You can’t be too careful. It isn’t sufficient — just to be honest. If I take that —— If you were just to give me a little note — in your handwriting — on your paper — just asking me —— I don’t suppose I need show it to anyone....”

“I’ll write the note,” said Lady Harman. A new set of uncomfortable ideas was dawning upon her. “But Susan —— You don’t mean that anyone, anyone who’s really honest — might get into trouble?”

“You can’t be too careful,” said Susan, manifestly resolved not to give our highly civilized state half a chance with her.

§6

The problem of Sir Isaac and just what he was doing and what he thought he was doing and what he meant to do increased in importance in Lady Harman’s mind as the days passed by. He had an

air of being malignantly up to something and she could not imagine what this something could be. He spoke to her very little but he looked at her a great deal. He had more and more of the quality of a premeditated imminent explosion....

One morning she was standing quite still in the drawing-room thinking over this now almost oppressive problem of why the situation did not develop further with him, when she became aware of a thin flat unusual book upon the small side table near the great armchair at the side of the fire. He had been reading that overnight and it lay obliquely — it might almost have been left out for her.

She picked it up. It was *The Taming of the Shrew* in that excellent folio edition of Henley's which makes each play a comfortable thin book apart. A curiosity to learn what it was had drawn her husband to English Literature made her turn over the pages. *The Taming of the Shrew* was a play she knew very slightly. For the Harmans, though deeply implicated like most other rich and striving people in plans for honouring the immortal William, like most other people found scanty leisure to read him.

As she turned over the pages a pencil mark caught her eye. Thence words were underlined and further accentuated by a deeply scored line in the margin.

"But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.
Nay; look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;
I will be master of what is mine own:
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
She is my household stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing:
And here she stands, touch her whoever dare;
I'll bring mine action on the proudest He,
That stops my way in Padua."

With a slightly heightened colour, Lady Harman read on and presently found another page slashed with Sir Isaac's approval....

Her face became thoughtful. Did he mean to attempt — Petruchio? He could never dare. There were servants, there were the people one met, the world.... He would never dare....

What a strange play it was! Shakespear of course was wonderfully wise, the crown of English wisdom, the culminating English mind, — or else one might almost find something a little stupid and clumsy.... Did women nowadays really feel like these Elizabethan wives who talked — like girls, very forward girls indeed, but girls of sixteen?...

She read the culminating speech of Katherine and now she had so forgotten Sir Isaac she scarcely noted the pencil line that endorsed the immortal words.

"Thy husband is thy Lord, thy Life, thy Keeper,
Thy Head, thy Sovereign; one who cares for thee,
And for thy maintenance commits his body
To painful labour both by sea and land,
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
While thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;
And craves no other tribute at thy hands
But love, fair looks, and true obedience;
Too little payment for so great a debt.
Such duty as the Subject owes the Prince,
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending Rebel
And graceless traitor to her loving Lord?
I am ashamed that women are so simple
To offer war, where they should kneel for peace;

My mind has been as big as one of yours,
My heat as great; my reason, haply, more,
To bandy word for word and frown for frown.
But now I see our lances are but straws;
Our strength is weak, our weakness past compare,
Seeming that most which we indeed least are...."

She wasn't indignant. Something in these lines took hold of her protesting imagination.

She knew that so she could have spoken of a man.

But that man, — she apprehended him as vaguely as an Anglican bishop apprehends God. He was obscured altogether by shadows; he had only one known characteristic, that he was totally unlike Sir Isaac. And the play was false she felt in giving this speech to a broken woman. Such things are not said by broken women. Broken women do no more than cheat and lie. But so a woman might speak out of her unconquered wilfulness, as a queen might give her lover a kingdom out of the fullness of her heart.

§7

The evening after his wife had had this glimpse into Sir Isaac's mental processes he telephoned that Charterson and Horatio Blenker were coming home to dinner with him. Neither Lady Charterson nor Mrs. Blenker were to be present; it was to be a business conversation and not a social occasion, and Lady Harman he desired should wear her black and gold with just a touch of crimson in her hair. Charterson wanted a word or two with the flexible Horatio on sugar at the London docks, and Sir Isaac had some vague ideas that a turn might be given to the public judgment upon the waitresses' strike, by a couple of Horatio's thoughtful yet gentlemanly articles. And in addition Charterson seemed to have something else upon his mind; he did not tell as much to Sir Isaac but he was weighing the possibilities of securing a controlling share in the *Daily Spirit*, which simply didn't know at present where it was upon the sugar business, and of installing Horatio's brother, Adolphus, as its editor. He wanted to form some idea from Horatio of what Adolphus might expect before he approached Adolphus.

Lady Harman wore the touch of crimson in her hair as her husband had desired, and the table was decorated simply with a big silver bowl of crimson roses. A slight shade of apprehension in Sir Isaac's face changed to approval at the sight of her obedience. After all perhaps she was beginning to see the commonsense of her position.

Charterson struck her as looking larger, but then whenever she saw him he struck her as looking larger. He enveloped her hand in a large amiable paw for a minute and asked after the children with gusto. The large teeth beneath his discursive moustache gave him the effect of a perennial smile to which his asymmetrical ears added a touch of waggery. He always betrayed a fatherly feeling towards her as became a man who was married to a handsome wife old enough to be her mother. Even when he asked about the children he did it with something of the amused knowingness of assured seniority, as if indeed he knew all sorts of things about the children that she couldn't as yet even begin to imagine. And though he confined his serious conversation to the two other men, he would ever and again show himself mindful of her and throw her some friendly enquiry, some quizzically puzzling remark. Blenker as usual treated her as if she were an only very indistinctly visible presence to whom an effusive yet inattentive politeness was due. He was clearly nervous almost to the pitch of jumpiness. He knew he was to be spoken to about the sugar business directly he saw Charterson, and he hated being spoken to about the sugar business. He had his code of honour. Of course one had to make concessions to one's proprietors, but he could not help feeling that if only they would consent to see his really quite obvious gentlemanliness more clearly it would be better for the paper, better for the party, better for them, far better for himself. He wasn't altogether a fool about that sugar; he knew how things lay. They ought to trust him more. His nervousness betrayed itself in many little ways. He crumbled his bread constantly until, thanks to Snagsby's assiduous replacement, he had made quite a pile of crumbs, he dropped his glasses in the soup — a fine occasion for Snagsby's *sang-froid* — and he forgot not to use a fish knife with the fish as Lady Grove directs and tried when he discovered his error to replace it furtively on the table cloth. Moreover he kept on patting the glasses on his nose — after Snagsby had whisked his soup plate away, rescued, wiped and returned them to him — until that feature glowed modestly at such excesses of attention, and the soup and sauces and things bothered his fine blond moustache unusually. So that Mr. Blenker what with the glasses, the napkin, the food and the things seemed as restless as a young sparrow. Lady Harman did her

duties as hostess in the quiet key of her sombre dress, and until the conversation drew her out into unexpected questionings she answered rather than talked, and she did not look at her husband once throughout the meal.

At first the talk was very largely Charterson. He had no intention of coming to business with Blenker until Lady Harman had given place to the port and the man's nerves were steadier. He spoke of this and that in the large discursive way men use in clubs, and it was past the fish before the conversation settled down upon the topic of business organization and Sir Isaac, a little warmed by champagne, came out of the uneasily apprehensive taciturnity into which he had fallen in the presence of his wife. Horatio Blenker was keenly interested in the idealization of commercial syndication, he had been greatly stirred by a book of Mr. Gerald Stanley Lee's called *Inspired Millionaires* which set out to show just what magnificent airs rich men might give themselves, and he had done his best to catch its tone and to find *Inspired Millionaires* in Sir Isaac and Charterson and to bring it to their notice and to the notice of the readers of the *Old Country Gazette*. He felt that if only Sir Isaac and Charterson would see getting rich as a Great Creative Act it would raise their tone and his tone and the tone of the *Old Country Gazette* tremendously. It wouldn't of course materially alter the methods or policy of the paper but it would make them all feel nobler, and Blenker was of that finer clay that does honestly want to feel nobler. He hated pessimism and all that criticism and self-examination that makes weak men pessimistic, he wanted to help weak men and be helped himself, he was all for that school of optimism that would have each dunghill was a well-upholstered throne, and his nervous, starry contributions to the talk were like patches of water ranunculuses trying to flower in the overflow of a sewer.

Because you know it is idle to pretend that the talk of Charterson and Sir Isaac wasn't a heavy flow of base ideas; they hadn't even the wit to sham very much about their social significance. They cared no more for the growth, the stamina, the spirit of the people whose lives they dominated than a rat cares for the stability of the house it gnaws. They *wanted* a broken-spirited people. They were in such relations wilfully and offensively stupid, and I do not see why we people who

read and write books should pay this stupidity merely because it is prevalent even the mild tribute of an ironical civility. Charterson talked of the gathering trouble that might lead to a strike of the transport workers in London docks, and what he had to say, he said, — he repeated it several times — was, "*Let* them strike. We're ready. The sooner they strike the better. Devonport's a Man and this time we'll *beat* 'em...."

He expanded generally on strikes. "It's a question practically whether we are to manage our own businesses or whether we're to have them managed for us. *Managed* I say!..."

"They know nothing of course of the details of organization," said Blenker, shining with intelligence and looking quickly first to the right and then to the left. "Nothing."

Sir Isaac broke out into confirmatory matter. There was an idea in his head that this talk might open his wife's eyes to some sense of the magnitude of his commercial life, to the wonder of its scale and quality. He compared notes with Charterson upon a speeding-up system for delivery vans invented by an American specialist and it made Blenker flush with admiration and turn as if for sympathy to Lady Harman to realize how a modification in a tailboard might mean a yearly saving in wages of many thousand pounds. "The sort of thing they don't understand," he said. And then Sir Isaac told of some of his own little devices. He had recently taken to having the returns of percentage increase and decrease from his various districts printed on postcards and circulated monthly among the district managers, postcards endorsed with such stimulating comments in red type as "Well done Cardiff!" or "What ails Portsmouth?" — the results had been amazingly good; "neck and neck work," he said, "everywhere" — and thence they passed to the question of confidential reports and surprise inspectors. Thereby they came to the rights and wrongs of the waitress strike.

And then it was that Lady Harman began to take a share in the conversation.

She interjected a question. "Yes," she said suddenly and her interruption was so unexpected that all three men turned their eyes to her. "But how much do the girls get a week?"

"I thought," she said to some confused explanations by Blenker

and Charterson, “that gratuities were forbidden.”

Blenker further explained that most of the girls of the class Sir Isaac was careful to employ lived at home. Their income was “supplementary.”

“But what happens to the others who don’t live at home, Mr. Blenker?” she asked.

“Very small minority,” said Mr. Blenker reassuring himself about his glasses.

“But what do they do?”

Charterson couldn’t imagine whether she was going on in this way out of sheer ignorance or not.

“Sometimes their fines make big unexpected holes in their week’s pay,” she said.

Sir Isaac made some indistinct remark about “utter nonsense.”

“It seems to me to be driving them straight upon the streets.”

The phrase was Susan’s. Its full significance wasn’t at that time very clear to Lady Harman and it was only when she had uttered it that she realized from Horatio Blenker’s convulsive start just what a blow she had delivered at that table. His glasses came off again. He caught them and thrust them back, he seemed to be holding his nose on, holding his face on, preserving those carefully arranged features of himself from hideous revelations; his free hand made weak movements with his dinner napkin. He seemed to be holding it in reserve against the ultimate failure of his face. Charterson surveyed her through an immense pause open-mouthed; then he turned his large now frozen amiability upon his host. “These are Awful questions,” he gasped, “rather beyond Us don’t you think?” and then magnificently; “Harman, things are looking pretty Queer in the Far East again. I’m told there are chances — of revolution — even in Pekin....”

Lady Harman became aware of Snagsby’s arm and his steady well-trained breathing beside her as, tenderly almost but with a regretful disapproval, he removed her plate....

§8

If Lady Harman had failed to remark at the time the deep impression

her words had made upon her hearers, she would have learnt it later from the extraordinary wrath in which Sir Isaac, as soon as his guests had departed, visited her. He was so angry he broke the seal of silence he had set upon his lips. He came raging into the pink bedroom through the paper-covered door as if they were back upon their old intimate footing. He brought a flavour of cigars and manly refreshment with him, his shirt front was a little splashed and crumpled and his white face was variegated with flushed patches.

"What ever d'you mean," he cried, "by making a fool of me in front of those fellers?... What's my business got to do with you?"

Lady Harman was too unready for a reply.

"I ask you what's my business got to do with you? It's *my* affair, *my* side. You got no more right to go shoving your spoke into that than — anything. See? What do *you* know of the rights and wrongs of business? How can *you* tell what's right and what isn't right? And the things you came out with — the things you came out with! Why Charterson — after you'd gone Charterson said, she doesn't know, she can't know what she's talking about! A decent woman! a *lady*! talking of driving girls on the street. You ought to be ashamed of yourself! You aren't fit to show your face.... It's these damned papers and pamphlets, all this blear-eyed stuff, these decadent novels and things putting narsty thoughts, *narsty dirty* thoughts into decent women's heads. It ought to be rammed back down their throats, it ought to be put a stop to!"

Sir Isaac suddenly gave way to woe. "What have I *done*?" he cried, "what have I done? Here's everything going so well! We might be the happiest of couples! We're rich, we got everything we want.... And then you go harbouring these ideas, fooling about with rotten people, taking up with Socialism —— Yes, I tell you — Socialism!"

His moment of pathos ended. "NO?" he shouted in an enormous voice.

He became white and grim. He emphasized his next words with a shaken finger.

"It's got to end, my lady. It's going to end sooner than you expect. That's all!..."

He paused at the papered door. He had a popular craving for a

vivid curtain and this he felt was just a little too mild.

"It's going to end," he repeated and then with great violence, with almost alcoholic violence, with the round eyes and shouting voice and shaken fist and blaspheming violence of a sordid, thrifty peasant enraged, "it's going to end a Damned Sight sooner than you expect."

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

Sir Isaac as Petruchio

§1

Twice had Sir Isaac come near to betraying the rapid and extensive preparations for the subjugation of his wife, that he hid behind his silences. He hoped that their estrangement might be healed by a certain display of strength and decision. He still refused to let himself believe that all this trouble that had arisen between them, this sullen insistence upon unbecoming freedoms of intercourse and movement, this questioning spirit and a gaucherie of manner that might almost be mistaken for an aversion from his person, were due to any essential evil in her nature; he clung almost passionately to the alternative that she was the victim of those gathering forces of discontent, of that interpretation which can only be described as decadent and that veracity which can only be called immodest, that darken the intellectual skies of our time, a sweet thing he held her still though touched by corruption, a prey to "idees," "idees" imparted from the poisoned mind of her sister, imbibed from the carelessly edited columns of newspapers, from all too laxly censored plays, from "blear-eyed" bookshow he thanked the Archbishop of York for that clever expressive epithet! — from the careless talk of rashly admitted guests, from the very atmosphere of London. And it had grown clearer and clearer to him that his duty to himself and the world and her was to remove her to a purer, simpler air, beyond the range of these infections, to isolate her and tranquillize her and so win her back again to that acquiescence, that entirely hopeless submissiveness that had made her so sweet and dear a companion for him in the earlier years of their married life. Long before Lady Beach-Mandarin's crucial luncheon, his deliberate foreseeing mind had been planning such a retreat. Black Strand even at his first visit had appeared to him in the light of a great opportunity, and the crisis of their quarrel did but release that same torrential energy which had carried him to a position of Napoleonic predominance in the world of

baking, light catering and confectionery, into the channels of a scheme already very definitely formed in his mind.

His first proceeding after the long hours of sleepless passion that had followed his wife's Hampton Court escapade, had been to place himself in communication with Mr. Brumley. He learnt at Mr. Brumley's club that that gentleman had slept there overnight and had started but a quarter of an hour before, back to Black Strand. Sir Isaac in hot pursuit and gathering force and assistance in mid flight reached Black Strand by midday.

It was with a certain twinge of the conscience that Mr. Brumley perceived his visitor, but it speedily became clear that Sir Isaac had no knowledge of the guilty circumstances of the day before. He had come to buy Black Strand — incontinently, that was all. He was going, it became clear at once, to buy it with all its fittings and furnishings as it stood, lock, stock and barrel. Mr. Brumley, concealing that wild elation, that sense of a joyous rebirth, that only the liquidation of nearly all one's possessions can give, was firm but not excessive. Sir Isaac haggled as a wave breaks and then gave in and presently they were making a memorandum upon the pretty writing-desk beneath the traditional rose Euphemia had established there when Mr. Brumley was young and already successful.

This done, and it was done in less than fifteen minutes, Sir Isaac produced a rather crumpled young architect from the motor-car as a conjurer might produce a rabbit from a hat, a builder from Aleham appeared astonishingly in a dog-cart — he had been summoned by telegram — and Sir Isaac began there and then to discuss alterations, enlargements and, more particularly, with a view to his nursery requirements, the conversion of the empty barn into a nursery wing and its connexion with the house by a corridor across the shrubbery.

"It will take you three months," said the builder from Aleham. "And the worst time of the year coming."

"It won't take three weeks — if I have to bring down a young army from London to do it," said Sir Isaac.

"But such a thing as plastering — —"

"We won't have plastering."

"There's canvas and paper, of course," said the young architect.

"There's canvas and paper," said Sir Isaac. "And those new patent

building units, so far as the corridor goes. I've seen the ads."

"We can whitewash 'em. They won't show much," said the young architect.

"Oh if you do things in *that* way," said the builder from Aleham with bitter resignation....

§2

The morning dawned at last when the surprise was ripe. It was four days after Susan's visit, and she was due again on the morrow with the money that would enable her employer to go to Lady Viping's now imminent dinner. Lady Harman had had to cut the Social Friends' meeting altogether, but the day before the surprise Agatha Alimony had come to tea in her jobbed car, and they had gone together to the committee meeting of the Shakespear Dinner Society. Sir Isaac had ignored that defiance, and it was an unusually confident and quite unsuspicious woman who descended in a warm October sunshine to the surprise. In the breakfast-room she discovered an awe-stricken Snagsby standing with his plate-basket before her husband, and her husband wearing strange unusual tweeds and gaiters, — buttoned gaiters, and standing a-straddle, — unusually a-straddle, on the hearthrug.

"That's enough, Snagsby," said Sir Isaac, at her entrance. "Bring it all."

She met Snagsby's eye, and it was portentous.

Latterly Snagsby's eye had lost the assurance of his former days. She had noted it before, she noted it now more than ever; as though he was losing confidence, as though he was beginning to doubt, as though the world he had once seemed to rule grew insecure beneath his feet. For a moment she met his eye; it might have been a warning he conveyed, it might have been an appeal for sympathy, and then he had gone. She looked at the table. Sir Isaac had breakfasted acutely.

In silence, among the wreckage and with a certain wonder growing, Lady Harman attended to her needs.

Sir Isaac cleared his throat.

She became aware that he had spoken. "What did you say, Isaac?" she asked, looking up. He seemed to have widened his straddle

almost dangerously, and he spoke with a certain conscious forcefulness.

"We're going to move out of this house, Elly," he said. "We're going down into the country right away."

She sat back in her chair and regarded his pinched and determined visage.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I've bought that house of Brumley's, — Black Strand. We're going to move down there — *now*. I've told the servants.... When you've done your breakfast, you'd better get Peters to pack your things. The big car's going to be ready at half-past ten."

Lady Harman reflected.

"To-morrow evening," she said, "I was going out to dinner at Lady Viping's."

"Not my affair — seemingly," said Sir Isaac with irony. "Well, the car's going to be ready at half-past ten."

"But that dinner —— !"

"We'll think about it when the time comes."

Husband and wife regarded each other.

"I've had about enough of London," said Sir Isaac. "So we're going to shift the scenery. See?"

Lady Harman felt that one might adduce good arguments against this course if only one knew of them.

Sir Isaac had a bright idea. He rang.

"Snagsby," he said, "just tell Peters to pack up Lady Harman's things...."

"*Well!*" said Lady Harman, as the door closed on Snagsby. Her mind was full of confused protest, but she had again that entirely feminine and demoralizing conviction that if she tried to express it she would weep or stumble into some such emotional disaster. If now she went upstairs and told Peters *not* to pack —— !

Sir Isaac walked slowly to the window, and stood for a time staring out into the garden.

Extraordinary bumpings began overhead in Sir Isaac's room. No doubt somebody was packing something....

Lady Harman realized with a deepening humiliation that she dared not dispute before the servants, and that he could. "But the

children — —" she said at last.

"I've told Mrs. Harblow," he said, over his shoulder. "Told her it was a bit of a surprise." He turned, with a momentary lapse into something like humour. "You see," he said, "it *is* a bit of a surprise."

"But what are you going to do with this house?"

"Lock it all up for a bit.... I don't see any sense in living where we aren't happy. Perhaps down there we shall manage better...."

It emerged from the confusion of Lady Harman's mind that perhaps she had better go to the nursery, and see how things were getting on there. Sir Isaac watched her departure with a slightly dubious eye, made little noises with his teeth for a time, and then went towards the telephone.

In the hall she found two strange young men in green aprons assisting the under-butler to remove the hats and overcoats and such-like personal material into a motor-van outside. She heard two of the housemaids scurrying upstairs. "'Arf an hour," said one, "isn't what I call a proper time to pack a box in."

In the nursery the children were disputing furiously what toys were to be taken into the country.

Lady Harman was a very greatly astonished woman. The surprise had been entirely successful.

§3

It has been said, I think, by Limburger, in his already cited work, that nothing so excites and prevails with woman as rapid and extensive violence, sparing and yet centring upon herself, and certainly it has to be recorded that, so far from being merely indignant, and otherwise a helplessly pathetic spectacle, Lady Harman found, though perhaps she did not go quite so far as to admit to herself that she found, this vehement flight from the social, moral, and intellectual contaminations of London an experience not merely stimulating but entertaining. It lifted her delicate eyebrows. Something, it may have been a sense of her own comparative immobility amid this sudden extraordinary bustle of her home, put it into her head that so it was long ago that Lot must have bundled together his removable domesticities.

She made one attempt at protest. “Isaac,” she said, “isn’t all this rather ridiculous — —”

“Don’t speak to me!” he answered, waving her off. “Don’t speak to me! You should have spoken before, Elly. *Now*, — things are happening.”

The image of Black Strand as, after all, a very pleasant place indeed returned to her. She adjudicated upon the nursery difficulties, and then went in a dreamlike state of mind to preside over her own more personal packing. She found Peters exercising all that indecisive helplessness which is characteristic of ladies’ maids the whole world over.

It was from Peters she learnt that the entire household, men and maids together, was to be hurled into Surrey. “Aren’t they all rather surprised?” asked Lady Harman.

“Yes, m’m,” said Peters on her knees, “but of course if the drains is wrong the sooner we all go the better.”

(So that was what he had told them.)

A vibration and a noise of purring machinery outside drew the lady to the window, and she discovered that at least four of the large motor-vans from the International Stores were to co-operate in the trek. There they were waiting, massive and uniform. And then she saw Snagsby in his alpaca jacket *running* towards the house from the gates. Of course he was running only very slightly indeed, but still he was running, and the expression of distress upon his face convinced her that he was being urged to unusual and indeed unsuitable tasks under the immediate personal supervision of Sir Isaac.... Then from round the corner appeared the under butler or at least the legs of him going very fast, under a pile of shirt boxes and things belonging to Sir Isaac. He dumped them into the nearest van and heaved a deep sigh and returned houseward after a remorseful glance at the windows.

A violent outcry from baby, who, with more than her customary violence was making her customary morning protest against being clad, recalled Lady Harman from the contemplation of these exterior activities....

The journey to Black Strand was not accomplished without misadventure; there was a puncture near Farnham, and as Clarence

with a leisurely assurance entertained himself with the Stepney, they were passed first by the second car with the nursery contingent, which went by in a shrill chorus, crying, "*We-e-e* shall get there first, *We-e-e* shall get there first," and then by a large hired car all agog with housemaids and Mrs. Crumble and with Snagsby, as round and distressed as the full moon, and the under butler, cramped and keen beside the driver. There followed the leading International Stores car, and then the Stepney was on and they could hasten in pursuit....

And at last they came to Black Strand, and when they saw Black Strand it seemed to Lady Harman that the place had blown out a huge inflamed red cheek and lost its pleasant balance altogether. "*Oh!*" she cried.

It was the old barn flushed by the strain of adaptation to a new use, its comfortable old wall ruptured by half a dozen brilliant new windows, a light red chimney stack at one end. From it a vividly artistic corridor ran to the house and the rest of the shrubbery was all trampled and littered with sheds, bricks, poles and material generally. Black Strand had left the hands of the dilettante school and was in the grip of those vigorous moulding forces that are shaping our civilization to-day.

The jasmine wig over the porch had suffered a strenuous clipping; the door might have just come out of prison. In the hall the Carpaccio copies still glowed, but there were dust sheets over most of the furniture and a plumber was moving his things out with that eleventh hour reluctance so characteristic of plumbers. Mrs. Rabbit, a little tearful, and dressed for departure very respectably in black was giving the youngest and least experienced housemaid a faithful history of Mr. Brumley's earlier period. "'Appy we all was," said Mrs. Rabbit, "as Birds in a Nest."

Through the windows two of the Putney gardeners were busy replacing Mr. Brumley's doubtful roses by recognized sorts, the *right* sorts....

"I've been doing all I can to make it ready for you," said Sir Isaac at his wife's ear, bringing a curious reminiscence of the first home-coming to Putney into her mind.

“And now,” said Sir Isaac with evident premeditation and a certain deliberate amiability, “now we got down here, now we got away a bit from all those London things with nobody to cut in between us, me and you can have a bit of a talk, Elly, and see what it’s all about.”

They had lunched together in the little hall-dining room, — the children had had a noisily cheerful picnic in the kitchen with Mrs. Harblow, and now Lady Harman was standing at the window surveying the ravages of rose replacement.

She turned towards him. “Yes,” she said. “I think — I think we can’t go on like this.”

“*I* can’t,” said Sir Isaac, “anyhow.”

He too came and stared at the rose planting.

“If we were to go up there — among the pine woods” — he pointed with his head at the dark background of Euphemia’s herbaceous borders— “we shouldn’t hear quite so much of this hammering....”

Husband and wife walked slowly in the afternoon sunlight across the still beautiful garden. Each was gravely aware of an embarrassed incapacity for the task they had set themselves. They were going to talk things over. Never in their lives had they really talked to each other clearly and honestly about anything. Indeed it is scarcely too much to say that neither had ever talked about anything to anyone. She was too young, her mind was now growing up in her and feeling its way to conscious expression, and he had never before wanted to express himself. He did now want to express himself. For behind his rant and fury Sir Isaac had been thinking very hard indeed during the last three weeks about his life and her life and their relations; he had never thought so much about anything except his business economics. So far he had either joked at her, talked “silly” to her, made, as they say, “remarks,” or vociferated. That had been the sum of their mental intercourse, as indeed it is the sum of the intercourse of most married couples. His attempt to state his case to her had so far always flared into rhetorical outbreaks. But he was discontented with these rhetorical outbreaks. His dispositions to fall into them made him rather like a nervous sepia that cannot keep its ink sac quiet while it is sitting for its portrait. In the earnestness of his attempt at self-display he vanished in his own outpourings.

He wanted now to reason with her simply and persuasively. He wanted to say quietly impressive and convincing things in a low tone of voice and make her abandon every possible view except his view. He walked now slowly meditating the task before him, making a faint thoughtful noise with his teeth, his head sunken in the collar of the motor overcoat he wore because of a slight cold he had caught. And he had to be careful about colds because of his constitutional defect. She too felt she had much to say. Much too she had in her mind that she couldn't say, because this strange quarrel had opened unanticipated things for her; she had found and considered repugnances in her nature she had never dared to glance at hitherto....

Sir Isaac began rather haltingly when they had reached a sandy, ant-infested path that ran slantingly up among the trees. He affected a certain perplexity. He said he did not understand what it was his wife was "after," what she "thought she was doing" in "making all this trouble"; he wanted to know just what it was she wanted, how she thought they ought to live, just what she considered his rights were as her husband and just what she considered were her duties as his wife — if, that is, she considered she had any duties. To these enquiries Lady Harman made no very definite reply; their estrangement instead of clearing her mind had on the whole perplexed it more, by making her realize the height and depth and extent of her possible separation from him. She replied therefore with an unsatisfactory vagueness; she said she wanted to feel that she possessed herself, that she was no longer a child, that she thought she had a right to read what she chose, see what people she liked, go out a little by herself, have a certain independence — she hesitated, "have a certain definite allowance of my own."

"Have I ever refused you money?" cried Sir Isaac protesting.

"It isn't that," said Lady Harman; "it's the feeling — —"

"The feeling of being able to — defy — anything I say," said Sir Isaac with a note of bitterness. "As if I didn't understand!"

It was beyond Lady Harman's powers to express just how that wasn't the precise statement of the case.

Sir Isaac, reverting to his tone of almost elaborate reasonableness, expanded his view that it was impossible for husband and wife to have two different sets of friends; — let alone every other

consideration, he explained, it wasn't convenient for them not to be about together, and as for reading or thinking what she chose he had never made any objection to anything unless it was "decadent rot" that any decent man would object to his womanfolk seeing, rot she couldn't understand the drift of — fortunately. Blear-eyed humbug.... He checked himself on the verge of an almost archiepiscopal outbreak in order to be patiently reasonable again. He was prepared to concede that it would be very nice if Lady Harman could be a good wife and also an entirely independent person, very nice, but the point was — his tone verged on the ironical — that she couldn't be two entirely different people at the same time.

"But you have your friends," she said, "you go away alone — —"

"That's different," said Sir Isaac with a momentary note of annoyance. "It's business. It isn't that I want to."

Lady Harman had a feeling that they were neither of them gaining any ground. She blamed herself for her lack of lucidity. She began again, taking up the matter at a fresh point. She said that her life at present wasn't full, that it was only half a life, that it was just home and marriage and nothing else; he had his business, he went out into the world, he had politics and— "all sorts of things"; she hadn't these interests; she had nothing in the place of them ——

Sir Isaac closed this opening rather abruptly by telling her that she should count herself lucky she hadn't, and again the conversation was suspended for a time.

"But I want to know about these things," she said.

Sir Isaac took that musingly.

"There's things go on," she said; "outside home. There's social work, there's interests —— Am I never to take any part — in that?"

Sir Isaac still reflected.

"There's one thing," he said at last, "I want to know. We'd better have it out — *now*."

But he hesitated for a time.

"Elly!" he blundered, "you aren't — you aren't getting somehow — not fond of me?"

She made no immediate reply.

"Look here!" he said in an altered voice. "Elly! there isn't something below all this? There isn't something been going on that I

don't know?"

Her eyes with a certain terror in their depths questioned him.

"Something," he said, and his face was deadly white— "*Some other man, Elly?*"

She was suddenly crimson, a flaming indignation.

"Isaac!" she said, "what do you *mean*? How can you *ask* me such a thing?"

"If it's that!" said Sir Isaac, his face suddenly full of malignant force, "I'll —— But I'd *kill* you...."

"If it isn't that," he went on searching his mind; "why should a woman get restless? Why should she want to go away from her husband, go meeting other people, go gadding about? If a woman's satisfied, she's satisfied. She doesn't harbour fancies.... All this grumbling and unrest. Natural for your sister, but why should you? You've got everything a woman needs, husband, children, a perfectly splendid home, clothes, good jewels and plenty of them, respect! Why should you want to go out after things? It's mere spoilt-childishness. Of course you want to wander out — and if there isn't a man — —"

He caught her wrist suddenly. "There isn't a man?" he demanded.

"Isaac!" she protested in horror.

"Then there'll be one. You think I'm a fool, you think I don't know anything all these literary and society people know. I *do* know. I know that a man and a woman have got to stick together, and if you go straying — you may think you're straying after the moon or social work or anything — but there's a strange man waiting round the corner for every woman and a strange woman for every man. Think *I*'ve had no temptations?... Oh! I *know*, I *know*. What's life or anything but that? and it's just because we've not gone on having more children, just because we listened to all those fools who said you were overdoing it, that all this fretting and grumbling began. We've got on to the wrong track, Elly, and we've got to get back to plain wholesome ways of living. See? That's what I've come down here for and what I mean to do. We've got to save ourselves. I've been too — too modern and all that. I'm going to be a husband as a husband should. I'm going to protect you from these idees — protect you from your own self.... And that's about where we stand, Elly, as

I make it out."

He paused with the effect of having delivered himself of long premeditated things.

Lady Harman essayed to speak. But she found that directly she set herself to speak she sobbed and began weeping. She choked for a moment. Then she determined she would go on, and if she must cry, she must cry. She couldn't let a disposition to tears seal her in silence for ever.

"It isn't," she said, "what I expected — of life. It isn't — —"

"It's what life is," Sir Isaac cut in.

"When I think," she sobbed, "of what I've lost — —"

"*Lost!*" cried Sir Isaac. "Lost! Oh come now, Elly, I like that. What! — *lost*. Hang it! You got to look facts in the face. You can't deny —— Marrying like this, — you made a jolly good thing of it."

"But the beautiful things, the noble things!"

"*What's* beautiful?" cried Sir Isaac in protesting scorn. "*What's* noble? ROT! Doing your duty if you like and being sensible, that's noble and beautiful, but not fretting about and running yourself into danger. You've got to have a sense of humour, Elly, in this life — —" He created a quotation. "As you make your bed — so shall you lie."

For an interval neither of them spoke. They crested the hill, and came into view of that advertisement board she had first seen in Mr. Brumley's company. She halted, and he went a step further and halted too. He recalled his ideas about the board. He had meant to have them all altered but other things had driven it from his mind....

"Then you mean to imprison me here," said Lady Harman to his back. He turned about.

"It isn't much like a prison. I'm asking you to stay here — and be what a wife *should* be."

"I'm to have no money."

"That's — that depends entirely on yourself. You know that well enough."

She looked at him gravely.

"I won't stand it," she said at last with a gentle deliberation.

She spoke so softly that he doubted his hearing. "*What?*" he asked sharply.

“I won’t stand it,” she repeated. “No.”

“But — what can you do?”

“I don’t know,” she said, after a moment of grave consideration.

For some moments his mind hunted among possibilities.

“It’s me that’s standing it,” he said. He came closely up to her. He seemed on the verge of rhetoric. He pressed his thin white lips together. “Standing it! when we might be so happy,” he snapped, and shrugged his shoulders and turned with an expression of mournful resolution towards the house again. She followed slowly.

He felt that he had done all that a patient and reasonable husband could do. *Now* — things must take their course.

§5

The imprisonment of Lady Harman at Black Strand lasted just one day short of a fortnight.

For all that time except for such interludes as the urgent needs of the strike demanded, Sir Isaac devoted himself to the siege. He did all he could to make her realize how restrainedly he used the powers the law vests in a husband, how little he forced upon her the facts of marital authority and wifely duty. At times he sulked, at times he affected a cold dignity, and at times a virile anger swayed him at her unsubmissive silences. He gave her little peace in that struggle, a struggle that came to the edge of physical conflict. There were moments when it seemed to her that nothing remained but that good old-fashioned connubial institution, the tussle for the upper hand, when with a feminine horror she felt violence shouldering her shoulder or contracting ready to grip her wrist. Against violence she doubted her strength, was filled with a desolating sense of yielding nerve and domitable muscle. But just short of violence Sir Isaac’s spirit failed him. He would glower and bluster, half threaten, and retreat. It might come to that at last but at present it had not come to that.

She could not understand why she had neither message nor sign from Susan Burnet, but she hid that anxiety and disappointment under her general dignity.

She spent as much time with the children as she could, and until

Sir Isaac locked up the piano she played, and was surprised to find far more in Chopin than she had ever suspected in the days when she had acquired a passable dexterity of execution. She found, indeed, the most curious things in Chopin, emotional phrases, that stirred and perplexed and yet pleased her....

The weather was very fine and open that year. A golden sunshine from October passed on into November and Lady Harman spent many of these days amidst the pretty things the builder from Aleham had been too hurried to desecrate, dump, burn upon, and flatten into indistinguishable mire, after the established custom of builders in gardens since the world began. She would sit in the rockery where she had sat with Mr. Brumley and recall that momentous conversation, and she would wander up the pine-wood slopes behind, and she would spend long musing intervals among Euphemia's perennials, thinking sometimes, and sometimes not so much thinking as feeling the warm tendernesses of nature and the perplexing difficulties of human life. With an amused amazement Lady Harman reflected as she walked about the pretty borders and the little patches of lawn and orchard that in this very place she was to have realized an imitation of the immortal "Elizabeth" and have been wise, witty, gay, defiant, gallant and entirely successful with her "Man of Wrath." Evidently there was some temperamental difference, or something in her situation, that altered the values of the affair. It was clearly a different sort of man for one thing. She didn't feel a bit gay, and her profound and deepening indignation with the alternative to this stagnation was tainted by a sense of weakness and incapacity.

She came very near surrender several times. There were afternoons of belated ripened warmth, a kind of summer that had been long in the bottle, with a certain lassitude in the air and a blue haze among the trees, that made her feel the folly of all resistances to fate. Why, after all, shouldn't she take life as she found it, that is to say, as Sir Isaac was prepared to give it to her? He wasn't really so bad, she told herself. The children — their noses were certainly a little sharp, but there might be worse children. The next might take after herself more. Who was she to turn upon her appointed life and declare it wasn't good enough? Whatever happened the world was still full of generous and beautiful things, trees, flowers, sunset and

sunrise, music and mist and morning dew.... And as for this matter of the sweated workers, the harshness of the business, the ungracious competition, suppose if instead of fighting her husband with her weak powers, she persuaded him. She tried to imagine just exactly how he might be persuaded....

She looked up and discovered with an extraordinary amazement Mr. Brumley with eager gestures and a flushed and excited visage hurrying towards her across the croquet lawn.

§6

Lady Viping's dinner-party had been kept waiting exactly thirty-five minutes for Lady Harman. Sir Isaac, with a certain excess of zeal, had intercepted the hasty note his wife had written to account for her probable absence. The party was to have centred entirely upon Lady Harman, it consisted either of people who knew her already, or of people who were to have been specially privileged to know her, and Lady Viping telephoned twice to Putney before she abandoned hope. "It's disconnected," she said, returning in despair from her second struggle with the great public service. "They can't get a reply."

"It's that little wretch," said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "He hasn't let her come. *I* know him."

"It's like losing a front tooth," said Lady Viping, surveying her table as she entered the dining-room.

"But surely — she would have written," said Mr. Brumley, troubled and disappointed, regarding an aching gap to the left of his chair, a gap upon which a pathetic little card bearing Lady Harman's name still lay obliquely.

Naturally the talk tended to centre upon the Harmans. And naturally Lady Beach-Mandarin was very bold and outspoken and called Sir Isaac quite a number of vivid things. She also aired her views of the marriage of the future, which involved a very stringent treatment of husbands indeed. "Half his property and half his income," said Lady Beach-Mandarin, "paid into her separate banking account."

"But," protested Mr. Brumley, "would men marry under those conditions?"

“Men will marry anyhow,” said Lady Beach-Mandarin, “under *any* conditions.”

“Exactly Sir Joshua’s opinion,” said Lady Viping.

All the ladies at the table concurred and only one cheerful bachelor barrister dissented. The other men became gloomy and betrayed a distaste for this general question. Even Mr. Brumley felt a curious faint terror and had for a moment a glimpse of the possibilities that might lie behind the Vote. Lady Beach-Mandarin went bouncing back to the particular instance. At present, she said, witness Lady Harman, women were slaves, pampered slaves if you will, but slaves. As things were now there was nothing to keep a man from locking up his wife, opening all her letters, dressing her in sack-cloth, separating her from her children. Most men, of course, didn’t do such things, they were amenable to public opinion, but Sir Isaac was a jealous little Ogre. He was a gnome who had carried off a princess....

She threw out projects for assailing the Ogre. She would descend to-morrow morning upon the Putney house, a living flamboyant writ of Habeas Corpus. Mr. Brumley, who had been putting two and two together, was abruptly moved to tell of the sale of Black Strand. “They may be there,” he said.

“He’s carried her off,” cried Lady Beach-Mandarin on a top note. “It might be the eighteenth century for all he cares. But if it’s Black Strand, — I’ll go to Black Strand....”

But she had to talk about it for a week before she actually made her raid, and then, with an instinctive need for an audience, she took with her a certain Miss Garradice, one of those mute, emotional nervous spinsters who drift detachedly, with quick sudden movements, glittering eyeglasses, and a pent-up imminent look, about our social system. There is something about this type of womanhood — it is hard to say — almost as though they were the bottled souls of departed buccaneers grown somehow virginal. She came with Lady Beach-Mandarin quietly, almost humorously, and yet it was as if the pirate glittered dimly visible through the polished glass of her erect exterior.

“Here we are!” said Lady Beach-Mandarin, staring astonished at the once familiar porch. “Now for it!”

She descended and assailed the bell herself and Miss Garradice stood beside her with the light of combat in her eyes and glasses and cheeks.

"Shall I offer to take her for a drive!"

"*Let's*," said Miss Garradice in an enthusiastic whisper. "*Right away! For ever.*"

"*I will*," said Lady Beach-Mandarin, and nodded desperately.

She was on the point of ringing again when Snagsby appeared.

He stood with a large obstructiveness in the doorway. "Lady 'Arman, my lady" he said with a well-trained deliberation, "is not a Tome."

"Not at home!" queried Lady Beach-Mandarin.

"Not a Tome, my lady," repeated Snagsby invincibly.

"But — when will she be at home?"

"I can't say, my lady."

"Is Sir Isaac —— ?"

"Sir Isaac, my lady, is not a Tome. Nobody is a Tome, my lady."

"But we've come from London!" said Lady Beach-Mandarin.

"I'm very sorry, my lady."

"You see, I want my friend to see this house and garden."

Snagsby was visibly disconcerted. "I 'ave no instructions, my lady," he tried.

"Oh, but Lady Harman would never object — —"

Snagsby's confusion increased. He seemed to be wanting to keep his face to the visitors and at the same time glance over his shoulder. "I will," he considered, "I will enquire, my lady." He backed a little, and seemed inclined to close the door upon them. Lady Beach-Mandarin was too quick for him. She got herself well into the open doorway. "And of whom are you going to enquire?"

A large distress betrayed itself in Snagsby's eye. "The 'ousekeeper," he attempted. "It falls to the 'ousekeeper, my lady."

Lady Beach-Mandarin turned her face to Miss Garradice, shining in support. "Stuff and nonsense," she said, "of course we shall come in." And with a wonderful movement that was at once powerful and perfectly lady-like this intrepid woman— "butted" is not the word — collided herself with Snagsby and hurled him backward into the hall. Miss Garradice followed closely behind and at once extended herself

in open order on Lady Beach-Mandarin's right. "Go and enquire," said Lady Beach-Mandarin with a sweeping gesture of her arm. "Go and enquire."

For a moment Snagsby surveyed the invasion with horror and then fled precipitately into the recesses of the house.

"Of *course* they're at home!" said Lady Beach-Mandarin. "Fancy that — that — that *navigable* — trying to shut the door on us!"

For a moment the two brightly excited ladies surveyed each other and then Lady Beach-Mandarin, with a quickness of movement wonderful in one so abundant, began to open first one and then another of the various doors that opened into the long hall-living room. At a peculiar little cry from Miss Garradice she turned from a contemplation of the long low study in which so much of the Euphemia books had been written, to discover Sir Isaac behind her, closely followed by an agonized Snagsby.

"A-a-a-a-h!" she cried, with both hands extended, "and so you've come in, Sir Isaac! That's perfectly delightful. This is my friend Miss Garradice, who's *dying* to see anything you've left of poor Euphemia's garden. And *how* is dear Lady Harman?"

For some crucial moments Sir Isaac was unable to speak and regarded his visitors with an expression that was unpretendingly criminal.

Then he found speech. "You can't," he said. "It — can't be managed." He shook his head; his lips were whitely compressed.

"But all the way from London, Sir Isaac!"

"Lady Harman's ill," lied Sir Isaac. "She mustn't be disturbed. Everything has to be kept quiet. See? Not even shouting. Not even ordinarily raised voices. A voice like yours — might kill her. That's why Snagsby here said we were not at home. We aren't at home — not to anyone."

Lady Beach-Mandarin was baffled.

"Snagsby," said Sir Isaac, "open that door."

"But can't I see her — just for a moment?"

Sir Isaac's malignity had softened a little at the prospect of victory. "Absolutely impossible," he said. "Everything disturbs her, every tiny thing. You —— You'd be certain to."

Lady Beach-Mandarin looked at her companion and it was

manifest that she was at the end of her resources. Miss Garradice after the fashion of highly strung spinsters suddenly felt disappointed in her leader. It wasn't, her silence intimated, for her to offer suggestions.

The ladies were defeated. When at last that stiff interval ended their dresses rustled doorward, and Sir Isaac broke out into the civilities of a victor....

It was only when they were a mile away from Black Strand that fluent speech returned to Lady Beach-Mandarin. "The little — Crippen," she said. "He's got her locked up in some cellar.... Horrid little face he has! He looked like a rat at bay."

"I think perhaps if we'd done *differently*," said Miss Garradice in a tone of critical irresponsibility.

"I'll write to her. That's what I'll do," said Lady Beach-Mandarin contemplating her next step. "I'm really — concerned. And didn't you feel — something sinister. That butler-man's expression — a kind of round horror."

That very evening she told it all — it was almost the trial trip of the story — to Mr. Brumley....

Sir Isaac watched their departure furtively from the study window and then ran out to the garden. He went right through into the pine woods beyond and presently, far away up the slopes, he saw his wife loitering down towards him, a gracious white tallness touched by a ray of sunlight — and without a suspicion of how nearly rescue had come to her.

§7

So you see under what excitement Mr. Brumley came down to Black Strand.

Luck was with him at first and he forced the defence with ridiculous ease.

"Lady Harman, sir, is not a Tome," said Snagsby.

"Ah!" said Mr. Brumley, with all the assurance of a former proprietor, "then I'll just have a look round the garden," and was through the green door in the wall and round the barn end before Snagsby's mind could function. That unfortunate man went as far as

the green door in pursuit and then with a gesture of despair retreated to the pantry and began cleaning all his silver to calm his agonized spirit. He could pretend perhaps that Mr. Brumley had never rung at the front door at all. If not ——

Moreover Mr. Brumley had the good fortune to find Lady Harman quite unattended and pensive upon the little seat that Euphemia had placed for the better seeing of her herbaceous borders.

"Lady Harman!" he said rather breathlessly, taking both her hands with an unwonted assurance and then sitting down beside her, "I am so glad to see you. I came down to see you — to see if I couldn't be of any service to you."

"It's so kind of you to come," she said, and her dark eyes said as much or more. She glanced round and he too glanced round for Sir Isaac.

"You see," he said. "I don't know.... I don't want to be impertinent.... But I feel — if I can be of any service to you.... I feel perhaps you want help here. I don't want to seem to be taking advantage of a situation. Or making unwarrantable assumptions. But I want to assure you — I would willingly die — if only I could do anything.... Ever since I first saw you."

He said all this in a distracted way, with his eyes going about the garden for the possible apparition of Sir Isaac, and all the time his sense of possible observers made him assume an attitude as though he was engaged in the smallest of small talk. Her colour quickened at the import of his words, and emotion, very rich and abundant emotion, its various factors not altogether untouched perhaps by the spirit of laughter, lit her eyes. She doubted a little what he was saying and yet she had anticipated that somehow, some day, in quite other circumstances, Mr. Brumley might break into some such strain.

"You see," he went on with a quality of appeal in his eyes, "there's so little time to say things — without possible interruption. I feel you are in difficulties and I want to make you understand —— We —— Every beautiful woman, I suppose, has a sort of right to a certain sort of man. I want to tell you — I'm not really presuming to make love to you — but I want to tell you I am altogether yours, altogether at your service. I've had sleepless nights. All this time I've been thinking about you. I'm quite clear, I haven't a doubt, I'll do

anything for you, without reward, without return, I'll be your devoted brother, anything, if only you'll make use of me...."

Her colour quickened. She looked around and still no one appeared. "It's so kind of you to come like this," she said. "You say things — But I *have* felt that you wanted to be brotherly...."

"Whatever I *can* be," assured Mr. Brumley.

"My situation here," she said, her dark frankness of gaze meeting his troubled eyes. "It's so strange and difficult. I don't know what to do. I don't know — what I *want* to do...."

"In London," said Mr. Brumley, "they think — they say — you have been taken off — brought down here — to a sort of captivity."

"I *have*," admitted Lady Harman with a note of recalled astonishment in her voice.

"If I can help you to escape —— !"

"But where can I escape?"

And one must admit that it is a little difficult to indicate a correct refuge for a lady who finds her home intolerable. Of course there was Mrs. Sawbridge, but Lady Harman felt that her mother's disposition to lock herself into her bedroom at the slightest provocation made her a weak support for a defensive fight, and in addition that boarding-house at Bournemouth did not attract her. Yet what other wall in all the world was there for Lady Harman to set her back against? During the last few days Mr. Brumley's mind had been busy with the details of impassioned elopements conducted in the most exalted spirit, but now in the actual presence of the lady these projects did in the most remarkable manner vanish.

"Couldn't you," he said at last, "go somewhere?" And then with an air of being meticulously explicit, "I mean, isn't there somewhere, where you might safely go?"

(And in his dreams he had been crossing high passes with her; he had halted suddenly and stayed her mule. In his dream because he was a man of letters and a poet it was always a mule, never a *train de luxe*. "Look," he had said, "below there, — *Italy!* — the country you have never seen before.")

"There's nowhere," she answered.

"Now *where*?" asked Mr. Brumley, "and how?" with the tone and something of the gesture of one who racks his mind. "If you only

trust yourself to me —— Oh! Lady Harman, if I dared ask it — —”

He became aware of Sir Isaac walking across the lawn towards them....

The two men greeted each other with a reasonable cordiality. “I wanted to see how you were getting on down here,” said Mr. Brumley, “and whether there was anything I could do for you.”

“We’re getting on all right,” said Sir Isaac with no manifest glow of gratitude.

“You’ve altered the old barn — tremendously.”

“Come and see it,” said Sir Isaac. “It’s a wing.”

Mr. Brumley remained seated. “It was the first thing that struck me, Lady Harman. This evidence of Sir Isaac’s energy.”

“Come and look over it,” Sir Isaac persisted.

Mr. Brumley and Lady Harman rose together.

“One’s enough to show him that,” said Sir Isaac.

“I was telling Lady Harman how much we missed her at Lady Viping’s, Sir Isaac.”

“It was on account of the drains,” Sir Isaac explained. “You can’t — it’s foolhardy to stay a day when the drains are wrong, dinners or no dinners.”

“You know *I* was extremely sorry not to come to Lady Viping’s. I hope you’ll tell her. I wrote.”

But Mr. Brumley didn’t remember clearly enough to make any use of that.

“Everybody naturally *is* sorry on an occasion of that sort,” said Sir Isaac. “But you come and see what we’ve done in that barn. In three weeks. They couldn’t have got it together in three months ten years ago. It’s — system.”

Mr. Brumley still tried to cling to Lady Harman.

“Have you been interested in this building?” he asked.

“I still don’t understand the system of the corridor,” she said, rising a little belatedly to the occasion. “I *will* come.”

Sir Isaac regarded her for a moment with a dubious expression and then began to explain the new method of building with large prepared units and shaped pieces of reinforced concrete instead of separate bricks that Messrs. Prothero & Cuthbertson had organized and which had enabled him to create this artistic corridor so simply.

It was a rather uncomfortable three-cornered conversation. Sir Isaac addressed his exposition exclusively to Mr. Brumley and Mr. Brumley made repeated ineffectual attempts to bring Lady Harman, and Lady Harman made repeated ineffectual attempts to bring herself, into a position in the conversation.

Their eyes met, the glow of Mr. Brumley's declarations remained with them, but neither dared risk any phrase that might arouse Sir Isaac's suspicions or escape his acuteness. And when they had gone through the new additions pretty thoroughly — the plumbers were still busy with the barn bathroom — Sir Isaac asked Mr. Brumley if there was anything more he would like to see. In the slight pause that ensued Lady Harman suggested tea. But tea gave them no opportunity of resuming their interrupted conversation, and as Sir Isaac's invincible determination to shadow his visitor until he was well off the premises became more and more unmistakable, — he made it quite ungraciously unmistakable, — Mr. Brumley's inventiveness failed. One thing came to him suddenly, but it led to nothing of any service to him.

"But I heard you were dangerously ill, Lady Harman!" he cried. "Lady Beach-Mandarin called here — —"

"But when?" asked Lady Harman, astonished over the tea-things.

"But you *know* she called!" said Mr. Brumley and looked in affected reproach at Sir Isaac.

"I've not been ill at all!"

"Sir Isaac told her."

"Told her I was ill!"

"Dangerously ill. That you couldn't bear to be disturbed."

"But *when*, Mr. Brumley?"

"Three days ago."

They both looked at Sir Isaac who was sitting on the music stool and eating a piece of tea-cake with a preoccupied air. He swallowed and then spoke thoughtfully — in a tone of detached observation. Nothing but a slight reddening of the eyes betrayed any unusual feeling in him.

"It's my opinion," he said, "that that old lady — Lady Beach-Mandarin I mean — doesn't know what she's saying half the time. She says — oh! remarkable things. Saying *that* for example!"

“But did she call on me?”

“She called. I’m surprised you didn’t hear. And she was all in a flurry for going on.... Did you come down, Mr. Brumley, to see if Lady Harman was ill?”

“That weighed with me.”

“Well, — you see she isn’t,” said Sir Isaac and brushed a stray crumb from his coat....

Mr. Brumley was at last impelled gateward and Sir Isaac saw him as far as the high-road.

“Good-bye!” cried Mr. Brumley with excessive amiability.

Sir Isaac with soundless lips made a good-bye like gesture.

“And now,” said Sir Isaac to himself with extreme bitterness, “now to see about getting a dog.”

“Bull mastiff?” said Sir Isaac developing his idea as he went back to Lady Harman. “Or perhaps a Thoroughly Vicious collie?”

“How did that chap get in?” he demanded. “What had he got to say to you?”

“He came in — to look at the garden,” said Lady Harman. “And of course he wanted to know if I had been well — because of Lady Viping’s party. And I suppose because of what you told Lady Beach-Mandarin.”

Sir Isaac grunted doubtfully. He thought of Snagsby and of all the instructions he had given Snagsby. He turned about and went off swiftly and earnestly to find Snagsby....

Snagsby lied. But Sir Isaac was able to tell from the agitated way in which he was cleaning his perfectly clean silver at that unseasonable hour that the wretched man was lying.

§8

Quite a number of words came to the lips of Mr. Brumley as he went unwillingly along the pleasant country road that led from Black Strand to the railway station. But the word he ultimately said showed how strongly the habits of the gentlemanly *littérateur* prevailed in him. It was the one inevitable word for his mood,— “Baffled!”

Close upon its utterance came the weak irritation of the impotent man. “What the *devil*?” cried Mr. Brumley.

Some critical spirit within him asked him urgently why he was going to the station, what he thought he was doing, what he thought he had done, and what he thought he was going to do. To all of which questions Mr. Brumley perceived he had no adequate reply.

Earlier in the day he had been inspired by a vague yet splendid dream of large masterful liberations achieved. He had intended to be very disinterested, very noble, very firm, and so far as Sir Isaac was concerned, a trifle overbearing. You know now what he said and did. "Of course if we could have talked for a little longer," he said. From the stormy dissatisfaction of his retreat this one small idea crystallized, that he had not talked enough without disturbance to Lady Harman. The thing he had to do was to talk to her some more. To go on with what he had been saying. That thought arrested his steps. On that hypothesis there was no reason whatever why he should go on to the station and London. Instead —— He stopped short, saw a convenient gate ahead, went to it, seated himself upon its topmost rail and attempted a calm survey of the situation. He had somehow to continue that conversation with Lady Harman.

Was it impossible to do that by going back to the front door of Black Strand? His instinct was against that course. He knew that if he went back now openly he would see nobody but Sir Isaac or his butler. He must therefore not go back openly. He must go round now and into the pine-woods at the back of Black Strand; thence he must watch the garden and find his opportunity of speaking to the imprisoned lady. There was something at once attractively romantic and repellently youthful about this course of action. Mr. Brumley looked at his watch, then he surveyed the blue clear sky overhead, with just one warm tinted wisp of cloud. It would be dark in an hour and it was probable that Lady Harman had already gone indoors for the day. Might it be possible after dark to approach the house? No one surely knew the garden so well as he.

Of course this sort of thing is always going on in romances; in the stories of that last great survivor of the Stevensonian tradition, H.B. Marriot Watson, the heroes are always creeping through woods, tapping at windows, and scaling house-walls, but Mr. Brumley as he sat on his gate became very sensible of his own extreme inexperience in such adventures. And yet anything seemed in his present mood

better than going back to London.

Suppose he tried his luck!

He knew of course the lie of the land about Black Strand very well indeed and his harmless literary social standing gave him a certain freedom of trespass. He dropped from his gate on the inner side and taking a bridle path through a pine-wood was presently out upon the moorland behind his former home. He struck the high-road that led past the Staminal Bread Board and was just about to clamber over the barbed wire on his left and make his way through the trees to the crest that commanded the Black Strand garden when he perceived a man in a velveteen coat and gaiters strolling towards him. He decided not to leave the road until he was free from observation. The man was a stranger, an almost conventional gamekeeper, and he endorsed Mr. Brumley's remark upon the charmingness of the day with guarded want of enthusiasm. Mr. Brumley went on for some few minutes, then halted, assured himself that the stranger was well out of sight and returned at once towards the point where high-roads were to be left and adventure begun. But he was still some yards away when he became aware of that velveteen-coated figure approaching again. "Damn!" said Mr. Brumley and slacked his eager paces. This time he expressed a view that the weather was extremely mild. "Very," said the man in velveteen with a certain lack of respect in his manner.

It was no good turning back again. Mr. Brumley went on slowly, affected to botanize, watched the man out of sight and immediately made a dash for the pine-woods, taking the barbed wire in a manner extremely detrimental to his left trouser leg. He made his way obliquely up through the trees to the crest from which he had so often surveyed the shining ponds of Aleham. There he paused to peer back for that gamekeeper — whom he supposed in spite of reason to be stalking him — to recover his breath and to consider his further plans. The sunset was very fine that night, a great red sun was sinking towards acutely outlined hill-crests, the lower nearer distances were veiled in lavender mists and three of the ponds shone like the fragments of a shattered pink topaz. But Mr. Brumley had no eye for landscape....

About two hours after nightfall Mr. Brumley reached the railway

station. His trousers and the elbow of his coat bore witness to a second transit of the barbed-wire fence in the darkness, he had manifestly walked into a boggy place and had some difficulty in recovering firm ground and he had also been sliding in a recumbent position down a bank of moist ferruginous sand. Moreover he had cut the palm of his left hand. There was a new strange stationmaster who regarded him without that respect to which he had grown accustomed. He received the information that the winter train service had been altered and that he would have to wait forty-five minutes for the next train to London with the resignation of a man already chastened by misfortune and fatigue. He went into the waiting-room and after a vain search for the poker — the new stationmaster evidently kept it in a different place — sat down in front of an irritatingly dull fire banked up with slack, and nursed his damaged hand and meditated on his future plans.

His plans were still exactly in the state in which they had been when Sir Isaac parted from him at the gate of Black Strand. They remained in the same state for two whole days. Throughout all that distressing period his general intention of some magnificent intervention on behalf of Lady Harman remained unchanged, it produced a number of moving visions of flights at incredible speeds in (recklessly hired) motor-cars of colossal power, — most of the purchase money for Black Strand was still uninvested at his bank — of impassioned interviews with various people, of a divorce court with a hardened judge congratulating the manifestly quite formal co-respondent on the moral beauty of his behaviour, but it evolved no sort of concrete practicable detail upon which any kind of action might be taken. And during this period of indecision Mr. Brumley was hunted through London by a feverish unrest. When he was in his little flat in Pont Street he was urged to go to his club, when he got to his club he was urged to go anywhere else, he called on the most improbable people and as soon as possible fled forth again, he even went to the British Museum and ordered out a lot of books on matrimonial law. Long before that great machine had disgorged them for him he absconded and this neglected, this widowed pile of volumes still standing to his account only came back to his mind in the middle of the night suddenly and disturbingly while he was

trying to remember the exact words he had used in his brief conversation with Lady Harman....

§9

Two days after Mr. Brumley's visit Susan Burnet reached Black Strand. She too had been baffled for a while. For some week or more she couldn't discover the whereabouts of Lady Harman and lived in the profoundest perplexity. She had brought back her curtains to the Putney house in a large but luggable bundle, they were all made and ready to put up, and she found the place closed and locked, in the charge of a caretaker whose primary duty it was to answer no questions. It needed several days of thought and amazement, and a vast amount of "I wonder," and "I just would like to know," before it occurred to Susan that if she wrote to Lady Harman at the Putney address the letter might be forwarded. And even then she almost wrecked the entire enterprise by mentioning the money, and it was by a quite exceptional inspiration that she thought after all it was wiser not to say that but to state that she had finished the curtains and done everything (underlined) that Lady Harman had desired. Sir Isaac read it and tossed it over to his wife. "Make her send her bill," he remarked.

Whereupon Lady Harman set Mrs. Crumble in motion to bring Susan down to Black Strand. This wasn't quite easy because as Mrs. Crumble pointed out they hadn't the slightest use for Susan's curtains there, and Lady Harman had to find the morning light quite intolerable in her bedroom — she always slept with window wide open and curtains drawn back — to create a suitable demand for Susan's services. But at last Susan came, too humbly invisible for Sir Isaac's attention, and directly she found Lady Harman alone in the room with her, she produced a pawn ticket and twenty pounds. "I 'ad to give all sorts of particulars," she said. "It was a job. But I did it...."

The day was big with opportunity, for Sir Isaac had been unable to conceal the fact that he had to spend the morning in London. He had gone up in the big car and his wife was alone, and so, with Susan upstairs still deftly measuring for totally unnecessary hangings, Lady Harman was able to add a fur stole and a muff and some gloves to

her tweed gardening costume, walk unchallenged into the garden and from the garden into the wood and up the hillside and over the crest and down to the high-road and past that great advertisement of Staminal Bread and so for four palpitating miles, to the railway station and the outer world.

She had the good fortune to find a train imminent, — the twelve-seventeen. She took a first-class ticket for London and got into a compartment with another woman because she felt it would be safer.

§10

Lady Harman reached Miss Alimony's flat at half-past three in the afternoon. She had lunched rather belatedly and uncomfortably in the Waterloo Refreshment Room and she had found out that Miss Alimony was at home through the telephone. "I want to see you urgently," she said, and Miss Alimony received her in that spirit. She was hatless but she had a great cloud of dark fuzzy hair above the grey profundity of her eyes and she wore an artistic tea-gown that in spite of a certain looseness at neck and sleeve emphasized the fine lines of her admirable figure. Her flat was furnished chiefly with books and rich oriental hangings and vast cushions and great bowls of scented flowers. On the mantel-shelf was the crystal that amused her lighter moments and above it hung a circular allegory by Florence Swinstead, very rich in colour, the Awakening of Woman, in a heavy gold frame. Miss Alimony conducted her guest to an armchair, knelt flexibly on the hearthrug before her, took up a small and elegant poker with a brass handle and a spear-shaped service end of iron and poked the fire.

The service end came out from the handle and fell into the grate. "It always does that," said Miss Alimony charmingly. "But never mind." She warmed both hands at the blaze. "Tell me all about it," she said, softly.

Lady Harman felt she would rather have been told all about it. But perhaps that would follow.

"You see," she said, "I find —— My married life — —"

She halted. It *was* very difficult to tell.

"Everyone," said Agatha, giving a fine firelit profile, and

remaining gravely thoughtful through a little pause.

"Do you mind," she asked abruptly, "if I smoke?"

When she had completed her effect with a delicately flavoured cigarette, she encouraged Lady Harman to proceed.

This Lady Harman did in a manner do. She said her husband left her no freedom of mind or movement, gave her no possession of herself, wanted to control her reading and thinking. "He insists — —" she said.

"Yes," said Miss Agatha sternly blowing aside her cigarette smoke. "They all insist."

"He insists," said Lady Harman, "on seeing all my letters, choosing all my friends. I have no control over my house or my servants, no money except what he gives me."

"In fact you are property."

"I'm simply property."

"A harem of one. And all *that* is within the provisions of the law!"

"How any woman can marry!" said Miss Agatha, after a little interval. "I sometimes think that is where the true strike of the sex ought to begin. If none of us married! If we said all of us, 'No, — definitely — we refuse this bargain! It is a man-made contract. We have had no voice in it. We decline.' Perhaps it will come to that. And I knew that you, you with that quiet beautiful penetration in your eyes would come to see it like that. The first task, after the vote is won, will be the revision of that contract. The very first task of our Women Statesmen...."

She ceased and revived her smouldering cigarette and mused blinking through the smoke. She seemed for a time almost lost to the presence of her guest in a great daydream of womanstatecraft.

"And so," she said, "you've come, as they all come, — to join us."

"*Well*," said Lady Harman in a tone that made Agatha turn eyes of surprise upon her.

"Of course," continued Lady Harman, "I suppose — I shall join you; but as a matter of fact you see, what I've done to-day has been to come right away.... You see I am still in my garden tweeds.... There it was down there, a sort of stale mate...."

Agatha sat up on her heels.

“But my dear!” she said, “you don’t mean you’ve run away?”

“Yes, — I’ve run away.”

“But — run away!”

“I sold a ring and got some money and here I am!”

“But — what are you going to do?”

“I don’t know. I thought you perhaps — might advise.”

“But — a man like your husband! He’ll pursue you!”

“If he knows where I am, he will,” said Lady Harman.

“He’ll make a scandal. My dear! are you wise? Tell me, tell me exactly, *why* have you run away? I didn’t understand at all — that you had run away.”

“Because,” began Lady Harman and flushed hotly. “It was impossible,” she said.

Miss Alimony regarded her deeply. “I wonder,” she said.

“I feel,” said Lady Harman, “if I stayed, if I gave in —— I mean after — after I had once — rebelled. Then I should just be — a wife — ruled, ordered — —”

“It wasn’t your place to give in,” said Miss Alimony and added one of those parliament touches that creep more and more into feminine phraseology; “I agree to that — *nemine contradicente*. But — I *wonder....*”

She began a second cigarette and thought in profile again.

“I think, perhaps, I haven’t explained, clearly, how things are,” said Lady Harman, and commenced a rather more explicit statement of her case. She felt she had not conveyed and she wanted to convey to Miss Alimony that her rebellion was not simply a desire for personal freedom and autonomy, that she desired these things because she was becoming more and more aware of large affairs outside her home life in which she ought to be not simply interested but concerned, that she had been not merely watching the workings of the business that made her wealthy, but reading books about socialism, about social welfare that had stirred her profoundly.... “But he won’t even allow me to know of such things,” she said....

Miss Alimony listened a little abstractedly.

Suddenly she interrupted. “Tell me,” she said, “one thing.... I confess,” she explained, “I’ve no business to ask. But if I’m to advise —— If my advice is to be worth anything....”

“Yes?” asked Lady Harman.

“Is there —— Is there someone else?”

“Someone else?” Lady Harman was crimson.

“On *your* side!”

“Someone else on my side?”

“I mean — someone. A man perhaps? Some man that you care for? More than you do for your husband?...”

“*I can’t imagine*,” whispered Lady Harman, “*anything* — —” And left her sentence unfinished. Her breath had gone. Her indignation was profound.

“Then I can’t understand why you should find it so important to come away.”

Lady Harman could offer no elucidation.

“You see,” said Miss Alimony, with an air of expert knowledge, “our case against our opponents is just exactly their great case against us. They say to us when we ask for the Vote, ‘the Woman’s Place is the Home.’ ‘Precisely,’ we answer, ‘the Woman’s Place *is* the Home. *Give* us our Homes!’ Now *your* place is your home — with your children. That’s where you have to fight your battle. Running away — for you it’s simply running away.”

“But —— If I stay I shall be beaten.” Lady Harman surveyed her hostess with a certain dismay. “Do you understand, Agatha? I *can’t* go back.”

“But my dear! What else can you do? What had you thought?”

“You see,” said Lady Harman, after a little struggle with that childish quality in her nerves that might, if it wasn’t controlled, make her eyes brim. “You see, I didn’t expect you quite to take this view. I thought perhaps you might be disposed —— If I could have stayed with you here, only for a little time, I could have got some work or something — —”

“It’s so dreadful,” said Miss Alimony, sitting far back with the relaxation of infinite regrets. “It’s dreadful.”

“Of course if you don’t see it as I do — —”

“I can’t,” said Miss Alimony. “I can’t.”

She turned suddenly upon her visitor and grasped her knees with her shapely hands. “Oh let me implore you! Don’t run away. Please for my sake, for all our sakes, for the sake of Womanhood, don’t run

away! Stay at your post. You mustn't run away. You must *not*. If you do, you admit everything. Everything. You must fight in your home. It's *your* home. That is the great principle you must grasp, — it's not his. It's there your duty lies. And there are your children — *your* children, your little ones! Think if you go — there may be a fearful fuss — proceedings. Lawyers — a search. Very probably he will take all sorts of proceedings. It will be a Matrimonial Case. How can I be associated with that? We mustn't mix up Women's Freedom with Matrimonial Cases. Impossible! We *dare* not! A woman leaving her husband! Think of the weapon it gives our enemies. If once other things complicate the Vote, — the Vote is lost. After all our self-denial, after all our sacrifices.... You see! Don't you *see*?...

"*Fight!*" she summarized after an eloquent interval.

"You mean," said Lady Harman,— "you think I ought to go back."

Miss Alimony paused to get her full effect. "*Yes*," she said in a profound whisper and endorsed it, "Oh so much so! — yes."

"Now?"

"Instantly."

For an interval neither lady spoke. It was the visitor at last who broke the tension.

"Do you think," she asked in a small voice and with the hesitation of one whom no refusal can surprise; "you could give me a cup of tea?"

Miss Alimony rose with a sigh and a slow unfolding rustle. "I forgot," she said. "My little maid is out."

Lady Harman left alone sat for a time staring at the fire with her eyes rather wide and her eyebrows raised as though she mutely confided to it her infinite astonishment. This was the last thing she had expected. She would have to go to some hotel. Can a woman stay alone at an hotel? Her heart sank. Inflexible forces seemed to be pointing her back to home — and Sir Isaac. He would be a very triumphant Sir Isaac, and she'd not have much heart left in her.... "I *won't* go back," she whispered to herself. "Whatever happens I *won't* go back...."

Then she became aware of the evening newspaper Miss Alimony had been reading. The headline, "Suffrage Raid on Regent Street,"

caught her eye. A queer little idea came into her head. It grew with tremendous rapidity. She put out a hand and took up the paper and read.

She had plenty of time to read because her hostess not only got the tea herself but went during that process to her bedroom and put on one of those hats that have contributed so much to remove the stigma of dowdiness from the suffrage cause, as an outward and visible sign that she was presently ceasing to be at home....

Lady Harman found an odd fact in the report before her. “One of the most difficult things to buy at the present time in the West End of London,” it ran, “is a hammer....”

Then a little further: “The magistrate said it was impossible to make discriminations in this affair. All the defendants must have a month’s imprisonment....”

When Miss Alimony returned Lady Harman put down the paper almost guiltily.

Afterwards Miss Alimony recalled that guilty start, and the still more guilty start that had happened, when presently she went out of the room again and returned with a lamp, for the winter twilight was upon them. Afterwards, too, she was to learn what had become of the service end of her small poker, the little iron club, which she missed almost as soon as Lady Harman had gone....

Lady Harman had taken that grubby but convenient little instrument and hidden it in her muff, and she had gone straight out of Miss Alimony’s flat to the Post Office at the corner of Jago Street, and there, with one simple effective impact, had smashed a ground-glass window, the property of His Majesty King George the Fifth. And having done so, she had called the attention of a youthful policeman, fresh from Yorkshire, to her offence, and after a slight struggle with his incredulity and a visit to the window in question, had escorted him to the South Hampsmith police-station, and had there made him charge her. And on the way she explained to him with a newfound lucidity why it was that women should have votes.

And all this she did from the moment of percussion onward, in a mood of exaltation entirely strange to her, but, as she was astonished to find, by no means disagreeable. She found afterwards that she only remembered very indistinctly her selection of the window and her

preparations for the fatal blow, but that the effect of the actual breakage remained extraordinarily vivid upon her memory. She saw with extreme distinctness both as it was before and after the breakage, first as a rather irregular grey surface, shining in the oblique light of a street lamp, and giving pale phantom reflections of things in the street, and then as it was after her blow. It was all visual impression in her memory; she could not recollect afterwards if there had been any noise at all. Where there had been nothing but a milky dinginess a thin-armed, irregular star had flashed into being, and a large triangular piece at its centre, after what seemed an interminable indecision, had slid, first covertly downward, and then fallen forward at her feet and shivered into a hundred fragments....

Lady Harman realized that a tremendous thing had been done — irrevocably. She stared at her achievement open-mouthed. The creative lump of iron dropped from her hand. She had a momentary doubt whether she had really wanted to break that window at all; and then she understood that this business had to be seen through, and seen through with neatness and dignity; and that wisp of regret vanished absolutely in her concentration upon these immediate needs.

§11

Some day, when the arts of the writer and illustrator are more closely blended than they are to-day, it will be possible to tell of all that followed this blow, with an approach to its actual effect. Here there should stand a page showing simply and plainly the lower half of the window of the Jago Street Post Office, a dark, rather grimy pane, reflecting the light of a street lamp — and *broken*. Below the pane would come a band of evilly painted woodwork, a corner of letter-box, a foot or so of brickwork, and then the pavement with a dropped lump of iron. That would be the sole content of this page, and the next page would be the same, but very slightly fainter, and across it would be printed a dim sentence or so of explanation. The page following that would show the same picture again, but now several lines of type would be visible, and then, as one turned over, the smashed window would fade a little, and the printed narrative, still

darkened and dominated by it, would nevertheless resume. One would read on how Lady Harman returned to convince the incredulous young Yorkshireman of her feat, how a man with a barrow-load of bananas volunteered comments, and how she went in custody, but with the extremest dignity, to the police-station. Then, with some difficulty, because that imposed picture would still prevail over the letterpress, and because it would be in small type, one would learn how she was bailed out by Lady Beach-Mandarin, who was clearly the woman she ought to have gone to in the first place, and who gave up a dinner with a duchess to entertain her, and how Sir Isaac, being too torn by his feelings to come near her spent the evening in a frantic attempt to keep the whole business out of the papers. He could not manage it. The magistrate was friendly next morning, but inelegant in his friendly expedients; he remanded Lady Harman until her mental condition could be inquired into, but among her fellow-defendants — there had been quite an epidemic of window-smashing that evening — Lady Harman shone pre-eminently sane. She said she had broken this window because she was assured that nothing would convince people of the great dissatisfaction of women with their conditions except such desperate acts, and when she was reminded of her four daughters she said it was precisely the thought of how they too would grow up to womanhood that had made her strike her blow. The statements were rather the outcome of her evening with Lady Beach-Mandarin than her own unaided discoveries, but she had honestly assimilated them, and she expressed them with a certain simple dignity.

Sir Isaac made a pathetic appearance before the court, and Lady Harman was shocked to see how worn he was with distress at her scandalous behaviour. He looked a broken man. That curious sense of personal responsibility, which had slumbered throughout the Black Strand struggle, came back to her in a flood, and she had to grip the edge of the dock tightly to maintain her self-control. Unaccustomed as he was to public speaking, Sir Isaac said in a low, sorrow-laden voice, he had provided himself with a written statement dissociating himself from the views his wife's rash action might seem to imply, and expressing his own opinions upon woman's suffrage and the relations of the sexes generally, with especial

reference to contemporary literature. He had been writing it most of the night. He was not, however, permitted to read this, and he then made an unstudied appeal for the consideration and mercy of the court. He said Lady Harman had always been a good mother and a faithful wife; she had been influenced by misleading people and bad books and publications, the true significance of which she did not understand, and if only the court would regard this first offence leniently he was ready to take his wife away and give any guarantee that might be specified that it should not recur. The magistrate was sympathetic and kindly, but he pointed out that this window-breaking had to be stamped out, and that it could only be stamped out by refusing any such exception as Sir Isaac desired. And so Sir Isaac left the court widowed for a month, a married man without a wife, and terribly distressed.

All this and more one might tell in detail, and how she went to her cell, and the long tedium of her imprisonment, and how deeply Snagsby felt the disgrace, and how Miss Alimony claimed her as a convert to the magic of her persuasions, and many such matters — there is no real restraint upon a novelist fully resolved to be English and Gothic and unclassical except obscure and inexplicable instincts. But these obscure and inexplicable instincts are at times imperative, and on this occasion they insist that here must come a break, a pause, in the presence of this radiating gap in the Postmaster-General's glass, and the phenomenon of this gentle and beautiful lady, the mother of four children, grasping in her gloved hand, and with a certain amateurishness, a lumpish poker-end of iron.

We make the pause by ending the chapter here and by resuming the story at a fresh point — with an account of various curious phases in the mental development of Mr. Brumley.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

MR. BRUMLEY IS TROUBLED BY DIFFICULT IDEAS

§1

Then as that picture of a post office pane, smashed and with a large hole knocked clean through it, fades at last upon the reader's consciousness, let another and a kindred spectacle replace it. It is the carefully cleaned and cherished window of Mr. Brumley's mind, square and tidy and as it were "frosted" against an excess of light, and in that also we have now to record the most jagged all and devastating fractures.

Little did Mr. Brumley reckon when first he looked up from his laces at Black Strand, how completely that pretty young woman in the dark furs was destined to shatter all the assumptions that had served his life.

But you have already had occasion to remark a change in Mr. Brumley's bearing and attitude that carries him far from the kindly and humorous conservatism of his earlier work. You have shared Lady Harman's astonishment at the ardour of his few stolen words in the garden, an astonishment that not only grew but flowered in the silences of her captivity, and you know something of the romantic impulses, more at least than she did, that gave his appearance at the little local railway station so belated and so disreputable a flavour. In the chilly ill-flavoured solitude of her prison cell and with a mind quickened by meagre and distasteful fare, Lady Harman had ample leisure to reflect upon many things, she had already fully acquainted herself with the greater proportion of Mr. Brumley's published works, and she found the utmost difficulty in reconciling the flushed impassioned quality of his few words of appeal, with the moral assumptions of his published opinions. On the whole she was inclined to think that her memory had a little distorted what he had said. In this however she was mistaken; Mr. Brumley had really been proposing an elopement and he was now entirely preoccupied with the idea of rescuing, obtaining and possessing Lady Harman for

himself as soon as the law released her.

One may doubt whether this extensive change from a humorous conservatism to a primitive and dangerous romanticism is to be ascribed entirely to the personal charm, great as it no doubt was, of Lady Harman; rather did her tall soft dark presence come to release a long accumulating store of discontent and unrest beneath the polished surfaces of Mr. Brumley's mind. Things had been stirring in him for some time; the latter Euphemia books had lacked much of the freshness of their precursors and he had found it increasingly hard, he knew not why, to keep up the lightness, the geniality, the friendly badinage of successful and accepted things, the sunny disregard of the grim and unamiable aspects of existence, that were the essential merits of that Optimistic Period of our literature in which Mr. Brumley had begun his career. With every justification in the world Mr. Brumley had set out to be an optimist, even in the *Granta* his work had been distinguished by its gay yet steadfast superficiality, and his early success, his rapid popularity, had done much to turn this early disposition into a professional attitude. He had determined that for all his life he would write for comfortable untroubled people in the character of a light-spirited, comfortable, untroubled person, and that each year should have its book of connubial humour, its travel in picturesque places, its fun and its sunshine, like roses budding in succession on a stem. He did his utmost to conceal from himself the melancholy realization that the third and the fourth roses were far less wonderful than the first and the second, and that by continuing the descending series a rose might be attained at last that was almost unattractive, but he was already beginning to suspect that he was getting less animated and a little irritable when Euphemia very gently and gracefully but very firmly and rather enigmatically died, and after an interval of tender and tenderly expressed regrets he found himself, in spite of the most strenuous efforts to keep bright and kindly and optimistic in the best style, dull and getting duller — he could disguise the thing no longer. And he weighed more. Six — eight — eleven pounds more. He took a flat in London, dined and lunched out lightly but frequently, sought the sympathetic friendship of several charming ladies, and involved himself deeply in the affairs of the Academic Committee. Indeed he

made a quite valiant struggle to feel that optimism was just where it always had been and everything all right and very bright with him and with the world about him. He did not go under without a struggle. But as Max Beerbohm's caricature — the 1908 one I mean — brought out all too plainly, there was in his very animation, something of the alert liveliness of the hunted man. Do what he would he had a terrible irrational feeling that things, as yet scarce imagined things, were after him and would have him. Even as he makes his point, even as he gesticulates airily, with his rather distinctively North European nose Beerbohmically enlarged and his sensitive nostril in the air, he seems to be looking at something he does not want to look at, something conceivably pursuing, out of the corner of his eye.

The thing that was assailing Mr. Brumley and making his old established humour and tenderness seem dull and opaque and giving this new uneasy quality to his expression was of course precisely the thing that Sir Isaac meant when he talked about "idees" and their disturbing influence upon all the once assured tranquillities and predominances of Putney life. It was criticism breaking bounds.

As a basis and substance for the tissue of whimsically expressed happiness and confident appreciation of the good things of life, which Mr. Brumley had set before himself as his agreeable — and it was to be hoped popular and profitable — life-task, certain assumptions had been necessary. They were assumptions he had been very willing to make and which were being made in the most exemplary way by the writers who were succeeding all about him at the commencement of his career. And these assumptions had had such an air then of being quite trustworthy, as being certain to wash and wear! Already nowadays it is difficult to get them stated; they have become incredible while still too near to justify the incredibility that attaches to history. It was assumed, for example, that in the institutions, customs and culture of the middle Victorian period, humanity had, so far as the broad lines of things are concerned, achieved its goal. There were of course still bad men and women — individually — and classes one had to recognize as "lower," but all the main things were right, general ideas were right; the law was right, institutions were right, Consols and British Railway

Debentures were right and were going to keep right for ever. The Abolition of Slavery in America had been the last great act which had inaugurated this millennium. Except for individual instances the tragic intensities of life were over now and done with; there was no more need for heroes and martyrs; for the generality of humanity the phase of genial comedy had begun. There might be improvements and refinements ahead, but social, political and economic arrangement were now in their main outlines settled for good and all; nothing better was possible and it was the agreeable task of the artist and the man of letters to assist and celebrate this establishment. There was to be much editing of Shakespear and Charles Lamb, much delightful humour and costume romance, and an Academy of refined Fine Writers would presently establish belles-lettres on the reputable official basis, write *finis* to creative force and undertake the task of stereotyping the language. Literature was to have its once terrible ferments reduced to the quality of a helpful pepsin. Ideas were dead — or domesticated. The last wild idea, in an impoverished and pitiful condition, had been hunted down and killed in the mobbing of, "The Woman Who Did." For a little time the world did actually watch a phase of English writing that dared nothing, penetrated nothing, suppressed everything and aspired at most to Charm, creep like a transitory patch of sunlight across a storm-rent universe. And vanish....

At no time was it a perfectly easy task to pretend that the crazy makeshifts of our legal and political systems, the staggering accidents of economic relationship, the festering disorder of contemporary philosophy and religious teaching, the cruel and stupid bed of King Og that is our last word in sexual adjustment, really constituted a noble and enduring sanity, and it became less and less so with the acute disillusionments that arose out of the Boer War. The first decade of the twentieth century was for the English a decade of badly sprained optimism. Our Empire was nearly beaten by a handful of farmers amidst the jeering contempt of the whole world — and we felt it acutely for several years. We began to question ourselves. Mr. Brumley found his gay but entirely respectable irresponsibility harder and harder to keep up as that decade wore on. And close upon the South African trouble came that

extraordinary new discontent of women with a woman's lot which we have been observing as it reached and troubled the life of Lady Harman. Women who had hitherto so passively made the bulk of that reading public which sustained Mr. Brumley and his kind — they wanted something else!

And behind and beneath these immediately disconcerting things still more sinister hintings and questioning were beginning to pluck at contentment. In 1899 nobody would have dreamt of asking and in 1909 even Mr. Brumley was asking, "Are things going on much longer?" A hundred little incidents conspired to suggest that a Christianity that had, to put it mildly, shirked the Darwinian challenge, had no longer the palliating influence demanded of a national religion, and that down there in the deep levels of labour where they built railways to carry Mr. Brumley's food and earn him dividends, where they made engines and instruments and textiles and drains for his little needs, there was a new, less bounded discontent, a grimmer spirit, something that one tried in vain to believe was only the work of "agitators," something that was to be pacified no longer by the thin pretences of liberalism, something that might lead ultimately — optimism scarcely dared to ask whither....

Mr. Brumley did his best to resist the influence of these darkening ideas. He tried to keep it up that everything was going well and that most of these shadows and complaints were the mischief of a few incurably restless personalities. He tried to keep it up that to belong to the working class was a thoroughly jolly thing — for those who were used to it. He declared that all who wanted to alter our laws or our ideas about property or our methods of production were envious and base and all who wanted any change between the sexes, foolish or vicious. He tried to go on disposing of socialists, agitators, feminists, women's suffragists, educationists and every sort of reformer with a good-humoured contempt. And he found an increasing difficulty in keeping his contempt sufficiently good-humoured. Instead of laughing down at folly and failure, he had moments when he felt that he was rather laughing up — a little wryly — at monstrous things impending. And since ideas are things of atmosphere and the spirit, insidious wolves of the soul, they crept up to him and gnawed the insides out of him even as he posed as their

manful antagonist.

Insensibly Mr. Brumley moved with his times. It is the necessary first phase in the break-up of any system of unsound assumptions that a number of its votaries should presently set about padding its cutting corners and relieving the harsh pressure of its injustices by exuberances of humour and sentimentality. Mr. Brumley became charitable and romantic, — orthodox still but charitable and romantic. He was all for smashing with the generalization, but now in the particular instance he was more and more for forgiveness. One finds creeping into the later Euphemia books a Bret-Harte-like doctrine that a great number of bad women are really good and a persuasion in the 'Raffles' key that a large proportion of criminals are really very picturesque and admirable fellows. One wonders how far Mr. Brumley's less ostensible life was softening in harmony with this exterior change, this tender twilight of principle. He wouldn't as yet face the sterner fact that most people who are condemned by society, whether they are condemned justly or not, are by the very gregariousness of man's nature debased, and that a law or custom that stamps you as bad makes you bad. A great state should have high and humane and considerate laws nobly planned, nobly administered and needing none of these shabby little qualifications *sotto voce*. To find goodness in the sinner and justification in the outcast is to condemn the law, but as yet Mr. Brumley's heart failed where his intelligence pointed towards that conclusion. He hadn't the courage to revise his assumptions about right and wrong to that extent; he just allowed them to get soft and sloppy. He waded, where there should be firm ground. He waded toward wallowing. This is a perilous way of living and the sad little end of Euphemia, flushed and coughing, left him no doubt in many ways still more exposed to the temptations of the sentimental byway and the emotional gloss. Happily this is a book about Lady Harman and not an exhaustive monograph upon Mr. Brumley. We will at least leave him the refuge of a few shadows.

Occasionally he would write an important signed review for the *Twentieth Century* or the *Hebdomadal Review*, and on one such occasion he took in hand several studies of contemporary conditions by various 'New Witnesses,' 'Young Liberals,' *New Age* rebels and

associated insurgent authors. He intended to be rather kindly with them, rather disillusioned, quite sympathetic but essentially conventional and conservative and sane. He sat at a little desk near the drooping Venus, under the benediction of Euphemia's posthumous rose, and turned over the pages of one of the least familiar of the group. The stuff was written with a crude force that at times became almost distinguished, but with a bitterness that he felt he must reprove. And suddenly he came upon a passionate tirade against the present period. It made him nibble softly with his lips at the top of his fountain pen as he read.

"We live," said the writer, "in a second Byzantine age, in one of those multitudinous accumulations of secondary interests, of secondary activities and conventions and colossal intricate insignificances, that lie like dust heaps in the path of the historian. The true history of such periods is written in bank books and cheque counterfoils and burnt to save individual reputations; it sneaks along under a thousand pretences, it finds its molelike food and safety in the dirt; its outer forms remain for posterity, a huge débris of unfathomable riddles."

"Hm!" said Mr. Brumley. "He slings it out. And what's this?"

"A civilization arrested and decayed, waiting through long inglorious ages of unscheduled crime, unchallenged social injustice, senseless luxury, mercenary politics and universal vulgarity and weakness, for the long overdue scavenging of the Turk."

"I wonder where the children pick up such language," whispered Mr. Brumley with a smile.

But presently he had pushed the book away and was thinking over this novel and unpleasant idea that perhaps after all his age didn't matter as some ages have mattered and as he had hitherto always supposed it did matter. Byzantine, with the gold of life stolen and the swans changed to geese? Of course always there had been a certain qualification upon heroes, even Cæsar had needed a wreath, but at any rate the age of Cæsar had mattered. Kings no doubt might be more kingly and the issues of life plainer and nobler, but this had been true of every age. He tried to weigh values against values, our past against our present, temperately and sanely. Our art might perhaps be keener for beauty than it seemed to be, but still — it

flourished. And our science at least was wonderful — wonderful. There certainly this young detractor of existing things went astray. What was there in Byzantium to parallel with the electric light, the electric tram, wireless telegraphy, aseptic surgery? Of course this about "unchallenged social injustice" was nonsense. Rant. Why! we were challenging social injustice at every general election — plainly and openly. And crime! What could the man mean about unscheduled crime? Mere words! There was of course a good deal of luxury, but not *wicked* luxury, and to compare our high-minded and constructive politics with the mere conflict of unscrupulous adventurers about that semi-oriental throne! It was nonsense!

"This young man must be spanked," said Mr. Brumley and, throwing aside an open illustrated paper in which a full-length portrait of Sir Edward Carson faced a picture of the King and Queen in their robes sitting side by side under a canopy at the Coronation Durbar, he prepared himself to write in an extremely salutary manner about the follies of the younger generation, and incidentally to justify his period and his professional contentment.

§2

One is reminded of those houses into which the white ants have eaten their way; outwardly still fair and solid, they crumble at the touch of a hand. And now you will begin to understand those changes of bearing that so perplexed Lady Harman, that sudden insurgence of flushed half-furtive passion in the garden, through the thin pretences of a liberal friendship. His hollow honour had been gripped and had given way.

He had begun so well. At first Lady Harman had occupied his mind in the properest way. She was another man's wife and sacred — according to all honourable standards, and what he wanted was merely to see more of her, talk to her, interest her in himself, share whatever was available outside her connubial obligations, — and think as little of Sir Isaac as possible.

How quickly the imaginative temperament of Mr. Brumley enlarged that to include a critical hostility to Sir Isaac, we have already recorded. Lady Harman was no longer simply a charming,

suppressed young wife, crying out for attentive development; she became an ill-treated beautiful woman — misunderstood. Still scrupulously respecting his own standards, Mr. Brumley embarked upon the dangerous business of inventing just how Sir Isaac might be outraging them, and once his imagination had started to hunt in that field, it speedily brought in enough matter for a fine state of moral indignation, a white heat of not altogether justifiable chivalry. Assisted by Lady Beach-Mandarin Mr. Brumley had soon converted the little millionaire into a matrimonial ogre to keep an anxious lover very painfully awake at nights. Because by that time and quite insensibly he had become an anxious lover — with all the gaps in the thread of realities that would have made him that, quite generously filled up from the world of reverie.

Moral indignation is jealousy with a halo. It is the peculiar snare of the perplexed orthodox, and soon Mr. Brumley was in a state of nearly unendurable moral indignation with Sir Isaac for a hundred exaggerations of what he was and of what conceivably he might have done to his silent yet manifestly unsuitably mated wife. And now that romantic streak which is as I have said the first certain symptom of decay in a system of moral assumptions began to show itself in Mr. Brumley's thoughts and conversation. "A marriage like that," said Mr. Brumley to Lady Beach-Mandarin, "isn't a marriage. It flouts the True Ideal of Marriage. It's slavery — following a kidnapping...."

But this is a wide step from the happy optimism of the Cambridge days. What becomes of the sanctity of marriage and the institution of the family when respectable gentlemen talk of something called "True Marriage," as non-existent in relation to a lady who is already the mother of four children? I record this lapsing of Mr. Brumley into romanticism without either sympathy or mitigation. The children, it presently became apparent, were not "true" children. "Forced upon her," said Mr. Brumley. "It makes one ill to think of it!" It certainly very nearly made him ill. And as if these exercises in distinction had inflamed his conscience Mr. Brumley wrote two articles in the *Hebdomadal* denouncing impure literature, decadence, immorality, various recent scandalous instances, and the suffragettes, declaring that woman's place was the home and that "in a pure and exalted monogamy lies the sole unitary basis for a civilized state."

The most remarkable thing about this article is an omission. That Sir Isaac's monogamy with any other instances that might be akin to it was not pure and exalted, and that it needed — shall we call it readjustment? is a view that in this article Mr. Brumley conspicuously doesn't display. It's as if for a moment, pen in hand, he had eddied back to his old absolute positions....

In a very little while Mr. Brumley and Lady Beach-Mandarin had almost persuaded each other that Sir Isaac was applying physical torture to his proudly silent wife, and Mr. Brumley was no longer dreaming and glancing at but steadily facing the possibility of a pure-minded and handsomely done elopement to "free" Lady Harman, that would be followed in due course by a marriage, a "true marriage" on a level of understanding far above any ordinary respectable wedding, amidst universal sympathy and admiration and the presence of all the very best people. In these anticipations he did rather remarkably overlook the absence of any sign of participation on the part of Lady Harman in his own impassioned personal feelings, and he overlooked still more remarkably as possible objections to his line of conduct, Millicent, Florence, Annette and Baby. These omissions no doubt simplified but also greatly falsified his outlook.

This proposal that all the best people shall applaud the higher rightness that was to be revealed in his projected elopement, is in the very essence of the romantic attitude. All other people are still to remain under the law. There is to be nothing revolutionary. But with exceptional persons under exceptional conditions ——

Mr. Brumley stated his case over and over again to his utmost satisfaction, and always at great moral altitudes and with a kind of transcendent orthodoxy. The more difficult any aspect of the affair appeared from the orthodox standpoint the more valiantly Mr. Brumley soared; if it came to his living with Lady Harman for a time before they could be properly married amidst picturesque foreign scenery in a little *casa* by the side of a stream, then the water in that stream was to be quite the purest water conceivable and the scenery and associations as morally faultless as a view that had passed the exacting requirements of Mr. John Ruskin. And Mr. Brumley was very clear in his mind that what he proposed to do was entirely

different in quality even if it was similar in form from anything that anyone else had ever done who had ever before made a scandal or appeared in the divorce court. This is always the way in such cases — always. The scandal was to be a noble scandal, a proud scandal, one of those instances of heroical love that turn aside misdemeanours — admittedly misdemeanours — into edifying marvels.

This was the state of mind to which Mr. Brumley had attained when he made his ineffectual raid upon Black Strand, and you will remark about it, if you are interested in the changes in people's ideas that are going on to-day, that although he was prepared to make the most extensive glosses in this particular instance upon the commonly accepted rules of what is right and proper, he was not for a moment prepared to accord the terrible gift of an independent responsibility to Lady Harman. In that direction lay regions that Mr. Brumley had still to explore. Lady Harman he considered was married wrongly and disastrously and this he held to be essentially the fault of Sir Isaac — with perhaps some slight blame attaching to Lady Harman's mother. The only path of escape he could conceive as yet for Lady Harman lay through the chivalry of some other man. That a woman could possibly rebel against one man without the sympathy and moral maintenance of another was still outside the range of Mr. Brumley's understanding. It is still outside the range of most men's understandings — and of a great many women's. If he generalized at all from these persuasions it was in the direction that in the interest of "true marriage" there should be greater facilities for divorce and also a kind of respectable-ization of divorce. Then these "false marriages" might be rectified without suffering. The reasons for divorce he felt should be extended to include things not generally reprehensible, and chivalrous people coming into court should be protected from the indelicate publicity of free reporting....

§3

Mr. Brumley was still contemplating rather inconclusively the possibility of a long and intimate talk leading up to and preparing for an elopement with Lady Harman, when he read of her Jago Street escapade and of her impending appearance at the South Hampsmith

police court. He was astonished. The more he contemplated the thing the greater became his astonishment.

Even at the first impact he realized that the line she had taken wasn't quite in the picture with the line he had proposed for her. He felt — left out. He felt as though a door had slammed between himself and affairs to which he had supposed himself essential. He could not understand why she had done this thing instead of coming straight to his flat and making use of all that chivalrous service she surely knew was at her disposal. This self-reliance, this direct dealing with the world, seemed to him, even in the height of his concern, unwomanly, a deeper injury to his own abandoned assumptions than any he had contemplated. He felt it needed explanation, and he hurried to secure an elbowed unsavoury corner in the back of the court in order to hear her defence. He had to wait through long stuffy spaces of time before she appeared. There were half a dozen other window smashers, — plain or at least untidy-looking young women. The magistrate told them they were silly and the soul of Mr. Brumley acquiesced. One tried to make a speech, and it was such a poor speech — squeaky....

When at last Lady Harman entered the box — the strangest place it seemed for her — he tried to emerge from the jostling crowd about him into visibility, to catch her eye, to give her the support of his devoted presence. Twice at least she glanced in his direction but gave no sign of seeing him. He was surprised that she could look without fear or detestation, indeed once with a gesture of solicitude, at Sir Isaac. She was astonishingly serene. There seemed to be just the faintest shadow of a smile about her lips as the stipendiary explained the impossibility of giving her anything less than a month. An uneasy object like the smashed remains of a colossal box of bonbons that was riding out a gale, down in the middle of the court, turned round at last completely and revealed itself as the hat of Lady Beach-Mandarin, but though Mr. Brumley waved his hand he could not even make that lady aware of his presence. A powerful rude criminal-looking man who stood in front of him and smelt grossly of stables, would not give him a fair chance of showing himself, and developed a strong personal hostility to him on account of his alleged "shoving about." It would not he felt be of the slightest help to Lady

Harman for him to involve himself in a personal struggle with a powerful and powerfully flavoured criminal.

It was all very dreadful.

After the proceedings were over and Lady Harman had been led away into captivity, he went out and took a taxi in an agitated distraught manner to Lady Beach-Mandarin's house.

"She meant," said Lady Beach-Mandarin, "to have a month's holiday from him and think things out. And she's got it."

Perhaps that was it. Mr. Brumley could not tell, and he spent some days in that state of perplexity which, like the weariness that heralds a cold, marks so often the onset of a new series of ideas....

Why hadn't she come to him? Had he after all rather overloaded his memory of her real self with imaginative accessories? Had she really understood what he had been saying to her in the garden? Afterwards when he had met her eyes as he and she went over the new wing with Sir Isaac she had so manifestly — and, when one came to think of it, so tranquilly — seemed to understand....

It was such an extraordinary thing to go smashing a window like that — when there he was at hand ready to help her. She knew his address? Did she? For a moment Mr. Brumley cherished that wild surmise. Was that perhaps it? But surely she could have looked in the Telephone Directory or Who's Who....

But if that was the truth of the matter she would have looked and behaved differently in court — quite differently. She would have been looking for him. She would have seen him....

It was queer too to recall what she had said in court about her daughters....

Could it be, he had a frightful qualm, that after all — he wasn't the man? How little he knew of her really....

"This wretched agitation," said Mr. Brumley, trying to flounder away anyhow from these disconcerting riddles; "it seems to unbalance them all."

But he found it impossible to believe that Lady Harman was seriously unbalanced.

§4

And if Mr. Brumley's system of romantically distorted moral assumptions was shattered by Lady Harman's impersonal blow at a post office window when all the rules seemed to require her to fly from the oppression of one man to the chivalry of another, what words can convey the devastating effect upon him of her conduct after her release? To that crisis he had been looking forward continually; to record the variety of his expectations would fill a large volume, but throughout them all prevailed one general idea, that when she came out of prison her struggle with her husband would be resumed, and that this would give Mr. Brumley such extraordinary opportunities of displaying his devotion that her response, which he was now beginning to suspect might be more reluctant than his earlier dreams had assumed, was ultimately inevitable. In all these dreams and meditations that response figured as the crown. He had to win and possess Lady Harman. The idea had taken hold of his busy yet rather pointless life, had become his directing object. He was full of schemes for presently arresting and captivating her imagination. He was already convinced that she cared for him; he had to inflame interest and fan liking into the fire of passion. And with a mind so occupied, Mr. Brumley wrote this and that and went about his affairs. He spent two days and a night at Margate visiting his son at his preparatory school, and he found much material for musing in the question of just how the high romantic affairs ahead of him would affect this delicately intelligent boy. For a time perhaps he might misjudge his father.... He spent a week-end with Lady Viping and stayed on until Wednesday and then he came back to London. His plans were still unformed when the day came for Lady Harman's release, and indeed beyond an idea that he would have her met at the prison gates by an enormous bunch of snowy-white and crimson chrysanthemums he had nothing really concrete at all in his mind.

She had, however, been released stealthily a day before her time, and this is what she had done. She had asked that — of all improbable people! — Sir Isaac's mother should meet her, the biggest car had come to the prison gates, and she had gone straight down with Mrs. Harman to her husband — who had taken a chill and was in bed drinking Contrexéville water — at Black Strand.

As these facts shaped themselves in answer to the blanched inquiries of Mr. Brumley his amazement grew. He began to realize that there must have been a correspondence during her incarceration, that all sorts of things had been happening while he had been dreaming, and when he went round to Lady Beach-Mandarin, who was just packing up to be the life and soul of a winter-sports party at a nice non-Lunnite hotel at Lenzerheide, he learnt particulars that chilled him to the marrow. "They've made it up," said Lady Beach-Mandarin.

"But how?" gasped Mr. Brumley, with his soul in infinite distress. "But how?"

"The Ogre, it seems, has come to see that bullying won't do. He's given in tremendously. He's let her have her way with the waitress strike and she's going to have an allowance of her own and all kinds of things. It's settled. It's his mother and that man Charterson talked him over. You know — his mother came to me — as her friend. For advice. Wanted to find out what sort of things we might have been putting in her head. She said so. A curious old thing — vulgar but — *wise*. I liked her. He's her darling — and she just knows what he is.... He doesn't like it but he's taken his dose. The thought of her going to prison again —— ! He's let her do anything rather than that...."

"And she's gone to him!"

"Naturally," said Lady Beach-Mandarin with what he felt to be deliberate brutality. Surely she must have understood ——

"But the waitress strike — what has it got to do with the waitress strike?"

"She cared — tremendously."

"*Did* she?"

"Tremendously. And they all go back and the system of inspection is being altered, and he's even forgiven Babs Wheeler. It made him ill to do it but he did."

"And she's gone back to him."

"Like Godiva," said Lady Beach-Mandarin with that sweeping allusiveness that was part of her complicated charm.

For three days Mr. Brumley was so staggered by these things that it did not occur to him that it was quite possible for him to see Lady Harman for himself and find out just how things stood. He remained in London with an imagination dazed. And as it was the Christmas season and as George Edmund in a rather expectant holiday state had now come up from Margate, Mr. Brumley went in succession to the Hippodrome, to Peter Pan and to an exhibition at Olympia, assisted at an afternoon display of the kinemacolor at La Scala Theatre, visited Hamley's and lunched George Edmund once at the Criterion and twice at the Climax Club, while thinking of nothing in all the world but the incalculable strangeness of women. George Edmund thought him a very passive leadable parent indeed, less querulous about money matters and altogether much improved. The glitter and colour of these various entertainments reflected themselves upon the surface of that deep flood of meditation, hook-armed wooden-legged pirates, intelligent elephants, ingenious but extremely expensive toys, flickering processions, comic turns, snatches of popular music and George Edmund's way of eating an orange, pictured themselves on his mind confusedly without in any way deflecting its course. Then on the fourth day he roused himself, gave George Edmund ten shillings to get himself a cutlet at the Café Royal and do the cinematographs round and about the West End, and so released reached Aleham in time for a temperate lunch. He chartered the Aleham car to take him to Black Strand and arrived there about a quarter past three, in a great effort to feel himself a matter-of-course visitor.

It ought to be possible to record that Mr. Brumley's mind was full of the intensest sense of Lady Harman during that journey and of nothing else, but as a matter of fact his mind was now curiously detached and reflective, the tensions and expectation of the past month and the astonishment of the last few days had worked themselves out and left him as it were the passive instrument of the purpose of his more impassioned moods. This distressed lover approached Black Strand in a condition of philosophical lassitude.

The road from Aleham to Black Strand is a picturesque old English road, needlessly winding and badly graded, wriggling across a healthy wilderness with occasional pine-woods. Something in that

familiar landscape — for his life had run through it since first he and Euphemia on a tandem bicycle and altogether very young had sought their ideal home in the South of England — set his mind swinging and generalizing. How freshly youthful he and Euphemia had been when first he came along that road, how crude, how full of happy expectations of success; it had been as bright and it was now as completely gone as the sunsets they had seen together.

How great a thing life is! How much greater than any single romance, or any individual affection! Since those days he had grown, he had succeeded, he had suffered in a reasonable way of course, still he could recall with a kind of satisfaction tears and deep week-long moods of hopeless melancholy — and he had changed. And now dominating this landscape, filling him with new emotions and desires and perplexing intimations of ignorance and limitations he had never suspected in his youth, was this second figure of a woman. She was different from Euphemia. With Euphemia everything had been so simple and easy; until that slight fading, that fatigue of entire success and satisfaction, of the concluding years. He and Euphemia had always kept it up that they had no thought in the world except for one another.... Yet if that had been true, why hadn't he died when she did. He hadn't died — with remarkable elasticity. Clearly in his case there had been these unexplored, unsuspected hinterlands of possibility towards which Lady Harman seemed now to be directing him. It came to him that afternoon as an entirely fresh thought that there might also have been something in Euphemia beyond their simple, so charmingly treated relationship. He began to recall moments when Euphemia had said perplexing little things, had looked at him with an expression that was unexpected, had been — difficult....

I write of Mr. Brumley to tell you things about him and not to explain him. It may be that the appetite for thorough good talks with people grows upon one, but at any rate it did occur to Mr. Brumley on his way to talk to Lady Harman, it occurred to him as a thing distressingly irrevocable that he could now never have a thorough good talk with Euphemia about certain neglected things between them. It would have helped him so much....

His eyes rested as he thought of these things upon the familiar

purple hill crests, patched that afternoon with the lingering traces of a recent snowstorm, the heather slopes, the dark mysterious woods, the patches of vivid green where a damp and marshy meadow or so broke the moorland surface. To-day in spite of the sun there was a bright blue-white line of frost to the northward of every hedge and bank, the trees were dripping down the white edgings of the morning into the pine-needle mud at their feet; he had seen it so like this before; years hence he might see it all like this again; all this great breezy countryside had taken upon itself a quality of endurance, as though it would still be real and essential in his mind when Lady Harman had altogether passed again. It would be real when he himself had passed away, and in other costumes and other vehicles fresh Euphemias and new crude George Brumleys would come along, feeling in the ultimate bright new wisdom of youth that it was all for them — a subservient scenery, when really it was entirely indifferent in its careless permanence to all their hopes and fancies....

§6

Mr. Brumley's thoughts on the permanence of landscape and the mutability of human affairs were more than a little dashed when he came within sight of Black Strand and perceived that once cosily beautiful little home clipped and extended, its shrubbery wrecked and the old barn now pierced with windows and adorned — for its new chimneys were not working very well — by several efficient novelties in chimney cowls. Up the slopes behind Sir Isaac had extended his boundaries, and had been felling trees and levelling a couple of tennis courts for next summer.

Something was being done to the porch, and the jasmine had been cleared away altogether. Mr. Brumley could not quite understand what was in progress; Sir Isaac he learnt afterwards had found a wonderful bargain in a real genuine Georgian portal of great dignity and simplicity in Aleham, and he was going to improve Black Strand by transferring it thither — with the utmost precaution and every piece numbered — from its original situation. Mr. Brumley stood among the preparatory débris of this and rang a quietly resolute electric bell, which was answered no longer by Mrs. Rabbit but by

the ample presence of Snagsby.

Snagsby in that doorway had something of the preposterous effect of a very large face beneath a very small hat. He had to Mr. Brumley's eyes a restored look, as though his self-confidence had been thoroughly done up since their last encounter. Bygones were bygones. Mr. Brumley was admitted as one is admitted to any normal home. He was shown into the little study-drawing-room with the stepped floor, which had been so largely the scene of his life with Euphemia, and he was left there for the better part of a quarter of an hour before his hostess appeared.

The room had been changed very little. Euphemia's solitary rose had gone, and instead there were several bowls of beaten silver scattered about, each filled with great chrysanthemums from London. Sir Isaac's jackdaw acquisitiveness had also overcrowded the corner beyond the fireplace with a very fine and genuine Queen Anne cabinet; there were a novel by Elizabeth Robins and two or three feminist and socialist works lying on the table which would certainly not have been visible, though they might have been in the house, during the Brumley régime. Otherwise things were very much as they always had been.

A room like this, thought Mr. Brumley among much other mental driftage, is like a heart, — so long as it exists it must be furnished and tenanted. No matter what has been, however bright and sweet and tender, the spaces still cry aloud to be filled again. The very essence of life is its insatiability. How complete all this had seemed in the moment when first he and Euphemia had arranged it. And indeed how complete life had seemed altogether at seven-and-twenty. Every year since then he had been learning — or at any rate unlearning. Until at last he was beginning to realize he had still everything to learn....

The door opened and the tall dark figure of Lady Harman stood for a moment in the doorway before she stepped down into the room.

She had always the same effect upon him, the effect of being suddenly remembered. When he was away from her he was always sure that she was a beautiful woman, and when he saw her again he was always astonished to see how little he had borne her beauty in mind. For a moment they regarded one another silently. Then she

closed the door behind her and came towards him.

All Mr. Brumley's philosophizing had vanished at the sight of her. His spirit was reborn within him. He thought of her and of his effect upon her, vividly, and of nothing else in the world.

She was paler he thought beneath her dusky hair, a little thinner and graver....

There was something in her manner as she advanced towards him that told him he mattered to her, that his coming there was something that moved her imagination as well as his own. With an almost impulsive movement she held out both her hands to him, and with an inspiration as sudden he took them and kissed them. When he had done so he was ashamed of his temerity; he looked up to meet in her dark eyes the scared shyness of a fallow deer. She suddenly remembered to withdraw her hands, and it became manifest to both of them that the incident must never have happened. She went to the window, stood almost awkwardly for a moment looking out of it, then turned. She put her hands on the back of the chair and stood holding it.

"I knew you would come to see me," she said.

"I've been very anxious about you," he said, and on that their minds rested through a little silence.

"You see," he explained, "I didn't know what was happening to you. Or what you were doing."

"After asking your advice," she said.

"Exactly."

"I don't know why I broke that window. Except I think that I wanted to get away."

"But why didn't you come to me?"

"I didn't know where you were. And besides — I didn't somehow want to come to you."

"But wasn't it wretched in prison? Wasn't it miserably cold? I used to think of you of nights in some wretched ill-aired cell.... You...."

"It *was* cold," she admitted. "But it was very good for me. It was quiet. The first few days seemed endless; then they began to go by quickly. Quite quickly at last. And I came to think. In the day there was a little stool where one sat. I used to sit on that and brood and try

to think things out — all sorts of things I've never had the chance to think about before."

"Yes," said Mr. Brumley.

"All this," she said.

"And it has brought you back here!" he said, with something of the tone of one who has a right to enquire, with some flavour too of reproach.

"You see," she said after a little pause, "during that time it was possible to come to understandings. Neither I nor my husband had understood the other. In that interval it was possible — to explain.

"Yes. You see, Mr. Brumley, we — we both misunderstood. It was just because of that and because I had no one who seemed able to advise me that I turned to you. A novelist always seems so wise in these things. He seems to know so many lives. One can talk to you as one can scarcely talk to anyone; you are a sort of doctor — in these matters. And it was necessary — that my husband should realize that I had grown up and that I should have time to think just how one's duty and one's — freedom have to be fitted together.... And my husband is ill. He has been ill, rather short of breath — the doctor thinks it is asthma — for some time, and all the agitation of this business has upset him and made him worse. He is upstairs now — asleep. Of course if I had thought I should make him ill I could never have done any of this. But it's done now and here I am, Mr. Brumley, back in my place. With all sorts of things changed. Put right...."

"I see," said Mr. Brumley stupidly.

Her speech was like the falling of an opaque curtain upon some romantic spectacle. She stood there, almost defensively behind her chair as she made it. There was a quality of premeditation in her words, yet something in her voice and bearing made him feel that she knew just how it covered up and extinguished his dreams and impulses. He heard her out and then suddenly his spirit rebelled against her decision. "No!" he cried.

She waited for him to go on.

"You see," he said, "I thought that it was just that you wanted to get away —— That this life was intolerable —— That you were —— Forgive me if I seem to be going beyond — going beyond what

I ought to be thinking about you. Only, why should I pretend? I care, I care for you tremendously. And it seemed to me that you didn't love your husband, that you were enslaved and miserable. I would have done anything to help you — anything in the world, Lady Harman. I know — it may sound ridiculous — there have been times when I would have faced death to feel you were happy and free. I thought all that, I felt all that, — and then — then you come back here. You seem not to have minded. As though I had misunderstood...."

He paused and his face was alive with an unwonted sincerity. His self-consciousness had for a moment fallen from him.

"I know," she said, "it *was* like that. I knew you cared. That is why I have so wanted to talk to you. It looked like that...."

She pressed her lips together in that old familiar hunt for words and phrases.

"I didn't understand, Mr. Brumley, all there was in my husband or all there was in myself. I just saw his hardness and his — his hardness in business. It's become so different now. You see, I forgot he has bad health. He's ill; I suppose he was getting ill then. Instead of explaining himself — he was — excited and — unwise. And now — —"

"Now I suppose he has — explained," said Mr. Brumley slowly and with infinite distaste. "Lady Harman, *what* has he explained?"

"It isn't so much that he has explained, Mr. Brumley," said Lady Harman, "as that things have explained themselves."

"But how, Lady Harman? How?"

"I mean about my being a mere girl, almost a child when I married him. Naturally he wanted to take charge of everything and leave nothing to me. And quite as naturally he didn't notice that now I am a woman, grown up altogether. And it's been necessary to do things. And naturally, Mr. Brumley, they shocked and upset him. But he sees now so clearly, he wrote to me, such a fair letter — an unusual letter — quite different from when he talks — it surprised me, telling me he wanted me to feel free, that he meant to make me — to arrange things that is, so that I should feel free and more able to go about as I pleased. It was a *generous* letter, Mr. Brumley. Generous about all sorts of affairs that there had been between us. He

said things, quite kind things, not like the things he has ever said before — —"

She stopped short and then began again.

"You know, Mr. Brumley, it's so hard to tell things without telling other things that somehow are difficult to tell. Yet if I don't tell you them, you won't know them and then you won't be able to understand in the least how things are with us."

Her eyes appealed to him.

"Tell me," he said, "whatever you think fit."

"When one has been afraid of anyone and felt they were ever so much stronger and cruel and hard than one is and one suddenly finds they aren't. It alters everything."

He nodded, watching her.

Her voice fell nearly to a whisper. "Mr. Brumley," she said, "when I came back to him — you know he was in bed here — instead of scolding me — he *cried*. He cried like a vexed child. He put his face into the pillow — just misery.... I'd never seen him cry — at least only once — long ago...."

Mr. Brumley looked at her flushed and tender face and it seemed to him that indeed he could die for her quite easily.

"I saw how hard I had been," she said. "In prison I'd thought of that, I'd thought women mustn't be hard, whatever happens to them. And when I saw him like that I knew at once how true that was.... He begged me to be a good wife to him. No! — he just said, 'Be a wife to me,' not even a good wife — and then he cried...."

For a moment or so Mr. Brumley didn't respond. "I see," he said at last. "Yes."

"And there were the children — such helpless little things. In the prison I worried about them. I thought of things for them. I've come to feel — they are left too much to nurses and strangers.... And then you see he has agreed to nearly everything I had wanted. It wasn't only the personal things — I was anxious about those silly girls — the strikers. I didn't want them to be badly treated. It distressed me to think of them. I don't think you know how it distressed me. And he — he gave way upon all that. He says I may talk to him about the business, about the way we do our business — the kindness of it I mean. And this is why I am back here. Where else *could* I be?"

“No,” said Mr. Brumley still with the utmost reluctance. “I see. Only — —”

He paused downcast and she waited for him to speak.

“Only it isn’t what I expected, Lady Harman. I didn’t think that matters could be settled by such arrangements. It’s sane, I know, it’s comfortable and kindly. But I thought — Oh! I thought of different things, quite different things from all this. I thought of you who are so beautiful caught in a loveless passionless world. I thought of the things there might be for you, the beautiful and wonderful things of which you are deprived.... Never mind what I thought! Never mind! You’ve made your choice. But I thought that you didn’t love, that you couldn’t love — this man. It seemed to me that you felt too — that to live as you are doing — with him — was a profanity. Something — I’d give everything I have, everything I am, to save you from. Because — because I care.... I misunderstood you. I suppose you can — do what you are doing.”

He jumped to his feet as he spoke and walked three paces away and turned to utter his last sentences. She too stood up.

“Mr. Brumley,” she said weakly, “I don’t understand. What do you mean? I have to do what I am doing. He — he is my husband.”

He made a gesture of impatience. “Do you understand nothing of *love*?” he cried.

She pressed her lips together and remained still and silent, dark against the casement window.

There came a sound of tapping from the room above. Three taps and again three taps.

Lady Harman made a little gesture as though she would put this sound aside.

“Love,” she said at last. “It comes to some people. It happens. It happens to young people.... But when one is married — —”

Her voice fell almost to a whisper. “One must not think of it,” she said. “One must think of one’s husband and one’s duty. Life cannot begin again, Mr. Brumley.”

The taps were repeated, a little more urgently.

“That is my husband,” she said.

She hesitated through a little pause. “Mr. Brumley,” she said, “I want friendship so badly, I want some one to be my friend. I don’t

want to think of things — disturbing things — things I have lost — things that are spoilt. *That* — that which you spoke of; what has it to do with me?"

She interrupted him as he was about to speak.

"Be my friend. Don't talk to me of impossible things. Love! Mr. Brumley, what has a married woman to do with love? I never think of it. I never read of it. I want to do my duty. I want to do my duty by him and by my children and by all the people I am bound to. I want to help people, weak people, people who suffer. I want to help him to help them. I want to stop being an idle, useless, spending woman...."

She made a little gesture of appeal with her hands.

"Oh!" he sighed, and then, "You know if I can help you —— Rather than distress you — —"

Her manner changed. It became confidential and urgent.

"Mr. Brumley," she said, "I must go up to my husband. He will be impatient. And when I tell him you are here he will want to see you.... You will come up and see him?"

Mr. Brumley sought to convey the struggle within him by his pose.

"I will do what you wish, Lady Harman," he said, with an almost theatrical sigh.

He closed the door after her and was alone in his former study once more. He walked slowly to his old writing-desk and sat down in his familiar seat. Presently he heard her footfalls across the room above. Mr. Brumley's mind under the stress of the unfamiliar and the unexpected was now lapsing rapidly towards the theatrical. "My *God*!" said Mr. Brumley.

He addressed that friendly memorable room in tones that mingled amazement and wrong. "He is her husband!" he said, and then: "The power of words!" ...

§7

It seemed to Mr. Brumley's now entirely disordered mind that Sir Isaac, propped up with cushions upon a sofa in the upstairs sitting-room, white-faced, wary and very short of breath, was like Proprietorship enthroned. Everything about him referred

deferentially to him. Even his wife dropped at once into the position of a beautiful satellite. His illness, he assured his visitor with a thin-lipped emphasis, was "quite temporary, quite the sort of thing that might happen to anyone." He had had a queer little benumbing of one leg, "just a trifle of nerve fag did it," and the slight asthma that came and went in his life had taken advantage of his condition to come again with a little beyond its usual aggressiveness. "Elly is going to take me off to Marienbad next week or the week after," he said. "I shall have a cure and she'll have a treat, and we shall come back as fit as fiddles." The incidents of the past month were to be put on a facetious footing it appeared. "It's a mercy they didn't crop her hair," he said, apropos of nothing and with an air of dry humour. No further allusion was made to Lady Harman's incarceration.

He was dressed in a lama wool bedroom suit and his resting leg was covered by a very splendid and beautiful fur rug. All Euphemia's best and gayest cushions sustained his back. The furniture had been completely rearranged for his comfort and convenience. Close to his hand was a little table with carefully selected remedies and aids and helps and stimulants, and the latest and best of the light fiction of the day was tossed about between the table, the couch and the floor. At the foot of the couch Euphemia's bedroom writing-table had been placed, and over this there were scattered traces of the stenographer who had assisted him to wipe off the day's correspondence. Three black cylinders and other appliances in the corner witnessed that his slight difficulty in breathing could be relieved by oxygen, and his eyes were regaled by a great abundance of London flowers at every available point in the room. Of course there were grapes, fabulous looking grapes.

Everything conspired to give Sir Isaac and his ownership the centre of the picture. Mr. Brumley had been brought upstairs to him, and the tea table, with scarcely a reference to anyone else, was arranged by Snagsby conveniently to his hand. And Sir Isaac himself had a confidence — the assurance of a man who has been shaken and has recovered. Whatever tears he had ever shed had served their purpose and were forgotten. "Elly" was his and the house was his and everything about him was his — he laid his hand upon her once when she came near him, his possessiveness was so gross — and the

strained suspicion of his last meeting with Mr. Brumley was replaced now by a sage and wizened triumph over anticipated and arrested dangers.

Their party was joined by Sir Isaac's mother, and the sight of her sturdy, swarthy, and rather dignified presence flashed the thought into Mr. Brumley's mind that Sir Isaac's father must have been a very blond and very nosey person indeed. She was homely and practical and contributed very usefully to a conversation that remained a trifle fragmentary and faintly uncomfortable to the end.

Mr. Brumley avoided as much as he could looking at Lady Harman, because he knew Sir Isaac was alert for that, but he was acutely aware of her presence dispensing the tea and moving about the room, being a good wife. It was his first impression of Lady Harman as a good wife and he disliked the spectacle extremely. The conversation hovered chiefly about Marienbad, drifted away and came back again. Mrs. Harman made several confidences that provoked the betrayal of a strain of irritability in Sir Isaac's condition. "We're all looking forward to this Marienbad expedition," she said. "I do hope it will turn out well. Neither of them have ever been abroad before — and there's the difficulty of the languages."

"Ow," snarled Sir Isaac, with a glance at his mother that was almost vicious and a lapse into Cockney intonations and phrases that witnessed how her presence recalled his youth, "It'll *go* all right, mother. *You* needn't fret."

"Of course they'll have a courier to see to their things, and go train de luxe and all that," Mrs. Harman explained with a certain gusto. "But still it's an adventure, with him not well, and both as I say more like children than grown-up people."

Sir Isaac intervened with a crushing clumsiness to divert this strain of explanation, with questions about the quality of the soil in the wood where the ground was to be cleared and levelled for his tennis lawns.

Mr. Brumley did his best to behave as a man of the world should. He made intelligent replies about the sand, he threw out obvious but serviceable advice upon travel upon the continent of Europe, and he tried not to think that this was the way of living into which the sweetest, tenderest, most beautiful woman in the world had been

trapped. He avoided looking at her until he felt it was becoming conspicuous, a negative stare. Why had she come back again? Fragmentary phrases she had used downstairs came drifting through his mind. “I never think of it. I never read of it.” And she so made for beautiful love and a beautiful life! He recalled Lady Beach-Mandarin’s absurdly apt, absurdly inept, “like Godiva,” and was suddenly impelled to raise the question of those strikers.

“Your trouble with your waitresses is over, Sir Isaac?”

Sir Isaac finished a cup of tea audibly and glanced at his wife. “I never meant to be hard on them,” he said, putting down his cup. “Never. The trouble blew up suddenly. One can’t be all over a big business everywhere all at once, more particularly if one is worried about other things. As soon as I had time to look into it I put things right. There was misunderstandings on both sides.”

He glanced up again at Lady Harman. (She was standing behind Mr. Brumley so that he could not see her but — did their eyes meet?)

“As soon as we are back from Marienbad,” Sir Isaac volunteered, “Lady Harman and I are going into all that business thoroughly.”

Mr. Brumley concealed his intense aversion for this association under a tone of intelligent interest. “Into — I don’t quite understand — what business?”

“Women employees in London — Hostels — all that kind of thing. Bit more sensible than suffragetting, eh, Elly?”

“Very interesting,” said Mr. Brumley with a hollow cordiality, “very.”

“Done on business lines, mind you,” said Sir Isaac, looking suddenly very sharp and keen, “done on proper business lines, there’s no end of a change possible. And it’s a perfectly legitimate outgrowth from such popular catering as ours. It interests me.”

He made a little whistling noise with his teeth at the end of this speech.

“I didn’t know Lady Harman was disposed to take up such things,” he said. “Or I’d have gone into them before.”

“He’s going into them now,” said Mrs. Harman, “heart and soul. Why! we have to take his temperature over it, to see he doesn’t work himself up into a fever.” Her manner became reasonable and confidential. She spoke to Mr. Brumley as if her son was slightly

deaf. “It’s better than his fretting,” she said....

§8

Mr. Brumley returned to London in a state of extreme mental and emotional unrest. The sight of Lady Harman had restored all his passion for her, the all too manifest fact that she was receding beyond his reach stirred him with unavailing impulses towards some impossible extremity of effort. She had filled his mind so much that he could not endure the thought of living without hope of her. But what hope was there of her? And he was jealous, detestably jealous, so jealous that in that direction he did not dare to let his mind go. He sawed at the bit and brought it back, or he would have had to writhe about the carriage. His thoughts ran furiously all over the place to avoid that pit. And now he found himself flashing at moments into wild and hopeless rebellion against the institution of marriage, of which he had hitherto sought always to be the dignified and smiling champion against the innovator, the over-critical and the young. He had never rebelled before. He was so astonished at the violence of his own objection that he lapsed from defiance to an incredulous examination of his own novel attitude. “It’s not *true* marriage I object to,” he told himself. “It’s this marriage like a rat trap, alluring and scarcely unavoidable, so that in we all go, and then with no escape — unless you tear yourself to rags. No escape....”

It came to him that there was at least one way out for Lady Harman: *Sir Isaac might die! ...*

He pulled himself up presently, astonished and dismayed at the activities of his own imagination. Among other things he had wondered if by any chance Lady Harman had ever allowed her mind to travel in this same post-mortem direction. At times surely the thing must have shone upon her as a possibility, a hope. From that he had branched off to a more general speculation. How many people were there in the world, nice people, kind people, moral and delicate-minded people, to whom the death of another person means release from that inflexible barrier — possibilities of secretly desired happiness, the realization of crushed and forbidden dreams? He had a vision of human society, like the vision of a night landscape seen

suddenly in a lightning flash, as of people caught by couples in traps and quietly hoping for one another's deaths. "Good Heavens!" said Mr. Brumley, "what are we coming to," and got up in his railway compartment — he had it to himself — and walked up and down its narrow limits until a jolt over a point made him suddenly sit down again. "Most marriages are happy," said Mr. Brumley, like a man who has fallen into a river and scrambles back to safety. "One mustn't judge by the exceptional cases....

"Though of course there are — a good many — exceptional cases." ...

He folded his arms, crossed his legs, frowned and reasoned with himself, — resolved to dismiss post-mortem speculations — absolutely.

He was not going to quarrel with the institution of marriage. That was going too far. He had never been able to see the beginnings of reason in sexual anarchy, never. It is against the very order of things. Man is a marrying animal just as much as he was a fire-making animal; he goes in pairs like mantel ornaments; it is as natural for him to marry and to exact and keep good faith — if need be with a savage jealousy, as it is for him to have lobes to his ears and hair under his armpits. These things jar with the dream perhaps; the gods on painted ceilings have no such ties, acting beautifully by their very nature; and here on the floor of the world one had them and one had to make the best of them.... Are we making the best of them? Mr. Brumley was off again. That last thought opened the way to speculative wildernesses, and into these Mr. Brumley went wandering with a novel desperate enterprise to find a kind of marriage that would suit him.

He began to reform the marriage laws. He did his utmost not to think especially of Lady Harman and himself while he was doing so. He would just take up the whole question and deal with it in a temperate reasonable way. It was so necessary to be reasonable and temperate in these questions — and not to think of death as a solution. Marriages to begin with were too easy to make and too difficult to break; countless girls — Lady Harman was only a type — were married long before they could know the beginnings of their own minds. We wanted to delay marriage — until the middle

twenties, say. Why not? Or if by the infirmities of humanity one must have marriage before then, there ought to be some especial opportunity of rescinding it later. (Lady Harman ought to have been able to rescind her marriage.) What ought to be the marriageable age in a civilized community? When the mind was settled into its general system of opinions Mr. Brumley thought, and then lapsed into a speculation whether the mind didn't keep changing and developing all through life; Lady Harman's was certainly still doing so.... This pointed to logical consequences of an undesirable sort....

(Some little mind-slide occurred just at this point and he found himself thinking that perhaps Sir Isaac might last for years and years, might even outlive a wife exhausted by nursing. And anyhow to wait for death! To leave the thing one loved in the embrace of the moribund!)

He wrenched his thoughts back as quickly as possible to a disinterested reform of the marriage laws. What had he decided so far? Only for more deliberation and a riper age in marrying. Surely that should appeal even to the most orthodox. But that alone would not eliminate mistakes and deceptions altogether. (Sir Isaac's skin had a peculiar, unhealthy look.) There ought in addition to be the widest facilities for divorce possible. Mr. Brumley tried to draw up a schedule in his head of the grounds for divorce that a really civilized community would entertain. But there are practical difficulties. Marriage is not simply a sexual union, it is an economic one of a peculiarly inseparable sort, — and there are the children. And jealousy! Of course so far as economics went, a kind of marriage settlement might meet most of the difficulties, and as for the children, Mr. Brumley was no longer in that mood of enthusiastic devotion to children that had made the birth of George Edmund so tremendous an event. Children, alone, afforded no reason for indissoluble lifelong union. Face the thing frankly. How long was it absolutely necessary for people to keep a home together for their children? The prosperous classes, the best classes in the community, packed the little creatures off to school at the age of nine or ten. One might overdo — we were overdoing in our writing nowadays this — philoprogenitive enthusiasm....

He found himself thinking of George Meredith's idea of Ten Year

Marriages....

His mind recoiled to Sir Isaac's pillowed-up possession. What flimsy stuff all this talk of altered marriage was! These things did not even touch the essentials of the matter. He thought of Sir Isaac's thin lips and wary knowing eyes. What possible divorce law could the wit of man devise that would release a desired woman from that — grip? Marriage was covetousness made law. As well ask such a man to sell all his goods and give to the poor as expect the Sir Isaacs of this world to relax the matrimonial subjugation of the wife. Our social order is built on jealousy, sustained by jealousy, and those brave schemes we evolve in our studies for the release of women from ownership, — and for that matter for the release of men too, — they will not stand the dusty heat of the market-place for a moment, they wilt under the first fierce breath of reality. Marriage and property are the twin children of man's individualistic nature; only on these terms can he be drawn into societies....

Mr. Brumley found his little scheme for novelties in marriage and divorce lying dead and for the most part still-born in his mind; himself in despair. To set to work to alter marriage in any essential point was, he realized, as if an ant should start to climb a thousand feet of cliff. This great institution rose upon his imagination like some insurmountable sierra, blue and sombre, between himself and the life of Lady Harman and all that he desired. There might be a certain amount of tinkering with matrimonial law in the next few years, of petty tinkering that would abolish a few pretences and give ease to a few amiable people, but if he were to come back to life a thousand years hence he felt he would still find the ancient gigantic barrier, crossed perhaps by a dangerous road, pierced perhaps by a narrow tunnel or so, but in all its great essentials the same, between himself and Lady Harman. It wasn't that it was rational, it wasn't that it was justifiable, but it was one with the blood in one's veins and the rain-cloud in the sky, a necessity in the nature of present things. Before mankind emerged from the valley of these restraints — if ever they did emerge — thousands of generations must follow one another, there must be tens of thousands of years of struggle and thought and trial, in the teeth of prevalent habit and opinion — and primordial instincts. A new humanity....

His heart sank to hopelessness.

Meanwhile? Meanwhile we had to live our lives.

He began to see a certain justification for the hidden cults that run beneath the fair appearances of life, those social secrecies by which people — how could one put it? — people who do not agree with established institutions, people, at any rate not merely egoistic and jealous as the crowd is egoistic and jealous, hide and help one another to mitigate the inflexible austerities of the great unreason.

Yes, Mr. Brumley had got to a phrase of that quality for the undiscriminating imperatives of the fundamental social institution. You see how a particular situation may undermine the assumptions of a mind originally devoted to uncritical acceptances. He still insisted it was a necessary great unreason, absolutely necessary — for the mass of people, a part of them, a natural expression of them, but he could imagine the possibility — of 'understandings.' ... Mr. Brumley was very vague about those understandings, those mysteries of the exalted that were to filch happiness from the destroying grasp of the crude and jealous. He had to be vague. For secret and noble are ideas like oil and water; you may fling them together with all the force of your will but in a little while they will separate again.

For a time this dream of an impossible secrecy was uppermost in Mr. Brumley's meditations. It came into his head with the effect of a discovery that always among the unclimbable barriers of this supreme institution there had been, — caves. He had been reading Anatole France recently and the lady of *Le Lys Rouge* came into his thoughts. There was something in common between Lady Harman and the Countess Martin, they were tall and dark and dignified, and Lady Harman was one of those rare women who could have carried the magnificent name of Thérèse. And there in the setting of Paris and Florence was a whole microcosm of love, real but illicit, carried out as it were secretly and tactfully, beneath the great shadow of the cliff. But he found it difficult to imagine Lady Harman in that. Or Sir Isaac playing Count Martin's part....

How different were those Frenchwomen, with their afternoons vacant except for love, their detachment, their lovers, those secret, convenient, romantically furnished flats, that compact explicit business of *l'amour*! He had indeed some moments of regret that

Lady Harman wouldn't go into that picture. She was different — if only in her simplicity. There was something about these others that put them whole worlds apart from her, who was held so tethered from all furtive adventure by her filmy tentacles of responsibility, her ties and strands of relationship, her essential delicacy. That momentary vision of Ellen as the Countess Martin broke up into absurdities directly he looked at it fully and steadfastly. From thinking of the two women as similar types he passed into thinking of them as opposites; Thérèse, hard, clear, sensuous, secretive, trained by a brilliant tradition in the technique of connubial betrayal, was the very antithesis of Ellen's vague but invincible veracity and openness. Not for nothing had Anatole France made his heroine the daughter of a grasping financial adventurer....

Of course the cave is a part of the mountain....

His mind drifted away to still more general speculations, and always he was trying not to see the figure of Sir Isaac, grimly and yet meanly resolute — in possession. Always too like some open-mouthed yokel at a fair who knows nothing of the insult chalked upon his back, he disregarded how he himself coveted and desired and would if he could have gripped. He forgot his own watchful attention to Euphemia in the past, nor did he think what he might have been if Lady Harman had been his wife. It needed the chill veracities of the small hours to bring him to that. He thought now of crude egotism as having Sir Isaac's hands and Sir Isaac's eyes and Sir Isaac's position. He forgot any egotism he himself was betraying.

All the paths of enlightenment he thought of, led to Lady Harman.

§9

That evening George Edmund, who had come home with his mind aglitter with cinematograph impressions, found his father a patient but inattentive listener. For indeed Mr. Brumley was not listening at all; he was thinking and thinking. He made noises like "Ah!" and "Um," at George Edmund and patted the boy's shoulder kindly and repeated words unintelligently, such as, "Red Indians, eh!" or "Came out of the water backwards! My eye!"

Sometimes he made what George Edmund regarded as quite

footling comments. Still George Edmund had to tell someone and there was no one else to tell. So George Edmund went on talking and Mr. Brumley went on thinking.

§10

Mr Brumley could not sleep at all until it was nearly five. His intelligence seemed to be making up at last for years of speculative restraint. In a world for the most part given up to slumber Mr. Brumley may be imagined as clambering hand over fist in the silences, feverishly and wonderfully overtaking his age. In the morning he got up pallid and he shaved badly, but he was a generation ahead of his own Euphemia series, and the school of charm and quiet humour and of letting things slide with a kind of elegant donnishness, had lost him for ever....

And among all sorts of things that had come to him in that vast gulf of nocturnal thinking was some vivid self-examination. At last he got to that. He had been dragged down to very elemental things indeed by the manifest completeness of Lady Harman's return to her husband. He had had at last to look at himself starkly for the male he was, to go beneath the gentlemanly airs, the refined and elegant virilities of his habitual poses. Either this thing was unendurable — there were certainly moments when it came near to being unendurable — or it was not. On the whole and excepting mere momentary paroxysms it was not, and so he had to recognize and he did recognize with the greatest amazement that there could be something else besides sexual attraction and manœuvring and possession between a beautiful woman and a man like himself. He loved Lady Harman, he loved her, he now began to realize just how much, and she could defeat him and reject him as a conceivable lover, turn that aside as a thing impossible, shame him as the romantic school would count shame and still command him with her confident eyes and her friendly extended hands. He admitted he suffered, let us rather say he claimed to suffer the heated torments of a passionate nature, but he perceived like fresh air and sunrise coming by blind updrawn and opened window into a fœtid chamber, that also he loved her with a clean and bodiless love, was anxious to

help her, was anxious now — it was a new thing — to understand her, to reassure her, to give unrequited what once he had sought rather to seem to give in view of an imagined exchange.

He perceived too in these still hours how little he had understood her hitherto. He had been blinded, — obsessed. He had been seeing her and himself and the whole world far too much as a display of the eternal dualism of sex, the incessant pursuit. Now with his sexual imaginings newly humbled and hopeless, with a realization of her own tremendous minimization of that fundamental of romance, he began to see all that there was in her personality and their possible relations outside that. He saw how gravely and deeply serious was her fine philanthropy, how honest and simple and impersonal her desire for knowledge and understandings. There is the brain of her at least, he thought, far out of Sir Isaac's reach. She wasn't abased by her surrenders, their simplicity exalted her, showed her innocent and himself a flushed and congested soul. He perceived now with the astonishment of a man newly awakened just how the great obsession of sex had dominated him — for how many years? Since his early undergraduate days. Had he anything to put beside her own fine detachment? Had he ever since his manhood touched philosophy, touched a social question, thought of anything human, thought of art, or literature or belief, without a glancing reference of the whole question to the uses of this eternal hunt? During that time had he ever talked to a girl or woman with an unembarrassed sincerity? He stripped his pretences bare; the answer was no. His very refinements had been no more than indicative fig-leaves. His conservatism and morality had been a mere dalliance with interests that too brutal a simplicity might have exhausted prematurely. And indeed hadn't the whole period of literature that had produced him been, in its straining purity and refinement, as it were one glowing, one illuminated fig-leaf, a vast conspiracy to keep certain matters always in mind by conspicuously covering them away? But this wonderful woman — it seemed — she hadn't them in mind! She shamed him if only by her trustful unsuspiciousness of the ancient selfish game of Him and Her that he had been so ardently playing.... He idealized and worshipped this clean blindness. He abased himself before it.

"No," cried Mr. Brumley suddenly in the silence of the night, "I

will rise again. I will rise again by love out of these morasses.... She shall be my goddess and by virtue of her I will end this incessant irrational craving for women.... I will be her friend and her faithful friend."

He lay still for a time and then he said in a whisper very humbly: "*God help me*."

He set himself in those still hours which are so endless and so profitable to men in their middle years, to think how he might make himself the perfect lover instead of a mere plotter for desire, and how he might purge himself from covetousness and possessiveness and learn to serve.

And if very speedily his initial sincerity was tinged again with egotism and if he drowsed at last into a portrait of himself as beautifully and admirably self-sacrificial, you must not sneer too readily at him, for so God has made the soul of Mr. Brumley and otherwise it could not do.

CHAPTER THE TENTH

Lady Harman comes out

§1

The treaty between Lady Harman and her husband which was to be her Great Charter, the constitutional basis of her freedoms throughout the rest of her married life, had many practical defects. The chief of these was that it was largely undocumented; it had been made piecemeal, in various ways, at different times and for the most part indirectly through diverse intermediaries. Charterson had introduced large vaguenesses by simply displaying more of his teeth at crucial moments, Mrs. Harman had conveyed things by hugging and weeping that were afterwards discovered to be indistinct; Sir Isaac writing from a bed of sickness had frequently been totally illegible. One cannot therefore detail the clauses of this agreement or give its provisions with any great precision; one can simply intimate the kind of understanding that had had an air of being arrived at. The working interpretations were still to come.

Before anything else it was manifestly conceded by Lady Harman that she would not run away again, and still more manifest that she undertook to break no more windows or do anything that might lead to a second police court scandal. And she was to be a true and faithful wife and comfort, as a wife should be, to Sir Isaac. In return for that consideration and to ensure its continuance Sir Isaac came great distances from his former assumption of a matrimonial absolutism. She was to be granted all sorts of small autonomies, — the word autonomy was carefully avoided throughout but its spirit was omnipresent.

She was in particular to have a banking account for her dress and personal expenditure into which Sir Isaac would cause to be paid a hundred pounds monthly and it was to be private to herself alone until he chose to go through the cashed cheques and counterfoils. She was to be free to come and go as she saw fit, subject to a punctual appearance at meals, the comfort and dignity of Sir Isaac and such

specific engagements as she might make with him. She might have her own friends, but there the contract became a little misty; a time was to come when Sir Isaac was to betray a conviction that the only proper friends that a woman can have are women. There were also non-corroborated assurances as to the privacy of her correspondence. The second Rolls-Royce car was to be entirely at her service, and Clarence was to be immediately supplemented by a new and more deferential man, and as soon as possible assisted to another situation and replaced. She was to have a voice in the further furnishing of Black Strand and in the arrangement of its garden. She was to read what she chose and think what she liked within her head without too minute or suspicious an examination by Sir Isaac, and short of flat contradiction at his own table she was to be free to express her own opinions in any manner becoming a lady. But more particularly if she found her ideas infringing upon the management or influence of the International Bread and Cake Stores, she was to convey her objections and ideas in the first instance privately and confidentially to Sir Isaac.

Upon this point he displayed a remarkable and creditable sensitiveness. His pride in that organization was if possible greater than his original pride in his wife, and probably nothing in all the jarring of their relationship had hurt him more than her accessibility to hostile criticism and the dinner-table conversation with Charterson and Blenker that had betrayed this fact. He began to talk about it directly she returned to him. His protestations and explanations were copious and heart-felt. It was perhaps the chief discovery made by Lady Harman at this period of reconstruction that her husband's business side was not to be explained completely as a highly energetic and elaborate avarice. He was no doubt acquisitive and retentive and mean-spirited, but these were merely the ugly aspects of a disposition that involved many other factors. He was also incurably a schemer. He liked to fit things together, to dove-tail arrangements, to devise economies, to spread ingeniously into new fields, he had a love of organization and contrivance as disinterested as an artist's love for the possibilities of his medium. He would rather have made a profit of ten per cent. out of a subtly planned shop than thirty by an unforeseen accident. He wouldn't have cheated to

get money for the world. He knew he was better at figuring out expenditures and receipts than most people and he was as touchy about his reputation for this kind of cleverness as any poet or painter for his fame. Now that he had awakened to the idea that his wife was capable of looking into and possibly even understanding his business, he was passionately anxious to show her just how wonderfully he had done it all, and when he perceived she was in her large, unskilled, helpless way, intensely concerned for all the vast multitude of incompetent or partially competent young women who floundered about in badly paid employment in our great cities, he grasped at once at the opportunity of recovering her lost interest and respect by doing some brilliant feats of contrivance in that direction. Why shouldn't he? He had long observed with a certain envy the admirable advertisement such firms as Lever and Cadbury and Burroughs & Wellcome gained from their ostentatiously able and generous treatment of their workpeople, and it seemed to him conceivable that in the end it might not be at all detrimental to his prosperity to put his hand to this long neglected piece of social work. The Babs Wheeler business had been a real injury in every way to the International Bread and Cake Stores and even if he didn't ultimately go to all the lengths his wife seemed to contemplate, he was resolved at any rate that an affair of that kind should not occur again. The expedition to Marienbad took with it a secretary who was also a stenographer. A particularly smart young inspector and Graper, the staff manager, had brisk four-day holidays once or twice for consultation purposes; Sir Isaac's rabbit-like architect was in attendance for a week and the Harmans returned to Putney with the first vivid greens of late March, — for the Putney Hill house was to be reopened and Black Strand reserved now for week-end and summer use — with plans already drawn out for four residential Hostels in London primarily for the girl waitresses of the International Stores who might have no homes or homes at an inconvenient distance, and, secondarily, if any vacant accommodation remained over, for any other employed young women of the same class....

§2

Lady Harman came back to England from the pine-woods and bright order and regimen and foreign novelty of their Bohemian Kur-Ort, in a state of renewed perplexity. Already that undocumented Magna Charta was manifestly not working upon the lines she had anticipated. The glosses Sir Isaac put upon it were extensive and remarkable and invariably in the direction of restricting her liberties and resuming controls she had supposed abandoned.

Marienbad had done wonders for him; his slight limp had disappeared, his nervous energy was all restored; except for a certain increase in his natural irritability and occasional panting fits, he seemed as well as he had ever been. At the end of their time at the Kur he was even going for walks. Once he went halfway up the Podhorn on foot. And with every increment in his strength his aggressiveness increased, his recognition of her new freedoms was less cordial and her sense of contrition and responsibility diminished. Moreover, as the scheme of those Hostels, which had played so large a part in her conception of their reconciliation, grew more and more definite, she perceived more and more that it was not certainly that fine and humanizing thing she had presumed it would be. She began to feel more and more that it might be merely an extension of Harman methods to cheap boarding-houses for young people. But faced with a mass of detailed concrete projects and invited to suggest modifications she was able to realize for the first time how vague, how ignorant and incompetent her wishes had been, how much she had to understand and how much she had to discover before she could meet Sir Isaac with his "I'm doing it all for you, Elly. If you don't like it, you tell me what you don't like and I'll alter it. But just vague doubting! One can't do anything with vague doubting."

She felt that once back in England out of this picturesque toylike German world she would be able to grasp realities again and deal with these things. She wanted advice, she wanted to hear what people said of her ideas. She would also, she imagined, begin to avail herself of those conceded liberties which their isolation together abroad and her husband's constant need of her presence had so far prevented her from tasting. She had an idea that Susan Burnet might prove suggestive about the Hostels.

And moreover, if now and then she could have a good talk with

someone understanding and intelligent, someone she could trust, someone who cared enough for her to think with her and for her....

§3

We have traced thus far the emergence of Lady Harman from that state of dutiful subjection and social irresponsibility which was the lot of woman in the past to that limited, ill-defined and quite unsecured freedom which is her present condition. And now we have to give an outline of the ideas of herself and her uses and what she had to do, which were forming themselves in her mind. She had made a determination of herself, which carried her along the lines of her natural predisposition, to duty, to service. There she displayed that acceptance of responsibility which is so much more often a feminine than a masculine habit of thinking. But she brought to the achievement of this determination a discriminating integrity of mind that is more frequently masculine than feminine. She wanted to know clearly what she was undertaking and how far its consequences would reach and how it was related to other things.

Her confused reading during the last few years and her own observation and such leakages of fact into her life as the talk of Susan Burnet, had all contributed to her realization that the world was full of needless discomfort and hardships and failure, due to great imperfectly apprehended injustices and maladjustments in the social system, and recently it had been borne in upon her, upon the barbed point of the *London Lion* and the quick tongue of Susan, that if any particular class of people was more answerable than any other for these evils, it was the people of leisure and freedom like herself, who had time to think, and the directing organizing people like her husband, who had power to change. She was called upon to do something, at times the call became urgent, and she could not feel any assurance which it was of the many vague and conflicting suggestions that came drifting to her that she had to do. Her idea of Hostels for the International waitresses had been wrung out of her prematurely during her earlier discussions with her husband. She did not feel that it was anything more than a partial remedy for a special evil. She wanted something more general than that, something

comprehensive enough to answer completely so wide a question as "What ought I to be doing with all my life?" In the honest simplicity of her nature she wanted to find an answer to that. Out of the confusion of voices about us she hoped to be able to disentangle directions for her life. Already she had been reading voraciously: while she was still at Marienbad she had written to Mr. Brumley and he had sent her books and papers, advanced and radical in many cases, that she might know, "What are people thinking?"

Many phrases from her earlier discussions with Sir Isaac stuck in her mind in a curiously stimulating way and came back to her as she read. She recalled him, for instance, with his face white and his eyes red and his flat hand sawing at her, saying: "I dessay I'm all wrong, I dessay I don't know anything about anything and all those chaps you read, Bernud Shaw, and Gosworthy, and all the rest of them are wonderfully clever; but you tell me, Elly, what they say we've got to do! You tell me that. You go and ask some of those chaps just what they want a man like me to do.... They'll ask me to endow a theatre or run a club for novelists or advertise the lot of them in the windows of my International Stores or something. And that's about all it comes to. You go and see if I'm not right. They grumble and they grumble; I don't say there's not a lot to grumble at, but give me something they'll back themselves for all they're worth as good to get done.... That's where I don't agree with all these idees. They're Wind, Elly, Weak wind at that."

It is distressing to record how difficult it was for Lady Harman to form even the beginnings of a disproof of that. Her life through all this second phase of mitigated autonomy was an intermittent pilgrimage in search of that disproof. She could not believe that things as they were, this mass of hardships, cruelties, insufficiencies and heartburnings were the ultimate wisdom and possibility of human life, yet when she went from them to the projects that would replace or change them she seemed to pass from things of overwhelming solidity to matters more thin and flimsy than the twittering of sparrows on the gutter. So soon as she returned to London she started upon her search for a solution; she supplemented Mr. Brumley's hunt for books with her own efforts, she went to meetings — sometimes Sir Isaac took her, once or twice she was

escorted by Mr. Brumley, and presently her grave interest and her personal charm had gathered about her a circle of companionable friends. She tried to talk to people and made great efforts to hear people who seemed authoritative and wise and leaderlike, talking.

There were many interruptions to this research, but she persevered. Quite early she had an illness that ended in a miscarriage, an accident for which she was by no means inconsolable, and before she had completely recovered from that Sir Isaac fell ill again, the first of a series of relapses that necessitated further foreign travel — always in elaborately comfortable trains with maid, courier, valet, and secretary, to some warm and indolent southward place. And few people knew how uncertain her liberties were. Sir Isaac was the victim of an increasing irritability, at times he had irrational outbursts of distrust that would culminate in passionate outbreaks and scenes that were truncated by an almost suffocating breathlessness. On several occasions he was on the verge of quarrelling violently with her visitors, and he would suddenly oblige her to break engagements, pour abuse upon her and bring matters back to the very verge of her first revolt. And then he would break her down by pitiful appeals. The cylinders of oxygen would be resorted to, and he would emerge from the crisis, rather rueful, tamed and quiet for the time.

He was her chief disturbance. Her children were healthy children and fell in with the routines of governess and tutor that their wealth provided. She saw them often, she noted their increasing resemblance to their father, she did her best to soften the natural secretiveness and aggressiveness of their manners, she watched their teachers and intervened whenever the influences about them seemed to her to need intervention, she dressed them and gave them presents and tried to believe she loved them, and as Sir Isaac's illness increased she took a larger and larger share in the direction of the household....

Through all these occupations and interruptions and immediacies she went trying to comprehend and at times almost believing she comprehended life, and then the whole spectacle of this modern world of which she was a part would seem to break up again into a multitude of warring and discordant fragments having no

conceivable common aim or solution. Those moments of unifying faith and confidence, that glowed so bravely and never endured, were at once tantalizing and sustaining. She could never believe but that ultimately she would not grasp and hold — something....

Many people met her and liked her and sought to know more of her; Lady Beach-Mandarin and Lady Viping were happy to be her social sponsors, the Blenkers and the Chartersons met her out and woke up cautiously to this new possibility; her emergence was rapid in spite of the various delays and interruptions I have mentioned and she was soon in a position to realize just how little one meets when one meets a number of people and how little one hears when one has much conversation. Her mind was presently crowded with confused impressions of pleasant men evading her agreeably and making out of her gravities an opportunity for bright sayings, and of women being vaguely solemn and quite indefinite.

She went into the circle of movements, was tried over by Mrs. Hubert Plessington, she questioned this and that promoter of constructive schemes, and instead of mental meat she was asked to come upon committees and sounded for subscriptions. On several occasions, escorted by Mr. Brumley — some instinct made her conceal or minimize his share in these expeditions to her husband — she went as inconspicuously as possible to the backs of public meetings in which she understood great questions were being discussed or great changes inaugurated. Some public figures she even followed up for a time, distrusting her first impressions.

She became familiar with the manners and bearing of our platform class, with the solemn dummy-like chairman or chairwoman, saying a few words, the alert secretary or organizer, the prominent figures sitting with an air of grave responsibility, generously acting an intelligent attention to others until the moment came for them themselves to deliver. Then with an ill-concealed relief some would come to the footlights, some leap up in their places with a tenoring eagerness, some would be facetious and some speak with neuralgic effort, some were impertinent, some propitiatory, some dull, but all were — disappointing, disappointing. God was not in any of them. A platform is no setting for the shy processes of an honest human mind, — we are all strained to

artificiality in the excessive glare of attention that beats upon us there. One does not exhibit opinions at a meeting, one acts them, the very truth must rouge its cheeks and blacken its eyebrows to tell, and to Lady Harman it was the acting chiefly and the make-up that was visible. They didn't grip her, they didn't lift her, they failed to convince her even of their own belief in what they supported.

§4

But occasionally among the multitude of conversations that gave her nothing, there would come some talk that illuminated and for the time almost reconciled her to the effort and the loss of time and distraction her social expeditions involved. One evening at one of Lady Tarvrille's carelessly compiled parties she encountered Edgar Wilkins the novelist and got the most suggestive glimpses of his attitude towards himself and towards the world of intellectual ferment to which he belonged. She had been taken down by an amiable but entirely uninteresting permanent official who when the time came turned his stereotyped talk over to the other side of him with a quiet mechanical indifference, and she was left for a little while in silence until Wilkins had disengaged himself.

He was a flushed man with untidy hair, and he opened at once with an appeal to her sympathies.

"Oh! Bother!" he said. "I say, — I've eaten that mutton. I didn't notice. One eats too much at these affairs. One doesn't notice at the time and then afterwards one finds out."

She was a little surprised at his gambit and could think of nothing but a kindly murmur.

"Detestable thing," he said; "my body."

"But surely not," she tried and felt as she said it that was a trifle bold.

"You're all right," he said making her aware he saw her. "But I've this thing that wheezes and fattens at the slightest excuse and — it encumbers me — bothers me to take exercise.... But I can hardly expect you to be interested in my troubles, can I?"

He made an all too manifest attempt to read her name on the slip of card that lay before her among the flowers and as manifestly

succeeded. “We people who write and paint and all that sort of thing are a breed of insatiable egotists, Lady Harman. With the least excuse. Don’t you think so?”

“Not — not exceptionally,” she said.

“Exceptionally,” he insisted.

“It isn’t my impression,” she said. “You’re — franker.”

“But someone was telling me — you’ve been taking impressions of us lately. I mean all of us people who go flapping ideas about in the air. Somebody — was it Lady Beach-Mandarin? — was saying you’d come out looking for Intellectual Heroes — and found Bernard Shaw.... But what could you have expected?”

“I’ve been trying to find out and understand what people are thinking. I want ideas.”

“It’s disheartening, isn’t it?”

“It’s — perplexing sometimes.”

“You go to meetings, and try to get to the bottom of Movements, and you want to meet and know the people who write the wonderful things? Get at the wonderful core of it?”

“One feels there are things going on.”

“Great illuminating things.”

“Well — yes.”

“And when you see those great Thinkers and Teachers and Guides and Brave Spirits and High Brows generally — —”

He laughed and stopped just in time on the very verge of taking pheasant.

“Oh, take it away,” he cried sharply.

“We’ve all been through that illusion, Lady Harman,” he went on.

“But I don’t like to think —— Aren’t Great Men after all — great?”

“In their ways, in their places — Yes. But not if you go up to them and look at them. Not at the dinner table, not in their beds.... What a time of disillusionment you must have had!

“You see, Lady Harman,” he said, leaning back from his empty plate, inclining himself confidentially to her ear and speaking in a privy tone; “it’s in the very nature of things that we — if I may put myself into the list — we ideologists, should be rather exceptionally loose and untrustworthy and disappointing men. Rotters — to speak

plain contemporary English. If you come to think of it, it has to be so."

"But — —" she protested.

He met her eye firmly. "It has to be."

"Why?"

"The very qualities that make literature entertaining, vigorous, inspiring, revealing, wonderful, beautiful and — all that sort of thing, make its producers — if you will forgive the word again — rotters."

She smiled and lifted her eyebrows protestingly.

"Sensitive nervous tissue," he said with a finger up to emphasize his words. "Quick responsiveness to stimulus, a vivid, almost uncontrollable, expressiveness; that's what you want in your literary man."

"Yes," said Lady Harman following cautiously. "Yes, I suppose it is."

"Can you suppose for a moment that these things conduce to self-control, to reserve, to consistency, to any of the qualities of a trustworthy man?... Of course you can't. And so we *aren't* trustworthy, we *aren't* consistent. Our virtues are our vices.... *My* life," said Mr. Wilkins still more confidentially, "won't bear examination. But that's by the way. It need not concern us now."

"But Mr. Brumley?" she asked on the spur of the moment.

"I'm not talking of him," said Wilkins with careless cruelty. "He's restrained. I mean the really imaginative people, the people with vision, the people who let themselves go. You see now why they are rotten, why they must be rotten. (No! No! take it away. I'm talking.) I feel so strongly about this, about the natural and necessary disreputableness of everybody who produces reputable writing — and for the matter of that, art generally — that I set my face steadily against all these attempts that keep on cropping up to make Figures of us. We aren't Figures, Lady Harman; it isn't our line. Of all the detestable aspects of the Victorian period surely that disposition to make Figures of its artists and literary men was the most detestable. Respectable Figures — Examples to the young. The suppressions, the coverings up that had to go on, the white-washing of Dickens, — who was more than a bit of a rip, you know, the concealment of Thackeray's mistresses. Did you know he had mistresses? Oh rather!

And so on. It's like that bust of Jove — or Bacchus was it? — they pass off as Plato, who probably looked like any other literary Grub. That's why I won't have anything to do with these Academic developments that my friend Brumley — Do you know him by the way? — goes in for. He's the third man down —— You *do* know him. And he's giving up the Academic Committee, is he? I'm glad he's seen it at last. What *is* the good of trying to have an Academy and all that, and put us in uniform and make out we are Somebodies, and respectable enough to be shaken hands with by George and Mary, when as a matter of fact we are, by our very nature, a collection of miscellaneous scandals —— We *must* be. Bacon, Shakespear, Byron, Shelley — all the stars.... No, Johnson wasn't a star, he was a character by Boswell.... Oh! great things come out of us, no doubt, our arts are the vehicles of wonder and hope, the world is dead without these things we produce, but that's no reason why — why the mushroom-bed should follow the mushrooms into the soup, is it? Perfectly fair image. (No, take it away.)"

He paused and then jumped in again as she was on the point of speaking.

"And you see even if our temperaments didn't lead inevitably to our — dipping rather, we should still have to — *dip*. Asking a writer or a poet to be seemly and Academic and so on, is like asking an eminent surgeon to be stringently decent. It's — you see, it's incompatible. Now a king or a butler or a family solicitor — if you like."

He paused again.

Lady Harman had been following him with an attentive reluctance.

"But what are we to do," she asked, "we people who are puzzled by life, who want guidance and ideas and — help, if — if all the people we look to for ideas are — —"

"Bad characters."

"Well, — it's your theory, you know — bad characters?"

Wilkins answered with the air of one who carefully disentangles a complex but quite solvable problem. "It doesn't follow," he said, "that because a man is a bad character he's not to be trusted in matters where character — as we commonly use the word — doesn't

come in. These sensitives, these — would you mind if I were to call myself an Æolian Harp? — these Æolian Harps; they can't help responding to the winds of heaven. Well, — listen to them. Don't follow them, don't worship them, don't even honour them, but listen to them. Don't let anyone stop them from saying and painting and writing and singing what they want to. Freedom, canvas and attention, those are the proper honours for the artist, the poet and the philosopher. Listen to the noise they make, watch the stuff they produce, and presently you will find certain things among the multitude of things that are said and shown and put out and published, something — light in *your* darkness — a writer for you, something for you. Nobody can have a greater contempt for artists and writers and poets and philosophers than I, oh! a squalid crew they are, mean, jealous, pugnacious, disgraceful in love, *disgraceful* — but out of it all comes the greatest serenest thing, the mind of the world, Literature. Nasty little midges, yes, — but fireflies — carrying light for the darkness."

His face was suddenly lit by enthusiasm and she wondered that she could have thought it rather heavy and commonplace. He stopped abruptly and glanced beyond her at her other neighbour who seemed on the verge of turning to them again. "If I go on," he said with a voice suddenly dropped, "I shall talk loud."

"You know," said Lady Harman, in a halty undertone, "you — you are too hard upon — upon clever people, but it is true. I mean it is true in a way...."

"Go on, I understand exactly what you are saying."

"I mean, there *are* ideas. It's just that, that is so — so —— I mean they seem never to be just there and always to be present."

"Like God. Never in the flesh — now. A spirit everywhere. You think exactly as I do, Lady Harman. It is just that. This is a great time, so great that there is no chance for great men. Every chance for great work. And we're doing it. There is a wind — blowing out of heaven. And when beautiful people like yourself come into things — —"

"I try to understand," she said. "I want to understand. I want — I want not to miss life."

He was on the verge of saying something further and then his eyes

wandered down the table and he stopped short.

He ended his talk as he had begun it with “Bother! Lady Tarvrille, Lady Harman, is trying to catch your eye.”

Lady Harman turned her face to her hostess and answered her smile. Wilkins caught at his chair and stood up.

“It would have been jolly to have talked some more,” he said.

“I hope we shall.”

“Well!” said Wilkins, with a sudden hardness in his eyes and she was swept away from him.

She found no chance of talking to him upstairs, Sir Isaac came for her early; but she went in hope of another meeting.

It did not come. For a time that expectation gave dinners and luncheon parties a quite appreciable attraction. Then she told Agatha Alimony. “I’ve never met him but that once,” she said.

“One doesn’t meet him now,” said Agatha, deeply.

“But why?”

Deep significance came into Miss Alimony’s eyes. “My dear,” she whispered, and glanced about them. “Don’t you *know*?”

Lady Harman was a radiant innocence.

And then Miss Alimony began in impressive undertones, with awful omissions like pits of darkness and with such richly embroidered details as serious spinsters enjoy, adding, indeed, two quite new things that came to her mind as the tale unfolded, and, naming no names and giving no chances of verification or reply, handed on the fearful and at that time extremely popular story of the awful wickedness of Wilkins the author.

Upon reflection Lady Harman perceived that this explained all sorts of things in their conversation and particularly the flash of hardness at the end.

Even then, things must have been hanging over him....

§5

And while Lady Harman was making these meritorious and industrious attempts to grasp the significance of life and to get some clear idea of her social duty, the developments of those Hostels she had started — she now felt so prematurely — was going on. There

were times when she tried not to think of them, turned her back on them, fled from them, and times when they and what she ought to do about them and what they ought to be and what they ought not to be, filled her mind to the exclusion of every other topic. Rigorously and persistently Sir Isaac insisted they were hers, asked her counsel, demanded her appreciation, presented as it were his recurring bill for them.

Five of them were being built, not four but five. There was to be one, the largest, in a conspicuous position in Bloomsbury near the British Museum, one in a conspicuous position looking out upon Parliament Hill, one conspicuously placed upon the Waterloo Road near St. George's Circus, one at Sydenham, and one in the Kensington Road which was designed to catch the eye of people going to and fro to the various exhibitions at Olympia.

In Sir Isaac's study at Putney there was a huge and rather splendid-looking morocco portfolio on a stand, and this portfolio bore in excellent gold lettering the words, International Bread and Cake Hostels. It was her husband's peculiar pleasure after dinner to take her to turn over this with him; he would sit pencil in hand, while she, poised at his request upon the arm of his chair, would endorse a multitude of admirable modifications and suggestions. These hostels were to be done — indeed they were being done — by Sir Isaac's tame architect, and the interlacing yellow and mauve tiles, and the Doulton ware mouldings that were already familiar to the public as the uniform of the Stores, were to be used upon the façades of the new institutions. They were to be boldly labelled

INTERNATIONAL HOSTELS

right across the front.

The plans revealed in every case a site depth as great as the frontage, and the utmost ingenuity had been used to utilize as much space as possible.

"Every room we get in," said Sir Isaac, "adds one to the denominator in the cost;" and carried his wife back to her schooldays. At last she had found sense in fractions. There was to be a series of convenient and spacious rooms on the ground floor, a refectory, which might be cleared and used for meetings— "dances," said Lady Harman. "Hardly the sort of thing we want 'em to get up

to," said Sir Isaac — various offices, the matron's apartments— "We ought to begin thinking about matrons," said Sir Isaac; — a bureau, a reading-room and a library— "We can pick good, serious stuff for them," said Sir Isaac, "instead of their filling their heads with trash" — one or two workrooms with tables for cutting out and sewing; this last was an idea of Susan Burnet's. Upstairs there was to be a beehive of bedrooms, floor above floor, and each floor as low as the building regulations permitted. There were to be long dormitories with cubicles at three-and-sixpence a week — make your own beds — and separate rooms at prices ranging from four-and-sixpence to seven-and-sixpence. Every three cubicles and every bedroom had lavatory basins with hot and cold water; there were pull-out drawers under the beds and a built-in chest of drawers, a hanging cupboard, a looking-glass and a radiator in each cubicle, and each floor had a box-room. It was ship-shape.

"A girl can get this cubicle for three-and-six a week," said Sir Isaac, tapping the drawing before him with his pencil. "She can get her breakfast with a bit of bacon or a sausage for two shillings a week, and she can get her high tea, with cold meat, good potted salmon, shrimp paste, jam and cetera, for three-and-six a week. Say her bus fares and lunch out mean another four shillings. That means she can get along on about twelve-and-six a week, comfortable, read the papers, have a book out of the library.... There's nothing like it to be got now for twice the money. The sort of thing they have now is one room, dingy, badly fitted, extra for coals.

"That's the answer to your problem, Elly," he said. "There we are. Every girl who doesn't live at home can live here — with a matron to keep her eye on her.... And properly run, Elly, properly run the thing's going to pay two or three per cent, — let alone the advertisement for the Stores.

"We can easily make these Hostels obligatory on all our girls who don't live at their own homes," he said. "That ought to keep them off the streets, if anything can. I don't see how even Miss Babs Wheeler can have the face to strike against that.

"And then we can arrange with some of the big firms, drapers' shops and all that sort of thing near each hostel, to take over most of our other cubicle space. A lot of them — overflow.

“Of course we’ll have to make sure the girls get in at night.” He reached out for a ground floor plan of the Bloomsbury establishment which was to be the first built. “If,” he said, “we were to have a sort of porter’s lodge with a book — and make ’em ring a bell after eleven say — just here....”

He took out a silver pencil case and got to work.

Lady Harman’s expression as she leant over him became thoughtful.

There were points about this project that gave her the greatest misgivings; that matron, keeping her eye on the girls, that carefully selected library, the porter’s bell, these casual allusions to “discipline” that set her thinking of scraps of the Babs Wheeler controversy. There was a regularity, an austerity about this project that chilled her, she hardly knew why. Her own vague intentions had been an amiable, hospitable, agreeably cheap establishment to which the homeless feminine employees in London could resort freely and cheerfully, and it was only very slowly that she perceived that her husband was by no means convinced of the spontaneity of their coming. He seemed always glancing at methods for compelling them to come in and oppressions when that compulsion had succeeded. There had already hovered over several of these anticipatory evenings, his very manifest intention to have very carefully planned “Rules.” She felt there lay ahead of them much possibility for divergence of opinion about these “Rules.” She foresaw a certain narrowness and hardness. She herself had made her fight against the characteristics of Sir Isaac and — perhaps she was lacking in that aristocratic feeling which comes so naturally to most successful middle-class people in England — she could not believe that what she had found bad and suffocating for herself could be agreeable and helpful for her poorer sisters.

It occurred to her to try the effect of the scheme upon Susan Burnet. Susan had such a knack of seeing things from unexpected angles. She contrived certain operations upon the study blinds, and then broached the business to Susan casually in the course of an enquiry into the welfare of the Burnet family.

Susan was evidently prejudiced against the idea.

“Yes,” said Susan after various explanations and exhibitions, “but

where's the home in it?"

"The whole thing is a home."

"Barracks *I* call it," said Susan. "Nobody ever felt at home in a room coloured up like that — and no curtains, nor vallances, nor toilet covers, nor anywhere where a girl can hang a photograph or anything. What girl's going to feel at home in a strange place like that?"

"They ought to be able to hang up photographs," said Lady Harman, making a mental note of it.

"And of course there'll be all sorts of Rules."

"*Some* rules."

"Homes, real homes don't have Rules. And I daresay — Fines."

"No, there shan't be any Fines," said Lady Harman quickly. "I'll see to that."

"You got to back up rules somehow — once you got 'em," said Susan. "And when you get a crowd, and no father and mother, and no proper family feeling, I suppose there's got to be Rules."

Lady Harman pointed out various advantages of the project.

"I'm not saying it isn't cheap and healthy and social," said Susan, "and if it isn't too strict I expect you'll get plenty of girls to come to it, but at the best it's an Institution, Lady Harman. It's going to be an Institution. That's what it's going to be."

She held the front elevation of the Bloomsbury Hostel in her hand and reflected.

"Of course for my part, I'd rather lodge with nice struggling believing Christian people anywhere than go into a place like that. It's the feeling of freedom, of being yourself and on your own. Even if the water wasn't laid on and I had to fetch it myself.... If girls were paid properly there wouldn't be any need of such places, none at all. It's the poverty makes 'em what they are.... And after all, somebody's got to lose the lodgers if this place gets them. Suppose this sort of thing grows up all over the place, it'll just be the story of the little bakers and little grocers and all those people over again. Why in London there are thousands of people just keep a home together by letting two or three rooms or boarding someone — and it stands to reason, they'll have to take less or lose the lodgers if this kind of thing's going to be done. Nobody isn't going to build a

Hostel for them."

"No," said Lady Harman, "I never thought of them."

"Lots of 'em haven't anything in the world but their bits of furniture and their lease and there they are stuck and tied. There's Aunt Hannah, Father's sister, she's like that. Sleeps in the basement and works and slaves, and often I've had to lend her ten shillings to pay the rent with, through her not being full. This sort of place isn't going to do much good to her."

Lady Harman surveyed the plan rather blankly. "I suppose it isn't."

"And then if you manage this sort of place easy and attractive, it's going to draw girls away from their homes. There's girls like Alice who'd do anything to get a bit of extra money to put on their backs and seem to think of nothing but chattering and laughing and going about. Such a place like this would be fine fun for Alice; in when she liked and out when she liked, and none of us to ask her questions. She'd be just the sort to go, and mother, who's had the upbringing of her, how's she to make up for Alice's ten shillings what she pays in every week? There's lots like Alice. She's not bad isn't Alice, she's a good girl and a good-hearted girl; I will say that for her, but she's shallow, say what you like she's shallow, she's got no thought and she's wild for pleasure, and sometimes it seems to me that that's as bad as being bad for all the good it does to anyone else in the world, and so I tell her. But of course she hasn't seen things as I've seen them and doesn't feel as I do about all these things...."

Thus Susan.

Her discourse so puzzled Lady Harman that she bethought herself of Mr. Brumley and called in his only too readily accorded advice. She asked him to tea on a day when she knew unofficially that Sir Isaac would be away, she showed him the plans and sketched their probable development. Then with that charming confidence of hers in his knowledge and ability she put her doubts and fears before him. What did he really think of these places? What did he think of Susan Burnet's idea of ruined lodging-house keepers? "I used to think our stores were good things," she said. "Is this likely to be a good thing at all?"

Mr. Brumley said "Um" a great number of times and realized that

he was a humbug. He fenced with her and affected sagacity for a time and suddenly he threw down his defences and confessed he knew as little of the business as she did. “But I see it is a complex question and — it’s an interesting one too. May I enquire into it for you? I think I might be able to hunt up a few particulars....”

He went away in a glow of resolution.

Georgina was about the only intimate who regarded the new development without misgiving.

“You think you’re going to do all sorts of things with these Hostels, Ella,” she said, “but as a matter of fact they’re bound to become just exactly what we’ve always wanted.”

“And what may that be?” asked Mrs. Sawbridge over her macramé work.

“Strongholds for a garrison of suffragettes,” said Georgina with the light of the Great Insane Movement in her eyes and a ringing note in her voice. “Fort Chabrols for women.”

§6

For some months in a negative and occasionally almost negligent fashion Mr. Brumley had been living up to his impassioned resolve to be an unselfish lover of Lady Harman. He had been rather at loose ends intellectually, deprived of his old assumptions and habitual attitudes and rather chaotic in the matter of his new convictions. He had given most of his productive hours to the writing of a novel which was to be an entire departure from the Euphemia tradition. The more he got on with this, the more clearly he realized that it was essentially insignificant. When he re-read what he had written he was surprised by crudities where he had intended sincerities and rhetoric where the scheme had demanded passion. What was the matter with him? He was stirred that Lady Harman should send for him, and his inability to deal with her perplexities deepened his realization of the ignorance and superficiality he had so long masked even from himself beneath the tricks and pretensions of a gay scepticism. He went away fully resolved to grapple with the entire Hostel question, and he put the patched and tortured manuscript of the new novel aside with a certain satisfaction to do this.

The more he reflected upon the nature of this study he proposed for himself the more it attracted him. It was some such reality as this he had been wanting. He could presently doubt whether he would ever go back to his novel-writing again, or at least to the sort of novel-writing he had been doing hitherto. To invent stories to save middle-aged prosperous middle-class people from the distresses of thinking, is surely no work for a self-respecting man. Stevenson in the very deeps of that dishonourable traffic had realized as much and likened himself to a *fille de joie*, and Haggard, of the same school and period, had abandoned blood and thunder at the climax of his success for the honest study of agricultural conditions. The newer successes were turning out work, less and less conventional and agreeable and more and more stiffened with facts and sincerities.... He would show Lady Harman that a certain debonair quality he had always affected, wasn't incompatible with a powerful grasp of general conditions.... And she wanted this done. Suppose he did it in a way that made him necessary to her. Suppose he did it very well.

He set to work, and understanding as you do a certain quality of the chameleon in Mr. Brumley's moral nature, you will understand that he worked through a considerable variety of moods. Sometimes he worked with disinterested passion and sometimes he was greatly sustained by this thought that here was something that would weave him in with the gravities of her life and give him perhaps a new inlet to intimacy. And presently a third thing came to his help, and that was the discovery that the questions arising out of this attempt to realize the importance of those Hostels, were in themselves very fascinating questions for an intelligent person.

Because before you have done with the business of the modern employé, you must, if you are an intelligent person, have taken a view of the whole vast process of social reorganization that began with the development of factory labour and big towns, and which is even now scarcely advanced enough for us to see its general trend. For a time Mr. Brumley did not realize the magnitude of the thing he was looking at; when he did, theories sprouted in his mind like mushrooms and he babbled with mental excitement. He came in a state of the utmost lucidity to explain his theories to Lady Harman, and they struck that lady at the time as being the most illuminating

suggestions she had ever encountered. They threw an appearance of order, of process, over a world of trade and employment and competition that had hitherto seemed too complex and mysterious for any understanding.

"You see," said Mr. Brumley — they had met that day in Kensington Gardens and they were sitting side by side upon green chairs near the frozen writings of Physical Energy— "You see, if I may lecture a little, putting the thing as simply as possible, the world has been filling up new spaces ever since the discovery of America; all the period from then to about 1870, let us say, was a period of rapid increase of population in response to new opportunities of living and new fulnesses of life in every direction. During that time, four hundred years of it roughly, there was a huge development of family life; to marry and rear a quite considerable family became the chief business of everybody, celibacy grew rare, monasteries and nunneries which had abounded vanished like things dissolving in a flood and even the priests became Protestant against celibacy and took unto themselves wives and had huge families. The natural checks upon increase, famine and pestilence, were lifted by more systematized communication and by scientific discovery; and altogether and as a consequence the world now has probably three or four times the human population it ever carried before. Everywhere in that period the family prevailed again, the prospering multiplying household; it was a return to the family, to the reproductive social grouping of early barbaric life, and naturally all the thought of the modern world which has emerged since the fifteenth century falls into this form. So I see it, Lady Harman. The generation of our grandfathers in the opening nineteenth century had two shaping ideas, two forms of thought, the family and progress, not realizing that that very progress which had suddenly reopened the doors of opportunity for the family that had revived the ancient injunction to increase and multiply and replenish the earth, might presently close that door again and declare the world was filled. But that is what is happening now. The doors close. That immense swarming and multiplying of little people is over, and the forces of social organization have been coming into play now, more and more for a century and a half, to produce new wholesale ways of doing things,

new great organizations, organizations that invade the autonomous family more and more, and are perhaps destined ultimately to destroy it altogether and supersede it. At least it is so I make my reading of history in these matters."

"Yes," said Lady Harman, with knitted brows, "Yes," and wondered privately whether it would be possible to get from that opening to the matter of her Hostels before it was time for her to return for Sir Isaac's tea.

Mr. Brumley continued to talk with his eyes fixed as it were upon his thoughts. "These things, Lady Harman, go on at different paces in different regions. I will not trouble you with a discussion of that, or of emigration, of any of the details of the vast proliferation that preceded the present phase. Suffice it, that now all the tendency is back towards restraints upon increase, to an increasing celibacy, to a fall in the birth-rate and in the average size of families, to — to a release of women from an entire devotion to a numerous offspring, and so at last to the supersession of those little family units that for four centuries have made up the substance of social life and determined nearly all our moral and sentimental attitudes. The autonomy of the family is being steadily destroyed, and it is being replaced by the autonomy of the individual in relation to some syndicated economic effort."

"I think," said Lady Harman slowly, arresting him by a gesture, "if you could make that about autonomy a little clearer...."

Mr. Brumley did. He went on to point out with the lucidity of a University Extension lecturer what he meant by these singular phrases. She listened intelligently but with effort. He was much too intent upon getting the thing expressed to his own satisfaction to notice any absurdity in his preoccupation with these theories about the population of the world in the face of her immediate practical difficulties. He declared that the onset of this new phase in human life, the modern phase, wherein there was apparently to be no more "proliferating," but instead a settling down of population towards a stable equilibrium, became apparent first with the expropriation of the English peasantry and the birth of the factory system and machine production. "Since that time one can trace a steady substitution of wholesale and collective methods for household and

family methods. It has gone far with us now. Instead of the woman drawing water from a well, the pipes and taps of the water company. Instead of the home-made rushlight, the electric lamp. Instead of home-spun, ready-made clothes. Instead of home-brewed, the brewer's cask. Instead of home-baked, first the little baker and then, clean and punctual, the International Bread and Cake Stores. Instead of the child learning at its mother's knee, the compulsory elementary school. Flats take the place of separate houses. Instead of the little holding, the big farm, and instead of the children working at home, the factory. Everywhere synthesis. Everywhere the little independent proprietor gives place to the company and the company to the trust. You follow all this, Lady Harman?"

"Go on," she said, encouraged by that transitory glimpse of the Stores in his discourse.

"Now London — and England generally — had its period of expansion and got on to the beginnings at least of this period of synthesis that is following it, sooner than any other country in the world; and because it was the first to reach the new stage it developed the characteristics of the new stage with a stronger flavour of the old than did such later growths of civilization as New York or Bombay or Berlin. That is why London and our British big cities generally are congestions of little houses, little homes, while the newer great cities run to apartments and flats. We hadn't grasped the logical consequences of what we were in for so completely as the people abroad did who caught it later, and that is why, as we began to develop our new floating population of mainly celibate employees and childless people, they had mostly to go into lodgings, they went into the homes that were intended for families as accessories to the family, and they were able to go in because the families were no longer so numerous as they used to be. London is still largely a city of landladies and lodgings, and in no other part of the world is there so big a population of lodgers. And this business of your Hostels is nothing more nor less than the beginning of the end of that. Just as the great refreshment caterers have mopped up the ancient multitude of coffee-houses and squalid little special feeding arrangements of the days of Tittlebat Titmouse and Dick Swiveller, so now your Hostels are going to mop up the lodging-house system of London. Of

course there are other and kindred movements. Naturally. The Y.W.C.A., the Y.M.C.A., the London Girls Club Union and so forth are all doing kindred work."

"But what, Mr. Brumley, what is to become of the landladies?" asked Lady Harman.

Mr. Brumley was checked in mid theory.

"I hadn't thought of the landladies," he said, after a short pause.

"They worry me," said Lady Harman.

"Um," said Mr. Brumley, thrown out.

"Do you know the other day I went into Chelsea, where there are whole streets of lodgings, and — I suppose it was wrong of me, but I went and pretended to be looking for rooms for a girl clerk I knew, and I saw — Oh! no end of rooms. And such poor old women, such dingy, worked-out, broken old women, with a kind of fearful sharpness, so eager, so dreadfully eager to get that girl clerk who didn't exist...."

She looked at him with an expression of pained enquiry.

"That," said Mr. Brumley, "that I think is a question, so to speak, for the social ambulance. If perhaps I might go on —— That particular difficulty we might consider later. I think I was talking of the general synthesis."

"Yes," said Lady Harman. "And what is it exactly that is to take the place of these isolated little homes and these dreary little lodgings? Here are we, my husband and I, rushing in with this new thing, just as he rushed in with his stores thirty years ago and overset little bakers and confectioners and refreshment dealers by the hundred. Some of them — poor dears — they —— I don't like to think. And it wasn't a good thing he made after all, — only a hard sort of thing. He made all those shops of his — with the girls who strike and say they are sweated and driven.... And now here we are making a kind of barrack place for people to live in!"

She expressed the rest of her ideas with a gesture of the hands.

"I admit the process has its dangers," said Mr. Brumley. "It's like the supersession of the small holdings by the *latifundia* in Italy. But that's just where our great opportunity comes in. These synthetic phases have occurred before in the world's history and their history is a history of lost opportunities.... But need ours be?"

She had a feeling as though something had slipped through her fingers.

"I feel," she said, "that it is more important to me than anything else in life, that these Hostels, anyhow, which are springing so rapidly from a chance suggestion of mine, shouldn't be lost opportunities."

"Exactly," said Mr. Brumley, with the gesture of one who recovers a thread. "That is just what I am driving at."

The fingers of his extended hand felt in the warm afternoon air for a moment, and then he said "Ah!" in a tone of recovery while she waited respectfully for the resumed thread.

"You see," he said, "I regard this process of synthesis, this substitution of wholesale and collective methods for homely and individual ones as, under existing conditions, inevitable — inevitable. It's the phase we live in, it's to this we have to adapt ourselves. It is as little under your control or mine as the movement of the sun through the zodiac. Practically, that is. And what we have to do is not, I think, to sigh for lost homes and the age of gold and spade husbandry, and pigs and hens in the home, and so on, but to make this new synthetic life tolerable for the mass of men and women, hopeful for the mass of men and women, a thing developing and ascending. That's where your Hostels come in, Lady Harman; that's where they're so important. They're a pioneer movement. If they succeed — and things in Sir Isaac's hands have a way of succeeding at any rate to the paying point — then there'll be a headlong rush of imitations, imitating your good features, imitating your bad features, deepening a groove.... You see my point?"

"Yes," she said. "It makes me — more afraid than ever."

"But hopeful," said Mr. Brumley, presuming to lay his hand for an instant on her arm. "It's big enough to be inspiring."

"But I'm afraid," she said.

"It's laying down the lines of a new social life — no less. And what makes it so strange, so typical, too, of the way social forces work nowadays, is that your husband, who has all the instinctive insistence upon every right and restriction of the family relation in his private life, who is narrowly, passionately *for* the home in his own case, who hates all books and discussion that seem to touch it,

should in his business activities be striking this tremendous new blow at the ancient organization. For that, you see, is what it amounts to."

"Yes," said Lady Harman slowly. "Yes. Of course, he doesn't know...."

Mr. Brumley was silent for a little while. "You see," he resumed, "at the worst this new social life may become a sort of slavery in barracks; at the best — it might become something very wonderful. My mind's been busy now for days thinking just how wonderful the new life might be. Instead of the old bickering, crowded family home, a new home of comrades...."

He made another pause, and his thoughts ran off upon a fresh track.

"In looking up all these things I came upon a queer little literature of pamphlets and so forth, dealing with the case of the shop assistants. They have a great grievance in what they call the living-in system. The employers herd them in dormitories over the shops, and usually feed them by gaslight in the basements; they fine them and keep an almost intolerable grip upon them; make them go to bed at half-past ten, make them go to church on Sundays, — all sorts of petty tyrannies. The assistants are passionately against this, but they've got no power to strike. Where could they go if they struck? Into the street. Only people who live out and have homes of their own to sulk in *can* strike. Naturally, therefore, as a preliminary to any other improvement in the shop assistant's life, these young people want to live out. Practically that's an impossible demand at present, because they couldn't get lodgings and live out with any decency at all on what it costs their employers to lodge and feed them *in*. Well, here you see a curious possibility for your Hostels. You open the prospect of a living-out system for shop assistants. But just in the degree in which you choose to interfere with them, regulate them, bully and deal with them wholesale through their employers, do you make the new living-out method approximate to the living-in. *That's* a curious side development, isn't it?"

Lady Harman appreciated that.

"That's only the beginning of the business. There's something more these Hostels might touch...."

Mr. Brumley gathered himself together for the new aspect. “There’s marriage,” he said.

“One of the most interesting and unsatisfactory aspects of the life of the employee to-day — and you know the employee is now in the majority in the adult population — is this. You see, we hold them celibate. We hold them celibate for a longer and longer period; the average age at marriage rises steadily; and so long as they remain celibate we are prepared with some sort of ideas about the future development of their social life, clubs, hostels, living-in, and so forth. But at present we haven’t any ideas at all about the adaptation of the natural pairing instinct to the new state of affairs. Ultimately the employee marries; they hold out as long as they possibly can, but ultimately they have to. They have to, even in the face of an economic system that holds out no prospects of anything but insecurity and an increasing chance of trouble and disaster to the employee’s family group. What happens is that they drop back into a distressful, crippled, insecure imitation of the old family life as one had it in what I might call the multiplying periods of history. They start a home, — they dream of a cottage, but they drift to a lodging, and usually it isn’t the best sort of lodging, for landladies hate wives and the other lodgers detest babies. Often the young couple doesn’t have babies. You see, they are more intelligent than peasants, and intelligence and fecundity vary reciprocally,” said Mr. Brumley.

“You mean?” interrupted Lady Harman softly.

“There is a world-wide fall in the birth-rate. People don’t have the families they did.”

“Yes,” said Lady Harman. “I understand now.”

“And the more prosperous or the more sanguine take these suburban little houses, these hutches that make such places as Hendon nightmares of monotony, or go into ridiculous jerry-built sham cottages in some Garden Suburb, where each young wife does her own housework and pretends to like it. They have a sort of happiness for a time, I suppose; the woman stops all outside work, the man, very much handicapped, goes on competing against single men. Then — nothing more happens. Except difficulties. The world goes dull and grey for them. They look about for a lodger, perhaps. Have you read Gissing’s *Paying Guest*?...”

“I suppose,” said Lady Harman, “I suppose it is like that. One tries not to think it is so.”

“One needn’t let oneself believe that dullness is unhappiness,” said Mr. Brumley. “I don’t want to paint things sadder than they are. But it’s not a fine life, it’s not a full life, that life in a Neo-Malthusian suburban hutch.”

“Neo —— ?” asked Lady Harman.

“A mere phrase,” said Mr. Brumley hastily. “The extraordinary thing is that, until you set me looking into these things with your questions, I’ve always taken this sort of thing for granted, as though it couldn’t be otherwise. Now I seem to see with a kind of freshness. I’m astounded at the muddle of it, the waste and aimlessness of it. And here again it is, Lady Harman, that I think your opportunity comes in. With these Hostels as they might be projected now, you seem to have the possibility of a modernized, more collective and civilized family life than the old close congestion of the single home, and I see no reason at all why you shouldn’t carry that collective life on to the married stage. As things are now these little communities don’t go beyond the pairing — and out they drift to find the homestead they will never possess. What has been borne in upon me more and more forcibly as I have gone through your — your nest of problems, is the idea that the new social — association, that has so extensively replaced the old family group, might be carried on right through life, that it might work in with all sorts of other discontents and bad adjustments.... The life of the women in these little childless or one-or-two-child homes is more unsatisfactory even than the man’s.”

Mr. Brumley’s face flushed with enthusiasm and he wagged a finger to emphasize his words. “Why not make Hostels, Lady Harman, for married couples? Why not try that experiment so many people have talked about of the conjoint kitchen and refectory, the conjoint nursery, the collective social life, so that the children who are single children or at best children in small families of two or three, may have the advantages of playfellows, and the young mothers still, if they choose, continue to have a social existence and go on with their professional or business, work? That’s the next step your Hostels might take ... Incidentally you see this opens a way to a

life of relative freedom for the woman who is married.... I don't know if you have read Mrs. Stetson. Yes, Charlotte Perkins Gilman Stetson.... Yes, *Woman and Economics*, that's the book.

"I know," Mr. Brumley went on, "I seem to be opening out your project like a concertina, but I want you to see just how my thoughts have been going about all this. I want you to realize I haven't been idle during these last few weeks. I know it's a far cry from what the Hostels are to all these ideas of what they might begin to be, I know the difficulties in your way — all sorts of difficulties. But when I think just how you stand at the very centre of the moulding forces in these changes...."

He dropped into an eloquent silence.

Lady Harman looked thoughtfully at the sunlight under the trees.

"You think," she said, "that it comes to as much as all this."

"More," said Mr. Brumley.

"I was frightened before. *Now* —— You make me feel as though someone had put the wheel of a motor car in my hand, started it and told me to steer...."

§7

Lady Harman went home from that talk in a taxi, and on the way she passed the building operations in Kensington Road. A few weeks ago it had been a mere dusty field of operation for the house-wreckers; now its walls were already rising to the second storey. She realized how swiftly nowadays the search for wisdom can be outstripped by reinforced concrete.

§8

It was only by slow degrees and rather in the absence of a more commanding interest than through any invincible quality in their appeal to her mind that these Hostels became in the next three years the grave occupation of Lady Harman's thoughts and energies. She yielded to them reluctantly. For a long time she wanted to look over them and past them and discover something — she did not know what — something high and domineering to which it would be easy

to give herself. It was difficult to give herself to the Hostels. In that Mr. Brumley, actuated by a mixture of more or less admirable motives, did his best to assist her. These Hostels alone he thought could give them something upon which they could meet, give them a common interest and him a method of service and companionship. It threw the qualities of duty and justification over their more or less furtive meetings, their little expeditions together, their quiet frequent association.

Together they made studies of the Girls' Clubs which are scattered about London, supplementary homes that have in such places as Walworth and Soho worked small miracles of civilization. These institutions appealed to a lower social level than the one their Hostels were to touch, but they had been organized by capable and understanding minds and Lady Harman found in one or two of their evening dances and in the lunch she shared one morning with a row of cheerful young factory girls from Soho just that quality of concrete realization for which her mind hungered. Then Mr. Brumley took her once or twice for evening walks, just when the stream of workers is going home; he battled his way with her along the footpath of Charing Cross Railway Bridge from the Waterloo side, they swam in the mild evening sunshine of September against a trampling torrent of bobbing heads, and afterwards they had tea together in one of the International Stores near the Strand, where Mr. Brumley made an unsuccessful attempt to draw out the waitress on the subject of Babs Wheeler and the recent strike. The young woman might have talked freely to a man alone or freely to Lady Harman alone but the combination of the two made her shy. The bridge experience led to several other expeditions, to see home-going on the tube, at the big railway termini, on the train — and once they followed up the process to Streatham and saw how the people pour out of the train at last and scatter — until at last they are just isolated individuals running up steps, diving into basements. And then it occurred to Mr. Brumley that he knew someone who would take them over "Gerrard," that huge telephone exchange, and there Lady Harman saw how the National Telephone Company, as it was in those days, had a care for its staff, the pleasant club rooms, the rest room, and stood in that queer rendez-vous of messages, where the

“Hello” girl sits all day, wearing a strange metallic apparatus over ear and mouth, watching small lights that wink significantly at her and perpetually pulling out and slipping in and releasing little flexible strings that seem to have a resilient volition of their own. They hunted out Mrs. Barnet and heard her ideas about conjoint homes for spinsters in the Garden Suburb. And then they went over a Training College for elementary teachers and visited the Post Office and then came back to more unobtrusive contemplation, from the customer’s little table, of the ministering personalities of the International Stores.

There were times when all these things seen, seemed to fall into an entirely explicable system under Mr. Brumley’s exposition, when they seemed to be giving and most generously giving the clearest indications of what kind of thing the Hostels had to be, and times when this all vanished again and her mind became confused and perplexed. She tried to express just what it was she missed to Mr. Brumley. “One doesn’t,” she said, “see all of them and what one sees isn’t what we have to do with. I mean we see them dressed up and respectable and busy and then they go home and the door shuts. It’s the home that we are going to alter and replace — and what is it like?” Mr. Brumley took her for walks in Highbury and the newer parts of Hendon and over to Clapham. “I want to go inside those doors,” she said.

“That’s just what they won’t let you do,” said Mr. Brumley. “Nobody visits but relations — and prospective relations, and the only other social intercourse is over the garden wall. Perhaps I can find books — —”

He got her novels by Edwin Pugh and Pett Ridge and Frank Swinnerton and George Gissing. They didn’t seem to be attractive homes. And it seemed remarkable to her that no woman had ever given the woman’s view of the small London home from the inside....

She overcame her own finer scruples and invaded the Burnet household. Apart from fresh aspects of Susan’s character in the capacity of a hostess she gained little light from that. She had never felt so completely outside a home in her life as she did when she was in the Burnets’ parlour. The very tablecloth on which the tea was

spread had an air of being new and protective of familiar things; the tea was manifestly quite unlike their customary tea, it was no more intimate than the confectioner's shop window from which it mostly came; the whole room was full of the muffled cries of things hastily covered up and specially put away. Vivid oblongs on the faded wallpaper betrayed even a rearrangement of the pictures. Susan's mother was a little dingy woman, wearing a very smart new cap to the best of her ability; she had an air of having been severely shaken up and admonished, and her general bearing confessed only too plainly how shattered those preparations had left her. She watched her capable daughter for cues. Susan's sisters displayed a disposition to keep their backs against something and at the earliest opportunity to get into the passage and leave Susan and her tremendous visitor alone but within earshot. They started convulsively when they were addressed and insisted on "your ladyship." Susan had told them not to but they would. When they supposed themselves to be unobserved they gave themselves up to the impassioned inspection of Lady Harman's costume. Luke had fled into the street, and in spite of various messages conveyed to him by the youngest sister he refused to enter until Lady Harman had gone again and was well out of the way. And Susan was no longer garrulous and at her ease; she had no pins in her mouth and that perhaps hampered her speech; she presided flushed and bright-eyed in a state of infectious nervous tension. Her politeness was awful. Never in all her life had Lady Harman felt her own lack of real conversational power so acutely. She couldn't think of a thing that mightn't be construed as an impertinence and that didn't remind her of district visiting. Yet perhaps she succeeded better than she supposed.

"What a family you have had!" she said to Mrs. Burnet. "I have four little girls, and I find them as much as we can manage."

"You're young yet, my ladyship," said Mrs. Burnet, "and they aren't always the blessings they seem to be. It's the rearing's the difficulty."

"They're all such healthy-looking — people."

"I wish we could get hold of Luke, my ladyship, and show you *'im*. He's that sturdy. And yet when 'e was a little feller — —"

She was launched for a time on those details that were always so

dear to the mothers of the past order of things. Her little spate of reminiscences was the only interlude of naturalness in an afternoon of painfully constrained behaviour....

Lady Harman returned a trifle shamefacedly from this abortive dip into realities to Mr. Brumley's speculative assurance.

§9

While Lady Harman was slowly accustoming her mind to this idea that the development of those Hostels was her appointed career in life, so far as a wife may have a career outside her connubial duties, and while she was getting insensibly to believe in Mr. Brumley's theory of their exemplary social importance, the Hostels themselves with a haste that she felt constantly was premature, were achieving a concrete existence. They were developing upon lines that here and there disregarded Mr. Brumley's ideas very widely; they gained in practicality what perhaps they lost in social value, through the entirely indirect relations between Mr. Brumley on the one hand and Sir Isaac on the other. For Sir Isaac manifestly did not consider and would have been altogether indisposed to consider Mr. Brumley as entitled to plan or suggest anything of the slightest importance in this affair, and whatever of Mr. Brumley reached that gentleman reached him in a very carefully transmitted form as Lady Harman's own unaided idea. Sir Isaac had sound Victorian ideas about the place of literature in life. If anyone had suggested to him that literature could supply ideas to practical men he would have had a choking fit, and he regarded Mr. Brumley's sedulous attentions to these hostel schemes with feelings, the kindlier elements of whose admixture was a belief that ultimately he would write some elegant and respectful approval of the established undertaking.

The entire admixture of Sir Isaac's feelings towards Mr. Brumley was by no means kindly. He disliked any man to come near Lady Harman, any man at all; he had a faint uneasiness even about waiters and hotel porters and the clergy. Of course he had agreed she should have friends of her own and he couldn't very well rescind that without something definite to go upon. But still this persistent follower kept him uneasy. He kept this uneasiness within bounds by

reassuring himself upon the point of Lady Harman's virtuous obedience, and so reassured he was able to temper his distrust with a certain contempt. The man was in love with his wife; that was manifest enough, and dangled after her.... Let him dangle. What after all did he get for it?...

But occasionally he broke through this complacency, betrayed a fitful ingenious jealousy, interfered so that she missed appointments and had to break engagements. He was now more and more a being of pathological moods. The subtle changes of secretion that were hardening his arteries, tightening his breath and poisoning his blood, reflected themselves upon his spirit in an uncertainty of temper and exasperating fatigues and led to startling outbreaks. Then for a time he would readjust himself, become in his manner reasonable again, become accessible.

He was the medium through which this vision that was growing up in her mind of a reorganized social life, had to translate itself, as much as it could ever translate itself, into reality. He called these hostels her hostels, made her the approver of all he did, but he kept every particle of control in his own hands. All her ideas and desires had to be realized by him. And his attitudes varied with his moods; sometimes he was keenly interested in the work of organization and then he terrified her by his bias towards acute economies, sometimes he was resentful at the burthen of the whole thing, sometimes he seemed to scent Brumley or at least some moral influence behind her mind and met her suggestions with a bitter resentment as though any suggestion must needs be a disloyalty to him. There was a remarkable outbreak upon her first tentative proposal that the hostel system might ultimately be extended to married couples.

He heard her with his lips pressing tighter and tighter together until they were yellow white and creased with a hundred wicked little horizontal creases. Then he interrupted her with silent gesticulations. Then words came.

"I never did, Elly," he said. "I never did. Reely — there are times when you ain't rational. Married couples who're assistants in shops and places!"

For a little while he sought some adequate expression of his point of view.

“Nice thing to go keeping a place for these chaps to have their cheap bits of skirt in,” he said at last.

Then further: “If a man wants a girl let him work himself up until he can keep her. Married couples indeed!”

He began to expand the possibilities of the case with a quite unusual vividness. “Double beds in each cubicle, I suppose,” he said, and played for a time about this fancy.... “Well, to hear such an idea from you of all people, Elly. I never did.”

He couldn’t leave it alone. He had to go on to the bitter end with the vision she had evoked in his mind. He was jealous, passionately jealous, it was only too manifest, of the possible happinesses of these young people. He was possessed by that instinctive hatred for the realized love of others which lies at the base of so much of our moral legislation. The bare thought — whole corridors of bridal chambers! — made his face white and his hand quiver. *His* young men and young women! The fires of a hundred Vigilance Committees blazed suddenly in his reddened eyes. He might have been a concentrated society for preventing the rapid multiplication of the unfit. The idea of facilitating early marriages was manifestly shameful to him, a disgraceful service to render, a job for Pandarus. What was she thinking of? Elly of all people! Elly who had been as innocent as driven snow before Georgina came interfering!

It ended in a fit of abuse and a panting seizure, and for a day or so he was too ill to resume the discussion, to do more than indicate a disgusted aloofness....

And then it may be the obscure chemicals at work within him changed their phase of reaction. At any rate he mended, became gentler, was more loving to his wife than he had been for some time and astonished her by saying that if she wanted Hostels for married couples, it wasn’t perhaps so entirely unreasonable. Selected cases, he stipulated, it would have to be and above a certain age limit, sober people. “It might even be a check on immorality,” he said, “properly managed....”

But that was as far as his acquiescence went and Lady Harman was destined to be a widow before she saw the foundation of any Hostel for young married couples in London.

§10

The reinforced concrete rose steadily amidst Lady Harman's questionings and Mr. Brumley's speculations. The Harmans returned from a recuperative visit to Kissingen, to which Sir Isaac had gone because of a suspicion that his Marienbad specialist had failed to cure him completely in order to get him back again, to find the first of the five hostels nearly ripe for its opening. There had to be a manageress and a staff organized and neither Lady Harman nor Mr. Brumley were prepared for that sort of business. A number of abler people however had become aware of the opportunities of the new development and Mrs. Hubert Plessington, that busy publicist, got the Harmans to a helpful little dinner, before Lady Harman had the slightest suspicion of the needs that were now so urgent. There shone a neat compact widow, a Mrs. Pembrose, who had buried her husband some eighteen months ago after studying social questions with him with great éclat for ten happy years, and she had done settlement work and Girls' Club work and had perhaps more power of organization — given a suitable director to provide for her lack of creativeness, Mrs. Plessington told Sir Isaac, than any other woman in London. Afterwards Sir Isaac had an opportunity of talking to her; he discussed the suffrage movement with her and was pleased to find her views remarkably sympathetic with his own. She was, he declared, a sensible woman, anxious to hear a man out and capable, it was evident, of a detachment from feminist particularism rare in her sex at the present time. Lady Harman had seen less of the lady that evening, she was chiefly struck by her pallor, by a kind of animated silence about her, and by the deep impression her capabilities had made on Mr. Plessington, who had hitherto seemed to her to be altogether too overworked in admiring his wife to perceive the points of any other human being. Afterwards Lady Harman was surprised to hear from one or two quite separate people that Mrs. Pembrose was the only possible person to act as general director of the new hostels. Lady Beach-Mandarin was so enthusiastic in the matter that she made a special call. "You've known her a long time?" said Lady Harman.

"Long enough to see what a chance she is!" said Lady Beach-

Mandarin.

Lady Harman perceived equivocation. “Now how long is that really?” she said.

“Count not in years, nor yet in moments on a dial,” said Lady Beach-Mandarin with a fine air of quotation. “I’m thinking of her quiet strength of character. Mrs. Plessington brought her round to see me the other afternoon.”

“Did she talk to you?”

“I saw, my dear, I saw.”

A vague aversion from Mrs. Pembrose was in some mysterious way strengthened in Lady Harman by this extraordinary convergence of testimony. When Sir Isaac mentioned the lady with a kind of forced casualness at breakfast as the only conceivable person for the work of initiation and organization that lay before them, Lady Harman determined to see more of her. With a quickened subtlety she asked her to tea. “I have heard so much of your knowledge of social questions and I want you to advise me about my work,” she wrote, and then scribbled a note to Mr. Brumley to call and help her judgments.

Mrs. Pembrose appeared dressed in dove colour with a near bonnetesque straw hat to match. She had a pale slightly freckled complexion, little hard blue-grey eyes with that sort of nose which redeems a squarish shape by a certain delicacy of structure; her chin was long and protruding and her voice had a wooden resonance and a ghost of a lisp. Her talk had a false consecutiveness due to the frequent use of the word “Yes.” Her bearing was erect and her manner guardedly alert.

From the first she betrayed a conviction that Mr. Brumley was incidental and unnecessary and that her real interest lay with Sir Isaac. She might almost have been in possession of special information upon that point.

“Yes,” she said, “I’m rather specially *up* in this sort of question. I worked side by side with my poor Frederick all his life, we were collaborators, and this question of the urban distributive employee was one of his special studies. Yes, he would have been tremendously interested in Sir Isaac’s project.”

“You know what we are doing?”

“Every one is interested in Sir Isaac’s enterprise. Naturally. Yes, I think I have a fairly good idea of what you mean to do. It’s a great experiment.”

“You think it is likely to answer?” said Mr. Brumley.

“In Sir Isaac’s hands it is *very* likely to answer,” said Mrs. Pembrose with her eye steadily on Lady Harman.

There was a little pause. “Yes, now you wrote of difficulties and drawing upon my experience. Of course just now I’m quite at Sir Isaac’s disposal.”

Lady Harman found herself thrust perforce into the rôle of her husband’s spokeswoman. She asked Mrs. Pembrose if she knew the exact nature of the experiment they contemplated.

Mrs. Pembrose hadn’t a doubt she knew. Of course for a long time and more especially in the Metropolis where the distances were so great and increasing so rapidly, there had been a gathering feeling not only in the catering trade, but in very many factory industries, against the daily journey to employment and home again. It was irksome and wasteful to everyone concerned, there was a great loss in control, later hours of beginning, uncertain service. “Yes, my husband calculated the hours lost in London every week, hours that are neither work nor play, mere tiresome stuffy journeying. It made an enormous sum. It worked out at hundreds of working lives per week.” Sir Isaac’s project was to abolish all that, to bring his staff into line with the drapers and grocers who kept their assistants on the living-in system....

“I thought people objected to the living-in system,” said Mr. Brumley.

“There’s an agitation against it on the part of a small Trade Union of Shop Assistants,” said Mrs. Pembrose. “But they have no real alternative to propose.”

“And this isn’t Living In,” said Mr. Brumley.

“Yes, I think you’ll find it is,” said Mrs. Pembrose with a nice little expert smile.

“Living-in isn’t *quite* what we want,” said Lady Harman slowly and with knitted brows, seeking a method of saying just what the difference was to be.

“Yes, not perhaps in the strictest sense,” said Mrs. Pembrose

giving her no chance, and went on to make fine distinctions. Strictly speaking, living-in meant sleeping over the shop and eating underneath it, and this hostel idea was an affair of a separate house and of occupants who would be assistants from a number of shops. "Yes, collectivism, if you like," said Mrs. Pembrose. But the word collectivism, she assured them, wouldn't frighten her, she was a collectivist, a socialist, as her husband had always been. The day was past when socialist could be used as a term of reproach. "Yes, instead of the individual employer of labour, we already begin to have the collective employer of labour, with a labour bureau — and so on. We share them. We no longer compete for them. It's the keynote of the time."

Mr. Brumley followed this with a lifted eyebrow. He was still new to these modern developments of collectivist ideas, this socialism of the employer.

The whole thing Mrs. Pembrose declared was a step forward in civilization, it was a step in the organization and discipline of labour. Of course the unruly and the insubordinate would cry out. But the benefits were plain enough, space, light, baths, association, reasonable recreations, opportunities for improvement ——

"But freedom?" said Mr. Brumley.

Mrs. Pembrose inclined her head a little on one side, looked at him this time and smiled the expert smile again. "If you knew as much as I do of the difficulties of social work," she said, "you wouldn't be very much in love with freedom."

"But — it's the very substance of the soul!"

"You must permit me to differ," said Mrs. Pembrose, and for weeks afterwards Mr. Brumley was still seeking a proper polite retort to that difficult counterstroke. It was such a featureless reply. It was like having your nose punched suddenly by a man without a face.

They descended to a more particular treatment of the problems ahead. Mrs. Pembrose quoted certain precedents from the Girls' Club Union.

"The people Lady Harman contemplates — entertaining," said Mr. Brumley, "are of a slightly more self-respecting type than those young women."

"It's largely veneer," said Mrs. Pembrose....

“Detestable little wretch,” said Mr. Brumley when at last she had departed. He was very uncomfortable. “She’s just the quintessence of all one fears and dreads about these new developments, she’s perfect — in that way — self-confident, arrogant, instinctively aggressive, with a tremendous class contempt. There’s a multitude of such people about who hate the employed classes, who *want* to see them broken in and subjugated. I suppose that kind of thing is in humanity. Every boy’s school has louts of that kind, who love to torment fags for their own good, who spring upon a chance smut on the face of a little boy to scrub him painfully, who have a kind of lust to dominate under the pretence of improving. I remember —— But never mind that now. Keep that woman out of things or your hostels work for the devil.”

“Yes,” said Lady Harman. “Certainly she shall not —— . No.”

But there she reckoned without her husband.

“I’ve settled it,” he said to her at dinner two nights later.

“What?”

“Mrs. Pembrose.”

“You’ve not made her —— ?”

“Yes, I have. And I think we’re very lucky to get her.”

“But — Isaac! I don’t want her!”

“You should have told me that before, Elly. I’ve made an agreement.”

She suddenly wanted to cry. “But —— You said I should manage these Hostels myself.”

“So you shall, Elly. But we must have somebody. When we go abroad and all that and for all the sort of business stuff and looking after things that you can’t do. We’ve *got* to have her. She’s the only thing going of her sort.”

“But — I don’t like her.”

“Well,” cried Sir Isaac, “why in goodness couldn’t you tell me that before, Elly? I’ve been and engaged her.”

She sat pale-faced staring at him with wide open eyes in which tears of acute disappointment were shining. She did not dare another word because of her trick of weeping.

“It’s all right, Elly,” said Sir Isaac. “How touchy you are! Anything you want about these Hostels of yours, you’ve only got to

tell me and it's done."

§11

Lady Harman was still in a state of amazement at the altered prospects of her hostels when the day arrived for the formal opening of the first of these in Bloomsbury. They made a little public ceremony of it in spite of her reluctance, and Mr. Brumley had to witness things from out of the general crowd and realize just how completely he wasn't in it, in spite of all his efforts. Mrs. Pembrose was modestly conspicuous, like the unexpected in all human schemes. There were several reporters present, and Horatio Blenker who was going to make a loyal leader about it, to be followed by one or two special articles for the *Old Country Gazette*.

Horatio had procured Mrs. Blapton for the opening after some ineffectual angling for the Princess Adeline, and the thing was done at half-past three in the afternoon. In the bright early July sunshine outside the new building there was a crimson carpet down on the pavement and an awning above it, there was a great display of dog-daisies at the windows and on the steps leading up to the locked portals, an increasing number of invited people lurked shyly in the ground-floor rooms ready to come out by the back way and cluster expectantly when Mrs. Blapton arrived, Graper the staff manager and two assistants in dazzling silk hats seemed everywhere, the rabbit-like architect had tried to look doggish in a huge black silk tie and only looked more like a rabbit than ever, and there was a steady driftage of small boys and girls, nurses with perambulators, cab touts, airing grandfathers and similar unemployed people towards the promise of the awning, the carpet and the flowers. The square building in all its bravery of Doulton ware and yellow and mauve tiles and its great gilt inscription

INTERNATIONAL HOSTELS

above the windows of the second storey seemed typical of all those modern forces that are now invading and dispelling the ancient residential peace of Bloomsbury.

Mrs. Blapton appeared only five minutes late, escorted by Bertie Trevor and her husband's spare secretary. Graper became so active at

the sight of her that he seemed more like some beast out of the Apocalypse with seven hands and ten hats than a normal human being; he marshalled the significant figures into their places, the door was unlocked without serious difficulty, and Lady Harman found herself in the main corridor beside Mr. Trevor and a little behind Mrs. Blapton, engaged in being shown over the new creation. Sir Isaac (driven by Graper at his elbow) was in immediate attendance on the great political lady, and Mrs. Pembrose, already with an air of proprietorship, explained glibly on her other hand. Close behind Lady Harman came Lady Beach-Mandarin, expanding like an appreciative gas in a fine endeavour to nestle happily into the whole big place, and with her were Mrs. Hubert Plessington and Mr. Pope, one of those odd people who are called publicists because one must call them something, and who take chairs and political sides and are vice-presidents of everything and organize philanthropies, write letters to the papers and cannot let the occasion pass without saying a few words and generally prevent the institutions of this country from falling out of human attention. He was a little abstracted in his manner, every now and then his lips moved as he imagined a fresh turn to some classic platitude; anyone who knew him might have foretold the speech into which he presently broke. He did this in the refectory where there was a convenient step up at the end. Beginning with the customary confession of incontinence, "could not let the occasion pass," he declared that he would not detain them long, but he felt that everyone there would agree with him that they shared that day in no slight occasion, no mean enterprise, that here was one of the most promising, one of the most momentous, nay! he would go further and add with due deference to them all, one of the most pregnant of social experiments in modern social work. In the past he had himself — if he might for a moment allow a personal note to creep into his observations, he himself had not been unconnected with industrial development. — (Querulous voice, "Who the devil is that?" and whispered explanations on the part of Horatio Blenker; "Pope — very good man — East Purblow Experiment — Payment in Kind instead of Wages — Yes.")....

Lady Harman ceased to listen to Mr. Pope's strained but not unhappy tenor. She had heard him before, and she had heard his like

endlessly. He was the larger moiety of every public meeting she had ever attended. She had ceased even to marvel at the dull self-satisfaction that possessed him. To-day her capacity for marvelling was entirely taken up by the details of this extraordinary reality which had sprung from her dream of simple, kindly, beautiful homes for distressed and overworked young women; nothing in the whole of life had been so amazing since that lurid occasion when she had been the agonized vehicle for the entry of Miss Millicent Harman upon this terrestrial scene. It was all so entirely what she could never have thought possible. A few words from other speakers followed, Mrs. Blapton, with the young secretary at hand to prompt, said something, and Sir Isaac was poked forwards to say, "Thank you very much. It's all my wife's doing, really.... Oh dash it! Thank you very much." It had the effect of being the last vestige of some more elaborate piece of eloquence that had suddenly disintegrated in his mind.

"And now, Elly," he said, as their landaulette took them home, "you're beginning to have your hostels."

"Then they *are* my hostels?" she asked abruptly.

"Didn't I say they were?" The satisfaction of his face was qualified by that fatigued irritability that nowadays always followed any exertion or excitement.

"If I want things done? If I want things altered?"

"Of course you may, of course you may. What's the matter with you, Elly? What's been putting ideers into your head? You got to have a directress to the thing; you must have a woman of education who knows a bit about things to look after the matrons and so on. Very likely she isn't everything you want. She's the only one we could get, and I don't see —— . Here I go and work hard for a year and more getting these things together to please you, and then suddenly you don't like 'em. There's a lot of the spoilt child in you, Elly — first and last. There they are...."

They were silent for the rest of the journey to Putney, both being filled with incommunicable things.

And now Lady Harman began to share the trouble of all those who let their minds pass out of the circle of their immediate affections with any other desire save interest and pleasure. Assisted in this unhappy development by the sedulous suggestions of Mr. Brumley she had begun to offend against the most sacred law in our sensible British code, she was beginning to take herself and her hostels seriously, and think that it mattered how she worked for them and what they became. She tried to give all the attention her children's upbringing, her husband's ailments and the general demands of her household left free, to this complex, elusive, puzzling and worrying matter. Instead of thinking that these hostels were just old hostels and that you start them and put in a Mrs. Pembrose and feel very benevolent and happy and go away, she had come to realize partly by dint of her own conscientious thinking and partly through Mr. Brumley's strenuous resolve that she should not take Sir Isaac's gift horse without the most exhaustive examination of its quality, that this new work, like most new things in human life, was capable not only of admirable but of altogether detestable consequences, and that it rested with her far more than with any other human being to realize the former and avoid the latter. And directly one has got to this critical pose towards things, just as one ceases to be content with things anyhow and to want them precisely somehow, one begins to realize just how intractable, confused and disingenuous are human affairs. Mr. Brumley had made himself see and had made her see how inevitable these big wholesale ways of doing things, these organizations and close social co-operations, have become unless there is to be a social disintegration and set back, and he had also brought himself and her to realize how easily they may develop into a new servitude, how high and difficult is the way towards methods of association that will ensure freedom and permit people to live fine individual lives. Every step towards organization raises a crop of vices peculiar to itself, fresh developments of the egotism and greed and vanity of those into whose hands there falls control, fresh instances of that hostile pedantry which seems so natural to officials and managers, insurgencies and obstinacies and suspicions on the part of everyone. The poor lady had supposed that when one's intentions were obviously benevolent everyone helped. She only

faced the realities of this task that she had not so much set for herself as had happened to her, after dreadful phases of disillusionment and dismay.

"These hostels," said Mr. Brumley in his most prophetic mood, "can be made free, fine things — or no — just as all the world of men we are living in, could be made a free, fine world. And it's our place to see they are that. It's just by being generous and giving ourselves, helping without enslaving, and giving without exacting gratitude, planning and protecting with infinite care, that we bring that world nearer.... Since I've known you I've come to know such things are possible...."

The Bloomsbury hostel started upon its career with an embarrassing difficulty. The young women of the International Stores Refreshment Departments for whom these institutions were primarily intended displayed what looked extremely like a concerted indisposition to come in. They had been circularized and informed that henceforth, to ensure the "good social tone" of the staff, all girls not living at home with their parents or close relations would be expected to reside in the new hostels. There followed an attractive account of the advantages of the new establishment. In drawing up this circular with the advice of Mrs. Pembrose, Sir Isaac had overlooked the fact that his management was very imperfectly informed just where the girls did live, and that after its issue it was very improbable that it would be possible to find out this very necessary fact. But the girls seemed to be unaware of this ignorance at headquarters, Miss Babs Wheeler was beginning to feel a little bored by good behaviour and crave for those dramatic cessations at the lunch hour, those speeches, with cheers, from a table top, those interviews with reporters, those flushed and eager councils of war and all the rest of that good old crisis feeling that had previously ended so happily. Mr. Graper came to his proprietor headlong, Mrs. Pembrose was summoned and together they contemplated the lamentable possibility of this great social benefit they had done the world being discredited at the outset by a strike of the proposed beneficiaries. Sir Isaac fell into a state of vindictiveness and was with difficulty restrained by Mr. Graper from immediately concluding the negotiations that were pending with three great Oxford Street firms

that would have given over the hostels to their employees and closed them against the International girls for ever.

Even Mrs. Pembrose couldn't follow Sir Isaac in that, and remarked: "As I understand it, the whole intention was to provide proper housing for our own people first and foremost."

"And haven't we provided it, *damn* them?" said Sir Isaac in white desperation....

It was Lady Harman who steered the newly launched institutions through these first entanglements. It was her first important advantage in the struggle that had hitherto been going relentlessly against her. She now displayed her peculiar gift, a gift that indeed is unhappily all too rare among philanthropists, the gift of not being able to classify the people with whom she was dealing, but of continuing to regard them as a multitude of individualized souls as distinct and considerable as herself. That makes no doubt for slowness and "inefficiency" and complexity in organization, but it does make for understandings. And now, through a little talk with Susan Burnet about her sister's attitude upon the dispute, she was able to take the whole situation in the flank.

Like many people who are not easily clear, Lady Harman when she was clear acted with very considerable decision, which was perhaps none the less effective because of the large softnesses of her manner.

She surprised Sir Isaac by coming of her own accord into his study, where with an altogether novel disfavour he sat contemplating the detailed plans for the Sydenham Hostel. "I think I've found out what the trouble is," she said.

"What trouble?"

"About my hostel."

"How do you know?"

"I've been finding out what the girls are saying."

"They'd say anything."

"I don't think they're clever enough for that," said Lady Harman after consideration. She recovered her thread. "You see, Isaac, they've been frightened by the Rules. I didn't know you had printed a set of Rules."

"One must *have* rules, Elly."

“In the background,” she decided. “But you see these Rules — were made conspicuous. They were printed in two colours on wall cards just exactly like that list of rules and scale of fines you had to withdraw — —”

“I know,” said Sir Isaac, shortly.

“It reminded the girls. And that circular that seems to threaten them if they don’t give up their lodgings and come in. And the way the front is got up to look just exactly like one of the refreshment-room branches — it makes them feel it will be un-homelike, and that there will be a kind of repetition in the evening of all the discipline and regulations they have to put up with during the day.”

“Have to put up with!” murmured Sir Isaac.

“I wish that had been thought of sooner. If we had made the places look a little more ordinary and called them Osborne House or something a little old-fashioned like that, something with a touch of the Old Queen about it and all that kind of thing.”

“We can’t go to the expense of taking down all those big gilt letters just to please the fancies of Miss Babs Wheeler.”

“It’s too late now to do that, perhaps. But we could do something, I think, to remove the suspicions ... I want, Isaac —— I think — —” She pulled herself together to announce her determination. “I think if I were to go to the girls and meet a delegation of them, and just talk to them plainly about what we mean by this hostel.”

“*You* can’t go making speeches.”

“It would just be talking to them.”

“It’s such a Come Down,” said Sir Isaac, after a momentary contemplation of the possibility.

For some time they talked without getting very far from these positions they had assumed. At last Sir Isaac shifted back upon his expert. “Can’t we talk about it to Mrs. Pembrose? She knows more about this sort of business than we do.”

“I’m not going to talk to Mrs. Pembrose,” said Lady Harman, after a little interval. Some unusual quality in her quiet voice made Sir Isaac lift his eyes to her face for a moment.

So one Saturday afternoon, Lady Harman had a meeting with a roomful of recalcitrant girls at the Regent Street Refreshment Branch, which looked very odd to her with grey cotton wrappers

over everything and its blinds down, and for the first time she came face to face with the people for whom almost in spite of herself she was working. It was a meeting summoned by the International Branch of the National Union of Waitresses and Miss Babs Wheeler and Mr. Graper were so to speak the north and south poles of the little group upon the improvised platform from which Lady Harman was to talk to the gathering. She would have liked the support of Mr. Brumley, but she couldn't contrive any unostentatious way of bringing him into the business without putting it upon a footing that would have involved the appearance of Sir Isaac and Mrs. Pembrose and — everybody. And essentially it wasn't to be everybody. It was to be a little talk.

Lady Harman rather liked the appearance of Miss Babs Wheeler, and met more than an answering approval in that insubordinate young woman's eye. Miss Wheeler was a minute swaggering person, much akimbo, with a little round blue-eyed innocent face that shone with delight at the lark of living. Her three companions who were in the lobby with her to receive and usher in Lady Harman seemed just as young, but they were relatively unilluminated except by their manifest devotion to their leader. They displayed rather than concealed their opinion of her as a "dear" and a "fair wonder." And the meeting generally it seemed to her was a gathering of very human young women, rather restless, then agog to see her and her clothes, and then somehow allayed by her appearance and quite amiably attentive to what she had to say. A majority were young girls dressed with the cheap smartness of the suburbs, the rest were for the most part older and dingier, and here and there were dotted young ladies of a remarkable and questionable smartness. In the front row, full of shy recognitions and a little disguised by an unfamiliar hat was Susan's sister Alice.

As Lady Harman had made up her mind that she was not going to deliver a speech she felt no diffidence in speaking. She was far too intent on her message to be embarrassed by any thought of the effect she was producing. She talked as she might have talked in one of her easier moods to Mr. Brumley. And as she talked it happened that Miss Babs Wheeler and quite a number of the other girls present watched her face and fell in love with her.

She began with her habitual prelude. “You see,” she said, and stopped and began again. She wanted to tell them and with a clumsy simplicity she told them how these Hostels had arisen out of her desire that they should have something better than the uncomfortable lodgings in which they lived. They weren’t a business enterprise, but they weren’t any sort of charity. “And I wanted them to be the sort of place in which you would feel quite free. I hadn’t any sort of intention of having you interfered with. I hate being interfered with myself, and I understand just as well as anyone can that you don’t like it either. I wanted these Hostels to be the sort of place that you might perhaps after a time almost manage and run for yourselves. You might have a committee or something.... Only you know it isn’t always easy to do as one wants. Things don’t always go in this world as one wants them to go — particularly if one isn’t clever.” She lost herself for a moment at that point, and then went on to say she didn’t like the new rules. They had been drawn up in a hurry and she had only read them after they were printed. All sorts of things in them

——

She seemed to be losing her theme again, and Mr. Graper handed her the offending card, a big varnished wall placard, with eyelets and tape complete. She glanced at it. For example, she said, it wasn’t her idea to have fines. (Great and long continued applause.) There was something she had always disliked about fines. (Renewed applause.) But these rules could easily be torn up. And as she said this and as the meeting broke into acquiescence again it occurred to her that there was the card of rules in her hands, and nothing could be simpler than to tear it up there and then. It resisted her for a moment, she compressed her lips and then she had it in halves. This tearing was so satisfactory to her that she tore it again and then again. As she tore it, she had a pleasant irrational feeling that she was tearing Mrs. Pembrose. Mr. Graper’s face betrayed his shocked feelings, and the meeting which had become charged with a strong desire to show how entirely it approved of her, made a crowning attempt at applause. They hammered umbrellas on the floor, they clapped hands, they rattled chairs and gave a shrill cheer. A chair was broken.

“I wish,” said Lady Harman when that storm had abated, “you’d come and look at the Hostel. Couldn’t you come next Saturday

afternoon? We could have a stand-up tea and you could see the place and then afterwards your committee and I — and my husband — could make out a real set of rules....”

She went on for some little time longer, she appealed to them with all the strength of her honest purpose to help her to make this possible good thing a real good thing, not to suspect, not to be hard on her— “and my husband” — not to make a difficult thing impossible, it was so easy to do that, and when she finished she was in the happiest possession of her meeting. They came thronging round her with flushed faces and bright eyes, they wanted to come near her, wanted to touch her, wanted to assure her that for her they were quite prepared to live in any kind of place. For her. “You come and talk to us, Lady Harman,” said one; “*we'll* show you.”

“Nobody hasn't told us, Lady Harman, how these Hostels were *yours*.”

“You come and talk to us again, Lady Harman.” ...

They didn't wait for the following Saturday. On Monday morning Mrs. Pembrose received thirty-seven applications to take up rooms.

§13

For the next few years it was to be a matter of recurrent heart-searching for Lady Harman whether she had been profoundly wise or extremely foolish in tearing up that card of projected rules. At the time it seemed the most natural and obvious little action imaginable; it was long before she realized just how symbolical and determining a few movements of the hand and wrist can be. It fixed her line not so much for herself as for others. It put her definitely, much more definitely than her convictions warranted, on the side of freedom against discipline. For indeed her convictions like most of our convictions kept along a tortuous watershed between these two. It is only a few rare extravagant spirits who are wholly for the warp or wholly for the woof of human affairs.

The girls applauded and loved her. At one stroke she had acquired the terrible liability of partisans. They made her their champion and sanction; she was responsible for an endless succession of difficulties that flowered out of their interpretations of her act. These Hostels

that had seemed passing out of her control, suddenly turned back upon her and took possession of her.

And they were never simple difficulties. Right and wrong refused to unravel for her; each side of every issue seemed to be so often in suicidal competition with its antagonist for the inferior case. If the forces of order and discipline showed themselves perennially harsh and narrow, it did not blind her perplexed eyes to the fact that the girls were frequently extremely naughty. She wished very often, she did so wish — they wouldn't be. They set out with a kind of eagerness for conflict.

Their very loyalty to her expressed itself not so much in any sustained attempt to make the hostels successful as in cheering inconveniently, in embarrassing declarations of a preference, in an ingenious and systematic rudeness to anyone suspected of imperfect devotion to her. The first comers into the Hostels were much more like the swelling inrush of a tide than, as Mrs. Pembrose would have preferred, like something laid on through a pipe, and when this lady wanted to go on with the old rules until Sir Isaac had approved of the new, the new arrivals went into the cutting-out room and manifested. Lady Harman had to be telephoned for to allay the manifestation.

And then arose questions of deportment, trivial in themselves, but of the gravest moment for the welfare of the hostels. There was a phrase about "noisy or improper conduct" in the revised rules. Few people would suspect a corridor, ten feet wide and two hundred feet long, as a temptation to impropriety, but Mrs. Pembrose found it was so. The effect of the corridors upon undisciplined girls quite unaccustomed to corridors was for a time most undesirable. For example they were moved to *run* along them violently. They ran races along them, when they overtook they jostled, when they were overtaken they squealed. The average velocity in the corridors of the lady occupants of the Bloomsbury Hostel during the first fortnight of its existence was seven miles an hour. Was that violence? Was that impropriety? The building was all steel construction, but one *heard* even in the Head Matron's room. And then there was the effect of the rows and rows of windows opening out upon the square. The square had some pleasant old trees and it was attractive to look down into their upper branches, where the sparrows mobbed and chattered

perpetually, and over them at the chimneys and turrets and sky signs of the London world. The girls looked. So far they were certainly within their rights. But they did not look modestly, they did not look discreetly. They looked out of wide-open windows, they even sat perilously and protrudingly on the window sills conversing across the façade from window to window, attracting attention, and once to Mrs. Pembrose's certain knowledge a man in the street joined in. It was on a Sunday morning, too, a Bloomsbury Sunday morning!

But graver things were to rouse the preventive prohibitionist in the soul of Mrs. Pembrose. There was the visiting of one another's rooms and cubicles. Most of these young people had never possessed or dreamt of possessing a pretty and presentable apartment to themselves, and the first effect of this was to produce a decorative outbreak, a vigorous framing of photographs and hammering of nails ("dust-gathering litter." — *Mrs. Pembrose*) and then — visiting. They visited at all hours and in all costumes; they sat in groups of three or four, one on the chair and the rest on the bed conversing into late hours, — entirely uncensored conversations too often accompanied by laughter. When Mrs. Pembrose took this to Lady Harman she found her extraordinarily blind to the conceivable evils of this free intercourse. "But Lady Harman!" said Mrs. Pembrose, with a note of horror, "some of them — kiss each other!"

"But if they're fond of each other," said Lady Harman. "I'm sure I don't see — —"

And when the floor matrons were instructed to make little surprise visits up and down the corridors the girls who occupied rooms took to locking their doors — and Lady Harman seemed inclined to sustain their right to do that. The floor matrons did what they could to exercise authority, one or two were former department manageresses, two were ex-elementary teachers, crowded out by younger and more certificated rivals, one, and the most trustworthy one, Mrs. Pembrose found, was an ex-wardress from Holloway. The natural result of these secret talkings and conferrings in the rooms became apparent presently in some mild ragging and in the concoction of petty campaigns of annoyance designed to soften the manners of the more authoritative floor matrons. Here again were perplexing difficulties. If a particular floor matron has a clear

commanding note in her voice, is it or is it not "violent and improper" to say "Haw!" in clear commanding tones whenever you suppose her to be within earshot? As for the door-locking Mrs. Pembrose settled that by carrying off all the keys.

Complaints and incidents drifted towards definite scenes and "situations." Both sides in this continuing conflict of dispositions were so definite, so intolerant, to the mind of the lady with the perplexed dark eyes who mediated. Her reason was so much with the matrons; her sympathies so much with the girls. She did not like the assured brevity of Mrs. Pembrose's judgments and decisions; she had an instinctive perception of the truth that all compact judgments upon human beings are unjust judgments. The human spirit is but poorly adapted either to rule or to be ruled, and the honesty of all the efforts of Mrs. Pembrose and her staffs — for soon the hostels at Sydenham and West Kensington were open — were marred not merely by arrogance but by an irritability, a real hostility to complexities and difficulties and resisters and troublesome characters. And it did not help the staff to a triumphant achievement of its duties that the girls had an exaggerated perception that Lady Harman's heart was on their side.

And presently the phrase "weeding out" crept into the talk of Mrs. Pembrose. Some of the girls were being marked as ringleaders, foci of mischief, characters it was desirable to "get rid of." Confronted with it Lady Harman perceived she was absolutely opposed to this idea of getting rid of anyone — unless it was Mrs. Pembrose. She liked her various people; she had no desire for a whittled success with a picked remnant of subdued and deferential employees. She put that to Mr. Brumley and Mr. Brumley was indignant and eloquent in his concurrence. A certain Mary Trunk, a dark young woman with a belief that it became her to have a sweet disorder in her hair, and a large blond girl named Lucy Baxandall seemed to be the chief among the bad influences of the Bloomsbury hostel, and they took it upon themselves to appeal to Lady Harman against Mrs. Pembrose. They couldn't, they complained, "do a Thing right for her...."

So the tangle grew.

Presently Lady Harman had to go to the Riviera with Sir Isaac and when she came back Mary Trunk and Lucy Baxandall had vanished

from both the International Hostel and the International Stores. She tried to find out why, and she was confronted by inadequate replies and enigmatical silences. “They decided to go,” said Mrs. Pembrose, and dropped “fortunately” after that statement. She disavowed any exact knowledge of their motives. But she feared the worst. Susan Burnet was uninforming. Whatever had happened had failed to reach Alice Burnet’s ears. Lady Harman could not very well hold a commission of enquiry into the matter, but she had an uneasy sense of a hidden campaign of dislodgement. And about the corridors and cubicles and club rooms there was she thought a difference, a discretion, a flavour of subjugation....

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

The Last Crisis

§1

It would be quite easy for anyone with the knack of reserve to go on from this point with a history of Lady Harman that would present her as practically a pure philanthropist. For from these beginnings she was destined to proceed to more and more knowledge and understanding and clear purpose and capable work in this interesting process of collective regrouping, this process which may even at last justify Mr. Brumley's courageous interpretations and prove to be an early experiment in the beginning of a new social order. Perhaps some day there will be an official biography, another addition to the inscrutable records of British public lives, in which all these things will be set out with tact and dignity. Horatio Blenker or Adolphus Blenker may survive to be entrusted with this congenial task. She will be represented as a tall inanimate person pursuing one clear benevolent purpose in life from her very beginning, and Sir Isaac and her relations with Sir Isaac will be rescued from reality. The book will be illustrated by a number of carefully posed photographer's photographs of her, studies of the Putney house and perhaps an unappetizing woodcut of her early home at Penge. The aim of all British biography is to conceal. A great deal of what we have already told will certainly not figure in any such biography, and still more certainly will the things we have yet to tell be missing.

Lady Harman was indeed only by the force of circumstances and intermittently a pure philanthropist, and it is with the intercalary passages of less exalted humanity that we are here chiefly concerned. At times no doubt she did really come near to filling and fitting and becoming identical with that figure of the pure philanthropist which was her world-ward face, but for the most part that earnest and dignified figure concealed more or less extensive spaces of nothingness, while the errant soul of the woman within strayed into less exalted ways of thinking.

There were times when she was almost sure of herself — Mrs. Hubert Plessington could scarcely have been surer of herself, and times when the whole magnificent project of constructing a new urban social life out of those difficult hostels, a collective urban life that should be liberal and free, broke into grimacing pieces and was the most foolish of experiments. Her struggles with Mrs. Pembrose thereupon assumed a quality of mere bickering and she could even doubt whether Mrs. Pembrose wasn't justified in her attitude and wiser by her very want of generosity. She felt then something childish in the whole undertaking that otherwise escaped her, she was convicted of an absurd self-importance, she discovered herself an ignorant woman availing herself of her husband's power and wealth to attempt presumptuous experiments. In these moods of disillusionment, her mind went adrift and was driven to and fro from discontent to discontent; she would find herself taking soundings and seeking an anchorage upon the strangest, most unfamiliar shoals. And in her relations and conflicts with her husband there was a smouldering shame for her submissions to him that needed only a phase of fatigue to become acute. So long as she believed in her hostels and her mission that might be endured, but forced back upon her more personal life its hideousness stood unclothed. Mr. Brumley could sometimes reassure her by a rhetorical effort upon the score of her hostels, but most of her more intimate and inner life was not, for very plain reasons, to be shown to him. He was full of the intention of generous self-denials, but she had long since come to measure the limits of his self-denial....

Mr. Brumley was a friend in whom smouldered a love, capable she knew quite clearly of tormented and tormenting jealousies. It would be difficult to tell, and she certainly could never have told how far she knew of this by instinct, how far it came out of rapid intuitions from things seen and heard. But she understood that she dared not let a single breath of encouragement, a hint of physical confidence, reach that banked-up glow. A sentinel discretion in her brain was always on the watch for that danger, and that restraint, that added deliberate inexpressiveness, kept them most apart, when most her spirit cried out for companionship.

The common quality of all these moods of lassitude was a

desolating loneliness. She had at times a need that almost overwhelmed her to be intimate, to be comforted and taken up out of the bleak harsh disappointments and stresses of her customary life. At times after Sir Isaac had either been too unloving or too loving, or when the girls or the matrons had achieved some new tangle of mutual unreasonableness, or when her faith failed, she would lie in the darkness of her own room with her soul crying out for — how can one put it? — the touch of other soul-stuff. And perhaps it was the constant drift of Mr. Brumley's talk, the little suggestions that fell drop by drop into her mind from his, that disposed her to believe that this aching sense of solitude in the void was to be assuaged by love, by some marvel of close exaltation that one might reach through a lover. She had told Mr. Brumley long ago that she would never let herself think of love, she still maintained to him that attitude of resolute aloofness, but almost without noting what she did, she was tampering now in her solitude with the seals of that locked chamber. She became secretly curious about love. Perhaps there was something in it of which she knew nothing. She found herself drawn towards poetry, found a new attraction in romance; more and more did she dally with the idea that there was some unknown beauty in the world, something to which her eyes might presently open, something deeper and sweeter than any thing she had ever known, close at hand, something to put all the world into proportion for her.

In a little while she no longer merely tampered with these seals, for quite silently the door had opened and she was craning in. This love it seemed to her might after all be so strange a thing that it goes unsuspected and yet fills the whole world of a human soul. An odd grotesque passage in a novel by Wilkins gave her that idea. He compared love to electricity, of all things in the world; that throbbing life amidst the atoms that we now draw upon for light, warmth, connexion, the satisfaction of a thousand wants and the cure of a thousand ills. There it is and always has been in the life of man, and yet until a century ago it worked unsuspected, was known only for a disregarded oddity of amber, a crackling in frost-dry hair and thunder....

And then she remembered how Mr. Brumley had once broken into

a panegyric of love. “It makes life a different thing. It is like the home-coming of something lost. All this dispersed perplexing world *centres*. Think what true love means; to live always in the mind of another and to have that other living always in your mind.... Only there can be no restraints, no reserves, no admission of prior rights. One must feel *safe* of one’s welcome and freedoms....”

Wasn’t it worth the risk of almost any breach of boundaries to get to such a light as that?...

She hid these musings from every human being, she was so shy with them, she hid them almost from herself. Rarely did they have their way with her and when they did, presently she would accuse herself of slackness and dismiss them and urge herself to fresh practicalities in her work. But her work was not always at hand, Sir Isaac’s frequent relapses took her abroad to places where she found herself in the midst of beautiful scenery with little to do and little to distract her from these questionings. Then such thoughts would inundate her.

This feeling of the unsatisfactoriness of life, of incompleteness and solitariness, was not of that fixed sort that definitely indicates its demand. Under its oppression she tried the idea of love, but she also tried certain other ideas. Very often this vague appeal had the quality of a person, sometimes a person shrouded in night, a soundless whisper, the unseen lover who came to Psyche in the darkness. And sometimes that person became more distinct, less mystic and more companionable. Perhaps because imaginations have a way of following the line of least resistance, it took upon itself something of the form, something of the voice and bearing of Mr. Brumley. She recoiled from her own thoughts when she discovered herself wondering what manner of lover Mr. Brumley might make — if suddenly she lowered her defences, freed his suffocating pleading, took him to herself.

In my anxiety to draw Mr. Brumley as he was, I have perhaps a little neglected to show him as Lady Harman saw him. We have employed the inconsiderate verisimilitude of a novelist repudiating romance in his portrayal; towards her he kept a better face. He was at least a very honest lover and there was little disingenuousness in the flow of fine mental attitudes that met her; the thought and presence of

her made him fine; as soon could he have turned his shady side towards the sun. And she was very ready and eager to credit him with generous qualities. We of his club and circle, a little assisted perhaps by Max Beerbohm's diabolical index finger, may have found and been not unwilling to find his face chiefly expressive of a kind of empty alertness; but when it was turned to her its quite pleasantly modelled features glowed and it was transfigured. So far as she was concerned, with Sir Isaac as foil, he was real enough and good enough for her. And by the virtue of that unlovely contrast even a certain ineffectiveness — became infinite delicacy....

The thought of Mr. Brumley in that relation and to that extent of clearness came but rarely into her consciousness, and when it did it was almost immediately dismissed again. It was the most fugitive of proffered consolations. And it is to be remarked that it made its most successful apparitions when Mr. Brumley was far away, and by some weeks or months of separation a little blurred and forgotten....

And sometimes this unrest of her spirit, this unhappiness turned her in quite another direction as it seemed and she had thoughts of religion. With a deepened shame she would go seeking into that other, that greater indelicacy, from which her upbringing had divorced her mind. She would even secretly pray. Greatly daring she fled on several occasions from her visitation of the hostels or slipped out of her home, and evading Mr. Brumley, went once to the Brompton Oratory, once or twice to the Westminster Cathedral and then having discovered Saint Paul's, to Saint Paul's in search of this nameless need. It was a need that no plain and ugly little place of worship would satisfy. It was a need that demanded choir and organ. She went to Saint Paul's haphazard when her mood and opportunity chanced together and there in the afternoons she found a wonder of great music and chanting voices, and she would kneel looking up into those divine shadows and perfect archings and feel for a time assuaged, wonderfully assuaged. Sometimes, there, she seemed to be upon the very verge of grasping that hidden reality which makes all things plain. Sometimes it seemed to her that this very indulgence was the hidden reality.

She could never be sure in her mind whether these secret worshippings helped or hampered her in her daily living. They

helped her to a certain disregard of annoyances and indignities and so far they were good, but they also helped towards a more general indifference. She might have told these last experiences to Mr. Brumley if she had not felt them to be indescribable. They could not be half told. They had to be told completely or they were altogether untellable. So she had them hid, and at once accepted and distrusted the consolation they brought her, and went on with the duties and philanthropies that she had chosen as her task in the world.

§2

One day in Lent — it was nearly three years after the opening of the first hostel — she went to Saint Paul's.

She was in a mood of great discouragement; the struggle between Mrs. Pembrose and the Bloomsbury girls had suddenly reopened in an acute form and Sir Isaac, who was sickening again after a period of better health, had become strangely restless and irritable and hostile to her. He had thwarted her unusually and taken the side of the matrons in a conflict in which Susan Burnet's sister Alice was now distinguished as the chief of the malcontents. The new trouble seemed to Lady Harman to be traceable in one direction to that ardent Unionist, Miss Babs Wheeler, under the spell of whose round-faced, blue-eyed, distraught personality Alice had altogether fallen. Miss Babs Wheeler was fighting for the Union; she herself lived at Highbury with her mother, and Alice was her chosen instrument in the hostels. The Union had always been a little against the lady-like instincts of many of the waitresses; they felt strikes were vulgar and impaired their social standing, and this feeling had been greatly strengthened by irruptions of large contingents of shop assistants from various department stores. The Bloomsbury Hostel in particular now accommodated a hundred refined and elegant hands — they ought rather to be called figures — from the great Oxford Street costume house of Eustace and Mills, young people with a tall sweeping movement and an elevation of chin that had become nearly instinctive, and a silent yet evident intention to find the International girls "low" at the slightest provocation. It is only too easy for poor humanity under the irritation of that tacit superiority to respond with

just the provocation anticipated. What one must regretfully speak of as the vulgar section of the International girls had already put itself in the wrong by a number of aggressive acts before the case came to Lady Harman's attention. Mrs. Pembrose seized the occasion for weeding on a courageous scale, and Miss Alice Burnet and three of her dearest friends were invited to vacate their rooms "pending redecoration".

With only too much plausibility the threatened young women interpreted this as an expulsion, and declined to remove their boxes and personal belongings. Miss Babs Wheeler thereupon entered the Bloomsbury Hostel, and in the teeth of three express prohibitions from Mrs. Pembrose, went a little up the staircase and addressed a confused meeting in the central hall. There was loud and continuous cheering for Lady Harman at intervals during this incident. Thereupon Mrs. Pembrose demanded sweeping dismissals, not only from the Hostels but the shops as an alternative to her resignation, and Lady Harman found herself more perplexed than ever....

Georgina Sawbridge had contrived to mingle herself in an entirely characteristic way in these troubles by listening for a brief period to an abstract of her sister's perplexities, then demanding to be made Director-General of the whole affair, refusing to believe this simple step impossible and retiring in great dudgeon to begin a series of letters of even more than sisterly bitterness. And Mr. Brumley when consulted had become dangerously sentimental. Under these circumstances Lady Harman's visit to Saint Paul's had much of the quality of a flight.

It was with an unwonted sense of refuge that she came from the sombre stress and roar of London without into the large hushed spaces of the cathedral. The door closed behind her — and all things changed. Here was meaning, coherence, unity. Here instead of a pelting confusion of movements and motives was a quiet concentration upon the little focus of light about the choir, the gentle complete dominance of a voice intoning. She slipped along the aisle and into the nave and made her way to a seat. How good this was! Outside she had felt large, awkwardly responsible, accessible to missiles, a distressed conspicuous thing; within this living peace she suddenly became no more than one of a tranquil hushed community

of small black-clad Lenten people; she found a chair and knelt and felt she vanished even from her own consciousness....

How beautiful was this place! She looked up presently at the great shadowy arcs far above her, so easy, so gracious that it seemed they had not so much been built by men as shaped by circling flights of angels. The service, a little clustering advance of voices unsustained by any organ, mingled in her mind with the many-pointed glow of candles. And then into this great dome of worship and beauty, like a bed of voices breaking into flower, like a springtime breeze of sound, came Allegri's Miserere....

Her spirit clung to this mood of refuge. It seemed as though the disorderly, pugnacious, misunderstanding universe had opened and shown her luminous mysteries. She had a sense of penetration. All that conflict, that jar of purposes and motives, was merely superficial; she had left it behind her. For a time she had no sense of effort in keeping hold of this, only of attainment, she drifted happily upon the sweet sustaining sounds, and then — then the music ceased. She came back into herself. Close to her a seated man stirred and sighed. She tried to get back her hold upon that revelation but it had gone. Inexorably, opaque, impenetrable doors closed softly on her moment of vision....

All about her was the stir of departure.

She walked out slowly into the cold March daylight, to the leaden greys, the hurrying black shapes, the chaotic afternoon traffic of London. She paused on the steps, still but half reawakened. A passing omnibus obtruded the familiar inscription, "International Stores for Staminal Bread."

She turned like one who remembers, to where her chauffeur stood waiting.

§3

As her motor car, with a swift smoothness, carried her along the Embankment towards the lattice bar of Charing Cross bridge and the remoter towers of the Houses of Parliament, grey now and unsubstantial against the bright western sky, her mind came back slowly to her particular issues in life. But they were no longer the big

exasperatingly important things that had seemed to hold her life by a hundred painful hooks before she went into the cathedral. They were small still under this dome of evening, small even by the measure of the grey buildings to the right of her and the warm lit river to her left, by the measure of the clustering dark barges, the teeming trams, the streaming crowds of people, the note of the human process that sounds so loud there. She felt small even to herself, for the touch of beauty saves us from our own personalities, makes Gods of us to our own littleness. She passed under the railway bridge at Charing Cross, watched the square cluster of Westminster's pinnacles rise above her until they were out of sight overhead, ran up the little incline and round into Parliament Square, and was presently out on the riverside embankment again with the great chimneys of Chelsea smoking athwart the evening gold. And thence with a sudden effect of skies shut and curtains drawn she came by devious ways to the Fulham Road and the crowding traffic of Putney Bridge and Putney High Street and so home.

Snagsby, assisted by a new under-butler, a lean white-faced young man with red hair, received her ceremoniously and hovered serviceably about her. On the hall table lay three or four visiting cards of no importance, some circulars and two letters. She threw the circulars into the basket placed for them and opened her first letter. It was from Georgina; it was on several sheets and it began, "I still cannot believe that you refuse to give me the opportunity the director-generalship of your hostels means to me. It is not as if you yourself had either the time or the abilities necessary for them yourself; you haven't, and there is something almost dog-in-the-manger-ish to my mind in the way in which you will not give me my chance, the chance I have always been longing for — —"

At this point Lady Harman put down this letter for subsequent perusal and took its companion, which was addressed in an unfamiliar hand. It was from Alice Burnet and it was written in that sprawling hand and diffused style natural to a not very well educated person with a complicated story to tell in a state of unusual emotion. But the gist was in the first few sentences which announced that Alice had been evicted from the hostel. "I found my things on the pavement," wrote Alice.

Lady Harman became aware of Snagsby still hovering at hand.

"Mrs. Pembrose, my lady, came here this afternoon," he said, when he had secured her attention.

"Came here."

"She asked for you, my lady, and when I told her you were not at 'ome, she asked if she might see Sir Isaac."

"And did she?"

"Sir Isaac saw her, my lady. They 'ad tea in the study."

"I wish I had been at home to see her," said Lady Harman, after a brief interval of reflection.

She took her two letters and turned to the staircase. They were still in her hand when presently she came into her husband's study. "I don't want a light," he said, as she put out her hand to the electric switch. His voice had a note of discontent, but he was sitting in the armchair against the window so that she could not see his features.

"How are you feeling this afternoon?" she asked.

"I'm feeling all right," he answered testily. He seemed to dislike inquiries after his health almost as much as he disliked neglect.

She came and stood by him and looked out from the dusk of the room into the garden darkening under a red-barred sky. "There is fresh trouble between Mrs. Pembrose and the girls," she said.

"She's been telling me about it."

"She's been here?"

"Pretty nearly an hour," said Sir Isaac.

Lady Harman tried to imagine that hour's interview on the spur of the moment and failed. She came to her immediate business. "I think," she said, "that she has been — high-handed...."

"You would," said Sir Isaac after an interval.

His tone was hostile, so hostile that it startled her.

"Don't you?"

He shook his head. "My idees and your idees — or anyhow the idees you've got hold of — somewhere — somehow —— I don't know where you *get* your idees. We haven't got the same idees, anyhow. You got to keep order in these places — anyhow...."

She perceived that she was in face of a prepared position. "I don't think," she threw out, "that she does keep order. She represses — and irritates. She gets an idea that certain girls are against her...."

“And you get an idea she’s against certain girls....”

“Practically she expels them. She has in fact just turned one out into the street.”

“You got to expel ‘em. You got to. You can’t run these places on sugar and water. There’s a sort of girl, a sort of man, who makes trouble. There’s a sort makes strikes, makes mischief, gets up grievances. You got to get rid of ’em somehow. You got to be practical somewhere. You can’t go running these places on a lot of littry idees and all that. It’s no good.”

The phrase “littry idees” held Lady Harman’s attention for a moment. But she could not follow it up to its implications, because she wanted to get on with the issue she had in hand.

“I want to be consulted about these expulsions. Girl after girl has been sent away — —”

Sir Isaac’s silhouette was obstinate.

“She knows her business,” he said.

He seemed to feel the need of a justification. “They shouldn’t make trouble.”

On that they rested for a little while in silence. She began to realize with a gathering emotion that this matter was far more crucial than she had supposed. She had been thinking only of the reinstatement of Alice Burnet, she hadn’t yet estimated just what that overriding of Mrs. Pembrose might involve.

“I don’t want to have any girl go until I have looked into her case. It’s —— It’s vital.”

“She says she can’t run the show unless she has some power.”

Neither spoke for some seconds. She had the feeling of hopeless vexation that might come to a child that has wandered into a trap. “I thought,” she began. “These hostels — —”

She stopped short.

Sir Isaac’s hand tightened on the arm of his chair. “I started ’em to please you,” he said. “I didn’t start ’em to please your friends.”

She turned her eyes quickly to his grey up-looking face.

“I didn’t start them for you and that chap Brumley to play about with,” he amplified. “And now you know about it, Elly.”

The thing had found her unprepared. “As if — —” she said at last.

“As if!” he mocked.

She stood quite still staring blankly at this unmanageable situation. He was the first to break silence. He lifted one hand and dropped it again with a dead impact on the arm of his chair. “I got the things,” he said, “and there they are. Anyhow, — they got to be run in a proper way.”

She made no immediate answer. She was seeking desperately for phrases that escaped her. “Do you think,” she began at last. “Do you really think —— ?”

He stared out of the window. He answered in tones of excessive reasonableness: “I didn’t start these hostels to be run by you and your — friend.” He gave the sentence the quality of an ultimatum, an irreducible minimum.

“He’s my friend,” she explained, “only — because he does work — for the hostels.”

Sir Isaac seemed for a moment to attempt to consider that. Then he relapsed upon his predetermined attitude. “God!” he exclaimed, “but I have been a fool!”

She decided that that must be ignored.

“I care more for those hostels than I care for anything — anything else in the world,” she told him. “I want them to work — I want them to succeed.... And then — —”

He listened in sceptical silence.

“Mr. Brumley is nothing to me but a helper. He —— How can you imagine, Isaac —— ? *I!* How can you dare? To suggest —— !”

“Very well,” said Sir Isaac and reflected and made his old familiar sound with his teeth. “Run the hostels without him, Elly,” he propounded. “Then I’ll believe.”

She perceived that suddenly she was faced by a test or a bargain. In the background of her mind the figure of Mr. Brumley, as she had seen him last, in brown and with a tie rather to one side, protested vainly. She did what she could for him on the spur of the moment. “But,” she said, “he’s so helpful. He’s so — harmless.”

“That’s as may be,” said Sir Isaac and breathed heavily.

“How can one suddenly turn on a friend?”

“I don’t see that you ever wanted a friend,” said Sir Isaac.

“He’s been so good. It isn’t reasonable, Isaac. When anyone has — *slaved*.”

“I don’t say he isn’t a good sort of chap,” said Sir Isaac, with that same note of almost superhuman rationality, “only — he isn’t going to run my hostels.”

“But what do you mean, Isaac?”

“I mean you got to choose.”

He waited as if he expected her to speak and then went on.

“What it comes to is this, Elly, I’m about sick of that chap. I’m sick of him.” He paused for a moment because his breath was short. “If you go on with the hostels he’s — Phew — got to mizzle. *Then* — I don’t mind — if you want that girl Burnet brought back in triumph.... It’ll make Mrs. Pembrose chuck the whole blessed show, you know, but I say — I don’t mind.... Only in that case, I don’t want to see or hear — or hear about — Phew — or hear about your Mr. Brumley again. And I don’t want you to, either.... I’m being pretty reasonable and pretty patient over this, with people — people — talking right and left. Still, — there’s a limit.... You’ve been going on — if I didn’t know you were an innocent — in a way ... I don’t want to talk about that. There you are, Elly.”

It seemed to her that she had always expected this to happen. But however much she had expected it to happen she was still quite unprepared with any course of action. She wanted with an equal want of limitation to keep both Mr. Brumley and her hostels.

“But Isaac,” she said. “What do you suspect? What do you think? This friendship has been going on —— How can I end it suddenly?”

“Don’t you be too innocent, Elly. You know and I know perfectly well what there is between men and women. I don’t make out I know — anything I don’t know. I don’t pretend you are anything but straight. Only — —”

He suddenly gave way to his irritation. His self-control vanished. “Damn it!” he cried, and his panting breath quickened; “the thing’s got to end. As if I didn’t understand! As if I didn’t understand!”

She would have protested again but his voice held her. “It’s got to end. It’s got to end. Of course you haven’t done anything, of course you don’t know anything or think of anything.... Only here I am ill.... *You* wouldn’t be sorry if I got worse.... *You* can wait; you can.... All right! All right! And there you stand, irritating me — arguing. You know — it chokes me.... Got to end, I tell you.... Got to end....”

He beat at the arms of his chair and then put a hand to his throat. "Go away," he cried to her. "Go to hell!"

§4

I cannot tell whether the reader is a person of swift decisions or one of the newer race of doubters; if he be the latter he will the better understand how Lady Harman did in the next two days make up her mind definitely and conclusively to two entirely opposed lines of action. She decided that her relations with Mr. Brumley, innocent as they were, must cease in the interests of the hostels and her struggle with Mrs. Pembrose, and she decided with quite equal certainty that her husband's sudden veto upon these relations was an intolerable tyranny that must be resisted with passionate indignation. Also she was surprised to find how difficult it was now to think of parting from Mr. Brumley. She made her way to these precarious conclusions and on from whichever it was to the other through a jungle of conflicting considerations and feelings. When she thought of Mrs. Pembrose and more particularly of the probable share of Mrs. Pembrose in her husband's objection to Mr. Brumley her indignation kindled. She perceived Mrs. Pembrose as a purely evil personality, as a spirit of espionage, distrust, calculated treachery and malignant intervention, as all that is evil in rule and officialism, and a vast wave of responsibility for all those difficult and feeble and likeable young women who elbowed and giggled and misunderstood and blundered and tried to live happily under the commanding stresses of Mrs. Pembrose's austerity carried her away. She had her duty to do to them and it overrode every other duty. If a certain separation from Mr. Brumley's assiduous aid was demanded, was it too great a sacrifice? And no sooner was that settled than the whole question reopened with her indignant demand why anyone at any price had the right to prohibit a friendship that she had so conscientiously kept innocent. If she gave way to this outrageous restriction to-day, what fresh limitations might not Sir Isaac impose to-morrow? And now, she was so embarrassed in her struggle by his health. She could not go to him and have things out with him, she could not directly defy him, because that might mean a suffocating seizure for him....

It was entirely illogical, no doubt, but extremely natural for Lady Harman to decide that she must communicate her decision, whichever one it was, to Mr. Brumley in a personal interview. She wrote to him and arranged to meet and talk to him in Kew Gardens, and with a feeling of discretion went thither not in the automobile but in a taxi-cab. And so delicately now were her two irrevocable decisions balanced in her mind that twice on her way to Kew she swayed over from one to the other.

Arrived at the gardens she found herself quite disinclined to begin the announcement of either decision. She was quite exceptionally glad to see Mr. Brumley; he was dressed in a new suit of lighter brown that became him very well indeed, the day was warm and bright, a day of scyllas and daffodils and snow-upon-the-mountains and green-powdered trees and frank sunshine, — and the warmth of her feelings for her friend merged indistinguishably with the springtime stir and glow. They walked across the bright turf together in a state of unjustifiable happiness, purring little admirations at the ingenious elegance of creation at its best as gardeners set it out for our edification, and the whole tenor of Lady Harman's mind was to make this occasion an escape from the particular business that had brought her thither.

"We'll look for daffodils away there towards the river under the trees," said Mr. Brumley, and it seemed preposterous not to enjoy those daffodils at least before she broached the great issue between an irresistible force and an immoveable post, that occupied her mental background.

Mr. Brumley was quite at his best that afternoon. He was happy, gay and deferential; he made her realize by his every tone and movement that if he had his choice of the whole world that afternoon and all its inhabitants and everything, there was no other place in which he would be, no other companion, no other occupation than this he had. He talked of spring and flowers, quoted poets and added the treasures of a well-stored mind to the amenities of the day. "It's good to take a holiday at times," he said, and after that it was more difficult than ever to talk about the trouble of the hostels.

She was able to do this at last while they were having tea in the little pavilion near the pagoda. It was the old pavilion, the one that

Miss Alimony's suffragettes were afterwards to burn down in order to demonstrate the relentless logic of women. They did it in the same eventful week when Miss Alimony was, she declared, so nearly carried off by White Slave Traders (disguised as nurses but, fortunately for her, smelling of brandy) from the Brixton Temperance Bazaar. But in those simpler days the pavilion still existed; it was tended by agreeable waiters whose evening dress was mitigated by cheerful little straw hats, and an enormous multitude of valiant and smutty Cockney sparrows chirped and squeaked and begged and fluttered and fought, venturing to the very tables and feet of the visitors. And here, a little sobered from their first elation by much walking about and the presence of jam and watercress, Mr. Brumley and Lady Harman could think again of the work they were doing for the reconstitution of society upon collective lines.

She began to tell him of the conflict between Mrs. Pembrose and Alice Burnet that threatened the latter with extinction. She found it more convenient to talk at first as though the strands of decision were still all in her hands; afterwards she could go on to the peculiar complication of the situation through the unexpected weakening of her position in relation to Mrs. Pembrose. She described the particular of the new trouble, the perplexing issue between the "lady-like," for which as a feminine ideal there was so much to be said on the one hand and the "genial," which was also an admirable quality, on the other. "You see," she said, "it's very rude to cough at people and make noises, but then it's so difficult to explain to the others that it's equally rude to go past people and pretend not to see or hear them. Girls of that sort always seem so much more underbred when they are trying to be superior than when they are not; they get so stiff and — exasperating. And this keeping out of the Union because it isn't genteel, it's the very essence of the trouble with all these employees. We've discussed that so often. Those drapers' girls seem full of such cold, selfish, base, pretentious notions; much more full even than our refreshment girls. And then as if it wasn't all difficult enough comes Mrs. Pembrose and her wardresses doing all sorts of hard, clumsy things, and one can't tell them just how little they are qualified to judge good behaviour. Their one idea of discipline is to speak to people as if they were servants and to be distant and

crushing. And long before one can do anything come trouble and tart replies and reports of “gross impertinence” and expulsion. We keep on expelling girls. This is the fourth time girls have had to go. What is to become of them? I know this Burnet girl quite well as you know. She’s just a human, kindly little woman.... She’ll feel disgraced.... How can I let a thing like that occur?”

She spread her hands apart over the tea things.

Mr. Brumley held his chin in his hand and said “Um” and looked judicial, and admired Lady Harman very much, and tried to grasp the whole trouble and wring out a solution. He made some admirable generalizations about the development of a new social feeling in response to changed conditions, but apart from a remark that Mrs. Pembrose was all organization and no psychology, and quite the wrong person for her position, he said nothing in the slightest degree contributory to the particular drama under consideration. From that utterance, however, Lady Harman would no doubt have gone on to the slow, tentative but finally conclusive statement of the new difficulty that had arisen out of her husband’s jealousy and to the discussion of the more fundamental decisions it forced upon her, if a peculiar blight had not fallen upon their conversation and robbed it at last of even an appearance of ease.

This blight crept upon their minds.... It began first with Mr. Brumley.

Mr. Brumley was rarely free from self-consciousness. Whenever he was in a restaurant or any such place of assembly, then whatever he did or whatever he said he had a kind of surplus attention, a quickening of the ears, a wandering of the eyes, to the groups and individuals round about him. And while he had seemed entirely occupied with Lady Harman, he had nevertheless been aware from the outset that a dingy and inappropriate-looking man in a bowler hat and a ready-made suit of grey, was listening to their conversation from an adjacent table.

This man had entered the pavilion oddly. He had seemed to dodge in and hesitate. Then he had chosen his table rather deliberately — and he kept looking, and trying not to seem to look.

That was not all. Mr. Brumley’s expression was overcast by the effort to recall something. He sat elbows on table and leant forward

towards Lady Harman and at the blossom-laden trees outside the pavilion and trifled with two fingers on his lips and spoke between them in a voice that was speculative and confidential and muffled and mysterious. “Where have I seen our friend to the left before?”

She had been aware of his distraction for some time.

She glanced at the man and found nothing remarkable in him. She tried to go on with her explanations.

Mr. Brumley appeared attentive and then he said again: “But where have I seen him?”

And from that point their talk was blighted; the heart seemed to go out of her. Mr. Brumley she felt was no longer taking in what she was saying. At the time she couldn’t in any way share his preoccupation. But what had been difficult before became hopeless and she could no longer feel that even presently she would be able to make him understand the peculiar alternatives before her. They drifted back by the great conservatory and the ornamental water, aripple with ducks and swans, to the gates where his taxi waited.

Even then it occurred to her that she ought to tell him something of the new situation. But now their time was running out, she would have to be concise, and what wife could ever say abruptly and offhand that frequent fact, “Oh, by the by, my husband is jealous of you”? Then she had an impulse to tell him simply, without any explanation at all, that for a time he must not meet her. And while she gathered herself together for that, his preoccupations intervened again.

He stood up in the open taxi-cab and looked back.

“That chap,” he said, “is following us.”

§5

The effect of this futile interview upon Lady Harman was remarkable. She took to herself an absurd conviction that this inconclusiveness had been an achievement. Confronted by a dilemma, she had chosen neither horn and assumed an attitude of inoffensive defiance. Springs in England vary greatly in their character; some are easterly and quarrelsome, some are north-westerly and wetly disastrous, a bleak invasion from the ocean; some

are but the broken beginnings of what are not so much years as stretches of meteorological indecision. This particular spring was essentially a south-westerly spring, good and friendly, showery but in the lightest way and so softly reassuring as to be gently hilarious. It was a spring to get into the blood of anyone; it gave Lady Harman the feeling that Mrs. Pembrose would certainly be dealt with properly and without unreasonable delay by Heaven, and that meanwhile it was well to take the good things of existence as cheerfully as possible. The good things she took were very innocent things. Feeling unusually well and enjoying great draughts of spring air and sunshine were the chief. And she took them only for three brief days. She carried the children down to Black Strand to see her daffodils, and her daffodils surpassed expectation. There was a delirium of blackthorn in the new wild garden she had annexed from the woods and a close carpet of encouraged wild primroses. Even the Putney garden was full of happy surprises. The afternoon following her visit to Black Strand was so warm that she had tea with her family in great gaiety on the lawn under the cedar. Her offspring were unusually sweet that day, they had new blue cotton sunbonnets, and Baby and Annette at least succeeded in being pretty. And Millicent, under the new Swiss governess, had acquired, it seemed quite suddenly, a glib colloquial French that somehow reconciled one to the extreme thinness and shapelessness of her legs.

Then an amazing new fact broke into this gleam of irrational contentment, a shattering new fact. She found she was being watched. She discovered that dingy man in the grey suit following her.

The thing came upon her one afternoon. She was starting out for a talk with Georgina. She felt so well, so confident of the world that it was intolerable to think of Georgina harbouring resentment; she resolved she would go and have things out with her and make it clear just how impossible it was to impose a Director-General upon her husband. She became aware of the man in grey as she walked down Putney Hill.

She recognized him at once. He was at the corner of Redfern Road and still unaware of her existence. He was leaning against the wall with the habituated pose of one who is frequently obliged to

lean against walls for long periods of time, and he was conversing in an elucidatory manner with the elderly crossing-sweeper who still braves the motor-cars at that point. He became aware of her emergence with a start, he ceased to lean and became observant.

He was one of those men whose face suggests the word “muzzle,” with an erect combative nose and a forward slant of the body from the rather inturned feet. He wore an observant bowler hat a little too small for him, and there is something about the tail of his jacket — as though he had been docked.

She passed at a stride to the acceptance of Mr. Brumley’s hitherto incredible suspicion. Her pulses quickened. It came into her head to see how far this man would go in following her. She went on demurely down the hill leaving him quite unaware that she had seen him.

She was amazed, and after her first belief incredulous again. Could Isaac be going mad? At the corner she satisfied herself of the grey man’s proximity and hailed a taxi-cab. The man in grey came nosing across to listen to her directions and hear where she was going.

“Please drive up the hill until I tell you,” she said, “slowly” — and had the satisfaction, if one may call it a satisfaction, of seeing the grey man dive towards the taxi-cab rank. Then she gave herself up to hasty scheming.

She turned her taxi-cab abruptly when she was certain of being followed, went back into London, turned again and made for Westridge’s great stores in Oxford Street. The grey man ticked up two pences in pursuit. All along the Brompton Road he pursued her with his nose like the jib of a ship.

She was excited and interested, and not nearly so shocked as she ought to have been. It didn’t somehow jar as it ought to have jarred with her idea of Sir Isaac. Watched by a detective! This then was the completion of the conditional freedom she had won by smashing that window. She might have known....

She was astonished and indignant but not nearly so entirely indignant as a noble heroine should have been. She was certainly not nearly so queenly as Mrs. Sawbridge would have shown herself under such circumstances. It may have been due to some plebeian

strain in her father's blood that over and above her proper indignation she was extremely interested. She wanted to know what manner of man it was whose nose was just appearing above the window edge of the taxi-cab behind. In her inexperienced inattention she had never yet thought it was possible that men could be hired to follow women.

She sat a little forward, thinking.

How far would he follow her and was it possible to shake him off? Or are such followers so expert that once upon a scent, they are like the Indian hunting dog, inevitable. She must see.

She paid off her taxi at Westridge's and, with the skill of her sex, observed him by the window reflection, counting the many doors of the establishment. Would he try to watch them all? There were also some round the corner. No, he was going to follow her in. She had a sudden desire, an unreasonable desire, perhaps an instinctive desire to see that man among baby-linen. It was in her power for a time to wreathe him with incongruous objects. This was the sort of fancy a woman must control....

He stalked her with an unreal sang-froid. He ambushed behind a display of infants' socks. Driven to buy by a saleswoman he appeared to be demanding improbable varieties of infant's socks.

Are these watchers and trackers sometimes driven to buying things in shops? If so, strange items must figure in accounts of expenses. If he bought those socks, would they appear in Sir Isaac's bill? She felt a sudden craving for the sight of Sir Isaac's Private Detective Account. And as for the articles themselves, what became of them? She knew her husband well enough to feel sure that if he paid for anything he would insist upon having it. But where — where did he keep them?...

But now the man's back was turned; he was no doubt improvising paternity and an extreme fastidiousness in baby's footwear —— Now for it! — through departments of deepening indelicacy to the lift!

But he had considered that possibility of embarrassment; he got round by some other way, he was just in time to hear the lift gate clash upon a calmly preoccupied lady, who still seemed as unaware of his existence as the sky.

He was running upstairs, when she descended again, without getting out; he stopped at the sight of her shooting past him, their eyes met and there was something appealing in his. He was very moist and his bowler was flagging. He had evidently started out in the morning with misconceptions about the weather. And it was clear he felt he had blundered in coming into Westridge's. Before she could get a taxi he was on the pavement behind her, hot but pursuing.

She sought in her mind for corner shops, with doors on this street and that. She exercised him upon Peter Robinson's and Debenham and Freebody's and then started for the monument. But on her way to the monument she thought of the moving staircase at Harrod's. If she went up and down on this, she wanted to know what he would do, would he run up and down the fixed flight? He did. Several times. And then she bethought herself of the Piccadilly tube; she got in at Brompton road and got out at Down Street and then got in again and went to South Kensington and he darted in and out of adjacent carriages and got into lifts by curious retrograde movements, being apparently under the erroneous impression that his back was less characteristic than his face.

By this time he was evidently no longer unaware of her intelligent interest in his movements. It was clear too that he had received a false impression that she wanted to shake him off and that all the sleuth in him was aroused. He was dishevelled and breathing hard and getting a little close and coarse in his pursuit, but he was sticking to it with a puckered intensified resolution. He came up into the South Kensington air open-mouthed and sniffing curiously, but invincible.

She discovered suddenly that she did not like him at all and that she wanted to go home.

She took a taxi, and then away in the wilds of the Fulham Road she had her crowning idea. She stopped the cab at a dingy little furniture shop, paid the driver exorbitantly and instructed him to go right back to South Kensington station, buy her an evening paper and return for her. The pursuer drew up thirty yards away, fell into her trap, paid off his cab and feigned to be interested by a small window full of penny toys, cheap chocolate and cocoanut ice. She bought herself a brass door weight, paid for it hastily and posted herself just

within the furniture-shop door.

Then you see her cab returned suddenly and she got in at once and left him stranded.

He made a desperate effort to get a motor omnibus. She saw him rushing across the traffic gesticulating. Then he collided with a boy with a basket on a bicycle — not so far as she could see injuriously, they seemed to leap at once into a crowd and an argument, and then he was hidden from her by a bend in the road.

§6

For a little while her mind was full of fragments of speculation about this man. Was he a married man? Was he very much away from home? What did he earn? Were there ever disputes about his expenses?...

She must ask Isaac. For she was determined to go home and challenge her husband. She felt buoyed up by indignation and the consciousness of innocence....

And then she felt an odd little doubt whether her innocence was quite so manifest as she supposed?

That doubt grew to uncomfortable proportions.

For two years she had been meeting Mr. Brumley as confidently as though they had been invisible beings, and now she had to rack her brains for just what might be mistaken, what might be misconstrued. There was nothing, she told herself, nothing, it was all as open as the day, and still her mind groped about for some forgotten circumstance, something gone almost out of memory that would bear misinterpretation.... How should she begin? “Isaac,” she would say, “I am being followed about London.” Suppose he denied his complicity! How could he deny his complicity?

The cab ran in through the gates of her home and stopped at the door. Snagsby came hurrying down the steps with a face of consternation. “Sir Isaac, my lady, has come home in a very sad state indeed.”

Beyond Snagsby in the hall she came upon a lost-looking round-eyed Florence.

“Daddy’s ill again,” said Florence.

“You run to the nursery,” said Lady Harman.

“I thought I might help,” said Florence. “I don’t want to play with the others.”

“No, run away to the nursery.”

“I want to see the ossygen let out,” said Florence petulantly to her mother’s unsympathetic back. “I *never* see the ossygen let out. Mum — my!...”

Lady Harman found her husband on the couch in his bedroom. He was propped up in a sitting position with every available cushion and pillow. His coat and waistcoat and collar had been taken off, and his shirt and vest torn open. The nearest doctor, Almsworth, was in attendance, but oxygen had not arrived, and Sir Isaac with an expression of bitter malignity upon his face was fighting desperately for breath. If anything his malignity deepened at the sight of his wife. “Damned climate,” he gasped. “Wouldn’t have come back — except for *your* foolery.”

It seemed to help him to say that. He took a deep inhalation, pressed his lips tightly together, and nodded at her to confirm his words.

“If he’s fanciful,” said Almsworth. “If in any way your presence irritates him — —”

“Let her stay,” said Sir Isaac. “It — pleases her....”

Almsworth’s colleague entered with the long-desired oxygen cylinder.

§7

And now every other interest in life was dominated, and every other issue postponed by the immense urgencies of Sir Isaac’s illness. It had entered upon a new phase. It was manifest that he could no longer live in England, that he must go to some warm and kindly climate. There and with due precautions and observances Almsworth assured Lady Harman he might survive for many years— “an invalid, of course, but a capable one.”

For some time the business of the International Stores had been preparing itself for this withdrawal. Sir Isaac had been entrusting his managers with increased responsibility and making things ready for

the flotation of a company that would take the whole network of enterprises off his hands. Charterson was associated with him in this, and everything was sufficiently definite to be managed from any continental resort to which his doctors chose to send him. They chose to send him to Santa Margherita on the Ligurian coast near Rapallo and Porto Fino.

It was old Bergener of Marienbad who chose this place. Sir Isaac had wanted to go to Marienbad, his first resort abroad; he had a lively and indeed an exaggerated memory of his Kur there; his growing disposition to distrust had turned him against his London specialist, and he had caused Lady Harman to send gigantic telegrams of inquiry to old Bergener before he would be content. But Bergener would not have him at Marienbad; it wasn't the place, it was the wrong time of year, there was the very thing for them at the Regency Hotel at Santa Margherita, an entire dépendance in a beautiful garden right on the sea, admirably furnished and adapted in every way to Sir Isaac's peculiar needs. There, declared Doctor Bergener, with a proper attendant, due precaution, occasional oxygen and no excitement he would live indefinitely, that is to say eight or ten years. And attracted by the eight or ten years, which was three more than the London specialist offered, Sir Isaac finally gave in and consented to be taken to Santa Margherita.

He was to go as soon as possible, and he went in a special train and with an immense elaboration of attendance and comforts. They took with them a young doctor their specialist at Marienbad had recommended, a bright young Bavarian with a perfectly square blond head, an incurable frock coat, the manners of the less kindly type of hotel-porter and luggage which apparently consisted entirely of apparatus, an arsenal of strange-shaped shining black cases. He joined them in London and went right through with them. From Genoa at his request they obtained the services of a trained nurse, an amiable fluent-shaped woman who knew only Italian and German. For reasons that he declined to give, but which apparently had something to do with the suffrage agitation, he would have nothing to do with an English trained nurse. They had also a stenographer and typist for Sir Isaac's correspondence, and Lady Harman had a secretary, a young lady with glasses named Summersly Satchell who

obviously reserved opinions of a harshly intellectual kind and had previously been in the service of the late Lady Mary Justin. She established unfriendly relations with the young doctor at an early date by attempting, he said, to learn German from him. Then there was a maid for Lady Harman, an assistant maid, and a valet-attendant for Sir Isaac. The rest of the service in the dépendance was supplied by the hotel management.

It took some weeks to assemble this expedition and transport it to its place of exile. Arrangements had to be made for closing the Putney house and establishing the children with Mrs. Harman at Black Strand. There was an exceptional amount of packing up to do, for this time Lady Harman felt she was not coming back — it might be for years. They were going out to warmth and sunlight for the rest of Sir Isaac's life.

He was entering upon the last phase in the slow disorganization of his secretions and the progressive hardening of his arterial tissues that had become his essential history. His appearance had altered much in the last few months; he had become visibly smaller, his face in particular had become sharp and little-featured. It was more and more necessary for him to sit up in order to breathe with comfort, he slept sitting up; and his senses were affected, he complained of strange tastes in his food, quarrelled with the cook and had fits of sickness. Sometimes, latterly, he had complained of strange sounds, like air whistling in water-pipes, he said, that had no existence outside his ears. Moreover, he was steadily more irritable and more suspicious and less able to control himself when angry. A long-hidden vein of vile and abusive language, hidden, perhaps, since the days of Mr. Gambard's college at Ealing, came to the surface....

For some days after his seizure Lady Harman was glad to find in the stress of his necessities an excuse for disregarding altogether the crisis in the hostels and the perplexing problem of her relations to Mr. Brumley. She wrote two brief notes to the latter gentleman breaking appointments and pleading pressure of business. Then, at first during intervals of sleeplessness at night, and presently during the day, the danger and ugliness of her outlook began to trouble her. She was still, she perceived, being watched, but whether that was because her husband had failed to change whatever orders he had

given, or because he was still keeping himself minutely informed of her movements, she could not tell. She was now constantly with him, and except for small spiteful outbreaks and occasional intervals of still and silent malignity, he tolerated and utilized her attentions. It was clear his jealousy of her rankled, a jealousy that made him even resentful at her health and ready to complain of any brightness of eye or vigour of movement. They had drifted far apart from the possibility of any real discussion of the hostels since that talk in the twilit study. To re-open that now or to complain of the shadowing pursuer who dogged her steps abroad would have been to precipitate Mr. Brumley's dismissal.

Even at the cost of letting things drift at the hostels for a time she wished to avoid that question. She would not see him, but she would not shut the door upon him. So far as the detective was concerned she could avoid discussion by pretending to be unaware of his existence, and as for the hostels — the hostels each day were left until the morrow.

She had learnt many things since the days of her first rebellion, and she knew now that this matter of the man friend and nothing else in the world is the central issue in the emancipation of women. The difficulty of him is latent in every other restriction of which women complain. The complete emancipation of women will come with complete emancipation of humanity from jealousy — and no sooner. All other emancipations are shams until a woman may go about as freely with this man as with that, and nothing remains for emancipation when she can. In the innocence of her first revolt this question of friendship had seemed to Lady Harman the simplest, most reasonable of minor concessions, but that was simply because Mr. Brumley hadn't in those days been talking of love to her, nor she been peeping through that once locked door. Now she perceived how entirely Sir Isaac was by his standards justified.

And after all that was recognized she remained indisposed to give up Mr. Brumley.

Yet her sense of evil things happening in the hostels was a deepening distress. It troubled her so much that she took the disagreeable step of asking Mrs. Pembrose to meet her at the Bloomsbury Hostel and talk out the expulsions. She found that lady

alertly defensive, entrenched behind expert knowledge and pretension generally. Her little blue eyes seemed harder than ever, the metallic resonance in her voice more marked, the lisp stronger. “Of course, Lady Harman, if you were to have some practical experience of control — —” and “Three times I have given these girls every opportunity — *every* opportunity.”

“It seems so hard to drive these girls out,” repeated Lady Harman. “They’re such human creatures.”

“You have to think of the ones who remain. You must — think of the Institution as a Whole.”

“I wonder,” said Lady Harman, peering down into profundities for a moment. Below the great truth glimmered and vanished that Institutions were made for man and not man for Institutions.

“You see,” she went on, rather to herself than to Mrs. Pembrose, “we shall be away now for a long time.”

Mrs. Pembrose betrayed no excesses of grief.

“It’s no good for me to interfere and then leave everything....”

“That way spells utter disorganization,” said Mrs. Pembrose.

“But I wish something could be done to lessen the harshness — to save the pride — of such a girl as Alice Burnet. Practically you tell her she isn’t fit to associate with — the other girls.”

“She’s had her choice and warning after warning.”

“I daresay she’s — stiff. Oh! — she’s difficult. But — being expelled is bitter.”

“I’ve not *expelled* her — technically.”

“She thinks she’s expelled....”

“You’d rather perhaps, Lady Harman, that *I* was expelled.”

The dark lady lifted her eyes to the little bridling figure in front of her for a moment and dropped them again. She had had an unspeakable thought, that Mrs. Pembrose wasn’t a gentlewoman, and that this sort of thing was a business for the gentle and for nobody else in the world. “I’m only anxious not to hurt anyone if I can help it,” said Lady Harman.

She went on with her attempt to find some way of compromise with Mrs. Pembrose that should save the spirit of the new malcontents. She was much too concerned on account of the things that lay ahead of them to care for her own pride with Mrs. Pembrose.

But that good lady had all the meagre inflexibilities of her class and at last Lady Harman ceased.

She came out into the great hall of the handsome staircase, ushered by Mrs. Pembrose as a guest is ushered by a host. She looked at the spacious proportion of the architecture and thought of the hopes and imaginations she had allowed to centre upon this place. It was to have been a glowing home of happy people, and over it all brooded the chill stillness of rules and regulations and methodical suppressions and tactful discouragement. It was an Institution, it had the empty orderliness of an Institution, Mrs. Pembrose had just called it an Institution, and so Susan Burnet had prophesied it would become five years or more ago. It was a dream subjugated to reality.

So it seemed to Lady Harman must all dreams be subjugated to reality, and the tossing spring greenery of the square, the sunshine, the tumult of sparrows and the confused sound of distant traffic, framed as it was in the hard dark outline of the entrance door, was as near as the promise of joy could ever come to her. "Caught and spoilt," that seemed to be the very essential of her life; just as it was of these Hostels, all the hopes, the imaginings, the sweet large anticipations, the generosities, and stirring warm desires....

Perhaps Lady Harman had been a little overworking with her preparations for exile. Because as these unhappy thoughts passed through her mind she realized that she was likely to weep. It was extremely undesirable that Mrs. Pembrose should see her weeping.

But Mrs. Pembrose did see her weeping, saw her dark eyes swimming with uncontrollable tears, watched her walk past her and out, without a word or a gesture of farewell.

A kind of perplexity came upon the soul of Mrs. Pembrose. She watched the tall figure descend to her car and enter it and dispose itself gracefully and depart....

"Hysterical," whispered Mrs. Pembrose at last and was greatly comforted.

"Childish," said Mrs. Pembrose sipping further consolation for an unwonted spiritual discomfort.

"Besides," said Mrs. Pembrose, "what else can one do?"

§8

Sir Isaac was greatly fatigued by his long journey to Santa Margherita in spite of every expensive precaution to relieve him; but as soon as the effect of that wore off, his recovery under the system Bergener had prescribed was for a time remarkable. In a little while he was out of bed again and in an armchair. Then the young doctor began to talk of drives. They had no car with them, so he went into Genoa and spent an energetic day securing the sweetest-running automobile he could find and having it refitted for Sir Isaac's peculiar needs. In this they made a number of excursions through the hot beauty of the Italian afternoons, eastward to Genoa, westward to Sestri and northward towards Montallegro. Then they went up to the summit of the Monte de Porto Fino and Sir Isaac descended and walked about and looked at the view and praised Bergener. After that he was encouraged to visit the gracious old monastery that overhangs the road to Porto Fino.

At first Lady Harman did her duty of control and association with an apathetic resignation. This had to go on — for eight or ten years. Then her imagination began to stir again. There came a friendly letter from Mr. Brumley and she answered with a description of the colour of the sea and the charm and wonder of its tideless shore. The three elder children wrote queer little letters and she answered them. She went into Rapallo and got herself a carriageful of Tauchnitz books....

That visit to the monastery on the Porto Fino road was like a pleasant little glimpse into the brighter realities of the Middle Ages. The place, which is used as a home of rest for convalescent Carthusians, chanced to be quite empty and deserted; the Bavarian rang a jangling bell again and again and at last gained the attention of an old gardener working in the vineyard above, an unkempt, unshaven, ungainly creature dressed in scarce decent rags of brown, who was yet courteous-minded and, albeit crack-voiced, with his yellow-fanged mouth full of gracious polysyllables. He hobbled off to get a key and returned through the still heat of the cobbled yard outside the monastery gates, and took them into cool airy rooms and showed them clean and simple cells in shady corridors, and a delightful orangery, and led them to a beautiful terrace that looked

out upon the glowing quivering sea. And he became very anxious to tell them something about “Francesco”; they could not understand him until the doctor caught “Battaglia” and “Pavia” and had an inspiration. Francis the First, he explained in clumsy but understandable English, slept here, when he was a prisoner of the Emperor and all was lost but honour. They looked at the slender pillars and graceful archings about them.

“Chust as it was now,” the young doctor said, his imagination touched for a moment by mere unscientific things....

They returned to their dépendance in a state of mutual contentment, Sir Isaac scarcely tired, and Lady Harman ran upstairs to change her dusty dress for a fresher muslin, while he went upon the doctor’s arm to the balcony where tea was to be served to them.

She came down to find her world revolutionized.

On the table in the balcony the letters had been lying convenient to his chair and he — it may be without troubling to read the address, had seized the uppermost and torn it open.

He was holding that letter now a little crumpled in his hand.

She had walked close up to the table before she realized the change. The little eyes that met hers were afire with hatred, his lips were white and pressed together tightly, his nostrils were dilated in his struggle for breath. “I knew it,” he gasped.

She clung to her dignity though she felt suddenly weak within. “That letter,” she said, “was addressed to me.”

There was a gleam of derision in his eyes.

“Look at it!” he said, and flung it towards her.

“My private letter!”

“Look at it!” he repeated.

“What right have you to open my letter?”

“Friendship!” he said. “Harmless friendship! Look what your — friend says!”

“Whatever there was in my letter — —”

“Oh!” cried Sir Isaac. “Don’t come *that* over me! Don’t you try it! Oooh! phew—” He struggled for breath for a time. “He’s so harmless. He’s so helpful. He —— Read it, you — —”

He hesitated and then hurled a strange word at her.

She glanced at the letter on the table but made no movement to

touch it. Then she saw that her husband's face was reddening and that his arm waved helplessly. His eyes, deprived abruptly of all the fury of conflict, implored assistance.

She darted to the French window that opened into the dining-room from the balcony. "Doctor Greve!" she cried. "Doctor Greve!"

Behind her the patient was making distressful sounds. "Doctor Greve," she screamed, and from above she heard the Bavarian shouting and then the noise of his coming down the stairs.

He shouted some direction in German as he ran past her. By an inspiration she guessed he wanted the nurse.

Miss Summersley Satchell appeared in the doorway and became helpful.

Then everyone in the house seemed to be converging upon the balcony.

It was an hour before Sir Isaac was in bed and sufficiently allayed for her to go to her own room. Then she thought of Mr. Brumley's letter, and recovered it from the table on the balcony where it had been left in the tumult of her husband's seizure.

It was twilight and the lights were on. She stood under one of them and read with two moths circling about her....

Mr. Brumley had had a mood of impassioned declaration. He had alluded to his "last moments of happiness at Kew." He said he would rather kiss the hem of her garment than be the "lord of any other woman's life."

It was all so understandable — looked at in the proper light. It was all so impossible to explain. And why had she let it happen? Why had she let it happen?

§9

The young doctor was a little puzzled and rather offended by Sir Isaac's relapse. He seemed to consider it incorrect and was on the whole disposed to blame Lady Harman. He might have had such a seizure, the young doctor said, later, but not now. He would be thrown back for some weeks, then he would begin to mend again and then whatever he said, whatever he did, Lady Harman must do nothing to contradict him. For a whole day Sir Isaac lay inert, in a

cold sweat. He consented once to attempt eating, but sickness overcame him. He seemed so ill that all the young doctor's reassurances could not convince Lady Harman that he would recover. Then suddenly towards evening his arrested vitality was flowing again, the young doctor ceased to be anxious for his own assertions, the patient could sit up against a pile of pillows and breathe and attend to affairs. There was only one affair he really seemed anxious to attend to. His first thought when he realized his returning strength was of his wife. But the young doctor would not let him talk that night.

Next morning he seemed still stronger. He was restless and at last demanded Lady Harman again.

This time the young doctor transmitted the message.

She came to him forthwith and found him, white-faced and unfamiliar-looking, his hands gripping the quilt and his eyes burning with hatred.

"You thought I'd forgotten," was his greeting.

"Don't argue," signalled the doctor from the end of Sir Isaac's bed.

"I've been thinking it out," said Sir Isaac. "When you were thinking I was too ill to think.... I know better now."

He sucked in his lips and then went on. "You've got to send for old Crappen," he said. "I'm going to alter things. I had a plan. But that would have been letting you off too easy. See? So — you send for old Crappen."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Never you mind, my lady, never you mind. You send for old Crappen."

She waited for a moment. "Is that all you want me to do?"

"I'm going to make it all right about those Hostels. Don't you fear. You and your Hostels! You shan't *touch* those hostels ever again. Ever. Mrs. Pembrose go! Why! You ain't worthy to touch the heel of her shoe! Mrs. Pembrose!"

He gathered together all his forces and suddenly expelled with rousing force the word he had already applied to her on the day of the intercepted letter.

He found it seemed great satisfaction in the sound and taste of it.

He repeated it thrice. “Zut,” cried the doctor, “Sssh!”

Then Sir Isaac intimated his sense that calm was imperative. “You send for Crappen,” he said with a quiet earnestness.

She had become now so used to terms of infamy during the last year or so, so accustomed to forgive them as part of his suffering, that she seemed not to hear the insult.

“Do you want him at once?” she asked. “Shall I telegraph?”

“Want him at once!” He dropped his voice to a whisper. “Yes, you fool — yes. Telegraph. (Phew.) Telegraph.... I mustn’t get angry, you know. You — telegraph.”

He became suddenly still. But his eyes were active with hate.

She glanced at the doctor, then moved to the door.

“I will send a telegram,” she said, and left him still malignant.

She closed the door softly and walked down the long cool passage towards her own room....

§10

She had to be patient. She had to be patient. This sort of thing had to go on from crisis to crisis. It might go on for years. She could see no remedy and no escape.

What else was there to do but be patient? It was all amazing unjust, but to be a married woman she was beginning to understand is to be outside justice. It is autocracy. She had once imagined otherwise, and most of her life had been the slow unlearning of that initial error. She had imagined that the hostels were hers simply because he had put it in that way. They had never been anything but his, and now it was manifest he would do what he liked with his own. The law takes no cognizance of the unwritten terms of a domestic reconciliation.

She sat down at the writing-table the hotel management had improvised for her.

She rested her chin on her hand and tried to think out her position. But what was there to think out, seeing that nature and law and custom have conspired together to put women altogether under the power of jealous and acquisitive men?

She drew the telegram form towards her.

She was going to write a telegram that she knew would bring Crappen headlong — to disinherit her absolutely. And — it suddenly struck her — her husband had trusted her to write it. She was going to do what he had trusted her to do.... But it was absurd.

She sat making patterns of little dots with her pencil point upon the telegram form, and there was a faint smile of amusement upon her lips.

It was absurd — and everything was absurd. What more was to be said or thought about it? This was the lot of woman. She had made her struggle, rebelled her little bit of rebellion. Most other women no doubt had done as much. It made no difference in the long run.

But it was hard to give up the hostels. She had been foolish of course, but she had not let them make her feel *real*. And she wasn't real. She was a wife — just *this*....

She sighed and bestirred herself and began to write.

Then abruptly she stopped writing.

For three years her excuse for standing — everything, had been these hostels. If now the hostels were to be wrenched out of her hands, if at her husband's death she was to be stripped of every possession and left a helpless dependant on her own children, if for all her good behaviour she was to be insulted by his frantic suspicions so long as he lived and then disgraced by his posthumous mistrust; was there any reason why she should go on standing anything any more? Away there in England was Mr. Brumley, *her* man, ready with service and devotion....

It was a profoundly comforting thing to think of him there as hers. He was hers. He'd given so much and on the whole so well. If at last she were to go to him....

Yet when she came to imagine the reality of the step that was in her mind, it took upon itself a chill and forbidding strangeness. It was like stepping out of a familiar house into empty space. What could it be like? To take some odd trunks with her, meet him somewhere, travel, travel through the evening, travel past nightfall? The bleak strangeness of that going out never to return!

Her imagination could give her no figure of Mr. Brumley as intimate, as habitual. She could as easily imagine his skeleton. He remained in all this queer speculation something friendly, something

incidental, more than a trifle disembodied, entirely devoted of course in that hovering way — but hovering....

And she wanted to be free. It wasn't Mr. Brumley she wanted; he was but a means — if indeed he was a means — to an end. The person she wanted, the person she had always wanted — was *herself*. Could Mr. Brumley give her that? Would Mr. Brumley give her that? Was it conceivable he would carry sacrifice to such a pitch as that?...

And what nonsense was this dream! Here was her husband needing her. And the children, whose inherent ungainliness, whose ungracious spirits demanded a perpetual palliation of culture and instilled deportment. What honest over-nurse was there for him or helper and guide and friend for them, if she withdrew? There was something undignified in a flight for mere happiness. There was something vindictive in flight from mere insult. To go, because she was disinherited, because her hostels were shattered, — No! And in short — she couldn't do it....

If Sir Isaac wanted to disinherit her he must disinherit her. If he wanted to go on seizing and reading her letters, then he could. There was nothing in the whole scheme of things to stop him if he did not want to stop himself, nothing at all. She was caught. This was the lot of women. She was a *wife*. What else in honour was there but to be a wife up to the hilt?...

She finished writing her telegram.

§11

Suddenly came a running in the passage outside, a rap at the door and the nurse entered, scared, voluble in Italian, but with gestures that translated her.

Lady Harman rose, realized the gravity and urgency of the moment and hurried with her along the passage. "Est-il mauvais?" the poor lady attempted, "Est-il — —"

Oh! what words are there for "taken worse"?

The woman attempted English and failed. She resorted to her native Italian and exclaimed about the "povero signore." She conveyed a sense of pitiful extremities. Could it be he was in pain again? What was it? What was it? Ten minutes ago he had been so

grimly angry.

At the door of the sick room the nurse laid a warning hand on the arm of Lady Harman and made an apprehensive gesture. They entered almost noiselessly.

The Bavarian doctor turned his face from the bed at their entrance. He was bending over Sir Isaac. He held up one hand as if to arrest them; his other was engaged with his patient. “No,” he said. His attention went back to the sick man, and he remained very still in that position, leaving Lady Harman to note for the first time how broad and flat he was both between his shoulders and between his ears. Then his face came round slowly, he relinquished something heavy, stood up, held up a hand. “Zu spät,” he whispered, as though he too was surprised. He sought in his mind for English and then found his phrase: “He has gone!”

“Gone?”

“In one instant.”

“Dead?”

“So. In one instant.”

On the bed lay Sir Isaac. His hand was thrust out as though he grasped at some invisible thing. His open eyes stared hard at his wife, and as she met his eyes he snored noisily in his nose and throat.

She looked from the doctor to the nurse. It seemed to her that both these people must be mad. Never had she seen anything less like death. “But he’s not dead!” she protested, still standing in the middle of the room.

“It iss chust the air in his throat,” the doctor said. “He went — *so!* In one instant as I was helping him.”

He waited to see some symptom of feminine weakness. There was a quality in his bearing — as though this event did him credit.

“But — Isaac!”

It was astounding. The noise in his throat ceased. But he still stared at her. And then the nurse made a kind of assault upon Lady Harman, caught her — even if she didn’t fall. It was no doubt the proper formula to collapse. Or to fling oneself upon the deceased. Lady Harman resisted this assistance, disentangled herself and remained amazed; the nurse a little disconcerted but still ready behind her.

“But,” said Lady Harman slowly, not advancing and pointing incredulously at the unwinking stare that met her own, “is he dead? Is he really dead? Like that?”

The doctor’s gesture to the nurse betrayed his sense of the fine quick scene this want of confidence had ruined. Under no circumstances in life did English people really seem to know how to behave or what was expected of them. He answered with something bordering upon irony. “Madam,” he said, with a slight bow, “he is *really* det.”

“But — like *that*!” cried Lady Harman.

“Like that,” repeated the doctor.

She went three steps nearer and stopped, open-eyed, wonder-struck, her lips compressed.

§12

For a time astonishment overwhelmed her mind. She did not think of Sir Isaac, she did not think of herself, her whole being was filled by this marvel of death and cessation. Like *that*!

Death!

Never before had she seen it. She had expected an extreme dignity, an almost ceremonial sinking back, a slow ebbing, but this was like a shot from a bow. It stunned her. And for some time she remained stunned, while the doctor and her secretary and the hotel people did all that they deemed seemly on this great occasion. She let them send her into another room; she watched with detached indifference a post-mortem consultation in whispers with a doctor from Rapallo. Then came a great closing of shutters. The nurse and her maid hovered about her, ready to assist her when the sorrowing began. But she had no sorrow. The long moments lengthened out, and he was still dead and she was still only amazement. It seemed part of the extraordinary, the perennial surprisingness of Sir Isaac that he should end in this way. Dead! She didn’t feel for some hours that he had in any way ended. He had died with such emphasis that she felt now that he was capable of anything. What mightn’t he do next? When she heard movements in the chamber of death it seemed to her that of all the people there, most probably it was he who made

them. She would not have been amazed if he had suddenly appeared in the doorway of her room, anger-white and his hand quiveringly extended, spluttering some complaint.

He might have cried: “Here I am dead! And it’s *you*, damn you — it’s *you*!”

It was after distinct efforts, after repeated visits to the room in which he lay, that she began to realize that death was death, that death goes on, that there was no more any Sir Isaac, but only a still body he had left behind, that was being moulded now into a stiff image of peace.

Then for a time she roused herself to some control of their proceedings. The doctor came to Lady Harman to ask her about the meals for the day, the hotel manager was in entanglements of tactful consideration, and then the nurse came for instructions upon some trivial matter. They had done what usage prescribes and now, in the absence of other direction, they appealed to her wishes. She remarked that everyone was going on tiptoe and speaking in undertones....

She realized duties. What does one have to do when one’s husband is dead? People would have to be told. She would begin by sending off telegrams to various people, to his mother, to her own, to his lawyer. She remembered she had already written a telegram — that very morning to Crappen. Should she still let the lawyer come out? He was her lawyer now. Perhaps he had better come, but instead of that telegram, which still lay upon the desk, she would wire the news of the death to him....

Does one send to the papers? How does one send to the papers?

She took Miss Summersly Satchell who was hovering outside in the sunshine on the balcony, into her room, and sat pale and businesslike and very careful about details, while Miss Summersly Satchell offered practical advice and took notes and wrote telegrams and letters....

There came a hush over everything as the day crept towards noon, and the widowed woman sat in her own room with an inactive mind, watching thin bars of sunlight burn their slow way across the floor. He was dead. It was going on now more steadfastly than ever. He was keeping dead. He was dead at last for good and her married life

was over, that life that had always seemed the only possible life, and this stunning incident, this thing that was like the blinding of eyes or the bursting of eardrums, was to be the beginning of strange new experiences.

She was afraid at first at their possible strangeness. And then, you know, in spite of a weak protesting compunction she began to feel glad....

She would not admit to herself that she was glad, that she was anything but a woman stunned, she maintained her still despondent attitude as long as she could, but gladness broke upon her soul as the day breaks, and a sense of release swam up to the horizons of her mind and rose upon her, flooding every ripple of her being, as the sun rises over water in a clear sky. Presently she could sit there no longer, she had to stand up. She walked to the closed Venetians to look out upon the world and checked herself upon the very verge of flinging them open. He was dead and it was all over for ever. Of course! — it was all over! Her marriage was finished and done. Miss Satchell came to summon her to lunch. Throughout that meal Lady Harman maintained a sombre bearing, and listened with attention to the young doctor's comments on the manner of Sir Isaac's going. And then, — it was impossible to go back to her room.

"My head aches," she said, "I must go down and sit by the sea," and her maid, a little shocked, brought her not only her sunshade, but needless wraps — as though a new-made widow must necessarily be very sensitive to the air. She would not let her maid come with her, she went down to the beach alone. She sat on some rocks near the very edge of the transparent water and fought her gladness for a time and presently yielded to it. He was dead. One thought filled her mind, for a while so filled her mind, that no other thought it seemed could follow it, it had an effect of being final; it so filled her mind that it filled the whole world; the broad sapphire distances of the sea, the lapping waves amidst the rocks at her feet, the blazing sun, the dark headland of Porto Fino and a small sailing boat that hung beyond came all within it like things enclosed within a golden globe. She forgot all the days of nursing and discomfort and pity behind her, all the duties and ceremonies before her, forgot all the details and circumstances of life in this one luminous realization. She was

free at last. She was a free woman.

Never more would he make a sound or lift a finger against her life, never more would he contradict her or flout her; never more would he come peeping through that papered panel between his room and hers, never more could hateful and humiliating demands be made upon her as his right; no more strange distresses of the body nor raw discomfort of the nerves could trouble her — for ever. And no more detectives, no more suspicions, no more accusations. That last blow he had meant to aim was frozen before it could strike her. And she would have the Hostels in her hands, secure and undisputed, she could deal as she liked with Mrs. Pembrose, take such advisers as she pleased.... She was free.

She found herself planning the regeneration of those difficult and disputed hostels, plans that were all coloured by the sun and sky of Italy. The manacles had gone; her hands were free. She would make this her supreme occupation. She had learnt her lesson now she felt, she knew something of the mingling of control and affectionate regard that was needed to weld the warring uneasy units of her new community. And she could do it, now as she was and unencumbered, she knew this power was in her. When everything seemed lost to her, suddenly it was all back in her hands....

She discovered the golden serenity of her mind with a sudden astonishment and horror. She was amazed and shocked that she should be glad. She struggled against it and sought to subdue her spirit to a becoming grief. One should be sorrowful at death in any case, one should be grieved. She tried to think of Sir Isaac with affection, to recall touching generosities, to remember kind things and tender and sweet things and she could not do so. Nothing would come back but the white intensities of his face, nothing but his hatred, his suspicion and his pitiless mean mastery. From which she was freed.

She could not feel sorry. She did her utmost to feel sorry; presently when she went back into the dépendance, she had to check her feet to a regretful pace; she dreaded the eyes of the hotel visitors she passed in the garden lest they should detect the liberation of her soul. But the hotel visitors being English were for the most part too preoccupied with manifestations of a sympathy that should be at

once heart-felt and quite unobtrusive and altogether in the best possible taste, to have any attention free for the soul of Lady Harman.

The sense of her freedom came and went like the sunlight of a day in spring, though she attempted her utmost to remain overcast. After dinner that night she was invaded by a vision of the great open years before her, at first hopeful but growing at last to fear and a wild restlessness, so that in defiance of possible hotel opinion, she wandered out into the moonlight and remained for a long time standing by the boat landing, dreaming, recovering, drinking in the white serenities of sea and sky. There was no hurry now. She might stay there as long as she chose. She need account for herself to no one; she was free. She might go where she pleased, do what she pleased, there was no urgency any more....

There was Mr. Brumley. Mr. Brumley made a very little figure at first in the great prospect before her.... Then he grew larger in her thoughts. She recalled his devotions, his services, his self-control. It was good to have one understanding friend in this great limitless world....

She would have to keep that friendship....

But the glorious thing was freedom, to live untrammelled....

Through the stillness a little breeze came stirring, and she awoke out of her dream and turned and faced the shuttered dépendance. A solitary dim light was showing on the verandah. All the rest of the building was a shapeless mass of grey. The long pale front of the hotel seen through a grove of orange trees was lit now at every other window with people going to bed. Beyond, a black hillside clambered up to the edge of the sky.

Far away out of the darknesses a man with a clear strong voice was singing to a tinkling accompaniment.

In the black orange trees swam and drifted a score of fireflies, and there was a distant clamour of nightingales when presently the unseen voice had done.

§13

When she was in her room again she began to think of Sir Isaac and

more particularly of that last fixed stare of his....

She was impelled to go and see him, to see for herself that he was peaceful and no longer a figure of astonishment. She went slowly along the corridor and very softly into his room — it remained, she felt, his room. They had put candles about him, and the outline of his face, showing dimly through the linen that veiled it, was like the face of one who sleeps very peacefully. Very gently she uncovered it.

He was not simply still, he was immensely still. He was more still and white than the moonlight outside, remoter than moon or stars.... She stood surveying him.

He looked small and pinched and as though he had been very tired. Life was over for him, altogether over. Never had she seen anything that seemed so finished. Once, when she was a girl she had thought that death might be but the opening of a door upon a more generous feast of living than this cramped world could give, but now she knew, she saw, that death can be death.

Life was over. She felt she had never before realized the meaning of death. That beautiful night outside, and all the beautiful nights and days that were still to come and all the sweet and wonderful things of God's world could be nothing to him now for ever. There was no dream in him that could ever live again, there was no desire, no hope in him.

And had he ever had his desire or his hope, or felt the intensities of life?

There was this beauty she had been discovering in the last few years, this mystery of love, — all that had been hidden from him.

She began to realize something sorrowful and pitiful in his quality, in his hardness, his narrowness, his bickering suspicions, his malignant refusals of all things generous and beautiful. He made her feel, as sometimes the children made her feel, the infinite pity of perversity and resistance to the bounties and kindliness of life.

The shadow of sorrow for him came to her at last.

Yet how obstinate he looked, the little frozen white thing that had been Sir Isaac Harman! And satisfied, wilfully satisfied; his lips were compressed and his mouth a little drawn in at the corners as if he would not betray any other feeling than content with the bargain he had made with life. She did not touch him; not for the world would

she ever touch that cold waxen thing that had so lately clasped her life, but she stood for a long time by the side of his quiet, immersed in the wonder of death....

He had been such a hard little man, such a pursuing little man, so unreasonable and difficult a master, and now — he was such a poor shrunken little man for all his obstinacy! She had never realized before that he was pitiful.... Had she perhaps feared him too much, disliked him too much to deal fairly with him? Could she have helped him? Was there anything she could have done that she had not done? Might she not at least have saved him his suspicion? Behind his rages, perhaps he had been wretched.

Could anyone else have helped him? If perhaps someone had loved him more than she had ever pretended to do ——

How strange that she should be so intimately in this room — and still so alien. So alien that she could feel nothing but detached wonder at his infinite loss.... *Alien*, — that was what she had always been, a captured alien in this man's household, — a girl he had taken. Had he ever suspected how alien? The true mourner, poor woman! was even now, in charge of Cook's couriers and interpreters, coming by express from London, to see with her own eyes this last still phase of the son she had borne into the world and watched and sought to serve. She was his nearest; she indeed was the only near thing there had ever been in his life. Once at least he must have loved her? And even she had not been very near. No one had ever been very near his calculating suspicious heart. Had he ever said or thought any really sweet or tender thing — even about her? He had been generous to her in money matters, of course, — but out of a vast abundance....

How good it was to have a friend! How good it was to have even one single friend!...

At the thought of his mother Lady Harman's mind began to drift slowly from this stiff culmination of life before her. Presently she replaced the white cloth upon his face and turned slowly away. Her imagination had taken up the question of how that poor old lady was to be met, how she was to be consoled, what was to be said to her....

She began to plan arrangements. The room ought to be filled with flowers; Mrs. Harman would expect flowers, large heavy white

flowers in great abundance. That would have to be seen to soon. One might get them in Rapallo. And afterwards, — they would have to take him to England, and have a fine great funeral, with every black circumstance his wealth and his position demanded. Mrs. Harman would need that, and so it must be done. Cabinet Ministers must follow him, members of Parliament, all Blenkerdom feeling self-consciously and, as far as possible, deeply, the Chartersons by way of friends, unfamiliar blood relations, a vast retinue of employees....

How could one take him? Would he have to be embalmed? Embalming! — what a strange complement of death. She averted herself a little more from the quiet figure on the bed, and could not turn to it again. They might come here and do all sorts of things to it, mysterious, evil-seeming things with knives and drugs....

She must not think of that. She must learn exactly what Mrs. Harman thought and desired. Her own apathy with regard to her husband had given way completely now to a desire to anticipate and meet Mrs. Harman's every conceivable wish.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

Love and a Serious Lady

§1

The news of Sir Isaac's death came quite unexpectedly to Mr. Brumley. He was at the Climax Club, and rather bored; he had had some tea and dry toast in the magazine room, and had been through the weeklies, and it was a particularly uninteresting week. Then he came down into the hall, looked idly at the latest bulletins upon the board, and read that "Sir Isaac Harman died suddenly this morning at Sta. Margherita, in Ligure, whither he had gone for rest and change."

He went on mechanically reading down the bulletin, leaving something of himself behind him that did not read on. Then he returned to that remarkable item and re-read it, and picked up that lost element of his being again.

He had awaited this event for so long, thought of it so often in such a great variety of relationships, dreamt of it, hoped for it, prayed for it, and tried not to think of it, that now it came to him in reality it seemed to have no substance or significance whatever. He had exhausted the fact before it happened. Since first he had thought of it there had passed four long years, and in that time he had seen it from every aspect, exhausted every possibility. It had become a theoretical possibility, the basis of continually less confident, continually more unsubstantial day dreams. Constantly he had tried not to think of it, tried to assure himself of Sir Isaac's invalid immortality. And here it was!

The line above it concerned an overdue ship, the line below resumed a speech by Mr. Lloyd George. "He would challenge the honourable member to repeat his accusations — —"

Mr. Brumley stood quite still before the mauve-coloured print letters for some time, then went slowly across the hall into the breakfast-room, sat down in a chair by the fireplace, and fell into a kind of featureless thinking. Sir Isaac was dead, his wife was free, and the long waiting that had become a habit was at an end.

He had anticipated a wild elation, and for a while he was only sensible of change, a profound change....

He began to feel glad that he had waited, that she had insisted upon patience, that there had been no disaster, no scandal between them. Now everything was clear for them. He had served his apprenticeship. They would be able to marry, and have no quarrel with the world.

He sat with his mind forming images of the prospect before him, images that were at first feeble and vague, and then, though still in a silly way, more concrete and definite. At first they were quite petty anticipations, of how he would have to tell people of his approaching marriage, of how he would break it to George Edmund that a new mother impended. He mused for some time upon the details of that. Should he take her down to George Edmund's school, and let the boy fall in love with her — he would certainly fall in love with her — before anything definite was said, or should he first go down alone and break the news? Each method had its own attractive possibilities of drama.

Then Mr. Brumley began to think of the letter he must write Lady Harman — a difficult letter. One does not rejoice at death. Already Mr. Brumley was beginning to feel a generous pity for the man he had done his utmost not to detest for so long. Poor Sir Isaac had lived like a blind thing in the sunlight, gathering and gathering, when the pride and pleasure of life is to administer and spend.... Mr. Brumley fell wondering just how she could be feeling now about her dead husband. She might be in a phase of quite real sorrow. Probably the last illness had tired and strained her. So that his letter would have to be very fine and tender and soothing, free from all harshness, free from any gladness — yet it would be hard not to let a little of his vast relief peep out. Always hitherto, except for one or two such passionate lapses as that which had precipitated the situation at Santa Margherita, his epistolary manner had been formal, his matter intellectual and philanthropic, for he had always known that no letter was absolutely safe from Sir Isaac's insatiable research. Should he still be formal, still write to "Dear Lady Harman," or suddenly break into a new warmth? Half an hour later he was sitting in the writing-room with some few flakes of torn paper on the carpet between his

feet and the partially filled wastepaper basket, still meditating upon this difficult issue of the address.

The letter he achieved at last began, “My dear Lady,” and went on to, “I do not know how to begin this letter — perhaps you will find it almost as difficult to receive....”

In the small hours he woke to one of his habitual revulsions. Was that, he asked himself, the sort of letter a lover should write to the beloved on her release, on the sudden long prayed-for opening of a way to her, on the end of her shameful servitude and his humiliations? He began to recall the cold and stilted sentences of that difficult composition. The gentility of it! All his life he had been a prey to gentility, had cast himself free from it, only to relapse again in such fashion as this. Would he never be human and passionate and sincere? Of course he was glad, and she ought to be glad, that Sir Isaac, their enemy and their prison, was dead; it was for them to rejoice together. He turned out of bed at last, when he could lie still under these self-accusations no longer, and wrapped himself in his warm dressing-gown and began to write. He wrote in pencil. His fountain-pen was as usual on his night table, but pencil seemed the better medium, and he wrote a warm and glowing love-letter that was brought to an end at last by an almost passionate fit of sneezing. He could find no envelopes in his bedroom Davenport, and so he left that honest scrawl under a paper-weight, and went back to bed greatly comforted. He re-read it in the morning with emotion, and some slight misgivings that grew after he had despatched it. He went to lunch at his club contemplating a third letter that should be sane and fine and sweet, and that should rectify the confusing effect of those two previous efforts. He wrote this letter later in the afternoon.

The days seemed very long before the answer to his first letter came to him, and in that interval two more — aspects went to her. Her reply was very brief, and written in the large, firm, still girlishly clear hand that distinguished her.

“*I was so glad of your letter. My life is so strange here, a kind of hushed life. The nights are extraordinarily beautiful, the moon very large and the little leaves on the trees still and black. We are coming back to England and the funeral will be from our Putney house.*”

That was all, but it gave Mr. Brumley an impression of her that

was exceedingly vivid and close. He thought of her, shadowy and dusky in the moonlight until his soul swam with love for her; he had to get up and walk about; he whispered her name very softly to himself several times; he groaned gently, and at last he went to his little desk and wrote to her his sixth letter — quite a beautiful letter. He told her that he loved her, that he had always loved her since their first moment of meeting, and he tried to express just the wave of tenderness that inundated him at the thought of her away there in Italy. Once, he said, he had dreamt that he would be the first to take her to Italy. Perhaps some day they would yet be in Italy together.

§2

It was only by insensible degrees that doubt crept into Mr. Brumley's assurances. He did not observe at once that none of the brief letters she wrote him responded to his second, the impassioned outbreak in pencil. And it seemed only in keeping with the modest reserves of womanhood that she should be restrained — she always had been restrained.

She asked him not to see her at once when she returned to England; she wanted, she said, "to see how things are," and that fell in very well with a certain delicacy in himself. The unburied body of Sir Isaac — it was now provisionally embalmed — was, through some inexplicable subtlety in his mind, a far greater barrier than the living man had ever been, and he wanted it out of the way. And everything settled. Then, indeed, they might meet.

Meanwhile he had a curious little private conflict of his own. He was trying not to think, day and night he was trying not to think, that Lady Harman was now a very rich woman. Yet some portions of his brain, and he had never suspected himself of such lawless regions, persisted in the most vulgar and outrageous suggestions, suggestions that made his soul blush; schemes, for example, of splendid foreign travel, of hotel staffs bowing, of a yacht in the Mediterranean, of motor cars, of a palatial flat in London, of a box at the opera, of artists patronized, of — most horrible! — a baronetcy.... The more authentic parts of Mr. Brumley cowered from and sought to escape these squalid dreams of magnificences. It shocked and terrified him

to find such things could come out in him. He was like some pest-stricken patient, amazedly contemplating his first symptom. His better part denied, repudiated. Of course he would never touch, never even propose — or hint.... It was an aspect he had never once contemplated before Sir Isaac died. He could on his honour, and after searching his heart, say that. Yet in Pall Mall one afternoon, suddenly, he caught himself with a thought in his head so gross, so smug, that he uttered a faint cry and quickened his steps.... Benevolent stepfather!

These distresses begot a hope. Perhaps, after all, probably, there would be some settlement.... She might not be rich, not so very rich.... She might be tied up....

He perceived in that lay his hope of salvation. Otherwise — oh, pitiful soul! — things were possible in him; he saw only too clearly what dreadful things were possible.

If only she were disinherited, if only he might take her, stripped of all these possessions that even in such glancing anticipations begot —— this horrid indigestion of the imagination!

But then, —— the Hostels?...

There he stumbled against an invincible riddle!

There was something dreadful about the way in which these considerations blotted out the essential fact of separations abolished, barriers lowered, the way to an honourable love made plain and open....

The day of the funeral came at last, and Mr. Brumley tried not to think of it, paternally, at Margate. He fled from Sir Isaac's ultimate withdrawal. Blenker's obituary notice in the *Old Country Gazette* was a masterpiece of tactful eulogy, ostentatiously loyal, yet extremely not unmindful of the widowed proprietor, and of all the possible changes of ownership looming ahead. Mr. Brumley, reading it in the Londonward train, was greatly reminded of the Hostels. That was a riddle he didn't begin to solve. Of course, it was imperative the Hostels should continue — imperative. Now they might run them together, openly, side by side. But then, with such temptations to hitherto inconceivable vulgarities. And again, insidiously, those visions returned of two figures, manifestly opulent, grouped about a big motor car or standing together under a large subservient

archway....

There was a long letter from her at his flat, a long and amazing letter. It was so folded that his eye first caught the writing on the third page: "*never marry again. It is so clear that our work needs all my time and all my means.*" His eyebrows rose, his expression became consternation; his hands trembled a little as he turned the letter over to read it through. It was a deliberate letter. It began —

"*Dear Mr. Brumley, I could never have imagined how much there is to do after we are dead, and before we can be buried.*"

"Yes," said Mr. Brumley; "but what does this *mean*?"

"*There are so many surprises — —*"

"It isn't clear."

"*In ourselves and the things about us.*"

"Of course, he would have made some complicated settlement. I might have known."

"*It is the strangest thing in the world to be a widow, much stranger than anyone could ever have supposed, to have no one to control one, no one to think of as coming before one, no one to answer to, to be free to plan one's life for oneself — —*"

He stood with the letter in his hand after he had read it through, perplexed.

"I can't stand this," he said. "I want to know."

He went to his desk and wrote: —

"*My Dear, I want you to marry me.*"

What more was to be said? He hesitated with this brief challenge in his hand, was minded to telegraph it and thought of James's novel, *In the Cage*. Telegraph operators are only human after all. He determined upon a special messenger and rang up his quarter valet — he shared service in his flat — to despatch it.

The messenger boy got back from Putney that evening about half-past eight. He brought a reply in pencil.

"*My dear Friend*," she wrote. "*You have been so good to me, so helpful. But I do not think that is possible. Forgive me. I want so badly to think and here I cannot think. I have never been able to think here. I am going down to Black Strand, and in a day or so I will write and we will talk. Be patient with me.*"

She signed her name "*Ellen*"; always before she had been "E.H."

"Yes," cried Mr. Brumley, "but I want to know!"

He fretted for an hour and went to the telephone.

Something was wrong with the telephone, it buzzed and went faint, and it would seem that at her end she was embarrassed. "I want to come to you now," he said. "Impossible," was the clearest word in her reply. Should he go in a state of virile resolution, force her hesitation as a man should? She might be involved there with Mrs. Harman, with all sorts of relatives and strange people....

In the end he did not go.

§3

He sat at his lunch alone next day at one of the little tables men choose when they shun company. But to the right of him was the table of the politicians, Adolphus Blenker and Pope of the East Purblow Experiment, and Sir Piper Nicolls, and Munk, the editor of the *Daily Rectification*, sage men all and deep in those mysterious manipulations and wire-pullings by which the liberal party organization was even then preparing for itself unusual distrust and dislike, and Horatio Blenker was tenoring away after his manner about a case of right and conscience, "Blenking like Winking" was how a silent member had put it once to Brumley in a gust of hostile criticism. "Practically if she marries again, she is a pauper," struck on Brumley's ears.

"Of course," said Mr. Brumley, and stopped eating.

"I don't know if you remember the particulars of the Astor case," began Munk....

Never had Mr. Brumley come so frankly to eavesdropping. But he heard no more of Lady Harman. Munk had to quote the rights and wrongs of various American wills, and then Mr. Pope seized his opportunity. "At East Purblow," he went on, "in quite a number of instances we had to envisage this problem of the widow — —"

Mr. Brumley pushed back his plate and strolled towards the desk.

It was exactly what he might have expected, what indeed had been at the back of his mind all along, and on the whole he was glad. Naturally she hesitated; naturally she wanted time to think, and as

naturally it was impossible for her to tell him what it was she was thinking about.

They would marry. They must marry. Love has claims supreme over all other claims and he felt no doubt that for her his comparative poverty of two thousand a year would mean infinitely more happiness than she had ever known or could know with Sir Isaac's wealth. She was reluctant, of course, to become dependent upon him until he made it clear to her what infinite pleasure it would be for him to supply her needs. Should he write to her forthwith? He outlined a letter in his mind, a very fine and generous letter, good phrases came, and then he reflected that it would be difficult to explain to her just how he had learnt of her peculiar situation. It would be far more seemly to wait either for a public announcement or for some intimation from her.

And then he began to realize that this meant the end of all their work at the Hostels. In his first satisfaction at escaping that possible great motor-car and all the superfluities of Sir Isaac's accumulation, he had forgotten that side of the business....

When one came to think it over, the Hostels did complicate the problem. It was ingenious of Sir Isaac....

It was infernally ingenious of Sir Isaac....

He could not remain in the club for fear that somebody might presently come talking to him and interrupt his train of thought. He went out into the streets.

These Hostels upset everything.

What he had supposed to be a way of escape was really the mouth of a net.

Whichever way they turned Sir Isaac crippled them....

§4

Mr. Brumley grew so angry that presently even the strangers in the street annoyed him. He turned his face homeward. He hated dilemmas; he wanted always to deny them, to thrust them aside, to take impossible third courses.

"For three years," shouted Mr. Brumley, free at last in his study to give way to his rage, "for three years I've been making her care for

these things. And then — and then — they turn against me!"

A violent, incredibly undignified wrath against the dead man seized him. He threw books about the room. He cried out vile insults and mingled words of an unfortunate commonness with others of extreme rarity. He wanted to go off to Kensal Green and hammer at the grave there and tell the departed knight exactly what he thought of him. Then presently he became calmer, he lit a pipe, picked up the books from the floor, and meditated revenges upon Sir Isaac's memory. I deplore my task of recording these ungracious moments in Mr. Brumley's love history. I deplore the ease with which men pass from loving and serving women to an almost canine fight for them. It is the ugliest essential of romance. There is indeed much in the human heart that I deplore. But Mr. Brumley was exasperated by disappointment. He was sore, he was raw. Driven by an intolerable desire to explore every possibility of the situation, full indeed of an unholy vindictiveness, he went off next morning with strange questions to Maxwell Hartington.

He put the case as a general case.

"Lady Harman?" said Maxwell Hartington.

"No, not particularly Lady Harman. A general principle. What are people — what are women tied up in such a way to do?"

Precedents were quoted and possibilities weighed. Mr. Brumley was flushed, vague but persistent.

"Suppose," he said, "that they love each other passionately — and their work, whatever it may be, almost as passionately. Is there no way —— ?"

"He'll have a *dum casta* clause right enough," said Maxwell Hartington.

"*Dum —— ? Dum casta!* But, oh! anyhow that's out of the question — absolutely," said Mr. Brumley.

"Of course," said Maxwell Hartington, leaning back in his chair and rubbing the ball of his thumb into one eye. "Of course — nobody ever enforces these *dum casta* clauses. There isn't anyone to enforce them. Ever." — He paused and then went on, speaking apparently to the array of black tin boxes in the dingy fixtures before him. "Who's going to watch you? That's what I always ask in these cases. Unless the lady goes and does things right under the noses of these trustees

they aren't going to bother. Even Sir Isaac I suppose hasn't provided funds for a private detective. Eh? You said something?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Brumley.

"Well, why should they start a perfectly rotten action like that," continued Maxwell Hartington, now addressing himself very earnestly to his client, "when they've only got to keep quiet and do their job and be comfortable. In these matters, Brumley, as in most matters affecting the relations of men and women, people can do absolutely what they like nowadays, absolutely, unless there's someone about ready to make a row. Then they can't do anything. It hardly matters if they don't do anything. A row's a row and damned disgraceful. If there isn't a row, nothing's disgraceful. Of course all these laws and regulations and institutions and arrangements are just ways of putting people at the mercy of blackmailers and jealous and violent persons. One's only got to be a lawyer for a bit to realize that. Still that's not *our* business. That's psychology. If there aren't any jealous and violent persons about, well, then no ordinary decent person is going to worry what you do. No decent person ever does. So far as I can gather the only barbarian in this case is the testator — now in Kensal Green. With additional precautions I suppose in the way of an artistic but thoroughly massive monument presently to be added — —"

"He'd — turn in his grave."

"Let him. No trustees are obliged to take action on *that*. I don't suppose they'd know if he did. I've never known a trustee bother yet about post-mortem movements of any sort. If they did, we'd all be having Prayers for the Dead. Fancy having to consider the subsequent reflections of the testator!"

"Well anyhow," said Mr. Brumley, after a little pause, "such a breach, such a proceeding is out of the question — absolutely out of the question. It's unthinkable."

"Then why did you come here to ask me about it?" demanded Maxwell Hartington, beginning to rub the other eye in an audible and unpleasant manner.

When at last Mr. Brumley was face to face with Lady Harman again, a vast mephitic disorderly creation of anticipations, intentions, resolves, suspicions, provisional hypotheses, urgencies, vindications, and wild and whirling stuff generally vanished out of his mind. There beside the raised seat in the midst of the little rock garden where they had talked together five years before, she stood waiting for him, this tall simple woman he had always adored since their first encounter, a little strange and shy now in her dead black uniform of widowhood, but with her honest eyes greeting him, her friendly hands held out to him. He would have kissed them but for the restraining presence of Snagsby who had brought him to her; as it was it seemed to him that the phantom of a kiss passed like a breath between them. He held her hands for a moment and relinquished them.

"It is so good to see you," he said, and they sat down side by side. "I am very glad to see you again."

Then for a little while they sat in silence.

Mr. Brumley had imagined and rehearsed this meeting in many different moods. Now, he found none of his premeditated phrases served him, and it was the lady who undertook the difficult opening.

"I could not see you before," she began. "I did not want to see anyone." She sought to explain. "I was strange. Even to myself. Suddenly — —" She came to the point. "To find oneself free.... Mr. Brumley, — *it was wonderful!*"

He did not interrupt her and presently she went on again.

"You see," she said, "I have become a human being —— owning myself. I had never thought what this change would be to me.... It has been —— . It has been — like being born, when one hadn't realized before that one wasn't born.... Now — now I can act. I can do this and that. I used to feel as though I was on strings — with somebody able to pull.... There is no one now able to pull at me, no one able to thwart me...."

Her dark eyes looked among the trees and Mr. Brumley watched her profile.

"It has been like falling out of a prison from which one never hoped to escape. I feel like a moth that has just come out of its case, — you know how they come out, wet and weak but — released. For a time I feel I can do nothing but sit in the sun."

“It’s queer,” she repeated, “how one tries to feel differently from what one really feels, how one tries to feel as one supposes people expect one to feel. At first I hardly dared look at myself.... I thought I ought to be sorrowful and helpless.... I am not in the least sorrowful or helpless....

“But,” said Mr. Brumley, “are you so free?”

“Yes.”

“Altogether?”

“As free now — as a man.”

“But —— people are saying in London —— . Something about a will —— .”

Her lips closed. Her brows and eyes became troubled. She seemed to gather herself together for an effort and spoke at length, without looking at him. “Mr. Brumley,” she said, “before I knew anything of the will —— . On the very evening when Isaac died —— . I knew —— I would never marry again. Never.”

Mr. Brumley did not stir. He remained regarding her with a mournful expression.

“I was sure of it then,” she said, “I knew nothing about the will. I want you to understand that — clearly.”

She said no more. The still pause lengthened. She forced herself to meet his eyes.

“I thought,” he said after a silent scrutiny, and left her to imagine what he had thought....

“But,” he urged to her protracted silence, “you *care*?”

She turned her face away. She looked at the hand lying idle upon her crape-covered knee. “You are my dearest friend,” she said very softly. “You are almost my only friend. But —— . I can never go into marriage any more....”

“My dear,” he said, “the marriage you have known —— .”

“No,” she said. “No sort of marriage.”

Mr. Brumley heaved a profound sigh.

“Before I had been a widow twenty-four hours, I began to realize that I was an escaped woman. It wasn’t the particular marriage.... It was any marriage.... All we women are tied. Most of us are willing to be tied perhaps, but only as people are willing to be tied to life-belts in a wreck — from fear from drowning. And now, I am just one of

the free women, like the women who can earn large incomes, or the women who happen to own property. I've paid my penalties and my service is over.... I knew, of course, that you would ask me this. It isn't that I don't care for you, that I don't love your company and your help — and the love and the kindness...."

"Only," he said, "although it is the one thing I desire, although it is the one return you can make me —— . But whatever I have done — I have done willingly...."

"My dear!" cried Mr. Brumley, breaking out abruptly at a fresh point, "I want you to marry me. I want you to be mine, to be my dear close companion, the care of my life, the beauty in my life.... I can't frame sentences, my dear. You know, you know.... Since first I saw you, talked to you in this very garden...."

"I don't forget a thing," she answered. "It has been my life as well as yours. Only — —"

The grip of her hand tightened on the back of their seat. She seemed to be examining her thumb intently. Her voice sank to a whisper. "I won't marry you," she said.

§6

Mr. Brumley leant back, then he bent forward in a desperate attitude with his hands and arms thrust between his knees, then suddenly he recovered, stood up and then knelt with one knee upon the seat. "What are you going to do with me then?" he asked.

"I want you to go on being my friend."

"I can't."

"You can't?"

"No, — I've *hoped*."

And then with something almost querulous in his voice, he repeated, "My dear, I want you to marry me and I want now nothing else in the world."

She was silent for a moment. "Mr. Brumley," she said, looking up at him, "have you no thought for our Hostels?"

Mr. Brumley as I have said hated dilemmas. He started to his feet, a man stung. He stood in front of her and quivered extended hands at her. "What do such things matter," he cried, "when a man is in

love?”

She shrank a little from him. “But,” she asked, “haven’t they always mattered?”

“Yes,” he expostulated; “but these Hostels, these Hostels.... We’ve started them — isn’t that good enough? We’ve set them going....”

“Do you know,” she asked, “what would happen to the hostels if I were to marry?”

“They would go on,” he said.

“They would go to a committee. Named. It would include Mrs. Pembrose.... Don’t you see what would happen? He understood the case so well....”

Mr. Brumley seemed suddenly shrunken. “He understood too well,” he said.

He looked down at her soft eyes, at her drooping gracious form, and it seemed to him that indeed she was made for love and that it was unendurable that she should be content to think of friendship and freedom as the ultimate purposes of her life....

§7

Presently these two were walking in the pine-woods beyond the garden and Mr. Brumley was discoursing lamentably of love, this great glory that was denied them.

The shade of perplexity deepened in her dark eyes as she listened. Ever and again she seemed about to speak and then checked herself and let him talk on.

He spoke of the closeness of love and the deep excitement of love and how it filled the soul with pride and the world with wonder, and of the universal right of men and women to love. He told of his dreams and his patience, and of the stormy hopes that would not be suppressed when he heard that Sir Isaac was dead. And as he pictured to himself the lost delights at which he hinted, as he called back those covert expectations, he forgot that she had declared herself resolved upon freedom at any cost, and his rage against Sir Isaac, who had possessed and wasted all that he would have cherished so tenderly, grew to nearly uncontrollable proportions.

“Here was your life,” he said, “your beautiful life opening and full — full of such dear seeds of delight and wonder, calling for love, ready for love, and there came this *Clutch*, this Clutch that embodied all the narrow meanness of existence, and gripped and crumpled you and spoilt you.... For I tell you my dear you don’t know; you don’t begin to know....”

He disregarded her shy eyes, giving way to his gathered wrath.

“And he conquers! This little monster of meanness, he conquers to the end — his dead hand, his dead desires, out of the grave they hold you! Always, always, it is Clutch that conquers; the master of life! I was a fool to dream, a fool to hope. I forgot. I thought only of you and I — that perhaps you and I — —”

He did not heed her little sound of protest. He went on to a bitter denunciation of the rule of jealousy in the world, forgetting that the sufferer under that rule in this case was his own consuming jealousy. That was life. Life was jealousy. It was all made up of fierce graspings, fierce suspicions, fierce resentments; men preyed upon one another even as the beasts they came from; reason made its crushed way through their conflict, crippled and wounded by their blows at one another. The best men, the wisest, the best of mankind, the stars of human wisdom, were but half ineffectual angels carried on the shoulders and guided by the steps of beasts. One might dream of a better world of men, of civilizations and wisdom latent in our passion-strained minds, of calms and courage and great heroical conquests that might come, but they lay tens of thousands of years away and we had to live, we had to die, no more than a herd of beasts tormented by gleams of knowledge we could never possess, of happiness for which we had no soul. He grew more and more eloquent as these thoughts sprang and grew in his mind.

“Of course I am absurd,” he cried. “All men are absurd. Man is the absurd animal. We have parted from primordial motives — lust and hate and hunger and fear, and from all the tragic greatness of uncontrollable fate and we, we’ve got nothing to replace them. We are comic — comic! Ours is the stage of comedy in life’s history, half lit and blinded, — and we fumble. As absurd as a kitten with its poor little head in a bag. There’s your soul of man! Mewing. We’re all at it, the poets, the teachers. How can anyone hope to escape?

Why should I escape? What am I that I should expect to be anything but a thwarted lover, a man mocked by his own attempts at service? Why should I expect to discover beauty and think that it won't be snatched away from me? All my life is comic — the story of this — this last absurdity could it make anything but a comic history? and yet within me my heart is weeping tears. The further one has gone, the deeper one wallows in the comic marsh. I am one of the newer kind of men, one of those men who cannot sit and hug their credit and their honour and their possessions and be content. I have seen the light of better things than that, and because of my vision, because of my vision and for no other reason I am the most ridiculous of men. Always I have tried to go out from myself to the world and give. Those early books of mine, those meretricious books in which I pretended all was so well with the world, — I did them because I wanted to give happiness and contentment and to be happy in the giving. And all the watchers and the grippers, the strong silent men and the calculating possessors of things, the masters of the world, they grinned at me. How I lied to please! But I tell you for all their grinning, in my very prostitution there was a better spirit than theirs in their successes. If I had to live over again — —"

He left that hypothesis uncompleted.

"And now," he said, with a curious contrast between his voice and the exaltation of his sentiments, "now that I am to be your tormented, your emasculated lover to the very end of things, emasculated by laws I hate and customs I hate and vile foresights that I despise — —"

He paused, his thread lost for a moment.

"Because," he said, "I'm going to do it. I'm going to do what I can. I'm going to be as you wish me to be, to help you, to serve you.... If you can't come to meet me, I'll meet you. I can't help but love you, I can't do without you. Never in my life have I subscribed willingly to the idea of renunciation. I've hated renunciation. But if there is no other course but renunciation, renunciation let it be. I'm bitter about this, bitter to the bottom of my soul, but at least I'll have you know I love you. Anyhow...."

His voice broke. There were tears in his eyes.

And on the very crest of these magnificent capitulations his soul

rebelled. He turned about so swiftly that for a sentence or so she did not realize the nature of his change. Her mind remained glowing with her distressed acceptance of his magnificent nobility.

"I can't," he said.

He flung off his surrenders as a savage might fling off a garment.

"When I think of his children," he said.

"When I think of the world filled by his children, the children you have borne him — and I — forbidden almost to touch your hand!"

And flying into a passion Mr. Brumley shouted "No!"

"Not even to touch your hand!"

"I won't do it," he assured her. "I won't do it. If I cannot be your lover — I will go away. I will never see you again. I will do anything — anything, rather than suffer this degradation. I will go abroad. I will go to strange places. I will aviate. I will kill myself — or anything, but I won't endure this. I won't. You see, you ask too much, you demand more than flesh and blood can stand. I've done my best to bring myself to it and I can't. I won't have that — that — —"

He waved his trembling fingers in the air. He was absolutely unable to find an epithet pointed enough and bitter enough to stab into the memory of the departed knight. He thought of him as marble, enthroned at Kensal Green, with a false dignity, a false serenity, and intolerable triumph. He wanted something, some monosyllable to expound and strip all that, some lung-filling sky-splitting monosyllable that one could shout. His failure increased his exasperation.

"I won't have him grinning, at me," he said at last. "And so, it's one thing or the other. There's no other choice. But I know your choice. I see your choice. It's good-bye — and why — why shouldn't I go now?"

He waved his arms about. He was pitifully ridiculous. His face puckered as an ill-treated little boy's might do. This time it wasn't just the pathetic twinge that had broken his voice before; he found himself to his own amazement on the verge of loud, undignified, childish weeping. He was weeping passionately and noisily; he was over the edge of it, and it was too late to snatch himself back. The shame which could not constrain him, overcame him. A preposterous

upward gesture of the hands expressed his despair. And abruptly this unhappy man of letters turned from her and fled, the most grief-routed of creatures, whooping and sobbing along a narrow pathway through the trees.

§8

He left behind him an exceedingly distressed and astonished lady. She had stood with her eyes opening wider and wider at this culminating exhibition.

"But Mr. Brumley!" she had cried at last. "Mr. Brumley!"

He did not seem to hear her. And now he was running and stumbling along very fast through the trees, so that in a few minutes he would be out of sight. Dismay came with the thought that he might presently go out of sight altogether.

For a moment she seemed to hesitate. Then with a swift decision and a firm large grasp of the hand, she gathered up her black skirts and set off after him along the narrow path. She ran. She ran lightly, with a soft rhythmic fluttering of white and black. The long crêpe bands she wore in Sir Isaac's honour streamed out behind her.

"But Mr. Brumley," she panted unheard. "Mister Brumley!"

He went from her fast, faster than she could follow, amidst the sun-dappled pine stems, and as he went he made noises between bellowing and soliloquy, heedless of any pursuit. All she could hear was a heart-wringing but inexpressive "Wa, wa, wooh, wa, woo," that burst from him ever and again. Through a more open space among the trees she fancied she was gaining upon him, and then as the pines came together again and were mingled with young spruces, she perceived that he drew away from her more and more. And he went round a curve and was hidden, and then visible again much further off, and then hidden —— .

She attempted one last cry to him, but her breath failed her, and she dropped her pace to a panting walk.

Surely he would not go thus into the high road! It was unendurable to think of him rushing out into the high road — blind with sorrow — it might be into the very bonnet of a passing automobile.

She passed beyond the pines and scanned the path ahead as far as the stile. Then she saw him, lying where he had flung himself, face downward among the bluebells.

"Oh!" she whispered to herself, and put one hand to her heart and drew nearer.

She was flooded now with that passion of responsibility, with that wild irrational charity which pours out of the secret depths of a woman's stirred being.

She came up to him so lightly as to be noiseless. He did not move, and for a moment she remained looking at him.

Then she said once more, and very gently —

"Mr. Brumley."

He started, listened for a second, turned over, sat up and stared at her. His face was flushed and his hair extremely ruffled. And a slight moisture recalled his weeping.

"Mr. Brumley," she repeated, and suddenly there were tears of honest vexation in her voice and eyes. "You *know* I cannot do without you."

He rose to his knees, and never, it seemed to him, had she looked so beautiful. She was a little out of breath, her dusky hair was disordered, and there was an unwonted expression in her eyes, a strange mingling of indignation and tenderness. For a moment they stared unaffectedly at each other, each making discoveries.

"Oh!" he sighed at last; "whatever you please, my dear. Whatever you please. I'm going to do as you wish, if you wish it, and be your friend and forget all this" — he waved an arm— "loving."

There were signs of a recrudescence of grief, and, inarticulate as ever, she sank to her knees close beside him.

"Let us sit quietly among these hyacinths," said Mr. Brumley. "And then afterwards we will go back to the house and talk ... talk about our Hostels."

He sat back and she remained kneeling.

"Of course," he said, "I'm yours — to do just as you will with. And we'll work —— . I've been a bit of a stupid brute. We'll work. For all those people. It will be — oh! a big work, quite a big work. Big enough for us to thank God for. Only —— ."

The sight of her panting lips had filled him with a wild desire, that

set every nerve aquivering, and yet for all that had a kind of moderation, a reasonableness. It was a sisterly thing he had in mind. He felt that if this one desire could be satisfied, then honour would be satisfied, that he would cease grudging Sir Isaac — anything....

But for some moments he could not force himself to speak of this desire, so great was his fear of a refusal.

"There's one thing," he said, and all his being seemed aquiver.

He looked hard at the trampled bluebells about their feet. "Never once," he went on, "never once in all these years — have we two even — once — kissed.... It is such a little thing.... So much."

He stopped, breathless. He could say no more because of the beating of his heart. And he dared not look at her face....

There was a swift, soft rustling as she moved....

She crouched down upon him and, taking his shoulder in her hand, upset him neatly backwards, and, doing nothing by halves, had kissed the astonished Mr. Brumley full upon his mouth.

THE END

THE WORLD SET FREE

The World Set Free was written during 1913 and published in 1914. Subtitled 'A Story of Mankind', it relates the fictional history of a devastating nuclear war and its aftermath. It had appeared first in serialised form with a different ending as *A Prophetic Trilogy*, consisting of three books: *A Trap to Catch the Sun, The Last War in the World and The World Set Free*.

A frequent theme of Wells' work, as in his 1901 non-fiction book *Anticipations*, was the history of humans' mastery of power and energy through technological advance, seen as a determinant of human progress. Scientists of the time were well aware that the slow natural radioactive decay of elements like radium continues for thousands of years, and that while the rate of energy release is negligible, the total amount released is huge. Wells extrapolates from this the (unfortunately correct) notion that such energy could be harnessed to create weapons capable of destruction on a scale hitherto unforeseen. The novel is dedicated "To Frederick Soddy's *Interpretation of Radium* [1909]."

THE WORLD SET FREE

A STORY OF MANKIND

BY

H. G. WELLS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
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Title page of the first edition

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Striving Upon A Hidden Mission,
Out To The Open Sea.

TO

FREDERICK SODDY'S

'INTERPRETATION OF RADIUM'

This Story,
Which Owes Long Passages To The Eleventh Chapter Of That Book,
Acknowledges And Inscribes Itself

PREFACE

THE WORLD SET FREE was written in 1913 and published early in 1914, and it is the latest of a series of three fantasias of possibility, stories which all turn on the possible developments in the future of some contemporary force or group of forces. The World Set Free was written under the immediate shadow of the Great War. Every intelligent person in the world felt that disaster was impending and knew no way of averting it, but few of us realised in the earlier half of 1914 how near the crash was to us. The reader will be amused to find that here it is put off until the year 1956. He may naturally want to know the reason for what will seem now a quite extraordinary delay. As a prophet, the author must confess he has always been inclined to be rather a slow prophet. The war aeroplane in the world of reality, for example, beat the forecast in Anticipations by about twenty years or so. I suppose a desire not to shock the sceptical reader's sense of use and wont and perhaps a less creditable disposition to hedge, have something to do with this dating forward of one's main events, but in the particular case of The World Set Free there was, I think, another motive in holding the Great War back, and that was to allow the chemist to get well forward with his discovery of the release of atomic energy. 1956 — or for that matter 2056 — may be none too late for that crowning revolution in human potentialities. And apart from this procrastination of over forty years, the guess at the opening phase of the war was fairly lucky; the forecast of an alliance of the Central Empires, the opening campaign through the Netherlands, and the despatch of the British Expeditionary Force were all justified before the book had been published six months. And the opening section of Chapter the Second remains now, after the reality has happened, a fairly adequate diagnosis of the essentials of the matter. One happy hit (in Chapter the Second, Section 2), on which the writer may congratulate himself, is the forecast that under modern conditions it would be quite impossible for any great general to emerge to supremacy and concentrate the enthusiasm of the armies of either side. There could be no Alexanders or Napoleons. And we soon heard the scientific

corps muttering, ‘These old fools,’ exactly as it is here foretold.

These, however, are small details, and the misses in the story far outnumber the hits. It is the main thesis which is still of interest now; the thesis that because of the development of scientific knowledge, separate sovereign states and separate sovereign empires are no longer possible in the world, that to attempt to keep on with the old system is to heap disaster upon disaster for mankind and perhaps to destroy our race altogether. The remaining interest of this book now is the sustained validity of this thesis and the discussion of the possible ending of war on the earth. I have supposed a sort of epidemic of sanity to break out among the rulers of states and the leaders of mankind. I have represented the native common sense of the French mind and of the English mind — for manifestly King Egbert is meant to be ‘God’s Englishman’ — leading mankind towards a bold and resolute effort of salvage and reconstruction. Instead of which, as the school book footnotes say, compare to-day’s newspaper. Instead of a frank and honourable gathering of leading men, Englishman meeting German and Frenchman Russian, brothers in their offences and in their disaster, upon the hills of Brissago, beheld in Geneva at the other end of Switzerland a poor little League of (Allied) Nations (excluding the United States, Russia, and most of the ‘subject peoples’ of the world), meeting obscurely amidst a world-wide disregard to make impotent gestures at the leading problems of the debacle. Either the disaster has not been vast enough yet or it has not been swift enough to inflict the necessary moral shock and achieve the necessary moral revulsion. Just as the world of 1913 was used to an increasing prosperity and thought that increase would go on for ever, so now it would seem the world is growing accustomed to a steady glide towards social disintegration, and thinks that that too can go on continually and never come to a final bump. So soon do use and wont establish themselves, and the most flaming and thunderous of lessons pale into disregard.

The question whether a Leblanc is still possible, the question whether it is still possible to bring about an outbreak of creative sanity in mankind, to avert this steady glide to destruction, is now one of the most urgent in the world. It is clear that the writer is temperamentally disposed to hope that there is such a possibility. But

he has to confess that he sees few signs of any such breadth of understanding and steadfastness of will as an effectual effort to turn the rush of human affairs demands. The inertia of dead ideas and old institutions carries us on towards the rapids. Only in one direction is there any plain recognition of the idea of a human commonweal as something overriding any national and patriotic consideration, and that is in the working class movement throughout the world. And labour internationalism is closely bound up with conceptions of a profound social revolution. If world peace is to be attained through labour internationalism, it will have to be attained at the price of the completest social and economic reconstruction and by passing through a phase of revolution that will certainly be violent, that may be very bloody, which may be prolonged through a long period, and may in the end fail to achieve anything but social destruction. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is in the labour class, and the labour class alone, that any conception of a world rule and a world peace has so far appeared. The dream of The World Set Free, a dream of highly educated and highly favoured leading and ruling men, voluntarily setting themselves to the task of reshaping the world, has thus far remained a dream.

H. G. WELLS. EASTON GLEBE, DUNMOW, 1921.

PRELUDE. THE SUN SNARERS

Section I

THE history of mankind is the history of the attainment of external power. Man is the tool-using, fire-making animal. From the outset of his terrestrial career we find him supplementing the natural strength and bodily weapons of a beast by the heat of burning and the rough implement of stone. So he passed beyond the ape. From that he expands. Presently he added to himself the power of the horse and the ox, he borrowed the carrying strength of water and the driving force of the wind, he quickened his fire by blowing, and his simple tools, pointed first with copper and then with iron, increased and varied and became more elaborate and efficient. He sheltered his heat in houses and made his way easier by paths and roads. He complicated his social relationships and increased his efficiency by the division of labour. He began to store up knowledge. Contrivance followed contrivance, each making it possible for a man to do more. Always down the lengthening record, save for a set-back ever and again, he is doing more.... A quarter of a million years ago the utmost man was a savage, a being scarcely articulate, sheltering in holes in the rocks, armed with a rough-hewn flint or a fire-pointed stick, naked, living in small family groups, killed by some younger man so soon as his first virile activity declined. Over most of the great wildernesses of earth you would have sought him in vain; only in a few temperate and sub-tropical river valleys would you have found the squatting lairs of his little herds, a male, a few females, a child or so.

He knew no future then, no kind of life except the life he led. He fled the cave-bear over the rocks full of iron ore and the promise of sword and spear; he froze to death upon a ledge of coal; he drank water muddy with the clay that would one day make cups of porcelain; he chewed the ear of wild wheat he had plucked and gazed with a dim speculation in his eyes at the birds that soared beyond his reach. Or suddenly he became aware of the scent of another male and rose up roaring, his roars the formless precursors of moral

admonitions. For he was a great individualist, that original, he suffered none other than himself.

So through the long generations, this heavy precursor, this ancestor of all of us, fought and bred and perished, changing almost imperceptibly.

Yet he changed. That keen chisel of necessity which sharpened the tiger's claw age by age and fined down the clumsy Orchippus to the swift grace of the horse, was at work upon him — is at work upon him still. The clumsier and more stupidly fierce among him were killed soonest and oftenest; the finer hand, the quicker eye, the bigger brain, the better balanced body prevailed; age by age, the implements were a little better made, the man a little more delicately adjusted to his possibilities. He became more social; his herd grew larger; no longer did each man kill or drive out his growing sons; a system of taboos made them tolerable to him, and they revered him alive and soon even after he was dead, and were his allies against the beasts and the rest of mankind. (But they were forbidden to touch the women of the tribe, they had to go out and capture women for themselves, and each son fled from his stepmother and hid from her lest the anger of the Old Man should be roused. All the world over, even to this day, these ancient inevitable taboos can be traced.) And now instead of caves came huts and hovels, and the fire was better tended and there were wrappings and garments; and so aided, the creature spread into colder climates, carrying food with him, storing food — until sometimes the neglected grass-seed sprouted again and gave a first hint of agriculture.

And already there were the beginnings of leisure and thought.

Man began to think. There were times when he was fed, when his lusts and his fears were all appeased, when the sun shone upon the squatting-place and dim stirrings of speculation lit his eyes. He scratched upon a bone and found resemblance and pursued it and began pictorial art, moulded the soft, warm clay of the river brink between his fingers, and found a pleasure in its patternings and repetitions, shaped it into the form of vessels, and found that it would hold water. He watched the streaming river, and wondered from what bountiful breast this incessant water came; he blinked at the sun and dreamt that perhaps he might snare it and spear it as it went down to

its resting-place amidst the distant hills. Then he was roused to convey to his brother that once indeed he had done so — at least that some one had done so — he mixed that perhaps with another dream almost as daring, that one day a mammoth had been beset; and therewith began fiction — pointing a way to achievement — and the august prophetic procession of tales.

For scores and hundreds of centuries, for myriads of generations that life of our fathers went on. From the beginning to the ripening of that phase of human life, from the first clumsy eolith of rudely chipped flint to the first implements of polished stone, was two or three thousand centuries, ten or fifteen thousand generations. So slowly, by human standards, did humanity gather itself together out of the dim intimations of the beast. And that first glimmering of speculation, that first story of achievement, that story-teller bright-eyed and flushed under his matted hair, gesticulating to his gaping, incredulous listener, gripping his wrist to keep him attentive, was the most marvellous beginning this world has ever seen. It doomed the mammoths, and it began the setting of that snare that shall catch the sun.

Section 2

That dream was but a moment in a man's life, whose proper business it seemed was to get food and kill his fellows and beget after the manner of all that belongs to the fellowship of the beasts. About him, hidden from him by the thinnest of veils, were the untouched sources of Power, whose magnitude we scarcely do more than suspect even to-day, Power that could make his every conceivable dream come real. But the feet of the race were in the way of it, though he died blindly unknowing.

At last, in the generous levels of warm river valleys, where food is abundant and life very easy, the emerging human overcoming his earlier jealousies, becoming, as necessity persecuted him less urgently, more social and tolerant and amenable, achieved a larger community. There began a division of labour, certain of the older men specialised in knowledge and direction, a strong man took the fatherly leadership in war, and priest and king began to develop their

roles in the opening drama of man's history. The priest's solicitude was seed-time and harvest and fertility, and the king ruled peace and war. In a hundred river valleys about the warm, temperate zone of the earth there were already towns and temples, a score of thousand years ago. They flourished unrecorded, ignoring the past and unsuspicious of the future, for as yet writing had still to begin.

Very slowly did man increase his demand upon the illimitable wealth of Power that offered itself on every hand to him. He tamed certain animals, he developed his primordially haphazard agriculture into a ritual, he added first one metal to his resources and then another, until he had copper and tin and iron and lead and gold and silver to supplement his stone, he hewed and carved wood, made pottery, paddled down his river until he came to the sea, discovered the wheel and made the first roads. But his chief activity for a hundred centuries and more, was the subjugation of himself and others to larger and larger societies. The history of man is not simply the conquest of external power; it is first the conquest of those distrusts and fiercenesses, that self-concentration and intensity of animalism, that tie his hands from taking his inheritance. The ape in us still resents association. From the dawn of the age of polished stone to the achievement of the Peace of the World, man's dealings were chiefly with himself and his fellow man, trading, bargaining, law-making, propitiating, enslaving, conquering, exterminating, and every little increment in Power, he turned at once and always turns to the purposes of this confused elaborate struggle to socialise. To incorporate and comprehend his fellow men into a community of purpose became the last and greatest of his instincts. Already before the last polished phase of the stone age was over he had become a political animal. He made astonishingly far-reaching discoveries within himself, first of counting and then of writing and making records, and with that his town communities began to stretch out to dominion; in the valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the great Chinese rivers, the first empires and the first written laws had their beginnings. Men specialised for fighting and rule as soldiers and knights. Later, as ships grew seaworthy, the Mediterranean which had been a barrier became a highway, and at last out of a tangle of pirate polities came the great struggle of Carthage and Rome. The

history of Europe is the history of the victory and breaking up of the Roman Empire. Every ascendant monarch in Europe up to the last, aped Caesar and called himself Kaiser or Tsar or Imperator or Kasir-i-Hind. Measured by the duration of human life it is a vast space of time between that first dynasty in Egypt and the coming of the aeroplane, but by the scale that looks back to the makers of the eoliths, it is all of it a story of yesterday.

Now during this period of two hundred centuries or more, this period of the warring states, while men's minds were chiefly preoccupied by politics and mutual aggression, their progress in the acquirement of external Power was slow — rapid in comparison with the progress of the old stone age, but slow in comparison with this new age of systematic discovery in which we live. They did not very greatly alter the weapons and tactics of warfare, the methods of agriculture, seamanship, their knowledge of the habitable globe, or the devices and utensils of domestic life between the days of the early Egyptians and the days when Christopher Columbus was a child. Of course, there were inventions and changes, but there were also retrogressions; things were found out and then forgotten again; it was, on the whole, a progress, but it contained no steps; the peasant life was the same, there were already priests and lawyers and town craftsmen and territorial lords and rulers, doctors, wise women, soldiers and sailors in Egypt and China and Assyria and south-eastern Europe at the beginning of that period, and they were doing much the same things and living much the same life as they were in Europe in A.D. 1500. The English excavators of the year A.D. 1900 could delve into the remains of Babylon and Egypt and disinter legal documents, domestic accounts, and family correspondence that they could read with the completest sympathy. There were great religious and moral changes throughout the period, empires and republics replaced one another, Italy tried a vast experiment in slavery, and indeed slavery was tried again and again and failed and failed and was still to be tested again and rejected again in the New World; Christianity and Mohammedanism swept away a thousand more specialised cults, but essentially these were progressive adaptations of mankind to material conditions that must have seemed fixed for ever. The idea of revolutionary changes in the material conditions of

life would have been entirely strange to human thought through all that time.

Yet the dreamer, the story-teller, was there still, waiting for his opportunity amidst the busy preoccupations, the comings and goings, the wars and processions, the castle building and cathedral building, the arts and loves, the small diplomacies and incurable feuds, the crusades and trading journeys of the middle ages. He no longer speculated with the untrammelled freedom of the stone-age savage; authoritative explanations of everything barred his path; but he speculated with a better brain, sat idle and gazed at circling stars in the sky and mused upon the coin and crystal in his hand. Whenever there was a certain leisure for thought throughout these times, then men were to be found dissatisfied with the appearances of things, dissatisfied with the assurances of orthodox belief, uneasy with a sense of unread symbols in the world about them, questioning the finality of scholastic wisdom. Through all the ages of history there were men to whom this whisper had come of hidden things about them. They could no longer lead ordinary lives nor content themselves with the common things of this world once they had heard this voice. And mostly they believed not only that all this world was as it were a painted curtain before things unguessed at, but that these secrets were Power. Hitherto Power had come to men by chance, but now there were these seekers seeking, seeking among rare and curious and perplexing objects, sometimes finding some odd utilisable thing, sometimes deceiving themselves with fancied discovery, sometimes pretending to find. The world of every day laughed at these eccentric beings, or found them annoying and ill-treated them, or was seized with fear and made saints and sorcerers and warlocks of them, or with covetousness and entertained them hopefully; but for the greater part heeded them not at all. Yet they were of the blood of him who had first dreamt of attacking the mammoth; every one of them was of his blood and descent; and the thing they sought, all unwittingly, was the snare that will some day catch the sun.

Section 3

Such a man was that Leonardo da Vinci, who went about the court of Sforza in Milan in a state of dignified abstraction. His common-place books are full of prophetic subtlety and ingenious anticipations of the methods of the early aviators. Durer was his parallel and Roger Bacon — whom the Franciscans silenced — of his kindred. Such a man again in an earlier city was Hero of Alexandria, who knew of the power of steam nineteen hundred years before it was first brought into use. And earlier still was Archimedes of Syracuse, and still earlier the legendary Daedalus of Cnossos. All up and down the record of history whenever there was a little leisure from war and brutality the seekers appeared. And half the alchemists were of their tribe.

When Roger Bacon blew up his first batch of gunpowder one might have supposed that men would have gone at once to the explosive engine. But they could see nothing of the sort. They were not yet beginning to think of seeing things; their metallurgy was all too poor to make such engines even had they thought of them. For a time they could not make instruments sound enough to stand this new force even for so rough a purpose as hurling a missile. Their first guns had barrels of coopered timber, and the world waited for more than five hundred years before the explosive engine came.

Even when the seekers found, it was at first a long journey before the world could use their findings for any but the roughest, most obvious purposes. If man in general was not still as absolutely blind to the unconquered energies about him as his paleolithic precursor, he was at best purblind.

Section 4

The latent energy of coal and the power of steam waited long on the verge of discovery, before they began to influence human lives.

There were no doubt many such devices as Hero's toys devised and forgotten, time after time, in courts and palaces, but it needed that coal should be mined and burning with plenty of iron at hand before it dawned upon men that here was something more than a curiosity. And it is to be remarked that the first recorded suggestion for the use of steam was in war; there is an Elizabethan pamphlet in

which it is proposed to fire shot out of corked iron bottles full of heated water. The mining of coal for fuel, the smelting of iron upon a larger scale than men had ever done before, the steam pumping engine, the steam-engine and the steam-boat, followed one another in an order that had a kind of logical necessity. It is the most interesting and instructive chapter in the history of the human intelligence, the history of steam from its beginning as a fact in human consciousness to the perfection of the great turbine engines that preceded the utilisation of intra-molecular power. Nearly every human being must have seen steam, seen it incuriously for many thousands of years; the women in particular were always heating water, boiling it, seeing it boil away, seeing the lids of vessels dance with its fury; millions of people at different times must have watched steam pitching rocks out of volcanoes like cricket balls and blowing pumice into foam, and yet you may search the whole human record through, letters, books, inscriptions, pictures, for any glimmer of a realisation that here was force, here was strength to borrow and use.... Then suddenly man woke up to it, the railways spread like a network over the globe, the ever enlarging iron steamships began their staggering fight against wind and wave.

Steam was the first-comer in the new powers, it was the beginning of the Age of Energy that was to close the long history of the Warring States.

But for a long time men did not realise the importance of this novelty. They would not recognise, they were not able to recognise that anything fundamental had happened to their immemorial necessities. They called the steam-engine the 'iron horse' and pretended that they had made the most partial of substitutions. Steam machinery and factory production were visibly revolutionising the conditions of industrial production, population was streaming steadily in from the country-side and concentrating in hitherto unthought-of masses about a few city centres, food was coming to them over enormous distances upon a scale that made the one sole precedent, the corn ships of imperial Rome, a petty incident; and a huge migration of peoples between Europe and Western Asia and America was in Progress, and — nobody seems to have realised that something new had come into human life, a strange swirl different

altogether from any previous circling and mutation, a swirl like the swirl when at last the lock gates begin to open after a long phase of accumulating water and eddying inactivity....

The sober Englishman at the close of the nineteenth century could sit at his breakfast-table, decide between tea from Ceylon or coffee from Brazil, devour an egg from France with some Danish ham, or eat a New Zealand chop, wind up his breakfast with a West Indian banana, glance at the latest telegrams from all the world, scrutinise the prices current of his geographically distributed investments in South Africa, Japan, and Egypt, and tell the two children he had begotten (in the place of his father's eight) that he thought the world changed very little. They must play cricket, keep their hair cut, go to the old school he had gone to, shirk the lessons he had shirked, learn a few scraps of Horace and Virgil and Homer for the confusion of cads, and all would be well with them....

Section 5

Electricity, though it was perhaps the earlier of the two to be studied, invaded the common life of men a few decades after the exploitation of steam. To electricity also, in spite of its provocative nearness all about him, mankind had been utterly blind for incalculable ages. Could anything be more emphatic than the appeal of electricity for attention? It thundered at man's ears, it signalled to him in blinding flashes, occasionally it killed him, and he could not see it as a thing that concerned him enough to merit study. It came into the house with the cat on any dry day and crackled insinuatingly whenever he stroked her fur. It rotted his metals when he put them together.... There is no single record that any one questioned why the cat's fur crackles or why hair is so unruly to brush on a frosty day, before the sixteenth century. For endless years man seems to have done his very successful best not to think about it at all; until this new spirit of the Seeker turned itself to these things.

How often things must have been seen and dismissed as unimportant, before the speculative eye and the moment of vision came! It was Gilbert, Queen Elizabeth's court physician, who first puzzled his brains with rubbed amber and bits of glass and silk and

shellac, and so began the quickening of the human mind to the existence of this universal presence. And even then the science of electricity remained a mere little group of curious facts for nearly two hundred years, connected perhaps with magnetism — a mere guess that — perhaps with the lightning. Frogs' legs must have hung by copper hooks from iron railings and twitched upon countless occasions before Galvani saw them. Except for the lightning conductor, it was 250 years after Gilbert before electricity stepped out of the cabinet of scientific curiosities into the life of the common man.... Then suddenly, in the half-century between 1880 and 1930, it ousted the steam-engine and took over traction, it ousted every other form of household heating, abolished distance with the perfected wireless telephone and the telephotograph....

Section 6

And there was an extraordinary mental resistance to discovery and invention for at least a hundred years after the scientific revolution had begun. Each new thing made its way into practice against a scepticism that amounted at times to hostility. One writer upon these subjects gives a funny little domestic conversation that happened, he says, in the year 1898, within ten years, that is to say, of the time when the first aviators were fairly on the wing. He tells us how he sat at his desk in his study and conversed with his little boy.

His little boy was in profound trouble. He felt he had to speak very seriously to his father, and as he was a kindly little boy he did not want to do it too harshly.

This is what happened.

'I wish, Daddy,' he said, coming to his point, 'that you wouldn't write all this stuff about flying. The chaps rot me.'

'Yes!' said his father.

'And old Broomie, the Head I mean, he rots me. Everybody rots me.'

'But there is going to be flying — quite soon.'

The little boy was too well bred to say what he thought of that. 'Anyhow,' he said, 'I wish you wouldn't write about it.'

'You'll fly — lots of times — before you die,' the father assured

him.

The little boy looked unhappy.

The father hesitated. Then he opened a drawer and took out a blurred and under-developed photograph. ‘Come and look at this,’ he said.

The little boy came round to him. The photograph showed a stream and a meadow beyond, and some trees, and in the air a black, pencil-like object with flat wings on either side of it. It was the first record of the first apparatus heavier than air that ever maintained itself in the air by mechanical force. Across the margin was written: ‘Here we go up, up, up — from S. P. Langley, Smithsonian Institution, Washington.’

The father watched the effect of this reassuring document upon his son. ‘Well?’ he said.

‘That,’ said the schoolboy, after reflection, ‘is only a model.’

‘Model to-day, man to-morrow.’

The boy seemed divided in his allegiance. Then he decided for what he believed quite firmly to be omniscience. ‘But old Broomie,’ he said, ‘he told all the boys in his class only yesterday, “no man will ever fly.” No one, he says, who has ever shot grouse or pheasants on the wing would ever believe anything of the sort....’

Yet that boy lived to fly across the Atlantic and edit his father’s reminiscences.

Section 7

At the close of the nineteenth century as a multitude of passages in the literature of that time witness, it was thought that the fact that man had at last had successful and profitable dealings with the steam that scalded him and the electricity that flashed and banged about the sky at him, was an amazing and perhaps a culminating exercise of his intelligence and his intellectual courage. The air of ‘Nunc Dimittis’ sounds in same of these writings. ‘The great things are discovered,’ wrote Gerald Brown in his summary of the nineteenth century. ‘For us there remains little but the working out of detail.’ The spirit of the seeker was still rare in the world; education was unskilled, unstimulating, scholarly, and but little valued, and few people even

then could have realised that Science was still but the flimsiest of trial sketches and discovery scarcely beginning. No one seems to have been afraid of science and its possibilities. Yet now where there had been but a score or so of seekers, there were many thousands, and for one needle of speculation that had been probing the curtain of appearances in 1800, there were now hundreds. And already Chemistry, which had been content with her atoms and molecules for the better part of a century, was preparing herself for that vast next stride that was to revolutionise the whole life of man from top to bottom.

One realises how crude was the science of that time when one considers the case of the composition of air. This was determined by that strange genius and recluse, that man of mystery, that disembowelled intelligence, Henry Cavendish, towards the end of the eighteenth century. So far as he was concerned the work was admirably done. He separated all the known ingredients of the air with a precision altogether remarkable; he even put it upon record that he had some doubt about the purity of the nitrogen. For more than a hundred years his determination was repeated by chemists all the world over, his apparatus was treasured in London, he became, as they used to say, 'classic,' and always, at every one of the innumerable repetitions of his experiment, that sly element argon was hiding among the nitrogen (and with a little helium and traces of other substances, and indeed all the hints that might have led to the new departures of the twentieth-century chemistry), and every time it slipped unobserved through the professorial fingers that repeated his procedure.

Is it any wonder then with this margin of inaccuracy, that up to the very dawn of the twentieth-century scientific discovery was still rather a procession of happy accidents than an orderly conquest of nature?

Yet the spirit of seeking was spreading steadily through the world. Even the schoolmaster could not check it. For the mere handful who grew up to feel wonder and curiosity about the secrets of nature in the nineteenth century, there were now, at the beginning of the twentieth, myriads escaping from the limitations of intellectual routine and the habitual life, in Europe, in America, North and South,

in Japan, in China, and all about the world.

It was in 1910 that the parents of young Holsten, who was to be called by a whole generation of scientific men, 'the greatest of European chemists,' were staying in a villa near Santo Domenico, between Fiesole and Florence. He was then only fifteen, but he was already distinguished as a mathematician and possessed by a savage appetite to understand. He had been particularly attracted by the mystery of phosphorescence and its apparent unrelatedness to every other source of light. He was to tell afterwards in his reminiscences how he watched the fireflies drifting and glowing among the dark trees in the garden of the villa under the warm blue night sky of Italy; how he caught and kept them in cages, dissected them, first studying the general anatomy of insects very elaborately, and how he began to experiment with the effect of various gases and varying temperature upon their light. Then the chance present of a little scientific toy invented by Sir William Crookes, a toy called the spinthariscope, on which radium particles impinge upon sulphide of zinc and make it luminous, induced him to associate the two sets of phenomena. It was a happy association for his inquiries. It was a rare and fortunate thing, too, that any one with the mathematical gift should have been taken by these curiosities.

Section 8

And while the boy Holsten was mooning over his fireflies at Fiesole, a certain professor of physics named Rufus was giving a course of afternoon lectures upon Radium and Radio-Activity in Edinburgh. They were lectures that had attracted a very considerable amount of attention. He gave them in a small lecture-theatre that had become more and more congested as his course proceeded. At his concluding discussion it was crowded right up to the ceiling at the back, and there people were standing, standing without any sense of fatigue, so fascinating did they find his suggestions. One youngster in particular, a chuckle-headed, scrub-haired lad from the Highlands, sat hugging his knee with great sand-red hands and drinking in every word, eyes aglow, cheeks flushed, and ears burning.

'And so,' said the professor, 'we see that this Radium, which

seemed at first a fantastic exception, a mad inversion of all that was most established and fundamental in the constitution of matter, is really at one with the rest of the elements. It does noticeably and forcibly what probably all the other elements are doing with an imperceptible slowness. It is like the single voice crying aloud that betrays the silent breathing multitude in the darkness. Radium is an element that is breaking up and flying to pieces. But perhaps all elements are doing that at less perceptible rates. Uranium certainly is; thorium — the stuff of this incandescent gas mantle — certainly is; actinium. I feel that we are but beginning the list. And we know now that the atom, that once we thought hard and impenetrable, and indivisible and final and — lifeless — lifeless, is really a reservoir of immense energy. That is the most wonderful thing about all this work. A little while ago we thought of the atoms as we thought of bricks, as solid building material, as substantial matter, as unit masses of lifeless stuff, and behold! these bricks are boxes, treasure boxes, boxes full of the intensest force. This little bottle contains about a pint of uranium oxide; that is to say, about fourteen ounces of the element uranium. It is worth about a pound. And in this bottle, ladies and gentlemen, in the atoms in this bottle there slumbers at least as much energy as we could get by burning a hundred and sixty tons of coal. If at a word, in one instant I could suddenly release that energy here and now it would blow us and everything about us to fragments; if I could turn it into the machinery that lights this city, it could keep Edinburgh brightly lit for a week. But at present no man knows, no man has an inkling of how this little lump of stuff can be made to hasten the release of its store. It does release it, as a burn trickles. Slowly the uranium changes into radium, the radium changes into a gas called the radium emanation, and that again to what we call radium A, and so the process goes on, giving out energy at every stage, until at last we reach the last stage of all, which is, so far as we can tell at present, lead. But we cannot hasten it.'

'I take ye, man,' whispered the chuckle-headed lad, with his red hands tightening like a vice upon his knee. 'I take ye, man. Go on! Oh, go on!'

The professor went on after a little pause. 'Why is the change gradual?' he asked. 'Why does only a minute fraction of the radium

disintegrate in any particular second? Why does it dole itself out so slowly and so exactly? Why does not all the uranium change to radium and all the radium change to the next lowest thing at once? Why this decay by driblets; why not a decay en masse? . . . Suppose presently we find it is possible to quicken that decay?'

The chuckle-headed lad nodded rapidly. The wonderful inevitable idea was coming. He drew his knee up towards his chin and swayed in his seat with excitement. 'Why not?' he echoed, 'why not?'

The professor lifted his forefinger.

'Given that knowledge,' he said, 'mark what we should be able to do! We should not only be able to use this uranium and thorium; not only should we have a source of power so potent that a man might carry in his hand the energy to light a city for a year, fight a fleet of battleships, or drive one of our giant liners across the Atlantic; but we should also have a clue that would enable us at last to quicken the process of disintegration in all the other elements, where decay is still so slow as to escape our finest measurements. Every scrap of solid matter in the world would become an available reservoir of concentrated force. Do you realise, ladies and gentlemen, what these things would mean for us?'

The scrub head nodded. 'Oh! go on. Go on.'

'It would mean a change in human conditions that I can only compare to the discovery of fire, that first discovery that lifted man above the brute. We stand to-day towards radio-activity as our ancestor stood towards fire before he had learnt to make it. He knew it then only as a strange thing utterly beyond his control, a flare on the crest of the volcano, a red destruction that poured through the forest. So it is that we know radio-activity to-day. This — this is the dawn of a new day in human living. At the climax of that civilisation which had its beginning in the hammered flint and the fire-stick of the savage, just when it is becoming apparent that our ever-increasing needs cannot be borne indefinitely by our present sources of energy, we discover suddenly the possibility of an entirely new civilisation. The energy we need for our very existence, and with which Nature supplies us still so grudgingly, is in reality locked up in inconceivable quantities all about us. We cannot pick that lock at present, but — —'

He paused. His voice sank so that everybody strained a little to hear him.

‘ —— we will.’

He put up that lean finger again, his solitary gesture.

‘And then,’ he said....

‘Then that perpetual struggle for existence, that perpetual struggle to live on the bare surplus of Nature’s energies will cease to be the lot of Man. Man will step from the pinnacle of this civilisation to the beginning of the next. I have no eloquence, ladies and gentlemen, to express the vision of man’s material destiny that opens out before me. I see the desert continents transformed, the poles no longer wildernesses of ice, the whole world once more Eden. I see the power of man reach out among the stars....’

He stopped abruptly with a catching of the breath that many an actor or orator might have envied.

The lecture was over, the audience hung silent for a few seconds, sighed, became audible, stirred, fluttered, prepared for dispersal. More light was turned on and what had been a dim mass of figures became a bright confusion of movement. Some of the people signalled to friends, some crowded down towards the platform to examine the lecturer’s apparatus and make notes of his diagrams. But the chuckle-headed lad with the scrub hair wanted no such detailed frittering away of the thoughts that had inspired him. He wanted to be alone with them; he elbowed his way out almost fiercely, he made himself as angular and bony as a cow, fearing lest some one should speak to him, lest some one should invade his glowing sphere of enthusiasm.

He went through the streets with a rapt face, like a saint who sees visions. He had arms disproportionately long, and ridiculous big feet.

He must get alone, get somewhere high out of all this crowding of commonness, of everyday life.

He made his way to the top of Arthur’s Seat, and there he sat for a long time in the golden evening sunshine, still, except that ever and again he whispered to himself some precious phrase that had stuck in his mind.

‘If,’ he whispered, ‘if only we could pick that lock....’

The sun was sinking over the distant hills. Already it was shorn of

its beams, a globe of ruddy gold, hanging over the great banks of cloud that would presently engulf it.

‘Eh!’ said the youngster. ‘Eh!’

He seemed to wake up at last out of his entrancement, and the red sun was there before his eyes. He stared at it, at first without intelligence, and then with a gathering recognition. Into his mind came a strange echo of that ancestral fancy, that fancy of a Stone Age savage, dead and scattered bones among the drift two hundred thousand years ago.

‘Ye auld thing,’ he said — and his eyes were shining, and he made a kind of grabbing gesture with his hand; ‘ye auld red thing.... We’ll have ye YET.’

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE NEW SOURCE OF ENERGY

Section I

The problem which was already being mooted by such scientific men as Ramsay, Rutherford, and Soddy, in the very beginning of the twentieth century, the problem of inducing radio-activity in the heavier elements and so tapping the internal energy of atoms, was solved by a wonderful combination of induction, intuition, and luck by Holsten so soon as the year 1933. From the first detection of radio-activity to its first subjugation to human purpose measured little more than a quarter of a century. For twenty years after that, indeed, minor difficulties prevented any striking practical application of his success, but the essential thing was done, this new boundary in the march of human progress was crossed, in that year. He set up atomic disintegration in a minute particle of bismuth; it exploded with great violence into a heavy gas of extreme radio-activity, which disintegrated in its turn in the course of seven days, and it was only after another year's work that he was able to show practically that the last result of this rapid release of energy was gold. But the thing was done — at the cost of a blistered chest and an injured finger, and from the moment when the invisible speck of bismuth flashed into riving and rending energy, Holsten knew that he had opened a way for mankind, however narrow and dark it might still be, to worlds of limitless power. He recorded as much in the strange diary biography he left the world, a diary that was up to that particular moment a mass of speculations and calculations, and which suddenly became for a space an amazingly minute and human record of sensations and emotions that all humanity might understand.

He gives, in broken phrases and often single words, it is true, but none the less vividly for that, a record of the twenty-four hours following the demonstration of the correctness of his intricate tracery of computations and guesses. 'I thought I should not sleep,' he writes — the words he omitted are supplied in brackets — (on account of)

‘pain in (the) hand and chest and (the) wonder of what I had done.... Slept like a child.’

He felt strange and disconcerted the next morning; he had nothing to do, he was living alone in apartments in Bloomsbury, and he decided to go up to Hampstead Heath, which he had known when he was a little boy as a breezy playground. He went up by the underground tube that was then the recognised means of travel from one part of London to another, and walked up Heath Street from the tube station to the open heath. He found it a gully of planks and scaffoldings between the hoardings of house-wreckers. The spirit of the times had seized upon that narrow, steep, and winding thoroughfare, and was in the act of making it commodious and interesting, according to the remarkable ideals of Neo-Georgian aestheticism. Such is the illogical quality of humanity that Holsten, fresh from work that was like a petard under the seat of current civilisation, saw these changes with regret. He had come up Heath Street perhaps a thousand times, had known the windows of all the little shops, spent hours in the vanished cinematograph theatre, and marvelled at the high-flung early Georgian houses upon the westward bank of that old gully of a thoroughfare; he felt strange with all these familiar things gone. He escaped at last with a feeling of relief from this choked alley of trenches and holes and cranes, and emerged upon the old familiar scene about the White Stone Pond. That, at least, was very much as it used to be.

There were still the fine old red-brick houses to left and right of him; the reservoir had been improved by a portico of marble, the white-fronted inn with the clustering flowers above its portico still stood out at the angle of the ways, and the blue view to Harrow Hill and Harrow spire, a view of hills and trees and shining waters and wind-driven cloud shadows, was like the opening of a great window to the ascending Londoner. All that was very reassuring. There was the same strolling crowd, the same perpetual miracle of motors dodging through it harmlessly, escaping headlong into the country from the Sabbatical stuffiness behind and below them. There was a band still, a women’s suffrage meeting — for the suffrage women had won their way back to the tolerance, a trifle derisive, of the populace again — socialist orators, politicians, a band, and the same

wild uproar of dogs, frantic with the gladness of their one blessed weekly release from the back yard and the chain. And away along the road to the Spaniards strolled a vast multitude, saying, as ever, that the view of London was exceptionally clear that day.

Young Holsten's face was white. He walked with that uneasy affectation of ease that marks an overstrained nervous system and an under-exercised body. He hesitated at the White Stone Pond whether to go to the left of it or the right, and again at the fork of the roads. He kept shifting his stick in his hand, and every now and then he would get in the way of people on the footpath or be jostled by them because of the uncertainty of his movements. He felt, he confesses, 'inadequate to ordinary existence.' He seemed to himself to be something inhuman and mischievous. All the people about him looked fairly prosperous, fairly happy, fairly well adapted to the lives they had to lead — a week of work and a Sunday of best clothes and mild promenading — and he had launched something that would disorganise the entire fabric that held their contentments and ambitions and satisfactions together. 'Felt like an imbecile who has presented a box full of loaded revolvers to a Creche,' he notes.

He met a man named Lawson, an old school-fellow, of whom history now knows only that he was red-faced and had a terrier. He and Holsten walked together and Holsten was sufficiently pale and jumpy for Lawson to tell him he overworked and needed a holiday. They sat down at a little table outside the County Council house of Golders Hill Park and sent one of the waiters to the Bull and Bush for a couple of bottles of beer, no doubt at Lawson's suggestion. The beer warmed Holsten's rather dehumanised system. He began to tell Lawson as clearly as he could to what his great discovery amounted. Lawson feigned attention, but indeed he had neither the knowledge nor the imagination to understand. 'In the end, before many years are out, this must eventually change war, transit, lighting, building, and every sort of manufacture, even agriculture, every material human concern — —'

Then Holsten stopped short. Lawson had leapt to his feet. 'Damn that dog!' cried Lawson. 'Look at it now. Hi! Here! Phewoo — phewoo phewoo! Come HERE, Bobs! Come HERE!'

The young scientific man, with his bandaged hand, sat at the green

table, too tired to convey the wonder of the thing he had sought so long, his friend whistled and bawled for his dog, and the Sunday people drifted about them through the spring sunshine. For a moment or so Holsten stared at Lawson in astonishment, for he had been too intent upon what he had been saying to realise how little Lawson had attended.

Then he remarked, 'WELL!' and smiled faintly, and — finished the tankard of beer before him.

Lawson sat down again. 'One must look after one's dog,' he said, with a note of apology. 'What was it you were telling me?'

Section 2

In the evening Holsten went out again. He walked to Saint Paul's Cathedral, and stood for a time near the door listening to the evening service. The candles upon the altar reminded him in some odd way of the fireflies at Fiesole. Then he walked back through the evening lights to Westminster. He was oppressed, he was indeed scared, by his sense of the immense consequences of his discovery. He had a vague idea that night that he ought not to publish his results, that they were premature, that some secret association of wise men should take care of his work and hand it on from generation to generation until the world was riper for its practical application. He felt that nobody in all the thousands of people he passed had really awakened to the fact of change, they trusted the world for what it was, not to alter too rapidly, to respect their trusts, their assurances, their habits, their little accustomed traffics and hard-won positions.

He went into those little gardens beneath the over-hanging, brightly-lit masses of the Savoy Hotel and the Hotel Cecil. He sat down on a seat and became aware of the talk of the two people next to him. It was the talk of a young couple evidently on the eve of marriage. The man was congratulating himself on having regular employment at last; 'they like me,' he said, 'and I like the job. If I work up — in'r dozen years or so I ought to be gettin' somethin' pretty comfortable. That's the plain sense of it, Hetty. There ain't no reason whatsoever why we shouldn't get along very decently — very decently indeed.'

The desire for little successes amidst conditions securely fixed! So it struck upon Holsten's mind. He added in his diary, 'I had a sense of all this globe as that....'

By that phrase he meant a kind of clairvoyant vision of this populated world as a whole, of all its cities and towns and villages, its high roads and the inns beside them, its gardens and farms and upland pastures, its boatmen and sailors, its ships coming along the great circles of the ocean, its time-tables and appointments and payments and dues as it were one unified and progressive spectacle. Sometimes such visions came to him; his mind, accustomed to great generalisations and yet acutely sensitive to detail, saw things far more comprehensively than the minds of most of his contemporaries. Usually the teeming sphere moved on to its predestined ends and circled with a stately swiftness on its path about the sun. Usually it was all a living progress that altered under his regard. But now fatigue a little deadened him to that incessancy of life, it seemed now just an eternal circling. He lapsed to the commoner persuasion of the great fixities and recurrencies of the human routine. The remoter past of wandering savagery, the inevitable changes of to-morrow were veiled, and he saw only day and night, seed-time and harvest, loving and begetting, births and deaths, walks in the summer sunlight and tales by the winter fireside, the ancient sequence of hope and acts and age perennially renewed, eddying on for ever and ever, save that now the impious hand of research was raised to overthrow this drowsy, gently humming, habitual, sunlit spinning-top of man's existence....

For a time he forgot wars and crimes and hates and persecutions, famine and pestilence, the cruelties of beasts, weariness and the bitter wind, failure and insufficiency and retrocession. He saw all mankind in terms of the humble Sunday couple upon the seat beside him, who schemed their inglorious outlook and improbable contentments. 'I had a sense of all this globe as that.'

His intelligence struggled against this mood and struggled for a time in vain. He reassured himself against the invasion of this disconcerting idea that he was something strange and inhuman, a loose wanderer from the flock returning with evil gifts from his sustained unnatural excursions amidst the darknesses and phosphorescences beneath the fair surfaces of life. Man had not been

always thus; the instincts and desires of the little home, the little plot, was not all his nature; also he was an adventurer, an experimenter, an unresting curiosity, an insatiable desire. For a few thousand generations indeed he had tilled the earth and followed the seasons, saying his prayers, grinding his corn and trampling the October winepress, yet not for so long but that he was still full of restless stirrings.

'If there have been home and routine and the field,' thought Holsten, 'there have also been wonder and the sea.'

He turned his head and looked up over the back of the seat at the great hotels above him, full of softly shaded lights and the glow and colour and stir of feasting. Might his gift to mankind mean simply more of that? . . .

He got up and walked out of the garden, surveyed a passing tram-car, laden with warm light, against the deep blues of evening, dripping and trailing long skirts of shining reflection; he crossed the Embankment and stood for a time watching the dark river and turning ever and again to the lit buildings and bridges. His mind began to scheme conceivable replacements of all those clustering arrangements....

'It has begun,' he writes in the diary in which these things are recorded. 'It is not for me to reach out to consequences I cannot foresee. I am a part, not a whole; I am a little instrument in the armoury of Change. If I were to burn all these papers, before a score of years had passed, some other man would be doing this. . .

Section 3

Holsten, before he died, was destined to see atomic energy dominating every other source of power, but for some years yet a vast network of difficulties in detail and application kept the new discovery from any effective invasion of ordinary life. The path from the laboratory to the workshop is sometimes a tortuous one; electro-magnetic radiations were known and demonstrated for twenty years before Marconi made them practically available, and in the same way it was twenty years before induced radio-activity could be brought to practical utilisation. The thing, of course, was discussed very much,

more perhaps at the time of its discovery than during the interval of technical adaptation, but with very little realisation of the huge economic revolution that impended. What chiefly impressed the journalists of 1933 was the production of gold from bismuth and the realisation albeit upon unprofitable lines of the alchemist's dreams; there was a considerable amount of discussion and expectation in that more intelligent section of the educated publics of the various civilised countries which followed scientific development; but for the most part the world went about its business — as the inhabitants of those Swiss villages which live under the perpetual threat of overhanging rocks and mountains go about their business — just as though the possible was impossible, as though the inevitable was postponed for ever because it was delayed.

It was in 1953 that the first Holsten-Roberts engine brought induced radio-activity into the sphere of industrial production, and its first general use was to replace the steam-engine in electrical generating stations. Hard upon the appearance of this came the Dass-Tata engine — the invention of two among the brilliant galaxy of Bengali inventors the modernisation of Indian thought was producing at this time — which was used chiefly for automobiles, aeroplanes, waterplanes, and such-like, mobile purposes. The American Kemp engine, differing widely in principle but equally practicable, and the Krupp-Erlanger came hard upon the heels of this, and by the autumn of 1954 a gigantic replacement of industrial methods and machinery was in progress all about the habitable globe. Small wonder was this when the cost, even of these earliest and clumsiest of atomic engines, is compared with that of the power they superseded. Allowing for lubrication the Dass-Tata engine, once it was started cost a penny to run thirty-seven miles, and added only nine and quarter pounds to the weight of the carriage it drove. It made the heavy alcohol-driven automobile of the time ridiculous in appearance as well as preposterously costly. For many years the price of coal and every form of liquid fuel had been clambering to levels that made even the revival of the draft horse seem a practicable possibility, and now with the abrupt relaxation of this stringency, the change in appearance of the traffic upon the world's roads was instantaneous. In three years the frightful armoured monsters that had hooted and

smoked and thundered about the world for four awful decades were swept away to the dealers in old metal, and the highways thronged with light and clean and shimmering shapes of silvered steel. At the same time a new impetus was given to aviation by the relatively enormous power for weight of the atomic engine, it was at last possible to add Redmayne's ingenious helicopter ascent and descent engine to the vertical propeller that had hitherto been the sole driving force of the aeroplane without overweighting the machine, and men found themselves possessed of an instrument of flight that could hover or ascend or descend vertically and gently as well as rush wildly through the air. The last dread of flying vanished. As the journalists of the time phrased it, this was the epoch of the Leap into the Air. The new atomic aeroplane became indeed a mania; every one of means was frantic to possess a thing so controllable, so secure and so free from the dust and danger of the road, and in France alone in the year 1943 thirty thousand of these new aeroplanes were manufactured and licensed, and soared humming softly into the sky.

And with an equal speed atomic engines of various types invaded industrialism. The railways paid enormous premiums for priority in the delivery of atomic traction engines, atomic smelting was embarked upon so eagerly as to lead to a number of disastrous explosions due to inexperienced handling of the new power, and the revolutionary cheapening of both materials and electricity made the entire reconstruction of domestic buildings a matter merely dependent upon a reorganisation of the methods of the builder and the house-furnisher. Viewed from the side of the new power and from the point of view of those who financed and manufactured the new engines and material it required the age of the Leap into the Air was one of astonishing prosperity. Patent-holding companies were presently paying dividends of five or six hundred per cent. and enormous fortunes were made and fantastic wages earned by all who were concerned in the new developments. This prosperity was not a little enhanced by the fact that in both the Dass-Tata and Holsten-Roberts engines one of the recoverable waste products was gold — the former disintegrated dust of bismuth and the latter dust of lead — and that this new supply of gold led quite naturally to a rise in prices throughout the world.

This spectacle of feverish enterprise was productivity, this crowding flight of happy and fortunate rich people — every great city was as if a crawling ant-hill had suddenly taken wing — was the bright side of the opening phase of the new epoch in human history. Beneath that brightness was a gathering darkness, a deepening dismay. If there was a vast development of production there was also a huge destruction of values. These glaring factories working night and day, these glittering new vehicles swinging noiselessly along the roads, these flights of dragon-flies that swooped and soared and circled in the air, were indeed no more than the brightnesses of lamps and fires that gleam out when the world sinks towards twilight and the night. Between these high lights accumulated disaster, social catastrophe. The coal mines were manifestly doomed to closure at no very distant date, the vast amount of capital invested in oil was becoming unsaleable, millions of coal miners, steel workers upon the old lines, vast swarms of unskilled or under-skilled labourers in innumerable occupations, were being flung out of employment by the superior efficiency of the new machinery, the rapid fall in the cost of transit was destroying high land values at every centre of population, the value of existing house property had become problematical, gold was undergoing headlong depreciation, all the securities upon which the credit of the world rested were slipping and sliding, banks were tottering, the stock exchanges were scenes of feverish panic; — this was the reverse of the spectacle, these were the black and monstrous under-consequences of the Leap into the Air.

There is a story of a demented London stockbroker running out into Threadneedle Street and tearing off his clothes as he ran. 'The Steel Trust is scrapping the whole of its plant,' he shouted. 'The State Railways are going to scrap all their engines. Everything's going to be scrapped — everything. Come and scrap the mint, you fellows, come and scrap the mint!'

In the year 1955 the suicide rate for the United States of America quadrupled any previous record. There was an enormous increase also in violent crime throughout the world. The thing had come upon an unprepared humanity; it seemed as though human society was to be smashed by its own magnificent gains.

For there had been no foresight of these things. There had been no

attempt anywhere even to compute the probable dislocations this flood of inexpensive energy would produce in human affairs. The world in these days was not really governed at all, in the sense in which government came to be understood in subsequent years. Government was a treaty, not a design; it was forensic, conservative, disputatious, unseeing, unthinking, uncreative; throughout the world, except where the vestiges of absolutism still sheltered the court favourite and the trusted servant, it was in the hands of the predominant caste of lawyers, who had an enormous advantage in being the only trained caste. Their professional education and every circumstance in the manipulation of the fantastically naive electoral methods by which they clambered to power, conspired to keep them contemptuous of facts, conscientiously unimaginative, alert to claim and seize advantages and suspicious of every generosity. Government was an obstructive business of energetic fractions, progress went on outside of and in spite of public activities, and legislation was the last crippling recognition of needs so clamorous and imperative and facts so aggressively established as to invade even the dingy seclusions of the judges and threaten the very existence of the otherwise inattentive political machine.

The world was so little governed that with the very coming of plenty, in the full tide of an incalculable abundance, when everything necessary to satisfy human needs and everything necessary to realise such will and purpose as existed then in human hearts was already at hand, one has still to tell of hardship, famine, anger, confusion, conflict, and incoherent suffering. There was no scheme for the distribution of this vast new wealth that had come at last within the reach of men; there was no clear conception that any such distribution was possible. As one attempts a comprehensive view of those opening years of the new age, as one measures it against the latent achievement that later years have demonstrated, one begins to measure the blindness, the narrowness, the insensate unimaginative individualism of the pre-atomic time. Under this tremendous dawn of power and freedom, under a sky ablaze with promise, in the very presence of science standing like some bountiful goddess over all the squat darknesses of human life, holding patiently in her strong arms, until men chose to take them, security, plenty, the solution of riddles,

the key of the bravest adventures, in her very presence, and with the earnest of her gifts in court, the world was to witness such things as the squalid spectacle of the Dass-Tata patent litigation.

There in a stuffy court in London, a grimy oblong box of a room, during the exceptional heat of the May of 1956, the leading counsel of the day argued and shouted over a miserable little matter of more royalties or less and whether the Dass-Tata company might not bar the Holsten-Roberts' methods of utilising the new power. The Dass-Tata people were indeed making a strenuous attempt to secure a world monopoly in atomic engineering. The judge, after the manner of those times, sat raised above the court, wearing a preposterous gown and a foolish huge wig, the counsel also wore dirty-looking little wigs and queer black gowns over their usual costume, wigs and gowns that were held to be necessary to their pleading, and upon unclean wooden benches stirred and whispered artful-looking solicitors, busily scribbling reporters, the parties to the case, expert witnesses, interested people, and a jostling confusion of subpoenaed persons, briefless young barristers (forming a style on the most esteemed and truculent examples) and casual eccentric spectators who preferred this pit of iniquity to the free sunlight outside. Every one was damply hot, the examining King's Counsel wiped the perspiration from his huge, clean-shaven upper lip; and into this atmosphere of grasping contention and human exhalations the daylight filtered through a window that was manifestly dirty. The jury sat in a double pew to the left of the judge, looking as uncomfortable as frogs that have fallen into an ash-pit, and in the witness-box lied the would-be omnivorous Dass, under cross-examination....

Holsten had always been accustomed to publish his results so soon as they appeared to him to be sufficiently advanced to furnish a basis for further work, and to that confiding disposition and one happy flash of adaptive invention the alert Dass owed his claim....

But indeed a vast multitude of such sharp people were clutching, patenting, pre-empting, monopolising this or that feature of the new development, seeking to subdue this gigantic winged power to the purposes of their little lusts and avarice. That trial is just one of innumerable disputes of the same kind. For a time the face of the

world festered with patent legislation. It chanced, however, to have one oddly dramatic feature in the fact that Holsten, after being kept waiting about the court for two days as a beggar might have waited at a rich man's door, after being bullied by ushers and watched by policemen, was called as a witness, rather severely handled by counsel, and told not to 'quibble' by the judge when he was trying to be absolutely explicit.

The judge scratched his nose with a quill pen, and sneered at Holsten's astonishment round the corner of his monstrous wig. Holsten was a great man, was he? Well, in a law-court great men were put in their places.

'We want to know has the plaintiff added anything to this or hasn't he?' said the judge, 'we don't want to have your views whether Sir Philip Dass's improvements were merely superficial adaptations or whether they were implicit in your paper. No doubt — after the manner of inventors — you think most things that were ever likely to be discovered are implicit in your papers. No doubt also you think too that most subsequent additions and modifications are merely superficial. Inventors have a way of thinking that. The law isn't concerned with that sort of thing. The law has nothing to do with the vanity of inventors. The law is concerned with the question whether these patent rights have the novelty the plantiff claims for them. What that admission may or may not stop, and all these other things you are saying in your overflowing zeal to answer more than the questions addressed to you — none of these things have anything whatever to do with the case in hand. It is a matter of constant astonishment to me in this court to see how you scientific men, with all your extraordinary claims to precision and veracity, wander and wander so soon as you get into the witness-box. I know no more unsatisfactory class of witness. The plain and simple question is, has Sir Philip Dass made any real addition to existing knowledge and methods in this matter or has he not? We don't want to know whether they were large or small additions nor what the consequences of your admission may be. That you will leave to us.'

Holsten was silent.

'Surely?' said the judge, almost pityingly.

'No, he hasn't,' said Holsten, perceiving that for once in his life

he must disregard infinitesimals.

'Ah!' said the judge, 'now why couldn't you say that when counsel put the question? . . .'

An entry in Holsten's diary-autobiography, dated five days later, runs: 'Still amazed. The law is the most dangerous thing in this country. It is hundreds of years old. It hasn't an idea. The oldest of old bottles and this new wine, the most explosive wine. Something will overtake them.'

Section 4

There was a certain truth in Holsten's assertion that the law was 'hundreds of years old.' It was, in relation to current thought and widely accepted ideas, an archaic thing. While almost all the material and methods of life had been changing rapidly and were now changing still more rapidly, the law-courts and the legislatures of the world were struggling desperately to meet modern demands with devices and procedures, conceptions of rights and property and authority and obligation that dated from the rude compromises of relatively barbaric times. The horse-hair wigs and antic dresses of the British judges, their musty courts and overbearing manners, were indeed only the outward and visible intimations of profounder anachronisms. The legal and political organisation of the earth in the middle twentieth century was indeed everywhere like a complicated garment, outworn yet strong, that now fettered the governing body that once it had protected.

Yet that same spirit of free-thinking and outspoken publication that in the field of natural science had been the beginning of the conquest of nature, was at work throughout all the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries preparing the spirit of the new world within the degenerating body of the old. The idea of a greater subordination of individual interests and established institutions to the collective future, is traceable more and more clearly in the literature of those times, and movement after movement fretted itself away in criticism of and opposition to first this aspect and then that of the legal, social, and political order. Already in the early nineteenth century Shelley, with no scrap of alternative, is denouncing the established rulers of

the world as Anarchs, and the entire system of ideas and suggestions that was known as Socialism, and more particularly its international side, feeble as it was in creative proposals or any method of transition, still witnesses to the growth of a conception of a modernised system of inter-relationships that should supplant the existing tangle of proprietary legal ideas.

The word 'Sociology' was invented by Herbert Spencer, a popular writer upon philosophical subjects, who flourished about the middle of the nineteenth century, but the idea of a state, planned as an electric-traction system is planned, without reference to pre-existing apparatus, upon scientific lines, did not take a very strong hold upon the popular imagination of the world until the twentieth century. Then, the growing impatience of the American people with the monstrous and socially paralysing party systems that had sprung out of their absurd electoral arrangements, led to the appearance of what came to be called the 'Modern State' movement, and a galaxy of brilliant writers, in America, Europe, and the East, stirred up the world to the thought of bolder rearrangements of social interaction, property, employment, education, and government, than had ever been contemplated before. No doubt these Modern State ideas were very largely the reflection upon social and political thought of the vast revolution in material things that had been in progress for two hundred years, but for a long time they seemed to be having no more influence upon existing institutions than the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire seemed to have had at the time of the death of the latter. They were fermenting in men's minds, and it needed only just such social and political stresses as the coming of the atomic mechanisms brought about, to thrust them forward abruptly into crude and startling realisation.

Section 5

Frederick Barnet's Wander Jahre is one of those autobiographical novels that were popular throughout the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century. It was published in 1970, and one must understand Wander Jahre rather in a spiritual and intellectual than in a literal sense. It is indeed an allusive title, carrying the world back to

the Wilhelm Meister of Goethe, a century and a half earlier.

Its author, Frederick Barnet, gives a minute and curious history of his life and ideas between his nineteenth and his twenty-third birthdays. He was neither a very original nor a very brilliant man, but he had a trick of circumstantial writing; and though no authentic portrait was to survive for the information of posterity, he betrays by a score of casual phrases that he was short, sturdy, inclined to be plump, with a 'rather blobby' face, and full, rather projecting blue eyes. He belonged until the financial debacle of 1956 to the class of fairly prosperous people, he was a student in London, he aeroplaned to Italy and then had a pedestrian tour from Genoa to Rome, crossed in the air to Greece and Egypt, and came back over the Balkans and Germany. His family fortunes, which were largely invested in bank shares, coal mines, and house property, were destroyed. Reduced to penury, he sought to earn a living. He suffered great hardship, and was then caught up by the war and had a year of soldiering, first as an officer in the English infantry and then in the army of pacification. His book tells all these things so simply and at the same time so explicitly, that it remains, as it were, an eye by which future generations may have at least one man's vision of the years of the Great Change.

And he was, he tells us, a 'Modern State' man 'by instinct' from the beginning. He breathed in these ideas in the class rooms and laboratories of the Carnegie Foundation school that rose, a long and delicately beautiful facade, along the South Bank of the Thames opposite the ancient dignity of Somerset House. Such thought was interwoven with the very fabric of that pioneer school in the educational renascence in England. After the customary exchange years in Heidelberg and Paris, he went into the classical school of London University. The older so-called 'classical' education of the British pedagogues, probably the most paralysing, ineffective, and foolish routine that ever wasted human life, had already been swept out of this great institution in favour of modern methods; and he learnt Greek and Latin as well as he had learnt German, Spanish, and French, so that he wrote and spoke them freely, and used them with an unconscious ease in his study of the foundation civilisations of the European system to which they were the key. (This change was still

so recent that he mentions an encounter in Rome with an 'Oxford don' who 'spoke Latin with a Wiltshire accent and manifest discomfort, wrote Greek letters with his tongue out, and seemed to think a Greek sentence a charm when it was a quotation and an impropriety when it wasn't.')

Barnet saw the last days of the coal-steam engines upon the English railways and the gradual cleansing of the London atmosphere as the smoke-creating sea-coal fires gave place to electric heating. The building of laboratories at Kensington was still in progress, and he took part in the students' riots that delayed the removal of the Albert Memorial. He carried a banner with 'We like Funny Statuary' on one side, and on the other 'Seats and Canopies for Statues, Why should our Great Departed Stand in the Rain?' He learnt the rather athletic aviation of those days at the University grounds at Sydenham, and he was fined for flying over the new prison for political libellers at Wormwood Scrubs, 'in a manner calculated to exhilarate the prisoners while at exercise.' That was the time of the attempted suppression of any criticism of the public judicature and the place was crowded with journalists who had ventured to call attention to the dementia of Chief Justice Abrahams. Barnet was not a very good aviator, he confesses he was always a little afraid of his machine — there was excellent reason for every one to be afraid of those clumsy early types — and he never attempted steep descents or very high flying. He also, he records, owned one of those oil-driven motor-bicycles whose clumsy complexity and extravagant filthiness still astonish the visitors to the museum of machinery at South Kensington. He mentions running over a dog and complains of the ruinous price of 'spatchcocks' in Surrey. 'Spatchcocks,' it seems, was a slang term for crushed hens.

He passed the examinations necessary to reduce his military service to a minimum, and his want of any special scientific or technical qualification and a certain precocious corpulence that handicapped his aviation indicated the infantry of the line as his sphere of training. That was the most generalised form of soldiering. The development of the theory of war had been for some decades but little assisted by any practical experience. What fighting had occurred in recent years, had been fighting in minor or uncivilised

states, with peasant or barbaric soldiers and with but a small equipment of modern contrivances, and the great powers of the world were content for the most part to maintain armies that sustained in their broader organisation the traditions of the European wars of thirty and forty years before. There was the infantry arm to which Barnet belonged and which was supposed to fight on foot with a rifle and be the main portion of the army. There were cavalry forces (horse soldiers), having a ratio to the infantry that had been determined by the experiences of the Franco-German war in 1871. There was also artillery, and for some unexplained reason much of this was still drawn by horses; though there were also in all the European armies a small number of motor-guns with wheels so constructed that they could go over broken ground. In addition there were large developments of the engineering arm, concerned with motor transport, motor-bicycle scouting, aviation, and the like.

No first-class intelligence had been sought to specialise in and work out the problem of warfare with the new appliances and under modern conditions, but a succession of able jurists, Lord Haldane, Chief Justice Briggs, and that very able King's Counsel, Philbrick, had reconstructed the army frequently and thoroughly and placed it at last, with the adoption of national service, upon a footing that would have seemed very imposing to the public of 1900. At any moment the British Empire could now put a million and a quarter of arguable soldiers upon the board of Welt-Politik. The traditions of Japan and the Central European armies were more princely and less forensic; the Chinese still refused resolutely to become a military power, and maintained a small standing army upon the American model that was said, so far as it went, to be highly efficient, and Russia, secured by a stringent administration against internal criticism, had scarcely altered the design of a uniform or the organisation of a battery since the opening decades of the century. Barnet's opinion of his military training was manifestly a poor one, his Modern State ideas disposed him to regard it as a bore, and his common sense condemned it as useless. Moreover, his habit of body made him peculiarly sensitive to the fatigues and hardships of service.

'For three days in succession we turned out before dawn and —

for no earthly reason — without breakfast,' he relates. 'I suppose that is to show us that when the Day comes the first thing will be to get us thoroughly uncomfortable and rotten. We then proceeded to Kriegspiel, according to the mysterious ideas of those in authority over us. On the last day we spent three hours under a hot if early sun getting over eight miles of country to a point we could have reached in a motor omnibus in nine minutes and a half — I did it the next day in that — and then we made a massed attack upon entrenchments that could have shot us all about three times over if only the umpires had let them. Then came a little bayonet exercise, but I doubt if I am sufficiently a barbarian to stick this long knife into anything living. Anyhow in this battle I shouldn't have had a chance. Assuming that by some miracle I hadn't been shot three times over, I was far too hot and blown when I got up to the entrenchments even to lift my beastly rifle. It was those others would have begun the sticking....

'For a time we were watched by two hostile aeroplanes; then our own came up and asked them not to, and — the practice of aerial warfare still being unknown — they very politely desisted and went away and did dives and circles of the most charming description over the Fox Hills.'

All Barnet's accounts of his military training were written in the same half-contemptuous, half-protesting tone. He was of opinion that his chances of participating in any real warfare were very slight, and that, if after all he should participate, it was bound to be so entirely different from these peace manoeuvres that his only course as a rational man would be to keep as observantly out of danger as he could until he had learnt the tricks and possibilities of the new conditions. He states this quite frankly. Never was a man more free from sham heroics.

Section 6

Barnet welcomed the appearance of the atomic engine with the zest of masculine youth in all fresh machinery, and it is evident that for some time he failed to connect the rush of wonderful new possibilities with the financial troubles of his family. 'I knew my father was worried,' he admits. That cast the smallest of shadows

upon his delighted departure for Italy and Greece and Egypt with three congenial companions in one of the new atomic models. They flew over the Channel Isles and Touraine, he mentions, and circled about Mont Blanc— 'These new helicopters, we found,' he notes, 'had abolished all the danger and strain of sudden drops to which the old-time aeroplanes were liable' — and then he went on by way of Pisa, Paestum, Ghirgenti, and Athens, to visit the pyramids by moonlight, flying thither from Cairo, and to follow the Nile up to Khartum. Even by later standards, it must have been a very gleeful holiday for a young man, and it made the tragedy of his next experiences all the darker. A week after his return his father, who was a widower, announced himself ruined, and committed suicide by means of an unscheduled opiate.

At one blow Barnet found himself flung out of the possessing, spending, enjoying class to which he belonged, penniless and with no calling by which he could earn a living. He tried teaching and some journalism, but in a little while he found himself on the underside of a world in which he had always reckoned to live in the sunshine. For innumerable men such an experience has meant mental and spiritual destruction, but Barnet, in spite of his bodily gravitation towards comfort, showed himself when put to the test, of the more valiant modern quality. He was saturated with the creative stoicism of the heroic times that were already dawning, and he took his difficulties and discomforts stoutly as his appointed material, and turned them to expression.

Indeed, in his book, he thanks fortune for them. 'I might have lived and died,' he says, 'in that neat fool's paradise of secure lavishness above there. I might never have realised the gathering wrath and sorrow of the ousted and exasperated masses. In the days of my own prosperity things had seemed to me to be very well arranged.' Now from his new point of view he was to find they were not arranged at all; that government was a compromise of aggressions and powers and lassitudes, and law a convention between interests, and that the poor and the weak, though they had many negligent masters, had few friends.

'I had thought things were looked after,' he wrote. 'It was with a kind of amazement that I tramped the roads and starved — and found

that no one in particular cared.'

He was turned out of his lodging in a backward part of London.

'It was with difficulty I persuaded my landlady — she was a needy widow, poor soul, and I was already in her debt — to keep an old box for me in which I had locked a few letters, keepsakes, and the like. She lived in great fear of the Public Health and Morality Inspectors, because she was sometimes too poor to pay the customary tip to them, but at last she consented to put it in a dark tiled place under the stairs, and then I went forth into the world — to seek first the luck of a meal and then shelter.'

He wandered down into the thronging gayer parts of London, in which a year or so ago he had been numbered among the spenders.

London, under the Visible Smoke Law, by which any production of visible smoke with or without excuse was punishable by a fine, had already ceased to be the sombre smoke-darkened city of the Victorian time; it had been, and indeed was, constantly being rebuilt, and its main streets were already beginning to take on those characteristics that distinguished them throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. The insanitary horse and the plebeian bicycle had been banished from the roadway, which was now of a resilient, glass-like surface, spotlessly clean; and the foot passenger was restricted to a narrow vestige of the ancient footpath on either side of the track and forbidden at the risk of a fine, if he survived, to cross the roadway. People descended from their automobiles upon this pavement and went through the lower shops to the lifts and stairs to the new ways for pedestrians, the Rows, that ran along the front of the houses at the level of the first story, and, being joined by frequent bridges, gave the newer parts of London a curiously Venetian appearance. In some streets there were upper and even third-story Rows. For most of the day and all night the shop windows were lit by electric light, and many establishments had made, as it were, canals of public footpaths through their premises in order to increase their window space.

Barnet made his way along this night-scene rather apprehensively since the police had power to challenge and demand the Labour Card of any indigent-looking person, and if the record failed to show he was in employment, dismiss him to the traffic pavement below.

But there was still enough of his former gentility about Barnet's appearance and bearing to protect him from this; the police, too, had other things to think of that night, and he was permitted to reach the galleries about Leicester Square — that great focus of London life and pleasure.

He gives a vivid description of the scene that evening. In the centre was a garden raised on arches lit by festoons of lights and connected with the Rows by eight graceful bridges, beneath which hummed the interlacing streams of motor traffic, pulsating as the current alternated between east and west and north and south. Above rose great frontages of intricate rather than beautiful reinforced porcelain, studded with lights, barred by bold illuminated advertisements, and glowing with reflections. There were the two historical music halls of this place, the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, in which the municipal players revolved perpetually through the cycle of Shakespeare's plays, and four other great houses of refreshment and entertainment whose pinnacles streamed up into the blue obscurity of the night. The south side of the square was in dark contrast to the others; it was still being rebuilt, and a lattice of steel bars surmounted by the frozen gestures of monstrous cranes rose over the excavated sites of vanished Victorian buildings.

This framework attracted Barnet's attention for a time to the exclusion of other interests. It was absolutely still, it had a dead rigidity, a stricken inaction, no one was at work upon it and all its machinery was quiet; but the constructor's globes of vacuum light filled its every interstice with a quivering green moonshine and showed alert but motionless — soldier sentinels!

He asked a passing stroller, and was told that the men had struck that day against the use of an atomic riveter that would have doubled the individual efficiency and halved the number of steel workers.

'Shouldn't wonder if they didn't get chucking bombs,' said Barnet's informant, hovered for a moment, and then went on his way to the Alhambra music hall.

Barnet became aware of an excitement in the newspaper kiosks at the corners of the square. Something very sensational had been flashed upon the transparencies. Forgetting for a moment his penniless condition, he made his way over a bridge to buy a paper,

for in those days the papers, which were printed upon thin sheets of metallic foil, were sold at determinate points by specially licensed purveyors. Half over, he stopped short at a change in the traffic below; and was astonished to see that the police signals were restricting vehicles to the half roadway. When presently he got within sight of the transparencies that had replaced the placards of Victorian times, he read of the Great March of the Unemployed that was already in progress through the West End, and so without expenditure he was able to understand what was coming.

He watched, and his book describes this procession which the police had considered it unwise to prevent and which had been spontaneously organised in imitation of the Unemployed Processions of earlier times. He had expected a mob but there was a kind of sullen discipline about the procession when at last it arrived. What seemed for a time an unending column of men marched wearily, marched with a kind of implacable futility, along the roadway underneath him. He was, he says, moved to join them, but instead he remained watching. They were a dingy, shabby, ineffective-looking multitude, for the most part incapable of any but obsolete and superseded types of labour. They bore a few banners with the time-honoured inscription: 'Work, not Charity,' but otherwise their ranks were unadorned.

They were not singing, they were not even talking, there was nothing truculent nor aggressive in their bearing, they had no definite objective they were just marching and showing themselves in the more prosperous parts of London. They were a sample of that great mass of unskilled cheap labour which the now still cheaper mechanical powers had superseded for evermore. They were being 'scrapped' — as horses had been 'scrapped.'

Barnet leant over the parapet watching them, his mind quickened by his own precarious condition. For a time, he says, he felt nothing but despair at the sight; what should be done, what could be done for this gathering surplus of humanity? They were so manifestly useless — and incapable — and pitiful.

What were they asking for?

They had been overtaken by unexpected things. Nobody had foreseen ——

It flashed suddenly into his mind just what the multitudinous shambling enigma below meant. It was an appeal against the unexpected, an appeal to those others who, more fortunate, seemed wiser and more powerful, for something — for INTELLIGENCE. This mute mass, weary footed, rank following rank, protested its persuasion that some of these others must have foreseen these dislocations — that anyhow they ought to have foreseen — and arranged.

That was what this crowd of wreckage was feeling and seeking so dumbly to assert.

'Things came to me like the turning on of a light in a darkened room,' he says. 'These men were praying to their fellow creatures as once they prayed to God! The last thing that men will realise about anything is that it is inanimate. They had transferred their animation to mankind. They still believed there was intelligence somewhere, even if it was careless or malignant.... It had only to be aroused to be conscience-stricken, to be moved to exertion.... And I saw, too, that as yet THERE WAS NO SUCH INTELLIGENCE. The world waits for intelligence. That intelligence has still to be made, that will for good and order has still to be gathered together, out of scraps of impulse and wandering seeds of benevolence and whatever is fine and creative in our souls, into a common purpose. It's something still to come....'

It is characteristic of the widening thought of the time that this not very heroical young man who, in any previous age, might well have been altogether occupied with the problem of his own individual necessities, should be able to stand there and generalise about the needs of the race.

But upon all the stresses and conflicts of that chaotic time there was already dawning the light of a new era. The spirit of humanity was escaping, even then it was escaping, from its extreme imprisonment in individuals. Salvation from the bitter intensities of self, which had been a conscious religious end for thousands of years, which men had sought in mortifications, in the wilderness, in meditation, and by innumerable strange paths, was coming at last with the effect of naturalness into the talk of men, into the books they read, into their unconscious gestures, into their newspapers and daily

purposes and everyday acts. The broad horizons, the magic possibilities that the spirit of the seeker had revealed to them, were charming them out of those ancient and instinctive preoccupations from which the very threat of hell and torment had failed to drive them. And this young man, homeless and without provision even for the immediate hours, in the presence of social disorganisation, distress, and perplexity, in a blazing wilderness of thoughtless pleasure that blotted out the stars, could think as he tells us he thought.

'I saw life plain,' he wrote. 'I saw the gigantic task before us, and the very splendour of its intricate and immeasurable difficulty filled me with exaltation. I saw that we have still to discover government, that we have still to discover education, which is the necessary reciprocal of government, and that all this — in which my own little speck of a life was so manifestly overwhelmed — this and its yesterday in Greece and Rome and Egypt were nothing, the mere first dust swirls of the beginning, the movements and dim murmurings of a sleeper who will presently be awake....'

Section 7

And then the story tells, with an engaging simplicity, of his descent from this ecstatic vision of reality.

'Presently I found myself again, and I was beginning to feel cold and a little hungry.'

He bethought himself of the John Burns Relief Offices which stood upon the Thames Embankment. He made his way through the galleries of the booksellers and the National Gallery, which had been open continuously day and night to all decently dressed people now for more than twelve years, and across the rose-gardens of Trafalgar Square, and so by the hotel colonnade to the Embankment. He had long known of these admirable offices, which had swept the last beggars and matchsellers and all the casual indigent from the London streets, and he believed that he would, as a matter of course, be able to procure a ticket for food and a night's lodgings and some indication of possible employment.

But he had not reckoned upon the new labour troubles, and when

he got to the Embankment he found the offices hopelessly congested and besieged by a large and rather unruly crowd. He hovered for a time on the outskirts of the waiting multitude, perplexed and dismayed, and then he became aware of a movement, a purposive trickling away of people, up through the arches of the great buildings that had arisen when all the railway stations were removed to the south side of the river, and so to the covered ways of the Strand. And here, in the open glare of midnight, he found unemployed men begging, and not only begging, but begging with astonishing assurance, from the people who were emerging from the small theatres and other such places of entertainment which abounded in that thoroughfare.

This was an altogether unexampled thing. There had been no begging in London streets for a quarter of a century. But that night the police were evidently unwilling or unable to cope with the destitute who were invading those well-kept quarters of the town. They had become stonily blind to anything but manifest disorder.

Barnet walked through the crowd, unable to bring himself to ask; indeed his bearing must have been more valiant than his circumstances, for twice he says that he was begged from. Near the Trafalgar Square gardens, a girl with reddened cheeks and blackened eyebrows, who was walking alone, spoke to him with a peculiar friendliness.

'I'm starving,' he said to her abruptly.

'Oh! poor dear!' she said; and with the impulsive generosity of her kind, glanced round and slipped a silver piece into his hand....

It was a gift that, in spite of the precedent of De Quincey, might under the repressive social legislation of those times, have brought Barnet within reach of the prison lash. But he took it, he confesses, and thanked her as well as he was able, and went off very gladly to get food.

Section 8

A day or so later — and again his freedom to go as he pleased upon the roads may be taken as a mark of increasing social disorganisation and police embarrassment — he wandered out into the open country.

He speaks of the roads of that plutocratic age as being ‘fenced with barbed wire against unpropertied people,’ of the high-walled gardens and trespass warnings that kept him to the dusty narrowness of the public ways. In the air, happy rich people were flying, heedless of the misfortunes about them, as he himself had been flying two years ago, and along the road swept the new traffic, light and swift and wonderful. One was rarely out of earshot of its whistles and gongs and siren cries even in the field paths or over the open downs. The officials of the labour exchanges were everywhere overworked and infuriated, the casual wards were so crowded that the surplus wanderers slept in ranks under sheds or in the open air, and since giving to wayfarers had been made a punishable offence there was no longer friendship or help for a man from the rare foot passenger or the wayside cottage....

‘I wasn’t angry,’ said Barnet. ‘I saw an immense selfishness, a monstrous disregard for anything but pleasure and possession in all those people above us, but I saw how inevitable that was, how certainly if the richest had changed places with the poorest, that things would have been the same. What else can happen when men use science and every new thing that science gives, and all their available intelligence and energy to manufacture wealth and appliances, and leave government and education to the rustling traditions of hundreds of years ago? Those traditions come from the dark ages when there was really not enough for every one, when life was a fierce struggle that might be masked but could not be escaped. Of course this famine grabbing, this fierce dispossession of others, must follow from such a disharmony between material and training. Of course the rich were vulgar and the poor grew savage and every added power that came to men made the rich richer and the poor less necessary and less free. The men I met in the casual wards and the relief offices were all smouldering for revolt, talking of justice and injustice and revenge. I saw no hope in that talk, nor in anything but patience....’

But he did not mean a passive patience. He meant that the method of social reconstruction was still a riddle, that no effectual rearrangement was possible until this riddle in all its tangled aspects was solved. ‘I tried to talk to those discontented men,’ he wrote, ‘but

it was hard for them to see things as I saw them. When I talked of patience and the larger scheme, they answered, “But then we shall all be dead” — and I could not make them see, what is so simple to my own mind, that that did not affect the question. Men who think in lifetimes are of no use to statesmanship.’

He does not seem to have seen a newspaper during those wanderings, and a chance sight of the transparency of a kiosk in the market-place at Bishop’s Stortford announcing a ‘Grave International Situation’ did not excite him very much. There had been so many grave international situations in recent years.

This time it was talk of the Central European powers suddenly attacking the Slav Confederacy, with France and England going to the help of the Slavs.

But the next night he found a tolerable meal awaiting the vagrants in the casual ward, and learnt from the workhouse master that all serviceable trained men were to be sent back on the morrow to their mobilisation centres. The country was on the eve of war. He was to go back through London to Surrey. His first feeling, he records, was one of extreme relief that his days of ‘hopeless battering at the underside of civilisation’ were at an end. Here was something definite to do, something definitely provided for. But his relief was greatly modified when he found that the mobilisation arrangements had been made so hastily and carelessly that for nearly thirty-six hours at the improvised depot at Epsom he got nothing either to eat or to drink but a cup of cold water. The depot was absolutely unprovisioned, and no one was free to leave it.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE LAST WAR

Section I

Viewed from the standpoint of a sane and ambitious social order, it is difficult to understand, and it would be tedious to follow, the motives that plunged mankind into the war that fills the histories of the middle decades of the twentieth century.

It must always be remembered that the political structure of the world at that time was everywhere extraordinarily behind the collective intelligence. That is the central fact of that history. For two hundred years there had been no great changes in political or legal methods and pretensions, the utmost change had been a certain shifting of boundaries and slight readjustment of procedure, while in nearly every other aspect of life there had been fundamental revolutions, gigantic releases, and an enormous enlargement of scope and outlook. The absurdities of courts and the indignities of representative parliamentary government, coupled with the opening of vast fields of opportunity in other directions, had withdrawn the best intelligences more and more from public affairs. The ostensible governments of the world in the twentieth century were following in the wake of the ostensible religions. They were ceasing to command the services of any but second-rate men. After the middle of the eighteenth century there are no more great ecclesiastics upon the world's memory, after the opening of the twentieth no more statesmen. Everywhere one finds an energetic, ambitious, short-sighted, common-place type in the seats of authority, blind to the new possibilities and litigiously reliant upon the traditions of the past.

Perhaps the most dangerous of those outworn traditions were the boundaries of the various 'sovereign states,' and the conception of a general predominance in human affairs on the part of some one particular state. The memory of the empires of Rome and Alexander squatted, an unlaid carnivorous ghost, in the human imagination — it

bored into the human brain like some grisly parasite and filled it with disordered thoughts and violent impulses. For more than a century the French system exhausted its vitality in belligerent convulsions, and then the infection passed to the German-speaking peoples who were the heart and centre of Europe, and from them onward to the Slavs. Later ages were to store and neglect the vast insane literature of this obsession, the intricate treaties, the secret agreements, the infinite knowingness of the political writer, the cunning refusals to accept plain facts, the strategic devices, the tactical manoeuvres, the records of mobilisations and counter-mobilisations. It ceased to be credible almost as soon as it ceased to happen, but in the very dawn of the new age their state craftsmen sat with their historical candles burning, and, in spite of strange, new reflections and unfamiliar lights and shadows, still wrangling and planning to rearrange the maps of Europe and the world.

It was to become a matter for subtle inquiry how far the millions of men and women outside the world of these specialists sympathised and agreed with their portentous activities. One school of psychologists inclined to minimise this participation, but the balance of evidence goes to show that there were massive responses to these suggestions of the belligerent schemer. Primitive man had been a fiercely combative animal; innumerable generations had passed their lives in tribal warfare, and the weight of tradition, the example of history, the ideals of loyalty and devotion fell in easily enough with the incitements of the international mischief-maker. The political ideas of the common man were picked up haphazard, there was practically nothing in such education as he was given that was ever intended to fit him for citizenship as such (that conception only appeared, indeed, with the development of Modern State ideas), and it was therefore a comparatively easy matter to fill his vacant mind with the sounds and fury of exasperated suspicion and national aggression.

For example, Barnet describes the London crowd as noisily patriotic when presently his battalion came up from the depot to London, to entrain for the French frontier. He tells of children and women and lads and old men cheering and shouting, of the streets and rows hung with the flags of the Allied Powers, of a real

enthusiasm even among the destitute and unemployed. The Labour Bureaux were now partially transformed into enrolment offices, and were centres of hotly patriotic excitement. At every convenient place upon the line on either side of the Channel Tunnel there were enthusiastic spectators, and the feeling in the regiment, if a little stiffened and darkened by grim anticipations, was none the less warlike.

But all this emotion was the fickle emotion of minds without established ideas; it was with most of them, Barnet says, as it was with himself, a natural response to collective movement, and to martial sounds and colours, and the exhilarating challenge of vague dangers. And people had been so long oppressed by the threat of and preparation for war that its arrival came with an effect of positive relief.

Section 2

The plan of campaign of the Allies assigned the defence of the lower Meuse to the English, and the troop-trains were run direct from the various British depots to the points in the Ardennes where they were intended to entrench themselves.

Most of the documents bearing upon the campaign were destroyed during the war, from the first the scheme of the Allies seems to have been confused, but it is highly probable that the formation of an aerial park in this region, from which attacks could be made upon the vast industrial plant of the lower Rhine, and a flanking raid through Holland upon the German naval establishments at the mouth of the Elbe, were integral parts of the original project. Nothing of this was known to such pawns in the game as Barnet and his company, whose business it was to do what they were told by the mysterious intelligences at the direction of things in Paris, to which city the Whitehall staff had also been transferred. From first to last these directing intelligences remained mysterious to the body of the army, veiled under the name of 'Orders.' There was no Napoleon, no Caesar to embody enthusiasm. Barnet says, 'We talked of Them. THEY are sending us up into Luxembourg. THEY are going to turn the Central European right.'

Behind the veil of this vagueness the little group of more or less worthy men which constituted Headquarters was beginning to realise the enormity of the thing it was supposed to control....

In the great hall of the War Control, whose windows looked out across the Seine to the Trocadero and the palaces of the western quarter, a series of big-scale relief maps were laid out upon tables to display the whole seat of war, and the staff-officers of the control were continually busy shifting the little blocks which represented the contending troops, as the reports and intelligence came drifting in to the various telegraphic bureaux in the adjacent rooms. In other smaller apartments there were maps of a less detailed sort, upon which, for example, the reports of the British Admiralty and of the Slav commanders were recorded as they kept coming to hand. Upon these maps, as upon chessboards, Marshal Dubois, in consultation with General Viard and the Earl of Delhi, was to play the great game for world supremacy against the Central European powers. Very probably he had a definite idea of his game; very probably he had a coherent and admirable plan.

But he had reckoned without a proper estimate either of the new strategy of aviation or of the possibilities of atomic energy that Holsten had opened for mankind. While he planned entrenchments and invasions and a frontier war, the Central European generalship was striking at the eyes and the brain. And while, with a certain diffident hesitation, he developed his gambit that night upon the lines laid down by Napoleon and Moltke, his own scientific corps in a state of mutinous activity was preparing a blow for Berlin. ‘These old fools!’ was the key in which the scientific corps was thinking.

The War Control in Paris, on the night of July the second, was an impressive display of the paraphernalia of scientific military organisation, as the first half of the twentieth century understood it. To one human being at least the consulting commanders had the likeness of world-wielding gods.

She was a skilled typist, capable of nearly sixty words a minute, and she had been engaged in relay with other similar women to take down orders in duplicate and hand them over to the junior officers in attendance, to be forwarded and filed. There had come a lull, and she had been sent out from the dictating room to take the air upon the

terrace before the great hall and to eat such scanty refreshment as she had brought with her until her services were required again.

From her position upon the terrace this young woman had a view not only of the wide sweep of the river below her, and all the eastward side of Paris from the Arc de Triomphe to Saint Cloud, great blocks and masses of black or pale darkness with pink and golden flashes of illumination and endless interlacing bands of dotted lights under a still and starless sky, but also the whole spacious interior of the great hall with its slender pillars and gracious arching and clustering lamps was visible to her. There, over a wilderness of tables, lay the huge maps, done on so large a scale that one might fancy them small countries; the messengers and attendants went and came perpetually, altering, moving the little pieces that signified hundreds and thousands of men, and the great commander and his two consultants stood amidst all these things and near where the fighting was nearest, scheming, directing. They had but to breathe a word and presently away there, in the world of reality, the punctual myriads moved. Men rose up and went forward and died. The fate of nations lay behind the eyes of these three men. Indeed they were like gods.

Most godlike of the three was Dubois. It was for him to decide; the others at most might suggest. Her woman's soul went out to this grave, handsome, still, old man, in a passion of instinctive worship.

Once she had taken words of instruction from him direct. She had awaited them in an ecstasy of happiness — and fear. For her exaltation was made terrible by the dread that some error might dishonour her....

She watched him now through the glass with all the unpenetrating minuteness of an impassioned woman's observation.

He said little, she remarked. He looked but little at the maps. The tall Englishman beside him was manifestly troubled by a swarm of ideas, conflicting ideas; he craned his neck at every shifting of the little red, blue, black, and yellow pieces on the board, and wanted to draw the commander's attention to this and that. Dubois listened, nodded, emitted a word and became still again, brooding like the national eagle.

His eyes were so deeply sunken under his white eyebrows that she

could not see his eyes; his moustache overhung the mouth from which those words of decision came. Viard, too, said little; he was a dark man with a drooping head and melancholy, watchful eyes. He was more intent upon the French right, which was feeling its way now through Alsace to the Rhine. He was, she knew, an old colleague of Dubois; he knew him better, she decided, he trusted him more than this unfamiliar Englishman....

Not to talk, to remain impassive and as far as possible in profile; these were the lessons that old Dubois had mastered years ago. To seem to know all, to betray no surprise, to refuse to hurry — itself a confession of miscalculation; by attention to these simple rules, Dubois had built up a steady reputation from the days when he had been a promising junior officer, a still, almost abstracted young man, deliberate but ready. Even then men had looked at him and said: 'He will go far.' Through fifty years of peace he had never once been found wanting, and at manoeuvres his impassive persistence had perplexed and hypnotised and defeated many a more actively intelligent man. Deep in his soul Dubois had hidden his one profound discovery about the modern art of warfare, the key to his career. And this discovery was that NOBODY KNEW, that to act therefore was to blunder, that to talk was to confess; and that the man who acted slowly and steadfastly and above all silently, had the best chance of winning through. Meanwhile one fed the men. Now by this same strategy he hoped to shatter those mysterious unknowns of the Central European command. Delhi might talk of a great flank march through Holland, with all the British submarines and hydroplanes and torpedo craft pouring up the Rhine in support of it; Viard might crave for brilliance with the motor bicycles, aeroplanes, and ski-men among the Swiss mountains, and a sudden swoop upon Vienna; the thing was to listen — and wait for the other side to begin experimenting. It was all experimenting. And meanwhile he remained in profile, with an air of assurance — like a man who sits in an automobile after the chauffeur has had his directions.

And every one about him was the stronger and surer for that quiet face, that air of knowledge and unruffled confidence. The clustering lights threw a score of shadows of him upon the maps, great bunches of him, versions of a commanding presence, lighter or darker,

dominated the field, and pointed in every direction. Those shadows symbolised his control. When a messenger came from the wireless room to shift this or that piece in the game, to replace under amended reports one Central European regiment by a score, to draw back or thrust out or distribute this or that force of the Allies, the Marshal would turn his head and seem not to see, or look and nod slightly, as a master nods who approves a pupil's self-correction. 'Yes, that's better.'

How wonderful he was, thought the woman at the window, how wonderful it all was. This was the brain of the western world, this was Olympus with the warring earth at its feet. And he was guiding France, France so long a resentful exile from imperialism, back to her old predominance.

It seemed to her beyond the desert of a woman that she should be privileged to participate....

It is hard to be a woman, full of the stormy impulse to personal devotion, and to have to be impersonal, abstract, exact, punctual. She must control herself....

She gave herself up to fantastic dreams, dreams of the days when the war would be over and victory enthroned. Then perhaps this harshness, this armour would be put aside and the gods might unbend. Her eyelids drooped....

She roused herself with a start. She became aware that the night outside was no longer still. That there was an excitement down below on the bridge and a running in the street and a flickering of searchlights among the clouds from some high place away beyond the Trocadero. And then the excitement came surging up past her and invaded the hall within.

One of the sentinels from the terrace stood at the upper end of the room, gesticulating and shouting something.

And all the world had changed. A kind of throbbing. She couldn't understand. It was as if all the water-pipes and concealed machinery and cables of the ways beneath, were beating — as pulses beat. And about her blew something like a wind — a wind that was dismay.

Her eyes went to the face of the Marshal as a frightened child might look towards its mother.

He was still serene. He was frowning slightly, she thought, but

that was natural enough, for the Earl of Delhi, with one hand gauntly gesticulating, had taken him by the arm and was all too manifestly disposed to drag him towards the great door that opened on the terrace. And Viard was hurrying towards the huge windows and doing so in the strangest of attitudes, bent forward and with eyes upturned.

Something up there?

And then it was as if thunder broke overhead.

The sound struck her like a blow. She crouched together against the masonry and looked up. She saw three black shapes swooping down through the torn clouds, and from a point a little below two of them, there had already started curling trails of red....

Everything else in her being was paralysed, she hung through moments that seemed infinities, watching those red missiles whirl down towards her.

She felt torn out of the world. There was nothing else in the world but a crimson-purple glare and sound, deafening, all-embracing, continuing sound. Every other light had gone out about her and against this glare hung slanting walls, pirouetting pillars, projecting fragments of cornices, and a disorderly flight of huge angular sheets of glass. She had an impression of a great ball of crimson-purple fire like a maddened living thing that seemed to be whirling about very rapidly amidst a chaos of falling masonry, that seemed to be attacking the earth furiously, that seemed to be burrowing into it like a blazing rabbit....

She had all the sensations of waking up out of a dream.

She found she was lying face downward on a bank of mould and that a little rivulet of hot water was running over one foot. She tried to raise herself and found her leg was very painful. She was not clear whether it was night or day nor where she was; she made a second effort, wincing and groaning, and turned over and got into a sitting position and looked about her.

Everything seemed very silent. She was, in fact, in the midst of a vast uproar, but she did not realise this because her hearing had been destroyed.

At first she could not join on what she saw to any previous experience.

She seemed to be in a strange world, a soundless, ruinous world, a world of heaped broken things. And it was lit — and somehow this was more familiar to her mind than any other fact about her — by a flickering, purplish-crimson light. Then close to her, rising above a confusion of debris, she recognised the Trocadero; it was changed, something had gone from it, but its outline was unmistakable. It stood out against a streaming, whirling uprush of red-lit steam. And with that she recalled Paris and the Seine and the warm, overcast evening and the beautiful, luminous organisation of the War Control....

She drew herself a little way up the slope of earth on which she lay, and examined her surroundings with an increasing understanding....

The earth on which she was lying projected like a cape into the river. Quite close to her was a brimming lake of dammed-up water, from which these warm rivulets and torrents were trickling. Wisps of vapour came into circling existence a foot or so from its mirror-surface. Near at hand and reflected exactly in the water was the upper part of a familiar-looking stone pillar. On the side of her away from the water the heaped ruins rose steeply in a confused slope up to a glaring crest. Above and reflecting this glare towered pillowed masses of steam rolling swiftly upward to the zenith. It was from this crest that the livid glow that lit the world about her proceeded, and slowly her mind connected this mound with the vanished buildings of the War Control.

‘Mais!’ she whispered, and remained with staring eyes quite motionless for a time, crouching close to the warm earth.

Then presently this dim, broken human thing began to look about it again. She began to feel the need of fellowship. She wanted to question, wanted to speak, wanted to relate her experience. And her foot hurt her atrociously. There ought to be an ambulance. A little gust of querulous criticisms blew across her mind. This surely was a disaster! Always after a disaster there should be ambulances and helpers moving about....

She craned her head. There was something there. But everything was so still!

‘Monsieur!’ she cried. Her ears, she noted, felt queer, and she

began to suspect that all was not well with them.

It was terribly lonely in this chaotic strangeness, and perhaps this man — if it was a man, for it was difficult to see — might for all his stillness be merely insensible. He might have been stunned....

The leaping glare beyond sent a ray into his corner and for a moment every little detail was distinct. It was Marshal Dubois. He was lying against a huge slab of the war map. To it there stuck and from it there dangled little wooden objects, the symbols of infantry and cavalry and guns, as they were disposed upon the frontier. He did not seem to be aware of this at his back, he had an effect of inattention, not indifferent attention, but as if he were thinking....

She could not see the eyes beneath his shaggy brows, but it was evident he frowned. He frowned slightly, he had an air of not wanting to be disturbed. His face still bore that expression of assured confidence, that conviction that if things were left to him France might obey in security....

She did not cry out to him again, but she crept a little nearer. A strange surmise made her eyes dilate. With a painful wrench she pulled herself up so that she could see completely over the intervening lumps of smashed-up masonry. Her hand touched something wet, and after one convulsive movement she became rigid.

It was not a whole man there; it was a piece of a man, the head and shoulders of a man that trailed down into a ragged darkness and a pool of shining black....

And even as she stared the mound above her swayed and crumbled, and a rush of hot water came pouring over her. Then it seemed to her that she was dragged downward....

Section 3

When the rather brutish young aviator with the bullet head and the black hair close-cropped en brosse, who was in charge of the French special scientific corps, heard presently of this disaster to the War Control, he was so wanting in imagination in any sphere but his own, that he laughed. Small matter to him that Paris was burning. His mother and father and sister lived at Caudebec; and the only

sweetheart he had ever had, and it was poor love-making then, was a girl in Rouen. He slapped his second-in-command on the shoulder. ‘Now,’ he said, ‘there’s nothing on earth to stop us going to Berlin and giving them tit-for-tat.... Strategy and reasons of state — they’re over.... Come along, my boy, and we’ll just show these old women what we can do when they let us have our heads.’

He spent five minutes telephoning and then he went out into the courtyard of the chateau in which he had been installed and shouted for his automobile. Things would have to move quickly because there was scarcely an hour and a half before dawn. He looked at the sky and noted with satisfaction a heavy bank of clouds athwart the pallid east.

He was a young man of infinite shrewdness, and his material and aeroplanes were scattered all over the country-side, stuck away in barns, covered with hay, hidden in woods. A hawk could not have discovered any of them without coming within reach of a gun. But that night he only wanted one of the machines, and it was handy and quite prepared under a tarpaulin between two ricks not a couple of miles away; he was going to Berlin with that and just one other man. Two men would be enough for what he meant to do....

He had in his hands the black complement to all those other gifts science was urging upon unregenerate mankind, the gift of destruction, and he was an adventurous rather than a sympathetic type....

He was a dark young man with something negroid about his gleaming face. He smiled like one who is favoured and anticipates great pleasures. There was an exotic richness, a chuckling flavour, about the voice in which he gave his orders, and he pointed his remarks with the long finger of a hand that was hairy and exceptionally big.

‘We’ll give them tit-for-tat,’ he said. ‘We’ll give them tit-for-tat. No time to lose, boys....’

And presently over the cloud-banks that lay above Westphalia and Saxony the swift aeroplane, with its atomic engine as noiseless as a dancing sunbeam and its phosphorescent gyroscopic compass, flew like an arrow to the heart of the Central European hosts.

It did not soar very high; it skimmed a few hundred feet above the

banked darknesses of cumulus that hid the world, ready to plunge at once into their wet obscurities should some hostile flier range into vision. The tense young steersman divided his attention between the guiding stars above and the level, tumbled surfaces of the vapour strata that hid the world below. Over great spaces those banks lay as even as a frozen lava-flow and almost as still, and then they were rent by ragged areas of translucency, pierced by clear chasms, so that dim patches of the land below gleamed remotely through abysses. Once he saw quite distinctly the plan of a big railway station outlined in lamps and signals, and once the flames of a burning rick showing livid through a boiling drift of smoke on the side of some great hill. But if the world was masked it was alive with sounds. Up through that vapour floor came the deep roar of trains, the whistles of horns of motor-cars, a sound of rifle fire away to the south, and as he drew near his destination the crowing of cocks....

The sky above the indistinct horizons of this cloud sea was at first starry and then paler with a light that crept from north to east as the dawn came on. The Milky Way was invisible in the blue, and the lesser stars vanished. The face of the adventurer at the steering-wheel, darkly visible ever and again by the oval greenish glow of the compass face, had something of that firm beauty which all concentrated purpose gives, and something of the happiness of an idiot child that has at last got hold of the matches. His companion, a less imaginative type, sat with his legs spread wide over the long, coffin-shaped box which contained in its compartments the three atomic bombs, the new bombs that would continue to explode indefinitely and which no one so far had ever seen in action. Hitherto Carolinum, their essential substance, had been tested only in almost infinitesimal quantities within steel chambers embedded in lead. Beyond the thought of great destruction slumbering in the black spheres between his legs, and a keen resolve to follow out very exactly the instructions that had been given him, the man's mind was a blank. His aquiline profile against the starlight expressed nothing but a profound gloom.

The sky below grew clearer as the Central European capital was approached.

So far they had been singularly lucky and had been challenged by

no aeroplanes at all. The frontier scouts they must have passed in the night; probably these were mostly under the clouds; the world was wide and they had had luck in not coming close to any soaring sentinel. Their machine was painted a pale gray, that lay almost invisibly over the cloud levels below. But now the east was flushing with the near ascent of the sun, Berlin was but a score of miles ahead, and the luck of the Frenchmen held. By imperceptible degrees the clouds below dissolved....

Away to the north-eastward, in a cloudless pool of gathering light and with all its nocturnal illuminations still blazing, was Berlin. The left finger of the steersman verified roads and open spaces below upon the mica-covered square of map that was fastened by his wheel. There in a series of lake-like expansions was the Havel away to the right; over by those forests must be Spandau; there the river split about the Potsdam island; and right ahead was Charlottenburg cleft by a great thoroughfare that fell like an indicating beam of light straight to the imperial headquarters. There, plain enough, was the Thiergarten; beyond rose the imperial palace, and to the right those tall buildings, those clustering, beflagged, bemasted roofs, must be the offices in which the Central European staff was housed. It was all coldly clear and colourless in the dawn.

He looked up suddenly as a humming sound grew out of nothing and became swiftly louder. Nearly overhead a German aeroplane was circling down from an immense height to challenge him. He made a gesture with his left arm to the gloomy man behind and then gripped his little wheel with both hands, crouched over it, and twisted his neck to look upward. He was attentive, tightly strung, but quite contemptuous of their ability to hurt him. No German alive, he was assured, could outfly him, or indeed any one of the best Frenchmen. He imagined they might strike at him as a hawk strikes, but they were men coming down out of the bitter cold up there, in a hungry, spiritless, morning mood; they came slanting down like a sword swung by a lazy man, and not so rapidly but that he was able to slip away from under them and get between them and Berlin. They began challenging him in German with a megaphone when they were still perhaps a mile away. The words came to him, rolled up into a mere blob of hoarse sound. Then, gathering alarm from his grim silence,

they gave chase and swept down, a hundred yards above him perhaps, and a couple of hundred behind. They were beginning to understand what he was. He ceased to watch them and concentrated himself on the city ahead, and for a time the two aeroplanes raced....

A bullet came tearing through the air by him, as though some one was tearing paper. A second followed. Something tapped the machine.

It was time to act. The broad avenues, the park, the palaces below rushed widening out nearer and nearer to them. 'Ready!' said the steersman.

The gaunt face hardened to grimness, and with both hands the bomb-thrower lifted the big atomic bomb from the box and steadied it against the side. It was a black sphere two feet in diameter. Between its handles was a little celluloid stud, and to this he bent his head until his lips touched it. Then he had to bite in order to let the air in upon the inducive. Sure of its accessibility, he craned his neck over the side of the aeroplane and judged his pace and distance. Then very quickly he bent forward, bit the stud, and hoisted the bomb over the side.

'Round,' he whispered inaudibly.

The bomb flashed blinding scarlet in mid-air, and fell, a descending column of blaze eddying spirally in the midst of a whirlwind. Both the aeroplanes were tossed like shuttlecocks, hurled high and sideways and the steersman, with gleaming eyes and set teeth, fought in great banking curves for a balance. The gaunt man clung tight with hand and knees; his nostrils dilated, his teeth biting his lips. He was firmly strapped....

When he could look down again it was like looking down upon the crater of a small volcano. In the open garden before the Imperial castle a shuddering star of evil splendour spurted and poured up smoke and flame towards them like an accusation. They were too high to distinguish people clearly, or mark the bomb's effect upon the building until suddenly the facade tottered and crumbled before the flare as sugar dissolves in water. The man stared for a moment, showed all his long teeth, and then staggered into the cramped standing position his straps permitted, hoisted out and bit another bomb, and sent it down after its fellow.

The explosion came this time more directly underneath the aeroplane and shot it upward edgeways. The bomb box tipped to the point of disgorgement, and the bomb-thrower was pitched forward upon the third bomb with his face close to its celluloid stud. He clutched its handles, and with a sudden gust of determination that the thing should not escape him, bit its stud. Before he could hurl it over, the monoplane was slipping sideways. Everything was falling sideways. Instinctively he gave himself up to gripping, his body holding the bomb in its place.

Then that bomb had exploded also, and steersman, thrower, and aeroplane were just flying rags and splinters of metal and drops of moisture in the air, and a third column of fire rushed eddying down upon the doomed buildings below....

Section 4

Never before in the history of warfare had there been a continuing explosive; indeed, up to the middle of the twentieth century the only explosives known were combustibles whose explosiveness was due entirely to their instantaneousness; and these atomic bombs which science burst upon the world that night were strange even to the men who used them. Those used by the Allies were lumps of pure Carolinum, painted on the outside with unoxidised cydonator inducive enclosed hermetically in a case of membranium. A little celluloid stud between the handles by which the bomb was lifted was arranged so as to be easily torn off and admit air to the inducive, which at once became active and set up radio-activity in the outer layer of the Carolinum sphere. This liberated fresh inducive, and so in a few minutes the whole bomb was a blazing continual explosion. The Central European bombs were the same, except that they were larger and had a more complicated arrangement for animating the inducive.

Always before in the development of warfare the shells and rockets fired had been but momentarily explosive, they had gone off in an instant once for all, and if there was nothing living or valuable within reach of the concussion and the flying fragments then they were spent and over. But Carolinum, which belonged to the beta

group of Hyslop's so-called 'suspended degenerator' elements, once its degenerative process had been induced, continued a furious radiation of energy and nothing could arrest it. Of all Hyslop's artificial elements, Carolinum was the most heavily stored with energy and the most dangerous to make and handle. To this day it remains the most potent degenerator known. What the earlier twentieth-century chemists called its half period was seventeen days; that is to say, it poured out half of the huge store of energy in its great molecules in the space of seventeen days, the next seventeen days' emission was a half of that first period's outpouring, and so on. As with all radio-active substances this Carolinum, though every seventeen days its power is halved, though constantly it diminishes towards the imperceptible, is never entirely exhausted, and to this day the battle-fields and bomb fields of that frantic time in human history are sprinkled with radiant matter, and so centres of inconvenient rays.

What happened when the celluloid stud was opened was that the inducive oxidised and became active. Then the surface of the Carolinum began to degenerate. This degeneration passed only slowly into the substance of the bomb. A moment or so after its explosion began it was still mainly an inert sphere exploding superficially, a big, inanimate nucleus wrapped in flame and thunder. Those that were thrown from aeroplanes fell in this state, they reached the ground still mainly solid, and, melting soil and rock in their progress, bored into the earth. There, as more and more of the Carolinum became active, the bomb spread itself out into a monstrous cavern of fiery energy at the base of what became very speedily a miniature active volcano. The Carolinum, unable to disperse, freely drove into and mixed up with a boiling confusion of molten soil and superheated steam, and so remained spinning furiously and maintaining an eruption that lasted for years or months or weeks according to the size of the bomb employed and the chances of its dispersal. Once launched, the bomb was absolutely unapproachable and uncontrollable until its forces were nearly exhausted, and from the crater that burst open above it, puffs of heavy incandescent vapour and fragments of viciously punitive rock and mud, saturated with Carolinum, and each a centre of scorching

and blistering energy, were flung high and far.

Such was the crowning triumph of military science, the ultimate explosive that was to give the ‘decisive touch’ to war....

Section 5

A recent historical writer has described the world of that time as one that ‘believed in established words and was invincibly blind to the obvious in things.’ Certainly it seems now that nothing could have been more obvious to the people of the earlier twentieth century than the rapidity with which war was becoming impossible. And as certainly they did not see it. They did not see it until the atomic bombs burst in their fumbling hands. Yet the broad facts must have glared upon any intelligent mind. All through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the amount of energy that men were able to command was continually increasing. Applied to warfare that meant that the power to inflict a blow, the power to destroy, was continually increasing. There was no increase whatever in the ability to escape. Every sort of passive defence, armour, fortifications, and so forth, was being outmastered by this tremendous increase on the destructive side. Destruction was becoming so facile that any little body of malcontents could use it; it was revolutionising the problems of police and internal rule. Before the last war began it was a matter of common knowledge that a man could carry about in a handbag an amount of latent energy sufficient to wreck half a city. These facts were before the minds of everybody; the children in the streets knew them. And yet the world still, as the Americans used to phrase it, ‘fooled around’ with the paraphernalia and pretensions of war.

It is only by realising this profound, this fantastic divorce between the scientific and intellectual movement on the one hand, and the world of the lawyer-politician on the other, that the men of a later time can hope to understand this preposterous state of affairs. Social organisation was still in the barbaric stage. There were already great numbers of actively intelligent men and much private and commercial civilisation, but the community, as a whole, was aimless, untrained and unorganised to the pitch of imbecility. Collective civilisation, the ‘Modern State,’ was still in the womb of the future....

Section 6

But let us return to Frederick Barnet's Wander Jahre and its account of the experiences of a common man during the war time. While these terrific disclosures of scientific possibility were happening in Paris and Berlin, Barnet and his company were industriously entrenching themselves in Belgian Luxembourg.

He tells of the mobilisation and of his summer day's journey through the north of France and the Ardennes in a few vivid phrases. The country was browned by a warm summer, the trees a little touched with autumnal colour, and the wheat already golden. When they stopped for an hour at Hirson, men and women with tricolour badges upon the platform distributed cakes and glasses of beer to the thirsty soldiers, and there was much cheerfulness. 'Such good, cool beer it was,' he wrote. 'I had had nothing to eat nor drink since Epsom.'

A number of monoplanes, 'like giant swallows,' he notes, were scouting in the pink evening sky.

Barnet's battalion was sent through the Sedan country to a place called Virton, and thence to a point in the woods on the line to Jemelle. Here they detrained, bivouacked uneasily by the railway — trains and stores were passing along it all night — and next morning he: marched eastward through a cold, overcast dawn, and a morning, first cloudy and then blazing, over a large spacious country-side interspersed by forest towards Arlon.

There the infantry were set to work upon a line of masked entrenchments and hidden rifle pits between St Hubert and Virton that were designed to check and delay any advance from the east upon the fortified line of the Meuse. They had their orders, and for two days they worked without either a sight of the enemy or any suspicion of the disaster that had abruptly decapitated the armies of Europe, and turned the west of Paris and the centre of Berlin into blazing miniatures of the destruction of Pompeii.

And the news, when it did come, came attenuated. 'We heard there had been mischief with aeroplanes and bombs in Paris,' Barnet relates; 'but it didn't seem to follow that "They" weren't still somewhere elaborating their plans and issuing orders. When the

enemy began to emerge from the woods in front of us, we cheered and blazed away, and didn't trouble much more about anything but the battle in hand. If now and then one cocked up an eye into the sky to see what was happening there, the rip of a bullet soon brought one down to the horizontal again....

That battle went on for three days all over a great stretch of country between Louvain on the north and Longwy to the south. It was essentially a rifle and infantry struggle. The aeroplanes do not seem to have taken any decisive share in the actual fighting for some days, though no doubt they effected the strategy from the first by preventing surprise movements. They were aeroplanes with atomic engines, but they were not provided with atomic bombs, which were manifestly unsuitable for field use, nor indeed had they any very effective kind of bomb. And though they manoeuvred against each other, and there was rifle shooting at them and between them, there was little actual aerial fighting. Either the airmen were indisposed to fight or the commanders on both sides preferred to reserve these machines for scouting....

After a day or so of digging and scheming, Barnet found himself in the forefront of a battle. He had made his section of rifle pits chiefly along a line of deep dry ditch that gave a means of inter-communication, he had had the earth scattered over the adjacent field, and he had masked his preparations with tussocks of corn and poppy. The hostile advance came blindly and unsuspiciously across the fields below and would have been very cruelly handled indeed, if some one away to the right had not opened fire too soon.

'It was a queer thrill when these fellows came into sight,' he confesses; 'and not a bit like manoeuvres. They halted for a time on the edge of the wood and then came forward in an open line. They kept walking nearer to us and not looking at us, but away to the right of us. Even when they began to be hit, and their officers' whistles woke them up, they didn't seem to see us. One or two halted to fire, and then they all went back towards the wood again. They went slowly at first, looking round at us, then the shelter of the wood seemed to draw them, and they trotted. I fired rather mechanically and missed, then I fired again, and then I became earnest to hit something, made sure of my sighting, and aimed very carefully at a

blue back that was dodging about in the corn. At first I couldn't satisfy myself and didn't shoot, his movements were so spasmodic and uncertain; then I think he came to a ditch or some such obstacle and halted for a moment. "GOT you," I whispered, and pulled the trigger.

'I had the strangest sensations about that man. In the first instance, when I felt that I had hit him I was irradiated with joy and pride....

'I sent him spinning. He jumped and threw up his arms....

'Then I saw the corn tops waving and had glimpses of him flapping about. Suddenly I felt sick. I hadn't killed him....

'In some way he was disabled and smashed up and yet able to struggle about. I began to think....

'For nearly two hours that Prussian was agonising in the corn. Either he was calling out or some one was shouting to him....

'Then he jumped up — he seemed to try to get up upon his feet with one last effort; and then he fell like a sack and lay quite still and never moved again.

'He had been unendurable, and I believe some one had shot him dead. I had been wanting to do so for some time....'

The enemy began sniping the rifle pits from shelters they made for themselves in the woods below. A man was hit in the pit next to Barnet, and began cursing and crying out in a violent rage. Barnet crawled along the ditch to him and found him in great pain, covered with blood, frantic with indignation, and with the half of his right hand smashed to a pulp. 'Look at this,' he kept repeating, hugging it and then extending it. 'Damned foolery! Damned foolery! My right hand, sir! My right hand!'

For some time Barnet could do nothing with him. The man was consumed by his tortured realisation of the evil silliness of war, the realisation which had come upon him in a flash with the bullet that had destroyed his skill and use as an artificer for ever. He was looking at the vestiges with a horror that made him impenetrable to any other idea. At last the poor wretch let Barnet tie up his bleeding stump and help him along the ditch that conducted him deviously out of range....

When Barnet returned his men were already calling out for water, and all day long the line of pits suffered greatly from thirst. For food

they had chocolate and bread.

‘At first,’ he says, ‘I was extraordinarily excited by my baptism of fire. Then as the heat of the day came on I experienced an enormous tedium and discomfort. The flies became extremely troublesome, and my little grave of a rifle pit was invaded by ants. I could not get up or move about, for some one in the trees had got a mark on me. I kept thinking of the dead Prussian down among the corn, and of the bitter outcries of my own man. Damned foolery! It WAS damned foolery. But who was to blame? How had we got to this? . . .

‘Early in the afternoon an aeroplane tried to dislodge us with dynamite bombs, but she was hit by bullets once or twice, and suddenly dived down over beyond the trees.

‘“From Holland to the Alps this day,” I thought, “there must be crouching and lying between half and a million of men, trying to inflict irreparable damage upon one another. The thing is idiotic to the pitch of impossibility. It is a dream. Presently I shall wake up.” . . .

‘Then the phrase changed itself in my mind. “Presently mankind will wake up.”

‘I lay speculating just how many thousands of men there were among these hundreds of thousands, whose spirits were in rebellion against all these ancient traditions of flag and empire. Weren’t we, perhaps, already in the throes of the last crisis, in that darkest moment of a nightmare’s horror before the sleeper will endure no more of it — and wakes?

‘I don’t know how my speculations ended. I think they were not so much ended as distracted by the distant thudding of the guns that were opening fire at long range upon Namur.’

Section 7

But as yet Barnet had seen no more than the mildest beginnings of modern warfare. So far he had taken part only in a little shooting. The bayonet attack by which the advanced line was broken was made at a place called Croix Rouge, more than twenty miles away, and that night under cover of the darkness the rifle pits were abandoned and he got his company away without further loss.

His regiment fell back unpressed behind the fortified lines between Namur and Sedan, entrained at a station called Mettet, and was sent northward by Antwerp and Rotterdam to Haarlem. Hence they marched into North Holland. It was only after the march into Holland that he began to realise the monstrous and catastrophic nature of the struggle in which he was playing his undistinguished part.

He describes very pleasantly the journey through the hills and open land of Brabant, the repeated crossing of arms of the Rhine, and the change from the undulating scenery of Belgium to the flat, rich meadows, the sunlit dyke roads, and the countless windmills of the Dutch levels. In those days there was unbroken land from Alkmaar and Leiden to the Dollart. Three great provinces, South Holland, North Holland, and Zuiderzeeland, reclaimed at various times between the early tenth century and 1945 and all many feet below the level of the waves outside the dykes, spread out their lush polders to the northern sun and sustained a dense industrious population. An intricate web of laws and custom and tradition ensured a perpetual vigilance and a perpetual defence against the beleaguering sea. For more than two hundred and fifty miles from Walcheren to Friesland stretched a line of embankments and pumping stations that was the admiration of the world.

If some curious god had chosen to watch the course of events in those northern provinces while that flanking march of the British was in progress, he would have found a convenient and appropriate seat for his observation upon one of the great cumulus clouds that were drifting slowly across the blue sky during all these eventful days before the great catastrophe. For that was the quality of the weather, hot and clear, with something of a breeze, and underfoot dry and a little inclined to be dusty. This watching god would have looked down upon broad stretches of sunlit green, sunlit save for the creeping patches of shadow cast by the clouds, upon sky-reflecting meres, fringed and divided up by masses of willow and large areas of silvery weeds, upon white roads lying bare to the sun and upon a tracery of blue canals. The pastures were alive with cattle, the roads had a busy traffic, of beasts and bicycles and gaily coloured peasants' automobiles, the hues of the innumerable motor barges in the canal

vied with the eventfulness of the roadways; and everywhere in solitary steadings, amidst ricks and barns, in groups by the wayside, in straggling villages, each with its fine old church, or in compact towns laced with canals and abounding in bridges and clipped trees, were human habitations.

The people of this country-side were not belligerents. The interests and sympathies alike of Holland had been so divided that to the end she remained undecided and passive in the struggle of the world powers. And everywhere along the roads taken by the marching armies clustered groups and crowds of impartially observant spectators, women and children in peculiar white caps and old-fashioned sabots, and elderly, clean-shaven men quietly thoughtful over their long pipes. They had no fear of their invaders; the days when 'soldiering' meant bands of licentious looters had long since passed away....

That watcher among the clouds would have seen a great distribution of khaki-uniformed men and khaki-painted material over the whole of the sunken area of Holland. He would have marked the long trains, packed with men or piled with great guns and war material, creeping slowly, alert for train-wreckers, along the north-going lines; he would have seen the Scheldt and Rhine choked with shipping, and pouring out still more men and still more material; he would have noticed halts and provisionings and detrainments, and the long, bustling caterpillars of cavalry and infantry, the maggot-like wagons, the huge beetles of great guns, crawling under the poplars along the dykes and roads northward, along ways lined by the neutral, unmolested, ambiguously observant Dutch. All the barges and shipping upon the canals had been requisitioned for transport. In that clear, bright, warm weather, it would all have looked from above like some extravagant festival of animated toys.

As the sun sank westward the spectacle must have become a little indistinct because of a golden haze; everything must have become warmer and more glowing, and because of the lengthening of the shadows more manifestly in relief. The shadows of the tall churches grew longer and longer, until they touched the horizon and mingled in the universal shadow; and then, slow, and soft, and wrapping the world in fold after fold of deepening blue, came the night — the

night at first obscurely simple, and then with faint points here and there, and then jewelled in darkling splendour with a hundred thousand lights. Out of that mingling of darkness and ambiguous glares the noise of an unceasing activity would have arisen, the louder and plainer now because there was no longer any distraction of sight.

It may be that watcher drifting in the pellucid gulf beneath the stars watched all through the night; it may be that he dozed. But if he gave way to so natural a proclivity, assuredly on the fourth night of the great flank march he was aroused, for that was the night of the battle in the air that decided the fate of Holland. The aeroplanes were fighting at last, and suddenly about him, above and below, with cries and uproar rushing out of the four quarters of heaven, striking, plunging, oversetting, soaring to the zenith and dropping to the ground, they came to assail or defend the myriads below.

Secretly the Central European power had gathered his flying machines together, and now he threw them as a giant might fling a handful of ten thousand knives over the low country. And amidst that swarming flight were five that drove headlong for the sea walls of Holland, carrying atomic bombs. From north and west and south, the allied aeroplanes rose in response and swept down upon this sudden attack. So it was that war in the air began. Men rode upon the whirlwind that night and slew and fell like archangels. The sky rained heroes upon the astonished earth. Surely the last fights of mankind were the best. What was the heavy pounding of your Homeric swordsmen, what was the creaking charge of chariots, beside this swift rush, this crash, this giddy triumph, this headlong swoop to death?

And then athwart this whirling rush of aerial duels that swooped and locked and dropped in the void between the lamp-lights and the stars, came a great wind and a crash louder than thunder, and first one and then a score of lengthening fiery serpents plunged hungrily down upon the Dutchmen's dykes and struck between land and sea and flared up again in enormous columns of glare and crimsoned smoke and steam.

And out of the darkness leapt the little land, with its spires and trees, aghast with terror, still and distinct, and the sea, tumbled with

anger, red-foaming like a sea of blood....

Over the populous country below went a strange multitudinous crying and a flurry of alarm bells....

The surviving aeroplanes turned about and fled out of the sky, like things that suddenly know themselves to be wicked....

Through a dozen thunderously flaming gaps that no water might quench, the waves came roaring in upon the land....

Section 8

'We had cursed our luck,' says Barnet, 'that we could not get to our quarters at Alkmaar that night. There, we were told, were provisions, tobacco, and everything for which we craved. But the main canal from Zaandam and Amsterdam was hopelessly jammed with craft, and we were glad of a chance opening that enabled us to get out of the main column and lie up in a kind of little harbour very much neglected and weedgrown before a deserted house. We broke into this and found some herrings in a barrel, a heap of cheeses, and stone bottles of gin in the cellar; and with this I cheered my starving men. We made fires and toasted the cheese and grilled our herrings. None of us had slept for nearly forty hours, and I determined to stay in this refuge until dawn and then if the traffic was still choked leave the barge and march the rest of the way into Alkmaar.

'This place we had got into was perhaps a hundred yards from the canal and underneath a little brick bridge we could see the flotilla still, and hear the voices of the soldiers. Presently five or six other barges came through and lay up in the meer near by us, and with two of these, full of men of the Antrim regiment, I shared my find of provisions. In return we got tobacco. A large expanse of water spread to the westward of us and beyond were a cluster of roofs and one or two church towers. The barge was rather cramped for so many men, and I let several squads, thirty or forty perhaps altogether, bivouac on the bank. I did not let them go into the house on account of the furniture, and I left a note of indebtedness for the food we had taken. We were particularly glad of our tobacco and fires, because of the numerous mosquitoes that rose about us.

'The gate of the house from which we had provisioned ourselves

was adorned with the legend, Vreugde bij Vrede, "Joy with Peace," and it bore every mark of the busy retirement of a comfort-loving proprietor. I went along his garden, which was gay and delightful with big bushes of rose and sweet brier, to a quaint little summer-house, and there I sat and watched the men in groups cooking and squatting along the bank. The sun was setting in a nearly cloudless sky.

'For the last two weeks I had been a wholly occupied man, intent only upon obeying the orders that came down to me. All through this time I had been working to the very limit of my mental and physical faculties, and my only moments of rest had been devoted to snatches of sleep. Now came this rare, unexpected interlude, and I could look detachedly upon what I was doing and feel something of its infinite wonderfulness. I was irradiated with affection for the men of my company and with admiration at their cheerful acquiescence in the subordination and needs of our positions. I watched their proceedings and heard their pleasant voices. How willing those men were! How ready to accept leadership and forget themselves in collective ends! I thought how manfully they had gone through all the strains and toil of the last two weeks, how they had toughened and shaken down to comradeship together, and how much sweetness there is after all in our foolish human blood. For they were just one casual sample of the species — their patience and readiness lay, as the energy of the atom had lain, still waiting to be properly utilised. Again it came to me with overpowering force that the supreme need of our race is leading, that the supreme task is to discover leading, to forget oneself in realising the collective purpose of the race. Once more I saw life plain....'

Very characteristic is that of the 'rather too corpulent' young officer, who was afterwards to set it all down in the Wander Jahre. Very characteristic, too, it is of the change in men's hearts that was even then preparing a new phase of human history.

He goes on to write of the escape from individuality in science and service, and of his discovery of this 'salvation.' All that was then, no doubt, very moving and original; now it seems only the most obvious commonplace of human life.

The glow of the sunset faded, the twilight deepened into night.

The fires burnt the brighter, and some Irishmen away across the meer started singing. But Barnet's men were too weary for that sort of thing, and soon the bank and the barge were heaped with sleeping forms.

'I alone seemed unable to sleep. I suppose I was over-weary, and after a little feverish slumber by the tiller of the barge I sat up, awake and uneasy....

'That night Holland seemed all sky. There was just a little black lower rim to things, a steeple, perhaps, or a line of poplars, and then the great hemisphere swept over us. As at first the sky was empty. Yet my uneasiness referred itself in some vague way to the sky.

'And now I was melancholy. I found something strangely sorrowful and submissive in the sleepers all about me, those men who had marched so far, who had left all the established texture of their lives behind them to come upon this mad campaign, this campaign that signified nothing and consumed everything, this mere fever of fighting. I saw how little and feeble is the life of man, a thing of chances, preposterously unable to find the will to realise even the most timid of its dreams. And I wondered if always it would be so, if man was a doomed animal who would never to the last days of his time take hold of fate and change it to his will. Always, it may be, he will remain kindly but jealous, desirous but discursive, able and unwisely impulsive, until Saturn who begot him shall devour him in his turn....

'I was roused from these thoughts by the sudden realisation of the presence of a squadron of aeroplanes far away to the north-east and very high. They looked like little black dashes against the midnight blue. I remember that I looked up at them at first rather idly — as one might notice a flight of birds. Then I perceived that they were only the extreme wing of a great fleet that was advancing in a long line very swiftly from the direction of the frontier and my attention tightened.

'Directly I saw that fleet I was astonished not to have seen it before.

'I stood up softly, undesirous of disturbing my companions, but with my heart beating now rather more rapidly with surprise and excitement. I strained my ears for any sound of guns along our front.

Almost instinctively I turned about for protection to the south and west, and peered; and then I saw coming as fast and much nearer to me, as if they had sprung out of the darkness, three banks of aeroplanes; a group of squadrons very high, a main body at a height perhaps of one or two thousand feet, and a doubtful number flying low and very indistinct. The middle ones were so thick they kept putting out groups of stars. And I realised that after all there was to be fighting in the air.

'There was something extraordinarily strange in this swift, noiseless convergence of nearly invisible combatants above the sleeping hosts. Every one about me was still unconscious; there was no sign as yet of any agitation among the shipping on the main canal, whose whole course, dotted with unsuspicious lights and fringed with fires, must have been clearly perceptible from above. Then a long way off towards Alkmaar I heard bugles, and after that shots, and then a wild clamour of bells. I determined to let my men sleep on for as long as they could....

'The battle was joined with the swiftness of dreaming. I do not think it can have been five minutes from the moment when I first became aware of the Central European air fleet to the contact of the two forces. I saw it quite plainly in silhouette against the luminous blue of the northern sky. The allied aeroplanes — they were mostly French — came pouring down like a fierce shower upon the middle of the Central European fleet. They looked exactly like a coarser sort of rain. There was a crackling sound — the first sound I heard — it reminded one of the Aurora Borealis, and I supposed it was an interchange of rifle shots. There were flashes like summer lightning; and then all the sky became a whirling confusion of battle that was still largely noiseless. Some of the Central European aeroplanes were certainly charged and overset; others seemed to collapse and fall and then flare out with so bright a light that it took the edge off one's vision and made the rest of the battle disappear as though it had been snatched back out of sight.

'And then, while I still peered and tried to shade these flames from my eyes with my hand, and while the men about me were beginning to stir, the atomic bombs were thrown at the dykes. They made a mighty thunder in the air, and fell like Lucifer in the picture,

leaving a flaring trail in the sky. The night, which had been pellucid and detailed and eventful, seemed to vanish, to be replaced abruptly by a black background to these tremendous pillars of fire....

'Hard upon the sound of them came a roaring wind, and the sky was filled with flickering lightnings and rushing clouds....

'There was something discontinuous in this impact. At one moment I was a lonely watcher in a sleeping world; the next saw every one about me afoot, the whole world awake and amazed....

'And then the wind had struck me a buffet, taken my helmet and swept aside the summerhouse of Vreugde bij Vrede, as a scythe sweeps away grass. I saw the bombs fall, and then watched a great crimson flare leap responsive to each impact, and mountainous masses of red-lit steam and flying fragments clamber up towards the zenith. Against the glare I saw the country-side for miles standing black and clear, churches, trees, chimneys. And suddenly I understood. The Central Europeans had burst the dykes. Those flares meant the bursting of the dykes, and in a little while the sea-water would be upon us....'

He goes on to tell with a certain prolixity of the steps he took — and all things considered they were very intelligent steps — to meet this amazing crisis. He got his men aboard and hailed the adjacent barges; he got the man who acted as barge engineer at his post and the engines working, he cast loose from his moorings. Then he bethought himself of food, and contrived to land five men, get in a few dozen cheeses, and ship his men again before the inundation reached them.

He is reasonably proud of this piece of coolness. His idea was to take the wave head-on and with his engines full speed ahead. And all the while he was thanking heaven he was not in the jam of traffic in the main canal. He rather, I think, overestimated the probable rush of waters; he dreaded being swept away, he explains, and smashed against houses and trees.

He does not give any estimate of the time it took between the bursting of the dykes and the arrival of the waters, but it was probably an interval of about twenty minutes or half an hour. He was working now in darkness — save for the light of his lantern — and in a great wind. He hung out head and stern lights....

Whirling torrents of steam were pouring up from the advancing waters, which had rushed, it must be remembered, through nearly incandescent gaps in the sea defences, and this vast uprush of vapour soon veiled the flaring centres of explosion altogether.

'The waters came at last, an advancing cascade. It was like a broad roller sweeping across the country. They came with a deep, roaring sound. I had expected a Niagara, but the total fall of the front could not have been much more than twelve feet. Our barge hesitated for a moment, took a dose over her bows, and then lifted. I signalled for full speed ahead and brought her head upstream, and held on like grim death to keep her there.

'There was a wind about as strong as the flood, and I found we were pounding against every conceivable buoyant object that had been between us and the sea. The only light in the world now came from our lamps, the steam became impenetrable at a score of yards from the boat, and the roar of the wind and water cut us off from all remoter sounds. The black, shining waters swirled by, coming into the light of our lamps out of an ebony blackness and vanishing again into impenetrable black. And on the waters came shapes, came things that flashed upon us for a moment, now a half-submerged boat, now a cow, now a huge fragment of a house's timberings, now a muddle of packing-cases and scaffolding. The things clapped into sight like something shown by the opening of a shutter, and then bumped shatteringly against us or rushed by us. Once I saw very clearly a man's white face....

'All the while a group of labouring, half-submerged trees remained ahead of us, drawing very slowly nearer. I steered a course to avoid them. They seemed to gesticulate a frantic despair against the black steam clouds behind. Once a great branch detached itself and tore shuddering by me. We did, on the whole, make headway. The last I saw of Vreugde bij Vrede before the night swallowed it, was almost dead astern of us....'

Section 9

Morning found Barnet still afloat. The bows of his barge had been badly strained, and his men were pumping or baling in relays. He had

got about a dozen half-drowned people aboard whose boat had capsized near him, and he had three other boats in tow. He was afloat, and somewhere between Amsterdam and Alkmaar, but he could not tell where. It was a day that was still half night. Gray waters stretched in every direction under a dark gray sky, and out of the waves rose the upper parts of houses, in many cases ruined, the tops of trees, windmills, in fact the upper third of all the familiar Dutch scenery; and on it there drifted a dimly seen flotilla of barges, small boats, many overturned, furniture, rafts, timbering, and miscellaneous objects.

The drowned were under water that morning. Only here and there did a dead cow or a stiff figure still clinging stoutly to a box or chair or such-like buoy hint at the hidden massacre. It was not till the Thursday that the dead came to the surface in any quantity. The view was bounded on every side by a gray mist that closed overhead in a gray canopy. The air cleared in the afternoon, and then, far away to the west under great banks of steam and dust, the flaming red eruption of the atomic bombs came visible across the waste of water.

They showed flat and sullen through the mist, like London sunsets. 'They sat upon the sea,' says Barnet, 'like frayed-out waterlilies of flame.'

Barnet seems to have spent the morning in rescue work along the track of the canal, in helping people who were adrift, in picking up derelict boats, and in taking people out of imperilled houses. He found other military barges similarly employed, and it was only as the day wore on and the immediate appeals for aid were satisfied that he thought of food and drink for his men, and what course he had better pursue. They had a little cheese, but no water. 'Orders,' that mysterious direction, had at last altogether disappeared. He perceived he had now to act upon his own responsibility.

'One's sense was of a destruction so far-reaching and of a world so altered that it seemed foolish to go in any direction and expect to find things as they had been before the war began. I sat on the quarter-deck with Mylius my engineer and Kemp and two others of the non-commissioned officers, and we consulted upon our line of action. We were foodless and aimless. We agreed that our fighting value was extremely small, and that our first duty was to get

ourselves in touch with food and instructions again. Whatever plan of campaign had directed our movements was manifestly smashed to bits. Mylius was of opinion that we could take a line westward and get back to England across the North Sea. He calculated that with such a motor barge as ours it would be possible to reach the Yorkshire coast within four-and-twenty hours. But this idea I overruled because of the shortness of our provisions, and more particularly because of our urgent need of water.

'Every boat we drew near now hailed us for water, and their demands did much to exasperate our thirst. I decided that if we went away to the south we should reach hilly country, or at least country that was not submerged, and then we should be able to land, find some stream, drink, and get supplies and news. Many of the barges adrift in the haze about us were filled with British soldiers and had floated up from the Nord See Canal, but none of them were any better informed than ourselves of the course of events. "Orders" had, in fact, vanished out of the sky.

'"Orders" made a temporary reappearance late that evening in the form of a megaphone hail from a British torpedo boat, announcing a truce, and giving the welcome information that food and water were being hurried down the Rhine and were to be found on the barge flotilla lying over the old Rhine above Leiden.'...

We will not follow Barnet, however, in the description of his strange overland voyage among trees and houses and churches by Zaandam and between Haarlem and Amsterdam, to Leiden. It was a voyage in a red-lit mist, in a world of steamy silhouette, full of strange voices and perplexity, and with every other sensation dominated by a feverish thirst. 'We sat,' he says, 'in a little huddled group, saying very little, and the men forward were mere knots of silent endurance. Our only continuing sound was the persistent mewing of a cat one of the men had rescued from a floating hayrick near Zaandam. We kept a southward course by a watch-chain compass Mylius had produced....

'I do not think any of us felt we belonged to a defeated army, nor had we any strong sense of the war as the dominating fact about us. Our mental setting had far more of the effect of a huge natural catastrophe. The atomic bombs had dwarfed the international issues

to complete insignificance. When our minds wandered from the preoccupations of our immediate needs, we speculated upon the possibility of stopping the use of these frightful explosives before the world was utterly destroyed. For to us it seemed quite plain that these bombs and the still greater power of destruction of which they were the precursors might quite easily shatter every relationship and institution of mankind.

'"What will they be doing," asked Mylius, "what will they be doing? It's plain we've got to put an end to war. It's plain things have to be run some way. THIS — all this — is impossible."

'I made no immediate answer. Something — I cannot think what — had brought back to me the figure of that man I had seen wounded on the very first day of actual fighting. I saw again his angry, tearful eyes, and that poor, dripping, bloody mess that had been a skilful human hand five minutes before, thrust out in indignant protest. "Damned foolery," he had stormed and sobbed, "damned foolery. My right hand, sir! My RIGHT hand. . . ."

'My faith had for a time gone altogether out of me. "I think we are too — too silly," I said to Mylius, "ever to stop war. If we'd had the sense to do it, we should have done it before this. I think this — —" I pointed to the gaunt black outline of a smashed windmill that stuck up, ridiculous and ugly, above the blood-lit waters— "this is the end."'

Section 10

But now our history must part company with Frederick Barnet and his barge-load of hungry and starving men.

For a time in western Europe at least it was indeed as if civilisation had come to a final collapse. These crowning buds upon the tradition that Napoleon planted and Bismarck watered, opened and flared 'like waterlilies of flame' over nations destroyed, over churches smashed or submerged, towns ruined, fields lost to mankind for ever, and a million weltering bodies. Was this lesson enough for mankind, or would the flames of war still burn amidst the ruins?

Neither Barnet nor his companions, it is clear, had any assurance in their answers to that question. Already once in the history of

mankind, in America, before its discovery by the whites, an organised civilisation had given way to a mere cult of warfare, specialised and cruel, and it seemed for a time to many a thoughtful man as if the whole world was but to repeat on a larger scale this ascendancy of the warrior, this triumph of the destructive instincts of the race.

The subsequent chapters of Barnet's narrative do but supply body to this tragic possibility. He gives a series of vignettes of civilisation, shattered, it seemed, almost irreparably. He found the Belgian hills swarming with refugees and desolated by cholera; the vestiges of the contending armies keeping order under a truce, without actual battles, but with the cautious hostility of habit, and a great absence of plan everywhere.

Overhead aeroplanes went on mysterious errands, and there were rumours of cannibalism and hysterical fanaticisms in the valleys of the Semoy and the forest region of the eastern Ardennes. There was the report of an attack upon Russia by the Chinese and Japanese, and of some huge revolutionary outbreak in America. The weather was stormier than men had ever known it in those regions, with much thunder and lightning and wild cloud-bursts of rain....

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE ENDING OF WAR

Section 1

On the mountain-side above the town of Brissago and commanding two long stretches of Lake Maggiore, looking eastward to Bellinzona, and southward to Luino, there is a shelf of grass meadows which is very beautiful in springtime with a great multitude of wild flowers. More particularly is this so in early June, when the slender asphodel Saint Bruno's lily, with its spike of white blossom, is in flower. To the westward of this delightful shelf there is a deep and densely wooded trench, a great gulf of blue some mile or so in width out of which arise great precipices very high and wild. Above the asphodel fields the mountains climb in rocky slopes to solitudes of stone and sunlight that curve round and join that wall of cliffs in one common skyline. This desolate and austere background contrasts very vividly with the glowing serenity of the great lake below, with the spacious view of fertile hills and roads and villages and islands to south and east, and with the hotly golden rice flats of the Val Maggia to the north. And because it was a remote and insignificant place, far away out of the crowding tragedies of that year of disaster, away from burning cities and starving multitudes, bracing and tranquillising and hidden, it was here that there gathered the conference of rulers that was to arrest, if possible, before it was too late, the debacle of civilisation. Here, brought together by the indefatigable energy of that impassioned humanitarian, Leblanc, the French ambassador at Washington, the chief Powers of the world were to meet in a last desperate conference to 'save humanity.'

Leblanc was one of those ingenuous men whose lot would have been insignificant in any period of security, but who have been caught up to an immortal role in history by the sudden simplification of human affairs through some tragical crisis, to the measure of their simplicity. Such a man was Abraham Lincoln, and such was Garibaldi. And Leblanc, with his transparent childish innocence, his

entire self-forgetfulness, came into this confusion of distrust and intricate disaster with an invincible appeal for the manifest sanities of the situation. His voice, when he spoke, was ‘full of remonstrance.’ He was a little bald, spectacled man, inspired by that intellectual idealism which has been one of the peculiar gifts of France to humanity. He was possessed of one clear persuasion, that war must end, and that the only way to end war was to have but one government for mankind. He brushed aside all other considerations. At the very outbreak of the war, so soon as the two capitals of the belligerents had been wrecked, he went to the president in the White House with this proposal. He made it as if it was a matter of course. He was fortunate to be in Washington and in touch with that gigantic childishness which was the characteristic of the American imagination. For the Americans also were among the simple peoples by whom the world was saved. He won over the American president and the American government to his general ideas; at any rate they supported him sufficiently to give him a standing with the more sceptical European governments, and with this backing he set to work — it seemed the most fantastic of enterprises — to bring together all the rulers of the world and unify them. He wrote innumerable letters, he sent messages, he went desperate journeys, he enlisted whatever support he could find; no one was too humble for an ally or too obstinate for his advances; through the terrible autumn of the last wars this persistent little visionary in spectacles must have seemed rather like a hopeful canary twittering during a thunderstorm. And no accumulation of disasters daunted his conviction that they could be ended.

For the whole world was flaring then into a monstrous phase of destruction. Power after Power about the armed globe sought to anticipate attack by aggression. They went to war in a delirium of panic, in order to use their bombs first. China and Japan had assailed Russia and destroyed Moscow, the United States had attacked Japan, India was in anarchistic revolt with Delhi a pit of fire spouting death and flame; the redoubtable King of the Balkans was mobilising. It must have seemed plain at last to every one in those days that the world was slipping headlong to anarchy. By the spring of 1959 from nearly two hundred centres, and every week added to their number,

roared the unquenchable crimson conflagrations of the atomic bombs, the flimsy fabric of the world's credit had vanished, industry was completely disorganised and every city, every thickly populated area was starving or trembled on the verge of starvation. Most of the capital cities of the world were burning; millions of people had already perished, and over great areas government was at an end. Humanity has been compared by one contemporary writer to a sleeper who handles matches in his sleep and wakes to find himself in flames.

For many months it was an open question whether there was to be found throughout all the race the will and intelligence to face these new conditions and make even an attempt to arrest the downfall of the social order. For a time the war spirit defeated every effort to rally the forces of preservation and construction. Leblanc seemed to be protesting against earthquakes, and as likely to find a spirit of reason in the crater of Etna. Even though the shattered official governments now clamoured for peace, bands of irreconcilables and invincible patriots, usurpers, adventurers, and political desperadoes, were everywhere in possession of the simple apparatus for the disengagement of atomic energy and the initiation of new centres of destruction. The stuff exercised an irresistible fascination upon a certain type of mind. Why should any one give in while he can still destroy his enemies? Surrender? While there is still a chance of blowing them to dust? The power of destruction which had once been the ultimate privilege of government was now the only power left in the world — and it was everywhere. There were few thoughtful men during that phase of blazing waste who did not pass through such moods of despair as Barnet describes, and declare with him: 'This is the end....'

And all the while Leblanc was going to and fro with glittering glasses and an inexhaustible persuasiveness, urging the manifest reasonableness of his view upon ears that ceased presently to be inattentive. Never at any time did he betray a doubt that all this chaotic conflict would end. No nurse during a nursery uproar was ever so certain of the inevitable ultimate peace. From being treated as an amiable dreamer he came by insensible degrees to be regarded as an extravagant possibility. Then he began to seem even practicable.

The people who listened to him in 1958 with a smiling impatience, were eager before 1959 was four months old to know just exactly what he thought might be done. He answered with the patience of a philosopher and the lucidity of a Frenchman. He began to receive responses of a more and more hopeful type. He came across the Atlantic to Italy, and there he gathered in the promises for this congress. He chose those high meadows above Brissago for the reasons we have stated. 'We must get away,' he said, 'from old associations.' He set to work requisitioning material for his conference with an assurance that was justified by the replies. With a slight incredulity the conference which was to begin a new order in the world, gathered itself together. Leblanc summoned it without arrogance, he controlled it by virtue of an infinite humility. Men appeared upon those upland slopes with the apparatus for wireless telegraphy; others followed with tents and provisions; a little cable was flung down to a convenient point upon the Locarno road below. Leblanc arrived, sedulously directing every detail that would affect the tone of the assembly. He might have been a courier in advance rather than the originator of the gathering. And then there arrived, some by the cable, most by aeroplane, a few in other fashions, the men who had been called together to confer upon the state of the world. It was to be a conference without a name. Nine monarchs, the presidents of four republics, a number of ministers and ambassadors, powerful journalists, and such-like prominent and influential men, took part in it. There were even scientific men; and that world-famous old man, Holsten, came with the others to contribute his amateur statecraft to the desperate problem of the age. Only Leblanc would have dared so to summon figure heads and powers and intelligence, or have had the courage to hope for their agreement....

Section 2

And one at least of those who were called to this conference of governments came to it on foot. This was King Egbert, the young king of the most venerable kingdom in Europe. He was a rebel, and had always been of deliberate choice a rebel against the magnificence of his position. He affected long pedestrian tours and a disposition to

sleep in the open air. He came now over the Pass of Sta Maria Maggiore and by boat up the lake to Brissago; thence he walked up the mountain, a pleasant path set with oaks and sweet chestnut. For provision on the walk, for he did not want to hurry, he carried with him a pocketful of bread and cheese. A certain small retinue that was necessary to his comfort and dignity upon occasions of state he sent on by the cable car, and with him walked his private secretary, Firmin, a man who had thrown up the Professorship of World Politics in the London School of Sociology, Economics, and Political Science, to take up these duties. Firmin was a man of strong rather than rapid thought, he had anticipated great influence in this new position, and after some years he was still only beginning to apprehend how largely his function was to listen. Originally he had been something of a thinker upon international politics, an authority upon tariffs and strategy, and a valued contributor to various of the higher organs of public opinion, but the atomic bombs had taken him by surprise, and he had still to recover completely from his pre-atomic opinions and the silencing effect of those sustained explosives.

The king's freedom from the trammels of etiquette was very complete. In theory — and he abounded in theory — his manners were purely democratic. It was by sheer habit and inadvertency that he permitted Firmin, who had discovered a rucksack in a small shop in the town below, to carry both bottles of beer. The king had never, as a matter of fact, carried anything for himself in his life, and he had never noted that he did not do so.

'We will have nobody with us,' he said, 'at all. We will be perfectly simple.'

So Firmin carried the beer.

As they walked up — it was the king made the pace rather than Firmin — they talked of the conference before them, and Firmin, with a certain want of assurance that would have surprised him in himself in the days of his Professorship, sought to define the policy of his companion. 'In its broader form, sir,' said Firmin; 'I admit a certain plausibility in this project of Leblanc's, but I feel that although it may be advisable to set up some sort of general control for International affairs — a sort of Hague Court with extended

powers — that is no reason whatever for losing sight of the principles of national and imperial autonomy.'

'Firmin,' said the king, 'I am going to set my brother kings a good example.'

Firmin intimated a curiosity that veiled a dread.

'By chucking all that nonsense,' said the king.

He quickened his pace as Firmin, who was already a little out of breath, betrayed a disposition to reply.

'I am going to chuck all that nonsense,' said the king, as Firmin prepared to speak. 'I am going to fling my royalty and empire on the table — and declare at once I don't mean to haggle. It's haggling — about rights — has been the devil in human affairs, for — always. I am going to stop this nonsense.'

Firmin halted abruptly. 'But, sir!' he cried.

The king stopped six yards ahead of him and looked back at his adviser's perspiring visage.

'Do you really think, Firmin, that I am here as — as an infernal politician to put my crown and my flag and my claims and so forth in the way of peace? That little Frenchman is right. You know he is right as well as I do. Those things are over. We — we kings and rulers and representatives have been at the very heart of the mischief. Of course we imply separation, and of course separation means the threat of war, and of course the threat of war means the accumulation of more and more atomic bombs. The old game's up. But, I say, we mustn't stand here, you know. The world waits. Don't you think the old game's up, Firmin?'

Firmin adjusted a strap, passed a hand over his wet forehead, and followed earnestly. 'I admit, sir,' he said to a receding back, 'that there has to be some sort of hegemony, some sort of Amphictyonic council — —'

'There's got to be one simple government for all the world,' said the king over his shoulder.

'But as for a reckless, unqualified abandonment, sir — —'

'BANG!' cried the king.

Firmin made no answer to this interruption. But a faint shadow of annoyance passed across his heated features.

'Yesterday,' said the king, by way of explanation, 'the Japanese

very nearly got San Francisco.'

'I hadn't heard, sir.'

'The Americans ran the Japanese aeroplane down into the sea and there the bomb got busted.'

'Under the sea, sir?'

'Yes. Submarine volcano. The steam is in sight of the Californian coast. It was as near as that. And with things like this happening, you want me to go up this hill and haggle. Consider the effect of that upon my imperial cousin — and all the others!'

'HE will haggle, sir.'

'Not a bit of it,' said the king.

'But, sir.'

'Leblanc won't let him.'

Firmin halted abruptly and gave a vicious pull at the offending strap. 'Sir, he will listen to his advisers,' he said, in a tone that in some subtle way seemed to implicate his master with the trouble of the knapsack.

The king considered him.

'We will go just a little higher,' he said. 'I want to find this unoccupied village they spoke of, and then we will drink that beer. It can't be far. We will drink the beer and throw away the bottles. And then, Firmin, I shall ask you to look at things in a more generous light.... Because, you know, you must....'

He turned about and for some time the only sound they made was the noise of their boots upon the loose stones of the way and the irregular breathing of Firmin.

At length, as it seemed to Firmin, or quite soon, as it seemed to the king, the gradient of the path diminished, the way widened out, and they found themselves in a very beautiful place indeed. It was one of those upland clusters of sheds and houses that are still to be found in the mountains of North Italy, buildings that were used only in the high summer, and which it was the custom to leave locked up and deserted through all the winter and spring, and up to the middle of June. The buildings were of a soft-toned gray stone, buried in rich green grass, shadowed by chestnut trees and lit by an extraordinary blaze of yellow broom. Never had the king seen broom so glorious; he shouted at the light of it, for it seemed to give out more sunlight

even than it received; he sat down impulsively on a lichenous stone, tugged out his bread and cheese, and bade Firmin thrust the beer into the shaded weeds to cool.

‘The things people miss, Firmin,’ he said, ‘who go up into the air in ships!’

Firmin looked around him with an ungenial eye. ‘You see it at its best, sir,’ he said, ‘before the peasants come here again and make it filthy.’

‘It would be beautiful anyhow,’ said the king.

‘Superficially, sir,’ said Firmin. ‘But it stands for a social order that is fast vanishing away. Indeed, judging by the grass between the stones and in the huts, I am inclined to doubt if it is in use even now.’

‘I suppose,’ said the king, ‘they would come up immediately the hay on this flower meadow is cut. It would be those slow, creamy-coloured beasts, I expect, one sees on the roads below, and swarthy girls with red handkerchiefs over their black hair.... It is wonderful to think how long that beautiful old life lasted. In the Roman times and long ages before ever the rumour of the Romans had come into these parts, men drove their cattle up into these places as the summer came on.... How haunted is this place! There have been quarrels here, hopes, children have played here and lived to be old crones and old gaffers, and died, and so it has gone on for thousands of lives. Lovers, innumerable lovers, have caressed amidst this golden broom....’

He meditated over a busy mouthful of bread and cheese.

‘We ought to have brought a tankard for that beer,’ he said.

Firmin produced a folding aluminium cup, and the king was pleased to drink.

‘I wish, sir,’ said Firmin suddenly, ‘I could induce you at least to delay your decision — —’

‘It’s no good talking, Firmin,’ said the king. ‘My mind’s as clear as daylight.’

‘Sire,’ protested Firmin, with his voice full of bread and cheese and genuine emotion, ‘have you no respect for your kingship?’

The king paused before he answered with unwonted gravity. ‘It’s just because I have, Firmin, that I won’t be a puppet in this game of international politics.’ He regarded his companion for a moment and

then remarked: ‘Kingship! — what do YOU know of kingship, Firmin?

‘Yes,’ cried the king to his astonished counsellor. ‘For the first time in my life I am going to be a king. I am going to lead, and lead by my own authority. For a dozen generations my family has been a set of dummies in the hands of their advisers. Advisers! Now I am going to be a real king — and I am going to — to abolish, dispose of, finish, the crown to which I have been a slave. But what a world of paralysing shams this roaring stuff has ended! The rigid old world is in the melting-pot again, and I, who seemed to be no more than the stuffing inside a regal robe, I am a king among kings. I have to play my part at the head of things and put an end to blood and fire and idiot disorder.’

‘But, sir,’ protested Firmin.

‘This man Leblanc is right. The whole world has got to be a Republic, one and indivisible. You know that, and my duty is to make that easy. A king should lead his people; you want me to stick on their backs like some Old Man of the Sea. To-day must be a sacrament of kings. Our trust for mankind is done with and ended. We must part our robes among them, we must part our kingship among them, and say to them all, now the king in every one must rule the world.... Have you no sense of the magnificence of this occasion? You want me, Firmin, you want me to go up there and haggle like a damned little solicitor for some price, some compensation, some qualification....’

Firmin shrugged his shoulders and assumed an expression of despair. Meanwhile, he conveyed, one must eat.

For a time neither spoke, and the king ate and turned over in his mind the phrases of the speech he intended to make to the conference. By virtue of the antiquity of his crown he was to preside, and he intended to make his presidency memorable. Reassured of his eloquence, he considered the despondent and sulky Firmin for a space.

‘Firmin,’ he said, ‘you have idealised kingship.’

‘It has been my dream, sir,’ said Firmin sorrowfully, ‘to serve.’

‘At the levers, Firmin,’ said the king.

‘You are pleased to be unjust,’ said Firmin, deeply hurt.

‘I am pleased to be getting out of it,’ said the king.

‘Oh, Firmin,’ he went on, ‘have you no thought for me? Will you never realise that I am not only flesh and blood but an imagination — with its rights. I am a king in revolt against that fetter they put upon my head. I am a king awake. My reverend grandparents never in all their august lives had a waking moment. They loved the job that you, you advisers, gave them; they never had a doubt of it. It was like giving a doll to a woman who ought to have a child. They delighted in processions and opening things and being read addresses to, and visiting triplets and nonagenarians and all that sort of thing. Incredibly. They used to keep albums of cuttings from all the illustrated papers showing them at it, and if the press-cutting parcels grew thin they were worried. It was all that ever worried them. But there is something atavistic in me; I hark back to unconstitutional monarchs. They christened me too retrogressively, I think. I wanted to get things done. I was bored. I might have fallen into vice, most intelligent and energetic princes do, but the palace precautions were unusually thorough. I was brought up in the purest court the world has ever seen.... Alertly pure.... So I read books, Firmin, and went about asking questions. The thing was bound to happen to one of us sooner or later. Perhaps, too, very likely I’m not vicious. I don’t think I am.’

He reflected. ‘No,’ he said.

Firmin cleared his throat. ‘I don’t think you are, sir,’ he said. ‘You prefer — —’

He stopped short. He had been going to say ‘talking.’ He substituted ‘ideas.’

‘That world of royalty!’ the king went on. ‘In a little while no one will understand it any more. It will become a riddle....

‘Among other things, it was a world of perpetual best clothes. Everything was in its best clothes for us, and usually wearing bunting. With a cinema watching to see we took it properly. If you are a king, Firmin, and you go and look at a regiment, it instantly stops whatever it is doing, changes into full uniform and presents arms. When my august parents went in a train the coal in the tender used to be whitened. It did, Firmin, and if coal had been white instead of black I have no doubt the authorities would have

blackened it. That was the spirit of our treatment. People were always walking about with their faces to us. One never saw anything in profile. One got an impression of a world that was insanely focused on ourselves. And when I began to poke my little questions into the Lord Chancellor and the archbishop and all the rest of them, about what I should see if people turned round, the general effect I produced was that I wasn't by any means displaying the Royal Tact they had expected of me....'

He meditated for a time.

'And yet, you know, there is something in the kingship, Firmin. It stiffened up my august little grandfather. It gave my grandmother a kind of awkward dignity even when she was cross — and she was very often cross. They both had a profound sense of responsibility. My poor father's health was wretched during his brief career; nobody outside the circle knows just how he screwed himself up to things. "My people expect it," he used to say of this tiresome duty or that. Most of the things they made him do were silly — it was part of a bad tradition, but there was nothing silly in the way he set about them.... The spirit of kingship is a fine thing, Firmin; I feel it in my bones; I do not know what I might not be if I were not a king. I could die for my people, Firmin, and you couldn't. No, don't say you could die for me, because I know better. Don't think I forget my kingship, Firmin, don't imagine that. I am a king, a kingly king, by right divine. The fact that I am also a chattering young man makes not the slightest difference to that. But the proper text-book for kings, Firmin, is none of the court memoirs and Welt-Politik books you would have me read; it is old Fraser's Golden Bough. Have you read that, Firmin?'

Firmin had. 'Those were the authentic kings. In the end they were cut up and a bit given to everybody. They sprinkled the nations — with Kingship.'

Firmin turned himself round and faced his royal master.

'What do you intend to do, sir?' he asked. 'If you will not listen to me, what do you propose to do this afternoon?'

The king flicked crumbs from his coat.

'Manifestly war has to stop for ever, Firmin. Manifestly this can only be done by putting all the world under one government. Our

crowns and flags are in the way. Manifestly they must go.'

'Yes, sir,' interrupted Firmin, 'but WHAT government? I don't see what government you get by a universal abdication!'

'Well,' said the king, with his hands about his knees, 'WE shall be the government.'

'The conference?' exclaimed Firmin.

'Who else?' asked the king simply.

'It's perfectly simple,' he added to Firmin's tremendous silence.

'But,' cried Firmin, 'you must have sanctions! Will there be no form of election, for example?'

'Why should there be?' asked the king, with intelligent curiosity.

'The consent of the governed.'

'Firmin, we are just going to lay down our differences and take over government. Without any election at all. Without any sanction. The governed will show their consent by silence. If any effective opposition arises we shall ask it to come in and help. The true sanction of kingship is the grip upon the sceptre. We aren't going to worry people to vote for us. I'm certain the mass of men does not want to be bothered with such things.... We'll contrive a way for any one interested to join in. That's quite enough in the way of democracy. Perhaps later — when things don't matter.... We shall govern all right, Firmin. Government only becomes difficult when the lawyers get hold of it, and since these troubles began the lawyers are shy. Indeed, come to think of it, I wonder where all the lawyers are.... Where are they? A lot, of course, were bagged, some of the worst ones, when they blew up my legislature. You never knew the late Lord Chancellor....

'Necessities bury rights. And create them. Lawyers live on dead rights disinterred.... We've done with that way of living. We won't have more law than a code can cover and beyond that government will be free....

'Before the sun sets to-day, Firmin, trust me, we shall have made our abdications, all of us, and declared the World Republic, supreme and indivisible. I wonder what my august grandmother would have made of it! All my rights! . . . And then we shall go on governing. What else is there to do? All over the world we shall declare that there is no longer mine or thine, but ours. China, the United States,

two-thirds of Europe, will certainly fall in and obey. They will have to do so. What else can they do? Their official rulers are here with us. They won't be able to get together any sort of idea of not obeying us.... Then we shall declare that every sort of property is held in trust for the Republic....'

'But, sir!' cried Firmin, suddenly enlightened. 'Has this been arranged already?'

'My dear Firmin, do you think we have come here, all of us, to talk at large? The talking has been done for half a century. Talking and writing. We are here to set the new thing, the simple, obvious, necessary thing, going.'

He stood up.

Firmin, forgetting the habits of a score of years, remained seated.

'WELL,' he said at last. 'And I have known nothing!'

The king smiled very cheerfully. He liked these talks with Firmin.

Section 3

That conference upon the Brissago meadows was one of the most heterogeneous collections of prominent people that has ever met together. Principalities and powers, stripped and shattered until all their pride and mystery were gone, met in a marvellous new humility. Here were kings and emperors whose capitals were lakes of flaming destruction, statesmen whose countries had become chaos, scared politicians and financial potentates. Here were leaders of thought and learned investigators dragged reluctantly to the control of affairs. Altogether there were ninety-three of them, Leblanc's conception of the head men of the world. They had all come to the realisation of the simple truths that the indefatigable Leblanc had hammered into them; and, drawing his resources from the King of Italy, he had provisioned his conference with a generous simplicity quite in accordance with the rest of his character, and so at last was able to make his astonishing and entirely rational appeal. He had appointed King Egbert the president, he believed in this young man so firmly that he completely dominated him, and he spoke himself as a secretary might speak from the president's left hand, and evidently did not realise himself that he was telling them all exactly what they

had to do. He imagined he was merely recapitulating the obvious features of the situation for their convenience. He was dressed in ill-fitting white silk clothes, and he consulted a dingy little packet of notes as he spoke. They put him out. He explained that he had never spoken from notes before, but that this occasion was exceptional.

And then King Egbert spoke as he was expected to speak, and Leblanc's spectacles moistened at that flow of generous sentiment, most amiably and lightly expressed. 'We haven't to stand on ceremony,' said the king, 'we have to govern the world. We have always pretended to govern the world and here is our opportunity.'

'Of course,' whispered Leblanc, nodding his head rapidly, 'of course.'

'The world has been smashed up, and we have to put it on its wheels again,' said King Egbert. 'And it is the simple common sense of this crisis for all to help and none to seek advantage. Is that our tone or not?'

The gathering was too old and seasoned and miscellaneous for any great displays of enthusiasm, but that was its tone, and with an astonishment that somehow became exhilarating it began to resign, repudiate, and declare its intentions. Firmin, taking notes behind his master, heard everything that had been foretold among the yellow broom, come true. With a queer feeling that he was dreaming, he assisted at the proclamation of the World State, and saw the message taken out to the wireless operators to be throbbed all round the habitable globe. 'And next,' said King Egbert, with a cheerful excitement in his voice, 'we have to get every atom of Carolinum and all the plant for making it, into our control....'

Firman was not alone in his incredulity. Not a man there who was not a very amiable, reasonable, benevolent creature at bottom; some had been born to power and some had happened upon it, some had struggled to get it, not clearly knowing what it was and what it implied, but none was irreconcilably set upon its retention at the price of cosmic disaster. Their minds had been prepared by circumstances and sedulously cultivated by Leblanc; and now they took the broad obvious road along which King Egbert was leading them, with a mingled conviction of strangeness and necessity. Things went very smoothly; the King of Italy explained the arrangements

that had been made for the protection of the camp from any fantastic attack; a couple of thousand of aeroplanes, each carrying a sharpshooter, guarded them, and there was an excellent system of relays, and at night all the sky would be searched by scores of lights, and the admirable Leblanc gave luminous reasons for their camping just where they were and going on with their administrative duties forthwith. He knew of this place, because he had happened upon it when holiday-making with Madame Leblanc twenty years and more ago. ‘There is very simple fare at present,’ he explained, ‘on account of the disturbed state of the countries about us. But we have excellent fresh milk, good red wine, beef, bread, salad, and lemons.... In a few days I hope to place things in the hands of a more efficient caterer....’

The members of the new world government dined at three long tables on trestles, and down the middle of these tables Leblanc, in spite of the barrenness of his menu, had contrived to have a great multitude of beautiful roses. There was similar accommodation for the secretaries and attendants at a lower level down the mountain. The assembly dined as it had debated, in the open air, and over the dark crags to the west the glowing June sunset shone upon the banquet. There was no precedency now among the ninety-three, and King Egbert found himself between a pleasant little Japanese stranger in spectacles and his cousin of Central Europe, and opposite a great Bengali leader and the President of the United States of America. Beyond the Japanese was Holsten, the old chemist, and Leblanc was a little way down the other side.

The king was still cheerfully talkative and abounded in ideas. He fell presently into an amiable controversy with the American, who seemed to feel a lack of impressiveness in the occasion.

It was ever the Transatlantic tendency, due, no doubt, to the necessity of handling public questions in a bulky and striking manner, to over-emphasise and over-accentuate, and the president was touched by his national failing. He suggested now that there should be a new era, starting from that day as the first day of the first year.

The king demurred.

‘From this day forth, sir, man enters upon his heritage,’ said the American.

‘Man,’ said the king, ‘is always entering upon his heritage. You Americans have a peculiar weakness for anniversaries — if you will forgive me saying so. Yes — I accuse you of a lust for dramatic effect. Everything is happening always, but you want to say this or this is the real instant in time and subordinate all the others to it.’

The American said something about an epoch-making day.

‘But surely,’ said the king, ‘you don’t want us to condemn all humanity to a world-wide annual Fourth of July for ever and ever more. On account of this harmless necessary day of declarations. No conceivable day could ever deserve that. Ah! you do not know, as I do, the devastations of the memorable. My poor grandparents were — RUBRICATED. The worst of these huge celebrations is that they break up the dignified succession of one’s contemporary emotions. They interrupt. They set back. Suddenly out come the flags and fireworks, and the old enthusiasms are furbished up — and it’s sheer destruction of the proper thing that ought to be going on. Sufficient unto the day is the celebration thereof. Let the dead past bury its dead. You see, in regard to the calendar, I am for democracy and you are for aristocracy. All things I hold, are august, and have a right to be lived through on their merits. No day should be sacrificed on the grave of departed events. What do you think of it, Wilhelm?’

‘For the noble, yes, all days should be noble.’

‘Exactly my position,’ said the king, and felt pleased at what he had been saying.

And then, since the American pressed his idea, the king contrived to shift the talk from the question of celebrating the epoch they were making to the question of the probabilities that lay ahead. Here every one became diffident. They could see the world unified and at peace, but what detail was to follow from that unification they seemed indisposed to discuss. This diffidence struck the king as remarkable. He plunged upon the possibilities of science. All the huge expenditure that had hitherto gone into unproductive naval and military preparations, must now, he declared, place research upon a new footing. ‘Where one man worked we will have a thousand.’ He appealed to Holsten. ‘We have only begun to peep into these possibilities,’ he said. ‘You at any rate have sounded the vaults of the treasure house.’

‘They are unfathomable,’ smiled Holsten.

‘Man,’ said the American, with a manifest resolve to justify and reinstate himself after the flickering contradictions of the king, ‘Man, I say, is only beginning to enter upon his heritage.’

‘Tell us some of the things you believe we shall presently learn, give us an idea of the things we may presently do,’ said the king to Holsten.

Holsten opened out the vistas....

‘Science,’ the king cried presently, ‘is the new king of the world.’

‘OUR view,’ said the president, ‘is that sovereignty resides with the people.’

‘No!’ said the king, ‘the sovereign is a being more subtle than that. And less arithmetical. Neither my family nor your emancipated people. It is something that floats about us, and above us, and through us. It is that common impersonal will and sense of necessity of which Science is the best understood and most typical aspect. It is the mind of the race. It is that which has brought us here, which has bowed us all to its demands....’

He paused and glanced down the table at Leblanc, and then re-opened at his former antagonist.

‘There is a disposition,’ said the king, ‘to regard this gathering as if it were actually doing what it appears to be doing, as if we ninety-odd men of our own free will and wisdom were unifying the world. There is a temptation to consider ourselves exceptionally fine fellows, and masterful men, and all the rest of it. We are not. I doubt if we should average out as anything abler than any other casually selected body of ninety-odd men. We are no creators, we are consequences, we are salvagers — or salvagees. The thing to-day is not ourselves but the wind of conviction that has blown us hither....’

The American had to confess he could hardly agree with the king’s estimate of their average.

‘Holsten, perhaps, and one or two others, might lift us a little,’ the king conceded. ‘But the rest of us?’

His eyes flitted once more towards Leblanc.

‘Look at Leblanc,’ he said. ‘He’s just a simple soul. There are hundreds and thousands like him. I admit, a certain dexterity, a certain lucidity, but there is not a country town in France where there

is not a Leblanc or so to be found about two o'clock in its principal cafe. It's just that he isn't complicated or Super-Mannish, or any of those things that has made all he has done possible. But in happier times, don't you think, Wilhelm, he would have remained just what his father was, a successful epicier, very clean, very accurate, very honest. And on holidays he would have gone out with Madame Leblanc and her knitting in a punt with a jar of something gentle and have sat under a large reasonable green-lined umbrella and fished very neatly and successfully for gudgeon....'

The president and the Japanese prince in spectacles protested together.

'If I do him an injustice,' said the king, 'it is only because I want to elucidate my argument. I want to make it clear how small are men and days, and how great is man in comparison....'

Section 4

So it was King Egbert talked at Brissago after they had proclaimed the unity of the world. Every evening after that the assembly dined together and talked at their ease and grew accustomed to each other and sharpened each other's ideas, and every day they worked together, and really for a time believed that they were inventing a new government for the world. They discussed a constitution. But there were matters needing attention too urgently to wait for any constitution. They attended to these incidentally. The constitution it was that waited. It was presently found convenient to keep the constitution waiting indefinitely as King Egbert had foreseen, and meanwhile, with an increasing self-confidence, that council went on governing....

On this first evening of all the council's gatherings, after King Egbert had talked for a long time and drunken and praised very abundantly the simple red wine of the country that Leblanc had procured for them, he fathered about him a group of congenial spirits and fell into a discourse upon simplicity, praising it above all things and declaring that the ultimate aim of art, religion, philosophy, and science alike was to simplify. He instanced himself as a devotee to simplicity. And Leblanc he instanced as a crowning instance of the

splendour of this quality. Upon that they all agreed.

When at last the company about the tables broke up, the king found himself brimming over with a peculiar affection and admiration for Leblanc, he made his way to him and drew him aside and broached what he declared was a small matter. There was, he said, a certain order in his gift that, unlike all other orders and decorations in the world, had never been corrupted. It was reserved for elderly men of supreme distinction, the acuteness of whose gifts was already touched to mellowness, and it had included the greatest names of every age so far as the advisers of his family had been able to ascertain them. At present, the king admitted, these matters of stars and badges were rather obscured by more urgent affairs, for his own part he had never set any value upon them at all, but a time might come when they would be at least interesting, and in short he wished to confer the Order of Merit upon Leblanc. His sole motive in doing so, he added, was his strong desire to signalise his personal esteem. He laid his hand upon the Frenchman's shoulder as he said these things, with an almost brotherly affection. Leblanc received this proposal with a modest confusion that greatly enhanced the king's opinion of his admirable simplicity. He pointed out that eager as he was to snatch at the proffered distinction, it might at the present stage appear invidious, and he therefore suggested that the conferring of it should be postponed until it could be made the crown and conclusion of his services. The king was unable to shake this resolution, and the two men parted with expressions of mutual esteem.

The king then summoned Firmin in order to make a short note of a number of things that he had said during the day. But after about twenty minutes' work the sweet sleepiness of the mountain air overcame him, and he dismissed Firmin and went to bed and fell asleep at once, and slept with extreme satisfaction. He had had an active, agreeable day.

Section 5

The establishment of the new order that was thus so humanly begun, was, if one measures it by the standard of any preceding age, a rapid progress. The fighting spirit of the world was exhausted. Only here

or there did fierceness linger. For long decades the combative side in human affairs had been monstrously exaggerated by the accidents of political separation. This now became luminously plain. An enormous proportion of the force that sustained armaments had been nothing more aggressive than the fear of war and warlike neighbours. It is doubtful if any large section of the men actually enlisted for fighting ever at any time really hungered and thirsted for bloodshed and danger. That kind of appetite was probably never very strong in the species after the savage stage was past. The army was a profession, in which killing had become a disagreeable possibility rather than an eventful certainty. If one reads the old newspapers and periodicals of that time, which did so much to keep militarism alive, one finds very little about glory and adventure and a constant harping on the disagreeableness of invasion and subjugation. In one word, militarism was funk. The belligerent resolution of the armed Europe of the twentieth century was the resolution of a fiercely frightened sheep to plunge. And now that its weapons were exploding in its hands, Europe was only too eager to drop them, and abandon this fancied refuge of violence.

For a time the whole world had been shocked into frankness; nearly all the clever people who had hitherto sustained the ancient belligerent separations had now been brought to realise the need for simplicity of attitude and openness of mind; and in this atmosphere of moral renascence, there was little attempt to get negotiable advantages out of resistance to the new order. Human beings are foolish enough no doubt, but few have stopped to haggle in a fire-escape. The council had its way with them. The band of ‘patriots’ who seized the laboratories and arsenal just outside Osaka and tried to rouse Japan to revolt against inclusion in the Republic of Mankind, found they had miscalculated the national pride and met the swift vengeance of their own countrymen. That fight in the arsenal was a vivid incident in this closing chapter of the history of war. To the last the ‘patriots’ were undecided whether, in the event of a defeat, they would explode their supply of atomic bombs or not. They were fighting with swords outside the iridium doors, and the moderates of their number were at bay and on the verge of destruction, only ten, indeed, remained unwounded, when the

republicans burst in to the rescue....

Section 6

One single monarch held out against the general acquiescence in the new rule, and that was that strange survival of mediaevalism, the 'Slavic Fox,' the King of the Balkans. He debated and delayed his submissions. He showed an extraordinary combination of cunning and temerity in his evasion of the repeated summonses from Brissago. He affected ill-health and a great preoccupation with his new official mistress, for his semi-barbaric court was arranged on the best romantic models. His tactics were ably seconded by Doctor Pestovitch, his chief minister. Failing to establish his claims to complete independence, King Ferdinand Charles annoyed the conference by a proposal to be treated as a protected state. Finally he professed an unconvincing submission, and put a mass of obstacles in the way of the transfer of his national officials to the new government. In these things he was enthusiastically supported by his subjects, still for the most part an illiterate peasantry, passionately if confusedly patriotic, and so far with no practical knowledge of the effect of atomic bombs. More particularly he retained control of all the Balkan aeroplanes.

For once the extreme naivete of Leblanc seems to have been mitigated by duplicity. He went on with the general pacification of the world as if the Balkan submission was made in absolute good faith, and he announced the disbandment of the force of aeroplanes that hitherto guarded the council at Brissago upon the approaching fifteenth of July. But instead he doubled the number upon duty on that eventful day, and made various arrangements for their disposition. He consulted certain experts, and when he took King Egbert into his confidence there was something in his neat and explicit foresight that brought back to that ex-monarch's mind his half-forgotten fantasy of Leblanc as a fisherman under a green umbrella.

About five o'clock in the morning of the seventeenth of July one of the outer sentinels of the Brissago fleet, which was soaring unobtrusively over the lower end of the lake of Garda, sighted and

hailed a strange aeroplane that was flying westward, and, failing to get a satisfactory reply, set its wireless apparatus talking and gave chase. A swarm of consorts appeared very promptly over the westward mountains, and before the unknown aeroplane had sighted Como, it had a dozen eager attendants closing in upon it. Its driver seems to have hesitated, dropped down among the mountains, and then turned southward in flight, only to find an intercepting biplane sweeping across his bows. He then went round into the eye of the rising sun, and passed within a hundred yards of his original pursuer.

The sharpshooter therein opened fire at once, and showed an intelligent grasp of the situation by disabling the passenger first. The man at the wheel must have heard his companion cry out behind him, but he was too intent on getting away to waste even a glance behind. Twice after that he must have heard shots. He let his engine go, he crouched down, and for twenty minutes he must have steered in the continual expectation of a bullet. It never came, and when at last he glanced round, three great planes were close upon him, and his companion, thrice hit, lay dead across his bombs. His followers manifestly did not mean either to upset or shoot him, but inexorably they drove him down, down. At last he was curving and flying a hundred yards or less over the level fields of rice and maize. Ahead of him and dark against the morning sunrise was a village with a very tall and slender campanile and a line of cable bearing metal standards that he could not clear. He stopped his engine abruptly and dropped flat. He may have hoped to get at the bombs when he came down, but his pitiless pursuers drove right over him and shot him as he fell.

Three other aeroplanes curved down and came to rest amidst grass close by the smashed machine. Their passengers descended, and ran, holding their light rifles in their hands towards the debris and the two dead men. The coffin-shaped box that had occupied the centre of the machine had broken, and three black objects, each with two handles like the ears of a pitcher, lay peacefully amidst the litter.

These objects were so tremendously important in the eyes of their captors that they disregarded the two dead men who lay bloody and broken amidst the wreckage as they might have disregarded dead frogs by a country pathway.

‘By God,’ cried the first. ‘Here they are!’

‘And unbroken!’ said the second.

‘I’ve never seen the things before,’ said the first.

‘Bigger than I thought,’ said the second.

The third comer arrived. He stared for a moment at the bombs and then turned his eyes to the dead man with a crushed chest who lay in a muddy place among the green stems under the centre of the machine.

‘One can take no risks,’ he said, with a faint suggestion of apology.

The other two now also turned to the victims. ‘We must signal,’ said the first man. A shadow passed between them and the sun, and they looked up to see the aeroplane that had fired the last shot. ‘Shall we signal?’ came a megaphone hail.

‘Three bombs,’ they answered together.

‘Where do they come from?’ asked the megaphone.

The three sharpshooters looked at each other and then moved towards the dead men. One of them had an idea. ‘Signal that first,’ he said, ‘while we look.’ They were joined by their aviators for the search, and all six men began a hunt that was necessarily brutal in its haste, for some indication of identity. They examined the men’s pockets, their bloodstained clothes, the machine, the framework. They turned the bodies over and flung them aside. There was not a tattoo mark.... Everything was elaborately free of any indication of its origin.

‘We can’t find out!’ they called at last.

‘Not a sign?’

‘Not a sign.’

‘I’m coming down,’ said the man overhead....

Section 7

The Slavic fox stood upon a metal balcony in his picturesque Art Nouveau palace that gave upon the precipice that overhung his bright little capital, and beside him stood Pestovitch, grizzled and cunning, and now full of an ill-suppressed excitement. Behind them the window opened into a large room, richly decorated in aluminium and

crimson enamel, across which the king, as he glanced ever and again over his shoulder with a gesture of inquiry, could see through the two open doors of a little azure walled antechamber the wireless operator in the turret working at his incessant transcription. Two pompously uniformed messengers waited listlessly in this apartment. The room was furnished with a stately dignity, and had in the middle of it a big green baize-covered table with the massive white metal inkpots and antiquated sandboxes natural to a new but romantic monarchy. It was the king's council chamber and about it now, in attitudes of suspended intrigue, stood the half-dozen ministers who constituted his cabinet. They had been summoned for twelve o'clock, but still at half-past twelve the king loitered in the balcony and seemed to be waiting for some news that did not come.

The king and his minister had talked at first in whispers; they had fallen silent, for they found little now to express except a vague anxiety. Away there on the mountain side were the white metal roofs of the long farm buildings beneath which the bomb factory and the bombs were hidden. (The chemist who had made all these for the king had died suddenly after the declaration of Brissago.) Nobody knew of that store of mischief now but the king and his adviser and three heavily faithful attendants; the aviators who waited now in the midday blaze with their bomb-carrying machines and their passenger bomb-throwers in the exercising grounds of the motor-cyclist barracks below were still in ignorance of the position of the ammunition they were presently to take up. It was time they started if the scheme was to work as Pestovitch had planned it. It was a magnificent plan. It aimed at no less than the Empire of the World. The government of idealists and professors away there at Brissago was to be blown to fragments, and then east, west, north, and south those aeroplanes would go swarming over a world that had disarmed itself, to proclaim Ferdinand Charles, the new Caesar, the Master, Lord of the Earth. It was a magnificent plan. But the tension of this waiting for news of the success of the first blow was — considerable.

The Slavic fox was of a pallid fairness, he had a remarkably long nose, a thick, short moustache, and small blue eyes that were a little too near together to be pleasant. It was his habit to worry his moustache with short, nervous tugs whenever his restless mind

troubled him, and now this motion was becoming so incessant that it irked Pestovitch beyond the limits of endurance.

‘I will go,’ said the minister, ‘and see what the trouble is with the wireless. They give us nothing, good or bad.’

Left to himself, the king could worry his moustache without stint; he leant his elbows forward on the balcony and gave both of his long white hands to the work, so that he looked like a pale dog gnawing a bone. Suppose they caught his men, what should he do? Suppose they caught his men?

The clocks in the light gold-capped belfries of the town below presently intimated the half-hour after midday.

Of course, he and Pestovitch had thought it out. Even if they had caught those men, they were pledged to secrecy.... Probably they would be killed in the catching.... One could deny anyhow, deny and deny.

And then he became aware of half a dozen little shining specks very high in the blue.... Pestovitch came out to him presently. ‘The government messages, sire, have all dropped into cipher,’ he said. ‘I have set a man — —’

‘LOOK!’ interrupted the king, and pointed upward with a long, lean finger.

Pestovitch followed that indication and then glanced for one questioning moment at the white face before him.

‘We have to face it out, sire,’ he said.

For some moments they watched the steep spirals of the descending messengers, and then they began a hasty consultation....

They decided that to be holding a council upon the details of an ultimate surrender to Brissago was as innocent-looking a thing as the king could well be doing, and so, when at last the ex-king Egbert, whom the council had sent as its envoy, arrived upon the scene, he discovered the king almost theatrically posed at the head of his councillors in the midst of his court. The door upon the wireless operators was shut.

The ex-king from Brissago came like a draught through the curtains and attendants that gave a wide margin to King Ferdinand’s state, and the familiar confidence of his manner belied a certain hardness in his eye. Firmin trotted behind him, and no one else was

with him. And as Ferdinand Charles rose to greet him, there came into the heart of the Balkan king again that same chilly feeling that he had felt upon the balcony — and it passed at the careless gestures of his guest. For surely any one might outwit this foolish talker who, for a mere idea and at the command of a little French rationalist in spectacles, had thrown away the most ancient crown in all the world.

One must deny, deny....

And then slowly and quite tiresomely he realised that there was nothing to deny. His visitor, with an amiable ease, went on talking about everything in debate between himself and Brissago except —— .

Could it be that they had been delayed? Could it be that they had had to drop for repairs and were still uncaptured? Could it be that even now while this fool babbled, they were over there among the mountains heaving their deadly charge over the side of the aeroplane?

Strange hopes began to lift the tail of the Slavic fox again.

What was the man saying? One must talk to him anyhow until one knew. At any moment the little brass door behind him might open with the news of Brissago blown to atoms. Then it would be a delightful relief to the present tension to arrest this chatterer forthwith. He might be killed perhaps. What?

The king was repeating his observation. ‘They have a ridiculous fancy that your confidence is based on the possession of atomic bombs.’

King Ferdinand Charles pulled himself together. He protested.

‘Oh, quite so,’ said the ex-king, ‘quite so.’

‘What grounds?’ The ex-king permitted himself a gesture and the ghost of a chuckle — why the devil should he chuckle? ‘Practically none,’ he said. ‘But of course with these things one has to be so careful.’

And then again for an instant something — like the faintest shadow of derision — gleamed out of the envoy’s eyes and recalled that chilly feeling to King Ferdinand’s spine.

Some kindred depression had come to Pestovitch, who had been watching the drawn intensity of Firmin’s face. He came to the help of his master, who, he feared, might protest too much.

‘A search!’ cried the king. ‘An embargo on our aeroplanes.’

‘Only a temporary expedient,’ said the ex-king Egbert, ‘while the search is going on.’

The king appealed to his council.

‘The people will never permit it, sire,’ said a bustling little man in a gorgeous uniform.

‘You’ll have to make ‘em,’ said the ex-king, genially addressing all the councillors.

King Ferdinand glanced at the closed brass door through which no news would come.

‘When would you want to have this search?’

The ex-king was radiant. ‘We couldn’t possibly do it until the day after to-morrow,’ he said.

‘Just the capital?’

‘Where else?’ asked the ex-king, still more cheerfully.

‘For my own part,’ said the ex-king confidentially, ‘I think the whole business ridiculous. Who would be such a fool as to hide atomic bombs? Nobody. Certain hanging if he’s caught — certain, and almost certain blowing up if he isn’t. But nowadays I have to take orders like the rest of the world. And here I am.’

The king thought he had never met such detestable geniality. He glanced at Pestovitch, who nodded almost imperceptibly. It was well, anyhow, to have a fool to deal with. They might have sent a diplomatist. ‘Of course,’ said the king, ‘I recognise the overpowering force — and a kind of logic — in these orders from Brissago.’

‘I knew you would,’ said the ex-king, with an air of relief, ‘and so let us arrange — —’

They arranged with a certain informality. No Balkan aeroplane was to adventure into the air until the search was concluded, and meanwhile the fleets of the world government would soar and circle in the sky. The towns were to be placarded with offers of reward to any one who would help in the discovery of atomic bombs....

‘You will sign that,’ said the ex-king.

‘Why?’

‘To show that we aren’t in any way hostile to you.’

Pestovitch nodded ‘yes’ to his master.

‘And then, you see,’ said the ex-king in that easy way of his,

‘we’ll have a lot of men here, borrow help from your police, and run through all your things. And then everything will be over. Meanwhile, if I may be your guest....’ When presently Pestovitch was alone with the king again, he found him in a state of jangling emotions. His spirit was tossing like a wind-whipped sea. One moment he was exalted and full of contempt for ‘that ass’ and his search; the next he was down in a pit of dread. ‘They will find them, Pestovitch, and then he’ll hang us.’

‘Hang us?’

The king put his long nose into his councillor’s face. ‘That grinning brute WANTS to hang us,’ he said. ‘And hang us he will, if we give him a shadow of a chance.’

‘But all their Modern State Civilisation!’

‘Do you think there’s any pity in that crew of Godless, Vivisecting Prigs?’ cried this last king of romance. ‘Do you think, Pestovitch, they understand anything of a high ambition or a splendid dream? Do you think that our gallant and sublime adventure has any appeal to them? Here am I, the last and greatest and most romantic of the Caesars, and do you think they will miss the chance of hanging me like a dog if they can, killing me like a rat in a hole? And that renegade! He who was once an anointed king! . . .

‘I hate that sort of eye that laughs and keeps hard,’ said the king.

‘I won’t sit still here and be caught like a fascinated rabbit,’ said the king in conclusion. ‘We must shift those bombs.’

‘Risk it,’ said Pestovitch. ‘Leave them alone.’

‘No,’ said the king. ‘Shift them near the frontier. Then while they watch us here — they will always watch us here now — we can buy an aeroplane abroad, and pick them up....’

The king was in a feverish, irritable mood all that evening, but he made his plans nevertheless with infinite cunning. They must get the bombs away; there must be a couple of atomic hay lorries, the bombs could be hidden under the hay.... Pestovitch went and came, instructing trusty servants, planning and replanning.... The king and the ex-king talked very pleasantly of a number of subjects. All the while at the back of King Ferdinand Charles’s mind fretted the mystery of his vanished aeroplane. There came no news of its capture, and no news of its success. At any moment all that power at

the back of his visitor might crumble away and vanish....

It was past midnight, when the king, in a cloak and slouch hat that might equally have served a small farmer, or any respectable middle-class man, slipped out from an inconspicuous service gate on the eastward side of his palace into the thickly wooded gardens that sloped in a series of terraces down to the town. Pestovitch and his guard-valet Peter, both wrapped about in a similar disguise, came out among the laurels that bordered the pathway and joined him. It was a clear, warm night, but the stars seemed unusually little and remote because of the aeroplanes, each trailing a searchlight, that drove hither and thither across the blue. One great beam seemed to rest on the king for a moment as he came out of the palace; then instantly and reassuringly it had swept away. But while they were still in the palace gardens another found them and looked at them.

'They see us,' cried the king.

'They make nothing of us,' said Pestovitch.

The king glanced up and met a calm, round eye of light, that seemed to wink at him and vanish, leaving him blinded....

The three men went on their way. Near the little gate in the garden railings that Pestovitch had caused to be unlocked, the king paused under the shadow of an flex and looked back at the place. It was very high and narrow, a twentieth-century rendering of mediaevalism, mediaevalism in steel and bronze and sham stone and opaque glass. Against the sky it splashed a confusion of pinnacles. High up in the eastward wing were the windows of the apartments of the ex-king Egbert. One of them was brightly lit now, and against the light a little black figure stood very still and looked out upon the night.

The king snarled.

'He little knows how we slip through his fingers,' said Pestovitch.

And as he spoke they saw the ex-king stretch out his arms slowly, like one who yawns, knuckle his eyes and turn inward — no doubt to his bed.

Down through the ancient winding back streets of his capital hurried the king, and at an appointed corner a shabby atomic-automobile waited for the three. It was a hackney carriage of the lowest grade, with dinted metal panels and deflated cushions. The driver was one of the ordinary drivers of the capital, but beside him

sat the young secretary of Pestovitch, who knew the way to the farm where the bombs were hidden.

The automobile made its way through the narrow streets of the old town, which were still lit and uneasy — for the fleet of airships overhead had kept the cafes open and people abroad — over the great new bridge, and so by straggling outskirts to the country. And all through his capital the king who hoped to outdo Caesar, sat back and was very still, and no one spoke. And as they got out into the dark country they became aware of the searchlights wandering over the country-side like the uneasy ghosts of giants. The king sat forward and looked at these flitting whitenesses, and every now and then peered up to see the flying ships overhead.

'I don't like them,' said the king.

Presently one of these patches of moonlight came to rest about them and seemed to be following their automobile. The king drew back.

'The things are confoundedly noiseless,' said the king. 'It's like being stalked by lean white cats.'

He peered again. 'That fellow is watching us,' he said.

And then suddenly he gave way to panic. 'Pestovitch,' he said, clutching his minister's arm, 'they are watching us. I'm not going through with this. They are watching us. I'm going back.'

Pestovitch remonstrated. 'Tell him to go back,' said the king, and tried to open the window. For a few moments there was a grim struggle in the automobile; a gripping of wrists and a blow. 'I can't go through with it,' repeated the king, 'I can't go through with it.'

'But they'll hang us,' said Pestovitch.

'Not if we were to give up now. Not if we were to surrender the bombs. It is you who brought me into this....'

At last Pestovitch compromised. There was an inn perhaps half a mile from the farm. They could alight there and the king could get brandy, and rest his nerves for a time. And if he still thought fit to go back he could go back.

'See,' said Pestovitch, 'the light has gone again.'

The king peered up. 'I believe he's following us without a light,' said the king.

In the little old dirty inn the king hung doubtful for a time, and

was for going back and throwing himself on the mercy of the council. ‘If there is a council,’ said Pestovitch. ‘By this time your bombs may have settled it.

‘But if so, these infernal aeroplanes would go.’

‘They may not know yet.’

‘But, Pestovitch, why couldn’t you do all this without me?’

Pestovitch made no answer for a moment. ‘I was for leaving the bombs in their place,’ he said at last, and went to the window. About their conveyance shone a circle of bright light. Pestovitch had a brilliant idea. ‘I will send my secretary out to make a kind of dispute with the driver. Something that will make them watch up above there. Meanwhile you and I and Peter will go out by the back way and up by the hedges to the farm....’

It was worthy of his subtle reputation and it answered passing well.

In ten minutes they were tumbling over the wall of the farm-yard, wet, muddy, and breathless, but unobserved. But as they ran towards the barns the king gave vent to something between a groan and a curse, and all about them shone the light — and passed.

But had it passed at once or lingered for just a second?

‘They didn’t see us,’ said Peter.

‘I don’t think they saw us,’ said the king, and stared as the light went swooping up the mountain side, hung for a second about a hayrick, and then came pouring back.

‘In the barn!’ cried the king.

He bruised his shin against something, and then all three men were inside the huge steel-girdered barn in which stood the two motor hay lorries that were to take the bombs away. Kurt and Abel, the two brothers of Peter, had brought the lorries thither in daylight. They had the upper half of the loads of hay thrown off, ready to cover the bombs, so soon as the king should show the hiding-place. ‘There’s a sort of pit here,’ said the king. ‘Don’t light another lantern. This key of mine releases a ring....’

For a time scarcely a word was spoken in the darkness of the barn. There was the sound of a slab being lifted and then of feet descending a ladder into a pit. Then whispering and then heavy breathing as Kurt came struggling up with the first of the hidden

bombs.

‘We shall do it yet,’ said the king. And then he gasped. ‘Curse that light. Why in the name of Heaven didn’t we shut the barn door?’ For the great door stood wide open and all the empty, lifeless yard outside and the door and six feet of the floor of the barn were in the blue glare of an inquiring searchlight.

‘Shut the door, Peter,’ said Pestovitch.

‘No,’ cried the king, too late, as Peter went forward into the light. ‘Don’t show yourself!’ cried the king. Kurt made a step forward and plucked his brother back. For a time all five men stood still. It seemed that light would never go and then abruptly it was turned off, leaving them blinded. ‘Now,’ said the king uneasily, ‘now shut the door.’

‘Not completely,’ cried Pestovitch. ‘Leave a chink for us to go out by....’

It was hot work shifting those bombs, and the king worked for a time like a common man. Kurt and Abel carried the great things up and Peter brought them to the carts, and the king and Pestovitch helped him to place them among the hay. They made as little noise as they could....

‘Ssh!’ cried the king. ‘What’s that?’

But Kurt and Abel did not hear, and came blundering up the ladder with the last of the load.

‘Ssh!’ Peter ran forward to them with a whispered remonstrance. Now they were still.

The barn door opened a little wider, and against the dim blue light outside they saw the black shape of a man.

‘Any one here?’ he asked, speaking with an Italian accent.

The king broke into a cold perspiration. Then Pestovitch answered: ‘Only a poor farmer loading hay,’ he said, and picked up a huge hay fork and went forward softly.

‘You load your hay at a very bad time and in a very bad light,’ said the man at the door, peering in. ‘Have you no electric light here?’

Then suddenly he turned on an electric torch, and as he did so Pestovitch sprang forward. ‘Get out of my barn!’ he cried, and drove the fork full at the intruder’s chest. He had a vague idea that so he

might stab the man to silence. But the man shouted loudly as the prongs pierced him and drove him backward, and instantly there was a sound of feet running across the yard.

'Bombs,' cried the man upon the ground, struggling with the prongs in his hand, and as Pestovitch staggered forward into view with the force of his own thrust, he was shot through the body by one of the two new-comers.

The man on the ground was badly hurt but plucky. 'Bombs,' he repeated, and struggled up into a kneeling position and held his electric torch full upon the face of the king. 'Shoot them,' he cried, coughing and spitting blood, so that the halo of light round the king's head danced about.

For a moment in that shivering circle of light the two men saw the king kneeling up in the cart and Peter on the barn floor beside him. The old fox looked at them sideways — snared, a white-faced evil thing. And then, as with a faltering suicidal heroism, he leant forward over the bomb before him, they fired together and shot him through the head.

The upper part of his face seemed to vanish.

'Shoot them,' cried the man who had been stabbed. 'Shoot them all!'

And then his light went out, and he rolled over with a groan at the feet of his comrades.

But each carried a light of his own, and in another moment everything in the barn was visible again. They shot Peter even as he held up his hands in sign of surrender.

Kurt and Abel at the head of the ladder hesitated for a moment, and then plunged backward into the pit. 'If we don't kill them,' said one of the sharpshooters, 'they'll blow us to rags. They've gone down that hatchway. Come! . . .

'Here they are. Hands up! I say. Hold your light while I shoot....'

Section 8

It was still quite dark when his valet and Firmin came together and told the ex-king Egbert that the business was settled.

He started up into a sitting position on the side of his bed.

‘Did he go out?’ asked the ex-king.

‘He is dead,’ said Firmin. ‘He was shot.’

The ex-king reflected. ‘That’s about the best thing that could have happened,’ he said. ‘Where are the bombs? In that farm-house on the opposite hill-side! Why! the place is in sight! Let us go. I’ll dress. Is there any one in the place, Firmin, to get us a cup of coffee?’

Through the hungry twilight of the dawn the ex-king’s automobile carried him to the farm-house where the last rebel king was lying among his bombs. The rim of the sky flashed, the east grew bright, and the sun was just rising over the hills when King Egbert reached the farm-yard. There he found the hay lorries drawn out from the barn with the dreadful bombs still packed upon them. A couple of score of aviators held the yard, and outside a few peasants stood in a little group and stared, ignorant as yet of what had happened. Against the stone wall of the farm-yard five bodies were lying neatly side by side, and Pestovitch had an expression of surprise on his face and the king was chiefly identifiable by his long white hands and his blonde moustache. The wounded aeronaut had been carried down to the inn. And after the ex-king had given directions in what manner the bombs were to be taken to the new special laboratories above Zurich, where they could be unpacked in an atmosphere of chlorine, he turned to these five still shapes.

Their five pairs of feet stuck out with a curious stiff unanimity....

‘What else was there to do?’ he said in answer to some internal protest.

‘I wonder, Firmin, if there are any more of them?’

‘Bombs, sir?’ asked Firmin.

‘No, such kings....

‘The pitiful folly of it!’ said the ex-king, following his thoughts. ‘Firmin, as an ex-professor of International Politics, I think it falls to you to bury them. There? . . . No, don’t put them near the well. People will have to drink from that well. Bury them over there, some way off in the field.’

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE NEW PHASE

Section 1

The task that lay before the Assembly of Brissago, viewed as we may view it now from the clarifying standpoint of things accomplished, was in its broad issues a simple one. Essentially it was to place social organisation upon the new footing that the swift, accelerated advance of human knowledge had rendered necessary. The council was gathered together with the haste of a salvage expedition, and it was confronted with wreckage; but the wreckage was irreparable wreckage, and the only possibilities of the case were either the relapse of mankind to the agricultural barbarism from which it had emerged so painfully or the acceptance of achieved science as the basis of a new social order. The old tendencies of human nature, suspicion, jealousy, particularism, and belligerency, were incompatible with the monstrous destructive power of the new appliances the inhuman logic of science had produced. The equilibrium could be restored only by civilisation destroying itself down to a level at which modern apparatus could no longer be produced, or by human nature adapting itself in its institutions to the new conditions. It was for the latter alternative that the assembly existed.

Sooner or later this choice would have confronted mankind. The sudden development of atomic science did but precipitate and render rapid and dramatic a clash between the new and the customary that had been gathering since ever the first flint was chipped or the first fire built together. From the day when man contrived himself a tool and suffered another male to draw near him, he ceased to be altogether a thing of instinct and untroubled convictions. From that day forth a widening breach can be traced between his egotistical passions and the social need. Slowly he adapted himself to the life of the homestead, and his passionate impulses widened out to the demands of the clan and the tribe. But widen though his impulses

might, the latent hunter and wanderer and wonderer in his imagination outstripped their development. He was never quite subdued to the soil nor quite tamed to the home. Everywhere it needed teaching and the priest to keep him within the bounds of the plough-life and the beast-tending. Slowly a vast system of traditional imperatives superposed itself upon his instincts, imperatives that were admirably fitted to make him that cultivator, that cattle-mincer, who was for twice ten thousand years the normal man.

And, unpremeditated, undesired, out of the accumulations of his tilling came civilisation. Civilisation was the agricultural surplus. It appeared as trade and tracks and roads, it pushed boats out upon the rivers and presently invaded the seas, and within its primitive courts, within temples grown rich and leisurely and amidst the gathering medley of the seaport towns rose speculation and philosophy and science, and the beginning of the new order that has at last established itself as human life. Slowly at first, as we traced it, and then with an accumulating velocity, the new powers were fabricated. Man as a whole did not seek them nor desire them; they were thrust into his hand. For a time men took up and used these new things and the new powers inadvertently as they came to him, recking nothing of the consequences. For endless generations change led him very gently. But when he had been led far enough, change quickened the pace. It was with a series of shocks that he realised at last that he was living the old life less and less and a new life more and more.

Already before the release of atomic energy the tensions between the old way of living and the new were intense. They were far intenser than they had been even at the collapse of the Roman imperial system. On the one hand was the ancient life of the family and the small community and the petty industry, on the other was a new life on a larger scale, with remoter horizons and a strange sense of purpose. Already it was growing clear that men must live on one side or the other. One could not have little tradespeople and syndicated businesses in the same market, sleeping carters and motor trolleys on the same road, bows and arrows and aeroplane sharpshooters in the same army, or illiterate peasant industries and power-driven factories in the same world. And still less it was possible that one could have the ideas and ambitions and greed and

jealousy of peasants equipped with the vast appliances of the new age. If there had been no atomic bombs to bring together most of the directing intelligence of the world to that hasty conference at Brissago, there would still have been, extended over great areas and a considerable space of time perhaps, a less formal conference of responsible and understanding people upon the perplexities of this world-wide opposition. If the work of Holsten had been spread over centuries and imparted to the world by imperceptible degrees, it would nevertheless have made it necessary for men to take counsel upon and set a plan for the future. Indeed already there had been accumulating for a hundred years before the crisis a literature of foresight; there was a whole mass of 'Modern State' scheming available for the conference to go upon. These bombs did but accentuate and dramatise an already developing problem.

Section 2

This assembly was no leap of exceptional minds and super-intelligences into the control of affairs. It was teachable, its members trailed ideas with them to the gathering, but these were the consequences of the 'moral shock' the bombs had given humanity, and there is no reason for supposing its individual personalities were greatly above the average. It would be possible to cite a thousand instances of error and inefficiency in its proceedings due to the forgetfulness, irritability, or fatigue of its members. It experimented considerably and blundered often. Excepting Holsten, whose gift was highly specialised, it is questionable whether there was a single man of the first order of human quality in the gathering. But it had a modest fear of itself, and a consequent directness that gave it a general distinction. There was, of course, a noble simplicity about Leblanc, but even of him it may be asked whether he was not rather good and honest-minded than in the fuller sense great.

The ex-king had wisdom and a certain romantic dash, he was a man among thousands, even if he was not a man among millions, but his memoirs, and indeed his decision to write memoirs, give the quality of himself and his associates. The book makes admirable but astonishing reading. Therein he takes the great work the council was

doing for granted as a little child takes God. It is as if he had no sense of it at all. He tells amusing trivialities about his cousin Wilhelm and his secretary Firmin, he pokes fun at the American president, who was, indeed, rather a little accident of the political machine than a representative American, and he gives a long description of how he was lost for three days in the mountains in the company of the only Japanese member, a loss that seems to have caused no serious interruption of the work of the council....

The Brissago conference has been written about time after time, as though it were a gathering of the very flower of humanity. Perched up there by the freak or wisdom of Leblanc, it had a certain Olympian quality, and the natural tendency of the human mind to elaborate such a resemblance would have us give its members the likenesses of gods. It would be equally reasonable to compare it to one of those enforced meetings upon the mountain-tops that must have occurred in the opening phases of the Deluge. The strength of the council lay not in itself but in the circumstances that had quickened its intelligence, dispelled its vanities, and emancipated it from traditional ambitions and antagonisms. It was stripped of the accumulation of centuries, a naked government with all that freedom of action that nakedness affords. And its problems were set before it with a plainness that was out of all comparison with the complicated and perplexing intimations of the former time.

Section 3

The world on which the council looked did indeed present a task quite sufficiently immense and altogether too urgent for any wanton indulgence in internal dissension. It may be interesting to sketch in a few phrases the condition of mankind at the close of the period of warring states, in the year of crisis that followed the release of atomic power. It was a world extraordinarily limited when one measures it by later standards, and it was now in a state of the direst confusion and distress.

It must be remembered that at this time men had still to spread into enormous areas of the land surface of the globe. There were vast mountain wildernesses, forest wildernesses, sandy deserts, and

frozen lands. Men still clung closely to water and arable soil in temperate or sub-tropical climates, they lived abundantly only in river valleys, and all their great cities had grown upon large navigable rivers or close to ports upon the sea. Over great areas even of this suitable land flies and mosquitoes, armed with infection, had so far defeated human invasion, and under their protection the virgin forests remained untouched. Indeed, the whole world even in its most crowded districts was filthy with flies and swarming with needless insect life to an extent which is now almost incredible. A population map of the world in 1950 would have followed seashore and river course so closely in its darker shading as to give an impression that homo sapiens was an amphibious animal. His roads and railways lay also along the lower contours, only here and there to pierce some mountain barrier or reach some holiday resort did they clamber above 3000 feet. And across the ocean his traffic passed in definite lines; there were hundreds of thousands of square miles of ocean no ship ever traversed except by mischance.

Into the mysteries of the solid globe under his feet he had not yet pierced for five miles, and it was still not forty years since, with a tragic pertinacity, he had clambered to the poles of the earth. The limitless mineral wealth of the Arctic and Antarctic circles was still buried beneath vast accumulations of immemorial ice, and the secret riches of the inner zones of the crust were untapped and indeed unsuspected. The higher mountain regions were known only to a sprinkling of guide-led climbers and the frequenters of a few gaunt hotels, and the vast rainless belts of land that lay across the continental masses, from Gobi to Sahara and along the backbone of America, with their perfect air, their daily baths of blazing sunshine, their nights of cool serenity and glowing stars, and their reservoirs of deep-lying water, were as yet only desolations of fear and death to the common imagination.

And now under the shock of the atomic bombs, the great masses of population which had gathered into the enormous dingy town centres of that period were dispossessed and scattered disastrously over the surrounding rural areas. It was as if some brutal force, grown impatient at last at man's blindness, had with the deliberate intention of a rearrangement of population upon more wholesome

lines, shaken the world. The great industrial regions and the large cities that had escaped the bombs were, because of their complete economic collapse, in almost as tragic plight as those that blazed, and the country-side was disordered by a multitude of wandering and lawless strangers. In some parts of the world famine raged, and in many regions there was plague.... The plains of north India, which had become more and more dependent for the general welfare on the railways and that great system of irrigation canals which the malignant section of the patriots had destroyed, were in a state of peculiar distress, whole villages lay dead together, no man heeding, and the very tigers and panthers that preyed upon the emaciated survivors crawled back infected into the jungle to perish. Large areas of China were a prey to brigand bands....

It is a remarkable thing that no complete contemporary account of the explosion of the atomic bombs survives. There are, of course, innumerable allusions and partial records, and it is from these that subsequent ages must piece together the image of these devastations.

The phenomena, it must be remembered, changed greatly from day to day, and even from hour to hour, as the exploding bomb shifted its position, threw off fragments or came into contact with water or a fresh texture of soil. Barnet, who came within forty miles of Paris early in October, is concerned chiefly with his account of the social confusion of the country-side and the problems of his command, but he speaks of heaped cloud masses of steam. 'All along the sky to the south-west' and of a red glare beneath these at night. Parts of Paris were still burning, and numbers of people were camped in the fields even at this distance watching over treasured heaps of salvaged loot. He speaks too of the distant rumbling of the explosion — 'like trains going over iron bridges.'

Other descriptions agree with this; they all speak of the 'continuous reverberations,' or of the 'thudding and hammering,' or some such phrase; and they all testify to a huge pall of steam, from which rain would fall suddenly in torrents and amidst which lightning played. Drawing nearer to Paris an observer would have found the salvage camps increasing in number and blocking up the villages, and large numbers of people, often starving and ailing, camping under improvised tents because there was no place for them

to go. The sky became more and more densely overcast until at last it blotted out the light of day and left nothing but a dull red glare 'extraordinarily depressing to the spirit.' In this dull glare, great numbers of people were still living, clinging to their houses and in many cases subsisting in a state of partial famine upon the produce in their gardens and the stores in the shops of the provision dealers.

Coming in still closer, the investigator would have reached the police cordon, which was trying to check the desperate enterprise of those who would return to their homes or rescue their more valuable possessions within the 'zone of imminent danger.'

That zone was rather arbitrarily defined. If our spectator could have got permission to enter it, he would have entered also a zone of uproar, a zone of perpetual thunderings, lit by a strange purplish-red light, and quivering and swaying with the incessant explosion of the radio-active substance. Whole blocks of buildings were alight and burning fiercely, the trembling, ragged flames looking pale and ghastly and attenuated in comparison with the full-bodied crimson glare beyond. The shells of other edifices already burnt rose, pierced by rows of window sockets against the red-lit mist.

Every step farther would have been as dangerous as a descent within the crater of an active volcano. These spinning, boiling bomb centres would shift or break unexpectedly into new regions, great fragments of earth or drain or masonry suddenly caught by a jet of disruptive force might come flying by the explorer's head, or the ground yawn a fiery grave beneath his feet. Few who adventured into these areas of destruction and survived attempted any repetition of their experiences. There are stories of puffs of luminous, radio-active vapour drifting sometimes scores of miles from the bomb centre and killing and scorching all they overtook. And the first conflagrations from the Paris centre spread westward half-way to the sea.

Moreover, the air in this infernal inner circle of red-lit ruins had a peculiar dryness and a blistering quality, so that it set up a soreness of the skin and lungs that was very difficult to heal....

Such was the last state of Paris, and such on a larger scale was the condition of affairs in Chicago, and the same fate had overtaken Berlin, Moscow, Tokio, the eastern half of London, Toulon, Kiel, and two hundred and eighteen other centres of population or

armament. Each was a flaming centre of radiant destruction that only time could quench, that indeed in many instances time has still to quench. To this day, though indeed with a constantly diminishing uproar and vigour, these explosions continue. In the map of nearly every country of the world three or four or more red circles, a score of miles in diameter, mark the position of the dying atomic bombs and the death areas that men have been forced to abandon around them. Within these areas perished museums, cathedrals, palaces, libraries, galleries of masterpieces, and a vast accumulation of human achievement, whose charred remains lie buried, a legacy of curious material that only future generations may hope to examine....

Section 4

The state of mind of the dispossessed urban population which swarmed and perished so abundantly over the country-side during the dark days of the autumnal months that followed the Last War, was one of blank despair. Barnet gives sketch after sketch of groups of these people, camped among the vineyards of Champagne, as he saw them during his period of service with the army of pacification.

There was, for example, that 'man-milliner' who came out from a field beside the road that rises up eastward out of Epernay, and asked how things were going in Paris. He was, says Barnet, a round-faced man, dressed very neatly in black — so neatly that it was amazing to discover he was living close at hand in a tent made of carpets — and he had 'an urbane but insistent manner,' a carefully trimmed moustache and beard, expressive eyebrows, and hair very neatly brushed.

'No one goes into Paris,' said Barnet.

'But, Monsieur, that is very unenterprising,' the man by the wayside submitted.

'The danger is too great. The radiations eat into people's skins.'

The eyebrows protested. 'But is nothing to be done?'

'Nothing can be done.'

'But, Monsieur, it is extraordinarily inconvenient, this living in exile and waiting. My wife and my little boy suffer extremely. There is a lack of amenity. And the season advances. I say nothing of the

expense and difficulty in obtaining provisions.... When does Monsieur think that something will be done to render Paris — possible?'

Barnet considered his interlocutor.

'I'm told,' said Barnet, 'that Paris is not likely to be possible again for several generations.'

'Oh! but this is preposterous! Consider, Monsieur! What are people like ourselves to do in the meanwhile? I am a costumier. All my connections and interests, above all my style, demand Paris....'

Barnet considered the sky, from which a light rain was beginning to fall, the wide fields about them from which the harvest had been taken, the trimmed poplars by the wayside.

'Naturally,' he agreed, 'you want to go to Paris. But Paris is over.'

'Over!'

'Finished.'

'But then, Monsieur — what is to become — of ME?'

Barnet turned his face westward, whither the white road led.

'Where else, for example, may I hope to find — opportunity?'

Barnet made no reply.

'Perhaps on the Riviera. Or at some such place as Homburg. Or some plague perhaps.'

'All that,' said Barnet, accepting for the first time facts that had lain evident in his mind for weeks; 'all that must be over, too.'

There was a pause. Then the voice beside him broke out. 'But, Monsieur, it is impossible! It leaves — nothing.'

'No. Not very much.'

'One cannot suddenly begin to grow potatoes!'

'It would be good if Monsieur could bring himself — —'

'To the life of a peasant! And my wife —— You do not know the distinguished delicacy of my wife, a refined helplessness, a peculiar dependent charm. Like some slender tropical creeper — with great white flowers.... But all this is foolish talk. It is impossible that Paris, which has survived so many misfortunes, should not presently revive.'

'I do not think it will ever revive. Paris is finished. London, too, I am told — Berlin. All the great capitals were stricken....'

'But —— ! Monsieur must permit me to differ.'

‘It is so.’

‘It is impossible. Civilisations do not end in this manner. Mankind will insist.’

‘On Paris?’

‘On Paris.’

‘Monsieur, you might as well hope to go down the Maelstrom and resume business there.’

‘I am content, Monsieur, with my own faith.’

‘The winter comes on. Would not Monsieur be wiser to seek a house?’

‘Farther from Paris? No, Monsieur. But it is not possible, Monsieur, what you say, and you are under a tremendous mistake.... Indeed you are in error.... I asked merely for information....’

‘When last I saw him,’ said Barnet, ‘he was standing under the signpost at the crest of the hill, gazing wistfully, yet it seemed to me a little doubtfully, now towards Paris, and altogether heedless of a drizzling rain that was wetting him through and through....’

Section 5

This effect of chill dismay, of a doom as yet imperfectly apprehended deepens as Barnet’s record passes on to tell of the approach of winter. It was too much for the great mass of those unwilling and incompetent nomads to realise that an age had ended, that the old help and guidance existed no longer, that times would not mend again, however patiently they held out. They were still in many cases looking to Paris when the first snowflakes of that pitiless January came swirling about them. The story grows grimmer....

If it is less monstrously tragic after Barnet’s return to England, it is, if anything, harder. England was a spectacle of fear-embittered householders, hiding food, crushing out robbery, driving the starving wanderers from every faltering place upon the roads lest they should die inconveniently and reproachfully on the doorsteps of those who had failed to urge them onward....

The remnants of the British troops left France finally in March, after urgent representations from the provisional government at Orleans that they could be supported no longer. They seem to have

been a fairly well-behaved, but highly parasitic force throughout, though Barnet is clearly of opinion that they did much to suppress sporadic brigandage and maintain social order. He came home to a famine-stricken country, and his picture of the England of that spring is one of miserable patience and desperate expedients. The country was suffering much more than France, because of the cessation of the overseas supplies on which it had hitherto relied. His troops were given bread, dried fish, and boiled nettles at Dover, and marched inland to Ashford and paid off. On the way thither they saw four men hanging from the telegraph posts by the roadside, who had been hung for stealing swedes. The labour refuges of Kent, he discovered, were feeding their crowds of casual wanderers on bread into which clay and sawdust had been mixed. In Surrey there was a shortage of even such fare as that. He himself struck across country to Winchester, fearing to approach the bomb-poisoned district round London, and at Winchester he had the luck to be taken on as one of the wireless assistants at the central station and given regular rations. The station stood in a commanding position on the chalk hill that overlooks the town from the east....

Thence he must have assisted in the transmission of the endless cipher messages that preceded the gathering at Brissago, and there it was that the Brissago proclamation of the end of the war and the establishment of a world government came under his hands.

He was feeling ill and apathetic that day, and he did not realise what it was he was transcribing. He did it mechanically, as a part of his tedious duty.

Afterwards there came a rush of messages arising out of the declaration that strained him very much, and in the evening when he was relieved, he ate his scanty supper and then went out upon the little balcony before the station, to smoke and rest his brains after this sudden and as yet inexplicable press of duty. It was a very beautiful, still evening. He fell talking to a fellow operator, and for the first time, he declares, ‘I began to understand what it was all about. I began to see just what enormous issues had been under my hands for the past four hours. But I became incredulous after my first stimulation. “This is some sort of Bunkum,” I said very sagely.

‘My colleague was more hopeful. “It means an end to bomb-

throwing and destruction," he said. "It means that presently corn will come from America."

'"Who is going to send corn when there is no more value in money?" I asked.

'Suddenly we were startled by a clashing from the town below. The cathedral bells, which had been silent ever since I had come into the district, were beginning, with a sort of rheumatic difficulty, to ring. Presently they warmed a little to the work, and we realised what was going on. They were ringing a peal. We listened with an unbelieving astonishment and looking into each other's yellow faces.

'"They mean it," said my colleague.

'"But what can they do now?" I asked. "Everything is broken down...."'

And on that sentence, with an unexpected artistry, Barnet abruptly ends his story.

Section 6

From the first the new government handled affairs with a certain greatness of spirit. Indeed, it was inevitable that they should act greatly. From the first they had to see the round globe as one problem; it was impossible any longer to deal with it piece by piece. They had to secure it universally from any fresh outbreak of atomic destruction, and they had to ensure a permanent and universal pacification. On this capacity to grasp and wield the whole round globe their existence depended. There was no scope for any further performance.

So soon as the seizure of the existing supplies of atomic ammunition and the apparatus for synthesising Carolinum was assured, the disbanding or social utilisation of the various masses of troops still under arms had to be arranged, the salvation of the year's harvests, and the feeding, housing, and employment of the drifting millions of homeless people. In Canada, in South America, and Asiatic Russia there were vast accumulations of provision that was immovable only because of the breakdown of the monetary and credit systems. These had to be brought into the famine districts very speedily if entire depopulation was to be avoided, and their

transportation and the revival of communications generally absorbed a certain proportion of the soldiery and more able unemployed. The task of housing assumed gigantic dimensions, and from building camps the housing committee of the council speedily passed to constructions of a more permanent type. They found far less friction than might have been expected in turning the loose population on their hands to these things. People were extraordinarily tamed by that year of suffering and death; they were disillusioned of their traditions, bereft of once obstinate prejudices; they felt foreign in a strange world, and ready to follow any confident leadership. The orders of the new government came with the best of all credentials, rations. The people everywhere were as easy to control, one of the old labour experts who had survived until the new time witnesses, 'as gangs of emigrant workers in a new land.' And now it was that the social possibilities of the atomic energy began to appear. The new machinery that had come into existence before the last wars increased and multiplied, and the council found itself not only with millions of hands at its disposal but with power and apparatus that made its first conceptions of the work it had to do seem pitifully timid. The camps that were planned in iron and deal were built in stone and brass; the roads that were to have been mere iron tracks became spacious ways that insisted upon architecture; the cultivations of foodstuffs that were to have supplied emergency rations, were presently, with synthesisers, fertilisers, actinic light, and scientific direction, in excess of every human need.

The government had begun with the idea of temporarily reconstituting the social and economic system that had prevailed before the first coming of the atomic engine, because it was to this system that the ideas and habits of the great mass of the world's dispossessed population was adapted. Subsequent rearrangement it had hoped to leave to its successors — whoever they might be. But this, it became more and more manifest, was absolutely impossible. As well might the council have proposed a revival of slavery. The capitalist system had already been smashed beyond repair by the onset of limitless gold and energy; it fell to pieces at the first endeavour to stand it up again. Already before the war half of the industrial class had been out of work, the attempt to put them back

into wages employment on the old lines was futile from the outset — the absolute shattering of the currency system alone would have been sufficient to prevent that, and it was necessary therefore to take over the housing, feeding, and clothing of this worldwide multitude without exacting any return in labour whatever. In a little while the mere absence of occupation for so great a multitude of people everywhere became an evident social danger, and the government was obliged to resort to such devices as simple decorative work in wood and stone, the manufacture of hand-woven textiles, fruit-growing, flower-growing, and landscape gardening on a grand scale to keep the less adaptable out of mischief, and of paying wages to the younger adults for attendance at schools that would equip them to use the new atomic machinery.... So quite insensibly the council drifted into a complete reorganisation of urban and industrial life, and indeed of the entire social system.

Ideas that are unhampered by political intrigue or financial considerations have a sweeping way with them, and before a year was out the records of the council show clearly that it was rising to its enormous opportunity, and partly through its own direct control and partly through a series of specific committees, it was planning a new common social order for the entire population of the earth. 'There can be no real social stability or any general human happiness while large areas of the world and large classes of people are in a phase of civilisation different from the prevailing mass. It is impossible now to have great blocks of population misunderstanding the generally accepted social purpose or at an economic disadvantage to the rest.' So the council expressed its conception of the problem it had to solve. The peasant, the field-worker, and all barbaric cultivators were at an 'economic disadvantage' to the more mobile and educated classes, and the logic of the situation compelled the council to take up systematically the supersession of this stratum by a more efficient organisation of production. It developed a scheme for the progressive establishment throughout the world of the 'modern system' in agriculture, a system that should give the full advantages of a civilised life to every agricultural worker, and this replacement has been going on right up to the present day. The central idea of the modern system is the substitution of cultivating

guilds for the individual cultivator, and for cottage and village life altogether. These guilds are associations of men and women who take over areas of arable or pasture land, and make themselves responsible for a certain average produce. They are bodies small enough as a rule to be run on a strictly democratic basis, and large enough to supply all the labour, except for a certain assistance from townspeople during the harvest, needed upon the land farmed. They have watchers' bungalows or chalets on the ground cultivated, but the ease and the costlessness of modern locomotion enables them to maintain a group of residences in the nearest town with a common dining-room and club house, and usually also a guild house in the national or provincial capital. Already this system has abolished a distinctively 'rustic' population throughout vast areas of the old world, where it has prevailed immemorially. That shy, unstimulated life of the lonely hovel, the narrow scandals and petty spites and persecutions of the small village, that hoarding, half inanimate existence away from books, thought, or social participation and in constant contact with cattle, pigs, poultry, and their excrement, is passing away out of human experience. In a little while it will be gone altogether. In the nineteenth century it had already ceased to be a necessary human state, and only the absence of any collective intelligence and an imagined need for tough and unintelligent soldiers and for a prolific class at a low level, prevented its systematic replacement at that time....

And while this settlement of the country was in progress, the urban camps of the first phase of the council's activities were rapidly developing, partly through the inherent forces of the situation and partly through the council's direction, into a modern type of town....

Section 7

It is characteristic of the manner in which large enterprises forced themselves upon the Brissago council, that it was not until the end of the first year of their administration and then only with extreme reluctance that they would take up the manifest need for a lingua franca for the world. They seem to have given little attention to the various theoretical universal languages which were proposed to

them. They wished to give as little trouble to hasty and simple people as possible, and the world-wide alstribution of English gave them a bias for it from the beginning. The extreme simplicity of its grammar was also in its favour.

It was not without some sacrifices that the English-speaking peoples were permitted the satisfaction of hearing their speech used universally. The language was shorn of a number of grammatical peculiarities, the distinctive forms for the subjunctive mood for example and most of its irregular plurals were abolished; its spelling was systematised and adapted to the vowel sounds in use upon the continent of Europe, and a process of incorporating foreign nouns and verbs commenced that speedily reached enormous proportions. Within ten years from the establishment of the World Republic the New English Dictionary had swelled to include a vocabulary of 250,000 words, and a man of 1900 would have found considerable difficulty in reading an ordinary newspaper. On the other hand, the men of the new time could still appreciate the older English literature.... Certain minor acts of uniformity accompanied this larger one. The idea of a common understanding and a general simplification of intercourse once it was accepted led very naturally to the universal establishment of the metric system of weights and measures, and to the disappearance of the various makeshift calendars that had hitherto confused chronology. The year was divided into thirteen months of four weeks each, and New Year's Day and Leap Year's Day were made holidays, and did not count at all in the ordinary week. So the weeks and the months were brought into correspondence. And moreover, as the king put it to Firmin, it was decided to 'nail down Easter.' . . . In these matters, as in so many matters, the new civilisation came as a simplification of ancient complications; the history of the calendar throughout the world is a history of inadequate adjustments, of attempts to fix seed-time and midwinter that go back into the very beginning of human society; and this final rectification had a symbolic value quite beyond its practical convenience. But the council would have no rash nor harsh innovations, no strange names for the months, and no alteration in the numbering of the years.

The world had already been put upon one universal monetary

basis. For some months after the accession of the council, the world's affairs had been carried on without any sound currency at all. Over great regions money was still in use, but with the most extravagant variations in price and the most disconcerting fluctuations of public confidence. The ancient rarity of gold upon which the entire system rested was gone. Gold was now a waste product in the release of atomic energy, and it was plain that no metal could be the basis of the monetary system again. Henceforth all coins must be token coins. Yet the whole world was accustomed to metallic money, and a vast proportion of existing human relationships had grown up upon a cash basis, and were almost inconceivable without that convenient liquidating factor. It seemed absolutely necessary to the life of the social organisation to have some sort of currency, and the council had therefore to discover some real value upon which to rest it. Various such apparently stable values as land and hours of work were considered. Ultimately the government, which was now in possession of most of the supplies of energy-releasing material, fixed a certain number of units of energy as the value of a gold sovereign, declared a sovereign to be worth exactly twenty marks, twenty-five francs, five dollars, and so forth, with the other current units of the world, and undertook, under various qualifications and conditions, to deliver energy upon demand as payment for every sovereign presented. On the whole, this worked satisfactorily. They saved the face of the pound sterling. Coin was rehabilitated, and after a phase of price fluctuations, began to settle down to definite equivalents and uses again, with names and everyday values familiar to the common run of people....

Section 8

As the Brissago council came to realise that what it had supposed to be temporary camps of refugees were rapidly developing into great towns of a new type, and that it was remoulding the world in spite of itself, it decided to place this work of redistributing the non-agricultural population in the hands of a compactor and better qualified special committee. That committee is now, far more than the council of any other of its delegated committees, the active

government of the world. Developed from an almost invisible germ of 'town-planning' that came obscurely into existence in Europe or America (the question is still in dispute) somewhere in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, its work, the continual active planning and replanning of the world as a place of human habitation, is now so to speak the collective material activity of the race. The spontaneous, disorderly spreadings and recessions of populations, as aimless and mechanical as the trickling of spilt water, which was the substance of history for endless years, giving rise here to congestions, here to chronic devastating wars, and everywhere to a discomfort and disorderliness that was at its best only picturesque, is at an end. Men spread now, with the whole power of the race to aid them, into every available region of the earth. Their cities are no longer tethered to running water and the proximity of cultivation, their plans are no longer affected by strategic considerations or thoughts of social insecurity. The aeroplane and the nearly costless mobile car have abolished trade routes; a common language and a universal law have abolished a thousand restraining inconveniences, and so an astonishing dispersal of habitations has begun. One may live anywhere. And so it is that our cities now are true social gatherings, each with a character of its own and distinctive interests of its own, and most of them with a common occupation. They lie out in the former deserts, these long wasted sun-baths of the race, they tower amidst eternal snows, they hide in remote islands, and bask on broad lagoons. For a time the whole tendency of mankind was to desert the river valleys in which the race had been cradled for half a million years, but now that the War against Flies has been waged so successfully that this pestilential branch of life is nearly extinct, they are returning thither with a renewed appetite for gardens laced by watercourses, for pleasant living amidst islands and houseboats and bridges, and for nocturnal lanterns reflected by the sea.

Man who is ceasing to be an agricultural animal becomes more and more a builder, a traveller, and a maker. How much he ceases to be a cultivator of the soil the returns of the Redistribution Committee showed. Every year the work of our scientific laboratories increases the productivity and simplifies the labour of those who work upon

the soil, and the food now of the whole world is produced by less than one per cent. of its population, a percentage which still tends to decrease. Far fewer people are needed upon the land than training and proclivity dispose towards it, and as a consequence of this excess of human attention, the garden side of life, the creation of groves and lawns and vast regions of beautiful flowers, has expanded enormously and continues to expand. For, as agricultural method intensifies and the quota is raised, one farm association after another, availing itself of the 1975 regulations, elects to produce a public garden and pleasaunce in the place of its former fields, and the area of freedom and beauty is increased. And the chemists' triumphs of synthesis, which could now give us an entirely artificial food, remain largely in abeyance because it is so much more pleasant and interesting to eat natural produce and to grow such things upon the soil. Each year adds to the variety of our fruits and the delightfulness of our flowers.

Section 9

The early years of the World Republic witnessed a certain recrudescence of political adventure. There was, it is rather curious to note, no revival of separatism after the face of King Ferdinand Charles had vanished from the sight of men, but in a number of countries, as the first urgent physical needs were met, there appeared a variety of personalities having this in common, that they sought to revive political trouble and clamber by its aid to positions of importance and satisfaction. In no case did they speak in the name of kings, and it is clear that monarchy must have been far gone in obsolescence before the twentieth century began, but they made appeals to the large survivals of nationalist and racial feeling that were everywhere to be found, they alleged with considerable justice that the council was overriding racial and national customs and disregarding religious rules. The great plain of India was particularly prolific in such agitators. The revival of newspapers, which had largely ceased during the terrible year because of the dislocation of the coinage, gave a vehicle and a method of organisation to these complaints. At first the council disregarded this developing

opposition, and then it recognised it with an entirely devastating frankness.

Never, of course, had there been so provisional a government. It was of an extravagant illegality. It was, indeed, hardly more than a club, a club of about a hundred persons. At the outset there were ninety-three, and these were increased afterwards by the issue of invitations which more than balanced its deaths, to as many at one time as one hundred and nineteen. Always its constitution has been miscellaneous. At no time were these invitations issued with an admission that they recognised a right. The old institution or monarchy had come out unexpectedly well in the light of the new regime. Nine of the original members of the first government were crowned heads who had resigned their separate sovereignty, and at no time afterwards did the number of its royal members sink below six. In their case there was perhaps a kind of attenuated claim to rule, but except for them and the still more infinitesimal pretensions of one or two ex-presidents of republics, no member of the council had even the shade of a right to his participation in its power. It was natural, therefore, that its opponents should find a common ground in a clamour for representative government, and build high hopes upon a return, to parliamentary institutions.

The council decided to give them everything they wanted, but in a form that suited ill with their aspirations. It became at one stroke a representative body. It became, indeed, magnificently representative. It became so representative that the politicians were drowned in a deluge of votes. Every adult of either sex from pole to pole was given a vote, and the world was divided into ten constituencies, which voted on the same day by means of a simple modification of the world post. Membership of the government, it was decided, must be for life, save in the exceptional case of a recall; but the elections, which were held quinquenially, were arranged to add fifty members on each occasion. The method of proportional representation with one transferable vote was adopted, and the voter might also write upon his voting paper in a specially marked space, the name of any of his representatives that he wished to recall. A ruler was recallable by as many votes as the quota by which he had been elected, and the original members by as many votes in any constituency as the

returning quotas in the first election.

Upon these conditions the council submitted itself very cheerfully to the suffrages of the world. None of its members were recalled, and its fifty new associates, which included twenty-seven which it had seen fit to recommend, were of an altogether too miscellaneous quality to disturb the broad trend of its policy. Its freedom from rules or formalities prevented any obstructive proceedings, and when one of the two newly arrived Home Rule members for India sought for information how to bring in a bill, they learnt simply that bills were not brought in. They asked for the speaker, and were privileged to hear much ripe wisdom from the ex-king Egbert, who was now consciously among the seniors of the gathering. Thereafter they were baffled men....

But already by that time the work of the council was drawing to an end. It was concerned not so much for the continuation of its construction as for the preservation of its accomplished work from the dramatic instincts of the politician.

The life of the race becomes indeed more and more independent of the formal government. The council, in its opening phase, was heroic in spirit; a dragon-slaying body, it slashed out of existence a vast, knotted tangle of obsolete ideas and clumsy and jealous proprietorships; it secured by a noble system of institutional precautions, freedom of inquiry, freedom of criticism, free communications, a common basis of education and understanding, and freedom from economic oppression. With that its creative task was accomplished. It became more and more an established security and less and less an active intervention. There is nothing in our time to correspond with the continual petty making and entangling of laws in an atmosphere of contention that is perhaps the most perplexing aspect of constitutional history in the nineteenth century. In that age they seem to have been perpetually making laws when we should alter regulations. The work of change which we delegate to these scientific committees of specific general direction which have the special knowledge needed, and which are themselves dominated by the broad intellectual process of the community, was in those days inextricably mixed up with legislation. They fought over the details; we should as soon think of fighting over the arrangement of the parts

of a machine. We know nowadays that such things go on best within laws, as life goes on between earth and sky. And so it is that government gathers now for a day or so in each year under the sunshine of Brissago when Saint Bruno's lilies are in flower, and does little more than bless the work of its committees. And even these committees are less originative and more expressive of the general thought than they were at first. It becomes difficult to mark out the particular directive personalities of the world. Continually we are less personal. Every good thought contributes now, and every able brain falls within that informal and dispersed kingship which gathers together into one purpose the energies of the race.

Section 10

It is doubtful if we shall ever see again a phase of human existence in which 'politics,' that is to say a partisan interference with the ruling sanities of the world, will be the dominant interest among serious men. We seem to have entered upon an entirely new phase in history in which contention as distinguished from rivalry, has almost abruptly ceased to be the usual occupation, and has become at most a subdued and hidden and discredited thing. Contentious professions cease to be an honourable employment for men. The peace between nations is also a peace between individuals. We live in a world that comes of age. Man the warrior, man the lawyer, and all the bickering aspects of life, pass into obscurity; the grave dreamers, man the curious learner, and man the creative artist, come forward to replace these barbaric aspects of existence by a less ignoble adventure.

There is no natural life of man. He is, and always has been, a sheath of varied and even incompatible possibilities, a palimpsest of inherited dispositions. It was the habit of many writers in the early twentieth century to speak of competition and the narrow, private life of trade and saving and suspicious isolation as though such things were in some exceptional way proper to the human constitution, and as though openness of mind and a preference for achievement over possession were abnormal and rather unsubstantial qualities. How wrong that was the history of the decades immediately following the establishment of the world republic witnesses. Once the world was

released from the hardening insecurities of a needless struggle for life that was collectively planless and individually absorbing, it became apparent that there was in the vast mass of people a long, smothered passion to make things. The world broke out into making, and at first mainly into aesthetic making. This phase of history, which has been not inaptly termed the 'Efflorescence,' is still, to a large extent, with us. The majority of our population consists of artists, and the bulk of activity in the world lies no longer with necessities but with their elaboration, decoration, and refinement. There has been an evident change in the quality of this making during recent years. It becomes more purposeful than it was, losing something of its first elegance and prettiness and gaining in intensity; but that is a change rather of hue than of nature. That comes with a deepening philosophy and a sounder education. For the first joyous exercises of fancy we perceive now the deliberation of a more constructive imagination. There is a natural order in these things, and art comes before science as the satisfaction of more elemental needs must come before art, and as play and pleasure come in a human life before the development of a settled purpose....

For thousands of years this gathering impulse to creative work must have struggled in man against the limitations imposed upon him by his social ineptitude. It was a long smouldering fire that flamed out at last in all these things. The evidence of a pathetic, perpetually thwarted urgency to make something, is one of the most touching aspects of the relics and records of our immediate ancestors. There exists still in the death area about the London bombs, a region of deserted small homes that furnish the most illuminating comment on the old state of affairs. These homes are entirely horrible, uniform, square, squat, hideously proportioned, uncomfortable, dingy, and in some respects quite filthy, only people in complete despair of anything better could have lived in them, but to each is attached a ridiculous little rectangle of land called 'the garden,' containing usually a prop for drying clothes and a loathsome box of offal, the dustbin, full of egg-shells, cinders, and such-like refuse. Now that one may go about this region in comparitive security — for the London radiations have dwindled to inconsiderable proportions — it is possible to trace in nearly every one of these gardens some effort

to make. Here it is a poor little plank summer-house, here it is a ‘fountain’ of bricks and oyster-shells, here a ‘rockery,’ here a ‘workshop.’ And in the houses everywhere there are pitiful little decorations, clumsy models, feeble drawings. These efforts are almost incredibly inept, like the drawings of blindfolded men, they are only one shade less harrowing to a sympathetic observer than the scratchings one finds upon the walls of the old prisons, but there they are, witnessing to the poor buried instincts that struggled up towards the light. That god of joyous expression our poor fathers ignorantly sought, our freedom has declared to us....

In the old days the common ambition of every simple soul was to possess a little property, a patch of land, a house uncontrolled by others, an ‘independence’ as the English used to put it. And what made this desire for freedom and prosperity so strong, was very evidently the dream of self-expression, of doing something with it, of playing with it, of making a personal delightfulness, a distinctiveness. Property was never more than a means to an end, nor avarice more than a perversion. Men owned in order to do freely. Now that every one has his own apartments and his own privacy secure, this disposition to own has found its release in a new direction. Men study and save and strive that they may leave behind them a series of panels in some public arcade, a row of carven figures along a terrace, a grove, a pavilion. Or they give themselves to the penetration of some still opaque riddle in phenomena as once men gave themselves to the accumulation of riches. The work that was once the whole substance of social existence — for most men spent all their lives in earning a living — is now no more than was the burden upon one of those old climbers who carried knapsacks of provisions on their backs in order that they might ascend mountains. It matters little to the easy charities of our emancipated time that most people who have made their labour contribution produce neither new beauty nor new wisdom, but are simply busy about those pleasant activities and enjoyments that reassure them that they are alive. They help, it may be, by reception and reverberation, and they hinder nothing. ...

Section 11

Now all this phase of gigantic change in the contours and appearances of human life which is going on about us, a change as rapid and as wonderful as the swift ripening of adolescence to manhood after the barbaric boyish years, is correlated with moral and mental changes at least as unprecedented. It is not as if old things were going out of life and new things coming in, it is rather that the altered circumstances of men are making an appeal to elements in his nature that have hitherto been suppressed, and checking tendencies that have hitherto been over-stimulated and over-developed. He has not so much grown and altered his essential being as turned new aspects to the light. Such turnings round into a new attitude the world has seen on a less extensive scale before. The Highlanders of the seventeenth century, for example, were cruel and bloodthirsty robbers, in the nineteenth their descendants were conspicuously trusty and honourable men. There was not a people in Western Europe in the early twentieth century that seemed capable of hideous massacres, and none that had not been guilty of them within the previous two centuries. The free, frank, kindly, gentle life of the prosperous classes in any European country before the years of the last wars was in a different world of thought and feeling from that of the dingy, suspicious, secretive, and uncharitable existence of the respectable poor, or the constant personal violence, the squalor and naive passions of the lowest stratum. Yet there were no real differences of blood and inherent quality between these worlds; their differences were all in circumstances, suggestion, and habits of mind. And turning to more individual instances the constantly observed difference between one portion of a life and another consequent upon a religious conversion, were a standing example of the versatile possibilities of human nature.

The catastrophe of the atomic bombs which shook men out of cities and businesses and economic relations shook them also out of their old established habits of thought, and out of the lightly held beliefs and prejudices that came down to them from the past. To borrow a word from the old-fashioned chemists, men were made nascent; they were released from old ties; for good or evil they were ready for new associations. The council carried them forward for good; perhaps if his bombs had reached their destination King

Ferdinand Charles might have carried them back to an endless chain of evils. But his task would have been a harder one than the council's. The moral shock of the atomic bombs had been a profound one, and for a while the cunning side of the human animal was overpowered by its sincere realisation of the vital necessity for reconstruction. The litigious and trading spirits cowered together, scared at their own consequences; men thought twice before they sought mean advantages in the face of the unusual eagerness to realise new aspirations, and when at last the weeds revived again and 'claims' began to sprout, they sprouted upon the stony soil of law-courts reformed, of laws that pointed to the future instead of the past, and under the blazing sunshine of a transforming world. A new literature, a new interpretation of history were springing into existence, a new teaching was already in the schools, a new faith in the young. The worthy man who forestalled the building of a research city for the English upon the Sussex downs by buying up a series of estates, was dispossessed and laughed out of court when he made his demand for some preposterous compensation; the owner of the discredited Dass patents makes his last appearance upon the scroll of history as the insolvent proprietor of a paper called The Cry for Justice, in which he duns the world for a hundred million pounds. That was the ingenuous Dass's idea of justice, that he ought to be paid about five million pounds annually because he had annexed the selvage of one of Holsten's discoveries. Dass came at last to believe quite firmly in his right, and he died a victim of conspiracy mania in a private hospital at Nice. Both of these men would probably have ended their days enormously wealthy, and of course ennobled in the England of the opening twentieth century, and it is just this novelty of their fates that marks the quality of the new age.

The new government early discovered the need of a universal education to fit men to the great conceptions of its universal rule. It made no wrangling attacks on the local, racial, and sectarian forms of religious profession that at that time divided the earth into a patchwork of hatreds and distrusts; it left these organisations to make their peace with God in their own time; but it proclaimed as if it were a mere secular truth that sacrifice was expected from all, that respect had to be shown to all; it revived schools or set them up afresh all

around the world, and everywhere these schools taught the history of war and the consequences and moral of the Last War; everywhere it was taught not as a sentiment but as a matter of fact that the salvation of the world from waste and contention was the common duty and occupation of all men and women. These things which are now the elementary commonplaces of human intercourse seemed to the councillors of Brissago, when first they dared to proclaim them, marvellously daring discoveries, not untouched by doubt, that flushed the cheek and fired the eye.

The council placed all this educational reconstruction in the hands of a committee of men and women, which did its work during the next few decades with remarkable breadth and effectiveness. This educational committee was, and is, the correlative upon the mental and spiritual side of the redistribution committee. And prominent upon it, and indeed for a time quite dominating it, was a Russian named Karenin, who was singular in being a congenital cripple. His body was bent so that he walked with difficulty, suffered much pain as he grew older, and had at last to undergo two operations. The second killed him. Already malformation, which was to be seen in every crowd during the middle ages so that the crippled beggar was, as it were, an essential feature of the human spectacle, was becoming a strange thing in the world. It had a curious effect upon Karenin's colleagues; their feeling towards him was mingled with pity and a sense of inhumanity that it needed usage rather than reason to overcome. He had a strong face, with little bright brown eyes rather deeply sunken and a large resolute thin-lipped mouth. His skin was very yellow and wrinkled, and his hair iron gray. He was at all times an impatient and sometimes an angry man, but this was forgiven him because of the hot wire of suffering that was manifestly thrust through his being. At the end of his life his personal prestige was very great. To him far more than to any contemporary is it due that self-abnegation, self-identification with the world spirit, was made the basis of universal education. That general memorandum to the teachers which is the key-note of the modern educational system, was probably entirely his work.

'Whosoever would save his soul shall lose it,' he wrote. 'That is the device upon the seal of this document, and the starting point of

all we have to do. It is a mistake to regard it as anything but a plain statement of fact. It is the basis for your work. You have to teach self-forgetfulness, and everything else that you have to teach is contributory and subordinate to that end. Education is the release of man from self. You have to widen the horizons of your children, encourage and intensify their curiosity and their creative impulses, and cultivate and enlarge their sympathies. That is what you are for. Under your guidance and the suggestions you will bring to bear on them, they have to shed the old Adam of instinctive suspicions, hostilities, and passions, and to find themselves again in the great being of the universe. The little circles of their egotisms have to be opened out until they become arcs in the sweep of the racial purpose. And this that you teach to others you must learn also sedulously yourselves. Philosophy, discovery, art, every sort of skill, every sort of service, love: these are the means of salvation from that narrow loneliness of desire, that brooding preoccupation with self and egotistical relationships, which is hell for the individual, treason to the race, and exile from God....'

Section 12

As things round themselves off and accomplish themselves, one begins for the first time to see them clearly. From the perspectives of a new age one can look back upon the great and widening stream of literature with a complete understanding. Things link up that seemed disconnected, and things that were once condemned as harsh and aimless are seen to be but factors in the statement of a gigantic problem. An enormous bulk of the sincerer writing of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries falls together now into an unanticipated unanimity; one sees it as a huge tissue of variations upon one theme, the conflict of human egotism and personal passion and narrow imaginations on the one hand, against the growing sense of wider necessities and a possible, more spacious life.

That conflict is in evidence in so early a work as Voltaire's Candide, for example, in which the desire for justice as well as happiness beats against human contrariety and takes refuge at last in a forced and inconclusive contentment with little things. Candide

was but one of the pioneers of a literature of uneasy complaint that was presently an innumerable multitude of books. The novels more particularly of the nineteenth century, if one excludes the mere story-tellers from our consideration, witness to this uneasy realisation of changes that call for effort and of the lack of that effort. In a thousand aspects, now tragically, now comically, now with a funny affectation of divine detachment, a countless host of witnesses tell their story of lives fretting between dreams and limitations. Now one laughs, now one weeps, now one reads with a blank astonishment at this huge and almost unpremeditated record of how the growing human spirit, now warily, now eagerly, now furiously, and always, as it seems, unsuccessfully, tried to adapt itself to the maddening misfit of its patched and ancient garments. And always in these books as one draws nearer to the heart of the matter there comes a disconcerting evasion. It was the fantastic convention of the time that a writer should not touch upon religion. To do so was to rouse the jealous fury of the great multitude of professional religious teachers. It was permitted to state the discord, but it was forbidden to glance at any possible reconciliation. Religion was the privilege of the pulpit....

It was not only from the novels that religion was omitted. It was ignored by the newspapers; it was pedantically disregarded in the discussion of business questions, it played a trivial and apologetic part in public affairs. And this was done not out of contempt but respect. The hold of the old religious organisations upon men's respect was still enormous, so enormous that there seemed to be a quality of irreverence in applying religion to the developments of every day. This strange suspension of religion lasted over into the beginnings of the new age. It was the clear vision of Marcus Karenin much more than any other contemporary influence which brought it back into the texture of human life. He saw religion without hallucinations, without superstitious reverence, as a common thing as necessary as food and air, as land and energy to the life of man and the well-being of the Republic. He saw that indeed it had already percolated away from the temples and hierarchies and symbols in which men had sought to imprison it, that it was already at work anonymously and obscurely in the universal acceptance of the greater state. He gave it clearer expression, rephrased it to the lights and

perspectives of the new dawn....

But if we return to our novels for our evidence of the spirit of the times it becomes evident as one reads them in their chronological order, so far as that is now ascertainable, that as one comes to the latter nineteenth and the earlier twentieth century the writers are much more acutely aware of secular change than their predecessors were. The earlier novelists tried to show 'life as it is,' the latter showed life as it changes. More and more of their characters are engaged in adaptation to change or suffering from the effects of world changes. And as we come up to the time of the Last Wars, this newer conception of the everyday life as a reaction to an accelerated development is continually more manifest. Barnet's book, which has served us so well, is frankly a picture of the world coming about like a ship that sails into the wind. Our later novelists give a vast gallery of individual conflicts in which old habits and customs, limited ideas, ungenerous temperaments, and innate obsessions are pitted against this great opening out of life that has happened to us. They tell us of the feelings of old people who have been wrenched away from familiar surroundings, and how they have had to make peace with uncomfortable comforts and conveniences that are still strange to them. They give us the discord between the opening egotisms of youths and the ill-defined limitations of a changing social life. They tell of the universal struggle of jealousy to capture and cripple our souls, of romantic failures and tragical misconceptions of the trend of the world, of the spirit of adventure, and the urgency of curiosity, and how these serve the universal drift. And all their stories lead in the end either to happiness missed or happiness won, to disaster or salvation. The clearer their vision and the subtler their art, the more certainly do these novels tell of the possibility of salvation for all the world. For any road in life leads to religion for those upon it who will follow it far enough....

It would have seemed a strange thing to the men of the former time that it should be an open question as it is to-day whether the world is wholly Christian or not Christian at all. But assuredly we have the spirit, and as surely have we left many temporary forms behind. Christianity was the first expression of world religion, the first complete repudiation of tribalism and war and disputation. That

it fell presently into the ways of more ancient rituals cannot alter that. The common sense of mankind has toiled through two thousand years of chastening experience to find at last how sound a meaning attaches to the familiar phrases of the Christian faith. The scientific thinker as he widens out to the moral problems of the collective life, comes inevitably upon the words of Christ, and as inevitably does the Christian, as his thought grows clearer, arrive at the world republic. As for the claims of the sects, as for the use of a name and successions, we live in a time that has shaken itself free from such claims and consistencies.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE LAST DAYS OF MARCUS KARENIN

Section 1

The second operation upon Marcus Karenin was performed at the new station for surgical work at Paran, high in the Himalayas above the Sutlej Gorge, where it comes down out of Thibet.

It is a place of such wildness and beauty as no other scenery in the world affords. The granite terrace which runs round the four sides of the low block of laboratories looks out in every direction upon mountains. Far below in the hidden depths of a shadowy blue cleft, the river pours down in its tumultuous passage to the swarming plains of India. No sound of its roaring haste comes up to those serenities. Beyond that blue gulf, in which whole forests of giant deodars seem no more than small patches of moss, rise vast precipices of many-coloured rock, fretted above, lined by snowfalls, and jagged into pinnacles. These are the northward wall of a towering wilderness of ice and snow which clambers southward higher and wilder and vaster to the culminating summits of our globe, to Dhaulagiri and Everest. Here are cliffs of which no other land can show the like, and deep chasms in which Mt. Blanc might be plunged and hidden. Here are icefields as big as inland seas on which the tumbled boulders lie so thickly that strange little flowers can bloom among them under the untempered sunshine. To the northward, and blocking out any vision of the uplands of Thibet, rises that citadel of porcelain, that gothic pile, the Lio Porgyul, walls, towers, and peaks, a clear twelve thousand feet of veined and splintered rock above the river. And beyond it and eastward and westward rise peaks behind peaks, against the dark blue Himalayan sky. Far away below to the south the clouds of the Indian rains pile up abruptly and are stayed by an invisible hand.

Hither it was that with a dreamlike swiftness Karenin flew high over the irrigations of Rajputana and the towers and cupolas of the ultimate Delhi; and the little group of buildings, albeit the southward

wall dropped nearly five hundred feet, seemed to him as he soared down to it like a toy lost among these mountain wildernesses. No road came up to this place; it was reached only by flight.

His pilot descended to the great courtyard, and Karenin assisted by his secretary clambered down through the wing fabric and made his way to the officials who came out to receive him.

In this place, beyond infections and noise and any distractions, surgery had made for itself a house of research and a healing fastness. The building itself would have seemed very wonderful to eyes accustomed to the flimsy architecture of an age when power was precious. It was made of granite, already a little roughened on the outside by frost, but polished within and of a tremendous solidity. And in a honeycomb of subtly lit apartments, were the spotless research benches, the operating tables, the instruments of brass, and fine glass and platinum and gold. Men and women came from all parts of the world for study or experimental research. They wore a common uniform of white and ate at long tables together, but the patients lived in an upper part of the buildings, and were cared for by nurses and skilled attendants....

The first man to greet Karenin was Ciana, the scientific director of the institution. Beside him was Rachel Borken, the chief organiser. 'You are tired?' she asked, and old Karenin shook his head.

'Cramped,' he said. 'I have wanted to visit such a place as this.'

He spoke as if he had no other business with them.

There was a little pause.

'How many scientific people have you got here now?' he asked.

'Just three hundred and ninety-two,' said Rachel Borken.

'And the patients and attendants and so on?'

'Two thousand and thirty.'

'I shall be a patient,' said Karenin. 'I shall have to be a patient. But I should like to see things first. Presently I will be a patient.'

'You will come to my rooms?' suggested Ciana.

'And then I must talk to this doctor of yours,' said Karenin. 'But I would like to see a bit of this place and talk to some of your people before it comes to that.'

He winced and moved forward.

'I have left most of my work in order,' he said.

‘You have been working hard up to now?’ asked Rachel Borken.

‘Yes. And now I have nothing more to do — and it seems strange.... And it’s a bother, this illness and having to come down to oneself. This doorway and the row of windows is well done; the gray granite and just the line of gold, and then those mountains beyond through that arch. It’s very well done....’

Section 2

Karenin lay on the bed with a soft white rug about him, and Fowler, who was to be his surgeon sat on the edge of the bed and talked to him. An assistant was seated quietly in the shadow behind the bed. The examination had been made, and Karenin knew what was before him. He was tired but serene.

‘So I shall die,’ he said, ‘unless you operate?’

Fowler assented. ‘And then,’ said Karenin, smiling, ‘probably I shall die.’

‘Not certainly.’

‘Even if I do not die; shall I be able to work?’

‘There is just a chance....’

‘So firstly I shall probably die, and if I do not, then perhaps I shall be a useless invalid?’

‘I think if you live, you may be able to go on — as you do now.’

‘Well, then, I suppose I must take the risk of it. Yet couldn’t you, Fowler, couldn’t you drug me and patch me instead of all this — vivisection? A few days of drugged and active life — and then the end?’

Fowler thought. ‘We are not sure enough yet to do things like that,’ he said.

‘But a day is coming when you will be certain.’

Fowler nodded.

‘You make me feel as though I was the last of deformity — Deformity is uncertainty — inaccuracy. My body works doubtfully, it is not even sure that it will die or live. I suppose the time is not far off when such bodies as mine will no longer be born into the world.’

‘You see,’ said Fowler, after a little pause, ‘it is necessary that spirits such as yours should be born into the world.’

‘I suppose,’ said Karenin, ‘that my spirit has had its use. But if you think that is because my body is as it is I think you are mistaken. There is no peculiar virtue in defect. I have always chafed against — all this. If I could have moved more freely and lived a larger life in health I could have done more. But some day perhaps you will be able to put a body that is wrong altogether right again. Your science is only beginning. It’s a subtler thing than physics and chemistry, and it takes longer to produce its miracles. And meanwhile a few more of us must die in patience.’

‘Fine work is being done and much of it,’ said Fowler. ‘I can say as much because I have nothing to do with it. I can understand a lesson, appreciate the discoveries of abler men and use my hands, but those others, Pigou, Masterton, Lie, and the others, they are clearing the ground fast for the knowledge to come. Have you had time to follow their work?’

Karenin shook his head. ‘But I can imagine the scope of it,’ he said.

‘We have so many men working now,’ said Fowler. ‘I suppose at present there must be at least a thousand thinking hard, observing, experimenting, for one who did so in nineteen hundred.’

‘Not counting those who keep the records?’

‘Not counting those. Of course, the present indexing of research is in itself a very big work, and it is only now that we are getting it properly done. But already we are feeling the benefit of that. Since it ceased to be a paid employment and became a devotion we have had only those people who obeyed the call of an aptitude at work upon these things. Here — I must show you it to-day, because it will interest you — we have our copy of the encyclopaedic index — every week sheets are taken out and replaced by fresh sheets with new results that are brought to us by the aeroplanes of the Research Department. It is an index of knowledge that grows continually, an index that becomes continually truer. There was never anything like it before.’

‘When I came into the education committee,’ said Karenin, ‘that index of human knowledge seemed an impossible thing. Research had produced a chaotic mountain of results, in a hundred languages and a thousand different types of publication....’ He smiled at his

memories. ‘How we groaned at the job!’

‘Already the ordering of that chaos is nearly done. You shall see.’

‘I have been so busy with my own work —— Yes, I shall be glad to see.’

The patient regarded the surgeon for a time with interested eyes.

‘You work here always?’ he asked abruptly.

‘No,’ said Fowler.

‘But mostly you work here?’

‘I have worked about seven years out of the past ten. At times I go away — down there. One has to. At least I have to. There is a sort of grayness comes over all this, one feels hungry for life, real, personal passionate life, love-making, eating and drinking for the fun of the thing, jostling crowds, having adventures, laughter — above all laughter — —’

‘Yes,’ said Karenin understandingly.

‘And then one day, suddenly one thinks of these high mountains again....’

‘That is how I would have lived, if it had not been for my — defects,’ said Karenin. ‘Nobody knows but those who have borne it the exasperation of abnormality. It will be good when you have nobody alive whose body cannot live the wholesome everyday life, whose spirit cannot come up into these high places as it wills.’

‘We shall manage that soon,’ said Fowler.

‘For endless generations man has struggled upward against the indignities of his body — and the indignities of his soul. Pains, incapacities, vile fears, black moods, despairs. How well I’ve known them. They’ve taken more time than all your holidays. It is true, is it not, that every man is something of a cripple and something of a beast? I’ve dipped a little deeper than most; that’s all. It’s only now when he has fully learnt the truth of that, that he can take hold of himself to be neither beast nor cripple. Now that he overcomes his servitude to his body, he can for the first time think of living the full life of his body.... Before another generation dies you’ll have the thing in hand. You’ll do as you please with the old Adam and all the vestiges from the brutes and reptiles that lurk in his body and spirit. Isn’t that so?’

‘You put it boldly,’ said Fowler.

Karenin laughed cheerfully at his caution.... ‘When,’ asked Karenin suddenly, ‘when will you operate?’

‘The day after to-morrow,’ said Fowler. ‘For a day I want you to drink and eat as I shall prescribe. And you may think and talk as you please.’

‘I should like to see this place.’

‘You shall go through it this afternoon. I will have two men carry you in a litter. And to-morrow you shall lie out upon the terrace. Our mountains here are the most beautiful in the world....’

Section 3

The next morning Karenin got up early and watched the sun rise over the mountains, and breakfasted lightly, and then young Gardener, his secretary, came to consult him upon the spending of his day. Would he care to see people? Or was this gnawing pain within him too much to permit him to do that?

‘I’d like to talk,’ said Karenin. ‘There must be all sorts of lively-minded people here. Let them come and gossip with me. It will distract me — and I can’t tell you how interesting it makes everything that is going on to have seen the dawn of one’s own last day.’

‘Your last day!’

‘Fowler will kill me.’

‘But he thinks not.’

‘Fowler will kill me. If he does not he will not leave very much of me. So that this is my last day anyhow, the days afterwards if they come at all to me, will be refuse. I know....’

Gardener was about to speak when Karenin went on again.

‘I hope he kills me, Gardener. Don’t be — old-fashioned. The thing I am most afraid of is that last rag of life. I may just go on — a scarred salvage of suffering stuff. And then — all the things I have hidden and kept down or discounted or set right afterwards will get the better of me. I shall be peevish. I may lose my grip upon my own egotism. It’s never been a very firm grip. No, no, Gardener, don’t say that! You know better, you’ve had glimpses of it. Suppose I came through on the other side of this affair, belittled, vain, and spiteful,

using the prestige I have got among men by my good work in the past just to serve some small invalid purpose....'

He was silent for a time, watching the mists among the distant precipices change to clouds of light, and drift and dissolve before the searching rays of the sunrise.

'Yes,' he said at last, 'I am afraid of these anaesthetics and these fag ends of life. It's life we are all afraid of. Death! — nobody minds just death. Fowler is clever — but some day surgery will know its duty better and not be so anxious just to save something . . . provided only that it quivers. I've tried to hold my end up properly and do my work. After Fowler has done with me I am certain I shall be unfit for work — and what else is there for me? . . . I know I shall not be fit for work....

'I do not see why life should be judged by its last trailing thread of vitality.... I know it for the splendid thing it is — I who have been a diseased creature from the beginning. I know it well enough not to confuse it with its husks. Remember that, Gardener, if presently my heart fails me and I despair, and if I go through a little phase of pain and ingratitude and dark forgetfulness before the end.... Don't believe what I may say at the last.... If the fabric is good enough the selvage doesn't matter. It can't matter. So long as you are alive you are just the moment, perhaps, but when you are dead then you are all your life from the first moment to the last....'

Section 4

Presently, in accordance with his wish, people came to talk to him, and he could forget himself again. Rachel Borken sat for a long time with him and talked chiefly of women in the world, and with her was a girl named Edith Haydon who was already very well known as a cytologist. And several of the younger men who were working in the place and a patient named Kahn, a poet, and Edwards, a designer of plays and shows, spent some time with him. The talk wandered from point to point and came back upon itself, and became now earnest and now trivial as the chance suggestions determined. But soon afterwards Gardener wrote down notes of things he remembered, and it is possible to put together again the outlook of Karenin upon the

world and how he thought and felt about many of the principal things in life.

‘Our age,’ he said, ‘has been so far an age of scene-shifting. We have been preparing a stage, clearing away the setting of a drama that was played out and growing tiresome.... If I could but sit out the first few scenes of the new spectacle....

‘How encumbered the world had become! It was ailing as I am ailing with a growth of unmeaning things. It was entangled, feverish, confused. It was in sore need of release, and I suppose that nothing less than the violence of those bombs could have released it and made it a healthy world again. I suppose they were necessary. Just as everything turns to evil in a fevered body so everything seemed turning to evil in those last years of the old time. Everywhere there were obsolete organisations seizing upon all the new fine things that science was giving to the world, nationalities, all sorts of political bodies, the churches and sects, proprietorship, seizing upon those treat powers and limitless possibilities and turning them to evil uses. And they would not suffer open speech, they would not permit of education, they would let no one be educated to the needs of the new time.... You who are younger cannot imagine the mixture of desperate hope and protesting despair in which we who could believe in the possibilities of science lived in those years before atomic energy came....

‘It was not only that the mass of people would not attend, would not understand, but that those who did understand lacked the power of real belief. They said the things, they saw the things, and the things meant nothing to them....

‘I have been reading some old papers lately. It is wonderful how our fathers bore themselves towards science. They hated it. They feared it. They permitted a few scientific men to exist and work — a pitiful handful.... “Don’t find out anything about us,” they said to them; “don’t inflict vision upon us, spare our little ways of life from the fearful shaft of understanding. But do tricks for us, little limited tricks. Give us cheap lighting. And cure us of certain disagreeable things, cure us of cancer, cure us of consumption, cure our colds and relieve us after repletion....” We have changed all that, Gardener. Science is no longer our servant. We know it for something greater

than our little individual selves. It is the awakening mind of the race, and in a little while —— In a little while —— I wish indeed I could watch for that little while, now that the curtain has risen....

'While I lie here they are clearing up what is left of the bombs in London,' he said. 'Then they are going to repair the ruins and make it all as like as possible to its former condition before the bombs fell. Perhaps they will dig out the old house in St John's Wood to which my father went after his expulsion from Russia.... That London of my memories seems to me like a place in another world. For you younger people it must seem like a place that could never have existed.'

'Is there much left standing?' asked Edith Haydon.

'Square miles that are scarcely shaken in the south and north-west, they say; and most of the bridges and large areas of dock. Westminster, which held most of the government offices, suffered badly from the small bomb that destroyed the Parliament, there are very few traces of the old thoroughfare of Whitehall or the Government region thereabout, but there are plentiful drawings to scale of its buildings, and the great hole in the east of London scarcely matters. That was a poor district and very like the north and the south.... It will be possible to reconstruct most of it.... It is wanted. Already it becomes difficult to recall the old time — even for us who saw it.'

'It seems very distant to me,' said the girl.

'It was an unwholesome world,' reflected Karenin. 'I seem to remember everybody about my childhood as if they were ill. They were ill. They were sick with confusion. Everybody was anxious about money and everybody was doing uncongenial things. They ate a queer mixture of foods, either too much or too little, and at odd hours. One sees how ill they were by their advertisements. All this new region of London they are opening up now is plastered with advertisements of pills. Everybody must have been taking pills. In one of the hotel rooms in the Strand they have found the luggage of a lady covered up by falling rubble and unburnt, and she was equipped with nine different sorts of pill and tabloid. The pill-carrying age followed the weapon-carrying age. They are equally strange to us. People's skins must have been in a vile state. Very few people were

properly washed; they carried the filth of months on their clothes. All the clothes they wore were old clothes; our way of pulping our clothes again after a week or so of wear would have seemed fantastic to them. Their clothing hardly bears thinking about. And the congestion of them! Everybody was jostling against everybody in those awful towns. In an uproar. People were run over and crushed by the hundred; every year in London the cars and omnibuses alone killed or disabled twenty thousand people, in Paris it was worse; people used to fall dead for want of air in the crowded ways. The irritation of London, internal and external, must have been maddening. It was a maddened world. It is like thinking of a sick child. One has the same effect of feverish urgencies and acute irrational disappointments.

'All history,' he said, 'is a record of a childhood....

'And yet not exactly a childhood. There is something clean and keen about even a sick child — and something touching. But so much of the old times makes one angry. So much they did seems grossly stupid, obstinately, outrageously stupid, which is the very opposite to being fresh and young.

'I was reading only the other day about Bismarck, that hero of nineteenth-century politics, that sequel to Napoleon, that god of blood and iron. And he was just a beery, obstinate, dull man. Indeed, that is what he was, the commonest, coarsest man, who ever became great. I looked at his portraits, a heavy, almost froggish face, with projecting eyes and a thick moustache to hide a poor mouth. He aimed at nothing but Germany, Germany emphasised, indurated, enlarged; Germany and his class in Germany; beyond that he had no ideas, he was inaccessible to ideas; his mind never rose for a recorded instant above a bumpkin's elaborate cunning. And he was the most influential man in the world, in the whole world, no man ever left so deep a mark on it, because everywhere there were gross men to resonate to the heavy notes he emitted. He trampled on ten thousand lovely things, and a kind of malice in these louts made it pleasant to them to see him trample. No — he was no child; the dull, national aggressiveness he stood for, no childishness. Childhood is promise. He was survival.

'All Europe offered its children to him, it sacrificed education, art,

happiness and all its hopes of future welfare to follow the clatter of his sabre. The monstrous worship of that old fool's "blood and iron" passed all round the earth. Until the atomic bombs burnt our way to freedom again....'

'One thinks of him now as one thinks of the megatherium,' said one of the young men.

'From first to last mankind made three million big guns and a hundred thousand complicated great ships for no other purpose but war.'

'Were there no sane men in those days,' asked the young man, 'to stand against that idolatry?'

'In a state of despair,' said Edith Haydon.

'He is so far off — and there are men alive still who were alive when Bismarck died!' . . . said the young man....

Section 5

'And yet it may be I am unjust to Bismarck,' said Karenin, following his own thoughts. 'You see, men belong to their own age; we stand upon a common stock of thought and we fancy we stand upon the ground. I met a pleasant man the other day, a Maori, whose great-grandfather was a cannibal. It chanced he had a daguerreotype of the old sinner, and the two were marvellously alike. One felt that a little juggling with time and either might have been the other. People are cruel and stupid in a stupid age who might be gentle and splendid in a gracious one. The world also has its moods. Think of the mental food of Bismarck's childhood; the humiliations of Napoleon's victories, the crowded, crowning victory of the Battle of the Nations.... Everybody in those days, wise or foolish, believed that the division of the world under a multitude of governments was inevitable, and that it was going on for thousands of years more. It WAS inevitable until it was impossible. Any one who had denied that inevitability publicly would have been counted — oh! a SILLY fellow. Old Bismarck was only just a little — forcible, on the lines of the accepted ideas. That is all. He thought that since there had to be national governments he would make one that was strong at home and invincible abroad. Because he had fed with a kind of rough

appetite upon what we can see now were very stupid ideas, that does not make him a stupid man. We've had advantages; we've had unity and collectivism blasted into our brains. Where should we be now but for the grace of science? I should have been an embittered, spiteful, downtrodden member of the Russian Intelligenza, a conspirator, a prisoner, or an assassin. You, my dear, would have been breaking dingy windows as a suffragette.'

'NEVER,' said Edith stoutly....

For a time the talk broke into humorous personalities, and the young people gibed at each other across the smiling old administrator, and then presently one of the young scientific men gave things a new turn. He spoke like one who was full to the brim.

'You know, sir, I've a fancy — it is hard to prove such things — that civilisation was very near disaster when the atomic bombs came banging into it, that if there had been no Holsten and no induced radio-activity, the world would have — smashed — much as it did. Only instead of its being a smash that opened a way to better things, it might have been a smash without a recovery. It is part of my business to understand economics, and from that point of view the century before Holsten was just a hundred years' crescendo of waste. Only the extreme individualism of that period, only its utter want of any collective understanding or purpose can explain that waste. Mankind used up material — insanely. They had got through three-quarters of all the coal in the planet, they had used up most of the oil, they had swept away their forests, and they were running short of tin and copper. Their wheat areas were getting weary and populous, and many of the big towns had so lowered the water level of their available hills that they suffered a drought every summer. The whole system was rushing towards bankruptcy. And they were spending every year vaster and vaster amounts of power and energy upon military preparations, and continually expanding the debt of industry to capital. The system was already staggering when Holsten began his researches. So far as the world in general went there was no sense of danger and no desire for inquiry. They had no belief that science could save them, nor any idea that there was a need to be saved. They could not, they would not, see the gulf beneath their feet. It was pure good luck for mankind at large that any research at all was in

progress. And as I say, sir, if that line of escape hadn't opened, before now there might have been a crash, revolution, panic, social disintegration, famine, and — it is conceivable — complete disorder.... The rails might have rusted on the disused railways by now, the telephone poles have rotted and fallen, the big liners dropped into sheet-iron in the ports; the burnt, deserted cities become the ruinous hiding-places of gangs of robbers. We might have been brigands in a shattered and attenuated world. Ah, you may smile, but that had happened before in human history. The world is still studded with the ruins of broken-down civilisations. Barbaric bands made their fastness upon the Acropolis, and the tomb of Hadrian became a fortress that warred across the ruins of Rome against the Colosseum.... Had all that possibility of reaction ended so certainly in 1940? Is it all so very far away even now?'

'It seems far enough away now,' said Edith Haydon.

'But forty years ago?'

'No,' said Karenin with his eyes upon the mountains, 'I think you underrate the available intelligence in those early decades of the twentieth century. Officially, I know, politically, that intelligence didn't tell — but it was there. And I question your hypothesis. I doubt if that discovery could have been delayed. There is a kind of inevitable logic now in the progress of research. For a hundred years and more thought and science have been going their own way regardless of the common events of life. You see — they have got loose. If there had been no Holsten there would have been some similar man. If atomic energy had not come in one year it would have come in another. In decadent Rome the march of science had scarcely begun.... Nineveh, Babylon, Athens, Syracuse, Alexandria, these were the first rough experiments in association that made a security, a breathing-space, in which inquiry was born. Man had to experiment before he found out the way to begin. But already two hundred years ago he had fairly begun.... The politics and dignities and wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were only the last phoenix blaze of the former civilisation flaring up about the beginnings of the new. Which we serve.... 'Man lives in the dawn for ever,' said Karenin. 'Life is beginning and nothing else but beginning. It begins everlastingly. Each step seems vaster than the

last, and does but gather us together for the nest. This Modern State of ours, which would have been a Utopian marvel a hundred years ago, is already the commonplace of life. But as I sit here and dream of the possibilities in the mind of man that now gather to a head beneath the shelter of its peace, these great mountains here seem but little things....'

Section 6

About eleven Karenin had his midday meal, and afterwards he slept among his artificial furs and pillows for two hours. Then he awoke and some tea was brought to him, and he attended to a small difficulty in connection with the Moravian schools in the Labrador country and in Greenland that Gardener knew would interest him. He remained alone for a little while after that, and then the two women came to him again. Afterwards Edwards and Kahn joined the group, and the talk fell upon love and the place of women in the renascent world. The cloudbanks of India lay under a quivering haze, and the blaze of the sun fell full upon the eastward precipices. Ever and again as they talked, some vast splinter of rock would crack and come away from these, or a wild rush of snow and ice and stone, pour down in thunder, hang like a wet thread into the gulfs below, and cease....

Section 7

For a time Karenin said very little, and Kahn, the popular poet, talked of passionate love. He said that passionate, personal love had been the abiding desire of humanity since ever humanity had begun, and now only was it becoming a possible experience. It had been a dream that generation after generation had pursued, that always men had lost on the verge of attainment. To most of those who had sought it obstinately it had brought tragedy. Now, lifted above sordid distresses, men and women might hope for realised and triumphant love. This age was the Dawn of Love....

Karenin remained downcast and thoughtful while Kahn said these things. Against that continued silence Kahn's voice presently seemed

to beat and fail. He had begun by addressing Karenin, but presently he was including Edith Haydon and Rachel Borken in his appeal. Rachel listened silently; Edith watched Karenin and very deliberately avoided Kahn's eyes.

'I know,' said Karenin at last, 'that many people are saying this sort of thing. I know that there is a vast release of love-making in the world. This great wave of decoration and elaboration that has gone about the world, this Efflorescence, has of course laid hold of that. I know that when you say that the world is set free, you interpret that to mean that the world is set free for love-making. Down there, — under the clouds, the lovers foregather. I know your songs, Kahn, your half-mystical songs, in which you represent this old hard world dissolving into a luminous haze of love — sexual love.... I don't think you are right or true in that. You are a young, imaginative man, and you see life — ardently — with the eyes of youth. But the power that has brought man into these high places under this blue-veiled blackness of the sky and which beckons us on towards the immense and awful future of our race, is riper and deeper and greater than any such emotions....

'All through my life — it has been a necessary part of my work — I have had to think of this release of sexual love and the riddles that perfect freedom and almost limitless power will put to the soul of our race. I can see now, all over the world, a beautiful ecstasy of waste; "Let us sing and rejoice and be lovely and wonderful." . . . The orgy is only beginning, Kahn.... It was inevitable — but it is not the end of mankind....

'Think what we are. It is but a yesterday in the endlessness of time that life was a dreaming thing, dreaming so deeply that it forgot itself as it dreamt, its lives, its individual instincts, its moments, were born and wondered and played and desired and hungered and grew weary and died. Incalculable successions of vision, visions of sunlit jungle, river wilderness, wild forest, eager desire, beating hearts, soaring wings and creeping terror flamed hotly and then were as though they had never been. Life was an uneasiness across which lights played and vanished. And then we came, man came, and opened eyes that were a question and hands that were a demand and began a mind and memory that dies not when men die, but lives and

increases for ever, an over-mind, a dominating will, a question and an aspiration that reaches to the stars.... Hunger and fear and this that you make so much of, this sex, are but the elementals of life out of which we have arisen. All these elementals, I grant you, have to be provided for, dealt with, satisfied, but all these things have to be left behind.'

'But Love,' said Kahn.

'I speak of sexual love and the love of intimate persons. And that is what you mean, Kahn.'

Karenin shook his head. 'You cannot stay at the roots and climb the tree,' he said....

'No,' he said after a pause, 'this sexual excitement, this love story, is just a part of growing up and we grow out of it. So far literature and art and sentiment and all our emotional forms have been almost altogether adolescent, plays and stories, delights and hopes, they have all turned on that marvellous discovery of the love interest, but life lengthens out now and the mind of adult humanity detaches itself. Poets who used to die at thirty live now to eighty-five. You, too, Kahn! There are endless years yet for you — and all full of learning.... We carry an excessive burden of sex and sexual tradition still, and we have to free ourselves from it. We do free ourselves from it. We have learnt in a thousand different ways to hold back death, and this sex, which in the old barbaric days was just sufficient to balance our dying, is now like a hammer that has lost its anvil, it plunges through human life. You poets, you young people want to turn it to delight. Turn it to delight. That may be one way out. In a little while, if you have any brains worth thinking about, you will be satisfied, and then you will come up here to the greater things. The old religions and their new offsets want still, I see, to suppress all these things. Let them suppress. If they can suppress. In their own people. Either road will bring you here at last to the eternal search for knowledge and the great adventure of power.'

'But incidentally,' said Rachel Borken; 'incidentally you have half of humanity, you have womankind, very much specialised for — for this love and reproduction that is so much less needed than it was.'

'Both sexes are specialised for love and reproduction,' said

Karenin.

‘But the women carry the heavier burden.’

‘Not in their imaginations,’ said Edwards.

‘And surely,’ said Kahn, ‘when you speak of love as a phase — isn’t it a necessary phase? Quite apart from reproduction the love of the sexes is necessary. Isn’t it love, sexual love, which has released the imagination? Without that stir, without that impulse to go out from ourselves, to be reckless of ourselves and wonderful, would our lives be anything more than the contentment of the stalled ox?’

‘The key that opens the door,’ said Karenin, ‘is not the goal of the journey.’

‘But women!’ cried Rachel. ‘Here we are! What is our future — as women? Is it only that we have unlocked the doors of the imagination for you men? Let us speak of this question now. It is a thing constantly in my thoughts, Karenin. What do you think of us? You who must have thought so much of these perplexities.’

Karenin seemed to weigh his words. He spoke very deliberately. ‘I do not care a rap about your future — as women. I do not care a rap about the future of men — as males. I want to destroy these peculiar futures. I care for your future as intelligences, as parts of and contribution to the universal mind of the race. Humanity is not only naturally over-specialised in these matters, but all its institutions, its customs, everything, exaggerate, intensify this difference. I want to unspecialise women. No new idea. Plato wanted exactly that. I do not want to go on as we go now, emphasising this natural difference; I do not deny it, but I want to reduce it and overcome it.’

‘And — we remain women,’ said Rachel Borken. ‘Need you remain thinking of yourselves as women?’

‘It is forced upon us,’ said Edith Haydon.

‘I do not think a woman becomes less of a woman because she dresses and works like a man,’ said Edwards. ‘You women here, I mean you scientific women, wear white clothing like the men, twist up your hair in the simplest fashion, go about your work as though there was only one sex in the world. You are just as much women, even if you are not so feminine, as the fine ladies down below there in the plains who dress for excitement and display, whose only thoughts are of lovers, who exaggerate every difference.... Indeed we

love you more.'

'But we go about our work,' said Edith Haydon.

'So does it matter?' asked Rachel.

'If you go about your work and if the men go about their work then for Heaven's sake be as much woman as you wish,' said Karenin. 'When I ask you to unspecialise, I am thinking not of the abolition of sex, but the abolition of the irksome, restricting, obstructive obsession with sex. It may be true that sex made society, that the first society was the sex-cemented family, the first state a confederacy of blood relations, the first laws sexual taboos. Until a few years ago morality meant proper sexual behaviour. Up to within a few years of us the chief interest and motive of an ordinary man was to keep and rule a woman and her children and the chief concern of a woman was to get a man to do that. That was the drama, that was life. And the jealousy of these demands was the master motive in the world. You said, Kahn, a little while ago that sexual love was the key that let one out from the solitude of self, but I tell you that so far it has only done so in order to lock us all up again in a solitude of two.... All that may have been necessary but it is necessary no longer. All that has changed and changes still very swiftly. Your future, Rachel, AS WOMEN, is a diminishing future.'

'Karenin?' asked Rachel, 'do you mean that women are to become men?'

'Men and women have to become human beings.'

'You would abolish women? But, Karenin, listen! There is more than sex in this. Apart from sex we are different from you. We take up life differently. Forget we are — females, Karenin, and still we are a different sort of human being with a different use. In some things we are amazingly secondary. Here am I in this place because of my trick of management, and Edith is here because of her patient, subtle hands. That does not alter the fact that nearly the whole body of science is man made; that does not alter the fact that men do so predominatingly make history, that you could nearly write a complete history of the world without mentioning a woman's name. And on the other hand we have a gift of devotion, of inspiration, a distinctive power for truly loving beautiful things, a care for life and a peculiar keen close eye for behaviour. You know men are blind

beside us in these last matters. You know they are restless — and fitful. We have a steadfastness. We may never draw the broad outlines nor discover the new paths, but in the future isn't there a confirming and sustaining and supplying role for us? As important, perhaps, as yours? Equally important. We hold the world up, Karenin, though you may have raised it.'

'You know very well, Rachel, that I believe as you believe. I am not thinking of the abolition of woman. But I do want to abolish — the heroine, the sexual heroine. I want to abolish the woman whose support is jealousy and whose gift possession. I want to abolish the woman who can be won as a prize or locked up as a delicious treasure. And away down there the heroine flares like a divinity.'

'In America,' said Edwards, 'men are fighting duels over the praises of women and holding tournaments before Queens of Beauty.'

'I saw a beautiful girl in Lahore,' said Kahn, 'she sat under a golden canopy like a goddess, and three fine men, armed and dressed like the ancient paintings, sat on steps below her to show their devotion. And they wanted only her permission to fight for her.'

'That is the men's doing,' said Edith Haydon.

'I SAID,' cried Edwards, 'that man's imagination was more specialised for sex than the whole being of woman. What woman would do a thing like that? Women do but submit to it or take advantage of it.'

'There is no evil between men and women that is not a common evil,' said Karenin. 'It is you poets, Kahn, with your love songs which turn the sweet fellowship of comrades into this woman-centred excitement. But there is something in women, in many women, which responds to these provocations; they succumb to a peculiarly self-cultivating egotism. They become the subjects of their own artistry. They develop and elaborate themselves as scarcely any man would ever do. They LOOK for golden canopies. And even when they seem to react against that, they may do it still. I have been reading in the old papers of the movements to emancipate women that were going on before the discovery of atomic force. These things which began with a desire to escape from the limitations and servitude of sex, ended in an inflamed assertion of sex, and women

more heroines than ever. Helen of Holloway was at last as big a nuisance in her way as Helen of Troy, and so long as you think of yourselves as women' — he held out a finger at Rachel and smiled gently— 'instead of thinking of yourselves as intelligent beings, you will be in danger of — Helenism. To think of yourselves as women is to think of yourselves in relation to men. You can't escape that consequence. You have to learn to think of yourselves — for our sakes and your own sakes — in relation to the sun and stars. You have to cease to be our adventure, Rachel, and come with us upon our adventures. ...' He waved his hand towards the dark sky above the mountain crests.

Section 8

'These questions are the next questions to which research will bring us answers,' said Karenin. 'While we sit here and talk idly and inexactly of what is needed and what may be, there are hundreds of keen-witted men and women who are working these things out, dispassionately and certainly, for the love of knowledge. The next sciences to yield great harvests now will be psychology and neural physiology. These perplexities of the situation between man and woman and the trouble with the obstinacy of egotism, these are temporary troubles, the issue of our own times. Suddenly all these differences that seem so fixed will dissolve, all these incompatibles will run together, and we shall go on to mould our bodies and our bodily feelings and personal reactions as boldly as we begin now to carve mountains and set the seas in their places and change the currents of the wind.'

'It is the next wave,' said Fowler, who had come out upon the terrace and seated himself silently behind Karenin's chair.

'Of course, in the old days,' said Edwards, 'men were tied to their city or their country, tied to the homes they owned or the work they did....'

'I do not see,' said Karenin, 'that there is any final limit to man's power of self-modification.

'There is none,' said Fowler, walking forward and sitting down upon the parapet in front of Karenin so that he could see his face.

‘There is no absolute limit to either knowledge or power.... I hope you do not tire yourself talking.’

‘I am interested,’ said Karenin. ‘I suppose in a little while men will cease to be tired. I suppose in a little time you will give us something that will hurry away the fatigue products and restore our jaded tissues almost at once. This old machine may be made to run without slacking or cessation.’

‘That is possible, Karenin. But there is much to learn.’

‘And all the hours we give to digestion and half living; don’t you think there will be some way of saving these?’

Fowler nodded assent.

‘And then sleep again. When man with his blazing lights made an end to night in his towns and houses — it is only a hundred years or so ago that that was done — then it followed he would presently resent his eight hours of uselessness. Shan’t we presently take a tabloid or lie in some field of force that will enable us to do with an hour or so of slumber and rise refreshed again?’

‘Frobisher and Ameer Ali have done work in that direction.’

‘And then the inconveniences of age and those diseases of the system that come with years; steadily you drive them back and you lengthen and lengthen the years that stretch between the passionate tumults of youth and the contractions of senility. Man who used to weaken and die as his teeth decayed now looks forward to a continually lengthening, continually fuller term of years. And all those parts of him that once gathered evil against him, the vestigial structures and odd, treacherous corners of his body, you know better and better how to deal with. You carve his body about and leave it re-modelled and unscarred. The psychologists are learning how to mould minds, to reduce and remove bad complexes of thought and motive, to relieve pressures and broaden ideas. So that we are becoming more and more capable of transmitting what we have learnt and preserving it for the race. The race, the racial wisdom, science, gather power continually to subdue the individual man to its own end. Is that not so?’

Fowler said that it was, and for a time he was telling Karenin of new work that was in progress in India and Russia. ‘And how is it with heredity?’ asked Karenin.

Fowler told them of the mass of inquiry accumulated and arranged by the genius of Tchen, who was beginning to define clearly the laws of inheritance and how the sex of children and the complexions and many of the parental qualities could be determined.

'He can actually DO —— ?'

'It is still, so to speak, a mere laboratory triumph,' said Fowler, 'but to-morrow it will be practicable.'

'You see,' cried Karenin, turning a laughing face to Rachel and Edith, 'while we have been theorising about men and women, here is science getting the power for us to end that old dispute for ever. If woman is too much for us, we'll reduce her to a minority, and if we do not like any type of men and women, we'll have no more of it. These old bodies, these old animal limitations, all this earthly inheritance of gross inevitabilities falls from the spirit of man like the shrivelled cocoon from an imago. And for my own part, when I hear of these things I feel like that — like a wet, crawling new moth that still fears to spread its wings. Because where do these things take us?'

'Beyond humanity,' said Kahn.

'No,' said Karenin. 'We can still keep our feet upon the earth that made us. But the air no longer imprisons us, this round planet is no longer chained to us like the ball of a galley slave....

'In a little while men who will know how to bear the strange gravitations, the altered pressures, the attenuated, unfamiliar gases and all the fearful strangenesses of space will be venturing out from this earth. This ball will be no longer enough for us; our spirit will reach out.... Cannot you see how that little argosy will go glittering up into the sky, twinkling and glittering smaller and smaller until the blue swallows it up. They may succeed out there; they may perish, but other men will follow them....

'It is as if a great window opened,' said Karenin.

Section 9

As the evening drew on Karenin and those who were about him went up upon the roof of the buildings, so that they might the better watch the sunset and the flushing of the mountains and the coming of the

afterglow. They were joined by two of the surgeons from the laboratories below, and presently by a nurse who brought Karenin refreshment in a thin glass cup. It was a cloudless, windless evening under the deep blue sky, and far away to the north glittered two biplanes on the way to the observatories on Everest, two hundred miles distant over the precipices to the east. The little group of people watched them pass over the mountains and vanish into the blue, and then for a time they talked of the work that the observatory was doing. From that they passed to the whole process of research about the world, and so Karenin's thoughts returned again to the mind of the world and the great future that was opening upon man's imagination. He asked the surgeons many questions upon the detailed possibilities of their science, and he was keenly interested and excited by the things they told him. And as they talked the sun touched the mountains, and became very swiftly a blazing and indented hemisphere of liquid flame and sank.

Karenin looked blinking at the last quivering rim of incandescence, and shaded his eyes and became silent.

Presently he gave a little start.

'What?' asked Rachel Borken.

'I had forgotten,' he said.

'What had you forgotten?'

'I had forgotten about the operation to-morrow. I have been so interested as Man to-day that I have nearly forgotten Marcus Karenin. Marcus Karenin must go under your knife to-morrow, Fowler, and very probably Marcus Karenin will die.' He raised his slightly shrivelled hand. 'It does not matter, Fowler. It scarcely matters even to me. For indeed is it Karenin who has been sitting here and talking; is it not rather a common mind, Fowler, that has played about between us? You and I and all of us have added thought to thought, but the thread is neither you nor me. What is true we all have; when the individual has altogether brought himself to the test and winnowing of expression, then the individual is done. I feel as though I had already been emptied out of that little vessel, that Marcus Karenin, which in my youth held me so tightly and completely. Your beauty, dear Edith, and your broad brow, dear Rachel, and you, Fowler, with your firm and skilful hands, are now

almost as much to me as this hand that beats the arm of my chair. And as little me. And the spirit that desires to know, the spirit that resolves to do, that spirit that lives and has talked in us to-day, lived in Athens, lived in Florence, lives on, I know, for ever....

'And you, old Sun, with your sword of flame searing these poor eyes of Marcus for the last time of all, beware of me! You think I die — and indeed I am only taking off one more coat to get at you. I have threatened you for ten thousand years, and soon I warn you I shall be coming. When I am altogether stripped and my disguises thrown away. Very soon now, old Sun, I shall launch myself at you, and I shall reach you and I shall put my foot on your spotted face and tug you about by your fiery locks. One step I shall take to the moon, and then I shall leap at you. I've talked to you before, old Sun, I've talked to you a million times, and now I am beginning to remember. Yes — long ago, long ago, before I had stripped off a few thousand generations, dust now and forgotten, I was a hairy savage and I pointed my hand at you and — clearly I remember it! — I saw you in a net. Have you forgotten that, old Sun? . . .

'Old Sun, I gather myself together out of the pools of the individual that have held me dispersed so long. I gather my billion thoughts into science and my million wills into a common purpose. Well may you slink down behind the mountains from me, well may you cower....'

Section 10

Karenin desired that he might dream alone for a little while before he returned to the cell in which he was to sleep. He was given relief for a pain that began to trouble him and wrapped warmly about with furs, for a great coldness was creeping over all things, and so they left him, and he sat for a long time watching the afterglow give place to the darkness of night.

It seemed to those who had to watch over him unobtrusively lest

he should be in want of any attention, that he mused very deeply.

The white and purple peaks against the golden sky sank down into cold, blue remoteness, glowed out again and faded again, and the burning cressets of the Indian stars, that even the moonrise cannot altogether quench, began their vigil. The moon rose behind the towering screen of dark precipices to the east, and long before it emerged above these, its slanting beams had filled the deep gorges below with luminous mist and turned the towers and pinnacles of Lio Porgyul to a magic dreamcastle of radiance and wonder....

Came a great uprush of ghostly light above the black rim of rocks, and then like a bubble that is blown and detaches itself the moon floated off clear into the unfathomable dark sky....

And then Karenin stood up. He walked a few paces along the terrace and remained for a time gazing up at that great silver disc, that silvery shield that must needs be man's first conquest in outer space....

Presently he turned about and stood with his hands folded behind him, looking at the northward stars....

At length he went to his own cell. He lay down there and slept peacefully till the morning. And early in the morning they came to him and the anaesthetic was given him and the operation performed.

It was altogether successful, but Karenin was weak and he had to lie very still; and about seven days later a blood clot detached itself from the healing scar and travelled to his heart, and he died in an instant in the night.

BEALBY: A HOLIDAY

Bealby was first published in 1915 and tells the story of young Bealby, who is determined not to be a servant, despite the objections of his mother.

Wells, near the time of publication

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VIII. — HOW BEALBY EXPLAINED

DEDICATION AND NOTE TO THE READER

AN irresistible impulse made me give a leading part in this story to a Lord Chancellor who delighted in Hegel. I fought against it, in vain. Well I knew that there was in the world a Lord Chancellor who read Hegel and was in no other respect like my Lord Chancellor. No one who knows the real man will for a moment imagine that my figure is meant for him, physically, temperamentally they are absolutely unlike. But there is always that provincial fool who "reads behind the lines" and who is always detecting "portraits" and "caricatures" in innocently creative work. Him, I warn. You may say, "But why not take out the figure, alter it, make it Lord Chief Justice for example, give it some other mental habit than the Hegelian?" That shows you know nothing of the art of fiction. I would rather be burnt alive than omit a little jest I have made about the Great Seal, and what other mental habit can compare with the rich Hegelian style? Who would read Bergson for comfort in the small hours? I would as soon dine on a boiled vegetable marrow, washed down with iced barley water. But Hegelian fills the mouth and warms the mind; it is as good as cursing. And things being so let me dedicate this book frankly and with affection and gratitude to that real Lord Chancellor who not only reads Hegel but who gave this country an army to be proud of, fit and ready when the moment came, who sought steadfastly to blend German thoroughness with our careless English fairness and who has suffered much foolish abuse and unreasonable criticism therefor in these wild patriotic times.

H. G. WELLS

I. — YOUNG BEALBY GOES TO SHONTS

§ 1

THE cat is the offspring of a cat and the dog of a dog, but butlers and lady's maids do not reproduce their kind. They have other duties.

So their successors have to be sought among the prolific, and particularly among the prolific on great estates. Such are gardeners, but not under-gardeners; gamekeepers and coachmen, but not lodge people because their years are too great and their lodges too small. And among those to whom this opportunity of entering service came was young Bealby who was the stepson of Mr. Darling, the gardener of Shonts.

Everyone knows the glories of Shonts. Its facade. Its two towers. The great marble pond. The terraces where the peacocks walk and the lower lake with the black and white swans. The great park and the avenue. The view of the river winding away across the blue country. And of the Shonts Velasquez — but that is now in America. And the Shonts Rubens, which is in the National Gallery. And the Shonts porcelain. And the Shonts past history; it was a refuge for the old faith; it had priests' holes and secret passages. And how at last the Marquis had to let Shonts to the Laxtons — the Peptonized Milk and Baby Soother people — for a long term of years. It was a splendid chance for any boy to begin his knowledge of service in so great an establishment, and only the natural perversity of human nature can explain the violent objection young Bealby took to anything of the sort. He did. He said he did not want to be a servant, and that he would not go and be a good boy and try his very best in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him at Shonts. On the contrary.

He communicated these views suddenly to his mother as she was preparing a steak and kidney pie in the bright little kitchen of the gardener's cottage. He came in with his hair all ruffled and his face hot and distinctly dirty, and his hands in his trousers pockets in the way he had been repeatedly told not to.

"Mother," he said, "I'm not going to be a steward's boy at the

house anyhow, not if you tell me to, not till you're blue in the face. So that's all about it."

This delivered he remained panting, having no further breath left in him.

His mother was a thin firm woman. She paused in her rolling of the dough until he had finished, and then she made a strong broadening sweep of the rolling-pin, and remained facing him, leaning forward on that implement with her head a little on one side.

"You will do," she said, "whatsoever your father has said you will do."

"'E isn't my father," said young Bealby.

His mother gave a snapping nod of the head expressive of extreme determination.

"Anyhow I ain't going to do it," said young Bealby, and feeling the conversation was difficult to sustain he moved towards the staircase door with a view to slamming it.

"You'll do it," said his mother, "right enough."

"You see whether I do," said young Bealby, and then got in his door-slam rather hurriedly because of steps outside.

Mr. Darling came in out of the sunshine a few moments later. He was a large, many-pocketed, earthy-whiskered man with a clean-shaven determined mouth, and he carried a large pale cucumber in his hand.

"I tole him," he said.

"What did he say?" asked his wife.

"Nuthin," said Mr. Darling.

"'E says 'e won't," said Mrs. DarIng. Mr. Darling regarded her thoughtfully for a moment.

"I never see such a boy," said Mr. Darling. "Why— 'e's *got* to."

§ 2

But young Bealby maintained an obstinate fight against the inevitable.

He had no gift of lucid exposition. "I ain't going to be a servant," he said. "I don't see what right people have making a servant of me."

“You got to be something,” said Mr. Darling.

“Everybody’s got to be something,” said Mrs. Darling.

“Then let me be something else,” said young Bealby.

“*I* dessay you’d like to be a gentleman,” said Mr. Darling.

“I wouldn’t mind,” said young Bealby.

“You got to be what your opportunities give you,” said Mr. Darling.

Young Bealby became breathless. “Why shouldn’t I be an engine driver?” he asked.

“All oily,” said his mother. “And getting yourself killed in an accident. And got to pay fines. You’d *like* to be an engine driver.”

“Or a soldier.”

“Oo! — a Swaddy!” said Mr. Darling derisively.

“Or the sea.”

“With that weak stummik of yours,” said Mrs. Darling.

“Besides which,” said Mr. Darling, “it’s been arranged for you to go up to the ‘ouse the very first of next month. And your box and everything ready.”

Young Bealby became very red in the face. “I won’t go,” he said very faintly.

“You will,” said Mr. Darling, “if I ‘ave to take you by the collar and the slack of your breeches to get you there.”

§ 3

The heart of young Bealby was a coal of fire within his breast as — unassisted — he went across the dewy park up to the great house whither his box was to follow him.

He thought the world a “rotten show.”

He also said, apparently to two does and a fawn, “ If you think I’m going to stand it, you know, you’re JOLLY-well mistaken.”

I do not attempt to justify his prejudice against honourable usefulness in a domestic capacity. He had it. Perhaps there is something in the air of Highbury, where he had spent the past eight years of his life, that leads to democratic ideals. It is one of those new places where estates seem almost forgotten. Perhaps too there

was something in the Bealby strain....

I think he would have objected to any employment at all. Hitherto he had been a remarkably free boy with a considerable gusto about his freedom. Why should that end? The little village mixed school had been a soft job for his Cockney wits, and for a year and a half he had been top boy. Why not go on being top boy?

Instead of which, under threats, he had to go across the sunlit corner of the park, through that slanting morning sunlight which had been so often the prelude to golden days of leafy wanderings! He had to go past the corner of the laundry where he had so often played cricket with the coachman's boys, (already swallowed up into the working world), he had to follow the laundry wall to the end of the kitchen and there, where the steps go down and underground, he had to say farewell to the sunlight, farewell to childhood, boyhood, freedom. He had to go down and along the stone corridor to the pantry, and there he had to ask for Mr. Mergleson. He paused on the top step, and looked up at the blue sky across which a hawk was slowly drifting. His eyes followed the hawk out of sight beyond a cypress bough, but indeed he was not thinking about the hawk, he was not seeing the hawk; he was struggling with a last wild impulse of his ferial nature. "Why not sling it?" his ferial nature was asking. "Why not even now — *do a bunk*?"

It would have been better for him perhaps and better for Mr. Mergleson and better for Shonts if he had yielded to the whisper of the Tempter. But his heart was heavy within him, and he had no provisions. And never a penny. One can do but a very little bunk on an empty belly! "Must" was written all over him. He went down the steps.

The passage was long and cool and at the end of it was a swing door. Through that and then to the left, he knew one had to go, past the stillroom and so to the pantry. The maids were at breakfast in the stillroom with the door open. The grimace he made in passing was intended rather to entertain than to insult, and anyhow a chap must do something with his face. And then he came to the pantry and into the presence of Mr. Mergleson.

Mr. Mergleson was in his shirt-sleeves and generally dishevelled, having an early cup of tea in an atmosphere full of the bleak

memories of overnight. He was an ample man with a large nose, a vast under lip and mutton-chop side whiskers. His voice would have suited a succulent parrot. He took out a gold watch from his waistcoat pocket and regarded it. “Ten minutes past seven, young man,” he said, “isn’t seven o’clock.”

Young Bealby made no articulate answer.

“Just stand there for a minute,” said Mr. Mergleson, “and when I’m at libbuty I’ll run through your duties.” And almost ostentatiously he gave himself up to the enjoyment of his cup of tea.

Three other gentlemen in deshabillé sat at table with Mr. Mergleson. They regarded young Bealby with attention and the youngest, a red- haired barefaced youth in shirt-sleeves and a green apron, was moved to a grimace that was clearly designed to echo the scowl on young Bealby’s features.

The fury that had been subdued by a momentary awe of Mr. Mergleson revived and gathered force. Young Bealby’s face became scarlet, his eyes filled with tears and his mind with the need for movement. After all — he wouldn’t stand it. He turned round abruptly and made for the door.

“Where’n earth you going to?” cried Mr. Mergleson.

He’s shy!” cried the second footman. Steady on!” cried the first footman and had him by the shoulder in the doorway.

“Lemme go!” howled the new recruit, struggling. “I won’t be a blooming servant. I won’t.”

“Here!” cried Mr. Mergleson, gesticulating with his teaspoon, “Bring ‘im to the end of the table there. What’s this about a blooming servant?”

Bealby suddenly blubbering was replaced at the end of the table.

“May I ask what’s this about a blooming servant?” asked Mr. Mergleson.

Sniff and silence.

“Did I understand you to say that you ain’t going to be a blooming servant, young Bealby?”

“Yes,” said young Bealby.

“Thomas,” said Mr. Mergleson, “just smack ‘is ‘ed. Smack it rather ‘ard....”

Things too rapid to relate occurred. “So you’d *bite*, would you?”

said Thomas....

"Ah!" said Mr. Mergleson. "Got 'im! That one!"....

"Just smack 'is 'ed once more," said Mr. Mergleson....

"And now you just stand there, young man, until I'm at libbuty to attend to you further," said Mr. Mergleson, and finished his tea slowly and eloquently....

The second footman rubbed his shin thoughtfully.

"If I got to smack 'is 'ed much," he said, e'd better change into his slippers."

"Take him to 'is room," said Mr, Mergleson getting up. "See 'e washes the grief and grubbiness off 'is face in the handwash at the end of the passage and make him put on his slippers. Then show 'im 'ow to lay the table in the steward's room."

§ 4

The duties to which Bealby was introduced struck him as perplexingly various, undesirably numerous, uninteresting and difficult to remember, and also he did not try to remember them very well because he wanted to do them as badly as possible, and he thought that forgetting would be a good way of starting at that. He was beginning at the bottom of the ladder; to him it fell to wait on the upper servants, and the green baize door at the top of the service staircase was the limit of his range. His room was a small wedge-shaped apartment under some steps leading to the servants' hall, lit by a window that did not open and that gave upon the underground passage. He received his instructions in a state of crumpled mutinousness, but for a day his desire to be remarkably impossible was more than counterbalanced by his respect for the large able hands of the four menservants, his seniors, and by a disinclination to be returned too promptly to the gardens. Then in a tentative manner he broke two plates, and got his head smacked by Mr. Mergleson himself. Mr. Mergleson gave a staccato slap quite as powerful as Thomas's but otherwise different. The hand of Mr. Mergleson was large and fat and he got his effects by dash, Thomas's was horny and lingered. After that young Bealby put salt in the teapot in which the

housekeeper made tea. But that, he observed, she washed out with hot water before she put in the tea. It was clear that he had wasted his salt, which ought to have gone into the kettle.

Next time — the kettle.

Beyond telling him his duties almost excessively nobody conversed with young Bealby during the long hours of his first day in service. At midday dinner in the servants' hall, he made one of the kitchen-maids giggle by pulling faces intended to be delicately suggestive of Mr. Mergleson, but that was his nearest approach to disinterested human intercourse.

When the hour for retirement came,—" Get out of it. Go to bed, you dirty little Kicker," said Thomas. "We've had about enough of you for one day " — young Bealby sat for a long time on the edge of his bed weighing the possibilities of arson and poison. He wished he had some poison. Some sort of poison with a medieval manner, poison that hurts before it kills. Also he produced a small penny pocketbook with a glazed black cover and blue edges. He headed one page of this " Mergleson " and entered beneath it three black crosses. Then he opened an account to Thomas, who was manifestly destined to be his principal creditor. Bealby was not a forgiving boy. At the village school they had been too busy making him a good Churchman to attend to things like that. There were a lot of crosses for Thomas.

And while Bealby made these sinister memoranda downstairs Lady Laxton — for Laxton had bought a baronetcy for twenty thousand down to the party funds and a tip to the whip over the Peptonized Milk flotation — Lady Laxton, a couple of floors above Bealby's ruffled head, mused over her approaching week-end party. It was an important week-end party. The Lord Chancellor of England was coming. Never before had she had so much as a member of the Cabinet at Shonts. He was coming, and do what she would she could not help but connect it with her very strong desire to see the master of Shonts in the clear scarlet of a Deputy Lieutenant. Peter would look so well in that. The Lord Chancellor was coming and to meet him and to circle about him there were Lord John Woodenhouse and Slinker Bond, there were the Countess of Barracks and Mrs. Rampound Pilby, the novelist, with her husband Rampound Pilby,

there was Professor Timbre, the philosopher, and there were four smaller (though quite good) people who would run about very satisfactorily among the others. (At least she thought they would run about very satisfactorily amongst the others, not imagining any evil of her cousin Captain Douglas.)

All this good company in Shonts filled Lady Laxton with a pleasant realization of progressive successes, but at the same time one must confess that she felt a certain diffidence. In her heart of hearts she knew she had not made this party. It had happened to her. How it might go on happening to her she did not know, it was beyond her control. She hoped very earnestly that everything would pass off well.

The Lord Chancellor was as big a guest as any she had had. One must grow as one grows, but still, — being easy and friendly with him would be, she knew, a tremendous effort. Rather like being easy and friendly with an elephant. She was not good at conversation. The task of interesting people taxed her and puzzled her....

It was Slinker Bond, the whip, who had arranged the whole business — after, it must be confessed, a hint from Sir Peter. Laxton had complained that the government were neglecting this part of the country. “They ought to show up more than they do in the county,” said Sir Peter and added almost carelessly, “I could easily put anybody up at Shonts.” There were to be two select dinner parties and a large but still select Sunday lunch to let in the countryside to the spectacle of the Laxtons taking their (new) proper place at Shonts....

It was not only the sense of her own deficiencies that troubled Lady Laxton; there were also her husband’s excesses. He had — it was no use disguising it — rather too much the manner of an employer. He had a way of getting, how could one put it? — confident at dinner, and Mergleson seemed to delight in filling up his glass. Then he would contradict a good deal.... She felt that Lord Chancellors however are the sort of men one doesn’t contradict....

Then the Lord Chancellor was said to be interested in philosophy — a difficult subject. She had got Timbre to talk to him upon that. Timbre was a professor of philosophy at Oxford, so that was sure to be all right. But she wished she knew one or two good safe things to

say in philosophy herself. She had long felt the need of a secretary and now she felt it more than ever. If she had a secretary she could just tell him what it was she wanted to talk about and he could get her one or two of the right books and mark the best passages and she could learn it all up.

She feared — it was a worrying fear — that Laxton would say right out and very early in the week-end that he didn't believe in philosophy. He had a way of saying he "didn't believe in" large things like that, art, philanthropy, novels, and so on. Sometimes he said, "I don't believe in all this " — art or whatever it was. She had watched people's faces when he had said it and she had come to the conclusion that saying you don't believe in things isn't the sort of thing people say nowadays. It was wrong somehow. But she did not want to tell Laxton directly that it was wrong. He would remember if she did, but he had a way of taking such things rather badly at the time.... She hated him to take things badly.

"If one could invent some little hint," she whispered to herself.

She had often wished she was better at hints.

She was, you see, a gentlewoman, modest, kindly. Her people were quite good people. Poor of course. But she was not clever, she was anything but clever. And the wives of these captains of industry need to be very clever indeed if they are to escape a magnificent social isolation. They get the titles and the big places and all that sort of thing, people don't at all intend to isolate them, but there is nevertheless an inadvertent avoidance....

Even as she uttered these words, "If one could invent some little hint," Bealby down there less than forty feet away through the solid floor below her feet and a little to the right was wetting his stump of pencil as wet as he could in order to ensure a sufficiently emphatic fourteenth cross on the score sheet of the doomed Thomas. Most of the other thirteen marks were done with such hard breathing emphasis that the print of them went more than half-way through that little blue-edged book.

§ 5

The arrival of the week-end guests impressed Bealby at first merely as a blessed influence that withdrew the four menservants into that unknown world on the other side of the green baize door, but then he learnt that it also involved the appearance of five new persons, two valets and three maids, for whom places had to be laid in the steward's room. Otherwise Lady Laxton's social arrangements had no more influence upon the mind of Bealby than the private affairs of the Emperor of China. There was something going on up there, beyond even his curiosity. All he heard of it was a distant coming and going of vehicles and some slight talk to which he was inattentive while the coachman and grooms were having a drink in the pantry — until these maids and valets appeared. They seemed to him to appear suddenly out of nothing like slugs after rain, black and rather shiny, sitting about inactively and quietly consuming small matters. He disliked them and they regarded him without affection or respect.

Who cared? He indicated his feeling towards them as soon as he was out of the steward's room by a gesture of the hand and nose venerable only by reason of its antiquity.

He had things more urgent to think about than strange valets and maids. Thomas had laid hands on him, jeered at him, inflicted shameful indignities on him, and he wanted to kill Thomas in some frightful manner. (But if possible unobtrusively.)

If he had been a little Japanese boy this would have been an entirely honourable desire. It would have been Bushido and all that sort of thing. In the gardener's stepson however it is — undesirable....

Thomas, on the other hand, having remarked the red light of revenge in Bealby's eye and being secretly afraid, felt that his honour was concerned in not relaxing his persecutions. He called him " icker" and when he did not answer to that name, he called him "Snorter," "Bleater," "nooks" and finally tweaked his ear. Then he saw fit to assume that Bealby was deaf and that ear- tweaking was the only available method of address. This led on to the convention of a sign language whereby ideas were communicated to Bealby by means of painful but frequently quite ingeniously symbolical freedoms with various parts of his person. Also Thomas affected to

discover uncleanliness in Bealby's head, and succeeded after many difficulties in putting it into a sinkful of lukewarm water.

Meanwhile young Bealby devoted such scanty time as he could give to reflection to debating whether it was better to attack Thomas suddenly with a carving knife or throw a lighted lamp. The large pantry inkpot of pewter might be effective in its way, he thought, but he doubted whether in the event of a charge it had sufficient stopping power. He was also curiously attracted by a long two-pronged toasting fork that hung at the side of the pantry fireplace. It had reach....

Over all these dark thoughts and ill-concealed emotions Mr. Mergleson prevailed, large yet speedy, speedy yet exact, parroting orders and making plump gestures, performing duties and seeing that duties were performed.

Matters came to a climax late on Saturday night at the end of a trying day, just before Mr. Mergleson went round to lock up and turn out the lights.

Thomas came into the pantry close behind Bealby who, greatly belated through his own inefficiency, was carrying a tray of glasses from the steward's room, applied an ungentle hand to his neck, and ruffled up his back hair in a smart and painful manner. At the same time Thomas remarked, "Burrrrh!"

Bealby stood still for a moment and then put down his tray on the table and, making peculiar sounds as he did so, resorted very rapidly to the toasting fork.... He got a prong into Thomas's chin at the first prod.

How swift are the changes of the human soul! At the moment of his thrust young Bealby was a primordial savage; so soon as he saw this incredible piercing of Thomas's chin — for all the care that Bealby had taken it might just as well have been Thomas's eye — he moved swiftly through the ages and became a simple Christian child. He abandoned violence and fled.

The fork hung for a moment from the visage of Thomas like a twisted beard of brass, and then rattled on the ground.

Thomas clapped his hand to his chin and discovered blood.

"You little — !" He never found the right word, (which perhaps is just as well), instead he started in pursuit of Bealby.

Bealby in his sudden horror of his own act — and Thomas — fled headlong into the passage and made straight for the service stairs that went up into a higher world. He had little time to think. Thomas with a red-smeared chin appeared in pursuit. Thomas the avenger. Thomas really roused. Bealby shot through the green baize door and the pursuing footman pulled up only just in time not to follow him.

Only just in time. He had an instinctive instant anxious fear of great dangers. He heard something, a sound as though the young of some very large animal had squeaked feebly. He had a glimpse of something black and white — and large....

Then something, some glass thing, smashed.

He steadied the green baize door which was wobbling on its brass hinges, controlled his panting breath and listened.

A low rich voice was — ejaculating. It was not Bealby's voice, it was the voice of some substantial person being quietly but deeply angry. They were the ejaculations restrained in tone but not in quality of a ripe and well-stored mind, — no boy's thin stuff.

Then very softly Thomas pushed open the door just widely enough to see, and as instantly let it fall back into place.

Very gently and yet with an alert rapidity he turned about and stole down the service stairs.

His superior officer appeared in the passage below.

Mr. Mergleson," he cried, "I say — Mr. Mergleson."

"What's up?" said Mr. Mergleson,

"He's gone!"

"Who?"

"Bealby."

"Home?" This almost hopefully.

"No."

"Where?"

"Up there! I think he ran against somebody."

Mr. Mergleson scrutinized his subordinate's face for a second. Then he listened intently; both men listened intently.

"Have to fetch him out of that," said Mr. Mergleson suddenly preparing for brisk activity.

Thomas bent lower over the banisters.

"The Lord Chancellor!" he whispered with white lips and a

sideways gesture of his head.

"What about 'im?" said Mergleson arrested by something in the manner of Thomas.

Thomas's whisper became so fine that Mr. Mergleson drew nearer to catch it. Thomas repeated the last remark. "He's just through there — on the landing — cursing and swearing— 'orrible things — more like a mad turkey than a human being."

"Where's Bealby?"

"He must almost 'ave run into 'im," said Thomas after consideration.

"But now — where is he?"

Thomas pantomimed infinite perplexity.

Mr. Mergleson reflected and decided upon his line. He came up the service staircase, lifted his chin and with an air of meek officiousness went through the green door. There was no one now on the landing, there was nothing remarkable on the landing except a broken tumbler, but half-way up the grand staircase stood the Lord Chancellor. Under one arm the great jurist carried a soda-water syphon and he grasped a decanter of whisky in his hand. He turned sharply at the sound of the green baize door and bent upon Mr. Mergleson the most terrible eyebrows that ever surely adorned a legal visage. He was very red in the face and savage-looking.

"Was it you," he said with a threatening gesture of the decanter and his voice betrayed a noble indignation, "was it you who slapped me behind?"

"Slapped you behind, me lord?"

"Slapped me behind. Don't I speak — plainly?"

"I — such a libbuty, me lord!"

"Idiot! I ask you a plain question."

With almost inconceivable alacrity Mr. Mergleson rushed up three steps, leapt forward and caught the syphon as it slipped from his lordship's arm.

He caught it, but at a price. He overset and, clasping it in his hands, struck his lordship first with the syphon on the left shin and then butted him with a face that was still earnestly respectful in the knees. His lordship's legs were driven sideways, so that they were no longer beneath his centre of gravity. With a monosyllabic remark of

a topographical nature his lordship collapsed upon Mr. Mergleson. The decanter flew out of his grasp and smashed presently with emphasis upon the landing below. The syphon escaping from the wreckage of Mr. Mergleson and drawn no doubt by a natural affinity, rolled noisily from step to step in pursuit of the decanter....

It was a curious little procession that hurried down the great staircase of Shonts that night. First the whisky like a winged harbinger with the pedestrian syphon in pursuit. Then the great lawyer gripping the great butler by the tails of his coat and punching furiously. Then Mr. Mergleson trying wildly to be respectful — even in disaster. First the Lord Chancellor dived over Mr. Mergleson grappling as he passed, then Mr. Mergleson, attempting explanations, was pulled backwards over the Lord Chancellor; then again the Lord Chancellor was for a giddy but vindictive moment uppermost; a second rotation and they reached the landing.

Bang! There was a deafening report!

II. — A WEEK-END AT SHONTS

§ 1

THE week-end visit is a form of entertainment peculiar to Great Britain. It is a thing that could have been possible only in a land essentially aristocratic and mellow, in which even the observance of the Sabbath has become mellow. At every London terminus on a Saturday afternoon the outgoing trains have an unusually large proportion of first-class carriages, and a peculiar abundance of rich-looking dressing-bags provoke the covetous eye. A discreet activity of valets and maids mingles with the stimulated alertness of the porters. One marks celebrities in gay raiment. There is an indefinable air of distinction upon platform and bookstall. Sometimes there are carriages reserved for especially privileged parties. There are greetings.

"And so you are coming too!"

"No, this time it is Shonts."

"The place where they found the Rubens. Who has it now?" ....

Through this cheerfully prosperous throng went the Lord Chancellor with his high nose, those eyebrows of his which he seemed to be able to furl or unfurl at will, and his expression of tranquil self-sufficiency. He was going to Shonts for his party and not for his pleasure, but there was no reason why that should appear upon his face. He went along preoccupied, pretending to see nobody, leaving to others the disadvantage of the greeting. In his right hand he carried a small important bag of leather. Under his left arm he bore a philosophical work by Doctor MacTaggart, three illustrated papers, the *Fortnightly Review*, the day's *Times*, the *Hibbert Journal*, *Punch* and two blue books. His lordship never quite knew the limits set to what he could carry under his arm. His man, Candler, followed therefore at a suitable distance with several papers that had already been dropped, alert to retrieve any further losses.

At the large bookstall they passed close by Mrs. Rampound Pilby who according to her custom was feigning to be a member of the general public and was asking the clerk about her last book. The

Lord Chancellor saw Rampound Pilby hovering at hand and deftly failed to catch his eye. He loathed the Rampound Pilbys. He speculated for a moment what sort of people could possibly stand Mrs. Pilby's vast pretensions — even from Saturday to Monday. One dinner party on her right hand had glutted him for life. He chose a corner seat, took possession of both it and the seat opposite it in order to have somewhere to put his feet, left Candler to watch over and pack in his hand luggage, and went high up the platform, remaining there with his back to the world — rather like a bigger more aquiline Napoleon — in order to evade the great novelist.

In this he was completely successful.

He returned however to find Candler on the verge of a personal conflict with a very fair young man in grey. He was so fair as to be almost an albino, except that his eyes were quick and brown; he was blushing the brightest pink and speaking very rapidly.

"These two places," said Candler, breathless with the badness of his case, "are engaged."

"Oh ve-*very* well," said the very fair young man, with his eyebrows and moustache looking very pale by contrast, "have it so. But do permit me to occupy the middle seat of the carriage. With a residuary interest in the semi-gentleman's place."

"You little know, young man, whom you are calling a semi-gentleman," said Candler, whose speciality was grammar.

"Here he is!" said the young gentleman.

"Which place will you have, my lord?" asked Candler, abandoning his case altogether.

"Facing," said the Lord Chancellor slowly unfurling the eyebrows and scowling at the young man in grey.

"Then I'll have the other," said the very fair young man talking very glibly. He spoke with a quick low voice, like one who forces himself to keep going. "You see," he said, addressing the great jurist with the extreme familiarity of the courageously nervous, "I've gone into this sort of thing before. First, mind you, I have a fair look for a vacant corner. I'm not the sort to spoil sport. But if there isn't a vacant corner I look for traces of a semi-gentleman. A semi-gentleman is one who has a soft cap and not an umbrella — his friend in the opposite seat has the umbrella — or he has an umbrella

and not a soft cap, or a waterproof and not a bag, or a bag and not a waterproof. And a half interest in a rug. That's what I call a semi-gentleman. You see the idea. Sort of divided beggar. Nothing in any way offensive."

"Sir," said the Lord Chancellor, interrupting in a voice of concentrated passion, "I don't care a *rap* what you call a semi-gentleman. *Will* you get out of my way?"

"Just as you please," said the very fair young man, and going a few paces from the carriage door he whistled for the boy with the papers. He was bearing up bravely.

"Pink 'un?" said the very fair young gentleman almost breathlessly. "*Black and White*? What's all these others? *Athenaeum*? *Sporting and Dramatic*? Right-O. And — Eh! What? Do I look the sort that buys a *Spectator*? You don't know! Do I wear galoshes? My dear boy, where's your *savoir faire*?"

§ 2

The Lord Chancellor was a philosopher and not easily perturbed. His severe manner was consciously assumed and never much more than skin-deep. He had already furled his eyebrows and dismissed his vis-a-vis from his mind before the train started. He turned over the *Hibbert Journal*, and read in it with a large tolerance.

Dimly on the outskirts of his consciousness the very fair young man hovered, as a trifling annoyance, as something pink and hot rustling a sheet of a discordant shade of pink, as something that got in the way of his legs and whistled softly some trivial cheerful air, just to show how little it cared. Presently, very soon, this vague trouble would pass out of his consciousness altogether....

The Lord Chancellor was no mere amateur of philosophy. His activities in that direction were a part of his public reputation. He lectured on religion and aesthetics. He was a fluent Hegelian. He spent his holidays, it was understood, in the Absolute — at any rate in Germany. He would sometimes break into philosophy at dinner tables and particularly over the dessert, and be more luminously incomprehensible while still apparently sober, than almost anyone.

An article in the Hibbert caught and held his attention. It attempted to define a new and doubtful variety of Infinity. You know of course that there are many sorts and species of Infinity, and that the Absolute is just the king among Infinities as the lion is king among the beasts....

"I say," said a voice coming out of the world of Relativity and coughing the cough of those who break a silence, "*You* aren't going to Shonts, are you?"

The Lord Chancellor returned slowly to earth.

"Just seen your label," said the very fair young man. "You see, — *I'm* going to Shonts."

The Lord Chancellor remained outwardly serene. He reflected for a moment. And then he fell into that snare which is more fatal to great lawyers and judges perhaps than to any other class of men, the snare of the crushing repartee. One had come into his head now, — a beauty.

"Then we shall meet there," he said in his suavest manner.

"Well — rather."

"It would be a great pity," said the Lord Chancellor with an effective blandness, using a kind of wry smile that he employed to make things humorous, "it would be a great pity, don't you think, to anticipate that pleasure."

And having smiled the retort well home with his head a little on one side, he resumed with large leisurely movements the reading of his Hibbert Journal.

"Got me there," said the very fair young man belatedly, looking boiled to a turn, and after a period of restlessness settled down to an impatient perusal of Black and White.

"There's a whole blessed week-end of course," the young man remarked presently without looking up from his paper and apparently pursuing some obscure meditations....

A vague uneasiness crept into the Lord Chancellor's mind as he continued to appear to peruse. Out of what train of thought could such a remark arise? His weakness for crushing retort had a little betrayed him....

It was however only when he found himself upon the platform of Chelsome, which as everyone knows is the station for Shonts, and

discovered Mr. and Mrs. Rampound Pilby upon the platform, looking extraordinarily like a national monument and its custodian, that the Lord Chancellor began to realize that he was in the grip of fate, and that the service he was doing his party by week-ending with the Laxtons was likely to be not simply joyless but disagreeable.

Well anyhow he had MacTaggart, and he could always work in his own room....

§ 3

By the end of dinner the Lord Chancellor was almost at the end of his large but clumsy endurance; he kept his eyebrows furled only by the most strenuous relaxation of his muscles, and within he was a sea of silent blasphemies. All sorts of little things had accumulated....

He exercised an unusual temperance with the port and old brandy his host pressed upon him, feeling that he dared not relax lest his rage had its way with him. The cigars were quite intelligent at any rate, and he smoked and listened with a faintly perceptible disdain to the conversation of the other men. At any rate Mrs. Rampound Pilby was out of the room. The talk had arisen out of a duologue that had preceded the departure of the ladies, a duologue of Timbre's, about apparitions and the reality of the future life. Sir Peter Laxton, released from the eyes of his wife, was at liberty to say he did not believe in all this stuff; it was just thought transference and fancy and all that sort of thing. His declaration did not arrest the flow of feeble instances and experiences into which such talk invariably degenerates. His lordship remained carelessly attentive, his eyebrows unfurled but drooping, his cigar upward at an acute angle; he contributed no anecdotes, content now and then to express himself compactly by some brief sentence of pure Hegelian — much as a Mahometan might spit.

"Why! come to that, they say Shonts is haunted," said Sir Peter. "I suppose we could have a ghost here in no time if I chose to take it on. Rare place for a ghost too."

The very fair young man of the train had got a name now and was Captain Douglas. When he was not blushing too brightly he was

rather good-looking. He was a distant cousin of Lady Laxton. He impressed the Lord Chancellor as unabashed. He engaged people in conversation with a cheerful familiarity that excluded only the Lord Chancellor, and even at the Lord Chancellor he looked ever and again. He pricked up his ears at the mention of ghosts, and afterwards when the Lord Chancellor came to think things over, it seemed to him that he had caught a curious glance of the Captain's bright little brown eye.

"What sort of ghost, Sir Peter? Chains? Eh? No?"

"Nothing of that sort, it seems. I don't know much about it, I wasn't sufficiently interested. No, sort of spook that bangs about and does you a mischief. What's its name? Plundergeist?"

"Poltergeist," the Lord Chancellor supplied carelessly in the pause.

"Runs its hand over your hair in the dark. Taps your shoulder. All nonsense. But we don't tell the servants. Sort of thing I don't believe in. Easily explained, — what with paneling and secret passages and priests' holes and all that."

"Priests' holes!" Douglas was excited.

"Where they hid. Perfect rabbit warren. There's one going out from the drawing-room alcove. Quite a good room in its way. But you know," — a note of wrath crept into Sir Peter's voice,— "they didn't treat me fairly about these priests' holes. I ought to have had a sketch and a plan of these priests' holes. When a chap is given possession of a place, he ought to be given possession. Well! I don't know where half of them are myself. That's not possession. Else we might refurnish them and do them up a bit. I guess they're pretty musty."

Captain Douglas spoke with his eye on the Lord Chancellor. "Sure there isn't a murdered priest in the place, Sir Peter?" he asked.

"Nothing of the sort," said Sir Peter. "I don't believe in these priests' holes. Half of 'em never had priests in 'em. It's all pretty tidy rot I expect — come to the bottom of it...."

The conversation did not get away from ghosts and secret passages until the men went to the drawing-room. If it seemed likely to do so Captain Douglas pulled it back. He seemed to delight in these silly particulars; the sillier they were the more he was

delighted.

The Lord Chancellor was a little preoccupied by one of those irrational suspicions that will sometimes afflict the most intelligent of men. Why did Douglas want to know all the particulars about the Shonts ghosts? Why every now and then did he glance with that odd expression at one's face — a glance half appealing and half amused? Amused! It was a strange fancy, but the Lord Chancellor could almost have sworn that the young man was laughing at him. At dinner he had had that feeling one has at times of being talked about; he had glanced along the table to discover the Captain and a rather plain woman, that idiot Timbre's wife she probably was, with their heads together looking up at him quite definitely and both manifestly pleased by something Douglas was telling her....

What was it Douglas had said in the train? Something like a threat. But the exact words had slipped the Lord Chancellor's memory....

The Lord Chancellor's preoccupation was just sufficient to make him a little unwary. He drifted into grappling distance of Mrs. Rampound Pilby. Her voice caught him like a lasso and drew him in.

"Well, and how is Lord Moggeridge now?" she asked.

What on earth is one to say to such an impertinence?

She was always like that. She spoke to a man of the calibre of Lord Bacon as though she was speaking to a schoolboy home for the holidays. She had an invincible air of knowing all through everybody. It gave rather confidence to her work than charm to her manner.

"Do you still go on with your philosophy?" she said.

"No," shouted the Lord Chancellor, losing all self-control for the moment and waving his eyebrows about madly, "No, I go off with it."

"For your vacations? Ah, Lord Moggeridge, how I envy you great lawyers your long vacations. 1 — never get a vacation. Always we poor authors are pursued by our creations, sometimes it's typescript, sometimes it's proofs. Not that I really complain of proofs. I confess to a weakness for proofs. Sometimes alas! it's criticism. Such undiscerning criticism!..."

The Lord Chancellor began to think very swiftly of some

tremendous lie that would enable him to escape at once without incivility from Lady Laxton's drawing-room. Then he perceived that Mrs. Rampound Pilby was asking him: " Is that the Captain Douglas, or his brother who's in love with the actress woman?"

The Lord Chancellor made no answer. What he thought was: " Great Silly Idiot! How should *I* know?"

"I think it must be the one, — the one who had to leave Portsmouth in disgrace because of the ragging scandal. He did nothing there, they say, but organize practical jokes. Some of them were quite subtle practical jokes. He's a cousin of our hostess; that perhaps accounts for his presence...."

The Lord Chancellor's comment betrayed the drift of his thoughts. "He'd better not try that sort of thing on here," he said. "I abominate — clowning."

Drawing-room did not last very long. Even Lady Laxton could not miss the manifest gloom of her principal guest, and after the good-nights and barley water and lemonade on the great landing Sir Peter led Lord Moggeridge by the arm — he hated being led by the arm — into the small but still spacious apartment that was called the study. The Lord Chancellor was now very thirsty; he was not used to abstinence of any sort; but Sir Peter's way of suggesting a drink roused such a fury of resentment in him that he refused tersely and conclusively. There was nobody else in the study but Captain Douglas, who seemed to hesitate upon the verge of some familiar address, and Lord Woodenhouse who was thirsty too, and held a vast tumbler of whisky and soda, with a tinkle of ice in it, on his knee in a way annoying to a parched man. The Lord Chancellor helped himself to a cigar and assumed the middle of the fireplace with an air of contentment, but he could feel the self-control running out of the heels of his boots.

Sir Peter after a quite unsuccessful invasion of his own hearthrug — the Lord Chancellor stood like a rock — secured the big armchair, stuck his feet out towards his distinguished guest and resumed a talk that he had been holding with Lord Woodenhouse about firearms. Mergleson had as usual been too attentive to his master's glass, and the fine edge was off Sir Peter's deference. "I always have carried firearms," he said, "and I always shall. Used properly they are a great

protection. Even in the country how are you to know who you're going to run up against — any when?"

"But you might shoot and hit something," said Douglas.

"Properly used, I said — properly used. Whipping out a revolver and shooting at a man, that's not properly used. Almost as bad as pointing it at him — which is pretty certain to make him fly straight at you. If he's got an ounce of pluck. But *I* said properly used and I *mean* properly used."

The Lord Chancellor tried to think about that article on Infinities, while appearing to listen to this fool's talk. He despised revolvers. Armed with such eyebrows as his it was natural for him to despise revolvers.

"Now, I've got some nice little barkers upstairs," said Sir Peter. "I'd almost welcome a burglar, just to try them."

"If you shoot a burglar," said Lord Woodenhouse abruptly, with a gust of that ill-temper that was frequent at Shonts towards bed-time, "when he's not attacking you, it s murder."

Sir Peter held up an offensively pacifying hand. "I know *that*," he said, "you needn't tell me *that*."

He raised his voice a little to increase his already excessive accentuations. "*I* said properly used."

A yawn took the Lord Chancellor unawares and he caught it dexterously with his hand. Then he saw Douglas hastily pull at his little blonde moustache to conceal a smile, — grinning ape! What was there to smile at? The man had been smiling all the evening.

Up to something?

"Now let me tell you," said Sir Peter, "let me tell you the proper way to use a revolver. You whip it out and instantly let fly at the ground. You should never let anyone see a revolver ever before they hear it — see? You let fly at the ground first off, and the concussion stuns them. It doesn't stun you. You expect it, they don't. See? There you are — five shots left, master of the situation."

"I think, Sir Peter, I'll bid you good-night," said the Lord Chancellor, allowing his eye to rest for one covetous moment on the decanter and struggling with the devil of pride.

Sir Peter made a gesture of extreme friendliness from his chair, expressive of the Lord Chancellor's freedom to do whatever he

pleased at Shonts. “I may perhaps tell you a little story that happened once in Morocco.”

“My eyes won’t keep open any longer,” said Captain Douglas suddenly, with a whirl of his knuckles into his sockets, and stood up.

Lord Woodenhouse stood up too.

“You see,” said Sir Peter, standing also but sticking to his subject and his hearer. “This was when I was younger than I am now, you must understand, and I wasn’t married. Just mooching about a bit, between business and pleasure. Under such circumstances one goes into parts of a foreign town where one wouldn’t go if one was older and wiser....”

Captain Douglas left Sir Peter and Woodenhouse to it.

He emerged on the landing and selected one of the lighted candlesticks upon the table. “Lord!” he whispered. He grimaced in soliloquy and then perceived the Lord Chancellor regarding him with suspicion and disfavour from the ascending staircase. He attempted ease. For the first time since the train incident he addressed Lord Moggeridge.

“I gather, my lord, you don’t believe in ghosts?” he said.

“No, sir,” said the Lord Chancellor, “I don’t.”

“They won’t trouble me to-night.”

“They won’t trouble any of us.”

“Fine old house anyhow,” said Captain Douglas.

The Lord Chancellor disdained to reply. He went on his way upstairs.

§ 4

When the Lord Chancellor sat down before the thoughtful fire in the fine old panelled room assigned to him he perceived that he was too disturbed to sleep. This was going to be an infernal week-end. The worst week-end he had ever had. Mrs. Rampound Pilby maddened him; Timbre, who was a Pragmatist — which stands in the same relation to a Hegelian that a small dog does to a large cat — exasperated him; he loathed Laxton, detested Rampound Pilby and feared — as far as he was capable of fearing anything — Captain

Douglas. There was no refuge, no soul in the house to whom he could turn for consolation and protection from these others. Slinker Bond could talk only of the affairs of the party, and the Lord Chancellor, being Lord Chancellor, had lost any interest in the affairs of the party; Woodenhouse could talk of nothing. The women were astonishingly negligible. There were practically no pretty women. There ought always to be pretty young women for a Lord Chancellor, pretty young women who can at least seem to listen....

And he was atrociously thirsty.

His room was supplied only with water, — stuff you use to clean your teeth — and nothing

No good thinking about it....

He decided that the best thing he could do to compose himself before turning in would be to sit down at the writing-table and write a few sheets of Hegelian — about that Infinity article in the *Hibbert*. There is indeed no better consolation for a troubled mind than the Hegelian exercises; they lift it above — everything. He took off his coat and sat down to this beautiful amusement, but he had scarcely written a page before his thirst became a torment. He kept thinking of that great tumbler Woodenhouse had held, — sparkling, golden, cool — and stimulating.

What he wanted was a good stiff whisky and a cigar, one of Laxton's cigars, the only good thing in his entertainment so far.

And then Philosophy.

Even as a student he had been a worker of the Teutonic type, — never abstemious.

He thought of ringing and demanding these comforts, and then it occurred to him that it was a little late to ring for things. Why not fetch them from the study himself?....

He opened his door and looked out upon the great staircase. It was a fine piece of work, that staircase. Low, broad, dignified....

There seemed to be nobody about. The lights were still on. He listened for a little while, and then put on his coat and went with a soft swiftness that was still quite dignified downstairs to the study, the study redolent of Sir Peter.

He made his modest collection.

Lord Moggeridge came nearer to satisfaction as he emerged from

the study that night at Shonts than at any other moment during this ill-advised week-end. In his pocket were four thoroughly good cigars. In one hand he held a cut glass decanter of whisky. In the other a capacious tumbler. Under his arm, with that confidence in the unlimited portative power of his arm that nothing could shake, he had tucked the syphon. His soul rested upon the edge of tranquillity like a bird that has escaped the fowler. He was already composing his next sentence about that new variety of Infinity....

Then something struck him from behind and impelled him forward a couple of paces. It was something hairy, something in the nature, he thought afterwards, of a worn broom. And also there were two other things softer and a little higher on each side....

Then it was he made that noise like the young of some large animal.

He dropped the glass in a hasty attempt to save the syphon....

"What in the name of Heavens?" he

cried, and found himself alone.

"Captain Douglas!"

The thought leapt to his mind.

But indeed it was not Captain Douglas. It was Bealby. Bealby in panic flight from Thomas. And how was Bealby to know that this large, richly laden man was the Lord Chancellor of England? Never before had Bealby seen anyone in evening dress except a butler, and so he supposed this was just some larger, finer kind of butler that they kept upstairs. Some larger, finer kind of butler blocking the path of escape. Bealby had taken in the situation with the rapidity of a hunted animal. The massive form blocked the door to the left....

In the playground of the village school Bealby had been pre-eminent for his dodging; he moved as quickly as a lizard. His little hands, his head, poised with the skill of a practised butter, came against that mighty back, and then Bealby had dodged into the study....

But it seemed to Lord Moggeridge, staggering over his broken glass and circling about defensively, that this fearful indignity could come only from Captain Douglas. Foolery.... Blup, blup.... Sham Poltergeist. Imbeciles....

He said as much, believing that this young man and possibly

confederates were within hearing; he said as much — hotly. He went on to remarks of an unphilosophical tendency about Captain Douglas generally, and about army officers, practical joking, Laxton's hospitalities, Shonts.... Thomas, you will remember, heard him....

Nothing came of it. No answer, not a word of apology.

At last in a great dudgeon and with a kind of wariness about his back, the Lord Chancellor, with things more spoilt for him than ever, went on his way upstairs.

When the green baize door opened behind him, he turned like a shot, and a large foolish-faced butler appeared. Lord Moggeridge with a sceptre-like motion of the decanter very quietly and firmly asked him a simple question and then, then the lunatic must needs leap up three stairs and dive suddenly and upsettingly at his legs.

Lord Moggeridge was paralysed with amazement. His legs were struck from under him. He uttered one brief topographical cry.

(To Sir Peter unfortunately it sounded like "Help! ")

For a few seconds the impressions that rushed upon Lord Moggeridge were too rapid for adequate examination. He had a compelling fancy to kill butlers. Things culminated in a pistol shot. And then he found himself sitting on the landing beside a disgracefully dishevelled manservant, and his host was running downstairs to them with a revolver in his hand.

On occasion Lord Moggeridge could produce a tremendous voice. He did so now. For a moment he stared panting at Sir Peter, and then emphasized by a pointing finger came the voice. Never had it been so charged with emotion.

"What does this mean, you, sir?" he shouted. "What does this mean?"

It was exactly what Sir Peter had intended to say.

§ 5

Explanations are detestable things. And anyhow it isn't right to address your host as "You, sir."

§ 6

Throughout the evening the persuasion had grown in Lady Laxton's mind that all was not going well with the Lord Chancellor. It was impossible to believe he was enjoying himself. But she did not know how to give things a turn for the better. Clever women would have known, but she was so convinced she was not clever that she did not even try.

Thing after thing had gone wrong.

How was she to know that there were two sorts of philosophy — quite different? She had thought philosophy was philosophy. But it seemed that there were these two sorts, if not more; a round large sort that talked about the Absolute and was scornfully superior and rather irascible, and a jabby-pointed sort that called people " Tender " or " Tough," and was generally much too familiar. To bring them together was just mixing trouble. There ought to be little books for hostesses explaining these things....

Then it was extraordinary that the Lord Chancellor who was so tremendously large and clever wouldn't go and talk to Mrs. Rampound Pilby who was also so tremendously large and clever. Repeatedly Lady Laxton had tried to get them into touch with one another. Until at last the Lord Chancellor had said distinctly and deliberately, when she had suggested his going across to the eminent writer, "God forbid!" Her dream of a large clever duologue that she could afterwards recall with pleasure was altogether shattered. She thought the Lord Chancellor uncommonly hard to please. These weren't the only people for him. Why couldn't he "chat party secrets" with Slinker Bond or say things to Lord Woodenhouse? You could say anything you liked to Lord Woodenhouse. Or talk with Mr. Timbre. Mrs. Timbre had given him an excellent opening; she had asked, wasn't it a dreadful anxiety always to have the Great Seal to mind? He had simply grunted.... And then why did he keep on looking so dangerously at Captain Douglas?....

Perhaps to-morrow things would take a turn for the better....

One can at least be hopeful. Even if one is not clever one can be that....

From such thoughts as these it was that this unhappy hostess was

roused by a sound of smashing glass, a rumpus, and a pistol shot.

She stood up, she laid her hand on her heart, she said “ Oh!” and gripped her dressing-table for support....

After a long time and when it seemed that it was now nothing more than a hubbub of voices, in which her husband’s could be distinguished clearly, she crept out very softly upon the upper landing.

She perceived her cousin. Captain Douglas, looking extremely fair and frail and untrustworthy in a much too gorgeous kimono dressing-gown of embroidered Japanese silk. “I can assure you, my lord,” he was saying in a strange high-pitched deliberate voice, “on my word of honour as a soldier, on my word of honour as a soldier, that I know absolutely nothing about it.”

“Sure it wasn’t all imagination, my lord?” Sir Peter asked with his inevitable infelicity...

She decided to lean over the balustrading and ask very quietly and clearly:

“Lord Moggeridge, please! is anything the matter?”

§ 7

All human beings are egotists, but there is no egotism to compare with the egotism of the very young.

Bealby was so much the centre of his world that he was incapable of any interpretation of this shouting and uproar, this smashing of decanters and firing of pistol shots, except in reference to himself. He supposed it to be a Hue and Cry. He supposed that he was being hunted — hunted by a pack of great butlers hounded on by the irreparably injured Thomas. The thought of upstairs gentlefolks passed quite out of his mind. He snatched up a faked Syrian dagger that lay, in the capacity of a paper knife, on the study table, concealed himself under the chintz valance of a sofa, adjusted its rumpled skirts neatly, and awaited the issue of events.

For a time events did not issue. They remained talking noisily upon the great staircase. Bealby could not hear what was said, but most of what was said appeared to be flat contradiction.

“Perchance,” whispered Bealby to himself, gathering courage, “perchance we have eluded them.... A breathing space....”

At last a woman’s voice mingled with the others and seemed a little to assuage them....

Then it seemed to Bealby that they were dispersing to beat the house for him. “Goodnight again then,” said someone.

That puzzled him, but he decided it was a “blind.” He remained very, very still.

He heard a choking in the apartment — the blue parlour it was called — between the study and the dining-room. Electric light?

Then someone came into the study. Bealby’s eye was as close to the ground as he could get it. He was breathless, he moved his head with an immense circumspection. The valance was translucent but not transparent, below it there was a crack of vision, a strip of carpet, the castors of chairs. Among these things he perceived feet — not ankles, it did not go up to that, but just feet. Large flatfish feet. A pair. They stood still, and Bealby’s hand lighted on the hilt of his dagger.

The person above the feet seemed to be surveying the room — or reflecting.

“Drunk!... Old fool’s either drunk or mad! That’s about the truth of it,” said a voice.

Mergleson! Angry, but parroty and unmistakable.

The feet went across to the table and there were faint sounds of refreshment, discreetly administered. Then a moment of profound stillness....

“Ah!” said the voice at last, a voice renewed.

Then the feet went to the passage door, halted in the doorway. There was a double click. The lights went out. Bealby was in absolute darkness.

Then a distant door closed and silence followed upon the dark....

Mr. Mergleson descended to a pantry ablaze with curiosity.

“The Lord Chancellor’s going dotty,” said Mr. Mergleson replying to the inevitable question. “That’s what’s up?” ....

“I tried to save the blessed syphon,” said Mr. Mergleson pursuing his narrative, “and ‘e sprang on me like a leppard. I suppose ‘e thought I wanted to take it away from ‘im., ‘E’d broke a glass

already. ‘Ow, — I don’t know. There it was, lying on the landing....”

“‘Ere’s where ‘e bit my ‘and,” said Mr. Mergleson....

A curious little side-issue occurred to Thomas. “Where’s young Kicker all this time?” he asked.

“Lord!” said Mr. Mergleson, “all them other things, they clean drove ‘im out of my ‘ed. I suppose ‘e’s up there, hiding somewhere....”

He paused. His eye consulted the eye of Thomas.

“‘E’s got be’ind a curtain or something,” said Mr. Mergleson....

“Queer where ‘e can ‘ave got to,” said Mr. Mergleson....

“Can’t be bothered about ‘im,” said Mr. Mergleson.

“I expect he’ll sneak down to ‘is room when things are quiet,” said Thomas, after reflection.

“No good going and looking for ‘im now,” said Mr. Mergleson. “Things upstairs, — they got to settle down....”

But in the small hours Mr. Mergleson awakened and thought of Bealby and wondered whether he was in bed. This became so great an uneasiness that about the hour of dawn he got up and went along the passage to Bealby’ s compartment. Bealby was not there and his bed had not been slept in.

That sinister sense of gathering misfortunes which comes to all of us at times in the small hours, was so strong in the mind of Mr. Mergleson that he went on and told Thomas of this disconcerting fact. Thomas woke with difficulty and rather crossly, but sat up at last, alive to the gravity of Mr. Mergleson’ s mood.

“If ‘e’s found hiding about upstairs after all this upset,” said Mr. Mergleson, and left the rest of the sentence to a sympathetic imagination.

“Now it’s light,” said Mr. Mergleson after a slight pause, “I think we better just go round and ‘ave a look for ‘im. Both of us.”

So Thomas clad himself provisionally, and the two menservants went upstairs very softly and began a series of furtive sweeping movements — very much in the spirit of Lord Kitchener’s historical sweeping movements in the Transvaal — through the stately old rooms in which Bealby must be lurking....

§ 8

Man is the most restless of animals. There is an incessant urgency in his nature. He never knows when he is well off. And so it was that Bealby' s comparative security under the sofa became presently too irksome to be endured. He seemed to himself to stay there for ages, but as a matter of fact, he stayed there only twenty minutes. Then with eyes tempered to the darkness he first struck out an alert attentive head, then crept out and remained for the space of half a minute on all fours surveying the indistinct blacknesses about him.

Then he knelt up. Then he stood up. Then with arms extended and cautious steps he began an exploration of the apartment.

The passion for exploration grows with what it feeds upon. Presently Bealby was feeling his way into the blue parlour and then round by its shuttered and curtained windows to the dining-room. His head was now full of the idea of some shelter, more permanent, less pervious to housemaids than that sofa. He knew enough now of domestic routines to know that upstairs in the early morning was much routed about by housemaids. He found many perplexing turns and corners, and finally got into the dining-room fireplace where it was very dark and kicked against some fireirons. That made his heart beat fast for a time. Then groping on past it, he found in the darkness what few people could have found in the day, the stud that released the panel that hid the opening of the way that led to the priest hole. He felt the thing open, and halted perplexed. In that corner there wasn't a ray of light. For a long time he was trying to think what this opening could be, and then he concluded it was some sort of back way from downstairs.... Well, anyhow it was all exploring. With an extreme gingerliness he got himself through the panel. He closed it almost completely behind him.

Careful investigation brought him to the view that he was in a narrow passage of brick or stone that came in a score of paces to a spiral staircase going both up and down. Up this he went, and presently breathed cool night air and had a glimpse of stars through a narrow slit-like window almost blocked by ivy. Then — what was very disagreeable — something scampered.

When Bealby's heart recovered he went on up again.

He came to the priest hole, a capacious cell six feet square with a bench bed and a little table and chair. It had a small door upon the stairs that was open and a niche cupboard. Here he remained for a time. Then restlessness made him explore a cramped passage, he had to crawl along it for some yards, that came presently into a curious space with wood on one side and stone on the other. Then ahead, most blessed thing! he saw light.

He went blundering towards it and then stopped appalled. From the other side of this wooden wall to the right of him had come a voice.

"Come in!" said the voice. A rich masculine voice that seemed scarcely two yards away.

Bealby became rigid. Then after a long interval he moved — as softly as he could.

The voice soliloquized.

Bealby listened intently, and then when all was still again crept forward two paces more towards the gleam. It was a peephole.

The unseen speaker was walking about. Bealby listened, and the sound of his beating heart mingled with the pad, pad, of slippered footsteps. Then with a brilliant effort his eye was at the chink. All was still again. For a time he was perplexed by what he saw, a large pink shining dome, against a deep greenish grey background. At the base of the dome was a kind of interrupted hedge, brown and leafless,....

Then he realized that he was looking at the top of a head and two enormous eyebrows. The rest was hidden....

Nature surprised Bealby into a penetrating sniff.

"Now," said the occupant of the room, and suddenly he was standing up — Bealby saw a long hairy neck sticking out of a dressing-gown — and walking to the side of the room. "I won't stand it," said the great voice, "I won't stand it. Ape's foolery!"

Then the Lord Chancellor began rapping at the panelling about his apartment.

"Hollow! It all sounds hollow."

Only after a long interval did he resume his writing....

All night long that rat behind the wainscot troubled the Lord Chancellor. Whenever he spoke, whenever he moved about it was

still; whenever he composed himself to write it began to rustle and blunder. Again and again it sniffed, — an annoying kind of sniff. At last the Lord Chancellor gave up his philosophical relaxation and went to bed, turned out the lights and attempted sleep, but this only intensified his sense of an uneasy, sniffing presence close to him. When the light was out it seemed to him that this Thing, whatever it was, instantly came into the room and set the floor creaking and snapping. A Thing perpetually attempting something and perpetually thwarted....

The Lord Chancellor did not sleep a wink. The first feeble infiltration of day found him sitting up in bed, wearily wrathful.... And now surely someone was going along the passage outside!

A great desire to hurt somebody very much seized upon the Lord Chancellor. Perhaps he might hurt that dismal farceur upon the landing! No doubt it was Douglas sneaking back to his own room after the night's efforts.

The Lord Chancellor slipped on his dressing-gown of purple silk. Very softly indeed did he open his bedroom door and very warily peep out. He heard the soft pad of feet upon the staircase.

He crept across the broad passage to the beautiful old balustrading. Down below he saw Mergleson — Mergleson again! — in a shameful deshabille — going like a snake, like a slinking cat, like an assassin, into the door of the study. Rage filled the great man's soul. Gathering up the skirts of his dressing-gown he started in a swift yet noiseless pursuit.

He followed Mergleson through the little parlour and into the dining- room, and then he saw it all! There was a panel open, and Mergleson very cautiously going in. Of course! They had got at him through the priest hole. They had been playing on his nerves. All night they had been doing it — no doubt in relays. The whole house was in this conspiracy.

With his eyebrows spread like the wings of a fighting-cock the Lord Chancellor in five vast noiseless strides had crossed the intervening space and gripped the butler by his collarless shirt as he was disappearing. It was like a hawk striking a sparrow. Mergleson felt himself clutched, glanced over his shoulder and, seeing that fierce familiar face again close to his own, pitiless, vindictive, lost all

sense of human dignity and yelled like a lost soul....

§ 9

Sir Peter Laxton was awakened from an uneasy sleep by the opening of the dressing-room door that connected his room with his wife's.

He sat up astonished and stared at her white face, its pallor exaggerated by the cold light of dawn.

"Peter," she said, "I'm sure there's something more going on."

"Something more going on?"

"Something — shouting and swearing."

"You don't mean?"

She nodded. "The Lord Chancellor," she said, in an awe-stricken whisper. "He's at it again. Downstairs in the dining-room."

Sir Peter seemed disposed at first to receive this quite passively. Then he flashed into extravagant wrath. "I'm damned," he cried, jumping violently out of bed, "if I'm going to stand this! Not if he was a hundred Lord Chancellors! He's turning the place into a bally lunatic asylum. Once — one might excuse. But to start in again.... What' s that?"

They both stood still listening. Faintly yet quite distinctly came the agonized cry of some imperfectly educated person—" 'Elp!"

"Here! Where's my trousers?" cried Sir Peter. "He's murdering Mergleson. There isn't a moment to lose."

§ 10

Until Sir Peter returned Lady Laxton sat quite still just as he had left her on his bed, aghast.

She could not even pray.

The sun had still to rise; the room was full of that cold weak inky light, light without warmth, knowledge without faith, existence without courage, that creeps in before the day. She waited.... In such a mood women have waited for massacre....

Downstairs a raucous shouting....

She thought of her happy childhood upon the Yorkshire wolds, before the idea of weekend parties had entered her mind. The heather. The little birds. Kind things. A tear ran down her cheek....

§ 11

Then Sir Peter stood before her again, alive still, but breathless and greatly ruffled.

She put her hands to her heart. She would be brave.

"Yes," she said. "Tell me."

"He's as mad as a hatter," said Sir Peter.

She nodded for more. She knew that.

"Has he — killed anyone?" she whispered.

"He looked uncommonly like trying," said Sir Peter.

She nodded, her lips tightly compressed. "Says Douglas will either have to leave the house or he does." "But — Douglas!"

"I know, but he won't hear a word." "But why Douglas?"

"I tell you he's as mad as a hatter. Got persecution mania. People tapping and bells ringing under his pillow all night — that sort of idea.... And furious. I tell you, — he frightened me. He was awful. He's given Mergleson a black eye. Hit him, you know. With his fist. Caught him in the passage to the priest hole — how they got there *I* don't know — and went for him like a madman."

"But what has Douglas done?"

"*I* don't know. I asked him, but he won't listen. He's just off his head.... Says Douglas has got the whole household trying to work a ghost on him. I tell you — he's off his nut."

Husband and wife looked at each other....

"Of course if Douglas didn't mind just going off to oblige me," said Sir Peter at last....

"It might calm him," he explained.... "You see, it's all so infernally awkward...."

"Is he back in his room?"

"Yes. Waiting for me to decide about Douglas. Walking up and down."

For a little while their minds remained prostrate and inactive.

“I’d been so looking forward to the lunch,” she said with a joyless smile. “The county”

She could not go on.

“You know,” said Sir Peter, “one thing, — I’ll see to it myself I won’t have him have a single drop of liquor more. If we have to search his room.”

“What I shall say to him at breakfast,” she said, “I don’t know.”

Sir Peter reflected. “There’s no earthly reason why you should be brought into it at all. Your line is to know nothing about it. Show him you know nothing about it. Ask him — ask him if he’s had a good night...”

III. — THE WANDERERS

§ 1

NEVER had the gracious eastward face of Shonts looked more beautiful than it did on the morning of the Lord Chancellor's visit. It glowed as translucent as amber lit by flames, its two towers were pillars of pale gold. It looked over its slopes and parapets upon a great valley of mist-barred freshness through which the distant river shone like a snake of light. The south-west facade was still in the shadow, and the ivy hung from it darkly greener than the greenest green. The stained-glass windows of the old chapel reflected the sunrise as though lamps were burning inside. Along the terrace a pensive peacock trailed his sheathed splendours through the dew.

Amidst the ivy was a fuss of birds.

And presently there was pushed out from amidst the ivy at the foot of the eastward tower a little brownish buff thing, that seemed as

natural there as a squirrel or a rabbit. It was a head, — a ruffled human head. It remained still for a moment contemplating the calm spaciousness of terrace and garden and countryside. Then it emerged farther and rotated and surveyed the house above it. Its expression was one of alert caution. Its natural freshness and innocence were a little marred by an enormous transverse smudge, a bar-sinister of smut, and the elfin delicacy of the left ear was festooned with a cobweb — probably a genuine antique. It was the face of Bealby.

He was considering the advisability of leaving Shonts — for good.

Presently his decision was made. His hands and shoulders appeared following his head, and then a dusty but undamaged Bealby was running swiftly towards the corner of the shrubbery. He crouched lest at any moment that pursuing pack of butlers should see him and give tongue. In another moment he was hidden from the house altogether, and rustling his way through a thicket of budding rhododendra. After those dirty passages the morning air was wonderfully sweet — but just a trifle hungry.

Grazing deer saw Bealby fly across the park, stared at him for a

time with great gentle unintelligent eyes, and went on feeding.

They saw him stop ever and again. He was snatching at mushrooms, that he devoured forthwith as he sped on.

On the edge of the beech-woods he paused and glanced back at Shonts.

Then his eyes rested for a moment on the clump of trees through which one saw a scrap of the head gardener's cottage, a bit of the garden wall....

A physiognomist might have detected a certain lack of self-confidence in Bealby's eyes.

But his spirit was not to be quelled. Slowly, joylessly perhaps, but with a grave determination, he raised his hand in that prehistoric gesture of the hand and face by which youth, since ever there was youth, has asserted the integrity of its soul against established and predominant things.

"*Ketch* me!" said Bealby.

§ 2

Bealby left Shonts about half-past four in the morning. He went westward because he liked the company of his shadow and was amused at first by its vast length. By half-past eight he had covered ten miles, and he was rather bored by his shadow. He had eaten nine raw mushrooms, two green apples and a quantity of unripe blackberries. None of these things seemed quite at home in him. And he had discovered himself to be wearing slippers. They were stout carpet slippers, but still they were slippers, — and the road was telling on them. At the ninth mile the left one began to give on the outer seam . He got over a stile into a path that ran through the corner of a wood, and there he met a smell of frying bacon that turned his very soul to gastric juice.

He stopped short and sniffed the air — and the air itself was sizzling.

"Oh Krikey," said Bealby, manifestly to the Spirit of the World. "This is a bit too strong. I wasn't thinking much before."

Then he saw something bright yellow and bulky just over the

hedge.

From this it was that the sound of frying came.

He went to the hedge, making no effort to conceal himself. Outside a great yellow caravan with dainty little windows stood a largish dark woman in a deerstalker hat, a short brown skirt, a large white apron and spatterdashes (among other things) frying bacon and potatoes in a frying-pan. She was very red in the face, and the frying-pan was spitting at her as frying-pans do at a timid cook....

Quite mechanically Bealby scrambled through the hedge and drew nearer this divine smell. The woman scrutinized him for a moment, and then blinking and averting her face went on with her cookery.

Bealby came quite close to her and remained, noting the bits of potato that swam about in the pan, the jolly curling of the rashers, the dancing of the bubbles, the hymning splash and splutter of the happy fat....

(If it should ever fall to my lot to be cooked, may I be fried in potatoes and butter. May I be fried with potatoes and good butter made from the milk of the cow. God send I am spared boiling; the prison of the pot, the rattling lid, the evil darkness, the greasy water....)

"I suppose," said the lady prodding with her fork at the bacon, "I suppose you call yourself a Boy."

"Yes, Miss," said Bealby.

"Have you ever fried?"

"I could, Miss."

"Like this?"

"Better."

"Just lay hold of this handle — for it's scorching the skin off my face I am." She seemed to think for a moment and added, "entirely."

In silence Bealby grasped that exquisite smell by the handle, he took the fork from her hand and put his hungry eager nose over the seething mess. It wasn't only bacon; there were onions, onions giving it — an edge! It cut to the quick of appetite. He could have wept with the intensity of his sensations.

A voice almost as delicious as the smell came out of the caravan window behind Bealby' s head.

“Ju-dy!” cried the voice.

“Here! — I mean, — it’s here I am,” said the lady in the deerstalker.

“Judy — you didn’t take my stockings for your own by any chance?”

The lady in the deerstalker gave way to delighted horror. “Sssh, Mavourneen!” she cried — she was one of that large class of amiable women who are more Irish than they need be— “there’s a Boy here!”

§ 3

There was indeed an almost obsequiously industrious and obliging Boy. An hour later he was no longer a Boy but the Boy, and three friendly women were regarding him with a merited approval.

He had done the frying, renewed a waning fire with remarkable skill and dispatch, reboiled a neglected kettle in the shortest possible time, laid almost without direction a simple meal, very exactly set out campstools and cleaned the frying-pan marvellously. Hardly had they taken their portions of that appetizing savouriness, than he had whipped off with that implement, gone behind the caravan, busied himself there, and returned with the pan — glittering bright. Himself if possible brighter. One cheek indeed shone with an animated glow.

“But wasn’t there some of the bacon and stuff left?” asked the lady in the deerstalker.

“I didn’t think it was wanted, Miss,” said Bealby. “So I cleared it up.”

He met understanding in her eye. He questioned her expression.

“Mayn’t I wash up for you. Miss?” he asked to relieve the tension.

He washed up, swiftly and cleanly. He had never been able to wash up to Mr. Mergleson’s satisfaction before, but now he did everything Mr. Mergleson had ever told him. He asked where to put the things away and he put them away. Then he asked politely if there was anything else he could do for them. Questioned, he said he liked doing things. “You haven’t,” said the lady in the deerstalker, “a taste for cleaning boots?”

Bealby declared he had.

“Surely,” said a voice that Bealby adored, “’tis an angel from heaven.”

He had a taste for cleaning boots! This was an extraordinary thing for Bealby to say. But a great change had come to him in the last half-hour. He was violently anxious to do things, any sort of things, servile things, for a particular person. He was in love.

The owner of the beautiful voice had come out of the caravan, she had stood for a moment in the doorway before descending the steps to the ground and the soul of Bealby had bowed down before her in instant submission. Never had he seen anything so lovely. Her straight slender body was sheathed in blue; fair hair a little tinged with red poured gloriously back from her broad forehead, and she had the sweetest eyes in the world. One hand lifted her dress from her feet; the other rested on the lintel of the caravan door. She looked at him and smiled.

So for two years she had looked and smiled across the footlights to the Bealby in mankind. She had smiled now on her entrance out of habit. She took the effect upon Bealby as a foregone conclusion.

Then she had looked to make sure that everything was ready before she descended.

“How good it smells, Judy!” she had said.

“I’ve had a helper,” said the woman who wore spats.

That time the blue-eyed lady had smiled at him quite definitely....

The third member of the party had appeared unobserved; the irradiations of the beautiful lady had obscured her. Bealby discovered her about. She was bareheaded; she wore a simple grey dress with a Norfolk jacket, and she had a pretty, clear white profile under black hair. She answered to the name of “Winnie.” The beautiful lady was Madeleine. They made little obscure jokes with each other and praised the morning ardently. “This is the best place of all,” said Madeleine.

“All night,” said Winnie, “not a single mosquito.”

None of these three ladies made any attempt to conceal the sincerity of their hunger or their appreciation of Bealby’s assistance. How good a thing is appreciation! Here he was doing with joy and pride and an eager excellence, the very services he had done so badly under the cuffings of Mergleson and Thomas....

§ 4

And now Bealby, having been regarded with approval for some moments and discussed in tantalizing undertones, was called upon to explain himself.

"Boy," said the lady in the deerstalker, who was evidently the leader and still more evidently the spokeswoman of the party, "come here."

"Yes, Miss." He put down the boot he was cleaning on the caravan step.

"In the first place, know by these presents, I am a married woman."

"Yes, Miss."

"And Miss is not a seemly mode of address for me."

"No, Miss. I mean—" Bealby hung for a moment and by the happiest of accidents, a scrap of his instruction at Shonts came up in his mind. "No," he said, "your — ladyship."

A great light shone on the spokeswoman's face. "Not yet, my child," she said, "not yet. He hasn't done his duty by me. I am — a simple Mum."

Bealby was intelligently silent.

"Say — Yes, Mum."

"Yes, Mum," said Bealby, and everybody laughed very agreeably.

"And now," said the lady, taking pleasure

in her words, "know by these presents

By the bye, what is your name?"

Bealby scarcely hesitated. "Dick Maltravers. Mum," he said and almost added, "The Dauntless Daredevil of the Diamondfields Horse," which was the second title.

"Dick will do," said the lady who was called Judy, and added suddenly and very amusingly: "You may keep the rest."

(These were the sort of people Bealby liked. The right sort.)

"Well, Dick, we want to know, have you ever been in service?"

It was sudden. But Bealby was equal to it. "Only for a day or two. Miss — I mean, Mum, — just to be useful."

“Were you useful?”

Bealby tried to think whether he had been, and could recall nothing but the face of Thomas with the fork hanging from it. “I did my best, Mum,” he said impartially.

“And all that is over?” Yes, Mum.”

And you’re at home again and out of employment?”

“Yes, Mum.”

“Do you live near here?”

“No — leastways, not very far.”

“With your father?”

“Stepfather, Mum. I’m a Norfan.”

“Well, how would you like to come with us for a few days and help with things? Seven-and-sixpence a week,”

Bealby’s face was eloquent.

“Would your stepfather object?”

Bealby considered. “I don’t think he would,” he said.

“You’d better go round and ask him.”

“I — suppose — yes,” he said.

“And get a few things.”

“Things, Mum?”

“Collars and things. You needn’t bring a great box for such a little while.”

“Yes, Mum....”

He hovered rather undecidedly.

“Better run along now. Our man and horse will be coming presently. We shan’t be able to wait for you long....”

Bealby assumed a sudden briskness and departed.

At the gate of the field he hesitated almost imperceptibly and then directed his face to the Sabbath stillness of the village.

Perplexity corrugated his features. The stepfather’s permission presented no difficulties, but it was more difficult about the luggage.

A voice called after him.

“Yes, Mum?” he said attentive and hopeful. Perhaps — somehow — they wouldn’t want luggage.

“You’ll want boots. You’ll have to walk by the caravan, you know. You’ll want some good stout boots.”

“All right, Mum,” he said with a sorrowful break in his voice. He

waited a few moments but nothing more came. He went on — very slowly. He had forgotten about the boots.

That defeated him....

It is hard to be refused admission to Paradise for the want of a hand-bag and a pair of walking boots....

§ 5

Bealby was by no means certain that he was going back to that caravan. He wanted to do so quite painfully, but

He'd just look a fool going back without boots and — nothing on earth would reconcile him to the idea of looking a fool in the eyes of that beautiful woman in blue.

"Dick," he whispered to himself despondently, "Daredevil Dick!" (A more miserable-looking face you never set eyes on.) "It's all up with your little schemes, Dick my boy. You must get a bag — and nothing on earth will get you a bag."

He paid little heed to the village through which he wandered. He knew there were no bags there. Chance rather than any volition of his own guided him down a side path that led to the nearly dry bed of a little rivulet, and there he sat down on some weedy grass under a group of willows. It was an untidy place that needed all the sunshine of the morning to be tolerable; one of those places where stinging nettles take heart and people throw old kettles, broken gallipots, jaded gravel, grass cuttings, rusty rubbish, old boots

For a time Bealby's eyes rested on the objects with an entire lack of interest.

Then he was reminded of his not so very remote childhood when he had found an old boot and made it into a castle....

Presently he got up and walked across to the rubbish heap and surveyed its treasures with a quickened intelligence. He picked up a widowed boot and weighed it in his hand.

He dropped it abruptly, turned about and hurried back into the village street.

He had ideas, two ideas, one for the luggage and one for the boots.... If only he could manage it. Hope beat his great pinions in

the heart of Bealby.

Sunday! The shops were shut. Yes, that was a fresh obstacle. He'd forgotten that.

The public-house stood bashfully open, the shy uninviting openness of Sunday morning before closing time, but public-houses alas! at all hours are forbidden to little boys. And besides he wasn't likely to get what he wanted in a public-house; he wanted a shop, a general shop. And here before him was the general shop — and its door ajar! His desire carried him over the threshold. The Sabbatical shutters made the place dark and cool, and the smell of bacon and cheese and chandleries, the very spirit of grocery, calm and unhurried, was cool and Sabbatical too, as if it sat there for the day in its best clothes. And a pleasant woman was talking over the counter to a thin and worried one who carried a bundle.

Their intercourse had a flavour of emergency and they both stopped abruptly at the appearance of Bealby.

His desire, his craving was now so great that it had altogether subdued the natural wiriness of his appearance. He looked meek, he looked good, he was swimming in propitiation and tender with respect. He produced an effect of being much smaller. He had got nice eyes. His movements were refined and his manners perfect.

"Not doing business to-day, my boy," said the pleasant woman.

"Oh, *please* 'm," he said from his heart.

"Sunday, you know."

"Oh, *please* 'm. If you could just give me a nold sheet of paper 'm, please."

"What for?" asked the pleasant woman.

"Just to wrap something up 'm."

She reflected and natural goodness had its way with her.

"A nice *big* bit?" said the woman.

"Please 'm."

"Would you like it brown?"

"0h, *please* 'm."

"And you got some string?"

Only cottony stuff," said Bealby, disembowelling a trouser pocket. "Wiv knots. But I dessay I can manage."

"You'd better have a bit of good string with it, my dear," said the

pleasant woman, whose generosity was now fairly on the run, “Then you can do your parcel up nice and tidy....

§ 6

The white horse was already in the shafts of the caravan and William, a deaf and clumsy man of uncertain age and a vast sharp noseiness, was lifting in the basket of breakfast gear and grumbling in undertones at the wickedness and unfairness of travelling on Sunday, when Bealby returned to gladden three waiting women.

“Ah!” said the inconspicuous lady, “I knew he’d come.”

“Look at his poor little precious parsivel,” said the actress.

Regarded as luggage it was rather pitiful, a knobby, brown paper parcel about the size — to be perfectly frank — of a tin can, two old boots and some grass, very carefully folded and tied up, — and carried gingerly.

“But “ the lady in the deerstalker began

and then paused.

“Dick,” she said, as he came nearer, “Where’s your boots?”

“Oh, please. Mum,” said the dauntless one, “they was away being mended. My stepfather thought perhaps you wouldn’t mind if I didn’t have boots. He said perhaps I might be able to get some more boots out of my salary....”

The lady in the deerstalker looked alarmingly uncertain and Bealby controlled infinite distresses.

“Haven’t you got a mother, Dick?” asked the beautiful voice suddenly. Its owner abounded in such spasmodic curiosities.

“She — last year ...” Matricide is a painful business at any time. And just as you see, in spite of every effort you have made, the jolliest lark in the world slipping out of your reach. And the sweet voice so sorry for him! So sorry! Bealby suddenly veiled his face with his elbow and gave way to honourable tears....

A simultaneous desire to make him happy, help him to forget his loss, possessed three women....

“That’ll be all right, Dick,” said the lady in the deerstalker patting his shoulder. “We’ll get you some boots to-morrow. And to-day you

must sit up beside William and spare your feet. You'll have to go to the inns with him...."

"It's wonderful, the elasticity of youth," said the inconspicuous lady five minutes later. "To see that boy now, you'd never imagine he'd had a sorrow in the world."

"Now get up there," said the lady who was the leader. "We shall walk across the fields and join you later. You understand where you are to wait for us, William?"

She came nearer and shouted, "You understand, William?"

William nodded ambiguously. "'Ent a Vool," he said.

The ladies departed. "You'll be all right, Dick," cried the actress kindly.

He sat up where he had been put, trying to look as Orphan Dick as possible after all that had occurred.

§ 7

"Do you know the wind on the heath — have you lived the Gypsy life? Have you spoken, wanderers yourselves, with a 'Romany chi and Romany chal' on the wind-swept moors at home or abroad? Have you tramped the broad highways, and, at close of day, pitched your tent near a running stream and cooked your supper by starlight over a fire of pinewood? Do you know the dreamless sleep of the wanderer at peace with himself and all the world?"

For most of us the answer to these questions of the Amateur Camping Club is in the negative.

Yet every year the call of the road, the Borrovian glamour, draws away a certain small number of the imaginative from the grosser comforts of a complex civilization, takes them out into tents and caravans and intimate communion with Nature and, incidentally, with various ingenious appliances designed to meet the needs of cooking in a breeze. It is an adventure to which high spirits and great expectations must be brought, it is an experience in proximity which few friendships survive — and altogether very great fun.

The life of breezy freedom resolves itself in practice chiefly into washing up and an anxious search for permission to camp. One

learns how rich and fruitful our world can be in bystanders, and how easy it is to forget essential groceries....

The heart of the joy of it lies in its perfect detachment. There you are in the morning sunlight under the trees that overhang the road going whither you will. Everything you need you have. Your van creaks along at your side. You are outside inns, outside houses, a home, a community, an imperium in imperio. At any moment you may draw out of the traffic upon the wayside grass and say, "Here — until the owner catches us at it — is home!" At any time — subject to the complaisance of William and your being able to find him — you may inspan and go onward. The world is all before you. You taste the complete yet leisurely insouciance of the snail.

And two of those three ladies had other satisfactions to supplement their pleasures. They both adored Madeleine Philips. She was not only perfectly sweet and lovely but she was known to be so; she had that most potent charm for women, prestige. They had got her all to themselves. They could show now how false is the old idea that there is no friendship nor conversation among women. They were full of wit and pretty things for one another and snatches of song in between. And they were free too from their "menfolk." They were doing without them. Dr. Bowles, the husband of the lady in the deerstalker, was away in Ireland, and Mr. Geedge, the lord of the inconspicuous woman, was golfing at Sandwich. And Madeleine Philips, it was understood, was only too glad to shake herself free from the crowd of admirers that hovered about her like wasps about honey....

Yet after three days each one had thoughts about the need of helpfulness and more particularly about washing-up, that were better left unspoken, that were indeed conspicuously unspoken beneath their merry give and take, like a black and silent river flowing beneath a bridge of ivory. And each of them had a curious feeling in the midst of all this fresh free behaviour, as though the others were not listening sufficiently, as though something of the effect of them was being wasted. Madeleine's smiles became rarer; at times she was almost impassive, and Judy preserved nearly all her wit and verbal fireworks for the times when they passed through villages.... Mrs. Geedge was less visibly affected. She had thoughts of writing a book

about it all, telling in the gayest, most provocative way, full of the quietest quaintest humour, just how jolly they had been. Menfolk would read it. This kept a little thin smile upon her lips....

As an audience William was tough stuff. He pretended deafness; he never looked. He did not want to look. He seemed always to be holding his nose in front of his face to prevent his observation — as men pray into their hats at church. But once Judy Bowles overheard a phrase or so in his private soliloquy. “Pack o’ wimmin,” William was saying. “Dratted petticoats. Dang ‘em. That’s what I say to ‘um. Dang ‘em!”

As a matter of fact, he just fell short of saying it to them. But his manner said it....

You begin to see how acceptable an addition was young Bealby to this company. He was not only helpful, immensely helpful, in things material, a vigorous and at first a careful washer-up, an energetic boot-polisher, a most serviceable cleaner and tidier of things, but he was also belief and support. Undisguisedly he thought the caravan the loveliest thing going, and its three mistresses the most wonderful of people. His alert eyes followed them about full of an unstinted admiration and interest, he pricked his ears when Judy opened her mouth, he handed things to Mrs. Geedge. He made no secret about Madeleine. When she spoke to him, he lost his breath, he reddened and was embarrassed....

They went across the fields saying that he was the luckiest of finds. It was fortunate his people had been so ready to spare him. Judy said boys were a race very cruelly maligned; see how willing he was! Mrs. Geedge said there was something elfin about Bealby’s little face; Madeleine smiled at the thought of his quaint artlessness. She knew quite clearly that he’d die for her....

§ 8

There was a little pause as the ladies moved away.

Then William spat and spoke in a note of irrational bitterness.

“Brasted Voolery,” said William and then loudly and fiercely, “Cam up y’ ode Runt you.”

At these words the white horse started into a convulsive irregular redistribution of its feet, the caravan strained and quivered into motion and Bealby's wanderings as a caravanner began.

For a time William spoke no more and Bealby scarcely regarded him. The light of strange fortunes and deep enthusiasm was in Bealby's eyes....

"One Thing," said William, "they don't 'ave the Sense to lock anythink up — Whatever."

Bealby's attention was recalled to the existence of his companion.

William's face was one of those faces that give one at first the impression of a solitary and very conceited nose. The other features are entirely subordinated to that salient effect. One sees them later. His eyes were small and uneven, his mouth apparently toothless, thin-lipped and crumpled, with the upper lip falling over the other in a manner suggestive of a meagre firmness mixed with appetite. When he spoke he made a faint slobbering sound. "Everyfink," he said, "behind there."

He became confidential. "I been in there. I larked about wiv their Fings."

"They got some choc'late," he said, lusciously. "Oo Fine!"

"All sorts of Fings."

He did not seem to expect any reply from Bealby.

"We going far before we meet 'em?" asked Bealby.

William's deafness became apparent.

His mind was preoccupied by other ideas.

One wicked eye came close to Bealby's face. "We going to 'ave a bit of choc'late," he said in a wet desirous voice.

He pointed his thumb over his shoulder at the door. "You get it," said William with reassuring nods and the mouth much pursed and very oblique.

Bealby shook his head.

"It's in a little dror, under 'er place where she sleeps."

Bealby's head-shake became more emphatic.

"Yus, I tell you," said William.

"No," said Bealby.

"Choc'late I tell you," said William and ran the tongue of appetite round the rim of his toothless mouth.

“Don’t want choc’late,” said Bealby, thinking of a large lump of it.

“Go on,” said William. “Nobody won’t see you....”

“Go it!” said William....

“You’re afraid,” said William....

“Here, I’ll go,” said William, losing self-control. “You just ‘old these reins.”

Bealby took the reins. William got up and opened the door of the caravan. Then Bealby realized his moral responsibility — and, leaving the reins, clutched William firmly by his baggy nether garments. They were elderly garments, much sat upon. “Don’t be a Vool,” said William, struggling. “Leago my slack.”

Something partially gave way and William’s head came round to deal with Bealby.

“What you mean pullin’ my cloes orf me?”

“That,” — he investigated. “Take me a Nour to sew up.”

“I ain’t going to steal,” shouted Bealby into the ear of William.

Nobody arst you to steal”

Nor you neither,” said Bealby.

The caravan bumped heavily against a low garden wall, skidded a little and came to rest. William sat down suddenly. The white horse after a period of confusion with its legs, tried the flavour of some overhanging lilac branches and was content.

“Gimme those reins,” said William. “You be the Brastedest Young Vool....”

“Sittin’ ‘ere,” said William presently, “chewin’ our teeth, when we might be eatin’ choc’late....”

“I ‘ent got no use for you,” said William, “blowed if I ‘ave....”

Then the thought of his injuries returned

to him.

“I’d make you sew ’em up yourself, darned if I woun’t — on’y you’d go running the brasted needle into me.... Nour’s work there is — by the feel of it.... Mor’n nour.... Gooddbe done, too.... All I got....”

“I’ll give you Sumpfin you little Beace ‘fore I done wi’ you.”

“I wouldn’t steal ‘er choc’lates,” said young Bealby, “Not if I was starving.”

“Eh?” shouted William.

“Steal!” shouted Bealby.

“I’ll steal ye, ‘fore I done with ye,” said William. “Tearin’ my cloes for me.... Oh! Cam up y’old Runt. We don’t want you to stop and lissen. Cam up I tell you!”

§ 9

They found the ladies rather, it seemed, by accident than design, waiting upon a sandy common rich with purple heather and bordered by woods of fir and spruce. They had been waiting some time and it was clear that the sight of the yellow caravan relieved an accumulated anxiety. Bealby rejoiced to see them. His soul glowed with the pride of chocolate resisted and William overcome. He resolved to distinguish himself over the preparation of the midday meal. It was a pleasant little island of green they chose for their midday pitch, a little patch of emerald turf amidst the purple, a patch already doomed to removal, as a bare oblong and a pile of rolled-up turves witnessed.

This pile and a little bank of heather and bramble promised shelter from the breeze, and down the hill a hundred yards away was a spring and a built-up pool. This spot lay perhaps fifty yards away from the high road and one reached it along a rutty track which had been made by the turf cutters. And overhead was the glorious sky of an English summer, with great clouds like sunlit, white-sailed ships, the Constable sky. The white horse was hobbled and turned out to pasture among the heather, and William was sent off to get congenial provender at the nearest public-house. “William!” shouted Mrs, Bowles as he departed, shouting confidentially into his ear, “Get your clothes mended!”

“Eh?” said William.

“Mend your clothes.”

“Yah! ‘E did that,” said William viciously with a movement of self- protection and so went.

Nobody watched him go. Almost sternly they set to work upon the luncheon preparation as William receded. “William,” Mrs.

Bowles remarked, as she bustled with the patent cooker, putting it up wrong way round so that afterwards it collapsed, “William — takes offence. Sometimes I think he takes offence almost too often.... Did you have any difficulty with him, Dick?”

“It wasn’t anything, Miss,” said Bealby meekly.

Bealby was wonderful with the firelighting, and except that he cracked a plate in warming it, quite admirable as a cook. He burnt his fingers twice — and liked doing it; he ate his portion with instinctive modesty on the other side of the caravan, and he washed up as Mr. Mergleson had always instructed him to do. Mrs. Bowles showed him how to clean knives and forks by sticking them into the turf. A little to his surprise these ladies lit and smoked cigarettes. They sat about and talked perplexingly. Clever staff. Then he had to get water from the neighbouring brook and boil the kettle for an early tea. Madeleine produced a charmingly bound little book and read in it, the other two professed themselves anxious for the view from a neighbouring hill. They produced their sensible spiked Swiss walking-sticks such as one does not see in England; they seemed full of energy. “You go,” Madeleine had said, “while I and Dick stay here and make tea. I’ve walked enough to-day....”

So Bealby, happy to the pitch of ecstasy, first explored the wonderful interior of the caravan, there was a dresser, a stove, let-down chairs and tables and all manner of things, and then nursed the kettle to the singing stage on the patent cooker while the beautiful lady reclined close at hand on a rug.

“Dick!” she said.

He had forgotten he was Dick.

“Dick!”

He remembered his personality with a start. “Yes, Miss!” He knelt up, with a handful of twigs in his hand and regarded her.

“Well, Dick,” she said.

He remained flushed adoration. There was a little pause and the lady smiled at him an unaffected smile.

“What are you going to be, Dick, when you grow up?”

“I don’t know, Miss. I’ve wondered.”

“What would you like to be?”

“Something abroad. Something — so that you could see things.”

“A soldier?”

“Or a sailor. Miss.”

“A sailor sees nothing but the sea.”

“I’d rather be a sailor than a common soldier. Miss.”

“You’d like to be an officer?”

“Yes, Miss — only”

“One of my very best friends is an officer,” she said, a little irrelevantly it seemed to Bealby.

“I’d be a Norficer like a shot,” said Bealby, “if I ‘ad ‘arf a chance, Miss.”

“Officers nowadays,” she said, “have to be very brave, able men.”

“I know, Miss,” said Bealby modestly.

The fire required attention for a little while....

The lady turned over on her elbow. “What do you think you are likely to be, Dick?” she asked.

He didn’t know.

“What sort of man is your stepfather?”

Bealby looked at her. “He isn’t much,” he said.

“What is he?”

Bealby hadn’t the slightest intention of being the son of a gardener. “‘E’s a law-writer.”

“What! in that village.”

“‘E ‘as to stay there for ‘is ‘ealth. Miss,” he said. “Every summer. ‘Is ‘ealth is very pre-precocious, Miss....”

He fed his fire with a few judiciously administered twigs.

“What was your own father, Dick?”

With that she opened a secret door in Bealby’s imagination. All stepchildren have those dreams. With him they were so frequent and vivid that they had long since become a kind of second truth. He coloured a little and answered with scarcely an interval for reflection. “‘E passed as Mal-travers,” he said.

“Wasn’t that his name?”

“I don’t rightly know, Miss. There was always something kep’ from me. My mother used to say, ‘Artie,’ she used to say: ‘there’s things that some day you must know, things that concern you. Things about your farver. But poor as we are now and struggling.... Not yet.... Some day you shall know truly — who you are!’ That was ‘ow

she said it, Miss.”

“And she died before she told you?”

He had almost forgotten that he had killed his mother that very morning. “Yes, miss,” he said.

She smiled at him and something in her smile made him blush hotly. For a moment he could have believed she understood. And indeed she did understand and it amused her to find this boy doing what she herself had done at times, what indeed she felt it was still in her to do. She felt that most delicate of sympathies, the sympathy of one rather over-imaginative person for another. But her next question dispelled his doubt of her though it left him red and hot. She asked it with a convincing simplicity.

“Have you any idea, Dick, have you any guess or suspicion, I mean, who it is you really are?”

“I wish I had. Miss,” he said. “I suppose it doesn’t matter, really — but one can’t help wondering....”

How often he had wondered in his lonely wanderings through that dear city of day-dreams where all the people one knows look out of windows as one passes and the roads are paved with pride! How often had he decided and changed and decided again!

§ 10

Now suddenly a realization of intrusion shattered this conversation. A third person stood over the little encampment, smiling mysteriously and waving a cleek in a slow hieratic manner through the air.

“Delicious lill’ corn’,” said the newcomer in tones of benediction.

He met their inquiring eyes with a luxurious smile, “‘Licious,” he said, and remained swaying insecurely and failing to express some imperfectly apprehended deep meaning by short peculiar movements of the cleek.

He was obviously a golfer astray from some adjacent course — and he had lunched.

“Mighty Join-you,” he said, and then very distinctly in a full large voice, “Miss Malleleine Philps.” There are the penalties of a public

and popular life.

"He's *drunk*," the lady whispered. "Get him to go away, Dick. I can't endure drunken men."

She stood up and Bealby stood up. He advanced in front of her, slowly, with his nose in the air, extraordinarily like a small terrier smelling at a strange dog.

"I said Mighty Join-you," the golfer repeated. His voice was richly excessive. He was a big heavy man with a short-cropped moustache, a great deal of neck and dewlap and a solemn expression.

"Prup. Be'r. Introzuze m'self," he remarked. He tried to indicate himself by waving his hand towards himself but finally abandoned the attempt as impossible. "Ma' Goo' Soch'l Poshishun," he said.

Bealby had a disconcerting sense of retreating footsteps behind him. He glanced over his shoulder and saw Miss Philips standing at the foot of the steps that led up to the fastnesses of the caravan. "Dick," she cried with a sharp note of alarm in her voice, "get rid of that man."

A moment after Bealby heard the door shut and a sound of a key in its lock. He concealed his true feelings by putting his arms akimbo, sticking his legs wider apart and contemplating the task before him with his head a little on one side. He was upheld by the thought that the yellow caravan had a window looking upon him....

The newcomer seemed to consider the ceremony of introduction completed. "I done care for goff," he said, almost vaingloriously.

He waved his cleek to express his preference. "Natua," he said with a satisfaction that bordered on fatuity.

He prepared to come down from the little turfy crest on which he stood to the encampment.

"'Ere!" said Bealby. "This is Private."

The golfer indicated by solemn movements of the cleek that this was understood but that other considerations overrode it.

"You You got to go!" cried Bealby

in a breathless squeak. "You get out of here."

The golfer waved an arm as who should say, "You do not understand but I forgive you," and continued to advance towards the fire. And then Bealby, at the end of his tact, commenced hostilities.

He did so because he felt he had to do something and he did not

know what else to do.

"Wan' no thin' but frenly conversation sushus custm'ry webred peel," the golfer was saying, and then a large fragment of turf hit him in the neck, burst all about him and stopped him abruptly.

He remained for some lengthy moments too astonished for words. He was not only greatly surprised but he chose to appear even more surprised than he was. In spite of the brown-black mould upon his cheek and brow and a slight displacement of his cap, he achieved a sort of dignity. He came slowly to a focus upon Bealby, who stood by the turf pile grasping a second missile. The cleek was extended sceptre wise.

"Replace the — Divot."

"You go orf," said Bealby. "I'll chuck it if you don't. I tell you fair."

"Replace the — Divot," roared the golfer again in a voice of extraordinary power. You — you go!" said Bealby. Am I t'ask you. Third time. Reshpect — Roos.... Replace the Divot."

It struck him fully in the face.

He seemed to emerge through the mould. He was blinking but still dignified. "Tha' — was intentional," he said.

He seemed to gather himself together....

Then suddenly and with a surprising nimbleness he discharged himself at Bealby. He came with astonishing swiftness. He got within a foot of him. Well it was for Bealby that he had learnt to dodge in the village playground. He went down under the golfer's arm and away round the end of the stack, and the golfer with his force spent in concussion remained for a time clinging to the turf pile and apparently trying to remember how he got there. Then he was reminded of recent occurrences by a shrill small voice from the other side of the stack.

"You gow away!" said the voice. "Can't you see you're annoying a lady? You gow away."

"No wish— 'noy anyone. Pease wall wirl."

But this was — subterfuge. He meant to catch that boy.

Suddenly and rather brilliantly he turned the flank of the turf pile, and only a couple of loose turfs at the foot of the heap upset his calculations. He found himself on all fours on ground from which it

was difficult to rise. But he did not lose heart. “Boy — hic — scow,” he said, and became for a second rush a nimble quadruped.

Again he got quite astonishingly near to Bealby, and then in an instant was on his feet and running across the encampment after him. He succeeded in kicking over the kettle and the patent cooker without any injury to himself or loss of pace, and succumbed only to the sharp turn behind the end of the caravan and the steps. He hadn’t somehow thought of the steps. So he went down rather heavily. But now the spirit of a fine man was roused. Regardless of the scream from inside that had followed his collapse, he was up and in pursuit almost instantly. Bealby only escaped the swiftness of his rush by jumping the shafts and going away across the front of the caravan to the turf pile again. The golfer tried to jump the shafts too, but he was not equal to that. He did in a manner jump. But it was almost as much diving as jumping. And there was something in it almost like the curveting of a Great Horse....

When Bealby turned at the crash, the golfer was already on all fours again and trying very busily to crawl out between the shaft and the front wheel. He would have been more successful in doing this if he had not begun by putting his arm through the wheel. As it was he was trying to do too much; he was trying to crawl out at two points at once and getting very rapidly annoyed at his inability to do so. The caravan was shifting slowly forward....

It was manifest to Bealby that getting this man to go was likely to be a much more lengthy business than he had supposed.

He surveyed the situation for a moment and then realizing the entanglement of his opponent, he seized a camp-stool by one leg, went round by the steps and attacked the prostrate enemy from the rear with effectual but inconclusive fury.

He hammered....

“Steady on, young man,” said a voice and he was seized from behind. He turned — to discover himself in the grip of a second golfer....

Another! Bealby fought in a fury of fear....

He bit an arm — rather too tweedy to feel much — and got in a couple of shinners — alas! that they were only slippered shinners! — before he was overpowered....

A cuffed, crumpled, disarmed and panting Bealby found himself watching the careful extraction of the first golfer from the front wheel. Two friends assisted that gentleman with a reproachful gentleness, and his repeated statements that he was all right seemed to reassure them greatly. Altogether there were now four golfers in the field, counting the pioneer.

"He was after this devil of a boy," said the one who held Bealby.

"Yes, but how did he get here?" asked a second friend.

"Feel better now?" said the third, helping the first comer to his uncertain feet. "Let me have your cleek o' man.... You won't want your cleek...."

Across the heather, lifting their heads a little, came Mrs. Bowles and Mrs. Geedge returning from their walk. They were wondering whoever their visitors could be.

And then like music after a dispute came Madeleine Philips, a beautiful blue-robed thing, coming slowly with a kind of wonder on her face, out of the caravan and down the steps. Instinctively everybody turned to her. The drunkard with a gesture released himself from his supporter and stood erect. His cap was replaced upon him — obliquely. His cleek had been secured.

"I heard a noise," said Madeleine lifting her pretty chin and speaking in her sweetest tones.

She looked her inquiries....

She surveyed the three sober men with a practised eye. She chose the tallest, a fair, serious-looking young man standing conveniently at the drunkard's elbow.

"Will you please take your friend away?" she said, indicating the offender with her beautiful white hand.

"Simly," he said in a slightly subdued voice. "Simly coring."

Everybody tried for a moment to understand him.

"Look here, old man, you've got no business here," said the fair young man. "You'd better come back to the club-house."

The drunken man stuck to his statement. "Simly coring," he said a little louder.

"I think," said a little bright-eyed man with a very cheerful yellow vest, "I think he's apologizing. I hope so."

The drunken man nodded his head. That among other matters.

The tall young man took his arm but he insisted on his point. “Simly coring,” he said with emphasis. “If — if — donewan’ me to cor. Notome. Nottot.... Mean’ say. Nottot tat-tome. Nottotome. Orny way — sayin’ notome. No wish ‘trude. No wish ‘all.”

“Well then, you see, you’d better come away.”

“I ars’ you — are you tome? Miss — Miss Pips.” He appealed to Miss Philips.

“If you’d answer him “ said the tall young man.

“No, sir,” she said with great dignity and the pretty chin higher than ever. “I am not at home.”

“Nuthin’ more t’say then,” said the drunken man, and with a sudden stoicism he turned away.

“Come,” he said, submitting to support.

“Simly orny arfnoon cor,” he said generally and permitted himself to be led off.

“Orny frenly cor....”

For some time he was audible as he receded explaining in a rather condescending voice, the extreme social correctness of his behaviour. Just for a moment or so there was a slight tussle, due to his desire to return and leave cards....

He was afterwards seen to be distributing a small handful of visiting cards amidst the heather with his free arm, rather in the manner of a paper chase — but much more gracefully.... Then decently and in order he was taken out of sight....

§ 11

Bealby had been unostentatiously released by his captor as soon as Miss Philips appeared, and the two remaining golfers now addressed themselves to the three ladies in regret and explanation.

The man who had held Bealby was an aquiline grey-clad person with a cascade moustache and wrinkled eyes and for some obscure reason he seemed to be amused; the little man in the yellow vest however was quite earnest and serious enough to make up for him. He was one of those little fresh-coloured men whose faces stick forward openly. He had open projecting eyes, an open mouth, his

cheeks were frank to the pitch of ostentation, his cap was thrust back from his exceptionally open forehead. He had a chest and a stomach. These, too, he held out. He would have held out anything. His legs leant forward from the feet. It was evidently impossible for a man of his nature to be anything but clean shaved.... Our fault entirely," he said. "Ought to have looked after him. Can't say how sorry and ashamed we are. Can't say how sorry we are he caused you any inconvenience."

"Of course," said Mrs. Bowles, "our boy-servant ought not to have pelted him."

"He didn't exactly pelt him, dear," said Madeleine....

"Well, anyhow our friend ought not to have been off his chain. It was our affair to look after him and we didn't...."

"You see," the open young man went on, with the air of lucid explanation, "he's our worst player. And he got round in a hundred and twenty-seven. And beat — somebody. And — it's upset him. It's not a bit of good disguising that we've been letting him drink.... We have. To begin with we encouraged him.... We oughtn't to have let him go. But we thought a walk alone might do him good. And some of us were a bit off him. Fed up rather. You see he'd been singing. Would go on singing...."

He went on to propitiations. "Anything the club can do to show how we regret.... If you would like to pitch later on in our rough beyond the pine woods.... You'd find it safe and secluded.... Custodian — most civil man. Get you water or anything you wanted. Especially after all that has happened...."

Bealby took no further part in these concluding politenesses. He had a curious feeling in his mind that perhaps he had not managed this affair quite so well as he might have done. He ought to have been more tactful like, more persuasive. He was a fool to have started chucking.... Well, well. He picked up the overturned kettle and went off down the hill to get water....

What had she thought of him?....

In the meantime one can at least boil kettles.

§ 12

One consequence of this little incident of the rejoicing golfer was that the three ladies were no longer content to dismiss William and Bealby at nightfall and sleep unprotected in the caravan. And this time their pitch was a lonely one with only the golf club-house within call. They were inclined even to distrust the golf club. So it was decided, to his great satisfaction, that Bealby should have a certain sleeping sack Mrs. Bowles had brought with her and that he should sleep therein between the wheels.

This sleeping sack was to have been a great feature of the expedition, but when it came to the test Judy could not use it. She had not anticipated that feeling of extreme publicity the open air gives one at first. It was like having all the world in one's bedroom. Every night she had relapsed into the caravan.

Bealby did not mind what they did with him so long as it meant sleeping. He had had a long day of it. He undressed sketchily and wriggled into the nice woolly bag and lay for a moment listening to the soft bumpings that were going on overhead. She was there. He had the instinctive confidence of our sex in women, and here were three of them. He had a vague idea of getting out of his bag again and kissing the underside of the van that held this dear beautiful creature....

He didn't....

Such a lot of things had happened that day — and the day before. He had been going without intermission, it seemed now for endless hours. He thought of trees, roads, dew-wet grass, frying-pans, pursuing packs of gigantic butlers hopelessly at fault, — no doubt they were hunting now, — chinks and crannies, tactless missiles flying, bursting, missiles it was vain to recall. He stared for a few seconds through the wheel spokes at the dancing, crackling fire of pine-cones which it had been his last duty to replenish, stared and blinked much as a little dog might do, and then he had slipped away altogether into the world of dreams....

§ 13

In the morning he was extraordinarily hard to wake....

“Is it after sleeping all day ye’d be?” cried Judy Bowles, who was always at her most Irish about breakfast-time.

IV. — THE UNOBTRUSIVE PARTING

§ 1

MONDAY was a happy day for Bealby. The caravan did seventeen miles and came to rest at last in a sloping field outside a cheerful little village set about a green on which was a long tent professing to be a theatre.

At the first stopping-place that possessed a general shop Mrs. Bowles bought Bealby a pair of boots. Then she had a bright idea. “Got any pocket money, Dick?” she asked.

She gave him half a crown, that is to say she gave him two shillings and sixpence, or five sixpences or thirty pennies — according as you choose to look at it — in one large undivided shining coin.

Even if he had not been in love here surely was incentive to a generous nature to help and do distinguished services. He dashed about doing things. The little accident on Sunday had warned him to be careful of the plates, and the only flaw upon a perfect day’s service was the dropping of an egg on its way to the frying-pan for supper. It remained where it fell and there presently he gave it a quiet burial. There was nothing else to be done with it....

All day long at intervals Miss Philips smiled at him and made him do little services for her. And in the evening, after the custom of her great profession when it keeps holiday, she insisted on going to the play. She said it would be the loveliest fun. She went with Mrs. Bowles because Mrs. Geedge wanted to sit quietly in the caravan and write down a few little things while they were still fresh in her mind. And it wasn’t in the part of Madeleine Philips not to insist that both William and Bealby must go too; she gave them each a shilling — though the prices were sixpence, threepence, twopence and a penny — and Bealby saw his first real play.

It was called Brothers in Blood or the Gentleman Ranker. There was a poster — which was only very slightly justified by the performance — of a man in khaki with a bandaged head proposing to sell his life dearly over a fallen comrade.

One went to the play through an open and damaged field gate and across trampled turf. Outside the tent were two paraffin flares illuminating the poster and a small cluster of the impecunious young. Within on grass that was worn and bleached were benches, a gathering audience, a piano played by an offhand lady and a drop scene displa5dng the Grand Canal, Venice. The Grand Canal was infested by a crowded multitude of zealous and excessive reflections of the palaces above and by peculiar crescentic black boats floating entirely out of water and having no reflections at all. The off-hand lady gave a broad impression of the Wedding March in "Lohengrin" and the back seats assisted by a sort of gastric vocalization called humming and by whistling between the teeth. Madeleine Philips evidently found it tremendous fun, even before the curtain rose.

And then — illusion....

The scenery was ridiculous, it waved about, the actors and actresses were surely the most pitiful of their tribe and every invention in the play impossible, but the imagination of Bealby like the loving-kindness of God made no difficulties, it rose up and met and embraced and gave life to all these things. It was a confused story in the play, everybody was more or less somebody else all the way through, and it got more confused in Bealby's mind, but it was clear from the outset that there was vile work afoot, nets spread and sweet simple people wronged. And never were sweet and simple people quite so sweet and simple. There was the wrongful brother who was weak and wicked and the rightful brother who was vindictively, almost viciously good, and there was an ingrained villain who was a baronet, a man who wore a frock-coat and a silk hat and carried gloves and a stick in every scene and upon all occasions — that sort of man. He looked askance, always. There was a dear simple girl, with a vast sweet smile, who was loved according to their natures by the wrongful and the rightful brother, and a large wicked red-clad, lip-biting woman whose passions made the crazy little stage quiver. There was a comic butler — very different stuff from old Mergleson — who wore an evening coat and plaid trousers and nearly choked Bealby. Why weren't all butlers like that? Funny. And there were constant denunciations. Always there were denunciations going on or denunciations impending. That took

Bealby particularly. Never surely in all the world were bad people so steadily and thoroughly scolded and told what. Everybody hissed them; Bealby hissed them. And when they were told what, he applauded. And yet they kept on with their wickedness to the very curtain. They retired — askance to the end. Foiled but pursuing. “A time will come,” they said.

There was a moment in the distresses of the heroine when Bealby dashed aside a tear.

And then at last most wonderfully it all came right. The company lined up and hoped that Bealby was satisfied. Bealby wished he had more hands. His heart seemed to fill his body. Oh prime I prime!....

And out he came into the sympathetic night. But he was no longer a trivial Bealby, his soul was purged, he was a strong and silent man, ready to explode into generous repartee or nerve himself for high endeavour. He slipped off in the opposite direction from the caravan because he wanted to be alone for a time and feel. He did not want to jar upon a sphere of glorious illusion that had blown up in his mind like a bubble....

He was quite sure that he had been wronged. Not to be wronged is to forgo the first privilege of goodness. He had been deeply wronged by a plot, — all those butlers were in the plot or why should they have chased him — he was much older than he really was, it had been kept from him, and in truth he was a rightful earl. “Earl Shonts,” he whispered; and indeed, why not? And Madeleine too had been wronged; she had been reduced to wander in this uncomfortable caravan; this Gipsy Queen; she had been brought to it by villains, the same villains who had wronged Bealby....

Out he went into the night, the kindly consenting summer night, where there is nothing to be seen or heard that will contradict these delicious wonderful persuasions.

He was so full of these dreams that he strayed far away along the dark country lanes and had at last the utmost difficulty in finding his way back to the caravan. And when ultimately he got back after hours and hours of heroic existence it did not even seem that they had missed him. It did not seem that he had been away half an hour.

§ 2

Tuesday was not so happy a day for Bealby as Monday.

Its shadows began when Mrs. Bowles asked him in a friendly tone when it was clean-collar day.

He was unready with his answer.

“And don’t you ever use a hair-brush, Dick?” she asked. “I’m sure now there’s one in your parcel.”

“I do use it sometimes, Mum,” he admitted.

“And I’ve never detected you with a toothbrush yet. Though that perhaps is extreme. And Dick — soap? I think you’d better be letting me give you a cake of soap.”

“I’d be very much obliged. Mum.”

“I hardly dare hint, Dick, at a clean handkerchief. Such things are known.”

“If you wouldn’t mind — when I’ve got the breakfast things done, Mum....”

The thing worried him all through breakfast. He had not expected personalities from Mrs. Bowles. More particularly personalities of this kind. He felt he had to think hard.

He affected modesty after he had cleared away breakfast, and carried off his little bundle to a point in the stream which was masked from the encampment by willows. With him he also brought that cake of soap. He began by washing his handkerchief, which was bad policy because that left him no dry towel but his jacket. He ought, he perceived, to have secured a dish-cloth or a newspaper. (This he must remember on the next occasion.) He did over his hands and the more exposed parts of his face with soap and jacket. Then he took off and examined his collar. It certainly was pretty bad....

“Why!” cried Mrs. Bowles when he returned, “that’s still the same collar.”

“They all seem to’ve got crumpled, ‘m,” said Bealby.

“But are they all as dirty?”

“I’d some blacking in my parcel,” said Bealby, “and it got loose, Mum. I’ll have to get another collar when we come to a shop.”

It was a financial sacrifice but it was the only way, and when they came to the shop Bealby secured a very nice collar indeed, high with

pointed turn- down corners, so that it cut his neck all round, jabbed him under the chin and gave him a proud upcast carriage of the head that led to his treading upon and very completely destroying a stray plate while preparing lunch. But it was more of a man's collar, he felt, than anything he had ever worn before. And it cost sixpence halfpenny, six dee and a half.

(I should have mentioned that while washing up the breakfast things he had already broken the handle off one of the breakfast-cups. Both these accidents deepened the cloud upon his day.)

And then there was the trouble of William. William having meditated upon the differences between them for a day had now invented an activity. As Bealby sat beside him behind the white horse he was suddenly and frightfully pinched. Gee! One wanted to yelp.

"Choc'late," said William through his teeth and very very savagely. "Now then."

After William had done that twice Bealby preferred to walk beside the caravan. Thereupon William whipped up the white horse and broke records and made all the crockery sing together and forced the pace until he was spoken to by Mrs. Bowles....

It was upon a Bealby thus depressed and worried that the rumour of impending " menfolk " came. It began after the party had stopped for letters at a village post-office; there were not only letters but a telegram, that Mrs. Bowles read with her spats far apart and her head on one side. "Ye'd like to know about it," she said waggishly to Miss Philips, "and you just shan't."

She then went into her letters.

"You've got some news," said Mrs. Geedge.

"I have that," said Mrs. Bowles, and not a word more could they get from her....

"I'll keep my news no longer," said Mrs. Bowles, lighting her cigarette after lunch as Bealby hovered about clearing away the banana skins and suchlike vestiges of dessert. "To-morrow night as ever is, if so be we get to Winthorpe-Sutbury, there'll be Men among us."

"But Tom's not coming," said Mrs. Geedge. "He asked Tim to tell me to tell you."

“And you’ve kept it these two hours, Judy.”

“For your own good and peace of mind. But now the murther’s out. Come they will, your Man and my Man, pretending to a pity because they can’t do without us. But like the self-indulgent monsters they are, they must needs stop at some grand hotel, Redlake he calls it, the Royal, on the hill above Winthorpe-Sutbury. The Royal! The very name describes it. Can’t you see the lounge, girls, with its white cane chairs? And saddlebacks! No other hotel it seems is good enough for them, and we if you please are asked to go in and have — what does the man call it — the ‘comforts of decency’ — and let the caravan rest for a bit.”

“Tim promised me I should run wild as long as I chose,” said Mrs. Geedge, looking anything but wild.

“They’re after thinking we’ve had enough of it,” said Mrs. Bowles.

“It sounds like that.”

“Sure I’d go on like this for ever,” said Judy. “’Tis the Man and the House and all of it that oppresses me. Vans for Women....”

“Let’s not go to Winthorpe-Sutbury,” said Madeleine.

(The first word of sense Bealby had heard.)

“Ah!” said Mrs. Bowles archly, “who knows but what there’ll be a Man for you? Some sort of Man anyhow.”

(Bealby thought that a most improper remark.)

“I want no man.”

“Ah!”

“Why do you say *Ah* like that?”

“Because I mean *Ah* like that.”

“Meaning?”

“Just that.”

Miss Philips eyed Mrs. Bowles and Mrs. Bowles eyed Miss Philips.

“Judy,” she said, “you’ve got something up your sleeve.”

“Where it’s perfectly comfortable,” said Mrs. Bowles.

And then quite maddeningly, she remarked, “Will you be after washing up presently, Dick?” and looked at him with a roguish quiet over her cigarette. It was necessary to disabuse her mind at once of the idea that he had been listening. He took up the last few plates and

went off to the washing place by the stream. All the rest of that conversation had to be lost.

Except that as he came back for the Hudson's soap he heard Miss Philips say, "Keep your old Men. I'll just console myself with Dick, my dears. Making such a Mystery!"

To which Mrs. Bowles replied darkly, "She little knows...."

A kind of consolation was to be got from that.... But what was it she little knew?....

§ 3

The men-folk when they came were nothing so terrific to the sight as Bealby had expected. And thank Heaven there were only two of them and each assigned. Something he perceived was said about someone else, he couldn't quite catch what, but if there was to have been someone else, at any rate there now wasn't. Professor Bowles was animated and Mr. Geedge was gracefully cold, they kissed their wives but not offensively, and there was a chattering pause while Bealby walked on beside the caravan. They were on the bare road that runs along the high ridge above Winthorpe-Sutbury, and the men had walked to meet them from some hotel or other — Bealby wasn't clear about that — by the golf links. Judy was the life and soul of the encounter, and all for asking the men what they meant by intruding upon three independent women who, sure-alive, could very well do without them. Professor Bowles took her pretty calmly, and seemed on the whole to admire her.

Professor Bowles was a compact little man wearing spectacles with alternative glasses, partly curved, partly fiat, he was hairy and dressed in that sort of soft tweedy stuff that ravels out — he seemed to have been sitting among thorns — and baggy knickerbockers with straps and very thick stockings and very sensible, open-air, in fact quite mountainous, boots. And yet though he was short and stout and active he had a kind of authority about him, and it was clear that for all her persuasiveness his wife merely ran over him like a creeper without making any great difference to him. "I've found," he said, "the perfect place for your encampment." She had been making

suggestions. And presently he left the ladies and came hurrying after the caravan to take control.

He was evidently a very controlling person.

"Here, you get down," he said to William. "That poor beast's got enough to pull without you."

And when William mumbled he said, "Hey?" in such a shout that William for ever after held his peace.

"Where d'you come from, you boy, you?" he asked suddenly, and Bealby looked to Mrs. Bowles to explain.

"Great silly collar you've got," said the Professor, interrupting her reply. "Boy like this ought to wear a wool shirt. Dirty too. Take it off, boy. It's choking you. Don't you feel it?"

Then he went on to make trouble about the tackle William had rigged to contain the white horse.

"This harness makes me sick," said Professor Bowles. "It's worse than Italy...."

"Ah!" he cried and suddenly darted off across the turf, going inelegantly and very rapidly, with peculiar motions of the head and neck as he brought first the flat and then the curved surface of his glasses into play. Finally he dived into the turf, remained scrabbling on all fours for a moment or so, became almost still for the fraction of a minute and then got up and returned to his wife, holding in an exquisite manner something that struggled between his finger and his thumb.

"That's the third to-day," he said, triumphantly. "They swarm here. It's a migration."

Then he resumed his penetrating criticism of the caravan outfit.

"That boy," he said suddenly with his glasses oblique, "hasn't taken off his collar yet."

Bealby revealed the modest secrets of his neck and pocketed the collar....

Mr. Geedge did not appear to observe Bealby. He was a man of the super- aquiline type with a nose like a rudder, he held his face as if it was a hatchet in a procession, and walked with the dignity of a man of honour. You could see at once he was a man of honour. Inflexibly, invincibly he was a man of honour. You felt that anywhen, in a fire, in an earthquake, in a railway accident when other

people would be running about and doing things he would have remained — a man of honour. It was his pride rather than his vanity to be mistaken for Sir Edward Grey. He now walked along with Miss Philips and his wife behind the disputing Bowleses, and discoursed in deep sonorous tones about the healthiness of healthy places and the stifling feeling one had in towns when there was no air.

§ 4

The Professor was remarkably active when at last the point he had chosen for the encampment was reached. Bealby was told to " look alive " twice, and William was assigned to his genus and species: " The man's an absolute idiot," was the way the Professor put it. William just shot a glance at him over his nose.

The place certainly commanded a wonderful view. It was a turfy bank protected from the north and south by bushes of yew and the beech-bordered edge of a chalk pit; it was close beside the road, a road which went steeply down the hill into Winthorpe-Sutbury, with that intrepid decision peculiar to the hill-roads of the south of England. It looked indeed as though you could throw the rinse of your teacups into the Winthorpe-Sutbury street; as if you could jump and impale yourself upon the church spire. The hills bellied out east and west and carried hangers, and then swept round to the west in a long level succession of projections, a perspective that merged at last with the general horizon of hilly bluenesses, amidst which Professor Bowles insisted upon a "sapphire glimpse" of sea. "The Channel," said Professor Bowles, as though that made it easier for them. Only Mr. Geedge refused to see even that mitigated version of the sea. There was something perhaps bluish and level, but he was evidently not going to admit it was sea until he had paddled in it and tested it in every way known to him....

"Good Lord!" cried the Professor. "What's the man doing now?"

William stopped the struggles and confidential discouragements he was bestowing upon the white horse and waited for a more definite reproach.

"Putting the caravan alongside to the sun! Do you think it will

ever get cool again? And think of the blaze of the sunset — through the glass of that door!"

William spluttered. "If I put'n t'other way — goo runnin' down t'hill like," said William.

"Imbecile!" cried the Professor. "Put something under the wheels. Here!" He careered about and produced great grey fragments of a perished yew tree. "Now then," he said. "Head up hill."

William did his best.

"Oh! not like that! Here, you!"

Bealby assisted with obsequious enthusiasm.

It was some time before the caravan was adjusted to the complete satisfaction of the Professor. But at last it was done, and the end door gaped at the whole prospect of the Weald with the steps hanging out idiotically like a tongue. The hind wheels were stayed up very cleverly by lumps of chalk and chunks of yew, living and dead, and certainly the effect of it was altogether taller and better. And then the preparations for the midday cooking began. The Professor was full of acute ideas about camping and cooking, and gave Bealby a lively but instructive time. There was no stream handy, but William was sent off to the hotel to fetch a garden water-cart that the Professor with infinite foresight had arranged should be ready.

The Geedges held aloof from these preparations, they were unassuming people, Miss Philips concentrated her attention upon the Weald — it seemed to Bealby a little discontentedly, as if it was unworthy of her — and Mrs. Bowles hovered, smoking cigarettes, over her husband' 5 activities, acting great amusement.

"You see it pleases me to get Himself busy," she said. "You'll end a Camper yet, Darlint, and us in the hotel."

The Professor answered nothing, but seemed to plunge deeper into practicality.

Under the urgency of Professor Bowles Bealby stumbled and broke a glass jar of marmalade over some fried potatoes, but otherwise did well as a cook's assistant. Once things were a little interrupted by the Professor going off to catch a cricket, but whether it was the right sort of cricket or not he failed to get it. And then with three loud reports — for a moment Bealby thought the mad butlers from Shonts were upon him with firearms — Captain Douglas

arrived and got off his motor bicycle and left it by the roadside. His machine accounted for his delay, for those were the early days of motor bicycles. It also accounted for a black smudge under one of his bright little eyes. He was fair and flushed, dressed in oilskins and a helmet-shaped cap and great gauntlets that made him, in spite of the smudge, look strange and brave and handsome like a Crusader — only that he was clad in oilskin and not steel, and his moustache was smaller than those of Crusaders were — and when he came across the turf to the encampment Mrs. Bowles and Mrs. Geedge both set up a cry of "A-Ah!" and Miss Philips turned an accusing face upon those two ladies. Bealby knelt with a bunch of knives and forks in his hand laying the cloth for lunch, and when he saw Captain Douglas approaching Miss Philips, he perceived clearly that that lady had already forgotten her lowly adorer, and his little heart was smitten with desolation. This man was arrayed like a chivalrous god, and how was a poor Bealby, whose very collar, his one little circlet of manhood, had been reft from him, how was he to compete with this tremendousness? In that hour the ambition for mechanism, the passion for leather and oilskin was sown in Bealby's heart.

"I told you not to come near me for a month," said Madeleine, but her face was radiant.

"These motor bicycles — very difficult to control," said Captain Douglas, and all the little golden-white hairs upon his sunlit cheek glittered in the sun,

"And besides," said Mrs. Bowles, "it's all nonsense."

The Professor was in a state of arrested administration; the three others were frankly audience to a clearly understood scene.

"You ought to be in France."

"I'm not in France."

"I sent you into exile for a month," and she held out a hand for the Captain to kiss.

He kissed it.

Someday, somewhere, it was written in the book of destiny Bealby should also kiss hands. It was a lovely thing to do.

"Month! It's been years," said the Captain. "Years and years."

"Then you ought to have come back before," she replied, and the Captain had no answer ready....

§ 5

When William arrived with the water-cart, he brought also further proofs of the Professor's organizing ability. He brought various bottles of wine, red Burgundy and sparkling hock, two bottles of cider, and peculiar and meritorious waters; he brought tinned things for hors d'oeuvre; he brought some luscious pears.

When he had a moment with Bealby behind the caravan he repeated thrice in tones of hopeless sorrow, "They'll eat 'um all. I knows they'll eat 'um all." And then plumbing a deeper tone of woe, "Ef they don't they'll count 'um. Ode Goggles'll bag 'um.... 'E's a bagger, 'e is."

It was the brightest of luncheons that was eaten that day in the sunshine and spaciousness above Winthorpe-Sutbury. Everyone was gay, and even the love-lorn Bealby who might well have sunk into depression and lethargy was galvanized into an activity that was almost cheerful by flashes from the Professor's glasses.

They talked of this and that; Bealby hadn't much time to attend, though the laughter that followed various sallies from Judy Bowles was very tantalizing, and it had come to the pears before his attention wasn't so much caught as felled by the word " Shonts "....

It was as if the sky had suddenly changed to vermilion. *All these people were talking of Shouts!...*

"Went there," said Captain Douglas, "in perfect good faith. Wanted to fill up Lucy's little party. One doesn't go to Shonts nowadays for idle pleasure. And then — I get ordered out of the house, absolutely Told to Go."

(This man had been at Shonts!)

"That was on Sunday morning?" said Mrs. Geedge.

"On Sunday morning," said Mrs. Bowles suddenly, "we were almost within sight of Shonts."

(This man had been at Shonts even at the time when Bealby was there!)

"Early on Sunday morning. Told to go. I was fairly flabbergasted. What the deuce is a man to do? Where's he to go? Sunday? One

doesn't go to places, Sunday morning. There I'd been sleeping like a lamb all night and suddenly in came Laxton and said, 'Look here, you know,' he said, 'you've got to oblige me and pack your bag and go. Now.' 'Why?' said I. 'Because you've driven the Lord Chancellor stark staring mad!'"

"But how?" asked the Professor almost angrily, "how? I don't see it. Why should he ask you to go?"

"*I* don't know!" cried Captain Douglas.

"Yes, but!" said the Professor, protesting against the unreasonableness of mankind.

"I'd had a word or two with him in the train. Nothing to speak of. About occupying two corner seats — always strikes me as a cad's trick — but on my honour I didn't rub it in. And then he got it into his head we were laughing at him at dinner — we were a bit, but only the sort of thing one says about anyone — way he works his eyebrows and all that — and then he thought I was ragging him.... I don't rag people. Got it so strongly he made a row that night. Said I'd made a ghost slap him on his back. Hang it! — what can you say to a thing like that? In my room all the time."

"You suffer for the sins of your brother," said Mrs. Bowles.

"Heavens!" cried the Captain, "I never thought of that! Perhaps he mistook me...."

He reflected for a moment and continued his narrative. "Then in the night, you know, he heard noises."

"They always do," said the Professor nodding confirmation.

"Couldn't sleep."

"A sure sign," said the Professor.

"And finally he sallied out in the early morning, caught the butler in one of the secret passages"

"How did the butler get into the secret passage?"

"Going round, I suppose. Part of his duties.... Anyhow he gave the poor beggar an awful doing — awful — brutal — black eye, — all that sort of thing; man much too respectful to hit back. Finally declared I'd been getting up a kind of rag, — squaring the servants to help and so forth.... Laxton, I fancy, half believed it.... Awkward thing, you know, having it said about that you ragged the Lord Chancellor. Makes a man seem a sort of mischievous idiot. Injures a

man. Then going away, you see, seems a kind of admission....”

“Why did you go?”

“Lucy,” said the Captain compactly. “Hysterics.

“Shonts would have burst,” he added, “if I hadn’t gone.”

Madeleine was helpful. “But you’ll have to do something further,” she said.

“What is one to do 7 “squealed the Captain.

“The sooner you get the Lord Chancellor certified a lunatic,” said the Professor soundly, “the better for your professional prospects.”

“He went on pretty bad after I’d gone.”

“You’ve heard?”

“Two letters. I picked ’em up at Wheatley Post Office this morning. You know he hadn’t done with that butler. Actually got out of his place and scruffed the poor devil at lunch. Shook him like a rat, she says. Said the man wasn’t giving him anything to drink — nice story, eh? Anyhow he scruffed him until things got broken....

“I had it all from Minnie Timbre — you know, used to be Minnie Flax.” He shot a propitiatory glance at Madeleine. “Used to be neighbours of ours you know, in the old time. Half the people, she says, didn’t know what was happening. Thought the butler was apoplectic and that old Moggeridge was helping him stand up. Taking off his collar. It was Laxton thought of saying it was a fit. Told everybody she says. Had to tell ’em Something, I suppose. But she saw better, and she thinks a good many others did. Laxton ran ’em both out of the room. Nice scene for Shouts, eh? Thundering awkward for poor Lucy. Not the sort of thing the county expected. Has her both ways. Can’t go to a house where the Lord Chancellor goes mad. One alternative. Can’t go to a house where the butler has fits. That’s the other. See the dilemma?...”

“I’ve got a letter from Lucy too. It’s here” — he struggled— “See? Eight sheets — pencil. No Joke for a man to read that. And she writes worse than any decent, self-respecting, illiterate woman has a right to do. Quivers. Like writing in a train. Can’t read half of it. But she’s got something about a boy on her mind. Mad about a boy. Have I taken away a boy? They’ve lost a boy. Took him in my luggage, I suppose. She’d better write to the Lord Chancellor. Likely as not he met him in some odd corner and flew at him. Smashed him

to atoms. Dispersed him. Anyhow they've lost a boy."

He protested to the world. "*I* can't go hunting lost boys for Lucy. I've done enough coming away as I did...."

Mrs. Bowles held out an arresting cigarette.

"What sort of boy was lost?" she asked.

"I don't know. Some little beast of a boy. I daresay she'd only imagined it. Whole thing been too much for her."

"Read that over again," said Mrs. Bowles, "about losing a boy. We've found one."

"That little chap?"

"We found that boy" — she glanced over her shoulder, but Bealby was nowhere to be seen— "on Sunday morning near Shonts. He strayed into us like a lost kitten."

"But I thought you said you knew his father, Judy," objected the Professor.

"Didn't verify," said Mrs. Bowles shortly, and then to Captain Douglas, "Read over again what Lady Laxton says about him...."

§ 6

Captain Douglas struggled with the difficulties of his cousin's handwriting.

Everybody drew together over the fragments of the dessert with an eager curiosity, and helped to weigh Lady Laxton's rather dishevelled phrases....

§ 7

"We'll call the principal witness," said Mrs. Bowles at last, warming to the business. "Dick!"

"Di — ick!"

"Dick!"

The Professor got up and strolled round behind the caravan. Then he returned. "No boy there."

"He heard!" said Mrs. Bowles in a large whisper and making

round wonder- eyes.

“She says,” said Douglas, “that the chances are he’s got into the secret passages....”

The Professor strolled out to the road and looked up it and then down upon the roofs of Winthorpe-Sutbury. “No,” he said. “He’s mizzled.”

“He’s only gone away for a bit,” said Mrs. Geedge. “He does sometimes after lunch. He’ll come back to wash up.”

“He’s probably taking a snooze among the yew bushes before facing the labours of washing up,” said Mrs. Bowles. “He can’t have mizzled. You see — in there He can’t by any chance have taken his luggage!”

She got up and clambered — with a little difficulty because of its piled-up position, into the caravan. “It’s all right,” she called out of the door. “His little parsivel is still here.”

Her head disappeared again.

“I don’t think he’d go away like this,” said Madeleine. “After all, what is there for him to go to — even if he is Lady Laxton’s missing boy....”

“I don’t believe he heard a word of it,” said Mrs. Geedge....

Mrs. Bowles reappeared, with a curious-looking brown-paper parcel in her hand. She descended carefully. She sat down by the fire and held the parcel on her knees. She regarded it and her companions waggishly and lit a fresh cigarette. “Our link with Dick,” she said, with the cigarette in her mouth.

She felt the parcel, she poised the parcel, she looked at it more and more waggishly. “I wonder?” she said.

Her expression became so waggish that her husband knew she was committed to behaviour of the utmost ungentlemanliness. He had long ceased to attempt restraint in these moods. She put her head on one side and tore open the corner of the parcel just a little way.

“A tin can,” she said in a stage whisper.

She enlarged the opening. “Blades of grass,” she said.

The Professor tried to regard it humorously. “Even if you have ceased to be decent you can still be frank.... I think now, my dear, you might just straightforwardly undo the parcel.”

She did. Twelve unsympathetic eyes surveyed the evidences of

Bealby's utter poverty.

"He's coming," cried Madeleine suddenly.

Judy re-packed hastily, but it was a false alarm.

"I said he'd mizzled," said the Professor.

"And without washing up!" wailed Madeleine. "I couldn't have thought it of him...."

§ 8

But Bealby had not " mizzled " although he was conspicuously not in evidence about the camp. There was neither sight nor sound of him for all the time they sat about the vestiges of their meal. They talked of him and of topics arising out of him, and whether the Captain should telegraph to Lady Laxton, "Boy practically found."

"I'd rather just find him," said the Captain, "and anyhow until we get hold of him we don't know it's her particular boy."

Then they talked of washing-up and how detestable it was. And suddenly the two husbands, seeing their advantage, renewed their proposals that the caravanners should put up at the golf-links hotel, and have baths and the comforts of civilization for a night or so — and anyhow walk thither for tea. And as William had now returned — he was sitting on the turf afar off smoking a nasty-looking short clay pipe — they rose up and departed. But Captain Douglas and Miss Philips for some reason did not go off exactly with the others but strayed apart, straying away more and more into a kind of solitude....

First the four married people and then the two lovers disappeared over the crest of the downs....

§ 9

For a time except for its distant sentinel the caravan seemed absolutely deserted, and then a clump of bramble against the wall of the old chalk-pit became agitated and a small, rueful, disillusioned, white-smeared little Bealby crept back into the visible universe

again. His heart was very heavy.

The time had come to go.

And he did not want to go. He had loved the caravan. He had adored Madeleine.

He would go, but he would go beautifully — touchingiy.

He would wash up before he went, he would make everything tidy, he would leave behind him a sense of irreparable loss....

With a mournful precision he set about this undertaking. If Mergleson could have seen him Mergleson would have been amazed....

He made everything look wonderfully tidy.

Then m the place where she had sat, lying on her rug, he found her favourite book, a small volume of Swinburne's poems very beautifully bound. Captain Douglas had given it to her.

Bealby handled it with a kind of reverence. So luxurious it was, so unlike the books in Bealby's world, so altogether of her quality....

Strange forces prompted him. For a time he hesitated. Then decision came with a rush. He selected a page, drew the stump of a pencil from his pocket, wetted it very wet and, breathing hard, began to write that traditional message, "Farewell. Remember Art Bealby."

To this he made an original addition: "I washt up before I went."

Then he remembered that so far as this caravan went he was not Art Bealby at all.

He renewed the wetness of his pencil and drew black lines athwart the name of "Art Bealby" until it was quite unreadable; then across this again and pressing still deeper so that the subsequent pages re-echoed it he wrote these singular words, "Ed rightful Earl Shonts." Then he was ashamed, and largely obliterated this by still more forcible strokes. Finally above it all plainly and nakedly he wrote "Dick Maltravers...."

He put down the book with a sigh and stood up.

Everything was beautifully in order. But could he not do something yet? There came to him the idea of wreathing the entire camping place with boughs of yew. It would look lovely — and significant. He set to work. At first he toiled zealously, but yew is tough to get and soon his hands were painful. He cast about for some easier way, and saw beneath the hind wheels of the caravan great

green boughs — one particularly a splendid long branch.... It seemed to him that it would be possible to withdraw this branch from the great heap of sticks and stones that stayed up the hind wheels of the caravan. It seemed to him that that was so. He was mistaken, but that was his idea.

He set to work to do it. It was rather more difficult to manage than he had supposed; there were unexpected ramifications, wider resistances. Indeed the thing seemed rooted.

Bealby was a resolute youngster at bottom.

He warmed to his task.... He tugged harder and harder....

§ 10

How various is the quality of humanity!

About Bealby there was ever an imaginative touch; he was capable of romance, of gallantries, of devotion. William was of a grosser clay, slave of his appetites, a materialist. Such men as William drive one to believe in born inferiors, in the existence of a lower sort, in the natural inequality of men.

While Bealby was busy at his little gentle task of reparation, a task foolish perhaps and not too ably conceived, but at any rate morally gracious, William had no thought in the world but the satisfaction of those appetites that the consensus of all mankind has definitely relegated to the lower category. And which Heaven has relegated to the lower region of our frame. He came now slinking towards the vestiges of the caravanners' picnic, and no one skilled in the interpretation of the human physiognomy could have failed to read the significance of the tongue tip that drifted over his thin oblique lips. He came so softly towards the encampment that Bealby did not note him. Partly William thought of remnants of food but chiefly he was intent to drain the bottles. Bealby had stuck them all neatly in a row a little way up the hill. There was a cider bottle with some heel-taps of cider, William drank that; then there was nearly half a bottle of hock and William drank that, then there were the drainings of the Burgundy and Apollinaris. It was all drink to William.

And after he had drained each bottle William winked at the watching angels and licked his lips, and patted the lower centres of his being with a shameless base approval. Then fired by alcohol, robbed of his last vestiges of self-control, his thoughts turned to the delicious chocolates that were stored in a daintily beribboned box in the little drawers beneath the sleeping bunk of Miss Philips. There was a new brightness in his eye, a spot of pink in either cheek. With an expression of the lowest cunning he reconnoitred Bealby.

Bealby was busy about something at the back end of the caravan, tugging at something.

With swift stealthy movements of an entirely graceless sort, William got up into the front of the caravan.

Just for a moment he hesitated before going in. He craned his neck to look round the side at the unconscious Bealby, wrinkled the vast nose into an unpleasant grimace and then — a crouching figure of appetite — he crept inside.

Here they were! He laid his hand in the drawer, halted listening....

What was that?....

Suddenly the caravan swayed. He stumbled, and fear crept into his craven soul. The caravan lurched. It was moving.... Its hind wheels came to the ground with a crash....

He took a step doorward and was pitched sideways and thrown upon his knees.... Then he was hurled against the dresser and hit by a falling plate. A cup fell and smashed and the caravan seemed to leap and bound....

Through the little window he had a glimpse of yew bushes hurrying upward. The caravan was going downhill....

“Lummy!” said William, clutching at the bunks to hold himself upright....

“Ca-arnt be that drink!” said William, aspread and aghast....

He attempted the door.

“Crikey! Here! Hold on! My shin!.... ’Tis thut Brasted Vool of a Boy!”

“....” said William. “.....”

“••••• ••••• •••••”

“•••••”

“•••••••”

“•••••••••”

§ 11

The caravan party soon came to its decision. They would stay the night in the hotel. And so as soon as they had had some tea they decided to go back and make William bring the caravan and all the ladies’ things round to the hotel. With characteristic eagerness Professor Bowles led the way.

And so it was Professor Bowles who first saw the release of the caravan. He barked. One short sharp bark. “Whup!” he cried, and very quickly, “Whatstheboy doing?”

Then quite a different style of noise, with the mouth open: “Wha — hoop!”

Then he set off running very fast down towards the caravan, waving his arms and shouting as he ran, “Yaaps! You Idiot. Yaaps!”

The others were less promptly active.

Down the slope they saw Bealby, a little struggling active Bealby, tugging away at a yew branch until the caravan swayed with his efforts, and then — then there was a movement as though the thing tossed its head and reared, and a smash as the heap of stuff that stayed up its hind wheels collapsed....

It plunged like a horse with a dog at its heels, it lurched sideways, and then with an air of quiet deliberation started down the grass slope to the road and Winthorpe-Sutbury....

Professor Bowles sped in pursuit like the wind, and Mrs. Bowles after a gasping moment set off after her lord, her face round and resolute. Mr. Geedge followed at a more dignified pace, making the only really sound suggestion that was offered on that occasion. “Hue! Stop it!” cried Mr. Geedge, for all the world like his great prototype at the Balkan Conference. And then like a large languid pair of scissors he began to run. Mrs. Geedge after some indefinite moments decided to see the humour of it all, and followed her husband, in a fluttering rush, emitting careful little musical giggles as she ran, giggles that she had learnt long ago from a beloved schoolfellow. Captain Douglas and Miss Philips were some way behind the others,

and the situation had already developed considerably before they grasped what was happening. Then obeying the instincts of a soldier the Captain came charging to support the others, and Miss Madeleine Philips after some wasted gestures realized that nobody was looking at her, and sat down quietly on the turf until this paralysing state of affairs should cease.

The caravan remained the centre of interest.

Without either indecent haste or any complete pause it pursued its way down the road towards the tranquil village below. Except for the rumbling of its wheels and an occasional concussion it made very little sound; once or twice there was a faint sound of breaking crockery from its interior and once the phantom of an angry yell, but that was all.

There was an effect of discovered personality about the thing. This vehicle which had hitherto been content to play a background part, a yellow patch amidst the scenery, was now revealing an individuality. It was purposeful and touched with a suggestion of playfulness, at once kindly and human; it had its thoughtful instants, its phases of quick decision, yet never once did it altogether lose a certain mellow dignity. There was nothing servile about it; never for a moment for example did it betray its blind obedience to gravitation. It was rather as if it and gravitation were going hand in hand. It came out into the road, butted into the bank, swept round, meditated for a full second, and then headed downhill, shafts foremost, going quietly faster and faster and swaying from bank to bank. The shafts went before it like arms held out....

It had a quality — as if it were a favourite elephant running to a beloved master from whom it had been over-long separated. Or a slightly intoxicated and altogether happy yellow guinea-pig making for some coveted food....

At a considerable distance followed Professor Bowles, a miracle of compact energy, running so fast that he seemed only to touch the ground at very rare intervals....

And then, dispersedly, in their order and according to their natures, the others....

There was fortunately very little on the road.

There was a perambulator containing twins, whose little girl

guardian was so lucky as to be high up on the bank gathering blackberries.

A ditcher, ditching.

A hawker lost in thought.

His cart, drawn by a poor little black screw of a pony and loaded with the cheap flawed crockery that is so popular among the poor.

A dog asleep in the middle of the village street....

Amidst this choice of objects the caravan displayed a whimsical humanity. It reduced the children in the perambulator to tears, but passed. It might have reduced them to a sort of red-currant jelly. It lurched heavily towards the ditcher and spared him, it chased the hawker up the bank, it whipped off a wheel from the cart of crockery (which after an interval of astonishment fell like a vast objurgation) and then it directed its course with a grim intentness towards the dog.

It just missed the dog. He woke up not a moment too soon. He fled with a yelp of dismay.

And then the caravan careered on a dozen yards farther, lost energy and — the only really undignified thing in its whole career — stood on its head in a wide wet ditch. It did this with just the slightest lapse into emphasis. There! It was as if it gave a grunt — and perhaps there was the faintest suggestion of William in that grunt — and then it became quite still....

For a time the caravan seemed finished and done. Its steps hung from its upper end like the tongue of a tired dog. Except for a few minute noises as though it was scratching itself inside, it was as inanimate as death itself.

But up the hill road the twins were weeping, the hawker and the ditcher were saying raucous things, the hawker's pony had backed into the ditch and was taking ill-advised steps, for which it was afterwards to be sorry, amidst the stock-in-trade, and Professor Bowles, Mrs. Bowles, Mr. Geedge, Captain Douglas and Mrs. Geedge were running — running — one heard the various patter of their feet.

And then came signs of life at the upward door of the caravan, a hand, an arm, an active investigating leg seeking a hold, a large nose, a small intent vicious eye; in fact — William.

William maddened.

Professor Bowles had reached the caravan. With a startlIng agility he clambered up by the wheels and step and confronted the unfortunate driver. It was an occasion for mutual sympathy rather than anger, but the Professor was hasty, efficient and unsympathetic with the lower classes, and William's was an ill-regulated temperament.

"You consummate ass!" began Professor Bowles....

When William heard Professor Bowles say this, incontinently he smote him in the face, and when Professor Bowles was smitten in the face he grappled instantly and very bravely and resolutely with William.

For a moment they struggled fearfully, they seemed to be endowed instantaneously with innumerable legs, and then suddenly they fell through the door of the caravan into the interior, their limbs seemed to whirl for a wonderful instant and then they were swallowed up....

The smash was tremendous. You would not have thought there was nearly so much in the caravan still left to get broken....

A healing silence....

At length smothered noises of still inadequate adjustment within...

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The village population in a state of scared delight appeared at a score of points and converged upon the catastrophe. Sounds of renewed dissension between William and the Professor inside the rearing yellow bulk, promised further interests and added an element of mystery to this manifest disaster.

§ 12

As Bealby, still grasping his great branch of yew, watched these events, a sense of human futility invaded his youthful mind. For the first time he realized the gulf between intention and result. He had meant so well....

He perceived it would be impossible to explain....

The thought of even attempting to explain things to Professor Bowles was repellent to him,....

He looked about him with round despairful eyes. He selected a direction which seemed to promise the maximum of concealment with the minimum of conversational possibility, and in that direction and without needless delay he set off, eager to turn over an entirely fresh page in his destiny as soon as possible....

To get away, the idea possessed all his being.

From the crest of the downs a sweet voice floated after his retreating form and never overtook him.

“Di — ick!”

§ 13

Then presently Miss Philips arose to her feet, gathered her skirts in her hand, and with her delicious chin raised and an expression of countenance that was almost business-like, descended towards the gathering audience below. She wore wide flowing skirts and came down the hill in Artemisian strides.

It was high time that somebody looked at her.

V. — THE SEEKING OF BEALBY

§ 1

ON the same Monday evening that witnessed Bealby's first experience of the theatre, Mr. Mergleson, the house steward of Shonts, walked slowly and thoughtfully across the corner of the park between the laundry and the gardens. His face was much recovered from the accidents of his collision with the Lord Chancellor, resort to raw meat in the kitchen had checked the development of his injuries, and only a few contusions in the side of his face were more than faintly traceable. And suffering had on the whole rather ennobled than depressed his bearing. He had a black eye, but it was not, he felt, a common black eye. It came from high quarters and through no fault of Mr. Mergleson's own. He carried it well. It was a fruit of duty rather than the outcome of wanton pleasure-seeking or misdirected passion.

He found Mr. Darling in profound meditation over some peach trees against the wall. They were not doing so well as they ought to do, and Mr. Darling was engaged in wondering why.

"Good evening, Mr. Darling," said Mr. Mergleson.

Mr. Darling ceased rather slowly to wonder and turned to his friend. "Good evening, Mr. Mergleson," he said. "I don't quite like the look of these here peaches. Mowed if I do."

Mr, Mergleson glanced at the peaches and then came to the matter that was nearest his heart.

"You 'aven't I suppose seen anything of your stepson these last two days, Mr. Darling?"

"Naturally not," said Mr. Darling, putting his head on one side and regarding his interlocutor. "Naturally not, — I've left that to you, Mr. Mergleson."

"Well, that's what's awkward," said Mr. Mergleson, and then, with a forced easiness, "You see, I ain't seen 'im either."

"No!"

"No. I lost sight of 'im " — Mr. Mergleson appeared to reflect— "late on Sattiday night."

"'Ow's that, Mr. Mergleson?"

Mr. Mergleson considered the difficulties of lucid explanation. "We missed 'im," said Mr. Mergleson, simply regarding the well-weeded garden path with a calculating expression and then lifting his eyes to Mr. Darling's with an air of great candour. "And we continue to miss him."

"*Well*!" said Mr. Darling. "That's rum."

"Yes," said Mr. Mergleson.

"It's decidedly rum," said Mr, Darling.

"We thought 'e might be 'iding from 'is work. Or cut off 'ome."

"You didn't send down to ask."

"We was too busy with the week-end people. On the 'ole we thought if 'e *'ad* cut 'ome, on the 'ole 'e wasn't a very serious loss. 'E got in the way at times.... And there was one or two things 'appened... Now that they're all gone and 'e 'asn't turned up Well, I came down, Mr. Darling, to arst you. Where's 'e gone?"

"'E ain't come 'ere," said Mr. Darling surveying the garden.

"I 'arf expected 'e might and I 'arf expected 'e mightn't," said Mr. Mergleson with the air of one who had anticipated Mr. Darling's answer but hesitated to admit as much.

The two gentlemen paused for some seconds and regarded each other searchingly. Where's 'e got to?" said Mr. Darling. Well," said Mr. Mergleson, putting his hands where the tails of his short jacket would have been if it hadn't been short and looking extraordinarily like a parrot in its more thoughtful moods, "to tell you the truth, Mr. Darling, I've 'ad a dream about 'im — and it worries me. I got a sort of ideer of 'im as being in one of them secret passages. 'Iding away. There was a guest, well, I say it with all respec' but anyone might 'ave 'id from 'im.... S' morning soon as the week-end 'ad cleared up and gone 'ome, me and Thomas went through them passages as well as we could. Not a trace of 'im. But I still got that ideer. 'E was a wriggling, climbing, enterprising sort of boy."

"I've checked 'im for it once or twice," said Mr. Darling with the red light of fierce memories gleaming for a moment in his eyes.

"'E might even," said Mr. Mergleson, "well, very likely 'ave got 'imself jammed in one of them secret passages...."

"Jammed," repeated Mr. Darling.

“Well — got ‘imself somewhere where ‘e can’t get out. I’ve ‘card tell there’s walled-up dungeons.”

“They say,” said Mr. Darling, “there’s underground passages to the Abbey ruins — three good mile away.”

“Orkward,” said Mr. Mergleson....

“Drat ‘is eyes!” said Mr. Darling, scratching his head. “What does ‘e mean by it?”

“We can’t leave ‘im there,” said Mr. Mergleson.

“I knowed a young devil once what crawled up a culvert,” said Mr. Darling. “‘Is father ‘ad to dig ‘im out like a fox.... Lord! ‘ow ‘e walloped ‘im for it.”

“Mistake to ‘ave a boy in so young,” said Mr. Mergleson.

“It’s all very awkward,” said Mr. Darling, surveying every aspect of the case. “You see ‘Is mother sets a most estrordinary value on ‘im. Most estrordinary.”

“I don’t know whether she oughtn’t to be told,” said Mr, Mergleson. “I was thinking of that.”

Mr. Darling was not the sort of man to meet trouble half-way. He shook his head at that. “Not yet, Mr. Mergleson. I don’t think yet. Not until everything’s been tried. I don’t think there’s any need to give her needless distress, — none whatever. If you don’t mind I think I’ll come up to- night — nineish say — and ‘ave a talk to you and Thomas about it — a quiet talk. Best to begin with a quiet talk. It’s a dashed rum go, and me and you we got to think it out a bit.”

“That’s what *I* think,” said Mr. Mergleson with unconcealed relief at Mr. Darling’ s friendliness. “That’s exactly the light, Mr. Darling, in which it appears to me. Because you see — if ‘e’s all right and in the ‘ouse, why doesn’t ‘e

§ 2

In the pantry that evening the question of telling someone was discussed further. It was discussed over a number of glasses of Mr. Mergleson’s beer. For, following a sound tradition, Mr. Mergleson brewed at Shonts, and sometimes he brewed well and sometimes he brewed ill, and sometimes he brewed weak and sometimes he brewed

strong, and there was no monotony in the cups at Shonts. This was sturdy stuff and suited Mr. Darling's mood, and ever and again with an author's natural weakness and an affectation of abstraction Mr. Mergleson took the jug out empty and brought it back foaming.

Henry, the second footman, was disposed to a forced hopefulness so as not to spoil the evening, but Thomas was sympathetic and distressed. The red-haired youth made cigarettes with a little machine, licked them and offered them to the others, saying little, as became him. Etiquette deprived him of an uninvited beer, and Mr. Mergleson's inattention completed what etiquette began.

"I can't bear to think of the poor little beggar, stuck head foremost into some cobwebby cranny, blowed if I can," said Thomas, getting help from the jug.

"He was an interesting kid," said Thomas in a tone that was frankly obituary. "He didn't like his work, one could see that, but he was lively — and I tried to help him along all I could, when I wasn't too busy myself."

"There was something sensitive about him," said Thomas.

Mr. Mergleson sat with his arms loosely thrown out over the table.

"What we got to do is to tell someone," he said, "I don't see 'ow I can put off telling 'er ladyship — after to-morrow morning. And then — 'eaven 'elp us!"

"Course I got to tell my missis," said Mr. Darling, and poured in a preoccupied way, some running over.

"We'll go through them passages again now before we go to bed," said Mr. Mergleson, "far as we can. But there's 'oles and chinks on'y a boy could get through."

"*I* got to tell the missis," said Mr. Darling. "That's what's worrying me...."

As the evening wore on there was a tendency on the part of Mr. DarIng to make this the refrain of his discourse. He sought advice. "'Ow'd you tell the missis?" he asked Mr. Mergleson, and emptied a glass to control his impatience before Mr. Mergleson replied.

"I shall tell 'er ladyship, just simply, the fact. I shall say, 'Your ladyship, here's my boy gone and we don't know where.' And as she arsts me questions so shall I give particulars."

Mr. Darling reflected and then shook his head slowly.

"'Ow'd *ju* tell the missis?" he asked Thomas.

"Glad I haven't got to," said Thomas. "Poor little beggar!"

"Yes, but 'ow would you tell 'er?" Mr. Darling said, varying the accent very carefully.

"I'd go to 'er and I'd pat her back and I'd say 'Bear up,' see, and when she asked what for, I'd just tell her what for — gradual like."

"You don't know the missis," said Mr. Darling. "Henry, 'ow'd *ju* tell 'er?"

"Let 'er find out," said Henry. "Wimmin do."

Mr. Darling reflected, and decided that too was unworkable.

"'Ow'd you?" he asked with an air of desperation of the red-haired youth.

The red-haired youth remained for a moment with his tongue extended, licking the gum of a cigarette paper, and his eyes on Mr. Darling. Then he finished the cigarette slowly, giving his mind very carefully to the question he had been honoured with. "I think," he said, in a low serious voice, "I should say, just simply, 'Mary' — or 'Susan' — or whatever her name is."

"Tilda," supplied Mr. Darling.

"'Tilda,' I should say, 'The Lord gave and the Lord 'ath taken away. Tilda!— 'e's gone.' Somethin' like that."

The red-haired boy cleared his throat. He was rather touched by his own simple eloquence.

Mr. Darling reflected on this with profound satisfaction for some moments. Then he broke out almost querulously, "Yes, but brast him! — Where's 'e gone?"

"Anyhow," said Mr. Darling, "I ain't going to tell 'er not till the morning. I ain't going to lose my night's rest if I 'ave lost my stepson. Nohow. Mr. Mergleson, I must say, I don't think I ever 'ave tasted better beer. Never. It's — it's famous beer."

He had some more....

On his way back through the moonlight to the gardens Mr. Darling was still unsettled as to the exact way of breaking things to his wife. He had come out from the house a little ruffled because of Mr. Mergleson's opposition to a rather good idea of his that he should go about the house and " holler for 'im a bit. He'd know my

voice you see. Ladyship wouldn't mind. Very likely 'sleep by now." But the moonlight dispelled his irritation.

How was he to tell his wife? He tried various methods to the listening moon.

There was for example the offhand newsy way. "You know tha' boy yours?" Then a pause for the reply. Then, "'E's toley dis'peared."

Only there are difficulties about the word totally.

Or the distressed impersonal manner. "Dre'fle thing happen'd. Dre'fle thing. Tha' poo' lill' chap, Artie — toley dis'peared."

Totally again.

Or the personal intimate note. "Dunno wha' you'll say t'me, Tilda, when you hear whattogottasay. Thur'ly bad news. Seems they los' our Artie up there — clean los' 'im. Can't fine 'im nowhere 'tall."

Or the authoritative kindly. "Tilda — you go' control yourself. Go' show whadyou made of. Our boy— 'e's — hic — *los*'."

Then he addressed the park at large with a sudden despair. "Don' care wha' I say, she'll blame it on to me. I know 'er!"

After that the enormous pathos of the situation got hold of him. "Poor lill' chap," he said. "Poor lill' fell'," and shed a few natural tears.

"Loved 'im jessis mione son."

As the circumambient night made no reply he repeated the remark in a louder, almost domineering tone....

He spent some time trying to climb the garden wall because the door did not seem to be in the usual place. (Have to inquire about that in the morning. Difficult to see everything is all right when one is so bereaved.) But finally he came on the door round a corner.

He told his wife merely that he intended to have a peaceful night, and took off his boots in a defiant and intermittent manner.

The morning would be soon enough.

She looked at him pretty hard, and he looked at her ever and again, but she never made a guess at it.

Bed.

§ 3

So soon as the week-enders had dispersed and Sir Peter had gone off to London to attend to various matters affecting the peptonizing of milk and the distribution of baby soothers about the habitable globe, Lady Laxton went back to bed and remained in bed until midday on Tuesday. Nothing short of complete rest and the utmost kindness from her maid would, she felt, save her from a nervous breakdown of the most serious description. The festival had been stormy to the end. Sir Peter's ill-advised attempts to deprive Lord Moggeridge of alcohol had led to a painful struggle at lunch, and this had been followed by a still more unpleasant scene between host and guest in the afternoon. "This is an occasion for tact," Sir Peter had said, and had gone off to tackle the Lord Chancellor, leaving his wife to the direst, best founded apprehensions. For Sir Peter's tact was a thing by itself, a mixture of misconception, recrimination and familiarity that was rarely well received....

She had had to explain to the Sunday dinner party that his lordship had been called away suddenly. "Something connected with the Great Seal," Lady Laxton had whispered in a discreet mysterious whisper. One or two simple hearers were left with the persuasion that the Great Seal had been taken suddenly unwell — and probably in a slightly indelicate manner. Thomas had to paint Mergleson's eye with grease-paint left over from some private theatricals. It had been a patched-up affair altogether, and before she retired to bed that night Lady Laxton had given way to her accumulated tensions and wept.

There was no reason whatever why to wind up the day Sir Peter should have stayed in her room for an hour saying what he thought of Lord Moggeridge. She felt she knew quite well enough what he thought of Lord Moggeridge, and on these occasions he always used a number of words that she did her best to believe, as a delicately brought-up woman, were unfamiliar to her ears....

So on Monday, as soon as the guests had gone, she went to bed again and stayed there, trying as a good woman should to prevent herself thinking of what the neighbours could be thinking — and saying — of the whole affair, by studying a new and very circumstantial pamphlet by Bishop Fowle on social evils, turning

over the moving illustrations of some recent antivivisection literature and re-reading the accounts in the morning papers of a colliery disaster in the north of England.

To such women as Lady Laxton, brought up in an atmosphere of refinement that is almost colourless and living a life troubled only by small social conflicts and the minor violence of Sir Peter, blameless to the point of complete uneventfulness, and secure and comfortable to the point of tedium, there is something amounting to fascination in the wickedness and sufferings of more normally situated people, there is a real attraction and solace in the thought of pain and stress, and as her access to any other accounts of vice and suffering was restricted she kept herself closely in touch with the more explicit literature of the various movements for human moralization that distinguish our age, and responded eagerly and generously to such painful catastrophes as enliven it. The counterfoils of her cheque-book witnessed to her gratitude for these vicarious sensations. She figured herself to herself in her day dreams as a calm and white and shining intervention checking and reproving amusements of an undesirable nature, and earning the tearful blessings of the mangled bye-products of industrial enterprise.

There is a curious craving for entire reality in the feminine composition, and there were times when in spite of these feasts of particulars, she wished she could come just a little nearer to the heady dreadfulnesses of life than simply writing a cheque against it. She would have liked to have actually seen the votaries of evil blench and repent before her contributions, to have herself unstrapped and revived and pitied some doomed and chloroformed victim of the so-called "scientist," to have herself participated in the stretcher and the hospital and humanity made marvellous by enlistment under the red-cross badge. But Sir Peter's ideals of womanhood were higher than his language, and he would not let her soil her refinement with any vision of the pain and evil in the world. "Sort of woman they want up there is a Trained Nurse," he used to say when she broached the possibility of going to some famine or disaster. "You don't want to go prying, old girl...."

She suffered, she felt, from repressed heroism. If ever she was to shine in disaster that disaster, she felt, must come to her, she might

not go to meet it, and so you realize how deeply it stirred her, how it brightened her and uplifted her to learn from Mr. Mergleson's halting statements that perhaps, that probably, that almost certainly, a painful and tragical thing was happening even now within the walls of Shonts, that there was urgent necessity for action — if anguish was to be witnessed before it had ended and life saved.

She clasped her hands; she surveyed her large servitor with agonized green-grey eyes.

"Something must be done at once," she said. "Everything possible must be done. Poor little Mite!"

"Of course, my lady, 'e may 'ave run away!" "Oh no!" she cried, "he hasn't run away. He hasn't run away. How can you be so wicked, Mergleson? Of course he hasn't run away. He's there now. And it's too dreadful." She became suddenly very firm and masterful. The morning's colliery tragedy inspired her imagination.

"We must get pick-axes," she said. "We must organize search parties. Not a moment is to be lost, Mergleson — not a moment.... Get the men in off the roads. Get everyone you can...."

And not a moment was lost. The road men were actually at work in Shonts before their proper dinner-hour was over.

They did quite a lot of things that afternoon. Every passage attainable from the dining-room opening was explored, and where these passages gave ok chinks and crannies they were opened up with a vigour which Lady Laxton had greatly stimulated by an encouraging presence and liberal doses of whisky. Through their efforts a fine new opening was made into the library from the wall near the window, a hole big enough for a man to fall through, because one did, and a great piece of stonework was thrown down from the Queen Elizabeth tower exposing the upper portion of the secret passage to the light of day. Lady Laxton herself and the head housemaid went round the panelling with a hammer and a chisel, and called out "Are you there?" and attempted an opening wherever it sounded hollow. The sweep was sent for to go up the old chimneys outside the present flues. Meanwhile Mr. Darling had been set with several of his men to dig for, discover, pick up and lay open the underground passage or disused drain, whichever it was, that was known to run from the corner of the laundry towards the old ice-

house, and that was supposed to reach to the Abbey ruins. After some bold exploratory excavations this channel was located and a report sent at once to Lady Laxton.

It was this and the new and alarming scar on the Queen Elizabeth tower that brought Mr. Beaulieu Plummer post-haste from the estate office up to the house. Mr. Beaulieu Plummer was the Marquis of Cranberry's estate agent, a man of great natural tact, and charged among other duties with the task of seeing that the Laxtons did not make away with Shonts during the period of their tenancy. He was a sound compact little man, rarely out of extremely riding breeches and gaiters, and he wore glasses, that now glittered with astonishment as he approached Lady Laxton and her band of spade workers.

At his approach Mr. Darling attempted to become invisible, but he was unable to do so.

"Lady Laxton," Mr. Beaulieu Plummer appealed, "may I ask?"

"Oh, Mr. Beaulieu Plummer, I'm so glad you've come. A little boy — suffocating! I can hardly hear it."

"Suffocating!" cried Mr. Beaulieu Plummer, "where?" and was in a confused manner told.

He asked a number of questions that Lady Laxton found very tiresome. But how did she know the boy was in the secret passages? Of course she knew; was it likely she would do all this if she didn't know? But mightn't he have run away? How could he when he was in the secret passages? But why not first scour the countryside? By which time he would be smothered and starved and

They parted with a mutual loss of esteem, and Mr. Beaulieu Plummer, looking very serious indeed, ran as fast as he could straight to the village telegraph-office. Or to be more exact he walked until he thought himself out of sight of Lady Laxton and then he took to his heels and ran. He sat for some time in the parlour post-office spoiling telegraph forms, and composing telegrams to Sir Peter Laxton and Lord Cranberry.

He got these off at last, and then drawn by an irresistible fascination went back to the park and watched from afar the signs of fresh activities on the part of Lady Laxton.

He saw men coming from the direction of the stables with large rakes. With these they dragged the ornamental waters.

Then a man with a pick-axe appeared against the skyline and crossed the roof in the direction of the clock tower, bound upon some unknown but probably highly destructive mission.

Then he saw Lady Laxton going off to the gardens. She was going to console Mrs. Darling in her trouble. This she did through nearly an hour and a half. And on the whole it seemed well to Mr. Beaulieu Plummer that so she should be occupied....

It was striking five when a telegraph boy on a bicycle came up from the village with a telegram from Sir Peter Laxton.

"Stop all proceedings absolutely," it said, "until I get to you."

Lady Laxton's lips tightened at the message. She was back from much weeping with Mrs. Darling and altogether finely strung. Here she felt was one of those supreme occasions when a woman must assert herself. "A matter of life or death," she wired in reply, and to show herself how completely she overrode such dictation as this, she sent Mr. Mergleson down to the village public-house with orders to engage anyone he could find there for an evening's work on an extraordinarily liberal overtime scale.

After taking this step the spirit of Lady Laxton quailed. She went and sat in her own room and quivered. She quivered but she clenched her delicate fist.

She would go through with it, come what might, she would go on with the excavation all night if necessary, but at the same time she began a little to regret that she had not taken earlier steps to demonstrate the improbability of Bealby having simply run away. She set to work to repair this omission. She wrote off to the Superintendent of Police in the neighbouring town, to the nearest magistrate, and then on the off-chance to various of her week-end guests, including Captain Douglas. If it was true that he had organized the annoyance of the Lord Chancellor (and though she still rejected that view she did now begin to regard it as a permissible hypothesis), then he might also know something about the mystery of this boy's disappearance.

Each letter she wrote she wrote with greater fatigue and haste than its predecessor and more illegibly.

Sir Peter arrived long after dark. He cut across the corner of the park to save time, and fell into one of the trenches that Mr. Darling

had opened. This added greatly to the eclat with which he came into the hall.

Lady Laxton withstood him for five minutes and then returned abruptly to her bedroom and locked herself in, leaving the control of the operations in his hands....

"If he's not in the house," said Sir Peter, "all this is thunderin' foolery, and if he's in the house he's dead. If he's dead he'll smell in a bit and then'll be the time to look for him. Somethin' to go upon instead of all this blind hacking the place about. No wonder they're threatenin' proceedings...."

§ 4

Upon Captain Douglas Lady Laxton's letter was destined to have a very distracting effect. Because as he came to think it over, as he came to put her partly illegible allusions to secret passages and a missing boy side by side with his memories of Lord Moggeridge's accusations and the general mystery of his expulsion from Shonts, it became more and more evident to him that he had here something remarkably like a clue, something that might serve to lift the black suspicion of irreverence and levity from his military reputation. And he had already got to the point of suggesting to Miss Philips that he ought to follow up and secure Bealby forthwith, before ever they came over the hill crest to witness the disaster to the caravan.

Captain Douglas, it must be understood, was a young man at war within himself.

He had been very nicely brought up, firstly in a charming English home, then in a preparatory school for selected young gentlemen, then in a good set at Eton, then at Sandhurst, where the internal trouble had begun to manifest itself. Afterwards the Bistershires.

There were three main strands in the composition of Captain Douglas. In the first place and what was peculiarly his own quality was the keenest interest in the why of things and the how of things and the general mechanism of things. He was fond of clocks, curious about engines, eager for science; he had a quick brain and nimble hands. He read Jules Verne and liked to think about going to the stars

and making flying machines and submarines — in those days when everybody knew quite certainly that such things were impossible. His brain teemed with larval ideas that only needed air and light to become active fullfledged ideas. There he excelled most of us. In the next place, but this second strand was just a strand that most young men have, he had a natural keen interest in the other half of humanity, he thought them lovely, interesting, wonderful, and they filled him with warm curiosities and set his imagination cutting the prettiest capers. And in the third place and there again he was ordinarily human, he wanted to be liked, admired, approved, well thought of.... And so constituted he had passed through the educational influence of that English home, that preparatory school, the good set at Eton, the Sandhurst discipline, the Bistershire mess....

Now the educational influence of the English home, the preparatory school, the good set at Eton and Sandhurst in those days — though Sandhurst has altered a little since — was all to develop that third chief strand of his being to the complete suppression of the others, to make him look well and unobtrusive, dress well and unobtrusively, behave well and unobtrusively, carry himself well, play games reasonably well, do nothing else well, and in the best possible form. And the two brothers Douglas, who were both really very much alike, did honestly do their best to be such plain and simple gentlemen as our country demands, taking pretentious established things seriously, and not being odd or intelligent — in spite of those insurgent strands.

But the strands were in them. Below the surface the disturbing impulses worked and at last forced their way out....

In one Captain Douglas, as Mrs. Rampound Pilby told the Lord Chancellor, the suppressed ingenuity broke out in disconcerting mystifications and practical jokes that led to a severance from Portsmouth, in the other the pent-up passions came out before the other ingredients in an uncontrollable devotion to the obvious and challenging femininity of Miss Madeleine Philips.... His training had made him proof against ordinary women, deaf as it were to their charms, but she — she had penetrated. And impulsive forces that have been pent up go with a bang when they go....

The first strand in the composition of Captain Douglas has still to

be accounted for, the sinister strain of intelligence and inventiveness and lively curiosity. On that he had kept a warier hold. So far that had not been noted against him. He had his motor bicycle it is true at a time when motor bicycles were on the verge of the caddish; to that extent a watchful eye might have found him suspicious; that was all that showed. I wish I could add it was all that there was, but other things — other things were going on. Nobody knew about them. But they were going on more and more.

He read books.

Not decent fiction, not official biographies about other fellows' fathers and all the old anecdotes brought up to date and so on, but books with ideas, — you know, philosophy, social philosophy, scientific stuff, all that rot. The sort of stuff they read in mechanics' institutes.

He thought. He could have controlled it. But he did not attempt to control it. He tried to think. He knew perfectly well that it wasn't good form, but a vicious attraction drew him on.

He used to sit in his bedroom-study at Sandhurst, with the door locked, and write down on a bit of paper what he really believed and why. He would cut all sorts of things to do this. He would question things no properly trained English gentleman ever questions.

And — he experimented.

This you know was long before the French and American aviators. It was long before the coming of that emphatic lead from abroad without which no well-bred English mind permits itself to stir. In the darkest secrecy he used to make little models of cane and paper and elastic in the hope that somehow he would find out something about flying. Flying — that dream! He used to go off by himself to lonely places and climb up as high as he could and send these things fluttering earthward. He used to moon over them and muse about them. If anyone came upon him suddenly while he was doing these things, he would sit on his model, or pretend it didn't belong to him or clap it into his pocket, whichever was most convenient, and assume the vacuous expression of a well-bred gentleman at leisure — and so far nobody had caught him. But it was a dangerous practice.

And finally, and this now is the worst and last thing to tell of his

eccentricities, he was keenly interested in the science of his profession and intensely ambitious.

He thought — though it wasn't his business to think, the business of a junior officer is to obey and look a credit to his regiment — that the military science of the British army was not nearly so bright as it ought to be, and that if big trouble came there might be considerable scope for an inventive man who had done what he could to keep abreast with foreign work, and a considerable weeding out of generals whose promotion had been determined entirely by their seniority, amiability and unruffled connubial felicity. He thought that the field artillery would be found out — there was no good in making a fuss about it beforehand — that no end of neglected dodges would have to be picked up from the enemy, that the transport was feeble, and a health service — other than surgery and ambulance — an unknown idea; but he saw no remedy but experience. So he worked hard in secret; he worked almost as hard as some confounded foreigner might have done; in the belief that after the first horrid smash-up there might be a chance to do things.

Outwardly of course he was sedulously all right. But he could not quite hide the stir in his mind. It broke out upon his surface in a chattering activity of incompleted sentences which he tried to keep as decently silly as he could. He had done his utmost hitherto to escape the observation of the powers that were. His infatuation for Madeleine Philips had at any rate distracted censorious attention from these deeper infamies....

And now here was a crisis in his fife. Through some idiotic entanglement manifestly connected with this missing boy, he had got tarred by his brother's brush and was under grave suspicion for liveliness and disrespect.

The thing might be his professional ruin. And he loved the suppressed possibilities of his work beyond measure.

It was a thing to make him absent-minded even in the company of Madeleine.

§ 5

Not only were the first and second strands in the composition of Captain Douglas in conflict with all his appearances and pretensions, but they were also in conflict with one another.

He was full of that concealed resolve to do and serve and accomplish great things in the world. That was surely purpose enough to hide behind an easy-going unpretending gentlemanliness. But he was also tremendously attracted by Madeleine Philips, more particularly when she was not there.

A beautiful woman may be the inspiration of a great career. This however he was beginning to find was not the case with himself. He had believed it at first and written as much and said as much, and said it very variously and gracefully. But becoming more and more distinctly clear to his intelligence was the fact that the very reverse was the case. Miss Madeleine Philips was making it very manifest to Captain Douglas that she herself was a career; that a lover with any other career in view need not — as the advertisements say — apply.

And the time she took up!

The distress of being with her!

And the distress of not being with her!

She was such a proud and lovely and entrancing and distressing being to remember, and such a vain and difficult thing to be with.

She knew clearly that she was made for love, for she had made herself for love, and she went through life like its empress with all mankind and numerous women at her feet. And she had an ideal of the lover who should win her which was like an oleographic copy of a Laszlo portrait of Douglas greatly magnified. He was to rise rapidly to great things, he was to be a conqueror and administrator, while attending exclusively to her. And incidentally she would gather desperate homage from ail other men of mark, and these attentions would be an added glory to her love for him. At first Captain Douglas had been quite prepared to satisfy all these requirements. He had met her at Shorncliffe, for her people were quite good military people, and he had worshipped his way straight to her feet. He had made the most delightfully simple and delicate love to her. He had given up his secret vice of thinking for the writing of quite surprisingly clever love-letters, and the little white paper models had ceased for a time to flutter in lonely places. And then the thought of

his career returned to him, from a new aspect, as something he might lay at her feet. And once it had returned to him it remained with him.

"Some day," he said, "and it may not be so very long, some of those scientific chaps will invent flying. Then the army will have to take it up, you know."

"I should love," she said, "to soar through the air."

He talked one day of going on active service. How would it affect them if he had to do so? It was a necessary part of a soldier's lot.

"But I should come too!" she said. "I should come with you."

"It might not be altogether convenient," he said, for already he had learnt that Madeleine Philips usually travelled with quite a large number of trunks and considerable impressiveness.

"Of course," she said, "it would be splendid! How could I let you go alone? You would be the great general and I should be with you always."

"Not always very comfortable," he suggested.

"Silly boy! — I shouldn't mind that! How little you know me! Any hardship!"

"A woman — if she isn't a nurse"

"I should come dressed as a man. I would be your groom...."

He tried to think of her dressed as a man, but nothing on earth could get his imagination any further than a vision of her dressed as a Principal Boy. She was so delightfully and valiantly not virile; her hair would have flowed, her body would have moved, a richly fluent femininity — visible through any disguise.

§ 6

That was in the opening stage of the controversy between their careers. In those days they were both acutely in love with each other. Their friends thought the spectacle quite beautiful; they went together so well. Admirers, fluttered with the pride of participation, asked them for week-ends together; those theatrical week-ends that begin on Sunday morning and end on Monday afternoon. She confided widely.

And when at last there was something like a rupture it became the

concern of a large circle of friends.

The particulars of the breach were differently stated. It would seem that looking ahead he had announced his intention of seeing the French army manoeuvres just when it seemed probable that she would be out of an engagement.

“But I ought to see what they are doing,” he said. “They’re going to try those new dirigibles.”

Then should she come?

He wanted to whisk about. It wouldn’t be any fun for her. They might get landed at nightfall in any old hole. And besides people would talk Especially as it was in France. One could do unconventional things in England one couldn’t in France. Atmosphere was different.

For a time after that halting explanation she maintained a silence. Then she spoke in a voice of deep feeling. She perceived, she said, that he wanted his freedom. She would be the last person to hold a reluctant lover to her side. He might go — to any manoeuvres. He might go if he wished round the world. He might go away from her for ever. She would not detain him, cripple him, hamper a career she had once been assured she inspired....

The unfortunate man torn between his love and his profession protested that he hadn’t meant that.

Then what had he meant?

He realized he had meant something remarkably like it, and he found great difficulty in expressing these fine distinctions....

She banished him from her presence for a month, said he might go to his manoeuvres — with her blessing. As for herself, that was her own affair. Some day perhaps he might know more of the heart of a woman.... She choked back tears — very beautifully, and military science suddenly became a trivial matter. But she was firm. He wanted to go. He must go. For a month anyhow.

He went sadly....

Into this opening breach rushed friends. It was the inestimable triumph of Judy Bowles to get there first. To begin with Madeleine confided in her and then, availing herself of the privilege of a distant cousinship, she commanded Douglas to tea in her Knightsbridge flat and had a good straight talk with him. She liked good straight talks

with honest young men about their love affairs; it was almost the only form of flirtation that the Professor, who was a fierce tough undiscriminating man upon the essentials of matrimony, permitted her. And there was something peculiarly gratifying about Douglas's complexion. Under her guidance he was induced to declare that he could not live without Madeleine, that her love was the heart of his life, without it he was nothing and with it he could conquer the world.... Judy permitted herself great protestations on behalf of Madeleine, and Douglas was worked up to the pitch of kissing her intervening hand. He had little silvery hairs, she saw, all over his temples. And he was such a simple perplexed dear. It was a rich beautiful afternoon for Judy.

And then in a very obvious way Judy, who was already deeply in love with the idea of a caravan tour and the "wind on the heath" and the "Gipsy life" and the "open road" and all the rest of it, worked this charming little love difficulty into her scheme, utilized her reluctant husband to arrange for the coming of Douglas, confided in Mrs. Geedge....

And Douglas went off with his perplexities. He gave up all thought of France, week-ended at Shonts instead, to his own grave injury, returned to London unexpectedly by a Sunday train, packed for France and started. He reached Rheims on Monday afternoon. And then the image of Madeleine which always became more beautiful and mysterious and commanding with every mile he put between them would not let him go on. He made unconvincing excuses to the Daily Excess military expert with whom he was to have seen things—" There's a woman in it, my boy, and you're a fool to go," said the Daily Excess man, "but of course you'll go, and I for one don't blame you " He hurried back to London and was at Judy's trysting-place even as Judy had anticipated.

And when he saw Madeleine standing in the sunlight, pleased and proud and glorious, with a smile in her eyes and trembling on her lips, with a strand or so of her beautiful hair and a streamer or so of delightful blue fluttering in the wind about her gracious form, it seemed to him for the moment that leaving the manoeuvres and coming back to England was quite a right and almost a magnificent thing to do.

§ 7

This meeting was no exception to their other race meetings.

The coming to her was a crescendo of poetical desire, the sight of her a climax and then — an accumulation of irritations.

He had thought being with her would be pure delight, and as they went over the down straying after the Bowles and the Geedges towards the Redlake Hotel he already found himself rather urgently asking her to marry him, and being annoyed by what he regarded as her evasiveness.

He walked along with the restrained movement of a decent Englishman, he seemed as it were to gesticulate only through his clenched teeth, and she floated beside him, in a blue dress that with a wonderful foresight she had planned for breezy uplands on the basis of Botticelli's Primavera. He was urging her to marry him soon; he needed her, he could not live in peace without her. It was not at all what he had come to say; he could not recollect that he had come to say anything, but now that he was with her it was the only thing he could find to say to her.

"But, my dearest boy," she said, "how are we to marry? What is to become of your career and my career?"

"I've left my career!" cried Captain Douglas with the first clear note of irritation in his voice.

"Oh! don't let us quarrel," she cried. "Don't let us talk of all those distant things. Let us be happy. Let us enjoy just this lovely day and the sunshine and the freshness and the beauty.... Because you know we are snatching these days. We have so few days together. Each — each must be a gem.... Look, dear, how the breeze sweeps through these tall dry stems that stick up everywhere — low broad ripples,"

She was a perfect work of art, abolishing time and obligations.

For a time they walked in silence. Then Captain Douglas said, "All very well — beauty and all that — but a fellow likes to know where he is."

She did not answer immediately and then she said, "I believe you are angry because you have come away from France."

“Not a bit of it,” said the Captain stoutly. “I’d come away from anywhere to be with you.”

“I wonder,” she said.

“Well — haven’t I?”

“I wonder if you ever are with me.... Oh! — I know you want me. I know you desire me. But the real thing, the happiness, — love. What is anything to love — anything at all?”

In this strain they continued until their footsteps led them through the shelter of a group of beeches. And there the gallant Captain sought expression in deeds. He kissed her hands, he sought her lips. She resisted softly.

“No,” she said, “only if you love me with all your heart.”

Then suddenly, wonderfully, conqueringly she yielded him her lips.

“Oh!” she sighed presently, “if only you understood.”

And leaving speech at that enigma she kissed again....

But you see now how difficult it was under these mystically loving conditions to introduce the idea of a prompt examination and dispatch of Bealby. Already these days were consecrated....

And then you see Bealby vanished — going seaward....

Even the crash of the caravan disaster did little to change the atmosphere. In spite of a certain energetic quality in the Professor’s direction of the situation — he was a little embittered because his thumb was sprained and his knee bruised rather badly and he had a slight abrasion over one ear and William had bitten his calf — the general disposition was to treat the affair hilariously. Nobody seemed really hurt except William, — the Professor was not so much hurt as annoyed — and William’s injuries though striking were all superficial, a sprained jaw and grazes and bruises and little things like that; everybody was heartened up to the idea of damages to be paid for; and neither the internal injuries to the caravan nor the hawker’s estimate of his stock-in-trade proved to be as great as one might reasonably have expected. Before sunset the caravan was safely housed in the Winthorpe-Sutbury public-house, William had found a congenial corner in the bar parlour, where his account of an inside view of the catastrophe and his views upon Professor Bowles were much appreciated, the hawker had made a bit extra by carting

all the luggage to the Redlake Royal Hotel, and the caravanners and their men-folk had loitered harmoniously back to this refuge. Madeleine had walked along the road beside Captain Douglas and his motor bicycle, which he had picked up at the now desolate encampment.

"It only remains," she said, "for that thing to get broken."

"But I may want it," he said.

"No," she said, "Heaven has poured us together and now He has smashed the vessels. At least He has smashed one of the vessels. And look! — like a great shield, there is the moon. It's the Harvest Moon, isn't it?"

"No," said the Captain, with his poetry running away with him. "It's the Lovers' Moon."

"It's like a benediction rising over our meeting."

And it was certainly far too much like a benediction for the Captain to talk about Bealby.

That night was a perfect night for lovers, a night flooded with a kindly radiance, so that the warm mystery of the centre of life seemed to lurk in every shadow, and hearts throbbed instead of beating and eyes were stars. After dinner everyone found wraps and slipped out into the moonlight; the Geedges vanished like moths; the Professor made no secret that Judy was transfigured for him. Night works these miracles. The only other visitors there, a brace of couples, resorted to the boats upon the little lake.

Two enormous waiters removing the coffee cups from the small tables upon the veranda heard Madeleine's beautiful voice for a little while; and then it was stilled....

§ 8

The morning found Captain Douglas in a state of reaction. He was anxious to explain quite clearly to Madeleine how necessary it was that, he should go in search of Bealby forthwith. He was beginning to realize now just what a chance in the form of Bealby had slipped through his fingers. He had dropped Bealby, and now the thing to do was to pick up Bealby again before he was altogether lost. Her

professional life unfortunately had given Miss Philips the habit of never rising before midday, and the Captain had to pass the time as well as he could until the opportunity for his explanaation came.

A fellow couldn't go off without an explanation....

He passed the time with Professor Bowles upon the golf-links.

The Professor was a first-rate player and an unselfish one; he wanted all other players to be as good as himself. He would spare no pains to make them so. If he saw them committing any of the many errors into which golfers fall he would tell them of it and tell them why it was an error, and insist upon showing them just how to avoid it in future. He would point out any want of judgment, and not confine himself as so many professional golf teachers do merely to the stroke. After a time he found it necessary to hint to the Captain that nowadays a military man must accustom himself to self-control. The Captain kept Pishing and Tushing and presently it was only too evident swearing softly; his play got jerky, his strokes were forcible without any real strength, once he missed the globe altogether and several times he sliced badly. The eyes under his light eyelashes were wicked little things.

He remembered that he had always detested golf.

And the Professor. He had always detested the Professor.

And his caddie; at least he would have always detested his caddie if he had known him long enough. His caddie was one of those maddening boys with no expression at all. It didn't matter what he did or failed to do, there was the silly idiot with his stuffed face, unmoved.

Really of course overjoyed — but apparently unmoved....

"Why did I play it that way?" the Captain repeated. "Oh! because I like to play it that way."

"Well," said the Professor. "It isn't a recognized way anyhow...."

Then came a moment of evil pleasure.

He sliced. Old Bowles sliced. For once in a while he'd muffed something. Always teaching others and here he was slicing! Why, sometimes the Captain didn't slice!....

He'd get out of that neatly enough. Luck! He'd get the hole yet. What a bore it all was!....

Why couldn't Madeleine get up at a decent hour to see a fellow?

Why must she lie in bed when she wasn't acting? If she had got up all this wouldn't have happened. The shame of it! Here he was, an able-bodied capable man in the prime of life and the morning of a day playing this blockhead's game!

Yes — blockhead's game!

"You play the Ike," said the Professor.

"Rather," said the Captain and addressed himself to his stroke.

"That's not your ball," said the Professor. Similar position," said the Captain. You know, you might win this hole," said the Professor.

Who cares?" said the Captain under his breath and putted extravagantly.

"That saves me," said the Professor and went down from a distance of twelve yards.

The Captain, full of an irrational resentment, did his best to halve the hole and failed.

"You ought to put in a week at nothing but putting," said the Professor. "It would save you at least a stroke a hole. I've noticed that on almost every green, if I haven't beaten you before I pull up in the putting."

The Captain pretended not to hear and said a lot of rococo things inside himself.

It was Madeleine who had got him in for this game. A beautiful healthy girl ought to get up in the mornings. Mornings and beautiful healthy girls are all the same thing really. She ought to be dewy — positively dewy.... There she must be lying, warm and beautiful in bed — like Catherine the Great or somebody of that sort. No. It wasn't right. All very luxurious and so on but not right. She ought to have understood that he was bound to fall a prey to the Professor if she didn't get up. Golf! Here he was, neglecting his career; hanging about on these beastly links, all the sound men away there in France — it didn't do to think of it! — and he was playing this retired tradesman's consolation!

(Beastly the Professor's legs looked from behind. The uglier a man's legs are the better he plays golf. It's almost a law.)

That's what it was, a retired tradesman's consolation. A decent British soldier has no more business to be playing golf than he has to be dressing dolls. It's a game at once worthless and exasperating. If a

man isn't perfectly fit he cannot play golf, and when he is perfectly fit he ought to be doing a man's work in the world. If ever anything deserved the name of vice, if ever anything was pure, unforgivable dissipation, surely golf was that thing....

And meanwhile that boy was getting more and more start. Anyone with a ha'porth of sense would have been up at five and after that brat — might have had him bagged and safe and back to lunch. Ass one was at times!

"You're here, sir," said the caddie.

The Captain perceived he was in a nasty place, open green ahead but with some tumbled country near at hand and to the left, a rusty old gravel pit, furze at the sides, water at the bottom. Nasty attractive hole of a place. Sort of thing one gets into. He must pull himself together for this. After all, having undertaken to play a game one must play the game. If he hit the infernal thing, that is to say the ball, if he hit the ball so that if it didn't go straight it would go to the right rather — clear of the hedge it wouldn't be so bad to the right. Difficult to manage. Best thing was to think hard of the green ahead, a long way ahead, — with just the slightest deflection to the right. Now then, — heels well down, club up, a good swing, keep your eye on the ball, keep your eye on the ball, keep your eye on the ball just where you mean to hit it — far below there and a little to the right — and don't worry....

Rap.

"In the pond I think, sir."

"The water would have splashed if it had gone in the pond," said the Professor. "It must be over there in the wet sand. You hit it pretty hard, I thought."

Search. The caddie looked as though he didn't care whether he found it or not. He ought to be interested. It was his profession, not just his game. But nowadays everybody had this horrid disposition towards slacking. A Tired generation we are. The world is too much with us. Too much to think about, too much to do, Madeleines, army manoeuvres, angry lawyers, lost boys — let alone such exhausting foolery as this game....

"Got it, sir!" said the caddie.

"Where?"

“Here, sir! Up in the bush, sir!”

It was resting in the branches of a bush two yards above the slippery bank.

“I doubt if you can play it,” said the Professor, “but it will be interesting to try.”

The Captain scrutinized the position. “I can play it,” he said.

“You’ll slip, I’m afraid,” said the Professor.

They were both right. Captain Douglas drove his feet into the steep slope of rusty sand below the bush, held his iron a little short and wiped the ball up and over and as he found afterwards out of the rough. All eyes followed the ball except his. The Professor made sounds of friendly encouragement. But the Captain was going — going. He was on all fours, he scrabbled handfuls of prickly gorse, of wet sand. His feet, his ankles, his calves slid into the pond. How much more? No. He’d reached the bottom. He proceeded to get out again as well as he could. Not so easy. The bottom of this pond sucked at him....

When at last he rejoined the other three his hands were sandy red, his knees were sandy red, his feet were of clay, but his face was like the face of a little child. Like the face of a little fair child after it has been boiled red in its bath and then dusted over with white powder. His ears were the colour of roses, Lancaster roses. And his eyes too had something of the angry wonder of a little child distressed....

“I was afraid you’d slip into the pond,” said the Professor,

“I didn’t,” said the Captain.

“I just got in to see how deep it was and cool my feet — I hate warm feet.”

He lost that hole but he felt a better golfer now, his anger he thought was warming him up so that he would presently begin to make strokes by instinct and do remarkable things unawares. After all there is something in the phrase “ getting one’s blood up.” If only the Professor wouldn’t dally so with his ball and let one’s blood get down again. Tap! — the Professor’s ball went soaring. Now for it. The Captain addressed himself to his task, altered his plans rather hastily, smote and topped the ball.

The least one could expect was a sympathetic silence. But the Professor thought fit to improve the occasion.

“You’ll never drive,” said the Professor, “you’ll never drive with that irritable jerk in the middle of the stroke. You might just as well smack the ball without raising your club. If you think”

The Captain lost his self-control altogether.

“Look here,” he said, “if you think that I care a single rap about how I hit the ball, if you think that I really want to win and do well at this beastly silly elderly childish game”

He paused on the verge of ungentlemanly language.

“If a thing’s worth doing at all,” said the Professor after a pause for reflection, “it’s worth doing well,”

“Then it isn’t worth doing at all. As this hole gives you the game — if you don’t mind”

The Captain’s hot moods were so rapid that already he was acutely ashamed of himself.

“Oh certainly if you wish it,” said the Professor.

With a gesture the Professor indicated the altered situation to the respectful caddies, and the two gentlemen turned their faces towards the hotel.

For a time they walked side by side in silence, the caddies following with hushed expressions.

“Splendid weather for the French manoeuvres,” said the Captain presently in an offhand tone, “that is to say if they are getting this weather.”

“At present there are a series of high-pressure systems over the whole of Europe north of the Alps,” said the Professor. “It is as near set fair as Europe can be.”

“Fine weather for tramps and wanderers,” said the Captain after a further interval.

“There’s a drawback to everything,” said the Professor. “But it’s very lovely weather.”

§ 9

They got back to the hotel about half-past eleven and the Captain went and had an unpleasant time with one of the tyres of his motor bicycle which had got down in the night. In replacing the tyre he

pinched the top of one of his fingers rather badly. Then he got the ordnance map of the district and sat at a green table in the open air in front of the hotel windows and speculated on the probable flight of Bealby. He had been last seen going south by east. That way lay the sea, and all boy fugitives go naturally for the sea.

He tried to throw himself into the fugitive's mind and work out just exactly the course Bealby must take to the sea.

For a time he found this quite an absorbing occupation.

Bealby probably had no money or very little money. Therefore he would have to beg or steal. He wouldn't go to the workhouse because he wouldn't know about the workhouse, respectable poor people never know anything about the workhouse, and the chances were he would be both too honest and too timid to steal. He'd beg. He'd beg at front doors because of dogs and things and he'd probably go along a high road. He'd be more likely to beg from houses than from passers-by because a door is at first glance less formidable than a pedestrian and more accustomed to being addressed. And he'd try isolated cottages rather than the village street doors, an isolated wayside cottage is so much more confidential. He'd ask for food — not money. All that seemed pretty sound.

Now this road on the map — into it he was bound to fall and along it he would go begging. No other?... No.

In the fine weather he'd sleep out. And he'd go — ten, twelve, fourteen — thirteen, thirteen miles a day.

So now, he ought to be about here. And to-night, — here.

To-morrow at the same pace, — here.

But suppose he got a lift!....

He'd only get a slow lift if he got one at all. It wouldn't make much difference in the calculation....

So if to-morrow one started and went on to these cross roads marked Inn, just about twenty-six miles it must be by the scale, and beat round it one ought to get something in the way of tidings of Mr. Bealby. Was there any reason why Bealby shouldn't go on south by east and seaward?....

None.

And now there remained nothing to do but to explain all this clearly to Madeleine. And why didn't she come down? Why didn't

she come down?

But when one got Bealby what would one do with him?

Wring the truth out of him — half by threats and half by persuasion. Suppose after all he hadn't any connexion with the upsetting of Lord Moggeridge? He had. Suppose he hadn't. He had. He had. He had.

And when one had the truth?

Whisk the boy right up to London and confront the Lord Chancellor with the facts. But suppose he wouldn't be confronted with the facts. He was a touchy old sinner....

For a time Captain Douglas baulked at this difficulty. Then suddenly there came into his head the tall figure, the long moustaches of that kindly popular figure, his adopted uncle Lord Chickney. Suppose he took the boy straight to Uncle Chickney, told him the whole story. Even the Lord Chancellor would scarcely refuse ten minutes to General Lord Chickney....

The clearer the plans of Captain Douglas grew the more anxious he became to put them before Madeleine — clearly and convincingly....

Because first he had to catch his boy....

Presently as Captain Douglas fretted at the continued eclipse of Madeleine, his thumb went into his waistcoat pocket and found a piece of paper. He drew it out and looked at it. It was a little piece of stiff note-paper cut into the shape of a curved V rather after the fashion of a soaring bird. It must have been there for months. He looked at it. His care-wrinkled brow relaxed. He glanced over his shoulder at the house and then held this little scrap high over his head and let go. It descended with a slanting flight curving round to the left, and then came about and swept down to the ground to the right.... Now why did it go like that? As if it changed its mind. He tried it again. Same result.... Suppose the curvature of the wings was a little greater? Would it make a more acute or a less acute angle? He did not know.... Try it.

He felt in his pocket for a piece of paper, found Lady Laxton's letter, produced a stout pair of nail scissors in a sheath from his waistcoat pocket, selected a good clear sheet, and set himself to cut out his improved V....

As he did so his eyes were on V number one, on the ground. It would be interesting to see if this thing turned about to the left again. If in fact it would go on zig-zagging. It ought he felt to do so. But to test that one ought to release it from some higher point so as to give it a longer flight. Stand on the chair?....

Not in front of the whole rotten hotel. And there was a beastly looking man in a green apron coming out of the house, — the sort of man who looks at you. He might come up and watch; these fellows are equal to anything of that sort. Captain Douglas replaced his scissors and scraps in his pockets, leaned back with an affectation of boredom, got up, lit a cigarette — sort of thing the man in the green apron would think all right — and strolled off towards a clump of beech trees, beyond which were bushes and a depression. There perhaps one might be free from observation. Just try these things for a bit. That point about the angle was a curious one; it made one feel one's ignorance not to know that....

§ 10

The ideal King has a careworn look, he rules, he has to do things, but the ideal Queen is radiant happiness, tall and sweetly dignified, simply she has to be things. And when at last towards midday Queen Madeleine dispelled the clouds of the morning and came shining back into the world that waited outside her door, she was full of thankfulness for herself and for the empire that was given her. She knew she was a delicious and wonderful thing, she knew she was well done, her hands, the soft folds of her dress as she held it up, the sweep of her hair from her forehead pleased her, she lifted her chin but not too high for the almost unenvious homage in the eyes of the housemaid on the staircase. Her descent was well timed for the lunch gathering of the hotel guests; there was "Ah I — here she comes at last!" and there was her own particular court out upon the verandah before the entrance, Geedge and the Professor and Mrs. Bowles — and Mrs. Geedge coming across the lawn, — and the lover?

She came on down and out into the sunshine. She betrayed no surprise. The others met her with flattering greetings that she

returned smilingly. But the lover?

He was not there!

It was as if the curtain had gone up on almost empty stalls.

He ought to have been worked up and waiting tremendously. He ought to have spent the morning in writing a poem to her or in writing a delightful poetical love-letter she could carry away and read, or in wandering alone and thinking about her. He ought to be feeling now like the end of a vigil. He ought to be standing now, a little in the background and with that pleasant flush of his upon his face and that shy, subdued, reluctant look that was so infinitely more flattering than any boldness of admiration. And then she would go towards him, for she was a giving type, and hold out both hands to him, and he, as though he couldn't help it, in spite of all his British reserve, would take one and hesitate — which made it all the more marked — and kiss it....

Instead of which he was just not there.... No visible disappointment dashed her bravery. She knew that at the slightest flicker Judy and Mrs. Geedge would guess and that anyhow the men would guess nothing. "I've rested," she said, "I've rested delightfully. What have you all been doing?"

Judy told of great conversations, Mr. Geedge had been looking for trout in the stream, Mrs. Geedge with a thin little smile said she had been making a few notes and — she added the word with deliberation—" observations," and Professor Bowles said he had had a round of golf with the Captain. "And he lost?" asked Madeleine.

"He's careless in his drive and impatient at the greens," said the Professor modestly.

"And then?"

"He vanished," said the Professor, recognizing the true orientation of her interest.

There was a little pause and Mrs. Geedge said, "You know " and stopped short.

Interrogative looks focused upon her.

"It's so odd," she said.

Curiosity increased.

"I suppose one ought not to say," said Mrs. Geedge, "and yet — why shouldn't one?"

“Exactly,” said Professor Bowles and everyone drew a little nearer to Mrs. Geedge.

“One can’t help being amused,” she said.

It was so — extraordinary.”

Is it something about the Captain?” asked Madeleine.

Yes. You see, — he didn’t see me.” Is he — is he writing poetry?” Madeleine was much entertained and relieved at the thought. That would account for everything. The poor dear! He hadn’t been able to find some rhyme!

But one gathered from the mysterious airs of Mrs. Geedge that he was not writing poetry. “You see,” she said, “I was lying out there among the bushes, just jotting down a few little things, — and he came by. And he went down into the hollow out of sight.... And what do you think he is doing? You’d never guess? He’s been at it for twenty minutes.”

They didn’t guess.

“He’s playing with little bits of paper — oh! like a kitten plays with dead leaves. He throws them up — and they flutter to the ground — and then he pounces on them.”

“But “ said Madeleine. And then very brightly, “Let’s go and see!”

She was amazed. She couldn’t understand. She hid it under a light playfulness, that threatened to become distraught. Even when presently, after a very careful stalking of the dell under the guidance of Mrs. Geedge, with the others in support, she came in sight of him, she still found him incredible. There was her lover, her devoted lover, standing on the top bar of a fence, his legs wide apart and his body balanced with difficulty, and in his fingers poised high was a little scrap of paper. This was the man who should have been waiting in the hall with feverish anxiety. His fingers released the little model and down it went drifting....

He seemed to be thinking of nothing else in the world. She might never have been born!....

Some noise, some rustle, caught his ear. He turned his head quickly, guiltily, and saw her and her companions.

And then he crowned her astonishment. No love-light leapt to his eyes; he uttered no cry of joy. Instead he clutched wildly at the air,

shouted, “Oh damn!” and came down with a complicated inelegance on all fours upon the ground.

He was angry with her — angry; she could see that he was extremely angry.

§ 11

So it was that the incompatibilities of man and woman arose again in the just recovering love-dream of Madeleine Philips. But now the discord was far more evident than it had been at the first breach.

Suddenly her dear lover, her flatterer, her worshipper, had become a strange averted man. He scrabbled up two of his paper scraps before he came towards her, still with no love-light in his eyes. He kissed her hand as if it was a matter of course and said almost immediately: “I’ve been hoping for you all the endless morning. I’ve had to amuse myself as best I can.”

His tone was resentful. He spoke as if he had a claim upon her, upon her attentions. As if it wasn’t entirely upon his side that obligations lay.

She resolved that shouldn’t deter her from being charming.

And all through the lunch she was as charming as she could be, and under such treatment that rebellious ruffled quality vanished from his manner, vanished so completely that she could wonder if it had really been evident at any time. The alert servitor returned.

She was only too pleased to forget the disappointment of her descent and forgive him, and it was with a puzzled incredulity that she presently saw his “difficult “ expression returning. It was an odd little knitting of the brows, a faint absent-mindedness, a filming of the brightness of his worship. He was just perceptibly indifferent to the charmed and charming things he was saying.

It seemed best to her to open the question herself. “Is there something on your mind, Dot?”

“Dot “ was his old school nickname.

“Well no — not exactly on my mind. But

It’s a bother of course. There’s that confounded boy....”

“Were you trying some sort of divination about him? With those

pieces of paper?”

“No. That was different. That was — just

something else. But you see that boy

Probably clear up the whole of the Moggeridge bother — and you know it is a bother. Might turn out beastly awkward....”

It was extraordinarily difficult to express. He wanted so much to stay with her and he wanted so much to go.

But all reason, all that was expressible, all that found vent in words and definite suggestions was on the side of an immediate pursuit of Bealby. So that it seemed to her he wanted and intended to go much more definitely than he actually did.

That divergence of purpose flawed a beautiful afternoon, cast chill shadows of silences over their talk, arrested endearments. She was irritated. About six o’clock she urged him to go; she did not mind, anyhow she had things to see to, letters to write, and she left him with an effect of leaving him for ever. He went and overhauled his motor bicycle thoroughly, and then an aching dread of separation from her arrested him.

Dinner, the late June sunset and the moon seemed to bring them together again. Almost harmoniously he was able to suggest that he should get up very early the next morning, pursue and capture Bealby and return for lunch.

“You’d get up at dawn!” she cried. “But how perfectly Splendid the midsummer dawn must be.”

Then she had an inspiration. “Dot!” she cried, “I will get up at dawn also and come with you.... Yes, but as you say he cannot be more than thirteen miles away we’d catch him warm in his little bed somewhere. And the freshness! The dewy freshness!”

And she laughed her beautiful laugh and said it would be “ Such Fun!” entering as she supposed into his secret desires and making the most perfect of reconciliations. They were to have tea first, which she would prepare with the caravan lamp and kettle. Mrs. Geedge would hand it over to her.

She broke into song. “A Hunting we will go — ooh,” she sang. “A Hunting we will go....”

But she could not conquer the churlish underside of the Captain’s nature even by such efforts. She threw a glamour of vigour and fun

over the adventure, but some cold streak in his composition was insisting all the time that as a boy hunt the attempt failed. Various little delays in her preparations prevented a start before half-past seven, he let that weigh with him, and when sometimes she clapped her hands and ran — and she ran like a deer, and sometimes she sang, he said something about going at an even pace.

At a quarter-past one Mrs. Geedge observed them returning. They were walking abreast and about six feet apart, they bore themselves grimly after the manner of those who have delivered ultimata and they conversed no more....

In the afternoon Madeleine kept her own room exhausted, and Captain Douglas sought opportunities of speaking to her in vain. His face expressed distress and perplexity, with momentary lapses into wrathful resolution, and he evaded Judy and her leading questions and talked about the weather with Geedge. He declined a proposal of the Professor's to go round the links, with especial reference to his neglected putting. "You ought to, you know," said the Professor.

About half-past three and without any publication of his intention. Captain Douglas departed upon his motor bicycle....

Madeleine did not reappear until dinner-time, and then she was clad in lace and gaiety that impressed the naturally very good observation of Mrs. Geedge as unreal.

§ 12

The Captain, a confusion of motives that was as it were a mind returning to chaos, started upon his motor bicycle. He had seen tears in her eyes. Just for one instant, but certainly they were tears. Tears of vexation. Or sorrow? (Which is the worse thing for a lover to arouse, grief or resentment?) But this boy must be caught, because if he was not caught a perpetually developing story of imbecile practical joking upon eminent and influential persons would eat like a cancer into the Captain's career. And if his career was spoilt what sort of thing would he be as a lover? Not to mention that he might never get a chance then to try flying for military purposes.... So anyhow, anyhow this boy must be caught. But quickly, for women's

hearts are tender, they will not stand exposure to hardship. There is a kind of unreasonableness natural to goddesses. Unhappily this was an expedition needing wariness, deliberation, and one brought to it a feverish hurry to get back. There must be self-control There must be patience. Such occasions try the soldierly quality of a man....

It added nothing to the Captain's self-control that after he had travelled ten miles he found he had forgotten his quite indispensable map and had to return for it. Then he was seized again with doubts about his inductions and went over them again, sitting by the roadside. (There must be patience.)... He went on at a pace of thirty-five miles an hour to the Inn he had marked upon his map as Bealby's limit for the second evening. It was a beastly little inn, it stewed tea for the Captain atrociously, and it knew nothing of Bealby. In the adjacent cottages also they had never heard of Bealby. Captain Douglas revised his deductions for the third time and came to the conclusion that he had not made a proper allowance for Wednesday afternoon. Then there was all Thursday, and the longer, lengthening part of Friday. He might have done thirty miles or more already. And he might have crossed this corner — inconspicuously.

Suppose he hadn't after all come along this road!

He had a momentary vision of Madeleine with eyes brightly tearful. "You left me for a Wild Goose Chase," he fancied her saying....

One must stick to one's job. A soldier more particularly must stick to his job. Consider Balaclava....

He decided to go on along this road and try the incidental cottages that his reasoning led him to suppose were the most likely places at which Bealby would ask for food. It was a business demanding patience and politeness.

So a number of cottagers, for the greater part they were elderly women past the fiercer rush and hurry of life, grandmothers and ancient dames or wives at leisure with their children away at the Council schools, had a caller that afternoon. Cottages are such lonely places in the daytime that even district visitors and canvassers are godsends, and only tramps ill-received. Captain Douglas ranked high in the scale of visitors. There was something about him, his fairness, a certain handsomeness, his quick colour, his active speech, which

interested women at all times, and now an indefinable flow of romantic excitement conveyed itself to his interlocutors. He encountered the utmost civility everywhere, doors at first tentatively ajar opened wider at the sight of him, and there was a kindly disposition to enter into his troubles lengthily and deliberately. They listened attentively to his demands, and before they testified to Bealby's sustained absence from their perception they would for the most part ask numerous questions in return. They wanted to hear the Captain's story, the reason for his research, the relationship between himself and the boy, they wanted to feel something of the sentiment of the thing. After that was the season for negative facts. Perhaps when everything was stated they might be able to conjure up what he wanted. He was asked in to have tea twice, for he looked not only pink and dusty but dry, and one old lady said that years ago she had lost just such a boy as Bealby seemed to be—" Ah! not in the way you have lost him " — and she wept, poor old dear! and was only comforted after she had told the Captain three touching but extremely lengthy and detailed anecdotes of Bealby's vanished prototype.

(Fellow cannot rush away, you know; still all this sort of thing, accumulating, means a confounded lot of delay.)

And then there was a deaf old man.... A very, very tiresome deaf old man who said at first he had seen Bealby....

After all the old fellow was deaf....

The sunset found the Captain on a breezy common forty miles away from the Redlake Royal Hotel and by this time he knew that fugitive boys cannot be trusted to follow the lines even of the soundest inductions. This business meant a search.

Should he pelt back to Redlake and start again more thoroughly on the morrow?

A moment of temptation.

If he did he knew she wouldn't let him go.

No!

NO!

He must make a sweeping movement through the country to the left, trying up and down the roads that, roughly speaking, radiated from Redlake between the twenty-fifth and the thirty-fifth

milestone....

It was night and high moonlight when at last the Captain reached Crayminster, that little old town decayed to a village, in the Crays valley. He was hungry, dispirited, quite unsuccessful and here he resolved to eat and rest for the night.

He would have a meal, for by this time he was ravenous, and then go and talk in the bar or the tap about Bealby.

Until he had eaten he felt he could not endure the sound of his own voice repeating what had already become a tiresome stereotyped formula: "You haven't I suppose seen or heard anything during the last two days of a small boy — little chap of about thirteen — wandering about? He's a sturdy resolute little fellow with a high colour, short wiry hair, rather dark...."

The White Hart at Crayminster after some negotiations produced mutton cutlets and Austrahan hock. As he sat at his meal in the small ambiguous respectable dining-room of the inn — adorned with framed and glazed beer advertisements, crinkled paper fringes and insincere sporting prints — he became aware of a murmurous confabulation going on in the bar parlour. It must certainly, he felt, be the bar parlour....

He could not hear distinctly, and yet it seemed to him that the conversational style of Crayminster was abnormally rich in expletive. And the tone was odd. It had a steadfast quality of commination.

He brushed off a crumb from his jacket, lit a cigarette and stepped across the passage to put his hopeless questions.

The talk ceased abruptly at his appearance.

It was one of those deep-toned bar parlours that are so infinitely more pleasant to the eye than the tawdry decorations of the genteel accommodation. It was brown with a trimming of green paper hops and it had a mirror and glass shelves sustaining bottles and tankards. Six or seven individuals were sitting about the room. They had a numerous effect. There was a man in very light floury tweeds, with a floury bloom on his face and hair and an anxious depressed expression. He was clearly a baker. He sat forward as though he nursed something precious under the table. Next him was a respectable-looking, regular-featured, fair man with a large head, and

a ruddy-faced butcher-like individual smoked a clay pipe by the side of the fireplace A further individual with an alert intrusive look might have been a grocer's assistant associating above himself.

"Evening," said the Captain.

"Evening," said the man with the large head guardedly.

The Captain came to the hearthrug with an affectation of ease.

"I suppose," he began, "that you haven't any of you seen anything of a small boy, wandering about. He's a little chap about thirteen. Sturdy, resolute-looking little fellow with a high colour, short wiry hair, rather dark...."

He stopped short arrested by the excited movements of the butcher's pipe and by the changed expressions of the rest of the company.

"We — we seen 'im," the man with the big head managed to say at last.

"We seen 'im all right," said a voice out of the darkness beyond the range of the lamp.

The baker with the melancholy expression interjected, "I don't care if I don't ever see 'im again."

"Ah!" said the Captain, astonished to find himself suddenly beyond hoping on a hot fresh scent. "Now all that's very interesting. Where did you see him?"

"Thunderin' vicious little varmint," said the butcher. "Owdacious."

"Mr. Benshaw," said the voice from the shadows, "'E's arter 'im now with a shot gun loaded up wi' oats. 'E'll pepper 'im if 'e gets 'im, Bill will, you bet your 'at. And serve 'im jolly well right tew."

"I doubt," said the baker, "I doubt if I'll ever get my stummik — not thoroughly proper again. It's a Blow I've 'ad. 'E give me a Blow. Oh! Mr. 'Orrocks, could I trouble you for another thimbleful of brandy? Just a thimbleful neat. It eases the ache...."

VI. — BEALBY AND THE TRAMP

§ 1

BEALBY was loth to leave the caravan party even when by his own gross negligence it had ceased to be a caravan party. He made off regretfully along the crest of the hills through bushes of yew and box until the clamour of the disaster was no longer in his ears. Then he halted for a time and stood sorrowing and listening, and then turned up by a fence along the border of a plantation and so came into a little overhung road.

His ideas of his immediate future were vague in the extreme. He was a receptive expectation. Since his departure from the gardener's cottage circumstances had handed him on. They had been interesting but unstable circumstances. He supposed they would still hand him on. So far as he had any definite view about his intentions it was that he was running away to sea. And that he was getting hungry.

It was also, he presently discovered, getting dark very gently and steadily. And the overhung road after some tortuosities expired suddenly upon the bosom of a great grey empty common with distant mysterious hedges.

It seemed high time to Bealby that something happened of a comforting nature.

Always hitherto something or someone had come to his help when the world grew dark and cold, and given him supper and put him or sent him to bed. Even when he had passed a night in the interstices of Shonts he had known there was a bed at quite a little distance under the stairs. If only that loud Voice hadn't shouted curses whenever he moved he would have gone to it. But as he went across this common in the gloaming it became apparent that this amiable routine was to be broken. For the first time he realized the world could be a homeless world.

And it had become very still.

Disagreeably still, and full of ambiguous shadows.

That common was not only an unsheltered place, he felt, but an unfriendly place, and he hurried to a gate at the farther end. He kept

glancing to the right and to the left. It would be pleasanter when he had got through that gate and shut it after him.

In England there are no grey wolves.

Yet at times one thinks of wolves, grey wolves, the colour of twilight and running noiselessly, almost noiselessly, at the side of their prey for quite a long time before they close in on it.

In England, I say, there are no grey wolves.

Wolves were extinguished in the reign of Edward the Third; it was in the histories, and since then no free wolf has trod the soil of England; only menagerie captives.

Of course there may be escaped wolves!

Now the gate! — sharp through it and slam it behind you, and a little brisk run and so into this plantation that slopes downhill. This is a sort of path, vague, but it must be a path. Let us hope it is a path.

What was that among the trees?

It stopped, surely it stopped, as Bealby stopped. Pump, pump Of course! that was one's heart.

Nothing there! Just fancy. Wolves live in the open; they do not come into woods like this. And besides, there are no wolves. And if one shouts — even if it is but a phantom voice one produces, they go away. They are cowardly things — really. Such as there aren't. And there is the power of the human eye. Which is why they stalk you and watch you and evade you when you look, and creep and creep and creep behind you!

Turn sharply.

Nothing.

How this stuff rustled under the feet! In woods at twilight, with innumerable things darting from trees and eyes watching you everywhere, it would be pleasanter if one could walk without making quite such a row. Presently surely, Bealby told himself, he would come out on a high road and meet other people and say "Good-night" as they passed. Jolly other people they would be, answering, "Goodnight." He was now going at a moistening trot. It was getting darker and he stumbled against things.

When you tumble down wolves leap. Not of course that there are any wolves.

It was stupid to keep thinking of wolves in this way. Think of

something else. Think of things beginning with a B. Beautiful things, boys, beads, butterflies, bears. The mind stuck at bears. Are there such things as long grey hears? Ugh! Almost endless, noiseless bears?....

It grew darker until at last the trees were black. The night was swallowing up the flying Bealby and he had a preposterous persuasion that it had teeth and would begin at the back of his legs....

§ 2

"Hi!" cried Bealby weakly, hailing the glow of the fire out of the darkness of the woods above.

The man by the fire peered at the sound, he had been listening to the stumbling footsteps for some time, and he answered nothing.

In another minute Bealby had struggled through the hedge into the visible world and stood regarding the man by the fire. The phantom wolves had fled beyond Sirius. But Bealby's face was pale still from the terrors of the pursuit and altogether he looked a smallish sort of small boy.

"Lost?" said the man by the fire.

"Couldn't find my way," said Bealby.

"Anyone with you?"

"No."

The man reflected. "Tired?"

"Bit."

"Come and sit down by the fire and rest yourself."

"I won't 'urt you," he added as Bealby hesitated.

So far in his limited experience Bealby had never seen a human countenance lit from behind by a flickering red flame. The effect he found remarkable rather than pleasing. It gave him the most active and unstable countenance Bealby had ever seen. The nose seemed to be in active oscillation between Pug and Roman, the eyes jumped out of black caves and then went back into them, the more permanent features appeared to be a vast triangle of neck and chin. The tramp would have impressed Bealby as altogether inhuman if it had not been for the smell of cooking he diffused. There were onions in it

and turnips and pepper — mouth-watering constituents, testimonials to virtue. He was making a stew in an old can that he had slung on a cross stick over a brisk fire of twigs that he was constantly replenishing.

"I won't 'urt you, darn you," he repeated. "Come and sit down on these leaves here for a bit and tell me all abart it."

Bealby did as he was desired. "I got lost," he said, feeling too exhausted to tell a good story.

The tramp, examined more closely, became less pyrotechnic. He had a large loose mouth, a confused massive nose, much long fair hair, a broad chin with a promising beard and spots — a lot of spots. His eyes looked out of deep sockets and they were sharp little eyes. He was a lean man. His hands were large and long and they kept on with the feeding of the fire as he sat and talked to Bealby. Once or twice he leant forward and smelt the pot judiciously, but all the time the little eyes watched Bealby very closely.

"Lose yer collar?" said the tramp.

Bealby felt for his collar. "I took it orf," he said.

"Come far?"

"Over there," said Bealby.

"Where?"

"Over there."

"What place?"

"Don't know the name of it."

"Then it ain't your 'ome?"

"No."

"You've run away," said the man.

"P'raps I 'ave," said Bealby.

"P'raps you 'ave! *Why* p'raps? You 'ave! What's the good of telling lies about it? When d'you start?"

"Monday," said Bealby.

The tramp reflected. "Had about enough of it?"

"Dunno," said Bealby truthfully.

"Like some soup?"

"Yes."

"'Ow much?"

"I could do with a lot," said Bealby.

“Ah yah! I didn’t mean that. I meant, ‘ow much for some? ‘Ow much will you pay for a nice, nice ‘arf can of soup? I ain’t a darn charity. See?”

“Tuppence,” said Bealby.

The tramp shook his head slowly from side to side and took out the battered iron spoon he was using to stir the stuff and tasted the soup lusciously. It was — jolly good soup and there were potatoes in it.

“Thrippence,” said Bealby.

“‘Ow much you got?” asked the tramp.

Bealby hesitated perceptibly. “Sixpence,” he said weakly.

“It’s sixpence,” said the tramp. “Pay up.”

“‘Ow big a can?” asked Bealby.

The tramp felt about in the darkness behind him and produced an empty can with a jagged mouth that had once contained, the label witnessed — I quote, I do not justify— ‘Deep Sea Salmon.’ “That,” he said, “and this chunk of bread.... Right enough?”

“You will do it?” said Bealby.

“Do I look a swindle?” cried the tramp, and suddenly a lump of the abundant hair fell over one eye in a singularly threatening manner. Bealby handed over the sixpence without further discussion. “I’ll treat you fairly, you see,” said the tramp, after he had spat on and pocketed the sixpence, and he did as much. He decided that the soup was ready to be served and he served it with care. Bealby began at once. “There’s a nextry onion,” said the tramp, throwing one over. “It didn’t cost me much and I gives it you for nothin’. That’s all right, eh? Here’s ‘ealth!”

Bealby consumed his soup and bread meekly with one eye upon his host. He would, he decided, eat all he could and then sit a little while, and then get this tramp to tell him the way to — anywhere else. And the tramp wiped soup out of his can with gobbets of bread very earnestly and meditated sagely on Bealby.

“You better pal in with me, matey, for a bit,” he said at last. “You can’t go nowhere else — not to-night.”

“Couldn’t I walk perhaps to a town or sumpthing?”

“These woods ain’t safe.”

“‘Ow d’you mean?”

“Ever ‘eard tell of a gurrillia? — sort of big black monkey thing.”

“Yes,” said Bealby faintly.

“There’s been one loose abat ‘ere — oh week or more. Fact. And if you wasn’t a grown up man quite and going along in the dark, well — ‘e might say something to you.... Of course ‘e wouldn’t do nothing where there was a fire or a man — but a little chap like you. I wouldn’t like to let you do it, ‘strewth I wouldn’t. It’s risky. Course I don’t want to keep you.

There it is. You go if you like. But I’d rather you didn’t. ‘Onest.”

“Where’d he come from?” asked Bealby.

M’nagery,” said the tramp.

‘E very near bit through the fist of a chap that tried to stop ‘im,” said the tramp.

Bealby after weighing tramp and gorilla very carefully in his mind decided he wouldn’t, and drew closer to the fire — but not too close — and the conversation deepened.

§ 3

It was a long and rambling conversation and the tramp displayed himself at times as quite an amiable person. It was a discourse varied by interrogations, and as a thread of departure and return it dealt with the life of the road and with life at large and — life, and with matters of “ must “ and “ may.”

Sometimes and more particularly at first Bealby felt as though a ferocious beast lurked in the tramp and peeped out through the fallen hank of hair and might leap out upon him, and sometimes he felt the tramp was large and fine and gay and amusing, more particularly when he lifted his voice and his bristling chin. And ever and again the talker became a nasty creature and a disgusting creature, and his red-lit face was an ugly creeping approach that made Bealby recoil. And then again he was strong and wise. So the unstable needle of a boy’s moral compass spins.

The tramp used strange terms. He spoke of the “deputy” and the “doss- house,” of the “spike” and “padding the hoof,” of “screevers “ and “tarts” and “copper’s narks.” To these words Bealby attached

such meanings as he could, and so the things of which the tramp talked floated unsurely into his mind and again and again he had to readjust and revise his interpretations. And through these dim and fluctuating veils a new side of life dawned upon his consciousness, a side that was strange and lawless and dirty — in every way dirty — and dreadful and — attractive. That was the queer thing about it, that attraction. It had humour. For all its squalor and repulsiveness it was lit by defiance and laughter, bitter laughter perhaps but laughter. It had a gaiety that Mr. Mergleson for example did not possess, it had a penetration, like the penetrating quality of onions or acids or asafoetida, that made the memory of Mr. Darling insipid.

The tramp assumed from the outset that Bealby had ‘ done something ‘ and run away, and some mysterious etiquette prevented his asking directly what was the nature of his offence. But he made a number of insidious soundings. And he assumed that Bealby was taking to the life of the road and that, until good cause to the contrary appeared, they were to remain together. “It’s a tough life,” he said, “but it has its points, and you got a toughish look about you.”

He talked of roads and the quality of roads and countryside. This was a good countryside; it wasn’t overdone and there was no great hostility to wanderers and sleeping out. Some roads — the London to Brighton for example — if a chap struck a match somebody came running. But here unless you went pulling the haystacks about too much they left you alone. And they weren’t such dead nuts on their pheasants, and one had a chance of an empty cowshed. “If I’ve spotted a shed or anything with a roof to it I stay out,” said the tramp, “even if it’s raining cats and dogs. Otherwise it’s the doss- ‘ouse or the ‘spike.’ It’s the rain is the worst thing — getting wet. You haven’t been wet yet, not if you only started Monday. Wet — with a chilly wind to drive it. Gaw! I been blown out of a holly hedge. You would think there’d be protection in a holly hedge....”

“Spike’s the last thing,” said the tramp, “I’d rather go bare-gutted to a doss-’ouse anywhen. Gaw! — you’ve not ‘ad your first taste of the spike yet.”

But it wasn’t heaven in the doss-houses. He spoke of several of the landladies in strange but it would seem unflattering terms. “And there’s always such a blamed lot of washing going on in a

doss-'ouse. Always washing they are! One chap's washing 'is socks and another's washing 'is shirt. Making a steam drying it. Disgustin'. Carn't see what they want with it all. Band to git dirty again...."

He discoursed of spikes, that is to say of workhouses, and of masters. "And then," he said with revolting yet alluring adjectives, "there's the bath."

"That's the worst side of it," said the tramp.... "'Owever it doesn't always rain, and if it doesn't rain, well, you can keep yourself dry."

He came back to the pleasanter aspects of the nomadic life. He was all for the outdoor style. "Ain't we comfortable 'ere?" he asked. He sketched out the simple larcenies that had contributed and given zest to the evening's meal. But it seemed there were also doss-houses that had the agreeable side. "Never been in one!" he said. "But where you been sleeping since Monday?"

Bealby described the caravan in phrases that seemed suddenly thin and anaemic to his ears.

"You hit it lucky," said the tramp. "If a chap's a kid he strikes all sorts of luck of that sort. Now ef *I* come up against three ladies travellin' in a van — think they'd arst me in? Not it!"

He dwelt with manifest envy on the situation and the possibilities of the situation for some time. "You ain't dangerous," he said; "that's where you get in...."

He consoled himself by anecdotes of remarkable good fortunes of a kindred description. Apparently he sometimes travelled in the company of a lady named Izzy Berners—" a fair scorcher, been a regular, slap-up circus actress." And there was also " good old Susan." It was a little difficult for Bealby to see the point of some of these flashes by a tendency on the part of the tramp while his thoughts turned on these matters to adopt a staccato style of speech, punctuated by brief, darkly significant guffaws. There grew in the mind of Bealby a vision of the doss-house as a large crowded place, lit by a great central fire, with much cooking afoot and much jawing and disputing going on, and then "me and Izzy sailed in...."

The fire sank, the darkness of the woods seemed to creep nearer. The moonlight pierced the trees only in long beams that seemed to point steadfastly at unseen things, it made patches of ashen light that looked like watching faces. Under the tramp's direction Bealby

skirmished round and got sticks and fed the fire until the darkness and thoughts of a possible gorilla were driven back for some yards and the tramp pronounced the blaze a “ fair treat.” He had made a kind of bed of leaves which he now invited Bealby to extend and share, and lying feet to the fire he continued his discourse.

He talked of stealing and cheating by various endearing names; he made these enterprises seem adventurous and facetious; there was it seemed a peculiar sort of happy find one came upon called a “ fiat,” that it was not only entertaining but obligatory to swindle. He made fraud seem so smart and bright at times that Bealby found it difficult to keep a firm grasp on the fact that it was — fraud....

Bealby lay upon the leaves close up to the prone body of the tramp, and his mind and his standards became confused. The tramp’s body was a dark but protecting ridge on one side of him; he could not see the fire beyond his toes but its flickerings were reflected by the tree stems about them, and made perplexing sudden movements that at times caught his attention and made him raise his head to watch them.... Against the terrors of the night the tramp had become humanity, the species, the moral basis. His voice was full of consolation; his topics made one forget the watchful silent circumambient. Bealby’s first distrusts faded. He began to think the tramp a fine, brotherly, generous fellow. He was also growing accustomed to a faint something — shall I call it an olfactory bar — that had hitherto kept them apart. The monologue ceased to devote itself to the elucidation of Bealby; the tramp was lying on his back with his fingers interlaced beneath his head and talking not so much to his companion as to the stars and the universe at large. His theme was no longer the wandering life simply but the wandering life as he had led it, and the spiritedness with which he had led it and the real and admirable quality of himself. It was that soliloquy of consolation which is the secret preservative of innumerable lives.

He wanted to make it perfectly clear that he was a tramp by choice. He also wanted to make it clear that he was a tramp and no better because of the wicked folly of those he had trusted and the evil devices of enemies. In the world that contained those figures of spirit, Isopel Berners and Susan, there was also it seemed a bad and spiritless person, the tramp’s wife, who had done him many passive

injuries. It was clear she did not appreciate her blessings. She had been much to blame. “Anybody’s opinion is better than ‘er ‘usband’s,” said the tramp. “Always ‘as been.” Bealby had a sudden memory of Mr. Darling saying exactly the same thing of his mother. “She’s the sort,” said the tramp, “what would rather go to a meetin’ than a music ‘all. She’d rather drop a shilling down a crack than spend it on anything decent. If there was a choice of jobs going she’d ask which ‘ad the lowest pay and the longest hours and she’d choose that. She’d feel safer. She was born scared, When there wasn’t anything else to do she’d stop at ‘ome and scrub the floors. Gaw! it made a chap want to put the darn’ pail over ‘er ‘ed, so’s she’d get enough of it....”

“I don’t hold with all this crawling through life and saying Please,” said the tramp. “I say it’s my world just as much as it’s your world. You may have your ‘orses and carriages, your ‘ouses and country places and all that, and you may think Gawd sent me to run abart and work for you; but *I* don’t. See?”

Bealby saw.

“I seek my satisfactions just as you seek your satisfactions, and if you want to get me to work you’ve jolly well got to make me. I don’t choose to work. I choose to keep on my own and a bit loose, and take my chance where I find it. You got to take your chances in this world. Sometimes they come bad and sometimes they come good. And very often you can’t tell which it is when they ‘ave come....”

Then he fell questioning Bealby again and then he talked of the immediate future. He was beating for the seaside. “Always something doing,” he said. “You got to keep your eye on for cops; those seaside benches, they’re ‘ot on tramps — give you a month for begging soon as look at you — but there’s flats dropping sixpences thick as flies on a sore ‘orse. You want a pal there for all sorts of jobs. You’re just the chap for it, matey. Saw it soon’s ever I set eyes on you. Then you can ‘ave fun....”

He made projects....

Finally he became more personal and very flattering.

“Now you and me,” he said, suddenly shifting himself quite close to Bealby, “we’re going to be downright pals. I’ve took a liking to you. Me and you are going to pal together. See?”

He breathed into Bealby's face and laid a hand on his knee and squeezed it, and Bealby, on the whole, felt honoured by his protection....

§ 4

In the unsympathetic light of a bright and pushful morning the tramp was shorn of much of his overnight glamour. It became manifest that he was not merely offensively unshaven but extravagantly dirty. It was not ordinary rural dirt. During the last few days he must have had dealings of an intimate nature with coal. He was taciturn and irritable, he declared that this sleeping out would be the death of him, and the breakfast was only too manifestly wanting in the comforts of a refined home. He seemed a little less embittered after breakfast, he became even faintly genial, but he remained unpleasing. A distaste for the tramp arose in Bealby's mind, and as he walked on behind his guide and friend, he revolved schemes of unobtrusive detachment.

Far be it from me to accuse Bealby of ingratitude. But it is true that that same disinclination which made him a disloyal assistant to Mr. Mergleson was now affecting his comradeship with the tramp. And he was deceitful. He allowed the tramp to build projects in the confidence of his continued adhesion, he did not warn him of the defection he meditated. But on the other hand Bealby had acquired from his mother an effective horror of stealing. And one must admit, since the tramp admitted it, that the man stole.

And another little matter had at the same time estranged Bealby from the tramp and linked the two of them together. The attentive reader will know that Bealby had exactly two shillings and twopence-halfpenny when he came down out of the woods to the fireside. He had Mrs. Bowles' half-crown and the balance of Madeleine Philips' theatre shilling, minus six-pence-halfpenny for a collar and sixpence he had given the tramp for the soup overnight. But all this balance was now in the pocket of the tramp. Money talks and the tramp had heard it. He had not taken it away from Bealby, but he had obtained it in this manner: "We two are pals," he said, "and one of us had better be Treasurer. That's Me. I know the ropes

better. So hand over what you got there, matey."

And after he had pointed out that a refusal might lead to Bealby's evisceration the transfer occurred. Bealby v/as searched, kindly but firmly....

It seemed to the tramp that this trouble had now blown over completely.

Little did he suspect the rebellious and treacherous thoughts that seethed in the head of his companion. Little did he suppose that his personal appearance, his manners, his ethical flavour — nay, even his physical flavour — were being judged in a spirit entirely unamiable. It seemed to him that he had obtained youthful and subservient companionship, companionship that would be equally agreeable and useful; he had adopted a course that he imagined would cement the ties between them; he reckoned not with ingratitude. "If anyone arsts you who I am, call me uncle," he said.

He walked along, a little in advance, sticking his toes out right and left in a peculiar wide pace that characterized his walk, and revolving schemes for the happiness and profit of the day. To begin with — great draughts of beer. Then tobacco. Later perhaps a little bread and cheese for Bealby. "You can't come in 'ere," he said at the first public-house. "You're under age, me boy. It ain't my doing, matey; it's 'Erbert Samuel. You blame 'im. 'E don't objec' to you going to work for any other Mr. Samuel there may 'appen to be abart or anything of that sort, that's good for you, that is; but 'e's most particular you shouldn't go into a public-'ouse. So you just wait about outside 'ere. *I'll* 'ave my eye on you."

"You going to spend my money?" asked Bealby.

"I'm going to ration the party," said the tramp.

"You — you got no right to spend my money," said Bealby.

"I— 'Ang it I — I'll get you some acid-drops," said the tramp in tones of remonstrance.

"I tell you, blame you, — it's 'Erbert Samuel. I can't 'elp it! I can't fight against the lor."

"You 'aven't any right to spend my money," said Bealby.

"Down't cut up crusty. 'Ow can *I* 'elp it?"

"I'll tell a policeman. You gimme back my money and lemme go."

The tramp considered the social atmosphere. It did not contain a policeman. It contained nothing but a peaceful kindly corner public-house, a sleeping dog and the back of an elderly man digging.

The tramp approached Bealby in a confidential manner. "'Oo's going to believe you?" he said. "And besides, 'ow did you come by it?"

Moreover. "*I* ain't going to spend your money. I got money of my own. 'Ere! See?" And suddenly before the dazzled eyes of Bealby he held and instantly withdrew three shillings and two coppers that seemed familiar. He had had a shilling of his own....

Bealby waited outside....

The tramp emerged in a highly genial mood, with acid drops, and a short clay pipe going strong. "'Ere," he said to Bealby with just the faintest flavour of magnificence over the teeth-held pipe and handed over not only the acid drops but a virgin short clay. "Fill," he said, proffering the tobacco. "It's yours jus' much as it's mine. Be'r not let 'Erbert Samuel see you though; that's all. 'E's got a lor abart it."

Bealby held his pipe in his clenched hand. He had already smoked — once . He remembered it quite vividly still, although it had happened six months ago. Yet he hated not using that tobacco. "No," he said, "I'll smoke later."

The tramp replaced the screw of red Virginia in his pocket with the air of one who has done the gentlemanly thing....

They went on their way, an ill-assorted couple.

All day Bealby chafed at the tie and saw the security in the tramp's pocket vanish. They lunched on bread and cheese and then the tramp had a good sustaining drink of beer for both of them, and after that they came to a common where it seemed agreeable to repose. And after a due meed of repose in a secluded hollow among the gorse the tramp produced a pack of exceedingly greasy cards and taught Bealby to play Euchre. Apparently the tramp had no distinctive pockets in his tail coat, the whole lining was one capacious pocket. Various knobs and bulges indicated his cooking tin, his feeding tin, a turnip and other unknown properties. At first they played for love and then they played for the balance in the tramp's pocket. And by the time Bealby had learnt Euchre thoroughly, that balance belonged to the tramp. But he was very

generous about it and said they would go on sharing just as they had done. And then he became confidential. He scratched about in the bagginess of his garment and drew out a little dark blade of stuff, like a flint implement, regarded it gravely for a moment and held it out to Bealby. “Guess what this is.”

Bealby gave it up.

“Smell it.”

It smelt very nasty. One familiar smell indeed there was with a paradoxical sanitary quality that he did not quite identify, but that was a mere basis for a complex reek of acquisitions. “What is it?” said Bealby. “Soap!”

“But what’s it for?”

“I thought you’d ask that.... What’s soap usually for?”

“Washing,” said Bealby guessing wildly. The tramp shook his head. “Making a foam,” he corrected. “That’s what I has my fits with. See? I shoves a bit in my mouth and down I goes and I rolls about. Making a sort of moaning sound. Why, I been given brandy often — neat brandy.... It isn’t always a cert — nothing’s absolutely a cert. I’ve ‘ad some let-downs.... Once I was bit by a nasty little dog — that brought me to pretty quick, and once I ‘ad an old gentleman go through my pockets. ‘ Poor chap! ‘ ‘e ses, ‘very likely ‘e’s destitoot, let’s see if ‘e’s got anything.’ ... I’d got all sorts of things, I didn’t want ‘im prying about. But I didn’t come-to sharp enough to stop ‘im. Got me into trouble that did....”

“It’s an old lay,” said the tramp, “but it’s astonishing ‘ow it’ll go in a quiet village. Sort of amuses ‘em. Or dropping suddenly in front of a bicycle party. Lot of them old tricks are the best tricks, and there ain’t many of ’em Billy Bridget don’t know. That’s where you’re lucky to ‘ave met me, matey. Billy Bridget’s a ‘ard man to starve. And I know the ropes. I know what you can do and what you can’t do. And I got a feeling for a policeman — same as some people ‘ave for cats. I’d know if one was ‘idden in the room....”

He expanded into anecdotes and the story of various encounters in which he shone. It was amusing and it took Bealby on his weak side. Wasn’t he the Champion Dodger of the Chelsome playground?

The tide of talk ebbed. “Well,” said the tramp, “time we was up and doing....”

They went along shady lanes and across an open park, and they skirted a breezy common from which they could see the sea. And among other things that the tramp said was this, “Time we began to forage a bit.”

He turned his large observant nose to the right of him and the left.

§ 5

Throughout the afternoon the tramp discoursed upon the rights and wrongs of property, in a way that Bealby found very novel and unsettling. The tramp seemed to have his ideas about owning and stealing arranged quite differently from those of Bealby. Never before had Bealby thought it possible to have them arranged in any other than the way he knew. But the tramp contrived to make most possession seem unrighteous and honesty a code devised by those who have for those who haven’t. “They’ve just got hold of it,” he said. “They want to keep it to themselves.... Do I look as though I’d stole much of anybody’s? It isn’t me got ‘old of this land and sticking up my notice boards to keep everybody off. It isn’t me spends my days and nights scheming ‘ow I can get ‘old of more and more of the stuff....

“I don’t envy it ‘em,” said the tramp. “Some ‘as one taste and some another. But when it comes to making all this fuss because a chap who isn’t a schemer ‘elps ‘imself to a mathful, — well, it’s Rot....

“It’s them makes the rules of the game and nobody ever arst me to play it. I don’t blame ‘em, mind you. Me and you might very well do the same. But brast me if I see where the sense of my keeping the rules comes in. This world ought to be a share out, Gawd meant it to be a share out. And me and you — we been done out of our share. That justifies us.”

“It isn’t right to steal,” said Bealby.

“It isn’t right to steal — certainly. It isn’t right — but it’s universal. Here’s a chap here over this fence, ask ‘im where ‘e got ‘is land. Stealing! What you call stealing, matey, *I* call restitootion. You ain’t probably never even ‘eard of socialism.”

“I’ve ‘eard of socialists right enough. Don’t believe in Gawd and ‘aven’t no morality.”

“Don’t you believe it. Why!— ‘Arf the socialists are parsons. What I’m saying is socialism — practically. *I’m* a socialist. I know all abat socialism. There isn’t nothing you can tell me abat socialism. Why! — for three weeks I was one of these here Anti-Socialist speakers. Paid for it. And I tell you there ain’t such a thing as property left; it’s all a blooming old pinch. Lords, commons, judges, all of them they’re just a crew of brasted old fences and the lawyers getting in the stuff. Then you talk to me of stealing! Stealing I”

The tramp’s contempt and his long intense way of saying “stealing” were very unsettling to a sensitive mind.

They bought some tea and grease in a village shop and the tramp made tea in his old tin with great dexterity, and then they gnawed bread on which two ounces of margarine had been generously distributed. “Live like fighting cocks, we do,” said the tramp wiping out his simple cuisine with the dragged-out end of his shirt sleeve. “And if I’m not very much mistaken we’ll sleep to-night on a nice bit of hay....”

But these anticipations were upset by a sudden temptation, and instead of a starry summer comfort the two were destined to spend a night of suffering and remorse.

A green lane lured them off the road, and after some windings led them past a field of wire-netted enclosures containing a number of perfect and conceited-looking hens close beside a little cottage, a vegetable garden and some new elaborate outhouses. It was manifestly a poultry farm, and something about it gave the tramp the conviction that it had been left, that nobody was at home.

These realizations are instinctive, they leap to the mind. He knew it, and an ambition to know further what was in the cottage came with the knowledge. But it seemed to him desirable that the work of exploration should be done by Bealby. He had thought of dogs, and it seemed to him that Bealby might be unembarrassed by that idea. So he put the thing to Bealby. “Let’s have a look round ‘ere,” he said. “You go in and see what’s abat....”

There was some difference of opinion. “I don’t ask you to take anything,” said the tramp.... “Nobody won’t catch you.... I tell you

nobody won't catch you.... I tell you there ain't nobody here to catch you.... Just for the fun of seeing in. I'll go up by them outhouses. And I'll see nobody comes.... Ain't afraid to go up a garden path, are you?... I tell you, I don't want you to steal.... You ain't got much guts to funk a thing like that.... I'll be abat too.... Thought you'd be the very chap for a bit of scouting.... Well, if you ain't afraid you'd do it.... Well, why didn't you say you'd do it at the beginning?..."

Bealby went through the hedge and up a grass track between poultry runs, made a cautious inspection of the outhouses and then approached the cottage. Everything was still. He thought it more plausible to go to the door than peep into the window. He rapped. Then after an interval of stillness he lifted the latch, opened the door and peered into the room. It was a pleasantly furnished room, and before the empty summer fireplace a very old white man was sitting in a chintz-covered armchair, lost it would seem in painful thought. He had a peculiar grey shrunken look, his eyes were closed, a bony hand with the shiny texture of alabaster gripped the chair arm.... There was something about him that held Bealby quite still for a moment.

And this old gentleman behaved very oddly.

His body seemed to crumple into his chair, his hands slipped down from the arms, his head nodded forwards and his mouth and eyes seemed to open together. And he made a snoring sound....

For a moment Bealby remained rigidly agape and then a violent desire to rejoin the tramp carried him back through the hen-runs....

He tried to describe what he had seen.

"Asleep with his mouth open," said the tramp. "Well, that ain't anything so wonderful. You got anything? That's what I want to know.... Did anyone ever see such a boy? 'Ere! I'll go....

"You keep a look out here," said the tramp.

But there was something about that old man in there, something so strange and alien to Bealby, that he could not remain alone in the failing twilight. He followed the cautious advances of the tramp towards the house. From the corner by the outhouses he saw the tramp go and peer in at the open door. He remained for some time peering; his head hidden from Bealby....

Then he went in....

Bealby had an extraordinary desire that somebody else would come. His soul cried out for help against some vaguely apprehended terror. And in the very moment of his wish came its fulfilment. He saw advancing up the garden path a tall woman in a blue serge dress, hatless and hurrying and carrying a little package — it was medicine — in her hand. And with her came a big black dog. At the sight of Bealby the dog came forward barking, and Bealby after a moment's hesitation turned and fled.

The dog was quick. But Bealby was quicker. He went up the netting of a hen-run and gave the dog no more than an ineffectual snap at his heels. And then dashing from the cottage door came the tramp. Under one arm was a brass- bound workbox and in the other was a candlestick and some smaller articles. He did not instantly grasp the situation of his treed companion, he was too anxious to escape the tall woman, and then with a yelp of dismay he discovered himself between woman and dog. All too late he sought to emulate Bealby. The workbox slipped from under his arm, the rest of his plunder fell from him, for an uneasy moment he was clinging to the side of the swaying hen-run and then it had caved in and the dog had got him.

The dog bit, desisted and then finding itself confronted by two men retreated. Bealby and the tramp rolled and scrambled over the other side of the collapsed netting into a parallel track and were half-way to the hedge before the dog, — but this time in a less vehement fashion, — resumed his attack.

He did not close with them again and at the hedge he halted altogether and remained hacking the gloaming with his rage.

The woman it seemed had gone into the house, leaving the tramp's scattered loot upon the field of battle.

"This means mizzle," said the tramp, leading the way at a trot.

Bealby saw no other course but to follow.

He had a feeling as though the world had turned against him. He did not dare to think what he was thinking of the events of these crowded ten minutes. He felt he had touched something dreadful; that the twilight was full of accusations.... He feared and hated the tramp now, but he perceived something had linked them as they had not been linked before. Whatever it was they shared it.

§ 6

They fled through the night; it seemed to Bealby for interminable hours. At last when they were worn out and footsore they crept through a gate and found an uncomfortable cowering-place in the corner of a field.

As they went they talked but little, but the tramp kept up a constant muttering to himself. He was troubled by the thought of hydrophobia. “I know I’ll ‘ave it,” he said, “I know I’ll get it.”

Bealby after a time ceased to listen to his companion. His mind was preoccupied. He could think of nothing but that very white man in the chair and the strange manner of his movement.

“Was ‘e awake when you saw ‘im?” he asked at last.

“Awake — who?”

“That old man.”

For a moment or so the tramp said nothing.

“‘E wasn’t awake, you young silly,” he said at last.

“But — wasn’t he?”

“Why! — don’t you know! ‘E’d croaked, — popped off the ‘ooks — very moment you saw ‘im.

For a moment Bealby’s voice failed him.

Then he said quite faintly, “You mean — he’d Was dead?”

“Didn’t you know?” said the tramp. “Gaw! What a kid you are!”

In that manner it was Bealby first saw a dead man. Never before had he seen anyone dead. And after that for all the night the old white man pursued him, with strange slowly-opening eyes, and a head on one side and his mouth suddenly and absurdly agape....

All night long that white figure presided over seas of dark dismay. It seemed always to be there, and yet Bealby thought of a score of other painful things. For the first time in his life he asked himself, “Where am I going? What am I drifting to?” The world beneath the old man’s dominance was a world of prisons.

Bealby believed he was a burglar and behind the darkness he imagined the outraged law already seeking him. And the terrors of his associate reinforced his own.

He tried to think what he should do in the morning. He dreaded the dawn profoundly. But he could not collect his thoughts because of the tramp's incessant lapses into grumbling lamentation. Bealby knew he had to get away from the tramp, but now he was too weary and alarmed to think of running away as a possible expedient. And besides there was the matter of his money. And beyond the range of the tramp's voice there were darknesses which to-night at least might hold inconceivable forms of lurking evil. But could he not appeal to the law to save him? Repent? Was there not something called turning King's Evidence?

The moon was no comfort that night. Across it there passed with incredible slowness a number of jagged little black clouds, blacker than any clouds Bealby had ever seen before. They were like velvet palls, lined with snowy fur. There was no end to them. And one at last most horribly gaped slowly and opened a mouth....

§ 7

At intervals there would be uncomfortable movements and the voice of the tramp came out of the darkness beside Bealby lamenting his approaching fate and discoursing — sometimes with violent expressions — on watch-dogs.

"I know I shall 'ave 'idrophobia," said the tramp. "I've always 'ad a disposition to 'idrophobia. Always a dread of water — and now it's got me.

"Think of it! — keeping a beast to set at a 'uman being. Where's the brotherhood of it? Where's the law and the humanity? Getting a animal to set at a brother man. And a poisoned animal, a animal with death in his teeth. And a 'orrible death too. Where's the sense and brotherhood?

"Gaw! when I felt 'is teeth coming through my trasers — !"

"Dogs oughtn't to be allowed. They're a noosance in the towns and a danger in the country. They oughtn't to be allowed anywhere — not till every blessed 'uman being 'as got three square meals a day. Then if you like, keep a dog. And see 'e's a clean dog....

"Gaw! if I'd been a bit quicker up that 'en roost!

“I ought to ‘ave landed ‘im a kick.

“It’s a man’s duty to ‘urt a dog. When ‘e sees a dog ‘e ought to ‘urt ‘im. It’s a natural ‘atred. If dogs were what they ought to be, if dogs understood ‘ow they’re situated, there wouldn’t be a dog go for a man ever.

“And if one did they’d shoot ‘im....

“After this if ever I get a chance to land a dog a oner with a stone I’ll land ‘im one. I been too sorft with dogs....”

Towards dawn Bealby slept uneasily, to be awakened by the loud snorting curiosity of three lively young horses. He sat up in a blinding sunshine and saw the tramp looking very filthy and contorted, sleeping with his mouth wide open and an expression of dismay and despair on his face.

§ 8

Bealby took his chance to steal away next morning while the tramp was engaged in artificial epilepsy.

“I feel like fits this morning,” said the tramp. “I could do it well. I want a bit of human kindness again. After that brasted dog.

“I expect soon I’ll ‘ave the foam all right withat any soap.”

They marked down a little cottage before which a benevolent-looking spectacled old gentleman in a large straw hat and a thin alpaca jacket was engaged in budding roses. Then they retired to prepare. The tramp handed over to Bealby various compromising possessions, which might embarrass an afflicted person under the searching hands of charity. There was for example the piece of soap after he had taken sufficient for his immediate needs, there was ninepence in money, there were the pack of cards with which they had played Euchre, a key or so and some wires, much assorted string, three tins, a large piece of bread, the end of a composite candle, a box of sulphur matches, list slippers, a pair of gloves, a clasp knife, sundry grey rags. They all seemed to have the distinctive flavour of the tramp....

“If you do a bunk with these,” said the tramp. “By Gawd”

He drew his finger across his throat.

(King's Evidence.)

Bealby from a safe distance watched the beginnings of the fit and it impressed him as a thoroughly hasty kind of fit. He saw the elderly gentleman hurry out of the cottage and stand for a moment looking over his little green garden gate, surveying the sufferings of the tramp with an expression of intense yet discreet commiseration. Then suddenly he was struck by an idea, he darted in among his rose bushes and reappeared with a big watering-can and an enormous syringe. Still keeping the gate between himself and the sufferer he loaded his syringe very carefully and deliberately....

Bealby would have liked to have seen more but he felt his moment had come. Another instant and it might be gone again. Very softly he dropped from the gate on which he was sitting and made off like a running partridge along the hedge of the field.

Just for a moment did he halt — at a strange sharp yelp that came from the direction of the little cottage. Then his purpose of flight resumed its control of him.

He would strike across country for two or three miles, then make for the nearest police station and give himself up. (Loud voices. Was that the tramp murdering the benevolent old gentleman in the straw hat, or was it the benevolent old gentleman in the straw hat murdering the tramp? No time to question. Onward, Onward!) The tramp's cans rattled in his pocket. He drew one out, hesitated a moment and flung it away and then sent its two companions after it....

He found his police station upon the road between Someport and Crayminster, a little peaceful rural station, a mere sunny cottage with a blue and white label and a notice board covered with belated bills about the stealing of pheasants' eggs. And another bill

It was headed "MISSING" and the next most conspicuous words were "£5 REWARD" and the next "ARTHUR BEALBY."

He was fascinated. So swift, so terribly swift is the law. Already they knew of his burglary, of his callous participation in the robbing of a dead man. Already the sleuths were upon his trail. So surely did his conscience strike to this conclusion that even the carelessly worded offer of a reward that followed his description conveyed no different intimation to his mind. "To whomsoever will bring him

back to Lady Laxton, at Shonts near Chelsmore," so it ran.

"And out of pocket expenses."

And even as Bealby read this terrible document, the door of the police station opened and a very big pink young policeman came out and stood regarding the world in a friendly, self-approving manner. He had innocent, happy, blue eyes; thus far he had had much to do with order and little with crime; and his rosebud mouth would have fallen open, had not discipline already closed it and set upon it the beginnings of a resolute expression that accorded ill with the rest of his open freshness. And when he had surveyed the sky and the distant hills and the little rose bushes that occupied the leisure of the force, his eyes fell upon Bealby....

Indecision has ruined more men than wickedness. And when one has slept rough and eaten nothing and one is conscious of a marred unclean appearance, it is hard to face one's situations. What Bealby had intended to do was to go right up to a policeman and say to him, simply and frankly: "I want to turn King's Evidence, please. I was in that burglary where there was a dead old man and a workbox and a woman and a dog. I was led astray by a bad character and I did not mean to do it. And really it was him that did it and not me."

But now his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, he felt he could not speak, could not go through with it. His heart had gone down into his feet. Perhaps he had caught the tramp's constitutional aversion to the police. He affected not to see the observant figure in the doorway. He assumed a slack careless bearing like one who reads by chance idly. He lifted his eyebrows to express unconcern. He pursed his mouth to whistle but no whistle came. He stuck his hands into his pockets, pulled up his feet as one pulls up plants by the roots and strolled away.

He quickened his stroll as he supposed by imperceptible degrees. He glanced back and saw that the young policeman had come out of the station and was reading the notice. And as the young policeman read he looked ever and again at Bealby like one who checks off items.

Bealby quickened his pace and then, doing his best to suggest by the movements of his back a mere boyish levity quite unconnected with the law, he broke into a trot.

Then presently he dropped back into a walking pace, pretended to see something in the hedge, stopped and took a sidelong look at the young policeman.

He was coming along with earnest strides, every movement of his suggested a stealthy hurry!

Bealby trotted and then becoming almost frank about it, ran. He took to his heels.

From the first it was not really an urgent chase; it was a stalking rather than a hunt, because the young policeman was too young and shy and lacking in confidence really to run after a boy without any definite warrant for doing so. When anyone came along he would drop into a smart walk and pretend not to be looking at Bealby but just going somewhere briskly. And after two miles of it he desisted, and stood for a time watching a heap of mangold wurzel directly and the disappearance of Bealby obliquely, and then when Bealby was quite out of sight he turned back thoughtfully towards his proper place.

On the whole he considered he was well out of it. He might have made a fool of himself ....

And yet, — five pounds reward!

VII. — THE BATTLE OF CRAYMINSTER

§ 1

BEALBY was beginning to realize that running away from one's situation and setting up for oneself is not so easy and simple a thing as it had appeared during those first days with the caravan. Three things he perceived had arisen to pursue him, two that followed in the daylight, the law and the tramp, and a third that came back at twilight, the terror of the darkness. And within there was a hollow faintness, for the afternoon was far advanced and he was extremely hungry. He had dozed away the early afternoon in the weedy corner of a wood. But for his hunger I think he would have avoided Crayminster.

Within a mile of that place he had come upon the "Missing" notice again stuck to the end of a barn. He had passed it askance, and then with a sudden inspiration returned and torn

it down. Somehow with the daylight his idea of turning King's Evidence against the tramp had weakened. He no longer felt sure.

Mustn't one wait and be asked first to turn King's Evidence?

Suppose they said he had merely confessed....

The Crayminster street had a picturesque nutritious look. Half-way down it was the White Hart with cyclist club signs on its walls and geraniums over a white porch, and beyond a house being built and already at the roofing pitch. To the right was a baker's shop diffusing a delicious suggestion of buns and cake, and to the left a little comfortable sweetstuff window and a glimpse of tables and a board: " Teas." Tea! He resolved to break into his ninepence boldly and generously. Very likely they would boil him an egg for a penny or so. Yet on the other hand if he just had three or four buns, soft new buns. He hovered towards the baker's shop and stopped short. That bill was in the window!

He wheeled about sharply and went into the sweetstuff shop and found a table with a white cloth and a motherly little woman in a large cap. Tea? He could have an egg and some thick bread-and-butter and a cup of tea for fivepence. He sat down respectfully to

await her preparations.

But he was uneasy.

He knew quite well that she would ask him questions. For that he was prepared. He said he was walking from his home in London to Someport to save the fare. “But you’re so dirty!” said the motherly little woman. “I sent my luggage by post, ma’m, and I lost my way and didn’t get it. And I don’t much mind, ma’m, if you don’t. Not washing....”

All that he thought he did quite neatly. But he wished there was not that bill in the baker’s window opposite and he wished he hadn’t quite such a hunted feeling. A faint claustrophobia affected him. He felt the shop might be a trap. He would be glad to get into the open again. Was there a way out behind if, for example, a policeman blocked the door? He hovered to the entrance while his egg was boiling, and then when he saw a large fat baker surveying the world with an afternoon placidity upon his face, he went back and sat by the table. He wondered if the baker had noted him.

He had finished his egg; he was drinking his tea with appreciative noises, when he discovered that the baker had noted him. Bealby’s eyes, at first inanely open above the tilting teacup, were suddenly riveted on something that was going on in the baker’s window. From where he sat he could see that detestable bill, and then slowly, feeling about for it, he beheld a hand and a floury sleeve. The bill was drawn up and vanished, and then behind a glass shelf of fancy bread and a glass shelf of buns something pink and indistinct began to move jerkily.... It was a human face and it was trying to peer into the little refreshment shop that sheltered Bealby....

Bealby’s soul went faint.

He had one inadequate idea. “Might I go out,” he said, “by your back way?”

“There isn’t a back way,” said the motherly little woman. “There’s a yard”

“If I might,” said Bealby and was out in it.

No way at all! High walls on every side. He was back like a shot in the shop, and now the baker was half-way across the road. “Five-pence,” said Bealby and gave the little old woman sixpence. “Here,” she cried, “take your penny!”

He did not wait. He darted out of the door.

The baker was all over the way of escape. He extended arms that seemed abnormally long and with a weak cry Bealby found himself trapped. Trapped, but not hopelessly. He knew how to do it. He had done it in milder forms before, but now he did it with all his being. Under the diaphragm of the baker smote Bealby' s hard little head, and instantly he was away running up the quiet sunny street. Man when he assumed the erect attitude made a hostage of his belly. It is a proverb among the pastoral Berbers of the Atlas mountains that the man who extends his arms in front of an angry ram is a fool.

It seemed probable to Bealby that he would get away up the street. The baker was engaged in elaborately falling backward, making the most of sitting down in the road, and the wind had been knocked out of him so that he could not shout. He emitted " Stop him!" in large whispers. Away ahead there were only three builder's men sitting under the wall beyond the White Hart, consuming tea out of their tea-cans. But the boy who was trimming the top of the tall privet hedge outside the doctor's saw the assault of the baker and incontinently uttered the shout that the baker could not. Also he fell off his steps with great alacrity and started in pursuit of Bealby. A young man from anywhere — perhaps the grocer's shop — also started for Bealby. But the workmen were slow to rise to the occasion. Bealby could have got past them. And then, abruptly at the foot of the street ahead, the tramp came into view, a battered disconcerting figure. His straw-coloured hat which had recently been wetted and dried in the sun was a swaying mop. The sight of Bealby seemed to rouse him from some disagreeable meditations. He grasped the situation with a terrible quickness.

Regardless of the wisdom of the pastoral Berbers he extended his arms and stood prepared to intercept.

Bealby thought at the rate of a hundred thoughts to the minute. He darted sideways and was up the ladder and among the beams and rafters of the unfinished roof before the pursuit had more than begun. "Here, come off that," cried the foreman builder, only now joining in the hunt with any sincerity. He came across the road while Bealby regarded him wickedly from the rafters above. Then as the good man made to ascend Bealby got him neatly on the hat — it was a bowler

hat — with a tile. This checked the advance. There was a disposition to draw a little off and look up at Bealby. One of the younger builders from the opposite sidewalk got him very neatly in the ribs with a stone. But two other shots went wide, and Bealby shifted to a more covered position behind the chimney-stack.

From here however he had a much less effective command of the ladder, and he perceived that his tenure of the new house was not likely to be a long one.

Below men parleyed. “Who is ‘e?” asked the foreman builder. “Where’d ‘e come from?” “‘E’s a brasted little thief,” said the tramp. “‘E’s one of the wust characters on the road.” The baker was recovering his voice now.

“There’s a reward out for ‘im,” he said, “and ‘e butted me in the stummick.”

“‘Ow much reward?” asked the foreman builder.

“Five pound for the man who catches him.”

“‘Ere!” cried the foreman builder in an arresting voice to the tramp. “Just stand away from that ladder....”

Whatever else Bealby might or might not be, one thing was very clear about him and that was that he was a fugitive. And the instinct of humanity is to pursue fugitives. Man is a hunting animal, inquiry into the justice of a case is an altogether later accretion to his complex nature, and that is why, whatever you are or whatever you do you should never let people get you on the run. There is a joy in the mere fact of hunting, the sight of a scarlet coat and a hound will brighten a whole village, and now Crayminster was rousing itself like a sleeper who wakes to sunshine and gay music. People were looking out of windows and coming out of shops, a policeman appeared and heard the baker’s simple story, a brisk hatless young man in a white apron and with a pencil behind his ear became prominent. Bealby, peeping over the ridge of the roof, looked a thoroughly dirty and unpleasant little creature to all these people.

The only spark of human sympathy for him below was in the heart of the little old woman in the cap who had given him his breakfast. She surveyed the roof of the new house from the door of her shop, she hoped Bealby wouldn’t hurt himself up there, and she held his penny change clutched in her hand in her apron pocket with

a vague idea that perhaps presently if he ran past she could very quickly give it him.

§ 2

Considerable delay in delivering the assault on the house was caused by the foreman's insistence that he alone should ascend the ladder to capture Bealby. He was one of those regular-featured men with large heads who seem to have inflexible backbones, he was large and fair and full with a sweetish chest voice, and in all his movements authoritative and deliberate. Whenever he made to ascend he discovered that people were straying into his building, and he had to stop and direct his men how to order them off. Inside his large head he was trying to arrange everybody to cut off Bealby's line of retreat without risking that anybody but himself should capture the fugitive. It was none too easy and it knitted his brows. Meanwhile Bealby was able to reconnoitre the adjacent properties and to conceive plans for a possible line of escape. He also got a few tiles handy against when the rush up the ladder came. At the same time two of the younger workmen were investigating the possibility of getting at him from inside the house. There was still no staircase, but there were ways of clambering. They had heard about the reward and they knew that they must do this before the foreman realized their purpose, and this a little retarded them. In their pockets they had a number of stones, ammunition in reserve, if it came again to throwing.

Bealby was no longer fatigued nor depressed; anxiety for the future was lost in the excitement of the present, and his heart told him that, come what might, getting on to the roof was an extraordinarily good dodge.

And if only he could bring off a certain jump he had in mind, there were other dodges....

In the village street an informal assembly of leading citizens, a little recovered now from their first nervousness about flying tiles, discussed the problem of Bealby. There was Mumby, the draper and vegetarian, with the bass voice and the big black beard. He advocated the fire engine. He was one of the volunteer fire brigade and never so

happy as when he was wearing his helmet. He had come out of his shop, at the shouting. Schocks the butcher, and his boy were also in the street; Schocks's yard with its heap of manure and fodder bounded the new house on the left. Rymell the vet emerged from the billiard-room of the White Hart, and with his head a little on one side was watching Bealby and replying attentively to the baker, who was asking him a number of questions that struck him as irrelevant. All the White Hart people were in the street.

"I suppose, Mr. Rymell," said the baker, "there's a mort of dangerous things in a man's belly round about 'is Stummick?"

"Tiles," said Mr. Rymell. "Loose bricks. It wouldn't do if he started dropping those."

"I was saying, Mr. Rymell," said the baker after a pause for digestion, "is a man likely to be injured badly by a Blaw in his stummick?"

Mr. Rymell stared at him for a moment with unresponsive eyes. "More likely to get you in the head," he said, and then, "Here! What's that fool of a carpenter going to do?"

The tramp was hovering on the outskirts of the group of besiegers, vindictive but dispirited. He had been brought to from his fit and given a shilling by the old gentleman, but he was dreadfully wet between his shirt — he wore a shirt, under three waistcoats and a coat — and his skin, because the old gentleman's method of revival had been to syringe him suddenly with cold water. It had made him weep with astonishment and misery. Now he saw no advantage in claiming Bealby publicly. His part, he felt, was rather a waiting one. What he had to say to Bealby could be best said without the assistance of a third person. And he wanted to understand more of this talk about a reward. If there was a reward out for Bealby

"That's not a bad dodge!" said Rymell, changing his opinion of the foreman suddenly as that individual began his ascent of the ladder with a bricklayer's hod carried shield-wise above his head. He went up with difficulty and slowly because of the extreme care he took to keep his head protected. But no tiles came. Bealby had discovered a more dangerous attack developing inside the house and was already in retreat down the other side of the building.

He did a leap that might have hurt him badly, taking off from the

corner of the house and jumping a good twelve feet on to a big heap of straw in the butcher's yard. He came down on all fours and felt a little jarred for an instant, and then he was up again and had scrambled up by a heap of manure to the top of the butcher's wall. He was over that and into Maccullum's yard next door before anyone in the front of the new house had realized that he was in flight. Then one of the two workmen who had been coming up inside the house saw him from the oblong opening that was some day to be the upstairs bedroom window, and gave tongue.

It was thirty seconds later and after Bealby had vanished from the butcher's wall that the foreman, still clinging to his hod, appeared over the ridge of the roof. At the workman's shout the policeman who, with the preventive disposition of his profession, had hitherto been stopping anyone from coming into the unfinished house, turned about and ran out into its brick and plaster and timber-littered backyard, whereupon the crowd in the street realizing that the quarry had gone away and no longer restrained, came pouring partly through the house and partly round through the butcher's gate into his yard.

Bealby had had a check.

He had relied upon the tarred felt roof of the mushroom shed of Maccullum the tailor and breeches-maker to get him to the wall that gave upon Mr. Benshaw's strawberry fields, and he had not seen from his roof above the ramshackle glazed outhouse which Maccullum called his workroom and in which four industrious tailors were working in an easy deshabille. The roof of the shed was the merest tarred touchwood, it had perished as felt long ago, it collapsed under Bealby, he went down into a confusion of mushrooms and mushroom-bed, he blundered out trailing mushrooms and spawn and rich matter, he had a nine-foot wall to negotiate and only escaped by a hair's-breadth from the clutch of a little red-slippered man who came dashing out from the workroom. But by a happy use of the top of the dustbin he did just get away over the wall in time, and the red-slippered tailor who was not good at walls was left struggling to imitate an ascent that had looked easy enough until he came to try it.

For a moment the little tailor struggled alone, and then both Maccullum's domain and the butcher's yard next door and the narrow patch of space behind the new house, were violently injected

with a crowd of active people, all confusedly on the Bealby trail. Someone, he never knew who, gave the little tailor a leg-up and then his red slippers twinkled over the wall and he was leading the hunt into the market gardens of Mr. Benshaw. A collarless colleague in list slippers and conspicuous braces followed. The policeman, after he had completed the wreck of Mr. Maccullum's mushroom shed, came next, and then Mr. Maccullum, with no sense of times and seasons, anxious to have a discussion at once upon the question of this damage. Mr. Maccullum was out of breath and he never got farther with this projected conversation than " Here!" This was repeated several times as opportunity seemed to offer. The remaining tailors got to the top of the wall more sedately with the help of the Maccullum kitchen steps and dropped; Mr. Schocks followed breathing hard, and then a fresh jet of humanity came squirting into the gardens through a gap in the fence at the back of the building site. This was led by the young workman who had first seen Bealby go away. Hard behind him came Rymell, the vet, the grocer's assistant, the doctor's page-boy and, less briskly, the baker. Then the tramp. Then Mumby and Schocks's boy. Then a number of other people. The seeking of Bealby had assumed the dimensions of a Hue and Cry.

The foreman with the large head and the upright back was still on the new roof; he was greatly distressed at the turn things had taken and shouted his claims to a major share in the capture of Bealby, mixed with his opinions of Bealby and a good deal of mere swearing, to a sunny but unsympathetic sky....

§ 3

Mr. Benshaw was a small holder, a sturdy English yeoman of the new school. He was an Anti-Socialist, a self-helper, an independent-spirited man. He had a steadily growing banking account and a plain but sterile wife, and he was dark in complexion and so erect in his bearing as to seem a little to lean forward. Usually he wore a sort of grey gamekeeper's suit with brown gaiters (except on Sundays when the coat was black), he was addicted to bowler hats that accorded ill

with his large grave grey-coloured face, and he was altogether a very sound strong man. His bowler hats did but accentuate that. He had no time for vanities, even the vanity of dressing consistently. He went into the nearest shop and just bought the cheapest hat he could, and so he got hats designed for the youthful and giddy, hats with flighty crowns and flippant bows and amorous brims that undulated attractively to set off flushed and foolish young faces. It made his unrelenting face look rather like the Puritans under the Stuart monarchy.

He was a horticulturist rather than a farmer. He had begun his career in cheap lodgings with a field of early potatoes and cabbages, supplemented by employment, but with increased prosperity his area of cultivation had extended and his methods intensified. He now grew considerable quantities of strawberries, raspberries, celery, seakale, asparagus, early peas, late peas and onions, and consumed more stable manure than any other cultivator within ten miles of Crayminster. He was beginning to send cut flowers to London. He had half an acre of glass and he was rapidly extending it. He had built himself a cottage on lines of austere economy, and a bony-looking dwelling-house for some of his men. He also owned a number of useful sheds of which tar and corrugated iron were conspicuous features. His home was furnished with the utmost respectability, and notably joyless even in a countryside where gaiety is regarded as an impossible quality in furniture. He was already in a small local way a mortgagee. Good fortune had not turned the head of Mr. Benshaw nor robbed him of the feeling that he was a particularly deserving person, entitled to a preferential treatment from a country which in his plain unsparing way he felt that he enriched

In many ways he thought that the country was careless of his needs. And in none more careless than in the laws relating to trespass. Across his dominions ran three footpaths, and one of these led to the public elementary school. That he should have to maintain this latter — and if he did not keep it in good order the children spread out and made parallel tracks among his cultivations — seemed to him a thing almost intolerably unjust. He mended it with cinders, acetylene refuse, which he believed and hoped to be

thoroughly bad for boots, and a peculiarly slimy chalky clay, and he put on a board at each end "Keep to the footpaths, Trespassers will be prosecuted, by Order," which he painted himself to save expense when he was confined indoors by the influenza. Still more unjust it would be, he felt, for him to spend money upon effective fencing, and he could find no fencing cheap enough and ugly enough and painful enough and impossible enough to express his feelings in the matter. Every day the children streamed to and fro, marking how his fruits ripened and his produce became more esculent. And other people pursued these tracks, many Mr. Benshaw was convinced went to and fro through his orderly crops who had no business whatever, no honest business, to pass that way. Either, he concluded, they did it to annoy him, or they did it to injure him. This continual invasion aroused in Mr. Benshaw all that stern anger against unrighteousness latent in our race which more than any other single force has made America and the Empire what they are to-day. Once already he had been robbed — a raid upon his raspberries — and he felt convinced that at any time he might be robbed again. He had made representations to the local authority to get the footpaths closed, but in vain. They defended themselves with the paltry excuse that the children would then have to go nearly a mile round to the school.

It was not only the tyranny of these footpaths that offended Mr. Benshaw's highly developed sense of Individual Liberty. All round his rather straggling dominions his neighbours displayed an ungenerous indisposition to maintain their fences to his satisfaction. In one or two places, in abandonment of his clear rights in the matter, he had at his own expense supplemented these lax defences with light barbed wire defences. But it was not a very satisfactory sort of barbed wire. He wanted barbed wire with extra spurs like a fighting cock; he wanted barbed wire that would start out after nightfall and attack passers-by. This boundary trouble was universal; in a way it was worse than the footpaths which after all only affected the Cage Fields where his strawberries grew. Except for the yard and garden walls of Maccullum and Schocks and that side, there was not really a satisfactory foot of enclosure all round Mr. Benshaw. On the one side rats and people's dogs and scratching cats came in, on the other side rabbits. The rabbits were intolerable, and recently there had been a

rise of nearly thirty per cent, in the price of wire netting.

Mr. Benshaw wanted to hurt rabbits; he did not want simply to kill them, he wanted so to kill them as to put the fear of death into the burrows. He wanted to kill them so that scared little furry survivors with their tails as white as ghosts would go lolloping home and say, “I say, you chaps, we’d better shift out of this. We’re up against a Strong Determined Man....”

I have made this lengthy statement of Mr. Benshaw’s economic and moral difficulties in order that the reader should understand the peculiar tension that already existed upon this side of Cray minster. It has been necessary to do so now because in a few seconds there will be no further opportunity for such preparations. There had been trouble, I may add very hastily, about the shooting of Mr. Benshaw’s gun; a shower of small shot had fallen out of the twilight upon the umbrella and basket of old Mrs. Frobisher. And only a week ago an unsympathetic bench after a hearing of over an hour and in the face of overwhelming evidence had refused to convict little Lucy Mumby, aged eleven, of stealing fruit from Mr. Benshaw’s fields. She had been caught red-handed....

At the very moment that Bealby was butting the baker in the stomach, Mr. Benshaw was just emerging from his austere cottage after a wholesome but inexpensive high tea in which he had finished up two left-over cold sausages, and he was considering very deeply the financial side of a furious black fence that he had at last decided should pen in the school children from further depredations. It should be of splintery tarred deal, and high, with well-pointed tops studded with sharp nails, and he believed that by making the path only two feet wide, a real saving of ground for cultivation might be made and a very considerable discomfort for the public arranged, to compensate for his initial expense. The thought of a narrow lane which would in winter be characterized by an excessive sliminess and from which there would be no lateral escape was pleasing to a mind by no means absolutely restricted to considerations of pounds, shillings and pence. In his hand after his custom he carried a hoe, on the handle of which feet were marked so that it was available not only for destroying the casual weed but also for purposes of measurement. With this he now checked his estimate, and found that

here he would reclaim as much as three feet of trodden waste, here a full two.

Absorbed in these calculations, he heeded little the growth of a certain clamour from the backs of the houses bordering on the High Street. It did not appear to concern him, and Mr. Benshaw made it almost ostentatiously his rule to mind his own business. His eyes remained fixed on the lumpy, dusty sun-baked track, that with an intelligent foresight he saw already transformed into a deterrent slough of despond for the young....

Then quite suddenly the shouting took on a new note. He glanced over his shoulder almost involuntarily and discovered that after all this uproar was his business. Amazingly his business. His mouth assumed a Cromwellian fierceness. His grip tightened on his hoe. That anyone should dare! But it was impossible!

His dominions were being invaded with a peculiar boldness and violence.

Ahead of everyone else and running with wild wavings of the arms across his strawberries was a small and very dirty little boy. He impressed Mr. Benshaw merely as a pioneer. Some thirty yards behind him was a little collarless, short-sleeved man in red slippers running with great effrontery and behind him another still more denuded lunatic, also in list slippers and with braces — braces of inconceivable levity. And then Wiggs, the policeman, hotly followed by Mr. Maccullum. Then more distraught tailors and Schocks the butcher. But a louder shout heralded the main attack and Mr. Benshaw turned his eyes — already they were slightly blood-shot eyes — to the right and saw, pouring through the broken hedge, a disorderly crowd, Rymell whom he had counted his friend, the grocer's assistant, the doctor's boy, some strangers — Mumby!

At the sight of Mumby, Mr. Benshaw leapt at a conclusion. He saw it all. The whole place was rising against him; they were asserting some infernal new right-of-way. Mumby — Mumby had got them to do it. All the fruits of fifteen years of toil, all the care and accumulation of Mr. Benshaw's prime, were to be trampled and torn to please a draper's spite!....

Sturdy yeoman as Mr. Benshaw was he resolved instantly to fight for his liberties. One moment he paused to blow the powerful police

whistle he carried in his pocket, and then rushed forward in the direction of the hated Mumby, the leader of trespassers, the parent and abetter and defender of the criminal Lucy. He took the hurrying panting man almost unawares, and with one wild sweep of the hoe felled him to the earth. Then he staggered about and smote again, but not quite in time to get the head of Mr. Rymell.

This whistle he carried was part of a systematic campaign he had developed against trespassers and fruit stealers. He and each of his assistants carried one, and at the first shrill note — it was his rule — everyone seized on any weapon that was handy and ran to pursue and capture. All his assistants were extraordinarily prompt in responding to these alarms, which were often the only break in long days of strenuous and strenuously directed toil. So now with an astonishing promptitude and animated faces men appeared from sheds and greenhouses and distant patches of culture hastening to the assistance of their dour employer.

It says much for the amiable relations that existed between employers and employed in those days before Syndicalism became the creed of the younger workers that they did hurry to his assistance.

But many rapid things were to happen before they came into action. For first a strange excitement seized upon the tramp. A fantastic delusive sense of social rehabilitation took possession of his soul. Here he was pitted against a formidable hoe-wielding man, who for some inscrutable reason was resolved to cover the retreat of Bealby. And all the world, it seemed, was with the tramp and against this hoe-wielder. All the tremendous forces of human society against which the tramp had struggled for so many years, whose power he knew and feared as only the outlaw can, had suddenly come into line with him. Across the strawberries to the right there was even a policeman hastening to join the majority, a policeman closely followed by a tradesman of the blackest, most respectable quality. The tramp had a vision of himself as a respectable man heroically leading respectable people against outcasts. He dashed the lank hair from his eyes, waved his arms laterally and then with a loud strange cry flung himself towards Mr. Benshaw. Two pairs of superimposed coat-tails flapped behind him. And then the hoe whistled through the air and the tramp fell to the ground like a sack.

But now Schocks's boy had grasped his opportunity. He had been working discreetly round behind Mr. Benshaw and as the hoe smote he leapt upon that hero's back and seized him about the neck with both arms and bore him staggering to the ground, and Rymell, equally quick, and used to the tackling of formidable creatures, had snatched and twisted away the hoe and grappled Mr. Benshaw almost before he was down. The first of Mr. Benshaw's helpers to reach the fray found the issue decided, his master held down conclusively and a growing circle trampling down a wide area of strawberry plants about the panting group....

Mr. Mumby more frightened than hurt was already sitting up, but the tramp with a glowing wound upon his cheekbone and an expression of astonishment in his face, lay low and pawed the earth.

"What d'you mean," gasped Mr. Rymell, "hitting people about with that hoe?"

"What d'you mean," groaned Mr. Benshaw, "running across my strawberries?"

"We were going after that boy."

"Pounds and pounds worth of damage. Mischief and wickedness Mumby!"

Mr. Rymell, suddenly realizing the true values of the situation, released Mr. Benshaw's hands and knelt up. "Look here, Mr. Benshaw," he said, "you seem to be under the impression we are trespassing."

Mr. Benshaw struggling into a sitting position was understood to inquire with some heat what Mr. Rymell called it. Schocks's boy picked up the hat with the erotic brim and handed it to the horticulturist silently and respectfully.

"We were not trespassing," said Mr. Rymell. "We were following up that boy. He was trespassing if you like.... By the bye, — where is the boy? Has anyone caught him?"

At the question attention which had been focused upon Mr. Benshaw and his hoe, came round. Across the field in the direction of the sunlit half-acre of glass the little tailor was visible standing gingerly and picking up his red slippers for the third time — they would come off in that loose good soil, everybody else had left the trail to concentrate on Mr. Benshaw — and Bealby Bealby was out

of sight. He

had escaped, clean got away.

“What boy?” asked Mr. Benshaw.

“Ferocious little beast who’s fought us like a rat. Been committing all sorts of crimes about the country. Five pounds reward for him.”

“Fruit stealing?” asked Mr. Benshaw.

“Yes,” said Mr. Rymell, chancing it.

Mr. Benshaw reflected slowly. His eyes surveyed his trampled crops. “Goooooooooooooo Lord!” he cried. “Look at those strawberries!” His voice gathered violence. “And that lout there!” he said. “Why! — he’s lying on them! That’s the brute who went for me!”

“You got him a pretty tidy one aside the head!” said Maccullum.

The tramp rolled over on some fresh strawberries and groaned pitifully.

“He’s hurt;’ said Mr. Mumby.

The tramp flopped and lay still.

“Get some water!” said Rymell, standing

up.

At the word water, the tramp started convulsively, rolled over and sat up with a dazed expression.

“No water,” he said weakly. “No more water,” and then catching Mr. Benshaw’s eye he got rather quickly to his feet.

Everybody who wasn’t already standing was getting up, and everyone now was rather carefully getting himself off any strawberry plant he had chanced to find himself smashing in the excitement of the occasion.

“That’s the man that started in on me,” said Mr. Benshaw. “What’s he doing here? Who is he?”

“Who are you, my man? What business have you to be careering over this field?” asked Mr. Rymell.

“I was only ‘elping,” said the tramp.

“Nice help,” said Mr. Benshaw.

“I thought that boy was a thief or something.”

“And so you made a rush at me.”

“I didn’t exactly — sir I thought you

was ‘elping ‘im.”

“You be off anyhow,” said Mr. Benshaw. “Whatever you thought.”

Yes, you be off!” said Mr. Rymell. That’s the way, my man,” said Mr. Benshaw. “We haven’t any jobs for you. The sooner we have you out of it the better for everyone. Get right on to the path and keep it.” And with a desolating sense of exclusion the tramp withdrew. “There’s pounds and pounds worth of damage here,” said Mr. Benshaw. “This job’ll cost me a pretty penny. Look at them berries there. Why they ain’t fit for jam!

And all done by one confounded boy.” An evil light came into Mr. Benshaw’s eyes. “You leave him to me and my chaps. If he’s gone up among those sheds there — we’ll settle with him. Anyhow there’s no reason why my fruit should be trampled worse than it has been. Fruit stealer, you say, he is?”

“They live on the country this time of year,” said Mr. Mumby.

“And catch them doing a day’s work picking!” said Mr. Benshaw. “I know the sort.”

“There’s a reward of five pounds for ‘im already,” said the baker....

§ 4

You perceive how humanitarian motives may sometimes defeat their own end, and how little Lady Laxton’s well-intentioned handbills were serving to rescue Bealby. Instead they were turning him into a scared and hunted animal. In spite of its manifest impossibility he was convinced that the reward and this pursuit had to do with his burglary of the poultry farm, and that his capture would be but the preliminary to prison, trial and sentence. His one remaining idea was to get away. But his escape across the market gardens had left him so blown and spent, that he was obliged to hide up for a time in this perilous neighbourhood, before going on. He saw a disused-looking shed in the lowest corner of the gardens behind the greenhouses and by doubling sharply along a hedge he got to it unseen. It was not disused — nothing in Mr. Benshaw’s possession ever was absolutely disused, but it was filled with horticultural lumber, with old calcium

carbide tins, with broken wheelbarrows and damaged ladders awaiting repair, with some ragged wheeling planks and surplus rolls of roofing felt. At the back were some unhinged shed doors leaning against the wall, and between them Bealby tucked himself neatly and became still, glad of any respite from the chase.

He would wait for twilight and then get away across the meadows at the back and then

go He didn't know whither. And now

he had no confidence in the wild world any more. A qualm of home-sickness for the compact little gardener's cottage at Shonts, came to Bealby. Why, as a matter of fact, wasn't he there now?

He ought to have tried more at Shonts.

He ought to have minded what they told him and not have taken up a toasting-fork against Thomas. Then he wouldn't now have been a hunted burglar with a reward of five pounds on his head and nothing in his pocket but threepence and a pack of greasy playing cards, a box of sulphur matches and various objectionable sundries, none of which were properly his own.

If only he could have his time over again!

Such wholesome reflections occupied his thoughts until the onset of the dusk stirred him to departure. He crept out of his hiding-place and stretched his limbs which had got very stiff, and was on the point of reconnoitring from the door of the shed when he became aware of stealthy footsteps outside.

With the quickness of an animal he shot back into his hiding-place. The footsteps had halted. For a long time it seemed the unseen waited listening. Had he heard Bealby?

Then someone fumbled with the door of the shed, it opened and there was a long pause of cautious inspection.

Then the unknown had shuffled into the shed and sat down on a heap of matting.

"Gaw!" said a voice.

The tramp's!

"If ever I struck a left-handed Mascot it was that boy," said the tramp. "The little swine!"

For the better part of two minutes he went on from this mild beginning to a descriptive elaboration of Bealby. For the first time in

his life Bealby learnt how unfavourable was the impression he might leave on a fellow- creature's mind.

"Took even my matches!" cried the tramp, and tried this statement over with variations.

"First that old fool with his syringe!" The tramp's voice rose in angry protest. "' Here's a chap dying epilepsy on your doorstep and all you can do is to squirt cold water at him! Cold water! Why you might kill a man doing that! And then say you'd thought' d bring 'im rand! Bring 'im rand! You be jolly glad I didn't stash your silly face in. You [misbegotten] old fool! What's a shilling for wetting a man to 'is skin? Wet through I was. Running inside my shirt, — dripping.... And then the blooming boy clears!

"*I* don't know what boys are coming to!"

cried the tramp. "These board schools it is.

Gets 'old of everything 'e can and bunks!

Gaw! if I get my 'ands on 'im, I'll show 'im. I'll"

For some time the tramp revelled in the details, for the most part crudely surgical, of his vengeance upon Bealby....

"Then there's that dog bite. 'Ow do I know 'ow that's going to turn at? If I get 'idrophobia, blowed if I don't *bite* some of 'em. 'Idrophobia. Screaming and foaming. Nice death for a man — my time o' life! Bark I shall. Bark and bite.

"And this is your world," said the tramp.

"This is the world you put people into and expect 'em to be 'appy....

"I'd like to bite that dough-faced fool with the silly 'at. I'd enjoy biting 'im. I'd spit it out, but I'd bite it right enough. Wiping abat with 'is 'O. Gaw! Get off my ground! Be orf with you. Slash. 'E ought to be shut up.

"Where's the justice of it?" shouted the tramp. "Where's the right and the sense of it? What 'ave *I* done that I should always get the under side? Why should *I* be stuck on the under side of everything? There's worse men than me in all sorts of positions.... Judges there are. 'Orrible Kerecters. Ministers and people. I've read abat 'em in the papers....

"It's we tramps are the scapegoats. Somebody's got to suffer so as the police can show a face. Gaw! Some of these days I'll do

something.... I'll do something. You'll drive me too far with it. I tell you"

He stopped suddenly and listened. Bealby had creaked.

"Gaw! What can one do?" said the tramp after a long interval.

And then complaining more gently, the tramp began to feel about to make his simple preparations for the night.

"'Unt me out of this I expect," said the tramp. "And many sleeping in feather beds that ain't fit to 'old a candle to me. Not a hordinary farthing candle...."

§ 5

The subsequent hour or so was an interval of tedious tension for Bealby.

After vast spaces of time he was suddenly aware of three vertical threads of light. He stared at them with mysterious awe, until he realized that they were just the moonshine streaming through the cracks of the shed.

The tramp tossed and muttered in his sleep.

Footsteps?

Yes — Footsteps.

Then voices.

They were coming along by the edge of the field, and coming and talking very discreetly.

"Ugh!" said the tramp and then softly, "What's that?" Then he too became noiselessly attentive.

Bealby could hear his own heart beating.

The men were now close outside the shed. "He wouldn't go in there," said Mr. Benshaw's voice. "He wouldn't dare. Anyhow we'll go up by the glass first. I'll let him have the whole barrel-full of oats if I get a glimpse of him. If he'd gone away they'd have caught him in the road...."

The footsteps receded. There came a cautious rustling on the part of the tramp and then his feet padded softly to the door of the shed. He struggled to open it, and then with a jerk got it open a few inches; a great bar of moonlight leapt and lay still across the floor of the

shed. Bealby advanced his head cautiously until he could see the black obscure indications of the tramp's back as he peeped out.

"Now," whispered the tramp, and opened the door wider. Then he ducked his head down and had darted out of sight, leaving the door open behind him.

Bealby questioned whether he should follow. He came out a few steps and then went back at a shout from away up the garden. "There he goes," shouted a voice, "in the shadow of the hedge."

"Look out, Jim!" — Bang — and a yelp.

"Stand away! I've got another barrel!"

Bang.

Then silence for a time, and then the footsteps coming back.

"That ought to teach him," said Mr. Benshaw. "First time I got him fair, and I think I peppered him a bit the second. Couldn't see very well, but I heard him yell. He won't forget that in a hurry. Not him. There's nothing like oats for fruit-stealers. Jim, just shut that door, will you? That's where he was hiding...."

It seemed a vast time to Bealby before he ventured out into the summer moonlight, and a very pitiful and outcast little Bealby he felt himself to be.

He was beginning to realize what it means to go beyond the narrow securities of human society. He had no friends, no friends at all....

He caught at and arrested a sob of self-pity.

Perhaps after all it was not so late as Bealby had supposed. There were still lights in some of the houses and he had the privilege of seeing Mr. Benshaw going to bed with pensive deliberation. Mr. Benshaw wore a flannel night-shirt and said quite a lengthy prayer before extinguishing his candle. Then suddenly Bealby turned nervously and made off through the hedge. A dog had barked.

At first there were nearly a dozen lighted windows in Crayminster. They went out one by one. He hung for a long time with a passionate earnestness on the sole surviving one, but that too went at last. He could have wept when at last it winked out. He came down into the marshy flats by the river, but he did not like the way in which the water sucked and swirled in the vague moonlight; also he suddenly discovered a great white horse standing quite still in the

misty grass not thirty yards away; so he went up to and crossed the high road and wandered up the hillside towards the allotments, which attracted him by reason of the sociability of the numerous tool sheds. In a hedge near at hand a young rabbit squealed sharply and was stilled. Why?

Then something like a short snake scrabbled by very fast through the grass.

Then he thought he saw the tramp stalking him noiselessly behind some currant bushes. That went on for some time, but came to nothing.

Then nothing pursued him, nothing at all. The gap, the void, came after him. The bodiless, the faceless, the formless; these are evil hunters in the night....

What a cold still watching thing moonlight can be!....

He thought he would like to get his back against something solid and found near one of the sheds a little heap of litter. He sat down against good tarred boards, assured at least that whatever came must come in front. Whatever he did, he was resolved, he would not shut his eyes.

That would be fatal....

He awoke in broad daylight amidst a cheerful uproar of birds.

§ 6

And then again flight and pursuit were resumed.

As Bealby went up the hill away from Crayminster he saw a man standing over a spade and watching his retreat, and when he looked back again presently this man was following. It was Lady Laxton's five pound reward had done the thing for him.

He was half minded to surrender and have done with it, but jail he knew was a dreadful thing of stone and darkness. He would make one last effort. So he beat along the edge of a plantation and then crossed it and forced his way through some gorse and came upon a sunken road, that crossed the hill in a gorse-lined cutting. He struggled down the steep bank. At its foot regardless of him, unaware of him, a man sat beside a motor bicycle with his fists gripped tight

and his head downcast, swearing. A county map was crumpled in his hand. “Damn!” he cried and flung the map to the ground and kicked it and put his foot on it.

Bealby slipped, came down the bank with a run and found himself in the road within a couple of yards of the blonde features and angry eyes of Captain Douglas. When he saw the Captain and perceived himself recognized, he flopped down — a done and finished Bealby....

§ 7

He had arrived just in time to interrupt the Captain in a wild and reprehensible fit of passion.

The Captain imagined it was a secret fit of passion. He thought he was quite alone and that no one could hear him or see him. So he had let himself shout and stamp, to work off the nervous tensions that tormented him beyond endurance.

In the direct sense of the words the Captain was in love with Madeleine. He was in love quite beyond the bounds set by refined and decorous people to this dangerous passion. The primordial savage that lurks in so many of us was uppermost in him. He was not in love with her prettily or delicately, he was in love with her violently and vehemently. He wanted to be with her, he wanted to be close to her, he wanted to possess her and nobody else to approach her. He was so inflamed now that no other interest in life had any importance except as it aided or interfered with this desire. He had forced himself in spite of this fever in his blood to leave her in order to pursue Bealby, and now he was regretting this firmness furiously. He had expected to catch Bealby overnight and bring him back to the hotel in triumph. But Bealby had been elusive. There she was, away there, hurt and indignant — neglected!

“A laggard in love,” cried the Captain, “a dastard in war! God! — I run away from everything. First I leave the manoeuvres, then her. Unstable as water thou shalt not prevail. Water! What does the confounded boy matter? What does he matter?

“And there she is. Alone! She’ll flirt — naturally she’ll flirt. Don’t

I deserve it? Haven't I asked for it? Just the one little time we might have had together! I fling it in her face. You fool, you laggard, you dastard! And here's this map!"

A breathing moment.

"How the devil," cried the Captain, "am I to find the little beast on this map?

"And twice he's been within reach of my hand!

"No decision!" cried the Captain. "No instant grip! What good is a soldier without it? What good is any man who will not leap at opportunity? I ought to have chased out last night after that fool and his oats. Then I might have had a chance!

"Chuck it! Chuck the whole thing! Go back to her. Kneel to her, kiss her, compel her!

"And what sort of reception am I likely to get?"

He crumpled the flapping map in his fist. And then suddenly out of nowhere Bealby came rolling down to his feet, a dishevelled and earthy Bealby. But Bealby.

"Good Lord!" cried the Captain, starting to his feet and holding the map like a sword sheath. "What do you want?"

For a second Bealby was a silent spectacle of misery.

"Oooh! I want my breckfuss," he burst out at last, reduced to tears.

"Are you young Bealby?" asked the Captain, seizing him by the shoulder.

"They're after me," cried Bealby. "If they catch me they'll put me in prison. Where they don't give you anything. It wasn't me did it — and I 'aven't had anything to eat — not since yesterday."

The Captain came rapidly to a decision. There should be no more faltering. He saw his way clear before him. He would act — like a whistling sword. "Here! jump up behind," he said ..." hold on tight to me...."

§ 8

For a time there was a more than Napoleonic swiftness in the Captain's movements. When Bealby' s pursuer came up to the hedge

that looks down into the sunken road, there was no Bealby, no Captain, nothing but a torn and dishevelled county map, an almost imperceptible odour of petrol and a faint sound — like a distant mowing machine, — and the motor bicycle was a mile away on the road to Beckinstone. Eight miles, eight rather sickening miles, Bealby did to Beckinstone in eleven minutes, and there in a little coffee-house he was given breakfast with eggs and bacon and marmalade (Prime!) and his spirit was restored to him while the Captain raided a bicycle and repairing shop and negotiated the hire of an experienced but fairly comfortable wicker-work trailer. And so, to London through the morning sunshine, leaving tramps, pursuers, policemen, handbills, bakers, market gardeners, terrors of the darkness and everything upon the road behind — and farther behind and remote and insignificant — and so to the vanishing point.

Some few words of explanation the Captain had vouchsafed and that was all.

"Don't be afraid about it," he said. "Don't be in the least bit afraid. You tell them about it, just simply and truthfully, exactly what you did, exactly how you got into it and out of it and all about it."

"You're going to take me up to a Magistrate, sir?"

"I'm going to take you up to the Lord Chancellor himself."

"And then they won't do anything?"

"Nothing at all, Bealby; you trust me.

All you've got to do is to tell the simple truth...."

It was pretty rough going in the trailer but very exciting. If you gripped the sides very hard and sat quite tight nothing very much happened, and also there was a strap across your chest. And you went past everything. There wasn't a thing on the road the Captain didn't pass, lowing deeply with his great horn when they seemed likely to block his passage. And as for the burglary and everything, it would all be settled....

The Captain also found that ride to London exhilarating. At least he was no longer hanging about; he was getting to something. He would be able to go back to her — and all his being now yearned to go back to her — with things achieved, with successes to show. He'd found the boy. He would go straight to dear old Uncle Chickney, and Uncle Chickney would put things right with Moggeridge, the boy

would bear his testimony, Moggeridge would be convinced and all would be well again. He might be back with Madeleine that evening. He would go back to her, and she would see the wisdom and energy of all he had done, and she would lift that dear chin of hers and smile that dear smile of hers and hold out her hand to be kissed, and the lights and reflections would play on that strong soft neck of hers....

They buzzed along stretches of common and stretches of straight-edged meadowland, by woods and orchards, by pleasant inns and slumbering villages and the gates and lodges of country houses.

These latter grew more numerous and presently they skirted a town, and then more road, more villages and at last signs of a nearness to London, more frequent houses, more frequent inns, hoardings and advertisements, an asphalted side-walk, lamps, a gasworks, laundries, a stretch of suburban villadom, a suburban railway station, a suburbanized old town, an omnibus, the head of a tramline, a stretch of public common thick with notice-boards, a broad pavement, something-or-other parade, with a row of shops....

London.

VIII. — HOW BEALBY EXPLAINED

§ 1

LORD CHICKNEY was only slightly older than Lord Moggeridge, but he had not worn nearly so well. His hearing was not good, though he would never admit it, and the loss of several teeth greatly affected his articulation. One might generalize and say that neither physically nor mentally do soldiers wear so well as lawyers. The army ages men sooner than the law and philosophy; it exposes them more freely to germs, which undermine and destroy, and it shelters them more completely from thought, which stimulates and preserves. A lawyer must keep his law highly polished and up-to-date or he hears of it within a fortnight, a general never realizes he is out of training and behind the times until disaster is accomplished. Since the magnificent retreat from Bondy-Satina in eighty-seven and his five weeks' defence of Barrowgast (with the subsequent operations) the abilities of Lord Chickney had never been exercised seriously at all. But there was a certain simplicity of manner and a very tall, very drooping, grizzled old-veteran picturesqueness about him that kept him distinguished, he was easy to recognize on public occasions on account of his vast height and his vast blonde-white moustaches, and so he got pointed out when greater men were ignored. The autograph collectors adored him. Every morning he would spend half an hour writing autographs and patriotic sentiments, and the habit was so strong in him that on Sundays, when there was no London post, and autograph writing would have been wrong anyhow, he filled the time in copying out the epistle and gospel for the day. And he liked to be well in the foreground of public affairs — if possible wearing his decorations. After the autographs he would work, sometimes for hours, for various patriotic and morally aggressive societies, and more particularly for those which opposed Socialism in every shape and form and those which sought to deprive working people, and particularly working girls, of the temptations that arise from unassigned leisure. He had a peculiar vague horror of SociaLism which he regarded as a compound of atheism, republicanism, blight,

mildew, measles, and all the worst characteristics of a Continental sabbath.

He wrote and toiled for these societies, but he could not speak for them on account of his teeth. For he had one peculiar weakness; he had faced death in many forms but he had never faced a dentist. The thought of dentists gave him just the same sick horror as the thought of Socialism. But it was a great grief to him that he could not speak his mind.

He was a man of blameless private life, a widower and childless. In later years he had come to believe that he had once been very deeply in love with his cousin Susan, who had married a rather careless husband named Douglas; both she and Douglas were dead now, but he maintained a touching affection for her two lively rather than satisfying sons. He called them his nephews, and by the continuous attrition of affection he had become their recognized uncle. He was glad when they came to him in their scrapes, and he liked to be seen about with them in public places. They regarded him with considerable confidence and respect and an affection that they sometimes blamed themselves for as not quite warm enough for his merits. But there is a kind of injustice about affection.

He was really gratified when he got a wire from the less discreditable of these two bright young relations, saying, “Sorely in need of your advice. Hope to bring difficulties to you to-day at twelve.”

He concluded very naturally that the boy had come to some crisis in his unfortunate entanglement with Madeleine Philips, and he was flattered by the trustfulness that brought the matter to him. He resolved to be delicate but wily, honourable, strictly honourable, but steadily, patiently separative. He paced his spacious study with his usual morning’s work neglected, and rehearsed little sentences in his mind that might be effective in the approaching interview. There would probably be emotion. He would pat the lad on his shoulder and be himself a little emotional. “I understand, my boy,” he would say, “I understand.

“Don’t forget, my boy, that I’ve been a young man too.”

He would be emotional, he would be sympathetic, but also he must be a man of the world. “Sort of thing that won’t do, you know,

my boy; sort of thing that people will not stand.... A soldier's wife has to be a soldier's wife and nothing else.... Your business is to serve the King, not — not some celebrity. Lovely no doubt, I don't deny the charm of her — but on the hoardings, my boy.... Now don't you think — don't you *think*? — there's some nice pure girl somewhere, sweet as violets, new as the dawn, and ready to be *yours*; a girl I mean, a maiden fancy free, not — how shall I put it? — a woman of the world. Wonderful I admit — but seasoned. Public. My dear, dear boy, I knew your mother when she was a girl, a sweet pure girl — a thing of dewy freshness. Ah! Well I remember her! All these years, my boy — Nothing. It's difficult....

Tears stood in his brave old blue eyes as he elaborated such phrases. He went up and down mumbling them through the defective teeth and the long moustache and waving an eloquent hand.

§ 2

When Lord Chickney's thoughts had once started in any direction it was difficult to turn them aside. No doubt that concealed and repudiated deafness helped his natural perplexity of mind. Truth comes to some of us as a still small voice, but Lord Chickney needed shouting and prods. And Douglas did not get to him until he was finishing lunch. Moreover it was the weakness of Captain Douglas to talk in jerky fragments and undertones, rather than clearly and fully in the American fashion. "Tell me all about it, my boy," said Lord Chickney. "Tell me all about it. Don't apologize for your clothes. I understand. Motor bicycle and just come up. But have you had any lunch, Eric?"

"Alan, uncle, — not Eric. My brother is Eric."

"Well, I called him Alan. Tell me all about it. Tell me what has happened. What are you thinking of doing? Just put the position before me. To tell you the truth I've been worrying over this business for some time."

"Didn't know you'd heard of it, uncle. He can't have talked about it already. Anyhow, — you see all the awkwardness of the situation. They say the old chap's a thundering spiteful old devil when he's

roused — and there's no doubt he was roused.... Tremendously...."

Lord Chickney was not listening very attentively. Indeed he was also talking. "Not clear to me there was another man in it," he was saying. "That makes it more complicated, my boy, makes the row acuter. Old fellow, eh? Who?"

They came to a pause at the same moment.

"You speak so indistinctly," complained Lord Chickney. "Who did you say?"

"I thought you understood. Lord Moggeridge."

"Lord! Lord Moggeridge! My dear Boy!

But how?"

"I thought you understood, uncle."

"He doesn't want to marry her! Tut! Never! Why the man must be sixty if he's a day...."

Captain Douglas regarded his distinguished uncle for a moment with distressed eyes. Then he came nearer, raised his voice and spoke more deliberately.

"I don't know whether you quite understand, uncle. I am talking about this affair at Shonts last week-end."

"My dear Boy, there's no need for you to shout. If only you don't mumble and clip your words — and turn head over heels with your ideas. Just tell me about it plainly. Who is Shonts? One of those Liberal peers? I seem to have heard the name...."

"Shonts, uncle, is the house the Laxtons have; you know, — Lucy."

"Little Lucy! I remember her. Curls all down her back. Married the milkman. But how does she come in, Alan? The story's getting complicated. But that's the worst of these infernal affairs, — they always do get complicated. Tangled skeins —

Oh what a tangled web we weave, When first we venture to deceive.

And now, like a sensible man, you want to get out of it."

Captain Douglas was bright pink with the effort to control himself and keep perfectly plain and straightforward. His hair had become like tow and little beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead.

I spent last week-end at Shonts," he said.

Lord Moggeridge, also there, week-ending. Got it into his head

that I was pulling his leg."

"Naturally, my boy, if he goes philandering. At his time of life. What else can he expect?"

"It wasn't philandering."

"Fine distinctions. Fine distinctions. Go on — anyhow."

"He got it into his head that I was playing practical jokes upon him. Confused me with Eric. It led to a rather first-class row. I had to get out of the house. Nothing else to do. He brought all sorts of accusations"

Captain Douglas stopped short. His uncle was no longer attending to him. They had drifted to the window of the study and the General was staring with an excitement and intelligence that grew visibly at the spectacle of Bealby and the trailer outside. For Bealby had been left in the trailer and he was sitting as good as gold waiting for the next step in his vindication from the dark charge of burglary. He was very travel-worn and the trailer was time-worn as well as travel-worn, and both contrasted with the efficient neatness and newness of the motor bicycle in front. The contrast had attracted the attention of a tall policeman who was standing in a state of elucidatory meditation regarding Bealby. Bealby was not regarding the policeman. He had the utmost confidence in Captain Douglas, he felt sure that he would presently be purged of all the horror of that dead old man and of the brief unpremeditated plunge into crime, but still for the present at any rate he did not feel equal to staring a policeman out of countenance....

From the window the policeman very largely obscured Bealby....

Whenever hearts are simple there lurks romance. Age cannot wither nor custom stale her infinite diversity. Suddenly out of your kindly diplomacies, your sane man-of-the-world intentions, leaps the imagination like a rocket, flying from such safe securities bang into the sky. So it happened to the old General. He became deaf to everything but the appearances before him. The world was jewelled with dazzling and delightful possibilities. His face was lit by a glow of genuine romantic excitement. He grasped his nephew's arm. He pointed. His grizzled cheeks flushed.

"That isn't," he asked with something verging upon admiration in his voice and manner, "a Certain Lady in disguise?"

§ 3

It became clear to Captain Douglas that if ever he was to get to Lord Moggeridge that day he must take his uncle firmly in hand. Without even attempting not to appear to shout he cried, “That is a little Boy. That is my Witness. It is Most Important that I should get him to Lord Moggeridge to tell his Story.”

“What story?” cried the old commander pulling at his moustache and still eyeing Bealby suspiciously....

It took exactly half an hour to get Lord Chickney from that inquiry to the telephone and even then he was still far from clear about the matter in hand. Captain Douglas got in most of the facts, but he could not eliminate an idea that it all had to do with Madeleine. Whenever he tried to say clearly that she was entirely outside the question, the General patted his shoulder and looked very wise and kind and said, “My dear Boy, I quite understand; I quite understand. Never mention a lady. No.”

So they started at last rather foggily — so far as things of the mind went, though the sun that day was brilliant — and because of engine trouble in Port Street the General’s hansom reached Little Tenby Street first and he got in a good five minutes preparing the Lord Chancellor tactfully and carefully before the bicycle and its trailer came upon the scene....

§ 4

Candler had been packing that morning with unusual solicitude for a week- end at Tulliver Abbey. His master had returned from the catastrophe of Shonts, fatigued, visibly aged and extraordinarily cross, and Candler looked to Tulliver Abbey to restore him to his former self. Nothing must be forgotten; there must be no little hitches, everything from first to last must go on oiled wheels, or it was clear his lordship might develop a desperate hostility to these excursions, excursions which Candler found singularly refreshing

and entertaining during the stresses of the session. Tulliver Abbey was as good a house as Shonts was bad; Lady Checksammington ruled with the softness of velvet and the strength of steel over a household of admirably efficient domestics, and there would be the best of people there, Mr. Evesham perhaps, the Loopers, Lady Privet, Andreas Doria and Mr. Pernambuco, great silken mellow personages and diamond-like individualities, amidst whom Lord Moggeridge's mind would be restfully active and his comfort quite secure. And as far as possible Candler wanted to get the books and papers his master needed into the trunk or the small valise. That habit of catching up everything at the last moment and putting it under his arm and the consequent need for alert picking up, meant friction and nervous wear and tear for both master and man.

Lord Moggeridge rose at half-past ten — he had been kept late overnight by a heated discussion at the Aristotelian — and breakfasted lightly upon a chop and coffee. Then something ruffled him; something that came with the letters. Candler could not quite make out what it was but he suspected another pamphlet by Dr. Schiller. It could not be the chop because Lord Moggeridge was always wonderfully successful with chops. Candler looked through the envelopes and letters afterwards and found nothing diagnostic, and then he observed a copy of Mind torn across and lying in the waste-paper basket.

"When I went out of the room," said Candler discreetly examining this. "Very likely it's that there Schiller after all."

But in this Candler was mistaken. What had disturbed the Lord Chancellor was a coarsely disrespectful article on the Absolute by a Cambridge Rhodes scholar written in that flighty facetious strain that spreads now like a pestilence over modern philosophical discussion. "Does the Absolute, on Lord Moggeridge's own showing, mean anything more than an eloquent oiliness uniformly distributed through space?" and so on.

Pretty bad!

Lord Moggeridge early in life had deliberately acquired a quite exceptional power of mental self-control. He took his perturbed mind now and threw it forcibly into the consideration of a case upon which he had reserved judgment. He was to catch the 3.35 at Paddington,

and at two he was smoking a cigar after a temperate lunch and reading over the notes of this judgment. It was then that the telephone bell became audible, and Candler came in to inform him that Lord Chickney was anxious to see him at once upon a matter of some slight importance.

"Slight importance?" asked Lord Moggeridge.

"Some slight importance, my lord."

"Some? Slight?"

"'Is lordship, my lord, mumbles rather now 'is back teeth 'ave gone," said Candler, "but so I understand 'im."

"These apologetic assertive phrases annoy me, Candler," said Lord Moggeridge over his shoulder. "You see," he turned round and spoke very clearly, "either the matter is of importance or it is not of importance. A thing must either be or not be. I wish you would manage — when you get messages on the telephone... But I suppose that is asking too much.... Will you explain to him, Candler, when we start, and — ask him, Candler — ask him what sort of matter it is."

Candler returned after some parleying.

"So far as I can make 'is lordship out, my lord, 'e says 'e wants to set you right about something, my lord. He says something about a little misapprehension."

"These diminutives, Candler, kill sense. Does he say what sort — what sort — of little misapprehension?"

"He says something — I'm sorry, my lord, but it's about Shonts, my lord."

"Then I don't want to hear about it," said Lord Moggeridge.

There was a pause. The Lord Chancellor resumed his reading with a deliberate obviousness; the butler hovered.

"I'm sorry, my lord, but I can't think exactly what I ought to say to 'is lordship, my lord."

"Tell him — tell him that I do not wish to hear anything more about Shonts for ever. Simply."

Candler hesitated and went out, shutting the door carefully lest any fragment of his halting rendering of this message to Lord Chickney should reach his master's ears.

Lord Moggeridge's powers of mental control

were, I say, very great He could dismiss

subjects from his mind absolutely. In a few instants he had completely forgotten Shonts and was making notes with a silver-cased pencil on the margins of his draft judgment.

§ 5

He became aware that Candler had returned.

"'Is lordship, Lord Chickney, my lord, is very persistent, my lord. 'E's rung up twice. 'E says now that 'e makes a personal matter of it. Come what may, 'e says, 'e wishes to speak for two minutes to your lordship. Over the telephone, my lord, 'e vouchsafes no further information."

Lord Moggeridge meditated over the end of his third after-lunch cigar. His man watched the end of his left eyebrow as an engineer might watch a steam gauge. There were no signs of an explosion. "He must come, Candler," his lordship said at last....

"Oh, Candler!"

"My lord?"

"Put the bags and things in a conspicuous position in the hall, Candler. Change yourself, and see that you look thoroughly like trains. And in fact have everything ready, prominently ready, Candler."

Then once more Lord Moggeridge concentrated his mind.

§ 6

To him there presently entered Lord Chickney.

Lord Chickney had been twice round the world and he had seen many strange and dusky peoples and many remarkable customs and peculiar prejudices, which he had never failed to despise, but he had never completely shaken off the county family ideas in which he had been brought up. He believed that there was an incurable difference in spirit between quite good people like himself and men from down below like Moggeridge, who was the son of an Exeter chorister. He believed that these men from nowhere always cherished the

profoundest respect for the real thing like himself, that they were greedy for association and gratified by notice, and so for the life of him he could not approach Lord Moggeridge without a faint sense of condescension. He saluted him as “my dear Lord Moggeridge,” wrung his hand with effusion, and asked him kind, almost district-visiting questions about his younger brother and the aspect of his house. “And you are just off, I see, for a weekend.”

These amenities the Lord Chancellor acknowledged by faint gruntings and an almost imperceptible movement of his eyebrows. “There was a matter,” he said, “some little matter, on which you want to consult me?”

“Well,” said Lord Chickney and rubbed his chin. “Yes. Yes, there was a little matter, a little trouble”

“Of an urgent nature.”

“Yes. Yes. Exactly. Just a little complicated, you know, not quite simple.” The dear old soldier’s manner became almost seductive. “One of these difficult little affairs, where one has to remember that one is a man of the world, you know. A little complication about a lady, known to you both. But one must make concessions, one must understand. The boy has a witness. Things are not as you supposed them to be.”

Lord Moggeridge had a clean conscience about ladies; he drew out his watch and looked at it — aggressively. He kept it in his hand during his subsequent remarks.

“I must confess,” he declared, “I have not the remotest idea.... If you will be so good as to be — elementary. What is it all about?”

“You see I knew the lad’s mother,” said

Lord Chickney. “In fact “ He became

insanely confidential—” Under happier circumstances — don’t misunderstand me, Moggeridge; I mean no evil — but he might have been my son. I feel for him like a son....”

§ 7

When presently Captain Douglas, a little heated from his engine trouble, came into the room — he had left Bealby with Candler in the

hall — it was instantly manifest to him that the work of preparation had been inadequately performed.

"One minute more, my dear Alan," cried Lord Chickney.

Lord Moggeridge with eyebrows waving and watch in hand was of a different opinion. He addressed himself to Captain Douglas.

"There isn't a minute more," he said. "What is all this — this philoprogenitive rigmarole about? Why have you come to me? My cab is outside now. All this about ladies and witnesses; — what is it?"

"Perfectly simple, my lord! You imagine that I played practical jokes upon you at Shonts. I didn't. I have a witness. The attack upon you downstairs, the noise in your room"

"Have I any guarantee?"

"It's the steward's boy from Shonts. Your man outside knows him. Saw him in the steward's room. He made the trouble for you — and me, and then he ran away. Just caught him. Not exchanged thirty words with him. Half a dozen questions. Settle everything.

Then you'll know — nothing for you but the utmost respect."

Lord Moggeridge pressed his lips together and resisted conviction.

"In consideration," interpolated Lord Chickney, "feelings of an old fellow. Old soldier. Boy means no harm."

With the rudeness of one sorely tried the Lord Chancellor thrust the General aside. "Oh I " he said, "Oh!" and then to Captain Douglas. "One minute. Where's your witness?..."

The Captain opened a door. Bealby found himself bundled into the presence of two celebrated men.

"Tell him," said Captain Douglas. "And look sharp about it."

"Tell me plainly," cried the Lord Chancellor. "And be — quick."

He put such a point on " quick " that it made Bealby jump.

"Tell him," said the General more gently. "Don't be afraid."

"Well," began Bealby after one accumulating pause, "it was 'im told me to do it. 'E said you go in there"

The Captain would have interrupted but the Lord Chancellor restrained him by a magnificent gesture of the hand holding the watch.

"He told you to do it!" he said. "I knew he did. Now listen! He

told you practically to go in and do anything you could."

"Yessir." Woe took possession of Bealby. "I didn't do any 'arm to the ole gentleman."

"But who told you?" cried the Captain. "Who told you?"

Lord Moggeridge annihilated him with arm and eyebrows. He held Bealby fascinated by a pointing finger.

"Don't do more than answer the questions. I have thirty seconds more. He told you to go in. He made you go in. At the earliest possible opportunity you got away?"

"I jest nipped out"

"Enough! And now, sir, how dare you come here without even a plausible lie? How dare you after your intolerable tomfoolery at Shonts confront me again with fresh tomfoolery? How dare you drag in your gallant and venerable uncle in this last preposterous — I suppose you would call it — lark! I suppose you had prepared that little wretch with some fine story. Little you know of False Witness! At the first question, he breaks down! He does not even begin his lie. He at least knows the difference between my standards and yours. Candler! Candler!"

Candler appeared.

"These — these gentlemen are going. Is everything ready?"

"The cab is at the door, m'lord. The usual cab."

Captain Douglas made one last desperate effort. "Sir!" he said. "My lord"

The Lord Chancellor turned upon him with a face that he sought to keep calm, though the eyebrows waved and streamed like black smoke in a gale. "Captain Douglas," he said, "you are probably not aware of the demands upon the time and patience of a public servant in such a position as mine. You see the world no doubt as a vastly entertaining fabric upon which you can embroider your — your facetious arrangements. Well, it is not so. It is real. It is earnest. You may sneer at the simplicity of an old man, but what I tell you of life is true. Comic effect is not, believe me, its goal. And you, sir, you, sir, you impress me as an intolerably foolish, flippant and unnecessary young man. Flippant. Unnecessary. Foolish."

As he said these words Candler approached him with a dust coat of a peculiar fineness and dignity, and he uttered the last words over

his protruded chest while Candler assisted his arms into his sleeves.

"My lord," said Captain Douglas again, but his resolution was deserting him.

"No," said the Lord Chancellor, leaning forward in a minatory manner while Candler pulled down the tail of his jacket and adjusted the collar of his overcoat.

"Uncle," said Captain Douglas.

"No," said the General, with the curt decision of a soldier and turned exactly ninety degrees away from him. "You little know how you have hurt me, Alan! You little know. I couldn't have imagined it. The Douglas strain! False Witness — and insult. I am sorry, my dear Moggeridge, beyond measure."

"I quite understand — you are as much a victim as myself. Quite. A more foolish attempt I am sorry to be in this hurry"

"Oh! You damned little fool," said the Captain and advanced a step towards the perplexed and shrinking Bealby. "You imbecile little trickster! What do you mean by it?"

"I didn't mean anything!"

Then suddenly the thought of Madeleine, sweet and overpowering, came into the head of this distraught young man. He had risked losing her, he had slighted and insulted her and here he was — entangled. Here he was in a position of nearly inconceivable foolishness, about to assault a dirty and silly little boy in the presence of the Lord Chancellor and Uncle Chickney. The world, he felt, was lost, and not well lost. And she was lost too. Even now while he pursued these follies she might be consoling her wounded pride....

He perceived that love is the supreme thing in life. He perceived that he who divides his purposes scatters his life to the four winds of heaven. A vehement resolve to cut the whole of this Bealby business pounced upon him. In that moment he ceased to care for reputation, for appearances, for the resentment of Lord Moggeridge or the good intentions of Uncle Chickney.

He turned, he rushed out of the room. He escaped by unparalleled gymnastics the worst consequence? of an encounter with the Lord Chancellor's bag which the under-butler had placed rather tactlessly between the doors, crossed the wide and dignified hall, and in another moment had his engine going and was struggling to mount

his machine in the street without. His face expressed an almost apoplectic concentration. He narrowly missed the noses of a pair of horses in the carriage of Lady Beach Mandarin, made an extraordinary curve to spare a fishmonger's tricycle, shaved the front and completely destroyed the gesture of that eminent actor manager, Mr. Pomegranate, who was crossing the road in his usual inadvertent fashion, and then he was popping and throbbing and banging round the corner and on his way back to the lovely and irresistible woman who was exerting so disastrous an influence upon his career

§ 8

The Captain fled from London in the utmost fury and to the general danger of the public. His heart was full of wicked blasphemies, shoutings and self- reproaches, but outwardly he seemed only pinkly intent. And as he crossed an open breezy common and passed by a milestone bearing this inscription, "To London Thirteen Miles," his hind tyre burst conclusively with a massive report....

§ 9

In every life there are crucial moments, turning points, and not infrequently it is just such a thing as this, a report, a sudden waking in the night, a flash upon the road to Damascus that marks and precipitates the accumulating new. Vehemence is not concentration. The headlong violence of the Captain had been no expression of a single-minded purpose, of a soul all gathered together to an end. Far less a pursuit had it been than a flight, a flight from his own dissensions. And now — now he was held.

After he had attempted a few plausible repairs and found the tyre obdurate, after he had addressed ill-chosen remonstrances to some unnamed hearer, after he had walked some way along the road and back in an indecision about repair shops in some neighbouring town, the last dregs of his resistance were spent. He perceived that he was in the presence of a Lesson. He sat down by the roadside some

twenty feet from the disabled motor bicycle, and, impotent for further effort, frankly admitted himself overtaken. He had not reckoned with punctures.

The pursuing questions came clambering upon him and would no longer be denied: who he was and what he was and how he was, and the meaning of this Rare Bate he had been in, and all those deep questions that are so systematically neglected in the haste and excitement of modern life.

In short, for the first time in many headlong days he asked himself simply and plainly what he thought he was up to?

Certain things became clear, and so minutely and exactly clear that it was incredible that they had ever for a moment been obscure. Of course Bealby had been a perfectly honest little boy, under some sort of misconception, and of course he ought to have been carefully coached and prepared and rehearsed before he was put before the Lord Chancellor. This was so manifest now that the Captain stared aghast at his own inconceivable negligence. But the mischief was done. Nothing now would ever propitiate Moggeridge, nothing now would ever reconcile Uncle Chickney. That was — settled. But what was not settled was the amazing disorder of his own mind. Why had he been so negligent, what had come over his mind in the last few weeks?

And this sudden strange illumination of the Captain's mind went so far as perceiving that the really important concern for him was not the accidents of Shonts but this epilepsy of his own will. Why now was he rushing back to Madeleine? Why? He did not love her. He knew he did not love her. On the whole, more than anything else he resented her.

But he was excited about her, he was so excited that these other muddles, fluctuations, follies, came as a natural consequence from that. Out of this excitement came those wild floods of angry energy that made him career about —

"Like some damned Cracker," said the Captain.

"For instance," he asked himself, "*now*! what am I going for?"

"If I go back she'll probably behave like an offended Queen. Doesn't seem to understand anything that does not focus on herself. Wants a sort of Limelight Lover....

She relies upon exciting me!

She relies upon exciting everyone! — she's just a woman specialized for excitement."

And after meditating through a profound minute upon this judgment, the Captain pronounced these two epoch-making words: *"I won't!"*

§ 10

The Captain's mind was now in a state of almost violent lucidity.

"This sex stuff," he said, "first I kept it under too tight and now I've let it rip too loose.

"I've been just a distracted fool, with my head swimming with meetings and embraces and — frills."

He produced some long impending generalizations.

"Not a man's work, this Lover business. Dancing about in a world of petticoats and powder puffs and attentions and jealousies. Rotten game.... Played off against some other man....

"I'll be hanged if I am.... Have to put women in their places.... Make a hash of everything if we don't...."

Then for a time the Captain meditated in silence and chewed his knuckle. His face darkened to a scowl. He swore as though some thought twisted and tormented him. "Let some other man get her! Think of her with some other man.

"I don't care," he said, when obviously he did. "There's other women in the world.

"A man — a man mustn't care for that....

"It's this or that," said the Captain, "anyhow...."

§ 11

Suddenly the Captain's mind was made up and done.

He arose to his feet and his face was firm and tranquil and now nearer pallor than pink. He left his bicycle and trailer by the wayside even as Christian left his burden. He asked a passing nurse-girl the

way to the nearest railway station and thither he went. Incidentally and because the opportunity offered he called in upon a cyclist's repair shop and committed his abandoned machinery to its keeping. He went straight to London, changed at his flat, dined at his club and caught the night train for France — for France and whatever was left of the grand manoeuvres.

He wrote a letter to Madeleine from the Est train next day, using their customary endearments, avoiding any discussion of their relations and describing the scenery of the Seine valley and the characteristics of Rouen in a few vivid and masterly phrases.

"If she's worth having she'll understand," said the Captain, but he knew perfectly well she would not understand.

Mrs. Geedge noted this letter among the others, and afterwards she was much exercised by Madeleine's behaviour. For suddenly that lady became extraordinarily gay and joyous in her bearing, singing snatches of song and bubbling over with suggestions for larks and picnics and wild excursions. She patted Mr. Geedge on the shoulder and ran her arm through the arm of Professor Bowles. Both gentlemen received these familiarities with a gawky coyness that Mrs. Geedge found contemptible. And moreover Madeleine drew several shy strangers into their circle. She invited the management to a happy participation.

Her great idea was a moonlight picnic. "We'll have a great camp-fire and afterwards we'll dance — this very night."

"But wouldn't it be better to-morrow?"

"To-night!"

"To-morrow perhaps Captain Douglas may be back again. And he's so good at all these things."

Mrs. Geedge knew better because she had seen the French stamp on the letter, but she meant to get to the bottom of this business, and thus it was she said this.

"I've sent him back to his soldiering," said Madeleine serenely. "He has better things to do."

For some moments after the unceremonious departure of Captain Douglas from the presence of Lord Moggeridge, it did not occur to anyone, it did not occur even to Bealby, that the Captain had left his witness behind him. The General and the Lord Chancellor moved into the hall, and Bealby, under the sway of a swift compelling gesture from Candler, followed modestly. The same current swept them all out into the portico, and while the under-butler whistled up a hansom for the General, the Lord Chancellor with a dignity that was at once polite and rapid, and with Candler gravely protective and a little reproving, departed. Bealby, slowly apprehending their desertion, regarded the world of London with perplexity and dismay. Candler had gone. The last of the gentlemen was going. The under-butler, Bealby felt, was no friend. Under-butlers never are.

Lord Chickney in the very act of entering his cab had his coat-tail tugged. He looked inquiringly.

"Please, sir, there's me," said Bealby.

Lord Chickney reflected. "Well?" he said.

The spirit of Bealby was now greatly abased. His face and voice betrayed him on the verge of tears. "I want to go 'ome to Shonts, sir."

Well, my boy, go 'ome — go home I mean to Shonts."

"'E's gone, sir," said Bealby....

Lord Chickney was a good-hearted man, and he knew that a certain public kindliness and disregard of appearances, looks far better and is infinitely more popular than a punctilious dignity. He took Bealby to Waterloo in his hansom, got him a third-class ticket to Chelsome, tipped a porter to see him safely into his train and dismissed him in the most fatherly manner.

§ 13

It was well after tea-time, Bealby felt, as he came once more within the boundaries of the Shonts estate.

It was a wiser and a graver Bealby who returned from this week of miscellaneous adventure. He did not clearly understand all that had happened to him; in particular he was puzzled by the extreme

annoyance and sudden departure of Captain Douglas from the presence of Lord Moggeridge; but his general impression s was that he had been in great peril of dire (punishment and that he had been rather hastily and ignominiously reprieved. The nice old gentleman with the long grey moustaches had dismissed him to the train at last with a quality of benediction. But Bealby understood now better than he had done before that adventures do not always turn out well for the boy hero, and that the social system has a number of dangerous and disagreeable holes at the bottom. He had reached the beginnings of wisdom. He was glad he had got away from the tramp and still gladder that he had got away from Crayminster; he was sorry that he would never see the beautiful lady again, and perplexed and perplexed. And also he was interested in the probability of his mother having toast for tea....

It must, he felt, be a long time after tea-time, — quite late....

He had weighed the advisability of returning quietly to his windowless bedroom under the stairs, putting on his little green apron and emerging with a dutiful sang-froid as if nothing had happened, on the one hand, or of going to the gardens on the other. But tea — with eatables — seemed more probable at the gardens....

He was deflected from the direct route across the park by a long deep trench, that someone had made and abandoned since the previous Sunday morning. He wondered what it was for. It was certainly very ugly. And as he came out by the trees and got the full effect of the facade, he detected a strangely bandaged quality about Shonts. It was as if Shonts had recently been in a fight and got a black eye. Then he saw the reason for this; one tower was swathed in scaffolding. He wondered what could have happened to the tower. Then his own troubles resumed their sway.

He was so fortunate as not to meet his father in the gardens, and he entered the house so meekly that his mother did not look up from the cashmere she was sewing. She was sitting at the table sewing some newly dyed black cashmere.

He was astonished at her extreme pallor and the drooping resignation of her pose.

“Mother!” he said and she looked up convulsively and stared, stared with bright round astonished eyes.

“I’m sorry, mother, I ‘aven’t been quite a good steward’s-room boy, mother. If I could ‘ave another go, mother....”

He halted for a moment, astonished that she said nothing, but only sat with that strange expression and opened and shut her mouth.

“Reely — I’d *try*, mother....”

THE END

BOON

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INTRODUCTION

Whenever a publisher gets a book by one author he wants an Introduction written to it by another, and Mr. Fisher Unwin is no exception to the rule. Nobody reads Introductions, they serve no useful purpose, and they give no pleasure, but they appeal to the business mind, I think, because as a rule they cost nothing. At any rate, by the pressure of a certain inseparable intimacy between Mr. Reginald Bliss and myself, this Introduction has been extracted from me. I will confess that I have not read his book through, though I have a kind of first-hand knowledge of its contents, and that it seems to me an indiscreet, ill-advised book….

I have a very strong suspicion that this Introduction idea is designed to entangle me in the responsibility for the book. In America, at any rate, "The Life of George Meek, Bath Chairman," was ascribed to me upon no better evidence. Yet any one who likes may go to Eastbourne and find Meek with chair and all complete. But in view of the complications of the book market and the large simplicities of the public mind, I do hope that the reader — and by that I mean the reviewer — will be able to see the reasonableness and the necessity of distinguishing between me and Mr. Reginald Bliss. I do not wish to escape the penalties of thus participating in, and endorsing, his manifest breaches of good taste, literary decorum, and friendly obligation, but as a writer whose reputation is already too crowded and confused and who is for the ordinary purposes of every day known mainly as a novelist, I should be glad if I could escape the public identification I am now repudiating. Bliss is Bliss and Wells is Wells. And Bliss can write all sorts of things that Wells could not do.

This Introduction has really no more to say than that.

H. G. WELLS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST The Back of Miss Bathwick and George Boon

§ 1

It is quite probable that the reader does not know of the death of George Boon, and that "remains" before his name upon the title-page will be greeted with a certain astonishment. In the ordinary course of things, before the explosion of the war, the death of George Boon would have been an event — oh! a three-quarters of a column or more in the *Times* event, and articles in the monthlies and reminiscences. As it is, he is not so much dead as missing. Something happened at the eleventh hour — I think it was chiefly the Admiralty report of the fight off the Falkland Islands — that blew his obituary notices clean out of the papers. And yet he was one of our most popular writers, and in America I am told he was in the "hundred thousand class." But now we think only of Lord Kitchener's hundred thousands.

It is no good pretending about it. The war has ended all that. Boon died with his age. After the war there will be a new sort of book-trade and a crop of new writers and a fresh tone, and everything will be different. This is an obituary, of more than George Boon…. I regard the outlook with profound dismay. I try to keep my mind off it by drilling with the Shrewsbury last line of volunteers and training down the excrescences of my physical style. When the war is over will be time enough to consider the prospects of a superannuated man of letters. We National Volunteers are now no mere soldiers on paper; we have fairly washable badges by way of uniform; we have bought ourselves dummy rifles; we have persuaded the War Office to give us a reluctant recognition on the distinct understanding that we have neither officers nor authority. In the event of an invasion, I understand, we are to mobilize and … do quite a number of useful things. But until there is an invasion in actual progress, nothing is to be decided more precisely than what this whiff of printer's shrapnel, these four full stops, conveys….

§ 2

I must confess I was monstrously disappointed when at last I could get my hands into those barrels in the attic in which Boon had stored his secret writings. There was more perhaps than I had expected; I do not complain of the quantity, but of the disorder, the incompleteness, the want of discipline and forethought.

Boon had talked so often and so convincingly of these secret books he was writing, he had alluded so frequently to this or that great project, he would begin so airily with "In the seventeenth chapter of my 'Wild Asses of the Devil,'" or "I have been recasting the third part of our 'Mind of the Race,'" that it came as an enormous shock to me to find there was no seventeenth chapter; there was not even a completed first chapter to the former work, and as for the latter, there seems nothing really finished or settled at all beyond the fragments I am now issuing, except a series of sketches of Lord Rosebery, for the most part in a toga and a wreath, engaged in a lettered retirement at his villa at Epsom, and labelled "Patrician Dignity, the Last Phase" — sketches I suppress as of no present interest — and a complete gallery of imaginary portraits (with several duplicates) of the Academic Committee that has done so much for British literature (the Polignac prize, for example, and Sir Henry Newbolt's professorship) in the last four or five years. So incredulous was I that this was all, that I pushed my inquiries from their original field in the attic into other parts of the house, pushed them, indeed, to the very verge of ransacking, and in that I greatly deepened the want of sympathy already separating me from Mrs. Boon. But I was stung by a thwarted sense of duty, and quite resolved that no ill-advised interference should stand between me and the publication of what Boon has always represented to me as the most intimate productions of his mind.

Yet now the first rush of executorial emotion is over I can begin to doubt about Boon's intention in making me his "literary executor." Did he, after all, intend these pencilled scraps, these marginal caricatures, and — what seems to me most objectionable — annotated letters from harmless prominent people for publication? Or was his selection of me his last effort to prolong what was, I think, if

one of the slightest, one also of the most sustained interests of his life, and that was a prolonged faint jeering at my expense? Because always — it was never hidden from me — in his most earnest moments Boon jeered at me. I do not know why he jeered at me, it was always rather pointless jeering and far below his usual level, but jeer he did. Even while we talked most earnestly and brewed our most intoxicating draughts of project and conviction, there was always this scarce perceptible blossom and flavour of ridicule floating like a drowning sprig of blue borage in the cup. His was indeed essentially one of those suspended minds that float above the will and action; when at last reality could be evaded no longer it killed him; he never really believed nor felt the urgent need that goads my more accurate nature to believe and do. Always when I think of us together, I feel that I am on my legs and that he sits about. And yet he could tell me things I sought to know, prove what I sought to believe, shape beliefs to a conviction in me that I alone could never attain.

He took life as it came, let his fancy play upon it, selected, elucidated, ignored, threw the result in jest or observation or elaborate mystification at us, and would have no more of it…. He would be earnest for a time and then break away. "The Last Trump" is quite typical of the way in which he would turn upon himself. It sets out so straight for magnificence; it breaks off so abominably. You will read it.

Yet he took things more seriously than he seemed to do.

This war, I repeat, killed him. He could not escape it. It bore him down. He did his best to disregard it. But its worst stresses caught him in the climax of a struggle with a fit of pneumonia brought on by a freak of bathing by moonlight — in an English October, a thing he did to distract his mind from the tension after the Marne — and it destroyed him. The last news they told him was that the Germans had made their "shoot and scuttle" raid upon Whitby and Scarborough. There was much circumstantial description in the morning's paper. They had smashed up a number of houses and killed some hundreds of people, chiefly women and children. Ten little children had been killed or mutilated in a bunch on their way to school, two old ladies at a boarding-house had had their legs

smashed, and so on.

"Take this newspaper," he said, and held it out to his nurse. "Take it," he repeated irritably, and shook it at her.

He stared at it as it receded. Then he seemed to be staring at distant things.

"Wild Asses of the Devil," he said at last. "Oh! Wild Asses of the Devil! I thought somehow it was a joke. It wasn't a joke. There they are, and the world is theirs."

And he turned his face to the wall and never spoke again.

§ 3

But before I go on it is necessary to explain that the George Boon I speak of is not exactly the same person as the George Boon, the Great Writer, whose fame has reached to every bookshop in the world. The same bodily presence perhaps they had, but that is all. Except when he chose to allude to them, those great works on which that great fame rests, those books and plays of his that have made him a household word in half a dozen continents, those books with their style as perfect and obvious as the gloss upon a new silk hat, with their flat narrative trajectory that nothing could turn aside, their unsubdued and apparently unsubduable healthy note, their unavoidable humour, and their robust pathos, never came between us. We talked perpetually of literature and creative projects, but never of that "output" of his. We talked as men must talk who talk at all, with an untrammelled freedom; now we were sublime and now curious, now we pursued subtleties and now we were utterly trivial, but always it was in an undisciplined, irregular style quite unsuitable for publication. That, indeed, was the whole effect of the George Boon I am now trying to convey, that he was indeed essentially not for publication. And this effect was in no degree diminished by the fact that the photograph of his beautiful castellated house, and of that extraordinarily irrelevant person Mrs. Boon — for I must speak my mind of her — and of her two dogs (Binkie and Chum), whom he detested, were, so to speak, the poulet and salade in the menu of every illustrated magazine.

The fact of it is he was one of those people who will *not* photograph; so much of him was movement, gesture, expression, atmosphere, and colour, and so little of him was form. His was the exact converse of that semi-mineral physical quality that men call handsome, and now that his career has come to its sad truncation I see no reason why I should further conceal the secret of the clear, emphatic, solid impression he made upon all who had not met him. It was, indeed, a very simple secret; —

He never wrote anything for his public with his own hand.

He did this of set intention. He distrusted a certain freakishness of his finger-tips that he thought might have injured him with his multitudinous master. He knew his holograph manuscript would certainly get him into trouble. He employed a lady, the lady who figures in his will, Miss Bathwick, as his amanuensis. In Miss Bathwick was all his security. She was a large, cool, fresh-coloured, permanently young lady, full of serious enthusiasms; she had been faultlessly educated in a girls' high school of a not too modern type, and she regarded Boon with an invincible respect. She wrote down his sentences (spelling without blemish in all the European languages) as they came from his lips, with the aid of a bright, efficient, new-looking typewriter. If he used a rare word or a whimsical construction, she would say, "I beg your pardon, Mr. Boon," and he would at once correct it; and if by any lapse of an always rather too nimble imagination he carried his thoughts into regions outside the tastes and interests of that enormous *ante-bellum* public it was his fortune to please, then, according to the nature of his divagation, she would either cough or sigh or — in certain eventualities — get up and leave the room.

By this ingenious device — if one may be permitted to use the expression for so pleasant and trustworthy an assistant — he did to a large extent free himself from the haunting dread of losing his public by some eccentricity of behaviour, some quirk of thought or fluctuation of "attitude" that has pursued him ever since the great success of "Captain Clayball," a book he wrote to poke fun at the crude imaginings of a particularly stupid schoolboy he liked, had put him into the forefront of our literary world.

He had a peculiar, and, I think, a groundless terror of the public of the United States of America, from which country he derived the larger moiety of his income. In spite of our remonstrances, he subscribed to the New York *Nation* to the very end, and he insisted, in spite of fact, reason, and my earnest entreaties (having regard to the future unification of the English-speaking race), in figuring that continental empire as a vain, garrulous, and prosperous female of uncertain age, and still more uncertain temper, with unfounded pretensions to intellectuality and an ideal of refinement of the most negative description, entirely on the strength of that one sample. One might as well judge England by the *Spectator*. My protests seemed only to intensify his zest in his personification of Columbia as the Aunt Errant of Christendom, as a wild, sentimental, and advanced maiden lady of inconceivable courage and enterprise, whom everything might offend and nothing cow. "I know," he used to say, "something will be said or done and she'll have hysterics; the temptation to smuggle something through Miss Bathwick's back is getting almost too much for me. I *could*, you know. Or some one will come along with something a little harder and purer and emptier and more emphatically handsome than I can hope to do. I shall lose her one of these days…. How can I hope to keep for ever that proud and fickle heart?"

And then I remember he suddenly went off at a tangent to sketch out a great novel he was to call "Aunt Columbia." "No," he said, "they would suspect that— 'Aunt Dove.'" She was to be a lady of great, unpremeditated wealth, living on a vast estate near a rather crowded and troublesome village. Everything she did and said affected the village enormously. She took the people's children into her employment; they lived on her surplus vegetables. She was to have a particularly troublesome and dishonest household of servants and a spoiled nephew called Teddy. And whenever she felt dull or energetic she drove down into the village and lectured and blamed the villagers — for being overcrowded, for being quarrelsome, for being poor and numerous, for not, in fact, being spinster ladies of enormous good fortune…. That was only the beginning of one of

those vast schemes of his that have left no trace now in all the collection.

His fear of shocking America was, I think, unfounded; at any rate, he succeeded in the necessary suppressions every time, and until the day of his death it was rare for the American press-cuttings that were removed in basketfuls almost daily with the other debris of his breakfast-table to speak of him in anything but quasi-amorous tones. He died for them the most spiritual as well as the most intellectual of men; "not simply intellectual, but lovable." They spoke of his pensive eyes, though, indeed, when he was not glaring at a camera they were as pensive as champagne, and when the robust pathos bumped against the unavoidable humour as they were swept along the narrow torrent of his story they said with all the pleasure of an apt quotation that indeed in his wonderful heart laughter mingled with tears.

§ 5

I think George Boon did on the whole enjoy the remarkable setting of his philosophical detachment very keenly; the monstrous fame of him that rolled about the world, that set out east and came back circumferentially from the west and beat again upon his doors. He laughed irresponsibly, spent the resulting money with an intelligent generosity, and talked of other things. "It is the quality of life," he said, and "The people love to have it so."

I seem to see him still, hurrying but not dismayed, in flight from the camera of an intrusive admirer — an admirer not so much of him as of his popularity — up one of his garden walks towards his agreeable study. I recall his round, enigmatical face, an affair of rosy rotundities, his very bright, active eyes, his queer, wiry, black hair that went out to every point in the heavens, his ankles and neck and wrists all protruding from his garments in their own peculiar way, protruding a little more in the stress of flight. I recall, too, his general effect of careless and, on the whole, commendable dirtiness, accentuated rather than corrected by the vivid tie of soft orange-coloured silk he invariably wore, and how his light paces danced

along the turf. (He affected in his private dominions trousers of faint drab corduroy that were always too short, braced up with vehement tightness, and displaying claret-coloured socks above his easy, square-toed shoes.) And I know that even that lumbering camera coming clumsily to its tripod ambush neither disgusted nor vulgarized him. He liked his game; he liked his success and the opulent stateliness it gave to the absurdities of Mrs. Boon and all the circumstances of his profoundly philosophical existence; and he liked it all none the worse because it was indeed nothing of himself at all, because he in his essence was to dull intelligences and commonplace minds a man invisible, a man who left no impression upon the camera-plate or moved by a hair's breadth the scale of a materialist balance.

§ 6

But I will confess the state of the remains did surprise and disappoint me.

His story of great literary enterprises, holograph and conducted in the profoundest secrecy, tallied so completely with, for example, certain reservations, withdrawals that took him out of one's company and gave him his evident best companionship, as it were, when he was alone. It was so entirely like him to concoct lengthy books away from his neatly ordered study, from the wise limitations of Miss Bathwick's significant cough and her still more significant back, that we all, I think, believed in these unseen volumes unquestioningly. While those fine romances, those large, bright plays, were being conceived in a publicity about as scandalous as a royal gestation, publicly planned and announced, developed, written, boomed, applauded, there was, we knew, this undercurrent of imaginative activity going on, concealed from Miss Bathwick's guardian knowledge, withdrawn from the stately rhythm of her keys. What more natural than to believe he was also writing it down?

Alas! I found nothing but fragments. The work upon which his present fame is founded was methodical, punctual and careful, and it progressed with a sort of inevitable precision from beginning to end,

and so on to another beginning. Not only in tone and spirit but in length (that most important consideration) he was absolutely trustworthy; his hundred thousand words of good, healthy, straightforward story came out in five months with a precision almost astronomical. In that sense he took his public very seriously. To have missed his morning's exercises behind Miss Bathwick's back would have seemed to him the most immoral — nay, worse, the most uncivil of proceedings.

"She wouldn't understand it," he would say, and sigh and go.

But these scraps and fragments are of an irregularity diametrically contrasting with this. They seem to have been begun upon impulse at any time, and abandoned with an equal impulsiveness, and they are written upon stationery of a variety and nature that alone would condemn them in the eyes of an alienist. The handwriting is always atrocious and frequently illegible, the spelling is strange, and sometimes indecently bad, the punctuation is sporadic, and many of the fragments would be at once put out of court as modern literature by the fact that they are written in pencil on *both sides of the paper!* Such of the beginnings as achieve a qualified completeness are of impossible lengths; the longest is a piece — allowing for gaps — of fourteen thousand words, and another a fragment shaping at about eleven. These are, of course, quite impossible sizes, neither essay nor short story nor novel, and no editor or publisher would venture to annoy the public with writings of so bizarre a dimension. In addition there are fragments of verse. But I look in vain for anything beyond the first chapter of that tremendous serial, "The Wild Asses of the Devil," that kept on day by day through June and July to the very outbreak of the war, and only a first chapter and a few illustrations and memoranda and fragments for our "Mind of the Race," that went on intermittently for several years. Whole volumes of that great hotchpotch of criticism are lost in the sandbanks of my treacherous memory for ever.

Much of the matter, including a small MS. volume of those brief verses called Limericks (personal always, generally actionable, and frequently lacking in refinement), I set aside at an early date. Much else also I rejected as too disjointed and unfinished, or too eccentric. Two bizarre fragments called respectively "Jane in Heaven" and "An

Account of a Play," I may perhaps find occasion to issue at a later date, and there were also several brief imitations of Villiers de l'Isle Adam quite alien to contemporary Anglo-Saxon taste, which also I hold over. Sometimes upon separate sheets, sometimes in the margins of other compositions, and frequently at the end of letters received by him I found a curious abundance of queer little drawings, caricatures of his correspondents, burlesque renderings of occurrences, disrespectful sidenotes to grave and pregnant utterances, and the like. If ever the correspondence of George Boon is published, it will have to be done in *fac-simile*. There is a considerable number of impressions of the back of Miss Bathwick's head, with and without the thread of velvet she sometimes wore about her neck, and quite a number of curiously idealized studies of that American reading public he would always so grotesquely and annoyingly insist on calling "Her." And among other things I found a rendering of myself as a short, flattened little object that has a touch of malignity in it I had no reason to expect. Few or none of these quaint comments are drawn with Indian ink upon millboard in a manner suitable for reproduction, and even were they so, I doubt whether the public would care for very many of them. (I give my own portrait — it is singularly unlike me — to show the style of thing he did.)

Of the "Mind of the Race" I may perhaps tell first. I find he had written out and greatly embellished the singularly vivid and detailed and happily quite imaginary account of the murder of that eminent litterateur, Dr. Tomlinson Keyhole, with which the "Mind of the Race" was to have concluded; and there are an extraordinarily offensive interview with Mr. Raymond Blathwayt (which, since it now "dates" so markedly, I have decided to suppress altogether) and

an unfinished study of "the Literary Statesmen of the Transition Years from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Centuries" (including a lengthy comparison of the greatness of Lords Bryce and Morley, a eulogy of Lord Morley and a discussion whether he has wit or humour) that were new to me. And perhaps I may note at this point the twenty sixpenny washing books in which Boon had commenced what I am firmly convinced is a general index of the works of Plato and Aristotle. It is conceivable he did this merely as an aid to his private reading, though the idea of a popular romancer reading anything will come to the general reader with a little shock of surprise.

Boon's idea of *Aristotle* (in modern dress), from the washing books.

(When asked, "*Why* in modern dress?" Boon replied simply that he would be.)

For my own part and having in memory his subtle and elusive talk, I am rather inclined to think that at one time he did go so far as to contemplate a familiar and humorous commentary upon these two pillars of the world's thought. An edition of them edited and copiously illustrated by him would, I feel sure, have been a remarkable addition to any gentleman's library. If he did turn his mind to anything of the sort he speedily abandoned the idea again, and with this mention and the note that he detested Aristotle, those six and twenty washing books may very well follow the bulk of the drawings and most of the verse back into their original oblivion….

Boon's idea of *Plato*, from the washing books.

(Boon absolutely rejected the Indian Bacchus bust as a portrait of *Plato*. When asked why, he remarked merely that it wasn't like him.)

§ 7

But now you will begin to understand the nature of the task that lies before me. If I am to do any justice to the cryptic George Boon, if indeed I am to publish anything at all about him, I must set myself to edit and convey these books whose only publication was in fact by word of mouth in his garden arbours, using these few fragments as the merest accessories to that. I have hesitated, I have collected unfavourable advice, but at last I have resolved to make at least one experimental volume of Boon's remains. After all, whatever we have of Aristotle and Socrates and all that we most value of Johnson comes through the testimony of hearers. And though I cannot venture to compare myself with Boswell….

I know the dangers I shall run in this attempt to save my friend from the devastating expurgations of his written ostensible career. I confess I cannot conceal from myself that, for example, I must needs show Boon, by the standards of every day, a little treacherous.

When I thrust an arm into one or other of the scores of densely packed bins of press cuttings that cumber the attics of his castellated mansion and extract a sample clutch, I find almost invariably praise, not judicious or intelligent praise perhaps, but slab and generous

praise, paragraphs, advice, photographs, notices, notes, allusions and comparisons, praise of the unparalleled gloss on his style by Doctor Tomlinson Keyhole under the pseudonym of "Simon up to Snuff," praise of the healthiness of the tone by Doctor Tomlinson Keyhole under the pseudonym of "The Silver Fish," inspired announcements of some forthcoming venture made by Doctor Tomlinson Keyhole under the pseudonym of "The True-Born Englishman," and interesting and exalting speculations as to the precise figure of Boon's income over Dr. Tomlinson Keyhole's own signature; I find chatty, if a little incoherent, notices by Braybourne of the most friendly and helpful sort, and interviews of the most flattering description by this well-known litterateur and that. And I reflect that while all this was going on, there was Boon on the other side of Miss Bathwick's rampart mind, not only not taking them and himself seriously, not only not controlling his disrespectful internal commentary on these excellent men, but positively writing it down, regaling himself with the imagined murder of this leader of thought and the forcible abduction to sinister and melancholy surroundings of that!

And yet I find it hard to do even this measure of justice to my friend. He was treacherous, it must be written, and yet he was, one must confess, a singularly attractive man. There was a certain quality in his life — it was pleasant. When I think of doing him justice I am at once dashed and consoled by the thought of how little he cared how I judged him. And I recall him very vividly as I came upon him on one occasion.

He is seated on a garden roller — an implement which makes a faultless outdoor seat when the handle is adjusted at a suitable angle against a tree, and one has taken the precaution to skid the apparatus with a piece of rockery or other convenient object. His back is against the handle, his legs lie in a boneless curve over the roller, and an inch or so of native buff shows between the corduroy trousers and the claret-coloured socks. He appears to be engaged partly in the degustation of an unappetizing lead pencil, and partly in the contemplation of a half-quire of notepaper. The expression of his rubicund face is distinctly a happy one. At the sound of my approach he looks up. "I've been drawing old Keyhole again!" he says like a

schoolboy.

Nevertheless, if critics of standing are to be drawn like this by authors of position, then it seems to me that there is nothing before us but to say Good-bye for ever to the Dignity of Letters.

CHAPTER THE SECOND Being the First Chapter of "The Mind of the Race"

§ 1

It was one of Boon's peculiarities to maintain a legend about every one he knew, and to me it was his humour to ascribe a degree of moral earnestness that I admit only too sadly is altogether above my quality. Having himself invented this great project of a book upon the Mind of the Race which formed always at least the thread of the discourse when I was present, he next went some way towards foisting it upon me. He would talk to me about it in a tone of remonstrance, raise imaginary difficulties to propositions I was supposed to make and superstitions I entertained, speak of it as "this book Bliss is going to write"; and at the utmost admit no more than collaboration. Possibly I contributed ideas; but I do not remember doing so now very distinctly. Possibly my influence was quasi-moral. The proposition itself fluctuated in his mind to suit this presentation and that, it had more steadfastness in mine. But if I was the anchorage he was the ship. At any rate we planned and discussed a book that Boon pretended that I was writing and that I believed him to be writing, in entire concealment from Miss Bathwick, about the collective mind of the whole human race.

Edwin Dodd was with us, I remember, in one of those early talks, when the thing was still taking form, and he sat on a large inverted flowerpot — we had camped in the greenhouse after lunch — and he was smiling, with his head slightly on one side and a wonderfully foxy expression of being on his guard that he always wore with Boon. Dodd is a leading member of the Rationalist Press Association, a militant agnostic, and a dear, compact man, one of those Middle Victorians who go about with a preoccupied, caulking air, as though, after having been at great cost and pains to banish God from the Universe, they were resolved not to permit Him back on any terms whatever. He has constituted himself a sort of alert customs officer of a materialistic age, saying suspiciously, "Here, now, what's this rapping under the table here?" and examining every proposition

to see that the Creator wasn't being smuggled back under some specious new generalization. Boon used to declare that every night Dodd looked under his bed for the Deity, and slept with a large revolver under his pillow for fear of a revelation…. From the first Dodd had his suspicions about this collective mind of Boon's. Most unjustifiable they seemed to me then, but he had them.

"You must admit, my dear Dodd — —" began Boon.

"I admit nothing," said Dodd smartly.

"You perceive something more extensive than individual wills and individual processes of reasoning in mankind, a body of thought, a trend of ideas and purposes, a thing made up of the synthesis of all the individual instances, something more than their algebraic sum, losing the old as they fall out, taking up the young, a common Mind expressing the species — —"

"Oh — figuratively, perhaps!" said Dodd.

§ 2

For my own part I could not see where Dodd's "figuratively" comes in. The mind of the race is as real to me as the mind of Dodd or my own. Because Dodd is completely made up of Dodd's right leg plus Dodd's left leg, plus Dodd's right arm plus Dodd's left arm plus Dodd's head and Dodd's trunk, it doesn't follow that Dodd is a mere figurative expression….

Dodd, I remember, protested he had a self-consciousness that held all these constituents together, but there was a time when Dodd was six months old, let us say, and there are times now when Dodd sleeps or is lost in some vivid sensation or action, when that clear sense of self is in abeyance. There is no reason why the collective mind of the world should not presently become at least as self-conscious as Dodd. Boon, indeed, argued that that was happening even now, that our very talk in the greenhouse was to that synthetic over-brain like a child's first intimations of the idea of "me." "It's a *fantastic* notion," said Dodd, shaking his head.

But Boon was fairly launched now upon his topic, and from the first, I will confess, it took hold of me.

“You mustn’t push the analogy of Dodd’s mind too far,” said Boon. “These great Over-minds — —”

“So there are several!” said Dodd.

“They fuse, they divide. These great Over-minds, these race minds, share nothing of the cyclic fate of the individual life; there is no birth for them, no pairing and breeding, no inevitable death. That is the lot of such intermediate experimental creatures as ourselves. The creatures below us, like the creatures above us, are free from beginnings and ends. The Amoeba never dies; it divides at times, parts of it die here and there, it has no sex, no begetting. (Existence without a love interest. My God! how it sets a novelist craving!) Neither has the germ plasm. These Over-minds, which for the most part clothe themselves in separate languages and maintain a sort of distinction, stand to us as we stand to the amœbæ or the germ cells we carry; they are the next higher order of being; they emerge above the intense, intensely defined struggle of individuals which is the more obvious substance of lives at the rank of ours; they grow, they divide, they feed upon one another, they coalesce and rejuvenate. So far they are like amœbæ. But they think, they accumulate experiences, they manifest a collective will.”

“Nonsense!” said Dodd, shaking his head from side to side.

“But the thing is manifest!”

“I’ve never met it.”

“You met it, my dear Dodd, the moment you were born. Who taught you to talk? Your mother, you say. But whence the language? Who made the language that gives a bias to all your thoughts? And who taught you to think, Dodd? Whence came your habits of conduct? Your mother, your schoolmaster were but mouthpieces, the books you read the mere forefront of that great being of Voices! There it is — your antagonist to-day. You are struggling against it with tracts and arguments….”

But now Boon was fairly going. Physically, perhaps, we were the children of our ancestors, but mentally we were the offspring of the race mind. It was clear as daylight. How could Dodd dare to argue? We emerged into a brief independence of will, made our personal innovation, became, as it were, new thoughts in that great intelligence, new elements of effort and purpose, and were presently

incorporated or forgotten or both in its immortal growth. Would the Race Mind incorporate Dodd or dismiss him? Dodd sat on his flowerpot, shaking his head and saying “Pooh!” to the cinerarias; and I listened, never doubting that Boon felt the truth he told so well. He came near making the Race soul incarnate. One felt it about us, receptive and responsive to Boon’s words. He achieved personification. He spoke of wars that peoples have made, of the roads and cities that grow and the routes that develop, no man planning them. He mentioned styles of architecture and styles of living; the gothic cathedral, I remember, he dwelt upon, a beauty, that arose like an exhalation out of scattered multitudes of men. He instanced the secular abolition of slavery and the establishment of monogamy as a development of Christian teaching, as things untraceable to any individual’s purpose. He passed to the mysterious consecutiveness of scientific research, the sudden determination of the European race mind to know more than chance thoughts could tell it….

“Francis Bacon?” said Dodd.

“Men like Bacon are no more than bright moments, happy thoughts, the discovery of the inevitable word; the race mind it was took it up, the race mind it was carried it on.”

“Mysticism!” said Dodd. “Give me the Rock of Fact!” He shook his head so violently that suddenly his balance was disturbed; clap went his feet, the flowerpot broke beneath him, and our talk was lost in the consequent solicitudes.

Dodd the Agnostic just before the flowerpot broke.

§ 3

Now that I have been searching my memory, I incline rather more than I did to the opinion that the bare suggestion at any rate of this particular Book did come from me. I probably went to Boon soon after this talk with Dodd and said a fine book might be written about the Mind of Humanity, and in all likelihood I gave some outline — I have forgotten what. I wanted a larger picture of that great Being his imagination had struck out. I remember at any, rate Boon taking me into his study, picking out Goldsmith's "Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning," turning it over and reading from it. "Something in this line?" he said, and read:

"'Complaints of our degeneracy in literature as well as in morals I own have been frequently exhibited of late…. The dullest critic who strives at a reputation for delicacy, by showing he cannot be pleased …'

"The old, old thing, you see! The weak protest of the living."

He turned over the pages. "He shows a proper feeling, but he's a little thin…. He says some good things. But— 'The age of Louis XIV, notwithstanding these respectable names, is still vastly,

superior.' Is it? Guess the respectable names that age of Louis XIV could override! — Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Montesquieu, D'Alembert! And now tell me the respectable names of the age of Louis XIV. And the conclusion of the whole matter —

"'Thus the man who, under the patronage of the great might have done honour to humanity, when only patronized by the bookseller becomes a thing a little superior to the fellow who works at the press.'

"'The patronage of the great'! 'Fellow who works at the press'! Goldsmith was a damnably genteel person at times in spite of the 'Vicar'! It's printed with the long 's,' you see. It all helps to remind one that times have changed." …

I followed his careless footsteps into the garden; he went gesticulating before me, repeating, "'An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning'! That's what your 'Mind of the Race' means. Suppose one did it now, we should do it differently in every way, from that."

"Yes, but how should we do it?" said I.

The project had laid hold upon me. I wanted a broad outline of the whole apparatus of thinking and determination in the modern State; something that should bring together all its various activities, which go on now in a sort of deliberate ignorance of one another, which would synthesize research, education, philosophical discussion, moral training, public policy. "There is," I said, "a disorganized abundance now."

"It's a sort of subconscious mind," said Boon, seeming to take me quite seriously, "with a half instinctive will…."

We discussed what would come into the book. One got an impression of the enormous range and volume of intellectual activity that pours along now, in comparison with the jejune trickle of Goldsmith's days. Then the world had — what? A few English writers, a few men in France, the Royal Society, the new Berlin Academy (conducting its transactions in French), all resting more or less upon the insecure patronage of the "Great"; a few schools, public and private, a couple of dozen of universities in all the world, a press of which *The Gentleman's Magazine* was the brightest ornament. Now ——

It is a curious thing that it came to us both as a new effect, this enormously greater size of the intellectual world of to-day. We didn't at first grasp the implications of that difference, we simply found it necessitated an enlargement of our conception. "And then a man's thoughts lived too in a world that had been created, lock, stock, and barrel, a trifle under six thousand years ago!…"

We fell to discussing the range and divisions of our subject. The main stream, we settled, was all that one calls "literature" in its broader sense. We should have to discuss that principally. But almost as important as the actual development of ideas, suggestions, ideals, is the way they are distributed through the body of humanity, developed, rendered, brought into touch with young minds and fresh minds, who are drawn so into participation, who themselves light up and become new thoughts. One had to consider journalism, libraries, book distribution, lecturing, teaching. Then there is the effect of laws, of inventions…. "Done in a large, dull, half-abstract way," said Boon, "one might fill volumes. One might become an Eminent Sociologist. You might even invent terminology. It's a chance — —"

We let it pass. He went on almost at once to suggest a more congenial form, a conversational novel. I followed reluctantly. I share the general distrust of fiction as a vehicle of discussion. We would, he insisted, invent a personality who would embody our Idea, who should be fanatically obsessed by this idea of the Mind of the Race, who should preach it on all occasions and be brought into illuminating contact with all the existing mental apparatus and organization of the world. "Something of your deep, moral earnestness, you know, only a little more presentable and not quite so vindictive," said Boon, "and without your — lapses. I seem to see him rather like Leo Maxse: the same white face, the same bright eyes, the same pervading suggestion of nervous intensity, the same earnest, quasi-reasonable voice — but instead of that anti-German obsession of his, an intelligent passion for the racial thought. He must be altogether a fanatic. He must think of the Mind of the Race in season and out of season. Collective thought will be no joke to him; it will be the supremely important thing. He will be passionately a patriot, entirely convinced of your proposition that 'the thought of a community is the life of a community,' and almost as certain that the

tide of our thought is ebbing."

"Is it?" said I.

"I've never thought. The 'Encyclopædia Britannica' says it is."

"We must call the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.'"

"As a witness — in the book — rather! But, anyhow, this man of ours will believe it and struggle against it. It will make him ill; it will spoil the common things of life for him altogether. I seem to see him interrupting some nice, bright, clean English people at tennis. 'Look here, you know,' he will say, 'this is all very well. But have you *thought* to-day? They tell me the Germans are thinking, the Japanese.' I see him going in a sort of agony round and about Canterbury Cathedral. 'Here are all these beautiful, tranquil residences clustering round this supremely beautiful thing, all these well-dressed, excellent, fresh-coloured Englishmen in their beautiful clerical raiment — deans, canons — and what have they *thought*, any of them? I keep my ear to the *Hibbert Journal*, but is it enough?' Imagine him going through London on an omnibus. He will see as clear as the advertisements on the hoardings the signs of the formal breaking up of the old Victorian Church of England and Dissenting cultures that have held us together so long. He will see that the faith has gone, the habits no longer hold, the traditions lie lax like cut string — there is nothing to replace these things. People do this and that dispersedly; there is democracy in beliefs even, and any notion is as good as another. And there is America. Like a burst Haggis. Intellectually. The Mind is confused, the Race in the violent ferment of new ideas, in the explosive development of its own contrivances, has lost its head. It isn't thinking any more; it's stupefied one moment and the next it's diving about ——

"It will be as clear as day to him that a great effort of intellectual self-control must come if the race is to be saved from utter confusion and dementia. And nobody seems to see it but he. He will go about wringing his hands, so to speak. I fancy him at last at a writing-desk, nervous white fingers clutched in his black hair. 'How can I put it so that they *must* attend and see?'"

So we settled on our method and principal character right away. But we got no farther because Boon insisted before doing anything else on drawing a fancy portrait of this leading character of ours and

choosing his name. We decided to call him Hallery, and that he should look something like this —

Hallery preparing to contradict.

That was how “The Mind of the Race” began, the book that was to have ended at last in grim burlesque with Hallery’s murder of Dr. Tomlinson Keyhole in his villa at Hampstead, and the conversation at dawn with that incredulous but literate policeman at Highgate — he was reading a World’s Classic — to whom Hallery gave himself up.

CHAPTER THE THIRD The Great Slump, the Revival of Letters, and the Garden by the Sea

§ 1

The story, as Boon planned it, was to begin with a spacious Introduction. We were to tell of the profound decadence of letters at the opening of the Twentieth Century and how a movement of revival began. A few notes in pencil of this opening do exist among the Remains, and to those I have referred. He read them over to me….

"'We begin,'" he said, "'in a minor key. The impetus of the Romantic movement we declare is exhausted; the Race Mind, not only of the English-speaking peoples but of the whole world, has come upon a period of lethargy. The Giants of the Victorian age — —'"

My eye discovered a familiar binding among the flower-pots. "You have been consulting the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,'" I said.

He admitted it without embarrassment.

"I have prigged the whole thing from the last Victorian Edition — with some slight variations…. 'The Giants of the Victorian age had passed. Men looked in vain for their successors. For a time there was an evident effort to fill the vacant thrones; for a time it seemed that the unstinted exertions of Miss Marie Corelli, Mr. Hall Caine, Mrs. Humphry Ward, and the friends of Mr. Stephen Phillips might go some way towards obliterating these magnificent gaps. And then, slowly but surely, it crept into men's minds that the game was up — —'"

"You will alter that phrase?" I said.

"Certainly. But it must serve now … 'that, humanly speaking, it was impossible that anything, at once so large, so copious, so broadly and unhesitatingly popular, so nobly cumulative as the Great Victorian Reputations could ever exist again. The Race seemed threatened with intellectual barrenness; it had dropped its great blossoms, and stood amidst the pile of their wilting but still showy petals, budless and bare. It is curious to recall the public utterances

upon literature that distinguished this desolate and melancholy time. It is a chorus of despair. There is in the comments of such admirable but ageing critics as still survived, of Mr. Gosse, for example, and the venerable Sir Sidney Colvin and Mr. Mumchance, an inevitable suggestion of widowhood; the judges, bishops, statesmen who are called to speak upon literature speak in the same reminiscent, inconsolable note as of a thing that is dead. Year after year one finds the speakers at the Dinner of the Royal Literary Fund admitting the impudence of their appeal. I remember at one of these festivities hearing the voice of Mr. Justice Gummidge break…. The strain, it is needless to say, found its echo in Dr. Tomlinson Keyhole; he confessed he never read anything that is less than thirty years old with the slightest enjoyment, and threw out the suggestion that nothing new should be published — at least for a considerable time — unless it was clearly shown to be posthumous….

"'Except for a few irresistible volumes of facetiousness, the reading public very obediently followed the indications of authority in these matters, just as it had followed authority and sustained the Giants in the great Victorian days. It bought the long-neglected classics — anything was adjudged a classic that was out of copyright — it did its best to read them, to find a rare smack in their faded allusions, an immediate application for their forgotten topics. It made believe that architects were still like Mr. Pecksniff and schoolmasters like Squeers, that there were no different women from Jane Austen's women, and that social wisdom ended in Ruskin's fine disorder. But with the decay, of any intellectual observation of the present these past things had lost their vitality. A few resolute people maintained an artificial interest in them by participation in quotation-hunting competitions and the like, but the great bulk of the educated classes ceased presently to read anything whatever. The classics were still bought by habit, as people who have lost faith will still go to church; but it is only necessary to examine some surviving volume of this period to mark the coruscation of printer's errors, the sheets bound in upside down or accidentally not inked in printing or transferred from some sister classic in the same series, to realize that these volumes were mere receipts for the tribute paid by the pockets of stupidity to the ancient prestige of thought….

“‘An air of completion rested upon the whole world of letters. A movement led by Professor Armstrong, the eminent educationist, had even gone some way towards banishing books from the schoolroom — their last refuge. People went about in the newly invented automobile and played open-air games; they diverted what attention they had once given to their minds to the more rational treatment of their stomachs. Reading became the last resort of those too sluggish or too poor to play games; one had recourse to it as a substitute for the ashes of more strenuous times in the earlier weeks of mourning for a near relative, and even the sale of classics began at last to decline. An altogether more satisfying and alluring occupation for the human intelligence was found in the game of Bridge. This was presently improved into Auction Bridge. Preparations were made for the erection of a richly decorative memorial in London to preserve the memory of Shakespeare, an English Taj Mahal; an Academy of uncreative literature was established under the Presidency of Lord Reay (who had never written anything at all), and it seemed but the matter of a few years before the goal of a complete and final mental quiet would be attained by the whole English-speaking community….’”

§ 2

“You know,” I said, “that doesn’t exactly represent — —”

“Hush!” said Boon. “It was but a resting phase! And at this point I part company with the ‘Encyclopædia.’”

“But you didn’t get all that out of the ‘Encyclopædia’?”

“Practically — yes. I may have rearranged it a little. The Encyclopædist is a most interesting and representative person. He takes up an almost eighteenth-century attitude, holds out hopes of a revival of Taste under an Academy, declares the interest of the great mass of men in literature is always ‘empirical,’ regards the great Victorian boom in letters as quite abnormal, and seems to ignore what you would call that necessary element of vitalizing thought…. It’s just here that Hallery will have to dispute with him. We shall have to bring them together in our book somehow…. Into this

impressive scene of decline and the ebb of all thinking comes this fanatic Hallery of ours, reciting with passionate conviction, 'the thought of a nation is the life of a nation.' You see our leading effect?"

He paused. "We have to represent Hallery as a voice crying in the wilderness. We have to present him in a scene of infinite intellectual bleakness, with the thinnest scrub of second-rate books growing contemptibly, and patches of what the Encyclopædist calls tares — wind-wilted tares — about him. A mournful Encyclopædist like some lone bird circling in the empty air beneath the fading stars…. Well, something of that effect, anyhow! And then, you know, suddenly, mysteriously one grows aware of light, of something coming, of something definitely coming, of the dawn of a great Literary Revival…."

"How does it come?"

"Oh! In the promiscuous way of these things. The swing of the pendulum, it may be. Some eminent person gets bored at the prospect of repeating that rigmarole about the great Victorians and our present slackness for all the rest of his life, and takes a leaf from one of Hallery's books. We might have something after the fashion of the Efficiency and Wake-up-England affair. Have you ever heard guinea-fowl at dawn?"

"I've heard them at twilight. They say, 'Come back. Come back.' But what has that to do with — —"

"Nothing. There's a movement, a stir, a twittering, and then a sudden promiscuous uproar, articles in the reviews, articles in the newspapers, paragraphs, letters, associations, societies, leagues. I imagine a very great personality indeed in the most extraordinary and unexpected way coming in…." (It was one of Boon's less amiable habits to impute strange and uncanny enterprises, the sudden adoption of movements, manias, propagandas, adhesion to vegetarianism, socialism, the strangest eccentricities, to the British royal family.) "As a result Hallery finds himself perforce a person of importance. 'The thought of a nation is the life of a nation,' one hears it from royal lips; 'a literature, a living soul, adequate to this vast empire,' turns up in the speech of a statesman of the greatest literary pretensions. Arnold White responds to the new note. The *Daily*

Express starts a Literary Revival on its magazine page and offers a prize. The *Times* follows suit. Reports of what is afoot reach social circles in New York…. The illumination passes with a dawnlike swiftness right across the broad expanse of British life, east and west flash together; the ladies' papers and the motoring journals devote whole pages to 'New Literature,' and there is an enormous revival of Book Teas…. That sort of thing, you know — extensively."

§ 3

"So much by way of prelude. Now picture to yourself the immediate setting of my conference. Just hand me that book by the 'Encyclopædia.'"

It was Mallock's "New Republic." He took it, turned a page or so, stuck a finger in it, and resumed.

"It is in a narrow, ill-kept road by the seaside, Bliss. A long wall, plaster-faced, blotched and peeling, crested with uncivil glass against the lower orders, is pierced by cast-iron gates clumsily classical, and through the iron bars of these there is visible the deserted gatekeeper's lodge, its cracked windows opaque with immemorial dirt, and a rich undergrowth of nettles beneath the rusty cypresses and stone-pines that border the carriage-way. An automobile throbs in the road; its occupants regard a board leaning all askew above the parapet, and hesitate to descend. On the board, which has been enriched by the attentions of the passing boy with innumerable radiant mud pellets, one reads with difficulty —

THIS CLASSICAL VILLA with magnificent gardens in the Victorian-Italian style reaching down to the sea, and replete with Latin and Greek inscriptions, a garden study, literary associations, fully matured Oxford allusions, and a great number of conveniently arranged bedrooms, to be LET OR SOLD.

Apply to the owner, Mr. W. H. MALLOCK, original author of "The New Republic."

Key within.

“‘This *must* be it, my dear Archer,’ says one of the occupants of the motor-car, and he rises, throws aside his furs, and reveals — the urbane presence of the Encyclopædist. He descends, and rings a clangorous bell…. Eh?”

“It’s the garden of the ‘New Republic’?”

“Exactly. Revisited. It’s an astonishing thing. Do you know the date of the ‘New Republic’? The book’s nearly forty years old! About the time of Matthew Arnold’s ‘Friendship’s Garland,’ and since that time there’s been nothing like a systematic stocktaking of the English-speaking mind — until the Encyclopædist reported ‘no effects.’ And I propose to make this little party in the motor-car a sort of scratch expedition, under the impetus of the proposed Revival of Thought. They are prospecting for a Summer Congress, which is to go into the state of the republic of letters thoroughly. It isn’t perhaps quite Gosse’s style, but he has to be there — in a way he’s the official British man of letters — but we shall do what we can for him, we shall make him show a strong disposition towards protective ironies and confess himself not a little bothered at being dragged into the horrid business. And I think we must have George Moore, who has played uncle to so many movements and been so uniformly disappointed in his nephews. And William Archer, with that face of his which is so exactly like his mind, a remarkably fine face mysteriously marred by an expression of unscrupulous integrity. And lastly, Keyhole.”

“Why Keyhole?” I asked.

“Hallery has to murder some one. I’ve planned that — and who *would* he murder but Keyhole?… And we have to hold the first meeting in Mallock’s garden to preserve the continuity of English thought.

“Very well! Then we invent a morose, elderly caretaker, greatly embittered at this irruption. He parleys for a time through the gate with all the loyalty of his class, mentions a number of discouraging defects, more particularly in the drainage, alleges the whole place is clammy, and only at Gosse’s clearly enunciated determination to enter produces the key.”

Boon consulted his text. “Naturally one would give a chapter to the Villa by the Sea and Mallock generally. Our visitors explore.

They visit one scene after another familiar to the good Mallockite; they descend 'the broad flights of steps flanked by Gods and Goddesses' that lead from one to another of the 'long, straight terraces set with vases and Irish yews,' and the yews, you know, have suffered from the want of water, the vases are empty, and ivy, under the benediction of our modest climate, has already veiled the classical freedom — the conscientious nudity, one might say — of the statuary. The laurels have either grown inordinately or perished, and the 'busts of orators, poets, and philosophers' 'with Latin inscriptions,' stand either bleakly exposed or else swallowed up, in a thicket. There is a pleasing struggle to translate the legends, and one gathers scholarship is not extinct in England.

"The one oasis in a universal weediness is the pond about the 'scaly Triton,' which has been devoted to the culture of spring onions, a vegetable to which the aged custodian quite superfluously avows himself very 'partial.' The visitors return to the house, walk along its terrace, survey its shuttered front, and they spend some time going through its musty rooms. Dr. Keyhole distinguishes himself by the feverish eagerness of his curiosity about where Leslie slept and where was the boudoir of Mrs. Sinclair. He insists that a very sad and painful scandal about these two underlies the *New Republic*, and professes a thirsty desire to draw a veil over it as conspicuously as possible. The others drag him away to the summer dining-room, now a great brier tangle, where once Lady Grace so pleasantly dined her guests. The little arena about the fountain in a porphyry basin they do not find, but the garden study they peer into, and see its inkpot in the shape of a classical temple, just as Mr. Mallock has described it, and the windowless theatre, and, in addition, they find a small private gas-works that served it. The old man lets them in, and by the light of uplifted vestas they see the decaying, rat-disordered ruins of the scene before which Jenkinson who was Jowett, and Herbert who was Ruskin, preached. It is as like a gorge in the Indian Caucasus as need be. The Brocken act-drop above hangs low enough to show the toes of the young witch, still brightly pink….

"They go down to the beach, and the old man, with evil chuckles, recalls a hitherto unpublished anecdote of mixed bathing in the 'seventies, in which Mrs. Sinclair and a flushed and startled Dr.

Jenkinson, Greek in thought rather than action, play the chief parts, and then they wade through a nettle-bed to that 'small classical portico' which leads to the locked enclosure containing the three tombs, with effigies after the fashion of Genoa Cemetery. But the key of the gate is lost, so that they cannot go in to examine them, and the weeds have hidden the figures altogether.

"'That's a pity,' some one remarks, 'for it's here, no doubt, that old Laurence lies, with his first mistress and his last — under these cypresses.'

"The aged custodian makes a derisive noise, and every one turns to him.

"'I gather you throw some doubt?' the Encyclopædist begins in his urbane way.

"'Buried — under the cypresses — first mistress and last!' The old man makes his manner invincibly suggestive of scornful merriment.

"'But isn't it so?'

"'Bless y'r 'art, *no*! Mr. Laurence — buried! Mr. Laurence worn't never alive!'

"'But there was a *young* Mr. Laurence?'

"'That was Mr. Mallup 'imself, that was! 'E was a great mistifier was Mr. Mallup, and sometimes 'e went about pretendin' to be Mr. Laurence and sometimes he was Mr. Leslie, and sometimes —— But there, you'd 'ardly believe. 'E got all this up — cypresses, chumes, everythink — out of 'is 'ed. Po'try. Why! 'Ere! Jest come along 'ere, gents!'

"He leads the way along a narrow privet alley that winds its surreptitious way towards an alcove.

"'Miss Merton,' he says, flinging the door of this open.

"'The Roman Catholic young person?' says Dr. Tomlinson Keyhole.

"'Quite right, sir,' says the aged custodian.

"They peer in.

"Hanging from a peg the four visitors behold a pale blue dress cut in the fashion of the 'seventies, a copious 'chignon' of fair hair, large earrings, and on the marble bench a pair of open-work stockings and other articles of feminine apparel. A tall mirror hangs opposite these

garments, and in a little recess convenient to the hand are the dusty and decaying materials for a hasty ‘make-up.’

“The old custodian watches the effect of this display upon the others with masked enjoyment.

“‘You mean Miss Merton *painted*?’ said the Encyclopædist, knitting his brows.

“‘Mr. Mallup did,’ says the aged custodian.

“‘You mean —— ?’

“‘Mr. Mallup was Miss Merton. ‘E got *‘er* up too. Parst ‘er orf as a young lady, ‘e did. Oh, ‘e was a great mistifier was Mr. Mallup. None of the three of ’em wasn’t real people, really; he got ’em all up.’

“‘She had sad-looking eyes, a delicate, proud mouth, and a worn, melancholy look,’ muses Mr. Archer.

“‘And young Laurence was in love with her,’ adds the Encyclopædist….

“‘They was all Mr. Mallup,’ says the aged custodian. ‘Made up out of ‘is ‘ed. And the gents that pretended they was Mr. ‘Uxley and Mr. Tyndall in disguise, one was Bill Smithers, the chemist’s assistant, and the other was the chap that used to write and print the *Margate Advertiser* before the noo papers come.’”

CHAPTER THE FOURTH Of Art, of Literature, of Mr. Henry James

§ 1

The Garden by the Sea chapter was to have gone on discursively with a discussion upon this project of a conference upon the Mind of the Race. The automobile-ful of gentlemen who had first arrived was to have supplied the opening interlocutors, but presently they were to have been supplemented by the most unexpected accessories. It would have been an enormously big dialogue if it had ever been written, and Boon's essentially lazy temperament was all against its ever getting written. There were to have been disputes from the outset as to the very purpose that had brought them all together. "A sort of literary stocktaking" was to have been Mr. Archer's phrase. Repeated. Unhappily, its commercialism was to upset Mr. Gosse extremely; he was to say something passionately bitter about its "utter lack of dignity." Then relenting a little, he was to urge as an alternative "some controlling influence, some standard and restraint, a new and better Academic influence." Dr. Keyhole was to offer his journalistic services in organizing an Academic plebiscite, a suggestion which was to have exasperated Mr. Gosse to the pitch of a gleaming silence.

In the midst of this conversation the party is joined by Hallery and an American friend, a quiet Harvard sort of man speaking meticulously accurate English, and still later by emissaries of Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Hearst, by Mr. Henry James, rather led into it by a distinguished hostess, by Mr. W. B. Yeats, late but keen, and by that Sir Henry Lunn who organizes the Swiss winter sports hotels. All these people drift in with an all too manifestly simulated accidentalness that at last arouses the distrust of the elderly custodian, so that Mr. Orage, the gifted editor of the *New Age*, arriving last, is refused admission. The sounds of the conflict at the gates do but faintly perturb the conference within, which is now really getting to business, but afterwards Mr. Orage, slightly wounded in the face by a dexterously plied rake and incurably

embittered, makes his existence felt by a number of unpleasant missiles discharged from over the wall in the direction of any audible voices. Ultimately Mr. Orage gets into a point of vantage in a small pine-tree overlooking the seaward corner of the premises, and from this he contributes a number of comments that are rarely helpful, always unamiable, and frequently in the worst possible taste.

Such was Boon's plan for the second chapter of "The Mind of the Race." But that chapter he never completely planned. At various times Boon gave us a number of colloquies, never joining them together in any regular order. The project of taking up the discussion of the Mind of the Race at the exact point Mr. Mallock had laid it down, and taking the villa by the sea for the meeting-place, was at once opposed by Hallery and his American friend with an evidently preconcerted readiness. They pointed out the entire democratization of thought and literature that had been going on for the past four decades. It was no longer possible to deal with such matters in the old aristocratic country-house style; it was no longer possible to take them up from that sort of beginning; the centre of mental gravity among the English-speaking community had shifted socially and geographically; what was needed now was something wider and ampler, something more in the nature of such a conference as the annual meeting of the British Association. Science left the gentleman's mansion long ago; literature must follow it — had followed it. To come back to Mr. Lankester's Villa by the sea was to come back to a beaten covert. The Hearst representative took up a strongly supporting position, and suggested that if indeed we wished to move with the times the thing to do was to strike out boldly for a special annex of the Panama Exhibition at San Francisco and for organization upon sound American lines. It was a case, he said, even for "exhibits." Sir Henry Lunn, however, objected that in America the Anglo-Saxon note was almost certain to be too exclusively sounded; that we had to remember there were vigorous cultures growing up and growing up more and more detachedly upon the continent of Europe; we wanted, at least, their reflected lights … some more central position…. In fact, Switzerland … where also numerous convenient hotels … patronized, he gathered from the illustrated papers, by Lord Lytton, Mrs. Asquith, Mr. F. R. Benson

… and all sorts of helpful leading people.

§ 2

Meanwhile Boon's plan was to make Mr. George Moore and Mr. Henry James wander off from the general dispute, and he invented a dialogue that even at the time struck me as improbable, in which both gentlemen pursue entirely independent trains of thought.

Mr. Moore's conception of the projected symposium was something rather in the vein of the journeyings of Shelley, Byron, and their charming companions through France to Italy, but magnified to the dimensions of an enormous pilgrimage, enlarged to the scale of a stream of refugees. "What, my dear James," he asked, "is this mind of humanity at all without a certain touch of romance, of adventure? Even Mallock appreciated the significance of *frou-frou*; but these fellows behind here…."

To illustrate his meaning better, he was to have told, with an extraordinary and loving mastery of detail, of a glowing little experience that had been almost forced upon him at Nismes by a pretty little woman from Nebraska, and the peculiar effect it had had, and particularly the peculiar effect that the coincidence that both Nebraska and Nismes begin with an "N" and end so very differently, had had upon his imagination….

Meanwhile Mr. James, being anxious not merely to state but also to ignore, laboured through the long cadences of his companion as an indefatigable steam-tug might labour endlessly against a rolling sea, elaborating his own particular point about the proposed conference.

"Owing it as we do," he said, "very, very largely to our friend Gosse, to that peculiar, that honest but restless and, as it were, at times almost malignantly ambitious organizing energy of our friend, I cannot altogether — altogether, even if in any case I should have taken so extreme, so devastatingly isolating a step as, to put it violently, *stand out*; yet I must confess to a considerable anxiety, a kind of distress, an apprehension, the terror, so to speak, of the kerbstone, at all this stream of intellectual trafficking, of going to and fro, in a superb and towering manner enough no doubt, but still

essentially going to and fro rather than in any of the completed senses of the word *getting there*, that does so largely constitute the aggregations and activities we are invited to traverse. My poor head, such as it is and as much as it can and upon such legs — save the mark! — as it can claim, must, I suppose, play its inconsiderable part among the wheels and the rearings and the toots and the whistles and all this uproar, this — Mm, Mm! — let us say, this *infernal* uproar, of the occasion; and if at times one has one's doubts before plunging in, whether after all, after the plunging and the dodging and the close shaves and narrow squeaks, one does begin to feel that one is getting through, whether after all one *will* get through, and whether indeed there is any getting through, whether, to deepen and enlarge and display one's doubt quite openly, there is in truth any sort of ostensible and recognizable other side attainable and definable at all, whether to put this thing with a lucidity that verges on the brutal, whether our amiable and in most respects our adorable Gosse isn't indeed preparing here and now, not the gathering together of a conference but the assembling, the *meet*, so to speak, of a wild-goose chase of an entirely desperate and hopeless description."

At that moment Mr. George Moore was saying: "Little exquisite shoulders without a touch of colour and with just that suggestion of rare old ivory in an old shop window in some out-of-the-way corner of Paris that only the most patent abstinence from baths and the brutality of soaping — —"

Each gentleman stopped simultaneously.

Ahead the path led between box-hedges to a wall, and above the wall was a pine-tree, and the Editor of the *New Age* was reascending the pine-tree in a laborious and resolute manner, gripping with some difficulty in his hand a large and very formidable lump of unpleasantness….

With a common impulse the two gentlemen turned back towards the house.

Mr. James was the first to break the momentary silence. "And so, my dear Moore, and so — to put it shortly — without any sort of positive engagement or entanglement or pledge or pressure — I *came*. And at the proper time and again with an entirely individual detachment and as little implication as possible I shall *go*…."

Subsequently Mr. James was to have buttonholed Hallery's American, and in the warm bath of his sympathy to have opened and bled slowly from another vein of thought.

"I admit the abundance of — what shall I say? — *activities* that our friend is summoning, the tremendous wealth of matter, of material for literature and art, that has accumulated during the last few decades. No one could appreciate, could savour and watch and respond, more than myself to the tremendous growing clangour of the mental process as the last half-century has exhibited it. But when it comes to the enterprise of gathering it together, and not simply just gathering it together, but gathering it *all* together, then surely one must at some stage ask the question, *Why* all? Why, in short, attempt to a comprehensiveness that must be overwhelming when in fact the need is for a selection that shall not merely represent but elucidate and lead. Aren't we, after all, all of us after some such indicating projection of a leading digit, after such an insistence on the outstandingly essential in face of this abundance, this saturation, this fluid chaos that perpetually increases? Here we are gathering together to celebrate and summarize literature in some sort of undefined and unprecedented fashion, and for the life of me I find it impossible to determine what among my numerous associates and friends and — to embrace still larger quantities of the stuff in hand — my contemporaries is considered to be the literature in question. So confused now are we between matter and treatment, between what is stated and documented and what is prepared and presented, that for the life of me I do not yet see whether we are supposed to be building an ark or whether by immersion and the meekest of submersions and an altogether complete submission of our distended and quite helpless carcasses to its incalculable caprice we are supposed to be celebrating and, in the whirling uncomfortable fashion of flotsam at large, indicating and making visible the whole tremendous cosmic inundation…."

Mr. James converses with Mr. George Moore upon matters of vital importance to both of them.

§ 3

It was entirely in the quality of Boon's intellectual untidiness that for a time he should go off at a tangent in pursuit of Mr. Henry James and leave his literary picnic disseminated about the grounds of Mr. Mallock's villa. There, indeed, they remained. The story when he

took it up again picked up at quite a different point.

I remember how Boon sat on the wall of his vegetable garden and discoursed upon James, while several of us squatted about on the cucumber-frames and big flowerpots and suchlike seats, and how over the wall Ford Madox Hueffer was beating Wilkins at Badminton. Hueffer wanted to come and talk too; James is one of his countless subjects — and what an omniscient man he is too! — but Wilkins was too cross to let him off….

So that all that Hueffer was able to contribute was an exhortation not to forget that Henry James knew Turgenev and that he had known them both, and a flat denial that Dickens was a novelist. This last was the tail of that Pre-Raphaelite feud begun in *Household Words*, oh! generations ago….

"Got you there, my boy!" said Wilkins. "Seven, twelve."

We heard no more from Hueffer.

"You see," Boon said, "you can't now talk of literature without going through James. James is unavoidable. James is to criticism what Immanuel Kant is to philosophy — a partially comprehensible essential, an inevitable introduction. If you understand what James is up to and if you understand what James is not up to, then you are placed. You are in the middle of the critical arena. You are in a position to lay about you with significance. Otherwise….

"I want to get this Hallery of mine, who is to be the hero of 'The Mind of the Race,' into a discussion with Henry James, but that, you know, is easier said than imagined. Hallery is to be one of those enthusiastic thinkers who emit highly concentrated opinion in gobbets, suddenly. James — isn't…."

Boon meditated upon his difficulties. "Hallery's idea of literature is something tremendously comprehensive, something that pierces always down towards the core of things, something that carries and changes all the activities of the race. This sort of thing."

He read from a scrap of paper —

"'The thought of a community is the life of that community, and if the collective thought of a community is disconnected and fragmentary, then the community is collectively vain and weak. That does not constitute an incidental defect but essential failure. Though that community have cities such as the world has never seen before,

fleets and hosts and glories, though it count its soldiers by the army corps and its children by the million, yet if it hold not to the reality of thought and formulated will beneath these outward things, it will pass, and all its glories will pass, like smoke before the wind, like mist beneath the sun; it will become at last only one more vague and fading dream upon the scroll of time, a heap of mounds and pointless history, even as are Babylon and Nineveh.'"

"I've heard that before somewhere," said Dodd.

"Most of this dialogue will have to be quotation," said Boon.

"He makes literature include philosophy?"

"Everything. It's all the central things. It's the larger Bible to him, a thing about which all the conscious direction of life revolves. It's alive with passion and will. Or if it isn't, then it ought to be…. And then as the antagonist comes this artist, this man who seems to regard the whole seething brew of life as a vat from which you skim, with slow, dignified gestures, works of art. … Works of art whose only claim is their art…. Hallery is going to be very impatient about art."

"Ought there to be such a thing as a literary artist?" some one said.

"Ought there, in fact, to be Henry James?" said Dodd.

"I don't think so. Hallery won't think so. You see, the discussion will be very fundamental. There's contributory art, of course, and a way of doing things better or worse. Just as there is in war, or cooking. But the way of doing isn't the end. First the end must be judged — and then if you like talk of how it is done. Get there as splendidly as possible. But get there. James and George Moore, neither of them take it like that. They leave out getting there, or the thing they get to is so trivial as to amount to scarcely more than an omission…."

Boon reflected. "In early life both these men poisoned their minds in studios. Thought about pictures even might be less studio-ridden than it is. But James has never discovered that a novel isn't a picture…. That life isn't a studio….

"He wants a novel to be simply and completely *done*. He wants it to have a unity, he demands homogeneity…. Why *should* a book have that? For a picture it's reasonable, because you have to see it all at once. But there's no need to see a book all at once. It's like

wanting to have a whole county done in one style and period of architecture. It's like insisting that a walking tour must stick to one valley….

"But James *begins* by taking it for granted that a novel is a work of art that must be judged by its oneness. Judged first by its oneness. Some one gave him that idea in the beginning of things and he has never found it out. He doesn't find things out. He doesn't even seem to want to find things out. You can see that in him; he is eager to accept things — elaborately. You can see from his books that he accepts etiquettes, precedences, associations, claims. That is his peculiarity. He accepts very readily and then — elaborates. He has, I am convinced, one of the strongest, most abundant minds alive in the whole world, and he has the smallest penetration. Indeed, he has no penetration. He is the culmination of the Superficial type. Or else he would have gone into philosophy and been greater even than his wonderful brother…. But here he is, spinning about, like the most tremendous of water-boatmen — you know those insects? — kept up by surface tension. As if, when once he pierced the surface, he would drown. It's incredible. A water-boatman as big as an elephant. I was reading him only yesterday 'The Golden Bowl'; it's dazzling how never for a moment does he go through."

"Recently he's been explaining himself," said Dodd.

"His 'Notes on Novelists.' It's one sustained demand for the picture effect. Which is the denial of the sweet complexity of life, of the pointing this way and that, of the spider on the throne. Philosophy aims at a unity and never gets there…. That true unity which we all suspect, and which no one attains, if it is to be got at all it is to be got by penetrating, penetrating down and through. The picture, on the other hand, is forced to a unity because it can see only one aspect at a time. I am doubtful even about that. Think of Hogarth or Carpaccio. But if the novel is to follow life it must be various and discursive. Life is diversity and entertainment, not completeness and satisfaction. All actions are half-hearted, shot delightfully with wandering thoughts — about something else. All true stories are a felt of irrelevances. But James sets out to make his novels with the presupposition that they can be made continuously relevant. And perceiving the discordant things, he tries to get rid of

them. He sets himself to pick the straws out of the hair of Life before he paints her. But without the straws she is no longer the mad woman we love. He talks of 'selection,' and of making all of a novel definitely *about* a theme. He objects to a 'saturation' that isn't oriented. And he objects, if you go into it, for no clear reason at all. Following up his conception of selection, see what in his own practice he omits. In practice James's selection becomes just omission and nothing more. He omits everything that demands digressive treatment or collateral statement. For example, he omits opinions. In all his novels you will find no people with defined political opinions, no people with religious opinions, none with clear partisanships or with lusts or whims, none definitely up to any specific impersonal thing. There are no poor people dominated by the imperatives of Saturday night and Monday morning, no dreaming types — and don't we all more or less live dreaming? And none are ever decently forgetful. All that much of humanity he clears out before he begins his story. It's like cleaning rabbits for the table.

"But you see how relentlessly it follows from the supposition that the novel is a work of art aiming at pictorial unities!

"All art too acutely self-centred comes to this sort of thing. James's denatured people are only the equivalent in fiction of those egg-faced, black-haired ladies, who sit and sit, in the Japanese colour-prints, the unresisting stuff for an arrangement of blacks….

"Then with the eviscerated people he has invented he begins to make up stories. What stories they are! Concentrated on suspicion, on a gift, on possessing a 'piece' of old furniture, on what a little girl may or may not have noted in an emotional situation. These people cleared for artistic treatment never make lusty love, never go to angry war, never shout at an election or perspire at poker; never in any way *date*…. And upon the petty residuum of human interest left to them they focus minds of a Jamesian calibre….

"The only living human motives left in the novels of Henry James are a certain avidity, and an entirely superficial curiosity. Even when relations are irregular or when sins are hinted at, you feel that these are merely attitudes taken up, gambits before the game of attainment and over-perception begins…. His people nose out suspicions, hint by hint, link by link. Have you ever known living human beings do

that? The thing his novel is *about* is always there. It is like a church lit but without a congregation to distract you, with every light and line focused on the high altar. And on the altar, very reverently placed, intensely there, is a dead kitten, an egg-shell, a bit of string…. Like his 'Altar of the Dead,' with nothing to the dead at all…. For if there was they couldn't all be candles and the effect would vanish…. And the elaborate, copious emptiness of the whole Henry James exploit is only redeemed and made endurable by the elaborate, copious wit. Upon the desert his selection has made Henry James erects palatial metaphors…. The chief fun, the only exercise, in reading Henry James is this clambering over vast metaphors….

"Having first made sure that he has scarcely anything left to express, he then sets to work to express it, with an industry, a wealth of intellectual stuff that dwarfs Newton. He spares no resource in the telling of his dead inventions. He brings up every device of language to state and define. Bare verbs he rarely tolerates. He splits his infinitives and fills them up with adverbial stuffing. He presses the passing colloquialism into his service. His vast paragraphs sweat and struggle; they could not sweat and elbow and struggle more if God Himself was the processional meaning to which they sought to come. And all for tales of nothingness…. It is leviathan retrieving pebbles. It is a magnificent but painful hippopotamus resolved at any cost, even at the cost of its dignity, upon picking up a pea which has got into a corner of its den. Most things, it insists, are beyond it, but it can, at any rate, modestly, and with an artistic singleness of mind, pick up that pea…."

§ 4

"A little while ago," said Boon, suddenly struggling with his trouser pocket and producing some pieces of paper, "I sketched out a novel, and as it was rather in the manner of Henry James I think perhaps you might be interested by it now. So much, that is, as there is of it. It is to be called 'The Spoils of Mr. Blandish,' and it is all about this particular business of the selective life. Mr. Blandish, as I saw him, was pretty completely taken from the James ideal…. He was a man

with an exquisite apprehension of particulars, with just that sense of there being a rightness attainable, a fitness, a charm, a finish…. In any little affair…. He believed that in speech and still more that in writing there was an inevitable right word, in actions great and small a mellowed etiquette, in everything a possible perfection. He was, in fact, the very soul of Henry James — as I understand it…. This sort of man —

Mr. Blandish going delicately through life. “Oh no! oh no! But

Yes! and *This is it!*"

"Going delicately."

I was able to secure the sketch.

"He didn't marry, he didn't go upon adventures; lust, avarice, ambition, all these things that as Milton says are to be got 'not without dust and heat,' were not for him. Blood and dust and heat — he ruled them out. But he had independent means, he could live freely and delicately and charmingly, he could travel and meet and be delighted by all the best sorts of people in the best sorts of places. So for years he enriched his resonances, as an admirable violin grows richer with every note it sounds. He went about elaborately, avoiding ugliness, death, suffering, industrialism, politics, sport, the thought of war, the red blaze of passion. He travelled widely in the more settled parts of the world. Chiefly he visited interesting and ancient places, putting his ever more exquisite sensorium at them, consciously taking delicate impressions upon the refined wax of his being. In a manner most carefully occasional, he wrote. Always of faded places. His 'Ypres' was wonderful. His 'Bruges' and his 'Hour of Van Eyk'….

"Such," said Boon, "is the hero. The story begins, oh! quite in the James manner with — —" He read —

"'At times it seemed inaccessible, a thing beyond hope, beyond imagining, and then at times it became so concrete an imagination, a desire so specific, so nearly expressed, as to grow if not to the exact particulars of longitude and latitude, yet at any rate so far as county and district and atmosphere were concerned, so far indeed as an intuition of proximity was concerned, an intimation that made it seem at last at certain moments as if it could not possibly be very much farther than just round the corner or over the crest….'

"But I've left a good bit of that to write up. In the book there will be pages and sheets of that sentence. The gist is that Mr. Blandish wants a house to live in and that he has an idea of the kind of house he wants. And the chapter, the long, unresting, progressing chapter, expands and expands; it never jumps you forward, it never lets you off, you can't skip and you can't escape, until there comes at last a culminating distension of statement in which you realize more and more clearly, until you realize it with the unforgettable certainty of a

thing long fought for and won at last, that Mr. Blandish has actually come upon the house and with a vigour of decision as vivid as a flash of lightning in a wilderness of troubled clouds, as vivid indeed as the loud, sonorous bursting of a long blown bladder, has said '*This is it!*' On that '*This is it*' my chapter ends, with an effect of enormous relief, with something of the beautiful serenity that follows a difficult parturition.

"The story is born.

"And then we leap forward to possession.

"'And here he was, in the warmest reality, in the very heart of the materialization of his dream — —' He has, in fact, got the house. For a year or so from its first accidental discovery he had done nothing but just covet the house; too fearful of an overwhelming disappointment even to make a definite inquiry as to its accessibility. But he has, you will gather, taken apartments in the neighbourhood, thither he visits frequently, and almost every day when he walks abroad the coveted house draws him. It is in a little seaside place on the east coast, and the only available walks are along the shore or inland across the golf-links. Either path offers tempting digressions towards *it*. He comes to know it from a hundred aspects and under a thousand conditions of light and atmosphere…. And while still in the early stage he began a curious and delicious secret practice in relationship. You have heard of the Spaniard in love, in love with a woman he had seen but once, whom he might never see again, a princess, etiquette-defended, a goddess, and who yet, seeing a necklace that became her, bought it for the joy of owning something that was at least by fitness hers. Even so did Mr. Blandish begin to buy first one little article and then, the fancy growing upon him more and more, things, 'pieces' they call them, that were in the vein of Samphire House. And then came the day, the wonderful day, when as he took his afternoon feast of the eye, the door opened, some one came out towards him….

"It was incredible. They were giving him tea with hot, inadvisable scones — but their hotness, their close heaviness, he accepted with a ready devotion, would have accepted had they been ten times as hot and close and heavy, not heedlessly, indeed, but gratefully, willingly paying his price for these astonishing revelations that without an

effort, serenely, calmly, dropped in between her gentle demands whether he would have milk and her mild inquiries as to the exact quantity of sugar his habits and hygienic outlook demanded, that his hostess so casually made. These generous, heedless people were talking of departures, of abandonments, of, so they put it, selling the dear old place, if indeed any one could be found to buy a place so old and so remote and — she pointed her intention with a laugh — so very, very dear. Repletion of scones were a small price to pay for such a glowing, such an incredible gift of opportunity, thrust thus straight into the willing, amazed hands….

"He gets the house. He has it done up. He furnishes it, and every article of furniture seems a stroke of luck too good to be true. And to crown it all I am going to write one of those long crescendo passages that James loves, a sentence, pages of it, of happy event linking to happy event until at last the incredible completion, a butler, unquestionably Early Georgian, respectability, competence equally unquestionable, a wife who could cook, and cook well, no children, no thought or possibility of children, and to crown all, the perfect name — Mutimer!

Mutimer at first.

"All this you must understand is told retrospectively as Blandish installs himself in Samphire House. It is told to the refrain, 'Still, fresh every morning, came the persuasion "This is too good to be true."' And as it is told, something else, by the most imperceptible degrees, by a gathering up of hints and allusions and pointing details, gets itself told too, and that is the growing realization in the mind of Blandish of a something extra, of something not quite bargained for, — the hoard and the haunting. About the house hangs a presence….

"He had taken it at first as a mere picturesque accessory to the whole picturesque and delightful wreathing of association and tradition about the place, that there should be this ancient flavour of the cutlass and the keg, this faint aroma of buried doubloons and Stevensonian experiences. He had assumed, etc…. He had gathered, etc…. And it was in the most imperceptible manner that beyond his sense of these takings and assumptions and gatherings there grew his perception that the delicate quiver of appreciation, at first his utmost tribute to these illegal and adventurous and sanguinary associations, was broadening and strengthening, was, one hardly knew whether to say developing or degenerating, into a nervous reaction, more spinal and less equivocally agreeable, into the question, sensed rather than actually thought or asked, whether in fact the place didn't in certain lights and certain aspects and at certain unfavourable moments come near to evoking the ghost — if such sorites are permissible in the world of delicate shades — of the ghost, of the ghost of a shiver — of *aversion*….

"And so at page a hundred and fifty or thereabouts we begin to get into the story," said Boon.

"You wade through endless marshes of subtle intimation, to a sense of a Presence in Samphire House. For a number of pages you are quite unable to tell whether this is a ghost or a legend or a foreboding or simply old-fashioned dreams that are being allusively placed before you. But there is an effect piled up very wonderfully, of Mr. Blandish, obsessed, uneasy, watching furtively and steadfastly his guests, his callers, his domestics, continually asking himself, 'Do they note it? Are they feeling it?'

"We break at last into incidents. A young friend of the impossible name of Deshman helps evolve the story; he comes to stay; he seems

to feel the influence from the outset, he cannot sleep, he wanders about the house…. Do others know? *Others?*… The gardener takes to revisiting the gardens after nightfall. He is met in the shrubbery with an unaccountable spade in his hand and answers huskily. Why should a gardener carry a spade? Why should he answer huskily? Why should the presence, the doubt, the sense of something else elusively in the air about them, become intensified at the encounter? Oh! conceivably of course in many places, but just *there*! As some sort of protection, it may be…. Then suddenly as Mr. Blandish sits at his lonely but beautifully served dinner he becomes aware for the first time of a change in Mutimer.

Mutimer at the end of a year.

“Something told him in that instant that Mutimer also *knew*….

“Deshman comes again with a new and disconcerting habit of tapping the panelling and measuring the thickness of the walls when he thinks no one is looking, and then a sister of Mr. Blandish and a friend, a woman, yet not so much a woman as a disembodied intelligence in a feminine costume with one of those impalpable relationships with Deshman that people have with one another in the world of Henry James, an association of shadows, an atmospheric liaison. Follow some almost sentenceless conversations. Mr. Blandish walks about the shrubbery with the friend, elaborately getting at it — whatever it is — and in front of them, now hidden by the yew hedges, now fully in view, walks Deshman with the married and settled sister of Mr. Blandish….

“‘So,’ said Mr. Blandish, pressing the point down towards the newly discovered sensitiveness, ‘where we feel, he it seems *knows*.’

“She seemed to consider.

“‘He doesn’t know completely,’ was her qualification.

“‘But he has something — something tangible.’

“‘If he can make it tangible.’

“On that the mind of Mr. Blandish played for a time.

“‘Then it isn’t altogether tangible yet?’

“‘It isn’t tangible enough for him to go upon.’

“‘Definitely something.’

“Her assent was mutely concise.

“‘That we on our part —— ?’

“The *we* seemed to trouble her.

“‘He knows more than you do,’ she yielded.

“The gesture, the half turn, the momentary halt in the paces of Mr. Blandish, plied her further.

“‘More, I think, than he has admitted — to any one.’

“‘Even to you?’

“He perceived an interesting wave of irritation. ‘Even to me,’ he had wrung from her, but at the price of all further discussion.

“Putting the thing crassly,” said Boon, “Deshman has got wind of a hoard, of a treasure, of something — Heaven as yet only knows what something — buried, imbedded, in some as yet unexplained way incorporated with Samphire House. On the whole the stress lies

rather on treasure, the treasure of smuggling, of longshore practices, of illegality on the high seas. And still clearer is it that the amiable Deshman wants to get at it without the participation of Mr. Blandish. Until the very end you are never quite satisfied why Deshman wants to get at it in so private a fashion. As the plot thickens you are played about between the conviction that Deshman wants the stuff for himself and the firm belief of the lady that against the possible intervention of the Treasury, he wants to secure it for Mr. Blandish, to secure it at least generously if nefariously, lest perhaps it should fall under the accepted definition and all the consequent confiscations of treasure trove. And there are further beautiful subtleties as to whether she really believes in this more kindly interpretation of the refined but dubitable Deshman…. A friend of Deshman's, shameless under the incredible name of Mimbleton, becomes entangled in this thick, sweet flow of narrative — the James method of introducing a character always reminds me of going round with the lantern when one is treacling for moths. Mimbleton has energy. He presses. Under a summer dawn of delicious sweetness Mimbleton is found insensible on the croquet lawn by Mr. Blandish, who, like most of the characters in the narrative from first to last, has been unable to sleep. And at the near corner of the house, close to a never before remarked ventilator, is a hastily and inaccurately refilled excavation….

"Then events come hurrying in a sort of tangled haste — making sibyl-like gestures.

"At the doorway Mutimer appears — swaying with some profound emotion. He is still in his evening attire. He has not yet gone to bed. In spite of the dawn he carried a burning candle — obliquely. At the sight of his master he withdraws — backwards and with difficulty….

"Then," said Boon, "I get my crowning chapter: the breakfast, a peculiar *something*, something almost palpable in the atmosphere — Deshman hoarse and a little talkative, Mimbleton with a possibly nervous headache, husky also and demanding tea in a thick voice, Mutimer waiting uneasily, and Mr. Blandish, outwardly calm, yet noting every particular, thinking meanings into every word and movement, and growing more and more clear in his conviction that

Mutimer knows — knows everything….

Mutimer as the plot thickens.

"Book two opens with Mr. Blandish practically in possession of the facts. Putting the thing coarsely, the treasure is — 1813 brandy, in considerable quantities bricked up in a disused cellar of Samphire House. Samphire House, instead of being the fine claret of a refuge Mr. Blandish supposed, is a loaded port. But of course in the novel we shall not put things coarsely, and for a long time you will be by no means clear what the 'spirit' is that Mr. Blandish is now resolved to exorcise. He is, in fact, engaged in trying to get that brandy away, trying to de-alcoholize his existence, trying — if one must put the thing in all the concrete crudity of his fundamental intention — to sell the stuff….

"Now in real life you would just go and sell it. But people in the novels of Henry James do not do things in the inattentive, offhand, rather confused, and partial way of reality: they bring enormous brains to bear upon the minutest particulars of existence. Mr. Blandish, following the laws of that world, has not simply to sell his brandy: he has to sell it subtly, intricately, interminably, with a delicacy, with a dignity….

"He consults friends — impalpable, intricate, inexhaustible friends.

"There are misunderstandings. One old and trusted intimate concludes rather hastily that Mr. Blandish is confessing that he has written a poem, another that he is making a proposal of marriage, another that he wishes an introduction to the secretary of the Psychical Research Society…. All this," said Boon, "remains, perhaps indefinitely, to be worked out. Only the end, the end, comes with a rush. Deshman has found for him — one never gets nearer to it than the 'real right people.' The real right people send their agent down, a curious blend of gentleman and commercial person he is, to investigate, to verify, to estimate quantities. Ultimately he will — shall we say it? — make an offer. With a sense of immense culmination the reader at last approaches the hoard….

"You are never told the thing exactly. It is by indefinable suggestions, by exquisite approaches and startings back, by circumlocution the most delicate, that your mind at last shapes its realization, that — the last drop of the last barrel has gone and that

Mutimer, the butler, lies dead or at least helpless — in the inner cellar. And a beautiful flavour, ripe and yet rare, rich without opulence, hangs — *diminuendo morendo* — in the air….”

CHAPTER THE FIFTH Of the Assembling and Opening of the World Conference on the Mind of the Race

§ 1

It must be borne in mind that not even the opening chapter of this huge book, "The Mind of the Race," was ever completely written. The discussion in the Garden by the Sea existed merely so far as the fragment of dialogue I have quoted took it. I do not know what Mr. Gosse contributed except that it was something bright, and that presently he again lost his temper and washed his hands of the whole affair and went off with Mr. Yeats to do a little Academy thing of their own round a corner, and I do not know what became of the emissaries of Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Hearst. One conversation drops out of mind and another begins; it is like the battle of the Aisne passing slowly into the battle of the Yser. The idea develops into the holding of a definite congress upon the Mind of the Race at some central place. I don't think Boon was ever very clear whether that place was Chautauqua, or Grindelwald, or Stratford, or Oxford during the Long Vacation, or the Exhibition grounds at San Francisco. It was, at any rate, some such place, and it was a place that was speedily placarded with all sorts of bills and notices and counsels, such as, "To the Central Hall," or "Section B: Criticism and Reviewing," or "Section M: Prose Style," or "Authors' Society (British) Solicitors' Department," or "Exhibit of the Reading Room of the British Museum."

Manifestly the model of a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science dominated his mind more and more, until at last he began to concoct a presidential address. And he invented a man called J. B. Pondlebury, very active and illiterate, but an excellent organizer, trained by Selfridge, that Marshal Field of London, who is very directive throughout. J. B. Pondlebury orders the special trains, contrives impossible excursions, organizes garden fêtes and water parties, keeps people together who would prefer to be

separated, and breaks up people who have been getting together. Through all these things drifts Hallery, whose writings started the idea, and sometimes he is almost, as it were, leader and sometimes he is like a drowned body in the torrent below Niagara — Pondlebury being Niagara.

On the whole the atmosphere of the great conference was American, and yet I distinctly remember that it was the Special Train to Bâle of which he gave us an account one afternoon; it was a night journey of considerable eventfulness, with two adjacent carriages de luxe labelled respectively "Specially Reserved for Miss Marie Corelli," and "Specially Reserved for Mr. and Mrs. George Bernard Shaw," with conspicuous reiterations. The other compartments were less exclusive, and contained curious minglings of greatness, activity, and reputation. Sir J. M. Barrie had an upper berth in a *wagon-lit*, where he remained sympathetically silent above a crowd of younger reputations, a crowd too numerous to permit the making of the lower berth and overflowing into the corridor. I remember Boon kept jamming new people into that congestion. The whole train, indeed, was to be fearfully overcrowded. That was part of the joke. James Joyce I recall as a novelist strange to me that Boon insisted was a "first-rater." He represented him as being of immense size but extreme bashfulness. And he talked about D. H. Lawrence, St. John Ervine, Reginald Wright Kauffman, Leonard Merrick, Viola Meynell, Rose Macaulay, Katherine Mansfield, Mary Austin, Clutton Brock, Robert Lynd, James Stephens, Philip Guedalla, H. M. Tomlinson, Denis Garstin, Dixon Scott, Rupert Brooke, Geoffrey Young, F. S. Flint, Marmaduke Pickthall, Randolph S. Bourne, James Milne ——

"Through all the jam, I think we must have Ford Madox Hueffer, wandering to and fro up and down the corridor, with distraught blue eyes, laying his hands on heads and shoulders, the Only Uncle of the Gifted Young, talking in a languid, plangent tenor, now boasting about trivialities, and now making familiar criticisms (which are invariably ill-received), and occasionally quite absent-mindedly producing splendid poetry…."

Like most authors who have made their way to prominence and profit, Boon was keenly sympathetic with any new writer who

promised to do interesting work, and very ready with his praise and recognition. That disposition in these writing, prolific times would alone have choked the corridor. And he liked young people even when their promises were not exactly convincing. He hated to see a good book neglected, and was for ever ramming "The Crystal Age" and "Said the Fisherman" and "Tony Drum" and "George's Mother" and "A Hind Let Loose" and "Growing Pains" down the throats of his visitors. But there were very human and definite limits to his appreciations. Conspicuous success, and particularly conspicuous respectable success, chilled his generosity. Conrad he could not endure. I do him no wrong in mentioning that; it is the way with most of us; and a score of flourishing contemporaries who might have liked tickets for the Conference special would have found great difficulty in getting them.

There is a fascination in passing judgements and drawing up class lists. For a time the high intention of the Mind of the Race was forgotten while we talked the narrow "shop" of London literary journalism, and discovered and weighed and log-rolled and — in the case of the more established — blamed and condemned. That Bâle train became less and less like a train and more and more like a descriptive catalogue.

For the best part of an afternoon we talked of the young and the new, and then we fell into a discussion about such reputations as Pickthall's and W. H. Hudson's and the late Stephen Crane's, reputations ridiculously less than they ought to be, so that these writers, who are certainly as securely classic as Beckford or Herrick, are still unknown to half the educated English reading public. Was it due to the haste of criticism or the illiteracy of publishers? That question led us so far away from the special Bâle train that we never returned to it. But I know that we decided that the real and significant writers were to be only a small portion of the crowd that congested the train; there were also to be endless impostors, imitators, editors, raiders of the world of print…. At every important station there was to be a frightful row about all these people's tickets, and violent attempts to remove doubtful cases…. Then Mr. Clement K. Shorter was to come in to advise and help the conductor…. Ultimately this led to trouble about Mr. Shorter's own credentials….

Some of Boon's jokes about this train were, to say the best of them, obvious. Mr. Compton Mackenzie was in trouble about his excess luggage, for example. Mr. Upton Sinclair, having carried out his ideal of an innocent frankness to a logical completeness in his travelling equipment, was forcibly wrapped in blankets by the train officials. Mr. Thomas Hardy had a first-class ticket but travelled by choice or mistake in a second-class compartment, his deserted place being subsequently occupied by that promising young novelist Mr. Hugh Walpole, provided with a beautiful fur rug, a fitted dressing-bag, a writing slope, a gold-nibbed fountain pen, innumerable introductions, and everything that a promising young novelist can need. The brothers Chesterton, Mr. Maurice Baring, and Mr. Belloc sat up all night in the *wagon-restaurant* consuming beer enormously and conversing upon immortality and whether it extends to Semitic and Oriental persons. At the end of the train, I remember, there was to have been a horse-van containing Mr. Maurice Hewlett's charger — Mr. Hewlett himself, I believe, was left behind by accident at the Gare de Lyons — Mr. Cunninghame Graham's Arab steed, and a large, quiet sheep, the inseparable pet of Mr. Arthur Christopher Benson….

There was also, I remember, a description of the whole party running for early coffee, which gave Boon ample and regrettable opportunities for speculations upon the *déshabille* of his contemporaries. Much of the detail of that invention I prefer to forget, but I remember Mr. Shaw was fully prepared for the emerging with hand-painted pyjamas, over which he was wearing a saffron dressing-gown decorated in green and purple scrolls by one of the bolder artists associated with Mr. Roger Fry, and as these special train allusions are all that I can ever remember Boon saying about Shaw, and as the drawing does in itself amount to a criticism, I give it here….

How Mr. Shaw knocked them all on Bâle platform, and got right into the middle of the picture. Remark his earnest face. This surely is no mountebank.

§ 2

Boon was greatly exercised over the problem of a president.

"Why have a president?" Dodd helped.

"There must be a Presidential Address," said Boon, "and these things always do have a president."

"Lord Rosebery," suggested Wilkins.

"Lord Morley," said Dodd.

“Lord Bryce.”

Then we looked at one another.

“For my own part,” said Boon, “if we are going in for that sort of thing, I favour Lord Reay.

“You see, Lord Reay has never done anything at all connected with literature. Morley and Bryce and Rosebery have at any rate written things — historical studies, addresses, things like that — but Reay has never written anything, and he let Gollancz make him president of the British Academy without a murmur. This seems to mark him out for this further distinction. He is just the sort of man who would be made — and who would let himself be made — president of a British affair of this sort, and they would hoist him up and he would talk for two or three hours without a blush. Just like that other confounded peer — what was his name? — who bored and bored and bored at the Anatole France dinner…. In the natural course of things it would be one of these literary lords….”

“What would he say?” asked Dodd.

“Maunderings, of course. It will make the book rather dull. I doubt if I can report him at length…. He will speak upon contemporary letters, the lack of current achievement…. I doubt if a man like Lord Reay ever reads at all. One wonders sometimes what these British literary aristocrats do with all their time. Probably he left off reading somewhere in the eighties. He won’t have noted it, of course, and he will be under the impression that nothing has been written for the past thirty years.”

“Good Lord!” said Wilkins.

“And he’ll say that. Slowly. Steadily. Endlessly. Then he will thank God for the English classics, ask where now is our Thackeray? where now our Burns? our Charlotte Brontë? our Tennyson? say a good word for our immortal bard, and sit down amidst the loud applause of thousands of speechlessly furious British and American writers….”

“I don’t see that this will help your book forward,” said Dodd.

“No, but it’s a proper way of beginning. Like Family Prayers.”

“I suppose,” said Wilkins, “if you told a man of that sort that there were more and better poets writing in English beautifully in 1914 than ever before he wouldn’t believe it. I suppose if you said that

Ford Madox Hueffer, for example, had produced sweeter and deeper poetry than Alfred, Lord Tennyson, he'd have a fit."

"He'd have nothing of the kind. You could no more get such an idea into the head of one of these great vestiges of our Gladstonian days than you could get it into the seat of a Windsor chair…. And people don't have fits unless something has got into them…. No, he'd reflect quite calmly that first of all he'd never heard of this Hueffer, then that probably he was a very young man. And, anyhow, one didn't meet him in important places…. And after inquiry he would find out he was a journalist…. And then probably he'd cease to cerebrate upon the question…."

§ 3

"Besides," said Boon, "we must have one of our literary peers because of America."

"You're unjust to America," I said.

"No," said Boon. "But Aunt Dove — I know her ways."

That led to a long, rambling discussion about the American literary atmosphere. Nothing that I could say would make him relent from his emphatic assertion that it is a spinster atmosphere, an atmosphere in which you can't say all sorts of things and where all sorts of things have to be specially phrased. "And she can't stand young things and crude things — —"

"America!" said Wilkins.

"The America I mean. The sort of America that ought to supply young new writers with caresses and — nourishment. …Instead of which you get the *Nation*…. That bleak acidity, that refined appeal to take the child away."

"But they don't produce new young writers!" said Wilkins.

"But they do!" said Boon. "And they strangle them!"

It was extraordinary what a power metaphors and fancies had upon Boon. Only those who knew him intimately can understand how necessary Miss Bathwick was to him. He would touch a metaphor and then return and sip it, and then sip and drink and swill until it had intoxicated him hopelessly.

“America,” said Boon, “can produce such a supreme writer as Stephen Crane — the best writer of English for the last half-century — or Mary Austin, who used to write —— What other woman could touch her? But America won’t own such children. It’s amazing. It’s a case of concealment of birth. She exposes them. Whether it’s Shame — or a Chinese trick…. She’ll sit never knowing she’s had a Stephen Crane, adoring the European reputation, the florid mental gestures of a Conrad. You see, she can tell Conrad ‘writes.’ It shows. And she’ll let Mary Austin die of neglect, while she worships the ‘art’ of Mary Ward. It’s like turning from the feet of a goddess to a pair of goloshes. She firmly believes that old quack Bergson is a bigger man than her own unapproachable William James…. She’s incredible. I tell you it’s only conceivable on one supposition…. I’d never thought before about these disgraceful sidelights on Miss Dove’s career….

“We English do make foundlings of some of her little victims, anyhow…. But why hasn’t she any natural instinct in the matter?

“Now, if one represented that peculiar Bostonian intellectual gentility, the *Nation* kind of thing, as a very wicked, sour lady’s-maid with a tremendous influence over the Spinster’s conduct….”

His mind was running on.

“I begin to see a melodramatic strain in this great novel, ‘Miss Dove.’… ‘Miss Dove’s Derelicts.’… Too broad, I am afraid. If one were to represent Sargent and Henry James as two children left out one cold night in a basket at a cottage in the village by a mysterious stranger, with nothing but a roll of dollars and a rough drawing of the Washington coat-of-arms to indicate their parentage….

“Then when they grow up they go back to the big house and she’s almost kind to them….

“Have you ever read the critical articles of Edgar Allan Poe? They’re very remarkable. He is always demanding an American Literature. It is like a deserted baby left to die in its cradle, weeping and wailing for its bottle…. What he wanted, of course, was honest and intelligent criticism.

“To this day America kills her Poes….”

“But confound it!” said Wilkins, “America does make discoveries for herself. Hasn’t she discovered Lowes Dickinson?”

“But that merely helps my case. Lowes Dickinson has just the qualities that take the American judgement; he carries the shadow of King’s College Chapel about with him wherever he goes; he has an unobtrusive air of being doubly starred in Baedeker and not thinking anything of it. And also she took Noyes to her bosom. But when has American criticism ever had the intellectual pluck to proclaim an American?

“And so, you see,” he remarked, going off again at a tangent, “if we are going to bid for American adhesions there’s only one course open to us in the matter of this presidential address…. Lord Morley….”

“You’re a little difficult to follow at times,” said Wilkins.

“Because he’s the man who’s safest not to say anything about babies or — anything alive…. Obviously a literary congress in America must be a festival in honour of sterility.

“Aunt Dove demands it. Like celebrating the virginity of Queen Elizabeth….”

§ 4

I find among the fragments of my departed friend some notes that seem to me to be more or less relevant here. They are an incomplete report of the proceedings of a section S, devoted to *Poiometry*, apparently the scientific measurement of literary greatness. It seems to have been under the control of a special committee, including Mr. James Huneker, Mr. Slosson, Sir Thomas Seccombe, Mr. James Douglas, Mr. Clement K. Shorter, the acting editor of the *Bookman*, and the competition editress of the *Westminster Gazette*….

Apparently the notes refer to some paper read before the section. Its authorship is not stated, nor is there any account of its reception. But the title is “The Natural History of Greatness, with especial reference to Literary Reputations.”

The opening was evidently one of those rapid historical sketches frequent in such papers.

“Persuasion that human beings are sometimes of disproportionate size appears first in the Egyptian and Syrian wall paintings….

Probably innate…. The discouragement of the young a social necessity in all early societies. In all societies?… Exaggerated stories about the departed…. Golden ages. Heroic ages. Ancestor worship…. Dead dogs better than living lions…. Abraham. Moses. The Homeric reputation, the first great literary cant. Resentment against Homer's exaggerated claims on the part of intelligent people. Zoilus. Caricature of the Homerists in the Satyricon. Other instances of unorthodox ancient criticism…. Shakespeare as an intellectual nuisance…. Extreme suffering caused to contemporary writers by the Shakespeare legend….

"Another form of opposition to these obsessions is the creation of countervailing reputations. Certain people in certain ages have resolved to set up Great Men of their own to put beside these Brocken spectres from the past. This marks a certain stage of social development, the beginning of self-consciousness in a civilized community. Self-criticism always begins in self-flattery. Virgil as an early instance of a Great Man of set intentions; deliberately put up as the Latin Homer….

"Evolution of the greatness of Aristotle during the Middle Ages.

"Little sense of contemporary Greatness among the Elizabethans.

"Comparison with the past the prelude to Great-Man-Making, begins with such a work as Swift's 'Battle of the Books.' Concurrently the decline in religious feeling robs the past of its half-mystical prestige. The Western world ripe for Great Men in the early nineteenth century. The Germans as a highly competitive and envious people take the lead. The inflation of Schiller. The greatness of Goethe. Incredible dullness of "Elective Affinities," of "Werther," of "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship." The second part of "Faust" a tiresome muddle. Large pretentiousness of the man's career. Resolve of the Germans to have a Great Fleet, a Great Empire, a Great Man. Difficulty in finding a suitable German for Greatening. Expansion of the Goethe legend. German efficiency brought to bear on the task. Lectures. Professors. Goethe compared to Shakespeare. Compared to Homer. Compared to Christ. Compared to God. Discovered to be incomparable….

"Stimulation of Scotch activities. The Scotch also passionately and aggressively patriotic. Fortunate smallness of Scotland and lack

of adjacent docile Germans has alone saved the world from another Prussia. Desperation of the search for a real Scotch First Rater. The discovery that Burns was as great as Shakespeare. Greater. The booming of Sir Walter Scott. Wake up, England! The production of Dickens. The slow but enormous discovery of Wordsworth. Victorian age sets up as a rival to the Augustine. Selection of Great Men in every department. The Great Victorian painters. Sir Frederick Leighton, compared with Titian and Michael Angelo. Tennyson as Virgil. Lord Tennyson at the crest of the Victorian Greatness wave. His hair. His cloak. His noble bearing. His aloofness. His Great Pipe. His price per word. His intellectual familiarities with Queen Victoria….

"Longfellow essentially an American repartee….

"Ingratitude of British Royal Family to those who contributed to the Victorian Greatness period, shown in the absence of representative Great Men from the Buckingham Palace Monument. Victoria did not do it all. Compare the Albert Memorial….

"Interesting task to plan an alternative pedestal. Proposal to make designs for a monument to our own times. Symbolic corner groups by Will Dyson. Frieze of representative men by Max. Canopy by Wyndham Lewis. Lost opportunity for much bright discussion….

"Analysis of literary greatness. Is any literary achievement essential to greatness? Probably a minute minimum indispensable. Burns. Fitzgerald. But compare Lord Acton and Lord Reay. Necessity of a marked personality. Weaknesses, but no unpopular vices. Greatness blighted by want of dignity. Laurence Sterne. Reciprocal duty of those made Great not to distress their Public. But imperfectly established scandal or complexity of relationship may give scope for vindications and research. Or a certain irregularity of life may create a loyal and devoted following of sympathizers. Shelley…. Then capable advocacy is needed and a critical world large enough to be effective but small enough to be unanimous. Part an able publisher may play in establishing and developing a Great Man…. Quiet Push, not Noisy Push. Injury done by tactless advertisement…. The element of luck….

"These are the seeds of greatness, but the growth depends upon the soil. The best soil is a large uncritical public newly come to

reading, a little suspicious of the propriety of the practice and in a state of intellectual snobbishness. It must also be fairly uniform and on some common basis of ideas. Ideally represented by the reading publics of Germany, Britain, the United States, and France in the middle nineteenth century….

"Decline in the output of Greatness towards the end of the Victorian time. Probably due in all cases to an enlargement of the reading public to unmanageable dimensions. No reputation sufficiently elastic to cover it. The growth of Chicago, New York, and the West destroyed the preponderance of Boston in America, and the Civil War broke the succession of American Great Men. Rarity of new American-born Greatnesses after the war. Dumping of established greatnesses from England gave no chance to the native market. No Protection for America in this respect. In Great Britain the board schools create big masses of intelligent people inaccessible to the existing machinery by which Greatness is imposed. The Greatness output in Britain declines also in consequence. Mrs. Humphry Ward, the last of the British Victorian Great. Expressed admiration of Mr. Gladstone for her work. Support of the *Spectator*. Profound respect of the American people. Rumour that she is represented as a sea goddess at the base of the Queen Victoria Memorial unfounded. Nobody is represented on the Queen Victoria Memorial except Queen Victoria…. Necessity after the epoch of Mrs. Ward of more and more flagrant advertisement to reach the enlarged public, so that at last touch is lost with the critical centres. Great Men beyond the Limit. Self-exploded candidates for Greatness. Boomsters. Best Sellers. Mr. Hall Caine as the shocking example….

"Other causes contributing to the decay of Greatness among literary men. Competition of politicians, princes, personages generally for the prestige of the literary man. Superior initial advantage in conspicuousness. The genuine writer handicapped. The process already beginning at the crest of the period. Queen Victoria's 'Leaves from a Highland Diary.' Mr. Gladstone and the higher windiness. Later developments. The Kaiser as a man of letters. Mr. Roosevelt as writer and critic. The Essays of President Wilson. The case of Lord Rosebery. Mr. Haldane as a philosopher. As a critic. His

opinion of Goethe. Compare the royal and noble authors of Byzantium. Compare the Roman Emperor becoming Pontifex Maximus. Compare the cannibal chief in a general's hat….

"Return of the literary men as such to a decent obscurity. From which they are unlikely to emerge again. This an unmixed blessing. So long as good writing and sound thinking are still appreciated the less we hear about authors the better. Never so little recognized Greatness and never so much wise, subtle, sweet, and boldly conceived literary work as now. This will probably continue. [He was writing before the war.] The English-reading literary world too large now for the operations of Greatening. Doubtful case of Rabindranath Tagore. Discuss this. Special suitability of India as a basis for Greatness. India probably on the verge of a Greatness period….

"Disrespect a natural disposition in the young. Checked and subdued in small societies, but now happily rampant in the uncontrollable English-speaking communities. The new (undignified) criticism. The *English Review*. Mr. Austin Harrison and the street-boy style. The literature of the chalked fence. The *New Age*. Literary carbolic acid — with an occasional substitution of vitriol…. Insurrection of the feminine mind against worship. Miss Rebecca West as the last birth of time. A virile-minded generation of young women indicated. Mrs. Humphry Ward blushes publicly for the *Freewoman* in the *Times*. Hitherto Greatness has demanded the applause of youth and feminine worship as necessary conditions. As necessary to its early stages as down to an eider chick. Impossible to imagine Incipient Greatness nestling comfortably upon Orage, Austin Harrison, and Rebecca West. Dearth of young Sidney Colvins…. Unhappy position of various derelict and still imperfectly developed Great surviving from the old times. Arnold Bennett as an aborted Great Man. Would have made a Great Victorian and had a crowd of satellite helpers. Now no one will ever treasure his old hats and pipes….

"Idea of an experimental resurrection of those who still live in our hearts. If Goethe had a second time on earth —— ? Could he do it now? Would Lord Haldane perceive him? Imaginary description of Lord Haldane's recognition of a youthful Goethe. They meet by

accident during a walking tour in Germany. Amiable aloofness of Lord Haldane. His gradual discovery of an intellectual superior in his modest companion. Public proclamation of his find…. Doubts….

"Peroration. Will the world be happy without Literary Greatnesses? Improvise and take a cheerful line upon this question."

Miss Rebecca West, pensive, after writing her well-known opinion of that Great Good Woman-Soul, Miss Ellen Key.

§ 5

Ultimately, against every possibility of the case, Boon decided that the President of his conference must be Hallery. And he wrote his presidential address. But he never read that address to us. Some shyness I think restrained him. I dig it out here now for the first time, a little astonished at it, disposed to admire something in its spirit…. But yet one has to admit that it shows an extraordinary lapse from Boon's accustomed mocking humour.

Here is the opening.

"Hallery then advanced to the edge of the platform and fumbled with his manuscript. His face was very white and his expression bitterly earnest. With an appearance of effort he began, omitting in his nervousness any form of address to his audience —

"'For the most part, the life of human communities has been as unconscious as the life of animals. They have been born as unknowingly as the beasts; they have followed unforeseen and

unheeded destinies, and destruction has come to them from forces scarcely anticipated and not understood. Tribes, nations beyond counting, have come and passed, with scarcely a mental activity beyond a few legends, a priestly guess at cosmogony, a few rumours and traditions, a list of kings as bare as a schoolboy's diary, a war or so, a triumph or so…. We are still only in the beginning of history — in the development, that is, of a racial memory; we have as yet hardly begun to inquire into our racial origins, our racial conditions, our racial future…. Philosophy, which is the discussion of the relation of the general to the particular, of the whole to the part, of the great and yet vague life of the race to the intense yet manifestly incomplete life of the individual, is still not three thousand years old. Man has lived consciously as man it may be for hundreds of thousands of years, he has learnt of himself by talking to his fellows, he has expressed personal love and many personal feelings with a truth and beauty that are well nigh final, but the race does but begin to live as a conscious being. It begins to live as a conscious being, and as it does so, the individual too begins to live in a new way, a greater, more understanding, and more satisfying way. His thoughts apprehend interests beyond himself and beyond his particular life….'

"At this point Hallery became so acutely aware of his audience that for some seconds he could not go on reading. A number of people in various parts of the hall had suddenly given way to their coughs, a bald-headed gentleman about the middle of the assembly had discovered a draught, and was silently but conspicuously negotiating for the closing of a window by an attendant, and at the back a cultivated-looking young gentleman was stealing out on tiptoe.

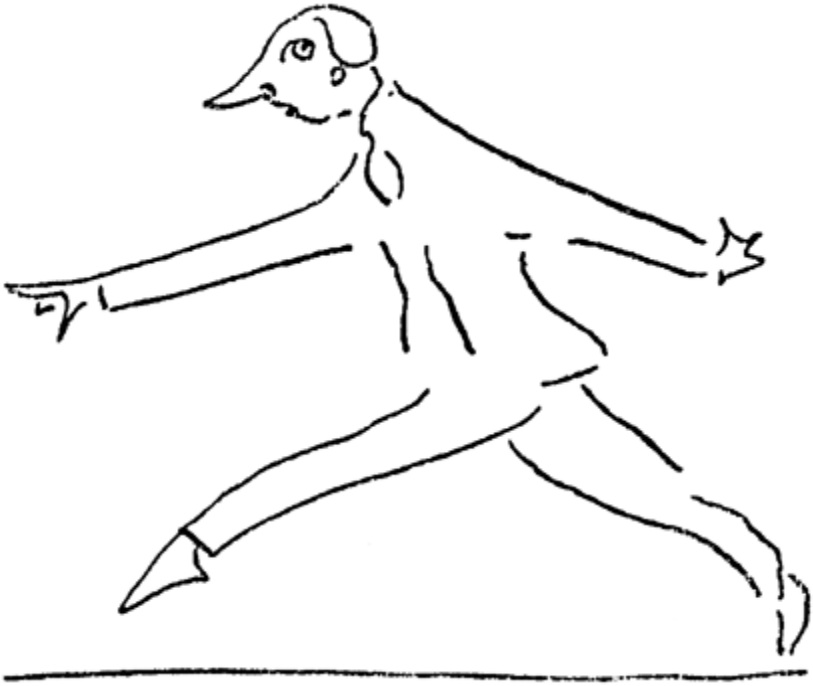

The first departure.

"For a moment Hallery was distressed by the thought that perhaps he might have taken a more amusing line than the one he had chosen, and then, realizing how vain were such regrets and rather quickening his pace, he resumed the reading of his address —

"'You see that I am beginning upon a very comprehensive scale, for I propose to bring within the scope of this conference all that arises out of these two things, out of the realization of the incompleteness of man's individual life on the one hand and out of the realization of a greater being in which man lives, of a larger racial life and ampler references upon the other. All this much — and with a full awareness of just how much it is — I am going to claim as literature and our province. Religion, I hold, every religion so far as it establishes and carries ideas, is literature, philosophy is literature, science is literature; a pamphlet or a leading article. I put all these things together — —'

"At this point there was a second departure.

The second departure.

Almost immediately followed by a third.

The third departure.

"Hallery halted for a second time and then gripped the reading-desk with both hands, and, reading now with a steadily accelerated velocity, heeded his audience no more —

"'I put all these things together because, indeed, it is only associations of antiquity and prescription and prestige can separate them. Altogether they constitute the great vague body of man's super-personal mental life, his unselfish life, his growing life, as a premeditating, self-conscious race and destiny. Here in growing volume, in this comprehensive literature of ours, preserved, selected, criticized, re-stated, continually rather more fined, continually rather more clarified, we have the mind, not of a mortal but of an immortal adventurer. Whom for the moment, fractionally, infinitesimally, whenever we can forget ourselves in pure feeling, in service, in creative effort or disinterested thought, we are privileged in that measure to become. This wonder that we celebrate, this literature, is the dawn of human divinity. . . . . ."

But though Hallery went on, I do not, on reflection, think that I will. I doubt if Boon ever decided to incorporate this extraordinary Presidential Address in our book; I think perhaps he meant to revise it or substitute something else. He wanted to state a case for the extreme importance of literature, and to my mind he carried his statement into regions mystical, to say the least of it, and likely to be considered blasphemous by many quite right-minded people. For instance, he made Hallery speak of the Word that links men's minds. He brings our poor, mortal, mental activities into the most extraordinary relationship with those greater things outside our lives which it is our duty to revere as much as possible and to think about as little as possible; he draws no line between them…. He never, I say, read the paper to us…. I cannot guess whether he did not read it to us because he doubted himself or because he doubted us, and I do not even care to examine my own mind to know whether I do or do not believe in the thesis he sets so unhesitatingly down. In a sense it is no doubt true that literature is a kind of over-mind of the race, and in a sense, no doubt, the Bible and the Koran, the Talmud and the Prayer Book are literature. In a sense Mr. Upton Sinclair's "Bible"

for Socialists of bits from ancient and modern writings is literature. In a sense, too, literature does go on rather like a continuous mind thinking…. But I feel that all this is just in a sense…. I don't really believe it. I am not quite sure what I do really believe, but I certainly recoil from anything so crudely positive as Hallery's wild assertions…. It would mean worshipping literature. Or at least worshipping the truth in literature….

Of course, one knows that real literature is something that has to do with leisure and cultivated people and books and shaded lamps and all that sort of thing. But Hallery wants to drag in not only cathedrals and sanctuaries, but sky-signs and hoardings…. He wants literature to embrace whatever is in or whatever changes the mind of the race, except purely personal particulars. And I think Boon was going to make Hallery claim this, just in order to show up against these tremendous significances the pettiness of the contemporary literary life, the poverty and levity of criticism, the mean business side of modern book-making and book-selling….

Turning over the pages of this rejected address, which I am sure the reader would not thank me for printing, I do come upon this presentable passage, which illustrates what I am saying —

"So that every man who writes to express or change or criticize an idea, every man who observes and records a fact in the making of a research, every man who hazards or tests a theory, every artist of any sort who really expresses, does thereby, in that very act, participate, share in, become for just that instant when he is novel and authentically *true*, the Mind of the Race, the thinking divinity. Do you not see, then, what an arrogant worship, what a sacramental thing it is to lift up brain and hand and say, '*I too will add*'? We bring our little thoughts as the priest brings a piece of common bread to consecration, and though we have produced but a couplet or a dozen lines of prose, we have nevertheless done the parallel miracle. And all reading that is reading with the mind, all conscious subjugation of our attention to expressed beauty, or expressed truth, is sacramental, is communion with the immortal being. We lift up our thoughts out of the little festering pit of desire and vanity which is one's individual self into that greater self…."

So he talks, and again presently of "that world-wide immortal

communion incessant as the march of sun and planets amidst the stars….”

And then, going on with his vast comparison, for I cannot believe this is more than a fantastic parallelism: “And if the mind that does, as we say, create is like the wafer that has become miraculously divine, then though you may not like to think of it, all you who give out books, who print books and collect books, and sell books and lend them, who bring pictures to people’s eyes, set things forth in theatres, hand out thought in any way from the thinking to the attentive mind, all you are priests, you do a priestly office, and every bookstall and hoarding is a wayside shrine, offering consolation and release to men and women from the intolerable prison of their narrow selves….”

§ 6

That, I think, is what Boon really at the bottom of his heart felt and believed about literature.

And yet in some way he could also not believe it; he could recognize something about it that made him fill the margin of the manuscript of this address with grotesque figures of an imaginary audience going out. They were, I know, as necessary to his whole conception as his swinging reference to the stars; both were as much part of his profound belief as the gargoyle on the spire and the high altar are necessary parts of a Gothic cathedral. And among other figures I am amused rather than hurt to find near the end this of myself —

Too high-pitched even for Reginald.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH Of not liking Hallery and the Royal Society for the Discouragement of Literature

§ 1

In the same peculiar receptacle in which I find this presidential address I found a quantity of other papers and scraps of paper, upon which Boon, I should judge, had been thinking about that address and why he was ashamed to produce it to us, and why he perceived that this audience would dislike Hallery so much that he was obliged to admit that they would go out before his lecture was finished, and why he himself didn't somehow like this Hallery that he had made. All these writings are in the nature of fragments, some are illegible and more are incomprehensible; but it is clear that his mind attacked these questions with a most extraordinary width of reference. I find him writing about the One and the Many, the General and the Particular, the Species and the Individual, declaring that it is through "the dimensions (*sic*) of space and time" that "individuation" becomes possible, and citing Darwin, Heraclitus, Kant, Plato, and Tagore, all with a view to determining just exactly what it was that irritated people in the breadth and height and expression of Hallery's views. Or to be more exact, what he knew would have irritated people with these views if they had ever been expressed.

Here is the sort of thing that I invite the intelligent reader to link up if he can with the very natural phenomenon of a number of quite ordinary sensible people hostile and in retreat before a tedious, perplexing, and presumptuous discourse —

"The individual human mind spends itself about equally in headlong flight from the Universal, which it dreads as something that will envelop and subjugate it, and in headlong flight to the Universal, which it seeks as a refuge from its own loneliness and silliness. It knows very certainly that the Universal will ultimately comprehend and incorporate it, yet it desires always that the Universal should *mother* it, take it up without injuring it in the slightest degree, foment

and nourish its egotism, cherish fondly all its distinctions, give it all the kingdoms of existence to play with….

"Ordinary people snuggle up to God as a lost leveret in a freezing wilderness might snuggle up to a Siberian tiger….

"You see that man who flies and seeks, who needs and does not want, does at last get to a kind of subconscious compromise over the matter. Couldn't he perhaps get the Infinite with the chill off? Couldn't he perhaps find a warm stuffed tiger? He cheats himself by hiding in what he can pretend is the goal. So he tries to escape from the pursuit of the living God to dead gods, evades religion in a church, does his best to insist upon time-honoured formulæ; God must have a button on the point. And it is our instinctive protection of the subconscious arrangement that makes us so passionately resentful at raw religion, at crude spiritual realities, at people who come at us saying harsh understandable things about these awful matters…. *They may wake the tiger!…*

"We like to think of religion as something safely specialized, codified, and put away. Then we can learn the rules and kick about a bit. But when some one comes along saying that science is religion, literature is religion, business — they'll come to that presently! — business is religion!…

"It spoils the afternoon….

"But that alone does not explain why Hallery, delivering his insistent presidential address, is detestable to his audience — for it is quite clear that he is detestable. I'm certain of it. No, what is the matter there is that the aggression of the universal is pointed and embittered by an all too justifiable suspicion that the individual who maintains it is still more aggressive, has but armed himself with the universal in order to achieve our discomfiture…. It's no good his being modest; that only embitters it. It is no good his making disavowals; that only shows that he is aware of it….

"Of course I invented Hallery only to get this burthen off myself….

"All spiritual truths ought to be conveyed by a voice speaking out of a dark void. As Hardy wants his spirits to speak in the 'Dynasts.' Failing that, why should we not deal with these questions through the anonymity of a gramophone?…

"A modern religion founded on a mysterious gramophone which was discovered carefully packed in a box of peculiar construction on a seat upon Primrose Hill….

"How well the great organized religions have understood this! How sound is the effort to meet it by shaving a priest's head or obliging him to grow a beard, putting him into canonicals, drilling him and regimenting him, so as to make him into a mere type….

"If I were to found a religion, I think I should insist upon masked priests…."

§ 2

This idea that the defensive instinct of the individuality, Jealousy, is constantly at war not only with other individualities but with all the great de-individualizing things, with Faith, with Science, with Truth, with Beauty; that out of its resentments and intricate devices one may draw the explanation of most of the perplexities and humours of the intellectual life, indeed the explanation of most life and of most motives, is the quintessence of Boon. The Mind of the Race toils through this jungle of jealous individuality to emerge. And the individual, knowing that single-handed he hasn't a chance against the immortal, allies himself with this and that, with sham immortalities, and partially effaced and partially confuted general things. And so it sets up its Greatnesses, to save it from greatness, its solemnities to preserve it from the overwhelming gravity of truth. "See," it can say, "I have my gods already, thank you. I do not think we will discuss this matter further."

I admit the difficulty of following Boon in this. I admit, too, that I am puzzled about his Mind of the Race. Does he mean by that expression a Great Wisdom and Will that must be, or a Great Wisdom and Will that might be?

But here he goes on with the topic of Hallery again.

"I invented Hallery to get rid of myself, but, after all, Hallery is really no more than the shadow of myself, and if I were impersonal and well bred, and if I spoke behind a black screen, it would still be as much my voice as ever. I do not see how it is possible to prevent

the impersonal things coming by and through persons; but at any rate we can begin to recognize that the person who brings the message is only in his way like the messenger-boy who brings the telegrams. The writer may have a sensitive mind, the messenger-boy may have nimble heels; that does not make him the creator of the thing that comes. Then I think people will be able to listen to such lectures as this of Hallery's without remembering all the time that it's a particular human being with a white face and a lisp…. And perhaps they will be able to respect literature and fine thought for the sake of the general human mind for which they live and for the sake of their own receptiveness…."

§ 3

And from that Boon suddenly went off into absurdities.

"Should all literature be anonymous?" he asks at the head of a sheet of notes.

"But one wants an author's name as a brand. Perhaps a number would suffice. Would authors write if they remained unknown? Mixed motives. Could one run a church with an unsalaried priesthood? But certainly now the rewards are too irregular, successful authors are absurdly flattered and provoked to impossible ambitions. Could we imitate the modern constitutional State by permitting limited ambitions but retaining all the higher positions inaccessible to mere enterprise and merit? Hereditary Novelists, Poets, and Philosophers, for example. The real ones undistinguished. Hereditary Historians and Scientific Men are already practical reality. Then such mischievous rewards and singlings out as the Nobel Prize could be distributed among these Official Intellectuals by lot or (better) by seniority. It would prevent much heartburning…."

These last notes strike me as an extraordinary declension from the, at least, exalted argument of the preceding memoranda. But they do serve to emphasize the essence of — what shall I call it? — Boonism, the idea that there is a great collective mental process going on in many minds, and that it is impertinent and distracting to

single out persons, great men, groups and schools, coteries and Academies. The flame burns wide and free. It is here; it is gone. You had it; you have it not. And again you see it plainly, stretching wide across the horizon….

§ 4

But after these scrappy notes about Jealousy and how people protect their minds against ideas, and especially the idea which is God, and against the mental intrusions of their fellow-creatures conveying ideas, I understand better the purport of that uninvited society, which he declared insisted upon coming to the Great Conference upon the Mind of the Race, and which held such enthusiastic and crowded meetings that at last it swamped all the rest of the enterprise. It was, he declared, to the bitter offence of Dodd, a society with very much the same attitude towards all impersonal mental activities that the Rationalist Press Association has to Religion, and it was called the Royal Society for the Discouragement of Literature.

"Why 'Royal'?" I asked.

"Oh — obviously," he said….

This Royal Society was essentially an organization of the conservative instincts of man. Its aim was to stop all this thinking….

And yet in some extraordinary way that either I did not note at the time or that he never explained, it became presently the whole Conference! The various handbills, pamphlets in outline, notes for lectures, and so forth, that accompanied his notes of the Proceedings of the Royal Society may either be intended as part of the sectional proceedings of the great conference or as the production of this hostile organization. I will make a few extracts from the more legible of these memoranda which render the point clearer.

§ 5 Publishers and Book Distributors

(Comparable to the Priest who hands the Elements and as much upon their Honour.)

The Publisher regrets that the copy for this section is missing, and fears that the substance of it must be left to the imagination of the reader. This is the more regrettable as the section was probably of a highly technical nature.

§ 6 The Young Reviewer

Here, again, Mr. Boon's notes are not to be found, and repeated applications to Mr. Bliss have produced nothing but a vague telegram to "go ahead."

§ 7 The Schoolmaster and Literature

"Essentially the work of the schoolmaster is to prepare the young and naturally over-individualized mind for communion with the Mind of the Race. Essentially his curriculum deals with modes of expression, with languages, grammar, the mathematical system of statement, the various scientific systems of statement, the common legend of history. All leads up, as the scholar approaches adolescence, to the introduction to living literature, living thought, criticism, and religion. But when we consider how literature is taught in schools — —"

Here the writing leaves off abruptly, and then there is written in very minute letters far down the page and apparently after an interval for reflection —

"Scholastic humour

O God!"

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH Wilkins makes Certain Objections

§ 1

Wilkins the author began to think about the Mind of the Race quite suddenly. He made an attack upon Boon as we sat in the rose-arbour smoking after lunch. Wilkins is a man of a peculiar mental constitution; he alternates between a brooding sentimental egotism and a brutal realism, and he is as weak and false in the former mood as he is uncompromising in the latter. I think the attraction that certainly existed between him and Boon must have been the attraction of opposites, for Boon is as emotional and sentimental in relation to the impersonal aspects of life as he is pitiless in relation to himself. Wilkins still spends large portions of his time thinking solemnly about some ancient trouble in which he was treated unjustly; I believe I once knew what it was, but I have long since forgotten. Yet when his mind does get loose from his own "case" for a bit it is, I think, a very penetrating mind indeed. And, at any rate, he gave a lot of exercise to Boon.

"All through this book, Boon," he began.

"What book?" asked Dodd.

"This one we are in. All through this book you keep on at the idea of the Mind of the Race. It is what the book is about; it is its theme. Yet I don't see exactly what you are driving at. Sometimes you seem to be making out this Mind of the Race to be a kind of God — —"

"A synthetic God," said Boon. "If it is to be called a God at all."

Dodd nodded as one whose worst suspicions are confirmed.

"Then one has to assume it is a continuing, coherent mind, that is slowly becoming wider, saner, profounder, more powerful?"

Boon never likes to be pressed back upon exact statements. "Yes," he said reluctantly. "In general — on the whole — yes. What are you driving at?"

"It includes all methods of expression from the poster when a play is produced at His Majesty's Theatre, from the cheering of the crowd when a fireman rescues a baby, up to — Walter Pater."

“So far as Pater expresses anything,” said Boon.

“Then you go on from the elevation this idea of a secular quasi-divine racial mental progress gives you, to judge and condemn all sorts of decent artistic and literary activities that don’t fall in or don’t admit that they fall in….”

“Something of that idea,” said Boon, growing a little testy—“something of that idea.”

“It gives you an opportunity of annoying a number of people you don’t like.”

“If I offend, it is their fault!” said Boon hotly. “Criticism can have no friendships. If they like to take it ill…. My criticism is absolutely, honest…. Some of them are my dearest friends.”

“They won’t be,” said Wilkins, “when all this comes out…. But, anyhow, your whole case, your justification, your thesis is that there is this Mind of the Race, overriding, dominating —— And that you are its Prophet.”

“Because a man confesses a belief, Wilkins, that doesn’t make him a Prophet. I don’t set up — I express.”

“Your Mind of the Race theory has an elegance, a plausibility, I admit,” said Wilkins.

Dodd’s expression indicated that it didn’t take him in. He compressed his lips. Not a bit of it.

“But is this in reality true? Is this what exists and goes on? We people who sit in studies and put in whole hours of our days thinking and joining things together do get a kind of coherence into our ideas about the world. Just because there is leisure and time for us to think. But are you sure that is the Race at all? That is my point. Aren’t we intellectually just a by-product? If you went back to the time of Plato, you would say that the idea of his “Republic” was what was going on in the Mind of the Race then. But I object that that was only the futile fancy of a gentleman of leisure. What was really going on was the gathering up of the Macedonian power to smash through Greece, and then make Greece conquer Asia. Your literature and philosophy are really just the private entertainment of old gentlemen out of the hurly-burly and ambitious young men too delicate to hunt or shoot. Thought is nothing in the world until it begins to operate in will and act, and the history of mankind doesn’t

show now, and it never has shown, any consecutive relation to human thinking. The real Mind of the Race is, I submit, something not literary at all, not consecutive, but like the inconsecutive incoherences of an idiot — —"

"No," said Boon, "of a child."

"You have wars, you have great waves of religious excitement, you have patriotic and imperial delusions, you have ill-conceived and surprising economic changes — —"

"As if humanity as a whole were a mere creature of chance and instinct," said Boon.

"Exactly," said Wilkins.

"I admit that," said Boon. "But my case is that sanity grows. That what was ceases to be. The mind of reason gets now out of the study into the market-place."

"You mean really, Boon, that the Mind of the Race isn't a mind that *is*, it is just a mind that becomes."

"That's what it's all about," said Boon.

"And that is where I want to take you up," said Wilkins. "I want to suggest that the Mind of the Race may be just a gleam of conscious realization that passes from darkness to darkness — —"

"*No*," said Boon.

"Why not?"

"Because I will not have it so," said Boon.

§ 2

There can be no denying that from quite an early stage in the discussion Boon was excited and presently on the verge of ill-temper. This dragging of his will into a question of fact showed, I think, the beginning of his irritation. And he was short and presently rather uncivil in his replies to Wilkins.

Boon argued that behind the individualities and immediacies of life there was in reality a consecutive growth of wisdom, that larger numbers of people and a larger proportion of people than ever before were taking part in the World Mind process, and that presently this would become a great conscious general thinking of the race

together.

Wilkins admitted that there had been a number of starts in the direction of impersonal understanding and explanation; indeed, there was something of the sort in every fresh religious beginning; but he argued that these starts do not show a regular progressive movement, and that none of them had ever achieved any real directive and unifying power over their adherents; that only a few Christians had ever grasped Christianity, that Brahminism fell to intellectual powder before it touched the crowd, that nowadays there was less sign than ever of the honest intellectuals getting any hold whatever upon the minds and movements of the popular mass….

"The Mind of the Race," said Wilkins, "seems at times to me much more like a scared child cowering in the corner of a cage full of apes."

Boon was extraordinarily disconcerted by these contradictions.

"It will grow up," he snatched.

"If the apes let it," said Wilkins. "You can see how completely the thinkers and poets and all this stuff of literature and the study don't represent the real Mind, such as it is, of Humanity, when you note how the mass of mankind turns naturally to make and dominate its own organs of expression. Take the popular press, take the popular theatre, take popular religion, take current fiction, take the music-hall, watch the development of the cinematograph. There you have the real body of mankind expressing itself. If you are right, these things should fall in a kind of relationship to the intellectual hierarchy. But the intellectual hierarchy goes and hides away in country houses and beautiful retreats and provincial universities and stuffy high-class periodicals. It's afraid of the mass of men, it dislikes and dreads the mass of men, and it affects a pride and aloofness to cover it. Plato wanted to reorganize social order and the common life; the young man in the twopenny tube was the man he was after. He wanted to exercise him and teach him exactly what to do with the young woman beside him. Instead of which poor Plato has become just an occasion for some Oxford don to bleat about his unapproachable style and wisdom…."

"I admit we're not connected up yet," said Boon.

"You're more disconnected than ever you were. In the Middle

Ages there was something like a connected system of ideas in Christendom, so that the Pope and the devout fishwife did in a sense march together….”

You see the wrangling argument on which they were launched.

Boon maintained that there was a spreading thought process, clearly perceptible nowadays, and that those detachments of Wilkins’ were not complete. He instanced the cheap editions of broad-thinking books, the variety of articles in the modern newspaper, the signs of wide discussions. Wilkins, on the other hand, asserted a predominant intellectual degeneration…. Moreover, Wilkins declared, with the murmurous approval of Dodd, that much even of the Academic thought process was going wrong, that Bergson’s Pragmatism for Ladies was a poor substitute even for Herbert Spencer, that the boom about “Mendelism” was a triumph of weak thinking over comprehensive ideas.

“Even if we leave the masses out of account, it is still rather more than doubtful if there is any secular intellectual growth.”

And it is curious to recall now that as an instance of a degenerative thought process among educated people Wilkins instanced modern Germany. Here, he said, in the case of a Mind covering over a hundred million people altogether, was a real retrocession of intellectual freedom. The pretentious expression of instinctive crudity had always been the peculiar weakness of the German mind. It had become more and more manifest, he said, as nationalism had ousted foreign influence. You see what pretty scope for mutual contradiction there was in all this. “Let me get books,” cried Wilkins, “and I will read you samples of the sort of thing that passes for thinking in Germany. I will read you some of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, some of Nietzsche’s boiling utterance, some of Schopenhauer.”

“Let me,” said Wilkins, “read a passage I have picked almost haphazard from Schopenhauer. One gets Schopenhauer rammed down one’s throat as a philosopher, as a deep thinker, as the only alternative to the Hegelian dose. And just listen — —”

He began to read in a voice of deliberate malice, letting his voice italicize the more scandalous transitions of what was certainly a very foolish and ill-knit piece of assertion.

"'Little men have a decided inclination for big women, and *vice versâ*; and indeed in a little man the preference for big women will be so much the more passionate if he himself was begotten by a big father, and only remains little through the influence of his mother; because he has inherited from his father the vascular system and its energy which was able to supply a large body with blood. If, on the other hand, his father and grandfather were both little, that inclination will make itself less felt. At the foundation of the aversion of a big woman to big men lies *the intention of Nature* to avoid too big a race…. Further, the consideration as to the complexion is very decided. Blondes prefer dark persons or brunettes; but the latter seldom prefer the former. *The reason is*, that fair hair and blue eyes are in themselves a variation from the type, almost an abnormity, analogous to white mice, or at least to grey horses. In no part of the world, not even in the vicinity of the Pole, are they indigenous, except in Europe, and are clearly of Scandinavian origin. I may here express my opinion in passing that the white colour of the skin is not natural to man, but that by nature he has a black or brown skin, like *our forefathers the Hindus*; that consequently a white man has never originally sprung from the womb of Nature, and that thus there is no such thing as a white race, much as this is talked of, but every white man is a faded or bleached one. Forced into this strange world, where he only exists like an exotic plant, and like this requires in winter the hothouse, in the course of thousands of years man became white. The gipsies, an Indian race which immigrated only about four centuries ago, show the transition from the complexion of the Hindu to our own. *Therefore* in sexual love Nature strives to return to dark hair and brown eyes as the primitive type; but the white colour of the skin has become second nature, though not so that the brown of the Hindu repels us. Finally, each one also seeks in the particular parts of the body the corrective of his own defects and aberrations, and does so the more decidedly the more important the part is. *Therefore* snub-nosed individuals have an inexpressible liking for hook-noses, parrot-faces; and it is the same with regard to all other parts. Men with excessively slim, long bodies and limbs can find beauty in a body which is even beyond measure stumpy and short…. Whoever is himself in some respects very perfect does not indeed seek and love

imperfection in this respect, but is yet more easily reconciled to it than others; because he himself insures the children against great imperfection of this part. For example, whoever is himself very white will not object to a yellow complexion; but whoever has the latter will find dazzling whiteness divinely beautiful.' (You will note that he perceives he has practically contradicted this a few lines before, and that evidently he has gone back and stuck in that saving clause about a white skin being second nature.) 'The rare case in which a man falls in love with a decidedly ugly woman occurs when, beside the exact harmony of the degree of sex explained above, the whole of her abnormities are precisely the opposite, and thus the corrective, of his. The love is then wont to reach a high degree….'

"And so on and so on," said Wilkins. "Just a foolish, irresponsible saying of things. And all this stuff, this celibate cerebration, you must remember, is not even fresh; it was said far more funnily and pleasantly by old Campanella in his 'City of the Sun.' And, mind you, this isn't a side issue Schopenhauer is upon; it isn't a moment of relaxation; this argument is essential to the whole argument of his philosophy…."

"But after all," said Boon, "Schopenhauer is hardly to be considered a modern. He was pre-Darwinian."

"Exactly why I begin with him," said Wilkins. "He was a contemporary of Darwin, and it was while Darwin was patiently and industriously building up evidence, that this nonsense, a whole torrent of it, a complete doctrine about the Will to Live, was being poured out. But what I want you to notice is that while the sort of cautious massing of evidence, the close reasoning, the honesty and veracity, that distinguished the method of Darwin and Huxley, are scarcely to be met with anywhere to-day, this spouting style of doing things is everywhere. Take any of the stuff of that intellectual jackdaw, Bernard Shaw, and you will find the Schopenhauer method in full development; caught-up ideas, glib, irrational transitions, wild assertions about the Life Force, about the effects of alcohol, about 'fear-poisoned' meat, about medical science, about economic processes, about Russia, about the Irish temperament and the English intelligence, about the thoughts and mental processes of everybody and every sort of mind, stuff too incoherent and recklessly positive

ever to be systematically answered. And yet half at least of the English-speaking intelligenzia regards Shaw as a part of the thought process of the world. Schopenhauer was a pioneer in the game of impudent assertion, very properly disregarded by his own generation; Shaw's dementia samples this age. You see my case? In any rationally trained, clear-headed period Shaw would have been looked into, dissected, and disposed of long ago…. And here I have two other of the voices that this time respects. It is all my argument that they are respected now enormously, Boon; not merely that they exist. Men to talk and write foolishly, to make groundless positive statements and to misapprehend an opponent there have always been, but this age now tolerates and accepts them. Here is that invalid Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who found a more congenial, intellectual atmosphere in Germany, and this is his great book, 'The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century.' This book has been received with the utmost solemnity in the highest quarters; nowhere has it been handed over to the derision which is its only proper treatment. You remember a rather readable and rather pretentious history we had in our schooldays, full of bad ethnology about Kelts and Anglo-Saxons, called J. R. Green's 'History of the English People'; it was part of that movement of professorial barbarity, of braggart race-Imperialism and anti-Irishism, of which Froude and Freeman were leaders; it smelt of Carlyle and Germany, it helped provoke the Keltic Renascence. Well, that was evidently, the germ of Herr Chamberlain. Here — —"

Wilkins turned over the pages.

"Here he is, in fairly good form. It is a section called 'The Turning Point,' and it's quite on all fours with Schopenhauer's 'our ancestors the Hindus.' It is part of a sketch in outline of the history of the past. 'The important thing,' he says, is to 'fix the turning-point of the history of Europe.' While he was at it he might just as well have *fixed* the equator of the history of Europe and its sparking-plug and the position of its liver. Now, listen —

"'The awakening of the Teutonic peoples to the consciousness of their all-important vocation as the founders of a completely new civilization and culture marks the turning-point; the year 1200 can be designated the central moment of this awakening.'

"Just consider that. He does not even trouble to remind us of the very considerable literature that must exist, of course, as evidence of that awakening. He just flings the statement out, knowing that his sort of follower swallows all such statements blind, and then, possibly with some qualms of doubt about what may have been happening in Spain and Italy and India and China and Japan, he goes on —

"'Scarcely any one will have the hardihood to deny that the inhabitants of Northern Europe have become the makers of the world's history. At no time have they stood alone … others, too, have exercised influence — indeed great influence — upon the destinies of mankind, but then *always merely as opponents of the men from the north*….'

"Poor Jenghiz Khan, who had founded the Mogul Empire in India just about that time, and was to lay the foundations of the Yuen dynasty, and prepare the way for the great days of the Mings, never knew how *mere* his relations were with these marvellous 'men from the north.' The Tartars, it is true, were sacking Moscow somewhere about twelve hundred…. But let us get on to more of the recital of Teutonic glories.

"'If, however, the Teutons were not the only people who moulded the world's history' (generous admission) 'they unquestionably' (that *unquestionably*!) 'deserve the first place; all those who appear as genuine shapers of the destinies of mankind, whether as builders of States or as discoverers of new thoughts and of original art' (oh Japan! oh Ming dynasty! oh art and life of India!) 'belong to the Teutonic race. The impulse given by the Arabs is short lived' (astronomy, chemistry, mathematics, modern science generally!); 'the Mongolians destroy but do not create anything' (Samarkand, Delhi, Pekin); 'the great Italians of the *rinascimento* were *all* born either in the north, saturated with Lombardic, Gothic, and Frankish blood, or in the extreme Germano-Hellenic south; in Spain it was the Western Goths who formed the element of life; the Jews are working out their "Renaissance" of to-day by following in every sphere as closely as possible the example of the Teutonic peoples.'

"That dodge of claiming all the great figures of the non-Teutonic nations as Teutons is carried out to magnificent extremes. Dante is a

Teuton on the strength of his profile and his surname, and there is some fine play about the race of Christ. He came from Galilee, notoriously non-Jewish, and so on; but Lord Redesdale, who writes a sympathetic Introduction, sets the seal on the Teutonic nationality of Christ by reminding us that Joseph was only the putative father….

"It makes a born Teuton like myself feel his divinity," said Wilkins, and read, browsing: "'From the moment the Teuton awakes a new world begins to open out — —' Um! Um!… Oh, here we are again! —

"'It is equally untrue that our culture is a renaissance of the Hellenic and the Roman; it was only after the birth of the Teutonic peoples that the renaissance of past achievements was possible and not *vice versâ*.'… I wonder what exactly *vice versâ* means there!… 'The mightiest creators of that epoch — a Shakespeare, a Michael Angelo — *do not know a word of Greek or Latin*.'

"The stalwart ignorance of it! Little Latin and less Greek even Ben Jonson allowed our William, and manifestly he was fed on Tudor translations. And the illiteracy of Michael Angelo is just an inspiration of Chamberlain's. He knows his readers. Now, in itself there is no marvel in this assertive, prejudiced, garrulous ignorance; it is semi-sober Bierhalle chatter, written down; and, God forgive us! most of us have talked in this way at one time or another; the sign and the wonder for you, Boon, is that this stuff has been taken quite seriously by all Germany and England and America, that it is accepted as first-rank stuff, that it has never been challenged, cut up, and sent to the butterman. It is Modern Thought. It is my second sample of the contemporary Mind of the Race. And now, gentlemen, we come to the third great intellectual high-kicker, Nietzsche. Nietzsche, I admit, had once a real and valid idea, and his work is built upon that real and valid idea; it is an idea that comes into the head of every intelligent person who grasps the idea of the secular change of species, the idea of Darwinism, in the course of five or six minutes after the effective grasping. This is the idea that *man is not final*. But Nietzsche was so constituted that to get an idea was to receive a revelation; this step, that every bright mind does under certain circumstances take, seemed a gigantic stride to him, a stride only possible to him, and for the rest of his lucid existence he

resounded variations, he wrote epigrammatic cracker-mottoes and sham Indian apophthegms, round and about his amazing discovery. And the whole thing is summed up in the title of Dr. Alexander Tille's 'Von Darwin bis Nietzsche,' in which this miracle of the obvious, this necessary corollary, is treated as a huge advance of the mind of mankind. No one slays this kind of thing nowadays. It goes on and goes on, a perpetually reinforced torrent of unreason washing through the brain of the race. There was a time when the general intelligence would have resisted and rejected Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Chamberlain, Shaw; now it resists such invasions less and less. That, Boon, is my case."

Wilkins, with his little pile of books for reference, his sombre manner, and his persistence, was indeed curiously suggestive of an advocate opening a trial. The Mind of the Race was far less of a continuity than it was when a generally recognized and understood orthodox Christianity held it together, as a backbone holds together the ribs and limbs and head of a body. That manifestly was what he was driving at, as Dodd presently complained. In those stabler days every one with ideas, willingly or unwillingly, had to refer to that doctrinal core, had to link up to it even if the connection was used only as a point of departure. Now more and more, as in these three examples, people began irresponsibly in the air, with rash assertions about life and race and the tendency of things. And the louder they shouted, the more fantastic and remarkable they were, the more likely they were to gather a following and establish a fresh vortex in the deliquescent confusion.

On the whole, Boon was disposed to tolerate these dispersed beginnings. "We attack truth in open order," he said, "instead of in column."

"I don't mind fresh beginnings," said Wilkins; "I don't mind open order, but I do object to blank ignorance and sheer misconception. It isn't a new beginning for Schopenhauer to say we are descended from Hindus; it is just stupidity and mental retrogression. We are no more descended from Hindus than Hindus are descended from us; that we may have a common ancestry is quite a different thing. One might as well say that the chimpanzee is descended from a gorilla or a gorilla from a chimpanzee. And it isn't any sort of truth, it is just a

loud lie, that the 'Germanic' peoples realized anything whatever in the year 1200. But all these — what shall I call them? — *moderns* are more and more up to that kind of thing, stating plausible things that have already been disproved, stating things erroneously, inventing pseudo-facts, and so getting off with a flourish. In the fields of ideas, and presently in the fields of action, these wildly kicking personalities have swamped any orderly progress; they have arrested and disowned all that clearing up of thought and all that patient, triumphant arrangement of proven fact which characterized the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. During that time the great analysis of biological science went on, which culminated in an entire revision of our conceptions of species, which opened a conceivable and hitherto undreamed-of past and future to the human imagination, which seemed to have revised and relaid the very foundations of philosophical discussion. And on that foundation, what has been done?"

"Naturally," cried Boon, "after a great achievement there must be a pause. The Mind of the Race must have its digestive interludes."

"But this is indigestion! First comes Herbert Spencer, with his misconception of the life process as a struggle of individuals to survive. His word 'Evolution' is the quintessence of the misunderstanding; his image of a steadfast, mechanical unfolding through selfishness, masked plausibly and disastrously the intricate, perplexing vision of the truth. From that sort of thing we go at a stride to the inevitable Super Man, the megatherium individual of futurity, the large egoist, and all that nonsense. Then comes a swarm of shallow, incontinent thinkers, anxious to find a simple driving force with a simple name for the whole process; the 'Life Force' and 'Will,' and so on. These things, my dear Boon, are just the appalling bubbles of gas that show how completely the Mind of the Race has failed to assimilate…."

"It is remarkable," said Boon, "how a metaphor may run away with the clearest of thinkers. The Mind of the Race is not so consistently gastric as all that."

"You started the metaphor," said Wilkins.

"And you mounted it and it bolted with you. To these unpleasant consequences…. Well, I hold, on the contrary, that after the

superficialities of the sixties and seventies and eighties people's minds have been getting a firmer and firmer grip upon the reality of specific instability. The new body of intellectual experiment, which isn't indigestion at all but only a preliminary attack, is all that mass of trial thinking that one lumps together in one's mind when one speaks of Pragmatism. With the breakdown of specific boundaries the validity of the logical process beyond finite ends breaks down. We make our truth for our visible purposes as we go along, and if it does not work we make it afresh. We see life once more as gallant experiment. The boundaries of our universe recede not only in time and space but thought. The hard-and-fast line between the scientific and the poetic method disappears…."

"And you get Bergson," said Wilkins triumphantly.

"Bergson is of that class and type that exploits the affairs of thought. But I refuse to have Pragmatism judged by Bergson. He takes hold of the unfinished inquiries that constitute the movement of Pragmatism and he makes a soft scepticism for delicate minds with easy ways back to any old-established orthodoxy they may regret."

"But here is my case again," said Wilkins. "It is only through Bergson that the Mind of the Race, the great operating mass mind out there, can take hold of this new system of ideas…."

§ 3

But now Boon and Wilkins were fairly launched upon a vital and entirely inconclusive controversy. Was the thought process of the world growing, spreading, progressing, or was it going to pieces? The one produced a hundred instances of the enlarging and quickening of men's minds, the other replied by instancing vulgarities, distortions, wide acceptance of nonsense. Did public advertisements make a more intelligent or less intelligent appeal now than they used to do? For half an afternoon they fought over the alleged degeneration of the *Times*, multiplying instances, comparing the "Parnellism and Crime" pamphlet with Lord Northcliffe's war indiscretions, and discussing the comparative merits of Mr. Moberly Bell's campaign to sell the twenty-year-old "Encyclopædia

Britannica" and found a "Book Club" that should abolish booksellers, with the displayed and illustrated advertisements of the new period.

The talk, you see, went high and low and came to no conclusion; but I think that on the whole Wilkins did succeed in shaking Boon's half-mystical confidence in the inevitableness of human wisdom. The honours, I think, lay with Wilkins. Boon did seem to establish that in physical science there had been, and was still, a great and growing process; but he was not able to prove, he could only express his faith, that the empire of sanity was spreading to greater and more human issues. He had to fall back upon prophecy. Presently there would be another big lunge forward, and so forth. But Wilkins, on his side, was able to make a case for a steady rotting in political life, an increase in loudness, emptiness, and violence in the last twenty years: he instanced Carsonism, the methods of Tariff Reform, the vehement Feminist movement, the malignant silliness of the "rebel" Labour Press, the rankness of German "patriotism."…

"But there are young people thinking," said Boon at last. "It isn't just these matured showings. Where one youth thought thirty years ago, fifty are thinking now. These wild, loud things are just an irruption. Just an irruption…."

The mocker was distressed.

The idea of active intellectual wrongness distressed him so much that he cast aside all his detachment from Hallery, and showed plainly that to this imaginary Hallery's idea of a secular growth of wisdom in mankind he himself was quite passionately clinging….

§ 4

He was so distressed that one day he talked about it to me alone for some time.

"Wilkins," he said, "insists on Facts. It is difficult to argue with him on that basis. You see, I don't intend Hallery's view to be an induction from facts. It's a conviction, an intuition. It is not the sort of thing one perceives after reading the newspaper placards or looking at the bookshelves in the British Museum. It's something

one knows for certain in the middle of the night. There is the Mind of the Race, I mean. It is something General; it is a refuge from the Particular and it is in the nature of God. That's plain, isn't it? And through it there is Communion. These phases, these irruptions are incidents. If all the world went frantic; if presently some horrible thing, some monstrous war smashed all books and thinking and civilization, still the mind would be there. It would immediately go on again and presently it would pick up all that had been done before — just as a philosopher would presently go on reading again after the servant-girl had fallen downstairs with the crockery…. It keeps on anyhow….

"Oh! I don't know *how*, my dear fellow. I can't explain. I'm not telling you of something I've reasoned out and discovered; I'm telling you of something I *know*. It's faith if you like. It keeps on and I know it keeps on — although I can't for the life of me tell how…."

He stopped. He flushed.

"That, you see, is Hallery's point of view," he said awkwardly.

"But Wilkins perhaps wouldn't contradict that. His point is merely that to be exact about words, that God-Mind, that General Mind of yours, isn't exactly to be called the Mind of the Race."

"But it is the Mind of the Race," said Boon. "It is the Mind of the Race. Most of the Race is out of touch with it, lost to it. Much of the Race is talking and doing nonsense and cruelty; astray, absurd. That does not matter to the Truth, Bliss. It matters to Literature. It matters because Literature, the clearing of minds, the release of minds, the food and guidance of minds, is the way, Literature is illumination, the salvation of ourselves and of every one from isolations…."

"Might be," I suggested.

"Must be," he said. "Oh! I know I've lived behind Miss Bathwick…. But I'm breaking out…. One of these days I will begin to dictate to her — and not mind what she does…. I'm a successful nobody — superficially — and it's only through my private thoughts and private jeering that I've come to see these things…."

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH The Beginning of "The Wild Asses of the Devil"

§ 1

One day a little time after the argument with Wilkins, Boon told me he would read me a story. He read it from a pencilled manuscript. After some anxious seeking I have found most of it again and put it together. Only a few pages are missing. Here is the story. I am sorry to say it was never finished. But he gave me a very clear conception of the contemplated end. That I will indicate in its place. And I think you will see how its idea springs from the talk with Wilkins I have had to render in the previous chapter.

§ 2

There was once an Author who pursued fame and prosperity in a pleasant villa on the south coast of England. He wrote stories of an acceptable nature and rejoiced in a growing public esteem, carefully offending no one and seeking only to please. He had married under circumstances of qualified and tolerable romance a lady who wrote occasional but otherwise regular verse, he was the father of a little daughter, whose reported sayings added much to his popularity, and some of the very best people in the land asked him to dinner. He was a deputy-lieutenant and a friend of the Prime Minister, a literary knighthood was no remote possibility for him, and even the Nobel prize, given a sufficient longevity, was not altogether beyond his hopes. And this amount of prosperity had not betrayed him into any un-English pride. He remembered that manliness and simplicity which are expected from authors. He smoked pipes and not the excellent cigars he could have afforded. He kept his hair cut and never posed. He did not hold himself aloof from people of the inferior and less successful classes. He habitually travelled third class in order to study the characters he put into his delightful novels; he went for long walks and sat in inns, accosting people; he drew out his

gardener. And though he worked steadily, he did not give up the care of his body, which threatened a certain plumpness and what is more to the point, a localized plumpness, not generally spread over the system but exaggerating the anterior equator. This expansion was his only care. He thought about fitness and played tennis, and every day, wet or fine, he went for at least an hour's walk….

Yet this man, so representative of Edwardian literature — for it is in the reign of good King Edward the story begins — in spite of his enviable achievements and prospects, was doomed to the most exhausting and dubious adventures before his life came to its unhonoured end….

Because I have not told you everything about him. Sometimes — in the morning sometimes — he would be irritable and have quarrels with his shaving things, and there were extraordinary moods when it would seem to him that living quite beautifully in a pleasant villa and being well-off and famous, and writing books that were always good-humoured and grammatical and a little distinguished in an inoffensive way, was about as boring and intolerable a life as any creature with a soul to be damned could possibly pursue. Which shows only that God in putting him together had not forgotten that viscus the liver which is usual on such occasions….

The winter at the seaside is less agreeable and more bracing than the summer, and there were days when this Author had almost to force himself through the wholesome, necessary routines of his life, when the south-west wind savaged his villa and roared in the chimneys and slapped its windows with gustsful of rain and

promised to wet that Author thoroughly and exasperatingly down his neck and round his wrists and ankles directly he put his nose outside his door. And the grey waves he saw from his window came rolling inshore under the hurrying grey rain-bursts, line after line, to smash along the undercliff into vast, feathering fountains of foam and sud and send a salt-tasting spin-drift into his eyes. But manfully he would put on his puttees and his water-proof cape and his biggest brierwood pipe, and out he would go into the whurryballoo of it all, knowing that so he would be all the brighter for his nice story-writing after tea.

On such a day he went out. He went out very resolutely along the seaside gardens of gravel and tamarisk and privet, resolved to oblige himself to go right past the harbour and up to the top of the east cliff before ever he turned his face back to the comforts of fire and wife and tea and buttered toast….

And somewhere, perhaps half a mile away from home, he became aware of a queer character trying to keep abreast of him.

His impression was of a very miserable black man in the greasy, blue-black garments of a stoker, a lascar probably from a steamship in the harbour, and going with a sort of lame hobble.

As he passed this individual the Author had a transitory thought of how much Authors don't know in the world, how much, for instance, this shivering, cringing body might be hiding within itself, of inestimable value as "local colour" if only one could get hold of it for "putting into" one's large acceptable novels. Why doesn't one sometimes tap these sources? Kipling, for example, used to do so, with most successful results…. And then the Author became aware that this enigma was hurrying to overtake him. He slackened his pace….

The creature wasn't asking for a light; it was begging for a box of matches. And, what was odd, in quite good English.

The Author surveyed the beggar and slapped his pockets. Never had he seen so miserable a face. It was by no means a prepossessing face, with its aquiline nose, its sloping brows, its dark, deep, bloodshot eyes much too close together, its V-shaped, dishonest mouth and drenched chin-tuft. And yet it was attractively animal and pitiful. The idea flashed suddenly into the Author's head: "Why not,

instead of going on, thinking emptily, through this beastly weather — why not take this man back home now, to the warm, dry study, and give him a hot drink and something to smoke, and *draw him out*?"

Get something technical and first-hand that would rather score off Kipling.

"Its damnably cold!" he shouted, in a sort of hearty, forecastle voice.

"It's worse than that," said the strange stoker.

"It's a hell of a day!" said the Author, more forcible than ever.

"Don't remind me of hell," said the stoker, in a voice of inappeasable regret.

The Author slapped his pockets again. "You've got an infernal cold. Look here, my man — confound it! would you like a hot grog?…"

§ 3

The scene shifts to the Author's study — a blazing coal fire, the stoker sitting dripping and steaming before it, with his feet inside the fender, while the Author fusses about the room, directing the preparation of hot drinks. The Author is acutely aware not only of the stoker but of himself. The stoker has probably never been in the home of an Author before; he is probably awe-stricken at the array of

books, at the comfort, convenience, and efficiency of the home, at the pleasant personality entertaining him…. Meanwhile the Author does not forget that the stoker is material, is "copy," is being watched, *observed*. So he poses and watches, until presently he forgets to pose in his astonishment at the thing he is observing. Because this stoker is rummier than a stoker ought to be ——

He does not simply accept a hot drink; he informs his host just how hot the drink must be to satisfy him.

"Isn't there something you could put in it — something called red pepper? I've tasted that once or twice. It's good. If you could put in a bit of red pepper."

"If you can stand that sort of thing?"

"And if there isn't much water, can't you set light to the stuff? Or let me drink it boiling, out of a pannikin or something? Pepper and all."

Wonderful fellows, these stokers! The Author went to the bell and asked for red pepper.

And then as he came back to the fire he saw something that he instantly dismissed as an optical illusion, as a mirage effect of the clouds of steam his guest was disengaging. The stoker was sitting, all crouched up, as close over the fire as he could contrive; and he was holding his black hands, not to the fire but *in* the fire, holding them pressed flat against two red, glowing masses of coal…. He glanced over his shoulder at the Author with a guilty start, and then instantly the Author perceived that the hands were five or six inches away from the coal.

Then came smoking. The Author produced one of his big cigars — for although a conscientious pipe-smoker himself he gave people cigars; and then, again struck by something odd, he went off into a corner of the room where a little oval mirror gave him a means of watching the stoker undetected. And this is what he saw.

He saw the stoker, after a furtive glance at him, deliberately turn the cigar round, place the lighted end in his mouth, inhale strongly, and blow a torrent of sparks and smoke out of his nose. His firelit face as he did this expressed a diabolical relief. Then very hastily he reversed the cigar again, and turned round to look at the Author. The Author turned slowly towards him.

“You like that cigar?” he asked, after one of those mutual pauses that break down a pretence.

“It’s admirable.”

“Why do you smoke it the other way round?”

The stoker perceived he was caught. “It’s a stokehole trick,” he said. “Do you mind if I do it? I didn’t think you saw.”

“Pray smoke just as you like,” said the Author, and advanced to watch the operation.

It was exactly like the fire-eater at a village fair. The man stuck the burning cigar into his mouth and blew sparks out of his nostrils. “Ah!” he said, with a note of genuine satisfaction. And then, with the cigar still burning in the corner of his mouth, he turned to the fire and *began to rearrange the burning coals with his hands* so as to pile up a great glowing mass. He picked up flaming and white-hot lumps as one might pick up lumps of sugar. The Author watched him, dumbfounded.

“I say!” he cried. “You stokers get a bit tough.”

The stoker dropped the glowing piece of coal in his hand. “I forgot,” he said, and sat back a little.

“Isn’t that a bit — *extra*?” asked the Author, regarding him. “Isn’t that some sort of trick?”

“We get so tough down there,” said the stoker, and paused discreetly as the servant came in with the red pepper.

“Now you can drink,” said the Author, and set himself to mix a drink of a pungency that he would have considered murderous ten minutes before. When he had done the stoker reached over and added more red pepper.

“I don’t quite see how it is your hand doesn’t burn,” said the Author as the stoker drank. The stoker shook his head over the uptilted glass.

“Incombustible,” he said, putting it down. “Could I have just a tiny drop more? Just brandy and pepper, if you *don’t* mind. Set alight. I don’t care for water except when it’s super-heated steam.”

And as the Author poured out another stiff glass of this incandescent brew, the stoker put up his hand and scratched the matted black hair over his temple. Then instantly he desisted and sat looking wickedly at the Author, while the Author stared at him

aghast. For at the corner of his square, high, narrow forehead, revealed for an instant by the thrusting back of the hair, a curious stumpy excrescence had been visible; and the top of his ear — he had a pointed top to his ear!

"A-a-a-a-h!" said the Author, with dilated eyes.

"A-a-a-a-h!" said the stoker, in hopeless distress.

"But you aren't —— !"

"I know — I know I'm not. I know…. I'm a devil. A poor, lost, homeless devil."

And suddenly, with a gesture of indescribable despair, the apparent stoker buried his face in his hands and burst into tears.

"Only man who's ever been decently kind to me," he sobbed. "And now — you'll chuck me out again into the beastly wet and cold…. Beautiful fire…. Nice drink…. Almost homelike…. Just to torment me…. Boo-ooh!"

And let it be recorded to the credit of our little Author, that he did overcome his momentary horror, that he did go quickly round the table, and that he patted that dirty stoker's shoulder.

"There!" he said. "There! Don't mind my rudeness. Have another nice drink. Have a hell of a drink. I won't turn you out if you're unhappy — on a day like this. Have just a mouthful of pepper, man, and pull yourself together."

And suddenly the poor devil caught hold of his arm. "Nobody good to me," he sobbed. "Nobody good to me." And his tears ran down over the Author's plump little hand — scalding tears.

§ 4

All really wonderful things happen rather suddenly and without any great emphasis upon their wonderfulness, and this was no exception to the general rule. This Author went on comforting his devil as though this was nothing more than a chance encounter with an unhappy child, and the devil let his grief and discomfort have vent in a manner that seemed at the time as natural as anything could be. He was clearly a devil of feeble character and uncertain purpose, much broken down by harshness and cruelty, and it throws a curious light

upon the general state of misconception with regard to matters diabolical that it came as a quite pitiful discovery to our Author that a devil could be unhappy and heart-broken. For a long time his most earnest and persistent questioning could gather nothing except that his guest was an exile from a land of great warmth and considerable entertainment, and it was only after considerable further applications of brandy and pepper that the sobbing confidences of the poor creature grew into the form of a coherent and understandable narrative.

And then it became apparent that this person was one of the very lowest types of infernal denizen, and that his role in the dark realms of Dis had been that of watcher and minder of a herd of sinister beings hitherto unknown to our Author, the Devil's Wild Asses, which pastured in a stretch of meadows near the Styx. They were, he gathered, unruly, dangerous, and enterprising beasts, amenable only to a certain formula of expletives, which instantly reduced them to obedience. These expletives the stoker-devil would not repeat; to do so except when actually addressing one of the Wild Asses would, he explained, involve torments of the most terrible description. The bare thought of them gave him a shivering fit. But he gave the Author to understand that to crack these curses as one drove the Wild Asses to and from their grazing on the Elysian fields was a by no means disagreeable amusement. The ass-herds would try who could crack the loudest until the welkin rang.

And speaking of these things, the poor creature gave a picture of diabolical life that impressed the Author as by no means unpleasant for any one with a suitable constitution. It was like the Idylls of Theocritus done in fire; the devils drove their charges along burning lanes and sat gossiping in hedges of flames, rejoicing in the warm, dry breezes (which it seems are rendered peculiarly bracing by the faint flavour of brimstone in the air), and watching the harpies and furies and witches circling in the perpetual afterglow of that inferior sky. And ever and again there would be holidays, and one would take one's lunch and wander over the sulphur craters picking flowers of sulphur or fishing for the souls of usurers and publishers and house-agents and land-agents in the lakes of boiling pitch. It was good sport, for the usurers and publishers and house-agents and land-

agents were always eager to be caught; they crowded round the hooks and fought violently for the bait, and protested vehemently and entertainingly against the Rules and Regulations that compelled their instant return to the lake of fire.

And sometimes when he was on holiday this particular devil would go through the saltpetre dunes, where the witches-brooms grow and the blasted heath is in flower, to the landing-place of the ferry whence the Great Road runs through the shops and banks of the Via Dolorosa to the New Judgement Hall, and watch the crowds of damned arriving by the steam ferry-boats of the Consolidated Charon Company. This steamboat-gazing seems about as popular down there as it is at Folkestone. Almost every day notable people arrive, and, as the devils are very well informed about terrestrial affairs — for of course all the earthly newspapers go straight to hell — whatever else could one expect? — they get ovations of an almost undergraduate intensity. At times you can hear their cheering or booing, as the case may be, right away on the pastures where the Wild Asses feed. And that had been this particular devil's undoing.

He had always been interested in the career of the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone….

He was minding the Wild Asses. He knew the risks. He knew the penalties. But when he heard the vast uproar, when he heard the eager voices in the lane of fire saying, "It's Gladstone at last!" when he saw how quietly and unsuspiciously the Wild Asses cropped their pasture, the temptation was too much. He slipped away. He saw the great Englishman landed after a slight struggle. He joined in the outcry of "Speech! Speech!" He heard the first delicious promise of a Home Rule movement which should break the last feeble links of Celestial Control….

And meanwhile the Wild Asses escaped — according to the rules and the prophecies….

§ 5

The little Author sat and listened to this tale of a wonder that never for a moment struck him as incredible. And outside his rain-lashed

window the strung-out fishing smacks pitched and rolled on their way home to Folkestone harbour….

The Wild Asses escaped.

They got away to the world. And his superior officers took the poor herdsman and tried him and bullied him and passed this judgement upon him: that he must go to the earth and find the Wild Asses, and say to them that certain string of oaths that otherwise must never be repeated, and so control them and bring them back to hell. That — or else one pinch of salt on their tails. It did not matter which. One by one he must bring them back, driving them by spell and curse to the cattle-boat of the ferry. And until he had caught and brought them all back he might never return again to the warmth and comfort of his accustomed life. That was his sentence and punishment. And they put him into a shrapnel shell and fired him out among the stars, and when he had a little recovered he pulled himself together and made his way to the world.

But he never found his Wild Asses and after a little time he gave up trying.

He gave up trying because the Wild Asses, once they had got out of control, developed the most amazing gifts. They could, for instance, disguise themselves with any sort of human shape, and the only way in which they differed then from a normal human being was — according to the printed paper of instructions that had been given to their custodian when he was fired out — that "their general conduct remains that of a Wild Ass of the Devil."

"And what interpretation can we put upon *that*?" he asked the listening Author.

And there was one night in the year — Walpurgis Night, when the Wild Asses became visibly great black wild asses and kicked up their hind legs and brayed. They had to. "But then, of course," said the devil, "they would take care to shut themselves up somewhere when they felt that coming on."

Like most weak characters, the stoker devil was intensely egotistical. He was anxious to dwell upon his own miseries and discomforts and difficulties and the general injustice of his treatment, and he was careless and casually indicative about the peculiarities of the Wild Asses, the matter which most excited and interested the

Author. He bored on with his doleful story, and the Author had to interrupt with questions again and again in order to get any clear idea of the situation.

The devil's main excuse for his nervelessness was his profound ignorance of human nature. "So far as I can see," he said, "they might all be Wild Asses. I tried it once — —"

"Tried what?"

"The formula. You know."

"Yes?"

"On a man named Sir Edward Carson."

"Well?"

"*Ugh!*" said the devil.

"Punishment?"

"Don't speak of it. He was just a professional lawyer-politician who had lost his sense of values…. How was *I* to know?… But our people certainly know how to hurt…."

After that it would seem this poor devil desisted absolutely from any attempt to recover his lost charges. He just tried to live for the moment and make his earthly existence as tolerable as possible. It was clear he hated the world. He found it cold, wet, draughty…. "I can't understand why everybody insists upon living outside of it," he said. "If you went inside — —"

He sought warmth and dryness. For a time he found a kind of contentment in charge of the upcast furnace of a mine, and then he was superseded by an electric-fan. While in this position he read a vivid account of the intense heat in the Red Sea, and he was struck by the idea that if he could get a job as stoker upon an Indian liner he might snatch some days of real happiness during that portion of the voyage. For some time his natural ineptitude prevented his realizing this project, but at last, after some bitter experiences of homelessness during a London December, he had been able to ship on an Indiaward boat — only to get stranded in Folkestone in consequence of a propeller breakdown. And so here he was!

He paused.

"But about these Wild Asses?" said the Author.

The mournful, dark eyes looked at him hopelessly.

"Mightn't they do a lot of mischief?" asked the Author.

“They’ll do no end of mischief,” said the despondent devil.

“Ultimately you’ll catch it for that?”

“Ugh!” said the stoker, trying not to think of it.

§ 6

Now the spirit of romantic adventure slumbers in the most unexpected places, and I have already told you of our plump Author’s discontents. He had been like a smouldering bomb for some years. Now, he burst out. He suddenly became excited, energetic, stimulating, uplifting.

The Author uplifts the devil.

He stood over the drooping devil.

“But my dear chap!” he said. “You must pull yourself together. You must do better than this. These confounded brutes may be doing all sorts of mischief. While you — shirk….”

And so on. Real ginger.

“If I had some one to go with me. Some one who knew his way about.”

The Author took whisky in the excitement of the moment. He began to move very rapidly about his room and make short, sharp gestures. You know how this sort of emotion wells up at times. “We must work from some central place,” said the Author. “To begin with, London perhaps.”

It was not two hours later that they started, this Author and this devil he had taken to himself, upon a mission. They went out in

overcoats and warm underclothing — the Author gave the devil a thorough outfit, a double lot of Jaeger's extra thick — and they were resolved to find the Wild Asses of the Devil and send them back to hell, or at least the Author was, in the shortest possible time. In the picture you will see him with a field-glass slung under his arm, the better to watch suspected cases; in his pocket, wrapped in oiled paper, is a lot of salt to use if by chance he finds a Wild Ass when the devil and his string of oaths is not at hand. So he started. And when he had caught and done for the Wild Asses, then the Author supposed that he would come back to his nice little villa and his nice little wife, and to his little daughter who said the amusing things, and to his popularity, his large gilt-edged popularity, and — except for an added prestige — be just exactly the man he had always been. Little knowing that whosoever takes unto himself a devil and goes out upon a quest, goes out upon a quest from which there is no returning

———

Nevermore.

Precipitate start of the Wild Ass hunters.

CHAPTER THE NINTH The Hunting of the Wild Asses of the Devil

§ 1

At this point the surviving manuscript comes to an abrupt end.

But Boon read or extemporized far beyond this point.

He made a figure that was at once absurd and pitiful of his little Author making this raid upon the world, resolved to detect and exorcise these suspected Wild Asses, and he told us at great length of how steadily and inevitably the poor enthusiast entangled himself in feuds and false accusations, libels and denunciations, free fights, burglaries, and so to universal execration in a perpetually tightening coil. "I'll stick to it," he squeaks, with every fresh blow of Fate. Behind him, with a developing incurable bronchitis that could never be fatal, toiled the devil, more and more despondent, more and more draggle-tailed, voiceless and unhelpful.

After a time he was perpetually trying to give his Author the slip.

But continually it is clearer that there *were* diabolical Wild Asses loose and active in the affairs of the world….

One day the Author had an inspiration. "Was your lot the only lot that ever escaped?"

"Oh no!" said the devil. "Ages before — there were some. It led to an awful row. Just before the Flood. They had to be drowned out. That's why they've been so stiff with me…. I'm not quite sure whether they didn't interbreed. They say in hell that the world has never been quite the same place since."…

You see the scope this story gave Boon's disposition to derision. There were endless things that Boon hated, movements that seemed to him wanton and mischievous, outbreaks of disastrous violence, evil ideas. I should get myself into as much hot water as his Author did if I were to tell all this poor man's adventures. He went to Ulster, he pursued prominent Tariff Reformers, he started off to Mexico and came back to investigate Pan-Germanism. I seem to remember his hanging for days about the entrance to Printing House Square…. And there was a scene in the House of Commons. The Author and

the devil had been tracking a prominent politician — never mind whom — with the growing belief that here at last they had one of them. And Walpurgis Night grew near. Walpurgis Night came.

"We must not lose sight of him," said the Author, very alert and ruthless. "If necessary we must smash the windows, blow open doors."

But the great man went down to the House as though nothing could possibly happen. They followed him.

"He will certainly rush home," said the Author, as the clock crept round to half-past eleven. "But anyhow let us get into the Strangers' Gallery and keep our eyes on him to the last."

They managed it with difficulty.

I remember how vividly Boon drew the picture for us: the rather bored House, a coming and going of a few inattentive Members, the nodding Speaker and the clerks, the silent watchers in the gallery, a little flicker of white behind the grille. And then at five minutes to twelve the honourable Member arose….

"We were wrong," said the Author.

"The draught here is fearful," said the devil. "Hadn't we better go?"

The honourable Member went on speaking showy, memorable, mischievous things. The seconds ticked away. And then — then it happened.

The Author made a faint rattling sound in his throat and clung to the rail before him. The devil broke into a cold sweat. There, visible to all men, was a large black Wild Ass, kicking up its heels upon the floor of the House. And braying.

And nobody was minding!

The Speaker listened patiently, one long finger against his cheek. The clerks bowed over the papers. The honourable Member's two colleagues listened like men under an anæsthetic, each sideways, each with his arm over the back of the seat. Across the House one Member was furtively writing a letter and three others were whispering together.

The Author felt for the salt, then he gripped the devil's wrist.

"Say those words!" he shouted quite loudly— "say those words! Say them now. Then — we shall have him."

But you know those House of Commons ushers. And at that time their usual alertness had been much quickened by several Suffragette outrages. Before the devil had got through his second sentence or the Author could get his salt out of his pocket both devil and Author were travelling violently, scruff and pant-seat irresistibly gripped, down Saint Stephen's Hall….

§ 2

"And you really begin to think," said Wilkins, "that there has been an increase in violence and unreasonableness in the world?"

"My case is that it is an irruption," said Boon. "But I do begin to see a sort of violence of mind and act growing in the world."

"There has always been something convulsive and extravagant in human affairs," said Wilkins. "No public thing, no collective thing, has ever had the sanity of men thinking quietly in a study."

And so we fell to discussing the Mind of the Race again, and whether there was indeed any sanity growing systematically out of human affairs, or whether this Mind of the Race was just a poor tormented rag of partial understanding that would never control the blind forces that had made and would destroy it. And it was inevitable that such a talk should presently drift to the crowning human folly, to that crowned Wild Ass of the Devil, aggressive militarism. That talk was going on, I remember, one very bright, warm, sunny day in May, or it may be in June, of 1914. And we talked of militarism as a flourish, as a kicking up of the national heels, as extravagance and waste; but, what seems to me so singular now, we none of us spoke of it or thought of it as a thing that could lead to the full horror of a universal war. Human memory is so strange and treacherous a thing that I doubt now if many English people will recall our habitual disregard in those days of war as a probability. We thought of it as a costly, foolish threatening, but that it could actually happen —— !

§ 3

Some things are so shocking that they seem to have given no shock at all, just as there are noises that are silences because they burst the ears. And for some days after the declaration of war against Germany the whole business seemed a vast burlesque. It was incredible that this great people, for whom all Western Europe has mingled, and will to the end of time mingle, admiration with a certain humorous contempt, was really advancing upon civilization, enormously armed, scrupulously prepared, bellowing, "Deutschland, Deutschland ueber Alles!" smashing, destroying, killing. We felt for a time, in spite of reason, that it was a joke, that presently Michael would laugh….

But by Jove! the idiot wasn't laughing….

For some weeks nobody in the circle about Boon talked of anything but the war. The Wild Asses of the Devil became an allusion, to indicate all this that was kicking Europe to splinters. We got maps, and still more maps; we sent into the town for newspapers and got special intelligence by telephone; we repeated and discussed rumours. The Belgians were showing pluck and resource, but the French were obviously shockingly unprepared. There were weeks — one may confess it now that they have so abundantly proved the contrary — when the French seemed crumpling up like pasteboard. They were failing to save the line of the Meuse, Maubeuge, Lille, Laon; there were surrenders, there was talk of treachery, and General French, left with his flank exposed, made a costly retreat. It was one Sunday in early September that Wilkins came to us with a *Sunday Observer*. "Look," he said, "they are down on the Seine! They are sweeping right round behind the Eastern line. They have broken the French in two. Here at Senlis they are almost within sight of Paris…."

Then some London eavesdropper talked of the British retreat. "Kitchener says our Army has lost half its fighting value. Our base is to be moved again from Havre to La Rochelle…."

Boon sat on the edge of his hammock.

"The Germans must be beaten," he said. "The new world is killed; we go back ten thousand years; there is no light, no hope, no thought nor freedom any more unless the Germans are beaten…. Until the Germans are beaten there is nothing more to be done in art, in

literature, in life. They are a dull, envious, greedy, cunning, vulgar, interfering, and intolerably conceited people. A world under their dominance will be intolerable. I will not live in it…."

"I had never believed they would do it," said Wilkins….

"Both my boys," said Dodd, "have gone into the Officers' Training Corps. They were in their cadet corps at school."

"Wasn't one an engineer?" asked Boon.

"The other was beginning to paint rather well," said Dodd. "But it all has to stop."

"I suppose I shall have to do something," said the London eavesdropper. "I'm thirty-eight…. I can ride and I'm pretty fit…. It's a nuisance."

"What is a man of my kind to do?" asked Wilkins. "I'm forty-eight."

"I can't believe the French are as bad as they seem," said Boon. "But, anyhow, we've no business to lean on the French…. But I wonder now —— Pass me that map."

§ 4

Next week things had mended, and the French and British were pushing the Germans back from the Marne to the Aisne. Whatever doubts we had felt about the French were dispelled in that swift week of recovery. They were all right. It was a stupendous relief, for if France had gone down, if her spirit had failed us, then we felt all liberalism, all republicanism, all freedom and light would have gone out in this world for centuries.

But then again at the Aisne the Germans stood, and our brisk rush of hope sobered down towards anxiety as the long flanking movement stretched towards the sea and the Antwerp situation developed….

By imperceptible degrees our minds began to free themselves from the immediate struggle of the war, from strategy and movements, from the daily attempt to unriddle from reluctant and ambiguous dispatches, Dutch rumours, censored gaps, and uninforming maps what was happening. It became clear to us that

there were to be no particular dramatic strokes, no sudden, decisive battles, no swift and clear conclusions. The struggle began to assume in our minds its true proportions, its true extent, in time, in space, in historical consequence. We had thought of a dramatic three months' conflict and a redrawn map of Europe; we perceived we were in the beginnings of a far vaster conflict; the end of an age; the slow, murderous testing and condemnation of whole systems of ideas that had bound men uneasily in communities for all our lives. We discussed — as all the world was discussing — the huge organization of sentiment and teaching that had produced this aggressive German patriotism, this tremendous national unanimity. Ford Madox Hueffer came in to tell us stories of a disciplined professoriate, of all education turned into a war propaganda, of the deliberate official mental moulding of a whole people that was at once fascinating and incredible. We went over Bernhardi and Treitschke; we weighed Nietzsche's share in that mental growth. Our talk drifted with the changing season and Boon's sudden illness after his chill, from his garden to his sitting-room, where he lay wrapped up upon a sofa, irritable and impatient with this unaccustomed experience of ill-health.

"You see how much easier it is to grow an evil weed than a wholesome plant," he said. "While this great strong wickedness has developed in Germany, what thought have we had in our English-speaking community? What does our world of letters amount to? Clowns and dons and prigs, cults of the precious and cults of style, a few squeaking author-journalists and such time-serving scoundrels as I, with my patent Bathwick filter, my twenty editions, and my thousands a year. None of us with any sense of a whole community or a common purpose! Where is our strength to go against that strength of the heavy German mind? Where is the Mind of our Race?"

He looked at me with tired eyes.

"It has been a joke with us," he said.

"Is there no power of thought among free men strong enough to swing them into armies that can take this monster by the neck? Must men be bullied for ever? Are there no men to think at least as earnestly as one climbs a mountain, and to write with their uttermost

pride? Are there no men to face truth as those boys at Mons faced shrapnel, and to stick for the honour of the mind and for truth and beauty as those lads stuck to their trenches? Bliss and I have tried to write of all the world of letters, and we have found nothing to write about but posturing and competition and sham reputations, and of dullness and impudence hiding and sheltering in the very sheath of the sword of thought…. For a little while after the war began our people seemed noble and dignified; but see now how all Britain breaks after its first quiet into chatter about spies, sentimentality about the architecture of Louvain, invasion scares, the bitter persecution of stray Germans, and petty disputes and recriminations like a pool under a breeze. And below that nothing. While still the big thing goes on, ungrasped, day after day, a monstrous struggle of our world against the thing it will not have…. No one is clear about what sort of thing we will have. It is a nightmare in which we try continually to escape and have no-whither to escape…. What is to come out of this struggle? Just anything that may come out of it, or something we mean *shall* come out of it?"

He sat up in his bed; his eyes were bright and he had little red spots in his cheeks.

"At least the Germans stand for something. It may be brutal, stupid, intolerable, but there it is — a definite intention, a scheme of living, an order, Germanic Kultur. But what the devil do *we* stand for? Was there anything that amounted to an intellectual life at all in all our beastly welter of writing, of nice-young-man poetry, of stylish fiction and fiction without style, of lazy history, popular philosophy, slobbering criticism, Academic civilities? Is there anything here to hold a people together? Is there anything to make a new world? A literature ought to dominate the mind of its people. Yet here comes the gale, and all we have to show for our racial thought, all the fastness we have made for our souls, is a flying scud of paper scraps, poems, such poems! casual articles, whirling headlong in the air, a few novels drowning in the floods…."

§ 5

There were times during his illness and depression when we sat about Boon very much after the fashion of Job's Comforters. And I remember an occasion when Wilkins took upon himself the responsibility for a hopeful view. There was about Wilkins's realistic sentimentality something at once akin and repugnant to Boon's intellectual mysticism, so that for a time Boon listened resentfully, and then was moved to spirited contradiction. Wilkins declared that the war was like one of those great illnesses that purge the system of a multitude of minor ills. It was changing the spirit of life about us; it would end a vast amount of mere pleasure-seeking and aimless extravagance; it was giving people a sterner sense of duty and a more vivid apprehension of human brotherhood. This ineffective triviality in so much of our literary life of which Boon complained would give place to a sense of urgent purpose….

"War," said Boon, turning his face towards Wilkins, "does nothing but destroy."

"All making is destructive," said Wilkins, while Boon moved impatiently; "the sculptor destroys a block of marble, the painter scatters a tube of paint…."

Boon's eye had something of the expression of a man who watches another ride his favourite horse.

"See already the new gravity in people's faces, the generosities, the pacification of a thousand stupid squabbles — —"

"If you mean Carsonism," said Boon, "it's only sulking until it can cut in again."

"I deny it," said Wilkins, warming to his faith. "This is the firing of the clay of Western European life. It stops our little arts perhaps — but see the new beauty that comes…. We can well spare our professional books and professional writing for a time to get such humour and wonder as one can find in the soldiers' letters from the front. Think of all the people whose lives would have been slack and ignoble from the cradle to the grave, who are being twisted up now to the stern question of enlistment; think of the tragedies of separation and danger and suffering that are throwing a stern bright light upon ten thousand obscure existences…."

"And the noble procession of poor devils tramping through the slush from their burning homes, God knows whither! And the light

of fire appearing through the cracks of falling walls, and charred bits of old people in the slush of the roadside, and the screams of men disembowelled, and the crying of a dying baby, in a wet shed full of starving refugees who do not know whither to go. Go on, Wilkins."

"Oh, if you choose to dwell on the horrors —— !"

"The one decent thing that we men who sit at home in the warm can do is to dwell on the horrors and do our little best to make sure that never, never shall this thing happen again. And that won't be done, Wilkins, by leaving War alone. War, war with modern machines, is a damned great horrible trampling monster, a filthy thing, an indecency; we aren't doing anything heroic, we are trying to lift a foul stupidity off the earth, we are engaged in a colossal sanitary job. These men who go for us into the trenches, they come back with no illusions. They know how dirty and monstrous it is. They are like men who have gone down for the sake of the people they love to clear out a choked drain. They have no illusions about being glorified. They only hope they aren't blood-poisoned and their bodies altogether ruined. And as for the bracing stir of it, they tell me, Wilkins, that their favourite song now in the trenches is —

"'Nobody knows how bored we are,
Bored we are,
Bored we are,
Nobody knows how bored we are,
And nobody seems to care.'

Meanwhile you sit at home and feel vicariously ennobled."

He laid his hand on a daily newspaper beside him.

"Oh, you're not the only one. I will make you ashamed of yourself, Wilkins. Here's the superlative to your positive. Here's the sort of man I should like to hold for five minutes head downwards in the bilge of a trench, writing on the Heroic Spirit in the *Morning Post*. He's one of your gentlemen who sit in a room full of books and promise themselves much moral benefit from the bloodshed in France. Coleridge, he says, Coleridge — the heroic, self-controlled Spartan Coleridge was of his opinion and very hard on Pacificism — Coleridge complained of peace-time in such words as these: 'All individual dignity and power, engulfed in courts, committees, institutions…. One benefit-club for mutual flattery.'… And then, I

suppose, the old loafer went off to sponge on somebody…. And here's the stuff the heroic, spirited Osborn, the *Morning Post* gentleman — unhappily not a German, and unhappily too old for trench work — quotes with delight now — *now!* — after Belgium! —

"'My spear, my sword, my shaggy shield!
With these I till, with these I sow,
With these I reap my harvest field —
No other wealth the gods bestow:
With these I plant the fertile vine,
With these I press the luscious wine.
My spear, my sword, my shaggy shield!
They make me lord of all below —
For those who dread my spear to wield,
Before my shaggy shield must bow.
Their fields, their vineyards, they resign,
And all that cowards have is mine.'

"He goes on to this —

"'It is in vain that the Pacificist rages at such staunch braggadocio. It blares out a political truth of timeless validity in words that are by no means politic. Sparta was the working model in ancient times of the State that lives by and for warfare, though never despising the rewards of an astute diplomacy; she was the Prussia of antiquity….

"'Spartan ideal of duty and discipline.'…

"You see the spirit of him! You see what has got loose! It is a real and potent spirit; you have to reckon with it through all this business. To this sort of mind the 'Pacificist' is a hateful fool. The Pacificist prefers making vineyards, painting pictures, building Gothic cathedrals, thinking clear thoughts to bawling "Bruteland, Bruteland, over all!" and killing people and smashing things up. He is a maker. That is what is intended here by a 'coward.' All real creative activity is hateful to a certain ugly, influential, aggressive type of mind, to this type of mind that expresses itself here in England through the *Morning Post* and *Spectator*. Both these papers are soaked through and through with a genuine detestation of all fine creation, all beauty, all novelty, all frank, generous, and pleasant things. In peace-time they maintain an attitude of dyspeptic hostility

to free art, to free literature, to fresh thought. They stand uncompromisingly for ugliness, dullness, and restriction — as ends in themselves. When you talk, Wilkins, of the intellectual good of the war, I ask you to note the new exultation that has come into these evil papers. When they speak of the 'moral benefits' of war they mean the smashing up of everything that they hate and we care for. They mean reaction. This good man Osborn, whom I have never seen or heard of before, seems to be quintessential of all that side. I can imagine him. I believe I could reconstruct him from this article I have here, just as anatomists have reconstructed extinct monsters from a single bone. He is, I am certain, a don. The emotional note suggests Oxford. He is a classical scholar. And that is the extent of his knowledge. Something in this way."

He began to sketch rapidly.

Fancy portrait of Mr. E. B. Osborn, singing about his sword and his shield and his ruthless virility, and all that sort of thing.

"You have to realize that while the Pacificists talk of the horrible ugliness of war and the necessity of establishing an everlasting world-peace, whiskered old ladies in hydropaths, dons on the *Morning Post*, chattering district visitors and blustering, bellowing parsons, people who are ever so much more representative of general humanity than we literary oddities — all that sort of people tucked away somewhere safe, are in a state of belligerent lustfulness and prepared — oh, prepared to give the very eyes of everybody else in this country, prepared to sacrifice the lives of all their servants and see the poor taxed to the devil, first for a victory over Germany and then for the closest, silliest, loudest imitation of Prussian swagger on our part (with them, of course, on the very top of it all) that we can contrive. That spirit is loose, Wilkins. All the dowagers are mewing for blood, all the male old women who teach classics and dream of re-action at Oxford and Cambridge, are having the time of their lives. They trust to panic, to loud accusations, to that fear of complexity that comes with fatigue. They trust to the exhaustion of delicate purposes and sensitive nerves. And this force-loving, bullying silliness is far more likely to come out on top, after the distresses of this war, after the decent men are dead in the trenches and the wise ones shouted to silence, than any finely intellectual, necessarily difficult plan to put an end for ever to all such senseless brutalities."

"I think you underrate the power of — well, modern sanity," said Wilkins.

"Time will show," said Boon. "I hope I do."

"This man Osborn, whoever he may be, must be just a fantastic extremist…. I do not see that he is an answer to my suggestion that for the whole mass of people this war means graver thought, steadier thought, a firmer collective purpose. It isn't only by books and formal literature that people think. There is the tremendous effect of realized and accumulated facts — —"

"Wilkins," said Boon, "do not cuddle such illusions. It is only in books and writings that facts get assembled. People are not grasping any comprehensive effects at all at the present time. One day one monstrous thing batters on our minds — a battleship is blown up or a hundred villagers murdered — and next day it is another. We do not so much think about it as get mentally scarred…. You can see in this

spy hunt that is going on and in the increasing denunciations and wrangling of the papers how the strain is telling…. Attention is overstrained and warms into violence. People are reading no books. They are following out no conclusions. No intellectual force whatever is evident dominating the situation. No organization is at work for a sane peace. Where is any *power* for Pacificism? Where is any strength on its side? America is far too superior to do anything but trade, the liberals here sniff at each other and quarrel gently but firmly on minor points, Mr. Norman Angell advertises himself in a small magazine and resents any other work for peace as though it were an infringement of his copyright. Read the daily papers; go and listen to the talk of people! Don't theorize, but watch. The mind you will meet is not in the least like a mind doing something slowly but steadfastly; far more is it like a mind being cruelly smashed about and worried and sticking to its immediate purpose with a narrower and narrower intensity. Until at last it is a pointed intensity. It is like a dying man strangling a robber in his death-grip…. We shall beat them, but we shall be dead beat doing it…. You see, Wilkins, I have tried to think as you do. In a sort of way this war has inverted our relations. I say these things now because they force themselves upon me…."

Wilkins considered for some moments.

"Even if nothing new appears," he said at last, "the mere beating down and discrediting of the militarist system leaves a world released…."

"But will it be broken down?" said Boon. "Think of the Osborns."

And then he cried in a voice of infinite despair: "No! War is just the killing of things and the smashing of things. And when it is all over, then literature and civilization will have to begin all over again. They will have to begin lower down and against a heavier load, and the days of our jesting are done. The Wild Asses of the Devil are loose and there is no restraining them. What is the good, Wilkins, of pretending that the Wild Asses are the instruments of Providence kicking better than we know? It is all evil. Evil. An evil year. And I lie here helpless, spitting and spluttering, with this chill upon my chest…. I cannot say or write what I would…. And in the days of my sunshine there were things I should have written, things I should

have understood….”

§ 6

Afterwards Boon consoled himself very much for a time by making further speculative sketches of Mr. Osborn, as the embodiment of the Heroic Spirit. I append one or two of the least offensive of these drawings.

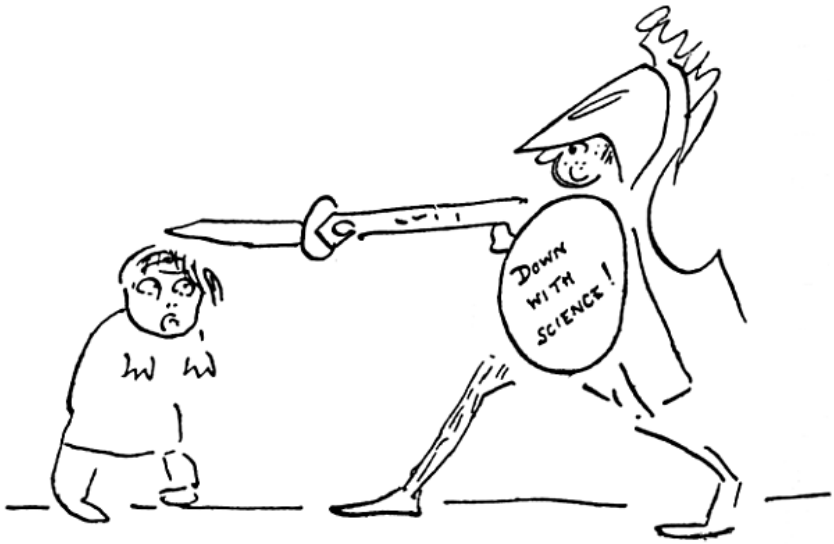

Fancy sketch of Mr. Osborn (the Heroic Spirit) compelling his tailor to make him trousers for nothing.

My weapon with my tailor speaks,
It cuts my coat and sews my breeks.

Mr. Osborn, in a moment of virile indignation, swiping St. Francis of Assisi one with a club.

The soul of Mr. Osborn doing a war dance (as a Spartan Red Indian) in order to work itself up for a "*Morning Post*" article.

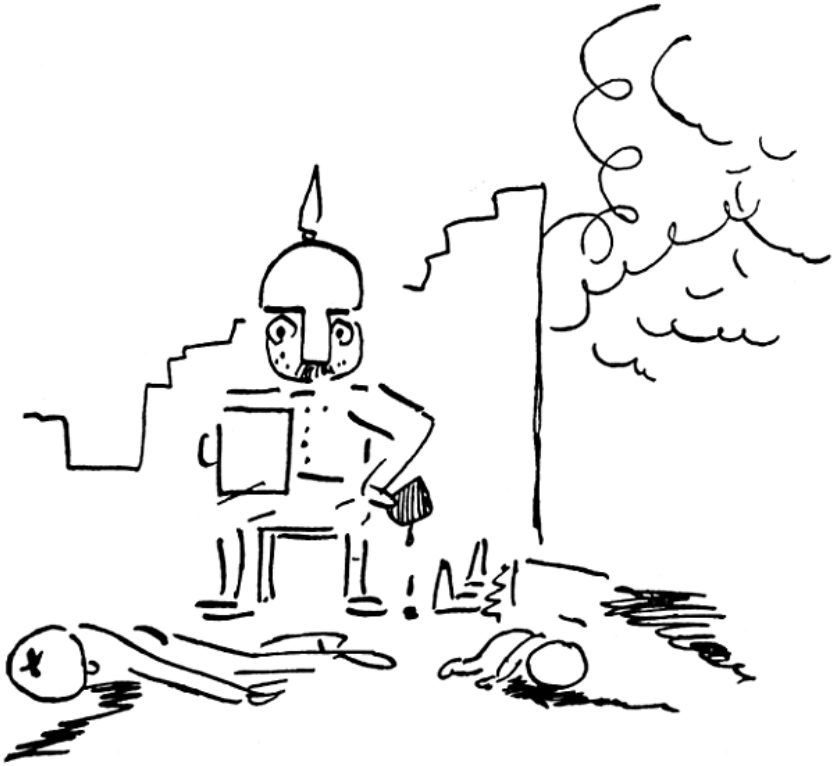

Mr. Osborn's dream of himself as a Prussian Spartan refreshing himself with Hero's food (fresh human liver) and drink (blood and champagne) after a good Go In at some Pacificist softs.

§ 7

Boon's pessimistic outlook on the war had a profoundly depressing effect upon me. I do all in my power to believe that Wilkins is right, and that the hopelessness that darkened Boon's last days was due to the overshadowing of his mind by his illness. It was not simply that he despaired of the world at large; so far as I am concerned, he pointed and barbed his opinion by showing how inevitable it was that the existing publishing and book trade would be shattered to fragments. Adapted as I am now to the necessities of that trade, incapable as I am of the fresh exertions needed to bring me into a successful relationship to the unknown exigencies of the future, the

sense of complete personal ruin mingled with and intensified the vision he imposed upon me of a world laid waste. I lay awake through long stretches of the night contemplating now my own life, no longer in its first vigour, pinched by harsh necessities and the fiercer competition of a young and needy generation, and now all life with its habits and traditions strained and broken. My daily fatigues at drill and the universal heavy cold in the head that has oppressed all Britain this winter almost more than the war, have added their quota to my nightly discomfort. And when at last I have slept I have been oppressed with peculiar and melancholy dreams.

One is so vividly in my mind that I am obliged to tell it here, although I am doubtful whether, except by a very extreme stretching of the meaning of words, we can really consider it among the Remains of George Boon.

It was one of those dreams of which the scenery is not so much a desolate place as desolation itself, and I was there toiling up great steepnesses with a little box of something in my hand. And I knew, in that queer confused way that is peculiar to dreams, that I was not myself but that I was the Author who is the hero of the Wild Asses of the Devil, and also that I was neither he nor I, but all sorts of authors, the spirit of authorship, no Author in particular but the Author at large, and that, since the melancholy devil had deserted me — he had sneaked off Heaven knows whither — it rested with me and with me alone to discover and catch and send out of this tormented world those same Wild Asses of the Devil of which you have read. And so I had salt in my box, Attic Salt, a precious trust, the one thing in all the universe with which I could subdue them.

And then suddenly there I was amidst all those very asses of which I have told you. There they were all about me, and they were more wild and horrible than I can describe to you. It was not that they were horrible in any particular way, they were just horrible, and they kicked up far over head, and leapt and did not even seem to trouble to elude my poor ineffectual efforts to get within salting distance of them. I toiled and I pursued amidst mad mountains that were suddenly marble flights of stairs that sloped and slid me down to precipices over which I floated; and then we were in soft places knee-deep in blood-red mud; and then they were close to my face,

eye to eye, enormous revolving eyes, like the lanterns of lighthouses; and then they swept away, and always I grew smaller and feebler and more breathless, and always they grew larger, until only their vast legs danced about me on the sward, and all the rest was hidden. And all the while I was tugging at my box of Attic Salt, to get it open, to get a pinch. Suddenly I saw they were all coming down upon me, and all the magic salt I had was in the box that would not open….

I saw the sward they trampled, and it was not sward, it was living beings, men hurt by dreadful wounds, and poor people who ran in streaming multitudes under the beating hoofs, and a lichenous growth of tender things and beautiful and sweet and right things on which they beat, splashing it all to blood and dirt. I could not open my box. I could not open my box. And a voice said: "Your box! Your box! Laugh at them for the fools they are, and at the salt sting of laughter back they will fly to hell!"

But I could not open my box, for I thought of my friend's sons and dear friends of my own, and there was no more spirit in me. "We cannot laugh!" I cried. "We cannot laugh! Another generation! Another generation may have the heart to do what we cannot do."

And the voice said: "Courage! Only your poor courage can save us!"

But in my dream I could do no more than weep pitifully and weep, and when I woke up my eyes were wet with tears.

CHAPTER THE TENTH The Story of the Last Trump

§ 1

"After this war," said Wilkins, "after its revelation of horrors and waste and destruction, it is impossible that people will tolerate any longer that system of diplomacy and armaments and national aggression that has brought this catastrophe upon mankind. This is the war that will end war."

"Osborn," said Boon, "Osborn."

"But after all the world has seen —— !"

"The world doesn't see," said Boon….

Boon's story of the Last Trump may well come after this to terminate my book. It has been by no means an easy task to assemble the various portions of this manuscript. It is written almost entirely in pencil, and sometimes the writing is so bad as to be almost illegible. But here at last it is, as complete, I think, as Boon meant it to be. It is his epitaph upon his dream of the Mind of the Race.

§ 2 The Story of the Last Trump

The story of the Last Trump begins in Heaven and it ends in all sorts of places round about the world….

Heaven, you must know, is a kindly place, and the blessed ones do not go on for ever singing Alleluia, whatever you may have been told. For they too are finite creatures, and must be fed with their eternity in little bits, as one feeds a chick or a child. So that there are mornings and changes and freshness, there is time to condition their lives. And the children are still children, gravely eager about their playing and ready always for new things; just children they are, but blessèd as you see them in the pictures beneath the careless feet of the Lord God. And one of these blessèd children routing about in an attic — for Heaven is, of course, full of the most heavenly attics, seeing that it has children — came upon a number of instruments

stored away, and laid its little chubby hands upon them….

Now indeed I cannot tell what these instruments were, for to do so would be to invade mysteries…. But one I may tell of, and that was a great brazen trumpet which the Lord God had made when He made the world — for the Lord God finishes all His jobs — to blow when the time for our Judgement came round. And He had made it and left it; there it was, and everything was settled exactly as the Doctrine of Predestination declares. And this blessèd child conceived one of those unaccountable passions of childhood for its smoothness and brassiness, and he played with it and tried to blow it, and trailed it about with him out of the attic into the gay and golden streets, and, after many fitful wanderings, to those celestial battlements of crystal of which you have doubtless read. And there the blessed child fell to counting the stars, and forgot all about the Trumpet beside him until a flourish of his elbow sent it over….

Down fell the trump, spinning as it fell, and for a day or so, which seemed but moments in heaven, the blessed child watched its fall until it was a glittering little speck of brightness….

When it looked a second time the trump was gone….

I do not know what happened to that child when at last it was time for Judgement Day and that shining trumpet was missed. I know that Judgement Day is long overpassed, because of the wickedness of the world; I think perhaps it was in A.D. 1000 when the expected Day should have dawned that never came, but no other heavenly particulars do I know at all, because now my scene changes to the narrow ways of this Earth….

And the Prologue in Heaven ends.

§ 3

And now the scene is a dingy little shop in Caledonian Market, where things of an incredible worthlessness lie in wait for such as seek after an impossible cheapness. In the window, as though it had always been there and never anywhere else, lies a long, battered, discoloured trumpet of brass that no prospective purchaser has ever been able to sound. In it mice shelter, and dust and fluff have

gathered after the fashion of this world. The keeper of the shop is a very old man, and he bought the shop long ago, but already this trumpet was there; he has no idea whence it came, nor its country or origin, nor anything about it. But once in a moment of enterprise that led to nothing he decided to call it an Ancient Ceremonial Shawm, though he ought to have known that whatever a shawm may be the last thing it was likely to be is a trumpet, seeing that they are always mentioned together. And above it hung concertinas and melodeons and cornets and tin whistles and mouth-organs and all that rubbish of musical instruments which delight the hearts of the poor. Until one day two blackened young men from the big motor works in the Pansophist Road stood outside the window and argued.

They argued about these instruments in stock and how you made these instruments sound, because they were fond of argument, and one asserted and the other denied that he could make every instrument in the place sound a note. And the argument rose high, and led to a bet.

"Supposing, of course, that the instrument is in order," said Hoskin, who was betting he could.

"That's understood," said Briggs.

And then they called as witnesses certain other young and black and greasy men in the same employment, and after much argument and discussion that lasted through the afternoon, they went in to the little old dealer about teatime, just as he was putting a blear-eyed, stinking paraffin-lamp to throw an unfavourable light upon his always very unattractive window. And after great difficulty they arranged that for the sum of one shilling, paid in advance, Hoskin should have a try at every instrument in the shop that Briggs chose to indicate.

And the trial began.

The third instrument that was pitched upon by Briggs for the trial was the strange trumpet that lay at the bottom of the window, the trumpet that you, who have read the Introduction, know was the trumpet for the Last Trump. And Hoskin tried and tried again, and then, blowing desperately, hurt his ears. But he could get no sound from the trumpet. Then he examined the trumpet more carefully and discovered the mice and fluff and other things in it, and demanded

that it should be cleaned; and the old dealer, nothing loth, knowing they were used to automobile-horns and such-like instruments, agreed to let them clean it on condition that they left it shiney. So the young men, after making a suitable deposit (which, as you shall hear, was presently confiscated), went off with the trumpet, proposing to clean it next day at the works and polish it with the peculiarly excellent brass polish employed upon the honk-honk horns of the firm. And this they did, and Hoskin tried again.

But he tried in vain. Whereupon there arose a great argument about the trumpet, whether it was in order or not, whether it was possible for any one to sound it. For if not, then clearly it was outside the condition of the bet.

Others among the young men tried it, including two who played wind instruments in a band and were musically knowing men. After their own failure they were strongly on the side of Hoskin and strongly against Briggs, and most of the other young men were of the same opinion.

"Not a bit of it," said Briggs, who was a man of resource. "*I*'ll show you that it can be sounded."

And taking the instrument in his hand, he went towards a peculiarly powerful foot blow-pipe that stood at the far end of the toolshed. "Good old Briggs!" said one of the other young men, and opinion veered about.

Briggs removed the blow-pipe from its bellows and tube, and then adjusted the tube very carefully to the mouthpiece of the trumpet. Then with great deliberation he produced a piece of bees-waxed string from a number of other strange and filthy contents in his pocket and tied the tube to the mouthpiece. And then he began to work the treadle of the bellows.

"Good old Briggs!" said the one who had previously admired him.

And then something incomprehensible happened.

It was a flash. Whatever else it was, it was a flash. And a sound that seemed to coincide exactly with the flash.

Afterwards the young men agreed to it that the trumpet blew to bits. It blew to bits and vanished, and they were all flung upon their faces — not backward, be it noted, but on their faces — and Briggs was stunned and scared. The toolshed windows were broken and the

various apparatus and cars around were much displaced, and *no traces of the trumpet were ever discovered*.

That last particular puzzled and perplexed poor Briggs very much. It puzzled and perplexed him the more because he had had an impression, so extraordinary, so incredible, that he was never able to describe it to any other living person. But his impression was this: that the flash that came with the sound came, not from the trumpet but to it, that it smote down to it and took it, and that its shape was in the exact likeness of a hand and arm of fire.

§ 4

And that was not all, that was not the only strange thing about the disappearance of that battered trumpet. There was something else, even more difficult to describe, an effect as though for one instant something opened….

The young men who worked with Hoskin and Briggs had that clearness of mind which comes of dealing with machinery, and they all felt this indescribable something else, as if for an instant the world wasn't the world, but something lit and wonderful, larger ——

This is what one of them said of it.

"I felt," he said, "just for a minute — as though I was blown to Kingdom Come."

"It is just how it took me," said another. "'Lord,' I says, 'here's Judgement Day!' and then there I was sprawling among the flies…."

But none of the others felt that they could say anything more definite than that.

§ 5

Moreover, there was a storm. All over the world there was a storm that puzzled meteorology, a moment's gale that left the atmosphere in a state of wild swaygog, rains, tornadoes, depressions, irregularities for weeks. News came of it from all the quarters of the earth.

All over China, for example, that land of cherished graves, there was a dust-storm, dust leaped into the air. A kind of earthquake shook Europe — an earthquake that seemed to have at heart the peculiar interests of Mr. Algernon Ashton; everywhere it cracked mausoleums and shivered the pavements of cathedrals, swished the flower-beds of cemeteries, and tossed tombstones aside. A crematorium in Texas blew up. The sea was greatly agitated, and the beautiful harbour of Sydney, in Australia, was seen to be littered with sharks floating upside down in manifest distress….

And all about the world a sound was heard like the sound of a trumpet instantly cut short.

§ 6

But this much is only the superficial dressing of the story. The reality is something different. It is this: that in an instant, and for an instant, the dead lived, and all that are alive in the world did for a moment see the Lord God and all His powers, His hosts of angels, and all His array looking down upon them. They saw Him as one sees by a flash of lightning in the darkness, and then instantly the world was opaque again, limited, petty, habitual. That is the tremendous reality of this story. Such glimpses have happened in individual cases before. The Lives of the saints abound in them. Such a glimpse it was that came to Devindranath Tagore upon the burning ghat at Benares. But this was not an individual but a world experience; the flash came to every one. Not always was it quite the same, and thereby the doubter found his denials, when presently a sort of discussion broke out in the obscurer Press. For this one testified that it seemed that "One stood very near to me," and another saw "all the hosts of heaven flame up towards the Throne."

And there were others who had a vision of brooding watchers, and others who imagined great sentinels before a veiled figure, and some one who felt nothing more divine than a sensation of happiness and freedom such as one gets from a sudden burst of sunshine in the spring…. So that one is forced to believe that something more than wonderfully wonderful, something altogether strange, was seen, and

that all these various things that people thought they saw were only interpretations drawn from their experiences and their imaginations. It was a light, it was beauty, it was high and solemn, it made this world seem a flimsy transparency….

Then it had vanished….

And people were left with the question of what they had seen, and just how much it mattered.

§ 7

A little old lady sat by the fire in a small sitting-room in West Kensington. Her cat was in her lap, her spectacles were on her nose; she was reading the morning's paper, and beside her, on a little occasional table, was her tea and a buttered muffin. She had finished the crimes and she was reading about the Royal Family. When she had read all there was to read about the Royal Family, she put down the paper, deposited the cat on the hearthrug, and turned to her tea. She had poured out her first cup and she had just taken up a quadrant of muffin when the trump and the flash came. Through its instant duration she remained motionless with the quadrant of muffin poised halfway to her mouth. Then very slowly she put the morsel down.

"Now what was that?" she said.

She surveyed the cat, but the cat was quite calm. Then she looked very, very hard at her lamp. It was a patent safety lamp, and had always behaved very well. Then she stared at the window, but the curtains were drawn and everything was in order.

"One might think I was going to be ill," she said, and resumed her toast.

§ 8

Not far away from this old lady, not more than three-quarters of a mile at most, sat Mr. Parchester in his luxurious study, writing a perfectly beautiful, sustaining sermon about the Need of Faith in God. He was a handsome, earnest, modern preacher, he was rector of

one of our big West End churches, and he had amassed a large, fashionable congregation. Every Sunday, and at convenient intervals during the week, he fought against Modern Materialism, Scientific Education, Excessive Puritanism, Pragmatism, Doubt, Levity, Selfish Individualism, Further Relaxation of the Divorce Laws, all the Evils of our Time — and anything else that was unpopular. He believed quite simply, he said, in all the old, simple, kindly things. He had the face of a saint, but he had rendered this generally acceptable by growing side whiskers. And nothing could tame the beauty of his voice.

He was an enormous asset in the spiritual life of the metropolis — to give it no harsher name — and his fluent periods had restored faith and courage to many a poor soul hovering on the brink of the dark river of thought….

And just as beautiful Christian maidens played a wonderful part in the last days of Pompeii, in winning proud Roman hearts to a hated and despised faith, so Mr. Parchester's naturally graceful gestures, and his simple, melodious, trumpet voice won back scores of our half-pagan rich women to church attendance and the social work of which his church was the centre….

And now by the light of an exquisitely shaded electric lamp he was writing this sermon of quiet, confident belief (with occasional hard smacks, perfect stingers in fact, at current unbelief and rival leaders of opinion) in the simple, divine faith of our fathers….

When there came this truncated trump and this vision….

§ 9

Of all the innumerable multitudes who for the infinitesimal fraction of a second had this glimpse of the Divinity, none were so blankly and profoundly astonished as Mr. Parchester. For — it may be because of his subtly spiritual nature — he *saw*, and seeing believed. He dropped his pen and let it roll across his manuscript, he sat stunned, every drop of blood fled from his face and his lips and his eyes dilated.

While he had just been writing and arguing about God, there *was*

God!

The curtain had been snatched back for an instant; it had fallen again; but his mind had taken a photographic impression of everything that he had seen — the grave presences, the hierarchy, the effulgence, the vast concourse, the terrible, gentle eyes. He felt it, as though the vision still continued, behind the bookcases, behind the pictured wall and the curtained window: *even now there was judgement!*

For quite a long time he sat, incapable of more than apprehending this supreme realization. His hands were held out limply upon the desk before him. And then very slowly his staring eyes came back to immediate things, and fell upon the scattered manuscript on which he had been engaged. He read an unfinished sentence and slowly recovered its intention. As he did so, a picture of his congregation came to him as he saw it from the pulpit during his evening sermon, as he had intended to see it on the Sunday evening that was at hand, with Lady Rupert in her sitting and Lady Blex in hers and Mrs. Munbridge, the rich and in her Jewish way very attractive Mrs. Munbridge, running them close in her adoration, and each with one or two friends they had brought to adore him, and behind them the Hexhams and the Wassinghams and behind them others and others and others, ranks and ranks of people, and the galleries on either side packed with worshippers of a less dominant class, and the great organ and his magnificent choir waiting to support him and supplement him, and the great altar to the left of him, and the beautiful new Lady Chapel, done by Roger Fry and Wyndham Lewis and all the latest people in Art, to the right. He thought of the listening multitude, seen through the haze of the thousand electric candles, and how he had planned the paragraphs of his discourse so that the notes of his beautiful voice should float slowly down, like golden leaves in autumn, into the smooth tarn of their silence, word by word, phrase by phrase, until he came to —

"Now to God the Father, God the Son — —"

And all the time he knew that Lady Blex would watch his face and Mrs. Munbridge, leaning those graceful shoulders of hers a little forward, would watch his face….

Many people would watch his face.

All sorts of people would come to Mr. Parchester's services at times. Once it was said Mr. Balfour had come. Just to hear him. After his sermons, the strangest people would come and make confessions in the beautifully furnished reception-room beyond the vestry. All sorts of people. Once or twice he had asked people to come and listen to him; and one of them had been a very beautiful woman. And often he had dreamt of the people who might come: prominent people, influential people, remarkable people. But never before had it occurred to Mr. Parchester that, a little hidden from the rest of the congregation, behind the thin veil of this material world, there was another auditorium. And that God also, God also, watched his face.

And watched him through and through.

Terror seized upon Mr. Parchester.

He stood up, as though Divinity had come into the room before him. He was trembling. He felt smitten and about to be smitten.

He perceived that it was hopeless to try and hide what he had written, what he had thought, the unclean egotism he had become.

"I did not know," he said at last.

The click of the door behind him warned him that he was not alone. He turned and saw Miss Skelton, his typist, for it was her time to come for his manuscript and copy it out in the specially legible type he used. For a moment he stared at her strangely.

She looked at him with those deep, adoring eyes of hers. "Am I too soon, sir?" she asked in her slow, unhappy voice, and seemed prepared for a noiseless departure.

He did not answer immediately. Then he said: "Miss Skelton, the Judgement of God is close at hand!"

And seeing she stood perplexed, he said —

"Miss Skelton, how can you expect me to go on acting and mouthing this Tosh when the Sword of Truth hangs over us?"

Something in her face made him ask a question.

"Did *you* see anything?" he asked.

"I thought it was because I was rubbing my eyes."

"Then indeed there is a God! And He is watching us now. And all this about us, this sinful room, this foolish costume, this preposterous life of blasphemous pretension —— !"

He stopped short, with a kind of horror on his face.

With a hopeless gesture he rushed by her. He appeared wild-eyed upon the landing before his manservant, who was carrying a scuttle of coal upstairs.

"Brompton," he said, "what are you doing?"

"Coal, sir."

"Put it down, man!" he said. "Are you not an immortal soul? God is here! As close as my hand! Repent! Turn to Him! The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

§ 10

Now if you are a policeman perplexed by a sudden and unaccountable collision between a taxicab and an electric standard, complicated by a blinding flash and a sound like an abbreviated trump from an automobile horn, you do not want to be bothered by a hatless clerical gentleman suddenly rushing out of a handsome private house and telling you that "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" You are respectful to him because it is the duty of a policeman to be respectful to Gentlemen, but you say to him, "Sorry I can't attend to that now, sir. One thing at a time. I've got this little accident to see to." And if he persists in dancing round the gathering crowd and coming at you again, you say: "I'm afraid I must ask you just to get away from here, sir. You aren't being a 'elp, sir." And if, on the other hand, you are a well-trained clerical gentleman, who knows his way about in the world, you do not go on pestering a policeman on duty after he has said that, even although you think God is looking at you and Judgement is close at hand. You turn away and go on, a little damped, looking for some one else more likely to pay attention to your tremendous tidings.

And so it happened to the Reverend Mr. Parchester.

He experienced a curious little recession of confidence. He went on past quite a number of people without saying anything further, and the next person he accosted was a flower-woman sitting by her basket at the corner of Chexington Square. She was unable to stop him at once when he began to talk to her because she was tying up a

big bundle of white chrysanthemums and had an end of string behind her teeth. And her daughter who stood beside her was the sort of girl who wouldn't say "Bo!" to a goose.

"Do you know, my good woman," said Mr. Parchester, "that while we poor creatures of earth go about our poor business here, while we sin and blunder and follow every sort of base end, close to us, above us, around us, watching us, judging us, are God and His holy angels? I have had a vision, and I am not the only one. I have *seen*. We are *in* the Kingdom of Heaven now and here, and Judgement is all about us now! Have you seen nothing? No light? No sound? No warning?"

By this time the old flower-seller had finished her bunch of flowers and could speak. "I saw it," she said. "And Mary — she saw it."

"Well?" said Mr. Parchester.

"But, Lord! It don't *mean* nothing!" said the old flower-seller.

§ 11

At that a kind of chill fell upon Mr. Parchester. He went on across Chexington Square by his own inertia.

He was still about as sure that he had seen God as he had been in his study, but now he was no longer sure that the world would believe that he had. He felt perhaps that this idea of rushing out to tell people was precipitate and inadvisable. After all, a priest in the Church of England is only one unit in a great machine; and in a world-wide spiritual crisis it should be the task of that great machine to act as one resolute body. This isolated crying aloud in the street was unworthy of a consecrated priest. It was a dissenting kind of thing to do. A vulgar individualistic screaming. He thought suddenly that he would go and tell his Bishop — the great Bishop Wampach. He called a taxicab, and within half an hour he was in the presence of his commanding officer. It was an extraordinarily difficult and painful interview….

You see, Mr. Parchester believed. The Bishop impressed him as being quite angrily resolved not to believe. And for the first time in

his career Mr. Parchester realized just how much jealous hostility a beautiful, fluent, and popular preacher may arouse in the minds of the hierarchy. It wasn't, he felt, a conversation. It was like flinging oneself into the paddock of a bull that has long been anxious to gore one.

"Inevitably," said the Bishop, "this theatricalism, this star-turn business, with its extreme spiritual excitements, its exaggerated soul crises and all the rest of it, leads to such a breakdown as afflicts you. Inevitably! You were at least wise to come to me. I can see you are only in the beginning of your trouble, that already in your mind fresh hallucinations are gathering to overwhelm you, voices, special charges and missions, strange revelations…. I wish I had the power to suspend you right away, to send you into retreat…."

Mr. Parchester made a violent effort to control himself. "But I tell you," he said, "that I saw God!" He added, as if to reassure himself: "More plainly, more certainly, than I see you."

"Of course," said the Bishop, "this is how strange new sects come into existence; this is how false prophets spring out of the bosom of the Church. Loose-minded, excitable men of your stamp — —"

Mr. Parchester, to his own astonishment, burst into tears. "But I tell you," he wept, "He is here. I have seen. I know."

"Don't talk such nonsense!" said the Bishop. "There is no one here but you and I!"

Mr. Parchester expostulated. "But," he protested, "He is omnipresent."

The Bishop controlled an expression of impatience. "It is characteristic of your condition," he said, "that you are unable to distinguish between a matter of fact and a spiritual truth…. Now listen to me. If you value your sanity and public decency and the discipline of the Church, go right home from here and go to bed. Send for Broadhays, who will prescribe a safe sedative. And read something calming and graceful and purifying. For my own part, I should be disposed to recommend the 'Life of Saint Francis of Assisi.'…."

Unhappily Mr. Parchester did not go home. He went out from the Bishop's residence stunned and amazed, and suddenly upon his desolation came the thought of Mrs. Munbridge….

She would understand….

He was shown up to her own little sitting-room. She had already gone up to her room to dress, but when she heard that he had called, and wanted very greatly to see her, she slipped on a loose, beautiful tea-gown *négligé* thing, and hurried to him. He tried to tell her everything, but she only kept saying "There! there!" She was sure he wanted a cup of tea, he looked so pale and exhausted. She rang to have the tea equipage brought back; she put the dear saint in an arm-chair by the fire; she put cushions about him, and ministered to him. And when she began partially to comprehend what he had experienced, she suddenly realized that she too had experienced it. That vision had been a brain-wave between their two linked and sympathetic brains. And that thought glowed in her as she brewed his tea with her own hands. He had been weeping! How tenderly he felt all these things! He was more sensitive than a woman. What madness to have expected understanding from the Bishop! But that was just like his unworldliness. He was not fit to take care of himself. A wave of tenderness carried her away. "Here is your tea!" she said, bending over him, and fully conscious of her fragrant warmth and sweetness, and suddenly, she could never afterwards explain why she was so, she was moved to kiss him on his brow….

How indescribable is the comfort of a true-hearted womanly friend! The safety of it! The consolation!…

About half-past seven that evening Mr. Parchester returned to his own home, and Brompton admitted him. Brompton was relieved to find his employer looking quite restored and ordinary again. "Brompton," said Mr. Parchester, "I will not have the usual dinner to-night. Just a single mutton cutlet and one of those quarter-bottles of Perrier Jouet on a tray in my study. I shall have to finish my sermon to-night."

(And he had promised Mrs. Munbridge he would preach that sermon specially for her.)

§ 13

And as it was with Mr. Parchester and Brompton and Mrs. Munbridge, and the taxi-driver and the policeman and the little old lady and the automobile mechanics and Mr. Parchester's secretary and the Bishop, so it was with all the rest of the world. If a thing is sufficiently strange and great no one will perceive it. Men will go on in their own ways though one rose from the dead to tell them that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, though the Kingdom itself and all its glory became visible, blinding their eyes. They and their ways are one. Men will go on in their ways as rabbits will go on feeding in their hutches within a hundred yards of a battery of artillery. For rabbits are rabbits, and made to eat and breed, and men are human beings and creatures of habit and custom and prejudice; and what has made them, what will judge them, what will destroy them — they may turn their eyes to it at times as the rabbits will glance at the concussion of the guns, but it will never draw them away from eating their lettuce and sniffing after their does….

§ 14

There was something of invalid peevishness even in the handwriting of Boon's last story, the Story of the Last Trump.

Of course, I see exactly what Boon is driving at in this fragment.

The distresses of the war had for a time broken down his faith in the Mind of the Race, and so he mocked at the idea that under any sort of threat or warning whatever men's minds can move out of the grooves in which they run. And yet in happier moods that was his own idea, and my belief in it came from him. That he should, in his illness, fall away from that saving confidence which he could give to me, and that he should die before his courage returned, seems just a part of the inexplicable tragedy of life. Because clearly this end of the Story of the Last Trump is forced and false, is unjust to life. I know how feebly we apprehend things, I know how we forget, but because we forget it does not follow that we never remember, because we fail to apprehend perfectly it does not follow that we

have no understanding. And so I feel that the true course of the Story of the Last Trump should have been far larger and much more wonderful and subtle than Boon made it. That instant vision of God would not have been dismissed altogether. People might have gone on, as Boon tells us they went on, but they would have been haunted nevertheless by a new sense of deep, tremendous things….

Cynicism is humour in ill-health. It would have been far more difficult to tell the story of how a multitude of commonplace people were changed by a half-dubious perception that God was indeed close at hand to them, a perception that they would sometimes struggle with and deny, sometimes realize overwhelmingly; it would have been a beautiful, pitiful, wonderful story, and it may be if Boon had lived he would have written it. He could have written it. But he was too ill for that much of writing, and the tired pencil turned to the easier course….

I can't believe after all I know of him, and particularly after the intimate talk I have repeated, that he would have remained in this mood. He would, I am certain, have altered the Story of the Last Trump. He must have done so.

And so, too, about this war, this dreadful outbreak of brutish violence which has darkened all our lives, I do not think he would have remained despairful. As his health mended, as the braveries of spring drew near, he would have risen again to the assurance he gave me that the Mind is immortal and invincible.

Of course there is no denying the evil, the black evils of this war; many of us are impoverished and ruined, many of us are wounded, almost all of us have lost friends and suffered indirectly in a hundred ways. And all that is going on yet. The black stream of consequence will flow for centuries. But all this multitudinous individual unhappiness is still compatible with a great progressive movement in the general mind. Being wounded and impoverished, being hurt and seeing things destroyed, is as much living and learning as anything else in the world. The tremendous present disaster of Europe may not be, after all, a disaster for mankind. Horrible possibilities have to be realized, and they can be realized only by experience; complacencies, fatuities have to be destroyed; we have to learn and relearn what Boon once called "the bitter need for honesty." We must see these

things from the standpoint of the Race Life, whose days are hundreds of years….

Nevertheless, such belief cannot alter for me the fact that Boon is dead and our little circle is scattered. I feel that no personal comfort nor any further happiness of the mind remains in store for me. My duties as his literary executor still give me access to the dear old house and the garden of our security, and, in spite of a considerable coolness between myself and Mrs. Boon — who would willingly have all this material destroyed and his reputation rest upon his better-known works — I make my duty my excuse to go there nearly every day and think. I am really in doubt about many matters. I cannot determine, for example, whether it may not be possible to make another volume from the fragments still remaining over after this one. There are great quantities of sketches, several long pieces of Vers Libre, the story of "Jane in Heaven," the draft of a novel. And so I go there and take out the papers and fall into fits of thinking. I turn the untidy pages and think about Boon and of all the stream of nonsense and fancy that was so much more serious to him and to me than the serious business of life. I go there, I know, very much as a cat hangs about its home after its people have departed — that is to say, a little incredulously and with the gleam of a reasonless hope….

There must, I suppose, come a limit to these visitations, and I shall have to go about my own business. I can see in Mrs. Boon's eye that she will presently demand conclusive decisions. In a world that has grown suddenly chilly and lonely I know I must go on with my work under difficult and novel conditions (and now well into the routines of middle age) as if there were no such things as loss and disappointment. I am, I learned long ago, an uncreative, unimportant man. And yet, I suppose, I do something; I count; it is better that I should help than not in the great task of literature, the great task of becoming the thought and the expressed intention of the race, the task of taming violence, organizing the aimless, destroying error, the task of waylaying the Wild Asses of the Devil and sending them back to Hell. It does not matter how individually feeble we writers and disseminators are; we have to hunt the Wild Asses. As the feeblest puppy has to bark at cats and burglars. And we have to do it because we know, in spite of the darkness, the wickedness, the haste

and hate, we know in our hearts, though no momentary trumpeting has shown it to us, that judgement is all about us and God stands close at hand.

Yes, we go on.

But I wish that George Boon were still in the world with me, and I wish that he could have written a different ending to the Story of the Last Trump.

THE RESEARCH MAGNIFICENT

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THE PRELUDE. ON FEAR AND ARISTOCRACY

1

The story of William Porphyry Benham is the story of a man who was led into adventure by an idea. It was an idea that took possession of his imagination quite early in life, it grew with him and changed with him, it interwove at last completely with his being. His story is its story. It was traceably germinating in the schoolboy; it was manifestly present in his mind at the very last moment of his adventurous life. He belonged to that fortunate minority who are independent of daily necessities, so that he was free to go about the world under its direction. It led him far. It led him into situations that bordered upon the fantastic, it made him ridiculous, it came near to making him sublime. And this idea of his was of such a nature that in several aspects he could document it. Its logic forced him to introspection and to the making of a record.

An idea that can play so large a part in a life must necessarily have something of the complication and protean quality of life itself. It is not to be stated justly in any formula, it is not to be rendered by an epigram. As well one might show a man's skeleton for his portrait. Yet, essentially, Benham's idea was simple. He had an incurable, an almost innate persuasion that he had to live life nobly and thoroughly. His commoner expression for that thorough living is "the aristocratic life." But by "aristocratic" he meant something very different from the quality of a Russian prince, let us say, or an English peer. He meant an intensity, a clearness.... Nobility for him was to get something out of his individual existence, a flame, a jewel, a splendour — it is a thing easier to understand than to say.

One might hesitate to call this idea "innate," and yet it comes soon into a life when it comes at all. In Benham's case we might trace it back to the Day Nursery at Seagate, we might detect it stirring already at the petticoat stage, in various private struttings and valiant dreamings with a helmet of pasteboard and a white-metal sword. We have most of us been at least as far as that with Benham. And we

have died like Horatius, slaying our thousands for our country, or we have perished at the stake or faced the levelled muskets of the firing party— "No, do not bandage my eyes" — because we would not betray the secret path that meant destruction to our city. But with Benham the vein was stronger, and it increased instead of fading out as he grew to manhood. It was less obscured by those earthy acquiescences, those discretions, that saving sense of proportion, which have made most of us so satisfactorily what we are. "Porphyry," his mother had discovered before he was seventeen, "is an excellent boy, a brilliant boy, but, I begin to see, just a little unbalanced."

The interest of him, the absurdity of him, the story of him, is that.

Most of us are — balanced; in spite of occasional reveries we do come to terms with the limitations of life, with those desires and dreams and discretions that, to say the least of it, qualify our nobility, we take refuge in our sense of humour and congratulate ourselves on a certain amiable freedom from priggishness or presumption, but for Benham that easy declension to a humorous acceptance of life as it is did not occur. He found his limitations soon enough; he was perpetually rediscovering them, but out of these interments of the spirit he rose again — remarkably. When we others have decided that, to be plain about it, we are not going to lead the noble life at all, that the thing is too ambitious and expensive even to attempt, we have done so because there were other conceptions of existence that were good enough for us, we decided that instead of that glorious impossible being of ourselves, we would figure in our own eyes as jolly fellows, or sly dogs, or sane, sound, capable men or brilliant successes, and so forth — practicable things. For Benham, exceptionally, there were not these practicable things. He blundered, he fell short of himself, he had — as you will be told — some astonishing rebuffs, but they never turned him aside for long. He went by nature for this preposterous idea of nobility as a linnet hatched in a cage will try to fly.

And when he discovered — and in this he was assisted not a little by his friend at his elbow — when he discovered that Nobility was not the simple thing he had at first supposed it to be, he set himself in a mood only slightly disconcerted to the discovery of Nobility. When

it dawned upon him, as it did, that one cannot be noble, so to speak, IN VACUO, he set himself to discover a Noble Society. He began with simple beliefs and fine attitudes and ended in a conscious research. If he could not get through by a stride, then it followed that he must get through by a climb. He spent the greater part of his life studying and experimenting in the noble possibilities of man. He never lost his absurd faith in that conceivable splendour. At first it was always just round the corner or just through the wood; to the last it seemed still but a little way beyond the distant mountains.

For this reason this story has been called THE RESEARCH MAGNIFICENT. It was a real research, it was documented. In the rooms in Westhaven Street that at last were as much as one could call his home, he had accumulated material for — one hesitates to call it a book — let us say it was an analysis of, a guide to the noble life. There after his tragic death came his old friend White, the journalist and novelist, under a promise, and found these papers; he found them to the extent of a crammed bureau, half a score of patent files quite distended and a writing-table drawer-full, and he was greatly exercised to find them. They were, White declares, they are still after much experienced handling, an indigestible aggregation. On this point White is very assured. When Benham thought he was gathering together a book he was dreaming, White says. There is no book in it....

Perhaps too, one might hazard, Benham was dreaming when he thought the noble life a human possibility. Perhaps man, like the ape and the hyaena and the tapeworm and many other of God's necessary but less attractive creatures, is not for such exalted ends. That doubt never seems to have got a lodgment in Benham's skull; though at times one might suppose it the basis of White's thought. You will find in all Benham's story, if only it can be properly told, now subdued, now loud and amazed and distressed, but always traceable, this startled, protesting question, "BUT WHY THE DEVIL AREN'T WE?" As though necessarily we ought to be. He never faltered in his persuasion that behind the dingy face of this world, the earthy stubbornness, the baseness and dulness of himself and all of us, lurked the living jewels of heaven, the light of glory, things unspeakable. At first it seemed to him that one had only just to

hammer and will, and at the end, after a life of willing and hammering, he was still convinced there was something, something in the nature of an Open Sesame, perhaps a little more intricate than one had supposed at first, a little more difficult to secure, but still in that nature, which would suddenly roll open for mankind the magic cave of the universe, that precious cave at the heart of all things, in which one must believe.

And then life — life would be the wonder it so perplexingly just isn't....

2

Benham did not go about the world telling people of this consuming research. He was not the prophet or preacher of his idea. It was too living and intricate and uncertain a part of him to speak freely about. It was his secret self; to expose it casually would have shamed him. He drew all sorts of reserves about him, he wore his manifest imperfections turned up about him like an overcoat in bitter wind. He was content to be inexplicable. His thoughts led him to the conviction that this magnificent research could not be, any more than any other research can be, a solitary enterprise, but he delayed expression; in a mighty writing and stowing away of these papers he found a relief from the unpleasant urgency to confess and explain himself prematurely. So that White, though he knew Benham with the intimacy of an old schoolfellow who had renewed his friendship, and had shared his last days and been a witness of his death, read the sheets of manuscript often with surprise and with a sense of added elucidation.

And, being also a trained maker of books, White as he read was more and more distressed that an accumulation so interesting should be so entirely unshaped for publication. "But this will never make a book," said White with a note of personal grievance. His hasty promise in their last moments together had bound him, it seemed, to a task he now found impossible. He would have to work upon it tremendously; and even then he did not see how it could be done.

This collection of papers was not a story, not an essay, not a confession, not a diary. It was — nothing definable. It went into no

conceivable covers. It was just, White decided, a proliferation. A vast proliferation. It wanted even a title. There were signs that Benham had intended to call it THE ARISTOCRATIC LIFE, and that he had tried at some other time the title of AN ESSAY ON ARISTOCRACY. Moreover, it would seem that towards the end he had been disposed to drop the word "aristocratic" altogether, and adopt some such phrase as THE LARGER LIFE. Once it was LIFE SET FREE. He had fallen away more and more from nearly everything that one associates with aristocracy — at the end only its ideals of fearlessness and generosity remained.

Of all these titles THE ARISTOCRATIC LIFE seemed at first most like a clue to White. Benham's erratic movements, his sudden impulses, his angers, his unaccountable patiences, his journeys to strange places, and his lapses into what had seemed to be pure adventurousness, could all be put into system with that. Before White had turned over three pages of the great fascicle of manuscript that was called Book Two, he had found the word "Bushido" written with a particularly flourishing capital letter and twice repeated. "That was inevitable," said White with the comforting regret one feels for a friend's banalities. "And it dates... [unreadable] this was early...."

"Modern aristocracy, the new aristocracy," he read presently, "has still to be discovered and understood. This is the necessary next step for mankind. As far as possible I will discover and understand it, and as far as I know it I will be it. This is the essential disposition of my mind. God knows I have appetites and sloths and habits and blindnesses, but so far as it is in my power to release myself I will escape to this...."

3

White sat far into the night and for several nights turning over papers and rummaging in untidy drawers. Memories came back to him of his dead friend and pieced themselves together with other memories and joined on to scraps in this writing. Bold yet convincing guesses began to leap across the gaps. A story shaped itself....

The story began with the schoolfellow he had known at Minchinghampton School.

Benham had come up from his father's preparatory school at Seagate. He had been a boy reserved rather than florid in his acts and manners, a boy with a pale face, incorrigible hair and brown eyes that went dark and deep with excitement. Several times White had seen him excited, and when he was excited Benham was capable of tensely daring things. On one occasion he had insisted upon walking across a field in which was an aggressive bull. It had been put there to prevent the boys taking a short cut to the swimming place. It had bellowed tremendously and finally charged him. He had dodged it and got away; at the time it had seemed an immense feat to White and the others who were safely up the field. He had walked to the fence, risking a second charge by his deliberation. Then he had sat on the fence and declared his intention of always crossing the field so long as the bull remained there. He had said this with white intensity, he had stopped abruptly in mid-sentence, and then suddenly he had dropped to the ground, clutched the fence, struggled with heaving shoulders, and been sick.

The combination of apparently stout heart and manifestly weak stomach had exercised the Minchinghampton intelligence profoundly.

On one or two other occasions Benham had shown courage of the same rather screwed-up sort. He showed it not only in physical but in mental things. A boy named Prothero set a fashion of religious discussion in the school, and Benham, after some self-examination, professed an atheistical republicanism rather in the manner of Shelley. This brought him into open conflict with Roddles, the History Master. Roddles had discovered these theological controversies in some mysterious way, and he took upon himself to talk at Benham and Prothero. He treated them to the common misapplication of that fool who "hath said in his heart there is no God." He did not perceive there was any difference between the fool who says a thing in his heart and one who says it in the dormitory. He revived that delectable anecdote of the Eton boy who professed disbelief and was at once "soundly flogged" by his head master. "Years afterwards that boy came back to thank — —"

"Gurr," said Prothero softly. "STEW — ard!"

"Your turn next, Benham," whispered an orthodox

controversialist.

"Good Lord! I'd like to see him," said Benham with a forced loudness that could scarcely be ignored.

The subsequent controversy led to an interview with the head. From it Benham emerged more whitely strung up than ever. "He said he would certainly swish me if I deserved it, and I said I would certainly kill him if he did."

"And then?"

"He told me to go away and think it over. Said he would preach about it next Sunday.... Well, a swishing isn't a likely thing anyhow. But I would.... There isn't a master here I'd stand a thrashing from — not one.... And because I choose to say what I think!... I'd run amuck."

For a week or so the school was exhilarated by a vain and ill-concealed hope that the head might try it just to see if Benham would. It was tantalizingly within the bounds of possibility....

These incidents came back to White's mind as he turned over the newspapers in the upper drawer of the bureau. The drawer was labelled "Fear — the First Limitation," and the material in it was evidently designed for the opening volume of the great unfinished book. Indeed, a portion of it was already arranged and written up.

As White read through this manuscript he was reminded of a score of schoolboy discussions Benham and he and Prothero had had together. Here was the same old toughness of mind, a kind of intellectual hardihood, that had sometimes shocked his schoolfellows. Benham had been one of those boys who do not originate ideas very freely, but who go out to them with a fierce sincerity. He believed and disbelieved with emphasis. Prothero had first set him doubting, but it was Benham's own temperament took him on to denial. His youthful atheism had been a matter for secret consternation in White. White did not believe very much in God even then, but this positive disbelieving frightened him. It was going too far. There had been a terrible moment in the dormitory, during a thunderstorm, a thunderstorm so vehement that it had awakened them all, when Latham, the humourist and a quietly devout boy, had suddenly challenged Benham to deny his Maker.

"NOW say you don't believe in God?"

Benham sat up in bed and repeated his negative faith, while little Hopkins, the Bishop's son, being less certain about the accuracy of Providence than His aim, edged as far as he could away from Benham's cubicle and rolled his head in his bedclothes.

"And anyhow," said Benham, when it was clear that he was not to be struck dead forthwith, "you show a poor idea of your God to think he'd kill a schoolboy for honest doubt. Even old Roddles—"

"I can't listen to you," cried Latham the humourist, "I can't listen to you. It's — HORRIBLE."

"Well, who began it?" asked Benham.

A flash of lightning lit the dormitory and showed him to White white-faced and ablaze with excitement, sitting up with the bedclothes about him. "Oh WOW!" wailed the muffled voice of little Hopkins as the thunder burst like a giant pistol overhead, and he buried his head still deeper in the bedclothes and gave way to unappeasable grief.

Latham's voice came out of the darkness. "This ATHEISM that you and Billy Prothero have brought into the school—"

He started violently at another vivid flash, and every one remained silent, waiting for the thunder....

But White remembered no more of the controversy because he had made a frightful discovery that filled and blocked his mind. Every time the lightning flashed, there was a red light in Benham's eyes....

It was only three days after when Prothero discovered exactly the same phenomenon in the School House boothole and talked of cats and cattle, that White's confidence in their friend was partially restored....

4

"Fear, the First Limitation" — his title indicated the spirit of Benham's opening book very clearly. His struggle with fear was the very beginning of his soul's history. It continued to the end. He had hardly decided to lead the noble life before he came bump against the fact that he was a physical coward. He felt fear acutely. "Fear," he wrote, "is the foremost and most persistent of the shepherding

powers that keep us in the safe fold, that drive us back to the beaten track and comfort and — futility. The beginning of all aristocracy is the subjugation of fear."

At first the struggle was so great that he hated fear without any qualification; he wanted to abolish it altogether.

"When I was a boy," he writes, "I thought I would conquer fear for good and all, and never more be troubled by it. But it is not to be done in that way. One might as well dream of having dinner for the rest of one's life. Each time and always I have found that it has to be conquered afresh. To this day I fear, little things as well as big things. I have to grapple with some little dread every day — urge myself.... Just as I have to wash and shave myself every day.... I believe it is so with every one, but it is difficult to be sure; few men who go into dangers care very much to talk about fear...."

Later Benham found some excuses for fear, came even to dealings with fear. He never, however, admits that this universal instinct is any better than a kindly but unintelligent nurse from whose fostering restraints it is man's duty to escape. Discretion, he declared, must remain; a sense of proportion, an "adequacy of enterprise," but the discretion of an aristocrat is in his head, a tactical detail, it has nothing to do with this visceral sinking, this ebb in the nerves. "From top to bottom, the whole spectrum of fear is bad, from panic fear at one extremity down to that mere disinclination for enterprise, that reluctance and indolence which is its lowest phase. These are things of the beast, these are for creatures that have a settled environment, a life history, that spin in a cage of instincts. But man is a beast of that kind no longer, he has left his habitat, he goes out to limitless living...."

This idea of man going out into new things, leaving securities, habits, customs, leaving his normal life altogether behind him, underlay all Benham's aristocratic conceptions. And it was natural that he should consider fear as entirely inconvenient, treat it indeed with ingratitude, and dwell upon the immense liberations that lie beyond for those who will force themselves through its remonstrances....

Benham confessed his liability to fear quite freely in these notes. His fear of animals was ineradicable. He had had an overwhelming

dread of bears until he was twelve or thirteen, the child's irrational dread of impossible bears, bears lurking under the bed and in the evening shadows. He confesses that even up to manhood he could not cross a field containing cattle without keeping a wary eye upon them — his bull adventure rather increased than diminished that disposition — he hated a strange dog at his heels and would manoeuvre himself as soon as possible out of reach of the teeth or heels of a horse. But the peculiar dread of his childhood was tigers. Some gaping nursemaid confronted him suddenly with a tiger in a cage in the menagerie annexe of a circus. "My small mind was overwhelmed."

"I had never thought," White read, "that a tiger was much larger than a St. Bernard dog.... This great creature!... I could not believe any hunter would attack such a monster except by stealth and with weapons of enormous power....

"He jerked himself to and fro across his cramped, rickety cage and looked over my head with yellow eyes — at some phantom far away. Every now and then he snarled. The contempt of his detestable indifference sank deeper and deeper into my soul. I knew that were the cage to vanish I should stand there motionless, his helpless prey. I knew that were he at large in the same building with me I should be too terror-stricken to escape him. At the foot of a ladder leading clear to escape I should have awaited him paralyzed. At last I gripped my nurse's hand. 'Take me away,' I whispered.

"In my dreams that night he stalked me. I made my frozen flight from him, I slammed a door on him, and he thrust his paw through a panel as though it had been paper and clawed for me. The paw got longer and longer....

"I screamed so loudly that my father came up from his study.

"I remember that he took me in his arms.

"'It's only a big sort of pussy, Poff,' he said. 'FELIS TIGRIS. FELIS, you know, means cat.'

"But I knew better. I was in no mood then for my father's insatiable pedagoguery.

"'And my little son mustn't be a coward.'...

"After that I understood I must keep silence and bear my tigers alone.

“For years the thought of that tiger’s immensity haunted my mind. In my dreams I cowered before it a thousand times; in the dusk it rarely failed me. On the landing on my way to bed there was a patch of darkness beyond a chest that became a lurking horror for me, and sometimes the door of my father’s bedroom would stand open and there was a long buff and crimson-striped shape, by day indeed an ottoman, but by night — . Could an ottoman crouch and stir in the flicker of a passing candle? Could an ottoman come after you noiselessly, and so close that you could not even turn round upon it? No!”

5

When Benham was already seventeen and, as he supposed, hardened against his fear of beasts, his friend Prothero gave him an account of the killing of an old labouring man by a stallion which had escaped out of its stable. The beast had careered across a field, leapt a hedge and come upon its victim suddenly. He had run a few paces and stopped, trying to defend his head with the horse rearing over him. It beat him down with two swift blows of its fore hoofs, one, two, lifted him up in its long yellow teeth and worried him as a terrier does a rat — the poor old wretch was still able to make a bleating sound at that — dropped him, trampled and kicked him as he tried to crawl away, and went on trampling and battering him until he was no more than a bloody inhuman bundle of clothes and mire. For more than half an hour this continued, and then its animal rage was exhausted and it desisted, and went and grazed at a little distance from this misshapen, hoof-marked, torn, and muddy remnant of a man. No one it seems but a horror-stricken child knew what was happening....

This picture of human indignity tortured Benham’s imagination much more than it tortured the teller of the tale. It filled him with shame and horror. For three or four years every detail of that circumstantial narrative seemed unforgettable. A little lapse from perfect health and the obsession returned. He could not endure the neighing of horses: when he saw horses galloping in a field with him his heart stood still. And all his life thereafter he hated horses.

A different sort of fear that also greatly afflicted Benham was due to a certain clumsiness and insecurity he felt in giddy and unstable places. There he was more definitely balanced between the hopelessly rash and the pitifully discreet.

He had written an account of a private struggle between himself and a certain path of planks and rock edges called the Bisse of Leysin. This happened in his adolescence. He had had a bad attack of influenza and his doctor had sent him to a little hotel — the only hotel it was in those days — at Montana in Valais. There, later, when he had picked up his strength, his father was to join him and take him mountaineering, that second-rate mountaineering which is so dear to dons and schoolmasters. When the time came he was ready for that, but he had had his experiences. He had gone through a phase of real cowardice. He was afraid, he confessed, before even he reached Montana; he was afraid of the steepness of the mountains. He had to drive ten or twelve miles up and up the mountain-side, a road of innumerable hairpin bends and precipitous banks, the horse was gaunt and ugly with a disposition to shy, and he confesses he clutched the side of the vehicle and speculated how he should jump if presently the whole turnout went tumbling over....

"And afterwards I dreamt dreams of precipices. I made strides over precipices, I fell and fell with a floating swiftness towards remote valleys, I was assailed by eagles upon a perilous ledge that crumbled away and left me clinging by my nails to nothing."

The Bisse of Leysin is one of those artificial water-courses which bring water from some distant source to pastures that have an insufficient or uncertain supply. It is a little better known than most because of a certain exceptional boldness in its construction; for a distance of a few score yards it runs supported by iron staples across the front of a sheer precipice, and for perhaps half a mile it hangs like an eyebrow over nearly or quite vertical walls of pine-set rock. Beside it, on the outer side of it, runs a path, which becomes an offhand gangway of planking at the overhanging places. At one corner, which gives the favourite picture postcard from Montana, the rocks project so sharply above the water that the passenger on the

gangway must crouch down upon the bending plank as he walks. There is no hand-hold at all.

A path from Montana takes one over a pine-clad spur and down a precipitous zig-zag upon the middle of the Bisse, and thither Benham came, fascinated by the very fact that here was something of which the mere report frightened him. He had to walk across the cold clear rush of the Bisse upon a pine log, and then he found himself upon one of the gentler interludes of the Bisse track. It was a scrambling path nearly two feet wide, and below it were slopes, but not so steep as to terrify. At a vast distance below he saw through tree-stems and blue haze a twisted strand of bright whiteness, the river that joins the Rhone at Sion. It looped about and passed out of sight remotely beneath his feet. He turned to the right, and came to a corner that overhung a precipice. He craned his head round this corner and saw the evil place of the picture-postcards.

He remained for a long time trying to screw himself up to walk along the jagged six-inch edge of rock between cliff and torrent into which the path has shrunken, to the sagging plank under the overhanging rock beyond.

He could not bring himself to do that.

"It happened that close to the corner a large lump of rock and earth was breaking away, a cleft was opening, so that presently, it seemed possible at any moment, the mass would fall headlong into the blue deeps below. This impending avalanche was not in my path along the Bisse, it was no sort of danger to me, but in some way its insecurity gave a final touch to my cowardice. I could not get myself round that corner."

He turned away. He went and examined the planks in the other direction, and these he found less forbidding. He crossed one precipitous place, with a fall of twoscore feet or less beneath him, and found worse ahead. There also he managed. A third place was still more disagreeable. The plank was worn and thin, and sagged under him. He went along it supporting himself against the rock above the Bisse with an extended hand. Halfway the rock fell back, so that there was nothing whatever to hold. He stopped, hesitating whether he should go back — but on this plank there was no going back because no turning round seemed practicable. While he was still

hesitating there came a helpful intervention. Behind him he saw a peasant appearing and disappearing behind trees and projecting rock masses, and coming across the previous plank at a vigorous trot....

Under the stimulus of a spectator Benham got to the end of this third place without much trouble. Then very politely he stood aside for the expert to go ahead so that he could follow at his own pace.

There were, however, more difficulties yet to come, and a disagreeable humiliation. That confounded peasant developed a parental solicitude. After each crossing he waited, and presently began to offer advice and encouragement. At last came a place where everything was overhanging, where the Bisse was leaking, and the plank wet and slippery. The water ran out of the leak near the brim of the wooden channel and fell in a long shivering thread of silver. THERE WAS NO SOUND OF ITS FALL. It just fell — into a void. Benham wished he had not noted that. He groaned, but faced the plank; he knew this would be the slowest affair of all.

The peasant surveyed him from the further side.

"Don't be afraid!" cried the peasant in his clumsy Valaisian French, and returned, returning along the plank that seemed quite sufficiently loaded without him, extending a charitable hand.

"Damn!" whispered Benham, but he took the hand.

Afterwards, rather ignobly, he tried to explain in his public-school French. "Pas de peur," he said. "Pas de peur. Mais la tete, n'a pas l'habitude."

The peasant, failing to understand, assured him again that there was no danger.

("Damn!")

Benham was led over all the other planks, he was led as if he was an old lady crossing a glacier. He was led into absolute safety, and shamefacedly he rewarded his guide. Then he went a little way and sat down, swore softly, and watched the honest man go striding and plunging down towards Lens until he was out of sight.

"Now," said Benham to himself, "if I do not go back along the planks my secret honour is gone for ever."

He told himself that he had not a good head, that he was not well, that the sun was setting and the light no longer good, that he had a very good chance indeed of getting killed. Then it came to him

suddenly as a clear and simple truth, as something luminously plain, that it is better to get killed than go away defeated by such fears and unsteadiness as his. The change came into his mind as if a white light were suddenly turned on — where there had been nothing but shadows and darkness. He rose to his feet and went swiftly and intently the whole way back, going with a kind of temperate recklessness, and, because he was no longer careful, easily. He went on beyond his starting place toward the corner, and did that supreme bit, to and fro, that bit where the lump was falling away, and he had to crouch, as gaily as the rest. Then he recrossed the Bisse upon the pine log, clambered up through the pines to the crest, and returned through the meadows to his own hotel.

After that he should have slept the sleep of contentment, but instead he had quite dreadful nightmares, of hanging in frozen fear above incredible declivities, of ill-aimed leaps across chasms to slippery footholds, of planks that swayed and broke suddenly in the middle and headed him down and down....

The next day in the sunshine he walked the Bisse again with those dreams like trailing mists in his mind, and by comparison the path of the Bisse was nothing, it was like walking along a kerbstone, it was an exercise for young ladies....

7

In his younger days Benham had regarded Fear as a shameful secret and as a thing to be got rid of altogether. It seemed to him that to feel fear was to fall short of aristocracy, and in spite of the deep dreads and disgusts that haunted his mind, he set about the business of its subjugation as if it were a spiritual amputation. But as he emerged from the egotism of adolescence he came to realize that this was too comprehensive an operation; every one feels fear, and your true aristocrat is not one who has eliminated, but one who controls or ignores it. Brave men are men who do things when they are afraid to do them, just as Nelson, even when he was seasick, and he was frequently seasick, was still master of the sea. Benham developed two leading ideas about fear; one that it is worse at the first onset, and far worse than any real experience, and the other that fear is

essentially a social instinct. He set himself upon these lines to study — what can we call it? — the taming of fear, the nature, care, and management of fear....

"Fear is very like pain in this, that it is a deterrent thing. It is superficial. Just as a man's skin is infinitely more sensitive than anything inside.... Once you have forced yourself or have been forced through the outward fear into vivid action or experience, you feel very little. The worst moment is before things happen. Rowe, the African sportsman, told me that he had seen cowardice often enough in the presence of lions, but he had never seen any one actually charged by a lion who did not behave well. I have heard the same thing of many sorts of dangers.

"I began to suspect this first in the case of falling or jumping down. Giddiness may be an almost intolerable torture, and falling nothing of the sort. I once saw the face of an old man who had flung himself out of a high window in Rome, and who had been killed instantly on the pavement; it was not simply a serene face, it was glad, exalted. I suspect that when we have broken the shell of fear, falling may be delightful. Jumping down is, after all, only a steeper tobogganing, and tobogganing a milder jumping down. Always I used to funk at the top of the Cresta run. I suffered sometimes almost intolerably; I found it almost impossible to get away. The first ten yards was like being slashed open with a sharp sword. But afterwards there was nothing but joyful thrills. All instinct, too, fought against me when I tried high diving. I managed it, and began to like it. I had to give it up because of my ears, but not until I had established the habit of stepping through that moment of disinclination.

"I was Challoner's passenger when he was killed at Sheerness. That was a queer unexpected experience, you may have supposed it an agony of terror, but indeed there was no fear in it at all. At any rate, I do not remember a moment of fear; it has gone clean out of my memory if ever it was there. We were swimming high and fast, three thousand feet or so, in a clear, sweet air over the town of Sheerness. The river, with a string of battleships, was far away to the west of us, and the endless grey-blue flats of the Thames to the north. The sun was low behind a bank of cloud. I was watching a motor-car, which seemed to be crawling slowly enough, though, no doubt, it

was making a respectable pace, between two hedges down below. It is extraordinary how slowly everything seems to be going when one sees it from such an height.

"Then the left wing of the monoplane came up like a door that slams, some wires whistled past my head, and one whipped off my helmet, and then, with the seat slipping away from me, down we went. I snatched unavailingly for the helmet, and then gripped the sides. It was like dropping in a boat suddenly into the trough of a wave — and going on dropping. We were both strapped, and I got my feet against the side and clung to the locked second wheel.

"The sensation was as though something like an intermittent electric current was pouring through me. It's a ridiculous image to use, I can't justify it, but it was as if I was having cold blue light squirted through every pore of my being. There was an astonishment, a feeling of confirmation. 'Of course these things do happen sometimes,' I told myself. I don't remember that Challoner looked round or said anything at all. I am not sure that I looked at him....

"There seemed to be a long interval of intensely excited curiosity, and I remember thinking, 'Lord, but we shall come a smash in a minute!' Far ahead I saw the grey sheds of Eastchurch and people strolling about apparently unaware of our disaster. There was a sudden silence as Challoner stopped the engine....

"But the point I want to insist upon is that I did not feel afraid. I was simply enormously, terribly INTERESTED....

"There came a tremendous jolt and a lunge, and we were both tipped forward, so that we were hanging forehead down by our straps, and it looked as if the sheds were in the sky, then I saw nothing but sky, then came another vast swerve, and we were falling sideways, sideways....

"I was altogether out of breath and PHYSICALLY astonished, and I remember noting quite intelligently as we hit the ground how the green grass had an effect of POURING OUT in every direction from below us....

"Then I remember a jerk and a feeling that I was flying up again. I was astonished by a tremendous popping — fabric, wires, everything seemed going pop, pop, pop, like a machine-gun, and then came a flash of intense pain as my arm crumpled up. It was quite impersonal

pain. As impersonal as seeing intense colour. SPLINTERS! I remember the word came into my head instantly. I remember that very definitely.

"I thought, I suppose, my arm was in splinters. Or perhaps of the scraps and ends of rods and wires flying about us. It is curious that while I remember the word I cannot recall the idea....

"When I became conscious again the chief thing present in my mind was that all those fellows round were young soldiers who wouldn't at all understand bad behaviour. My arm was — orchestral, but still far from being real suffering IN me. Also I wanted to know what Challoner had got. They wouldn't understand my questions, and then I twisted round and saw from the negligent way his feet came out from under the engine that he must be dead. And dark red stains with bright red froth —

"Of course!

"There again the chief feeling was a sense of oddity. I wasn't sorry for him any more than I was for myself.

"It seemed to me that it was all right with us both, remarkable, vivid, but all right...."

8

"But though there is little or no fear in an aeroplane, even when it is smashing up, there is fear about aeroplanes. There is something that says very urgently, 'Don't,' to the man who looks up into the sky. It is very interesting to note how at a place like Eastchurch or Brooklands the necessary discretion trails the old visceral feeling with it, and how men will hang about, ready to go up, resolved to go up, but delaying. Men of indisputable courage will get into a state between dread and laziness, and waste whole hours of flying weather on any excuse or no excuse. Once they are up that inhibition vanishes. The man who was delaying and delaying half an hour ago will now be cutting the most venturesome capers in the air. Few men are in a hurry to get down again. I mean that quite apart from the hesitation of landing, they like being up there."

Then, abruptly, Benham comes back to his theory.

"Fear, you see, is the inevitable janitor, but it is not the ruler of

experience. That is what I am driving at in all this. The bark of danger is worse than its bite. Inside the portals there may be events and destruction, but terror stays defeated at the door. It may be that when that old man was killed by a horse the child who watched suffered more than he did....

"I am sure that was so...."

9

As White read Benham's notes and saw how his argument drove on, he was reminded again and again of those schoolboy days and Benham's hardihood, and his own instinctive unreasonable reluctance to follow those gallant intellectual leads. If fear is an ancient instinctive boundary that the modern life, the aristocratic life, is bound to ignore and transcend, may this not also be the case with pain? We do a little adventure into the "life beyond fear"; may we not also think of adventuring into the life beyond pain? Is pain any saner a warning than fear? May not pain just as much as fear keep us from possible and splendid things? But why ask a question that is already answered in principle in every dentist's chair? Benham's idea, however, went much further than that, he was clearly suggesting that in pain itself, pain endured beyond a certain pitch, there might come pleasure again, an intensity of sensation that might have the colour of delight. He betrayed a real anxiety to demonstrate this possibility, he had the earnestness of a man who is sensible of dissentient elements within. He hated the thought of pain even more than he hated fear. His arguments did not in the least convince White, who stopped to poke the fire and assure himself of his own comfort in the midst of his reading.

Young people and unseasoned people, Benham argued, are apt to imagine that if fear is increased and carried to an extreme pitch it becomes unbearable, one will faint or die; given a weak heart, a weak artery or any such structural defect and that may well happen, but it is just as possible that as the stimulation increases one passes through a brief ecstasy of terror to a new sane world, exalted but as sane as normal existence. There is the calmness of despair. Benham had made some notes to enforce this view, of the observed calm

behaviour of men already hopelessly lost, men on sinking ships, men going to execution, men already maimed and awaiting the final stroke, but for the most part these were merely references to books and periodicals. In exactly the same way, he argued, we exaggerate the range of pain as if it were limitless. We think if we are unthinking that it passes into agony and so beyond endurance to destruction. It probably does nothing of the kind. Benham compared pain to the death range of the electric current. At a certain voltage it thrills, at a greater it torments and convulses, at a still greater it kills. But at enormous voltages, as Tesla was the first to demonstrate, it does no injury. And following on this came memoranda on the recorded behaviour of martyrs, on the self-torture of Hindoo ascetics, of the defiance of Red Indian prisoners.

"These things," Benham had written, "are much more horrible when one considers them from the point of view of an easy-chair"; — White gave an assenting nod— "ARE THEY REALLY HORRIBLE AT ALL? Is it possible that these charred and slashed and splintered persons, those Indians hanging from hooks, those walkers in the fiery furnace, have had glimpses through great windows that were worth the price they paid for them? Haven't we allowed those checks and barriers that are so important a restraint upon childish enterprise, to creep up into and distress and distort adult life?...

"The modern world thinks too much as though painlessness and freedom from danger were ultimate ends. It is fear-haunted, it is troubled by the thoughts of pain and death, which it has never met except as well-guarded children meet these things, in exaggerated and untestable forms, in the menagerie or in nightmares. And so it thinks the discovery of anaesthetics the crowning triumph of civilization, and cosiness and innocent amusement, those ideals of the nursery, the whole purpose of mankind...."

"Mm," said White, and pressed his lips together and knotted his brows and shook his head.

10

But the bulk of Benham's discussion of fear was not concerned with

this perverse and overstrained suggestion of pleasure reached through torture, this exaggeration of the man resolved not to shrink at anything; it was an examination of the present range and use of fear that led gradually to something like a theory of control and discipline. The second of his two dominating ideas was that fear is an instinct arising only in isolation, that in a crowd there may be a collective panic, but that there is no real individual fear. Fear, Benham held, drives the man back to the crowd, the dog to its master, the wolf to the pack, and when it is felt that the danger is pooled, then fear leaves us. He was quite prepared to meet the objection that animals of a solitary habit do nevertheless exhibit fear. Some of this apparent fear, he argued, was merely discretion, and what is not discretion is the survival of an infantile characteristic. The fear felt by a tiger cub is certainly a social emotion, that drives it back to the other cubs, to its mother and the dark hiding of the lair. The fear of a fully grown tiger sends it into the reeds and the shadows, to a refuge, that must be "still reminiscent of the maternal lair." But fear has very little hold upon the adult solitary animal, it changes with extreme readiness to resentment and rage.

"Like most inexperienced people," ran his notes, "I was astonished at the reported feats of men in war; I believed they were exaggerated, and that there was a kind of unpremeditated conspiracy of silence about their real behaviour. But when on my way to visit India for the third time I turned off to see what I could of the fighting before Adrianople, I discovered at once that a thousand casually selected conscripts will, every one of them, do things together that not one of them could by any means be induced to do alone. I saw men not merely obey orders that gave them the nearly certain prospect of death, but I saw them exceeding orders; I saw men leap out of cover for the mere sake of defiance, and fall shot through and smashed by a score of bullets. I saw a number of Bulgarians in the hands of the surgeon, several quite frightfully wounded, refuse chloroform merely to impress the English onlooker, some of their injuries I could scarcely endure to see, and I watched a line of infantry men go on up a hill and keep on quite manifestly cheerful with men dropping out and wriggling, and men dropping out and lying still until every other man was down.... Not one man would

have gone up that hill alone, without onlookers....”

Rowe, the lion hunter, told Benham that only on one occasion in his life had he given way to ungovernable fear, and that was when he was alone. Many times he had been in fearful situations in the face of charging lions and elephants, and once he had been bowled over and carried some distance by a lion, but on none of these occasions had fear demoralized him. There was no question of his general pluck. But on one occasion he was lost in rocky waterless country in Somaliland. He strayed out in the early morning while his camels were being loaded, followed some antelope too far, and lost his bearings. He looked up expecting to see the sun on his right hand and found it on his left. He became bewildered. He wandered some time and then fired three signal shots and got no reply. Then losing his head he began shouting. He had only four or five more cartridges and no water-bottle. His men were accustomed to his going on alone, and might not begin to remark upon his absence until sundown.... It chanced, however, that one of the shikari noted the water-bottle he had left behind and organized a hunt for him.

Long before they found him he had passed to an extremity of terror. The world had become hideous and threatening, the sun was a pitiless glare, each rocky ridge he clambered became more dreadful than the last, each new valley into which he looked more hateful and desolate, the cramped thorn bushes threatened him gauntly, the rocks had a sinister lustre, and in every blue shadow about him the night and death lurked and waited. There was no hurry for them, presently they would spread out again and join and submerge him, presently in the confederated darkness he could be stalked and seized and slain. Yes, this he admitted was real fear. He had cracked his voice, yelling as a child yells. And then he had become afraid of his own voice....

“Now this excess of fear in isolation, this comfort in a crowd, in support and in a refuge, even when support or refuge is quite illusory, is just exactly what one would expect of fear if one believed it to be an instinct which has become a misfit. In the ease of the soldier fear is so much a misfit that instead of saving him for the most part it destroys him. Raw soldiers under fire bunch together and armies fight in masses, men are mowed down in swathes, because only so is the courage of the common men sustained, only so can

they be brave, albeit spread out and handling their weapons as men of unqualified daring would handle them they would be infinitely safer and more effective....

"And all of us, it may be, are restrained by this misfit fear from a thousand bold successful gestures of mind and body, we are held back from the attainment of mighty securities in pitiful temporary shelters that are perhaps in the end no better than traps...."

From such considerations Benham went on to speculate how far the crowd can be replaced in a man's imagination, how far some substitute for that social backing can be made to serve the same purpose in neutralizing fear. He wrote with the calm of a man who weighs the probabilities of a riddle, and with the zeal of a man lost to every material consideration. His writing, it seemed to White, had something of the enthusiastic whiteness of his face, the enthusiastic brightness of his eyes. We can no more banish fear from our being at present than we can carve out the fleshy pillars of the heart or the pineal gland in the brain. It is deep in our inheritance. As deep as hunger. And just as we have to satisfy hunger in order that it should leave us free, so we have to satisfy the unconquerable importunity of fear. We have to reassure our faltering instincts. There must be something to take the place of lair and familiars, something not ourselves but general, that we must carry with us into the lonely places. For it is true that man has now not only to learn to fight in open order instead of in a phalanx, but he has to think and plan and act in open order, to live in open order....

Then with one of his abrupt transitions Benham had written, "This brings me to God."

"The devil it does!" said White, roused to a keener attention.

"By no feat of intention can we achieve courage in loneliness so long as we feel indeed alone. An isolated man, an egoist, an Epicurean man, will always fail himself in the solitary place. There must be something more with us to sustain us against this vast universe than the spark of life that began yesterday and must be extinguished to-morrow. There can be no courage beyond social courage, the sustaining confidence of the herd, until there is in us the sense of God. But God is a word that covers a multitude of meanings. When I was a boy I was a passionate atheist, I defied God,

and so far as God is the mere sanction of social traditions and pressures, a mere dressing up of the crowd's will in canonicals, I do still deny him and repudiate him. That God I heard of first from my nursemaid, and in very truth he is the proper God of all the nursemaids of mankind. But there is another God than that God of obedience, God the immortal adventurer in me, God who calls men from home and country, God scourged and crowned with thorns, who rose in a nail-pierced body out of death and came not to bring peace but a sword."

With something bordering upon intellectual consternation, White, who was a decent self-respecting sceptic, read these last clamberings of Benham's spirit. They were written in pencil; they were unfinished when he died.

(Surely the man was not a Christian!)

"You may be heedless of death and suffering because you think you cannot suffer and die, or you may be heedless of death and pain because you have identified your life with the honour of mankind and the insatiable adventurousness of man's imagination, so that the possible death is negligible and the possible achievement altogether outweighs it."...

White shook his head over these pencilled fragments.

He was a member of the Rationalist Press Association, and he had always taken it for granted that Benham was an orthodox unbeliever. But this was hopelessly unsound, heresy, perilous stuff; almost, it seemed to him, a posthumous betrayal....

11

One night when he was in India the spirit of adventure came upon Benham. He had gone with Kepple, of the forestry department, into the jungle country in the hills above the Tapti. He had been very anxious to see something of that aspect of Indian life, and he had snatched at the chance Kepple had given him. But they had scarcely started before the expedition was brought to an end by an accident, Kepple was thrown by a pony and his ankle broken. He and Benham bandaged it as well as they could, and a litter was sent for, and meanwhile they had to wait in the camp that was to have been the

centre of their jungle raids. The second day of this waiting was worse for Kepple than the first, and he suffered much from the pressure of this amateurish bandaging. In the evening Benham got cool water from the well and rearranged things better; the two men dined and smoked under their thatched roof beneath the big banyan, and then Kepple, tired out by his day of pain, was carried to his tent. Presently he fell asleep and Benham was left to himself.

Now that the heat was over he found himself quite indisposed to sleep. He felt full of life and anxious for happenings.

He went back and sat down upon the iron bedstead beneath the banyan, that Kepple had lain upon through the day, and he watched the soft immensity of the Indian night swallow up the last lingering colours of the world. It left the outlines, it obliterated nothing, but it stripped off the superficial reality of things. The moon was full and high overhead, and the light had not so much gone as changed from definition and the blazing glitter and reflections of solidity to a translucent and unsubstantial clearness. The jungle that bordered the little encampment north, south, and west seemed to have crept a little nearer, enriched itself with blackness, taken to itself voices.

(Surely it had been silent during the day.)

A warm, faintly-scented breeze just stirred the dead grass and the leaves. In the day the air had been still.

Immediately after the sunset there had been a great crying of peacocks in the distance, but that was over now; the crickets, however, were still noisy, and a persistent sound had become predominant, an industrious unmistakable sound, a sound that took his mind back to England, in midsummer. It was like a watchman's rattle — a nightjar!

So there were nightjars here in India, too! One might have expected something less familiar. And then came another cry from far away over the heat-stripped tree-tops, a less familiar cry. It was repeated. Was that perhaps some craving leopard, a tiger cat, a panther? —

"HUNT, HUNT"; that might be a deer.

Then suddenly an angry chattering came from the dark trees quite close at hand. A monkey?...

These great, scarce visible, sweeping movements through the air

were bats....

Of course, the day jungle is the jungle asleep. This was its waking hour. Now the deer were arising from their forms, the bears creeping out of their dens amidst the rocks and blundering down the gullies, the tigers and panthers and jungle cats stalking noiselessly from their lairs in the grass. Countless creatures that had hidden from the heat and pitiless exposure of the day stood now awake and alertly intent upon their purposes, grazed or sought water, flitting delicately through the moonlight and shadows. The jungle was awakening. Again Benham heard that sound like the belling of a stag....

This was the real life of the jungle, this night life, into which man did not go. Here he was on the verge of a world that for all the stuffed trophies of the sportsman and the specimens of the naturalist is still almost as unknown as if it was upon another planet. What intruders men are, what foreigners in the life of this ancient system!

He looked over his shoulder, and there were the two little tents, one that sheltered Kepple and one that awaited him, and beyond, in an irregular line, glowed the ruddy smoky fires of the men. One or two turbaned figures still flitted about, and there was a voice — low, monotonous — it must have been telling a tale. Further, sighing and stirring ever and again, were tethered beasts, and then a great pale space of moonlight and the clumsy outlines of the village well. The clustering village itself slept in darkness beyond the mango trees, and still remoter the black encircling jungle closed in. One might have fancied this was the encampment of newly-come invaders, were it not for the larger villages that are overgrown with thickets and altogether swallowed up again in the wilderness, and for the deserted temples that are found rent asunder by the roots of trees and the ancient embankments that hold water only for the drinking of the sambur deer....

Benham turned his face to the dim jungle again....

He had come far out of his way to visit this strange world of the ancient life, that now recedes and dwindles before our new civilization, that seems fated to shrivel up and pass altogether before the dry advance of physical science and material organization. He was full of unsatisfied curiosities about its fierce hungers and passions, its fears and cruelties, its instincts and its well-nigh

incommunicable and yet most precious understandings. He had long ceased to believe that the wild beast is wholly evil, and safety and plenty the ultimate good for men....

Perhaps he would never get nearer to this mysterious jungle life than he was now.

It was intolerably tantalizing that it should be so close at hand and so inaccessible....

As Benham sat brooding over his disappointment the moon, swimming on through the still circle of the hours, passed slowly over him. The lights and shadows about him changed by imperceptible gradations and a long pale alley where the native cart track drove into the forest, opened slowly out of the darkness, slowly broadened, slowly lengthened. It opened out to him with a quality of invitation....

There was the jungle before him. Was it after all so inaccessible?

"Come!" the road said to him.

Benham rose and walked out a few paces into the moonlight and stood motionless.

Was he afraid?

Even now some hungry watchful monster might lurk in yonder shadows, watching with infinite still patience. Kepple had told him how they would sit still for hours — staring unblinkingly as cats stare at a fire — and then crouch to advance. Beneath the shrill overtone of the nightjars, what noiseless grey shapes, what deep breathings and cracklings and creepings might there not be?...

Was he afraid?

That question determined him to go.

He hesitated whether he should take a gun. A stick? A gun, he knew, was a dangerous thing to an inexperienced man. No! He would go now, even as he was with empty hands. At least he would go as far as the end of that band of moonlight. If for no other reason than because he was afraid. NOW!

For a moment it seemed to him as though his feet were too heavy to lift and then, hands in pockets, khaki-clad, an almost invisible figure, he strolled towards the cart-track.

Come to that, he halted for a moment to regard the distant fires of the men. No one would miss him. They would think he was in his tent. He faced the stirring quiet ahead. The cart-track was a rutted

path of soft, warm sand, on which he went almost noiselessly. A bird squabbled for an instant in a thicket. A great white owl floated like a flake of moonlight across the track and vanished without a sound among the trees.

Along the moonlit path went Benham, and when he passed near trees his footsteps became noisy with the rustle and crash of dead leaves. The jungle was full of moonlight; twigs, branches, creepers, grass-clumps came out acutely vivid. The trees and bushes stood in pools of darkness, and beyond were pale stretches of misty moonshine and big rocks shining with an unearthly lustre. Things seemed to be clear and yet uncertain. It was as if they dissolved or retired a little and then returned to solidity.

A sudden chattering broke out overhead, and black across the great stars soared a flying squirrel and caught a twig, and ran for shelter. A second hesitated in a tree-top and pursued. They chased each other and vanished abruptly. He forgot his sense of insecurity in the interest of these active little silhouettes. And he noted how much bigger and more wonderful the stars can look when one sees them through interlacing branches.

Ahead was darkness; but not so dark when he came to it that the track was invisible. He was at the limit of his intention, but now he saw that that had been a childish project. He would go on, he would walk right into the jungle. His first disinclination was conquered, and the soft intoxication of the subtropical moonshine was in his blood.... But he wished he could walk as a spirit walks, without this noise of leaves....

Yes, this was very wonderful and beautiful, and there must always be jungles for men to walk in. Always there must be jungles....

Some small beast snarled and bolted from under his feet. He stopped sharply. He had come into a darkness under great boughs, and now he stood still as the little creature scuttled away. Beyond the track emerged into a dazzling whiteness....

In the stillness he could hear the deer belling again in the distance, and then came a fuss of monkeys in a group of trees near at hand. He remained still until this had died away into mutterings.

Then on the verge of movement he was startled by a ripe mango that slipped from its stalk and fell out of the tree and struck his hand.

It took a little time to understand that, and then he laughed, and his muscles relaxed, and he went on again.

A thorn caught at him and he disentangled himself.

He crossed the open space, and the moon was like a great shield of light spread out above him. All the world seemed swimming in its radiance. The stars were like lamps in a mist of silvery blue.

The track led him on across white open spaces of shrivelled grass and sand, amidst trees where shadows made black patternings upon the silver, and then it plunged into obscurities. For a time it lifted, and then on one hand the bush fell away, and he saw across a vast moonlit valley wide undulations of open cultivation, belts of jungle, copses, and a great lake as black as ebony. For a time the path ran thus open, and then the jungle closed in again and there were more thickets, more levels of grass, and in one place far overhead among the branches he heard and stood for a time perplexed at a vast deep humming of bees....

Presently a black monster with a hunched back went across his path heedless of him and making a great noise in the leaves. He stood quite still until it had gone. He could not tell whether it was a boar or hyaena; most probably, he thought, a boar because of the heaviness of its rush.

The path dropped downhill for a time, crossed a ravine, ascended. He passed a great leafless tree on which there were white flowers. On the ground also, in the darkness under the tree, there were these flowers; they were dropping noiselessly, and since they were visible in the shadows, it seemed to him that they must be phosphorescent. And they emitted a sweetish scent that lay heavily athwart the path. Presently he passed another such tree. Then he became aware of a tumult ahead of him, a smashing of leaves, a snorting and slobbering, grunting and sucking, a whole series of bestial sounds. He halted for a little while, and then drew nearer, picking his steps to avoid too great a noise. Here were more of those white-blossomed trees, and beneath, in the darkness, something very black and big was going to and fro, eating greedily. Then he found that there were two and then more of these black things, three or four of them.

Curiosity made Benham draw nearer, very softly.

Presently one showed in a patch of moonlight, startlingly big, a

huge, black hairy monster with a long white nose on a grotesque face, and he was stuffing armfuls of white blossom into his mouth with his curved fore claws. He took not the slightest notice of the still man, who stood perhaps twenty yards away from him. He was too blind and careless. He snorted and smacked his slobbering lips, and plunged into the shadows again. Benham heard him root among the leaves and grunt appreciatively. The air was heavy with the reek of the crushed flowers.

For some time Benham remained listening to and peering at these preoccupied gluttons. At last he shrugged his shoulders, and left them and went on his way. For a long time he could hear them, then just as he was on the verge of forgetting them altogether, some dispute arose among them, and there began a vast uproar, squeals, protests, comments, one voice ridiculously replete and authoritative, ridiculously suggestive of a drunken judge with his mouth full, and a shrill voice of grievance high above the others....

The uproar of the bears died away at last, almost abruptly, and left the jungle to the incessant night-jars....

For what end was this life of the jungle?

All Benham's senses were alert to the sounds and appearances about him, and at the same time his mind was busy with the perplexities of that riddle. Was the jungle just an aimless pool of life that man must drain and clear away? Or is it to have a use in the greater life of our race that now begins? Will man value the jungle as he values the precipice, for the sake of his manhood? Will he preserve it?

Man must keep hard, man must also keep fierce. Will the jungle keep him fierce?

For life, thought Benham, there must be insecurity....

He had missed the track....

He was now in a second ravine. He was going downward, walking on silvery sand amidst great boulders, and now there was a new sound in the air — . It was the croaking of frogs. Ahead was a solitary gleam. He was approaching a jungle pool....

Suddenly the stillness was alive, in a panic uproar. "HONK!" cried a great voice, and "HONK!" There was a clatter of hoofs, a wild rush — a rush as it seemed towards him. Was he being charged?

He backed against a rock. A great pale shape leaped by him, an antlered shape. It was a herd of big deer bolting suddenly out of the stillness. He heard the swish and smash of their retreat grow distant, disperse. He remained standing with his back to the rock.

Slowly the strophe and antistrophe of frogs and goat-suckers resumed possession of his consciousness. But now some primitive instinct perhaps or some subconscious intimation of danger made him meticulously noiseless.

He went on down a winding sound-deadening path of sand towards the drinking-place. He came to a wide white place that was almost level, and beyond it under clustering pale-stemmed trees shone the mirror surface of some ancient tank, and, sharp and black, a dog-like beast sat on its tail in the midst of this space, started convulsively and went slinking into the undergrowth. Benham paused for a moment and then walked out softly into the light, and, behold! as if it were to meet him, came a monster, a vast dark shape drawing itself lengthily out of the blackness, and stopped with a start as if it had been instantly changed to stone.

It had stopped with one paw advanced. Its striped mask was light and dark grey in the moonlight, grey but faintly tinged with ruddiness; its mouth was a little open, its fangs and a pendant of viscous saliva shone vivid. Its great round-pupilled eyes regarded him stedfastly. At last the nightmare of Benham's childhood had come true, and he was face to face with a tiger, uncaged, uncontrolled.

For some moments neither moved, neither the beast nor the man. They stood face to face, each perhaps with an equal astonishment, motionless and soundless, in that mad Indian moonlight that makes all things like a dream.

Benham stood quite motionless, and body and mind had halted together. That confrontation had an interminableness that had nothing to do with the actual passage of time. Then some trickle of his previous thoughts stirred in the frozen quiet of his mind.

He spoke hoarsely. "I am Man," he said, and lifted a hand as he spoke. "The Thought of the world."

His heart leapt within him as the tiger moved. But the great beast went sideways, gardant, only that its head was low, three noiseless

instantaneous strides it made, and stood again watching him.

"Man," he said, in a voice that had no sound, and took a step forward.

"Wough!" With two bounds the monster had become a great grey streak that crackled and rustled in the shadows of the trees. And then it had vanished, become invisible and inaudible with a kind of instantaneousness.

For some seconds or some minutes Benham stood rigid, fearlessly expectant, and then far away up the ravine he heard the deer repeat their cry of alarm, and understood with a new wisdom that the tiger had passed among them and was gone....

He walked on towards the deserted tank and now he was talking aloud.

"I understand the jungle. I understand.... If a few men die here, what matter? There are worse deaths than being killed....

"What is this fool's trap of security?

"Every time in my life that I have fled from security I have fled from death....

"Let men stew in their cities if they will. It is in the lonely places, in jungles and mountains, in snows and fires, in the still observatories and the silent laboratories, in those secret and dangerous places where life probes into life, it is there that the masters of the world, the lords of the beast, the rebel sons of Fate come to their own....

"You sleeping away there in the cities! Do you know what it means for you that I am here to-night?

"Do you know what it means to you?

"I am just one — just the precursor.

"Presently, if you will not budge, those hot cities must be burnt about you. You must come out of them...."

He wandered now uttering his thoughts as they came to him, and he saw no more living creatures because they fled and hid before the sound of his voice. He wandered until the moon, larger now and yellow tinged, was low between the black bars of the tree stems. And then it sank very suddenly behind a hilly spur and the light failed swiftly.

He stumbled and went with difficulty. He could go no further among these rocks and ravines, and he sat down at the foot of a tree

to wait for day.

He sat very still indeed.

A great stillness came over the world, a velvet silence that wrapped about him, as the velvet shadows wrapped about him. The corncrakes had ceased, all the sounds and stir of animal life had died away, the breeze had fallen. A drowsing comfort took possession of him. He grew more placid and more placid still. He was enormously content to find that fear had fled before him and was gone. He drifted into that state of mind when one thinks without ideas, when one's mind is like a starless sky, serene and empty.

12

Some hours later Benham found that the trees and rocks were growing visible again, and he saw a very bright star that he knew must be Lucifer rising amidst the black branches. He was sitting upon a rock at the foot of a slender-stemmed leafless tree. He had been asleep, and it was daybreak. Everything was coldly clear and colourless.

He must have slept soundly.

He heard a cock crow, and another answer — jungle fowl these must be, because there could be no village within earshot — and then far away and bringing back memories of terraced houses and ripe walled gardens, was the scream of peacocks. And some invisible bird was making a hollow beating sound among the trees near at hand. TUNK.... TUNK, and out of the dry grass came a twittering.

There was a green light in the east that grew stronger, and the stars after their magnitudes were dissolving in the blue; only a few remained faintly visible. The sound of birds increased. Through the trees he saw towering up a great mauve thing like the back of a monster, — but that was nonsense, it was the crest of a steep hillside covered with woods of teak.

He stood up and stretched himself, and wondered whether he had dreamed of a tiger.

He tried to remember and retrace the course of his over-night wanderings.

A flight of emerald parakeets tore screaming through the trees,

and then far away uphill he heard the creaking of a cart.

He followed the hint of a footmark, and went back up the glen slowly and thoughtfully.

Presently he came to a familiar place, a group of trees, a sheet of water, and the ruins of an old embankment. It was the ancient tank of his overnight encounter. The pool of his dream?

With doubt still in his mind, he walked round its margin to the sandy level beyond, and cast about and sought intently, and at last found, and then found clearly, imposed upon the tracks of several sorts of deer and the footprints of many biggish birds, first the great spoor of the tiger and then his own. Here the beast had halted, and here it had leapt aside. Here his own footmarks stopped. Here his heels had come together.

It had been no dream.

There was a white mist upon the water of the old tank like the bloom upon a plum, and the trees about it seemed smaller and the sand-space wider and rougher than they had seemed in the moonshine. Then the ground had looked like a floor of frosted silver.

And thence he went on upward through the fresh morning, until just as the east grew red with sunrise, he reached the cart-track from which he had strayed overnight. It was, he found, a longer way back to the camp than he remembered it to be. Perhaps he had struck the path further along. It curved about and went up and down and crossed three ravines. At last he came to that trampled place of littered white blossom under great trees where he had seen the bears.

The sunlight went before him in a sheaf of golden spears, and his shadow, that was at first limitless, crept towards his feet. The dew had gone from the dead grass and the sand was hot to his dry boots before he came back into the open space about the great banyan and the tents. And Kepple, refreshed by a night's rest and coffee, was wondering loudly where the devil he had gone.

CHAPTER THE FIRST ~~ THE BOY GROWS UP

1

Benham was the son of a schoolmaster. His father was assistant first at Cheltenham, and subsequently at Minchinghampton, and then he became head and later on sole proprietor of Martindale House, a high-class preparatory school at Seagate. He was extremely successful for some years, as success goes in the scholastic profession, and then disaster overtook him in the shape of a divorce. His wife, William Porphyry's mother, made the acquaintance of a rich young man named Nolan, who was recuperating at Seagate from the sequelae of snake-bite, malaria, and a gun accident in Brazil. She ran away with him, and she was divorced. She was, however, unable to marry him because he died at Wiesbaden only three days after the Reverend Harold Benham obtained his decree absolute. Instead, therefore, being a woman of great spirit, enterprise and sweetness, she married Godfrey Marayne, afterwards Sir Godfrey Marayne, the great London surgeon.

Nolan was a dark, rather melancholy and sentimental young man, and he left about a third of his very large fortune entirely to Mrs. Benham and the rest to her in trust for her son, whom he deemed himself to have injured. With this and a husband already distinguished, she returned presently to London, and was on the whole fairly well received there.

It was upon the reverend gentleman at Seagate that the brunt of this divorce fell. There is perhaps a certain injustice in the fact that a schoolmaster who has lost his wife should also lose the more valuable proportion of his pupils, but the tone of thought in England is against any association of a schoolmaster with matrimonial irregularity. And also Mr. Benham remarried. It would certainly have been better for him if he could have produced a sister. His school declined and his efforts to resuscitate it only hastened its decay. Conceiving that he could now only appeal to the broader-minded, more progressive type of parent, he became an educational reformer,

and wrote upon modernizing the curriculum with increasing frequency to the TIMES. He expended a considerable fraction of his dwindling capital upon a science laboratory and a fives court; he added a London Bachelor of Science with a Teaching Diploma to the school staff, and a library of about a thousand volumes, including the Hundred Best Books as selected by the late Lord Avebury, to the school equipment. None of these things did anything but enhance the suspicion of laxity his wife's escapade had created in the limited opulent and discreet class to which his establishment appealed. One boy who, under the influence of the Hundred Best Books, had quoted the ZEND-AVESTA to an irascible but influential grandfather, was withdrawn without notice or compensation in the middle of the term. It intensifies the tragedy of the Reverend Harold Benham's failure that in no essential respect did his school depart from the pattern of all other properly-conducted preparatory schools.

In appearance he was near the average of scholastic English gentlemen. He displayed a manifest handsomeness somewhat weakened by disregard and disuse, a large moustache and a narrow high forehead. His rather tired brown eyes were magnified by glasses. He was an active man in unimportant things, with a love for the phrase "ship-shape," and he played cricket better than any one else on the staff. He walked in wide strides, and would sometimes use the tail of his gown on the blackboard. Like so many clergymen and schoolmasters, he had early distrusted his natural impulse in conversation, and had adopted the defensive precaution of a rather formal and sonorous speech, which habit had made a part of him. His general effect was of one who is earnestly keeping up things that might otherwise give way, keeping them up by act and voice, keeping up an atmosphere of vigour and success in a school that was only too manifestly attenuated, keeping up a pretentious economy of administration in a school that must not be too manifestly impoverished, keeping up a claim to be in the scientific van and rather a flutterer of dovecots — with its method of manual training for example — keeping up ESPRIT DE CORPS and the manliness of himself and every one about him, keeping up his affection for his faithful second wife and his complete forgetfulness of and indifference to that spirit of distracting impulse and insubordination

away there in London, who had once been his delight and insurmountable difficulty. “After my visits to her,” wrote Benham, “he would show by a hundred little expressions and poses and acts how intensely he wasn’t noting that anything of the sort had occurred.”

But one thing that from the outset the father seemed to have failed to keep up thoroughly was his intention to mould and dominate his son.

The advent of his boy had been a tremendous event in the reverend gentleman’s life. It is not improbable that his disposition to monopolize the pride of this event contributed to the ultimate disruption of his family. It left so few initiatives within the home to his wife. He had been an early victim to that wave of philoprogenitive and educational enthusiasm which distinguished the closing decade of the nineteenth century. He was full of plans in those days for the education of his boy, and the thought of the youngster played a large part in the series of complicated emotional crises with which he celebrated the departure of his wife, crises in which a number of old school and college friends very generously assisted — spending weekends at Seagate for this purpose, and mingling tobacco, impassioned handclasps and suchlike consolation with much patient sympathetic listening to his carefully balanced analysis of his feelings. He declared that his son was now his one living purpose in life, and he sketched out a scheme of moral and intellectual training that he subsequently embodied in five very stimulating and intimate articles for the SCHOOL WORLD, but never put into more than partial operation.

“I have read my father’s articles upon this subject,” wrote Benham, “and I am still perplexed to measure just what I owe to him. Did he ever attempt this moral training he contemplated so freely? I don’t think he did. I know now, I knew then, that he had something in his mind.... There were one or two special walks we had together, he invited me to accompany him with a certain portentousness, and we would go out pregnantly making superficial remarks about the school cricket and return, discussing botany, with nothing said.

“His heart failed him.

“Once or twice, too, he seemed to be reaching out at me from the

school pulpit.

"I think that my father did manage to convey to me his belief that there were these fine things, honour, high aims, nobilities. If I did not get this belief from him then I do not know how I got it. But it was as if he hinted at a treasure that had got very dusty in an attic, a treasure which he hadn't himself been able to spend...."

The father who had intended to mould his son ended by watching him grow, not always with sympathy or understanding. He was an overworked man assailed by many futile anxieties. One sees him striding about the establishment with his gown streaming out behind him urging on the groundsman or the gardener, or dignified, expounding the particular advantages of Seagate to enquiring parents, one sees him unnaturally cheerful and facetious at the midday dinner table, one imagines him keeping up high aspirations in a rather too hastily scribbled sermon in the school pulpit, or keeping up an enthusiasm for beautiful language in a badly-prepared lesson on Virgil, or expressing unreal indignation and unjustifiably exalted sentiments to evil doers, and one realizes his disadvantage against the quiet youngster whose retentive memory was storing up all these impressions for an ultimate judgment, and one understands, too, a certain relief that mingled with his undeniable emotion when at last the time came for young Benham, "the one living purpose" of his life, to be off to Minchinghampton and the next step in the mysterious ascent of the English educational system.

Three times at least, and with an increased interval, the father wrote fine fatherly letters that would have stood the test of publication. Then his communications became comparatively hurried and matter-of-fact. His boy's return home for the holidays was always rather a stirring time for his private feelings, but he became more and more inexpressive. He would sometimes lay a hand on those growing shoulders and then withdraw it. They felt braced-up shoulders, stiffly inflexible or — they would wince. And when one has let the habit of indefinite feelings grow upon one, what is there left to say? If one did say anything one might be asked questions....

One or two of the long vacations they spent abroad together. The last of these occasions followed Benham's convalescence at Montana and his struggle with the Bisse; the two went to Zermatt and did

several peaks and crossed the Theodule, and it was clear that their joint expeditions were a strain upon both of them. The father thought the son reckless, unskilful, and impatient; the son found the father's insistence upon guides, ropes, precautions, the recognized way, the highest point and back again before you get a chill, and talk about it sagely but very, very modestly over pipes, tiresome. He wanted to wander in deserts of ice and see over the mountains, and discover what it is to be benighted on a precipice. And gradually he was becoming familiar with his father's repertory of Greek quotations. There was no breach between them, but each knew that holiday was the last they would ever spend together....

The court had given the custody of young William Porphyry into his father's hands, but by a generous concession it was arranged that his mother should have him to see her for an hour or so five times a year. The Nolan legacy, however, coming upon the top of this, introduced a peculiar complication that provided much work for tactful intermediaries, and gave great and increasing scope for painful delicacies on the part of Mr. Benham as the boy grew up.

"I see," said the father over his study pipe and with his glasses fixed on remote distances above the head of the current sympathizer, "I see more and more clearly that the tale of my sacrifices is not yet at an end.... In many respects he is like her.... Quick. Too quick.... He must choose. But I know his choice. Yes, yes, — I'm not blind. She's worked upon him.... I have done what I could to bring out the manhood in him. Perhaps it will bear the strain.... It will be a wrench, old man — God knows."

He did his very best to make it a wrench.

2

Benham's mother, whom he saw quarterly and also on the first of May, because it was her birthday, touched and coloured his imagination far more than his father did. She was now Lady Marayne, and a prominent, successful, and happy little lady. Her dereliction had been forgiven quite soon, and whatever whisper of it remained was very completely forgotten during the brief period of moral kindliness which followed the accession of King Edward the

Seventh. It no doubt contributed to her social reinstatement that her former husband was entirely devoid of social importance, while, on the other hand, Sir Godfrey Marayne's temporary monopoly of the caecal operation which became so fashionable in the last decade of Queen Victoria's reign as to be practically epidemic, created a strong feeling in her favour.

She was blue-eyed and very delicately complexioned, quick-moving, witty, given to little storms of clean enthusiasm; she loved handsome things, brave things, successful things, and the respect and affection of all the world. She did quite what she liked upon impulse, and nobody ever thought ill of her.

Her family were the Mantons of Blent, quite good west-country people. She had broken away from them before she was twenty to marry Benham, whom she had idealized at a tennis party. He had talked of his work and she had seen it in a flash, the noblest work in the world, him at his daily divine toil and herself a Madonna surrounded by a troupe of Blessed Boys — all of good family, some of quite the best. For a time she had kept it up even more than he had, and then Nolan had distracted her with a realization of the heroism that goes to the ends of the earth. She became sick with desire for the forests of Brazil, and the Pacific, and — a peak in Darien. Immediately the school was frowsty beyond endurance, and for the first time she let herself perceive how dreadfully a gentleman and a scholar can smell of pipes and tobacco. Only one course lay open to a woman of spirit....

For a year she did indeed live like a woman of spirit, and it was at Nolan's bedside that Marayne was first moved to admiration. She was plucky. All men love a plucky woman.

Sir Godfrey Marayne smelt a good deal of antiseptic soap, but he talked in a way that amused her, and he trusted as well as adored her. She did what she liked with his money, her own money, and her son's trust money, and she did very well. From the earliest Benham's visits were to a gracious presence amidst wealthy surroundings. The transit from the moral blamelessness of Seagate had an entirely misleading effect of ascent.

Their earlier encounters became rather misty in his memory; they occurred at various hotels in Seagate. Afterwards he would go, first

taken by a governess, and later going alone, to Charing Cross, where he would be met, in earlier times by a maid and afterwards by a deferential manservant who called him "Sir," and conveyed, sometimes in a hansom cab and later in a smart brougham, by Trafalgar Square, Lower Regent Street, Piccadilly, and streets of increasing wealth and sublimity to Sir Godfrey's house in Desborough Street. Very naturally he fell into thinking of these discreet and well-governed West End streets as a part of his mother's atmosphere.

The house had a dignified portico, and always before he had got down to the pavement the door opened agreeably and a second respectful manservant stood ready. Then came the large hall, with its noiseless carpets and great Chinese jars, its lacquered cabinets and the wide staircase, and floating down the wide staircase, impatient to greet him, light and shining as a flower petal, sweet and welcoming, radiating a joyfulness as cool and clear as a dewy morning, came his mother. "WELL, little man, my son," she would cry in her happy singing voice, "WELL?"

So he thought she must always be, but indeed these meetings meant very much to her, she dressed for them and staged them, she perceived the bright advantages of her rarity and she was quite determined to have her son when the time came to possess him. She kissed him but not oppressively, she caressed him cleverly; it was only on these rare occasions that he was ever kissed or caressed, and she talked to his shy boyishness until it felt a more spirited variety of manhood. "What have you been doing?" she asked, "since I saw you last."

She never said he had grown, but she told him he looked tall; and though the tea was a marvellous display it was never an obtrusive tea, it wasn't poked at a fellow; a various plenty flowed well within reach of one's arm, like an agreeable accompaniment to their conversation.

"What have you done? All sorts of brave things? Do you swim now? I can swim. Oh! I can swim half a mile. Some day we will swim races together. Why not? And you ride?...

"The horse bolted — and you stuck on? Did you squeak? I stick on, but I HAVE to squeak. But you — of course, No! you mustn't.

I'm just a little woman. And I ride big horses...."

And for the end she had invented a characteristic little ceremony.

She would stand up in front of him and put her hands on his shoulders and look into his face.

"Clean eyes?" she would say, " — still?"

Then she would take his ears in her little firm hands and kiss very methodically his eyes and his forehead and his cheeks and at last his lips. Her own eyes would suddenly brim bright with tears.

"GO," she would say.

That was the end.

It seemed to Benham as though he was being let down out of a sunlit fairyland to this grey world again.

3

The contrast between Lady Marayne's pretty amenities and the good woman at Seagate who urged herself almost hourly to forget that William Porphyry was not her own son, was entirely unfair. The second Mrs. Benham's conscientious spirit and a certain handsome ability about her fitted her far more than her predecessor for the onerous duties of a schoolmaster's wife, but whatever natural buoyancy she possessed was outweighed by an irrepressible conviction derived from an episcopal grandparent that the remarriage of divorced persons is sinful, and by a secret but well-founded doubt whether her husband loved her with a truly romantic passion. She might perhaps have borne either of these troubles singly, but the two crushed her spirit.

Her temperament was not one that goes out to meet happiness. She had reluctant affections and suspected rather than welcomed the facility of other people's. Her susceptibility to disagreeable impressions was however very ample, and life was fenced about with protections for her "feelings." It filled young Benham with inexpressible indignations that his sweet own mother, so gay, so brightly cheerful that even her tears were stars, was never to be mentioned in his stepmother's presence, and it was not until he had fully come to years of reflection that he began to realize with what honesty, kindness and patience this naturally not very happy lady had

nursed, protected, mended for and generally mothered him.

4

As Benham grew to look manly and bear himself with pride, his mother's affection for him blossomed into a passion. She made him come down to London from Cambridge as often as she could; she went about with him; she made him squire her to theatres and take her out to dinners and sup with her at the Carlton, and in the summer she had him with her at Chexington Manor, the Hertfordshire house Sir Godfrey had given her. And always when they parted she looked into his eyes to see if they were still clean — whatever she meant by that — and she kissed his forehead and cheeks and eyes and lips. She began to make schemes for his career, she contrived introductions she judged would be useful to him later.

Everybody found the relationship charming. Some of the more conscientious people, it is true, pretended to think that the Reverend Harold Benham was a first husband and long since dead, but that was all. As a matter of fact, in his increasingly futile way he wasn't, either at Seagate or in the Educational Supplement of the TIMES. But even the most conscientious of us are not obliged to go to Seagate or read the Educational Supplement of the TIMES.

Lady Marayne's plans for her son's future varied very pleasantly. She was an industrious reader of biographies, and more particularly of the large fair biographies of the recently contemporary; they mentioned people she knew, they recalled scenes, each sowed its imaginative crop upon her mind, a crop that flourished and flowered until a newer growth came to oust it. She saw her son a diplomat, a prancing pro-consul, an empire builder, a trusted friend of the august, the bold leader of new movements, the saviour of ancient institutions, the youngest, brightest, modernest of prime ministers — or a tremendously popular poet. As a rule she saw him unmarried — with a wonderful little mother at his elbow. Sometimes in romantic flashes he was adored by German princesses or eloped with Russian grand-duchesses! But such fancies were HORS D'OEUVRE. The modern biography deals with the career. Every project was bright, every project had GO — tremendous go. And they all demanded a

hero, debonnaire and balanced. And Benham, as she began to perceive, wasn't balanced. Something of his father had crept into him, a touch of moral stiffness. She knew the flavour of that so well. It was a stumbling, an elaboration, a spoil-sport and weakness. She tried not to admit to herself that even in the faintest degree it was there. But it was there.

"Tell me all that you are doing NOW," she said to him one afternoon when she had got him to herself during his first visit to Chexington Manor. "How do you like Cambridge? Are you making friends? Have you joined that thing — the Union, is it? — and delivered your maiden speech? If you're for politics, Poff, that's your game. Have you begun it?"

She lay among splashes of sunshine on the red cushions in the punt, a little curled-up figure of white, with her sweet pale animated face warmed by the reflection of her red sunshade, and her eyes like little friendly heavens. And he, lean, and unconsciously graceful, sat at her feet and admired her beyond measure, and rejoiced that now at last they were going to be ever so much together, and doubted if it would be possible ever to love any other woman so much as he did her.

He tried to tell her of Cambridge and his friends and the undergraduate life he was leading, but he found it difficult. All sorts of things that seemed right and good at Trinity seemed out of drawing in the peculiar atmosphere she created about her. All sorts of clumsiness and youthfulness in himself and his associates he felt she wouldn't accept, couldn't accept, that it would be wrong of her to accept. Before they could come before her they must wear a bravery. He couldn't, for instance, tell her how Billy Prothero, renouncing vanity and all social pretension, had worn a straw hat into November and the last stages of decay, and how it had been burnt by a special commission ceremonially in the great court. He couldn't convey to her the long sessions of beer and tobacco and high thinking that went on in Prothero's rooms into the small hours. A certain Gothic greyness and flatness and muddiness through which the Cambridge spirit struggles to its destiny, he concealed from her. What remained to tell was — attenuated. He could not romance. So she tried to fill in his jejune outlines. She tried to inspire a son who seemed most

unaccountably up to nothing.

"You must make good friends," she said. "Isn't young Lord Breeze at your college? His mother the other day told me he was. And Sir Freddy Quenton's boy. And there are both the young Baptons at Cambridge."

He knew one of the Baptons.

"Poff," she said suddenly, "has it ever occurred to you what you are going to do afterwards. Do you know you are going to be quite well off?"

Benham looked up with a faint embarrassment. "My father said something. He was rather vague. It wasn't his affair — that kind of thing."

"You will be quite well off," she repeated, without any complicating particulars. "You will be so well off that it will be possible for you to do anything almost that you like in the world. Nothing will tie you. Nothing...."

"But — HOW well off?"

"You will have several thousands a year."

"Thousands?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"But — Mother, this is rather astounding.... Does this mean there are estates somewhere, responsibilities?"

"It is just money. Investments."

"You know, I've imagined — . I've thought always I should have to DO something."

"You MUST do something, Poff. But it needn't be for a living. The world is yours without that. And so you see you've got to make plans. You've got to know the sort of people who'll have things in their hands. You've got to keep out of — holes and corners. You've got to think of Parliament and abroad. There's the army, there's diplomacy. There's the Empire. You can be a Cecil Rhodes if you like. You can be a Winston...."

5

Perhaps it was only the innate eagerness of Lady Marayne which made her feel disappointed in her son's outlook upon life. He did not

choose among his glittering possibilities, he did not say what he was going to be, proconsul, ambassador, statesman, for days. And he talked VAGUELY of wanting to do something fine, but all in a fog. A boy of nearly nineteen ought to have at least the beginnings of SAVOIR FAIRE.

Was he in the right set? Was he indeed in the right college? Trinity, by his account, seemed a huge featureless place — and might he not conceivably be LOST in it? In those big crowds one had to insist upon oneself. Poff never insisted upon himself — except quite at the wrong moment. And there was this Billy Prothero. BILLY! Like a goat or something. People called William don't get their Christian name insisted upon unless they are vulnerable somewhere. Any form of William stamps a weakness, Willie, Willy, Will, Billy, Bill; it's a fearful handle for one's friends. At any rate Poff had escaped that. But this Prothero!

"But who IS this Billy Prothero?" she asked one evening in the walled garden.

"He was at Minchinghampton."

"But who IS he? Who is his father? Where does he come from?"

Benham sought in his mind for a space. "I don't know," he said at last. Billy had always been rather reticent about his people. She demanded descriptions. She demanded an account of Billy's furniture, Billy's clothes, Billy's form of exercise. It dawned upon Benham that for some inexplicable reason she was hostile to Billy. It was like the unmasking of an ambuscade. He had talked a lot about Prothero's ideas and the discussions of social reform and social service that went on in his rooms, for Billy read at unknown times, and was open at all hours to any argumentative caller. To Lady Marayne all ideas were obnoxious, a form of fogging; all ideas, she held, were queer ideas. "And does he call himself a Socialist?" she asked. "I THOUGHT he would."

"Poff," she cried suddenly, "you're not a SOCIALIST?"

"Such a vague term."

"But these friends of yours — they seem to be ALL Socialists. Red ties and everything complete."

"They have ideas," he evaded. He tried to express it better. "They give one something to take hold of."

She sat up stiffly on the garden-seat. She lifted her finger at him, very seriously. “I hope,” she said with all her heart, “that you will have nothing to do with such ideas. Nothing. SOCIALISM!”

“They make a case.”

“Pooh! Any one can make a case.”

“But—”

“There’s no sense in them. What is the good of talking about upsetting everything? Just disorder. How can one do anything then? You mustn’t. You mustn’t. No. It’s nonsense, little Poff. It’s absurd. And you may spoil so much.... I HATE the way you talk of it.... As if it wasn’t all — absolutely — RUBBISH....”

She was earnest almost to the intonation of tears.

Why couldn’t her son go straight for his ends, clear tangible ends, as she had always done? This thinking about everything! She had never thought about anything in all her life for more than half an hour — and it had always turned out remarkably well.

Benham felt baffled. There was a pause. How on earth could he go on telling her his ideas if this was how they were to be taken?

“I wish sometimes,” his mother said abruptly, with an unusually sharp note in her voice, “that you wouldn’t look quite so like your father.”

“But I’m NOT like my father!” said Benham puzzled.

“No,” she insisted, and with an air of appealing to his soberer reason, “so why should you go LOOKING like him? That CONCERNED expression....”

She jumped to her feet. “Poff,” she said, “I want to go and see the evening primroses pop. You and I are talking nonsense. THEY don’t have ideas anyhow. They just pop — as God meant them to do. What stupid things we human beings are!”

Her philosophical moments were perhaps the most baffling of all.

6

Billy Prothero became the symbol in the mind of Lady Marayne for all that disappointed her in Benham. He had to become the symbol, because she could not think of complicated or abstract things, she had to make things personal, and he was the only personality

available. She fretted over his existence for some days therefore (once she awakened and thought about him in the night), and then suddenly she determined to grasp her nettle. She decided to seize and obliterate this Prothero. He must come to Chexington and be thoroughly and conclusively led on, examined, ransacked, shown up, and disposed of for ever. At once. She was not quite clear how she meant to do this, but she was quite resolved that it had to be done. Anything is better than inaction.

There was a little difficulty about dates and engagements, but he came, and through the season of expectation Benham, who was now for the first time in contact with the feminine nature, was delighted at the apparent change to cordiality. So that he talked of Billy to his mother much more than he had ever done before.

Billy had been his particular friend at Minchinghampton, at least during the closing two years of his school life. Billy had fallen into friendship with Benham, as some of us fall in love, quite suddenly, when he saw Benham get down from the fence and be sick after his encounter with the bull. Already Billy was excited by admiration, but it was the incongruity of the sickness conquered him. He went back to the school with his hands more than usually in his pockets, and no eyes for anything but this remarkable strung-up fellow-creature. He felt he had never observed Benham before, and he was astonished that he had not done so.

Billy Prothero was a sturdy sort of boy, generously wanting in good looks. His hair was rough, and his complexion muddy, and he walked about with his hands in his pockets, long flexible lips protruded in a whistle, and a rather shapeless nose well up to show he didn't care. Providence had sought to console him by giving him a keen eye for the absurdity of other people. He had a suggestive tongue, and he professed and practised cowardice to the scandal of all his acquaintances. He was said never to wash behind his ears, but this report wronged him. There had been a time when he did not do so, but his mother had won him to a promise, and now that operation was often the sum of his simple hasty toilet. His desire to associate himself with Benham was so strong that it triumphed over a defensive reserve. It enabled him to detect accessible moments, do inobtrusive friendly services, and above all amuse his quarry. He not

only amused Benham, he stimulated him. They came to do quite a number of things together. In the language of schoolboy stories they became “inseparables.”

Prothero’s first desire, so soon as they were on a footing that enabled him to formulate desires, was to know exactly what Benham thought he was up to in crossing a field with a bull in it instead of going round, and by the time he began to understand that, he had conceived an affection for him that was to last a lifetime.

“I wasn’t going to be bullied by a beast,” said Benham.

“Suppose it had been an elephant?” Prothero cried.... “A mad elephant?... A pack of wolves?”

Benham was too honest not to see that he was entangled. “Well, suppose in YOUR case it had been a wild cat?... A fierce mastiff?... A mastiff?... A terrier?... A lap dog?”

“Yes, but my case is that there are limits.”

Benham was impatient at the idea of limits. With a faintly malicious pleasure Prothero lugged him back to that idea.

“We both admit there are limits,” Prothero concluded. “But between the absolutely impossible and the altogether possible there’s the region of risk. You think a man ought to take that risk—” He reflected. “I think — no — I think NOT.”

“If he feels afraid,” cried Benham, seeing his one point. “If he feels afraid. Then he ought to take it....”

After a digestive interval, Prothero asked, “WHY? Why should he?”

The discussion of that momentous question, that Why? which Benham perhaps might never have dared ask himself, and which Prothero perhaps might never have attempted to answer if it had not been for the clash of their minds, was the chief topic of their conversation for many months. From Why be brave? it spread readily enough to Why be honest? Why be clean? — all the great whys of life.... Because one believes.... But why believe it? Left to himself Benham would have felt the mere asking of this question was a thing ignoble, not to be tolerated. It was, as it were, treason to nobility. But Prothero put it one afternoon in a way that permitted no high dismissal of their doubts. “You can’t build your honour on fudge, Benham. Like committing sacrilege — in order to buy a cloth for the

altar.”

By that Benham was slipped from the recognized code and launched upon speculations which became the magnificent research.

It was not only in complexion and stature and ways of thinking that Billy and Benham contrasted. Benham inclined a little to eloquence, he liked very clean hands, he had a dread of ridiculous outlines. Prothero lapsed readily into ostentatious slovenliness, when his hands were dirty he pitied them sooner than scrubbed them, he would have worn an overcoat with one tail torn off rather than have gone cold. Moreover, Prothero had an earthy liking for animals, he could stroke and tickle strange cats until they wanted to leave father and mother and all earthly possessions and follow after him, and he mortgaged a term’s pocket money and bought and kept a small terrier in the school house against all law and tradition, under the baseless pretence that it was a stray animal of unknown origin. Benham, on the other hand, was shy with small animals and faintly hostile to big ones. Beasts he thought were just beasts. And Prothero had a gift for caricature, while Benham’s aptitude was for music.

It was Prothero’s eyes and pencil that first directed Benham to the poor indolences and evasions and insincerities of the masters. It was Prothero’s wicked pictures that made him see the shrivelled absurdity of the vulgar theology. But it was Benham who stood between Prothero and that rather coarsely conceived epicureanism that seemed his logical destiny. When quite early in their Cambridge days Prothero’s revolt against foppery reached a nadir of personal neglect, and two philanthropists from the rooms below him, goaded beyond the normal tolerance of Trinity, and assisted by two sportsmen from Trinity Hall, burnt his misshapen straw hat (after partly filling it with gunpowder and iron filings) and sought to duck him in the fountain in the court, it was Benham, in a state between distress and madness, and armed with a horn-handled cane of exceptional size, who intervened, turned the business into a blend of wrangle and scuffle, introduced the degrading topic of duelling into a simple wholesome rag of four against one, carried him off under the cloud of horror created by this impropriety and so saved him, still only slightly wetted, not only from this indignity but from the experiment in rationalism that had provoked it.

Because Benham made it perfectly clear what he had thought and felt about this hat.

Such was the illuminating young man whom Lady Marayne decided to invite to Chexington, into the neighbourhood of herself, Sir Godfrey, and her circle of friends.

7

He was quite anxious to satisfy the requirements of Benham's people and to do his friend credit. He was still in the phase of being a penitent pig, and he inquired carefully into the needs and duties of a summer guest in a country house. He knew it was quite a considerable country house, and that Sir Godfrey wasn't Benham's father, but like most people, he was persuaded that Lady Marayne had divorced the parental Benham. He arrived dressed very neatly in a brown suit that had only one fault, it had not the remotest suggestion of having been made for him. It fitted his body fairly well, it did annex his body with only a few slight incompatibilities, but it repudiated his hands and face. He had a conspicuously old Gladstone bag and a conspicuously new despatch case, and he had forgotten black ties and dress socks and a hair brush. He arrived in the late afternoon, was met by Benham, in tennis flannels, looking smartened up and a little unfamiliar, and taken off in a spirited dog-cart driven by a typical groom. He met his host and hostess at dinner.

Sir Godfrey was a rationalist and a residuum. Very much of him, too much perhaps, had gone into the acquirement and perfect performance of the caecal operation; the man one met in the social world was what was left over. It had the effect of being quiet, but in its unobtrusive way knobby. He had a knobby brow, with an air about it of having recently been intent, and his conversation was curiously spotted with little knobby arrested anecdotes. If any one of any distinction was named, he would reflect and say, "Of course, — ah, yes, I know him, I know him. Yes, I did him a little service — in '96."

And something in his manner would suggest a satisfaction, or a dissatisfaction with confidential mysteries.

He welcomed Billy Prothero in a colourless manner, and made

conversation about Cambridge. He had known one or two of the higher dons. One he had done at Cambridge quite recently. “The inns are better than they are at Oxford, which is not saying very much, but the place struck me as being changed. The men seemed younger....”

The burden of the conversation fell upon Lady Marayne. She looked extraordinarily like a flower to Billy, a little diamond buckle on a black velvet band glittered between the two masses of butter-coloured hair that flowed back from her forehead, her head was poised on the prettiest neck conceivable, and her shapely little shoulders and her shapely little arms came decidedly but pleasantly out of a softness and sparkle of white and silver and old rose. She talked what sounded like innocent commonplaces a little spiced by whim, though indeed each remark had an exploratory quality, and her soft blue eyes rested ever and again upon Billy’s white tie. It seemed she did so by the merest inadvertency, but it made the young man wish he had after all borrowed a black one from Benham. But the manservant who had put his things out had put it out, and he hadn’t been quite sure. Also she noted all the little things he did with fork and spoon and glass. She gave him an unusual sense of being brightly, accurately and completely visible.

Chexington, it seemed to Billy, was done with a large and costly and easy completeness. The table with its silver and flowers was much more beautifully done than any table he had sat at before, and in the dimness beyond the brightness there were two men to wait on the four of them. The old grey butler was really wonderfully good....

“You shoot, Mr. Prothero?”

“You hunt, Mr. Prothero?”

“You know Scotland well, Mr. Prothero?”

These questions disturbed Prothero. He did not shoot, he did not hunt, he did not go to Scotland for the grouse, he did not belong, and Lady Marayne ought to have seen that he did not belong to the class that does these things.

“You ride much, Mr. Prothero?”

Billy conceived a suspicion that these innocent inquiries were designed to emphasize a contrast in his social quality. But he could not be sure. One never could be sure with Lady Marayne. It might be just that she did not understand the sort of man he was. And in that

case ought he to maintain the smooth social surface unbroken by pretending as far as possible to be this kind of person, or ought he to make a sudden gap in it by telling his realities. He evaded the shooting question anyhow. He left it open for Lady Marayne and the venerable butler and Sir Godfrey and every one to suppose he just happened to be the sort of gentleman of leisure who doesn't shoot. He disavowed hunting, he made it appear he travelled when he travelled in directions other than Scotland. But the fourth question brought him to bay. He regarded his questioner with his small rufous eye.

"I have never been across a horse in my life, Lady Marayne."

"Tut, tut," said Sir Godfrey. "Why! — it's the best of exercise. Every man ought to ride. Good for the health. Keeps him fit. Prevents lodgments. Most trouble due to lodgments."

"I've never had a chance of riding. And I think I'm afraid of horses."

"That's only an excuse," said Lady Marayne. "Everybody's afraid of horses and nobody's really afraid of horses."

"But I'm not used to horses. You see — I live on my mother. And she can't afford to keep a stable."

His hostess did not see his expression of discomfort. Her pretty eyes were intent upon the peas with which she was being served.

"Does your mother live in the country?" she asked, and took her peas with fastidious exactness.

Prothero coloured brightly. "She lives in London."

"All the year?"

"All the year."

"But isn't it dreadfully hot in town in the summer?"

Prothero had an uncomfortable sense of being very red in the face. This kept him red. "We're suburban people," he said.

"But I thought — isn't there the seaside?"

"My mother has a business," said Prothero, redder than ever.

"O-oh!" said Lady Marayne. "What fun that must be for her?"

"It's a real business, and she has to live by it. Sometimes it's a worry."

"But a business of her own!" She surveyed the confusion of his visage with a sweet intelligence. "Is it an amusing sort of business,

Mr. Prothero?”

Prothero looked mulish. “My mother is a dressmaker,” he said. “In Brixton. She doesn’t do particularly badly — or well. I live on my scholarship. I have lived on scholarships since I was thirteen. And you see, Lady Marayne, Brixton is a poor hunting country.”

Lady Marayne felt she had unmasked Prothero almost indecently. Whatever happened there must be no pause. There must be no sign of a hitch.

“But it’s good at tennis,” she said. “You DO play tennis, Mr. Prothero?”

“I — I gesticulate,” said Prothero.

Lady Marayne, still in flight from that pause, went off at a tangent.

“Poff, my dear,” she said, “I’ve had a diving-board put at the deep end of the pond.”

The remark hung unanswered for a moment. The transition had been too quick for Benham’s state of mind.

“Do you swim, Mr. Prothero?” the lady asked, though a moment before she had determined that she would never ask him a question again. But this time it was a lucky question.

“Prothero mopped up the lot of us at Minchinghampton with his diving and swimming,” Benham explained, and the tension was relaxed.

Lady Marayne spoke of her own swimming, and became daring and amusing at her difficulties with local feeling when first she swam in the pond. The high road ran along the far side of the pond— “And it didn’t wear a hedge or anything,” said Lady Marayne. “That was what they didn’t quite like. Swimming in an undraped pond....”

Prothero had been examined enough. Now he must be entertained. She told stories about the village people in her brightest manner. The third story she regretted as soon as she was fairly launched upon it; it was how she had interviewed the village dressmaker, when Sir Godfrey insisted upon her supporting local industries. It was very amusing but technical. The devil had put it into her head. She had to go through with it. She infused an extreme innocence into her eyes and fixed them on Prothero, although she felt a certain deepening pinkness in her cheeks was betraying her, and she did not look at Benham until her unhappy, but otherwise quite amusing anecdote,

was dead and gone and safely buried under another....

But people ought not to go about having dressmakers for mothers....

And coming into other people's houses and influencing their sons....

8

That night when everything was over Billy sat at the writing-table of his sumptuous bedroom — the bed was gilt wood, the curtains of the three great windows were tremendous, and there was a cheval glass that showed the full length of him and seemed to look over his head for more, — and meditated upon this visit of his. It was more than he had been prepared for. It was going to be a great strain. The sleek young manservant in an alpaca jacket, who said "Sir" whenever you looked at him, and who had seized upon and unpacked Billy's most private Gladstone bag without even asking if he might do so, and put away and displayed Billy's things in a way that struck Billy as faintly ironical, was unexpected. And it was unexpected that the brown suit, with its pockets stuffed with Billy's personal and confidential sundries, had vanished. And apparently a bath in a bathroom far down the corridor was prescribed for him in the morning; he hadn't thought of a dressing-gown. And after one had dressed, what did one do? Did one go down and wander about the house looking for the breakfast-room or wait for a gong? Would Sir Godfrey read Family Prayers? And afterwards did one go out or hang about to be entertained? He knew now quite clearly that those wicked blue eyes would mark his every slip. She did not like him. She did not like him, he supposed, because he was common stuff. He didn't play up to her world and her. He was a discord in this rich, cleverly elaborate household. You could see it in the servants' attitudes. And he was committed to a week of this.

Billy puffed out his cheeks to blow a sigh, and then decided to be angry and say "Damn!"

This way of living which made him uncomfortable was clearly an irrational and objectionable way of living. It was, in a cumbersome way, luxurious. But the waste of life of it, the servants, the

observances, all concentrated on the mere detail of existence? There came a rap at the door. Benham appeared, wearing an expensive-looking dressing-jacket which Lady Marayne had bought for him. He asked if he might talk for a bit and smoke. He sat down in a capacious chintz-covered easy chair beside Prothero, lit a cigarette, and came to the point after only a trivial hesitation.

"Prothero," he said, "you know what my father is."

"I thought he ran a preparatory school."

There was the profoundest resentment in Prothero's voice.

"And, all the same, I'm going to be a rich man."

"I don't understand," said Prothero, without any shadow of congratulation.

Benham told Prothero as much as his mother had conveyed to him of the resources of his wealth. Her version had been adapted to his tender years and the delicacies of her position. The departed Nolan had become an eccentric godfather. Benham's manner was apologetic, and he made it clear that only recently had these facts come to him. He had never suspected that he had had this eccentric godfather. It altered the outlook tremendously. It was one of the reasons that made Benham glad to have Prothero there, one wanted a man of one's own age, who understood things a little, to try over one's new ideas. Prothero listened with an unamiable expression.

"What would you do, Prothero, if you found yourself saddled with some thousands a year?"

"Godfathers don't grow in Brixton," said Prothero concisely.

"Well, what am I to do, Prothero?"

"Does all THIS belong to you?"

"No, this is my mother's."

"Godfather too?"

"I've not thought.... I suppose so. Or her own."

Prothero meditated.

"THIS life," he said at last, "this large expensiveness — ..."

He left his criticism unfinished.

"I agree. It suits my mother somehow. I can't understand her living in any other way. But — for me...."

"What can one do with several thousands a year?"

Prothero's interest in this question presently swamped his petty

personal resentments. “I suppose,” he said, “one might have rather a lark with money like that. One would be free to go anywhere. To set all sorts of things going.... It’s clear you can’t sell all you have and give it to the poor. That is pauperization nowadays. You might run a tremendously revolutionary paper. A real upsetting paper. How many thousands is it?”

“I don’t know. SOME.”

Prothero’s interest was growing as he faced the possibilities.

“I’ve dreamt of a paper,” he said, “a paper that should tell the brute truth about things.”

“I don’t know that I’m particularly built to be a journalist,” Benham objected.

“You’re not,” said Billy.... “You might go into Parliament as a perfectly independent member.... Only you wouldn’t get in....”

“I’m not a speaker,” said Benham.

“Of course,” said Billy, “if you don’t decide on a game, you’ll just go on like this. You’ll fall into a groove, you’ll — you’ll hunt. You’ll go to Scotland for the grouse.”

For the moment Prothero had no further suggestions.

Benham waited for a second or so before he broached his own idea.

“Why, first of all, at any rate, Billy, shouldn’t one use one’s money to make the best of oneself? To learn things that men without money and leisure find it difficult to learn? By an accident, however unjust it is, one is in the position of a leader and a privileged person. Why not do one’s best to give value as that?”

“Benham, that’s the thin end of aristocracy!”

“Why not?”

“I hate aristocracy. For you it means doing what you like. While you are energetic you will kick about and then you will come back to this.”

“That’s one’s own look-out,” said Benham, after reflection.

“No, it’s bound to happen.”

Benham retreated a little from the immediate question.

“Well, we can’t suddenly at a blow change the world. If it isn’t to be plutocracy to-day it has to be aristocracy.”

Prothero frowned over this, and then he made a sweeping

proposition.

"YOU CANNOT HAVE ARISTOCRACY," he said, "BECAUSE, YOU SEE — ALL MEN ARE RIDICULOUS. Democracy has to fight its way out from under plutocracy. There is nothing else to be done."

"But a man in my position — ?"

"It's a ridiculous position. You may try to escape being ridiculous. You won't succeed."

It seemed to Benham for a moment as though Prothero had got to the bottom of the question, and then he perceived that he had only got to the bottom of himself. Benham was pacing the floor.

He turned at the open window, held out a long forefinger, and uttered his countervailing faith.

"Even if he is ridiculous, Prothero, a man may still be an aristocrat. A man may anyhow be as much of an aristocrat as he can be."

Prothero reflected. "No," he said, "it sounds all right, but it's wrong. I hate all these advantages and differences and distinctions. A man's a man. What you say sounds well, but it's the beginning of pretension, of pride—"

He stopped short.

"Better, pride than dishonour," said Benham, "better the pretentious life than the sordid life. What else is there?"

"A life isn't necessarily sordid because it isn't pretentious," said Prothero, his voice betraying a defensive disposition.

"But a life with a large income MUST be sordid unless it makes some sort of attempt to be fine...."

9

By transitions that were as natural as they were complicated and untraceable Prothero found his visit to Chexington developing into a tangle of discussions that all ultimately resolved themselves into an antagonism of the democratic and the aristocratic idea. And his part was, he found, to be the exponent of the democratic idea. The next day he came down early, his talk with Benham still running through his head, and after a turn or so in the garden he was attracted to the

front door by a sound of voices, and found Lady Marayne had been up still earlier and was dismounting from a large effective black horse. This extorted an unwilling admiration from him. She greeted him very pleasantly and made a kind of introduction of her steed. There had been trouble at a gate, he was a young horse and fidgeted at gates; the dispute was still bright in her. Benham she declared was still in bed. "Wait till I have a mount for him." She reappeared fitfully in the breakfast-room, and then he was left to Benham until just before lunch. They read and afterwards, as the summer day grew hot, they swam in the nude pond. She joined them in the water, splashing about in a costume of some elaboration and being very careful not to wet her hair. Then she came and sat with them on the seat under the big cedar and talked with them in a wrap that was pretty rather than prudish and entirely unmotherly. And she began a fresh attack upon him by asking him if he wasn't a Socialist and whether he didn't want to pull down Chexington and grow potatoes all over the park.

This struck Prothero as an inadequate statement of the Socialist project and he made an unsuccessful attempt to get it amended.

The engagement thus opened was renewed with great energy at lunch. Sir Godfrey had returned to London and the inmost aspect of his fellow-creatures, but the party of three was supplemented by a vague young lady from the village and an alert agent from the neighbouring Tentington estate who had intentions about a cottage. Lady Marayne insisted upon regarding Socialism as a proposal to reinaugurate the first French Revolution, as an inversion of society so that it would be bottom upward, as an attack upon rule, order, direction. "And what good are all these proposals? If you had the poor dear king beheaded, you'd only get a Napoleon. If you divided all the property up between everybody, you'd have rich and poor again in a year."

Billy perceived no way of explaining away this version of his Socialism that would not involve uncivil contradictions — and nobody ever contradicted Lady Marayne.

"But, Lady Marayne, don't you think there is a lot of disorder and injustice in the world?" he protested.

"There would be ever so much more if your Socialists had their

way."

"But still, don't you think — ..."

It is unnecessary even to recapitulate these universal controversies of our time. The lunch-table and the dinner-table and the general talk of the house drifted more and more definitely at its own level in the same direction as the private talk of Prothero and Benham, towards the antagonism of the privileged few and the many, of the trained and traditioned against the natural and undisciplined, of aristocracy against democracy. At the week-end Sir Godfrey returned to bring fresh elements. He said that democracy was unscientific. "To deny aristocracy is to deny the existence of the fittest. It is on the existence of the fittest that progress depends."

"But do our social conditions exalt the fittest?" asked Prothero.

"That is another question," said Benham.

"Exactly," said Sir Godfrey. "That is another question. But speaking with some special knowledge, I should say that on the whole the people who are on the top of things OUGHT to be on the top of things. I agree with Aristotle that there is such a thing as a natural inferior."

"So far as I can understand Mr. Prothero," said Lady Marayne, "he thinks that all the inferiors are the superiors and all the superiors inferior. It's quite simple...."

It made Prothero none the less indignant with this, that there was indeed a grain of truth in it. He hated superiors, he felt for inferiors.

10

At last came the hour of tipping. An embarrassed and miserable Prothero went slinking about the house distributing unexpected gold.

It was stupid, it was damnable; he had had to borrow the money from his mother....

Lady Marayne felt he had escaped her. The controversy that should have split these two young men apart had given them a new interest in each other. When afterwards she sounded her son, very delicately, to see if indeed he was aware of the clumsiness, the social ignorance and uneasiness, the complete unsuitability of his friend, she could get no more from him than that exasperating phrase, "He

has ideas!”

What are ideas? England may yet be ruined by ideas.

He ought never to have gone to Trinity, that monster packet of everything. He ought to have gone to some little GOOD college, good all through. She ought to have asked some one who KNEW.

11

One glowing afternoon in October, as these two young men came over Magdalen Bridge after a long disputatious and rather tiring walk to Drayton — they had been talking of Eugenics and the “family” — Benham was almost knocked down by an American trotter driven by Lord Breeze. “Whup there!” said Lord Breeze in a voice deliberately brutal, and Benham, roused from that abstraction which is partly fatigue, had to jump aside and stumbled against the parapet as the gaunt pacer went pounding by.

Lord Breeze grinned the sort of grin a man remembers. And passed.

“Damnation!” said Benham with a face that had become suddenly very white.

Then presently. “Any fool can do that who cares to go to the trouble.”

“That,” said Prothero, taking up their unquenchable issue, “that is the feeling of democracy.”

“I walk because I choose to,” said Benham.

The thing rankled.

“This equestrianism,” he began, “is a matter of time and money — time even more than money. I want to read. I want to deal with ideas....

“Any fool can drive....”

“Exactly,” said Prothero.

“As for riding, it means no more than the elaborate study and cultivation of your horse. You have to know him. All horses are individuals. A made horse perhaps goes its round like an omnibus, but for the rest....”

Prothero made a noise of sympathetic assent.

“In a country where equestrianism is assertion I suppose one must

be equestrian....”

That night some malignant spirit kept Benham awake, and great American trotters with vast wide-striding feet and long yellow teeth, uncontrollable, hard-mouthed American trotters, pounded over his angry soul.

“Prothero,” he said in hall next day, “we are going to drive to-morrow.”

Next day, so soon as they had lunched, he led the way towards Maltby’s, in Crosshampton Lane. Something in his bearing put a question into Prothero’s mind. “Benham,” he asked, “have you ever driven before?”

“NEVER,” said Benham.

“Well?”

“I’m going to now.”

Something between pleasure and alarm came into Prothero’s eyes. He quickened his pace so as to get alongside his friend and scrutinize his pale determination. “Why are you doing this?” he asked.

“I want to do it.”

“Benham, is it — EQUESTRIAN?”

Benham made no audible reply. They proceeded resolutely in silence.

An air of expectation prevailed in Maltby’s yard. In the shafts of a high, bleak-looking vehicle with vast side wheels, a throne-like vehicle that impressed Billy Prothero as being a gig, a very large angular black horse was being harnessed.

“This is mine,” said Benham compactly.

“This is yours, sir,” said an ostler.

“He looks — QUIET.”

“You’ll find him fresh enough, sir.”

Benham made a complicated ascent to the driver’s seat and was handed the reins. “Come on,” he said, and Prothero followed to a less exalted seat at Benham’s side. They seemed to be at a very great height indeed. The horse was then led out into Crosshampton Lane, faced towards Trinity Street and discharged. “Check,” said Benham, and touched the steed with his whip. They started quite well, and the ostlers went back into the yard, visibly unanxious. It struck Prothero that perhaps driving was less difficult than he had supposed.

They went along Crosshampton Lane, that high-walled gulley, with dignity, with only a slight suggestion of the inaccuracy that was presently to become apparent, until they met a little old bearded don on a bicycle. Then some misunderstanding arose between Benham and the horse, and the little bearded don was driven into the narrow pavement and had to get off hastily. He made no comment, but his face became like a gargoyle. “Sorry,” said Benham, and gave his mind to the corner. There was some difficulty about whether they were to turn to the right or the left, but at last Benham, it seemed, carried his point, and they went along the narrow street, past the grey splendours of King’s, and rather in the middle of the way.

Prothero considered the beast in front of him, and how proud and disrespectful a horse in a dogcart can seem to those behind it! Moreover, unaccustomed as he was to horses, he was struck by the strong resemblance a bird’s-eye view of a horse bears to a fiddle, a fiddle with devil’s ears.

“Of course,” said Prothero, “this isn’t a trotter.”

“I couldn’t get a trotter,” said Benham.

“I thought I would try this sort of thing before I tried a trotter,” he added.

And then suddenly came disaster.

There was a butcher’s cart on the right, and Benham, mistrusting the intelligence of his steed, insisted upon an excessive amplitude of clearance. He did not reckon with the hand-barrow on his left, piled up with dirty plates from the lunch of Trinity Hall. It had been left there; its custodian was away upon some mysterious errand. Heaven knows why Trinity Hall exhibited the treasures of its crockery thus stained and deified in the Cambridge streets. But it did — for Benham’s and Prothero’s undoing. Prothero saw the great wheel over which he was poised entangle itself with the little wheel of the barrow. “God!” he whispered, and craned, fascinated. The little wheel was manifestly intrigued beyond all self-control by the great wheel; it clung to it, it went before it, heedless of the barrow, of which it was an inseparable part. The barrow came about with an appearance of unwillingness, it locked against the great wheel; it reared itself towards Prothero and began, smash, smash, smash, to shed its higher plates. It was clear that Benham was grappling with a

crisis upon a basis of inadequate experience. A number of people shouted haphazard things. Then, too late, the barrow had persuaded the little wheel to give up its fancy for the great wheel, and there was an enormous crash.

"Whoa!" cried Benham. "Whoa!" but also, unfortunately, he sawed hard at the horse's mouth.

The animal, being in some perplexity, danced a little in the narrow street, and then it had come about and it was backing, backing, on the narrow pavement and towards the plate-glass window of a book and newspaper shop. Benham tugged at its mouth much harder than ever. Prothero saw the window bending under the pressure of the wheel. A sense of the profound seriousness of life and of the folly of this expedition came upon him. With extreme nimbleness he got down just as the window burst. It went with an explosion like a pistol shot, and then a clatter of falling glass. People sprang, it seemed, from nowhere, and jostled about Prothero, so that he became a peripheral figure in the discussion. He perceived that a man in a green apron was holding the horse, and that various people were engaged in simultaneous conversation with Benham, who with a pale serenity of face and an awful calm of manner, dealt with each of them in turn.

"I'm sorry," he was saying. "Somebody ought to have been in charge of the barrow. Here are my cards. I am ready to pay for any damage....

"The barrow ought not to have been there....

"Yes, I am going on. Of course I'm going on. Thank you."

He beckoned to the man who had held the horse and handed him half-a-crown. He glanced at Prothero as one might glance at a stranger. "Check!" he said. The horse went on gravely. Benham lifted out his whip. He appeared to have clean forgotten Prothero. Perhaps presently he would miss him. He went on past Trinity, past the ruddy brick of St. John's. The curve of the street hid him from Prothero's eyes.

Prothero started in pursuit. He glimpsed the dog-cart turning into Bridge Street. He had an impression that Benham used the whip at the corner, and that the dog-cart went forward out of sight with a startled jerk. Prothero quickened his pace.

But when he got to the fork between the Huntingdon Road and the

Cottenham Road, both roads were clear.

He spent some time in hesitation. Then he went along the Huntingdon Road until he came upon a road-mender, and learnt that Benham had passed that way. “Going pretty fast ‘e was,” said the road-mender, “and whipping ‘is ‘orse. Else you might ‘a thought ‘e was a boltin’ with ‘im.” Prothero decided that if Benham came back at all he would return by way of Cottenham, and it was on the Cottenham Road that at last he encountered his friend again.

Benham was coming along at that good pace which all experienced horses when they are fairly turned back towards Cambridge display. And there was something odd about Benham, as though he had a large circular halo with a thick rim. This, it seemed, had replaced his hat. He was certainly hatless. The warm light of the sinking sun shone upon the horse and upon Benham’s erect figure and upon his face, and gleams of fire kept flashing from his head to this rim, like the gleam of drawn swords seen from afar. As he drew nearer this halo detached itself from him and became a wheel sticking up behind him. A large, clumsy-looking bicycle was attached to the dog-cart behind. The expression of Benham’s golden face was still a stony expression; he regarded his friend with hard eyes.

“You all right, Benham?” cried Prothero, advancing into the road.

His eye examined the horse. It looked all right, if anything it was a trifle subdued; there was a little foam about its mouth, but not very much.

“Whoa!” said Benham, and the horse stopped. “Are you coming up, Prothero?”

Prothero clambered up beside him. “I was anxious,” he said.

“There was no need to be.”

“You’ve broken your whip.”

“Yes. It broke.... GET up!”

They proceeded on their way to Cambridge.

“Something has happened to the wheel,” said Prothero, trying to be at his ease.

“Merely a splinter or so. And a spoke perhaps.”

“And what is this behind?”

Benham made a half-turn of the head. “It’s a motor-bicycle.”

Prothero took in details.

"Some of it is missing."

"No, the front wheel is under the seat."

"Oh!"

"Did you find it?" Prothero asked, after an interval.

"You mean?"

"He ran into a motor-car — as I was passing. I was perhaps a little to blame. He asked me to bring his machine to Cambridge. He went on in the car.... It is all perfectly simple."

Prothero glanced at the splinters in the wheel with a renewed interest.

"Did your wheel get into it?" he asked. Benham affected not to hear. He was evidently in no mood for story-telling.

"Why did you get down, Prothero?" he asked abruptly, with the note of suppressed anger thickening his voice.

Prothero became vividly red. "I don't know," he said, after an interval.

"I DO," said Benham, and they went on in a rich and active silence to Cambridge, and the bicycle repair shop in Bridge Street, and Trinity College. At the gate of Trinity Benham stopped, and conveyed rather by acts than words that Prothero was to descend. He got down meekly enough, although he felt that the return to Maltby's yard might have many points of interest. But the spirit had gone out of him.

12

For three days the two friends avoided each other, and then Prothero went to Benham's room. Benham was smoking cigarettes — Lady Marayne, in the first warmth of his filial devotion, had prohibited his pipe — and reading Webb's INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY. "Hello!" he said coldly, scarcely looking up, and continued to read that absorbing work.

"I keep on thinking how I jumped down from that damned dog-cart," said Prothero, without any preface.

"It didn't matter in the least," said Benham distantly.

"Oh! ROT," said Prothero. "I behaved like a coward."

Benham shut his book.

"Benham," said Prothero. "You are right about aristocracy, and I am wrong. I've been thinking about it night and day."

Benham betrayed no emotion. But his tone changed. "Billy," he said, "there are cigarettes and whiskey in the corner. Don't make a fuss about a trifle."

"No whiskey," said Billy, and lit a cigarette. "And it isn't a trifle."

He came to Benham's hearthrug. "That business," he said, "has changed all my views. No — don't say something polite! I see that if one hasn't the habit of pride one is bound to get off a dogcart when it seems likely to smash. You have the habit of pride, and I haven't. So far as the habit of pride goes, I come over to the theory of aristocracy."

Benham said nothing, but he put down Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and reached out for and got and lit a cigarette.

"I give up 'Go as you please.' I give up the natural man. I admit training. I perceive I am lax and flabby, unguarded, I funk too much, I eat too much, and I drink too much. And, yet, what I have always liked in you, Benham, is just this — that you don't."

"I do," said Benham.

"Do what?"

"Funk."

"Benham, I believe that naturally you funk as much as I do. You're more a thing of nerves than I am, far more. But you keep yourself up to the mark, and I have let myself get flabby. You're so right. You're so utterly right. These last nights I've confessed it — aloud. I had an inkling of it — after that rag. But now it's as clear as daylight. I don't know if you mean to go on with me, after what's happened, but anyhow I want you to know, whether you end our friendship or not—"

"Billy, don't be an old ass," said Benham.

Both young men paused for a moment. They made no demonstrations. But the strain was at an end between them.

"I've thought it all out," Billy went on with a sudden buoyancy. "We two are both of the same kind of men. Only you see, Benham, you have a natural pride and I haven't. You have pride. But we are both intellectuals. We both belong to what the Russians call the

Intelligentsia. We have ideas, we have imagination, that is our strength. And that is our weakness. That makes us moral light-weights. We are flimsy and uncertain people. All intellectuals are flimsy and uncertain people. It's not only that they are critical and fastidious; they are weak-handed. They look about them; their attention wanders. Unless they have got a habit of controlling themselves and forcing themselves and holding themselves together."

"The habit of pride."

"Yes. And then — then we are lords of the world."

"All this, Billy," said Benham, "I steadfastly believe."

"I've seen it all now," said Prothero. "Lord! how clearly I see it! The intellectual is either a prince or he is a Greek slave in a Roman household. He's got to hold his chin up or else he becomes — even as these dons we see about us — a thing that talks appointments, a toady, a port-wine bibber, a mass of detail, a conscious maker of neat sayings, a growing belly under a dwindling brain. Their gladness is drink or gratified vanity or gratified malice, their sorrow is indigestion or — old maid's melancholy. They are the lords of the world who will not take the sceptre.... And what I want to say to you, Benham, more than anything else is, YOU go on — YOU make yourself equestrian. You drive your horse against Breeze's, and go through the fire and swim in the ice-cold water and climb the precipice and drink little and sleep hard. And — I wish I could do so too."

"But why not?"

"Because I can't. Now I admit I've got shame in my heart and pride in my head, and I'm strung up. I might do something — this afternoon. But it won't last. YOU — you have pride in your bones. My pride will vanish at a laugh. My honour will go at a laugh. I'm just exalted by a crisis. That's all. I'm an animal of intelligence. Soul and pride are weak in me. My mouth waters, my cheek brightens, at the sight of good things. And I've got a lickerish tail, Benham. You don't know. You don't begin to imagine. I'm secretive. But I quiver with hot and stirring desires. And I'm indolent — dirty indolent. Benham, there are days when I splash my bath about without getting into it. There are days when I turn back from a walk because there's

a cow in the field.... But, I spare you the viler details.... And it's that makes me hate fine people and try so earnestly to persuade myself that any man is as good as any man, if not a trifle better. Because I know it isn't so...."

"Billy," said Benham, "you've the boldest mind that ever I met."

Prothero's face lit with satisfaction. Then his countenance fell again. "I know I'm better there," he said, "and yet, see how I let in a whole system of lies to cover my secret humiliations. There, at least, I will cling to pride. I will at least THINK free and clean and high. But you can climb higher than I can. You've got the grit to try and LIVE high. There you are, Benham."

Benham stuck one leg over the arm of his chair. "Billy," he said, "come and be — equestrian and stop this nonsense."

"No."

"Damn it — you DIVE!"

"You'd go in before me if a woman was drowning."

"Nonsense. I'm going to ride. Come and ride too. You've a cleverer way with animals than I have. Why! that horse I was driving the other day would have gone better alone. I didn't drive it. I just fussed it. I interfered. If I ride for ever, I shall never have decent hands, I shall always hang on my horse's mouth at a gallop, I shall never be sure at a jump. But at any rate I shall get hard. Come and get hard too."

"You can," said Billy, "you can. But not I! Heavens, the TROUBLE of it! The riding-school! The getting up early! No! — for me the Trumpington Road on foot in the afternoon. Four miles an hour and panting. And my fellowship and the combination-room port. And, besides, Benham, there's the expense. I can't afford the equestrian order."

"It's not so great."

"Not so great! I don't mean the essential expense. But — the incidentals. I don't know whether any one can realize how a poor man is hampered by the dread of minor catastrophes. It isn't so much that he is afraid of breaking his neck, Benham, as that he is afraid of breaking something he will have to pay for. For instance — . Benham! how much did your little expedition the other day — ?"

He stopped short and regarded his friend with round eyes and

raised eyebrows.

A reluctant grin overspread Benham's face. He was beginning to see the humour of the affair.

"The claim for the motor-bicycle isn't sent in yet. The repair of the mudguards of the car is in dispute. Trinity Hall's crockery, the plate-glass window, the whip-lash and wheel and so forth, the hire of the horse and trap, sundry gratuities.... I doubt if the total will come very much under fifty pounds. And I seem to have lost a hat somewhere."

Billy regarded his toes and cleared his throat.

"Depending as I do on a widowed mother in Brixton for all the expenditure that isn't covered by my pot-hunting—"

"Of course," said Benham, "it wasn't a fair sample afternoon."

"Still—"

"There's footer," said Benham, "we might both play footer."

"Or boxing."

"And, anyhow, you must come with me when I drive again. I'm going to start a trotter."

"If I miss another drive may I be — lost for ever," said Billy, with the utmost sincerity. "Never more will I get down, Benham, wherever you may take me. Short of muffing my fellowship I'm with you always.... Will it be an American trotter?"

"It will be the rawest, gauntest, ungainliest brute that ever scared the motor-bicycles on the Northampton Road. It will have the legs and stride of an ostrich. It will throw its feet out like dealing cards. It will lift its head and look the sun in the eye like a vulture. It will have teeth like the English spinster in a French comic paper.... And we will fly...."

"I shall enjoy it very much," said Prothero in a small voice after an interval for reflection. "I wonder where we shall fly. It will do us both a lot of good. And I shall insure my life for a small amount in my mother's interest.... Benham, I think I will, after all, take a whiskey.... Life is short...."

He did so and Benham strolled to the window and stood looking out upon the great court.

"We might do something this afternoon," said Benham.

"Splendid idea," reflected Billy over his whiskey. "Living hard

and thinking hard. A sort of Intelligentsia that is BLOODED.... I shall, of course, come as far as I can with you."

13

In one of the bureau drawers that White in this capacity of literary executor was examining, there were two documents that carried back right to these early days. They were both products of this long wide undergraduate argumentation that had played so large a part in the making of Benham. One recorded the phase of maximum opposition, and one was the outcome of the concluding approach of the antagonists. They were debating club essays. One had been read to a club in Pembroke, a club called the ENQUIRERS, of which White also had been a member, and as he turned it over he found the circumstances of its reading coming back to his memory. He had been present, and Carnac's share in the discussion with his shrill voice and stumpy gestures would alone have sufficed to have made it a memorable occasion. The later one had been read to the daughter club of the ENQUIRERS, the SOCIAL ENQUIRERS, in the year after White had gone down, and it was new to him.

Both these papers were folded flat and neatly docketed; they were rather yellow and a little dog-eared, and with the outer sheet pencilled over with puzzling or illegible scribblings, Benham's memoranda for his reply. White took the earlier essay in his hand. At the head of the first page was written in large letters, "Go slowly, speak to the man at the back." It brought up memories of his own experiences, of rows of gaslit faces, and of a friendly helpful voice that said, "Speak up?"

Of course this was what happened to every intelligent contemporary, this encounter with ideas, this restatement and ventilation of the old truths and the old heresies. Only in this way does a man make a view his own, only so does he incorporate it. These are our real turning points. The significant, the essential moments in the life of any one worth consideration are surely these moments when for the first time he faces towards certain broad ideas and certain broad facts. Life nowadays consists of adventures among generalizations. In class-rooms after the lecture, in studies in the

small hours, among books or during solitary walks, the drama of the modern career begins. Suddenly a man sees his line, his intention. Yet though we are all of us writing long novels — White's world was the literary world, and that is how it looked to him — which profess to set out the lives of men, this part of the journey, this crucial passage among the Sphinxes, is still done — when it is done at all — slightly, evasively. Why?

White fell back on his professionalism. "It does not make a book. It makes a novel into a treatise, it turns it into a dissertation."

But even as White said this to himself he knew it was wrong, and it slid out of his thoughts again. Was not this objection to the play of ideas merely the expression of that conservative instinct which fights for every old convention? The traditional novel is a love story and takes ideas for granted, it professes a hero but presents a heroine. And to begin with at least, novels were written for the reading of heroines. Miss Lydia Languish sets no great store upon the contents of a man's head. That is just the stuffing of the doll. Eyes and heart are her game. And so there is never any more sphinx in the story than a lady may impersonate. And as inevitably the heroine meets a man. In his own first success, White reflected, the hero, before he had gone a dozen pages, met a very pleasant young woman very pleasantly in a sunlit thicket; the second opened at once with a bicycle accident that brought two young people together so that they were never afterwards disentangled; the third, failing to produce its heroine in thirty pages, had to be rearranged. The next —

White returned from an unprofitable digression to the matter before him.

14

The first of Benham's early essays was written in an almost boyish hand, it was youthfully amateurish in its nervous disposition to definitions and distinctions, and in the elaborate linking of part to part. It was called TRUE DEMOCRACY. Manifestly it was written before the incident of the Trinity Hall plates, and most of it had been done after Prothero's visit to Chexington. White could feel that now inaudible interlocutor. And there were even traces of Sir Godfrey

Marayne's assertion that democracy was contrary to biology. From the outset it was clear that whatever else it meant, True Democracy, following the analogy of True Politeness, True Courage, True Honesty and True Marriage, did not mean democracy at all. Benham was, in fact, taking Prothero's word, and trying to impose upon it his own solidifying and crystallizing opinion of life.

They were not as yet very large or well-formed crystals. The proposition he struggled to develop was this, that True Democracy did not mean an equal share in the government, it meant an equal opportunity to share in the government. Men were by nature and in the most various ways unequal. True Democracy aimed only at the removal of artificial inequalities....

It was on the truth of this statement, that men were by nature unequal, that the debate had turned. Prothero was passionately against the idea at that time. It was, he felt, separating himself from Benham more and more. He spoke with a personal bitterness. And he found his chief ally in a rigorous and voluble Frenchman named Carnac, an aggressive Roman Catholic, who opened his speech by saying that the first aristocrat was the devil, and shocked Prothero by claiming him as probably the only other sound Christian in the room. Several biologists were present, and one tall, fair youth with a wearisome forefinger tried to pin Carnac with questions.

"But you must admit some men are taller than others?"

"Then the others are broader."

"Some are smaller altogether."

"Nimbler — it's notorious."

"Some of the smaller are less nimble than the others."

"Then they have better nightmares. How can you tell?"

The biologist was temporarily incapacitated, and the talk went on over his prostrate attempts to rally and protest.

A second biologist seemed to Benham to come nearer the gist of the dispute when he said that they were not discussing the importance of men, but their relative inequalities. Nobody was denying the equal importance of everybody. But there was a virtue of this man and a virtue of that. Nobody could dispute the equal importance of every wheel in a machine, of every atom in the universe. Prothero and Carnac were angry because they thought the

denial of absolute equality was a denial of equal importance. That was not so. Every man mattered in his place. But politically, or economically, or intellectually that might be a lowly place....

At this point Carnac interrupted with a whooping and great violence, and a volley of obscure French colloquialisms.

He was understood to convey that the speaker was a Jew, and did not in the least mean what he was saying....

15

The second paper was an altogether maturer and more characteristic production. It was no longer necessary to answer Prothero. Prothero had been incorporated. And Benham had fairly got away with his great idea. It was evident to White that this paper had been worked over on several occasions since its first composition and that Benham had intended to make it a part of his book. There were corrections in pencil and corrections in a different shade of ink, and there was an unfinished new peroration, that was clearly the latest addition of all. Yet its substance had been there always. It gave the youth just grown to manhood, but anyhow fully grown. It presented the far-dreaming intellectualist shaped.

Benham had called it ARISTOCRACY. But he was far away by now from political aristocracy.

This time he had not begun with definitions and generalizations, but with a curiously subjective appeal. He had not pretended to be theorizing at large any longer, he was manifestly thinking of his own life and as manifestly he was thinking of life as a matter of difficulty and unexpected thwartings.

"We see life," he wrote, "not only life in the world outside us, but life in our own selves, as an immense choice of possibilities; indeed, for us in particular who have come up here, who are not under any urgent necessity to take this line or that, life is apparently pure choice. It is quite easy to think we are all going to choose the pattern of life we like best and work it out in our own way.... And, meanwhile, there is no great hurry....

"I want to begin by saying that choice isn't so easy and so necessary as it seems. We think we are going to choose presently,

and in the end we may never choose at all. Choice needs perhaps more energy than we think. The great multitude of older people we can observe in the world outside there, haven't chosen either in the matter of the world outside, where they shall go, what they shall do, what part they shall play, or in the matter of the world within, what they will be and what they are determined they will never be. They are still in much the same state of suspended choice as we seem to be in, but in the meanwhile THINGS HAPPEN TO THEM. And things are happening to us, things will happen to us, while we still suppose ourselves in the wings waiting to be consulted about the casting of the piece....

"Nevertheless this immense appearance of choice which we get in the undergraduate community here, is not altogether illusion; it is more reality than illusion even if it has not the stable and complete reality it appears to have. And it is more a reality for us than it was for our fathers, and much more a reality now than it was a few centuries ago. The world is more confused and multitudinous than ever it was, the practicable world far wider, and ourselves far less under the pressure of inflexible moulding forces and inevitable necessities than any preceding generations. I want to put very clearly how I see the new world, the present world, the world of novel choice to which our youth and inexperience faces, and I want to define to you a certain selection of choices which I am going to call aristocratic, and to which it is our manifest duty and destiny as the elect and favoured sons of our race to direct ourselves.

"It isn't any choice of Hercules I mean, any mere alternative whether we will be, how shall I put it? — the bridegrooms of pleasure or the bridegrooms of duty. It is infinitely vaster and more subtly moral than that. There are a thousand good lives possible, of which we may have one, lives which are soundly good, or a thousand bad lives, if you like, lives which are thoroughly bad — that's the old and perpetual choice, that has always been — but what is more evident to me and more remarkable and disconcerting is that there are nowadays ten thousand muddled lives lacking even so much moral definition, even so much consistency as is necessary for us to call them either good or bad, there are planless indeterminate lives, more and more of them, opening out as the possible lives before us, a

perfect wilderness between salvation and damnation, a wilderness so vast and crowded that at last it seems as though the way to either hell or heaven would be lost in its interminable futility. Such planless indeterminate lives, plebeian lives, mere lives, fill the world, and the spectacle of whole nations, our whole civilization, seems to me to re-echo this planlessness, this indeterminate confusion of purpose. Plain issues are harder and harder to find, it is as if they had disappeared. Simple living is the countryman come to town. We are deafened and jostled and perplexed. There are so many things afoot that we get nothing....

"That is what is in my mind when I tell you that we have to gather ourselves together much more than we think. We have to clench ourselves upon a chosen end. We have to gather ourselves together out of the swill of this brimming world.

"Or — we are lost...."

("Swill of this brimming world," said White. "Some of this sounds uncommonly like Prothero." He mused for a moment and then resumed his reading.)

"That is what I was getting at when, three years ago, I made an attack upon Democracy to the mother society of this society, an attack that I expressed ill and failed to drive home. That is what I have come down now to do my best to make plainer. This age of confusion is Democracy; it is all that Democracy can ever give us. Democracy, if it means anything, means the rule of the planless man, the rule of the unkempt mind. It means as a necessary consequence this vast boiling up of collectively meaningless things.

"What is the quality of the common man, I mean of the man that is common to all of us, the man who is the Standard for such men as Carnac, the man who seems to be the ideal of the Catholic Democrat? He is the creature of a few fundamental impulses. He begins in blind imitation of the life about him. He lusts and takes a wife, he hungers and tills a field or toils in some other way to earn a living, a mere aimless living, he fears and so he does not wander, he is jealous and stays by his wife and his job, is fiercely yet often stupidly and injuriously defensive of his children and his possessions, and so until he wearies. Then he dies and needs a cemetery. He needs a cemetery because he is so afraid of dissolution

that even when he has ceased to be, he still wants a place and a grave to hold him together and prevent his returning to the All that made him. Our chief impression of long ages of mankind comes from its cemeteries. And this is the life of man, as the common man conceives and lives it. Beyond that he does not go, he never comprehends himself collectively at all, the state happens about him; his passion for security, his gregarious self-defensiveness, makes him accumulate upon himself until he congests in cities that have no sense of citizenship and states that have no structure; the clumsy, inconsecutive lying and chatter of his newspapers, his hoardings and music-halls gives the measure of his congested intelligences, the confusion of ugly, half empty churches and chapels and meeting-halls gauge the intensity of his congested souls, the tricks and slow blundering dishonesties of Diet and Congress and Parliament are his statecraft and his wisdom....

"I do not care if this instant I am stricken dead for pride. I say here now to you and to High Heaven that THIS LIFE IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME. I know there is a better life than this muddle about us, a better life possible now. I know it. A better individual life and a better public life. If I had no other assurances, if I were blind to the glorious intimations of art, to the perpetually widening promise of science, to the mysterious beckonings of beauty in form and colour and the inaccessible mockery of the stars, I should still know this from the insurgent spirit within me....

"Now this better life is what I mean when I talk of Aristocracy. This idea of a life breaking away from the common life to something better, is the consuming idea in my mind.

"Constantly, recurrently, struggling out of the life of the farm and the shop, the inn and the market, the street and the crowd, is something that is not of the common life. Its way of thinking is Science, its dreaming is Art, its will is the purpose of mankind. It is not the common thing. But also it is not an unnatural thing. It is not as common as a rat, but it is no less natural than a panther.

"For it is as natural to be an explorer as it is to be a potato grower, it is rarer but it is as natural; it is as natural to seek explanations and arrange facts as it is to make love, or adorn a hut, or show kindness to a child. It is a folly I will not even dispute about, that man's only

natural implement is the spade. Imagination, pride, exalted desire are just as much Man, as are hunger and thirst and sexual curiosities and the panic dread of unknown things....

"Now you see better what I mean about choice. Now you see what I am driving at. We have to choose each one for himself and also each one for the race, whether we will accept the muddle of the common life, whether we ourselves will be muddled, weakly nothings, children of luck, steering our artful courses for mean success and tawdry honours, or whether we will be aristocrats, for that is what it amounts to, each one in the measure of his personal quality an aristocrat, refusing to be restrained by fear, refusing to be restrained by pain, resolved to know and understand up to the hilt of his understanding, resolved to sacrifice all the common stuff of his life to the perfection of his peculiar gift, a purged man, a trained, selected, artificial man, not simply free, but lordly free, filled and sustained by pride. Whether you or I make that choice and whether you or I succeed in realizing ourselves, though a great matter to ourselves, is, I admit, a small matter to the world. But the great matter is this, that THE CHOICE IS BEING MADE, that it will continue to be made, and that all around us, so that it can never be arrested and darkened again, is the dawn of human possibility...."

(White could also see his dead friend's face with its enthusiastic paleness, its disordered hair and the glowing darknesses in the eyes. On such occasions Benham always had an expression of ESCAPE. Temporary escape. And thus would his hand have clutched the reading-desk; thus would his long fingers have rustled these dry papers.)

"Man has reached a point when a new life opens before him....

"The old habitual life of man is breaking up all about us, and for the new life our minds, our imaginations, our habits and customs are all unprepared....

"It is only now, after some years of study and living, that I begin to realize what this tremendous beginning we call Science means to mankind. Every condition that once justified the rules and imperatives, the manners and customs, the sentiments, the morality, the laws and limitations which make up the common life, has been or is being destroyed.... Two or three hundred years more and all that

life will be as much a thing past and done with as the life that was lived in the age of unpolished stone....

“Man is leaving his ancestral shelters and going out upon the greatest adventure that ever was in space or time, he is doing it now, he is doing it in us as I stand here and read to you.”

CHAPTER THE SECOND ~~ THE YOUNG MAN ABOUT TOWN

1

The oldest novel in the world at any rate, White reflected, was a story with a hero and no love interest worth talking about. It was the story of Tobias and how he came out from the shelters of his youth into this magic and intricate world. Its heroine was incidental, part of the spoil, a seven times relict....

White had not read the book of Tobit for many years, and what he was really thinking of was not that ancient story at all, but Botticelli's picture, that picture of the sunlit morning of life. When you say "Tobias" that is what most intelligent people will recall. Perhaps you will remember how gaily and confidently the young man strides along with the armoured angel by his side. Absurdly enough, Benham and his dream of high aristocracy reminded White of that....

"We have all been Tobias in our time," said White.

If White had been writing this chapter he would have in all probability called it THE TOBIAS STAGE, forgetful that there was no Tobit behind Benham and an entirely different Sara in front of him.

2

From Cambridge Benham came to London. For the first time he was to live in London. Never before had he been in London for more than a few days at a time. But now, guided by his mother's advice, he was to have a flat in Finacue street, just round the corner from Desborough Street, a flat very completely and delightfully furnished under her supervision. It had an admirable study, in which she had arranged not only his books, but a number of others in beautiful old leather bindings that it had amused her extremely to buy; it had a splendid bureau and business-like letter-filing cabinets, a neat little drawing-room and a dining-room, well-placed abundant electric

lights, and a man called Merkle whom she had selected very carefully and who she felt would not only see to Benham's comfort but keep him, if necessary, up to the mark.

This man Merkle seemed quite unaware that humanity "here and now" — even as he was engaged in meticulously putting out Benham's clothes — was "leaving its ancestral shelters and going out upon the greatest adventure that ever was in space or time." If he had been told as much by Benham he would probably have said, "Indeed, sir," and proceeded accurately with his duties. And if Benham's voice had seemed to call for any additional remark, he would probably have added, "It's 'igh time, sir, something of the sort was done. Will you have the white wesket as before, sir, or a fresh one this evening?... Unless it's a very special occasion, sir.... Exactly, sir. THANK you, sir."

And when her son was properly installed in his apartments Lady Marayne came round one morning with a large experienced-looking portfolio and rendered an account of her stewardship of his estate that was already some months overdue. It was all very confused and confusing, and there were inexplicable incidents, a heavy overdraft at the bank for example, but this was Sir Godfrey's fault, she explained. "He never would help me with any of this business," she said. "I've had to add sometimes for HOURS. But, of course, you are a man, and when you've looked through it all, I know you'll understand."

He did look through it enough to see that it was undesirable that he should understand too explicitly, and, anyhow, he was manifestly very well off indeed, and the circumstances of the case, even as he understood them, would have made any businesslike book-keeping ungracious. The bankers submitted the corroborating account of securities, and he found himself possessed of his unconditional six thousand a year, with, as she put it, "the world at his feet." On the whole it seemed more wonderful to him now than when he had first heard of it. He kissed her and thanked her, and left the portfolio open for Merkle's entirely honest and respectful but very exact inspection, and walked back with her to Desborough Street, and all the while he was craving to ask the one tremendous question he knew he would never ask, which was just how exactly this beneficent Nolan came in....

Once or twice in the small hours, and on a number of other occasions, this unspeakable riddle assumed a portentous predominance in his mind. He was forced back upon his inner consciousness for its consideration. He could discuss it with nobody else, because that would have been discussing his mother.

Probably most young men who find themselves with riches at large in the world have some such perplexity as this mixed in with the gift. Such men as the Cecils perhaps not, because they are in the order of things, the rich young Jews perhaps not, because acquisition is their principle, but for most other intelligent inheritors there must be this twinge of conscientious doubt. "Why particularly am I picked out for so tremendous an advantage?" If the riddle is not Nolan, then it is rent, or it is the social mischief of the business, or the particular speculative COUP that established their fortune.

"PECUNIA NON OLET," Benham wrote, "and it is just as well. Or the west-ends of the world would reek with deodorizers. Restitution is inconceivable; how and to whom? And in the meanwhile here we are lifted up by our advantage to a fantastic appearance of opportunity. Whether the world looks to us or not to do tremendous things, it ought to look to us. And above all we ought to look to ourselves. RICHESSE OBLIGE."

3

It is not to be supposed that Benham came to town only with a general theory of aristocracy. He had made plans for a career. Indeed, he had plans for several careers. None of them when brought into contrast with the great spectacle of London retained all the attractiveness that had saturated them at their inception.

They were all more or less political careers. Whatever a democratic man may be, Prothero and he had decided that an aristocratic man is a public man. He is made and protected in what he is by laws and the state and his honour goes out to the state. The aristocrat has no right to be a voluptuary or a mere artist or a respectable nonentity, or any such purely personal things. Responsibility for the aim and ordering of the world is demanded from him as imperatively as courage.

Benham's deliberate assumption of the equestrian role brought him into contact with a new set of acquaintances, conscious of political destinies. They were amiable, hard young men, almost affectedly unaffected; they breakfasted before dawn to get in a day's hunting, and they saw to it that Benham's manifest determination not to discredit himself did not lead to his breaking his neck. Their bodies were beautifully tempered, and their minds were as flabby as Prothero's body. Among them were such men as Lord Breeze and Peter Westerton, and that current set of Corinthians who supposed themselves to be resuscitating the Young England movement and Tory Democracy. Poor movements which indeed have never so much lived as suffered chronic resuscitation. These were days when Tariff Reform was only an inglorious possibility for the Tory Party, and Young England had yet to demonstrate its mental quality in an anti-socialist campaign. Seen from the perspectives of Cambridge and Chexington, the Tory party was still a credible basis for the adventure of a young man with an aristocratic theory in his mind.

These were the days when the strain and extremity of a dangerous colonial war were fresh in people's minds, when the quality of the public consciousness was braced up by its recent response to unanticipated demands. The conflict of stupidities that had caused the war was overlaid and forgotten by a hundred thousand devotions, by countless heroic deaths and sufferings, by a pacification largely conceived and broadly handled. The nation had displayed a belated regard for its honour and a sustained passion for great unities. It was still possible for Benham to regard the empire as a splendid opportunity, and London as the conceivable heart of the world. He could think of Parliament as a career, and of a mingling of aristocratic socialism based on universal service with a civilizing imperialism as a purpose....

But his thoughts had gone wider and deeper than that....

Already when Benham came to London he had begun to dream of possibilities that went beyond the accidental states and empires of to-day. Prothero's mind, replete with historical detail, could find nothing but absurdity in the alliances and dynasties and loyalties of our time. "Patched up things, Benham, temporary, pretentious. All very well for the undignified man, the democratic man, to take

shelter under, all very well for the humourist to grin and bear, all very well for the crowd and the quack, but not for the aristocrat — No! — his mind cuts like steel and burns like fire. Lousy sheds they are, plastered hoardings... and such a damned nuisance too! For any one who wants to do honourable things! With their wars and their diplomacies, their tariffs and their encroachments; all their humbugging struggles, their bloody and monstrous struggles, that finally work out to no end at all.... If you are going for the handsome thing in life then the world has to be a united world, Benham, as a matter of course. That was settled when the railways and the telegraph came. Telephones, wireless telegraphy, aeroplanes insist on it. We've got to mediatise all this stuff, all these little crowns and boundaries and creeds, and so on, that stand in the way. Just as Italy had to be united in spite of all the rotten little dukes and princes and republics, just as Germany had to be united in spite of its scores of kingdoms and duchies and liberties, so now the world. Things as they are may be fun for lawyers and politicians and court people and — douaniers; they may suit the loan-mongers and the armaments shareholders, they may even be more comfortable for the middle-aged, but what, except as an inconvenience, does that matter to you or me?"

Prothero always pleased Benham when he swept away empires. There was always a point when the rhetoric broke into gesture.

"We've got to sweep them away, Benham," he said, with a wide gesture of his arm. "We've got to sweep them all away."

Prothero helped himself to some more whiskey, and spoke hastily, because he was afraid some one else might begin. He was never safe from interruption in his own room. The other young men present sucked at their pipes and regarded him doubtfully. They were never quite certain whether Prothero was a prophet or a fool. They could not understand a mixed type, and he was so manifestly both.

"The only sane political work for an intelligent man is to get the world-state ready. For that we have to prepare an aristocracy—"

"Your world-state will be aristocratic?" some one interpolated.

"Of course it will be aristocratic. How can uninformed men think all round the globe? Democracy dies five miles from the parish pump. It will be an aristocratic republic of all the capable men in the

world....”

“Of course,” he added, pipe in mouth, as he poured out his whiskey, “it’s a big undertaking. It’s an affair of centuries....”

And then, as a further afterthought: “All the more reason for getting to work at it....”

In his moods of inspiration Prothero would discourse through the tobacco smoke until that great world-state seemed imminent — and Part Two in the Tripos a thing relatively remote. He would talk until the dimly-lit room about him became impalpable, and the young men squatting about it in elaborately careless attitudes caught glimpses of cities that are still to be, bridges in wild places, deserts tamed and oceans conquered, mankind no longer wasted by bickerings, going forward to the conquest of the stars....

An aristocratic world-state; this political dream had already taken hold of Benham’s imagination when he came to town. But it was a dream, something that had never existed, something that indeed may never materialize, and such dreams, though they are vivid enough in a study at night, fade and vanish at the rustle of a daily newspaper or the sound of a passing band. To come back again.... So it was with Benham. Sometimes he was set clearly towards this world-state that Prothero had talked into possibility. Sometimes he was simply abreast of the patriotic and socially constructive British Imperialism of Breeze and Westerton. And there were moods when the two things were confused in his mind, and the glamour of world dominion rested wonderfully on the slack and straggling British Empire of Edward the Seventh — and Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Mr. Chamberlain. He did go on for a time honestly entertaining both these projects in his mind, each at its different level, the greater impalpable one and the lesser concrete one within it. In some unimaginable way he could suppose that the one by some miracle of ennoblement — and neglecting the Frenchman, the Russian, the German, the American, the Indian, the Chinaman, and, indeed, the greater part of mankind from the problem — might become the other....

All of which is recorded here, without excess of comment, as it happened, and as, in a mood of astonished reminiscences, he came finally to perceive it, and set it down for White’s meditative perusal.

But to the enthusiasm of the young, dreams have something of the substance of reality and realities, something of the magic of dreams. The London to which Benham came from Cambridge and the disquisitions of Prothero was not the London of a mature and disillusioned vision. It was London seen magnified and distorted through the young man's crystalline intentions. It had for him a quality of multitudinous, unquenchable activity. Himself filled with an immense appetite for life, he was unable to conceive of London as fatigued. He could not suspect these statesmen he now began to meet and watch, of jaded wills and petty spites, he imagined that all the important and influential persons in this large world of affairs were as frank in their private lives and as unembarrassed in their financial relationships as his untainted self. And he had still to reckon with stupidity. He believed in the statecraft of leader-writers and the sincerity of political programmes. And so regarded, what an avenue to Empire was Whitehall! How momentous was the sunrise in St. James's Park, and how significant the clustering knot of listeners and speakers beneath the tall column that lifts our Nelson to the windy sky!

For a time Benham was in love with the idea of London. He got maps of London and books about London. He made plans to explore its various regions. He tried to grasp it all, from the conscious picturesqueness of its garden suburbs to the factories of Croydon, from the clerk-villadoms of Ealing to the inky streams of Bow. In those days there were passenger steamboats that would take one from the meadows of Hampton Court past the whole spectacle of London out to the shipping at Greenwich and the towed liners, the incessant tugs, the heaving portals of the sea.... His time was far too occupied for him to carry out a tithe of these expeditions he had planned, but he had many walks that bristled with impressions. Northward and southward, eastward and westward a dreaming young man could wander into a wilderness of population, polite or sombre, poor, rich, or middle-class, but all ceaselessly active, all urgently pressing, as it seemed, to their part in the drama of the coming years. He loved the late afternoon, when every artery is injected and gorged with the

multitudinous home-going of the daily workers, he loved the time of lighting up, and the clustering excitements of the late hours. And he went out southward and eastward into gaunt regions of reeking toil. As yet he knew nothing of the realities of industrialism. He saw only the beauty of the great chimneys that rose against the sullen smoke-barred sunsets, and he felt only the romance of the lurid shuddering flares that burst out from squat stacks of brickwork and lit the emptiness of strange and slovenly streets....

And this London was only the foreground of the great scene upon which he, as a prosperous, well-befriended young Englishman, was free to play whatever part he could. This narrow turbid tidal river by which he walked ran out under the bridges eastward beneath the grey-blue clouds towards Germany, towards Russia, and towards Asia, which still seemed in those days so largely the Englishman's Asia. And when you turned about at Blackfriars Bridge this sense of the round world was so upon you that you faced not merely Westminster, but the icy Atlantic and America, which one could yet fancy was a land of Englishmen — Englishmen a little estranged. At any rate they assimilated, they kept the tongue. The shipping in the lower reaches below the Tower there carried the flags of every country under the sky.... As he went along the riverside he met a group of dusky students, Chinese or Japanese. Cambridge had abounded in Indians; and beneath that tall clock tower at Westminster it seemed as though the world might centre. The background of the Englishman's world reached indeed to either pole, it went about the earth, his background it was — for all that he was capable of doing. All this had awaited him....

Is it any wonder if a young man with an excitable imagination came at times to the pitch of audible threats? If the extreme indulgence of his opportunity and his sense of ability and vigour lifted his vanity at moments to the kingly pitch? If he ejaculated and made a gesture or so as he went along the Embankment?

5

In the disquisition upon choice that opened Benham's paper on ARISTOCRACY, he showed himself momentarily wiser than his

day-dreams. For in these day-dreams he did seem to himself to be choosing among unlimited possibilities. Yet while he dreamt other influences were directing his movements. There were for instance his mother, Lady Marayne, who saw a very different London from what he did, and his mother Dame Nature, who cannot see London at all. She was busy in his blood as she is busy in the blood of most healthy young men; common experience must fill the gaps for us; and patiently and thoroughly she was preparing for the entrance of that heroine, whom not the most self-centred of heroes can altogether avoid....

And then there was the power of every day. Benham imagined himself at large on his liberating steed of property while indeed he was mounted on the made horse of Civilization; while he was speculating whither he should go, he was already starting out upon the round. One hesitates upon the magnificent plan and devotion of one's lifetime and meanwhile there is usage, there are engagements. Every morning came Merkle, the embodiment of the established routine, the herald of all that the world expected and required Benham to be and do. Usually he awakened Benham with the opening of his door and the soft tinkle of the curtain rings as he let in the morning light. He moved softly about the room, gathering up and removing the crumpled hulls of yesterday; that done he reappeared at the bedside with a cup of admirable tea and one thin slice of bread-and-butter, reported on the day's weather, stood deferential for instructions. "You will be going out for lunch, sir. Very good, sir. White slips of course, sir. You will go down into the country in the afternoon? Will that be the serge suit, sir, or the brown?"

These matters settled, the new aristocrat could yawn and stretch like any aristocrat under the old dispensation, and then as the sound of running water from the bathroom ceased, stick his toes out of bed.

The day was tremendously indicated. World-states and aristocracies of steel and fire, things that were as real as coal-scuttles in Billy's rooms away there at Cambridge, were now remoter than Sirius.

He was expected to shave, expected to bath, expected to go in to the bright warmth and white linen and silver and china of his breakfast-table. And there he found letters and invitations, loaded

with expectation. And beyond the coffee-pot, neatly folded, lay the TIMES, and the DAILY NEWS and the TELEGRAPH all with an air of requiring his attention. There had been more fighting in Thibet and Mr. Ritchie had made a Free Trade speech at Croydon. The Japanese had torpedoed another Russian ironclad and a British cruiser was ashore in the East Indies. A man had been found murdered in an empty house in Hoxton and the King had had a conversation with General Booth. Tadpole was in for North Winchelsea, beating Taper by nine votes, and there had been a new cut in the Atlantic passenger rates. He was expected to be interested and excited by these things.

Presently the telephone bell would ring and he would hear the clear little voice of his mother full of imperative expectations. He would be round for lunch? Yes, he would be round to lunch. And the afternoon, had he arranged to do anything with his afternoon? No! — put off Chexington until tomorrow. There was this new pianist, it was really an EXPERIENCE, and one might not get tickets again. And then tea at Panton's. It was rather fun at Panton's.... Oh! — Weston Massinghay was coming to lunch. He was a useful man to know. So CLEVER.... So long, my dear little Son, till I see you....

So life puts out its Merkle threads, as the poacher puts his hair noose about the pheasant's neck, and while we theorize takes hold of us....

It came presently home to Benham that he had been down from Cambridge for ten months, and that he was still not a step forward with the realization of the new aristocracy. His political career waited. He had done a quantity of things, but their net effect was incoherence. He had not been merely passive, but his efforts to break away into creative realities had added to rather than diminished his accumulating sense of futility.

The natural development of his position under the influence of Lady Marayne had enormously enlarged the circle of his acquaintances. He had taken part in all sorts of social occasions, and sat and listened to a representative selection of political and literary and social personages, he had been several times to the opera and to a great number and variety of plays, he had been attentively inconspicuous in several really good week-end parties. He had spent

a golden October in North Italy with his mother, and escaped from the glowing lassitude of Venice for some days of climbing in the Eastern Alps. In January, in an outbreak of enquiry, he had gone with Lionel Maxim to St. Petersburg and had eaten zakuska, brightened his eyes with vodka, talked with a number of charming people of the war that was then imminent, listened to gipsy singers until dawn, careered in sledges about the most silent and stately of capitals, and returned with Lionel, discoursing upon autocracy and assassination, Japan, the Russian destiny, and the government of Peter the Great. That excursion was the most after his heart of all the dispersed employments of his first year. Through the rest of the winter he kept himself very fit, and still further qualified that nervous dislike for the horse that he had acquired from Prothero by hunting once a week in Essex. He was incurably a bad horseman; he rode without sympathy, he was unready and convulsive at hedges and ditches, and he judged distances badly. His white face and rigid seat and a certain joylessness of bearing in the saddle earned him the singular nickname, which never reached his ears, of the "Galvanized Corpse." He got through, however, at the cost of four quite trifling spills and without damaging either of the horses he rode. And his physical self-respect increased.

On his writing-desk appeared a few sheets of manuscript that increased only very slowly. He was trying to express his Cambridge view of aristocracy in terms of Finacue Street, West.

The artistic and intellectual movements of London had made their various demands upon his time and energies. Art came to him with a noble assumption of his interest and an intention that presently became unpleasantly obvious to sell him pictures that he did not want to buy and explain away pictures that he did. He bought one or two modern achievements, and began to doubt if art and aristocracy had any necessary connection. At first he had accepted the assumption that they had. After all, he reflected, one lives rather for life and things than for pictures of life and things or pictures arising out of life and things. This Art had an air of saying something, but when one came to grips with it what had it to say? Unless it was Yah! The drama, and more particularly the intellectual drama, challenged his attention. In the hands of Shaw, Barker, Masefield,

Galsworthy, and Hankin, it, too, had an air of saying something, but he found it extremely difficult to join on to his own demands upon life anything whatever that the intellectual drama had the air of having said. He would sit forward in the front row of the dress-circle with his cheek on his hand and his brow slightly knit. His intentness amused observant people. The drama that did not profess to be intellectual he went to with Lady Marayne, and usually on first nights. Lady Marayne loved a big first night at St. James's Theatre or His Majesty's. Afterwards, perhaps, Sir Godfrey would join them at a supper party, and all sorts of clever and amusing people would be there saying keen intimate things about each other. He met Yeats, who told amusing stories about George Moore, and afterwards he met George Moore, who told amusing stories about Yeats, and it was all, he felt, great fun for the people who were in it. But he was not in it, and he had no very keen desire to be in it. It wasn't his stuff. He had, though they were nowadays rather at the back of his mind, quite other intentions. In the meanwhile all these things took up his time and distracted his attention.

There was, as yet, no practicable aviation to beguile a young man of spirit, but there were times when Benham found himself wondering whether there might not be something rather creditable in the possession and control of a motor-car of exceptional power. Only one might smash people up. Should an aristocrat be deterred by the fear of smashing people up? If it is a selfish fear of smashing people up, if it is nerves rather than pity? At any rate it did not come to the car.

6

Among other things that delayed Benham very greatly in the development of his aristocratic experiments was the advice that was coming to him from every quarter. It came in extraordinary variety and volume, but always it had one unvarying feature. It ignored and tacitly contradicted his private intentions.

We are all of us disposed to be propagandists of our way of living, and the spectacle of a wealthy young man quite at large is enough to excite the most temperate of us without distinction of age or sex. "If I

were you," came to be a familiar phrase in his ear. This was particularly the case with political people; and they did it not only from the natural infirmity of humanity, but because, when they seemed reluctant or satisfied with him as he was, Lady Marayne egged them on.

There was a general assumption that he was to go into Parliament, and most of his counsellors assumed further that on the whole his natural sympathies would take him into the Conservative party. But it was pointed out to him that just at present the Liberal party was the party of a young man's opportunity; sooner or later the swing of the pendulum which would weed the Conservatives and proliferate Liberals was bound to come, there was always more demand and opportunity for candidates on the Liberal side, the Tariff Reformers were straining their ministerial majority to the splitting point, and most of the old Liberal leaders had died off during the years of exile. The party was no longer dominated; it would tolerate ideas. A young man who took a distinctive line — provided it was not from the party point of view a vexatious or impossible line — might go very rapidly far and high. On the other hand, it was urged upon him that the Tariff Reform adventure called also for youth and energy. But there, perhaps, there was less scope for the distinctive line — and already they had Garvin. Quite a number of Benham's friends pointed out to him the value of working out some special aspect of our national political interests. A very useful speciality was the Balkans. Mr. Pope, the well-known publicist, whose very sound and considerable reputation was based on the East Purblow Labour Experiment, met Benham at lunch and proposed to go with him in a spirit of instructive association to the Balkans, rub up their Greek together, and settle the problem of Albania. He wanted, he said, a foreign speciality to balance his East Purblow interest. But Lady Beach Mandarin warned Benham against the Balkans; the Balkans were getting to be too handy for Easter and summer holidays, and now that there were several good hotels in Servia and Montenegro and Sofia, they were being overdone. Everybody went to the Balkans and came back with a pet nationality. She loathed pet nationalities. She believed most people loathed them nowadays. It was stale: it was GLADSTONIAN. She was all for specialization in social reform.

She thought Benham ought to join the Fabian Society and consult the Webbs. Quite a number of able young men had been placed with the assistance of the Webbs. They were, she said, “a perfect fount....” Two other people, independently of each other, pointed out to Benham the helpfulness of a few articles in the half-crown monthlies....

“What are the assumptions underlying all this?” Benham asked himself in a phase of lucidity.

And after reflection. “Good God! The assumptions! What do they think will satisfy me?...”

Everybody, however, did not point to Parliament. Several people seemed to think Travel, with a large T, was indicated. One distant cousin of Sir Godfrey’s, the kind of man of the world who has long moustaches, was for big game shooting. “Get right out of all this while you are young,” he said. “There’s nothing to compare with stopping a charging lion at twenty yards. I’ve done it, my boy. You can come back for all this pow-wow afterwards.” He gave the diplomatic service as a second choice. “There you are,” he said, “first-rate social position, nothing to do, theatres, operas, pretty women, colour, life. The best of good times. Barring Washington, that is. But Washington, they say, isn’t as bad as it used to be — since Teddy has Europeanized ‘em....”

Even the Reverend Harold Benham took a subdued but thoughtful share in his son’s admonition. He came up to the flat — due precautions were taken to prevent a painful encounter — he lunched at his son’s new club, and he was visibly oppressed by the contrast between the young man’s youthful fortunes and his own. As visibly he bore up bravely. “There are few men, Poff, who would not envy you your opportunities,” he said. “You have the Feast of Life spread out at your feet.... I hope you have had yourself put up for the Athenaeum. They say it takes years. When I was a young man — and ambitious — I thought that some day I might belong to the Athenaeum.... One has to learn....”

7

And with an effect of detachment, just as though it didn’t belong to

the rest of him at all, there was beginning a sort of backstairs and underside to Benham's life. There is no need to discuss how inevitable that may or may not be in the case of a young man of spirit and large means, nor to embark upon the discussion of the temptations and opportunities of large cities. Several ladies, of various positions and qualities, had reflected upon his manifest need of education. There was in particular Mrs. Skelmersdale, a very pretty little widow with hazel eyes, black hair, a mobile mouth, and a pathetic history, who talked of old music to him and took him to a Dolmetsch concert in Clifford's Inn, and expanded that common interest to a general participation in his indefinite outlook. She advised him about his probable politics — everybody did that — but when he broke through his usual reserve and suggested views of his own, she was extraordinarily sympathetic. She was so sympathetic and in such a caressing way that she created a temporary belief in her understanding, and it was quite imperceptibly that he was drawn into the discussion of modern ethical problems. She herself was a rather stimulating instance of modern ethical problems. She told him something of her own story, and then their common topics narrowed down very abruptly. He found he could help her in several ways. There is, unhappily, a disposition on the part of many people, who ought to know better, to regard a role played by Joseph during his earlier days in Egypt as a ridiculous one. This point of view became very inopportunely dominant in Benham's mind when he was lunching TETE A TETE with Mrs. Skelmersdale at her flat....

The ensuing intimacy was of an entirely concealed and respectable nature, but a certain increased preoccupation in his manner set Lady Marayne thinking. He had as a matter of fact been taken by surprise.

Still he perceived that it is no excuse for a man that he has been taken by surprise. Surprises in one's own conduct ought not to happen. When they do happen then an aristocrat ought to stick to what he had done. He was now in a subtle and complicated relationship to Mrs. Skelmersdale, a relationship in which her pride had become suddenly a matter of tremendous importance. Once he had launched himself upon this affair, it was clear to him that he owed it to her never to humiliate her. And to go back upon himself

now would be a tremendous humiliation for her. You see, he had helped her a little financially. And she looked to him, she wanted him....

She wasn't, he knew, altogether respectable. Indeed, poor dear, her ethical problems, already a little worn, made her seem at times anything but respectable. He had met her first one evening at Jimmy Gluckstein's when he was forming his opinion of Art. Her manifest want of interest in pictures had attracted him. And that had led to music. And to the mention of a Clementi piano, that short, gentle, sad, old, little sort of piano people will insist upon calling a spinet, in her flat.

And so to this....

It was very wonderful and delicious, this first indulgence of sense.

It was shabby and underhand.

The great god Pan is a glorious god. (And so was Swinburne.) And what can compare with the warmth of blood and the sheen of sunlit limbs?

But Priapus....

She was the most subtle, delightful and tender of created beings.

She had amazing streaks of vulgarity.

And some astonishing friends.

Once she had seemed to lead the talk deliberately to money matters.

She loved him and desired him. There was no doubt of it.

There was a curious effect about her as though when she went round the corner she would become somebody else. And a curious recurrent feeling that round the corner there was somebody else.

He had an extraordinary feeling that his mother knew about this business. This feeling came from nothing in her words or acts, but from some indefinable change in her eyes and bearing towards him. But how could she know?

It was unlikely that she and Mrs. Skelmersdale would ever meet, and it seemed to him that it would be a particularly offensive incident for them to meet.

There were times now when life took on a grey and boring quality such as it had never had before he met Mrs. Skelmersdale, and the only remedy was to go to her. She could restore his nervous

tranquillity, his feeling of solidity and reality, his pride in himself. For a time, that is.

Nevertheless his mind was as a whole pervaded by the feeling that he ought not to have been taken by surprise.

And he had the clearest conviction in his mind that if now he could be put back again to the day before that lunch....

No! he should not have gone there to lunch.

He had gone there to see her Clementi piano.

Had he or had he not thought beforehand of any other possibility?

On a point so vital his memory was curiously unsure.

8

The worry and disorganization of Benham's life and thoughts increased as the spring advanced. His need in some way to pull things together became overpowering. He began to think of Billy Prothero, more and more did it seem desirable to have a big talk with Billy and place everything that had got disturbed. Benham thought of going to Cambridge for a week of exhaustive evenings. Small engagements delayed that expedition....

Then came a day in April when all the world seemed wrong to Benham. He was irritable; his will was unstable; whatever presented itself to be done presented itself as undesirable; he could settle to nothing. He had been keeping away from Mrs. Skelmersdale and in the morning there came a little note from her designed to correct this abstention. She understood the art of the attractive note. But he would not decide to go to her. He left the note unanswered.

Then came his mother at the telephone and it became instantly certain to Benham that he could not play the dutiful son that evening. He answered her that he could not come to dinner. He had engaged himself. "Where?"

"With some men."

There was a pause and then his mother's voice came, flattened by disappointment. "Very well then, little Poff. Perhaps I shall see you to-morrow."

He replaced the receiver and fretted back into his study, where the notes on aristocracy lay upon his desk, the notes he had been

pretending to work over all the morning.

“Damned liar!” he said, and then, “Dirty liar!” He decided to lunch at the club, and in the afternoon he was moved to telephone an appointment with his siren. And having done that he was bound to keep it.

About one o’clock in the morning he found himself walking back to Finacue Street. He was no longer a fretful conflict of nerves, but if anything he was less happy than he had been before. It seemed to him that London was a desolate and inglorious growth.

London ten years ago was much less nocturnal than it is now. And not so brightly lit. Down the long streets came no traffic but an occasional hansom. Here and there a cat halted or bolted in the road. Near Piccadilly a policeman hovered artfully in a doorway, and then came a few belated prostitutes waylaying the passers-by, and a few youths and men, wearily lust driven.

As he turned up New Bond Street he saw a figure that struck him as familiar. Surely! — it was Billy Prothero! Or at any rate it was astonishingly like Billy Prothero. He glanced again and the likeness was more doubtful. The man had his back to Benham, he was halting and looking back at a woman.

By some queer flash of intuition it came to Benham that even if this was not Prothero, still Prothero did these things. It might very well be Prothero even, though, as he now saw, it wasn’t. Everybody did these things....

It came into Benham’s head for the first time that life could be tiresome.

This Bond Street was a tiresome place; with its shops all shut and muffled, its shops where in the crowded daytime one bought costly furniture, costly clothes, costly scent, sweets, bibelots, pictures, jewellery, presents of all sorts, clothes for Mrs. Skelmersdale, sweets for Mrs. Skelmersdale, presents for Mrs. Skelmersdale, all the elaborate fittings and equipage of — THAT!

“Good night, dear,” a woman drifted by him.

“I’ve SAID good night,” he cried, “I’ve SAID good night,” and so went on to his flat. The unquenchable demand, the wearisome insatiability of sex! When everything else has gone, then it shows itself bare in the bleak small hours. And at first it had seemed so light

a matter! He went to bed, feeling dog-tired, he went to bed at an hour and with a finished completeness that Merkle would have regarded as entirely becoming in a young gentleman of his position.

And a little past three o'clock in the morning he awoke to a mood of indescribable desolation. He awoke with a start to an agony of remorse and self-reproach.

9

For a time he lay quite still staring at the darkness, then he groaned and turned over. Then, suddenly, like one who fancies he hears a strange noise, he sat up in bed and listened. "Oh, God!" he said at last.

And then: "Oh! The DIRTINESS of life! The dirty muddle of life!

"What are we doing with life? What are we all doing with life?

"It isn't only this poor Milly business. This only brings it to a head. Of course she wants money...."

His thoughts came on again.

"But the ugliness!

"Why did I begin it?"

He put his hands upon his knees and pressed his eyes against the backs of his hands and so remained very still, a blankness beneath his own question.

After a long interval his mind moved again.

And now it was as if he looked upon his whole existence, he seemed to see in a large, clear, cold comprehensiveness, all the wasted days, the fruitless activities, the futilities, the perpetual postponements that had followed his coming to London. He saw it all as a joyless indulgence, as a confusion of playthings and undisciplined desires, as a succession of days that began amiably and weakly, that became steadily more crowded with ignoble and trivial occupations, that had sunken now to indignity and uncleanness. He was overwhelmed by that persuasion, which only freshly soiled youth can feel in its extreme intensity, that life was slipping away from him, that the sands were running out, that in a little while his existence would be irretrievably lost.

By some trick of the imagination he saw life as an interminable

Bond Street, lit up by night lamps, desolate, full of rubbish, full of the very best rubbish, trappings, temptations, and down it all he drove, as the damned drive, wearily, inexplicably.

WHAT ARE WE UP TO WITH LIFE! WHAT ARE WE MAKING OF LIFE!

But hadn't he intended to make something tremendous of life? Hadn't he come to London trailing a glory?...

He began to remember it as a project. It was the project of a great World-State sustained by an aristocracy of noble men. He was to have been one of those men, too fine and far-reaching for the dull manoeuvers of such politics as rule the world to-day. The project seemed still large, still whitely noble, but now it was unlit and dead, and in the foreground he sat in the flat of Mrs. Skelmersdale, feeling dissipated and fumbling with his white tie. And she was looking tired. "God!" he said. "How did I get there?"

And then suddenly he reached out his arms in the darkness and prayed aloud to the silences.

"Oh, God! Give me back my visions! Give me back my visions!"

He could have imagined he heard a voice calling upon him to come out into life, to escape from the body of this death. But it was his own voice that called to him....

10

The need for action became so urgent in him, that he got right out of his bed and sat on the edge of it. Something had to be done at once. He did not know what it was but he felt that there could be no more sleep, no more rest, no dressing nor eating nor going forth before he came to decisions. Christian before his pilgrimage began was not more certain of this need of flight from the life of routine and vanities.

What was to be done?

In the first place he must get away and think about it all, think himself clear of all these — these immediacies, these associations and relations and holds and habits. He must get back to his vision, get back to the God in his vision. And to do that he must go alone.

He was clear he must go alone. It was useless to go to Prothero,

one weak man going to a weaker. Prothero he was convinced could help him not at all, and the strange thing is that this conviction had come to him and had established itself incontestably because of that figure at the street corner, which had for just one moment resembled Prothero. By some fantastic intuition Benham knew that Prothero would not only participate but excuse. And he knew that he himself could endure no excuses. He must cut clear of any possibility of qualification. This thing had to be stopped. He must get away, he must get free, he must get clean. In the extravagance of his reaction Benham felt that he could endure nothing but solitary places and to sleep under the open sky.

He wanted to get right away from London and everybody and lie in the quiet darkness and stare up at the stars.

His plans grew so definite that presently he was in his dressing-gown and turning out the maps in the lower drawer of his study bureau. He would go down into Surrey with a knapsack, wander along the North Downs until the Guildford gap was reached, strike across the Weald country to the South Downs and then beat eastward. The very thought of it brought a coolness to his mind. He knew that over those southern hills one could be as lonely as in the wilderness and as free to talk to God. And there he would settle something. He would make a plan for his life and end this torment.

When Merkle came in to him in the morning he was fast asleep.

The familiar curtain rings awakened Benham. He turned his head over, stared for a moment and then remembered.

"Merkle," he said, "I am going for a walking tour. I am going off this morning. Haven't I a rucksack?"

"You 'ave a sort of canvas bag, sir, with pockets to it," said Merkle. "Will you be needing the VERY 'eavy boots with 'obnails — Swiss, I fancy, sir — or your ordinary shooting boots?"

"And when may I expect you back, sir?" asked Merkle as the moment for departure drew near.

"God knows," said Benham, "I don't."

"Then will there be any address for forwarding letters, sir?"

Benham hadn't thought of that. For a moment he regarded Merkle's scrupulous respect with a transient perplexity.

"I'll let you know, Merkle," he said. "I'll let you know."

For some days at least, notes, telephone messages, engagements, all this fuss and clamour about nothing, should clamour for him in vain....

11

"But how closely," cried White, in a mood of cultivated enthusiasm; "how closely must all the poor little stories that we tell to-day follow in the footsteps of the Great Exemplars! A little while ago and the springtime freshness of Tobias irradiated the page. Now see! it is Christian — ."

Indeed it looked extremely like Christian as Benham went up across the springy turf from Epsom Downs station towards the crest of the hill. Was he not also fleeing in the morning sunlight from the City of Destruction? Was he not also seeking that better city whose name is Peace? And there was a bundle on his back. It was the bundle, I think, that seized most firmly upon the too literary imagination of White.

But the analogy of the bundle was a superficial one. Benham had not the slightest desire to lose it from his shoulders. It would have inconvenienced him very greatly if he had done so. It did not contain his sins. Our sins nowadays are not so easily separated. It contained a light, warm cape-coat he had bought in Switzerland and which he intended to wrap about him when he slept under the stars, and in addition Merkle had packed it with his silk pyjamas, an extra pair of stockings, tooth-brush, brush and comb, a safety razor.... And there were several sheets of the Ordnance map.

12

The urgency of getting away from something dominated Benham to the exclusion of any thought of what he might be getting to. That muddle of his London life had to be left behind. First, escape....

Over the downs great numbers of larks were singing. It was warm April that year and early. All the cloud stuff in the sky was gathered into great towering slow-sailing masses, and the rest was blue of the intensest. The air was so clean that Benham felt it clean in the

substance of his body. The chestnuts down the hill to the right were flowering, the beeches were luminously green, and the oaks in the valley foaming gold. And sometimes it was one lark filled his ears, and sometimes he seemed to be hearing all the larks for miles about him. Presently over the crest he would be out of sight of the grand stand and the men exercising horses, and that brace of red-jacketed golfers....

What was he to do?

For a time he could think of nothing to do except to keep up and out of the valley. His whole being seemed to have come to his surfaces to look out at the budding of the year and hear the noise of the birds. And then he got into a long road from which he had to escape, and trespassing southward through plantations he reached the steep edge of the hills and sat down over above a great chalk pit somewhere near Dorking and surveyed all the tumbled wooded spaces of the Weald.... It is after all not so great a country this Sussex, nor so hilly, from deepest valley to highest crest is not six hundred feet, yet what a greatness of effect it can achieve! There is something in those downland views which, like sea views, lifts a mind out to the skies. All England it seemed was there to Benham's vision, and the purpose of the English, and his own purpose in the world. For a long time he surveyed the large delicacy of the detail before him, the crests, the tree-protected houses, the fields and farmsteads, the distant gleams of water. And then he became interested in the men who were working in the chalk pit down below.

They at any rate were not troubled with the problem of what to do with their lives.

13

Benham found his mind was now running clear, and so abundantly that he could scarcely, he felt, keep pace with it. As he thought his flow of ideas was tinged with a fear that he might forget what he was thinking. In an instant, for the first time in his mental existence, he could have imagined he had discovered Labour and seen it plain. A little while ago and he had seemed a lonely man among the hills, but indeed he was not lonely, these men had been with him all the time,

and he was free to wander, to sit here, to think and choose simply because those men down there were not free. HE WAS SPENDING THEIR LEISURE.... Not once but many times with Prothero had he used the phrase RICHESSE OBLIGE. Now he remembered it. He began to remember a mass of ideas that had been overlaid and stifling within him. This was what Merkle and the club servants and the entertainments and engagements and his mother and the artistic touts and the theatrical touts and the hunting and the elaboration of games and — Mrs. Skelmersdale and all that had clustered thickly round him in London had been hiding from him. Those men below there had not been trusted to choose their work; they had been given it. And he had been trusted....

And now to grapple with it! Now to get it clear! What work was he going to do? That settled, he would deal with his distractions readily enough. Until that was settled he was lax and exposed to every passing breeze of invitation.

"What work am I going to do? What work am I going to do?" He repeated it.

It is the only question for the aristocrat. What amusement? That for a footman on holiday. That for a silly child, for any creature that is kept or led or driven. That perhaps for a tired invalid, for a toiler worked to a rag. But able-bodied amusement! The arms of Mrs. Skelmersdale were no worse than the solemn aimlessness of hunting, and an evening of dalliance not an atom more reprehensible than an evening of chatter. It was the waste of him that made the sin. His life in London had been of a piece together. It was well that his intrigue had set a light on it, put a point to it, given him this saving crisis of the nerves. That, indeed, is the chief superiority of idle love-making over other more prevalent forms of idleness and self-indulgence; it does at least bear its proper label. It is reprehensible. It brings your careless honour to the challenge of concealment and shabby evasions and lies....

But in this pellucid air things took their proper proportions again.

And now what was he to do?

"Politics," he said aloud to the turf and the sky.

Is there any other work for an aristocratic man?... Science? One could admit science in that larger sense that sweeps in History, or

Philosophy. Beyond that whatever work there is is work for which men are paid. Art? Art is nothing aristocratic except when it is a means of scientific or philosophical expression. Art that does not argue nor demonstrate nor discover is merely the craftsman's impudence.

He pulled up at this and reflected for a time with some distinguished instances in his mind. They were so distinguished, so dignified, they took their various arts with so admirable a gravity that the soul of this young man recoiled from the verdicts to which his reasoning drove him. "It's not for me to judge them," he decided, "except in relation to myself. For them there may be tremendous significances in Art. But if these do not appear to me, then so far as I am concerned they do not exist for me. They are not in my world. So far as they attempt to invade me and control my attitudes or my outlook, or to judge me in any way, there is no question of their impudence. Impudence is the word for it. My world is real. I want to be really aristocratic, really brave, really paying for the privilege of not being a driven worker. The things the artist makes are like the things my private dream-artist makes, relaxing, distracting. What can Art at its greatest be, pure Art that is, but a more splendid, more permanent, transmissible reverie! The very essence of what I am after is NOT to be an artist...."

After a large and serious movement through his mind he came back to Science, Philosophy or Politics as the sole three justifications for the usurpation of leisure.

So far as devotion to science went, he knew he had no specific aptitude for any departmentalized subject, and equally he felt no natural call to philosophy. He was left with politics....

"Or else, why shouldn't I go down there and pick up a shovel and set to work? To make leisure for my betters...."

And now it was that he could take up the real trouble that more than anything else had been keeping him ineffective and the prey of every chance demand and temptation during the last ten months. He had not been able to get himself into politics, and the reason why he had not been able to do so was that he could not induce himself to fit in. Statecraft was a remote and faded thing in the political life of the time; politics was a choice of two sides in a game, and either side he

found equally unattractive. Since he had come down from Cambridge the Tariff Reform people had gone far to capture the Conservative party. There was little chance of a candidature for him without an adhesion to that. And he could find nothing he could imagine himself working for in the declarations of the Tariff Reform people. He distrusted them, he disliked them. They took all the light and pride out of imperialism, they reduced it to a shabby conspiracy of the British and their colonies against foreign industrialism. They were violent for armaments and hostile to education. They could give him no assurance of any scheme of growth and unification, and no guarantees against the manifest dangers of economic disturbance and political corruption a tariff involves. Imperialism without noble imaginations, it seemed to him, was simply nationalism with megalomania. It was swaggering, it was greed, it was German; its enthusiasm was forced, its nobility a vulgar lie. No. And when he turned to the opposite party he found little that was more attractive. They were prepared, it seemed, if they came into office, to pull the legislature of the British Isles to pieces in obedience to the Irish demand for Home Rule, and they were totally unprepared with any scheme for doing this that had even a chance of success. In the twenty years that had elapsed since Gladstone's hasty and disastrous essay in political surgery they had studied nothing, learnt nothing, produced no ideas whatever in the matter. They had not had the time. They had just negotiated, like the mere politicians they were, for the Nationalist vote. They seemed to hope that by a marvel God would pacify Ulster. Lord Dunraven, Plunkett, were voices crying in the wilderness. The sides in the party game would as soon have heeded a poet.... But unless Benham was prepared to subscribe either to Home Rule or Tariff Reform there was no way whatever open to him into public life. He had had some decisive conversations. He had no illusions left upon that score....

Here was the real barrier that had kept him inactive for ten months. Here was the problem he had to solve. This was how he had been left out of active things, a prey to distractions, excitements, idle temptations — and Mrs. Skelmersdale.

Running away to shoot big game or explore wildernesses was no remedy. That was just running away. Aristocrats do not run away.

What of his debt to those men down there in the quarry? What of his debt to the unseen men in the mines away in the north? What of his debt to the stokers on the liners, and to the clerks in the city? He reiterated the cardinal article of his creed: The aristocrat is a privileged man in order that he may be a public and political man.

But how is one to be a political man when one is not in politics?

Benham frowned at the Weald. His ideas were running thin.

He might hammer at politics from the outside. And then again how? He would make a list of all the things that he might do. For example he might write. He rested one hand on his knee and lifted one finger and regarded it. COULD he write? There were one or two men who ran papers and seemed to have a sort of independent influence. Strachey, for example, with his SPECTATOR; Maxse, with his NATIONAL REVIEW. But they were grown up, they had formed their ideas. He had to learn first.

He lifted a second finger. How to learn? For it was learning that he had to do.

When one comes down from Oxford or Cambridge one falls into the mistake of thinking that learning is over and action must begin. But until one perceives clearly just where one stands action is impossible.

How is one with no experience of affairs to get an experience of affairs when the door of affairs is closed to one by one's own convictions? Outside of affairs how can one escape being flimsy? How can one escape becoming merely an intellectual like those wordy Fabians, those writers, poseurs, and sham publicists whose wrangles he had attended? And, moreover, there is danger in the leisure of your intellectual. One cannot be always reading and thinking and discussing and inquiring.... WOULD IT NOT BE BETTER AFTER ALL TO MAKE A CONCESSION, SWALLOW HOME RULE OR TARIFF REFORM, AND SO AT LEAST GET HIS HANDS ON THINGS?

And then in a little while the party conflict would swallow him up?

Still it would engage him, it would hold him. If, perhaps, he did not let it swallow him up. If he worked with an eye open for opportunities of self-assertion....

The party game had not altogether swallowed “Mr. Arthur.”...

But every one is not a Balfour....

He reflected profoundly. On his left knee his left hand rested with two fingers held up. By some rapid mental alchemy these fingers had now become Home Rule and Tariff Reform. His right hand which had hitherto taken no part in the controversy, had raised its index finger by imperceptible degrees. It had been raised almost subconsciously. And by still obscurer processes this finger had become Mrs. Skelmersdale. He recognized her sudden reappearance above the threshold of consciousness with mild surprise. He had almost forgotten her share in these problems. He had supposed her dismissed to an entirely subordinate position....

Then he perceived that the workmen in the chalk pit far below had knocked off and were engaged upon their midday meal. He understood why his mind was no longer moving forward with any alacrity.

Food?

The question where he should eat arose abruptly and dismissed all other problems from his mind. He unfolded a map. Here must be the chalk pit, here was Dorking. That village was Brockham Green. Should he go down to Dorking or this way over Box Hill to the little inn at Burford Bridge. He would try the latter.

14

The April sunset found our young man talking to himself for greater emphasis, and wandering along a turfy cart-track through a wilderness mysteriously planted with great bushes of rhododendra on the Downs above Shere. He had eaten a belated lunch at Burford Bridge, he had got some tea at a little inn near a church with a splendid yew tree, and for the rest of the time he had wandered and thought. He had travelled perhaps a dozen or fifteen miles, and a good way from his first meditations above the Dorking chalk pit.

He had recovered long ago from that remarkable conception of an active if dishonest political career as a means of escaping Mrs. Skelmersdale and all that Mrs. Skelmersdale symbolized. That would be just louting from one bad thing to another. He had to settle Mrs.

Skelmersdale clean and right, and he had to do as exquisitely right in politics as he could devise. If the public life of the country had got itself into a stupid antagonism of two undesirable things, the only course for a sane man of honour was to stand out from the parties and try and get them back to sound issues again. There must be endless people of a mind with himself in this matter. And even if there were not, if he was the only man in the world, he still had to follow his lights and do the right. And his business was to find out the right....

He came back from these imaginative excursions into contemporary politics with one idea confirmed in his mind, an idea that had been indeed already in his mind during his Cambridge days. This was the idea of working out for himself, thoroughly and completely, a political scheme, a theory of his work and duty in the world, a plan of the world's future that should give a rule for his life. The Research Magnificent was emerging. It was an alarmingly vast proposal, but he could see no alternative but submission, a plebeian's submission to the currents of life about him.

Little pictures began to flit before his imagination of the way in which he might build up this tremendous inquiry. He would begin by hunting up people, everybody who seemed to have ideas and promise ideas he would get at. He would travel far — and exhaustively. He would, so soon as the ideas seemed to indicate it, hunt out facts. He would learn how the world was governed. He would learn how it did its thinking. He would live sparingly. ("Not TOO sparingly," something interpolated.) He would work ten or twelve hours a day. Such a course of investigation must pass almost of its own accord into action and realization. He need not trouble now how it would bring him into politics. Inevitably somewhere it would bring him into politics. And he would travel. Almost at once he would travel. It is the manifest duty of every young aristocrat to travel. Here he was, ruling India. At any rate, passively, through the mere fact of being English, he was ruling India. And he knew nothing of India. He knew nothing indeed of Asia. So soon as he returned to London his preparations for this travel must begin, he must plot out the men to whom he would go, and so contrive that also he would go round the world. Perhaps he would get Lionel Maxim to go with him. Or if

Maxim could not come, then possibly Prothero. Some one surely could be found, some one thinking and talking of statecraft and the larger idea of life. All the world is not swallowed up in every day....

15

His mind shifted very suddenly from these large proposals to an entirely different theme. These mental landslips are not unusual when men are thinking hard and wandering. He found himself holding a trial upon himself for Presumptuousness, for setting himself up against the wisdom of the ages, and the decisions of all the established men in the world, for being in short a Presumptuous Sort of Ass. He was judge and jury and prosecutor, but rather inexplicably the defence was conducted in an irregular and undignified way by some inferior stratum of his being.

At first the defence contented itself with arguments that did at least aim to rebut the indictment. The decisions of all the established men in the world were notoriously in conflict. However great was the gross wisdom of the ages the net wisdom was remarkably small. Was it after all so very immodest to believe that the Liberals were right in what they said about Tariff Reform, and the Tories right in their criticism of Home Rule?

And then suddenly the defence threw aside its mask and insisted that Benham had to take this presumptuous line because there was no other tolerable line possible for him.

"Better die with the Excelsior chap up the mountains," the defence interjected.

Than what?

Consider the quality Benham had already betrayed. He was manifestly incapable of a decent modest mediocre existence. Already he had ceased to be — if one may use so fine a word for genteel abstinence — virtuous. He didn't ride well, he hadn't good hands, and he hadn't good hands for life. He must go hard and harsh, high or low. He was a man who needed BITE in his life. He was exceptionally capable of boredom. He had been bored by London. Social occasions irritated him, several times he had come near to gross incivilities, art annoyed him, sport was an effort, wholesome

perhaps, but unattractive, music he loved, but it excited him. The defendant broke the sunset calm by uttering amazing and improper phrases.

“I can’t smug about in a state of falsified righteousness like these Crampton chaps.

“I shall roll in women. I shall rollick in women. If, that is, I stay in London with nothing more to do than I have had this year past.

“I’ve been sliding fast to it....

“NO! I’M DAMNED IF I DO!...” 16

For some time he had been bothered by a sense of something, something else, awaiting his attention. Now it came swimming up into his consciousness. He had forgotten. He was, of course, going to sleep out under the stars.

He had settled that overnight, that was why he had this cloak in his rucksack, but he had settled none of the details. Now he must find some place where he could lie down. Here, perhaps, in this strange forgotten wilderness of rhododendra.

He turned off from the track and wandered among the bushes. One might lie down anywhere here. But not yet; it was as yet barely twilight. He consulted his watch. HALF-PAST SEVEN.

Nearly dinner-time....

No doubt Christian during the earlier stages of his pilgrimage noticed the recurrence of the old familiar hours of his life of emptiness and vanity. Or rather of vanity — simply. Why drag in the thought of emptiness just at this point?...

It was very early to go to bed.

He might perhaps sit and think for a time. Here for example was a mossy bank, a seat, and presently a bed. So far there were only three stars visible but more would come. He dropped into a reclining attitude. DAMP!

When one thinks of sleeping out under the stars one is apt to forget the dew.

He spread his Swiss cloak out on the soft thick carpeting of herbs and moss, and arranged his knapsack as a pillow. Here he would lie and recapitulate the thoughts of the day. (That squealing might be a young fox.) At the club at present men would be sitting about holding themselves back from dinner. Excellent the clear soup

always was at the club! Then perhaps a Chateaubriand. That — what was that? Soft and large and quite near and noiseless. An owl!

The damp feeling was coming through his cloak. And this April night air had a knife edge. Early ice coming down the Atlantic perhaps. It was wonderful to be here on the top of the round world and feel the icebergs away there. Or did this wind come from Russia? He wasn't quite clear just how he was oriented, he had turned about so much. Which was east? Anyhow it was an extremely cold wind.

What had he been thinking? Suppose after all that ending with Mrs. Skelmersdale was simply a beginning. So far he had never looked sex in the face....

He sat up and sneezed violently.

It would be ridiculous to start out seeking the clue to one's life and be driven home by rheumatic fever. One should not therefore incur the risk of rheumatic fever.

Something squealed in the bushes.

It was impossible to collect one's thoughts in this place. He stood up. The night was going to be bitterly cold, savagely, cruelly cold....

No. There was no thinking to be done here, no thinking at all. He would go on along the track and presently he would strike a road and so come to an inn. One can solve no problems when one is engaged in a struggle with the elements. The thing to do now was to find that track again....

It took Benham two hours of stumbling and walking, with a little fence climbing and some barbed wire thrown in, before he got down into Shere to the shelter of a friendly little inn. And then he negotiated a satisfying meal, with beef-steak as its central fact, and stipulated for a fire in his bedroom.

The landlord was a pleasant-faced man; he attended to Benham himself and displayed a fine sense of comfort. He could produce wine, a half-bottle of Australian hock, Big Tree brand No. 8, a virile wine, he thought of sardines to precede the meal, he provided a substantial Welsh rarebit by way of a savoury, he did not mind in the least that it was nearly ten o'clock. He ended by suggesting coffee. "And a liqueur?"

Benham had some Benedictine!

One could not slight such sympathetic helpfulness. The

Benedictine was genuine. And then came the coffee.

The cup of coffee was generously conceived and honestly made.

A night of clear melancholy ensued....

17

Hitherto Benham had not faced in any detail the problem of how to break with Mrs. Skelmersdale. Now he faced it pessimistically. She would, he knew, be difficult to break with. (He ought never to have gone there to lunch.) There would be something ridiculous in breaking off. In all sorts of ways she might resist. And face to face with her he might find himself a man divided against himself. That opened preposterous possibilities. On the other hand it was out of the question to do the business by letter. A letter hits too hard; it lies too heavy on the wound it has made. And in money matters he could be generous. He must be generous. At least financial worries need not complicate her distresses of desertion. But to suggest such generosities on paper, in cold ink, would be outrageous. And, in brief — he ought not to have gone there to lunch. After that he began composing letters at a great rate. Delicate — explanatory. Was it on the whole best to be explanatory?...

It was going to be a tremendous job, this breaking with her. And it had begun so easily....

There was, he remembered with amazing vividness, a little hollow he had found under her ear, and how when he kissed her there it always made her forget her worries and ethical problems for a time and turn to him....

“No,” he said grimly, “it must end,” and rolled over and stared at the black....

Like an insidious pedlar, that old rascal whom young literary gentlemen call the Great God Pan, began to spread his wares in the young man’s memory....

After long and feverish wanderings of the mind, and some talking to himself and walking about the room, he did at last get a little away from Mrs. Skelmersdale.

He perceived that when he came to tell his mother about this journey around the world there would be great difficulties. She would

object very strongly, and if that did not do then she would become extremely abusive, compare him to his father, cry bitterly, and banish him suddenly and heartbrokenly from her presence for ever. She had done that twice already — once about going to the opera instead of listening to a lecture on Indian ethnology and once about a week-end in Kent.... He hated hurting his mother, and he was beginning to know now how easily she was hurt. It is an abominable thing to hurt one's mother — whether one has a justification or whether one hasn't.

Recoiling from this, he was at once resumed by Mrs. Skelmersdale. Who had in fact an effect of really never having been out of the room. But now he became penitent about her. His penitence expanded until it was on a nightmare scale. At last it blotted out the heavens. He felt like one of those unfortunate victims of religious mania who are convinced they have committed the Sin against the Holy Ghost. (Why had he gone there to lunch? That was the key to it. WHY had he gone there to lunch?)... He began to have remorse for everything, for everything he had ever done, for everything he had ever not done, for everything in the world. In a moment of lucidity he even had remorse for drinking that stout honest cup of black coffee....

And so on and so on and so on....

When daylight came it found Benham still wide awake. Things crept mournfully out of the darkness into a reproachful clearness. The sound of birds that had been so delightful on the yesterday was now no longer agreeable. The thrushes, he thought, repeated themselves a great deal.

He fell asleep as it seemed only a few minutes before the landlord, accompanied by a great smell of frying bacon, came to call him.

18

The second day opened rather dully for Benham. There was not an idea left in his head about anything in the world. It was — SOLID. He walked through Bramley and Godalming and Witley and so came out upon the purple waste of Hindhead. He strayed away from the road and found a sunny place of turf amidst the heather and lay down

and slept for an hour or so. He arose refreshed. He got some food at the Huts Inn on the Hindhead crest and went on across sunlit heathery wildernesses variegated by patches of spruce and fir and silver birch. And then suddenly his mental inanition was at an end and his thoughts were wide and brave again. He was astonished that for a moment he could have forgotten that he was vowed to the splendid life.

"Continence by preoccupation;" he tried the phrase....

"A man must not give in to fear; neither must he give in to sex. It's the same thing really. The misleading of instinct."

This set the key of his thought throughout the afternoon — until Amanda happened to him.

CHAPTER THE THIRD ~~ AMANDA

1

Amanda happened to Benham very suddenly.

From Haslemere he had gone on to further heaths and gorse beyond Liphook, and thence he had wandered into a pretty district beset with Hartings. He had found himself upon a sandy ridge looking very beautifully into a sudden steep valley that he learnt was Harting Coombe; he had been through a West Harting and a South Harting and read finger-posts pointing to others of the clan; and in the evening, at the foot of a steep hill where two roads met, he sat down to consider whether he should go back and spend the night in one of the two kindly-looking inns of the latter place or push on over the South Downs towards the unknown luck of Singleton or Chichester. As he sat down two big retrievers, black and brown, came headlong down the road. The black carried a stick, the brown disputed and pursued. As they came abreast of him the foremost a little relaxed his hold, the pursuer grabbed at it, and in an instant the rivalry had flared to rage and a first-class dogfight was in progress.

Benham detested dog-fights. He stood up, pale and distressed. “Lie down!” he cried. “Shut up, you brutes!” and was at a loss for further action.

Then it was Amanda leapt into his world, a light, tall figure of a girl, fluttering a short petticoat. Hatless she was, brown, flushed, and her dark hair tossing loose, and in a moment she had the snarling furious dogs apart, each gripped firmly by its collar. Then with a wriggle black was loose and had closed again. Inspired by the best traditions of chivalry Benham came to her assistance. He was not expert with dogs. He grasped the black dog under its ear. He was bitten in the wrist, rather in excitement than malice, and with a certain excess of zeal he was strangling the brute before you could count ten.

Amanda seized the fallen stick and whacked the dog she held, reasonably but effectively until its yelps satisfied her. “There!” she said pitching her victim from her, and stood erect again. She

surveyed the proceedings of her helper for the first time.

"You needn't," she said, "choke Sultan anymore."

"Ugh!" she said, as though that was enough for Sultan. And peace was restored.

"I'm obliged to you. But — ... I say! He didn't bite you, did he? Oh, SULTAN!"

Sultan tried to express his disgust at the affair. Rotten business. When a fellow is fighting one can't be meticulous. And if people come interfering. Still — SORRY! So Sultan by his code of eye and tail.

"May I see?... Something ought to be done to this...."

She took his wrist in her hand, and her cheek and eyelashes came within a foot of his face.

Some observant element in his composition guessed, and guessed quite accurately, that she was nineteen....

2

She had an eyebrow like a quick stroke of a camel's-hair brush, she had a glowing face, half childish imp, half woman, she had honest hazel eyes, a voice all music, a manifest decision of character. And he must have this bite seen to at once. She lived not five minutes away. He must come with her.

She had an aunt who behaved like a mother and a mother who behaved like a genteel visitor, and they both agreed with Amanda that although Mr. Walter Long and his dreadful muzzles and everything did seem to have stamped out rabies, yet you couldn't be too careful with a dog bite. A dog bite might be injurious in all sorts of ways — particularly Sultan's bite. He was, they had to confess, a dog without refinement, a coarse-minded omnivorous dog. Both the elder ladies insisted upon regarding Benham's wound as clear evidence of some gallant rescue of Amanda from imminent danger— "she's always so RECKLESS with those dogs," as though Amanda was not manifestly capable of taking care of herself; and when he had been Listerined and bandaged, they would have it that he should join them at their supper-dinner, which was already prepared and waiting. They treated him as if he were still an undergraduate, they

took his arrangements in hand as though he was a favourite nephew. He must stay in Harting that night. Both the Ship and the Coach and Horses were excellent inns, and over the Downs there would be nothing for miles and miles....

The house was a little long house with a verandah and a garden in front of it with flint-edged paths; the room in which they sat and ate was long and low and equipped with pieces of misfitting good furniture, an accidental-looking gilt tarnished mirror, and a sprinkling of old and middle-aged books. Some one had lit a fire, which cracked and spurted about cheerfully in a motherly fireplace, and a lamp and some candles got lit. Mrs. Wilder, Amanda's aunt, a comfortable dark broad-browed woman, directed things, and sat at the end of the table and placed Benham on her right hand between herself and Amanda. Amanda's mother remained undeveloped, a watchful little woman with at least an eyebrow like her daughter's. Her name, it seemed, was Morris. No servant appeared, but two cousins of a vague dark picturesqueness and with a stamp of thirty upon them, the first young women Benham had ever seen dressed in djibbahs, sat at the table or moved about and attended to the simple needs of the service. The reconciled dogs were in the room and shifted inquiring noses from one human being to another.

Amanda's people were so easy and intelligent and friendly, and Benham after his thirty hours of silence so freshly ready for human association, that in a very little while he could have imagined he had known and trusted this household for years. He had never met such people before, and yet there was something about them that seemed familiar — and then it occurred to him that something of their easy-going freedom was to be found in Russian novels. A photographic enlargement of somebody with a vegetarian expression of face and a special kind of slouch hat gave the atmosphere a flavour of Socialism, and a press and tools and stamps and pigments on an oak table in the corner suggested some such socialistic art as bookbinding. They were clearly 'advanced' people. And Amanda was tremendously important to them, she was their light, their pride, their most living thing. They focussed on her. When he talked to them all in general he talked to her in particular. He felt that some introduction of himself was due to these welcoming people. He tried

to give it mixed with an itinerary and a sketch of his experiences. He praised the heather country and Harting Coombe and the Hartings. He told them that London had suddenly become intolerable— "In the spring sunshine."

"You live in London?" said Mrs. Wilder.

Yes. And he had wanted to think things out. In London one could do no thinking —

"Here we do nothing else," said Amanda.

"Except dog-fights," said the elder cousin.

"I thought I would just wander and think and sleep in the open air. Have you ever tried to sleep in the open air?"

"In the summer we all do," said the younger cousin. "Amanda makes us. We go out on to the little lawn at the back."

"You see Amanda has some friends at Limpsfield. And there they all go out and camp and sleep in the woods."

"Of course," reflected Mrs. Wilder, "in April it must be different."

"It IS different," said Benham with feeling; "the night comes five hours too soon. And it comes wet." He described his experiences and his flight to Shere and the kindly landlord and the cup of coffee. "And after that I thought with a vengeance."

"Do you write things?" asked Amanda abruptly, and it seemed to him with a note of hope.

"No. No, it was just a private puzzle. It was something I couldn't get straight."

"And you have got it straight?" asked Amanda.

"I think so."

"You were making up your mind about something?"

"Amanda DEAR!" cried her mother.

"Oh! I don't mind telling you," said Benham.

They seemed such unusual people that he was moved to unusual confidences. They had that effect one gets at times with strangers freshly met as though they were not really in the world. And there was something about Amanda that made him want to explain himself to her completely.

"What I wanted to think about was what I should do with my life."

"Haven't you any WORK — ?" asked the elder cousin.

“None that I’m obliged to do.”

“That’s where a man has the advantage,” said Amanda with the tone of profound reflection. “You can choose. And what are you going to do with your life?”

“Amanda,” her mother protested, “really you mustn’t!”

“I’m going round the world to think about it,” Benham told her.

“I’d give my soul to travel,” said Amanda.

She addressed her remark to the salad in front of her.

“But have you no ties?” asked Mrs. Wilder.

“None that hold me,” said Benham. “I’m one of those unfortunates who needn’t do anything at all. I’m independent. You see my riddles. East and west and north and south, it’s all my way for the taking. There’s not an indication.”

“If I were you,” said Amanda, and reflected. Then she half turned herself to him. “I should go first to India,” she said, “and I should shoot, one, two, three, yes, three tigers. And then I would see Farukhabad Sikri — I was reading in a book about it yesterday — where the jungle grows in the palaces; and then I would go right up the Himalayas, and then, then I would have a walking tour in Japan, and then I would sail in a sailing ship down to Borneo and Java and set myself up as a Ranee — ... And then I would think what I would do next.”

“All alone, Amanda?” asked Mrs. Wilder.

“Only when I shoot tigers. You and mother should certainly come to Japan.”

“But Mr. Benham perhaps doesn’t intend to shoot tigers, Amanda?” said Amanda’s mother.

“Not at once. My way will be a little different. I think I shall go first through Germany. And then down to Constantinople. And then I’ve some idea of getting across Asia Minor and Persia to India. That would take some time. One must ride.”

“Asia Minor ought to be fun,” said Amanda. “But I should prefer India because of the tigers. It would be so jolly to begin with the tigers right away.”

“It is the towns and governments and peoples I want to see rather than tigers,” said Benham. “Tigers if they are in the programme. But I want to find out about — other things.”

“Don’t you think there’s something to be found out at home?” said the elder cousin, blushing very brightly and speaking with the effort of one who speaks for conscience’ sake.

“Betty’s a Socialist,” Amanda said to Benham with a suspicion of apology.

“Well, we’re all rather that,” Mrs. Wilder protested.

“If you are free, if you are independent, then don’t you owe something to the workers?” Betty went on, getting graver and redder with each word.

“It’s just because of that,” said Benham, “that I am going round the world.”

3

He was as free with these odd people as if he had been talking to Prothero. They were — alert. And he had been alone and silent and full of thinking for two clear days. He tried to explain why he found Socialism at once obvious and inadequate....

Presently the supper things got themselves put away and the talk moved into a smaller room with several armchairs and a fire. Mrs. Wilder and the cousins and Amanda each smoked a cigarette as if it were symbolical, and they were joined by a grave grey-bearded man with a hyphenated name and slightly Socratic manner, dressed in a very blue linen shirt and collar, a very woolly mustard-coloured suit and loose tie, and manifestly devoted to one of those branches of exemplary domestic decoration that grow upon Socialist soil in England. He joined Betty in the opinion that the duty of a free and wealthy young man was to remain in England and give himself to democratic Socialism and the abolition of “profiteering.” “Consider that chair,” he said. But Benham had little feeling for the craftsmanship of chairs.

Under cross-examination Mr. Rathbone-Sanders became entangled and prophetic. It was evident he had never thought out his “democratic,” he had rested in some vague tangle of idealism from which Benham now set himself with the zeal of a specialist to rout him. Such an argument sprang up as one meets with rarely beyond the happy undergraduate’s range. Everybody lived in the discussion,

even Amanda's mother listened visibly. Betty said she herself was certainly democratic and Mrs. Wilder had always thought herself to be so, and outside the circle round the fire Amanda hovered impatiently, not quite sure of her side as yet, but eager to come down with emphasis at the first flash of intimation.

She came down vehemently on Benham's.

And being a very clear-cutting personality with an instinct for the material rendering of things, she also came and sat beside him on the little square-cornered sofa.

"Of course, Mr. Rathbone-Sanders," she said, "of course the world must belong to the people who dare. Of course people aren't all alike, and dull people, as Mr. Benham says, and spiteful people, and narrow people have no right to any voice at all in things...."

4

In saying this she did but echo Benham's very words, and all she said and did that evening was in quick response to Benham's earnest expression of his views. She found Benham a delightful novelty. She liked to argue because there was no other talk so lively, and she had perhaps a lurking intellectual grudge against Mr. Rathbone-Sanders that made her welcome an ally. Everything from her that night that even verges upon the notable has been told, and yet it sufficed, together with something in the clear, long line of her limbs, in her voice, in her general physical quality, to convince Benham that she was the freest, finest, bravest spirit that he had ever encountered.

In the papers he left behind him was to be found his perplexed endeavours to explain this mental leap, that after all his efforts still remained unexplained. He had been vividly impressed by the decision and courage of her treatment of the dogs; it was just the sort of thing he could not do. And there was a certain contagiousness in the petting admiration with which her family treated her. But she was young and healthy and so was he, and in a second mystery lies the key of the first. He had fallen in love with her, and that being so whatever he needed that instantly she was. He needed a companion, clean and brave and understanding....

In his bed in the Ship that night he thought of nothing but her

before he went to sleep, and when next morning he walked on his way over the South Downs to Chichester his mind was full of her image and of a hundred pleasant things about her. In his confessions he wrote, “I felt there was a sword in her spirit. I felt she was as clean as the wind.”

Love is the most chastening of powers, and he did not even remember now that two days before he had told the wind and the twilight that he would certainly “roll and rollick in women” unless there was work for him to do. She had a peculiarly swift and easy stride that went with him in his thoughts along the turf by the wayside halfway and more to Chichester. He thought always of the two of them as being side by side. His imagination became childishly romantic. The open down about him with its scrub of thorn and yew became the wilderness of the world, and through it they went — in armour, weightless armour — and they wore long swords. There was a breeze blowing and larks were singing and something, something dark and tortuous dashed suddenly in headlong flight from before their feet. It was an ethical problem such as those Mrs. Skelmersdale nursed in her bosom. But at the sight of Amanda it had straightened out — and fled....

And interweaving with such imaginings, he was some day to record, there were others. She had brought back to his memory the fancies that had been aroused in his first reading of Plato’s REPUBLIC; she made him think of those women Guardians, who were the friends and mates of men. He wanted now to re-read that book and the LAWS. He could not remember if the Guardians were done in the LAWS as well as in the REPUBLIC. He wished he had both these books in his rucksack, but as he had not, he decided he would hunt for them in Chichester. When would he see Amanda again? He would ask his mother to make the acquaintance of these very interesting people, but as they did not come to London very much it might be some time before he had a chance of seeing her again. And, besides, he was going to America and India. The prospect of an exploration of the world was still noble and attractive; but he realized it would stand very much in the way of his seeing more of Amanda. Would it be a startling and unforgivable thing if presently he began to write to her? Girls of that age and spirit living

in out-of-the-way villages have been known to marry....

Marriage didn't at this stage strike Benham as an agreeable aspect of Amanda's possibilities; it was an inconvenience; his mind was running in the direction of pedestrian tours in armour of no particular weight, amidst scenery of a romantic wildness....

When he had gone to the house and taken his leave that morning it had seemed quite in the vein of the establishment that he should be received by Amanda alone and taken up the long garden before anybody else appeared, to see the daffodils and the early apple-trees in blossom and the pear-trees white and delicious.

Then he had taken his leave of them all and made his social tentatives. Did they ever come to London? When they did they must let his people know. He would so like them to know his mother, Lady Marayne. And so on with much gratitude.

Amanda had said that she and the dogs would come with him up the hill, she had said it exactly as a boy might have said it, she had brought him up to the corner of Up Park and had sat down there on a heap of stones and watched him until he was out of sight, waving to him when he looked back. "Come back again," she had cried.

In Chichester he found a little green-bound REPUBLIC in a second-hand book-shop near the Cathedral, but there was no copy of the LAWS to be found in the place. Then he was taken with the brilliant idea of sleeping the night in Chichester and going back next day via Harting to Petersfield station and London. He carried out this scheme and got to South Harting neatly about four o'clock in the afternoon. He found Mrs. Wilder and Mrs. Morris and Amanda and the dogs entertaining Mr. Rathbone-Sanders at tea, and they all seemed a little surprised, and, except Mr. Rathbone-Sanders, they all seemed pleased to see him again so soon. His explanation of why he hadn't gone back to London from Chichester struck him as a little unconvincing in the cold light of Mr. Rathbone-Sanders' eye. But Amanda was manifestly excited by his return, and he told them his impressions of Chichester and described the entertainment of the evening guest at a country inn and suddenly produced his copy of the REPUBLIC. "I found this in a book-shop," he said, "and I brought it for you, because it describes one of the best dreams of aristocracy there has ever been dreamt."

At first she praised it as a pretty book in the dearest little binding, and then realized that there were deeper implications, and became grave and said she would read it through and through, she loved such speculative reading.

She came to the door with the others and stayed at the door after they had gone in again. When he looked back at the corner of the road to Petersfield she was still at the door and waved farewell to him.

He only saw a light slender figure, but when she came back into the sitting-room Mr. Rathbone-Sanders noted the faint flush in her cheek and an unwonted abstraction in her eye.

And in the evening she tucked her feet up in the armchair by the lamp and read the REPUBLIC very intently and very thoughtfully, occasionally turning over a page.

5

When Benham got back to London he experienced an unwonted desire to perform his social obligations to the utmost.

So soon as he had had some dinner at his club he wrote his South Harting friends a most agreeable letter of thanks for their kindness to him. In a little while he hoped he should see them again. His mother, too, was most desirous to meet them.... That done, he went on to his flat and to various aspects of life for which he was quite unprepared.

But here we may note that Amanda answered him. Her reply came some four days later. It was written in a square schoolgirl hand, it covered three sheets of notepaper, and it was a very intelligent essay upon the REPUBLIC of Plato. “Of course,” she wrote, “the Guardians are inhuman, but it was a glorious sort of inhumanity. They had a spirit — like sharp knives cutting through life.”

It was her best bit of phrasing and it pleased Benham very much. But, indeed, it was not her own phrasing, she had culled it from a disquisition into which she had led Mr. Rathbone-Sanders, and she had sent it to Benham as she might have sent him a flower.

6

Benham re-entered the flat from which he had fled so precipitately with three very definite plans in his mind. The first was to set out upon his grand tour of the world with as little delay as possible, to shut up this Finacue Street establishment for a long time, and get rid of the soul-destroying perfections of Merkle. The second was to end his ill-advised intimacy with little Mrs. Skelmersdale as generously and cheerfully as possible. The third was to bring Lady Marayne into social relations with the Wilder and Morris MENAGE at South Harting. It did not strike him that there was any incompatibility among these projects or any insurmountable difficulty in any of them until he was back in his flat.

The accumulation of letters, packages and telephone memoranda upon his desk included a number of notes and slips to remind him that both Mrs. Skelmersdale and his mother were ladies of some determination. Even as he stood turning over the pile of documents the mechanical vehemence of the telephone filled him with a restored sense of the adverse will in things. "Yes, mam," he heard Merkle's voice, "yes, mam. I will tell him, mam. Will you keep possession, mam." And then in the doorway of the study, "Mrs. Skelmersdale, sir. Upon the telephone, sir."

Benham reflected with various notes in his hand. Then he went to the telephone.

"You Wicked Boy, where have you been hiding?"

"I've been away. I may have to go away again."

"Not before you have seen me. Come round and tell me all about it."

Benham lied about an engagement.

"Then to-morrow in the morning."... Impossible.

"In the afternoon. You don't WANT to see me." Benham did want to see her.

"Come round and have a jolly little evening to-morrow night. I've got some more of that harpsichord music. And I'm dying to see you. Don't you understand?"

Further lies. "Look here," said Benham, "can you come and have a talk in Kensington Gardens? You know the place, near that Chinese garden. Paddington Gate...."

The lady's voice fell to flatness. She agreed. "But why not come

to see me HERE?" she asked.

Benham hung up the receiver abruptly.

He walked slowly back to his study. "Phew!" he whispered to himself. It was like hitting her in the face. He didn't want to be a brute, but short of being a brute there was no way out for him from this entanglement. Why, oh! why the devil had he gone there to lunch?...

He resumed his examination of the waiting letters with a ruffled mind. The most urgent thing about them was the clear evidence of gathering anger on the part of his mother. He had missed a lunch party at Sir Godfrey's on Tuesday and a dinner engagement at Philip Magnet's, quite an important dinner in its way, with various promising young Liberals, on Wednesday evening. And she was furious at "this stupid mystery. Of course you're bound to be found out, and of course there will be a scandal."... He perceived that this last note was written on his own paper. "Merkle!" he cried sharply.

"Yessir!"

Merkle had been just outside, on call.

"Did my mother write any of these notes here?" he asked.

"Two, sir. Her ladyship was round here three times, sir."

"Did she see all these letters?"

"Not the telephone calls, sir. I 'ad put them on one side. But.... It's a little thing, sir."

He paused and came a step nearer. "You see, sir," he explained with the faintest flavour of the confidential softening his mechanical respect, "yesterday, when 'er ladyship was 'ere, sir, some one rang up on the telephone—"

"But you, Merkle—"

"Exactly, sir. But 'er ladyship said 'I'LL go to that, Merkle,' and just for a moment I couldn't exactly think 'ow I could manage it, sir, and there 'er ladyship was, at the telephone. What passed, sir, I couldn't 'ear. I 'eard her say, 'Any message?' And I FANCY, sir, I 'eard 'er say, 'I'm the 'ousemaid,' but that, sir, I think must have been a mistake, sir."

"Must have been," said Benham. "Certainly — must have been. And the call you think came from — ?"

"There again, sir, I'm quite in the dark. But of course, sir, it's

usually Mrs. Skelmersdale, sir. Just about her time in the afternoon. On an average, sir....”

7

“I went out of London to think about my life.”

It was manifest that Lady Marayne did not believe him.

“Alone?” she asked.

“Of course alone.”

“STUFF!” said Lady Marayne.

She had taken him into her own little sitting-room, she had thrown aside gloves and fan and theatre wrap, curled herself comfortably into the abundantly cushioned corner by the fire, and proceeded to a mixture of cross-examination and tirade that he found it difficult to make head against. She was vibrating between distressed solicitude and resentful anger. She was infuriated at his going away and deeply concerned at what could have taken him away. “I was worried,” he said. “London is too crowded to think in. I wanted to get myself alone.”

“And there I was while you were getting yourself alone, as you call it, wearing my poor little brains out to think of some story to tell people. I had to stuff them up you had a sprained knee at Chexington, and for all I knew any of them might have been seeing you that morning. Besides what has a boy like you to worry about? It’s all nonsense, Poff.”

She awaited his explanations. Benham looked for a moment like his father.

“I’m not getting on, mother,” he said. “I’m scattering myself. I’m getting no grip. I want to get a better hold upon life, or else I do not see what is to keep me from going to pieces — and wasting existence. It’s rather difficult sometimes to tell what one thinks and feels—”

She had not really listened to him.

“Who is that woman,” she interrupted suddenly, “Mrs. Fly-by-Night, or some such name, who rings you up on the telephone?”

Benham hesitated, blushed, and regretted it.

“Mrs. Skelmersdale,” he said after a little pause.

“It’s all the same. Who is she?”

“She’s a woman I met at a studio somewhere, and I went with her to one of those Dolmetsch concerts.”

He stopped.

Lady Marayne considered him in silence for a little while. “All men,” she said at last, “are alike. Husbands, sons and brothers, they are all alike. Sons! One expects them to be different. They aren’t different. Why should they be? I suppose I ought to be shocked, Poff. But I’m not. She seems to be very fond of you.”

“She’s — she’s very good — in her way. She’s had a difficult life....”

“You can’t leave a man about for a moment,” Lady Marayne reflected. “Poff, I wish you’d fetch me a glass of water.”

When he returned she was looking very fixedly into the fire. “Put it down,” she said, “anywhere. Poff! is this Mrs. Helter-Skelter a discreet sort of woman? Do you like her?” She asked a few additional particulars and Benham made his grudging admission of facts. “What I still don’t understand, Poff, is why you have been away.”

“I went away,” said Benham, “because I want to clear things up.”

“But why? Is there some one else?”

“No.”

“You went alone? All the time?”

“I’ve told you I went alone. Do you think I tell you lies, mother?”

“Everybody tells lies somehow,” said Lady Marayne. “Easy lies or stiff ones. Don’t FLOURISH, Poff. Don’t start saying things like a moral windmill in a whirlwind. It’s all a muddle. I suppose every one in London is getting in or out of these entanglements — or something of the sort. And this seems a comparatively slight one. I wish it hadn’t happened. They do happen.”

An expression of perplexity came into her face. She looked at him. “Why do you want to throw her over?”

“I WANT to throw her over,” said Benham.

He stood up and went to the hearthrug, and his mother reflected that this was exactly what all men did at just this phase of a discussion. Then things ceased to be sensible.

From overhead he said to her: “I want to get away from this

complication, this servitude. I want to do some — some work. I want to get my mind clear and my hands clear. I want to study government and the big business of the world."

"And she's in the way?"

He assented.

"You men!" said Lady Marayne after a little pause. "What queer beasts you are! Here is a woman who is kind to you. She's fond of you. I could tell she's fond of you directly I heard her. And you amuse yourself with her. And then it's Gobble, Gobble, Gobble, Great Work, Hands Clear, Big Business of the World. Why couldn't you think of that before, Poff? Why did you begin with her?"

"It was unexpected...."

"STUFF!" said Lady Marayne for a second time. "Well," she said, "well. Your Mrs. Fly-by-Night, — oh it doesn't matter! — whatever she calls herself, must look after herself. I can't do anything for her. I'm not supposed even to know about her. I daresay she'll find her consolations. I suppose you want to go out of London and get away from it all. I can help you there, perhaps. I'm tired of London too. It's been a tiresome season. Oh! tiresome and disappointing! I want to go over to Ireland and travel about a little. The Pothercareys want us to come. They've asked us twice...."

Benham braced himself to face fresh difficulties. It was amazing how different the world could look from his mother's little parlour and from the crest of the North Downs.

"But I want to start round the world," he cried with a note of acute distress. "I want to go to Egypt and India and see what is happening in the East, all this wonderful waking up of the East, I know nothing of the way the world is going — ..."

"India!" cried Lady Marayne. "The East. Poff, what is the MATTER with you? Has something happened — something else? Have you been having a love affair? — a REAL love affair?"

"Oh, DAMN love affairs!" cried Benham. "Mother! — I'm sorry, mother! But don't you see there's other things in the world for a man than having a good time and making love. I'm for something else than that. You've given me the splendidest time — ..."

"I see," cried Lady Marayne, "I see. I've bored you. I might have known I should have bored you."

“You’ve NOT bored me!” cried Benham.

He threw himself on the rug at her feet. “Oh, mother!” he said, “little, dear, gallant mother, don’t make life too hard for me. I’ve got to do my job, I’ve got to find my job.”

“I’ve bored you,” she wept.

Suddenly she was weeping with all the unconcealed distressing grief of a disappointed child. She put her pretty be-ringed little hands in front of her face and recited the accumulation of her woes.

“I’ve done all I can for you, planned for you, given all my time for you and I’ve BORED you.”

“Mother!”

“Don’t come near me, Poff! Don’t TOUCH me! All my plans. All my ambitions. Friends — every one. You don’t know all I’ve given up for you....”

He had never seen his mother weep before. Her self-abandonment amazed him. Her words were distorted by her tears. It was the most terrible and distressing of crises....

“Go away from me! How can you help me? All I’ve done has been a failure! Failure! Failure!”

8

That night the silences of Finacue Street heard Benham’s voice again. “I must do my job,” he was repeating, “I must do my job. Anyhow....”

And then after a long pause, like a watchword and just a little unsurely: “Aristocracy....”

The next day his resolution had to bear the brunt of a second ordeal. Mrs. Skelmersdale behaved beautifully and this made everything tormentingly touching and difficult. She convinced him she was really in love with him, and indeed if he could have seen his freshness and simplicity through her experienced eyes he would have known there was sound reason why she should have found him exceptional. And when his clumsy hints of compensation could no longer be ignored she treated him with a soft indignation, a tender resentment, that left him soft and tender. She looked at him with pained eyes and a quiver of the lips. What did he think she was? And

then a little less credibly, did he think she would have given herself to him if she hadn't been in love with him? Perhaps that was not altogether true, but at any rate it was altogether true to her when she said it, and it was manifest that she did not for a moment intend him to have the cheap consolation of giving her money. But, and that seemed odd to Benham, she would not believe, just as Lady Marayne would not believe, that there was not some other woman in the case. He assured her and she seemed reassured, and then presently she was back at exactly the same question. Would no woman ever understand the call of Asia, the pride of duty, the desire for the world?

One sort of woman perhaps....

It was odd that for the first time now, in the sunshine of Kensington Gardens, he saw the little gossamer lines that tell that thirty years and more have passed over a face, a little wrinkling of the eyelids, a little hardening of the mouth. How slight it is, how invisible it has been, how suddenly it appears! And the sunshine of the warm April afternoon, heightened it may be by her determined unmercenary pose, betrayed too the faintest hint of shabbiness in her dress. He had never noticed these shadows upon her or her setting before and their effect was to fill him with a strange regretful tenderness....

Perhaps men only begin to love when they cease to be dazzled and admire. He had thought she might reproach him, he had felt and feared she might set herself to stir his senses, and both these expectations had been unjust to her he saw, now that he saw her beside him, a brave, rather ill-advised and unlucky little struggler, stung and shamed. He forgot the particulars of that first lunch of theirs together and he remembered his mother's second contemptuous "STUFF!"

Indeed he knew now it had not been unexpected. Why hadn't he left this little sensitive soul and this little sensitive body alone? And since he hadn't done so, what right had he now to back out of their common adventure? He felt a sudden wild impulse to marry Mrs. Skelmersdale, in a mood between remorse and love and self-immolation, and then a sunlit young woman with a leaping stride in her paces, passed across his heavens, pointing to Asia and Utopia and forbidding even another thought of the banns....

“You will kiss me good-bye, dear, won’t you?” said Mrs. Skelmersdale, brimming over. “You will do that.”

He couldn’t keep his arm from her little shoulders. And as their lips touched he suddenly found himself weeping also....

His spirit went limping from that interview. She chose to stay behind in her chair and think, she said, and each time he turned back she was sitting in the same attitude looking at him as he receded, and she had one hand on the chair back and her arm drawn up to it. The third time he waved his hat clumsily, and she started and then answered with her hand. Then the trees hid her....

This sex business was a damnable business. If only because it made one hurt women....

He had trampled on Mrs. Skelmersdale, he had hurt and disappointed his mother. Was he a brute? Was he a cold-blooded prig? What was this aristocracy? Was his belief anything more than a theory? Was he only dreaming of a debt to the men in the quarry, to the miners, to the men in the stokeholes, to the drudges on the fields? And while he dreamt he wounded and distressed real living creatures in the sleep-walk of his dreaming....

So long as he stuck to his dream he must at any rate set his face absolutely against the establishment of any further relations with women.

Unless they were women of an entirely different type, women hardened and tempered, who would understand.

9

So Benham was able to convert the unfortunate Mrs. Skelmersdale into a tender but for a long time an entirely painful memory. But mothers are not so easily disposed of, and more particularly a mother whose conduct is coloured deeply by an extraordinary persuasion of having paid for her offspring twice over. Nolan was inexplicable; he was, Benham understood quite clearly, never to be mentioned again; but somehow from the past his shadow and his legacy cast a peculiar and perplexing shadow of undefined obligation upon Benham’s outlook. His resolution to go round the world carried on his preparations rapidly and steadily, but at the same time his mother’s

thwarted and angry bearing produced a torture of remorse in him. It was constantly in his mind, like the suit of the importunate widow, that he ought to devote his life to the little lady's happiness and pride, and his reason told him that even if he wanted to make this sacrifice he couldn't; the mere act of making it would produce so entirely catastrophic a revulsion. He could as soon have become a croquet champion or the curate of Chexington church, lines of endeavour which for him would have led straightly and simply to sacrilegious scandal or manslaughter with a mallet.

There is so little measure in the wild atonements of the young that it was perhaps as well for the Research Magnificent that the remorses of this period of Benham's life were too complicated and scattered for a cumulative effect. In the background of his mind and less subdued than its importance could seem to warrant was his promise to bring the Wilder-Morris people into relations with Lady Marayne. They had been so delightful to him that he felt quite acutely the slight he was putting upon them by this delay. Lady Marayne's moods, however, had been so uncertain that he had found no occasion to broach this trifling matter, and when at last the occasion came he perceived in the same instant the fullest reasons for regretting it.

"Ah!" she said, hanging only for a moment, and then: "you told me you were alone!"...

Her mind leapt at once to the personification of these people as all that had puzzled and baffled her in her son since his flight from London. They were the enemy, they had got hold of him.

"When I asked you if you were alone you pretended to be angry," she remembered with a flash. "You said, 'Do I tell lies?'"

"I WAS alone. Until — It was an accident. On my walk I was alone."

But he flinched before her accusing, her almost triumphant, forefinger.

From the instant she heard of them she hated these South Harting people unrestrainedly. She made no attempt to conceal it. Her valiant bantam spirit caught at this quarrel as a refuge from the rare and uncongenial ache of his secession. "And who are they? What are they? What sort of people can they be to drag in a passing young

man? I suppose this girl of theirs goes out every evening — Was she painted, Poff?"

She whipped him with her questions as though she was slashing his face. He became dead-white and grimly civil, answering every question as though it was the sanest, most justifiable inquiry.

"Of course I don't know who they are. How should I know? What need is there to know?"

"There are ways of finding out," she insisted. "If I am to go down and make myself pleasant to these people because of you."

"But I implore you not to."

"And five minutes ago you were imploring me to! Of course I shall."

"Oh well! — well!"

"One has to know SOMETHING of the people to whom one commits oneself, surely."

"They are decent people; they are well-behaved people."

"Oh! — I'll behave well. Don't think I'll disgrace your casual acquaintances. But who they are, what they are, I WILL know...."

On that point Lady Marayne was to score beyond her utmost expectations.

"Come round," she said over the telephone, two mornings later. "I've something to tell you."

She was so triumphant that she was sorry for him. When it came to telling him, she failed from her fierceness.

"Poff, my little son," she said, "I'm so sorry I hardly know how to tell you. Poff, I'm sorry. I have to tell you — and it's utterly beastly."

"But what?" he asked.

"These people are dreadful people."

"But how?"

"You've heard of the great Kent and Eastern Bank smash and the Marlborough Building Society frauds eight or nine years ago?"

"Vaguely. But what has that to do with them?"

"That man Morris."

She stopped short, and Benham nodded for her to go on.

"Her father," said Lady Marayne.

"But who was Morris? Really, mother, I don't remember."

"He was sentenced to seven years — ten years — I forget. He had

done all sorts of dreadful things. He was a swindler. And when he went out of the dock into the waiting-room — He had a signet ring with prussic acid in it — ...”

“I remember now,” he said.

A silence fell between them.

Benham stood quite motionless on the hearthrug and stared very hard at the little volume of Henley’s poetry that lay upon the table.

He cleared his throat presently.

“You can’t go and see them then,” he said. “After all — since I am going abroad so soon — ... It doesn’t so very much matter.”

10

To Benham it did not seem to be of the slightest importance that Amanda’s father was a convicted swindler who had committed suicide. Never was a resolved and conscious aristocrat so free from the hereditary delusion. Good parents, he was convinced, are only an advantage in so far as they have made you good stuff, and bad parents are no discredit to a son or daughter of good quality. Conceivably he had a bias against too close an examination of origins, and he held that the honour of the children should atone for the sins of the fathers and the questionable achievements of any intervening testator. Not half a dozen rich and established families in all England could stand even the most conventional inquiry into the foundations of their pride, and only a universal amnesty could prevent ridiculous distinctions. But he brought no accusation of inconsistency against his mother. She looked at things with a lighter logic and a kind of genius for the acceptance of superficial values. She was condoned and forgiven, a rescued lamb, re-established, notoriously bright and nice, and the Morrises were damned. That was their status, exclusion, damnation, as fixed as colour in Georgia or caste in Bengal. But if his mother’s mind worked in that way there was no reason why his should. So far as he was concerned, he told himself, it did not matter whether Amanda was the daughter of a swindler or the daughter of a god. He had no doubt that she herself had the spirit and quality of divinity. He had seen it.

So there was nothing for it in the failure of his mother’s civilities

but to increase his own. He would go down to Harting and take his leave of these amiable outcasts himself. With a certain effusion. He would do this soon because he was now within sight of the beginning of his world tour. He had made his plans and prepared most of his equipment. Little remained to do but the release of Merkle, the wrappering and locking up of Finacue Street, which could await him indefinitely, and the buying of tickets. He decided to take the opportunity afforded by a visit of Sir Godfrey and Lady Marayne to the Blights, big iron people in the North of England of so austere a morality that even Benham was ignored by it. He announced his invasion in a little note to Mrs. Wilder. He parted from his mother on Friday afternoon; she was already, he perceived, a little reconciled to his project of going abroad; and contrived his arrival at South Harting for that sunset hour which was for his imagination the natural halo of Amanda.

"I'm going round the world," he told them simply. "I may be away for two years, and I thought I would like to see you all again before I started."

That was quite the way they did things.

The supper-party included Mr. Rathbone-Sanders, who displayed a curious tendency to drift in between Benham and Amanda, a literary youth with a Byronic visage, very dark curly hair, and a number of extraordinarily mature chins, a girl-friend of Betty's who had cycled down from London, and who it appeared maintained herself at large in London by drawing for advertisements, and a silent colourless friend of Mr. Rathbone-Sanders. The talk lit by Amanda's enthusiasm circled actively round Benham's expedition. It was clear that the idea of giving some years to thinking out one's possible work in the world was for some reason that remained obscure highly irritating to both Mr. Rathbone-Sanders and the Byronic youth. Betty too regarded it as levity when there was "so much to be done," and the topic whacked about and rose to something like a wrangle, and sat down and rested and got up again reinvigorated, with a continuity of interest that Benham had never yet encountered in any London gathering. He made a good case for his modern version of the Grand Tour, and he gave them something of his intellectual enthusiasm for the distances and views, the cities and seas, the multitudinous wide

spectacle of the world he was to experience. He had been reading about Benares and North China. As he talked Amanda, who had been animated at first, fell thoughtful and silent. And then it was discovered that the night was wonderfully warm and the moon shining. They drifted out into the garden, but Mr. Rathbone-Sanders was suddenly entangled and drawn back by Mrs. Wilder and the young woman from London upon some technical point, and taken to the work-table in the corner of the dining-room to explain. He was never able to get to the garden.

Benham found himself with Amanda upon a side path, a little isolated by some swaggering artichokes and a couple of apple trees and so forth from the general conversation. They cut themselves off from the continuation of that by a little silence, and then she spoke abruptly and with the quickness of a speaker who has thought out something to say and fears interruption: "Why did you come down here?"

"I wanted to see you before I went."

"You disturb me. You fill me with envy."

"I didn't think of that. I wanted to see you again."

"And then you will go off round the world, you will see the Tropics, you will see India, you will go into Chinese cities all hung with vermilion, you will climb mountains. Oh! men can do all the splendid things. Why do you come here to remind me of it? I have never been anywhere, anywhere at all. I never shall go anywhere. Never in my life have I seen a mountain. Those Downs there — look at them! — are my highest. And while you are travelling I shall think of you — and think of you...."

"Would YOU like to travel?" he asked as though that was an extraordinary idea.

"Do you think EVERY girl wants to sit at home and rock a cradle?"

"I never thought YOU did."

"Then what did you think I wanted?"

"What DO you want?"

She held her arms out widely, and the moonlight shone in her eyes as she turned her face to him.

"Just what you want," she said; " — THE WHOLE WORLD!

“Life is like a feast,” she went on; “it is spread before everybody and nobody must touch it. What am I? Just a prisoner. In a cottage garden. Looking for ever over a hedge. I should be happier if I couldn’t look. I remember once, only a little time ago, there was a cheap excursion to London. Our only servant went. She had to get up at an unearthly hour, and I — I got up too. I helped her to get off. And when she was gone I went up to my bedroom again and cried. I cried with envy for any one, any one who could go away. I’ve been nowhere — except to school at Chichester and three or four times to Emsworth and Bognor — for eight years. When you go” — the tears glittered in the moonlight— “I shall cry. It will be worse than the excursion to London.... Ever since you were here before I’ve been thinking of it.”

It seemed to Benham that here indeed was the very sister of his spirit. His words sprang into his mind as one thinks of a repartee. “But why shouldn’t you come too?” he said.

She stared at him in silence. The two white-lit faces examined each other. Both she and Benham were trembling.

“COME TOO?” she repeated.

“Yes, with me.”

“But — HOW?”

Then suddenly she was weeping like a child that is teased; her troubled eyes looked out from under puckered brows. “You don’t mean it,” she said. “You don’t mean it.”

And then indeed he meant it.

“Marry me,” he said very quickly, glancing towards the dark group at the end of the garden. “And we will go together.”

He seized her arm and drew her to him. “I love you,” he said. “I love your spirit. You are not like any one else.”

There was a moment’s hesitation.

Both he and she looked to see how far they were still alone.

Then they turned their dusky faces to each other. He drew her still closer.

“Oh!” she said, and yielded herself to be kissed. Their lips touched, and for a moment he held her lithe body against his own.

“I want you,” he whispered close to her. “You are my mate. From the first sight of you I knew that....”

They embraced — alertly furtive.

Then they stood a little apart. Some one was coming towards them. Amanda's bearing changed swiftly. She put up her little face to his, confidently and intimately.

"Don't TELL any one," she whispered eagerly shaking his arm to emphasize her words. "Don't tell any one — not yet. Not for a few days...."

She pushed him from her quickly as the shadowy form of Betty appeared in a little path between the artichokes and raspberry canes.

"Listening to the nightingales?" cried Betty.

"Yes, aren't they?" said Amanda inconsecutively.

"That's our very own nightingale!" cried Betty advancing. "Do you hear it, Mr. Benham? No, not that one. That is a quite inferior bird that performs in the vicarage trees...."

11

When a man has found and won his mate then the best traditions demand a lyrical interlude. It should be possible to tell, in that ecstatic manner which melts words into moonshine, makes prose almost uncomfortably rhythmic, and brings all the freshness of every spring that ever was across the page, of the joyous exaltation of the happy lover. This at any rate was what White had always done in his novels hitherto, and what he would certainly have done at this point had he had the telling of Benham's story uncontrolledly in his hands. But, indeed, indeed, in real life, in very truth, the heart has not this simplicity. Only the heroes of romance, and a few strong simple clean-shaven Americans have that much emotional integrity. (And even the Americans do at times seem to an observant eye to be putting in work at the job and keeping up their gladness.) Benham was excited that night, but not in the proper bright-eyed, red-cheeked way; he did not dance down the village street of Harting to his harbour at the Ship, and the expression in his eyes as he sat on the edge of his bed was not the deep elemental wonder one could have wished there, but amazement. Do not suppose that he did not love Amanda, that a rich majority of his being was not triumphantly glad to have won her, that the image of the two armour-clad lovers was

not still striding and flourishing through the lit wilderness of his imagination. For three weeks things had pointed him to this. They would do everything together now, he and his mate, they would scale mountains together and ride side by side towards ruined cities across the deserts of the World. He could have wished no better thing. But at the same time, even as he felt and admitted this and rejoiced at it, the sky of his mind was black with consternation....

It is remarkable, White reflected, as he turned over the abundant but confused notes upon this perplexing phase of Benham's development that lay in the third drawer devoted to the Second Limitation, how dependent human beings are upon statement. Man is the animal that states a case. He lives not in things but in expressed ideas, and what was troubling Benham inordinately that night, a night that should have been devoted to purely blissful and exalted expectations, was the sheer impossibility of stating what had happened in any terms that would be tolerable either to Mrs. Skelmersdale or Lady Marayne. The thing had happened with the suddenness of a revelation. Whatever had been going on in the less illuminated parts of his mind, his manifest resolution had been merely to bid South Harting good-bye — And in short they would never understand. They would accuse him of the meanest treachery. He could see his mother's face, he could hear her voice saying, "And so because of this sudden infatuation for a swindler's daughter, a girl who runs about the roads with a couple of retrievers hunting for a man, you must spoil all my plans, ruin my year, tell me a lot of pretentious stuffy lies...." And Mrs. Skelmersdale too would say, "Of course he just talked of the world and duty and all that rubbish to save my face...."

It wasn't so at all.

But it looked so frightfully like it!

Couldn't they realize that he had fled out of London before ever he had seen Amanda? They might be able to do it perhaps, but they never would. It just happened that in the very moment when the edifice of his noble resolutions had been ready, she had stepped into it — out of nothingness and nowhere. She wasn't an accident; that was just the point upon which they were bound to misjudge her; she was an embodiment. If only he could show her to them as she had

first shown herself to him, swift, light, a little flushed from running but not in the least out of breath, quick as a leopard upon the dogs.... But even if the improbable opportunity arose, he perceived it might still be impossible to produce the Amanda he loved, the Amanda of the fluttering short skirt and the clear enthusiastic voice. Because, already he knew she was not the only Amanda. There was another, there might be others, there was this perplexing person who had flashed into being at the very moment of their mutual confession, who had produced the entirely disconcerting demand that nobody must be told. Then Betty had intervened. But that sub-Amanda and her carneying note had to be dealt with on the first occasion, because when aristocrats love they don't care a rap who is told and who is not told. They just step out into the light side by side....

"Don't tell any one," she had said, "not for a few days...."

This sub-Amanda was perceptible next morning again, flitting about in the background of a glad and loving adventuress, a pre-occupied Amanda who had put her head down while the real Amanda flung her chin up and contemplated things on the Asiatic scale, and who was apparently engaged in disentangling something obscure connected with Mr. Rathbone-Sanders that ought never to have been entangled....

"A human being," White read, "the simplest human being, is a clustering mass of aspects. No man will judge another justly who judges everything about him. And of love in particular is this true. We love not persons but revelations. The woman one loves is like a goddess hidden in a shrine; for her sake we live on hope and suffer the kindred priestesses that make up herself. The art of love is patience till the gleam returns...."

Sunday and Monday did much to develop this idea of the intricate complexity of humanity in Benham's mind. On Monday morning he went up from the Ship again to get Amanda alone and deliver his ultimatum against a further secrecy, so that he could own her openly and have no more of the interventions and separations that had barred him from any intimate talk with her throughout the whole of Sunday. The front door stood open, the passage hall was empty, but as he hesitated whether he should proclaim himself with the knocker or walk through, the door of the little drawing-room flew open and a

black-clad cylindrical clerical person entirely unknown to Benham stumbled over the threshold, blundered blindly against him, made a sound like “MOO” and a pitiful gesture with his arm, and fled forth....

It was a curate and he was weeping bitterly....

Benham stood in the doorway and watched a clumsy broken-hearted flight down the village street.

He had been partly told and partly left to infer, and anyhow he was beginning to understand about Mr. Rathbone-Sanders. That he could dismiss. But — why was the curate in tears?

12

He found Amanda standing alone in the room from which this young man had fled. She had a handful of daffodils in her hand, and others were scattered over the table. She had been arranging the big bowl of flowers in the centre. He left the door open behind him and stopped short with the table between them. She looked up at him — intelligently and calmly. Her pose had a divine dignity.

“I want to tell them now,” said Benham without a word of greeting.

“Yes,” she said, “tell them now.”

They heard steps in the passage outside. “Betty!” cried Amanda.

Her mother’s voice answered, “Do you want Betty?”

“We want you all,” answered Amanda. “We have something to tell you....”

“Carrie!” they heard Mrs. Morris call her sister after an interval, and her voice sounded faint and flat and unusual. There was the soft hissing of some whispered words outside and a muffled exclamation. Then Mrs. Wilder and Mrs. Morris and Betty came into the room. Mrs. Wilder came first, and Mrs. Morris with an alarmed face as if sheltering behind her. “We want to tell you something,” said Amanda.

“Amanda and I are going to marry each other,” said Benham, standing in front of her.

For an instant the others made no answer; they looked at each other.

“BUT DOES HE KNOW?” Mrs. Morris said in a low voice.

Amanda turned her eyes to her lover. She was about to speak, she seemed to gather herself for an effort, and then he knew that he did not want to hear her explanation. He checked her by a gesture.

“I KNOW,” he said, and then, “I do not see that it matters to us in the least.”

He went to her holding out both his hands to her.

She took them and stood shyly for a moment, and then the watchful gravity of her face broke into soft emotion. “Oh!” she cried and seized his face between her hands in a passion of triumphant love and kissed him.

And then he found himself being kissed by Mrs. Morris.

She kissed him thrice, with solemnity, with thankfulness, with relief, as if in the act of kissing she transferred to him precious and entirely incalculable treasures.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH ~~ THE SPIRITED HONEYMOON

1

It was a little after sunrise one bright morning in September that Benham came up on to the deck of the sturdy Austrian steamboat that was churning its way with a sedulous deliberation from Spalato to Cattaro, and lit himself a cigarette and seated himself upon a deck chair. Save for a yawning Greek sailor busy with a mop the first-class deck was empty.

Benham surveyed the haggard beauty of the Illyrian coast. The mountains rose gaunt and enormous and barren to a jagged fantastic silhouette against the sun; their almost vertical slopes still plunged in blue shadow, broke only into a little cold green and white edge of olive terraces and vegetation and houses before they touched the clear blue water. An occasional church or a house perched high upon some seemingly inaccessible ledge did but accentuate the vast barrenness of the land. It was a land desolated and destroyed. At Ragusa, at Salona, at Spalato and Zara and Pola Benham had seen only variations upon one persistent theme, a dwindled and uncreative human life living amidst the giant ruins of preceding times, as worms live in the sockets of a skull. Forward an unsavoury group of passengers still slumbered amidst fruit-peel and expectorations, a few soldiers, some squalid brigands armed with preposterous red umbrellas, a group of curled-up human lumps brooded over by an aquiline individual caparisoned with brass like a horse, his head wrapped picturesquely in a shawl. Benham surveyed these last products of the "life force" and resumed his pensive survey of the coast. The sea was deserted save for a couple of little lateen craft with suns painted on their gaudy sails, sea butterflies that hung motionless as if unawakened close inshore....

The travel of the last few weeks had impressed Benham's imagination profoundly. For the first time in his life he had come face to face with civilization in defeat. From Venice hitherward he had marked with cumulative effect the clustering evidences of effort

spent and power crumbled to nothingness. He had landed upon the marble quay of Pola and visited its deserted amphitheatre, he had seen a weak provincial life going about ignoble ends under the walls of the great Venetian fortress and the still more magnificent cathedral of Zara; he had visited Spalato, clustered in sweltering grime within the ample compass of the walls of Diocletian's villa, and a few troublesome sellers of coins and iridescent glass and fragments of tessellated pavement and such-like loot was all the population he had found amidst the fallen walls and broken friezes and columns of Salona. Down this coast there ebbed and flowed a mean residual life, a life of violence and dishonesty, peddling trades, vendettas and war. For a while the unstable Austrian ruled this land and made a sort of order that the incalculable chances of international politics might at any time shatter. Benham was drawing near now to the utmost limit of that extended peace. Ahead beyond the mountain capes was Montenegro and, further, Albania and Macedonia, lands of lawlessness and confusion. Amanda and he had been warned of the impossibility of decent travel beyond Cattaro and Cettinje but this had but whetted her adventurousness and challenged his spirit. They were going to see Albania for themselves.

The three months of honeymoon they had been spending together had developed many remarkable divergences of their minds that had not been in the least apparent to Benham before their marriage. Then their common resolve to be as spirited as possible had obliterated all minor considerations. But that was the limit of their unanimity. Amanda loved wild and picturesque things, and Benham strong and clear things; the vines and brushwood amidst the ruins of Salona that had delighted her had filled him with a sense of tragic retrogression. Salona had revived again in the acutest form a dispute that had been smouldering between them throughout a fitful and lengthy exploration of north and central Italy. She could not understand his disgust with the mediaeval colour and confusion that had swamped the pride and state of the Roman empire, and he could not make her feel the ambition of the ruler, the essential discipline and responsibilities of his aristocratic idea. While his adventurousness was conquest, hers, it was only too manifest, was brigandage. His thoughts ran now into the form of an imaginary discourse, that he

would never deliver to her, on the decay of states, on the triumphs of barbarians over rulers who will not rule, on the relaxation of patrician orders and the return of the robber and assassin as lordship decays. This coast was no theatrical scenery for him; it was a shattered empire. And it was shattered because no men had been found, united enough, magnificent and steadfast enough, to hold the cities, and maintain the roads, keep the peace and subdue the brutish hates and suspicions and cruelties that devastated the world.

And as these thoughts came back into his mind, Amanda flickered up from below, light and noiseless as a sunbeam, and stood behind his chair.

Freedom and the sight of the world had if possible brightened and invigorated her. Her costume and bearing were subtly touched by the romance of the Adriatic. There was a flavour of the pirate in the cloak about her shoulders and the light knitted cap of scarlet she had stuck upon her head. She surveyed his preoccupation for a moment, glanced forward, and then covered his eyes with her hands. In almost the same movement she had bent down and nipped the tip of his ear between her teeth.

"Confound you, Amanda!"

"You'd forgotten my existence, you star-gazing Cheetah. And then, you see, these things happen to you!"

"I was thinking."

"Well — DON'T.... I distrust your thinking. This coast is wilder and grimmer than yesterday. It's glorious...."

She sat down on the chair he unfolded for her.

"Is there nothing to eat?" she asked abruptly.

"It is too early."

2

"This coast is magnificent," she said presently.

"It's hideous," he answered. "It's as ugly as a heap of slag."

"It's nature at its wildest."

"That's Amanda at her wildest."

"Well, isn't it?"

"No! This land isn't nature. It's waste. Not wilderness. It's the

other end. Those hills were covered with forests; this was a busy civilized coast just a little thousand years ago. The Venetians wasted it. They cut down the forests; they filled the cities with a mixed mud of population, THAT stuff. Look at it"! — he indicated the sleepers forward by a movement of his head.

"I suppose they WERE rather feeble people," said Amanda.

"Who?"

"The Venetians."

"They were traders — and nothing more. Just as we are. And when they were rich they got splendid clothes and feasted and rested. Much as we do."

Amanda surveyed him. "We don't rest."

"We idle."

"We are seeing things."

"Don't be a humbug, Amanda. We are making love. Just as they did. And it has been — ripping. In Salona they made love tremendously. They did nothing else until the barbarians came over the mountains...."

"Well," said Amanda virtuously, "we will do something else."

He made no answer and her expression became profoundly thoughtful. Of course this wandering must end. He had been growing impatient for some time. But it was difficult, she perceived, to decide just what to do with him....

Benham picked up the thread of his musing.

He was seeing more and more clearly that all civilization was an effort, and so far always an inadequate and very partially successful effort. Always it had been aristocratic, aristocratic in the sense that it was the work of minorities, who took power, who had a common resolution against the inertia, the indifference, the insubordination and instinctive hostility of the mass of mankind. And always the set-backs, the disasters of civilization, had been failures of the aristocratic spirit. Why had the Roman purpose faltered and shrivelled? Every order, every brotherhood, every organization carried with it the seeds of its own destruction. Must the idea of statecraft and rule perpetually reappear, reclothe itself in new forms, age, die, even as life does — making each time its almost infinitesimal addition to human achievement? Now the world is

crying aloud for a renascence of the spirit that orders and controls. Human affairs sway at a dizzy height of opportunity. Will they keep their footing there, or stagger? We have got back at last to a time as big with opportunity as the early empire. Given only the will in men and it would be possible now to turn the dazzling accidents of science, the chancy attainments of the nineteenth century, into a sane and permanent possession, a new starting point.... What a magnificence might be made of life!

He was aroused by Amanda's voice.

"When we go back to London, old Cheetah," she said, "we must take a house."

For some moments he stared at her, trying to get back to their point of divergence.

"Why?" he asked at length.

"We must have a house," she said.

He looked at her face. Her expression was profoundly thoughtful, her eyes were fixed on the slumbering ships poised upon the transparent water under the mountain shadows.

"You see," she thought it out, "you've got to TELL in London. You can't just sneak back there. You've got to strike a note of your own. With all these things of yours."

"But how?"

"There's a sort of little house, I used to see them when I was a girl and my father lived in London, about Brook Street and that part. Not too far north.... You see going back to London for us is just another adventure. We've got to capture London. We've got to scale it. We've got advantages of all sorts. But at present we're outside. We've got to march in."

Her clear hazel eyes contemplated conflicts and triumphs.

She was roused by Benham's voice.

"What the deuce are you thinking of, Amanda?"

She turned her level eyes to his. "London," she said. "For you."

"I don't want London," he said.

"I thought you did. You ought to. I do."

"But to take a house! Make an invasion of London!"

"You dear old Cheetah, you can't be always frisking about in the wilderness, staring at the stars."

“But I’m not going back to live in London in the old way, theatres, dinner-parties, chatter—”

“Oh no! We aren’t going to do that sort of thing. We aren’t going to join the ruck. We’ll go about in holiday times all over the world. I want to see Fusiyama. I mean to swim in the South Seas. With you. We’ll dodge the sharks. But all the same we shall have to have a house in London. We have to be FELT there.”

She met his consternation fairly. She lifted her fine eyebrows. Her little face conveyed a protesting reasonableness.

“Well, MUSTN’T we?”

She added, “If we want to alter the world we ought to live in the world.”

Since last they had disputed the question she had thought out these new phrases.

“Amanda,” he said, “I think sometimes you haven’t the remotest idea of what I am after. I don’t believe you begin to suspect what I am up to.”

She put her elbows on her knees, dropped her chin between her hands and regarded him impudently. She had a characteristic trick of looking up with her face downcast that never failed to soften his regard.

“Look here, Cheetah, don’t you give way to your early morning habit of calling your own true love a fool,” she said.

“Simply I tell you I will not go back to London.”

“You will go back with me, Cheetah.”

“I will go back as far as my work calls me there.”

“It calls you through the voice of your mate and slave and doormat to just exactly the sort of house you ought to have.... It is the privilege and duty of the female to choose the lair.”

For a space Benham made no reply. This controversy had been gathering for some time and he wanted to state his view as vividly as possible. The Benham style of connubial conversation had long since decided for emphasis rather than delicacy.

“I think,” he said slowly, “that this wanting to take London by storm is a beastly VULGAR thing to want to do.”

Amanda compressed her lips.

“I want to work out things in my mind,” he went on. “I do not

want to be distracted by social things, and I do not want to be distracted by picturesque things. This life — it's all very well on the surface, but it isn't real. I'm not getting hold of reality. Things slip away from me. God! but how they slip away from me!"

He got up and walked to the side of the boat.

She surveyed his back for some moments. Then she went and leant over the rail beside him.

"I want to go to London," she said.

"I don't."

"Where do you want to go?"

"Where I can see into the things that hold the world together."

"I have loved this wandering — I could wander always. But... Cheetah! I tell you I WANT to go to London."

He looked over his shoulder into her warm face. "NO," he said.

"But, I ask you."

He shook his head.

She put her face closer and whispered. "Cheetah! big beast of my heart. Do you hear your mate asking for something?"

He turned his eyes back to the mountains. "I must go my own way."

"Haven't I, so far, invented things, made life amusing, Cheetah? Can't you trust the leopard's wisdom?"

He stared at the coast inexorably.

"I wonder," she whispered.

"What?"

"You ARE that, Cheetah, that lank, long, EAGER beast — ."

Suddenly with a nimble hand she had unbuttoned and rolled up the sleeve of her blouse. She stuck her pretty blue-veined arm before his eyes. "Look here, sir, it was you, wasn't it? It was your powerful jaw inflicted this bite upon the arm of a defenceless young leopardess —"

"Amanda!"

"Well." She wrinkled her brows.

He turned about and stood over her, he shook a finger in her face and there was a restrained intensity in his voice as he spoke.

"Look here, Amanda!" he said, "if you think that you are going to make me agree to any sort of project about London, to any sort of

complication of our lives with houses in smart streets and a campaign of social assertion — by THAT, then may I be damned for an uxorious fool!"

Her eyes met his and there was mockery in her eyes.

"This, Cheetah, is the morning mood," she remarked.

"This is the essential mood. Listen, Amanda—"

He stopped short. He looked towards the gangway, they both looked. The magic word "Breakfast" came simultaneously from them.

"Eggs," she said ravenously, and led the way.

A smell of coffee as insistent as an herald's trumpet had called a truce between them.

3

Their marriage had been a comparatively inconspicuous one, but since that time they had been engaged upon a honeymoon of great extent and variety. Their wedding had taken place at South Harting church in the marked absence of Lady Marayne, and it had been marred by only one untoward event. The Reverend Amos Pugh who, in spite of the earnest advice of several friends had insisted upon sharing in the ceremony, had suddenly covered his face with the sleeves of his surplice and fled with a swift rustle to the vestry, whence an uproar of inadequately smothered sorrow came as an obligato accompaniment to the more crucial passages of the service. Amanda appeared unaware of the incident at the time, but afterwards she explained things to Benham. "Curates," she said, "are such pent-up men. One ought, I suppose, to remember that. But he never had anything to go upon at all — not anything — except his own imaginations."

"I suppose when you met him you were nice to him."

"I was nice to him, of course...."

They drove away from Harting, as it were, over the weeping remains of this infatuated divine. His sorrow made them thoughtful for a time, and then Amanda nestled closer to her lover and they forgot about him, and their honeymoon became so active and entertaining that only very rarely and transitorily did they ever think

of him again.

The original conception of their honeymoon had been identical with the plans Benham had made for the survey and study of the world, and it was through a series of modifications, replacements and additions that it became at last a prolonged and very picturesque tour in Switzerland, the Austrian Tyrol, North Italy, and down the Adriatic coast. Amanda had never seen mountains, and longed, she said, to climb. This took them first to Switzerland. Then, in spite of their exalted aims, the devotion of their lives to noble purposes, it was evident that Amanda had no intention of scamping the detail of love, and for that what background is so richly beautiful as Italy? An important aspect of the grand tour round the world as Benham had planned it, had been interviews, inquiries and conversations with every sort of representative and understanding person he could reach. An unembarrassed young man who wants to know and does not promise to bore may reach almost any one in that way, he is as impersonal as pure reason and as mobile as a letter, but the presence of a lady in his train leaves him no longer unembarrassed. His approach has become a social event. The wife of a great or significant personage must take notice or decide not to take notice. Of course Amanda was prepared to go anywhere, just as Benham's shadow; it was the world that was unprepared. And a second leading aspect of his original scheme had been the examination of the ways of government in cities and the shifting and mixture of nations and races. It would have led to back streets, and involved and complicated details, and there was something in the fine flame of girlhood beside him that he felt was incompatible with those shadows and that dust. And also they were lovers and very deeply in love. It was amazing how swiftly that draggled shameful London sparrow-gamin, Eros, took heart from Amanda, and became wonderful, beautiful, glowing, life-giving, confident, clear-eyed; how he changed from flesh to sweet fire, and grew until he filled the sky. So that you see they went to Switzerland and Italy at last very like two ordinary young people who were not aristocrats at all, had no theory about the world or their destiny, but were simply just ardently delighted with the discovery of one another.

Nevertheless Benham was for some time under a vague

impression that in a sort of way still he was going round the world and working out his destinies.

It was part of the fascination of Amanda that she was never what he had supposed her to be, and that nothing that he set out to do with her ever turned out as they had planned it. Her appreciations marched before her achievement, and when it came to climbing it seemed foolish to toil to summits over which her spirit had flitted days before. Their Swiss expeditions which she had foreseen as glorious wanderings amidst the blue ice of crevasses and nights of exalted hardihood became a walking tour of fitful vigour and abundant fun and delight. They spent a long day on the ice of the Aletsch glacier, but they reached the inn on its eastward side with magnificent appetites a little late for dinner.

Amanda had revealed an unexpected gift for nicknames and pretty fancies. She named herself the Leopard, the spotless Leopard; in some obscure way she intimated that the colour was black, but that was never to be admitted openly, there was supposed to be some lurking traces of a rusty brown but the word was spotless and the implication white, a dazzling white, she would play a thousand variations on the theme; in moments of despondency she was only a black cat, a common lean black cat, and sacks and half-bricks almost too good for her. But Benham was always a Cheetah. That had come to her as a revelation from heaven. But so clearly he was a Cheetah. He was a Hunting Leopard; the only beast that has an up-cast face and dreams and looks at you with absent-minded eyes like a man. She laced their journeys with a fantastic monologue telling in the third person what the Leopard and the Cheetah were thinking and seeing and doing. And so they walked up mountains and over passes and swam in the warm clear water of romantic lakes and loved each other mightily always, in chestnut woods and olive orchards and flower-starred alps and pine forests and awning-covered boats, and by sunset and moonlight and starshine; and out of these agreeable solitudes they came brown and dusty, striding side by side into sunlit entertaining fruit-piled market-places and envious hotels. For days and weeks together it did not seem to Benham that there was anything that mattered in life but Amanda and the elemental joys of living. And then the Research Magnificent began to stir in him again.

He perceived that Italy was not India, that the clue to the questions he must answer lay in the crowded new towns that they avoided, in the packed bookshops and the talk of men, and not in the picturesque and flowery solitudes to which their lovemaking carried them.

Moods began in which he seemed to forget Amanda altogether.

This happened first in the Certosa di Pavia whither they had gone one afternoon from Milan. That was quite soon after they were married. They had a bumping journey thither in a motor-car, a little doubtful if the excursion was worth while, and they found a great amazement in the lavish beauty and decorative wealth of that vast church and its associated cloisters, set far away from any population as it seemed in a flat wilderness of reedy ditches and patchy cultivation. The distilleries and outbuildings were deserted — their white walls were covered by one monstrously great and old wisteria in flower — the soaring marvellous church was in possession of a knot of unattractive guides. One of these conducted them through the painted treasures of the gold and marble chapels; he was an elderly but animated person who evidently found Amanda more wonderful than any church. He poured out great accumulations of information and compliments before her. Benham dropped behind, went astray and was presently recovered dreaming in the great cloister. The guide showed them over two of the cells that opened thereupon, each a delightful house for a solitary, bookish and clean, and each with a little secret walled garden of its own. He was covertly tipped against all regulations and departed regretfully with a beaming dismissal from Amanda. She found Benham wondering why the Carthusians had failed to produce anything better in the world than a liqueur. “One might have imagined that men would have done something in this beautiful quiet; that there would have come thought from here or will from here.”

“In these dear little nests they ought to have put lovers,” said Amanda.

“Oh, of course, YOU would have made the place Thelema....”

But as they went shaking and bumping back along the evil road to Milan, he fell into a deep musing. Suddenly he said, “Work has to be done. Because this order or that has failed, there is no reason why we should fail. And look at those ragged children in the road ahead of

us, and those dirty women sitting in the doorways, and the foul ugliness of these gaunt nameless towns through which we go! They are what they are, because we are what we are — idlers, excursionists. In a world we ought to rule....

"Amanda, we've got to get to work...."

That was his first display of this new mood, which presently became a common one. He was less and less content to let the happy hours slip by, more and more sensitive to the reminders in giant ruin and deserted cell, in a chance encounter with a string of guns and soldiers on their way to manoeuvres or in the sight of a stale newspaper, of a great world process going on in which he was now playing no part at all. And a curious irritability manifested itself more and more plainly, whenever human pettiness obtruded upon his attention, whenever some trivial dishonesty, some manifest slovenliness, some spiritless failure, a cheating waiter or a wayside beggar brought before him the shiftless, selfish, aimless elements in humanity that war against the great dream of life made glorious. "Accursed things," he would say, as he flung some importunate cripple at a church door a ten-centime piece; "why were they born? Why do they consent to live? They are no better than some chance fungus that is because it must."

"It takes all sorts to make a world," said Amanda.

"Nonsense," said Benham. "Where is the megatherium? That sort of creature has to go. Our sort of creature has to end it."

"Then why did you give it money?"

"Because — I don't want the thing to be more wretched than it is. But if I could prevent more of them — ... What am I doing to prevent them?"

"These beggars annoy you," said Amanda after a pause. "They do me. Let us go back into the mountains."

But he fretted in the mountains.

They made a ten days' tour from Macugnaga over the Monte Moro to Sass, and thence to Zermatt and back by the Theodule to Macugnaga. The sudden apparition of douaniers upon the Monte Moro annoyed Benham, and he was also irritated by the solemn English mountain climbers at Saas Fee. They were as bad as golfers, he said, and reflected momentarily upon his father. Amanda fell in

love with Monte Rosa, she wanted to kiss its snowy forehead, she danced like a young goat down the path to Mattmark, and rolled on the turf when she came to gentians and purple primulas. Benham was tremendously in love with her most of the time, but one day when they were sitting over the Findelen glacier his perceptions blundered for the first time upon the fundamental antagonism of their quality. She was sketching out jolly things that they were to do together, expeditions, entertainments, amusements, and adventures, with a voluble swiftness, and suddenly in a flash his eyes were opened, and he saw that she would never for a moment feel the quality that made life worth while for him. He saw it in a flash, and in that flash he made his urgent resolve not to see it. From that moment forth his bearing was poisoned by his secret determination not to think of this, not to admit it to his mind. And forbidden to come into his presence in its proper form, this conflict of intellectual temperaments took on strange disguises, and the gathering tension of his mind sought to relieve itself along grotesque irrelevant channels.

There was, for example, the remarkable affair of the drive from Macugnaga to Piedimulera.

They had decided to walk down in a leisurely fashion, but with the fatigues of the precipitous clamber down from Switzerland still upon them they found the white road between rock above and gorge below wearisome, and the valley hot in the late morning sunshine, and already before they reached the inn they had marked for lunch Amanda had suggested driving the rest of the way. The inn had a number of brigand-like customers consuming such sustenance as garlic and salami and wine; it received them with an indifference that bordered on disrespect, until the landlord, who seemed to be something of a beauty himself, discovered the merits of Amanda. Then he became markedly attentive. He was a large, fat, curly-headed person with beautiful eyes, a cherished moustache, and an air of great gentility, and when he had welcomed his guests and driven off the slatternly waiting-maid, and given them his best table, and consented, at Amanda's request, to open a window, he went away and put on a tie and collar. It was an attention so conspicuous that even the group of men in the far corner noticed and commented on it, and then they commented on Amanda and Benham, assuming an

ignorance of Italian in the visitors that was only partly justifiable. “Bellissima,” “bravissima,” “signorina,” “Inglesa,” one need not be born in Italy to understand such words as these. Also they addressed sly comments and encouragements to the landlord as he went to and fro.

Benham was rather still and stiff during the meal, but it ill becomes an English aristocrat to discuss the manners of an alien population, and Amanda was amused by the effusion of the landlord and a little disposed to experiment upon him. She sat radiating light amidst the shadows.

The question of the vehicle was broached. The landlord was doubtful, then an idea, it was manifestly a questionable idea, occurred to him. He went to consult an obscure brown-faced individual in the corner, disappeared, and the world without became eloquent. Presently he returned and announced that a carozza was practicable. It had been difficult, but he had contrived it. And he remained hovering over the conclusion of their meal, asking questions about Amanda’s mountaineering and expressing incredulous admiration.

His bill, which he presented with an uneasy flourish, was large and included the carozza.

He ushered them out to the carriage with civilities and compliments. It had manifestly been difficult and contrived. It was dusty and blistered, there had been a hasty effort to conceal its recent use as a hen-roost, the harness was mended with string. The horse was gaunt and scandalous, a dirty white, and carried its head apprehensively. The driver had but one eye, through which there gleamed a concentrated hatred of God and man.

“No wonder he charged for it before we saw it,” said Benham.

“It’s better than walking,” said Amanda.

The company in the inn gathered behind the landlord and scrutinized Amanda and Benham intelligently. The young couple got in. “Avanti,” said Benham, and Amanda bestowed one last ineradicable memory on the bowing landlord.

Benham did not speak until just after they turned the first corner, and then something portentous happened, considering the precipitous position of the road they were upon. A small boy appeared sitting in

the grass by the wayside, and at the sight of him the white horse shied extravagantly. The driver rose in his seat ready to jump. But the crisis passed without a smash. “Cheetah!” cried Amanda suddenly. “This isn’t safe.” “Ah!” said Benham, and began to act with the vigour of one who has long accumulated force. He rose in his place and gripped the one-eyed driver by the collar. “ASPETTO,” he said, but he meant “Stop!” The driver understood that he meant “Stop,” and obeyed.

Benham wasted no time in parleying with the driver. He indicated to him and to Amanda by a comprehensive gesture that he had business with the landlord, and with a gleaming appetite upon his face went running back towards the inn.

The landlord was sitting down to a little game of dominoes with his friends when Benham reappeared in the sunlight of the doorway. There was no misunderstanding Benham’s expression.

For a moment the landlord was disposed to be defiant. Then he changed his mind. Benham’s earnest face was within a yard of his own, and a threatening forefinger was almost touching his nose.

“Albergo cattivissimo,” said Benham. “Cattivissimo! Pranzo cattivissimo ‘orrido. Cavallo cattivissimo, dangerousissimo. Gioco abominablissimo, damnissimo. Capisce. Eh?” [*]

* This is vile Italian. It may — with a certain charity to Benham — be rendered: “The beastliest inn! The beastliest! The beastliest, most awful lunch! The vilest horse! Most dangerous! Abominable trick! Understand?”

The landlord made deprecatory gestures.

“YOU understand all right,” said Benham. “Da me il argento per il carozzo. Subito?” [*]

* “Give me back the money for the carriage. QUICKLY!”

The landlord was understood to ask whether the signor no longer wished for the carriage.

“SUBITO!” cried Benham, and giving way to a long-restrained impulse seized the padrone by the collar of his coat and shook him vigorously.

There were dissuasive noises from the company, but no attempt at rescue. Benham released his hold.

“Adesso!” said Benham. [*]

* “NOW!”

The landlord decided to disgorge. It was at any rate a comfort that the beautiful lady was not seeing anything of this. And he could explain afterwards to his friends that the Englishman was clearly a lunatic, deserving pity rather than punishment. He made some sound of protest, but attempted no delay in refunding the money Benham had prepaid. Outside sounded the wheels of the returning carriage. They stopped. Amanda appeared in the doorway and discovered Benham dominant.

He was a little short of breath, and as she came in he was addressing the landlord with much earnestness in the following compact sentences.

“Attendez! Ecco! Adesso noi andiamo con questa cattivissimo cavallo a Piedimulera. Si noi arrivero in safety, securo that is, pagaremo. Non altro. Si noi abbiamo accidento Dio — Dio have mercy on your sinful soul. See! Capisce? That’s all.” [*]

* “Now we will go with this beastly horse to Piedimulera. If we get there safely I will pay. If we have an accident, then—”

He turned to Amanda. “Get back into the thing,” he said. “We won’t have these stinking beasts think we are afraid of the job. I’ve just made sure he won’t have a profit by it if we smash up. That’s all. I might have known what he was up to when he wanted the money beforehand.” He came to the doorway and with a magnificent gesture commanded the perplexed driver to turn the carriage.

While that was being done he discoursed upon his adjacent fellow-creatures. “A man who pays beforehand for anything in this filthy sort of life is a fool. You see the standards of the beast. They think of nothing but their dirty little tricks to get profit, their garlic, their sour wine, their games of dominoes, their moments of lust. They crawl in this place like cockroaches in a warm corner of the fireplace until they die. Look at the scabby frontage of the house. Look at the men’s faces.... Yes. So! Adequato. Aspettate.... Get back into the carriage, Amanda.”

“You know it’s dangerous, Cheetah. The horse is a shier. That man is blind in one eye.”

“Get back into the carriage,” said Benham, whitely angry. “I AM

GOING TO DRIVE!”

“But — !”

Just for a moment Amanda looked scared. Then with a queer little laugh she jumped in again.

Amanda was never a coward when there was excitement afoot. “We’ll smash!” she cried, by no means woefully.

“Get up beside me,” said Benham speaking in English to the driver but with a gesture that translated him. Power over men radiated from Benham in this angry mood. He took the driver’s seat. The little driver ascended and then with a grim calmness that brooked no resistance Benham reached over, took and fastened the apron over their knees to prevent any repetition of the jumping out tactics.

The recovering landlord became voluble in the doorway.

“In Piedimulera pagero,” said Benham over his shoulder and brought the whip across the white outstanding ribs. “Get up!” said Benham.

Amanda gripped the sides of the seat as the carriage started into motion.

He laid the whip on again with such vigour that the horse forgot altogether to shy at the urchin that had scared it before.

“Amanda,” said Benham leaning back. “If we do happen to go over on THAT side, jump out. It’s all clear and wide for you. This side won’t matter so—”

“MIND!” screamed Amanda and recalled him to his duties. He was off the road and he had narrowly missed an outstanding chestnut true.

“No, you don’t,” said Benham presently, and again their career became erratic for a time as after a slight struggle he replaced the apron over the knees of the deposed driver. It had been furtively released. After that Benham kept an eye on it that might have been better devoted to the road.

The road went down in a series of curves and corners. Now and then there were pacific interludes when it might have been almost any road. Then, again, it became specifically an Italian mountain road. Now and then only a row of all too infrequent granite stumps separated them from a sheer precipice. Some of the corners were

miraculous, and once they had a wheel in a ditch for a time, they shaved the parapet of a bridge over a gorge and they drove a cyclist into a patch of maize, they narrowly missed a goat and jumped three gullies, thrice the horse stumbled and was jerked up in time, there were sickening moments, and withal they got down to Piedimulera unbroken and unspilt. It helped perhaps that the brake, with its handle like a barrel organ, had been screwed up before Benham took control. And when they were fairly on the level outside the town Benham suddenly pulled up, relinquished the driving into the proper hands and came into the carriage with Amanda.

"Safe now," he said compactly.

The driver appeared to be murmuring prayers very softly as he examined the brake.

Amanda was struggling with profound problems. "Why didn't you drive down in the first place?" she asked. "Without going back."

"The landlord annoyed me," he said. "I had to go back.... I wish I had kicked him. Hairy beast! If anything had happened, you see, he would have had his mean money. I couldn't bear to leave him."

"And why didn't you let HIM drive?" She indicated the driver by a motion of the head.

"I was angry," said Benham. "I was angry at the whole thing."

"Still—"

"You see I think I did that because he might have jumped off if I hadn't been up there to prevent him — I mean if we had had a smash. I didn't want him to get out of it."

"But you too—"

"You see I was angry...."

"It's been as good as a switchback," said Amanda after reflection. "But weren't you a little careless about me, Cheetah?"

"I never thought of you," said Benham, and then as if he felt that inadequate: "You see — I was so annoyed. It's odd at times how annoyed one gets. Suddenly when that horse shied I realized what a beastly business life was — as those brutes up there live it. I want to clear out the whole hot, dirty, little aimless nest of them...."

"No, I'm sure," he repeated after a pause as though he had been digesting something "I wasn't thinking about you at all."

The suppression of his discovery that his honeymoon was not in the least the great journey of world exploration he had intended, but merely an impulsive pleasure hunt, was by no means the only obscured and repudiated conflict that disturbed the mind and broke out upon the behaviour of Benham. Beneath that issue he was keeping down a far more intimate conflict. It was in those lower, still less recognized depths that the volcanic fire arose and the earthquakes gathered strength. The Amanda he had loved, the Amanda of the gallant stride and fluttering skirt was with him still, she marched rejoicing over the passes, and a dearer Amanda, a soft whispering creature with dusky hair, who took possession of him when she chose, a soft creature who was nevertheless a fierce creature, was also interwoven with his life. But — But there was now also a multitude of other Amandas who had this in common that they roused him to opposition, that they crossed his moods and jarred upon his spirit. And particularly there was the Conquering Amanda not so much proud of her beauty as eager to test it, so that she was not unmindful of the stir she made in hotel lounges, nor of the magic that may shine memorably through the most commonplace incidental conversation. This Amanda was only too manifestly pleased to think that she made peasant lovers discontented and hotel porters unmercenary; she let her light shine before men. We lovers, who had deemed our own subjugation a profound privilege, love not this further expansiveness of our lady's empire. But Benham knew that no aristocrat can be jealous; jealousy he held to be the vice of the hovel and farmstead and suburban villa, and at an enormous expenditure of will he ignored Amanda's waving flags and roving glances. So, too, he denied that Amanda who was sharp and shrewd about money matters, that flash of an Amanda who was greedy for presents and possessions, that restless Amanda who fretted at any cessation of excitement, and that darkly thoughtful Amanda whom chance observations and questions showed to be still considering an account she had to settle with Lady Marayne. He resisted these impressions, he shut them out of his mind, but still they worked into his thoughts, and presently he could find himself asking, even as he

and she went in step striding side by side through the red-scarred pinewoods in the most perfect outward harmony, whether after all he was so happily mated as he declared himself to be a score of times a day, whether he wasn't catching glimpses of reality through a veil of delusion that grew thinner and thinner and might leave him disillusioned in the face of a relationship —

Sometimes a man may be struck by a thought as though he had been struck in the face, and when the name of Mrs. Skelmersdale came into his head, he glanced at his wife by his side as if it were something that she might well have heard. Was this indeed the same thing as that? Wonderful, fresh as the day of Creation, clean as flame, yet the same! Was Amanda indeed the sister of Mrs. Skelmersdale — wrought of clean fire, but her sister?...

But also beside the inimical aspects which could set such doubts afoot there were in her infinite variety yet other Amandas neither very dear nor very annoying, but for the most part delightful, who entertained him as strangers might, Amandas with an odd twist which made them amusing to watch, jolly Amandas who were simply irrelevant. There was for example Amanda the Dog Mistress, with an astonishing tact and understanding of dogs, who could explain dogs and the cock of their ears and the droop of their tails and their vanity and their fidelity, and why they looked up and why they suddenly went off round the corner, and their pride in the sound of their voices and their dastardly thoughts and sniffing satisfactions, so that for the first time dogs had souls for Benham to see. And there was an Amanda with a striking passion for the sleekness and soft noses of horses. And there was an Amanda extremely garrulous, who was a biographical dictionary and critical handbook to all the girls in the school she had attended at Chichester — they seemed a very girlish lot of girls; and an Amanda who was very knowing — knowing was the only word for it — about pictures and architecture. And these and all the other Amandas agreed together to develop and share this one quality in common, that altogether they pointed to no end, they converged on nothing. She was, it grew more and more apparent, a miscellany bound in a body. She was an animated discursiveness. That passion to get all things together into one aristocratic aim, that restraint of purpose, that imperative to focus,

which was the structural essential of Benham's spirit, was altogether foreign to her composition.

There were so many Amandas, they were as innumerable as the Venuses — Cytherea, Cypria, Paphia, Popularia, Euploea, Area, Verticordia, Etaira, Basilea, Myrtea, Libertina, Freya, Astarte, Philommedis, Telessigamma, Anadyomene, and a thousand others to whom men have bowed and built temples, a thousand and the same, and yet it seemed to Benham there was still one wanting.

The Amanda he had loved most wonderfully was that Amanda in armour who had walked with him through the wilderness of the world along the road to Chichester — and that Amanda came back to him no more.

5

Amanda too was making her observations and discoveries.

These moods of his perplexed her; she was astonished to find he was becoming irritable; she felt that he needed a firm but gentle discipline in his deportment as a lover. At first he had been perfect....

But Amanda was more prepared for human inconsecutiveness than Benham, because she herself was inconsecutive, and her dissatisfaction with his irritations and preoccupation broadened to no general discontent. He had seemed perfect and he wasn't. So nothing was perfect. And he had to be managed, just as one must manage a dog or a cousin or a mother or a horse. Anyhow she had got him, she had no doubt that she held him by a thousand ties, the spotless leopard had him between her teeth, he was a prisoner in the dusk of her hair, and the world was all one vast promise of entertainment.

6

But the raid into the Balkans was not the tremendous success she had expected it to be. They had adventures, but they were not the richly coloured, mediaeval affairs she had anticipated. For the most part until Benham broke loose beyond Ochrida they were adventures in discomfort. In those remote parts of Europe inns die away and cease, and it had never occurred to Amanda that inns could die away

anywhere. She had thought that they just became very simple and natural and quaint. And she had thought that when benighted people knocked at a door it would presently open hospitably. She had not expected shots at random from the window. And it is not usual in Albania generally for women, whether they are Christian or Moslem, to go about unveiled; when they do so it leads to singular manifestations. The moral sense of the men is shocked and staggered, and they show it in many homely ways. Small boys at that age when feminine beauty does not yet prevail with them, pelt. Also in Mahometan districts they pelt men who do not wear fezzes, while occasionally Christians of the shawl-headed or skull-cap persuasions will pelt a fez. Sketching is always a peltable or mobable offence, as being contrary to the Koran, and sitting down tempts the pelter. Generally they pelt. The dogs of Albania are numerous, big, dirty, white dogs, large and hostile, and they attack with little hesitation. The women of Albania are secluded and remote, and indisposed to be of service to an alien sister. Roads are infrequent and most bridges have broken down. No bridge has been repaired since the later seventeenth century, and no new bridge has been made since the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. There are no shops at all. The scenery is magnificent but precipitous, and many of the high roads are difficult to trace. And there is rain. In Albania there is sometimes very heavy rain.

Yet in spite of these drawbacks they spent some splendid hours in their exploration of that wild lost country beyond the Adriatic headlands. There was the approach to Cattaro for example, through an arm of the sea, amazingly beautiful on either shore, that wound its way into the wild mountains and ended in a deep blue bay under the tremendous declivity of Montenegro. The quay, with its trees and lateen craft, ran along under the towers and portcullised gate of the old Venetian wall, within clustered the town, and then the fortifications zigzagged up steeply to a monstrous fantastic fortress perched upon a great mountain headland that overhung the town. Behind it the rocks, slashed to and fro with the road to Cettinje, continued to ascend into blue haze, upward and upward until they became a purple curtain that filled half the heavens. The paved still town was squalid by day, but in the evening it became theatrically

incredible, with an outdoor cafe amidst flowers and creepers, a Hungarian military band, a rabble of promenaders like a stage chorus in gorgeous costumes and a great gibbous yellow moon.

And there was Kroia, which Benham and Amanda saw first through the branches of the great trees that bordered the broad green track they were following. The town and its castle were poised at a tremendous height, sunlit and brilliant against a sombre mass of storm cloud, over vast cliffs and ravines. Kroia continued to be beautiful through a steep laborious approach up to the very place itself, a clustering group of houses and bazaars crowned with a tower and a minaret, and from a painted corridor upon this crest they had a wonderful view of the great seaward levels, and even far away the blue sea itself stretching between Scutari and Durazzo. The eye fell in succession down the stages of a vast and various descent, on the bazaars and tall minarets of the town, on jagged rocks and precipices, on slopes of oak forest and slopes of olive woods, on blue hills dropping away beyond blue hills to the coast. And behind them when they turned they saw great mountains, sullenly magnificent, cleft into vast irregular masses, dense with woods below and grim and desolate above....

These were unforgettable scenes, and so too was the wild lonely valley through which they rode to Ochrida amidst walnut and chestnut trees and scattered rocks, and the first vision of that place itself, with its fertile levels dotted with sheep and cattle, its castle and clustering mosques, its spacious blue lake and the great mountains rising up towards Olympus under the sun. And there was the first view of the blue Lake of Presba seen between silvery beech stems, and that too had Olympus in the far background, plain now and clear and unexpectedly snowy. And there were midday moments when they sat and ate under vines and heard voices singing very pleasantly, and there were forest glades and forest tracks in a great variety of beauty with mountains appearing through their parted branches, there were ilex woods, chestnut woods, beech woods, and there were strings of heavily-laden mules staggering up torrent-worn tracks, and strings of blue-swathed mysterious-eyed women with burthens on their heads passing silently, and white remote houses and ruins and deep gorges and precipices and ancient half-ruinous bridges over

unruly streams. And if there was rain there was also the ending of rain, rainbows, and the piercing of clouds by the sun's incandescence, and sunsets and the moon, first full, then new and then growing full again as the holiday wore on.

They found tolerable accommodation at Cattaro and at Cettinje and at a place halfway between them. It was only when they had secured a guide and horses, and pushed on into the south-east of Montenegro that they began to realize the real difficulties of their journey. They aimed for a place called Podgoritza, which had a partially justifiable reputation for an inn, they missed the road and spent the night in the open beside a fire, rolled in the blankets they had very fortunately bought in Cettinje. They supped on biscuits and Benham's brandy flask. It chanced to be a fine night, and, drawn like moths by the fire, four heavily-armed mountaineers came out of nowhere, sat down beside Benham and Amanda, rolled cigarettes, achieved conversation in bad Italian through the muleteer and awaited refreshment. They approved of the brandy highly, they finished it, and towards dawn warmed to song. They did not sing badly, singing in chorus, but it appeared to Amanda that the hour might have been better chosen. In the morning they were agreeably surprised to find one of the Englishmen was an Englishwoman, and followed every accessible detail of her toilette with great interest. They were quite helpful about breakfast when the trouble was put to them; two vanished over a crest and reappeared with some sour milk, a slabby kind of bread, goat's cheese young but hardened, and coffee and the means of making coffee, and they joined spiritedly in the ensuing meal. It ought to have been extraordinarily good fun, this camp under the vast heavens and these wild visitors, but it was not such fun as it ought to have been because both Amanda and Benham were extremely cold, stiff, sleepy, grubby and cross, and when at last they were back in the way to Podgoritza and had parted, after some present-giving from their chance friends, they halted in a sunlit grassy place, rolled themselves up in their blankets and recovered their arrears of sleep.

Podgoritza was their first experience of a khan, those oriental substitutes for hotels, and it was a deceptively good khan, indeed it was not a khan at all, it was an inn; it provided meals, it had a kind of

bar, or at any rate a row of bottles and glasses, it possessed an upper floor with rooms, separate rooms, opening on to a gallery. The room had no beds but it had a shelf about it on which Amanda and Benham rolled up in their blankets and slept. “We can do this sort of thing all right,” said Amanda and Benham. “But we mustn’t lose the way again.”

“In Scutari,” said Benham, “we will get an extra horse and a tent.”

The way presently became a lake and they reached Scutari by boat towards the dawn of the next day....

The extra horse involved the addition of its owner, a small suspicious Latin Christian, to the company, and of another horse for him and an ugly almost hairless boy attendant. Moreover the British consul prevailed with Benham to accept the services of a picturesque Arnaut CAVASSE, complete with a rifle, knives, and other implements and the name of Giorgio. And as they got up into the highlands beyond Scutari they began to realize the deceitfulness of Podgoritza and the real truth about khans. Their next one they reached after a rainy evening, and it was a cavernous room with a floor of indurated mud and full of eye-stinging wood-smoke and wind and the smell of beasts, unpartitioned, with a weakly hostile custodian from whom no food could be got but a little goat’s flesh and bread. The meat Giorgio stuck upon a skewer in gobbets like cats-meat and cooked before the fire. For drink there was coffee and raw spirits. Against the wall in one corner was a slab of wood rather like the draining board in a scullery, and on this the guests were expected to sleep. The horses and the rest of the party camped loosely about the adjacent corner after a bitter dispute upon some unknown point between the horse owner and the custodian.

Amanda and Benham were already rolled up on their slanting board like a couple of chrysalids when other company began to arrive through the open door out of the moonlight, drawn thither by the report of a travelling Englishwoman.

They were sturdy men in light coloured garments adorned ostentatiously with weapons, they moved mysteriously about in the firelit darknesses and conversed in undertones with Giorgio. Giorgio seemed to have considerable powers of exposition and a gift for social organization. Presently he came to Benham and explained that

raki was available and that hospitality would do no harm; Benham and Amanda sat up and various romantic figures with splendid moustaches came forward and shook hands with him, modestly ignoring Amanda. There was drinking, in which Benham shared, incomprehensible compliments, much ineffective saying of "BUONA NOTTE," and at last Amanda and Benham counterfeited sleep. This seemed to remove a check on the conversation and a heated discussion in tense undertones went on, it seemed interminably.... Probably very few aspects of Benham and Amanda were ignored.... Towards morning the twanging of a string proclaimed the arrival of a querulous-faced minstrel with a sort of embryonic one-stringed horse-headed fiddle, and after a brief parley singing began, a long high-pitched solo. The fiddle squealed pitifully under the persuasion of a semicircular bow. Two heads were lifted enquiringly.

The singer had taken up his position at their feet and faced them. It was a compliment.

"OH!" said Amanda, rolling over.

The soloist obliged with three songs, and then, just as day was breaking, stopped abruptly and sprawled suddenly on the floor as if he had been struck asleep. He was vocal even in his sleep. A cock in the far corner began crowing and was answered by another outside....

But this does not give a full account of the animation of the khan. "OH!" said Amanda, rolling over again with the suddenness of accumulated anger.

"They're worse than in Scutari," said Benham, understanding her trouble instantly.

"It isn't days and nights we are having," said Benham a few days later, "it's days and nightmares."

But both he and Amanda had one quality in common. The deeper their discomfort the less possible it was to speak of turning back from the itinerary they had planned....

They met no robbers, though an excited little English Levantine in Scutari had assured them they would do so and told a vivid story of a ride to Ipek, a delay on the road due to a sudden inexplicable lameness of his horse after a halt for refreshment, a political discussion that delayed him, his hurry through the still twilight to

make up for lost time, the coming on of night and the sudden silent apparition out of the darkness of the woods about the road of a dozen armed men each protruding a gun barrel. “Sometimes they will wait for you at a ford or a broken bridge,” he said. “In the mountains they rob for arms. They assassinate the Turkish soldiers even. It is better to go unarmed unless you mean to fight for it.... Have you got arms?”

“Just a revolver,” said Benham.

But it was after that that he closed with Giorgio.

If they found no robbers in Albania, they met soon enough with bloodshed. They came to a village where a friend of a friend of Giorgio’s was discovered, and they slept at his house in preference to the unclean and crowded khan. Here for the first time Amanda made the acquaintance of Albanian women and was carried off to the woman’s region at the top of the house, permitted to wash, closely examined, shown a baby and confided in as generously as gesture and some fragments of Italian would permit. Benham slept on a rug on the first floor in a corner of honour beside the wood fire. There had been much confused conversation and some singing, he was dog-tired and slept heavily, and when presently he was awakened by piercing screams he sat up in a darkness that seemed to belong neither to time nor place....

Near his feet was an ashen glow that gave no light.

His first perplexity gave way to dismay at finding no Amanda by his side. “Amanda!” he cried....

Her voice floated down through a chink in the floor above. “What can it be, Cheetah?”

Then: “It’s coming nearer.”

The screaming continued, heart-rending, eviscerating shrieks. Benham, still confused, lit a match. All the men about him were stirring or sitting up and listening, their faces showing distorted and ugly in the flicker of his light. “CHE E?” he tried. No one answered. Then one by one they stood up and went softly to the ladder that led to the stable-room below. Benham struck a second match and a third.

“Giorgio!” he called.

The cavasse made an arresting gesture and followed discreetly and noiselessly after the others, leaving Benham alone in the dark.

Benham heard their shuffling patter, one after the other, down the

ladder, the sounds of a door being unbarred softly, and then no other sound but that incessant shrieking in the darkness.

Had they gone out? Were they standing at the door looking out into the night and listening?

Amanda had found the chink and her voice sounded nearer.

"It's a woman," she said.

The shrieking came nearer and nearer, long, repeated, throat-tearing shrieks. Far off there was a great clamour of dogs. And there was another sound, a whisper — ?

"RAIN!"

The shrieks seemed to turn into a side street and receded. The tension of listening relaxed. Men's voices sounded below in question and answer. Dogs close at hand barked shortly and then stopped enquiringly.

Benham seemed to himself to be sitting alone for an interminable time. He lit another match and consulted his watch. It was four o'clock and nearly dawn....

Then slowly and stumbling up the ladder the men began to return to Benham's room.

"Ask them what it is," urged Amanda.

But for a time not even Giorgio would understand Benham's questions. There seemed to be a doubt whether he ought to know. The shrieking approached again and then receded. Giorgio came and stood, a vague thoughtful figure, by the embers of the fire. Explanation dropped from him reluctantly. It was nothing. Some one had been killed: that was all. It was a vendetta. A man had been missing overnight, and this morning his brother who had been prowling and searching with some dogs had found him, or rather his head. It was on this side of the ravine, thrown over from the other bank on which the body sprawled stiffly, wet through, and now growing visible in the gathering daylight. Yes — the voice was the man's wife. It was raining hard.... There would be shrieking for nine days. Yes, nine days. Confirmation with the fingers when Benham still fought against the facts. Her friends and relatives would come and shriek too. Two of the dead man's aunts were among the best keeners in the whole land. They could keen marvellously. It was raining too hard to go on.... The road would be impossible in rain....

Yes it was very melancholy. Her house was close at hand. Perhaps twenty or thirty women would join her. It was impossible to go on until it had stopped raining. It would be tiresome, but what could one do?...

7

As they sat upon the parapet of a broken bridge on the road between Elbassan and Ochrida Benham was moved to a dissertation upon the condition of Albania and the politics of the Balkan peninsula.

"Here we are," he said, "not a week from London, and you see the sort of life that men live when the forces of civilization fail. We have been close to two murders—"

"Two?"

"That little crowd in the square at Scutari — That was a murder. I didn't tell you at the time."

"But I knew it was," said Amanda.

"And you see the filth of it all, the toiling discomfort of it all. There is scarcely a house here in all the land that is not filthier and viler than the worst slum in London. No man ventures far from his village without arms, everywhere there is fear. The hills are impassable because of the shepherd's dogs. Over those hills a little while ago a stranger was torn to pieces by dogs — and partially eaten. Amanda, these dogs madden me. I shall let fly at the beasts. The infernal indignity of it! But that is by the way. You see how all this magnificent country lies waste with nothing but this crawling, ugly mockery of human life."

"They sing," said Amanda.

"Yes," said Benham and reflected, "they do sing. I suppose singing is the last thing left to men. When there is nothing else you can still sit about and sing. Miners who have been buried in mines will sing, people going down in ships."

"The Sussex labourers don't sing," said Amanda. "These people sing well."

"They would probably sing as well if they were civilized. Even if they didn't I shouldn't care. All the rest of their lives is muddle and cruelty and misery. Look at the women. There was that party of bent

creatures we met yesterday, carrying great bundles, carrying even the men's cloaks and pipes, while their rascal husbands and brothers swaggered behind. Look at the cripples we have seen and the mutilated men. If we have met one man without a nose, we have met a dozen. And stunted people. All these people are like evil schoolboys; they do nothing but malicious mischief; there is nothing adult about them but their voices; they are like the heroic dreams of young ruffians in a penitentiary. You saw that man at Scutari in the corner of the bazaar, the gorgeous brute, you admired him — ."

"The man with the gold inlaid pistols and the diamonds on his yataghan. He wanted to show them to us."

"Yes. You let him see you admired him."

"I liked the things on his stall."

"Well, he has killed nearly thirty people."

"In duels?"

"Good Lord! NO! Assassinations. His shoemaker annoyed him by sending in a bill. He went to the man's stall, found him standing with his child in his arms and blew out his brains. He blundered against a passer-by in the road and shot him. Those are his feats. Sometimes his pistols go off in the bazaar just by accident."

"Does nobody kill him?"

"I wanted to," said Benham and became thoughtful for a time. "I think I ought to have made some sort of quarrel. But then as I am an Englishman he might have hesitated. He would have funked a strange beast like me. And I couldn't have shot him if he had hesitated. And if he hadn't—"

"But doesn't a blood feud come down on him?"

"It only comes down on his family. The shoemaker's son thought the matter over and squared accounts by putting the muzzle of a gun into the small of the back of our bully's uncle. It was easier that way.... You see you're dealing with men of thirteen years old or thereabouts, the boy who doesn't grow up."

"But doesn't the law — ?"

"There's no law. Only custom and the Turkish tax collector.

"You see this is what men are where there is no power, no discipline, no ruler, no responsibility. This is a masterless world. This is pure democracy. This is the natural state of men. This is the

world of the bully and the brigand and assassin, the world of the mud-pelter and brawler, the world of the bent woman, the world of the flea and the fly, the open drain and the baying dog. This is what the British sentimentalist thinks a noble state for men."

"They fight for freedom."

"They fight among each other. There are their private feuds and their village feuds and above all that great feud religion. In Albania there is only one religion and that is hate. But there are three churches for the better cultivation of hate and cruelty, the Latin, the Greek and the Mahometan."

"But no one has ever conquered these people."

"Any one could, the Servians, the Bulgarians, the Greeks, the Italians, the Austrians. Why, they can't even shoot! It's just the balance of power and all that foolery keeps this country a roadless wilderness. Good God, how I tire of it! These men who swagger and stink, their brawling dogs, their greasy priests and dervishes, the down-at-heel soldiers, the bribery and robbery, the cheating over the money...."

He slipped off the parapet, too impatient to sit any longer, and began to pace up and down in the road.

"One marvels that no one comes to clear up this country, one itches to be at the job, and then one realizes that before one can begin here, one must get to work back there, where the fools and pedants of WELT POLITIK scheme mischief one against another. This country frets me. I can't see any fun in it, can't see the humour of it. And the people away there know no better than to play off tribe against tribe, sect against sect, one peasant prejudice against another. Over this pass the foolery grows grimmer and viler. We shall come to where the Servian plots against the Bulgarian and the Greek against both, and the Turk, with spasmodic massacres and indulgences, broods over the brew. Every division is subdivided. There are two sorts of Greek church, Exarchic, Patriarchic, both teaching by threat and massacre. And there is no one, no one, with the sense to over-ride all these squalid hostilities. All those fools away there in London and Vienna and St. Petersburg and Rome take sides as though these beastly tribes and leagues and superstitions meant anything but blank, black, damnable ignorance. One fool stands up for the

Catholic Albanians, another finds heroes in the Servians, another talks of Brave Little Montenegro, or the Sturdy Bulgarian, or the Heroic Turk. There isn't a religion in the whole Balkan peninsula, there isn't a tribal or national sentiment that deserves a moment's respect from a sane man. They're things like niggers' nose-rings and Chinese secret societies; childish things, idiot things that have to go. Yet there is no one who will preach the only possible peace, which is the peace of the world-state, the open conspiracy of all the sane men in the world against the things that break us up into wars and futilities. And here am I — who have the light — WANDERING! Just wandering!"

He shrugged his shoulders and came to stare at the torrent under the bridge.

"You're getting ripe for London, Cheetah," said Amanda softly.

"I want somehow to get to work, to get my hands on definite things."

"How can we get back?"

She had to repeat her question presently.

"We can go on. Over the hills is Ochrida and then over another pass is Presba, and from there we go down into Monastir and reach a railway and get back to the world of our own times again."

8

But before they reached the world of their own times Macedonia was to show them something grimmer than Albania.

They were riding through a sunlit walnut wood beyond Ochrida when they came upon the thing.

The first they saw of it looked like a man lying asleep on a grassy bank. But he lay very still indeed, he did not look up, he did not stir as they passed, the pose of his hand was stiff, and when Benham glanced back at him, he stifled a little cry of horror. For this man had no face and the flies had been busy upon him....

Benham caught Amanda's bridle so that she had to give her attention to her steed.

"Ahead!" he said, "Ahead! Look, a village!"

(Why the devil didn't they bury the man? Why? And that fool

Giorgio and the others were pulling up and beginning to chatter. After all she might look back.)

Through the trees now they could see houses. He quickened his pace and jerked Amanda's horse forward....

But the village was a still one. Not a dog barked.

Here was an incredible village without even a dog!

And then, then they saw some more people lying about. A woman lay in a doorway. Near her was something muddy that might have been a child, beyond were six men all spread out very neatly in a row with their faces to the sky.

"Cheetah!" cried Amanda, with her voice going up. "They've been killed. Some one has killed them."

Benham halted beside her and stared stupidly. "It's a band," he said. "It's — propaganda. Greeks or Turks or Bulgarians."

"But their feet and hands are fastened! And — ... WHAT HAVE THEY BEEN DOING TO THEM?..."

"I want to kill," cried Benham. "Oh! I want to kill people. Come on, Amanda! It blisters one's eyes. Come away. Come away! Come!"

Her face was white and her eyes terror-stricken. She obeyed him mechanically. She gave one last look at those bodies....

Down the deep-rutted soil of the village street they clattered. They came to houses that had been set on fire....

"What is that hanging from a tree?" cried Amanda. "Oh, oh!"

"Come on...."

Behind them rode the others scared and hurrying.

The sunlight had become the light of hell. There was no air but horror. Across Benham's skies these fly-blown trophies of devilry dangled mockingly in the place of God. He had no thought but to get away.

Presently they encountered a detachment of Turkish soldiers, very greasy and ragged, with worn-out boots and yellow faces, toiling up the stony road belatedly to the village. Amanda and Benham riding one behind the other in a stricken silence passed this labouring column without a gesture, but presently they heard the commander stopping and questioning Giorgio....

Then Giorgio and the others came clattering to overtake them.

Giorgio was too full to wait for questions. He talked eagerly to Benham's silence.

It must have happened yesterday, he explained. They were Bulgarians — traitors. They had been converted to the Patriarchists by the Greeks — by a Greek band, that is to say. They had betrayed one of their own people. Now a Bulgarian band had descended upon them. Bulgarian bands it seemed were always particularly rough on Bulgarian-speaking Patriarchists....

9

That night they slept in a dirty little room in a peasant's house in Resnia, and in the middle of the night Amanda woke up with a start and heard Benham talking. He seemed to be sitting up as he talked. But he was not talking to her and his voice sounded strange.

"Flies," he said, "in the sunlight!"

He was silent for a time and then he repeated the same words.

Then suddenly he began to declaim. "Oh! Brutes together. Apes. Apes with knives. Have they no lord, no master, to save them from such things? This is the life of men when no man rules.... When no man rules.... Not even himself.... It is because we are idle, because we keep our wits slack and our wills weak that these poor devils live in hell. These things happen here and everywhere when the hand that rules grows weak. Away in China now they are happening. Persia. Africa.... Russia staggers. And I who should serve the law, I who should keep order, wander and make love.... My God! may I never forget! May I never forget! Flies in the sunlight! That man's face. And those six men!

"Grip the savage by the throat.

"The weak savage in the foreign office, the weak savage at the party headquarters, feud and indolence and folly. It is all one world. This and that are all one thing. The spites of London and the mutilations of Macedonia. The maggots that eat men's faces and the maggots that rot their minds. Rot their minds. Rot their minds. Rot their minds...."

To Amanda it sounded like delirium.

"CHEETAH!" she said suddenly between remonstrance and a cry

of terror.

The darkness suddenly became quite still. He did not move.

She was afraid. “Cheetah!” she said again.

“What is it, Amanda?”

“I thought — . Are you all right?”

“Quite.”

“But do you feel well?”

“I’ve got this cold I caught in Ochrida. I suppose I’m feverish. But — yes, I’m well.”

“You were talking.”

Silence for a time.

“I was thinking,” he said.

“You talked.”

“I’m sorry,” he said after another long pause.

10

The next morning Benham had a pink spot on either cheek, his eyes were feverishly bright, he would touch no food and instead of coffee he wanted water. “In Monastir there will be a doctor,” he said. “Monastir is a big place. In Monastir I will see a doctor. I want a doctor.”

They rode out of the village in the freshness before sunrise and up long hills, and sometimes they went in the shade of woods and sometimes in a flooding sunshine. Benham now rode in front, preoccupied, intent, regardless of Amanda, a stranger, and she rode close behind him wondering.

“When you get to Monastir, young man,” she told him, inaudibly, “you will go straight to bed and we’ll see what has to be done with you.”

“AMMALATO,” said Giorgio confidentially, coming abreast of her.

“MEDICO IN MONASTIR,” said Amanda.

“SI, — MOLTI MEDICI, MONASTIR,” Giorgio agreed.

Then came the inevitable dogs, big white brutes, three in full cry charging hard at Benham and a younger less enterprising beast running along the high bank above yapping and making feints to

descend.

The goatherd, reclining under the shadow of a rock, awaited Benham's embarrassment with an indolent malice.

"You UNCIVILIZED Beasts!" cried Benham, and before Amanda could realize what he was up to, she heard the crack of his revolver and saw a puff of blue smoke drift away above his right shoulder. The foremost beast rolled over and the goatherd had sprung to his feet. He shouted with something between anger and dismay as Benham, regardless of the fact that the other dogs had turned and were running back, let fly a second time. Then the goatherd had clutched at the gun that lay on the grass near at hand, Giorgio was bawling in noisy remonstrance and also getting ready to shoot, and the horse-owner and his boy were clattering back to a position of neutrality up the stony road. "BANG!" came a flight of lead within a yard of Benham, and then the goatherd was in retreat behind a rock and Giorgio was shouting "AVANTI, AVANTI!" to Amanda.

She grasped his intention and in another moment she had Benham's horse by the bridle and was leading the retreat. Giorgio followed close, driving the two baggage mules before him.

"I am tired of dogs," Benham said. "Tired to death of dogs. All savage dogs must be shot. All through the world. I am tired—"

Their road carried them down through the rocky pass and then up a long slope in the open. Far away on the left they saw the goatherd running and shouting and other armed goatherds appearing among the rocks. Behind them the horse-owner and his boy came riding headlong across the zone of danger.

"Dogs must be shot," said Benham, exalted. "Dogs must be shot."

"Unless they are GOOD dogs," said Amanda, keeping beside him with an eye on his revolver.

"Unless they are good dogs to every one," said Benham.

They rushed along the road in a turbulent dusty huddle of horses and mules and riders. The horse-owner, voluble in Albanian, was trying to get past them. His boy pressed behind him. Giorgio in the rear had unslung his rifle and got it across the front of his saddle. Far away they heard the sound of a shot, and a kind of shudder in the air overhead witnessed to the flight of the bullet. They crested a rise and suddenly between the tree boughs Monastir was in view, a wide

stretch of white town, with many cypress and plane trees, a winding river with many wooden bridges, clustering minarets of pink and white, a hilly cemetery, and scattered patches of soldiers' tents like some queer white crop to supplement its extensive barracks.

As they hurried down towards this city of refuge a long string of mules burthened with great bales of green stuff appeared upon a convergent track to the left. Besides the customary muleteers there were, by way of an escort, a couple of tattered Turkish soldiers. All these men watched the headlong approach of Benham's party with apprehensive inquiry. Giorgio shouted some sort of information that made the soldiers brighten up and stare up the hill, and set the muleteers whacking and shouting at their convoy. It struck Amanda that Giorgio must be telling lies about a Bulgarian band. In another moment Benham and Amanda found themselves swimming in a torrent of mules. Presently they overtook a small flock of fortunately nimble sheep, and picked up several dogs, dogs that happily disregarded Benham in the general confusion. They also comprehended a small springless cart, two old women with bundles and an elderly Greek priest, before their dusty, barking, shouting cavalcade reached the outskirts of Monastir. The two soldiers had halted behind to cover the retreat.

Benham's ghastly face was now bedewed with sweat and he swayed in his saddle as he rode. "This is NOT civilization, Amanda," he said, "this is NOT civilization."

And then suddenly with extraordinary pathos:

"Oh! I want to go to BED! I want to go to BED! A bed with sheets...."

To ride into Monastir is to ride into a maze. The streets go nowhere in particular. At least that was the effect on Amanda and Benham. It was as if Monastir too had a temperature and was slightly delirious. But at last they found an hotel — quite a civilized hotel....

The doctor in Monastir was an Armenian with an ambition that outran his capacity to speak English. He had evidently studied the language chiefly from books. He thought THESE was pronounced "theser" and THOSE was pronounced "thoser," and that every English sentence should be taken at a rush. He diagnosed Benham's complaint in various languages and failed to make his meaning clear

to Amanda. One combination of words he clung to obstinately, having clearly the utmost faith in its expressiveness. To Amanda it sounded like, “May, Ah! Slays,” and it seemed to her that he sought to intimate a probable fatal termination of Benham’s fever. But it was clear that the doctor was not satisfied that she understood. He came again with a queer little worn book, a parallel vocabulary of half-a-dozen European languages.

He turned over the pages and pointed to a word. “May! Ah! Slays!” he repeated, reproachfully, almost bitterly.

“Oh, MEASLES!” cried Amanda....

So the spirited honeymoon passed its zenith.

11

The Benhams went as soon as possible down to Smyrna and thence by way of Uskub tortuously back to Italy. They recuperated at the best hotel of Locarno in golden November weather, and just before Christmas they turned their faces back to England.

Benham’s plans were comprehensive but entirely vague; Amanda had not so much plans as intentions....

CHAPTER THE FIFTH ~~ THE ASSIZE OF JEALOUSY

1

It was very manifest in the disorder of papers amidst which White spent so many evenings of interested perplexity before this novel began to be written that Benham had never made any systematic attempt at editing or revising his accumulation at all. There were not only overlapping documents, in which he had returned again to old ideas and restated them in the light of fresh facts and an apparent unconsciousness of his earlier effort, but there were mutually destructive papers, new views quite ousting the old had been tossed in upon the old, and the very definition of the second limitation, as it had first presented itself to the writer, had been abandoned. To begin with, this second division had been labelled "Sex," in places the heading remained, no effective substitute had been chosen for some time, but there was a closely-written memorandum, very much erased and written over and amended, which showed Benham's early dissatisfaction with that crude rendering of what he had in mind. This memorandum was tacked to an interrupted fragment of autobiography, a manuscript soliloquy in which Benham had been discussing his married life.

"It was not until I had been married for the better part of a year, and had spent more than six months in London, that I faced the plain issue between the aims I had set before myself and the claims and immediate necessities of my personal life. For all that time I struggled not so much to reconcile them as to serve them simultaneously...."

At that the autobiography stopped short, and the intercalary note began.

This intercalary note ran as follows:

"I suppose a mind of my sort cannot help but tend towards simplification, towards making all life turn upon some one dominant idea, complex perhaps in its reality but reducible at last to one consistent simple statement, a dominant idea which is essential as

nothing else is essential, which makes and sustains and justifies. This is perhaps the innate disposition of the human mind, at least of the European mind — for I have some doubts about the Chinese. Theology drives obstinately towards an ultimate unity in God, science towards an ultimate unity in law, towards a fundamental element and a universal material truth from which all material truths evolve, and in matters of conduct there is the same tendency to refer to a universal moral law. Now this may be a simplification due to the need of the human mind to comprehend, and its inability to do so until the load is lightened by neglecting factors. William James has suggested that on account of this, theology may be obstinately working away from the truth, that the truth may be that there are several or many in compatible and incommensurable gods; science, in the same search for unity, may follow divergent methods of inquiry into ultimately uninterchangeable generalizations; and there may be not only not one universal moral law, but no effective reconciliation of the various rights and duties of a single individual. At any rate I find myself doubtful to this day about my own personal systems of right and wrong. I can never get all my life into one focus. It is exactly like examining a rather thick section with a microscope of small penetration; sometimes one level is clear and the rest foggy and monstrous, and sometimes another.

"Now the ruling ME, I do not doubt, is the man who has set his face to this research after aristocracy, and from the standpoint of this research it is my duty to subordinate all other considerations to this work of clearing up the conception of rule and nobility in human affairs. This is my aristocratic self. What I did not grasp for a long time, and which now grows clearer and clearer to me, is firstly that this aristocratic self is not the whole of me, it has absolutely nothing to do with a pain in my ear or in my heart, with a scar on my hand or my memory, and secondly that it is not altogether mine. Whatever knowledge I have of the quality of science, whatever will I have towards right, is of it; but if from without, from the reasoning or demonstration or reproof of some one else, there comes to me clear knowledge, clarified will, that also is as it were a part of my aristocratic self coming home to me from the outside. How often have I not found my own mind in Prothero after I have failed to find

it in myself? It is, to be paradoxical, my impersonal personality, this Being that I have in common with all scientific-spirited and aristocratic-spirited men. This it is that I am trying to get clear from the great limitations of humanity. When I assert a truth for the sake of truth to my own discomfort or injury, there again is this incompatibility of the aristocratic self and the accepted, confused, conglomerate self of the unanalyzed man. The two have a separate system of obligations. One's affections, compounded as they are in the strangest way of physical reactions and emotional associations, one's implicit pledges to particular people, one's involuntary reactions, one's pride and jealousy, all that one might call the dramatic side of one's life, may be in conflict with the definitely seen rightnesses of one's higher use...."

The writing changed at this point.

"All this seems to me at once as old as the hills and too new to be true. This is like the conflict of the Superior Man of Confucius to control himself, it is like the Christian battle of the spirit with the flesh, it savours of that eternal wrangle between the general and the particular which is metaphysics, it was for this aristocratic self, for righteousness' sake, that men have hungered and thirsted, and on this point men have left father and mother and child and wife and followed after salvation. This world-wide, ever-returning antagonism has filled the world in every age with hermits and lamas, recluses and teachers, devoted and segregated lives. It is a perpetual effort to get above the simplicity of barbarism. Whenever men have emerged from the primitive barbarism of the farm and the tribe, then straightway there has emerged this conception of a specialized life a little lifted off the earth; often, for the sake of freedom, celibate, usually disciplined, sometimes directed, having a generalized aim, beyond personal successes and bodily desires. So it is that the philosopher, the scientifically concentrated man, has appeared, often, I admit, quite ridiculously at first, setting out upon the long journey that will end only when the philosopher is king....

"At first I called my Second Limitation, Sex. But from the outset I meant more than mere sexual desire, lust and lustful imaginings, more than personal reactions to beauty and spirited living, more even than what is called love. On the one hand I had in mind many

appetites that are not sexual yet turn to bodily pleasure, and on the other there are elements of pride arising out of sex and passing into other regions, all the elements of rivalry for example, that have strained my first definition to the utmost. And I see now that this Second Limitation as I first imagined it spreads out without any definite boundary, to include one's rivalries with old schoolfellows, for example, one's generosities to beggars and dependents, one's desire to avenge an injured friend, one's point of honour, one's regard for the good opinion of an aunt and one's concern for the health of a pet cat. All these things may enrich, but they may also impede and limit the aristocratic scheme. I thought for a time I would call this ill-defined and miscellaneous wilderness of limitation the Personal Life. But at last I have decided to divide this vast territory of difficulties into two subdivisions and make one of these Indulgence, meaning thereby pleasurable indulgence of sense or feeling, and the other a great mass of self-regarding motives that will go with a little stretching under the heading of Jealousy. I admit motives are continually playing across the boundary of these two divisions, I should find it difficult to argue a case for my classification, but in practice these two groupings have a quite definite meaning for me. There is pride in the latter group of impulses and not in the former; the former are always a little apologetic. Fear, Indulgence, Jealousy, these are the First Three Limitations of the soul of man. And the greatest of these is Jealousy, because it can use pride. Over them the Life Aristocratic, as I conceive it, marches to its end. It saves itself for the truth rather than sacrifices itself romantically for a friend. It justifies vivisection if thereby knowledge is won for ever. It upholds that Brutus who killed his sons. It forbids devotion to women, courts of love and all such decay of the chivalrous idea. And it resigns — so many things that no common Man of Spirit will resign. Its intention transcends these things. Over all the world it would maintain justice, order, a noble peace, and it would do this without indignation, without resentment, without mawkish tenderness or individualized enthusiasm or any queen of beauty. It is of a cold austere quality, commanding sometimes admiration but having small hold upon the affections of men. So that it is among its foremost distinctions that its heart is

steeled....”

There this odd fragment ended and White was left to resume the interrupted autobiography.

2

What moods, what passions, what nights of despair and gathering storms of anger, what sudden cruelties and amazing tendernesses are buried and hidden and implied in every love story! What a waste is there of exquisite things! So each spring sees a million glorious beginnings, a sunlit heaven in every opening leaf, warm perfection in every stirring egg, hope and fear and beauty beyond computation in every forest tree; and in the autumn before the snows come they have all gone, of all that incalculable abundance of life, of all that hope and adventure, excitement and deliciousness, there is scarcely more to be found than a soiled twig, a dirty seed, a dead leaf, black mould or a rotting feather....

White held the ten or twelve pencilled pages that told how Benham and Amanda drifted into antagonism and estrangement and as he held it he thought of the laughter and delight they must have had together, the exquisite excitements of her eye, the racing colour of her cheek, the gleams of light upon her skin, the flashes of wit between them, the sense of discovery, the high rare paths they had followed, the pools in which they had swum together. And now it was all gone into nothingness, there was nothing left of it, nothing at all, but just those sheets of statement, and it may be, stored away in one single mind, like things forgotten in an attic, a few neglected faded memories....

And even those few sheets of statement were more than most love leaves behind it. For a time White would not read them. They lay neglected on his knee as he sat back in Benham’s most comfortable chair and enjoyed an entirely beautiful melancholy.

White too had seen and mourned the spring.

Indeed, poor dear! he had seen and mourned several springs....

With a sigh he took up the manuscript and read Benham’s desiccated story of intellectual estrangement, and how in the end he had decided to leave his wife and go out alone upon that journey of

inquiry he had been planning when first he met her.

3

Amanda had come back to England in a state of extravagantly vigorous womanhood. Benham's illness, though it lasted only two or three weeks, gave her a sense of power and leadership for which she had been struggling instinctively ever since they came together. For a time at Locarno he was lax-minded and indolent, and in that time she formed her bright and limited plans for London. Benham had no plans as yet but only a sense of divergence, as though he was being pulled in opposite directions by two irresistible forces. To her it was plain that he needed occupation, some distinguished occupation, and she could imagine nothing better for him than a political career. She perceived he had personality, that he stood out among men so that his very silences were effective. She loved him immensely, and she had tremendous ambitions for him and through him.

And also London, the very thought of London, filled her with appetite. Her soul thirsted for London. It was like some enormous juicy fruit waiting for her pretty white teeth, a place almost large enough to give her avidity the sense of enough. She felt it waiting for her, household, servants, a carriage, shops and the jolly delight of buying and possessing things, the opera, first-nights, picture exhibitions, great dinner-parties, brilliant lunch parties, crowds seen from a point of vantage, the carriage in a long string of fine carriages with the lamplit multitude peering, Amanda in a thousand bright settings, in a thousand various dresses. She had had love; it had been glorious, it was still glorious, but her love-making became now at times almost perfunctory in the contemplation of these approaching delights and splendours and excitements.

She knew, indeed, that ideas were at work in Benham's head; but she was a realist. She did not see why ideas should stand in the way of a career. Ideas are a brightness, the good looks of the mind. One talks ideas, but THE THING THAT IS, IS THE THING THAT IS. And though she believed that Benham had a certain strength of character of his own, she had that sort of confidence in his love for her and in the power of her endearments that has in it the assurance

of a faint contempt. She had mingled pride and sense in the glorious realization of the power over him that her wit and beauty gave her. She had held him faint with her divinity, intoxicated with the pride of her complete possession, and she did not dream that the moment when he should see clearly that she could deliberately use these ultimate delights to rule and influence him, would be the end of their splendour and her power. Her nature, which was just a nest of vigorous appetites, was incapable of suspecting his gathering disillusionment until it burst upon her.

Now with her attention set upon London ahead he could observe her. In the beginning he had never seemed to be observing her at all, they dazzled one another; it seemed extraordinary now to him to note how much he had been able to disregard. There were countless times still when he would have dropped his observation and resumed that mutual exaltation very gladly, but always now other things possessed her mind....

There was still an immense pleasure for him in her vigour; there was something delightful in her pounce, even when she was pouncing on things superficial, vulgar or destructive. She made him understand and share the excitement of a big night at the opera, the glitter and prettiness of a smart restaurant, the clustering little acute adventures of a great reception of gay people, just as she had already made him understand and sympathize with dogs. She picked up the art world where he had laid it down, and she forced him to feel dense and slow before he rebelled against her multitudinous enthusiasms and admirations. South Harting had had its little group of artistic people; it is not one of your sleepy villages, and she slipped back at once into the movement. Those were the great days of John, the days before the Post Impressionist outbreak. John, Orpen, Tonks, she bought them with vigour. Artistic circles began to revolve about her. Very rapidly she was in possession.... And among other desirable things she had, it seemed, pounced upon and captured Lady Marayne.

At any rate it was clear that that awful hostile silence and aloofness was to end. Benham never quite mastered how it was done. But Amanda had gone in one morning to Desborough Street, very sweetly and chastely dressed, had abased herself and announced a

possible (though subsequently disproved) grandchild. And she had appreciated the little lady so highly and openly, she had so instantly caught and reproduced her tone, that her success, though only temporary in its completeness, was immediate. In the afternoon Benham was amazed by the apparition of his mother amidst the scattered unsettled furnishings of the new home Amanda had chosen in Lancaster Gate. He was in the hall, the door stood open awaiting packing-cases from a van without. In the open doorway she shone, looking the smallest of dainty things. There was no effect of her coming but only of her having arrived there, as a little blue butterfly will suddenly alight on a flower.

"Well, Poff!" said Lady Marayne, ignoring abysses, "What are you up to now, Poff? Come and embrace me...."

"No, not so," she said, "stiffest of sons...."

She laid hold of his ears in the old fashion and kissed one eye.

"Congratulations, dear little Poff. Oh! congratulations! In heaps. I'm so GLAD."

Now what was that for?

And then Amanda came out upon the landing upstairs, saw the encounter with an involuntary cry of joy, and came downstairs with arms wide open. It was the first intimation he had of their previous meeting. He was for some minutes a stunned, entirely inadequate Benham....

4

At first Amanda knew nobody in London, except a few people in the Hampstead Garden suburb that she had not the slightest wish to know, and then very quickly she seemed to know quite a lot of people. The artistic circle brought in people, Lady Marayne brought in people; they spread. It was manifest the Benhams were a very bright young couple; he would certainly do something considerable presently, and she was bright and daring, jolly to look at and excellent fun, and, when you came to talk to her, astonishingly well informed. They passed from one hostess's hand to another: they reciprocated. The Clynes people and the Rushtones took her up; Mr. Evesham was amused by her, Lady Beach Mandarin proclaimed her

charm like a trumpet, the Young Liberal people made jealous advances, Lord Moggeridge found she listened well, she lit one of the brightest weekend parties Lady Marayne had ever gathered at Chexington. And her descriptions of recent danger and adventure in Albania not only entertained her hearers but gave her just that flavour of personal courage which completes the fascination of a young woman. People in the gaps of a halting dinner-table conversation would ask: "Have you met Mrs. Benham?"

Meanwhile Benham appeared to be talking. A smiling and successful young woman, who a year ago had been nothing more than a leggy girl with a good lot of miscellaneous reading in her head, and vaguely engaged, or at least friendly to the pitch of engagement, to Mr. Rathbone-Sanders, may be forgiven if in the full tide of her success she does not altogether grasp the intention of her husband's discourse. It seemed to her that he was obsessed by a responsibility for civilization and the idea that he was aristocratic. (Secretly she was inclined to doubt whether he was justified in calling himself aristocratic; at the best his mother was county-stuff; but still if he did there was no great harm in it nowadays.) Clearly his line was Tory-Democracy, social reform through the House of Lords and friendly intimacy with the more spirited young peers. And it was only very slowly and reluctantly that she was forced to abandon this satisfactory solution of his problem. She reproduced all the equipment and comforts of his Finacue Street study in their new home, she declared constantly that she would rather forego any old social thing than interfere with his work, she never made him go anywhere with her without first asking if his work permitted it. To relieve him of the burthen of such social attentions she even made a fag or so. The making of fags out of manifestly stricken men, the keeping of tamed and hopeless admirers, seemed to her to be the most natural and reasonable of feminine privileges. They did their useful little services until it pleased the Lord Cheetah to come to his own. That was how she put it....

But at last he was talking to her in tones that could no longer be ignored. He was manifestly losing his temper with her. There was a novel austerity in his voice and a peculiar whiteness about his face on certain occasions that lingered in her memory.

He was indeed making elaborate explanations. He said that what he wanted to do was to understand “the collective life of the world,” and that this was not to be done in a West-End study. He had an extraordinary contempt, it seemed, for both sides in the drama of British politics. He had extravagant ideas of beginning in some much more fundamental way. He wanted to understand this “collective life of the world,” because ultimately he wanted to help control it. (Was there ever such nonsense?) The practical side of this was serious enough, however; he was back at his old idea of going round the earth. Later on that might be rather a jolly thing to do, but not until they had struck root a little more surely in London.

And then with amazement, with incredulity, with indignation, she began to realize that he was proposing to go off by himself upon this vague extravagant research, that all this work she had been doing to make a social place for him in London was as nothing to him, that he was thinking of himself as separable from her....

“But, Cheetah! How can you leave your spotless leopard? You would howl in the lonely jungle!”

“Possibly I shall. But I am going.”

“Then I shall come.”

“No.” He considered her reasons. “You see you are not interested.”

“But I am.”

“Not as I am. You would turn it all into a jolly holiday. You don’t want to see things as I want to do. You want romance. All the world is a show for you. As a show I can’t endure it. I want to lay hands on it.”

“But, Cheetah!” she said, “this is separation.”

“You will have your life here. And I shall come back.”

“But, Cheetah! How can we be separated?”

“We are separated,” he said.

Her eyes became round with astonishment. Then her face puckered.

“Cheetah!” she cried in a voice of soft distress, “I love you. What do you mean?”

And she staggered forward, tear-blinded, and felt for his neck and shoulders, so that she might weep in his arms....

5

"Don't say we are separated," she whispered, putting her still wet face close to his.

"No. We're mates," he answered softly, with his arm about her.

"How could we ever keep away from each uvver?" she whispered.

He was silent.

"How COULD we?"

He answered aloud. "Amanda," he said, "I mean to go round the world."

She disentangled herself from his arm and sat up beside him.

"What is to become of me," she asked suddenly in a voice of despair, "while you go round the world? If you desert me in London," she said, "if you shame me by deserting me in London — If you leave me, I will never forgive you, Cheetah! Never." Then in an almost breathless voice, and as if she spoke to herself, "Never in all my days."

6

It was after that that Amanda began to talk about children. There was nothing involuntary about Amanda. "Soon," she said, "we must begin to think of children. Not just now, but a little later. It's good to travel and have our fun, but life is unreal until there are children in the background. No woman is really content until she is a mother...." And for nearly a fortnight nothing more was said about that solitary journey round the world.

But children were not the only new topic in Amanda's talk. She set herself with an ingenious subtlety to remind her husband that there were other men in the world. The convenient fags, sometimes a little embarrassed, found their inobtrusive services being brought into the light before Benham's eyes. Most of them were much older men than himself, elderly philanderers of whom it seemed to him no sane man need be jealous, men often of forty or more, but one was a contemporary, Sir Philip Easton, a man with a touch of Spanish blood and a suggestion of Spanish fire, who quite manifestly was very much in love with Amanda and of whom she spoke with a slight

perceptible difference of manner that made Benham faintly uneasy. He was ashamed of the feeling. Easton it seemed was a man of a peculiarly fine honour, so that Amanda could trust herself with him to an extent that would have been inadvisable with men of a commoner substance, and he had a gift of understanding and sympathy that was almost feminine; he could cheer one up when one was lonely and despondent. For Amanda was so methodical in the arrangement of her time that even in the full rush of a London season she could find an hour now and then for being lonely and despondent. And he was a liberal and understanding purchaser of the ascendant painters; he understood that side of Amanda's interests, a side upon which Benham was notably deficient....

"Amanda seems to like that dark boy, Poff; what is his name? — Sir Philip Easton?" said Lady Marayne.

Benham looked at her with a slightly hostile intelligence, and said nothing.

"When a man takes a wife, he has to keep her," said Lady Marayne.

"No," said Benham after consideration. "I don't intend to be a wife-herd."

"What?"

"Wife-herd — same as goat-herd."

"Coarse, you are sometimes, Poff — nowadays."

"It's exactly what I mean. I can understand the kind of curator's interest an Oriental finds in shepherding a large establishment, but to spend my days looking after one person who ought to be able to look after herself—"

"She's very young."

"She's quite grown up. Anyhow I'm not a moral nursemaid."

"If you leave her about and go abroad—"

"Has she been talking to you, mother?"

"The thing shows."

"But about my going abroad?"

"She said something, my little Poff."

Lady Marayne suddenly perceived that beneath Benham's indifference was something strung very tight, as though he had been thinking inordinately. He weighed his words before he spoke again.

“If Amanda chooses to threaten me with a sort of conditional infidelity, I don’t see that it ought to change the plans I have made for my life....”

7

“No aristocrat has any right to be jealous,” Benham wrote. “If he chances to be mated with a woman who does not see his vision or naturally go his way, he has no right to expect her, much less to compel her to go his way. What is the use of dragging an unwilling companion through morasses of uncongenial thought to unsought ends? What is the use of dragging even a willing pretender, who has no inherent will to seek and live the aristocratic life?

“But that does not excuse him from obedience to his own call....”

He wrote that very early in his examination of the Third Limitation. Already he had thought out and judged Amanda. The very charm of her, the sweetness, the nearness and magic of her, was making him more grimly resolute to break away. All the elaborate process of thinking her over had gone on behind the mask of his silences while she had been preoccupied with her housing and establishment in London; it was with a sense of extraordinary injustice, of having had a march stolen upon her, of being unfairly trapped, that Amanda found herself faced by foregone conclusions. He was ready now even with the details of his project. She should go on with her life in London exactly as she had planned it. He would take fifteen hundred a year for himself and all the rest she might spend without check or stint as it pleased her. He was going round the world for one or two years. It was even possible he would not go alone. There was a man at Cambridge he might persuade to come with him, a don called Prothero who was peculiarly useful in helping him to hammer out his ideas....

To her it became commandingly necessary that none of these things should happen.

She tried to play upon his jealousy, but her quick instinct speedily told her that this only hardened his heart. She perceived that she must make a softer appeal. Now of a set intention she began to revive and imitate the spontaneous passion of the honeymoon; she perceived for

the first time clearly how wise and righteous a thing it is for a woman to bear a child. “He cannot go if I am going to have a child,” she told herself. But that would mean illness, and for illness in herself or others Amanda had the intense disgust natural to her youth. Yet even illness would be better than this intolerable publication of her husband’s ability to leave her side....

She had a wonderful facility of enthusiasm and she set herself forthwith to cultivate a philoprogenitive ambition, to communicate it to him. Her dread of illness disappeared; her desire for offspring grew.

“Yes,” he said, “I want to have children, but I must go round the world none the less.”

She argued with all the concentrated subtlety of her fine keen mind. She argued with persistence and repetition. And then suddenly so that she was astonished at herself, there came a moment when she ceased to argue.

She stood in the dusk in a window that looked out upon the park, and she was now so intent upon her purpose as to be still and self-forgetful; she was dressed in a dinner-dress of white and pale green, that set off her slim erect body and the strong clear lines of her neck and shoulders very beautifully, some greenish stones caught a light from without and flashed soft whispering gleams from amidst the misty darkness of her hair. She was going to Lady Marayne and the opera, and he was bound for a dinner at the House with some young Liberals at which he was to meet two representative Indians with a grievance from Bengal. Husband and wife had but a few moments together. She asked about his company and he told her.

“They will tell you about India.”

“Yes.”

She stood for a moment looking out across the lights and the dark green trees, and then she turned to him.

“Why cannot I come with you?” she asked with sudden passion. “Why cannot I see the things you want to see?”

“I tell you you are not interested. You would only be interested through me. That would not help me. I should just be dealing out my premature ideas to you. If you cared as I care, if you wanted to know as I want to know, it would be different. But you don’t. It isn’t your

fault that you don't. It happens so. And there is no good in forced interest, in prescribed discovery."

"Cheetah," she asked, "what is it that you want to know — that I don't care for?"

"I want to know about the world. I want to rule the world."

"So do I."

"No, you want to have the world."

"Isn't it the same?"

"No. You're a greedier thing than I am, you Black Leopard you — standing there in the dusk. You're a stronger thing. Don't you know you're stronger? When I am with you, you carry your point, because you are more concentrated, more definite, less scrupulous. When you run beside me you push me out of my path.... You've made me afraid of you.... And so I won't go with you, Leopard. I go alone. It isn't because I don't love you. I love you too well. It isn't because you aren't beautiful and wonderful...."

"But, Cheetah! nevertheless you care more for this that you want than you care for me."

Benham thought of it. "I suppose I do," he said.

"What is it that you want? Still I don't understand."

Her voice had the break of one who would keep reasonable in spite of pain.

"I ought to tell you."

"Yes, you ought to tell me."

"I wonder if I can tell you," he said very thoughtfully, and rested his hands on his hips. "I shall seem ridiculous to you."

"You ought to tell me."

"I think what I want is to be king of the world."

She stood quite still staring at him.

"I do not know how I can tell you of it. Amanda, do you remember those bodies — you saw those bodies — those mutilated men?"

"I saw them," said Amanda.

"Well. Is it nothing to you that those things happen?"

"They must happen."

"No. They happen because there are no kings but pitiful kings. They happen because the kings love their Amandas and do not care."

“But what can YOU do, Cheetah?”

“Very little. But I can give my life and all my strength. I can give all I can give.”

“But how? How can you help it — help things like that massacre?”

“I can do my utmost to find out what is wrong with my world and rule it and set it right.”

“YOU! Alone.”

“Other men do as much. Every one who does so helps others to do so. You see — ... In this world one may wake in the night and one may resolve to be a king, and directly one has resolved one is a king. Does that sound foolishness to you? Anyhow, it’s fair that I should tell you, though you count me a fool. This — this kingship — this dream of the night — is my life. It is the very core of me. Much more than you are. More than anything else can be. I mean to be a king in this earth. KING. I’m not mad.... I see the world staggering from misery to misery and there is little wisdom, less rule, folly, prejudice, limitation, the good things come by chance and the evil things recover and slay them, and it is my world and I am responsible. Every man to whom this light has come is responsible. As soon as this light comes to you, as soon as your kingship is plain to you, there is no more rest, no peace, no delight, except in work, in service, in utmost effort. As far as I can do it I will rule my world. I cannot abide in this smug city, I cannot endure its self-complacency, its routine, its gloss of success, its rottenness.... I shall do little, perhaps I shall do nothing, but what I can understand and what I can do I will do. Think of that wild beautiful country we saw, and the mean misery, the filth and the warring cruelty of the life that lives there, tragedy, tragedy without dignity; and think, too, of the limitless ugliness here, and of Russia slipping from disorder to massacre, and China, that sea of human beings, sliding steadily to disaster. Do you think these are only things in the newspapers? To me at any rate they are not things in newspapers; they are pain and failure, they are torment, they are blood and dust and misery. They haunt me day and night. Even if it is utterly absurd I will still do my utmost. It IS absurd. I’m a madman and you and my mother are sensible people.... And I will go my way.... I don’t care for the absurdity. I don’t care a

rap.”

He stopped abruptly.

“There you have it, Amanda. It’s rant, perhaps. Sometimes I feel it’s rant. And yet it’s the breath of life to me.... There you are.... At last I’ve been able to break silence and tell you....”

He stopped with something like a sob and stood regarding the dusky mystery of her face. She stood quite still, she was just a beautiful outline in the twilight, her face was an indistinctness under the black shadow of her hair, with eyes that were two patches of darkness.

He looked at his watch, lifting it close to his face to see the time. His voice changed. “Well — if you provoke a man enough, you see he makes speeches. Let it be a lesson to you, Amanda. Here we are talking instead of going to our dinners. The car has been waiting ten minutes.”

Amanda, so still, was the most disconcerting of all Amandas....

A strange exaltation seized upon her very suddenly. In an instant she had ceased to plot against him. A vast wave of emotion swept her forward to a resolution that astonished her.

“Cheetah!” she said, and the very quality of her voice had changed, “give me one thing. Stay until June with me.”

“Why?” he asked.

Her answer came in a voice so low that it was almost a whisper.

“Because — now — no, I don’t want to keep you any more — I am not trying to hold you any more.... I want....”

She came forward to him and looked up closely at his face.

“Cheetah,” she whispered almost inaudibly, “Cheetah — I didn’t understand. But now — . I want to bear your child.”

He was astonished. “Old Leopard!” he said.

“No,” she answered, putting her hands upon his shoulders and drawing very close to him, “Queen — if I can be — to your King.”

“You want to bear me a child!” he whispered, profoundly moved.

8

The Hindu agitators at the cavernous dinner under the House of Commons came to the conclusion that Benham was a dreamer. And

over against Amanda at her dinner-party sat Sir Sidney Umber, one of those men who know that their judgments are quoted.

"Who is the beautiful young woman who is seeing visions?" he asked of his neighbour in confidential undertones....

He tittered. "I think, you know, she ought to seem just SLIGHTLY aware that the man to her left is talking to her...."

9

A few days later Benham went down to Cambridge, where Prothero was now a fellow of Trinity and Brissenden Trust Lecturer....

All through Benham's writing there was manifest a persuasion that in some way Prothero was necessary to his mind. It was as if he looked to Prothero to keep him real. He suspected even while he obeyed that upward flourish which was his own essential characteristic. He had a peculiar feeling that somehow that upward bias would betray him; that from exaltation he might presently float off, into the higher, the better, and so to complete unreality. He fled from priggishness and the terror of such sublimity alike to Prothero. Moreover, in relation to so many things Prothero in a peculiar distinctive manner SAW. He had less self-control than Benham, less integrity of purpose, less concentration, and things that were before his eyes were by the very virtue of these defects invariably visible to him. Things were able to insist upon themselves with him. Benham, on the other hand, when facts contradicted his purpose too stoutly, had a way of becoming blind to them. He repudiated inconvenient facts. He mastered and made his world; Prothero accepted and recorded his. Benham was a will towards the universe where Prothero was a perception and Amanda a confusing responsive activity. And it was because of his realization of this profound difference between them that he was possessed by the idea of taking Prothero with him about the world, as a detachable kind of vision — rather like that eye the Graiae used to hand one another....

After the busy sunlit streets of Maytime Cambridge, Prothero's rooms in Trinity, their windows full of Gothic perspectives and light-soaked blue sky, seemed cool and quiet. A flavour of scholarship pervaded them — a little blended with the flavour of innumerable

breakfasts nearly but not completely forgotten. Prothero's door had been locked against the world, and he had appeared after a slight delay looking a little puffy and only apprehending who his visitor was after a resentful stare for the better part of a second. He might have been asleep, he might have been doing anything but the examination papers he appeared to be doing. The two men exchanged personal details; they had not met since some months before Benham' s marriage, and the visitor's eye went meanwhile from his host to the room and back to his host's face as though they were all aspects of the thing he was after, the Prothero humour, the earthly touch, the distinctive Prothero flavour. Then his eye was caught by a large red, incongruous, meretricious-looking volume upon the couch that had an air of having been flung aside, VENUS IN GEM AND MARBLE, its cover proclaimed....

His host followed that glance and blushed. "They send me all sorts of inappropriate stuff to review," he remarked.

And then he was denouncing celibacy.

The transition wasn't very clear to Benham. His mind had been preoccupied by the problem of how to open his own large project. Meanwhile Prothero got, as it were, the conversational bit between his teeth and bolted. He began to say the most shocking things right away, so that Benham's attention was caught in spite of himself.

"Inflammatory classics."

"What's that?"

"Celibacy, my dear Benham, is maddening me," said Prothero. "I can't stand it any longer."

It seemed to Benham that somewhere, very far away, in another world, such a statement might have been credible. Even in his own life, — it was now indeed a remote, forgotten stage — there had been something distantly akin....

"You're going to marry?"

"I must."

"Who's the lady, Billy?"

"I don't know. Venus."

His little red-brown eye met his friend's defiantly. "So far as I know, it is Venus Anadyomene." A flash of laughter passed across his face and left it still angrier, still more indecorously defiant. "I like

her best, anyhow. I do, indeed. But, Lord! I feel that almost any of them—"

"Tut, tut!" said Benham.

Prothero flushed deeply but stuck to his discourse.

"Wasn't it always your principle, Benham, to look facts in the face? I am not pronouncing an immoral principle. Your manner suggests I am. I am telling you exactly how I feel. That is how I feel. I want — Venus. I don't want her to talk to or anything of that sort.... I have been studying that book, yes, that large, vulgar, red book, all the morning, instead of doing any work. Would you like to see it?... NO!...

"This spring, Benham, I tell you, is driving me mad. It is a peculiarly erotic spring. I cannot sleep, I cannot fix my mind, I cannot attend to ordinary conversation. These feelings, I understand, are by no means peculiar to myself.... No, don't interrupt me, Benham; let me talk now that the spirit of speech is upon me. When you came in you said, 'How are you?' I am telling you how I am. You brought it on yourself. Well — I am — inflamed. I have no strong moral or religious convictions to assist me either to endure or deny this — this urgency. And so why should I deny it? It's one of our chief problems here. The majority of my fellow dons who look at me with secretive faces in hall and court and combination-room are in just the same case as myself. The fever in oneself detects the fever in others. I know their hidden thoughts. Their fishy eyes defy me to challenge their hidden thoughts. Each covers his miserable secret under the cloak of a wholesome manly indifference. A tattered cloak.... Each tries to hide his abandonment to this horrible vice of continence—"

"Billy, what's the matter with you?"

Prothero grimaced impatience. "Shall I NEVER teach you not to be a humbug, Benham?" he screamed, and in screaming became calmer. "Nature taunts me, maddens me. My life is becoming a hell of shame. 'Get out from all these books,' says Nature, 'and serve the Flesh.' The Flesh, Benham. Yes — I insist — the Flesh. Do I look like a pure spirit? Is any man a pure spirit? And here am I at Cambridge like a lark in a cage, with too much port and no Aspasia. Not that I should have liked Aspasia."

“Mutual, perhaps, Billy.”

“Oh! you can sneer!”

“Well, clearly — Saint Paul is my authority — it’s marriage, Billy.”

Prothero had walked to the window. He turned round.

“I CAN’T marry,” he said. “The trouble has gone too far. I’ve lost my nerve in the presence of women. I don’t like them any more. They come at one — done up in a lot of ridiculous clothes, and chattering about all sorts of things that don’t matter....” He surveyed his friend’s thoughtful attitude. “I’m getting to hate women, Benham. I’m beginning now to understand the bitterness of spinsters against men. I’m beginning to grasp the unkindliness of priests. The perpetual denial. To you, happily married, a woman is just a human being. You can talk to her, like her, you can even admire her calmly; you’ve got, you see, no grudge against her....”

He sat down abruptly.

Benham, upon the hearthrug before the empty fireplace, considered him.

“Billy! this is delusion,” he said. “What’s come over you?”

“I’m telling you,” said Prothero.

“No,” said Benham.

Prothero awaited some further utterance.

“I’m looking for the cause of it. It’s feeding, Billy. It’s port and stimulants where there is no scope for action. It’s idleness. I begin to see now how much fatter you are, how much coarser.”

“Idleness! Look at this pile of examination answers. Look at that filing system like an arsenal of wisdom. Useless wisdom, I admit, but anyhow not idleness.”

“There’s still bodily idleness. No. That’s your trouble. You’re stuffy. You’ve enlarged your liver. You sit in this room of a warm morning after an extravagant breakfast — . And peep and covet.”

“Just eggs and bacon!”

“Think of it! Coffee and toast it ought to be. Come out of it, Billy, and get aired.”

“How can one?”

“Easily. Come out of it now. Come for a walk, you Pig!”

“It’s an infernally warm morning.

“Walk with me to Grantchester.”

“We might go by boat. You could row.”

“WALK.”

“I ought to do these papers.”

“You weren’t doing them.”

“No....”

“Walk with me to Grantchester. All this affliction of yours is — horrid — and just nothing at all. Come out of it! I want you to come with me to Russia and about the world. I’m going to leave my wife —”

“Leave your wife!”

“Why not? And I came here hoping to find you clear-headed, and instead you are in this disgusting state. I’ve never met anything in my life so hot and red and shiny and shameless. Come out of it, man! How can one talk to you?”

10

“You pull things down to your own level,” said Benham as they went through the heat to Grantchester.

“I pull them down to truth,” panted Prothero.

“Truth! As though being full of gross appetites was truth, and discipline and training some sort of falsity!”

“Artificiality. And begetting pride, Benham, begetting a prig’s pride.”

For a time there was more than the heat of the day between them....

The things that Benham had come down to discuss were thrust into the background by the impassioned materialism of Prothero.

“I’m not talking of Love,” he said, remaining persistently outrageous. “I’m talking of physical needs. That first. What is the good of arranging systems of morality and sentiment before you know what is physically possible....

“But how can one disentangle physical and moral necessities?”

“Then why don’t we up and find out?” said Billy.

He had no patience with the secrecy, the ignorance, the emotion that surrounded these questions. We didn’t worship our ancestors

when it came to building bridges or working metals or curing disease or studying our indigestion, and why should we become breathless or wordless with awe and terror when it came to this fundamental affair? Why here in particular should we give way to Holy Fear and stifled submission to traditional suppressions and the wisdom of the ages? "What is the wisdom of the ages?" said Prothero. "Think of the corners where that wisdom was born.... Flea-bitten sages in stone-age hovels.... Wandering wise man with a rolling eye, a fakir under a tree, a Jewish sheik, an Arab epileptic...."

"Would you sweep away the experience of mankind?" protested Benham.

The experience of mankind in these matters had always been bitter experience. Most of it was better forgotten. It didn't convince. It had never worked things out. In this matter just as in every other matter that really signified things had still to be worked out. Nothing had been worked out hitherto. The wisdom of the ages was a Cant. People had been too busy quarrelling, fighting and running away. There wasn't any digested experience of the ages at all. Only the mis-remembered hankey-pankey of the Dead Old Man.

"Is this love-making a physical necessity for most men and women or isn't it?" Prothero demanded. "There's a simple question enough, and is there anything whatever in your confounded wisdom of the ages to tell me yes or no? Can an ordinary celibate be as healthy and vigorous as a mated man? Is a spinster of thirty-eight a healthy human being? Can she be? I don't believe so. Then why in thunder do we let her be? Here am I at a centre of learning and wisdom and I don't believe so; and there is nothing in all our colleges, libraries and roomsfull of wiseacres here, to settle that plain question for me, plainly and finally. My life is a grubby torment of cravings because it isn't settled. If sexual activity IS a part of the balance of life, if it IS a necessity, well let's set about making it accessible and harmless and have done with it. Swedish exercises. That sort of thing. If it isn't, if it can be reduced and done without, then let us set about teaching people HOW to control themselves and reduce and get rid of this vehement passion. But all this muffled mystery, this pompous sneak's way we take with it!"

"But, Billy! How can one settle these things? It's a matter of

idiosyncrasy. What is true for one man isn't true for another. There's infinite difference of temperaments!"

"Then why haven't we a classification of temperaments and a moral code for each sort? Why am I ruled by the way of life that is convenient for Rigdon the vegetarian and fits Bowler the saint like a glove? It isn't convenient for me. It fits me like a hair-shirt. Of course there are temperaments, but why can't we formulate them and exercise the elementary charity of recognizing that one man's health in these matters is another man's death? Some want love and gratification and some don't. There are people who want children and people who don't want to be bothered by children but who are full of vivid desires. There are people whose only happiness is chastity, and women who would rather be courtesans than mothers. Some of us would concentrate upon a single passion or a single idea; others overflow with a miscellaneous — tenderness. Yes, — and you smile! Why spit upon and insult a miscellaneous tenderness, Benham? Why grin at it? Why try every one by the standards that suit oneself? We're savages, Benham, shamefaced savages, still. Shamefaced and persecuting.

"I was angry about sex by seventeen," he went on. "Every year I live I grow angrier."

His voice rose to a squeal of indignation as he talked.

"Think," he said, "of the amount of thinking and feeling about sex that is going on in Cambridge this morning. The hundreds out of these thousands full of it. A vast tank of cerebration. And we put none of it together; we work nothing out from that but poor little couplings and casual stories, patchings up of situations, misbehaviours, blunders, disease, trouble, escapes; and the next generation will start, and the next generation after that will start with nothing but your wisdom of the ages, which isn't wisdom at all, which is just awe and funk, taboos and mystery and the secretive cunning of the savage....

"What I really want to do is my work," said Prothero, going off quite unexpectedly again. "That is why all this business, this incessant craving and the shame of it and all makes me so infernally angry...."

11

"There I'm with you," cried Benham, struggling out of the thick torrent of Prothero's prepossessions. "What we want to do is our work."

He clung to his idea. He raised his voice to prevent Prothero getting the word again.

"It's this, that you call Work, that I call — what do I call it? — living the aristocratic life, which takes all the coarse simplicity out of this business. If it was only submission.... YOU think it is only submission — giving way.... It isn't only submission. We'd manage sex all right, we'd be the happy swine our senses would make us, if we didn't know all the time that there was something else to live for, something far more important. And different. Absolutely different and contradictory. So different that it cuts right across all these considerations. It won't fit in.... I don't know what this other thing is; it's what I want to talk about with you. But I know that it IS, in all my bones.... YOU know.... It demands control, it demands continence, it insists upon disregard."

But the ideas of continence and disregard were unpleasant ideas to Prothero that day.

"Mankind," said Benham, "is overcharged with this sex. It suffocates us. It gives life only to consume it. We struggle out of the urgent necessities of a mere animal existence. We are not so much living as being married and given in marriage. All life is swamped in the love story...."

"Man is only overcharged because he is unsatisfied," said Prothero, sticking stoutly to his own view.

12

It was only as they sat at a little table in the orchard at Grantchester after their lunch that Benham could make head against Prothero and recover that largeness of outlook which had so easily touched the imagination of Amanda. And then he did not so much dispose of Prothero's troubles as soar over them. It is the last triumph of the human understanding to sympathize with desires we do not share,

and to Benham who now believed himself to be loved beyond the chances of life, who was satisfied and tranquil and austerely content, it was impossible that Prothero's demands should seem anything more than the grotesque and squalid squealings of the beast that has to be overridden and rejected altogether. It is a freakish fact of our composition that these most intense feelings in life are just those that are most rapidly and completely forgotten; hate one may recall for years, but the magic of love and the flame of desire serve their purpose in our lives and vanish, leaving no trace, like the snows of Venice. Benham was still not a year and a half from the meretricious delights of Mrs. Skelmersdale, and he looked at Prothero as a marble angel might look at a swine in its sty....

What he had now in mind was an expedition to Russia. When at last he could sufficiently release Prothero's attention, he unfolded the project that had been developing steadily in him since his honeymoon experience.

He had discovered a new reason for travelling. The last country we can see clearly, he had discovered, is our own country. It is as hard to see one's own country as it is to see the back of one's head. It is too much behind us, too much ourselves. But Russia is like England with everything larger, more vivid, cruder; one felt that directly one walked about St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg upon its Neva was like a savage untamed London on a larger Thames; they were seagull-haunted tidal cities, like no other capitals in Europe. The shipping and buildings mingled in their effects. Like London it looked over the heads of its own people to a limitless polyglot empire. And Russia was an aristocratic land, with a middle-class that had no pride in itself as a class; it had a British toughness and incompetence, a British disregard of logic and meticulous care. Russia, like England, was outside Catholic Christendom, it had a state church and the opposition to that church was not secularism but dissent. One could draw a score of such contrasted parallels. And now it was in a state of intolerable stress, that laid bare the elemental facts of a great social organization. It was having its South African war, its war at the other end of the earth, with a certain defeat instead of a dubious victory....

"There is far more freedom for the personal life in Russia than in

England," said Prothero, a little irrelevantly.

Benham went on with his discourse about Russia....

"At the college of Troitzka," said Prothero, "which I understand is a kind of monster Trinity unencumbered by a University, Binns tells me that although there is a profession of celibacy within the walls, the arrangements of the town and more particularly of the various hotels are conceived in a spirit of extreme liberality."

Benham hardly attended at all to these interruptions.

He went on to point out the elemental quality of the Russian situation. He led up to the assertion that to go to Russia, to see Russia, to try to grasp the broad outline of the Russian process, was the manifest duty of every responsible intelligence that was free to do as much. And so he was going, and if Prothero cared to come too —

"Yes," said Prothero, "I should like to go to Russia."

13

But throughout all their travel together that summer Benham was never able to lift Prothero away from his obsession. It was the substance of their talk as the Holland boat stood out past waiting destroyers and winking beacons and the lights of Harwich, into the smoothly undulating darkness of the North Sea; it rose upon them again as they sat over the cakes and cheese of a Dutch breakfast in the express for Berlin. Prothero filled the Sieges Allee with his complaints against nature and society, and distracted Benham in his contemplation of Polish agriculture from the windows of the train with turgid sexual liberalism. So that Benham, during this period until Prothero left him and until the tragic enormous spectacle of Russia in revolution took complete possession of him, was as it were thinking upon two floors. Upon the one he was thinking of the vast problems of a society of a hundred million people staggering on the verge of anarchy, and upon the other he was perplexed by the feverish inattention of Prothero to the tremendous things that were going on all about them. It was only presently when the serenity of his own private life began to be ruffled by disillusionment, that he began to realize the intimate connexion of these two systems of thought. Yet Prothero put it to him plainly enough.

“Inattentive,” said Prothero, “of course I am inattentive. What is really the matter with all this — this social mess people are in here, is that nearly everybody is inattentive. These Big Things of yours, nobody is thinking of them really. Everybody is thinking about the Near Things that concern himself.”

“The bombs they threw yesterday? The Cossacks and the whips?”

“Nudges. Gestures of inattention. If everybody was thinking of the Res Publica would there be any need for bombs?”

He pursued his advantage. “It’s all nonsense to suppose people think of politics because they are in ‘em. As well suppose that the passengers on a liner understand the engines, or soldiers a war. Before men can think of to-morrow, they must think of to-day. Before they can think of others, they must be sure about themselves. First of all, food; the private, the personal economic worry. Am I safe for food? Then sex, and until one is tranquil and not ashamed, not irritated and dissatisfied, how can one care for other people, or for next year or the Order of the World? How can one, Benham?”

He seized the illustration at hand. “Here we are in Warsaw — not a month after bomb-throwing and Cossack charging. Windows have still to be mended, smashed doors restored. There’s blood-stains still on some of the houses. There are hundreds of people in the Citadel and in the Ochrana prison. This morning there were executions. Is it anything more than an eddy in the real life of the place? Watch the customers in the shops, the crowd in the streets, the men in the cafes who stare at the passing women. They are all swallowed up again in their own business. They just looked up as the Cossacks galloped past; they just shifted a bit when the bullets spat....”

And when the streets of Moscow were agog with the grotesque amazing adventure of the Potemkin mutineers, Prothero was in the full tide of the private romance that severed him from Benham and sent him back to Cambridge — changed.

Before they reached Moscow Benham was already becoming accustomed to disregard Prothero. He was looking over him at the vast heaving trouble of Russia, which now was like a sea that tumbles under the hurrying darknesses of an approaching storm. In those days it looked as though it must be an overwhelming storm. He was drinking in the wide and massive Russian effects, the drifting

crowds in the entangling streets, the houses with their strange lettering in black and gold, the innumerable barbaric churches, the wildly driven droshkys, the sombre red fortress of the Kremlin, with its bulbous churches clustering up into the sky, the crosses, the innumerable gold crosses, the mad church of St. Basil, carrying the Russian note beyond the pitch of permissible caricature, and in this setting the obscure drama of clustering, staring, sash-wearing peasants, long-haired students, sane-eyed women, a thousand varieties of uniform, a running and galloping to and fro of messengers, a flutter of little papers, whispers, shouts, shots, a drama elusive and portentous, a gathering of forces, an accumulation of tension going on to a perpetual clash and clamour of bells. Benham had brought letters of introduction to a variety of people, some had vanished, it seemed. They were "away," the porters said, and they continued to be "away," — it was the formula, he learnt, for arrest; others were evasive, a few showed themselves extraordinarily anxious to inform him about things, to explain themselves and things about them exhaustively. One young student took him to various meetings and showed him in great detail the scene of the recent murder of the Grand Duke Sergius. The buildings opposite the old French cannons were still under repair. "The assassin stood just here. The bomb fell there, look! right down there towards the gate; that was where they found his arm. He was torn to fragments. He was scraped up. He was mixed with the horses...."

Every one who talked spoke of the outbreak of revolution as a matter of days or at the utmost weeks. And whatever question Benham chose to ask these talkers were prepared to answer. Except one. "And after the revolution," he asked, "what then?..." Then they waved their hands, and failed to convey meanings by reassuring gestures.

He was absorbed in his effort to understand this universal ominous drift towards a conflict. He was trying to piece together a process, if it was one and the same process, which involved riots in Lodz, fighting at Libau, wild disorder at Odessa, remote colossal battlings in Manchuria, the obscure movements of a disastrous fleet lost somewhere now in the Indian seas, steaming clumsily to its fate, he was trying to rationalize it all in his mind, to comprehend its

direction. He was struggling strenuously with the obscurities of the language in which these things were being discussed about him, a most difficult language demanding new sets of visual images because of its strange alphabet. Is it any wonder that for a time he failed to observe that Prothero was involved in some entirely disconnected affair.

They were staying at the big Cosmopolis bazaar in the Theatre Square. Thither, through the doors that are opened by distraught-looking men with peacocks' feathers round their caps, came Benham's friends and guides to take him out and show him this and that. At first Prothero always accompanied Benham on these expeditions; then he began to make excuses. He would stay behind in the hotel. Then when Benham returned Prothero would have disappeared. When the porter was questioned about Prothero his nescience was profound.

One night no Prothero was discoverable at any hour, and Benham, who wanted to discuss a project for going on to Kieff and Odessa, was alarmed.

"Moscow is a late place," said Benham's student friend. "You need not be anxious until after four or five in the morning. It will be quite time — QUITE time to be anxious to-morrow. He may be — close at hand."

When Benham hunted up Prothero in his room next morning he found him sleepy and irritable.

"I don't trouble if YOU are late," said Prothero, sitting up in his bed with a red resentful face and crumpled hair. "I wasn't born yesterday."

"I wanted to talk about leaving Moscow."

"I don't want to leave Moscow."

"But Odessa — Odessa is the centre of interest just now."

"I want to stay in Moscow."

Benham looked baffled.

Prothero stuck up his knees and rested his night-shirted arms upon them. "I don't want to leave Moscow," he said, "and I'm not going to do so."

"But haven't we done—"

Prothero interrupted. "You may. But I haven't. We're not after the

same things. Things that interest you, Benham, don't interest me. I've found — different things."

His expression was extraordinarily defiant.

"I want," he went on, "to put our affairs on a different footing. Now you've opened the matter we may as well go into it. You were good enough to bring me here.... There was a sort of understanding we were working together.... We aren't.... The long and short of it is, Benham, I want to pay you for my journey here and go on my own — independently."

His eye and voice achieved a fierceness that Benham found nearly incredible in him.

Something that had got itself overlooked in the press of other matters jerked back into Benham's memory. It popped back so suddenly that for an instant he wanted to laugh. He turned towards the window, picked his way among Prothero's carelessly dropped garments, and stood for a moment staring into the square, with its drifting, assembling and dispersing fleet of trains and its long line of blue-coated IZVOSHTCHIKS. Then he turned.

"Billy," he said, "didn't I see you the other evening driving towards the Hermitage?"

"Yes," said Prothero, and added, "that's it."

"You were with a lady."

"And she IS a lady," said Prothero, so deeply moved that his face twitched as though he was going to weep.

"She's a Russian?"

"She had an English mother. Oh, you needn't stand there and look so damned ironical! She's — she's a woman. She's a thing of kindness...."

He was too full to go on.

"Billy, old boy," said Benham, distressed, "I don't want to be ironical—"

Prothero had got his voice again.

"You'd better know," he said, "you'd better know. She's one of those women who live in this hotel."

"Live in this hotel!"

"On the fourth floor. Didn't you know? It's the way in most of these big Russian hotels. They come down and sit about after lunch

and dinner. A woman with a yellow ticket. Oh! I don't care. I don't care a rap. She's been kind to me; she's — she's dear to me. How are you to understand? I shall stop in Moscow. I shall take her to England. I can't live without her, Benham. And then — And then you come worrying me to come to your damned Odessa!"

And suddenly this extraordinary young man put his hands to his face as though he feared to lose it and would hold it on, and after an apoplectic moment burst noisily into tears. They ran between his fingers. "Get out of my room," he shouted, suffocatingly. "What business have you to come prying on me?"

Benham sat down on a chair in the middle of the room and stared round-eyed at his friend. His hands were in his pockets. For a time he said nothing.

"Billy," he began at last, and stopped again. "Billy, in this country somehow one wants to talk like a Russian. Billy, my dear — I'm not your father, I'm not your judge. I'm — unreasonably fond of you. It's not my business to settle what is right or wrong for you. If you want to stay in Moscow, stay in Moscow. Stay here, and stay as my guest...."

He stopped and remained staring at his friend for a little space.

"I didn't know," said Prothero brokenly; "I didn't know it was possible to get so fond of a person...."

Benham stood up. He had never found Prothero so attractive and so abominable in his life before.

"I shall go to Odessa alone, Billy. I'll make things all right here before I go...."

He closed the door behind him and went in a state of profound thought to his own room....

Presently Prothero came to him with a vague inopportune desire to explain what so evidently did not need explaining. He walked about the room trying ways of putting it, while Benham packed.

In an unaccountable way Prothero's bristling little mind seemed to have shrunken to something sleek and small.

"I wish," he said, "you could stay for a later train and have lunch and meet her. She's not the ordinary thing. She's — different."

Benham plumbed depths of wisdom. "Billy," he said, "no woman IS the ordinary thing. They are all — different...."

For a time this affair of Prothero's seemed to be a matter as disconnected from the Research Magnificent as one could imagine any matter to be. While Benham went from Moscow and returned, and travelled hither and thither, and involved himself more and more in the endless tangled threads of the revolutionary movement in Russia, Prothero was lost to all those large issues in the development of his personal situation. He contributed nothing to Benham's thought except attempts at discouragement. He reiterated his declaration that all the vast stress and change of Russian national life was going on because it was universally disregarded. "I tell you, as I told you before, that nobody is attending. You think because all Moscow, all Russia, is in the picture, that everybody is concerned. Nobody is concerned. Nobody cares what is happening. Even the men who write in newspapers and talk at meetings about it don't care. They are thinking of their dinners, of their clothes, of their money, of their wives. They hurry home...."

That was his excuse.

Manifestly it was an excuse.

His situation developed into remarkable complications of jealousy and divided counsels that Benham found altogether incomprehensible. To Benham in those days everything was very simple in this business of love. The aristocrat had to love ideally; that was all. He had to love Amanda. He and Amanda were now very deeply in love again, more in love, he felt, than they had ever been before. They were now writing love-letters to each other and enjoying a separation that was almost voluptuous. She found in the epistolatory treatment of her surrender to him and to the natural fate of women, a delightful exercise for her very considerable powers of expression. Life pointed now wonderfully to the great time ahead when there would be a Cheetah cub in the world, and meanwhile the Cheetah loped about the wild world upon a mighty quest. In such terms she put it. Such foolishness written in her invincibly square and youthful hand went daily from London to Russia, and stacked up against his return in the porter's office at the Cosmopolis Bazaar or pursued him down through the jarring disorders of south-west

Russia, or waited for him at ill-chosen post-offices that deflected his journeyings wastefully or in several instances went altogether astray. Perhaps they supplied self-educating young strikers in the postal service with useful exercises in the deciphering of manuscript English. He wrote back five hundred different ways of saying that he loved her extravagantly....

It seemed to Benham in those days that he had found the remedy and solution of all those sexual perplexities that distressed the world; Heroic Love to its highest note — and then you go about your business. It seemed impossible not to be happy and lift one's chin high and diffuse a bracing kindliness among the unfortunate multitudes who stewed in affliction and hate because they had failed as yet to find this simple, culminating elucidation. And Prothero — Prothero, too, was now achieving the same grand elementariness, out of his lusts and protests and general physical squalor he had flowered into love. For a time it is true it made rather an ineffective companion of him, but this was the mere goose-stepping for the triumphal march; this way ultimately lay exaltation. Benham had had as yet but a passing glimpse of this Anglo-Russian, who was a lady and altogether unlike her fellows; he had seen her for a doubtful second or so as she and Prothero drove past him, and his impression was of a rather little creature, white-faced with dusky hair under a red cap, paler and smaller but with something in her, a quiet alertness, that gave her a touch of kinship with Amanda. And if she liked old Prothero — And, indeed, she must like old Prothero or could she possibly have made him so deeply in love with her?

They must stick to each other, and then, presently, Prothero's soul would wake up and face the world again. What did it matter what she had been?

Through stray shots and red conflict, long tediums of strained anxiety and the physical dangers of a barbaric country staggering towards revolution, Benham went with his own love like a lamp within him and this affair of Prothero's reflecting its light, and he was quite prepared for the most sympathetic and liberal behaviour when he came back to Moscow to make the lady's acquaintance. He intended to help Prothero to marry and take her back to Cambridge, and to assist by every possible means in destroying and forgetting the

official yellow ticket that defined her status in Moscow. But he reckoned without either Prothero or the young lady in this expectation.

It only got to him slowly through his political preoccupations that there were obscure obstacles to this manifest course. Prothero hesitated; the lady expressed doubts.

On closer acquaintance her resemblance to Amanda diminished. It was chiefly a similarity of complexion. She had a more delicate face than Amanda, and its youthful brightness was deadened; she had none of Amanda's glow, and she spoke her mother's language with a pretty halting limp that was very different from Amanda's clear decisions.

She put her case compactly.

"I would not DO in Cambridge," she said with an infinitesimal glance at Prothero.

"Mr. Benham," she said, and her manner had the gravity of a woman of affairs, "now do you see me in Cambridge? Now do you see me? Kept outside the walls? In a little DATCHA? With no occupation? Just to amuse him."

And on another occasion when Prothero was not with her she achieved still completer lucidity.

"I would come if I thought he wanted me to come," she said. "But you see if I came he would not want me to come. Because then he would have me and so he wouldn't want me. He would just have the trouble. And I am not sure if I should be happy in Cambridge. I am not sure I should be happy enough to make him happy. It is a very learned and intelligent and charming society, of course; but here, THINGS HAPPEN. At Cambridge nothing happens — there is only education. There is no revolution in Cambridge; there are not even sinful people to be sorry for.... And he says himself that Cambridge people are particular. He says they are liberal but very, very particular, and perhaps I could not always act my part well. Sometimes I am not always well behaved. When there is music I behave badly sometimes, or when I am bored. He says the Cambridge people are so liberal that they do not mind what you are, but he says they are so particular that they mind dreadfully how you are what you are.... So that it comes to exactly the same thing...."

“Anna Alexievna,” said Benham suddenly, “are you in love with Prothero?”

Her manner became conscientiously scientific.

“He is very kind and very generous — too generous. He keeps sending for more money — hundreds of roubles, I try to prevent him.”

“Were you EVER in love?”

“Of course. But it’s all gone long ago. It was like being hungry. Only very fine hungry. Exquisite hungry.... And then being disgusted....”

“He is in love with you.”

“What is love?” said Anna. “He is grateful. He is by nature grateful.” She smiled a smile, like the smile of a pale Madonna who looks down on her bambino.

“And you love nothing?”

“I love Russia — and being alone, being completely alone. When I am dead perhaps I shall be alone. Not even my own body will touch me then.”

Then she added, “But I shall be sorry when he goes.”

Afterwards Benham talked to Prothero alone. “Your Anna,” he said, “is rather wonderful. At first, I tell you now frankly I did not like her very much, I thought she looked ‘used,’ she drank vodka at lunch, she was gay, uneasily; she seemed a sham thing. All that was prejudice. She thinks; she’s generous, she’s fine.”

“She’s tragic,” said Prothero as though it was the same thing.

He spoke as though he noted an objection. His next remark confirmed this impression. “That’s why I can’t take her back to Cambridge,” he said.

“You see, Benham,” he went on, “she’s human. She’s not really feminine. I mean, she’s — unsexed. She isn’t fitted to be a wife or a mother any more. We’ve talked about the possible life in England, very plainly. I’ve explained what a household in Cambridge would mean.... It doesn’t attract her.... In a way she’s been let out from womanhood, forced out of womanhood, and I see now that when women are let out from womanhood there’s no putting them back. I could give a lecture on Anna. I see now that if women are going to be wives and mothers and homekeepers and ladies, they must be got

ready for it from the beginning, sheltered, never really let out into the wild chances of life. She has been. Bitterly. She's REALLY emancipated. And it's let her out into a sort of nothingness. She's no longer a woman, and she isn't a man. She ought to be able to go on her own — like a man. But I can't take her back to Cambridge. Even for her sake."

His perplexed eyes regarded Benham.

"You won't be happy in Cambridge — alone," said Benham.

"Oh, damnably not! But what can I do? I had at first some idea of coming to Moscow for good — teaching."

He paused. "Impossible. I'm worth nothing here. I couldn't have kept her."

"Then what are you going to do, Billy?"

"I don't KNOW what I'm going to do, I tell you. I live for the moment. To-morrow we are going out into the country."

"I don't understand," said Benham with a gesture of resignation. "It seems to me that if a man and woman love each other — well, they insist upon each other. What is to happen to her if you leave her in Moscow?"

"Damnation! Is there any need to ask that?"

"Take her to Cambridge, man. And if Cambridge objects, teach Cambridge better manners."

Prothero's face was suddenly transfigured with rage.

"I tell you she won't come!" he said.

"Billy!" said Benham, "you should make her!"

"I can't."

"If a man loves a woman he can make her do anything—"

"But I don't love her like that," said Prothero, shrill with anger. "I tell you I don't love her like that."

Then he lunged into further deeps. "It's the other men," he said, "it's the things that have been. Don't you understand? Can't you understand? The memories — she must have memories — they come between us. It's something deeper than reason. It's in one's spine and under one's nails. One could do anything, I perceive, for one's very own woman...."

"MAKE her your very own woman, said the exponent of heroic love.

“I shirk deeds, Benham, but you shirk facts. How could any man make her his very own woman now? You — you don’t seem to understand — ANYTHING. She’s nobody’s woman — for ever. That — that might-have-been has gone for ever.... It’s nerves — a passion of the nerves. There’s a cruelty in life and — She’s KIND to me. She’s so kind to me....”

And then again Prothero was weeping like a vexed child.

15

The end of Prothero’s first love affair came to Benham in broken fragments in letters. When he looked for Anna Alexievna in December — he never learnt her surname — he found she had left the Cosmopolis Bazaar soon after Prothero’s departure and he could not find whither she had gone. He never found her again. Moscow and Russia had swallowed her up.

Of course she and Prothero parted; that was a foregone conclusion. But Prothero’s manner of parting succeeded in being at every phase a shock to Benham’s ideas. It was clear he went off almost callously; it would seem there was very little crying. Towards the end it was evident that the two had quarrelled. The tears only came at the very end of all. It was almost as if he had got through the passion and was glad to go. Then came regret, a regret that increased in geometrical proportion with every mile of distance.

In Warsaw it was that grief really came to Prothero. He had some hours there and he prowled the crowded streets, seeing girls and women happy with their lovers, abroad upon bright expeditions and full of delicious secrets, girls and women who ever and again flashed out some instant resemblance to Anna....

In Berlin he stopped a night and almost decided that he would go back. “But now I had the damned frontier,” he wrote, “between us.”

It was so entirely in the spirit of Prothero, Benham thought, to let the “damned frontier” tip the balance against him.

Then came a scrawl of passionate confession, so passionate that it seemed as if Prothero had been transfigured. “I can’t stand this business,” he wrote. “It has things in it, possibilities of emotional disturbance — you can have no idea! In the train — luckily I was

alone in the compartment — I sat and thought, and suddenly, I could not help it, I was weeping — noisy weeping, an uproar! A beastly German came and stood in the corridor to stare. I had to get out of the train. It is disgraceful, it is monstrous we should be made like this....

"Here I am stranded in Hanover with nothing to do but to write to you about my dismal feelings...."

After that surely there was nothing before a broken-hearted Prothero but to go on with his trailing wing to Trinity and a life of inappeasable regrets; but again Benham reckoned without the invincible earthliness of his friend. Prothero stayed three nights in Paris.

"There is an extraordinary excitement about Paris," he wrote. "A levity. I suspect the gypsum in the subsoil — some as yet undescribed radiations. Suddenly the world looks brightly cynical.... None of those tear-compelling German emanations....

"And, Benham, I have found a friend.

"A woman. Of course you will laugh, you will sneer. You do not understand these things.... Yet they are so simple. It was the strangest accident brought us together. There was something that drew us together. A sort of instinct. Near the Boulevard Poissoniere...."

"Good heavens!" said Benham. "A sort of instinct!"

"I told her all about Anna!"

"Good Lord!" cried Benham.

"She understood. Perfectly. None of your so-called 'respectable' women could have understood.... At first I intended merely to talk to her...."

Benham crumpled the letter in his hand.

"Little Anna Alexievna!" he said, "you were too clean for him."

16

Benham had a vision of Prothero returning from all this foreign travel meekly, pensively, a little sadly, and yet not without a kind of relief, to the grey mildness of Trinity. He saw him, capped and gowned, and restored to academic dignity again, nodding greetings, resuming friendships.

The little man merged again into his rare company of discreet Benedicts and restrained celibates at the high tables. They ate on in their mature wisdom long after the undergraduates had fled. Presently they would withdraw processionally to the combination room....

There would be much to talk about over the wine.

Benham speculated what account Prothero would give of Moscow....

He laughed abruptly.

And with that laugh Prothero dropped out of Benham's world for a space of years. There may have been other letters, but if so they were lost in the heaving troubles of a revolution-strained post-office. Perhaps to this day they linger sere and yellow in some forgotten pigeon-hole in Kishinev or Ekaterinoslav....

17

In November, after an adventure in the trader's quarter of Kieff which had brought him within an inch of death, and because an emotional wave had swept across him and across his correspondence with Amanda, Benham went back suddenly to England and her. He wanted very greatly to see her and also he wanted to make certain arrangements about his property. He returned by way of Hungary, and sent telegrams like shouts of excitement whenever the train stopped for a sufficient time. "Old Leopard, I am coming, I am coming," he telegraphed, announcing his coming for the fourth time. It was to be the briefest of visits, very passionate, the mutual refreshment of two noble lovers, and then he was returning to Russia again.

Amanda was at Chexington, and there he found her installed in the utmost dignity of expectant maternity. Like many other people he had been a little disposed to regard the bearing of children as a common human experience; at Chexington he came to think of it as a rare and sacramental function. Amanda had become very beautiful in quiet, grey, dove-like tones; her sun-touched, boy's complexion had given way to a soft glow of the utmost loveliness, her brisk little neck that had always reminded him of the stalk of a flower was now

softened and rounded; her eyes were tender, and she moved about the place in the manner of one who is vowed to a great sacrifice. She dominated the scene, and Lady Marayne, with a certain astonishment in her eyes and a smouldering disposition to irony, was the half-sympathetic, half-resentful priestess of her daughter-in-law's unparalleled immolation. The MOTIF of motherhood was everywhere, and at his bedside he found — it had been put there for him by Amanda — among much other exaltation of woman's mission, that most wonderful of all philoprogenitive stories, Hudson's CRYSTAL AGE.

Everybody at Chexington had an air of being grouped about the impending fact. An epidemic of internal troubles, it is true, kept Sir Godfrey in the depths of London society, but to make up for his absence Mrs. Morris had taken a little cottage down by the river and the Wilder girls were with her, both afire with fine and subtle feelings and both, it seemed, and more particularly Betty, prepared to be keenly critical of Benham's attitude.

He did a little miss his cue in these exaltations, because he had returned in a rather different vein of exaltation.

In missing it he was assisted by Amanda herself, who had at moments an effect upon him of a priestess confidentially disrobed. It was as if she put aside for him something official, something sincerely maintained, necessary, but at times a little irksome. It was as if she was glad to take him into her confidence and unbend. Within the pre-natal Amanda an impish Amanda still lingered.

There were aspects of Amanda that it was manifest dear Betty must never know....

But the real Amanda of that November visit even in her most unpontifical moods did not quite come up to the imagined Amanda who had drawn him home across Europe. At times she was extraordinarily jolly. They had two or three happy walks about the Chexington woods; that year the golden weather of October had flowed over into November, and except for a carpet of green and gold under the horse-chestnuts most of the leaves were still on the trees. Gleams of her old wanton humour shone on him. And then would come something else, something like a shadow across the world, something he had quite forgotten since his idea of heroic love

had flooded him, something that reminded him of those long explanations with Mr. Rathbone-Sanders that had never been explained, and of the curate in the doorway of the cottage and his unaccountable tears.

On the afternoon of his arrival at Chexington he was a little surprised to find Sir Philip Easton coming through the house into the garden, with an accustomed familiarity. Sir Philip perceived him with a start that was instantly controlled, and greeted him with unnatural ease.

Sir Philip, it seemed, was fishing and reading and playing cricket in the neighbourhood, which struck Benham as a poor way of spending the summer, the sort of soft holiday a man learns to take from scholars and literary men. A man like Sir Philip, he thought, ought to have been aviating or travelling.

Moreover, when Sir Philip greeted Amanda it seemed to Benham that there was a flavour of established association in their manner. But then Sir Philip was also very assiduous with Lady Marayne. She called him "Pip," and afterwards Amanda called across the tennis-court to him, "Pip!" And then he called her "Amanda." When the Wilder girls came up to join the tennis he was just as brotherly....

The next day he came to lunch.

During that meal Benham became more aware than he had ever been before of the peculiar deep expressiveness of this young man's eyes. They watched him and they watched Amanda with a solicitude that seemed at once pained and tender. And there was something about Amanda, a kind of hard brightness, an impartiality and an air of something undefinably suspended, that gave Benham an intuitive certitude that that afternoon Sir Philip would be spoken to privately, and that then he would pack up and go away in a state of illumination from Chexington. But before he could be spoken to he contrived to speak to Benham.

They were left to smoke after lunch, and then it was he took advantage of a pause to commit his little indiscretion.

"Mrs. Benham," he said, "looks amazingly well — extraordinarily well, don't you think?"

"Yes," said Benham, startled. "Yes. She certainly keeps very well."

“She misses you terribly,” said Sir Philip; “it is a time when a woman misses her husband. But, of course, she does not want to hamper your work....”

Benham felt it was very kind of him to take so intimate an interest in these matters, but on the spur of the moment he could find no better expression for this than a grunt.

“You don’t mind,” said the young man with a slight catch in the breath that might have been apprehensive, “that I sometimes bring her books and flowers and things? Do what little I can to keep life interesting down here? It’s not very congenial.... She’s so wonderful — I think she is the most wonderful woman in the world.”

Benham perceived that so far from being a modern aristocrat he was really a primitive barbarian in these matters.

“I’ve no doubt,” he said, “that my wife has every reason to be grateful for your attentions.”

In the little pause that followed Benham had a feeling that Sir Philip was engendering something still more personal. If so, he might be constrained to invert very gently but very firmly the bowl of chrysanthemums over Sir Philip’s head, or kick him in an improving manner. He had a ridiculous belief that Sir Philip would probably take anything of the sort very touchingly. He scrambled in his mind for some remark that would avert this possibility.

“Have you ever been in Russia?” he asked hastily. “It is the most wonderful country in Europe. I had an odd adventure near Kiev. During a pogrom.”

And he drowned the developing situation in a flood of description....

But it was not so easy to drown the little things that were presently thrown out by Lady Marayne. They were so much more in the air....

18

Sir Philip suddenly got out of the picture even as Benham had foreseen.

“Easton has gone away,” he remarked three days later to Amanda.

“I told him to go. He is a bore with you about. But otherwise he is

rather a comfort, Cheetah." She meditated upon Sir Philip. "And he's an HONOURABLE man," she said. "He's safe...."

19

After that visit it was that the notes upon love and sex began in earnest. The scattered memoranda upon the perfectness of heroic love for the modern aristocrat ended abruptly. Instead there came the first draft for a study of jealousy. The note was written in pencil on Chexington notepaper and manifestly that had been supported on the ribbed cover of a book. There was a little computation in the corner, converting forty-five degrees Reaumur into degrees Fahrenheit, which made White guess it had been written in the Red Sea. But, indeed, it had been written in a rather amateurishly stoked corridor-train on Benham's journey to the gathering revolt in Moscow....

"I think I have been disposed to underrate the force of sexual jealousy.... I thought it was something essentially contemptible, something that one dismissed and put behind oneself in the mere effort to be aristocratic, but I begin to realize that it is not quite so easily settled with....

"One likes to know.... Possibly one wants to know too much.... In phases of fatigue, and particularly in phases of sleeplessness, when one is leaving all that one cares for behind, it becomes an irrational torment....

"And it is not only in oneself that I am astonished by the power of this base motive. I see, too, in the queer business of Prothero how strongly jealousy, how strongly the sense of proprietorship, weighs with a man....

"There is no clear reason why one should insist upon another human being being one's ownest own — utterly one's own....

"There is, of course, no clear reason for most human motives....

"One does....

"There is something dishonouring in distrust — to both the distrusted and the one who distrusts...."

After that, apparently, it had been too hot and stuffy to continue.

20

Benham did not see Amanda again until after the birth of their child. He spent his Christmas in Moscow, watching the outbreak, the fitful fighting and the subsequent break-up, of the revolution, and taking care of a lost and helpless English family whose father had gone astray temporarily on the way home from Baku. Then he went southward to Rostov and thence to Astrakhan. Here he really began his travels. He determined to get to India by way of Herat and for the first time in his life rode out into an altogether lawless wilderness. He went on obstinately because he found himself disposed to funk the journey, and because discouragements were put in his way. He was soon quite cut off from all the ways of living he had known. He learnt what it is to be flea-bitten, saddle-sore, hungry and, above all, thirsty. He was haunted by a dread of fever, and so contrived strange torments for himself with overdoses of quinine. He ceased to be traceable from Chexington in March, and he reappeared in the form of a telegram from Karachi demanding news in May. He learnt he was the father of a man-child and that all was well with Amanda.

He had not expected to be so long away from any communication with the outer world, and something in the nature of a stricken conscience took him back to England. He found a second William Porphyry in the world, dominating Chexington, and Amanda tenderly triumphant and passionate, the Madonna enthroned. For William Porphyry he could feel no emotion. William Porphyry was very red and ugly and protesting, feeble and aggressive, a matter for a skilled nurse. To see him was to ignore him and dispel a dream. It was to Amanda Benham turned again.

For some days he was content to adore his Madonna and listen to the familiar flatteries of her love. He was a leaner, riper man, Amanda said, and wiser, so that she was afraid of him....

And then he became aware that she was requiring him to stay at her side. “We have both had our adventures,” she said, which struck him as an odd phrase.

It forced itself upon his obstinate incredulity that all those conceptions of heroic love and faithfulness he had supposed to be so clearly understood between them had vanished from her mind. She had absolutely forgotten that twilight moment at the window which had seemed to him the crowning instant, the real marriage of their

lives. It had gone, it had left no recoverable trace in her. And upon his interpretations of that he had loved her passionately for a year. She was back at exactly the ideas and intentions that ruled her during their first settlement in London. She wanted a joint life in the social world of London, she demanded his presence, his attention, the daily practical evidences of love. It was all very well for him to be away when the child was coming, but now everything was different. Now he must stay by her.

This time he argued no case. These issues he had settled for ever. Even an indignant dissertation from Lady Marayne, a dissertation that began with appeals and ended in taunts, did not move him. Behind these things now was India. The huge problems of India had laid an unshakeable hold upon his imagination. He had seen Russia, and he wanted to balance that picture by a vision of the east....

He saw Easton only once during a week-end at Chexington. The young man displayed no further disposition to be confidentially sentimental. But he seemed to have something on his mind. And Amanda said not a word about him. He was a young man above suspicion, Benham felt....

And from his departure the quality of the correspondence of these two larger carnivores began to change. Except for the repetition of accustomed endearments, they ceased to be love letters in any sense of the word. They dealt chiefly with the "Cub," and even there Benham felt presently that the enthusiasm diminished. A new amazing quality for Amanda appeared — triteness. The very writing of her letters changed as though it had suddenly lost backbone. Her habitual liveliness of phrasing lost its point. Had she lost her animation? Was she ill unknowingly? Where had the light gone? It was as if her attention was distracted.... As if every day when she wrote her mind was busy about something else.

Abruptly at last he understood. A fact that had never been stated, never formulated, never in any way admitted, was suddenly pointed to convergently by a thousand indicating fingers, and beyond question perceived to be THERE....

He left a record of that moment of realization.

"Suddenly one night I woke up and lay still, and it was as if I had never seen Amanda before. Now I saw her plainly, I saw her with

that same dreadful clearness that sometimes comes at dawn, a pitiless, a scientific distinctness that has neither light nor shadow....

"Of course," I said, and then presently I got up very softly....

"I wanted to get out of my intolerable, close, personal cabin. I wanted to feel the largeness of the sky. I went out upon the deck. We were off the coast of Madras, and when I think of that moment, there comes back to me also the faint flavour of spice in the air, the low line of the coast, the cool flooding abundance of the Indian moonlight, the swish of the black water against the side of the ship. And a perception of infinite loss, as if the limitless heavens above this earth and below to the very uttermost star were just one boundless cavity from which delight had fled....

"Of course I had lost her. I knew it with absolute certainty. I knew it from her insecure temperament, her adventurousness, her needs. I knew it from every line she had written me in the last three months. I knew it intuitively. She had been unfaithful. She must have been unfaithful.

"What had I been dreaming about to think that it would not be so?"

21

"Now let me write down plainly what I think of these matters. Let me be at least honest with myself, whatever self-contradictions I may have been led into by force of my passions. Always I have despised jealousy....

"Only by the conquest of four natural limitations is the aristocratic life to be achieved. They come in a certain order, and in that order the spirit of man is armed against them less and less efficiently. Of fear and my struggle against fear I have told already. I am fearful. I am a physical coward until I can bring shame and anger to my assistance, but in overcoming fear I have been helped by the whole body of human tradition. Every one, the basest creatures, every Hottentot, every stunted creature that ever breathed poison in a slum, knows that the instinctive constitution of man is at fault here and that fear is shameful and must be subdued. The race is on one's side. And so there is a vast traditional support for a man against the Second

Limitation, the limitation of physical indulgence. It is not so universal as the first, there is a grinning bawling humour on the side of grossness, but common pride is against it. And in this matter my temperament has been my help: I am fastidious, I eat little, drink little, and feel a shivering recoil from excess. It is no great virtue; it happens so; it is something in the nerves of my skin. I cannot endure myself unshaven or in any way unclean; I am tormented by dirty hands or dirty blood or dirty memories, and after I had once loved Amanda I could not — unless some irrational impulse to get equal with her had caught me — have broken my faith to her, whatever breach there was in her faith to me....

"I see that in these matters I am cleaner than most men and more easily clean; and it may be that it is in the vein of just that distinctive virtue that I fell so readily into a passion of resentment and anger.

"I despised a jealous man. There is a traditional discredit of jealousy, not so strong as that against cowardice, but still very strong. But the general contempt of jealousy is curiously wrapped up with the supposition that there is no cause for jealousy, that it is unreasonable suspicion. Given a cause then tradition speaks with an uncertain voice....

"I see now that I despised jealousy because I assumed that it was impossible for Amanda to love any one but me; it was intolerable to imagine anything else, I insisted upon believing that she was as fastidious as myself and as faithful as myself, made indeed after my image, and I went on disregarding the most obvious intimations that she was not, until that still moment in the Indian Ocean, when silently, gently as a drowned body might rise out of the depths of a pool, that knowledge of love dead and honour gone for ever floated up into my consciousness.

"And then I felt that Amanda had cheated me! Outrageously. Abominably.

"Now, so far as my intelligence goes, there is not a cloud upon this question. My demand upon Amanda was outrageous and I had no right whatever to her love or loyalty. I must have that very clear....

"This aristocratic life, as I conceive it, must be, except accidentally here and there, incompatible with the domestic life. It means going hither and thither in the universe of thought as much as

in the universe of matter, it means adventure, it means movement and adventure that must needs be hopelessly encumbered by an inseparable associate, it means self-imposed responsibilities that will not fit into the welfare of a family. In all ages, directly society had risen above the level of a barbaric tribal village, this need of a release from the family for certain necessary types of people has been recognized. It was met sometimes informally, sometimes formally, by the growth and establishment of special classes and orders, of priests, monks, nuns, of pledged knights, of a great variety of non-family people, whose concern was the larger collective life that opens out beyond the simple necessities and duties and loyalties of the steading and of the craftsman's house. Sometimes, but not always, that release took the form of celibacy; but besides that there have been a hundred institutional variations of the common life to meet the need of the special man, the man who must go deep and the man who must go far. A vowed celibacy ceased to be a tolerable rule for an aristocracy directly the eugenic idea entered the mind of man, because a celibate aristocracy means the abandonment of the racial future to a proletariat of base unleaderly men. That was plain to Plato. It was plain to Campanelea. It was plain to the Protestant reformers. But the world has never yet gone on to the next step beyond that recognition, to the recognition of feminine aristocrats, rulers and the mates of rulers, as untrammelled by domestic servitudes and family relationships as the men of their kind. That I see has always been my idea since in my undergraduate days I came under the spell of Plato. It was a matter of course that my first gift to Amanda should be his REPUBLIC. I loved Amanda transfigured in that dream....

"There are no such women....

"It is no excuse for me that I thought she was like-minded with myself. I had no sound reason for supposing that. I did suppose that. I did not perceive that not only was she younger than myself, but that while I had been going through a mill of steely education, kept close, severely exercised, polished by discussion, she had but the weak training of a not very good school, some scrappy reading, the vague discussions of village artists, and the draped and decorated novelties of the 'advanced.' It all went to nothing on the impact of the world....

She showed herself the woman the world has always known, no miracle, and the alternative was for me to give myself to her in the ancient way, to serve her happiness, to control her and delight and companion her, or to let her go.

"The normal woman centres upon herself; her mission is her own charm and her own beauty and her own setting; her place is her home. She demands the concentration of a man. Not to be able to command that is her failure. Not to give her that is to shame her. As I had shamed Amanda...."

22

"There are no such women." He had written this in and struck it out, and then at some later time written it in again. There it stayed now as his last persuasion, but it set White thinking and doubting. And, indeed, there was another sheet of pencilled broken stuff that seemed to glance at quite another type of womanhood.

23

"It is clear that the women aristocrats who must come to the remaking of the world will do so in spite of limitations at least as great as those from which the aristocratic spirit of man escapes. These women must become aristocratic through their own innate impulse, they must be self-called to their lives, exactly as men must be; there is no making an aristocrat without a predisposition for rule and nobility. And they have to discover and struggle against just exactly the limitations that we have to struggle against. They have to conquer not only fear but indulgence, indulgence of a softer, more insidious quality, and jealousy — proprietorship....

"It is as natural to want a mate as to want bread, and a thousand times in my work and in my wanderings I have thought of a mate and desired a mate. A mate — not a possession. It is a need almost naively simple. If only one could have a woman who thought of one and with one! Though she were on the other side of the world and busied about a thousand things....

"'WITH one,' I see it must be rather than 'OF one.' That 'of one'

is just the unexpurgated egotistical demand coming back again....

"Man is a mating creature. It is not good to be alone. But mating means a mate....

"We should be lovers, of course; that goes without saying....

"And yet not specialized lovers, not devoted, ATTENDING lovers. 'Dancing attendance' — as they used to say. We should meet upon our ways as the great carnivores do....

"That at any rate was a sound idea. Though we only played with it.

"But that mate desire is just a longing that can have no possible satisfaction now for me. What is the good of dreaming? Life and chance have played a trick upon my body and soul. I am mated, though I am mated to a phantom. I loved and I love Arnanda, not Easton's Amanda, but Amanda in armour, the Amanda of my dreams. Sense, and particularly the sense of beauty, lies deeper than reason in us. There can be no mate for me now unless she comes with Amanda's voice and Amanda's face and Amanda's quick movements and her clever hands...."

24

"Why am I so ungrateful to her still for all the happiness she gave me?

"There were things between us two as lovers, — love, things more beautiful than anything else in the world, things that set the mind hunting among ineffectual images in a search for impossible expression, images of sunlight shining through blood-red petals, images of moonlight in a scented garden, of marble gleaming in the shade, of far-off wonderful music heard at dusk in a great stillness, of fairies dancing softly, of floating happiness and stirring delights, of joys as keen and sudden as the knife of an assassin, assassin's knives made out of tears, tears that are happiness, wordless things; and surprises, expectations, gratitudes, sudden moments of contemplation, the sight of a soft eyelid closed in sleep, shadowy tones in the sound of a voice heard unexpectedly; sweet, dear magical things that I can find no words for....

"If she was a goddess to me, should it be any affair of mine that

she was not a goddess to herself; that she could hold all this that has been between us more cheaply than I did? It does not change one jot of it for me. At the time she did not hold it cheaply. She forgets where I do not forget....”

25

Such were the things that Benham could think and set down.

Yet for whole days he was possessed by the thought of killing Amanda and himself.

He did not at once turn homeward. It was in Ceylon that he dropped his work and came home. At Colombo he found a heap of letters awaiting him, and there were two of these that had started at the same time. They had been posted in London on one eventful afternoon. Lady Marayne and Amanda had quarrelled violently. Two earnest, flushed, quick-breathing women, full of neat but belated repartee, separated to write their simultaneous letters. Each letter trailed the atmosphere of that truncated encounter. Lady Marayne told her story ruthlessly. Amanda, on the other hand, generalized, and explained. Sir Philip’s adoration of her was a love-friendship, it was beautiful, it was pure. Was there no trust nor courage in the world? She would defy all jealous scandal. She would not even banish him from her side. Surely the Cheetah could trust her. But the pitiless facts of Lady Marayne went beyond Amanda’s explaining. The little lady’s dignity had been stricken. “I have been used as a cloak,” she wrote.

Her phrases were vivid. She quoted the very words of Amanda, words she had overheard at Chexington in the twilight. They were no invention. They were the very essence of Amanda, the lover. It was as sure as if Benham had heard the sound of her voice, as if he had peeped and seen, as if she had crept by him, stooping and rustling softly. It brought back the living sense of her, excited, flushed, reckless; his wild-haired Amanda of infinite delight.... All day those words of hers pursued him. All night they flared across the black universe. He buried his face in the pillows and they whispered softly in his ear.

He walked his room in the darkness longing to smash and tear.

He went out from the house and shook his ineffectual fists at the stirring quiet of the stars.

He sent no notice of his coming back. Nor did he come back with a definite plan. But he wanted to get at Amanda.

26

It was with Amanda he had to reckon. Towards Easton he felt scarcely any anger at all. Easton he felt only existed for him because Amanda willed to have it so.

Such anger as Easton did arouse in him was a contemptuous anger. His devotion filled Benham with scorn. His determination to serve Amanda at any price, to bear the grossest humiliations and slights for her, his humility, his service and tenderness, his care for her moods and happiness, seemed to Benham a treachery to human nobility. That rage against Easton was like the rage of a trade-unionist against a blackleg. Are all the women to fall to the men who will be their master-slaves and keepers? But it was not simply that Benham felt men must be freed from this incessant attendance; women too must free themselves from their almost instinctive demand for an attendant....

His innate disposition was to treat women as responsible beings. Never in his life had he thought of a woman as a pretty thing to be fooled and won and competed for and fought over. So that it was Amanda he wanted to reach and reckon with now, Amanda who had mated and ruled his senses only to fling him into this intolerable pit of shame and jealous fury. But the forces that were driving him home now were the forces below the level of reason and ideas, organic forces compounded of hate and desire, profound aboriginal urgencies. He thought, indeed, very little as he lay in his berth or sulked on deck; his mind lay waste under a pitiless invasion of exasperating images that ever and again would so wring him that his muscles would tighten and his hands clench or he would find himself restraining a snarl, the threat of the beast, in his throat.

Amanda grew upon his imagination until she overshadowed the whole world. She filled the skies. She bent over him and mocked him. She became a mystery of passion and dark beauty. She was the

sin of the world. One breathed her in the winds of the sea. She had taken to herself the greatness of elemental things....

So that when at last he saw her he was amazed to see her, and see that she was just a creature of common size and quality, a rather tired and very frightened-looking white-faced young woman, in an evening-dress of unfamiliar fashion, with little common trinkets of gold and colour about her wrists and neck.

In that instant's confrontation he forgot all that had brought him homeward. He stared at her as one stares at a stranger whom one has greeted in mistake for an intimate friend.

For he saw that she was no more the Amanda he hated and desired to kill than she had ever been the Amanda he had loved.

27

He took them by surprise. It had been his intention to take them by surprise. Such is the inelegance of the jealous state.

He reached London in the afternoon and put up at a hotel near Charing Cross. In the evening about ten he appeared at the house in Lancaster Gate. The butler was deferentially amazed. Mrs. Benham was, he said, at a theatre with Sir Philip Easton, and he thought some other people also. He did not know when she would be back. She might go on to supper. It was not the custom for the servants to wait up for her.

Benham went into the study that reduplicated his former rooms in Finacue Street and sat down before the fire the butler lit for him. He sent the man to bed, and fell into profound meditation.

It was nearly two o'clock when he heard the sound of her latchkey and went out at once upon the landing.

The half-door stood open and Easton's car was outside. She stood in the middle of the hall and relieved Easton of the gloves and fan he was carrying.

"Good-night," she said, "I am so tired."

"My wonderful goddess," he said.

She yielded herself to his accustomed embrace, then started, stared, and wrenched herself out of his arms.

Benham stood at the top of the stairs looking down upon them,

white-faced and inexpressive. Easton dropped back a pace. For a moment no one moved nor spoke, and then very quietly Easton shut the half-door and shut out the noises of the road.

For some seconds Benham regarded them, and as he did so his spirit changed....

Everything he had thought of saying and doing vanished out of his mind.

He stuck his hands into his pockets and descended the staircase. When he was five or six steps above them, he spoke. “Just sit down here,” he said, with a gesture of one hand, and sat down himself upon the stairs. “DO sit down,” he said with a sudden testiness as they continued standing. “I know all about this affair. Do please sit down and let us talk.... Everybody’s gone to bed long ago.”

“Cheetah!” she said. “Why have you come back like this?”

Then at his mute gesture she sat down at his feet.

“I wish you would sit down, Easton,” he said in a voice of subdued savagery.

“Why have you come back?” Sir Philip Easton found his voice to ask.

“SIT down,” Benham spat, and Easton obeyed unwillingly.

“I came back,” Benham went on, “to see to all this. Why else? I don’t — now I see you — feel very fierce about it. But it has distressed me. You look changed, Amanda, and fagged. And your hair is untidy. It’s as if something had happened to you and made you a stranger.... You two people are lovers. Very natural and simple, but I want to get out of it. Yes, I want to get out of it. That wasn’t quite my idea, but now I see it is. It’s queer, but on the whole I feel sorry for you. All of us, poor humans — . There’s reason to be sorry for all of us. We’re full of lusts and uneasiness and resentments that we haven’t the will to control. What do you two people want me to do to you? Would you like a divorce, Amanda? It’s the clean, straight thing, isn’t it? Or would the scandal hurt you?”

Amanda sat crouched together, with her eyes on Benham.

“Give us a divorce,” said Easton, looking to her to confirm him.

Amanda shook her head.

“I don’t want a divorce,” she said.

“Then what do you want?” asked Benham with sudden asperity.

“I don’t want a divorce,” she repeated. “Why do you, after a long silence, come home like this, abruptly, with no notice?”

“It was the way it took me,” said Benham, after a little interval.

“You have left me for long months.”

“Yes. I was angry. And it was ridiculous to be angry. I thought I wanted to kill you, and now I see you I see that all I want to do is to help you out of this miserable mess — and then get away from you. You two would like to marry. You ought to be married.”

“I would die to make Amanda happy,” said Easton.

“Your business, it seems to me, is to live to make her happy. That you may find more of a strain. Less tragic and more tiresome. I, on the other hand, want neither to die nor live for her.” Amanda moved sharply. “It’s extraordinary what amazing vapours a lonely man may get into his head. If you don’t want a divorce then I suppose things might go on as they are now.”

“I hate things as they are now,” said Easton. “I hate this falsehood and deception.”

“You would hate the scandal just as much,” said Amanda.

“I would not care what the scandal was unless it hurt you.”

“It would be only a temporary inconvenience,” said Benham. “Every one would sympathize with you.... The whole thing is so natural.... People would be glad to forget very soon. They did with my mother.”

“No,” said Amanda, “it isn’t so easy as that.”

She seemed to come to a decision.

“Pip,” she said. “I want to talk to — HIM — alone.”

Easton’s brown eyes were filled with distress and perplexity. “But why?” he asked.

“I do,” she said.

“But this is a thing for US.”

“Pip, I want to talk to him alone. There is something — something I can’t say before you....”

Sir Philip rose slowly to his feet.

“Shall I wait outside?”

“No, Pip. Go home. Yes, — there are some things you must leave to me.”

She stood up too and turned so that she and Benham both faced

the younger man. The strangest uneasiness mingled with his resolve to be at any cost splendid. He felt — and it was a most unexpected and disconcerting feeling — that he was no longer confederated with Amanda; that prior, more fundamental and greater associations prevailed over his little new grip upon her mind and senses. He stared at husband and wife aghast in this realization. Then his resolute romanticism came to his help. “I would trust you—” he began. “If you tell me to go—”

Amanda seemed to measure her hold upon him.

She laid her hand upon his arm. “Go, my dear Pip,” she said. “Go.”

He had a moment of hesitation, of anguish, and it seemed to Benham as though he eked himself out with unreality, as though somewhen, somewhere, he had seen something of the sort in a play and filled in a gap that otherwise he could not have supplied.

Then the door had closed upon him, and Amanda, pale and darkly dishevelled, faced her husband, silently and intensely.

“WELL?” said Benham.

She held out her arms to him.

“Why did you leave me, Cheetah? Why did you leave me?”

28

Benham affected to ignore those proffered arms. But they recalled in a swift rush the animal anger that had brought him back to England. To remind him of desire now was to revive an anger stronger than any desire. He spoke seeking to hurt her.

“I am wondering now,” he said, “why the devil I came back.”

“You had to come back to me.”

“I could have written just as well about these things.”

“CHEETAH,” she said softly, and came towards him slowly, stooping forward and looking into his eyes, “you had to come back to see your old Leopard. Your wretched Leopard. Who has rolled in the dirt. And is still yours.”

“Do you want a divorce? How are we to fix things, Amanda?”

“Cheetah, I will tell you how we will fix things.”

She dropped upon the step below him. She laid her hands with a

deliberate softness upon him, she gave a toss so that her disordered hair was a little more disordered, and brought her soft chin down to touch his knees. Her eyes implored him.

"Cheetah," she said. "You are going to forgive."

He sat rigid, meeting her eyes.

"Amanda," he said at last, "you would be astonished if I kicked you away from me and trampled over you to the door. That is what I want to do."

"Do it," she said, and the grip of her hands tightened. "Cheetah, dear! I would love you to kill me."

"I don't want to kill you."

Her eyes dilated. "Beat me."

"And I haven't the remotest intention of making love to you," he said, and pushed her soft face and hands away from him as if he would stand up.

She caught hold of him again. "Stay with me," she said.

He made no effort to shake off her grip. He looked at the dark cloud of her hair that had ruled him so magically, and the memory of old delights made him grip a great handful almost inadvertently as he spoke. "Dear Leopard," he said, "we humans are the most streaky of conceivable things. I thought I hated you. I do. I hate you like poison. And also I do not hate you at all."

Then abruptly he was standing over her.

She rose to her knees.

"Stay here, old Cheetah!" she said. "This is your house. I am your wife."

He went towards the unfastened front door.

"Cheetah!" she cried with a note of despair.

He halted at the door.

"Amanda, I will come to-morrow. I will come in the morning, in the sober London daylight, and then we will settle things."

He stared at her, and to her amazement he smiled. He spoke as one who remarks upon a quite unexpected fact....

"Never in my life, Amanda, have I seen a human being that I wanted so little to kill."

White found a fragment that might have been written within a week of those last encounters of Benham and Amanda.

"The thing that astonished me most in Amanda was the change in her mental quality.

"With me in the old days she had always been a sincere person; she had deceived me about facts, but she had never deceived me about herself. Her personal, stark frankness had been her essential strength. And it was gone. I came back to find Amanda an accomplished actress, a thing of poses and calculated effects. She was a surface, a sham, a Lorelei. Beneath that surface I could not discover anything individual at all. Fear and a grasping quality, such as God gave us all when he gave us hands; but the individual I knew, the humorous wilful Spotless Leopard was gone. Whither, I cannot imagine. An amazing disappearance. Clean out of space and time like a soul lost for ever.

"When I went to see her in the morning, she was made up for a scene, she acted an intricate part, never for a moment was she there in reality....

"I have got a remarkable persuasion that she lost herself in this way, by cheapening love, by making base love to a lover she despised.... There can be no inequality in love. Give and take must balance. One must be one's natural self or the whole business is an indecent trick, a vile use of life! To use inferiors in love one must needs talk down to them, interpret oneself in their insufficient phrases, pretend, sentimentalize. And it is clear that unless oneself is to be lost, one must be content to leave alone all those people that one can reach only by sentimentalizing. But Amanda — and yet somehow I love her for it still — could not leave any one alone. So she was always feverishly weaving nets of false relationship. Until her very self was forgotten. So she will go on until the end. With Easton it had been necessary for her to key herself to a simple exalted romanticism that was entirely insincere. She had so accustomed herself to these poses that her innate gestures were forgotten. She could not recover them; she could not even reinvent them. Between us there were momentary gleams as though presently we should be our frank former selves again. They were never more than momentary...."

And that was all that this astonishing man had seen fit to tell of his last parting from his wife.

Perhaps he did Amanda injustice. Perhaps there was a stronger thread of reality in her desire to recover him than he supposed. Clearly he believed that under the circumstances Amanda would have tried to recover anybody.

She had dressed for that morning's encounter in a very becoming and intimate wrap of soft mauve and white silk, and she had washed and dried her dark hair so that it was a vapour about her face. She set herself with a single mind to persuade herself and Benham that they were inseparable lovers, and she would not be deflected by his grim determination to discuss the conditions of their separation. When he asked her whether she wanted a divorce, she offered to throw over Sir Philip and banish him for ever as lightly as a great lady might sacrifice an objectionable poodle to her connubial peace.

Benham passed through perplexing phases, so that she herself began to feel that her practice with Easton had spoilt her hands. His initial grimness she could understand, and partially its breakdown into irritability. But she was puzzled by his laughter. For he laughed abruptly.

"You know, Amanda, I came home in a mood of tremendous tragedy. And really, — you are a Lark."

And then overriding her altogether, he told her what he meant to do about their future and the future of their little son.

"You don't want a divorce and a fuss. Then I'll leave things. I perceive I've no intention of marrying any more. But you'd better do the straight thing. People forget and forgive. Especially when there is no one about making a fuss against you.

"Perhaps, after all, there is something to be said for shirking it. We'll both be able to get at the boy then. You'll not hurt him, and I shall want to see him. It's better for the boy anyhow not to have a divorce.

"I'll not stand in your way. I'll get a little flat and I shan't come too much to London, and when I do, you can get out of town. You must be discreet about Easton, and if people say anything about him, send them to me. After all, this is our private affair.

"We'll go on about money matters as we have been going. I trust

to you not to run me into overwhelming debts. And, of course, if at any time, you do want to marry — on account of children or anything — if nobody knows of this conversation we can be divorced then....”

Benham threw out these decisions in little dry sentences while Amanda gathered her forces for her last appeal.

It was an unsuccessful appeal, and at the end she flung herself down before him and clung to his knees. He struggled ridiculously to get himself clear, and when at last he succeeded she dropped prostrate on the floor with her dishevelled hair about her.

She heard the door close behind him, and still she lay there, a dark Guinevere, until with a start she heard a step upon the thick carpet without. He had come back. The door reopened. There was a slight pause, and then she raised her face and met the blank stare of the second housemaid. There are moments, suspended fragments of time rather than links in its succession, when the human eye is more intelligible than any words.

The housemaid made a rapid apologetic noise and vanished with a click of the door.

“DAMN!” said Amanda.

Then slowly she rose to her knees.

She meditated through vast moments.

“It’s a cursed thing to be a woman,” said Amanda. She stood up. She put her hand on the telephone in the corner and then she forgot about it. After another long interval of thought she spoke.

“Cheetah!” she said, “Old Cheetah!...

“I didn’t THINK it of you....”

Then presently with the even joyless movements of one who does a reasonable business, with something indeed of the manner of one who packs a trunk, she rang up Sir Philip Easton.

30

The head chambermaid on the first floor of the Westwood Hotel in Danebury Street had a curious and perplexing glimpse of Benham’s private processes the morning after this affair.

Benham had taken Room 27 on the afternoon of his return to

London. She had seen him twice or three times, and he had struck her as a coldly decorous person, tall, white-faced, slow speaking; the last man to behave violently or surprise a head chambermaid in any way. On the morning of his departure she was told by the first-floor waiter that the occupant of Room 26 had complained of an uproar in the night, and almost immediately she was summoned to see Benham.

He was standing facing the door and in a position which did a little obscure the condition of the room behind him. He was carefully dressed, and his manner was more cold and decorous than ever. But one of his hands was tied up in a white bandage.

"I am going this morning," he said, "I am going down now to breakfast. I have had a few little accidents with some of the things in the room and I have cut my hand. I want you to tell the manager and see that they are properly charged for on the bill.... Thank you."

The head chambermaid was left to consider the accidents.

Benham's things were all packed up and the room had an air of having been straightened up neatly and methodically after a destructive cataclysm. One or two items that the chambermaid might possibly have overlooked in the normal course of things were carefully exhibited. For example, the sheet had been torn into half a dozen strips and they were lying side by side on the bed. The clock on the mantelpiece had been knocked into the fireplace and then pounded to pieces. All the looking-glasses in the room were smashed, apparently the electric lamp that stood on the night table by the bedside had been wrenched off and flung or hammered about amidst the other breakables. And there was a considerable amount of blood splashed about the room. The head chambermaid felt unequal to the perplexities of the spectacle and summoned her most convenient friend, the head chambermaid on the third floor, to her aid. The first-floor waiter joined their deliberations and several housemaids displayed a respectful interest in the matter. Finally they invoked the manager. He was still contemplating the scene of the disorder when the precipitate retreat of his subordinates warned him of Benham's return.

Benham was smoking a cigarette and his bearing was reassuringly tranquil.

"I had a kind of nightmare," he said. "I am fearfully sorry to have

disarranged your room. You must charge me for the inconvenience as well as for the damage."

31

"An aristocrat cannot be a lover."

"One cannot serve at once the intricacies of the wider issues of life and the intricacies of another human being. I do not mean that one may not love. One loves the more because one does not concentrate one's love. One loves nations, the people passing in the street, beasts hurt by the wayside, troubled scoundrels and university dons in tears....

"But if one does not give one's whole love and life into a woman's hands I do not think one can expect to be loved.

"An aristocrat must do without close personal love...."

This much was written at the top of a sheet of paper. The writing ended halfway down the page. Manifestly it was an abandoned beginning. And it was, it seemed to White, the last page of all this confusion of matter that dealt with the Second and Third Limitations. Its incompleteness made its expression perfect....

There Benham's love experience ended. He turned to the great business of the world. Desire and Jealousy should deflect his life no more; like Fear they were to be dismissed as far as possible and subdued when they could not be altogether dismissed. Whatever stirrings of blood or imagination there were in him after that parting, whatever failures from this resolution, they left no trace on the rest of his research, which was concerned with the hates of peoples and classes and war and peace and the possibilities science unveils and starry speculations of what mankind may do.

32

But Benham did not leave England again until he had had an encounter with Lady Marayne.

The little lady came to her son in a state of extraordinary anger and distress. Never had she seemed quite so resolute nor quite so hopelessly dispersed and mixed. And when for a moment it seemed

to him that she was not as a matter of fact dispersed and mixed at all, then with an instant eagerness he dismissed that one elucidatory gleam. “What are you doing in England, Poff?” she demanded. “And what are you going to do?

“Nothing! And you are going to leave her in your house, with your property and a lover. If that’s it, Poff, why did you ever come back? And why did you ever marry her? You might have known; her father was a swindler. She’s begotten of deceit. She’ll tell her own story while you are away, and a pretty story she’ll make of it.”

“Do you want me to divorce her and make a scandal?”

“I never wanted you to go away from her. If you’d stayed and watched her as a man should, as I begged you and implored you to do. Didn’t I tell you, Poff? Didn’t I warn you?”

“But now what am I to do?”

“There you are! That’s just a man’s way. You get yourself into this trouble, you follow your passions and your fancies and fads and then you turn to me! How can I help you now, Poff? If you’d listened to me before!”

Her blue eyes were demonstratively round.

“Yes, but—”

“I warned you,” she interrupted. “I warned you. I’ve done all I could for you. It isn’t that I haven’t seen through her. When she came to me at first with that made-up story of a baby! And all about loving me like her own mother. But I did what I could. I thought we might still make the best of a bad job. And then — . I might have known she couldn’t leave Pip alone.... But for weeks I didn’t dream. I wouldn’t dream. Right under my nose. The impudence of it!”

Her voice broke. “Such a horrid mess! Such a hopeless, horrid mess!”

She wiped away a bright little tear....

“It’s all alike. It’s your way with us. All of you. There isn’t a man in the world deserves to have a woman in the world. We do all we can for you. We do all we can to amuse you, we dress for you and we talk for you. All the sweet, warm little women there are! And then you go away from us! There never was a woman yet who pleased and satisfied a man, who did not lose him. Give you everything and off you must go! Lovers, mothers....”

It dawned upon Benham dimly that his mother's troubles did not deal exclusively with himself.

"But Amanda," he began.

"If you'd looked after her properly, it would have been right enough. Pip was as good as gold until she undermined him.... A woman can't wait about like an umbrella in a stand.... He was just a boy.... Only of course there she was — a novelty. It is perfectly easy to understand. She flattered him.... Men are such fools."

"Still — it's no good saying that now."

"But she'll spend all your money, Poff! She'll break your back with debts. What's to prevent her? With him living on her! For that's what it comes to practically."

"Well, what am I to do?"

"You aren't going back without tying her up, Poff? You ought to stop every farthing of her money — every farthing. It's your duty."

"I can't do things like that."

"But have you no Shame? To let that sort of thing go on!"

"If I don't feel the Shame of it — And I don't."

"And that money — . I got you that money, Poff! It was my money."

Benham stared at her perplexed. "What am I to do?" he asked.

"Cut her off, you silly boy! Tie her up! Pay her through a solicitor. Say that if she sees him ONCE again—"

He reflected. "No," he said at last.

"Poff!" she cried, "every time I see you, you are more and more like your father. You're going off — just as he did. That baffled, MULISH look — priggish — solemn! Oh! it's strange the stuff a poor woman has to bring into the world. But you'll do nothing. I know you'll do nothing. You'll stand everything. You — you Cuckold! And she'll drive by me, she'll pass me in theatres with the money that ought to have been mine! Oh! Oh!"

She dabbed her handkerchief from one swimming eye to the other. But she went on talking. Faster and faster, less and less coherently; more and more wildly abusive. Presently in a brief pause of the storm Benham sighed profoundly....

It brought the scene to a painful end....

For weeks her distress pursued and perplexed him.

He had an extraordinary persuasion that in some obscure way he was in default, that he was to blame for her distress, that he owed her — he could never define what he owed her.

And yet, what on earth was one to do?

And something his mother had said gave him the odd idea that he had misjudged his father, that he had missed depths of perplexed and kindred goodwill. He went down to see him before he returned to India. But if there was a hidden well of feeling in Mr. Benham senior, it had been very carefully boarded over. The parental mind and attention were entirely engaged in a dispute in the SCHOOL WORLD about the heuristic method. Somebody had been disrespectful to Martindale House and the thing was rankling almost unendurably. It seemed to be a relief to him to show his son very fully the essentially illogical position of his assailant. He was entirely inattentive to Benham's carefully made conversational opportunities. He would be silent at times while Benham talked and then he would break out suddenly with: "What seems to me so unreasonable, so ridiculous, in the whole of that fellow's second argument — if one can call it an argument — .... A man who reasons as he does is bound to get laughed at. If people will only see it...."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH ~~ THE NEW HAROUN AL RASCHID

1

Benham corresponded with Amanda until the summer of 1913. Sometimes the two wrote coldly to one another, sometimes with warm affection, sometimes with great bitterness. When he met White in Johannesburg during the strike period of 1913, he was on his way to see her in London and to settle their relationship upon a new and more definite footing. It was her suggestion that they should meet.

About her he felt an enormous, inexorable, dissatisfaction. He could not persuade himself that his treatment of her and that his relations to her squared with any of his preconceptions of nobility, and yet at no precise point could he detect where he had definitely taken an ignoble step. Through Amanda he was coming to the full experience of life. Like all of us he had been prepared, he had prepared himself, to take life in a certain way, and life had taken him, as it takes all of us, in an entirely different and unexpected way.... He had been ready for noble deeds and villainies, for achievements and failures, and here as the dominant fact of his personal life was a perplexing riddle. He could not hate and condemn her for ten minutes at a time without a flow of exoneration; he could not think of her tolerantly or lovingly without immediate shame and resentment, and with the utmost will in the world he could not banish her from his mind.

During the intervening years he had never ceased to have her in his mind; he would not think of her it is true if he could help it, but often he could not help it, and as a negative presence, as a thing denied, she was almost more potent than she had been as a thing accepted. Meanwhile he worked. His nervous irritability increased, but it did not hinder the steady development of his Research.

Long before his final parting from Amanda he had worked out his idea and method for all the more personal problems in life; the problems he put together under his headings of the first three "Limitations." He had resolved to emancipate himself from fear,

indulgence, and that instinctive preoccupation with the interests and dignity of self which he chose to term Jealousy, and with the one tremendous exception of Amanda he had to a large extent succeeded. Amanda. Amanda. Amanda. He stuck the more grimly to his Research to drown that beating in his brain.

Emancipation from all these personal things he held now to be a mere prelude to the real work of a man's life, which was to serve this dream of a larger human purpose. The bulk of his work was to discover and define that purpose, that purpose which must be the directing and comprehending form of all the activities of the noble life. One cannot be noble, he had come to perceive, at large; one must be noble to an end. To make human life, collectively and in detail, a thing more comprehensive, more beautiful, more generous and coherent than it is to-day seemed to him the fundamental intention of all nobility. He believed more and more firmly that the impulses to make and help and subserve great purposes are abundantly present in the world, that they are inhibited by hasty thinking, limited thinking and bad thinking, and that the real ennoblement of human life was not so much a creation as a release. He lumped the preventive and destructive forces that keep men dispersed, unhappy, and ignoble under the heading of Prejudice, and he made this Prejudice his fourth and greatest and most difficult limitation. In one place he had written it, "Prejudice or Divisions." That being subdued in oneself and in the world, then in the measure of its subjugation, the new life of our race, the great age, the noble age, would begin.

So he set himself to examine his own mind and the mind of the world about him for prejudice, for hampering follies, disguised disloyalties and mischievous distrusts, and the great bulk of the papers that White struggled with at Westhaven Street were devoted to various aspects of this search for "Prejudice." It seemed to White to be at once the most magnificent and the most preposterous of enterprises. It was indeed no less than an enquiry into all the preventable sources of human failure and disorder.... And it was all too manifest to White also that the last place in which Benham was capable of detecting a prejudice was at the back of his own head.

Under this Fourth Limitation he put the most remarkable array of

influences, race-hatred, national suspicion, the evil side of patriotism, religious and social intolerance, every social consequence of muddle headedness, every dividing force indeed except the purely personal dissensions between man and man. And he developed a metaphysical interpretation of these troubles. “No doubt,” he wrote in one place, “much of the evil between different kinds of men is due to uncultivated feeling, to natural bad feeling, but far more is it due to bad thinking.” At times he seemed on the verge of the persuasion that most human trouble is really due to bad metaphysics. It was, one must remark, an extraordinary journey he had made; he had started from chivalry and arrived at metaphysics; every knight he held must be a logician, and ultimate bravery is courage of the mind. One thinks of his coming to this conclusion with knit brows and balancing intentness above whole gulfs of bathos — very much as he had once walked the Leysin Bisse....

“Men do not know how to think,” he insisted — getting along the planks; “and they will not realize that they do not know how to think. Nine-tenths of the wars in the world have arisen out of misconceptions.... Misconception is the sin and dishonour of the mind, and muddled thinking as ignoble as dirty conduct.... Infinitely more disastrous.”

And again he wrote: “Man, I see, is an over-practical creature, too eager to get into action. There is our deepest trouble. He takes conclusions ready-made, or he makes them in a hurry. Life is so short that he thinks it better to err than wait. He has no patience, no faith in anything but himself. He thinks he is a being when in reality he is only a link in a being, and so he is more anxious to be complete than right. The last devotion of which he is capable is that devotion of the mind which suffers partial performance, but insists upon exhaustive thought. He scamps his thought and finishes his performance, and before he is dead it is already being abandoned and begun all over again by some one else in the same egotistical haste....”

It is, I suppose, a part of the general humour of life that these words should have been written by a man who walked the plank to fresh ideas with the dizziest difficulty unless he had Prothero to drag him forward, and who acted time after time with an altogether

disastrous hastiness.

2

Yet there was a kind of necessity in this journey of Benham's from the cocked hat and wooden sword of Seagate and his early shame at cowardice and baseness to the spiritual megalomania of his complete Research Magnificent. You can no more resolve to live a life of honour nowadays and abstain from social and political scheming on a world-wide scale, than you can profess religion and refuse to think about God. In the past it was possible to take all sorts of things for granted and be loyal to unexamined things. One could be loyal to unexamined things because they were unchallenged things. But now everything is challenged. By the time of his second visit to Russia, Benham's ideas of conscious and deliberate aristocracy reaching out to an idea of universal responsibility had already grown into the extraordinary fantasy that he was, as it were, an uncrowned king in the world. To be noble is to be aristocratic, that is to say, a ruler. Thence it follows that aristocracy is multiple kingship, and to be an aristocrat is to partake both of the nature of philosopher and king....

Yet it is manifest that the powerful people of this world are by no means necessarily noble, and that most modern kings, poor in quality, petty in spirit, conventional in outlook, controlled and limited, fall far short of kingship. Nevertheless, there IS nobility, there IS kingship, or this earth is a dustbin and mankind but a kind of skin-disease upon a planet. From that it is an easy step to this idea, the idea whose first expression had already so touched the imagination of Amanda, of a sort of diffused and voluntary kingship scattered throughout mankind. The aristocrats are not at the high table, the kings are not enthroned, those who are enthroned are but pretenders and SIMULACRA, kings of the vulgar; the real king and ruler is every man who sets aside the naive passions and self-interest of the common life for the rule and service of the world.

This is an idea that is now to be found in much contemporary writing. It is one of those ideas that seem to appear simultaneously at many points in the world, and it is impossible to say now how far Benham was an originator of this idea, and how far he simply

resonated to its expression by others. It was far more likely that Prothero, getting it heaven knows where, had spluttered it out and forgotten it, leaving it to germinate in the mind of his friend....

This lordly, this kingly dream became more and more essential to Benham as his life went on. When Benham walked the Bisse he was just a youngster resolved to be individually brave; when he prowled in the jungle by night he was there for all mankind. With every year he became more and more definitely to himself a consecrated man as kings are consecrated. Only that he was self-consecrated, and anointed only in his heart. At last he was, so to speak, Haroun al Raschid again, going unsuspected about the world, because the palace of his security would not tell him the secrets of men's disorders. He was no longer a creature of circumstances, he was kingly, unknown, Alfred in the Camp of the Danes. In the great later accumulations of his Research the personal matter, the introspection, the intimate discussion of motive, becomes less and less. He forgets himself in the exaltation of kingliness. He worries less and less over the particular rightness of his definite acts. In these later papers White found Benham abstracted, self-forgetful, trying to find out with an ever increased self-detachment, with an ever deepening regal solicitude, why there are massacres, wars, tyrannies and persecutions, why we let famine, disease and beasts assail us, and want dwarf and cripple vast multitudes in the midst of possible plenty. And when he found out and as far as he found out, he meant quite simply and earnestly to apply his knowledge....

3

The intellectualism of Benham intensified to the end. His definition of Prejudice impressed White as being the most bloodless and philosophical formula that ever dominated the mind of a man.

"Prejudice," Benham had written, "is that common incapacity of the human mind to understand that a difference in any respect is not a difference in all respects, reinforced and rendered malignant by an instinctive hostility to what is unlike ourselves. We exaggerate classification and then charge it with mischievous emotion by referring it to ourselves." And under this comprehensive formula he

proceeded to study and attack Family Prejudice, National Prejudice, Race Prejudice, War, Class Prejudice, Professional Prejudice, Sex Prejudice, in the most industrious and elaborate manner. Whether one regards one's self or others he held that these prejudices are evil things. "From the point of view of human welfare they break men up into wars and conflicts, make them an easy prey to those who trade upon suspicion and hostility, prevent sane collective co-operations, cripple and embitter life. From the point of view of personal aristocracy they make men vulgar, violent, unjust and futile. All the conscious life of the aristocrat must be a constant struggle against false generalizations; it is as much his duty to free himself from that as from fear, indulgence, and jealousy; it is a larger and more elaborate task, but it is none the less cardinal and essential. Indeed it is more cardinal and essential. The true knight has to be not only no coward, no self-pamperer, no egotist. He has to be a philosopher. He has to be no hasty or foolish thinker. His judgment no more than his courage is to be taken by surprise.

"To subdue fear, desire and jealousy, is the aristocrat's personal affair, it is his ritual and discipline, like a knight watching his arms; but the destruction of division and prejudice and all their forms and establishments, is his real task, that is the common work of knighthood. It is a task to be done in a thousand ways; one man working by persuasion, another by example, this one overthrowing some crippling restraint upon the freedom of speech and the spread of knowledge, and that preparing himself for a war that will shatter a tyrannous presumption. Most imaginative literature, all scientific investigation, all sound criticism, all good building, all good manufacture, all sound politics, every honesty and every reasoned kindliness contribute to this release of men from the heat and confusions of our present world."

It was clear to White that as Benham progressed with this major part of his research, he was more and more possessed by the idea that he was not making his own personal research alone, but, side by side with a vast, masked, hidden and once unsuspected multitude of others; that this great idea of his was under kindred forms the great idea of thousands, that it was breaking as the dawn breaks, simultaneously to great numbers of people, and that the time was not

far off when the new aristocracy, the disguised rulers of the world, would begin to realize their common bent and effort. Into these latter papers there creeps more and more frequently a new phraseology, such expressions as the "Invisible King" and the "Spirit of Kingship," so that as Benham became personally more and more solitary, his thoughts became more and more public and social.

Benham was not content to define and denounce the prejudices of mankind. He set himself to study just exactly how these prejudices worked, to get at the nature and habits and strengths of each kind of prejudice, and to devise means for its treatment, destruction or neutralization. He had no great faith in the power of pure reasonableness; his psychological ideas were modern, and he had grasped the fact that the power of most of the great prejudices that strain humanity lies deeper than the intellectual level. Consequently he sought to bring himself into the closest contact with prejudices in action and prejudices in conflict in order to discover their sub-rational springs.

A large proportion of that larger moiety of the material at Westhaven Street which White from his extensive experience of the public patience decided could not possibly "make a book," consisted of notes and discussions upon the first-hand observations Benham had made in this or that part of the world. He began in Russia during the revolutionary trouble of 1906, he went thence to Odessa, and from place to place in Bessarabia and Kieff, where during a pogrom he had his first really illuminating encounter with race and culture prejudice. His examination of the social and political condition of Russia seems to have left him much more hopeful than was the common feeling of liberal-minded people during the years of depression that followed the revolution of 1906, and it was upon the race question that his attention concentrated.

The Swadeshi outbreak drew him from Russia to India. Here in an entirely different environment was another discord of race and culture, and he found in his study of it much that illuminated and corrected his impressions of the Russian issue. A whole drawer was devoted to a comparatively finished and very thorough enquiry into human dissensions in lower Bengal. Here there were not only race but culture conflicts, and he could work particularly upon the

differences between men of the same race who were Hindus, Christians and Mahometans respectively. He could compare the Bengali Mahometan not only with the Bengali Brahminist, but also with the Mahometan from the north-west. “If one could scrape off all the creed and training, would one find much the same thing at the bottom, or something fundamentally so different that no close homogeneous social life and not even perhaps a life of just compromise is possible between the different races of mankind?”

His answer to that was a confident one. “There are no such natural and unalterable differences in character and quality between any two sorts of men whatever, as would make their peaceful and kindly co-operation in the world impossible,” he wrote.

But he was not satisfied with his observations in India. He found the prevalence of caste ideas antipathetic and complicating. He went on after his last parting from Amanda into China, it was the first of several visits to China, and thence he crossed to America. White found a number of American press-cuttings of a vehemently anti-Japanese quality still awaiting digestion in a drawer, and it was clear to him that Benham had given a considerable amount of attention to the development of the “white” and “yellow” race hostility on the Pacific slope; but his chief interest at that time had been the negro. He went to Washington and thence south; he visited Tuskegee and Atlanta, and then went off at a tangent to Hayti. He was drawn to Hayti by Hesketh Pritchard’s vivid book, WHERE BLACK RULES WHITE, and like Hesketh Pritchard he was able to visit that wonderful monument to kingship, the hidden fastness of La Ferriere, the citadel built a century ago by the “Black Napoleon,” the Emperor Christophe. He went with a young American demonstrator from Harvard.

4

It was a memorable excursion. They rode from Cap Haytien for a day’s journey along dusty uneven tracks through a steaming plain of luxurious vegetation, that presented the strangest mixture of unbridled jungle with populous country. They passed countless villages of thatched huts alive with curiosity and swarming with

naked black children, and yet all the time they seemed to be in a wilderness. They forded rivers, they had at times to force themselves through thickets, once or twice they lost their way, and always ahead of them, purple and sullen, the great mountain peak with La Ferriere upon its crest rose slowly out of the background until it dominated the landscape. Long after dark they blundered upon rather than came to the village at its foot where they were to pass the night. They were interrogated under a flaring torch by peering ragged black soldiers, and passed through a firelit crowd into the presence of the local commandant to dispute volubly about their right to go further. They might have been in some remote corner of Nigeria. Their papers, laboriously got in order, were vitiated by the fact, which only became apparent by degrees, that the commandant could not read. They carried their point with difficulty.

But they carried their point, and, watched and guarded by a hungry half-naked negro in a kepi and the remains of a sky-blue pair of trousers, they explored one of the most exemplary memorials of imperialism that humanity has ever made. The roads and parks and prospects constructed by this vanished Emperor of Hayti, had long since disappeared, and the three men clambered for hours up ravines and precipitous jungle tracks, occasionally crossing the winding traces of a choked and ruined road that had once been the lordly approach to his fastness. Below they passed an abandoned palace of vast extent, a palace with great terraces and the still traceable outline of gardens, though there were green things pushing between the terrace steps, and trees thrust out of the empty windows. Here from a belvedere of which the skull-like vestige still remained, the negro Emperor Christophe, after fourteen years of absolute rule, had watched for a time the smoke of the burning of his cane-fields in the plain below, and then, learning that his bodyguard had deserted him, had gone in and blown out his brains.

He had christened the place after the best of examples, “Sans Souci.”

But the citadel above, which was to have been his last defence, he never used. The defection of his guards made him abandon that. To build it, they say, cost Hayti thirty thousand lives. He had the true Imperial lavishness. So high it was, so lost in a wilderness of trees

and bush, looking out over a land relapsed now altogether to a barbarism of patch and hovel, so solitary and chill under the tropical sky — for even the guards who still watched over its suspected treasures feared to live in its ghostly galleries and had made hovels outside its walls — and at the same time so huge and grandiose — there were walls thirty feet thick, galleries with scores of rust-eaten cannon, circular dining-halls, king's apartments and queen's apartments, towering battlements and great arched doorways — that it seemed to Benham to embody the power and passing of that miracle of human history, tyranny, the helpless bowing of multitudes before one man and the transitoriness of such glories, more completely than anything he had ever seen or imagined in the world before. Beneath the battlements — they are choked above with jungle grass and tamarinds and many flowery weeds — the precipice fell away a sheer two thousand feet, and below spread a vast rich green plain populous and diversified, bounded at last by the blue sea, like an amethystine wall. Over this precipice Christophe was wont to fling his victims, and below this terrace were bottle-shaped dungeons where men, broken and torn, thrust in at the neck-like hole above, starved and died: it was his headquarters here, here he had his torture chambers and the means for nameless cruelties....

"Not a hundred years ago," said Benham's companion, and told the story of the disgraced favourite, the youth who had offended.

"Leap," said his master, and the poor hypnotized wretch, after one questioning glance at the conceivable alternatives, made his last gesture of servility, and then stood out against the sky, swayed, and with a convulsion of resolve, leapt and shot headlong down through the shimmering air.

Came presently the little faint sound of his fall.

The Emperor satisfied turned away, unmindful of the fact that this projectile he had launched had caught among the bushes below, and presently struggled and found itself still a living man. It could scramble down to the road and, what is more wonderful, hope for mercy. An hour and it stood before Christophe again, with an arm broken and bloody and a face torn, a battered thing now but with a faint flavour of pride in its bearing. "Your bidding has been done, Sire," it said.

“So,” said the Emperor, unappeased. “And you live? Well — Leap again....”

And then came other stories. The young man told them as he had heard them, stories of ferocious wholesale butcheries, of men standing along the walls of the banqueting chamber to be shot one by one as the feast went on, of exquisite and terrifying cruelties, and his one note of wonder, his refrain was, “HERE! Not a hundred years ago.... It makes one almost believe that somewhere things of this sort are being done now.”

They ate their lunch together amidst the weedy flowery ruins. The lizards which had fled their coming crept out again to bask in the sunshine. The soldier-guide and guard scrabbled about with his black fingers in the ruinous and rifled tomb of Christophe in a search for some saleable memento....

Benham sat musing in silence. The thought of deliberate cruelty was always an actual physical distress to him. He sat bathed in the dreamy afternoon sunlight and struggled against the pictures that crowded into his mind, pictures of men aghast at death, and of fear-driven men toiling in agony, and of the shame of extorted obedience and of cringing and crawling black figures, and the defiance of righteous hate beaten down under blow and anguish. He saw eyes alight with terror and lips rolled back in agony, he saw weary hopeless flight before striding proud destruction, he saw the poor trampled mangled dead, and he shivered in his soul....

He hated Christophe and all that made Christophe; he hated pride, and then the idea came to him that it is not pride that makes Christophes but humility.

There is in the medley of man’s composition, deeper far than his superficial working delusion that he is a separated self-seeking individual, an instinct for cooperation and obedience. Every natural sane man wants, though he may want it unwittingly, kingly guidance, a definite direction for his own partial life. At the bottom of his heart he feels, even if he does not know it definitely, that his life is partial. He is driven to join himself on. He obeys decision and the appearance of strength as a horse obeys its rider’s voice. One thinks of the pride, the uncontrolled frantic will of this black ape of all Emperors, and one forgets the universal docility that made him

possible. Usurpation is a crime to which men are tempted by human dirigibility. It is the orderly peoples who create tyrants, and it is not so much restraint above as stiff insubordination below that has to be taught to men. There are kings and tyrannies and imperialisms, simply because of the unkingliness of men.

And as he sat upon the battlements of La Ferriere, Benham cast off from his mind his last tolerance for earthly kings and existing States, and expounded to another human being for the first time this long-cherished doctrine of his of the Invisible King who is the lord of human destiny, the spirit of nobility, who will one day take the sceptre and rule the earth.... To the young American's naive American response to any simply felt emotion, he seemed with his white earnestness and his glowing eyes a veritable prophet....

"This is the root idea of aristocracy," said Benham.

"I have never heard the underlying spirit of democracy, the real true Thing in democracy, so thoroughly expressed," said the young American.

5

Benham's notes on race and racial cultures gave White tantalizing glimpses of a number of picturesque experiences. The adventure in Kieff had first roused Benham to the reality of racial quality. He was caught in the wheels of a pogrom.

"Before that time I had been disposed to minimize and deny race. I still think it need not prevent men from the completest social co-operation, but I see now better than I did how difficult it is for any man to purge from his mind the idea that he is not primarily a Jew, a Teuton, or a Kelt, but a man. You can persuade any one in five minutes that he or she belongs to some special and blessed and privileged sort of human being; it takes a lifetime to destroy that persuasion. There are these confounded differences of colour, of eye and brow, of nose or hair, small differences in themselves except that they give a foothold and foundation for tremendous fortifications of prejudice and tradition, in which hostilities and hatreds may gather. When I think of a Jew's nose, a Chinaman's eyes or a negro's colour I am reminded of that fatal little pit which nature has left in the

vermiform appendix, a thing no use in itself and of no significance, but a gathering-place for mischief. The extremest case of race-feeling is the Jewish case, and even here, I am convinced, it is the Bible and the Talmud and the exertions of those inevitable professional champions who live upon racial feeling, far more than their common distinction of blood, which holds this people together banded against mankind."

Between the lines of such general propositions as this White read little scraps of intimation that linked with the things Benham let fall in Johannesburg to reconstruct the Kieff adventure.

Benham had been visiting a friend in the country on the further side of the Dnieper. As they drove back along dusty stretches of road amidst fields of corn and sunflower and through bright little villages, they saw against the evening blue under the full moon a smoky red glare rising from amidst the white houses and dark trees of the town. "The pogrom's begun," said Benham's friend, and was surprised when Benham wanted to end a pleasant day by going to see what happens after the beginning of a pogrom.

He was to have several surprises before at last he left Benham in disgust and went home by himself.

For Benham, with that hastiness that so flouted his exalted theories, passed rapidly from an attitude of impartial enquiry to active intervention. The two men left their carriage and plunged into the network of unlovely dark streets in which the Jews and traders harboured.... Benham's first intervention was on behalf of a crouching and yelping bundle of humanity that was being dragged about and kicked at a street corner. The bundle resolved itself into a filthy little old man, and made off with extraordinary rapidity, while Benham remonstrated with the kickers. Benham's tallness, his very Gentile face, his good clothes, and an air of tense authority about him had its effect, and the kickers shuffled off with remarks that were partly apologies. But Benham's friend revolted. This was no business of theirs.

Benham went on unaccompanied towards the glare of the burning houses.

For a time he watched. Black figures moved between him and the glare, and he tried to find out the exact nature of the conflict by

enquiries in clumsy Russian. He was told that the Jews had insulted a religious procession, that a Jew had spat at an ikon, that the shop of a cheating Jew trader had been set on fire, and that the blaze had spread to the adjacent group of houses. He gathered that the Jews were running out of the burning block on the other side "like rats." The crowd was mostly composed of town roughs with a sprinkling of peasants. They were mischievous but undecided. Among them were a number of soldiers, and he was surprised to see a policemen, brightly lit from head to foot, watching the looting of a shop that was still untouched by the flames.

He held back some men who had discovered a couple of women's figures slinking along in the shadow beneath a wall. Behind his remonstrances the Jewesses escaped. His anger against disorder was growing upon him....

Late that night Benham found himself the leading figure amidst a party of Jews who had made a counter attack upon a gang of roughs in a court that had become the refuge of a crowd of fugitives. Some of the young Jewish men had already been making a fight, rather a poor and hopeless fight, from the windows of the house near the entrance of the court, but it is doubtful if they would have made an effective resistance if it had not been for this tall excited stranger who was suddenly shouting directions to them in sympathetically murdered Russian. It was not that he brought powerful blows or subtle strategy to their assistance, but that he put heart into them and perplexity into his adversaries because he was so manifestly non-partizan. Nobody could ever have mistaken Benham for a Jew. When at last towards dawn a not too zealous governor called out the troops and began to clear the streets of rioters, Benham and a band of Jews were still keeping the gateway of that court behind a hasty but adequate barricade of furniture and handbarrows.

The ghetto could not understand him, nobody could understand him, but it was clear a rare and precious visitor had come to their rescue, and he was implored by a number of elderly, dirty, but very intelligent-looking old men to stay with them and preserve them until their safety was assured.

They could not understand him, but they did their utmost to entertain him and assure him of their gratitude. They seemed to

consider him as a representative of the British Government, and foreign intervention on their behalf is one of those unfortunate fixed ideas that no persecuted Jews seem able to abandon.

Benham found himself, refreshed and tended, sitting beside a wood fire in an inner chamber richly flavoured by humanity and listening to a discourse in evil but understandable German. It was a discourse upon the wrongs and the greatness of the Jewish people — and it was delivered by a compact middle-aged man with a big black beard and long-lashed but animated eyes. Beside him a very old man dozed and nodded approval. A number of other men crowded the apartment, including several who had helped to hold off the rioters from the court. Some could follow the talk and ever again endorsed the speaker in Yiddish or Russian; others listened with tantalized expressions, their brows knit, their lips moving.

It was a discourse Benham had provoked. For now he was at the very heart of the Jewish question, and he could get some light upon the mystery of this great hatred at first hand. He did not want to hear tales of outrages, of such things he knew, but he wanted to understand what was the irritation that caused these things.

So he listened. The Jew dilated at first on the harmlessness and usefulness of the Jews.

"But do you never take a certain advantage?" Benham threw out.

"The Jews are cleverer than the Russians. Must we suffer for that?"

The spokesman went on to the more positive virtues of his race. Benham suddenly had that uncomfortable feeling of the Gentile who finds a bill being made against him. Did the world owe Israel nothing for Philo, Aron ben Asher, Solomon Gabriol, Halevy, Mendelssohn, Heine, Meyerbeer, Rubinstein, Joachim, Zangwill? Does Britain owe nothing to Lord Beaconsfield, Montefiore or the Rothschilds? Can France repudiate her debt to Fould, Gaudahaux, Oppert, or Germany to Furst, Steinschneider, Herxheimer, Lasker, Auerbach, Traube and Lazarus and Benfey?...

Benham admitted under the pressure of urgent tones and gestures that these names did undoubtedly include the cream of humanity, but was it not true that the Jews did press a little financially upon the inferior peoples whose lands they honoured in their exile?

The man with the black beard took up the challenge bravely.

“They are merciful creditors,” he said. “And it is their genius to possess and control. What better stewards could you find for the wealth of nations than the Jews? And for the honours? That always had been the role of the Jews — stewardship. Since the days of Joseph in Egypt....”

Then in a lower voice he went on to speak of the deficiencies of the Gentile population. He wished to be just and generous but the truth was the truth. The Christian Russians loved drink and laziness; they had no sense of property; were it not for unjust laws even now the Jews would possess all the land of South Russia....

Benham listened with a kind of fascination. “But,” he said.

It was so. And with a confidence that aroused a protest or so from the onlookers, the Jewish apologist suddenly rose up, opened a safe close beside the fire and produced an armful of documents.

“Look!” he said, “all over South Russia there are these!”

Benham was a little slow to understand, until half a dozen of these papers had been thrust into his hand. Eager fingers pointed, and several voices spoke. These things were illegalities that might some day be legal; there were the records of loans and hidden transactions that might at any time put all the surrounding soil into the hands of the Jew. All South Russia was mortgaged....

“But is it so?” asked Benham, and for a time ceased to listen and stared into the fire.

Then he held up the papers in his hand to secure silence and, feeling his way in unaccustomed German, began to speak and continued to speak in spite of a constant insurgent undertone of interruption from the Jewish spokesman.

All men, Benham said, were brothers. Did they not remember Nathan the Wise?

“I did not claim him,” said the spokesman, misunderstanding. “He is a character in fiction.”

But all men are brothers, Benham maintained. They had to be merciful to one another and give their gifts freely to one another. Also they had to consider each other’s weaknesses. The Jews were probably justified in securing and administering the property of every community into which they came, they were no doubt right in

claiming to be best fitted for that task, but also they had to consider, perhaps more than they did, the feelings and vanities of the host population into which they brought these beneficent activities. What was said of the ignorance, incapacity and vice of the Roumanians and Russians was very generally believed and accepted, but it did not alter the fact that the peasant, for all his incapacity, did like to imagine he owned his own patch and hovel and did have a curious irrational hatred of debt....

The faces about Benham looked perplexed.

"THIS," said Benham, tapping the papers in his hand. "They will not understand the ultimate benefit of it. It will be a source of anger and fresh hostility. It does not follow because your race has supreme financial genius that you must always follow its dictates to the exclusion of other considerations...."

The perplexity increased.

Benham felt he must be more general. He went on to emphasize the brotherhood of man, the right to equal opportunity, equal privilege, freedom to develop their idiosyncrasies as far as possible, unhindered by the idiosyncrasies of others. He could feel the sympathy and understanding of his hearers returning. "You see," said Benham, "you must have generosity. You must forget ancient scores. Do you not see the world must make a fresh beginning?"

He was entirely convinced he had them with him. The heads nodded assent, the bright eyes and lips followed the slow disentanglement of his bad German.

"Free yourselves and the world," he said.

Applause.

"And so," he said breaking unconsciously into English, "let us begin by burning these BEASTLY mortgages!"

And with a noble and dramatic gesture Benham cast his handful on the fire. The assenting faces became masks of horror. A score of hands clutched at those precious papers, and a yell of dismay and anger filled the room. Some one caught at his throat from behind. "Don't kill him!" cried some one. "He fought for us!"

An hour later Benham returned in an extraordinarily dishevelled and battered condition to his hotel. He found his friend in anxious consultation with the hotel proprietor.

"We were afraid that something had happened to you," said his friend.

"I got a little involved," said Benham.

"Hasn't some one clawed your cheek?"

"Very probably," said Benham.

"And torn your coat? And hit you rather heavily upon the neck?"

"It was a complicated misunderstanding," said Benham. "Oh! pardon! I'm rather badly bruised upon that arm you're holding."

7

Benham told the story to White as a jest against himself.

"I see now of course that they could not possibly understand my point of view," he said....

"I'm not sure if they quite followed my German....

"It's odd, too, that I remember saying, 'Let's burn these mortgages,' and at the time I'm almost sure I didn't know the German for mortgage...."

It was not the only occasion on which other people had failed to grasp the full intention behind Benham's proceedings. His aristocratic impulses were apt to run away with his conceptions of brotherhood, and time after time it was only too manifest to White that Benham's pallid flash of anger had astonished the subjects of his disinterested observations extremely. His explorations in Hayti had been terminated abruptly by an affair with a native policeman that had necessitated the intervention of the British Consul. It was begun with that suddenness that was too often characteristic of Benham, by his hitting the policeman. It was in the main street of Cap Haytien, and the policeman had just clubbed an unfortunate youth over the head with the heavily loaded wooden club which is the normal instrument of Haytien discipline. His blow was a repartee, part of a triangular altercation in which a large, voluble, mahogany-coloured lady whose head was tied up in a blue handkerchief played a conspicuous part, but it seemed to Benham an entirely unjustifiable

blow.

He allowed an indignation with negro policemen in general that had been gathering from the very moment of his arrival at Port-au-Prince to carry him away. He advanced with the kind of shout one would hurl at a dog, and smote the policeman to the earth with the stout stick that the peculiar social atmosphere of Hayti had disposed him to carry. By the local standard his blow was probably a trivial one, but the moral effect of his indignant pallor and a sort of rearing tallness about him on these occasions was always very considerable. Unhappily these characteristics could have no effect on a second negro policeman who was approaching the affray from behind, and he felled Benham by a blow on the shoulder that was meant for the head, and with the assistance of his colleague overpowered him, while the youth and the woman vanished.

The two officials dragged Benham in a state of vehement protest to the lock-up, and only there, in the light of a superior officer's superior knowledge, did they begin to realize the grave fact of his British citizenship.

The memory of the destruction of the Haytien fleet by a German gunboat was still vivid in Port-au-Prince, and to that Benham owed it that in spite of his blank refusal to compensate the man he had knocked over, he was after two days of anger, two days of extreme insanitary experience, and much meditation upon his unphilosophical hastiness, released.

Quite a number of trivial incidents of a kindred sort diversified his enquiries into Indian conditions. They too turned for the most part on his facile exasperation at any defiance of his deep-felt desire for human brotherhood. At last indeed came an affair that refused ultimately to remain trivial, and tangled him up in a coil that invoked newspaper articles and heated controversies.

The effect of India upon Benham's mind was a peculiar mixture of attraction and irritation. He was attracted by the Hindu spirit of intellectualism and the Hindu repudiation of brutality, and he was infuriated by the spirit of caste that cuts the great world of India into a thousand futile little worlds, all aloof and hostile one to the other. "I came to see India," he wrote, "and there is no India. There is a great number of Indias, and each goes about with its chin in the air,

quietly scorning everybody else."

His Indian adventures and his great public controversy on caste began with a tremendous row with an Indian civil servant who had turned an Indian gentleman out of his first-class compartment, and culminated in a disgraceful fracas with a squatting brown holiness at Benares, who had thrown aside his little brass bowlful of dinner because Benham's shadow had fallen upon it.

"You unendurable snob!" said Benham, and then lapsing into the forceful and inadvisable: "By Heaven, you SHALL eat it!..."

8

Benham's detestation of human divisions and hostilities was so deep in his character as to seem almost instinctive. But he had too a very clear reason for his hostility to all these amazing breaks in human continuity in his sense of the gathering dangers they now involve. They had always, he was convinced, meant conflict, hatred, misery and the destruction of human dignity, but the new conditions of life that have been brought about by modern science were making them far more dangerous than they had ever been before. He believed that the evil and horror of war was becoming more and more tremendous with every decade, and that the free play of national prejudice and that stupid filching ambitiousness that seems to be inseparable from monarchy, were bound to precipitate catastrophe, unless a real international aristocracy could be brought into being to prevent it.

In the drawer full of papers labelled "Politics," White found a paper called "The Metal Beast." It showed that for a time Benham had been greatly obsessed by the thought of the armaments that were in those days piling up in every country in Europe. He had gone to Essen, and at Essen he had met a German who had boasted of Zeppelins and the great guns that were presently to smash the effete British fleet and open the Imperial way to London.

"I could not sleep," he wrote, "on account of this man and his talk and the streak of hatred in his talk. He distressed me not because he seemed exceptional, but because he seemed ordinary. I realized that he was more human than I was, and that only killing and killing could come out of such humanity. I thought of the great ugly guns I

had seen, and of the still greater guns he had talked about, and how gloatingly he thought of the destruction they could do. I felt as I used to feel about that infernal stallion that had killed a man with its teeth and feet, a despairing fear, a sense of monstrosity in life. And this creature who had so disturbed me was only a beastly snuffy little man in an ill-fitting frock-coat, who laid his knife and fork by their tips on the edge of his plate, and picked his teeth with gusto and breathed into my face as he talked to me. The commonest of representative men. I went about that Westphalian country after that, with the conviction that headless, soulless, blood-drinking metal monsters were breeding all about me. I felt that science was producing a poisonous swarm, a nest of black dragons. They were crouching here and away there in France and England, they were crouching like beasts that bide their time, mewed up in forts, kennelled in arsenals, hooded in tarpaulins as hawks are hooded.... And I had never thought very much about them before, and there they were, waiting until some human fool like that frock-coated thing of spite, and fools like him multiplied by a million, saw fit to call them out to action. Just out of hatred and nationalism and faction....”

Then came a queer fancy.

“Great guns, mines, battleships, all that cruelty-apparatus; I see it more and more as the gathering revenge of dead joyless matter for the happiness of life. It is a conspiracy of the lifeless, an enormous plot of the rebel metals against sensation. That is why in particular half-living people seem to love these things. La Ferriere was a fastness of the kind of tyranny that passes out of human experience, the tyranny of the strong man over men. Essen comes, the new thing, the tyranny of the strong machine....

“Science is either slave or master. These people — I mean the German people and militarist people generally — have no real mastery over the scientific and economic forces on which they seem to ride. The monster of steel and iron carries Kaiser and Germany and all Europe captive. It has persuaded them to mount upon its back and now they must follow the logic of its path. Whither?... Only kingship will ever master that beast of steel which has got loose into the world. Nothing but the sense of unconquerable kingship in us all will ever dare withstand it.... Men must be kingly aristocrats — it

isn't MAY be now, it is MUST be — or, these confederated metals, these things of chemistry and metallurgy, these explosives and mechanisms, will trample the blood and life out of our race into mere red-streaked froth and filth....”

Then he turned to the question of this metallic beast's release. Would it ever be given blood?

“Men of my generation have been brought up in this threat of a great war that never comes; for forty years we have had it, so that it is with a note of incredulity that one tells oneself, ‘After all this war may happen. But can it happen?’”

He proceeded to speculate upon the probability whether a great war would ever devastate western Europe again, and it was very evident to White that he wanted very much to persuade himself against that idea. It was too disagreeable for him to think it probable. The paper was dated 1910. It was in October, 1914, that White, who was still working upon the laborious uncertain account of Benham's life and thought he has recently published, read what Benham had written. Benham concluded that the common-sense of the world would hold up this danger until reason could get “to the head of things.”

“There are already mighty forces in Germany,” Benham wrote, “that will struggle very powerfully to avoid a war. And these forces increase. Behind the coarseness and the threatenings, the melodrama and the display of the vulgarer sort there arises a great and noble people.... I have talked with Germans of the better kind.... You cannot have a whole nation of Christophes.... There also the true knighthood discovers itself.... I do not believe this war will overtake us.”

“WELL!” said White.

“I must go back to Germany and understand Germany better,” the notes went on.

But other things were to hold Benham back from that resolve. Other things were to hold many men back from similar resolves until it was too late for them....

“It is preposterous that these monstrous dangers should lower over Europe, because a certain threatening vanity has crept into the blood of a people, because a few crude ideas go inadequately controlled....

Does no one see what that metallic beast will do if they once let it loose? It will trample cities; it will devour nations....”

White read this on the 9th of October, 1914. One crumpled evening paper at his feet proclaimed in startled headlines: “Rain of Incendiary Shells. Antwerp Ablaze.” Another declared untruthfully but impressively: “Six Zeppelins drop Bombs over the Doomed City.”

He had bought all the evening papers, and had read and re-read them and turned up maps and worried over strategic problems for which he had no data at all — as every one did at that time — before he was able to go on with Benham’s manuscripts.

These pacific reassurances seemed to White’s war-troubled mind like finding a flattened and faded flower, a girl’s love token, between the pages of some torn and scorched and blood-stained book picked out from a heap of loot after rapine and murder had had their fill....

“How can we ever begin over again?” said White, and sat for a long time staring gloomily into the fire, forgetting forgetting, forgetting too that men who are tired and weary die, and that new men are born to succeed them....

“We have to begin over again,” said White at last, and took up Benham’s papers where he had laid them down....

9

One considerable section of Benham’s treatment of the Fourth Limitation was devoted to what he called the Prejudices of Social Position. This section alone was manifestly expanding into a large treatise upon the psychology of economic organization....

It was only very slowly that he had come to realize the important part played by economic and class hostilities in the disordering of human affairs. This was a very natural result of his peculiar social circumstances. Most people born to wealth and ease take the established industrial system as the natural method in human affairs; it is only very reluctantly and by real feats of sympathy and disinterestedness that they can be brought to realize that it is natural only in the sense that it has grown up and come about, and necessary only because nobody is strong and clever enough to rearrange it.

Their experience of it is a satisfactory experience. On the other hand, the better off one is, the wider is one's outlook and the more alert one is to see the risks and dangers of international dissensions. Travel and talk to foreigners open one's eyes to aggressive possibilities; history and its warnings become conceivable. It is in the nature of things that socialists and labour parties should minimize international obligations and necessities, and equally so that autocracies and aristocracies and plutocracies should be negligent of and impatient about social reform.

But Benham did come to realize this broader conflict between worker and director, between poor man and possessor, between resentful humanity and enterprise, between unwilling toil and unearned opportunity. It is a far profounder and subtler conflict than any other in human affairs. "I can foresee a time," he wrote, "when the greater national and racial hatreds may all be so weakened as to be no longer a considerable source of human limitation and misery, when the suspicions of complexion and language and social habit are allayed, and when the element of hatred and aggression may be clean washed out of most religious cults, but I do not begin to imagine a time, because I cannot imagine a method, when there will not be great friction between those who employ, those who direct collective action, and those whose part it is to be the rank and file in industrialism. This, I know, is a limitation upon my confidence due very largely to the restricted nature of my knowledge of this sort of organization. Very probably resentment and suspicion in the mass and self-seeking and dishonesty in the fortunate few are not so deeply seated, so necessary as they seem to be, and if men can be cheerfully obedient and modestly directive in war time, there is no reason why ultimately they should not be so in the business of peace. But I do not understand the elements of the methods by which this state of affairs can be brought about.

"If I were to confess this much to an intelligent working man I know that at once he would answer 'Socialism,' but Socialism is no more a solution of this problem than eating is a solution when one is lost in the wilderness and hungry. Of course everybody with any intelligence wants Socialism, everybody, that is to say, wants to see all human efforts directed to the common good and a common end,

but brought face to face with practical problems Socialism betrays a vast insufficiency of practical suggestions. I do not say that Socialism would not work, but I do say that so far Socialists have failed to convince me that they could work it. The substitution of a stupid official for a greedy proprietor may mean a vanished dividend, a limited output and no other human advantage whatever. Socialism is in itself a mere eloquent gesture, inspiring, encouraging, perhaps, but beyond that not very helpful, towards the vast problem of moral and material adjustment before the race. That problem is incurably miscellaneous and intricate, and only by great multitudes of generous workers, one working at this point and one at that, secretly devoted knights of humanity, hidden and dispersed kings, unaware of one another, doubting each his right to count himself among those who do these kingly services, is this elaborate rightening of work and guidance to be done."

So from these most fundamental social difficulties he came back to his panacea. All paths and all enquiries led him back to his conception of aristocracy, conscious, self-disciplined, devoted, self-examining yet secret, making no personal nor class pretences, as the supreme need not only of the individual but the world.

10

It was the Labour trouble in the Transvaal which had brought the two schoolfellows together again. White had been on his way to Zimbabwe. An emotional disturbance of unusual intensity had driven him to seek consolations in strange scenery and mysterious desolations. It was as if Zimbabwe called to him. Benham had come to South Africa to see into the question of Indian immigration, and he was now on his way to meet Amanda in London. Neither man had given much heed to the gathering social conflict on the Rand until the storm burst about them. There had been a few paragraphs in the papers about a dispute upon a point of labour etiquette, a question of the recognition of Trade Union officials, a thing that impressed them both as technical, and then suddenly a long incubated quarrel flared out in rioting and violence, the burning of houses and furniture, attacks on mines, attempts to dynamite trains. White stayed in

Johannesburg because he did not want to be stranded up country by the railway strike that was among the possibilities of the situation. Benham stayed because he was going to London very reluctantly, and he was glad of this justification for a few days' delay. The two men found themselves occupying adjacent tables in the Sherborough Hotel, and White was the first to recognize the other. They came together with a warmth and readiness of intimacy that neither would have displayed in London.

White had not seen Benham since the social days of Amanda at Lancaster Gate, and he was astonished at the change a few years had made in him. The peculiar contrast of his pallor and his dark hair had become more marked, his skin was deader, his features seemed more prominent and his expression intenser. His eyes were very bright and more sunken under his brows. He had suffered from yellow fever in the West Indies, and these it seemed were the marks left by that illness. And he was much more detached from the people about him; less attentive to the small incidents of life, more occupied with inner things. He greeted White with a confidence that White was one day to remember as pathetic.

"It is good to meet an old friend," Benham said. "I have lost friends. And I do not make fresh ones. I go about too much by myself, and I do not follow the same tracks that other people are following...."

What track was he following? It was now that White first heard of the Research Magnificent. He wanted to know what Benham was doing, and Benham after some partial and unsatisfactory explanation of his interest in insurgent Hindoos, embarked upon larger expositions. "It is, of course, a part of something else," he amplified. He was writing a book, "an enormous sort of book." He laughed with a touch of shyness. It was about "everything," about how to live and how not to live. And "aristocracy, and all sorts of things." White was always curious about other people's books. Benham became earnest and more explicit under encouragement, and to talk about his book was soon to talk about himself. In various ways, intentionally and inadvertently, he told White much. These chance encounters, these intimacies of the train and hotel, will lead men at times to a stark frankness of statement they would never permit themselves with

habitual friends.

About the Johannesburg labour trouble they talked very little, considering how insistent it was becoming. But the wide propositions of the Research Magnificent, with its large indifference to immediate occurrences, its vast patience, its tremendous expectations, contrasted very sharply in White's memory with the bitterness, narrowness and resentment of the events about them. For him the thought of that first discussion of this vast inchoate book into which Benham's life was flowering, and which he was ultimately to summarize, trailed with it a fringe of vivid little pictures; pictures of crowds of men hurrying on bicycles and afoot under a lowering twilight sky towards murmuring centres of disorder, of startling flares seen suddenly afar off, of the muffled galloping of troops through the broad dusty street in the night, of groups of men standing and watching down straight broad roads, roads that ended in groups of chimneys and squat buildings of corrugated iron. And once there was a marching body of white men in the foreground and a complicated wire fence, and a clustering mass of Kaffirs watching them over this fence and talking eagerly amongst themselves.

"All this affair here is little more than a hitch in the machinery," said Benham, and went back to his large preoccupation....

But White, who had not seen so much human disorder as Benham, felt that it was more than that. Always he kept the tail of his eye upon that eventful background while Benham talked to him.

When the firearms went off he may for the moment have even given the background the greater share of his attention....

11

It was only as White burrowed through his legacy of documents that the full values came to very many things that Benham said during these last conversations. The papers fitted in with his memories of their long talks like text with commentary; so much of Benham's talk had repeated the private writings in which he had first digested his ideas that it was presently almost impossible to disentangle what had been said and understood at Johannesburg from the fuller statement of those patched and corrected manuscripts. The two things merged

in White's mind as he read. The written text took upon itself a resonance of Benham's voice; it eked out the hints and broken sentences of his remembered conversation.

But some things that Benham did not talk about at all, left by their mere marked absence an impression on White's mind. And occasionally after Benham had been talking for a long time there would be an occasional aphasia, such as is often apparent in the speech of men who restrain themselves from betraying a preoccupation. He would say nothing about Amanda or about women in general, he was reluctant to speak of Prothero, and another peculiarity was that he referred perhaps half a dozen times or more to the idea that he was a "prig." He seemed to be defending himself against some inner accusation, some unconquerable doubt of the entire adventure of his life. These half hints and hints by omission exercised the quick intuitions of White's mind very keenly, and he drew far closer to an understanding of Benham's reserves than Benham ever suspected....

At first after his parting from Amanda in London Benham had felt completely justified in his treatment of her. She had betrayed him and he had behaved, he felt, with dignity and self-control. He had no doubt that he had punished her very effectively, and it was only after he had been travelling in China with Prothero for some time and in the light of one or two chance phrases in her letters that he began to have doubts whether he ought to have punished her at all. And one night at Shanghai he had a dream in which she stood before him, dishevelled and tearful, his Amanda, very intensely his Amanda, and said that she was dirty and shameful and spoilt for ever, because he had gone away from her. Afterwards the dream became absurd: she showed him the black leopard's fur as though it was a rug, and it was now moth-eaten and mangey, the leopard skin that had been so bright and wonderful such a little time ago, and he awoke before he could answer her, and for a long time he was full of unspoken answers explaining that in view of her deliberate unfaithfulness the position she took up was absurd. She had spoilt her own fur. But what was more penetrating and distressing in this dream was not so much the case Amanda stated as the atmosphere of unconquerable intimacy between them, as though they still belonged to each other, soul to

soul, as though nothing that had happened afterwards could have destroyed their common responsibility and the common interest of their first unstinted union. She was hurt, and of course he was hurt. He began to see that his marriage to Amanda was still infinitely more than a technical bond.

And having perceived that much he presently began to doubt whether she realized anything of the sort. Her letters fluctuated very much in tone, but at times they were as detached and guarded as a schoolgirl writing to a cousin. Then it seemed to Benham an extraordinary fraud on her part that she should presume to come into his dream with an entirely deceptive closeness and confidence. She began to sound him in these latter letters upon the possibility of divorce. This, which he had been quite disposed to concede in London, now struck him as an outrageous suggestion. He wrote to ask her why, and she responded exasperatingly that she thought it was "better." But, again, why better? It is remarkable that although his mind had habituated itself to the idea that Easton was her lover in London, her thought of being divorced, no doubt to marry again, filled him with jealous rage. She asked him to take the blame in the divorce proceedings. There, again, he found himself ungenerous. He did not want to do that. Why should he do that? As a matter of fact he was by no means reconciled to the price he had paid for his Research Magnificent; he regretted his Amanda acutely. He was regretting her with a regret that grew when by all the rules of life it ought to be diminishing.

It was in consequence of that regret and his controversies with Prothero while they travelled together in China that his concern about what he called priggishness arose. It is a concern that one may suppose has a little afflicted every reasonably self-conscious man who has turned from the natural passionate personal life to religion or to public service or any abstract devotion. These things that are at least more extensive than the interests of flesh and blood have a trick of becoming unsubstantial, they shine gloriously and inspiringly upon the imagination, they capture one and isolate one and then they vanish out of sight. It is far easier to be entirely faithful to friend or lover than it is to be faithful to a cause or to one's country or to a religion. In the glow of one's first service that larger idea may be as

closely spontaneous as a handclasp, but in the darkness that comes as the glow dies away there is a fearful sense of unreality. It was in such dark moments that Benham was most persecuted by his memories of Amanda and most distressed by this suspicion that the Research Magnificent was a priggishness, a pretentious logomachy. Prothero could indeed hint as much so skilfully that at times the dream of nobility seemed an insult to the sunshine, to the careless laughter of children, to the good light in wine and all the warm happiness of existence. And then Amanda would peep out of the dusk and whisper, "Of course if you could leave me — ! Was I not LIFE? Even now if you cared to come back to me — For I loved you best and loved you still, old Cheetah, long after you had left me to follow your dreams.... Even now I am drifting further into lies and the last shreds of dignity drop from me; a dirty, lost, and shameful leopard I am now, who was once clean and bright.... You could come back, Cheetah, and you could save me yet. If you would love me...."

In certain moods she could wring his heart by such imagined speeches, the very quality of her voice was in them, a softness that his ear had loved, and not only could she distress him, but when Benham was in this heartache mood, when once she had set him going, then his little mother also would rise against him, touchingly indignant, with her blue eyes bright with tears; and his frowsty father would back towards him and sit down complaining that he was neglected, and even little Mrs. Skelmersdale would reappear, bravely tearful on her chair looking after him as he slunk away from her through Kensington Gardens; indeed every personal link he had ever had to life could in certain moods pull him back through the door of self-reproach Amanda opened and set him aching and accusing himself of harshness and self-concentration. The very kittens of his childhood revived forgotten moments of long-repented hardness. For a year before Prothero was killed there were these heartaches. That tragedy gave them their crowning justification. All these people said in this form or that, "You owed a debt to us, you evaded it, you betrayed us, you owed us life out of yourself, love and services, and you have gone off from us all with this life that was ours, to live by yourself in dreams about the rule of the world, and with empty phantoms of power and destiny. All this was intellectualization. You

sacrificed us to the thin things of the mind. There is no rule of the world at all, or none that a man like you may lay hold upon. The rule of the world is a fortuitous result of incalculably multitudinous forces. But all of us you could have made happier. You could have spared us distresses. Prothero died because of you. Presently it will be the turn of your father, your mother — Amanda perhaps....”

He made no written note of his heartaches, but he made several memoranda about priggishness that White read and came near to understanding. In spite of the tugging at his heart-strings, Benham was making up his mind to be a prig. He weighed the cold uningratiating virtues of priggishness against his smouldering passion for Amanda, and against his obstinate sympathy for Prothero’s grossness and his mother’s personal pride, and he made his choice. But it was a reluctant choice.

One fragment began in the air. “Of course I had made myself responsible for her life. But it was, you see, such a confoundedly energetic life, as vigorous and as slippery as an eel.... Only by giving all my strength to her could I have held Amanda.... So what was the good of trying to hold Amanda?...

“All one’s people have this sort of claim upon one. Claims made by their pride and their self-respect, and their weaknesses and dependences. You’ve no right to hurt them, to kick about and demand freedom when it means snapping and tearing the silly suffering tendrils they have wrapped about you. The true aristocrat I think will have enough grasp, enough steadiness, to be kind and right to every human being and still do the work that ought to be his essential life. I see that now. It’s one of the things this last year or so of loneliness has made me realize; that in so far as I have set out to live the aristocratic life I have failed. Instead I’ve discovered it — and found myself out. I’m an overstrung man. I go harshly and continuously for one idea. I live as I ride. I blunder through my fences, I take off too soon. I’ve no natural ease of mind or conduct or body. I am straining to keep hold of a thing too big for me and do a thing beyond my ability. Only after Prothero’s death was it possible for me to realize the prig I have always been, first as regards him and then as regards Amanda and my mother and every one. A necessary unavoidable priggishness....” I do not see how certain things can be

done without prigs, people, that is to say, so concentrated and specialized in interest as to be a trifle inhuman, so resolved as to be rather rhetorical and forced.... All things must begin with clumsiness, there is no assurance about pioneers....

"Some one has to talk about aristocracy, some one has to explain aristocracy.... But the very essence of aristocracy, as I conceive it, is that it does not explain nor talk about itself....

"After all it doesn't matter what I am.... It's just a private vexation that I haven't got where I meant to get. That does not affect the truth I have to tell....

"If one has to speak the truth with the voice of a prig, still one must speak the truth. I have worked out some very considerable things in my research, and the time has come when I must set them out clearly and plainly. That is my job anyhow. My journey to London to release Amanda will be just the end of my adolescence and the beginning of my real life. It will release me from my last entanglement with the fellow creatures I have always failed to make happy.... It's a detail in the work.... And I shall go on.

"But I shall feel very like a man who goes back for a surgical operation.

"It's very like that. A surgical operation, and when it is over perhaps I shall think no more about it.

"And beyond these things there are great masses of work to be done. So far I have but cleared up for myself a project and outline of living. I must begin upon these masses now, I must do what I can upon the details, and, presently, I shall see more clearly where other men are working to the same ends...."

12

Benham's expedition to China with Prothero was essentially a wrestle between his high resolve to work out his conception of the noble life to the utmost limit and his curiously invincible affection and sympathy for the earthliness of that inglorious little don. Although Benham insisted upon the dominance of life by noble imaginations and relentless reasonableness, he would never altogether abandon the materialism of life. Prothero had once said to

him, “You are the advocate of the brain and I of the belly. Only, only we respect each other.” And at another time, “You fear emotions and distrust sensations. I invite them. You do not drink gin because you think it would make you weep. But if I could not weep in any other way I would drink gin.” And it was under the influence of Prothero that Benham turned from the haughty intellectualism, the systematized superiorities and refinements, the caste marks and defensive dignities of India to China, that great teeming stinking tank of humorous yellow humanity.

Benham had gone to Prothero again after a bout of elevated idealism. It was only very slowly that he reconciled his mind to the idea of an entirely solitary pursuit of his aristocratic dream. For some time as he went about the world he was trying to bring himself into relationship with the advanced thinkers, the liberal-minded people who seemed to promise at least a mental and moral co-operation. Yet it is difficult to see what co-operation was possible unless it was some sort of agreement that presently they should all shout together. And it was after a certain pursuit of Rabindranath Tagore, whom he met in Hampstead, that a horror of perfect manners and perfect finish came upon him, and he fled from that starry calm to the rich uncleanness of the most undignified fellow of Trinity. And as an advocate and exponent of the richness of the lower levels of life, as the declared antagonist of caste and of the uttermost refinements of pride, Prothero went with Benham by way of Siberia to the Chinese scene.

Their controversy was perceptible at every dinner-table in their choice of food and drink. Benham was always wary and Prothero always appreciative. It peeped out in the distribution of their time, in the direction of their glances. Whenever women walked about, Prothero gave way to a sort of ethnological excitement. “That girl — a wonderful racial type.” But in Moscow he was sentimental. He insisted on going again to the Cosmopolis Bazaar, and when he had ascertained that Anna Alexievna had vanished and left no trace he prowled the streets until the small hours.

In the eastward train he talked intermittently of her. “I should have defied Cambridge,” he said.

But at every stopping station he got out upon the platform

ethnologically alert....

Theoretically Benham was disgusted with Prothero. Really he was not disgusted at all. There was something about Prothero like a sparrow, like a starling, like a Scotch terrier.... These, too, are morally objectionable creatures that do not disgust....

Prothero discoursed much upon the essential goodness of Russians. He said they were a people of genius, that they showed it in their faults and failures just as much as in their virtues and achievements. He extolled the "germinating disorder" of Moscow far above the "implacable discipline" of Berlin. Only a people of inferior imagination, a base materialist people, could so maintain its attention upon precision and cleanliness. Benham was roused to defence against this paradox. "But all exaltation neglects," said Prothero. "No religion has ever boasted that its saints were spick and span." This controversy raged between them in the streets of Irkutsk. It was still burning while they picked their way through the indescribable filth of Pekin.

"You say that all this is a fine disdain for material things," said Benham. "But look out there!"

Apt to their argument a couple of sturdy young women came shuffling along, cleaving the crowd in the narrow street by virtue of a single word and two brace of pails of human ordure.

"That is not a fine disdain for material things," said Benham. "That is merely individualism and unsystematic living."

"A mere phase of frankness. Only frankness is left to them now. The Manchus crippled them, spoilt their roads and broke their waterways. European intervention paralyses every attempt they make to establish order on their own lines. In the Ming days China did not reek.... And, anyhow, Benham, it's better than the silly waste of London...."

And in a little while Prothero discovered that China had tried Benham and found him wanting, centuries and dynasties ago.

What was this new-fangled aristocratic man, he asked, but the ideal of Confucius, the superior person, "the son of the King"? There you had the very essence of Benham, the idea of self-examination, self-preparation under a vague Theocracy. ("Vaguer," said Benham, "for the Confucian Heaven could punish and reward.") Even the

elaborate sham modesty of the two dreams was the same. Benham interrupted and protested with heat. And this Confucian idea of the son of the King, Prothero insisted, had been the cause of China's paralysis. "My idea of nobility is not traditional but expectant," said Benham. "After all, Confucianism has held together a great pacific state far longer than any other polity has ever lasted. I'll accept your Confucianism. I've not the slightest objection to finding China nearer salvation than any other land. Do but turn it round so that it looks to the future and not to the past, and it will be the best social and political culture in the world. That, indeed, is what is happening. Mix Chinese culture with American enterprise and you will have made a new lead for mankind."

From that Benham drove on to discoveries. "When a man thinks of the past he concentrates on self; when he thinks of the future he radiates from self. Call me a neo-Confucian; with the cone opening forward away from me, instead of focussing on me...."

"You make me think of an extinguisher," said Prothero.

"You know I am thinking of a focus," said Benham. "But all your thought now has become caricature.... You have stopped thinking. You are fighting after making up your mind...."

Prothero was a little disconcerted by Benham's prompt endorsement of his Chinese identification. He had hoped it would be exasperating. He tried to barb his offence. He amplified the indictment. All cultures must be judged by their reaction and fatigue products, and Confucianism had produced formalism, priggishness, humbug.... No doubt its ideals had had their successes; they had unified China, stamped the idea of universal peace and good manners upon the greatest mass of population in the world, paved the way for much beautiful art and literature and living. "But in the end, all your stern orderliness, Benham," said Prothero, "only leads to me. The human spirit rebels against this everlasting armour on the soul. After Han came T'ang. Have you never read Ling Po? There's scraps of him in English in that little book you have — what is it? — the LUTE OF JADE? He was the inevitable Epicurean; the Omar Khayyam after the Prophet. Life must relax at last...."

"No!" cried Benham. "If it is traditional, I admit, yes; but if it is creative, no...."

Under the stimulation of their undying controversy Benham was driven to closer enquiries into Chinese thought. He tried particularly to get to mental grips with English-speaking Chinese. “We still know nothing of China,” said Prothero. “Most of the stuff we have been told about this country is mere middle-class tourists’ twaddle. We send merchants from Brixton and missionaries from Glasgow, and what doesn’t remind them of these delectable standards seems either funny to them or wicked. I admit the thing is slightly pot-bound, so to speak, in the ancient characters and the ancient traditions, but for all that, they KNOW, they HAVE, what all the rest of the world has still to find and get. When they begin to speak and write in a modern way and handle modern things and break into the soil they have scarcely touched, the rest of the world will find just how much it is behind.... Oh! not soldiering; the Chinese are not such fools as that, but LIFE....”

Benham was won to a half belief in these assertions.

He came to realize more and more clearly that while India dreams or wrestles weakly in its sleep, while Europe is still hopelessly and foolishly given over to militant monarchies, racial vanities, delirious religious feuds and an altogether imbecile fumbling with loaded guns, China, even more than America, develops steadily into a massive possibility of ordered and aristocratic liberalism....

The two men followed their associated and disconnected paths. Through Benham’s chance speeches and notes, White caught glimpses, as one might catch glimpses through a moving trellis, of that bilateral adventure. He saw Benham in conversation with liberal-minded mandarins, grave-faced, bald-browed persons with disciplined movements, who sat with their hands thrust into their sleeves talking excellent English; while Prothero pursued enquiries of an intenser, more recondite sort with gentlemen of a more confidential type. And, presently, Prothero began to discover and discuss the merits of opium.

For if one is to disavow all pride and priggishness, if one is to find the solution of life’s problem in the rational enjoyment of one’s sensations, why should one not use opium? It is art materialized. It gives tremendous experiences with a minimum of exertion, and if presently its gifts diminish one need but increase the quantity.

Moreover, it quickens the garrulous mind, and steadies the happiness of love. Across the varied adventures of Benham's journey in China fell the shadow first of a suspicion and then of a certainty....

The perfected and ancient vices of China wrapped about Prothero like some tainted but scented robe, and all too late Benham sought to drag him away. And then in a passion of disgust turned from him.

"To this," cried Benham, "one comes! Save for pride and fierceness!"

"Better this than cruelty," said Prothero talking quickly and clearly because of the evil thing in his veins. "You think that you are the only explorer of life, Benham, but while you toil up the mountains I board the house-boat and float down the stream. For you the stars, for me the music and the lanterns. You are the son of a mountaineering don, and I am a Chinese philosopher of the riper school. You force yourself beyond fear of pain, and I force myself beyond fear of consequences. What are we either of us but children groping under the black cloak of our Maker? — who will not blind us with his light. Did he not give us also these lusts, the keen knife and the sweetness, these sensations that are like pineapple smeared with saltpetre, like salted olives from heaven, like being flayed with delight.... And did he not give us dreams fantastic beyond any lust whatever? What is the good of talking? Speak to your own kind. I have gone, Benham. I am lost already. There is no resisting any more, since I have drugged away resistance. Why then should I come back? I know now the symphonies of the exalted nerves; I can judge; and I say better lie and hear them to the end than come back again to my old life, to my little tin-whistle solo, my — effort! My EFFORT!... I ruin my body. I know. But what of that?... I shall soon be thin and filthy. What of the grape-skin when one has had the pulp?"

"But," said Benham, "the cleanness of life!"

"While I perish," said Prothero still more wickedly, "I say good things...."

13

White had a vision of a great city with narrow crowded streets, hung

with lank banners and gay with vertical vermilion labels, and of a pleasant large low house that stood in a garden on a hillside, a garden set with artificial stones and with beasts and men and lanterns of white porcelain, a garden which overlooked this city. Here it was that Benham stayed and talked with his host, a man robed in marvellous silks and subtle of speech even in the European languages he used, and meanwhile Prothero, it seemed, had gone down into the wickedness of the town below. It was a very great town indeed, spreading for miles along the banks of a huge river, a river that divided itself indolently into three shining branches so as to make islands of the central portion of the place. And on this river swarmed for ever a vast flotilla of ships and boats, boats in which people lived, boats in which they sought pleasure, moored places of assembly, high-pooped junks, steamboats, passenger sampans, cargo craft, such a water town in streets and lanes, endless miles of it, as no other part of the world save China can display. In the daylight it was gay with countless sunlit colours embroidered upon a fabric of yellow and brown, at night it glittered with a hundred thousand lights that swayed and quivered and were reflected quiveringly upon the black flowing waters.

And while Benham sat and talked in the garden above came a messenger who was for some reason very vividly realized by White's imagination. He was a tall man with lack-lustre eyes and sunken cheeks that made his cheek bones very prominent, and gave his thin-lipped mouth something of the geniality of a skull, and the arm he thrust out of his yellow robe to hand Prothero's message to Benham was lean as a pole. So he stood out in White's imagination, against the warm afternoon sky and the brown roofs and blue haze of the great town below, and was with one exception the distinctest thing in the story. The message he bore was scribbled by Prothero himself in a nerveless scrawl: "Send a hundred dollars by this man. I am in a frightful fix."

Now Benham's host had been twitting him with the European patronage of opium, and something in this message stirred his facile indignation. Twice before he had had similar demands. And on the whole they had seemed to him to be unreasonable demands. He was astonished that while he was sitting and talking of the great world-

republic of the future and the secret self-directed aristocracy that would make it possible, his own friend, his chosen companion, should thus, by this inglorious request and this ungainly messenger, disavow him. He felt a wave of intense irritation.

"No," he said, "I will not."

And he was too angry to express himself in any language understandable by his messenger.

His host intervened and explained after a few questions that the occasion was serious. Prothero, it seemed, had been gambling.

"No," said Benham. "He is shameless. Let him do what he can."

The messenger was still reluctant to go.

And scarcely had he gone before misgivings seized Benham.

"Where IS your friend?" asked the mandarin.

"I don't know," said Benham.

"But they will keep him! They may do all sorts of things when they find he is lying to them."

"Lying to them?"

"About your help."

"Stop that man," cried Benham suddenly realizing his mistake. But when the servants went to stop the messenger their intentions were misunderstood, and the man dashed through the open gate of the garden and made off down the winding road.

"Stop him!" cried Benham, and started in pursuit, suddenly afraid for Prothero.

The Chinese are a people of great curiosity, and a small pebble sometimes starts an avalanche....

White pieced together his conception of the circles of disturbance that spread out from Benham's pursuit of Prothero's flying messenger.

For weeks and months the great town had been uneasy in all its ways because of the insurgent spirits from the south and the disorder from the north, because of endless rumours and incessant intrigue. The stupid manoeuvres of one European "power" against another, the tactlessness of missionaries, the growing Chinese disposition to meet violence and force with violence and force, had fermented and brewed the possibility of an outbreak. The sudden resolve of Benham to get at once to Prothero was like the firing of a mine. This tall,

pale-faced, incomprehensible stranger charging through the narrow streets that led to the pleasure-boats in the south river seemed to many a blue-clad citizen like the White Peril embodied. Behind him came the attendants of the rich man up the hill; but they surely were traitors to help this stranger.

Before Benham could at all realize what was happening he found his way to the river-boat on which he supposed Prothero to be detained, barred by a vigorous street fight. Explanations were impossible; he joined in the fight.

For three days that fight developed round the mystery of Prothero's disappearance.

It was a complicated struggle into which the local foreign traders on the river-front and a detachment of modern drilled troops from the up-river barracks were presently drawn. It was a struggle that was never clearly explained, and at the end of it they found Prothero's body flung out upon a waste place near a little temple on the river bank, stabbed while he was asleep....

And from the broken fragments of description that Benham let fall, White had an impression of him hunting for all those three days through the strange places of a Chinese city, along narrow passages, over queer Venetian-like bridges, through the vast spaces of empty warehouses, in the incense-scented darkness of temple yards, along planks that passed to the dark hulls of secret barges, in quick-flying boats that slipped noiselessly among the larger craft, and sometimes he hunted alone, sometimes in company, sometimes black figures struggled in the darkness against dim-lit backgrounds and sometimes a swarm of shining yellow faces screamed and shouted through the torn paper windows.... And then at the end of this confused effect of struggle, this Chinese kinematograph film, one last picture jerked into place and stopped and stood still, a white wall in the sunshine come upon suddenly round a corner, a dirty flagged passage and a stiff crumpled body that had for the first time an inexpressive face....

14

Benham sat at a table in the smoking-room of the Sherborough Hotel at Johannesburg and told of these things. White watched him from an

armchair. And as he listened he noted again the intensification of Benham's face, the darkness under his brows, the pallor of his skin, the touch of red in his eyes. For there was still that red gleam in Benham's eyes; it shone when he looked out of a darkness into a light. And he sat forward with his arms folded under him, or moved his long lean hand about over the things on the table.

"You see," he said, "this is a sort of horror in my mind. Things like this stick in my mind. I am always seeing Prothero now, and it will take years to get this scar off my memory again. Once before — about a horse, I had the same kind of distress. And it makes me tender, sore-minded about everything. It will go, of course, in the long run, and it's just like any other ache that lays hold of one. One can't cure it. One has to get along with it....

"I know, White, I ought to have sent that money, but how was I to know then that it was so imperative to send that money?...

"At the time it seemed just pandering to his vices....

"I was angry. I shall never subdue that kind of hastiness altogether. It takes me by surprise. Before the messenger was out of sight I had repented....

"I failed him. I have gone about in the world dreaming of tremendous things and failing most people. My wife too...."

He stopped talking for a little time and folded his arms tight and stared hard in front of himself, his lips compressed.

"You see, White," he said, with a kind of setting of the teeth, "this is the sort of thing one has to stand. Life is imperfect. Nothing can be done perfectly. And on the whole—" He spoke still more slowly, "I would go through again with the very same things that have hurt my people. If I had to live over again. I would try to do the things without hurting the people, but I would do the things anyhow. Because I'm raw with remorse, it does not follow that on the whole I am not doing right. Right doing isn't balm. If I could have contrived not to hurt these people as I have done, it would have been better, just as it would be better to win a battle without any killed or wounded. I was clumsy with them and they suffered, I suffer for their suffering, but still I have to stick to the way I have taken. One's blunders are accidents. If one thing is clearer than another it is that the world isn't accident-proof....

“But I wish I had sent those dollars to Prothero.... God! White, but I lie awake at night thinking of that messenger as he turned away.... Trying to stop him....

“I didn’t send those dollars. So fifty or sixty people were killed and many wounded.... There for all practical purposes the thing ends. Perhaps it will serve to give me a little charity for some other fool’s haste and blundering....

“I couldn’t help it, White. I couldn’t help it....

“The main thing, the impersonal thing, goes on. One thinks, one learns, one adds one’s contribution of experience and understanding. The spirit of the race goes on to light and comprehension. In spite of accidents. In spite of individual blundering.

“It would be absurd anyhow to suppose that nobility is so easy as to come slick and true on every occasion....

“If one gives oneself to any long aim one must reckon with minor disasters. This Research I undertook grows and grows. I believe in it more and more. The more it asks from me the more I give to it. When I was a youngster I thought the thing I wanted was just round the corner. I fancied I would find out the noble life in a year or two, just what it was, just where it took one, and for the rest of my life I would live it. Finely. But I am just one of a multitude of men, each one going a little wrong, each one achieving a little right. And the noble life is a long, long way ahead.... We are working out a new way of living for mankind, a new rule, a new conscience. It’s no small job for all of us. There must be lifetimes of building up and lifetimes of pulling down and trying again. Hope and disappointments and much need for philosophy.... I see myself now for the little workman I am upon this tremendous undertaking. And all my life hereafter goes to serve it....”

He turned his sombre eyes upon his friend. He spoke with a grim enthusiasm. “I’m a prig. I’m a fanatic, White. But I have something clear, something better worth going on with than any adventure of personal relationship could possibly be....”

And suddenly he began to tell White as plainly as he could of the faith that had grown up in his mind. He spoke with a touch of defiance, with the tense force of a man who shrinks but overcomes his shame. “I will tell you what I believe.”

He told of his early dread of fear and baseness, and of the slow development, expansion and complication of his idea of self-respect until he saw that there is no honour nor pride for a man until he refers his life to ends and purposes beyond himself. An aristocrat must be loyal. So it has ever been, but a modern aristocrat must also be lucid; there it is that one has at once the demand for kingship and the repudiation of all existing states and kings. In this manner he had come to his idea of a great world republic that must replace the little warring kingdoms of the present, to the conception of an unseen kingship ruling the whole globe, to his King Invisible, who is the Lord of Truth and all sane loyalty. "There," he said, "is the link of our order, the new knighthood, the new aristocracy, that must at last rule the earth. There is our Prince. He is in me, he is in you; he is latent in all mankind. I have worked this out and tried it and lived it, and I know that outwardly and inwardly this is the way a man must live, or else be a poor thing and a base one. On great occasions and small occasions I have failed myself a thousand times, but no failure lasts if your faith lasts. What I have learnt, what I have thought out and made sure, I want now to tell the world. Somehow I will tell it, as a book I suppose, though I do not know if I shall ever be able to make a book. But I have away there in London or with me here all the masses of notes I have made in my search for the life that is worth while living.... We who are self-appointed aristocrats, who are not ashamed of kingship, must speak to one another....

"We can have no organization because organizations corrupt....

"No recognition....

"But we can speak plainly...."

(As he talked his voice was for a space drowned by the jingle and voices of mounted police riding past the hotel.)

"But on one side your aristocracy means revolution," said White. "It becomes a political conspiracy."

"Manifestly. An open conspiracy. It denies the king upon the stamps and the flag upon the wall. It is the continual proclamation of the Republic of Mankind."

The earlier phases of violence in the Rand outbreak in 1913 were manifest rather in the outskirts of Johannesburg than at the centre. "Pulling out" was going on first at this mine and then that, there were riots in Benoni, attacks on strike breakers and the smashing up of a number of houses. It was not until July the 4th that, with the suppression of a public meeting in the market-place, Johannesburg itself became the storm centre.

Benham and White were present at this marketplace affair, a confused crowded occasion, in which a little leaven of active men stirred through a large uncertain multitude of decently dressed onlookers. The whole big square was astir, a swaying crowd of men. A ramshackle platform improvised upon a trolley struggled through the swarming straw hats to a street corner, and there was some speaking. At first it seemed as though military men were using this platform, and then it was manifestly in possession of an excited knot of labour leaders with red rosettes. The military men had said their say and got down. They came close by Benham, pushing their way across the square. "We've warned them," said one. A red flag, like some misunderstood remark at a tea-party, was fitfully visible and incomprehensible behind the platform. Somebody was either pitched or fell off the platform. One could hear nothing from the speakers except a minute bleating....

Then there were shouts that the police were charging. A number of mounted men trotted into the square. The crowd began a series of short rushes that opened lanes for the passage of the mounted police as they rode to and fro. These men trotted through the crowd, scattering knots of people. They carried pick-handles, but they did not seem to be hitting with them. It became clear that they aimed at the capture of the trolley. There was only a feeble struggle for the trolley; it was captured and hauled through the scattered spectators in the square to the protection of a small impassive body of regular cavalry at the opposite corner. Then quite a number of people seemed to be getting excited and fighting. They appeared to be vaguely fighting the foot-police, and the police seemed to be vaguely pushing through them and dispersing them. The roof of a little one-story shop became prominent as a centre of vigorous stone-throwing.

It was no sort of battle. Merely the normal inconsecutiveness of

human affairs had become exaggerated and pugnacious. A meeting was being prevented, and the police engaged in the operation were being pelted or obstructed. Mostly people were just looking on.

"It amounts to nothing," said Benham. "Even if they held a meeting, what could happen? Why does the Government try to stop it?"

The drifting and charging and a little booing went on for some time. Every now and then some one clambered to a point of vantage, began a speech and was pulled down by policemen. And at last across the confusion came an idea, like a wind across a pond.

The strikers were to go to the Power Station.

That had the effect of a distinct move in the game. The Power Station was the centre of Johannesburg's light and energy. There if anywhere it would be possible to express one's disapproval of the administration, one's desire to embarrass and confute it. One could stop all sorts of things from the Power Station. At any rate it was a repartee to the suppression of the meeting. Everybody seemed gladdened by a definite project.

Benham and White went with the crowd.

At the intersection of two streets they were held up for a time; the scattered drift of people became congested. Gliding slowly across the mass came an electric tram, an entirely unbattered tram with even its glass undamaged, and then another and another. Strikers, with the happy expression of men who have found something expressive to do, were escorting the trams off the street. They were being meticulously careful with them. Never was there less mob violence in a riot. They walked by the captured cars almost deferentially, like rough men honoured by a real lady's company. And when White and Benham reached the Power House the marvel grew. The rioters were already in possession and going freely over the whole place, and they had injured nothing. They had stopped the engines, but they had not even disabled them. Here too manifestly a majority of the people were, like White and Benham, merely lookers-on.

"But this is the most civilized rioting," said Benham. "It isn't rioting; it's drifting. Just as things drifted in Moscow. Because nobody has the rudder....

"What maddens me," he said, "is the democracy of the whole

thing. White! I HATE this modern democracy. Democracy and inequality! Was there ever an absurder combination? What is the good of a social order in which the men at the top are commoner, meaner stuff than the men underneath, the same stuff, just spoilt, spoilt by prosperity and opportunity and the conceit that comes with advantage? This trouble wants so little, just a touch of aristocracy, just a little cultivated magnanimity, just an inkling of responsibility, and the place might rise instantly out of all this squalor and evil temper.... What does all this struggle here amount to? On one side unintelligent greed, unintelligent resentment on the other; suspicion everywhere....

"And you know, White, at bottom THEY ALL WANT TO BE DECENT!

"If only they had light enough in their brains to show them how. It's such a plain job they have here too, a new city, the simplest industries, freedom from war, everything to make a good life for men, prosperity, glorious sunshine, a kind of happiness in the air. And mismanagement, fear, indulgence, jealousy, prejudice, stupidity, poison it all. A squabble about working on a Saturday afternoon, a squabble embittered by this universal shadow of miner's phthisis that the masters were too incapable and too mean to prevent.

"Oh, God!" cried Benham, "when will men be princes and take hold of life? When will the kingship in us wake up and come to its own?... Look at this place! Look at this place!... The easy, accessible happiness! The manifest prosperity. The newness and the sunshine. And the silly bitterness, the rage, the mischief and miseries!..."

And then: "It's not our quarrel...."

"It's amazing how every human quarrel draws one in to take sides. Life is one long struggle against the incidental. I can feel my anger gathering against the Government here in spite of my reason. I want to go and expostulate. I have a ridiculous idea that I ought to go off to Lord Gladstone or Botha and expostulate.... What good would it do? They move in the magic circles of their own limitations, an official, a politician — how would they put it?— 'with many things to consider....'

"It's my weakness to be drawn into quarrels. It's a thing I have to guard against....

“What does it all amount to? It is like a fight between navvies in a tunnel to settle the position of the Pole star. It doesn’t concern us.... Oh! it doesn’t indeed concern us. It’s a scuffle in the darkness, and our business, the business of all brains, the only permanent good work is to light up the world.... There will be mischief and hatred here and suppression and then forgetfulness, and then things will go on again, a little better or a little worse....”

“I’m tired of this place, White, and of all such places. I’m tired of the shouting and running, the beating and shooting. I’m sick of all the confusions of life’s experience, which tells only of one need amidst an endless multitude of distresses. I’ve seen my fill of wars and disputes and struggles. I see now how a man may grow weary at last of life and its disorders, its unreal exacting disorders, its blunders and its remorse. No! I want to begin upon the realities I have made for myself. For they are the realities. I want to go now to some quiet corner where I can polish what I have learnt, sort out my accumulations, be undisturbed by these transitory symptomatic things....

“What was that boy saying? They are burning the STAR office.... Well, let them....”

And as if to emphasize his detachment, his aversion, from the things that hurried through the night about them, from the red flare in the sky and the distant shouts and revolver shots and scuffling flights down side streets, he began to talk again of aristocracy and the making of greatness and a new great spirit in men. All the rest of his life, he said, must be given to that. He would say his thing plainly and honestly and afterwards other men would say it clearly and beautifully; here it would touch a man and there it would touch a man; the Invisible King in us all would find himself and know himself a little in this and a little in that, and at last a day would come, when fair things and fine things would rule the world and such squalor as this about them would be as impossible any more for men as a Stone Age Corroboree....

Late or soon?

Benham sought for some loose large measure of time.

“Before those constellations above us have changed their shapes....

“Does it matter if we work at something that will take a hundred years or ten thousand years? It will never come in our lives, White. Not soon enough for that. But after that everything will be soon — when one comes to death then everything is at one’s fingertips — I can feel that greater world I shall never see as one feels the dawn coming through the last darkness....”

16

The attack on the Rand Club began while Benham and White were at lunch in the dining-room at the Sherborough on the day following the burning of the STAR office. The Sherborough dining-room was on the first floor, and the Venetian window beside their table opened on to a verandah above a piazza. As they talked they became aware of an excitement in the street below, shouting and running and then a sound of wheels and the tramp of a body of soldiers marching quickly. White stood up and looked. “They’re seizing the stuff in the gunshops,” he said, sitting down again. “It’s amazing they haven’t done it before.”

They went on eating and discussing the work of a medical mission at Mukden that had won Benham’s admiration....

A revolver cracked in the street and there was a sound of glass smashing. Then more revolver shots. “That’s at the big club at the corner, I think,” said Benham and went out upon the verandah.

Up and down the street mischief was afoot. Outside the Rand Club in the cross street a considerable mass of people had accumulated, and was being hustled by a handful of khaki-clad soldiers. Down the street people were looking in the direction of the market-place and then suddenly a rush of figures flooded round the corner, first a froth of scattered individuals and then a mass, a column, marching with an appearance of order and waving a flag. It was a poorly disciplined body, it fringed out into a swarm of sympathizers and spectators upon the side walk, and at the head of it two men disputed. They seemed to be differing about the direction of the whole crowd. Suddenly one smote the other with his fist, a blow that hurled him sideways, and then turned with a triumphant gesture to the following ranks, waving his arms in the air. He was a tall lean

man, hatless and collarless, greyhaired and wild-eyed. On he came, gesticulating gauntly, past the hotel.

And then up the street something happened. Benham's attention was turned round to it by a checking, by a kind of catch in the breath, on the part of the advancing procession under the verandah.

The roadway beyond the club had suddenly become clear. Across it a dozen soldiers had appeared and dismounted methodically and lined out, with their carbines in readiness. The mounted men at the club corner had vanished, and the people there had swayed about towards this new threat. Quite abruptly the miscellaneous noises of the crowd ceased. Understanding seized upon every one.

These soldiers were going to fire....

The brown uniformed figures moved like automata; the rifle shots rang out almost in one report....

There was a rush in the crowd towards doorways and side streets, an enquiring pause, the darting back of a number of individuals into the roadway and then a derisive shouting. Nobody had been hit. The soldiers had fired in the air.

"But this is a stupid game," said Benham. "Why did they fire at all?"

The tall man who had led the mob had run out into the middle of the road. His commando was a little disposed to assume a marginal position, and it had to be reassured. He was near enough for Benham to see his face. For a time it looked anxious and thoughtful. Then he seemed to jump to his decision. He unbuttoned and opened his coat wide as if defying the soldiers. "Shoot," he bawled, "Shoot, if you dare!"

A little uniform movement of the soldiers answered him. The small figure of the officer away there was inaudible. The coat of the man below flapped like the wings of a crowing cock before a breast of dirty shirt, the hoarse voice cracked with excitement, "Shoot, if you dare. Shoot, if you dare! See!"

Came the metallic bang of the carbines again, and in the instant the leader collapsed in the road, a sprawl of clothes, hit by half a dozen bullets. It was an extraordinary effect. As though the figure had been deflated. It was incredible that a moment before this thing had been a man, an individual, a hesitating complicated purpose.

“Good God!” cried Benham, “but — this is horrible!”

The heap of garments lay still. The red hand that stretched out towards the soldiers never twitched.

The spectacular silence broke into a confusion of sounds, women shrieked, men cursed, some fled, some sought a corner from which they might still see, others pressed forward. “Go for the swine!” bawled a voice, a third volley rattled over the heads of the people, and in the road below a man with a rifle halted, took aim, and answered the soldiers’ fire. “Look out!” cried White who was watching the soldiers, and ducked. “This isn’t in the air!”

Came a straggling volley again, like a man running a metal hammer very rapidly along iron corrugations, and this time people were dropping all over the road. One white-faced man not a score of yards away fell with a curse and a sob, struggled up, staggered for some yards with blood running abundantly from his neck, and fell and never stirred again. Another went down upon his back clumsily in the roadway and lay wringing his hands faster and faster until suddenly with a movement like a sigh they dropped inert by his side. A straw-hatted youth in a flannel suit ran and stopped and ran again. He seemed to be holding something red and strange to his face with both hands; above them his eyes were round and anxious. Blood came out between his fingers. He went right past the hotel and stumbled and suddenly sprawled headlong at the opposite corner. The majority of the crowd had already vanished into doorways and side streets. But there was still shouting and there was still a remnant of amazed and angry men in the roadway — and one or two angry women. They were not fighting. Indeed they were unarmed, but if they had had weapons now they would certainly have used them.

“But this is preposterous!” cried Benham. “Preposterous. Those soldiers are never going to shoot again! This must stop.”

He stood hesitating for a moment and then turned about and dashed for the staircase. “Good Heaven!” cried White. “What are you going to do?”

Benham was going to stop that conflict very much as a man might go to stop a clock that is striking unwarrantably and amazingly. He was going to stop it because it annoyed his sense of human dignity.

White hesitated for a moment and then followed, crying

“Benham!”

But there was no arresting this last outbreak of Benham’s all too impatient kingship. He pushed aside a ducking German waiter who was peeping through the glass doors, and rushed out of the hotel. With a gesture of authority he ran forward into the middle of the street, holding up his hand, in which he still held his dinner napkin clenched like a bomb. White believes firmly that Benham thought he would be able to dominate everything. He shouted out something about “Foolery!”

Haroun al Raschid was flinging aside all this sublime indifference to current things....

But the carbines spoke again.

Benham seemed to run unexpectedly against something invisible. He spun right round and fell down into a sitting position. He sat looking surprised.

After one moment of blank funk White drew out his pocket handkerchief, held it arm high by way of a white flag, and ran out from the piazza of the hotel.

17

“Are you hit?” cried White dropping to his knees and making himself as compact as possible. “Benham!”

Benham, after a moment of perplexed thought answered in a strange voice, a whisper into which a whistling note had been mixed.

“It was stupid of me to come out here. Not my quarrel. Faults on both sides. And now I can’t get up. I will sit here a moment and pull myself together. Perhaps I’m — I must be shot. But it seemed to come — inside me.... If I should be hurt. Am I hurt?... Will you see to that book of mine, White? It’s odd. A kind of faintness.... What?”

“I will see after your book,” said White and glanced at his hand because it felt wet, and was astonished to discover it bright red. He forgot about himself then, and the fresh flight of bullets down the street.

The immediate effect of this blood was that he said something more about the book, a promise, a definite promise. He could never recall his exact words, but their intention was binding. He conveyed

his absolute acquiescence with Benham's wishes whatever they were. His life for that moment was unreservedly at his friend's disposal....

White never knew if his promise was heard. Benham had stopped speaking quite abruptly with that "What?"

He stared in front of him with a doubtful expression, like a man who is going to be sick, and then, in an instant, every muscle seemed to give way, he shuddered, his head flopped, and White held a dead man in his arms.

THE END

MR. BRITLING SEES IT THROUGH

Another social realist novel, this book was first published in 1916 and is a portrait of English society during the First World War. The protagonist is, in many ways, an alter ego for Wells himself. Living in a small country town and discontented with his married life, Mr. Britling reflects on the global tragedy of the conflict – as well as its effect on the individuals caught up in it, both at home and on the battlefield.

The novel is notable as for its full expression of Wells' non-sectarian religious faith, which he had previously struggled to reconcile with his scientific knowledge, but which here becomes the basis for Britling's ability to find meaning in the awful tragedy of the war. The novel was tremendously well-received and was one of the most popular British novels to be published during the First World War.

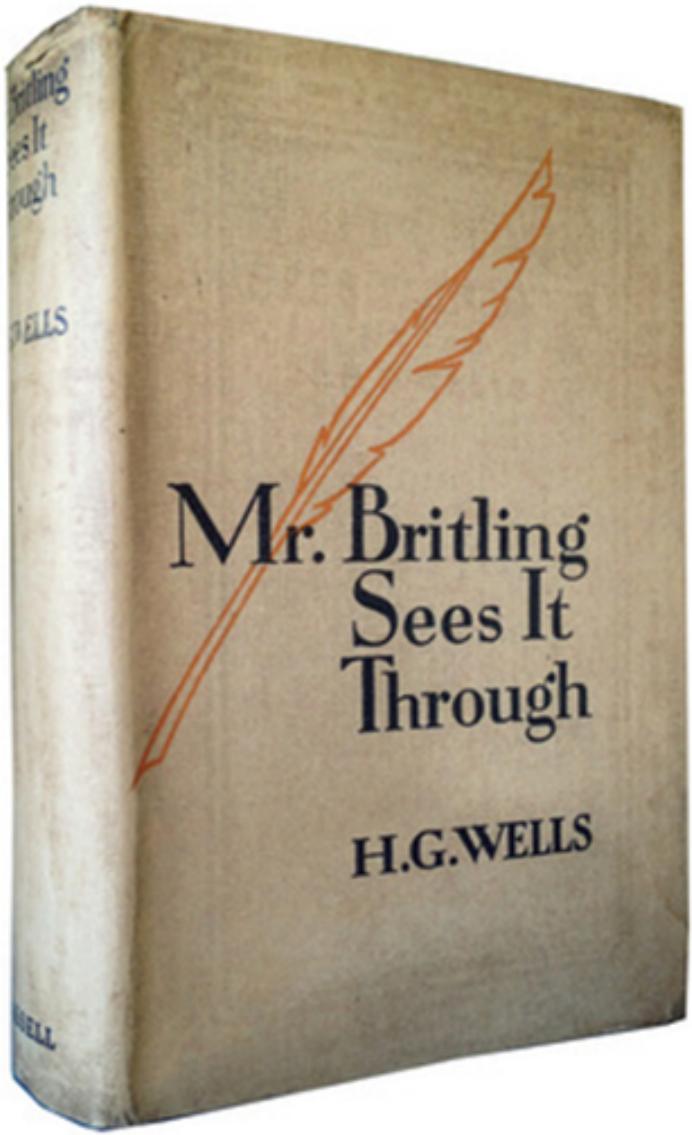

The first edition

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MR. BRITLING SEES IT THROUGH

BY

H. G. WELLS

AUTHOR OF "THE WIFE OF SIR ISAAC HARMAN," "THE RESEARCH MAGNIFICENT," "WHAT IS COMING," ETC.

WITH FRONTISPIECE

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BOOK I. MATCHING’S EASY AT EASE

CHAPTER THE FIRST

MR. DIRECK VISITS MR. BRITLING

§ 1

It was the sixth day of Mr. Direck's first visit to England, and he was at his acutest perception of differences. He found England in every way gratifying and satisfactory, and more of a contrast with things American than he had ever dared to hope.

He had promised himself this visit for many years, but being of a sunny rather than energetic temperament — though he firmly believed himself to be a reservoir of clear-sighted American energy — he had allowed all sorts of things, and more particularly the uncertainties of Miss Mamie Nelson, to keep him back. But now there were no more uncertainties about Miss Mamie Nelson, and Mr. Direck had come over to England just to convince himself and everybody else that there were other interests in life for him than Mamie....

And also, he wanted to see the old country from which his maternal grandmother had sprung. Wasn't there even now in his bedroom in New York a water-colour of Market Saffron church, where the dear old lady had been confirmed? And generally he wanted to see Europe. As an interesting side show to the excursion he hoped, in his capacity of the rather underworked and rather over-salaried secretary of the Massachusetts Society for the Study of Contemporary Thought, to discuss certain agreeable possibilities with Mr. Britling, who lived at Matching's Easy.

Mr. Direck was a type of man not uncommon in America. He was very much after the fashion of that clean and pleasant-looking person one sees in the advertisements in American magazines, that agreeable person who smiles and says, "Good, it's the Fizgig Brand," or "Yes, it's a Wilkins, and that's the Best," or "My shirt-front never rucks; it's a Chesson." But now he was saying, still with the same firm smile, "Good. It's English." He was pleased by every unlikeness to things American, by every item he could hail as characteristic; in

the train to London he had laughed aloud with pleasure at the chequer-board of little fields upon the hills of Cheshire, he had chuckled to find himself in a compartment without a corridor; he had tipped the polite yet kindly guard magnificently, after doubting for a moment whether he ought to tip him at all, and he had gone about his hotel in London saying "Lordy! Lordy! My *word!*" in a kind of ecstasy, verifying the delightful absence of telephone, of steam-heat, of any dependent bathroom. At breakfast the waiter (out of Dickens it seemed) had refused to know what "cereals" were, and had given him his egg in a china egg-cup such as you see in the pictures in *Punch*. The Thames, when he sallied out to see it, had been too good to be true, the smallest thing in rivers he had ever seen, and he had had to restrain himself from affecting a marked accent and accosting some passer-by with the question, "Say! But is this little wet ditch here the Historical River Thames?"

In America, it must be explained, Mr. Direck spoke a very good and careful English indeed, but he now found the utmost difficulty in controlling his impulse to use a high-pitched nasal drone and indulge in dry "Americanisms" and poker metaphors upon all occasions. When people asked him questions he wanted to say "Yep" or "Sure," words he would no more have used in America than he could have used a bowie knife. But he had a sense of rôle. He wanted to be visibly and audibly America eye-witnessing. He wanted to be just exactly what he supposed an Englishman would expect him to be. At any rate, his clothes had been made by a strongly American New York tailor, and upon the strength of them a taxi-man had assumed politely but firmly that the shillings on his taximeter were dollars, an incident that helped greatly to sustain the effect of Mr. Direck, in Mr. Direck's mind, as something standing out with an almost representative clearness against the English scene.... So much so that the taxi-man got the dollars....

Because all the time he had been coming over he had dreaded that it wasn't true, that England was a legend, that London would turn out to be just another thundering great New York, and the English exactly like New Englanders....

§ 2

And now here he was on the branch line of the little old Great Eastern Railway, on his way to Matching's Easy in Essex, and he was suddenly in the heart of Washington Irving's England.

Washington Irving's England! Indeed it was. He couldn't sit still and just peep at it, he had to stand up in the little compartment and stick his large, firm-featured, kindly countenance out of the window as if he greeted it. The country under the June sunshine was neat and bright as an old-world garden, with little fields of corn surrounded by dog-rose hedges, and woods and small rushy pastures of an infinite tidiness. He had seen a real deer park, it had rather tumbledown iron gates between its shield-surmounted pillars, and in the distance, beyond all question, was Bracebridge Hall nestling among great trees. He had seen thatched and timbered cottages, and half-a-dozen inns with creaking signs. He had seen a fat vicar driving himself along a grassy lane in a governess cart drawn by a fat grey pony. It wasn't like any reality he had ever known. It was like travelling in literature.

Mr. Britling's address was the Dower House, and it was, Mr. Britling's note had explained, on the farther edge of the park at Claverings. Claverings! The very name for some stately home of England....

And yet this was only forty-two miles from London. Surely it brought things within the suburban range. If Matching's Easy were in America, commuters would live there. But in supposing that, Mr. Direck displayed his ignorance of a fact of the greatest importance to all who would understand England. There is a gap in the suburbs of London. The suburbs of London stretch west and south and even west by north, but to the north-eastward there are no suburbs; instead there is Essex. Essex is not a suburban county; it is a characteristic and individualised county which wins the heart. Between dear Essex and the centre of things lie two great barriers, the East End of London and Epping Forest. Before a train could get to any villadom with a cargo of season-ticket holders it would have to circle about this rescued woodland and travel for twenty unprofitable miles, and so once you are away from the main Great Eastern lines Essex still

lives in the peace of the eighteenth century, and London, the modern Babylon, is, like the stars, just a light in the nocturnal sky. In Matching's Easy, as Mr. Britling presently explained to Mr. Direck, there are half-a-dozen old people who have never set eyes on London in their lives — and do not want to.

"Aye-ya!"

"Fussin' about thea."

"Mr. Robinson, 'e went to Lon', 'e did. That's 'ow 'e 'urt 'is fut."

Mr. Direck had learnt at the main-line junction that he had to tell the guard to stop the train for Matching's Easy; it only stopped "by request"; the thing was getting better and better; and when Mr. Direck seized his grip and got out of the train there was just one little old Essex station-master and porter and signalman and everything, holding a red flag in his hand and talking to Mr. Britling about the cultivation of the sweet peas which glorified the station. And there was the Mr. Britling who was the only item of business and the greatest expectation in Mr. Direck's European journey, and he was quite unlike the portraits Mr. Direck had seen and quite unmistakably Mr. Britling all the same, since there was nobody else upon the platform, and he was advancing with a gesture of welcome.

"Did you ever see such peas, Mr. Dick?" said Mr. Britling by way of introduction.

"My *word*," said Mr. Direck in a good old Farmer Hayseed kind of voice.

"Aye-ya!" said the station-master in singularly strident tones. "It be a rare year for sweet peas," and then he slammed the door of the carriage in a leisurely manner and did dismissive things with his flag, while the two gentlemen took stock, as people say, of one another.

§ 3

Except in the doubtful instance of Miss Mamie Nelson, Mr. Direck's habit was good fortune. Pleasant things came to him. Such was his position as the salaried secretary of this society of thoughtful Massachusetts business men to which allusion has been made. Its purpose was to bring itself expeditiously into touch with the best

thought of the age.

Too busily occupied with practical realities to follow the thought of the age through all its divagations and into all its recesses, these Massachusetts business men had had to consider methods of access more quintessential and nuclear. And they had decided not to hunt out the best thought in its merely germinating stages, but to wait until it had emerged and flowered to some trustworthy recognition, and then, rather than toil through recondite and possibly already reconsidered books and writings generally, to offer an impressive fee to the emerged new thinker, and to invite him to come to them and to lecture to them and to have a conference with them, and to tell them simply, competently and completely at first hand just all that he was about. To come, in fact, and be himself — in a highly concentrated form. In this way a number of interesting Europeans had been given very pleasant excursions to America, and the society had been able to form very definite opinions upon their teaching. And Mr. Britling was one of the representative thinkers upon which this society had decided to inform itself. It was to broach this invitation and to offer him the impressive honorarium by which the society honoured not only its guests but itself, that Mr. Direck had now come to Matching's Easy. He had already sent Mr. Britling a letter of introduction, not indeed intimating his precise purpose, but mentioning merely a desire to know him, and the letter had been so happily phrased and its writer had left such a memory of pleasant hospitality on Mr. Britling's mind during Mr. Britling's former visit to New York, that it had immediately produced for Mr. Direck an invitation not merely to come and see him but to come and stay over the week-end.

And here they were shaking hands.

Mr. Britling did not look at all as Mr. Direck had expected him to look. He had expected an Englishman in a country costume of golfing tweeds, like the Englishman in country costume one sees in American illustrated stories. Drooping out of the country costume of golfing tweeds he had expected to see the mildly unhappy face, pensive even to its drooping moustache, with which Mr. Britling's publisher had for some faulty and unfortunate reason familiarised the American public. Instead of this, Mr. Britling was in a miscellaneous

costume, and mildness was the last quality one could attribute to him. His moustache, his hair, his eyebrows bristled; his flaming freckled face seemed about to bristle too. His little hazel eyes came out with a "ping" and looked at Mr. Direck. Mr. Britling was one of a large but still remarkable class of people who seem at the mere approach of photography to change their hair, their clothes, their moral natures. No photographer had ever caught a hint of his essential Britlingness and bristlingness. Only the camera could ever induce Mr. Britling to brush his hair, and for the camera alone did he reserve that expression of submissive martyrdom Mr. Direck knew. And Mr. Direck was altogether unprepared for a certain casualness of costume that sometimes overtook Mr. Britling. He was wearing now a very old blue flannel blazer, no hat, and a pair of knickerbockers, not tweed breeches but tweed knickerbockers of a remarkable bagginess, and made of one of those virtuous socialistic homespun tweeds that drag out into woolly knots and strings wherever there is attrition. His stockings were worsted and wrinkled, and on his feet were those extraordinary slippers of bright-coloured bast-like interwoven material one buys in the north of France. These were purple with a touch of green. He had, in fact, thought of the necessity of meeting Mr. Direck at the station at the very last moment, and had come away from his study in the clothes that had happened to him when he got up. His face wore the amiable expression of a wire-haired terrier disposed to be friendly, and it struck Mr. Direck that for a man of his real intellectual distinction Mr. Britling was unusually short.

For there can be no denying that Mr. Britling was, in a sense, distinguished. The hero and subject of this novel was at its very beginning a distinguished man. He was in the *Who's Who* of two continents. In the last few years he had grown with some rapidity into a writer recognised and welcomed by the more cultivated sections of the American public, and even known to a select circle of British readers. To his American discoverers he had first appeared as an essayist, a serious essayist who wrote about aesthetics and Oriental thought and national character and poets and painting. He had come through America some years ago as one of those Kahn scholars, those promising writers and intelligent men endowed by

Auguste Kahn of Paris, who go about the world nowadays in comfort and consideration as the travelling guests of that original philanthropist — to acquire the international spirit. Previously he had been a critic of art and literature and a writer of thoughtful third leaders in the London *Times*. He had begun with a Pembroke fellowship and a prize poem. He had returned from his world tour to his reflective yet original corner of *The Times* and to the production of books about national relationships and social psychology, that had brought him rapidly into prominence.

His was a naturally irritable mind, which gave him point and passion; and moreover he had a certain obstinate originality and a generous disposition. So that he was always lively, sometimes spacious, and never vile. He loved to write and talk. He talked about everything, he had ideas about everything; he could no more help having ideas about everything than a dog can resist smelling at your heels. He sniffed at the heels of reality. Lots of people found him interesting and stimulating, a few found him seriously exasperating. He had ideas in the utmost profusion about races and empires and social order and political institutions and gardens and automobiles and the future of India and China and aesthetics and America and the education of mankind in general.... And all that sort of thing....

Mr. Direck had read a very great deal of all this expressed opiniativeness of Mr. Britling: he found it entertaining and stimulating stuff, and it was with genuine enthusiasm that he had come over to encounter the man himself. On his way across the Atlantic and during the intervening days, he had rehearsed this meeting in varying keys, but always on the supposition that Mr. Britling was a large, quiet, thoughtful sort of man, a man who would, as it were, sit in attentive rows like a public meeting and listen. So Mr. Direck had prepared quite a number of pleasant and attractive openings, and now he felt was the moment for some one of these various simple, memorable utterances. But in none of these forecasts had he reckoned with either the spontaneous activities of Mr. Britling or with the station-master of Matching's Easy. Oblivious of any conversational necessities between Mr. Direck and Mr. Britling, this official now took charge of Mr. Direck's grip-sack, and, falling into line with the two gentlemen as they walked towards the exit gate,

resumed what was evidently an interrupted discourse upon sweet peas, originally addressed to Mr. Britling.

He was a small, elderly man with a determined-looking face and a sea voice, and it was clear he overestimated the distance of his hearers.

"Mr. Darling what's head gardener up at Claverings, *'e* can't get sweet peas like that, try *'ow* 'e will. Tried everything 'e 'as. Sand ballast, 'e's tried. Seeds same as me. 'E came along 'ere only the other day, 'e did, and 'e says to me, 'e says, 'darned 'f I can see why a station-master should beat a professional gardener at 'is own game,' 'e says, 'but you do. And in your orf time, too, so's to speak,' 'e says. 'I've tried sile,' 'e says — —"

"Your first visit to England?" asked Mr. Britling of his guest.

"Absolutely," said Mr. Direck.

"I says to 'im, 'there's one thing you 'aven't tried,' I says," the station-master continued, raising his voice by a Herculean feat still higher.

"I've got a little car outside here," said Mr. Britling. "I'm a couple of miles from the station."

"I says to 'im, I says, ''ave you tried the vibritation of the trains?' I says. 'That's what you 'aven't tried, Mr. Darling. That's what you *can't* try,' I says. 'But you rest assured that that's the secret of my sweet peas,' I says, 'nothing less and nothing more than the vibritation of the trains.'"

Mr. Direck's mind was a little confused by the double nature of the conversation and by the fact that Mr. Britling spoke of a car when he meant an automobile. He handed his ticket mechanically to the station-master, who continued to repeat and endorse his anecdote at the top of his voice as Mr. Britling disposed himself and his guest in the automobile.

"You know you 'aven't 'urt that mud-guard, sir, not the slightest bit that matters," shouted the station-master. "I've been a looking at it — er. It's my fence that's suffered most. And that's only strained the post a lil' bit. Shall I put your bag in behind, sir?"

Mr. Direck assented, and then, after a momentary hesitation, rewarded the station-master's services.

"Ready?" asked Mr. Britling.

“That’s all right sir,” the station-master reverberated.

With a rather wide curve Mr. Britling steered his way out of the station into the highroad.

§ 4

And now it seemed was the time for Mr. Direck to make his meditated speeches. But an unexpected complication was to defeat this intention. Mr. Direck perceived almost at once that Mr. Britling was probably driving an automobile for the first or second or at the extremest the third time in his life.

The thing became evident when he struggled to get into the high gear — an attempt that stopped the engine, and it was even more startlingly so when Mr. Britling narrowly missed a collision with a baker’s cart at a corner. “I pressed the accelerator,” he explained afterwards, “instead of the brake. One does at first. I missed him by less than a foot.” The estimate was a generous one. And after that Mr. Direck became too anxious not to distract his host’s thoughts to persist with his conversational openings. An attentive silence came upon both gentlemen that was broken presently by a sudden outcry from Mr. Britling and a great noise of tormented gears. “Damn!” cried Mr. Britling, and “How the *devil*?”

Mr. Direck perceived that his host was trying to turn the car into a very beautiful gateway, with gate-houses on either side. Then it was manifest that Mr. Britling had abandoned this idea, and then they came to a stop a dozen yards or so along the main road. “Missed it,” said Mr. Britling, and took his hands off the steering wheel and blew stormily, and then whistled some bars of a fretful air, and became still.

“Do we go through these ancient gates?” asked Mr. Direck.

Mr. Britling looked over his right shoulder and considered problems of curvature and distance. “I think,” he said, “I will go round outside the park. It will take us a little longer, but it will be simpler than backing and manoeuvring here now.... These electric starters are remarkably convenient things. Otherwise now I should have to get down and wind up the engine.”

After that came a corner, the rounding of which seemed to present few difficulties until suddenly Mr. Britling cried out, “Eh! *eh*! EH! Oh, *damn*!”

Then the two gentlemen were sitting side by side in a rather sloping car that had ascended the bank and buried its nose in a hedge of dog-rose and honeysuckle, from which two missel thrushes, a blackbird and a number of sparrows had made a hurried escape....

§ 5

“Perhaps,” said Mr. Britling without assurance, and after a little peaceful pause, “I can reverse out of this.”

He seemed to feel some explanation was due to Mr. Direck. “You see, at first — it’s perfectly simple — one steers *round* a corner and then one doesn’t put the wheels straight again, and so one keeps on going round — more than one meant to. It’s the bicycle habit; the bicycle rights itself. One expects a car to do the same thing. It was my fault. The book explains all this question clearly, but just at the moment I forgot.”

He reflected and experimented in a way that made the engine scold and fuss....

“You see, she won’t budge for the reverse.... She’s — embedded.... Do you mind getting out and turning the wheel back? Then if I reverse, perhaps we’ll get a move on....”

Mr. Direck descended, and there were considerable efforts.

“If you’d just grip the spokes. Yes, so.... One, Two, Three!... No! Well, let’s just sit here until somebody comes along to help us. Oh! Somebody will come all right. Won’t you get up again?”

And after a reflective moment Mr. Direck resumed his seat beside Mr. Britling....

§ 6

The two gentlemen smiled at each other to dispel any suspicion of discontent.

“My driving leaves something to be desired,” said Mr. Britling with an air of frank impartiality. “But I have only just got this car for myself — after some years of hired cars — the sort of lazy arrangement where people supply car, driver, petrol, tyres, insurance and everything at so much a month. It bored me abominably. I can’t imagine now how I stood it for so long. They sent me down a succession of compact, scornful boys who used to go fast when I wanted to go slow, and slow when I wanted to go fast, and who used to take every corner on the wrong side at top speed, and charge dogs and hens for the sport of it, and all sorts of things like that. They would not even let me choose my roads. I should have got myself a car long ago, and driven it, if it wasn’t for that infernal business with a handle one had to do when the engine stopped. But here, you see, is a reasonably cheap car with an electric starter — American, I need scarcely say. And here I am — going at my own pace.”

Mr. Direck glanced for a moment at the pretty disorder of the hedge in which they were embedded, and smiled and admitted that it was certainly much more agreeable.

Before he had finished saying as much Mr. Britling was talking again.

He had a quick and rather jerky way of speaking; he seemed to fire out a thought directly it came into his mind, and he seemed to have a loaded magazine of thoughts in his head. He spoke almost exactly twice as fast as Mr. Direck, clipping his words much more, using much compacter sentences, and generally cutting his corners, and this put Mr. Direck off his game.

That rapid attack while the transatlantic interlocutor is deploying is indeed a not infrequent defect of conversations between Englishmen and Americans. It is a source of many misunderstandings. The two conceptions of conversation differ fundamentally. The English are much less disposed to listen than the American; they have not quite the same sense of conversational give and take, and at first they are apt to reduce their visitors to the rôle of auditors wondering when their turn will begin. Their turn never does begin. Mr. Direck sat deeply in his slanting seat with a half face to his celebrated host and said “Yep” and “Sure” and “That *is* so,” in the dry grave tones that he believed an Englishman would naturally

expect him to use, realising this only very gradually.

Mr. Britling, from his praise of the enterprise that had at last brought a car he could drive within his reach, went on to that favourite topic of all intelligent Englishmen, the adverse criticism of things British. He pointed out that the central position of the brake and gear levers in his automobile made it extremely easy for the American manufacturer to turn it out either as a left-handed or a right-handed car, and so adapt it either to the Continental or to the British rule of the road. No English cars were so adaptable. We British suffered much from our insular rule of the road, just as we suffered much from our insular weights and measures. But we took a perverse pride in such disadvantages. The irruption of American cars into England was a recent phenomenon, it was another triumph for the tremendous organising ability of the American mind. They were doing with the automobile what they had done with clocks and watches and rifles, they had standardised and machined wholesale, while the British were still making the things one by one. It was an extraordinary thing that England, which was the originator of the industrial system and the original developer of the division of labour, should have so fallen away from systematic manufacturing. He believed this was largely due to the influence of Oxford and the Established Church....

At this point Mr. Direck was moved by an anecdote. “It will help to illustrate what you are saying, Mr. Britling, about systematic organisation if I tell you a little incident that happened to a friend of mine in Toledo, where they are setting up a big plant with a view to capturing the entire American and European market in the class of the thousand-dollar car — —”

“There’s no end of such little incidents,” said Mr. Britling, cutting in without apparent effort. “You see, we get it on both sides. Our manufacturer class was, of course, originally an insurgent class. It was a class of distended craftsmen. It had the craftsman’s natural enterprise and natural radicalism. As soon as it prospered and sent its boys to Oxford it was lost. Our manufacturing class was assimilated in no time to the conservative classes, whose education has always had a mandarin quality — very, very little of it, and very cold and choice. In America you have so far had no real conservative class at

all. Fortunate continent! You cast out your Tories, and you were left with nothing but Whigs and Radicals. But our peculiar bad luck has been to get a sort of revolutionary who is a Tory mandarin too. Ruskin and Morris, for example, were as reactionary and anti-scientific as the dukes and the bishops. Machine haters. Science haters. Rule of Thumbites to the bone. So are our current Socialists. They've filled this country with the idea that the ideal automobile ought to be made entirely by the hand labour of traditional craftsmen, quite individually, out of beaten copper, wrought iron and seasoned oak. All this electric-starter business and this electric lighting outfit I have here, is perfectly hateful to the English mind.... It isn't that we are simply backward in these things, we are antagonistic. The British mind has never really tolerated electricity; at least, not that sort of electricity that runs through wires. Too slippery and glib for it. Associates it with Italians and fluency generally, with Volta, Galvani, Marconi and so on. The proper British electricity is that high-grade useless long-sparking stuff you get by turning round a glass machine; stuff we used to call frictional electricity. Keep it in Leyden jars.... At Claverings here they still refuse to have electric bells. There was a row when the Solomonsons, who were tenants here for a time, tried to put them in...."

Mr. Direck had followed this cascade of remarks with a patient smile and a slowly nodding head. "What you say," he said, "forms a very marked contrast indeed with the sort of thing that goes on in America. This friend of mine I was speaking of, the one who is connected with an automobile factory in Toledo — —"

"Of course," Mr. Britling burst out again, "even conservatism isn't an ultimate thing. After all, we and your enterprising friend at Toledo, are very much the same blood. The conservatism, I mean, isn't racial. And our earlier energy shows it isn't in the air or in the soil. England has become unenterprising and sluggish because England has been so prosperous and comfortable...."

"Exactly," said Mr. Direck. "My friend of whom I was telling you, was a man named Robinson, which indicates pretty clearly that he was of genuine English stock, and, if I may say so, quite of your build and complexion; racially, I should say, he was, well — very much what you are...."

§ 7

This rally of Mr. Direck's mind was suddenly interrupted.

Mr. Britling stood up, and putting both hands to the sides of his mouth, shouted "Yi-ah! Aye-ya! Thea!" at unseen hearers.

After shouting again, several times, it became manifest that he had attracted the attention of two willing but deliberate labouring men. They emerged slowly, first as attentive heads, from the landscape. With their assistance the car was restored to the road again. Mr. Direck assisted manfully, and noted the respect that was given to Mr. Britling and the shillings that fell to the men, with an intelligent detachment. They touched their hats, they called Mr. Britling "Sir." They examined the car distantly but kindly. "Ain't 'urt 'e, not a bit 'e ain't, not really," said one encouragingly. And indeed except for a slight crumpling of the mud-guard and the detachment of the wire of one of the headlights the automobile was uninjured. Mr. Britling resumed his seat; Mr. Direck gravely and in silence got up beside him. They started with the usual convulsion, as though something had pricked the vehicle unexpectedly and shamefully behind. And from this point Mr. Britling, driving with meticulous care, got home without further mishap, excepting only that he scraped off some of the metal edge of his footboard against the gate-post of his very agreeable garden.

His family welcomed his safe return, visitor and all, with undisguised relief and admiration. A small boy appeared at the corner of the house, and then disappeared hastily again. "Daddy's got back all right at last," they heard him shouting to unseen hearers.

§ 8

Mr. Direck, though he was a little incommoded by the suppression of his story about Robinson — for when he had begun a thing he liked to finish it — found Mr. Britling's household at once thoroughly British, quite un-American and a little difficult to follow. It had a

quality that at first he could not define at all. Compared with anything he had ever seen in his life before it struck him as being — he found the word at last — sketchy. For instance, he was introduced to nobody except his hostess, and she was indicated to him by a mere wave of Mr. Britling's hand. "That's Edith," he said, and returned at once to his car to put it away. Mrs. Britling was a tall, freckled woman with pretty bright brown hair and preoccupied brown eyes. She welcomed him with a handshake, and then a wonderful English parlourmaid — she at least was according to expectations — took his grip-sack and guided him to his room. "Lunch, sir," she said, "is outside," and closed the door and left him to that and a towel-covered can of hot water.

It was a square-looking old red-brick house he had come to, very handsome in a simple Georgian fashion, with a broad lawn before it and great blue cedar trees, and a drive that came frankly up to the front door and then went off with Mr. Britling and the car round to unknown regions at the back. The centre of the house was a big airy hall, oak-panelled, warmed in winter only by one large fireplace and abounding in doors which he knew opened into the square separate rooms that England favours. Bookshelves and stuffed birds comforted the landing outside his bedroom. He descended to find the hall occupied by a small bright bristling boy in white flannel shirt and knickerbockers and bare legs and feet. He stood before the vacant open fireplace in an attitude that Mr. Direck knew instantly was also Mr. Britling's. "Lunch is in the garden," the Britling scion proclaimed, "and I've got to fetch you. And, I say! is it true? Are you American?"

"Why surely," said Mr. Direck.

"Well, I know some American," said the boy. "I learnt it."

"Tell me some," said Mr. Direck, smiling still more amiably.

"Oh! Well — God darn you! Ouch, Gee-whizz! Soak him, Maud! It's up to you, Duke...."

"Now where did you learn all that?" asked Mr. Direck recovering.

"Out of the Sunday Supplement," said the youthful Britling.

"Why! Then you know all about Buster Brown," said Mr. Direck. "He's Fine — eh?"

The Britling child hated Buster Brown. He regarded Buster

Brown as a totally unnecessary infant. He detested the way he wore his hair and the peculiar cut of his knickerbockers and — him. He thought Buster Brown the one drop of paraffin in the otherwise delicious feast of the Sunday Supplement. But he was a diplomatic child.

"I think I like Happy Hooligan better," he said. "And dat ole Maud."

He reflected with joyful eyes, Buster clean forgotten. "Every week," he said, "she kicks some one."

It came to Mr. Direck as a very pleasant discovery that a British infant could find a common ground with the small people at home in these characteristically American jests. He had never dreamt that the fine wine of Maud and Buster could travel.

"Maud's a treat," said the youthful Britling, relapsing into his native tongue.

Mr. Britling appeared coming to meet them. He was now in a grey flannel suit — he must have jumped into it — and altogether very much tidier....

§ 9

The long narrow table under the big sycamores between the house and the adapted barn that Mr. Direck learnt was used for "dancing and all that sort of thing," was covered with a blue linen diaper cloth, and that too surprised him. This was his first meal in a private household in England, and for obscure reasons he had expected something very stiff and formal with "spotless napery." He had also expected a very stiff and capable service by implacable parlourmaids, and the whole thing indeed highly genteel. But two cheerful women servants appeared from what was presumably the kitchen direction, wheeling a curious wicker erection, which his small guide informed him was called Aunt Clatter — manifestly deservedly — and which bore on its shelves the substance of the meal. And while the maids at this migratory sideboard carved and opened bottles and so forth, the small boy and a slightly larger brother, assisted a little by two young men of no very defined position and relationship, served the

company. Mrs. Britling sat at the head of the table, and conversed with Mr. Direck by means of hostess questions and imperfectly accepted answers while she kept a watchful eye on the proceedings.

The composition of the company was a matter for some perplexity to Mr. Direck. Mr. and Mrs. Britling were at either end of the table, that was plain enough. It was also fairly plain that the two barefooted boys were little Britlings. But beyond this was a cloud of uncertainty. There was a youth of perhaps seventeen, much darker than Britling but with nose and freckles rather like his, who might be an early son or a stepson; he was shock-headed and with that look about his arms and legs that suggests overnight growth; and there was an unmistakable young German, very pink, with close-cropped fair hair, glasses and a panama hat, who was probably the tutor of the younger boys. (Mr. Direck also was wearing his hat, his mind had been filled with an exaggerated idea of the treacheries of the English climate before he left New York. Every one else was hatless.) Finally, before one reached the limits of the explicable there was a pleasant young man with a lot of dark hair and very fine dark blue eyes, whom everybody called "Teddy." For him, Mr. Direck hazarded "secretary."

But in addition to these normal and understandable presences, there was an entirely mysterious pretty young woman in blue linen who sat and smiled next to Mr. Britling, and there was a rather kindred-looking girl with darker hair on the right of Mr. Direck who impressed him at the very outset as being still prettier, and — he didn't quite place her at first — somehow familiar to him; there was a large irrelevant middle-aged lady in black with a gold chain and a large nose, between Teddy and the tutor; there was a tall middle-aged man with an intelligent face, who might be a casual guest; there was an Indian young gentleman faultlessly dressed up to his brown soft linen collar and cuffs, and thereafter an uncontrolled outbreak of fine bronze modelling and abundant fuzzy hair; and there was a very erect and attentive baby of a year or less, sitting up in a perambulator and gesticulating cheerfully to everybody. This baby it was that most troubled the orderly mind of Mr. Direck. The research for its paternity made his conversation with Mrs. Britling almost as disconnected and absent-minded as her conversation with him. It

almost certainly wasn't Mrs. Britling's. The girl next to him or the girl next to Mr. Britling or the lady in black might any of them be married, but if so where was the spouse? It seemed improbable that they would wheel out a foundling to lunch....

Realising at last that the problem of relationship must be left to solve itself if he did not want to dissipate and consume his mind entirely, Mr. Direck turned to his hostess, who was enjoying a brief lull in her administrative duties, and told her what a memorable thing the meeting of Mr. Britling in his own home would be in his life, and how very highly America was coming to esteem Mr. Britling and his essays. He found that with a slight change of person, one of his premeditated openings was entirely serviceable here. And he went on to observe that it was novel and entertaining to find Mr. Britling driving his own automobile and to note that it was an automobile of American manufacture. In America they had standardised and systematised the making of such things as automobiles to an extent that would, he thought, be almost startling to Europeans. It was certainly startling to the European manufacturers. In illustration of that he might tell a little story of a friend of his called Robinson — a man who curiously enough in general build and appearance was very reminiscent indeed of Mr. Britling. He had been telling Mr. Britling as much on his way here from the station. His friend was concerned with several others in one of the biggest attacks that had ever been made upon what one might describe in general terms as the thousand-dollar light automobile market. What they said practically was this: This market is a jig-saw puzzle waiting to be put together and made one. We are going to do it. But that was easier to figure out than to do. At the very outset of this attack he and his associates found themselves up against an unexpected and very difficult proposition....

At first Mrs. Britling had listened to Mr. Direck with an almost undivided attention, but as he had developed his opening the feast upon the blue linen table had passed on to a fresh phase that demanded more and more of her directive intelligence. The two little boys appeared suddenly at her elbows. "Shall we take the plates and get the strawberries, Mummy?" they asked simultaneously. Then one of the neat maids in the background had to be called up and

instructed in undertones, and Mr. Direck saw that for the present Robinson's illuminating experience was not for her ears. A little baffled, but quite understanding how things were, he turned to his neighbour on his left....

The girl really had an extraordinarily pretty smile, and there was something in her soft bright brown eye — like the movement of some quick little bird. And — she was like somebody he knew! Indeed she was. She was quite ready to be spoken to.

"I was telling Mrs. Britling," said Mr. Direck, "what a very great privilege I esteem it to meet Mr. Britling in this highly familiar way."

"You've not met him before?"

"I missed him by twenty-four hours when he came through Boston on the last occasion. Just twenty-four hours. It was a matter of very great regret to me."

"I wish I'd been paid to travel round the world."

"You must write things like Mr. Britling and then Mr. Kahn will send you."

"Don't you think if I promised well?"

"You'd have to write some promissory notes, I think — just to convince him it was all right."

The young lady reflected on Mr. Britling's good fortune.

"He saw India. He saw Japan. He had weeks in Egypt. And he went right across America."

Mr. Direck had already begun on the liner to adapt himself to the hopping inconsecutiveness of English conversation. He made now what he felt was quite a good hop, and he dropped his voice to a confidential undertone. (It was probably Adam in his first conversation with Eve, who discovered the pleasantness of dropping into a confidential undertone beside a pretty ear with a pretty wave of hair above it.)

"It was in India, I presume," murmured Mr. Direck, "that Mr. Britling made the acquaintance of the coloured gentleman?"

"Coloured gentleman!" She gave a swift glance down the table as though she expected to see something purple with yellow spots. "Oh, that is one of Mr. Lawrence Carmine's young men!" she explained even more confidentially and with an air of discussing the silver bowl of roses before him. "He's a great authority on Indian literature,

he belongs to a society for making things pleasant for Indian students in London, and he has them down."

"And Mr. Lawrence Carmine?" he pursued.

Even more intimately and confidentially she indicated Mr. Carmine, as it seemed by a motion of her eyelash.

Mr. Direck prepared to be even more *sotto-voce* and to plumb a much profounder mystery. His eye rested on the perambulator; he leant a little nearer to the ear.... But the strawberries interrupted him.

"Strawberries!" said the young lady, and directed his regard to his left shoulder by a little movement of her head.

He found one of the boys with a high-piled plate ready to serve him.

And then Mrs. Britling resumed her conversation with him. She was so ignorant, she said, of things American, that she did not even know if they had strawberries there. At any rate, here they were at the crest of the season, and in a very good year. And in the rose season too. It was one of the dearest vanities of English people to think their apples and their roses and their strawberries the best in the world.

"And their complexions," said Mr. Direck, over the pyramid of fruit, quite manifestly intending a compliment. So that was all right.... But the girl on the left of him was speaking across the table to the German tutor, and did not hear what he had said. So that even if it wasn't very neat it didn't matter....

Then he remembered that she was like that old daguerreotype of a cousin of his grandmother's that he had fallen in love with when he was a boy. It was her smile. Of course! Of course!... And he'd sort of adored that portrait.... He felt a curious disposition to tell her as much....

"What makes this visit even more interesting if possible to me," he said to Mrs. Britling, "than it would otherwise be, is that this Essex country is the country in which my maternal grandmother was raised, and also long way back my mother's father's people. My mother's father's people were very early New England people indeed.... Well, no. If I said *Mayflower* it wouldn't be true. But it would approximate. They were Essex Hinkinsons. That's what they were. I must be a good third of me at least Essex. My grandmother

was an Essex Corner, I must confess I've had some thought—"

"Corner?" said the young lady at his elbow sharply.

"I was telling Mrs. Britling I had some thought—"

"But about those Essex relatives of yours?"

"Well, of finding if they were still about in these parts.... Say! I haven't dropped a brick, have I?"

He looked from one face to another.

"*She's* a Corner," said Mrs. Britling.

"Well," said Mr. Direck, and hesitated for a moment. It was so delightful that one couldn't go on being just discreet. The atmosphere was free and friendly. His intonation disarmed offence. And he gave the young lady the full benefit of a quite expressive eye. "I'm very pleased to meet you, Cousin Corner. How are the old folks at home?"

§ 10

The bright interest of this consulship helped Mr. Direck more than anything to get the better of his Robinson-anecdote crave, and when presently he found his dialogue with Mr. Britling resumed, he turned at once to this remarkable discovery of his long lost and indeed hitherto unsuspected relative. "It's an American sort of thing to do, I suppose," he said apologetically, "but I almost thought of going on, on Monday, to Market Saffron, which was the locality of the Hinkinsons, and just looking about at the tombstones in the churchyard for a day or so."

"Very probably," said Mr. Britling, "you'd find something about them in the parish registers. Lots of our registers go back three hundred years or more. I'll drive you over in my lil' old car."

"Oh! I wouldn't put you to that trouble," said Mr. Direck hastily.

"It's no trouble. I like the driving. What I have had of it. And while we're at it, we'll come back by Harborough High Oak and look up the Corner pedigree. They're all over that district still. And the road's not really difficult; it's only a bit up and down and roundabout."

"I couldn't think, Mr. Britling, of putting you to that much

trouble."

"It's no trouble. I want a day off, and I'm dying to take Gladys — —"

"Gladys?" said Mr. Direck with sudden hope.

"That's my name for the lil' car. I'm dying to take her for something like a decent run. I've only had her out four times altogether, and I've not got her up yet to forty miles. Which I'm told she ought to do easily. We'll consider that settled."

For the moment Mr. Direck couldn't think of any further excuse. But it was very clear in his mind that something must happen; he wished he knew of somebody who could send a recall telegram from London, to prevent him committing himself to the casual destinies of Mr. Britling's car again. And then another interest became uppermost in his mind.

"You'd hardly believe me," he said, "if I told you that that Miss Corner of yours has a quite extraordinary resemblance to a miniature I've got away there in America of a cousin of my maternal grandmother's. She seems a very pleasant young lady."

But Mr. Britling supplied no further information about Miss Corner.

"It must be very interesting," he said, "to come over here and pick up these American families of yours on the monuments and tombstones. You know, of course, that district south of Evesham where every other church monument bears the stars and stripes, the arms of departed Washingtons. I doubt though if you'll still find the name about there. Nor will you find many Hinkinsons in Market Saffron. But lots of this country here has five or six hundred-year-old families still flourishing. That's why Essex is so much more genuinely Old England than Surrey, say, or Kent. Round here you'll find Corners and Fairlies, and then you get Capels, and then away down towards Dunmow and Braintree Maynards and Byngs. And there are oaks and hornbeams in the park about Claverings that have echoed to the howling of wolves and the clank of men in armour. All the old farms here are moated — because of the wolves. Claverings itself is Tudor, and rather fine too. And the cottages still wear thatch...."

He reflected. "Now if you went south of London instead of

northward it's all different. You're in a different period, a different society. You're in London suburbs right down to the sea. You'll find no genuine estates left, not of our deep-rooted familiar sort. You'll find millionaires and that sort of people, sitting in the old places. Surrey is full of rich stockbrokers, company-promoters, bookies, judges, newspaper proprietors. Sort of people who fence the paths across their parks. They do something to the old places — I don't know what they do — but instantly the countryside becomes a villadom. And little sub-estates and red-brick villas and art cottages spring up. And a kind of new, hard neatness. And pneumatic tyre and automobile spirit advertisements, great glaring boards by the roadside. And all the poor people are inspected and rushed about until they forget who their grandfathers were. They become villa parasites and odd-job men, and grow basely rich and buy gramophones. This Essex and yonder Surrey are as different as Russia and Germany. But for one American who comes to look at Essex, twenty go to Godalming and Guildford and Dorking and Lewes and Canterbury. Those Surrey people are not properly English at all. They are strenuous. You have to get on or get out. They drill their gardeners, lecture very fast on agricultural efficiency, and have miniature rifle ranges in every village. It's a county of new notice-boards and barbed-wire fences; there's always a policeman round the corner. They dress for dinner. They dress for everything. If a man gets up in the night to look for a burglar he puts on the correct costume — or doesn't go. They've got a special scientific system for urging on their tramps. And they lock up their churches on a week-day. Half their soil is hard chalk or a rationalistic sand, only suitable for bunkers and villa foundations. And they play golf in a large, expensive, thorough way because it's the thing to do.... Now here in Essex we're as lax as the eighteenth century. We hunt in any old clothes. Our soil is a rich succulent clay; it becomes semi-fluid in winter — when we go about in waders shooting duck. All our fingerposts have been twisted round by facetious men years ago. And we pool our breeds of hens and pigs. Our roses and oaks are wonderful; that alone shows that this is the real England. If I wanted to play golf — which I don't, being a decent Essex man — I should have to motor ten miles into Hertfordshire. And for rheumatics and

longevity Surrey can't touch us. I want you to be clear on these points, because they really will affect your impressions of this place.... This country is a part of the real England — England outside London and outside manufactures. It's one with Wessex and Mercia or old Yorkshire — or for the matter of that with Meath or Lothian. And it's the essential England still...."

§ 11

It detracted a little from Mr. Direck's appreciation of this flow of information that it was taking them away from the rest of the company. He wanted to see more of his new-found cousin, and what the baby and the Bengali gentleman — whom manifestly one mustn't call "coloured" — and the large-nosed lady and all the other inexplicables would get up to. Instead of which Mr. Britling was leading him off alone with an air of showing him round the premises, and talking too rapidly and variously for a question to be got in edgeways, much less any broaching of the matter that Mr. Direck had come over to settle.

There was quite a lot of rose garden, it made the air delicious, and it was full of great tumbling bushes of roses and of neglected standards, and it had a long pergola of creepers and trailers and a great arbour, and underneath over the beds everywhere, contrary to all the rules, the blossom of a multitude of pansies and stock and little trailing plants swarmed and crowded and scrimmaged and drilled and fought great massed attacks. And then Mr. Britling talked their way round a red-walled vegetable garden with an abundance of fruit trees, and through a door into a terraced square that had once been a farmyard, outside the converted barn. The barn doors had been replaced by a door-pierced window of glass, and in the middle of the square space a deep tank had been made, full of rainwater, in which Mr. Britling remarked casually that "everybody" bathed when the weather was hot. Thyme and rosemary and suchlike sweet-scented things grew on the terrace about the tank, and ten trimmed little trees of *Arbor vitae* stood sentinel. Mr. Direck was tantalisingly aware that beyond some lilac bushes were his new-found cousin and

the kindred young woman in blue playing tennis with the Indian and another young man, while whenever it was necessary the large-nosed lady crossed the stage and brooded soothingly over the perambulator. And Mr. Britling, choosing a seat from which Mr. Direck just couldn't look comfortably through the green branches at the flying glimpses of pink and blue and white and brown, continued to talk about England and America in relation to each other and everything else under the sun.

Presently through a distant gate the two small boys were momentarily visible wheeling small but serviceable bicycles, followed after a little interval by the German tutor. Then an enormous grey cat came slowly across the garden court, and sat down to listen respectfully to Mr. Britling. The afternoon sky was an intense blue, with little puff-balls of cloud lined out across it.

Occasionally, from chance remarks of Mr. Britling's, Mr. Direck was led to infer that his first impressions as an American visitor were being related to his host, but as a matter of fact he was permitted to relate nothing; Mr. Britling did all the talking. He sat beside his guest and spirted and played ideas and reflections like a happy fountain in the sunshine.

Mr. Direck sat comfortably, and smoked with quiet appreciation the one after-lunch cigar he allowed himself. At any rate, if he himself felt rather word-bound, the fountain was nimble and entertaining. He listened in a general sort of way to the talk, it was quite impossible to follow it thoughtfully throughout all its chinks and turnings, while his eyes wandered about the garden and went ever and again to the flitting tennis-players beyond the green. It was all very gay and comfortable and complete; it was various and delightful without being in the least *opulent*; that was one of the little secrets America had to learn. It didn't look as though it had been made or bought or cost anything, it looked as though it had happened rather luckily....

Mr. Britling's talk became like a wide stream flowing through Mr. Direck's mind, bearing along momentary impressions and observations, drifting memories of all the crowded English sights and sounds of the last five days, filmy imaginations about ancestral names and pretty cousins, scraps of those prepared conversational

openings on Mr. Britling's standing in America, the explanation about the lecture club, the still incompletely forgotten purport of the Robinson anecdote....

"Nobody planned the British estate system, nobody planned the British aristocratic system, nobody planned the confounded constitution, it came about, it was like layer after layer wrapping round an agate, but you see it came about so happily in a way, it so suited the climate and the temperament of our people and our island, it was on the whole so cosy, that our people settled down into it, you can't help settling down into it, they had already settled down by the days of Queen Anne, and Heaven knows if we shall ever really get away again. We're like that little shell the *Lingula*, that is found in the oldest rocks and lives to-day: it fitted its easy conditions, and it has never modified since. Why should it? It excretes all its disturbing forces. Our younger sons go away and found colonial empires. Our surplus cottage children emigrate to Australia and Canada or migrate into the towns. It doesn't alter *this*...."

§ 12

Mr. Direck's eye had come to rest upon the barn, and its expression changed slowly from lazy appreciation to a brightening intelligence. Suddenly he resolved to say something. He resolved to say it so firmly that he determined to say it even if Mr. Britling went on talking all the time.

"I suppose, Mr. Britling," he said, "this barn here dates from the days of Queen Anne."

"The walls of the yard here are probably earlier: probably monastic. That grey patch in the corner, for example. The barn itself is Georgian."

"And here it is still. And this farmyard, here it is still."

Mr. Britling was for flying off again, but Mr. Direck would not listen; he held on like a man who keeps his grip on a lasso.

"There's one thing I would like to remark about your barn, Mr. Britling, and I might, while I am at it, say the same thing about your farmyard."

Mr. Britling was held. “What’s that?” he asked.

“Well,” said Mr. Direck, “the point that strikes me most about all this is that that barn isn’t a barn any longer, and that this farmyard isn’t a farmyard. There isn’t any wheat or chaff or anything of that sort in the barn, and there never will be again: there’s just a pianola and a dancing floor, and if a cow came into this farmyard everybody in the place would be shooing it out again. They’d regard it as a most unnatural object.”

He had a pleasant sense of talking at last. He kept right on. He was moved to a sweeping generalisation.

“You were so good as to ask me, Mr. Britling, a little while ago, what my first impression of England was. Well, Mr. Britling, my first impression of England that seems to me to matter in the least is this: that it looks and feels more like the traditional Old England than any one could possibly have believed, and that in reality it is less like the traditional Old England than any one would ever possibly have imagined.”

He was carried on even further. He made a tremendous literary epigram. “I thought,” he said, “when I looked out of the train this morning that I had come to the England of Washington Irving. I find it is not even the England of Mrs. Humphry Ward.”

CHAPTER THE SECOND

MR. BRITLING CONTINUES HIS EXPOSITION

§ 1

Mr. Direck found little reason to revise his dictum in the subsequent experiences of the afternoon. Indeed the afternoon and the next day were steadily consistent in confirming what a very good dictum it had been. The scenery was the traditional scenery of England, and all the people seemed quicker, more irresponsible, more chaotic, than any one could have anticipated, and entirely inexplicable by any recognised code of English relationships....

"You think that John Bull is dead and a strange generation is wearing his clothes," said Mr. Britling. "I think you'll find very soon it's the old John Bull. Perhaps not Mrs. Humphry Ward's John Bull, or Mrs. Henry Wood's John Bull but true essentially to Shakespeare, Fielding, Dickens, Meredith...."

"I suppose," he added, "there are changes. There's a new generation grown up...."

He looked at his barn and the swimming pool. "It's a good point of yours about the barn," he said. "What you say reminds me of that very jolly thing of Kipling's about the old mill-wheel that began by grinding corn and ended by driving dynamos....

"Only I admit that barn doesn't exactly drive a dynamo....

"To be frank, it's just a pleasure barn....

"The country can afford it...."

§ 2

He left it at that for the time, but throughout the afternoon Mr. Direck had the gratification of seeing his thought floating round and round in the back-waters of Mr. Britling's mental current. If it didn't itself get into the stream again its reflection at any rate appeared and reappeared. He was taken about with great assiduity throughout the

afternoon, and he got no more than occasional glimpses of the rest of the Dower House circle until six o'clock in the evening.

Meanwhile the fountains of Mr. Britling's active and encyclopædic mind played steadily.

He was inordinately proud of England, and he abused her incessantly. He wanted to state England to Mr. Direck as the amiable summation of a grotesque assembly of faults. That was the view into which the comforts and prosperities of his middle age had brought him from a radicalism that had in its earlier stages been angry and bitter. And for Mr. Britling England was "here." Essex was the county he knew. He took Mr. Direck out from his walled garden by a little door into a trim paddock with two white goals. "We play hockey here on Sundays," he said in a way that gave Mr. Direck no hint of the practically compulsory participation of every visitor to Matching's Easy in this violent and dangerous exercise, and thence they passed by a rich deep lane and into a high road that ran along the edge of the deer park of Claverings. "We will call in on Claverings later," said Mr. Britling. "Lady Homartyn has some people there for the week-end, and you ought to see the sort of thing it is and the sort of people they are. She wanted us to lunch there to-morrow, but I didn't accept that because of our afternoon hockey."

Mr. Direck received this reason uncritically.

The village reminded Mr. Direck of Abbey's pictures. There was an inn with a sign standing out in the road, a painted sign of the Clavering Arms; it had a water trough (such as Mr. Weller senior ducked the dissenter in) and a green painted table outside its inviting door. There were also a general shop and a number of very pleasant cottages, each marked with the Mainstay crest. All this was grouped about a green with real geese drilling thereon. Mr. Britling conducted his visitor (through a lych gate) into the church-yard, and there they found mossy, tumble-down tombstones, one with a skull and cross-bones upon it, that went back to the later seventeenth century. In the aisle of the church were three huge hatchments, and there was a side chapel devoted to the Mainstay family and the Barons Homartyn, with a series of monuments that began with painted Tudor effigies and came down to a vast stained glass window of the vilest commercial Victorian. There were also mediæval brasses of parish

priests, and a marble crusader and his lady of some extinguished family which had ruled Matching's Easy before the Mainstays came. And as the two gentlemen emerged from the church they ran against the perfect vicar, Mr. Dimple, ample and genial, with an embracing laugh and an enveloping voice. "Come to see the old country," he said to Mr. Direck. "So Good of you Americans to do that! So Good of you...."

There was some amiable sparring between the worthy man and Mr. Britling about bringing Mr. Direck to church on Sunday morning. "He's terribly Lax," said Mr. Dimple to Mr. Direck, smiling radiantly. "Terribly Lax. But then nowadays Everybody *is* so Lax. And he's very Good to my Coal Club; I don't know what we should do without him. So I just admonish him. And if he doesn't go to church, well, anyhow he doesn't go anywhere else. He may be a poor churchman, but anyhow he's not a dissenter...."

"In England, you see," Mr. Britling remarked, after they had parted from the reverend gentleman, "we have domesticated everything. We have even domesticated God."

For awhile Mr. Britling showed Mr. Direck English lanes, and then came back along narrow white paths across small fields of rising wheat, to the village and a little gate that led into the park.

"Well," said Mr. Direck, "what you say about domestication does seem to me to be very true indeed. Why! even those clouds up there look as though they had a shepherd and were grazing."

"Ready for shearing almost," said Mr. Britling.

"Indeed," said Mr. Direck, raising his voice a little, "I've seen scarcely anything in England that wasn't domesticated, unless it was some of your back streets in London."

Mr. Britling seemed to reflect for a moment. "They're an excrescence," he said....

§ 3

The park had a trim wildness like nature in an old Italian picture; dappled fallow deer grouped close at hand and looked at the two men fearlessly; the path dropped through oak trees and some stunted

bracken to a little loitering stream, that paused ever and again to play at ponds and waterfalls and bear a fleet of water-lily leaves; and then their way curved round in an indolent sweep towards the cedars and shrubberies of the great house. The house looked low and extensive to an American eye, and its red-brick chimneys rose like infantry in open order along its extended line. There was a glimpse of flower-bright garden and terraces to the right as they came round the corner to the front of the house through a path cut in the laurel bushes.

Mr. Britling had a moment of exposition as they approached the entrance.

"I expect we shall find Philbert from the Home Office — or is it the Local Government Board? — and Sir Thomas Loot, the Treasury man. There may be some other people of that sort, the people we call the Governing Class. Wives also. And I rather fancy the Countess of Frensham is coming, she's strong on the Irish Question, and Lady Venetia Trumpington, who they say is a beauty — I've never seen her. It's Lady Homartyn's way to expect me to come in — not that I'm an important item at these week-end social feasts — but she likes to see me on the table — to be nibbled at if any one wants to do so — like the olives and the salted almonds. And she always asks me to lunch on Sunday and I always refuse — because of the hockey. So you see I put in an appearance on the Saturday afternoon...."

They had reached the big doorway.

It opened into a large cool hall adorned with the heads of hippopotami and rhinoceroses and a stuffed lion, and furnished chiefly with a vast table on which hats and sticks and newspapers were littered. A manservant with a subdued, semi-confidential manner, conveyed to Mr. Britling that her ladyship was on the terrace, and took the hats and sticks that were handed to him and led the way through the house. They emerged upon a broad terrace looking out under great cedar trees upon flower beds and stone urns and tennis lawns and yew hedges that dipped to give a view of distant hills. On the terrace were grouped perhaps a dozen people for the most part holding teacups, they sat in deck chairs and folding seats about a little table that bore the tea-things. Lady Homartyn came forward to welcome the newcomers.

Mr. Direck was introduced as a travelling American gratified to

see a typical English country house, and Lady Homartyn in an habituated way ran over the points of her Tudor specimen. Mr. Direck was not accustomed to titled people, and was suddenly in doubt whether you called a baroness "My Lady" or "Your Ladyship," so he wisely avoided any form of address until he had a lead from Mr. Britling. Mr. Britling presently called her "Lady Homartyn." She took Mr. Direck and sat him down beside a lady whose name he didn't catch, but who had had a lot to do with the British Embassy at Washington, and then she handed Mr. Britling over to the Rt. Honble. George Philbert, who was anxious to discuss certain points in the latest book of essays. The conversation of the lady from Washington was intelligent but not exacting, and Mr. Direck was able to give a certain amount of attention to the general effect of the scene.

He was a little disappointed to find that the servants didn't wear livery. In American magazine pictures and in American cinematograph films of English stories and in the houses of very rich Americans living in England, they do so. And the Mansion House is misleading; he had met a compatriot who had recently dined at the Mansion House, and who had described "flunkeys" in hair-powder and cloth of gold — like Thackeray's Jeames Yellowplush. But here the only servants were two slim, discreet and attentive young gentlemen in black coats with a gentle piety in their manner instead of pride. And he was a little disappointed too by a certain lack of splendour in the company. The ladies affected him as being ill-dressed; there was none of the hard snap, the "*There!* and what do you say to it?" about them of the well-dressed American woman, and the men too were not so much tailored as unobtrusively and yet grammatically clothed.

§ 4

He was still only in the fragmentary stage of conversation when everything was thrown into commotion by the important arrival of Lady Frensham, and there was a general reshuffling of places. Lady Frensham had arrived from London by automobile; she appeared in

veils and swathings and a tremendous dust cloak, with a sort of nephew in her train who had driven the car. She was manifestly a constitutionally triumphant woman. A certain afternoon lassitude vanished in the swirl of her arrival. Mr. Philbert removed wrappings and handed them to the manservant.

"I lunched with Sir Edward Carson to-day, my dear," she told Lady Homartyn, and rolled a belligerent eye at Philbert.

"And is he as obdurate as ever?" asked Sir Thomas.

"Obdurate! It's Redmond who's obdurate," cried Lady Frensham. "What do you say, Mr. Britling?"

"A plague on both your parties," said Mr. Britling.

"You can't keep out of things like that," said Lady Frensham with the utmost gusto, "when the country's on the very verge of civil war.... You people who try to pretend there isn't a grave crisis when there is one, will be more accountable than any one — when the civil war does come. It won't spare you. Mark my words!"

The party became a circle.

Mr. Direck found himself the interested auditor of a real English country-house week-end political conversation. This at any rate was like the England of which Mrs. Humphry Ward's novels had informed him, but yet not exactly like it. Perhaps that was due to the fact that for the most part these novels dealt with the England of the 'nineties, and things had lost a little in dignity since those days. But at any rate here were political figures and titled people, and they were talking about the "country."...

Was it possible that people of this sort did "run" the country, after all?... When he had read Mrs. Humphry Ward in America he had always accepted this theory of the story quite easily, but now that he saw and heard them — !

But all governments and rulers and ruling classes when you look at them closely are incredible....

"I don't believe the country is on the verge of civil war," said Mr. Britling.

"Facts!" cried Lady Frensham, and seemed to wipe away delusions with a rapid gesture of her hands.

"You're interested in Ireland, Mr. Dirks?" asked Lady Homartyn.

"We see it first when we come over," said Mr. Direck rather

neatly, and after that he was free to attend to the general discussion.

Lady Frensham, it was manifest, was one of that energetic body of aristocratic ladies who were taking up an irreconcilable attitude against Home Rule "in any shape or form" at that time. They were rapidly turning British politics into a system of bitter personal feuds in which all sense of imperial welfare was lost. A wild ambition to emulate the extremest suffragettes seems to have seized upon them. They insulted, they denounced, they refused every invitation lest they should meet that "traitor" the Prime Minister, they imitated the party hatreds of a fiercer age, and even now the moderate and politic Philbert found himself treated as an invisible object. They were supported by the extremer section of the Tory press, and the most extraordinary writers were set up to froth like lunatics against the government as "traitors," as men who "insulted the King"; the *Morning Post* and the lighter-witted side of the Unionist press generally poured out a torrent of partisan nonsense it is now almost incredible to recall. Lady Frensham, bridling over Lady Homartyn's party, and for a time leaving Mr. Britling, hurried on to tell of the newest developments of the great feud. She had a wonderful description of Lady Londonderry sitting opposite "that old rascal, the Prime Minister," at a performance of Mozart's *Zauberflöte*.

"If looks could kill!" cried Lady Frensham with tremendous gusto.

"Sir Edward is quite firm that Ulster means to fight. They have machine-guns — ammunition. And I am sure the army is with us...."

"Where did they get those machine-guns and ammunition?" asked Mr. Britling suddenly.

"Ah! that's a secret," cried Lady Frensham.

"Um," said Mr. Britling.

"You see," said Lady Frensham; "it *will* be civil war! And yet you writing people who have influence do nothing to prevent it!"

"What are we to do, Lady Frensham?"

"Tell people how serious it is."

"You mean, tell the Irish Nationalists to lie down and be walked over. They won't be...."

"We'll see about that," cried Lady Frensham, "we'll see about that!"

She was a large and dignified person with a kind of figure-head nobility of carriage, but Mr. Direck was suddenly reminded of a girl cousin of his who had been expelled from college for some particularly elaborate and aimless rioting....

"May I say something to you, Lady Frensham," said Mr. Britling, "that you have just said to me? Do you realise that this Carsonite campaign is dragging these islands within a measurable distance of civil war?"

"It's the fault of your Lloyd George and his government. It's the fault of your Socialists and sentimentalists. You've made the mischief and you have to deal with it."

"Yes. But do you really figure to yourself what a civil war may mean for the empire? Surely there are other things in the world besides this quarrel between the 'loyalists' of Ulster and the Liberal government; there are other interests in this big empire than party advantages? Yon think you are going to frighten this Home Rule government into some ridiculous sort of collapse that will bring in the Tories at the next election. Well, suppose you don't manage that. Suppose instead that you really do contrive to bring about a civil war. Very few people here or in Ireland want it — I was over there not a month ago — but when men have loaded guns in their hands they sometimes go off. And then people see red. Few people realise what an incurable sore opens when fighting begins. Suppose part of the army revolts and we get some extraordinary and demoralising fighting over there. India watches these things. Bengal may imitate Ireland. At that distance rebellion and treason are rebellion and treason whether they are coloured orange or green. And then suppose the Germans see fit to attack us!"

Lady Frensham had a woman's elusiveness. "Your Redmondites would welcome them with open arms."

"It isn't the Redmondites who invite them now, anyhow," said Mr. Britling, springing his mine. "The other day one of your 'loyalists,' Andrews, was talking in the *Morning Post* of preferring conquest by Germany to Home Rule; Craig has been at the same game; Major Crawford, the man who ran the German Mausers last April, boasted that he would transfer his allegiance to the German Emperor rather than see Redmond in power."

“Rhetoric!” said Lady Frensham. “Rhetoric!”

“But one of your Ulster papers has openly boasted that arrangements have been made for a ‘powerful Continental monarch’ to help an Ulster rebellion.”

“Which paper?” snatched Lady Frensham.

Mr. Britling hesitated.

Mr. Philbert supplied the name. “I saw it. It was the *Irish Churchman*.”

“You two have got your case up very well,” said Lady Frensham. “I didn’t know Mr. Britling was a party man.”

“The Nationalists have been circulating copies,” said Philbert. “Naturally.”

“They make it look worse than mere newspaper talk and speeches,” Mr. Britling pressed. “Carson, it seems, was lunching with the German Emperor last autumn. A fine fuss you’d make if Redmond did that. All this gun-running, too, is German gun-running.”

“What does it matter if it is?” said Lady Frensham, allowing a belligerent eye to rest for the first time on Philbert. “You drove us to it. One thing we are resolved upon at any cost. Johnny Redmond may rule England if he likes; he shan’t rule Ireland....”

Mr. Britling shrugged his shoulders, and his face betrayed despair.

“My one consolation,” he said, “in this storm is a talk I had last month with a young Irishwoman in Meath. She was a young person of twelve, and she took a fancy to me — I think because I went with her in an alleged dangerous canoe she was forbidden to navigate alone. All day the eternal Irish Question had banged about over her observant head. When we were out on the water she suddenly decided to set me right upon a disregarded essential. ‘You English,’ she said, ‘are just a bit disposed to take all this trouble seriously. Don’t you fret yourself about it... Half the time we’re just laffing at you. You’d best leave us all alone....’”

And then he went off at a tangent from his own anecdote.

“But look at this miserable spectacle!” he cried. “Here is a chance of getting something like a reconciliation of the old feud of English and Irish, and something like a settlement of these ancient distresses, and there seems no power, no conscience, no sanity in any of us,

sufficient to save it from this cantankerous bitterness, this sheer wicked mischief of mutual exasperation.... Just when Ireland is getting a gleam of prosperity.... A murrain on both your parties!"

"I see, Mr. Britling, you'd hand us all over to Jim Larkin!"

"I'd hand you all over to Sir Horace Plunkett—"

"That doctrinaire dairyman!" cried Lady Frensham, with an air of quite conclusive repartee. "You're hopeless, Mr. Britling. You're hopeless."

And Lady Homartyn, seeing that the phase of mere personal verdicts drew near, created a diversion by giving Lady Frensham a second cup of tea, and fluttering like a cooling fan about the heated brows of the disputants. She suggested tennis....

§ 5

Mr. Britling was still flushed and ruffled as he and his guest returned towards the Dower House. He criticised England himself unmercifully, but he hated to think that in any respect she fell short of perfection; even her defects he liked to imagine were just a subtler kind of power and wisdom. And Lady Frensham had stuck her voice and her gestures through all these amiable illusions. He was like a lover who calls his lady a foolish rogue, and is startled to find that facts and strangers do literally agree with him.

But it was so difficult to resolve Lady Frensham and the Irish squabble generally into anything better than idiotic mischief, that for a time he was unusually silent — wrestling with the problem, and Mr. Direck got the conversational initiative.

"To an American mind it's a little — startling," said Mr. Direck, "to hear ladies expressing such vigorous political opinions."

"I don't mind that," said Mr. Britling. "Women over here go into politics and into public-houses — I don't see why they shouldn't. If such things are good enough for men they are good enough for women; we haven't your sort of chivalry. But it's the peculiar malignant silliness of this sort of Toryism that's so discreditable. It's discreditable. There's no good in denying it. Those people you have heard and seen are a not unfair sample of our governing class — of a

certain section of our governing class — as it is to-day. Not at all unfair. And you see how amazingly they haven't got hold of anything. There was a time when they could be politic.... Hidden away they have politic instincts even now.... But it makes me sick to think of this Irish business. Because, you know, it's true — we *are* drifting towards civil war there."

"You are of that opinion?" said Mr. Direck.

"Well, isn't it so? Here's all this Ulster gun-running — you heard how she talked of it? Isn't it enough to drive the south into open revolt?..."

"Is there very much, do you think, in the suggestion that some of this Ulster trouble is a German intrigue? You and Mr. Philbert were saying things—"

"I don't know," said Mr. Britling shortly.

"I don't know," he repeated. "But it isn't because I don't think our Unionists and their opponents aren't foolish enough for anything of the sort. It's only because I don't believe that the Germans are so stupid as to do such things.... Why should they?...

"It makes me — expressionless with anger," said Mr. Britling after a pause, reverting to his main annoyance. "They won't consider any compromise. It's sheer love of quarrelling.... Those people there think that nothing can possibly happen. They are like children in a nursery playing at rebellion. Unscathed and heedless. Until there is death at their feet they will never realise they are playing with loaded guns...."

For a time he said no more; and listened perfunctorily while Mr. Direck tried to indicate the feeling in New England towards the Irish Question and the many difficult propositions an American politician has to face in that respect. And when Mr. Britling took up the thread of speech again it had little or no relation to Mr. Direck's observations.

"The psychology of all this recent insubordination and violence is — curious. Exasperating too.... I don't quite grasp it.... It's the same thing whether you look at the suffrage business or the labour people or at this Irish muddle. People may be too safe. You see we live at the end of a series of secure generations in which none of the great things of life have changed materially. We've grown up with no

sense of danger — that is to say, with no sense of responsibility. None of us, none of us — for though I talk my actions belie me — really believe that life can change very fundamentally any more forever. All this", — Mr. Britling waved his arm comprehensively— "looks as though it was bound to go on steadily forever. It seems incredible that the system could be smashed. It seems incredible that anything we can do will ever smash the system. Lady Homartyn, for example, is incapable of believing that she won't always be able to have week-end parties at Claverings, and that the letters and the tea won't come to her bedside in the morning. Or if her imagination goes to the point of supposing that some day *she* won't be there to receive the tea, it means merely that she supposes somebody else will be. Her pleasant butler may fear to lose his 'situation,' but nothing on earth could make him imagine a time when there will not be a 'situation' for him to lose. Old Asquith thinks that we always have got along, and that we always shall get along by being quietly artful and saying, 'Wait and see.' And it's just because we are all convinced that we are so safe against a general breakdown that we are able to be so recklessly violent in our special cases. Why shouldn't women have the vote? they argue. What does it matter? And bang goes a bomb in Westminster Abbey. Why shouldn't Ulster create an impossible position? And off trots some demented Carsonite to Germany to play at treason on some half word of the German Emperor's and buy half a million rifles....

"Exactly like children being very, very naughty....

"And," said Mr. Britling with a gesture to round off his discourse, "we do go on. We shall go on — until there is a spark right into the magazine. We have lost any belief we ever had that fundamental things happen. We are everlasting children in an everlasting nursery...."

And immediately he broke out again.

"The truth of the matter is that hardly any one has ever yet mastered the fact that the world is round. The world is round — like an orange. The thing is told us — like any old scandal — at school. For all practical purposes we forget it. Practically we all live in a world as flat as a pancake. Where time never ends and nothing changes. Who really believes in any world outside the circle of the

horizon? Here we are and visibly nothing is changing. And so we go on to — nothing will ever change. It just goes on — in space, in time. If we could realise that round world beyond, then indeed we should go circumspectly.... If the world were like a whispering gallery, what whispers might we not hear now — from India, from Africa, from Germany, warnings from the past, intimations of the future....

"We shouldn't heed them...."

§ 6

And indeed at the very moment when Mr. Britling was saying these words, in Sarajevo in Bosnia, where the hour was somewhat later, men whispered together, and one held nervously to a black parcel that had been given him and nodded as they repeated his instructions, a black parcel with certain unstable chemicals and a curious arrangement of detonators therein, a black parcel destined ultimately to shatter nearly every landmark of Mr. Britling's and Lady Frensham's cosmogony....

§ 7

When Mr. Direck and Mr. Britling returned to the Dower House the guest was handed over to Mrs. Britling and Mr. Britling vanished, to reappear at supper time, for the Britlings had a supper in the evening instead of dinner. When Mr. Britling did reappear every trace of his vexation with the levities of British politics and the British ruling class had vanished altogether, and he was no longer thinking of all that might be happening in Germany or India....

While he was out of the way Mr. Direck extended his acquaintance with the Britling household. He was taken round the garden and shown the roses by Mrs. Britling, and beyond the rose garden in a little arbour they came upon Miss Corner reading a book. She looked very grave and pretty reading a book. Mr. Direck came to a pause in front of her, and Mrs. Britling stopped beside him. The

young lady looked up and smiled.

"The last new novel?" asked Mr. Direck pleasantly.

"Campanella's 'City of the Sun.'"

"My word! but isn't that stiff reading?"

"You haven't read it," said Miss Corner.

"It's a dry old book anyhow."

"It's no good pretending you have," she said, and there Mr. Direck felt the conversation had to end.

"That's a very pleasant young lady to have about," he said to Mrs. Britling as they went on towards the barn court.

"She's all at loose ends," said Mrs. Britling. "And she reads like a — Whatever does read? One drinks like a fish. One eats like a wolf."

They found the German tutor in a little court playing Badminton with the two younger boys. He was a plump young man with glasses and compact gestures; the game progressed chiefly by misses and the score was counted in German. He won thoughtfully and chiefly through the ardour of the younger brother, whose enthusiastic returns invariably went out. Instantly the boys attacked Mrs. Britling with a concerted enthusiasm. "Mummy! Is it to be dressing-up supper?"

Mrs. Britling considered, and it was manifest that Mr. Direck was material to her answer.

"We wrap ourselves up in curtains and bright things instead of dressing," she explained. "We have a sort of wardrobe of fancy dresses. Do you mind?"

Mr. Direck was delighted.

And this being settled, the two small boys went off with their mother upon some special decorative project they had conceived and Mr. Direck was left for a time to Herr Heinrich.

Herr Heinrich suggested a stroll in the rose garden, and as Mr. Direck had not hitherto been shown the rose garden by Herr Heinrich, he agreed. Sooner or later everybody, it was evident, had got to show him that rose garden.

"And how do you like living in an English household?" said Mr. Direck, getting to business at once. "It's interesting to an American to see this English establishment, and it must be still more interesting to a German."

"I find it very different from Pomerania," said Herr Heinrich. "In

some respects it is more agreeable, in others less so. It is a pleasant life but it is not a serious life.

"At any time," continued Herr Heinrich, "some one may say, 'Let us do this thing,' or 'Let us do that thing,' and then everything is disarranged.

"People walk into the house without ceremony. There is much kindness but no politeness. Mr. Britling will go away for three or four days, and when he returns and I come forward to greet him and bow, he will walk right past me, or he will say just like this, 'How do, Heinrich?'"

"Are you interested in Mr. Britling's writings?" Mr. Direck asked.

"There again I am puzzled. His work is known even in Germany. His articles are reprinted in German and Austrian reviews. You would expect him to have a certain authority of manner. You would expect there to be discussion at the table upon questions of philosophy and aesthetics.... It is not so. When I ask him questions it is often that they are not seriously answered. Sometimes it is as if he did not like the questions I askt of him. Yesterday I askt of him did he agree or did he not agree with Mr. Bernard Shaw. He just said — I wrote it down in my memoranda — he said: 'Oh! Mixt Pickles.' What can one understand of that? — Mixt Pickles!"...

The young man's sedulous blue eyes looked out of his pink face through his glasses at Mr. Direck, anxious for any light he could offer upon the atmospheric vagueness of this England.

He was, he explained, a student of philology preparing for his doctorate. He had not yet done his year of military service. He was studying the dialects of East Anglia —

"You go about among the people?" Mr. Direck inquired.

"No, I do not do that. But I ask Mr. Carmine and Mrs. Britling and the boys many questions. And sometimes I talk to the gardener."

He explained how he would prepare his thesis and how it would be accepted, and the nature of his army service and the various stages by which he would subsequently ascend in the orderly professorial life to which he was destined. He confessed a certain lack of interest in philology, but, he said, "it is what I have to do." And so he was going to do it all his life through. For his own part he was interested in ideas of universal citizenship, in Esperanto and Ido and universal

languages and such-like attacks upon the barriers between man and man. But the authorities at home did not favour cosmopolitan ideas, and so he was relinquishing them. “Here, it is as if there were no authorities,” he said with a touch of envy.

Mr. Direck induced him to expand that idea.

Herr Heinrich made Mr. Britling his instance. If Mr. Britling were a German he would certainly have some sort of title, a definite position, responsibility. Here he was not even called Herr Doktor. He said what he liked. Nobody rewarded him; nobody reprimanded him. When Herr Heinrich asked him of his position, whether he was above or below Mr. Bernard Shaw or Mr. Arnold White or Mr. Garvin or any other publicist, he made jokes. Nobody here seemed to have a title and nobody seemed to have a definite place. There was Mr. Lawrence Carmine; he was a student of Oriental questions; he had to do with some public institution in London that welcomed Indian students; he was a Geheimrath —

“Eh?” said Mr. Direck.

“It is — what do they call it? the Essex County Council.” But nobody took any notice of that. And when Mr. Philbert, who was a minister in the government, came to lunch he was just like any one else. It was only after he had gone that Herr Heinrich had learnt by chance that he was a minister and “Right Honourable....”

“In Germany everything is definite. Every man knows his place, has his papers, is instructed what to do....”

“Yet,” said Mr. Direck, with his eyes on the glowing roses, the neat arbour, the long line of the red wall of the vegetable garden and a distant gleam of cornfield, “it all looks orderly enough.”

“It is as if it had been put in order ages ago,” said Herr Heinrich.

“And was just going on by habit,” said Mr. Direck, taking up the idea.

Their comparisons were interrupted by the appearance of “Teddy,” the secretary, and the Indian young gentleman, damp and genial, as they explained, “from the boats.” It seemed that “down below” somewhere was a pond with a punt and an island and a toy dinghy. And while they discussed swimming and boating, Mr. Carmine appeared from the direction of the park conversing gravely with the elder son. They had been for a walk and a talk together.

There were proposals for a Badminton foursome. Mr. Direck emerged from the general interchange with Mr. Lawrence Carmine, and then strolled through the rose garden to see the sunset from the end. Mr. Direck took the opportunity to verify his impression that the elder son was the present Mrs. Britling's stepson, and he also contrived by a sudden admiration for a distant row of evening primroses to deflect their path past the arbour in which the evening light must now be getting a little too soft for Miss Corner's book.

Miss Corner was drawn into the sunset party. She talked to Mr. Carmine and displayed, Mr. Direck thought, great originality of mind. She said "The City of the Sun" was like the cities the boys sometimes made on the playroom floor. She said it was the dearest little city, and gave some amusing particulars. She described the painted walls that made the tour of the Civitas Solis a liberal education. She asked Mr. Carmine, who was an authority on Oriental literature, why there were no Indian nor Chinese Utopias.

Now it had never occurred to Mr. Direck to ask why there were no Indian nor Chinese Utopias, and even Mr. Carmine seemed surprised to discover this deficiency.

"The primitive patriarchal village *is* Utopia to India and China," said Mr. Carmine, when they had a little digested the inquiry. "Or at any rate it is their social ideal. They want no Utopias."

"Utopias came with cities," he said, considering the question. "And the first cities, as distinguished from courts and autocratic capitals, came with ships. India and China belong to an earlier age. Ships, trade, disorder, strange relationships, unofficial literature, criticism — and then this idea of some novel remaking of society...."

§ 8

Then Mr. Direck fell into the hands of Hugh, the eldest son, and anticipating the inevitable, said that he liked to walk in the rose garden. So they walked in the rose garden.

"Do you read Utopias?" said Mr. Direck, cutting any preface, in the English manner.

"Oh, *rather*!" said Hugh, and became at once friendly and

confidential.

"We all do," he explained. "In England everybody talks of change and nothing ever changes."

"I found Miss Corner reading — what was it? the Sun People? — some old classical Italian work."

"Campanella," said Hugh, without betraying the slightest interest in Miss Corner. "Nothing changes in England, because the people who want to change things change their minds before they change anything else. I've been in London talking for the last half-year. Studying art they call it. Before that I was a science student, and I want to be one again. Don't you think, Sir, there's something about science — it's steadier than anything else in the world?"

Mr. Direck thought that the moral truths of human nature were steadier than science, and they had one of those little discussions of real life that begin about a difference inadequately apprehended, and do not so much end as are abandoned. Hugh struck him as being more speculative and detached than any American college youth of his age that he knew — but that might not be a national difference but only the Britling strain. He seemed to have read more and more independently, and to be doing less. And he was rather more restrained and self-possessed.

Before Mr. Direck could begin a proper inquiry into the young man's work and outlook, he had got the conversation upon America. He wanted tremendously to see America. "The dad says in one of his books that over here we are being and that over there you are beginning. It must be tremendously stimulating to think that your country is still being made...."

Mr. Direck thought that an interesting point of view. "Unless something tumbles down here, we never think of altering it," the young man remarked. "And even then we just shore it up."

His remarks had the effect of floating off from some busy mill of thought within him. Hitherto Mr. Direck had been inclined to think this silent observant youth, with his hands in his pockets and his shoulders a little humped, as probably shy and adolescently ineffective. But the head was manifestly quite busy....

"Miss Corner," he began, taking the first thing that came into his head, and then he remembered that he had already made the remark

he was going to make not five minutes ago.

"What form of art," he asked, "are you contemplating in your studies at the present time in London?"....

Before this question could be dealt with at all adequately, the two small boys became active in the garden beating in everybody to "dress-up" before supper. The secretary, Teddy, came in a fatherly way to look after Mr. Direck and see to his draperies.

§ 9

Mr. Direck gave his very best attention to this business of draping himself, for he had not the slightest intention of appearing ridiculous in the eyes of Miss Corner. Teddy came with an armful of stuff that he thought "might do."

"What'll I come as?" asked Mr. Direck.

"We don't wear costumes," said Teddy. "We just put on all the brightest things we fancy. If it's any costume at all, it's Futurist."

"And surely why shouldn't one?" asked Mr. Direck, greatly struck by this idea. "Why should we always be tied by the fashions and periods of the past?"

He rejected a rather Mephistopheles-like costume of crimson and a scheme for a brigand-like ensemble based upon what was evidently an old bolero of Mrs. Britling's, and after some reflection he accepted some black silk tights. His legs were not legs to be ashamed of. Over this he tried various brilliant wrappings from the Dower House *armoire*, and chose at last, after some hesitation in the direction of a piece of gold and purple brocade, a big square of green silk curtain stuff adorned with golden pheasants and other large and dignified ornaments; this he wore toga fashion over his light silken under-vest — Teddy had insisted on the abandonment of his shirt "if you want to dance at all" — and fastened with a large green glass-jewelled brooch. From this his head and neck projected, he felt, with a tolerable dignity. Teddy suggested a fillet of green ribbon, and this Mr. Direck tried, but after prolonged reflection before the glass rejected. He was still weighing the effect of this fillet upon the mind of Miss Corner when Teddy left him to make his own modest

preparations. Teddy's departure gave him a chance for profile studies by means of an arrangement of the long mirror and the table looking-glass that he had been too shy to attempt in the presence of the secretary. The general effect was quite satisfactory.

"Wa-a-a-l," he said with a quaver of laughter, "now who'd have thought it?" and smiled a consciously American smile at himself before going down.

The company was assembling in the panelled hall, and made a brilliant show in the light of the acetylene candles against the dark background. Mr. Britling in a black velvet cloak and black silk tights was a deeper shade among the shadows; the high lights were Miss Corner and her sister, in glittering garments of peacock green and silver that gave a snake-like quality to their lithe bodies. They were talking to the German tutor, who had become a sort of cotton Cossack, a spectacled Cossack in buff and bright green. Mrs. Britling was dignified and beautiful in a purple djibbah, and her stepson had become a handsome still figure of black and crimson. Teddy had contrived something elaborate and effective in the Egyptian style, with a fish-basket and a cuirass of that thin matting one finds behind washstands; the small boys were brigands, with immensely baggy breeches and cummerbunds in which they had stuck a selection of paper-knives and toy pistols and similar weapons. Mr. Carmine and his young man had come provided with real Indian costumes; the feeling of the company was that Mr. Carmine was a mullah. The aunt-like lady with the noble nose stood out amidst these levities in a black silk costume with a gold chain. She refused, it seemed, to make herself absurd, though she encouraged the others to extravagance by nods and enigmatical smiles. Nevertheless she had put pink ribbons in her cap. A family of father, golden-haired mother, and two young daughters, sympathetically attired, had just arrived, and were discarding their outer wrappings with the assistance of host and hostess.

It was all just exactly what Mr. Direck had never expected in England, and equally unexpected was the supper on a long candle-lit table without a cloth. No servants were present, but on a sideboard stood a cold salmon and cold joints and kalter aufschnitt and kartoffel salat, and a variety of other comestibles, and many bottles of beer

and wine and whisky. One helped oneself and anybody else one could, and Mr. Direck did his best to be very attentive to Mrs. Britling and Miss Corner, and was greatly assisted by the latter.

Everybody seemed unusually gay and bright-eyed. Mr. Direck found something exhilarating and oddly exciting in all this unusual bright costume and in this easy mutual service; it made everybody seem franker and simpler. Even Mr. Britling had revealed a sturdy handsomeness that had not been apparent to Mr. Direck before, and young Britling left no doubts now about his good looks. Mr. Direck forgot his mission and his position, and indeed things generally, in an irrational satisfaction that his golden pheasants harmonised with the glitter of the warm and smiling girl beside him. And he sat down beside her— "You sit anywhere," said Mrs. Britling — with far less compunction than in his ordinary costume he would have felt for so direct a confession of preference. And there was something in her eyes, it was quite indefinable and yet very satisfying, that told him that now he escaped from the stern square imperatives of his patriotic tailor in New York she had made a discovery of him.

Everybody chattered gaily, though Mr. Direck would have found it difficult to recall afterwards what it was they chattered about, except that somehow he acquired the valuable knowledge that Miss Corner was called Cecily, and her sister Letty, and then — so far old Essex custom held — the masculine section was left for a few minutes for some imaginary drinking, and a lighting of cigars and cigarettes, after which everybody went through interwoven moonlight and afterglow to the barn. Mr. Britling sat down to a pianola in the corner and began the familiar cadences of "Whistling Rufus."

"You dance?" said Miss Cecily Corner.

"I've never been much of a dancing man," said Mr. Direck. "What sort of dance is this?"

"Just anything. A two-step."

Mr. Direck hesitated and regretted a well-spent youth, and then Hugh came prancing forward with outstretched hands and swept her away.

Just for an instant Mr. Direck felt that this young man was a trifle superfluous....

But it was very amusing dancing.

It wasn't any sort of taught formal dancing. It was a spontaneous retort to the leaping American music that Mr. Britling footed out. You kept time, and for the rest you did as your nature prompted. If you had a partner you joined hands, you fluttered to and from one another, you paced down the long floor together, you involved yourselves in romantic pursuits and repulsions with other couples. There was no objection to your dancing alone. Teddy, for example, danced alone in order to develop certain Egyptian gestures that were germinating in his brain. There was no objection to your joining hands in a cheerful serpent....

Mr. Direck hung on to Cissie and her partner. They danced very well together; they seemed to like and understand each other. It was natural of course for two young people like that, thrown very much together, to develop an affection for one another.... Still, she was older by three or four years.

It seemed unreasonable that the boy anyhow shouldn't be in love with her....

It seemed unreasonable that any one shouldn't be in love with her....

Then Mr. Direck remarked that Cissie was watching Teddy's manoeuvres over her partner's shoulder with real affection and admiration....

But then most refreshingly she picked up Mr. Direck's gaze and gave him the slightest of smiles. She hadn't forgotten him.

The music stopped with an effect of shock, and all the bobbing, whirling figures became walking glories.

"Now that's not difficult, is it?" said Miss Corner, glowing happily.

"Not when you do it," said Mr. Direck.

"I can't imagine an American not dancing a two-step. You must do the next with me. Listen! It's 'Away Down Indiana' ... ah! I knew you could."

Mr. Direck, too, understood now that he could, and they went off holding hands rather after the fashion of two skaters.

"My word!" said Mr. Direck. "To think I'd be dancing."

But he said no more because he needed his breath.

He liked it, and he had another attempt with one of the visitor daughters, who danced rather more formally, and then Teddy took the pianola and Mr. Direck was astonished by the spectacle of an eminent British thinker in a whirl of black velvet and extremely active black legs engaged in a kind of Apache dance in pursuit of the visitor wife. In which Mr. Lawrence Carmine suddenly mingled.

"In Germany," said Herr Heinrich, "we do not dance like this. It could not be considered seemly. But it is very pleasant."

And then there was a waltz, and Herr Heinrich bowed to and took the visitor wife round three times, and returned her very punctually and exactly to the point whence he had taken her, and the Indian young gentleman (who must not be called "coloured") waltzed very well with Cecily. Mr. Direck tried to take a tolerant European view of this brown and white combination. But he secured her as soon as possible from this Asiatic entanglement, and danced with her again, and then he danced with her again.

"Come and look at the moonlight," cried Mrs. Britling.

And presently Mr. Direck found himself strolling through the rose garden with Cecily. She had the sweetest moonlight face, her white shining robe made her a thing of moonlight altogether. If Mr. Direck had not been in love with her before he was now altogether in love. Mamie Nelson, whose freakish unkindness had been rankling like a poisoned thorn in his heart all the way from Massachusetts, suddenly became Ancient History.

A tremendous desire for eloquence arose in Mr. Direck's soul, a desire so tremendous that no conceivable phrase he could imagine satisfied it. So he remained tongue-tied. And Cecily was tongue-tied, too. The scent of the roses just tinted the clear sweetness of the air they breathed.

Mr. Direck's mood was an immense solemnity, like a dark ocean beneath the vast dome of the sky, and something quivered in every fibre of his being, like moonlit ripples on the sea. He felt at the same time a portentous stillness and an immense enterprise....

Then suddenly the pianola, pounding a cake walk, burst out into ribald invitation....

"Come back to dance!" cried Cecily, like one from whom a spell has just been broken. And Mr. Direck, snatching at a vanishing scrap

of everything he had not said, remarked, “I shall never forget this evening.”

She did not seem to hear that.

They danced together again. And then Mr. Direck danced with the visitor lady, whose name he had never heard. And then he danced with Mrs. Britling, and then he danced with Letty. And then it seemed time for him to look for Miss Cecily again.

And so the cheerful evening passed until they were within a quarter of an hour of Sunday morning. Mrs. Britling went to exert a restraining influence upon the pianola.

“Oh! one dance more!” cried Cissie Corner.

“Oh! one dance more!” cried Letty.

“One dance more,” Mr. Direck supported, and then things really *had* to end.

There was a rapid putting out of candles and a stowing away of things by Teddy and the sons, two chauffeurs appeared from the region of the kitchen and brought Mr. Lawrence Carmine’s car and the visitor family’s car to the front door, and everybody drifted gaily through the moonlight and the big trees to the front of the house. And Mr. Direck saw the perambulator waiting — the mysterious perambulator — a little in the dark beyond the front door.

The visitor family and Mr. Carmine and his young Indian departed. “Come to hockey!” shouted Mr. Britling to each departing car-load, and Mr. Carmine receding answered: “I’ll bring three!”

Then Mr. Direck, in accordance with a habit that had been growing on him throughout the evening, looked around for Miss Cissie Corner and failed to find her. And then behold she was descending the staircase with the mysterious baby in her arms. She held up a warning finger, and then glanced at her sleeping burthen. She looked like a silvery Madonna. And Mr. Direck remembered that he was still in doubt about that baby....

Teddy, who was back in his flannels, seized upon the perambulator. There was much careful baby stowing on the part of Cecily; she displayed an infinitely maternal solicitude. Letty was away changing; she reappeared jauntily taking leave, disregarding the baby absolutely, and Teddy departed bigamously, wheeling the perambulator between the two sisters into the hazes of the moonlight.

There was much crying of good nights. Mr. Direck's curiosities narrowed down to a point of great intensity....

Of course, Mr. Britling's circle must be a very "Advanced" circle...

§ 10

Mr. Direck found he had taken leave of the rest of the company, and drifted into a little parlour with Mr. Britling and certain glasses and siphons and a whisky decanter on a tray....

"It is a very curious thing," said Mr. Direck, "that in England I find myself more disposed to take stimulants and that I no longer have the need for iced water that one feels at home. I ascribe it to a greater humidity in the air. One is less dried and one is less braced. One is no longer pursued by a thirst, but one needs something to buck one up a little. Thank you. That is enough."

Mr. Direck took his glass of whisky and soda from Mr. Britling's hand.

Mr. Britling seated himself in an armchair by the fireplace and threw one leg carelessly over the arm. In his black velvet cloak and cap, and his black silk tights, he was very like a minor character, a court chamberlain for example, in some cloak and rapier drama. "I find this week-end dancing and kicking about wonderfully wholesome," he said. "That and our Sunday hockey. One starts the new week clear and bright about the mind. Friday is always my worst working day."

Mr. Direck leant against the table, wrapped in his golden pheasants, and appreciated the point.

"Your young people dance very cheerfully," he said.

"We all dance very cheerfully," said Mr. Britling.

"Then this Miss Corner," said Mr. Direck, "she is the sister, I presume, is she? of that pleasant young lady who is married — she is married, isn't she? — to the young man you call Teddy."

"I should have explained these young people. They're the sort of young people we are producing over here now in quite enormous quantity. They are the sort of equivalent of the Russian Intelligentsia,

an irresponsible middle class with ideas. Teddy, you know, is my secretary. He's the son, I believe, of a Kilburn solicitor. He was recommended to me by Datcher of *The Times*. He came down here and lived in lodgings for a time. Then suddenly appeared the young lady."

"Miss Corner's sister?"

"Exactly. The village was a little startled. The cottager who had let the rooms came to me privately. Teddy is rather touchy on the point of his personal independence, he considers any demand for explanations as an insult, and probably all he had said to the old lady was, 'This is Letty — come to share my rooms.' I put the matter to him very gently. 'Oh, yes,' he said, rather in the manner of some one who has overlooked a trifle. 'I got married to her in the Christmas holidays. May I bring her along to see Mrs. Britling?' We induced him to go into a little cottage I rent. The wife was the daughter of a Colchester journalist and printer. I don't know if you talked to her."

"I've talked to the sister rather."

"Well, they're both idea'd. They're highly educated in the sense that they do really think for themselves. Almost fiercely. So does Teddy. If he thinks he hasn't thought anything he thinks for himself, he goes off and thinks it different. The sister is a teacher who wants to take the B.A. degree in London University. Meanwhile she pays the penalty of her sex."

"Meaning — ?" asked Mr. Direck, startled.

"Oh! that she puts in a great deal too much of her time upon housework and minding her sister's baby."

"She's a very interesting and charming young lady indeed," said Mr. Direck. "With a sort of Western college freedom of mind — and something about her that isn't American at all."

Mr. Britling was following the train of his own thoughts.

"My household has some amusing contrasts," he said. "I don't know if you have talked to that German.

"He's always asking questions. And you tell him any old thing and he goes and writes it down in his room upstairs, and afterwards asks you another like it in order to perplex himself by the variety of your answers. He regards the whole world with a methodical distrust. He wants to document it and pin it down. He suspects it only too

justly of disorderly impulses, and a capacity for self-contradiction. He is the most extraordinary contrast to Teddy, whose confidence in the universe amounts almost to effrontery. Teddy carries our national laxness to a foolhardy extent. He is capable of leaving his watch in the middle of Claverings Park and expecting to find it a month later — being carefully taken care of by a squirrel, I suppose — when he happens to want it. He's rather like a squirrel himself — without the habit of hoarding. He is incapable of asking a question about anything; he would be quite sure it was all right anyhow. He would feel that asking questions betrayed a want of confidence — was a sort of incivility. But my German, if you notice, — his normal expression is one of grave solicitude. He is like a conscientious ticket-collector among his impressions. And did you notice how beautifully my pianola rolls are all numbered and catalogued? He did that. He set to work and did it as soon as he got here, just as a good cat when you bring it into the house sets to work and catches mice. Previously the pianola music was chaos. You took what God sent you.

"And he *looks* like a German," said Mr. Britling.

"He certainly does that," said Mr. Direck.

"He has the fair type of complexion, the rather full habit of body, the temperamental disposition, but in addition that close-cropped head, it is almost as if it were shaved, the plumpness, the glasses — those are things that are made. And the way he carries himself. And the way he thinks. His meticulousness. When he arrived he was delightful, he was wearing a student's corps cap and a rucksack, he carried a violin; he seemed to have come out of a book. No one would ever dare to invent so German a German for a book. Now, a young Frenchman or a young Italian or a young Russian coming here might look like a foreigner, but he wouldn't have the distinctive national stamp a German has. He wouldn't be plainly French or Italian or Russian. Other peoples are not made; they are neither made nor created but proceeding — out of a thousand indefinable causes. The Germans are a triumph of directive will. I had to remark the other day that when my boys talked German they shouted. 'But when one talks German one *must* shout,' said Herr Heinrich. 'It is taught so in the schools.' And it is. They teach them to shout and to throw out

their chests. Just as they teach them to read notice-boards and not think about politics. Their very ribs are not their own. My Herr Heinrich is comparatively a liberal thinker. He asked me the other day, 'But why should I give myself up to philology? But then,' he reflected, 'it is what I have to do.'"

Mr. Britling seemed to have finished, and then just as Mr. Direck was planning a way of getting the talk back by way of Teddy to Miss Corner, he snuggled more deeply into his chair, reflected and broke out again.

"This contrast between Heinrich's carefulness and Teddy's easy-goingness, come to look at it, is I suppose one of the most fundamental in the world. It reaches to everything. It mixes up with education, statecraft, morals. Will you make or will you take? Those are the two extreme courses in all such things. I suppose the answer of wisdom to that is, like all wise answers, a compromise. I suppose one must accept and then make all one can of it.... Have you talked at all to my eldest son?"

"He's a very interesting young man indeed," said Mr. Direck. "I should venture to say there's a very great deal in him. I was most impressed by the few words I had with him."

"There, for example, is one of my perplexities," said Mr. Britling.

Mr. Direck waited for some further light on this sudden transition.

"Ah! your troubles in life haven't begun yet. Wait till you're a father. That cuts to the bone. You have the most delicate thing in the world in hand, a young kindred mind. You feel responsible for it, you know you are responsible for it; and you lose touch with it. You can't get at it. Nowadays we've lost the old tradition of fatherhood by divine right — and we haven't got a new one. I've tried not to be a cramping ruler, a director, a domestic tyrant to that lad — and in effect it's meant his going his own way.... I don't dominate. I hoped to advise. But you see he loves my respect and good opinion. Too much. When things go well I know of them. When the world goes dark for him, then he keeps his trouble from me. Just when I would so eagerly go into it with him.... There's something the matter now, something — it may be grave. I feel he wants to tell me. And there it is! — it seems I am the last person to whom he can humiliate himself by a confession of blundering, or weakness.... Something I should

just laugh at and say, ‘That’s in the blood of all of us, dear Spit of myself. Let’s see what’s to be done.’...”

He paused and then went on, finding in the unfamiliarity and transitoriness of his visitor a freedom he might have failed to find in a close friend.

“I am frightened at times at all I don’t know about in that boy’s mind. I know nothing of his religiosities. He’s my son and he must have religiosities. I know nothing of his ideas or of his knowledge about sex and all that side of life. I do not know of the things he finds beautiful. I can guess at times; that’s all; when he betrays himself.... You see, you don’t know really what love is until you have children. One doesn’t love women. Indeed you don’t! One gives and gets; it’s a trade. One may have tremendous excitements and expectations and overwhelming desires. That’s all very well in its way. But the love of children is an exquisite tenderness: it rends the heart. It’s a thing of God. And I lie awake at nights and stretch out my hands in the darkness to this lad — who will never know — until his sons come in their time....”

He made one of his quick turns again.

“And that’s where our English way makes for distresses. Mr. Prussian respects and fears his father; respects authorities, attends, obeys and — *his father has a hold upon him*. But I said to myself at the outset, ‘No, whatever happens, I will not usurp the place of God. I will not be the Priest-Patriarch of my children. They shall grow and I will grow beside them, helping but not cramping or overshadowing.’ They grow more. But they blunder more. Life ceases to be a discipline and becomes an experiment....”

“That’s very true,” said Mr. Direck, to whom it seemed the time was ripe to say something. “This is the problem of America perhaps even more than of England. Though I have not had the parental experience you have undergone.... I can see very clearly that a son is a very serious proposition.”

“The old system of life was organisation. That is where Germany is still the most ancient of European states. It’s a reversion to a tribal cult. It’s atavistic.... To organise or discipline, or mould characters or press authority, is to assume that you have reached finality in your general philosophy. It implies an assured end. Heinrich has his

assured end, his philological professorship or thereabouts as a part of the Germanic machine. And that too has its assured end in German national assertion. Here, we have none of those convictions. We know we haven't finality, and so we are open and apologetic and receptive, rather than wilful.... You see all organisation, with its implication of finality, is death. We feel that. The Germans don't. What you organise you kill. Organised morals or organised religion or organised thought are dead morals and dead religion and dead thought. Yet some organisation you must have. Organisation is like killing cattle. If you do not kill some the herd is just waste. But you musn't kill all or you kill the herd. The unkilled cattle are the herd, the continuation; the unorganised side of life is the real life. The reality of life is adventure, not performance. What isn't adventure isn't life. What can be ruled about can be machined. But priests and schoolmasters and bureaucrats get hold of life and try to make it *all* rules, *all* etiquette and regulation and correctitude.... And parents and the love of parents make for the same thing. It is all very well to experiment for oneself, but when one sees these dear things of one's own, so young and inexperienced and so capable of every sort of gallant foolishness, walking along the narrow plank, going down into dark jungles, ah! then it makes one want to wrap them in laws and foresight and fence them about with 'Verboten' boards in all the conceivable aspects...."

"In America of course we do set a certain store upon youthful self-reliance," said Mr. Direck.

"As we do here. It's in your blood and our blood. It's the instinct of the English and the Irish anyhow to suspect government and take the risks of the chancy way.... And manifestly the Russians, if you read their novelists, have the same twist in them.... When we get this young Prussian here, he's a marvel to us. He really believes in Law. He *likes* to obey. That seems a sort of joke to us. It's curious how foreign these Germans are — to all the rest of the world. Because of their docility. Scratch the Russian and you get the Tartar. Educate the Russian or the American or the Englishman or the Irishman or Frenchman or any real northern European except the German, and you get the Anarchist, that is to say the man who dreams of order without organisation — of something beyond organisation....

“It’s one o’clock,” said Mr. Britling abruptly, perceiving a shade of fatigue upon the face of his hearer and realising that his thoughts had taken him too far, “and Sunday. Let’s go to bed.”

§ 11

For a time Mr. Direck could not sleep. His mind had been too excited by this incessant day with all its novelties and all its provocations to comparison. The whole complicated spectacle grouped itself, with a naturalness and a complete want of logic that all who have been young will understand, about Cecily Corner.

She had to be in the picture, and so she came in as though she were the central figure, as though she were the quintessential England. There she was, the type, the blood, the likeness, of no end of Massachusetts families, the very same stuff indeed, and yet she was different....

For a time his thoughts hovered ineffectively about certain details of her ear and cheek, and one may doubt if his interest in these things was entirely international....

Then he found himself under way with an exposition of certain points to Mr. Britling. In the security of his bed he could imagine that he was talking very slowly and carefully while Mr. Britling listened; already he was more than half way to dreamland or he could not have supposed anything so incredible.

“There’s a curious sort of difference,” he was saying. “It is difficult to define, but on the whole I might express it by saying that such a gathering as this if it was in America would be drawn with harder lines, would show its bones more and have everything more emphatic. And just to take one illustrative point: in America in such a gathering as this there would be bound to be several jokes going on as it were, running jokes and running criticisms, from day to day and from week to week.... There would be jokes about your writing and your influence and jokes about Miss Corner’s advanced reading.... You see, in America we pay much more attention to personal character. Here people, I notice, are not talked to about their personal characters at all, and many of them do not seem to be aware and do

not seem to mind what personal characters they have....

"And another thing I find noteworthy is the way in which what I might call mature people seem to go on having a good time instead of standing by and applauding the young people having a good time.... And the young people do not seem to have set out to have a good time at all.... Now in America, a charming girl like Miss Corner would be distinctly more aware of herself and her vitality than she is here, distinctly more. Her peculiarly charming sidelong look, if I might make so free with her — would have been called attention to. It's a perfectly beautiful look, the sort of look some great artist would have loved to make immortal. It's a look I shall find it hard to forget.... But she doesn't seem to be aware in the least of it. In America she would be aware of it. She would be distinctly aware of it. She would have been *made* aware of it. She would have been advised of it. It would be looked for and she would know it was looked for. She would *give* it as a singer gives her most popular song. Mamie Nelson, for example, used to give a peculiar little throw back of the chin and a laugh.... It was talked about. People came to see it....

"Of course Mamie Nelson was a very brilliant girl indeed. I suppose in England you would say we spoilt her. I suppose we did spoil her...."

It came into Mr. Direck's head that for a whole day he had scarcely given a thought to Mamie Nelson. And now he was thinking of her — calmly. Why shouldn't one think of Mamie Nelson calmly?

She was a proud imperious thing. There was something Southern in her. Very dark blue eyes she had, much darker than Miss Corner's....

But how tortuous she had been behind that outward pride of hers! For four years she had let him think he was the only man who really mattered in the world, and all the time quite clearly and definitely she had deceived him. She had made a fool of him and she had made a fool of the others perhaps — just to have her retinue and play the queen in her world. And at last humiliation, bitter humiliation, and Mamie with her chin in the air and her bright triumphant smile looking down on him.

Hadn't he, she asked, had the privilege of loving her?

She took herself at the value they had set upon her.

Well — somehow — that wasn't right....

All the way across the Atlantic Mr. Direck had been trying to forget her downward glance with the chin up, during that last encounter — and other aspects of the same humiliation. The years he had spent upon her! The time! Always relying upon her assurance of a special preference for him. He tried to think he was suffering from the pangs of unrequited love, and to conceal from himself just how bitterly his pride and vanity had been rent by her ultimate rejection. There had been a time when she had given him reason to laugh in his sleeve at Booth Wilmington.

Perhaps Booth Wilmington had also had reason for laughing in his sleeve....

Had she even loved Booth Wilmington? Or had she just snatched at him?...

Wasn't he, Direck, as good a man as Booth Wilmington anyhow?...

For some moments the old sting of jealousy rankled again. He recalled the flaring rivalry that had ended in his defeat, the competition of gifts and treats.... A thing so open that all Carrierville knew of it, discussed it, took sides.... And over it all Mamie with her flashing smile had sailed like a processional goddess....

Why, they had made jokes about him in the newspapers!

One couldn't imagine such a contest in Matching's Easy. Yet surely even in Matching's Easy there are lovers.

Is it something in the air, something in the climate that makes things harder and clearer in America?...

Cissie — why shouldn't one call her Cissie in one's private thoughts anyhow? — would never be as hard and clear as Mamie. She had English eyes — merciful eyes....

That was the word — *merciful*!

The English light, the English air, are merciful....

Merciful....

They tolerate old things and slow things and imperfect apprehensions. They aren't always getting at you....

They don't laugh at you.... At least — they laugh differently....

Was England the tolerant country? With its kind eyes and its wary

sidelong look. Toleration. In which everything mellowed and nothing was destroyed. A soft country. A country with a passion for imperfection. A padded country....

England — all stuffed with soft feathers ... under one's ear. A pillow — with soft, kind Corners ... Beautiful rounded Corners.... Dear, dear Corners. Cissie Corners. Corners. Could there be a better family?

Massachusetts — but in heaven....

Harps playing two-steps, and kind angels wrapped in moonlight.

Very softly I and you,

One turn, two turn, three turn, too.

Off we go!....

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE ENTERTAINMENT OF MR. DIRECK REACHES A CLIMAX

§ 1

Breakfast was in the open air, and a sunny, easy-going feast. Then the small boys laid hands on Mr. Direck and showed him the pond and the boats, while Mr. Britling strolled about the lawn with Hugh, talking rather intently. And when Mr. Direck returned from the boats in a state of greatly enhanced popularity he found Mr. Britling conversing over his garden railings to what was altogether a new type of Britisher in Mr. Direck's experience. It was a tall, lean, sun-bitten youngish man of forty perhaps, in brown tweeds, looking more like the Englishman of the American illustrations than anything Mr. Direck had met hitherto. Indeed he came very near to a complete realisation of that ideal except that there was a sort of intensity about him, and that his clipped moustache had the restrained stiffness of a wiry-haired terrier. This gentleman Mr. Direck learnt was Colonel Rendezvous. He spoke in clear short sentences, they had an effect of being punched out, and he was refusing to come into the garden and talk.

"Have to do my fourteen miles before lunch," he said. "You haven't seen Manning about, have you?"

"He isn't here," said Mr. Britling, and it seemed to Mr. Direck that there was the faintest ambiguity in this reply.

"Have to go alone, then," said Colonel Rendezvous. "They told me that he had started to come here."

"I shall motor over to Bramley High Oak for your Boy Scout festival," said Mr. Britling.

"Going to have three thousand of 'em," said the Colonel. "Good show."

His steely eyes seemed to search the cover of Mr. Britling's garden for the missing Manning, and then he decided to give him up. "I must be going," he said. "So long. Come up!"

A well-disciplined dog came to heel, and the lean figure had given Mr. Direck a semi-military salutation and gone upon its way. It marched with a long elastic stride; it never looked back.

"Manning," said Mr. Britling, "is probably hiding up in my rose garden."

"Curiously enough, I guessed from your manner that that might be the case," said Mr. Direck.

"Yes. Manning is a London journalist. He has a little cottage about a mile over there" — Mr. Britling pointed vaguely— "and he comes down for the week-ends. And Rendezvous has found out he isn't fit. And everybody ought to be fit. That is the beginning and end of life for Rendezvous. Fitness. An almost mineral quality, an insatiable activity of body, great mental simplicity. So he takes possession of poor old Manning and trots him for that fourteen miles — at four miles an hour. Manning goes through all the agonies of death and damnation, he half dissolves, he pants and drags for the first eight or ten miles, and then I must admit he rather justifies Rendezvous' theory. He is to be found in the afternoon in a hammock suffering from blistered feet, but otherwise unusually well. But if he can escape it, he does. He hides."

"But if he doesn't want to go with Rendezvous, why does he?" said Mr. Direck.

"Well, Rendezvous is accustomed to the command of men. And Manning's only way of refusing things is on printed forms. Which he doesn't bring down to Matching's Easy. Ah! behold!"

Far away across the lawn between two blue cedars there appeared a leisurely form in grey flannels and a loose tie, advancing with manifest circumspection.

"He's gone," cried Britling.

The leisurely form, obviously amiable, obviously a little out of condition, became more confident, drew nearer.

"I'm sorry to have missed him," he said cheerfully. "I thought he might come this way. It's going to be a very warm day indeed. Let us sit about somewhere and talk.

"Of course," he said, turning to Direck, "Rendezvous is the life and soul of the country."

They strolled towards a place of seats and hammocks between the

big trees and the rose garden, and the talk turned for a time upon Rendezvous. “They have the tidiest garden in Essex,” said Manning. “It’s not Mrs. Rendezvous’ fault that it is so. Mrs. Rendezvous, as a matter of fact, has a taste for the picturesque. She just puts the things about in groups in the beds. She wants them, she says, to grow anyhow. She desires a romantic disorder. But she never gets it. When he walks down the path all the plants dress instinctively.... And there’s a tree near their gate; it used to be a willow. You can ask any old man in the village. But ever since Rendezvous took the place it’s been trying to present arms. With the most extraordinary results. I was passing the other day with old Windershin. ‘You see that there old poplar,’ he said. ‘It’s a willow,’ said I. ‘No,’ he said, ‘it did used to be a willow before Colonel Rendezvous he came. But now it’s a poplar.’... And, by Jove, it is a poplar!”...

The conversation thus opened by Manning centred for a time upon Colonel Rendezvous. He was presented as a monster of energy and self-discipline; as the determined foe of every form of looseness, slackness, and easy-goingness.

“He’s done wonderful work for the local Boy Scout movement,” said Manning.

“It’s Kitchenerism,” said Britling.

“It’s the army side of the efficiency stunt,” said Manning.

There followed a digression upon the Boy Scout movement, and Mr. Direck made comparisons with the propaganda of Seton Thompson in America. “Colonel Teddyism,” said Manning. “It’s a sort of reaction against everything being too easy and too safe.”

“It’s got its anti-decadent side,” said Mr. Direck.

“If there is such a thing as decadence,” said Mr. Britling.

“If there wasn’t such a thing as decadence,” said Manning, “we journalists would have had to invent it.”...

“There is something tragical in all this — what shall I call it? — Kitchenerism,” Mr. Britling reflected “Here you have it rushing about and keeping itself — screwed up, and trying desperately to keep the country screwed up. And all because there may be a war some day somehow with Germany. Provided Germany *is* insane. It’s that war, like some sort of bee in Rendezvous’ brains, that is driving him along the road now to Market Saffron — he always keeps to the

roads because they are severer — through all the dust and sunshine. When he might be here gossiping....

"And you know, I don't see that war coming," said Mr. Britling. "I believe Rendezvous sweats in vain. I can't believe in that war. It has held off for forty years. It may hold off forever."

He nodded his head towards the German tutor, who had come into view across the lawn, talking profoundly with Mr. Britling's eldest son.

"Look at that pleasant person. There he is — *Echt Deutsch* — if anything ever was. Look at my son there! Do you see the two of them engaged in mortal combat? The thing's too ridiculous. The world grows sane. They may fight in the Balkans still; in many ways the Balkan States are in the very rear of civilisation; but to imagine decent countries like this or Germany going back to bloodshed! No.... When I see Rendezvous keeping it up and keeping it up, I begin to see just how poor Germany must be keeping it up. I begin to realise how sick Germany must be getting of the high road and the dust and heat and the everlasting drill and restraint.... My heart goes out to the South Germans. Old Manning here always reminds me of Austria. Think of Germany coming like Rendezvous on a Sunday morning, and looking stiffly over Austria's fence. 'Come for a good hard walk, man. Keep Fit....'"

"But suppose this Balkan trouble becomes acute," said Manning.

"It hasn't; it won't. Even if it did we should keep out of it."

"But suppose Russia grappled Austria and Germany flung herself suddenly upon France — perhaps taking Belgium on the way."

"Oh! — we should fight. Of course we should fight. Could any one but a congenital idiot suppose we shouldn't fight? They know we should fight. They aren't altogether idiots in Germany. But the thing's absurd. Why *should* Germany attack France? It's as if Manning here took a hatchet suddenly and assailed Edith.... It's just the dream of their military journalists. It's such schoolboy nonsense. Isn't that a beautiful pillar rose? Edith only put it in last year.... I hate all this talk of wars and rumours of wars.... It's worried all my life. And it gets worse and it gets emptier every year...."

§ 2

Now just at that moment there was a loud report....

But neither Mr. Britling nor Mr. Manning nor Mr. Direck was interrupted or incommoded in the slightest degree by that report. Because it was too far off over the curve of this round world to be either heard or seen at Matching's Easy. Nevertheless it was a very loud report. It occurred at an open space by a river that ran through a cramped Oriental city, a city spiked with white minarets and girt about by bare hills under a blazing afternoon sky. It came from a black parcel that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria, with great presence of mind, had just flung out from the open hood of his automobile, where, tossed from the side of the quay, it had descended a few seconds before. It exploded as it touched the cobbled road just under the front of the second vehicle in the procession, and it blew to pieces the front of the automobile and injured the aide-de-camp who was in it and several of the spectators. Its thrower was immediately gripped by the bystanders. The procession stopped. There was a tremendous commotion amongst that brightly-costumed crowd, a hot excitement in vivid contrast to the Sabbath calm of Matching's Easy....

Mr. Britling, to whom the explosion was altogether inaudible, continued his dissertation upon the common-sense of the world and the practical security of our Western peace.

§ 3

Lunch was an open-air feast again. Three visitors had dropped in; they had motored down from London piled up on a motor-cycle and a side-car; a brother and two sisters they seemed to be, and they had apparently reduced hilariousness to a principle. The rumours of coming hockey that had been floating on the outskirts of Mr. Direck's consciousness ever since his arrival, thickened and multiplied.... It crept into his mind that he was expected to play....

He decided he would not play. He took various people into his confidence. He told Mr. Britling, and Mr. Britling said, "We'll make

you full back, where you'll get a hit now and then and not have very much to do. All you have to remember is to hit with the flat side of your stick and not raise it above your shoulders." He told Teddy, and Teddy said, "I strongly advise you to dress as thinly as you can consistently with decency, and put your collar and tie in your pocket before the game begins. Hockey is properly a winter game." He told the maiden aunt-like lady with the prominent nose, and she said almost enviously, "Every one here is asked to play except me. I assuage the perambulator. I suppose one mustn't be envious. I don't see why I shouldn't play. I'm not so old as all that." He told Hugh, and Hugh warned him to be careful not to get hold of one of the sprung sticks. He considered whether it wouldn't be wiser to go to his own room and lock himself in, or stroll off for a walk through Claverings Park. But then he would miss Miss Corner, who was certain, it seemed, to come up for hockey. On the other hand, if he did not miss her he might make himself ridiculous in her eyes, and efface the effect of the green silk stuff with the golden pheasants.

He determined to stay behind until she arrived, and explain to her that he was not going to play. He didn't somehow want her to think he wasn't perfectly fit to play.

Mr. Carmine arrived in an automobile with two Indians and a gentleman who had been a prospector in Alaska, the family who had danced overnight at the Dower House reappeared, and then Mrs. Teddy, very detached with a special hockey stick, and Miss Corner wheeling the perambulator. Then came further arrivals. At the earliest opportunity Mr. Direck secured the attention of Miss Corner, and lost his interest in any one else.

"I can't play this hockey," said Mr. Direck. "I feel strange about it. It isn't an American game. Now if it were baseball — !"

He left her to suppose him uncommonly hot stuff at baseball.

"If you're on my side," said Cecily, "mind you pass to me."

It became evident to Mr. Direck that he was going to play this hockey after all.

"Well," he said, "if I've got to play hockey, I guess I've got to play hockey. But can't I just get a bit of practice somewhere before the game begins?"

So Miss Corner went off to get two sticks and a ball and came

back to instruct Mr. Direck. She said he had a good eye. The two small boys scenting play in the air got sticks and joined them. The overnight visitor's wife appeared from the house in abbreviated skirts, and wearing formidable shin-guards. With her abundant fair hair, which was already breaking loose, so to speak, to join the fray, she looked like a short stout dismounted Valkyr. Her gaze was clear and firm.

§ 4

Hockey as it was played at the Dower House at Matching's Easy before the war, was a game combining danger, physical exercise and kindliness in a very high degree. Except for the infant in the perambulator and the outwardly calm but inwardly resentful aunt, who wheeled the child up and down in a position of maximum danger just behind the unnetted goal, every one was involved. Quite able-bodied people acquainted with the game played forward, the less well-informed played a defensive game behind the forward line, elderly, infirm, and bulky persons were used chiefly as obstacles in goal. Several players wore padded leg-guards, and all players were assumed to have them and expected to behave accordingly.

Proceedings began with an invidious ceremony called picking up. This was heralded by Mr. Britling, clad in the diaphanous flannels and bearing a hockey stick, advancing with loud shouts to the centre of the hockey field. "Pick up! Pick up!" echoed the young Britlings.

Mr. Direck became aware of a tall, drooping man with long hair and long digressive legs in still longer white flannel trousers, and a face that was somehow familiar. He was talking with affectionate intimacy to Manning, and suddenly Mr. Direck remembered that it was in Manning's weekly paper, *The Sectarian*, in which a bitter caricaturist enlivened a biting text, that he had become familiar with the features of Manning's companion. It was Raeburn, Raeburn the insidious, Raeburn the completest product of the party system.... Well, that was the English way. "Come for the pick up!" cried the youngest Britling, seizing upon Mr. Direck's elbow. It appeared that Mr. Britling and the overnight dinner guest — Mr. Direck never

learnt his name — were picking up.

Names were shouted. “I’ll take Cecily!” Mr. Direck heard Mr. Britling say quite early. The opposing sides as they were picked fell into two groups. There seemed to be difficulties about some of the names. Mr. Britling, pointing to the more powerful looking of the Indian gentlemen, said, “*You*, Sir.”

“I’m going to speculate on Mr. Dinks,” said Mr. Britling’s opponent.

Mr. Direck gathered that Mr. Dinks was to be his hockey name.

“You’re on *our* side,” said Mrs. Teddy. “I think you’ll have to play forward, outer right, and keep a sharp eye on Cissie.”

“I’ll do what I can,” said Mr. Direck.

His captain presently confirmed this appointment.

His stick was really a sort of club and the ball was a firm hard cricket ball.... He resolved to be very gentle with Cecily, and see that she didn’t get hurt.

The sides took their places for the game, and a kind of order became apparent to Mr. Direck. In the centre stood Mr. Britling and the opposing captain, and the ball lay between them. They were preparing to “bully off” and start the game. In a line with each of them were four other forwards. They all looked spirited and intent young people, and Mr. Direck wished he had had more exercise to justify his own alert appearance. Behind each centre forward hovered one of the Britling boys. Then on each side came a vaguer row of three backs, persons of gentler disposition or maturer years. They included Mr. Raeburn, who was considered to have great natural abilities for hockey but little experience. Mr. Raeburn was behind Mr. Direck. Mrs. Britling was the centre back. Then in a corner of Mr. Direck’s side was a small girl of six or seven, and in the half-circle about the goal a lady in a motoring dust coat and a very short little man whom Mr. Direck had not previously remarked. Mr. Lawrence Carmine, stripped to the braces, which were richly ornamented with Oriental embroidery, kept goal for our team.

The centre forwards went through a rapid little ceremony. They smote their sticks on the ground, and then hit the sticks together. “One,” said Mr. Britling. The operation was repeated. “Two,” ... “Three.”

Smack, Mr. Britling had got it and the ball had gone to the shorter and sturdier of the younger Britlings, who had been standing behind Mr. Direck's captain. Crack, and it was away to Teddy; smack, and it was coming right at Direck.

"Lordy!" he said, and prepared to smite it.

Then something swift and blue had flashed before him, intercepted the ball and shot it past him. This was Cecily Corner, and she and Teddy were running abreast like the wind towards Mr. Raeburn.

"Hey!" cried Mr. Raeburn, "stop!" and advanced, as it seemed to Mr. Direck, with unseemly and threatening gestures towards Cissie.

But before Mr. Direck could adjust his mind to this new phase of affairs, Cecily had passed the right honourable gentleman with the same mysterious ease with which she had flashed by Mr. Direck, and was bearing down upon the miscellaneous Landwehr which formed the "backs" of Mr. Direck's side.

"*You* rabbit!" cried Mr. Raeburn, and became extraordinarily active in pursuit, administering great lengths of arm and leg with a centralised efficiency he had not hitherto displayed.

Running hard to the help of Mr. Raeburn was the youngest Britling boy, a beautiful contrast. It was like a puff ball supporting and assisting a conger eel. In front of Mr. Direck the little stout man was being alert. Teddy was supporting the attack near the middle of the field, crying "Centre!" while Mr. Britling, very round and resolute, was bouncing straight towards the threatened goal. But Mrs. Teddy, running as swiftly as her sister, was between Teddy and the ball. Whack! the little short man's stick had clashed with Cecily's. Confused things happened with sticks and feet, and the little short man appeared to be trying to cut down Cecily as one cuts down a tree, she tried to pass the ball to her centre forward — too late, and then Mrs. Teddy had intercepted it, and was flickering back towards Mr. Britling's goal in a rush in which Mr. Direck perceived it was his duty to join.

Yes, he had to follow up Mrs. Teddy and pick up the ball if he had a chance and send it in to her or the captain or across to the left forwards, as circumstances might decide. It was perfectly clear.

Then came his moment. The little formidably padded lady who

had dined at the Dower House overnight, made a gallant attack upon Mrs. Teddy. Out of the confusion of this clash the ball spun into Mr. Direck's radius. Where should he smite and how? A moment of reflection was natural.

But now the easy-fitting discipline of the Dower House style of hockey became apparent. Mr. Direck had last observed the tall young Indian gentleman, full of vitality and anxious for destruction, far away in the distance on the opposing right wing. But now, regardless of the more formal methods of the game, this young man had resolved, without further delay and at any cost, to hit the ball hard, and he was travelling like some Asiatic typhoon with an extreme velocity across the remonstrances of Mr. Britling and the general order of his side. Mr. Direck became aware of him just before his impact. There was a sort of collision from which Mr. Direck emerged with a feeling that one side of his face was permanently flattened, but still gallantly resolved to hit the comparatively lethargic ball. He and the staggered but resolute Indian clashed sticks again. And Mr. Direck had the best of it. Years of experience couldn't have produced a better pass to the captain....

"Good pass!"

Apparently from one of the London visitors.

But this was *some* game!

The ball executed some rapid movements to and fro across the field. Our side was pressing hard. There was a violent convergence of miscellaneous backs and suchlike irregulars upon the threatened goal. Mr. Britling's dozen was rapidly losing its disciplined order. One of the sidecar ladies and the gallant Indian had shifted their activities to the defensive back, and with them was a spectacled gentleman waving his stick, high above all recognised rules. Mr. Direck's captain and both Britling boys hurried to join the fray. Mr. Britling, who seemed to Mr. Direck to be for a captain rather too demagogic, also ran back to rally his forces by loud cries. "Pass outwardly!" was the burthen of his contribution.

The struggle about the Britling goal ceased to be a game and became something between a fight and a social gathering. Mr. Britling's goal-keeper could be heard shouting, "I can't see the ball! *Lift your feet!*" The crowded conflict lurched towards the goal posts.

“My shin!” cried Mr. Manning. “No, you *don’t!*”

Whack, but again whack!

Whack! “Ah! *would* you?” Whack.

“Goal!” cried the side-car gentleman.

“Goal!” cried the Britling boys....

Mr. Manning, as goal-keeper, went to recover the ball, but one of the Britling boys politely anticipated him.

The crowd became inactive, and then began to drift back to loosely conceived positions.

“It’s no good swarming into goal like that,” Mr. Britling, with a faint asperity in his voice, explained to his followers. “We’ve got to keep open and not *crowd* each other.”

Then he went confidentially to the energetic young Indian to make some restrictive explanation of his activities.

Mr. Direck strolled back towards Cecily. He was very warm and a little blown, but not, he felt, disgraced. He was winning.

“You’ll have to take your coat off,” she said.

It was a good idea.

It had occurred to several people and the boundary line was already dotted with hastily discarded jackets and wraps and so forth. But the lady in the motoring dust coat was buttoning it to the chin.

“One goal love,” said the minor Britling boy.

“We haven’t begun yet, Sunny,” said Cecily.

“Sonny! That’s American,” said Mr. Direck.

“No. We call him Sunny Jim,” said Cecily. “They’re bullying off again.”

“Sunny Jim’s American too,” said Mr. Direck, returning to his place....

The struggle was resumed. And soon it became clear that the first goal was no earnest of the quality of the struggle. Teddy and Cecily formed a terribly efficient combination. Against their brilliant rushes, supported in a vehement but effective manner by the Indian to their right and guided by loud shoutings from Mr. Britling (centre), Mr. Direck and the side-car lady and Mr. Raeburn struggled in vain. One swift advance was only checked by the dust cloak, its folds held the ball until help arrived; another was countered by a tremendous swipe of Mr. Raeburn’s that sent the ball within an inch of the youngest

Britling's head and right across the field; the third resulted in a swift pass from Cecily to the elder Britling son away on her right, and he shot the goal neatly and swiftly through the lattice of Mr. Lawrence Carmine's defensive movements. And after that very rapidly came another goal for Mr. Britling's side and then another.

Then Mr. Britling cried out that it was "Half Time," and explained to Mr. Direck that whenever one side got to three goals they considered it was half time and had five minutes' rest and changed sides. Everybody was very hot and happy, except the lady in the dust cloak who was perfectly cool. In everybody's eyes shone the light of battle, and not a shadow disturbed the brightness of the afternoon for Mr. Direck except a certain unspoken anxiety about Mr. Raeburn's trousers.

You see Mr. Direck had never seen Mr. Raeburn before, and knew nothing about his trousers.

They appeared to be coming down.

To begin with they had been rather loose over the feet and turned up, and as the game progressed, fold after fold of concertina-ed flannel gathered about his ankles. Every now and then Mr. Raeburn would seize the opportunity of some respite from the game to turn up a fresh six inches or so of this accumulation. Naturally Mr. Direck expected this policy to end unhappily. He did not know that the flannel trousers of Mr. Raeburn were like a river, that they could come down forever and still remain inexhaustible....

He had visions of this scene of happy innocence being suddenly blasted by a monstrous disaster....

Apart from this worry Mr. Direck was as happy as any one there!

Perhaps these apprehensions affected his game. At any rate he did nothing that pleased him in the second half, Cecily danced all over him and round and about him, and in the course of ten minutes her side had won the two remaining goals with a score of Five-One; and five goals is "game" by the standards of Matching's Easy.

And then with the very slightest of delays these insatiable people picked up again. Mr. Direck slipped away and returned in a white silk shirt, tennis trousers and a belt. This time he and Cecily were on the same side, the Cecily-Teddy combination was broken, and he it seemed was to take the place of the redoubtable Teddy on the left

wing with her.

This time the sides were better chosen and played a long, obstinate, even game. One-One. One-Two. One-Three. (Half Time.) Two-Three. Three all. Four-Three. Four all....

By this time Mr. Direck was beginning to master the simple strategy of the sport. He was also beginning to master the fact that Cecily was the quickest, nimblest, most indefatigable player on the field. He scouted for her and passed to her. He developed tacit understandings with her. Ideas of protecting her had gone to the four winds of Heaven. Against them Teddy and a sidecar girl with Raeburn in support made a memorable struggle. Teddy was as quick as a cat. “Four-Three” looked like winning, but then Teddy and the tall Indian and Mrs. Teddy pulled square. They almost repeated this feat and won, but Mr. Manning saved the situation with an immense oblique hit that sent the ball to Mr. Direck. He ran with the ball up to Raeburn and then dodged and passed to Cecily. There was a lively struggle to the left; the ball was hit out by Mr. Raeburn and thrown in by a young Britling; lost by the forwards and rescued by the padded lady. Forward again! This time will do it!

Cecily away to the left had worked round Mr. Raeburn once more. Teddy, realising that things were serious, was tearing back to attack her.

Mr. Direck supported with silent intentness. “Centre!” cried Mr. Britling. “Cen-tre!”

“Mr. Direck!” came her voice, full of confidence. (Of such moments is the heroic life.) The ball shot behind the hurtling Teddy. Mr. Direck stopped it with his foot, a trick he had just learnt from the eldest Britling son. He was neither slow nor hasty. He was in the half-circle, and the way to the goal was barred only by the dust-cloak lady and Mr. Lawrence Carmine. He made as if to shoot to Mr. Carmine’s left and then smacked the ball, with the swiftness of a serpent’s stroke, to his right.

He’d done it! Mr. Carmine’s stick and feet were a yard away.

Then hard on this wild triumph came a flash of horror. One can’t see everything. His eye following the ball’s trajectory....

Directly in its line of flight was the perambulator.

The ball missed the legs of the lady with the noble nose by a kind

of miracle, hit and glanced off the wheel of the perambulator, and went spinning into a border of antirrhinums.

"Good!" cried Cecily. "Splendid shot!"

He'd shot a goal. He'd done it well. The perambulator it seemed didn't matter. Though apparently the impact had awakened the baby. In the margin of his consciousness was the figure of Mr. Britling remarking: "Aunty. You really mustn't wheel the perambulator — *just* there."

"I thought," said the aunt, indicating the goal posts by a facial movement, "that those two sticks would be a sort of protection.... Aah! *Did* they then?"

Never mind that.

"That's *game!*" said one of the junior Britlings to Mr. Direck with a note of high appreciation, and the whole party, relaxing and crumpling like a lowered flag, moved towards the house and tea.

§ 5

"We'll play some more after tea," said Cecily. "It will be cooler then."

"My word, I'm beginning to like it," said Mr. Direck.

"You're going to play very well," she said.

And such is the magic of a game that Mr. Direck was humbly proud and grateful for her praise, and trotted along by the side of this creature who had revealed herself so swift and resolute and decisive, full to overflowing of the mere pleasure of just trotting along by her side. And after tea, which was a large confused affair, enlivened by wonderful and entirely untruthful reminiscences of the afternoon by Mr. Raeburn, they played again, with fewer inefficients and greater skill and swiftness, and Mr. Direck did such quick and intelligent things that everybody declared that he was a hockey player straight from heaven. The dusk, which at last made the position of the ball too speculative for play, came all too soon for him. He had played in six games, and he knew he would be as stiff as a Dutch doll in the morning. But he was very, very happy.

The rest of the Sunday evening was essentially a sequel to the

hockey.

Mr. Direck changed again, and after using some embrocation that Mrs. Britling recommended very strongly, came down in a black jacket and a cheerfully ample black tie. He had a sense of physical well-being such as he had not experienced since he came aboard the liner at New York. The curious thing was that it was not quite the same sense of physical well-being that one had in America. That is bright and clear and a little dry, this was — humid. His mind quivered contentedly, like sunset midges over a lake — it had no hard bright flashes — and his body wanted to sit about. His sense of intimacy with Cecily increased each time he looked at her. When she met his eyes she smiled. He'd caught her style now, he felt; he attempted no more compliments and was frankly her pupil at hockey and Badminton. After supper Mr. Britling renewed his suggestion of an automobile excursion on the Monday.

"There's nothing to take you back to London," said Mr. Britling, "and we could just hunt about the district with the little old car and see everything you want to see...."

Mr. Direck did not hesitate three seconds. He thought of Gladys; he thought of Miss Cecily Corner.

"Well, indeed," he said, "if it isn't burthening you, if I'm not being any sort of inconvenience here for another night, I'd be really very glad indeed of the opportunity of going around and seeing all these ancient places...."

§ 6

The newspapers came next morning at nine, and were full of the Sarajevo Murders. Mr. Direck got the *Daily Chronicle* and found quite animated headlines for a British paper.

"Who's this Archduke," he asked, "anyhow? And where is this Bosnia? I thought it was a part of Turkey."

"It's in Austria," said Teddy.

"It's in the middle ages," said Mr. Britling. "What an odd, pertinaceous business it seems to have been. First one bomb, then another; then finally the man with the pistol. While we were strolling

about the rose garden. It's like something out of 'The Prisoner of Zenda.'"

"Please," said Herr Heinrich.

Mr. Britling assumed an attentive expression.

"Will not this generally affect European politics?"

"I don't know. Perhaps it will."

"It says in the paper that Serbia has sent those bombs to Sarajevo."

"It's like another world," said Mr. Britling, over his paper. "Assassination as a political method. Can you imagine anything of the sort happening nowadays west of the Adriatic? Imagine some one assassinating the American Vice-President, and the bombs being at once ascribed to the arsenal at Toronto!... We take our politics more sadly in the West.... Won't you have another egg, Direck?"

"Please! Might this not lead to a war?"

"I don't think so. Austria may threaten Serbia, but she doesn't want to provoke a conflict with Russia. It would be going too near the powder magazine. But it's all an extraordinary business."

"But if she did?" Herr Heinrich persisted.

"She won't.... Some years ago I used to believe in the inevitable European war," Mr. Britling explained to Mr. Direck, "but it's been threatened so long that at last I've lost all belief in it. The Powers wrangle and threaten. They're far too cautious and civilised to let the guns go off. If there was going to be a war it would have happened two years ago when the Balkan League fell upon Turkey. Or when Bulgaria attacked Serbia...."

Herr Heinrich reflected, and received these conclusions with an expression of respectful edification.

"I am naturally anxious," he said, "because I am taking tickets for my holidays at an Esperanto Conference at Boulogne."

§ 7

"There is only one way to master such a thing as driving an automobile," said Mr. Britling outside his front door, as he took his place in the driver's seat, "and that is to resolve that from the first

you will take no risks. Be slow if you like. Stop and think when you are in doubt. But do nothing rashly, permit no mistakes."

It seemed to Mr. Direck as he took his seat beside his host that this was admirable doctrine.

They started out of the gates with an extreme deliberation. Indeed twice they stopped dead in the act of turning into the road, and the engine had to be restarted.

"You will laugh at me," said Mr. Britling; "but I'm resolved to have no blunders this time."

"I don't laugh at you. It's excellent," said Mr. Direck.

"It's the right way," said Mr. Britling. "Care — oh damn! I've stopped the engine again. Ugh! — ah! — *so!* — Care, I was saying — and calm."

"Don't think I want to hurry you," said Mr. Direck. "I don't...."

They passed through the tillage at a slow, agreeable pace, tooting loudly at every corner, and whenever a pedestrian was approached. Mr. Direck was reminded that he had still to broach the lecture project to Mr. Britling. So much had happened —

The car halted abruptly and the engine stopped.

"I thought that confounded hen was thinking of crossing the road," said Mr. Britling. "Instead of which she's gone through the hedge. She certainly looked this way.... Perhaps I'm a little fussy this morning.... I'll warm up to the work presently."

"I'm convinced you can't be too careful," said Mr. Direck. "And this sort of thing enables one to see the country better...."

Beyond the village Mr. Britling seemed to gather confidence. The pace quickened. But whenever other traffic or any indication of a side way appeared discretion returned. Mr. Britling stalked his sign posts, crawling towards them on the belly of the lowest gear; he drove all the morning like a man who is flushing ambuscades. And yet accident overtook him. For God demands more from us than mere righteousness.

He cut through the hills to Market Saffron along a lane-road with which he was unfamiliar. It began to go up hill. He explained to Mr. Direck how admirably his engine would climb hills on the top gear.

They took a curve and the hill grew steeper, and Mr. Direck opened the throttle.

They rounded another corner, and still more steeply the hill rose before them.

The engine began to make a chinking sound, and the car lost pace. And then Mr. Britling saw a pleading little white board with the inscription "Concealed Turning." For the moment he thought a turning might be concealed anywhere. He threw out his clutch and clapped on his brake. Then he repented of what he had done. But the engine, after three Herculean throbs, ceased to work. Mr. Britling with a convulsive clutch at his steering wheel set the electric hooter snarling, while one foot released the clutch again and the other, on the accelerator, sought in vain for help. Mr. Direck felt they were going back, back, in spite of all this vocalisation. He clutched at the emergency brake. But he was too late to avoid misfortune. With a feeling like sitting gently in butter, the car sank down sideways and stopped with two wheels in the ditch.

Mr. Britling said they were in the ditch — said it with quite unnecessary violence....

This time two cart horses and a retinue of five men were necessary to restore Gladys to her self-respect....

After that they drove on to Market Saffron, and got there in time for lunch, and after lunch Mr. Direck explored the church and the churchyard and the parish register....

After lunch Mr. Britling became more cheerful about his driving. The road from Market Saffron to Blandish, whence one turns off to Matching's Easy, is the London and Norwich high road; it is an old Roman Stane Street and very straightforward and honest in its stretches. You can see the cross roads half a mile away, and the low hedges give you no chance of a surprise. Everybody is cheered by such a road, and everybody drives more confidently and quickly, and Mr. Britling particularly was heartened by it and gradually let out Gladys from the almost excessive restriction that had hitherto marked the day. "On a road like this nothing can happen," said Mr. Britling.

"Unless you broke an axle or burst a tyre," said Mr. Direck.

"My man at Matching's Easy is most careful in his inspection," said Mr. Britling, putting the accelerator well down and watching the speed indicator creep from forty to forty-five. "He went over the car

not a week ago. And it's not one month old — in use that is."

Yet something did happen.

It was as they swept by the picturesque walls under the big old trees that encircle Brandismead Park. It was nothing but a slight miscalculation of distances. Ahead of them and well to the left, rode a postman on a bicycle; towards them, with that curious effect of implacable fury peculiar to motor cycles, came a motor cyclist. First Mr. Britling thought that he would not pass between these two, then he decided that he would hurry up and do so, then he reverted to his former decision, and then it seemed to him that he was going so fast that he must inevitably run down the postman. His instinct not to do that pulled the car sharply across the path of the motor cyclist. "Oh, my God!" cried Mr. Britling. "My God!" twisted his wheel over and distributed his feet among his levers dementedly.

He had an imperfectly formed idea of getting across right in front of the motor cyclist, and then they were going down the brief grassy slope between the road and the wall, straight at the wall, and still at a good speed. The motor cyclist smacked against something and vanished from the problem. The wall seemed to rush up at them and then — collapse. There was a tremendous concussion. Mr. Direck gripped at his friend the emergency brake, but had only time to touch it before his head hit against the frame of the glass wind-screen, and a curtain fell upon everything....

He opened his eyes upon a broken wall, a crumpled motor car, and an undamaged motor cyclist in the aviator's cap and thin oilskin overalls dear to motor cyclists. Mr. Direck stared and then, still stunned and puzzled, tried to raise himself. He became aware of acute pain.

"Don't move for a bit," said the motor cyclist. "Your arm and side are rather hurt, I think...."

§ 8

In the course of the next twelve hours Mr. Direck was to make a discovery that was less common in the days before the war than it has been since. He discovered that even pain and injury may be

vividly interesting and gratifying.

If any one had told him he was going to be stunned for five or six minutes, cut about the brow and face and have a bone in his wrist put out, and that as a consequence he would find himself pleased and exhilarated, he would have treated the prophecy with ridicule; but here he was lying stiffly on his back with his wrist bandaged to his side and smiling into the darkness even more brightly than he had smiled at the Essex landscape two days before. The fact is pain hurts or irritates, but in itself it does not make a healthily constituted man miserable. The expectation of pain, the certainty of injury may make one hopeless enough, the reality rouses our resistance. Nobody wants a broken bone or a delicate wrist, but very few people are very much depressed by getting one. People can be much more depressed by smoking a hundred cigarettes in three days or losing one per cent. of their capital.

And everybody had been most delightful to Mr. Direck.

He had had the monopoly of damage. Mr. Britling, holding on to the steering wheel, had not even been thrown out. “Unless I’m internally injured,” he said, “I’m not hurt at all. My liver perhaps — bruised a little....”

Gladys had been abandoned in the ditch, and they had been very kindly brought home by a passing automobile. Cecily had been at the Dower House at the moment of the rueful arrival. She had seen how an American can carry injuries. She had made sympathy and helpfulness more delightful by expressed admiration.

“She’s a natural born nurse,” said Mr. Direck, and then rather in the tone of one who addressed a public meeting: “But this sort of thing brings out all the good there is in a woman.”

He had been quite explicit to them and more particularly to her, when they told him he must stay at the Dower House until his arm was cured. He had looked the application straight into her pretty eyes.

“If I’m to stay right here just as a consequence of that little shake up, may be for a couple of weeks, may be three, and if you’re coming to do a bit of a talk to me ever and again, then I tell you I don’t call this a misfortune. It isn’t a misfortune. It’s right down sheer good luck....”

And now he lay as straight as a mummy, with his soul filled with radiance of complete mental peace. After months of distress and confusion, he'd got straight again. He was in the middle of a real good story, bright and clean. He knew just exactly what he wanted.

"After all," he said, "it's true. There's ideals. *She's* an ideal. Why, I loved her before ever I set eyes on Mamie. I loved her before I was put into pants. That old portrait, there it was pointing my destiny.... It's affinity.... It's natural selection....

"Well, I don't know what she thinks of me yet, but I do know very well what she's *got* to think of me. She's got to think all the world of me — if I break every limb of my body making her do it.

"I'd a sort of feeling it was right to go in that old automobile.

"Say what you like, there's a Guidance...."

He smiled confidentially at the darkness as if they shared a secret.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

MR. BRITLING IN SOLILOQUY

§ 1

Very different from the painful contentment of the bruised and broken Mr. Direck was the state of mind of his unwounded host. He too was sleepless, but sleepless without exaltation. The day had been too much for him altogether; his head, to borrow an admirable American expression, was "busy."

How busy it was, a whole chapter will be needed to describe....

The impression Mr. Britling had made upon Mr. Direck was one of indefatigable happiness. But there were times when Mr. Britling was called upon to pay for his general cheerful activity in lump sums of bitter sorrow. There were nights — and especially after seasons of exceptional excitement and nervous activity — when the reckoning would be presented and Mr. Britling would welter prostrate and groaning under a stormy sky of unhappiness — active insatiable unhappiness — a beating with rods.

The sorrows of the sanguine temperament are brief but furious; the world knows little of them. The world has no need to reckon with them. They cause no suicides and few crimes. They hurry past, smiting at their victim as they go. None the less they are misery. Mr. Britling in these moods did not perhaps experience the grey and hopeless desolations of the melancholic nor the red damnation of the choleric, but he saw a world that bristled with misfortune and error, with poisonous thorns and traps and swampy places and incurable blunderings. An almost insupportable remorse for being Mr. Britling would pursue him — justifying itself upon a hundred counts....

And for being such a Britling!...

Why — he revived again that bitter question of a thousand and one unhappy nights — why was he such a fool? Such a hasty fool? Why couldn't he look before he leapt? Why did he take risks? Why was he always so ready to act upon the supposition that all was bound to go well? (He might as well have asked why he had quick

brown eyes.)

Why, for instance, hadn't he adhered to the resolution of the early morning? He had begun with an extremity of caution....

It was a characteristic of these moods of Mr. Britling that they produced a physical restlessness. He kept on turning over and then turning over again, and sitting up and lying back, like a martyr on a gridiron....

This was just the latest instance of a life-long trouble. Will there ever be a sort of man whose thoughts are quick and his acts slow? Then indeed we shall have a formidable being. Mr. Britling's thoughts were quick and sanguine and his actions even more eager than his thoughts. Already while he was a young man Mr. Britling had found his acts elbow their way through the hurry of his ideas and precipitate humiliations. Long before his reasons were marshalled, his resolutions were formed. He had attempted a thousand remonstrances with himself; he had sought to remedy the defects in his own character by written inscriptions in his bedroom and memoranda inside his watch case. "Keep steady!" was one of them. "Keep the End in View." And, "Go steadfastly, coherently, continuously; only so can you go where you will." In distrusting all impulse, scrutinising all imagination, he was persuaded lay his one prospect of escape from the surprise of countless miseries. Otherwise he danced among glass bombs and barbed wire.

There had been a time when he could exhort himself to such fundamental charge and go through phases of the severest discipline. Always at last to be taken by surprise from some unexpected quarter. At last he had ceased to hope for any triumph so radical. He had been content to believe that in recent years age and a gathering habit of wisdom had somewhat slowed his leaping purpose. That if he hadn't overcome he had at least to a certain extent minimised it. But this last folly was surely the worst. To charge through this patient world with — how much did the car weigh? A ton certainly and perhaps more — reckless of every risk. Not only to himself but others. At this thought, he clutched the steering wheel again. Once more he saw the bent back of the endangered cyclist, once more he felt rather than saw the seething approach of the motor bicycle, and then through a long instant he drove helplessly at the wall....

Hell perhaps is only one such incident, indefinitely prolonged....

Anything might have been there in front of him. And indeed now, out of the dreamland to which he could not escape something had come, something that screamed sharply....

"Good God!" he cried, "if I had hit a child! I might have hit a child!" The hypothesis flashed into being with the thought, tried to escape and was caught. It was characteristic of Mr. Britling's nocturnal imagination that he should individualise this child quite sharply as rather plain and slender, with reddish hair, staring eyes, and its ribs crushed in a vivid and dreadful manner, pinned against the wall, mixed up with some bricks, only to be extracted, oh! *horribly*.

But this was not fair! He had hurt no child! He had merely pitched out Mr. Direck and broken his arm....

It wasn't his merit that the child hadn't been there!

The child might have been there!

Mere luck.

He lay staring in despair — as an involuntary God might stare at many a thing in this amazing universe — staring at the little victim his imagination had called into being only to destroy....

§ 2

If he had not crushed a child other people had. Such things happened. Vicariously at any rate he had crushed many children....

Why are children ever crushed?

And suddenly all the pain and destruction and remorse of all the accidents in the world descended upon Mr. Britling.

No longer did he ask why am I such a fool, but why are we all such fools? He became Man on the automobile of civilisation, crushing his thousands daily in his headlong and yet aimless career....

That was a trick of Mr. Britling's mind. It had this tendency to spread outward from himself to generalised issues. Many minds are like that nowadays. He was not so completely individualised as people are supposed to be individualised — in our law, in our stories, in our moral judgments. He had a vicarious factor. He could slip

from concentrated reproaches to the liveliest remorse for himself as The Automobilist in General, or for himself as England, or for himself as Man. From remorse for smashing his guest and his automobile he could pass by what was for him the most imperceptible of transitions to remorse for every accident that has ever happened through the error of an automobilist since automobiles began. All that long succession of blunderers became Mr. Britling. Or rather Mr. Britling became all that vast succession of blunderers.

These fluctuating lapses from individuation made Mr. Britling a perplexity to many who judged only by the old personal standards. At times he seemed a monster of cantankerous self-righteousness, whom nobody could please or satisfy, but indeed when he was most pitiless about the faults of his race or nation he was really reproaching himself, and when he seemed more egotistical and introspective and self-centred he was really ransacking himself for a clue to that same confusion of purposes that waste the hope and strength of humanity. And now through the busy distresses of the night it would have perplexed a watching angel to have drawn the line and shown when Mr. Britling, was grieving for his own loss and humiliation and when he was grieving for these common human weaknesses of which he had so large a share.

And this double refraction of his mind by which a concentrated and individualised Britling did but present a larger impersonal Britling beneath, carried with it a duplication of his conscience and sense of responsibility. To his personal conscience he was answerable for his private honour and his debts and the Dower House he had made and so on, but to his impersonal conscience he was answerable for the whole world. The world from the latter point of view was his egg. He had a subconscious delusion that he had laid it. He had a subconscious suspicion that he had let it cool and that it was addled. He had an urgency to incubate it. The variety and interest of his talk was largely due to that persuasion, it was a perpetual attempt to spread his mental feathers over the task before him....

§ 3

After this much of explanation it is possible to go on to the task which originally brought Mr. Direck to Matching's Easy, the task that Massachusetts society had sent him upon, the task of organising the mental unveiling of Mr. Britling. Mr. Direck saw Mr. Britling only in the daylight, and with an increasing distraction of the attention towards Miss Cecily Corner. We may see him rather *more* clearly in the darkness, without any distraction except his own.

Now the smashing of Gladys was not only the source of a series of reproaches and remorses directly arising out of the smash; it had also a wide system of collateral consequences, which were also banging and blundering their way through the Britling mind. It was extraordinarily inconvenient in quite another direction that the automobile should be destroyed. It upset certain plans of Mr. Britling's in a direction growing right out from all the Dower House world in which Mr. Direck supposed him to be completely set and rooted. There were certain matters from which Mr. Britling had been averting his mind most strenuously throughout the week-end. Now, there was no averting his mind any more.

Mr. Britling was entangled in a love affair. It was, to be exact, and disregarding minor affinities, his eighth love affair. And the new automobile, so soon as he could drive it efficiently, was to have played quite a solvent and conclusive part in certain entangled complications of this relationship.

A man of lively imagination and quick impulses naturally has love affairs as he drives himself through life, just as he naturally has accidents if he drives an automobile.

And the peculiar relations that existed between Mr. Britling and Mrs. Britling tended inevitably to make these love affairs troublesome, undignified and futile. Especially when they were viewed from the point of view of insomnia.

Mr. Britling's first marriage had been a passionately happy one. His second was by comparison a marriage in neutral tint. There is much to be said for that extreme Catholic theory which would make marriage not merely lifelong but eternal. Certainly Mr. Britling would have been a finer if not a happier creature if his sentimental existence could have died with his first wife or continued only in his love for their son. He had married in the glow of youth, he had had

two years of clean and simple loving, helping, quarrelling and the happy ending of quarrels. Something went out of him into all that, which could not be renewed again. In his first extremity of grief he knew that perfectly well — and then afterwards he forgot it. While there is life there is imagination, which makes and forgets and goes on.

He met Edith under circumstances that did not in any way recall his lost Mary. He met her, as people say, "socially"; Mary, on the other hand, had been a girl at Newnham while he was a fellow of Pembroke, and there had been something of accident and something of furtiveness in their lucky discovery of each other. There had been a flush in it; there was dash in it. But Edith he saw and chose and had to woo. There was no rushing together; there was solicitation and assent. Edith was a Bachelor of Science of London University and several things like that, and she looked upon the universe under her broad forehead and broad-waving brown hair with quiet watchful eyes that had nothing whatever to hide, a thing so incredible to Mr. Britling that he had loved and married her very largely for the serenity of her mystery. And for a time after their marriage he sailed over those brown depths plumbing furiously.

Of course he did not make his former passion for Mary at all clear to her. Indeed, while he was winning Edith it was by no means clear to himself. He was making a new emotional drama, and consciously and subconsciously he dismissed a hundred reminiscences that sought to invade the new experience, and which would have been out of key with it. And without any deliberate intention to that effect he created an atmosphere between himself and Edith in which any discussion of Mary was reduced to a minimum, and in which Hugh was accepted rather than explained. He contrived to believe that she understood all sorts of unsayable things; he invented miracles of quite uncongenial mute mutuality....

It was over the chess-board that they first began to discover their extensive difficulties of sympathy. Mr. Britling's play was characterised by a superficial brilliance, much generosity and extreme unsoundness; he always moved directly his opponent had done so — and then reflected on the situation. His reflection was commonly much wiser than his moves. Mrs. Britling was, as it were,

a natural antagonist to her husband; she was as calm as he was irritable. She was never in a hurry to move, and never disposed to make a concession. Quietly, steadfastly, by caution and deliberation, without splendour, without error, she had beaten him at chess until it led to such dreadful fits of anger that he had to renounce the game altogether. After every such occasion he would be at great pains to explain that he had merely been angry with himself. Nevertheless he felt, and would not let himself think (while she concluded from incidental heated phrases), that that was not the complete truth about the outbreak.

Slowly they got through the concealments of that specious explanation. Temperamentally they were incompatible.

They were profoundly incompatible. In all things she was defensive. She never came out; never once had she surprised him halfway upon the road to her. He had to go all the way to her and knock and ring, and then she answered faithfully. She never surprised him even by unkindness. If he had a cut finger she would bind it up very skilfully and healingly, but unless he told her she never discovered he had a cut finger. He was amazed she did not know of it before it happened. He piped and she did not dance. That became the formula of his grievance. For several unhappy years she thwarted him and disappointed him, while he filled her with dumb inexplicable distresses. He had been at first so gay an activity, and then he was shattered; fragments of him were still as gay and attractive as ever, but between were outbreaks of anger, of hostility, of something very like malignity. Only very slowly did they realise the truth of their relationship and admit to themselves that the fine bud of love between them had failed to flower, and only after long years were they able to delimit boundaries where they had imagined union, and to become — allies. If it had been reasonably possible for them to part without mutual injury and recrimination they would have done so, but two children presently held them, and gradually they had to work out the broad mutual toleration of their later relations. If there was no love and delight between them there was a real habitual affection and much mutual help. She was proud of his steady progress to distinction, proud of each intimation of respect he won; she admired and respected his work; she recognised that he had

some magic, of liveliness and unexpectedness that was precious and enviable. So far as she could help him she did. And even when he knew that there was nothing behind it, that it was indeed little more than an imaginative inertness, he could still admire and respect her steady dignity and her consistent honourableness. Her practical capacity was for him a matter for continual self-congratulation. He marked the bright order of her household, her flowering borders, the prosperous high-born roses of her garden with a wondering appreciation. He had never been able to keep anything in order. He relied more and more upon her. He showed his respect for her by a scrupulous attention to her dignity, and his confidence by a franker and franker emotional neglect. Because she expressed so little he succeeded in supposing she felt little, and since nothing had come out of the brown depths of her eyes he saw fit at last to suppose no plumb-line would ever find anything there. He pursued his interests; he reached out to this and that; he travelled; she made it a matter of conscience to let him go unhampered; she felt, she thought — unrecorded; he did, and he expressed and re-expressed and over-expressed, and started this and that with quick irrepressible activity, and so there had accumulated about them the various items of the life to whose more ostensible accidents Mr. Direck was now for an indefinite period joined.

It was in the nature of Mr. Britling to incur things; it was in the nature of Mrs. Britling to establish them. Mr. Britling had taken the Dower House on impulse, and she had made it a delightful home. He had discovered the disorderly delights of mixed Sunday hockey one weekend at Pontings that had promised to be dull, and she had made it an institution.... He had come to her with his orphan boy and a memory of a passionate first loss that sometimes, and more particularly at first, he seemed to have forgotten altogether, and at other times was only too evidently lamenting with every fibre of his being. She had taken the utmost care of the relics of her duskily pretty predecessor that she found in unexpected abundance in Mr. Britling's possession, and she had done her duty by her sometimes rather incomprehensible stepson. She never allowed herself to examine the state of her heart towards this youngster; it is possible that she did not perceive the necessity for any such examination....

So she went through life, outwardly serene and dignified, one of a great company of rather fastidious, rather unenterprising women who have turned for their happiness to secondary things, to those fair inanimate things of household and garden which do not turn again and rend one, to aestheticisms and delicacies, to order and seemliness. Moreover she found great satisfaction in the health and welfare, the growth and animation of her own two little boys. And no one knew, and perhaps even she had contrived to forget, the phases of astonishment and disillusionment, of doubt and bitterness and secret tears, that spread out through the years in which she had slowly realised that this strange, fitful, animated man who had come to her, vowing himself hers, asking for her so urgently and persuasively, was ceasing, had ceased, to love her, that his heart had escaped her, that she had missed it; she never dreamt that she had hurt it, and that after its first urgent, tumultuous, incomprehensible search for her it had hidden itself bitterly away....

§ 4

The mysterious processes of nature that had produced Mr. Britling had implanted in him an obstinate persuasion that somewhere in the world, from some human being, it was still possible to find the utmost satisfaction for every need and craving. He could imagine as existing, as waiting for him, he knew not where, a completeness of understanding, a perfection of response, that would reach all the gamut of his feelings and sensations from the most poetical to the most entirely physical, a beauty of relationship so transfiguring that not only would she — it went without saying that this completion was a woman — be perfectly beautiful in its light but, what was manifestly more incredible, that he too would be perfectly beautiful and quite at his ease.... In her presence there could be no self-reproaches, no lapses, no limitations, nothing but happiness and the happiest activities.... To such a persuasion half the imaginative people in the world succumb as readily and naturally as ducklings take to water. They do not doubt its truth any more than a thirsty camel doubts that presently it will come to a spring.

This persuasion is as foolish as though a camel hoped that some day it would drink from such a spring that it would never thirst again. For the most part Mr. Britling ignored its presence in his mind, and resisted the impulses it started. But at odd times, and more particularly in the afternoon and while travelling and in between books, Mr. Britling so far succumbed to this strange expectation of a wonder round the corner that he slipped the anchors of his humour and self-contempt and joined the great cruising brotherhood of the Pilgrims of Love....

In fact — though he himself had never made a reckoning of it — he had been upon eight separate cruises. He was now upon the eighth....

Between these various excursions — they took him round and about the world, so to speak, they cast him away on tropical beaches, they left him dismasted on desolate seas, they involved the most startling interventions and the most inconvenient consequences — there were interludes of penetrating philosophy. For some years the suspicion had been growing up in Mr. Britling's mind that in planting this persuasion in his being, the mysterious processes of Nature had been, perhaps for some purely biological purpose, pulling, as people say, his leg, that there were not these perfect responses, that loving a woman is a thing one does thoroughly once for all — or so — and afterwards recalls regrettably in a series of vain repetitions, and that the career of the Pilgrim of Love, so soon as you strip off its credulous glamour, is either the most pitiful or the most vulgar and vile of perversions from the proper conduct of life. But this suspicion had not as yet grown to prohibitive dimensions with him, it was not sufficient to resist the seasons of high tide, the sudden promise of the salt-edged breeze, the invitation of the hovering sea-bird; and he was now concealing beneath the lively surface of activities with which Mr. Direck was now familiar, a very extensive system of distresses arising out of the latest, the eighth of these digressional adventures....

Mr. Britling had got into it very much as he had got into the ditch on the morning before his smash. He hadn't thought the affair out and he hadn't looked carefully enough. And it kept on developing in just the ways he would rather that it didn't.

The seventh affair had been very disconcerting. He had made a fool of himself with quite a young girl; he blushed to think how young; it hadn't gone very far, but it had made his nocturnal reflections so disagreeable that he had — by no means for the first time — definitely and forever given up these foolish dreams of love. And when Mrs. Harrowdean swam into his circle, she seemed just exactly what was wanted to keep his imagination out of mischief. She came bearing flattery to the pitch of adoration. She was the brightest and cleverest of young widows. She wrote quite admirably criticism in the *Scrutator* and the *Sectarian*, and occasionally poetry in the *Right Review* — when she felt disposed to do so. She had an intermittent vein of high spirits that was almost better than humour and made her quickly popular with most of the people she met, and she was only twenty miles away in her pretty house and her absurd little jolly park.

There was something, she said, in his thought and work that was like walking in mountains. She came to him because she wanted to clamber about the peaks and glens of his mind.

It was natural to reply that he wasn't by any means the serene mountain elevation she thought him, except perhaps for a kind of loneliness....

She was a great reader of eighteenth century memoirs, and some she conveyed to him. Her mental quality was all in the vein of the friendships of Rousseau and Voltaire, and pleasantly and trippingly she led him along the primrose path of an intellectual liaison. She came first to Matching's Easy, where she was sweet and bright and vividly interested and a great contrast to Mrs. Britling, and then he and she met in London, and went off together with a fine sense of adventure for a day at Richmond, and then he took some work with him to her house and stayed there....

Then she went away into Scotland for a time and he wanted her again tremendously and clamoured for her eloquently, and then it was apparent and admitted between them that they were admirably in love, oh! immensely in love.

The transitions from emotional mountaineering to ardent intimacies were so rapid and impulsive that each phase obliterated its predecessor, and it was only with a vague perplexity that Mr. Britling

found himself transferred from the rôle of a mountainous objective for pretty little pilgrims to that of a sedulous lover in pursuit of the happiness of one of the most uncertain, intricate, and entrancing of feminine personalities. This was not at all his idea of the proper relations between men and women, but Mrs. Harrowdean had a way of challenging his gallantry. She made him run about for her; she did not demand but she commanded presents and treats and surprises; she even developed a certain jealousy in him. His work began to suffer from interruptions. Yet they had glowing and entertaining moments together that could temper his rebellious thoughts with the threat of irreparable loss. "One must love, and all things in life are imperfect," was how Mr. Britling expressed his reasons for submission. And she had a hold upon him too in a certain facile pitifulness. She was little; she could be stung sometimes by the slightest touch and then her blue eyes would be bright with tears.

Those possible tears could weigh at times even more than those possible lost embraces.

And there was Oliver.

Oliver was a person Mr. Britling had never seen. He grew into the scheme of things by insensible gradations. He was a government official in London; he was, she said, extraordinarily dull, he was lacking altogether in Mr. Britling's charm and interest, but he was faithful and tender and true. And considerably younger than Mr. Britling. He asked nothing but to love. He offered honourable marriage. And when one's heart was swelling unendurably one could weep in safety on his patient shoulder. This patient shoulder of Oliver's ultimately became Mr. Britling's most exasperating rival.

She liked to vex him with Oliver. She liked to vex him generally. Indeed in this by no means abnormal love affair, there was a very strong antagonism. She seemed to resent the attraction Mr. Britling had for her and the emotions and pleasure she had with him. She seemed under the sway of an instinctive desire to make him play heavily for her, in time, in emotion, in self-respect. It was intolerable to her that he could take her easily and happily. That would be taking her cheaply. She valued his gifts by the bother they cost him, and was determined that the path of true love should not, if she could help it, run smooth. Mr. Britling on the other hand was of the school

of polite and happy lovers. He thought it outrageous to dispute and contradict, and he thought that making love was a cheerful, comfortable thing to be done in a state of high good humour and intense mutual appreciation. This levity offended the lady's pride. She drew unfavourable contrasts with Oliver. If Oliver lacked charm he certainly did not lack emotion. He desired sacrifice, it seemed, almost more than satisfactions. Oliver was a person of the most exemplary miserableness; he would weep copiously and frequently. She could always make him weep when she wanted to do so. By holding out hopes and then dashing them if by no other expedient. Why did Mr. Britling never weep? She wept.

Some base streak of competitiveness in Mr. Britling's nature made it seem impossible that he should relinquish the lady to Oliver. Besides, then, what would he do with his dull days, his afternoons, his need for a properly demonstrated affection?

So Mr. Britling trod the path of his eighth digression, rather overworked in the matter of flowers and the selection of small jewellery, stalked by the invisible and indefatigable Oliver, haunted into an unwilling industry of attentions — attentions on the model of the professional lover of the French novels — by the memory and expectation of tearful scenes. "Then you don't love me! And it's all spoilt. I've risked talk and my reputation.... I was a fool ever to dream of making love beautifully...."

Exactly like running your car into a soft wet ditch when you cannot get out and you cannot get on. And your work and your interests waiting and waiting for you!...

The car itself was an outcome of the affair. It was Mrs. Harrowdean's idea, she thought chiefly of pleasant expeditions to friendly inns in remote parts of the country, inns with a flavour of tacit complicity, but it fell in very pleasantly with Mr. Britling's private resentment at the extraordinary inconvenience of the railway communications between Matching's Easy and her station at Pyecrafts, which involved a journey to Liverpool Street and a long wait at a junction. And now the car was smashed up — just when he had acquired skill enough to take it over to Pyecrafts without shame, and on Tuesday or Wednesday at latest he would have to depart in the old way by the London train....

Only the most superficial mind would assert nowadays that man is a reasonable creature. Man is an unreasonable creature, and it was entirely unreasonable and human for Mr. Britling during his nocturnal self-reproaches to mix up his secret resentment at his infatuation for Mrs. Harrowdean with his ill-advised attack upon the wall of Brandismead Park. He ought never to have bought that car; he ought never to have been so ready to meet Mrs. Harrowdean more than half-way.

What exacerbated his feeling about Mrs. Harrowdean was a new line she had recently taken with regard to Mrs. Britling. From her first rash assumption that Mr. Britling was indifferent to his wife, she had come to realise that on the contrary he was in some ways extremely tender about his wife. This struck her as an outrageous disloyalty. Instead of appreciating a paradox she resented an infidelity. She smouldered with perplexed resentment for some days, and then astonished her lover by a series of dissertations of a hostile and devastating nature upon the lady of the Dower House.

He tried to imagine he hadn't heard all that he had heard, but Mrs. Harrowdean had a nimble pen and nimbler afterthoughts, and once her mind had got to work upon the topic she developed her offensive in half-a-dozen brilliant letters.... On the other hand she professed a steadily increasing passion for Mr. Britling. And to profess passion for Mr. Britling was to put him under a sense of profound obligation — because indeed he was a modest man. He found himself in an emotional quandary.

You see, if Mrs. Harrowdean had left Mrs. Britling alone everything would have been quite tolerable. He considered Mrs. Harrowdean a charming human being, and altogether better than he deserved. Ever so much better. She was all initiative and response and that sort of thing. And she was so discreet. She had her own reputation to think about, and one or two of her predecessors — God rest the ashes of those fires! — had not been so discreet. Yet one could not have this sort of thing going on behind Edith's back. All sorts of things one might have going on behind Edith's back, but not this writing and saying of perfectly beastly things about Edith. Nothing could alter the fact that Edith was his honour....

§ 5

Throughout the week-end Mr. Britling had kept this trouble well battened down. He had written to Mrs. Harrowdean a brief ambiguous note saying, "I am thinking over all that you have said," and after that he had scarcely thought about her at all. Or at least he had always contrived to be much more vividly thinking about something else. But now in these night silences the suppressed trouble burst hatches and rose about him.

What a mess he had made of the whole scheme of his emotional life! There had been a time when he had started out as gaily with his passions and his honour as he had started out with Gladys to go to Market Saffron. He had as little taste for complications as he had for ditches. And now his passions and his honour were in a worse case even than poor muddy smashed up Gladys as the cart-horses towed her off, for she at any rate might be repaired. But he — he was a terribly patched fabric of explanations now. Not indeed that he had ever stooped to explanations. But there he was! Far away, like a star seen down the length of a tunnel, was that first sad story of a love as clean as starlight. It had been all over by eight-and-twenty and he could find it in his heart to grieve that he had ever given a thought to love again. He should have lived a decent widower.... Then Edith had come into his life, Edith that honest and unconscious defaulter. And there again he should have stuck to his disappointment. He had stuck to it — nine days out of every ten. It's the tenth day, it's the odd seductive moment, it's the instant of confident pride — and there is your sanguine temperament in the ditch.

He began to recapitulate items in the catalogue of his escapades, and the details of his automobile misadventures mixed themselves up with the story of his heart steering. For example there was that tremendous Siddons affair. He had been taking the corner of a girlish friendship and he had taken it altogether too far. What a frightful mess that had been! When once one is off the road anything may happen, from a crumpled mud-guard to the car on the top of you. And there was his forty miles an hour spurt with the great and gifted Delphine Marquise — for whom he was to have written a play and been a perfect Annunzio. Until Willersley appeared — very like the

motor-cyclist — buzzing in the opposite direction. And then had ensued angers, humiliations....

Had every man this sort of crowded catalogue? Was every forty-five-year-old memory a dark tunnel receding from the star of youth? It is surely a pity that life cannot end at thirty. It comes to one clean and in perfect order....

Is experience worth having?

What a clean, straight thing the spirit of youth is. It is like a bright new spear. It is like a finely tempered sword. The figure of his boy took possession of his mind, his boy who looked out on the world with his mother's, dark eyes, the slender son of that whole-hearted first love. He was a being at once fine and simple, an intimate mystery. Must he in his turn get dented and wrinkled and tarnished?

The boy was in trouble. What was the trouble?

Was it some form of the same trouble that had so tangled and tainted and scarred the private pride of his father? And how was it possible for Mr. Britling, disfigured by heedless misadventures, embarrassed by complications and concealments, to help this honest youngster out of his perplexities? He imagined possible forms of these perplexities. Graceless forms. Ugly forms. Such forms as only the nocturnal imagination would have dared present....

Oh, why had he been such a Britling? Why was he still such a Britling?

Mr. Britling sat up in his bed and beat at the bedclothes with his fists. He uttered uncompleted vows, "From this hour forth ... from this hour forth...."

He must do something, he felt. At any rate he had his experiences. He could warn. He could explain away. Perhaps he might help to extricate, if things had got to that pitch.

Should he write to his son? For a time he revolved a long, tactful letter in his mind. But that was impossible. Suppose the trouble was something quite different? It would have to be a letter in the most general terms....

§ 6

It was in the doubly refracting nature of Mr. Britling's mind that while he was deploring his inefficiency in regard to his son, he was also deploring the ineffectiveness of all his generation of parents. Quite insensibly his mind passed over to the generalised point of view.

In his talks with Mr. Direck, Mr. Britling could present England as a great and amiable spectacle of carelessness and relaxation, but was it indeed an amiable spectacle? The point that Mr. Direck had made about the barn rankled in his thoughts. His barn was a barn no longer, his farmyard held no cattle; he was just living laxly in the buildings that ancient needs had made, he was living on the accumulated prosperity of former times, the spendthrift heir of toiling generations. Not only was he a pampered, undisciplined sort of human being; he was living in a pampered, undisciplined sort of community. The two things went together.... This confounded Irish business, one could laugh at it in the daylight, but was it indeed a thing to laugh at? We were drifting lazily towards a real disaster. We had a government that seemed guided by the principles of Mr. Micawber, and adopted for its watchword "Wait and see." For months now this trouble had grown more threatening. Suppose presently that civil war broke out in Ireland! Suppose presently that these irritated, mishandled suffragettes did some desperate irreconcilable thing, assassinated for example! The bomb in Westminster Abbey the other day might have killed a dozen people.... Suppose the smouldering criticism of British rule in India and Egypt were fanned by administrative indiscretions into a flame....

And then suppose Germany had made trouble....

Usually Mr. Britling kept his mind off Germany. In the daytime he pretended Germany meant nothing to England. He hated alarmists. He hated disagreeable possibilities. He declared the idea of a whole vast nation waiting to strike at us incredible. Why should they? You cannot have seventy million lunatics.... But in the darkness of the night one cannot dismiss things in this way. Suppose, after all, their army was more than a parade, their navy more than a protest?

We might be caught — It was only in the vast melancholia of such occasions that Mr. Britling would admit such possibilities, but

we might be caught by some sudden declaration of war.... And how should we face it?

He recalled the afternoon's talk at Claverings and such samples of our governmental machinery as he chanced to number among his personal acquaintance. Suppose suddenly the enemy struck! With Raeburn and his friends to defend us! Or if the shock tumbled them out of power, then with these vituperative Tories, these spiteful advocates of weak tyrannies and privileged pretences in the place of them. There was no leadership in England. In the lucid darkness he knew that with a terrible certitude. He had a horrible vision of things disastrously muffled; of Lady Frensham and her *Morning Post* friends first garrulously and maliciously "patriotic," screaming her way with incalculable mischiefs through the storm, and finally discovering that the Germans were the real aristocrats and organising our national capitulation on that understanding. He knew from talk he had heard that the navy was weak in mines and torpedoes, unprovided with the great monitors needed for a war with Germany; torn by doctrinaire feuds; nevertheless the sea power was our only defence. In the whole country we might muster a military miscellany of perhaps three hundred thousand men. And he had no faith in their equipment, in their direction. General French, the one man who had his entire confidence, had been forced to resign through some lawyer's misunderstanding about the Irish difficulty. He did not believe any plans existed for such a war as Germany might force upon us, any calculation, any foresight of the thing at all.

Why had we no foresight? Why had we this wilful blindness to disagreeable possibilities? Why did we lie so open to the unexpected crisis? Just what he said of himself he said also of his country. It was curious to remember that. To realise how closely Dower House could play the microcosm to the whole Empire....

It became relevant to the trend of his thoughts that his son had through his mother a strong strain of the dark Irish in his composition.

How we had wasted Ireland! The rich values that lay in Ireland, the gallantry and gifts, the possible friendliness, all these things were being left to the Ulster politicians and the Tory women to poison and spoil, just as we left India to the traditions of the chattering army

women and the repressive instincts of our mandarins. We were too lazy, we were too negligent. We passed our indolent days leaving everything to somebody else. Was this the incurable British, just as it was the incurable Britling, quality?

Was the whole prosperity of the British, the far-flung empire, the securities, the busy order, just their good luck? It was a question he had asked a hundred times of his national as of his personal self. No doubt luck had favoured him. He was prosperous, and he was still only at the livelier end of middle age. But was there not also a personal factor, a meritorious factor? Luck had favoured the British with a well-placed island, a hardening climate, accessible minerals, but then too was there not also a national virtue? Once he had believed in that, in a certain gallantry, a noble levity, an underlying sound sense. The last ten years of politics had made him doubt that profoundly. He clung to it still, but without confidence. In the night that dear persuasion left him altogether.... As for himself he had a certain brightness and liveliness of mind, but the year of his fellowship had been a soft year, he had got on to *The Times* through something very like a misapprehension, and it was the chances of a dinner and a duchess that had given him the opportunity of the Kahn show. He'd dropped into good things that suited him. That at any rate was the essence of it. And these lucky chances had been no incentive to further effort. Because things had gone easily and rapidly with him he had developed indolence into a philosophy. Here he was just over forty, and explaining to the world, explaining all through the week-end to this American — until even God could endure it no longer and the smash stopped him — how excellent was the backwardness of Essex and English go-as-you-please, and how through good temper it made in some mysterious way for all that was desirable. A fat English doctrine. *Punch* has preached it for forty years.

But this wasn't what he had always been. He thought of the strenuous intentions of his youth, before he had got into this turmoil of amorous experiences, while he was still out there with the clean star of youth. As Hugh was....

In those days he had had no amiable doctrine of compromise. He had truckled to no "domesticated God," but talked of the "pitiless truth"; he had tolerated no easygoing pseudo-aristocratic social

system, but dreamt of such a democracy "mewing its mighty youth" as the world had never seen. He had thought that his brains were to do their share in building up this great national *imago*, winged, divine, out of the clumsy, crawling, snobbish, comfort-loving caterpillar of Victorian England. With such dreams his life had started, and the light of them, perhaps, had helped him to his rapid success. And then his wife had died, and he had married again and become somehow more interested in his income, and then the rather expensive first of the eight experiences had drained off so much of his imaginative energy, and the second had drained off so much, and there had been quarrels and feuds, and the way had been lost, and the days had passed. He hadn't failed. Indeed he counted as a success among his generation. He alone, in the night watches, could gauge the quality of that success. He was widely known, reputably known; he prospered. Much had come, oh! by a mysterious luck, but everything was doomed by his invincible defects. Beneath that hollow, enviable show there ached waste. Waste, waste, waste — his heart, his imagination, his wife, his son, his country — his automobile....

Then there flashed into his mind a last straw of disagreeable realisation.

He hadn't as yet insured his automobile! He had meant to do so. The papers were on his writing-desk.

§ 7

On these black nights, when the personal Mr. Britling would lie awake thinking how unsatisfactorily Mr. Britling was going on, and when the impersonal Mr. Britling would be thinking how unsatisfactorily his universe was going on, the whole mental process had a likeness to some complex piece of orchestral music wherein the organ deplored the melancholy destinies of the race while the piccolo lamented the secret trouble of Mrs. Harrowdean; the big drum thundered at the Irish politicians, and all the violins bewailed the intellectual laxity of the university system. Meanwhile the trumpets prophesied wars and disasters, the cymbals ever and again

inserted a clashing jar about the fatal delay in the automobile insurance, while the triangle broke into a plangent solo on the topic of a certain rotten gate-post he always forgot in the daytime, and how in consequence the cows from the glebe farm got into the garden and ate Mrs. Britling's carnations.

Time after time he had promised to see to that gatepost....

The organ *motif* battled its way to complete predominance. The lesser themes were drowned or absorbed. Mr. Britling returned from the rôle of an incompetent automobilist to the rôle of a soul naked in space and time wrestling with giant questions. These cosmic solicitudes, it may be, are the last penalty of irreligion. Was Huxley right, and was all humanity, even as Mr. Britling, a careless, fitful thing, playing a tragically hopeless game, thinking too slightly, moving too quickly, against a relentless antagonist?

Or is the whole thing just witless, accidentally cruel perhaps, but not malignant? Or is it wise, and merely refusing to pamper us? Is there somewhere in the immensities some responsive kindliness, some faint hope of toleration and assistance, something sensibly on our side against death and mechanical cruelty? If so, it certainly refuses to pamper us.... But if the whole thing is cruel, perhaps also it is witless and will-less? One cannot imagine the ruler of everything a devil — that would be silly. So if at the worst it is inanimate then anyhow we have our poor wills and our poor wits to pit against it. And manifestly then, the good of life, the significance of any life that is not mere receptivity, lies in the disciplined and clarified will and the sharpened and tempered mind. And what for the last twenty years — for all his lectures and writings — had he been doing to marshal the will and harden the mind which were his weapons against the Dark? He was ready enough to blame others — dons, politicians, public apathy, but what was he himself doing?

What was he doing now?

Lying in bed!

His son was drifting to ruin, his country was going to the devil, the house was a hospital of people wounded by his carelessness, the country roads choked with his smashed (and uninsured) automobiles, the cows were probably lined up along the borders and munching Edith's carnations at this very moment, his pocketbook and bureau

were stuffed with venomous insults about her — and he was just lying in bed!

Suddenly Mr. Britling threw back his bedclothes and felt for the matches on his bedside table.

Indeed this was by no means the first time that his brain had become a whirring torment in his skull. Previous experiences had led to the most careful provision for exactly such states. Over the end of the bed hung a light, warm pyjama suit of llama-wool, and at the feet of it were two tall boots of the same material that buckled to the middle of his calf. So protected, Mr. Britling proceeded to make himself tea. A Primus stove stood ready inside the fender of his fireplace, and on it was a brightly polished brass kettle filled with water; a little table carried a tea-caddy, a tea-pot, a lemon and a glass. Mr. Britling lit the stove and then strolled to his desk. He was going to write certain "Plain Words about Ireland." He lit his study lamp and meditated beside it until a sound of water boiling called him to his tea-making.

He returned to his desk stirring the lemon in his glass of tea. He would write the plain common sense of this Irish situation. He would put things so plainly that this squabbling folly would *have* to cease. It should be done austerely, with a sort of ironical directness. There should be no abuse, no bitterness, only a deep passion of sanity.

What is the good of grieving over a smashed automobile?

He sipped his tea and made a few notes on his writing pad. His face in the light of his shaded reading lamp had lost its distraught expression, his hand fingered his familiar fountain pen....

§ 8

The next morning Mr. Britling came into Mr. Direck's room. He was pink from his morning bath, he was wearing a cheerful green-and-blue silk dressing gown, he had shaved already, he showed no trace of his nocturnal vigil. In the bathroom he had whistled like a bird. "Had a good night?" he said. "That's famous. So did I. And the wrist and arm didn't even ache enough to keep you awake?"

"I thought I heard you talking and walking about," said Mr.

Direck.

“I got up for a little bit and worked. I often do that. I hope I didn’t disturb you. Just for an hour or so. It’s so delightfully quiet in the night....”

He went to the window and blinked at the garden outside. His two younger sons appeared on their bicycles returning from some early expedition. He waved a hand of greeting. It was one of those summer mornings when attenuated mist seems to fill the very air with sunshine dust.

“This is the sunniest morning bedroom in the house,” he said. “It’s south-east.”

The sunlight slashed into the masses of the blue cedar outside with a score of golden spears.

“The Dayspring from on High,” he said.... “I thought of rather a useful pamphlet in the night.

“I’ve been thinking about your luggage at that hotel,” he went on, turning to his guest again. “You’ll have to write and get it packed up and sent down here —

“No,” he said, “we won’t let you go until you can hit out with that arm and fell a man. Listen!”

Mr. Direck could not distinguish any definite sound.

“The smell of frying rashers, I mean,” said Mr. Britling. “It’s the clarion of the morn in every proper English home....

“You’d like a rasher, coffee?

“It’s good to work in the night, and it’s good to wake in the morning,” said Mr. Britling, rubbing his hands together. “I suppose I wrote nearly two thousand words. So quiet one is, so concentrated. And as soon as I have had my breakfast I shall go on with it again.”

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE COMING OF THE DAY

§ 1

It was quite characteristic of the state of mind of England in the summer of 1914 that Mr. Britling should be mightily concerned about the conflict in Ireland, and almost deliberately negligent of the possibility of a war with Germany.

The armament of Germany, the hostility of Germany, the consistent assertion of Germany, the world-wide clash of British and German interests, had been facts in the consciousness of Englishmen for more than a quarter of a century. A whole generation had been born and brought up in the threat of this German war. A threat that goes on for too long ceases to have the effect of a threat, and this overhanging possibility had become a fixed and scarcely disturbing feature of the British situation. It kept the navy sedulous and Colonel Rendezvous uneasy; it stimulated a small and not very influential section of the press to a series of reminders that bored Mr. Britling acutely, it was the excuse for an agitation that made national service ridiculous, and quite subconsciously it affected his attitude to a hundred things. For example, it was a factor in his very keen indignation at the Tory levity in Ireland, in his disgust with many things that irritated or estranged Indian feeling. It bored him; there it was, a danger, and there was no denying it, and yet he believed firmly that it was a mine that would never be fired, an avalanche that would never fall. It was a nuisance, a stupidity, that kept Europe drilling and wasted enormous sums on unavoidable preparations; it hung up everything like a noisy argument in a drawing-room, but that human weakness and folly would ever let the mine actually explode he did not believe. He had been in France in 1911, he had seen how close things had come then to a conflict, and the fact that they had not come to a conflict had enormously strengthened his natural disposition to believe that at bottom Germany was sane and her militarism a bluff.

But the Irish difficulty was a different thing. There, he felt, was need for the liveliest exertions. A few obstinate people in influential positions were manifestly pushing things to an outrageous point....

He wrote through the morning — and as the morning progressed the judicial calm of his opening intentions warmed to a certain regrettable vigour of phrasing about our politicians, about our political ladies, and our hand-to-mouth press....

He came down to lunch in a frayed, exhausted condition, and was much afflicted by a series of questions from Herr Heinrich. For it was an incurable characteristic of Herr Heinrich that he asked questions; the greater part of his conversation took the form of question and answer, and his thirst for information was as marked as his belief that German should not simply be spoken but spoken "out loud." He invariably prefaced his inquiries with the word "Please," and he insisted upon ascribing an omniscience to his employer that it was extremely irksome to justify after a strenuous morning of enthusiastic literary effort. He now took the opportunity of a lull in the solicitudes and congratulations that had followed Mr. Direck's appearance — and Mr. Direck was so little shattered by his misadventure that with the assistance of the kindly Teddy he had got up and dressed and come down to lunch — to put the matter that had been occupying his mind all the morning, even to the detriment of the lessons of the Masters Britling.

"Please!" he said, going a deeper shade of pink and partly turning to Mr. Britling.

A look of resignation came into Mr. Britling's eyes. "Yes?" he said.

"I do not think it will be wise to take my ticket for the Esperanto Conference at Boulogne. Because I think it is probable to be war between Austria and Servia, and that Russia may make war on Austria."

"That may happen. But I think it improbable."

"If Russia makes war on Austria, Germany will make war on Russia, will she not?"

"Not if she is wise," said Mr. Britling, "because that would bring in France."

"That is why I ask. If Germany goes to war with France I should

have to go to Germany to do my service. It will be a great inconvenience to me."

"I don't imagine Germany will do anything so frantic as to attack Russia. That would not only bring in France but ourselves."

"England?"

"Of course. We can't afford to see France go under. The thing is as plain as daylight. So plain that it cannot possibly happen.... Cannot.... Unless Germany wants a universal war."

"Thank you," said Herr Heinrich, looking obedient rather than reassured.

"I suppose now," said Mr. Direck after a pause, "that there isn't any strong party in Germany that wants a war. That young Crown Prince, for example."

"They keep him in order," said Mr. Britling a little irritably. "They keep him in order....

"I used to be an alarmist about Germany," said Mr. Britling, "but I have come to feel more and more confidence in the sound common sense of the mass of the German population, and in the Emperor too if it comes to that. He is — if Herr Heinrich will permit me to agree with his own German comic papers — sometimes a little theatrical, sometimes a little egotistical, but in his operatic, boldly coloured way he means peace. I am convinced he means peace...."

§ 2

After lunch Mr. Britling had a brilliant idea for the ease and comfort of Mr. Direck.

It seemed as though Mr. Direck would be unable to write any letters until his wrist had mended. Teddy tried him with a typewriter, but Mr. Direck was very awkward with his left hand, and then Mr. Britling suddenly remembered a little peculiarity he had which it was possible that Mr. Direck might share unconsciously, and that was his gift of looking-glass writing with his left hand. Mr. Britling had found out quite by chance in his schoolboy days that while his right hand had been laboriously learning to write, his left hand, all unsuspected, had been picking up the same lesson, and that by taking

a pencil in his left hand and writing from right to left, without watching what he was writing, and then examining the scrawl in a mirror, he could reproduce his own handwriting in exact reverse. About three people out of five have this often quite unsuspected ability. He demonstrated his gift, and then Miss Cecily Corner, who had dropped in in a casual sort of way to ask about Mr. Direck, tried it, and then Mr. Direck tried it. And they could all do it. And then Teddy brought a sheet of copying carbon, and so Mr. Direck, by using the carbon reversed under his paper, was restored to the world of correspondence again.

They sat round a little table under the cedar trees amusing themselves with these experiments, and after that Cecily and Mr. Britling and the two small boys entertained themselves by drawing pigs with their eyes shut, and then Mr. Britling and Teddy played hard at Badminton until it was time for tea. And Cecily sat by Mr. Direck and took an interest in his accident, and he told her about summer holidays in the Adirondacks and how he loved to travel. She said she would love to travel. He said that so soon as he was better he would go on to Paris and then into Germany. He was extraordinarily curious about this Germany and its tremendous militarism. He'd far rather see it than Italy, which was, he thought, just all art and ancient history. His turn was for modern problems. Though of course he didn't intend to leave out Italy while he was at it. And then their talk was scattered, and there was great excitement because Herr Heinrich had lost his squirrel.

He appeared coming out of the house into the sunshine, and so distraught that he had forgotten the protection of his hat. He was very pink and deeply moved.

"But what shall I do without him?" he cried. "He has gone!"

The squirrel, Mr. Direck gathered, had been bought by Mrs. Britling for the boys some month or so ago; it had been christened "Bill" and adored and then neglected, until Herr Heinrich took it over. It had filled a place in his ample heart that the none too demonstrative affection of the Britling household had left empty. He abandoned his pursuit of philology almost entirely for the cherishing and adoration of this busy, nimble little creature. He carried it off to his own room, where it ran loose and took the greatest liberties with

him and his apartment. It was an extraordinarily bold and savage little beast even for a squirrel, but Herr Heinrich had set his heart and his very large and patient will upon the establishment of sentimental relations. He believed that ultimately Bill would let himself be stroked, that he would make Bill love him and understand him, and that his would be the only hand that Bill would ever suffer to touch him. In the meanwhile even the untamed Bill was wonderful to watch. One could watch him forever. His front paws were like hands, like a musician's hands, very long and narrow. "He would be a musician if he could only make his fingers go apart, because when I play my violin he listens. He is attentive."

The entire household became interested in Herr Heinrich's attacks upon Bill's affection. They watched his fingers with particular interest because it was upon those that Bill vented his failures to respond to the stroking advances.

"To-day I have stroked him once and he has bitten me three times," Herr Heinrich reported. "Soon I will stroke him three times and he shall not bite me at all.... Also yesterday he climbed up me and sat on my shoulder, and suddenly bit my ear. It was not hard he bit, but sudden.

"He does not mean to bite," said Herr Heinrich. "Because when he has bit me he is sorry. He is ashamed.

"You can see he is ashamed."

Assisted by the two small boys, Herr Heinrich presently got a huge bough of oak and brought it into his room, converting the entire apartment into the likeness of an aviary. "For this," said Herr Heinrich, looking grave and diplomatic through his glasses, "Billy will be very grateful. And it will give him confidence with me. It will make him feel we are in the forest together."

Mrs. Britling came to console her husband in the matter.

"It is not right that the bedroom should be filled with trees. All sorts of dust and litter came in with it."

"If it amuses him," said Mr. Britling.

"But it makes work for the servants."

"Do they complain?"

"No."

"Things will adjust themselves. And it is amusing that he should

do such a thing....”

And now Billy had disappeared, and Herr Heinrich was on the verge of tears. It was so ungrateful of Billy. Without a word.

“They leave my window open,” he complained to Mr. Direck. “Often I have askit them not to. And of course he did not understand. He has out climbit by the ivy. Anything may have happened to him. Anything. He is not used to going out alone. He is too young.

“Perhaps if I call—”

And suddenly he had gone off round the house crying: “Beelee! Beelee! Here is an almond for you! An almond, Beelee!”

“Makes me want to get up and help,” said Mr. Direck. “It’s a tragedy.”

Everybody else was helping. Even the gardener and his boy knocked off work and explored the upper recesses of various possible trees.

“He is too young,” said Herr Heinrich, drifting back.... And then presently: “If he heard my voice I am sure he would show himself. But he does not show himself.”

It was clear he feared the worst....

At supper Billy was the sole topic of conversation, and condolence was in the air. The impression that on the whole he had displayed rather a brutal character was combated by Herr Heinrich, who held that a certain brusqueness was Billy’s only fault, and told anecdotes, almost sacred anecdotes, of the little creature’s tenderer, nobler side. “When I feed him always he says, ‘Thank you,’” said Herr Heinrich. “He never fails.” He betrayed darker thoughts. “When I went round by the barn there was a cat that sat and looked at me out of a laurel bush,” he said. “I do not like cats.”

Mr. Lawrence Carmine, who had dropped in, was suddenly reminded of that lugubrious old ballad, “The Mistletoe Bough,” and recited large worn fragments of it impressively. It tells of how a beautiful girl hid away in a chest during a Christmas game of hide-and-seek, and how she was found, a dried vestige, years afterwards. It took a very powerful hold upon Herr Heinrich’s imagination. “Let us now,” he said, “make an examination of every box and cupboard and drawer. Marking each as we go....”

When Mr. Britling went to bed that night, after a long gossip with

Carmine about the Bramo Samaj and modern developments of Indian thought generally, the squirrel was still undiscovered.

The worthy modern thinker undressed slowly, blew out his candle and got into bed. Still meditating deeply upon the God of the Tagores, he thrust his right hand under his pillow according to his usual practice, and encountered something soft and warm and active. He shot out of bed convulsively, lit his candle, and lifted his pillow discreetly.

He discovered the missing Billy looking crumpled and annoyed.

For some moments there was a lively struggle before Billy was gripped. He chattered furiously and bit Mr. Britling twice. Then Mr. Britling was out in the passage with the wriggling lump of warm fur in his hand, and paddling along in the darkness to the door of Herr Heinrich. He opened it softly.

A startled white figure sat up in bed sharply.

"Billy," said Mr. Britling by way of explanation, dropped his capture on the carpet, and shut the door on the touching reunion.

§ 3

A day was to come when Mr. Britling was to go over the history of that sunny July with incredulous minuteness, trying to trace the real succession of events that led from the startling crime at Sarajevo to Europe's last swift rush into war. In a sense it was untraceable; in a sense it was so obvious that he was amazed the whole world had not watched the coming of disaster. The plain fact of the case was that there was no direct connection; the Sarajevo murders were dropped for two whole weeks out of the general consciousness, they went out of the papers, they ceased to be discussed; then they were picked up again and used as an excuse for war. Germany, armed so as to be a threat to all the world, weary at last of her mighty vigil, watching the course of events, decided that her moment had come, and snatched the dead archduke out of his grave again to serve her tremendous ambition.

It may well have seemed to the belligerent German patriot that all her possible foes were confused, divided within themselves, at an

extremity of distraction and impotence. The British Isles seemed slipping steadily into civil war. Threat was met by counter-threat, violent fool competed with violent fool for the admiration of the world, the National Volunteers armed against the Ulster men; everything moved on with a kind of mechanical precision from parade and meeting towards the fatal gun-running of Howth and the first bloodshed in Dublin streets. That wretched affray, far more than any other single thing, must have stiffened Germany in the course she had chosen. There can be no doubt of it; the mischief makers of Ireland set the final confirmation upon the European war. In England itself there was a summer fever of strikes; Liverpool was choked by a dockers' strike, the East Anglian agricultural labourers were in revolt, and the building trade throughout the country was on the verge of a lockout. Russia seemed to be in the crisis of a social revolution. From Baku to St. Petersburg there were insurrectionary movements in the towns, and on the 23rd — the very day of the Austrian ultimatum — Cossacks were storming barbed wire entanglements in the streets of the capital. The London Stock Exchange was in a state of panic disorganisation because of a vast mysterious selling of securities from abroad. And France, France it seemed was lost to all other consideration in the enthralling confrontations and denunciations of the Caillaux murder trial, the trial of the wife of her ex-prime Minister for the murder of a blackmailing journalist. It was a case full of the vulgarest sexual violence. Before so piquant a spectacle France it seemed could have no time nor attention for the revelation of M. Humbert, the Reporter of the Army Committee, proclaiming that the artillery was short of ammunition, that her infantry had boots "thirty years old" and not enough of those....

Such were the appearances of things. Can it be wondered if it seemed to the German mind that the moment for the triumphant assertion of the German predominance in the world had come? A day or so before the Dublin shooting, the murder of Sarajevo had been dragged again into the foreground of the world's affairs by an ultimatum from Austria to Serbia of the extremest violence. From the hour when the ultimatum was discharged the way to Armageddon lay wide and unavoidable before the feet of Europe. After the Dublin

conflict there was no turning back. For a week Europe was occupied by proceedings that were little more than the recital of a formula. Austria could not withdraw her unqualified threats without admitting error and defeat, Russia could not desert Serbia without disgrace, Germany stood behind Austria, France was bound to Russia by a long confederacy of mutual support, and it was impossible for England to witness the destruction of France or the further strengthening of a loud and threatening rival. It may be that Germany counted on Russia giving way to her, it may be she counted on the indecisions and feeble perplexities of England, both these possibilities were in the reckoning, but chiefly she counted on war. She counted on war, and since no nation in all the world had ever been so fully prepared in every way for war as she was, she also counted on victory.

One writes "Germany." That is how one writes of nations, as though they had single brains and single purposes. But indeed while Mr. Britling lay awake and thought of his son and Lady Frensham and his smashed automobile and Mrs. Harrowdean's trick of abusive letter-writing and of God and evil and a thousand perplexities, a multitude of other brains must also have been busy, lying also in beds or sitting in studies or watching in guard-rooms or chatting belatedly in cafés or smoking-rooms or pacing the bridges of battleships or walking along in city or country, upon this huge possibility the crime of Sarajevo had just opened, and of the state of the world in relation to such possibilities. Few women, one guesses, heeded what was happening, and of the men, the men whose decision to launch that implacable threat turned the destinies of the world to war, there is no reason to believe that a single one of them had anything approaching the imaginative power needed to understand fully what it was they were doing. We have looked for an hour or so into the seething pot of Mr. Britling's brain and marked its multiple strands, its inconsistencies, its irrational transitions. It was but a specimen. Nearly every brain of the select few that counted in this cardinal determination of the world's destinies, had its streak of personal motive, its absurd and petty impulses and deflections. One man decided to say *this* because if he said *that* he would contradict something he had said and printed four or five days ago; another took

a certain line because so he saw his best opportunity of putting a rival into a perplexity. It would be strange if one could reach out now and recover the states of mind of two such beings as the German Kaiser and his eldest son as Europe stumbled towards her fate through the long days and warm, close nights of that July. Here was the occasion for which so much of their lives had been but the large pretentious preparation, coming right into their hands to use or forgo, here was the opportunity that would put them into the very forefront of history forever; this journalist emperor with the paralysed arm, this common-fibred, sly, lascivious son. It is impossible that they did not dream of glory over all the world, of triumphant processions, of a world-throne that would outshine Caesar's, of a godlike elevation, of acting Divus Caesar while yet alive. And being what they were they must have imagined spectators, and the young man, who was after all a young man of particularly poor quality, imagined no doubt certain women onlookers, certain humiliated and astonished friends, and thought of the clothes he would wear and the gestures he would make. The nickname his English cousins had given this heir to all the glories was the "White Rabbit." He was the backbone of the war party at court. And presently he stole bric-à-brac. That will help posterity to the proper values of things in 1914. And the Teutonic generals and admirals and strategists with their patient and perfect plans, who were so confident of victory, each within a busy skull must have enacted anticipatory dreams of his personal success and marshalled his willing and unwilling admirers. Readers of histories and memoirs as most of this class of men are, they must have composed little eulogistic descriptions of the part themselves were to play in the opening drama, imagined pleasing vindications and interesting documents. Some of them perhaps saw difficulties, but few foresaw failure. For all this set of brains the thing came as a choice to take or reject; they could make war or prevent it. And they chose war.

It is doubtful if any one outside the directing intelligence of Germany and Austria saw anything so plain. The initiative was with Germany. The Russian brains and the French brains and the British brains, the few that were really coming round to look at this problem squarely, had a far less simple set of problems and profounder

uncertainties. To Mr. Britling's mind the Round Table Conference at Buckingham Palace was typical of the disunion and indecision that lasted up to the very outbreak of hostilities. The solemn violence of Sir Edward Carson was intensely antipathetic to Mr. Britling, and in his retrospective inquiries he pictured to himself that dark figure with its dropping under-lip, seated, heavy and obstinate, at that discussion, still implacable though the King had but just departed after a little speech that was packed with veiled intimations of imminent danger...

Mr. Britling had no mercy in his mind for the treason of obstinate egotism and for persistence in a mistaken course. His own temperamental weaknesses lay in such different directions. He was always ready to leave one trail for another; he was always open to conviction, trusting to the essentials of his character for an ultimate consistency. He hated Carson in those days as a Scotch terrier might hate a bloodhound, as something at once more effective and impressive, and exasperatingly, infinitely less intelligent.

§ 4

Thus — a vivid fact as yet only in a few hundred skulls or so — the vast catastrophe of the Great War gathered behind the idle, dispersed and confused spectacle of an indifferent world, very much as the storms and rains of late September gathered behind the glow and lassitudes of August, and with scarcely more of set human intention. For the greater part of mankind the European international situation was at most something in the papers, no more important than the political disturbances in South Africa, where the Herzogites were curiously uneasy, or the possible trouble between Turkey and Greece. The things that really interested people in England during the last months of peace were boxing and the summer sales. A brilliant young Frenchman, Carpentier, who had knocked out Bombardier Wells, came over again to defeat Gunboat Smith, and did so to the infinite delight of France and the whole Latin world, amidst the generous applause of Anglo-Saxondom. And there was also a British triumph over the Americans at polo, and a lively and cultured newspaper discussion about a proper motto for the arms of the

London County Council. The trial of Madame Caillaux filled the papers with animated reports and vivid pictures; Gregori Rasputin was stabbed and became the subject of much lively gossip about the Russian Court; and Ulivi, the Italian impostor who claimed he could explode mines by means of an "ultra-red" ray, was exposed and fled with a lady, very amusingly. For a few days all the work at Woolwich Arsenal was held up because a certain Mr. Entwhistle, having refused to erect a machine on a concrete bed laid down by non-unionists, was rather uncivilly dismissed, and the Irish trouble pounded along its tiresome mischievous way. People gave a divided attention to these various topics, and went about their individual businesses.

And at Dower House they went about their businesses. Mr. Direck's arm healed rapidly; Cecily Corner and he talked of their objects in life and Utopias and the books of Mr. Britling, and he got down from a London bookseller Baedeker's guides for Holland and Belgium, South Germany and Italy; Herr Heinrich after some doubt sent in his application form and his preliminary deposit for the Esperanto Conference at Boulogne, and Billy consented to be stroked three times but continued to bite with great vigour and promptitude. And the trouble about Hugh, Mr. Britling's eldest son, resolved itself into nothing of any vital importance, and settled itself very easily.

§ 5

After Hugh had cleared things up and gone back to London Mr. Britling was inclined to think that such a thing as apprehension was a sin against the general fairness and integrity of life.

Of all things in the world Hugh was the one that could most easily rouse Mr. Britling's unhappy aptitude for distressing imaginations. Hugh was nearer by far to his heart and nerves than any other creature. In the last few years Mr. Britling, by the light of a variety of emotional excursions in other directions, had been discovering this. Whatever Mr. Britling discovered he talked about; he had evolved from his realisation of this tenderness, which was without an effort so much tenderer than all the subtle and tremendous feelings he had

attempted in his — excursions, the theory that he had expounded to Mr. Direck that it is only through our children that we are able to achieve disinterested love, real love. But that left unexplained that far more intimate emotional hold of Hugh than of his very jolly little step-brothers. That was a fact into which Mr. Britling rather sedulously wouldn't look....

Mr. Britling was probably much franker and more open-eyed with himself and the universe than a great number of intelligent people, and yet there were quite a number of aspects of his relations with his wife, with people about him, with his country and God and the nature of things, upon which he turned his back with an attentive persistence. But a back too resolutely turned may be as indicative as a pointing finger, and in this retrogressive way, and tacitly even so far as his formal thoughts, his unspoken comments, went, Mr. Britling knew that he loved his son because he had lavished the most hope and the most imagination upon him, because he was the one living continuation of that dear life with Mary, so lovingly stormy at the time, so fine now in memory, that had really possessed the whole heart of Mr. Britling. The boy had been the joy and marvel of the young parents; it was incredible to them that there had ever been a creature so delicate and sweet, and they brought considerable imagination and humour to the detailed study of his minute personality and to the forecasting of his future. Mr. Britling's mind blossomed with wonderful schemes for his education. All that mental growth no doubt contributed greatly to Mr. Britling's peculiar affection, and with it there interwove still tenderer and subtler elements, for the boy had a score of Mary's traits. But there were other things still more conspicuously ignored. One silent factor in the slow widening of the breach between Edith and Mr. Britling was her cool estimate of her stepson. She was steadfastly kind to this shock-headed, untidy little dreamer, he was extremely well cared for in her hands, she liked him and she was amused by him — it is difficult to imagine what more Mr. Britling could have expected — but it was as plain as daylight that she felt that this was not the child she would have cared to have borne. It was quite preposterous and perfectly natural that this should seem to Mr. Britling to be unfair to Hugh.

Edith's home was more prosperous than Mary's; she brought her

own money to it; the bringing up of her children was a far more efficient business than Mary's instinctive proceedings. Hugh had very nearly died in his first year of life; some summer infection had snatched at him; that had tied him to his father's heart by a knot of fear; but no infection had ever come near Edith's own nursery. And it was Hugh that Mr. Britling had seen, small and green-faced and pitiful under an anaesthetic for some necessary small operation to his adenoids. His younger children had never stabbed to Mr. Britling's heart with any such pitifulness; they were not so thin-skinned as their elder brother, not so assailable by the little animosities of dust and germ. And out of such things as this evolved a shapeless cloud of championship for Hugh. Jealousies and suspicions are latent in every human relationship. We go about the affairs of life pretending magnificently that they are not so, pretending to the generosities we desire. And in all step-relationships jealousy and suspicion are not merely latent, they stir.

It was Mr. Britling's case for Hugh that he was something exceptional, something exceptionally good, and that the peculiar need there was to take care of him was due to a delicacy of nerve and fibre that was ultimately a virtue. The boy was quick, quick to hear, quick to move, very accurate in his swift way, he talked unusually soon, he began to sketch at an early age with an incurable roughness and a remarkable expressiveness. That he was sometimes ungainly, often untidy, that he would become so mentally preoccupied as to be uncivil to people about him, that he caught any malaise that was going, was all a part of that. The sense of Mrs. Britling's unexpressed criticisms, the implied contrasts with the very jolly, very uninspired younger family, kept up a nervous desire in Mr. Britling for evidences and manifestations of Hugh's quality. Not always with happy results; it caused much mutual irritation, but not enough to prevent the growth of a real response on Hugh's part to his father's solicitude. The youngster knew and felt that his father was his father just as certainly as he felt that Mrs. Britling was not his mother. To his father he brought his successes and to his father he appealed.

But he brought his successes more readily than he brought his troubles. So far as he himself was concerned he was disposed to take a humorous view of the things that went wrong and didn't come off

with him, but as a “Tremendous Set-Down for the Proud Parent” they resisted humorous treatment....

Now the trouble that he had been hesitating to bring before his father was concerned with that very grave interest of the young, his Object in Life. It had nothing to do with those erotic disturbances that had distressed his father’s imagination. Whatever was going on below the surface of Hugh’s smiling or thoughtful presence in that respect had still to come to the surface and find expression. But he was bothered very much by divergent strands in his own intellectual composition. Two sets of interests pulled at him, one — it will seem a dry interest to many readers, but for Hugh it glittered and fascinated — was crystallography and molecular physics; the other was caricature. Both aptitudes sprang no doubt from the same exceptional sensitiveness to form. As a schoolboy he exercised both very happily, but now he was getting to the age of specialisation, and he was fluctuating very much between science and art. After a spell of scientific study he would come upon a fatigue period and find nothing in life but absurdities and a lark that one could represent very amusingly; after a bout of funny drawings his mind went back to his light and crystals and films like a Magdalen repenting in a church. After his public school he had refused Cambridge and gone to University College, London, to work under the great and inspiring Professor Cardinal; simultaneously Cardinal had been arranging to go to Cambridge, and Hugh had scarcely embarked upon his London work when Cardinal was succeeded by the dull, conscientious and depressing Pelkingham, at whose touch crystals became as puddings, bubble films like cotton sheets, transparency vanished from the world, and X rays dwarfed and died. And Hugh degenerated immediately into a scoffing trifler who wished to give up science for art.

He gave up science for art after grave consultation with his father, and the real trouble that had been fretting him, it seemed, was that now he repented and wanted to follow Cardinal to Cambridge, and — a year lost — go on with science again. He felt it was a discreditable fluctuation; he knew it would be a considerable expense; and so he took two weeks before he could screw himself up to broaching the matter.

"So *that* is all," said Mr. Britling, immensely relieved.

"My dear Parent, you didn't think I had backed a bill or forged a cheque?"

"I thought you might have married a chorus girl or something of that sort," said Mr. Britling.

"Or bought a large cream-coloured motor-car for her on the instalment system, which she'd smashed up. No, that sort of thing comes later.... I'll just put myself down on the waiting list of one of those bits of delight in the Cambridge tobacco shops — and go on with my studies for a year or two...."

§ 6

Though Mr. Britling's anxiety about his son was dispelled, his mind remained curiously apprehensive throughout July. He had a feeling that things were not going well with the world, a feeling he tried in vain to dispel by various distractions. Perhaps some subtler subconscious analysis of the situation was working out probabilities that his conscious self would not face. And when presently he bicycled off to Mrs. Harrowdean for flattery, amusement, and comfort generally, he found her by no means the exalting confirmation of everything he wished to believe about himself and the universe, that had been her delightful rôle in the early stages of their romantic friendship. She maintained her hostility to Edith; she seemed bent on making things impossible. And yet there were one or two phases of the old sustaining intimacies.

They walked across her absurd little park to the summer-house with the view on the afternoon of his arrival, and they discussed the Irish pamphlet which was now nearly finished.

"Of course," she said, "it will be a wonderful pamphlet."

There was a reservation in her voice that made him wait.

"But I suppose all sorts of people could write an Irish pamphlet. Nobody but you could write 'The Silent Places.' Oh, *why* don't you finish that great beautiful thing, and leave all this world of reality and newspapers, all these Crude, Vulgar, Quarrelsome, Jarring things to other people? You have the magic gift, you might be a poet, you can

take us out of all these horrid things that are, away to Beautyland, and you are just content to be a critic and a disputer. It's your surroundings. It's your sordid realities. It's that Practicality at your elbow. You ought never to see a newspaper. You ought never to have an American come within ten miles of you. You ought to live on bowls of milk drunk in valleys of asphodel."

Mr. Britling, who liked this sort of thing in a way, and yet at the same time felt ridiculously distended and altogether preposterous while it was going on, answered feebly and self-consciously.

"There was your letter in the *Nation* the other day," she said. "Why *do* you get drawn into arguments? I wanted to rush into the *Nation* and pick you up and wipe the anger off you, and carry you out of it all — into some quiet beautiful place."

"But one *has* to answer these people," said Mr. Britling, rolling along by the side of her like a full moon beside Venus, and quite artlessly falling in with the tone of her.

She repeated lines from "The Silent Places" from memory. She threw quite wonderful emotion into her voice. She made the words glow. And he had only shown her the thing once....

Was he indeed burying a marvellous gift under the dust of current affairs? When at last in the warm evening light they strolled back from the summer-house to dinner he had definitely promised her that he would take up and finish "The Silent Places."... And think over the Irish pamphlet again before he published it....

Pyecrafts was like a crystal casket of finer soil withdrawn from the tarred highways of the earth....

And yet the very next day this angel enemy of controversies broke out in the most abominable way about Edith, and he had to tell her more plainly than he had done hitherto, that he could not tolerate that sort of thing. He wouldn't have Edith guyed. He wouldn't have Edith made to seem base. And at that there was much trouble between them, and tears and talk of Oliver....

Mr. Britling found himself unable to get on either with "The Silent Places" or the pamphlet, and he was very unhappy....

Afterwards she repented very touchingly, and said that if only he would love her she would swallow a thousand Ediths. He waived a certain disrespect in the idea of her swallowing Edith, and they had a

beautiful reconciliation and talked of exalted things, and in the evening he worked quite well upon “The Silent Places” and thought of half-a-dozen quite wonderful lines, and in the course of the next day he returned to Dower House and Mr. Direck and considerable piles of correspondence and the completion of the Irish pamphlet.

But he was restless. He was more restless in his house than he had ever been. He could not understand it. Everything about him was just as it had always been, and yet it was unsatisfactory, and it seemed more unstable than anything had ever seemed before. He was bored by the solemn development of the Irish dispute; he was irritated by the smouldering threat of the Balkans; he was irritated by the suffragettes and by a string of irrational little strikes; by the general absence of any main plot as it were to hold all these wranglings and trivialities together.... At the Dower House the most unpleasant thoughts would come to him. He even had doubts whether in “The Silent Places,” he had been plagiarising, more or less unconsciously, from Henry James’s “Great Good Place.”...

On the twenty-first of July Gladys came back repaired and looking none the worse for her misadventure. Next day he drove her very carefully over to Pyecrafts, hoping to drug his uneasiness with the pretence of a grand passion and the praises of “The Silent Places,” that beautiful work of art that was so free from any taint of application, and alas! he found Mrs. Harrowdean in an evil mood. He had been away from her for ten days — ten whole days. No doubt Edith had manoeuvred to keep him. She hadn’t! *Hadn’t* she? How was he, poor simple soul! to tell that she hadn’t? That was the prelude to a stormy afternoon.

The burthen of Mrs. Harrowdean was that she was wasting her life, that she was wasting the poor, good, patient Oliver’s life, that for the sake of friendship she was braving the worst imputations and that he treated her cavalierly, came when he wished to do so, stayed away heartlessly, never thought she needed *little* treats, *little* attentions, *little* presents. Did he think she could settle down to her poor work, such as it was, in neglect and loneliness? He forgot women were dear little tender things, and had to be made happy and *kept* happy. Oliver might not be clever and attractive but he did at least in his clumsy way understand and try and do his duty....

Towards the end of the second hour of such complaints the spirit of Mr. Britling rose in revolt. He lifted up his voice against her, he charged his voice with indignant sorrow and declared that he had come over to Pyecrafts with no thought in his mind but sweet and loving thoughts, that he had but waited for Gladys to be ready before he came, that he had brought over the manuscript of "The Silent Places" with him to polish and finish up, that "for days and days" he had been longing to do this in the atmosphere of the dear old summer-house with its distant view of the dear old sea, and that now all that was impossible, that Mrs. Harrowdean had made it impossible and that indeed she was rapidly making everything impossible....

And having delivered himself of this judgment Mr. Britling, a little surprised at the rapid vigour of his anger, once he had let it loose, came suddenly to an end of his words, made a renunciatory gesture with his arms, and as if struck with the idea, rushed out of her room and out of the house to where Gladys stood waiting. He got into her and started her up, and after some trouble with the gear due to the violence of his emotion, he turned her round and departed with her — crushing the corner of a small bed of snapdragon as he turned — and dove her with a sulky sedulousness back to the Dower House and newspapers and correspondence and irritations, and that gnawing and irrational sense of a hollow and aimless quality in the world that he had hoped Mrs. Harrowdean would assuage. And the further he went from Mrs. Harrowdean the harsher and unjuster it seemed to him that he had been to her.

But he went on because he did not see how he could very well go back.

§ 7

Mr. Direck's broken wrist healed sooner than he desired. From the first he had protested that it was the sort of thing that one can carry about in a sling, that he was quite capable of travelling about and taking care of himself in hotels, that he was only staying on at Matching's Easy because he just loved to stay on and wallow in Mrs.

Britling's kindness and Mr. Britling's company. While as a matter of fact he wallowed as much as he could in the freshness and friendliness of Miss Cecily Corner, and for more than a third of this period Mr. Britling was away from home altogether.

Mr. Direck, it should be clear by this time, was a man of more than European simplicity and directness, and his intentions towards the young lady were as simple and direct and altogether honest as such intentions can be. It is the American conception of gallantry more than any other people's, to let the lady call the tune in these affairs; the man's place is to be protective, propitiatory, accommodating and clever, and the lady's to be difficult but delightful until he catches her and houses her splendidly and gives her a surprising lot of pocket-money, and goes about his business; and upon these assumptions Mr. Direck went to work. But quite early it was manifest to him that Cecily did not recognise his assumptions. She was embarrassed when he got down one or two little presents of chocolates and flowers for her from London — the Britling boys were much more appreciative — she wouldn't let him contrive costly little expeditions for her, and she protested against compliments and declared she would stay away when he paid them. And she was not contented by his general sentiments about life, but asked the most direct questions about his occupation and his activities. His chief occupation was being the well provided heir of a capable lawyer, and his activities in the light of her inquiries struck him as being light and a trifle amateurish, qualities he had never felt as any drawback about them before. So that he had to rely rather upon aspirations and the possibility, under proper inspiration, of a more actively serviceable life in future.

"There's a feeling in the States," he said, "that we've had rather a tendency to overdo work, and that there is scope for a leisure class to develop the refinement and the wider meanings of life."

"But a leisure class doesn't mean a class that does nothing," said Cecily. "It only means a class that isn't busy in business."

"You're too hard on me," said Mr. Direck with that quiet smile of his.

And then by way of putting her on the defensive he asked her what she thought a man in his position ought to do.

"*Something*," she said, and in the expansion of this vague demand they touched on a number of things. She said that she was a Socialist, and there was still in Mr. Direck's composition a streak of the old-fashioned American prejudice against the word. He associated Socialists with Anarchists and deported aliens. It was manifest too that she was deeply read in the essays and dissertations of Mr. Britling. She thought everybody, man or woman, ought to be chiefly engaged in doing something definite for the world at large. ("There's my secretaryship of the Massachusetts Modern Thought Society, anyhow," said Mr. Direck.) And she herself wanted to be doing something — it was just because she did not know what it was she ought to be doing that she was reading so extensively and voraciously. She wanted to lose herself in something. Deep in the being of Mr. Direck was the conviction that what she ought to be doing was making love in a rapturously egotistical manner, and enjoying every scrap of her own delightful self and her own delightful vitality — while she had it, but for the purposes of their conversation he did not care to put it any more definitely than to say that he thought we owed it to ourselves to develop our personalities. Upon which she joined issue with great vigour.

"That is just what Mr. Britling says about you in his 'American Impressions,'" she said. "He says that America overdoes the development of personalities altogether, that whatever else is wrong about America that is where America is most clearly wrong. I read that this morning, and directly I read it I thought, 'Yes, that's exactly it! Mr. Direck is overdoing the development of personalities.'"

"Me!"

"Yes. I like talking to you and I don't like talking to you. And I see now it is because you keep on talking of my Personality and your Personality. That makes me uncomfortable. It's like having some one following me about with a limelight. And in a sort of way I do like it. I like it and I'm flattered by it, and then I go off and dislike it, dislike the effect of it. I find myself trying to be what you have told me I am — sort of acting myself. I want to glance at looking-glasses to see if I am keeping it up. It's just exactly what Mr. Britling says in his book about American women. They act themselves, he says; they get a kind of story and explanation about themselves and they are always

trying to make it perfectly plain and clear to every one. Well, when you do that you can't think nicely of other things."

"We like a clear light on people," said Mr. Direck.

"We don't. I suppose we're shadier," said Cecily.

"You're certainly much more in half-tones," said Mr. Direck. "And I confess it's the half-tones get hold of me. But still you haven't told me, Miss Cissie, what you think I ought to do with myself. Here I am, you see, very much at your disposal. What sort of business do you think it's my duty to go in for?"

"That's for some one with more experience than I have, to tell you. You should ask Mr. Britling."

"I'd rather have it from you."

"I don't even know for myself," she said.

"So why shouldn't we start to find out together?" he asked.

It was her tantalising habit to ignore all such tentatives.

"One can't help the feeling that one is in the world for something more than oneself," she said....

§ 8

Soon Mr. Direck could measure the time that was left to him at the Dower House no longer by days but by hours. His luggage was mostly packed, his tickets to Rotterdam, Cologne, Munich, Dresden, Vienna, were all in order. And things were still very indefinite between him and Cecily. But God has not made Americans clean-shaven and firm-featured for nothing, and he determined that matters must be brought to some sort of definition before he embarked upon travels that were rapidly losing their attractiveness in this concentration of his attention....

A considerable nervousness betrayed itself in his voice and manner when at last he carried out his determination.

"There's just a lil' thing," he said to her, taking advantage of a moment when they were together after lunch, "that I'd value now more than anything else in the world."

She answered by a lifted eyebrow and a glance that had not so much inquiry in it as she intended.

“If we could just take a lil’ walk together for a bit. Round by Claverings Park and all that. See the deer again and the old trees. Sort of scenery I’d like to remember when I’m away from it.”

He was a little short of breath, and there was a quite disproportionate gravity about her moment for consideration.

“Yes,” she said with a cheerful acquiescence that came a couple of bars too late. “Let’s. It will be jolly.”

“These fine English afternoons are wonderful afternoons,” he remarked after a moment or so of silence. “Not quite the splendid blaze we get in our summer, but — sort of glowing.”

“It’s been very fine all the time you’ve been here,” she said....

After which exchanges they went along the lane, into the road by the park fencing, and so to the little gate that lets one into the park, without another word.

The idea took hold of Mr. Direck’s mind that until they got through the park gate it would be quite out of order to say anything. The lane and the road and the stile and the gate were all so much preliminary stuff to be got through before one could get to business. But after the little white gate the way was clear, the park opened out and one could get ahead without bothering about the steering. And Mr. Direck had, he felt, been diplomatically involved in lanes and by-ways long enough.

“Well,” he said as he rejoined her after very carefully closing the gate. “What I really wanted was an opportunity of just mentioning something that happens to be of interest to you — if it does happen to interest you.... I suppose I’d better put the thing as simply as possible.... Practically.... I’m just right over the head and all in love with you.... I thought I’d like to tell you....”

Immense silences.

“Of course I won’t pretend there haven’t been others,” Mr. Direck suddenly resumed. “There have. One particularly. But I can assure you I’ve never felt the depth and height or anything like the sort of Quiet Clear Conviction.... And now I’m just telling you these things, Miss Corner, I don’t know whether it will interest you if I tell you that you’re really and truly the very first love I ever had as well as my last. I’ve had sent over — I got it only yesterday — this lil’ photograph of a miniature portrait of one of my ancestor’s relations

— a Corner just as you are. It's here...."

He had considerable difficulties with his pockets and papers. Cecily, mute and flushed and inconvenienced by a preposterous and unaccountable impulse to weep, took the picture he handed her.

"When I was a lil' fellow of fifteen," said Mr. Direck in the tone of one producing a melancholy but conclusive piece of evidence, "I *worshipped* that miniature. It seemed to me — the loveliest person.... And — it's just you...."

He too was preposterously moved.

It seemed a long time before Cecily had anything to say, and then what she had to say she said in a softened, indistinct voice. "You're very kind," she said, and kept hold of the little photograph.

They had halted for the photograph. Now they walked on again.

"I thought I'd like to tell you," said Mr. Direck and became tremendously silent.

Cecily found him incredibly difficult to answer. She tried to make herself light and offhand, and to be very frank with him.

"Of course," she said, "I knew — I felt somehow — you meant to say something of this sort to me — when you asked me to come with you — —"

"Well?" he said.

"And I've been trying to make my poor brain think of something to say to you."

She paused and contemplated her difficulties....

"Couldn't you perhaps say something of the same kind — such as I've been trying to say?" said Mr. Direck presently, with a note of earnest helpfulness. "I'd be very glad if you could."

"Not exactly," said Cecily, more careful than ever.

"Meaning?"

"I think you know that you are the best of friends. I think you are, oh — a Perfect Dear."

"Well — that's all right — so far."

"That *is* as far."

"You don't know whether you love me? That's what you mean to say."

"No.... I feel somehow it isn't that.... Yet...."

"There's nobody else by any chance?"

“No.” Cecily weighed things. “You needn’t trouble about that.”

“Only ... only you don’t know.”

Cecily made a movement of assent.

“It’s no good pretending I haven’t thought about you,” she said.

“Well, anyhow I’ve done my best to give you the idea,” said Mr. Direck. “I seem now to have been doing that pretty nearly all the time.”

“Only what should we do?”

Mr. Direck felt this question was singularly artless. “Why! — we’d marry,” he said. “And all that sort of thing.”

“Letty has married — and all that sort of thing,” said Cecily, fixing her eye on him very firmly because she was colouring brightly. “And it doesn’t leave Letty very much — forrader.”

“Well now, they have a good time, don’t they? I’d have thought they have a lovely time!”

“They’ve had a lovely time. And Teddy is the dearest husband. And they have a sweet little house and a most amusing baby. And they play hockey every Sunday. And Teddy does his work. And every week is like every other week. It is just heavenly. Just always the same heavenly. Every Sunday there is a fresh week of heavenly beginning. And this, you see, isn’t heaven; it is earth. And they don’t know it but they are getting bored. I have been watching them, and they are getting dreadfully bored. It’s heart-breaking to watch, because they are almost my dearest people. Teddy used to be making perpetual jokes about the house and the baby and his work and Letty, and now — he’s made all the possible jokes. It’s only now and then he gets a fresh one. It’s like spring flowers and then — summer. And Letty sits about and doesn’t sing. They want something new to happen.... And there’s Mr. and Mrs. Britling. They love each other. Much more than Mrs. Britling dreams, or Mr. Britling for the matter of that. Once upon a time things were heavenly for them too, I suppose. Until suddenly it began to happen to them that nothing new ever happened....”

“Well,” said Mr. Direck, “people can travel.”

“But that isn’t *real* happening,” said Cecily.

“It keeps one interested.”

“But real happening is doing something.”

“You come back to that,” said Mr. Direck. “I never met any one before who’d quite got that spirit as you have it. I wouldn’t alter it. It’s part of you. It’s part of this place. It’s what Mr. Britling always seems to be saying and never quite knowing he’s said it. It’s just as though all the things that are going on weren’t the things that ought to be going on — but something else quite different. Somehow one falls into it. It’s as if your daily life didn’t matter, as if politics didn’t matter, as if the King and the social round and business and all those things weren’t anything really, and as though you felt there was something else — out of sight — round the corner — that you ought to be getting at. Well, I admit, that’s got hold of me too. And it’s all mixed up with my idea of you. I don’t see that there’s really a contradiction in it at all. I’m in love with you, all my heart’s in love with you, what’s the good of being shy about it? I’d just die for your littlest wish right here now, it’s just as though I’d got love in my veins instead of blood, but that’s not taking me away from that other thing. It’s bringing me round to that other thing. I feel as if without you I wasn’t up to anything at all, but *with* you — We’d not go settling down in a cottage or just touring about with a Baedeker Guide or anything of that kind. Not for long anyhow. We’d naturally settle down side by side and *do* ...”

“But what should we do?” asked Cecily.

There came a hiatus in their talk.

Mr. Direck took a deep breath.

“You see that old felled tree there. I was sitting on it the day before yesterday and thinking of you. Will you come there and sit with me on it? When you sit on it you get a view, oh! a perfectly lovely English view, just a bit of the house and those clumps of trees and the valley away there with the lily pond. I’d love to have you in my memory of it....”

They sat down, and Mr. Direck opened his case. He was shy and clumsy about opening it, because he had been thinking dreadfully hard about it, and he hated to seem heavy or profound or anything but artless and spontaneous to Cecily. And he felt even when he did open his case that the effect of it was platitudinous and disappointing. Yet when he had thought it out it had seemed very profound and altogether living.

“You see one doesn’t want to use terms that have been used in a thousand different senses in any way that isn’t a perfectly unambiguous sense, and at the same time one doesn’t want to seem to be canting about things or pitching anything a note or two higher than it ought legitimately to go, but it seems to me that this sort of something that Mr. Britling is always asking for in his essays and writings and things, and what you are looking for just as much and which seems so important to you that even love itself is a secondary kind of thing until you can square the two together, is nothing more nor less than Religion — I don’t mean this Religion or that Religion but just Religion itself, a Big, Solemn, Comprehensive Idea that holds you and me and all the world together in one great, grand universal scheme. And though it isn’t quite the sort of idea of love-making that’s been popular — well, in places like Carrierville — for some time, it’s the right idea; it’s got to be followed out if we don’t want love-making to be a sort of idle, troublesome game of treats and flatteries that is sure as anything to lead right away to disappointments and foolishness and unfaithfulness and — just Hell. What you are driving at, according to my interpretation, is that marriage has got to be a religious marriage or else you are splitting up life, that religion and love are most of life and all the power there is in it, and that they can’t afford to be harnessed in two different directions.... I never had these ideas until I came here and met you, but they come up now in my mind as though they had always been there.... And that’s why you don’t want to marry in a hurry. And that’s why I’m glad almost that you don’t want to marry in a hurry.”

He considered. “That’s why I’ll have to go on to Germany and just let both of us turn things over in our minds.”

“Yes,” said Cecily, weighing his speech. “*I* think that is it. I think that I do want a religious marriage, and that what is wrong with Teddy and Letty is that they aren’t religious. They pretend they are religious somewhere out of sight and round the corner.... Only—”

He considered her gravely.

“What *is* Religion?” she asked.

Here again there was a considerable pause.

“Very nearly two-thirds of the papers read before our Massachusetts society since my connection with it, have dealt with

that very question," Mr. Direck began. "And one of our most influential members was able to secure the services of a very able and highly trained young woman from Michigan University, to make a digest of all these representative utterances. We are having it printed in a thoroughly artistic mariner, as the club book for our autumn season. The drift of her results is that religion isn't the same thing as religions. That most religions are old and that religion is always new.... Well, putting it simply, religion is the perpetual rediscovery of that Great Thing Out There.... What the Great Thing is goes by all sorts of names, but if you know it's there and if you remember it's there, you've got religion.... That's about how she figured it out.... I shall send you the book as soon as a copy comes over to me.... I can't profess to put it as clearly as she puts it. She's got a real analytical mind. But it's one of the most suggestive lil' books I've ever seen. It just takes hold of you and *makes* you think."

He paused and regarded the ground before him — thoughtfully.

"Life," said Cecily, "has either got to be religious or else it goes to pieces.... Perhaps anyhow it goes to pieces...."

Mr. Direck endorsed these observations by a slow nodding of the head.

He allowed a certain interval to elapse. Then a vaguely apprehended purpose that had been for a time forgotten in these higher interests came back to him. He took it up with a breathless sense of temerity.

"Well," he said, "then you don't hate me?"

She smiled.

"You don't dislike me or despise me?"

She was still reassuring.

"You don't think I'm just a slow American sort of portent?"

"No."

"You think, on the whole, I might even — someday —— ?"

She tried to meet his eyes with a pleasant frankness, and perhaps she was franker than she meant to be.

"Look here," said Mr. Direck, with a little quiver of emotion softening his mouth. "I'll ask you something. We've got to wait. Until you feel clearer. Still.... Could you bring yourself —— ? If just once — I could kiss you....

“I’m going away to Germany,” he went on to her silence. “But I shan’t be giving so much attention to Germany as I supposed I should when I planned it out. But somehow — if I felt — that I’d kissed you....”

With a delusive effect of calmness the young lady looked first over her left shoulder and then over her right and surveyed the park about them. Then she stood up. “We can go that way home,” she said with a movement of her head, “through the little covert.”

Mr. Direck stood up too.

“If I was a poet or a bird,” said Mr. Direck, “I should sing. But being just a plain American citizen all I can do is just to talk about all I’d do if I wasn’t....”

And when they had reached the little covert, with its pathway of soft moss and its sheltering screen of interlacing branches, he broke the silence by saying, “Well, what’s wrong with right here and now?” and Cecily stood up to him as straight as a spear, with gifts in her clear eyes. He took her soft cool face between his trembling hands, and kissed her sweet half-parted lips. When he kissed her she shivered, and he held her tighter and would have kissed her again. But she broke away from him, and he did not press her. And muter than ever, pondering deeply, and secretly trembling in the queerest way, these two outwardly sedate young people returned to the Dower House....

And after tea the taxicab from the junction came for him and he vanished, and was last seen as a waving hat receding along the top of the dog-rose hedge that ran beyond the hockey field towards the village.

“He will see Germany long before I shall,” said Herr Heinrich with a gust of nostalgia. “I wish almost I had not agreed to go to Boulogne.”

And for some days Miss Cecily Corner was a very grave and dignified young woman indeed. Pondering....

§ 9

After the departure of Mr. Direck things international began to move

forward with great rapidity. It was exactly as if his American deliberation had hitherto kept things waiting. Before his postcard from Rotterdam reached the Dower House Austria had sent an ultimatum to Serbia, and before Cecily had got the letter he wrote her from Cologne, a letter in that curiously unformed handwriting the stenographer and the typewriter are making an American characteristic, Russia was mobilising, and the vast prospect of a European war had opened like the rolling up of a curtain on which the interests of the former week had been but a trivial embroidery. So insistent was this reality that revealed itself that even the shooting of the Dublin people after the gun-running of Howth was dwarfed to unimportance. The mind of Mr. Britling came round from its restless wanderings to a more and more intent contemplation of the hurrying storm-clouds that swept out of nothingness to blacken all his sky. He watched it, he watched amazed and incredulous, he watched this contradiction of all his reiterated confessions of faith in German sanity and pacifism, he watched it with all that was impersonal in his being, and meanwhile his personal life ran in a continually deeper and narrower channel as his intelligence was withdrawn from it.

Never had the double refraction of his mind been more clearly defined. On the one hand the Britling of the disinterested intelligence saw the habitual peace of the world vanish as the daylight vanishes when a shutter falls over the window of a cell; and on the other the Britling of the private life saw all the pleasant comfort of his relations with Mrs. Harrowdean disappearing in a perplexing irrational quarrel. He did not want to lose Mrs. Harrowdean; he contemplated their breach with a profound and profoundly selfish dismay. It seemed the wanton termination of an arrangement of which he was only beginning to perceive the extreme and irreplaceable satisfactoriness.

It wasn't that he was in love with her. He knew almost as clearly as though he had told himself as much that he was not. But then, on the other hand, it was equally manifest in its subdued and ignored way that as a matter of fact she was hardly more in love with him. What constituted the satisfactoriness of the whole affair was its essential unlovingness and friendly want of emotion. It left their minds free to play with all the terms and methods of love without

distress. She could summon tears and delights as one summons servants, and he could act his part as lover with no sense of lost control. They supplied in each other's lives a long-felt want — if only, that is, she could control her curious aptitude for jealousy and the sexual impulse to vex. There, he felt, she broke the convention of their relations and brought in serious realities, and this little rift it was that had widened to a now considerable breach. He knew that in every sane moment she dreaded and wished to heal that breach as much as he did. But the deep simplicities of the instincts they had tacitly agreed to bridge over washed the piers of their reconciliation away.

And unless they could restore the bridge things would end, and Mr. Britling felt that the ending of things would involve for him the most extraordinary exasperation. She would go to Oliver for comfort; she would marry Oliver; and he knew her well enough to be sure that she would thrust her matrimonial happiness with Oliver unsparingly upon his attention; while he, on the other hand, being provided with no corresponding Olivette, would be left, a sort of emotional celibate, with his slack times and his afternoons and his general need for flattery and amusement dreadfully upon his own hands. He would be tormented by jealousy. In which case — and here he came to verities — his work would suffer. It wouldn't grip him while all these vague demands she satisfied fermented unassuaged.

And, after the fashion of our still too adolescent world, Mr. Britling and Mrs. Harrowdean proceeded to negotiate these extremely unromantic matters in the phrases of that simple, honest and youthful passionateness which is still the only language available, and at times Mr. Britling came very near persuading himself that he had something of the passionate love for her that he had once had for his Mary, and that the possible loss of her had nothing to do with the convenience of Pyecrafts or any discretion in the world. Though indeed the only thing in the whole plexus of emotional possibility that still kept anything of its youthful freshness in his mind was the very strong objection indeed he felt to handing her over to anybody else in the world. And in addition he had just a touch of fatherly feeling that a younger man would not have had, and it made him feel very anxious to prevent her making a fool of herself

by marrying a man out of spite. He felt that since an obstinate lover is apt to be an exacting husband, in the end the heavy predominance of Oliver might wring much sincerer tears from her than she had ever shed for himself. But that generosity was but the bright edge to a mainly possessive jealousy.

It was Mr. Britling who reopened the correspondence by writing a little apology for the corner of the small snapdragon bed, and this evoked an admirably touching reply. He replied quite naturally with assurances and declarations. But before she got his second letter her mood had changed. She decided that if he had really and truly been lovingly sorry, instead of just writing a note to her he would have rushed over to her in a wild, dramatic state of mind, and begged forgiveness on his knees. She wrote therefore a second letter to this effect, crossing his second one, and, her literary gift getting the better of her, she expanded her thesis into a general denunciation of his habitual off-handedness with her, to an abandonment of all hope of ever being happy with him, to a decision to end the matter once for all, and after a decent interval of dignified regrets to summon Oliver to the reward of his patience and goodness. The European situation was now at a pitch to get upon Mr. Britling's nerves, and he replied with a letter intended to be conciliatory, but which degenerated into earnest reproaches for her "unreasonableness." Meanwhile she had received his second and tenderly eloquent letter; it moved her deeply, and having now cleared her mind of much that had kept it simmering uncomfortably, she replied with a sweetly loving epistle. From this point their correspondence had a kind of double quality, being intermittently angry and loving; her third letter was tender, and it was tenderly answered in his fourth; but in the interim she had received his third and answered it with considerable acerbity, to which his fifth was a retort, just missing her generous and conclusive fifth. She replied to his fifth on a Saturday evening — it was that eventful Saturday, Saturday the First of August, 1914 — by a telegram. Oliver was abroad in Holland, engaged in a much-needed emotional rest, and she wired to Mr. Britling: "Have wired for Oliver, he will come to me, do not trouble to answer this."

She was astonished to get no reply for two days. She got no reply for two days because remarkable things were happening to the

telegraph wires of England just then, and her message, in the hands of a boy scout on a bicycle, reached Mr. Britling's house only on Monday afternoon. He was then at Claverings discussing the invasion of Belgium that made Britain's participation in the war inevitable, and he did not open the little red-brown envelope until about half-past six. He failed to mark the date and hours upon it, but he perceived that it was essentially a challenge. He was expected, he saw, to go over at once with his renovated Gladys and end this unfortunate clash forever in one striking and passionate scene. His mind was now so full of the war that he found this the most colourless and unattractive of obligations. But he felt bound by the mysterious code of honour of the illicit love affair to play his part. He postponed his departure until after supper — there was no reason why he should be afraid of motoring by moonlight if he went carefully — because Hugh came in with Cissie demanding a game of hockey. Hockey offered a nervous refreshment, a scampering forgetfulness of the tremendous disaster of this war he had always believed impossible, that nothing else could do, and he was very glad indeed of the irruption....

§ 10

For days the broader side of Mr. Britling's mind, as distinguished from its egotistical edge, had been reflecting more and more vividly and coherently the spectacle of civilisation casting aside the thousand dispersed activities of peace, clutching its weapons and setting its teeth, for a supreme struggle against militarist imperialism. From the point of view of Matching's Easy that colossal crystallising of accumulated antagonisms was for a time no more than a confusion of headlines and a rearrangement of columns in the white windows of the newspapers through which those who lived in the securities of England looked out upon the world. It was a display in the sphere of thought and print immeasurably remote from the real green turf on which one walked, from the voice and the church-bells of Mr. Dimple that sounded their ample caresses in one's ears, from the clashing of the stags who were beginning to knock the velvet from

their horns in the park, or the clatter of the butcher's cart and the respectful greeting of the butcher boy down the lane. It was the spectacle of the world less real even to most imaginations than the world of novels or plays. People talked of these things always with an underlying feeling that they romanced and intellectualised.

On Thursday, July 23rd, the Austro-Hungarian minister at Belgrade presented his impossible ultimatum to the Serbian government, and demanded a reply within forty-eight hours. With the wisdom of retrospect we know now clearly enough what that meant. The Sarajevo crime was to be resuscitated and made an excuse for war. But nine hundred and ninety-nine Europeans out of a thousand had still no suspicion of what was happening to them. The ultimatum figured prominently in the morning papers that came to Matching's Easy on Friday, but it by no means dominated the rest of the news; Sir Edward Carson's rejection of the government proposals for Ulster was given the pride of place, and almost equally conspicuous with the Serbian news were the Caillaux trial and the storming of the St. Petersburg barricades by Cossacks. Herr Heinrich's questions at lunch time received reassuring replies.

On Saturday Sir Edward Carson was still in the central limelight, Russia had intervened and demanded more time for Serbia, and the *Daily Chronicle* declared the day a critical one for Europe. Dublin with bayonet charges and bullets thrust Serbia into a corner on Monday. No shots had yet been fired in the East, and the mischief in Ireland that Germany had counted on was well ahead. Sir Edward Grey was said to be working hard for peace.

"It's the cry of wolf," said Mr. Britling to Herr Heinrich.

"But at last there did come a wolf," said Herr Heinrich. "I wish I had not sent my first moneys to that Conference upon Esperanto. I feel sure it will be put off."

"See!" said Teddy very cheerfully to Herr Heinrich on Tuesday, and held up the paper, in which "The Bloodshed in Dublin" had squeezed the "War Cloud Lifting" into a quite subordinate position.

"What did we tell you?" said Mrs. Britling. "Nobody wants a European war."

But Wednesday's paper vindicated his fears. Germany had commanded Russia not to mobilise.

“Of course Russia will mobilise,” said Herr Heinrich.

“Or else forever after hold her peace,” said Teddy.

“And then Germany will mobilise,” said Herr Heinrich, “and all my holiday will vanish. I shall have to go and mobilise too. I shall have to fight. I have my papers.”

“I never thought of you as a soldier before,” said Teddy.

“I have deferred my service until I have done my thesis,” said Herr Heinrich. “Now all that will be — Piff! And my thesis three-quarters finished.”

“That is serious,” said Teddy.

“*Verdammte Dummheit!*” said Herr Heinrich. “Why do they do such things?”

On Thursday, the 30th of July, Caillaux, Carson, strikes, and all the common topics of life had been swept out of the front page of the paper altogether; the stock exchanges were in a state of wild perturbation, and food prices were leaping fantastically. Austria was bombarding Belgrade, contrary to the rules of war hitherto accepted; Russia was mobilising; Mr. Asquith was, he declared, not relaxing his efforts “to do everything possible to circumscribe the area of possible conflict,” and the Vienna Conference of Peace Societies was postponed. “I do not see why a conflict between Russia and Austria should involve Western Europe,” said Mr. Britling. “Our concern is only for Belgium and France.”

But Herr Heinrich knew better. “No,” he said. “It is the war. It has come. I have heard it talked about in Germany many times. But I have never believed that it was obliged to come. Ach! It considers no one. So long as Esperanto is disregarded, all these things must be.”

Friday brought photographs of the mobilisation in Vienna, and the news that Belgrade was burning. Young men in straw hats very like English or French or Belgian young men in straw hats were shown parading the streets of Vienna, carrying flags and banners portentously, blowing trumpets or waving hats and shouting. Saturday saw all Europe mobilising, and Herr Heinrich upon Teddy’s bicycle in wild pursuit of evening papers at the junction. Mobilisation and the emotions of Herr Heinrich now became the central facts of the Dower House situation. The two younger Britlings mobilised with great vigour upon the playroom floor. The

elder had one hundred and ninety toy soldiers with a considerable equipment of guns and wagons; the younger had a force of a hundred and twenty-three, not counting three railway porters (with trucks complete), a policeman, five civilians and two ladies. Also they made a number of British and German flags out of paper. But as neither would allow his troops to be any existing foreign army, they agreed to be Redland and Blueland, according to the colour of their prevailing uniforms. Meanwhile Herr Heinrich confessed almost promiscuously the complication of his distresses by a hitherto unexpected emotional interest in the daughter of the village publican. She was a placid receptive young woman named Maud Hickson, on whom the young man had, it seemed, imposed the more poetical name of Marguerite.

"Often we have spoken together, oh yes, often," he assured Mrs. Britling. "And now it must all end. She loves flowers, she loves birds. She is most sweet and innocent. I have taught her many words in German and several times I have tried to draw her in pencil, and now I must go away and never see her any more."

His implicit appeal to the whole literature of Teutonic romanticism disarmed Mrs. Britling's objection that he had no business whatever to know the young woman at all.

"Also," cried Herr Heinrich, facing another aspect of his distresses, "how am I to pack my things? Since I have been here I have bought many things, many books, and two pairs of white flannel trousers and some shirts and a tin instrument that I cannot work, for developing privately Kodak films. All this must go into my little portmanteau. And it will not go into my little portmanteau!

"And there is Billy! Who will now go on with the education of Billy?"

The hands of fate paused not for Herr Heinrich's embarrassments and distresses. He fretted from his room downstairs and back to his room, he went out upon mysterious and futile errands towards the village inn, he prowled about the garden. His head and face grew pinker and pinker; his eyes were flushed and distressed. Everybody sought to say and do kind and reassuring things to him.

"Ach!" he said to Teddy; "you are a civilian. You live in a free country. It is not your war. You can be amused at it...."

But then Teddy was amused at everything.

Something but very dimly apprehended at Matching's Easy, something methodical and compelling away in London, seemed to be fumbling and feeling after Herr Heinrich, and Herr Heinrich it appeared was responding. Sunday's post brought the decision.

"I have to go," he said. "I must go right up to London to-day. To an address in Bloomsbury. Then they will tell me how to go to Germany. I must pack and I must get the taxi-cab from the junction and I must go. Why are there no trains on the branch line on Sundays for me to go by it?"

At lunch he talked politics. "I am entirely opposed to the war," he said. "I am entirely opposed to any war."

"Then why go?" asked Mr. Britling. "Stay here with us. We all like you. Stay here and do not answer your mobilisation summons."

"But then I shall lose all my country. I shall lose my papers. I shall be outcast. I must go."

"I suppose a man should go with his own country," Mr. Britling reflected.

"If there was only one language in all the world, none of such things would happen," Herr Heinrich declared. "There would be no English, no Germans, no Russians."

"Just Esperantists," said Teddy.

"Or Idoists," said Herr Heinrich. "I am not convinced of which. In some ways Ido is much better."

"Perhaps there would have to be a war between Ido and Esperanto to settle it," said Teddy.

"Who shall we play skat with when you have gone?" asked Mrs. Britling.

"All this morning," said Herr Heinrich, expanding in the warmth of sympathy, "I have been trying to pack and I have been unable to pack. My mind is too greatly disordered. I have been told not to bring much luggage. Mrs. Britling, please."

Mrs. Britling became attentive.

"If I could leave much of my luggage, my clothes, some of them, and particularly my violin, it would be much more to my convenience. I do not care to be mobilised with my violin. There may be much crowding. Then I would but just take my rucksack...."

“If you will leave your things packed up.”

“And afterwards they could be sent.”

But he did not leave them packed up. The taxi-cab, to order which he had gone to the junction in the morning on Teddy’s complaisant machine, came presently to carry him off, and the whole family and the first contingent of the usual hockey players gathered about it to see him off. The elder boy of the two juniors put a distended rucksack upon the seat. Herr Heinrich then shook hands with every one.

“Write and tell us how you get on,” cried Mrs. Britling.

“But if England also makes war!”

“Write to Reynolds — let me give you his address; he is my agent in New York,” said Mr. Britling, and wrote it down.

“We’ll come to the village corner with you, Herr Heinrich,” cried the boys.

“No,” said Herr Heinrich, sitting down into the automobile, “I will part with you altogether. It is too much....”

“*Auf Wiedersehen!*” cried Mr. Britling. “Remember, whatever happens there will be peace at last!”

“Then why not at the beginning?” Herr Heinrich demanded with a reasonable exasperation and repeated his maturer verdict on the whole European situation; “*Verdammte Bummelei!*”

“Go,” said Mr. Britling to the taxi driver.

“*Auf Wiedersehen*, Herr Heinrich!”

“*Auf Wiedersehen!*”

“Good-bye, Herr Heinrich!”

“Good luck, Herr Heinrich!”

The taxi started with a whir, and Herr Heinrich passed out of the gates and along the same hungry road that had so recently consumed Mr. Direck. “Give him a last send-off,” cried Teddy. “One, Two, Three! *Auf Wiedersehen!*”

The voices, gruff and shrill, sounded raggedly together. The dog-rose hedge cut off the sight of the little face. Then the pink head bobbed up again. He was standing up and waving the panama hat. Careless of sunstroke....

Then Herr Heinrich had gone altogether....

“Well,” said Mr. Britling, turning away.

“I do hope they won’t hurt him,” said a visitor.

“Oh, they won’t put a youngster like that in the fighting line,” said Mr. Britling. “He’s had no training yet. And he has to wear glasses. How can he shoot? They’ll make a clerk of him.”

“He hasn’t packed at all,” said Mrs. Britling to her husband. “Just come up for an instant and peep at his room. It’s — touching.”

It was touching.

It was more than touching; in its minute, absurd way it was symbolical and prophetic, it was the miniature of one small life uprooted.

The door stood wide open, as he had left it open, careless of all the little jealousies and privacies of occupation and ownership. Even the windows were wide open as though he had needed air; he who had always so sedulously shut his windows since first he came to England. Across the empty fireplace stretched the great bough of oak he had brought in for Billy, but now its twigs and leaves had wilted, and many had broken off and fallen on the floor. Billy’s cage stood empty upon a little table in the corner of the room. Instead of packing, the young man had evidently paced up and down in a state of emotional elaboration; the bed was disordered as though he had several times flung himself upon it, and his books had been thrown about the room despairfully. He had made some little commencements of packing in a borrowed cardboard box. The violin lay as if it lay in state upon the chest of drawers, the drawers were all partially open, and in the middle of the floor sprawled a pitiful shirt of blue, dropped there, the most flattened and broken-hearted of garments. The fireplace contained an unsuccessful pencil sketch of a girl’s face, torn across....

Husband and wife regarded the abandoned room in silence for a time, and when Mr. Britling spoke he lowered his voice.

“I don’t see Billy,” he said.

“Perhaps he has gone out of the window,” said Mrs. Britling also in a hushed undertone....

“Well,” said Mr. Britling abruptly and loudly, turning away from this first intimation of coming desolations, “let us go down to our hockey! He had to go, you know. And Billy will probably come back again when he begins to feel hungry....”

§ 11

Monday was a public holiday, the First Monday in August, and the day consecrated by long-established custom to the Matching's Easy Flower Show in Claverings Park. The day was to live in Mr. Britling's memory with a harsh brightness like the brightness of that sunshine one sees at times at the edge of a thunderstorm. There were tents with the exhibits, and a tent for "Popular Refreshments," there was a gorgeous gold and yellow steam roundabout with motor-cars and horses, and another in green and silver with wonderfully undulating ostriches and lions, and each had an organ that went by steam; there were cocoanut shies and many ingenious prize-giving shooting and dart-throwing and ring-throwing stalls, each displaying a marvellous array of crockery, clocks, metal ornaments, and suchlike rewards. There was a race of gas balloons, each with a postcard attached to it begging the finder to say where it descended, and you could get a balloon for a shilling and have a chance of winning various impressive and embarrassing prizes if your balloon went far enough — fish carvers, a silver-handled walking-stick, a bog-oak gramophone-record cabinet, and things like that. And by a special gate one could go for sixpence into the Claverings gardens, and the sixpence would be doubled by Lady Homartyn and devoted next winter to the Matching's Easy coal club. And Mr. Britling went through all the shows with his boys, and finally left them with a shilling each and his blessing and paid his sixpence for the gardens and made his way as he had promised, to have tea with Lady Homartyn.

The morning papers had arrived late, and he had been reading them and re-reading them and musing over them intermittently until his family had insisted upon his coming out to the festivities. They said that if for no other reason he must come to witness Aunt Wilshire's extraordinary skill at the cocoanut shy. She could beat everybody. Well, one must not miss a thing like that. The headlines proclaimed, "The Great Powers at War; France Invaded by Germany; Germany invaded by Russia; 100,000 Germans march into

Luxemburg; Can England Abstain? Fifty Million Loan to be Issued." And Germany had not only violated the Treaty of London but she had seized a British ship in the Kiel Canal.... The roundabouts were very busy and windily melodious, and the shooting gallery kept popping and jingling as people shot and broke bottles, and the voices of the young men and women inviting the crowd to try their luck at this and that rang loud and clear. Teddy and Letty and Cissie and Hugh were developing a quite disconcerting skill at the dart-throwing, and were bent upon compiling a complete tea-set for the Teddy cottage out of their winnings. There was a score of automobiles and a number of traps and gigs about the entrance to the portion of the park that had been railed off for the festival, the small Britling boys had met some nursery visitors from Claverings House and were busy displaying skill and calm upon the roundabout ostriches, and less than four hundred miles away with a front that reached from Nancy to Liège more than a million and a quarter of grey-clad men, the greatest and best-equipped host the world had ever seen, were pouring westward to take Paris, grip and paralyse France, seize the Channel ports, invade England, and make the German Empire the master-state of the earth. Their equipment was a marvel of foresight and scientific organisation, from the motor kitchens that rumbled in their wake to the telescopic sights of the sharp-shooters, the innumerable machine-guns of the infantry, the supply of entrenching material, the preparations already made in the invaded country....

"Let's try at the other place for the sugar-basin!" said Teddy, hurrying past. "Don't get *two* sugar-basins," said Cissie breathless in pursuit. "Hugh is trying for a sugar-basin at the other place."

Then Mr. Britling heard a bellicose note.

"Let's have a go at the bottles," said a cheerful young farmer. "Ought to keep up our shooting, these warlike times...."

Mr. Britling ran against Hickson from the village inn and learnt that he was disturbed about his son being called up as a reservist. "Just when he was settling down here. It seems a pity they couldn't leave him for a bit."

"'Tis a noosence," said Hickson, "but anyhow, they give first prize to his radishes. He'll be glad to hear they give first prize to his

radishes. Do you think, Sir, there's very much probability of this war? It do seem to be beginning like."

"It looks more like beginning than it has ever done," said Mr. Britling. "It's a foolish business."

"I suppose if they start in on us we got to hit back at them," said Mr. Hickson. "Postman — he's got his papers too...."

Mr. Britling made his way through the drifting throng towards the little wicket that led into the Gardens....

He was swung round suddenly by a loud bang.

It was the gun proclaiming the start of the balloon race.

He stood for some moments watching the scene. The balloon start had gathered a little crowd of people, village girls in white gloves and cheerful hats, young men in bright ties and ready-made Sunday suits, fathers and mothers, boy scouts, children, clerks in straw hats, bicyclists and miscellaneous folk. Over their heads rose Mr. Cheshunt, the factotum of the estate. He was standing on a table and handing the little balloons up into the air one by one. They floated up from his hand like many-coloured grapes, some rising and falling, some soaring steadily upward, some spinning and eddying, drifting eastward before the gentle breeze, a string of bubbles against the sky and the big trees that bounded the park. Farther away to the right were the striped canvas tents of the flower-show, still farther off the roundabouts churned out their music, the shooting galleries popped, and the swing boats creaked through the air. Cut off from these things by a line of fencing lay the open park in which the deer grouped themselves under the great trees and regarded the festival mistrustfully. Teddy and Hugh appeared breaking away from the balloon race cluster, and hurrying back to their dart-throwing. A man outside a little tent that stood apart was putting up a brave-looking notice, "Unstinted Teas One Shilling." The Teddy perambulator was moored against the cocoanut shy, and Aunt Wilshire was still displaying her terrible prowess at the cocoanuts. Already she had won twenty-seven. Strange children had been impressed by her to carry them, and formed her retinue. A wonderful old lady was Aunt Wilshire....

Then across all the sunshine of this artless festival there appeared, as if it were writing showing through a picture, "France Invaded by

Germany; Germany Invaded by Russia."

Mr. Britling turned again towards the wicket, with its collectors of tribute, that led into the Gardens.

§ 12

The Claverings gardens, and particularly the great rockery, the lily pond, and the herbaceous borders, were unusually populous with unaccustomed visitors and shy young couples. Mr. Britling had to go to the house for instructions, and guided by the under-butler found Lady Homartyn hiding away in the walled Dutch garden behind the dairy. She had been giving away the prizes of the flower-show, and she was resting in a deck chair while a spinster relation presided over the tea. Mrs. Britling had fled the outer festival earlier, and was sitting by the tea-things. Lady Meade and two or three visitors had motored out from Hartleytree to assist, and Manning had come in with his tremendous confirmation of all that the morning papers had foreshadowed.

"Have you any news?" asked Mr. Britling.

"It's *war!*" said Mrs. Britling.

"They are in Luxemburg," said Manning. "That can only mean that they are coming through Belgium."

"Then I was wrong," said Mr. Britling, "and the world is altogether mad. And so there is nothing else for us to do but win.... Why could they not leave Belgium alone?"

"It's been in all their plans for the last twenty years," said Manning.

"But it brings us in for certain."

"I believe they have reckoned on that."

"Well!" Mr. Britling took his tea and sat down, and for a time he said nothing.

"It is three against three," said one of the visitors, trying to count the Powers engaged.

"Italy," said Manning, "will almost certainly refuse to fight. In fact Italy is friendly to us. She is bound to be. This is, to begin with, an Austrian war. And Japan will fight for us...."

“I think,” said old Lady Meade, “that this is the suicide of Germany. They cannot possibly fight against Russia and France and ourselves. Why have they ever begun it?”

“It may be a longer and more difficult war than people suppose,” said Manning. “The Germans reckon they are going to win.”

“Against us all?”

“Against us all. They are tremendously prepared.”

“It is impossible that Germany should win,” said Mr. Britling, breaking his silence. “Against her Germany has something more than armies; all reason, all instinct — the three greatest peoples in the world.”

“At present very badly supplied with war material.”

“That may delay things; it may make the task harder; but it will not alter the end. Of course we are going to win. Nothing else is thinkable. I have never believed they meant it. But I see now they meant it. This insolent arming and marching, this forty years of national blustering; sooner or later it had to topple over into action....”

He paused and found they were listening, and he was carried on by his own thoughts into further speech.

“This isn’t the sort of war,” he said, “that is settled by counting guns and rifles. Something that has oppressed us all has become intolerable and has to be ended. And it will be ended. I don’t know what soldiers and politicians think of our prospects, but I do know what ordinary reasonable men think of the business. I know that all we millions of reasonable civilised onlookers are prepared to spend our last shillings and give all our lives now, rather than see Germany unbeaten. I know that the same thing is felt in America, and that given half a chance, given just one extra shake of that foolish mailed fist in the face of America, and America also will be in this war by our side. Italy will come in. She is bound to come in. France will fight like one man. I’m quite prepared to believe that the Germans have countless rifles and guns; have got the most perfect maps, spies, plans you can imagine. I’m quite prepared to hear that they have got a thousand tremendous surprises in equipment up their sleeves. I’m quite prepared for sweeping victories for them and appalling disasters for us. Those are the first things. What I do know is that the

Germans understand nothing of the spirit of man; that they do not dream for a moment of the devil of resentment this war will arouse. Didn't we all trust them not to let off their guns? Wasn't that the essence of our liberal and pacific faith? And here they are in the heart of Europe letting off their guns?"

"And such a lot of guns," said Manning.

"Then you think it will be a long war, Mr. Britling?" said Lady Meade.

"Long or short, it will end in the downfall of Germany. But I do not believe it will be long. I do not agree with Manning. Even now I cannot believe that a whole great people can be possessed by war madness. I think the war is the work of the German armaments party and of the Court party. They have forced this war on Germany. Well — they must win and go on winning. So long as they win, Germany will hold together, so long as their armies are not clearly defeated nor their navy destroyed. But once check them and stay them and beat them, then I believe that suddenly the spirit of Germany will change even as it changed after Jena...."

"Willie Nixon," said one of the visitors, "who came back from Hamburg yesterday, says they are convinced they will have taken Paris and St. Petersburg and one or two other little places and practically settled everything for us by about Christmas."

"And London?"

"I forgot if he said London. But I suppose a London more or less hardly matters. They don't think we shall dare come in, but if we do they will Zeppelin the fleet and walk through our army — if you can call it an army."

Manning nodded confirmation.

"They do not understand," said Mr. Britling.

"Sir George Padish told me the same sort of thing," said Lady Homartyn. "He was in Berlin in June."

"Of course the efficiency of their preparations is almost incredible," said another of Lady Meade's party.

"They have thought out and got ready for everything — literally everything."

§ 13

Mr. Britling had been a little surprised by the speech he had made. He hadn't realised before he began to talk how angry and scornful he was at this final coming into action of the Teutonic militarism that had so long menaced his world. He had always said it would never really fight — and here it was fighting! He was furious with the indignation of an apologist betrayed. He had only realised the strength and passion of his own belligerent opinions as he had heard them, and as he walked back with his wife through the village to the Dower House, he was still in the swirl of this self-discovery; he was darkly silent, devising fiercely denunciatory phrases against Krupp and Kaiser. "Krupp and Kaiser," he grasped that obvious, convenient alliteration. "It is all that is bad in mediævalism allied to all that is bad in modernity," he told himself.

"The world," he said, startling Mrs. Britling with his sudden speech, "will be intolerable to live in, it will be unendurable for a decent human being, unless we win this war.

"We must smash or be smashed...."

His brain was so busy with such stuff that for a time he stared at Mrs. Harrowdean's belated telegram without grasping the meaning of a word of it. He realised slowly that it was incumbent upon him to go over to her, but he postponed his departure very readily in order to play hockey. Besides which it would be a full moon, and he felt that summer moonlight was far better than sunset and dinner time for the declarations he was expected to make. And then he went on phrase-making again about Germany until he had actually bullied off at hockey.

Suddenly in the midst of the game he had an amazing thought. It came to him like a physical twinge.

"What the devil are we doing at this hockey?" he asked abruptly of Teddy, who was coming up to bully after a goal. "We ought to be drilling or shooting against those infernal Germans."

Teddy looked at him questioningly.

"Oh, come on!" said Mr. Britling with a gust of impatience, and snapped the sticks together.

§ 14

Mr. Britling started for his moonlight ride about half-past nine that night. He announced that he could neither rest nor work, the war had thrown him into a fever; the driving of the automobile was just the distraction he needed; he might not, he added casually, return for a day or so. When he felt he could work again he would come back. He filled up his petrol tank by the light of an electric torch, and sat in his car in the garage and studied his map of the district. His thoughts wandered from the road to Pyecrafts to the coast, and to the possible route of a raider. Suppose the enemy anticipated a declaration of war! Here he might come, and here....

He roused himself from these speculations to the business in hand.

The evening seemed as light as day, a cool moonshine filled the world. The road was silver that flushed to pink at the approach of Mr. Britling's headlight, the dark turf at the wayside and the bushes on the bank became for a moment an acid green as the glare passed. The full moon was climbing up the sky, and so bright that scarcely a star was visible in the blue grey of the heavens. Houses gleamed white a mile away, and ever and again a moth would flutter and hang in the light of the lamps, and then vanish again in the night.

Gladys was in excellent condition for a run, and so was Mr. Britling. He went neither fast nor slow, and with a quite unfamiliar confidence. Life, which had seemed all day a congested confusion darkened by threats, became cool, mysterious and aloof and with a quality of dignified reassurance.

He steered along the narrow road by the black dog-rose hedge, and so into the high road towards the village. The village was alight at several windows but almost deserted. Out beyond, a coruscation of lights burnt like a group of topaz and rubies set in the silver shield of the night. The festivities of the Flower Show were still in full progress, and the reduction of the entrance fee after seven had drawn in every lingering outsider. The roundabouts churned out their relentless music, and the bottle-shooting galleries popped and crashed. The well-patronised ostriches and motorcars flickered round in a pulsing rhythm; black, black, black, before the naphtha flares.

Mr. Britling pulled up at the side of the road, and sat for a little

while watching the silhouettes move hither and thither from shadow to shadow across the bright spaces.

"On the very brink of war — on the brink of Armageddon," he whispered at last. "Do they understand? Do any of us understand?"

He slipped in his gear to starting, and was presently running quietly with his engine purring almost inaudibly along the level road to Hartleytree. The sounds behind him grew smaller and smaller, and died away leaving an immense unruffled quiet under the moon. There seemed no motion but his own, no sound but the neat, subdued, mechanical rhythm in front of his feet. Presently he ran out into the main road, and heedless of the lane that turned away towards Pyecrafts, drove on smoothly towards the east and the sea. Never before had he driven by night. He had expected a fumbling and tedious journey; he found he had come into an undreamt-of silvery splendour of motion. For it seemed as though even the automobile was running on moonlight that night.... Pyecrafts could wait. Indeed the later he got to Pyecrafts the more moving and romantic the little comedy of reconciliation would be. And he was in no hurry for that comedy. He felt he wanted to apprehend this vast summer calm about him, that alone of all the things of the day seemed to convey anything whatever of the majestic tragedy that was happening to mankind. As one slipped through this still vigil one could imagine for the first time the millions away there marching, the wide river valleys, villages, cities, mountain-ranges, ports and seas inaudibly busy.

"Even now," he said, "the battleships may be fighting."

He listened, but the sound was only the low intermittent drumming of his cylinders as he ran with his throttle nearly closed, down a stretch of gentle hill.

He felt that he must see the sea. He would follow the road beyond the Rodwell villages, and then turn up to the crest of Eastonbury Hill. And thither he went and saw in the gap of the low hills beyond a V-shaped level of moonlit water that glittered and yet lay still. He stopped his car by the roadside, and sat for a long time looking at this and musing. And once it seemed to him three little shapes like short black needles passed in line ahead across the molten silver.

But that may have been just the straining of the eyes....

All sorts of talk had come to Mr. Britling's ears about the navies of England and France and Germany; there had been public disputes of experts, much whispering and discussion in private. We had the heavier vessels, the bigger guns, but it was not certain that we had the preeminence in science and invention. Were they relying as we were relying on Dreadnoughts, or had they their secrets and surprises for us? To-night, perhaps, the great ships were steaming to conflict....

To-night all over the world ships must be in flight and ships pursuing; ten thousand towns must be ringing with the immediate excitement of war....

Only a year ago Mr. Britling had been lunching on a battleship and looking over its intricate machinery. It had seemed to him then that there could be no better human stuff in the world than the quiet, sunburnt, disciplined men and officers he had met.... And our little army, too, must be gathering to-night, the little army that had been chastened and reborn in South Africa, that he was convinced was individually more gallant and self-reliant and capable than any other army in the world. He would have sneered or protested if he had heard another Englishman say that, but in his heart he held the dear belief....

And what other aviators in the world could fly as the Frenchmen and Englishmen he had met once or twice at Eastchurch and Salisbury could fly? These are things of race and national quality. Let the German cling to his gasbags. "We shall beat them in the air," he whispered. "We shall beat them on the seas. Surely we shall beat them on the seas. If we have men enough and guns enough we shall beat them on land.... Yet — For years they have been preparing...."

There was little room in the heart of Mr. Britling that night for any love but the love of England. He loved England now as a nation of men. There could be no easy victory. Good for us with our too easy natures that there could be no easy victory. But victory we must have now — or perish....

He roused himself with a sigh, restarted his engine, and went on to find some turning place. He still had a colourless impression that the journey's end was Pyecrafts.

"We must all do the thing we can," he thought, and for a time the course of his automobile along a winding down-hill road held his

attention so that he could not get beyond it. He turned about and ran up over the hill again and down long slopes inland, running very softly and smoothly with his lights devouring the road ahead and sweeping the banks and hedges beside him, and as he came down a little hill through a village he heard a confused clatter and jingle of traffic ahead, and saw the danger triangle that warns of cross-roads. He slowed down and then pulled up abruptly.

Riding across the gap between the cottages was a string of horsemen, and then a grey cart, and then a team drawing a heavy object — a gun, and then more horsemen, and then a second gun. It was all a dim brown procession in the moonlight. A mounted officer came up beside him and looked at him and then went back to the cross-roads, but as yet England was not troubling about spies. Four more guns passed, and then a string of carts and more mounted men, sitting stiffly. Nobody was singing or shouting; scarcely a word was audible, and through all the column there was an effect of quiet efficient haste. And so they passed, and rumbled and jingled and clattered out of the scene, leaving Mr. Britling in his car in the dreaming village. He restarted his engine once more, and went his way thoughtfully.

He went so thoughtfully that presently he missed the road to Pyecrafts — if ever he had been on the road to Pyecrafts at all — altogether. He found himself upon a highway running across a flattish plain, and presently discovered by the sight of the Great Bear, faint but traceable in the blue overhead, that he was going due north. Well, presently he would turn south and west; that in good time; now he wanted to feel; he wanted to think. How could he best help England in the vast struggle for which the empty silence and beauty of this night seemed to be waiting? But indeed he was not thinking at all, but feeling, feeling wonder, as he had never felt it since his youth had passed from him. This war might end nearly everything in the world as he had known the world; that idea struggled slowly through the moonlight into consciousness, and won its way to dominance in his mind.

The character of the road changed; the hedges fell away, the pine trees and pine woods took the place of the black squat shapes of the hawthorn and oak and apple. The houses grew rarer and the world

emptier and emptier, until he could have believed that he was the only man awake and out-of-doors in all the slumbering land....

For a time a little thing caught hold of his dreaming mind. Continually as he ran on, black, silent birds rose startled out of the dust of the road before him, and fluttered noiselessly beyond his double wedge of light. What sort of bird could they be? Were they night-jars? Were they different kinds of birds snatching at the quiet of the night for a dust bath in the sand? This little independent thread of inquiry ran through the texture of his mind and died away....

And at one place there was a great bolting of rabbits across the road, almost under his wheels....

The phrases he had used that afternoon at Claverings came back presently into his head. They were, he felt assured, the phrases that had to be said now. This war could be seen as the noblest of wars, as the crowning struggle of mankind against national dominance and national aggression; or else it was a mere struggle of nationalities and pure destruction and catastrophe. Its enormous significances, he felt, must not be lost in any petty bickering about the minor issues of the conflict. But were these enormous significances being stated clearly enough? Were they being understood by the mass of liberal and pacific thinkers? He drove more and more slowly as these questions crowded upon his attention until at last he came to a stop altogether.... "Certain things must be said clearly," he whispered. "Certain things — The meaning of England.... The deep and long-unspoken desire for kindliness and fairness.... Now is the time for speaking. It must be put as straight now as her gun-fire, as honestly as the steering of her ships."

Phrases and paragraphs began to shape themselves in his mind as he sat with one arm on his steering-wheel.

Suddenly he roused himself, turned over the map in the map-case beside him, and tried to find his position....

So far as he could judge he had strayed right into Suffolk....

About one o'clock in the morning he found himself in Newmarket. Newmarket too was a moonlit emptiness, but as he hesitated at the cross-roads he became aware of a policeman standing quite stiff and still at the corner by the church.

"Matching's Easy?" he cried.

“That road, Sir, until you come to Market Saffron, and then to the left....”

Mr. Britling had a definite purpose now in his mind, and he drove faster, but still very carefully and surely. He was already within a mile or so of Market Saffron before he remembered that he had made a kind of appointment with himself at Pyecrafts. He stared at two conflicting purposes. He turned over certain possibilities.

At the Market Saffron cross-roads he slowed down, and for a moment he hung undecided.

“Oliver,” he said, and as he spoke he threw over his steering-wheel towards the homeward way.... He finished his sentence when he had negotiated the corner safely. “Oliver must have her....”

And then, perhaps fifty yards farther along, and this time almost indignantly: “She ought to have married him long ago....”

He put his automobile in the garage, and then went round under the black shadow of his cedars to the front door. He had no key, and for a long time he failed to rouse his wife by flinging pebbles and gravel at her half-open window. But at last he heard her stirring and called out to her.

He explained he had returned because he wanted to write. He wanted indeed to write quite urgently. He went straight up to his room, lit his reading-lamp, made himself some tea, and changed into his nocturnal suit. Daylight found him still writing very earnestly at his pamphlet. The title he had chosen was: “And Now War Ends.”

§ 15

In this fashion it was that the great war began in Europe and came to one man in Matching’s Easy, as it came to countless intelligent men in countless pleasant homes that had scarcely heeded its coming through all the years of its relentless preparation. The familiar scenery of life was drawn aside, and War stood unveiled. “I am the Fact,” said War, “and I stand astride the path of life. I am the threat of death and extinction that has always walked beside life, since life began. There can be nothing else and nothing more in human life until you have reckoned with me.”

BOOK II. MATCHING'S EASY AT WAR

CHAPTER THE FIRST

ONLOOKERS

§ 1

On that eventful night of the first shots and the first deaths Mr. Britling did not sleep until daylight had come. He sat writing at this pamphlet of his, which was to hail the last explosion and the ending of war. For a couple of hours he wrote with energy, and then his energy flagged. There came intervals when he sat still and did not write. He yawned and yawned again and rubbed his eyes. The day had come and the birds were noisy when he undressed slowly, dropping his clothes anyhow upon the floor, and got into bed....

He woke to find his morning tea beside him and the housemaid going out of the room. He knew that something stupendous had happened to the world, but for a few moments he could not remember what it was. Then he remembered that France was invaded by Germany and Germany by Russia, and that almost certainly England was going to war. It seemed a harsh and terrible fact in the morning light, a demand for stresses, a certainty of destruction; it appeared now robbed of all the dark and dignified beauty of the night. He remembered just the same feeling of unpleasant, anxious expectation as he now felt when the Boer War had begun fifteen years ago, before the first news came. The first news of the Boer War had been the wrecking of a British armoured train near Kimberley. What similar story might not the overdue paper tell when presently it came?

Suppose, for instance, that some important division of our Fleet had been surprised and overwhelmed....

Suppose the Germans were already crumpling up the French armies between Verdun and Belfort, very swiftly and dreadfully....

Suppose after all that the Cabinet was hesitating, and that there would be no war for some weeks, but only a wrangle about Belgian neutrality. While the Germans smashed France....

Or, on the other hand, there might be some amazing, prompt

success on our part. Our army and navy people were narrow, but in their narrow way he believed they were extraordinarily good....

What would the Irish do?...

His thoughts were no more than a thorny jungle of unanswerable questions through which he struggled in un-progressive circles.

He got out of bed and dressed in a slow, distraught manner. When he reached his braces he discontinued dressing for a time; he opened the atlas at Northern France, and stood musing over the Belgian border. Then he turned to Whitaker's Almanack to browse upon the statistics of the great European armies. He was roused from this by the breakfast gong.

At breakfast there was no talk of anything but war. Hugh was as excited as a cat in thundery weather, and the small boys wanted information about flags. The Russian and the Serbian flag were in dispute, and the flag page of Webster's Dictionary had to be consulted. Newspapers and letters were both abnormally late, and Mr. Britling, tiring of supplying trivial information to his offspring, smoked cigarettes in the garden. He had an idea of intercepting the postman. His eyes and ears informed him of the approach of Mrs. Faber's automobile. It was an old, resolute-looking machine painted red, and driven by a trusted gardener; there was no mistaking it.

Mrs. Faber was in it, and she stopped it outside the gate and made signals. Mrs. Britling, attracted by the catastrophic sounds of Mrs. Faber's vehicle, came out by the front door, and she and her husband both converged upon the caller.

§ 2

"I won't come in," cried Mrs. Faber, "but I thought I'd tell you. I've been getting food."

"Food?"

"Provisions. There's going to be a run on provisions. Look at my flitch of bacon!"

"But — —"

"Faber says we have to lay in what we can. This war — it's going to stop everything. We can't tell what will happen. I've got the

children to consider, so here I am. I was at Hickson's before nine...."

The little lady was very flushed and bright-eyed. Her fair hair was disordered, her hat a trifle askew. She had an air of enjoying unwonted excitements. "All the gold's being hoarded too," she said, with a crow of delight in her voice. "Faber says that probably our cheques won't be worth *that* in a few days. He rushed off to London to get gold at his clubs — while he can. I had to insist on Hickson taking a cheque. 'Never,' I said, 'will I deal with you again — never — unless you do....' Even then he looked at me almost as if he thought he wouldn't.

"It's Famine!" she said, turning to Mr. Britling. "I've laid hands on all I can. I've got the children to consider."

"But why is it famine?" asked Mr. Britling.

"Oh! it *is*!" she said.

"But why?"

"Faber understands," she said. "Of course it's Famine...."

"And would you believe me," she went on, going back to Mrs. Britling, "that man Hickson stood behind his counter — where I've dealt with him for *years*, and refused absolutely to let me have more than a dozen tins of sardines. *Refused!* Point blank!

"I was there before nine, and even then Hickson's shop was crowded — *crowded*, my dear!"

"What have you got?" said Mr. Britling with an inquiring movement towards the automobile.

She had got quite a lot. She had two sides of bacon, a case of sugar, bags of rice, eggs, a lot of flour.

"What are all these little packets?" said Mr. Britling.

Mrs. Faber looked slightly abashed.

"Cerebos salt," she said. "One gets carried away a little. I just got hold of it and carried it out to the car. I thought we might have to salt things later."

"And the jars are pickles?" said Mr. Britling.

"Yes. But look at all my flour! That's what will go first...."

The lady was a little flurried by Mr. Britling's too detailed examination of her haul. "What good is blacking?" he asked. She would not hear him. She felt he was trying to spoil her morning. She declared she must get on back to her home. "Don't say I didn't warn

you," she said. "I've got no end of things to do. There's peas! I want to show cook how to bottle our peas. For this year — it's lucky, we've got no end of peas. I came by here just for the sake of telling you." And with that she presently departed — obviously ruffled by Mrs. Britling's lethargy and Mr. Britling's scepticism.

Mr. Britling watched her go off with a slowly rising indignation.

"And that," he said, "is how England is going to war! Scrambling for food — at the very beginning."

"I suppose she is anxious for the children," said Mrs. Britling.

"Blacking!"

"After all," said Mr. Britling, "if other people are doing that sort of thing—"

"That's the idea of all panics. We've got not to do it.... The country hasn't even declared war yet! Hallo, here we are! Better late than never."

The head of the postman, bearing newspapers and letters, appeared gliding along the top of the hedge as he cycled down the road towards the Dower House corner.

§ 3

England was not yet at war, but all the stars were marching to that end. It was as if an event so vast must needs take its time to happen. No doubt was left upon Mr. Britling's mind, though a whole-page advertisement in the *Daily News*, in enormous type and of mysterious origin, implored Great Britain not to play into the hands of Russia, Russia the Terrible, that bugbear of the sentimental Radicals. The news was wide and sweeping, and rather inaccurate. The Germans were said to be in Belgium and Holland, and they had seized English ships in the Kiel Canal. A moratorium had been proclaimed, and the reports of a food panic showed Mrs. Faber to be merely one example of a large class of excitable people.

Mr. Britling found the food panic disconcerting. It did not harmonise with his leading *motif* of the free people of the world rising against the intolerable burthen of militarism. It spoilt his picture....

Mrs. Britling shared the paper with Mr. Britling, they stood by the bed of begonias near the cedar tree and read, and the air was full of the cheerful activities of the lawn-mower that was being drawn by a carefully booted horse across the hockey field.

Presently Hugh came flitting out of the house to hear what had happened. “One can’t work somehow, with all these big things going on,” he apologised. He secured the *Daily News* while his father and mother read *The Times*. The voices of the younger boys came from the shade of the trees; they had brought all their toy soldiers out of doors, and were making entrenched camps in the garden.

“The financial situation is an extraordinary one,” said Mr. Britling, concentrating his attention.... “All sorts of staggering things may happen. In a social and economic system that has grown just anyhow.... Never been planned.... In a world full of Mrs. Fabers....”

“Moratorium?” said Hugh over his *Daily News*. “In relation to debts and so on? Modern side you sent me to, Daddy. I live at hand to mouth in etymology. Mors and crematorium — do we burn our bills instead of paying them?”

“Moratorium,” reflected Mr. Britling; “Moratorium. What nonsense you talk! It’s something that delays, of course. Nothing to do with death. Just a temporary stoppage of payments.... Of course there’s bound to be a tremendous change in values....”

§ 4

“There’s bound to be a tremendous change in values.”

On that text Mr. Britling’s mind enlarged very rapidly. It produced a wonderful crop of possibilities before he got back to his study. He sat down to his desk, but he did not immediately take up his work. He had discovered something so revolutionary in his personal affairs that even the war issue remained for a time in suspense.

Tucked away in the back of Mr. Britling’s consciousness was something that had not always been there, something warm and comforting that made life and his general thoughts about life much easier and pleasanter than they would otherwise have been, the sense

of a neatly arranged investment list, a shrewdly and geographically distributed system of holdings in national loans, municipal investments, railway debentures, that had amounted altogether to rather over five-and-twenty thousand pounds; his and Mrs. Britling's, a joint accumulation. This was, so to speak, his economic viscera. It sustained him, and kept him going and comfortable. When all was well he did not feel its existence; he had merely a pleasant sense of general well-being. When here or there a security got a little disarranged he felt a vague discomfort. Now he became aware of grave disorders. It was as if he discovered he had been accidentally eating toadstools, and didn't quite know whether they weren't a highly poisonous sort. But an analogy may be carried too far....

At any rate, when Mr. Britling got back to his writing-desk he was much too disturbed to resume "And Now War Ends."

"There's bound to be a tremendous change in values!"

He had never felt quite so sure as most people about the stability of the modern financial system. He did not, he felt, understand the working of this moratorium, or the peculiar advantage of prolonging the bank holidays. It meant, he supposed, a stoppage of payment all round, and a cutting off of the supply of ready money. And Hickson the grocer, according to Mrs. Faber, was already looking askance at cheques.

Even if the bank did reopen Mr. Britling was aware that his current balance was low; at the utmost it amounted to twenty or thirty pounds. He had been expecting cheques from his English and American publishers, and the usual *Times* cheque. Suppose these payments were intercepted!

All these people might, so far as he could understand, stop payment under this moratorium! That hadn't at first occurred to him. But, of course, quite probably they might refuse to pay his account when it fell due.

And suppose *The Times* felt his peculiar vein of thoughtfulness unnecessary in these stirring days!

And then if the bank really did lock up his deposit account, and his securities became unsaleable!

Mr. Britling felt like an oyster that is invited to leave its shell....

He sat back from his desk contemplating these things. His

imagination made a weak attempt to picture a world in which credit has vanished and money is of doubtful value. He supposed a large number of people would just go on buying and selling at or near the old prices by force of habit.

His mind and conscience made a valiant attempt to pick up "And Now War Ends" and go on with it, but before five minutes were out he was back at the thoughts of food panic and bankruptcy....

§ 5

The conflict of interests at Mr. Britling's desk became unendurable. He felt he must settle the personal question first. He wandered out upon the lawn and smoked cigarettes.

His first conception of a great convergent movement of the nations to make a world peace and an end to militant Germany was being obscured by this second, entirely incompatible, vision of a world confused and disorganised. Mrs. Fabers in great multitudes hoarding provisions, riotous crowds attacking shops, moratorium, shut banks and waiting queues. Was it possible for the whole system to break down through a shock to its confidence? Without any sense of incongruity the dignified pacification of the planet had given place in his mind to these more intimate possibilities. He heard a rustle behind him, and turned to face his wife.

"Do you think," she asked, "that there is any chance of a shortage of food?"

"If all the Mrs. Fabers in the world run and grab—"

"Then every one must grab. I haven't much in the way of stores in the house."

"H'm," said Mr. Britling, and reflected.... "I don't think we must buy stores now."

"But if we are short."

"It's the chances of war," said Mr. Britling.

He reflected. "Those who join a panic make a panic. After all, there is just as much food in the world as there was last month. And short of burning it the only way of getting rid of it is to eat it. And the harvests are good. Why begin a scramble at a groaning board?"

“But people *are* scrambling! It would be awkward — with the children and everything — if we ran short.”

“We shan’t. And anyhow, you mustn’t begin hoarding, even if it means hardship.”

“Yes. But you won’t like it if suddenly there’s no sugar for your tea.”

Mr. Britling ignored this personal application.

“What is far more serious than a food shortage is the possibility of a money panic.”

He paced the lawn with her and talked. He said that even now very few people realised the flimsiness of the credit system by which the modern world was sustained. It was a huge growth of confidence, due very largely to the uninquiring indolence of — everybody. It was sound so long as mankind did, on the whole, believe in it; give only a sufficient loss of faith and it might suffer any sort of collapse. It might vanish altogether — as the credit system vanished at the breaking up of Italy by the Goths — and leave us nothing but tangible things, real property, possession nine points of the law, and that sort of thing. Did she remember that last novel of Gissing’s?— “Veranilda,” it was called. It was a picture of the world when there was no wealth at all except what one could carry hidden or guarded about with one. That sort of thing came to the Roman Empire slowly, in the course of lifetimes, but nowadays we lived in a rapider world — with flimsier institutions. Nobody knew the strength or the weakness of credit; nobody knew whether even the present shock might not send it smashing down.... And then all the little life we had lived so far would roll away....

Mrs. Britling, he noted, glanced ever and again at her sunlit house — there were new sunblinds, and she had been happy in her choice of a colour — and listened with a sceptical expression to this disquisition.

“A few days ago,” said Mr. Britling, trying to make things concrete for her, “you and I together were worth five-and-twenty thousand pounds. Now we don’t know what we are worth; whether we have lost a thousand or ten thousand....”

He examined his sovereign purse and announced he had six pounds. “What have you?”

She had about eighteen pounds in the house.

“We may have to get along with that for an indefinite time.”

“But the bank will open again presently,” she said. “And people about here trust us.”

“Suppose they don’t?”

She did not trouble about the hypothesis. “And our investments will recover. They always do recover.”

“Everything may recover,” he admitted. “But also nothing may recover. All this life of ours which has seemed so settled and secure — isn’t secure. I have felt that we were fixed here and rooted — for all our lives. Suppose presently things sweep us out of it? It’s a possibility we may have to face. I feel this morning as if two enormous gates had opened in our lives, like the gates that give upon an arena, gates giving on a darkness — through which anything might come. Even death. Suppose suddenly we were to see one of those great Zeppelins in the air, or hear the thunder of guns away towards the coast. And if a messenger came upon a bicycle telling us to leave everything and go inland....”

“I see no reason why one should go out to meet things like that.”

“But there is no reason why one should not envisage them....”

“The curious thing,” said Mr. Britling, pursuing his examination of the matter, “is that, looking at these things as one does now, as things quite possible, they are not nearly so terrifying and devastating to the mind as they would have seemed — last week. I believe I should load you all into Gladys and start off westward with a kind of exhilaration....”

She looked at him as if she would speak, and said nothing. She suspected him of hating his home and affecting to care for it out of politeness to her....

“Perhaps mankind tries too much to settle down. Perhaps these stirrings up have to occur to save us from our disposition to stuffy comfort. There’s the magic call of the unknown experience, of dangers and hardships. One wants to go. But unless some push comes one does not go. There is a spell that keeps one to the lair and the old familiar ways. Now I am afraid — and at the same time I feel that the spell is broken. The magic prison is suddenly all doors. You may call this ruin, bankruptcy, invasion, flight; they are doors out of

habit and routine.... I have been doing nothing for so long, except idle things and discursive things."

"I thought that you managed to be happy here. You have done a lot of work."

"Writing is recording, not living. But now I feel suddenly that we are living intensely. It is as if the whole quality of life was changing. There are such times. There are times when the spirit of life changes altogether. The old world knew that better than we do. It made a distinction between weekdays and Sabbaths, and between feasts and fasts and days of devotion. That is just what has happened now. Week-day rules must be put aside. Before — oh! three days ago, competition was fair, it was fair and tolerable to get the best food one could and hold on to one's own. But that isn't right now. War makes a Sabbath, and we shut the shops. The banks are shut, and the world still feels as though Sunday was keeping on...."

He saw his own way clear.

"The scale has altered. It does not matter now in the least if we are ruined. It does not matter in the least if we have to live upon potatoes and run into debt for our rent. These now are the most incidental of things. A week ago they would have been of the first importance. Here we are face to face with the greatest catastrophe and the greatest opportunity in history. We have to plunge through catastrophe to opportunity. There is nothing to be done now in the whole world except to get the best out of this tremendous fusing up of all the settled things of life." He had got what he wanted. He left her standing upon the lawn and hurried back to his desk....

§ 6

When Mr. Britling, after a strenuous morning among high ideals, descended for lunch, he found Mr. Lawrence Carmine had come over to join him at that meal. Mr. Carmine was standing in the hall with his legs very wide apart reading *The Times* for the fourth time. "I can do no work," he said, turning round. "I can't fix my mind. I suppose we are going to war. I'd got so used to the war with Germany that I never imagined it would happen. Gods! what a bore it will be.... And

Maxse and all those scaremongers cock-a-hoop and 'I told you so.' Damn these Germans!"

He looked despondent and worried. He followed Mr. Britling towards the dining-room with his hands deep in his pockets.

"It's going to be a tremendous thing," he said, after he had greeted Mrs. Britling and Hugh and Aunt Wilshire and Teddy, and seated himself at Mr. Britling's hospitable board. "It's going to upset everything. We don't begin to imagine all the mischief it is going to do."

Mr. Britling was full of the heady draught of liberal optimism he had been brewing upstairs. "I am not sorry I have lived to see this war," he said. "It may be a tremendous catastrophe in one sense, but in another it is a huge step forward in human life. It is the end of forty years of evil suspense. It is crisis and solution."

"I wish I could see it like that," said Mr. Carmine.

"It is like a thaw — everything has been in a frozen confusion since that Jew-German Treaty of Berlin. And since 1871."

"Why not since Schleswig-Holstein?" said Mr. Carmine.

"Why not? Or since the Treaty of Vienna?"

"Or since — One might go back."

"To the Roman Empire," said Hugh.

"To the first conquest of all," said Teddy....

"I couldn't work this morning," said Hugh. "I have been reading in the Encyclopædia about races and religions in the Balkans.... It's very mixed."

"So long as it could only be dealt with piecemeal," said Mr. Britling. "And that is just where the tremendous opportunity of this war comes in. Now everything becomes fluid. We can redraw the map of the world. A week ago we were all quarrelling bitterly about things too little for human impatience. Now suddenly we face an epoch. This is an epoch. The world is plastic for men to do what they will with it. This is the end and the beginning of an age. This is something far greater than the French Revolution or the Reformation.... And we live in it...."

He paused impressively.

"I wonder what will happen to Albania?" said Hugh, but his comment was disregarded.

“War makes men bitter and narrow,” said Mr. Carmine.

“War narrowly conceived,” said Mr. Britling. “But this is an indignant and generous war.”

They speculated about the possible intervention of the United States. Mr. Britling thought that the attack on Belgium demanded the intervention of every civilised power, that all the best instincts of America would be for intervention. “The more,” he said, “the quicker.”

“It would be strange if the last power left out to mediate were to be China,” said Mr. Carmine. “The one people in the world who really believe in peace.... I wish I had your confidence, Britling.”

For a time they contemplated a sort of Grand Inquest on Germany and militarism, presided over by the Wisdom of the East. Militarism was, as it were, to be buried as a suicide at four cross-roads, with a stake through its body to prevent any untimely resuscitation.

§ 7

Mr. Britling was in a phase of imaginative release. Such a release was one of the first effects of the war upon many educated minds. Things that had seemed solid forever were visibly in flux; things that had seemed stone were alive. Every boundary, every government, was seen for the provisional thing it was. He talked of his World Congress meeting year by year, until it ceased to be a speculation and became a mere intelligent anticipation; he talked of the “manifest necessity” of a Supreme Court for the world. He beheld that vision at the Hague, but Mr. Carmine preferred Delhi or Samarkand or Alexandria or Nankin. “Let us get away from the delusion of Europe anyhow,” said Mr. Carmine....

As Mr. Britling had sat at his desk that morning and surveyed the stupendous vistas of possibility that war was opening, the catastrophe had taken on a more and more beneficial quality. “I suppose that it is only through such crises as these that the world can reconstruct itself,” I said. And, on the whole that afternoon he was disposed to hope that the great military machine would not smash itself too easily. “We want the nations to feel the need of one another,” he

said. “Too brief a campaign might lead to a squabble for plunder. The Englishman has to learn his dependence on the Irishman, the Russian has to be taught the value of education and the friendship of the Pole.... Europe will now have to look to Asia, and recognise that Indians and Chinamem are also ‘white.’... But these lessons require time and stresses if they are to be learnt properly....”

They discussed the possible duration of the war.

Mr. Carmine thought it would be a long struggle; Mr. Britling thought that the Russians would be in Berlin by the next May. He was afraid they might get there before the end of the year. He thought that the Germans would beat out their strength upon the French and Belgian lines, and never be free to turn upon the Russian at all. He was sure they had underrated the strength and energy of the French and of ourselves. “The Russians meanwhile,” he said, “will come on, slowly, steadily, inevitably....”

§ 8

That day of vast anticipations drew out into the afternoon. It was a day — obsessed. It was the precursor of a relentless series of doomed and fettered days. There was a sense of enormous occurrences going on just out of sound and sight — behind the mask of Essex peacefulness. From this there was no escape. It made all other interests fitful. Games of Badminton were begun and abruptly truncated by the arrival of the evening papers; conversations started upon any topic whatever returned to the war by the third and fourth remark....

After lunch Mr. Britling and Mr. Carmine went on talking. Nothing else was possible. They repeated things they had already said. They went into things more thoroughly. They sat still for a time, and then suddenly broke out with some new consideration....

It had been their custom to play skat with Herr Heinrich, who had shown them the game very explicitly and thoroughly. But there was no longer any Herr Heinrich — and somehow German games were already out of fashion. The two philosophers admitted that they had already considered skat to be complicated without subtlety, and that

its chief delight for them had been the pink earnestness of Herr Heinrich, his inability to grasp their complete but tacit comprehension of its innocent strategy, and his invariable ill-success to bring off the coups that flashed before his imagination.

He would survey the destructive counter-stroke with unconcealed surprise. He would verify his first impression by craning towards it and adjusting his glasses on his nose. He had a characteristic way of doing this with one stiff finger on either side of his sturdy nose.

"It is very fortunate for you that you have played that card," he would say, growing pinker and pinker with hasty cerebration. "Or else — yes" — a glance at his own cards— "it would have been altogether bad for you. I had taken only a very small risk.... Now I must—"

He would reconsider his hand.

"*Zo!*" he would say, dashing down a card....

Well, he had gone and skat had gone. A countless multitude of such links were snapping that day between hundreds of thousands of English and German homes.

§ 9

The imminence of war produced a peculiar exaltation in Aunt Wilshire. She developed a point of view that was entirely her own.

It was Mr. Britling's habit, a habit he had set himself to acquire after much irritating experience, to disregard Aunt Wilshire. She was not, strictly speaking, his aunt; she was one of those distant cousins we find already woven into our lives when we attain to years of responsibility. She had been a presence in his father's household when Mr. Britling was a boy. Then she had been called "Jane," or "Cousin Jane," or "Your cousin Wilshire." It had been a kindly freak of Mr. Britling's to promote her to Aunty rank.

She eked out a small inheritance by staying with relatives. Mr. Britling's earlier memories presented her as a slender young woman of thirty, with a nose upon which small boys were forbidden to comment. Yet she commented upon it herself, and called his attention to its marked resemblance to that of the great Duke of

Wellington. “He was, I am told,” said Cousin Wilshire to the attentive youth, “a great friend of your great-grandmother’s. At any rate, they were contemporaries. Since then this nose has been in the family. He would have been the last to draw a veil over it, but other times, other manners. ‘Publish,’ he said, ‘and be damned.’”

She had a knack of exasperating Mr. Britling’s father, a knack which to a less marked degree she also possessed in relation to the son. But Mr. Britling senior never acquired the art of disregarding her. Her method — if one may call the natural expression of a personality a method — was an invincibly superior knowledge, a firm and ill-concealed belief that all statements made in her hearing were wrong and most of them absurd, and a manner calm, assured, restrained. She may have been born with it; it is on record that at the age of ten she was pronounced a singularly trying child. She may have been born with the air of thinking the doctor a muff and knowing how to manage all this business better. Mr. Britling had known her only in her ripeness. As a boy, he had enjoyed her confidences — about other people and the general neglect of her advice. He grew up rather to like her — most people rather liked her — and to attach a certain importance to her unattainable approval. She was sometimes kind, she was frequently absurd....

With very little children she was quite wise and Jolly....

So she circulated about a number of houses which at any rate always welcomed her coming. In the opening days of each visit she performed marvels of tact, and set a watch upon her lips. Then the demons of controversy and dignity would get the better of her. She would begin to correct, quietly but firmly, she would begin to disapprove of the tone and quality of her treatment. It was quite common for her visit to terminate in speechless rage both on the side of host and of visitor. The remarkable thing was that this speechless rage never endured. Though she could exasperate she could never offend. Always after an interval during which she was never mentioned, people began to wonder how Cousin Jane was getting on.... A tentative correspondence would begin, leading slowly up to a fresh invitation.

She spent more time in Mr. Britling’s house than in any other. There was a legend that she had “drawn out” his mind, and that she

had “stood up” for him against his father. She had certainly contradicted quite a number of those unfavourable comments that fathers are wont to make about their sons. Though certainly she contradicted everything. And Mr. Britling hated to think of her knocking about alone in boarding-houses and hydropathic establishments with only the most casual chances for contradiction.

Moreover, he liked to see her casting her eye over the morning paper. She did it with a manner as though she thought the terrestrial globe a great fool, and quite beyond the reach of advice. And as though she understood and was rather amused at the way in which the newspaper people tried to keep back the real facts of the case from her.

And now she was scornfully entertained at the behaviour of everybody in the war crisis.

She confided various secrets of state to the elder of the younger Britlings — preferably when his father was within earshot.

“None of these things they are saying about the war,” she said, “really matter in the slightest degree. It is all about a spoilt carpet and nothing else in the world — a madman and a spoilt carpet. If people had paid the slightest attention to common sense none of this war would have happened. The thing was perfectly well known. He was a delicate child, difficult to rear and given to screaming fits. Consequently he was never crossed, allowed to do everything. Nobody but his grandmother had the slightest influence with him. And she prevented him spoiling this carpet as completely as he wished to do. The story is perfectly well known. It was at Windsor — at the age of eight. After that he had but one thought: war with England....

“Everybody seemed surprised,” she said suddenly at tea to Mr. Carmine. “I at least am not surprised. I am only surprised it did not come sooner. If any one had asked me I could have told them, three years, five years ago.”

The day was one of flying rumours, Germany was said to have declared war on Italy, and to have invaded Holland as well as Belgium.

“They’ll declare war against the moon next!” said Aunt Wilshire.

“And send a lot of Zeppelins,” said the smallest boy. “Herr

Heinrich told us they can fly thousands of miles."

"He will go on declaring war until there is nothing left to declare war against. That is exactly what he has always done. Once started he cannot desist. Often he has had to be removed from the dinner-table for fear of injury. *Now*, it is ultimatums."

She was much pleased by a headline in the *Daily Express* that streamed right across the page: "The Mad Dog of Europe." Nothing else, she said, had come so near her feelings about the war.

"Mark my words," said Aunt Wilshire in her most impressive tones. "He is insane. It will be proved to be so. He will end his days in an asylum — as a lunatic. I have felt it myself for years and said so in private.... Knowing what I did.... To such friends as I could trust not to misunderstand me.... Now at least I can speak out.

"With his moustaches turned up!" exclaimed Aunt Wilshire after an interval of accumulation.... "They say he has completely lost the use of the joint in his left arm, he carries it stiff like a Punch and Judy — and he wants to conquer Europe.... While his grandmother lived there was some one to keep him in order. He stood in Awe of her. He hated her, but he did not dare defy her. Even his uncle had some influence. Now, nothing restrains him.

"A double-headed mad dog," said Aunt Wilshire. "Him and his eagles!... A man like that ought never to have been allowed to make a war.... Not even a little war.... If he had been put under restraint when I said so, none of these things would have happened. But, of course I am nobody.... It was not considered worth attending to."

§ 10

One remarkable aspect of the English attitude towards the war was the disposition to treat it as a monstrous joke. It is a disposition traceable in a vast proportion of the British literature of the time. In spite of violence, cruelty, injustice, and the vast destruction and still vaster dangers of the struggles, that disposition held. The English mind refused flatly to see anything magnificent or terrible in the German attack, or to regard the German Emperor or the Crown Prince as anything more than figures of fun. From first to last their

conception of the enemy was an overstrenuous, foolish man, red with effort, with protruding eyes and a forced frightfulness of demeanour. That he might be tremendously lethal did not in the least obscure the fact that he was essentially ridiculous. And if as the war went on the joke grew grimmer, still it remained a joke. The German might make a desert of the world; that could not alter the British conviction that he was making a fool of himself.

And this disposition kept coming to the surface throughout the afternoon, now in a casual allusion, now in some deliberate jest. The small boys had discovered the goose step, and it filled their little souls with amazement and delight. That human beings should consent to those ridiculous paces seemed to them almost incredibly funny. They tried it themselves, and then set out upon a goose-step propaganda. Letty and Cissie had come up to the Dower House for tea and news, and they were enrolled with Teddy and Hugh. The six of them, chuckling and swaying, marched, in vast scissor strides across the lawn. "Left," cried Hugh. "Left."

"Toes *out* more," said Mr. Lawrence Carmine.

"Keep stiffer," said the youngest Britling.

"Watch the Zeppelins and look proud," said Hugh. "With the chest out. *Zo!*"

Mrs. Britling was so much amused that she went in for her camera, and took a snapshot of the detachment. It was a very successful snapshot, and a year later Mr. Britling was to find a print of it among his papers, and recall the sunshine and the merriment....

§ 11

That night brought the British declaration of war against Germany. To nearly every Englishman that came as a matter of course, and it is one of the most wonderful facts in history that the Germans were surprised by it. When Mr. Britling, as a sample Englishman, had said that there would never be war between Germany and England, he had always meant that it was inconceivable to him that Germany should ever attack Belgium or France. If Germany had been content to fight a merely defensive war upon her western frontier and let

Belgium alone, there would scarcely have been such a thing as a war party in Great Britain. But the attack upon Belgium, the westward thrust, made the whole nation flame unanimously into war. It settled a question that was in open debate up to the very outbreak of the conflict. Up to the last the English had cherished the idea that in Germany, just as in England, the mass of people were kindly, pacific, and detached. That had been the English mistake. Germany was really and truly what Germany had been professing to be for forty years, a War State. With a sigh — and a long-forgotten thrill — England roused herself to fight. Even now she still roused herself sluggishly. It was going to be an immense thing, but just how immense it was going to be no one in England had yet imagined.

Countless men that day whom Fate had marked for death and wounds stared open-mouthed at the news, and smiled with the excitement of the headlines, not dreaming that any of these things would come within three hundred miles of them. What was war to Matching's Easy — to all the Matching's Easies great and small that make up England? The last home that was ever burnt by an enemy within a hundred miles of Matching's Easy was burnt by the Danes rather more than a thousand years ago.... And the last trace of those particular Danes in England were certain horny scraps of indurated skin under the heads of the nails in the door of St. Clement Danes in London....

Now again, England was to fight in a war which was to light fires in England and bring death to English people on English soil. There were inconceivable ideas in August, 1914. Such things must happen before they can be comprehended as possible.

§ 12

This story is essentially the history of the opening and of the realisation of the Great War as it happened to one small group of people in Essex, and more particularly as it happened to one human brain. It came at first to all these people in a spectacular manner, as a thing happening dramatically and internationally, as a show, as something in the newspapers, something in the character of an

historical epoch rather than a personal experience; only by slow degrees did it and its consequences invade the common texture of English life. If this story could be represented by sketches or pictures the central figure would be Mr. Britling, now sitting at his desk by day or by night and writing first at his tract “And Now War Ends” and then at other things, now walking about his garden or in Claverings park or going to and fro in London, in his club reading the ticker or in his hall reading the newspaper, with ideas and impressions continually clustering, expanding, developing more and more abundantly in his mind, arranging themselves, reacting upon one another, building themselves into generalisations and conclusions....

All Mr. Britling’s mental existence was soon threaded on the war. His more or less weekly *Times* leader became dissertations upon the German point of view; his reviews of books and Literary Supplement articles were all oriented more and more exactly to that one supreme fact....

It was rare that he really seemed to be seeing the war; few people saw it; for most of the world it came as an illimitable multitude of incoherent, loud, and confusing impressions. But all the time he was at least doing his utmost to see the war, to simplify it and extract the essence of it until it could be apprehended as something epic and explicable, as a stateable issue....

Most typical picture of all would be Mr. Britling writing in a little circle of orange lamplight, with the blinds of his room open for the sake of the moonlight, but the window shut to keep out the moths that beat against it. Outside would be the moon and the high summer sky and the old church tower dim above the black trees half a mile away, with its clock — which Mr. Britling heard at night but never noted by day — beating its way round the slow semicircle of the nocturnal hours. He had always hated conflict and destruction, and felt that war between civilised states was the quintessential expression of human failure, it was a stupidity that stopped progress and all the free variation of humanity, a thousand times he had declared it impossible, but even now with his country fighting he was still far from realising that this was a thing that could possibly touch him more than intellectually. He did not really believe with his eyes

and finger-tips and backbone that murder, destruction, and agony on a scale monstrous beyond precedent was going on in the same world as that which slumbered outside the black ivy and silver shining window-sill that framed his peaceful view.

War had not been a reality of the daily life of England for more than a thousand years. The mental habit of the nation for fifty generations was against its emotional recognition. The English were the spoilt children of peace. They had never been wholly at war for three hundred years, and for over eight hundred years they had not fought for life against a foreign power. Spain and France had threatened in turn, but never even crossed the seas. It is true that England had had her civil dissensions and had made wars and conquests in every part of the globe and established an immense empire, but that last, as Mr. Britling had told Mr. Direck, was "an excursion." She had just sent out younger sons and surplus people, emigrants and expeditionary forces. Her own soil had never seen any successful foreign invasion; her homeland, the bulk of her households, her general life, had gone on untouched by these things. Nineteen people out of twenty, the middle class and most of the lower class, knew no more of the empire than they did of the Argentine Republic or the Italian Renaissance. It did not concern them. War that calls upon every man and threatens every life in the land, war of the whole national being, was a thing altogether outside English experience and the scope of the British imagination. It was still incredible, it was still outside the range of Mr. Britling's thoughts all through the tremendous onrush and check of the German attack in the west that opened the great war. Through those two months he was, as it were, a more and more excited spectator at a show, a show like a baseball match, a spectator with money on the event, rather than a really participating citizen of a nation thoroughly at war....

§ 13

After the jolt of the food panic and a brief, financial scare, the vast inertia of everyday life in England asserted itself. When the public

went to the banks for the new paper money, the banks tendered gold — apologetically. The supply of the new notes was very insufficient, and there was plenty of gold. After the first impression that a universal catastrophe had happened there was an effect as if nothing had happened.

Shops re-opened after the Bank Holiday, in a tentative spirit that speedily became assurance; people went about their business again, and the war, so far as the mass of British folk were concerned, was for some weeks a fever of the mind and intelligence rather than a physical and personal actuality. There was a keen demand for news, and for a time there was very little news. The press did its best to cope with this immense occasion. Led by the *Daily Express*, all the halfpenny newspapers adopted a new and more resonant sort of headline, the streamer, a band of emphatic type that ran clean across the page and announced victories or disconcerting happenings. They did this every day, whether there was a great battle or the loss of a trawler to announce, and the public mind speedily adapted itself to the new pitch.

There was no invitation from the government and no organisation for any general participation in war. People talked unrestrictedly; every one seemed to be talking; they waved flags and displayed much vague willingness to do something. Any opportunity of service was taken very eagerly. Lord Kitchener was understood to have demanded five hundred thousand men; the War Office arrangements for recruiting, arrangements conceived on a scale altogether too small, were speedily overwhelmed by a rush of willing young men. The flow had to be checked by raising the physical standard far above the national average, and recruiting died down to manageable proportions. There was a quite genuine belief that the war might easily be too exclusively considered; that for the great mass of people it was a disturbing and distracting rather than a vital interest. The phase "Business as Usual" ran about the world, and the papers abounded in articles in which going on as though there was no war at all was demonstrated to be the truest form of patriotism. "Leave things to Kitchener" was another watchword with a strong appeal to the national quality. "Business as usual during Alterations to the Map of Europe" was the advertisement of one cheerful barber, widely

quoted....

Hugh was at home all through August. He had thrown up his rooms in London with his artistic ambitions, and his father was making all the necessary arrangements for him to follow Cardinal to Cambridge. Meanwhile Hugh was taking up his scientific work where he had laid it down. He gave a reluctant couple of hours in the afternoon to the mysteries of Little-go Greek, and for the rest of his time he was either working at mathematics and mathematical physics or experimenting in a little upstairs room that had been carved out of the general space of the barn. It was only at the very end of August that it dawned upon him or Mr. Britling that the war might have more than a spectacular and sympathetic appeal for him. Hitherto contemporary history had happened without his personal intervention. He did not see why it should not continue to happen with the same detachment. The last elections — and a general election is really the only point at which the life of the reasonable Englishman becomes in any way public — had happened four years ago, when he was thirteen.

§ 14

For a time it was believed in Matching's Easy that the German armies had been defeated and very largely destroyed at Liège. It was a mistake not confined to Matching's Easy.

The first raiding attack was certainly repulsed with heavy losses, and so were the more systematic assaults on August the sixth and seventh. After that the news from Liège became uncertain, but it was believed in England that some or all of the forts were still holding out right up to the German entry into Brussels. Meanwhile the French were pushing into their lost provinces, occupying Altkirch, Mulhausen and Saarburg; the Russians were invading Bukovina and East Prussia; the *Goeben*, the *Breslau* and the *Panther* had been sunk by the newspapers in an imaginary battle in the Mediterranean, and Togoland was captured by the French and British. Neither the force nor the magnitude of the German attack through Belgium was appreciated by the general mind, and it was possible for Mr. Britling

to reiterate his fear that the war would be over too soon, long before the full measure of its possible benefits could be secured. But these apprehensions were unfounded; the lessons the war had in store for Mr. Britling were far more drastic than anything he was yet able to imagine even in his most exalted moods.

He resisted the intimations of the fall of Brussels and the appearance of the Germans at Dinant. The first real check to his excessive anticipations of victory for the Allies came with the sudden reappearance of Mr. Direck in a state of astonishment and dismay at Matching's Easy. He wired from the Strand office, "Coming to tell you about things," and arrived on the heels of his telegram.

He professed to be calling upon Mr. and Mrs. Britling, and to a certain extent he was; but he had a quick eye for the door or windows; his glance roved irrelevantly as he talked. A faint expectation of Cissie came in with him and hovered about him, as the scent of violets follows the flower.

He was, however, able to say quite a number of things before Mr. Britling's natural tendency to do the telling asserted itself.

"My word," said Mr. Direck, "but this is *some* war. It is going on regardless of every decent consideration. As an American citizen I naturally expected to be treated with some respect, war or no war. That expectation has not been realised.... Europe is dislocated.... You have no idea here yet how completely Europe is dislocated....

"I came to Europe in a perfectly friendly spirit — and I must say I am surprised. Practically I have been thrown out, neck and crop. All my luggage is lost. Away at some one-horse junction near the Dutch frontier that I can't even learn the name of. There's joy in some German home, I guess, over my shirts; they were real good shirts. This tweed suit I have is all the wardrobe I've got in the world. All my money — good American notes — well, they laughed at them. And when I produced English gold they suspected me of being English and put me under arrest.... I can assure you that the English are most unpopular in Germany at the present time, thoroughly unpopular.... Considering that they are getting exactly what they were asking for, these Germans are really remarkably annoyed.... Well, I had to get the American consul to advance me money, and I've done more waiting about and irregular fasting and travelling on

an empty stomach and viewing the world, so far as it was permitted, from railway sidings — for usually they made us pull the blinds down when anything important was on the track — than any cow that ever came to Chicago.... I was handed as freight — low grade freight.... It doesn't bear recalling."

Mr. Direck assumed as grave and gloomy an expression as the facial habits of years would permit.

"I tell you I never knew there was such a thing as war until this happened to me. In America we don't know there is such a thing. It's like pestilence and famine; something in the story books. We've forgotten it for anything real. There's just a few grandfathers go around talking about it. Judge Holmes and sage old fellows like him. Otherwise it's just a game the kids play at.... And then suddenly here's everybody running about in the streets — hating and threatening — and nice old gentlemen with white moustaches and fathers of families scheming and planning to burn houses and kill and hurt and terrify. And nice young women, too, looking for an Englishman to spit at; I tell you I've been within range and very uncomfortable several times.... And what one can't believe is that they are really doing these things. There's a little village called Visé near the Dutch frontier; some old chap got fooling there with a fowling-piece; and they've wiped it out. Shot the people by the dozen, put them out in rows three deep and shot them, and burnt the place. Short of scalping, Red Indians couldn't have done worse. Respectable German soldiers....

"No one in England really seems to have any suspicion what is going on in Belgium. You hear stories — People tell them in Holland. It takes your breath away. They have set out just to cow those Belgians. They have started in to be deliberately frightful. You do not begin to understand.... Well.... Outrages. The sort of outrages Americans have never heard of. That one doesn't speak of.... Well.... Rape.... They have been raping women for disciplinary purposes on tables in the market-place of Liège. Yes, sir. It's a fact. I was told it by a man who had just come out of Belgium. Knew the people, knew the place, knew everything. People over here do not seem to realise that those women are the same sort of women that you might find in Chester or Yarmouth, or in Matching's Easy for the matter of that.

They still seem to think that Continental women are a different sort of women — more amenable to that sort of treatment. They seem to think there is some special Providential law against such things happening to English people. And it's within two hundred miles of you — even now. And as far as I can see there's precious little to prevent it coming nearer....”

Mr. Britling thought there were a few little obstacles.

“I've seen the new British army drilling in London, Mr. Britling. I don't know if you have. I saw a whole battalion. And they hadn't got half-a-dozen uniforms, and not a single rifle to the whole battalion.

“You don't begin to realise in England what you are up against. You have no idea what it means to be in a country where everybody, the women, the elderly people, the steady middle-aged men, are taking war as seriously as business. They haven't the slightest compunction. I don't know what Germany was like before the war, I had hardly gotten out of my train before the war began; but Germany to-day is one big armed camp. It's all crawling with soldiers. And every soldier has his uniform and his boots and his arms and his kit.

“And they're as sure of winning as if they had got London now. They mean to get London. They're cocksure they are going to walk through Belgium, cocksure they will get to Paris by Sedan day, and then they are going to destroy your fleet with Zeppelins and submarines and make a dash across the Channel. They say it's England they are after, in this invasion of Belgium. They'll just down France by the way. They say they've got guns to bombard Dover from Calais. They make a boast of it. They know for certain you can't arm your troops. They know you can't turn out ten thousand rifles a week. They come and talk to any one in the trains, and explain just how your defeat is going to be managed. It's just as though they were talking of rounding up cattle.”

Mr. Britling said they would soon be disillusioned.

Mr. Direck, with the confidence of his authentic observations, remarked after a perceptible interval, “I wonder how.”

He reverted to the fact that had most struck upon his imagination.

“Grown-up people, ordinary intelligent experienced people, taking war seriously, talking of punishing England; it's a revelation. A sort of solemn enthusiasm. High and low....

“And the trainloads of men and the trainloads of guns....”

“Liège,” said Mr. Britling.

“Liège was just a scratch on the paint,” said Mr. Direck. “A few thousand dead, a few score thousand dead, doesn’t matter — not a red cent to them. There’s a man arrived at the Cecil who saw them marching into Brussels. He sat at table with me at lunch yesterday. All day it went on, a vast unending river of men in grey. Endless waggons, endless guns, the whole manhood of a nation and all its stuff, marching....

“I thought war,” said Mr. Direck, “was a thing when most people stood about and did the shouting, and a sort of special team did the fighting. Well, Germany isn’t fighting like that.... I confess it, I’m scared.... It’s the very biggest thing on record; it’s the very limit in wars.... I dreamt last night of a grey flood washing everything in front of it. You and me — and Miss Corner — curious thing, isn’t it? that she came into it — were scrambling up a hill higher and higher, with that flood pouring after us. Sort of splashing into a foam of faces and helmets and bayonets — and clutching hands — and red stuff.... Well, Mr. Britling, I admit I’m a little bit overwrought about it, but I can assure you you don’t begin to realise in England what it is you’ve butted against....”

§ 15

Cissie did not come up to the Dower House that afternoon, and so Mr. Direck, after some vague and transparent excuses, made his way to the cottage.

Here his report become even more impressive. Teddy sat on the writing desk beside the typewriter and swung his legs slowly. Letty brooded in the armchair. Cissie presided over certain limited crawling operations of the young heir.

“They could have the equal of the whole British Army killed three times over and scarcely know it had happened. They’re *all* in it. It’s a whole country in arms.”

Teddy nodded thoughtfully.

“There’s our fleet,” said Letty.

“Well, *that* won’t save Paris, will it?”

Mr. Direck didn’t, he declared, want to make disagreeable talk, but this was a thing people in England had to face. He felt like one of them himself— “naturally.” He’d sort of hurried home to them — it was just like hurrying home — to tell them of the tremendous thing that was going to hit them. He felt like a man in front of a flood, a great grey flood. He couldn’t hide what he had been thinking. “Where’s our army?” asked Letty suddenly.

“Lost somewhere in France,” said Teddy. “Like a needle in a bottle of hay.”

“What I keep on worrying at is this,” Mr. Direck resumed. “Suppose they did come, suppose somehow they scrambled over, sixty or seventy thousand men perhaps.”

“Every man would turn out and take a shot at them,” said Letty.

“But there’s no rifles!”

“There’s shot guns.”

“That’s exactly what I’m afraid of,” said Mr. Direck. “They’d massacre....

“You may be the bravest people on earth,” said Mr. Direck, “but if you haven’t got arms and the other chaps have — you’re just as if you were sheep.”

He became gloomily pensive.

He roused himself to describe his experiences at some length, and the extraordinary disturbance of his mind. He related more particularly his attempts to see the sights of Cologne during the stir of mobilisation. After a time his narrative flow lost force, and there was a general feeling that he ought to be left alone with Cissie. Teddy had a letter that must be posted; Letty took the infant to crawl on the mossy stones under the pear tree. Mr. Direck leant against the window-sill and became silent for some moments after the door had closed on Letty.

“As for you, Cissie,” he began at last, “I’m anxious. I’m real anxious. I wish you’d let me throw the mantle of Old Glory over you.”

He looked at her earnestly.

“Old Glory?” asked Cissie.

“Well — the Stars and Stripes. I want you to be able to claim

American citizenship — in certain eventualities. It wouldn't be so very difficult. All the world over, Cissie, Americans are respected.... Nobody dares touch an American citizen. We are — an inviolate people."

He paused. "But how?" asked Cissie.

"It would be perfectly easy — perfectly."

"How?"

"Just marry an American citizen," said Mr. Direck, with his face beaming with ingenuous self-approval. "Then you'd be safe, and I'd not have to worry."

"Because we're in for a stiff war!" cried Cissie, and Direck perceived he had blundered.

"Because we may be invaded!" she said, and Mr. Direck's sense of error deepened.

"I vow—" she began.

"No!" cried Mr. Direck, and held out a hand.

There was a moment of crisis.

"Never will I desert my country — while she is at war," said Cissie, reducing her first fierce intention, and adding as though she regretted her concession, "Anyhow."

"Then it's up to me to end the war, Cissie," said Mr. Direck, trying to get her back to a less spirited attitude.

But Cissie wasn't to be got back so easily. The war was already beckoning to them in the cottage, and drawing them down from the auditorium into the arena.

"This is the rightest war in history," she said. "If I was an American I should be sorry to be one now and to have to stand out of it. I wish I was a man now so that I could do something for all the decency and civilisation the Germans have outraged. I can't understand how any man can be content to keep out of this, and watch Belgium being destroyed. It is like looking on at a murder. It is like watching a dog killing a kitten...."

Mr. Direck's expression was that of a man who is suddenly shown strange lights upon the world.

Mr. Britling found Mr. Direck's talk very indigestible.

He was parting very reluctantly from his dream of a disastrous collapse of German imperialism, of a tremendous, decisive demonstration of the inherent unsoundness of militarist monarchy, to be followed by a world conference of chastened but hopeful nations, and — the Millennium. He tried now to think that Mr. Direck had observed badly and misconceived what he saw. An American, unused to any sort of military occurrences, might easily mistake tens of thousands for millions, and the excitement of a few commercial travellers for the enthusiasm of a united people. But the newspapers now, with a kindred reluctance, were beginning to qualify, bit by bit, their first representation of the German attack through Belgium as a vast and already partly thwarted parade of incompetence. The Germans, he gathered, were being continually beaten in Belgium; but just as continually they advanced. Each fresh newspaper name he looked up on the map marked an oncoming tide. Alost — Charleroi. Farther east the French were retreating from the Saales Pass. Surely the British, who had now been in France for a fortnight, would presently be manifest, stemming the onrush; somewhere perhaps in Brabant or East Flanders. It gave Mr. Britling an unpleasant night to hear at Claverings that the French were very ill-equipped; had no good modern guns either at Lille or Maubeuge, were short of boots and equipment generally, and rather depressed already at the trend of things. Mr. Britling dismissed this as pessimistic talk, and built his hopes on the still invisible British army, hovering somewhere —

He would sit over the map of Belgium, choosing where he would prefer to have the British hover....

Namur fell. The place names continued to shift southward and westward. The British army or a part of it came to light abruptly at Mons. It had been fighting for thirty-eight hours and defeating enormously superior forces of the enemy. That was reassuring until a day or so later "the Cambray — Le Cateau line" made Mr. Britling realise that the victorious British had recoiled five and twenty miles....

And then came the Sunday of *The Times* telegram, which spoke of a "retreating and a broken army." Mr. Britling did not see this, but Mr. Manning brought over the report of it in a state of profound

consternation. Things, he said, seemed to be about as bad as they could be. The English were retreating towards the coast and in much disorder. They were “in the air” and already separated from the Trench. They had narrowly escaped “a Sedan” under the fortifications of Maubeuge.... Mr. Britling was stunned. He went to his study and stared helplessly at maps. It was as if David had flung his pebble — and missed!

But in the afternoon Mr. Manning telephoned to comfort his friend. A reassuring despatch from General French had been published and — all was well — practically — and the British had been splendid. They had been fighting continuously for several days round and about Mons; they had been attacked at odds of six to one, and they had repulsed and inflicted enormous losses on the enemy. They had established an incontestable personal superiority over the Germans. The Germans had been mown down in heaps; the British had charged through their cavalry like charging through paper. So at last and very gloriously for the British, British and German had met in battle. After the hard fighting of the 26th about Landrecies, the British had been comparatively unmolested, reinforcements covering double the losses had joined them and the German advance was definitely checked ... Mr. Britling’s mind swung back to elation. He took down the entire despatch from Mr. Manning’s dictation, and ran out with it into the garden where Mrs. Britling, with an unwonted expression of anxiety, was presiding over the teas of the usual casual Sunday gathering.... The despatch was read aloud twice over. After that there was hockey and high spirits, and then Mr. Britling went up to his study to answer a letter from Mrs. Harrowdean, the first letter that had come from her since their breach at the outbreak of the war, and which he was now in a better mood to answer than he had been hitherto.

She had written ignoring his silence and absence, or rather treating it as if it were an incident of no particular importance. Apparently she had not called upon the patient and devoted Oliver as she had threatened; at any rate, there were no signs of Oliver in her communication. But she reproached Mr. Britling for deserting her, and she clamoured for his presence and for kind and strengthening words. She was, she said, scared by this war. She was only a little

thing, and it was all too dreadful, and there was not a soul in the world to hold her hand, at least no one who understood in the slightest degree how she felt. (But why was not Oliver holding her hand?) She was like a child left alone in the dark. It was perfectly horrible the way that people were being kept in the dark. The stories one heard, "*often from quite trustworthy sources*," were enough to depress and terrify any one. Battleship after battleship had been sunk by German torpedoes, a thing kept secret from us for no earthly reason, and Prince Louis of Battenberg had been discovered to be a spy and had been sent to the Tower. Haldane too was a spy. Our army in France had been "practically *sold*" by the French. Almost all the French generals were in German pay. The censorship and the press were keeping all this back, but what good was it to keep it back? It was folly not to trust people! But it was all too dreadful for a poor little soul whose only desire was to live happily. Why didn't he come along to her and make her feel she had protecting arms round her? She couldn't think in the daytime: she couldn't sleep at night....

Then she broke away into the praises of serenity. Never had she thought so much of his beautiful "Silent Places" as she did now. How she longed to take refuge in some such dreamland from violence and treachery and foolish rumours! She was weary of every reality. She wanted to fly away into some secret hiding-place and cultivate her simple garden there — as Voltaire had done.... Sometimes at night she was afraid to undress. She imagined the sound of guns, she imagined landings and frightful scouts "in masks" rushing inland on motor bicycles....

It was an ill-timed letter. The nonsense about Prince Louis of Battenberg and Lord Haldane and the torpedoed battleships annoyed him extravagantly. He had just sufficient disposition to believe such tales as to find their importunity exasperating. The idea of going over to Pyecrafts to spend his days in comforting a timid little dear obsessed by such fears, attracted him not at all. He had already heard enough adverse rumours at Claverings to make him thoroughly uncomfortable. He had been doubting whether after all his "Examination of War" was really much less of a futility than "And Now War Ends"; his mind was full of a sense of incomplete statements and unsubstantial arguments. He was indeed in a state of

extreme intellectual worry. He was moreover extraordinarily out of love with Mrs. Harrowdean. Never had any affection in the whole history of Mr. Britling's heart collapsed so swiftly and completely. He was left incredulous of ever having cared for her at all. Probably he hadn't. Probably the whole business had been deliberate illusion from first to last. The "dear little thing" business, he felt, was all very well as a game of petting, but times were serious now, and a woman of her intelligence should do something better than wallow in fears and elaborate a winsome feebleness. A very unnecessary and tiresome feebleness. He came almost to the pitch of writing that to her.

The despatch from General French put him into a kindlier frame of mind. He wrote instead briefly but affectionately. As a gentleman should. "How could you doubt our fleet or our army?" was the gist of his letter. He ignored completely every suggestion of a visit to Pyecrafts that her letter had conveyed. He pretended that it had contained nothing of the sort.... And with that she passed out of his mind again under the stress of more commanding interests....

Mr. Britling's mood of relief did not last through the week. The defeated Germans continued to advance. Through a week of deepening disillusionment the main tide of battle rolled back steadily towards Paris. Lille was lost without a struggle. It was lost with mysterious ease.... The next name to startle Mr. Britling as he sat with newspaper and atlas following these great events was Compiègne. "Here!" Manifestly the British were still in retreat. Then the Germans were in possession of Laon and Rheims and still pressing south. Maubeuge surrounded and cut off for some days, had apparently fallen....

It was on Sunday, September the sixth, that the final capitulation of Mr. Britling's facile optimism occurred.

He stood in the sunshine reading the *Observer* which the gardener's boy had just brought from the May Tree. He had spread it open on a garden table under the blue cedar, and father and son were both reading it, each as much as the other would let him. There was fresh news from France, a story of further German advances, fighting at Senlis— "But that is quite close to Paris!" — and the appearance of German forces at Nogent-sur-Seine. "Sur Seine!" cried Mr.

Britling. “But where can that be? South of the Marne? Or below Paris perhaps?”

It was not marked upon the *Observer’s* map, and Hugh ran into the house for the atlas.

When he returned Mr. Manning was with his father, and they both looked grave.

Hugh opened the map of northern France. “Here it is,” he said.

Mr. Britling considered the position.

“Manning says they are at Rouen,” he told Hugh. “Our base is to be moved round to La Rochelle....”

He paused before the last distasteful conclusion.

“Practically,” he admitted, taking his dose, “they have got Paris. It is almost surrounded now.”

He sat down to the map. Mr. Manning and Hugh stood regarding him. He made a last effort to imagine some tremendous strategic reversal, some stone from an unexpected sling that should fell this Goliath in the midst of his triumph.

“Russia,” he said, without any genuine hope....

§ 17

And then it was that Mr. Britling accepted the truth.

“One talks,” he said, “and then weeks and months later one learns the meaning of the things one has been saying. I was saying a month ago that this is the biggest thing that has happened in history. I said that this was the supreme call upon the will and resources of England. I said there was not a life in all our empire that would not be vitally changed by this war. I said all these things; they came through my mouth; I suppose there was a sort of thought behind them.... Only at this moment do I understand what it is that I said. Now — let me say it over as if I had never said it before; this *is* the biggest thing in history, that we *are* all called upon to do our utmost to resist this tremendous attack upon the peace and freedom of the world. Well, doing our utmost does not mean standing about in pleasant gardens waiting for the newspaper.... It means the abandonment of ease and security....

“How lazy we English are nowadays! How readily we grasp the comforting delusion that excuses us from exertion. For the last three weeks I have been deliberately believing that a little British army — they say it is scarcely a hundred thousand men — would somehow break this rush of millions. But it has been driven back, as any one not in love with easy dreams might have known it would be driven back — here and then here and then here. It has been fighting night and day. It has made the most splendid fight — and the most ineffectual fight.... You see the vast swing of the German flail through Belgium. And meanwhile we have been standing about talking of the use we would make of our victory....

“We have been asleep,” he said. “This country has been asleep....

“At the back of our minds,” he went on bitterly, “I suppose we thought the French would do the heavy work on land — while we stood by at sea. So far as we thought at all. We’re so temperate-minded; we’re so full of qualifications and discretions.... And so leisurely.... Well, France is down. We’ve got to fight for France now over the ruins of Paris. Because you and I, Manning, didn’t grasp the scale of it, because we indulged in generalisations when we ought to have been drilling and working. Because we’ve been doing ‘business as usual’ and all the rest of that sort of thing, while Western civilisation has been in its death agony. If this is to be another ‘71, on a larger scale and against not merely France but all Europe, if Prussianism is to walk rough-shod over civilisation, if France is to be crushed and Belgium murdered, then life is not worth having. Compared with such an issue as that no other issue, no other interest matters. Yet what are we doing to decide it — you and I? How can it end in anything but a German triumph if you and I, by the million, stand by....”

He paused despairfully and stared at the map.

“What ought we to be doing?” asked Mr. Manning.

“Every man ought to be in training,” said Mr. Britling. “Every one ought to be participating.... In some way.... At any rate we ought not to be taking our ease at Matching’s Easy any more....”

“It interrupts everything,” said Hugh suddenly. “These Prussians are the biggest nuisance the world has ever seen.”

He considered. “It’s like every one having to run out because the house catches fire. But of course we have to beat them. It has to be done. And every one has to take a share.

“Then we can get on with our work again.”

Mr. Britling turned his eyes to his eldest son with a startled expression. He had been speaking — generally. For the moment he had forgotten Hugh.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

TAKING PART

§ 1

There were now two chief things in the mind of Mr. Britling. One was a large and valiant thing, a thing of heroic and processional quality, the idea of taking up one's share in the great conflict, of leaving the Dower House and its circle of habits and activities and going out — . From that point he wasn't quite sure where he was to go, nor exactly what he meant to do. His imagination inclined to the figure of a volunteer in an improvised uniform inflicting great damage upon a raiding invader from behind a hedge. The uniform, one presumes, would have been something in the vein of the costume in which he met Mr. Direck. With a "brassard." Or he thought of himself as working at a telephone or in an office engaged upon any useful quasi-administrative work that called for intelligence rather than training. Still, of course, with a "brassard." A month ago he would have had doubts about the meaning of "brassard"; now it seemed to be the very keyword for national organisation. He had started for London by the early train on Monday morning with the intention of immediate enrolment in any such service that offered; of getting, in fact, into his brassard at once. The morning papers he bought at the station dashed his conviction of the inevitable fall of Paris into hopeful doubts, but did not shake his resolution. The effect of rout and pursuit and retreat and retreat and retreat had disappeared from the news. The German right was being counter-attacked, and seemed in danger of getting pinched between Paris and Verdun with the British on its flank. This relieved his mind, but it did nothing to modify his new realisation of the tremendous gravity of the war. Even if the enemy were held and repulsed a little there was still work for every man in the task of forcing them back upon their own country. This war was an immense thing, it would touch everybody.... That meant that every man must give himself. That he had to give himself. He must let nothing stand between him and that

clear understanding. It was utterly shameful now to hold back and not to do one's utmost for civilisation, for England, for all the ease and safety one had been given — against these drilled, commanded, obsessed millions.

Mr. Britling was a flame of exalted voluntaryism, of patriotic devotion, that day.

But behind all this bravery was the other thing, the second thing in the mind of Mr. Britling, a fear. He was prepared now to spread himself like some valiant turkey-gobbler, every feather at its utmost, against the aggressor. He was prepared to go out and flourish bayonets, march and dig to the limit of his power, shoot, die in a ditch if needful, rather than permit German militarism to dominate the world. He had no fear for himself. He was prepared to perish upon the battlefield or cut a valiant figure in the military hospital. But what he perceived very clearly and did his utmost not to perceive was this qualifying and discouraging fact, that the war monster was not nearly so disposed to meet him as he was to meet the war, and that its eyes were fixed on something beside and behind him, that it was already only too evidently stretching out a long and shadowy arm past him towards Teddy — and towards Hugh....

The young are the food of war....

Teddy wasn't Mr. Britling's business anyhow. Teddy must do as he thought proper. Mr. Britling would not even advise upon that. And as for Hugh —

Mr. Britling did his best to brazen it out.

"My eldest boy is barely seventeen," he said. "He's keen to go, and I'd be sorry if he wasn't. He'll get into some cadet corps of course — he's already done something of that kind at school. Or they'll take him into the Territorials. But before he's nineteen everything will be over, one way or another. I'm afraid, poor chap, he'll feel sold...."

And having thrust Hugh safely into the background of his mind as — juvenile, doing a juvenile share, no sort of man yet — Mr. Britling could give a free rein to his generous imaginations of a national uprising. From the idea of a universal participation in the struggle he passed by an easy transition to an anticipation of all Britain armed and gravely embattled. Across gulfs of obstinate

reality. He himself was prepared to say, and accordingly he felt that the great mass of the British must be prepared to say to the government: "Here we are at your disposal. This is not a diplomatists' war nor a War Office war; this is a war of the whole people. We are all willing and ready to lay aside our usual occupations and offer our property and ourselves. Whim and individual action are for peace times. Take us and use us as you think fit. Take all we possess." When he thought of the government in this way, he forgot the governing class he knew. The slack-trousered Raeburn, the prim, attentive Philbert, Lady Frensham at the top of her voice, stern, preposterous Carson, boozy Bandershoot and artful Taper, wily Asquith, the eloquent yet unsubstantial George, and the immobile Grey, vanished out of his mind; all those representative exponents of the way things are done in Great Britain faded in the glow of his imaginative effort; he forgot the dreary debates, the floundering newspapers, the "bluffs," the intrigues, the sly bargains of the week-end party, the "schoolboy honour" of grown men, the universal weak dishonesty in thinking; he thought simply of a simplified and ideal government that governed. He thought vaguely of something behind and beyond them, England, the ruling genius of the land; something with a dignified assurance and a stable will. He imagined this shadowy ruler miraculously provided with schemes and statistics against this supreme occasion which had for so many years been the most conspicuous probability before the country. His mind leaping forwards to the conception of a great nation reluctantly turning its vast resources to the prosecution of a righteous defensive war, filled in the obvious corollaries of plan and calculation. He thought that somewhere "up there" there must be people who could count and who had counted everything that we might need for such a struggle, and organisers who had schemed and estimated down to practicable and manageable details....

Such lapses from knowledge to faith are perhaps necessary that human heroism may be possible....

His conception of his own share in the great national uprising was a very modest one. He was a writer, a footnote to reality; he had no trick of command over men, his rôle was observation rather than organisation, and he saw himself only as an insignificant individual

dropping from his individuality into his place in a great machine, taking a rifle in a trench, guarding a bridge, filling a cartridge — just with a brassard or something like that on — until the great task was done. Sunday night was full of imaginations of order, of the countryside standing up to its task, of roads cleared and resources marshalled, of the petty interests of the private life altogether set aside. And mingling with that it was still possible for Mr. Britling, he was still young enough, to produce such dreams of personal service, of sudden emergencies swiftly and bravely met, of conspicuous daring and exceptional rewards, such dreams as hover in the brains of every imaginative recruit....

The detailed story of Mr. Britling's two days' search for some easy and convenient ladder into the service of his threatened country would be a voluminous one. It would begin with the figure of a neatly brushed patriot, with an intent expression upon his intelligent face, seated in the Londonward train, reading the war news — the first comforting war news for many days — and trying not to look as though his life was torn up by the roots and all his being aflame with devotion; and it would conclude after forty-eight hours of fuss, inquiry, talk, waiting, telephoning, with the same gentleman, a little fagged and with a kind of weary apathy in his eyes, returning by the short cut from the station across Claverings park to resume his connection with his abandoned roots. The essential process of the interval had been the correction of Mr. Britling's temporary delusion that the government of the British Empire is either intelligent, instructed, or wise.

The great "Business as Usual" phase was already passing away, and London was in the full tide of recruiting enthusiasm. That tide was breaking against the most miserable arrangements for enlistment it is possible to imagine. Overtaxed and not very competent officers, whose one idea of being very efficient was to refuse civilian help and be very, very slow and circumspect and very dignified and overbearing, sat in dirty little rooms and snarled at this unheard-of England that pressed at door and window for enrolment. Outside every recruiting office crowds of men and youths waited, leaning against walls, sitting upon the pavements, waited for long hours, waiting to the end of the day and returning next morning, without

shelter, without food, many sick with hunger; men who had hurried up from the country, men who had thrown up jobs of every kind, clerks, shopmen, anxious only to serve England and "teach those damned Germans a lesson." Between them and this object they had discovered a perplexing barrier; an inattention. As Mr. Britling made his way by St. Martin's Church and across Trafalgar Square and marked the weary accumulation of this magnificently patriotic stuff, he had his first inkling of the imaginative insufficiency of the War Office that had been so suddenly called upon to organise victory. He was to be more fully informed when he reached his club.

His impression of the streets through which he passed was an impression of great unrest. There were noticeably fewer omnibuses and less road traffic generally, but there was a quite unusual number of drifting pedestrians. The current on the pavements was irritatingly sluggish. There were more people standing about, and fewer going upon their business. This was particularly the case with the women he saw. Many of them seemed to have drifted in from the suburbs and outskirts of London in a state of vague expectation, unable to stay in their homes.

Everywhere there were the flags of the Allies; in shop windows, over doors, on the bonnets of automobiles, on people's breasts, and there was a great quantity of recruiting posters on the hoardings and in windows: "Your King and Country Need You" was the chief text, and they still called for "A Hundred Thousand Men" although the demand of Lord Kitchener had risen to half a million. There were also placards calling for men on nearly all the taxicabs. The big windows of the offices of the Norddeutscher Lloyd in Cockspur Street were boarded up, and plastered thickly with recruiting appeals.

At his club Mr. Britling found much talk and belligerent stir. In the hall Wilkins the author was displaying a dummy rifle of bent iron rod to several interested members. It was to be used for drilling until rifles could be got, and it could be made for eighteen pence. This was the first intimation Mr. Britling got that the want of foresight of the War Office only began with its unpreparedness for recruits. Men were talking very freely in the club; one of the temporary effects of the war in its earlier stages was to produce a partial thaw in the constitutional British shyness; and men who had glowered at Mr.

Britling over their lunches and had been glowered at by Mr. Britling in silence for years now started conversations with him.

"What is a man of my sort to do?" asked a clean-shaven barrister.

"Exactly what I have been asking," said Mr. Britling. "They are fixing the upward age for recruits at thirty; it's absurdly low. A man well over forty like myself is quite fit to line a trench or guard a bridge. I'm not so bad a shot...."

"We've been discussing home defence volunteers," said the barrister. "Anyhow we ought to be drilling. But the War Office sets its face as sternly against our doing anything of the sort as though we were going to join the Germans. It's absurd. Even if we older men aren't fit to go abroad, we could at least release troops who could."

"If you had the rifles," said a sharp-featured man in grey to the right of Mr. Britling.

"I suppose they are to be got," said Mr. Britling.

The sharp-featured man indicated by appropriate facial action and head-shaking that this was by no means the case.

"Every dead man, many wounded men, most prisoners," he said, "mean each one a rifle lost. We have lost five-and-twenty thousand rifles alone since the war began. Quite apart from arming new troops we have to replace those rifles with the drafts we send out. Do you know what is the maximum weekly output of rifles at the present time in this country?"

Mr. Britling did not know.

"Nine thousand."

Mr. Britling suddenly understood the significance of Wilkins and his dummy gun.

The sharp-featured man added with an air of concluding the matter: "It's the barrels are the trouble. Complicated machinery. We haven't got it and we can't make it in a hurry. And there you are!"

The sharp-featured man had a way of speaking almost as if he was throwing bombs. He threw one now. "Zinc," he said.

"We're not short of zinc?" said the lawyer.

The sharp-featured man nodded, and then became explicit.

Zinc was necessary for cartridges; it had to be refined zinc and very pure, or the shooting went wrong. Well, we had let the refining business drift away from England to Belgium and Germany. There

were just one or two British firms still left.... Unless we bucked up tremendously we should get caught short of cartridges.... At any rate of cartridges so made as to ensure good shooting. “And there you are!” said the sharp-featured man.

But the sharp-featured man did not at that time represent any considerable section of public thought. “I suppose after all we can get rifles from America,” said the lawyer. “And as for zinc, if the shortage is known the shortage will be provided for....”

The prevailing topic in the smoking-room upstairs was the inability of the War Office to deal with the flood of recruits that was pouring in, and its hostility to any such volunteering as Mr. Britling had in mind. Quite a number of members wanted to volunteer; there was much talk of their fitness; “I’m fifty-four,” said one, “and I could do my twenty-five miles in marching kit far better than half those boys of nineteen.” Another was thirty-eight. “I must hold the business together,” he said; “but why anyhow shouldn’t I learn to shoot and use a bayonet?” The personal pique of the rejected lent force to their criticisms of the recruiting and general organisation. “The War Office has one incurable system,” said a big mine-owner. “During peace time it runs all its home administration with men who will certainly be wanted at the front directly there is a war. Directly war comes, therefore, there is a shift all round, and a new untried man — usually a dug-out in an advanced state of decay — is stuck into the job. Chaos follows automatically. The War Office always has done this, and so far as one can see it always will. It seems incapable of realising that another man will be wanted until the first is taken away. Its imagination doesn’t even run to that.”

Mr. Britling found a kindred spirit in Wilkins.

Wilkins was expounding his tremendous scheme for universal volunteering. Everybody was to be accepted. Everybody was to be assigned and registered and — *badged*.

“A brassard,” said Mr. Britling.

“It doesn’t matter whether we really produce a fighting force or not,” said Wilkins. “Everybody now is enthusiastic — and serious. Everybody is willing to put on some kind of uniform and submit to some sort of orders. And the thing to do is to catch them in the willing stage. Now is the time to get the country lined up and

organised, ready to meet the internal stresses that are bound to come later. But there's no disposition whatever to welcome this universal offering. It's just as though this war was a treat to which only the very select friends of the War Office were to be admitted. And I don't admit that the national volunteers would be ineffective — even from a military point of view. There are plenty of fit men of our age, and men of proper age who are better employed at home — armament workers for example, and there are all the boys under the age. They may not be under the age before things are over...."

He was even prepared to plan uniforms.

"A brassard," repeated Mr. Britling, "and perhaps coloured strips on the revers of a coat."

"Colours for the counties," said Wilkins, "and if there isn't coloured cloth to be got there's — red flannel. Anything is better than leaving the mass of people to mob about...."

A momentary vision danced before Mr. Britling's eyes of red flannel petticoats being torn up in a rapid improvisation of soldiers to resist a sudden invasion. Passing washerwomen suddenly requisitioned. But one must not let oneself be laughed out of good intentions because of ridiculous accessories. The idea at any rate was the sound one....

The vision of what ought to be done shone brightly while Mr. Britling and Mr. Wilkins maintained it. But presently under discouraging reminders that there were no rifles, no instructors, and, above all, the open hostility of the established authorities, it faded again....

Afterwards in other conversations Mr. Britling reverted to more modest ambitions.

"Is there no clerical work, no minor administrative work, a man might be used for?" he asked.

"Any old dug-out," said the man with the thin face, "any old doddering Colonel Newcome, is preferred to you in that matter...."

Mr. Britling emerged from his club about half-past three with his mind rather dishevelled and with his private determination to do something promptly for his country's needs blunted by a perplexing "How?" His search for doors and ways where no doors and ways existed went on with a gathering sense of futility.

He had a ridiculous sense of pique at being left out, like a child shut out from a room in which a vitally interesting game is being played.

"After all, it is *our* war," he said.

He caught the phrase as it dropped from his lips with a feeling that it said more than he intended. He turned it over and examined it, and the more he did so the more he was convinced of its truth and soundness....

§ 2

By night there was a new strangeness about London. The authorities were trying to suppress the more brilliant illumination of the chief thoroughfares, on account of the possibility of an air raid. Shopkeepers were being compelled to pull down their blinds, and many of the big standard lights were unlit. Mr. Britling thought these precautions were very fussy and unnecessary, and likely to lead to accidents amidst the traffic. But it gave a Rembrandtesque quality to the London scene, turned it into mysterious arrangements of brown shadows and cones and bars of light. At first many people were recalcitrant, and here and there a restaurant or a draper's window still blazed out and broke the gloom. There were also a number of insubordinate automobiles with big head-lights. But the police were being unusually firm....

"It will all glitter again in a little time," he told himself.

He heard an old lady who was projecting from an offending automobile at Piccadilly Circus in hot dispute with a police officer. "Zeppelins indeed!" she said. "What nonsense! As if they would *dare* to come here! Who would *let* them, I should like to know?"

Probably a friend of Lady Frensham's, he thought. Still — the idea of Zeppelins over London did seem rather ridiculous to Mr. Britling. He would not have liked to have been caught talking of it himself.... There never had been Zeppelins over London. They were gas bags....

§ 3

On Wednesday morning Mr. Britling returned to the Dower House, and he was still a civilian unassigned.

In the hall he found a tall figure in khaki standing and reading *The Times* that usually lay upon the hall table. The figure turned at Mr. Britling's entry, and revealed the aquiline features of Mr. Lawrence Carmine. It was as if his friend had stolen a march on him.

But Carmine's face showed nothing of the excitement and patriotic satisfaction that would have seemed natural to Mr. Britling. He was white and jaded, as if he had not slept for many nights. "You see," he explained almost apologetically of the three stars upon his sleeve, "I used to be a captain of volunteers." He had been put in charge of a volunteer force which had been re-embodied and entrusted with the care of the bridges, gasworks, factories and railway tunnels, and with a number of other minor but necessary duties round about Easinghampton. "I've just got to shut up my house," said Captain Carmine, "and go into lodgings. I confess I hate it.... But anyhow it can't last six months.... But it's beastly.... Ugh!..."

He seemed disposed to expand that "Ugh," and then thought better of it. And presently Mr. Britling took control of the conversation.

His two days in London had filled him with matter, and he was glad to have something more than Hugh and Teddy and Mrs. Britling to talk it upon. What was happening now in Great Britain, he declared, was *adjustment*. It was an attempt on the part of a great unorganised nation, an attempt, instinctive at present rather than intelligent, to readjust its government and particularly its military organisation to the new scale of warfare that Germany had imposed upon the world. For two strenuous decades the British navy had been growing enormously under the pressure of German naval preparations, but the British military establishment had experienced no corresponding expansion. It was true there had been a futile, rather foolishly conducted agitation for universal military service, but there had been no accumulation of material, no preparation of armament-making machinery, no planning and no foundations for any sort of organisation that would have facilitated the rapid

expansion of the fighting forces of a country in a time of crisis. Such an idea was absolutely antagonistic to the mental habits of the British military caste. The German method of incorporating all the strength and resources of the country into one national fighting machine was quite strange to the British military mind — still. Even after a month of war. War had become the comprehensive business of the German nation; to the British it was an incidental adventure. In Germany the nation was militarised, in England the army was specialised. The nation for nearly every practical purpose got along without it. Just as political life had also become specialised.... Now suddenly we wanted a government to speak for every one, and an army of the whole people. How were we to find it?

Mr. Britling dwelt upon this idea of the specialised character of the British army and navy and government. It seemed to him to be the clue to everything that was jarring in the London spectacle. The army had been a thing aloof, for a special end. It had developed all the characteristics of a caste. It had very high standards along the lines of its specialisation, but it was inadaptable and conservative. Its exclusiveness was not so much a deliberate culture as a consequence of its detached function. It touched the ordinary social body chiefly through three other specialised bodies, the court, the church, and the stage. Apart from that it saw the great unofficial civilian world as something vague, something unsympathetic, something possibly antagonistic, which it comforted itself by snubbing when it dared and tricking when it could, something that projected members of Parliament towards it and was stingy about money. Directly one grasped how apart the army lived from the ordinary life of the community, from industrialism or from economic necessities, directly one understood that the great mass of Englishmen were simply "outsiders" to the War Office mind, just as they were "outsiders" to the political clique, one began to realise the complete unfitness of either government or War Office for the conduct of so great a national effort as was now needed. These people "up there" did not know anything of the broad mass of English life at all, they did not know how or where things were made; when they wanted things they just went to a shop somewhere and got them. This was the necessary psychology of a small army under a clique

government. Nothing else was to be expected. But now — somehow — the nation had to take hold of the government that it had neglected so long....

"You see," said Mr. Britling, repeating a phrase that was becoming more and more essential to his thoughts, "this is *our* war....

"Of course," said Mr. Britling, "these things are not going to be done without a conflict. We aren't going to take hold of our country which we have neglected so long without a lot of internal friction. But in England we can make these readjustments without revolution. It is our strength....

"At present England is confused — but it's a healthy confusion. It's astir. We have more things to defeat than just Germany....

"These hosts of recruits — weary, uncared for, besieging the recruiting stations. It's symbolical.... Our tremendous reserves of will and manhood. Our almost incredible insufficiency of direction....

"Those people up there have no idea of the Will that surges up in England. They are timid little manoeuvring people, afraid of property, afraid of newspapers, afraid of trade-unions. They aren't leading us against the Germans; they are just being shoved against the Germans by necessity...."

From this Mr. Britling broke away into a fresh addition to his already large collection of contrasts between England and Germany. Germany was a nation which has been swallowed up and incorporated by an army and an administration; the Prussian military system had assimilated to itself the whole German life. It was a State in a state of repletion, a State that had swallowed all its people. Britain was not a State. It was an unincorporated people. The British army, the British War Office, and the British administration had assimilated nothing; they were little old partial things; the British nation lay outside them, beyond their understanding and tradition; a formless new thing, but a great thing; and now this British nation, this real nation, the "outsiders," had to take up arms. Suddenly all the underlying ideas of that outer, greater English life beyond politics, beyond the services, were challenged, its tolerant good humour, its freedom, and its irresponsibility. It was not simply English life that was threatened; it was all the latitudes of democracy, it was every liberal idea and every liberty. It was civilisation in danger. The

uncharted liberal system had been taken by the throat; it had to "make good" or perish....

"I went up to London expecting to be told what to do. There is no one to tell any one what to do.... Much less is there any one to compel us what to do....

"There's a War Office like a college during a riot, with its doors and windows barred; there's a government like a cockle boat in an Atlantic gale....

"One feels the thing ought to have come upon us like the sound of a trumpet. Instead, until now, it has been like a great noise, that we just listened to, in the next house.... And now slowly the nation awakes. London is just like a dazed sleeper waking up out of a deep sleep to fire and danger, tumult and cries for help, near at hand. The streets give you exactly that effect. People are looking about and listening. One feels that at any moment, in a pause, in a silence, there may come, from far away, over the houses, faint and little, the boom of guns or the small outcries of little French or Belgian villages in agony...."

Such was the gist of Mr. Britling's discourse.

He did most of the table talk, and all that mattered. Teddy was an assenting voice, Hugh was silent and apparently a little inattentive, Mrs. Britling was thinking of the courses and the servants and the boys, and giving her husband only half an ear, Captain Carmine said little and seemed to be troubled by some disagreeable preoccupation. Now and then he would endorse or supplement the things Mr. Britling was saying. Thrice he remarked: "People still do not begin to understand."...

§ 4

It was only when they sat together in the barn court out of the way of Mrs. Britling and the children that Captain Carmine was able to explain his listless bearing and jaded appearance. He was suffering from a bad nervous shock. He had hardly taken over his command before one of his men had been killed — and killed in a manner that had left a scar upon his mind.

The man had been guarding a tunnel, and he had been knocked down by one train when crossing the line behind another. So it was that the bomb of Sarajevo killed its first victim in Essex. Captain Carmine had found the body. He had found the body in a cloudy moonlight; he had almost fallen over it; and his sensations and emotions had been eminently disagreeable. He had had to drag the body — it was very dreadfully mangled — off the permanent way, the damaged, almost severed head had twisted about very horribly in the uncertain light, and afterwards he had found his sleeves saturated with blood. He had not noted this at the time, and when he had discovered it he had been sick. He had thought the whole thing more horrible and hateful than any nightmare, but he had succeeded in behaving with a sufficient practicality to set an example to his men. Since this had happened he had not had an hour of dreamless sleep.

"One doesn't expect to be called upon like that," said Captain Carmine, "suddenly here in England.... When one is smoking after supper...."

Mr. Britling listened to this experience with distressed brows. All his talking and thinking became to him like the open page of a monthly magazine. Across it this bloody smear, this thing of red and black, was dragged....

§ 5

The smear was still bright red in Mr. Britling's thoughts when Teddy came to him.

"I must go," said Teddy, "I can't stop here any longer."

"Go where?"

"Into khaki. I've been thinking of it ever since the war began. Do you remember what you said when we were bullying off at hockey on Bank Holiday — the day before war was declared?"

Mr. Britling had forgotten completely; he made an effort. "What did I say?"

"You said, 'What the devil are we doing at this hockey? We ought to be drilling or shooting against those confounded Germans!' ... I've never forgotten it.... I ought to have done it before. I've been a scout-

master. In a little while they will want officers. In London, I'm told, there are a lot of officers' training corps putting men through the work as quickly as possible.... If I could go...."

"What does Letty think?" said Mr. Britling after a pause. This was right, of course — the only right thing — and yet he was surprised.

"She says if you'd let her try to do my work for a time...."

"She *wants* you to go?"

"Of course she does," said Teddy. "She wouldn't like me to be a shirker.... But I can't unless you help."

"I'm quite ready to do that," said Mr. Britling. "But somehow I didn't think it of you. I hadn't somehow thought of *you*—"

"What *did* you think of me?" asked Teddy.

"It's bringing the war home to us.... Of course you ought to go — if you want to go."

He reflected. It was odd to find Teddy in this mood, strung up and serious and businesslike. He felt that in the past he had done Teddy injustice; this young man wasn't as trivial as he had thought him....

They fell to discussing ways and means; there might have to be a loan for Teddy's outfit, if he did presently secure a commission. And there were one or two other little matters.... Mr. Britling dismissed a ridiculous fancy that he was paying to send Teddy away to something that neither that young man nor Letty understood properly....

The next day Teddy vanished Londonward on his bicycle. He was going to lodge in London in order to be near his training. He was zealous. Never before had Teddy been zealous. Mrs. Teddy came to the Dower House for the correspondence, trying not to look self-conscious and important.

Two Mondays later a very bright-eyed, excited little boy came running to Mr. Britling, who was smoking after lunch in the rose garden. "Daddy!" squealed the small boy. "Teddy! In khaki!"

The other junior Britling danced in front of the hero, who was walking beside Mrs. Britling and trying not to be too aggressively a soldierly figure. He looked a very man in khaki and more of a boy than ever. Mrs. Teddy came behind, quietly elated.

Mr. Britling had a recurrence of that same disagreeable fancy that these young people didn't know exactly what they were going into.

He wished he was in khaki himself; then he fancied this compunction wouldn't trouble him quite so much.

The afternoon with them deepened his conviction that they really didn't in the slightest degree understand. Life had been so good to them hitherto, that even the idea of Teddy's going off to the war seemed a sort of fun to them. It was just a thing he was doing, a serious, seriously amusing, and very creditable thing. It involved his dressing up in these unusual clothes, and receiving salutes in the street.... They discussed every possible aspect of his military outlook with the zest of children, who recount the merits of a new game. They were putting Teddy through his stages at a tremendous pace. In quite a little time he thought he would be given the chance of a commission.

"They want subalterns badly. Already they've taken nearly a third of our people," he said, and added with the wistfulness of one who glances at inaccessible delights: "one or two may get out to the front quite soon."

He spoke as a young actor might speak of a star part. And with a touch of the quality of one who longs to travel in strange lands.... One must be patient. Things come at last....

"If I'm killed she gets eighty pounds a year," Teddy explained among many other particulars.

He smiled — the smile of a confident immortal at this amusing idea.

"He's my little annuity," said Letty, also smiling, "dead or alive."

"We'll miss Teddy in all sorts of ways," said Mr. Britling.

"It's only for the duration of the war," said Teddy. "And Letty's very intelligent. I've done my best to chasten the evil in her."

"If you think you're going to get back your job after the war," said Letty, "you're very much mistaken. I'm going to raise the standard."

"*You*!" said Teddy, regarding her coldly, and proceeded ostentatiously to talk of other things.

§ 6

“Hugh’s going to be in khaki too,” the elder junior told Teddy. “He’s too young to go out in Kitchener’s army, but he’s joined the Territorials. He went off on Thursday.... I wish Gilbert and me was older....”

Mr. Britling had known his son’s purpose since the evening of Teddy’s announcement.

Hugh had come to his father’s study as he was sitting musing at his writing-desk over the important question whether he should continue his “Examination of War” uninterruptedly, or whether he should not put that on one side for a time and set himself to state as clearly as possible the not too generally recognised misfit between the will and strength of Britain on the one hand and her administrative and military organisation on the other. He felt that an enormous amount of human enthusiasm and energy was being refused and wasted; that if things went on as they were going there would continue to be a quite disastrous shortage of gear, and that some broadening change was needed immediately if the swift exemplary victory over Germany that his soul demanded was to be ensured. Suppose he were to write some noisy articles at once, an article, for instance, to be called “The War of the Mechanics” or “The War of Gear,” and another on “Without Civil Strength there is no Victory.” If he wrote such things would they be noted or would they just vanish indistinguishably into the general mental tumult? Would they be audible and helpful shouts, or just waste of shouting?... That at least was what he supposed himself to be thinking; it was, at any rate, the main current of his thinking; but all the same, just outside the circle of his attention a number of other things were dimly apprehended, bobbing up and down in the flood and ready at the slightest chance to swirl into the centre of his thoughts. There was, for instance, Captain Carmine in the moonlight lugging up a railway embankment something horrible, something loose and wet and warm that had very recently been a man. There was Teddy, serious and patriotic — filling a futile penman with incredulous respect. There was the thin-faced man at the club, and a curious satisfaction he had betrayed in the public disarrangement. And there was Hugh. Particularly there was Hugh, silent but watchful. The boy never babbled. He had his mother’s gift of deep

dark silences. Out of which she was wont to flash, a Black Princess waving a sword. He wandered for a little while among memories.... But Hugh didn't come out like that, though it always seemed possible he might — perhaps he didn't come out because he was a son. Revelation to his father wasn't his business.... What was he thinking of it all? What was he going to do? Mr. Britling was acutely anxious that his son should volunteer; he was almost certain that he would volunteer, but there was just a little shadow of doubt whether some extraordinary subtlety of mind mightn't have carried the boy into a pacifist attitude. No! that was impossible. In the face of Belgium.... But as greatly — and far more deeply in the warm flesh of his being — did Mr. Britling desire that no harm, no evil should happen to Hugh....

The door opened, and Hugh came in....

Mr. Britling glanced over his shoulder with an affectation of indifference. "Hal-*lo!*" he said. "What do you want?"

Hugh walked awkwardly to the hearthrug.

"Oh!" he said in an off-hand tone; "I suppose I've got to go soldiering for a bit. I just thought — I'd rather like to go off with a man I know to-morrow...."

Mr. Britling's manner remained casual.

"It's the only thing to do now, I'm afraid," he said.

He turned in his chair and regarded his son. "What do you mean to do? O.T.C.?"

"I don't think I should make much of an officer. I hate giving orders to other people. We thought we'd just go together into the Essex Regiment as privates...."

There was a little pause. Both father and son had rehearsed this scene in their minds several times, and now they found that they had no use for a number of sentences that had been most effective in these rehearsals. Mr. Britling scratched his cheek with the end of his pen. "I'm glad you want to go, Hugh," he said.

"I *don't* want to go," said Hugh with his hands deep in his pockets. "I want to go and work with Cardinal. But this job has to be done by every one. Haven't you been saying as much all day?... It's like turning out to chase a burglar or suppress a mad dog. It's like necessary sanitation...."

“You aren’t attracted by soldiering?”

“Not a bit. I won’t pretend it, Daddy. I think the whole business is a bore. Germany seems to me now just like some heavy horrible dirty mass that has fallen across Belgium and France. We’ve got to shove the stuff back again. That’s all....”

He volunteered some further remarks to his father’s silence.

“You know I can’t get up a bit of tootle about this business,” he said. “I think killing people or getting killed is a thoroughly nasty habit.... I expect my share will be just drilling and fatigue duties and route marches, and loafing here in England....”

“You can’t possibly go out for two years,” said Mr. Britling, as if he regretted it.

A slight hesitation appeared in Hugh’s eyes. “I suppose not,” he said.

“Things ought to be over by then — anyhow,” Mr. Britling added, betraying his real feelings.

“So it’s really just helping at the furthest end of the shove,” Hugh endorsed, but still with that touch of reservation in his manner....

The pause had the effect of closing the theoretical side of the question. “Where do you propose to enlist?” said Mr. Britling, coming down to practical details.

§ 7

The battle of the Marne passed into the battle of the Aisne, and then the long lines of the struggle streamed north-westward until the British were back in Belgium failing to clutch Menin and then defending Ypres. The elation of September followed the bedazzlement and dismay of August into the chapter of forgotten moods; and Mr. Britling’s sense of the magnitude, the weight and duration of this war beyond all wars, increased steadily. The feel of it was less and less a feeling of crisis and more and more a feeling of new conditions. It wasn’t as it had seemed at first, the end of one human phase and the beginning of another; it was in itself a phase. It was a new way of living. And still he could find no real point of contact for himself with it all except the point of his pen. Only at his

writing-desk, and more particularly at night, were the great presences of the conflict his. Yet he was always desiring some more personal and physical participation.

Hugh came along one day in October in an ill-fitting uniform, looking already coarser in fibre and with a nose scorched red by the autumnal sun. He said the life was rough, but it made him feel extraordinarily well; perhaps man was made to toil until he dropped asleep from exhaustion, to fast for ten or twelve hours and then eat like a wolf. He was acquiring a taste for Woodbine cigarettes, and a heady variety of mineral waters called Monsters. He feared promotion; he felt he could never take the high line with other human beings demanded of a corporal. He was still trying to read a little chemistry and crystallography, but it didn't "go with the life." In the scanty leisure of a recruit in training it was more agreeable to lie about and write doggerel verses and draw caricatures of the men in one's platoon. Invited to choose what he liked by his family, he demanded a large tuckbox such as he used to have at school, only "*much* larger," and a big tin of insect powder. It must be able to kill ticks....

When he had gone, the craving for a personal share in the nation's physical exertions became overpowering in Mr. Britling. He wanted, he felt, to "get his skin into it." He had decided that the volunteer movement was a hopeless one. The War Office, after a stout resistance to any volunteer movement at all, decided to recognise it in such a manner as to make it ridiculous. The volunteers were to have no officers and no uniforms that could be remotely mistaken for those of the regulars, so that in the event of an invasion the Germans would be able to tell what they had to deal with miles away. Wilkins found his conception of a whole nation, all enrolled, all listed and badged according to capacity, his dream of every one falling into place in one great voluntary national effort, treated as the childish dreaming of that most ignorant of all human types, a "novelist." *Punch* was delicately funny about him; he was represented as wearing a preposterous cocked hat of his own design, designing cocked hats for every one. Wilkins was told to "shut up" in a multitude of anonymous letters, and publicly and privately to "leave things to Kitchener." To bellow in loud clear tones "leave things to

Kitchener," and to depart for the theatre or the river or an automobile tour, was felt very generally at that time to be the proper conduct for a patriot. There was a very general persuasion that to become a volunteer when one ought to be just modestly doing nothing at all, was in some obscure way a form of disloyalty....

So Mr. Britling was out of conceit with volunteering, and instead he went and was duly sworn and entrusted with the badge of a special constable. The duties of a special constable were chiefly not to understand what was going on in the military sphere, and to do what he was told in the way of watching and warding conceivably vulnerable points. He had also to be available in the event of civil disorder. Mr. Britling was provided with a truncheon and sent out to guard various culverts, bridges, and fords in the hilly country to the north-westward of Matching's Easy. It was never very clear to him what he would do if he found a motor-car full of armed enemies engaged in undermining a culvert, or treacherously deepening some strategic ford. He supposed he would either engage them in conversation, or hit them with his truncheon, or perhaps do both things simultaneously. But as he really did not believe for a moment that any human being was likely to tamper with the telegraphs, telephones, ways and appliances committed to his care, his uncertainty did not trouble him very much. He prowled the lonely lanes and paths in the darkness, and became better acquainted with a multitude of intriguing little cries and noises that came from the hedges and coverts at night. One night he rescued a young leveret from a stoat, who seemed more than half inclined to give him battle for its prey until he cowed and defeated it with the glare of his electric torch....

As he prowled the countryside under the great hemisphere of Essex sky, or leant against fences or sat drowsily upon gates or sheltered from wind and rain under ricks or sheds, he had much time for meditation, and his thoughts went down and down below his first surface impressions of the war. He thought no longer of the rights and wrongs of this particular conflict but of the underlying forces in mankind that made war possible; he planned no more ingenious treaties and conventions between the nations, and instead he faced the deeper riddles of essential evil and of conceivable changes in the

heart of man. And the rain assailed him and thorns tore him, and the soaked soft meadows bogged and betrayed his wandering feet, and the little underworld of the hedges and ditches hissed and squealed in the darkness and pursued and fled, and devoured or were slain.

And one night in April he was perplexed by a commotion among the pheasants and a barking of distant dogs, and then to his great astonishment he heard noises like a distant firework display and saw something like a phantom yellowish fountain-pen in the sky far away to the east lit intermittently by a quivering search-light and going very swiftly. And after he had rubbed his eyes and looked again, he realised that he was looking at a Zeppelin — a Zeppelin flying Londonward over Essex.

And all that night was wonder....

§ 8

While Mr. Britling was trying to find his duty in the routine of a special constable, Mrs. Britling set to work with great energy to attend various classes and qualify herself for Red Cross work. And early in October came the great drive of the Germans towards Antwerp and the sea, the great drive that was apparently designed to reach Calais, and which swept before it multitudes of Flemish refugees. There was an exodus of all classes from Antwerp into Holland and England, and then a huge process of depopulation in Flanders and the Pas de Calais. This flood came to the eastern and southern parts of England and particularly to London, and there hastily improvised organisations distributed it to a number of local committees, each of which took a share of the refugees, hired and furnished unoccupied houses for the use of the penniless, and assisted those who had means into comfortable quarters. The Matching's Easy committee found itself with accommodation for sixty people, and with a miscellaneous bag of thirty individuals entrusted to its care, who had been part of the load of a little pirate steam-boat from Ostend. There were two Flemish peasant families, and the rest were more or less middle-class refugees from Antwerp. They were brought from the station to the Tithe barn at Claverings,

and there distributed, under the personal supervision of Lady Homartyn and her agent, among those who were prepared for their entertainment. There was something like competition among the would-be hosts; everybody was glad of the chance of "doing something," and anxious to show these Belgians what England thought of their plucky little country. Mr. Britling was proud to lead off a Mr. Van der Pant, a neat little bearded man in a black tail-coat, a black bowler hat, and a knitted muffler, with a large rucksack and a conspicuously foreign-looking bicycle, to the hospitalities of Dower House. Mr. Van der Pant had escaped from Antwerp at the eleventh hour, he had caught a severe cold and, it would seem, lost his wife and family in the process; he had much to tell Mr. Britling, and in his zeal to tell it he did not at once discover that though Mr. Britling knew French quite well he did not know it very rapidly.

The dinner that night at the Dower House marked a distinct fresh step in the approach of the Great War to the old habits and securities of Matching's Easy. The war had indeed filled every one's mind to the exclusion of all other topics since its very beginning; it had carried off Herr Heinrich to Germany, Teddy to London, and Hugh to Colchester, it had put a special brassard round Mr. Britling's arm and carried him out into the night, given Mrs. Britling several certificates, and interrupted the frequent visits and gossip of Mr. Lawrence Carmine; but so far it had not established a direct contact between the life of Matching's Easy and the grim business of shot, shell, and bayonet at the front. But now here was the Dower House accomplishing wonderful idioms in Anglo-French, and an animated guest telling them — sometimes one understood clearly and sometimes the meaning was clouded — of men blown to pieces under his eyes, of fragments of human beings lying about in the streets; there was trouble over the expression *omoplate d'une femme*, until one of the youngsters got the dictionary and found out it was the shoulder-blade of a woman; of pools of blood — everywhere — and of flight in the darkness.

Mr. Van der Pant had been in charge of the dynamos at the Antwerp Power Station, he had been keeping the electrified wires in the entanglements "alive," and he had stuck to his post until the German high explosives had shattered his wires and rendered his

dynamos useless. He gave vivid little pictures of the noises of the bombardment, of the dead lying casually in the open spaces, of the failure of the German guns to hit the bridge of boats across which the bulk of the defenders and refugees escaped. He produced a little tourist's map of the city of Antwerp, and dotted at it with a pencil-case. "The — what do you call? — *obus*, ah, shells! fell, so and so and so." Across here he had fled on his *bécane*, and along here and here. He had carried off his rifle, and hid it with the rifles of various other Belgians between floor and ceiling of a house in Zeebrugge. He had found the pirate steamer in the harbour, its captain resolved to extract the uttermost fare out of every refugee he took to London. When they were all aboard and started they found there was no food except the hard ration biscuits of some Belgian soldiers. They had portioned this out like shipwrecked people on a raft.... The *mer* had been *calme*; thank Heaven! All night they had been pumping. He had helped with the pumps. But Mr. Van der Pant hoped still to get a reckoning with the captain of that ship.

Mr. Van der Pant had had shots at various Zeppelins. When the Zeppelins came to Antwerp everybody turned out on the roofs and shot at them. He was contemptuous of Zeppelins. He made derisive gestures to express his opinion of them. They could do nothing unless they came low, and if they came low you could hit them. One which ventured down had been riddled; it had had to drop all its bombs — luckily they fell in an open field — in order to make its lame escape. It was all nonsense to say, as the English papers did, that they took part in the final bombardment. Not a Zeppelin.... So he talked, and the Britling family listened and understood as much as they could, and replied and questioned in Anglo-French. Here was a man who but a few days ago had been steering his bicycle in the streets of Antwerp to avoid shell craters, pools of blood, and the torn-off arms and shoulder-blades of women. He had seen houses flaring, set afire by incendiary bombs, and once at a corner he had been knocked off his bicycle by the pouff of a bursting shell.... Not only were these things in the same world with us, they were sitting at our table.

He told one grim story of an invalid woman unable to move, lying in bed in her *appartement*, and of how her husband went out on the

balcony to look at the Zeppelin. There was a great noise of shooting. Ever and again he would put his head back into the room and tell her things, and then after a time he was silent and looked in no more. She called to him, and called again. Becoming frightened, she raised herself by a great effort and peered through the glass. At first she was too puzzled to understand what had happened. He was hanging over the front of the balcony, with his head twisted oddly. Twisted and shattered. He had been killed by shrapnel fired from the outer fortifications....

These are the things that happen in histories and stories. They do not happen at Matching's Easy....

Mr. Van der Pant did not seem to be angry with the Germans. But he manifestly regarded them as people to be killed. He denounced nothing that they had done; he related. They were just an evil accident that had happened to Belgium and mankind. They had to be destroyed. He gave Mr. Britling an extraordinary persuasion that knives were being sharpened in every cellar in Brussels and Antwerp against the day of inevitable retreat, of a resolution to exterminate the invader that was far too deep to be vindictive.... And the man was most amazingly unconquered. Mr. Britling perceived the label on his habitual dinner wine with a slight embarrassment. "Do you care," he asked, "to drink a German wine? This is Berncasteler from the Moselle." Mr. Van der Pant reflected. "But it is a good wine," he said. "After the peace it will be Belgian.... Yes, if we are to be safe in the future from such a war as this, we must have our boundaries right up to the Rhine."

So he sat and talked, flushed and, as it were, elated by the vividness of all that he had undergone. He had no trace of tragic quality, no hint of subjugation. But for his costume and his trimmed beard and his language he might have been a Dubliner or a Cockney.

He was astonishingly cut off from all his belongings. His house in Antwerp was abandoned to the invader; valuables and cherished objects very skilfully buried in the garden; he had no change of clothing except what the rucksack held. His only footwear were the boots he came in. He could not get on any of the slippers in the house, they were all too small for him, until suddenly Mrs. Britling bethought herself of Herr Heinrich's pair, still left unpacked upstairs.

She produced them, and they fitted exactly. It seemed only poetical justice, a foretaste of national compensations, to annex them to Belgium forthwith....

Also it became manifest that Mr. Van der Pant was cut off from all his family. And suddenly he became briskly critical of the English way of doing things. His wife and child had preceded him to England, crossing by Ostend and Folkestone a fortnight ago; her parents had come in August; both groups had been seized upon by improvised British organisations and very thoroughly and completely lost. He had written to the Belgian Embassy and they had referred him to a committee in London, and the committee had begun its services by discovering a Madame Van der Pant hitherto unknown to him at Camberwell, and displaying a certain suspicion and hostility when he said she would not do. There had been some futile telegrams. "What," asked Mr. Van der Pant, "ought one to do?"

Mr. Britling temporised by saying he would "make inquiries," and put Mr. Van der Pant off for two days. Then he decided to go up to London with him and "make inquiries on the spot." Mr. Van der Pant did not discover his family, but Mr. Britling discovered the profound truth of a comment of Herr Heinrich's which he had hitherto considered utterly trivial, but which had nevertheless stuck in his memory. "The English," Herr Heinrich had said, "do not understanding indexing. It is the root of all good organisation."

Finally, Mr. Van der Pant adopted the irregular course of asking every Belgian he met if they had seen any one from his district in Antwerp, if they had heard of the name of "Van der Pant," if they had encountered So-and-so or So-and-so. And by obstinacy and good fortune he really got on to the track of Madame Van der Pant; she had been carried off into Kent, and a day later the Dower House was the scene of a happy reunion. Madame was a slender lady, dressed well and plainly, with a Belgian common sense and a Catholic reserve, and André was like a child of wax, delicate and charming and unsubstantial. It seemed incredible that he could ever grow into anything so buoyant and incessant as his father. The Britling boys had to be warned not to damage him. A sitting-room was handed over to the Belgians for their private use, and for a time the two families settled into the Dower House side by side. Anglo-French

became the table language of the household. It hampered Mr. Britling very considerably. And both families set themselves to much unrecorded observation, much unspoken mutual criticism, and the exercise of great patience. It was tiresome for the English to be tied to a language that crippled all spontaneous talk; these linguistic gymnastics were fun to begin with, but soon they became very troublesome; and the Belgians suspected sensibilities in their hosts and a vast unwritten code of etiquette that did not exist; at first they were always waiting, as it were, to be invited or told or included; they seemed always deferentially backing out from intrusions. Moreover, they would not at first reveal what food they liked or what they didn't like, or whether they wanted more or less.... But these difficulties were soon smoothed away, they Anglicised quickly and cleverly. André grew bold and cheerful, and lost his first distrust of his rather older English playmates. Every day at lunch he produced a new, carefully prepared piece of English, though for some time he retained a marked preference for "Good morning, Saire," and "Thank you very mush," over all other locutions, and fell back upon them on all possible and many impossible occasions. And he could do some sleight-of-hand tricks with remarkable skill and humour, and fold paper with quite astonishing results. Meanwhile Mr. Van der Pant sought temporary employment in England, went for long rides upon his bicycle, exchanged views with Mr. Britling upon a variety of subjects, and became a wonderful player of hockey.

He played hockey with an extraordinary zest and nimbleness. Always he played in the tail coat, and the knitted muffler was never relinquished; he treated the game entirely as an occasion for quick tricks and personal agility; he bounded about the field like a kitten, he pirouetted suddenly, he leapt into the air and came down in new directions; his fresh-coloured face was alive with delight, the coat tails and the muffler trailed and swished about breathlessly behind his agility. He never passed to other players; he never realised his appointed place in the game; he sought simply to make himself a leaping screen about the ball as he drove it towards the goal. But André he would not permit to play at all, and Madame played like a lady, like a Madonna, like a saint carrying the instrument of her martyrdom. The game and its enthusiasms flowed round her and

receded from her; she remained quite valiant but tolerant, restrained; doing her best to do the extraordinary things required of her, but essentially a being of passive dignities, living chiefly for them; Letty careering by her, keen and swift, was like a creature of a different species....

Mr. Britling cerebrated abundantly about these contrasts.

"What has been blown in among us by these German shells," he said, "is essentially a Catholic family. Blown clean out of its setting.... We who are really — Neo-Europeans....

"At first you imagine there is nothing separating us but language. Presently you find that language is the least of our separations. These people are people living upon fundamentally different ideas from ours, ideas far more definite and complete than ours. You imagine that home in Antwerp as something much more rounded off, much more closed in, a cell, a real social unit, a different thing altogether from this place of meeting. Our boys play cheerfully with all comers; little André hasn't learnt to play with any outside children at all. We must seem incredibly *open* to these Van der Pants. A house without sides.... Last Sunday I could not find out the names of the two girls who came on bicycles and played so well. They came with Kitty Westropp. And Van der Pant wanted to know how they were related to us. Or how was it they came?...

"Look at Madame. She's built on a fundamentally different plan from any of our womenkind here. Tennis, the bicycle, co-education, the two-step, the higher education of women.... Say these things over to yourself, and think of her. It's like talking of a nun in riding breeches. She's a specialised woman, specialising in womanhood, her sphere is the home. Soft, trailing, draping skirts, slow movements, a veiled face; for no Oriental veil could be more effectual than her beautiful Catholic quiet. Catholicism invented the invisible purdah. She is far more akin to that sweet little Indian lady with the wonderful robes whom Carmine brought over with her tall husband last summer, than she is to Letty or Cissie. She, too, undertook to play hockey. And played it very much as Madame Van der Pant played it....

"The more I see of our hockey," said Mr. Britling, "the more wonderful it seems to me as a touchstone of character and culture

and breeding....”

Mr. Manning, to whom he was delivering this discourse, switched him on to a new track by asking what he meant by “Neo-European.”

“It’s a bad phrase,” said Mr. Britling. “I’ll withdraw it. Let me try and state exactly what I have in mind. I mean something that is coming up in America and here and the Scandinavian countries and Russia, a new culture, an escape from the Levantine religion and the Catholic culture that came to us from the Mediterranean. Let me drop Neo-European; let me say Northern. We are Northerners. The key, the heart, the nucleus and essence of every culture is its conception of the relations of men and women; and this new culture tends to diminish the specialisation of women as women, to let them out from the cell of the home into common citizenship with men. It’s a new culture, still in process of development, which will make men more social and co-operative and women bolder, swifter, more responsible and less cloistered. It minimises instead of exaggerating the importance of sex....

“And,” said Mr. Britling, in very much the tones in which a preacher might say “Sixthly,” “it is just all this Northern tendency that this world struggle is going to release. This war is pounding through Europe, smashing up homes, dispersing and mixing homes, setting Madame Van der Pant playing hockey, and André climbing trees with my young ruffians; it is killing young men by the million, altering the proportions of the sexes for a generation, bringing women into business and office and industry, destroying the accumulated wealth that kept so many of them in refined idleness, flooding the world with strange doubts and novel ideas....”

§ 9

But the conflict of manners and customs that followed the invasion of the English villages by French and Belgian refugees did not always present the immigrants as Catholics and the hosts as “Neo-European.” In the case of Mr. Dimple it was the other way round. He met Mr. Britling in Claverings park and told him his troubles....

“Of course,” he said, “we have to do our Utmost for Brave Little

Belgium. I would be the last to complain of any little inconvenience one may experience in doing that. Still, I must confess I think you and dear Mrs. Britling are fortunate, exceptionally fortunate, in the Belgians you have got. My guests — it's unfortunate — the man is some sort of journalist and quite — oh! much too much — an Atheist. An open positive one. Not simply Honest Doubt. I'm quite prepared for honest doubt nowadays. You and I have no quarrel over that. But he is aggressive. He makes remarks about miracles, quite derogatory remarks, and not always in French. Sometimes he almost speaks English. And in front of my sister. And he goes out, he says, looking for a Café. He never finds a Café, but he certainly finds every public house within a radius of miles. And he comes back smelling dreadfully of beer. When I drop a Little Hint, he blames the beer. He says it is not good beer — our good Essex beer! He doesn't understand any of our simple ways. He's sophisticated. The girls about here wear Belgian flags — and air their little bits of French. And he takes it as an encouragement. Only yesterday there was a scene. It seems he tried to kiss the Hickson girl at the inn — Maudie.... And his wife; a great big slow woman — in every way she is — Ample; it's dreadful even to seem to criticise, but I do so *wish* she would not see fit to sit down and nourish her baby in my poor old bachelor drawing-room — often at the most *unseasonable* times. And — so lavishly...."

Mr. Britling attempted consolations.

"But anyhow," said Mr. Dimple, "I'm better off than poor dear Mrs. Bynne. She secured two milliners. She insisted upon them. And their clothes were certainly beautifully made — even my poor old unworldly eye could tell that. And she thought two milliners would be so useful with a large family like hers. They certainly *said* they were milliners. But it seems — I don't know what we shall do about them.... My dear Mr. Britling, those young women are anything but milliners — anything but milliners...."

A faint gleam of amusement was only too perceptible through the good man's horror.

"Sirens, my dear Mr. Britling. Sirens. By profession."...

§ 10

October passed into November, and day by day Mr. Britling was forced to apprehend new aspects of the war, to think and rethink the war, to have his first conclusions checked and tested, twisted askew, replaced. His thoughts went far and wide and deeper — until all his earlier writing seemed painfully shallow to him, seemed a mere automatic response of obvious comments to the stimulus of the war's surprise. As his ideas became subtler and profounder, they became more difficult to express; he talked less; he became abstracted and irritable at table. To two people in particular Mr. Britling found his real ideas inexpressible, to Mr. Direck and to Mr. Van der Pant.

Each of these gentlemen brought with him the implication or the intimation of a critical attitude towards England. It was all very well for Mr. Britling himself to be critical of England; that is an Englishman's privilege. To hear Mr. Van der Pant questioning British efficiency or to suspect Mr. Direck of high, thin American superiorities to war, was almost worse than to hear Mrs. Harrowdean saying hostile things about Edith. It roused an even acuter protective emotion.

In the case of Mr. Van der Pant matters were complicated by the difficulty of the language, which made anything but the crudest statements subject to incalculable misconception.

Mr. Van der Pant had not the extreme tactfulness of his so typically Catholic wife; he made it only too plain that he thought the British postal and telegraph service slow and slack, and the management of the Great Eastern branch lines wasteful and inefficient. He said the workmen in the fields and the workmen he saw upon some cottages near the junction worked slowlier and with less interest than he had ever seen any workman display in all his life before. He marvelled that Mr. Britling lit his house with acetylene and not electric light. He thought fresh eggs were insanely dear, and his opinion of Matching's Easy pig-keeping was uncomplimentary. The roads, he said, were not a means of getting from place to place, they were a *dédale*; he drew derisive maps with his finger on the table-cloth of the lane system about the Dower House. He was astonished that there was no Café in Matching's Easy; he declared

that the “public house” to which he went with considerable expectation was no public house at all; it was just a sly place for drinking beer.... All these were things Mr. Britling might have remarked himself; from a Belgian refugee he found them intolerable.

He set himself to explain to Mr. Van der Pant firstly that these things did not matter in the slightest degree, the national attention, the national interest ran in other directions; and secondly that they were, as a matter of fact and on the whole, merits slightly disguised. He produced a pleasant theory that England is really not the Englishman’s field, it is his breeding place, his resting place, a place not for efficiency but good humour. If Mr. Van der Pant were to make inquiries he would find there was scarcely a home in Matching’s Easy that had not sent some energetic representative out of England to become one of the English of the world. England was the last place in which English energy was spent. These hedges, these dilatory roads were full of associations. There was a road that turned aside near Market Saffron to avoid Turk’s wood; it had been called Turk’s wood first in the fourteenth century after a man of that name. He quoted Chesterton’s happy verses to justify these winding lanes.

“The road turned first towards the left,
Where Perkin’s quarry made the cleft;
The path turned next towards the right,
Because the mastiff used to bite....”

And again:

“And I should say they wound about
To find the town of Roundabout,
The merry town of Roundabout
That makes the world go round.”

If our easy-going ways hampered a hard efficiency, they did at least develop humour and humanity. Our diplomacy at any rate had not failed us....

He did not believe a word of this stuff. His deep irrational love for England made him say these things.... For years he had been getting himself into hot water because he had been writing and hinting just such criticisms as Mr. Van der Pant expressed so bluntly.... But he wasn’t going to accept foreign help in dissecting his mother....

And another curious effect that Mr. Van der Pant had upon Mr.

Britling was to produce an obstinate confidence about the war and the nearness of the German collapse. He would promise Mr. Van der Pant that he should be back in Antwerp before May; that the Germans would be over the Rhine by July. He knew perfectly well that his ignorance of all the military conditions was unqualified, but still he could not restrain himself from this kind of thing so soon as he began to speak Entente Cordiale — Anglo-French, that is to say. Something in his relationship to Mr. Van der Pant obliged him to be acutely and absurdly the protecting British.... At times he felt like a conscious bankrupt talking off the hour of disclosure. But indeed all that Mr. Britling was trying to say against the difficulties of a strange language and an alien temperament, was that the honour of England would never be cleared until Belgium was restored and avenged....

While Mr. Britling was patrolling unimportant roads and entertaining Mr. Van der Pant with discourses upon the nearness of victory and the subtle estimableness of all that was indolent, wasteful and evasive in English life, the war was passing from its first swift phases into a slower, grimmer struggle. The German retreat ended at the Aisne, and the long outflanking manoeuvres of both hosts towards the Channel began. The English attempts to assist Belgium in October came too late for the preservation of Antwerp, and after a long and complicated struggle in Flanders the British failed to outflank the German right, lost Ghent, Menin and the Belgian coast, but held Ypres and beat back every attempt of the enemy to reach Dunkirk and Calais. Meanwhile the smaller German colonies and islands were falling to the navy, the Australian battleship *Sydney* smashed the *Emden* at Cocos Island, and the British naval disaster of Coronel was wiped out by the battle of the Falklands. The Russians were victorious upon their left and took Lemberg, and after some vicissitudes of fortune advanced to Przemysl, occupying the larger part of Galicia; but the disaster of Tannenberg had broken their progress in East Prussia, and the Germans were pressing towards Warsaw. Turkey had joined the war, and suffered enormous losses in the Caucasus. The Dardanelles had been shelled for the first time, and the British were at Basra on the Euphrates.

§ 11

The Christmas of 1914 found England, whose landscape had hitherto been almost as peaceful and soldierless as Massachusetts, already far gone along the path of transformation into a country full of soldiers and munition makers and military supplies. The soldiers came first, on the well-known and greatly admired British principle of "first catch your hare" and then build your kitchen. Always before, Christmas had been a time of much gaiety and dressing up and prancing and two-stepping at the Dower House, but this year everything was too uncertain to allow of any gathering of guests. Hugh got leave for the day after Christmas, but Teddy was tied; and Cissie and Letty went off with the small boy to take lodgings near him. The Van der Pants had hoped to see an English Christmas at Matching's Easy, but within three weeks of Christmas Day Mr. Van der Pant found a job that he could do in Nottingham, and carried off his family. The two small boys cheered their hearts with paper decorations, but the Christmas Tree was condemned as too German, and it was discovered that Santa Claus had suddenly become Old Father Christmas again. The small boys discovered that the price of lead soldiers had risen, and were unable to buy electric torches, on which they had set their hearts. There was to have been a Christmas party at Claverings, but at the last moment Lady Homartyn had to hurry off to an orphan nephew who had been seriously wounded near Ypres, and the light of Claverings was darkened.

Soon after Christmas there were rumours of an impending descent of the Headquarters staff of the South-Eastern army upon Claverings. Then Mr. Britling found Lady Homartyn back from France, and very indignant because after all the Headquarters were to go to Lady Wensleydale at Ladyholt. It was, she felt, a reflection upon Claverings. Lady Homartyn became still more indignant when presently the new armies, which were gathering now all over England like floods in a low-lying meadow, came pouring into the parishes about Claverings to the extent of a battalion and a Territorial battery. Mr. Britling heard of their advent only a day or two before they arrived; there came a bright young officer with an orderly, billeting; he was much exercised to get, as he expressed it several

times, a quart into a pint bottle. He was greatly pleased with the barn. He asked the size of it and did calculations. He could "stick twenty-five men into it — easy." It would go far to solve his problems. He could manage without coming into the house at all. It was a ripping place. "No end."

"But beds," said Mr. Britling.

"Lord! they don't want *beds*," said the young officer....

The whole Britling family, who were lamenting the loss of their Belgians, welcomed the coming of the twenty-five with great enthusiasm. It made them feel that they were doing something useful once more. For three days Mrs. Britling had to feed her new lodgers — the kitchen motors had as usual gone astray — and she did so in a style that made their boastings about their billet almost insufferable to the rest of their battery. The billeting allowance at that time was ninepence a head, and Mr. Britling, ashamed of making a profit out of his country, supplied not only generous firing and lighting, but unlimited cigarettes, cards and games, illustrated newspapers, a cocoa supper with such little surprises as sprats and jam roly-poly, and a number of more incidental comforts. The men arrived fasting under the command of two very sage middle-aged corporals, and responded to Mrs. Britling's hospitalities by a number of good resolutions, many of which they kept. They never made noises after half-past ten, or at least only now and then when a singsong broke out with unusual violence; they got up and went out at five or six in the morning without a sound; they were almost inconveniently helpful with washing-up and tidying round.

In quite a little time Mrs. Britling's mind had adapted itself to the spectacle of half-a-dozen young men in khaki breeches and shirts performing their toilets in and about her scullery, or improvising an unsanctioned game of football between the hockey goals. These men were not the miscellaneous men of the new armies; they were the earlier Territorial type with no heroics about them; they came from the midlands; and their two middle-aged corporals kept them well in hand and ruled them like a band of brothers. But they had an illegal side, that developed in directions that set Mr. Britling theorising. They seemed, for example, to poach by nature, as children play and sing. They possessed a promiscuous white dog. They began to add

rabbits to their supper menu, unaccountable rabbits. One night there was a mighty smell of frying fish from the kitchen, and the cook reported trout. “Trout!” said Mr. Britling to one of the corporals; “now where did you chaps get trout?”

The “fisherman,” they said, had got them with a hair noose. They produced the fisherman, of whom they were manifestly proud. It was, he explained, a method of fishing he had learnt when in New York Harbour. He had been a stoker. He displayed a confidence in Mr. Britling that made that gentleman an accessory after his offence, his very serious offence against pre-war laws and customs. It was plain that the trout were the trout that Mr. Pumshock, the stock-broker and amateur gentleman, had preserved so carefully in the Easy. Hitherto the countryside had been forced to regard Mr. Pumshock’s trout with an almost superstitious respect. A year ago young Snooker had done a month for one of those very trout. But now things were different.

“But I don’t really fancy fresh-water fish,” said the fisherman. “It’s just the ketchin’ of ’em I like....”

And a few weeks later the trumpeter, an angel-faced freckled child with deep-blue eyes, brought in a dozen partridge eggs which he wanted Mary to cook for him....

The domesticity of the sacred birds, it was clear, was no longer safe in England....

Then again the big guns would go swinging down the road and into Claverings park, and perform various exercises with commendable smartness and a profound disregard for Lady Homartyn’s known objection to any departure from the public footpath....

And one afternoon as Mr. Britling took his constitutional walk, a reverie was set going in his mind by the sight of a neglected-looking pheasant with a white collar. The world of Matching’s Easy was getting full now of such elderly birds. Would *that* go on again after the war? He imagined his son Hugh as a grandfather, telling the little ones about parks and preserves and game laws, and footmen and butlers and the marvellous game of golf, and how, suddenly, Mars came tramping through the land in khaki and all these things faded and vanished, so that presently it was discovered they were gone....

CHAPTER THE THIRD

MALIGNITY

§ 1

And while the countryside of England changed steadily from its lax pacific amenity to the likeness of a rather slovenly armed camp, while long-fixed boundaries shifted and dissolved and a great irreparable wasting of the world's resources gathered way, Mr. Britling did his duty as a special constable, gave his eldest son to the Territorials, entertained Belgians, petted his soldiers in the barn, helped Teddy to his commission, contributed to war charities, sold out securities at a loss and subscribed to the War Loan, and thought, thought endlessly about the war.

He could think continuously day by day of nothing else. His mind was as caught as a galley slave, as unable to escape from tugging at this oar. All his universe was a magnetic field which oriented everything, whether he would have it so or not, to this one polar question.

His thoughts grew firmer and clearer; they went deeper and wider. His first superficial judgments were endorsed and deepened or replaced by others. He thought along the lonely lanes at night; he thought at his desk; he thought in bed; he thought in his bath; he tried over his thoughts in essays and leading articles and reviewed them and corrected them. Now and then came relaxation and lassitude, but never release. The war towered over him like a vigilant teacher, day after day, week after week, regardless of fatigue and impatience, holding a rod in its hand.

§ 2

Certain things had to be forced upon Mr. Britling because they jarred so greatly with his habits of mind that he would never have accepted them if he could have avoided doing so.

Notably he would not recognise at first the extreme bitterness of this war. He would not believe that the attack upon Britain and Western Europe generally expressed the concentrated emotion of a whole nation. He thought that the Allies were in conflict with a system and not with a national will. He fought against the persuasion that the whole mass of a great civilised nation could be inspired by a genuine and sustained hatred. Hostility was an uncongenial thing to him; he would not recognise that the greater proportion of human beings are more readily hostile than friendly. He did his best to believe — in his "And Now War Ends" he did his best to make other people believe — that this war was the perverse exploit of a small group of people, of limited but powerful influences, an outrage upon the general geniality of mankind. The cruelty, mischief, and futility of war were so obvious to him that he was almost apologetic in asserting them. He believed that war had but to begin and demonstrate its quality among the Western nations in order to unify them all against its repetition. They would exclaim: "But we can't do things like this to one another!" He saw the aggressive imperialism of Germany called to account even by its own people; a struggle, a collapse, a liberal-minded conference of world powers, and a universal resumption of amiability upon a more assured basis of security. He believed — and many people in England believed with him — that a great section of the Germans would welcome triumphant Allies as their liberators from intolerable political obsessions.

The English because of their insularity had been political amateurs for endless generations. It was their supreme vice, it was their supreme virtue, to be easy-going. They had lived in an atmosphere of comedy, and denied in the whole tenor of their lives that life is tragic. Not even the Americans had been more isolated. The Americans had had their Indians, their negroes, their War of Secession. Until the Great War the Channel was as broad as the Atlantic for holding off every vital challenge. Even Ireland was away — a four-hour crossing. And so the English had developed to the fullest extent the virtues and vices of safety and comfort; they had a hatred of science and dramatic behaviour; they could see no reason for exactness or intensity; they disliked proceeding "to extremes."

Ultimately everything would turn out all right. But they knew what it is to be carried into conflicts by energetic minorities and the trick of circumstances, and they were ready to understand the case of any other country which has suffered that fate. All their habits inclined them to fight good-temperedly and comfortably, to quarrel with a government and not with a people. It took Mr. Britling at least a couple of months of warfare to understand that the Germans were fighting in an altogether different spirit.

The first intimations of this that struck upon his mind were the news of the behaviour of the Kaiser and the Berlin crowd upon the declaration of war, and the violent treatment of the British subjects seeking to return to their homes. Everywhere such people had been insulted and ill-treated. It was the spontaneous expression of a long-gathered bitterness. While the British ambassador was being howled out of Berlin, the German ambassador to England was taking a farewell stroll, quite unmolested, in St. James's Park.... One item that struck particularly upon Mr. Britling's imagination was the story of the chorus of young women who assembled on the railway platform of the station through which the British ambassador was passing to sing — to his drawn blinds— "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles." Mr. Britling could imagine those young people, probably dressed more or less uniformly in white, with flushed faces and shining eyes, letting their voices go, full throated, in the modern German way....

And then came stories of atrocities, stories of the shooting of old men and the butchery of children by the wayside, stories of wounded men bayoneted or burnt alive, of massacres of harmless citizens, of looting and filthy outrages....

Mr. Britling did his utmost not to believe these things. They contradicted his habitual world. They produced horrible strains in his mind. They might, he hoped, be misreported so as to seem more violent or less justifiable than they were. They might be the acts of stray criminals, and quite disconnected from the normal operations of the war. Here and there some weak-minded officer may have sought to make himself terrible.... And as for the bombardment of cathedrals and the crime of Louvain, well, Mr. Britling was prepared to argue that Gothic architecture is not sacrosanct if military necessity cuts

through it.... It was only after the war had been going on some months that Mr. Britling's fluttering, unwilling mind was pinned down by official reports and a cloud of witnesses to a definite belief in the grim reality of systematic rape and murder, destruction, dirtiness and abominable compulsions that blackened the first rush of the Prussians into Belgium and Champagne....

They came hating and threatening the lands they outraged. They sought occasion to do frightful deeds.... When they could not be frightful in the houses they occupied, then to the best of their ability they were destructive and filthy. The facts took Mr. Britling by the throat....

The first thing that really pierced Mr. Britling with the conviction that there was something essentially different in the English and the German attitude towards the war was the sight of a bale of German comic papers in the study of a friend in London. They were filled with caricatures of the Allies and more particularly of the English, and they displayed a force and quality of passion — an incredible force and quality of passion. Their amazing hate and their amazing filthiness alike overwhelmed Mr. Britling. There was no appearance of national pride or national dignity, but a bellowing patriotism and a limitless desire to hurt and humiliate. They spat. They were red in the face and they spat. He sat with these violent sheets in his hands — *ashamed*.

"But I say!" he said feebly. "It's the sort of thing that might come out of a lunatic asylum...."

One incredible craving was manifest in every one of them. The German caricaturist seemed unable to represent his enemies except in extremely tight trousers or in none; he was equally unable to represent them without thrusting a sword or bayonet, spluttering blood, into the more indelicate parts of their persons. This was the *leit-motif* of the war as the German humorists presented it. "But," said Mr. Britling, "these things can't represent anything like the general state of mind in Germany."

"They do," said his friend.

"But it's blind fury — at the dirt-throwing stage."

"The whole of Germany is in that blind fury," said his friend. "While we are going about astonished and rather incredulous about

this war, and still rather inclined to laugh, that's the state of mind of Germany.... There's a sort of deliberation in it. They think it gives them strength. They *want* to foam at the mouth. They do their utmost to foam more. They write themselves up. Have you heard of the 'Hymn of Hate'?"

Mr. Britling had not.

"There was a translation of it in last week's *Spectator*.... This is the sort of thing we are trying to fight in good temper and without extravagance. Listen, Britling!

"*You* will we hate with a lasting hate;
We will never forgo our hate —
Hate by water and hate by land,
Hate of the head and hate of the hand,
Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,
Hate of seventy millions, choking down;
We love as one, we hate as one,
We have *one* foe, and one alone —
ENGLAND!"

He read on to the end.

"Well," he said when he had finished reading, "what do you think of it?"

"I want to feel his bumps," said Mr. Britling after a pause. "It's incomprehensible."

"They're singing that up and down Germany. Lissauer, I hear, has been decorated...."

"It's — stark malignity," said Mr. Britling. "What have we done?"

"It's colossal. What is to happen to the world if these people prevail?"

"I can't believe it — even with this evidence before me.... No! I want to feel their bumps...."

§ 3

"You see," said Mr. Britling, trying to get it into focus, "I have known quite decent Germans. There must be some sort of

misunderstanding.... I wonder what makes them hate us. There seems to me no reason in it."

"I think it is just thoroughness," said his friend. "They are at war. To be at war is to hate."

"That isn't at all my idea."

"We're not a thorough people. When we think of anything, we also think of its opposite. When we adopt an opinion we also take in a provisional idea that it is probably nearly as wrong as it is right. We are — atmospheric. They are concrete.... All this filthy, vile, unjust and cruel stuff is honest genuine war. We pretend war does not hurt. They know better.... The Germans are a simple honest people. It is their virtue. Possibly it is their only virtue...."

§ 4

Mr. Britling was only one of a multitude who wanted to feel the bumps of Germany at that time. The effort to understand a people who had suddenly become incredible was indeed one of the most remarkable facts in English intellectual life during the opening phases of the war. The English state of mind was unlimited astonishment. There was an enormous sale of any German books that seemed likely to illuminate the mystery of this amazing concentration of hostility; the works of Bernhardi, Treitschke, Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, became the material of countless articles and interminable discussions. One saw little clerks on the way to the office and workmen going home after their work earnestly reading these remarkable writers. They were asking, just as Mr. Britling was asking, what it was the British Empire had struck against. They were trying to account for this wild storm of hostility that was coming at them out of Central Europe.

It was a natural next stage to this, when after all it became manifest that instead of there being a liberal and reluctant Germany at the back of imperialism and Junkerdom, there was apparently one solid and enthusiastic people, to suppose that the Germans were in some distinctive way evil, that they were racially more envious, arrogant, and aggressive than the rest of mankind. Upon that

supposition a great number of English people settled. They concluded that the Germans had a peculiar devil of their own — and had to be treated accordingly. That was the second stage in the process of national apprehension, and it was marked by the first beginnings of a spy hunt, by the first denunciation of naturalised aliens, and by some anti-German rioting among the mixed alien population in the East End. Most of the bakers in the East End of London were Germans, and for some months after the war began they went on with their trade unmolested. Now many of these shops were wrecked.... It was only in October that the British gave these first signs of a sense that they were fighting not merely political Germany but the Germans.

But the idea of a peculiar malignity in the German quality as a key to the broad issue of the war was even less satisfactory and less permanent in Mr. Britling's mind than his first crude opposition of militarism and a peaceful humanity as embodied respectively in the Central Powers and the Russo-Western alliance. It led logically to the conclusion that the extermination of the German peoples was the only security for the general amiability of the world, a conclusion that appealed but weakly to his essential kindliness. After all, the Germans he had met and seen were neither cruel nor hate-inspired. He came back to that obstinately. From the harshness and vileness of the printed word and the unclean picture, he fell back upon the flesh and blood, the humanity and sterling worth, of — as a sample — young Heinrich.

Who was moreover a thoroughly German young German — a thoroughly Prussian young Prussian.

At times young Heinrich alone stood between Mr. Britling and the belief that Germany and the whole German race was essentially wicked, essentially a canting robber nation. Young Heinrich became a sort of advocate for his people before the tribunal of Mr. Britling's mind. (And on his shoulder sat an absurdly pampered squirrel.) s fresh, pink, sedulous face, very earnest, adjusting his glasses, saying "Please," intervened and insisted upon an arrest of judgment....

Since the young man's departure he had sent two postcards of greeting directly to the "Familie Britling," and one letter through the friendly intervention of Mr. Britling's American publisher. Once also

he sent a message through a friend in Norway. The postcards simply recorded stages in the passage of a distraught pacifist across Holland to his enrolment. The letter by way of America came two months later. He had been converted into a combatant with extreme rapidity. He had been trained for three weeks, had spent a fortnight in hospital with a severe cold, and had then gone to Belgium as a transport driver — his father had been a horse-dealer and he was familiar with horses. "If anything happens to me," he wrote, "please send my violin at least very carefully to my mother." It was characteristic that he reported himself as very comfortably quartered in Courtrai with "very nice people." The niceness involved restraints. "Only never," he added, "do we talk about the war. It is better not to do so." He mentioned the violin also in the later communication through Norway. Therein he lamented the lost fleshpots of Courtrai. He had been in Posen, and now he was in the Carpathians, up to his knees in snow and "very uncomfortable...."

And then abruptly all news from him ceased.

Month followed month, and no further letter came.

"Something has happened to him. Perhaps he is a prisoner...."

"I hope our little Heinrich hasn't got seriously damaged.... He may be wounded...."

"Or perhaps they stop his letters.... Very probably they stop his letters."

§ 5

Mr. Britling would sit in his armchair and stare at his fire, and recall conflicting memories of Germany — of a pleasant land, of friendly people. He had spent many a jolly holiday there. So recently as 1911 all the Britling family had gone up the Rhine from Rotterdam, had visited a string of great cities and stayed for a cheerful month of sunshine at Neunkirchen in the Odenwald.

The little village perches high among the hills and woods, and at its very centre is the inn and the linden tree and — Adam Meyer. Or at least Adam Meyer *was* there. Whether he is there now, only the spirit of change can tell; if he live to be a hundred no friendly

English will ever again come tramping along by the track of the Blaue Breiecke or the Weisse Streiche to enjoy his hospitality; there are rivers of blood between, and a thousand memories of hate....

It was a village distended with hospitalities. Not only the inn but all the houses about the place of the linden tree, the shoe-maker's, the post-mistress's, the white house beyond, every house indeed except the pastor's house, were full of Adam Meyer's summer guests. And about it and over it went and soared Adam Meyer, seeing they ate well, seeing they rested well, seeing they had music and did not miss the moonlight — a host who forgot profit in hospitality, an inn-keeper with the passion of an artist for his inn.

Music, moonlight, the simple German sentiment, the hearty German voices, the great picnic in a Stuhl Wagen, the orderly round games the boys played with the German children, and the tramps and confidences Hugh had with Kurt and Karl, and at last a crowning jollification, a dance, with some gipsy musicians whom Mr. Britling discovered, when the Germans taught the English various entertaining sports with baskets and potatoes and forfeits and the English introduced the Germans to the licence of the two-step. And everybody sang "Britannia, Rule the Waves," and "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles," and Adam Meyer got on a chair and made a tremendous speech more in dialect than ever, and there was much drinking of beer and sirops in the moonlight under the linden....

Afterwards there had been a periodic sending of postcards and greetings, which indeed only the war had ended.

Right pleasant people those Germans had been, sun and green-leaf lovers, for whom "Frisch Auf" seemed the most natural of national cries. Mr. Britling thought of the individual Germans who had made up the assembly, of the men's amusingly fierce little hats of green and blue with an inevitable feather thrust perkily into the hatband behind, of the kindly plumpnesses behind their turned-up moustaches, of the blonde, sedentary women, very wise about the comforts of life and very kind to the children, of their earnest pleasure in landscape and Art and Great Writers, of their general frequent desire to sing, of their plasticity under the directing hands of Adam Meyer. He thought of the mellow south German landscape, rolling away broad and fair, of the little clean red-roofed townships,

the old castles, the big prosperous farms, the neatly marked pedestrian routes, the hospitable inns, and the artless abundant Aussichtthurms....

He saw all those memories now through a veil of indescribable sadness — as of a world lost, gone down like the cities of Lyonesse beneath deep seas....

Right pleasant people in a sunny land! Yet here pressing relentlessly upon his mind were the murders of Visé, the massacres of Dinant, the massacres of Louvain, murder red-handed and horrible upon an inoffensive people, foully invaded, foully treated; murder done with a sickening cant of righteousness and racial pretension....

The two pictures would not stay steadily in his mind together. When he thought of the broken faith that had poured those slaughtering hosts into the decent peace of Belgium, that had smashed her cities, burnt her villages and filled the pretty gorges of the Ardennes with blood and smoke and terror, he was flooded with self-righteous indignation, a self-righteous indignation that was indeed entirely Teutonic in its quality, that for a time drowned out his former friendship and every kindly disposition towards Germany, that inspired him with destructive impulses, and obsessed him with a desire to hear of death and more death and yet death in every German town and home....

§ 6

It will be an incredible thing to the happier reader of a coming age — if ever this poor record of experience reaches a reader in the days to come — to learn how much of the mental life of Mr. Britling was occupied at this time with the mere horror and atrocity of warfare. It is idle and hopeless to speculate now how that future reader will envisage this war; it may take on broad dramatic outlines, it may seem a thing, just, logical, necessary, the burning of many barriers, the destruction of many obstacles. Mr. Britling was too near to the dirt and pain and heat for any such broad landscape consolations. Every day some new detail of evil beat into his mind. Now it would be the artless story of some Belgian refugee. There was a girl from

Alost in the village for example, who had heard the fusillade that meant the shooting of citizens, the shooting of people she had known, she had seen the still blood-stained wall against which two murdered cousins had died, the streaked sand along which their bodies had been dragged; three German soldiers had been quartered in her house with her and her invalid mother, and had talked freely of the massacres in which they had been employed. One of them was in civil life a young schoolmaster, and he had had, he said, to kill a woman and a baby. The girl had been incredulous. Yes, he had done so! Of course he had done so! His officer had made him do it, had stood over him. He could do nothing but obey. But since then he had been unable to sleep, unable to forget.

"We had to punish the people," he said. "They had fired on us."

And besides, his officer had been drunk. It had been impossible to argue. His officer had an unrelenting character at all times....

Over and over again Mr. Britling would try to imagine that young schoolmaster soldier at Alost. He imagined with a weak staring face and watery blue eyes behind his glasses, and that memory of murder....

Then again it would be some incident of death and mutilation in Antwerp, that Van der Pant described to him. The Germans in Belgium were shooting women frequently, not simply for grave spying but for trivial offences.... Then came the battleship raid on Whitby and Scarborough, and the killing among other victims of a number of children on their way to school. This shocked Mr. Britling absurdly, much more than the Belgian crimes had done. They were *English* children. At home!... The drowning of a great number of people on a torpedoed ship full of refugees from Flanders filled his mind with pitiful imaginings for days. The Zeppelin raids, with their slow crescendo of blood-stained futility, began before the end of 1914.... It was small consolation for Mr. Britling to reflect that English homes and women and children were, after all, undergoing only the same kind of experience that our ships have inflicted scores of times in the past upon innocent people in the villages of Africa and Polynesia....

Each month the war grew bitterer and more cruel. Early in 1915 the Germans began their submarine war, and for a time Mr. Britling's

concern was chiefly for the sailors and passengers of the ships destroyed. He noted with horror the increasing indisposition of the German submarines to give any notice to their victims; he did not understand the grim reasons that were turning every submarine attack into a desperate challenge of death. For the Germans under the seas had pitted themselves against a sea power far more resourceful, more steadfast and skilful, sterner and more silent, than their own. It was not for many months that Mr. Britling learnt the realities of the submarine blockade. Submarine after submarine went out of the German harbours into the North Sea, never to return. No prisoners were reported, no boasting was published by the British fishers of men; U boat after U boat vanished into a chilling mystery.... Only later did Mr. Britling begin to hear whispers and form ideas of the noiseless, suffocating grip that sought through the waters for its prey.

The *Falaba* crime, in which the German sailors were reported to have jeered at the drowning victims in the water, was followed by the sinking of the *Lusitania*. At that a wave of real anger swept through the Empire. Hate was begetting hate at last. There were violent riots in Great Britain and in South Africa. Wretched little German hairdressers and bakers and so forth fled for their lives, to pay for the momentary satisfaction of the Kaiser and Herr Ballin. Scores of German homes in England were wrecked and looted; hundreds of Germans maltreated. War is war. Hard upon the *Lusitania* storm came the publication of the Bryce Report, with its relentless array of witnesses, its particulars of countless acts of cruelty and arrogant unreason and uncleanness in Belgium and the occupied territory of France. Came also the gasping torture of "gas," the use of flame jets, and a new exacerbation of the savagery of the actual fighting. For a time it seemed as though the taking of prisoners along the western front would cease. Tales of torture and mutilation, tales of the kind that arise nowhere and out of nothing, and poison men's minds to the most pitiless retaliations, drifted along the opposing fronts....

The realities were evil enough without any rumours. Over various dinner-tables Mr. Britling heard this and that first-hand testimony of harshness and spite. One story that stuck in his memory was of British prisoners on the journey into Germany being put apart at a station from their French companions in misfortune, and forced to

“run the gauntlet” back to their train between the fists and bayonets of files of German soldiers. And there were convincing stories of the same prisoners robbed of overcoats in bitter weather, baited with dogs, separated from their countrymen, and thrust among Russians and Poles with whom they could hold no speech. So Lissauer’s Hate Song bore its fruit in a thousand cruelties to wounded and defenceless men. The English had cheated great Germany of another easy victory like that of ‘71. They had to be punished. That was all too plainly the psychological process. At one German station a woman had got out of a train and crossed a platform to spit on the face of a wounded Englishman.... And there was no monopoly of such things on either side. At some journalistic gathering Mr. Britling met a little white-faced, resolute lady who had recently been nursing in the north of France. She told of wounded men lying among the coal of coal-sheds, of a shortage of nurses and every sort of material, of an absolute refusal to permit any share in such things to reach the German “swine.” ... “Why have they come here? Let our own boys have it first. Why couldn’t they stay in their own country? Let the filth die.”

Two soldiers impressed to carry a wounded German officer on a stretcher had given him a “joy ride,” pitching him up and down as one tosses a man in a blanket. “He was lucky to get off with that.”...

“All *our* men aren’t angels,” said a cheerful young captain back from the front. “If you had heard a little group of our East London boys talking of what they meant to do when they got into Germany, you’d feel anxious....”

“But that was just talk,” said Mr. Britling weakly, after a pause....

There were times when Mr. Britling’s mind was imprisoned beyond any hope of escape amidst such monstrous realities....

He was ashamed of his one secret consolation. For nearly two years yet Hugh could not go out to it. There would surely be peace before that....

§ 7

Tormenting the thought of Mr. Britling almost more acutely than this

growing tale of stupidly inflicted suffering and waste and sheer destruction was the collapse of the British mind from its first fine phase of braced-up effort into a state of bickering futility.

Too long had British life been corrupted by the fictions of loyalty to an uninspiring and alien Court, of national piety in an official Church, of freedom in a politician-rigged State, of justice in an economic system where the advertiser, the sweater and usurer had a hundred advantages over the producer and artisan, to maintain itself now steadily at any high pitch of heroic endeavour. It had bought its comfort with the demoralisation of its servants. It had no completely honest organs; its spirit was clogged by its accumulated insincerities. Brought at last face to face with a bitter hostility and a powerful and unscrupulous enemy, an enemy socialistic, scientific and efficient to an unexampled degree, it seemed indeed to be inspired for a time by an unwonted energy and unanimity. Youth and the common people shone. The sons of every class went out to fight and die, full of a splendid dream of this war. Easy-going vanished from the foreground of the picture. But only to creep back again as the first inspiration passed. Presently the older men, the seasoned politicians, the owners and hucksters, the charming women and the habitual consumers, began to recover from this blaze of moral exaltation. Old habits of mind and procedure reasserted themselves. The war which had begun so dramatically missed its climax; there was neither heroic swift defeat nor heroic swift victory. There was indecision; the most trying test of all for an undisciplined people. There were great spaces of uneventful fatigue. Before the Battle of the Yser had fully developed the dramatic quality had gone out of the war. It had ceased to be either a tragedy or a triumph; for both sides it became a monstrous strain and wasting. It had become a wearisome thrusting against a pressure of evils....

Under that strain the dignity of England broke, and revealed a malignity less focussed and intense than the German, but perhaps even more distressing. No paternal government had organised the British spirit for patriotic ends; it became now peevish and impatient, like some ill-trained man who is sick, it directed itself no longer against the enemy alone but fitfully against imagined traitors and shirkers; it wasted its energies in a deepening and spreading net of

internal squabbles and accusations. Now it was the wily indolence of the Prime Minister, now it was the German culture of the Lord Chancellor, now the imaginative enterprise of the First Lord of the Admiralty that focussed a vindictive campaign. There began a hunt for spies and of suspects of German origin in every quarter except the highest; a denunciation now of "traitors," now of people with imaginations, now of scientific men, now of the personal friend of the Commander-in-Chief, now of this group and then of that group.... Every day Mr. Britling read his three or four newspapers with a deepening disappointment.

When he turned from the newspaper to his post, he would find the anonymous letter-writer had been busy....

Perhaps Mr. Britling had remarked that Germans were after all human beings, or that if England had listened to Matthew Arnold in the 'eighties our officers by this time might have added efficiency to their courage and good temper. Perhaps he had himself put a touch of irritant acid into his comment. Back flared the hate. "Who are *you*, Sir? What are *you*, Sir? What right have *you*, Sir? What claim have *you*, Sir?"...

§ 8

"Life had a wrangling birth. On the head of every one of us rests the ancestral curse of fifty million murders."

So Mr. Britling's thoughts shaped themselves in words as he prowled one night in March, chill and melancholy, across a rushy meadow under an overcast sky. The death squeal of some little beast caught suddenly in a distant copse had set loose this train of thought. "Life struggling under a birth curse?" he thought. "How nearly I come back at times to the Christian theology!... And then, Redemption by the shedding of blood."

"Life, like a rebellious child, struggling out of the control of the hate which made it what it is."

But that was Mr. Britling's idea of Gnosticism, not of orthodox Christianity. He went off for a time into faded reminiscences of theological reading. What had been the Gnostic idea? That the God

of the Old Testament was the Devil of the New? But that had been the idea of the Manichæans!...

Mr. Britling, between the black hedges, came back presently from his attempts to recall his youthful inquiries into man's ancient speculations, to the enduring riddles that have outlasted a thousand speculations. Has hate been necessary, and is it still necessary, and will it always be necessary? Is all life a war forever? The rabbit is nimble, lives keenly, is prevented from degenerating into a diseased crawling eater of herbs by the incessant ferret. Without the ferret of war, what would life become?... War is murder truly, but is not Peace decay?

It was during these prowling nights in the first winter of the war that Mr. Britling planned a new writing that was to go whole abysses beneath the facile superficiality of "And Now War Ends." It was to be called the "Anatomy of Hate." It was to deal very faithfully with the function of hate as a corrective to inefficiency. So long as men were slack, men must be fierce. This conviction pressed upon him....

In spite of his detestation of war Mr. Britling found it impossible to maintain that any sort of peace state was better than a state of war. If wars produced destructions and cruelties, peace could produce indolence, perversity, greedy accumulation and selfish indulgences. War is discipline for evil, but peace may be relaxation from good. The poor man may be as wretched in peace time as in war time. The gathering forces of an evil peace, the malignity and waste of war, are but obverse and reverse of the medal of ill-adjusted human relationships. Was there no Greater Peace possible; not a mere recuperative pause in killing and destruction, but a phase of noble and creative living, a phase of building, of discovery, of beauty and research? He remembered, as one remembers the dead, dreams he had once dreamt of the great cities, the splendid freedoms, of a coming age, of marvellous enlargements of human faculty, of a coming science that would be light and of art that could be power....

But would that former peace have ever risen to that?...

After all, had such visions ever been more than idle dreams? Had the war done more than unmask reality?...

He came to a gate and leant over it.

The darkness drizzled about him; he turned up his collar and

watched the dim shapes of trees and hedges gather out of the night to meet the dismal dawn. He was cold and hungry and weary.

He may have drowsed; at least he had a vision, very real and plain, a vision very different from any dream of Utopia.

It seemed to him that suddenly a mine burst under a great ship at sea, that men shouted and women sobbed and cowered, and flares played upon the rain-pitted black waves; and then the picture changed and showed a battle upon land, and searchlights were flickering through the rain and shells flashed luridly, and men darkly seen in silhouette against red flames ran with fixed bayonets and slipped and floundered over the mud, and at last, shouting thinly through the wind, leapt down into the enemy trenches....

And then he was alone again staring over a wet black field towards a dim crest of shapeless trees.

§ 9

Abruptly and shockingly, this malignity of warfare, which had been so far only a festering cluster of reports and stories and rumours and suspicions, stretched out its arm into Essex and struck a barb of grotesque cruelty into the very heart of Mr. Britling. Late one afternoon came a telegram from Filmington-on-Sea, where Aunt Wilshire had been recovering her temper in a boarding-house after a round of visits in Yorkshire and the moorlands. And she had been "very seriously injured" by an overnight German air raid. It was a raid that had not been even mentioned in the morning's papers. She had asked to see him.

It was, ran the compressed telegraphic phrase, "advisable to come at once."

Mrs. Britling helped him pack a bag, and came with him to the station in order to drive the car back to the Dower House; for the gardener's boy who had hitherto attended to these small duties had now gone off as an unskilled labourer to some munition works at Chelmsford. Mr. Britling sat in the slow train that carried him across country to the junction for Filmington, and failed altogether to realise what had happened to the old lady. He had an absurd feeling that it

was characteristic of her to intervene in affairs in this manner. She had always been so tough and unbent an old lady that until he saw her he could not imagine her as being really seriously and pitifully hurt....

But he found her in the hospital very much hurt indeed. She had been smashed in some complicated manner that left the upper part of her body intact, and lying slantingly upon pillows. Over the horror of bandaged broken limbs and tormented flesh below sheets and a counterpane were drawn. Morphia had been injected, he understood, to save her from pain, but presently it might be necessary for her to suffer. She lay up in her bed with an effect of being enthroned, very white and still, her strong profile with its big nose and her straggling hair and a certain dignity gave her the appearance of some very important, very old man, of an aged pope for instance, rather than of an old woman. She had made no remark after they had set her and dressed her and put her to bed except "send for Hughie Britling, The Dower House, Matching's Easy. He is the best of the bunch." She had repeated the address and this commendation firmly over and over again, in large print as it were, even after they had assured her that a telegram had been despatched.

In the night, they said, she had talked of him.

He was not sure at first that she knew of his presence.

"Here I am, Aunt Wilshire," he said.

She gave no sign.

"Your nephew Hugh."

"Mean and preposterous," she said very distinctly.

But she was not thinking of Mr. Britling. She was talking of something else.

She was saying: "It should not have been known I was here. There are spies everywhere. Everywhere. There is a spy now — or a lump very like a spy. They pretend it is a hot-water bottle. Pretext.... Oh, yes! I admit — absurd. But I have been pursued by spies. Endless spies. Endless, endless spies. Their devices are almost incredible.... He has never forgiven me....

"All this on account of a carpet. A palace carpet. Over which I had no control. I spoke my mind. He knew I knew of it. I never concealed it. So I was hunted. For years he had meditated revenge.

Now he has it. But at what a cost! And they call him Emperor. Emperor!

"His arm is withered; his son — imbecile. He will die — without dignity...."

Her voice weakened, but it was evident she wanted to say something more.

"I'm here," said Mr. Britling. "Your nephew Hughie."

She listened.

"Can you understand me?" he asked.

She became suddenly an earnest, tender human being. "My dear!" she said, and seemed to search for something in her mind and failed to find it.

"You have always understood me," she tried.

"You have always been a good boy to me, Hughie," she said, rather vacantly, and added after some moments of still reflection, "*au fond*."

After that she was silent for some minutes, and took no notice of his whispers.

Then she recollected what had been in her mind. She put out a hand that sought for Mr. Britling's sleeve.

"Hughie!"

"I'm here, Auntie," said Mr. Britling. "I'm here."

"Don't let him get at *your* Hughie.... Too good for it, dear. Oh! much — much too good.... People let these wars and excitements run away with them.... They put too much into them.... They aren't — they aren't worth it. Don't let him get at your Hughie."

"No!"

"You understand me, Hughie?"

"Perfectly, Auntie."

"Then don't forget it. Ever."

She had said what she wanted to say. She had made her testament. She closed her eyes. He was amazed to find this grotesque old creature had suddenly become beautiful, in that silvery vein of beauty one sometimes finds in very old men. She was exalted as great artists will sometimes exalt the portraits of the aged. He was moved to kiss her forehead.

There came a little tug at his sleeve.

“I think that is enough,” said the nurse, who had stood forgotten at his elbow.

“But I can come again?”

“Perhaps.”

She indicated departure by a movement of her hand.

§ 10

The next day Aunt Wilshire was unconscious of her visitor.

They had altered her position so that she lay now horizontally, staring inflexibly at the ceiling and muttering queer old disconnected things.

The Windsor Castle carpet story was still running through her mind, but mixed up with it now were scraps of the current newspaper controversies about the conduct of the war. And she was still thinking of the dynastic aspects of the war. And of spies. She had something upon her mind about the King’s more German aunts.

“As a precaution,” she said, “as a precaution. Watch them all.... The Princess Christian.... Laying foundation stones.... Cement.... Guns. Or else why should they always be laying foundation stones?... Always.... Why?... Hushed up....

“None of these things,” she said, “in the newspapers. They ought to be.”

And then after an interval, very distinctly, “The Duke of Wellington. My ancestor — in reality.... Publish and be damned.”

After that she lay still....

The doctors and nurses could hold out only very faint hopes to Mr. Britling’s inquiries; they said indeed it was astonishing that she was still alive.

And about seven o’clock that evening she died....

§ 11

Mr. Britling, after he had looked at his dead cousin for the last time, wandered for an hour or so about the silent little watering-place

before he returned to his hotel. There was no one to talk to and nothing else to do but to think of her death.

The night was cold and bleak, but full of stars. He had already mastered the local topography, and he knew now exactly where all the bombs that had been showered upon the place had fallen. Here was the corner of blackened walls and roasted beams where three wounded horses had been burnt alive in a barn, here the row of houses, some smashed, some almost intact, where a mutilated child had screamed for two hours before she could be rescued from the debris that had pinned her down, and taken to the hospital. Everywhere by the dim light of the shaded street lamps he could see the black holes and gaps of broken windows; sometimes abundant, sometimes rare and exceptional, among otherwise uninjured dwellings. Many of the victims he had visited in the little cottage hospital where Aunt Wilshire had just died. She was the eleventh dead. Altogether fifty-seven people had been killed or injured in this brilliant German action. They were all civilians, and only twelve were men.

Two Zeppelins had come in from over the sea, and had been fired at by an anti-aircraft gun coming on an automobile from Ipswich. The first intimation the people of the town had had of the raid was the report of this gun. Many had run out to see what was happening. It was doubtful if any one had really seen the Zeppelins, though every one testified to the sound of their engines. Then suddenly the bombs had come streaming down. Only six had made hits upon houses or people; the rest had fallen ruinously and very close together on the local golf links, and at least half had not exploded at all and did not seem to have been released to explode.

A third at least of the injured people had been in bed when destruction came upon them.

The story was like a page from some fantastic romance of Jules Verne's; the peace of the little old town, the people going to bed, the quiet streets, the quiet starry sky, and then for ten minutes an uproar of guns and shells, a clatter of breaking glass, and then a fire here, a fire there, a child's voice pitched high by pain and terror, scared people going to and fro with lanterns, and the sky empty again, the raiders gone....

Five minutes before, Aunt Wilshire had been sitting in the boarding-house drawing-room playing a great stern “Patience,” the Emperor Patience (“Napoleon, my dear! — not that Potsdam creature”) that took hours to do. Five minutes later she was a thing of elemental terror and agony, bleeding wounds and shattered bones, plunging about in the darkness amidst a heap of wreckage. And already the German airmen were buzzing away to sea again, proud of themselves, pleased no doubt — like boys who have thrown a stone through a window, beating their way back to thanks and rewards, to iron crosses and the proud embraces of delighted Fraus and Fräuleins....

For the first time it seemed to Mr. Britling he really saw the immediate horror of war, the dense cruel stupidity of the business, plain and close. It was as if he had never perceived anything of the sort before, as if he had been dealing with stories, pictures, shows and representations that he knew to be shams. But that this dear, absurd old creature, this thing of home, this being of familiar humours and familiar irritations, should be torn to pieces, left in torment like a smashed mouse over which an automobile has passed, brought the whole business to a raw and quivering focus. Not a soul among all those who had been rent and torn and tortured in this agony of millions, but was to any one who understood and had been near to it, in some way lovable, in some way laughable, in some way worthy of respect and care. Poor Aunt Wilshire was but the sample thrust in his face of all this mangled multitude, whose green-white lips had sweated in anguish, whose broken bones had thrust raggedly through red dripping flesh.... The detested features of the German Crown Prince jerked into the centre of Mr. Britling’s picture. The young man stood in his dapper uniform and grinned under his long nose, carrying himself jauntily, proud of his extreme importance to so many lives....

And for a while Mr. Britling could do nothing but rage.

“Devils they are!” he cried to the stars.

“Devils! Devilish fools rather. Cruel blockheads. Apes with all science in their hands! My God! but *we will teach them a lesson yet!...*”

That was the key of his mood for an hour of aimless wandering,

wandering that was only checked at last by a sentinel who turned him back towards the town....

He wandered, muttering. He found great comfort in scheming vindictive destruction for countless Germans. He dreamt of swift armoured aeroplanes swooping down upon the flying airship, and sending it reeling earthward, the men screaming. He imagined a shattered Zeppelin staggering earthward in the fields behind the Dower House, and how he would himself run out with a spade and smite the Germans down. "Quarter indeed! Kamerad! Take *that*, you foul murderer!"

In the dim light the sentinel saw the retreating figure of Mr. Britling make an extravagant gesture, and wondered what it might mean. Signalling? What ought an intelligent sentry to do? Let fly at him? Arrest him?... Take no notice?...

Mr. Britling was at that moment killing Count Zeppelin and beating out his brains. Count Zeppelin was killed that night and the German Emperor was assassinated; a score of lesser victims were offered up to the *manes* of Aunt Wilshire; there were memorable cruelties before the wrath and bitterness of Mr. Britling was appeased. And then suddenly he had had enough of these thoughts; they were thrust aside, they vanished out of his mind.

§ 12

All the while that Mr. Britling had been indulging in these imaginative slaughterings and spending the tears and hate that had gathered in his heart, his reason had been sitting apart and above the storm, like the sun waiting above thunder, like a wise nurse watching and patient above the wild passions of a child. And all the time his reason had been maintaining silently and firmly, without shouting, without speech, that the men who had made this hour were indeed not devils, were no more devils than Mr. Britling was a devil, but sinful men of like nature with himself, hard, stupid, caught in the same web of circumstance. "Kill them in your passion if you will," said reason, "but understand. This thing was done neither by devils nor fools, but by a conspiracy of foolish motives, by the weak

acquiescences of the clever, by a crime that was no man's crime but the natural necessary outcome of the ineffectiveness, the blind motives and muddleheadedness of all mankind."

So reason maintained her thesis, like a light above the head of Mr. Britling at which he would not look, while he hewed airmen to quivering rags with a spade that he had sharpened, and stifled German princes with their own poison gas, given slowly and as painfully as possible. "And what of the towns *our* ships have bombarded?" asked reason unheeded. "What of those Tasmanians *our* people utterly swept away?"

"What of French machine-guns in the Atlas?" reason pressed the case. "Of Himalayan villages burning? Of the things we did in China? Especially of the things we did in China...."

Mr. Britling gave no heed to that.

"The Germans in China were worse than we were," he threw out....

He was maddened by the thought of the Zeppelin making off, high and far in the sky, a thing dwindling to nothing among the stars, and the thought of those murderers escaping him. Time after time he stood still and shook his fist at Boötes, slowly sweeping up the sky....

And at last, sick and wretched, he sat down on a seat upon the deserted parade under the stars, close to the soughing of the invisible sea below....

His mind drifted back once more to those ancient heresies of the Gnostics and the Manichæans which saw the God of the World as altogether evil, which sought only to escape by the utmost abstinences and evasions and perversions from the black wickedness of being. For a while his soul sank down into the uncongenial darknesses of these creeds of despair. "I who have loved life," he murmured, and could have believed for a time that he wished he had never had a son....

Is the whole scheme of nature evil? Is life in its essence cruel? Is man stretched quivering upon the table of the eternal vivisector for no end — and without pity?

These were thoughts that Mr. Britling had never faced before the war. They came to him now, and they came only to be rejected by the inherent quality of his mind. For weeks, consciously and

subconsciously, his mind had been grappling with this riddle. He had thought of it during his lonely prowlings as a special constable; it had flung itself in monstrous symbols across the dark canvas of his dreams. “Is there indeed a devil of pure cruelty? Does any creature, even the very cruellest of creatures, really apprehend the pain it causes, or inflict it for the sake of the infliction?” He summoned a score of memories, a score of imaginations, to bear their witness before the tribunal of his mind. He forgot cold and loneliness in this speculation. He sat, trying all Being, on this score, under the cold indifferent stars.

He thought of certain instances of boyish cruelty that had horrified him in his own boyhood, and it was clear to him that indeed it was not cruelty, it was curiosity, dense textured, thick skinned, so that it could not feel even the anguish of a blinded cat. Those boys who had wrung his childish soul to nigh intolerable misery, had not indeed been tormenting so much as observing torment, testing life as wantonly as one breaks thin ice in the early days of winter. In very much cruelty the real motive is surely no worse than that obtuse curiosity; a mere step of understanding, a mere quickening of the nerves and mind, makes it impossible. But that is not true of all or most cruelty. Most cruelty has something else in it, something more than the clumsy plunging into experience of the hobbledehoy; it is vindictive or indignant; it is never tranquil and sensuous; it draws its incentive, however crippled and monstrous the justification may be, from something punitive in man’s instinct, something therefore that implies a sense, however misguided, of righteousness and vindication. That factor is present even in spite; when some vile or atrocious thing is done out of envy or malice, that envy and malice has in it always — *always?* Yes, always — a genuine condemnation of the hated thing as an unrighteous thing, as an unjust usurpation, as an inexcusable privilege, as a sinful overconfidence. Those men in the airship? — he was coming to that. He found himself asking himself whether it was possible for a human being to do any cruel act without an excuse — or, at least, without the feeling of excusability. And in the case of these Germans and the outrages they had committed and the retaliations they had provoked, he perceived that always there was the element of a perceptible if inadequate

justification. Just as there would be if presently he were to maltreat a fallen German airman. There was anger in their vileness. These Germans were an unsubtle people, a people in the worst and best sense of the words, plain and honest; they were prone to moral indignation; and moral indignation is the mother of most of the cruelty in the world. They perceived the indolence of the English and Russians, they perceived their disregard of science and system, they could not perceive the longer reach of these greater races, and it seemed to them that the mission of Germany was to chastise and correct this laxity. Surely, they had argued, God was not on the side of those who kept an untilled field. So they had butchered these old ladies and slaughtered these children just to show us the consequences:

"All along of dirtiness, all along of mess,
All along of doing things rather more or less."

The very justification our English poet has found for a thousand overbearing actions in the East! "Forget not order and the real," that was the underlying message of bomb and gas and submarine. After all, what right had we English *not* to have a gun or an aeroplane fit to bring down that Zeppelin ignominiously and conclusively? Had we not undertaken Empire? Were we not the leaders of great nations? Had we indeed much right to complain if our imperial pose was flouted? "There, at least," said Mr. Britling's reason, "is one of the lines of thought that brought that unseen cruelty out of the night high over the houses of Filmington-on-Sea. That, in a sense, is the cause of this killing. Cruel it is and abominable, yes, but is it altogether cruel? Hasn't it, after all, a sort of stupid rightness? — isn't it a stupid reaction to an indolence at least equally stupid?"

What was this rightness that lurked below cruelty? What was the inspiration of this pressure of spite, this anger that was aroused by ineffective gentleness and kindliness? Was it indeed an altogether evil thing; was it not rather an impulse, blind as yet, but in its ultimate quality *as good as mercy*, greater perhaps in its ultimate values than mercy?

This idea had been gathering in Mr. Britling's mind for many weeks; it had been growing and taking shape as he wrote, making experimental beginnings for his essay, "The Anatomy of Hate." Is

there not, he now asked himself plainly, a creative and corrective impulse behind all hate? Is not this malignity indeed only the ape-like precursor of the great disciplines of a creative state?

The invincible hopefulness of his sanguine temperament had now got Mr. Britling well out of the pessimistic pit again. Already he had been on the verge of his phrase while wandering across the rushy fields towards Market Saffron; now it came to him again like a legitimate monarch returning from exile.

"When hate shall have become creative energy....

"Hate which passes into creative power; gentleness which is indolence and the herald of euthanasia....

"Pity is but a passing grace; for mankind will not always be pitiful."

But meanwhile, meanwhile.... How long were men so to mingle wrong with right, to be energetic without mercy and kindly without energy?...

For a time Mr. Britling sat on the lonely parade under the stars and in the sound of the sea, brooding upon these ideas.

His mind could make no further steps. It had worked for its spell. His rage had ebbed away now altogether. His despair was no longer infinite. But the world was dark and dreadful still. It seemed none the less dark because at the end there was a gleam of light. It was a gleam of light far beyond the limits of his own life, far beyond the life of his son. It had no balm for these sufferings. Between it and himself stretched the weary generations still to come, generations of bickering and accusation, greed and faintheartedness, and half truth and the hasty blow. And all those years would be full of pitiful things, such pitiful things as the blackened ruins in the town behind, the little grey-faced corpses, the lives torn and wasted, the hopes extinguished and the gladness gone....

He was no longer thinking of the Germans as diabolical. They were human; they had a case. It was a stupid case, but our case, too, was a stupid case. How stupid were all our cases! What was it we missed? Something, he felt, very close to us, and very elusive. Something that would resolve a hundred tangled oppositions....

His mind hung at that. Back upon his consciousness came crowding the horrors and desolations that had been his daily food

now for three quarters of a year. He groaned aloud. He struggled against that renewed envelopment of his spirit. “Oh, blood-stained fools!” he cried, “oh, pitiful, tormented fools!

“Even that vile airship was a ship of fools!

“We are all fools still. Striving apes, irritated beyond measure by our own striving, easily moved to anger.”

Some train of subconscious suggestion brought a long-forgotten speech back into Mr. Britling’s mind, a speech that is full of that light which still seeks so mysteriously and indefatigably to break through the darkness and thickness of the human mind.

He whispered the words. No unfamiliar words could have had the same effect of comfort and conviction.

He whispered it of those men whom he still imagined flying far away there eastward, through the clear freezing air beneath the stars, those muffled sailors and engineers who had caused so much pain and agony in this little town.

“*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*”

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

IN THE WEB OF THE INEFFECTIVE

§ 1

Hugh's letters were becoming a very important influence upon Mr. Britling's thought. Hugh had always been something of a letter-writer, and now what was perhaps an inherited desire to set things down was manifest. He had been accustomed to decorate his letters from school with absurd little sketches — sometimes his letters had been all sketches — and now he broke from drawing to writing and back to drawing in a way that pleased his father mightily. The father loved this queer trick of caricature; he did not possess it himself, and so it seemed to him the most wonderful of all Hugh's little equipment of gifts. Mr. Britling used to carry these letters about until their edges got grimy; he would show them to any one he felt capable of appreciating their youthful freshness; he would quote them as final and conclusive evidence to establish this or that. He did not dream how many thousands of mothers and fathers were treasuring such documents. He thought other sons were dull young men by comparison with Hugh.

The earlier letters told much of the charms of discipline and the open air. "All the bother about what one has to do with oneself is over," wrote Hugh. "One has disposed of oneself. That has the effect of a great relief. Instead of telling oneself that one ought to get up in the morning, a bugle tells you that.... And there's no nonsense about it, no chance of lying and arguing about it with oneself.... I begin to see the sense of men going into monasteries and putting themselves under rules. One is carried along in a sort of moral automobile instead of trudging the road...."

And he was also sounding new physical experiences.

"Never before," he declared, "have I known what fatigue is. It's a miraculous thing. One drops down in one's clothes on any hard old thing and sleeps...."

And in his early letters he was greatly exercised by the elementary

science of drill and discipline, and the discussion of whether these things were necessary. He began by assuming that their importance was overrated. He went on to discover that they constituted the very essentials of all good soldiering. “In a crisis,” he concluded, “there is no telling what will get hold of a man, his higher instincts or his lower. He may show courage of a very splendid sort — or a hasty discretion. A habit is much more trustworthy than an instinct. So discipline sets up a habit of steady and courageous bearing. If you keep your head you are at liberty to be splendid. If you lose it, the habit will carry you through.”

The young man was also very profound upon the effects of the suggestion of various exercises upon the mind.

“It is surprising how bloodthirsty one feels in a bayonet charge. We have to shout; we are encouraged to shout. The effect is to paralyse one’s higher centres. One ceases to question — anything. One becomes a ‘bayoneteer.’ As I go bounding forward I imagine fat men, succulent men ahead, and I am filled with the desire to do them in neatly. This sort of thing—”

A sketch of slaughter followed, with a large and valiant Hugh leaving a train of fallen behind him.

“Not like this. This is how I used to draw it in my innocent childhood, but it is incorrect. More than one German on the bayonet at a time is an incumbrance. And it would be swank — a thing we detest in the army.”

The second sketch showed the same brave hero with half a dozen of the enemy skewered like cat’s-meat.

“As for the widows and children, I disregard ‘em.”

§ 2

But presently Hugh began to be bored.

“Route marching again,” he wrote. “For no earthly reason than that they can do nothing else with us. We are getting no decent musketry training because there are no rifles. We are wasting half our time. If you multiply half a week by the number of men in the army you will see we waste centuries weekly.... If most of these men here

had just been enrolled and left to go about their business while we trained officers and instructors and got equipment for them, and if they had then been put through their paces as rapidly as possible, it would have been infinitely better for the country.... In a sort of way we are keeping raw; in a sort of way we are getting stale.... I get irritated by this. I feel we are not being properly done by.

"Half our men are educated men, reasonably educated, but we are always being treated as though we were too stupid for words....

"No good grousing, I suppose, but after Statesminster and a glimpse of old Cardinal's way of doing things, one gets a kind of toothache in the mind at the sight of everything being done twice as slowly and half as well as it need be."

He went off at a tangent to describe the men in his platoon. "The best man in our lot is an ex-grocer's assistant, but in order to save us from vain generalisations it happens that the worst man — a moon-faced creature, almost incapable of lacing up his boots without help and objurgation — is also an ex-grocer's assistant. Our most offensive member is a little cad with a snub nose, who has read Kipling and imagines he is the nearest thing that ever has been to Private Ortheris. He goes about looking for the other two of the Soldiers Three; it is rather like an unpopular politician trying to form a ministry. And he is conscientiously foul-mouthed. He feels losing a chance of saying 'bloody' as acutely as a snob feels dropping an H. He goes back sometimes and says the sentence over again and puts the 'bloody' in. I used to swear a little out of the range of your parental ear, but Ortheris has cured me. When he is about I am mincing in my speech. I perceive now that cursing is a way of chewing one's own dirt. In a platoon there is no elbow-room for indifference; you must either love or hate. I have a feeling that my first taste of battle will not be with Germans, but with Private Ortheris...."

And one letter was just a picture, a parody of the well-known picture of the bivouac below and the soldier's dream of return to his beloved above. But Master Hugh in the dream was embracing an enormous retort, while a convenient galvanometer registered his emotion and little tripods danced around him.

Then came a letter which plunged abruptly into criticism.

"My dear Parent, this is a swearing letter. I must let go to somebody. And somehow none of the other chaps are convenient. I don't know if I ought to be put against a wall and shot for it, but I hereby declare that all the officers of this battalion over and above the rank of captain are a constellation of incapables — and several of the captains are herewith included. Some of them are men of a pleasant disposition and carefully aborted mental powers, and some are men of an unpleasant disposition and no mental powers at all. And I believe — a little enlightened by your recent letter to *The Times* — that they are a fair sample of the entire 'army' class which has got to win this war. Usually they are indolent, but when they are thoroughly roused they are fussy. The time they should spend in enlarging their minds and increasing their military efficiency they devote to keeping fit. They are, roughly speaking, fit — for nothing. They cannot move us thirty miles without getting half of us left about, without losing touch with food and shelter, and starving us for thirty-six hours or so in the process, and they cannot count beyond the fingers of one hand, not having learnt to use the nose for arithmetical operations.... I conclude this war is going to be a sort of Battle of Inkerman on a large scale. We chaps in the ranks will have to do the job. Leading is 'off.'...

"All of this, my dear Parent, is just a blow off. I have been needlessly starved, and fagged to death and exasperated. We have moved five-and-twenty miles across country — in fifty-seven hours. And without food for about eighteen hours. I have been with my Captain, who has been billeting us here in Cheasingholt. Oh, he is a MUFF! Oh God! oh God of Heaven! what a MUFF! He is afraid of printed matter, but he controls himself heroically. He prides himself upon having no 'sense of locality, confound it!' Prides himself! He went about this village, which is a little dispersed, at a slight trot, and wouldn't avail himself of the one-inch map I happened to have. He judged the capacity of each room with his eye and wouldn't let me measure, even with God's own paces. Not with the legs I inherit. 'We'll put five fellahs hea!' he said. 'What d'you want to measure

the room for? We haven't come to lay down carpets.' Then, having assigned men by *coup d'oeil*, so as to congest half the village miserably, he found the other half unoccupied and had to begin all over again. 'If you measured the floor space first, sir,' I said, 'and made a list of the houses—' 'That isn't the way I'm going to do it,' he said, fixing me with a pitiless eye....

"That isn't the way they are going to do it, Daddy! The sort of thing that is done over here in the green army will be done over there in the dry. They won't be in time; they'll lose their guns where now they lose our kitchens. I'm a mute soldier; I've got to do what I'm told; still, I begin to understand the Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

"They say the relations of men and officers in the new army are beautiful. Some day I may learn to love my officer — but not just yet. Not till I've forgotten the operations leading up to the occupation of Cheasingholt.... He muffs his real job without a blush, and yet he would rather be shot than do his bootlaces up criss-cross. What I say about officers applies only and solely to him really.... How well I understand now the shooting of officers by their men.... But indeed, fatigue and exasperation apart, this shift has been done atrociously...."

The young man returned to these criticisms in a later letter.

"You will think I am always carping, but it does seem to me that nearly everything is being done here in the most wasteful way possible. We waste time, we waste labour, we waste material, oh Lord! how we waste our country's money. These aren't, I can assure you, the opinions of a conceited young man. It's nothing to be conceited about.... We're bored to death by standing about this infernal little village. There is nothing to do — except trail after a small number of slatternly young women we despise and hate. I *don't*, Daddy. And I don't drink. Why have I inherited no vices? We had a fight here yesterday — sheer boredom. Ortheris has a swollen lip, and another private has a bad black eye. There is to be a return match. I perceive the chief horror of warfare is boredom....

"Our feeding here is typical of the whole system. It is a system invented not with any idea of getting the best results — that does not enter into the War Office philosophy — but to have a rule for everything, and avoid arguments. There is rather too generous an

allowance of bread and stuff per man, and there is a very fierce but not very efficient system of weighing and checking. A rather too generous allowance is, of course, a direct incentive to waste or stealing — as any one but our silly old duffer of a War Office would know. The checking is for quantity, which any fool can understand, rather than for quality. The test for the quality of army meat is the smell. If it doesn't smell bad, it is good....

"Then the raw material is handed over to a cook. He is a common soldier who has been made into a cook by a simple ceremony. He is told, 'You are a cook.' He does his best to be. Usually he roasts or bakes to begin with, guessing when the joint is done, afterwards he hacks up what is left of his joints and makes a stew for next day. A stew is hacked meat boiled up in a big pot. It has much fat floating on the top. After you have eaten your fill you want to sit about quiet. The men are fed usually in a large tent or barn. We have a barn. It is not a clean barn, and just to make it more like a picnic there are insufficient plates, knives and forks. (I tell you, no army people can count beyond eight or ten.) The corporals after their morning's work have to carve. When they have done carving they tell me they feel they have had enough dinner. They sit about looking pale, and wander off afterwards to the village pub. (I shall probably become a corporal soon.) In these islands before the war began there was a surplus of women over men of about a million. (See the publications of the Fabian Society, now so popular among the young.) None of these women have been trusted by the government with the difficult task of cooking and giving out food to our soldiers. No man of the ordinary soldier class ever cooks anything until he is a soldier.... All food left over after the stew or otherwise rendered uneatable by the cook is thrown away. We throw away pail-loads. *We bury meat....*

"Also we get three pairs of socks. We work pretty hard. We don't know how to darn socks. When the heels wear through, come blisters. Bad blisters disable a man. Of the million of surplus women (see above) the government has not had the intelligence to get any to darn our socks. So a certain percentage of us go lame. And so on. And so on.

"You will think all this is awful grousing, but the point I want to make — I hereby to ease my feelings make it now in a fair round

hand — is that all this business could be done far better and far cheaper if it wasn't left to these absolutely inexperienced and extremely exclusive military gentlemen. They think they are leading England and showing us all how; instead of which they are just keeping us back. Why in thunder are they doing everything? Not one of them, when he is at home, is allowed to order the dinner or poke his nose into his own kitchen or check the household books.... The ordinary British colonel is a helpless old gentleman; he ought to have a nurse.... This is not merely the trivial grievance of my insulted stomach, it is a serious matter for the country. Sooner or later the country may want the food that is being wasted in all these capers. In the aggregate it must amount to a daily destruction of tons of stuff of all sorts. Tons.... Suppose the war lasts longer than we reckon!"

From this point Hugh's letter jumped to a general discussion of the military mind.

"Our officers are beastly good chaps, nearly all of them. That's where the perplexity of the whole thing comes in. If only they weren't such good chaps! If only they were like the Prussian officers to their men, then we'd just take on a revolution as well as the war, and make everything tidy at once. But they are decent, they are charming.... Only they do not think hard, and they do not understand that doing a job properly means doing it as directly and thought-outly as you possibly can. They won't worry about things. If their tempers were worse perhaps their work might be better. They won't use maps or timetables or books of reference. When we move to a new place they pick up what they can about it by hearsay; not one of our lot has the gumption to possess a contoured map or a Michelin guide. They have hearsay minds. They are fussy and petty and wasteful — and, in the way of getting things done, pretentious. By their code they're paragons of honour. Courage — they're all right about that; no end of it; honesty, truthfulness, and so on — high. They have a kind of horsey standard of smartness and pluck, too, that isn't bad, and they have a fine horror of whiskers and being unbuttoned. But the mistake they make is to class thinking with whiskers, as a sort of fussy sidegrowth. Instead of classing it with unbuttonedupness. They hate economy. And preparation....

"They won't see that inefficiency is a sort of dishonesty. If a man

doesn't steal sixpence, they think it a light matter if he wastes half a crown. Here follows wisdom! *From the point of view of a nation at war, sixpence is just a fifth part of half a crown....*

"When I began this letter I was boiling with indignation, complicated, I suspect, by this morning's 'stew'; now I have written thus far I feel I'm an ungenerous grumbler.... It is remarkable, my dear Parent, that I let off these things to you. I like writing to you. I couldn't possibly say the things I can write. Heinrich had a confidential friend at Breslau to whom he used to write about his Soul. I never had one of those Teutonic friendships. And I haven't got a Soul. But I have to write. One must write to some one — and in this place there is nothing else to do. And now the old lady downstairs is turning down the gas; she always does at half-past ten. She didn't ought. She gets — ninepence each. Excuse the pencil...."

That letter ended abruptly. The next two were brief and cheerful. Then suddenly came a new note.

"We've got rifles! We're real armed soldiers at last. Every blessed man has got a rifle. And they come from Japan! They are of a sort of light wood that is like new oak and art furniture, and makes one feel that one belongs to the First Garden Suburb Regiment; but I believe much can be done with linseed oil. And they are real rifles, they go bang. We are a little light-headed about them. Only our training and discipline prevent our letting fly at incautious spectators on the skyline. I saw a man yesterday about half a mile off. I was possessed by the idea that I could get him — right in the middle.... Ortheris, the little beast, has got a motor-bicycle, which he calls his 'b —— y oto' — no one knows why — and only death or dishonourable conduct will save me, I gather, from becoming a corporal in the course of the next month...."

§ 4

A subsequent letter threw fresh light on the career of the young man with the "oto." Before the rifle and the "oto," and in spite of his fights with some person or persons unknown, Ortheris found trouble. Hugh told the story with the unblushing *savoir-faire* of the very

young.

"By the by, Ortheris, following the indications of his creator and succumbing to the universal boredom before the rifles came, forgot Lord Kitchener's advice and attempted 'seduktion.' With painful results which he insists upon confiding to the entire platoon. He has been severely smacked and scratched by the proposed victim, and warned off the premises (licensed premises) by her father and mother — both formidable persons. They did more than warn him off the premises. They had displayed neither a proper horror of Don Juan nor a proper respect for the King's uniform. Mother, we realise, got hold of him and cuffed him severely. 'What the 'ell's a chap to do?' cried Ortheris. 'You can't go 'itting a woman back.' Father had set a dog on him. A less ingenuous character would be silent about such passages — I should be too egotistical and humiliated altogether — but that is not his quality. He tells us in tones of naïve wonder. He talks about it and talks about it. 'I don't care what the old woman did,' he says, 'not — reely. What 'urts me about it is that I jest made a sort of mistake 'ow *she'd* tike it. You see, I sort of feel I've 'urt and insulted *'er*. And reely I didn't mean to. Swap me, I didn't mean to. Gawd 'elp me. I wouldn't 'ave 'ad it 'appened as it 'as 'appened, not for worlds. And now I can't get round to 'er, or anyfing, not to explain.... You chaps may laugh, but you don't know what there is *in* it.... I tell you it worries me something frightful. You think I'm just a little cad who took liberties he didn't ought to. (Note of anger drowning uncharitable grunts of assent.) 'Ow the 'ell is 'e to know *when* 'e didn't ought to? ... I *swear* she liked me....'

"This kind of thing goes on for hours — in the darkness.

"'I'd got regular sort of fond of 'er.'

"And the extraordinary thing is it makes me begin to get regular fond of Ortheris.

"I think it is because the affair has surprised him right out of acting Ortheris and Tommy Atkins for a bit, into his proper self. He's frightfully like some sort of mongrel with a lot of wiry-haired terrier and a touch of Airedale in it. A mongrel you like in spite of the flavour of all the horrid things he's been nosing into. And he's as hard as nails and, my dear daddy! he can't box for nuts."

§ 5

Mr. Britling, with an understanding much quickened by Hugh's letters, went about Essex in his automobile, and on one or two journeys into Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, and marked the steady conversion of the old pacific countryside into an armed camp. He was disposed to minimise Hugh's criticisms. He found in them something of the harshness of youth, which is far too keen-edged to be tolerant with half performance and our poor human evasion of perfection's overstrain. "Our poor human evasion of perfection's overstrain"; this phrase was Mr. Britling's. To Mr. Britling, looking less closely and more broadly, the new army was a pride and a marvel.

He liked to come into some quiet village and note the clusters of sturdy khaki-clad youngsters going about their business, the tethered horses, the air of subdued bustle, the occasional glimpses of guns and ammunition trains. Wherever one went now there were soldiers and still more soldiers. There was a steady flow of men into Flanders, and presently to Gallipoli, but it seemed to have no effect upon the multitude in training at home. He was pleasantly excited by the evident increase in the proportion of military material upon the railways; he liked the promise and mystery of the long lines of trucks bearing tarpaulin-covered wagons and carts and guns that he would pass on his way to Liverpool Street station. He could apprehend defeat in the silence of the night, but when he saw the men, when he went about the land, then it was impossible to believe in any end but victory....

But through the spring and summer there was no victory. The "great offensive" of May was checked and abandoned after a series of ineffective and very costly attacks between Ypres and Soissons. The Germans had developed a highly scientific defensive in which machine-guns replaced rifles and a maximum of punishment was inflicted upon an assaulting force with a minimum of human loss. The War Office had never thought much of machine-guns before, but now it thought a good deal. Moreover, the energies of Britain were being turned more and more towards the Dardanelles.

The idea of an attack upon the Dardanelles had a traditional

attractiveness for the British mind. Old men had been brought up from childhood with “forcing the Dardanelles” as a familiar phrase; it had none of the flighty novelty and vulgarity about it that made an “aerial offensive” seem so unwarrantable a proceeding. Forcing the Dardanelles was historically British. It made no break with tradition. Soon after Turkey entered the war British submarines appeared in the Sea of Marmora, and in February a systematic bombardment of the Dardanelles began; this was continued intermittently for a month, the defenders profiting by their experiences and by spells of bad weather to strengthen their works. This first phase of the attack culminated in the loss of the *Irresistible*, *Ocean*, and *Bouvet*, when on the 17th of March the attacking fleet closed in upon the Narrows. After an interlude of six weeks to allow of further preparations on the part of the defenders, who were now thoroughly alive to what was coming, the Allied armies gathered upon the scene, and a difficult and costly landing was achieved at two points upon the peninsula of Gallipoli. With that began a slow and bloody siege of the defences of the Dardanelles, clambering up to the surprise landing of a fresh British army in Suvla Bay in August, and its failure in the battle of Anafarta, through incompetent commanders and a general sloppiness of leading, to cut off and capture Maidos and the Narrows defences.... Meanwhile the Russian hosts, which had reached their high-water mark in the capture of Przemysl, were being forced back first in the south and then in the north. The Germans recaptured Lemberg, entered Warsaw, and pressed on to take Brest Litowsk. The Russian lines rolled back with an impressive effect of defeat, and the Germans thrust towards Riga and Petrograd, reaching Vilna about the middle of September....

Day after day Mr. Britling traced the swaying fortunes of the conflict, with impatience, with perplexity, but with no loss of confidence in the ultimate success of Britain. The country was still swarming with troops, and still under summer sunshine. A second hay harvest redeemed the scantiness of the first, the wheat crops were wonderful, and the great fig tree at the corner of the Dower House had never borne so bountifully nor such excellent juicy figs....

And one day in early June while those figs were still only a hope, Teddy appeared at the Dower House with Letty, to say good-bye

before going to the front. He was going out in a draft to fill up various gaps and losses; he did not know where. Essex was doing well but bloodily over there. Mrs. Britling had tea set out upon the lawn under the blue cedar, and Mr. Britling found himself at a loss for appropriate sayings, and talked in his confusion almost as though Teddy's departure was of no significance at all. He was still haunted by that odd sense of responsibility for Teddy. Teddy was not nearly so animated as he had been in his pre-khaki days; there was a quiet exaltation in his manner rather than a lively excitement. He knew now what he was in for. He knew now that war was not a lark, that for him it was to be the gravest experience he had ever had or was likely to have. There were no more jokes about Letty's pension, and a general avoidance of the topics of high explosives and asphyxiating gas....

Mr. and Mrs. Britling took the young people to the gate.

"Good luck!" cried Mr. Britling as they receded.

Teddy replied with a wave of the hand.

Mr. Britling stood watching them for some moments as they walked towards the little cottage which was to be the scene of their private parting.

"I don't like his going," he said. "I hope it will be all right with him.... Teddy's so grave nowadays. It's a mean thing, I know, it has none of the Roman touch, but I am glad that this can't happen with Hugh — —" He computed. "Not for a year and three months, even if they march him into it upon his very birthday....

"It may all he over by then...."

§ 6

In that computation he reckoned without Hugh.

Within a month Hugh was also saying "Good-bye."

"But how's this?" protested Mr. Britling, who had already guessed the answer. "You're not nineteen."

"I'm nineteen enough for this job," said Hugh. "In fact, I enlisted as nineteen."

Mr. Britling said nothing for a little while. Then he spoke with a

catch in his breath. “I don’t blame you,” he said. “It was — the right spirit.”

Drill and responsibilities of non-commissioned rank had imposed a novel manliness upon the bearing of Corporal Britling. “I always classified a little above my age at Statesminster,” he said as though that cleared up everything.

He looked at a rosebud as though it interested him. Then he remarked rather casually:

“I thought,” he said, “that if I was to go to war I’d better do the thing properly. It seemed — sort of half and half — not to be eligible for the trenches.... I ought to have told you....”

“Yes,” Mr. Britling decided.

“I was shy about it at first.... I thought perhaps the war would be over before it was necessary to discuss anything.... Didn’t want to go into it.”

“Exactly,” said Mr. Britling as though that was a complete explanation.

“It’s been a good year for your roses,” said Hugh.

§ 7

Hugh was to stop the night. He spent what seemed to him and every one a long, shy, inexpressive evening. Only the small boys were really natural and animated. They were much impressed and excited by his departure, and wanted to ask a hundred questions about the life in the trenches. Many of them Hugh had to promise to answer when he got there. Then he would see just exactly how things were. Mrs. Britling was motherly and intelligent about his outfit. “Will you want winter things?” she asked....

But when he was alone with his father after every one had gone to bed they found themselves able to talk.

“This sort of thing seems more to us than it would be to a French family,” Hugh remarked, standing on the hearthrug.

“Yes,” agreed Mr. Britling. “Their minds would be better prepared.... They’d have their appropriate things to say. They have been educated by the tradition of service — and ‘71.”

Then he spoke — almost resentfully.

"The older men ought to go before you boys. Who is to carry on if a lot of you get killed?"

Hugh reflected. "In the stiffest battle that ever can be the odds are against getting killed," he said.

"I suppose they are."

"One in three or four in the very hottest corners."

Mr. Britling expressed no satisfaction.

"Every one is going through something of this sort."

"All the decent people, at any rate," said Mr. Britling....

"It will be an extraordinary experience. Somehow it seems out of proportion—"

"With what?"

"With life generally. As one has known it."

"It isn't in proportion," Mr. Britling admitted.

"Incommensurables," said Hugh.

He considered his phrasing. "It's not," he said, "as though one was going into another part of the same world, or turning up another side of the world one was used to. It is just as if one had been living in a room and one had been asked to step outside.... It makes me think of a queer little thing that happened when I was in London last winter. I got into Queer Company. I don't think I told you. I went to have supper with some students in Chelsea. I hadn't been to the place before, but they seemed all right — just people like me — and everybody. And after supper they took me on to some people *they* didn't know very well; people who had to do with some School of Dramatic Art. There were two or three young actresses there and a singer and people of that sort, sitting about smoking cigarettes, and we began talking plays and books and picture shows and all that stuff; and suddenly there was a knocking at the door and some one went out and found a policeman with a warrant on the landing. They took off our host's son.... It had to do with a murder...."

Hugh paused. "It was the Bedford Mansions mystery. I don't suppose you remember about it or read about it at the time. He'd killed a man.... It doesn't matter about the particulars anyhow, but what I mean is the effect. The effect of a comfortable well-lit orderly room and the sense of harmless people — and then the door opening

and the policeman and the cold draught flowing in. *Murder!* A girl who seemed to know the people well explained to me in whispers what was happening. It was like the opening of a trap-door going down into some pit you have always known was there, but never really believed in."

"I know," said Mr. Britling. "I know."

"That's just how I feel about this war business. There's no real death over here. It's laid out and boxed up. And accidents are all padded about. If one got a toss from a horse here, you'd be in bed and comfortable in no time.... And there; it's like another planet. It's outside.... I'm going outside.... Instead of there being no death anywhere, it is death everywhere, outside there. We shall be using our utmost wits to kill each other. A kind of reverse to this world."

Mr. Britling nodded.

"I've never seen a dead body yet. In Dower-House land there aren't dead bodies."

"We've kept things from you — horrid things of that sort."

"I'm not complaining," said Hugh.... "But — Master Hugh — the Master Hugh you kept things from — will never come back."

He went on quickly as his father raised distressed eyes to him. "I mean that anyhow *this* Hugh will never come back. Another one may. But I shall have been outside, and it will all be different...."

He paused. Never had Mr. Britling been so little disposed to take up the discourse.

"Like a man," he said, seeking an image and doing no more than imitate his son's; "who goes out of a busy lighted room through a trap-door into a blizzard, to mend the roof...."

For some moments neither father nor son said anything more. They had a queer sense of insurmountable insufficiency. Neither was saying what he had wanted to say to the other, but it was not clear to them now what they had to say to one another....

"It's wonderful," said Mr. Britling.

Hugh could only manage: "The world has turned right over...."

"The job has to be done," said Mr. Britling.

"The job has to be done," said Hugh.

The pause lengthened.

"You'll be getting up early to-morrow," said Mr. Britling....

§ 8

When Mr. Britling was alone in his own room all the thoughts and feelings that had been held up downstairs began to run more and more rapidly and abundantly through his mind.

He had a feeling — every now and again in the last few years he had had the same feeling — as though he was only just beginning to discover Hugh. This perpetual rediscovery of one's children is the experience of every observant parent. He had always considered Hugh as a youth, and now a man stood over him and talked, as one man to another. And this man, this very new man, mint new and clean and clear, filled Mr. Britling with surprise and admiration.

It was as if he perceived the beauty of youth for the first time in Hugh's slender, well balanced, khaki-clad body. There was infinite delicacy in his clear complexion, his clear eyes; the delicately pencilled eyebrow that was so exactly like his mother's. And this thing of brightness and bravery talked as gravely and as wisely as any weather-worn, shop-soiled, old fellow....

The boy was wise.

Hugh thought for himself; he thought round and through his position, not egotistically but with a quality of responsibility. He wasn't just hero-worshipping and imitating, just spinning some self-centred romance. If he was a fair sample of his generation then it was a better generation than Mr. Britling's had been....

At that Mr. Britling's mind went off at a tangent to the grievance of the rejected volunteer. It was acutely shameful to him that all these fine lads should be going off to death and wounds while the men of forty and over lay snug at home. How stupid it was to fix things like that! Here were the fathers, who had done their work, shot their bolts, returned some value for the costs of their education, unable to get training, unable to be of any service, shamefully safe, doing April fool work as special constables; while their young innocents, untried, all their gathering possibilities of service unbroached, went down into the deadly trenches.... The war would leave the world a world of cripples and old men and children....

He felt himself as a cowardly brute, fat, wheezy, out of training, sheltering behind this dear one branch of Mary's life.

He writhed with impotent humiliation....

How stupidly the world is managed.

He began to fret and rage. He could not lie in peace in his bed; he got up and prowled about his room, blundering against chairs and tables in the darkness.... We were too stupid to do the most obvious things; we were sending all these boys into hardship and pitiless danger; we were sending them ill-equipped, insufficiently supported, we were sending our children through the fires to Moloch, because essentially we English were a world of indolent, pampered, sham good-humoured, old and middle-aged men. (So he distributed the intolerable load of self-accusation.) Why was he doing nothing to change things, to get them better? What was the good of an assumed modesty, an effort at tolerance for and confidence in these boozy old lawyers, these ranting platform men, these stiff-witted officers and hide-bound officials? They were butchering the youth of England. Old men sat out of danger contriving death for the lads in the trenches. That was the reality of the thing. "My son!" he cried sharply in the darkness. His sense of our national deficiencies became tormentingly, fantastically acute. It was as if all his cherished delusions had fallen from the scheme of things.... What was the good of making believe that up there they were planning some great counter-stroke that would end in victory? It was as plain as daylight that they had neither the power of imagination nor the collective intelligence even to conceive of a counter-stroke. Any dull mass may resist, but only imagination can strike. Imagination! To the end we should not strike. We might strike through the air. We might strike across the sea. We might strike hard at Gallipoli instead of dribbling inadequate armies thither as our fathers dribbled men at the Redan.... But the old men would sit at their tables, replete and sleepy, and shake their cunning old heads. The press would chatter and make odd ambiguous sounds like a shipload of monkeys in a storm. The political harridans would get the wrong men appointed, would attack every possible leader with scandal and abuse and falsehood....

The spirit and honour and drama had gone out of this war.

Our only hope now was exhaustion. Our only strategy was to

barter blood for blood — trusting that our tank would prove the deeper....

While into this tank stepped Hugh, young and smiling....

The war became a nightmare vision....

§ 9

In the morning Mr. Britling's face was white from his overnight brain storm, and Hugh's was fresh from wholesome sleep. They walked about the lawn, and Mr. Britling talked hopefully of the general outlook until it was time for them to start to the station....

The little old station-master grasped the situation at once, and presided over their last hand-clasp.

"Good luck, Hugh!" cried Mr. Britling.

"Good luck!" cried the little old station-master.

"It's not easy a-parting," he said to Mr. Britling as the train slipped down the line. "There's been many a parting hea' since this here old war began. Many. And some as won't come back again neether."

§ 10

For some days Mr. Britling could think of nothing but Hugh, and always with a dull pain at his heart. He felt as he had felt long ago while he had waited downstairs and Hugh upstairs had been under the knife of a surgeon. But this time the operation went on and still went on. At the worst his boy had but one chance in five of death or serious injury, but for a time he could think of nothing but that one chance. He felt it pressing upon his mind, pressing him down....

Then instead of breaking under that pressure, he was released by the trick of the sanguine temperament. His mind turned over, abruptly, to the four chances out of five. It was like a dislocated joint slipping back into place. It was as sudden as that. He found he had adapted himself to the prospect of Hugh in mortal danger. It had become a fact established, a usual thing. He could bear with it and go

about his affairs.

He went up to London, and met other men at the club in the same emotional predicament. He realised that it was neither very wonderful nor exceptionally tragic now to have a son at the front.

"My boy is in Gallipoli," said one. "It's tough work there."

"My lad's in Flanders," said Mr. Britling. "Nothing would satisfy him but the front. He's three months short of eighteen. He misstated his age."

And they went on to talk newspaper just as if the world was where it had always been.

But until a post card came from Hugh Mr. Britling watched the postman like a lovesick girl.

Hugh wrote more frequently than his father had dared to hope, pencilled letters for the most part. It was as if he was beginning to feel an inherited need for talk, and was a little at a loss for a sympathetic ear. Park, his schoolmate, who had enlisted with him, wasn't, it seemed, a theoriser. "Park becomes a martinet," Hugh wrote. "Also he is a sergeant now, and this makes rather a gulf between us." Mr. Britling had the greatest difficulty in writing back. There were many grave deep things he wanted to say, and never did. Instead he gave elaborate details of the small affairs of the Dower House. Once or twice, with a half-unconscious imitation of his boy's style, he took a shot at the theological and philosophical hares that Hugh had started. But the exemplary letters that he composed of nights from a Father to a Son at War were never written down. It was just as well, for there are many things of that sort that are good to think and bad to say....

Hugh was not very explicit about his position or daily duties. What he wrote now had to pass through the hands of a Censor, and any sort of definite information might cause the suppression of his letter. Mr. Britling conceived him for the most part as quartered some way behind the front, but in a flat, desolated country and within hearing of great guns. He assisted his imagination with the illustrated papers. Sometimes he put him farther back into pleasant old towns after the fashion of Beauvais, and imagined loitering groups in the front of cafés; sometimes he filled in the obvious suggestions of the phrase that all the Pas de Calais was now one vast British camp.

Then he crowded the picture with tethered horses and tents and grey-painted wagons, and Hugh in the foreground — bare-armed, with a bucket....

Hugh's letters divided themselves pretty fairly between two main topics; the first was the interest of the art of war, the second the reaction against warfare. "After one has got over the emotion of it," he wrote, "and when one's mind has just accepted and forgotten (as it does) the horrors and waste of it all, then I begin to perceive that war is absolutely the best game in the world. That is the real strength of war, I submit. Not as you put it in that early pamphlet of yours; ambition, cruelty, and all those things. Those things give an excuse for war, they rush timid and base people into war, but the essential matter is the hold of the thing itself upon an active imagination. It's such a big game. Instead of being fenced into a field and tied down to one set of tools as you are in almost every other game, you have all the world to play and you may use whatever you can use. You can use every scrap of imagination and invention that is in you. And it's wonderful.... But real soldiers aren't cruel. And war isn't cruel in its essence. Only in its consequences. Over here one gets hold of scraps of talk that light up things. Most of the barbarities were done — it is quite clear — by an excited civilian sort of men, men in a kind of inflamed state. The great part of the German army in the early stage of the war was really an army of demented civilians. Trained civilians no doubt, but civilians in soul. They were nice orderly clean law-abiding men suddenly torn up by the roots and flung into quite shocking conditions. They felt they were rushing at death, and that decency was at an end. They thought every Belgian had a gun behind the hedge and a knife in his trouser leg. They saw villages burning and dead people, and men smashed to bits. They lived in a kind of nightmare. They didn't know what they were doing. They did horrible things just as one does them sometimes in dreams...."

He flung out his conclusion with just his mother's leaping consecutiveness. "Conscript soldiers are the ruin of war.... Half the Germans and a lot of the French ought never to have been brought within ten miles of a battlefield.

"What makes all this so plain are the diaries the French and English have been finding on the dead. You know at the early state of

the war every German soldier was expected to keep a diary. He was ordered to do it. The idea was to keep him interested in the war. Consequently, from the dead and wounded our people have got thousands.... It helps one to realise that the Germans aren't really soldiers at all. Not as our men are. They are obedient, law-abiding, intelligent people, who have been shoved into this. They have to see the war as something romantic and melodramatic, or as something moral, or as tragic fate. They have to bellow songs about 'Deutschland,' or drag in 'Gott.' They don't take to the game as our men take to the game....

"I confess I'm taking to the game. I wish at times I had gone into the O.T.C. with Teddy, and got a better hold of it. I was too high-browed about this war business. I dream now of getting a commission....

"That diary-hunting strategy is just the sort of thing that makes this war intellectually fascinating. Everything is being thought out and then tried over that can possibly make victory. The Germans go in for psychology much more than we do, just as they go in for war more than we do, but they don't seem to be really clever about it. So they set out to make all their men understand the war, while our chaps are singing 'Tipperary.' But what the men put down aren't the beautiful things they ought to put down; most of them shove down lists of their meals, some of the diaries are all just lists of things eaten, and a lot of them have written the most damning stuff about outrages and looting. Which the French are translating and publishing. The Germans would give anything now to get back these silly diaries. And now they have made an order that no one shall go into battle with any written papers at all.... Our people got so keen on documenting and the value of chance writings that one of the principal things to do after a German attack had failed had been to hook in the documentary dead, and find out what they had on them.... It's a curious sport, this body fishing. You have a sort of triple hook on a rope, and you throw it and drag. They do the same. The other day one body near Hooghe was hooked by both sides, and they had a tug-of-war. With a sharpshooter or so cutting in whenever our men got too excited. Several men were hit. The Irish — it was an Irish regiment — got him — or at least they got the better part of him....

“Now that I am a sergeant, Park talks to me again about all these things, and we have a first lieutenant too keen to resist such technical details. They are purely technical details. You must take them as that. One does not think of the dead body as a man recently deceased, who had perhaps a wife and business connections and a weakness for oysters or pale brandy. Or as something that laughed and cried and didn’t like getting hurt. That would spoil everything. One thinks of him merely as a uniform with marks upon it that will tell us what kind of stuff we have against us, and possibly with papers that will give us a hint of how far he and his lot are getting sick of the whole affair....

“There’s a kind of hardening not only of the body but of the mind through all this life out here. One is living on a different level. You know — just before I came away — you talked of Dower-House-land — and outside. This is outside. It’s different. Our men here are kind enough still to little things — kittens or birds or flowers. Behind the front, for example, everywhere there are Tommy gardens. Some are quite bright little patches. But it’s just nonsense to suppose we are tender to the wounded up here — and, putting it plainly, there isn’t a scrap of pity left for the enemy. Not a scrap. Not a trace of such feeling. They were tender about the wounded in the early days — men tell me — and reverent about the dead. It’s all gone now. There have been atrocities, gas, unforgettable things. Everything is harder. Our people are inclined now to laugh at a man who gets hit, and to be annoyed at a man with a troublesome wound. The other day, they say, there was a big dead German outside the Essex trenches. He became a nuisance, and he was dragged in and taken behind the line and buried. After he was buried, a kindly soul was putting a board over him with ‘Somebody’s Fritz’ on it, when a shell burst close by. It blew the man with the board a dozen yards and wounded him, and it restored Fritz to the open air. He was lifted clean out. He flew head over heels like a windmill. This was regarded as a tremendous joke against the men who had been at the pains of burying him. For a time nobody else would touch Fritz, who was now some yards behind his original grave. Then as he got worse and worse he was buried again by some devoted sanitarians, and this time the inscription was ‘Somebody’s Fritz. R.I.P.’ And as luck

would have it, he was spun up again. In pieces. The trench howled with laughter and cries of 'Good old Fritz!' 'This isn't the Resurrection, Fritz.'...

"Another thing that appeals to the sunny humour of the trenches as a really delicious practical joke is the trick of the fuses. We have two kinds of fuse, a slow-burning fuse such as is used for hand-grenades and such-like things, a sort of yard-a-minute fuse, and a rapid fuse that goes a hundred yards a second — for firing mines and so on. The latter is carefully distinguished from the former by a conspicuous red thread. Also, as you know, it is the habit of the enemy and ourselves when the trenches are near enough, to enliven each other by the casting of homely but effective hand-grenades made out of tins. When a grenade drops in a British trench somebody seizes it instantly and throws it back. To hoist the German with his own petard is particularly sweet to the British mind. When a grenade drops into a German trench everybody runs. (At least that is what I am told happens by the men from our trenches; though possibly each side has its exceptions.) If the bomb explodes, it explodes. If it doesn't, Hans and Fritz presently come creeping back to see what has happened. Sometimes the fuse hasn't caught properly, it has been thrown by a nervous man; or it hasn't burnt properly. Then Hans or Fritz puts in a new fuse and sends it back with loving care. To hoist the Briton with his own petard is particularly sweet to the German mind.... But here it is that military genius comes in. Some gifted spirit on our side procured (probably by larceny) a length of mine fuse, the rapid sort, and spent a laborious day removing the red thread and making it into the likeness of its slow brother. Then bits of it were attached to tin-bombs and shied — unlit of course — into the German trenches. A long but happy pause followed. I can see the chaps holding themselves in. Hans and Fritz were understood to be creeping back, to be examining the unlit fuse, to be applying a light thereunto, in order to restore it to its maker after their custom....

"A loud bang in the German trenches indicated the moment of lighting, and the exit of Hans and Fritz to worlds less humorous.

"The genius in the British trenches went on with the preparation of the next surprise bomb — against the arrival of Kurt and Karl....

"Hans, Fritz, Kurt, Karl, Michael and Wilhelm; it went for quite a

long time before they grew suspicious....

"You once wrote that all fighting ought to be done nowadays by metal soldiers. I perceive, my dear Daddy, that all real fighting is...."

§ 11

Not all Hugh's letters were concerned with these grim technicalities. It was not always that news and gossip came along; it was rare that a young man with a commission would condescend to talk shop to two young men without one; there were few newspapers and fewer maps, and even in France and within sound of guns, Hugh could presently find warfare almost as much a bore as it had been at times in England. But his criticism of military methods died away. "Things are done better out here," he remarked, and "We're nearer reality here. I begin to respect my Captain. Who is developing a sense of locality. Happily for our prospects." And in another place he speculated in an oddly characteristic manner whether he was getting used to the army way, whether he was beginning to see the sense of the army way, or whether it really was that the army way braced up nearer and nearer to efficiency as it got nearer to the enemy. "And here one hasn't the haunting feeling that war is after all an hallucination. It's already common sense and the business of life....

"In England I always had a sneaking idea that I had 'dressed up' in my uniform....

"I never dreamt before I came here how much war is a business of waiting about and going through duties and exercises that were only too obviously a means of preventing our discovering just how much waiting about we were doing. I suppose there is no great harm in describing the place I am in here; it's a kind of scenery that is somehow all of a piece with the life we lead day by day. It is a village that has been only partly smashed up; it has never been fought through, indeed the Germans were never within two miles of it, but it was shelled intermittently for months before we made our advance. Almost all the houses are still standing, but there is not a window left with a square foot of glass in the place. One or two houses have been burnt out, and one or two are just as though they

had been kicked to pieces by a lunatic giant. We sleep in batches of four or five on the floors of the rooms; there are very few inhabitants about, but the village inn still goes on. It has one poor weary billiard-table, very small with very big balls, and the cues are without tops; it is The Amusement of the place. Ortheris does miracles at it. When he leaves the army he says he's going to be a marker, 'a b —— y marker.' The country about us is flat — featureless — desolate. How I long for hills, even for Essex mud hills. Then the road runs on towards the front, a brick road frightfully worn, lined with poplars. Just at the end of the village mechanical transport ends and there is a kind of depot from which all the stuff goes up by mules or men or bicycles to the trenches. It is the only movement in the place, and I have spent hours watching men shift grub or ammunition or lending them a hand. All day one hears guns, a kind of thud at the stomach, and now and then one sees an aeroplane, very high and small. Just beyond this point there is a group of poplars which have been punished by a German shell. They are broken off and splintered in the most astonishing way; all split and ravelled out like the end of a cane that has been broken and twisted to get the ends apart. The choice of one's leisure is to watch the A.S.C. or play football, twenty a side, or sit about indoors, or stand in the doorway, or walk down to the Estaminet and wait five or six deep for the billiard-table. Ultimately one sits. And so you get these unconscionable letters."

"Unconscionable," said Mr. Britling. "Of course — he will grow out of that sort of thing.

"And he'll write some day, sure enough. He'll write."

He went on reading the letter.

"We read, of course. But there never could be a library here big enough to keep us going. We can do with all sorts of books, but I don't think the ordinary sensational novel is quite the catch it was for a lot of them in peace time. Some break towards serious reading in the oddest fashion. Old Park, for example, says he wants books you can chew; he is reading a cheap edition of 'The Origin of Species.' He used to regard Florence Warden and William le Queux as the supreme delights of print. I wish you could send him Metchnikoff's 'Nature of Man' or Pearson's 'Ethics of Freethought.' I feel I am building up his tender mind. Not for me though, Daddy. Nothing of

that sort for me. These things take people differently. What I want here is literary opium. I want something about fauns and nymphs in broad low glades. I would like to read Spenser's 'Faerie Queen.' I don't think I have read it, and yet I have a very distinct impression of knights and dragons and sorcerers and wicked magic ladies moving through a sort of Pre-Raphaelite tapestry scenery — only with a light on them. I could do with some Hewlett of the 'Forest Lovers' kind. Or with Joseph Conrad in his Kew Palm-house mood. And there is a book, I once looked into it at a man's room in London; I don't know the title, but it was by Richard Garnett, and it was all about gods who were in reduced circumstances but amidst sunny picturesque scenery. Scenery without steel or poles or wire. A thing after the manner of Heine's 'Florentine Nights.' Any book about Greek gods would be welcome, anything about temples of ivory-coloured stone and purple seas, red caps, chests of jewels, and lizards in the sun. I wish there was another 'Thais.' The men here are getting a kind of newspaper sheet of literature scraps called *The Times* Broadsheets. Snippets, but mostly from good stuff. They're small enough to stir the appetite, but not to satisfy it. Rather an irritant — and one wants no irritant.... I used to imagine reading was meant to be a stimulant. Out here it has to be an anodyne....

"Have you heard of a book called 'Tom Cringle's Log'?

"War is an exciting game — that I never wanted to play. It excites once in a couple of months. And the rest of it is dirt and muddle and boredom, and smashed houses and spoilt roads and muddy scenery and boredom, and the lumbering along of supplies and the lumbering back of the wounded and weary — and boredom, and continual vague guessing of how it will end and boredom and boredom and boredom, and thinking of the work you were going to do and the travel you were going to have, and the waste of life and the waste of days and boredom, and splintered poplars and stink, everywhere stink and dirt and boredom.... And all because these accursed Prussians were too stupid to understand what a boredom they were getting ready when they pranced and stuck their chests out and earnt the praises of Mr. Thomas Carlyle.... *Gott strafe Deutschland*.... So send me some books, books of dreams, books about China and the willow-pattern plate and the golden age and fairyland. And send

them soon and address them very carefully....”

§ 12

Teddy’s misadventure happened while figs were still ripening on Mr. Britling’s big tree. It was Cissie brought the news to Mr. Britling. She came up to the Dower House with a white, scared face.

“I’ve come up for the letters,” she said. “There’s bad news of Teddy, and Letty’s rather in a state.”

“He’s not —— ?” Mr. Britling left the word unsaid.

“He’s wounded and missing,” said Cissie.

“A prisoner!” said Mr. Britling.

“And wounded. *How*, we don’t know.”

She added: “Letty has gone to telegraph.”

“Telegraph to whom?”

“To the War Office, to know what sort of wound he has. They tell nothing. It’s disgraceful.”

“It doesn’t say *severely*?”

“It says just nothing. Wounded and missing! Surely they ought to give us particulars.”

Mr. Britling thought. His first thought was that now news might come at any time that Hugh was wounded and missing. Then he set himself to persuade Cissie that the absence of “seriously” meant that Teddy was only quite bearably wounded, and that if he was also “missing” it might be difficult for the War Office to ascertain at once just exactly what she wanted to know. But Cissie said merely that “Letty was in an awful state,” and after Mr. Britling had given her a few instructions for his typing, he went down to the cottage to repeat these mitigatory considerations to Letty. He found her much whiter than her sister, and in a state of cold indignation with the War Office. It was clear she thought that organisation ought to have taken better care of Teddy. She had a curious effect of feeling that something was being kept back from her. It was manifest too that she was disposed to regard Mr. Britling as biased in favour of the authorities.

“At any rate,” she said, “they could have answered my telegram promptly. I sent it at eight. Two hours of scornful silence.”

This fierce, strained, unjust Letty was a new aspect to Mr. Britling. Her treatment of his proffered consolations made him feel slightly henpecked.

"And just fancy!" she said. "They have no means of knowing if he has arrived safely on the German side. How can they know he is a prisoner without knowing that?"

"But the word is 'missing.'"

"That *means* a prisoner," said Letty uncivilly....

§ 13

Mr. Britling returned to the Dower House perplexed and profoundly disturbed. He had a distressful sense that things were far more serious with Teddy than he had tried to persuade Letty they were; that "wounded and missing" meant indeed a man abandoned to very sinister probabilities. He was distressed for Teddy, and still more acutely distressed for Mrs. Teddy, whose every note and gesture betrayed suppositions even more sinister than his own. And that preposterous sense of liability, because he had helped Teddy to get his commission, was more distressful than it had ever been. He was surprised that Letty had not assailed him with railing accusations.

And this event had wiped off at one sweep all the protective scab of habituation that had gathered over the wound of Hugh's departure. He was back face to face with the one evil chance in five....

In the hall there was lying a letter from Hugh that had come by the second post. It was a relief even to see it....

Hugh had had his first spell in the trenches.

Before his departure he had promised his half brothers a long and circumstantial account of what the trenches were really like. Here he redeemed his promise. He had evidently written with the idea that the letter would be handed over to them.

"Tell the bruddykinses I'm glad they're going to Brinsmead school. Later on, I suppose, they will go on to Statesminster. I suppose that you don't care to send them so far in these troubled times....

"And now about those trenches — as I promised. The great thing

to grasp is that they are narrow. They are a sort of negative wall. They are more like giant cracks in the ground than anything else.... But perhaps I had better begin by telling how we got there. We started about one in the morning ladened up with everything you can possibly imagine on a soldier, and in addition I had a kettle — filled with water — most of the chaps had bundles of firewood, and some had extra bread. We marched out of our quarters along the road for a mile or more, and then we took the fields, and presently came to a crest and dropped into a sort of maze of zigzag trenches going up to the front trench. These trenches, you know, are much deeper than one's height; you don't see anything. It's like walking along a mud-walled passage. You just trudge along them in single file. Every now and then some one stumbles into a soakaway for rainwater or swears at a soft place, or somebody blunders into the man in front of him. This seems to go on for hours and hours. It certainly went on for an hour; so I suppose we did two or three miles of it. At one place we crossed a dip in the ground and a ditch, and the trench was built up with sandbags up to the ditch and there was a plank. Overhead there were stars, and now and then a sort of blaze thing they send up lit up the edges of the trench and gave one a glimpse of a treetop or a factory roof far away. Then for a time it was more difficult to go on because you were blinded. Suddenly just when you were believing that this sort of trudge was going on forever, we were in the support trenches behind the firing line, and found the men we were relieving ready to come back.

"And the firing line itself? Just the same sort of ditch with a parapet of sandbags, but with dug-outs, queer big holes helped out with sleepers from a nearby railway track, opening into it from behind. Dug-outs vary a good deal. Many are rather like the cubby-house we made at the end of the orchard last summer; only the walls are thick enough to stand a high explosive shell. The best dug-out in our company's bit of front was quite a dressy affair with some woodwork and a door got from the ruins of a house twenty or thirty yards behind us. It had a stove in it too, and a chimbley, and pans to keep water in. It was the best dug-out for miles. This house had a well, and there was a special trench ran back to that, and all day long there was a coming and going for water. There had once been a

pump over the well, but a shell had smashed that....

"And now you expect me to tell of Germans and the fight and shelling and all sorts of things. *I haven't seen a live German*; I haven't been within two hundred yards of a shell burst, there has been no attack and I haven't got the V.C. I have made myself muddy beyond describing; I've been working all the time, but I've not fired a shot or fought a ha'porth. We were busy all the time — just at work, repairing the parapet, which had to be done gingerly because of snipers, bringing our food in from the rear in big carriers, getting water, pushing our trench out from an angle slantingways forward. Getting meals, clearing up and so on takes a lot of time. We make tea in big kettles in the big dug-out, which two whole companies use for their cooking, and carry them with a pole through the handles to our platoons. We wash up and wash and shave. Dinner preparation (and consumption) takes two or three hours. Tea too uses up time. It's like camping out and picnicking in the park. This first time (and next too) we have been mixed with some Sussex men who have been here longer and know the business.... It works out that we do most of the fatigue. Afterwards we shall go up alone to a pitch of our own....

"But all the time you want to know about the Germans. They are a quarter of a mile away at this part, or nearly a quarter of a mile. When you snatch a peep at them it is like a low parti-coloured stone wall — only the stones are sandbags. The Germans have them black and white, so that you cannot tell which are loopholes and which are black bags. Our people haven't been so clever — and the War Office love of uniformity has given us only white bags. No doubt it looks neater. But it makes our loopholes plain. For a time black sandbags were refused. The Germans sniped at us, but not very much. Only one of our lot was hit, by a chance shot that came through the sandbag at the top of the parapet. He just had a cut in the neck which didn't prevent his walking back. They shelled the trenches half a mile to the left of us though, and it looked pretty hot. The sandbags flew about. But the men lie low, and it looks worse than it is. The weather was fine and pleasant, as General French always says. And after three days and nights of cramped existence and petty chores, one in the foremost trench and two a little way back, and then two days in support, we came back — and here we are again waiting for

our second Go.

“The night time is perhaps a little more nervy than the day. You get your head up and look about, and see the flat dim country with its ruined houses and its lumps of stuff that are dead bodies and its long vague lines of sandbags, and the searchlights going like white windmill arms and an occasional flare or star shell. And you have a nasty feeling of people creeping and creeping all night between the trenches....

“Some of us went out to strengthen a place in the parapet that was only one sandbag thick, where a man had been hit during the day. We made it four bags thick right up to the top. All the while you were doing it, you dreaded to find yourself in the white glare of a searchlight, and you had a feeling that something would hit you suddenly from behind. I had to make up my mind not to look round, or I should have kept on looking round.... Also our chaps kept shooting over us, within a foot of one’s head. Just to persuade the Germans that we were not out of the trench....

“Nothing happened to us. We got back all right. It was silly to have left that parapet only one bag thick. There’s the truth, and all of my first time in the trenches.

“And the Germans?

“I tell you there was no actual fighting at all. I never saw the head of one.

“But now see what a good bruddykins I am. I have seen a fight, a real exciting fight, and I have kept it to the last to tell you about.... It was a fight in the air. And the British won. It began with a German machine appearing, very minute and high, sailing towards our lines a long way to the left. We could tell it was a German because of the black cross; they decorate every aeroplane with a black Iron Cross on its wings and tail; that our officer could see with his glasses. (He let me look.) Suddenly whack, whack, whack, came a line of little puffs of smoke behind it, and then one in front of it, which meant that our anti-aircraft guns were having a go at it. Then, as suddenly, Archibald stopped, and we could see the British machine buzzing across the path of the German. It was just like two birds circling in the air. Or wasps. They buzzed like wasps. There was a little crackling — like brushing your hair in frosty weather. They were

shooting at each other. Then our lieutenant called out, ‘Hit, by Jove!’ and handed the glasses to Park and instantly wanted them back. He says he saw bits of the machine flying off.

“When he said that you could fancy you saw it too, up there in the blue.

“Anyhow the little machine cocked itself up on end. Rather slowly.... Then down it came like dropping a knife....

“It made you say ‘Ooooo!’ to see that dive. It came down, seemed to get a little bit under control, and then dive down again. You could hear the engine roar louder and louder as it came down. I never saw anything fall so fast. We saw it hit the ground among a lot of smashed-up buildings on the crest behind us. It went right over and flew to pieces, all to smithereens....

“It hurt your nose to see it hit the ground....

“Somehow — I was sort of overcome by the thought of the men in that dive. I was trying to imagine how they felt it. From the moment when they realised they were going.

“What on earth must it have seemed like at last?

“They fell seven thousand feet, the men say; some say nine thousand feet. A mile and a half!

“But all the chaps were cheering.... And there was our machine hanging in the sky. You wanted to reach up and pat it on the back. It went up higher and away towards the German lines, as though it was looking for another German. It seemed to go now quite slowly. It was an English machine, though for a time we weren’t sure; our machines are done in tri-colour just as though they were French. But everybody says it was English. It was one of our crack fighting machines, and from first to last it has put down seven Germans.... And that’s really all the fighting there was. There has been fighting here; a month ago. There are perhaps a dozen dead Germans lying out still in front of the lines. Little twisted figures, like overthrown scarecrows, about a hundred yards away. But that is all.

“No, the trenches have disappointed me. They are a scene of tiresome domesticity. They aren’t a patch on our quarters in the rear. There isn’t the traffic. I’ve not found a single excuse for firing my rifle. I don’t believe I shall ever fire my rifle at an enemy — ever....

“You’ve seen Rendezvous’ fresh promotion, I suppose? He’s one

of the men the young officers talk about. Everybody believes in him. Do you remember how Manning used to hide from him?...”

§ 14

Mr. Britling read this through, and then his thoughts went back to Teddy’s disappearance and then returned to Hugh. The youngster was right in the front now, and one had to steel oneself to the possibilities of the case. Somehow Mr. Britling had not expected to find Hugh so speedily in the firing line, though he would have been puzzled to find a reason why this should not have happened. But he found he had to begin the lesson of stoicism all over again.

He read the letter twice, and then he searched for some indication of its date. He suspected that letters were sometimes held back....

Four days later this suspicion was confirmed by the arrival of another letter from Hugh in which he told of his second spell in the trenches. This time things had been much more lively. They had been heavily shelled and there had been a German attack. And this time he was writing to his father, and wrote more freely. He had scribbled in pencil.

“Things are much livelier here than they were. Our guns are getting to work. They are firing in spells of an hour or so, three or four times a day, and just when they seem to be leaving off they begin again. The Germans suddenly got the range of our trenches the day before yesterday, and begun to pound us with high explosive.... Well, it’s trying. You never seem quite to know when the next bang is coming, and that keeps your nerves hung up; it seems to tighten your muscles and tire you. We’ve done nothing but lie low all day, and I feel as weary as if I had marched twenty miles. Then ‘whop,’ one’s near you, and there is a flash and everything flies. It’s a mad sort of smash-about. One came much too close to be pleasant; as near as the old oil jars are from the barn court door. It bowled me clean over and sent a lot of gravel over me. When I got up there was twenty yards of trench smashed into a mere hole, and men lying about, and some of them groaning and one three-quarters buried. We had to turn to and get them out as well as we could....

“I felt stunned and insensitive; it was well to have something to do....

“Our guns behind felt for the German guns. It was the damnest racket. Like giant lunatics smashing about amidst colossal pots and pans. They fired different sorts of shells; stink shells as well as Jack Johnsons, and though we didn’t get much of that at our corner there was a sting of chlorine in the air all through the afternoon. Most of the stink shells fell short. We hadn’t masks, but we rigged up a sort of protection with our handkerchiefs. And it didn’t amount to very much. It was rather like the chemistry room after Heinrich and the kids had been mixing things. Most of the time I was busy helping with the men who had got hurt. Suddenly there came a lull. Then some one said the Germans were coming, and I had a glimpse of them.

“You don’t look at anything steadily while the guns are going. When a big gun goes off or a shell bursts anywhere near you, you seem neither to see nor hear for a moment. You keep on being intermittently stunned. One sees in a kind of flicker in between the impacts....

“Well, there they were. This time I saw them. They were coming out and running a little way and dropping, and our shell was bursting among them and behind them. A lot of it was going too far. I watched what our men were doing, and poured out a lot of cartridges ready to my hand and began to blaze away. Half the German attack never came out of their trench. If they really intended business against us, which I doubt, they were half-hearted in carrying it out. They didn’t show for five minutes, and they left two or three score men on the ground. Whenever we saw a man wriggle we were told to fire at him; it might be an unwounded man trying to crawl back. For a time our guns gave them beans. Then it was practically over, but about sunset their guns got back at us again, and the artillery fight went on until it was moonlight. The chaps in our third company caught it rather badly, and then our guns seemed to find something and get the upper hand....

“In the night some of our men went out to repair the wire entanglements, and one man crawled halfway to the enemy trenches to listen. But I had done my bit for the day, and I was supposed to

sleep in the dug-out. I was far too excited to sleep. All my nerves were jumping about, and my mind was like a lot of flying fragments flying about very fast....

"They shelled us again next day and our tea dixy was hit; so that we didn't get any tea....

"I slept thirty hours after I got back here. And now I am slowly digesting these experiences. Most of our fellows are. My mind and nerves have been rather bumped and bruised by the shelling, but not so much as you might think. I feel as though I'd presently not think very much of it. Some of our men have got the stun of it a lot more than I have. It gets at the older men more. Everybody says that. The men of over thirty-five don't recover from a shelling for weeks. They go about — sort of hesitatingly....

"Life is very primitive here — which doesn't mean that one is getting down to anything fundamental, but only going back to something immediate and simple. It's fetching and carrying and getting water and getting food and going up to the firing line and coming back. One goes on for weeks, and then one day one finds oneself crying out, 'What is all this for? When is it to end?' I seemed to have something ahead of me before this war began, education, science, work, discoveries; all sorts of things; but it is hard to feel that there is anything ahead of us here....

"Somehow the last spell in the fire trench has shaken up my mind a lot. I was getting used to the war before, but now I've got back to my original amazement at the whole business. I find myself wondering what we are really up to, why the war began, why we were caught into this amazing routine. It looks, it feels orderly, methodical, purposeful. Our officers give us orders and get their orders, and the men back there get their orders. Everybody is getting orders. Back, I suppose, to Lord Kitchener. It goes on for weeks with the effect of being quite sane and intended and the right thing, and then, then suddenly it comes whacking into one's head, 'But this — this is utterly *mad*!' This going to and fro and to and fro and to and fro; this monotony which breaks ever and again into violence — violence that never gets anywhere — is exactly the life that a lunatic leads. Melancholia and mania.... It's just a collective obsession — by war. The world is really quite mad. I happen to be having just one

gleam of sanity, that won't last after I have finished this letter. I suppose when an individual man goes mad and gets out of the window because he imagines the door is magically impossible, and dances about in the street without his trousers jabbing at passers-by with a toasting-fork, he has just the same sombre sense of unavoidable necessity that we have, all of us, when we go off with our packs into the trenches....

"It's only by an effort that I can recall how life felt in the spring of 1914. Do you remember Heinrich and his attempt to make a table chart of the roses, so that we could sit outside the barn and read the names of all the roses in the barn court? Like the mountain charts they have on tables in Switzerland. What an inconceivable thing that is now! For all I know I shot Heinrich the other night. For all I know he is one of the lumps that we counted after the attack went back.

"It's a queer thing, Daddy, but I have a sort of *seditious* feeling in writing things like this. One gets to feel that it is wrong to think. It's the effect of discipline. Of being part of a machine. Still, I doubt if I ought to think. If one really looks into things in this spirit, where is it going to take us? Ortheris — his real name by the by is Arthur Jewell — hasn't any of these troubles. 'The b —— y Germans butted into Belgium,' he says. 'We've got to 'oof 'em out again. That's all abart it. Leastways it's all *I* know.... I don't know nothing about Serbia, I don't know nothing about anything, except that the Germans got to stop this sort of gime for Everlasting, Amen.'...

"Sometimes I think he's righter than I am. Sometimes I think he is only madder."

§ 15

These letters weighed heavily upon Mr. Britling's mind. He perceived that this precociously wise, subtle youngster of his was now close up to the line of injury and death, going to and fro from it, in a perpetual, fluctuating danger. At any time now in the day or night the evil thing might wing its way to him. If Mr. Britling could have prayed, he would have prayed for Hugh. He began and never finished some ineffectual prayers.

He tried to persuade himself of a Roman stoicism; that he would be sternly proud, sternly satisfied, if this last sacrifice for his country was demanded from him. He perceived he was merely humbugging himself....

This war had no longer the simple greatness that would make any such stern happiness possible....

The disaster to Teddy and Mrs. Teddy hit him hard. He winced at the thought of Mrs. Teddy's white face; the unspoken accusation in her eyes. He felt he could never bring himself to say his one excuse to her: "I did not keep Hugh back. If I had done that, then you might have the right to blame."

If he had overcome every other difficulty in the way to an heroic pose there was still Hugh's unconquerable lucidity of outlook. War *was* a madness....

But what else was to be done? What else could be done? We could not give in to Germany. If a lunatic struggles, sane men must struggle too....

Mr. Britling had ceased to write about the war at all. All his later writings about it had been abandoned unfinished. He could not imagine them counting, affecting any one, producing any effect. Indeed he was writing now very intermittently. His contributions to *The Times* had fallen away. He was perpetually thinking now about the war, about life and death, about the religious problems that had seemed so remote in the days of the peace; but none of his thinking would become clear and definite enough for writing. All the clear stars of his mind were hidden by the stormy clouds of excitement that the daily newspaper perpetually renewed and by the daily developments of life. And just as his professional income shrank before his mental confusion and impotence, the private income that came from his and his wife's investments became uncertain. She had had two thousand pounds in the Constantinople loan, seven hundred in debentures of the Ottoman railway; he had held similar sums in two Hungarian and one Bulgarian loan, in a linoleum factory at Rouen and in a Swiss Hotel company. All these stopped payments, and the dividends from their other investments shrank. There seemed no limit set to the possibilities of shrinkage of capital and income. Income tax had leapt to colossal dimensions, the cost of most things

had risen, and the tangle of life was now increased by the need for retrenchments and economies. He decided that Gladys, the facetiously named automobile, was a luxury, and sold her for a couple of hundred pounds. He lost his gardener, who had gone to higher priced work with a miller, and he had great trouble to replace him, so that the garden became disagreeably unkempt and unsatisfactory. He had to give up his frequent trips to London. He was obliged to defer Statesminster for the boys. For a time at any rate they must go as day boys to Brinsmead. At every point he met this uncongenial consideration of ways and means. For years now he had gone easy, lived with a certain self-indulgence. It was extraordinarily vexatious to have one's greater troubles for one's country and one's son and one's faith crossed and complicated by these little troubles of the extra sixpence and the untimely bill.

What worried his mind perhaps more than anything else was his gradual loss of touch with the essential issues of the war. At first the militarism, the aggression of Germany, had seemed so bad that he could not see the action of Britain and her allies as anything but entirely righteous. He had seen the war plainly and simply in the phrase, "Now this militarism must end." He had seen Germany as a system, as imperialism and junkerism, as a callous materialist aggression, as the spirit that makes war, and the Allies as the protest of humanity against all these evil things.

Insensibly, in spite of himself, this first version of the war was giving place to another. The tawdry, rhetorical German Emperor, who had been the great antagonist at the outset, the last upholder of Cæsarism, God's anointed with the withered arm and the mailed fist, had receded from the foreground of the picture; that truer Germany which is thought and system, which is the will to do things thoroughly, the Germany of Ostwald and the once rejected Hindenburg, was coming to the fore. It made no apology for the errors and crimes that had been imposed upon it by its Hohenzollern leadership, but it fought now to save itself from the destruction and division that would be its inevitable lot if it accepted defeat too easily; fought to hold out, fought for a second chance, with discipline, with skill and patience, with a steadfast will. It fought with science, it fought with economy, with machines and thought

against all too human antagonists. It necessitated an implacable resistance, but also it commanded respect. Against it fought three great peoples with as fine a will; but they had neither the unity, the habitual discipline, nor the science of Germany, and it was the latter defect that became more and more the distressful matter of Mr. Britling's thoughts. France after her initial experiences, after her first reeling month, had risen from the very verge of defeat to a steely splendour of resolution, but England and Russia, those twin slack giants, still wasted force, were careless, negligent, uncertain. Everywhere up and down the scale, from the stupidity of the uniform sandbags and Hugh's young officer who would not use a map, to the general conception and direction of the war, Mr. Britling's inflamed and oversensitised intelligence perceived the same bad qualities for which he had so often railed upon his countrymen in the days of the peace, that impatience, that indolence, that wastefulness and inconclusiveness, that failure to grip issues and do obviously necessary things. The same lax qualities that had brought England so close to the supreme imbecility of a civil war in Ireland in July, 1914, were now muddling and prolonging the war, and postponing, it might be for ever, the victory that had seemed so certain only a year ago. The politician still intrigued, the ineffectives still directed. Against brains used to the utmost their fight was a stupid thrusting forth of men and men and yet more men, men badly trained, under-equipped, stupidly led. A press clamour for invention and scientific initiative was stifled under a committee of elderly celebrities and eminent dufferdom; from the outset, the Ministry of Munitions seemed under the influence of the "business man."...

It is true that righteousness should triumph over the tyrant and the robber, but have carelessness and incapacity any right to triumph over capacity and foresight? Men were coming now to dark questionings between this intricate choice. And, indeed, was our cause all righteousness?

There surely is the worst doubt of all for a man whose son is facing death.

Were we indeed standing against tyranny for freedom?

There came drifting to Mr. Britling's ears a confusion of voices, voices that told of reaction, of the schemes of employers to best the

trade unions, of greedy shippers and greedy house landlords reaping their harvest, of waste and treason in the very households of the Ministry, of religious cant and intolerance at large, of self-advertisement written in letters of blood, of forestalling and jobbery, of irrational and exasperating oppressions in India and Egypt.... It came with a shock to him, too, that Hugh should see so little else than madness in the war, and have so pitiless a realisation of its essential futility. The boy forced his father to see — what indeed all along he had been seeing more and more clearly. The war, even by the standards of adventure and conquest, had long since become a monstrous absurdity. Some way there must be out of this bloody entanglement that was yielding victory to neither side, that was yielding nothing but waste and death beyond all precedent. The vast majority of people everywhere must be desiring peace, willing to buy peace at any reasonable price, and in all the world it seemed there was insufficient capacity to end the daily butchery and achieve the peace that was so universally desired, the peace that would be anything better than a breathing space for further warfare.... Every day came the papers with the balanced story of battles, losses, destructions, ships sunk, towns smashed. And never a decision, never a sign of decision.

One Saturday afternoon Mr. Britling found himself with Mrs. Britling at Claverings. Lady Homartyn was in mourning for her two nephews, the Glassington boys, who had both been killed, one in Flanders, the other in Gallipoli. Raeburn was there too, despondent and tired-looking. There were three young men in khaki, one with the red of a staff officer; there were two or three women whom Mr. Britling had not met before, and Miss Sharsper the novelist, fresh from nursing experience among the convalescents in the south of France. But he was disgusted to find that the gathering was dominated by his old antagonist, Lady Frensham, unsubdued, unaltered, rampant over them all, arrogant, impudent, insulting. She was in mourning, she had the most splendid black furs Mr. Britling had ever seen; her large triumphant profile came out of them like the head of a vulture out of its ruff; her elder brother was a wounded prisoner in Germany, her second was dead; it would seem that hers were the only sacrifices the war had yet extorted from any one. She

spoke as though it gave her the sole right to criticise the war or claim compensation for the war.

Her incurable propensity to split the country, to make mischievous accusations against classes and districts and public servants, was having full play. She did her best to provoke Mr. Britling into a dispute, and throw some sort of imputation upon his patriotism as distinguished from her own noisy and intolerant conceptions of "loyalty."

She tried him first with conscription. She threw out insults at the shirkers and the "funk classes." All the middle-class people clung on to their wretched little businesses, made any sort of excuse....

Mr. Britling was stung to defend them. "A business," he said acidly, "isn't like land, which waits and grows rich for its owner. And these people can't leave ferrety little agents behind them when they go off to serve. Tens of thousands of middle-class men have ruined themselves and flung away every prospect they had in the world to go to this war."

"And scores of thousands haven't!" said Lady Frensham. "They are the men I'm thinking of."...

Mr. Britling ran through a little list of aristocratic stay-at-homes that began with a duke.

"And not a soul speaks to them in consequence," she said.

She shifted her attack to the Labour people. They would rather see the country defeated than submit to a little discipline.

"Because they have no faith in the house of lawyers or the house of landlords," said Mr. Britling. "Who can blame them?"

She proceeded to tell everybody what she would do with strikers. She would give them "short shrift." She would give them a taste of the Prussian way — homoeopathic treatment. "But of course old vote-catching Asquith daren't — he daren't!" Mr. Britling opened his mouth and said nothing; he was silenced. The men in khaki listened respectfully but ambiguously; one of the younger ladies it seemed was entirely of Lady Frensham's way of thinking, and anxious to show it. The good lady having now got her hands upon the Cabinet proceeded to deal faithfully with its two-and-twenty members. Winston Churchill had overridden Lord Fisher upon the question of Gallipoli, and incurred terrible responsibilities. Lord

Haldane — she called him “Tubby Haldane” — was a convicted traitor. “The man’s a German out and out. Oh! what if he hasn’t a drop of German blood in his veins? He’s a German by choice — which is worse.”

“I thought he had a certain capacity for organisation,” said Mr. Britling.

“We don’t want his organisation, and we don’t want *him*,” said Lady Frensham.

Mr. Britling pleaded for particulars of the late Lord Chancellor’s treasons. There were no particulars. It was just an idea the good lady had got into her head, that had got into a number of accessible heads. There was only one strong man in all the country now, Lady Frensham insisted. That was Sir Edward Carson.

Mr. Britling jumped in his chair.

“But has he ever done anything?” he cried, “except embitter Ireland?”

Lady Frensham did not hear that question. She pursued her glorious theme. Lloyd George, who had once been worthy only of the gallows, was now the sole minister fit to put beside her hero. He had won her heart by his condemnation of the working man. He was the one man who was not afraid to speak out, to tell them they drank, to tell them they shirked and loafed, to tell them plainly that if defeat came to this country the blame would fall upon *them*!

“*No!*” cried Mr. Britling.

“Yes,” said Lady Frensham. “Upon them and those who have flattered and misled them....”

And so on....

It presently became necessary for Lady Homartyn to rescue Mr. Britling from the great lady’s patriotic tramplings. He found himself drifting into the autumnal garden — the show of dahlias had never been so wonderful — in the company of Raeburn and the staff officer and a small woman who was presently discovered to be remarkably well-informed. They were all despondent. “I think all this promiscuous blaming of people is quite the worst — and most ominous — thing about us just now,” said Mr. Britling after the restful pause that followed the departure from the presence of Lady Frensham.

“It goes on everywhere,” said the staff officer.

“Is it really — honest?” said Mr. Britling.

Raeburn, after reflection, decided to answer. “As far as it is stupid, yes. There’s a lot of blame coming; there’s bound to be a day of reckoning, and I suppose we’ve all got an instinctive disposition to find a scapegoat for our common sins. The Tory press is pretty rotten, and there’s a strong element of mere personal spite — in the Churchill attacks for example. Personal jealousy probably. Our ‘old families’ seem to have got vulgar-spirited imperceptibly — in a generation or so. They quarrel and shirk and lay blame exactly as bad servants do — and things are still far too much in their hands. Things are getting muffed, there can be no doubt about that — not fatally, but still rather seriously. And the government — it was human before the war, and we’ve added no archangels. There’s muddle. There’s mutual suspicion. You never know what newspaper office Lloyd George won’t be in touch with next. He’s honest and patriotic and energetic, but he’s mortally afraid of old women and class intrigues. He doesn’t know where to get his backing. He’s got all a labour member’s terror of the dagger at his back. There’s a lack of nerve, too, in getting rid of prominent officers — who have friends.”

The staff officer nodded.

“Northcliffe seems to me to have a case,” said Mr. Britling. “Every one abuses him.”

“I’d stop his *Daily Mail*,” said Raeburn. “I’d leave *The Times*, but I’d stop the *Daily Mail* on the score of its placards alone. It overdoes Northcliffe. It translates him into the shrieks and yells of underlings. The plain fact is that Northcliffe is scared out of his wits by German efficiency — and in war time when a man is scared out of his wits, whether he is honest or not, you put his head in a bag or hold a pistol to it to calm him.... What is the good of all this clamouring for a change of government? We haven’t a change of government. It’s like telling a tramp to get a change of linen. Our men, all our public men, are second-rate men, with the habits of advocates. There is nothing masterful in their minds. How can you expect the system to produce anything else? But they are doing as well as they can, and there is no way of putting in any one else now, and there you are.”

“Meanwhile,” said Mr. Britling, “our boys — get killed.”

“They’d get killed all the more if you had — let us say — Carson and Lloyd George and Northcliffe and Lady Frensham, with, I suppose, Austin Harrison and Horatio Bottomley thrown in — as a Strong Silent Government.... I’d rather have Northcliffe as dictator than that.... We can’t suddenly go back on the past and alter our type. We didn’t listen to Matthew Arnold. We’ve never thoroughly turned out and cleaned up our higher schools. We’ve resisted instruction. We’ve preferred to maintain our national luxuries of a bench of bishops and party politics. And compulsory Greek and the university sneer. And Lady Frensham. And all that sort of thing. And here we are!... Well, damn it, we’re in for it now; we’ve got to plough through with it — with what we have — as what we are.”

The young staff officer nodded. He thought that was “about it.”

“You’ve got no sons,” said Mr. Britling.

“I’m not even married,” said Raeburn, as though he thanked God.

The little well-informed lady remarked abruptly that she had two sons; one was just home wounded from Suvla Bay. What her son told her made her feel very grave. She said that the public was still quite in the dark about the battle of Anafarta. It had been a hideous muddle, and we had been badly beaten. The staff work had been awful. Nothing joined up, nothing was on the spot and in time. The water supply, for example, had gone wrong; the men had been mad with thirst. One regiment which she named had not been supported by another; when at last the first came back the two battalions fought in the trenches regardless of the enemy. There had been no leading, no correlation, no plan. Some of the guns, she declared, had been left behind in Egypt. Some of the train was untraceable to this day. It was mislaid somewhere in the Levant. At the beginning Sir Ian Hamilton had not even been present. He had failed to get there in time. It had been the reckless throwing away of an army. And so hopeful an army! Her son declared it meant the complete failure of the Dardanelles project....

“And when one hears how near we came to victory!” she cried, and left it at that.

“Three times this year,” said Raeburn, “we have missed victories because of the badness of our staff work. It’s no good picking out scapegoats. It’s a question of national habit. It’s because the sort of

man we turn out from our public schools has never learnt how to catch trains, get to an office on the minute, pack a knapsack properly, or do anything smartly and quickly — anything whatever that he can possibly get done for him. You can't expect men who are habitually easy-going to keep bucked up to a high pitch of efficiency for any length of time. All their training is against it. All their tradition. They hate being prigs. An Englishman will be any sort of stupid failure rather than appear a prig. That's why we've lost three good fights that we ought to have won — and thousands and thousands of men — and material and time, precious beyond reckoning. We've lost a year. We've dashed the spirit of our people."

"My boy in Flanders," said Mr. Britling, "says about the same thing. He says our officers have never learnt to count beyond ten, and that they are scared at the sight of a map...."

"And the war goes on," said the little woman.

"How long, oh Lord! how long?" cried Mr. Britling.

"I'd give them another year," said the staff officer. "Just going as we are going. Then something *must* give way. There will be no money anywhere. There'll be no more men.... I suppose they'll feel that shortage first anyhow. Russia alone has over twenty millions."

"That's about the size of it," said Raeburn....

"Do you think, sir, there'll be civil war?" asked the young staff officer abruptly after a pause.

There was a little interval before any one answered this surprising question.

"After the peace, I mean," said the young officer.

"There'll be just the devil to pay," said Raeburn.

"One thing after another in the country is being pulled up by its roots," reflected Mr. Britling.

"We've never produced a plan for the war, and it isn't likely we shall have one for the peace," said Raeburn, and added: "and Lady Frensham's little lot will be doing their level best to sit on the safety-valve.... They'll rake up Ireland and Ulster from the very start. But I doubt if Ulster will save 'em."

"We shall squabble. What else do we ever do?"

No one seemed able to see more than that. A silence fell on the little party.

“Well, thank heaven for these dahlias,” said Raeburn, affecting the philosopher.

The young staff officer regarded the dahlias without enthusiasm....

§ 16

Mr. Britling sat one September afternoon with Captain Lawrence Carmine in the sunshine of the barn court, and smoked with him and sometimes talked and sometimes sat still.

“When it began I did not believe that this war could be like other wars,” he said. “I did not dream it. I thought that we had grown wiser at last. It seemed to me like the dawn of a great clearing up. I thought the common sense of mankind would break out like a flame, an indignant flame, and consume all this obsolete foolery of empires and banners and militarism directly it made its attack upon human happiness. A score of things that I see now were preposterous, I thought must happen — naturally. I thought America would declare herself against the Belgian outrage; that she would not tolerate the smashing of the great sister republic — if only for the memory of Lafayette. Well — I gather America is chiefly concerned about our making cotton contraband. I thought the Balkan States were capable of a reasonable give and take; of a common care for their common freedom. I see now three German royalties trading in peasants, and no men in their lands to gainsay them. I saw this war, as so many Frenchmen have seen it, as something that might legitimately command a splendid enthusiasm of indignation.... It was all a dream, the dream of a prosperous comfortable man who had never come to the cutting edge of life. Everywhere cunning, everywhere small feuds and hatreds, distrusts, dishonesties, timidities, feebleness of purpose, dwarfish imaginations, swarm over the great and simple issues.... It is a war now like any other of the mobbing, many-aimed cataclysms that have shattered empires and devastated the world; it is a war without point, a war that has lost its soul, it has become mere incoherent fighting and destruction, a demonstration in vast and tragic forms of the stupidity and ineffectiveness of our species....”

He stopped, and there was a little interval of silence.

Captain Carmine tossed the fag end of his cigar very neatly into a tub of hydrangeas. “Three thousand years ago in China,” he said, “there were men as sad as we are, for the same cause.”

“Three thousand years ahead perhaps,” said Mr. Britling, “there will still be men with the same sadness.... And yet — and yet.... No. Just now I have no elasticity. It is not in my nature to despair, but things are pressing me down. I don’t recover as I used to recover. I tell myself still that though the way is long and hard the spirit of hope, the spirit of creation, the generosities and gallantries in the heart of man, must end in victory. But I say that over as one repeats a worn-out prayer. The light is out of the sky for me. Sometimes I doubt if it will ever come back. Let younger men take heart and go on with the world. If I could die for the right thing now — instead of just having to live on in this world of ineffective struggle — I would be glad to die now, Carmine....”

§ 17

In these days also Mr. Direck was very unhappy.

For Cissie, at any rate, had not lost touch with the essential issues of the war. She was as clear as ever that German militarism and the German attack on Belgium and France was the primary subject of the war. And she dismissed all secondary issues. She continued to demand why America did not fight. “We fight for Belgium. Won’t you fight for the Dutch and Norwegian ships? Won’t you even fight for your own ships that the Germans are sinking?”

Mr. Direck attempted explanations that were ill received.

“You were ready enough to fight the Spaniards when they blew up the *Maine*. But the Germans can sink the *Lusitania*! That’s — as you say — a different proposition.”

His mind was shot by an extraordinary suspicion that she thought the *Lusitania* an American vessel. But Mr. Direck was learning his Cissie, and he did not dare to challenge her on this score.

“You haven’t got hold of the American proposition,” he said. “We’re thinking beyond wars.”

“That’s what we have been trying to do,” said Cissie. “Do you

think we came into it for the fun of the thing?"

"Haven't I shown in a hundred ways that I sympathise?"

"Oh — sympathy!..."

He fared little better at Mr. Britling's hands. Mr. Britling talked darkly, but pointed all the time only too plainly at America. "There's two sorts of liberalism," said Mr. Britling, "that pretend to be the same thing; there's the liberalism of great aims and the liberalism of defective moral energy...."

§ 18

It was not until Teddy had been missing for three weeks that Hugh wrote about him. The two Essex battalions on the Flanders front were apparently wide apart, and it was only from home that Hugh learnt what had happened.

"You can't imagine how things narrow down when one is close up against them. One does not know what is happening even within a few miles of us, until we get the newspapers. Then, with a little reading between the lines and some bold guessing, we fit our little bit of experience with a general shape. Of course I've wondered at times about Teddy. But oddly enough I've never thought of him very much as being out here. It's queer, I know, but I haven't. I can't imagine why....

"I don't know about 'missing.' We've had nothing going on here that has led to any missing. All our men have been accounted for. But every few miles along the front conditions alter. His lot may have been closer up to the enemy, and there may have been a rush and a fight for a bit of trench either way. In some parts the German trenches are not thirty yards away, and there is mining, bomb throwing, and perpetual creeping up and give and take. Here we've been getting a bit forward. But I'll tell you about that presently. And, anyhow, I don't understand about 'missing.' There's very few prisoners taken now. But don't tell Letty that. I try to imagine old Teddy in it....

"Missing's a queer thing. It isn't tragic — or pitiful. Or partly reassuring like 'prisoner.' It just sends one speculating and

speculating. I can't find any one who knows where the 14th Essex are. Things move about here so mysteriously that for all I know we may find them in the next trench next time we go up. But there *is* a chance for Teddy. It's worth while bucking Letty all you can. And at the same time there's odds against him. There plainly and unfeelingly is how things stand in my mind. I think chiefly of Letty. I'm glad Cissie is with her, and I'm glad she's got the boy. Keep her busy. She was frightfully fond of him. I've seen all sorts of things between them, and I know that.... I'll try and write to her soon, and I'll find something hopeful to tell her.

"Meanwhile I've got something to tell you. I've been through a fight, a big fight, and I haven't got a scratch. I've taken two prisoners with my lily hand. Men were shot close to me. I didn't mind that a bit. It was as exciting as one of those bitter fights we used to have round the hockey goal. I didn't mind anything till afterwards. Then when I was in the trench in the evening I trod on something slippery — pah! And after it was all over one of my chums got it — sort of unfairly. And I keep on thinking of those two things so much that all the early part is just dreamlike. It's more like something I've read in a book, or seen in the *Illustrated London News* than actually been through. One had been thinking so often, how will it feel? how shall I behave? that when it came it had an effect of being flat and ordinary.

"They say we hadn't got enough guns in the spring or enough ammunition. That's all right now — anyhow. They started in plastering the Germans overnight, and right on until it was just daylight. I never heard such a row, and their trenches — we could stand up and look at them without getting a single shot at us — were flying about like the crater of a volcano. We were not in our firing trench. We had gone back into some new trenches, at the rear — I think to get out of the way of the counter fire. But this morning they weren't doing very much. For once our guns were on top. There was a feeling of anticipation — very like waiting for an examination paper to be given out; then we were at it. Getting out of a trench to attack gives you an odd feeling of being just hatched. Suddenly the world is big. I don't remember our gun fire stopping. And then you rush. 'Come on! Come on!' say the officers. Everybody gives a sort

of howl and rushes. When you see men dropping, you rush the faster. The only thing that checks you at all is the wire twisted about everywhere. You don't want to trip over that. The frightening thing is the exposure. After being in the trenches so long you feel naked. You run like a scared child for the German trench ahead. I can't understand the iron nerve of a man who can expose his back by turning to run away. And there's a thirsty feeling with one's bayonet. But they didn't wait. They dropped rifles and ran. But we ran so fast after them that we caught one or two in the second trench. I got down into that, heard a voice behind me, and found my two prisoners lying artful in a dug-out. They held up their hands as I turned. If they hadn't I doubt if I should have done anything to them. I didn't feel like it. I felt *friendly*.

"Not all the Germans ran. Three or four stuck to their machine-guns until they got bayoneted. Both the trenches were frightfully smashed about, and in the first one there were little knots and groups of dead. We got to work at once shying the sandbags over from the old front of the trench to the parados. Our guns had never stopped all the time; they were now plastering the third line trenches. And almost at once the German shells began dropping into us. Of course they had the range to an inch. One didn't have any time to feel and think; one just set oneself with all one's energy to turn the trench over....

"I don't remember that I helped or cared for a wounded man all the time, or felt anything about the dead except to step over them and not on them. I was just possessed by the idea that we had to get the trench into a sheltering state before they tried to come back. And then stick there. I just wanted to win, and there was nothing else in my mind....

"They did try to come back, but not very much....

"Then when I began to feel sure of having got hold of the trench for good, I began to realise just how tired I was and how high the sun had got. I began to look about me, and found most of the other men working just as hard as I had been doing. 'We've done it!' I said, and that was the first word I'd spoken since I told my two Germans to come out of it, and stuck a man with a wounded leg to watch them. 'It's a bit of All Right,' said Ortheris, knocking off also, and lighting

a half-consumed cigarette. He had been wearing it behind his ear, I believe, ever since the charge. Against this occasion. He'd kept close up to me all the time, I realised. And then old Park turned up very cheerful with a weak bayonet jab in his forearm that he wanted me to rebandage. It was good to see him practically all right too.

"'I took two prisoners,' I said, and everybody I spoke to I told that. I was fearfully proud of it.

"I thought that if I could take two prisoners in my first charge I was going to be some soldier.

"I had stood it all admirably. I didn't feel a bit shaken. I was as tough as anything. I'd seen death and killing, and it was all just hockey.

"And then that confounded Ortheris must needs go and get killed.

"The shell knocked me over, and didn't hurt me a bit. I was a little stunned, and some dirt was thrown over me, and when I got up on my knees I saw Jewell lying about six yards off — and his legs were all smashed about. Ugh! Pulped!

"He looked amazed. 'Bloody,' he said, 'bloody.' He fixed his eyes on me, and suddenly grinned. You know we'd once had two fights about his saying 'bloody,' I think I told you at the time, a fight and a return match, he couldn't box for nuts, but he stood up like a Briton, and it appealed now to his sense of humour that I should be standing there too dazed to protest at the old offence. 'I thought *you* was done in,' he said. 'I'm in a mess — a bloody mess, ain't I? Like a stuck pig. Bloody — right enough. Bloody! I didn't know I 'ad it *in* me.'

"He looked at me and grinned with a sort of pale satisfaction in keeping up to the last — dying good Ortheris to the finish. I just stood up helpless in front of him, still rather dazed.

"He said something about having a thundering thirst on him.

"I really don't believe he felt any pain. He would have done if he had lived.

"And then while I was fumbling with my water-bottle, he collapsed. He forgot all about Ortheris. Suddenly he said something that cut me all to ribbons. His face puckered up just like the face of a fretful child which refuses to go to bed. 'I didn't want to be aut of it,' he said petulantly. 'And I'm done!' And then — then he just looked discontented and miserable and died — right off. Turned his head a

little way over. As if he was impatient at everything. Fainted — and fluttered out.

"For a time I kept trying to get him to drink....

"I couldn't believe he was dead....

"And suddenly it was all different. I began to cry. Like a baby. I kept on with the water-bottle at his teeth long after I was convinced he was dead. I didn't want him to be aut of it! God knows how I didn't. I wanted my dear little Cockney cad back. Oh! most frightfully I wanted him back.

"I shook him. I was like a scared child. I blubbered and howled things.... It's all different since he died.

"My dear, dear Father, I am grieving and grieving — and it's altogether nonsense. And it's all mixed up in my mind with the mess I trod on. And it gets worse and worse. So that I don't seem to feel anything really, even for Teddy.

"It's been just the last straw of all this hellish foolery....

"If ever there was a bigger lie, my dear Daddy, than any other, it is that man is a reasonable creature....

"War is just foolery — lunatic foolery — hell's foolery....

"But, anyhow, your son is sound and well — if sorrowful and angry. We were relieved that night. And there are rumours that very soon we are to have a holiday and a refit. We lost rather heavily. We have been praised. But all along, Essex has done well. I can't reckon to get back yet, but there are such things as leave for eight-and-forty hours or so in England....

"I shall be glad of that sort of turning round....

"I'm tired. Oh! I'm tired....

"I wanted to write all about Jewell to his mother or his sweetheart or some one; I wanted to wallow in his praises, to say all the things I really find now that I thought about him, but I haven't even had that satisfaction. He was a Poor Law child; he was raised in one of those awful places between Sutton and Banstead in Surrey. I've told you of all the sweethearting he had. 'Soldiers Three' was his Bible; he was always singing 'Tipperary,' and he never got the tune right nor learnt more than three lines of it. He laced all his talk with 'b —— y'; it was his jewel, his ruby. But he had the pluck of a robin or a squirrel; I never knew him scared or anything but cheerful. Misfortunes,

humiliations, only made him chatty. And he'd starve to have something to give away.

"Well, well, this is the way of war, Daddy. This is what war is. Damn the Kaiser! Damn all fools.... Give my love to the Mother and the bruddykins and every one...."

§ 19

It was just a day or so over three weeks after this last letter from Hugh that Mr. Direck reappeared at Matching's Easy. He had had a trip to Holland — a trip that was as much a flight from Cissie's reproaches as a mission of inquiry. He had intended to go on into Belgium, where he had already been doing useful relief work under Mr. Hoover, but the confusion of his own feelings had checked him and brought him back.

Mr. Direck's mind was in a perplexity only too common during the stresses of that tragic year. He was entangled in a paradox; like a large majority of Americans at that time his feelings were quite definitely pro-Ally, and like so many in that majority he had a very clear conviction that it would be wrong and impossible for the United States to take part in the war. His sympathies were intensely with the Dower House and its dependent cottage; he would have wept with generous emotion to see the Stars and Stripes interwoven with the three other great banners of red, white and blue that led the world against German imperialism and militarism, but for all that his mind would not march to that tune. Against all these impulses fought something very fundamental in Mr. Direck's composition, a preconception of America that had grown almost insensibly in his mind, the idea of America as a polity aloof from the Old World system, as a fresh start for humanity, as something altogether too fine and precious to be dragged into even the noblest of European conflicts. America was to be the beginning of the fusion of mankind, neither German nor British nor French nor in any way national. She was to be the great experiment in peace and reasonableness. She had to hold civilisation and social order out of this fray, to be a refuge for all those finer things that die under stress and turmoil; it was her task

to maintain the standards of life and the claims of humanitarianism in the conquered province and the prisoners' compound, she had to be the healer and arbitrator, the remonstrance and not the smiting hand. Surely there were enough smiting hands.

But this idea of an America judicial, remonstrating, and aloof, led him to a conclusion that scandalised him. If America will not, and should not use force in the ends of justice, he argued, then America has no right to make and export munitions of war. She must not trade in what she disavows. He had a quite exaggerated idea of the amount of munitions that America was sending to the Allies, he was inclined to believe that they were entirely dependent upon their transatlantic supplies, and so he found himself persuaded that the victory of the Allies and the honour of America were incompatible things. And — in spite of his ethical aloofness — he loved the Allies. He wanted them to win, and he wanted America to abandon a course that he believed was vitally necessary to their victory. It was an intellectual dilemma. He hid this self-contradiction from Matching's Easy with much the same feelings that a curate might hide a poisoned dagger at a tea-party....

It was entirely against his habits of mind to hide anything — more particularly an entanglement with a difficult proposition — but he perceived quite clearly that neither Cecily nor Mr. Britling were really to be trusted to listen calmly to what, under happier circumstances, might be a profoundly interesting moral complication. Yet it was not in his nature to conceal; it was in his nature to state.

And Cecily made things much more difficult. She was pitiless with him. She kept him aloof. "How can I let you make love to me," she said, "when our English men are all going to the war, when Teddy is a prisoner and Hugh is in the trenches. If I were a man — !"

She couldn't be induced to see any case for America. England was fighting for freedom, and America ought to be beside her. "All the world ought to unite against this German wickedness," she said.

"I'm doing all I can to help in Belgium," he protested. "Aren't I working? We've fed four million people."

He had backbone, and he would not let her, he was resolved, bully him into a falsehood about his country. America was aloof. She was

right to be aloof.... At the same time, Cecily's reproaches were unendurable. And he could feel he was drifting apart from her....

He couldn't make America go to war.

In the quiet of his London hotel he thought it all out. He sat at a writing-table making notes of a perfectly lucid statement of the reasonable, balanced liberal American opinion. An instinct of caution determined him to test it first on Mr. Britling.

But Mr. Britling realised his worst expectations. He was beyond listening.

"I've not heard from my boy for more than three weeks," said Mr. Britling in the place of any salutation. "This morning makes three-and-twenty days without a letter."

It seemed to Mr. Direck that Mr. Britling had suddenly grown ten years older. His face was more deeply lined; the colour and texture of his complexion had gone grey. He moved restlessly and badly; his nerves were manifestly unstrung.

"It's intolerable that one should be subjected to this ghastly suspense. The boy isn't three hundred miles away."

Mr. Direck made obvious inquiries.

"Always before he's written — generally once a fortnight."

They talked of Hugh for a time, but Mr. Britling was fitful and irritable and quite prepared to hold Mr. Direck accountable for the laxity of the War Office, the treachery of Bulgaria, the ambiguity of Roumania or any other barb that chanced to be sticking into his sensibilities. They lunched precariously. Then they went into the study to smoke.

There Mr. Direck was unfortunate enough to notice a copy of that innocent American publication *The New Republic*, lying close to two or three numbers of *The Fatherland*, a pro-German periodical which at that time inflicted itself upon English writers with the utmost determination. Mr. Direck remarked that *The New Republic* was an interesting effort on the part of "*la Jeunesse Américaine*." Mr. Britling regarded the interesting effort with a jaded, unloving eye.

"You Americans," he said, "are the most extraordinary people in the world."

"Our conditions are exceptional," said Mr. Direck.

"You think they are," said Mr. Britling, and paused, and then

began to deliver his soul about America in a discourse of accumulating bitterness. At first he reasoned and explained, but as he went on he lost self-control; he became dogmatic, he became denunciatory, he became abusive. He identified Mr. Direck more and more with his subject; he thrust the uncivil "You" more and more directly at him. He let his cigar go out, and flung it impatiently into the fire. As though America was responsible for its going out....

Like many Britons Mr. Britling had that touch of patriotic feeling towards America which takes the form of impatient criticism. No one in Britain ever calls an American a foreigner. To see faults in Germany or Spain is to tap boundless fountains of charity; but the faults of America rankle in an English mind almost as much as the faults of England. Mr. Britling could explain away the faults of England readily enough; our Hanoverian monarchy, our Established Church and its deadening effect on education, our imperial obligations and the strain they made upon our supplies of administrative talent were all very serviceable for that purpose. But there in America was the old race, without Crown or Church or international embarrassment, and it was still falling short of splendid. His speech to Mr. Direck had the rancour of a family quarrel. Let me only give a few sentences that were to stick in Mr. Direck's memory.

"You think you are out of it for good and all. So did we think. We were as smug as you are when France went down in '71.... Yours is only one further degree of insularity. You think this vacuous aloofness of yours is some sort of moral superiority. So did we, so did we....

"It won't last you ten years if we go down....

"Do you think that our disaster will leave the Atlantic for you? Do you fancy there is any Freedom of the Seas possible beyond such freedom as we maintain, except the freedom to attack you? For forty years the British fleet has guarded all America from European attack. Your Monroe doctrine skulks behind it now....

"I'm sick of this high thin talk of yours about the war.... You are a nation of ungenerous onlookers — watching us throttle or be throttled. You gamble on our winning. And we shall win; we shall win. And you will profit. And when we have won a victory only one shade less terrible than defeat, then you think you will come in and

tinker with our peace. Bleed us a little more to please your hyphenated patriots....”

He came to his last shaft. “You talk of your New Ideals of Peace. You say that you are too proud to fight. But your business men in New York give the show away. There’s a little printed card now in half the offices in New York that tells of the real pacificism of America. They’re busy, you know. Trade’s real good. And so as not to interrupt it they stick up this card: ‘Nix on the war!’ Think of it!— ‘Nix on the war!’ Here is the whole fate of mankind at stake, and America’s contribution is a little grumbling when the Germans sank the *Lusitania*, and no end of grumbling when we hold up a ship or two and some fool of a harbour-master makes an overcharge. Otherwise— ‘Nix on the war!’...

“Well, let it be Nix on the war! Don’t come here and talk to me! You who were searching registers a year ago to find your Essex kin. Let it be Nix! Explanations! What do I want with explanations? And” — he mocked his guest’s accent and his guest’s mode of thought— “dif’cult prap’sitions.”

He got up and stood irresolute. He knew he was being preposterously unfair to America, and outrageously uncivil to a trusting guest; he knew he had no business now to end the talk in this violent fashion. But it was an enormous relief. And to mend matters — *No!* He was glad he’d said these things....

He swung a shoulder to Mr. Direck, and walked out of the room....

Mr. Direck heard him cross the hall and slam the door of the little parlour....

Mr. Direck had been stirred deeply by the tragic indignation of this explosion, and the ring of torment in Mr. Britling’s voice. He had stood up also, but he did not follow his host.

“It’s his boy,” said Mr. Direck at last, confidentially to the writing-desk. “How can one argue with him? It’s just hell for him....”

§ 20

Mr. Direck took his leave of Mrs. Britling, and went very slowly

towards the little cottage. But he did not go to the cottage. He felt he would only find another soul in torment there.

"What's the good of hanging round talking?" said Mr. Direck.

He stopped at the stile in the lane, and sat thinking deeply. "Only one thing will convince her," he said.

He held out his fingers. "First this," he whispered, "and then that. Yes."

He went on as far as the bend from which one sees the cottage, and stood for a little time regarding it.

He returned still more sorrowfully to the junction, and with every step he took it seemed to him that he would rather see Cecily angry and insulting than not see her at all.

At the post office he stopped and wrote a letter-card.

"Dear Cissie," he wrote. "I came down to-day to see you — and thought better of it. I'm going right off to find out about Teddy. Somehow I'll get that settled. I'll fly around and do that somehow if I have to go up to the German front to do it. And when I've got that settled I've got something else in my mind — well, it will wipe out all this little trouble that's got so big between us about neutrality. And I love you dearly, Cissie."

That was all the card would hold.

§ 21

And then as if it were something that every one in the Dower House had been waiting for, came the message that Hugh had been killed.

The telegram was brought up by a girl in a pinafore instead of the boy of the old dispensation, for boys now were doing the work of youths and youths the work of the men who had gone to the war.

Mr. Britling was standing at the front door; he had been surveying the late October foliage, touched by the warm light of the afternoon, when the messenger appeared. He opened the telegram, hoping as he had hoped when he opened any telegram since Hugh had gone to the front that it would not contain the exact words he read; that it would say wounded, that at the worst it would say "missing," that perhaps it might even tell of some pleasant surprise, a brief return to home such

as the last letter had foreshadowed. He read the final, unqualified statement, the terse regrets. He stood quite still for a moment or so, staring at the words....

It was a mile and a quarter from the post office to the Dower House, and it was always his custom to give telegraph messengers who came to his house twopence, and he wanted very much to get rid of the telegraph girl, who stood expectantly before him holding her red bicycle. He felt now very sick and strained; he had a conviction that if he did not by an effort maintain his bearing cool and dry he would howl aloud. He felt in his pocket for money; there were some coppers and a shilling. He pulled it all out together and stared at it.

He had an absurd conviction that this ought to be a sixpenny telegram. The thing worried him. He wanted to give the brat sixpence, and he had only threepence and a shilling, and he didn't know what to do and his brain couldn't think. It would be a shocking thing to give her a shilling, and he couldn't somehow give just coppers for so important a thing as Hugh's death. Then all this problem vanished and he handed the child the shilling. She stared at him, inquiring, incredulous. "Is there a reply, Sir, please?"

"No," he said, "that's for you. All of it.... This is a peculiar sort of telegram.... It's news of importance...."

As he said this he met her eyes, and had a sudden persuasion that she knew exactly what it was the telegram had told him, and that she was shocked at this gala-like treatment of such terrible news. He hesitated, feeling that he had to say something else, that he was socially inadequate, and then he decided that at any cost he must get his face away from her staring eyes. She made no movement to turn away. She seemed to be taking him in, recording him, for repetition, greedily, with every fibre of her being.

He stepped past her into the garden, and instantly forgot about her existence....

§ 22

He had been thinking of this possibility for the last few weeks almost continuously, and yet now that it had come to him he felt that he had

never thought about it before, that he must go off alone by himself to envisage this monstrous and terrible fact, without distraction or interruption.

He saw his wife coming down the alley between the roses.

He was wrenched by emotions as odd and unaccountable as the emotions of adolescence. He had exactly the same feeling now that he had had when in his boyhood some unpleasant admission had to be made to his parents. He felt he could not go through a scene with her yet, that he could not endure the task of telling her, of being observed. He turned abruptly to his left. He walked away as if he had not seen her, across his lawn towards the little summer-house upon a knoll that commanded the high road. She called to him, but he did not answer....

He would not look towards her, but for a time all his senses were alert to hear whether she followed him. Safe in the summer-house he could glance back.

It was all right. She was going into the house.

He drew the telegram from his pocket again furtively, almost guiltily, and re-read it. He turned it over and read it again....

Killed.

Then his own voice, hoarse and strange to his ears, spoke his thought.

"My God! how unutterably silly.... Why did I let him go? Why did I let him go?"

§ 23

Mrs. Britling did not learn of the blow that had struck them until after dinner that night. She was so accustomed to ignore his incomprehensible moods that she did not perceive that there was anything tragic about him until they sat at table together. He seemed heavy and sulky and disposed to avoid her, but that sort of moodiness was nothing very strange to her. She knew that things that seemed to her utterly trivial, the reading of political speeches in *The Times*, little comments on life made in the most casual way, mere movements, could so avert him. She had cultivated a certain

disregard of such fitful darknesses. But at the dinner-table she looked up, and was stabbed to the heart to see a haggard white face and eyes of deep despair regarding her ambiguously.

"Hugh!" she said, and then with a chill intimation, "*What is it?*"

They looked at each other. His face softened and winced.

"My Hugh," he whispered, and neither spoke for some seconds.

"*Killed*," he said, and suddenly stood up whimpering, and fumbled with his pocket.

It seemed he would never find what he sought. It came at last, a crumpled telegram. He threw it down before her, and then thrust his chair back clumsily and went hastily out of the room. She heard him sob. She had not dared to look at his face again.

"Oh!" she cried, realising that an impossible task had been thrust upon her.

"But what can I *say* to him?" she said, with the telegram in her hand.

The parlourmaid came into the room.

"Clear the dinner away!" said Mrs. Britling, standing at her place. "Master Hugh is killed...." And then wailing: "Oh! what can I *say*? What can I *say*?"

§ 24

That night Mrs. Britling made the supreme effort of her life to burst the prison of self-consciousness and inhibition in which she was confined. Never before in all her life had she so desired to be spontaneous and unrestrained; never before had she so felt herself hampered by her timidity, her self-criticism, her deeply ingrained habit of never letting herself go. She was rent by reflected distress. It seemed to her that she would be ready to give her life and the whole world to be able to comfort her husband now. And she could conceive no gesture of comfort. She went out of the dining-room into the hall and listened. She went very softly upstairs until she came to the door of her husband's room. There she stood still. She could hear no sound from within. She put out her hand and turned the handle of the door a little way, and then she was startled by the loudness of the

sound it made and at her own boldness. She withdrew her hand, and then with a gesture of despair, with a face of white agony, she flitted along the corridor to her own room.

Her mind was beaten to the ground by this catastrophe, of which to this moment she had never allowed herself to think. She had never allowed herself to think of it. The figure of her husband, like some pitiful beast, wounded and bleeding, filled her mind. She gave scarcely a thought to Hugh. “Oh, what can I *do* for him?” she asked herself, sitting down before her unlit bedroom fire.... “What can I say or do?”

She brooded until she shivered, and then she lit her fire....

It was late that night and after an eternity of resolutions and doubts and indecisions that Mrs. Britling went to her husband. He was sitting close up to the fire with his chin upon his hands, waiting for her; he felt that she would come to him, and he was thinking meanwhile of Hugh with a slow unprogressive movement of the mind. He showed by a movement that he heard her enter the room, but he did not turn to look at her. He shrank a little from her approach.

She came and stood beside him. She ventured to touch him very softly, and to stroke his head. “My dear,” she said. “My poor dear!

“It is so dreadful for you,” she said, “it is so dreadful for you. I know how you loved him....”

He spread his hands over his face and became very still.

“My poor dear!” she said, still stroking his hair, “my poor dear!”

And then she went on saying “poor dear,” saying it presently because there was nothing more had come into her mind. She desired supremely to be his comfort, and in a little while she was acting comfort so poorly that she perceived her own failure. And that increased her failure, and that increased her paralysing sense of failure....

And suddenly her stroking hand ceased. Suddenly the real woman cried out from her.

“I can’t *reach* you!” she cried aloud. “I can’t reach you. I would do anything.... You! You with your heart half broken....”

She turned towards the door. She moved clumsily, she was blinded by her tears.

Mr. Britling uncovered his face. He stood up astonished, and then pity and pitiful understanding came storming across his grief. He made a step and took her in his arms. “My dear,” he said, “don’t go from me....”

She turned to him weeping, and put her arms about his neck, and he too was weeping.

“My poor wife!” he said, “my dear wife. If it were not for you — I think I could kill myself to-night. Don’t cry, my dear. Don’t, don’t cry. You do not know how you comfort me. You do not know how you help me.”

He drew her to him; he put her cheek against his own....

His heart was so sore and wounded that he could not endure that another human being should go wretched. He sat down in his chair and drew her upon his knees, and said everything he could think of to console her and reassure her and make her feel that she was of value to him. He spoke of every pleasant aspect of their lives, of every aspect, except that he never named that dear pale youth who waited now.... He could wait a little longer....

At last she went from him.

“Good night,” said Mr. Britling, and took her to the door. “It was very dear of you to come and comfort me,” he said....

§ 25

He closed the door softly behind her.

The door had hardly shut upon her before he forgot her. Instantly he was alone again, utterly alone. He was alone in an empty world....

Loneliness struck him like a blow. He had dependents, he had cares. He had never a soul to whom he might weep....

For a time he stood beside his open window. He looked at the bed — but no sleep he knew would come that night — until the sleep of exhaustion came. He looked at the bureau at which he had so often written. But the writing there was a shrivelled thing....

This room was unendurable. He must go out. He turned to the window, and outside was a troublesome noise of night-jars and a distant roaring of stags, black trees, blacknesses, the sky clear and

remote with a great company of stars.... The stars seemed attentive. They stirred and yet were still. It was as if they were the eyes of watchers. He would go out to them....

Very softly he went towards the passage door, and still more softly felt his way across the landing and down the staircase. Once or twice he paused to listen.

He let himself out with elaborate precautions....

Across the dark he went, and suddenly his boy was all about him, playing, climbing the cedars, twisting miraculously about the lawn on a bicycle, discoursing gravely upon his future, lying on the grass, breathing very hard and drawing preposterous caricatures. Once again they walked side by side up and down — it was athwart this very spot — talking gravely but rather shyly....

And here they had stood a little awkwardly, before the boy went in to say good-bye to his stepmother and go off with his father to the station....

"I will work to-morrow again," whispered Mr. Britling, "but to-night — to-night.... To-night is yours.... Can you hear me, can you hear? Your father ... who had counted on you...."

§ 26

He went into the far corner of the hockey paddock, and there he moved about for a while and then stood for a long time holding the fence with both hands and staring blankly into the darkness. At last he turned away, and went stumbling and blundering towards the rose garden. A spray of creeper tore his face and distressed him. He thrust it aside fretfully, and it scratched his hand. He made his way to the seat in the arbour, and sat down and whispered a little to himself, and then became very still with his arm upon the back of the seat and his head upon his arm.

BOOK III. THE TESTAMENT OF MATCHING'S EASY

CHAPTER THE FIRST

MRS. TEDDY GOES FOR A WALK

§ 1

All over England now, where the livery of mourning had been a rare thing to see, women and children went about in the October sunshine in new black clothes. Everywhere one met these fresh griefs, mothers who had lost their sons, women who had lost their men, lives shattered and hopes destroyed. The dyers had a great time turning coloured garments to black. And there was also a growing multitude of crippled and disabled men. It was so in England, much more was it so in France and Russia, in all the countries of the Allies, and in Germany and Austria; away into Asia Minor and Egypt, in India and Japan and Italy there was mourning, the world was filled with loss and mourning and impoverishment and distress.

And still the mysterious powers that required these things of mankind were unappeased, and each day added its quota of heart-stabbing messages and called for new mourning, and sent home fresh consignments of broken and tormented men.

Some clung to hopes that became at last almost more terrible than black certainties....

Mrs. Teddy went about the village in a coloured dress bearing herself confidently. Teddy had been listed now as "missing, since reported killed," and she had had two letters from his comrades. They said Teddy had been left behind in the ruins of a farm with one or two other wounded, and that when the Canadians retook the place these wounded had all been found butchered. None had been found alive. Afterwards the Canadians had had to fall back. Mr. Direck had been at great pains to hunt up wounded men from Teddy's company, and also any likely Canadians both at the base hospital in France and in London, and to get what he could from them. He had made it a service to Cissie. Only one of his witnesses was quite clear about Teddy, but he, alas! was dreadfully clear. There had been only one lieutenant among the men left behind, he said, and obviously that

must have been Teddy. “He had been prodded in half-a-dozen places. His head was nearly severed from his body.”

Direck came down and told the story to Cissie. “Shall I tell it to her?” he asked.

Cissie thought. “Not yet,” she said....

Letty’s face changed in those pitiful weeks when she was denying death. She lost her pretty colour, she became white; her mouth grew hard and her eyes had a hard brightness. She never wept, she never gave a sign of sorrow, and she insisted upon talking about Teddy, in a dry offhand voice. Constantly she referred to his final return. “Teddy,” she said, “will be surprised at this,” or “Teddy will feel sold when he sees how I have altered that.”

“Presently we shall see his name in a list of prisoners,” she said. “He is a wounded prisoner in Germany.”

She adopted that story. She had no justification for it, but she would hear no doubts upon it. She presently began to prepare parcels to send him. “They want almost everything,” she told people. “They are treated abominably. He has not been able to write to me yet, but I do not think I ought to wait until he asks me.”

Cissie was afraid to interfere with this.

After a time Letty grew impatient at the delay in getting any address and took her first parcel to the post office.

“Unless you know what prison he is at,” said the postmistress.

“Pity!” said Letty. “I don’t know that. Must it wait for that? I thought the Germans were so systematic that it didn’t matter.”

The postmistress made tedious explanations that Letty did not seem to hear. She stared straight in front of her at nothing. Then in a pause in the conversation she picked up her parcel.

“It’s tiresome for him to have to wait,” she said. “But it can’t be long before I know.”

She took the parcel back to the cottage.

“After all,” she said, “it gives us time to get the better sort of throat lozenges for him — the sort the syndicate shop doesn’t keep.”

She put the parcel conspicuously upon the dresser in the kitchen where it was most in the way, and set herself to make a jersey for Teddy against the coming of the cold weather.

But one night the white mask fell for a moment from her face.

Cissie and she had been sitting in silence before the fire. She had been knitting — she knitted very badly — and Cissie had been pretending to read, and had been watching her furtively. Cissie eyed the slow, toilsome growth of the slack woolwork for a time, and the touch of angry effort in every stroke of the knitting needles. Then she was stirred to remonstrance.

"Poor Letty!" she said very softly. "Suppose after all, he is dead?"

Letty met her with a pitiless stare.

"He is a prisoner," she said. "Isn't that enough? Why do you jab at me by saying that? A wounded prisoner. Isn't that enough despicable trickery for God even to play on Teddy — our Teddy? To the very last moment he shall not be dead. Until the war is over. Until six months after the war....

"I will tell you why, Cissie...."

She leant across the table and pointed her remarks with her knitting needles, speaking in a tone of reasonable remonstrance. "You see," she said, "if people like Teddy are to be killed, then all our ideas that life is meant for, honesty and sweetness and happiness, are wrong, and this world is just a place of devils; just a dirty cruel hell. Getting born would be getting damned. And so one must not give way to that idea, however much it may seem likely that he is dead....

"You see, if he *is* dead, then Cruelty is the Law, and some one must pay me for his death.... Some one must pay me.... I shall wait for six months after the war, dear, and then I shall go off to Germany and learn my way about there. And I will murder some German. Not just a common German, but a German who belongs to the guilty kind. A sacrifice. It ought, for instance, to be comparatively easy to kill some of the children of the Crown Prince or some of the Bavarian princes. I shall prefer German children. I shall sacrifice them to Teddy. It ought not to be difficult to find people who can be made directly responsible, the people who invented the poison gas, for instance, and kill them, or to kill people who are dear to them. Or necessary to them.... Women can do that so much more easily than men....

"That perhaps is the only way in which wars of this kind will ever be brought to an end. By women insisting on killing the kind of

people who make them. Rooting them out. By a campaign of pursuit and assassination that will go on for years and years after the war itself is over.... Murder is such a little gentle punishment for the crime of war.... It would be hardly more than a reproach for what has happened. Falling like snow. Death after death. Flake by flake. This prince. That statesman. The count who writes so fiercely for war.... That is what I am going to do. If Teddy is really dead.... We women were ready enough a year or so ago to starve and die for the Vote, and that was quite a little thing in comparison with this business.... Don't you see what I mean? It's so plain and sensible, Cissie. Whenever a man sits and thinks whether he will make a war or not, then he will think too of women, women with daggers, bombs; of a vengeance that will never tire nor rest; of consecrated patient women ready to start out upon a pilgrimage that will only end with his death.... I wouldn't hurt these war makers. No. In spite of the poison gas. In spite of trench feet and the men who have been made blind and the wounded who have lain for days, dying slowly in the wet. Women ought not to hurt. But I would kill. Like killing dangerous vermin. It would go on year by year. Balkan kings, German princes, chancellors, they would have schemed for so much — and come to just a rattle in the throat.... And if presently other kings and emperors began to prance about and review armies, they too would go....

"Until all the world understood that women would not stand war any more forever....

"Of course I shall do something of the sort. What else is there to do now for me?"

Letty's eyes were bright and intense, but her voice was soft and subdued. She went on after a pause in the same casual voice. "You see now, Cissie, why I cling to the idea that Teddy is alive. If Teddy is alive, then even if he is wounded, he will get some happiness out of it — and all this won't be — just rot. If he is dead then everything is so desperately silly and cruel from top to bottom—"

She smiled wanly to finish her sentence.

"But, Letty!" said Cissie, "there is the boy!"

"I shall leave the boy to you. Compared with Teddy I don't care *that* for the boy. I never did. What is the good of pretending? Some women are made like that."

She surveyed her knitting. “Poor stitches,” she said....

“I’m hard stuff, Cissie. I take after mother more than father. Teddy is my darling. All the tenderness of my life is Teddy. If it goes, it goes.... I won’t crawl about the world like all these other snivelling widows. If they’ve killed my man I shall kill. Blood for blood and loss for loss. I shall get just as close to the particular Germans who made this war as I can, and I shall kill them and theirs....

“The Women’s Association for the Extirpation of the whole breed of War Lords,” she threw out. “If I *do* happen to hurt — does it matter?”

She looked at her sister’s shocked face and smiled again.

“You think I go about staring at nothing,” she remarked.... “Not a bit of it! I have been planning all sorts of things.... I have been thinking how I could get to Germany.... Or one might catch them in Switzerland.... I’ve had all sorts of plans. They can’t go guarded for ever....

“Oh, it makes me despise humanity to see how many soldiers and how few assassins there are in the world.... After the things we have seen. If people did their duty by the dagger there wouldn’t be such a thing as a War Lord in the world. Not one.... The Kaiser and his sons and his sons’ sons would know nothing but fear now for all their lives. Fear would only cease to pursue as the coffin went down into the grave. Fear by sea, fear by land, for the vessel he sailed in, the train he travelled in, fear when he slept for the death in his dreams, fear when he waked for the death in every shadow; fear in every crowd, fear whenever he was alone. Fear would stalk him through the trees, hide in the corner of the staircase; make all his food taste perplexingly, so that he would want to spit it out....”

She sat very still brooding on that idea for a time, and then stood up.

“What nonsense one talks!” she cried, and yawned. “I wonder why poor Teddy doesn’t send me a post card or something to tell me his address. I tell you what I *am* afraid of sometimes about him, Cissie.”

“Yes?” said Cissie.

“Loss of memory. Suppose a beastly lump of shell or something

whacked him on the head.... I had a dream of him looking strange about the eyes and not knowing me. That, you know, really *may* have happened.... It would be beastly, of course....”

Cissie’s eyes were critical, but she had nothing ready to say.

There were some moments of silence.

“Oh! bed,” said Letty. “Though I shall just lie scheming.”

§ 2

Cissie lay awake that night thinking about her sister as if she had never thought about her before.

She began to weigh the concentrated impressions of a thousand memories. She and her sister were near in age; they knew each other with an extreme intimacy, and yet it seemed to Cissie that night as though she did not know Letty at all. A year ago she would have been certain she knew everything about her. But the old familiar Letty, with the bright complexion, and the wicked eye, with her rebellious schoolgirl insistence upon the beautifulness of “Boof’l young men,” and her frank and glowing passion for Teddy, with her delight in humorous mystifications and open-air exercise and all the sunshine and laughter of life, this sister Letty, who had been so satisfactory and complete and final, had been thrust aside like a mask. Cissie no longer knew her sister’s eyes. Letty’s hand had become thin and unfamiliar and a little wrinkled; she was sharp-featured and thin-lipped; her acts, which had once been predictable, were incomprehensible, and Cissie was thrown back upon speculations. In their schooldays Letty had had a streak of intense sensibility; she had been easily moved to tears. But never once had she wept or given any sign of weeping since Teddy’s name had appeared in the casualty list.... What was the strength of this tragic tension? How far would it carry her? Was Letty really capable of becoming a Charlotte Corday? Of carrying out a scheme of far-seeing vengeance, of making her way through long months and years nearer and nearer to revenge?

Were such revenges possible?

Would people presently begin to murder the makers of the Great

War? What a strange thing it would be in history if so there came a punishment and end to the folly of kings!

Only a little while ago Cissie's imagination might have been captured by so romantic a dream. She was still but a year or so out of the stage of melodrama. But she was out of it. She was growing up now to a subtler wisdom. People, she was beginning to realise, do not do these simple things. They make vows of devotion and they are not real vows of devotion; they love — quite honestly — and qualify. There are no great revenges but only little mean ones; no life-long vindications except the unrelenting vengeance of the law. There is no real concentration of people's lives anywhere such as romance demands. There is change, there is forgetfulness. Everywhere there is dispersal. Even to the tragic story of Teddy would come the modifications of time. Even to the wickedness of the German princes would presently be added some conflicting aspects. Could Letty keep things for years in her mind, hard and terrible, as they were now? Surely they would soften; other things would overlay them....

There came a rush of memories of Letty in a dozen schoolgirl adventures, times when she had ventured, and times when she had failed; Letty frightened, Letty vexed, Letty launching out to great enterprises, going high and hard and well for a time, and then failing. She had seen Letty snivelling and dirty; Letty shamed and humiliated. She knew her Letty to the soul. Poor Letty! Poor dear Letty! With a sudden clearness of vision Cissie realised what was happening in her sister's mind. All this tense scheming of revenges was the imaginative play with which Letty warded off the black alternative to her hope; it was not strength, it was weakness. It was a form of giving way. She could not face starkly the simple fact of Teddy's death. That was too much for her. So she was building up this dream of a mission of judgment against the day when she could resist the facts no longer. She was already persuaded, only she would not be persuaded until her dream was ready. If this state of suspense went on she might establish her dream so firmly that it would at last take complete possession of her mind. And by that time also she would have squared her existence at Matching's Easy with the elaboration of her reverie.

She would go about the place then, fancying herself preparing for this tremendous task she would never really do; she would study German maps; she would read the papers about German statesmen and rulers; perhaps she would even make weak attempts to obtain a situation in Switzerland or in Germany. Perhaps she would buy a knife or a revolver. Perhaps presently she would begin to hover about Windsor or Sandringham when peace was made, and the German cousins came visiting again....

Into Cissie's mind came the image of the thing that might be; Letty, shabby, draggled, with her sharp bright prettiness become haggard, an assassin dreamer, still dependent on Mr. Britling, doing his work rather badly, in a distraught unpunctual fashion.

She must be told, she must be convinced soon, or assuredly she would become an eccentric, a strange character, a Matching's Easy Miss Flite....

§ 3

Cissie could think more clearly of Letty's mind than of her own.

She herself was in a tangle. She had grown to be very fond of Mr. Direck, and to have a profound trust and confidence in him, and her fondness seemed able to find no expression at all except a constant girding at his and America's avoidance of war. She had fallen in love with him when he was wearing fancy dress; she was a young woman with a stronger taste for body and colour than she supposed; what indeed she resented about him, though she did not know it, was that he seemed never disposed to carry the spirit of fancy dress into everyday life. To begin with he had touched both her imagination and senses, and she wanted him to go on doing that. Instead of which he seemed lapsing more and more into reiterated assurances of devotion and the flat competent discharge of humanitarian duties. Always nowadays he was trying to persuade her that what he was doing was the right and honourable thing for him to do; what he did not realise, what indeed she did not realise, was the exasperation his rightness and reasonableness produced in her. When he saw he exasperated her he sought very earnestly to be righter and

reasonabler and more plainly and demonstrably right and reasonable than ever.

Withal, as she felt and perceived, he was such a good thing, such a very good thing; so kind, so trustworthy, with a sort of slow strength, with a careful honesty, a big good childishness, a passion for fairness. And so helpless in her hands. She could lash him and distress him. Yet she could not shake his slowly formed convictions.

When Cissie had dreamt of the lover that fate had in store for her in her old romantic days, he was to be *perfect* always, he and she were always to be absolutely in the right (and, if the story needed it, the world in the wrong). She had never expected to find herself tied by her affections to a man with whom she disagreed, and who went contrary to her standards, very much as if she was lashed on the back of a very nice elephant that would wince to but not obey the goad....

So she nagged him and taunted him, and would hear no word of his case. And he wanted dreadfully to discuss his case. He felt that the point of conscience about the munitions was particularly fine and difficult. He wished she would listen and enter into it more. But she thought with that more rapid English flash which is not so much thinking as feeling. He loved that flash in her in spite of his persuasion of its injustice.

Her thought that he ought to go to the war made him feel like a renegade; but her claim that he was somehow still English held him in spite of his reason. In the midst of such perplexities he was glad to find one neutral task wherein he could find himself whole-heartedly with and for Cissie.

He hunted up the evidence of Teddy's fate with a devoted pertinacity.

And in the meanwhile the other riddle resolved itself. He had had a certain idea in his mind for some time. He discovered one day that it was an inspiration. He could keep his conscientious objection about America, and still take a line that would satisfy Cissie. He took it.

When he came down to Matching's Easy at her summons to bear his convincing witness of Teddy's fate, he came in an unwonted costume. It was a costume so wonderful in his imagination that it seemed to cry aloud, to sound like a trumpet as he went through

London to Liverpool Street station; it was a costume like an international event; it was a costume that he felt would blare right away to Berlin. And yet it was a costume so commonplace, so much the usual wear now, that Cissie, meeting him at the station and full of the thought of Letty's trouble, did not remark it, felt indeed rather than observed that he was looking more strong and handsome than he had ever done since he struck upon her imagination in the fantastic wrap that Teddy had found for him in the merry days when there was no death in the world. And Letty too, resistant, incalculable, found no wonder in the wonderful suit.

He bore his testimony. It was the queer halting telling of a patched-together tale....

"I suppose," said Letty, "if I tell you now that I don't believe that that officer was Teddy you will think I am cracked.... But I don't."

She sat staring straight before her for a time after saying this. Then suddenly she got up and began taking down her hat and coat from the peg behind the kitchen door. The hanging strap of the coat was twisted and she struggled with it petulantly until she tore it.

"Where are you going?" cried Cissie.

Letty's voice over her shoulder was the harsh voice of a scolding woman.

"I'm going out — anywhere." She turned, coat in hand. "Can't I go out if I like?" she asked. "It's a beautiful day.... Mustn't I go out?... I suppose you think I ought to take in what you have told me in a moment. Just smile and say '*Indeed!*' ... Abandoned! — while his men retreated! How jolly! And then not think of it any more.... Besides, I must go out. You two want to be left together. You want to canoodle. Do it while you can!"

Then she put on coat and hat, jamming her hat down on her head, and said something that Cissie did not immediately understand.

"*He'll* have his turn in the trenches soon enough. Now that he's made up his mind.... He might have done it sooner...."

She turned her back as though she had forgotten them. She stood for a moment as though her feet were wooden, not putting her feet as she usually put her feet. She took slow, wide, unsure steps. She went out — like something that is mortally injured and still walks — into the autumnal sunshine. She left the door wide open behind her.

§ 4

And Cissie, with eyes full of distress for her sister, had still to grasp the fact that Direck was wearing a Canadian uniform....

He stood behind her, ashamed that in such a moment this fact and its neglect by every one could be so vivid in his mind.

§ 5

Cissie's estimate of her sister's psychology had been just. The reverie of revenge had not yet taken a grip upon Letty's mind sufficiently strong to meet the challenge of this conclusive evidence of Teddy's death. She walked out into a world of sunshine now almost completely convinced that Teddy was dead, and she knew quite well that her dream of some dramatic and terrible vindication had gone from her. She knew that in truth she could do nothing of that sort....

She walked out with a set face and eyes that seemed unseeing, and yet it was as if some heavy weight had been lifted from her shoulders. It was over; there was no more to hope for and there was nothing more to fear. She would have been shocked to realise that her mind was relieved.

She wanted to be alone. She wanted to be away from every eye. She was like some creature that after a long nightmare incubation is at last born into a clear, bleak day. She had to feel herself; she had to stretch her mind in this cheerless sunshine, this new world, where there was to be no more Teddy and no real revenge nor compensation for Teddy. Teddy was past....

Hitherto she had had an angry sense of being deprived of Teddy — almost as though he were keeping away from her. Now, there was no more Teddy to be deprived of....

She went through the straggling village, and across the fields to the hillside that looks away towards Mertonsome and its steeple. And where the hill begins to fall away she threw herself down under the

hedge by the path, near by the stile into the lane, and lay still. She did not so much think as remain blank, waiting for the beginning of impressions....

It was as it were a blank stare at the world....

She did not know if it was five minutes or half an hour later that she became aware that some one was looking at her. She turned with a start, and discovered the Reverend Dimple with one foot on the stile, and an expression of perplexity and consternation upon his chubby visage.

Instantly she understood. Already on four different occasions since Teddy's disappearance she had seen the good man coming towards her, always with a manifest decision, always with the same faltering doubt as now. Often in their happy days had she and Teddy discussed him and derided him and rejoiced over him. They had agreed he was as good as Jane Austen's Mr. Collins. He really was very like Mr. Collins, except that he was plumper. And now, it was as if he was transparent to her hard defensive scrutiny. She knew he was impelled by his tradition, by his sense of fitness, by his respect for his calling, to offer her his ministrations and consolations, to say his large flat amiabilities over her and pat her kindly with his hands. And she knew too that he dreaded her. She knew that the dear old humbug knew at the bottom of his heart quite certainly that he was a poor old humbug, and that she was in his secret. And at the bottom of his heart he found himself too honest to force his poor platitudes upon any who would not be glad of them. If she could have been glad of them he would have had no compunction. He was a man divided against himself; failing to carry through his rich pretences, dismayed.

He had been taking his afternoon "constitutional." He had discovered her beyond the stile just in time to pull up. Then had come a fatal, a preposterous hesitation. She stared at him now, with hard, expressionless eyes.

He stared back at her, until his plump pink face was all consternation. He was extraordinarily distressed. It was as if a thousand unspoken things had been said between them.

"No wish," he said, "intrude."

If he had had the certain balm, how gladly would he have given it!

He broke the spell by stepping back into the lane. He made a gesture with his hands, as if he would have wrung them. And then he had fled down the lane — almost at a run.

"Po' girl," he shouted. "Po' girl," and left her staring.

Staring — and then she laughed.

This was good. This was the sort of thing one could tell Teddy, when at last he came back and she could tell him anything. And then she realised again; there was no more Teddy, there would be no telling. And suddenly she fell weeping.

"Oh, Teddy, Teddy," she cried through her streaming tears. "How could you leave me? How can I bear it?"

Never a tear had she shed since the news first came, and now she could weep, she could weep her grief out. She abandoned herself unreservedly to this blessed relief....

§ 6

There comes an end to weeping at last, and Letty lay still, in the red light of the sinking sun.

She lay so still that presently a little foraging robin came dirting down to the grass not ten yards away and stopped and looked at her. And then it came a hop or so nearer.

She had been lying in a state of passive abandonment, her swollen wet eyes open, regardless of everything. But those quick movements caught her back to attention. She began to watch the robin, and to note how it glanced sidelong at her and appeared to meditate further approaches. She made an almost imperceptible movement, and straightway the little creature was in a projecting spray of berried hawthorn overhead.

Her tear-washed mind became vaguely friendly. With an unconscious comfort it focussed down to the robin. She rolled over, sat up, and imitated his friendly "cheep."

§ 7

Presently she became aware of footsteps rustling through the grass towards her.

She looked over her shoulder and discovered Mr. Britling approaching by the field path. He looked white and tired and listless, even his bristling hair and moustache conveyed his depression; he was dressed in an old tweed knickerbocker suit and carrying a big atlas and some papers. He had an effect of hesitation in his approach. It was as if he wanted to talk to her and doubted her reception for him.

He spoke without any preface. “Direck has told you?” he said, standing over her.

She answered with a sob.

“I was afraid it was so, and yet I did not believe it,” said Mr. Britling. “Until now.”

He hesitated as if he would go on, and then he knelt down on the grass a little way from her and seated himself. There was an interval of silence.

“At first it hurts like the devil,” he said at last, looking away at Mertonsome spire and speaking as if he spoke to no one in particular. “And then it hurts. It goes on hurting.... And one can’t say much to any one....”

He said no more for a time. But the two of them comforted one another, and knew that they comforted each other. They had a common feeling of fellowship and ease. They had been stricken by the same thing; they understood how it was with each other. It was not like the attempted comfort they got from those who had not loved and dreaded....

She took up a little broken twig and dug small holes in the ground with it.

“It’s strange,” she said, “but I’m glad I know for sure.”

“I can understand that,” said Mr. Britling.

“It stops the nightmares.... It isn’t hopes I’ve had so much as fears.... I wouldn’t admit he was dead or hurt. Because — I couldn’t think it without thinking it — horrible. *Now*—”

“It’s final,” said Mr. Britling.

“It’s definite,” she said after a pause. “It’s like thinking he’s asleep — for good.”

But that did not satisfy her. There was more than this in her mind. “It does away with the half and half,” she said. “He’s dead or he is alive....”

She looked up at Mr. Britling as if she measured his understanding.

“You don’t still doubt?” he said.

“I’m content now in my mind — in a way. He wasn’t anyhow there — unless he was dead. But if I saw Teddy coming over the hedge there to me — It would be just natural.... No, don’t stare at me. I know really he is dead. And it is a comfort. It is peace.... All the thoughts of him being crushed dreadfully or being mutilated or lying and screaming — or things like that — they’ve gone. He’s out of his spoilt body. He’s my unbroken Teddy again.... Out of sight somewhere.... Unbroken.... Sleeping.”

She resumed her excavation with the little stick, with the tears running down her face.

Mr. Britling presently went on with the talk. “For me it came all at once, without a doubt or a hope. I hoped until the last that nothing would touch Hugh. And then it was like a black shutter falling — in an instant....”

He considered. “Hugh, too, seems just round the corner at times. But at times, it’s a blank place....

“At times,” said Mr. Britling, “I feel nothing but astonishment. The whole thing becomes incredible. Just as for weeks after the war began I couldn’t believe that a big modern nation could really go to war — seriously — with its whole heart.... And they have killed Teddy and Hugh....

“They have killed millions. Millions — who had fathers and mothers and wives and sweethearts....”

§ 8

“Somehow I can’t talk about this to Edith. It is ridiculous, I know. But in some way I can’t.... It isn’t fair to her. If I could, I would.... Quite soon after we were married I ceased to talk to her. I mean talking really and simply — as I do to you. And it’s never come

back. I don't know why.... And particularly I can't talk to her of Hugh.... Little things, little shadows of criticism, but enough to make it impossible.... And I go about thinking about Hugh, and what has happened to him sometimes... as though I was stifling."

Letty compared her case.

"I don't want to talk about Teddy — not a word."

"That's queer.... But perhaps — a son is different. Now I come to think of it — I've never talked of Mary.... Not to any one ever. I've never thought of that before. But I haven't. I couldn't. No. Losing a lover, that's a thing for oneself. I've been through that, you see. But a son's more outside you. Altogether. And more your own making. It's not losing a thing *in* you; it's losing a hope and a pride.... Once when I was a little boy I did a drawing very carefully. It took me a long time.... And a big boy tore it up. For no particular reason. Just out of cruelty.... That — that was exactly like losing Hugh...."

Letty reflected.

"No," she confessed, "I'm more selfish than that."

"It isn't selfish," said Mr. Britling. "But it's a different thing. It's less intimate, and more personally important."

"I have just thought, 'He's gone. He's gone.' Sometimes, do you know, I have felt quite angry with him. Why need he have gone — so soon?"

Mr. Britling nodded understandingly.

"I'm not angry. I'm not depressed. I'm just bitterly hurt by the ending of something I had hoped to watch — always — all my life," he said. "I don't know how it is between most fathers and sons, but I admired Hugh. I found exquisite things in him. I doubt if other people saw them. He was quiet. He seemed clumsy. But he had an extraordinary fineness. He was a creature of the most delicate and rapid responses.... These aren't my fond delusions. It was so.... You know, when he was only a few days old, he would start suddenly at any strange sound. He was alive like an Æolian harp from the very beginning.... And his hair when he was born — he had a lot of hair — was like the down on the breast of a bird. I remember that now very vividly — and how I used to like to pass my hand over it. It was silk, spun silk. Before he was two he could talk — whole sentences. He had the subtlest ear. He loved long words.... And then," he said

with tears in his voice, “all this beautiful fine structure, this brain, this fresh life as nimble as water — as elastic as a steel spring, it is destroyed....

“I don’t make out he wasn’t human. Often and often I have been angry with him, and disappointed in him. There were all sorts of weaknesses in him. We all knew them. And we didn’t mind them. We loved him the better. And his odd queer cleverness!.... And his profound wisdom. And then all this beautiful and delicate fabric, all those clear memories in his dear brain, all his whims, his sudden inventions....

“You know, I have had a letter from his chum Park. He was shot through a loophole. The bullet went through his eye and brow.... Think of it!

“An amazement ... a blow ... a splattering of blood. Rags of tormented skin and brain stuff.... In a moment. What had taken eighteen years — love and care....”

He sat thinking for an interval, and then went on, “The reading and writing alone! I taught him to read myself — because his first governess, you see, wasn’t very clever. She was a very good methodical sort, but she had no inspiration. So I got up all sorts of methods for teaching him to read. But it wasn’t necessary. He seemed to leap all sorts of difficulties. He leapt to what one was trying to teach him. It was as quick as the movement of some wild animal....

“He came into life as bright and quick as this robin looking for food....

“And he’s broken up and thrown away.... Like a cartridge case by the side of a covert....”

He choked and stopped speaking. His elbows were on his knees, and he put his face between his hands and shuddered and became still. His hair was troubled. The end of his stumpy moustache and a little roll of flesh stood out at the side of his hand, and made him somehow twice as pitiful. His big atlas, from which papers projected, seemed forgotten by his side. So he sat for a long time, and neither he nor Letty moved or spoke. But they were in the same shadow. They found great comfort in one another. They had not been so comforted before since their losses came upon them.

§ 9

It was Mr. Britling who broke silence. And when he drew his hands down from his face and spoke, he said one of the most amazing and unexpected things she had ever heard in her life.

"The only possible government in Albania," he said, looking steadfastly before him down the hill-side, "is a group of republican cantons after the Swiss pattern. I can see no other solution that is not offensive to God. It does not matter in the least what we owe to Serbia or what we owe to Italy. We have got to set this world on a different footing. We have got to set up the world at last — on justice and reason."

Then, after a pause, "The Treaty of Bucharest was an evil treaty. It must be undone. Whatever this German King of Bulgaria does, that treaty must be undone and the Bulgarians united again into one people. They must have themselves, whatever punishment they deserve, they must have nothing more, whatever reward they win."

She could not believe her ears.

"After this precious blood, after this precious blood, if we leave one plot of wickedness or cruelty in the world—"

And therewith he began to lecture Letty on the importance of international politics — to every one. How he and she and every one must understand, however hard it was to understand.

"No life is safe, no happiness is safe, there is no chance of bettering life until we have made an end to all that causes war....

"We have to put an end to the folly and vanity of kings, and to any people ruling any people but themselves. There is no convenience, there is no justice in any people ruling any people but themselves; the ruling of men by others, who have not their creeds and their languages and their ignorances and prejudices, that is the fundamental folly that has killed Teddy and Hugh — and these millions. To end that folly is as much our duty and business as telling the truth or earning a living...."

"But how can you alter it?"

He held out a finger at her. "Men may alter anything if they have

motive enough and faith enough."

He indicated the atlas beside him.

"Here I am planning the real map of the world," he said. "Every sort of district that has a character of its own must have its own rule; and the great republic of the united states of the world must keep the federal peace between them all. That's the plain sense of life; the federal world-republic. Why do we bother ourselves with loyalties to any other government but that? It needs only that sufficient men should say it, and that republic would be here now. Why have we loitered so long — until these tragic punishments come? We have to map the world out into its states, and plan its government and the way of its tolerations."

"And you think it will come?"

"It will come."

"And you believe that men will listen to such schemes?" said Letty.

Mr. Britling, with his eyes far away over the hills, seemed to think. "Yes," he said. "Not perhaps to-day — not steadily. But kings and empires die; great ideas, once they are born, can never die again. In the end this world-republic, this sane government of the world, is as certain as the sunset. Only...."

He sighed, and turned over a page of his atlas blindly.

"Only we want it soon. The world is weary of this bloodshed, weary of all this weeping, of this wasting of substance and this killing of sons and lovers. We want it soon, and to have it soon we must work to bring it about. We must give our lives. What is left of our lives....

"That is what you and I must do, Letty. What else is there left for us to do?... I will write of nothing else, I will think of nothing else now but of safety and order. So that all these dear dead — not one of them but will have brought the great days of peace and man's real beginning nearer, and these cruel things that make men whimper like children, that break down bright lives into despair and kill youth at the very moment when it puts out its clean hands to take hold of life — these cruelties, these abominations of confusion, shall cease from the earth forever."

Letty regarded him, frowning, and with her chin between her fists....

"But do you really believe," said Letty, "that things can be better than they are?"

"But — *Yes!*" said Mr. Britling.

"I don't," said Letty. "The world is cruel. It is just cruel. So it will always be."

"It need not be cruel," said Mr. Britling.

"It is just a place of cruel things. It is all set with knives. It is full of diseases and accidents. As for God — either there is no God or he is an idiot. He is a slobbering idiot. He is like some idiot who pulls off the wings of flies."

"No," said Mr. Britling.

"There is no progress. Nothing gets better. How can *you* believe in God after Hugh? *Do* you believe in God?"

"Yes," said Mr. Britling after a long pause; "I do believe in God."

"Who lets these things happen!" She raised herself on her arm and thrust her argument at him with her hand. "Who kills my Teddy and your Hugh — and millions."

"No," said Mr. Britling.

"But he *must* let these things happen. Or why do they happen?"

"No," said Mr. Britling. "It is the theologians who must answer that. They have been extravagant about God. They have had silly absolute ideas — that He is all powerful. That He's omni-everything. But the common sense of men knows better. Every real religious thought denies it. After all, the real God of the Christians is Christ, not God Almighty; a poor mocked and wounded God nailed on a cross of matter.... Some day He will triumph.... But it is not fair to say that He causes all things now. It is not fair to make out a case against him. You have been misled. It is a theologian's folly. God is not absolute; God is finite.... A finite God who struggles in his great and comprehensive way as we struggle in our weak and silly way — who is *with* us — that is the essence of all real religion.... I agree with you so — Why! if I thought there was an omnipotent God who looked down on battles and deaths and all the waste and horror of this war — able to prevent these things — doing them to amuse

Himself — I would spit in his empty face....”

“Any one would....”

“But it’s your teachers and catechisms have set you against God.... They want to make out He owns all Nature. And all sorts of silly claims. Like the heralds in the Middle Ages who insisted that Christ was certainly a great gentleman entitled to bear arms. But God is within Nature and necessity. Necessity is a thing beyond God — beyond good and ill, beyond space and time, a mystery everlastingly impenetrable. God is nearer than that. Necessity is the uttermost thing, but God is the innermost thing. Closer He is than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. He is the Other Thing than this world. Greater than Nature or Necessity, for he is a spirit and they are blind, but not controlling them.... Not yet....”

“They always told me He was the maker of Heaven and Earth.”

“That’s the Jew God the Christians took over. It’s a Quack God, a Panacea. It’s not my God.”

Letty considered these strange ideas.

“I never thought of Him like that,” she said at last. “It makes it all seem different.”

“Nor did I. But I do now.... I have suddenly found it and seen it plain. I see it so plain that I am amazed that I have not always seen it.... It is, you see, so easy to understand that there is a God, and how complex and wonderful and brotherly He is, when one thinks of those dear boys who by the thousand, by the hundred thousand, have laid down their lives.... Ay, and there were German boys too who did the same.... The cruelties, the injustice, the brute aggression — they saw it differently. They laid down their lives — they laid down their lives.... Those dear lives, those lives of hope and sunshine....

“Don’t you see that it must be like that, Letty? Don’t you see that it must be like that?”

“No,” she said, “I’ve seen things differently from that.”

“But it’s so plain to me,” said Mr. Britling. “If there was nothing else in all the world but our kindness for each other, or the love that made you weep in this kind October sunshine, or the love I bear Hugh — if there was nothing else at all — if everything else was cruelty and mockery and filthiness and bitterness, it would still be certain that there was a God of love and righteousness. If there were

no signs of God in all the world but the godliness we have seen in those two boys of ours; if we had no other light but the love we have between us....

"You don't mind if I talk like this?" said Mr. Britling. "It's all I can think of now — this God, this God who struggles, who was in Hugh and Teddy, clear and plain, and how He must become the ruler of the world...."

"This God who struggles," she repeated. "I have never thought of Him like that."

"Of course He must be like that," said Mr. Britling. "How can God be a Person; how can He be anything that matters to man, unless He is limited and defined and — human like ourselves.... With things outside Him and beyond Him."

§ 11

Letty walked back slowly through the fields of stubble to her cottage.

She had been talking to Mr. Britling for an hour, and her mind was full of the thought of this changed and simplified man, who talked of God as he might have done of a bird he had seen or of a tree he had sheltered under. And all mixed up with this thought of Mr. Britling was this strange idea of God who was also a limited person, who could come as close as Teddy, whispering love in the darkness. She had a ridiculous feeling that God really struggled like Mr. Britling, and that with only some indefinable inferiority of outlook Mr. Britling loved like God. She loved him for his maps and his dreams and the bareness of his talk to her. It was strange how the straining thought of the dead Teddy had passed now out of her mind. She was possessed by a sense of ending and beginning, as though a page had turned over in her life and everything was new. She had never given religion any thought but contemptuous thought for some years, since indeed her growing intelligence had dismissed it as a scheme of inexcusable restraints and empty pretences, a thing of discords where there were no discords except of its making. She had been a happy Atheist. She had played in the sunshine, a natural creature with the completest confidence in the essential goodness of

the world in which she found herself. She had refused all thought of painful and disagreeable things. Until the bloody paw of war had wiped out all her assurance. Teddy, the playmate, was over, the love game was ended for ever; the fresh happy acceptance of life as life; and in the place of Teddy was the sorrow of life, the pity of life, and this coming of God out of utter remoteness into a conceivable relation to her own existence.

She had left Mr. Britling to his atlas. He lay prone under the hedge with it spread before him. His occupation would have seemed to her only a little while ago the absurdest imaginable. He was drawing boundaries on his maps very carefully in red ink, with a fountain pen. But now she understood.

She knew that those red ink lines of Mr. Britling's might in the end prove wiser and stronger than the bargains of the diplomats....

In the last hour he had come very near to her. She found herself full of an unwonted affection for him. She had never troubled her head about her relations with any one except Teddy before. Now suddenly she seemed to be opening out to all the world for kindness. This new idea of a friendly God, who had a struggle of his own, who could be thought of as kindred to Mr. Britling, as kindred to Teddy — had gripped her imagination. He was behind the autumnal sunshine; he was in the little bird that had seemed so confident and friendly. Whatever was kind, whatever was tender; there was God. And a thousand old phrases she had read and heard and given little heed to, that had lain like dry bones in her memory, suddenly were clothed in flesh and became alive. This God — if this was God — then indeed it was not nonsense to say that God was love, that he was a friend and companion.... With him it might be possible to face a world in which Teddy and she would never walk side by side again nor plan any more happiness for ever. After all she had been very happy; she had had wonderful happiness. She had had far more happiness, far more love, in her short years or so than most people had in their whole lives. And so in the reaction of her emotions, Letty, who had gone out with her head full of murder and revenge, came back through the sunset thinking of pity, of the thousand kindnesses and tendernesses of Teddy that were, after all, perhaps only an intimation of the limitless kindnesses and tendernesses of

God.... What right had she to a white and bitter grief, self-centred and vindictive, while old Britling could still plan an age of mercy in the earth and a red-gold sunlight that was warm as a smile from Teddy lay on all the world....

She must go into the cottage and kiss Cissie, and put away that parcel out of sight until she could find some poor soldier to whom she could send it. She had been pitiless towards Cissie in her grief. She had, in the egotism of her sorrow, treated Cissie as she might have treated a chair or a table, with no thought that Cissie might be weary, might dream of happiness still to come. Cissie had still to play the lover, and her man was already in khaki. There would be no such year as Letty had had in the days before the war darkened the world. Before Cissie's marrying the peace must come, and the peace was still far away. And Direck too would have to take his chances....

Letty came through the little wood and over the stile that brought her into sight of the cottage. The windows of the cottage as she saw it under the bough of the big walnut tree, were afire from the sun. The crimson rambler over the porch that she and Teddy had planted was still bearing roses. The door was open and people were moving in the porch.

Some one was coming out of the cottage, a stranger, in an unfamiliar costume, and behind him was a man in khaki — but that was Mr. Direck! And behind him again was Cissie.

But the stranger!

He came out of the frame of the porch towards the garden gate....

Who — who was this stranger?

It was a man in queer-looking foreign clothes, baggy trousers of some soft-looking blue stuff and a blouse, and he had a white-bandaged left arm. He had a hat stuck at the back of his head, and a beard....

He was entirely a stranger, a foreigner. Was she going insane? Of course he was a stranger!

And then he moved a step, he made a queer sideways pace, a caper, on the path, and instantly he ceased to be strange and foreign. He became amazingly, incredibly, familiar by virtue of that step....

No!

Her breath stopped. All Letty's being seemed to stop. And this

stranger who was also incredibly familiar, after he had stared at her motionless form for a moment, waved his hat with a gesture — a gesture that crowned and scaled the effect of familiarity. She gave no sign in reply.

No, that familiarity was just a mad freakishness in things.

This strange man came from Belgium perhaps, to tell something about Teddy....

And then she surprised herself by making a groaning noise, an absurd silly noise, just like the noise when one imitates a cow to a child. She said "Mooo-oo."

And she began to run forward, with legs that seemed misfits, waving her hands about, and as she ran she saw more and more certainly that this wounded man in strange clothing was Teddy. She ran faster and still faster, stumbling and nearly falling. If she did not get to him speedily the world would burst.

To hold him, to hold close to him!...

"Letty! Letty! Just one arm...."

She was clinging to him and he was holding her....

It was all right. She had always known it was all right. (Hold close to him.) Except just for a little while. But that had been foolishness. Hadn't she always known he was alive? And here he was alive! (Hold close to him.) Only it was so good to be sure — after all her torment; to hold him, to hang about him, to feel the solid man, kissing her, weeping too, weeping together with her. "Teddy my love!"

§ 12

Letty was in the cottage struggling to hear and understand things too complicated for her emotion-crowded mind. There was something that Mr. Direck was trying to explain about a delayed telegram that had come soon after she had gone out. There was much indeed that Mr. Direck was trying to explain. What did any explanation really matter when you had Teddy, with nothing but a strange beard and a bandaged arm between him and yourself? She had an absurd persuasion at first that those two strangenesses would also presently

be set aside, so that Teddy would become just exactly what Teddy had always been.

Teddy had been shot through the upper arm....

"My hand has gone, dear little Letty. It's my left hand, luckily. I shall have to wear a hook like some old pirate...."

There was something about his being taken prisoner. "That other officer" — that was Mr. Direck's officer— "had been lying there for days." Teddy had been shot through the upper arm, and stunned by a falling beam. When he came to he was disarmed, with a German standing over him....

Then afterwards he had escaped. In quite a little time he had escaped. He had been in a railway station somewhere in Belgium; locked in a waiting-room with three or four French prisoners, and the junction had been bombed by French and British aeroplanes. Their guard and two of the prisoners had been killed. In the confusion the others had got away into the town. There were trucks of hay on fire, and a store of petrol was in danger. "After that one was bound to escape. One would have been shot if one had been found wandering about."

The bomb had driven some splinters of glass and corrugated iron into Teddy's wrist; it seemed a small place at first; it didn't trouble him for weeks. But then some dirt got into it.

In the narrow cobbled street beyond the station he had happened upon a woman who knew no English, but who took him to a priest, and the priest had hidden him.

Letty did not piece together the whole story at first. She did not want the story very much; she wanted to know about this hand and arm.

There would be queer things in the story when it came to be told. There was an old peasant who had made Teddy work in his fields in spite of his smashed and aching arm, and who had pointed to a passing German when Teddy demurred; there were the people called "they" who had at that time organised the escape of stragglers into Holland. There was the night watch, those long nights in succession before the dash for liberty. But Letty's concern was all with the hand. Inside the sling there was something that hurt the imagination, something bandaged, a stump. She could not think of it. She could

not get away from the thought of it.

"But why did you lose your hand?"

It was only a little place at first, and then it got painful....

"But I didn't go into a hospital because I was afraid they would intern me, and so I wouldn't be able to come home. And I was dying to come home. I was — homesick. No one was ever so homesick. I've thought of this place and the garden, and how one looked out of the window at the passers-by, a thousand times. I seemed always to be seeing them. Old Dimple with his benevolent smile, and Mrs. Wolker at the end cottage, and how she used to fetch her beer and wink when she caught us looking at her, and little Charlie Slobberface sniffing on his way to the pigs and all the rest of them. And you, Letty. Particularly you. And how we used to lean on the window-sill with our shoulders touching, and your cheek just in front of my eyes.... And nothing aching at all in one....

"How I thought of that and longed for that!...

"And so, you see, I didn't go to the hospital. I kept hoping to get to England first. And I left it too long...."

"Life's come back to me with you!" said Letty. "Until just to-day I've believed you'd come back. And to-day — I doubted.... I thought it was all over — all the real life, love and the dear fun of things, and that there was nothing before me, nothing before me but just holding out — and keeping your memory.... Poor arm. Poor arm. And being kind to people. And pretending you were alive somewhere.... I'll not care about the arm. In a little while.... I'm glad you've gone, but I'm gladder you're back and can never go again.... And I will be your right hand, dear, and your left hand and all your hands. Both my hands for your dear lost left one. You shall have three hands instead of two...."

§ 13

Letty stood by the window as close as she could to Teddy in a world that seemed wholly made up of unexpected things. She could not heed the others, it was only when Teddy spoke to the others, or when they spoke to Teddy, that they existed for her.

For instance, Teddy was presently talking to Mr. Direck.

They had spoken about the Canadians who had come up and relieved the Essex men after the fight in which Teddy had been captured. And then it was manifest that Mr. Direck was talking of his regiment. “I’m not the only American who has gone Canadian — for the duration of the war.”

He had got to his explanation at last.

“I’ve told a lie,” he said triumphantly. “I’ve shifted my birthplace six hundred miles.

“Mind you, I don’t admit a thing that Cissie has ever said about America — not one thing. You don’t understand the sort of proposition America is up against. America is the New World, where there are no races and nations any more; she is the Melting Pot, from which we will cast the better state. I’ve believed that always — in spite of a thousand little things I believe it now. I go back on nothing. I’m not fighting as an American either. I’m fighting simply as myself.... I’m not going fighting for England, mind you. Don’t you fancy that. I don’t know I’m so particularly in love with a lot of English ways as to do that. I don’t see how any one can be very much in love with your Empire, with its dead-alive Court, its artful politicians, its lords and ladies and snobs, its way with the Irish and its way with India, and everybody shifting responsibility and telling lies about your common people. I’m not going fighting for England. I’m going fighting for Cissie — and justice and Belgium and all that — but more particularly for Cissie. And anyhow I can’t look Pa Britling in the face any more.... And I want to see those trenches — close. I reckon they’re a thing it will be interesting to talk about some day.... So I’m going,” said Mr. Direck. “But chiefly — it’s Cissie. See?”

Cissie had come and stood by the side of him.

She looked from poor broken Teddy to him and back again.

“Up to now,” she said, “I’ve wanted you to go....”

Tears came into her eyes.

“I suppose I must let you go,” she said. “Oh! I’d hate you not to go....”

"Good God! how old the Master looks!" cried Teddy suddenly.

He was standing at the window, and as Mr. Direck came forward inquiringly he pointed to the figure of Mr. Britling passing along the road towards the Dower House.

"He does look old. I hadn't noticed," said Mr. Direck.

"Why, he's gone grey!" cried Teddy, peering. "He wasn't grey when I left."

They watched the knickerbockered figure of Mr. Britling receding up the hill, atlas and papers in his hands behind his back.

"I must go out to him," said Teddy, disengaging himself from Letty.

"No," she said, arresting him with her hand.

"But he will be glad—"

She stood in her husband's way. She had a vision of Mr. Britling suddenly called out of his dreams of God ruling the united states of the world, to rejoice at Teddy's restoration....

"No," she said; "it will only make him think again of Hugh — and how he died. Don't go out, Teddy. Not now. What does he care for *you*?... Let him rest from such things.... Leave him to dream over his atlas.... He isn't so desolate — if you knew.... I will tell you, Teddy — when I can....

"But just now — No, he will think of Hugh again.... Let him go.... He has God and his atlas there.... They're more than you think."

CHAPTER THE SECOND

MR. BRITLING WRITES UNTIL SUNRISE

§ 1

It was some weeks later. It was now the middle of November, and Mr. Britling, very warmly wrapped in his thick dressing-gown and his thick llama wool pyjamas, was sitting at his night desk, and working ever and again at an essay, an essay of preposterous ambitions, for the title of it was "The Better Government of the World."

Latterly he had had much sleepless misery. In the day life was tolerable, but in the night — unless he defended himself by working, the losses and cruelties of the war came and grimaced at him, insufferably. Now he would be haunted by long processions of refugees, now he would think of the dead lying stiff and twisted in a thousand dreadful attitudes. Then again he would be overwhelmed with anticipations of the frightful economic and social dissolution that might lie ahead.... At other times he thought of wounds and the deformities of body and spirit produced by injuries. And sometimes he would think of the triumph of evil. Stupid and triumphant persons went about a world that stupidity had desolated, with swaggering gestures, with a smiling consciousness of enhanced importance, with their scornful hatred of all measured and temperate and kindly things turned now to scornful contempt. And mingling with the soil they walked on lay the dead body of Hugh, face downward. At the back of the boy's head, rimmed by blood-stiffened hair — the hair that had once been "as soft as the down of a bird" — was a big red hole. That hole was always pitilessly distinct. They stepped on him — heedlessly. They heeled the scattered stuff of his exquisite brain into the clay....

From all such moods of horror Mr. Britling's circle of lamplight was his sole refuge. His work could conjure up visions, like opium visions, of a world of order and justice. Amidst the gloom of world bankruptcy he stuck to the prospectus of a braver enterprise —

reckless of his chances of subscribers....

§ 2

But this night even this circle of lamplight would not hold his mind. Doubt had crept into this last fastness. He pulled the papers towards him, and turned over the portion he had planned.

His purpose in the book he was beginning to write was to reason out the possible methods of government that would give a stabler, saner control to the world. He believed still in democracy, but he was realising more and more that democracy had yet to discover its method. It had to take hold of the consciences of men, it had to equip itself with still unformed organisations. Endless years of patient thinking, of experimenting, of discussion lay before mankind ere this great idea could become reality, and right, the proven right thing, could rule the earth.

Meanwhile the world must still remain a scene of blood-stained melodrama, of deafening noise, contagious follies, vast irrational destructions. One fine life after another went down from study and university and laboratory to be slain and silenced....

Was it conceivable that this mad monster of mankind would ever be caught and held in the thin-spun webs of thought?

Was it, after all, anything but pretension and folly for a man to work out plans for the better government of the world? — was it any better than the ambitious scheming of some fly upon the wheel of the romantic gods?

Man has come, floundering and wounding and suffering, out of the breeding darknesses of Time, that will presently crush and consume him again. Why not flounder with the rest, why not eat, drink, fight, scream, weep and pray, forget Hugh, stop brooding upon Hugh, banish all these priggish dreams of "The Better Government of the World," and turn to the brighter aspects, the funny and adventurous aspects of the war, the Chestertonian jolliness, *Punch* side of things? Think you because your sons are dead that there will be no more cakes and ale? Let mankind blunder out of the mud and blood as mankind has blundered in....

Let us at any rate keep our precious Sense of Humour....

He pulled his manuscript towards him. For a time he sat decorating the lettering of his title, "The Better Government of the World," with little grinning gnomes' heads and waggish tails....

§ 3

On the top of Mr. Britling's desk, beside the clock, lay a letter, written in clumsy English and with its envelope resealed by a label which testified that it had been "OPENED BY CENSOR."

The friendly go-between in Norway had written to tell Mr. Britling that Herr Heinrich also was dead; he had died a wounded prisoner in Russia some months ago. He had been wounded and captured, after undergoing great hardships, during the great Russian attack upon the passes of the Carpathians in the early spring, and his wound had mortified. He had recovered partially for a time, and then he had been beaten and injured again in some struggle between German and Croatian prisoners, and he had sickened and died. Before he died he had written to his parents, and once again he had asked that the fiddle he had left in Mr. Britling's care should if possible be returned to them. It was manifest that both for him and them now it had become a symbol with many associations.

The substance of this letter invaded the orange circle of the lamp; it would have to be answered, and the potentialities of the answer were running through Mr. Britling's brain to the exclusion of any impersonal composition. He thought of the old parents away there in Pomerania — he believed but he was not quite sure, that Heinrich had been an only son — and of the pleasant spectacled figure that had now become a broken and decaying thing in a prisoner's shallow grave....

Another son had gone — all the world was losing its sons....

He found himself thinking of young Heinrich in the very manner, if with a lesser intensity, in which he thought about his own son, as of hopes senselessly destroyed. His mind took no note of the fact that Heinrich was an enemy, that by the reckoning of a "war of attrition" his death was balance and compensation for the death of Hugh. He

went straight to the root fact that they had been gallant and kindly beings, and that the same thing had killed them both....

By no conceivable mental gymnastics could he think of the two as antagonists. Between them there was no imaginable issue. They had both very much the same scientific disposition; with perhaps more dash and inspiration in the quality of Hugh; more docility and method in the case of Karl. Until war had smashed them one against the other....

He recalled his first sight of Heinrich at the junction, and how he had laughed at the sight of his excessive Teutonism. The close-cropped shining fair head surmounted by a yellowish-white corps cap had appeared dodging about among the people upon the platform, and manifestly asking questions. The face had been very pink with the effort of an unaccustomed tongue. The young man had been clad in a suit of white flannel refined by a purple line; his boots were of that greenish yellow leather that only a German student could esteem "chic"; his rucksack was upon his back, and the precious fiddle in its case was carried very carefully in one hand; this same dead fiddle. The other hand held a stick with a carved knob and a pointed end. He had been too German for belief. "Herr Heinrich!" Mr. Britling had said, and straightway the heels had clashed together for a bow, a bow from the waist, a bow that a heedless old lady much burthened with garden produce had greatly disarranged. From first to last amidst our off-hand English ways Herr Heinrich had kept his bow — and always it had been getting disarranged.

That had been his constant effect; a little stiff, a little absurd, and always clean and pink and methodical. The boys had liked him without reserve, Mrs. Britling had liked him; everybody had found him a likeable creature. He never complained of anything except picnics. But he did object to picnics; to the sudden departure of the family to wild surroundings for the consumption of cold, knifeless and forkless meals in the serious middle hours of the day. He protested to Mr. Britling, respectfully but very firmly. It was, he held, implicit in their understanding that he should have a cooked meal in the middle of the day. Otherwise his Magen was perplexed and disordered. In the evening he could not eat with any gravity or profit....

Their disposition towards under-feeding and a certain lack of fine sentiment were the only flaws in the English scheme that Herr Heinrich admitted. He certainly found the English unfeeling. His heart went even less satisfied than his Magen. He was a being of expressive affections; he wanted great friendships, mysterious relationships, love. He tried very bravely to revere and to understand and be occultly understood by Mr. Britling; he sought long walks and deep talks with Hugh and the small boys; he tried to fill his heart with Cissie; he found at last marvels of innocence and sweetness in the Hickson girl. She wore her hair in a pigtail when first he met her, and it made her almost Marguerite. This young man had cried aloud for love, warm and filling, like the Mittagsessen that was implicit in their understanding. And all these Essex people failed to satisfy him; they were silent, they were subtle, they slipped through the fat yet eager fingers of his heart, so that he fell back at last upon himself and his German correspondents and the idealisation of Maud Hickson and the moral education of Billy. Billy. Mr. Britling's memories came back at last to the figure of young Heinrich with the squirrel on his shoulder, that had so often stood in the way of the utter condemnation of Germany. That, seen closely, was the stuff of one brutal Prussian. What quarrel had we with him?...

Other memories of Heinrich flitted across Mr. Britling's reverie. Heinrich at hockey, running with extreme swiftness and little skill, tricked and baffled by Letty, dodged by Hugh, going headlong forward and headlong back, and then with a cry flinging himself flat on the ground exhausted.... Or again Heinrich very grave and very pink, peering through his glasses at his cards at Skat.... Or Heinrich in the boats upon the great pond, or Heinrich swimming, or Heinrich hiding very, very artfully from the boys about the garden on a theory of his own, or Heinrich in strange postures, stalking the deer in Claverings Park. For a time he had had a great ambition to creep quite close to a deer and *touch* it.... Or Heinrich indexing. He had a passion for listing and indexing books, music, any loose classifiable thing. His favourite amusement was devising schemes for the indentation of dictionary leaves, so that one could turn instantly to the needed word. He had bought and cut the edges of three dictionaries; each in succession improved upon the other; he had had

great hopes of patents and wealth arising therefrom.... And his room had been a source of strange sounds; his search for music upon the violin. He had hoped when he came to Matching's Easy to join "some string quartette." But Matching's Easy produced no string quartette. He had to fall back upon the pianola, and try to play duets with that. Only the pianola did all the duet itself, and in the hands of a small Britling was apt to betray a facetious moodiness; sudden alternations between extreme haste and extreme lassitude....

Then there came a memory of Heinrich talking very seriously; his glasses magnifying his round blue eyes, talking of his ideas about life, of his beliefs and disbeliefs, of his ambitions and prospects in life.

He confessed two principal ambitions. They varied perhaps in their absolute dimensions, but they were of equal importance in his mind. The first of these was, so soon as he had taken his doctorate in philology, to give himself to the perfecting of an International Language; it was to combine all the virtues of Esperanto and Ido. "And then," said Herr Heinrich, "I do not think there will be any more wars — ever." The second ambition, which was important first because Herr Heinrich found much delight in working at it, and secondly because he thought it would give him great wealth and opportunity for propagating the perfect speech, was the elaboration of his system of marginal indentations for dictionaries and alphabetical books of reference of all sorts. It was to be so complete that one would just stand over the book to be consulted, run hand and eye over its edges and open the book— "at the very exact spot." He proposed to follow this business up with a quite Germanic thoroughness. "Presently," he said, "I must study the machinery by which the edges of books are cut. It is possible I may have to invent these also." This was the double-barrelled scheme of Herr Heinrich's career. And along it he was to go, and incidentally develop his large vague heart that was at present so manifestly unsatisfied....

Such was the brief story of Herr Heinrich.

That story was over — just as Hugh's story was over. That first volume would never now have a second and a third. It ended in some hasty grave in Russia. The great scheme for marginal indices would never be patented, the duets with the pianola would never be played

again.

Imagination glimpsed a little figure toiling manfully through the slush and snow of the Carpathians; saw it staggering under its first experience of shell fire; set it amidst attacks and flights and fatigue and hunger and a rush perhaps in the darkness; guessed at the wounding blow. Then came the pitiful pilgrimage of the prisoners into captivity, captivity in a land desolated, impoverished and embittered. Came wounds wrapped in filthy rags, pain and want of occupation, and a poor little bent and broken Heinrich sitting aloof in a crowded compound nursing a mortifying wound....

He used always to sit in a peculiar attitude with his arms crossed on his crossed legs, looking slantingly through his glasses....

So he must have sat, and presently he lay on some rough bedding and suffered, untended, in infinite discomfort; lay motionless and thought at times, it may be, of Matching's Easy and wondered what Hugh and Teddy were doing. Then he became fevered, and the world grew bright-coloured and fantastic and ugly for him. Until one day an infinite weakness laid hold of him, and his pain grew faint and all his thoughts and memories grew faint — and still fainter....

The violin had been brought into Mr. Britling's study that afternoon, and lay upon the further window-seat. Poor little broken sherd, poor little fragment of a shattered life! It looked in its case like a baby in a coffin.

"I must write a letter to the old father and mother," Mr. Britling thought. "I can't just send the poor little fiddle — without a word. In all this pitiful storm of witless hate — surely there may be one greeting — not hateful.

"From my blackness to yours," said Mr. Britling aloud. He would have to write it in English. But even if they knew no English some one would be found to translate it to them. He would have to write very plainly.

§ 4

He pushed aside the manuscript of "The Better Government of the World," and began to write rather slowly, shaping his letters roundly

and distinctly:

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to you to tell you I am sending back the few little things I had kept for your son at his request when the war broke out. I am sending them —

Mr. Britling left that blank for the time until he could arrange the method of sending to the Norwegian intermediary.

Especially I am sending his violin, which he had asked me thrice to convey to you. Either it is a gift from you or it symbolised many things for him that he connected with home and you. I will have it packed with particular care, and I will do all in my power to ensure its safe arrival.

I want to tell you that all the stress and passion of this war has not made us here in Matching's Easy forget our friend your son. He was one of us, he had our affection, he had friends here who are still his friends. We found him honourable and companionable, and we share something of your loss. I have got together for you a few snapshots I chance to possess in which you will see him in the sunshine, and which will enable you perhaps to picture a little more definitely than you would otherwise do the life he led here. There is one particularly that I have marked. Our family is lunching out-of-doors, and you will see that next to your son is a youngster, a year or so his junior, who is touching glasses with him. I have put a cross over his head. He is my eldest son, he was very dear to me, and he too has been, killed in this war. They are, you see, smiling very pleasantly at each other.

While writing this Mr. Britling had been struck by the thought of the photographs, and he had taken them out of the little drawer into which he was accustomed to thrust them. He picked out the ones that showed the young German, but there were others, bright with sunshine, that were now charged with acquired significances; there were two showing the children and Teddy and Hugh and Cissie and Letty doing the goose step, and there was one of Mr. Van der Pant, smiling at the front door, in Heinrich's abandoned slippers. There were endless pictures of Teddy also. It is the happy instinct of the Kodak to refuse those days that are overcast, and the photographic record of a life is a chain of all its kindlier aspects. In the drawer above these snapshots there were Hugh's letters and a miscellany of

trivial documents touching on his life.

Mr. Britling discontinued writing and turned these papers over and mused. Heinrich's letters and postcards had got in among them, and so had a letter of Teddy's....

The letters reinforced the photographs in their reminder how kind and pleasant a race mankind can be. Until the wild asses of nationalism came kicking and slaying amidst them, until suspicion and jostling greed and malignity poison their minds, until the fools with the high explosives blow that elemental goodness into shrieks of hate and splashes of blood. How kindly men are — up to the very instant of their cruelties! His mind teemed suddenly with little anecdotes and histories of the goodwill of men breaking through the ill-will of war, of the mutual help of sorely wounded Germans and English lying together in the mud and darkness between the trenches, of the fellowship of captors and prisoners, of the Saxons at Christmas fraternising with the English.... Of that he had seen photographs in one of the daily papers....

His mind came back presently from these wanderings to the task before him.

He tried to picture these Heinrich parents. He supposed they were kindly, civilised people. It was manifest the youngster had come to him from a well-ordered and gentle-spirited home. But he imagined them — he could not tell why — as people much older than himself. Perhaps young Heinrich had on some occasion said they were old people — he could not remember. And he had a curious impulse too to write to them in phrases of consolation; as if their loss was more pitiable than his own. He doubted whether they had the consolation of his sanguine temperament, whether they could resort as readily as he could to his faith, whether in Pomerania there was the same consoling possibility of an essay on the Better Government of the World. He did not think this very clearly, but that was what was at the back of his mind. He went on writing.

If you think that these two boys have both perished, not in some noble common cause but one against the other in a struggle of dynasties and boundaries and trade routes and tyrannous ascendancies, then it seems to me that you must feel as I feel that this war is the most tragic and dreadful thing that has ever happened to

mankind.

He sat thinking for some minutes after he had written that, and when presently he resumed his writing, a fresh strain of thought was traceable even in his opening sentence.

If you count dead and wounds this is the most dreadful war in history; for you as for me, it has been almost the extremity of personal tragedy.... Black sorrow.... But is it the most dreadful war?

I do not think it is. I can write to you and tell you that I do indeed believe that our two sons have died not altogether in vain. Our pain and anguish may not be wasted — may be necessary. Indeed they may be necessary. Here am I bereaved and wretched — and I hope. Never was the fabric of war so black; that I admit. But never was the black fabric of war so threadbare. At a thousand points the light is shining through.

Mr. Britling's pen stopped.

There was perfect stillness in the study bedroom.

"The tinpot style," said Mr. Britling at last in a voice of extreme bitterness.

He fell into an extraordinary quarrel with his style. He forgot about those Pomeranian parents altogether in his exasperation at his own inexpressiveness, at his incomplete control of these rebel words and phrases that came trailing each its own associations and suggestions to hamper his purpose with it. He read over the offending sentence.

"The point is that it is true," he whispered. "It is exactly what I want to say."...

Exactly?...

His mind stuck on that "exactly."... When one has much to say style is troublesome. It is as if one fussed with one's uniform before a battle.... But that is just what one ought to do before a battle.... One ought to have everything in order....

He took a fresh sheet and made three trial beginnings.

"War is like a black fabric."...

"War is a curtain of black fabric across the pathway."

"War is a curtain of dense black fabric across all the hopes and kindliness of mankind. Yet always it has let through some gleams of light, and now — I am not dreaming — it grows threadbare, and

here and there and at a thousand points the light is breaking through. We owe it to all these dear youths—"

His pen stopped again.

"I must work on a rough draft," said Mr. Britling.

§ 5

Three hours later Mr. Britling was working by daylight, though his study lamp was still burning, and his letter to old Heinrich was still no better than a collection of material for a letter. But the material was falling roughly into shape, and Mr. Britling's intentions were finding themselves. It was clear to him now that he was no longer writing as his limited personal self to those two personal selves grieving, in the old, large, high-walled, steep-roofed household amidst pine woods, of which Heinrich had once shown him a picture. He knew them too little for any such personal address. He was writing, he perceived, not as Mr. Britling but as an Englishman — that was all he could be to them — and he was writing to them as Germans; he could apprehend them as nothing more. He was just England bereaved to Germany bereaved....

He was no longer writing to the particular parents of one particular boy, but to all that mass of suffering, regret, bitterness and fatigue that lay behind the veil of the "front." Slowly, steadily, the manhood of Germany was being wiped out. As he sat there in the stillness he could think that at least two million men of the Central Powers were dead, and an equal number maimed and disabled. Compared with that our British losses, immense and universal as they were by the standard of any previous experience, were still slight; our larger armies had still to suffer, and we had lost irrevocably not very much more than a quarter of a million. But the tragedy gathered against us. We knew enough already to know what must be the reality of the German homes to which those dead men would nevermore return....

If England had still the longer account to pay, the French had paid already nearly to the limits of endurance. They must have lost well over a million of their mankind, and still they bled and bled. Russia

too in the East had paid far more than man for man in this vast swapping off of lives. In a little while no Censorship would hold the voice of the peoples. There would be no more talk of honour and annexations, hegemonies and trade routes, but only Europe lamenting for her dead....

The Germany to which he wrote would be a nation of widows and children, rather pinched boys and girls, crippled men, old men, deprived men, men who had lost brothers and cousins and friends and ambitions. No triumph now on land or sea could save Germany from becoming that. France too would be that, Russia, and lastly Britain, each in their degree. Before the war there had been no Germany to which an Englishman could appeal; Germany had been a threat, a menace, a terrible trampling of armed men. It was as little possible then to think of talking to Germany as it would have been to have stopped the Kaiser in mid career in his hooting car down the Unter den Linden and demand a quiet talk with him. But the Germany that had watched those rushes with a slightly doubting pride had her eyes now full of tears and blood. She had believed, she had obeyed, and no real victory had come. Still she fought on, bleeding, agonising, wasting her substance and the substance of the whole world, to no conceivable end but exhaustion, so capable she was, so devoted, so proud and utterly foolish. And the mind of Germany, whatever it was before the war, would now be something residual, something left over and sitting beside a reading-lamp as he was sitting beside a reading-lamp, thinking, sorrowing, counting the cost, looking into the dark future....

And to that he wrote, to that dimly apprehended figure outside a circle of the light like his own circle of light — which was the father of Heinrich, which was great Germany, Germany which lived before and which will yet outlive the flapping of the eagles....

Our boys, he wrote, *have died, fighting one against the other. They have been fighting upon an issue so obscure that your German press is still busy discussing what it was. For us it was that Belgium was invaded and France in danger of destruction. Nothing else could have brought the English into the field against you. But why you invaded Belgium and France and whether that might have been averted we do not know to this day. And still this war goes on and*

still more boys die, and these men who do not fight, these men in the newspaper offices and in the ministries plan campaigns and strokes and counter-strokes that belong to no conceivable plan at all. Except that now for them there is something more terrible than war. And that is the day of reckoning with their own people.

What have we been fighting for? What are we fighting for? Do you know? Does any one know? Why am I spending what is left of my substance and you what is left of yours to keep on this war against each other? What have we to gain from hurting one another still further? Why should we be puppets any longer in the hands of crowned fools and witless diplomatists? Even if we were dumb and acquiescent before, does not the blood of our sons now cry out to us that this foolery should cease? We have let these people send our sons to death.

It is you and I who must stop these wars, these massacres of boys.

Massacres of boys! That indeed is the essence of modern war. The killing off of the young. It is the destruction of the human inheritance, it is the spending of all the life and material of the future upon present-day hate and greed. Fools and knaves, politicians, tricksters, and those who trade on the suspicions and thoughtless, generous angers of men, make wars; the indolence and modesty of the mass of men permit them. Are you and I to suffer such things until the whole fabric of our civilisation, that has been so slowly and so laboriously built up, is altogether destroyed?

When I sat down to write to you I had meant only to write to you of your son and mine. But I feel that what can be said in particular of our loss, need not be said; it can be understood without saying. What needs to be said and written about is this, that war must be put an end to and that nobody else but you and me and all of us can do it. We have to do that for the love of our sons and our race and all that is human. War is no longer human; the chemist and the metallurgist have changed all that. My boy was shot through the eye; his brain was blown to pieces by some man who never knew what he had done. Think what that means!... It is plain to me, surely it is plain to you and all the world, that war is now a mere putting of the torch to explosives that flare out to universal ruin. There is nothing for one sane man to write to another about in these days but the salvation of

mankind from war.

Now I want you to be patient with me and hear me out. There was a time in the earlier part of this war when it was hard to be patient because there hung over us the dread of losses and disaster. Now we need dread no longer. The dreaded thing has happened. Sitting together as we do in spirit beside the mangled bodies of our dead, surely we can be as patient as the hills.

I want to tell you quite plainly and simply that I think that Germany which is chief and central in this war is most to blame for this war. Writing to you as an Englishman to a German and with war still being waged, there must be no mistake between us upon this point. I am persuaded that in the decade that ended with your overthrow of France in 1871, Germany turned her face towards evil, and that her refusal to treat France generously and to make friends with any other great power in the world, is the essential cause of this war. Germany triumphed — and she trampled on the loser. She inflicted intolerable indignities. She set herself to prepare for further aggressions; long before this killing began she was making war upon land and sea, launching warships, building strategic railways, setting up a vast establishment of war material, threatening, straining all the world to keep pace with her threats.... At last there was no choice before any European nation but submission to the German will, or war. And it was no will to which righteous men could possibly submit. It came as an illiberal and ungracious will. It was the will of Zabern. It is not as if you had set yourselves to be an imperial people and embrace and unify the world. You did not want to unify the world. You wanted to set the foot of an intensely national Germany, a sentimental and illiberal Germany, a Germany that treasured the portraits of your ridiculous Kaiser and his litter of sons, a Germany wearing uniform, reading black letter, and despising every kultur but her own, upon the neck of a divided and humiliated mankind. It was an intolerable prospect. I had rather the whole world died.

Forgive me for writing "you." You are as little responsible for that Germany as I am for — Sir Edward Grey. But this happened over you; you did not do your utmost to prevent it — even as England has happened, and I have let it happen over me....

“It is so dry; so general,” whispered Mr. Britling. “And yet — it is this that has killed our sons.”

He sat still for a time, and then went on reading a fresh sheet of his manuscript.

When I bring these charges against Germany I have little disposition to claim any righteousness for Britain. There has been small splendour in this war for either Germany or Britain or Russia; we three have chanced to be the biggest of the combatants, but the glory lies with invincible France. It is France and Belgium and Serbia who shine as the heroic lands. They have fought defensively and beyond all expectation, for dear land and freedom. This war for them has been a war of simple, definite issues, to which they have risen with an entire nobility. Englishman and German alike may well envy them that simplicity. I look to you, as an honest man schooled by the fierce lessons of this war, to meet me in my passionate desire to see France, Belgium and Serbia emerge restored from all this blood and struggle, enlarged to the limits of their nationality, vindicated and secure. Russia I will not write about here; let me go on at once to tell you about my own country; remarking only that between England and Russia there are endless parallelisms. We have similar complexities, kindred difficulties. We have for instance an imported dynasty, we have a soul-destroying State Church which cramps and poisons the education of our ruling class, we have a people out of touch with a secretive government, and the same traditional contempt for science. We have our Irelands and Polands. Even our kings bear a curious likeness....

At this point there was a break in the writing, and Mr. Britling made, as it were, a fresh beginning.

Politically the British Empire is a clumsy collection of strange accidents. It is a thing as little to be proud of as the outline of a flint or the shape of a potato. For the mass of English people India and Egypt and all that side of our system mean less than nothing; our trade is something they do not understand, our imperial wealth something they do not share. Britain has been a group of four democracies caught in the net of a vast yet casual imperialism; the common man here is in a state of political perplexity from the cradle to the grave. None the less there is a great people here even as there

is a great people in Russia, a people with a soul and character of its own, a people of unconquerable kindliness and with a peculiar genius, which still struggle towards will and expression. We have been beginning that same great experiment that France and America and Switzerland and China are making, the experiment of democracy. It is the newest form of human association, and we are still but half awake to its needs and necessary conditions. For it is idle to pretend that the little city democracies of ancient times were comparable to the great essays in practical republicanism that mankind is making to-day. This age of the democratic republics that dawn is a new age. It has not yet lasted for a century, not for a paltry hundred years.... All new things are weak things; a rat can kill a man-child with ease; the greater the destiny, the weaker the immediate self-protection may be. And to me it seems that your complete and perfect imperialism, ruled by Germans for Germans, is in its scope and outlook a more antiquated and smaller and less noble thing than these sprawling emergent giant democracies of the West that struggle so confusedly against it....

But that we do struggle confusedly, with pitiful leaders and infinite waste and endless delay; that it is to our indisciplines and to the dishonesties and tricks our incompleteness provokes, that the prolongation of this war is to be ascribed, I readily admit. At the outbreak of this war I had hoped to see militarism felled within a year....

§ 6

From this point onward Mr. Britling's notes became more fragmentary. They had a consecutiveness, but they were discontinuous. His thought had leapt across gaps that his pen had had no time to fill. And he had begun to realise that his letter to the old people in Pomerania was becoming impossible. It had broken away into dissertation.

"Yet there must be dissertations," he said. "Unless such men as we are take these things in hand, always we shall be misgoverned, always the sons will die...."

§ 7

I do not think you Germans realise how steadily you were conquering the world before this war began. Had you given half the energy and intelligence you have spent upon this war to the peaceful conquest of men's minds and spirits, I believe that you would have taken the leadership of the world tranquilly — no man disputing. Your science was five years, your social and economic organisation was a quarter of a century in front of ours.... Never has it so lain in the power of a great people to lead and direct mankind towards the world republic and universal peace. It needed but a certain generosity of the imagination....

But your Junkers, your Imperial court, your foolish vicious Princes; what were such dreams to them?... With an envious satisfaction they hurled all the accomplishment of Germany into the fires of war....

§ 8

Your boy, as no doubt you know, dreamt constantly of such a world peace as this that I foreshadow; he was more generous than his country. He could envisage war and hostility only as misunderstanding. He thought that a world that could explain itself clearly would surely be at peace. He was scheming always therefore for the perfection and propagation of Esperanto or Ido, or some such universal link. My youngster too was full of a kindred and yet larger dream, the dream of human science, which knows neither king nor country nor race....

These boys, these hopes, this war has killed....

That fragment ended so. Mr. Britling ceased to read for a time. "But has it killed them?" he whispered....

"If you had lived, my dear, you and your England would have talked with a younger Germany — better than I can ever do...."

He turned the pages back, and read here and there with an

accumulating discontent.

§ 9

"Dissertations," said Mr. Britling.

Never had it been so plain to Mr. Britling that he was a weak, silly, ill-informed and hasty-minded writer, and never had he felt so invincible a conviction that the Spirit of God was in him, and that it fell to him to take some part in the establishment of a new order of living upon the earth; it might be the most trivial part by the scale of the task, but for him it was to be now his supreme concern. And it was an almost intolerable grief to him that his services should be, for all his desire, so poor in quality, so weak in conception. Always he seemed to be on the verge of some illuminating and beautiful statement of his cause; always he was finding his writing inadequate, a thin treachery to the impulse of his heart, always he was finding his effort weak and ineffective. In this instance, at the outset he seemed to see with a golden clearness the message of brotherhood, or forgiveness, of a common call. To whom could such a message be better addressed than to those sorrowing parents; from whom could it come with a better effect than from himself? And now he read what he had made of this message. It seemed to his jaded mind a pitifully jaded effort. It had no light, it had no depth. It was like the disquisition of a debating society.

He was distressed by a fancy of an old German couple, spectacled and peering, puzzled by his letter. Perhaps they would be obscurely hurt by his perplexing generalisations. Why, they would ask, should this Englishman preach to them?

He sat back in his chair wearily, with his chin sunk upon his chest. For a time he did not think, and then, he read again the sentence in front of his eyes.

"These boys, these hopes, this war has killed."

The words hung for a time in his mind.

"No!" said Mr. Britling stoutly. "They live!"

And suddenly it was borne in upon his mind that he was not alone. There were thousands and tens of thousands of men and

women like himself, desiring with all their hearts to say, as he desired to say, the reconciling word. It was not only his hand that thrust against the obstacles.... Frenchmen and Russians sat in the same stillness, facing the same perplexities; there were Germans seeking a way through to him. Even as he sat and wrote. And for the first time clearly he felt a Presence of which he had thought very many times in the last few weeks, a Presence so close to him that it was behind his eyes and in his brain and hands. It was no trick of his vision; it was a feeling of immediate reality. And it was Hugh, Hugh that he had thought was dead, it was young Heinrich living also, it was himself, it was those others that sought, it was all these and it was more, it was the Master, the Captain of Mankind, it was God, there present with him, and he knew that it was God. It was as if he had been groping all this time in the darkness, thinking himself alone amidst rocks and pitfalls and pitiless things, and suddenly a hand, a firm strong hand, had touched his own. And a voice within him bade him be of good courage. There was no magic trickery in that moment; he was still weak and weary, a discouraged rhetorician, a good intention ill-equipped; but he was no longer lonely and wretched, no longer in the same world with despair. God was beside him and within him and about him.... It was the crucial moment of Mr. Britling's life. It was a thing as light as the passing of a cloud on an April morning; it was a thing as great as the first day of creation. For some moments he still sat back with his chin upon his chest and his hands dropping from the arms of his chair. Then he sat up and drew a deep breath....

This had come almost as a matter of course.

For weeks his mind had been playing about this idea. He had talked to Letty of this Finite God, who is the king of man's adventure in space and time. But hitherto God had been for him a thing of the intelligence, a theory, a report, something told about but not realised.... Mr. Britling's thinking about God hitherto had been like some one who has found an empty house, very beautiful and pleasant, full of the promise of a fine personality. And then as the discoverer makes his lonely, curious explorations, he hears downstairs, dear and friendly, the voice of the Master coming in....

There was no need to despair because he himself was one of the

feeble folk. God was with him indeed, and he was with God. The King was coming to his own. Amidst the darknesses and confusions, the nightmare cruelties and the hideous stupidities of the great war, God, the Captain of the World Republic, fought his way to empire. So long as one did one's best and utmost in a cause so mighty, did it matter though the thing one did was little and poor?

"I have thought too much of myself," said Mr. Britling, "and of what I would do by myself. I have forgotten *that which was with me....*"

§ 10

He turned over the rest of the night's writing presently, and read it now as though it was the work of another man.

These later notes were fragmentary, and written in a sprawling hand.

"Let us make ourselves watchers and guardians of the order of the world....

"If only for love of our dead....

"Let us pledge ourselves to service. Let us set ourselves with all our minds and all our hearts to the perfecting and working out of the methods of democracy and the ending for ever of the kings and emperors and priestcrafts and the bands of adventurers, the traders and owners and forestallers who have betrayed mankind into this morass of hate and blood — in which our sons are lost — in which we flounder still...."

How feeble was this squeak of exhortation! It broke into a scolding note.

"Who have betrayed," read Mr. Britling, and judged the phrase.

"Who have fallen with us," he amended....

"One gets so angry and bitter — because one feels alone, I suppose. Because one feels that for them one's reason is no reason. One is enraged by the sense of their silent and regardless contradiction, and one forgets the Power of which one is a part...."

The sheet that bore the sentence he criticised was otherwise blank except that written across it obliquely in a very careful hand were the

words “Hugh,” and “Hugh Philip Britling.”...

On the next sheet he had written: “Let us set up the peace of the World Republic amidst these ruins. Let it be our religion, our calling.”

There he had stopped.

The last sheet of Mr. Britling’s manuscript may be more conveniently given in fac-simile than described.

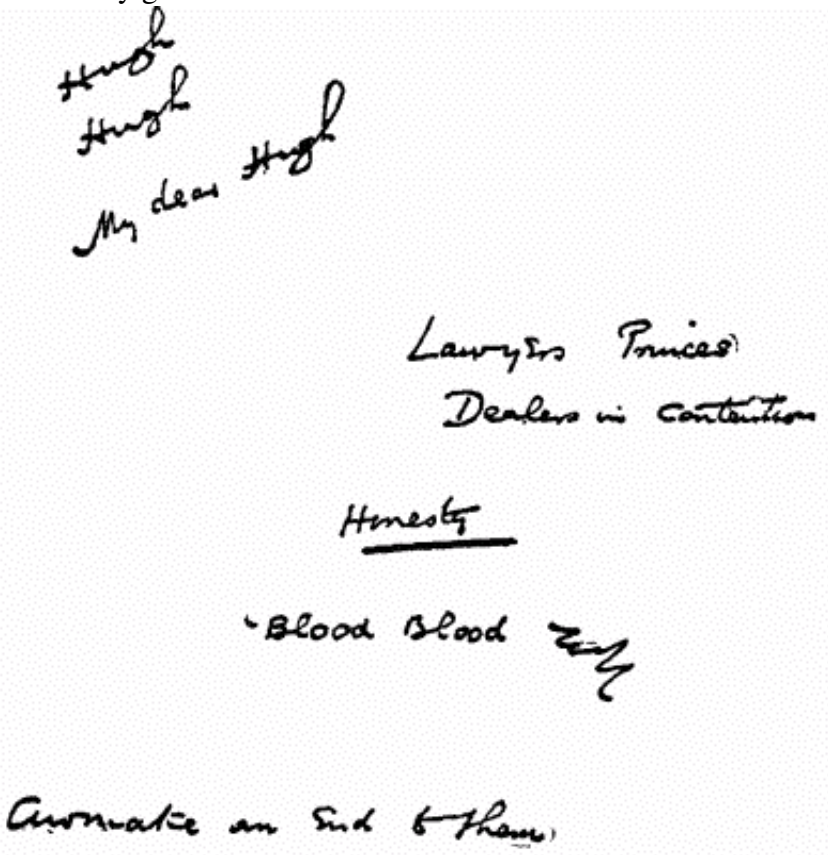

§ 11

He sighed.

He looked at the scattered papers, and thought of the letter they were to have made.

His fatigue spoke first.

“Perhaps after all I’d better just send the fiddle....”

He rested his cheeks between his hands, and remained so for a long time. His eyes stared unseeingly. His thoughts wandered and spread and faded. At length he recalled his mind to that last idea. “Just send the fiddle — without a word.”

“No. I must write to them plainly.

“About God as I have found Him.

“As He has found me....”

He forgot the Pomeranians for a time. He murmured to himself. He turned over the conviction that had suddenly become clear and absolute in his mind.

“Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God and been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honour. But all these things fall into place and life falls into place only with God. Only with God. God, who fights through men against Blind Force and Night and Non-Existence; who is the end, who is the meaning. He is the only King.... Of course I must write about Him. I must tell all my world of Him. And before the coming of the true King, the inevitable King, the King who is present whenever just men foregather, this blood-stained rubbish of the ancient world, these puny kings and tawdry emperors, these wily politicians and artful lawyers, these men who claim and grab and trick and compel, these war makers and oppressors, will presently shrivel and pass — like paper thrust into a flame....”

Then after a time he said:

“Our sons who have shown us God....”

§ 12

He rubbed his open hands over his eyes and forehead.

The night of effort had tired his brain, and he was no longer thinking actively. He had a little interval of blankness, sitting at his desk with his hands pressed over his eyes....

He got up presently, and stood quite motionless at the window, looking out.

His lamp was still burning, but for some time he had not been

writing by the light of his lamp. Insensibly the day had come and abolished his need for that individual circle of yellow light. Colour had returned to the world, clean pearly colour, clear and definite like the glance of a child or the voice of a girl, and a golden wisp of cloud hung in the sky over the tower of the church. There was a mist upon the pond, a soft grey mist not a yard high. A covey of partridges ran and halted and ran again in the dewy grass outside his garden railings. The partridges were very numerous this year because there had been so little shooting. Beyond in the meadow a hare sat up as still as a stone. A horse neighed.... Wave after wave of warmth and light came sweeping before the sunrise across the world of Matching's Easy. It was as if there was nothing but morning and sunrise in the world.

From away towards the church came the sound of some early worker whetting a scythe.

THE END

THE SOUL OF A BISHOP

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CHAPTER THE FIRST - THE DREAM

(1)

IT was a scene of bitter disputation. A hawk-nosed young man with a pointing finger was prominent. His face worked violently, his lips moved very rapidly, but what he said was inaudible.

Behind him the little rufous man with the big eyes twitched at his robe and offered suggestions.

And behind these two clustered a great multitude of heated, excited, swarthy faces....

The emperor sat on his golden throne in the midst of the gathering, commanding silence by gestures, speaking inaudibly to them in a tongue the majority did not use, and then prevailing. They ceased their interruptions, and the old man, Arius, took up the debate. For a time all those impassioned faces were intent upon him; they listened as though they sought occasion, and suddenly as if by a preconcerted arrangement they were all thrusting their fingers into their ears and knitting their brows in assumed horror; some were crying aloud and making as if to fly. Some indeed tucked up their garments and fled. They spread out into a pattern. They were like the little monks who run from St. Jerome's lion in the picture by Carpaccio. Then one zealot rushed forward and smote the old man heavily upon the mouth....

The hall seemed to grow vaster and vaster, the disputing, infuriated figures multiplied to an innumerable assembly, they drove about like snowflakes in a gale, they whirled in argumentative couples, they spun in eddies of contradiction, they made extraordinary patterns, and then amidst the cloudy darkness of the unfathomable dome above them there appeared and increased a radiant triangle in which shone an eye. The eye and the triangle filled the heavens, sent out flickering rays, glowed to a blinding incandescence, seemed to be speaking words of thunder that were nevertheless inaudible. It was as if that thunder filled the heavens, it was as if it were nothing but the beating artery in the sleeper's ear. The attention strained to hear and comprehend, and on the very verge

of comprehension snapped like a fiddle-string.

"Nicoea!"

The word remained like a little ash after a flare.

The sleeper had awakened and lay very still, oppressed by a sense of intellectual effort that had survived the dream in which it had arisen. Was it so that things had happened? The slumber-shadowed mind, moving obscurely, could not determine whether it was so or not. Had they indeed behaved in this manner when the great mystery was established? Who said they stopped their ears with their fingers and fled, shouting with horror? Shouting? Was it Eusebius or Athanasius? Or Sozomen.... Some letter or apology by Athanasius?... And surely it was impossible that the Trinity could have appeared visibly as a triangle and an eye. Above such an assembly.

That was mere dreaming, of course. Was it dreaming after Raphael? After Raphael? The drowsy mind wandered into a side issue. Was the picture that had suggested this dream the one in the Vatican where all the Fathers of the Church are shown disputing together? But there surely God and the Son themselves were painted with a symbol — some symbol — also? But was that disputation about the Trinity at all? Wasn't it rather about a chalice and a dove? Of course it was a chalice and a dove! Then where did one see the triangle and the eye? And men disputing? Some such picture there was....

What a lot of disputing there had been! What endless disputing! Which had gone on. Until last night. When this very disagreeable young man with the hawk nose and the pointing finger had tackled one when one was sorely fagged, and disputed; disputed. Rebuked and disputed. "Answer me this," he had said.... And still one's poor brains disputed and would not rest.... About the Trinity....

The brain upon the pillow was now wearily awake. It was at once hopelessly awake and active and hopelessly unprogressive. It was like some floating stick that had got caught in an eddy in a river, going round and round and round. And round. Eternally — eternally — eternally begotten.

"But what possible meaning do you attach then to such a phrase as eternally begotten?"

The brain upon the pillow stared hopelessly at this question,

without an answer, without an escape. The three repetitions spun round and round, became a swiftly revolving triangle, like some electric sign that had got beyond control, in the midst of which stared an unwinking and resentful eye.

(2)

Every one knows that expedient of the sleepless, the counting of sheep.

You lie quite still, you breathe regularly, you imagine sheep jumping over a gate, one after another, you count them quietly and slowly until you count yourself off through a fading string of phantom numbers to number Nod....

But sheep, alas! suggest an episcopal crook.

And presently a black sheep had got into the succession and was struggling violently with the crook about its leg, a hawk-nosed black sheep full of reproof, with disordered hair and a pointing finger. A young man with a most disagreeable voice.

At which the other sheep took heart and, deserting the numbered succession, came and sat about the fire in a big drawing-room and argued also. In particular there was Lady Sunderbund, a pretty fragile tall woman in the corner, richly jewelled, who sat with her pretty eyes watching and her lips compressed. What had she thought of it? She had said very little.

It is an unusual thing for a mixed gathering of this sort to argue about the Trinity. Simply because a tired bishop had fallen into their party. It was not fair to him to pretend that the atmosphere was a liberal and inquiring one, when the young man who had sat still and dormant by the table was in reality a keen and bitter Irish Roman Catholic. Then the question, a question-begging question, was put quite suddenly, without preparation or prelude, by surprise. “Why, Bishop, was the Spermaticos Logos identified with the Second and not the Third Person of the Trinity?”

It was indiscreet, it was silly, to turn upon the speaker and affect an air of disengagement and modernity and to say: “Ah, that indeed is the unfortunate aspect of the whole affair.”

Whereupon the fierce young man had exploded with: “To that, is

it, that you Anglicans have come?”

The whole gathering had given itself up to the disputation, Lady Sunderbund, an actress, a dancer — though she, it is true, did not say very much — a novelist, a mechanical expert of some sort, a railway peer, geniuses, hairy and Celtic, people of no clearly definable position, but all quite unequal to the task of maintaining that air of reverent vagueness, that tenderness of touch, which is by all Anglican standards imperative in so deep, so mysterious, and, nowadays, in mixed society at least, so infrequent a discussion.

It was like animals breaking down a fence about some sacred spot. Within a couple of minutes the affair had become highly improper. They had raised their voices, they had spoken with the utmost familiarity of almost unspeakable things. There had been even attempts at epigram. Athanasian epigrams. Bent the novelist had doubted if originally there had been a Third Person in the Trinity at all. He suggested a reaction from a too-Manichaean dualism at some date after the time of St. John’s Gospel. He maintained obstinately that that Gospel was dualistic.

The unpleasant quality of the talk was far more manifest in the retrospect than it had been at the time. It had seemed then bold and strange, but not impossible; now in the cold darkness it seemed sacrilegious. And the bishop’s share, which was indeed only the weak yielding of a tired man to an atmosphere he had misjudged, became a disgraceful display of levity and bad faith. They had baited him. Some one had said that nowadays every one was an Arian, knowingly or unknowingly. They had not concealed their conviction that the bishop did not really believe in the Creeds he uttered.

And that unfortunate first admission stuck terribly in his throat.

Oh! Why had he made it?

(3)

Sleep had gone.

The awakened sleeper groaned, sat up in the darkness, and felt gropingly in this unaccustomed bed and bedroom first for the edge of the bed and then for the electric light that was possibly on the little bedside table.

The searching hand touched something. A water-bottle. The hand resumed its exploration. Here was something metallic and smooth, a stem. Either above or below there must be a switch....

The switch was found, grasped, and turned.

The darkness fled.

In a mirror the sleeper saw the reflection of his face and a corner of the bed in which he lay. The lamp had a tilted shade that threw a slanting bar of shadow across the field of reflection, lighting a right-angled triangle very brightly and leaving the rest obscure. The bed was a very great one, a bed for the Anakim. It had a canopy with yellow silk curtains, surmounted by a gilded crown of carved wood. Between the curtains was a man's face, clean-shaven, pale, with disordered brown hair and weary, pale-blue eyes. He was clad in purple pyjamas, and the hand that now ran its fingers through the brown hair was long and lean and shapely.

Beside the bed was a convenient little table bearing the light, a water-bottle and glass, a bunch of keys, a congested pocket-book, a gold-banded fountain pen, and a gold watch that indicated a quarter past three. On the lower edge of the picture in the mirror appeared the back of a gilt chair, over which a garment of peculiar construction had been carelessly thrown. It was in the form of that sleeveless cassock of purple, opening at the side, whose lower flap is called a bishop's apron; the corner of the frogged coat showed behind the chair-back, and the sash lay crumpled on the floor. Black doeskin breeches, still warmly lined with their pants, lay where they had been thrust off at the corner of the bed, partly covering black hose and silver-buckled shoes.

For a moment the tired gaze of the man in the bed rested upon these evidences of his episcopal dignity. Then he turned from them to the watch at the bedside.

He groaned helplessly.

(4)

These country doctors were no good. There wasn't a physician in the diocese. He must go to London.

He looked into the weary eyes of his reflection and said, as one

makes a reassuring promise, “London.”

He was being worried. He was being intolerably worried, and he was ill and unable to sustain his positions. This doubt, this sudden discovery of controversial unsoundness, was only one aspect of his general neurasthenia. It had been creeping into his mind since the “Light Unden the Altar” controversy. Now suddenly it had leapt upon him from his own unwary lips.

The immediate trouble arose from his loyalty. He had followed the King’s example; he had become a total abstainer and, in addition, on his own account he had ceased to smoke. And his digestion, which Princhester had first made sensitive, was deranged. He was suffering chemically, suffering one of those nameless sequences of maladjustments that still defy our ordinary medical science. It was afflicting him with a general malaise, it was affecting his energy, his temper, all the balance and comfort of his nerves. All day he was weary; all night he was wakeful. He was estranged from his body. He was distressed by a sense of detachment from the things about him, by a curious intimation of unreality in everything he experienced. And with that went this levity of conscience, a heaviness of soul and a levity of conscience, that could make him talk as though the Creeds did not matter — as though nothing mattered....

If only he could smoke!

He was persuaded that a couple of Egyptian cigarettes, or three at the outside, a day, would do wonders in restoring his nervous calm. That, and just a weak whisky and soda at lunch and dinner. Suppose now — !

His conscience, his sense of honour, deserted him. Latterly he had had several of these conscience-blanks; it was only when they were over that he realized that they had occurred.

One might smoke up the chimney, he reflected. But he had no cigarettes! Perhaps if he were to slip downstairs....

Why had he given up smoking?

He groaned aloud. He and his reflection eyed one another in mutual despair.

There came before his memory the image of a boy’s face, a swarthy little boy, grinning, grinning with a horrible knowingness and pointing his finger — an accusing finger. It had been the most

exasperating, humiliating, and shameful incident in the bishop's career. It was the afternoon for his fortnightly address to the Shop-girls' Church Association, and he had been seized with a panic fear, entirely irrational and unjustifiable, that he would not be able to deliver the address. The fear had arisen after lunch, had gripped his mind, and then as now had come the thought, "If only I could smoke!" And he had smoked. It seemed better to break a vow than fail the Association. He had fallen to the temptation with a completeness that now filled him with shame and horror. He had stalked Dunk, his valet-butler, out of the dining-room, had affected to need a book from the book-case beyond the sideboard, had gone insincerely to the sideboard humming "From Greenland's icy mountains," and then, glancing over his shoulder, had stolen one of his own cigarettes, one of the fatter sort. With this and his bedroom matches he had gone off to the bottom of the garden among the laurels, looked everywhere except above the wall to be sure that he was alone, and at last lit up, only as he raised his eyes in gratitude for the first blissful inhalation to discover that dreadful little boy peeping at him from the crotch in the yew-tree in the next garden. As though God had sent him to be a witness!

Their eyes had met. The bishop recalled with an agonized distinctness every moment, every error, of that shameful encounter. He had been too surprised to conceal the state of affairs from the pitiless scrutiny of those youthful eyes. He had instantly made as if to put the cigarette behind his back, and then as frankly dropped it....

His soul would not be more naked at the resurrection. The little boy had stared, realized the state of affairs slowly but surely, pointed his finger....

Never had two human beings understood each other more completely.

A dirty little boy! Capable no doubt of a thousand kindred scoundrelisms.

It seemed ages before the conscience-stricken bishop could tear himself from the spot and walk back, with such a pretence of dignity as he could muster, to the house.

And instead of the discourse he had prepared for the Shop-girls' Church Association, he had preached on temptation and falling, and

how he knew they had all fallen, and how he understood and could sympathize with the bitterness of a secret shame, a moving but unsuitable discourse that had already been subjected to misconstruction and severe reproof in the local press of Princhester.

But the haunting thing in the bishop's memory was the face and gesture of the little boy. That grubby little finger stabbed him to the heart.

"Oh, God!" he groaned. "The meanness of it! How did I bring myself — ?"

He turned out the light convulsively, and rolled over in the bed, making a sort of cocoon of himself. He bored his head into the pillow and groaned, and then struggled impatiently to throw the bed-clothes off himself. Then he sat up and talked aloud.

"I must go to Brighton-Pomfrey," he said. "And get a medical dispensation. If I do not smoke—"

He paused for a long time.

Then his voice sounded again in the darkness, speaking quietly, speaking with a note almost of satisfaction.

"I shall go mad. I must smoke or I shall go mad."

For a long time he sat up in the great bed with his arms about his knees.

(5)

Fearful things came to him; things at once dreadfully blasphemous and entirely weak-minded.

The triangle and the eye became almost visible upon the black background of night. They were very angry. They were spinning round and round faster and faster. Because he was a bishop and because really he did not believe fully and completely in the Trinity. At one and the same time he did not believe in the Trinity and was terrified by the anger of the Trinity at his unbelief.... He was afraid. He was aghast.... And oh! he was weary....

He rubbed his eyes.

"If I could have a cup of tea!" he said.

Then he perceived with surprise that he had not thought of praying. What should he say? To what could he pray?

He tried not to think of that whizzing Triangle, that seemed now to be nailed like a Catherine wheel to the very centre of his forehead, and yet at the same time to be at the apex of the universe. Against that — for protection against that — he was praying. It was by a great effort that at last he pronounced the words:

"Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord ...."

Presently he had turned up his light, and was prowling about the room. The clear inky dinginess that comes before the raw dawn of a spring morning, found his white face at the window, looking out upon the great terrace and the park.

CHAPTER THE SECOND - THE WEAR AND TEAR OF EPISCOPACY

(1)

IT was only in the last few years that the bishop had experienced these nervous and mental crises. He was a belated doubter. Whatever questionings had marked his intellectual adolescence had either been very slight or had been too adequately answered to leave any serious scars upon his convictions.

And even now he felt that he was afflicted physically rather than mentally, that some protective padding of nerve-sheath or brain-case had worn thin and weak, and left him a prey to strange disturbances, rather than that any new process of thought was eating into his mind. These doubts in his mind were still not really doubts; they were rather alien and, for the first time, uncontrolled movements of his intelligence. He had had a sheltered upbringing; he was the well-connected son of a comfortable rectory, the only son and sole survivor of a family of three; he had been carefully instructed and he had been a willing learner; it had been easy and natural to take many things for granted. It had been very easy and pleasant for him to take the world as he found it and God as he found Him. Indeed for all his years up to manhood he had been able to take life exactly as in his infancy he took his carefully warmed and prepared bottle — unquestioningly and beneficially.

And indeed that has been the way with most bishops since bishops began.

It is a busy continuous process that turns boys into bishops, and it will stand few jars or discords. The student of ecclesiastical biography will find that an early vocation has in every age been almost universal among them; few are there among these lives that do not display the incipient bishop from the tenderest years. Bishop How of Wakefield composed hymns before he was eleven, and Archbishop Benson when scarcely older possessed a little oratory in which he conducted services and — a pleasant touch of the more secular boy — which he protected from a too inquisitive sister by

means of a booby trap. It is rare that those marked for episcopal dignities go so far into the outer world as Archbishop Lang of York, who began as a barrister. This early predestination has always been the common episcopal experience. Archbishop Benson's early attempts at religious services remind one both of St. Thomas a Becket, the "boy bishop," and those early ceremonies of St. Athanasius which were observed and inquired upon by the good bishop Alexander. (For though still a tender infant, St. Athanasius with perfect correctness and validity was baptizing a number of his innocent playmates, and the bishop who "had paused to contemplate the sports of the child remained to confirm the zeal of the missionary.") And as with the bishop of the past, so with the bishop of the future; the Rev. H. J. Campbell, in his story of his soul's pilgrimage, has given us a pleasant picture of himself as a child stealing out into the woods to build himself a little altar.

Such minds as these, settled as it were from the outset, are either incapable of real scepticism or become sceptical only after catastrophic changes. They understand the sceptical mind with difficulty, and their beliefs are regarded by the sceptical mind with incredulity. They have determined their forms of belief before their years of discretion, and once those forms are determined they are not very easily changed. Within the shell it has adopted the intelligence may be active and lively enough, may indeed be extraordinarily active and lively, but only within the shell.

There is an entire difference in the mental quality of those who are converts to a faith and those who are brought up in it. The former know it from outside as well as from within. They know not only that it is, but also that it is not. The latter have a confidence in their creed that is one with their apprehension of sky or air or gravitation. It is a primary mental structure, and they not only do not doubt but they doubt the good faith of those who do. They think that the Atheist and Agnostic really believe but are impelled by a mysterious obstinacy to deny. So it had been with the Bishop of Princhester; not of cunning or design but in simple good faith he had accepted all the inherited assurances of his native rectory, and held by Church, Crown, Empire, decorum, respectability, solvency — and compulsory Greek at the Little Go — as his father had done before him. If in his

undergraduate days he had said a thing or two in the modern vein, affected the socialism of William Morris and learnt some Swinburne by heart, it was out of a conscious wildness. He did not wish to be a prig. He had taken a far more genuine interest in the artistry of ritual.

Through all the time of his incumbency of the church of the Holy Innocents, St. John's Wood, and of his career as the bishop suffragan of Pinner, he had never faltered from his profound confidence in those standards of his home. He had been kind, popular, and endlessly active. His undergraduate socialism had expanded simply and sincerely into a theory of administrative philanthropy. He knew the Webbs. He was as successful with working-class audiences as with fashionable congregations. His home life with Lady Ella (she was the daughter of the fifth Earl of Birkenholme) and his five little girls was simple, beautiful, and happy as few homes are in these days of confusion. Until he became Bishop of Princhester — he followed Hood, the first bishop, as the reign of his Majesty King Edward the Peacemaker drew to its close — no anticipation of his coming distress fell across his path.

(2)

He came to Princhester an innocent and trustful man. The home life at the old rectory of Otteringham was still his standard of truth and reality. London had not disillusioned him. It was a strange waste of people, it made him feel like a missionary in infidel parts, but it was a kindly waste. It was neither antagonistic nor malicious. He had always felt there that if he searched his Londoner to the bottom, he would find the completest recognition of the old rectory and all its data and implications.

But Princhester was different.

Princhester made one think that recently there had been a second and much more serious Fall.

Princhester was industrial and unashamed. It was a countryside savagely invaded by forges and mine shafts and gaunt black things. It was scarred and impeded and discoloured. Even before that invasion, when the heather was not in flower it must have been a black country. Its people were dour uncandid individuals, who slanted their

heads and knitted their brows to look at you. Occasionally one saw woods brown and blistered by the gases from chemical works. Here and there remained old rectories, closely reminiscent of the dear old home at Otteringham, jostled and elbowed and overshadowed by horrible iron cylinders belching smoke and flame. The fine old abbey church of Princhester, which was the cathedral of the new diocese, looked when first he saw it like a lady Abbess who had taken to drink and slept in a coal truck. She minced apologetically upon the market-place; the parvenu Town Hall patronized and protected her as if she were a poor relation....

The old aristocracy of the countryside was unpicturesquely decayed. The branch of the Walshinghams, Lady Ella's cousins, who lived near Pringle, was poor, proud and ignoble. And extremely unpopular. The rich people of the country were self-made and inclined to nonconformity, the working-people were not strictly speaking a "poor," they were highly paid, badly housed, and deeply resentful. They went in vast droves to football matches, and did not care a rap if it rained. The prevailing wind was sarcastic. To come here from London was to come from atmospheric blue-greys to ashen-greys, from smoke and soft smut to grime and black grimness.

The bishop had been charmed by the historical associations of Princhester when first the see was put before his mind. His realization of his diocese was a profound shock.

Only one hint had he had of what was coming. He had met during his season of congratulations Lord Gatling dining unusually at the Athenaeum. Lord Gatling and he did not talk frequently, but on this occasion the great racing peer came over to him. "You will feel like a cherub in a stokehole," Lord Gatling had said....

"They used to heave lumps of slag at old Hood's gaiters," said Lord Gatling.

"In London a bishop's a lord and a lark and nobody minds him," said Lord Gatling, "but Princhester is different. It isn't used to bishops.... Well, — I hope you'll get to like 'em."

(3)

Trouble began with a fearful row about the position of the bishop's

palace. Hood had always evaded this question, and a number of strong-willed self-made men of wealth and influence, full of local patriotism and that competitive spirit which has made England what it is, already intensely irritated by Hood's prevarications, were resolved to pin his successor to an immediate decision. Of this the new bishop was unaware. Mindful of a bishop's constant need to travel, he was disposed to seek a home within easy reach of Pringle Junction, from which nearly every point in the diocese could be simply and easily reached. This fell in with Lady Ella's liking for the rare rural quiet of the Kibe valley and the neighbourhood of her cousins the Walshinghams. Unhappily it did not fall in with the inflexible resolution of each and every one of the six leading towns of the see to put up, own, obtrude, boast, and swagger about the biggest and showiest thing in episcopal palaces in all industrial England, and the new bishop had already taken a short lease and gone some way towards the acquisition of Ganford House, two miles from Pringle, before he realized the strength and fury of these local ambitions.

At first the magnates and influences seemed to be fighting only among themselves, and he was so ill-advised as to broach the Ganford House project as a compromise that would glorify no one unfairly, and leave the erection of an episcopal palace for some future date when he perhaps would have the good fortune to have passed to "where beyond these voices there is peace," forgetting altogether among other oversights the importance of architects and builders in local affairs. His proposal seemed for a time to concentrate the rich passions of the whole countryside upon himself and his wife.

Because they did not leave Lady Ella alone. The Walshinghams were already unpopular in their county on account of a poverty and shyness that made them seem "stuck up" to successful captains of industry only too ready with the hand of friendship, the iron grip indeed of friendship, consciously hospitable and eager for admission and endorsements. And Princhester in particular was under the sway of that enterprising weekly, The White Blackbird, which was illustrated by, which indeed monopolized the gifts of, that brilliant young caricaturist "The Snicker."

It had seemed natural for Lady Ella to acquiesce in the proposals of the leading Princhester photographer. She had always helped where she could in her husband's public work, and she had been popular upon her own merits in Wealdstone. The portrait was abominable enough in itself; it dwelt on her chin, doubled her age, and denied her gentleness, but it was a mere starting-point for the subtle extravagance of The Snicker's poisonous gift.... The thing came upon the bishop suddenly from the book-stall at Pringle Junction.

He kept it carefully from Lady Ella.... It was only later that he found that a copy of The White Blackbird had been sent to her, and that she was keeping the horror from him. It was in her vein that she should reproach herself for being a vulnerable side to him.

Even when the bishop capitulated in favour of Princhester, that decision only opened a fresh trouble for him. Princhester wanted the palace to be a palace; it wanted to combine all the best points of Lambeth and Fulham with the marble splendours of a good modern bank. The bishop's architectural tastes, on the other hand, were rationalistic. He was all for building a useful palace in undertones, with a green slate roof and long horizontal lines. What he wanted more than anything else was a quite remote wing with a lot of bright little bedrooms and a sitting-room and so on, complete in itself, examination hall and everything, with a long intricate connecting passage and several doors, to prevent the ordination candidates straying all over the place and getting into the talk and the tea. But the diocese wanted a proud archway — and turrets, and did not care a rap if the ordination candidates slept about on the carpets in the bishop's bedroom. Ordination candidates were quite outside the sphere of its imagination.

And he disappointed Princhester with his equipage. Princhester had a feeling that it deserved more for coming over to the church from nonconformity as it was doing. It wanted a bishop in a mitre and a gilt coach. It wanted a pastoral crook. It wanted something to go with its mace and its mayor. And (obsessed by The Snicker) it wanted less of Lady Ella. The cruelty and unreason of these attacks upon his wife distressed the bishop beyond measure, and baffled him hopelessly. He could not see any means of checking them nor of

defending or justifying her against them.

The palace was awaiting its tenant, but the controversies and bitternesses were still swinging and swaying and developing when King George was being crowned. Close upon that event came a wave of social discontent, the great railway strike, a curious sense of social and political instability, and the first beginnings of the bishop's ill health.

(4)

There came a day of exceptional fatigue and significance.

The industrial trouble was a very real distress to the bishop. He had a firm belief that it is a function of the church to act as mediator between employer and employed. It was a common saying of his that the aim of socialism — the right sort of socialism — was to Christianize employment. Regardless of suspicion on either hand, regardless of very distinct hints that he should "mind his own business," he exerted himself in a search for methods of reconciliation. He sought out every one who seemed likely to be influential on either side, and did his utmost to discover the conditions of a settlement. As far as possible and with the help of a not very efficient chaplain he tried to combine such interviews with his more normal visiting.

At times, and this was particularly the case on this day, he seemed to be discovering nothing but the incurable perversity and militancy of human nature. It was a day under an east wind, when a steely-blue sky full of colourless light filled a stiff-necked world with whitish high lights and inky shadows. These bright harsh days of barometric high pressure in England rouse and thwart every expectation of the happiness of spring. And as the bishop drove through the afternoon in a hired fly along a rutted road of slag between fields that were bitterly wired against the Sunday trespasser, he fell into a despondent meditation upon the political and social outlook.

His thoughts were of a sort not uncommon in those days. The world was strangely restless. Since the passing of Victoria the Great there had been an accumulating uneasiness in the national life. It was as if some compact and dignified paper-weight had been lifted from

people's ideas, and as if at once they had begun to blow about anyhow. Not that Queen Victoria had really been a paper-weight or any weight at all, but it happened that she died as an epoch closed, an epoch of tremendous stabilities. Her son, already elderly, had followed as the selvedge follows the piece, he had passed and left the new age stripped bare. In nearly every department of economic and social life now there was upheaval, and it was an upheaval very different in character from the radicalism and liberalism of the Victorian days. There were not only doubt and denial, but now there were also impatience and unreason. People argued less and acted quicker. There was a pride in rebellion for its own sake, an indiscipline and disposition to sporadic violence that made it extremely hard to negotiate any reconciliations or compromises. Behind every extremist it seemed stood a further extremist prepared to go one better....

The bishop had spent most of the morning with one of the big employers, a tall dark man, lean and nervous, and obviously tired and worried by the struggle. He did not conceal his opinion that the church was meddling with matters quite outside its sphere. Never had it been conveyed to the bishop before how remote a rich and established Englishman could consider the church from reality.

"You've got no hold on them," he said. "It isn't your sphere."

And again: "They'll listen to you — if you speak well. But they don't believe you know anything about it, and they don't trust your good intentions. They won't mind a bit what you say unless you drop something they can use against us."

The bishop tried a few phrases. He thought there might be something in co-operation, in profit-sharing, in some more permanent relationship between the business and the employee.

"There isn't," said the employer compactly. "It's just the malice of being inferior against the man in control. It's just the spirit of insubordination and boredom with duty. This trouble's as old as the Devil."

"But that is exactly the business of the church," said the bishop brightly, "to reconcile men to their duty."

"By chanting the Athanasian creed at 'em, I suppose," said the big employer, betraying the sneer he had been hiding hitherto.

“This thing is a fight,” said the big employer, carrying on before the bishop could reply. “Religion had better get out of the streets until this thing is over. The men won’t listen to reason. They don’t mean to. They’re bit by Syndicalism. They’re setting out, I tell you, to be unreasonable and impossible. It isn’t an argument; it’s a fight. They don’t want to make friends with the employer. They want to make an end to the employer. Whatever we give them they’ll take and press us for more. Directly we make terms with the leaders the men go behind it.... It’s a raid on the whole system. They don’t mean to work the system — anyhow. I’m the capitalist, and the capitalist has to go. I’m to be bundled out of my works, and some — some “ — he seemed to be rejecting unsuitable words— “confounded politician put in. Much good it would do them. But before that happens I’m going to fight. You would.”

The bishop walked to the window and stood staring at the brilliant spring bulbs in the big employer’s garden, and at a long vista of newly-mown lawn under great shapely trees just budding into green.

“I can’t admit,” he said, “that these troubles lie outside the sphere of the church.”

The employer came and stood beside him. He felt he was being a little hard on the bishop, but he could not see any way of making things easier.

“One doesn’t want Sacred Things,” he tried, “in a scrap like this.

“We’ve got to mend things or end things,” continued the big employer. “Nothing goes on for ever. Things can’t last as they are going on now....”

Then he went on abruptly to something that for a time he had been keeping back.

“Of course just at present the church may do a confounded lot of harm. Some of you clerical gentlemen are rather too fond of talking socialism and even preaching socialism. Don’t think I want to be overcritical. I admit there’s no end of things to be said for a proper sort of socialism, Ruskin, and all that. We’re all Socialists nowadays. Ideals — excellent. But — it gets misunderstood. It gives the men a sense of moral support. It makes them fancy that they are It. Encourages them to forget duties and set up preposterous claims. Class war and all that sort of thing. You gentlemen of the clergy

don't quite realize that socialism may begin with Ruskin and end with Karl Marx. And that from the Class War to the Commune is just one step."

(5)

From this conversation the bishop had made his way to the vicarage of Mogham Banks. The vicar of Mogham Banks was a sacerdotal socialist of the most advanced type, with the reputation of being closely in touch with the labour extremists. He was a man addicted to banners, prohibited ornaments, special services at unusual hours, and processions in the streets. His taste in chasubles was loud, he gardened in a cassock and, it was said, he slept in his biretta; he certainly slept in a hair shirt, and he littered his church with flowers, candles, side altars, confessional boxes, requests for prayers for the departed, and the like. There had already been two Kensitite demonstrations at his services, and altogether he was a source of considerable anxiety to the bishop. The bishop did his best not to know too exactly what was going on at Mogham Banks. Sooner or later he felt he would be forced to do something — and the longer he could put that off the better. But the Rev. Morrice Deans had promised to get together three or four prominent labour leaders for tea and a frank talk, and the opportunity was one not to be missed. So the bishop, after a hasty and not too digestible lunch in the refreshment room at Pringle, was now in a fly that smelt of straw and suggested infectious hospital patients, on his way through the industry-scarred countryside to this second conversation.

The countryside had never seemed so scarred to him as it did that day.

It was probably the bright hard spring sunshine that emphasized the contrast between that dear England of hedges and homes and the south-west wind in which his imagination lived, and the crude presences of a mechanical age. Never before had the cuttings and heapings, the smashing down of trees, the obtrusion of corrugated iron and tar, the belchings of smoke and the haste, seemed so harsh and disregardful of all the bishop's world. Across the fields a line of gaunt iron standards, abominably designed, carried an electric cable

to some unknown end. The curve of the hill made them seem a little out of the straight, as if they hurried and bent forward furtively.

"Where are they going?" asked the bishop, leaning forward to look out of the window of the fly, and then: "Where is it all going?"

And presently the road was under repair, and was being done at a great pace with a huge steam-roller, mechanically smashed granite, and kettles of stinking stuff, asphalt or something of that sort, that looked and smelt like Milton's hell. Beyond, a gaunt hoarding advertised extensively the Princhester Music Hall, a mean beastly place that corrupted boys and girls; and also it clamoured of tyres and potted meats....

The afternoon's conference gave him no reassuring answer to his question, "Where is it all going?"

The afternoon's conference did no more than intensify the new and strange sense of alienation from the world that the morning's talk had evoked.

The three labour extremists that Morrice Deans had assembled obviously liked the bishop and found him picturesque, and were not above a certain snobbish gratification at the purple-trimmed company they were in, but it was clear that they regarded his intervention in the great dispute as if it were a feeble waving from the bank across the waters of a great river.

"There's an incurable misunderstanding between the modern employer and the modern employed," the chief labour spokesman said, speaking in a broad accent that completely hid from him and the bishop and every one the fact that he was by far the best-read man of the party. "Disraeli called them the Two Nations, but that was long ago. Now it's a case of two species. Machinery has made them into different species. The employer lives away from his work-people, marries a wife foreign, out of a county family or suchlike, trains his children from their very birth in a different manner. Why, the growth curve is different for the two species. They haven't even a common speech between them. One looks east and the other looks west. How can you expect them to agree? Of course they won't agree. We've got to fight it out. They say we're their slaves for ever. Have you ever read Lady Bell's 'At the Works'? A well-intentioned woman, but she gives the whole thing away. We say, No! It's our

sort and not your sort. We'll do without you. We'll get a little more education and then we'll do without you. We're pressing for all we can get, and when we've got that we'll take breath and press for more. We're the Morlocks. Coming up. It isn't our fault that we've differentiated."

"But you haven't understood the drift of Christianity," said the bishop. "It's just to assert that men are One community and not two."

"There's not much of that in the Creeds," said a second labour leader who was a rationalist. "There's not much of that in the services of the church."

The vicar spoke before his bishop, and indeed he had plenty of time to speak before his bishop. "Because you will not set yourselves to understand the symbolism of her ritual," he said.

"If the church chooses to speak in riddles," said the rationalist.

"Symbols," said Morrice Deans, "need not be riddles," and for a time the talk eddied about this minor issue and the chief labour spokesman and the bishop looked at one another. The vicar instanced and explained certain apparently insignificant observances, his antagonist was contemptuously polite to these explanations. "That's all very pratty," he said....

The bishop wished that fine points of ceremonial might have been left out of the discussion.

Something much bigger than that was laying hold of his intelligence, the realization of a world extravagantly out of hand. The sky, the wind, the telegraph poles, had been jabbing in the harsh lesson of these men's voices, that the church, as people say, "wasn't in it." And that at the same time the church held the one remedy for all this ugliness and contention in its teaching of the universal fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of men. Only for some reason he hadn't the phrases and he hadn't the voice to assert this over their wrangling and their stiff resolution. He wanted to think the whole business out thoroughly, for the moment he had nothing to say, and there was the labour leader opposite waiting smilingly to hear what he had to say so soon as the bout between the vicar and the rationalist was over.

That morning in the long galleries of the bishop's imagination a fresh painting had been added. It was a big wall painting rather in the manner of Puvis de Chavannes. And the central figure had been the bishop of Princhester himself. He had been standing upon the steps of the great door of the cathedral that looks upon the marketplace where the tram-lines meet, and he had been dressed very magnificently and rather after the older use. He had been wearing a tunicle and dalmatic under a chasuble, a pectoral cross, purple gloves, sandals and buskins, a mitre and his presentation ring. In his hand he had borne his pastoral staff. And the clustering pillars and arches of the great doorway were painted with a loving flat particularity that omitted nothing but the sooty tinge of the later discolourations.

On his right hand had stood a group of employers very richly dressed in the fashion of the fifteenth century, and on the left a rather more numerous group of less decorative artisans. With them their wives and children had been shown, all greatly impressed by the canonicals. Every one had been extremely respectful.

He had been reconciling the people and blessing them and calling them his "sheep" and his "little children."

But all this was so different.

Neither party resembled sheep or little children in the least degree.

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The labour leader became impatient with the ritualistic controversy; he set his tea-cup aside out of danger and leant across the corner of the table to the bishop and spoke in a sawing undertone. "You see," he said, "the church does not talk our language. I doubt if it understands our language. I doubt if we understand clearly where we are ourselves. These things have to be fought out and hammered out. It's a big dusty dirty noisy job. It may be a bloody job before it's through. You can't suddenly call a halt in the middle of the scrap and have a sort of millennium just because you want it....

"Of course if the church had a plan," he said, "if it had a proposal to make, if it had anything more than a few pious palliatives to suggest, that might be different. But has it?"

The bishop had a bankrupt feeling. On the spur of the moment he could say no more than: "It offers its mediation."

Full as he was with the preoccupation of these things and so a little slow and inattentive in his movements, the bishop had his usual luck at Pringle Junction and just missed the 7.27 for Princhester. He might perhaps have got it by running through the subway and pushing past people, but bishops must not run through subways and push past people. His mind swore at the mischance, even if his lips refrained.

He was hungry and, tired; he would not get to the palace now until long after nine; dinner would be over and Lady Ella would naturally suppose he had dined early with the Rev. Morrice Deans. Very probably there would be nothing ready for him at all.

He tried to think he was exercising self-control, but indeed all his sub-conscious self was busy in a manner that would not have disgraced Tertullian with the eternal welfare of those city fathers whose obstinacy had fixed the palace at Princhester. He walked up and down the platform, gripping his hands very tightly behind him, and maintaining a serene upcast countenance by a steadfast effort. It seemed a small matter to him that the placards of the local evening papers should proclaim "Lloyd George's Reconciliation Meeting at Wombash Broken up by Suffragettes." For a year now he had observed a strict rule against buying the products of the local press, and he saw no reason for varying this protective regulation.

His mind was full of angry helplessness.

Was he to blame, was the church to blame, for its powerlessness in these social disputes? Could an abler man with a readier eloquence have done more?

He envied the cleverness of Cardinal Manning. Manning would have got right into the front of this affair. He would have accumulated credit for his church and himself....

But would he have done much?...

The bishop wandered along the platform to its end, and stood contemplating the convergent ways that gather together beyond the station and plunge into the hillside and the wilderness of sidings and trucks, signal-boxes, huts, coal-pits, electric standards, goods sheds, turntables, and engine-houses, that ends in a bluish bricked-up cliff against the hill. A train rushed with a roar and clatter into the throat

of the great tunnel and was immediately silenced; its rear lights twinkled and vanished, and then out of that huge black throat came wisps of white steam and curled slowly upward like lazy snakes until they caught the slanting sunshine. For the first time the day betrayed a softness and touched this scene of black energy to gold. All late afternoons are beautiful, whatever the day has been — if only there is a gleam of sun. And now a kind of mechanical greatness took the place of mere black disorder in the bishop's perception of his see. It was harsh, it was vast and strong, it was no lamb he had to rule but a dragon. Would it ever be given to him to overcome his dragon, to lead it home, and bless it?

He stood at the very end of the platform, with his gaitered legs wide apart and his hands folded behind him, staring beyond all visible things.

Should he do something very bold and striking? Should he invite both men and masters to the cathedral, and preach tremendous sermons to them upon these living issues?

Short sermons, of course.

But stating the church's attitude with a new and convincing vigour.

He had a vision of the great aisle strangely full and alive and astir. The organ notes still echoed in the fretted vaulting, as the preacher made his way from the chancel to the pulpit. The congregation was tense with expectation, and for some reason his mind dwelt for a long time upon the figure of the preacher ascending the steps of the pulpit. Outside the day was dark and stormy, so that the stained-glass windows looked absolutely dead. For a little while the preacher prayed. Then in the attentive silence the tenor of the preacher would begin, a thin jet of sound, a ray of light in the darkness, speaking to all these men as they had never been spoken to before....

Surely so one might call a halt to all these harsh conflicts. So one might lay hands afresh upon these stubborn minds, one might win them round to look at Christ the Master and Servant....

That, he thought, would be a good phrase: "Christ the Master and Servant."....

"Members of one Body," that should be his text.... At last it was finished. The big congregation, which had kept so still, sighed and

stirred. The task of reconciliation was as good as done. “And now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost....”

Outside the day had become suddenly bright, the threatening storm had drifted away, and great shafts of coloured light from the pictured windows were smiting like arrows amidst his hearers....

This idea of a great sermon upon capital and labour did so powerfully grip the bishop’s imagination that he came near to losing the 8.27 train also.

He discovered it when it was already in the station. He had to walk down the platform very quickly. He did not run, but his gaiters, he felt, twinkled more than a bishop’s should.

(8)

Directly he met his wife he realized that he had to hear something important and unpleasant.

She stood waiting for him in the inner hall, looking very grave and still. The light fell upon her pale face and her dark hair and her long white silken dress, making her seem more delicate and unworldly than usual and making the bishop feel grimy and sordid.

“I must have a wash,” he said, though before he had thought of nothing but food. “I have had nothing to eat since tea-time — and that was mostly talk.”

Lady Ella considered. “There are cold things.... You shall have a tray in the study. Not in the dining-room. Eleanor is there. I want to tell you something. But go upstairs first and wash your poor tired face.”

“Nothing serious, I hope?” he asked, struck by an unusual quality in her voice.

“I will tell you,” she evaded, and after a moment of mutual scrutiny he went past her upstairs.

Since they had come to Princhester Lady Ella had changed very markedly. She seemed to her husband to have gained in dignity; she was stiller and more restrained; a certain faint arrogance, a touch of the “ruling class” manner had dwindled almost to the vanishing point. There had been a time when she had inclined to an authoritative hauteur, when she had seemed likely to develop into

one of those aggressive and interfering old ladies who play so overwhelming a part in British public affairs. She had been known to initiate adverse judgments, to exercise the snub, to cut and humiliate. Princhester had done much to purge her of such tendencies. Princhester had made her think abundantly, and had put a new and subtler quality into her beauty. It had taken away the least little disposition to rustle as she moved, and it had softened her voice.

Now, when presently she stood in the study, she showed a new circumspection in her treatment of her husband. She surveyed the tray before him.

"You ought not to drink that Burgundy," she said. "I can see you are dog-tired. It was uncorked yesterday, and anyhow it is not very digestible. This cold meat is bad enough. You ought to have one of those quarter bottles of champagne you got for my last convalescence. There's more than a dozen left over."

The bishop felt that this was a pretty return of his own kindly thoughts "after many days," and soon Dunk, his valet-butler, was pouring out the precious and refreshing glassful....

"And now, dear?" said the bishop, feeling already much better.

Lady Ella had come round to the marble fireplace. The mantelpiece was a handsome work by a Princhester artist in the Gill style — with contemplative ascetics as supporters.

"I am worried about Eleanor," said Lady Ella.

"She is in the dining-room now," she said, "having some dinner. She came in about a quarter past eight, half way through dinner."

"Where had she been?" asked the bishop.

"Her dress was torn — in two places. Her wrist had been twisted and a little sprained."

"My dear!"

"Her face — Grubby! And she had been crying."

"But, my dear, what had happened to her? You don't mean — ?"

Husband and wife stared at one another aghast. Neither of them said the horrid word that flamed between them.

"Merciful heaven!" said the bishop, and assumed an attitude of despair.

"I didn't know she knew any of them. But it seems it is the second Walshingham girl — Phoebe. It's impossible to trace a girl's

thoughts and friends. She persuaded her to go."

"But did she understand?"

"That's the serious thing," said Lady Ella.

She seemed to consider whether he could bear the blow.

"She understands all sorts of things. She argues.... I am quite unable to argue with her."

"About this vote business?"

"About all sorts of things. Things I didn't imagine she had heard of. I knew she had been reading books. But I never imagined that she could have understood...."

The bishop laid down his knife and fork.

"One may read in books, one may even talk of things, without fully understanding," he said.

Lady Ella tried to entertain this comforting thought. "It isn't like that," she said at last. "She talks like a grown-up person. This — this escapade is just an accident. But things have gone further than that. She seems to think — that she is not being educated properly here, that she ought to go to a College. As if we were keeping things from her...."

The bishop reconsidered his plate.

"But what things?" he said.

"She says we get all round her," said Lady Ella, and left the implications of that phrase to unfold.

(9)

For a time the bishop said very little.

Lady Ella had found it necessary to make her first announcement standing behind him upon the hearthrug, but now she sat upon the arm of the great armchair as close to him as possible, and spoke in a more familiar tone.

The thing, she said, had come to her as a complete surprise. Everything had seemed so safe. Eleanor had been thoughtful, it was true, but it had never occurred to her mother that she had really been thinking — about such things as she had been thinking about. She had ranged in the library, and displayed a disposition to read the weekly papers and the monthly reviews. But never a sign of

discontent.

"But I don't understand," said the bishop. "Why is she discontented? What is there that she wants different?"

"Exactly," said Lady Ella.

"She has got this idea that life here is secluded in some way," she expanded. "She used words like 'secluded' and 'artificial' and — what was it?— 'cloistered.' And she said—"

Lady Ella paused with an effect of exact retrospection.

"'Out there,' she said, 'things are alive. Real things are happening.' It is almost as if she did not fully believe—"

Lady Ella paused again.

The bishop sat with his arm over the back of his chair, and his face downcast.

"The ferment of youth," he said at last. "The ferment of youth. Who has given her these ideas?"

Lady Ella did not know. She could have thought a school like St. Aubyns would have been safe, but nowadays nothing was safe. It was clear the girls who went there talked as girls a generation ago did not talk. Their people at home encouraged them to talk and profess opinions about everything. It seemed that Phoebe Walshingham and Lady Kitty Kingdom were the leaders in these premature mental excursions. Phoebe aired religious doubts.

"But little Phoebe!" said the bishop.

"Kitty," said Lady Ella, "has written a novel."

"Already!"

"With elopements in it — and all sorts of things. She's had it typed. You'd think Mary Crosshampton would know better than to let her daughter go flourishing the family imagination about in that way."

"Eleanor told you?"

"By way of showing that they think of — things in general."

The bishop reflected. "She wants to go to College."

"They want to go in a set."

"I wonder if college can be much worse than school.... She's eighteen — ? But I will talk to her...."

All our children are changelings. They are perpetually fresh strangers. Every day they vanish and a new person masquerades as yesterday's child until some unexpected development betrays the cheat.

The bishop had still to learn this perennial newness of the young. He learnt it in half an hour at the end of a fatiguing day.

He went into the dining-room. He went in as carelessly as possible and smoking a cigarette. He had an honourable dread of being portentous in his family; almost ostentatiously he laid the bishop aside. Eleanor had finished her meal, and was sitting in the arm-chair by the fire with one hand holding her sprained wrist.

"Well," he said, and strolled to the hearthrug. He had had an odd idea that he would find her still dirty, torn, and tearful, as her mother had described her, a little girl in a scrape. But she had changed into her best white evening frock and put up her hair, and became in the firelight more of a lady, a very young lady but still a lady, than she had ever been to him before. She was dark like her mother, but not of the same willowy type; she had more of her father's sturdy build, and she had developed her shoulders at hockey and tennis. The firelight brought out the gracious reposeful lines of a body that ripened in adolescence. And though there was a vibration of resolution in her voice she spoke like one who is under her own control.

"Mother has told you that I have disgraced myself," she began.

"No," said the bishop, weighing it. "No. But you seem to have been indiscreet, little Norah."

"I got excited," she said. "They began turning out the other women — roughly. I was indignant."

"You didn't go to interrupt?" he asked.

She considered. "No," she said. "But I went."

He liked her disposition to get it right. "On that side," he assisted.

"It isn't the same thing as really meaning, Daddy," she said.

"And then things happened?"

"Yes," she said to the fire.

A pause followed. If they had been in a law-court, her barrister would have said, "That is my case, my lord." The bishop prepared to open the next stage in the proceedings.

"I think, Norah, you shouldn't have been there at all," he said.

“Mother says that.”

“A man in my position is apt to be judged by his family. You commit more than yourself when you commit an indiscretion. Apart from that, it wasn’t the place for a girl to be at. You are not a child now. We give you freedom — more freedom than most girls get — because we think you will use it wisely. You knew — enough to know that there was likely to be trouble.”

The girl looked into the fire and spoke very carefully. “I don’t think that I oughtn’t to know the things that are going on.”

The bishop studied her face for an instant. It struck him that they had reached something very fundamental as between parent and child. His modernity showed itself in the temperance of his reply.

“Don’t you think, my dear, that on the whole your mother and I, who have lived longer and know more, are more likely to know when it is best that you should begin to know — this or that?”

The girl knitted her brows and seemed to be reading her answer out of the depths of the coals. She was on the verge of speaking, altered her mind and tried a different beginning.

“I think that every one must do their thinking — his thinking — for — oneself,” she said awkwardly.

“You mean you can’t trust — ?”

“It isn’t trusting. But one knows best for oneself when one is hungry.”

“And you find yourself hungry?”

“I want to find out for myself what all this trouble about votes and things means.”

“And we starve you — intellectually?”

“You know I don’t think that. But you are busy....”

“Aren’t you being perhaps a little impatient, Eleanor? After all — you are barely eighteen.... We have given you all sorts of liberties.”

Her silence admitted it. “But still,” she said after a long pause, “there are other girls, younger than I am, in these things. They talk about — oh, all sorts of things. Freely....”

“You’ve been awfully good to me,” she said irrelevantly. “And of course this meeting was all pure accident.”

Father and daughter remained silent for awhile, seeking a better grip.

“What exactly do you want, Eleanor?” he asked.

She looked up at him. “Generally?” she asked.

“Your mother has the impression that you are discontented.”

“Discontented is a horrid word.”

“Well — unsatisfied.”

She remained still for a time. She felt the moment had come to make her demand.

“I would like to go to Newnham or Somerville — and work. I feel — so horribly ignorant. Of all sorts of things. If I were a son I should go—”

“Ye — es,” said the bishop and reflected.

He had gone rather far in the direction of the Woman Suffrage people; he had advocated equality of standard in all sorts of matters, and the memory of these utterances hampered him.

“You could read here,” he tried.

“If I were a son, you wouldn’t say that.”

His reply was vague. “But in this home,” he said, “we have a certain atmosphere.”

He left her to imply her differences in sensibility and response from the hardier male.

Her hesitation marked the full gravity of her reply. “It’s just that,” she said. “One feels—” She considered it further. “As if we were living in a kind of magic world — not really real. Out there—” she glanced over her shoulder at the drawn blind that hid the night. “One meets with different sorts of minds and different — atmospheres. All this is very beautiful. I’ve had the most wonderful home. But there’s a sort of feeling as though it couldn’t really go on, as though all these strikes and doubts and questionings—”

She stopped short at questionings, for the thing was said.

The bishop took her meaning gallantly and honestly.

“The church of Christ, little Norah, is built upon a rock.”

She made no answer. She moved her head very slightly so that he could not see her face, and remained sitting rather stiffly and awkwardly with her eyes upon the fire.

Her silence was the third and greatest blow the bishop received that day....

It seemed very long indeed before either of them spoke. At last he

said: “We must talk about these things again, Norah, when we are less tired and have more time.... You have been reading books.... When Caxton set up his printing-press he thrust a new power between church and disciple and father and child.... And I am tired. We must talk it over a little later.”

The girl stood up. She took her father’s hands. “Dear, dear Daddy,” she said, “I am so sorry to be a bother. I am so sorry I went to that meeting.... You look tired out.”

“We must talk — properly,” said the bishop, patting one hand, then discovering from her wincing face that it was the sprained one. “Your poor wrist,” he said.

“It’s so hard to talk, but I want to talk to you, Daddy. It isn’t that I have hidden things....”

She kissed him, and the bishop had the odd fancy that she kissed him as though she was sorry for him....

It occurred to him that really there could be no time like the present for discussing these “questionings” of hers, and then his fatigue and shyness had the better of him again.

(11)

The papers got hold of Eleanor’s share in the suffragette disturbance. The White Blackbird said things about her.

It did not attack her. It did worse. It admired her ...impudently.

It spoke of her once as “Norah,” and once as “the Scrope Flapper.”

Its headline proclaimed: “Plucky Flappers Hold Up L. G.”

CHAPTER THE THIRD - INSOMNIA

(1)

THE night after his conversation with Eleanor was the first night of the bishop's insomnia. It was the definite beginning of a new phase in his life.

Doctors explain to us that the immediate cause of insomnia is always some poisoned or depleted state of the body, and no doubt the fatigues and hasty meals of the day had left the bishop in a state of unprecedented chemical disorder, with his nerves irritated by strange compounds and unsoothed by familiar lubricants. But chemical disorders follow mental disturbances, and the core and essence of his trouble was an intellectual distress. For the first time in his life he was really in doubt, about himself, about his way of living, about all his persuasions. It was a general doubt. It was not a specific suspicion upon this point or that. It was a feeling of detachment and unreality at once extraordinarily vague and extraordinarily oppressive. It was as if he discovered himself flimsy and transparent in a world of minatory solidity and opacity. It was as if he found himself made not of flesh and blood but of tissue paper.

But this intellectual insecurity extended into his physical sensations. It affected his feeling in his skin, as if it were not absolutely his own skin.

And as he lay there, a weak phantom mentally and bodily, an endless succession and recurrence of anxieties for which he could find no reassurance besieged him.

Chief of this was his distress for Eleanor.

She was the central figure in this new sense of illusion in familiar and trusted things. It was not only that the world of his existence which had seemed to be the whole universe had become diaphanous and betrayed vast and uncontrollable realities beyond it, but his daughter had as it were suddenly opened a door in this glassy sphere of insecurity that had been his abiding refuge, a door upon the stormy rebel outer world, and she stood there, young, ignorant, confident, adventurous, ready to step out.

“Could it be possible that she did not believe?”

He saw her very vividly as he had seen her in the dining-room, slender and upright, half child, half woman, so fragile and so fearless. And the door she opened thus carelessly gave upon a stormy background like one of the stormy backgrounds that were popular behind portrait Dianas in eighteenth century paintings. Did she believe that all he had taught her, all the life he led was — what was her phrase? — a kind of magic world, not really real?

He groaned and turned over and repeated the words: “A kind of magic world — not really real!”

The wind blew through the door she opened, and scattered everything in the room. And still she held the door open.

He was astonished at himself. He started up in swift indignation. Had he not taught the child? Had he not brought her up in an atmosphere of faith? What right had she to turn upon him in this matter? It was — indeed it was — a sort of insolence, a lack of reverence....

It was strange he had not perceived this at the time.

But indeed at the first mention of “questionings” he ought to have thundered. He saw that quite clearly now. He ought to have cried out and said, “On your knees, my Norah, and ask pardon of God!”

Because after all faith is an emotional thing....

He began to think very rapidly and copiously of things he ought to have said to Eleanor. And now the eloquence of reverie was upon him. In a little time he was also addressing the tea-party at Morrice Deans’. Upon them too he ought to have thundered. And he knew now also all that he should have said to the recalcitrant employer. Thunder also. Thunder is surely the privilege of the higher clergy — under Jove.

But why hadn’t he thundered?

He gesticulated in the darkness, thrust out a clutching hand.

There are situations that must be gripped — gripped firmly. And without delay. In the middle ages there had been grip enough in a purple glove.

From these belated seizures of the day's lost opportunities the bishop passed to such a pessimistic estimate of the church as had never entered his mind before.

It was as if he had fallen suddenly out of a spiritual balloon into a world of bleak realism. He found himself asking unprecedented and devastating questions, questions that implied the most fundamental shiftings of opinion. Why was the church such a failure? Why had it no grip upon either masters or men amidst this vigorous life of modern industrialism, and why had it no grip upon the questioning young? It was a tolerated thing, he felt, just as sometimes he had felt that the Crown was a tolerated thing. He too was a tolerated thing; a curious survival....

This was not as things should be. He struggled to recover a proper attitude. But he remained enormously dissatisfied....

The church was no Levite to pass by on the other side away from the struggles and wrongs of the social conflict. It had no right when the children asked for the bread of life to offer them Gothic stone....

He began to make interminable weak plans for fulfilling his duty to his diocese and his daughter.

What could he do to revivify his clergy? He wished he had more personal magnetism, he wished he had a darker and a larger presence. He wished he had not been saddled with Whippham's rather futile son as his chaplain. He wished he had a dean instead of being his own dean. With an unsympathetic rector. He wished he had it in him to make some resounding appeal. He might of course preach a series of thumping addresses and sermons, rather on the lines of "Fors Clavigera," to masters and men, in the Cathedral. Only it was so difficult to get either masters or men into the Cathedral.

Well, if the people will not come to the bishop the bishop must go out to the people. Should he go outside the Cathedral — to the place where the trains met?

Interweaving with such thoughts the problem of Eleanor rose again into his consciousness.

Weren't there books she ought to read? Weren't there books she ought to be made to read? And books — and friends — that ought to be imperatively forbidden? Imperatively!

But how to define the forbidden?

He began to compose an address on Modern Literature (so-called).

It became acrimonious.

Before dawn the birds began to sing.

His mind had seemed to be a little tranquillized, there had been a distinct feeling of subsidence sleepwards, when first one and then another little creature roused itself and the bishop to greet the gathering daylight.

It became a little clamour, a misty sea of sound in which individuality appeared and disappeared. For a time a distant cuckoo was very perceptible, like a landmark looming up over a fog, like the cuckoo in the Pastoral Symphony.

The bishop tried not to heed these sounds, but they were by their very nature insistent sounds. He lay disregarding them acutely.

Presently he pulled the coverlet over his ears.

A little later he sat up in bed.

Again in a slight detail he marked his strange and novel detachment from the world of his upbringing. His hallucination of disillusionment had spread from himself and his church and his faith to the whole animate creation. He knew that these were the voices of "our feathered songsters," that this was "a joyous chorus" greeting the day. He knew that a wakeful bishop ought to bless these happy creatures, and join with them by reciting Ken's morning hymn. He made an effort that was more than half habit, to repeat and he repeated with a scowling face and the voice of a schoolmaster:

"Awake my soul, and with the sun Thy daily stage of duty run...."

He got no further. He stopped short, sat still, thinking what utterly detestable things singing birds were. A. blackbird had gripped his attention. Never had he heard such vain repetitions. He struggled against the dark mood of criticism. "He prayeth best who loveth best __"

No, he did not love the birds. It was useless to pretend. Whatever one may say about other birds a cuckoo is a low detestable cad of a bird.

Then the bishop began to be particularly tormented by a bird that made a short, insistent, wheezing sound at regular intervals of perhaps twenty seconds. If a bird could have whooping-cough, that,

he thought, was the sort of whoop it would have. But even if it had whooping-cough he could not pity it. He hung in its intervals waiting for the return of the wheeze.

And then that blackbird reasserted itself. It had a rich boastful note; it seemed proud of its noisy reiteration of simple self-assertion. For some obscure reason the phrase “oleographic sounds” drifted into the bishop’s thoughts. This bird produced the peculiar and irrational impression that it had recently made a considerable sum of money by shrewd industrialism. It was, he thought grimly, a genuine Princhester blackbird.

This wickedly uncharitable reference to his diocese ran all unchallenged through the bishop’s mind. And others no less wicked followed it.

Once during his summer holidays in Florence he and Lady Ella had subscribed to an association for the protection of song-birds. He recalled this now with a mild wonder. It seemed to him that perhaps after all it was as well to let fruit-growers and Italians deal with singing-birds in their own way. Perhaps after all they had a wisdom....

He passed his hands over his face. The world after all is not made entirely for singing-birds; there is such a thing as proportion. Singing-birds may become a luxury, an indulgence, an excess.

Did the birds eat the fruit in Paradise?

Perhaps there they worked for some collective musical effect, had some sort of conductor in the place of this — hullabaloo....

He decided to walk about the room for a time and then remake his bed....

The sunrise found the bishop with his head and shoulders out of the window trying to see that blackbird. He just wanted to look at it. He was persuaded it was a quite exceptional blackbird.

Again came that oppressive sense of the futility of the contemporary church, but this time it came in the most grotesque form. For hanging half out of the casement he was suddenly reminded of St. Francis of Assisi, and how at his rebuke the wheeling swallow stilled their cries.

But it was all so different then.

(3)

It was only after he had passed four similar nights, with intervening days of lassitude and afternoon siestas, that the bishop realized that he was in the grip of insomnia.

He did not go at once to a doctor, but he told his trouble to every one he met and received much tentative advice. He had meant to have his talk with Eleanor on the morning next after their conversation in the dining-room, but his bodily and spiritual anaemia prevented him.

The fifth night was the beginning of the Whitsuntide Ember week, and he wore a red cassock and had a distracting and rather interesting day welcoming his ordination candidates. They had a good effect upon him; we spiritualize ourselves when we seek to spiritualize others, and he went to bed in a happier frame of mind than he had done since the day of the shock. He woke in the night, but he woke much more himself than he had been since the trouble began. He repeated that verse of Ken's:

"When in the night I sleepless lie, My soul with heavenly thoughts supply; Let no ill dreams disturb my rest, No powers of darkness me molest."

Almost immediately after these there floated into his mind, as if it were a message, the dear familiar words:

"He giveth his Beloved sleep."

These words irradiated and soothed him quite miraculously, the clouds of doubt seemed to dissolve and vanish and leave him safe and calm under a clear sky; he knew those words were a promise, and very speedily he fell asleep and slept until he was called.

But the next day was a troubled one. Whippham had muddled his timetable and crowded his afternoon; the strike of the transport workers had begun, and the ugly noises they made at the tramway depot, where they were booing some one, penetrated into the palace. He had to snatch a meal between services, and the sense of hurry invaded his afternoon lectures to the candidates. He hated hurry in Ember week. His ideal was one of quiet serenity, of grave things said slowly, of still, kneeling figures, of a sort of dark cool spiritual germination. But what sort of dark cool spiritual germination is

possible with an ass like Whippham about?

In the fresh courage of the morning the bishop had arranged for that talk with Eleanor he had already deferred too long, and this had proved less satisfactory than he had intended it to be.

The bishop's experience with the ordination candidates was following the usual course. Before they came there was something bordering upon distaste for the coming invasion; then always there was an effect of surprise at the youth and faith of the neophytes and a real response of the spirit to the occasion. Throughout the first twenty-four hours they were all simply neophytes, without individuality to break up their uniformity of self-devotion. Then afterwards they began to develop little personal traits, and scarcely ever were these pleasing traits. Always one or two of them would begin haunting the bishop, giving way to an appetite for special words, special recognitions. He knew the expression of that craving on their faces. He knew the way-laying movements in room and passage that presently began.

This time in particular there was a freckled underbred young man who handed in what was evidently a carefully prepared memorandum upon what he called "my positions." Apparently he had a muddle of doubts about the early fathers and the dates of the earlier authentic copies of the gospels, things of no conceivable significance.

The bishop glanced through this bale of papers — it had of course no index and no synopsis, and some of the pages were not numbered — handed it over to Whippham, and when he proved, as usual, a broken reed, the bishop had the brilliant idea of referring the young man to Canon Bliss (of Pringle), "who has a special knowledge quite beyond my own in this field."

But he knew from the young man's eye even as he said this that it was not going to put him off for more than a day or so.

The immediate result of glancing over these papers was, however, to enhance in the bishop's mind a growing disposition to minimize the importance of all dated and explicit evidences and arguments for orthodox beliefs, and to resort to vague symbolic and liberal interpretations, and it was in this state that he came to his talk with Eleanor.

He did not give her much time to develop her objections. He met her half way and stated them for her, and overwhelmed her with sympathy and understanding. She had been “too literal.” “Too literal” was his keynote. He was a little astonished at the liberality of his own views. He had been getting along now for some years without looking into his own opinions too closely and he was by no means prepared to discover how far he had come to meet his daughter’s scepticisms. But he did meet them. He met them so thoroughly that he almost conveyed that hers was a needlessly conservative and oldfashioned attitude.

Occasionally he felt he was being a little evasive, but she did not seem to notice it. As she took his drift, her relief and happiness were manifest. And he had never noticed before how clear and pretty her eyes were; they were the most honest eyes he had ever seen. She looked at him very steadily as he explained, and lit up at his points. She brightened wonderfully as she realized that after all they were not apart, they had not differed; simply they had misunderstood....

And before he knew where he was, and in a mere parenthetical declaration of liberality, he surprised himself by conceding her demand for Newnham even before she had repeated it. It helped his case wonderfully.

“Call in every exterior witness you can. The church will welcome them.... No, I want you to go, my dear....”

But his mind was stirred again to its depths by this discussion. And in particular he was surprised and a little puzzled by this Newnham concession and the necessity of making his new attitude clear to Lady Ella....

It was with a sense of fatality that he found himself awake again that night, like some one lying drowned and still and yet perfectly conscious at the bottom of deep cold water.

He repeated, “He giveth his Beloved sleep,” but all the conviction had gone out of the words.

(4)

Neither the bishop’s insomnia nor his incertitudes about himself and his faith developed in a simple and orderly manner. There were

periods of sustained suffering and periods of recovery; it was not for a year or so that he regarded these troubles as more than acute incidental interruptions of his general tranquillity or realized that he was passing into a new phase of life and into a new quality of thought. He told every one of the insomnia and no one of his doubts; these he betrayed only by an increasing tendency towards vagueness, symbolism, poetry and toleration. Eleanor seemed satisfied with his exposition; she did not press for further enlightenment. She continued all her outward conformities except that after a time she ceased to communicate; and in September she went away to Newnham. Her doubts had not visibly affected Clementina or her other sisters, and the bishop made no further attempts to explore the spiritual life of his family below the surface of its formal acquiescence.

As a matter of fact his own spiritual wrestlings were almost exclusively nocturnal. During his spells of insomnia he led a curiously double existence. In the daytime he was largely the self he had always been, able, assured, ecclesiastical, except that he was a little jaded and irritable or sleepy instead of being quick and bright; he believed in God and the church and the Royal Family and himself securely; in the wakeful night time he experienced a different and novel self, a bare-minded self, bleakly fearless at its best, shamelessly weak at its worst, critical, sceptical, joyless, anxious. The anxiety was quite the worst element of all. Something sat by his pillow asking grey questions: “What are you doing? Where are you going? Is it really well with the children? Is it really well with the church? Is it really well with the country? Are you indeed doing anything at all? Are you anything more than an actor wearing a costume in an archaic play? The people turn their backs on you.”

He would twist over on his pillow. He would whisper hymns and prayers that had the quality of charms.

“He giveth his Beloved sleep”; that answered many times, and many times it failed.

The labour troubles of 1912 eased off as the year wore on, and the bitterness of the local press over the palace abated very considerably. Indeed there was something like a watery gleam of popularity when he brought down his consistent friend, the dear old Princess

Christiana of Hoch and Unter, black bonnet, deafness, and all, to open a new wing of the children's hospital. The Princhester conservative paper took the occasion to inform the diocese that he was a fluent German scholar and consequently a persona grata with the royal aunts, and that the Princess Christiana was merely just one of a number of royalties now practically at the beck and call of Princhester. It was not true, but it was very effective locally, and seemed to justify a little the hauteur of which Lady Ella was so unjustly suspected. Yet it involved a possibility of disappointments in the future.

He went to Brighton-Pomfrey too upon the score of his general health, and Brighton-Pomfrey revised his general regimen, discouraged indiscreet fasting, and suggested a complete abstinence from red wine except white port, if indeed that can be called a red wine, and a moderate use of Egyptian cigarettes.

But 1913 was a strenuous year. The labour troubles revived, the suffragette movement increased greatly in violence and aggressiveness, and there sprang up no less than three ecclesiastical scandals in the diocese. First, the Kensitites set themselves firmly to make presentations and prosecutions against Morrice Deans, who was reserving the sacrament, wearing, they said, "Babylonish garments," going beyond all reason in the matter of infant confession, and generally brightening up Mogham Banks; next, a popular preacher in Wombash, published a book under the exasperating title, "The Light Under the Altar," in which he showed himself as something between an Arian and a Pantheist, and treated the dogma of the Trinity with as little respect as one would show to an intrusive cat; while thirdly, an obscure but overworked missioner of a tin mission church in the new working-class district at Pringle, being discovered in some sort of polygamous relationship, had seen fit to publish in pamphlet form a scandalous admission and defence, a pamphlet entitled "Marriage True and False," taking the public needlessly into his completest confidence and quoting the affairs of Abraham and Hosea, reviving many points that are better forgotten about Luther, and appealing also to such uncanonical authorities as Milton, Plato, and John Humphrey Noyes. This abnormal concurrence of indiscipline was extremely unlucky for the bishop. It

plunged him into strenuous controversy upon three fronts, so to speak, and involved a great number of personal encounters far too vivid for his mental serenity.

The Pringle polygamist was the most moving as Morrice Deans was the most exacting and troublesome and the Wombash Pantheist the most insidiously destructive figure in these three toilsome disputes. The Pringle man's soul had apparently missed the normal distribution of fig-leaves; he was an illiterate, open-eyed, hard-voiced, freckled, rational-minded creature, with large expository hands, who had come by a side way into the church because he was an indefatigable worker, and he insisted upon telling the bishop with an irrepressible candour and completeness just exactly what was the matter with his intimate life. The bishop very earnestly did not want these details, and did his utmost to avoid the controversial questions that the honest man pressed respectfully but obstinately upon him.

"Even St. Paul, my lord, admitted that it is better to marry than burn," said the Pringle misdemeanant, "and here was I, my lord, married and still burning!" and, "I think you would find, my lord, considering all Charlotte's peculiarities, that the situation was really much more trying than the absolute celibacy St. Paul had in view."...

The bishop listened to these arguments as little as possible, and did not answer them at all. But afterwards the offender came and wept and said he was ruined and heartbroken and unfairly treated because he wasn't a gentleman, and that was distressing. It was so exactly true — and so inevitable. He had been deprived, rather on account of his voice and apologetics than of his offence, and public opinion was solidly with the sentence. He made a gallant effort to found what he called a Labour Church in Pringle, and after some financial misunderstandings departed with his unambiguous menage to join the advanced movement on the Clyde.

The Morrice Deans enquiry however demanded an amount of erudition that greatly fatigued the bishop. He had a very fair general knowledge of vestments, but he had never really cared for anything but the poetry of ornaments, and he had to work strenuously to master the legal side of the question. Whippham, his chaplain, was worse than useless as a helper. The bishop wanted to end the matter as quickly, quietly, and favourably to Morrice Deans as possible; he

thought Morrice Deans a thoroughly good man in his parish, and he believed that the substitution of a low churchman would mean a very complete collapse of church influence in Mogham Banks, where people were now thoroughly accustomed to a highly ornate service. But Morrice Deans was intractable and his pursuers indefatigable, and on several occasions the bishop sat far into the night devising compromises and equivocations that should make the Kensitites think that Morrice Deans wasn't wearing vestments when he was, and that should make Morrice Deans think he was wearing vestments when he wasn't. And it was Whippham who first suggested green tea as a substitute for coffee, which gave the bishop indigestion, as his stimulant for these nocturnal bouts.

Now green tea is the most lucid of poisons.

And while all this extra activity about Morrice Deans, these vigils and crammings and writings down, were using all and more energy than the bishop could well spare, he was also doing his quiet utmost to keep "The Light under the Altar" ease from coming to a head.

This man he hated.

And he dreaded him as well as hated him. Chasters, the author of "The Light under the Altar," was a man who not only reasoned closely but indelicately. There was a demonstrating, jeering, air about his preaching and writing, and everything he said and did was saturated by the spirit of challenge. He did not so much imitate as exaggerate the style of Matthew Arnold. And whatever was done publicly against him would have to be done very publicly because his book had got him a London reputation.

From the bishop's point of view Chasters was one of nature's ignoblemen. He seemed to have subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles and passed all the tests and taken all the pledges that stand on the way to ordination, chiefly for the pleasure of attacking them more successfully from the rear; he had been given the living of Wombash by a cousin, and filled it very largely because it was not only more piquant but more remunerative and respectable to be a rationalist lecturer in a surplice. And in a hard kind of ultra-Protestant way his social and parochial work was not badly done. But his sermons were terrible. "He takes a text," said one informant, "and he goes on firstly, secondly, thirdly, fourthly, like somebody tearing

the petals from a flower. ‘Finally,’ he says, and throws the bare stalk into the dustbin.”

The bishop avoided “The Light under the Altar” for nearly a year. It was only when a second book was announced with the winning title of “The Core of Truth in Christianity” that he perceived he must take action. He sat up late one night with a marked copy, a very indignantly marked copy, of the former work that an elderly colonel, a Wombash parishioner, an orthodox Layman of the most virulent type, had sent him. He perceived that he had to deal with a dialectician of exceptional ability, who had concentrated a quite considerable weight of scholarship upon the task of explaining away every scrap of spiritual significance in the Eucharist. From Chasters the bishop was driven by reference to the works of Legge and Frazer, and for the first time he began to measure the dimensions and power of the modern criticism of church doctrine and observance. Green tea should have lit his way to refutation; instead it lit up the whole inquiry with a light of melancholy confirmation. Neither by night nor by day could the bishop find a proper method of opening a counter attack upon Chasters, who was indisputably an intellectually abler man and a very ruthless beast indeed to assail, and meanwhile the demand that action should be taken increased.

The literature of church history and the controversies arising out of doctrinal development became the employment of the bishop’s leisure and a commanding preoccupation. He would have liked to discuss with some one else the network of perplexities in which he was entangling himself, and more particularly with Canon Bliss, but his own positions were becoming so insecure that he feared to betray them by argument. He had grown up with a kind of intellectual modesty. Some things he had never yet talked about; it made his mind blench to think of talking about them. And his great aching gaps of wakefulness began now, thanks to the green tea, to be interspersed with theological dreams and visions of an extravagant vividness. He would see Frazer’s sacrificial kings butchered picturesquely and terribly amidst strange and grotesque rituals; he would survey long and elaborate processions and ceremonials in which the most remarkable symbols were borne high in the sight of all men; he would cower before a gigantic and threatening Heaven.

These green-tea dreams and visions were not so much phases of sleep as an intensification and vivid furnishing forth of insomnia. It added greatly to his disturbance that — exceeding the instructions of Brighton-Pomfrey — he had now experimented ignorantly and planlessly with one or two narcotics and sleeping mixtures that friends and acquaintances had mentioned in his hearing. For the first time in his life he became secretive from his wife. He knew he ought not to take these things, he knew they were physically and morally evil, but a tormenting craving drove him to them. Subtly and insensibly his character was being undermined by the growing nervous trouble.

He astonished himself by the cunning and the hypocritical dignity he could display in procuring these drugs. He arranged to have a tea-making set in his bedroom, and secretly substituted green tea, for which he developed a powerful craving, in the place of the delicate China tea Lady Ella procured him.

(5)

These doctrinal and physical anxieties and distresses were at their worst in the spring and early summer of 1914. That was a time of great mental and moral disturbance. There was premonition in the air of those days. It was like the uneasiness sensitive people experience before a thunderstorm. The moral atmosphere was sullen and close. The whole world seemed irritable and mischievous. The suffragettes became extraordinarily malignant; the democratic movement went rotten with sabotage and with a cant of being "rebels"; the reactionary Tories and a crew of noisy old peeresses set themselves to create incurable confusion again in the healing wounds of Ireland, and feuds and frantic folly broke out at every point of the social and political edifice. And then a bomb burst at Sarajevo that silenced all this tumult. The unstable polity of Europe heeled over like a ship that founders.

Through the swiftest, tensest week in history Europe capsized into war.

(6)

The first effect of the war upon the mind of the bishop, as upon most imaginative minds, was to steady and exalt it. Trivialities and exasperations seemed swept out of existence. Men lifted up their eyes from disputes that had seemed incurable and wrangling that promised to be interminable, and discovered a plain and tragic issue that involved every one in a common call for devotion. For a great number of men and women who had been born and bred in security, the August and September of 1914 were the supremely heroic period of their lives. Myriads of souls were born again to ideas of service and sacrifice in those tremendous days.

Black and evil thing as the war was, it was at any rate a great thing; it did this much for countless minds that for the first time they realized the epic quality of history and their own relationship to the destinies of the race. The flimsy roof under which we had been living our lives of comedy fell and shattered the floor under our feet; we saw the stars above and the abyss below. We perceived that life was insecure and adventurous, part of one vast adventure in space and time....

Presently the smoke and dust of battle hid the great distances again, but they could not altogether destroy the memories of this revelation.

For the first two months the bishop's attention was so detached from his immediate surroundings and employments, so absorbed by great events, that his history if it were told in detail would differ scarcely at all from the histories of most comparatively unemployed minds during those first dramatic days, the days when the Germans made their great rush upon Paris and it seemed that France was down, France and the whole fabric of liberal civilization. He emerged from these stunning apprehensions after the Battle of the Marne, to find himself busy upon a score of dispersed and disconnected war jobs, and trying to get all the new appearances and forces and urgencies of the war into relations with himself. One thing became very vivid indeed, that he wasn't being used in any real and effective way in the war. There was a mighty going to and fro upon Red Cross work and various war committees, a vast preparation for wounded men and for the succour of dislocated families; a preparation, that proved to be needless, for catastrophic

unemployment. The war problem and the puzzle of German psychology ousted for a time all other intellectual interests; like every one else the bishop swam deep in Nietzsche, Bernhardi, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and the like; he preached several sermons upon German materialism and the astonishing decay of the German character. He also read every newspaper he could lay his hands on — like any secular man. He signed an address to the Russian Orthodox church, beginning "Brethren," and he revised his impressions of the Filioque controversy. The idea of a reunion of the two great state churches of Russia and England had always attracted him. But hitherto it had been a thing quite out of scale, visionary, utopian. Now in this strange time of altered perspectives it seemed the most practicable of suggestions. The mayor and corporation and a detachment of the special reserve in uniform came to a great intercession service, and in the palace there were two conferences of local influential people, people of the most various types, people who had never met tolerantly before, expressing now opinions of unprecedented breadth and liberality.

All this sort of thing was fresh and exciting at first, and then it began to fall into a routine and became habitual, and as it became habitual he found that old sense of detachment and futility was creeping back again. One day he realized that indeed the whole flood and tumult of the war would be going on almost exactly as it was going on now if there had been neither cathedral nor bishop in Princhester. It came to him that if archbishops were rolled into patriarchs and patriarchs into archbishops, it would matter scarcely more in the world process that was afoot than if two men shook hands while their house was afire. At times all of us have inappropriate thoughts. The unfortunate thought that struck the bishop as a bullet might strike a man in an exposed trench, as he was hurrying through the cloisters to a special service and address upon that doubly glorious day in our English history, the day of St. Crispin, was of Diogenes rolling his tub.

It was a poisonous thought.

It arose perhaps out of an article in a weekly paper at which he had glanced after lunch, an article written by one of those sceptical spirits who find all too abundant expression in our periodical

literature. The writer boldly charged the "Christian churches" with absolute ineffectiveness. This war, he declared, was above all other wars a war of ideas, of material organization against rational freedom, of violence against law; it was a war more copiously discussed than any war had ever been before, the air was thick with apologetics. And what was the voice of the church amidst these elemental issues? Bishops and divines who were patriots one heard discordantly enough, but where were the bishops and divines who spoke for the Prince of Peace? Where was the blessing of the church, where was the veto of the church? When it came to that one discovered only a broad preoccupied back busied in supplementing the Army Medical Corps with Red Cross activities, good work in its way — except that the canonicals seemed superfluous. Who indeed looked to the church for any voice at all? And so to Diogenes.

The bishop's mind went hunting for an answer to that indictment. And came back and came back to the image of Diogenes.

It was with that image dangling like a barbed arrow from his mind that the bishop went into the pulpit to preach upon St. Crispin's day, and looked down upon a thin and scattered congregation in which the elderly, the childless, and the unoccupied predominated.

That night insomnia resumed its sway.

Of course the church ought to be controlling this great storm, the greatest storm of war that had ever stirred mankind. It ought to be standing fearlessly between the combatants like a figure in a wall painting, with the cross of Christ uplifted and the restored memory of Christendom softening the eyes of the armed nations. "Put down those weapons and listen to me," so the church should speak in irresistible tones, in a voice of silver trumpets.

Instead it kept a long way from the fighting, tucked up its vestments, and was rolling its local tubs quite briskly.

(7)

And then came the aggravation of all these distresses by an abrupt abandonment of smoking and alcohol. Alcoholic relaxation, a necessary mitigation of the unreality of peacetime politics, becomes a grave danger in war, and it was with an understandable desire to

forward the interests of his realm that the King decided to set his statesmen an example — which unhappily was not very widely followed — by abstaining from alcohol during the continuance of the struggle. It did however swing over the Bishop of Princhester to an immediate and complete abandonment of both drink and tobacco. At that time he was finding comfort for his nerves in Manila cheroots, and a particularly big and heavy type of Egyptian cigarette with a considerable amount of opium, and his disorganized system seized upon this sudden change as a grievance, and set all his jangling being crying aloud for one cigarette — just one cigarette.

The cheroots, it seemed, he could better spare, but a cigarette became his symbol for his lost steadiness and ease.

It brought him low.

The reader has already been told the lamentable incident of the stolen cigarette and the small boy, and how the bishop, tormented by that shameful memory, cried aloud in the night.

The bishop rolled his tub, and is there any tub-rolling in the world more busy and exacting than a bishop's? He rolled in it spite of ill-health and insomnia, and all the while he was tormented by the enormous background of the world war, by his ineffective realization of vast national needs, by his passionate desire, for himself and his church, not to be ineffective.

The distressful alternation between nights of lucid doubt and days of dull acquiescence was resumed with an intensification of its contrasts. The brief phase of hope that followed the turn of the fighting upon the Maine, the hope that after all the war would end swiftly, dramatically, and justly, and everything be as it had been before — but pleasanter, gave place to a phase that bordered upon despair. The fall of Antwerp and the doubts and uncertainties of the Flanders situation weighed terribly upon the bishop. He was haunted for a time by nightmares of Zeppelins presently raining fire upon London. These visions became Apocalyptic. The Zeppelins came to England with the new year, and with the close of the year came the struggle for Ypres that was so near to being a collapse of the allied defensive. The events of the early spring, the bloody failure of British generalship at Neuve Chapelle, the naval disaster in the Dardanelles, the sinking of the Falaba, the Russian defeat in the

Masurian Lakes, all deepened the bishop's impression of the immensity of the nation's difficulties and of his own unhelpfulness. He was ashamed that the church should hold back its curates from enlistment while the French priests were wearing their uniforms in the trenches; the expedition of the Bishop of London to hold open-air services at the front seemed merely to accentuate the tub-rolling. It was rolling the tub just where it was most in the way.

What was wrong? What was wanting?

The Westminster Gazette, The Spectator, and several other of the most trusted organs of public opinion were intermittently discussing the same question. Their discussions implied at once the extreme need that was felt for religion by all sorts of representative people, and the universal conviction that the church was in some way muddling and masking her revelation. "What is wrong with the Churches?" was, for example, the general heading of The Westminster Gazette's correspondence.

One day the bishop skimmed a brief incisive utterance by Sir Harry Johnston that pierced to the marrow of his own shrinking convictions. Sir Harry is one of those people who seem to write as well as speak in a quick tenor. "Instead of propounding plainly and without the acereted mythology of Asia Minor, Greece and Rome, the pure Gospel of Christ.... they present it overloaded with unbelievable myths (such as, among a thousand others, that Massacre of the Innocents which never took place).... bore their listeners by a Tibetan repetition of creeds that have ceased to be credible.... Mutually contradictory propositions.... Prayers and litanies composed in Byzantine and mediaeval times.... the want of actuality, the curious silliness which has, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, hung about the exposition of Christianity.... But if the Bishops continue to fuss about the trappings of religion.... the maintenance of codes compiled by people who lived sixteen hundred or two thousand five hundred years ago.... the increasingly educated and practical-minded working classes will not come to church, weekday or Sunday."

The bishop held the paper in his hand, and with a mind that he felt to be terribly open, asked himself how true that sharp indictment might be, and, granting its general truth, what was the duty of the

church, that is to say of the bishops, for as Cyprian says, ecelesia est in episcopo. We say the creeds; how far may we unsay them?

So far he had taken no open action against Chasters. Suppose now he were to side with Chasters and let the whole diocese, the church of Princhester, drift as far as it chose under his inaction towards an extreme modernism, risking a conflict with, and if necessary fighting, the archbishop.... It was but for a moment that his mind swung to this possibility and then recoiled. The Laymen, that band of bigots, would fight. He could not contemplate litigation and wrangling about the teaching of the church. Besides, what were the "trappings of religion" and what the essentials? What after all was "the pure gospel of Christ" of which this writer wrote so glibly? He put the paper down and took a New Testament from his desk and opened it haphazard. He felt a curious wish that he could read it for the first time. It was over-familiar. Everything latterly in his theology and beliefs had become over-familiar. It had all become mechanical and dead and unmeaning to his tired mind....

Whippham came with a reminder of more tub-rolling, and the bishop's speculations were broken off.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH - THE SYMPATHY OF LADY SUNDERBUND

(1)

THAT night when he cried aloud at the memory of his furtive cigarette, the bishop was staying with a rich man named Garstein Fellows. These Garstein Fellows people were steel people with a financial side to them; young Garstein Fellows had his fingers in various chemical businesses, and the real life of the firm was in various minor partners called Hartstein and Blumenhart and so forth, who had acquired a considerable amount of ungentlemanly science and energy in Germany and German Switzerland. But the Fellows element was good old Princhester stuff. There had been a Fellows firm in Princhester in 1819. They were not people the bishop liked and it was not a house the bishop liked staying at, but it had become part of his policy to visit and keep in touch with as many of the local plutocracy as he could, to give and take with them, in order to make the presence of the church a reality to them. It had been not least among the negligences and evasions of the sainted but indolent Hood that he had invariably refused overnight hospitality whenever it was possible for him to get back to his home. The morning was his working time. His books and hymns had profited at the cost of missing many a generous after-dinner subscription, and at the expense of social unity. From the outset Scrope had set himself to alter this. A certain lack of enthusiasm on Lady Ella's part had merely provoked him to greater effort on his own. His ideal of what was needed with the people was something rather jolly and familiar, something like a very good and successful French or Irish priest, something that came easily and readily into their homes and laid a friendly hand on their shoulders. The less he liked these rich people naturally the more familiar his resolution to be successfully intimate made him. He put down the names and brief characteristics of their sons and daughters in a little note-book and consulted it before every visit so as to get his most casual enquiries right. And he invited himself to the Garstein Fellows house on this occasion by telegram.

“A special mission and some business in Wombash may I have a scrap of supper and a bed?”

Now Mrs. Garstein Fellows was a thoroughly London woman; she was one of the banking Grunenbaums, the fair tall sort, and she had a very decided tendency to smartness. She had a little party in the house, a sort of long week-end party, that made her hesitate for a minute or so before she framed a reply to the bishop’s request.

It was the intention of Mrs. Garstein Fellows to succeed very conspicuously in the British world, and the British world she felt was a complicated one; it is really not one world but several, and if you would surely succeed you must keep your peace with all the systems and be a source of satisfaction to all of them. So at least Mrs. Garstein Fellows saw it, and her method was to classify her acquaintances according to their systems, to keep them in their proper bundles, and to give every one the treatment he or she was accustomed to receive. And since all things British are now changing and passing away, it may not be uninteresting to record the classification Mrs. Garstein Fellows adopted. First she set apart as most precious and desirable, and requiring the most careful treatment, the “court dowdies “ — for so it was that the dignity and quiet good taste that radiated from Buckingham Palace impressed her restless, shallow mind — the sort of people who prefer pair horse carriages to automobiles, have quiet friendships in the highest quarters, quietly do not know any one else, busy themselves with charities, dress richly rather than impressively, and have either little water-colour accomplishments or none at all, and no other relations with “art.” At the skirts of this crowning British world Mrs. Garstein Fellows tugged industriously and expensively. She did not keep a carriage and pair and an old family coachman because that, she felt, would be considered pushing and presumptuous; she had the sense to stick to her common unpretending 80 h.p. Daimler; but she wore a special sort of blackish hat-bonnet for such occasions as brought her near the centre of honour, which she got from a little good shop known only to very few outside the inner ring, which hat-bonnet she was always careful to sit on for a few minutes before wearing. And it was to this first and highest and best section of her social scheme that she considered that bishops properly belonged. But some bishops,

and in particular such a comparatively bright bishop as the Bishop of Princhester, she also thought of as being just as comfortably accommodated in her second system, the "serious liberal lot," which was more fatiguing and less boring, which talked of books and things, visited the Bells, went to all first-nights when Granville Barker was the producer, and knew and valued people in the grey and earnest plains between the Cecils and the Sidney Webbs. And thirdly there were the smart intellectual lot, again not very well marked off, and on the whole practicable to bishops, of whom fewer particulars are needed because theirs is a perennial species, and then finally there was that fourth world which was paradoxically at once very brilliant and a little shady, which had its Night Club side, and seemed to set no limit to its eccentricities. It seemed at times to be aiming to shock and yet it had its standards, but here it was that the dancers and actresses and forgiven divorcees came in — and the bishops as a rule, a rule hitherto always respected, didn't. This was the ultimate world of Mrs. Garstein Fellows; she had no use for merely sporting people and the merely correct smart and the duller county families, sets that led nowhere, and it was from her fourth system of the Glittering Doubtfuls that this party which made her hesitate over the bishop's telegram, was derived.

She ran over their names as she sat considering her reply.

What was there for a bishop to object to? There was that admirable American widow, Lady Sunderbund. She was enormously rich, she was enthusiastic. She was really on probation for higher levels; it was her decolletage delayed her. If only she kept off theosophy and the Keltic renascence and her disposition to profess wild intellectual passions, there would be no harm in her. Provided she didn't come down to dinner in anything too fantastically scanty — but a word in season was possible. No! there was no harm in Lady Sunderbund. Then there were Ridgeway Kelso and this dark excitable Catholic friend of his, Paidraig O'Gorman. Mrs. Garstein Fellows saw no harm in them. Then one had to consider Lord Gatling and Lizzie Barusetter. But nothing showed, nothing was likely to show even if there was anything. And besides, wasn't there a Church and Stage Guild?

Except for those people there seemed little reason for alarm. Mrs.

Garstein Fellows did not know that Professor Hoppart, who so amusingly combined a professorship of political economy with the writing of music-hall lyrics, was a keen amateur theologian, nor that Bent, the sentimental novelist, had a similar passion. She did not know that her own eldest son, a dark, romantic-looking youngster from Eton, had also come to the theological stage of development. She did however weigh the possibilities of too liberal opinions on what are called social questions on the part of Miss Sharsper, the novelist, and decided that if that lady was watched nothing so terrible could be said even in an undertone; and as for the Mariposa, the dancer, she had nothing but Spanish and bad French, she looked all right, and it wasn't very likely she would go out of her way to startle an Anglican bishop. Simply she needn't dance. Besides which even if a man does get a glimpse of a little something — it isn't as if it was a woman.

But of course if the party mustn't annoy the bishop, the bishop must do his duty by the party. There must be the usual purple and the silver buckles.

She wired back:

"A little party but it won't put you out send your man with your change."

(2)

In making that promise Mrs. Garstein Fellows reckoned without the morbid sensibility of the bishop's disorganized nervous system and the unsuspected theological stirrings beneath the apparent worldliness of Hoppart and Bent.

The trouble began in the drawing-room after dinner. Out of deference to the bishop's abstinence the men did not remain to smoke, but came in to find the Mariposa and Lady Sunderbund smoking cigarettes, which these ladies continued to do a little defiantly. They had hoped to finish them before the bishop came up. The night was chilly, and a cheerful wood fire cracking and banging on the fireplace emphasized the ordinary heating. Mrs. Garstein Fellows, who had not expected so prompt an appearance of the men, had arranged her chairs in a semicircle for a little womanly gossip,

and before she could intervene she found her party, with the exception of Lord Gatling, who had drifted just a little too noticeably with Miss Barnsetter into a window, sitting round with a conscious air, that was perhaps just a trifle too apparent, of being "good."

And Mr. Bent plunged boldly into general conversation.

"Are you reading anything now, Mrs. Garstein Fellows?" he asked. "I'm an interested party."

She was standing at the side of the fireplace. She bit her lip and looked at the cornice and meditated with a girlish expression. "Yes," she said. "I am reading again. I didn't think I should but I am."

"For a time," said Hoppart, "I read nothing but the papers. I bought from a dozen to twenty a day."

"That is wearing off," said the bishop.

"The first thing I began to read again," said Mrs. Garstein Fellows, " — I'm not saying it for your sake, Bishop — was the Bible."

"I went to the Bible," said Bent as if he was surprised.

"I've heard that before," said Ridgeway Kelso, in that slightly explosive manner of his. "All sorts of people who don't usually read the Bible—"

"But Mr. Kelso!" protested their hostess with raised eyebrows.

"I was thinking of Bent. But anyhow there's been a great wave of seriousness, a sudden turning to religion and religious things. I don't know if it comes your way, Bishop...."

"I've had no rows of penitents yet."

"We may be coming," said Hoppart.

He turned sideways to face the bishop. "I think we should be coming if — if it wasn't for old entangled difficulties. I don't know if you will mind my saying it to you, but...."

The bishop returned his frank glance. "I'd like to know above all things," he said. "If Mrs. Garstein Fellow will permit us. It's my business to know."

"We all want to know," said Lady Sunderbund, speaking from the low chair on the other side of the fireplace. There was a vibration in her voice and a sudden gleam of enthusiasm in her face. "Why shouldn't people talk se'iously sometimes?"

"Well, take my own case," said Hoppart. "In the last few weeks,

I've been reading not only in the Bible but in the Fathers. I've read most of Athanasius, most of Eusebius, and — I'll confess it — Gibbon. I find all my old wonder come back. Why are we pinned to — to the amount of creed we are pinned to? Why for instance must you insist on the Trinity?"

"Yes," said the Eton boy explosively, and flushed darkly to find he had spoken.

"Here is a time when men ask for God," said Hoppart. "And you give them three!" cried Bent rather cheaply. "I confess I find the way encumbered by these Alexandrian elaborations," Hoppart completed.

"Need it be?" whispered Lady Sunderbund very softly.

"Well," said the bishop, and leant back in his armchair and knitted his brow at the fire. "I do not think," he said, "that men coming to God think very much of the nature of God. Nevertheless," he spoke slowly and patted the arm of his chair, "nevertheless the church insists that certain vitally important truths have to be conveyed, certain mortal errors are best guarded against, by these symbols."

"You admit they are symbols."

"So the church has always called them."

Hoppart showed by a little movement and grimace that he thought the bishop quibbled.

"In every sense of the word," the bishop hastened to explain, "the creeds are symbolical. It is clear they seek to express ineffable things by at least an extended use of familiar words. I suppose we are all agreed nowadays that when we speak of the Father and of the Son we mean something only in a very remote and exalted way parallel with — with biological fatherhood and sonship."

Lady Sunderbund nodded eagerly. "Yes," she said, "oh, yes," and held up an expectant face for more.

"Our utmost words, our most elaborately phrased creeds, can at the best be no better than the shadow of something unseen thrown upon the screen of experience."

He raised his rather weary eyes to Hoppart as if he would know what else needed explanation. He was gratified by Lady Sunderbund's approval, but he affected not to see or hear it. But it was Bent who spoke.

He spoke in the most casual way. He made the thing seem the

most incidental of observations.

"What puzzles me," he said, "is why the early Christians identified the Spermaticos Logos of the Stoics with the second and not with the third person of the Trinity."

To which the bishop, rising artlessly to the bait, replied, "Ah! that indeed is the unfortunate aspect of the whole affair."

And then the Irish Catholic came down on him....

(3)

How the bishop awakened in the night after this dispute has been told already in the opening section of this story. To that night of discomfort we now return after this comprehensive digression. He awoke from nightmares of eyes and triangles to bottomless remorse and perplexity. For the first time he fully measured the vast distances he had travelled from the beliefs and attitudes of his early training, since his coming to Princhester. Travelled — or rather slipped and fallen down the long slopes of doubt.

That clear inky dimness that comes before dawn found his white face at the window looking out upon the great terrace and the park.

(4)

After a bout of mental distress and sleeplessness the bishop would sometimes wake in the morning not so much exhausted as in a state of thin mental and bodily activity. This was more particularly so if the night had produced anything in the nature of a purpose. So it was on this occasion. The day was clear before him; at least it could be cleared by sending three telegrams; his man could go back to Princhester and so leave him perfectly free to go to Brighton-Pomfrey in London and secure that friendly dispensation to smoke again which seemed the only alternative to a serious mental breakdown. He would take his bag, stay the night in London, smoke, sleep well, and return the next morning. Dunk, his valet-butler, found him already bathed and ready for a cup of tea and a Bradshaw at half-past seven. He went on dressing although the good train for London did not start until 10.45.

Mrs. Garstein Fellows was by nature and principle a late riser; the breakfast-room showed small promise yet of the repast, though the table was set and bright with silver and fresh flowers, and a wood fire popped and spurted to greet and encourage the March sunshine. But standing in the doorway that led to the promise and daffodils and crocuses of Mrs. Garstein Fellows' garden stood Lady Sunderbund, almost with an effect of waiting, and she greeted the bishop very cheerfully, doubted the immediate appearance of any one else, and led him in the most natural manner into the new but already very pleasant shrubbery.

In some indefinable special way the bishop had been aware of Lady Sunderbund's presence since first he had met her, but it was only now that he could observe her with any particularity. She was tall like his own Lady Ella but not calm and quiet; she was electric, her eyes, her smiles, her complexion had as it were an established brightness that exceeded the common lustre of things. This morning she was dressed in grey that was nevertheless not grey but had an effect of colour, and there was a thread of black along the lines of her body and a gleam of gold. She carried her head back with less dignity than pride; there was a little frozen movement in her dark hair as if it flamed up out of her head. There were silver ornaments in her hair. She spoke with a pretty little weakness of the r's that had probably been acquired abroad. And she lost no time in telling him, she was eager to tell him, that she had been waylaying him. "I did so want to talk to you some maw," she said. "I was shy last night and they we' all so noisy and eaga'. I p'ayed that you might come down early.

"It's an oppo'tunity I've longed for," she said.

She did her very pretty best to convey what it was had been troubling her. 'iligion bad been worrying her for years. Life was — oh — just ornaments and games and so wea'isome, so wea'isome, unless it was 'iligious. And she couldn't get it 'iligious.

The bishop nodded his head gravely.

"You unde'stand?" she pressed.

"I understand too well — the attempt to get hold — and keep hold."

"I knew you would!" she cried.

She went on with an impulsive rapidity. O'thodoxy had always 'ipelled her, — always. She had felt herself confronted by the most insurmountable difficulties, and yet whenever she had gone away from Christianity — she had gone away from Christianity, to the Theosophists and the Christian Scientists — she had felt she was only "st'aying fu'tha." And then suddenly when he was speaking last night, she had felt he knew. It was so wonderful to hear the "k'eed was only a symbol."

"Symbol is the proper name for it," said the bishop. "It wasn't for centuries it was called the Creed."

Yes, and so what it really meant was something quite different from what it did mean.

The bishop felt that this sentence also was only a symbol, and nodded encouragingly — but gravely, warily.

And there she was, and the point was there were thousands and thousands and thousands of educated people like her who were dying to get through these old-fashioned symbols to the true faith that lay behind them. That they knew lay behind them. She didn't know if he had read "The Light under the Altar"?

"He's vicar of Wombash — in my diocese," said the bishop with restraint.

"It's wonde'ful stuff," said Lady Sunderbund. "It's spi'tually cold, but it's intellectually wonde'ful. But we want that with spi'tuality. We want it so badly. If some one—"

She became daring. She bit her under lip and flashed her spirit at him.

"If you—" she said and paused.

"Could think aloud," said the bishop.

"Yes," she said, nodding rapidly, and became breathless to hear.

It would certainly be an astonishing end to the Chasters difficulty if the bishop went over to the heretic, the bishop reflected.

"My dear lady, I won't disguise," he began; "in fact I don't see how I could, that for some years I have been growing more and more discontented with some of our most fundamental formulae. But it's been very largely a shapeless discontent — hitherto. I don't think I've said a word to a single soul. No, not a word. You are the first person to whom I've ever made the admission that even my feelings

are at times unorthodox."

She lit up marvellously at his words. "Go on," she whispered.

But she did not need to tell him to go on. Now that he had once broached the casket of his reserves he was only too glad of a listener. He talked as if they were intimate and loving friends, and so it seemed to both of them they were. It was a wonderful release from a long and painful solitude.

To certain types it is never quite clear what has happened to them until they tell it. So that now the bishop, punctuated very prettily by Lady Sunderbund, began to measure for the first time the extent of his departure from the old innate convictions of Otteringham Rectory. He said that it was strange to find doubt coming so late in life, but perhaps it was only in recent years that his faith had been put to any really severe tests. It had been sheltered and unchallenged.

"This fearful wa'," Lady Sunderbund interjected.

But Princhester had been a critical and trying change, and "The Light under the Altar" case had ploughed him deeply. It was curious that his doubts always seemed to have a double strand; there was a moral objection based on the church's practical futility and an intellectual strand subordinated to this which traced that futility largely to its unconvincing formulae.

"And yet you know," said the bishop, "I find I can't go with Chasters. He beats at the church; he treats her as though she were wrong. I feel like a son, growing up, who finds his mother isn't quite so clear-spoken nor quite so energetic as she seemed to be once. She's right, I feel sure. I've never doubted her fundamental goodness."

"Yes," said Lady Sunderbund, very eagerly, "yes."

"And yet there's this futility.... You know, my dear lady, I don't know what to do. One feels on the one hand, that here is a cloud of witnesses, great men, sainted men, subtle men, figures permanently historical, before whom one can do nothing but bow down in the utmost humility, here is a great instrument and organization — what would the world be without the witness of the church? — and on the other hand here are our masses out of hand and hostile, our industrial leaders equally hostile; there is a failure to grip, and that failure to grip is so clearly traceable to the fact that our ideas are not modern

ideas, that when we come to profess our faith we find nothing in our mouths but antiquated Alexandrian subtleties and phrases and ideas that may have been quite alive, quite significant, quite adequate in Asia Minor or Egypt, among men essentially orientals, fifteen hundred years ago, but which now—"

He expressed just what they came to now by a gesture.

She echoed his gesture.

"Probably I'm not alone among my brethren," he went on, and then: "But what is one to do?"

With her hands she acted her sense of his difficulty.

"One may be precipitate," he said. "There's a kind of loyalty and discipline that requires one to keep the ranks until one's course of action is perfectly clear. One owes so much to so many. One has to consider how one may affect — oh! people one has never seen."

He was lugging things now into speech that so far had been scarcely above the threshold of his conscious thought. He went on to discuss the entire position of the disbelieving cleric. He discovered a fine point.

"If there was something else, an alternative, another religion, another Church, to which one could go, the whole case would be different. But to go from the church to nothingness isn't to go from falsehood to truth. It's to go from truth, rather badly expressed, rather conservatively hidden by its protections, truth in an antiquated costume, to the blackest lie — in the world."

She took that point very brightly.

"One must hold fast to 'iligion," she said, and looked earnestly at him and gripped fiercely, pink thumbs out, with her beautiful hands held up.

That was it, exactly. He too was gripping. But while on the outside the Midianites of denial were prowling for these clinging souls, within the camp they were assailed by a meticulous orthodoxy that was only too eager to cast them forth. The bishop dwelt for a time upon the curious fierceness orthodoxy would sometimes display. Nowadays atheism can be civil, can be generous; it is orthodoxy that trails a scurrilous fringe.

"Who was that young man with a strong Irish accent — who contradicted me so suddenly?" he asked.

“The dark young man?”

“The noisy young man.”

“That was Mist’ Pat’ick O’Go’man. He is a Kelt and all that. Spells Pat’ick with eva so many letters. You know. They say he spends ouas and ouas lea’ning E’se. He wo’ies about it. They all t’y to lea’n E’se, and it wo’ies them and makes them hate England moa and moa.”

“He is orthodox. He — is what I call orthodox to the ridiculous extent.”

“‘idiculous.”

A deep-toned gong proclaimed breakfast over a square mile or so of territory, and Lady Sunderbund turned about mechanically towards the house. But they continued their discussion.

She started indeed a new topic. “Shall we eva, do ‘ou think, have a new ‘iligion — t’ua and betta?”

That was a revolutionary idea to him.

He was still fending it off from him when a gap in the shrubs brought them within sight of the house and of Mrs. Garstein Fellows on the portico waving a handkerchief and crying “Break-fast.”

“I wish we could talk for houas,” said Lady Sunderbund.

“I’ve been glad of this talk,” said the bishop. “Very glad.”

She lifted her soft abundant skirts and trotted briskly across the still dewy lawn towards the house door. The bishop followed gravely and slowly with his hands behind his back and an unusually peaceful expression upon his face. He was thinking how rare and precious a thing it is to find intelligent friendship in women. More particularly when they were dazzlingly charming and pretty. It was strange, but this was really his first woman friend. If, as he hoped, she became his friend.

Lady Sunderbund entered the breakfast room in a gusty abundance like Botticelli’s Primavera, and kissed Mrs. Garstein Fellows good-morning. She exhaled a glowing happiness. “He is wondyful,” she panted. “He is most wondyful.”

“Mr. Hidgeway Kelso?”

“No, the dee’ bishop! I love him. Are those the little sausages I like? May I take th’ee? I’ve been up houas.”

The dee’ bishop appeared in the sunlit doorway.

(5)

The bishop felt more contentment in the London train than he had felt for many weeks. He had taken two decisive and relieving steps. One was that he had stated his case to another human being, and that a very charming and sympathetic human being, he was no longer a prey to a current of secret and concealed thoughts running counter to all the appearances of his outward life; and the other was that he was now within an hour or so of Brighton-Pomfrey and a cigarette. He would lunch on the train, get to London about two, take a taxi at once to the wise old doctor, catch him over his coffee in a charitable and understanding mood, and perhaps be smoking a cigarette publicly and honourably and altogether satisfyingly before three.

So far as Brighton-Pomfrey's door this program was fulfilled without a hitch. The day was fine and he had his taxi opened, and noted with a patriotic satisfaction as he rattled through the streets, the glare of the recruiting posters on every vacant piece of wall and the increasing number of men in khaki in the streets. But at the door he had a disappointment. Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was away at the front — of all places; he had gone for some weeks; would the bishop like to see Dr. Dale?

The bishop hesitated. He had never set eyes on this Dr. Dale.

Indeed, he had never heard of Dr. Dale.

Seeing his old friend Brighton-Pomfrey and being gently and tactfully told to do exactly what he was longing to do was one thing; facing some strange doctor and going slowly and elaborately through the whole story of his illness, his vow and his breakdown, and perhaps having his reaction time tested and all sorts of stripping and soundings done, was quite another. He was within an ace of turning away.

If he had turned away his whole subsequent life would have been different. It was the very slightest thing in the world tipped the beam. It was the thought that, after all, whatever inconvenience and unpleasantness there might be in this interview, there was at the end of it a very reasonable prospect of a restored and legitimate cigarette.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH - THE FIRST VISION

(1)

Dr. DALE exceeded the bishop's worst apprehensions. He was a lean, lank, dark young man with long black hair and irregular, rather prolonged features; his chin was right over to the left; he looked constantly at the bishop's face with a distinctly sceptical grey eye; he could not have looked harder if he had been a photographer or a portrait painter. And his voice was harsh, and the bishop was particularly sensitive to voices.

He began by understanding far too much of the bishop's illness, and he insisted on various familiarities with the bishop's heart and tongue and eye and knee that ruffled the bishop's soul.

"Brighton-Pomfrey talked of neurasthenia?" he asked. "That was his diagnosis," said the bishop. "Neurasthenia," said the young man as though he despised the word.

The bishop went on buttoning up his coat.

"You don't of course want to break your vows about drinking and smoking," said the young man with the very faintest suggestion of derision in his voice.

"Not if it can possibly be avoided," the bishop asserted. "Without a loss, that is, of practical efficiency," he added. "For I have much to do."

"I think that it is possible to keep your vow," said the young man, and the bishop could have sworn at him. "I think we can manage that all right."

(2)

The bishop sat at the table resting his arm upon it and awaiting the next development of this unsatisfactory interview. He was on the verge of asking as unpleasantly as possible when Brighton-Pomfrey would return.

The young man stood upon Brighton-Pomfrey's hearth-rug and was evidently contemplating dissertations.

“Of course,” he said, as though he discussed a problem with himself, “you must have some sort of comfort. You must get out of this state, one way or another.”

The bishop nodded assent. He had faint hopes of this young man’s ideas of comfort.

Dr. Dale reflected. Then he went off away from the question of comfort altogether. “You see, the trouble in such a case as this is peculiarly difficult to trace to its sources because it comes just upon the border-line of bodily and mental things. You may take a drug or alter your regimen and it disturbs your thoughts, you may take an idea and it disturbs your health. It is easy enough to say, as some do, that all ideas have a physical substratum; it is almost as easy to say with the Christian Scientist that all bodily states are amenable to our ideas. The truth doesn’t, I think, follow the border between those opposite opinions very exactly on either side. I can’t, for instance, tell you to go home and pray against these uncertainties and despairs, because it is just these uncertainties and despairs that rob you of the power of efficient prayer.”

He did not seem to expect anything from the bishop.

“I don’t see that because a case brings one suddenly right up against the frontier of metaphysics, why a doctor should necessarily pull up short at that, why one shouldn’t go on into either metaphysics or psychology if such an extension is necessary for the understanding of the case. At any rate if you’ll permit it in this consultation....”

“Go on,” said the bishop, holding on to that promise of comfort. “The best thing is to thrash out the case in your own way. And then come to what is practical.”

“What is really the matter here — the matter with you that is — is a disorganization of your tests of reality. It’s one of a group of states hitherto confused. Neurasthenia, that comprehensive phrase — well, it is one of the neurasthenias. Here, I confess, I begin to talk of work I am doing, work still to be published, finished first and then published.... But I go off from the idea that every living being lives in a state not differing essentially from a state of hallucination concerning the things about it. Truth, essential truth, is hidden. Always. Of course there must be a measure of truth in our working illusions, a working measure of truth, or the creature would smash

itself up and end itself, but beyond that discretion of the fire and the pitfall lies a wide margin of error about which we may be deceived for years. So long as it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter. I don't know if I make myself clear."

"I follow you," said the bishop a little wearily, "I follow you. Phenomena and noumena and so on and so on. Kant and so forth. Pragmatism. Yes."

With a sigh.

"And all that," completed Dr. Dale in a voice that suggested mockery. "But you see we grow into a way of life, we settle down among habits and conventions, we say 'This is all right' and 'That is always so.' We get more and more settled into our life as a whole and more and more confident. Unless something happens to shake us out of our sphere of illusion. That may be some violent contradictory fact, some accident, or it may be some subtle change in one's health and nerves that makes us feel doubtful. Or a change of habits. Or, as I believe, some subtle quickening of the critical faculty. Then suddenly comes the feeling as though we were lost in a strange world, as though we had never really seen the world before."

He paused.

The bishop was reluctantly interested. "That does describe something — of the mental side," he admitted. "I never believe in concealing my own thoughts from an intelligent patient," said Dr. Dale, with a quiet offensiveness. "That sort of thing belongs to the dark ages of the 'pothecary's art. I will tell you exactly my guesses and suppositions about you. At the base of it all is a slight and subtle kidney trouble, due I suggest to your going to Princhester and drinking the local water—"

"But it's excellent water. They boast of it."

"By all the established tests. As a matter of fact many of our best drinking waters have all sorts of unspecified qualities. Burton water, for example, is radioactive by Beetham's standards up to the ninth degree. But that is by the way. My theory about your case is that this produced a change in your blood, that quickened your sensibilities and your critical faculties just at a time when a good many bothers — I don't of course know what they were, but I can, so to speak, see the marks all over you — came into your life."

The bishop nodded.

"You were uprooted. You moved from house to house, and failed to get that curled up safe feeling one has in a real home in any of them."

"If you saw the fireplaces and the general decoration of the new palace!" admitted the bishop. "I had practically no control."

"That confirms me," said Dr. Dale. "Insomnia followed, and increased the feeling of physical strangeness by increasing the bodily disturbance. I suspect an intellectual disturbance."

He paused.

"There was," said the bishop.

"You were no longer at home anywhere. You were no longer at home in your diocese, in your palace, in your body, in your convictions. And then came the war. Quite apart from everything else the mind of the whole world is suffering profoundly from the shock of this war — much more than is generally admitted. One thing you did that you probably did not observe yourself doing, you drank rather more at your meals, you smoked a lot more. That was your natural and proper response to the shock."

"Ah!" said the bishop, and brightened up.

"It was remarked by Tolstoy, I think, that few intellectual men would really tolerate the world as it is if it were not for smoking and drinking. Even novelists have their moments of lucidity. Certainly these things soothe the restlessness in men's minds, deaden their sceptical sensibilities. And just at the time when you were getting most dislodged — you gave them up."

"And the sooner I go back to them the better," said the bishop brightly. "I quite see that."

"I wouldn't say that," said Dr. Dale....

(3)

"That," said Dr. Dale, "is just where my treatment of this case differs from the treatment of " — he spoke the name reluctantly as if he disliked the mere sound of it— "Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey."

"Hitherto, of course," said the bishop, "I've been in his hands."

"He," said Dr. Dale, "would certainly set about trying to restore

your old sphere of illusion, your old familiar sensations and ideas and confidences. He would in fact turn you back. He would restore all your habits. He would order you a rest. He would send you off to some holiday resort, fresh in fact but familiar in character, the High lands, North Italy, or Switzerland for example. He would forbid you newspapers and order you to botanize and prescribe tranquillizing reading; Trollope's novels, the Life of Gladstone, the works of Mr. A. C. Benson, memoirs and so on. You'd go somewhere where there was a good Anglican chaplain, and you'd take some of the services yourself. And we'd wash out the effects of the Princhester water with Contrexeville, and afterwards put you on Salutaris or Perrier. I don't know whether I shouldn't have inclined to some such treatment before the war began. Only—"

He paused.

"You think — ?"

Dr. Dale's face betrayed a sudden sombre passion. "It won't do now," he said in a voice of quiet intensity. "It won't do now."

He remained darkly silent for so long that at last the bishop spoke. "Then what," he asked, "do you suggest?

"Suppose we don't try to go back," said Dr. Dale. "Suppose we go on and go through."

"Where?"

"To reality.

"I know it's doubtful, I know it's dangerous," he went on, "but I am convinced that now we can no longer keep men's minds and souls in these feathered nests, these spheres of illusion. Behind these veils there is either God or the Darkness.... Why should we not go on?"

The bishop was profoundly perplexed. He heard himself speaking. "It would be unworthy of my cloth," he was saying.

Dr. Dale completed the sentence: "to go back."

"Let me explain a little more," he said, "what I mean by 'going on.' I think that this loosening of the ties of association that bind a man to his everyday life and his everyday self is in nine cases out of ten a loosening of the ties that bind him to everyday sanity. One common form of this detachment is the form you have in those cases of people who are found wandering unaware of their names, unaware

of their places of residence, lost altogether from themselves. They have not only lost their sense of identity with themselves, but all the circumstances of their lives have faded out of their minds like an idle story in a book that has been read and put aside. I have looked into hundreds of such cases. I don't think that loss of identity is a necessary thing; it's just another side of the general weakening of the grip upon reality, a kind of anaemia of the brain so that interest fades and fails. There is no reason why you should forget a story because you do not believe it — if your brain is strong enough to hold it. But if your brain is tired and weak, then so soon as you lose faith in your records, your mind is glad to let them go. When you see these lost identity people that is always your first impression, a tired brain that has let go."

The bishop felt extremely like letting go.

"But how does this apply to my case?"

"I come to that," said Dr. Dale, holding up a long large hand. "What if we treat this case of yours in a new way? What if we give you not narcotics but stimulants and tonics? What if we so touch the blood that we increase your sense of physical detachment while at the same time feeding up your senses to a new and more vivid apprehension of things about you?" He looked at his patient's hesitation and added: "You'd lose all that craving feeling, that you fancy at present is just the need of a smoke. The world might grow a trifle — transparent, but you'd keep real. Instead of drugging oneself back to the old contentment—"

"You'd drug me on to the new," said the bishop.

"But just one word more!" said Dr. Dale. "Hear why I would do this! It was easy and successful to rest and drug people back to their old states of mind when the world wasn't changing, wasn't spinning round in the wildest tornado of change that it has ever been in. But now — Where can I send you for a rest? Where can I send you to get you out of sight and hearing of the Catastrophe? Of course old Brighton-Pomfrey would go on sending people away for rest and a nice little soothing change if the Day of Judgment was coming in the sky and the earth was opening and the sea was giving up its dead. He'd send 'em to the seaside. Such things as that wouldn't shake his faith in the Channel crossing. My idea is that it's not only right for

you to go through with this, but that it's the only thing to do. If you go right on and right through with these doubts and intimations—"

He paused.

"You may die like a madman," he said, "but you won't die like a tame rabbit."

(4)

The bishop sat reflecting. What fascinated and attracted him was the ending of all the cravings and uneasinesses and restlessness that had distressed his life for over four years; what deterred him was the personality of this gaunt young man with his long grey face, his excited manner, his shock of black hair. He wanted that tonic — with grave misgivings. "If you think this tonic is the wiser course," he began. "I'd give it you if you were my father," said Dr. Dale. "I've got everything for it," he added.

"You mean you can make it up — without a prescription."

"I can't give you a prescription. The essence of it — It's a distillate I have been trying. It isn't in the Pharmacopeia."

Again the bishop had a twinge of misgiving.

But in the end he succumbed. He didn't want to take the stuff, but also he did not want to go without his promised comfort.

Presently Dale had given him a little phial — and was holding up to the window a small medicine glass into which he was pouring very carefully twenty drops of the precious fluid. "Take it only," he said, "when you feel you must."

"It is the most golden of liquids," said the bishop, peering at it.

"When you want more I will make you more. Later of course, it will be possible to write a prescription. Now add the water — so.

"It becomes opalescent. How beautifully the light plays in it!

"Take it."

The bishop dismissed his last discretion and drank.

"Well?" said Dr. Dale.

"I am still here," said the bishop, smiling, and feeling a joyous tingling throughout his body. "It stirs me."

(5)

The bishop stood on the pavement outside Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey's house. The massive door had closed behind him.

It had been an act of courage, of rashness if you will, to take this draught. He was acutely introspective, ready for anything, for the most disagreeable or the most bizarre sensations. He was asking himself, Were his feet steady? Was his head swimming?

His doubts glowed into assurance.

Suddenly he perceived that he was sure of God.

Not perhaps of the God of Nicaea, but what did these poor little quibblings and definitions of the theologians matter? He had been worrying about these definitions and quibblings for four long restless years. Now they were just failures to express — what surely every one knew — and no one would ever express exactly. Because here was God, and the kingdom of God was manifestly at hand. The visible world hung before him as a mist might hang before the rising sun. He stood proudly and masterfully facing a universe that had heretofore bullied him into doubt and apologetics, a universe that had hitherto been opaque and was now betrayed translucent.

That was the first effect of the new tonic, complete reassurance, complete courage. He turned to walk towards Mount Street and Berkeley Square as a sultan might turn to walk among his slaves.

But the tonic was only beginning.

Before he had gone a dozen steps he was aware that he seemed more solid and larger than the people about him. They had all a curious miniature effect, as though he was looking at them through the wrong end of an opera glass. The houses on either side of the street and the traffic shared this quality in an equal measure. It was as if he was looking at the world through apertures in a miniature cinematograph peep-show. This surprised him and a little dashed his first glow of satisfaction.

He passed a man in khaki who, he fancied, looked at him with an odd expression. He observed the next passers-by narrowly and suspiciously, a couple of smartish young men, a lady with a poodle, a grocer's boy with a basket, but none seemed to observe anything remarkable about him. Then he caught the eye of a taxi-driver and became doubtful again.

He had a feeling that this tonic was still coming in like a tide. It

seemed to be filling him and distending him, in spite of the fact that he was already full. After four years of flaccidity it was pleasant to be distended again, but already he felt more filled than he had ever been before. At present nothing was showing, but all his body seemed braced and uplifted. He must be careful not to become inflated in his bearing.

And yet it was difficult not to betray a little inflation. He was so filled with assurance that things were right with him and that God was there with him. After all it was not mere fancy; he was looking through the peepholes of his eyes at the world of illusion and appearance. The world that was so intent upon its immediate business, so regardless of eternal things, that had so dominated him but a little while ago, was after all a thing more mortal than himself.

Another man in khaki passed him.

For the first time he saw the war as something measurable, as something with a beginning and an end, as something less than the immortal spirit in man. He had been too much oppressed by it. He perceived all these people in the street were too much oppressed by it. He wanted to tell them as much, tell them that all was well with them, bid them be of good cheer. He wanted to bless them. He found his arm floating up towards gestures of benediction. Self-control became increasingly difficult.

All the way down Berkeley Square the bishop was in full-bodied struggle with himself. He was trying to control himself, trying to keep within bounds. He felt that he was stepping too high, that his feet were not properly reaching the ground, that he was walking upon cushions of air.

The feeling of largeness increased, and the feeling of transparency in things about him. He avoided collision with passers-by — excessively. And he felt his attention was being drawn more and more to something that was going on beyond the veil of visible things. He was in Piccadilly now, but at the same time Piccadilly was very small and he was walking in the presence of God.

He had a feeling that God was there though he could not see him. And at the same time he was in this transitory world, with people going to and fro, men with umbrellas tucked dangerously under their arms, men in a hurry, policemen, young women rattling Red Cross

collecting boxes, smart people, loafers. They distracted one from God.

He set out to cross the road just opposite Prince's, and jumping needlessly to give way to an omnibus had the narrowest escape from a taxicab.

He paused on the pavement edge to recover himself. The shock of his near escape had, as people say, pulled him together.

What was he to do? Manifestly this opalescent draught was overpowering him. He ought never to have taken it. He ought to have listened to the voice of his misgivings. It was clear that he was not in a fit state to walk about the streets. He was — what had been Dr. Dale's term? — losing his sense of reality. What was he to do? He was alarmed but not dismayed. His thoughts were as full-bodied as the rest of his being, they came throbbing and bumping into his mind. What was he to do?

Brighton-Pomfrey ought never to have left his practice in the hands of this wild-eyed experimenter.

Strange that after a lifetime of discretion and men's respect one should be standing on the Piccadilly pavement — intoxicated!

It came into his head that he was not so very far from the Athenaeum, and surely there if anywhere a bishop may recover his sense of being — ordinary.

And behind everything, behind the tall buildings and the swarming people there was still the sense of a wide illuminated space, of a light of wonder and a Presence. But he must not give way to that again! He had already given way altogether too much. He repeated to himself in a whisper, "I am in Piccadilly."

If he kept tight hold upon himself he felt he might get to the Athenaeum before — before anything more happened.

He murmured directions to himself. "Keep along the pavement. Turn to the right at the Circus. Now down the hill. Easily down the hill. Don't float! Junior Army and Navy Stores. And the bookseller."

And presently he had a doubt of his name and began to repeat it.

"Edward Princhester. Edward Scrope, Lord Bishop of Princhester."

And all the while voices within him were asserting, "You are in the kingdom of Heaven. You are in the presence of God. Place and

time are a texture of illusion and dreamland. Even now, you are with God."

(6)

The porter of the Athenaeum saw him come in, looking well — flushed indeed — but queer in expression; his blue eyes were wide open and unusually vague and blue.

He wandered across towards the dining-room, hesitated, went to look at the news, seemed in doubt whether he would not go into the smoking-room, and then went very slowly upstairs, past the golden angel up to the great drawing-room.

In the drawing-room he found only Sir James Mounce, the man who knew the novels of Sir Walter Scott by heart and had the minutest and most unsparing knowledge of every detail in the life of that supreme giant of English literature. He had even, it was said, acquired a Scotch burr in the enthusiasm of his hero-worship. It was usually sufficient only to turn an ear towards him for him to talk for an hour or so. He was now studying Bradshaw.

The bishop snatched at him desperately. He felt that if he went away there would be no hold left upon the ordinary things of life.

"Sir James," he said, "I was wondering the other day when was the exact date of the earliest public ascription of Waverley to Scott."

"Eh!" said Sir James, "but I'd like to talk that over with ye. Indeed I would. It would be depending very largely on what ye called 'public.' But—"

He explained something about an engagement in Birmingham that night, a train to catch. Reluctantly but relentlessly he abandoned the proffered ear. But he promised that the next time they met in the club he would go into the matter "exhausteevely."

The door closed upon him. The bishop was alone. He was flooded with the light of the world that is beyond this world. The things about him became very small and indistinct.

He would take himself into a quiet corner in the library of this doll's house, and sit his little body down in one of the miniature armchairs. Then if he was going to faint or if the trancelike feeling was to become altogether a trance — well, a bishop asleep in an

armchair in the library of the Athenaeum is nothing to startle any one.

He thought of that convenient hidden room, the North Library, in which is the bust of Croker. There often one can be quite alone.... It was empty, and he went across to the window that looks out upon Pall Mall and sat down in the little uncomfortable easy chair by the desk with its back to the Benvenuto Cellini.

And as he sat down, something snapped — like the snapping of a lute string — in his brain.

(7)

With a sigh of deep relief the bishop realized that this world had vanished.

He was in a golden light.

He perceived it as a place, but it was a place without buildings or trees or any very definite features. There was a cloudy suggestion of distant hills, and beneath his feet were little gem-like flowers, and a feeling of divinity and infinite friendliness pervaded his being. His impressions grew more definite. His feet seemed to be bare. He was no longer a bishop nor clad as a bishop. That had gone with the rest of the world. He was seated on a slab of starry rock.

This he knew quite clearly was the place of God.

He was unable to disentangle thoughts from words. He seemed to be speaking in his mind.

"I have been very foolish and confused and perplexed. I have been like a creature caught among thorns."

"You served the purpose of God among those thorns." It seemed to him at first that the answer also was among his thoughts.

"I seemed so silly and so little. My wits were clay."

"Clay full of desires."

"Such desires!"

"Blind desires. That will presently come to the light."

"Shall we come to the light?"

"But here it is, and you see it!"

(8)

It became clearer in the mind of the bishop that a figure sat beside him, a figure of great strength and beauty, with a smiling face and kindly eyes. A strange thought and a strange courage came to the bishop.

"Tell me," he whispered, "are you God?"

"I am the Angel of God."

The bishop thought over that for some moments.

"I want," he said, "to know about God.

"I want," he said, with a deepening passion of the soul, "to know about God. Slowly through four long years I have been awakening to the need of God. Body and soul I am sick for the want of God and the knowledge of God. I did not know what was the matter with me, why my life had become so disordered and confused that my very appetites and habits are all astray. But I am perishing for God as a waterless man upon a raft perishes for drink, and there is nothing but madness if I touch the seas about me. Not only in my thoughts but in my under thoughts and in my nerves and bones and arteries I have need of God. You see I grew up in the delusion that I knew God, I did not know that I was unprovisioned and unprovided against the tests and strains and hardships of life. I thought that I was secure and safe. I was told that we men — who were apes not a quarter of a million years ago, who still have hair upon our arms and ape's teeth in our jaws — had come to the full and perfect knowledge of God. It was all put into a creed. Not a word of it was to be altered, not a sentence was to be doubted any more. They made me a teacher of this creed. They seemed to explain it to me. And when I came to look into it, when my need came and I turned to my creed, it was old and shrivelled up, it was the patched-up speculations of vanished Greeks and Egyptians, it was a mummy of ancient disputes, old and dry, that fell to dust as I unwrapped it. And I was dressed up in the dress of old dead times and put before an altar of forgotten sacrifices, and I went through ceremonies as old as the first seedtime; and suddenly I knew clearly that God was not there, God was not in my Creed, not in my cathedral, not in my ceremonies, nowhere in my life. And at the same time I knew, I knew as I had never known before, that certainly there was God."

He paused. "Tell me," said the friend at his side; "tell me."

“It was as if a child running beside its mother, looked up and saw that he had never seen her face before, that she was not his mother, and that the words he had seemed to understand were — now that he listened — words in an unknown tongue.

“You see, I am but a common sort of man, dear God; I have neither lived nor thought in any way greatly, I have gone from one day to the next day without looking very much farther than the end of the day, I have gone on as life has befallen; if no great trouble had come into my life, so I should have lived to the end of my days. But life which began for me easily and safely has become constantly more difficult and strange. I could have held my services and given my benedictions, I could have believed I believed in what I thought I believed.... But now I am lost and astray — crying out for God....”

(9)

“Let us talk a little about your troubles,” said the Angel. “Let us talk about God and this creed that worries you and this church of yours.”

“I feel as though I had been struggling to this talk through all the years — since my doubts began.”

“The story your Creed is trying to tell is much the same story that all religions try to tell. In your heart there is God, beyond the stars there is God. Is it the same God?”

“I don’t know,” said the bishop.

“Does any one know?”

“I thought I knew.”

“Your creed is full of Levantine phrases and images, full of the patched contradictions of the human intelligence utterly puzzled. It is about those two Gods, the God beyond the stars and the God in your heart. It says that they are the same God, but different. It says that they have existed together for all time, and that one is the Son of the other. It has added a third Person — but we won’t go into that.”

The bishop was reminded suddenly of the dispute at Mrs. Garstein Fellows’. “We won’t go into that,” he agreed. “No!”

“Other religions have told the story in a different way. The Cathars and Gnostics did. They said that the God in your heart is a rebel against the God beyond the stars, that the Christ in your heart is

like Prometheus — or Hiawatha — or any other of the sacrificial gods, a rebel. He arises out of man. He rebels against that high God of the stars and crystals and poisons and monsters and of the dead emptiness of space.... The Manicheans and the Persians made out our God to be fighting eternally against that Being of silence and darkness beyond the stars. The Buddhists made the Lord Buddha the leader of men out of the futility and confusion of material existence to the great peace beyond. But it is all one story really, the story of the two essential Beings, always the same story and the same perplexity cropping up under different names, the story of one being who stirs us, calls to us, and leads us, and of another who is above and outside and in and beneath all things, inaccessible and incomprehensible. All these religions are trying to tell something they do not clearly know — of a relationship between these two, that eludes them, that eludes the human mind, as water escapes from the hand. It is unity and opposition they have to declare at the same time; it is agreement and propitiation, it is infinity and effort."

"And the truth?" said the bishop in an eager whisper. "You can tell me the truth."

The Angel's answer was a gross familiarity. He thrust his hand through the bishop's hair and ruffled it affectionately, and rested for a moment holding the bishop's cranium in his great palm.

"But can this hold it?" he said....

"Not with this little box of brains," said the Angel. "You could as soon make a meal of the stars and pack them into your belly. You haven't the things to do it with inside this."

He gave the bishop's head a little shake and relinquished it.

He began to argue as an elder brother might.

"Isn't it enough for you to know something of the God that comes down to the human scale, who has been born on your planet and arisen out of Man, who is Man and God, your leader? He's more than enough to fill your mind and use up every faculty of your being. He is courage, he is adventure, he is the King, he fights for you and with you against death...."

"And he is not infinite? He is not the Creator?" asked the bishop.

"So far as you are concerned, no," said the Angel.

"So far as I am concerned?"

"What have you to do with creation?"

And at that question it seemed that a great hand swept carelessly across the blackness of the farther sky, and smeared it with stars and suns and shining nebulas as a brush might smear dry paint across a canvas.

The bishop stared in front of him. Then slowly he bowed his head, and covered his face with his hands.

"And I have been in orders," he murmured; "I have been teaching people the only orthodox and perfect truth about these things for seven and twenty years."

And suddenly he was back in his gaiters and his apron and his shovel hat, a little black figure exceedingly small in a very great space....

(10)

It was a very great space indeed because it was all space, and the roof was the ebony of limitless space from which the stars swung flaming, held by invisible ties, and the soil beneath his feet was a dust of atoms and the little beginnings of life. And long before the bishop bared his face again, he knew that he was to see his God.

He looked up slowly, fearing to be dazzled.

But he was not dazzled. He knew that he saw only the likeness and bodying forth of a being inconceivable, of One who is greater than the earth and stars and yet no greater than a man. He saw a being for ever young, for ever beginning, for ever triumphant. The quality and texture of this being was a warm and living light like the effulgence at sunrise; He was hope and courage like a sunlit morning in spring. He was adventure for ever, and His courage and adventure flowed into and submerged and possessed the being of the man who beheld him. And this presence of God stood over the bishop, and seemed to speak to him in a wordless speech.

He bade him surrender himself. He bade him come out upon the Adventure of Life, the great Adventure of the earth that will make the atoms our bond-slaves and subdue the stars, that will build up the white fires of ecstasy to submerge pain for ever, that will overcome death. In Him the spirit of creation had become incarnate, had joined

itself to men, summoning men to Him, having need of them, having need of them, having need of their service, even as great kings and generals and leaders need and use men. For a moment, for an endless age, the bishop bowed himself in the being and glory of God, felt the glow of the divine courage and confidence in his marrow, felt himself one with God.

For a timeless interval....

Never had the bishop had so intense a sense of reality. It seemed that never before had he known anything real. He knew certainly that God was his King and master, and that his unworthy service could be acceptable to God. His mind embraced that idea with an absolute conviction that was also absolute happiness.

(11)

The thoughts and sensations of the bishop seemed to have lifted for a time clean away from the condition of time, and then through a vast orbit to be returning to that limitation.

He was aware presently that things were changing, that the light was losing its diviner rays, that in some indescribable manner the glory and the assurance diminished.

The onset of the new phase was by imperceptible degrees. From a glowing, serene, and static realization of God, everything relapsed towards change and activity. He was in time again and things were happening, it was as if the quicksands of time poured by him, and it was as if God was passing away from him. He fell swiftly down from the heaven of self-forgetfulness to a grotesque, pathetic and earthly self-consciousness.

He became acutely aware of his episcopal livery. And that God was passing away from him.

It was as if God was passing, and as if the bishop was unable to rise up and follow him.

Then it was as if God had passed, and as if the bishop was in headlong pursuit of him and in a great terror lest he should be left behind. And he was surely being left behind.

He discovered that in some unaccountable way his gaiters were loose; most of their buttons seemed to have flown off, and his

episcopal sash had slipped down about his feet. He was sorely impeded. He kept snatching at these things as he ran, in clumsy attempts to get them off.

At last he had to stop altogether and kneel down and fumble with the last obstinate button.

“Oh God!” he cried, “God my captain! Wait for me! Be patient with me!”

And as he did so God turned back and reached out his hand. It was indeed as if he stood and smiled. He stood and smiled as a kind man might do; he dazzled and blinded his worshipper, and yet it was manifest that he had a hand a man might clasp.

Unspeakable love and joy irradiated the whole being of the bishop as he seized God’s hand and clasped it desperately with both his own. It was as if his nerves and arteries and all his substance were inundated with golden light....

It was again as if he merged with God and became God....

CHAPTER THE SIXTH - EXEGETICAL

(1)

WITHOUT any sense of transition the bishop found himself seated in the little North Library of the Athenaeum club and staring at the bust of John Wilson Croker. He was sitting motionless and musing deeply. He was questioning with a cool and steady mind whether he had seen a vision or whether he had had a dream. If it had been a dream it had been an extraordinarily vivid and convincing dream. He still seemed to be in the presence of God, and it perplexed him not at all that he should also be in the presence of Croker. The feeling of mental rottenness and insecurity that had weakened his thought through the period of his illness, had gone. He was secure again within himself.

It did not seem to matter fundamentally whether it was an experience of things without or of things within him that had happened to him. It was clear to him that much that he had seen was at most expressive, that some was altogether symbolical. For example, there was that sudden absurd realization of his sash and gaiters, and his perception of them as encumbrances in his pursuit of God. But the setting and essential of the whole thing remained in his mind neither expressive nor symbolical, but as real and immediately perceived, and that was the presence and kingship of God. God was still with him and about him and over him and sustaining him. He was back again in his world and his ordinary life, in his clothing and his body and his club, but God had been made and remained altogether plain and manifest.

Whether an actual vision had made his conviction, or whether the conviction of his own subconscious mind had made the dream, seemed but a small matter beside the conviction that this was indeed the God he had desired and the God who must rule his life.

“The stuff? The stuff had little to do with it. It just cleared my head.... I have seen. I have seen really. I know.”

(2)

For a long time as it seemed the bishop remained wrapped in clouds of luminous meditation. Dream or vision it did not matter; the essential thing was that he had made up his mind about God, he had found God. Moreover, he perceived that his theological perplexities had gone. God was higher and simpler and nearer than any theological God, than the God of the Three Creeds. Those creeds lay about in his mind now like garments flung aside, no trace nor suspicion of divinity sustained them any longer. And now — Now he would go out into the world.

The little Library of the Athenaeum has no visible door. He went to the book-masked entrance in the corner, and felt among the bookshelves for the hidden latch. Then he paused, held by a curious thought. What exactly was the intention of that symbolical struggle with his sash and gaiters, and why had they impeded his pursuit of God?

To what particularly significant action was he going out?

The Three Creeds were like garments flung aside. But he was still wearing the uniform of a priest in the service of those three creeds.

After a long interval he walked into the big reading-room. He ordered some tea and dry toast and butter, and sat down very thoughtfully in a corner. He was still sitting and thinking at half-past eight.

It may seem strange to the reader that this bishop who had been doubting and criticizing the church and his system of beliefs for four long years had never before faced the possibility of a severance from his ecclesiastical dignity. But he had grown up in the church, his life had been so entirely clerical and Anglican, that the widest separation he had hitherto been able to imagine from this past had left him still a bishop, heretical perhaps, innovating in the broadening of beliefs and the liberalizing of practice, defensive even as Chasters was defensive, but still with the palace and his dignities, differing in opinion rather than in any tangible reality from his previous self. For a bishop, disbelief in the Church is a far profounder scepticism than mere disbelief in God. God is unseen, and in daily things unfelt; but the Church is with the predestined bishop always. His concept of the extremest possible departure from orthodoxy had been something that Chasters had phrased as “a restatement of Christ.” It was a new

idea, an idea that had come with an immense effect of severance and novelty, that God could be other than the God of the Creed, could present himself to the imagination as a figure totally unlike the white, gentle, and compromising Redeemer of an Anglican's thought. That the bishop should treat the whole teaching of the church and the church itself as wrong, was an idea so new that it fell upon him now like a thunderbolt out of a cloudless sky. But here, clear in his mind now, was a feeling, amounting to conviction, that it was the purpose and gesture of the true God that he should come right out of the church and all his professions.

And in the first glow of his vision he felt this gesture imperative. He must step right out.... Whither? how? And when?

To begin with it seemed to him that an immediate renunciation was demanded. But it was a momentous step. He wanted to think. And to go on thinking. Rather than to act precipitately. Although the imperative seemed absolute, some delaying and arresting instinct insisted that he must "think" If he went back to Princhester, the everyday duties of his position would confront him at once with an effect of a definite challenge. He decided to take one of the Reform club bedrooms for two or three days, and wire to Princhester that he was "unavoidably delayed in town," without further explanations. Then perhaps this inhibitory force would give way.

It did not, however, give way. His mind sat down for two days in a blank amazement at the course before him, and at the end of that time this reasonless and formless institution was as strong as ever. During that time, except for some incidental exchanges at his clubs, he talked to no one. At first he did not want to talk to any one. He remained mentally and practically active, with a still intensely vivid sense that God, the true God, stood watching him and waiting for him to follow. And to follow meant slipping right out of all the world he had ever known. To thrust his foot right over the edge of a cliff would scarcely have demanded more from the bishop's store of resolution. He stood on the very verge. The chief secretion of his mind was a shadowy experiment or so in explanation of why he did not follow.

Insensibly the extreme vividness of his sense of God's nearness decreased. But he still retained a persuasion of the reality of an immediate listener waiting, and of the need of satisfying him.

On the third day he found his mind still further changed. He no longer felt that God was in Pall Mall or St. James's Park, whither he resorted to walk and muse. He felt now that God was somewhere about the horizon....

He felt too no longer that he thought straight into the mind of God. He thought now of what he would presently say to God. He turned over and rehearsed phrases. With that came a desire to try them first on some other hearer. And from that to the attentive head of Lady Sunderbund, prettily bent towards him, was no great leap. She would understand, if any one could understand, the great change that had happened in his mind.

He found her address in the telephone book. She could be quite alone to him if he wouldn't mind "just me." It was, he said, exactly what he desired.

But when he got to her great airy flat overlooking Hyde Park, with its Omega Workshop furniture and its arresting decoration, he was not so sure whether this encounter was so exactly the thing he had desired as he had supposed.

The world had become opaque and real again as he walked up St. James's Street and past the Ritz. He had a feeling that he was taking an afternoon off from God. The adventurous modernity of the room in which he waited intensified that. One whole white wall was devoted to a small picture by Wyndham Lewis. It was like a picture of an earthquake in a city of aniline pink and grey and keen green cardboard, and he wished it had never existed.

He turned his back upon it and stared out of the window over the trees and greenery. The balcony was decorated with white and pink geraniums in pots painted black and gold, and the railings of the balcony were black and gold with crimson shape like squares wildly out of drawing.

Lady Sunderbund kept him waiting perhaps five minutes. Then she came sailing in to him.

She was dressed in a way and moved across the room in a way that was more reminiscent of Botticelli's Spring than ever — only

with a kind of superadded stiffish polonaise of lace — and he did not want to be reminded of Botticelli's Spring or wonder why she had taken to stiff lace polonaises. He did not enquire whether he had met Lady Sunderbund to better advantage at Mrs. Garstein Fellows' or whether his memory had overrated her or whether anything had happened to his standard of taste, but his feeling now was decidedly one of disappointment, and all the talk and self-examination he had promised himself seemed to wither and hide away within him. For a time he talked of her view, and then admired her room and its arrangement, which he thought really were quite unbecomingly flippant and undignified for a room. Then came the black tea-things on their orange tray, and he searched in his mind for small talk to sustain their interview.

But he had already betrayed his disposition to "go on with our talk" in his telephone enquiry, and Lady Sunderbund, perceiving his shyness, began to make openings for him, at first just little hinting openings, and then larger and larger ones, until at last one got him.

"I'm so glad," she said, "to see you again. I'm so glad to go on with our talk. I've thought about it and thought about it."

She beamed at him happily.

"I've thought ova ev'y wo'd you said," she went on, when she had finished conveying her pretty bliss to him. "I've been so helped by thinking the k'eeds are symbols. And all you said. And I've felt time after time, you couldn't stay whe' you we'. That what you we' saying to me, would have to be said 'ight out."

That brought him in. He could not very well evade that opening without incivility. After all he had asked to see her, and it was a foolish thing to let little decorative accidentals put him off his friendly purpose. A woman may have flower-pots painted gold with black checkers and still be deeply understanding. He determined to tell her what was in his mind. But he found something barred him from telling that he had had an actual vision of God. It was as if that had been a private and confidential meeting. It wasn't, he felt, for him either to boast a privilege or tell others of things that God had not chosen to show them.

"Since I saw you," he said, "I have thought a great deal — of the subject of our conversation."

“I have been t’ying to think,” she said in a confirmatory tone, as if she had co-operated.

“My faith in God grows,” he said.

She glowed. Her lips fell apart. She flamed attention.

“But it grows less like the faith of the church, less and less. I was born and trained in Anglicanism, and it is with a sort of astonishment I find myself passing now out of every sort of Catholicism — seeing it from the outside....”

“Just as one might see Buddhism,” she supplied.

“And yet feeling nearer, infinitely nearer to God,” he said.

“Yes,” she panted; “yes.”

“I thought if one went out, one went out just to doubt and darkness.”

“And you don’t?”

“No.”

“You have gone at one step to a new ‘iligion!”

He stared for a moment at the phrase.

“To religion,” he said.

“It is so wondyful,” she said, with her hands straight down upon the couch upon which she was sitting, and leaning forward at him, so as to seem almost as much out of drawing as a modern picture.

“It seems,” he reflected; “ — as if it were a natural thing.”

She came back to earth very slowly. She turned to the tea-things with hushed and solemn movements as though she administered a ceremony of peculiar significance. The bishop too rose slowly out of the profundity of his confession. “No sugar please,” he said, arresting the lump in mid air.

It was only when they were embarked upon cups of tea and had a little refreshed themselves, that she carried the talk further.

“Does it mean that you must leave the church?” she asked.

“It seemed so at first,” he said. “But now I do not know. I do not know what I ought to do.”

She awaited his next thought.

“It is as if one had lived in a room all one’s life and thought it the world — and then suddenly walked out through a door and discovered the sea and the mountains and stars. So it was with me and the Anglican Church. It seems so extraordinary now — and it

would have seemed the most natural thing a year ago — to think that I ever believed that the Anglican Compromise was the final truth of religion, that nothing more until the end of the world could ever be known that Cosmo Gordon Lang did not know, that there could be no conception of God and his quality that Randall Davidson did not possess."

He paused.

"I did," he said.

"I did," she responded with round blue eyes of wonder.

"At the utmost the Church of England is a tabernacle on a road."

"A 'oad that goes whe'?" she rhetorized.

"Exactly," said the bishop, and put down his cup.

"You see, my dear Lady Sunderbund," he resumed, "I am exactly in the same position of that man at the door."

She quoted aptly and softly: "The wo'ld was all befo' them whe' to choose."

He was struck by the aptness of the words.

"I feel I have to come right out into the bare truth. What exactly then do I become? Do I lose my priestly function because I discover how great God is? But what am I to do?"

He opened a new layer of his thoughts to her.

"There is a saying," he remarked, "once a priest, always a priest. I cannot imagine myself as other than what I am."

"But o'thodox no maw," she said.

"Orthodox — self-satisfied, no longer. A priest who seeks, an exploring priest."

"In a Chu'ch of P'og'ess and B'othe'hood," she carried him on.

"At any rate, in a progressive and learning church."

She flashed and glowed assent.

"I have been haunted," he said, "by those words spoken at Athens. 'Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.' That comes to me with an effect of — guidance is an old-fashioned word — shall I say suggestion? To stand by the altar bearing strange names and ancient symbols, speaking plainly to all mankind of the one true God — !"

He did not get much beyond this point at the time, though he remained talking with Lady Sunderbund for nearly an hour longer. The rest was merely a beating out of what had already been said. But insensibly she renewed her original charm, and as he became accustomed to her he forgot a certain artificiality in her manner and the extreme modernity of her costume and furniture. She was a wonderful listener; nobody else could have helped him to expression in quite the same way, and when he left her he felt that now he was capable of stating his case in a coherent and acceptable form to almost any intelligent hearer. He had a point of view now that was no longer embarrassed by the immediate golden presence of God; he was no longer dazzled nor ecstatic; his problem had diminished to the scale of any other great human problem, to the scale of political problems and problems of integrity and moral principle, problems about which there is no such urgency as there is about a house on fire, for example.

And now the desire for expression was running strong. He wanted to state his situation; if he did not state he would have to act; and as he walked back to the club dinner he turned over possible interlocutors in his thoughts. Lord Rampound sat with him at dinner, and he came near broaching the subject with him. But Lord Rampound that evening had that morbid running of bluish legal anecdotes which is so common an affliction with lawyers, and theology sinks and dies in that turbid stream.

But as he lay in bed that night he thought of his old friend and helper Bishop Likeman, and it was borne in upon him that he should consult him. And this he did next day.

Since the days when the bishop had been only plain Mr. Scrope, the youngest and most helpful of Likeman's historical band of curates, their friendship had continued. Likeman had been a second father to him; in particular his tact and helpfulness had shone during those days of doubt and anxiety when dear old Queen Victoria, God's representative on earth, had obstinately refused, at the eleventh hour, to make him a bishop. She had those pigheaded fits, and she was touchy about the bishops. She had liked Scrope on account of the excellence of his German pronunciation, but she had been irritated by newspaper paragraphs — nobody could ever find

out who wrote them and nobody could ever find out who showed them to the old lady — anticipating his elevation. She had gone very red in the face and stiffened in the Guelphic manner whenever Scrope was mentioned, and so a rich harvest of spiritual life had remained untilled for some months. Likeman had brought her round.

It seemed arguable that Scrope owed some explanation to Likeman before he came to any open breach with the Establishment.

He found Likeman perceptibly older and more shrivelled on account of the war, but still as sweet and lucid and subtle as ever. His voice sounded more than ever like a kind old woman's.

He sat buried in his cushions — for "nowadays I must save every scrap of vitality" — and for a time contented himself with drawing out his visitor's story.

Of course, one does not talk to Likeman of visions or intuitions. "I am disturbed, I find myself getting out of touch;" that was the bishop's tone.

Occasionally Likeman nodded slowly, as a physician might do at the recital of familiar symptoms. "Yes," he said, "I have been through most of this.... A little different in the inessentials.... How clear you are!"

"You leave our stupid old Trinities — as I left them long ago," said old Likeman, with his lean hand feeling and clawing at the arm of his chair.

"But — !"

The old man raised his hand and dropped it. "You go away from it all — straight as a line. I did. You take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. And there you find—"

He held up a lean finger, and inclined it to tick off each point.

"Fate — which is God the Father, the Power of the Heart, which is God the Son, and that Light which comes in upon us from the inaccessible Godhead, which is God the Holy Spirit."

"But I know of no God the Holy Spirit, and Fate is not God at all. I saw in my vision one sole God, uncrucified, militant — conquering and to conquer."

Old Likeman stared. "You saw!"

The Bishop of Princhester had not meant to go so far. But he stuck to his words. "As if I saw with my eyes. A God of light and

courage."

"You have had visions, Scrope?"

"I seemed to see."

"No, you have just been dreaming dreams."

"But why should one not see?"

"See! The things of the spirit. These symbols as realities! These metaphors as men walking!"

"You talk like an agnostic."

"We are all agnostics. Our creeds are expressions of ourselves and our attitude and relationship to the unknown. The triune God is just the form of our need and disposition. I have always assumed that you took that for granted. Who has ever really seen or heard or felt God? God is neither of the senses nor of the mind; he is of the soul. You are realistic, you are materialistic...."

His voice expostulated.

The Bishop of Princhester reflected. The vision of God was far off among his memories now, and difficult to recall. But he said at last: "I believe there is a God and that he is as real a person as you or I. And he is not the theological God we set out before the world."

"Personification," said Likeman. "In the eighteenth century they used to draw beautiful female figures as Science and Mathematics. Young men have loved Science — and Freedom — as Pygmalion loved Galatea. Have it so if you will. Have a visible person for your Deity. But let me keep up my — spirituality."

"Your spirituality seems as thin as a mist. Do you really believe — anything?"

"Everything!" said Likeman emphatically, sitting up with a transitory vigour. "Everything we two have ever professed together. I believe that the creeds of my church do express all that can possibly be expressed in the relationship of — That" — he made a comprehensive gesture with a twist of his hand upon its wrist— "to the human soul. I believe that they express it as well as the human mind can express it. Where they seem to be contradictory or absurd, it is merely that the mystery is paradoxical. I believe that the story of the Fall and of the Redemption is a complete symbol, that to add to it or to subtract from it or to alter it is to diminish its truth; if it seems incredible at this point or that, then simply I admit my own mental

defect. And I believe in our Church, Scrope, as the embodied truth of religion, the divine instrument in human affairs. I believe in the security of its tradition, in the complete and entire soundness of its teaching, in its essential authority and divinity."

He paused, and put his head a little on one side and smiled sweetly. "And now can you say I do not believe?"

"But the historical Christ, the man Jesus?"

"A life may be a metaphor. Why not? Yes, I believe it all. All."

The Bishop of Princhester was staggered by this complete acceptance. "I see you believe all you profess," he said, and remained for a moment or so rallying his forces.

"Your vision — if it was a vision — I put it to you, was just some single aspect of divinity," said Likeman. "We make a mistake in supposing that Heresy has no truth in it. Most heresies are only a disproportionate apprehension of some essential truth. Most heretics are men who have suddenly caught a glimpse through the veil of some particular verity.... They are dazzled by that aspect. All the rest has vanished.... They are obsessed. You are obsessed clearly by this discovery of the militancy of God. God the Son — as Hero. And you want to go out to the simple worship of that one aspect. You want to go out to a Dissenter's tent in the wilderness, instead of staying in the Great Temple of the Ages."

Was that true?

For some moments it sounded true.

The Bishop of Princhester sat frowning and looking at that. Very far away was the vision now of that golden Captain who bade him come. Then at a thought the bishop smiled.

"The Great Temple of the Ages," he repeated. "But do you remember the trouble we had when the little old Queen was so pigheaded?"

"Oh! I remember, I remember," said Likeman, smiling with unshaken confidence. "Why not?"

"For sixty years all we bishops in what you call the Great Temple of the Ages, were appointed and bullied and kept in our places by that pink irascible bit of dignity. I remember how at the time I didn't dare betray my boiling indignation even to you — I scarcely dared admit it to myself...."

He paused.

"It doesn't matter at all," and old Likeman waved it aside.

"Not at all," he confirmed, waving again.

"I spoke of the whole church of Christ on earth," he went on. "These things, these Victorias and Edwards and so on, are temporary accidents — just as the severance of an Anglican from a Roman communion and a Greek orthodox communion are temporary accidents. You will remark that wise men in all ages have been able to surmount the difficulty of these things. Why? Because they knew that in spite of all these splits and irregularities and defacements — like the cracks and crannies and lichens on a cathedral wall — the building held good, that it was shelter and security. There is no other shelter and security. And so I come to your problem. Suppose it is true that you have this incidental vision of the militant aspect of God, and he isn't, as you see him now that is, — he isn't like the Trinity, he isn't like the Creed, he doesn't seem to be related to the Church, then comes the question, are you going out for that? And whither do you go if you do go out? The Church remains. We alter doctrines not by changing the words but by shifting the accent. We can under-accentuate below the threshold of consciousness."

"But can we?"

"We do. Where's Hell now? Eighty years ago it warmed the whole Church. It was — as some atheist or other put it the other day — the central heating of the soul. But never mind that point now. Consider the essential question, the question of breaking with the church. Ask yourself, whither would you go? To become an oddity! A Dissenter. A Negative. Self emasculated. The spirit that denies. You would just go out. You would just cease to serve Religion. That would be all. You wouldn't do anything. The Church would go on; everything else would go on. Only you would be lost in the outer wilderness.

"But then—"

Old Likeman leant forward and pointed a bony finger. "Stay in the Church and modify it. Bring this new light of yours to the altar."

There was a little pause.

"No man," the bishop thought aloud, "putteth new wine into old bottles."

Old Likeman began to speak and had a fit of coughing. “Some of these texts — whuff, whuff — like a conjuror’s hat — whuff — make ’em — fit anything.”

A man-servant appeared and handed a silver box of lozenges into which the old bishop dipped with a trembling hand.

“Tricks of that sort,” he said, “won’t do, Scrope — among professionals.

“And besides,” he was inspired; “true religion is old wine — as old as the soul.

“You are a bishop in the Church of Christ on Earth,” he summed it up. “And you want to become a detached and wandering Ancient Mariner from your shipwreck of faith with something to explain — that nobody wants to hear. You are going out I suppose you have means?”

The old man awaited the answer to his abrupt enquiry with a handful of lozenges.

“No,” said the Bishop of Princhester, “practically — I haven’t.”

“My dear boy!” it was as if they were once more rector and curate. “My dear brother! do you know what the value of an ex-bishop is in the ordinary labour market?”

“I have never thought of that.”

“Evidently. You have a wife and children?”

“Five daughters.”

“And your wife married you — I remember, she married you soon after you got that living in St. John’s Wood. I suppose she took it for granted that you were fixed in an ecclesiastical career. That was implicit in the transaction.”

“I haven’t looked very much at that side of the matter yet,” said the Bishop of Princhester.

“It shouldn’t be a decisive factor,” said Bishop Likeman, “not decisive. But it will weigh. It should weigh....”

The old man opened out fresh aspects of the case. His argument was for delay, for deliberation. He went on to a wider set of considerations. A man who has held the position of a bishop for some years is, he held, no longer a free man in matters of opinion. He has become an official part of a great edifice which supports the faith of multitudes of simple and dependant believers. He has no right to

indulge recklessly in intellectual and moral integrities. He may understand, but how is the flock to understand? He may get his own soul clear, but what will happen to them? He will just break away their supports, astonish them, puzzle them, distress them, deprive them of confidence, convince them of nothing.

"Intellectual egotism may be as grave a sin," said Bishop Likeman, "as physical selfishness.

"Assuming even that you are absolutely right," said Bishop Likeman, "aren't you still rather in the position of a man who insists upon Swedish exercises and a strengthening dietary on a raft?"

"I think you have made out a case for delay," said his hearer.

"Three months."

The Bishop of Princhester conceded three months.

"Including every sort of service. Because, after all, even supposing it is damnable to repeat prayers and creeds you do not believe in, and administer sacraments you think superstition, nobody can be damned but yourself. On the other hand if you express doubts that are not yet perfectly digested — you experiment with the souls of others...."

(5)

The bishop found much to ponder in his old friend's counsels. They were discursive and many-fronted, and whenever he seemed to be penetrating or defeating the particular considerations under examination the others in the background had a way of appearing invincible. He had a strong persuasion that Likeman was wrong — and unanswerable. And the true God now was no more than the memory of a very vividly realized idea. It was clear to the bishop that he was no longer a churchman or in the generally accepted sense of the word a Christian, and that he was bound to come out of the church. But all sense of urgency had gone. It was a matter demanding deliberation and very great consideration for others.

He took no more of Dale's stuff because he felt bodily sound and slept well. And he was now a little shy of this potent fluid. He went down to Princhester the next day, for his compromise of an interval of three months made it seem possible to face his episcopal routine

again. It was only when he was back in his own palace that the full weight of his domestic responsibilities in the discussion of the course he had to take, became apparent.

Lady Ella met him with affection and solicitude.

"I was tired and mentally fagged," he said. "A day or so in London had an effect of change."

She agreed that he looked much better, and remained for a moment or so scrutinizing him with the faint anxiety of one resolved to be completely helpful.

He regarded her with a renewed sense of her grace and dignity and kindliness. She was wearing a grey dress of soft silky material, touched with blue and covered with what seemed to him very rich and beautiful lace; her hair flowed back very graciously from her broad brow, and about her wrist and neck were delicate lines of gold. She seemed tremendously at home and right just where she was, in that big hospitable room, cultured but Anglican, without pretensions or novelties, with a glow of bound books, with the grand piano that Miriam, his third daughter, was beginning to play so well, with the tea equipage of shining silver and fine porcelain.

He sat down contentedly in the low armchair beside her.

It wasn't a setting that one would rashly destroy....

And that evening at dinner this sense of his home as a complex of finely adjusted things not to be rashly disturbed was still more in the mind of the bishop. At dinner he had all his domesticities about him. It was the family time, from eight until ten, at which latter hour he would usually go back from the drawing-room to his study. He surveyed the table. Eleanor was at home for a few days, looking a little thin and bright but very keen and happy. She had taken a first in the first part of the Moral Science Tripos, and she was working hard now for part two. Clementina was to go back to Newnham with her next September. She aspired to history. Miriam's bent was musical. She and Phoebe and Daphne and Clementina were under the care of skilful Mademoiselle Lafarge, most tactful of Protestant French-women, Protestant and yet not too Protestant, one of those rare French Protestants in whom a touch of Bergson and the Pasteur Monod

"scarce suspected, animates the whole."

And also they had lessons, so high are our modern standards of education, from Mr. Blent, a brilliant young mathematician in orders, who sat now next to Lady Ella. Mr. Whippham, the chaplain, was at the bishop's right hand, ready for any chance of making arrangements to clear off the small arrears of duty the little holiday in London had accumulated. The bishop surveyed all these bright young people between himself and the calm beauty of his wife. He spoke first to one and then another upon the things that interested them. It rejoiced his heart to be able to give them education and opportunity, it pleased him to see them in clothes that he knew were none the less expensive because of their complete simplicity. Miriam and Mr. Blent wrangled pleasantly about Debussy, and old Dunk waited as though in orders of some rare and special sort that qualified him for this service.

All these people, the bishop reflected, counted upon him that this would go on....

Eleanor was answering some question of her mother's. They were so oddly alike and so curiously different, and both in their several ways so fine. Eleanor was dark like his own mother. Perhaps she did a little lack Lady Ella's fine reserves; she could express more, she could feel more acutely, she might easily be very unhappy or very happy....

All these people counted on him. It was indeed acutely true, as Likeman had said, that any sudden breach with his position would be a breach of faith — so far as they were concerned.

And just then his eye fell upon the epergne, a very old and beautiful piece of silver, that graced the dinner-table. It had been given him, together with an episcopal ring, by his curates and choristers at the Church of the Holy Innocents, when he became bishop of Pinner. When they gave it him, had any one of them dreamt that some day he might be moved to strike an ungracious blow at the mother church that had reared them all?

It was his custom to join the family in the drawing-room after dinner. To-night he was a little delayed by Whippham, with some trivialities about next month's confirmations in Pringle and Princhester. When he came in he found Miriam playing, and playing very beautifully one of those later sonatas of Beethoven, he could

never remember whether it was Of. 109 or Of. 111, but he knew that he liked it very much; it was solemn and sombre with phases of indescribable sweetness — while Clementina, Daphne and Mademoiselle Lafarge went on with their war knitting and Phoebe and Mr. Blent bent their brows over chess. Eleanor was reading the evening paper. Lady Ella sat on a high chair by the coffee things, and he stood in the doorway surveying the peaceful scene for a moment or so, before he went across the room and sat down on the couch close to her.

"You look tired," she whispered softly.

"Worries."

"That Chasters case?"

"Things developing out of that. I must tell you later." It would be, he felt, a good way of breaking the matter to her.

"Is the Chasters case coming on again, Daddy?" asked Eleanor.

He nodded.

"It's a pity," she said.

"What?

"That he can't be left alone."

"It's Sir Reginald Phipps. The Church would be much more tolerant if it wasn't for the House of Laymen. But they — they feel they must do something."

He seized the opportunity of the music ceasing to get away from the subject. "Miriam dear," he asked, raising his voice; "is that 109 or 111? I can never tell."

"That is always 111, Daddy," said Miriam. "It's the other one is 109." And then evidently feeling that she had been pert: "Would you like me to play you 109, Daddy?"

"I should love it, my dear." And he leant back and prepared to listen in such a thorough way that Eleanor would have no chance of discussing the Chasters' heresies. But this was interrupted by the consummation of the coffee, and Mr. Blent, breaking a long silence with "Mate in three, if I'm not mistaken," leapt to his feet to be of service. Eleanor, with the rough seriousness of youth, would not leave the Chasters case alone.

"But need you take action against Mr. Chasters?" she asked at once.

“It’s a very complicated subject, my dear,” he said.

“His arguments?”

“The practical considerations.”

“But what are practical considerations in such a case?”

“That’s a post-graduate subject, Norah,” her father said with a smile and a sigh.

“But,” began Eleanor, gathering fresh forces.

“Daddy is tired,” Lady Ella intervened, patting him on the head.

“Oh, terribly! — of that,” he said, and so escaped Eleanor for the evening.

But he knew that before very long he would have to tell his wife of the changes that hung over their lives; it would be shabby to let the avalanche fall without giving the longest possible warning; and before they parted that night he took her hands in his and said: “There is much I have to tell you, dear. Things change, the whole world changes. The church must not live in a dream....

“No,” she whispered. “I hope you will sleep to-night,” and held up her grave sweet face to be kissed.

(6)

But he did not sleep perfectly that night.

He did not sleep indeed very badly, but he lay for some time thinking, thinking not onward but as if he pressed his mind against very strong barriers that had closed again. His vision of God which had filled the heavens, had become now gem-like, a minute, hard, clear-cut conviction in his mind that he had to disentangle himself from the enormous complications of symbolism and statement and organization and misunderstanding in the church and achieve again a simple and living worship of a simple and living God. Likeman had puzzled and silenced him, only upon reflection to convince him that amidst such intricacies of explanation the spirit cannot live. Creeds may be symbolical, but symbols must not prevaricate. A church that can symbolize everything and anything means nothing.

It followed from this that he ought to leave the church. But there came the other side of this perplexing situation. His feelings as he lay in his bed were exactly like those one has in a dream when one

wishes to run or leap or shout and one can achieve no movement, no sound. He could not conceive how he could possibly leave the church.

His wife became as it were the representative of all that held him helpless. She and he had never kept secret from one another any plan of action, any motive, that affected the other. It was clear to him that any movement towards the disavowal of doctrinal Christianity and the renunciation of his see must be first discussed with her. He must tell her before he told the world.

And he could not imagine his telling her except as an incredibly shattering act.

So he left things from day to day, and went about his episcopal routines. He preached and delivered addresses in such phrases as he knew people expected, and wondered profoundly why it was that it should be impossible for him to discuss theological points with Lady Ella. And one afternoon he went for a walk with Eleanor along the banks of the Prin, and found himself, in response to certain openings of hers, talking to her in almost exactly the same terms as Likeman had used to him.

Then suddenly the problem of this theological eclaircissement was complicated in an unexpected fashion.

He had just been taking his Every Second Thursday Talk with Diocesan Men Helpers. He had been trying to be plain and simple upon the needless narrowness of enthusiastic laymen. He was still in the Bishop Andrews cap and purple cassock he affected on these occasions; the Men Helpers loved purple; and he was disentangling himself from two or three resolute bores — for our loyal laymen can be at times quite superlative bores — when Miriam came to him.

"Mummy says, 'Come to the drawing-room if you can.' There is a Lady Sunderbund who seems particularly to want to see you."

He hesitated for a moment, and then decided that this was a conversation he ought to control.

He found Lady Sunderbund looking very tall and radiantly beautiful in a sheathlike dress of bright crimson trimmed with snow-white fur and a white fur toque. She held out a long white-gloved hand to him and cried in a tone of comradeship and profound understanding: "I've come, Bishop!"

“You’ve come to see me?” he said without any sincerity in his polite pleasure.

“I’ve come to P’inchesta to stay!” she cried with a bright triumphant rising note.

She evidently considered Lady Ella a mere conversational stop-gap, to be dropped now that the real business could be commenced. She turned her pretty profile to that lady, and obliged the bishop with a compact summary of all that had preceded his arrival. “I have been telling Lady Ella,” she said, “I’ve taken a house, fu’nitua and all! Hea. In P’inchesta! I’ve made up my mind to sit unda you — as they say in Clapham. I’ve come ‘ight down he’ fo’ good. I’ve taken a little house — oh! a sweet little house that will be all over ‘oses next month. I’m living f’om ‘oom to ‘oom and having the othas done up. It’s in that little quiet st’eet behind you’ ga’den wall. And he’ I am!”

“Is it the old doctor’s house?” asked Lady Ella.

“Was it an old docta?” cried Lady Sunderbund. “How delightful! And now I shall be a patient!”

She concentrated upon the bishop.

“Oh, I’ve been thinking all the time of all the things you told me. Ova and ova. It’s all so wondyful and so — so like a G’ate Daw opening. New light. As if it was all just beginning.”

She clasped her hands.

The bishop felt that there were a great number of points to this situation, and that it was extremely difficult to grasp them all at once. But one that seemed of supreme importance to his whirling intelligence was that Lady Ella should not know that he had gone to relieve his soul by talking to Lady Sunderbund in London. It had never occurred to him at the time that there was any shadow of disloyalty to Lady Ella in his going to Lady Sunderbund, but now he realized that this was a thing that would annoy Lady Ella extremely. The conversation had in the first place to be kept away from that. And in the second place it had to be kept away from the abrupt exploitation of the new theological developments.

He felt that something of the general tension would be relieved if they could all three be got to sit down.

“I’ve been talking for just upon two hours,” he said to Lady Ella. “It’s good to see the water boiling for tea.”

He put a chair for Lady Sunderbund to the right of Lady Ella, got her into it by infusing an ecclesiastical insistence into his manner, and then went and sat upon the music-stool on his wife's left, so as to establish a screen of tea-things and cakes and so forth against her more intimate enthusiasm. Meanwhile he began to see his way clearer and to develop his line.

"Well, Lady Sunderbund," he said, "I can assure you that I think you will be no small addition to the church life of Princhester. But I warn you this is a hard-working and exacting diocese. We shall take your money, all we can get of it, we shall take your time, we shall work you hard."

"Wo'k me hard!" cried Lady Sunderbund with passion.

"We will, we will," said the bishop in a tone that ignored her passionate note.

"I am sure Lady Sunderbund will be a great help to us," said Lady Ella. "We want brightening. There's a dinginess...."

Lady Sunderbund beamed an acknowledgment. "I shall exact a 'eturn," she said. "I don't mind wo'king, but I shall wo'k like the poo' students in the Middle Ages did, to get my teaching. I've got my own soul to save as well as help saving othas. Since oua last talk —"

She found the bishop handing her bread and butter. For a time the bishop fought a delaying action with the tea-things, while he sought eagerly and vainly in his mind for some good practical topic in which he could entangle and suppress Lady Sunderbund's enthusiasms. From this she broke away by turning suddenly to Lady Ella.

"Youa husband's views," she said, "we'e a 'eal 'evelation to me. It was like not being blind — all at once."

Lady Ella was always pleased to hear her husband praised. Her colour brightened a little. "They seem very ordinary views," she said modestly.

"You share them?" cried Lady Sunderbund.

"But of course," said Lady Ella.

"Wondyful!" cried Lady Sunderbund.

"Tell me, Lady Sunderbund," said the bishop, "are you going to alter the outer appearance of the old doctor's house?" And found that at last he had discovered the saving topic.

“Ha’dly at all,” she said. “I shall just have it pointed white and do the doa — I’m not su’ how I shall do the doa. Whetha I shall do the doa gold or a vehy, vehy ‘itch blue.”

For a time she and Lady Ella, to whom these ideas were novel, discussed the animation of grey and sombre towns by house painting. In such matter Lady Sunderbund had a Russian mind. “I can’t bea’ g’ey,” she said. “Not in my su’oundings, not in my k’eed, nowhe’e.” She turned to the bishop. “If I had my way I would paint you’ cathed’al inside and out.”

“They used to be painted,” said the bishop. “I don’t know if you have seen Ely. There the old painting has been largely restored....”

From that to the end there was no real danger, and at last the bishop found himself alone with his wife again.

“Remarkable person,” he said tentatively. “I never met any one whose faults were more visible. I met her at Wimbush House.”

He glanced at his watch.

“What did she mean,” asked Lady Ella abruptly, “by talking of your new views? And about revelations?”

“She probably misunderstood something I said at the Garstein Fellows’,” he said. “She has rather a leaping mind.”

He turned to the window, looked at his nails, and appeared to be suddenly reminded of duties elsewhere....

It was chiefly manifest to him that the difficulties in explaining the changes of his outlook to Lady Ella had now increased enormously.

(7)

A day or so after Lady Sunderbund’s arrival in Princhester the bishop had a letter from Likeman. The old man was manifestly in doubt about the effect of their recent conversation.

“My dear Scrope,” it began. “I find myself thinking continually about our interview and the difficulties you laid bare so frankly to me. We touched upon many things in that talk, and I find myself full of afterthoughts, and not perfectly sure either quite of what I said or of what I failed to say. I feel that in many ways I was not perhaps so clear and convincing as the justice of my case should have made me, and you are one of my own particular little company, you were one

of the best workers in that band of good workers, your life and your career are very much my concern. I know you will forgive me if I still mingle something of the paternal with my fraternal admonitions. I watched you closely. I have still my old diaries of the St. Matthew's days, and I have been looking at them to remind me of what you once were. It was my custom to note my early impressions of all the men who worked with me, because I have a firm belief in the soundness of first impressions and the considerable risk one runs of having them obscured by the accidents and habituations of constant intercourse. I found that quite early in your days at St. Matthew's I wrote against your name 'enthusiastic, but a saving delicacy.' After all our life-long friendship I would not write anything truer. I would say of you to-day, 'This man might have been a revivalist, if he were not a gentleman.' There is the enthusiast, there is the revivalist, in you. It seems to me that the stresses and questions of this great crisis in the world's history have brought it nearer to the surface than I had ever expected it to come.

"I quite understand and I sympathize with your impatience with the church at the present time; we present a spectacle of pompous insignificance hard to bear with. We are doing very little, and we are giving ourselves preposterous airs. There seems to be an opinion abroad that in some quasi-automatic way the country is going to collapse after the war into the arms of the church and the High Tories; a possibility I don't accept for a moment. Why should it? These forcible-feeble reactionaries are much more likely to explode a revolution that will disestablish us. And I quite understand your theological difficulties — quite. The creeds, if their entire symbolism is for a moment forgotten, if they are taken as opaque statements of fact, are inconsistent, incredible. So incredible that no one believes them; not even the most devout. The utmost they do is to avert their minds — reverentially. Credo quia impossibile. That is offensive to a Western mind. I can quite understand the disposition to cry out at such things, 'This is not the Church of God!' — to run out from it —

"You have some dream, I suspect, of a dramatic dissidence.

"Now, my dear Brother and erstwhile pupil, I ask you not to do this thing. Wait, I implore you. Give me — and some others, a little time. I have your promise for three months, but even after that, I ask

you to wait. Let the reform come from within the church. The church is something more than either its creeds, its clergy, or its laymen. Look at your cathedral rising out of and dominating Princhester. It stands not simply for Athanasius; it stands but incidentally for Athanasius; it stands for all religion. Within that fabric — let me be as frank here as in our private conversation — doctrine has altered again and again. To-day two distinct religions worship there side by side; one that fades and one that grows brighter. There is the old quasi-materialistic belief of the barbarians, the belief in such things, for example, as that Christ the physical Son of God descended into hell and stayed there, seeing the sights I suppose like any tourist and being treated with diplomatic civilities for three terrestrial days; and on the other hand there is the truly spiritual belief that you and I share, which is absolutely intolerant of such grotesque ideas. My argument to you is that the new faith, the clearer vision, gains ground; that the only thing that can prevent or delay the church from being altogether possessed by what you call and I admit is, the true God, is that such men as yourself, as the light breaks upon you, should be hasty and leave the church. You see my point of view, do you not? It is not one that has been assumed for our discussion; it is one I came to long years ago, that I was already feeling my way to in my St. Matthew's Lenton sermons.

"A word for your private ear. I am working. I cannot tell you fully because I am not working alone. But there are movements afoot in which I hope very shortly to be able to ask you to share. That much at least I may say at this stage. Obscure but very powerful influences are at work for the liberalizing of the church, for release from many narrow limitations, for the establishment of a modus vivendi with the nonconformist and dissentient bodies in Britain and America, and with the churches of the East. But of that no more now.

"And in conclusion, my dear Scrope, let me insist again upon the eternal persistence of the essential Religious Fact:"

(Greek Letters Here)

(Rev. i. 18. "Fear not. I am the First and Last thing, the Living thing.")

And these promises which, even if we are not to take them as promises in the exact sense in which, let us say, the payment of five

sovereigns is promised by a five-pound note, are yet assertions of practically inevitable veracity:

(Greek Letters Here)

(Phil. i. 6. “He who began... will perfect.” Eph. v. 14. “He will illuminate.”)

The old man had written his Greek tags in shakily resolute capitals. It was his custom always to quote the Greek Testament in his letters, never the English version. It is a practice not uncommon with the more scholarly of our bishops. It is as if some eminent scientific man were to insist upon writing H2O instead of “water,” and “sodium chloride” instead of “table salt” in his private correspondence. Or upon hanging up a stuffed crocodile in his hall to give the place tone. The Bishop of Princhester construed these brief dicta without serious exertion, he found them very congenial texts, but there were insuperable difficulties in the problem why Likeman should suppose they had the slightest weight upon his side of their discussion. The more he thought the less they seemed to be on Likeman’s side, until at last they began to take on a complexion entirely opposed to the old man’s insidious arguments, until indeed they began to bear the extraordinary interpretation of a special message, unwittingly delivered.

(8)

The bishop was still thinking over this communication when he was interrupted by Lady Ella. She came with a letter in her hand to ask him whether she might send five-and-twenty pounds to a poor cousin of his, a teacher in a girls’ school, who had been incapacitated from work by a dislocation of the cartilage of her knee. If she could go to that unorthodox but successful practitioner, Mr. Barker, the bone-setter, she was convinced she could be restored to efficiency. But she had no ready money. The bishop agreed without hesitation. His only doubt was the certainty of the cure, but upon that point Lady Ella was convinced; there had been a great experience in the Walshingham family.

“It is pleasant to be able to do things like this,” said Lady Ella, standing over him when this matter was settled.

“Yes,” the bishop agreed; “it is pleasant to be in a position to do things like this....”

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH - THE SECOND VISION

(1)

A MONTH later found the bishop's original state of perplexity and insomnia returned and intensified. He had done none of all the things that had seemed so manifestly needing to be done after his vision in the Athenaeum. All the relief and benefit of his experience in London had vanished out of his life. He was afraid of Dr. Dale's drug; he knew certainly that it would precipitate matters; and all his instincts in the state of moral enfeeblement to which he had relapsed, were to temporize.

Although he had said nothing further about his changed beliefs to Lady Ella, yet he perceived clearly that a shadow had fallen between them. She had a wife's extreme sensitiveness to fine shades of expression and bearing, and manifestly she knew that something was different. Meanwhile Lady Sunderbund had become a frequent worshipper in the cathedral, she was a figure as conspicuous in sombre Princhester as a bird of paradise would have been; common people stood outside her very very rich blue door on the chance of seeing her; she never missed an opportunity of hearing the bishop preach or speak, she wrote him several long and thoughtful letters with which he did not bother Lady Ella, she communicated persistently, and manifestly intended to become a very active worker in diocesan affairs.

It was inevitable that she and the bishop should meet and talk occasionally in the cathedral precincts, and it was inevitable that he should contrast the flexibility of her rapid and very responsive mind with a certain defensiveness, a stoniness, in the intellectual bearing of Lady Ella.

If it had been Lady Sunderbund he had had to explain to, instead of Lady Ella, he could have explained a dozen times a day.

And since his mind was rehearsing explanations it was not unnatural they should overflow into this eagerly receptive channel, and that the less he told Lady Ella the fuller became his spiritual

confidences to Lady Sunderbund.

She was clever in realizing that they were confidences and treating them as such, more particularly when it chanced that she and Lady Ella and the bishop found themselves in the same conversation.

She made great friends with Miriam, and initiated her by a whole collection of pretty costume plates into the mysteries of the "Ussian Ballet" and the works of Mousso'gski and "Imsky Ko'zakof."

The bishop liked a certain religiosity in the texture of Moussorgski's music, but failed to see the "significance " — of many of the costumes.

(2)

It was on a Sunday night — the fourth Sunday after Easter — that the supreme crisis of the bishop's life began. He had had a feeling all day of extreme dulness and stupidity; he felt his ministrations unreal, his ceremonies absurd and undignified. In the night he became bleakly and painfully awake. His mind occupied itself at first chiefly with the tortuousness and weakness of his own character. Every day he perceived that the difficulty of telling Lady Ella of the change in his faith became more mountainous. And every day he procrastinated. If he had told her naturally and simply on the evening of his return from London — before anything material intervened — everything would have been different, everything would have been simpler....

He groaned and rolled over in his bed.

There came upon him the acutest remorse and misery. For he saw that amidst these petty immediacies he had lost touch with God. The last month became incredible. He had seen God. He had touched God's hand. God had been given to him, and he had neglected the gift. He was still lost amidst the darkness and loneliness, the chaotic ends and mean shifts, of an Erastian world. For a month now and more, after a vision of God so vivid and real and reassuring that surely no saint nor prophet had ever had a better, he had made no more than vague responsive movements; he had allowed himself to be persuaded into an unreasonable and cowardly delay, and the fetters of association and usage and minor interests were as unbroken

as they had been before ever the vision shone. Was it credible that there had ever been such a vision in a life so entirely dictated by immediacy and instinct as his? We are all creatures of the dark stream, we swim in needs and bodily impulses and small vanities; if ever and again a bubble of spiritual imaginativeness glows out of us, it breaks and leaves us where we were.

"Louse that I am!" he cried.

He still believed in God, without a shadow of doubt; he believed in the God that he had seen, the high courage, the golden intention, the light that had for a moment touched him. But what had he to do with God, he, the loiterer, the little thing?

He was little, he was funny. His prevarications with his wife, for example, were comic. There was no other word for him but "funny."

He rolled back again and lay staring.

"Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" What right has a little bishop in a purple stock and doeskin breeches, who hangs back in his palace from the very call of God, to a phrase so fine and tragic as "the body of this death?"

He was the most unreal thing in the universe. He was a base insect giving himself airs. What advantage has a bishop over the Praying Mantis, that cricket which apes the attitude of piety? Does he matter more — to God?

"To the God of the Universe, who can tell? To the God of man, — yes."

He sat up in bed struck by his own answer, and full of an indescribable hunger for God and an indescribable sense of his complete want of courage to make the one simple appeal that would satisfy that hunger. He tried to pray. "O God!" he cried, "forgive me! Take me!" It seemed to him that he was not really praying but only making believe to pray. It seemed to him that he was not really existing but only seeming to exist. He seemed to himself to be one with figures on a china plate, with figures painted on walls, with the flimsy imagined lives of men in stories of forgotten times. "O God!" he said, "O God," acting a gesture, mimicking appeal.

"Anaemic," he said, and was given an idea.

He got out of bed, he took his keys from the night-table at the bed head and went to his bureau.

He stood with Dale's tonic in his hand. He remained for some time holding it, and feeling a curious indisposition to go on with the thing in his mind.

He turned at last with an effort. He carried the little phial to his bedside, and into the tumbler of his water-bottle he let the drops fall, drop by drop, until he had counted twenty. Then holding it to the bulb of his reading lamp he added the water and stood watching the slow pearly eddies in the mixture mingle into an opalescent uniformity. He replaced the water-bottle and stood with the glass in his hand. But he did not drink.

He was afraid.

He knew that he had only to drink and this world of confusion would grow transparent, would roll back and reveal the great simplicities behind. And he was afraid.

He was afraid of that greatness. He was afraid of the great imperatives that he knew would at once take hold of his life. He wanted to muddle on for just a little longer. He wanted to stay just where he was, in his familiar prison-house, with the key of escape in his hand. Before he took the last step into the very presence of truth, he would — think.

He put down the glass and lay down upon his bed....

(3)

He awoke in a mood of great depression out of a dream of wandering interminably in an endless building of innumerable pillars, pillars so vast and high that the ceiling was lost in darkness. By the scale of these pillars he felt himself scarcely larger than an ant. He was always alone in these wanderings, and always missing something that passed along distant passages, something desirable, something in the nature of a procession or of a ceremony, something of which he was in futile pursuit, of which he heard faint echoes, something luminous of which he seemed at times to see the last fading reflection, across vast halls and wildernesses of shining pavement and through Cyclopaean archways. At last there was neither sound nor gleam, but the utmost solitude, and a darkness and silence and the uttermost profundity of sorrow....

It was bright day. Dunk had just come into the room with his tea, and the tumbler of Dr. Dale's tonic stood untouched upon the night-table. The bishop sat up in bed. He had missed his opportunity. To-day was a busy day, he knew.

"No," he said, as Dunk hesitated whether to remove or leave the tumbler. "Leave that."

Dunk found room for it upon the tea-tray, and vanished softly with the bishop's evening clothes.

The bishop remained motionless facing the day. There stood the draught of decision that he had lacked the decision even to touch.

From his bed he could just read the larger items that figured upon the engagement tablet which it was Whippham's business to fill over-night and place upon his table. He had two confirmation services, first the big one in the cathedral and then a second one in the evening at Pringle, various committees and an interview with Chasters. He had not yet finished his addresses for these confirmation services....

The task seemed mountainous — overwhelming.

With a gesture of desperation he seized the tumblerful of tonic and drank it off at a gulp.

(4)

For some moments nothing seemed to happen.

Then he began to feel stronger and less wretched, and then came a throbbing and tingling of artery and nerve.

He had a sense of adventure, a pleasant fear in the thing that he had done. He got out of bed, leaving his cup of tea untasted, and began to dress. He had the sensation of relief a prisoner may feel who suddenly tries his cell door and finds it open upon sunshine, the outside world and freedom.

He went on dressing although he was certain that in a few minutes the world of delusion about him would dissolve, and that he would find himself again in the great freedom of the place of God.

This time the transition came much sooner and much more rapidly. This time the phases and quality of the experience were different. He felt once again that luminous confusion between the

world in which a human life is imprisoned and a circumambient and interpenetrating world, but this phase passed very rapidly; it did not spread out over nearly half an hour as it had done before, and almost immediately he seemed to plunge away from everything in this life altogether into that outer freedom he sought. And this time there was not even the elemental scenery of the former vision. He stood on nothing; there was nothing below and nothing above him. There was no sense of falling, no terror, but a feeling as though he floated released. There was no light, but as it were a clear darkness about him. Then it was manifest to him that he was not alone, but that with him was that same being that in his former vision had called himself the Angel of God. He knew this without knowing why he knew this, and either he spoke and was answered, or he thought and his thought answered him back. His state of mind on this occasion was altogether different from the first vision of God; before it had been spectacular, but now his perception was altogether super-sensuous.

(And nevertheless and all the time it seemed that very faintly he was still in his room.)

It was he who was the first to speak. The great Angel whom he felt rather than saw seemed to be waiting for him to speak.

"I have come," he said, "because once more I desire to see God."

"But you have seen God."

"I saw God. God was light, God was truth. And I went back to my life, and God was hidden. God seemed to call me. He called. I heard him, I sought him and I touched his hand. When I went back to my life I was presently lost in perplexity. I could not tell why God had called me nor what I had to do."

"And why did you not come here before?"

"Doubt and fear. Brother, will you not lay your hand on mine?"

The figure in the darkness became distincter. But nothing touched the bishop's seeking hands.

"I want to see God and to understand him. I want reassurance. I want conviction. I want to understand all that God asks me to do. The world is full of conflict and confusion and the spirit of war. It is dark and dreadful now with suffering and bloodshed. I want to serve God who could save it, and I do not know how."

It seemed to the bishop that now he could distinguish dimly but

surely the form and features of the great Angel to whom he talked. For a little while there was silence, and then the Angel spoke.

"It was necessary first," said the Angel, "that you should apprehend God and desire him. That was the purport of your first vision. Now, since you require it, I will tell you and show you certain things about him, things that it seems you need to know, things that all men need to know. Know then first that the time is at hand when God will come into the world and rule it, and when men will know what is required of them. This time is close at hand. In a little while God will be made manifest throughout the earth. Men will know him and know that he is King. To you this truth is to be shown — that you may tell it to others."

"This is no vision?" said the bishop, "no dream that will pass away?"

"Am I not here beside you?"

(5)

The bishop was anxious to be very clear. Things that had been shapelessly present in his mind now took form and found words for themselves.

"The God I saw in my vision — He is not yet manifest in the world?"

"He comes. He is in the world, but he is not yet manifested. He whom you saw in your vision will speedily be manifest in the world. To you this vision is given of the things that come. The world is already glowing with God. Mankind is like a smouldering fire that will presently, in quite a little time, burst out into flame.

"In your former vision I showed you God," said the Angel. "This time I will show you certain signs of the coming of God. And then you will understand the place you hold in the world and the task that is required of you."

(6)

And as the Angel spoke he lifted up his hands with the palms upward, and there appeared above them a little round cloud, that

grew denser until it had the likeness of a silver sphere. It was a mirror in the form of a ball, but a mirror not shining uniformly; it was discoloured with greyish patches that had a familiar shape. It circled slowly upon the Angel's hands. It seemed no greater than the compass of a human skull, and yet it was as great as the earth. Indeed it showed the whole earth. It was the earth. The hands of the Angel vanished out of sight, dissolved and vanished, and the spinning world hung free. All about the bishop the velvet darkness broke into glittering points that shaped out the constellations, and nearest to them, so near as to seem only a few million miles away in the great emptiness into which everything had resolved itself, shone the sun, a ball of red-tongued fires. The Angel was but a voice now; the bishop and the Angel were somewhere aloof from and yet accessible to the circling silver sphere.

At the time all that happened seemed to happen quite naturally, as things happen in a dream. It was only later, when all this was a matter of memory, that the bishop realized how strange and incomprehensible his vision had been. The sphere was the earth with all its continents and seas, its ships and cities, its country-sides and mountain ranges. It was so small that he could see it all at once, and so great and full that he could see everything in it. He could see great countries like little patches upon it, and at the same time he could see the faces of the men upon the highways, he could see the feelings in men's hearts and the thoughts in their minds. But it did not seem in any way wonderful to the bishop that so he should see those things, or that it was to him that these things were shown.

"This is the whole world," he said.

"This is the vision of the world," the Angel answered.

"It is very wonderful," said the bishop, and stood for a moment marvelling at the compass of his vision. For here was India, here was Samarkand, in the light of the late afternoon; and China and the swarming cities upon her silvery rivers sinking through twilight to the night and throwing a spray and tracery of lantern spots upon the dark; here was Russia under the noontide, and so great a battle of artillery raging on the Dunajec as no man had ever seen before; whole lines of trenches dissolved into clouds of dust and heaps of blood-streaked earth; here close to the waiting streets of

Constantinople were the hills of Gallipoli, the grave of British Imperialism, streaming to heaven with the dust and smoke of bursting shells and rifle fire and the smoke and flame of burning brushwood. In the sea of Marmora a big ship crowded with Turkish troops was sinking; and, purple under the clear water, he could see the shape of the British submarine which had torpedoed her and had submerged and was going away. Berlin prepared its frugal meals, still far from famine. He saw the war in Europe as if he saw it on a map, yet every human detail showed. Over hundreds of miles of trenches east and west of Germany he could see shells bursting and the men below dropping, and the stretcher-bearers going back with the wounded. The roads to every front were crowded with reserves and munitions. For a moment a little group of men indifferent to all this struggle, who were landing amidst the Antarctic wilderness, held his attention; and then his eyes went westward to the dark rolling Atlantic across which, as the edge of the night was drawn like a curtain, more and still more ships became visible beating upon their courses eastward or westward under the overtaking day.

The wonder increased; the wonder of the single and infinitely multitudinous adventure of mankind.

"So God perhaps sees it," he whispered.

(7)

"Look at this man," said the Angel, and the black shadow of a hand seemed to point.

It was a Chinaman sitting with two others in a little low room separated by translucent paper windows from a noisy street of shrill-voiced people. The three had been talking of the ultimatum that Japan had sent that day to China, claiming a priority in many matters over European influences they were by no means sure whether it was a wrong or a benefit that had been done to their country. From that topic they had passed to the discussion of the war, and then of wars and national aggressions and the perpetual thrusting and quarrelling of mankind. The older man had said that so life would always be; it was the will of Heaven. The little, very yellow-faced, emaciated man had agreed with him. But now this younger man, to whose thoughts

the Angel had so particularly directed the bishop's attention, was speaking. He did not agree with his companion.

"War is not the will of Heaven," he said; "it is the blindness of men."

"Man changes," he said, "from day to day and from age to age. The science of the West has taught us that. Man changes and war changes and all things change. China has been the land of flowery peace, and she may yet give peace to all the world. She has put aside that puppet Emperor at Peking, she turns her face to the new learning of the West as a man lays aside his heavy robes, in order that her task may be achieved."

The older man spoke, his manner was more than a little incredulous, and yet not altogether contemptuous. "You believe that someday there will be no more war in the world, that a time will come when men will no longer plot and plan against the welfare of men?"

"Even that last," said the younger man. "Did any of us dream twenty-five years ago that here in China we should live to see a republic? The age of the republics draws near, when men in every country of the world will look straight up to the rule of Right and the empire of Heaven."

("And God will be King of the World," said the Angel. "Is not that faith exactly the faith that is coming to you?")

The two other Chinamen questioned their companion, but without hostility.

"This war," said the Chinaman, "will end in a great harvesting of kings."

"But Japan—" the older man began.

The bishop would have liked to hear more of that conversation, but the dark hand of the Angel motioned him to another part of the world. "Listen to this," said the Angel.

He pointed the bishop to where the armies of Britain and Turkey lay in the heat of Mesopotamia. Along the sandy bank of a wide, slow-flowing river rode two horsemen, an Englishman and a Turk. They were returning from the Turkish lines, whither the Englishman had been with a flag of truce. When Englishmen and Turks are thrown together they soon become friends, and in this case matters

had been facilitated by the Englishman's command of the Turkish language. He was quite an exceptional Englishman. The Turk had just been remarking cheerfully that it wouldn't please the Germans if they were to discover how amiably he and his charge had got on. "It's a pity we ever ceased to be friends," he said.

"You Englishmen aren't like our Christians," he went on.

The Englishmen wanted to know why.

"You haven't priests in robes. You don't chant and worship crosses and pictures, and quarrel among yourselves."

"We worship the same God as you do," said the Englishman.

"Then why do we fight?"

"That's what we want to know."

"Why do you call yourselves Christians? And take part against us? All who worship the One God are brothers."

"They ought to be," said the Englishman, and thought. He was struck by what seemed to him an amazingly novel idea.

"If it weren't for religions all men would serve God together," he said. "And then there would be no wars — only now and then perhaps just a little honest fighting...."

"And see here," said the Angel. "Here close behind this frightful battle, where the German phalanx of guns pounds its way through the Russian hosts. Here is a young German talking to two wounded Russian prisoners, who have stopped to rest by the roadside. He is a German of East Prussia; he knows and thinks a little Russian. And they too are saying, all three of them, that the war is not God's will, but the confusion of mankind.

"Here," he said, and the shadow of his hand hovered over the burning-ghats of Benares, where a Brahmin of the new persuasion watched the straight spires of funereal smoke ascend into the glow of the late afternoon, while he talked to an English painter, his friend, of the blind intolerance of race and caste and custom in India.

"Or here."

The Angel pointed to a group of people who had gathered upon a little beach at the head of a Norwegian fiord. There were three lads, an old man and two women, and they stood about the body of a drowned German sailor which had been washed up that day. For a time they had talked in whispers, but now suddenly the old man

spoke aloud.

"This is the fourth that has come ashore," he said. "Poor drowned souls! Because men will not serve God."

"But folks go to church and pray enough," said one of the women.

"They do not serve God," said the old man. "They just pray to him as one nods to a beggar. They do not serve God who is their King. They set up their false kings and emperors, and so all Europe is covered with dead, and the seas wash up these dead to us. Why does the world suffer these things? Why did we Norwegians, who are a free-spirited people, permit the Germans and the Swedes and the English to set up a king over us? Because we lack faith. Kings mean secret counsels, and secret counsels bring war. Sooner or later war will come to us also if we give the soul of our nation in trust to a king.... But things will not always be thus with men. God will not suffer them for ever. A day comes, and it is no distant day, when God himself will rule the earth, and when men will do, not what the king wishes nor what is expedient nor what is customary, but what is manifestly right."....

"But men are saying that now in a thousand places," said the Angel. "Here is something that goes a little beyond that."

His pointing hand went southward until they saw the Africanders riding down to Windhuk. Two men, Boer farmers both, rode side by side and talked of the German officer they brought prisoner with them. He had put sheep-dip in the wells of drinking-water; his life was fairly forfeit, and he was not to be killed. "We want no more hate in South Africa," they agreed. "Dutch and English and German must live here now side by side. Men cannot always be killing."

"And see his thoughts," said the Angel.

The German's mind was one amazement. He had been sure of being shot, he had meant to make a good end, fierce and scornful, a relentless fighter to the last; and these men who might have shot him like a man were going to spare him like a dog. His mind was a tumbled muddle of old and new ideas. He had been brought up in an atmosphere of the foulest and fiercest militarism; he had been trained to relentlessness, ruthlessness and so forth; war was war and the bitterer the better, frightfulness was your way to victory over every enemy. But these people had found a better way. Here were Dutch

and English side by side; sixteen years ago they had been at war together and now they wore the same uniform and rode together, and laughed at him for a queer fellow because he was for spitting at them and defying them, and folding his arms and looking level at the executioners' rifles. There were to be no executioners' rifles.... If it was so with Dutch and English, why shouldn't it be so presently with French and Germans? Why someday shouldn't French, German, Dutch and English, Russian and Pole, ride together under this new star of mankind, the Southern Cross, to catch whatever last mischief-maker was left to poison the wells of goodwill?

His mind resisted and struggled against these ideas. "Austere," he whispered. "The ennobling tests of war." A trooner rode up alongside, and offered him a drink of water

"Just a mouthful," he said apologetically. "We've had to go rather short."...

"There's another brain busy here with the same idea," the Angel interrupted. And the bishop found himself looking into the bedroom of a young German attache in Washington, sleepless in the small hours.

"Ach!" cried the young man, and sat up in bed and ran his hands through his fair hair.

He had been working late upon this detestable business of the Lusitania; the news of her sinking had come to hand two days before, and all America was aflame with it. It might mean war. His task had been to pour out explanations and justifications to the press; to show that it was an act of necessity, to pretend a conviction that the great ship was loaded with munitions, to fight down the hostility and anger that blazed across a continent. He had worked to his limit. He had taken cup after cup of coffee, and had come to bed worked out not two hours ago. Now here he was awake after a nightmare of drowning women and children, trying to comfort his soul by recalling his own arguments. Never once since the war began had he doubted the rightness of the German cause. It seemed only a proof of his nervous exhaustion that he could doubt it now. Germany was the best organized, most cultivated, scientific and liberal nation the earth had ever seen, it was for the good of mankind that she should be the dominant power in the world; his patriotism had had the passion of a

mission. The English were indolent, the French decadent, the Russians barbaric, the Americans basely democratic; the rest of the world was the "White man's Burthen"; the clear destiny of mankind was subservience to the good Prussian eagle. Nevertheless — those wet draggled bodies that swirled down in the eddies of the sinking Titan — Ach! He wished it could have been otherwise. He nursed his knees and prayed that there need not be much more of these things before the spirit of the enemy was broken and the great Peace of Germany came upon the world.

And suddenly he stopped short in his prayer.

Suddenly out of the nothingness and darkness about him came the conviction that God did not listen to his prayers....

Was there any other way?

It was the most awful doubt he had ever had, for it smote at the training of all his life. "Could it be possible that after all our old German God is not the proper style and title of the true God? Is our old German God perhaps only the last of a long succession of bloodstained tribal effigies — and not God at all?"

For a long time it seemed that the bishop watched the thoughts that gathered in the young attache's mind. Until suddenly he broke into a quotation, into that last cry of the dying Goethe, for "Light. More Light!"...

"Leave him at that," said the Angel. "I want you to hear these two young women."

The hand came back to England and pointed to where Southend at the mouth of the Thames was all agog with the excitement of an overnight Zeppelin raid. People had got up hours before their usual time in order to look at the wrecked houses before they went up to their work in town. Everybody seemed abroad. Two nurses, not very well trained as nurses go nor very well-educated women, were snatching a little sea air upon the front after an eventful night. They were too excited still to sleep. They were talking of the horror of the moment when they saw the nasty thing "up there," and felt helpless as it dropped its bombs. They had both hated it.

"There didn't ought to be such things," said one.

"They don't seem needed," said her companion.

"Men won't always go on like this — making wars and all such

wickedness."

"It's 'ow to stop them?"

"Science is going to stop them."

"Science?"

"Yes, science. My young brother — oh, he's a clever one — he says such things! He says that it's science that they won't always go on like this. There's more sense coming into the world and more — my young brother says so. Says it stands to reason; it's Evolution. It's science that men are all brothers; you can prove it. It's science that there oughtn't to be war. Science is ending war now by making it horrible like this, and making it so that no one is safe. Showing it up. Only when nobody is safe will everybody want to set up peace, he says. He says it's proved there could easily be peace all over the world now if it wasn't for flags and kings and capitalists and priests. They still manage to keep safe and out of it. He says the world ought to be just one state. The World State, he says it ought to be."

("Under God," said the bishop, "under God.")

"He says science ought to be King of the whole world."

"Call it Science if you will," said the bishop. "God is wisdom."

"Out of the mouths of babes and elementary science students," said the Angel. "The very children in the board schools are turning against this narrowness and nonsense and mischief of nations and creeds and kings. You see it at a thousand points, at ten thousand points, look, the world is all flashing and flickering; it is like a spinthariscope; it is aquiver with the light that is coming to mankind. It is on the verge of blazing even now."

"Into a light."

"Into the one Kingdom of God. See here! See here! And here! This brave little French priest in a helmet of steel who is daring to think for the first time in his life; this gentle-mannered emir from Morocco looking at the grave-diggers on the battlefield; this mother who has lost her son....

"You see they all turn in one direction, although none of them seem to dream yet that they are all turning in the same direction. They turn, every one, to the rule of righteousness, which is the rule of God. They turn to that communism of effort in the world which alone permits men to serve God in state and city and their economic

lives.... They are all coming to the verge of the same salvation, the salvation of one human brotherhood under the rule of one Righteousness, one Divine will.... Is that the salvation your church offers?"

(8)

"And now that we have seen how religion grows and spreads in men's hearts, now that the fields are white with harvest, I want you to look also and see what the teachers of religion are doing," said the Angel.

He smiled. His presence became more definite, and the earthly globe about them and the sun and the stars grew less distinct and less immediately there. The silence invited the bishop to speak.

"In the light of this vision, I see my church plainly for the little thing it is," he said.

He wanted to be perfectly clear with the Angel and himself.

"This church of which I am a bishop is just a part of our poor human struggle, small and pitiful as one thinks of it here in the light of the advent of God's Kingdom, but very great, very great indeed, ancient and high and venerable, in comparison with me. But mostly it is human. It is most human. For my story is the church's story, and the church's story is mine. Here I could almost believe myself the church itself. The world saw a light, the nations that were sitting in darkness saw a great light. Even as I saw God. And then the church began to forget and lose itself among secondary things. As I have done.... It tried to express the truth and lost itself in a maze of theology. It tried to bring order into the world and sold its faith to Constantine. These men who had professed the Invisible King of the World, shirked his service. It is a most terrible disaster that Christianity has sold itself to emperors and kings. They forged a saying of the Master's that we should render unto Ceasar the things that are Ceasar's and unto God the things that are God's....

"Who is this Ceasar to set himself up to share mankind with God? Nothing that is Ceasar's can be any the less God's. But Constantine Caesar sat in the midst of the council, his guards were all about it, and the poor fanatics and trimmers and schemers disputed nervously

with their eyes on him, disputed about homoousian and homoiousian, and grimaced and pretended to be very very fierce and exact to hide how much they were frightened and how little they knew, and because they did not dare to lay violent hands upon that usurper of the empire of the world....

"And from that day forth the Christian churches have been damned and lost. Kept churches. Lackey churches. Roman, Russian, Anglican; it matters not. My church indeed was twice sold, for it doubled the sin of Nicaea and gave itself over to Henry and Elizabeth while it shammed a dispute about the sacraments. No one cared really about transubstantiation any more than the earlier betrayers cared about consubstantiality; that dispute did but serve to mask the betrayal."

He turned to the listening Angel. "What can you show me of my church that I do not know? Why! we Anglican bishops get our sees as footmen get a job. For months Victoria, that old German Frau, delayed me — because of some tittle-tattle.... The things we are! Snape, who afterwards became Bishop of Burnham, used to waylay the Prince Consort when he was riding in Hyde Park and give him, he boasts, 'a good loud cheer,' and then he would run very fast across the park so as to catch him as he came round, and do it again.... It is to that sort of thing we bearers of the light have sunken....

"I have always despised that poor toady," the bishop went on. "And yet here am I, and God has called me and shown me the light of his countenance, and for a month I have faltered. That is the mystery of the human heart, that it can and does sin against the light. What right have I, who have seen the light — and failed, what right have I — to despise any other human being? I seem to have been held back by a sort of paralysis.

"Men are so small, so small still, that they cannot keep hold of the vision of God. That is why I want to see God again.... But if it were not for this strange drug that seems for a little while to lift my mind above the confusion and personal entanglements of every day, I doubt if even now I could be here. I am here, passionate to hold this moment and keep the light. As this inspiration passes, I shall go back, I know, to my home and my place and my limitations. The

littleness of men! The forgetfulness of men! I want to know what my chief duty is, to have it plain, in terms so plain that I can never forget.

"See in this world," he said, turning to the globe, "while Chinese merchants and Turkish troopers, school-board boys and Norwegian fishermen, half-trained nurses and Boer farmers are full of the spirit of God, see how the priests of the churches of Nicaea spend their time."

And now it was the bishop whose dark hands ran over the great silver globe, and it was the Angel who stood over him and listened, as a teacher might stand over a child who is learning a lesson. The bishop's hand rested for a second on a cardinal who was planning a political intrigue to produce a reaction in France, then for a moment on a Pomeranian pastor who was going out to his well-tilled fields with his Sunday sermon, full of fierce hatred of England, still echoing in his head. Then he paused at a Mollah preaching the Jehad, in doubt whether he too wasn't a German pastor, and then at an Anglican clergyman still lying abed and thinking out a great mission of Repentance and Hope that should restore the authority of the established church — by incoherent missioning — without any definite sin indicated for repentance nor any clear hope for anything in particular arising out of such activities. The bishop's hand went seeking to and fro, but nowhere could he find any religious teacher, any religious body rousing itself to meet the new dawn of faith in the world. Some few men indeed seemed thoughtful, but within the limitation of their vows. Everywhere it was church and creed and nation and king and property and partisanship, and nowhere was it the True God that the priests and teachers were upholding. It was always the common unhampered man through whom the light of God was breaking; it was always the creed and the organization of the religious professionals that stood in the way to God....

"God is putting the priests aside," he cried, "and reaching out to common men. The churches do not serve God. They stand between man and God. They are like great barricades on the way to God."

The bishop's hand brushed over Archbishop Pontifex, who was just coming down to breakfast in his palace. This pompous old man was dressed in a purple garment that set off his tall figure very finely,

and he was holding out his episcopal ring for his guests to kiss, that being the customary morning greeting of Archbishop Pontifex. The thought of that ring-kissing had made much hard work at lower levels "worth while" to Archbishop Pontifex. And seventy miles away from him old Likeman breakfasted in bed on Benger's food, and searched his Greek Testament for tags to put to his letters. And here was the familiar palace at Princhester, and in an armchair in his bed-room sat Bishop Scrope insensible and motionless, in a trance in which he was dreaming of the coming of God.

"I see my futility. I see my vanity. But what am I to do?" he said, turning to the darkness that now wrapped about the Angel again, fold upon fold. "The implications of yesterday bind me for the morrow. This is my world. This is what I am and what I am in. How can I save myself? How can I turn from these habits and customs and obligations to the service of the one true God? When I see myself, then I understand how it is with the others. All we priests and teachers are men caught in nets. I would serve God. Easily said! But how am I to serve God? How am I to help and forward His coming, to make myself part of His coming?"

He perceived that he was returning into himself, and that the vision of the sphere and of the starry spaces was fading into non-existence.

He struggled against this return. He felt that his demand was still unanswered. His wife's face had suddenly come very close to him, and he realized she intervened between him and that solution.

What was she doing here?

(9)

The great Angel seemed still to be near at hand, limitless space was all about him, and yet the bishop perceived that he was now sitting in the arm-chair in his bedroom in the palace of Princhester. He was both there and not there. It seemed now as if he had two distinct yet kindred selves, and that the former watched the latter. The latter was now awakening to the things about him; the former marked his gestures and listened with an entire detachment to the words he was saying. These words he was saying to Lady Ella: "God is coming to

rule the world, I tell you. We must leave the church."

Close to him sat Lady Ella, watching him with an expression in which dismay and resolution mingled. Upon the other side of him, upon a little occasional table, was a tray with breakfast things. He was no longer the watcher now, but the watched.

Lady Ella bent towards him as he spoke. She seemed to struggle with and dismiss his astonishing statement.

"Edward," she said, "you have been taking a drug." He looked round at his night table to see the little phial. It had gone. Then he saw that Lady Ella held it very firmly in her hand.

"Dunk came to me in great distress. He said you were insensible and breathing heavily. I came. I realized. I told him to say nothing to any one, but to fetch me a tray with your breakfast. I have kept all the other servants away and I have waited here by you.... Dunk I think is safe.... You have been muttering and moving your head from side to side...."

The bishop's mind was confused. He felt as though God must be standing just outside the room. "I have failed in my duty," he said. "But I am very near to God." He laid his hand on her arm. "You know, Ella, He is very close to us...."

She looked perplexed.

He sat up in his chair.

"For some months now," he said, "there have been new forces at work in my mind. I have been invaded by strange doubts and still stranger realizations. This old church of ours is an empty mask. God is not specially concerned in it."

"Edward!" she cried, "what are you saying?"

"I have been hesitating to tell you. But I see now I must tell you plainly. Our church is a cast hull. It is like the empty skin of a snake. God has gone out of it."

She rose to her feet. She was so horrified that she staggered backward, pushing her chair behind her. "But you are mad," she said.

He was astonished at her distress. He stood up also.

"My dear," he said, "I can assure you I am not mad. I should have prepared you, I know...."

She looked at him wild-eyed. Then she glanced at the phial, gripped in her hand.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, and going swiftly to the window emptied out the contents of the little bottle. He realized what she was doing too late to prevent her.

“Don’t waste that!” he cried, and stepping forward caught hold of her wrist. The phial fell from her white fingers, and crashed upon the rough paved garden path below.

“My dear,” he cried, “my dear. You do not understand.”

They stood face to face. “It was a tonic,” he said. “I have been ill. I need it.”

“It is a drug,” she answered. “You have been uttering blasphemies.”

He dropped her arm and walked half-way across the room. Then he turned and faced her.

“They are not blasphemies,” he said. “But I ought not to have surprised you and shocked you as I have done. I want to tell you of changes that have happened to my mind.”

“Now!” she exclaimed, and then: “I will not hear them now. Until you are better. Until these fumes—”

Her manner changed. “Oh, Edward!” she cried, “why have you done this? Why have you taken things secretly? I know you have been sleepless, but I have been so ready to help you. I have been willing — you know I have been willing — for any help. My life is all to be of use to you....”

“Is there any reason,” she pleaded, “why you should have hidden things from me?”

He stood remorseful and distressed. “I should have talked to you,” he said lamely.

“Edward,” she said, laying her hands on his shoulders, “will you do one thing for me? Will you try to eat a little breakfast? And stay here? I will go down to Mr. Whippham and arrange whatever is urgent with him. Perhaps if you rest — There is nothing really imperative until the confirmation in the afternoon.... I do not understand all this. For some time — I have felt it was going on. But of that we can talk. The thing now is that people should not know, that nothing should be seen.... Suppose for instance that horrible White Blackbird were to hear of it.... I implore you. If you rest here — And if I were to send for that young doctor who attended

Miriam."

"I don't want a doctor," said the bishop.

"But you ought to have a doctor."

"I won't have a doctor," said the bishop.

It was with a perplexed but powerless dissent that the externalized perceptions of the bishop witnessed his agreement with the rest of Lady Ella's proposals so soon as this point about the doctor was conceded.

(10)

For the rest of that day until his breakdown in the cathedral the sense of being in two places at the same time haunted the bishop's mind. He stood beside the Angel in the great space amidst the stars, and at the same time he was back in his ordinary life, he was in his palace at Princhester, first resting in his bedroom and talking to his wife and presently taking up the routines of his duties again in his study downstairs.

His chief task was to finish his two addresses for the confirmation services of the day. He read over his notes, and threw them aside and remained for a time thinking deeply. The Greek tags at the end of Likeman's letter came into his thoughts; they assumed a quality of peculiar relevance to this present occasion. He repeated the words: "Epitelesei. Epiphausei."

He took his little Testament to verify them. After some slight trouble he located the two texts. The first, from Philippians, ran in the old version, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it"; the second was expressed thus: "Christ shall give thee light." He was dissatisfied with these renderings and resorted to the revised version, which gave "perfect" instead of "perform," and "shall shine upon you" for "give thee light." He reflected profoundly for a time.

Then suddenly his addresses began to take shape in his mind, and these little points lost any significance. He began to write rapidly, and as he wrote he felt the Angel stood by his right hand and read and approved what he was writing. There were moments when his mind seemed to be working entirely beyond his control. He had a transitory questioning whether this curious intellectual automatism

was not perhaps what people meant by “inspiration.”

(11)

The bishop had always been sensitive to the secret fount of pathos that is hidden in the spectacle of youth. Long years ago when he and Lady Ella had been in Florence he had been moved to tears by the beauty of the fresh-faced eager Tobit who runs beside the great angel in the picture of Botticelli. And suddenly and almost as uncontrollably, that feeling returned at the sight of the young congregation below him, of all these scores of neophytes who were gathered to make a public acknowledgment of God. The war has invested all youth now with the shadow of tragedy; before it came many of us were a little envious of youth and a little too assured of its certainty of happiness. All that has changed. Fear and a certain tender solicitude mingle in our regard for every child; not a lad we pass in the street but may presently be called to face such pain and stress and danger as no ancient hero ever knew. The patronage, the insolent condescension of age, has vanished out of the world. It is dreadful to look upon the young.

He stood surveying the faces of the young people as the rector read the Preface to the confirmation service. How simple they were, how innocent! Some were a little flushed by the excitement of the occasion; some a little pallid. But they were all such tender faces, so soft in outline, so fresh and delicate in texture and colour. They had soft credulous mouths. Some glanced sideways at one another; some listened with a forced intentness. The expression of one good-looking boy, sitting in a corner scat, struck the bishop as being curiously defiant. He stood very erect, he blinked his eyes as though they smarted, his lips were compressed bitterly. And then it seemed to the bishop that the Angel stood beside him and gave him understanding.

“He is here,” the bishop knew, “because he could not avoid coming. He tried to excuse himself. His mother wept. What could he do? But the church’s teaching nowadays fails even to grip the minds of boys.”

The rector came to the end of his Preface: “They will evermore

endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as they by their own confession have assented unto."

"Like a smart solicitor pinning them down," said the bishop to himself, and then roused himself, unrolled the little paper in his hand, leant forward, and straightway began his first address.

Nowadays it is possible to say very unorthodox things indeed in an Anglican pulpit unchallenged. There remains no alert doctrinal criticism in the church congregations. It was possible, therefore, for the bishop to say all that follows without either hindrance or disturbance. The only opposition, indeed, came from within, from a sense of dreamlike incongruity between the place and the occasion and the things that he found himself delivering.

"All ceremonies," he began, "grow old. All ceremonies are tainted even from the first by things less worthy than their first intention, and you, my dear sons and daughters, who have gathered to-day in this worn and ancient building, beneath these monuments to ancient vanities and these symbols of forgotten or abandoned theories about the mystery of God, will do well to distinguish in your minds between what is essential and what is superfluous and confusing in this dedication you make of yourselves to God our Master and King. For that is the real thing you seek to do today, to give yourselves to God. This is your spiritual coming of age, in which you set aside your childish dependence upon teachers and upon taught phrases, upon rote and direction, and stand up to look your Master in the face. You profess a great brotherhood when you do that, a brotherhood that goes round the earth, that numbers men of every race and nation and country, that aims to bring God into all the affairs of this world and make him not only the king of your individual lives but the king — in place of all the upstarts, usurpers, accidents, and absurdities who bear crowns and sceptres today — of an united mankind."

He paused, and in the pause he heard a little rustle as though the congregation before him was sitting up in its places, a sound that always nerves and reassures an experienced preacher.

"This, my dear children, is the reality of this grave business to-day, as indeed it is the real and practical end of all true religion. This is your sacrament urn, your soldier's oath. You salute and give your fealty to the coming Kingdom of God. And upon that I would have

you fix your minds to the exclusion of much that, I know only too well, has been narrow and evil and sectarian in your preparation for this solemn rite. God is like a precious jewel found among much rubble; you must cast the rubble from you. The crowning triumph of the human mind is simplicity; the supreme significance of God lies in his unity and universality. The God you salute to-day is the God of the Jews and Gentiles alike, the God of Islam, the God of the Brahmo Somaj, the unknown God of many a righteous unbeliever. He is not the God of those felted theologies and inexplicable doctrines with which your teachers may have confused your minds. I would have it very clear in your minds that having drunken the draught you should not reverence unduly the cracked old vessel that has brought it to your lips. I should be falling short of my duty if I did not make that and everything I mean by that altogether plain to you."

He saw the lad whose face of dull defiance he had marked before, sitting now with a startled interest in his eyes. The bishop leant over the desk before him, and continued in the persuasive tone of a man who speaks of things too manifest for laboured argument.

"In all ages religion has come from God through broad-minded creative men, and in all ages it has fallen very quickly into the hands of intense and conservative men. These last — narrow, fearful, and suspicious — have sought in every age to save the precious gift of religion by putting it into a prison of formulae and asseverations. Bear that in mind when you are pressed to definition. It is as if you made a box hermetically sealed to save the treasure of a fresh breeze from the sea. But they have sought out exact statements and tortuous explanations of the plain truth of God, they have tried to take down God in writing, to commit him to documents, to embalm his living faith as though it would otherwise corrupt. So they have lost God and fallen into endless differences, disputes, violence, and darkness about insignificant things. They have divided religion between this creed and teacher and that. The corruption of the best is the worst, said Aristotle; and the great religions of the world, and especially this Christianity of ours, are the ones most darkened and divided and wasted by the fussings and false exactitudes of the creed-monger and the sectary. There is no lie so bad as a stale disfigured truth. There is

no heresy so damnable as a narrow orthodoxy. All religious associations carry this danger of the over-statement that misstates and the over-emphasis that divides and betrays. Beware of that danger. Do not imagine, because you are gathered in this queerly beautiful old building today, because I preside here in this odd raiment of an odder compromise, because you see about you in coloured glass and carven stone the emblems of much vain disputation, that thereby you cut yourselves off and come apart from the great world of faith, Catholic, Islamic, Brahministic, Buddhistic, that grows now to a common consciousness of the near Advent of God our King. You enter that waiting world fraternity now, you do not leave it. This place, this church of ours, should be to you not a seclusion and a fastness but a door.

"I could quote you a score of instances to establish that this simple universalism was also the teaching of Christ. But now I will only remind you that it was Mary who went to her lord simply, who was commended, and not Martha who troubled about many things. Learn from the Mary of Faith and not from these Marthas of the Creeds. Let us abandon the presumptions of an ignorant past. The perfection of doctrine is not for finite men. Give yourselves to God. Give yourselves to God. Not to churches and uses, but to God. To God simply. He is the first word of religion and the last. He is Alpha; he is Omega. Epitelesei; it is He who will finish the good work begun."

The bishop ended his address in a vivid silence. Then he began his interrogation.

"Do you here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves—"

He stopped short. The next words were: "bound to believe and do all those things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you."

He could not stand those words. He hesitated, and then substituted: "acknowledge yourselves to be the true servants of the one God, who is the Lord of Mankind?"

For a moment silence hung in the cathedral. Then one voice, a

boy's voice, led a ragged response. "I do."

Then the bishop: "Our help is in the Name of the Lord."

The congregation answered doubtfully, with a glance at its prayer books: "Who hath made heaven and earth."

The bishop: "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

The congregation said with returning confidence: "Henceforth, world without end."

(12)

Before his second address the bishop had to listen to Veni Creator Spiritus, in its English form, and it seemed to him the worst of all possible hymns. Its defects became monstrously exaggerated to his hypersensitive mind. It impressed him in its Englished travesty as a grotesque, as a veritable Charlie Chaplin among hymns, and in truth it does stick out most awkward feet, it misses its accusatives, it catches absurdly upon points of abstruse doctrine. The great Angel stood motionless and ironical at the bishop's elbow while it was being sung. "Your church," he seemed to say.

"We must end this sort of thing," whispered the bishop. "We must end this sort of thing — absolutely." He glanced at the faces of the singers, and it became beyond all other things urgent, that he should lift them once for all above the sectarian dogmatism of that hymn to a simple vision of God's light....

He roused himself to the touching business of the laying on of hands. While he did so the prepared substance of his second address was running through his mind. The following prayer and collects he read without difficulty, and so came to his second address. His disposition at first was explanatory.

"When I spoke to you just now," he began, "I fell unintentionally into the use of a Greek word, epitelesei. It was written to me in a letter from a friend with another word that also I am now going to quote to you. This letter touched very closely upon the things I want to say to you now, and so these two words are very much in my mind. The former one was taken from the Epistle to the Philippians; it signifies, 'He will complete the work begun'; the one I have now in mind comes from the Epistle to the Ephesians; it is Epiphausei — or,

to be fuller, epiphausei soi ho Christos, which signifies that He will shine upon us. And this is very much in my thoughts now because I do believe that this world, which seemed so very far from God a little while ago, draws near now to an unexampled dawn. God is at hand.

"It is your privilege, it is your grave and terrible position, that you have been born at the very end and collapse of a negligent age, of an age of sham kingship, sham freedom, relaxation, evasion, greed, waste, falsehood, and sinister preparation. Your lives open out in the midst of the breakdown for which that age prepared. To you negligence is no longer possible. There is cold and darkness, there is the heat of the furnace before you; you will live amidst extremes such as our youth never knew; whatever betide, you of your generation will have small chance of living untempered lives. Our country is at war and half mankind is at war; death and destruction trample through the world; men rot and die by the million, food diminishes and fails, there is a wasting away of all the hoarded resources, of all the accumulated well-being of mankind; and there is no clear prospect yet of any end to this enormous and frightful conflict. Why did it ever arise? What made it possible? It arose because men had forgotten God. It was possible because they worshipped simulacra, were loyal to phantoms of race and empire, permitted themselves to be ruled and misled by idiot princes and usurper kings. Their minds were turned from God, who alone can rule and unite mankind, and so they have passed from the glare and follies of those former years into the darkness and anguish of the present day. And in darkness and anguish they will remain until they turn to that King who comes to rule them, until the sword and indignation of God have overthrown their misleaders and oppressors, and the Justice of God, the Kingdom of God set high over the republics of mankind, has brought peace for ever to the world. It is to this militant and imminent God, to this immortal Captain, this undying Law-giver, that you devote yourselves to-day.

"For he is imminent now. He comes. I have seen in the east and in the west, the hearts and the minds and the wills of men turning to him as surely as when a needle is magnetized it turns towards the north. Even now as I preach to you here, God stands over us all, ready to receive us...."

And as he said these words, the long nave of the cathedral, the shadows of its fretted roof, the brown choir with its golden screen, the rows of seated figures, became like some picture cast upon a flimsy and translucent curtain. Once more it seemed to the bishop that he saw God plain. Once more the glorious effulgence poured about him, and the beautiful and wonderful conquest of men's hearts and lives was manifest to him.

He lifted up his hands and cried to God, and with an emotion so profound, an earnestness so commanding, that very many of those who were present turned their faces to see the figure to which he looked and spoke. And some of the children had a strange persuasion of a presence there, as of a divine figure militant, armed, and serene....

"Oh God our Leader and our Master and our Friend," the bishop prayed, "forgive our imperfection and our little motives, take us and make us one with thy great purpose, use us and do not reject us, make us all here servants of thy kingdom, weave our lives into thy struggle to conquer and to bring peace and union to the world. We are small and feeble creatures, we are feeble in speech, feebler still in action, nevertheless let but thy light shine upon us and there is not one of us who cannot be lit by thy fire, and who cannot lose himself in thy salvation. Take us into thy purpose, O God. Let thy kingdom come into our hearts and into this world."

His voice ceased, and he stood for a measurable time with his arms extended and his face upturned....

The golden clouds that whirled and eddied so splendidly in his brain thinned out, his sense of God's immediacy faded and passed, and he was left aware of the cathedral pulpit in which he stood so strangely posed, and of the astonished congregation below him. His arms sank to his side. His eyes fell upon the book in front of him and he felt for and gripped the two upper corners of it and, regardless of the common order and practice, read out the Benediction, changing the words involuntarily as he read:

"The Blessing of God who is the Father, the Son, the Spirit and the King of all Mankind, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen."

Then he looked again, as if to look once more upon that radiant

vision of God, but now he saw only the clear cool space of the cathedral vault and the coloured glass and tracery of the great rose window. And then, as the first notes of the organ came pealing above the departing stir of the congregation, he turned about and descended slowly, like one who is still half dreaming, from the pulpit.

(13)

In the vestry he found Canon Bliss. "Help me to take off these garments," the bishop said. "I shall never wear them again."

"You are ill," said the canon, scrutinizing his face.

"Not ill. But the word was taken out of my mouth. I perceive now that I have been in a trance, a trance in which the truth is real. It is a fearful thing to find oneself among realities. It is a dreadful thing when God begins to haunt a priest.... I can never minister in the church again."

Whippham thrust forward a chair for the bishop to sit down. The bishop felt now extraordinarily fatigued. He sat down heavily, and rested his wrists on the arms of the chair. "Already," he resumed presently, "I begin to forget what it was I said."

"You became excited," said Bliss, "and spoke very loudly and clearly."

"What did I say?"

"I don't know what you said; I have forgotten. I never want to remember. Things about the Second Advent. Dreadful things. You said God was close at hand. Happily you spoke partly in Greek. I doubt if any of those children understood. And you had a kind of lapse — an aphasia. You mutilated the interrogation and you did not pronounce the benediction properly. You changed words and you put in words. One sat frozen — waiting for what would happen next."

"We must postpone the Pringle confirmation," said Whippham. "I wonder to whom I could telephone."

Lady Ella appeared, and came and knelt down by the bishop's chair. "I never ought to have let this happen," she said, taking his wrists in her hands. "You are in a fever, dear."

"It seemed entirely natural to say what I did," the bishop declared.

Lady Ella looked up at Bliss.

“A doctor has been sent for,” said the canon to Lady Ella.

“I must speak to the doctor,” said Lady Ella as if her husband could not hear her. “There is something that will make things clearer to the doctor. I must speak to the doctor for a moment before he sees him.”

Came a gust of pretty sounds and a flash of bright colour that shamed the rich vestments at hand. Over the shoulder of the rector and quite at the back, appeared Lady Sunderbund resolutely invading the vestry. The rector intercepted her, stood broad with extended arms.

“I must come in and speak to him. If it is only fo’ a moment.”

The bishop looked up and saw Lady Ella’s expression. Lady Ella was sitting up very stiffly, listening but not looking round.

A vague horror and a passionate desire to prevent the entry of Lady Sunderbund at any cost, seized upon the bishop. She would, he felt, be the last overwhelming complication. He descended to a base subterfuge. He lay back in his chair slowly as though he unfolded himself, he covered his eyes with his hand and then groaned aloud.

“Leave me alone!” he cried in a voice of agony. “Leave me alone! I can see no one.... I can — no more.”

There was a momentous silence, and then the tumult of Lady Sunderbund receded.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH - THE NEW WORLD

(1)

THAT night the bishop had a temperature of a hundred and a half. The doctor pronounced him to be in a state of intense mental excitement, aggravated by some drug. He was a doctor modern and clear-minded enough to admit that he could not identify the drug. He overruled, every one overruled, the bishop's declaration that he had done with the church, that he could never mock God with his episcopal ministrations again, that he must proceed at once with his resignation. "Don't think of these things," said the doctor. "Banish them from your mind until your temperature is down to ninety-eight. Then after a rest you may go into them."

Lady Ella insisted upon his keeping his room. It was with difficulty that he got her to admit Whippham, and Whippham was exasperatingly in order. "You need not trouble about anything now, my lord," he said. "Everything will keep until you are ready to attend to it. It's well we're through with Easter. Bishop Buncombe of Eastern Blowdesia was coming here anyhow. And there is Canon Bliss. There's only two ordination candidates because of the war. We'll get on swimmingly."

The bishop thought he would like to talk to those two ordination candidates, but they prevailed upon him not to do so. He lay for the best part of one night confiding remarkable things to two imaginary ordination candidates.

He developed a marked liking for Eleanor's company. She was home again now after a visit to some friends. It was decided that the best thing to do with him would be to send him away in her charge. A journey abroad was impossible. France would remind him too dreadfully of the war. His own mind turned suddenly to the sweet air of Hunstanton. He had gone there at times to read, in the old Cambridge days. "It is a terribly ugly place," he said, "but it is wine in the veins."

Lady Ella was doubtful about Zeppelins. Thrice they had been right over Hunstanton already. They came in by the easy landmark of

the Wash.

"It will interest him," said Eleanor, who knew her father better.

(2)

One warm and still and sunny afternoon the bishop found himself looking out upon the waters of the Wash. He sat where the highest pebble layers of the beach reached up to a little cliff of sandy earth perhaps a foot high, and he looked upon sands and sea and sky and saw that they were beautiful.

He was a little black-gaitered object in a scene of the most exquisite and delicate colour. Right and left of him stretched the low grey salted shore, pale banks of marly earth surmounted by green-grey wiry grass that held and was half buried in fine blown sand. Above, the heavens made a complete hemisphere of blue in which a series of remote cumulus clouds floated and dissolved. Before him spread the long levels of the sands, and far away at its utmost ebb was the sea. Eleanor had gone to explore the black ribs of a wrecked fishing-boat that lay at the edge of a shallow lagoon. She was a little pink-footed figure, very bright and apparently transparent. She had reverted for a time to shameless childishness; she had hidden her stockings among the reeds of the bank, and she was running to and fro, from star-fish to razor shell and from cockle to weed. The shingle was pale drab and purple close at hand, but to the westward, towards Hunstanton, the sands became brown and purple, and were presently broken up into endless skerries of low flat weed-covered boulders and little intensely blue pools. The sea was a band of sapphire that became silver to the west; it met the silver shining sands in one delicate breathing edge of intensely white foam. Remote to the west, very small and black and clear against the afternoon sky, was a cart, and about it was a score or so of mussel-gatherers. A little nearer, on an apparently empty stretch of shining wet sand, a multitude of gulls was mysteriously busy. These two groups of activities and Eleanor's flitting translucent movements did but set off and emphasize the immense and soothing tranquillity.

For a long time the bishop sat passively receptive to this healing beauty. Then a little flow of thought began and gathered in his mind.

He had come out to think over two letters that he had brought with him. He drew these now rather reluctantly from his pocket, and after a long pause over the envelopes began to read them.

He reread Likeman's letter first.

Likeman could not forgive him.

"My dear Scrope," he wrote, "your explanation explains nothing. This sensational declaration of infidelity to our mother church, made under the most damning and distressing circumstances in the presence of young and tender minds entrusted to your ministrations, and in defiance of the honourable engagements implied in the confirmation service, confirms my worst apprehensions of the weaknesses of your character. I have always felt the touch of theatricality in your temperament, the peculiar craving to be pseudo-deeper, pseudo-simpler than us all, the need of personal excitement. I know that you were never quite contented to believe in God at second-hand. You wanted to be taken notice of — personally. Except for some few hints to you, I have never breathed a word of these doubts to any human being; I have always hoped that the ripening that comes with years and experience would give you an increasing strength against the dangers of emotionalism and against your strong, deep, quiet sense of your exceptional personal importance...."

The bishop read thus far, and then sat reflecting.

Was it just?

He had many weaknesses, but had he this egotism? No; that wasn't the justice of the case. The old man, bitterly disappointed, was endeavouring to wound. Scrope asked himself whether he was to blame for that disappointment. That was a more difficult question....

He dismissed the charge at last, crumpled up the letter in his hand, and after a moment's hesitation flung it away.... But he remained acutely sorry, not so much for himself as for the revelation of Likeman this letter made. He had had a great affection for Likeman and suddenly it was turned into a wound.

(3)

The second letter was from Lady Sunderbund, and it was an altogether more remarkable document. Lady Sunderbund wrote on a

notepaper that was evidently the result of a perverse research, but she wrote a letter far more coherent than her speech, and without that curious falling away of the r's that flavoured even her gravest observations with an unjust faint aroma of absurdity. She wrote with a thin pen in a rounded boyish handwriting. She italicized with slashes of the pen.

He held this letter in both hands between his knees, and considered it now with an expression that brought his eyebrows forward until they almost met, and that tucked in the corners of his mouth.

"My dear Bishop," it began.

"I keep thinking and thinking and thinking of that wonderful service, of the wonderful, wonderful things you said, and the wonderful choice you made of the moment to say them — when all those young lives were coming to the great serious thing in life. It was most beautifully done. At any rate, dear Bishop and Teacher, it was most beautifully begun. And now we all stand to you like creditors because you have given us so much that you owe us ever so much more. You have started us and you have to go on with us. You have broken the shell of the old church, and here we are running about with nowhere to go. You have to make the shelter of a new church now for us, purged of errors, looking straight to God. The King of Mankind! — what a wonderful, wonderful phrase that is. It says everything. Tell us more of him and more. Count me first — not foremost, but just the little one that runs in first — among your disciples. They say you are resigning your position in the church. Of course that must be true. You are coming out of it — what did you call it? — coming out of the cracked old vessel from which you have poured the living waters. I called on Lady Ella yesterday. She did not tell me very much; I think she is a very reserved as well as a very dignified woman, but she said that you intended to go to London. In London then I suppose you will set up the first altar to the Divine King. I want to help.

"Dear Bishop and Teacher, I want to help tremendously — with all my heart and all my soul. I want to be let do things for you." (The "you" was erased by three or four rapid slashes, and "our King" substituted.)

“I want to be privileged to help build that First Church of the World Unified under God. It is a dreadful thing to says but, you see, I am very rich; this dreadful war has made me ever so much richer — steel and shipping and things — it is my trustees have done it. I am ashamed to be so rich. I want to give. I want to give and help this great beginning of yours. I want you to let me help on the temporal side, to make it easy for you to stand forth and deliver your message, amidst suitable surroundings and without any horrid worries on account of the sacrifices you have made. Please do not turn my offering aside. I have never wanted anything so much in all my life as I want to make this gift. Unless I can make it I feel that for me there is no salvation! I shall stick with my loads and loads of stocks and shares and horrid possessions outside the Needle’s Eye. But if I could build a temple for God, and just live somewhere near it so as to be the poor woman who sweeps out the chapels, and die perhaps and be buried under its floor! Don’t smile at me. I mean every word of it. Years ago I thought of such a thing. After I had visited the Certosa di Pavia — do you know it? So beautiful, and those two still alabaster figures — recumbent. But until now I could never see my way to any such service. Now I do. I am all afire to do it. Help me! Tell me! Let me stand behind you and make your mission possible. I feel I have come to the most wonderful phase in my life. I feel my call has come....

“I have written this letter over three times, and torn each of them up. I do so want to say all this, and it is so desperately hard to say. I am full of fears that you despise me. I know there is a sort of high colour about me. My passion for brightness. I am absurd. But inside of me is a soul, a real, living, breathing soul. Crying out to you: ‘Oh, let me help! Let me help!’ I will do anything, I will endure anything if only I can keep hold of the vision splendid you gave me in the cathedral. I see it now day and night, the dream of the place I can make for you — and you preaching! My fingers itch to begin. The day before yesterday I said to myself, ‘I am quite unworthy, I am a worldly woman, a rich, smart, decorated woman. He will never accept me as I am.’ I took off all my jewels, every one, I looked through all my clothes, and at last I decided I would have made for me a very simple straight grey dress, just simple and straight and

grey. Perhaps you will think that too is absurd of me, too self-conscious. I would not tell of it to you if I did not want you to understand how alive I am to my utter impossibilities, how resolved I am to do anything so that I may be able to serve. But never mind about silly me; let me tell you how I see the new church.

"I think you ought to have some place near the centre of London; not too west, for you might easily become fashionable, not too east because you might easily be swallowed up in merely philanthropic work, but somewhere between the two. There must be vacant sites still to be got round about Kingsway. And there we must set up your tabernacle, a very plain, very simple, very beautifully proportioned building in which you can give your message. I know a young man, just the very young man to do something of the sort, something quite new, quite modern, and yet solemn and serious. Lady Ella seemed to think you wanted to live somewhere in the north-west of London — but she would tell me very little. I seem to see you not there at all, not in anything between west-end and suburb, but yourself as central as your mind, in a kind of clergy house that will be part of the building. That is how it is in my dream anyhow. All that though can be settled afterwards. My imagination and my desire is running away with me. It is no time yet for premature plans. Not that I am not planning day and night. This letter is simply to offer. I just want to offer. Here I am and all my worldly goods. Take me, I pray you. And not only pray you. Take me, I demand of you, in the name of God our king. I have a right to be used. And you have no right to refuse me. You have to go on with your message, and it is your duty to take me — just as you are obliged to step on any steppingstone that lies on your way to do God service.... And so I am waiting. I shall be waiting — on thorns. I know you will take your time and think. But do not take too much time. Think of me waiting.

"Your servant, your most humble helper in God (your God),

"AGATHA SUNDERBUND."

And then scrawled along the margin of the last sheet:

"If, when you know — a telegram. Even if you cannot say so much as 'Agreed,' still such a word as 'Favourable.' I just hang over the Void until I hear.

"AGATHA S."

A letter demanding enormous deliberation. She argued closely in spite of her italics. It had never dawned upon the bishop before how light is the servitude of the disciple in comparison with the servitude of the master. In many ways this proposal repelled and troubled him, in many ways it attracted him. And the argument of his clear obligation to accept her co-operation gripped him; it was a good argument.

And besides it worked in very conveniently with certain other difficulties that perplexed him.

(4)

The bishop became aware that Eleanor was returning to him across the sands. She had made an end to her paddling, she had put on her shoes and stockings and become once more the grave and responsible young woman who had been taking care of him since his flight from Princhester. He replaced the two letters in his pocket, and sat ready to smile as she drew near; he admired her open brow, the toss of her hair, and the poise of her head upon her neck. It was good to note that her hard reading at Cambridge hadn't bent her shoulders in the least....

"Well, old Dad!" she said as she drew near. "You've got back a colour."

"I've got back everything. It's time I returned to Princhester."

"Not in this weather. Not for a day or so." She flung herself at his feet. "Consider your overworked little daughter. Oh,how good this is!"

"No," said the bishop in a grave tone that made her look up into his face. "I must go hack."

He met her clear gaze. "What do you think of all this business, Eleanor?" he asked abruptly. "Do you think I had a sort of fit in the cathedral?"

He winced as he asked the question.

"Daddy," she said, after a little pause; "the things you said and did that afternoon were the noblest you ever did in your life. I wish I had been there. It must have been splendid to be there. I've not told you before — I've been dying to.... I'd promised not to say a word — not

to remind you. I promised the doctor. But now you ask me, now you are well again, I can tell you. Kitty Kingdom has told me all about it, how it felt. It was like light and order coming into a hopeless dark muddle. What you said was like what we have all been trying to think — I mean all of us young people. Suddenly it was all clear."

She stopped short. She was breathless with the excitement of her confession.

Her father too remained silent for a little while. He was reminded of his weakness; he was, he perceived, still a little hysterical. He felt that he might weep at her youthful enthusiasm if he did not restrain himself.

"I'm glad," he said, and patted her shoulder. "I'm glad, Norah."

She looked away from him out across the lank brown sands and water pools to the sea. "It was what we have all been feeling our way towards, the absolute simplification of religion, the absolute simplification of politics and social duty; just God, just God the King."

"But should I have said that — in the cathedral?"

She felt no scruples. "You had to," she said.

"But now think what it means," he said. "I must leave the church."

"As a man strips off his coat for a fight."

"That doesn't dismay you?"

She shook her head, and smiled confidently to sea and sky.

"I'm glad if you're with me," he said. "Sometimes — I think — I'm not a very self-reliant man."

"You'll have all the world with you," she was convinced, "in a little time."

"Perhaps rather a longer time than you think, Norah. In the meantime—"

She turned to him once more.

"In the meantime there are a great many things to consider. Young people, they say, never think of the transport that is needed to win a battle. I have it in my mind that I should leave the church. But I can't just walk out into the marketplace and begin preaching there. I see the family furniture being carried out of the palace and put into vans. It has to go somewhere...."

“I suppose you will go to London.”

“Possibly. In fact certainly. I have a plan. Or at least an opportunity.... But that isn’t what I have most in mind. These things are not done without emotion and a considerable strain upon one’s personal relationships. I do not think this — I do not think your mother sees things as we do.”

“She will,” said young enthusiasm, “when she understands.”

“I wish she did. But I have been unlucky in the circumstances of my explanations to her. And of course you understand all this means risks — poverty perhaps — going without things — travel, opportunity, nice possessions — for all of us. A loss of position too. All this sort of thing,” he stuck out a gaitered calf and smiled, “will have to go. People, some of them, may be disasagreeable to us....”

“After all, Daddy,” she said, smiling, “it isn’t so bad as the cross and the lions and burning pitch. And you have the Truth.”

“You do believe — ?” He left his sentence unfinished.

She nodded, her face aglow. “We know you have the Truth.”

“Of course in my own mind now it is very clear. I had a kind of illumination....” He would have tried to tell her of his vision, and he was too shy. “It came to me suddenly that the whole world was in confusion because men followed after a thousand different immediate aims, when really it was quite easy, if only one could be simple it was quite easy, to show that nearly all men could only be fully satisfied and made happy in themselves by one single aim, which was also the aim that would make the whole world one great order, and that aim was to make God King of one’s heart and the whole world. I saw that all this world, except for a few base monstrous spirits, was suffering hideous things because of this war, and before the war it was full of folly, waste, social injustice and suspicion for the same reason, because it had not realized the kingship of God. And that is so simple; the essence of God is simplicity. The sin of this war lies with men like myself, men who set up to tell people about God, more than it lies with any other class —”

“Kings?” she interjected. “Diplomatists? Finance?”

“Yes. Those men could only work mischief in the world because the priests and teachers let them. All things human lie at last at the

door of the priest and teacher. Who differentiate, who qualify and complicate, who make mean unnecessary elaborations, and so divide mankind. If it were not for the weakness and wickedness of the priests, every one would know and understand God. Every one who was modest enough not to set up for particular knowledge. Men disputed whether God is Finite or Infinite, whether he has a triple or a single aspect. How should they know? All we need to know is the face he turns to us. They impose their horrible creeds and distinctions. None of those things matter. Call him Christ the God or call him simply God, Allah, Heaven; it does not matter. He comes to us, we know, like a Helper and Friend; that is all we want to know. You may speculate further if you like, but it is not religion. They dispute whether he can set aside nature. But that is superstition. He is either master of nature and he knows that it is good, or he is part of nature and must obey. That is an argument for hair-splitting metaphysicians. Either answer means the same for us. It does not matter which way we come to believe that he does not idly set the course of things aside. Obviously he does not set the course of things aside. What he does do for certain is to give us courage and save us from our selfishness and the bitter hell it makes for us. And every one knows too what sort of things we want, and for what end we want to escape from ourselves. We want to do right. And right, if you think clearly, is just truth within and service without, the service of God's kingdom, which is mankind, the service of human needs and the increase of human power and experience. It is all perfectly plain, it is all quite easy for any one to understand, who isn't misled and chattered at and threatened and poisoned by evil priests and teachers."

"And you are going to preach that, Daddy?"

"If I can. When I am free — you know I have still to resign and give up — I shall make that my message."

"And so God comes."

"God comes as men perceive him in his simplicity.... Let men but see God simply, and forthwith God and his kingdom possess the world."

She looked out to sea in silence for awhile.

Then she turned to her father. "And you think that His Kingdom

will come — perhaps in quite a little time — perhaps in our lifetimes? And that all these ridiculous or wicked little kings and emperors, and these political parties, and these policies and conspiracies, and this nationalist nonsense and all the patriotism and rowdyism, all the private profit-seeking and every baseness in life, all the things that it is so horrible and disgusting to be young among and powerless among, you think they will fade before him?"

The bishop pulled his faith together.

"They will fade before him — but whether it will take a lifetime or a hundred lifetimes or a thousand lifetimes, my Norah—"

He smiled and left his sentence unfinished, and she smiled back at him to show she understood.

And then he confessed further, because he did not want to seem merely sentimentally hopeful.

"When I was in the cathedral, Norah — and just before that service, it seemed to me — it was very real.... It seemed that perhaps the Kingdom of God is nearer than we suppose, that it needs but the faith and courage of a few, and it may be that we may even live to see the dawning of his kingdom, even — who knows? — the sunrise. I am so full of faith and hope that I fear to be hopeful with you. But whether it is near or far—"

"We work for it," said Eleanor.

Eleanor thought, eyes downcast for a little while, and then looked up.

"It is so wonderful to talk to you like this, Daddy. In the old days, I didn't dream — Before I went to Newnham. I misjudged you. I thought Never mind what I thought. It was silly. But now I am so proud of you. And so happy to be back with you, Daddy, and find that your religion is after all just the same religion that I have been wanting."

CHAPTER THE NINTH - THE THIRD VISION

(1)

ONE afternoon in October, four months and more after that previous conversation, the card of Mr. Edward Scrope was brought up to Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey. The name awakened no memories. The doctor descended to discover a man so obviously in unaccustomed plain clothes that he had a momentary disagreeable idea that he was facing a detective. Then he saw that this secular disguise draped the familiar form of his old friend, the former Bishop of Princhester. Scrope was pale and a little untidy; he had already acquired something of the peculiar, slightly faded quality one finds in a don who has gone to Hampstead and fallen amongst advanced thinkers and got mixed up with the Fabian Society. His anxious eyes and faintly propitiatory manner suggested an impending appeal.

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey had the savoir-faire of a successful consultant; he prided himself on being all things to all men; but just for an instant he was at a loss what sort of thing he had to be here. Then he adopted the genial, kindly, but by no means lavishly generous tone advisable in the case of a man who has suffered considerable social deterioration without being very seriously to blame.

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was a little round-faced man with defective eyesight and an unsuitable nose for the glasses he wore, and he flaunted — God knows why — enormous side-whiskers.

"Well," he said, balancing the glasses skilfully by throwing back his head, "and how are you? And what can I do for you? There's no external evidence of trouble. You're looking lean and a little pale, but thoroughly fit."

"Yes," said the late bishop, "I'm fairly fit—"

"Only — ?" said the doctor, smiling his teeth, with something of the manner of an old bathing woman who tells a child to jump.

"Well, I'm run down and — worried."

"We'd better sit down," said the great doctor professionally, and looked hard at him. Then he pulled at the arm of a chair.

The ex-bishop sat down, and the doctor placed himself between his patient and the light.

“This business of resigning my bishopric and so forth has involved very considerable strains,” Scrope began. “That I think is the essence of the trouble. One cuts so many associations.... I did not realize how much feeling there would be.... Difficulties too of readjusting one’s position.”

“Zactly. Zactly. Zactly,” said the doctor, snapping his face and making his glasses vibrate. “Run down. Want a tonic or a change?”

“Yes. In fact — I want a particular tonic.”

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey made his eyes and mouth round and interrogative.

“While you were away last spring—”

“Had to go,” said the doctor, “unavoidable. Gas gangrene. Certain enquiries. These young investigators all very well in their way. But we older reputations — Experience. Maturity of judgment. Can’t do without us. Yes?”

“Well, I came here last spring and saw, an assistant I suppose he was, or a supply, — do you call them supplies in your profession? — named, I think — Let me see — D — ?”

“Dale!”

The doctor as he uttered this word set his face to the unaccustomed exercise of expressing malignity. His round blue eyes sought to blaze, small cherubic muscles exerted themselves to pucker his brows. His colour became a violent pink. “Lunatic!” he said. “Dangerous Lunatic! He didn’t do anything — anything bad in your case, did he?”

He was evidently highly charged with grievance in this matter. “That man was sent to me from Cambridge with the highest testimonials. The very highest. I had to go at twenty-four hours’ notice. Enquiry — gas gangrene. There was nothing for it but to leave things in his hands.”

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey disavowed responsibility with an open, stumpy-fingered hand.

“He did me no particular harm,” said Scrope.

“You are the first he spared,” said Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey.

“Did he — ? Was he unskilful?”

“Unskilful is hardly the word.”

“Were his methods peculiar?”

The little doctor sprang to his feet and began to pace about the room. “Peculiar!” he said. “It was abominable that they should send him to me. Abominable!”

He turned, with all the round knobs that constituted his face, aglow. His side-whiskers waved apart like wings about to flap. He protruded his face towards his seated patient. “I am glad that he has been killed,” he said. “Glad! There!”

His glasses fell off — shocked beyond measure. He did not heed them. They swung about in front of him as if they sought to escape while he poured out his feelings.

“Fool!” he spluttered with demonstrative gestures. “Dangerous fool! His one idea — to upset everybody. Drugs, Sir! The most terrible drugs! I come back. Find ladies. High social position. Morphine-maniacs. Others. Reckless use of the most dangerous expedients.... Cocaine not in it. Stimulants — violent stimulants. In the highest quarters. Terrible. Exalted persons. Royalty! Anxious to be given war work and become anonymous.... Horrible! He’s been a terrible influence. One idea — to disturb soul and body. Minds unhinged. Personal relations deranged. Shattered the practice of years. The harm he has done! The harm!”

He looked as though he was trying to burst — as a final expression of wrath. He failed. His hands felt trembling to recover his pince-nez. Then from his tail pocket he produced a large silk handkerchief and wiped the glasses. Replaced them. Wriggled his head in his collar, running his fingers round his neck. Patted his tie.

“Excuse this outbreak!” he said. “But Dr. Dale has inflicted injuries!”

Scrope got up, walked slowly to the window, clasping his hands behind his back, and turned. His manner still retained much of his episcopal dignity. “I am sorry. But still you can no doubt tell from your books what it was he gave me. It was a tonic that had a very great effect on me. And I need it badly now.”

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was quietly malignant. “He kept no diary at all,” he said. “No diary at all.”

“But

“If he did,” said Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey, holding up a flat hand and wagging it from side to side, “I wouldn’t follow his treatment.” He intensified with the hand going faster. “I wouldn’t follow his treatment. Not under any circumstances.”

“Naturally,” said Scrope, “if the results are what you say. But in my case it wasn’t a treatment. I was sleepless, confused in my mind, wretched and demoralized; I came here, and he just produced the stuff — It clears the head, it clears the mind. One seems to get away from the cloud of things, to get through to essentials and fundamentals. It straightened me out.... You must know such a stuff. Just now, confronted with all sorts of problems arising out of my resignation, I want that tonic effect again. I must have it. I have matters to decide — and I can’t decide. I find myself uncertain, changeable from hour to hour. I don’t ask you to take up anything of this man Dale’s. This is a new occasion. But I want that drug.”

At the beginning of this speech Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey’s hands had fallen to his hips. As Scrope went on the doctor’s pose had stiffened. His head had gone a little on one side; he had begun to play with his glasses. At the end he gave vent to one or two short coughs, and then pointed his words with his glasses held out.

“Tell me,” he said, “tell me.” (Cough.) “Had this drug that cleared your head — anything to do with your resignation?”

And he put on his glasses disconcertingly, and threw his head back to watch the reply.

“It did help to clear up the situation.”

“Exactly,” said Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey in a tone that defined his own position with remorseless clearness. “Exactly.” And he held up a flat, arresting hand. .

“My dear Sir,” he said. “How can you expect me to help you to a drug so disastrous? — even if I could tell you what it is.”

“But it was not disastrous to me,” said Scrope.

“Your extraordinary resignation — your still more extraordinary way of proclaiming it!”

“I don’t think those were disasters.”

“But my dear Sir!”

“You don’t want to discuss theology with me, I know. So let me tell you simply that from my point of view the illumination that came

to me — this drug of Dr. Dale's helping — has been the great release of my life. It crystallized my mind. It swept aside the confusing commonplace things about me. Just for a time I saw truth clearly.... I want to do so again."

"Why?"

"There is a crisis in my affairs — never mind what. But I cannot see my way clear."

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey was meditating now with his eyes on his carpet and the corners of his mouth tucked in. He was swinging his glasses pendulum-wise. "Tell me," he said, looking sideways at Scrope, "what were the effects of this drug? It may have been anything. How did it give you this — this vision of the truth — that led to your resignation?"

Scrope felt a sudden shyness. But he wanted Dale's drug again so badly that he obliged himself to describe his previous experiences to the best of his ability.

"It was," he said in a matter-of-fact tone, "a golden, transparent liquid. Very golden, like a warm-tinted Chablis. When water was added it became streaked and opalescent, with a kind of living quiver in it. I held it up to the light."

"Yes? And when you took it?"

"I felt suddenly clearer. My mind — I had a kind of exaltation and assurance."

"Your mind," Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey assisted, "began to go twenty-nine to the dozen."

"It felt stronger and clearer," said Scrope, sticking to his quest.

"And did things look as usual?" asked the doctor, protruding his knobby little face like a clenched fist.

"No," said Scrope and regarded him. How much was it possible to tell a man of this type?

"They differed?" said the doctor, relaxing.

"Yes.... Well, to be plain.... I had an immediate sense of God. I saw the world — as if it were a transparent curtain, and then God became — evident.... Is it possible for that to determine the drug?"

"God became — evident," the doctor said with some distaste, and shook his head slowly. Then in a sudden sharp cross-examining tone: "You mean you had a vision? Actually saw 'um?"

“It was in the form of a vision.” Scrope was now mentally very uncomfortable indeed.

The doctor’s lips repeated these words noiselessly, with an effect of contempt. “He must have given you something — It’s a little like morphia. But golden — opalescent? And it was this vision made you astonish us all with your resignation?”

“That was part of a larger process,” said Scrope patiently. “I had been drifting into a complete repudiation of the Anglican positions long before that. All that this drug did was to make clear what was already in my mind. And give it value. Act as a developer.”

The doctor suddenly gave way to a botryoidal hilarity. “To think that one should be consulted about visions of God — in Mount Street!” he said. “And you know, you know you half want to believe that vision was real. You know you do.”

So far Scrope had been resisting his realization of failure. Now he gave way to an exasperation that made him reckless of Brighton-Pomfrey’s opinion. “I do think,” he said, “that that drug did in some way make God real to me. I think I saw God.”

Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey shook his head in a way that made Scrope want to hit him.

“I think I saw God,” he repeated more firmly. “I had a sudden realization of how great he was and how great life was, and how timid and mean and sordid were all our genteel, professional lives. I was seized upon, for a time I was altogether possessed by a passion to serve him fitly and recklessly, to make an end to compromises with comfort and self-love and secondary things. And I want to hold to that. I want to get back to that. I am given to lassitudes. I relax. I am by temperament an easy-going man. I want to buck myself up, I want to get on with my larger purposes, and I find myself tired, muddled, entangled.... The drug was a good thing. For me it was a good thing. I want its help again.”

“I know no more than you do what it was.”

“Are there no other drugs that you do know, that have a kindred effect? If for example I tried morphia in some form?”

“You’d get visions. They wouldn’t be divine visions. If you took small quantities very discreetly you might get a temporary quickening. But the swift result of all repeated drug-taking is, I can

assure you, moral decay — rapid moral decay. To touch drugs habitually is to become hopelessly unpunctual, untruthful, callously selfish and insincere. I am talking mere textbook, mere everyday common-places, to you when I tell you that."

"I had an idea. I had a hope...."

"You've a stiff enough fight before you," said the doctor, "without such a handicap as that."

"You won't help me?"

The doctor walked up and down his hearthrug, and then delivered himself with an extended hand and waggling fingers.

"I wouldn't if I could. For your good I wouldn't. And even if I would I couldn't, for I don't know the drug. One of his infernal brews, no doubt. Something — accidental. It's lost — for good — for your good, anyhow...."

(2)

Scrope halted outside the stucco portals of the doctor's house. He hesitated whether he should turn to the east or the west.

"That door closes," he said. "There's no getting back that way."...

He stood for a time on the kerb. He turned at last towards Park Lane and Hyde Park. He walked along thoughtfully, inattentively steering a course for his new home in Pembury Road, Notting Hill.

(3)

At the outset of this new phase in Scrope's life that had followed the crisis of the confirmation service, everything had seemed very clear before him. He believed firmly that he had been shown God, that he had himself stood in the presence of God, and that there had been a plain call to him to proclaim God to the world. He had realized God, and it was the task of every one who had realized God to help all mankind to the same realization. The proposal of Lady Sunderbund had fallen in with that idea. He had been steeling himself to a prospect of struggle and dire poverty, but her prompt loyalty had come as an immense relief to his anxiety for his wife and family. When he had talked to Eleanor upon the beach at Hunstanton it had

seemed to him that his course was manifest, perhaps a little severe but by no means impossible. They had sat together in the sunshine, exalted by a sense of fine adventure and confident of success, they had looked out upon the future, upon the great near future in which the idea of God was to inspire and reconstruct the world.

It was only very slowly that this pristine clearness became clouded and confused. It had not been so easy as Eleanor had supposed to win over the sympathy of Lady Ella with his resignation. Indeed it had not been won over. She had become a stern and chilling companion, mute now upon the issue of his resignation, but manifestly resentful. He was secretly disappointed and disconcerted by her tone. And the same hesitation of the mind, instinctive rather than reasoned, that had prevented a frank explanation of his earlier doubts to her, now restrained him from telling her naturally and at once of the part that Lady Sunderbund was to play in his future ministry. In his own mind he felt assured about that part, but in order to excuse his delay in being frank with his wife, he told himself that he was not as yet definitely committed to Lady Sunderbund's project. And in accordance with that idea he set up housekeeping in London upon a scale that implied a very complete cessation of income. "As yet," he told Lady Ella, "we do not know where we stand. For a time we must not so much house ourselves as camp. We must take some quite small and modest house in some less expensive district. If possible I would like to take it for a year, until we know better how things are with us."

He reviewed a choice of London districts.

Lady Ella said her bitterest thing. "Does it matter where we hide our heads?"

That wrung him to: "We are not hiding our heads."

She repented at once. "I am sorry, Ted," she said. "It slipped from me."...

He called it camping, but the house they had found in Pembury Road, Notting Hill, was more darkened and less airy than any camp. Neither he nor his wife had ever had any experience of middle-class house-hunting or middle-class housekeeping before, and they spent three of the most desolating days of their lives in looking for this cheap and modest shelter for their household possessions. Hitherto

life had moved them from one established and comfortable home to another; their worst affliction had been the modern decorations of the Palace at Princhester, and it was altogether a revelation to them to visit house after house, ill-lit, ill-planned, with dingy paint and peeling wallpaper, kitchens for the most part underground, and either without bathrooms or with built-out bathrooms that were manifestly grudging afterthoughts, such as harbour the respectable middle classes of London. The house agents perceived intimations of helplessness in their manner, adopted a "rushing" method with them strange to people who had hitherto lived in a glowing halo of episcopal dignity. "Take it or leave it," was the note of those gentlemen; "there are always people ready for houses." The line that property in land and houses takes in England, the ex-bishop realized, is always to hold up and look scornful. The position of the land-owning, house-owning class in a crowded country like England is ultra-regal. It is under no obligation to be of use, and people are obliged to get down to the land somewhere. They cannot conduct business and rear families in the air. England's necessity is the landlord's opportunity....

Scrope began to generalize about this, and develop a new and sincerer streak of socialism in his ideas. "The church has been very remiss," he said, as he and Lady Ella stared at the basement "breakfast room" of their twenty-seventh dismal possibility. "It should have insisted far more than it has done upon the landlord's responsibility. No one should tolerate the offer of such a house as this — at such a rent — to decent people. It is unrighteous."

At the house agent's he asked in a cold, intelligent ruling-class voice, the name of the offending landlord.

"It's all the property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that side of the railway," said the agent, picking his teeth with a pin. "Lazy lot. Dreadfully hard to get 'em to do anything. Own some of the worst properties in London."

Lady Ella saw things differently again. "If you had stayed in the church," she said afterwards, "you might have helped to alter such things as that."

At the time he had no answer.

"But," he said presently as they went back in the tube to their

modest Bloomsbury hotel, “if I had stayed in the church I should never have realized things like that.”

(4)

But it does no justice to Lady Ella to record these two unavoidable expressions of regret without telling also of the rallying courage with which she presently took over the task of resettling herself and her stricken family. Her husband’s change of opinion had fallen upon her out of a clear sky, without any premonition, in one tremendous day. In one day there had come clamouring upon her, with an effect of revelation after revelation, the ideas of drugs, of heresy and blasphemy, of an alien feminine influence, of the entire moral and material breakdown of the man who had been the centre of her life. Never was the whole world of a woman so swiftly and comprehensively smashed. All the previous troubles of her life seemed infinitesimal in comparison with any single item in this dismaying debacle. She tried to consolidate it in the idea that he was ill, “disordered.” She assured herself that he would return from Hunstanton restored to health and orthodoxy, with all his threatenings of a resignation recalled; the man she had loved and trusted to succeed in the world and to do right always according to her ideas. It was only with extreme reluctance that she faced the fact that with the fumes of the drug dispelled and all signs of nervous exhaustion gone, he still pressed quietly but resolutely toward a severance from the church. She tried to argue with him and she found she could not argue. The church was a crystal sphere in which her life was wholly contained, her mind could not go outside it even to consider a dissentient proposition.

While he was at Hunstanton, every day she had prayed for an hour, some days she had prayed for several hours, in the cathedral, kneeling upon a harsh hassock that hurt her knees. Even in her prayers she could not argue nor vary. She prayed over and over again many hundreds of times: “Bring him back, dear Lord. Bring him back again.”

In the past he had always been a very kind and friendly mate to her, but sometimes he had been irritable about small things,

especially during his seasons of insomnia; now he came back changed, a much graver man, rather older in his manner, carefully attentive to her, kinder and more watchful, at times astonishingly apologetic, but rigidly set upon his purpose of leaving the church. “I know you do not think with me in this,” he said. “I have to pray you to be patient with me. I have struggled with my conscience.... For a time it means hardship, I know. Poverty. But if you will trust me I think I shall be able to pull through. There are ways of doing my work. Perhaps we shall not have to undergo this cramping in this house for very long....”

“It is not the poverty I fear,” said Lady Ella.

And she did face the worldly situation, if a little sadly, at any rate with the courage of practical energy. It was she who stood in one ungainly house after another and schemed how to make discomforts tolerable, while Scrope raged unhelpfully at landlordism and the responsibility of the church for economic disorder. It was she who at last took decisions into her hands when he was too jaded to do anything but generalize weakly, and settled upon the house in Pembury Road which became their London home. She got him to visit Hunstanton again for half a week while she and Miriam, who was the practical genius of the family, moved in and made the new home presentable. At the best it was barely presentable. There were many plain hardships. The girls had to share one of the chief bedrooms in common instead of their jolly little individual dens at Princhester.... One little room was all that could be squeezed out as a study for “father”; it was not really a separate room, it was merely cut off by closed folding doors from the dining-room, folding doors that slowly transmitted the dinner flavours to a sensitive worker, and its window looked out upon a blackened and uneventful yard and the skylights of a populous, conversational, and high-spirited millinery establishment that had been built over the corresponding garden of the house in Restharrow Street. Lady Ella had this room lined with open shelves, and Clementina (in the absence of Eleanor at Newuham) arranged the pick of her father’s books. It is to be noted as a fact of psychological interest that this cramped, ill-lit little room distressed Lady Ella more than any other of the discomforts of their new quarters. The bishop’s writing-desk filled a whole side of it.

Parsimony ruled her mind, but she could not resist the impulse to get him at least a seemly reading-lamp.

He came back from Hunstanton full of ideas for work in London. He was, he thought, going to "write something" about his views. He was very grateful and much surprised at what she had done to that forbidding house, and full of hints and intimations that it would not be long before they moved to something roomier. She was disposed to seek some sort of salaried employment for Clementina and Miriam at least, but he would not hear of that. "They must go on and get educated," he said, "if I have to give up smoking to do it. Perhaps I may manage even without that." Eleanor, it seemed, had a good prospect of a scholarship at the London School of Economics that would practically keep her. There would be no Cambridge for Clementina, but London University might still be possible with a little pinching, and the move to London had really improved the prospects of a good musical training for Miriam. Phoebe and Daphne, Lady Ella believed, might get in on special terms at the Notting Hill High School.

Scrope found it difficult to guess at what was going on in the heads of his younger daughters. None displayed such sympathy as Eleanor had confessed. He had a feeling that his wife had schooled them to say nothing about the change in their fortunes to him. But they quarrelled a good deal, he could hear, about the use of the one bathroom — there was never enough hot water after the second bath. And Miriam did not seem to enjoy playing the new upright piano in the drawing-room as much as she had done the Princhester grand it replaced. Though she was always willing to play that thing he liked; he knew now that it was the Adagio of Of. 111; whenever he asked for it.

London servants, Lady Ella found, were now much more difficult to get than they had been in the Holy Innocents' days in St. John's Wood. And more difficult to manage when they were got. The households of the more prosperous clergy are much sought after by domestics of a serious and excellent type; an unfrocked clergyman's household is by no means so attractive. The first comers were young women of unfortunate dispositions; the first cook was reluctant and insolent, she went before her month was up; the second careless; she

made burnt potatoes and cindered chops, underboiled and overboiled eggs; a "dropped" look about everything, harsh coffee and bitter tea seemed to be a natural aspect of the state of being no longer a bishop. He would often after a struggle with his nerves in the bedroom come humming cheerfully to breakfast, to find that Phoebe, who was a delicate eater, had pushed her plate away scarcely touched, while Lady Ella sat at the end of the table in a state of dangerous calm, framing comments for delivering downstairs that would be sure to sting and yet leave no opening for repartee, and trying at the same time to believe that a third cook, if the chances were risked again, would certainly be "all right."

The drawing-room was papered with a morose wallpaper that the landlord, in view of the fact that Scrope in his optimism would only take the house on a yearly agreement, had refused to replace; it was a design of very dark green leaves and grey gothic arches; and the apartment was lit by a chandelier, which spilt a pool of light in the centre of the room and splashed useless weak patches elsewhere. Lady Ella had to interfere to prevent the monopolization of this centre by Phoebe and Daphne for their home work. This light trouble was difficult to arrange; the plain truth was that there was not enough illumination to go round. In the Princhester drawing-room there had been a number of obliging little electric pushes. The size of the dining-room, now that the study was cut off from it, forbade hospitality. As it was, with only the family at home, the housemaid made it a grievance that she could scarcely squeeze by on the sideboard side to wait.

The house vibrated to the trains in the adjacent underground railway. There was a lady next door but one who was very pluckily training a contralto voice that most people would have gladly thrown away. At the end of Restharrow Street was a garage, and a yard where chauffeurs were accustomed to "tune up" their engines. All these facts were persistently audible to any one sitting down in the little back study to think out this project of "writing something," about a change in the government of the whole world. Petty inconveniences no doubt all these inconveniences were, but they distressed a rather oversensitive mind which was also acutely aware that even upon this scale living would cost certainly two hundred and

fifty pounds if not more in excess of the little private income available.

(5)

These domestic details, irrelevant as they may seem in a spiritual history, need to be given because they added an intimate keenness to Scrope's readiness for this private chapel enterprise that he was discussing with Lady Sunderbund. Along that line and along that line alone, he saw the way of escape from the great sea of London dinginess that threatened to submerge his family. And it was also, he felt, the line of his duty; it was his "call."

At least that was how he felt at first. And then matters began to grow complicated again.

Things had gone far between himself and Lady Sunderbund since that letter he had read upon the beach at Old Hunstanton. The blinds of the house with the very very blue door in Princhester had been drawn from the day when the first vanload of the renegade bishop's private possessions had departed from the palace. The lady had returned to the brightly decorated flat overlooking Hyde Park. He had seen her repeatedly since then, and always with a fairly clear understanding that she was to provide the chapel and pulpit in which he was to proclaim to London the gospel of the Simplicity and Universality of God. He was to be the prophet of a reconsidered faith, calling the whole world from creeds and sects, from egotisms and vain loyalties, from prejudices of race and custom, to the worship and service of the Divine King of all mankind. That in fact had been the ruling resolve in his mind, the resolve determining his relations not only with Lady Sunderbund but with Lady Ella and his family, his friends, enemies and associates. He had set out upon this course unchecked by any doubt, and overriding the manifest disapproval of his wife and his younger daughters. Lady Sunderbund's enthusiasm had been enormous and sustaining....

Almost imperceptibly that resolve had weakened. Imperceptibly at first. Then the decline had been perceived as one sometimes perceives a thing in the background out of the corner of one's eye.

In all his early anticipations of the chapel enterprise, he had

imagined himself in the likeness of a small but eloquent figure standing in a large exposed place and calling this lost misled world back to God. Lady Sunderbund, he assumed, was to provide the large exposed place (which was dimly paved with pews) and guarantee that little matter which was to relieve him of sordid anxieties for his family, the stipend. He had agreed in an inattentive way that this was to be eight hundred a year, with a certain proportion of the subscriptions. “At first, I shall be the chief subscriber,” she said. “Before the rush comes.” He had been so content to take all this for granted and think no more about it — more particularly to think no more about it — that for a time he entirely disregarded the intense decorative activities into which Lady Sunderbund incontinently plunged. Had he been inclined to remark them he certainly might have done so, even though a considerable proportion was being thoughtfully veiled for a time from his eyes.

For example, there was the young architect with the wonderful tie whom he met once or twice at lunch in the Hyde Park flat. This young man pulled the conversation again and again, Lady Sunderbund aiding and abetting, in the direction of the “ideal church.” It was his ambition, he said, someday, to build an ideal church, “divorced from tradition.”

Scrope had been drawn at last into a dissertation. He said that hitherto all temples and places of worship had been conditioned by orientation due to the seasonal aspects of religion, they pointed to the west or — as in the case of the Egyptian temples — to some particular star, and by sacramentalism, which centred everything on a highly lit sacrificial altar. It was almost impossible to think of a church built upon other lines than that. The architect would be so free that —

“Absolutely free,” interrupted the young architect. “He might, for example, build a temple like a star.”

“Or like some wondyful casket,” said Lady Sunderbund....

And also there was a musician with fuzzy hair and an impulsive way of taking the salted almonds, who wanted to know about religious music.

Scrope hazarded the idea that a chanting people was a religious people. He said, moreover, that there was a fine religiosity about

Moussorgski, but that the most beautiful single piece of music in the world was Beethoven's sonata, Opus 111, — he was thinking, he said, more particularly of the Adagio at the end, molto semplice e cantabile. It had a real quality of divinity.

The musician betrayed impatience at the name of Beethoven, and thought, with his mouth appreciatively full of salted almonds, that nowadays we had got a little beyond that anyhow.

"We shall be superhuman before we get beyond either Purcell or Beethoven," said Scrope.

Nor did he attach sufficient importance to Lady Sunderbund's disposition to invite Positivists, members of the Brotherhood Church, leaders among the Christian Scientists, old followers of the Rev. Charles Voysey, Swedenborgians, Moslem converts, Indian Theosophists, psychic phenomena and so forth, to meet him. Nevertheless it began to drift into his mind that he was by no means so completely in control of the new departure as he had supposed at first. Both he and Lady Sunderbund professed universalism; but while his was the universalism of one who would simplify to the bare fundamentals of a common faith, hers was the universalism of the collector. Religion to him was something that illuminated the soul, to her it was something that illuminated prayer-books. For a considerable time they followed their divergent inclinations without any realization of their divergence. None the less a vague doubt and dissatisfaction with the prospect before him arose to cloud his confidence.

At first there was little or no doubt of his own faith. He was still altogether convinced that he had to confess and proclaim God in his life. He was as sure that God was the necessary king and saviour of mankind and of a man's life, as he was of the truth of the Binomial Theorem. But what began first to fade was the idea that he had been specially called to proclaim the True God to all the world. He would have the most amiable conference with Lady Sunderbund, and then as he walked back to Notting Hill he would suddenly find stuck into his mind like a challenge, Heaven knows how: "Another prophet?" Even if he succeeded in this mission enterprise, he found himself asking, what would he be but just a little West-end Mahomet? He would have founded another sect, and we have to make an end to all

sects. How is there to be an end to sects, if there are still to be chapels — richly decorated chapels — and congregations, and salaried specialists in God?

That was a very disconcerting idea. It was particularly active at night. He did his best to consider it with a cool detachment, regardless of the facts that his private income was just under three hundred pounds a year, and that his experiments in cultured journalism made it extremely improbable that the most sedulous literary work would do more than double this scanty sum. Yet for all that these nasty, ugly, sordid facts were entirely disregarded, they did somehow persist in coming in and squatting down, shapeless in a black corner of his mind — from which their eyes shone out, so to speak — whenever his doubt whether he ought to set up as a prophet at all was under consideration.

(6)

Then very suddenly on this October afternoon the situation had come to a crisis.

He had gone to Lady Sunderbund's flat to see the plans and drawings for the new church in which he was to give his message to the world. They had brought home to him the complete realization of Lady Sunderbund's impossibility. He had attempted upon the spur of the moment an explanation of just how much they differed, and he had precipitated a storm of extravagantly perplexing emotions....

She kept him waiting for perhaps ten minutes before she brought the plans to him. He waited in the little room with the Wyndham Lewis picture that opened upon the balcony painted with crazy squares of livid pink. On a golden table by the window a number of recently bought books were lying, and he went and stood over these, taking them up one after another. The first was "The Countess of Huntingdon and Her Circle," that bearder of lightminded archbishops, that formidable harbourer of Wesleyan chaplains. For some minutes he studied the grim portrait of this inspired lady standing with one foot ostentatiously on her coronet and then turned to the next volume. This was a life of Saint Teresa, that energetic organizer of Spanish nunneries. The third dealt with Madame Guyon.

It was difficult not to feel that Lady Sunderbund was reading for a part.

She entered.

She was wearing a long simple dress of spangled white with a very high waist; she had a bracelet of green jade, a waistband of green silk, and her hair was held by a wreath of artificial laurel, very stiff and green. Her arms were full of big rolls of cartridge paper and tracing paper. “I’m so pleased,” she said. “It’s ‘eady at last and I can show you.”

She banged the whole armful down upon a vivid little table of inlaid black and white wood. He rescued one or two rolls and a sheet of tracing paper from the floor.

“It’s the Temple,” she panted in a significant whisper. “It’s the Temple of the One T’ue God!”

She scrabbled among the papers, and held up the elevation of a strange square building to his startled eyes. “Iszi’t it just pe’fect?” she demanded.

He took the drawing from her. It represented a building, manifestly an enormous building, consisting largely of two great, deeply fluted towers flanking a vast archway approached by a long flight of steps. Between the towers appeared a dome. It was as if the Mosque of Saint Sophia had produced this offspring in a mesalliance with the cathedral of Wells. Its enormity was made manifest by the minuteness of the large automobiles that were driving away in the foreground after “setting down.” “Here is the plan,” she said, thrusting another sheet upon him before he could fully take in the quality of the design. “The g’eat Hall is to be pe’fectly ‘ound, no aisle, no altar, and in lettas of sapphiah, ‘God is ev’ywhe’.’”

She added with a note of solemnity, “It will hold th’ee thousand people sitting down.”

“But — !” said Scrope.

“The’e’s a sort of g’andeur,” she said. “It’s young Venable’s wo’k. It’s his fl’st g’ate oppo’tunity.”

“But — is this to go on that little site in Aldwych?”

“He says the’ isn’t ‘oom the’!” she explained. “He wants to put it out at Golda’s G’een.”

“But — if it is to be this little simple chapel we proposed, then

wasn't our idea to be central?"

"But if the' isn't 'oem!" she said — conclusively. "And isn't this — isn't it rather a costly undertaking, rather more costly—"

"That doesn't matta. I'm making heaps and heaps of money. Half my p'ope'ty is in shipping and a lot of the 'eat in munitions. I'm 'icher than eva. Isn't the' a sort of g'andeur?" she pressed.

He put the elevation down. He took the plan from her hands and seemed to study it. But he was really staring blankly at the whole situation.

"Lady Sunderbund," he said at last, with an effort, "I am afraid all this won't do."

"Won't do!"

"No. It isn't in the spirit of my intention. It isn't in a great building of this sort — so — so ornate and imposing, that the simple gospel of God's Universal Kingdom can be preached."

"But oughtn't so gate a message to have as g'ate a pulpit?"

And then as if she would seize him before he could go on to further repudiations, she sought hastily among the drawings again.

"But look," she said. "It has ev'ything! It's not only a p'eaching place; it's a headquarters for ev'ything."

With the rapid movements of an excited child she began to thrust the remarkable features and merits of the great project upon him. The preaching dome was only the heart of it. There were to be a library, "'efecto'ies," consultation rooms, classrooms, a publication department, a big underground printing establishment. "Nowadays," she said, "ev'y gate movement must p'int." There was to be music, she said, "a gate invisible o'gan," hidden amidst the architectural details, and pouring out its sounds into the dome, and then she glanced in passing at possible "p'ocessions" round the preaching dome. This preaching dome was not a mere shut-in drum for spiritual reverberations, around it ran great open corridors, and in these corridors there were to be "chapels."

"But what for?" he asked, stemming the torrent. "What need is there for chapels? There are to be no altars, no masses, no sacraments?"

"No," she said, "but they are to be chapels for special int'ests; a chapel for science, a chapel for healing, a chapel for gov'ment.

Places for peoples to sit and think about those things — with paintings and symbols."

"I see your intention," he admitted. "I see your intention."

"The' is to be a gate da'k blue 'ound chapel for sta's and atoms and the myst'ry of matta." Her voice grew solemn. "All still and deep and high. Like a k'ystal in a da'k place. You will go down steps to it. Th'ough a da'k 'ounded a'ch ma'ked with mathematical symbols and balances and scientific app'atus.... And the ve'y next to it, the ve'y next, is to be a little b'ight chapel for bi'ds and flowas!"

"Yes," he said, "it is all very fine and expressive. It is, I see, a symbolical building, a great artistic possibility. But is it the place for me? What I have to say is something very simple, that God is the king of the whole world, king of the ha'penny newspaper and the omnibus and the vulgar everyday things, and that they have to worship him and serve him as their leader in every moment of their lives. This isn't that. This is the old religions over again. This is taking God apart. This is putting him into a fresh casket instead of the old one. And.... I don't like it."

"Don't like it," she cried, and stood apart from him with her chin in the air, a tall astonishment and dismay.

"I can't do the work I want to do with this."

"But — Isn't it you' idea?"

"No. It is not in the least my idea. I want to tell the whole world of the one God that can alone unite it and save it — and you make this extravagant toy."

He felt as if he had struck her directly he uttered that last word.

"Toy!" she echoed, taking it in, "you call it a Toy!"

A note in her voice reminded him that there were two people who might feel strongly in this affair.

"My dear Lady Sunderbund," he said with a sudden change of manner, "I must needs follow the light of my own mind. I have had a vision of God, I have seen him as a great leader towering over the little lives of men, demanding the little lives of men, prepared to take them and guide them to the salvation of mankind and the conquest of pain and death. I have seen him as the God of the human affair, a God of politics, a God of such muddy and bloody wars as this war, a God of economics, a God of railway junctions and clinics and

factories and evening schools, a God in fact of men. This God — this God here, that you want to worship, is a God of artists and poets — of elegant poets, a God of bric-a-brac, a God of choice allusions. Oh, it has its grandeur! I don't want you to think that what you are doing may not be altogether fine and right for you to do. But it is not what I have to do.... I cannot — indeed I cannot — go on with this project — upon these lines."

He paused, flushed and breathless. Lady Sunderbund had heard him to the end. Her bright face was brightly flushed, and there were tears in her eyes. It was like her that they should seem tears of the largest, most expensive sort, tears of the first water.

"But," she cried, and her red delicate mouth went awry with dismay and disappointment, and her expression was the half incredulous expression of a child suddenly and cruelly disappointed: "You won't go on with all this?"

"No," he said. "My dear Lady Sunderbund—"

"Oh! don't Lady Sunderbund me!" she cried with a novel rudeness. "Don't you see I've done it all for you?"

He winced and felt boorish. He had never liked and disapproved of Lady Sunderbund so much as he did at that moment. And he had no words for her.

"How can I stop it all at once like this?"

And still he had no answer.

She pursued her advantage. "What am I to do?" she cried.

She turned upon him passionately. "Look what you've done!" She marked her points with finger upheld, and gave odd suggestions in her face of an angry coster girl. "Eva' since I met you, I've wo'shipped you. I've been 'eady to follow you anywhe' — to do anything. Eva' since that night when you sat so calm and dignified, and they baited you and wo'id you. When they we' all vain and cleva, and you — you thought only of God and 'iligion and didn't mind fo' you'self.... Up to then — I'd been living — oh! the emptiest life..."

The tears ran. "Pe'haps I shall live it again...." She dashed her grief away with a hand beringed with stones as big as beetles.

"I said to myself, this man knows something I don't know. He's got the seeds of ete'nal life su'ely. I made up my mind then and the'

I'd follow you and back you and do all I could fo' you. I've lived fo' you. Eve' since. Lived fo' you. And now when all my little plans are 'ipe, you — ! Oh!"

She made a quaint little gesture with pink fists upraised, and then stood with her hand held up, staring at the plans and drawings that were littered over the inlaid table. "I've planned and planned. I said, I will build him a temple. I will be his temple se'vant.... Just a me' se'vant...."

She could not go on.

"But it is just these temples that have confused mankind," he said.

"Not my temple," she said presently, now openly weeping over the gay rejected drawings. "You could have explained...."

"Oh!" she said petulantly, and thrust them away from her so that they went sliding one after the other on to the floor. For some long-drawn moments there was no sound in the room but the slowly accelerated slide and flop of one sheet of cartridge paper after another.

"We could have been so happy," she wailed, "se'ving oua God."

And then this disconcerting lady did a still more disconcerting thing. She staggered a step towards Scrape, seized the lapels of his coat, bowed her head upon his shoulder, put her black hair against his cheek, and began sobbing and weeping.

"My dear lady!" he expostulated, trying weakly to disengage her.

"Let me k'y," she insisted, gripping more resolutely, and following his backward pace. "You must let me k'y. You must let me k'y."

His resistance ceased. One hand supported her, the other patted her shining hair. "My dear child!" he said. "My dear child! I had no idea. That you would take it like this...."

(7)

That was but the opening of an enormous interview. Presently he had contrived in a helpful and sympathetic manner to seat the unhappy lady on a sofa, and when after some cramped discourse she stood up before him, wiping her eyes with a wet wonder of lace, to deliver herself the better, a newborn appreciation of the tactics of the

situation made him walk to the other side of the table under colour of picking up a drawing.

In the retrospect he tried to disentangle the threads of a discussion that went to and fro and contradicted itself and began again far back among things that had seemed forgotten and disposed of. Lady Sunderbund's mind was extravagantly untrained, a wild-grown mental thicket. At times she reproached him as if he were a heartless God; at times she talked as if he were a recalcitrant servant. Her mingling of utter devotion and the completest disregard for his thoughts and wishes dazzled and distressed his mind. It was clear that for half a year her clear, bold, absurd will had been crystallized upon the idea of giving him exactly what she wanted him to want. The crystal sphere of those ambitions lay now shattered between them.

She was trying to reconstruct it before his eyes.

She was, she declared, prepared to alter her plans in any way that would meet his wishes. She had not understood. "If it is a Toy," she cried, "show me how to make it not a Toy! Make it 'eal!"

He said it was the bare idea of a temple that made it impossible. And there was this drawing here; what did it mean? He held it out to her. It represented a figure, distressingly like himself, robed as a priest in vestments.

She snatched the offending drawing from him and tore it to shreds.

"If you don't want a Temple, have a meeting-house. You wanted a meeting-house anyhow."

"Just any old meeting-house," he said. "Not that special one. A place without choirs and clergy."

"If you won't have music," she responded, "don't have music. If God doesn't want music it can go. I can't think God does not app'ove of music, but — that is for you to settle. If you don't like the' being o'naments, we'll make it all plain. Some g'ate g'ey Dome — all g'ey and black. If it isn't to be beautiful, it can be ugly. Yes, ugly. It can be as ugly" — she sobbed— "as the City Temple. We will get some otha a'chitect — some City a'chitect. Some man who has built B'anch Banks or 'ailway stations. That's if you think it pleases God.... B'eak young Venable's hea't.... Only why should you

not let me make a place fo' you' message? Why shouldn't it be me? You must have a place. You've got 'to p'each somewhe'."

"As a man, not as a priest."

"Then p'each as a man. You must still wea' something."

"Just ordinary clothes."

"O'dina'y clothes a' clothes in the fashion," she said. "You would have to go to you' taila for a new p'eaching coat with b'aid put on dif'ently, or two buttons instead of th'ee...."

"One needn't be fashionable."

"Ev'ybody is fash'nable. How can you help it? Some people wea' old fashions; that's all.... A cassock's an old fashion. There's nothing so plain as a cassock."

"Except that it's a clerical fashion. I want to be just as I am now."

"If you think that — that owoble suit is o'dina'y clothes!" she said, and stared at him and gave way to tears of real tenderness.

"A cassock," she cried with passion. "Just a pe'fectly plain cassock. Fo' deecency!... Oh, if you won't — not even that!"

(8)

As he walked now after his unsuccessful quest of Dr. Brighton-Pomfrey towards the Serpentine he acted that stormy interview with Lady Sunderbund over again. At the end, as a condition indeed of his departure, he had left things open. He had assented to certain promises. He was to make her understand better what it was he needed. He was not to let anything that had happened affect that "spi'tual f'enship." She was to abandon all her plans, she was to begin again "at the ve'y beginning." But he knew that indeed there should be no more beginning again with her. He knew that quite beyond these questions of the organization of a purified religion, it was time their association ended. She had wept upon him; she had clasped both his hands at parting and prayed to be forgiven. She was drawing him closer to her by their very dissension. She had infected him with the softness of remorse; from being a bright and spirited person, she had converted herself into a warm and touching person. Her fine, bright black hair against his cheek and the clasp of her hand on his shoulder was now inextricably in the business. The

perplexing, the astonishing thing in his situation was that there was still a reluctance to make a conclusive breach.

He was not the first of men who have tried to find in vain how and when a relationship becomes an entanglement. He ought to break off now, and the riddle was just why he should feel this compunction in breaking off now. He had disappointed her, and he ought not to have disappointed her; that was the essential feeling. He had never realized before as he realized now this peculiar quality of his own mind and the gulf into which it was leading him. It came as an illuminating discovery.

He was a social animal. He had an instinctive disposition to act according to the expectations of the people about him, whether they were reasonable or congenial expectations or whether they were not. That, he saw for the first time, had been the ruling motive of his life; it was the clue to him. Man is not a reasonable creature; he is a socially responsive creature trying to be reasonable in spite of that fact. From the days in the rectory nursery when Scrope had tried to be a good boy on the whole and just a little naughty sometimes until they stopped smiling, through all his life of school, university, curacy, vicarage and episcopacy up to this present moment, he perceived now that he had acted upon no authentic and independent impulse. His impulse had always been to fall in with people and satisfy them. And all the painful conflicts of those last few years had been due to a growing realization of jarring criticisms, of antagonized forces that required from him incompatible things. From which he had now taken refuge — or at any rate sought refuge — in God. It was paradoxical, but manifestly in God he not only sank his individuality but discovered it.

It was wonderful how much he had thought and still thought of the feelings and desires of Lady Sunderbund, and how little he thought of God. Her he had been assiduously propitiating, managing, accepting, for three months now. Why? Partly because she demanded it, and there was a quality in her demand that had touched some hidden spring — of vanity perhaps it was — in him, that made him respond. But partly also it was because after the evacuation of the palace at Princhester he had felt more and more, felt but never dared to look squarely in the face, the catastrophic change in the worldly

circumstances of his family. Only this chapel adventure seemed likely to restore those fallen and bedraggled fortunes. He had not anticipated a tithe of the dire quality of that change. They were not simply uncomfortable in the Notting Hill home. They were miserable. He fancied they looked to him with something between reproach and urgency. Why had he brought them here? What next did he propose to do? He wished at times they would say it out instead of merely looking it. Phoebe's failing appetite chilled his heart.

That concern for his family, he believed, had been his chief motive in clinging to Lady Sunderbund's projects long after he had realized how little they would forward the true service of God. No doubt there had been moments of flattery, moments of something, something rather in the nature of an excited affection; some touch of the magnificent in her, some touch of the infantile, — both appealed magnetically to his imagination; but the real effective cause was his habitual solicitude for his wife and children and his consequent desire to prosper materially. As his first dream of being something between Mohammed and Peter the Hermit in a new proclamation of God to the world lost colour and life in his mind, he realized more and more clearly that there was no way of living in a state of material prosperity and at the same time in a state of active service to God. The Church of the One True God (by favour of Lady Sunderbund) was a gaily-coloured lure.

And yet he wanted to go on with it. All his imagination and intelligence was busy now with the possibility of in some way subjugating Lady Sunderbund, and modifying her and qualifying her to an endurable proposition. Why?

Why?

There could be but one answer, he thought. Brought to the test of action, he did not really believe in God! He did not believe in God as he believed in his family. He did not believe in the reality of either his first or his second vision; they had been dreams, autogenous revelations, exaltations of his own imaginations. These beliefs were upon different grades of reality. Put to the test, his faith in God gave way; a sword of plaster against a reality of steel.

And yet he did believe in God. He was as persuaded that there

was a God as he was that there was another side to the moon. His intellectual conviction was complete. Only, beside the living, breathing — occasionally coughing — reality of Phoebe, God was something as unsubstantial as the Binomial Theorem....

Very like the Binomial Theorem as one thought over that comparison.

By this time he had reached the banks of the Serpentine and was approaching the grey stone bridge that crosses just where Hyde Park ends and Kensington Gardens begins. Following upon his doubts of his religious faith had come another still more extraordinary question: "Although there is a God, does he indeed matter more in our ordinary lives than that same demonstrable Binomial Theorem? Isn't one's duty to Phoebe plain and clear?" Old Likeman's argument came back to him with novel and enhanced powers. Wasn't he after all selfishly putting his own salvation in front of his plain duty to those about him? What did it matter if he told lies, taught a false faith, perjured and damned himself, if after all those others were thereby saved and comforted?

"But that is just where the whole of this state of mind is false and wrong," he told himself. "God is something more than a priggish devotion, an intellectual formula. He has a hold and a claim — he should have a hold and a claim — exceeding all the claims of Phoebe, Miriam, Daphne, Clementina — all of them.... But he hasn't'!..."

It was to that he had got after he had left Lady Sunderbund, and to that he now returned. It was the thinness and unreality of his thought of God that had driven him post-haste to Brighton-Pomfrey in search for that drug that had touched his soul to belief.

Was God so insignificant in comparison with his family that after all with a good conscience he might preach him every Sunday in Lady Sunderbund's church, wearing Lady Sunderbund's vestments?

Before him he saw an empty seat. The question was so immense and conclusive, it was so clearly a choice for all the rest of his life between God and the dear things of this world, that he felt he could not decide it upon his legs. He sat down, threw an arm along the back of the seat and drummed with his fingers.

If the answer was "yes" then it was decidedly a pity that he had

not stayed in the church. It was ridiculous to strain at the cathedral gnat and then swallow Lady Sunderbund's decorative Pantechnicon.

For the first time, Scrope definitely regretted his apostasy.

A trivial matter, as it may seem to the reader, intensified that regret. Three weeks ago Borrowdale, the bishop of Howeaster, had died, and Scrope would have been the next in rotation to succeed him on the bench of bishops. He had always looked forward to the House of Lords, intending to take rather a new line, to speak more, and to speak more plainly and fully upon social questions than had hitherto been the practice of his brethren. Well, that had gone....

(9)

Regrets were plain now. The question before his mind was growing clear; whether he was to persist in this self-imposed martyrdom of himself and his family or whether he was to go back upon his outbreak of visionary fanaticism and close with this last opportunity that Lady Sunderbund offered of saving at least the substance of the comfort and social status of his wife and daughters. In which case it was clear to him he would have to go to great lengths and exercise very considerable subtlety — and magnetism — in the management of Lady Sunderbund....

He found himself composing a peculiar speech to her, very frank and revealing, and one that he felt would dominate her thoughts.... She attracted him oddly.... At least this afternoon she had attracted him....

And repelled him....

A wholesome gust of moral impatience stirred him. He smacked the back of the seat hard, as though he smacked himself.

No. He did not like it....

A torn sunset of purple and crimson streamed raggedly up above and through the half stripped trecs of Kensington Gardens, and he found himself wishing that Heaven would give us fewer sublimities in sky and mountain and more in our hearts. Against the background of darkling trees and stormily flaming sky a girl was approaching him. There was little to be seen of her but her outline. Something in her movement caught his eye and carried his memory back to a

sundown at Hunstanton. Then as she came nearer he saw that it was Eleanor.

It was odd to see her here. He had thought she was at Newnham.

But anyhow it was very pleasant to see her. And there was something in Eleanor that promised an answer to his necessity. The girl had a kind of instinctive wisdom. She would understand the quality of his situation better perhaps than any one. He would put the essentials of that situation as fully and plainly as he could to her. Perhaps she, with that clear young idealism of hers, would give him just the lift and the light of which he stood in need. She would comprehend both sides of it, the points about Phoebe as well as the points about God.

When first he saw her she seemed to be hurrying, but now she had fallen to a loitering pace. She looked once or twice behind her and then ahead, almost as though she expected some one and was not sure whether this person would approach from east or west. She did not observe her father until she was close upon him.

Then she was so astonished that for a moment she stood motionless, regarding him. She made an odd movement, almost as if she would have walked on, that she checked in its inception. Then she came up to him and stood before him. “It’s Dad,” she said.

“I didn’t know you were in London, Norah,” he began.

“I came up suddenly.”

“Have you been home?”

“No. I wasn’t going home. At least — not until afterwards.”

Then she looked away from him, east and then west, and then met his eye again.

“Won’t you sit down, Norah?”

“I don’t know whether I can.”

She consulted the view again and seemed to come to a decision. “At least, I will for a minute.”

She sat down. For a moment neither of them spoke....

“What are you doing here, little Norah?”

She gathered her wits. Then she spoke rather volubly. “I know it looks bad, Daddy. I came up to meet a boy I know, who is going to France to-morrow. I had to make excuses — up there. I hardly remember what excuses I made.”

“A boy you know?”

“Yes.”

“Do we know him?”

“Not yet.”

For a time Scrope forgot the Church of the One True God altogether. “Who is this boy?” he asked.

With a perceptible effort Eleanor assumed a tone of commonsense conventionality. “He’s a boy I met first when we were skating last year. His sister has the study next to mine.”

Father looked at daughter, and she met his eyes. “Well?”

“It’s all happened so quickly, Daddy,” she said, answering all that was implicit in that “Well?” She went on, “I would have told you about him if he had seemed to matter. But it was just a friendship. It didn’t seem to matter in any serious way. Of course we’d been good friends — and talked about all sorts of things. And then suddenly you see,” — her tone was offhand and matter-of-fact— “he has to go to France.”

She stared at her father with the expression of a hostess who talks about the weather. And then the tears gathered and ran down her cheek.

She turned her face to the Serpentine and clenched her fist.

But she was now fairly weeping. “I didn’t know he cared. I didn’t know I cared.”

His next question took a little time in coming.

“And it’s love, little Norah?” he asked.

She was comfortably crying now, the defensive altogether abandoned. “It’s love, Daddy.... Oh! love!.... He’s going tomorrow.” For a minute or so neither spoke. Scrope’s mind was entirely made up in the matter. He approved altogether of his daughter. But the traditions of parentage, his habit of restrained decision, made him act a judicial part. “I’d like just to see this boy,” he said, and added: “If it isn’t rather interfering....”

“Dear Daddy!” she said. “Dear Daddy!” and touched his hand. “He’ll be coming here....”

“If you could tell me a few things about him,” said Scrope. “Is he an undergraduate?”

“You see,” began Eleanor and paused to marshal her facts. “He

graduated this year. Then he's been in training at Cambridge. Properly he'd have a fellowship. He took the Natural Science tripos, zoology chiefly. He's good at philosophy, but of course our Cambridge philosophy is so silly — McTaggart blowing bubbles.... His father's a doctor, Sir Hedley Riverton."

As she spoke her eyes had been roving up the path and down. "He's coming," she interrupted. She hesitated. "Would you mind if I went and spoke to him first, Daddy?"

"Of course go to him. Go and warn him I'm here," said Scrope.

Eleanor got up, and was immediately greeted with joyful gestures by an approaching figure in khaki. The two young people quickened their paces as they drew nearer one another. There was a rapid greeting; they stood close together and spoke eagerly. Scrope could tell by their movements when he became the subject of their talk. He saw the young man start and look over Eleanor's shoulder, and he assumed an attitude of philosophical contemplation of the water, so as to give the young man the liberty of his profile.

He did not look up until they were quite close to him, and when he did he saw a pleasant, slightly freckled fair face a little agitated, and very honest blue eyes. "I hope you don't think, Sir, that it's bad form of me to ask Eleanor to come up and see me as I've done. I telegraphed to her on an impulse, and it's been very kind of her to come up to me."

"Sit down," said Scrope, "sit down. You're Mr. Riverton?"

"Yes, Sir," said the young man. He had the frequent "Sir" of the subaltern. Scrope was in the centre of the seat, and the young officer sat down on one side of him while Eleanor took up a watching position on her father's other hand. "You see, Sir, we've hardly known each other — I mean we've been associated over a philosophical society and all that sort of thing, but in a more familiar way, I mean...."

He hung for a moment, just a little short of breath. Scrope helped him with a grave but sympathetic movement of the head. "It's a little difficult to explain," the young man apologized.

"We hadn't understood, I think, either of us very much. We'd just been friendly — and liked each other. And so it went on even when I was training. And then when I found I had to go out — I'm going out

a little earlier than I expected — I thought suddenly I wouldn't ever go to Cambridge again at all perhaps — and there was something in one of her letters.... I thought of it a lot, Sir, I thought it all over, and I thought it wasn't right for me to do anything and I didn't do anything until this morning. And then I sort of had to telegraph. I know it was frightful cheek and bad form and all that, Sir. It is. It would be worse if she wasn't different — I mean, Sir, if she was just an ordinary girl.... But I had a sort of feeling — just wanting to see her. I don't suppose you've ever felt anything, Sir, as I felt I wanted to see her — and just hear her speak to me...."

He glanced across Scrope at Eleanor. It was as if he justified himself to them both.

Scrope glanced furtively at his daughter who was leaning forward with tender eyes on her lover, and his heart went out to her. But his manner remained judicial.

"All this is very sudden," he said.

"Or you would have heard all about it, Sir," said young Riverton. "It's just the hurry that has made this seem furtive. All that there is between us, Sir, is just the two telegrams we've sent, hers and mine. I hope you won't mind our having a little time together. We won't do anything very committal. It's as much friendship as anything. I go by the evening train to-morrow."

"Mm," said Serope with his eye on Eleanor.

"In these uncertain times," he began.

"Why shouldn't I take a risk too, Daddy?" said Eleanor sharply.

"I know there's that side of it," said the young man. "I oughtn't to have telegraphed," he said.

"Can't I take a risk?" exclaimed Eleanor. "I'm not a doll. I don't want to live in wadding until all the world is safe for me."

Scrope looked at the glowing face of the young man.

"Is this taking care of her?" he asked.

"If you hadn't telegraphed — !" she cried with a threat in her voice, and left it at that.

"Perhaps I feel about her — rather as if she was as strong as I am — in those ways. Perhaps I shouldn't. I could hardly endure myself, Sir — cut off from her. And a sort of blank. Nothing said."

"You want to work out your own salvation," said Scrope to his

daughter.

"No one else can," she answered. "I'm — I'm grown up."

"Even if it hurts?"

"To live is to be hurt somehow," she said. "This — This—" She flashed her love. She intimated by a gesture that it is better to be stabbed with a clean knife than to be suffocated or poisoned or to decay....

Scrope turned his eyes to the young man again. He liked him. He liked the modelling of his mouth and chin and the line of his brows. He liked him altogether. He pronounced his verdict slowly. "I suppose, after all," he said, "that this is better than the tender solicitude of a safe and prosperous middleaged man. Eleanor, my dear, I've been thinking to-day that a father who stands between his children and hardship, by doing wrong, may really be doing them a wrong. You are a dear girl to me. I won't stand between you two. Find your own salvation." He got up. "I go west," he said, "presently. You, I think, go east."

"I can assure you, Sir," the young man began.

Scrope held his hand out. "Take your life in your own way," he said.

He turned to Eleanor. "Talk as you will," he said.

She clasped his hand with emotion. Then she turned to the waiting young man, who saluted.

"You'll come back to supper?" Scrope said, without thinking out the implications of that invitation.

She assented as carelessly. The fact that she and her lover were to go, with their meeting legalized and blessed, excluded all other considerations. The two young people turned to each other.

Scrope stood for a moment or so and then sat down again.

For a time he could think only of Eleanor.... He watched the two young people as they went eastward. As they walked their shoulders and elbows bumped amicably together.

(10)

Presently he sought to resume the interrupted thread of his thoughts. He knew that he had been dealing with some very tremendous and

urgent problem when Eleanor had appeared. Then he remembered that Eleanor at the time of her approach had seemed to be a solution rather than an interruption. Well, she had her own life. She was making her own life. Instead of solving his problems she was solving her own. God bless those dear grave children! They were nearer the elemental things than he was. That eastward path led to Victoria — and thence to a very probable death. The lad was in the infantry and going straight into the trenches.

Love, death, God; this war was bringing the whole world back to elemental things, to heroic things. The years of comedy and comfort were at an end in Europe; the age of steel and want was here. And he had been thinking — What had he been thinking?

He mused, and the scheme of his perplexities reshaped itself in his mind. But at that time he did not realize that a powerful new light was falling upon it now, cast by the tragic illumination of these young lovers whose love began with a parting. He did not see how reality had come to all things through that one intense reality. He reverted to the question as he had put it to himself, before first he recognized Eleanor. Did he believe in God? Should he go on with this Sunderbund adventure in which he no longer believed? Should he play for safety and comfort, trusting to God's toleration? Or go back to his family and warn them of the years of struggle and poverty his renunciation cast upon them?

Somehow Lady Sunderbund's chapel was very remote and flimsy now, and the hardships of poverty seemed less black than the hardship of a youthful death.

Did he believe in God? Again he put that fundamental question to himself.

He sat very still in the sunset peace, with his eyes upon the steel mirror of the waters. The question seemed to fill the whole scene, to wait, even as the water and sky and the windless trees were waiting....

And then by imperceptible degrees there grew in Scrope's mind the persuasion that he was in the presence of the living God. This time there was no vision of angels nor stars, no snapping of bow-strings, no throbbing of the heart nor change of scene, no magic and melodramatic drawing back of the curtain from the mysteries; the

water and the bridge, the ragged black trees, and a distant boat that broke the silvery calm with an arrow of black ripples, all these things were still before him. But God was there too. God was everywhere about him. This persuasion was over him and about him; a dome of protection, a power in his nerves, a peace in his heart. It was an exalting beauty; it was a perfected conviction.... This indeed was the coming of God, the real coming of God. For the first time Scrope was absolutely sure that for the rest of his life he would possess God. Everything that had so perplexed him seemed to be clear now, and his troubles lay at the foot of this last complete realization like a litter of dust and leaves in the foreground of a sunlit, snowy mountain range.

It was a little incredible that he could ever have doubted.

(11)

It was a phase of extreme intellectual clairvoyance. A multitude of things that hitherto had been higgledy-piggledy, contradictory and incongruous in his mind became lucid, serene, full and assured. He seemed to see all things plainly as one sees things plainly through perfectly clear still water in the shadows of a summer noon. His doubts about God, his periods of complete forgetfulness and disregard of God, this conflict of his instincts and the habits and affections of his daily life with the service of God, ceased to be perplexing incompatibilities and were manifest as necessary, understandable aspects of the business of living.

It was no longer a riddle that little immediate things should seem of more importance than great and final things. For man is a creature thrusting his way up from the beast to divinity, from the blindness of individuality to the knowledge of a common end. We stand deep in the engagements of our individual lives looking up to God, and only realizing in our moments of exaltation that through God we can escape from and rule and alter the whole world-wide scheme of individual lives. Only in phases of illumination do we realize the creative powers that lie ready to man's hand. Personal affections, immediate obligations, ambitions, self-seeking, these are among the natural and essential things of our individual lives, as intimate almost

as our primordial lusts and needs; God, the true God, is a later revelation, a newer, less natural thing in us; a knowledge still remote, uncertain, and confused with superstition; an apprehension as yet entangled with barbaric traditions of fear and with ceremonial surgeries, blood sacrifices, and the maddest barbarities of thought. We are only beginning to realize that God is here; so far as our minds go he is still not here continually; we perceive him and then again we are blind to him. God is the last thing added to the completeness of human life. To most His presence is imperceptible throughout their lives; they know as little of him as a savage knows of the electric waves that beat through us for ever from the sun. All this appeared now so clear and necessary to Scrope that he was astonished he had ever found the quality of contradiction in these manifest facts.

In this unprecedented lucidity that had now come to him, Scrope saw as a clear and simple necessity that there can be no such thing as a continuous living presence of God in our lives. That is an unreasonable desire. There is no permanent exaltation of belief. It is contrary to the nature of life. One cannot keep actively believing in and realizing God round all the twenty-four hours any more than one can keep awake through the whole cycle of night and day, day after day. If it were possible so to apprehend God without cessation, life would dissolve in religious ecstasy. But nothing human has ever had the power to hold the curtain of sense continually aside and retain the light of God always. We must get along by remembering our moments of assurance. Even Jesus himself, leader of all those who have hailed the coming kingdom of God, had cried upon the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The business of life on earth, life itself, is a thing curtained off, as it were, from such immediate convictions. That is in the constitution of life. Our ordinary state of belief, even when we are free from doubt, is necessarily far removed from the intuitive certainty of sight and hearing. It is a persuasion, it falls far short of perception....

“We don’t know directly,” Scrope said to himself with a checking gesture of the hand, “we don’t see. We can’t. We hold on to the remembered glimpse, we go over our reasons.”...

And it was clear too just because God is thus manifest like the momentary drawing of a curtain, sometimes to this man for a time

and sometimes to that, but never continuously to any, and because the perception of him depends upon the ability and quality of the perceiver, because to the intellectual man God is necessarily a formula, to the active man a will and a commandment, and to the emotional man love, there can be no creed defining him for all men, and no ritual and special forms of service to justify a priesthood. "God is God," he whispered to himself, and the phrase seemed to him the discovery of a sufficient creed. God is his own definition; there is no other definition of God. Scrope had troubled himself with endless arguments whether God was a person, whether he was concerned with personal troubles, whether he loved, whether he was finite. It were as reasonable to argue whether God was a frog or a rock or a tree. He had imagined God as a figure of youth and courage, had perceived him as an effulgence of leadership, a captain like the sun. The vision of his drug-quickened mind had but symbolized what was otherwise inexpressible. Of that he was now sure. He had not seen the invisible but only its sign and visible likeness. He knew now that all such presentations were true and that all such presentations were false. Just as much and just as little was God the darkness and the brightness of the ripples under the bows of the distant boat, the black beauty of the leaves and twigs of those trees now acid-clear against the flushed and deepening sky. These riddles of the profundities were beyond the compass of common living. They were beyond the needs of common living. He was but a little earth parasite, sitting idle in the darkling day, trying to understand his infinitesimal functions on a minor planet. Within the compass of terrestrial living God showed himself in its own terms. The life of man on earth was a struggle for unity of spirit and for unity with his kind, and the aspect of God that alone mattered to man was a unifying kingship without and within. So long as men were men, so would they see God. Only when they reached the crest could they begin to look beyond. So we knew God, so God was to us; since we struggled, he led our struggle, since we were finite and mortal he defined an aim, his personality was the answer to our personality; but God, except in so far as he was to us, remained inaccessible, inexplicable, wonderful, shining through beauty, shining beyond research, greater than time or space, above good and evil and pain

and pleasure.

(12)

Serope's mind was saturated as it had never been before by his sense of the immediate presence of God. He floated in that realization. He was not so much thinking now as conversing starkly with the divine interlocutor, who penetrated all things and saw into and illuminated every recess of his mind. He spread out his ideas to the test of this presence; he brought out his hazards and interpretations that this light might judge them.

There came back to his mind the substance of his two former visions; they assumed now a reciprocal quality, they explained one another and the riddle before him. The first had shown him the personal human aspect of God, he had seen God as the unifying captain calling for his personal service, the second had set the stage for that service in the spectacle of mankind's adventure. He had been shown a great multitude of human spirits reaching up at countless points towards the conception of the racial unity under a divine leadership, he had seen mankind on the verge of awakening to the kingdom of God. "That solves no mystery," he whispered, gripping the seat and frowning at the water; "mysteries remain mysteries; but that is the reality of religion. And now, now, what is my place? What have I to do? That is the question I have been asking always; the question that this moment now will answer; what have I to do?..."

God was coming into the life of all mankind in the likeness of a captain and a king; all the governments of men, all the leagues of men, their debts and claims and possessions, must give way to the world republic under God the king. For five troubled years he had been staring religion in the face, and now he saw that it must mean this — or be no more than fetishism, Obi, Orphic mysteries or ceremonies of Demeter, a legacy of mental dirtiness, a residue of self-mutilation and superstitious sacrifices from the cunning, fear-haunted, ape-dog phase of human development. But it did mean this. And every one who apprehended as much was called by that very apprehension to the service of God's kingdom. To live and serve God's kingdom on earth, to help to bring it about, to propagate the

idea of it, to establish the method of it, to incorporate all that one made and all that one did into its growing reality, was the only possible life that could be lived, once that God was known.

He sat with his hands gripping his knees, as if he were holding on to his idea. “And now for my part,” he whispered, brows knit, “now for my part.”

Ever since he had given his confirmation addresses he had been clear that his task, or at least a considerable portion of his task, was to tell of this faith in God and of this conception of service in his kingdom as the form and rule of human life and human society. But up to now he had been floundering hopelessly in his search for a method and means of telling. That, he saw, still needed to be thought out. For example, one cannot run through the world crying, “The Kingdom of God is at hand.” Men’s minds were still so filled with old theological ideas that for the most part they would understand by that only a fantasy of some great coming of angels and fiery chariots and judgments, and hardly a soul but would doubt one’s sanity and turn scornfully away. But one must proclaim God not to confuse but to convince men’s minds. It was that and the habit of his priestly calling that had disposed him towards a pulpit. There he could reason and explain. The decorative genius of Lady Sunderbund had turned that intention into a vast iridescent absurdity.

This sense he had of thinking openly in the sight of God, enabled him to see the adventure of Lady Sunderbund without illusion and without shame. He saw himself at once honest and disingenuous, divided between two aims. He had no doubt now of the path he had to pursue. A stronger man of permanently clear aims might possibly turn Lady Sunderbund into a useful opportunity, oblige her to provide the rostrum he needed; but for himself, he knew he had neither the needed strength nor clearness; she would smother him in decoration, overcome him by her picturesque persistence. It might be ridiculous to run away from her, but it was necessary. And he was equally clear now that for him there must be no idea of any pulpit, of any sustained mission. He was a man of intellectual moods; only at times, he realized, had he the inspiration of truth; upon such uncertain snatches and glimpses he must live; to make his life a ministry would be to face phases when he would simply be “carrying

on," with his mind blank and his faith asleep.

His thought spread out from this perennial decision to more general things again. Had God any need of organized priests at all? Wasn't that just what had been the matter with religion for the last three thousand years?

His vision and his sense of access to God had given a new courage to his mind; in these moods of enlightenment he could see the world as a comprehensible ball, he could see history as an understandable drama. He had always been on the verge of realizing before, he realized now, the two entirely different and antagonistic strands that interweave in the twisted rope of contemporary religion; the old strand of the priest, the fetishistic element of the blood sacrifice and the obscene rite, the element of ritual and tradition, of the cult, the caste, the consecrated tribe; and interwoven with this so closely as to be scarcely separable in any existing religion was the new strand, the religion of the prophets, the unidolatrous universal worship of the one true God. Priest religion is the antithesis to prophet religion. He saw that the founders of all the great existing religions of the world had been like himself — only that he was a weak and commonplace man with no creative force, and they had been great men of enormous initiative — men reaching out, and never with a complete definition, from the old kind of religion to the new. The Hebrew prophets, Jesus, whom the priests killed when Pilate would have spared him, Mohammed, Buddha, had this much in common that they had sought to lead men from temple worship, idol worship, from rites and ceremonies and the rule of priests, from anniversaryism and sacramentalism, into a direct and simple relation to the simplicity of God. Religious progress had always been liberation and simplification. But none of these efforts had got altogether clear. The organizing temper in men, the disposition to dogmatic theorizing, the distrust of the discretion of the young by the wisdom of age, the fear of indiscipline which is so just in warfare and so foolish in education, the tremendous power of the propitiatory tradition, had always caught and crippled every new gospel before it had run a score of years. Jesus for example gave man neither a theology nor a church organization; His sacrament was an innocent feast of memorial; but the fearful, limited, imitative men he left to

carry on his work speedily restored all these three abominations of the antiquated religion, theology, priest, and sacrifice. Jesus indeed, caught into identification with the ancient victim of the harvest sacrifice and turned from a plain teacher into a horrible blood bath and a mock cannibal meal, was surely the supreme feat of the ironies of chance....

"It is curious how I drift back to Jesus," said Scrope. "I have never seen how much truth and good there was in his teaching until I broke away from Christianity and began to see him plain. If I go on as I am going, I shall end a Nazarene...."

He thought on. He had a feeling of temerity, but then it seemed as if God within him bade him be of good courage.

Already in a glow of inspiration he had said practically as much as he was now thinking in his confirmation address, but now he realized completely what it was he had then said. There could be no priests, no specialized ministers of the one true God, because every man to the utmost measure of his capacity was bound to be God's priest and minister. Many things one may leave to specialists: surgery, detailed administration, chemistry, for example; but it is for every man to think his own philosophy and think out his own religion. One man may tell another, but no man may take charge of another. A man may avail himself of electrician or gardener or what not, but he must stand directly before God; he may suffer neither priest nor king. These other things are incidental, but God, the kingdom of God, is what he is for.

"Good," he said, checking his reasoning. "So I must bear witness to God — but neither as priest nor pastor. I must write and talk about him as I can. No reason why I should not live by such writing and talking if it does not hamper my message to do so. But there must be no high place, no ordered congregation. I begin to see my way...."

The evening was growing dark and chill about him now, the sky was barred with deep bluish purple bands drawn across a chilly brightness that had already forgotten the sun, the trees were black and dim, but his understanding of his place and duty was growing very definite.

"And this duty to bear witness to God's kingdom and serve it is so plain that I must not deflect my witness even by a little, though to do

so means comfort and security for my wife and children. God comes first....”

“They must not come between God and me....”

“But there is more in it than that.”

He had come round at last through the long clearing-up of his mind, to his fundamental problem again. He sat darkly reluctant.

“I must not play priest or providence to them,” he admitted at last. “I must not even stand between God and them.”

He saw now what he had been doing; it had been the flaw in his faith that he would not trust his family to God. And he saw too that this distrust has been the flaw in the faith of all religious systems hitherto....

(13)

In this strange voyage of the spirit which was now drawing to its end, in which Scrope had travelled from the confused, unanalyzed formulas and assumptions and implications of his rectory upbringing to his present stark and simple realization of God, he had at times made some remarkable self-identifications. He was naturally much given to analogy; every train of thought in his mind set up induced parallel currents. He had likened himself to the Anglican church, to the whole Christian body, as, for example, in his imagined second conversation with the angel of God. But now he found himself associating himself with a still more far-reaching section of mankind. This excess of solicitude was traceable perhaps in nearly every one in all the past of mankind who had ever had the vision of God. An excessive solicitude to shield those others from one’s own trials and hardships, to preserve the exact quality of the revelation, for example, had been the fruitful cause of crippling errors, spiritual tyrannies, dogmatisms, dissensions, and futilities. “Suffer little children to come unto me”; the text came into his head with an effect of contribution. The parent in us all flares out at the thought of the younger and weaker minds; we hide difficulties, seek to spare them from the fires that temper the spirit, the sharp edge of the truth that shapes the soul. Christian is always trying to have a carriage sent back from the Celestial City for his family. Why, we ask, should they

flounder dangerously in the morasses that we escaped, or wander in the forest in which we lost ourselves? Catch these souls young, therefore, save them before they know they exist, kidnap them to heaven; vaccinate them with a catechism they may never understand, lull them into comfort and routine. Instinct plays us false here as it plays the savage mother false when she snatches her fevered child from the doctor's hands. The last act of faith is to trust those we love to God....

Hitherto he had seen the great nets of theological overstatement and dogma that kept mankind from God as if they were the work of purely evil things in man, of pride, of self-assertion, of a desire to possess and dominate the minds and souls of others. It was only now that he saw how large a share in the obstruction of God's Kingdom had been played by the love of the elder and the parent, by the carefulness, the fussy care, of good men and women. He had wandered in wildernesses of unbelief, in dangerous places of doubt and questioning, but he had left his wife and children safe and secure in the self-satisfaction of orthodoxy. To none of them except to Eleanor had he ever talked with any freedom of his new apprehensions of religious reality. And that had been at Eleanor's initiative. There was, he saw now, something of insolence and something of treachery in this concealment. His ruling disposition throughout the crisis had been to force comfort and worldly well-being upon all those dependants even at the price of his own spiritual integrity. In no way had he consulted them upon the bargain.... While we have pottered, each for the little good of his own family, each for the lessons and clothes and leisure of his own children, assenting to this injustice, conforming to that dishonest custom, being myopically benevolent and fundamentally treacherous, our accumulated folly has achieved this catastrophe. It is not so much human wickedness as human weakness that has permitted the youth of the world to go through this hell of blood and mud and fire. The way to the kingdom of God is the only way to the true safety, the true wellbeing of the children of men....

It wasn't fair to them. But now he saw how unfair it was to them in a light that has only shone plainly upon European life since the great interlude of the armed peace came to an end in August, 1914.

Until that time it had been the fashion to ignore death and evade poverty and necessity for the young. We can shield our young no longer, death has broken through our precautions and tender evasions — and his eyes went eastward into the twilight that had swallowed up his daughter and her lover.

The tumbled darkling sky, monstrous masses of frowning blue, with icy gaps of cold light, was like the great confusions of the war. All our youth has had to go into that terrible and destructive chaos — because of the kings and churches and nationalities sturdier-souled men would have set aside.

Everything was sharp and clear in his mind now. Eleanor after all had brought him his solution.

He sat quite still for a little while, and then stood up and turned northward towards Notting Hill.

The keepers were closing Kensington Gardens, and he would have to skirt the Park to Victoria Gate and go home by the Bayswater Road....

(14)

As he walked he rearranged in his mind this long-overdue apology for his faith that he was presently to make to his family. There was no one to interrupt him and nothing to embarrass him, and so he was able to set out everything very clearly and convincingly. There was perhaps a disposition to digress into rather voluminous subordinate explanations, on such themes, for instance, as sacramentalism, whereon he found himself summarizing Frazer's Golden Bough, which the Chasters' controversy had first obliged him to read, and upon the irrelevance of the question of immortality to the process of salvation. But the reality of his eclaircissement was very different from anything he prepared in these anticipations.

Tea had been finished and put away, and the family was disposed about the dining-room engaged in various evening occupations; Phoebe sat at the table working at some mathematical problem, Clementina was reading with her chin on her fist and a frown on her brow; Lady Ella, Miriam and Daphne were busy making soft washing cloths for the wounded; Lady Ella had brought home the

demand for them from the Red Cross centre in Burlington House. The family was all downstairs in the dining-room because the evening was chilly, and there were no fires upstairs yet in the drawing-room. He came into the room and exchanged greetings with Lady Ella. Then he stood for a time surveying his children. Phoebe, he noted, was a little flushed; she put passion into her work; on the whole she was more like Eleanor than any other of them. Miriam knitted with a steady skill. Clementina's face too expressed a tussle. He took up one of the rough-knit washing-cloths upon the side-table, and asked how many could be made in an hour. Then he asked some idle obvious question about the fire upstairs. Clementina made an involuntary movement; he was disturbing her. He hovered for a moment longer. He wanted to catch his wife's eye and speak to her first. She looked up, but before he could convey his wish for a private conference with her, she smiled at him and then bent over her work again.

He went into the back study and lit his gas fire. Hitherto he had always made a considerable explosion when he did so, but this time by taking thought and lighting his match before he turned on the gas he did it with only a gentle thud. Then he lit his reading-lamp and pulled down the blind — pausing for a time to look at the lit dressmaker's opposite. Then he sat down thoughtfully before the fire. Presently Ella would come in and he would talk to her. He waited a long time, thinking only weakly and inconsecutively, and then he became restless. Should he call her?

But he wanted their talk to begin in a natural-seeming way. He did not want the portentousness of "wanting to speak" to her and calling her out to him. He got up at last and went back into the other room. Clementina had gone upstairs, and the book she had been reading was lying closed on the sideboard. He saw it was one of Chasters' books, he took it up, it was "The Core of Truth in Christianity," and he felt an irrational shock at the idea of Clementina reading it. In spite of his own immense changes of opinion he had still to revise his conception of the polemical Chasters as an evil influence in religion. He fidgeted past his wife to the mantel in search of an imaginary mislaid pencil. Clementina came down with some bandage linen she was cutting out. He hung over his wife in a way that he felt must

convey his desire for a conversation. Then he picked up Chasters' book again. "Does any one want this?" he asked.

"Not if I may have it again," consented Clementina.

He took it back with him and began to read again those familiar controversial pages. He read for the best part of an hour with his knees drying until they smoked over the gas. What curious stuff it was! How it wrangled! Was Chasters a religious man? Why did he write these books? Had he really a passion for truth or only a Swift-like hatred of weakly-thinking people? None of this stuff in his books was really wrong, provided it was religious-spirited. Much of it had been indeed destructively illuminating to its reader. It let daylight through all sorts of walls. Indeed, the more one read the more vividly true its acid-bit lines became.... And yet, and yet, there was something hateful in the man's tone. Scrope held the book and thought. He had seen Chasters once or twice. Chasters had the sort of face, the sort of voice, the sort of bearing that made one think of his possibly saying upon occasion, rudely and rejoicing, "More fool you!" Nevertheless Scrope perceived now with an effort of discovery that it was from Chasters that he had taken all the leading ideas of the new faith that was in him. Here was the stuff of it. He had forgotten how much of it was here. During those months of worried study while the threat of a Chasters prosecution hung over him his mind had assimilated almost unknowingly every assimilable element of the Chasters doctrine; he had either assimilated and transmuted it by the alchemy of his own temperament, or he had reacted obviously and filled in Chasters' gaps and pauses. Chasters could beat a road to the Holy of Holies, and shy at entering it. But in spite of all the man's roughness, in spite of a curious flavour of baseness and malice about him, the spirit of truth had spoken through him. God has a use for harsh ministers. In one man God lights the heart, in another the reason becomes a consuming fire. God takes his own where he finds it. He does not limit himself to nice people. In these matters of evidence and argument, in his contempt for amiable, demoralizing compromise, Chasters served God as Scrope could never hope to serve him. Scrope's new faith had perhaps been altogether impossible if the Chasters controversy had not ploughed his mind.

For a time Scrope dwelt upon this remarkable realization. Then as

he turned over the pages his eyes rested on a passage of uncivil and ungenerous sarcasm. Against old Likeman of all people!...

What did a girl like Clementina make of all this? How had she got the book? From Eleanor? The stuff had not hurt Eleanor. Eleanor had been able to take the good that Chasters taught, and reject the evil of his spirit....

He thought of Eleanor, gallantly working out her own salvation. The world was moving fast to a phase of great freedom — for the young and the bold.... He liked that boy....

His thoughts came back with a start to his wife. The evening was slipping by and he had momentous things to say to her. He went and just opened the door.

"Ella!" he said.

"Did you want me?"

"Presently."

She put a liberal interpretation upon that "presently," so that after what seemed to him a long interval he had to call again, "Ella!"

"Just a minute," she answered.

(15)

Lady Ella was still, so to speak, a little in the other room when she came to him.

"Shut that door, please," he said, and felt the request had just that flavour of portentousness he wished to avoid.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I wanted to talk to you — about some things. I've done something rather serious to-day. I've made an important decision."

Her face became anxious. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"You see," he said, leaning upon the mantelshelf and looking down at the gas flames, "I've never thought that we should all have to live in this crowded house for long."

"All!" she interrupted in a voice that made him look up sharply. "You're not going away, Ted?"

"Oh, no. But I hoped we should all be going away in a little time. It isn't so."

"I never quite understood why you hoped that."

“It was plain enough.”

“How?”

“I thought I should have found something to do that would have enabled us to live in better style. I’d had a plan.”

“What plan?”

“It’s fallen through.”

“But what plan was it?”

“I thought I should be able to set up a sort of broad church chapel. I had a promise.”

Her voice was rich with indignation. “And she has betrayed you?”

“No,” he said, “I have betrayed her.”

Lady Ella’s face showed them still at cross purposes. He looked down again and frowned. “I can’t do that chapel business,” he said. “I’ve had to let her down. I’ve got to let you all down. There’s no help for it. It isn’t the way. I can’t have anything to do with Lady Sunderbund and her chapel.”

“But,” Lady Ella was still perplexed.

“It’s too great a sacrifice.”

“Of us?”

“No, of myself. I can’t get into her pulpit and do as she wants and keep my conscience. It’s been a horrible riddle for me. It means plunging into all this poverty for good. But I can’t work with her, Ella. She’s impossible.”

“You mean — you’re going to break with Lady Sunderbund?”

“I must.”

“Then, Teddy!” — she was a woman groping for flight amidst intolerable perplexities— “why did you ever leave the church?”

“Because I have ceased to believe—”

“But had it nothing to do with Lady Sunderbund?”

He stared at her in astonishment.

“If it means breaking with that woman,” she said.

“You mean,” he said, beginning for the first time to comprehend her, “that you don’t mind the poverty?”

“Poverty!” she cried. “I cared for nothing but the disgrace.”

“Disgrace?”

“Oh, never mind, Ted! If it isn’t true, if I’ve been dreaming....”

Instead of a woman stunned by a life sentence of poverty, he saw

his wife rejoicing as if she had heard good news.

Their minds were held for a minute by the sound of some one knocking at the house door; one of the girls opened the door, there was a brief hubbub in the passage and then they heard a cry of "Eleanor!" through the folding doors.

"There's Eleanor," he said, realizing he had told his wife nothing of the encounter in Hyde Park.

They heard Eleanor's clear voice: "Where's Mummy? Or Daddy?" and then: "Can't stay now, dears. Where's Mummy or Daddy?"

"I ought to have told you," said Scrope quickly. "I met Eleanor in the Park. By accident. She's come up unexpectedly. To meet a boy going to the front. Quite a nice boy. Son of Riverton the doctor. The parting had made them understand one another. It's all right, Ella. It's a little irregular, but I'd stake my life on the boy. She's very lucky."

Eleanor appeared through the folding doors. She came to business at once.

"I promised you I'd come back to supper here, Daddy," she said. "But I don't want to have supper here. I want to stay out late."

She saw her mother look perplexed. "Hasn't Daddy told you?"

"But where is young Riverton?"

"He's outside."

Eleanor became aware of a broad chink in the folding doors that was making the dining-room an auditorium for their dialogue. She shut them deftly.

"I have told Mummy," Scrope explained. "Bring him in to supper. We ought to see him."

Eleanor hesitated. She indicated her sisters beyond the folding doors. "They'll all be watching us, Mummy," she said. "We'd be uncomfortable. And besides—"

"But you can't go out and dine with him alone!"

"Oh, Mummy! It's our only chance."

"Customs are changing," said Scrope.

"But can they?" asked Lady Ella.

"I don't see why not."

The mother was still doubtful, but she was in no mood to cross

her husband that night. “It’s an exceptional occasion,” said Scrope, and Eleanor knew her point was won. She became radiant. “I can be late?”

Scrope handed her his latch-key without a word.

“You dear kind things,” she said, and went to the door. Then turned and came back and kissed her father. Then she kissed her mother. “It is so kind of you,” she said, and was gone. They listened to her passage through a storm of questions in the dining-room.

“Three months ago that would have shocked me,” said Lady Ella.

“You haven’t seen the boy,” said Scrope.

“But the appearances!”

“Aren’t we rather breaking with appearances?” he said.

“And he goes to-morrow — perhaps to get killed,” he added. “A lad like a schoolboy. A young thing. Because of the political foolery that we priests and teachers have suffered in the place of the Kingdom of God, because we have allowed the religion of Europe to become a lie; because no man spoke the word of God. You see — when I see that — see those two, those children of one-and-twenty, wrenched by tragedy, beginning with a parting.... It’s like a knife slashing at all our appearances and discretions.... Think of our lovemaking....”

The front door banged.

He had some idea of resuming their talk. But his was a scattered mind now.

“It’s a quarter to eight,” he said as if in explanation.

“I must see to the supper,” said Lady Ella.

(16)

There was an air of tension at supper as though the whole family felt that momentous words impended. But Phoebe had emerged victorious from her mathematical struggle, and she seemed to eat with better appetite than she had shown for some time. It was a cold meat supper; Lady Ella had found it impossible to keep up the regular practice of a cooked dinner in the evening, and now it was only on Thursdays that the Scropes, to preserve their social tradition, dressed and dined; the rest of the week they supped. Lady Ella never

talked very much at supper; this evening was no exception. Clementina talked of London University and Bedford College; she had been making enquiries; Daphne described some of the mistresses at her new school. The feeling that something was expected had got upon Scrope's nerves. He talked a little in a flat and obvious way, and lapsed into thoughtful silences. While supper was being cleared away he went back into his study.

Thence he returned to the dining-room hearthrug as his family resumed their various occupations.

He tried to speak in a casual conversational tone.

"I want to tell you all," he said, "of something that has happened to-day."

He waited. Phoebe had begun to figure at a fresh sheet of computations. Miriam bent her head closer over her work, as though she winced at what was coming. Daphne and Clementina looked at one another. Their eyes said "Eleanor!" But he was too full of his own intention to read that glance. Only his wife regarded him attentively.

"It concerns you all," he said.

He looked at Phoebe. He saw Lady Ella's hand go out and touch the girl's hand gently to make her desist. Phoebe obeyed, with a little sigh.

"I want to tell you that to-day I refused an income that would certainly have exceeded fifteen hundred pounds a year."

Clementina looked up now. This was not what she expected. Her expression conveyed protesting enquiry.

"I want you all to understand why I did that and why we are in the position we are in, and what lies before us. I want you to know what has been going on in my mind."

He looked down at the hearthrug, and tried to throw off a memory of his Princhester classes for young women, that oppressed him. His manner he forced to a more familiar note. He stuck his hands into his trouser pockets.

"You know, my dears, I had to give up the church. I just simply didn't believe any more in orthodox Church teaching. And I feel I've never explained that properly to you. Not at all clearly. I want to explain that now. It's a queer thing, I know, for me to say to you, but

I want you to understand that I am a religious man. I believe that God matters more than wealth or comfort or position or the respect of men, that he also matters more than your comfort and prosperity. God knows I have cared for your comfort and prosperity. I don't want you to think that in all these changes we have been through lately, I haven't been aware of all the discomfort into which you have come — the relative discomfort. Compared with Princhester this is dark and crowded and poverty-stricken. I have never felt crowded before, but in this house I know you are horribly crowded. It is a house that seems almost contrived for small discomforts. This narrow passage outside; the incessant going up and down stairs. And there are other things. There is the blankness of our London Sundays. What is the good of pretending? They are desolating. There's the impossibility too of getting good servants to come into our dug-out kitchen. I'm not blind to all these sordid consequences. But all the same, God has to be served first. I had to come to this. I felt I could not serve God any longer as a bishop in the established church, because I did not believe that the established church was serving God. I struggled against that conviction — and I struggled against it largely for your sakes. But I had to obey my conviction.... I haven't talked to you about these things as much as I should have done, but partly at least that is due to the fact that my own mind has been changing and reconsidering, going forward and going back, and in that fluid state it didn't seem fair to tell you things that I might presently find mistaken. But now I begin to feel that I have really thought out things, and that they are definite enough to tell you...."

He paused and resumed. "A number of things have helped to change the opinions in which I grew up and in which you have grown up. There were worries at Princhester; I didn't let you know much about them, but there were. There was something harsh and cruel in that atmosphere. I saw for the first time — it's a lesson I'm still only learning — how harsh and greedy rich people and employing people are to poor people and working people, and how ineffective our church was to make things better. That struck me. There were religious disputes in the diocese too, and they shook me. I thought my faith was built on a rock, and I found it was built on sand. It was slipping and sliding long before the war. But the war

brought it down. Before the war such a lot of things in England and Europe seemed like a comedy or a farce, a bad joke that one tolerated. One tried half consciously, half avoiding the knowledge of what one was doing, to keep one's own little circle and life civilized. The war shook all those ideas of isolation, all that sort of evasion, down. The world is the rightful kingdom of God; we had left its affairs to kings and emperors and suchlike impostors, to priests and profit-seekers and greedy men. We were genteel condoners. The war has ended that. It thrusts into all our lives. It brings death so close — A fortnight ago twenty-seven people were killed and injured within a mile of this by Zeppelin bombs.... Every one loses some one.... Because through all that time men like myself were going through our priestly mummeries, abasing ourselves to kings and politicians, when we ought to have been crying out: 'No! No! There is no righteousness in the world, there is no right government, except it be the kingdom of God.'"

He paused and looked at them. They were all listening to him now. But he was still haunted by a dread of preaching in his own family. He dropped to the conversational note again.

"You see what I had in mind. I saw I must come out of this, and preach the kingdom of God. That was my idea. I don't want to force it upon you, but I want you to understand why I acted as I did. But let me come to the particular thing that has happened to-day. I did not think when I made my final decision to leave the church that it meant such poverty as this we are living in — permanently. That is what I want to make clear to you. I thought there would be a temporary dip into dinginess, but that was all. There was a plan; at the time it seemed a right and reasonable plan; for setting up a chapel in London, a very plain and simple undenominational chapel, for the simple preaching of the world kingdom of God. There was some one who seemed prepared to meet all the immediate demands for such a chapel."

"Was it Lady Sunderbund?" asked Clementina.

Scrope was pulled up abruptly. "Yes," he said. "It seemed at first a quite hopeful project."

"We'd have hated that," said Clementina, with a glance as if for assent, at her mother. "We should all have hated that."

“Anyhow it has fallen through.”

“We don’t mind that,” said Clementina, and Daphne echoed her words.

“I don’t see that there is any necessity to import this note of — hostility to Lady Sunderbund into this matter.” He addressed himself rather more definitely to Lady Ella. “She’s a woman of a very extraordinary character, highly emotional, energetic, generous to an extraordinary extent....”

Daphne made a little noise like a comment.

A faint acerbity in her father’s voice responded.

“Anyhow you make a mistake if you think that the personality of Lady Sunderbund has very much to do with this thing now. Her quality may have brought out certain aspects of the situation rather more sharply than they might have been brought out under other circumstances, but if this chapel enterprise had been suggested by quite a different sort of person, by a man, or by a committee, in the end I think I should have come to the same conclusion. Leave Lady Sunderbund out. Any chapel was impossible. It is just this specialization that has been the trouble with religion. It is just this tendency to make it the business of a special sort of man, in a special sort of building, on a special day — Every man, every building, every day belongs equally to God. That is my conviction. I think that the only possible existing sort of religions meeting is something after the fashion of the Quaker meeting. In that there is no professional religious man at all; not a trace of the sacrifices to the ancient gods.... And no room for a professional religions man....” He felt his argument did a little escape him. He snatched, “That is what I want to make clear to you. God is not a speciality; he is a universal interest.”

He stopped. Both Daphne and Clementina seemed disposed to say something and did not say anything.

Miriam was the first to speak. “Daddy,” she said, “I know I’m stupid. But are we still Christians?”

“I want you to think for yourselves.”

“But I mean,” said Miriam, “are we — something like Quakers — a sort of very broad Christians?”

“You are what you choose to be. If you want to keep in the

church, then you must keep in the church. If you feel that the Christian doctrine is alive, then it is alive so far as you are concerned."

"But the creeds?" asked Clementina.

He shook his head. "So far as Christianity is defined by its creeds, I am not a Christian. If we are going to call any sort of religious feeling that has a respect for Jesus, Christianity, then no doubt I am a Christian. But so was Mohammed at that rate. Let me tell you what I believe. I believe in God, I believe in the immediate presence of God in every human life, I believe that our lives have to serve the Kingdom of God...."

"That practically is what Mr. Chasters calls 'The Core of Truth in Christianity.'"

"You have been reading him?"

"Eleanor lent me the book. But Mr. Chasters keeps his living."

"I am not Chasters," said Scrope stiffly, and then relenting: "What he does may be right for him. But I could not do as he does."

Lady Ella had said no word for some time.

"I would be ashamed," she said quietly, "if you had not done as you have done. I don't mind — The girls don't mind — all this.... Not when we understand — as we do now."

That was the limit of her eloquence.

"Not now that we understand, Daddy," said Clementina, and a faint flavour of Lady Sunderbund seemed to pass and vanish.

There was a queer little pause. He stood rather distressed and perplexed, because the talk had not gone quite as he had intended it to go. It had deteriorated towards personal issues. Phoebe broke the awkwardness by jumping up and coming to her father. "Dear Daddy," she said, and kissed him.

"We didn't understand properly," said Clementina, in the tone of one who explains away much — that had never been spoken....

"Daddy," said Miriam with an inspiration, "may I play something to you presently?"

"But the fire!" interjected Lady Ella, disposing of that idea.

"I want you to know, all of you, the faith I have," he said.

Daphne had remained seated at the table.

"Are we never to go to church again?" she asked, as if at a loss.

Scrope went back into his little study. He felt shy and awkward with his daughters now. He felt it would be difficult to get back to usualness with them. To-night it would be impossible. To-morrow he must come down to breakfast as though their talk had never occurred.... In his rehearsal of this deliverance during his walk home he had spoken much more plainly of his sense of the coming of God to rule the world and end the long age of the warring nations and competing traders, and he had intended to speak with equal plainness of the passionate subordination of the individual life to this great common purpose of God and man, an aspect he had scarcely mentioned at all. But in that little room, in the presence of those dear familiar people, those great horizons of life had vanished. The room with its folding doors had fixed the scale. The wallpaper had smothered the Kingdom of God; he had been, he felt, domestic; it had been an after-supper talk. He had been put out, too, by the mention of Lady Sunderbund and the case of Chasters....

In his study he consoled himself for this diminution of his intention. It had taken him five years, he reflected, to get to his present real sense of God's presence and to his personal subordination to God's purpose. It had been a little absurd, he perceived, to expect these girls to leap at once to a complete understanding of the halting hints, the allusive indications of the thoughts that now possessed his soul. He tried like some maiden speaker to recall exactly what it was he had said and what it was he had forgotten to say.... This was merely a beginning, merely a beginning.

After the girls had gone to bed, Lady Ella came to him and she was glowing and tender; she was in love again as she had not been since the shadow had first fallen between them. "I was so glad you spoke to them," she said. "They had been puzzled. But they are dear loyal girls."

He tried to tell her rather more plainly what he felt about the whole question of religion in their lives, but eloquence had departed from him.

"You see, Ella, life cannot get out of tragedy — and sordid

tragedy — until we bring about the Kingdom of God. It's no unreality that has made me come out of the church."

"No, dear. No," she said soothingly and reassuringly. "With all these mere boys going to the most dreadful deaths in the trenches, with death, hardship and separation running amok in the world—"

"One has to do something," she agreed.

"I know, dear," he said, "that all this year of doubt and change has been a dreadful year for you."

"It was stupid of me," she said, "but I have been so unhappy. It's over now — but I was wretched. And there was nothing I could say.... I prayed.... It isn't the poverty I feared ever, but the disgrace. Now — I'm happy. I'm happy again.

"But how far do you come with me?"

"I'm with you."

"But," he said, "you are still a churchwoman?"

"I don't know," she said. "I don't mind."

He stared at her.

"But I thought always that was what hurt you most, my breach with the church."

"Things are so different now," she said.

Her heart dissolved within her into tender possessiveness. There came flooding into her mind the old phrases of an ancient story: "Whither thou goest I will go... thy people shall be my people and thy God my God.... The Lord do so to me and more also if aught but death part thee and me."

Just those words would Lady Ella have said to her husband now, but she was capable of no such rhetoric.

"Whither thou goest," she whispered almost inaudibly, and she could get no further. "My dear," she said.

(18)

At two o'clock the next morning Scrope was still up. He was sitting over the snoring gas fire in his study. He did not want to go to bed. His mind was too excited, he knew, for any hope of sleep. In the last twelve hours, since he had gone out across the park to his momentous talk with Lady Sunderbund, it seemed to him that his life

had passed through its cardinal crisis and come to its crown and decision. The spiritual voyage that had begun five years ago amidst a stormy succession of theological nightmares had reached harbour at last. He was established now in the sure conviction of God's reality, and of his advent to unify the lives of men and to save mankind. Some unobserved process in his mind had perfected that conviction, behind the cloudy veil of his vacillations and moods. Surely that work was finished now, and the day's experience had drawn the veil and discovered God established for ever.

He contrasted this simple and overruling knowledge of God as the supreme fact in a practical world with that vague and ineffective subject for sentiment who had been the "God" of his Anglican days. Some theologian once spoke of God as "the friend behind phenomena"; that Anglican deity had been rather a vague flummery behind court and society, wealth, "respectability," and the comfortable life. And even while he had lived in lipservice to that complaisant compromise, this true God had been here, this God he now certainly professed, waiting for his allegiance, waiting to take up the kingship of this distraught and bloodstained earth. The finding of God is but the stripping of bandages from the eyes. Seek and ye shall find....

He whispered four words very softly: "The Kingdom of God!"

He was quite sure he had that now, quite sure.

The Kingdom of God!

That now was the form into which all his life must fall. He recalled his vision of the silver sphere and of ten thousand diverse minds about the world all making their ways to the same one conclusion. Here at last was a king and emperor for mankind for whom one need have neither contempt nor resentment; here was an aim for which man might forge the steel and wield the scalpel, write and paint and till and teach. Upon this conception he must model all his life. Upon this basis he must found friendships and co-operations. All the great religions, Christianity, Islam, in the days of their power and honesty, had proclaimed the advent of this kingdom of God. It had been their common inspiration. A religion surrenders when it abandons the promise of its Millennium. He had recovered that ancient and immortal hope. All men must achieve it, and with their

achievement the rule of God begins. He muttered his faith. It made it more definite to put it into words and utter it. “It comes. It surely comes. To-morrow I begin. I will do no work that goes not Godward. Always now it shall be the truth as near as I can put it. Always now it shall be the service of the commonweal as well as I can do it. I will live for the ending of all false kingship and priestcraft, for the eternal growth of the spirit of man....”

He was, he knew clearly, only one common soldier in a great army that was finding its way to enlistment round and about the earth. He was not alone. While the kings of this world fought for dominion these others gathered and found themselves and one another, these others of the faith that grows plain, these men who have resolved to end the bloodstained chronicles of the Dynasts and the miseries of a world that trades in life, for ever. They were many men, speaking divers tongues. He was but one who obeyed the worldwide impulse. He could smile at the artless vanity that had blinded him to the import of his earlier visions, that had made him imagine himself a sole discoverer, a new Prophet, that had brought him so near to founding a new sect. Every soldier in the new host was a recruiting sergeant according to his opportunity.... And none was leader. Only God was leader....

“The achievement of the Kingdom of God;” this was his calling. Henceforth this was his business in life....

For a time he indulged in vague dreams of that kingdom of God on earth of which he would be one of the makers; it was a dream of a shadowy splendour of cities, of great scientific achievements, of a universal beauty, of beautiful people living in the light of God, of a splendid adventure, thrusting out at last among the stars. But neither his natural bent nor his mental training inclined him to mechanical or administrative explicitness. Much more was his dream a vision of men inwardly ennobled and united in spirit. He saw history growing reasonable and life visibly noble as mankind realized the divine aim. All the outward peace and order, the joy of physical existence finely conceived, the mounting power and widening aim were but the expression and verification of the growth of God within. Then we would bear children for finer ends than the blood and mud of battlefields. Life would tower up like a great flame. By faith we

reached forward to that. The vision grew more splendid as it grew more metaphorical. And the price one paid for that; one gave sham dignities, false honour, a Levitical righteousness, immediate peace, one bartered kings and churches for God.... He looked at the mean, poverty-struck room, he marked the dinginess and tawdriness of its detail and all the sordid evidences of ungracious bargaining and grudging service in its appointments. For all his life now he would have to live in such rooms. He who had been one of the lucky ones.... Well, men were living in dug-outs and dying gaily in muddy trenches, they had given limbs and lives, eyes and the joy of movement, prosperity and pride, for a smaller cause and a feebler assurance than this that he had found....

(19)

Presently his thoughts were brought back to his family by the sounds of Eleanor's return. He heard her key in the outer door; he heard her move about in the hall and then slip lightly up to bed. He did not go out to speak to her, and she did not note the light under his door.

He would talk to her later when this discovery of her own emotions no longer dominated her mind. He recalled her departing figure and how she had walked, touching and looking up to her young mate, and he a little leaning to her....

"God bless them and save them," he said....

He thought of her sisters. They had said but little to his clumsy explanations. He thought of the years and experience that they must needs pass through before they could think the fulness of his present thoughts, and so he tempered his disappointment. They were a gallant group, he felt. He had to thank Ella and good fortune that so they were. There was Clementina with her odd quick combatant sharpness, a harder being than Eleanor, but nevertheless a fine-spirited and even more independent. There was Miriam, indefatigably kind. Phoebe too had a real passion of the intellect and Daphne an innate disposition to service. But it was strange how they had taken his proclamation of a conclusive breach with the church as though it was a command they must, at least outwardly, obey. He had expected them to be more deeply shocked; he had thought he

would have to argue against objections and convert them to his views. Their acquiescence was strange. They were content he should think all this great issue out and give his results to them. And his wife, well as he knew her, had surprised him. He thought of her words: “Whither thou goest—”

He was dissatisfied with this unconditional agreement. Why could not his wife meet God as he had met God? Why must Miriam put the fantastic question — as though it was not for her to decide: “Are we still Christians?” And pursuing this thought, why couldn’t Lady Sunderbund set up in religion for herself without going about the world seeking for a priest and prophet. Were women Undines who must get their souls from mortal men? And who was it tempted men to set themselves up as priests? It was the wife, the disciple, the lover, who was the last, the most fatal pitfall on the way to God.

He began to pray, still sitting as he prayed.

“Oh God!” he prayed. “Thou who has shown thyself to me, let me never forget thee again. Save me from forgetfulness. And show thyself to those I love; show thyself to all mankind. Use me, O God, use me; but keep my soul alive. Save me from the presumption of the trusted servant; save me from the vanity of authority....

“And let thy light shine upon all those who are so dear to me.... Save them from me. Take their dear loyalty....”

He paused. A flushed, childishly miserable face that stared indignantly through glittering tears, rose before his eyes. He forgot that he had been addressing God.

“How can I help you, you silly thing?” he said. “I would give my own soul to know that God had given his peace to you. I could not do as you wished. And I have hurt you!... You hurt yourself.... But all the time you would have hampered me and tempted me — and wasted yourself. It was impossible.... And yet you are so fine!”

He was struck by another aspect.

“Ella was happy — partly because Lady Sunderbund was hurt and left desolated....”

“Both of them are still living upon nothings. Living for nothings. A phantom way of living....”

He stared blankly at the humming blue gas jets amidst the incandescent asbestos for a space.

“Make them understand,” he pleaded, as though he spoke confidentially of some desirable and reasonable thing to a friend who sat beside him. “You see it is so hard for them until they understand. It is easy enough when one understands. Easy—” He reflected for some moments— “It is as if they could not exist — except in relationship to other definite people. I want them to exist — as now I exist — in relationship to God. Knowing God....”

But now he was talking to himself again.

“So far as one can know God,” he said presently.

For a while he remained frowning at the fire. Then he bent forward, turned out the gas, arose with the air of a man who relinquishes a difficult task. “One is limited,” he said. “All one’s ideas must fall within one’s limitations. Faith is a sort of tour de force. A feat of the imagination. For such things as we are. Naturally — naturally.... One perceives it clearly only in rare moments.... That alters nothing....”

JOAN AND PETER: THE STORY OF AN EDUCATION

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CHAPTER I. — PETER'S PARENTAGE

§ 1

EARLY one summer morning in England, in the year 1808 in the reign — which seemed in those days to have been going on for ever and to be likely to go on for evermore — of Queen Victoria, there was born a little boy named Peter. Peter was a novel name then; he was before the great crop of Peters who derived their name from Peter Pan. He was born with some difficulty. His father, who had not been to bed all night, for the trouble of the birth had begun overnight at about nine o'clock, was walking about in the garden in a dewy dawn, thinking the world very dreadful and beautiful, when he first heard Peter cry. Peter, he thought, made a noise like a little frightened hen that something big had caught.... Peter's mother had been moaning but now she moaned no more, and Peter's father stood outside and whispered "Oh, God! Oh! Damn them and damn them! why don't they tell met"

Then the nurse put her head out of the window; it was a casement window with white roses about it; said "Everything's all right. I'll tell you when to come in," and vanished again.

Peter's father turned about very sharply so that she should not see he was fool enough to weep, and went along the flagged path to the end of the garden, where was the little summer-house that looked over the Weald. But he could not see the Weald because his tears blinded him. All night Peter's father had been thinking what an imperfect husband he had always been and how he had never really-told his wife how much he loved her, and how indeed until now he had never understood how very much he loved her, and he had been making good resolutions for the future in great abundance, in enormous abundance, the most remarkable good resolutions, and one waking nightmare after another had been chasing across his mind nightmares of a dreadful dark-grey world in which there would be no Dolly, no Dolly at all anywhere, even if you went out into the garden and whistled your utmost, and he would be a widower with only one little lonely child to console him. He could not imagine any other

woman for him but Dolly.

The last trailing vestige of those twilight distresses vanished when presently he saw Dolly looking tired indeed but pink and healthy, with her hair almost roguishly astray, and the room full of warm daylight from the dawn-flushed sky, full of fresh south-west air from the Sussex downs, full of the sense of invincible life, and young master Peter, very puckered and ugly and red and pitiful, in a blanket in the nurse's arms, and Dr. Fremisson smirking behind her, entirely satisfied with himself and the universe and every detail of it.

When Dolly had been kissed and whispered to they gave Peter to his father to hold.

Peter's father had never understood before that a baby is an exquisite thing.

§ 2

The parents of Peter were modern young people, and Peter was no accidental intruder. Their heads were full of new ideas, new that is in the days when Queen Victoria seemed immortal and the world settled for ever. They put Peter in their two sunniest rooms; rarely were the windows shut; his nursery was white and green, bright with pretty pictures and never without flowers. It had a cork carpet and a rug displaying amusing black cats on pink, and he was weighed carefully first once a week and then once a month until he was four years old.

His father, whom everybody called Stubbo, came of an old Quaker stock. Quakerism in its beginnings was a very fine and wonderful religion indeed, a real research for the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, a new way of thinking and living, but weaknesses of the mind and spirit brought it back very soon to a commoner texture. The Stubland family was among those which had been most influenced by the evangelical wave of the Wesleyan time. Peter's great- grandfather, old Stubland, the West-of-England cloth manufacturer, was an emotional person with pietistic inclinations that nearly carried him over at different times to the Plymouth Brethren, to the Wesleyan Methodists, and to the Countess of

Huntingdon's connexion. Religion was his only social recreation, most other things he held to be sinful, and his surplus energies went all into the business. He had an aptitude for mechanical organization and started the Yorkshire factory; his son, still more evangelical and still more successful, left a business worth well over two hundred thousand pounds among thirteen children, of whom Peter's father was the youngest. "Stublands" became a limited company with uncles Rigby and John as directors, and the rest of the family was let loose, each one with a nice little secure six hundred a year or thereabouts from Stubland debentures and Stubland ordinary shares, to do what it liked in the world.

It wasn't, of course, told that it could do what it liked in the world. That it found out for itself — in the teeth of much early teaching to the contrary. That early teaching had been predominantly prohibitive, there had been no end of "thou shalt not" and very little of "thou shalt," an irksome teaching for young people destined to leisure. Mankind was presented waiting about for the Judgment Day, with Satan as busy as a pickpocket in a crowd. Also he offered roundabouts and coconut-shies.... This family doctrine tallied so little with the manifest circumstances and natural activity of the young Stublands that it just fell off their young minds. The keynote of Stubbo's upbringing had been a persistent unanswered "Why not?" to all the things he was told not to do. "Why not dance? Why not go to theatres and music-halls? Why not make love? Why not read and quote this exciting new poetry of Swinburne's?"...

The early 'nineties were a period of careless diastole in British affairs. There seemed to be enough and to spare for every one, given only a little generosity. Peace dwelt on the earth for ever. It was difficult to prove the proprietorship of Satan in the roundabouts and the coconut-shies. There was a general belief that one's parents and grandparents had taken life far too grimly and suspiciously, a belief which, indeed, took possession of Stubbo before he was in trousers.

His emancipation was greatly aided by his elder sister Phyllis, a girl with an abnormal sense of humour. It was Phyllis who brightened the Sunday afternoons, when she and her sister Phoebe and her brothers were supposed to be committing passages of scripture to memory in the attic, by the invention of increasingly

irreligious Limericks. Phoebe would sometimes be dreadfully shocked and sometimes join in with great vigour and glory. Phyllis was also an artist in misquotation. She began by taking a facetious view of the ark and Jonah's whale, and as her courage grew she went on to the Resurrection. She had a genius for asking seemingly respectful but really destructive questions about religious matters, that made her parents shy of instruction. The Stubland parents had learnt their faith with more reverence than intelligence from their parents, who had had it in a similar spirit from their parents, who had had it from their parents; so that nobody had looked into it closely for some generations, and something vital had evaporated unsuspected. It had evaporated so completely that when Peter's father and Peter's aunts and uncles came in their turn as children to examine the precious casket, they not only perceived that there was nothing in it, but they could very readily jump to the rash conclusion that there never had been anything in it. It seemed just an odd blend of empty resonant phrases and comical and sometimes slightly improper stories, that lent themselves very pleasantly to facetious illustration.

Stubbo, as he grew up under these circumstances, had not so much taken on the burthen of life as thrown it off. He decided he would not go into business — business struck him as a purely avaricious occupation — and after a pleasant year at Cambridge he became quite clear that the need of the world and his temperament was Art. The world was not beautiful enough. This was more particularly true of the human contribution. So he went into Art to make the world more beautiful, and came up to London to study and to wear a highly decorative blue linen blouse in private and to collect posters — people then were just beginning to collect posters.

From the last stage of Quakerism to the last extremity of decoration is but a step. Quite an important section of the art world in Britain owes itself to the Quakers and Plymouth Brethren, and to the drab and grey disposition of the sterner evangelicals. It is as if that elect strain in the race had shut its eyes for a generation or so, merely in order to open them again and see brighter. The reaction of the revolting generation has always been toward colour; the pyrotechnic display of the Omega workshops in London is but the last violent

outbreak of the Quaker spirit. Young Stubland, a quarter of a century before the Omega enterprise, was already slaking a thirst for chromatic richness behind the lead of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites. It took a year or so and several teachers and much friendly frankness to persuade him he could neither draw nor paint, and then he relapsed into decoration and craftsmanship. He beat out copper into great weals of pattern and he bound books grossly. He spent some time upon lettering, and learnt how to make the simplest inscription beautifully illegible. He decided to be an architect. In the meantime he made the acquaintance of a large circle of artistic and literary people, became a Fabian socialist, abandoned Stubland tweeds for fluffy artistically dyed garments, bicycled about a lot — those were the early days of the bicycle, before the automobile robbed it of its glory — talked endlessly, and had a very good time. He met his wife and married her, and he built his own house as a sample of what he could do as an architect.

It was, with one exception, the only house he ever built. It was quite original in design and almost indistinguishable from the houses of a round dozen contemporaries of Mr. Charles Voysey. It was a little low-browed, white house, with an enormous and very expensive roof of green slates; it had wide, low mullioned casement windows, its rooms were eight feet high and its doors five foot seven, and all about it were enormous buttresses fit to sustain a castle. It had sun-traps and verandahs and a terrace, and it snuggled into the ruddy hillside and stared fatly out across the Weald from beyond Limpsfield, and it was quite a jolly little house to live in when you had learnt to be shorter than five feet seven inches and to dodge the low bits of ceiling and the beam over the ingle-nook.

And therein, to crown the work of the builder, Peter was born.

§ 3

Peter's mother came from quite a different strand in the complicated web of British life. Her "people" — she was brought up to call them that — were county people, but old-fashioned and prolific, and her father had been the sixth son of a third son and very lucky to get a

living. He was the Vicar of Long Downport and an early widower; his two sons had gone to Oxford with scholarships, and Dolly had stayed at home, a leggy, dark-eyed girl with a sceptical manner, much given to reading history. One of her brothers passed from Oxford into the higher division of the Civil Service and went to India; the other took to scornful, reactionary journalism, dramatic criticism, musical comedy lyrics, parody, and drink — which indeed is almost a necessity if a man is to stick to reactionary journalism; this story will presently inherit Joan from him; she had a galaxy of cousins who were parsons, missionaries, schoolmasters, and soldiers; one was an explorer; not one was in business. Her father was a bookish inattentive man who had just missed a fellowship because of a general discursiveness; if he could have afforded it he would have been very liberal indeed in his theology; and, like grains of pepper amidst milder nourishment, there were all sorts of sceptical books about the house: Renan's *Life of Christ* Strauss's *Life of Christy Gibbon*, various eighteenth century memoirs, Huxley's Essays, much Victor Hugo, and a "collected" Shelley, books that his daughter read with a resolute frown, sitting for the most part with one leg tucked up under her in the chair, her chin on her fists, and her elbows on either side of the volume undergoing assimilation.

Her reading was historical, and her tendency romantic. Her private daydream through some years of girlhood was that she was Caesar's wife. She was present at all his battles, and sometimes, when he had had another of his never altogether fatal wounds, she led the army. Also, which was a happy thought, she stabbed Brutus first, and so her Caesar, contrariwise to history, reigned happily with her for many, many years. She would go to sleep of a night dreaming of Mr. and Mrs. Imperator driving in triumph through the gates of Rome after some little warlike jaunt. Sometimes she drove. And also they came to Britain to drive out the Picts and Scots, and were quartered with her father in Long Downport, conquering Picts, Scots, Danes, and the most terrific anachronisms with an equal stoutness and courage. The private title she bestowed upon herself (and never told to any human being) was "The Imperatrix."

As she grew up she became desirous of more freedom and education. After much argument with her father she came up to an

aunt in London, and went to study science in the Huxley days as a free student at the Royal College of Science. She saw her future husband at an art students' soirée, he looked tall and bright and masterful; he had a fine profile, and his blond hair poured nobly off his forehead; she did not dream that Peter's impatience for incarnation put ideas into her head, she forgot her duty to Caesar and imagined a devotion to art and beauty. They made a pretty couple, and she married amidst universal approval — after a slight dispute whether it was to be a religious or a civil marriage. She was married in her father's church.

In the excitement of meeting, appreciating and marrying Stubbo, she forgot that she had had a great pity and tenderness and admiration for her shy and impulsive cousin, Oswald Sydenham, with the glass eye and cruelly scarred face, who had won the V.C. before he was twenty at the bombardment of Alexandria, and who had since done the most remarkable things in Nyasaland. It had been quite typical heroism that had won him the V.C. He had thrown a shell overboard, and it had burst in the air as he threw it and pulped one side of his face. But when she married, she had temporarily forgotten Cousin Oswald. She was just carried away by Arthur Stubland's profile, and the wave in his hair, and — life.

Arthur was Stubbo's Christian name because he had been born under the spell of "The Idylls of the King."

Afterwards when Oswald came home again, she thought the good side of his face, the side of his face that hadn't been so seriously damaged by the Egyptian shell, looked at her rather queerly. But the wounded side remained a Sphinx-like mask.

"Congratulations!" said Oswald, fumbling with the word. "Congratulations! I hope you'll be happy, Dolly."...

She was far gone in rationalism before she met Arthur, and he completed her emancipation. Their ideas ran closely together. They projected some years of travel before they settled down. He wanted to see mediaeval Italy "thoroughly," and she longed for Imperial Rome. They took just a couple of rooms in South Kensington and spent all the rest of their income in long stretches of holiday. They honeymooned in pleasant inns in South Germany; they did some climbing in the Tyrol and the Dolomites — she had a good head —

they had a summer holiday on the Adriatic coast, and she learnt to swim and dive well, and they did one long knapsack tramp round and along the Swiss Italian frontier and then another through the Apennines to Florence.

It was a perfectly lovely time. Everything was bright and happy, and they got on wonderfully together, except that There was a shadow for her. She found it difficult to say exactly what the shadow was, and it is still more difficult for the historian to define it. She dismissed the idea that it had anything to do with Cousin Oswald's one reproachful eye. She sometimes had a faint suspicion that it was her jilted Caesar asking for at least a Rubicon to cross, but it is doubtful if she ever had any suspicion of Peter, waiting outside the doors of life. Yet the feeling of something forgotten, of something left out, grew throughout those sunny days. It was in some sweet meadows high up on the great hill above Fiesole, that she tried to tell Arthur of this vexatious feeling of deficiency.

Manifestly she puzzled him, which was not to be wondered at since the feeling puzzled her. But it also had a queer effect of irritating him.

"Arthur, if you always say I don't love you," she said, "when I tell you anything, then how can I tell you anything at all!"

"Aren't we having the loveliest times!" he asked.

"Yes," she said without complete conviction. "It isn't that."

"You admit you love me. You admit you're having the loveliest time!"

She sat up with her elbows on her knees and her knuckles pressing her round, firm chin.

"It's just all one holiday," she said.

"I did some work last month."

He had planned three impossible houses and made a most amusing cardboard model of one of them. She disregarded this plea.

"When we came up here people were working in the fields. Even that pretty little girl among the bushes was looking after sheep."

"By Jove! I wish I could paint her — and those Holman Hunt-faced sheep of hers. It's tantalizing to be able to see — and yet not to have the — the expressive gift...."

"Things are going on now, Arthur. Down there in the valley along

that white road, people are going and coming.... There is a busy little train now.... Things are happening. Things are going to happen. And the work that goes on! The hard work! Today — there are thousands and thousands of men in mines. Out of this sunshine....”

There was an interval. Arthur rolled over on his face to look at the minute railway and road and river bed far below at the bottom of a deep lake of pellucid blue air.

“I don’t agree with you,” he said at last.

“Too much is happening,” he said. “Noisy, vulgar fuss. Commercialism, competition, factory production. Does it make people happy f Look at that horrid little railway disturbing all this beautiful simple Tuscan life....”

Another long pause.

She made a further step. “But if something beautiful is being destroyed,” she tried, “we ought not to be here.”

That also took a little time to soak in.

Then he stirred impatiently.

“Don’t we,” he asked, “protest? By the mere act of living our own lives? Don’t I, in my small way, try to do my share in the Restoration of Craftsmanship? Aren’t people of our sort doing something — something a little too unpretending to be obvious — to develop the conception of a fairer and better, a less hurried, less greedy life?”

He raised an appealing face to her.

She sat with knitted brows. She did not assent, but it was difficult to argue her disaccord.

He took advantage of her pause.

“Confess,” he said, “you would like to have me a business manager — of some big concern. Or a politician. You want me to be in the scrimmage. No! — lording it over the scrimmage. The real things aren’t done like that, Dolly. The real things aren’t done like that!”

She put her next thought out in its stark simplicity.

“Are we doing any real thing in the world at all?”

He did not answer for some seconds.

Then he astonished her by losing his temper. It was exactly as if her question had probed down to some secret soreness deep within him. “Oh, damn!” he shouted. “And on this lovely morning! It’s too

bad of you, Dolly!" It was as if he had bit upon a tender tooth. Perhaps a fragment of the stopping had come out of his Nonconformist conscience.

He knelt up and stared at her. "You don't love this, anyhow — whether you love me or not."

He tried to alter his tone from a note of sheer quarrelsomeness to badinage. "You Blue Conscience, you! You Gnawing Question! Are we doing anything real at all, you say. Is no one, then, to stand up and meet the sunlight for its own sake, when God sends it to us? No! You can't unsay it now." (Though she was not unsaying it. She was only trying for some more acceptable way of saying it over again.) "My day is spoilt! You've stuck a fever into me!"

He looked about him. He wanted some vivid gesture. "Oh, come on!" he cried.

He sprang up. He gesticulated over her. He banished the view with a sweep of rejection. "Let us go back to the inn. Let us take our traps back to stuffy old Florence. Let us see three churches and two picture-galleries before sunset! And take our tickets for home. We aren't rushing and we ought to rush. Life is rush. This holiday has lasted too long, Dolly,"

"'Life is real! Life is earnest!'
Simple joys are not its goal."

"Own, my Dolly! If only this afternoon we could find some solid serious lecture down there! Or an election. You'd love an election.... And anyhow, it's nearly lunch time."

She knelt, took his hand, and stood up.

You mock," she said. "But you know that what I want to say — isn't that...."

§ 4

He did know. But all the way back to England he was a man with an irritating dart sticking in his mind. And the discussion she had released that day worried him for months.

He wanted it to be clear that their .lives were on a very high level indeed. No mere idlers were they. Hitherto he said they had been keeping honeymoon, but that was only before they began life in earnest. Now they were really going to begin. They were going to take hold of life.

House and Peter followed quite logically upon that.

How easy was life in those days — at least, for countless thousands of independent people! It was the age of freedom — for the independent. They went where they listed; the world was full of good hotels, and every country had its *Baedeker* well up to date. Every cultivated home had its little corner of weather-worn guide books, a nest of memories, an *Orario*, an *Indicateur*, or a Continental *Bradshaw*. The happy multitude of the free travelled out to beautiful places and returned to comfortable homes. The chief anxiety in life was to get good servants — and there were plenty of good servants. Politics went on, at home and abroad, a traditional game between the Ins and Outs. The world was like a spinning top that seems to be quite still and stable.... Yet youth was apt to feel as Dolly felt, that there was something lacking.

Arthur was quite ready to fall in with this idea that something was lacking. He was inclined to think that one got to the root of it by recognizing that there was not enough Craftsmanship and too much cheap material, too much machine production, and, more especially, too much aniline dye. He was particularly strong against aniline dyes. All Britain was strong against aniline dyes, — and so that trade went to Germany. He reached socialism by way of aesthetic criticism. Individual competition was making the world hideous. It was destroying individuality. What the world needed was a non-competitive communism for the collective discouragement of machinery. (Meanwhile he bought a bicycle.) He decided that his modest six hundred a year was all that he and Dolly needed to live upon; he would never work for money — that would be “sordid” — but for the joy of work, and on his income they would lead a simple working-man’s existence, free from the vulgarities of competition, politics and commercialism.

Dolly was fascinated, delighted, terrified and assuaged by Peter, and Peter and a simple house free also from the vulgarities of modern

mechanism kept her so busy with only one servant to help her, that it was only in odd times, in the late evening when the sky grew solemn or after some book had stirred her mind, that she recalled that once oppressive feeling of something wanting, something that was still wanting....

CHAPTER II. — STUBLANDS IN COUNCIL

§ 1

BUT although Dolly did not pursue her husband with any sustained criticism, he seemed now to feel always that her attitude was critical and needed an answer. The feeling made him something of a thinker and something of a talker. Sometimes the thinker was uppermost, and then he would sit silent and rather in profile (his profile, it has already been stated, was a good one, and much enhanced by a romantic bang of warm golden hair that hung down over one eye), very picturesque in his beautiful blue linen blouse, listening to whatever was said; and sometimes he would turn upon the company and talk with a sort of experimental dogmatism, as is the way with men a little insecure in their convictions, but quite good talk. He would talk of education, and work, and Peter, and of love and beauty, and the finer purposes of life, and things like that. A lot of talk came the way of Peter's father. Along the Limpsfield ridge and away east and west and north, there was a scattered community of congenial intellectuals. It spread along the ridge beyond Dorking, and resumed again at Haslemere and Hindhead, where Grant Allen and Richard Le Gallienne were established. They were mostly people of the same detached and independent class as the Stublands; they were the children of careful people who had created considerable businesses, or the children of the more successful of middle Victorian celebrities, or dons, or writers themselves, or they came from Hampstead, which was in those days a nest of considerable people's children, inheritors of reputations and writers of memoirs, an hour's 'bus drive from London and outside the cab radius.

A thin flavour of Hampstead spread out, indeed, over all Surrey. Some of these newcomers lived in old adapted cottages; some of them had built little houses after the fashion of the Stublands; some had got into the real old houses that already existed. There was much Sunday walking and "dropping in" and long evenings and suppers. Safety bicycles were coming into use and greatly increasing intercourse. And there was a coming and going of Stubland aunts and

uncles and of Sydenhams and Dolly's "people." Nearly all were youngish folk; it was a new generation and a new sort of population for the countryside. They were dotted among the farms and the estates and preserves and "places" of the old county family pattern. The "county" wondered a little at them, kept busy with horse and dog and gun, and, except for an occasional stiff call, left them alone. The church lamented their neglected Sabbaths. The doctors were not unfriendly.

One of the frequent visitors, indeed, at The Ingle-Nook — that was the name of Peter's birthplace — was Doctor Fremisson, the local general practitioner. He was a man, he said, who liked "Ideas." The aborigines lacked Ideas, it seemed; but Stubland was a continual feast of them. The doctor's diagnosis of the difference between these new English and the older English of the country rested entirely on the presence or absence of Ideas. But there he was wrong. The established people were people of fixed ideas; the immigrants had abandoned fixed ideas for discussion. So far from their having no ideas, those occasional callers who came dropping in so soon as the Stublands were settled in The Ingle-Nook before Peter was born, struck the Stublands as having ideas like monstrous and insurmountable cliffs. To fling your own ideas at them was like trying to lob stones into Zermatt from Macugnana.

One day when Mrs. Darcy, old Lady Darcy's daughter-in-law, had driven over, some devil prompted Arthur to shock her. He talked his extremest Fabianism. He would have the government control all railways, land, natural products; nobody should have a wage of less than two pounds a week; the whole country should be administered for the universal benefit; everybody should be educated.

"I'm sure the dear old Queen does all she can," said Mrs. Darcy.

"I'm a democratic republican," said Arthur.

He might as well have called himself a Christadelphian for any idea he conveyed.

Presently, seized by a gust of unreasonable irritation, he went out of the room.

"Mr. Stubland talks," said Mrs. Darcy; "*really*-She paused. She hesitated. She spoke with a little disarming titter lest what she said should seem too dreadful. "He says such things. I really believe he's

more than half a Liberal. *There*! You mustn't mind what I say, Mrs. Stubland..."

Dolly, by virtue of her vicarage training, understood these people better than Peter's father. She had read herself out of the great Anglican culture, but she remembered things from the inside. She was still in close touch with numerous relations who were quite completely inside. Before the little green gate had clicked behind their departing backs, Arthur would protest to her and heaven that these visitors were impossible, that such visitors could not be, they were phantoms or bad practical jokes, undergraduates dressed up to pull his leg.

"They know nothing," he said.

"They know all sorts of things you don't know," she corrected.

"What do they know? There isn't a topic one can start on which they are not just blank."

"You start the wrong topics. They can tell you all sorts of things about the dear Queen's grandchildren. They know things about horses. And about regiments and barracks. Tell me, Arthur, how is the charming young Prince of Bulgaria, who is just getting married, related to the late Prince Consort."

"Damn their Royal Marriages!"

"If you say that, then they have an equal right to say, 'damn your Wildes and Beardsleys and William Morrises and Swinburnes."

"They read nothing."

"They read Mrs. Henry Wood. They read lots of authors you have never heard of, nice authors. They read so many of them that for the most part they forget their names. The bold ones read Quida — who isn't half bad. They read every scrap they can find about the marriage of the Princess Marie to the Crown Prince of Roumania. Mrs. Bagshot-Fawcett talked about it yesterday. It seems he's really a rarer and better sort of Hohenzollern than the young German Emperor, our sailor grandson that is. She isn't very clear about it, but she seems to think that the Prince of Hohenzollern ought rightfully to be German Emperor."

"Oh, what *rot*!"

"But perhaps she's right. How do you know? / don't. She takes an almost voluptuous delight in the two marriage ceremonies. You

know, I suppose, dear, that there were two ceremonies, a Protestant one and a Catholic one, because the Roumanian Hohenzollerns are Catholic Hohenzollerns. Of course, the dear princess would become a Catholic—"

"Oh, *don't*!" cried Peter's father; "don't!"

"I had to listen to three-quarters of an hour of it yesterday. Such a happy and convenient occurrence, the princess's conversion, but — archly — of course, my dear, I suppose there's sometimes just a little *persuasion* in these cases."

"Dolly, you go too far!"

"But that isn't, of course, the great interest just at present. The great interest just at present is George and May. You know they're going to be married."

Arthur lifted a protesting profile. "My dear! Who is May?" he tenored.

"Affected ignorance! She is the Princess May who was engaged to the late Duke of Clarence, the Princess Mary of Teck. And now he's dead, she's going to marry the Duke of York. Surely you understand about that. He is your Future Sovereign. Mrs. Bagshot-Fawcett gets positively lush about him. It was George she always loved, Mrs. Bagshot-Fawcett says, but she accepted his brother for Reasons of State. So after all it's rather nice and romantic that the elder brother —"

Arthur roared and tore his hair and walked up and down the low room. "What are these people to me?" he shouted. "What are these people to me?"

"But there is twenty times as much about that sort of thing in the papers as there is about our sort of things."

There was no disputing it.

"We're in a foreign country," cried Arthur, going off at a tangent. "We're in a foreign country. We English are a subject people.... Talk of Home Rule for Ireland!... Why are there no *English* Nationalists? One of these days I will hoist the cross of St. George outside this cottage. But I doubt if any one on this countryside will know it for the English flag."

§ 2

Whatever is seems right, and it is only now, after five and twenty years of change, that we do begin to see as a remarkable thing the detached life that great masses of the English were leading beneath the canopy of the Hanoverian monarchy. For in those days the court thought in German: Teutonized Anglicans, sentimental, materialistic and resolutely "loyal," dominated society; Gladstone was notoriously disliked by them for his anti-German policy and his Irish and Russian sympathies, and the old Queen's selection of bishops guided feeling in the way it ought to go. But there was a leakage none the less. More and more people were drifting out of relationship to church and state, exactly as Peter's parents had drifted out. The Court dominated, but it did not dominate intelligently; it controlled the church to no effect, its influence upon universities and schools and art and literature was merely deadening; it responded to flattery but it failed to direct; it was the court of an alien-spirited old lady, making much of the pathos of her widowhood and trading still on the gallantry and generosity that had welcomed her as a "girl queen." The real England separated itself more and more from that superficial England of the genteel that looked to Osborne and Balmoral. To the real England, dissentient England, court taste was a joke, court art was a scandal; of English literature and science notoriously the court knew nothing. In the huge pacific industrial individualism of Great Britain it did not seem a serious matter that the army and navy and the Indian administration were orientated to the court. Peter's parents and the large class of detached people to which they belonged, were out of politics, out of the system, scornful, or facetious and aloof. Just as they were out of religion. These things did not concern them.

The great form of the empire contained these indifferents, the great roof of church and state hung over them. Royal visits, diplomatic exchanges and the like passed to and fro, alien, uninteresting proceedings; Heligoland was given to the young Emperor William the Second by Lord Salisbury, the old Queen's favourite prime minister, English politicians jostled the French in Africa as roughly as possible to "larn them to be" republicans, and resisted the Home Rule aspirations and the ill-concealed

republicanism of the "Keltic fringe"; one's Anglican neighbours of the "ruling class" went off to rule India and the empire with manners that would have maddened Job; they stood for Parliament and played the game of politics upon factitious issues. Sir Charles Dilke, the last of the English Republicans, and Charles Stewart Parnell, the uncrowned King of Ireland, had both been extinguished by opportune divorce cases. (Liberal opinion, it was felt, must choose between the private and the public life. You could not have it both ways.) It did not seem to be a state of affairs to make a fuss about. The general life went on comfortably enough. We built our pretty rough-cast houses, taught Shirley poppies to spring artlessly between the paving-stones in our garden paths, begot the happy children who were to grow up under that roof of a dynastic system that was never going to fall in. (Because it never had fallen in.)

Never before had nurseries been so pretty as they were in that glowing pause at the end of the nineteenth century.

Peter's nursery was a perfect room in which to hatch the soul of a little boy. Its walls were done in a warm cream-coloured paint, and upon them Peter's father had put the most lovely pattern of trotting and jumping horses and dancing cats and dogs and leaping lambs, a carnival of beasts. He had copied these figures from books, enlarging them as he did so; he had cut them out in paper, stuck them on the wall, and then flicked bright blue paint at them until they were all outlined in a penumbra of stippled blue. Then he unpinned the paper and took it on to another part of the wall and so made his pattern. There was a big brass fireguard in Peter's nursery that hooked on to the jambs of the fireplace, and all the tables had smoothly rounded corners against the days when Peter would run about. The floor was of cork carpet on which Peter would put his toys, and there was a crimson hearthrug on which Peter was destined to crawl. And a number of stuffed dogs and elephants, whose bead eyes had been carefully removed by Dolly and replaced with eyes of black cloth that Peter would be less likely to worry off and swallow, awaited his maturing clutch. (But there were no Teddy Bears yet; Teddy Bears had still to come into the world. America had still to discover the charm of its Teddy.) There were scales in Peter's nursery to weigh Peter every week, and tables to show how much he ought to weigh

and when one should begin to feel anxious. There was nothing casual about the early years of Peter.

Peter began well, a remarkably fine child, Dr. Fremisson said, of nine pounds. Although he was born in warm summer weather we never went back upon that. He favoured his mother perhaps more than an impartial child should, but that was at any rate a source of satisfaction to Cousin Oswald (of the artificial eye).

Cousin Oswald was doing his best to behave nicely and persuade himself that all this show had been got up by Dolly and was Dolly's show — and that Arthur just happened to be about.

"Look at him," said Cousin Oswald as Peter regarded the world with unwinking intelligence from behind an appreciated bottle; "the Luck of him. He's the Heir of the Ages. Look at this room and this house and every one about him."

Dolly remarked foolishly that Peter was a "nittle darum. 'E dizzerves-i-tall. Nevything."

"The very sunshine on the wall looks as though it had been got for him specially," said Cousin Oswald.

"It was got for him specially," said Dolly, with a light of amusement in her eyes that reminded him of former times.

This visit was a great occasion. It was the first time Cousin Oswald had seen either Arthur or Peter. Almost directly after he had learnt about Dolly's engagement and jerked out his congratulations, he had cut short his holiday in England and gone back to Central Africa. Now he was in England again, looked baked and hard, and his hair, which had always been stubby, more stubby than ever. The scarred half of him had lost its harsh redness and become brown. He was staying with his aunt, Dolly's second cousin by marriage, Lady Charlotte Sydenham, not ten miles away towards Tonbridge, and he took to bicycling over to The Ingle-Nook every other day or so and gossiping.

"These bicycles," he said," are most useful things. Wonderful things. As soon as they get cheap — bound to get cheap — they will play a wonderful part in Central Africa."

"But there are no roads in Central Africa!" said Arthur.

"Better. Foot tracks padded by bare feet for generations. You could ride for hundreds of miles without dismounting—"

“Compared with our little black babies,” said Cousin Oswald, “Peter seems immobile. He’s like a baby on a lotus flower meditating existence. Those others are like young black indiarubber kittens — all acrawl. But then they’ve got to look sharp and run for themselves as soon as possible, and he hasn’t.... Things happen there.”

“I wonder,” said Arthur in his lifting tenor, “how far all this opening up of Africa to civilization and gin and Bibles is justifiable.”

The one living eye glared at him. “It isn’t exactly like that,” said Oswald stiffly, and offered no occasion for further controversy at the moment.

The conversation hung for a little while. Dolly wanted to say to her cousin: “He isn’t thinking of you. It’s just his way of generalizing about things....”

Anyhow this young man has a tremendous future,” said Oswald, going back to the original topic. “Think of what lies before him. Never has the world been so safe and settled — most of it that is — as it is now. I suppose really the world’s hardly begun to touch education. In this house everything seems educational — pictures, toys, everything. When one sees how small niggers can be moulded and changed even in a missionary school, it makes one think. I wish I knew more about education. I lie awake at nights thinking of the man I might be, if I knew all I don’t know, and of all I could do if I did. And it’s the same with others. Every one who seems worth anything seems regretting his education wasn’t better. Hitherto of course there’s always been wars, interruptions, religious rows; the world’s been confused and poor, a* thorough muddle; there’s never been a real planned education for people. Just scraps and hints. But we’re changing all that. Here’s a big safe world at last. No wars in Europe since “71 and no likelihood in our time of any more big wars. Things settle down. And he comes in for it all.”

“I hope all this settling down won’t make the world too monotonous,” said Arthur.

“You artists and writers have got to see to that. No, I don’t see it getting monotonous. There’s always differences of climate and colour. Temperament. All sorts of differences.”

“And Nature,” said Arthur profoundly. “Old Mother Nature.”

“Have you christened Peter yet?” Oswald asked abruptly.

“He’s not going to be christened,” said Dolly. “Not until he asks to be. We’ve just registered him. He’s a registered baby.”

“So he won’t have two godfathers and a godmother to be damned for him.”

“We’ve weighed the risk,” said Arthur.

“He might have a godfather just — *pour rire*,” said Oswald.

“That’s different,” Dolly encouraged promptly. “We must get him one.”

“I’d like to be Peter’s godfather,” said Oswald.

“I will deny him no advantage,” said Arthur. “The ceremony The ceremony shall be a simple one. Godfather,

Peter; Peter, godfather. Peter, my son, salute your godfather.”

Oswald seemed trying to remember a formula. “I promise and vow three things in his name; first a beautiful mug; secondly that he shall be duly instructed in chemistry, biology, mathematics, the French and German tongues and all that sort of thing; and thirdly, that — what is thirdly? That he shall renounce the devil and all his works, there isn’t a devil nowadays.”

Peter having consumed his bottle to the dregs and dreamt over it for a space, now thrust it from him and turning towards Oswald, regurgitated — but within the limits of nursery good manners. Then he smiled a toothless, slightly derisive smile.

“Intelligent ‘e is!” crooned Dolly. “Unstand evlyflmg ‘e does....”

§ 3

This conversation about Peter’s future, once it had been started, rambled on for the next three weeks, and then Oswald very abruptly saw fit to be called away to Africa again....

Various interlocutors dropped in while that talk was in progress. Arthur felt his way to his real opinions through a series of experimental dogmas.

Arthur’s disposition was towards an extreme Rousseauism. It is the tendency of the interrogative class in all settled communities. He thought that a boy or girl ought to run wild until twelve and not be bothered by lessons, ought to eat little else but fruit and nuts, go

bareheaded and barefooted. Why not? Oswald's disposition would have been to oppose Arthur anyhow, but against these views all his circle of ideas fought by necessity. If Arthur was Ruskinite and Morrisite, Oswald was as completely Huxleyite. If Arthur thought the world perishing for need of Art and Nature, Oswald stood as strongly for the saving power of Science. In this matter of bare feet —

"There's thorns, pins, snakes, tetanus," reflected Oswald.

"The foot hardens."

"Only the sole," said Oswald. "And not enough."

"Shielded from all the corruptions of town and society," said Arthur presently.

"There's no such corruptor as that old Mother Nature of yours. You daren't leave that bottle of milk to her for half an hour but what she turns it sour or poisons it with one of her beastly germs."

"I never approved of the bottle," said Arthur, bringing a flash of hot resentment into Dolly's eyes....

Oswald regretted his illustration.

"Old Mother Nature is a half-wit," he said. "She's distraught. You overrate the jade. She's thinking of everything at once. All her affairs got into a hopeless mess from the very start. Most of her world is desert with water running to waste. A tropical forest is three-quarters death and decay, and what is alive is either murdering or being murdered. It's only when you come to artificial things, such as a ploughed field, for example, that you get space and health and every blade doing its best."

"I don't call a ploughed field an artificial thing," said Arthur.

"But it is," said Oswald.

Dr. Fremisson was dragged into this dispute. "A ploughed field," he maintained, "is part of the natural life of man."

"Like boots and reading."

"I wouldn't say that," said Dr. Fremisson warily. He had the usual general practitioner's belief that any education whatever is a terrible strain on the young, and he was quite on the side of Rousseau and Arthur in that matter. Moreover, as a result of his professional endeavours he had been forced to a belief that Nature's remedies are the best.

“I’d like to know just what does belong to the natural life of man and what is artificial,” said Oswald. “ If a ploughed field belongs then a plough belongs. And if a plough belongs a foundry belongs — and a coal mine. And you wouldn’t plough in bare feet — not in those Weald Clays down there! You want good stout boots for those. And you’d let your ploughman read at least a calendar? Boots and books come in, you see.”

“You’re a perfect lawyer, Mr. Sydenham,” said the doctor, and pretended the discussion had become fanciful....

“But you’ll not leave him to go unlettered until he is half grown up!” said Oswald to Dolly in real distress. “It’s so easy to teach ’em to read early and so hard later. I remember my little brother....”

“I am the mother and a muth,” said Dolly. “When Peter displays the slightest interest in the alphabet, the alphabet it shall be.”

Oswald felt reassured. He had a curious confidence that Dolly could be trusted to protect his godchild.

§ 4

One day Aunt Phyllis and Aunt Phoebe came down. Both sisters participated in the Stubland break back to colour, but while Aunt Phyllis was a wit and her hats a spree Aunt Phoebe was fantastically serious and her hats went beyond a joke. They got their stuffs apparently from the shop of William Morris and Co., they had their dresses built upon Pre-Raphaelite lines, they did their hair plainly and simply but very carelessly, and their hats were noble brimmers or extravagant toques. Their profiles were as fine almost as Arthur’s, a type of profile not so suitable for young women as for golden youth. They were bright-eyed and a little convulsive in their movements. Beneath these extravagances and a certain conversational wildness they lived nervously austere lives. They were greatly delighted with Peter, but they did not know what to do with him. Phyllis held him rather better than Phoebe, but Phoebe with her chatelaine amused him rather more than Phyllis.

“How happy a tinker’s baby must be,” said Aunt Phoebe, rattling her trinkets: “Or a tin-smith’s.”

“I begin to see some use in a Hindoo woman’s bangles,” said Aunt Phyllis, “or in that clatter machine of yours, Phoebe. Every young mother should rattle. Make a note of it, Phoebe dear, for your book....”

“Whatever you do with him, Dolly,” said Aunt Phoebe, “teach him anyhow to respect women and treat them as his equals. From the Very First.”

“Meaning votes,” said Aunt Phyllis. “Didums *want* give um’s mummy a Vote den.”

“Never let him touch butcher’s meat in any shape or form,” said Aunt Phoebe. “Once a human child tastes blood the mischief is done.”

“Avoid patriotic songs and symbols,” prompted Aunt Phyllis, who had heard these ideas already in the train coming down.

“And never buy him toy soldiers drums, guns, trumpets. These things soak deeper into the mind than people suppose. They make wickedness domestic.... Surround him with beautiful things. Accustom him—”

She winced that Arthur should hear her, but she spoke as one having a duty to perform.

“Accustom him to the nude, Dolly, from his early years. Associate it with innocent amusements. Retrieve the fall. Never let him wear a hat upon his head nor boots upon his feet. As soon tie him up into a papoose. As soon tight-lace. A child’s first years should be one long dream of loveliness and spontaneous activity.”

But at this point Peter betrayed signs that he found his aunts overstimulating. He released his grip upon the thimble-case of the chatelaine. His face puckered, ridges and waves and puckers of pink fatness ran distractedly over it, and he threw his head back and opened a large square toothless mouth.

“Mary,” cried Dolly, and a comfortable presence that had been hovering mistrustfully outside the door ever since the aunts appeared, entered with alacrity and bore Peter protectingly away.

“He must be almost entirely lungs,” said Aunt Phoebe, when her voice could be heard through the receding bawl. “Other internal organs no doubt develop later.”

“Come out to the stone table under the roses,” said Dolly. “We

argue there about Peter's upbringing almost every afternoon."

"Argue, I grant you," said Aunt Phoebe, following her hostess and dangling her chatelaine from one hand as if to illustrate her remarks, "but argue rightly."

When Oswald came over in the afternoon he was disposed to regard the two aunts as serious reinforcements to Arthur's educational heresies. Phyllis and Phoebe were a little inclined to be shy with him as a strange man and he and I Arthur did most of the talking, but they made their positions plain by occasional interpolations. Arthur, supported by their presence, was all for letting Peter grow up a wild untrammelled child of nature. Oswald became genuinely distressed.

"But education," he protested, "is as natural to a human being as nests to birds."

"Then why force it?" said Phyllis with dexterity.

"Even a cat boxes its kittens' ears!"

"A domesticated cat," said Phoebe. "A *civilized* cat."

"But I've seen a wild lioness—"

"Are we to learn how to manage our young from lions and hyenas!" cried Phoebe.

They were too good for Oswald. He saw Peter already ruined, a fat, foolish, undisciplined cub.

Dolly with sympathetic amusement watched his distress, which his living half face betrayed in the oddest contrast to his left hand calm.

Arthur had been thinking gracefully while his sisters tackled their adversary. Now he decided to sum up the discussion. His authoritative manner on these occasions was always slightly irritating to Oswald. Like so many who read only occasionally and take thought as a special exercise, Arthur had a fixed persuasion that nobody else ever read or thought at all. So that he did not so much discuss as adjudicate.

"Of course," he said, "we have to be reasonable in these things. For men a certain artificiality is undoubtedly natural. That is, so to speak, the human paradox. But artificiality is the last resort. Instinct is our basis. For the larger part the boy has just to grow. But We watch his growth. Education is really watching — keeping the

course. The human error is to do too much, to distrust instinct too much, to over-teach, over-legislate, over-manage, over-decorate—"

"No, you don't, my gentleman," came the voice of Mary from the shadow under the old pear tree.

"Now I wonder " said Arthur, craning his neck to look over the rose bushes.

"Diddums then," said Mary. "Woun't they lettim put'tt in's mouf? *Oooh*!"

"Trust her instinct," said Dolly, and Arthur was restrained.

Oswald took advantage of the interruption to take the word from Arthur.

"We joke and sharpen our wits in this sort of talk," he said, "but education, you know, isn't a joke. It might be the greatest power in the world. If I didn't think I was a sort of school-master in Africa.... That's the only decent excuse a white man has for going there.... I'm getting to be a fanatic about education. Give me the schools of the world and I would make a Millennium in half a century.... You don't mean to let Peter drift. You say it, but you can't mean it. Drift is waste. We don't make half of what we could make of our children. We don't make a quarter — not a tenth. They could know ever so much more, think ever so much better. We're all at sixes and sevens."

He realized he wasn't good at expressing his ideas. He had intended something very clear and compelling, a sort of ultimatum about Peter.

"I believe in Sir Francis Galton," Aunt Phoebe remarked in this pause, saying with stern resolution things that she felt had to be said. They made her a little breathless, and she fixed her eye on the view until they were said. "Eugenics. It is a new idea. A revival. Plato had it. Men ought to be bred like horses. No marriage or any nonsense of that kind. Just a simple scientific blending of points. Then Everything would be different."

"Almost too different," Arthur reflected....

"When I consider Peter and think of all one could do for him," said Oswald, still floundering for some clenching way of putting it....

One evening Dolly caught her cousin looking at her husband with an expression that stuck in her memory. It was Oswald's habit to sit if he could in such a position that he could rest the obliterated cheek of his face upon a shadowing hand, his fingers on his forehead Then one saw what; a pleasant-faced man he would have been if only he had left that Egyptian shell alone. So he was sitting on this occasion, his elbow on the arm of the settle. His brow was knit, his one eye keen and steady. He was listening to his host discoursing upon the many superiorities of the artisan in the middle ages to his successor of today And he seemed to be weighing and estimating Arthur with some little difficulty.

Then, as if it was a part of the calculation he was making, he turned to look at Dolly. Their eyes met; for a moment he could not mask himself.

Then he turned to Arthur again with his expression restored to polite interest.

It was the most trivial of incidents, but it stayed, a mental burr.

§ 6

A little accident which happened a few weeks after Oswald's departure put the idea of making a will into Arthur's head. Dolly had wanted to ride a bicycle, but he had some theory that she would not need to ride alone or that it would over-exert her to ride alone, and so he had got a tandem bicycle instead, on which they could ride together. Those were the days when all England echoed to the strains of:

"*Disy*, *Disy*, tell me your answer true; I'm arf *crizy* All fer the love of you-oo...

Yew'd look sweet Upon the seat Of a bicycle mide fer two."

A wandering thrush of a cockney whistled it on their first expedition. Dolly went out a little resentfully with Arthur's broad back obscuring most of her landscape, and her third ride ended in a destructive spill down Ipinghanger Hill. The bicycle brake was still in a primitive stage in those days; one steadied one's progress down a hill by the art, since lost to mankind again, of "back-pedalling,"

and Dolly's feet were carried over and thrown off the pedals and the machine got away. Arthur's nerve was a good one. He fought the gathering pace and steered with skill down to the very last bend of that downland descent. The last corner got them. They took the bank and hedge sideways and the crumpled tandem remained on one side of the bank and Arthur and Dolly found themselves torn and sprained but essentially unbroken in a hollow of wet moss and marsh-mallows beyond the hedge.

The sense of adventure helped them through an afternoon of toilsome return....

"But we might both have been killed that time, said Arthur with a certain gusto.

"If we had," said Arthur presently, expanding that idea, "what would have become of Peter?"...

They had both made simple wills copied out of *Whitaker's Almanack*, leaving everything to each other; it had not occurred to them before that two young parents who cross glaciers together, go cycling together, travel in the same is, cross the seas in the same boats, might very easily get into the same smash. In that case the law, it appeared, presumed that the wife, being the weaker vessel, would expire first, and so Uncle Rigby, who had relapsed more and more stuffily into evangelical narrowness since his marriage, would extend a dark protection over Peter's life. "Lucy wouldn't even feed him properly," said Dolly. She s so close and childlessly inhuman. I can't bear to think of it.

On the other hand, if by any chance Dolly should show a flicker of life after the extinction of Arthur, Peter and all his possessions would fall under the hand of Dolly s shady brother, the failure of the family, a being of incalculable misdemeanours, a gross, white-faced literary man, an artist in parody (itself a vice), who smelt of tobacco always, and already at thirty-eight, it was but too evident, preferred port and old brandy to his self-respect.

"We ought to remake our wills and each appoint the same guardian," said Arthur.

It was not very easy to find the perfect guardian. Then as Arthur sat at lunch one day the sunshine made a glory of the little silver tankard that adorned the Welsh, dresser at the end of the room.

“Dolly,” he said, “old Oswald would like this job.”

She’d known that by instinct from the first, but she had never expected Arthur to discover it.

“He’s got a sort of fancy for Peter,” he said.

“I think we could trust him,” said Dolly temperately.

“Poor old Oswald,” said Arthur; “he’s a tragic figure. That mask of his cuts him off from so much. He idolizes you and Peter, Dolly. You don’t suspect it, but he does. He’s our man.”

CHAPTER III. — ARTHUR OR OSWALD?

§ 1

DESTINY is at times a slashing sculptor. At first Destiny seemed to have intended Oswald Sydenham to be a specimen of the school-boy hero; he made record scores in the school matches, climbed trees higher than any one else did, and was moreover a good all-round boy at his work; he was healthy, very tall but strong, dark, pleasant-looking, and popular with men and women and — he was quite aware of these facts. He shone with equal brightness as a midshipman; he dared, he could lead. Several women of thirty or thereabouts adored him — before it is good for youth to be adored. He had a knack of success, he achieved a number of things; he judged himself and found that this he had done "pretty decently", and that "passing well." Then Destiny decided apparently that he was not thinking as freshly or as abundantly as he ought to do — a healthy, successful life does not leave much time for original thinking — and smashed off the right side of his face. In a manner indeed quite creditable to him. It was given to few men in those pacific days to get the V.C. before the age of twenty-one.

He lay in hospital for a long spell, painful but self-satisfied. The nature of his injuries was not yet clear to him. Presently he would get all right again. "V.C.," he whispered. "At twenty. Pretty decent."

He saw himself in the looking-glass with half his face bandaged, and there was nothing very shocking in that. Then one day came his first glimpse of his unbandaged self....

"One must take it decently," he said to himself again and again through a night of bottomless dismay.

And, "How can I look a woman in the face again?"

He stuck to his bandages as long as possible.

He learnt soon enough that some women could not look him in the face anyhow, and among them was one who should have hidden her inability from him at any cost.

And he was not only disfigured; he was crippled and unserviceable; so the Navy decided. Something had gone out of his

eyesight; he could no longer jump safely nor hit a ball with certainty. He could not play tennis at all; he had ten minutes of humiliation with one of the nurses, protesting all the time. “Give me another chance and I’ll begin to get into it. Let me get my eye in — my only eye in. Oh, the devil! give a chap a chance!... Sorry, nurse. Now!... Damn! It’s no good. Oh God! it’s no good. What shall I do?” Even his walk had now a little flavour of precaution. But he could still shoot straight up to two or three hundred yards.... These facts formed the basis for much thinking on the part of a young man who had taken it for granted that he was destined to a bright and leading role in the world.

When first he realized that he was crippled and disabled for life, he thought of suicide. But in an entirely detached and theoretical spirit. Suicide had no real attraction for him. He meant to live anyhow. The only question therefore was the question of what he was to do. He would lie awake at nights sketching out careers that did not require athleticism or a good presence. “I suppose it’s got to be chiefly using my brains,” he decided. “The great trouble will be not to get fat and stuffy. I’ve never liked indoors....”

He did his best to ignore the fact that an honourable life before him meant a life of celibacy. But he could not do so. For many reasons arising out of his temperament and the experiences those women friendships had thrust upon him, that limitation had an effect of dismaying cruelty upon his mind. “Perhaps some day I shall find a blind girl,” he said, and felt his face doubtfully. “Oh, damn!” He perceived that the sewing up of his face was a mere prelude to the sewing up of his life. It distressed him beyond measure. It was the persuasion that the deprivation was final that obsessed him with erotic imaginations. For a time he was obsessed almost to the verge of madness.

He had moods of raving anger on account of this extravagant and uncontrollable preoccupation. He would indulge secretly in storms of cursing, torrents of foulness and foul blasphemies that left him strangely relieved. But he had an unquenchable sense of the need of a fight.

“I’ll get square with this damned world somehow,” he said. “I won’t be beaten.”

There were some ugly and dismal aspects in his attempt not to be beaten, plunges into strange mires with remorse at the far side. They need not deflect our present story.

"What's the whole beastly game about anyhow?" he asked. "Why are we made like this?"

Meanwhile his pride kept up a valiant front. No one should suspect he was not cheerful. No one should suspect he felt himself to be a thing apart. He hid his vicious strain — or made a jest of it. He developed a style of humour that turned largely on his disfigurement. His internal stresses reflected a dry bitterness upon the world.

It was a great comfort presently to get hints that here and there other souls had had to learn lessons as hard as his own. One day he chanced upon the paralyzed Heine's farewell to beauty. "Perhaps," he said, "I've only got by a short cut to where a lot of people must come out sooner or later. Every one who lives on must get bald and old — anyhow." He took a hint from an article he found in some monthly review upon Richard Crookback. "A crippled body makes a crippled mind," he read. "Is that going to happen to me?"

Thence he got to: "If I think about myself now," he asked, "what else can happen? I'll go bitter."

"Something I can do well, but something in which I can forget myself." That, he realized, was his recipe.

"Let's find out what the whole beastly game is about," he decided — a large proposition. "And stop thinking of my personal set-back altogether."

But that is easier said than done.

§ 2

HE would, he decided, "go in for science."

He had read about science in the magazines, and about its remorseless way with things. Science had always had a temperamental call upon his mind. The idea of a pitiless acceptance of fact had now a greater fascination than ever for him. Art was always getting sentimental and sensuous — this was in the early 'eighties; religion was mystical and puritanical; science just looked

at facts squarely, and would see a cancer or a liver fluke or a healing scar as beautiful as Venus. Moreover it told you coldly and correctly of the skin glands of Venus. It neither stimulated nor condemned. It would steady the mind. He had an income of four hundred a year, and fairly good expectations of another twelve hundred. There was nothing to prevent him going in altogether for scientific work.

Those were the great days when Huxley lectured on zoology at South Kensington, and to him Oswald went. Oswald did indeed find science consoling and inspiring. Scientific studies were at once rarer and more touched by enthusiasm a quarter of a century ago than they are now, and he was soon a passionate naturalist, consumed by the insatiable craving to know how. That little, long upper laboratory in the Normal School of Science, as the place was then called, with the preparations and diagrams along one side, the sinks and windows along the other, the row of small tables down the windows, and the ever-present vague mixed smell of methylated spirit, Canada balsam, and a sweetish decay, opened vast new horizons to him. To the world of the eighteen-eighties the story of life, of the origin and branching out of species, of the making of continents, was still the most inspiring of new romances. Comparative anatomy in particular was then a great and philosophical "new learning," a mighty training of the mind; the drift of biological teaching towards specialization was still to come.

For a time Oswald thought of giving his life to biology. But biology unhappily had little need of Oswald. He was a clumsy dissector because of his injury, and unhandy at most of the practical work, he had to work with his head on one side and rather close to what he was doing, but it dawned upon him one day as a remarkable discovery that neither personal beauty nor great agility are demanded from an explorer or collector. It was a picture he saw in an illustrated paper of H. M. Stanley traversing an African forest in a litter, with a great retinue of porters, that first put this precious idea into his head. "One wants pluck and a certain toughness," he said. "I'm tough enough. And then I shall be out of reach of — Piccadilly."

He had excellent reasons for disliking the West End. It lured him, it exasperated him, it demoralized him and made him ashamed. He got and read every book of African travel he could hear of. In 1885

he snatched at an opportunity and went with an expedition through Portuguese East Africa to Nyasa and Tanganyika. He found fatigue and illness and hardship there — and peace of nerve and imagination. He remained in that region of Africa for three years.

But biology and Africa were merely the fields of human interest in which Oswald's mind was most active in those days. Such inquiries were only a part of his valiant all-round struggle to reconstruct the life that it had become impossible to carry on as a drama of the noble and picturesque loves and adventures of Oswald Sydenham. His questions led him into philosophy; he tried over religion, which had hitherto in his romantic phase simply furnished suitable church scenery for meetings and repentances. He read many books, listened to preachers, hunted out any teacher who seemed to promise help in the mending of his life, considered this "movement" and that "question." His resolve to find what "the whole beastly game was about," was no passing ejaculation. He followed the trend of his time towards a religious scepticism and an entire neglect of current politics. Religion was then at the nadir of formalism; current politics was an outwardly idiotic, inwardly dishonest, party duel between the followers of Gladstone and Disraeli. Social and economic questions he was inclined to leave to the professors. Those were the early days of socialist thought in England, the days before Fabianism, and he did not take to the new teachings very kindly. He was a moderate man in aesthetic matters, William Morris left him tepid, he had no sense of grievance against machinery and aniline dyes, he did not grasp the workers 5 demand because it was outside his traditions and experiences. Science seemed to him more and more plainly to be the big regenerative thing in human life, and the mission immediately before men of energy was the spreading of civilization, that is to say of knowledge, apparatus, clear thought, and release from instinct and superstition, about the world.

In those days science was at its maximum of aggressive hopefulness. With the idea of scientific progress there was also bound up in many British minds the idea of a racial mission. The long Napoleonic wars had cut off British thought from the thought of the continent of Europe, and this separation was never completely healed throughout the nineteenth century. In spite of their world-

empire the British remained remarkably self-centred and self-satisfied. They were a world-people, and no other people were. They were at once insular and world-wide. During the nineteenth century until its last quarter there was no real challenge to their extra-European ascendancy. A man like Sydenham did not so much come to the conclusion that the subjugation and civilization of the world by science and the Anglican culture was the mission of the British Empire, as find that conclusion ready-made by tradition and circumstances in his mind. He did not even trouble to express it; it seemed to him self-evident. When Kipling wrote of the White Man's Burthen, Briton was understood. Everywhere the British went about the world, working often very disinterestedly and ably, quite unaware of the amazement and exasperation created in French and German and American minds by the discovery of these tranquil assumptions.

So it was with Oswald Sydenham for many years. For three years he was in the district between Bangweolo and Lake Nyasa, making his headquarters at Blantyre, collecting specimens and learning much about mankind and womankind in that chaos of Arab slavers, Scotch missionaries, traders, prospectors, native tribes, Zulu raiders Indian store-keepers, and black "Portuguese"; then, discovering that Blantyre had picked up a nick-name from the natives of "Half Face" for him, he took a temporary dislike to Blantyre, and decided to go by way of Tanganyika either to Uganda or Zanzibar, first sending home a considerable collection of specimens by way of Mozambique. He got through at last to Uganda, after some ugly days and hours, only to learn of a very good reason why he should return at once to the southern lakes. He heard that a new British consul was going up the Zambesi to Nyasaland with a British protectorate up his sleeve, and he became passionately anxious to secure a position near the ear of this official. There were many things the man ought to know at once that neither traders nor mission men would tell him.

To get any official position it was necessary for Oswald to return to London and use the influence of various allied Sydenhams. He winced at the thought of coming back to England and meeting the eyes of people who had known him before his disfigurement, but the need to have some sort of official recognition if he was to explain himself properly in Nyasaland made it necessary that he should

come. That was in the summer of 1889.

He went down to visit his uncle at Long Downport while the "influences" brewed, and here it was he first met Dolly. He did not know it, but now his face was no longer a shock to the observer. The injured side which had been at first mostly a harsh, reddish blank scar with a glass eye, had not only been baked and weatherworn by Africa, but it had in some indefinable way been assimilated by the unmutilated half. It had been taken up into his individuality; his renascent character possessed it now; it had been humanized and become a part of him; it had acquired dignity. Muscles and nerves had reconstructed some of their relations and partially resumed abandoned duties. If only he had known it, there was nothing repulsive about him to Dolly. Though he was not a pretty man, he had the look of a strong one. The touch of imagination in her composition made her see behind this half vizor of immobilized countenance the young hero who had risked giving his life for his fellows; his disfigurement did but witness the price he had paid. In those days at home in England one forgot that most men were brave. No one had much occasion nor excuse for bravery. A brave man seemed a wonderful man.

He loved Dolly with a love in which a passion of gratitude was added to the commoner ingredients. Her smiling eyes restored his self-respect. He felt he was no longer a horror to women. But could it be love she felt for him? Was not that to presume too far? She gave him friendliness. He guessed she gave him pity. She gave him the infinite reassurance of her frank eyes. Would it not be an ill return to demand more than these gracious gifts?

The possibility of humiliation — and of humiliating Dolly — touched a vein of abject cowardice in his composition. He could not bring himself to the test. He tried some vague signalling that she did,not seem to understand. His time ran out and he went — awkwardly. When he returned for a second time, he returned to find that Arthur's fine profile had eclipsed his memory.

§ 3

AFTER the visit that made him a godfather, Oswald did not return again to England until his godson had attained the ripe age of four years. And when Oswald came again he had changed very greatly. He was now almost completely his new self; the original good-looking midshipman, that sunny "type," was buried deep in a highly individualized person, who had in England something of the effect of a block of seasoned ship's timber among new-cut blocks of white deal. He had been used and tested. He had been scarred, and survived. His obsession had lifted. He had got himself well under control.

He was now acquiring a considerable knowledge of things African, and more particularly of those mysterious processes of change and adventure that were presented to the British consciousness in those days as "empire building."

He had seen this part of Africa change dramatically under his eyes. When first he had gone out it was but a dozen years from the death of Livingstone, who had been the first white man in this land. In Livingstone's wake had come rifles, missionaries, and the big game hunter. The people of the Shire Highlands were now mostly under the rule of chiefs who had come into the country with Livingstone as Basuto porters, and whom he had armed with rifles. The town of Blantyre had been established by Scotch missionaries to preserve Livingstone's memory and his work. Things had gone badly for a time. A certain number of lay helpers to the Church of Scotland Mission had set up as quasi-independent sovereigns, with powers of life and death, about their mission stations; many of them had got completely out of hand and were guilty of much extortion and cruelty. One of them, Fennick, murdered a chief in a drunken bout, got himself killed, and nearly provoked a native war only a year or so before Oswald's arrival. Arab adventurers from Zanzibar and black Portuguese from the Zambesi were also pushing into this country. The Yao to the north and the Angoni-Zulus to the south, tribes of a highly militant spirit, added their quota to a kaleidoscope of murder, rape, robbery and incalculable chances, which were further complicated by the annexational propaganda of more or less vaguely accredited German, Belgian, Portuguese and British agents.

Oswald reached Tanganyika in the company of a steamboat (in

portable pieces) which had been sent by the Scotch missionaries by way of the Zambesi and Lake Nyasa; he helped with its reconstruction, and took a considerable share in fighting the Arab slavers between Nyasa and Tanganyika. One of his earliest impressions of African warfare was the figure of a blistered and wounded negro standing painfully to tell his story of the fight from which he had escaped. "You see," the Scotch trader who was translating, explained, "he's saying they had just spears and the Arabs had guns, and they got driven back on the lagoon into the reeds. The reeds were dry, and the Arabs set them on fire. That's how he's got his arm and leg burns, he says. Nasty places. But they'll heal all right; he's a vegetarian and a teetotaller — usually. Those reeds burn like thatch, and if the poor devils ran out they got stabbed or shot, and if they went into the water the crocodiles would be getting them. I know that end of the lake. It's fairly alive with crocodiles. A perfect bank holiday for the crocodiles. Poor devils! Poor devils!"

The whole of Africa, seen in those days from the viewpoint of Blantyre, was the most desolating spectacle of human indiscipline it is possible to conceive. Everywhere was the adventurer and violence and cruelty and fever, nowhere law and discipline. The mission men turned robbers, the traders became drunkards, the porters betrayed their masters. Mission intrigued against mission, disobeyed the consuls, and got at hopeless loggerheads with the traders and early planters. Where there is no control, there is no self- control. Thirst and lust racked every human being; even some of the missionaries deemed it better to marry native women than to burn. In his own person Oswald played microcosm to human society. He had his falls and bitter moments, but his faith in science and civilization, human will and self- control, stumbled to its feet again. "We'll get things straight here presently," he said. Of himself as of Nyasaland. "Never say damned till you're dead."

His first return to England not only gave him a futile dream of Dolly to keep him clean and fastidious in Africa, but restored his waning belief in an orderly world. Seen from that distant point, the conflicts in Africa fell into a proper perspective as the froth and confusion before the launching of a new and unprecedented peace. Africa had been a black stew of lust, bloodshed and disease since the

beginnings of history. These latter days were but the last flare-up of an ancient disorder before the net of the law and the roads and railways, the net of the hospitals and microscopes and anthropologists, caught and tamed and studied and mastered the black continent. He got his official recognition and went back to join this new British agent, Mr. Harry Johnston, in Nyasaland and see a kind of order establish itself and grow more orderly and secure, over the human confusion round and about the Shire Highlands. He found in his chief, who presently became Commissioner and Administrator (with a uniform rather like an Admiral's for state occasions), a man after his own heart, with the same unquenchable faith in the new learning of science and the same belief in the better future that opened before mankind. The Commissioner, a little animated, talkative man of tireless interest and countless interests, reciprocated Oswald's liking. In Central Africa one is either too busy or too tired and ill to do much talking, but there were one or two evenings when Oswald was alone with his chief and they could exchange views. Johnston had a modern religious philosophy that saw God chiefly through the valiant hearts of men; he made Oswald read Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom Of Man*, which had become, so to speak, his own theological point of departure. It was a book of sombre optimism productive of a kind of dark hopefulness— "provided we stick it" — that accorded well with the midday twilight of the Congo forests into which Oswald was presently sent. It marched with much that Oswald had been thinking out for himself. It did not so much tell him new things as crystallize his own thoughts.

Two ideas were becoming the guiding lights of Oswald Sydenham's thought and life. One was the idea of self-devotion to British Imperial expansion. The British Empire was to be the instrument of world civilization, the protectress and vehicle of science; the critical examination of Imperialism in the light of these pretensions had still to come. He had still to discover that science could be talked in other languages than English, and thought go on behind brown and yellow foreheads. His second idea was that the civilizing process was essentially an educational process, a training in toleration and devotion, the tempering of egotism by wide ideas. Thereby "we shall get things straighter presently. We shall get them

very straight in the long run."...

Directly after Oswald's second visit to England, the one in which he became Peter's godfather, a series of campaigns against the slave-raiding Arab chiefs, who still remained practically independent in the Protectorate, began. Oswald commanded in a very "near thing" in the Highlands, during which he held a small stockade against the Yao with six Sikhs and a few Atonga for three days, and was finally rescued when his ammunition had almost given out; and after that he was entrusted with a force of over three hundred men in the expedition that ended in the capture and hanging of old Mlozi. He fought in steamy heat and pouring rain, his head aching and his body shivering, and he ended his campaigning with a first experience of blackwater fever. It struck him as an unutterably beastly experience, although the doctor assured him he had been let down lightly. However, this was almost the end of the clearing-up fighting in the Protectorate, and Oswald could take things easily for a time. Thereafter the work of pacification, road-making, and postal and telegraphic organization went on swiftly and steadily.

But these days of peaceful organization were ended by a disagreeable emotional situation. Oswald found himself amused and attracted by a pretty woman he despised thoroughly and disliked a good deal. She was the wife of a planter near Blantyre. So far from thinking him an ugly and disfigured being, she made it plain to him that his ugliness was an unprecedented excitement for her. Always imprisoned in his mind was the desire to have a woman of his very own; at times he envied even the Yao warriors their black slave mistresses; and he was more than half disposed to snatch this craving creature in spite of the lies and tricks and an incessant chattering vanity that disfigured her soul, and end all his work in Africa, to gratify, if only for some lurid months, his hunger for a human possession. The situation took him by surprise in a negligent phase; he pulled up sharply when he was already looking down a slippery slope of indignity and dishonour. If he had as yet done no foolish things he had thought and said them. The memory of Dolly came to him in the night. He declared to himself, and he tried to declare it without reservation, that it was better to sit for a time within a yard of Dolly's inaccessible goodness than paint a Protectorate already

British enough to be scandal-loving, with the very brightest hues of passion's flame-colour. He ran away from this woman.

So he came back — by no means single-mindedly. There were lapses indeed on the slow steamer journey to Egypt into almost unendurable torments of regret. Of which, however, no traces appeared when he came into the presence of Dolly and his godson at The Ingle-Nook.

§ 4

Peter took to Oswald and Oswald took to Peter from the beginning.

Peter, by this time, had Joan for a foster-sister. And also he had Nobby. Nobby was a beloved Dutch doll, armless and legless, but adored and trusted as no other doll has ever been in the whole history of dolls since the world began. He had been Peter's first doll. One day when he was playing tunes with Nobby on the nursery fender, one exceptionally accented note splintered off a side of Nobby's smooth but already much obliterated countenance. Peter was not so much grieved as dismayed, and Arthur was very sympathetic and did his best to put things right with a fine brush and some black paint. But when Peter saw Oswald he met him with a cry of delight and recognition.

"It's Nobby!" he cried.

"But who's Nobby?" asked Oswald.

"*You* — Nobby," Peter insisted with a squeak, and turned about just in time to prevent Arthur from hiding the fetish away. "Gimme my Nobby!" he said.

"Nobby is his private god," Dolly hastened to explain. "It is his dearest possession. It is the most beautiful thing in the world to him. Every night he must have Nobby under his pillow...."

Oswald stood with his wooden double in his hand for a moment, recognized himself at a glance, thought it over, and smiled his grim, one-sided smile.

"I'm Nobby right enough," he said. "Big Nobby, Peter. He takes you off to Dreamland. Some day I'll take you to the Mountains of the Moon."

So far Joan, a black-headed, black-eyed doll, had been coyly on the edge of the conversation, a little disposed to take refuge in the skirts of Mary. Now she made a great effort on her own account. "Nobby," she screamed; "big, *Big* Nobby!" And, realizing she had made a success, hid her face.

"Nobby to you," said Oswald. "Does *that* want a godfather too? It's my role...."

§ 5

THE changes in the Stubland nursery, though they were the most apparent, were certainly not the greatest in the little home that looked over the Weald. Arthur had been unfaithful to Dolly — on principle it would seem. That did not reach Oswald's perceptions all at once, though even on his first visit he felt a difference between them.

The later 'nineties were the "Sex Problem" period in Great Britain. Not that sex has been anything else than a perplexity in all ages, but it was just about this time that that unanswerable "Why not?" — that bacterium of social decay, spreading out from the dark corners of unventilated religious dogmas into a moribund system of morals, reached, in the case of the children of the serious middle-classes of Great Britain, this important field of conduct. The manner of the question and the answer remained still serious. Those were the days of "The Woman Who Did" and the "Keynote Series," of adultery without fun and fornication for conscience' sake. Arthur, with ample leisure, a high-grade bicycle, the consciousness of the artistic temperament and a gnawing secret realization, which had never left him since those early days in Florence, that Dolly did not really consider him as an important person in the world's affairs, was all too receptive of the new suggestions. After some discursive liberal conversations with various people he found the complication he sought in the youngest of three plain but passionate sisters, who lived a decorative life in a pretty little modern cottage on the edge of a wood beyond Limpsfield. The new gale of emancipation sent a fire through her veins. Her soul within her was like a flame. She wrote poetry with a peculiar wistful charm, and her decorative methods

were so similar to Arthur's that it seemed natural to conclude they might be the precursors of an entirely new school. They put a new interest and life into each other's work. It became a sort of collaboration....

The affair was not all priggishness on Arthur's part. The woman was honestly in love; and for most men love makes love; there is a pride and fascination for them in a new love adventure, in the hesitation, the dash, the soft capture, the triumph and kindness, that can manage with very poor excuses. And such a beautiful absence of mutual criticism always, such a kindly accepting blindness in passionate eyes!

At first Dolly did not realize how Arthur was rounding off his life. She was busy now with her niece, her disreputable elder brother's love child, as well as Peter; she did not miss Arthur very much during his increasing absences. Th«n Arthur, who wished to savour all the aspects of the new situation, revealed it to her one August evening in general terms by a discourse upon polygamy.

Dolly's quick mind seized the situation long before Arthur could state it.

She did not guess who her successful rival was. She did not know it was the younger Miss Blend, that familiar dark squat figure, quick and almost crowded in speech, and with a peculiar avidity about her manner and bearing. She assumed it must be some person of transcendant and humiliating merit; that much her romantic standards demanded. She was also a little disgusted, as though Arthur had discovered himself to be physically unclean. Her immediate impulse was to arrest a specific confession.

"You forget instinct, Arthur dear," she said, colouring brightly. "What you say is perfectly reasonable, wonderfully so. Only — it would make me feel sick — I mean sick — if, for example, I thought you—"

She turned away and looked at the view.

"Are you so sure that is instinct? Or convention?" he asked, after a pause of half comprehension.

"Instinct — for certain.... Lovers are one. Whither you go, *I* go — in the spirit. You can't go alone with another woman while I — while I In those things....

Oh, it's inconceivable I"

"That's a primitive point of view."

"Love — lust for the matter of that.... They are primitive things," said Dolly, undisguisedly wretched.

"There's reason in the control of them."

"Polygamy!" she cried scornfully.

Arthur was immensely disconcerted.

He lit a cigarette, and his movements were slow and clumsy.

"Ideas may differ," he said lamely....

He did not make his personal confession after all.

In the middle of the night Arthur was lying awake thinking with unusual violence, and for the first time for a long while seeing a question from a standpoint other than his own. Also he fancied he had heard a sound of great significance at bedtime. That uncertain memory worried him more and more. He got up now with excessive precautions against noise and crept with extreme slowness and care to the little door between his room and Dolly's. It was locked.

Then she had understood!

A solemn, an almost awe-stricken Arthur paddled back to his own bed through a pool of moonlight on the floor. A pair of pallid, blue-veined feet and bright pyjama legs and a perplexed, vague continuation upward was all the moon could see.

§6

It was, it seemed to Arthur, a very hard, resolute and unapproachable Dolly who met him at the breakfast-table on the brick terrace outside the little kitchen window. He reflected that the ultimate injury a wife can do to a husband is ruthless humiliation, and she was certainly making him feel most abominably ashamed of himself. She had always, he reflected, made him feel that she didn't very greatly believe in him. There was just a touch of the spitfire in Dolly....

But, indeed, within Dolly was a stormy cavern of dismay and indignation and bitter understanding. She had wept a great deal in the night and thought interminably; she knew already that there was much more in this thing than a simple romantic issue.

Her first impulses had been quite in the romantic tradition: “Never again!” and “Now we part!” and “Henceforth we are as strangers!”

She had already got ten thousand miles beyond that. She did not even know whether she hated him or loved him. She doubted if she had ever known.

Her state of mind was an extraordinary patchwork. Every possibility in her being was in a state of intense excitement. She was swayed by a violently excited passion for him that was only restrained by a still more violent resolve to punish and prevail over him. He had never seemed so good-looking, so pleasant-faced, so much “old Arthur” — or such a fatuous being. And he was watching her, watching her, watching her, obliquely, furtively, while he pretended awkwardly to be at his ease. What a scared comic thing Arthur could be! There were moments when she could have screamed with laughter at his solicitous face.

Meanwhile some serviceable part of her mind devoted itself to the table needs of Joan and Peter.

Peter was disposed to incite Joan to a porridge-eating race. You just looked at Joan and began to eat fast very quietly, and then Joan would catch on and begin to eat fast too. Her spoon would go quicker and quicker, and make a noise — whack, whack, whack! And as it was necessary that she should keep her wicked black eyes fixed on your plate all the time to see how you were getting on, she would sometimes get an empty spoon up, sometimes miss her mouth, sometimes splash. But Mummy took a strong hand that morning. ‘P >T (. was an argument, but Mummy was unusually firm. She turned breakfast into a drill. “Fill spoon. Tention! Mouf. Withdraw spoon.” Not bad fun, really, though Mummy looked much too stern for any liberties. And Daddy wasn’t game for a diversion. Wouldn’t look at a little boy....

After breakfast Arthur decided that he was not going to be bullied. He got out his bicycle and announced in a dry, off-hand tone that he was going out for the day.

“So long, Guv’nor,” said Dolly, as off-handedly, and stood at the door in an expressionless way until he was beyond the green road gate.

Then she strolled back through the house into the garden, and

stood for a time considering the situation.

"So I am to bring up two babies — and grow old, while this goes on!" she whispered.

She went to clear the things off the breakfast-table, and stood motionless again.

"My God!" she said; "why wasn't I born a man?"

And that, or some image that followed it, let her thoughts out to Africa and a sturdy, teak-complexioned figure with a one-sided face under its big sun-helmet....

"Why didn't I marry a man?" she said. "Why didn't I get me a mate?"

§ 7

THESE were the primary factors of the situation that Oswald, arriving six weeks later, was slowly to discover and comprehend. As he did so he felt the self-imposed restraints of his relations to Arthur and Dolly slip from him. Arthur was now abundantly absent. Never before had Oswald and Dolly been so much alone together. Peter and Joan m the foreground were a small restraint upon speech and understanding.

But now this story falls away from romance. Romance requires that a woman should love a man or not love a man; that she should love one man only and go with the man of her choice, that no other consideration, unless it be duty or virtue, should matter. But Dolly found with infinite dismay that she was divided.

She loved certain things in Oswald and certain things in Arthur. The romantic tradition which ruled in these matters, provided no instructions in such a case. The two men were not sufficiently contrasted. One was not black enough; the other not white enough. Oswald was a strong man and brave, but Arthur, though he lived a tame and indolent life, seemed almost insensible to danger. She had never seen him afraid or rattled. He was a magnificent rock climber, for example; his physical nerve was perfect. Everything would have been so much simpler if he had been a "soft." She was sensitive to physical quality. It was good to watch Arthur move; Oswald's

injuries made him clumsy and a little cautious in his movements. But Oswald was growing into a politician; he had already taken great responsibilities in Africa; he talked like a prince and like a lover about his Atonga and his Sikhs, and about the whiteclad kingdom of Uganda and about the fantastic gallant Masai, who must be saved from extermination. That princely way of thinking was the fine thing about him; there he outshone Arthur. He was wonderful to her when he talked of those Central African kingdoms that were rotting into chaos under the influence of the Arab and European invasions, chaos from, which a few honest Englishmen might yet rescue a group of splendid peoples.

He could be loyal all through; it was his nature. And he loved her — as Arthur had never loved her. With a gleam of fierceness. As though there was a streak of anger in his love.

"Why do you endure it?" he fretted. "Why do you endure it?"

But he was irritable, absurd about many little things. He could lose his temper over games; particularly if Arthur played too.

Yet there was a power about Oswald. It was a quality that made her fear him and herself. She feared for the freedom of her spirit. If ever she became Oswald's she would become his much more than she had ever been Arthur's. There was something about him that was real and commanding, in a sense in which nothing was real about Arthur.

She had a dread, which made her very wary, that one day Oswald would seize upon her, that he would take her in his arms and kiss her. This possibility accumulated. She had a feeling that it would be something very dreadful, painful and enormous; that it would be like being branded, that therewith Arthur would be abolished for her.... At the thought she realized that she did not want Arthur to be abolished. She had an enormous kindliness for Arthur that would have been impossible without a little streak of humorous superiority. If Oswald threatened her with his latent mastery, Arthur had the appeal of much dependence.

And apart from Oswald or Arthur, something else in her protested, an instinct or a deeply-rooted tradition. The thought of a second man was like thinking of the dislocation of her soul. It involved a nightmare of overlapping, of partial obliteration, of

contrast and replacement, in things that she felt could have no honour or dignity unless they are as simple and natural as inadvertent actions....

The thing that swayed her most towards Oswald, oddly enough, was his mutilated face. That held her back from any decision against him. “If I do not go with him,” she thought, “he will think it is that.” She could not endure that he should be so wounded.

Then, least personal and selfish thought of all, was the question of Joan and Peter. What would happen to them? In any case, Dolly knew they would come to her. There was no bitter vindictiveness in Arthur, and he shirked every responsibility he could. She could leave him and go to Uganda and return to them. She knew there would be no attempt to deprive her of Peter. Oswald would be as good a father as Arthur. The children weighed on neither side.

Dolly’s mind had become discontinuous as it had never been discontinuous before. None of these things were in her mind all the time; sometimes one aspect was uppermost and sometimes another. Sometimes she was ruled by nothing but vindictive pride which urged her to put herself on a level with Arthur. At times again her pride was white and tight-lipped, exhorting her above all things not to put herself on a level with Arthur. When Oswald pressed her, her every impulse was to resist; when he was away and she felt her loneliness — and his — her heart went out to him.

She had given herself to Arthur, that seemed conclusive. But Arthur had dishonoured the gift. She had a great sense of obligation to Oswald. She had loved Oswald before she had ever seen Arthur; years ago she had given her cousin the hope and claim that burnt accusingly in his eye today.

“Come with me, Dolly,” he said. “Come with me. Share my life. This isn’t life here.”

“But could I come with you?”

“If you dared. Not to Blantyre, perhaps. That’s — respectable. Church and women and chatter. Blantyre’s over. But there’s Uganda. Baker took a wife there. It’s still a land of wild romance. And I must go soon. I must get to Uganda. So much is happening. Muir says this Soudanese trouble won’t wait.... But I hang on here, day after day. I can’t leave you to it, Dolly. I can’t endure that.”

"You *have* to leave me," she said.

"No. Come with me. This soft grey-green countryside is no place for you. I want you in a royal leopard skin with a rifle in your hand. You are pale for want of the sun.

And while we were out there he could divorce you. He would divorce you — and marry some other copper puncher. Some Craftswoman. And stencil like hell. Then we could marry."

He gripped her wrists across the stone table. "Dolly, my darling!" he said; "don't let me go back alone."

"But what of Peter and Joan?"

"Leave them to nurses for a year or so and then bring them out to the sun. If the boy stays here, he will grow up — some sort of fiddling artist. He will punch copper and play about with book-binding."

She struggled suddenly to free her wrists, and he gripped them tighter until he saw that she was looking towards the house. At last he realized that Arthur approached.

"Oh, *damn*!" said Oswald....

§ 8

DOLLY cut this knot she could not untie, and as soon as she had cut it she began to repent.

Indecision may become an unendurable torment. On the one hand that dark strong life in the African sunblaze with this man she feared in spite of his unconcealed worship, called to a long-suppressed vein of courage in her being; on the other hand was her sense of duty, her fastidious cleanness, this English home with its thousand gentle associations and Arthur, Arthur who had suddenly abandoned neglect, become attentive, mutely apologetic, but who had said not a word, since he had put himself out of court, about Oswald.

He had said nothing, but he had become grave in his manner. Once or twice she had watched him when he had not known she watched him, and she had tried to fathom what was now in his mind. Did he want her!

This and that pulled her.

One night in the middle of the night she lay awake, unable to sleep, unable to decide. She went to her window and pressed her forehead against the pane and stared at the garden in a mist of moonlight. “I must end it,” she said. “I must end it.”

She went to the door that separated her room from Arthur’s, and unlocked it noisily. She walked across the room and stood by the window. Arthur was awake too. He leant up upon his elbow and regarded her without a word. “Arthur,” she said, “am I to go to Africa or am I to stay with you?”

Arthur answered after a little while. “I want you to stay with me.”

“On my conditions?”

“I have been a fool, Dolly. It’s over....”

They were both trembling, and their voices were unsteady.

“Can I believe you, Arthur?” she asked weakly....

He came across the moonlight to her, and as he spoke his tears came. Old, tender, well-remembered phrases were on his lips. “Dolly! Little sweet Dolly,” he said, and took her hungrily into his arms....

There remained nothing now of the knot but to tell Oswald that she had made her irrevocable decision.

§ 9

ARTHUR was eloquent about their reconciliation. What became of her rival Dolly never learnt, nor greatly cared; she was turned out of Arthur’s heart, it would seem, rather as one turns a superfluous cat out of doors. Arthur alluded to the emotional situation generally as “this mess.” “If I’d had proper work to do and some outlet for my energy this mess wouldn’t have happened,” he said. He announced in phrases only too obviously derivative that he must find something real to do. “Something that will take me and use me.”

But Dolly was manifestly unhappy. He decided that the crisis had overtaxed her. Oswald must have worried her tremendously. (He thought it was splendid of her that she never blamed Oswald.) The garden, the place, was full now of painful associations — and moreover the rejected cat was well within the range of a chance

meeting. Travel among beautiful scenery seemed the remedy indicated. Their income happened to be a little overspent, but it only added to his sense of rising to a great emotional emergency that he should have to draw upon his capital. They started upon a sort of recrudescence of their honeymoon, beginning with Rome.

Aunt Phyllis and Aunt Phoebe came to mind the house and Joan and Peter. Aunt Phoebe was writing a little wise poetical book about education, mostly out of her inner consciousness, and she seized the opportunity of this experience very gladly....

Dolly was a thing of moods for all that journey.

At times she was extravagantly hilarious, she was wild, as she had never been before. She would start out to scamper about a twilit town after a long day's travel, so that it was hard for Arthur to keep pace with her flitting energy; she would pretend to be Tarantula-bitten in some chestnut grove and dance love dances and flee like a dryad to be pursued and caught. And at other times she sat white and still as though she had a broken heart. Never did an entirely virtuous decision give a woman so much heartache. They went up Vesuvius by night on mules from Pompeii, and as they stood on the black edge of the crater, the guide called her attention to the vast steely extent of the moonlit southward sea.

She heard herself whisper "Africa," and wondered if Arthur too had heard.

And at Capri Arthur had a dispute with a boatman. The boat was taken at the Marina Grande. The boatman proposed the tour of the island and all the grottos, and from the Marina Grande the project seemed reasonable enough. The sea, though not glassy smooth, was quite a practicable sea. But a point had to be explained very carefully. The boatman put it in slow and simple Italian with much helpful gesture. If the wind rose to a storm so that they would have to return before completing this "giro," they would still pay the same fee.

"Oh quite," said Arthur carelessly in English, and the bargain was made.

They worked round the corner of the island, under the Salto di Tiberio, that towering cliff down which the legend says Tiberius flung his victims, and as soon as they came out from under the lee of

the island Arthur discovered a cheat. The gathering wind beyond the shelter of the cliffs was cutting up the blue water into a disorderly system of tumbling white-capped waves. The boat headed straight into a storm. It lifted and fell and swayed and staggered; the boatman at his oar dramatically exaggerated his difficulties. “He knew of this,” said Arthur savagely. “He thinks we shall want to give in. Well, let’s see who gives in first. Let’s put him through his program and see how he likes it.”

Arthur had taken off his hat, and clutched it to save it from the wind. He looked very fine with his hair blowing back. “Buona aria,” he said, grinning cheerfully to the boatman. “Bellissima!”

The boatman was understood to say that the wind was rising and that it was going to be worse presently.

“Bellissima!” said Arthur, patting Dolly’s back.

The boatman was seized with solicitude for the lady.

Dolly surveyed the great cliffs that towered overhead and the frothy crests against which the boat smacked and lifted. “Bellissima,” she agreed, smiling at the boatman’s consternation. “Avanti!”

The boat plunged and ploughed its way for a little while in silence. The boatman suggested that things were getting dangerous. Could the signora swim?

Arthur assured him that she could swim like a fish.

And the capitano?

Arthur accepted his promotion cheerfully and assured the boatman that his swimming was only second to Dolly’s.

The boatman informed them that he himself could scarcely swim at all. He was not properly a seafaring man. He had come to Capri for his health; his lungs were weak. He had been a stonemason at Alessandria, but the dust had been bad for his lungs. He could not swim. He could not manage a boat very well in stormy weather. And he was an orphan.

“*Io* Orfano!” cried Arthur, greatly delighted, and stabbing himself with an elucidatory forefinger. “Io Orfano anche.”

The boatman lapsed into gloom. In a little while they had beaten round the headland into view of the Faraglione, that big outstanding rock which is pierced by a great arch, upon the south-eastern side of

the island. The passage through this Arco Naturale was in the boatman's agreement. They could see the swirl of the waters now through that natural gateway, rising, pouring almost to the top of the arch and then swirling down to the trough of the wave. The west wind whipped the orphan's blue-black curls about his ears. He began to cry off his bargain.

"We go through that arch," said Arthur, "or my name is not Stubland."

The boatman argued his case. The wind was rising; the further they went the more they came into the weather. He had not the skill of a man born to the sea.

"You made the bargain," said Arthur.

"Let us return while we are still safe," the boatman protested.

"Go through the arch," said Arthur. The boatman looked at the arch, the sky, the endless onslaught of advancing waves to seaward and Arthur, and then with a gesture of despair turned the boat towards the arch.

"He's frightened, Arthur," said Dolly.

"Serve him right. He won't try this game again in a hurry," said Arthur, and then relenting: "Go through the arch and we will return...."

The boatman baulked at the arch twice. It was evident they must go through just behind the crest of a wave. He headed in just a moment or so too soon, got through on the very crest, bent double to save his head, made a clumsy lunge with his oar that struck the rock and threw him sideways. Then they were rushing with incredible swiftness out of the arch down a blue-green slope of water, and the Faraglione rose again before Dolly's eyes like a thing relieved after a moment of intense concentration. But suddenly everything was sideways. Everything was askew. The boat was half overturned and the boatman was sitting unsteadily on the gunwale, clutching at the opposite side which was rising, rising. The man, she realized, was going overboard, and Arthur's swift grab at him did but complete the capsize. The side of the boat was below her where the floor should be, and that gave way to streaming bubbling water into which one man plunged on the top of the other....

Dolly leapt clear of the overturned boat, went under and came

up....

She tossed the wet hair from her head and looked about her. The Faraglione was already thirty yards or more away and receding fast. The boat was keel upward and rolling away towards the cliff. There were no signs of Arthur or the boatman.

What must she do? Just before the accident she had noted the Piccola Marina away to the north-west. That would mean a hard swim against the waves, but it would be the best thing to do. It could not be half a mile away. And Arthur? Arthur would look after himself. He would do that all right. She would only encumber him by swimming around. Perhaps he would get the man on to the boat. Perhaps people had seen them from the Piccola Marina. If so boats would come out to them.

She struck out shoreward.

How light one's clothes made one feel! But presently they would drag. (Never meet trouble half-way.) It was going to be a long swim. Even if there should be no current....

She swam....

Then she had doubts. Ought she to go back and look for Arthur? She could not be much good to him even if she found him. It was her first duty to save herself. Peter was not old enough to be left. No one would care for Joan and him as she could care for them. It was a long enough swim without looking for Arthur. It was going to be a very long swim....

She wished she could get a glimpse of Arthur. She looked this way and that. It would be easier to swim side by side. But in this choppy sea he might be quite close and still be hidden.... Best not to bother about things — just swim.

For a long time she swam like a machine....

After a time she began to think of her clothes again. The waves now seemed to be trying to get them off. She was being tugged back by her clothes. Could she get some of them off? Not in this rough water. It would be more exhausting than helpful. Clothes ought to be easier to get off; not so much tying and pinning....

The waves were coming faster now. The wind must be freshening. They were more numerous and less regular.

Splash! That last wave was a trencherous beast — no! —

treacherous beast.... Phew, ugh! Salt in the mouth. Salt in the eyes. And here was another, too soon! ... Oh *fight*!

It was hard to see the Piccola Marina. Wait for the lift of the next wave.... She was going too much to the left, ever so much too much to the left....

One must exert oneself for Peter's sake.

What was Arthur doing?

It seemed a long time now since she had got into the water, and the shore was still a long way off. There was nobody there at all that she could see.... Boats drawn high and dry. Plenty of boats. Extraordinary people these Italians — they let stonemasons take charge of boats. Extortionate stonemasons.... She was horribly tired. Not in good fettle.... She looked at the Faraglione over her shoulder. It was still disgustingly near and big. She had hardly swum a third of the way yet. Or else there was a current. Better not think of currents. She had to stick to it. Perhaps it was the worst third of the way she had done. But what infinite joy and relief it would be just to stop swimming and spread one's arms and feet!

She had to stick to it for little Peter's sake. For little Peter's sake. Peter too young to be left....

Arthur? Best not to think about Arthur just yet. It had been silly to insist on the Arco Naturale....

What a burthen and bother dress was to a woman! What a leaden burthen!...

She must not think. She must not think. She must swim like a machine. Like a machine. One.... Two.... One.... Two.... Slow and even.

She fell asleep. For some moments she was fast asleep. She woke up with the water rising over her head and struck out again.

There was a sound of many waters in her ears and an enormous indolence in her limbs against which she struggled in vain. She did struggle, and the thought that spurred her to struggle was still the thought of Peter.

"Peter is too young to be left yet," sang like a refrain in her head as she roused herself for her last fight with the water. Peter was too young to be left yet. Peter, her little son. But the salt blinded her now; she was altogether out of step with the slow and resolute

rhythm of the waves. They broke foaming upon her and beat upon her, and presently turned her about and over like a leaf in an eddy.

CHAPTER IV. — FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE UNIVERSE

§ 1

PETER could not remember a time when Joan was not in his world, and from the beginning it seemed to him that the chief fact was Mary. “Nanny,” you called her, or “Mare-*wi*,” or you simply howled and she came. She was omnipresent; if she was not visible then she was just round the corner, by night or day. Other figures were more intermittent, “Daddy,” a large, loud, exciting, almost terrific thing; “Mummy,” who was soft and made gentle noises but was, in comparison with Mary, rather a fool about one’s bottle; “Pussy,” and then the transitory smiling propitiatory human stuff that was difficult to remember and name correctly. “Aunties,” “Nannies” and suchlike. But also there were inanimate persons. There were the brass-headed sentinels about one’s cot and the great brown round-headed newel post. His name was Bungo-Peter; he was a king and knew everything, he watched the stairs, but you did not tell people this because they would not understand. Also there was the brass-eyed monster with the triple belly who was called Chester-Drawers; he shammed dead and watched you, and in the night he creaked about the room. And there was Gope the stove, imprisoned in the fender with hell burning inside him, and there was Nobby. Nobby was the protector of little boys against Chester-Drawers, stray bears, the Thing on the Landing, spider scratchings and many such discomforts of nursery life. Of course you could also draw a deep breath and yell for “Mare-*wi*” but she was apt not to understand one’s explanation and to scold. It was better to hold tight to Nobby. And also Nobby was lovely and went whack.

Moreover if you called “Mare-*wi*” then when the lights came Joan would sit up in her cot and stare sleepily while you were being scolded. She would say that she knew there weren’t such things. And you would be filled with an indefinable sense of foolishness. Behind an impenetrable veil of darkness with an intervening floor space acrawl with bears and “burdlars” she could say such things with

impunity. In the morning one forgot. Joan in the daytime was a fairly amusing companion, except that she sometimes tried to touch Nobby. Once Peter caught her playing with Nobby and pretending that Nobby was a baby. One hand took Nobby by the head, and the other took Joan by the hair. That was the time when Peter had his first spanking, but Joan was careful not to touch Nobby again.

Generally Joan was passable. Of course she was an intrusion and in the way, but if one wanted to march round and round shouting "Tara-ra-ra, ra-ra, ra-ra, Tara boom de ay," banging something, a pan or a drum, with Nobby, she could be trusted to join in very effectively. She was good for noise-marches always, and they would not have been any fun without her. She had the processional sense, and knew that her place was second. She talked also in a sort of way, but it was not necessary to listen. She could be managed. If, for example, she touched Peter's bricks he yelled in a soul-destroying way and went for her with a brick in each hand. She was quick to take a hint of that sort.

It was Arthur's theory that little children should not be solitary. Mutual aid is the basis of social life, and from their earliest years children must be accustomed to co-operation. They had to be trained for the co-operative commonwealth as set forth in the writings of Prince Kropotkin. Mary thought differently. So Arthur used to go in his beautiful blue blouse and sit in the sunny nursery amidst the toys and the children, inciting them to premature co-operations.

"Now Peter put a brick," he used to say.

"Now Joan put a brick."

"Now Dadda put a brick."

Mary used to watch proceedings with a cynical and irritating expression.

"Peter's tower," Peter would propose.

"Our tower," Arthur used to say.

"Peter knock it over."

"No. No one knock it over."

"Peter put two bricks."

"Very well."

"Dadda not put any more bricks. No. Peter finish it."

"Na-ow!" from Joan in a voice like a little cat. "*Me* finish it."

Arthur wanted to preserve against this original sin of individualism. He got quite cross at last imposing joyful and willing co-operation upon two highly resistant minds.

Mary's way was altogether different. She greatly appreciated the fact that Dolly and Arthur had had the floor of the nursery covered with cork carpet, and that Arthur at the suggestion of Aunt Pho3be had got a blackboard and chalks in order to instil a free gesture in drawing from the earliest years. With a piece of chalk Mary would draw a line across the floor of the nursery, fairly dividing the warmth of the stove and the light of the window.

"That's your bit, Peter," she would say, "and that's your bit, Joan. Them's your share of bricks and them's yours. Now don't you think of going outside your bit, either of you, whatever you do. Nohow. Nor touch so much as a brick that isn't yours."

Whereupon both children would settle down to play with infinite contentment.

Yet these individualists were not indifferent to each other. If Joan wanted to draw on the blackboard with chalk, then always Peter wanted to draw on the blackboard with chalk at the same time, and here again it was necessary for Mary to mark a boundary between them; and if Peter wanted to build with bricks then Joan did also. Each was uneasy if the other was not in sight. And they would each do the same thing on different sides of their chalk boundary, with a wary eye on the other's proceedings and with an endless stream of explanation of what they were doing.

"Peter's building a love-i-lay house."

"Joan's building, oh! — a lovelay-er house. Wiv a cross on it."

"Why not build one lovely house for both of you?" said Arthur, still with the Co-operative Commonwealth in mind. Neither child considered that his proposal called for argument. It went over their heads and vanished. They continued building individually as before, but in silence lest Arthur should be tempted to intervene again.

§ 2

JOAN was a dancer from the age of three.

Perhaps she got some hint from Dolly, there is no telling; but anyhow she frisked and capered rhythmically by a kind of instinct whenever Dolly played the piano. So Dolly showed her steps and then more steps. Peter did not take to dancing so readily as Joan and his disposition was towards burlesque. Joan danced for the love of dancing, but Peter was inventive and turned his dances into expression. He invented the Fat Dance, with a pillow under his pinafore, the Thin Dance, with a concave stomach and a meagre expression, the One Leg dance and the Bird Dance, this latter like the birds about the crumbs in winter time. Also the Tipsy Dance, bacchic, which Arthur thought vulgar and discouraged. Dolly taught Joan the Flower Dance, with a very red cap like a pistil, and white silk skirt petals upheld by her arms. These she opened slowly, and at last dropped and then drooped. This needed a day of preparation. Peter produced his first remembered aesthetic judgment on a human being on this occasion.

"*Pritty* Joan," he said with conviction, as she stood flushed and bright-eyed after the dance, and with that he went and kissed her.

"He's beginning young," said Arthur.

It is what all parents say, and it is true of all children. But parents keep on saying it....

Before he was fully four Peter was conducting an aesthetic analysis of his world. He liked some of the tunes Dolly played and disapproved of others. He distributed "pritty" lavishly but by no means indiscriminately over the things of the world. "Oh pritty fo'wers," was the primordial form of these expanding decisions. But he knew that Nobby was not pretty.

Arthur did his best to encourage and assist these budding appreciations.

One evening there was a beautiful still sunset. The sun went down, a great flattening sphere of reddening gold sinking into vast levels of blue over the remoter hills. Joan had already been carried off to bed, but Arthur seized upon Peter and stood him in the window seat. "Look," said Arthur. Peter looked intently, and both his parents sat beside him, watching his nice little round head and the downy edge of his intent profile.

"Look," said Arthur, "it goes. It goes. It's going... going...

going....”

The sun became a crescent, a red scimitar, a streak of fire.

“Ah!” said Arthur, “it’s gone.”

Came an immense pause.

“Do it *adain*. Dadda,” said Peter with immense approval. “Do it adain....”

§ 3

THE theory of Ideals played almost as important a part in the early philosophy of Peter as it did in the philosophy of Plato. But Peter did not call them “Ideals,” he called them “toys.” Toys were the simplified essences of things, pure, perfect and manageable; Real Things were troublesome, uncontrollable, over complicated and largely irrelevant. A Real Train, for example, was a poor, big, clumsy, limited thing that was obliged to go to Red Hill or Croydon or London, that was full of stuffy unnecessary strangers, usually sitting firmly in the window seats, that you could do nothing satisfactory with at all. A Toy Train was your very own; it took you wherever you wanted, to Fairyland or Russia or anywhere, at whatever pace you chose. Then there was a beautiful rag doll named “Pleeceman,” who had a comic, almost luminous red nose, and smiled perpetually; you could hit Joan with him and make her squawk and yet be sure of not hurting her within the meaning of the law; how inferior was the great formless lump of a thing, with a pale uneventful visitor’s sort of face we saw out of the train at Caterham!

Nobody could have lifted him by a leg and waved him about; and if you had shied him into a corner, instead of all going just anyhow and still smiling, he would probably have been cross and revengeful. How inferior again was the Real Cow, with its chewing habits, its threatening stare and moo and its essential rudeness, to Suzannah, the cow on the green board. Perhaps the best real things in the world were young pigs....

But this much is simply to explain how it was that Peter was grateful but not overwhelmed to find that there was also a real Nobby in existence as well as his beloved fetish. And this Nobby was, as

real things went, much better than one could have expected him to be. Peter's heart went out to him from the very first encounter, and never found reason to relinquish him again.

Nobby wasted a good lot of time that might have been better employed in play, by talking to Mummy; and when a little boy set himself to rescue his friend from so tepid an occupation, Mary showed a peculiar disposition to thwart one. "Oh! leave them alone," she said, with the tart note in her voice. "I'm sure they don't want either of you."

Still Mummy didn't always get Nobby, and a little boy and girl could hear him talk and play about with him. When he told really truly things it was better than any one else telling stories. He had had all sorts of experiences; he had been a sailor; he knew what was inside a ship. That had been a growing need in Peter's life. All Peter's ships had been solid hitherto. Arid Nobby had been in the same field, practically speaking, with lions ever so many times. Lions, of course, are not nearly so dreadful as bears in a little boy's world; bears are the most dreadful things in the world (especially is this true of the black, under-bed bear, Ursus Pedivorus) but lions are dreadful enough. If one saw one in a field one would instantly get back over the stile again and go home, Mary or no Mary. But one day near Nairobi, Nobby had come upon a lion in broad daylight right in the middle of the path. Nobby had nothing but a stick. "I was in a hurry and I felt annoyed," said Nobby. "So I just walked towards him and waved my stick at him, and shouted to him to get out of my way."

"*Yes?*" breathless.

"And he went. Most lions will get away from a man if they can. Not always though."

A pause. There was evidently another story to that. "Tell us," said Mummy, more interested even than the children.

Big Nobby made model African villages out of twigs and such-like nothings in the garden, and he brought down Joan and Peter boxes of Zulu warriors from London to inhabit them. Also he bought two boxes of * 'Egyptian camel corps." One wet day he "made Africa" on the nursery floor. He made mountains out of books and wood blocks, and put a gold-mine of gold paper therein; he got in a

lot of twigs of box from the garden and made the most lovely forest you can imagine; he built villages of bricks for the Zulus; he put out the animals of Peter's Noah's ark in the woods. "Here's the lion," he said, propping up the lion against the tree because of its broken leg.

"Gurr Wooooooah!" said Joan.

"Exactly," said Nobby, encouraging her.

"Waar-oooh. Waaaa!" said Joan, presuming on it.

"Bang!" said Peter. "You're *dead*, Joan," and stopped any more of that.

§ 4

Then one day an extraordinary thing happened. It was towards lunch-time, and Mary was bringing Joan and Peter home from a walk in the woods. Joan was tired, but Peter had been enterprising and had run on far ahead; he was trotting his fat legs down the rusty lane that ran through the bushes close to the garden fence when he saw Nobby's lank form coming towards him from the house, walking slowly and as if he couldn't see where he was going. Peter was for slipping into the bushes and jumping out at him and saying "Boo." Then he saw Nobby stop and stand still and stare back at the house, and then, most wonderful and dreadful! this great big grown-up began to sob and cry. He said "Ooo-er!" just as Peter did sometimes when he felt unendurably ill-used. And he kept raising his clenched fists as if he was going to shake them — and not doing so.

"I will go to Hell," said Nobby. "I will go to Hell."

In a passion!

(Peter was shocked and ashamed for Nobby.)

Then Nobby turned and saw Peter before Peter could hide away from him. He stopped crying at once, but there was his funny face all red and shiny on one side.

"Hullo, old Peter boy," said Nobby. "I'm off. I'm going right away. Been fooled."

So that was it. But hadn't he Africa and lions and elephants and black men to go to, a great Real Play Nursery instead of a Nursery of Toys? Why make a fuss of it?

He came to Peter and lifted him up in his arms. “Goodbye, old Peter,” he said. “Good-bye, Peter. Keep off the copper punching.” He kissed his godson — how wet his face was! — and put him down, and was going off along the path and Peter hadn’t said a word.

He wanted to cry too, to think that Nobby was going. He stared and then ran a little way after his friend.

“Nobby,” he shouted; “good-bye!”

“Good-bye, old man,” Nobby cried back to him.

“Good-bye. Gooood-bye-er.”

Then Peter trotted back to the house to be first with the sad but exciting news that Nobby had gone. But as he came down from the green wicket to the house he looked up and saw his father at the upstairs window, gazing after Nobby with an unusual expression that perplexed him, and in the little hall he found his mother, and she had been crying too, though she was pretending she hadn’t. They knew about Nobby. Something strange was in the air, perceptible to a little boy but utterly beyond his understanding. Perhaps Nobby had been naughty. So he thought it best to change the subject, and began talking at once about a wonderful long bicycle with no less than three men on it — not two, Mummy, but three — that he had seen upon the highroad. They had thin white silk shirts without sleeves, and rode furiously with their heads down. Their shirts were blown out funnily behind them in the middles of their backs. They went like that!

All through the midday meal nobody said a word about Nobby....

Nobody ever did say anything about Nobby again. When on a few occasions Peter himself talked appreciatively of Nobby nobody, unless it was Joan now and then, seemed the least bit interested....

One side consequence of Oswald’s visit had been the dethronement of the original Nobby. The real Nobby had somehow thrust the toy Nobby into the background. Perhaps he drifted into the recesses of some box or cupboard. At any rate when Peter thought of him one day he was nowhere to be found. That did not matter so much as it would have done a couple of months before. Now if the bears and “burdlars” got busy in the night-nursery Peter used to pretend that the pillow was the real Nobby, the Nobby who wasn’t even afraid of lions and had driven off one with a stick. A prowling

bear hadn't much chance against a little boy who snuggled up to that Nobby.

§ 5

Mummy was rather dull in those days, and Daddy seemed always to be looking at her. Daddy had a sort of inelasticity in his manner too. Suddenly Aunt Phyllis and Aunt Phoebe appeared, and it was announced that Daddy and Mummy were going off to Italy. It was too far for them to take little boys and girls, they said, and besides there were, oh! horrid spiders. And Peter must stay to mind the house and Joan and his aunts; it wasn't right not to have some man about. He was to have a sailor suit with trousers also, great responsibilities altogether for a boy not much over four. So there was a great kissing and going off, and Joan and Peter settled down to the rule of the aunts and only missed Mummy and Daddy now and then.

Then one day something happened over the children's heads. Mary had red eyes and wouldn't say why; the aunts had told her not to do so.

Phyllis and Phoebe decided not to darken the children's lives by wearing mourning, but Mary said that anyhow she would go into black. But neither Joan nor Peter took much notice of the black dress.

"Why don't Mummy and Daddy come back?" asked Peter one day of Aunt Phoebe.

"They've travelled to such wonderful places, said Aunt Phoebe with a catch in her voice. "They may not be back for ever so long. No. Not till Peter is ever so big."

"Then why don't they send us cull'd poce-cards like they did't first?" said Peter.

Aunt Phoebe was so taken aback she could answer nothing.

"They just forgotten us," said Peter and reflected. "They gone on and on."

"Isn't Nobby ever coming back either?" he asked, abruptly, displaying a devastating acceptance of the new situation.

"But who's Nobby?"

"That's Mr. Oswald Sydenham," said Mary.

"He's coming back quite soon," said Aunt Phoebe. "He's on his way now."

"'Cos he *promised* me a lion skin," said Peter.

§ 6

AUNTS Phyllis and Phoebe found themselves two of the four guardians appointed under Arthur's will.

It had been one of Arthur's occasional lapses into deceit that he destroyed the will which made Oswald the sole guardian of Joan — so far as he could dispose of Joan — and Peter, without saying a word about it to Dolly. He had vacillated between various substitutes for Oswald up to the very moment when he named the four upon whom he decided finally, to his solicitor. Some streak of jealousy or pride, combined with a doubt whether Oswald would now consent to act, had first prompted the alteration. Instead he had decided to shift the responsibility to his sisters. Then a twinge of compunction had made him replace Oswald. Then feeling that Oswald might still be out talked or out voted by his sisters, he had stuck in the name of Dolly's wealthy and important cousin, Lady Charlotte Sydenham. He had only seen her twice, but she had seemed a lady of considerable importance and strength of character. Anyhow it made things fairer to the Sydenham side.

But Phyllis and Phoebe at once assumed, not without secret gladness, that the burthen of this responsibility would fall upon them. Oswald Sydenham was away in the heart of Africa; Lady Charlotte Sydenham was also abroad. She had telegraphed, "Unwell impossible to return to England six weeks continue children's life as hitherto." That seemed to promise a second sleeping partner in the business.

The sisters decided to continue The Ingle-Nook as the children's home, and made the necessary arrangements with Mr. Sycamore, the family solicitor, to that end.

They discussed their charges very carefully and fully. Phyllis was for a meticulous observance of Arthur's known or assumed "wishes," but Phoebe took a broader view. Mary too pointed out the dangers of

too literal an adhesion to precedent.

"We want everything to go on exactly as it did when they were alive," said Phyllis to Mary.

"Things 'ave got to be different," said Mary.

"Not if we can help it," said Aunt Phyllis.

"They'll *grow*," said Mary after reflection.

Phoebe became eloquent in the evening.

"We are to have the advantages of maternity, Phyllis, without — without the degradation. It is a solemn trust. Blessed are we among women, Phyllis. I feel a Madonna. We are Madonnas, Phyllis. Modern Madonnas. Just Touched by the Wings of the Dove.... These little souls dropped from heaven upon our knees.... Poor Arthur! It is our task to guide his offspring to that high destiny he might have attained. *Look*, Phyllis!"

With her flat hand she indicated the long garden path that Dolly had planned.

Phyllis peered forward without intelligence. "What is it?" she asked.

Phyllis perceived that Phoebe was flushed with poetical excitement. And Phoebe's voice dropped mystically to a deep whisper. "Don't you see? White lilies! A coincidence, of course. But — Beautiful."

"For a child with a high destiny, I doubt if Peter is careful enough with his clothes," said Phyllis, trying to sound a less Pre-Raphaelite note. "He was a perfect little Disgrace this afternoon."

"The darling! But I understand.... Joan too has much before her, Phyllis. As yet their minds are blank, tabula rasa; of either of them there is still to be made — anything. Peter — upon this Rock I set — a New Age. When women shall come to their own. Joan again. Joan of Arc. Coincidences no doubt. But leave me my fancies. Fancies if you will. For me they are no fancies. Before the worlds, Phyllis, we were made for this."

She rested her chin on her hand, and stared out into the blue twilight, a brooding prophetess.

"Only a woman can understand a woman," she said presently. "Not a Word of this, Phyllis, to Others."

"I wish we had bought some cigarettes this afternoon," said

Phyllis.

"The little red glow," reflected Phoebe indulgently. "It helps. But I don't want to smoke tonight. It would spoil it. Smoke! Let the Flame burn clear awhile.... We will get in cigarettes tomorrow."

§ 7

JOAN and Peter remained unaware of the great destinies before them. More observant persons than they were might have guessed there were deep meanings in the way in which Aunt Phoebe smoothed back their hair from their foreheads and said "Ah," and bade them "Mark it well" whenever she imparted any general statement, but they took these things merely as her particular way of manifesting the irrational quality common to all grown-up people. Also she would say "Dignity! Your mission!" when they howled or fought. It was to the manuscript that grew into a bigger and bigger pile upon what had been Arthur's writing-desk in Arthur's workroom, that she restricted her most stirring ideas. She wrote there daily, going singing to it as healthy young men go singing to their bathrooms. She splashed her mind about and refreshed herself greatly. She wrote in a large hand, punctuating chiefly with dashes. She had conceived her book rather in the manner of the prophetic works of the admired Mr. Ruskin — with Carlylean lapses. It was to be called Hail Bambino and the Grain of Mustard Seed. It was all about the tremendousness of children.

The conscientious valiance of Aunt Phoebe was very manifest in the opening. "Caesar," the book began, "and the son of Semele burst strangely into this world, but Jesus, Mohammed, Confucius, Newton, Darwin, Robert Burns, were born as peacefully as you or I. Nathless they came for such ends — if indeed one can think of any ending thereto! — as blot out the stars. Yesterday a puling babe — for Jesus puled, Mohammed puled, let us not spare ourselves, Newton, a delicate child, puled most offensively — Herod here and bacteria there, infantile colic, tuberculosis and what not, searched for each little life, in vain, and so to- day behold springing victoriously from each vital granule a tree of Teaching, of Consequence, that buds and

burgeons and shoots and for ever spreads so that the Gates of Hell may not prevail against it! Here it is the Tree of Spirituality, here the Tree of Thought, predestined intertwiner with the Tree of Asgard, here in our last instance a chanting Beauty, a heartening lyrical Yawp and Whirlaboo. And forget it not, whatever else be forgotten, the Word of the Wise, '*as the twig is bent the tree inclines.*' So it is and utterly that we realize the importance of education, the pregnant intensity of the least urgency, the hint, the gleam, the offering of service, to these First Tender Years."

Here Aunt Phoebe had drawn breath for a moment, before she embarked upon her second paragraph; and here we will leave Aunt Phoebe glowing amidst her empurpled prose.

Joan and Peter took the substitution of Aunt Phoebe muttering like a Sibyl overhead and Aunt Phyllis, who was really amusing with odd drawings and twisted paper toys and much dancing and running about, in the place of Daddy and Mummy, with the stoical acceptance of the very young. About Daddy and Mummy there hung a faint flavour of departure but no sense of conclusive loss. No clear image and expectation of a return had been formed. No day of definite disappointment ever came. After all the essential habitual person, Mary, was still there, and all the little important routines of child-life continued very much as they had always done.

Yet there was already the dawn of further apprehensions in Peter's mind at least. One day Peter picked up a dead bird in the garden, a bird dead with no injuries manifest. He tried to make it stand up and peck.

"It ain't no good, Master Peter; it's dead," said Mary.

"What's dead?" said Peter.

"*That* is."

"*Gone* dead,"said Peter.

"And won't ever go anything else now — except smell, said Mary.

Peter reflected. Later he re-visited the dead bird and was seen in profound meditation over it. Then he repaired to Aunt Phyllis and confided his intention of immortality.

"Peter," he said, "not go dead — nohow."

"Of course not," said Aunt Phyllis. " He's got too much sense.

The idea!”

This was reassuring. But alone it was not enough.

“Joan not go dead,” he said. “No.”

“Certainly she shan’t,” said Aunt Phyllis and awaited further decisions.

“Pussy not go dead.”

“Not until ninety times nine.”

“Aunt Phyllis not go dead. Marewi not go dead.”

He reflected further. He tried, “Mummy and Daddy not go dead....”

Then after thought, “When are Daddy and Mummy coming back again?”

Aunt Phyllis told a wise lie. “Some day. Not for a long time. They’ve gone — oh, ever so far.”

“Farther than ever so,” said Peter.

He reflected. “When they come back Peter will be a Big Boy. Mummy and Daddy ‘ardly know ‘im.”

And from that time, Daddy and Mummy ceased to be thought of further as immediate presences, and became hero and heroine in a dream of tomorrow, a dream of returning happiness when life was dull, of release and vindication when life was hard, a pleasant dream, a hope, a basis for imaginative anticipations and pillow fairy tales, sleeping Parents like those sleeping Kings who figure in the childhood of nations, like King Arthur or Barbarossa. Sometimes it was one parent and sometimes it was the other that dominated the thought, “When Mummy comes back.... When Daddy comes back.”

Joan learnt very soon to say it too.

§ 8

Death was too big a thing for Peter to comprehend. He had hardly begun yet with life. And he had made not even a beginning with religion. He had never been baptized; he had learnt no prayers at his mother’s knee. The priceless Mary had come to the Stublands warranted a churchwoman, but as with so many of her class, her orthodoxy had been only a professional uniform to cloak a very keen

hostility and contempt for the clergy, and she dropped quite readily into the ways of a household in which religion was entirely ignored. The first Peter heard of religion was at the age of four and a half, and that was from a serious friend of Mary's, a Particular Baptist, who came for a week's visit to The Ingle-Nook. The visitor was really distressed at the spiritual outlook of the two children. She borrowed Peter for a "little walk." She thought she would begin with him and try Joan afterwards. Then as plainly and impressively as possible she imparted the elements of her faith to Peter and taught him a brief, simple prayer. "He's a Love," she told Mary, "and so Quick! It's a shime to keep him such a little heathen. I didn't say that prayer over twice before he had it Pat."

Mary was rather moved by her friend's feelings. She felt that she was going behind the back of the aunts, but nevertheless she saw no great harm in what had happened The deaths of Arthur and Dolly had shaken Mary's innate scepticism; she had a vague feeling that there might be grave risks, well worth consideration, beyond the further edge of life.

Aunt Phyllis was the first of the responsible people overhead to discover what had happened. Peter loved his prayer; it was full of the most beautiful phrases; no words had ever so filled his mouth and mind. There was for example, "For Jesus Krice sake Amen." Like a song. You could use it anywhere. Aunt Phyllis found him playing trains with his bricks in the nursery one afternoon. "Hoo! Chuff-Chuff. Chuff-Chuff. Change for Reigate, change for London. For Jesus Krice sake Amen."

Aunt Phyllis sat down in the little chair. Peter, she said, "who is this Jesus Krice?"

Peter was reluctant to give information. I know all about 'im," he said, and would at first throw no other light on the matter.

Then he relented and told a wonder. He turned his bacK on his brick train and drew close to Aunt Phyllis. His manner was solemn and impressive exactly as Mary's friend's had been; his words were as slow and deliberate. "Jesus Krice could go dead and come alive again," he said, "over and over, whenever He wanted to."

And having paused a moment to complete the effect of this marvel, Peter turned about again, squatted down like a little brown

holland mushroom with a busy little knob on the top, and resumed his shouting. “Hoo! Chuff-Chuff. Chuff-Chuff. Chuff.”

§ 9

One day Mary with an unaccustomed urgency in her manner hurried Joan and Peter out of the garden and into the nursery, and there tidied them up with emphasis. Joan showed fight a bit but not much; Peter was thinking of something else and was just limp. Then Mary took them down to the living-room, the big low room with the ingle-nook and the dining-table in the far bay beside the second fireplace. There they beheld a large female Visitor of the worst sort. They approached her with extreme reluctance, impelled by Mary’s gentle but persistent hand. The Visitor was sitting in the window-seat with Aunt Phyllis beside her. And Aunt Phoebe was standing before the little fireplace. But these were incidental observations; the great fact was the Visitor.

She was the largest lady that Peter had ever seen; she had a plumed hat with black chiffon and large purple bows and a brim of soft black stuff and suchlike things, and she wore a large cape in three tiers and a large black feather boa that hissed when she moved and disseminated feathers. Her shoulders were enormously exaggerated by a kind of vast epaulette, and after the custom of all loyal Anglicans in those days her neck was tightly swathed about and adorned with a big purple bow. Everything she wore had been decorated and sewn upon, and her chequered skirts below were cut out by panels and revelations of flounced purple. In the midst of this costume, beneath the hat and a pale blonde fuss of hair, was set a large, pale, freckled, square-featured face with two hard blue eyes and a fascinating little tussock of sandy hair growing out of one cheek that instantly captured the eye of the little boy. And out of the face proceeded a harsh voice, slow, loud, and pitched in that note of arrogance which was the method of the ruling class in those days. “So these are our little Wards,” said the voice, and as she spoke her lips wrinkled and her teeth showed.

She turned to Phyllis with a confidential air, but spoke still in the same clear tones. “Which is the By-blow, my dear, the Boy or the

Gel?”

“Lady Charlotte!” exclaimed Phyllis, and then spoke in-audibly, explaining something.

But Peter made a note of “By-blow.” It was a lovely word.

“Not even in Black. They ought to wear Black,” he heard the big lady say.

Then he found himself being scrutinized.

“Haugh!” said the big lady, making a noise like the casual sounds emitted by large wading birds. “They both take after the Sydenhams, anyhow. They might be brother and sister!”

“Practically they are,” said Aunt Phoebe.

Lady Charlotte confuted her with an unreal smile. “Practically *not*,” she said decisively.

There was a little pause. “Well, Master Stubland,” said the Visitor abruptly and quite terrifyingly. “What have you got to say for yourself?”

As Peter had not yet learnt to swear freely, he had nothing to say for himself just at that moment.

“Not very Bright yet,” said Lady Charlotte goadingly. “I suppose they have run wild hitherto.”

“It was poor Arthur’s wish—” began Aunt Phyllis.

“We must alter all that now,” Lady Charlotte interrupted. “Tell me your name, little boy.”

“Peter Picktoe,” said Peter with invention. “You going to stop here long?”

“So you’ve found your tongue at last,” said Lady Charlotte. “That’s only your nickname. What’s your proper name?”

“Can we go out in the garden now, Auntie?” said Peter; “and play at By- blows?”

“Garden now,” said Joan.

“He’s Brighter than you seem to think,” said Aunt Phoebe with gentle sarcasm.

“Commina *Garden*,” said Joan, tugging at Peter’s pinafore.

“But I must ask him his name first,” said Lady Charlotte, “and,” with growing firmness, “he must tell it me. Come! What is your name, my dear?”

“Peter,” prompted Mary.

“Peter,” said Peter, satisfied that it was a silly game and anxious to get it over and away from this horror as soon as possible.

“And who gave you that name?”

“Nobody; it’s mine,” said Peter.

“Isn’t the poor child even *beginning* to learn his Catechism?” asked Lady Charlotte.

“Yes, the garden,” said Aunt Phoebe to Mary, and the scene began to close upon the children as they moved gardenward. Joan danced ahead. Peter followed thoughtfully before Mary’s gentle urgency. What was that last word? “Cattymism?” Then a fresh thought occurred to him.

“Mary,” said Peter, in an impassioned and all too audible undertone; “look. She’s got a Whisker. *Here*! Troof!”

“It was my brother’s wish,” Phyllis was explaining as the children disappeared through the door....

“It isn’t the modern way to begin so early with rote-learning,” said Aunt Phoebe; “the little fellow’s still not five.”

“He’s a pretty good size.”

“Because we haven’t worried his mind yet. Milk, light, play, like a happy little animal.”

“We must change all that now,” said Lady Charlotte Sydenham with conviction.

CHAPTER V. — THE CHRISTENING

§ 1

LADY CHARLOTTE SYDENHAM was one of those large, ignorant, ruthless, low- church, wealthy, and well-born ladies who did so much to make England what it was in the days before the Great War. She was educated with the utmost care by totally illiterate governesses who were ladies by birth, chiefly on the importance and privileges of her social position, the Anglican faith and Mrs. Strickland's "Queens of England"; she had French from a guaranteed Protestant teacher and German from a North German instructress (Lutheran Protestant), who also taught her to play the piano with the force and precision of a crack regiment of cavalry. Subsequently she had improved her mind by reading memoirs and biographies of noble and distinguished people and by travel amidst obvious scenery and good foreign hotels. She had married at two-and-thirty when things were beginning to look rather doubtful for her.

Old Mr. Sydenham, who had made his money and undermined his health in India in the John Company days, had been fifty-four, and from the very outset she had been ever so much too much for him. At sixty-five he had petered out like an exhausted lode. She had already got an abject confidential maid into thorough training, and was fully prepared for widowhood. She hung out big black bonnets and expensive black clothes upon her projections, so as to look larger than ever, and took her place and even more than her place, very resolutely, among the leaders of the county Anglicans.

She had early mastered the simple arts of county family intercourse. Her style in contradiction was very good, her insults were frequently witty, she could pretend to love horses, there was no need for her to pretend to despise and hate tradesmen and working people, and she kept herself well-informed upon the domestic details of the large and spreading family of the "Dear Queen." She was very good at taking down impertinent people, and most people struck her as impertinent; she could make a young man or a plain girl or a social inferior "feel small" quicker (and smaller) than almost any one

in that part of Surrey. She was a woman without vices; her chief pleasure was to feel all right and important and the centre of things, and to that her maid as a sort of grand Vizieress, her well-disciplined little household and her choice of friends ministered. The early fear of "Romanists" in which she had been trained had been a little dispelled by the wider charities of maturity, but she held secularists and socialists in an ever-deepening abhorrence. They planned, she knew, to disturb the minds of the lower classes, upset her investments, behead the Dear Queen, and plunge the whole world into vice and rapine and Sabbath-breaking. She interested herself in such leisure as the care of her own health and comfort left her, in movements designed to circumvent and defeat the aims of these enemies of God and (all that was worth considering in) Man. She even countenanced quite indulgent charities if they seemed designed to take the wind out of the sails of socialism. She drove about the district in a one-horse carriage and delivered devastating calls.

Such was the lady whom Arthur had made one of the four guardians of his little son and niece. He had seen her twice; he had rather liked a short speech of five sentences she made at a Flower Show, and he had heard her being extremely rude to a curate. He believed her to be wealthy and trustworthy and very well suited to act as a counter influence to any extravagant tendencies there might be in Aunt Phoebe. Also she was Dolly's cousin, and appointing her had seemed a sort of compensation for altering his will without Dolly's knowledge. Besides, it had been very unlikely that she would ever act. And he had been in a hurry when he altered his will, and could not think of any one else.

Now Lady Charlotte was not by any means satisfied by her visit to The Ingle-Nook. The children looked unusually big for their years and disrespectful and out of hand. It was clear they had not taken to her. The nurse, too, had a sort of unbroken look in her eye that was unbecoming in a menial position. The aunts were odd persons; Phyllis was much too disposed to accentuate the father's wishes, and Lady Charlotte had a most extraordinary and indecent feeling — all the time she was talking to her that Aunt Phoebe wasn't wearing stays. (Could the woman have forgotten them, or was it deliberate? It was like pretending to be clothed when you were really naked.)

Their conversation had been queer, most queer. They did not seem to realize that she was by way of being a leader in the county and accustomed to being listened to with deference. Nearly everything she said they had quietly contradicted or ignored. The way in which the children were whisked away from her presence was distinctly disrespectful. She had a right, it was her duty, to look at them well and question them clearly about their treatment, to see that they had proper treatment, and it was necessary that they should fully understand her importance in their lives. But those two oddly-dressed young women — youngish women, rather, for probably they were both over thirty — did not themselves seem to understand that she was naturally the Principal Guardian.

Phyllis had been constantly referring to the wishes of this Stubland person who had married George Sydenham's Dolly. Apparently the woman supposed that those wishes were to override every rational consideration for the children's welfare. After all, the boy was as much Dolly's child as a Stubland, and as for the girl, except that the Stublands had been allowed to keep her, she wasn't a Stubland at all. She wasn't anything at all. She was pure Charity. There was not the slightest obligation upon Any one to do Anything for her. Making her out to be an equal with a legitimate child was just the subversive, wrong-headed sort of thing these glorified shoddy-makers, the Stublands, would do. But like to like. Their own genealogy probably wouldn't bear scrutiny for six generations. She ought to be trained as a Maid: There were none too many trained Maids nowadays. But Arthur Stubland had actually settled money on her.

There was much to put right in this situation, a great occasion for a large, important lady to impress herself tremendously on a little group of people insultingly disposed to be unaware of her. The more she thought the matter over the more plainly she saw her duty before her. She did not talk to servants; no lady talks to servants; but it was her habit to think aloud during the ministrations of Unwin, her maid, and often Unwin would overhear and reply quite helpfully.

"It's an odd job I've got with these two new Wards of mine," she said.

"They put too much on you, m'lady," said Unwin, pinning.

“I shall do what is Right. I shall see that what is Right is done.”

“You don’t spare yourself enough, m’lady.”

“I must go over again and again. Those women don’t like me. I disturb them. They’re up to no good.”

“It won’t be the first Dark Place, m’lady, you’ve thrown light into.”

The lady surveyed her reflection in the glass with a knowing expression. She knitted her brows, partly closed one eye, and nodded slowly as she spoke.

“There’s something queer about the boy’s religious instruction. It’s being kept back. Now why did they get embarrassed when I asked who were the godparents? I ought to have followed that up.”

“My godfathers and godmothers wherein I was made,” murmured Unwin, with the quiet satisfaction of the well-instructed.

“Properly it’s the business of the godparents. I have a right to know.”

“I suppose the poor boy has godparents, m’lady,” said Unwin, coming up from obscure duties with the skirt.

“But of course he has godparents!”

“Pardon me, m’lady, but not of course.”

“But what do you mean, Unwin?”

“I hardly like to say it, m’lady, of relations, ‘owever distant, of ours. Still, m’lady —

“Don’t Chew it about, Unwin.”

“Then I out with it, m’lady. ‘Ave they been baptized, mlady, either of them? ‘Ave they been baptized?”

§ 2

Before a fortnight was out Lady Charlotte had made two more visits to The Ingle-Nook, she had had an acrimonious dispute” upon religious questions with Phoebe, and she was well on her way to the terrible realization that these two apparently imbecile ladies in the shapeless “arty” dresses were really socialists and secularists — of course, like all other socialists and secularists, “of the worst type.” It was impossible that those two unfortunate children should be left in

their aunts' "clutches," and she prepared herself with a steadily increasing determination and grandeur to seize upon and take over and rescue these two innocent souls from the moral and spiritual destruction that threatened them. Once in her hands, Lady Charlotte was convinced it would not be too late to teach the little fellow a proper respect for those in authority over him and to bring home to the girl an adequate sense of that taint upon her life of which she was still so shockingly unaware. The boy must be taught not to call attention to people's physical peculiarities, and to answer properly when spoken to; a certain sharpness would not be lost upon him; and it was but false kindness to the girl to let her grow up in ignorance of her disadvantage. Sooner or later it would have to be brought home to her, and the later it was the more difficult would it be for her to accept her proper position with a becoming humility. And a thing of immediate urgency was, of course, the baptism of both these little lost souls.

In pursuit of these entirely praiseworthy aims Lady Charlotte was subjected to a series of very irritating rebuffs that did but rouse her to a greater firmness. On her fourth visit she was not even allowed to see the children; the specious excuse was made that they were "out for a walk," and when she passed that over forgivingly and said: "It does not matter very much. What I want to arrange today is the business of the Christening," both aunts began to answer at once and in almost identical words. Phoebe gave way to her sister. "If their parents had wanted them Christened," said Aunt Phyllis, "there was ample time for them to have had it done."

"We are the parents now," said Lady Charlotte.

"And two of us are quite of the parents' mind."

"You forget that I also speak for my nephew Oswald," said Lady Charlotte.

"But do you?" said Aunt Phyllis, with almost obtruded incredulity.

"Certainly," said Lady Charlotte, with a sweeping, triumphant gesture, a conclusive waving of the head.

"You know he is on his way back from Uganda?" Aunt Phyllis remarked with an unreal innocence.

Lady Charlotte had not known. But she stood up gallantly to the

blow. “I know he will support me by insisting upon the proper treatment of these poor children.”

“What can a man know about the little souls of children?” cried Phoebe.

But Aunt Phyllis restrained her. “I have no doubt Mr. Sydenham will have his own views in the matter,” said Phyllis.

“I have no doubt he will,” said Lady Charlotte imposingly....

Even Mary showed the same disposition to insolence. As Lady Charlotte was returning along the little path through the bushes that ran up to the high road where her carriage with the white horse waited, she saw Mary and the children approaching. Peter saw Lady Charlotte first and flew back. “Lady wiv de Whisker!” he said earnestly and breathlessly, and dodged off into the bushes. Joan hesitated, and fled after him. By a detour the fluttering little figures outflanked the great lady and escaped homeward.

“Come here, children!” she cried. “I want you.”

Spurt on the part of the children.

“They are really most distressingly Rude,” she said to Mary. “It’s inexcusable. Tell them to come back. I have something to say to them.”

“They won’t, Mum,” said Mary — though surely aware of the title.

“But I tell you to.”

“It’s no good, Mum. It’s shyness. If they won’t come, they won’t.”

“But, my good woman, have you *no* control?”

“They always race ‘ome like that,” said Mary.

“Then you aren’t fit to control them. As one of the children’s guardians, I But we shall see.”

She went her way, a stately figure of passion.

“Orty old Ag,” said Mary, and dismissed the encounter from her mind.

§ 3

“You got your rights like anybody, m’lady,” said Unwin.

It was that phrase put it into Lady Charlotte's head to consult her solicitor. He opened new vistas to her imagination.

Lady Charlotte's solicitor was a lean, long, faded blond of forty-five or so. He was the descendant of five generations of Lincoln's Inn solicitors, a Low Churchman, a man of notoriously pure life, and very artful indeed. He talked in a thin, high tenor voice, and was given to nibbling his thumbnail and wincing with his eyes as he talked. His thumbnail produced gaps of indistinctness in his speech.

"Powers of a guardian, m'lady. Defends upon whafower want exercise over thinfant."

"I do wish you'd keep your thumb out of your mouth," said Lady Charlotte.

"Sorry," said Mr. Grimes, wincing and trying painfully to rearrange his arm. "Still, I'd like to know — position."

"There are three other guardians."

"Generous allowance," said Mr. Grimes. "Do you all act?"

"One of us is lost in the Wilds of Africa. The others I want to consult you about. They do not seem to me to be fit and proper persons to be entrusted with the care of young children, and they do not seem disposed to afford me a proper share in the direction of affairs."

"Ah!" said Mr. Grimes, replacing his thumb. "Sees t'point t'Chacery."

Lady Charlotte disregarded this comment. She wished to describe Aunts Phyllis and Phoebe in her own words.

"They are quite extraordinary young women — not by any stretch of language to be called Ladies. They dress in that way — like the pictures in the Grosvenor Gallery."

"Aesthetic?"

"I could find a harsher word for it. They smoke. Not a nice thing for children to see. I suspect them strongly of vegetarianism. From something one of them said. In which case the children will not be properly nourished. And they speak quite openly of socialism in front of their charges. Neither of the poor little creatures had been bought a scrap of mourning. Not a scrap. I doubt if they have even been made to understand that their parents are dead. But that is only the beginning. I am totally unable to ascertain whether either of the

poor mites has been christened. Apparently they have not....”

Mr. Grimes withdrew his thumb for a moment. “You are perfectly within yer rights — insisting — knowing” — thumb replaced— “all thlese things.”

“Exactly. And in having my say in their general upbringing.”

“How far do they prevent that?” “Oh; they get in my way. They send the children out whenever they feel I am coming. They do not listen to me and accept any suggestions I make. Oh! — sniff at it!”

“And you want to make ‘em?”

“I want to do my duty by those two children, Mr. Grimes. It is a charge that has been laid upon me.”

Mr. Grimes reflected, rubbing his thumb thoughtfully along the front of his teeth.

“They are getting no religious instruction whatever,” said Lady Charlotte. “None.”

“Hot was the ‘ligion father?” said Mr. Grimes suddenly. Lady Charlotte was not to be deterred by a silly and inopportune question. She just paused for an instant and reddened. “He was a member of the Church of England,” she said.

“Even if he wasn’t,” said Mr. Grimes understandingly, but with thumb still in place, “Ligion necessary t’welfare. Case of Besant Chil’n zample. Thlis is Klistian country.”

“I sometimes doubt it,” said Lady Charlotte.

“Legally,” said Mr. Grimes.

“If the law did its duty!”

“You don’t wanner goatallaw fewcan ‘void it?” asked Mr. Grimes, grasping his job.

Lady Charlotte assumed an expression of pained protest, and lifted one black-gloved hand. Mr. Grimes hastily withdrew his thumbnail from his mouth. “I am saying, Lady Charlotte, that what you want to do is to assert your authority, if possible, without legal proceedings.”

He was trying to get the whole situation clear in his mind before he tendered any exact advice. Most children who are quarrelled over in this way gravitate very rapidly into the care of the Lord Chancellor; to that no doubt these children would come; but Lady Charlotte was a prosperous lady with a lot of fight in her and a knack

of illegality, and before these children became Wards in Chancery she might, under suitable provocation, run up a very considerable little bill for expenses and special advice in extracting her from such holes as she got herself into. It is an unjust libel upon solicitors that they tempt their clients into litigation. So far is this unjust that the great majority will spare neither time nor expense in getting a case settled out of court.

Nor did Lady Charlotte want to litigate. Courts are uncertain, irritating places. She just wanted to get hold of her two wards, and to deal with them in such a way as to inflict the maximum of annoyance and humiliation upon those queer Stubland aunts. And to save the children from socialism, secularism, Catholicism, and all the wandering wolves of opinion that lie in wait for the improperly trained.

But also she went in fear of Oswald. Oswald was one of the few human beings of whom she went in awe. He was always rude and overbearing with her. From the very first moment when he had seen her as his uncle's new wife, he had realized in a flash of boyish intuition that if he did not get in with an insult first, he would be her victim. So his first words to her had been an apparently involuntary "0 God!" Then he had pretended to dissemble his contempt with a cold politeness. Those were the days of his good looks; he was as tall and big as he was ever to be, and she had expected a "little midshipmite," whom she would treat like a child, and possibly even send early to bed. From the first she was at a disadvantage. He had a material hold on her too, now. He was his uncle's heir and her Trustee; and she had the belief of all Victorian women in the unlimited power of Trustees to abuse their trust unless they are abjectly propitiated. He used to come and stay in her house as if it was already his own; the servants would take their orders from him. She was assuring Grimes as she had assured the Stubland aunts that he was on her side; "The Sydenhams are all sound churchmen." But even as she said this she saw his grim, one-sided face and its one hard intent eye pinning her. "Acting without authority again, my good aunt," he would say. "You 11 get yourself into trouble yet."

That was one of his invariable stabs whenever he came to see her. Always he would ask, sooner or later, in that first meeting:

“Any one bagged you for libel yet! No! Or insulting behaviour? Some one will get you sooner or later.”

“Anything that *I* say about people,” she would reply with dignity, “is True, Oswald.”

“They’ll double the damages if you stick that out.”...

And she saw him now standing beside the irritating, necessary Grimes, sardonically ready to take part against her, prepared even to give those abominable aunts an unendurable triumph over her....

“I want no vulgar litigation,” she said. “Everything ought to be done as quietly as possible. There is no need to ventilate the family affairs of the Sydenhams, and particularly when I tell you that one of the children is — She hesitated. “Irregular.”

The thumb went back, and Mr. Grimes’ face assumed a diplomatic innocence. “Whascalled a love-shild?”

“Exactly,” said Lady Charlotte, with a nod that forbade all research for paternity. If Joan were assumed to be of Stubland origin, so much the better for Lady Charlotte’s case. “Everything must be done quietly and privately,” she said.

“Sactly,” said Mr. Grimes, and was reminded of his thumb by her eye. He coughed, put his arm down, and sat up in his chair. “They have possession of the children?” he said.

“Should I be here?” she appealed.

“Ah! That gives the key of the situation.... Would they litigate?”

“Why should they?”

“If by chance you got possession?”

“That would be difficult.”

“But not impossible? Perhaps something could be managed. With my assistance. Once or twice before I have had cases that turned on the custody of minors. Custody, like possession, is nine points of the law. Then they would have to come into court.”

“We want nobody to come into court.”

“Exactly, m’lady. I am pointing out to you how improbable it is that they will do so. I am gauging their disinclination.”

The attitude of Mr. Grimes relaxed unconsciously until once more the teeth and thumbnail were at their little play again.

He continued with thoughtful eyes upon his client’s expression. “Possibly they wouldn’t li’e ‘nquiry into character.”

“Oh, do take that thumb away!” cried Lady Charlotte. “And don’t lounge.”

“I’m sorry, m’lady,” said Mr. Grimes, sitting up. “I was saying, practically, do we know of any little irregularities, anything — I won’t say actually immoral, but indiscreet, in these two ladies’ lives? Anything they wouldn’t like to have publicly discussed. In the case of most people there’s a Something. Few people will readily and cheerfully face a discussion of Character. Even quite innocent people.”

“They’re certainly very lax — very. They smoke. Inordinately. I saw the cigarette stains on their fingers. And unless I am very much mistaken, one of them — well” — Lady Charlotte leant forward towards him with an air of scandalous condescension— “she wears no stays at all, Mr. Grimes — none at all! No! She’s a very queer young woman indeed in my opinion.”

“M’m!... No visitors to the house — no gentlemen, for example — who might seem a little dubious!”

Lady Charlotte did not know. “I will get my maid to make enquiries — discreetly. We certainly ought to know that.”

“The elder one writes poetry,” she threw out.

“We must see to that, too. If we can procure some of that. Nowadays there is quite a quantity — of very indiscreet poetry. Many people do not realize the use that might be made of it against them. And even if the poetry is not indiscreet, it creates a prejudice....”

He proceeded to unfold his suggestions. Lady Charlotte must subdue herself for a while to a reassuring demeanour towards the aunts at The Ingle-Nook. She must gain the confidence of the children. “And of the children’s maid!” he said acutely. “She’s rather an important factor.”

“She’s a very impertinent young woman,” said Lady Charlotte.

“But you must reassure her for a time, Lady Charlotte, if the children are to come to you — ultimately.”

“I can make the sacrifice,” the lady said; “if you think it is my duty.”

Meanwhile Mr. Grimes would write a letter, a temperate letter, yet “just a little stiff in tone,” pointing out the legal and enforceable right

of his client to see and have free communication with the children, and to be consulted about their affairs, and trusting that the Misses Stubland would see their way to accord these privileges without further evasion.

§ 4

The Stubland aunts were not the ladies to receive a solicitor's letter calmly. They were thrown into a state of extreme trepidation. A solicitor's letter had for them the powers of an injunction. It was clear that Lady Charlotte must be afforded that reasonable access, that consultative importance to which she was entitled. Phyllis became extremely reasonable. Perhaps they had been a little disposed to monopolize the children. They were not the only Madonnas upon the tree. That was Phyllis's response to this threat. Phoebe was less disposed to make concessions. "Those children are a sacred charge to us," she said. "What can a woman of that sort know or care for children? Lapdogs are her children. Let us make such concessions as we must, but let us *guard essentials*, Phyllis.... As the apples of our eyes...."

In the wake of this letter came Lady Charlotte herself, closely supported by the faithful Unwin, no longer combative, no longer actively self-assertive, but terribly suave. Her movements were accompanied by unaccustomed gestures of urbanity, done chiefly by throwing out the open hand sideways, and she made large, kind tenor noises as reassuring as anything Mr. Grimes could have wished. She astonished Aunt Phyllis with "Ha'ow are the dear little things today?"

Mary was very mistrustful, and Aunt Phyllis had to expostulate with her. "You see, Mary, it seems she's the children's guardian just as we are. They must see a little of her...."

"And *ha-ow's* Peter?" said Lady Charlotte.

"Very well, thank you, Lady Charlotte," said Mary.

"Very well, thank you lazy Cha'lot," said Peter.

"That's right. We shall soon get along Famously. And how's my little Joan?"

Joan took refuge behind Mary.

"Pee-Bo!" said Lady Charlotte tremendously, and craned her head.

Peter regarded the lady incredulously. He wanted to ask a question about the whisker. But something in Mary's grip upon his wrist warned him not to do that. In this world, he remembered suddenly, there are Unspeakable Things. Perhaps this was one of them.... That made it all the more fascinating, of course.

Lady Charlotte was shown the nursery; she stayed to nursery tea. She admired everything loudly.

"And so these are your Toys, lucky Peter. Do you play with them all?"

"Joan's toys too," said Joan.

"Such a Pretty Room!" said Lady Charlotte with gestures of approval. "Such a Pretty Outlook. I wonder you didn't make its the Drawing-Room. Isn't it a pretty room, Unwin?"

"Very pritty, m'lady."

Very skilfully she made her first tentative towards the coup she had in mind.

"One day, Mary, you must bring them over to Tea with *me*," she said....

"I do so want the dear children to come over to me," she said presently in the garden to aunts Phyllis and Phoebe.

"If the would come over quite informally-with their Mary. Just to Tea and scamper about the shrubbery...."

Mary and Unwin surveyed the garden conversation from the nursery window, and talked sourly and distrustfully.

"Been with 'er long?" asked Mary.

"Seven years," said Unwin.

"Purgat'ry?" said Mary.

"She 'as to be managed," said Unwin.

§ 5

The day of the great coup of Lady Charlotte was tragic and painful from the beginning. Peter got up wicked. It was his custom, and a

very bad one, to bang with his spoon on the bottom of his little porringer as he ate his porridge.

It had grown out of his appreciation of the noise the spoon made as it dug up his food. Now, as Mary said, he "*d'liberately 'ammered.*" How frequently had Mary not told him he would do it "once too often!" This was the once too often. The porridge plate cracked and broke, and the porridge and the milk and the sugar escaped in horrid hot gouts and lumps over tablecloth and floor and Peter's knees. It s was a fearful mess. It was enough to cow the stoutest heart. Peter, a great boy of five, lifted up his voice and wept.

So this dire day began.

Then there was a new thin summer blouse, a glaring white silk thing, for Peter, and in those days all new things meant trouble for him. It was put on after a hot fight with Mary; his head came through flushed and crumpled. But Joan accepted her new blouse as good as gold. Then for some reason the higher powers would not let us go and look at the kittens, the dear little blind kittens in the outhouse. There were six of them, all different, for the Ingle-Nook cat was a generous, large-minded creature. Only after a dispute in which Joan threatened to go the way of Peter was "just a glimpse" conceded. And they were softer and squealier and warmer than anything one had ever imagined. We wanted to linger. Mary talked of a miracle. "Any time," she said, "one of them kitties may eat up all the others. Any time. Kitties often do that. But it's always the best one does it."

We wanted to stay and see if this would happen. No! We were dragged reluctantly to our walk.

Was it Peter's fault that when we got to the edge of the common the fence of Master's paddock had been freshly tarred? Must a little boy test the freshness of the paint on every fence before he wriggles half under it and stares at Wonderland on the other side? If so, this was a new law.

But anyhow here we were in trouble once more, this beastly new white blouse "completely spoilt," Mary said, and Mary in an awful stew. The walk was to be given up and we were to go home in dire disgrace and change....

Even Aunt Phyllis turned against Peter. She looked at him and said, "O *Peter*! *What* a mess!"

Then it was that sorrow and the knowledge of death came upon Joan.

She was left downstairs while Peter was hauled rather than taken upstairs to change, and in that atmosphere of unrest and disaster it seemed a sweet and comforting thing to do to go and look at the kittens again. But beyond the corner of the house she saw old Groombridge, the Occasional Gardener, digging a hole, and beside him in a pitiful heap lay five wet little objects and close at hand was a pail. Dark apprehension came upon Joan's soul, but she went up to him nevertheless. "What you been doing to my kittays?" she asked.

"I drownded five," said old Groombridge in a warm and kindly voice. "But I kep' the best un. 'E's a beauty, 'e is."

"But why you drownded 'em?" asked Joan.

"Eh! you got to drown kittens, little Missie," said old Groombridge. "Else ud be too many of um. But ollays there's one or so kep'. Callum Jubilee I reckon. 'Tis all the go this year agin."

Joan had to tell some one. She turned about towards the house, but long before she could find a hearer her sorrowful news burst through her. Aunt Phoebe writing Ruskinian about the marvellous purity of childish intuitions was suddenly disturbed by the bitter cry of Niobe Joan going past beneath the window. Joan had a voluminous voice when she was fully roused.

"They been 'n dwouwnded my kittays, Petah. They been 'n dwouwnded my kittays."

§ 6

It seemed to Mary that Lady Charlotte's invitation came as a "perfect godsend." It was at once used to its utmost value to distract the two little flushed and tearful things from their distresses. Great expectations were aroused. That very afternoon they were to go out to tea to Chastlands, a lovely place; they were to have a real ride in a real carriage, not a cab like the station-cab that smells of straw, but a carriage; and Mary was coming too, she was going to wear her best hat with the red flower and enjoy herself "no end," and there would be cake and all sorts of things and a big shrubbery to play in and a

flower garden — oh! miles bigger than our garden. “Only you mustn’t go picking the flowers,” said Mary. “Lady Charlotte won’t like that.”

Was Auntie Phyllis coming too?

No, Auntie wasn’t coming too; she’d love to come, but she couldn’t....

It all began very much as Mary had promised. The carriage with the white horse was waiting punctually at two o’clock on the high road above the house. There was a real carpet, green with a yellow coat-of-arms, on the floor of the carriage, and the same coat-of-arms on the panel of the door; the brass door-handle was so bright and attractive that Mary had to tell Joan to keep her greedy little hands off it or she would fall out. They drove through pine woods for a time and then across a great common with geese on it, and then up a deep-hedged, winding, uphill road and so to an open road that lay over a great cornfield, and then by a snug downland village of thatched white cottages very gay with flowers. And so to a real lodge with a garden round it and a white-aproned gate-keeper, which impressed Mary very favourably.

“It’s a sort of park she has,” said Mary.

As they drew near the house they were met by a very gay and smiling and obviously pretty lady, in a dress of blue cotton stuff and flowers in her hat. She had round blue eyes and glowing cheeks and a rejoicing sort of voice.

“Here they are!” she cried. “Hullo, old Peter! Hullo, old Joan! Would you like to get out?”

They would.

“Would they like to see the garden?”

They would.

And a little bit of “chockky” each?

Glances for approval at Mary and encouraging nods from Mary. They would. They got quite big pieces of chocolate and pouched them solemnly, and went on with grave, unsymmetrical faces. And the bright lady took them each by a hand and began to talk of flowers and birds and all the things they were going to see, a summerhouse, a croquet-poky lawn, a little old pony stable, a churchy-perchy, and all sorts of things. Particularly the churchy-perchy.

Mary dropped behind amicably.

So accompanied it was not very dreadful to meet the great whisker-woman herself in a white and mauve patterned dress of innumerable flounces and a sunshade with a deep valance to it, to match. She didn't come very near to the children, but waved her hand to them and crowed in what was manifestly a friendly spirit. And across the lawn they saw a marvel, a lawn-mower pushed by a man and drawn by a little piebald pony in boots.

"He puts on his booty-pootys when little boys have to take them off, to walk over the grassy green carpet," said the blue cotton lady.

Peter was emboldened to address Lady Charlotte.

"Puts on 'is booty-pootys," he said impressively.

"Wise little pony," said Lady Charlotte.

They saw all sorts of things, the stables, the summer-house, a little pond with a swan upon it, a lane through dark bushes, and so they came to the church.

§ 7

Lady Charlotte had decided to christen both the children.

She was not sure whether she wanted to take possession of them altogether, in spite of Mr. Grimes' suggestion. Her health was uncertain, at any time she might have to go abroad; she was liable to nervous headaches to which the proximity of captive and possibly insurgent children would be unhelpful, and her two pet dogs were past that first happy fever of youth which makes the presence of children acceptable. And also there was Oswald — that woman had said he was coming home. But christened Lady Charlotte was resolved those children should be, at whatever cost. It was her duty. It would be an act of the completest self-vindication, and the completest vindication of sound Anglican ideas. And once it was done it would be done, let the Ingle-Nook aunts rage ever so wildly.

Within a quarter of a mile of Chastlands stood a little church among evergreen trees, Otfield Church, so near to Chastlands and so far from Otfield that Lady Charlotte used to point out, "It's practically my Chapel of Ease." Her outer shrubbery ran to the

churchyard wall, and she had a gate of her own and went to church through a respectful avenue of her own rhododendrons and in by a convenient door. Wiscott, the curate in charge, was an agreeable, easily trodden-on young man with a wife of obscure origins — Lady Charlotte suspected a childhood behind some retail shop — and abject social ambitions. It was Wiscott whose bullying Arthur had overheard when he conceived his admiration for Lady Charlotte. Lady Charlotte had no social prejudices; she liked these neighbours in her own way and would entertain them to tea and even occasionally to lunch. The organ in Otfield church was played in those days by a terrified National schoolmistress, a sound, nice churchwoman of the very lowest educational qualifications permissible, and the sexton, a most respectful worthy old fellow, eked out his income as an extra hand in Lady Charlotte's garden and was the father of one of her housemaids. Moreover he was the husband of a richly grateful wife in whose rheumatism Lady Charlotte took quite a kindly interest. All these things gave Lady Charlotte a nice homelike feeling in God's little house in Otfield; God seemed to come nearer to her there and to be more aware of her importance in His world than anywhere else; and it was there that she proposed to hold the simple ceremony that should snatch Peter and Joan like brands from the burning.

Her plans were made very carefully. Mrs. "Wiscott had a wide and winning way with children, and she was to capture their young hearts from the outset and lead them to the church. Mary, whom Lady Charlotte regarded as doubtfully friendly, was to be detached by Unwin and got away for a talk. At the church would be the curate and the organist and the sexton and his daughter and Cashel, the butler, a very fine type of the more serious variety of Anglican butlers, slender and very active and earnest and a teetotaler. And to the children it would all seem like a little game.

Mr. Wiscott had been in some doubt about the ceremony. He had baptized infants, he had baptized "those of riper years," but he had never yet had to deal with children of four or five. The rubric provides that for such the form for the Public Baptism of Infants is available with the change of the word "infant" to "child" where occasion requires it, but the rubric says nothing of the handling of the

children concerned. He consulted Lady Charlotte. Should he lift up Peter and Joan in succession to the font when the moment of the actual sprinkling came, or should he deal with them as if they were adults? Lady Charlotte decided that he had better lift. “They are only little mites,” said Lady Charlotte.

Now up to that point the ceremony went marvellously according to plan. It is true that Mary wasn’t quite got out of the way; she was obliged to follow at a distance because the children in spite of every hospitality would every now and then look round for her to nod reassuringly to them; but when she saw the rest of the party going into the little church she shied away with the instinctive avoidance of the reluctant church woman, and remained remotely visible through the open doorway afar off in the rhododendron walk conversing deeply with Unwin. They were conversing about the unreasonableness of Unwin’s sister-in-law in not minding what she ate in spite of her indigestion.

The children, poor little heathens! had never been in church before and everything was a wonder. They saw a gentleman standing in the midst of the church and clad in a manner strange to them, in a surplice and cassock, and under it you saw his trousers and boots — it was as if he wore night clothes over his day clothes — and immediately he began to read very fast but yet in a strangely impressive manner out of a book. They had great confidence now in Mrs. Wiscott, and accompanied her into a pew and sat up neatly on hassocks beside her. The gentleman in the white robe kept on reading, and every now and then the others, who had also got hold of books, answered him. At first Peter wanted to laugh, then he got very solemn, and then he began to want to answer too: “wow wow wow,” when the others did. But he knew he had best do it very softly. There was reverence in the air. Then everybody got up and went and stood, and Mrs. Wiscott made Joan and Peter stand, round about the font. She stood close beside Joan and Peter with her hands very reassuringly behind them. Prom this point Peter could see the curate’s Adam’s apple moving in a very fascinating way. So things went on quite successfully until the fatal moment when Mr. Wiscott took Peter up in his arms.

“Come along,” he said very pleasantly — not realizing that Peter

did not like his Adam's apple.

"He's going to show you the pretty water," said Mrs. Wiscott.

"*Naw*!" said Peter sharply and backed as the curate gripped his arm, and then everything seemed to go wrong.

Mr. Wiscott had never handled a sturdy little boy of five before. Peter would have got away if Mrs. Wiscott, abandoning Joan, had not picked him up and handed him neatly to her husband. Then came a breathless struggle on the edge of the font, and upon every one, even upon Lady Charlotte, came a strange sense as though they were engaged in some deed of darkness. The water splashed loudly. It splashed on Peter's face and Peter's abundant voice sent out its S.O.S. call: "Mare-*wi*!"

Mr. Wiscott compressed his lips and held Peter firmly, hushing resolutely, and presently struggled on above a tremendous din towards the sign of the cross....

But Joan had formed her own rash judgments.

She bolted down the aisle and out through the open door, and her voice filled the universe. "They dwounding Petah. They dwounding Petah — like they did the kittays!"

Far away was Mary, but turning towards her amazed.

Joan rushed headlong to her for sanctuary, wild with terror.

"I wanna be *kep*, Marewi," she bawled. "I wanna be *kep*!"

§ 8

But here Mary was to astonish Lady Charlotte. "Why couldn't they tell *me*?" she asked Unwin when she grasped the situation.

"It's all right, Joan," she said. "Nobody ain't killing Peter. You come alongo me and see."

And it was Mary who stilled the hideous bawling of Peter, and Mary who induced Joan to brave the horrors of this great experience and to desist from her reiterated assertion: "Done *wan'* nergenelman t'wash me!"

And it was Mary who said in the carriage going back:

"Don't you say nothing about being naughty to yer Aunt Phyllis and I won't neether."

And so she did her best to avoid any further discussion of the matter.

But in this pacific intention she was thwarted by Lady Charlotte, who presently drove over to The Ingle-Nook to see her "two little Christians" and how Aunt Phoebe was taking it. She had the pleasure of explaining what had happened herself.

"We had them christened," she said. "It all passed off very well,"

"It is an outrage," cried Aunt Phoebe, "on my brother's memory. It must be undone."

"That I fear can never be," said Lady Charlotte serenely, folding her hands before her and smiling loftily.

"Their Little White Souls!" exclaimed Aunt Phoebe, and then seizing a weapon from the enemy's armoury: "*I shall write to our solicitor.*"

§ 9

EVEN Lady Charlotte quailed a little before a strange solicitor; she knew that even Grimes held the secret of many tremendous powers; and when Mr. Sycamore introduced himself as having "had the pleasure of meeting your nephew, Mr. Oswald Sydenham, on one or two occasions," she prepared to be civil, wary, and evasive to the best of her ability. Mr. Sycamore was a very good-looking, rosy little man with silvery hair, twinkling gold spectacles, a soft voice and a manner of imperturbable urbanity. "I felt sure your ladyship would be willing to talk about this little business," he said. "So often a little explanation between reasonable people prevents, oh! the most disagreeable experiences. Nowadays when courts are so very prone to stand upon their dignity and inflict quite excessive penalties upon infractions — such as this."

Lady Charlotte said she was quite prepared to defend all that she had done — anywhere.

Mr. Sycamore hoped she would never be put to that inconvenience. He did not wish to discuss the legal aspects of the case at all, still — there was such a thing as Contempt. He thought that Lady Charlotte would understand that already she had gone

rather far.

“Mr. Sycamore,” said Lady Charlotte, heavily and impressively, “at the present time I am ill, seriously ill. I ought to have been at Bordighera a month ago. But law or no law I could not think of those poor innocent children remaining unbaptized. I stayed — to do my duty.”

“I doubt if any court would sustain the plea that it was your duty, single-handed, without authorization, in defiance it is alleged of the expressed wishes of the parents.”

“But you, Mr. Sycamore, know that it was my duty.”

“That depends, Lady Charlotte, on one’s opinions upon the efficacy of infant baptism. Opinions, you know, vary widely. I have read very few books upon the subject, and what I have read confused me rather than otherwise.”

And Mr. Sycamore put his hands together before him and sat with his head a little on one side regarding Lady Charlotte attentively through the gold-rimmed spectacles.

“Well, anyhow you wouldn’t let children grow up socialists and secularists without some attempt to prevent it!”

“Within the law,” said Mr. Sycamore gently, and coughed behind his hand and continued to beam through his glasses....

They talked in this entirely inconsecutive way for some time with a tremendous air of discussing things deeply. Lady Charlotte expressed a great number of opinions very forcibly, and Mr. Sycamore listened with the manner of a man who had at last after many years of intellectual destitution met a profoundly interesting talker. Only now and then did he seem to question her view. But yet he succeeded in betraying a genuine anxiety about the possible penalties that might fall upon Lady Charlotte. Presently, she never knew quite how, she found herself accusing Joan of her illegitimacy.

“But my dear Lady Charlotte, the poor child is scarcely responsible.”

“If we made no penalties on account of illegitimacy the whole world would dissolve away in immorality.”

Mr. Sycamore looked quite arch. “My dear lady, surely there would be one or two exceptions!”...

Finally, with a tremendous effect of having really got to the

bottom of the matter, he said: “Then I conclude, Lady Charlotte, that now that the children are baptized and their spiritual welfare is assured, all you wish is for things to go on quietly and smoothly without the Miss Stublands annoying you further.”

“Exactly,” said Lady Charlotte. “My one desire is to go abroad — now that my task is done.”

“You have every reason to be satisfied, Lady Charlotte, with things as they are. I take it that what I have to do now is to talk over the Miss Stublands and prevent any vindictive litigation arising out of the informality of your proceedings. I think — yes, I think and hope that I can do it.”

And this being agreed upon Mr. Sycamore lunched comfortably and departed to The Ingle-Nook, where he showed the same receptive intelligence to Aunt Phoebe. There was the same air of taking soundings in the deep places of opinion.

“I understand,” he said at last, “that your one desire is to be free from further raids and invasions from Lady Charlotte. I can quite understand it. Practically she will agree to that. I can secure that. I think I can induce her to waive what she considers to be her rights. You can’t unbaptize the children, but I should think that under your care the effect, whatever the effect may be, can be trusted to wear off....”

And having secured a similar promise of inaction from the Miss Stublands, Mr. Sycamore returned to London, twinkling pleasantly about the spectacles as he speculated exactly what it was that he had so evidently quite satisfactorily settled.

CHAPTER VI. — THE FOURTH GUARDIAN

§ 1

IT was just a quarter of a year after the death of Dolly and Arthur before Oswald Sydenham heard of the event and of Arthur's will and of the disputes of his three fellow guardians in England. For when the stonemason boatman staggered and fell and the boat turned over beneath the Arco Naturale, Oswald was already marching with a long string of porters and armed men beyond the reach of letters and telegrams into the wilderness.

He was in pursuit of a detachment of the Sudanese mutineers who, with a following of wives, children and captives, were making their way round through the wet forest country north of Lake Kioga towards the Nile province. With Sydenham was an able young subaltern, Muir, the only other white man of the party. In that net of rivers, marsh and forest they were destined to spend some feverish months. They pushed too far eastward and went too fast, and they found themselves presently not the pursuers but the pursued, cut off from their supports to the south. They built a stockade near Lake Salisbury, and were loosely besieged. For a time both sides in the conflict were regarded with an impartial unfriendliness by the naked blacks who then cultivated that primitive region, and it was only the looting and violence of the Sudanese that finally turned the scale in favour of Sydenham's little force. Sydenham was able to attack in his turn with the help of a local levy; he took the Sudanese camp, killed twenty or thirty of the mutineers, captured most of their women and gear, and made five prisoners with very little loss to his own party. He led the attack, a tall, lean, dreadful figure with half a face that stared fiercely and half a red, tight-skinned, blind mask. Two Sudanese upon whom his one-sided visage came suddenly, yelled with dismay, dropped their rifles and started a stampede. Black men they knew and white men, but this was a horrible red and white man. A remnant of the enemy got away to the north and eluded his pursuit until it became dangerous to push on further. They were getting towards the district in which was the rebel chief Kabarega, and a

union of his forces with the Sudanese fugitives would have been more than Sydenham and Muir could have tackled.

The government force turned southward again. Oswald had been suffering from fatigue and a recurrence of black-water fever, a short, sharp spell that passed off as suddenly as it came; but it left him weak and nervously shaken; for some painful days before he gave in he ruled his force with an iron discipline that was at once irrational and terrifying, and afterwards he was carried in a litter, and Muir took over the details of command. It was only when Oswald was within two days' journey of Luba Fort upon Lake Victoria Nyanza that his letters reached him.

§ 2

During all this time until he heard of Dolly's death, Oswald's heart was bitter against her and womankind. He had left England in a fever of thwarted loneliness. He did his best to "go to Hell" even as he had vowed in the first ecstasy of rage, humiliation and loss. He found himself incapable of a self- destructive depravity. He tried drinking heavily and he could never be sure that he was completely drunk; some toughness in his fibre defeated this overrated consolation. He attempted other forms of dissipation, and he could not even achieve remorse, nothing but exasperation with that fiddling pettiness of sexual misbehaviour which we call Vice. He desired a gigantic sense of desolation and black damnation, and he got only shame for a sort of childish nastiness. "If this is Sin!" cried Oswald at last, "then God help the Devil!"

"There's nothing like Work," said Oswald, "nothing like Work for forgetfulness. And getting hurt. And being shot at. I've done with this sort of thing for good and all...."

"What a fool I was to come here!..."

And he went on his way to Uganda.

The toil of his expedition kept his mind from any clear thinking about Dolly. But if he thought little he felt much. His mind stuck and raged at one intolerable thought, and could not get beyond it. Dolly had come towards him and then had broken faith with the promise in

her eyes, and fled back to Arthur's arms. And now she was with Arthur. Arthur was with her, Arthur had got her. And it was intolerably stupid of her. And yet she wasn't stupid. There she was in that affected little white cottage with its idiotic big roof, waiting about while that fool punched copper or tenored about aesthetics. (Oswald's objection to copper repousse had long since passed the limits of sanity.) Always Dolly was at Arthur's command now. Until the end of things. And she might be here beside her mate, with the flash in her eyes, with her invincible spirit, sharing danger, fever and achievement; empire building, mankind saving....

Now and then indeed his mind generalized his bitter personal disappointment with a fine air of getting beyond it. The Blantyre woman and that older woman of his first experiences who had screamed at the sight of his disfigured face, were then brought into the case to establish a universal misogyny. Women were just things of sex, child-bearers, dressed up to look like human beings. They promised companionship as the bait on the hook promises food. They were the cheap lures of that reproductive maniac, herself feminine, old Mother Nature; sham souls blind to their own worthless quality through an inordinate vanity and self-importance. Ruthless they were in their distribution of disappointment. Sterile themselves, life nested in them. They were the crowning torment in the Martyrdom of Man.

Thus Oswald in the moments when thought overtook him. And when it came to any dispute about women among the men, and particularly to the disposal of the women after the defeat of the mutineers near Lake Salisbury, it suited his humour to treat them as chattels and to note how ready they were to be treated as chattels, how easy in the transfer of their affections and services from their defeated masters to their new owners. This, he said, was the natural way with women. In Europe life was artificial; women were out of hand; we were making an inferior into a superior as the Egyptian made a god of the cat. Like cat worship it was a phase in development that would pass in its turn.

The camp at which his letters met him was in the Busoga country, and all day long the expedition had been tramping between high banks of big-leaved plants, blue flowering salvias, dracenas and the

like, and under huge flowering trees. Captain Wilkinson from Luba Port had sent runners and porters to meet them, and at the halting-place, an open space near the banana fields of a village, they found tea already set for them. Oswald was ill and tired, and Muir took over the bothers of supervision while Oswald sat in a deck chair, drank tea, and opened his letters. The first that came to hand was from Sycamore, the Stubland solicitor. Its news astonished him.

Dear Sir, wrote Mr. Sycamore.

I regret to have to inform you of the death of my two clients, your friends Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stubland. They were drowned by a boat accident at Capri on the third of this month, and they probably died within a few minutes of each other. They had been in Italy upon a walking tour together. There were no witnesses of the accident — the boatman was drowned with them — and the presumption in such cases is that the husband survived the wife. This is important because by the will of Mrs. Stubland you are nominated as the sole guardian both of the son and the adopted daughter, while by the will of Mr. Stubland you are one of four such guardians. In all other respects the wills are in identical terms....

At this point Oswald ceased to read.

He was realizing that these words meant that Dolly was dead.

§ 3

Oswald felt very little grief at the first instant of this realization. We grieve acutely for what we have lost, whether it be a reality or a dream, but Dolly had become for Oswald neither a possession nor a hope. In his mind she was established as an intense quarrel. Whatever he had to learn about her further had necessarily to begin in terms of that. The first blow of this news made him furious. He could not think of any act or happening of Dolly's except in terms of it being aimed at him. And he was irrationally angry with her for dying in such a way. That she had gone back to Arthur and resumed his embraces was, he felt, bad enough; but that she should start out to travel with Arthur alone, to walk by Arthur's side exactly as Oswald had desired her to walk by his side — he had dreamt of her radiant

companionship, it had seemed within his grasp — and at last to get drowned with Arthur, that was the thing to strike him first. He did not read the rest of the letter attentively. He threw it down on the folding table before him and hit it with his fist, and gave his soul up to a storm of rage and jealousy.

"To let that fool drown her!" he cried. "She'd do anything for him....

"And I might go to *Hell*!...

"Oh, *damn* all women!..."

It was not a pretty way of taking this blow. But such are the instinctive emotions of the thwarted male. His first reception of the news of Dolly's death was to curse her and all her sex....

And then suddenly he had a gleam of imagination and saw Dolly white and wet and pitiful. Without any intermediate stage his mind leapt straight from storming anger to that....

For a time he stared at that vision — reproached and stunned....

Something that had darkened his thoughts was dispelled. His mind was illuminated by understanding. He saw Dolly again very clearly as she had talked to him in the garden. It was as if he had never seen her before. For the first time he realized her indecision. He understood now why it was she had snatched herself back from him and taken what she knew would be an irrevocable step, and he knew now that it was his own jealous pride that had made that step irrevocable. The Dolly who had told him of that decision next morning was a Dolly already half penitent and altogether dismayed. And if indeed he had loved her better than his pride, even then he might have held on still and won her. He remembered how she had winced when she made her hinting confession to him. No proud, cold-hearted woman had she been when she had whispered, "Oswald, now you must certainly go."

It was as plain as daylight, and never before had he seen it plain.

He had left her, weak thing that she was, because she was weak, for this fellow to waste and drown. And it was over now and irrevocable.

"Men and women, poor fools together," he said. "Poor fools. Poor fools," and then at the thought of Dolly, broken and shrinking, ashamed of the thing she had done, at the thought of the insults he

had slashed at her, knowing how much she was ashamed and thinking nevertheless only of his own indignity, and at the thought of how all this was now stilled forever in death, an overwhelming sense of the pitifulness of human pride and hatred, passion and desire came upon him. How we hated! how we hurt one another! and how fate mocked all our spites and hopes! God sold us a bargain in life. Dolly was sold. Arthur the golden-crested victor was sold. He himself was sold. The story had ended in this pitiless smacking of every one of the three poor tiresome bits of self-assertion who had acted in it. It was a joke, *really*, just a joke. He began to laugh as a dog barks, and then burst into bitter weeping....

He wept noisily for a time. He blubbered with his elbows on the table.

His Swahili attendant watched him with an undiminished respect, for Africa weeps and laughs freely and knows well that great chiefs also may weep.

Presently his tears gave out; he became very still and controlled, feeling as if in all his life he would never weep again.

He took up Mr. Sycamore's letter and went on reading it.

"In all other respects the wills are in identical terms," the letter ran. "In both I am appointed sole executor, a confidence I appreciate as a tribute to my lifelong friendship with Mr. Stubland and his parents. The other guardians are Miss Phyllis and Miss Phoebe Stubland and your aunt-in-law, Lady Charlotte Sydenham."

"Good heavens!" cried Oswald wearily, as one hears a hopelessly weak jest. "But why?"

"I do not know if you will remember me, but I have had the pleasure of meeting you on one or two occasions, notably after your admirable paper read to the Royal Geographical Society. This fact and the opinion our chance meetings have enabled me to form of you, emboldens me to add something here that I should not I think have stated to a perfect stranger, and that is my impression that Mr. Stubland was particularly anxious that you should become a guardian under his will. I knew Mr. Stubland from quite a little boy; his character was a curious one, there was a streak of distrust and secretiveness in it, due I think to a Keltic strain that came in from his mother's side. He altered his will a couple of days before he started

for Italy, and from his manner and from the fact that Mrs. Stubland's will was not also altered, I conclude that he did so without consulting her. He did so because for some reason he had taken it into his head that you would not act, and he did so for no other reason that I can fathom. Otherwise he would have left the former will alone. Under the circumstances I feel bound to tell you this because it may materially affect your decision to undertake this responsibility. I think it will be greatly to the advantage of the children if you do. I may add that I know the two Miss Stublands as well as I knew their brother, and that I have a certain knowledge of Lady Charlotte, having been consulted on one occasion by a client in relation to her. The Misses Stubland were taking care of The Ingle-Nook and children — there is a trustworthy nurse — in the absence of the parents up to the time of the parents' decease, and it will be easy to prolong this convenient arrangement for the present. The children are still of tender age and for the next few years they could scarcely be better off. I trust that in the children's interest you will see your way to accept this duty to your friend. My hope is enhanced by the thought that so I may be able later to meet again a man for whose courage and abilities and achievements I have a very great admiration indeed.

I am, dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

George Sycamore."

"Yes," said Oswald, "but I can't, you know."

He turned over Sycamore's letter again, and it seemed no longer a jest and an insult that Arthur had made him Peter's guardian. Sycamore's phrases did somehow convey the hesitating Arthur, penitent of the advantages that had restored him Dolly and still fatuously confident of Oswald's good faith.

"But I can't do it, my man," said Oswald. "It's too much for human nature. Your own people must see to your own breed."

He sat quite still for a long time thinking of another child that now could never be born.

"Why didn't I stick to her," he whispered. "Why didn't I hold out for her!"

He took up Sycamore's letter again.

“But why the devil did he shove in old Charlotte?” he exclaimed. “The man was no better than an idiot. And underhand at that.”

His eye went to a pile of still unopened letters. “Ah! here we are!” he said, selecting one in a bulky stone-grey envelope.

He opened it and extracted a number of sheets of stone-grey paper covered with a vast, loose handwriting, for which previous experience had given Oswald a strong distaste.

My dear Nephew, her letter began.

I suppose you have already heard the unhappy end of that Stubland marriage. I have always said that it was bound to end in a tragedy....

“Oh Lord!” said Oswald, and pitched the letter aside and fell into deep thought....

He became aware of Muir standing and staring down at him. One of the boys must have gone off to Muir and told him of Oswald’s emotion.

“Hullo,” said Muir. “All right?”

“I’ve been crying,” said Oswald drily. “I’ve had bad news. This fever leaves one rotten.”

“Old Wilkinson has sent us up a bottle of champagne,” said Muir. “He’s thought of everything. The cook’s got curry powder again and there’s a basket of fish. We shall dine tonight. It’s what you want.”

“Perhaps it is,” said Oswald.

§ 4

After dinner, the best dinner they had had for many weeks, a dinner beautifully suggestive to a sick man of getting back once more to a world in which there is enough and comfort, Oswald’s tongue was loosened and he told his story. He was not usually a communicative man but this was a brimming occasion; Muir he knew for a model of discretion, Muir had been his colleague, his nurse and his intimate friend to the exclusion of all others, for three eventful months, and Muir had already made his confidences. So Oswald told about Dolly and how his scar and his scruples had come between them, and what he thought and felt about Arthur, and so to much experimental

wisdom about love and the bitterness of life. He mentioned the children, and presently Muir, who had the firm conscientiousness of the Scotch, brought him back to Peter.

"He was a decent little chap," said Oswald. "He was tremendously like Dolly."

"And not like that other man?" said Muir sympathetically.

"No. Not a bit."

"I'm thinking you ought to stand by him for all you're worth."

Oswald thought.

"I will," he said....

The next morning life did not seem nearly so rounded and kindly as it had been after his emotional storm of the evening before; he was angry and jealous about Dolly and Arthur again, and again disposed to regard his guardianship as an imposition, but he felt he had given his word overnight and that he was bound now to stand by Joan and Peter as well as he could. Moreover neither Lady Charlotte nor the sisters Stubland were really, he thought, people to whom children should be entrusted. His party reached Luba's the next evening, and he at once arranged to send a cable to Mr. Sycamore accepting his responsibility and adding: 11 Prefer children should go on as much as possible mother's ideas until my return."

CHAPTER VII. — THE SCHOOL OF ST. GEORGE AND THE VENERABLE BEDE

§ 1

SO for a time this contest of the newer England of free thought, sentimental socialism, and invested profits (so far as it was embodied in the Stubland sisters) and the traditional land-owning, church-going Tory England (so far that is as Lady Charlotte Sydenham was able to represent it), for the upbringing of Joan and Peter was suspended, and the Stubland sisters remained in control of these fortunate heirs of the ages. The two ladies determined to make the most of their opportunity to train the children to be, as Aunt Phoebe put it, "free and simple, but fearlessly advanced, unbiassed and yet exquisitely cultivated, inheritors of the treasure of the past purged of all ancient defilement, sensuous, passionate, determined, forerunners of a super-humanity" — for already the phrases at least of Nietzsche were trickling into the restricted but turbid current of British thought.

In their design the Stubland sisters were greatly aided by the sudden appearance of Miss Murgatroyd in the neighbourhood, and the rapid and emphatic establishment of the School of Saint George and the Venerable Bede within two miles of The Ingle-Nook door.

Miss Murgatroyd was a sturdy, rufous lady with a resentful manner, as though she felt that everything and everybody were deliberately getting in her way, and an effort of tension that passed very readily from anger to enthusiasm and from enthusiasm to anger. Her place was in the van. She did not mind very much where the van was going so long as she was in it. She was a born teacher, too, and so overpoweringly moved to teach that what she taught was a secondary consideration. She wanted to do something for mankind — it hardly mattered what. In America she would have been altogether advanced and new, but it was a peculiarity of middle-class British liberalism at the end of the nineteenth century just as it was of middle-class French liberalism a hundred years before, that it was strongly reactionary in colour. In the place of Rousseau and his demand for a return to the age of innocence, we English had Ruskin

and Morris, who demanded a return to the Middle Ages. And in Miss Murgatroyd there was Rousseau as well as Ruskin; she wanted, she said, the best of everything; she was very comprehensive; she epitomized the movements of her time.

A love disappointment — the man had fled inexplicably to the ends of the earth and vanished — had exacerbated in Miss Murgatroyd a passion for the plastic affections of children; she had resolved to give herself wholly to the creation of a new sort of school embodying all the best ideals of the time. She saw herself a richly-robed, creative prophetess among the clustering and adoring young.

She had had a certain amount of capital available, and this she had expended upon the adaptation of a pleasant, many-roomed, modern house that looked out bravely over the valley of the Weald about a mile and three-quarters from The Ingle-Nook, to the necessities of a boarding-school, and here she presently accumulated her scholars. She furnished it very brightly in art colours and Morris patterns; wherever possible the woodwork was stained a pleasing green and perforated with heart-shaped holes; there were big, flat, obscurely symbolical colour-prints by Walter Crane, reproductions in bright colours of the works of Rossetti and Burne Jones and Botticelli, and a full-size cast of the Venus of Milo. The name was Ruskinian in spirit with a touch of J.R. Green's *Short History of the English People*.

Miss Murgatroyd was indiscriminately receptive of new educational ideas; she meant to miss nothing; and some of these ideas were quite good and some were quite silly; and nearly every holiday she went off with a large notebook and much enthusiasm to educational congresses and conferences and summer schools and got some more. One that she acquired quite early, soon after the battle of Omdurman, was to put all her girls and most of her boys into djibbahs — loose, pretty garments that were imitated from and named after the Dervish form of shirt. Hers was one of the first of those numerous "djibbah schools" that still flourish in England.

Also she had a natural proclivity towards bare legs and sandals and hatlessness, and only a certain respect for the parents kept the school from waves of pure vegetarianism. And she did all she could to carry her classes out of the classrooms and into the open air....

The end of the nineteenth century was a happy and beautiful time for the bodies of the children of the more prosperous classes. Children had become precious. Among such people as the Stublands one never heard of such a thing as the death of a child; all their children lived and grew up. It was a point upon which Arthur had never tired of insisting. Whenever he had felt bored and wanting a brief holiday he had been accustomed to go off with a knapsack to study church architecture, and he had never failed to note the lists of children on the monuments. "There you are again," he would say. "Look at that one: 'and of Susan his wife by whom he had issue eleven children of whom three survived him.' That's the universal story of a woman's life in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Nowadays it would read,' by whom he had issue three children who all survived him.' And you see here, she died first, worn out, and he married again. And here are five more children, and three die in infancy and childhood. There was a frightful boom in dying in those days; dying was a career in itself for two-thirds of the children born. They made an art of early death. They were trained to die in an edifying manner. Parents wrote books about their little lost saints. Instead of rearing them."....

Miss Murgatroyd's school was indeed healthy and pretty and full of physical happiness, but the teaching and mental training that went on in it was of a lower quality. Mental strength and mental balance do not show in quite the same way as their physical equivalents. Minds do not grow as bodies do, through leaving the windows open and singing in the sun.

§ 2

Aunt Phoebe was an old acquaintance of Miss Murgatroyd. They had met at Adelboden during one of the early Fabian excursions in Switzerland. Afterwards Miss Murgatroyd had been charmed by Aunt Phoebe's first book, a little thin volume of bold ideas in grey covers and a white back, called, *By-thoughts of a Stitchwoman*. In it Aunt Phoebe represented herself rather after the fashion of one of those richly conceived women who sit and stitch in the background

of Sir Frederick Leighton's great wall paintings at South Kensington, "The Industrial Arts applied to Peace" and "The Industrial Arts Applied to War" (her needlework was really very bad indeed) and while she stitched she thought. She thought outrageously; that was the idea; and she represented all the quiet stitching sex as thinking as outrageously. Miss Murgatroyd had a kindred craving for outrageous thinking, and the book became the link of a great intellectual friendship. They vied with one another in the extremity of their opinions and the mystical extravagance of their expressions. They maintained a tumescent flow of thought that was mostly feeling and feeling that was mostly imitation, far over the heads of the nice little children, who ran about the bright and airy school premises free from most of the current infections of body and spirit, and grew as children do grow under favourable circumstances, after the manner of Nature in her better moods, that is to say after the manner of Nature ploughed and weeded and given light and air.

So far as Aunt Phoebe was concerned, the great thoughts were confined to one or two intimates and — a rather hypothetical circle — her readers. Her mental galumphings were a thing apart. A kind of shyness prevented her with strangers and children. But Miss Murgatroyd was impelled by a sense of duty to build up the character of her children by discourse, more particularly on Sundays. On Sunday mornings the whole school went to church; in the afternoon it had a decorous walk, or it read or talked, and Miss Mills, the junior assistant, read aloud to the little ones; in the evening it read or it drew and painted, except for a special half hour when Miss Murgatroyd built its character up. That was her time. Thus, for example, she built it up about Truth.

"Girls," she began, "I want to talk to you a little this evening about Truth. I want you to think about Truth, to concentrate your minds upon it and see just all it means and can mean to us. You know we must all tell the Truth, but has it ever occurred to you to ask why we must tell the Truth? I want you to ask that. I want you to be aware of why you have to be good in this way and that. I do not want you to be unthinkingly good. I want you to be

'Not like dumb, driven cattle!

Be a hero in the strife!'

or a heroine as the case may be. And so, why do we tell the Truth? Is it because if we did not do so people would be deceived and things go wrong? Partly. Is it because if we did not do so, people would not trust us? Also yes, partly. But the real reason, girls and boys, is this, the real reason is that Lying Lips are an Abomination to the Lord, they are disgusting to Him, and so they ought to be disgusting to us. That is the real reason why we should tell the truth. Because it is a thing offensive and disgraceful, and if we did not do so, then we should tell a Lie.

("Doris, do stop plaiting your sister's hair, please. There is a time for all things.)

"I hope there is no one here who can bear to think calmly of telling a Lie; and yet every time you do not tell the Truth manfully and bravely you do that. It is an offence so dreadful that we are told in Scripture that whosoever calleth his brother a liar — no doubt without sufficient evidence — is in danger of Hell Fire. I hope you will think of that if ever you should be tempted at any time to tell a Lie.

"But now I want you to think a little of what is Truth. It is clear you cannot tell the truth unless you know what truth is. Well, what is truth? One thing, I think, will occur to you all at once as part at least of the answer. Truth is straightness. "When we say a ruler is true we mean that it is straight, and when we say a wall or a corner is out of truth we mean that it isn't straight. And, in vulgar parlance, when we say a man is a straight man we mean one whose acts and words are true. And another thing of which our great teacher Ruskin so often reminds us is, that Truth is Simplicity. True people are always simple, and simple people are usually too simple to be anything but true. Truth never explains. It never argues. When I have to ask a girl — and sometimes I have to ask a girl — did she or did she not do this or that, then if she answers me — simply and straightly Yes or No, I feel I am getting the truth, but if she answers back, 'that depends/ or 'Please, Miss Murgatroyd, may I explain just how it was?' then I know that there is something coming — something else coming, and not the straight and simple, the homespun, simple,

valiant English Truth at all. Yes and No are the true words, because as Plato and Aristotle and the Greek philosophers generally taught us in the Science of Logic long ago, and taught it to us for all time, a thing either is or else it is not; it is no good explaining or trying to explain, nothing can ever alter that now for ever. Either you did do the thing or you didn't do the thing. There is no other choice. That is the very essence of Logic; it would be impossible to have Logic without it."...

So Miss Murgatroyd building up in her pupils' minds by precept and example, the wonderful art and practice of English ratiocination.

§ 3

At first Joan and Peter did not see very much of Miss Murgatroyd. She moved about at the back of things, very dignified and remote, decorative and vaguely terrible. Their business lay chiefly with Miss Mills.

Miss Mills was also an educational enthusiast, but of a milder, gentler type than Miss Murgatroyd; she lacked Miss Murgatroyd's confidence and boldness; she sometimes doubted whether everything wasn't almost too difficult to teach. She was no blind disciple of her employer. She had a suppressed sense of academic humour that she had acquired by staying with an aunt who kept a small Berlin-wool shop in Oxford, and once or twice she had thought of the most dreadful witticisms about Miss Murgatroyd.

Though she had told them to no one, they had kept her ears hot for days. Often she wanted quite badly to titter at the school; it was so different from an ordinary school. Yet she liked wearing a djibbah and sandals. That was fun. She had no educational qualifications, but year by year she was slowly taking the diploma of Associate of the London College of Preceptors. It is a kindly college; the examinations for the diploma may be taken subject by subject over a long term of years. She used to enjoy going up to London for her diploma at Christmas and Midsummer. Her great difficulty was the arithmetic. The sums never came right.

Miss Murgatroyd was usually very severe upon what she called

the Fetish of Examinations; she herself had neither degree nor diploma, it was a moral incapacity, and she admitted that she could as soon steal as pass an examination; but it was understood that Miss Mills pursued this qualification with no idea whatever of passing but merely "for the sake of the stimulus." She made a point of never preparing at all ("cramming" that is) for any of the papers she "took." This put the thing on a higher level altogether.

She had already done the Theory and Practice of Education part of the diploma. For that she had read parts of *Leonard and Gertrude*, and she had attended five lectures upon Froebel. Those were days long before the Montessori System, which is now so popular with our Miss Millses; the prevalent educational vogues in the 'nineties were Kindergarten and Swedish drill (the Ling System). Miss Mills was an enthusiast for the Kindergarten. She began teaching Joan and Peter queer little practices with paper mats and paper-pattern folding, and the stringing of beads. As Joan and Peter had been doing such things for a year or so at home as "play," their ready teachability impressed her very favourably. All the children who fell under Miss Mills got a lot of Kindergarten, even though some of them were as old as nine or ten. They had lots of little songs that she made them sing with appropriate action. All these little songs dealt with the familiar daily life — as it was lived in South Germany four score years ago. The children pretended to be shoemakers, foresters, and woodcutters and hunters and cowherds and masons and students wandering about the country, and they imitated the hammering of shoes, the sawing of stone or the chopping down of trees, and so forth. It had never dawned upon Miss Mills that such types as these were rare objects upon the Surrey countryside. In the country about her there were no masons because there was no stone, no cowherds because there were no cows on the hills and the cows below grazed in enclosed fields, trees and wood were handled wholesale by machinery, and people's boots came from Northampton or America, and were repaired in London. If any one had suggested songs about golf caddies, jobbing gardeners, or traction-engines, or steam-ploughs, or sawmills, or rate-collectors, or grocers' boys, or season-ticket holders, or stockbrokers from London stealing rights-of-way, or carpenters putting up fences and trespass-notice boards, she would

have thought it a very vulgar suggestion indeed.

Kindergarten did not occupy all the time-table of Miss Mills. She regarded kindergarten as a special subject. She also taught her class to read, she taught them to write, she imparted the elements of history and geography, she did not so much lay the foundations of mathematics as accumulate a sort of rubble on which Mr. Beldame, the visiting mathematical master (Tuesdays and Thursdays), was afterwards to build. Here again Joan and Peter were fortunate. Peter had learnt his alphabet before he was two; Joan had not been much later with it, and both of them could read easy little stories already before they came under Miss Mills' guidance. That English spelling was entirely illogical, had not troubled them in the least. Insistence upon logical consistency comes later in life. Miss Mills never discovered their previous knowledge. She had heard of a method of teaching to read which was called the "Look and Say Method," and the essence of it was that you never learnt your letters. It was devised for the use of those older children who go to elementary schools from illiterate homes, Mid who are beginning to think for themselves a little. From the first by this method the pupils learnt the letters in combination.

"Now, Peter," Miss Mills would say, "this is 'to.' Look and say — to."

"To," said Peter.

"Now I put this little squiggle to it."

("P," said Peter privately).

"And it is 'top'."

"Top," said Peter.

"And now *this* is 'co.' What is this? Look and say."

Peter regarded "cop" for a moment. He knew c-o-p was the signal for "cop," just as S.O.S. is the signal for "help urgently needed," but he knew also it was forbidden to read out the letters of the signal.

"Cop," said Peter, after going through the necessary process of thought.

His inmost feeling about the matter was that Miss Mills did not know her letters, but had some queer roundabout way of reading of her own, and that he was taking an agreeable advantage of her....

Then Miss Mills taught Peter to add and subtract and multiply and

divide. She had once heard some lectures upon teaching arithmetic by graphic methods that had pleased her very much. They had seemed so clear. The lecturer had suggested that for a time easy sums might be shown in the concrete as well as in figures. You would first of all draw your operation or express it by wood blocks, and then you would present it in figures. You would draw an addition of 3 to 4, thus:

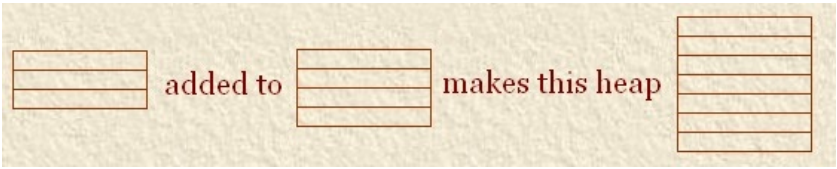

And then when your pupil had counted it and verified it you would

write it down:

3 + 4 = 7

But Miss Mills, when she made her notes, had had no time to draw all the parallelograms; she had just put down one and a number over it in each case, and then her memory had muddled the idea. So she taught Joan and Peter thus: "See," she said, "I will make it perfectly plain to you. Perfectly plain. You take three — so," and she drew

and then you take four — so," and she drew

and then you see three plus four makes seven — so:

"Do you see now how it *must* be so, Peter?"

Peter tried to feel that he did.

Peter quite agreed that it was nice to draw frames about the figures in this way. Afterwards he tried a variation that looked like the face of old Chester Drawers:

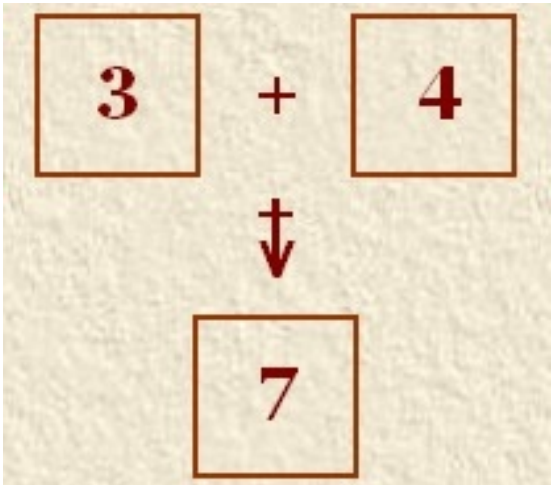

But for some reason Miss Mills would not see the beauty of that. Instead of laughing, she said: “Oh, no, that’s quite wrong!” which seemed to Peter just selfishly insisting on her own way.

Well, one had to let her have her own way. She was a grown-up. If it had been Joan, Peter would have had his way....

Both Joan and Peter were much addicted to drawing when they went to the School of St. George and the Venerable Bede. They had picked it up from Dolly. They produced sketches that were something between a scribble and an inspired sketch. They drew three-legged horses that really kicked and men who really struck hard with arms longer than themselves, terrific blows. If Peter wanted to make a soldier looking very fierce in profile, he drew an extra eye aglare beyond the tip of the man’s nose. If Joan wanted to do a pussy-cat curled up, she curled it up into long spirals like a snake. Any intelligent person could be amused by the sketches of Joan and Peter. But Miss Mills discovered they were all “out of proportion,” and Miss Murgatroyd said that this sort of thing was “mere scribbling.” She called Peter’s attention to the strong, firm outlines of various drawings by Walter Crane. She said that what the hands of Joan and Peter wanted was discipline. She said that a

drawing wasn't a drawing until it was "lined in." She set the two children drawing pages and pages of firm, straight lines. She related a wonderful fable of how Giotto's one aim in life was to draw a perfect freehand circle. She held out hopes that some day they might draw "from models," cones and cubes and such-like stirring objects. But she did not think they would ever draw well enough to draw human beings. Neither Miss Mills nor Miss Murgatroyd thought it was possible for any one, not being a professional artist, to draw a human being in motion. They knew it took years and years of training. Even then it was very exhausting to the model. They thought it was impertinent for any one young to attempt it.

So Joan and Peter got through their "drawing lessons" by being as inattentive as possible, and in secret they practised drawing human beings as a vice, as something forbidden and detrimental and delightful. They drew them kicking about and doing all sorts of things. They drew them with squinting eyes and frightful noses. Sometimes they would sort of come like people they knew. They made each other laugh. Peter would draw nonsense things to amuse the older girls. When he found difficulties with hands or feet or horses' legs he would look secretly at pictures to see how they were done. He thought it was wrong to do this, but he did it. He wanted to make his pictures alive-er and liker every time; he was unscrupulous how he did it. So gradually the two children became caricaturists. But in their school reports there was never anything about their drawing except "Untidy," or, in the case of Joan, "Could do better if she would try."

Peter was rather good at arithmetic, in spite of Miss Mills' instruction. He got sums right. It was held to be a gift. Joan was less fortunate. Like most people who have been badly taught, Miss Mills had one or two foggy places in her own arithmetical equipment. She was not clear about seven sevens and eight eights; she had a confused, irregular tendency to think that they might amount in either case to fifty-six, and also she had a trick of adding seven to nine as fifteen, although she always got from nine to seven correctly as sixteen. Every learner of arithmetic has a tendency to start little local flaws of this sort, standing sources of error, and every good, trained teacher looks out for them, knows how to test for them and

set them right. Once they have been faced in a clear-headed way, such flaws can be cured in an hour or so. But few teachers in upper and middle-class schools in England, in those days, knew even the elements of their business; and it was the custom to let the baffling influence of such flaws develop into the persuasion that the pupil had not "the gift for mathematics." Very few women indeed of the English "educated" classes to this day can understand a fraction or do an ordinary multiplication sum. They think computation is a sort of fudging — in which some people are persistently lucky enough to guess right— "the gift for mathematics" — or impudent enough to carry their points. That was Miss Mills' secret and unformulated conviction, a conviction with which she was infecting a large proportion of the youngsters committed to her care. Joan became a mathematical gambler of the wildest description. But there was a guiding light in Peter's little head that made him grip at last upon the conviction that seven sevens make always forty-nine, and eight eights always sixty-four, and that when this haunting fifty-six flapped about in the sums it was because Miss Mills, grown-up teacher though she was, was wrong.

Mr. Robert Mond, who has done admirable things for the organized study and organized rearing of infants, once told me that a baby was the hardest thing in the world to kill. If it were not, he said, there would be no grown-up people at all. "But a lot," he added, " get their digestions spoilt, mind you, or grow up rickety."... Still harder is it to kill a child's intelligence. There is something heroic about the fight that every infant mind has to make against the bad explanations, the misleading suggestions, the sheer foolishness in which we adults entangle it. The dawning intelligence of Peter, like a young Hercules, fought with the serpentine muddle-headedness of Miss Mills in its cradle, and escaped — remarkably undamaged.... Joan's, too, fought and escaped, except perhaps for a slight serpentine infection. She was feminine and flexible; she lacked a certain brutality of conviction that Peter possessed.

§ 4

But the regular teaching was the least important thing in the life of the School of St. George and the Venerable Bede. It existed largely in order to be put on one side.

Miss Murgatroyd had the temperament of a sensational editor. Her school was a vehicle for Booms. Every term there was at least one fundamental change.

The year when Joan and Peter joined the school was the year of the Diamond Jubilee, and Miss Murgatroyd had a season of loyalty. The "Empire" and a remarkable work called Sixty Years a Queen dominated the school; Victoria, that poor little old panting German widow, was represented as building up a great fabric of liberty and order, as reconciling nations, as showing what a woman's heart, a mother's instinct, could do for mankind. She was, Miss Murgatroyd conveyed, the instigator of such inventions as the electric light and the telephone; she spread railways over the world as one spreads bread with butter; she inspired Tennyson and Dickens, Carlyle and William Morris to their remarkable efforts. The whole world revered her. All this glow of personal loyalty vanished from the school before the year was out; the Queen ceased to be mentioned and the theme of Hand Industry replaced her. Everything was to be taught by hand and no books were to be used. Education had become too bookish. "Rote learning" was forbidden throughout the establishment and "text-books" were to be replaced by simple note-books made by the children themselves. Then two bright girls came to the school whose father was French, and, by a happy accident, a little boy also joined up who had been very well trained by a French governess. All three spoke French extremely well. Miss Murgatroyd was inspired to put the school French on a colloquial footing, and the time-table was reconstructed with a view to the production of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme on St. George's Day, the anniversary day of the school.

A parent who could paint was requisitioned as a scene-painter, the stage was put up in the main schoolroom, and those who could take no other part were set to help make the costumes and distribute programs at the performance....

These things happened over the heads of Joan and Peter very much as the things in the newspaper used to happen over our heads

before the Great War got hold of us. They went about their small lives amidst these things and with a vast indifference to all such things. They played their little parts in them — the realities of life were not there.

To begin with, Mary used to take them to school; but after a year and a half of that it occurred to Aunt Phyllis that it would cultivate self-reliance if they went alone. So Mary only went to fetch them when there was need of an umbrella or some such serious occasion. The path ran up through the bushes to the high road past the fence of Master's paddock where Peter had once covered himself with tar. Then they had to go along the high road with a pine-wood to the right — a winding path amidst the trees ran parallel to the road — and presently with a pine-wood to the left, which hid the hollow in which the parents of young Cuspard had made their abode and out of which young Cuspard would sometimes appear, a ginger-haired, hard-breathing youngster, bare-headed and bare-footed and altogether very advanced, and so to the little common where there would be geese or a tethered pony. Joan and Peter crossed this obliquely by the path, which was often boggy in wet weather, and went along by the Sheldrick's holly hedge to the open crest of heather from which one could run down to the school. One could see the playground and games going on long before one could get down to them. And if it were not too stormy the school flag with its red St. George and the Dragon on white would be flying. There were no indications of the Venerable Bede on the Flag, but Joan had concluded privately that he was represented by the red knob at the top of the flagstaff. For a year and more Joan thought that the Venerable Bede was really a large old bead of profound mystical significance.

Joan and Peter varied with the seasons, but except when Joan wore a djibbah they were dressed almost alike; in high summer with bare legs and brown smocks and Heidelberg sandals, and in winter like rolls of green wool stuck on leather gaiters. When they grew beyond the smock stage, then they both wore art green blouses with the school emblem of St. George on the pockets, but Joan wore a dark blue gym skirt and Peter had dark blue knickerbockers simply. The walk altered a little every day. Now the trees were dark and the

brambles by the roadside wet and wilted, now all the world was shooting green buds except for the pines, now the pines were taking up the spring brightness, now all the world was hot and dusty and full of the smell of resin, and now again it was wet and misty and with a thousand sorts of brightly coloured fungus among the pine stems. Joan and Peter learnt by experience that throwing pine-cones hurts, and reserved them for the Cuspard boy who had never mastered this lesson. Peter started a "Moo-seum" of fungi in the playroom, and made a great display of specimens that presently dried up or deliquesced and stank. When the snow came in the winter the Cuspard boy waylaid them at the corner with a prepared heap of snowballs and fell upon them with shrieks of excitement, throwing so fast and wildly and playing the giddy windmill so completely that it was quite easy for Joan and Peter to close in and capture his heap. Whereupon he fled toward the school weeping loudly that it was his heap and refusing to be comforted.

But afterwards all three of them made common cause against a treacherous ambuscade behind the Sheldrick holly hedge.

It was on these journeyings that Joan began to hear first of the marvellous adventures of Uncle Nobby and Bungo Peter. She most liked Bungo Peter because he had such a satisfying name; Peter never told her he was really the newel knob at home, but she always understood him to be something very large and round and humorous and richly coloured. Sometimes he was as big as the world and sometimes he was a suitable playmate for little children. He was the one constant link in a wandering interminable Saga that came like a spider's thread endlessly out of Peter's busy brain. It was a story of quests and wanderings, experiments and tasks and feuds and wars; Nobby was almost always in it, kind and dreadfully brave and always having narrow escapes and being rescued by Bungo Peter. Daddy and Mummy came in and went out again, Peter and Joan joined in. For a time Bungo Peter had a Wonderful Cat that would have shamed Puss-in-boots. Sometimes the story would get funny, so funny that the two children would roll along the road, drunken with laughter. As for example when Bungo Peter had hiccups and couldn't say anything else whatever you asked him.

After a time Joan learned the trick of the Saga and would go on

with it in her own mind as a day-dream. She invented that really and truly Bungo Peter loved her desperately and that she loved Bungo Peter; but she knew, though she knew not why nor wherefore, that this was a thing Peter must never be told.

Sometimes she would try to cut in and make some of the saga herself. "Lemme tell you, Petah," she used to squeal. "You just lemme tell you." But it was a rare thing for Peter to give way to her; sometimes he would not listen at all to what she had to say about Bungo Peter; he would smite her down with "No, he didn't do nuffin of the sort, not reely," and sometimes when she had thought of a really good thing to tell about him, Peter would take it away from her and go on telling about it himself, as for instance when she thought of "Lightning-slick," that Bungo Peter used to put on his heels.

Peter listened to her poor speeding-up with "Lightning-slick" for a while.

Then he said: "And after that, Joan, after that—"

"Oh! *lemme* go on, Petah. *Do* lemme go on. The fird time he was runned after by anyfing it was this."

"He put it on his bicycle wheels," said Peter, getting bored by her, "instead of oil."

"He put it on his bicycle wheels instead of oil," said Joan, accepting the idea, "and along came a Tiger." (She had already done a Mad Dog and a Bear.)

But after that Peter took over altogether while she was waving about rather helplessly and breathlessly with "the *Forf* time Bungo Peter used Lightning-slick, the forf time—" and hesitating whether to make it a snake or an elephant, Peter could stand it no longer.

"But you don't know what Bungo Peter did the *Forf* time, Joan — you don't reely and I do. Bungo Peter told me. Bungo Peter wanted the holidays to come, so Bungo Peter went and put Lightning-slick on the axles of the Erf."

"What good was that?"

"It went fast. It went faster and faster. The Erf. It regular spun round. And the sun rose and the sun set jest in an hour or so. 'Cos it *would*, Joan. It *would*. Yes, it *would*. There wasn't any time for anyfing. People got up and had their breckfus — and it was bedtime. People went out for walks and got b'nighted. Then when the holidays

came Bungo Peter just put a stick in the place and stopped it going fast any more."

"Put a stick in what place?"

"Where the Erf goes round. And then, then the days were as long as long. They lasted — oo, 'undreds of 'ours, heaps."

"Didn't they get 'ungry?" said Joan, overcome by this magnificent invention.

"They 'ad *free* dinners every day, sometimes four, and 's many teas as they wanted. Out-of-doors. Only you see they didn't 'ave to go to bed, 'ardly ever. See, Joan? ..."

There had to be a pause of blissful contemplation before their minds could go on to any further invention.

"I believe if I had the fings I could make Lightning-slick," Said Peter with a rising inflection of the voice.

He did believe. As soon as it was really said he believed it. Joan, round- eyed with admiration, believed too....

This Saga of Bungo Peter did not so much end as die out, when Aunt Phyllis got little bicycles for her charges after Joan's seventh birthday, and they began to ride to school. You cannot tell legends on a bicycle.

§ 5

Mr. Sheldrick was a large, loose painter man held together by a very hairy tweed suit, and the Sheldricks were a large, loose family not so much born and brought up as negligently let loose into the world at the slightest provocation by a small facetious mother. It was Mr. Sheldrick who painted the scenery for the school play productions, and it was the Sheldricks who first put it into Miss Murgatroyd's head that children could be reasonably expected to act. The elder Sheldricks were so to speak the camels and giraffes of Miss Murgatroyd's school, but the younger ones came down to dimensions that made them practicable playmates for Joan and Peter. Every now and then there would be a Sheldrick birthday (and once Mr. Sheldrick sold a picture) and then there would be a children's tea-party. It was always a dressing-up tea-party at the Sheldricks.

The Sheldrick household possessed a big chest full of pieces of coloured stuff, cloaks, fragmentary wigs, tinsel, wooden swords and the like; this chest stood on the big landing outside the studio and it was called the " dressing-up box." It was an inexhaustible source of joy and a liberal education to the Sheldricks and their friends.

There were grades of experience in these dressing-up parties. At the lowest, when you were just a "little darling" fit only for gusty embraces — Joan was that to begin with and Peter by dint of a resolute angularity was but battling his way out of it — you put on a preposterous hat or something and ran about yelling, "Look at meeeeee!" Then you rose — Peter rose almost at once and saw to it that Joan rose too, to Dumb Crambo.

In Dumb Crambo one half of the party, the bored half, is "in." It chooses a word, such as "sleep," it tells the "outs" that it rhymes with "sneep," and the "outs" then prepare and act as rapidly as possible, "deep," "creep," "sheep," and so on until they hit upon the right word. There was always much rushing about upon the landing, a great fermentation of ideas, a perpetual "I say, let's," imagination, contrivance, co-operation. So rapidly, joyfully and abundantly, with a disarming effect of confusion, the Sheldricks at their tea-parties did exactly what Miss Mills believed she was doing in her slow, elaborate, remote-spirited Kindergarten lessons, in which she was perpetually saying, "No; no, dear, that isn't right!" or "Now let us all do it over again just once more and get it perfect." It was Peter who discovered that these strange ritual-exercises of Miss Mills' were really a rigid version of the Sheldrick entertainments, and tried to introduce novelties of gesture and facial play and slight but pleasing variations in the verses. He got a laugh or so. But Miss Mills soon put a stop to these experiments.

From Dumb Crambo the Sheldrick dressing-up games rose to scenes from history and charades. Then Mrs. Sheldrick was moved to write a children's play about fairies and bluebells and butterflies and an angel-child who had died untimely, a play that broke out into a wild burlesque of itself even at its first rehearsals. Then came a wave of Shakespearian enthusiasm that was started by the two elder Sheldricks and skilfully fostered by Daddy Sheldrick, who was getting bored by Dumb Crambo and charades. After a little resistance

the younger ones fell in with the new movement and an auspicious beginning was made with selections from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Miss Murgatroyd was first made aware of this new development by a case of discipline. The second Sheldrick girl was charged with furtively learning passages of Shakespeare by heart instead of pretending to attend to Miss Mills' display of a total inability to explain the method used in the extraction of the square root. Had it been any other playwright than Shakespeare, things might have gone hard with the Sheldrick girl, but "Shakespeare is different."

Miss Murgatroyd, perceiving there was more in this than a mere question of discipline, came to see one of the Sheldrick performances, was converted, and annexed the whole thing. The next term of school life she made a Shakespeare Boom, and she astonished the world and herself by an altogether charming production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In those days the histrionic possibilities of young children were unsuspected by the parents and schoolmasters who walked over them. Romeo was still played in England by elderly men with time-worn jowls and reverberating voices, and Juliet by dear old actresses for whom the theatre-going public had a genuine filial affection. England had forgotten how young she was in the days of good Queen Elizabeth.

Both Joan and Peter took a prominent part in Miss Murgatroyd's production because, in spite of nearly four years of Miss Mills, they still had wonderfully good memories. Peter made a dignified Oberon and also a delightfully quaint Thisbe, and Joan was Puck. She danced a dance. She danced in front of the Queen Titania after the Fairy song. It was a dance in which she ceased to be human and became a little brown imp with flashing snake's eyes and hair like a thunder-cloud. It had been invented years ago by poor dead and drowned Dolly, and the Sheldricks had picked it up again from Joan and developed and improved it for her.

§ 6

But the Sheldricks were not always acting Shakespeare. There were

phases in those tea-parties when a kind of wildness came into their blood and the blood of those they entertained that called for something more violent than dressing-up or acting. Then in summertime they had a great scampering and hiding in the garden, it was the sort of garden where you can run across the beds and charge through the shrubs, and in winter they played "Ogre" or "Darkness Ogre" indoors. In Ogre some one — it was usually Mr. Sheldrick — was Ogre, and the little corner room out of the hall was his Den. And you hid. In the Sheldrick's house you could hide anywhere except in the studio or the pantry and china closet; you could hide in Mrs. Sheldrick's wardrobe or in the linen cupboard over the hot water pipes (until it got too hot for you) or under anybody's bed in anybody's room. And the Ogre came after you and caught you — often by the foot you had left out carelessly beyond the counterpane — and took you to his Den, and there you were a prisoner until some brave soul came careering across the hall to touch your hand and rescue you and set you free again. The Ogre was never safe against rescues until every one was caught, and everybody never was caught; sooner or later came a gaol delivery, and so the game began all over again and went on until a meal or something released the Ogre or the Ogre struck work. Nobody was so good an Ogre as Mr. Sheldrick; there was such a nice terribleness about him, and he had a way of chanting "Yumpty-Ow. Yumpty-Ow," as he came after you.

Of course every house is not suitable for Ogre. Intelligent children who understand the delights of Ogre classify homes into two sorts. There are the commonplace homes we most of us inhabit with one staircase, and there are the glorious homes with two, so that you can sneak down one while the Ogre hunts for you up the other. The Sheldrick home had two entirely separate staircases and a long passage between them, and a sort of loop-line arrangement of communicating bedrooms. And also, though this has nothing to do with Ogre, it was easy to get out upon the Sheldrick roof.

"Darkness Ogre" was more exciting in a dreadful kind of way than Ogre. It was only played in winter, and all the blinds and curtains were drawn and all the lights put out. You didn't need to hide. You just got into a corner and stood still, holding your breath. And the Ogre took off his boots and put on felt slippers, and all the

noise he made was a rustle and a creak, and you were never sure that it was him — unless he betrayed himself by whispering "Yumpty-Ow." He creaked rather more than most, but that was a matter for delicate perceptions. There were frightful moments when you could hear him moving about and feeling about in the very room where you stood frozen, getting nearer and nearer to you. You had to bite your knuckles not to scream.

Once when they were playing Darkness Ogre, Peter was in a corner of Mrs. Sheldrick's room with Sydney Sheldrick, the third of the Sheldrick sisters, and they were crowding up very close together. And suddenly Sydney put her arms round Peter and began to kiss his ears and cheek. Peter resisted, pushed her away from him. "Ssh," said Sydney. "You be my little sweetheart." Peter resisted this proposal with vigour. Then they heard the Ogre creaking down the passage. Sydney drew Peter closer to her, but Peter struggled away from her and made a dash for the further door. He was almost caught. He escaped because somebody else started into flight from the corner of the landing outside the studio and drew the Ogre off the scent.

Afterwards Peter avoided secluded corners when Sydney was about.

But somehow he could not forget what had happened. He kept on thinking of Sydney for a time, and after that she seemed always to be a little more important than the rest of his older schoolmates. Perhaps it was because she took more notice of him. She wanted to help his work, and she would ruffle his hair or pinch his ear as she went past him. She wore a peculiar long jersey so that you could distinguish her from the others quite a long way off. She had level brows and a radiant smile, her shoulders were strong and her legs and feet were very pretty. He noted how well she walked. She always seemed to be looking at Peter. When he shut his eyes and thought of her he could remember her better than he could other people. He did not know whether he liked her or disliked her more than the others; but he perceived that she had in some way become exceptional.

Young Winterbaum was another of Miss Murgatroyd's pupils who made a lasting impression on Peter. He was dark-eyed and fuzzy-haired, the contour of his face had a curious resemblance to that of a sheep, and his head was fixed on in a different way so that be looked more skyward and down his face at you. His expression was one of placid self-satisfaction; his hands twisted about, and ever and again he pranced as he walked. He had a superfluity of gesture, and his voice was a fat voice with the remotest possible hint of a lisp. He had two little round, jolly, frizzy, knock-about sisters who ousted Joan and Peter from their position as the little darlings of the school. The only boy in the school who at all resembled him was young Cuspard, but young Cuspard had not the same bold lines either in his face or conduct; he was red-haired, his nose was a snout instead of a hook, and instead of rather full, well-modelled lips he had that sort of loose mouth that blows. Young Winterbaum said his nose had the Norman arch, and that it showed he was aristocratic and one of the conquerors of England. He was second cousin to a peer, Lord Contango. It was only slowly that Peter came to apprehend the full peculiarity of young Winterbaum.

The differences in form and gesture of the two boys were only the outward and visible signs of profound differences between their imaginations. For example, the heroes of Peter's romancings were wonderful humorous persons, Nobbys and Bungo Peters, and his themes adventures, struggles, quests that left them neither richer nor poorer than before in a limitless, undisciplined, delightful world, but young Winterbaum's hero was himself, and he thought in terms of achievement and acquisition. He was a King and the strongest and bravest and richest of all Kings. He had wonderful horses, wonderful bicycles, wonderful catapults and an astonishing army. He counted these things. He walked from the other direction to school, and though no one knew it but himself, he walked in procession. Guards went before him and behind him, and ancient councillors walked beside him. And always he was going on to fresh triumphs and possessions.

He had a diplomatic side to him. He was prepared to negotiate upon the matter of kingship. One day he reached the crest above the school while it was still early, and found Joan and Peter sitting and

surveying the playground, waiting for the first bell before they ran down. He stood beside Peter.

"All this is my Kingdom," he said, waving both his arms about over the Weald. "I am King of all this, I have a great army."

"Not over this part," said Peter modestly but firmly.

"You be King up to here," said young Winterbaum. "You have an army too."

"*I* want a kingdom too," said Joan.

Young Winterbaum proposed a fair division of Peter's kingdom between Joan and Peter.

Peter let Joan have what young Winterbaum gave her. It took some moments to grasp this new situation. "My kingdom," he said suddenly, "goes right over to those ponds there and up to the church."

"You can't," said young Winterbaum. "I've claimed that."

Peter grunted. It did not seem worth while to have a kingdom unless those ponds were included.

"But if you like I'll give your people permission to go over all that country whenever they like."

Peter still felt there was a catch in it somewhere.

"I've got a hundred and seven soldiers," said young Winterbaum. "And six guns that shoot."

Joan was surprised and shocked to hear that Peter had five hundred soldiers.

"Each of my soldiers, each one, counts as a thousand men," said young Winterbaum, getting ahead again.

Then the first bell rang and suspended the dispute. But Peter went down to the school with a worried feeling. He wished he had thought of claiming all Surrey as his kingdom first. It was a lamentable oversight. He was disposed to ask the eldest Sheldrick girl whether young Winterbaum really had a *right* to claim all the Weald. There was a reason in these things....

Young Winterbaum had an extraordinary knack of accentuating possessions. Joan and Peter were very pleased and proud to have bicycles; the first time they arrived upon them at the school young Winterbaum took possession of them and examined them thoroughly. They were really good bicycles, excellent bicycles, he

explained, and new, not second-hand; but they were not absolutely the best sort.

The best sort nowadays had wood rims. He was going to have a bicycle with wood rims. And there ought to be a Bowden brake in front as well as behind; the one in front was only a spoon brake. It was a pity to have a spoon brake; it would injure the tyre. He doubted if the tubing was helical tubing. And the bell wasn't a "King of the Road." It was no good for Peter to pretend it had a good sound, "the King of the Road" had a better sound. When young Winterbaum got his bicycle his bell was going to be a "King of the Road, 1902 pattern."...

Young Winterbaum was always doing this with things, bringing them up into the foreground of life, grading them, making them competitive and irritating. There was no getting ahead of him. He made Peter feel that the very dust in the Winterbaum dustbin was Grade A. Standard I. while The Ingle-Nook was satisfied with any old makeshift stuff.

Young Winterbaum's clothes were made by Samuelson's, the best boys' tailor in London; there was no disputing it because there was an advertisement in *The Daily Telegraph* that said as much; he was in trousers and Peter had knickerbockers; he wore sock suspenders, and he had his name in gold letters inside his straw hat. Also he had a pencil-case like no other pencil-case in the school. He was always proposing a comparison of pencil-cases.

His imagination turned precociously and easily to romance and love and the beauty of women. He read a number of novelettes that he had borrowed from his sister's nurse. He imparted to Peter the idea of a selective pairing off of the species, an idea for which A Midsummer Night's Dream had already prepared a favourable soil. It was after he had seen Joan dance her dance when that play was performed and heard the unstinted applause that greeted her, that he decided to honour her above all the school with his affections. Previously he had wavered between the eldest Sheldrick girl because she was the biggest, tallest and heaviest girl in the school (though a formidable person to approach) and little Minnie Restharrow who was top in so many classes. But now he knew that Joan was "it," and that he was in love with her.

But some instinct told him that Peter had to be dealt with.

He approached Peter in this manner.

"Who's your girl, Peter?" said young Winterbaum. "Who is your own true love? You've got to have some one."

Peter drew a bow at a venture, and subconscious processes guided the answer. "Sydney Sheldrick," he said.

Young Winterbaum seemed to snatch even before Peter had done speaking. "I'm going to have Joan," he said. "She dances better than any one. She's going to be, oh! — a lovely woman."

Peter was dimly aware of an error. He had forgotten Joan. "I'm going to have Joan too," he said.

"You can't have two sweethearts," said young Winterbaum.

"I can. I'm going to. I'm different."

"But Joan's mine already."

"Get out," said Peter indignantly. "You can't have her."

"But she's mine."

"Shut it," said Peter vulgarly*

"I'll fight you a duel for her. We will fight a real duel for her."

"You hadn't better begin," said Peter.

"But I mean — you know — a duel, Peter."

"Let's fight one now," said Peter, "'f you think you're going to have Joan for *your* girl."

"We will fight with swords."

"Sticks."

"Yes, but call them swords. And we shall have to have seconds and a doctor."

"Joan's my second."

"You can't have Joan. *My* second's the Grand Duke of Surrey-Sussex."

"Then mine's Bungo-Peter."

"But we've got no sticks."

"I know where there's two sticks," said Peter. "Under the stairs. And we can fight in the shrubbery over by the fence."

The sticks were convenient little canes. "They ought to have hilts," said young Winterbaum. "You ever fenced?"

"Not much," said Peter guardedly.

"I've often fenced with my cousin, the honourable Ralph — you

know. Like this — guard. One. Two. You've got to have a wrist."

They repaired to the field of battle. "We stand aside while the seconds pace out the ground," explained young Winterbaum. "Now we shake hands. Now we take our places."

They proceeded to strike fencer-like attitudes. Young Winterbaum suddenly became one of the master swordsmen of the world, but Peter was chiefly intent on where he should hit young Winterbaum. He had got to hit him and hurt him a lot, or else he would get Joan. They crossed swords. Then young Winterbaum feinted and Peter hit him hard on the arm. Then young Winterbaum thrust Peter in the chest, and began to explain at once volubly that Peter was now defeated and dead and everything conclusively settled.

But nobody was going to take away Peter's Joan on such easy terms. Peter, giving his antagonist no time to complete his explanation, slashed him painfully on the knuckles. "I'm not dead," said Peter, slashing again. "I'm not dead. See? Come on!"

Whereupon young Winterbaum cried out, as it were with a trumpet, in a loud and grief-stricken voice. "Now I shall hurt you. That's too much," and swiped viciously at Peter's face and raised a weal on Peter's cheek. Whereupon Peter, feeling that Joan was slipping from him, began to rain blows upon young Winterbaum wherever young Winterbaum might be supposed to be tender, and young Winterbaum began to dance about obliquely and cry out, "Mustn't hit my legs. Mustn't hit my legs. Not fair. Oo-oh! my knuckles!" And after one or two revengeful slashes at Peter's head which Peter — who had had his experiences with Joan in a rage — parried with an uplifted arm, young Winterbaum turned and ran — ran into the arms of Miss Murgatroyd, who had been attracted to the shrubbery by his cries....

It was the first fight that had ever happened in the school of St. George and the Venerable Bede since its foundation.

"He said I couldn't fight him," said Peter.

"He went on fighting after I'd pinked him," said young Winterbaum.

Neither of them said a word about Joan.

So Miss Murgatroyd made a great session of the school, and the two combatants, flushed and a little heroic, sat on either side of her

discourse. She said that this was the first time she had ever had to reprove any of her pupils for fighting. She hoped that never again would it be necessary for her to do so. She said that nothing we could do was quite so wicked as fighting because nothing was so flatly contradictory to our Lord's commandment that we should love one another. The only fight we might fight with a good conscience was the good fight. In that sense we were all warriors. We were fighters for righteousness. In a sense every one was a knight and a fighter, every girl as well as every boy. Because there was no more reason why girls should not fight as well as boys. Some day she hoped this would be recognized, and girls would be given knighthoods and wear their spurs as proudly as the opposite sex. Earth was a battlefield, and none of us must be dumb driven cattle or submit to injustice or cruelty. We must not think that life was made for silken ease or self-indulgence. Let us think rather of the Red Indian perpetually in training for conflict, lean and vigorous and breathing only through his nose. No one who breathed through his or her open mouth would ever be a fighter.

At this point Miss Murgatroyd seemed to hesitate for a time. Breathing was a very attractive topic to her, and it was drawing her away from her main theme. She was, so to speak, dredging for her lost thread in the swift undertow of hygienic doctrine as one might dredge for a lost cable. She got it presently, and concluded by hoping that this would be a lesson to Philip and Peter and that henceforth they would learn that great lesson of Prince Kropotkin's that cooperation is better than conflict.

Neither of the two combatants listened very closely to this discourse. Peter was wrestling with the question whether a hot red weal across one's cheek is compatible with victory, and young Winterbaum with the still more subtle difficulty of whether he had been actually running away or merely stepping back when he had collided with Miss Murgatroyd, and what impression this apparently retrograde movement had made on her mind and upon the mind of Peter. Did they understand that sometimes a swordsman had to go back and could go back without the slightest discredit?...

§ 8

After this incident the disposal of Joan ceased to be a topic for conversation between young Winterbaum and Peter, and presently young Winterbaum conveyed to Peter in an offhand manner that he adored Minnie Restharrow as the cleverest and most charming girl in the school. She was indeed absolutely the best thing to be got in that way. She was, he opined, cleverer even than Miss Murgatroyd. He was therefore, he intimated, in love with Minnie Restharrow. It was a great passion.

So far as Peter was concerned, he gathered, it might be.

All the canons of romance required that Peter, having fought for and won Joan, should thereupon love Joan and her only until he was of an age to marry her. As a matter of fact, having disposed of this invader of his private ascendancy over Joan, he thought no more of her in that relationship. He decided, however, that if young Winterbaum was going to have a sweetheart he must have one too, and mysterious processes of his mind indicated Sydney Sheldrick as the only possible person. It was not that Peter particularly wanted a sweetheart, but he was not going to let young Winterbaum come it over him — any more than he was going to let young Winterbaum be King of more than half of Surrey. He was profoundly bored by all this competitiveness, but obscure instincts urged him to keep his end up.

One day Miss Murgatroyd was expatiating to the mother of a prospective pupil upon the wonderful effects of coeducation in calming the passions. “The boys and girls grow up together, get used to each other, and there’s never any nonsense between them.”

“And don’t they — well, take an interest in each other?”

“Not in that way. Not in any undesirable way. Such as they would if they had been morbidly separated.”

“But it seems almost unnatural for them not to take an interest.”

“Experience, I can assure you, shows otherwise,” said Miss Murgatroyd conclusively.

At that moment two figures, gravely conversing together, passed across the lawn in the middle distance; one was a well-grown girl of thirteen in a short-skirted gymnasium dress, the other a nice-looking

boy of ten, knickerbockered, bare-legged, sandalled, and wearing the art green blouse of the school. They looked the most open-air and unsophisticated children of modernity it was possible to conceive. This is what they were saying:

"Sydney, when I grow up I'm going to marry you. You got to be my sweetheart. See?"

"You darling! Is that what you have to tell me? I didn't think you loved me a little bit."

"I'm going to marry you," said Peter, sticking to the facts of the case.

"I'd hug you. Only old Muggy is looking out of the window. But the very first chance I get I'll kiss you. And you'll have to kiss me back, mind, Peter."

"Where some one can't see us," Peter stipulated.

"Oh! I *love* spooning," said the ardent Sydney. "'Member when I kissed you before? ..."

"The girls refine the boys and the whole atmosphere is just a *family* atmosphere," Miss Murgatroyd was explaining at the window.

CHAPTER VIII. — THE HIGH CROSS PREPARATORY SCHOOL

§ 1

FROM the time when he was christened until he was ten, Lady Charlotte Sydenham remained only a figure in the remotest background of Peter's life. Once or twice he saw her in the downstairs room at The Ingle-Nook with his aunts bristling defensively beside her, and once she came to the school, and each time she looked at him with a large, hard, hostile smile and said: "And ha-ow s Peter? and then with a deepening disapproval: "Ha-ow s Joan? But that did not mean that Lady Charlotte had done with Joan and Peter, nor that she had relinquished in the slightest degree her claims to dominate their upbringing. She was just letting them grow up a little "according to their mother's ideas, poor woman," and biding her time. She wrote every now and then to Aunts Phyllis and Phoebe, just to remind them of her authority, and she wrote two long and serious letters to Oswald about what was to be done. He answered her briefly in such terms as: "Let well alone. Religion comes later." Oswald had never returned to England. He had been in Uganda now for five long years, and her fear of him was dying down. She was beginning to think that perhaps he did not care very much for Joan and Peter. He had had blackwater fever again. Perhaps he would never come home any more.

Then in the years 1901 and 1902 she had been much occupied by a special campaign against various London socialists that had ended in a libel case. She was quite convinced that all socialists were extremely immoral people, she was greatly alarmed at the spread of socialism, and so she wrote and employed a secretary to write letters to a number of people marked "private and confidential," warning them against this or that prominent socialist. In these she made various definite statements which, as her counsel vainly tried to argue, were not to be regarded as statements of fact so much as illustrations of the tendency of socialist teaching. She was tackled by a gentleman in a red necktie named Bamshot, of impregnable virtue,

in whom her free gift of “numerous illegitimate children” had evoked no gratitude. Her efforts to have him “thoroughly cross-examined” produced no sympathy in either judge or jury. All men, she realized, are wicked and anxious to shield each other. She left the court with a passionate and almost uncontrollable desire to write more letters about Bamshot and more, worse than ever, and with much nastier charges. And it was perhaps a subconscious effort to shift the pressure of this dangerous impulse that turned her mind to the state of spiritual neglect in which Joan and Peter were growing out of childhood.

A number of other minor causes moved her in the same direction. She had had a violent quarrel about the bill with the widow of an Anglican clergyman who kept her favourite pension at Bordighera; and she could still not forgive the establishment at Pallanza that, two years before, had refused to dismiss its head-waiter for saying “Vivent les Boers!” in her hearing. She had been taking advice about a suitable and thoroughly comfortable substitute for these resorts and meanwhile she had stayed on in England — until there were oysters on the table. Lady Charlotte Sydenham had an unrefined appetite for oysters, and with oysters came a still less refined craving for Dublin stout. It was an odd secret weakness understood only by her domestics, and noted only by^a small circle of intimate friends.

“I don’t seem to fancy anything very much to-day, Unwin,” Lady Charlotte used to say.

“I don’t know if you’d be tempted by a nice oyster or two, mlady. They’re very pick-me-up things,” the faithful attendant would suggest. “It’s September now, and there’s and R in the month, so its safe to venture-”

“Mm.”

“And if I might make so bold as to add a ‘arf bottle of good Guinness, m’lady. It’s a tonic. Run down as you are.”

Without oysters neither Lady Charlotte nor Unwin would have considered stout a proper drink for a lady. And indeed it was not a proper drink for Lady Charlotte. A very little stout sufficed to derange her naturally delicate internal chemistry. Upon the internal chemistry of Lady Charlotte her equanimity ultimately depended. There is wrath in stout....

Then Mr. Grimes, who had never ceased to hope that considerable out-of-court activities might still be developed around these two little wards, had taken great pains to bring Aunt Phoebe's *Collected Papers of a Stitchwoman (Second Series)* and her little precious volume *Carmen Naturae* before his client's notice.

These books certainly made startling reading for Lady Charlotte. She had never seen the first "Stitchwoman" papers, she knew nothing of Swinburne, Ruskin, Carlyle, the decadents, nothing of the rich inspirations of the later Victorian period, arid so the almost luscious richness of Aunt Phoebe's imagination, her florid verbiage, her note of sensuous defiance, burst almost devastatingly upon a mind that was habituated to the ordered passions and pearly greys of Mrs. Henry Wood's novels *More Leaves*, *Good Words*, and *The Quiver*.

"'With what measure ye mete,'" she read, "'so shall it be meted unto you again,' and the Standard that Man has fixed for woman recoils now upon his head. Which standard is it to be, — His or Hers? No longer can we fight under two flags. Wild oats, or the Immaculate Banner? Question to be answered shrewdly, and according to whether we deem it is Experience or Escape we live for, now that we are out of Eden footing it among the sturdy, exhilarating thistles. What will ye, my masters? — pallid man unstained, or seasoned woman? Judgment hesitates. Judgment may indeed hesitate. I, who sit here stitching, mark her hesitation, myself — observant. Is it too bold a speculation that presently golden lassies as well as golden lads will sow their wild oats bravely on the slopes of life? Is it too much to dream of that grave mother of a greater world, the Woman of the Future, glancing back from the glowing harvest of her life to some tall premonition by the wayside? — her One Wild Oat! the crown and seal of her education!"

"Either she means nothing by that," said Lady Charlotte, "or she means just sheer depravity. Wild Oat, indeed! Really! To call it that I With Joan on her hands already!"

And here again is a little poem from *Carmen Naturae*, which also impressed Lady Charlotte very unfavourably:

THE MATERIALIST SINGS

Put by your tangled Trinities

And let the atoms swing,
The merry magic atoms
That trace out everything.

These ancient gods are fantasies,
Mere Metaphors and Names;
But I can feel the Vortex Ring
Go singing through my veins.

No casket of a pallid ghost,
But all compact of thrills,
My body beats and throbs and lives,
My Mighty Atom wills.

"I *don't* know what the world is coming to," said Lady Charlotte. "In other times a woman who ventured to write such blasphemy would have been Struck Dead...."

"Thrills again!" said Lady Charlotte, turning over the offending pages. "In a book that any one may read. Exposing her thrills to any Bagman who chooses to put down three and sixpence for the pleasure. Imagine it, Unwin!"

Unwin did her best, assuming an earnest expression....

Other contributory influences upon Lady Charlotte's state of mind were her secret anxiety for the moral welfare of the realm now that Queen Victoria had given place to the notoriously lax Edward VII., and the renascence of sectarian controversies in connexion with Mr. Balfour's Education Act. Anglicanism was rousing itself for a new struggle to keep hold of the nation's children, the Cecils and Lord Halifax were ranging wide and free with the educational dragnet, and Lady Charlotte was a part of the great system of Anglicanism. The gale that blows the ships home, lifts the leaves.... But far more powerful than any of these causes was the death of a certain Mr. Pybus, who was Unwin's brother-in-law; he died through an operation undertaken by a plucky rather than highly educated general practitioner, to remove a neglected tumour. This left Unwin's sister in want of subsidies, and while Unwin lay in bed one night puzzling over this family problem, it occurred to her that if her sister could get

some little girl to mind...

§ 2

Mr. Grimes was very helpful and sympathetic when Lady Charlotte consulted him. He repeated the advice he had given five years ago, that Lady Charlotte should not litigate but act, and so thrust upon the other parties the onus of litigation. She should obtain possession of the two children, put them into suitable schools— "I don't see how we can put that By-blow into a school," Lady Charlotte interpolated — and refuse to let the aunts know where they were until they consented to reasonable terms, to the proper religious education of the children, to their proper clothing, and to their separation. " Directly we have the engagement of the Misses Stubland not to disturb the, new arrangement," said Mr. Grimes, "we shall have gained our point. I see no harm in letting the children rejoin their aunts for their holidays."

"That woman may corrupt them at any time," said Lady Charlotte.

"On that point we can watch and enquire. Of course, the boy might stay at the school for the holiday times. There is a class of school which caters for that sort of thing. That we can see to later."...

Mr. Grimes arranged all the details of the abduction of Joan and Peter with much tact and imagination. As a preliminary step he made Lady Charlotte write to Aunt Phoebe expressing her opinion that the time was now ripe to put the education of the children upon a rational footing. They were no longer little children, and it was no longer possible for them to go on as they were going. Peter was born an English gentleman, and he ought to go to a good preparatory school for boys forthwith; Joan's destinies in life were different, but they were certainly destinies for which play-acting, running about with bare feet, and dressing like a little savage could be no sort of training. Lady Charlotte (Mr. Grimes made her say) had been hoping against hope that some suggestion for a change would come from the Misses Stubland. She could not hope against hope for ever. She must therefore request a conference, at which Mr. Grimes could be present, for a discussion of the new arrangements that were now

urgently necessary. To this the Misses Stub-land replied evasively and carelessly. In their reply Mr. Grimes, without resentment, detected the hand of Mr. Sycamore. They were willing to take part in a conference as soon as Mr. Oswald Sydenham returned. They had reason to believe he was on his way to England now.

Lady Charlotte, still guided by Mr. Grimes, then assumed a more peremptory tone. She declared that in the interests of both children it was impossible for things to go on any longer as they had been going. Already the boy was ten. The plea that nothing could be done until Mr. Sydenham returned was a mere delaying device. The boy ought to go to school forthwith. Lady Charlotte was extremely sorry that the Misses Stubland would not come to any agreement upon this urgent matter. She could not rest content with things in this state, and she would be obliged to consider what her course of action — for the time had come for her to take action — must be.

With the way thus cleared, Mr. Grimes set his forces in motion. "Leave it to me, Lady Charlotte," he said. "Leave it to me." A polite young man appeared one morning seated in a chariot of fire outside the road gate of the School of St George and the Venerable Bede. He was in one of those strange and novel portents, a "motor-car." This alone made him interesting and attractive, and it greatly impressed young Winterbaum to discover that the visitor had come about Joan and Peter. Young Winterbaum went out to scrutinize the motor-car and its driver, and see if there was anything wrong about it. But it was difficult to underestimate.

"It's a petrol car," he said. "Belsize.... Those are fine lamps."

Miss Murgatroyd gathered that the guardians of Joan and Peter found it necessary to interview the children, and had sent the car to fetch them.

"Miss Stubland said nothing of this when I saw her the day before yesterday," said Miss Murgatroyd. "We do not care for interruptions in the children's work."

The young man explained that the case was urgent. "Lady Charlotte has been called away. And she must see the children before she goes out of England."

There was something very reassuring about the motor-car. They departed cheerfully to the ill-concealed envy and admiration of

young Winterbaum.

The young man had red hair, a white, freckled face, and a costly and remarkable made-up necktie of green plush. The expression of his pale blue eyes was apprehensive, and ever and again he blew. His efforts at conversation were fragmentary and unilluminating. “I got to take you for a long ride,” he said, seating himself between Peter and Joan. “A lovely long ride.”

“Where?” said Joan.

“You’ll see in a bit,” said the young man.

“We going to Chastlands?” asked Peter.

“No,” said the young man.

“Then where are we going?” said Peter.

“These here cars’11 do forty — fifty miles an hour,” said the young man, changing the subject.

In a little while they had passed beyond the limits of Peter’s knowledge altogether, and were upon an unknown road. It was astonishing how the car devoured the road. You saw a corner a long way off and then immediately you were turning this corner. The car went as swiftly up the hills as down. It said “honk.” The trees and hedges flew by as if one was in a train, and behind we trailed a marvellous cloud of dust. The driver sat before us with his head sunken between his hunched-up shoulders; he never seemed to move; he was quite different from the swaying, noble coachman with the sun-red face, wearing a top hat with a waist and a broad brim, who sat erect and poised his whip and drove Lady Charlotte’s white horse.

§ 3

For a time the road ran undulating between high hedges and tall trees and through villages, and all along to the right of it were the steep, round-headed Downs. Then came a little town, and the automobile turned off: into a valley that cut the Downs across and opened out more and more, and then came heathery common and a town, and then lanes and many villages, flat meadows and flatter, poplars, and then another town with a bridge, and then across long levels of green

a glimpse of the big tower of Windsor Castle. “This is Runnymede, where Magna Carta was signed,” said the young man suddenly. “And that’s Windsor, where the King lives — when he isn’t living somewhere else, as he usually does.... He’s a ‘ot un is the King.... See the chap there sailing a boat?”

They went right into Windsor and had a glimpse of the great gates of the Castle and the round tower very near to them, and then they turned down a steep, narrow, paved street and so came into a district of little mean villas in rows and rows. And outside one of these the car stopped.

“Here we are,” said the young man.

“Where are we?” asked Peter.

“Where we get out,” said the young man. “Time we had a feed.”

“Dinnah,” said Joan, with a bright expression, and prepared to descend.

A small, white-faced, anxious woman appeared at the door. She was wearing amiability as one wears a Sabbath garment. Moreover, she had a greyish-black dress that ended in a dingy, stiff buff frilling at the neck and wrists.

“You Mrs. Pybus?” asked the young man.

“I been expecting you a nour,” said Mrs. Pybus, acquiescing in the name. “Is this the young lady and gentleman?”

That again was a question that needed no answer. The group halted awkwardly on the doorstep for a few seconds. “And this is Miss Joan?” said Mrs. Pybus, with a joyless smile. “I didn’t expect you to be ‘arf yr’ size. And what a short dress they put you in! You must ‘ave regular shot up. Makes you what I call leggy....”

This again was poor as a conversational opening.

“‘Ow old might you be, dearie?” asked Mrs. Pybus.

“I’m eight,” said Joan. “But I’ll be nine soon.”

The young man for inscrutable reasons found this funny. He guffawed. “She’s eight,” he said to the world at large; “but she’ll be nine soon. That’s good, that is!”

“If you’re spared, you shud say,” said Mrs. Pybus. “You’re a big eight, any’ow. ‘Ow old are you, dear?”

Peter was disliking her quietly with his hands in his pockets. He paused for a moment, doubting whether he would answer to the

name of “dear.” “Ten,” he said.

“Just ten?” asked the young man as if alert for humour.

Peter nodded, and the young man was thwarted.

“I suppose you’ll be ready for something to eat,” said Mrs. Pybus. “‘Adn’t you better come in?”

They went in.

The room they entered was, perhaps, the most ordinary sort of room in England at that time, but it struck upon the observant minds of Joan and Peter as being strange and remarkable. They had never been before in an ordinary English living-room. It was a small, oblong room with a faint projection towards the street, as if it had attempted to develop a bow window and had lacked the strength to do so. On one side was a fireplace surmounted by a mantelshelf and an “overmantel,” an affair of walnut-wood with a number of patches of looking-glass and small brackets and niches on which were displayed an array of worthless objects made to suggest ornaments, small sham bronzes, shepherdesses, sham Japanese fans, a disjointed German pipe and the like. In the midst of the mantelshelf stood a black marble clock insisting fixedly that the time was half-past seven, and the mantelshelf itself and the fireplace were “draped” with a very cheap figured muslin that one might well have supposed had never been to the wash except for the fact that its pattern was so manifestly washed out. The walls were papered with a florid pink wallpaper, and all the woodwork was painted a dirty brownish-yellow colour and “grained” so as to render the detection of dirt impossible. Small as this room was there had been a strenuous and successful attempt to obliterate such floor space as it contained by an accumulation of useless furniture; there were flimsy things called whatnots in two of its corners, there was a bulky veneered mahogany chiffonier opposite the fireplace, and in the window two ferns and a rubber plant in wool-adorned pots died slowly upon a rickety table of bamboo. The walls had been a basis for much decorative activity, partly it would seem to conceal or minimize a mysterious skin disease that affected the wallpaper, but partly also for a mere perverse impulse towards litter. There were weak fret work brackets stuck up for their own sakes and more or less askew, and stouter brackets entrusted with the support of more “ornaments,” small

bowls and a tea-pot that valiantly pretended they were things of beauty; there were crossed palm fans, there was a steel engraving of Queen Victoria giving the Bible to a dusky potentate as the secret of England's greatness; there was "The Soul's Awakening," two portraits of George and May, and a large but faded photograph of the sea front at Scarborough in an Oxford frame. A gas "chandelier" descended into the midst of this apartment, betraying a confused ornate disposition in its lines, and the obliteration of the floor space was completed by a number of black horsehair chairs and a large table, now "laid" with a worn and greyish-white cloth for a meal. Such were the homes that the Victorian age had evolved by the million in England, and to such nests did the common mind of the British resort when it wished to meditate upon the problems of its Imperial destiny. Joan and Peter surveyed it open-mouthed.

The table was laid about a cruet as its central fact, a large, metallic edifice surmounted by a ring and bearing weary mustard, spiritless pepper, faded cayenne pepper, vinegar and mysteries in bottles. Joan and Peter were interested in this strange object and at the same time vaguely aware of something missing. What they missed were flowers; on this table there were no flowers. There was a cold joint, a white jug of beer and a glass jug of water, and pickles. "I got cold meat," said Mrs. Pybus, "not being sure when you were coming." She arranged her guests. But she did not immediately begin. She had had an idea. She regarded Peter.

"Now, Peter," she said, "let me 'ear you say Grice."

Peter wondered.

"Say Grice, dearie."

"Grice, "said Peter.

The young man with the red hair was convulsed with merriment. "That's good," he said. "That's reely Good. Kids are amusing."

"But I tole you to say Grice," said Mrs. Pybus, ruffled.

"I said it."

The young man's voice squeaked as he explained. "He doesn't know 'ow to say Grace," he said. "Never 'card of it."

"Is it a catch?" asked Peter.

The young man caught and restrained a fresh outburst of merriment with the back of his hand, and then explained again to

Mrs. Pybus.

"'E's a perfec' little 'eathen," said Mrs. Pybus. "I never did. They'll teach you to say grice all right, my boy, before you're very much older. Mark my words." And with a sort of businesslike reverence Mrs. Pybus gabbled her formula. Then she proceeded to carve. As she carved she pursed her lips and frowned.

The cold meat was not bad, but the children ate fastidiously, and Joan, after her fashion, left all her fat. This attracted the attention of Mrs. Pybus. "Eat it up, dearie," said Mrs. Pybus. "Wiste not, want not."

"I don't eat fat."

"But you must eat fat," said Mrs. Pybus.

Joan shook her head.

"Well 'ave to teach you to eat fat," said Mrs. Pybus with a dangerous gentleness. For the time, however, the teaching was not insisted upon. "Lovely bits! Enough to feed a little dog," said Mrs. Pybus, as she removed Joan's plate to make way for apple tart.

The conversation was intermittent. It was as if they waited for some further event. The young man with the red hair spoke of the great world of London and the funeral of Lord Salisbury.

"'E was a great statesman, say what you like," said the young man with red hair.

He also spoke of Holbein's attempt to swim the channel.

"They say 'e oils 'imself all over," said the young man.

"Lor'!" said Mrs. Pybus.

"It can't be comfortable," said the young man; "say what you like."

Presently the young man broke a silence by saying: "These here Balkans seem to be giving trouble again."

"Troublesome lot they are," said Mrs. Pybus.

"Greeks and Macedonians and Turks and Bulgarians and such. It fair makes my head spin, the lot of them. Servians there are too, and Montenegroes. Too many of 'em altogether. Cat and dog."

"Are them the same Greeks that used to be so clever?" asked Mrs. Pybus.

"*Used* to be," said the young man with a kind of dark scorn, and suddenly began to pick his teeth with a pin.

“They can’t even speak their own language now — not properly. Fair rotten,” the young man added.

He fascinated Joan. She had never watched anything like him. But Peter just hated him.

§4

Upon this scene there presently appeared a new actor. He was preluded by a knocking at the door, he was ushered in by Mrs. Pybus who was opening and shutting her mouth in a state of breathless respect; he was received with the utmost deference by the young man with red hair. Indeed, from the moment when his knocking was heard without, the manner and bearing of the red-haired young man underwent the most marvellous change. An agitated alacrity appeared in his manner; he stood up and moved nervously; by weak, neckward movements of his head he seemed to indicate he now regretted wearing such a bright green tie. The newcomer appeared in the doorway. He was a tall, grey-clad, fair gentleman, with a face that twitched and a hand that dandled in front of him. He grinned his teeth at the room. “So thassem,” he said, touching his teeth with his thumbnail.

He nodded confidentially to the red-haired young man without removing his eyes from Joan and Peter. He showed still more of his teeth and rattled his thumbnail along them. Then he waved his hand over the table. “Clear all this away,” he said, and sat down in the young man’s chair. Mrs. Pybus cleared away rapidly, assisted abjectly by the young man.

Mr. Grimes seemed to check off the two children. “You’re Joan,” he said. “I needn’t bother about you. You’re provided for. Peter. Peter’s our business.”

He got out a pocket-book and pencil. “Let’s look at you, Peter. Just come out here, will you?”

Peter obeyed reluctantly and suspiciously.

“No stockings. Don’t they wear stockings at that school of yours?”

“Not when we don’t want them,” said Peter. “ No.”

“‘Mazes me you wear anything,” said Mr. Grimes. “S’pose it’ll come to that. Let’s see your hat.”

“Haven’t got a hat,” said Peter. “Wouldn’t wear it if I had.”

“*Wouldn’t* you!” said Mr. Grimes. “H’m!”

“Nice little handful,” said Mr. Grimes, and hummed. He produced a paper from the pocket-book and read it, rubbing his teeth with the point of his pencil.

“Lersee whassor outfit we wan’,” said Mr. Grimes. “H’m.... H’m.... H’m....”

He stood up briskly. “Well, young man, we must go out and get you some clothes and things. What’s called a school outfit. We’ll have to go in that motor-car again. Quickest way. Get your hat. But you haven’t got a hat.”

“Me come too,” said Joan.

“No. You can’t come to a tailor’s, and that’s where we’re going. Little girls can’t come to tailors, you know,” said Mr. Grimes.

Peter thought privately that Mr. Grimes was just the sort of beast who would take you to a tailor’s. Well, he would stick it out. This couldn’t go on for ever. He allowed himself to be guided by Mr. Grimes to the door. He restrained an impulse to ask to be allowed to sit beside the driver. One doesn’t ask favours of beasts like Grimes.

Joan went to the window to watch the car and Mr. Grimes’ proceedings mistrustfully.

“I got a nice picture-book for you to look at,” said Mrs. Pybus, coming behind her. “Don’t go standing and staring out of the window, dearie. It’s an idle thing to stare out of windows.”

Joan had an unpleasant feeling that she had to comply with this. Under the initiative of Mrs. Pybus she sat up to the table and permitted a large book to be opened in front of her, feigning attention. She kept her eye as much as possible on the window. She was aware of Peter getting into the car with Mr. Grimes. There was a sudden buzzing of machinery, the slam of a door, and the automobile moved and vanished.

She gave a divided attention to the picture-book before her, which was really not properly a picture-book at all but an old bound volume of the Illustrated London News full of wood engravings of royal processions and suchlike desiccated matter. It was a dusty, frowsty

volume, damp-stained at the edges. She tried to be amused. But it was very grey and dull, and she felt strangely uneasy. Every few minutes she would look up expecting to see the car back outside, but it did not return....

She heard the red-haired young man in the passage saying he thought he'd have to be getting round to the railway-station, and there was some point explained by Mrs. Pybus at great length and over and over again about the difference between the Great Western and the South Western Railway. The front door slammed after him at last, and Mrs. Pybus was audible returning to her kitchen.

Presently she came and looked at Joan with a thin, unreal smile on her white face.

"Getting on all right with the pretty pictures, dearie?" she asked.

"When's Peter coming back?" asked Joan.

"Oh, not for a longish bit," said Mrs. Pybus. "You see, he's going to school."

"Can I go to school?"

"Not 'is school. He's going to a boy school."

"Oh!" said Joan, learning for the first time that schools have sexes. "Can I go out in the garden?"

"It isn't much of a garden," said Mrs. Pybus. "But what there is you're welcome."

It wasn't much of a garden. Rather it was a yard, into which a lean-to scullery, a coal shed, and a dustbin bit deeply. Along one side was a high fence cutting it off from a similar yard, and against this high fence a few nasturtiums gingered the colour scheme. A clothes-line stretched diagonally across this space and bore a depressed pair of black stockings, and in the corner at the far end a lilac bush was slowly but steadily and successfully wishing itself dead. The opposite corner was devoted to a collection of bottles, the ribs of an umbrella, and a dust-pan that had lost its handle. From beneath this curious rather than pleasing accumulation peeped the skeleton of a "rockery" built of brick clinkers and free from vegetation of any sort. An unseen baby a garden or two away deplored its existence loudly. At intervals a voice that sounded like the voice of an embittered little girl cut across these lamentations:

"Well, you shouldn't 'ave broke yer bottle," said the voice, with a

note of moral demonstration....

Joan stayed in this garden for exactly three minutes. Then she returned to Mrs. Pybus, who was engaged in some dim operations with a kettle in the kitchen. “Drat this old kitchener!” said Mrs. Pybus, rattling at a damper.

“Want to go ‘ome,” Joan said, in a voice that betrayed emotion.

Mrs. Pybus turned her meagre face and surveyed Joan without excessive tenderness.

“This is your ‘ome, dearie,” she said.

“I live at Ingle-Nook,” said Joan.

Mrs. Pybus shook her head. “All that’s been done away with,” she said. “Your aunts ‘ave give you up, and you’re going to live ‘ere for good— ‘long o’ me.”

§ 5

Meanwhile Mr. Grimes, with a cheerful kindliness that Peter perceived to be assumed, conveyed that young gentleman first to an outfitter, where he was subjected to nameless indignities with a tape, and finally sent behind a screen and told to change out of his nice, comfortable old clothes and Heidelberg sandals into a shirt and a collar and a grey flannel suit, and hard black shoes. All of which he did in a mute, helpless rage, because he did not consider himself equal to Mr. Grimes and the outfitter and his staff (with possibly the chauffeur thrown in) in open combat. He was then taken to a hairdresser and severely clipped, which struck him as a more sensible proceeding; the stuff they put on his head was indeed pleasingly aromatic; and then he was bought some foolery of towels and things, and finally a Bible and a prayer-book and a box. With this box he returned to the outfitter’s, and was quite interested in discovering that a pile of things had accumulated on the counter, ties, collars and things, and were to be packed in the box for him forthwith. A junior assistant was doing up his Limpsfield clothes in a separate parcel. So do we put off childish things. That parcel was to go via Mr. Grimes to The Ingle-Nook.

A memory of certain beloved sea stories came into Peter’s head.

“This my kit?” he asked Mr. Grimes abruptly.

“You might call it your kit,” said Mr. Grimes.

“Am I going on a battleship?” asked Peter.

Mr. Grimes — and the two outfitting assistants in sympathy — were loudly amused.

“You’re going to High Cross School,” said Mr. Grimes, emerging from his mirth. “Firm treatment. Sound Church training. Unruly boys not objected to.”

“I didn’t know,” said Peter.

They returned to the automobile, and after a mile or so of roads and turnings stopped outside a gaunt brace of drab-coloured semi-detached villas standing back behind a patch of lawn, and having a walled enclosure to the left and an overgrown laurel shrubbery to the right. “Here’s High Cross School,” said Mr. Grimes, a statement that was rendered unnecessary by a conspicuous black and gold board that rose above the walled enclosure. They descended.

“Wonther which ithe houth,” mused Mr. Grimes, consulting his teeth, and then suddenly decided and led Peter towards the right hand of the two associated doors. “This,” said Mr. Grimes, as they waited on the doorstep, “is a real school.... No nonsense about it,” said Mr. Grimes.

Peter nodded with affected intelligence.

They were ushered by a slatternly maid-servant into the presence of a baldish man with a white, puffy face and pale grey eyes, who was wearing a university gown and seemed to be expecting them. He was standing before the fireplace in the front parlour, which had a general air of being a study. There were an untidy desk facing the window and bookshelves in the recess on either side of the fireplace. Over the mantel was a tobacco-jar bearing the arms of some college, and reminders of Mr. Mainwearing’s university achievements in the form of a college shield and Cambridge photographs.

“Well,” said Mr. Grimes, “here’s your young man, and thrust Peter forward.

“So you’ve come to join us?” said Mr. Mainwearing with a sort of clouded amiability.

“Join what?” said Peter.

Mr. Mainwearing raised his eyebrows. “High Cross School,” he

said.

"I'm at the School of St. George and the Venerable Bede," said Peter. "So how can I?"

"No," said Mr. Grimes; "you're joining here now."

"But I can't go to *two* schools."

"Consequently you're coming to this one," said Mr. Grimes.

"It's very sudden," said Peter.

"What's this about the School of Saint What's-his-name? asked Mr. Mainwearing of Mr. Grimes.

"It's just a sort of fad school they've been sending him to," Mr. Grimes explained. "We're altering all that. It's a girls' school, and he's a growing boy. It's a school where socialism and play-acting are school subjects, and everybody runs about with next to nothing on. So his proper guardians have decided that's got to stop. And here we are."

Mr. Mainwearing regarded Peter heavily while this was going on.

"Done any square root yet?" he asked suddenly.

Peter had not.

"Know the date of Magna Carta?"

Peter did not. "It was under John," he said.

"I wanted the date," said Mr. Mainwearing. "What's the capital of Bulgaria?"

Peter did not know.

"Know any French irregular verbs?"

Peter said he didn't.

"Got to begin at the beginning," said Mr. Mainwearing. "Got your outfit?"

"We've just seen to that," said Mr. Grimes. "There's one or two things I'd like to say to you—"

He glanced at Peter.

Mr. Mainwearing comprehended. He came and laid one hand on Peter. "Time you saw some of your schoolfellows," he said.

Under his guiding pressure Peter was impelled along a passage, through an archway, across an empty but frowsty schoolroom in which one solitary small boy sat and sobbed grievously, and so by way of another passage to a kind of glass back-door from which steps went down to a large gravelled space, behind the high wall that

carried the black and gold board. In the corner were parallel bars. A group of nine or ten boys were standing round these bars: they were all clad in the same sort of grey flannels that Peter was wearing, and they had all started round at the sound of the opening of the door. One shock-headed boy perhaps a head taller than any of the rest, had a great red mouth beneath a red nose.

"Boys!" shouted Mr. Mainwearing; "here's a new chum. See that he learns his way about a bit, Probyn."

"Yessir!" said the shock-headed boy in a loud adult kind of voice.

Mr. Mainwearing gave Peter a shove that started him down the steps towards the playground, and slammed the door behind him.

Most of these boys were bigger than any boys that Peter had ever known before. They looked enormous. He reckoned some must be fifteen or sixteen — quite. They were as big as the biggest Sheldrick girl. Probyn seemed indeed as big as a man; Peter could see right across the playground that he had a black smear of moustache. His neck and wrists and elbows stuck out of his clothes.

Peter with his hands in his new-found pockets walked slowly towards these formidable creatures across the stony playground. They regarded him enigmatically. So explorers must feel, who land on a strange beach in the presence of an unknown race of men.

§ 6

"Come on, fathead!" said Probyn as he drew near.

Peter had expected that tone. He affected indifference.

"What's your name?" asked Probyn.

"Stubland," said Peter. "You Probyn?"

"Stubland," said Probyn. "Stubland. What's your Christian name?"

"Peter. What's yours?"

Probyn disregarded this counter question markedly. "Simon Peter, eh! Your father got you out of the Bible, I expect. Know anything of cricket, Simon Peter?"

"Not much," said Simon Peter.

"Can you swim?"

“No.”

“Can you fight?”

“I don’t know.”

“What’s your father?”

Peter didn’t answer. Instead, he fixed his attention upon a fair-haired boy of about his own size who was standing at the end of the parallel bars. “What’s your name?” he asked.

The fair boy looked at Probyn.

“Damn it!” said Probyn. “I asked you a question, Mr. Simon Peter.”

Peter continued disregardful. “Hasn’t this school got a flagstaff?” he asked generally.

Probyn came closer to him and gripped him by the shoulder. “I asked you a question, Mr. Simon Peter. What is your father?”

It was a question Peter could not answer because for some obscure reason he could not bring himself to say that his father was dead. If ever he said that, he knew his father would be dead. But what else could he say of his father? So he seemed to shrink a little and remained mute. “We’ll have to cross-examine you,” said Probyn, and shook him.

The fair boy came in front of Peter. It was clear he had great confidence in Probyn. He had a fat, smooth, round face that Peter disliked.

“Simon Peter,” he said. “Answer up.”

“What is your father?” said Probyn.

“What’s your father?” repeated the fair boy, and then suddenly flicked Peter under the nose with his finger.

But this did at least enable Peter to change the subject. He smote at the fat-faced boy with great vigour and missed him. The fat-faced boy dodged back quickly.

“Hullo!” said Probyn. “Ginger!”

“That chap’s not going to touch my nose,” said Peter. “Anyhow.”

“Touch it when I like,” said the fat-faced boy.

“You won’t.”

“You want to *fight*?” asked the fat-faced boy, conscious of popular support.

Peter said he wasn’t going to have his nose flicked anyhow.

“Flick it again, Newton,” said Probyn, “and see.”

“I’ll show you in no time,” said Newton.

“Why! — I’d lick you with one hand,” continued Newton.

Peter said nothing. But he regarded his antagonist very intently.

“Skinny little snipe,” said Newton. “Whaddyou think you’d do to me?”

“Hit him, Newton,” said a cadaverous boy with freckles.

“Hit him, Newton. He’s too cocky,” said another. “Flick his silly nose again and see.”

“I’ll hit him ‘f’e wants it,” said Newton, and buttoned up his jacket in a preparatory way.

“Hit him, Newton,” other voices urged.

“Let him put up his fists,” said Newton.

“Do that when I please,” said Peter rather faintly.

Newton had seemed at first just about Peter’s size. Now he seemed very much larger. All the boys seemed to have grown larger. They were gathering in a vast circle of doom round a minute and friendless Peter. Probyn loomed over him like a figure of fate. Peter wondered whether he need have hit at Newton. It seemed now a very unwise thing indeed to have done. Newton was alternately swaying towards him and swaying away from him, and repeating his demand for Peter to put his hands up. He seemed on the verge of flicking again. He was going to flick. Probyn watched them both critically. Then with a rapid movement of the mind Peter realized that Newton’s face was swaying now well within his range; the moment had come, and desperately, with a great effort and a wide and sweeping movement of the arm, he smote hard at Newton’s cheek. Smack. A good blow. Newton recoiled with an expression of astonishment. “You — swine!” he said.

Two other boys came running across the playground, and voices explained, “New boy.... Fight....”

But curiously enough the fight did not go on. Newton at a slightly greater distance continued to loom threateningly, but did no more than loom. His cheek was very red. “I’ll break your jaw, cutting at me like that,” he said. “You swine!” He used foul and novel terms expressive of rage. He looked at Probyn as if for approval, but Probyn offered none. He continued to threaten, but he did not come

within arm's length again.

"Hit him back, Newton," several voices urged, but with no success.

"Wait till I start on him," said Newton.

"Buck up, young Newton," said Probyn suddenly, "and stop jawing. You began it. I'm not going to help you. Make a ring, you chaps. It's a fair fight."

Peter found himself facing Newton in the centre of an interested circle.

Newton was walking crab fashion athwart the circle, swaying with his fists and elbows high. He was now-acting a dangerous intentness. "Come on," he said terribly.

"Hit him, Newton," said the cadaverous boy. "Don't wait for him."

"You started it, Newton," Probyn insisted. "And he's hit you fair."

A loud familiar sound, the clamorous ringing of a bell, struck across the suspended drama. "That's tea," said Newton eagerly, dropping his fists. "It's no good starting on him now."

"You'll have to fight him later," said Probyn. "Now he's hit you."

"It's up to you, Newton," said the cadaverous boy, evidently following Probyn's lead.

"*Cave*. It's Noser," said a voice.

There was a little pause.

"Toke!" cried Probyn.

"Toke, Simon Peter," said the cadaverous boy informingly....

Peter found himself no longer in focus. Every one was moving towards the door whence Peter had descended to the playground, and at this door there now stood a middle-aged man with a large nose and a sly expression, surveying the boys.

Impelled by gregarious instincts, Peter followed the crowd.

He did not like these hostile boys. He did not like this shabby-looking place. He was quite ready to believe that presently he would have to go on fighting Newton. He was not particularly afraid of Newton, but he perceived that Probyn stood behind him. He detested Probyn already. He was afraid of Probyn. Probyn was like a golliwog. . He knew by instinct that Probyn was full of disagreeable

possibilities for him, and that it would be very hard to get away from Probyn. And what did it all mean? Was he never going back to Limpsfield again?

The bell had had exactly the tone of the tea bell at Miss Murgatroyd's school. It might have been the same bell. And it had made his heart homesick for the colour and brightness of the School of St. George and the Venerable Bede, and for the friendly garden and familiar rooms of Ingle-Nook. For the first time he realized that he had fallen into this school as an animal falls into a trap, that his world had changed, that home was very far away....

And what had they done to Joan?...

Had he to live here always?...

It struck Mr. Noakley, the assistant master with the large nose, as he watched the boys at tea, that the new boy had a face like a doll, but really that face with its set, shining, expressionless eyes was only the mask, the very thin mask, that covered a violent disposition to blubber....

Well, no one was going to see Peter blub. No one was going to hear him blub....

Tonight perhaps in bed.

He had still to realize the publicity of a school dormitory....

He knew he couldn't box, but he had seen something in Newton's eyes that made him feel that Newton was not invincible. He would grip his fists in a very knobby way and hit Newton as hard as he could in the face. Oh! — frightfully hard....

Peter was not eating very much. "Bags I your slice of Toke," said the cadaverous boy.

"Take the beastly stuff," said Peter.

"Little spoilt mammy coddle," thought old Nosey Noakley. "We aren't good enough for him."

§ 7

So it was that Mr. Grimes, acting for Lady Charlotte, set about the rescue of Joan and Peter from, as she put it, "the freaks, faddists and Hill-Top philosophies of the Surrey hills," and their restoration to the

established sobrieties and decorums of English life. Very naturally this sudden action came as an astonishing blow to the two advanced aunts. At nine o'clock that evening Miss Murgatroyd was called down to see Miss Phyllis Stubland, who had ridden over on her bicycle. "Where are the children?" asked Aunt Phyllis.

"You sent for them," said Miss Murgatroyd.

"Sent for them!"

"Yes. I remember now. The young man said it was Lady Charlotte Sydenham. Didn't you know? She is going abroad tomorrow or the next day."

"Sent for them!" Aunt Phyllis repeated....

Two hours later Aunt Phyllis was telling the terrible news to Mary. Aunt Phoebe was in London for the night to see Mr. Tree play Richard II, and there were no means of communicating with her until the morning. The Ingle-Nook was much too Pre-Raphaelite to possess a telephone, and Aunt Phoebe was sleeping at the flat of a friend in Church Row, Hampstead. Next morning a telegram found her still in bed.

class="telegram"> "CHILDREN KIDNAPPED BY LADY CHARLOTTE CONSULT SYCAMORE PHYLLIS"

said the telegram.

"*No!*" cried Aunt Phoebe sharply.

Then as the little servant-maid was on the point of closing the door, "Tell Miss Jepson," Aunt Phoebe commanded....

Miss Jepson found Aunt Phoebe out of bed and dressing with a rapid casualness. It was manifest that some great crisis had happened. "An outrage upon all women," said Aunt Phoebe. "I have been outraged."

"My dear!" said Miss Jepson.

"Read that telegram!" cried Aunt Phoebe, pointing to a small ball of pink paper in the corner of the room.

Miss Jepson went over to the corner with a perplexed expression, and smoothed out the telegram and read it.

"A *Bradshaw* and a hansom!" Aunt Phoebe was demanding as she moved rapidly about the room from one scattered garment to another. "No breakfast. I can eat nothing. Nothing. I am a tigress. A maddened tigress. Maddened. Beyond endurance. Oh! Can you reach

these buttons, dear!”

Miss Jepson hovered about her guest readjusting her costume in accordance with commonplace standards while Aunt Phoebe expressed herself in Sibylline utterances.

“Children dedicated to the future.... Reek of ancient corruptions.... Abomination of desolation.... The nine fifty-three.... Say half an hour.... Remonstrance.... An avenging sword.... The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.”

“Are you going to this Mr. Sycamore?” asked Miss Jepson suddenly.

Aunt Phoebe seemed lost for a time and emerged with, “Good God! — *No!* This is an occasion when a woman must show she can act as a man. This tries us, Amanda. I will have no man in this. No man at all! Are women to loll in harems for ever while men act and fight? When little children are assailed?...”

“Chastlands,” said Aunt Phoebe to the cabman, waving Miss Jepson’s *Bradshaw* in tier hand.

The man looked stupid.

“Oh! Charing Cross,” she cried scornfully. “The rest is beyond you.”

And in the train she startled her sole fellow-traveller and made him get out at the next station by saying suddenly twice over in her loud, clear contralto voice the one word “*Action*.” She left Miss Jepson’s *Bradshaw* in the compartment when she got out.

She found Chastlands far gone in packing for Lady Charlotte’s flight abroad. “I demand Lady Charlotte,” she said. She followed up old Cashel as he went to announce her. He heard her coming behind him, but his impression of her was so vivid that he deemed it wiser not to notice this informality. And besides in his dry, thin way he wanted to hear why she demanded Lady Charlotte. He perceived the possibilities of a memorable clash. He was a quiet, contemplative man who hid his humour like a miser’s treasure and lived much upon his memories. Weeks after a thing had happened he would suddenly titter, in bed, or in church, or while he was cleaning his plate. And non$ were told why he tittered.

For a moment Aunt Phoebe hovered on the landing outside the Chastlands drawing-room.

“I can’t see her,” she heard Lady Charlotte say, with something like a note of terror. “It is impossible.”

“Leave her to me, me Lady,” said a man’s voice.

“Tell her to wait, Cashel,” said Lady Charlotte.

Aunt Phoebe entered, trailing her artistic robes. Before her by the writing-table in the big window stood Lady Charlotte, flounced, bonneted, dressed as if for instant flight. A slender, fair, wincing man in grey stood nearer, his expression agitated but formidable. They had evidently both risen to their feet as Aunt Phoebe entered. Cashel made insincere demonstrations of intervention, but Aunt Phoebe disposed of him with a gesture. A haughty and terrible politeness was in her manner, but she sobbed slightly as she spoke.

“Lady Charlotte,” she said, “where are my wards?

“They are my wards,” said Lady Charlotte no less haughtily.

“Excuse me, Lady Charlotte. Permit me,” said Mr. Grimes, with soothing gestures of his lean white hands.

“Please do not intervene,” said Aunt Phoebe.

“Mr. Grimes, madam, is my solicitor,” said Lady Charlotte. “You may go, Cashel.”

Cashel went reluctantly.

Mr. Grimes advanced a step and dandled his hands and smiled ingratiatingly. Italian and Spanish women will stab, he had heard, and fishwives are a violent class. Otherwise he believed all women, however terrible in appearance, to be harmless. This gave him courage.

“Miss Stubland, I believe,” he said. “These young people, young Stubland and his foster-sister to wit, are at present in my charge — under instructions from Lady Charlotte.”

“Where?” asked Aunt Phoebe.

“Our case, Miss Stubland, is that they were not being properly educated in your charge. That is our case. They were receiving no sound moral and religious training, and they were being brought up in — to say the least of it — an eccentric fashion. Our aim in taking them out of your charge is to secure for them a proper ordinary English bringing up.”

“Every word an insult,” panted Aunt Phoebe. “Every word. What have you done with them?”

“Until we are satisfied that you will consent to continue their training on proper lines, Miss Stubland, you can scarcely expect us to put it in your power to annoy these poor children further.”

Mr. Grimes’ face was wincing much more than usual, and these involuntary grimaces affected Aunt Phoebe in her present mood as though they were deliberate insults. He did not allow for this added exasperation.

“Annoy!” cried Aunt Phoebe.

“That is the usual expression. We are perfectly within our rights in refusing you access. Having regard to your manifest determination to upset any proper arrangement.”

“You refuse to let me know where those children are?”

“Unless you can get an order against us.”

“You mean — go to some old judge?”

Mr. Grimes gesticulated assent. If she chose to phrase it in that way, so much the worse for her application.

“You won’t You will go on with this kidnapping?”

“Miss Stubland, we are entirely satisfied with our present course and our present position.”

Lady Charlotte endorsed him with three great nods.

Aunt Phoebe stood aghast.

Mr. Grimes remained quietly triumphant. Lady Charlotte stood quietly triumphant behind him. For a moment it seemed as if Aunt Phoebe had no reply of any sort to make.

Then suddenly she advanced three steps and seized upon Mr. Grimes. One hand gripped his nice grey coat below the collar behind, the other, the looseness of his waistcoat just below the tie. And lifting him up upon his toes Aunt Phoebe shook him.

Mr. Grimes was a lean, spare, ironical man. Aunt Phoebe was a well-developed woman. Yet only by an enormous effort did she break the instinctive barriers that make a man sacred from feminine assault. It was an effort so enormous that when at last it broke down the dam of self-restraint, it came through a boiling flood of physical power. It came through with a sort of instantaneousness. At one moment Mr. Grimes stood before Lady Charlotte’s eyes dominating the scene; at the next he was, as materialists say of the universe, “all vibrations.” He was a rag, he was a scrap of carpet in Aunt Phoebe’s

hands. The appetite for shaking seemed to grow in Aunt Phoebe as she shook.

From the moment when Aunt Phoebe gripped him until she had done shaking him nobody except Lady Charlotte made an articulate sound. And all that Lady Charlotte said, before astonishment overcame her, was one loud "Haw!" The face of Mr. Grimes remained set, except for a certain mechanical rattling of the teeth in a wild stare at Aunt Phoebe; Aunt Phoebe's features bore that earnest calm one may see upon the face of a good woman who washes clothes or kneads bread. Then suddenly it was as if Aunt Phoebe woke up out of a trance.

"You make — you make me forget myself!" said Aunt Phoebe with a low sob, and after one last shake relinquished him.

Mr. Grimes gyrated for a moment and came to rest against a massive table. He was still staring at Aunt Phoebe.

For a moment the three people remained breathing heavily and contemplating the outrage. At last Mr. Grimes was able to raise a wavering, pointing finger to gasp, "You have — you have — yes — indeed — forgotten yourself!"

Then, as if he struggled to apprehend the position, "You — you have assaulted me."

"Let it be — let it be a warning to you," said Aunt Phoebe.

"That is a threat."

"Agreed," panted Aunt Phoebe with spirit, though she had not meant to threaten him at all.

"If you think, madam, that you can assault me with impunity—"

"I shouldn't have thought it — before I took hold of you. A bag of bones.... Man indeed!" And then very earnestly— "Yes."

She paused. The pause held all three of them still.

"But why — oh, why! — should I bandy words with such a thing as you?" she asked with a sudden belated recovery of her dignity. "You—"

She sought her word carefully.

"Flibber-gib!"

And forgetting altogether the mission upon which she had come, Aunt Phoebe turned about to make her exit from the scene. It seemed to her, perhaps justly, that it was impossible to continue the parley

further. “Legalized scoundrel!” she said over her shoulder, and moved towards the door. In that first tremendous clash of the New Woman and the Terrific Old Lady, it must be admitted that the New Woman carried off, so to speak, the physical honours. Lady Charlotte stood against the fireplace visibly appalled. Only when Aunt Phoebe was already at the door did it occur to Lady Charlotte to ring the bell to have her visitor “shown out.” Her shaking hand could scarcely find the bell handle. For the rest she was ineffective, wasting great opportunities for scorn and dignity. She despised herself for not having a larger, fiercer solicitor. She doubted herself. For the first time in her life Lady Charlotte Sydenham doubted herself, and quailed before a new birth of time.

Upon the landing appeared old Cashel, mutely respectful. He showed out Aunt Phoebe in profound silence. He watched her retreating form with affectionate respect, stroking his cheek slowly with two fingers. He closed the door.

He stood as one who seeks to remember. “Flibber-jib,” he said at last very softly, without exultation or disapproval. He simply wanted to have it exactly right. Then he went upstairs to have a long, mild, respectful look at Mr. Grimes, and to ask if he could do anything for him....

§ 8

Aunt Phoebe’s return to The Ingle-Nook blended triumph and perplexity.

“I could never have imagined a man so flimsy,” she said.

“But where are the children?” asked Aunt Phyllis.

“If all men are like him — then masculine ascendancy is an imposture.”

(“Yes, but where are the children?”)

“So a baulked tigress might feel.”

Aunt Phyllis decided to write to Mr. Sycamore.

§ 9

Mr. Mainwearing was the proprietor of a private school for young gentlemen, not by choice but by reason of the weaknesses of his character. It was card-playing more than anything else that had made him an educator. And it was vanity and the want of any sense of proportion that had led to the card-playing.

Mr. Mainwearing's father had been a severe parent, severe to the pitch of hostility. He had lost his wife early, and he had taken a grudge against his only son, whose looks he did not like. He had sent him to Cambridge with a bitter assurance that he would do no good there; had kept him too short of money to be comfortable, spent most of his property — he was a retired tea-broker — in disappointing and embittering jaunts into vice, and died suddenly, leaving — unwillingly, but he had to leave it — about three thousand pounds to his heir. Young Mainwearing had always been short of pocket-money, and for a time he regarded this legacy as limitless wealth; he flashed from dingy obscurity into splendour, got himself coloured shirts and remarkable ties, sought the acquaintance of horses, slipped down to London for music-halls and "life." When it dawned upon him that even three thousand pounds was not a limitless ocean of money, he attempted to maintain its level by winning more from his fellow undergraduates. Nap and poker were the particular forms of sport he affected. He reckoned that he was, in a quiet way, rather cleverer than most fellows, and that he would win. But he was out in his reckoning. He left Cambridge with a Junior Optime in the Mathematical Tripos and a residuum of about seven hundred pounds. lie was a careful cricketer, and he had liked football at school in his concluding years when he was big enough to barge into the other chaps. Surveying the prospect before him, he decided that a school was the best place for him, he advertised himself as "of gentlemanly appearance" and "good at games," and he found his billet in a preparatory school at Brighton. Thence he went to a big grammar school, and thence came to the High Cross School to remain first as assistant, then as son-in-law and partner, and now as sole proprietor. Mrs. Mainwearing was not very useful as a helpmeet, as she was slightly but not offensively defective in her mind; still one must take life as one finds it. She was, at any rate, regular in her habits, and did not interfere with the housekeeper, a worthy, confidence-creating

woman, much tipped by the tenderer sort of parent.

Of course Mr. Mainwearing had no special training as a teacher. He had no ideas about education at all. He had no social philosophy. He had never asked why he was alive or what he was up to. Instinct, perhaps, warned him that the answer might be disagreeable. Much less did he inquire what his boys were likely to be up to. And it did not occur to him, it did not occur to any one in those days, to consider that these deficiencies barred him in any way from the preparation of the genteel young for life. He taught as he had been taught; his teachers had done the same; he was the last link of a long chain of tradition that had perhaps in the beginning had some element of intention in it as to what was to be made of the pupil. Schools, like religions, tend perpetually to forget what they are for. High Cross School, like numberless schools in Great Britain in those days, had forgotten completely; it was a mysterious fated routine; the underlying idea seemed to be that boys must go to school as puppies have the mange. Certain school books existed, God alone knew why, and the classes were taken through them. It was like reading prayers. Certain examination boards checked this process in a way that Mr. Mainwearing felt reflected upon his honour, and like all fundamentally dishonest people he was inclined to be touchy about his honour. But parents wanted examination results and he had to give in. Preparation for examinations dominated the school; no work was done in the school that did not lead towards an examination paper; if there had been no examinations, no work would have been done at all. But these examinations might have been worse than they were. The examiners were experienced teachers and considerate for their kind. They respected the great routine. The examiners in classics had, at best, Babu Latin and less Greek, and so they knew quite well how to set a paper that would enable the intelligent candidate to conceal an entire incapacity for reading, writing, or speaking a classical language; the examiners in mathematics knew nothing of practical calculations, and treated the subject as a sort of Patience game; the foreign language examiners stuck loyally to the grammar; in drawing the examiners asked you to copy “copies,” they did not, at any rate, require you to draw things; and altogether the “curse of examinations” might have pressed on Mr. Mainwearing

harder than it did. Suppose the language papers had been just long passages to translate into and out of English, and that the mathematical test had been all problems, and the drawing test had been a test of drawing anything! What school could have stood the strain?

To assist him in the work of his school Mr. Mainwearing had gathered about him a staff of three. He had found a young man rather of his own social quality, but very timid, a B.A. Cantab, by way of the botanical special; then there was Noakley, a rather older, sly creature, with a large overbalancing nose, who had failed to qualify years ago as an elementary assistant school-master and so had strayed into the uncharted and uncertificated ways of a private school; and finally there was Kahn, an Alsatian, who taught languages and the piano. With these three and the active assistance of Mrs. Rich, the housekeeper, the school maintained its sluggish routines.

The boys slept in two long rooms that had been made by knocking through partitions in the two upper floors, and converted into dormitories by the simple expedient of crowding them with iron bedsteads and small chests of drawers. It was the business of Noakley — who had a separate room on the top floor — to arouse the boys at seven with cries and violence for the business of the day. But there was a tacit understanding between him and the boys not to molest each other until about twenty minutes past.

It was a rule, established by Mr. Mainwearing in a phase of hygienic enthusiasm some years before, that on fine mornings throughout the year the boys should go for a sharp run before breakfast. It was a modern and impressive thing to do and it cost him nothing. It was Noakley's duty to accompany them on this run. He was unable to imagine any more loathsome duty. So that he had invented a method of supplementing the rains of heaven by means of a private watering-pot. His room was directly above Mr. Mainwearing's, and Mr. Mainwearing slept with his window shut and his blinds down, and about seven-fifteen or so every morning the curious passer-by might have seen a lean, sly man with an enormous nose, his mouth wide open and his tongue out with effort, leaning far out of an upper bedroom of High Cross School and industriously and

carefully watering the window and window-sill of the room two storeys below him. Later, perhaps, a patient observer might have been rewarded by the raising of Mr. Mainwearing's blind and a glimpse of Mr. Mainwearing, unshaven and in a white cotton nightgown, glancing out at the weather....

So generally the morning began with a tedious, sticky, still sleepy hour called Early Prep, in the schoolroom on the ground floor. It was only during Kahn's alternate week of morning duty that the run ever occurred. Then it wasn't a run. It began as a run and settled down as soon as it was out of sight of the school to a sulky walk and a muttered monologue by Kahn in German — he never spoke any language but German before breakfast — about his "*Magen*."

Noakley's method in early prep, was to sit as near to the fire as possible in the winter and at the high desk in summer, and to leave the boys alone so long as they left him alone. They conversed in undertones, made and threw paper darts at one another, read forbidden fiction, and so forth. Breakfast at half-past eight released them, and there was a spell of playground before morning school at half-past nine. At half-past nine Mr. Mainwearing and Mr. Smithers, the botanical Cantab, appeared in the world, gowned and a little irritable, and prayers and scripture inaugurated the official day. Mr. Mainwearing's connexion was a sound Church connexion, and he opened the day with an abbreviated Matins and the collect and lessons for the day. Then the junior half of the school went upstairs to the second class-room with Mr. Smithers, while Mr. Mainwearing dealt tediously with Chronicles or Kings. Meanwhile Kahn and Noakley corrected exercise-books in the third class-room, and waited their time to take up their part in the great task of building up the British imperial mind. By eleven o'clock each of the four class-rooms was thoroughly stuffy and the school was in full swing; Mr. Mainwearing, who could not have translated a new satire by Juvenal to save his life, was "teaching" Greek or Latin or history, Mr. Smithers was setting or explaining exercises on the way to quadratic equations or Euclid Book II., which were the culminating points of High Cross mathematics; Kahn, hoarse with loud anger, was making a personal quarrel of the French class; and Noakley was gently setting the feet of the younger boys astray in geography or arithmetic

or parsing. This was the high-water mark of the day's effort.

After the midday dinner, which was greasy and with much too much potato in it, came a visible decline. In the afternoon Mr. Mainwearing would start a class upon some sort of exercises, delegate Probyn to keep order, and retire to slumber in his study; Smithers and Kahn, who both suffered from indigestion, would quarrel bitterly with boys they disliked and inflict punishments; Noakley would sleep quietly through a drawing class on the tacit understanding that there was no audible misbehaviour, and that the boys would awaken him if they heard Mr. Mainwearing coming.

Mr. Mainwearing, when he came, usually came viciously. He would awaken in an evil temper and sit cursing his life for some time before he could rouse himself to a return to duty. He would suddenly become filled with suspicions, about the behaviour of the boys or the worthiness of his assistants. He would take his cane and return with a heavy scowl on his face through the archway to his abandoned class.

He would hear a murmur of disorder, a squeak of "*cave*!" and a hush.

Or he would hear Probyn's loud bellow: "Shut up, young Pyecroft. Shut it, I say! — or I'll report you!"

He would appear threateningly in the doorway.

"What's he doing, Probyn?" he would ask. "What's he doing?"

"Humbugging about, Sir. He's always humbugging about."

The diffused wrath of Mr. Mainwearing would gather to a focus. If there were no little beasts like young Pyecroft he wouldn't be in this infernal, dull, dreary hole of a school.

"I'll teach you to humbug about, Pyecroft," he would say. "Come out, Sir!"

"Please, Sir!"

Roar. "Don't bandy words with me, you little Hound! Come out, I say!"

"Please!" Young Pyecroft would come out slowly and weeping. Mr. Mainwearing would grip him hungrily.

"I'll teach you to humbug about. (Cut.) I'11 teach you! (Cut.) I can't leave this class-room for a moment but half a dozen of you must go turning it upside down." (Cut.)

"Wow!"

“Don’t answer me, Sir!” (Cut.) “Don’t answer me.” (Cut.) “Now, Sir?”

Pyecroft completely subdued. Pyecroft relinquished.

“Now, are there any more of you?” asked Mr. Mainwearing, feeling a little better.

Then he would hesitate. Should he take the set work at once, or should he steal upstairs on tiptoe to catch out one of the assistants? His practice varied. He always suspected Noakley of his afternoon sleep, and was never able to catch him. Noakley slept with the class-room door slightly open. His boys could hear the opening of the classroom door downstairs. When they did they would smack down a book upon the desk close beside him, and Noakley would start teaching instantly like an automaton that has just been released. He didn’t take a second to awaken, so that he was very hard indeed to catch.

The school remained a scene of jaded activities until four, when a bell rang for afternoon prayers under Mr. Mainwearing in the main schoolroom. Then the boys would sing a hymn while Kahn accompanied on a small harmonium that stood in the corner of the room. While prayers were going on a certain scattered minority of the boys were speculating whether Kahn or Smithers would remember this or that task that had been imposed in a moment of passion, weighing whether it was safer to obey or forget. Kahn and Smithers would return to the class-rooms reluctantly to gather in the harvest of their own wrath, but now for a little time Noakley was free to do nothing. Noakley hardly ever imposed punishments. When he was spoken to upon the subject he would put his nose down in a thoughtful manner and reply in a tone of mild observation: “The boys, they seem to mind me somehow.”

Meanwhile the released boys dispersed to loaf about the playground and the outhouses and playing-field until tea at five. Sometimes there was a hectic attempt at cricket or football in the field in which Mr. Mainwearing participated, and then tea was at half-past five. When Mr. Mainwearing participated he liked to bat, and he did not like to be bowled out. Noakley was vaguely supposed to superintend Tea and evening prep., and the boys, after a supper of milk and biscuits, were packed off to bed at half-past eight. It was

much too early to send the bigger boys to bed, but “Good God!” said Mr. Mainwearing; “am I to have no peace in my day?” And he tried to ease his conscience about what might go on in the dormitories after bedtime by directing

Noakley to “exercise a general supervision,” and by occasionally stealing upstairs in his socks.

Wednesday and Saturday were half-holidays, and in the afternoon the boys wore flannels or shorts, according to the season, and played pick-up cricket or football or hockey in a well-worn field at the back of the school, or they went for a walk with Noakley or Smithers. On Sundays they wore top hats and pseudo-Eton jackets, and went to church in the morning and the evening. In the afternoon Smithers took Scripture wearily for an hour, and then went for a walk with Noakley! And on Sunday evening they wrote home carefully supervised letters saying how happy they were and how they were all in the best of health and about “examinational prospects,” and how they hoped they were making satisfactory progress and suchlike topics. But they never gave any account of the talk that went on during the playground loafing, nor of the strange games and ceremonies over which Probyn presided in the dormitories, nor of the exercises of Mr. Main wearing’s cane. There was no library, and the boys never read anything except school books and such printed matter as they themselves introduced into the school. They never read nor drew nor painted nor made verses to please themselves. They never dreamt of acting or singing. Their only training in the use of their hands was at cricket, and they never looked at a newspaper. Occasionally Smithers gave a lesson in botany, but there was no other science teaching. Science teaching requires apparatus and apparatus costs money, and so far as the prospectus went it was quite easy to call the botany “science.”...

§ 10

In this manner did High Cross School grind and polish its little batch of boys for their participation in the affairs of the greatest, most civilized and most civilizing empire the world has ever seen.

It was, perhaps, a bad specimen of an English private school, but it was a specimen. There were worse as well as better among the schools of England. There were no doubt many newer and larger, many cleaner, many better classified. Some had visiting drill-sergeants, some had chemistry cupboards, some had specially built gymnasia, some even had school libraries of a hundred volumes or so.... Most of them had better housing and better arranged dormitories. And most of them were consistently "preparatory," stuck to an upward age-limit, and turned out a boy as soon as he became a youth to go on to business or medicine or the public schools. Mr. Mainwearing's school was exceptional in this, that it had to hold on to all it could get. He had a connexion with one or two solicitors, an understanding — Mr. Grimes was one of his friends — and his school contained in addition to Peter several other samples of that unfortunate type of boy whose school is found for him by a solicitor. Some stayed at Windsor with Mr. Mainwearing during the holidays. In that matter High Cross School was exceptional. But the want of any intellectual interest, of any spontaneous activities of the mind at all in High Cross School, was no exceptional thing.

Life never stands altogether still, but it has a queer tendency to form stationary eddies, and very much of the education of middle-class and upper- class youth in England had been an eddy for a century. The still exquisite and impressionable brains of the new generation came tumbling down the stream, curious, active, greedy, and the eddying schools caught them with a grip of iron and spun them round and round for six or seven precious years and at last flung them out....

§ 11

Into this vicious eddy about Mr. Mainwearing's life and school came the developing brain of Master Peter Stubland, and resented it extremely. At first he had been too much astonished by his transfer from Limpsfield to entertain any other emotion; it was only after some days at High Cross School that he began to realize that the experience was not simply astonishing but uncongenial, and indeed

hateful.

He discovered he hated the whole place. Comprehended within this general hatred were particular ones. He hated Newton. The fight remained in suspense, neither boy knew anything of scientific fisticuffs, neither had ever worn a boxing-glove, and both were disposed to evade the hard, clear issue of the ring. But Newton continued to threaten and grimace at him, and once as he was passing Peter on the staircase he turned about and punched him in the back.

For Newton Peter's hatred was uncomplicated; for Probyn and a second boy nearly as big, a fair, sleepy boy named Ames, Peter had a feeling that differed from a clear, clean hatred; it had an element of disgust and dread in it. Probyn, with Ames as an accessory and Newton as his pet toady, dominated the school. It is an unnatural and an unwholesome thing for boys and youths of various ages to be herded as closely together as they were in High Cross School; the natural instinct of the young is against such an association. In a good, big school whose atmosphere is wholesome, boys will classify themselves out in the completest way; they will not associate, they will scarcely speak with boys outside their own year. There is a foolish way of disposing of this fact by saying that boys are "such Snobs." But indeed they are kept apart by the fiercest instinct of self-preservation. All life and all its questions are stirring and unfolding in the young boy; in every sort of young creature a natural discretion fights against forced and premature developments. "Keep to your phase," says nature. The older boys, perplexed by novel urgencies and curiosities, are embarrassed by their younger fellows; younger boys are naturally afraid of older ones and a little disposed to cringe. But what were such considerations as these to a man like Mainwearing? He had never thought over, he had long since forgotten, his own development. Any boy, old or young, whose parents could pay the bill, was got into the school and kept in the school as long as possible. None of the school work was interesting; there were constant gaps in the routine when there was nothing to do but loaf. It was inevitable that the older boys should become mischievous louts; they bullied and tormented and corrupted the younger boys because there was nothing else to do; if there had been anything else to do they would have absolutely disregarded the

younger boys; and the younger boys did what they could to propitiate these powerful and unaccountable giants. The younger boys "sucked up" to the bigger boys; they became, as it were, clients; they were annexed by patrons. They professed unlimited obedience in exchange for protection. Newton, for instance, called himself Probyn's "monkey"; Pyecroft was Ames's. Probyn would help Newton with his sums, amuse himself by putting him to the torture (when Newton was expected to display a doglike submission) or make him jealous by professing an affection for other small boys.

Peter came into this stuffy atmosphere of forced and undignified relationships instinct, though he knew it not, with a passionate sense of honour. From the very beginning he knew there was something in these boys and in their atmosphere that made them different from himself, something from which he had to keep himself aloof. There was a word missing from his vocabulary that would have expressed it, and that word was "Cad." But at the School of St. George and the Venerable Bede they were not taught to call any people "cads."

He was a boy capable of considerable reserve. He did not, like young Winterbaum, press his every thought and idea upon those about him. He could be frank where he was confident, but this sense of difference smote him dumb. Several of his schoolfellows, old Noakley, and Mr. Mainwearing, became uncomfortably aware of an effect of unspoken comment in Peter. He would receive a sudden phrase of abuse with a thoughtful expression, as though he weighed it and compared it with some exterior standard. This irritated a school staff accustomed to use abusive language. Probyn, after Peter had hit Newton, took a fancy to him that did not in the least modify Peter's instinctive detestation of the red nostrils and the sloppy mouth and the voluminous bellow. Peter became rapidly skilful in avoiding Probyn's conversation, and this monstrously enhanced his attraction for Probyn. Probyn's attention varied between deliberate attempts to vex and deliberate attempts to propitiate. He kept alive the promise of a fight with Newton, and frankly declared that Peter could lick Newton any day. Newton was as distressed as a cast mistress.

One evening the cadaverous boy discovered Peter drawing warriors on horseback. He reported this strange gift to Ames. Ames

came demanding performances, and Peter obliged.

"He *can* draw," said Ames. "George and the Dragon, eh? It's *good*."

Probyn was shouted to, and joined in the admiration.

Peter drew this and that by request.

"Draw a woman," said Ames, and then, as the nimble pencil obeyed, "No — not an old woman. Draw — you know. Draw a savage woman."

"Draw a girl bathing — like they are in Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday," said Probyn. "Just with light things on."

"Draw a heathen goddess," said Ames. "With nothing on at all."

Peter said he couldn't draw goddesses.

"Go on," said Ames. "Draw a savage woman."

Peter, being pressed, tried a negress. They hung over him insisting upon details.

"Get out, young Newton!" cried Probyn. "Don't come hanging round here. He's drawing things."

Ames pressed further requests.

"Shan't draw any more," said Peter with a sudden disinclination.

"Go it, Simon Peter," said Ames, "don't be a mammy-good."

"Gaw! if I could draw!" said Probyn.

But Peter had finished drawing.

§ 12

No further questions were asked Peter about his father, but on Sunday night, when home-letter time came round, any doubt about the soundness of his social position was set at rest by Mr. Mainwearing himself. Home-letters from High Cross School involved so many delicate considerations that the proprietor made it his custom to supervise them himself. He distributed sheets of paper with the school heading, and afterwards he collected them and addressed them himself in his study. "You, Stubland, must write a letter to your aunt," he said loudly across the room, "and tell her how you are getting on."

"Aunt Phyllis?" said Peter.

“No, no!” Mr. Mainwearing answered in clear tones. “Your aunt, Lady Charlotte Sydenham.”

Respectful glances at Peter, and a stare of admiration from Probyn.

After a season of reflection Peter held up his hand. “Please, Sir, I don’t write letters to Lady Charlotte.”

“You must begin.”

Still further reflection. “I want to write to my Aunt Phyllis.”

“Nonsense! Do as I tell you.”

Peter reflected again for some minutes. He was deeply moved. He controlled a disposition to weep. (No one was going to see Peter blub in this school — ever.) Then Mr. Mainwearing saw him begin to write, with intervals of deep thought. But the letter was an unsatisfactory one.

“*Dear Aunt Phyllis,*” it began — in spite of instructions.

“This is a very nice school and I like it very much. I have no pocket-money. We eat Toke. Please come and take me away now. Your affectionate nephew

“PETER.”

Then Peter rubbed his eyes and it made his finger wet, and there was a drop of eye wet fell on the paper, but he did not blub. He did not blub, he knew, because he had made up his mind not to blub, but his face was flushed almost like that of a boy who has been blubbing.

Mr. Mainwearing came and read the letter. “Come, come,” he said, “this won’t do,” which was just what Peter had expected. “This is obstinacy,” said Mr. Mainwearing.

He got Peter a fresh sheet of paper and stood over him. “Write as I tell you,” said Mr. Mainwearing.

The other boys listened as this letter was dictated to a quiet but obedient Peter:

“Dear Lady Charlotte,

“I arrived safely on Wednesday at High Cross School, which I like very much. I had a long ride in an automobile. Mr. Grimes bought me a splendid bat. Mr. Mainwearing has examined me upon my attainments, and believes that with effort I shall make satisfactory progress here. We play cricket here and do modern science as well as our classical studies. I hope you may never be disappointed by my

efforts after all your kindness to me.

"Your affectionate nephew,

"PETER STUBLAND."

In the night Peter woke up out of an ugly and miserable dream, and his eyes were wet with tears. He believed he was caught at High Cross School for good and all. He believed that all the things he hated and dreaded were about him now for ever.

§ 13

From the first Mr. Mainwearing had been prepared for Peter's antagonism. He had been warned by Mr. Grimes that Peter might prove "a little difficult." The letter to Aunt Phyllis confirmed this impression he had already formed of a fund of stiff resistance in his new pupil. "I shall have to talk to that young man," he said.

The occasion was not long in coming.

It came next morning in the general Scripture lesson. The boys were reading the Gospel of St. Matthew verse by verse, and in order to check inattention Mr. Mainwearing, instead of allowing the boys to read in rotation, was dodging the next verse irregularly from boy to boy. "Now, Pyecroft," he would say; "Now — Rivers."

He was always ready to pick up a nickname and improve upon it for the general amusement. "Now, Simonides," he said.

No answer.

"Simonides!"

Peter, with his New Testament open before him, was studying the map of Africa on the end wall. That was Egypt and that was the Nile, and down that you went to Uganda, where all the people dressed in white and Nobby walked fearlessly among lions.

Peter became aware of a loud shout of "Sim-on-i-des!"

It was apparently being addressed to him by Mr. Mainwearing. He returned at a jump to Europe and High Cross School.

"Wool-gathering again," said Mr. Mainwearing. "Thinking of the dear old Agapemone, eh? We can't have that here, young man. We can't allow that here. We must quicken that proud but sluggish spirit of yours. With the usual stimulus. Come out, sir."

He moved towards the cane, which hung from a nail beside the high desk.

Obliging schoolfellows explained to Peter. “He spoke to you three times.” “He’s going to swish you.” “You’ll get it.”

Peter went very white and sat very tight.

“Now, young man,” said Mr. Mainwearing, flicking the cane. “Step out, please....

“Come out here, sir.”

No answer from Peter.

“Stubland,” roared Mr. Mainwearing. “Come out at once.”

There came a break in the traditions of High Cross School.

Peter rose to his feet. It seemed he was going to obey. And then he said in a voice, faint and small but perfectly clear, “I ain’t going to be caned. No.”

There was a great pause. There was as it were silence in Heaven. And then, his footsteps echoing through that immensity of awe, Mr. Mainwearing advanced upon Peter. Peter with a loud undignified cry fled along the wall under the map of Palestine towards the door.

“Stop him there, Ames!” cried Mr. Mainwearing. Ames was slow to understand.

Mr. Mainwearing put down the cane on the mantelshelf and became very active; he leapt a desk clumsily, upset an inkpot, and collided with Ames at the door a moment after Peter had vanished. On the landing outside Peter hesitated, and then doubled downstairs to the boot-hole. For a moment Mr. Mainwearing was at fault. “Hell!” he said. All the classroom heard him say “Hell!” All the school treasured that cry in its heart for future use. “Young — ,” said Mr. Mainwearing. It was long a matter for secret disputation in the school what particularly choice sort of young thing Mr. Mainwearing had called Peter. Then he heard a crash in the boot-hole and was downstairs in a moment. Peter was out in the area, up the area steps as quick as a scared grey mouse, and then he made his mistake. He struck out across the open in front of the house. In a dozen strides Mr. Mainwearing had him.

“I’ll thrash you, Sir,” said Mr. Mainwearing, swinging the little body by the collar, and shaking him as a dog might shake a rat. “I’ll thrash you. I’ll thrash you before the whole school.”

But two people had their blood up now.

"I'll tell my uncle Nobby," yelled Peter. "I'll tell my uncle Nobby. He's a soldier."

Thus disputing they presently reappeared in the lower class-room. Peter was tremendously dishevelled and still kicking, and Mr. Mainwearing was holding him by the general slack of his garments.

"Silence, Sir, while I thrash you," said Mr. Mainwearing, and he was red and moist.

"My uncle, he's a soldier. He's a V.C. You thrash me and he'll kill you. He'll kill you. He'll kill you."

"Gimme my cane, some one," said Mr. Mainwearing.

"He'll kill you."

Nobody got the cane. "Probyn," cried Mr. Mainwearing, "give me my cane."

Probyn hesitated, and then said to young Newton, "You get it." Young Newton had been standing up, half offering himself for this service. He handed the cane to Mr. Mainwearing.

"You touch me!" threatened Peter, "you touch me. He'll kill you," and taking advantage of the moment when Mr. Main wearing's hand was extended for the cane he scored a sound kick on the master's knee. Then by an inspired wriggle he sought to involve himself with Mr. Mainwearing's gown in such a manner as to protect his more vulnerable area.

But now Mr. Mainwearing was in a position to score. He stuck his cane between his teeth in an impressive and terrible manner, and then got his gown loose and altered his grip on his small victim. Now for it! The school hung breathless. *Cut*. Peter became as lively as an eel. Cut.

There were tears in his voice, but his voice was full and clear.

"He'll kill you. He'll come here and kill you. I'll burn down the school."

"You will, will you?"

Cut. A kick. *Cut*. Silent wriggles.

"Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten," counted Mr. Mainwearing and stopped, and let go his hold with a shove. "Now go to your place," he said. He was secretly grateful to Peter that he went. Peter had a way at times of looking a very small boy, and he did so now.

He was tearful, red and amazingly dishevelled, but still not broken down to technical blubbing. His face was streaked with emotion; it was only too manifest that the routines of High Cross had reduced his private ablutions to a minimum. He glanced over his shoulder to see if he was still pursued. He could still sob, “My uncle.”

But Mr. Mainwearing did not mean this to be the close of the encounter. He had thought out the problems of discipline according to his lights; a boy must give in. Peter had still to give in.

“And now Stubland,” he proclaimed, “stay in after afternoon school, stay in all tomorrow, and write me out five hundred times, ‘I must not sulk. I must obey.’ Five hundred times, Sir.”

Something muffled was audible from Peter, something suggestive of a refusal.

“Bring them to me on Wednesday evening at latest. That will keep you busy — and no time to spare. You hear me? Sir? ‘I must not sulk’ and ‘I must obey.’ And if they are not ready, Sir, twelve strokes good and full. And every morning until they are ready, twelve strokes. That’s how we do things here. No shirking. Play the fool with me and you pay for it — up to the hilt. This, at any rate, is a school, a school where discipline is respected, whatever queer Socialist Agapemone you may have frequented before. And now I’ve taken you in hand, young man, I mean to go through with you — if you have a hundred uncles Nobchick armed to the teeth. If you have a thousand uncles Nobchick, they won’t help you, if you air your stubborn temper at High Cross School....”

Perhaps Peter would have written the lines, but young Newton, in the company of two friends, came up to him in the playground before dinner. “ Going to write those lines, Simon Peter?” asked young Newton.

What could a chap do but say, “No fear.”

“You’ll write ’em all right,” said Newton, and turned scornfully. So Peter sat in the stuffy schoolroom during detention time, and drew pictures of soldiers and battles and adventures and mused and made his plans.

He was going to run away. He was going to run right out of this disgusting place into the world. He would run away tomorrow after the midday meal. It would be the Wednesday half-holiday, and to go

off then gave him his very best chance of a start; he might not be missed by any one in particular throughout the afternoon. The gap of time until tea-time seemed to him to be a limitless gap. “Abscond,” said Peter, a beautiful, newly-acquired word. Just exactly whither he wanted to go, he did not know. Vaguely he supposed he would have to go to his Limpsfield aunts, but what he wanted to think he was doing was running away to sea. He was going to run away to sea and meet Nobby very soon; he was going to run against Nobby by the happiest chance, Nobby alone, or perhaps even (this was still dreamier) Daddy and Mummy. Then they would go on explorations together, and he and Nobby would sleep side by side at camp fires amidst the howling of lions. Somewhere upon that expedition he would come upon Mainwearing and Probyn and Newton, captives perhaps in the hands of savages.

What would he and Nobby and Mummy and Daddy and Bungo Peter and Joan do to such miscreants?...

This kept Peter thinking a long time. Because it was beyond the limits of Peter’s generosity just now to spare Mr. Mainwearing. Probyn perhaps. Probyn, penitent to the pitch of tears, might be reduced to the status of a humble fag; even Newton might go on living in some very menial capacity — there could be a dog with the party of which Newton would always go in fear — but Mr. Mainwearing had exceeded the limits of mercy....

A man like that was capable of any treason....

Peter had it! — a beautiful scene. Mr. Mainwearing detected in a hideous conspiracy with a sinister Arab trader to murder the entire expedition, would be captured redhanded by Peter (armed with a revolver and a cutlass) and brought before Nobby and Bungo Peter. “The man must die,” Nobby would say. “And quickly,” Bungo Peter would echo, “seeing how perilous is our present situation.”

Then Peter would step forward. Mr. Mainwearing in a state of abject terror would fling himself down before him, cling to his knees, pray for forgiveness, pray Peter to intercede.

Yes. On the whole — yes. Peter would intercede.

Peter began to see the scene as a very beautiful one indeed....

But Nobby would be made of sterner stuff. “You are too noble, Peter. In such a country as this we cannot be cumbered with traitor

carrion. “We have killed the Arab. Is it just to spare this thousand times more perjured wretch, this blot upon the fair name of Englishman? Mainwearing, if such indeed be your true name, down on your knees and make your peace with God.”...

At this moment the reverie was interrupted by Mr. Mainwearing in cricketing flannels traversing the schoolroom. He was going to have a whack before tea. He just stood at the wickets and made the bigger boys bowl to him.

Little he knew!

Peter affected to write industriously....

§ 14

After the midday meal on Wednesday Peter loafed for a little time in the playground.

“Coming to play cricket, Simon Peter?” said Probyn.

“Got to stay in the schoolroom,” said Peter.

“He’s going to write his five hundred lines,” said young Newton. “I said he would.”

(Young Newton would know better later.)

Peter went back unobtrusively to the schoolroom. In his desk were two slices of bread-and-butter secreted from the breakfast table and wrapped in clean pages from an exercise-book. These were his simple provisions. With these, a pencil, and a good serviceable catapult he proposed to set out into the wide, wide world. He had no money.

He “scouted” Mr. Mainwearing into his study, marked that he shut the door, and heard him pull down the blind. The armchair creaked as the schoolmaster sat down for the afternoon’s repose. That would make a retreat from the front door of the school house possible. The back of the house meant a risk of being seen by the servants, the playground door or the cricket-field might attract the attention of some sneak. But from the front door to the road and the shelter of the playground wall was but ten seconds dash. Still Peter, from the moment he crept out of the main class-room into the passage to the moment when he was out of sight of the windows was

as tightly strung as a fiddle-string. Never before in all his little life had he lived at such a pitch of nervous intensity. Once in the road he ran, and continued to run until he turned into the road to Clewer. Then he dropped into a good smart walk. The world was all before him.

The world was a warm October afternoon and a straight road, poplars and red roofs ahead. Whither the road ran he had no idea, but in the back of his mind, obscured but by no means hidden by a cloud of dreams, was the necessity of getting to Ingle-Nook. After he had walked perhaps half a mile upon the road to Clewer it occurred to Peter that he would ask his way.

The first person he asked was a nice little old lady with a kind face, and she did not know where the road went nor whence it came. "That way it goes to Pescod Street," she said, "if you take the right turning, and that way it goes past the racecourse. But you have to turn off, you know. That's Clewer Church."

No, she didn't know which was the way to Limpsfield. Perhaps if Peter asked the postman he'd know.

No postman was visible....

The next person Peter asked was as excessive as the old lady was deficient. He was a large, smiling, self-satisfied man, with a hearty laugh.

"Where does the road go, my boy?" he repeated. "Why! it goes to Maidenhead and Cookham. Cookham! Have you hear the story? This is the way the man told the waiter to take the underdone potatoes. Because it's the way to Cook-ham. See? Good, eh? But not so good as telling him to take peas that was. Through Windsor, you know. Because it's the way to Turnham Green. Ha, ha!

"How far is Maidenhead? Oh! a tidy bit — a tidy bit. Say four miles. Put it at four miles."

When Peter asked for Limpsfield the large man at once jumped to the conclusion he meant Winchfield. "That's a bit on your left," he said, t 'just a bit on your left. How far? Oh! a tidy bit. Say five miles — five miles and a 'arf, say."

When he had gone on a little way the genial man shouted back to Peter: "Might be six miles, perhaps," he said. "Not more."

Which was comforting news. So Peter went on his way with his

back to Limpsfield — which was a good thirty miles and more away from him — and a pleasant illusion that Aunts Phyllis and Phoebe were quite conveniently just round the corner....

About four o'clock he had discovered Maidenhead bridge, and thereafter the river held him to the end. He had never had a good look at a river before. It was a glowing October afternoon, and the river life was enjoying its Indian summer. High Cross School was an infinite distance away, and all its' shadows were dismissed from his mind. Boats are wonderful things to a small boy who has lived among hills. He wandered slowly along the towing-path, and watched several boats and barges through the lock. In each boat he hoped to see Uncle Nobby. But it just happened that Uncle Nobby wasn't there. Near the lock some people were feeding two swans. When they had gone through the lock Peter went close down to the swans. They came to him in a manner so friendly that he gave them the better part of his provisions. After that he watched the operations of a man repairing a Canadian canoe beside a boat-letting place. Then he became interested in the shoaling fish in the shallows. After that he walked for a time, on past some little islands. At last, as he was now a little foot-sore, he sat down on the bank in the lush grass above some clumps of sweet rush.

He was just opposite the autumnal fires of the Cleveden woods, amidst which he could catch glimpses of Italian balustrading. The water was a dark mirror over which hung a bloom of mist. Now and then an infrequent boat would glide noiselessly or with a measured beat of rowlocks, through the brown water. Afar off was a swan....

Presently he would go on to Ingle-Nook. But not just yet. When his feet and legs were a little rested he would go on. He would ask first for Limpsfield and then for Ingle-Nook. It would be three or four miles. He would get there in time for supper.

He was struck by a thought that should have enlightened him. He wondered no one had ever brought him before from Ingle-Nook to this beautiful place. It was funny they did not know of it....

Above that balustrading among the trees over there, must be a palace, and in that palace lived a beautiful princess who loved Peter....

§ 15

It seemed at the first blush the most delightful accident in the world that the man with the ample face should ask Peter to mind his boat.

He rowed up to the wooden steps close by where Peter was sitting. He seemed to argue a little with the lady who was steering and had to back away again, but at last he got the steps and shipped his oars and held on with a boat hook and got out. He helped the lady to land.

"Here, Tommy!" he shouted, tying up the boat to the rail of the steps. "Just look after this boat a bit. We're going to have some tea."

"We shall have to walk miles," said the lady.

"Damn!" said the man.

Something seemed to tell Peter that the man was cross.

Peter doubted whether he was properly Tommy. Then he saw that there was something attractive in looking after a boat.

"Don't let any one steal it," said the man with the ample face, with an unreal geniality. "And I'll give you a tanner."

Peter arose and came to the steps. The lady and the gentleman stood for a time on the top of the bank, disputing fiercely — she wanted to go one way and he another — and finally disappeared, still disputing, in the lady's direction. Or rather, the lady made off in the direction of Cookham and the gentleman followed protesting. "Any way it's miles," she said....

Slowly the afternoon quiet healed again. Peter was left in solitude with the boat, the silvery river, the overhanging woods, the distant swan.

At first he just sat and looked at the boat.

It had crimson cushions in it, and the lady had left a Japanese sunshade. The name of the boat was the Princess May. The lining wood of the boat was pale and the outer wood and the wood of the rowlocks darker with just one exquisite gold line. The oars were very wonderful, but the boat-hook with its paddle was much more wonderful. It would be lovely to touch that boat-hook. It was a thing you could paddle with or you could catch hold with the hook or poke with the spike.

In a minute or so the call of the boat-hook had become irresistible,

and Peter had got it out of the boat. He held it up like a spear, he waved it about. He poked the boat out with it and tried to paddle with it in the water between the boat and the bank, but the boat swung back too soon.

Presently he got into the boat very carefully so as to paddle with the boat-hook in the water beyond the boat. In wielding the paddle he almost knocked off his hat, so he took it off and laid it in the bottom of the boat. Then he became deeply interested in his paddling.

When he paddled in a certain way the whole boat, he found, began to swing out and round, and when he stopped paddling it went back against the bank. But it could not go completely round because of the tight way in which the ample-faced man had tied it to the rail of the steps. If the rope were tied quite at its end the boat could be paddled completely round. It would be beautiful to paddle it completely round with the waggling rudder up-stream instead of down.

That thought did not lead to immediate action. But within two minutes Peter was untying the boat and retying it in accordance with his ambitions.

In those days the Boy Scout movement was already in existence, but it had still to disseminate sound views about knot-tying among the rising generation. Peter's knot was not so much a knot as a knot-like gesture. How bad it was he only discovered when he was back in the boat and had paddled it nearly half-way round. Then he saw that the end of the rope was slipping off the rail to which he had tied it as a weary snake might slink off into the grass. The stem of the boat was perhaps a yard from shore.

Peter acted with promptitude. He dropped his paddle, ran to the bows, and jumped. Except for his left leg he landed safely. His left leg he recovered from the water. But there was no catching the rope. It trailed submerged after the boat, and the boat with an exasperating leisureliness, with a movement that was barely perceptible, widened its distance from the bank.

For a time Peter's mind wrestled with this problem-Should he try and find a stick that would reach the boat? Should he throw stones so as to bring it back in shore?

Or perhaps if he told some one that the boat was adrift?

He went up the steps to the towing-path. There was no one who looked at all helpful within sight. He watched the boat drift slowly for a time towards the middle of the stream. Then it seemed to be struck with an idea of going down to Maidenhead. He watched it recede and followed it slowly. When he saw some people afar off he tried to look as though he did not belong to the boat. He decided that presently somebody would appear rowing — whom he would ask to catch his boat for him. Then he would tow it back to its old position.

Presently Peter came to the white gate of a bungalow and considered the advisability of telling a busy gardener who was mowing a lawn, about the boat. But it was difficult to frame a suitable form of address.

Still further on a pleasant middle-aged woman who was trimming a privet hedge very carefully with garden shears, seemed a less terrible person to accost. Peter said to her modestly and self-forgetfully; "I think there's a boat adrift down there."

The middle-aged woman peered through her spectacles.

"Some one couldn't have tied it up," she said, and having looked at the boat with a quiet intelligence for some time she resumed her clipping.

Her behaviour did much to dispel Peter's idea of calling in adult help.

When he looked again the boat had turned round. It had drifted out into the middle of the stream, and it seemed now to be travelling rather faster and to be rocking slightly. It was not going down towards the lock but away towards where a board said "Danger." Danger. It was as if a cold hand was laid on Peter's heart. He no longer wanted to find the man with the ample face and tell him that his boat was adrift. The sun had set, the light seemed to have gone out of things, and Peter had a feeling that it was long past tea-time. He wished now he had never seen the man with the ample face. Would he have to pay for the boat? Could he say he had never promised to mind it?

But if that was so why had he got into the boat and played about with it?

His left shoe and his left trouser-leg were very wet and getting cold.

A great craving for tea and home comforts generally arose in Peter's wayward mind. Home comforts and forgetfulness. It seemed to him high time that he asked some one the way to Limpsfield....

§ 16

When Noakley and Probyn arrived at Maidenhead bridge in the late afternoon it seemed to them that they had done all that reasonable searchers could do, and that the best thing now was to take the train back to Windsor. They were tired and they felt futile. And then, when hope was exhausted, they struck the trail of Peter. The policeman at the foot of the bridge had actually noted him. "'Overed about the bridge for a bit," said the policeman, "and then went along the towing path. A little grave chap in grey flannel. Funny thing, but I thought 'E might be a runaway.... Something about 'im...."

So it was that Noakley and Probyn came upon the ample-faced man at the lock, in the full tide of his distress.

He was vociferous to get across to the weir. "The boat ought to have come down long ago," he was saying, "unless it's caught up in something. If he was in the boat the kid's drowned for certain...."

Noakley had some difficulty in getting him to explain what kid. It was difficult to secure the attention of the ample-faced man. In fact before this could be done he twice pushed back Noakley's face with his hand as though it was some sort of inanimate obstacle.

It was a great and tragic experience for Probyn. They both went across by the lock to the island behind the lead of the lockkeeper and the ample-faced man. They came out in sight of the weir; the river was still full from the late September rains and the weir was a frothing cascade, and at the crest of it they saw an upturned boat jammed by the current against the timbers. A Japanese umbrella circled open in a foamy eddy below, stick upward. The sun was down now; a chill was in the air; a sense of coming winter.

And then close at hand, caught in some weedy willow stems that dipped in the rushing water Probyn discovered a little soddened straw hat, a little half-submerged hat, bobbing with the swift current, entangled in the willow stems.

It was unmistakable. It bore the white and black ribbon of High Cross School.

"Oh, my God!" cried Probyn at the sight of the hat, and burst into tears.

"Poor little Peter. I'd have done anything for him!"

He sobbed, and as he sobbed he talked. He became so remorseful and so grossly sentimental that even Noakley was surprised....

§ 17

When next morning Mr. Grimes learnt by a long and expensive telegram from Mr. Mainwearing, followed almost immediately by a long explanatory letter, that Peter had run away from school and had been drowned near Boulter's Lock, he was overcome with terror. He had visions of Aunt Phoebe — doubled, for he imagined Aunt Phyllis to be just such another — as an avenger of blood. At the bare thought he became again a storm of vibrations. His clerks in the office outside could hear his nails running along his teeth all the morning, like the wind among the reeds. His imagination threw up wild and hasty schemes for a long holiday in some inaccessible place, in Norway or Switzerland, but the further he fled from civilization the more unbridled the vengeance, when it did overtake him, might be. Lady Charlotte was still in England. On the day appointed and for two days after, the Channel sea was reported stormy. All her plans were shattered and she had stayed on. She was still staying on. In a spasm of spite he telegraphed the dire news to her. Then he went down to Windsor, all a-quiver, to see that Mr. Mainwearing did not make a fool of himself, and to help him with the inquest on Peter as soon as the body was recovered.

His telegram did have a very considerable effect upon Lady Charlotte, the more so as it arrived within an hour or so of a letter from Mrs. Pybus containing some very disconcerting news about Joan. At midday came Mr. Mainwearing's story — pitched to a high note of Anglican piety. The body, he said, was still not found, "but we must hope for the best." When Mr. Sycamore arrived at Chastlands in the afternoon he found Lady Charlotte immensely

spread out in her drawing-room as an invalid, with Unwin on guard behind her. She lay, a large bundle of ribbon, lace, and distresses, upon a sofa; she had hoisted an enormous beribboned lace cap with black-and-gold bows. On a table close at hand were a scent-bottle, smelling-salts, camphor, menthol, and suchlike aids. There were also a few choice black grapes and a tonic. She meant to make a brave fight for it.

Mr. Sycamore was not aware how very dead Peter was at Chastlands and Windsor, seeing that he was now also at The Ingle-Nook in a state of considerable vitality. It was some moments before he realized this localized demise. Indeed it was upon an entirely different aspect of this War of the Guardians that he was now visiting the enemy camp.

At first there was a little difficulty made about admitting him. Cashel explained that Lady Charlotte was "much upset. Terribly upset." Finally he found himself in her large presence.

She gave him no time to speak.

"I am ill, Mr. Sycamore. I am in a wretched state. Properly I should be in bed now. I have been unable to travel abroad to rest. I have been totally unable to attend to affairs. And now comes this last blow. Terrible! A judgment."

"I was not aware, Lady Charlotte, that you knew," Mr. Sycamore began.

"Of course I know. Telegrams, letters. No attempt to break it to me. The brutal truth. I cannot tell you how I deplore my supineness that has led to this catastrophe."

"Hardly supine," Mr. Sycamore ventured.

"Yes, supine. If I had taken up my responsibilities years ago — when these poor children were christened, none of this might have happened. Nothing."

Mr. Sycamore perceived that he was in the presence of something more than mere fuss about Peter's running away. A wary gleam came into his spectacles.

"Perhaps, Lady Charlotte, if I could see your telegram," he said.

"Give it him, Unwin," she said.

"Stole a boat — carried over a weir," he read. "But this is terrible! I had no idea."

“Give him the letter. No — not that one. The other.”

“Body not yet recovered,” he read, and commented with confidence, “It will turn up later, I feel sure. Of course, all this is — news to me; boat — weir — everything. Yes.”

“And I was ill already!” said Lady Charlotte. “There is reason to suppose my heart is weak. I use myself too hard. I am too concerned about many things. I cannot live for myself alone. It is not my nature. The doctor had commanded a quiet month here before I even thought of travel — literally commanded. And then comes this blow. The wretched child could not have chosen a worse time.”

She gave a gesture of despair. She fell back upon her piled pillows with a gesture of furious exhaustion.

“In the last twenty-four hours,” she said, “I have eaten one egg, Mr. Sycamore.... And some of that I left.”

Mr. Sycamore’s note of sympathy was perhaps a little insincere. “Of course,” he said, “in taking the children away from their school — where they were at least safe and happy — you undertook a considerable responsibility.”

Lady Charlotte took him up with emphasis. “I admit no responsibility — none whatever. Understand, Mr. Sycamore, once for all, I am not responsible for — whatever has happened to this wretched little boy. Sorry for him — yes, but I have nothing to regret. I took him away from — undesirable surroundings — and sent him to a school, by no means a cheap school, that was recommended very highly, very highly indeed, by Mr. Grimes. It was my plain duty to do as much. There my responsibility ends.”

Mr. Sycamore had drifted quietly into a chair, and was sitting obliquely to her in an attitude more becoming a family doctor than a hostile lawyer. He regarded the cornice in the far corner of the room as she spoke, and replied without looking at her, softly and almost as if in soliloquy: “Legally — no.”

“I am not responsible,” the lady repeated. “If any one is responsible, it is Mr. Grimes.”

“I came to ask you to produce your two wards,” said Mr. Sycamore abruptly, “because Mr. Oswald Sydenham lands at Southampton tonight.”

“He has always been coming.”

“This time he has come.”

“If he had come earlier all this would not have happened. Has he really come?”

“He is here — in England, that is.”

Lady Charlotte gasped and lay back. Unwin handed her the bottle of smelling-salts. “I have done nothing more than my duty,” she said.

Mr. Sycamore became more gentle in his manner than ever. “As the person finally responsible—”

“*No!*”

“Haven’t you been just a little careless?”

“Mr. Sycamore, it was this boy who was careless. I am sorry to say it now that he — I can only hope that at the last — But he was not a good boy. Anything but a good boy. He had been altogether demoralized by those mad, violent creatures. He ran away from this school, an excellent school, highly recommended. And: you must remember, Mr. Sycamore, that I was paying for it. The abnormal position of the property, the way in which apparently all the income is to be paid over to these women — without consulting me. Well, I won’t complain of that now. I was prepared to pay. I paid. But the boy was already thoroughly corrupted. His character was undermined. He ran away. I wash my hands of the consequences.”

Mr. Sycamore was on the point of saying something and thought better of it.

“At any rate,” he said, “I have to ask you on behalf of Mr. Oswald Sydenham to produce the other child — the girl.”

“She can’t be produced,” said Lady Charlotte desperately.

“That really does make things serious.”

“Oh, don’t misunderstand me! The child is in excellent hands — excellent hands. But there are — neighbours. She was told to keep indoors, carefully told. What must she do but rush out at the first chance! She had had fair warning that there were measles about, she had had measles explained to her carefully, yet she must needs go and make friends with a lot of dirty little wretches!”

“And catch measles.”

“Exactly.”

“That’s why — ?”

“That’s why—”

“There again, Lady Charlotte, and again with all due respect, haven’t you been just a little careless? At that nice, airy school in Surrey there was never any contagion — of any sort.”

“There was no proper religious teaching.”

“Was there any where you placed these children?”

“I was led to believe—”

She left it at that.

Mr. Sycamore allowed himself to point the moral. “It is a very remarkable thing to me, Lady Charlotte, most remarkable, that Catholic people and Church of England people — you must forgive me for saying it — and religious bodies generally should be so very anxious and energetic to get control of the education of children and so careless — indeed they are dreadfully careless — of the tone, the wholesomeness and the quality of the education they supply. And of the homes they permit. It’s almost as if they cared more for getting the children branded than whether they lived or died.”

“The school was an excellent school,” said Lady Charlotte; an excellent school. Your remarks are cruel and painful.”

Mr. Sycamore again restrained some retort. Then he said, I think it would be well for Mr. Oswald Sydenham to have the address of the little girl.”

Lady Charlotte considered. “There is nothing to conceal,” she said, and gave the address of Mrs. Pybus,” a most trustworthy woman,” Mr. Sycamore took it down very carefully in a little note-book that came out of his vest pocket. Then he seemed to consider whether he should become more offensive or not, and to decide upon the former alternative.

“I suppose,” he said reflectively as he replaced the little book, “that the demand for religious observances and religious orthodoxy as a first condition in schools is productive of more hypocrisy and rottenness in education than any other single cause. It is a matter of common observation. A school is generally about as inefficient as its religious stripe is marked. I suppose it is because if you put the weight on one thing you cannot put it on another. Or perhaps it is because no test is so easy for a thoroughly mean and dishonest person to satisfy as a religious test. Schools which have no claims to any other merit can always pass themselves off as severely religious.

Perhaps the truth is that all bad schools profess orthodoxy rather than that orthodoxy makes bad schools. Nowadays it is religion that is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

"If you have nothing further to say than this Secularist lecturing," said Lady Charlotte with great dignity, "I should be obliged if you would find somewhere — some Hall of Science — ... Considering what my feelings must be. . . Scarcely in the mood for — blasphemies."

"Lady Charlotte," said Mr. Sycamore, betraying a note of indignation in his voice; "this school into which you flung your little ward was a very badly conducted school indeed."

"It was nothing of the sort," said Lady Charlotte. "How dare you reproach me?"

Mr. Sycamore went on as though she had not spoken. "There was a lot of bullying and nasty behaviour among the boys, and the masters inflicted punishments without rhyme or reason."

"How can you know anything of the sort?"

"On the best authority — the boy's."

"But how could he—"

"He was thrashed absurdly and set an impossible task for not answering to a silly nickname. There was no one to whom he could complain. He ran away. He had an idea of reaching Limpsfield, but when he realized that night was coming on, being really a very sensible little boy, he selected a kindly-looking house, asked to see the lady of the house, and told her he had run away from home and wanted to go back. He gave his aunt's address at The Ingle-Nook, and he was sent home in the morning. He arrived home this morning."

Lady Charlotte made a strange noise, but Mr. Sycamore hurried on. "How this delusion about a boat and a weir got into the story I don't know. He says nothing about them. Indeed, he says very little about anything. He's a reserved little boy. We have to get what we can out of him."

"You mean to say that the boy is still alive!" cried Lady Charlotte.

"Happily!"

"In face of these telegrams!"

"I saw him not two hours ago."

“But how do you account for these telegrams and letters?”

Mr. Sycamore positively tittered. “That’s for Mr. Grimes to explain.”

“And he is alive — and unhurt?”

“As fresh as paint; and quite happy.”

“Then if ever a little boy deserved a whipping, a thoroughly good whipping,” cried Lady Charlotte, “it is Master Peter Stubland! Safe, indeed! It’s outrageous! After all I have gone through! Unwin!”

Unwin handed the salts.

Mr. Sycamore stood up. He still had the essence of his business to communicate, but there was something in the great lady’s blue eyes that made him want to stand up. And that little tussock of fair hair on her cheek — in some indescribable way it had become fierce.

“To think,” said Lady Charlotte, “that I have been put to all this unutterable worry and distress—”

She was at a loss for words. Mr. Sycamore appreciated the fact that if he had anything more to say to her he must communicate it before the storm burst. He stroked his chin thoughtfully, and began to deliver his message with just the faintest quality of hurry in his delivery.

“The real business upon which I came to you today, Lady Charlotte, has really nothing to do with this — escapade at all. It is something else. Things have arisen that alter the outlook for those children very considerably. There is every reason to suppose that neither you nor the Misses Stubland are properly guardians of Joan and Peter at all. No. One moment more, Lady Charlotte; let me explain. Two young Germans, it would appear, witnessed the accident to the boat from the top of the Capri headland. They saw Mr. Stub-land apparently wrestling with the boatman, then the boat overset and the two men never reappeared. They must have dragged each other down. The witnesses are quite certain about that. But Mrs. Stubland, poor young lady, could be seen swimming for quite a long time; she swam nearly halfway to land before she gave in, although the water was very choppy indeed. I made enquiries when I was in Naples this spring, and I do not think there would be much trouble in producing those witnesses still. They were part of the — what shall I call it? — social circle of that man Krupp, the gunmaker. He lived at

Capri. If we accept this story, then, Lady Charlotte, Mrs. Stubland's will holds good, and her husband's does not, and Mr. Oswald Sydenham becomes the sole guardian of the children....”

He paused. The lady's square face slowly assumed an expression of dignified satisfaction.

“So long as those poor children are rescued from those women,” said Lady Charlotte, “my task is done. I do not grudge any exertion, any sacrifice I have made, so long as that end is secured. I do not look for thanks. Much less repayment. Perhaps some day these children may come to understand—”

Unwin made a sound like the responses in church.

“I would go through it all again,” said Lady Charlotte—“willingly. . . Now that my nephew has returned I have no more anxiety.” She made an elegant early-Georgian movement with the smelling-salts. “I am completely justified. I have been slighted, tricked, threatened, insulted, made ill ... but I am justified.”

She resorted again to the salts.

CHAPTER IX. — OSWALD TAKES CONTROL

§ 1

WHILE Mr. Sycamore was regaling himself with the discomfiture of Lady Charlotte, Oswald Sydenham was already walking about the West End of London.

He had come upon a fresh crisis in his life. He was doing his best to accept some thoroughly disagreeable limitations. His. London specialist had but confirmed his own conviction. It was no longer possible for him to continue in Africa. He had reached the maximum of blackwater fever permitted to normal men. The next bout — if there was a next bout — would kill him. In addition to this very valid reason for a return, certain small fragments of that Egyptian shell long dormant in his arm had awakened to mischief, and had to be removed under the more favourable conditions to be found in England. He had come back therefore to a land where he had now no close friends and no special occupations, and once more he had to begin life afresh.

He had returned with extreme reluctance. He could not see anything ahead of him in England that gripped his imagination at all. He was strongly tempted to have his arm patched up, and return to Africa for a last spell of work and a last conclusive dose of the fever germ. But in England he might be of use for a longer period, and a kind of godless conscience in him insisted that there must be no deliberate waste in his disposal of his life.

For some time he had been distressed by the general ignorance, in England of the realities of things African, and by the general coarsening and deterioration, as he held it to be, of the Imperial idea. There was much over here that needed looking into, he felt, and when it was looked into then the indications for further work might appear. Why not, so far as his powers permitted, do something in helping English people to realize all that Africa was and might be. That was work he might do, and live. In Africa there was little more for him to do but die.

That was all very well in theory. It did not alter his persuasion that

he was going to be intolerably lonely if he stayed on in England. Out there were the Chief Commissioner and Muir and half a dozen other people for whom he had developed a strong affection; he was used to his native servants and he liked them; he had his round of intensely interesting activities, he was accustomed to the life. Out there, too, there was sunshine. Such sunshine as the temperate zone can never reproduce. This English world was a grey, draughty, cloudy, lonely world, and one could not always be working. That sunshine alone meant a vast deprivation.

This sort of work he thought of doing and which seemed the only thing now that he could possibly do, wasn't, he reflected uncomfortably, by any means the work that he could do best. He knew he was bad-tempered. Ill-health intensified a natural irritability. He knew his brain was now a very uncertain instrument, sometimes quite good, sometimes a weary fount of half-formed ideas and indecisions. As an advocate of the right way in Africa, he would do some good no doubt; but he would certainly get into some tiresome squabbles, he would bark his knuckles and bruise his shins. Nevertheless — cheerless though the outlook was — it was, he felt, the work he ought to do.

"Pump up enthusiasm," said Oswald. "Begin again. What else can I do?"

But what he was pumping up that afternoon in London was really far more like anger. Rage and swearing were the natural secretions of Oswald's mind at every season of perplexity; he became angry when other types would be despondent. Where melancholic men abandon effort, men of the choleric type take to kicking and smashing. Where the former contract, the latter beat about and spread themselves. Oswald, beneath his superficial resignation, was working up for a quarrel with something. His instinct was to convert the distress of his developing physical insufficiencies into hostility to some external antagonist.

lie knew of, and he was doing his best to control, this black urgency to violent thoughts and conclusions. He wanted to kick and he knew he must not yet waste energy in kicking. He was not justified in kicking. He must not allow his sense of personal grievance against fate to disturb his mind. He must behave with a

studied calm and aloofness.

"Damn!" said Oswald, no doubt by way of endorsing this decision.

Pursuant to these virtuous resolutions this tall, lean, thwarted man, full of jealous solicitude for the empire he had helped enlarge, this disfigured man whose face was in two halves like those partially treated portraits one sees outside the shops of picture-cleaners, was engaged in comporting himself as much as possible like some pleasant, leisurely man of the world with no obligation or concern but to make himself comfortable and find amusement in things about him. He was doing his best to feel that there was no hurry about anything, and no reason whatever for getting into a state of mind. Just a calm quiet onlooker he had to be. He was, he told himself, taking a look round London as a preliminary to settling down there. Perhaps he was going to settle down in London. Or perhaps in the country somewhere. It did not matter which — whichever was the most pleasant. It was all very pleasant. Very pleasant indeed. A life now of wise lounging and judicious, temperate activities it had to be. He must not fuss.

He had arrived in England the day before, but as yet, except for a brief note to Mr. Sycamore, he had notified no one of his return. He had put up at the Climax Club in Piccadilly, a proprietary club that was half hotel, where one could get a sitting-room as well as a bedroom; and after a visit to his doctor — a visit that confirmed all his worst apprehensions of the need of abandoning Africa for ever — he had spent the evening in the club trying to be calm over the newspapers and magazines. But when one is ill and tired as Oswald was, all that one reads in the newspapers and magazines is wrong and exasperating.

It was 1903; the time when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain returned from South Africa to launch his Tariff Reform agitation — and Oswald was temperamentally a Free Trader. The whole press, daily, weekly, monthly, was full of the noises of the controversy. It impressed him as a controversy almost intolerably mean. His Imperialism was essentially a romantic and generous imagination, a dream of service, of himself, serving the Empire and of the Empire serving mankind. The tacit assumption underlying this most sordid of

political campaigns that the Empire was really nothing of the kind, that it was an adventure of exploitation, a national enterprise in the higher piracy, borrowing a faded picturesqueness from the scoundrelism of the Elizabethan and Jacobean buccaneers, the men who started the British slave trade and the Ulster trouble and founded no Empire at all except the plantations of Virginia and Barbados, distressed and perplexed his mind almost unendurably. It was so maddeningly plausible. It was so manifestly the pathway of destruction.

After throwing The National Review into a distant armchair and then, when he met the startled eye of a fellow member, trying to look as though that was his usual way with a magazine, he sought distraction in Southey's "Doctor," which happened to be in the club library. After dinner he went out for a stroll in the West End, and visited the Alhambra. He found that more soothing than the papers. The old excitement of the human moth at the candles of vice he no longer felt. He wondered why these flitting allurements had ever stirred him. But he liked the stir and the lights and the pleasant inconsecutive imbecility of the entertainment.

He slept fairly well. In the morning a clerk of Mr. Sycamore's telephoned to say that that gentleman was out of town, he had been called down to see Lady Charlotte Sydenham, but that he would be back, and would probably try to "get" Oswald about eleven in the evening. He had something important to tell Oswald. The day began cloudy, and repented and became fine. By midday it was, for London, a golden day. Yet to Oswald it seemed but a weak solution of sunshine. If you stood bareheaded in such sunshine you would catch a chill. But he made the best of it.

"October mild and boon," he quoted. He assured himself that it would be entertaining to stroll about the West End and look at the shops and mark the changes in things. He breakfasted late at one of the windows overlooking the Green Park, visited the club barber, walked along to his tailor, bought three new hats and a stout gold-banded cane with an agate top in Bond Street, a pair of boots, gloves arid other sundries. Then he went into his second club, the Plantain, in Pall Mall, to read the papers — until he discovered that he was beginning to worry about Tariff Reform again. He saw no one he

knew, and lunched alone. In the afternoon he strolled out into London once more.

He was, he found, no longer uncomfortable and self-conscious in the streets of London. His one-sided, blank-sided face did not make him self-conscious now as it used to do, he had reconciled himself to his disfigurement. If at first he had exaggerated its effect, he now inclined to forget it altogether. He wore hats nowadays with a good broad brim, and cocked them to over-shadow the missing eye; his dark moustache had grown and was thick and symmetrical; he had acquired the habit of looking at himself in glasses so as to minimize his defaced half. It seemed to him a natural thing now that the casual passer-by should pull up for the fraction of a second at the sight of his tall figure, or look back at him as if to verify a first impression. Didn't people do that to everybody?

He went along Pall Mall, whose high gentility was still in those days untroubled by the Royal Automobile Club and scarcely ruffled by a discreet shop or so; he turned up through St. James's Street to Piccadilly with a reminiscent glance by the way down Jermyn Street, where he had had his first experiences of restaurants and suchlike dissipations in his early midshipman days. How far away those follies seemed now! The shops of Bond Street drew him northward; the Dore Gallery of his childhood, he noted, was still going on; he prowled along Oxford Street as far as the Marble Arch — Gillows was still Gillows in those days, and Selfridge had yet to dawn on the London world — and beat back by way of Seymour Street to Regent Street. He nodded to Verrey's, where long ago he had lunched in a short plaid frock and white socks under the auspices of his godmother, old Lady Percival Pelham. It was all very much as he had left it in '97. That fever of rebuilding and rearrangement which was already wrecking the old Strand and sweeping away Booksellers' Row and the Drury Lane slums and a score of ancient landmarks, had not yet reached the West End. There was the same abundance of smart hansom cabs crawling in the streets or neatly ranked on the stands; the same populous horse omnibuses, the same brightly dressed people, and, in Regent Street and Piccadilly, the same too-brightly-dressed women loiterers, only now most of them were visibly coarse and painted; there were the same mendicants and

sandwich-men at the pavement edge. Perhaps there were more omnibuses crowding upon one another at Piccadilly and Oxford Circuses, and more people everywhere. Or perhaps that was only the effect of returning from a less crowded world.

Now and then he saw automobiles, queer, clumsy carriages without horses they seemed to be, or else low, heavy-looking vehicles with a flavour of battleship about them. Several emitted bluish smoke and trailed an evil smell. In Regent Street outside Liberty's art shop one of these mechanical novelties was in trouble. Everybody seemed pleased. The passing cabmen were openly derisive. Oswald joined the little group of people at the pavement edge who were watching the heated and bothered driver engaged in some obscure struggle beneath his car.

An old gentleman in a white waistcoat stood beside Oswald, and presently turned to him.

"Silly things," he said. "Noisy, dangerous, stinking things. They ought to be forbidden."

"Perhaps they will improve," said Oswald.

"How could that thing improve?" asked the old gentleman. "Lotta dirty ironmongery."

He turned away with the air of a man for whom a question had been settled. Oswald followed him thoughtfully....

He resumed his identifications. Piccadilly Circus! Here was the good old Café Monico; yonder the *Criterion*."

But everything seemed smaller.

That was the thing that struck him most forcibly; London revisited he discovered to be an intense little place.

It was extraordinary that this should be the head of the Empire. It seemed, when one came back to it, so entirely indifferent to the Empire, so entirely self-absorbed. When one was out beyond there, in Uganda, East Africa, Sudan, Egypt, in all those vast regions where the British were doing the best work they had ever done in pacification and civilization, one thought of London as if it were a great head that watched one from afar, that could hear a cry for help, that could send support. Yet here were these people in these narrow, brightly served streets, very busy about their own affairs, almost as busy and self-absorbed as the white-robed crowd in the big market-

place in Mengo, and conspicuously, remarkably not thinking of Africa — or anything of the sort. He compared Bond Street and its crowded, inconvenient side-walks with one of the great garden vistas of the Uganda capital, much to the advantage of the latter. He descended by the Duke of York's steps, past the old milk stall with its cow, into the Mall. Buckingham Palace, far away, was much less impressive than the fort at Kampala on its commanding hill; the vegetation of St. James's Park and its iron fencing were a poor substitute for the rich-patterned reed palisades and the wealth of fronds that bordered the wide prospects of the Uganda capital. All English trees looked stunted to Oswald's eyes.

Towards the palace, tree-felling was in progress, the felling of trees that could never be replaced; and an ugly hoarding veiled the erection of King Edward's pious memorial to Queen Victoria, the memorial which later her grandson, the Kaiser, was to unveil.

He went on into Whitehall — there was no Admiralty Arch in those days, and one came out of the Mall by way of Spring Gardens round the corner of an obtrusive bank. Oswald paused for a minute to survey the squat buildings and high column of Trafalgar Square, pale amber in the October sunshine, and then strolled down towards Westminster. He became more and more consciously the loitering home-comer. He smiled at the mounted soldiers in their boxes outside the Horse Guards, paused at and approved of the architectural intentions of the new War Office, and nodded to his old friends, the Admiralty and the Colonial Office. Here they brewed the destinies of the Old World outside Europe and kept the Seven Seas. He played his part with increased self-approval. He made his way to Westminster Bridge and spent some time surveying the down river prospect. It was, after all, a little ditch of a river. St. Paul's was fairly visible, and the red, rusty shed of Charing Cross station and its brutal iron bridge, fit monument of the clumsy looting by "private enterprise" that characterized the Victorian age, had never looked uglier.

He crossed from one side of the bridge to the other, leant over the parapet and regarded the Houses of Parliament. The flag was flying, and a number of little groups of silk-hatted men and gaily dressed ladies were having tea on the terrace.

“I wonder why we rule our Empire from a sham Gothic building,” thought Oswald. “If anything, it ought to be Roman....”

He turned his attention to the traffic and the passers-by. “They don’t realize,” he said. “Suppose suddenly they were to have a mirage here of some of the lands and cities this old Parliament House controls?”

A little stout man driving a pony-trap caught his attention. It was a smart new pony-trap, and there was a look of new clothes about its driver; he smoked a cigar that stuck upward from the corner of his mouth, and in his button-hole was a red chrysanthemum; his whole bearing suggested absolute contentment with himself and acquiescence in the universe; he handled his reins and drew his whip across the flanks of his shining cob as delicately as if he was fly-fishing. “What does he think he is up to?” asked Oswald. A thousand times he had seen that Sphinx of perfect self-contentment on passing negro faces.

“The Empire doesn’t worry him,” said Oswald.

§ 2

It was worrying Oswald a lot. Everything was worrying Oswald just then. It is a subtle question to answer of such cases whether the physical depression shapes the despondent thought, or whether the gnawing doubt prepares the nervous illness. His confidence in his work and the system to which he belonged had vanished by imperceptible degrees.

For some years he had gone about his work with very few doubts. He had been too busy. But now ill-health had conspired with external circumstances to expose him to questionings about things he had never questioned before. They were very fundamental doubts. They cut at the roots of his life. He was beginning to doubt whether the Empire was indeed as good a thing and as great a thing as he had assumed it to be.... The Empire to which his life had been given.

This did not make him any less an Imperialist than he had been, but it sharpened his imperialism with a sense of urgency that cut into his mind.

Altogether Oswald had now given nearly eighteen years to East and Central Africa. His illness had called a halt in a very busy life. For two years and more after his last visit to England, he had been occupied chiefly in operations in and beyond the Lango country against Kabarega and the remnant of the rebel Sudanese. He had assisted in the rounding-up of King Mwanga, the rebel king of Uganda, and in setting up the child king and the regency that replaced him. At the end of 1899 his former chief, Sir Harry Johnston, had come up from British Central Africa as Special Commissioner to Uganda, and the work of land settlement, of provincial organization, of railways and postal development had gone on apace. Next year indeed war had come again, but it was the last war in this part of the world for some time. It was caused by the obstinate disposition of the Nandi people to steal the copper wire from the telegraph poles that had been set up in their country. Hitherto their chief use for copper wire had been to make bracelets and anklets for their married women. They were shocked by this endless stretching out of attenuated feminine adornment. They did their best to restore it to what they considered was its proper use. It was a homely misunderstanding rather than a war. Oswald had led that expedition to a successful explanation. Thereafter the leading fact in the history of Uganda until the sleeping sickness came had been the construction of the railway from the coast to Lake Victoria Nyanza.

In Uganda as in Nyasaland Oswald Sydenham had found himself part of a rapid and busy process of tidying up the world. For some years it had carried him along and determined all his views.

The tidying-up of Africa during the closing years of the nineteenth century was indeed one of the most rapid and effective tidyings up in history. In the late ‘eighties the whole of Africa from the frontiers of lower Egypt down to Rhodesia had been a world of chaotic adventure and misery; a black world of insecure barbarism invaded by the rifle, and the Arab and European adventurers who brought it. There had been no such thing as a school from Nubia to Rhodesia, and everywhere there had been constant aimless bloodshed. Long ages of conflict, arbitrary cruelty and instinctive fierceness seemed to have reached a culmination of destructive

disorder. The increasing light that fell on Africa did but illuminate a scene of collapse. The new forces that were coming into the country appeared at first as hopelessly blind and cruel as the old; the only difference was that they were better armed. The Arab was frankly a slaver, European enterprise was deeply interested in forced labour. The first-fruits of Christianity had been civil war, and one of Oswald's earliest experiences of Uganda had been the attack of Mwanga and his Roman Catholic adherents upon the Anglicans in Mengo, who held out in Lugard's little fort and ultimately established the soundness of the Elizabethan compromise by means of a Maxim gun It was never a confident outlook for many years anywhere between the Zambesi and the Nile cataracts. Probably no honest man ever worked in west and central Africa between 1880 and 1900 who escaped altogether from phases of absolute despair; who did not face with a sinking heart, lust, hatred, cunning and treachery, black intolerance and ruthless aggression. And behind all the perversities of man worked the wickedness of tropical Nature, uncertain in her moods, frightful in her storms, fruitful of strange troubles through weed and parasite, insect and pestilence. Yet civilization had in the long run won an astonishing victory. In a score of years, so endless then, so brief in retrospect, roads that had been decaying tracks or non-existent were made safe and open everywhere, the railway and the post and telegraph came to stay, vast regions of Africa which since the beginning of things had known no rule but the whim and arbitrary power of transitory chiefs and kings, awoke to the conception of impartial law; war canoes vanished from the lakes and robber tribes learnt to tend their own cattle and cultivate their gardens. And now there were schools. There were hospitals. Perhaps a quarter of a million young people in Uganda alone could read and write; the percentage of literacy in Uganda was rapidly overtaking that in India and Russia.

On the face of it this was enough to set one thinking of the whole world as if it were sweeping forward to universal civilization and happiness. For some years that had been Oswald's habit of mind. It had been his sustaining faith. He had gone from task to task until this last attack of black-water fever had arrested his activities. And then these doubts displayed themselves.

From South Africa, that land of destiny for western civilization, had come the first germ of his doubting. Sir Harry Johnston, Oswald's chief, a frank and bitter critic of the New Imperialism that had thrust up from the Cape to Nyasaland under the leadership of Cecil Rhodes, helped to shape and point his scepticism. The older tradition of the Empire was one of administration regardless of profit, Johnston declared; the new seemed inspired by conceptions of violent and hasty gain. The Rhodes example had set all Africa dancing to the tune of crude exploitation. It had fired the competitive greed of the King of the Belgians and unleashed blood and torture in the Congo Free State. The Congo State had begun as a noble experiment, a real attempt at international compromise; it had been given over to an unworthy trustee and wrecked hideously by his ruthless profit-hunting. All over the Empire, honest administrators and colonial politicians, friendly explorers and the missionaries of civilization, were becoming more and more acutely aware of a heavy acquisitive thrust behind the New Imperialism. Usually they felt it first in the treatment of the natives. The earlier ill-treatment of the native came from the local trader, the local planter, the white rough; now as that sort of thing was got in hand and men could begin to hope for a new and better order, came extensive schemes from Europe for the wholesale detachment of the native from his land, for the wholesale working and sweating of the native population....

Had we defeated the little robbers only to clear the way for organized imperial robbery?

Such things were already troubling Oswald's mind before the shock of the South African war. But before the war they amounted to criticisms of this administration or that, they were still untouched by any doubts of the general Imperial purpose or of the Empire as a whole. The South African war laid bare an amazing and terrifying amount of national incompetence. The Empire was not only hustled into a war for which there was no occasion, but that war was planned with a lack of intelligent foresight and conducted with a lack of soundness that dismayed every thoughtful Englishman. After a monstrous wasteful struggle the national resources dragged it at last to a not very decisive victory. The outstanding fact became evident that the British army tradition was far gone in decay, that the army

was feebly organized and equipped, and that a large proportion of its officers were under-educated men, narrow and conventional, inferior in imagination and initiative to the farmers, lawyers, cattle-drovers, and suchlike leaders against whom their wits were pitted. Behind the rejoicings that hailed the belated peace was a real and unprecedented national humiliation. For the first time the educated British were enquiring whether all was well with the national system if so small a conquest seemed so great a task. Upon minds thus sensitized came the realization of an ever more vigorous and ever more successful industrial and trade competition from Germany and the United States; Great Britain was losing her metallurgical ascendancy, dropping far behind in the chemical industries and no longer supreme upon the seas. For the first time a threat was apparent in the methods of Germany. Germany was launching liner after liner to challenge the British mercantile ascendancy, and she was increasing her navy with a passionate vigour. What did it mean? All over the world the British were discovering the German. And the German, it seemed, had got this New Imperialism that was in the British mind in a still harsher, still less scrupulous and still more vulgar form. "Wake up, England," said the Prince of Wales returning from a visit to Canada, and Oswald heard the phrase reverberating in Uganda and talked about it and thought it over continually.

(And Lord Rosebery spoke of "efficiency.") But now when Oswald sought in the newspapers for signs of this waking up that he desired, he found instead this tremendous reiteration of the ideas of the New Imperialism, acquisitive, mercenary, and altogether selfish and national, which he already so profoundly disliked. The awakening he desired was an awakening of the spirit, an awakening to broader ideas and nobler conceptions of the nation's role in the world's affairs. He had hoped to find men talking of great schemes of national education, of new schools of ethnology, of tropical botany and oriental languages that would put the Imperial adventure on a broad basis of understanding and competent direction. Instead, he found England full of wild talk about "taxing the foreigner." A hasty search for national profit he refused to recognize as an awakening. For him indeed it had far more of the quality of a nightmare.

§ 3

It is remarkable how much our deeper convictions are at the mercy of physiological jolts.

Before the renewed attacks of fever had lowered his vitality, Oswald had felt doubtful of this and that, but he had never doubted of the ultimate human triumph; he had never even doubted that the great Empire he served would survive, achieve its mission triumphantly, and incorporate itself in some way with a unified mankind. He himself might blunder or fail, there might be all sorts of set-backs, but in the end what he called Anglo-Saxonism would prevail, the tradition of justice and free speech would be justified by victory, and the darkest phase of the Martyrdom of Man end. But now the fever had so wrought on his nerves and tissues that he no longer enjoyed this ultimate confidence. He could think that anything might fail. He could even doubt the stability of the Victorian world.

One night during this last illness that had brought him home he fell thinking of Zimbabwe and the lost cities of Africa, and then presently of the dead cities of Yucatan, and then of all the lost and vanished civilizations of the world, of the long succession of human failures to secure any abiding order and security. With this he mingled the suggestion of a recent anthropological essay he had read. Two races of men with big brains and subtle minds, the Neanderthal race and the Cro-Magnon race, it was argued very convincingly, had been entirely exterminated before the beginnings of our present humanity. Our own race too might fail and perish and pass away. In the night with a mounting temperature these were very grisly and horrible thoughts indeed. And when at last he passed from such weary and dismal speculations to sleep, there came a dream to crown and perpetuate his mood, a dream that was to return again and again.

It was one of those dreams that will sometimes give a nightmare reality of form and shape to the merest implications of the waking life, one of those dreams that run before and anticipate and perhaps direct one's daylight decisions. That black artist of delirium who throws his dark creations upon our quivering mental screens, had seized and utilized all Oswald's germinating misgivings and added queer suggestions of his own. Through a thousand irrelevant and

transitory horrors one persistent idea ran through Oswald's distresses. It was the idea of a dark forest. And of an endless effort to escape from it. He was one of the captains of a vaguely conceived expedition that was lost in an interminable wilderness of shadows; sometimes it was an expedition of limitless millions, and the black trees and creepers about him went up as high as the sky, and sometimes he alone seemed to be the entire expedition, and the darkness rested on his eyes, and the thorns wounded him, and the great ropes of the creepers slashed his face. He was always struggling to get through this forest to some unknown hope, to some place where there was light, where there was air and freedom, where one could look with brotherly security upon the stars; and this forest which was Life, held him back; it held him with its darkness, it snared him with slime and marshy pitfalls, it entangled him amidst pools and channels of black and blood-red stinking water, it tripped him and bound him with its creepers; evil beasts snared his followers, great serpents put them to flight, inexplicable panics and madnesses threw the long straggling columns into internecine warfare, incredible imbecilities threatened the welfare of the entire expedition. He would find himself examining the loads of an endless string of porters, and this man had flung away bread and loaded his pack with poisonous fungi, and that one had replaced ammunition by rust and rubbish and filth. He would find himself in frantic remonstrance with porters who had flung aside their loads, who were sullenly preparing to desert; or again, the whole multitude would be stricken with some strange disease with the most foul and horrible symptoms, and refuse the doubtful medicines he tendered in his despair; or the ground would suddenly breed an innumerable multitude of white thin voracious leeches that turned red-black as they fed....

Then far off through the straight bars of the tree stems a light shone, and a great hope sprang up in him. And then the light became red, a wavering red, a sudden hot breeze brought a sound of crackling wood and the soughing of falling trees, spires and flags and agonized phantoms of flame rushed up to the zenith; through the undergrowth a thousand black beasts stampeded, the air was thick with wild flights of moths and humming-birds, and he realized that

the forest had caught fire....

That forest fire was always a climax. With it came a burning sensation in loins and back. It made him shout and struggle and fight amidst the black fugitives and the black thickets. Until the twigs and leaves about him were bursting into flames like a Christmas tree that is being lit up. He would awaken in a sweating agony.

Then presently he would be back again in the midst of that vague innumerable expedition in the steamy deep grey aisles of the forest, under the same gathering sense of urgent necessity, amidst the same inextricable thickening tangle of' confusions and cross-purposes.

In his waking moments Oswald, if he could, would have dismissed that dream altogether from his mind. He could argue that it was the creation of some purely pathological despondency, that it had no resemblance, no parallelism, no sort of relation to reality. Yet something of its dark hues was reflected in his waking thoughts. Sometimes this reflection was so faint as to be scarcely perceptible, but always it was there.

§ 4

The Plantain, to which Oswald drifted back to dine, was a club gathered from the ends of the earth and very proud of the fact; it was made up of explorers, travellers, colonial officials, K.C.M.G.'s and C.M.G.'s. It was understood to be a great exchange of imperial ideas, and except for a group or so of members who lived in and about London, it had no conversation because, living for the most part at different ends of the earth, its members did not get to know each other very well. Occasionally there was sporting gossip. Shy, sunburnt men drifted in at intervals of three or four years, and dined and departed. Once a member with a sunstroke from India gave way to religious mania, and tried to preach theosophy from the great staircase to three lonely gentlemen who were reading the telegrams in the hall. He was removed with difficulty. The great red-papered, white-painted silences of the club are copiously adorned with rather old yellow maps of remote regions, and in the hall big terrestrial and celestial globes are available for any members who wish to refresh

their minds upon the broad facts of our position in space. But the great glory of the club is its wealth of ethnological and sporting trophies. Scarcely is there a variety of spear, stabbing or disembowelling knife, blowing tube, bow, crossbow, or matchlock, that is not at the disposal of any member nimble enough to pluck it from the wall. In addition there is a vast collection of the heads of beasts; everywhere they project from walls and pillars; heads of bison, gazelles and wart-hogs cheer the souls of the members even in the humblest recesses. In the dining-room, above each table, a hippopotamus or a rhinoceros or a tiger or a lion glares out with glassy eyes upon the world, showing every item in its dentition. Below these monsters sits an occasional empire-builder, in the careful evening dress of the occasional visitant to civilization, seeming by contrast a very pallid, little, nicely behaved thing indeed.

To the Plantain came Oswald, proposing to dine alone, and in this dining-room he discovered Slingsby Darton, the fiscal expert, a little Cockney with scarcely any nose at all, sitting with the utmost impudence under the largest moose. Oswald was so pleased to discover any one he knew that he only remembered that he detested Slingsby Darton as he prepared to sit down with him. There was nothing for it then but to make the best of him.

Oswald chose his dinner and his wine with care. Bed wines were forbidden him, but the wine waiter had good authority, authority from India and gastrically very sensitive, for the Moselle he recommended. And in answer to Slingsby Darton's enquiries, Oswald spread out his theory that he was an amiable, pleased sort of person obliged to come home from Uganda, sorry to leave Uganda, but glad to be back in the dear old country and "at the centre of things," and ready to take up anything

"Politics?" said Slingsby Darton. "We want a few voices that have got out of sight of the parish pump."

Politics — well, it might be. But it was a little hard to join on to things at first. "Fearful lot of squabbling — not very much doing. Not nearly as much as one had hoped."

That seemed a restrained, reasonable sort of thing to say. Nor was it extravagant to throw out, "I thought it was 'Wake up, England'; but she seems just to be talking in her sleep."

Out flares the New Imperialism at once in Oswald's face. "But have you read Chamberlain's great speeches?" Slingsby Darton protests.

"I had those in mind," said Oswald grimly.

Both gentlemen were in the early phase of encounter. It was not yet time to join issue. Slingsby Darton heard, but made no retort. Oswald was free to develop his discontents.

Nothing seemed to be getting done, he complained. The army had been proved inefficient, incapable even of a colonial war, but what were we doing?

"Exactly," said Slingsby Darton. "You dare not even whisper 'conscription.'"

Oswald had not been thinking of that but of a technical reorganization, more science, more equipment. But all that he could see in the way of a change were "these beastly new caps." (Those were the days of the hated 'Brodrick.') Then economic reorganization hung fire. "Unemployed" processions grew bigger every winter. ("Tariff," whispered Darton. "Intelligent organization," said Oswald.) Then education —

"Education," said Oswald, "is at the heart of the whole business."

"I wouldn't say that altogether," said Slingsby Darton.

"At the heart of the whole business," Oswald repeated as though Slingsby Darton had not spoken. "The people do not know. Our people do not understand." The Boer war had shown how horribly backward our education was — our higher education, our scientific and technical education, the education of our officials and generals in particular. "We have an empire as big as the world and an imagination as small as a parish." But it would be a troublesome job to change that. Much too troublesome. Oswald became bitter and accusatory. His living side sneered. It would bother a lot of Balfour's friends quite uncomfortably. The dear old Church couldn't keep its grip on an education of that sort, and of course the dear old Church must have its grip on education. So after a few large-minded flourishes, the politicians had swamped the whole question of educational reform in this row about church schools and the Passive Resistance movement, both sides only too glad to get away from reality. Oswald was as bitter against the Passive Resister as he was

against the Church.

"I don't know whether I should give quite the primary place to education," said Slingsby Darton, battling against this tirade. "I don't know whether I should quite say that. Mr. Chamberlain—"

The fat, as the vulgar say, was in the fire.

October, 1903, was a feverish and impassioned time in English affairs. From Birmingham that month the storm had burst. With a great splash Mr. Joseph Chamberlain had flung the issue of Protection into the sea of political affairs; huge waves of disturbance were sweeping out to the uttermost boundaries of the empire. Instead of paying taxes we were to "tax the foreigner." To that our fine imperial dream had come. Over dinner-tables, in trains and smoking-rooms, men were quarrelling with their oldest friends. To Oswald the conversion of Imperialism into a scheme for world exploitation in the interests of Birmingham seemed the most atrocious swamping of real issues by private interests that it was possible to conceive. The Sydenham strain was an uncommercial strain. Slingsby Darton was manifestly in the full swirl of the new movement, the man looked cunning and eager, he put his pert little face on one side and raised his voice to argue. A gathering quarrelsomeness took possession of Oswald. He began to speak very rapidly and pungently. He assumed an exasperating and unjustifiable detachment in order to quarrel better. He came into these things from the outside, he declared, quite unbiased, oh! quite unbiased. And this "nail-trust organizer's campaign" shocked him — shocked him unspeakably. Here was England confessedly in a phase of inefficiency and deterioration, needing a careful all-round effort, in education, in business organization, in military preparation. And suddenly drowning everything else in his noise came "this demagogue ironmonger with his panacea!"

Slingsby Darton was indignant. "My dear Sir! I cannot hear you speak of Mr. Chamberlain in such terms as that!"

"But consider the situation," said Oswald. "Consider the situation! When of all things we want steady and harmonious constructive work, comes all the uproar, all the cheap, mean thinking and dishonest spouting, the music-hall tricks and poster arguments, of a Campaign."

Slingsby Darton argued. “But, my dear Sir, it is a constructive campaign! It is based on urgent economic needs.”

Oswald would have none of that. Tariff Reform was a quack remedy. “A *Zollverein*. Think of it! With an empire in great detached patches all over the world. Each patch with different characteristics and different needs. A child could see that a *Zollverein* is absurd. A child could see it. Yet to read the speeches of Chamberlain you’d think a tariff could work geographical miracles and turn the empire into a compact continent, locked fast against the foreigner. How can a scattered host become a band of robbers? The mere attempt takes us straight towards disaster.”

“Straight away from it!” Slingsby Darton contradicted.

Oswald went on regardlessly. “An empire — scattered like ours — run on selfish and exclusive lines must bring us into conflict with every other people under the sun,” he asserted. “It must do. Apart from the utter and wanton unrighteousness, apart from the treason to humanity. Oh! I hate this New Imperialism. I hate it and dread it. It spoils my sleep at nights, it worries me and worries me....”

Slingsby Darton thought he would do better to worry about this free trade of ours which was bleeding us to death.

“I do not speak as one ignorant of the empire,” said Oswald. “I have been watching it—”

Slingsby Darton, disregarded, maintained that he, too, had been watching.

But Oswald was now at the “I tell you, Sir,” stage.

He declared that the New Imperialism came from Germany. It was invented by professors of *Weltpolitik*. Milner had grafted it upon us at Balliol. But German conditions were altogether different from ours, Germany was a geographical unity, all drawn together, unified by natural necessity, like a fist. Germany was indeed a fist — by geographical necessity. The British empire was like an open hand. Must be like an open hand. We were an open people — or we were nothing. We were a liberalizing power or we were the most pretentious sham in history. But we seemed to be forgetting that liberal idea for which we stood. We swaggered now like owners, forgetting that we were only trustees. Trustees for mankind. We were becoming a boastful and a sprawling people. The idea of grabbing

half the world — and then shutting other peoples out with tariffs, was — Oswald was losing self-control— “a shoving tradesman’s dream.” And we were doing it — as one might expect “a trust-organizing-nail-maker” — phrase rubbed in with needless emphasis — to do it. “We were shoving about, treading on everybody’s toes — and failing to educate, failing to arm Yes — shoving. It was a good word. He did not mind how many times he used it. “This dream of defying the world without an army, and dominating it without education!” The Germans were at least logical in their swagger. If they shoved about they also armed. And they educated. Anyhow they trained. But we trod on everybody’s toes and tried to keep friends all round....

So Oswald — under the moose — while Slingsby Darton did what he could by stabbing an objection at him now and again. It became clearer and clearer to Slingsby Darton that the only possibility before him of holding his own, short of throwing knives and glasses at Oswald, was to capture the offensive.

“You complain of a panacea,” he said, poking out two arresting fingers at Oswald. “That Tariff Reform is a panacea. But what of education? What of this education of yours? That also is a panacea.”

And just then apt to his aid came “Walsall and the Bishop of Pinner from their table under the big, black, clerical-looking hippopotamus. Walsall was a naturalist, and had met Oswald in the days of his biological enthusiasm; the Bishop of Pinner had formerly been the Bishop of Tanganyika and knew Oswald by repute. So they came over to greet him and were at once seized upon as auxiliaries by Slingsby Darton.

“We’re getting heated over politics,” said Slingsby Darton, indicating that at least Oswald was.

“Every one is getting heated over politics,” said the bishop. “It’s as bad as the Home Rule split.”

“Sydenham’s panacea is to save the world by education. He won’t hear of economic organization.”

The bishop opened eyes and mouth at Oswald until he looked like the full moon....

On that assertion of Slingsby Darton’s they drifted past the paying-desk to the small smoking-room, and there they had a great dispute about education beneath a gallery audience, so to speak,

composed of antelope, Barbary sheep, gnu, yaks, and a sea lion. Oswald had never realized before how passionately he believed in education. It was a revelation. He discovered himself. He wanted to tell these men they were uneducated. He did succeed in saying that Mr. Chamberlain was "essentially an uneducated man."

Walsall was a very trying opponent for a disputant of swift and passionate convictions. He had a judicial affectation, a Socratic pose. He was a grey, fluffy-headed man with large tortoiseshell spectacles and a general resemblance to a kind wise owl. He liked to waggle his head slowly from side to side and smile. He liked to begin sentences with "But have you thought?" or "I think you have overlooked " or "So far from believing that, I hold the exact converse." He said these things in a very suave voice as though each remark was carefully dressed in oil before serving.

He expressed grave doubts whether there was "any benefit in education — any benefit whatever."

But the argument that formed that evening's entertainment for the sea lion and those assorted ruminating artio-dactyls was too prolonged and heated and discursive to interest any but the most sedulous reader. Every possible sort of heresy about education seemed loose that night for the affliction of Oswald. Slingsby Darton said, "Make men prosperous and education will come of its own accord." Walsall thought that the sort of people who benefited by education "would get on anyhow." He thought knowledge was of value according to the difficulty one experienced in attaining it. (Could any sane man really believe that?) "I would persecute science," said Walsall, "and then it would be taken care of by enthusiasts."

"But do you know," said Oswald, with an immense quiet in his manner, "that there is a — a British Empire? An empire with rather urgent needs?"

(Suppressed murmur from Slingsby Darton: "Then I don't see what your position is at all!")

Walsall disputed these "needs. "Weren't we all too much disposed to make the empire a thing of plan and will? An empire was a growth. It was like a man, it grew without taking thought. Presently it aged and decayed. We were not going to save the empire by taking

thought.

(Slingsby Darton, disregarded, now disagreeing with Walsall.)

"Germany takes thought," Oswald interjected.

"To its own undoing, perhaps," said Walsall....

The bishop's method of annoyance was even blander than Walsall's, and more exasperating to the fevered victim. He talked of the evils of an "educated proletariat." For a stable community only a certain proportion of educated people was advisable. You could upset the social balance by over-educating the masses. "We destroy good, honest, simple-souled workers in order to make discontented clerks." Oswald spluttered, "You must make a citizen in a modern population understand something of the State he belongs to!"

"Better, Faith," said the bishop. "Far better, Faith. Teach them a simple Catechism."

He had visited Russia. He had been to the coronation of the Tzar, a beautiful ceremony, only a little marred by a quite accidental massacre of some of the spectators. Those were the days before the Russo-Japanese war and the coming of the Duma. There was much to admire in Russia, the good bishop declared; much to learn. Russia was the land of Mary, great-souled and blessed; ours alas! was the land of bustling Martha. Nothing more enviable than the political solidarity of Russia— "after our warring voices.... Time after time I asked myself, 'Aren't we Westerns on the wrong track?' Here is something — Great. And growing greater. Something simple. Here is obedience and a sort of primitive contentment. Trust in the Little White Father, belief in God. Here Christianity lives indeed."

About eleven o'clock Walsall was propounding a paradox. "All this talk of education," he said, "reminds me of the man who tried to lift himself by his own ears. How, I ask myself, can a democracy such as ours take an intelligent interest in its destiny unless it is educated, and how can it educate itself unless it takes an intelligent interest in its destiny? How escape that dilemma?"

"A community," said Oswald, grappling with this after a moment, "a community isn't one mind, it's a number of minds, some more intelligent, some less. It's a perpetual flow of new minds—"

Then something gave way within him.

"We sit here," he said in a voice so full of fury that the mouth of

the bishop fell open, “and while we talk this halfwitted, half-clever muck to excuse ourselves from getting the nation into order, the sands run out of the glass. The time draws near when the empire will be challenged—”

He stood up abruptly.

“Have you any idea,” he said, “what the empire might be? Have you thought of these hundreds of millions to whom we might give light — had we light? Are we to be a possessing and profit-hunting people because we have not the education to be a leaderly people? Are we to do no better than Rome and Carthage — and loot the provinces of the world? Loot or education, that is the choice of every imperial opportunity. All England, I find, is echoing with screams for loot. Have none of us vision? None?”

The bishop shook his head sadly. The man, he thought, was raving.

“What is this vision of yours?” sneered Walsall. “Ten thousand professors?”

“After all,” said Slingsby Darton with a weary insidiousness, “we do not differ about our fundamental idea. You must have funds. You must endow your schools. Without Tariff Reform to give you revenue —

But Oswald was not going to begin over again.

“I ought to be in bed,” he said, looking at his watch. “My doctor sends me to bed at ten....”

“My God!” he whispered as he put on his coat under the benevolent supervision of an exceptionally fine Indian buffalo.

“What is to happen to the empire,” he cried, going out into the night and addressing himself to the moon, to the monument which commemorates the heroic incompetence of the Duke of York, and to an interested hansom cabby, “what is to happen to the empire — when these are its educated opinions?”

§ 5

But it is high time that Joan and Peter came back into this narrative. For this is their story, it bears their names on its covers and on its

back and on its title-page and at the head of each left-hand page. It has been necessary to show the state of mind, the mental condition, the outlook, of their sole guardian when their affairs came into his hands. This done they now return by telephone. Oswald had not been back in the comfortable sitting-room at the Climax Club for ten minutes before he was rung up by Mr. Sycamore and reminded of his duty to his young charges. A club page called Mr. Sydenham to the receiver in his bedroom.

In those days the telephone was still far from perfection. It had not been in general use for a decade.... Mr. Sycamore was audible as a still small voice.

"Mr. Sydenham? Sycamore speaking,"

"No need to be," said Oswald. "You haven't been speaking to me."

"Who am I speaking to? I want Mr. Sydenham. Sycamore speaking."

"I'm Mr. Sydenham. Who are you? No need to be sick of your speaking so far as I'm concerned. I've only just been called to the telephone—"

"Your solicitor, Sycamore. S.Y.C.A.M.O.R.E."

"Oh! Eight O. How are you, Mr. Sycamore? I'm Sydenham. How are those children?"

"Hope you're well, Mr. Sydenham?"

"Gaudy — in a way. How are you?"

"I've been with Lady Charlotte today. I don't know if you've heard anything of—"

Whop! Whop. Bunnik. *Silence*.

After a little difficulty communication with Mr. Sycamore was partially restored. I say partially because his voice had now become very small and remote indeed. "I was saying, I don't know if you understand anything of the present state of affairs."

"Nothing," said Oswald. "Fire ahead."

"Can you hear me distinctly? I find you almost inaudible."

Remonstrances with the exchange led after a time to slightly improved communications.

"You were saying something about a fire?" said Mr. Sycamore.

"I said nothing about a fire. You were saying something about the

children?”

“Well, well. Things are in a very confused state, Mr. Sydenham. I hope you mean to take hold of their education. These children are not being educated, they are being fought over.”

“Who’s thinking over them?”

“No one. But the Misses Stubland and Lady Charlotte are fighting over them — F.I.G.H.T.I.N.G. I want you to think over them.... You — yes.... Think, yes. Both clever children. Great waste if they are not properly educated.... Matters are really urgent. I have been with Lady Charlotte today. You know she kidnapped them?”

“Kidnapped?”

A bright girlish voice, an essentially happy voice, cut into the conversation at this point. “Three minutes up,” it said.

Empire-building language fell from Oswald. In some obscure way this feminine intervention was swept aside, and talk was resumed with Mr. Sycamore.

It continued to be a fragmentary talk, and for a time the burthen of some unknown lady complaining to an unknown friend about the behaviour of a third unknown named George, stated to lack “gumption,” interwove with the main theme. But Mr. Sycamore did succeed in conveying to Oswald a sense of urgency about the welfare of his two charges. Immediate attention was demanded. They were being neglected. The girl was ill. “I would like to talk it over with you as soon as possible,” said Mr. Sycamore.

“Can you come and breakfast here at eight?” said the man from the tropics.

“Half past nine,” said the Londoner, and the talk closed.

The talk ended, but for a time the bell of Oswald’s telephone remained in an agitated state, giving little nervous rings at intervals. When he answered these the exchange said “Number please,” and when he said, “You rang me,” the exchange said, “Oh, no! we didn’t....”

“An empire,” whispered Oswald, sitting on the edge of his bed, “which cannot even run a telephone service efficiently....”

“Education.

He tried to recall his last speech at the club. Had he ranted? What had they thought of it? What precisely had he said? While they sat

and talked muck — his memory was unpleasantly insistent upon that "muck" — the sands ran out of the hour-glass, a new generation grew up.

Had he said that? That was the point of it all — about the new generation. A new generation was growing up and we were doing nothing to make it wiser, more efficient, to give it a broader outlook than the generation that had blundered into and blundered through the Boer war. Had he said that? That was what he ought to have said.

§ 6

For a long time he sat on his bed, blank-minded and too tired to finish undressing. He got to bed at last. But not to sleep. He found that the talk in the club had disturbed his mind almost unendurably. It had pointed and endorsed everything that he had been trying not to think about the old country. Now, too weary and too excited to sleep, he turned over and over again, unprofitably and unprogressively, the tangled impressions of his return to England.

How many millions of such hours of restless questioning must have been spent by wakeful Englishmen in the dozen years between the Boer war and the Great war; how many nocturnally scheming brains must have explored the complicated maze of national dangers, national ambitions, and national ineptitude! If "Wake up, England," sowed no great harvest of change in the daylight, it did at any rate produce large phantom crops at night. He argued with Walsall over and over again, sometimes wide awake and close to the point, sometimes drowsily with the discussion becoming vague and strangely misshapen and incoherent. Was Walsall right? Was it impossible to change the nature and quality of a people? Must we English always be laggards in peace and blunderers in war? Were our achievements accidents, and our failures essential? Was slackness in our blood? Surely a great effort might accomplish much, a great effort to reorganize political life, to improve national education, to make the press a better instrument of public thought and criticism. To which Walsall answered again with, "How can a democratic community take an intelligent interest in its destinies unless it is

educated, and how can it educate itself unless it takes an intelligent interest in its destinies?”

Oswald groaned and turned over in bed.

Thought passed by insensible degrees into dreaming and dreaming shallowed again to wakefulness. Always he seemed to be arguing with Walsall and the bishop for education and effort; nevertheless, now vaguely apprehended as an atmospheric background, now real and close, the black forest of his African nightmare was about him. Always he was struggling on and always he was hoping to see down some vista the warm gleam of daylight, the promise of the open. And Walsall, a vast forest owl with enormous spectacles, kept getting in the way, flapping hands that were really great wings at him and assuring him that there was no way out. None. “This forest is life. This forest will always be life. There is no other life. After all it isn’t such a very bad forest.” Other figures, too, came and went; a gigantic bishop sitting back in an easy chair blocked one hopeful vista, declaring that book-learning only made the lower classes discontented and mischievous, and then a stupidly contented fat man smoking a fat cigar drove in a gig athwart the line of march. He said nothing; he just drove his gig. Then somehow an automobile came in, a most hopeful means of escape, except that it had broken down; and Oswald was trying to repair it in spite of the jeering of an elderly gentleman in a white waistcoat. Suddenly the whole forest swarmed with children. There were countless children; there were just two children. Instead of a multitudinous expedition Oswald found himself alone in the black jungle with just two children, two white and stunted children who were dying for the air and light. No one had cared for them. One was ill, seriously ill. Unless the way out was found they could not live. They were Dolly’s children, his wards. But what was he to do for them? .

Then far ahead he saw that light of the great conflagration, that light that promised to be daylight and became a fire....

“Black coffee,” said Oswald during one of the wide-awake intervals. “Cigars. Talk. Over-excited.... I ought to be more careful.... I forget how flimsy I am still....

“I must get my mind off these things. I’ll talk to old Sycamore

tomorrow and see about this little master Peter Stubland and his foster-sister. I'll go into the matter thoroughly. I haven't thought of them before.

"I wonder if the boy still takes after Dolly....

"After all," he said, rolling over, "it's true. Education is the big neglected duty of the time. It's fundamental. And what am I doing? It's just England — England all over — to let that boy be dragged up. I ought to see about him — now. I'll go down there....

"I'll go and stay with Aunt Charlotte for a day or so. I'll send her a wire tomorrow.

§ 7

The quiet but observant life of old Cashel at Chastlands was greatly enlivened by the advent of Oswald.

Signs of a grave and increasing agitation in the mind of Cashel's mistress became evident immediately after the departure of Mr. Sycamore. Manifestly whatever that gentleman had said or done — old Cashel had been able to catch very little — had been of a highly stimulating nature. So soon as he was out of the house, Lady Charlotte abandoned her sofa and table, upsetting her tonic as she did so, and still wearing her dressing-gown and cap, proceeded to direct a hasty packing for Italy. Unwin became much agitated, and a housemaid being addressed as a "perfect fool" became a sniffing fount of tears. There was a running to and fro with trunks and tea-baskets, a ringing of bells, and minor orders were issued and countermanded; the carriage was summoned twice for an afternoon drive and twice dismissed. When at last the lace peignoir was changed for a more suitable costume in which to take tea, Lady Charlotte came so near to actual physical violence that Unwin abruptly abandoned her quest of a perfect pose for wig and cap, and her ladyship surprised and delighted Cashel with a blond curl cocked waggishly over one eye. She did not have tea until half-past five.

She talked to herself with her hard blue eyes fixed on vacancy. "I will not stay here to be insulted," she said.

"Rampageous," whispered Cashel on the landing. "Rumbustious.

What's it all about?"

"Cashel!" she said sharply as he was taking away the tea-things.

"M'lady."

"Telephone to Mr. Grimes and ask him to take tickets as usual for myself and Unwin to Pallanza — for tomorrow."

It was terrible but pleasing to have to tell her that Mr. Grimes would now certainly have gone home from his office.

"See that it is done tomorrow. Tomorrow I must catch the eleven forty-seven for Charing Cross. I shall take lunch with me in the train. A wing of chicken. A drop of claret. Perhaps a sandwich. Gentleman's Relish or shrimp paste. And a grape or so. A mere mouthful. I shall expect you to be in attendance to help with the luggage as far as Charing Cross...."

So she was going after all.

"Like a flight," mused Cashel. "What's after the Old Girl?"...

He grasped the situation a little more firmly next day.

The preparations for assembling Lady Charlotte in the hall before departure were well forward at eleven o'clock, although there was no need to start for the station until the half hour. A brief telegram from Oswald received about half-past ten had greatly stimulated these activities....

Unwin, very white in the face — she always had a bilious headache when travelling was forward — and dressed in the peculiar speckled black dress and black hat that she considered most deterrent to foreign depravity, was already sitting stiffly in the hall with Lady Charlotte's purple-coloured dressing-bag beside her, and Cashel having seen to the roll of rugs was now just glancing through the tea-basket to make sure that it was in order, when suddenly there was the flapping, rustling sound of a large woman in rapid movement upon the landing above, and Lady Charlotte appeared at the head of the stairs, all hatted, veiled and wrapped for travelling. Her face was bright white with excitement. "Unwin, I want you," she cried. "Cashel, say I'm in bed. Say I'm ill and must not be disturbed. Say I've been taken ill."

She vanished with the agility of a girl of twenty — except that the landing was of a different opinion.

The two servants heard her scuttle into her room and slam the

door. There was a great moment of silence.

“Oh, Lor’!” Unwin rose with the sigh of a martyr, and taking the dressing-bag with her — the fittings alone were worth forty pounds — and pressing her handkerchief to her aching brow, marched upstairs.

Cash el, agape, was roused by the ringing of the front door bell. He opened to discover Mr. Oswald Sydenham with one arm in a sling and a rug upon the other.

“Hullo, Cashel,” he said. “I suppose my room isn’t occupied? My telegram here? How’s Lady Charlotte?”

“Very poorly, sir,” said Cashel. “She’s had to take in her bed, sir.”

“Pity. Anything serious?”

“A sudden attact, sir.”

“H’m. Well, tell her I’m going to inflict myself upon her for a day or so. Just take my traps in and I’ll go on with this fly to Limpsfield. Say I’ll be back to dinner.”

“Certainly, sir.”

The old man bustled out to get in the valise and Gladstone bag that constituted Oswald’s luggage. “When he came into the hall again he found the visitor scrutinizing the tea-basket and the roll of rugs with his one penetrating eye in a manner that made him dread a question. But Oswald never questioned servants; on this occasion only he winked at one.

“Nothing wrong with the arm, sir?” asked old Cashel.

“Nothing,” said Oswald, still looking markedly at the symptoms of imminent travel. “ H’m.”

He went out to the fly, stood ready to enter it, and then swivelled round very quickly and looked up at his aunt’s bedroom window in time to catch an instant impression of a large, anxious face regarding him.

235 “Ah!” said Oswald, and returned smiling grimly into the hall.

“Cashel, “he called.

“Sir?”

“Her ladyship is up. Tell her I have a few words to say to her before she goes.”

“Beg pardon, sir—”

“Look here, Cashel, you do what I tell you,”

“Til tell Miss Unwin, sir.”

He went upstairs, leaving Oswald still thinking over the nigs. Yes, she was off! She had got everything; pointed Alpine sticks, tea-basket, travelling campstool. It must be Switzerland or Italy for the winter at least. A great yearning to see his aunt with his own eye came upon Oswald. He followed Cashel upstairs quietly but swiftly, and found him in a hasty whispered consultation with Unwin on the second landing. “Oh my ‘ed’ll burst bang,” Unwin was saying.

“‘Er ladyship, sir,” she began at the sight of Oswald.

“Ssh!” he said to her, and held her and Cashel silent with an uplifted forefinger while he listened to the sounds of a large powerful woman going to bed swiftly and violently in her clothes.

“I must go in to her, sir,” said Unwin breaking the silence. “Poor dear! It’s a very sudden attact.”

The door opened and closed upon Unwin.

“Lock the door on him, you — you *Idiot*!” they heard Lady Charlotte shout — too late.

The hated and dreaded visage of Oswald appeared looking round the corner of the door into the great lady’s bedroom. Her hat had been flung aside, she was tying on an unconvincing night cap over her great blond travelling wig; her hastily assumed nightgown betrayed the agate brooch at her neck.

“How dare you, sir!” she cried at the sight of him.

“You’re not ill. You’re going to cut off to Italy this afternoon. What have you done to my Wards?”

“A lady’s sick room! Sacred, Sir! Have you no sense of decency?”

“Is it measles, Auntie?”

“Go away!”

“I daren’t. If I leave you alone in this country for a year or two you’re bound to get into trouble. What am I to do with you?”

“Unbecoming intrusion!”

“You ought to be stopped by the Foreign Office. You’ll lead to a war with Italy.”

“Go for a doctor, Cashel,” she cried aloud in her great voice. “Go for the doctor.”

“M’lady,” very faintly from the landing.

“And countermand the station cab, Cashel,” said Oswald.

“If you do anything of the sort, Cashel!” she cried, and sitting up in bed clutched the sheets with such violence that a large spring-sided boot became visible at the foot of the bed. The great lady had gone to bed in her boots. Aunt and nephew both glared at this revelation in an astonished silence.

“How can you, Auntie,” said Oswald.

“If I choose,” said Lady Charlotte. “If I choose — Oh! Go away!”

“Back to dinner,” said Oswald sweetly, and withdrew.

He was still pensive upon the landing when Unwin appeared to make sure that the station cab was not countermanded....

Under the circumstances he was not surprised to find on his return from The Ingle-Nook that he was now the only occupant of Chastlands. Aunt Charlotte had fled, leaving behind a note that had evidently been written before his arrival.

Dear Nephew — I am sorry that my arrangements for going abroad this winter, already made, prevent my welcoming you home for this uninvited and totally unexpected visit. I am sure Cashel and the other servants will take good care of you. You seem to know the way to their good graces. There are many things I should have liked to talk over with you if you had given me due and proper notice of your return as you ought to have done, instead, of leaving it to a solicitor to break the glad tidings to me, followed by a sixpenny telegram. As it is, I shall just miss you. I have to go, and I cannot wait. All my arrangements are made. I suppose it is idle to expect civility from you ever or the slightest attention to the convenances. The Sydenhams have never shone in manners. Well, I hope you will take those two poor children quite out of the hands of those smoking, blaspheming, nightgown-wearing Limps field women. They are utterly unfit for such a responsibility. Utterly. I would not trust a pauper brat in their hands. The children require firm treatment, the girl especially, or they will be utterly spoilt. She is deceitful and dishonest, as one might expect; she gave Mrs. Pybus a very trying time indeed, catching measles deliberately and so converting the poor woman’s house into a regular hospital. I fear for her later. I have done my best for them both. No doubt you will find it all spun into a fine tale, but I trust your penetration to see through a tissue of

lies, however plausible it may seem at the first blush. I am glad to think you are now to relieve me of a serious responsibility, though how a single man not related to her in the slightest degree can possibly bring up a young girl, even though illegitimate, without grave scandal, passes my poor comprehension. No doubt I am an old-fashioned old fool nowadays! Thank God! I beg to be excused!

Your affectionate Aunt

CHARLOTTE.

Towards the end of this note her ladyship's highly angular handwriting betrayed by an enhanced size and considerable irregularity, a deflection from her customary calm.

§ 8

Oswald knocked for some time at the open green door of The Ingle-Nook before attracting any one's attention. Then a small but apparently only servant appeared, a little round-faced creature who looked up hard into Oswald's living eye — as though she didn't quite like the other. She explained that "Miss Phyllis" was not at home, and that "Miss Phoebe mustn't be disturved." Miss Phoebe was working. Miss Phyllis had gone away with Mary

"Who's Mary?" said Oswald.

"Well, Sir, it's Mary who always 'as been 'ere, Sir," — TO Windsor to be with Miss Joan. "Arid it's orders no one's 'llowed to upset Miss Phoebe when she's writing. Not even Lady Charlotte Sydenham, Sir. I dursn't give your name, Sir, even. I dursn't."

"Except," she added reverentially, "it's Death or a Fire."

"You aren't the Piano, per'aps?" she asked.

Oswald had to confess he wasn't.

The little servant looked sorry for him.

And that was in truth the inexorable law now of The Ingle-Nook. Aunt Phoebe was taking herself very seriously — as became a Thinker whose Stitchwoman papers, deep, high, and occasionally broad in thought, were running into a sale of tens of thousands. So she sat hard and close at her writing-table from half-past nine to twelve every morning, secluded and defended from all the world,

correcting, musing deeply over, and occasionally reading aloud the proofs of the third series of Stitchwoman papers. (Old Groom-bridge, the occasional gardener, used to listen outside in awe and admiration. “My word, but she do give it ‘em!” old Groombridge used to say.) Oswald perceived that there was nothing to do but wait. “I’ll wait,” he said, “downstairs.”

“I suppose I ought to let you in,” said the little servant, evidently seeking advice.

“Oh, decidedly,” said Oswald, and entered the room in which he had parted from Dolly six years ago.

The door closed behind the little servant, and Oswald found himself in a house far more heavily charged with memories than he could have expected. The furniture had been but little altered; it was the morning time again, the shadow masses fell in the same places, it had just the same atmosphere of quiet expectation it had had on that memorable day before the door beyond had opened and Dolly had appeared, subdued and ashamed, to tell him of the act that severed them for ever. How living she seemed here by virtue of those inanimate’ things! Had that door opened now he would have expected to see her standing there again. And he was alive still, strong and active, altered just a little by a touch of fever and six short years of experience, but the same thing or impulse and desire and anger, and she had gone beyond time and space, beyond hunger or desire. He had walked between this window and this fireplace on these same bricks on which he was pacing now, spitting abuse at her, a man mad with shame and thwarted desire. Never had he forgiven her, or stayed his mind to think what life had been for her, until she was dead. That outbreak, with gesticulating hands and an angry, grimacing face, had been her last memory of him. What a broken image he had made of himself in her mind! And now he could never set things right with her, never tell her of his belated understanding and pity. “I was a weak thing, confused and torn between my motives. Why did you — you who were my lover — why did you not help me after I had stumbled!” So the still phantom in that room reproached him, a phantom of his own creation, for Dolly had never reproached him; to the end she had had no reproaches in her heart for any one but herself because of their disaster.

“Hold tight to love, little people,” he whispered. “Hold tight to love.... But we don’t, we don’t....”

Never before had Oswald so felt the tremendous pitifulness of life. He felt that if he stayed longer in this room he must cry out. He walked to the garden door and stood looking at the empty flagstone path between the dahlias and sunflowers.

It was all as if he had but left it yesterday, except for the heartache that now mingled with the sunshine.

“Pat — whack — pat — whack”; he scarcely heeded that rhythmic noise.

Peter had gone out of his head altogether. He walked slowly along the pathway towards the little arbour that overhung the Weald. Then, turning, he discovered Peter with a bat in his hand, regarding him....

Directly Oswald saw Peter he marvelled that he had not been eager to see him before. The boy was absurdly like Dolly; he had exactly the same smile; and directly he saw the gaunt figure of his one-eyed guardian he cried out, “It’s Nobby!” with a voice that might have been hers. There was a squeak of genuine delight in his voice. He wasn’t at all the sturdy little thing in a pinafore that Oswald remembered, lie seemed indeed at the first glance just a thin, flat-chested little Dolly in grey flannel trousers.

He had obviously been bored before this happy arrival of Oswald. He had been banging a rubber ball against the scullery with a cricket-bat and counting hits and misses. It is a poor entertainment. Oswald did not realize how green his memory had been kept by the Bungo-Peter saga, and Peter’s prompt recognition after six years flattered him.

The two approached one another slowly, taking each other in.

“You remember me?” said Oswald superfluously.

“Don’t I just! You promised me a lion’s skin.”

“So I did.”

He could not bear to begin this new relationship as a defaulter. “It’s on its way to you,” he equivocated, making secret plans.

Peter, tucking his bat under his arm and burying his hands in his trouser pockets, drew still nearer. At a distance of four feet or thereabouts he stopped short and Oswald stopped short. Peter regarded this still incredible home-comer with his head a little on one

side.

"It was you, used to tell me stories."

"You don't remember my telling you stories?"

"I do. About the Ba-ganda who live in U-ganda. Don't you remember how you used to put out my Zulus and my elephants and lions on the floor and say it was Africa. You taught us roaring like lions — Joan and me. Don't you remember?"

Oswald remembered. He remembered himself on all fours with the children on the floor of the sunny play-room upstairs, and some one sometimes standing, sometimes sitting above the game, some one who listened as keenly as the children, some one at whom he talked about that world of lakes as large as seas, and of trackless, sunless forests and of park-like glades and wildernesses of flowers, and about strings of loaded porters and of encounters with marvelling people who tad never before set eyes on a European....

§ 9

The idea that the guardianship of Peter was just a little duty to be seen to, vanished at the sight of him in favour of the realization of a living relationship. There are moments when small boys of ten in perfect health and condition can look the smallest, flimsiest, and most pathetic of created things — and at the same time preternaturally valiant and intelligent. They take on a likeness to sacred flames that may at any moment flicker out. More particularly does this unconscious camouflage of delicacy occur in the presence of parents and guardians already in a state of self-reproach and emotional disorder. Mr. Grimes with an eye to growth had procured a grey flannel suit a little too large for Peter, but it never occurred to Oswald that the misfit could be due to anything but a swift and ominous shrinkage of the boy. He wanted to carry him off forthwith to beer and cream and sea-bathing.

But these were feelings he knew he must not betray.

"I must tell you some more stories," he said. "I've come back to England to live."

"*Here*?" — brightly.

“Well, near here. But I shall see a lot of you now, Peter.”

“I’ll like that,” said Peter. “I’ve often thought of you—”

A pause.

“You broken your arm?” said Peter

“Not so bad as that. I’ve got to have some bits of shell taken out.”

“That Egyptian shell? When you got the V.C.?”

“I never told you of the Egyptian shell?” asked Oswald.

“Mummy did. Once. Long ago.”

Another pause.

“This garden’s not so greatly altered, Peter,” said Oswald.

“There’s a Friendship’s Garden up that end,” said Peter, indicating the end by a movement of his head. “But it isn’t much. Aunt Phoebe started it and forgot it. Every one who came was to plant something. And me and Joan have gardens, but they’ve got all weedy now.”

“Let’s have a look at it all,” said Oswald, and guardian and ward strolled towards the steep.

“The Dahlias are splendid this year,” Oswald remarked, “and these Japanese roses are covered with berries. Splendid, aren’t they? One can make a jelly of them Quite a good jelly. And let me see, wasn’t there a little summer-house at the end of this path where one looked over the Weald? Ah! here it is. Hardly changed at all.”

He sat down. Here he had talked with Dolly and taken her hand....

He bestirred himself to talk.

“And exactly how old are you now, Peter?”

“Ten years and two months,” said Peter.

“We’ll have to find a school for you.”

“Have you been in Africa since I saw you?” Peter asked, avoiding the topic.

“Since you saw me going off,” said Oswald, and the man glanced at the boy and the boy glanced at the man, and each was wondering what the other remembered. “I’ve been in Uganda all the time. There’s been fighting and working. Some day you must go to Uganda and see all that has been done. We’ve made a good railway and good roads and telegraphs. We’ve put down robbers and cruelty.”

“And shot a lot of lions?”

“Plenty. The lions were pretty awful for a bit. About Nairobi and along the line.”

“Shot ’em when they were coming at you?”

“One was coming straight at me.”

“That’s my skin,” said Peter.

Oswald make no answer.

“I’d like to go to Africa,” said Peter.

“You shall.”

He decided to begin at once upon his neglected task of making an Imperial citizen according to the ideas that prevailed before the advent of the New Imperialism. “That sort of thing,” he said, “is what we Englishmen are for, you know, Peter. What our sort of Englishman is for anyhow. We have to go about the world and make roads and keep the peace and see fair play. We’ve got to kill big beasts and climb hard mountains. That’s the job of the Englishman. He’s a sort of policeman. A sort of working guardian Not a nosy slave-driver trying to get rich. He chases off slave-drivers. All the world’s his beat. India, Africa, China, and the East, all the seas of the world. This little fat green country, all trim and tidy and set with houses and gardens, isn’t much of a land for a man, you know — unless he’s an invalid. It’s a good land to grow up in and come back to die in. Or rest in. But in between, no!”

“No,”said Peter.

“No.”

“But you haven’t come back to die, Uncle Nobby?”

“No fear. But I’ve had to come back. I’m resting. This old arm, you know, and all that sort of thing. Just for a time.... And besides I want to see a lot of you.”

“Yes.”

“You have to grow up here and learn all you can, science and all sorts of things, so that you can be a useful man — wherever you have to go.” .

“Africa,” said Peter.

“Africa, perhaps. And that’s why one has to go to school and college — and learn all about it.”

“They haven’t taught me much about it yet,” said Peter.

“Well, you haven’t been to much in the way of schools,” said

Oswald.

"Are there better schools?"

"No end. We're going to find one," said Oswald.

"I wish school was over," said Peter.

"Why? You've got no end to learn yet."

"I want to begin," said Peter, looking out across the tumbled gentleness of the Weald.

"Begin school?"

"No, begin — Africa, India — doing things."

"School first," said Oswald.

"Are there schools where you learn about guns and animals and mountains and foreign people?" said Peter.

"There must be," said Oswald. "We'll find something."

"Where you don't do Latin and parsing and 'straction of the square root."

"Oh! those things have their place."

"Did you have to do them, Uncle Nobby?"

"Rather."

"Were they useful to you?"

"At times — in a way. Of course those things are good as training, you know — awfully good. Harden up the mental muscles, Peter."

Peter made no reply to that.

Presently Peter said, "Shall I learn about machines?"

"When you've done some mathematics, Peter."

"I'd like to fly," said Peter.

"That's far away yet."

"There was a boy at that school, his father was an engineer; and he said that flying machines were coming quite soon."

This was beyond Oswald's range.

"The French have got a balloon that steers about," he said. "That's as near as we are likely to come to flying for a long time yet."

"This boy said that he meant a real flying machine, not a balloon. It was to be heavier than air. It would fly like a kite or a bird."

"I doubt if we'll see that in my lifetime," said Oswald; "or yours," blind to the fate that had marked Peter for its own.

"H'm," said Peter, with a shadow falling upon one of his brightest dreams. (Nobby ought to know these things. His word ought surely

to be final. Still, after all, this chap's father was an engineer.) "I'd love to fly," said Peter.

§ 10

Something with the decorative effect of a broad processional banner in a very High Church indeed, appeared upon the flagstone path. It was Aunt Phoebe.

She had come out into the garden half an hour before her usual time. But indeed from the moment when she had heard Oswald and Peter talking in the garden below she had been unable to write more. After some futile attempts to pick up the lost thread of her discourse, she had gone to her bedroom and revised her toilet, which was often careless in the morning, so as to .be more expressive of her personality.

She was wearing a long djibbah-like garment with a richly embroidered yoke, she had sandals over her brown stockings, and rather by way of symbol of authorship than for any immediate use she bore a big leather portfolio. There was moreover now a gold-mounted fountain pen amidst the other ingredients of the cheerful chatelaine that had once delighted Peter's babyhood.

She seemed a fuller, more confident person than Oswald remembered. She came eloquent with apologies. "I have to make an inexorable rule," she said, "against disturbances. As if I were a man writer instead of a mere woman. Between nine and one I am a woman enclosed — cloistered — refused. Sacred hours of self-completeness. Unspeakably precious to me. Visitors are not even announced. It is a law — inflexible."

"We must all respect our work," said Oswald.

"It's over now," said Aunt Phoebe, smiling like the sun after clouds. "It's over now for the day. I am just human — until tomorrow again."

"You are writing a book?" Oswald asked rather ineptly.

"The Stitchwoman; Series Three. Much is expected; much must be given. I am the slave now of a Following." Aunt Phoebe went to the wall and stood with her fine profile raised up over the view. She

was a little breathless and twitching slightly, but very magnificent. Most of her hair was tidy. “Our old Weald, does it look the same?” she asked.

“Quite the same,” said Oswald, standing up beside her.

“But not to me,” she said. Indeed not to me. To me every day it is different. Always wide, always wonderful, but different, always different. I know it so well.”

Oswald felt she had worked a “catch” on him. He was faintly nettled.

“Still,” he said, “fundamentally one must recognize that it’s the same Weald.”

“I wonder,” said Aunt Phoebe suddenly, looking at him very intently, and then, as if she tasted the word, “Fundamentally?”

“I don’t know,” she added.

Oswald was too much annoyed to reply.

“And what do you think of your new charge?” she asked. “I don’t know whether Peter quite understands that yet. The young squire goes to the men. He casts aside childish things, and rides out in his little Caparison to join the ranks. Do you know that, Peter? Mr. Sydenham is now your sole guardian.”

Peter looked at Oswald and smiled shyly, and his cheeks flushed.

“I think we shall get on together,” said Oswald.

“Would that it ended there! You take the girl too?”

“It is not my doing,” said Oswald.

Aunt Phoebe addressed the Weald.

“Poor Dolly! So it is that the mother soul cheats itself. Through the ages — always self-abnegation for the woman.” She turned to Oswald. “If she had had time to think I am certain she would not have excluded women from this trust. Certain. What have men to do with education? With the education of a woman more particularly. The Greater from the Less. But the thing is done. It has been a great experiment, a wonderful experiment; teaching, I learnt — but I doubt if you will understand that.”

There was a slight pause. “What exactly was the nature of the experiment?” asked Oswald modestly.

“Feminine influence. Dominant.”

Oswald considered. “I don’t know if you include Lady Charlotte,”

he threw out.

"Oh!" said Aunt Phoebe.

"But she has played her part, I gather."

"Feminine! No! She is completely a Man-made Woman. Quintessentially the Pampered Squaw. Holding her position by her former charms. A Sex Residuum. Relict. This last outrage. An incident — merely. Her course of action was dictated for her. A Man. A mere solicitor. One Grimes. The flimsiest creature! An aspen leaf — but Male. Male."

Stern thoughts kept Aunt Phoebe silent for a time. Then she remarked very quietly, "I shook him. I shook him well."

"I hope still to have the benefit of your advice," said Oswald gravely.

"Nay," she said. But she was pleased. "A shy comment, perhaps. But the difference will be essential. Don't expect me to guide you as you would wish to be guided. That phase is over between men and women. We hand the children over — since the law will have it so. Take them!"

And then addressing the Weald, Aunt Phoebe, in vibrating accents, uttered a word that was to be the keynote of £ decade of feminine activities.

"The Vote," said Aunt Phoebe, getting a wonderful emotional buzz into her voice. "The Vo-o-o-o-o-te."

§ 11

So it was that Oswald found himself fully invested with his responsibilities.

There was a terrifying suggestion in Aunt Phoebe's manner that he would presently have to clap Peter's hat on, make up a small bundle of Peter's possessions, and fare forth with him into the wide world, picking up the convalescent at Windsor on the way, but that was a misapprehension of Aunt Phoebe's intentions. And, after all, it was Peter's house and garden if it came to that. For a time at least things could go on as they were. But the task of direction was now fully his. Whether these two young people were properly educated or

not, whether they too became slackers and inadequate or worthy citizens of this great empire, rested now entirely in his hands.

"They must have the best," he said....

The best was not immediately apparent.

From Chastlands and his two rooms at the Climax Club Oswald conducted his opening researches for the educational best, and whenever he was at Chastlands he came over nearly every day to The Ingle-Nook on his bicycle It was a well-remembered road. Scarcely was there a turn in it that did not recall some thought of the former time when he had ridden over daily for a sight of Dolly; he would leave his bicycle in a clump of gorse by the high road that was surely an outgrown fragment of the old bush in which he had been wont to leave it six years before; he would walk down the same rusty path, and his heart would quicken as it used to quicken at the thought of seeing Dolly. But presently Peter began to oust Dolly from his thoughts. Sometimes Peter would be standing waiting for him by the high road. Sometimes Peter, mounted on a little outgrown bicycle, would meet him on the purple common half way.

A man and a boy of ten are perhaps better company than a man and a boy of fifteen. There's so much less egotism between them. At any rate Peter and Oswald talked of education and travel and politics and philosophy with unembarrassed freedom. Oswald, like most childless people, had had no suspicion of what the grey matter of a bright little boy's brain can hold. He was amazed at Peter's views and curiosities. It was Oswald's instinct never to talk "down" to man, woman or child. He had never thought about it, but if you had questioned him he would have told you that that was the sort of thing one didn't do. And this instinct gave him a wide range of available companionship. Peter had never conceived such good company as Oswald. You could listen to Oswald for hours. They discoursed upon every topic out of dreamland. And sometimes they came very close even to that dreamland where Bungo Peter adventured immortally. Oswald would feel a transfiguring presence, a touch of fantasy and half suspect their glorious companion.

Much of their talk was a kind of story-telling.

"How should we go to the Congo Forest?" Peter would ask. "Would one go by Nairobi?"

“No, that’s the other way. We’d have to go—”

And forthwith Nobby and Peter were getting their stuff together and counting how many porters they would need....

“One day perhaps we’d come upon a place ‘fested with crocodiles,” Peter would say.

“We would. You would be pushing rather ahead of the party with your guns, looking for anything there might be — pushing through tall reeds far above your head,” Oswald would oblige.

“You’d be with me,” insisted Peter....

It was really story-telling....

It was Peter’s habit in those days when he was alone to meditate on paper. He would cover sheet after sheet with rapidly drawn scenes of adventure. One day Oswald found himself figuring in one of these dream pictures. He and Peter were leading an army in battle. “Capture of Ten War Elephants” was the legend thereon. But he realized how clearly the small boy saw him. Nothing was spared of the darkened, browless side of his face with its asymmetrical glass eye, the figure of him was very long and lean and bent, with its arm still in its old sling; and it was drawn manifestly with the utmost confidence and admiration and love....

Peter’s hostility to schools was removed very slowly. The lessons at High Cross had scarred him badly, and about Miss Mills clung associations of the utmost dreariness. Still it was Oswald’s instinct to consult the young man on his destiny.

“There’s a lot you don’t know yet,” said Oswald.

“Can’t I read it out of books?” asked Peter.

“You can’t read everything out of books,” said Oswald. “There’s things you ought to see and handle. And things you can only learn by doing.”

Oswald wanted Peter to plan his own school.

Peter considered. “I’d like lessons about the insides of animals, and about the people in foreign countries — and how engines work — and all that sort of thing.”

“Then we must find a school for you where they teach all that sort of thing,” said Oswald, as though it was merely a question of ordering goods from the Civil Service Stores....

He had much to learn yet about education.

§ 12

But Oswald was still only face to face with the half of his responsibility.

One morning he found Peter at the schoolroom table very busy cutting big letters out of white paper. Beside him was a long strip of Turkey twill from the dressing-up box that The Ingle-Nook had plagiarized from the Sheldricks. “I’m getting ready for Joan,” said Peter. “I’m going to put ‘Welcome’ on this for over the garden gate. And there’s to be a triumphal arch.”

Hitherto Peter had scarcely betrayed any interest in Joan at all, now he seemed able to think of no one else, and Oswald found himself reduced abruptly from the position of centre of Peter’s universe to a mere helper in the decorations. But he was beginning to understand the small boy by this time, and he took the withdrawal of the limelight philosophically.

When Aunt Phyllis and Joan arrived they found the flagged path from the “Welcome” gate festooned with chains of coloured paper (bought with Peter’s own pocket-money and made by him and Oswald, with some slight assistance and much moral support from Aunt Phoebe in the evening) to the door. The triumphal arch had been achieved rather in the Gothic style by putting the movable Badminton net posts into a sort of trousering of assorted oriental cloths from the dressing-up chest, and crossing two heads of giant Heracleum between them. Peter stood at the door in the white satin suit his innocent vanity loved — among other roles it had served for Bassanio, Prince Hal, and Antony (over the body of Caesar) — with a face of extraordinary solemnity. Behind him stood Uncle Nobby.

Joan wasn’t quite the Joan that Peter expected. She was still wan from her illness and she had grown several inches. She was as tall as he. And she was white-faced, so that her hair seemed blacker than ever, and her eyes were big and lustrous. She came walking slowly down the path with her eyes wide open. There was a difference, he felt, in her movement as she came forward, though he could not have said what it was; there was more grace in Joan now and less vigour.

But it was the same Joan's voice that cried, "Oh, Petah! It's lovely!" She stood before him for a moment and then threw her arms about him. She hugged him and kissed him, and Uncle Nobby knew that it was the smear of High Cross School that made him wriggle out of her embrace and not return her kisses.

But immediately he took her by the hand.

"It's better in the playroom, Joan," he said.

"All right, Joan> go on with him," said Oswald, and came forward to meet Aunt Phyllis. Aunt Phoebe was on the staircase a little aloof from these things, as became a woman of intellect, and behind Aunt Phyllis came Mary, and behind Mary came the Limpsfield cabman with Aunt Phyllis's trunk upon his shoulder, and demolished the triumphal arch. But Peter did not learn of that disaster until later, and then he did not mind; it had served its purpose.

The playroom (it was the old nursery rechristened) was indeed better. It was all glorious with paper chains of green and white festooned from corner to corner. On the floor to the right under the window was every toy soldier that Peter possessed drawn up in review array — a gorgeous new Scots Grey band in the front that Oswald had given him. But that was nothing. The big arm-chair had been drawn out into the middle of the room, and on it was Peter's own lion-skin. And a piece of red stair-carpet had been put for Joan to go up to the throne upon. And beside the throne was a little table, and on the table was a tinsel robe from Clarkson's and a wonderful gilt crown and a sceptre. Oswald had brought them along that morning.

"The crown is for you, Joan!" said Peter. "The sceptre was bought for you."

Little white-faced Joan stood stockishly with the crown in one hand and the sceptre in the other. "Put the crown on, Joan," said Peter. "It's yours. It's a restoration ceremony."

But she didn't put it on.

"It's lovely — and it's lovely," whispered Joan in a sort of rapture, and stared about her incredulously with her big dark eyes. It was home again — home, and Mrs. Pybus had passed like an evil dream in the night. She had never really believed it possible before

that Mrs. Pybus could pass away. Even while Aunt Phyllis and Mary had been nursing her, Mrs. Pybus had hovered in the background like something more enduring, waiting for them to pass away as inexplicably as they had come. Joan had heard the whining voice upon the stairs every day and always while she was ill, and once Mrs. Pybus had come and stood by her bedside and remarked like one who maintains an argument, "She'll be 'appy enough 'ere when she's better again."

No more Mrs. Pybus! No more whining scoldings. No more unexpected slaps and having to go to bed supperless. No more measles and uneasy misery in a bed with grey sheets. No more dark dreadful sayings that lurked in the mind like jungle beasts. She was home, home with Peter, out of that darkness....

And yet — outside was the darkness still....

"Joan," said Peter, trying to rouse her. "There's a cake like a birthday for tea...."

When Oswald came in she was still holding the gilt crown in her hand.

She let Peter take it from her and put it on her head, still staring incredulously about her. She took the sceptre limply. Peter was almost gentle with this strange, staring Joan.

§ 13

For some days Oswald regarded Joan as a grave and thoughtful child. She seemed to be what country people call "old-fashioned." She might have been a changeling. He did not hear her laugh once. And she followed Peter about as if she was his shadow.

Then one day as he cycled over from Chastlands he heard a strange tumult proceeding from a little field on Master's farm, a marvellous mixture of familiar and unfamiliar sounds, an uproar, wonderful as though a tinker's van had met a school treat and the twain had got drunk together. The source of this row was hidden from him by a little coppice, and he dismounted and went through the wood to investigate. Joan and Peter had discovered a disused cowshed with a sloping roof of corrugated iron, and they had also

happened upon an abandoned kettle and two or three tin cans. They were now engaged in hurling these latter objects on to the resonant roof, down which they rolled thunderously only to be immediately returned. Joan was no longer a slip of pensive dignity, Peter was no longer a marvel of intellectual curiosities. They were both shrieking their maximum. Oswald had never before suspected Joan of an exceptionally full voice, nor Peter of so vast a wealth of gurgling laughter. "Keep the Pot-A-boilin'—" yelled Joan. "Keep the Pot-A-boilin'."

"Hoo!" cried Peter. "Hoo! Go it, Joan. Wow!"

And then, to crown the glory, the kettle burst. It came into two pieces. That was too perfect! The two children staggered back. Each seized a half of the kettle and kicked it deliberately. Then they rolled away and fell on their stomachs amidst the grass, kicking their legs in the air.

But the spirit of rowdyism grows with what it feeds upon.

"Oh, let's do something reely awful!" cried Joan. "Let's do something reely awful, Petah!"

Peter's legs became still and stiff with interrogation.

"Oh, Petah!" said Joan. "If I could only smash a window. Prow a brick frough a real window, a Big Glass Window. Just one Glass Window."

"Where's a window?" said Peter, evidently in a highly receptive condition.

From which pitch of depravity Oswald roused him by a prod in the back....

§ 14

But after that Joan changed rapidly. Colour crept back into her skin, and a faintly rollicking quality into her bearing. She became shorter again and visibly sturdier, and her hair frizzed more and stuck out more. Her laugh and her comments upon the world became an increasingly frequent embroidery upon the quiet of The Ingle-Nook. She seemed to have a delusion that Peter was just within earshot, but only just.

Oswald wondered how far her recent experiences had vanished from her mind. He thought they might have done so altogether until one day Joan took him into her confidence quite startlingly. He was smoking in the little arbour, and she came and stood beside him so noiselessly that he did not know she was there until she spoke. She was holding her hands behind her, and she was regarding the South Downs with a pensive frown. She was paying him the most beautiful compliment. She had come to consult him.

"Mrs. Pybus said," she remarked, "that every one who doesn't believe there's a God goes straight to Hell....

"I don't believe there's a God," said Joan, "and Peter knows there isn't."

For a moment Oswald was a little taken aback by this simple theology. Then he said, "D'you think Peter's looked everywhere, Joan?"

Then he saw the real point at issue. "One thing you may be sure about, Joan," he said, "and that is that there isn't a Hell. Which is rather a pity in its way, because it would be nice to think of this Mrs. Pybus of yours going there. But there's no Hell at all. There's nothing more dreadful than the dreadful things in life. There's no need to worry about Hell."

That he thought was fairly conclusive. But Joan remained pensive, with her eyes still on the distant hills. Then she asked one of those unanswerable children's questions that are all implication, imputation, assumption, misunderstanding, and elision.

"But if there isn't a Hell," said Joan, "what does God do?"

§ 15

It was after Joan had drifted away again from these theological investigations that Oswald, after sitting some time in silence, said aloud and with intense conviction, "I love these children."

He was no longer a stranger in England; he had a living anchorage. He looked out over the autumnal glories of the Weald, dreaming intentions. These children must be educated. They must be educated splendidly. Oswald wanted to see Peter serving the empire.

The boy would have pluck — he had already the loveliest brain — and a sense of fun. And Joan? Oswald was, perhaps, not quite so keen in those days upon educating Joan. That was to come later....

After all, the empire, indeed the whole world of mankind, is made up of Joans and Peters. What the empire is, what mankind becomes, is nothing but the sum of what we have made of the Joans and Peters.

CHAPTER X. — A SEARCHING OF SCHOOLMASTERS

§ 1

SO it was that a systematic intention took hold of the lives of Joan and Peter. They had been snatched apart adventurously and disastrously out of the hands of an aimless and impulsive modernism and dragged off into dusty and decaying corners of the Anglican system. Now they were to be rescued by this Empire worshipper, this disfigured and suffering educational fanatic, and taught?

What was there in Oswald's mind? His intentions were still sentimental and cloudy, but they were beginning to assume a firm and definite form. Just as the Uganda children were being made into civilized men and women according to the lights and means of the Protectorate government, so these two children had to be made fit rulers and servants of the greatest empire in the world. They had to know all that a ruling race should know, they had to think and act as befitted a leading people. All this seemed to him the simple and obvious necessity of the case. But he was a sick man, fatigued much more readily than most men, given to moods of bitter irritability; he had little knowledge of how he might set about this task, he did not know what help was available and what was impossible. He made enquiries and some were very absurd enquiries; he sought advice and talked to all sorts of people; and meanwhile Joan and Peter spent a very sunny and pleasant November running wild about Limpsfield — until one day Oswald noted as much and packed them off for the rest of the term to Miss Murgatroyd again. The School of St. George and the Venerable Bede was concentrating upon a Christmas production of Alice in Wonderland. There could not be very much bad teaching anyhow, and there would be plenty of fun.

How is one to learn where one's children may be educated?

This story has its comic aspects: Oswald went first to the Education Department!

He thought that if one had two rather clever and hopeful children upon whom one was prepared to lavish time and money, an Imperial

Education Department would be able to tell an anxious guardian what schools existed for them and the respective claims and merits and inter-relationships of such schools. But he found that the government which published a six-inch map of the British Isles on which even the meanest outhouse is marked, had no information for the enquiring parent or guardian at all in this matter of schools. An educational map had still to become a part of the equipment of the civilized state. As it was inconceivable that party capital could be made out of the production of such a map, it was likely to remain a desideratum in Great Britain for many years to come.

In an interview that remained dignified on one side at least until the last, Oswald was referred to the advertisement columns of The Times and the religious and educational papers, and to— "a class of educational agents," said the official with extreme detachment. " Usually, of course, people hear of schools."

So it was that England still referred back to the happy days of the eighteenth century when our world was small enough for everybody to know and trust and consult everybody, and tell in a safe and confidential manner everything that mattered.

"Oh, my God!" groaned Oswald suddenly, giving way to his internal enemies. "My God! Here are two children, brilliant children — with plenty of money to be spent on them! Doesn't the Empire care a twopenny dam what becomes of them?"

"There is an Association of Private Schoolmasters, I believe," said the official, staring at him; "but I don't know if it's any good."

§ 2

Joan was rehearsing a special dance in costume and Peter was word-perfect as the White Knight long before Oswald had found even a hopeful school for either of them. He clung for some time to the delusion that there must exist somewhere a school that would exactly meet Peter's natural and reasonable demand for an establishment where one would learn about "guns and animals, mountains, machines and foreign people," that would give lessons about "the insides of animals" and "how engines work" and "all that sort of

thing.” The man wanted a school kept by Leonardo da Vinci. When he found a curriculum singularly bare of these vital matters, he began to ask questions.

His questions presently developed into a very tiresome and trying Catechism for Schoolmasters. He did not allow for the fact that most private schoolmasters in England were I rather overworked and rather under-exercised men with considerable financial worries. Indeed, he made allowances for no one. He wanted to get on with the education of Joan and Peter — and more particularly of Peter.

His Catechism varied considerably in detail, but always it ran upon the lines of the following questions.

“What sort of boy are you trying to make?”

“How will he differ from an uneducated boy?

“I don’t mean in manners, I mean how will he differ in imagination?”

“Yes — I said — imagination.”

“Don’t you know that education is building up an imagination? I thought everybody knew that.”

“Then what is education doing?”

Here usually the Catechized would become troublesome and the Catechist short and rude. The Catechism would be not so much continued as resumed after incivilities and a silence.

“What sort of curriculum is my ward to go through?”

“Why is he to do Latin?”

“Why is he to do Greek?”

“Is he going to read or write or speak these languages?”

“Then what is the strange and peculiar benefit of them?”

“What will my ward know about Africa when you have done with him?”

“What will he know about India? Are there any Indian boys here?”

“What will he know about Garibaldi and Italy? About engineering? About Darwin?”

“Will he be able to write good English?”

“Do your boys do much German? Russian? Spanish or Hindustani?”

“Will he know anything about the way the Royal Exchange affects

the Empire? But why shouldn't he understand the elementary facts of finance and currency? Why shouldn't every citizen understand what a pound sterling really means? All our everyday life depends on that. What do you teach about Socialism? Nothing! Did you say Nothing? But he may be a member of Parliament some day. Anyhow he'll be a voter."

"But if you can't teach him everything why not leave out these damned classics of yours?"...

The record of an irritable man seeking the impossible is not to {)e dwelt upon too closely.. During his search for the boys' school that has yet to exist, Oswald gave way to some unhappy impulses; he made himself distressing and exasperating to quite a number of people. From the first his attitude to scholastic agents was hostile and uncharitable. His appearance made them nervous and defensive from the outset, more particularly the fierce cocking of his hat and the red intensity of his eye. He came in like an accusation rather than an application.

"And tell me, are these all the schools there are?" he would ask, sitting with various printed and copygraphed papers in his hand.

"All we can recommend," the genteel young man in charge would say.

"All you are paid to recommend?" Oswald would ask.

"They are the best schools available," the genteel young man would fence.

"Bah!" Oswald would say.

A bad opening....

From the ruffled scholastic agents Oswald would go on in a mood that was bound to ruffle the hopeful school proprietor. Indeed some of these interviews became heated so soon and so extravagantly that there was a complete failure to state even the most elementary facts of the case. Lurid misunderstandings blazed. Uganda got perplexingly into the dispute. From one admirable establishment in Eastbourne Oswald retreated with its principal calling after him from his dignified portico, "I wouldn't take the little nigger at any price."

When his doctor saw him after this last encounter he told him; "You are not getting on as well as you ought to do. You are running about too much. You ought to be resting completely."

So Oswald took a week's rest from school visiting before he tried again.

§ 3

If it had not been for the sense of Joan and Peter growing visibly day by day, Oswald might perhaps have displayed more of the patience of the explorer. But his was rather the urgency of a thirsty traveller who looks for water than the deliberation of a trigonometrical survey. In a little while he mastered the obvious fact that preparatory schools were conditioned by the schools for which they prepared. He found a school at Margate, White Court, which differed rather in quality, and particularly in the quality of its proprietor, than in the nature of its arrangements from the other schools he had been visiting, and to this he committed Peter. Assisted by Aunt Phyllis he found an education for Joan in Highmorton School, ten miles away; he settled himself in a furnished house at Margate to be near them both; and having thus gained a breathing time, he devoted himself to a completer study of the perplexing chaos of upper-class education in England. What was it "up to"? He had his own clear conviction of what it ought to be up to, but the more he saw of existing conditions, the more hopelessly it seemed to be up to either entirely different things or else, in a spirit of intellectual sabotage, up to nothing at all. From the preparatory schools he went on to the great public schools, and from the public schools he went to the universities. He brought to the quest all the unsympathetic detachment of an alien observer and all the angry passion of an anxious patriot. With some suggestions from Matthew Arnold.

"Indolence." "Insincerity." These two words became more and more frequent in his thoughts as he went from one great institution to another. Occasionally the headmasters he talked to had more than a suspicion of his unspoken comments. "Their imaginations are dead within them," said Oswald. "If only they could see the Empire! If only they could forget their little pride and dignity and affectations in the vision of mankind!"

His impressions of headmasters were for the most part taken

against a background of white-flannelled boys in playing-fields or grey-flannelled boys in walled court-yards. Eton gave him its river effects and a bright, unforgettable boatman in a coat of wonderful blue; Harrow displayed its view and insisted upon its hill. Physically he liked almost all the schools he saw, except Winchester, which he visited on a rainy day. Almost always there were fine architectural effects; now there was a nucleus of Gothic, now it was time-worn Tudor red brick, now well-proportioned grey Georgian. Most of these establishments had the dignity of age, but Caxton was wealthily new. Caxton was a nest of new buildings of honey-coloured stone; it was growing energetically but tidily; it waved its hand to a busy wilderness of rocks and plants and said, "our botanical garden," to a piece of field and said "our museum group." But it had science laboratories with big apparatus, and the machinery for a small engineering factory. Oswald with an experienced eye approved of its biological equipment. All these great schools were visibly full of life and activity. At times Oswald was so impressed by this life and activity that he felt ashamed of his enquiries; it seemed ungracious not to suppose that all was going well here, that almost any of these schools was good enough and that almost any casual or sentimental considerations, Sydenham family traditions or the like, should suffice to determine which was to have the moulding of Peter. But he had set his heart now on getting to the very essentials of this problem; he was resolved to be blinded by no fair appearances, and though these schools looked as firmly rooted and stoutly prosperous as British oaks and as naturally grown as they, though they had an air of discharging a function as necessary as the beating of a heart and as inevitably, he still kept his grip on the idea that they were artificial things of men's contriving, and still pressed his questions: What are you trying to do? What are you doing? How are you doing it? How do you fit in to the imperial scheme of things?

So challenged these various high and head-masters had most of them the air of men invited to talk of things that are easier to understand than to say. They were not at all pompous about their explanations; from first to last Oswald never discovered the pompous school-master of legend and history; without exception they seemed anxious to get out of their gowns and pose as intelligent laymen; but

they were not intelligent laymen, they did not explain, they did not explain, they waved hands and smiled. They " hoped" they were "turning out clean English gentlemen." They didn't train their men specially to any end at all. The aim was to develop a general intelligence, a general goodwill.

"In relation to the empire and its destiny?" said Oswald.

"I should hardly fix it so definitely as that," said Overtone of Hillborough.

"But don't you set before these youngsters some general aim in life to which they are all to contribute?"

"We rather leave the sort of contribution to them," said Overtone.

"But you must put something before them of where they are, where they are to come in, what they belong to?" said Oswald.

"That lies in the world about them," said Overtone. "King and country — we don't need to preach such things."

"But what the King signifies — if he signifies anything at all — and the aim of the country," urged Oswald. "And the Empire! The Empire — our reality. This greatness of ours beyond the seas."

"We don't stress it," said Overtone. "English boys are apt to be suspicious and ironical. Have you read that delightful account of the patriotic lecture in *Stalky and Co*? Oh, you should,"

A common evasiveness characterized all these head-masters when Oswald demanded the particulars of Peter's curriculum. He wanted to know just the subjects Peter would study and which were to be made the most important, and then when these questions were answered he would demand: "And why do you teach this? What is the particular benefit of that to the boy or the empire? How does this other fit into your scheme of a clear-minded man?" But it was difficult to get even the first questions answered plainly. From the very outset he found himself entangled in that longstanding controversy upon the educational value of Latin and Greek. His circumstances and his disposition alike disposed him to be sceptical of the value of these shibboleths of the British academic world. Their share in the timetable was enormous. Excellent gentlemen who failed to impress him as either strong-minded or exact, sought to convince him of the pricelessness of Latin in strengthening and disciplining the mind; Hinks of Carchester, the distinguished Greek scholar,

slipped into his hand at parting a pamphlet asserting that only Greek studies would make a man write English beautifully and precisely. Unhappily for his argument Hinks had written his pamphlet neither beautifully nor precisely. Lippiek, irregularly bald and with neglected teeth, a man needlessly unpleasing to the eye, descanted upon the Greek spirit, and its blend of wisdom and sensuous beauty. He quoted Euripides at Oswald and breathed an antique air in his face — although he knew that Oswald knew practically no Greek.

"Well," said Oswald, "but compare this," and gave him back three good minutes of Swahili.

"But what does it mean? It's gibberish to me. A certain melody perhaps."

"In English," Oswald grinned, "you would lose it all. It is a passage of — oh! quite fantastic beauty. "...

No arguments, no apologetics, stayed the deepening of Oswald's conviction that education in the public schools of Great Britain was not a forward-going process but a habit and tradition, that these classical school-masters were saying "nothing like the classics" in exactly the same spirit that the cobbler said "nothing like leather," because it was the stuff they had in stock. These subjects were for the most part being slackly, tediously, and altogether badly taught to boys who found no element of interest in them, the boys were as a class acquiring a distaste and contempt for learning thus presented, and a subtle, wide demoralization ensued. They found a justification for cribs and every possible device for shirking work in the utter remoteness and uselessness of these main subjects; the extravagant interest they took in school games was very largely a direct consequence of their intense boredom in school hours.

Such was the impression formed by Oswald. To his eyes these great schools, architecturally so fine, so happy in their out-of-door aspects, so pleasant socially, became more and more visibly whirlpools into which the living curiosity and happy energy of the nation's youth were drawn and caught, and fatigued, thwarted, and wasted. They were beautiful shelters of intellectual laziness — from which Peter must if possible be saved.

But how to save him? There was, Oswald discovered, no saving him completely. Oswald had a profound hostility to solitary

education. He knew that except through accidental circumstances of the rarest sort, a private tutor must necessarily be a poor thing. A man who is cheap enough to devote all his time to the education of one boy can have very little that is worth imparting. And education is socialization. Education is the process of making the unsocial individual a citizen....

Oswald's decision upon Caxton in the end, was by no means a certificate of perfection for Caxton. But Caxton had a good i^ lopsided Modern Side, with big, business-like chemical and physical laboratories, a quite honest and living-looking biological and geological museum, and a pleasant and active layman as headmaster. The mathematical teaching instead of being a drill in examination solutions was carried on in connexion with work in the physical and engineering laboratories. It was true that the "Modern Side'* of Caxton taught no history of any sort, ignored logic and philosophy, and, in the severity of its modernity, excluded even that amount of Latin which is needed for a complete mastery of English; nevertheless it did manifestly interest its boys enough to put games into a secondary place. At Caxton one did not see boys playing games as old ladies in hydropaths play patience, desperately and excessively and with a forced enthusiasm, because they had nothing better to do. Even the Caxton school magazine did not give much more than two-thirds of its space to games. So to Caxton Peter went, when Mr. Mackinder of White Court had done his duty by him.

§ 4

Mr. Henderson, the creator of Caxton, was of the large sized variety of schoolmaster, rather round-shouldered and with a slightly persecuted bearing towards parents; his mind seemed busy with many things — buildings, extensions, governors, chapels. Oswald walked with him through a field that was visibly becoming a botanical garden, towards the school playing-fields. Once the schoolmaster stopped, his mind distressed by a sudden intrusive doubt whether the exactly right place had been chosen for what he called a "biological pond." He had to ask various questions of a

gardener and give certain directions. But he was listening to Oswald, nevertheless.

Oswald discoursed upon the training of what he called "the fortunate Elite." "We can't properly educate the whole of our community yet, perhaps," he said, "but at least these expensive boys of ours ought to be given everything we can possibly give them. It's to them and their class the Empire will look. Naturally. We ought to turn out boys who know where they are in the world, what the empire is and what it aims to do, who understand something of their responsibilities to Asia and Africa and have a philosophy of life and duty...."

"More of that sort of thing is done," said Mr. Henderson, "than outsiders suppose. Masters talk to boys. Lend them books."

"In an incidental sort of way," said Oswald. "But three-quarters of the boys you miss.... Even here, it seems, you must still have your classical side. You must still keep on with Latin and Greek, with courses that will never reach through the dull grind to the stale old culture beyond. Why not drop all that? Why not be modern outright, and leave Eton and Harrow and Winchester and Westminster to go the old ways? Why not teach modern history and modern philosophy in plain English here? Why not question the world we see, instead of the world of those dead Levantines? Why not be a modern school altogether?"

The headmaster seemed to consider that idea. But there were the gravest of practical objections.

"We'd get no scholarships," he considered. "Our boys would stop at a dead end. They'd get no appointments. They'd be dreadfully handicapped....

"We're not a complete system," said Mr. Henderson. "No. We're only part of a big circle. We've got to take what the parents send on to us and we've got to send them on to college or the professions or what not. It's only part of a process here — only part of a process."...

Just as the ultimate excuse of the private schoolmasters had been that they could do no more than prepare along the lines dictated for them by the public school, so the public school waved Oswald on to the university. Thus he came presently with his questions to the university, to Oxford and Cambridge, for it was clear these set the

pattern of all the rest in England. He came to Oxford and Cambridge as he came to the public schools, it must be remembered, with a fresh mind, for the navy had snatched him straight out of his preparatory school away from the ordinary routines of an English education at the tender age of thirteen.

§ 5

Oswald's investigation of Oxford and Cambridge began even before Peter had entered School House at Caxton. As early as the spring of 1906, the scarred face under the soft felt hat was to be seen projecting from one of those brown-coloured hansom cabs that used to ply in Cambridge. His bag was on the top and he was going to the University Arms to install himself and have "a good look round the damned place." At times there still hung about Oswald a faint flavour of the midshipman on leave in a foreign town.

He spent three days watching undergraduates, he prowled about the streets, and with his face a little on one side, brought his red-brown eye to bear on the books in bookshop windows and the display of socks and ties and handkerchiefs in the outfitters. In those years the chromatic sock was just dawning upon the adolescent mind, it had still to achieve the iridescent glories of its crowning years. But Oswald found it symptomatic; *ex pede Herculem*. He was to be seen surveying the Backs, and standing about among the bookstalls in the Market Place. He paddled a Canadian canoe to Byron's pool, and watched a cheerful group dispose of a huge tea in the garden of the inn close at hand. They seemed to joke for his benefit, neat rather than merry jesting. So that was Cambridge, was it? Then he went on by a tedious crosscountry journey to the slack horrors of one of the Oxford hotels, and made a similar preliminary survey of the land here that he proposed to prospect. There seemed to be more rubbish and more remainders in the Oxford secondhand bookshops and less comfort in the hotels; the place was more self-consciously picturesque, there was less of Diana and more of Venus about its beauty, a rather blowsy Gothic Venus with a bad tooth or so. So it impressed Oswald. The glamour of Oxford, sunrise upon

Magdalen tower, Oriel, Pater, and so forth, were lost upon Oswald's toughened mind; he had spent his susceptible adolescence on a battleship, and the sunblaze of Africa had given him a taste for colour like a taste for raw rye whiskey....

He walked about the perfect garden of St. Giles' College and beat at the head of Blepp, the senior tutor, whose acquaintance he had made in the Athenaeum, with his stock questions. The garden of St. Giles' College is as delicate as fine linen in lavender; its turf is supposed to make American visitors regret the ancestral trip in the Mayflower very bitterly; Blepp had fancied that in a way it answered Oswald. But Oswald turned his glass eye and his ugly side to the garden, it might just as well have not been there, and kept to his questioning; "What are we making of our boys here? What are they going to make of the Empire? What are you teaching them? What are you not teaching them? How are you working them? And why? Why? What's the idea of it all? Suppose presently when this fine October in history ends, that the weather of the world breaks up; what will you have ready for the storm?"

Blepp felt the ungraciousness of such behaviour acutely.

It was like suddenly asking the host of some great beautiful dinner-party whether he earned his income honestly. Like shouting it up the table at him. But Oswald was almost as comfortable a guest for a don to entertain as a spur in one's trouser pocket. Blepp did his best to temper the occasion by an elaborate sweet reasonableness.

"Don't you think there's something in our atmosphere?" he began.

"I don't like your atmosphere. The Oxford shops seem grubby little shops. The streets are narrow and badly lit." *

"I wasn't thinking of the shops."

"It's where the youngsters buy their stuff, their furniture, and as far as I can see, most of their ideas."

"You'll be in sympathy with the American lady who complained the other day about our want of bathrooms," Blepp sneered.

"Well, why not?" said Oswald outrageously.

Blepp shrugged his shoulders and looked for sympathy at the twisted brick chimneys of St. Giles'.

Oswald became jerkily eloquent. "We've got an empire sprawling

all over the world. We're a people at grips with all mankind. And in a few years these few thousand men here and at Cambridge and a few thousand in the other universities, have practically to be the mind of the empire. Think of the problems that press upon us as an empire. All the nations sharpen themselves now like knives. Are we making the mentality to solve the Irish riddle here? Are we preparing any outlook for India here? What are you doing here to get ready for such tasks as these?"

"How can I show you the realities that go on beneath the surface?" said Blepp. "You don't see what is brewing today, the talk that goes on in the men's rooms, the mutual polishing of minds, Look not at our formal life but our informal life. Consider one college, consider for example Balliol. Think of the Jowett influence, the Milner group — not blind to the empire there, were we? Even that fellow Belloc. A saucy rogue, but good rich stuff. All out of just one college. These are things one cannot put in a syllabus. These are things that defeat statistics."

"But that is no reason why you should put chaff and dry bones into the syllabus," said Oswald....

"This place," said Oswald, and waved his arm at the great serenity of St. Giles', "it has the air of a cathedral close. It might be a beautiful place of retirement for sad and weary old men. It seems a thousand miles from machinery, from great towns and the work of the world."

"Would you have us teach in a foundry?"

"I'd have you teaching something about the storm that seems to me to be gathering in the world of labour. These youngsters here are going to be the statesmen, the writers and teachers, the lawyers, the high officials, the big employers, of tomorrow. But all that world of industry they have to control seems as far off here as if it were-on another planet. You're not talking about it, you're not thinking about it. You're teaching about the Gracchi and the Greek fig trade. You 're magnifying that pompous bore Cicero and minimizing — old Salisbury for example — who was a far more important figure in history — a greater man in a greater world."

"With all respect to his memory," said Blepp, "but *good Lord*!"

"Much greater. Your classics put out your perspective. Dozens of

living statesmen are greater than Cicero. Of course our moderns are greater. If only because of the greatness of our horizons. Oxford and Cambridge ought to be the learning and thinking part of the whole empire, twin hemispheres in the imperial brain. But when I think of the size of the imperial body, its hundreds of nations, its thousands of cities, its tribes, its vast extension round and about the world, the immense problem of it, and then of the size and quality of this, I'm reminded of the Atlantosaurus. You've heard of the beast? Its brain was smaller than the ganglia of its rump. No doubt its brain thought itself quite up to its job. It wasn't. Something ate up the Atlantosaurus. These two places, this place, ought to be big enough, and bigly conceived enough, to irradiate our whole world with ideas. All the empire. They ought to dominate the minds of hundreds of millions of men. And they dominate nothing. Leave India and Africa out of it. They do not even dominate England. Think only of your labour at home, of that huge blind Titan, whom you won't understand, which doesn't understand you—"

"There again," interrupted Blepp sharply, "you are simply ignorant of what is going on here. Because Oxford has a certain traditional beauty and a decent respect for the past, because it doesn't pose and assert itself rawly, you are offended. You do not realize how active we can be, how up-to-date we are. It wouldn't make us more modern in spirit if we lived in enamelled bathrooms and lectured in corrugated iron sheds. That isn't modernity. That's your mistake. In respect to this very question of labour, we have got our labour contact. Have you never heard of Ruskin College? Founded here by an American of the most modern type, one Vrooman." He repeated the name "Vrooman," not as though he loved it but as though he thought it ought to appeal to Oswald. "I think he came from Chicago." Surely a Teutonic name from Chicago was modern enough to satisfy any one! "It is a college of real working-men, of the Trade Union leader type, the actual horny-handed article, who come up here — I suppose because they don't agree with your idea that we deal only in the swathings of mummies. They at any rate think that we have something to tell the modern world, something worth their learning. Perhaps they know their needs better than you do."

Oswald was momentarily abashed. He expressed a desire to visit this Ruskin College.

Blepp explained he was not himself connected with the college. “Not quite my line,” said Blepp parenthetically; but he could arrange for a visit under proper guidance, and presently under the wing of a don of radical tendencies Oswald went.

It seemed to him the most touching and illuminating thing in Oxford. It reminded him of *Jude The Obscure*.

Ruskin College was sheltered over some stables in a back street, and it displayed a small group of oldish young men, for the most part with north- country accents, engaged in living under austere circumstances — they paid scarcely anything and did all the housework — and doing their best to get hold of the precious treasure of knowledge and understanding they were persuaded Oxford possessed. They had come up on their savings by virtue of extraordinary sacrifices. Graduation in any of the Oxford schools was manifestly impossible to them, if only on account of the Greek bar; the university had no use for these respectful pilgrims and no intention of encouraging more of them, and the “principal,” Mr. Dennis Hird, in the teeth of much opposition, was vamping a sort of course for them with the aid of a few liberal-minded junior dons who delivered a lecture when their proper engagements permitted. There was a vague suggestion of perplexity in the conversation of the two students with whom Oswald talked. This tepid drip of disconnected instruction wasn’t what they had expected, but then, what had they expected? Vrooman, the idealist who had set the thing going, had returned to America leaving much to be explained. Oswald dined with Blepp at St. Osyth’s that night, and spoke over the port in the common room of these working men who were “dunning Oxford for wisdom.”

Jarlow, the wit of the college, who had been entertaining the company with the last half-dozen Spoonerisms he had invented, was at once reminded of a little poem he had made, and he recited it. It was supposed to be by one of these same Ruskin College men, and his artless rhyming of * l Socrates” and “fates” and “sides” and “Euripides,” combined with a sort of modest pretentiousness of thought and intention, was very laughable indeed. Everybody

laughed merrily except Oswald.

"That's quite one of your best, Jarlow," said Blepp.

But Oxford had been rubbing Oswald's fur backwards that day. The common room became aware of him sitting up stiffly and regarding Jarlow with an evil expression.

"Why the Devil," said Oswald, addressing himself pointedly and querulously to Jarlow, "shouldn't a working-man say 'So-crates?' We all say 'Paris.' These men do Oxford too much honour."

§ 6

Perhaps there was a sort of necessity in the educational stagnation of England during those crucial years before the Great War. All the influential and important people of the country were having a thoroughly good time, and if there was a growing quarrel between worker and employer no one saw any reason in that for sticking a goad into the teacher. The disposition of the mass of men is always on the side of custom against innovation. The clear-headed effort of yesterday tends always to become the unintelligent routine of tomorrow. So long as we get along we go along. In the less exacting days of good Queen Victoria the educational processes of Great Britain had served well enough; they still went on because the necessity for a more thorough, coherent, and lucid education had still to be made glaringly manifest. Few people understood the discontent of a Ray Lankester, the fretfulness of a Kipling. Foresight dies when the imagination slumbers. Only catastrophe can convince the mass of people of the possibility of catastrophe. The system had the inertia of a spinning top. The most thoroughly and completely mis-taught of one generation became the mis-teachers of the next. "Learn, obey, create nothing, initiate nothing, have no troublesome doubts," ran the rules of scholarly discretion. "Prize-boy, scholar, fellow, don, pedagogue; prize-boy, scholar, fellow, don" — so spun the circle of the schools. Into that relentless circle the bright, curious little Peters, who wanted to know about the insides of animals and the way of machines and what was happening, were drawn; the little Joans, too, were being drawn. The best escaped complete deadening, they found

a use for themselves, but life usually kept them too busy and used them too hard for them ever to return to teach in college or school of the realities they had experienced. And so as Joan and Peter grew up, Oswald became more and more tolerant of a certain rabble rout of inky outsiders who, without authority and dignity, were at least putting living ideas of social function and relationship in the way of adolescent enquiry.

It became manifest to Oswald that the real work of higher education, the discussion of God, of the state and of sex, of all the great issues in life, while it was being elaborately evaded in the formal education of the country, was to a certain extent being done, thinly, unsatisfactorily, pervertedly even by the talk of boys and girls among themselves, by the casual suggestions of tutors, friends, and chance acquaintances, and more particularly by a number of irresponsible journalists and literary men. For example though the higher education of the country afforded no comprehensive view of social inter-relationship at all, the propaganda of the socialists did give a scheme — Oswald thought it was a mistaken and wrong-headed scheme — of economic interdependence. If the school showed nothing to their children of the Empire but a few tiresome maps, Kipling's stories, for all his Jingo violence, did at least breathe something of its living spirit. As Joan and Peter grew up they ferreted out and brought to their guardian's knowledge a school of irresponsible contemporary teachers, Shaw, Wells and the other Fabian Society pamphleteers, the Belloc-Chesterton group, Cunninghame Graham, Edward Carpenter, Orage of *The New Age,* Galsworthy, Cannan; the suffragettes, and the like. If the formal teachers lacked boldness these strange self-appointed instructors seemed to be nothing if not bold. *The Freewoman*, which died to rise again as *The New Freewoman*, existed it seemed chiefly to mention everything that a young lady should never dream of mentioning. Aunt Phoebe's monthly, *Wayleaves*, in its green and purple cover, made a gallant effort to outdo that valiant weekly. Aunt Phoebe was a bright and irresponsible assistant in the education of Oswald's wards. She sowed the house with strange books whenever she came to stay with them. Oswald found Joan reading Oscar Wilde when she was seventeen. He did not interrupt her reading, for he could not imagine

how to set about the interruption. Later on he discovered a most extraordinary volume by Havelock Ellis lying in the library, an impossible volume. He read in it a little and then put it down. Afterwards he could not believe that book existed. He thought he must have dreamt about it, or dreamt the contents into it. It seemed incredible that Aunt Phoebe!... He was never quite sure. When he went to look for it again it had vanished, and he did not like to ask for it.

More and more did this outside supplement of education in England press upon Oswald's reluctant attention. Most of these irregulars he disliked by nature and tradition. None of them had the dignity and restraint of the great Victorians, the Corinthian elegance of Ruskin, the Teutonic hammer-blows of Carlyle. Shaw he understood was a lean, red-haired Pantaloon, terribly garrulous and vain; Belloc and Chesterton thrust a shameless obesity upon the public attention; the social origins of most of the crew were appalling, Bennett was a solicitor's clerk from the potteries, Wells a counter-jumper, Orage came from Leeds. Oswald had seen a picture of Wells by Max that confirmed his worst suspicions about these people; a heavy bang of hair assisted a cascade moustache to veil a pasty face that was broad rather than long and with a sly, conceited expression; the creature still wore a long and crumpled frock coat, acquired no doubt during his commercial phase, and rubbed together two large, clammy, white, misshapen hands. Except for Cunninghame Graham there was not a gentleman, as Oswald understood the word, among them all. But these writers got hold of the intelligent young because they did at least write freely where the university teacher feared to tread. They wrote, he thought, without any decent restraint. They seasoned even wholesome suggestions with a flavour of scandalous excitement. It remained an open question in his mind whether they did more good by making young people think or more harm by making them think wrong. Progressive dons he found maintained the former opinion. With that support Oswald was able to follow his natural disposition and leave the reading of his two wards unrestrained.

And they read — and thought, to such purpose as will be presently told.

§ 7

But here Justice demands an interlude.

Before we go on to tell of how Joan and Peter grew up to adolescence in these schools that Oswald — assisted by Aunt Phyllis in the case of Joan — found for them, Mr. Mackinder must have his say, and make the Apology of the Schoolmaster. He made it to Oswald when first Oswald visited him and chose his school out of all the other preparatory schools, to be Peter's. He appeared as a little brown man with a hedgehog's nose and much of the hedgehog's indignant note in his voice. He came, shy and hostile, into the drawing-room in which Oswald awaited him. It was, by the by, the most drawing-room-like drawing-room that Oswald had ever been in; it was as if some one had said to a furniture dealer, "People expect me to have a drawing-room. Please let me have exactly the sort of drawing-room that people expect." It displayed a grand piano towards the French window, a large standard lamp with an enormous shade, a pale silk sofa, an Ottoman, a big fern in an ornate pot, and water-colours of Venetian lagoons. In the midst of it all stood Mr. Mackinder, in a highly contracted state, mutely radiating an interrogative "Well?"

"I'm looking for a school for my nephew," said Oswald.

"You want him here?"

"Well — Do you mind if first of all I see something of the school?"

"We're always open to investigation," said Mr. Mackinder, bitterly.

"I want to do the very best I can for this boy. I feel very strongly that it's my duty to him and the country to turn him out — as well as a boy can be turned out."

Mr. Mackinder nodded his head and continued to listen.

This was something new in private schoolmasters. For the most part they had opened themselves out to Oswald, like sunflowers, like the receptive throats of nestlings. They had embraced and silenced him by the wealth of their assurances.

“I have two little wards,” he said. “A boy and a girl. I want to make all I can of them. They ought to belong to the Elite. The strength of a country — of an empire — depends ultimately almost entirely on its Elite. This empire isn’t overwhelmed with intelligence, and most of the talk we hear about the tradition of statesmanship-Mr. Mackinder made a short snorting noise through his nose that seemed to indicate his opinion of contemporary statesmanship.

“You see I take this schooling business very solemnly. These upper-class schools, I say, these schools for the sons of prosperous people and scholarship winners, are really Elite-making machines. They really make — or fail to make — the Empire. That makes me go about asking schoolmasters a string of questions. Some of them don’t like my questions. Perhaps they are too elementary. I ask: what is this education of yours up to? What is the design of the whole? What is this preparation of yours for? This is called a Preparatory School. You lay the foundations. What is the design of the building for which these foundations are laid?”

He paused, determined to make Mr. Mackinder say something before he discoursed further.

“It isn’t so simple as that,” was wrung from Mr. Mackinder. “ Suppose we just walk round the school. Suppose we just see the sort of place it is and what we are doing here. Then perhaps you’ll be able to see better what we contribute — in the way of making a citizen.”

The inspection was an unusually satisfactory one. White Court was one of the few private schools Oswald had seen that had been built expressly for its purpose. Its class rooms were well lit and well arranged, its little science museum seemed good and well arranged and well provided with diagrams; its gymnasium was businesslike; its wall blackboards unusually abundant and generously used, and everything was tidy. Nevertheless the Catechism for Schoolmasters was not spared. “Now,” said Oswald, “now for the curriculum?”

“We live in the same world with most other English schools,” Mr. Mackinder sulked. “This is a preparatory school.”

“What are called English subjects?”

“Yes.”

“How do you teach geography?”

“With books and maps.”

Oswald spoke of lantern slides and museum visits. The cinema had yet to become an educational possibility.

“I do what I can,” said Mr. Mackinder; “I’m not a millionaire.”

“Do you *do* classics?”

“We do Latin. Clever boys do a little Greek. In preparation for the public schools.”

“Grammar of course?...

“What else?....

“French, German, Latin, Greek, bits of mathematics, botany, geography, bits of history, book-keeping, music lessons, some water-colour painting; it’s very mixed,” said Oswald.

“It’s miscellaneous.”

Mr. Mackinder roused himself to a word of defence: “The boys don’t specialize.”

“But this is a diet of scraps,” said Oswald, reviving one of the most controversial topics of the catechism. “Nothing can be done thoroughly.”

“We are necessarily elementary.”

“It’s rather like the White Knight in *Alice In Wonderland* packing his luggage for nowhere.”

“We have to teach what is required of us,” said Mr. Mackinder.

“But what is education up to?” asked Oswald.

As Mr. Mackinder offered no answer to that riddle, Oswald went on. “What is Education in England up to, anyhow? In Uganda we knew what we were doing. There was an idea in it. The old native tradition was breaking up. We taught them to count and reckon English fashion, to read and write, we gave them books and the Christian elements, so that they could join on to our civilization and play a part in the great world that was breaking up their little world. We didn’t teach them anything that didn’t serve mind or soul or body. We saw the end of what we were doing. But half this school teaching of yours is like teaching in a dream. You don’t teach the boy what he wants to know and needs to know. You spend half his time on calculations he has no use for, mere formal calculations, and on this dead language stuff! It’s like trying to graft mummy steak on living flesh. It’s like boiling fossils for soup.”

Mr. Mackinder said nothing.

"And damn it!" said Oswald petulantly; "your school is about as good a school as I've seen or am likely to see....

"I had an idea," he went on, "of just getting the very best out of those two youngsters — the boy especially — of making every hour of his school work a gift of so much power or skill or subtlety, of opening the world to him like a magic book.... The boy's tugging at the magic covers...."

He stopped short.

"There are no such schools," said Mr. Mackinder compactly. "This is as good a school as you will find."

And there he left the matter for the time. But in the evening he dined with Oswald at his hotel, and it may be that iced champagne had something to do with a certain relaxation from his afternoon restraint. Oswald had already arranged about Peter, but he wanted the little man to talk more. So he set him an example. He talked of his own life. He represented it as a life of disappointment and futility. "I envy you your life of steadfast usefulness." He spoke of his truncated naval career and his disfigurement. Of the years of uncertainty that had followed. He talked of the ambitions and achievements of other men, of the large hopes and ambitions of youth.

"I too," said Mr. Mackinder, warming for a moment, and then left his sentence unfinished. Oswald continued to generalize....

"All life, I suppose, is disappointment — is anyhow largely disappointment," said Mr. Mackinder presently.

"We get something done."

"Five per cent., ten per cent., of what we meant to do."

The schoolmaster reflected. Oswald refilled his glass for him.

"To begin with I thought, none of these other fellows really know how to run a school. I will, I said, make a nest of Young Paragons. I will take a bunch of boys and get the best out of them, the best possible; watch them, study them, foster them, make a sort of boy so that the White Court brand shall be looked for and recognized...."

He sipped his faintly seething wine and put down the glass.

"Five per cent," he said; "ten per cent, perhaps." He touched his lips with his dinner-napkin. "I have turned out some creditable boys."

“Did you make any experiments in the subjects you taught?”

“At first. But one of the things we discover in life as we grow past the first flush of beginning, is just how severely we are conditioned. We are conditioned. We seem to be free. And we are in a net. You have criticized my curriculum today pretty severely, Mr. Sydenham. Much that you say is absolutely right. It is wasteful, discursive, ineffective. Yes.... But in my place I doubt if you could have made it much other than it is....

“One or two things I do. Latin grammar here is taught, on lines strictly parallel with the English and French and German — that is to say, we teach languages comparatively. It was troublesome to arrange, but it makes a difference mentally. And I take a class in Formal Logic; English teaching is imperfect, expression is slovenly, without that. The boys write English verse. The mathematical teaching too, is as modern as the examining boards will let it be. Small things, perhaps. But you do not know the obstacles.

“Mr. Sydenham, your talk today has reminded me of all the magnificent things I set out to do at White Court, when I sank my capital in building White Court six and twenty years ago. When I found that I couldn’t control the choice of subjects, when I found that in that matter I was ruled by the sort of schools and colleges the boys had to go on to and by the preposterous examinations they would have to pass, then I told myself, ‘at least I can cultivate their characters and develop something like a soul in them, instead of crushing out individuality and imagination as most schools do...’

“Well, I think I have a house of clean-minded and cheerful and willing boys, and I think they all tell the truth....”

“I don’t know what I’m to do with the religious teaching of these two youngsters of mine,” said Oswald abruptly. “Practically, they’re Godless.”

Mr. Mackinder did not speak for a little while. Then he said, “It is almost unavoidable, under existing conditions, that the religious teaching in a school should be — formal and orthodox.

“For my own part — I’m liberal,” said Mr. Mackinder, and added, “very liberal. Let me tell you, Mr. Sydenham, exactly how I see things.”

He paused for a moment as if he collected his views.

“If a little boy has grown up in a home, in the sort of home which one might describe as God-fearing, if he has not only heard of God but seen God as a living influence upon the people about him, then — then, I admit, you have something real. He will believe in God. He will know God. God — simply because of the faith about him — will be a knowable reality. God is a faith. In men. Such a boy’s world will fall into shape about the idea of God. He will take God as a matter of course. Such a boy can be religious from childhood — yes.... But there are very few such homes.”

“Less, probably, than there used to be?”

Mr. Mackinder disavowed an answer by a gesture of hands and shoulders. He went on, frowning slightly as he talked. * He wanted to say exactly what he thought. “For all other boys, Mr. Sydenham, God, for all practical purposes, does not exist. Their worlds have been made without him; they do not think in terms of him; and if he is to come into their lives at all he must come in from the outside — a discovery, like a mighty rushing wind. By what is called Conversion. At adolescence. Until that happens you must build the soul on pride, on honour, on the decent instincts. It is all you have. And the less they hear about God the better. They will not understand. It will be a cant to them — a kind of indelicacy. The two greatest things in the world have been the most vulgarized. God and sex. . . If I had my own way I would have no religious services for my boys at all.”

“Instead of which?”

Mr. Mackinder paused impressively before replying.

“The local curate is preparing two of my elder boys for Confirmation at the present time.”

He gazed gloomily at the tablecloth. “If one could do as one liked!” he said. “If only one could do as one liked!”

But now Oswald was realizing for the first time the eternal tragedy of the teacher, that sower of unseen harvests, that reaper of thistles and the wind, that serf of custom, that subjugated rebel, that feeble, persistent antagonist of the triumphant things’ that rule him. And behind that immediate tragedy Oswald was now apprehending for the first time something more universally tragic, an incessantly recurring story of high hopes and a grey ending; the story of boys

and girls, clean and sweet-minded, growing up into life, and of the victory of world inertia, of custom drift and the tarnishing years.

Mr. Mackinder spoke of his own youth. Quite early in life had come physical humiliations, the realization that his slender and delicate physique debarred him from most active occupations, and his resolve to be of use in some field where his weak and undersized body would be at no great disadvantage. “I made up my mind that teaching should be my religion,” he said.

He told of the difficulties he had encountered in his attempts to get any pedagogic science or training. “This is the most difficult profession in the world,” he said, “and the most important. Yet it is not studied; it has no established practice; it is not endowed. Buildings are endowed and institutions, but not teachers.” And in Great Britain, in the schools of the classes that will own and rule the country, ninety-nine per cent, of the work was done by unskilled workmen, by low-grade, genteel women and young men. In America the teachers were nearly all women. “How can we expect to raise a nation nearly as good as we might do under such a handicap?” He had read and learnt what he could about teaching; he had served for small salaries in schools that seemed living and efficient; finally he had built his own school with his own money. He had had the direst difficulties in getting a staff together. “What can one expect?” he said. “We pay them hardly better than shop assistants — less than bank clerks. You see the relative importance of things in the British mind.” What hope or pride was there to inspire an assistant schoolmaster to do good work?

“I thought I could make a school different from all other schools, and I found I had to make a school like most other fairly good schools. I had to work for what the parents required of me, and the ideas of the parents had been shaped by their schools. I had never dreamt of the immensity of the resistance these would offer to constructive change. In this world there are incessant changes, but most of them are landslides or epidemics.... I tried to get away from stereotyping examinations. I couldn’t. I tried to get away from formal soul-destroying religion. I couldn’t. I tried to get a staff of real assistants. I couldn’t. I had to take what came. I had to be what was required of me....

“One works against time always. Over against the Parents. It is not only the boys one must educate, but the parents — let alone one’s self. The parents demand impossible things. I have been asked for Greek and for bookkeeping by double-entry by the same parent. I had — I had to leave the matter — as if I thought such things were possible. After all, the Parent is master. One can’t run a school without boys,”

“You’d get some boys,” said Oswald.

“Not enough. I’m up against time. The school has to pay.”

“Can’t you hold out for a time? Run the school on a handful of oatmeal?”

“It’s running it on an overdraft I don’t fancy. You’re not a married man, Mr. Sydenham, with sons to consider,”

“No,” said Oswald shortly. “But I have these wards. And, after all, there’s not only today but tomorrow. If the world is going wrong for want of education . If you don’t give it your sons will suffer.”

“Tomorrow, perhaps. But today comes first. I’m up against time. Oh, I’m up against time.”

He sat with his hands held out supine on the table before him.

“I started my school twenty-seven years ago next Hilary. And it seems like yesterday. When I started it I meant it to be something memorable in schools.... I jumped into it. I thought I should swim about.... It was like jumping into the rapids of Niagara. I was seized, I was rushed along.... Ai! Ai!...”

“Time’s against us all,” said Oswald. “I suppose the next glacial age will overtake us long before we’re ready to fight out our destiny.”

“If you want to feel the generations rushing to waste,” said Mr. Mackinder, “like rapids — like rapids — you must put your heart and life into a private school.”

CHAPTER XI. — ADOLESCENCE

§ 1

"THE generations rushing to waste like rapids — like rapids...."

Ten years later Oswald found himself repeating the words of the little private schoolmaster.

He was in the gravest perplexity. Joan was now nineteen and a half and Peter almost of age, and they had had a violent quarrel. They would not live in the same house together any longer, they declared. Peter had gone back overnight to Cambridge on his motor bicycle; Joan's was out of order — an embittering addition to her distress — and she had cycled on her push bicycle over the hills that morning to Bishop's Stortford to catch the Cambridge train. And Oswald was left to think over the situation and all that had led to it.

He sat alone in the May sunshine in the little arbour that overlooked his rose garden at Pelham Ford, trying to grasp all that had happened to these stormy young people since he had so boldly taken the care of their lives into his hands. He found himself trying to retrace the phases of their upbringing, and his thoughts went wide and far over the problem of human training. Suddenly he had discovered his charges adult. Joan had stood before him, amazingly grown up — a woman, young, beautiful, indignant.

Who could have foretold ten years ago that Joan would have been declaring with tears in her voice but much stiffness in her manner, that she had "stood enough" from Peter, and calling him "weak."

"He insults all my friends, Nobby," she had said, "and as for his — . He's like that puppy we had who dug up rotten bones we had never suspected, all over the garden.

"Oh! *his women are horrible*!" Joan had cried....

§ 2

Oswald's choice of a permanent home at Pelham Ford had been largely determined by the educational requirements of Joan and

Peter. While Peter had been at White Court and Joan at Highmorton School twelve miles away, Oswald had occupied a not very well furnished "furnished house" at Margate. When Peter, after an inquisition by Oswald into English Public Schools, had been awarded at last as a sort of prize, with reservations, to Caxton, Oswald — convinced now by his doctors and his own disagreeable experiences that he must live in England for the rest of his life if he was to hope for any comfort or activity — decided to set up a permanent home with a garden and buildings that would be helpful through days of dullness in some position reasonably accessible from London, Caxton and Margate, and later on from Cambridge, to which they were both predestined. After some search he found the house he needed in the pretty little valley of the Ash, that runs north-eastward from Ware. The Stubland aunts still remained as tenants of The Ingle-Nook, and made it a sort of alternative home for the youngsters.

The country to the north and east of Ware is a country of miniature gorges with frequent water-splashes. The stream widens and crosses the road in a broad, pebbly shallow of ripples just at the end of Pelham Ford, there is a causeway with a white handrail for bicycles and foot passengers beside the ford, and beyond it is an inn and the post office and such thatched, whitewashed homes as constitute the village. Then beyond comes a row of big trees and the high red wall and iron gates of this house Oswald had taken. The church of Pelham Ford is a little humped, spireless building up the hill to the left. The stream brawls along for a time beside the road. Through the gates of the house one looks across a lawn barred by the shadows of big trees, at a blazing flower-garden that goes up a series of terraces to the little red tiled summerhouse that commands the view of the valley. The house is to the right and near the road, a square comfortable eighteenth-century red-brick house with ivy on its shadowed side and fig trees and rose trees towards the sun. It has a classical portico, and a grave but friendly expression.

The Margate house had been a camp, but this was furnished with some deliberation. Oswald had left a miscellany of possessions behind him in Uganda which Muir had packed and sent on after him when it was settled that there could be no return to .Africa. The hall

befitted the home of a member of the Plantain Club; African spoils adorned it, three lions' heads, a white rhinoceros head, elephants' feet, spears, gourds, tusks; in the midst a large table took the visitor's hat and stick, and bore a large box for the post. Out of this hall opened a little close study Oswald rarely used except when Joan and Peter and their friends were at home and a passage led to a sunny, golden-brown library possessing three large southward windows on the garden, a room it had pleased him greatly to furnish, and in which he did most of his writing. It had a parquet floor and Oriental rugs like sunlit flower-beds. Across the hall, opposite the study, was a sort of sittingroom-livingroom which was given over to Joan and Peter. It had been called the Schoolroom in the days when their holiday visits had been mitigated by the presence of some temporary governess or tutor, and now that those disciplined days were over their two developing personalities still jostled in the one apartment. A large pleasant drawing-room and a dining-room completed the tale of rooms on the ground floor.

In this room across the hall there was much that would have repaid research on the part of Oswald. The room was a joint room only when Joan and Peter were without guests in the house. Whenever there were guests, whether they were women or men, Joan turned out and the room became a refuge or rendezvous for Peter. It was therefore rather Peter's than Joan's. Here as in most things it was Peter's habit to prevail over Joan. But she had her rights; she had had a voice in the room's decoration, a share in its disorder. The upper bookshelves to the right of the fireplace were hers and the wall next to that. Against this stood her bureau, locked and secure, over and against Peter's bureau. Oswald had given them these writing desks three Christmasses ago. But the mess on the table under the window was Peter's, and Peter had more than his fair share of the walls. The stuffed birds and animals and a row of sculls were the result of a "Mooseum" phase of Peter's when he was fourteen. The water-colour pictures were Peter's. The hearthrug was the lion-skin that Peter still believed had been brought for him from Nairobi by Oswald.

Peter could caricature, and his best efforts were framed here; his style was a deliberate compliment to the incomparable Max. He had

been very successful in bringing out the latent fierceness of Joan; one not ungraceful effort was called "The Scalp Dance," the other, less pleasing to its subject, represented Joan in full face with her hands behind her back and her feet apart, "Telling the Whole Troof." Joan, alas! had no corresponding skill for a retort, but she had framed an enlargement of a happy snapshot of Peter on the garden wall. She had stood below arid held her camera up so that Peter's boots and legs were immense and his head dwindled to nothing in perspective. So seen, he became an embodiment of masculine brutality. The legend was, "The Camera Can Detect What Our Eyes Cannot."

One corner of this room was occupied by a pianola piano and a large untidy collection of classical music rolls; right and left of the fireplace the bookshelves bore an assortment of such literature as appealed in those days to animated youth, classics of every period from Plato to Shaw, and such moderns as Compton Mackenzie, Masefield, Gilbert Cannan and Ezra Pound. Back numbers of *The Freewoman*, *The New Age*, *The New Statesman*, and *The Poetry Review* mingled on the lowest shelf. There was a neat row of philosophical textbooks in the Joan section; Joan for no particular reason was taking the moral science tripos; and a microscope stood on Peter's table, for he was biological....

§ 3

Oswald's domestic arrangements had at first been a grave perplexity. In Uganda he had kept house very well with a Swahili over-man and a number of "boys"; in Margate this sort of service was difficult to obtain, and the holiday needs of the children seemed to demand a feminine influence of the governess-companion type, a "lady." A succession of refined feminine personalities had intersected these years of Oswald's life. They were all ladies by birth and profession, they all wore collars supported by whalebone about their necks, and they all developed and betrayed a tenderness for Oswald that led to a series of flights to the Climax Club and firm but generous dismissals. Oswald's ideas of matrimony were crude and commonplace; he could imagine himself marrying no one but a buxom young woman

of three-and-twenty, and he could not imagine any buxom young woman of three-and-twenty taking a healthy interest in a man over forty with only half a face and fits of fever and fretfulness. When these ladies one after another threw out their gentle intimations he had the ingratitude to ascribe their courage to a sense of his own depreciated matrimonial value. This caused just enough indignation to nerve him to the act of dismissal. But on each occasion he spent the best part of a morning and made serious inroads upon the club notepaper before the letter of dismissal was framed, and he always fell back upon the stock lie that he was going abroad to a *Kurort* and was going to lock up the house. On each occasion the house was locked up for three or four weeks, and Oswald lived a nomadic existence until a fresh lady could be found. Finally God sent him Mrs. Moxton.

She came in at Margate during an interregnum while Aunt Phyllis was in control. Aunt Phyllis after a reflective interview passed her on to Oswald. She was more like Britannia than one could have imagined possible; her face was perhaps a little longer and calmer and her pink chins rather more numerous.

"I understand," she said, seating herself against Oswald's desk, "that you are in need of some one to take charge of your household."

"Did you — hear?" began Oswald.

"It's the talk of Margate," she said calmly.

"So I understand that you are prepared to be the lady—"

"I am not a lady," said Mrs. Moxton with a faint asperity.

"I beg your pardon," said Oswald.

"I am a housekeeper," she said, as who should say: "at least give me credit for that." "I have had experience with a single gentleman."

There seemed to be an idea in it.

"I was housekeeper to the late Mr. Justice Benlees for some years, until he died, and then unhappily, being in receipt of a small pension from him, I took to keeping a boarding-house. Winnipeg House. On the Marine Parade. A most unpleasant and anxious experience." Her note of indignation returned, and the clear pink of her complexion deepened by a shade. "A torrent of Common People."

"Exactly," said Oswald. "I have seen them walking about the town. Beastly new yellow boots. And fast, squeaky little girls in

those new floppy white hats. You think you could dispose of the boarding-house?"

Mrs. Moxton compressed her chins slightly in assent.

"It's a saleable concern?"

"There are those," said Mrs. Moxton with a faint sense of the marvels of God's universe in her voice, "who would be glad of it."

He rested his face on his hand and regarded her profile very earnestly with his one red-brown eye — from the beginning to the end of the interview Mrs. Moxton never once looked straight at him. He perceived that she was incapable of tenderness, dissimulation, or any personal relationship, a woman in profile, a woman with a pride in her work, a woman to be trusted.

"You'll do, "he said.

"Of course, Sir, you will take up my references first. They are a little — old, but I think you will find them satisfactory."

"I have no doubts about your references, Mrs. Moxton, but they shall be taken up nevertheless, duly and in order."

"Thank you, Sir," said Mrs. Moxton, giving him a three-quarter face, and almost looking at him in her pleasure.

And thereafter Mrs. Moxton ruled the household of Oswald according to the laws and habits of the late Mr. Justice Benlees, who had evidently been a very wise, comfortable, and intelligent man. When she came on from the uncongenial furniture at Margate to the comfort and beauty of Pelham Ford she betrayed a certain approval by expanding an inch or so in every direction and letting out two new chins, but otherwise she made no remark. She radiated decorum and a faint smell of lavender. She had, it seemed, always possessed a black-watered-silk dress and a gold chain. Even Lady Charlotte approved of her.

For some years Mrs. Moxton enabled Oswald to disregard the social difficulties that are supposed to surround feminine adolescence. Joan and Peter got along very well with Pelham Ford as their home, and no other feminine control except an occasional visit from the Stubland aunts. Then Aunt Charlotte became tiresome because Joan was growing up. "How can the gal grow up properly," she asked, "even considering what she is, in a house in which there isn't a lady at the head?"

Oswald reflected upon the problem. He summoned Mrs. Moxton to his presence.

"Mrs. Moxton," he said, "when Miss Joan is here, I've been thinking, don't you think she ought to be, so to speak, mistress of the place?"

"I have been wondering when you would make the change, Mr. Sydenham," said Mrs. Moxton. "I shall be very pleased to take my orders from Miss Joan."

And after that Mrs. Moxton used to come to Joan whenever Joan was at Pelham Ford, and tell her what orders she had to give for the day. And when Joan had visitors, Mrs. Moxton told Joan just exactly what arrangements Joan was to order Mrs. Moxton to make. In.all things that mattered Mrs. Moxton ruled Joan with an obedience of iron. Her curtseys, slow, deliberate and firm, insisted that Joan was a lady — and had got to be one. She took to calling Joan "Ma'am." Joan had to live up to it, and did. Visitors increased after the young people were at Cambridge. Junior dons from Newnham and Girton would come and chaperon their hostess, and Peter treated Oswald to a variety of samples of the younger male generation. Some of the samples Oswald liked more than others. And he concealed very carefully from Aunt Charlotte how mixed these young gatherings were, how light was the Cambridge standard of chaperonage, and how very junior were some of the junior dons from the women's colleges.

§ 4

When children are small we elders in charge are apt to suppose them altogether plastic. There are resistances, it is true, but these express themselves at first only in tantrums, in apparently quite meaningless outbreaks; we impose our phrases and values so completely, that such spasmodic opposition seems to signify nothing. We impose our names for things, our classifications with their thousand implications, our interpretations. The child is imitative and obedient by instinct, its personality for the most part latent, warily hidden. That is "hand," we dictate, that is "hat," that is "pussy cat," that is "pretty, pretty," that is

“good,” that is “nasty,” that is “ugly — Ugh!” That again is “fearsome; run away!” There is no discussion. If we know our parental business we are able to establish all sorts of habits, readinesses, dispositions in these entirely plastic days. “Time for Peter to go to bed,” uttered with gusto, becomes the signal for an interesting ritual upon which he embarks with dignity. Until some idiot visitor remarks loudly, “Doesn’t he *hate* going to bed? I always hated going to bed.” Whereupon in that matter the seeds of reflection and dissent are sown in the little mind.

And so with most other matters. For a few years of advantage the new mind is clay and we have it to ourselves, and then, still clay, it becomes perceptibly resistent, perceptibly disposed to recover some former shape we have given it or to take an outline of its own. It discovers we are not divine and that even Dadda cannot recall the sunset. It is not only that other minds are coming in to modify and contradict our decisions. We contradict ourselves and it notes the contradiction. And old Nature begins to take an increasing share in the accumulating personality. Apart from what we give and those others give, things bubble up inside it, desires, imaginations, creative dreams. By imperceptible degrees the growing mind slips away from us. A little while ago it seemed like some open vessel into which we could pour whatever we chose; now suddenly it is closed and locked, hiding a fermentation.

Perhaps things have always been more or less so between elders and young, but in the old days of slower change what fathers and mothers had to tell the child, priest and master re-echoed, laws and institutions confirmed, the practice of every one, good or evil, endorsed in black or white. But from the break-up of the Catholic culture in England onward there has been an unceasing conflict between more and more divergent stories about life, and in the last half century that clash has enormously intensified. What began as a war of ideals became at last a chaos. Adolescence was once either an obedience or a rebellion; at the opening of the twentieth century it had become an interrogation and an experiment. One heard very much of the right of the parent to bring up children in his own religion, his own ideas, but no one ever bothered to explain how that right was to be preserved. In Ireland one found near Dublin

educational establishments surrounded by ten-foot walls topped with broken glass, protecting a Catholic atmosphere for a few precious and privileged specimens of the Erse nation. Mr. James Joyce in his *Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man*, has bottled a specimen of that Catholic atmosphere for the astonishment of posterity. The rest of the youth of the changing world lay open to every wind of suggestion that blew. The parent or guardian found himself a mere competitor for the attention and convictions of his charges.

§ 5

Through childhood and boyhood and girlhood, Peter's sex and seniority alike had conspired to give him a leadership over Joan. His seemed the richer, livelier mind, he told most of the stories and initiated most of the games; Joan was the follower. That masculine ascendancy lasted until Peter was leaving Caxton; in spite of various emancipating forces at Highmorton. Then in less than a year Joan took possession of herself.

Reserve is a necessary grace in all younger brothers and sisters. Peter spread his reveries as a peacock spreads its tail, but Joan kept her dreams discreetly private. All youth lives much in reverie; thereby the stronger minds anticipate and rehearse themselves for life in a thousand imaginations, the weaker ones escape from it. Against that early predominance of Peter, Joan maintained her self-respect by extensive secret supplements of the Bungo-Peter saga. For example she was Bungo-Peter's "Dearest Beloved." Peter never suspected how Bungo-Peter and she cuddled up together at the camp fires and were very close and warm every night, until she went off to sleep....

When she was about fourteen Joan's imagination passed out of the phase of myth and saga into the world of romance. The real world drew closer to her. Bungo-Peter vanished; Nobby shrank down to a real Uncle Nobby. Her childish reveries had disregarded possibility; now the story had to be plausible; it had to join on to Highmorton and The Ingle-Nook and Pelham Ford; its heroine had to be conceivable as the real Joan. And with the coming of reality, came moods. There were times when she felt dull, and the world looked on

her with a grey and stupid face, and other times to compensate her for these dull phases, seasons of unwonted exaltation. It was as if her being sometimes drew itself together in order presently to leap and extend itself.

In these new phases of expansion she had the most perfect conviction that life, and particularly her life, was wonderful and beautiful and destined to be more and more so. She began to experience a strange new happiness in mere existence, a happiness that came with an effect of revelation. It is hard to convey the peculiar delight that invaded her during these phases. It was almost as if the earth had just been created for her and given to her as a present. There were moments when the world was a crystal globe of loveliness about her, moments of ecstatic realization of a universal beauty. The slightest things would suffice to release this sunshine in her soul. She would discover the intensest delight in little, hitherto disregarded details, in the colour of a leaf held up to the light, or the rhythms of ripples on a pond or the touch of a bird's feather. There were moments when she wanted to kiss the sunset, and times when she would clamber over the end wall of the garden at Pelham Ford in order to lie hidden and still, with every sense awake, in the big clump of bracken in the corner by the wood beyond. The smell of crushed bracken delighted her intensely. She wanted to be a nymph then and not a girl in clothes. And shining summer streams and lakes roused in her a passionate desire to swim, to abandon herself wholly to the comprehensive sweet silvery caress of the waters.

In the days of the Saga story, the time of the story had always been Now — and Never; but in the drama of adolescence the time of all Joan's reveries was Tomorrow; what she dreamt of now were things that were to be real experiences in quite a little time, when she had grown just a year or so older, when she was a little taller, when she had left school, when she was really as beautiful as she hoped to be.

The world about her by example and precept, by plays and stories and poems and histories, was supplying her with a rich confusion of material for these anticipatory sketches. One main history emerged in her fifteenth year. It went on for many months. Joan of Arc was in the making of it, and Jane Shore, and Nell Gwyn. At first she was the

Lady Joan, and then she became just Joan Stubland, but always she was the king's mistress.

From the very beginning Joan had found something splendid and attractive in the word "mistress," It had come to her first in a history lesson, and then more brightly clad in a costume novel. But it was a very glorious and noble kind of mistress that Joan had in view. Her ideas of the authority and duties of a mistress were vague; but she knew that a mistress rules by beauty. That she ruled Joan never doubted — or why should she be called mistress? And she prevailed over queens, so French history had instructed her. She made war and peace. Joan of Arc was inextricably mixed in with the vision. She was a beautiful girl, and she told the king of France what to do. At need she led armies. What else but a mistress could you call her? "Mistress of France," magnificent phrase! Of such ideas was Joan Stubland woven. The king perhaps would do injustice, or neglect a meritorious case. Then Joan Stubland would appear, watchful and dignified. "No," she would say. "That must not be. I am the king's mistress."

And she wore a kind of light armour. Without skirts. Never with skirts. Joan at fourteen already saw long skirts ahead of her, and hated them as a man might hate a swamp that he must presently cross knee-deep.

Where the king went Joan went. But he was not the current king, nor his destined successor. She had studied these monarchs in the illustrated papers — and in the news. She did not think much of them. They stood down out of Joan's dream in favour of a younger autocrat. After all, was there not also a young prince, her contemporary, who would some day be king? But in her imagination he was not like his published portraits; instead — and this is curious — he was rather like Peter. He was as much like Peter as any one. This was all of Peter that ever got into her reveries, for there was a curious bar in her mind to Peter being thought of either as her lover or as any one not her lover. Something obscure in her composition barred any such direct imaginations about Peter.

So, contrawise to all established morality and to everything to which her properly constituted teachers were trying to shape her, a chance phrase in a history book filled the imagination of Joan with

this dream of a different sort of woman's life altogether. In which one went side by side with a man in a manly way, sharing his power, being dear and beautiful to him. Compared with such a lot who would be one of these wives? "Who would stay at home and — as a consequence apparently of the religious ceremony of matrimony — have babies?

The king's mistress story was Joan's dominant reverie, but it was not her only one. It was, so to speak, her serial; it was always "to be continued in our next." But her busy mind, whenever her attention was not fully occupied, was continually spinning romance; beside the serial story there were endless incidental ones. Almost always they were love stories. They were violent and adventurous in substance, full of chases, fights, and confrontations, but Joan did not stint herself of kissing and embraces. There were times when she liked tremendously to think of herself kissing. Most little girls of thirteen or fourteen are thinking with the keenest interest and curiosity about this lover business and its mysteries, and Joan was no exception. She was deeply interested to find she was almost as old as Juliet. Inspired by Shakespeare, Joan thought quite a lot about balconies and ladders — and Romeo. Some of her school contemporaries jested about these things and were very arch and sly. But she was as shy of talking about love as she was prone to love reveries. She talked of flowers and poetry and music and scenery and beautiful things as though they were things in themselves, but in her heart she was convinced that all the loveliness that shone upon her in the world was only so much intimation of the coming loveliness of love.

The outward and visible disposition of Highmorton School was all against the spirit of such dreams. The disposition of Highmorton was towards a scorn of males. What Joan knew surely to be lovely, Highmorton denounced as "soppy." "Soppy" was a terrible word in boys' schools and girls' schools alike, a flail for all romance. But in the girls' schools it was used more particularly against tender thoughts of men. Highmorton taught the revolt of women from the love of men — in favour of the love of women. The school resounded always with the achievements of the one important sex, hitherto held back by man-made laws from demonstrating an all-round superiority. The staff at Highmorton had all a common

hardness of demeanour; they were without exception suffragettes, and most of them militant suffragettes. They played hockey with great violence, and let the elder girls hear them say “damn!” The ones who had any beauty aspired to sub-virile effects; they impressed small adorers as if they were sexless angels. There was Miss Oriana Frobisher (science) with the glorious wave in her golden hair and the flash of lightning in her glasses. She had done great feats with love, it was said; she had refused a professor of botany and a fabulously rich widower, and the mathematical master was “gone” on her. There was Miss Kellaway, dark and pensive, known to her worshippers as “Queen of the Night,” fragile, and yet a swift and nimble forward. Aunt Phoebe also had become a leading militant, and Aunt Phyllis, who wavered on the verge of militancy, continued the Highmorton teaching in the holidays. “Absolute equality between the sexes,” was their demand; their moderate demand, seeing what men were. Joan would have been more than human not to take the colour of so universal a teaching. And yet in her reveries there was always one man exempt from that doom of general masculine inferiority. She had no use for a dream lover — unless he was dying of consumption or, Tristram fashion, of love-caused wounds — who could not outrun, out-fence, out-wrestle and out-think her, or for a situation of asserted equality which could not dissolve into caressing devotion.

§ 6

And of these preoccupations with the empire and the duties and destinies of the empire and the collective affairs of mankind, which to Oswald were the very gist and purpose of education, Highmorton taught Joan practically nothing. Miss Jevons, the Head, would speak now arid then of “loyalty to the crown” in a rather distant way — Miss Murgatroyd had been wont to do the same thing — and for the rest left politics alone. Except that there was one thing, one supreme thing, the Vote. When first little Joan heard of the Vote at Limpsfield she was inclined to think it was a flattened red round thing rather like the Venerable Bede at the top of the flagstaff. She learned little better at Highmorton. She gathered that women were going to “get the

vote" and then they were to vote. They were going to vote somehow against the men and it would make the world better, but there was very little more to it than that. The ideas remained strictly personal, strictly dramatic. Wicked men like Mr. Asquith who opposed the vote were to be cast down; one of the dazzling Pankhurst family, or perhaps Miss Oriana Frobisher, was to take his place. Profound scepticisms about this vote — in her heart of hearts she called it the "old Vote," were hidden by Joan from the general observation of the school. She had only the slightest attacks of that common schoolgirl affliction, schoolmistress love; she never idolized Miss Jevons or Miss Frobisher or Miss Kellaway. Their enthusiasm for the vote, therefore, prevented hers.

Later on it was to be different. She was to find in the vote a symbol of personal freedom — and an excellent excuse for undergraduate misbehaviour.

It is true Highmorton School presented a certain amount of history and geography to Joan's mind, but in no way as a process in which she was concerned. She grew up to believe that in England we were out of history, out of geography, eternally blessed in a constitution that we could not better, under a crown which was henceforth for ever, so to speak, the centre of an everlasting social tea-party, and that party "politics" in Parliament and the great Vote struggle had taken the place of such real convulsions of human fortune as occurred in other countries and other times. Wars, famine, pestilence; the world had done with them. Nations, kings and people, politics, were for Joan throughout all her schooldays no more than scenery for her unending private personal romance.

But because much has been told here of Joan's reveries it is not to be imagined that she was addicted to brooding. It was only when her mind was unoccupied that the internal story-teller got to work. Usually Joan was pretty actively occupied. The Highmorton ideal of breezy activity took hold of her very early; one kept "on the Go." In school she liked her work, even though her unworshipping disposition got her at times at loggerheads with her teachers; there was so much more in the lessons than there had been at Miss Murgatroyd's . Out of school she became rather a disorderly influence. At first she missed Peter dreadfully. Then she began to

imitate Peter for the benefit of one or two small associates with less initiative than her own. Then she became authentically Peter-like. She tried a mild saga of her own in those junior days, and taught her friends to act a part in it as Peter had taught her to be a companion of the great Bungo. She developed the same sort of disposition to go up ladders, climb over walls, try the fronts of cliffs, go through open doors and try closed ones, that used to make Peter such agreeable company. Once or twice she and a friend or so even got lost by the mistress in charge of a school walk, and came home by a different way through the outskirts of Broadstairs. But that led to an awe-inspiring "fuss." Moreover, it took Joan some years to grasp the idea that the physical correction of one's friends is not ladylike. When it came to other girls she perceived that Peter's way with a girl was really a very good way — better than either hauteur or pinching. Holding down, for instance, or the wrist wrench.

All the time that she was at Highmorton Joan found no friend as good as Peter. Tel Wymark, with the freckles, became important about Joan's fifteenth birthday as a good giggling associate, a person to sit with in the back seats of lectures and debates and tickle to death with dry comments on the forward proceedings. To turn on Tel quietly and slowly and do a gargoyle face at her was usually enough to set her off — or even to pull a straight face and sit as if you were about to gargoyle. Tel's own humour was by no means negligible, and she had a store of Limericks, the first Limericks Joan had encountered. Joan herself rarely giggled; on a few occasions she laughed loudly, but for most comic occasions her laughter was internal, and so this disintegration of Tel by merriment became a fascinating occupation. It was no doubt the contrast of her dark restraint that subjected her to the passionate affection of Adela Murchison.

That affair began a year or so before the friendship with Tel. Adela was an abundant white-fleshed creature rather more than a year older than Joan. She came back from the Easter holidays, stage struck, with her head full of Rosalind. She had seen Miss Lillah McCarthy as Rosalind in As You Like it, and had fallen violently in love with her. She went over the play with Joan, and Joan was much fascinated by the Rosalind masquerade; in such guise Joan Stubland

might well have met her king for the first time. Then Adela and Joan let their imaginations loose and played at Shakespearian love-making. They would get together upon walks and steal apart whenever an opportunity offered. Adela wanted to kiss a great deal, and once when she kissed Joan she whispered, “It’s not Rosalind I love, not Lillah or any one else; just Joan.” Joan kissed her in return. And then something twisted over in Joan’s mind that drove her to austerity; suddenly she would have no more of this kissing, she herself could not have explained why or wherefore. It was the queerest recoil. “We’re being too soppy,” she said to Adela, but that did not in the least express it. Adela became a protesting and urgent lover; she wrote Joan notes, she tried to make scenes, she demanded Was there any one else?

“No,” said Joan. “But I don’t like all this rot.”

“You did!” said Adela with ready tears shining in her pretty eyes.

“And I don’t now,” said Joan....

Joan herself was puzzled, but she had no material in her mind by which she could test and analyse this revulsion. She hid a dark secret from all the world, she hid it almost from herself, that once before, in the previous summer holidays, one afternoon while she was staying with her aunts at The Ingle-Nook, she had walked over by the Cuspard house on the way to Miss Murgatroyd’s. And she had met young Cuspard, grown tall and quaintly good-looking, in white flannels. They had stopped to talk and sat down on a tree together, and suddenly he had kissed her. “You’re lovely, Joan,” he said. It was an incredible thing to remember, it was a memory so astounding as to be obscure, but she knew as a fact that she had kissed him again and had liked this kissing, and then had had just this same feeling of terror, of enormity, as though something vast clutched at her. It was fantastically disagreeable, not like a real disagreeable thing, but like a dream disagreeable thing. She resolved that in fact it had not happened, she barred it back out of the current of her thoughts, and it shadowed her life for days.

The modern world tells the young a score of conflicting stories — more or less distinctly — about every essential thing. While men like Oswald dream of a culture telling the young plainly what they are supposed to be for, what this or that or the other is for, the current

method of instruction about God and state and sex alike is a wrangle that never joins issue. For every youth and maiden .who is not strictly secluded or very stupid, adolescence is a period of distressful perplexity, of hidden hypotheses, misunderstood hints, checked urgency, and wild stampedes of the imagination. Joan's opening mind was like some ill-defended country across which armies marched. Came the School of St. George and the Venerable Bede, led by Miss Murgatroyd and applauded by Aunt Phoebe, baring its head and feet and knees, casting aside corsets, appealing to nature and simplicity, professing fearlessness, and telling the young a great deal less than it had the air of telling them. Came Highmorton, a bracing wind after that relaxing atmosphere.

But Limpsfield had at least a certain honesty in its limited initiation; Highmorton was comparatively an imposture. With an effect of going right on beyond all established things to something finer and newer, Highmorton was really restoring prudery in a brutalized form. It is no more vigorous to ban a topic by calling it "soppy" and waving a muddy hockey-stick at it in a threatening manner, than it is to ban it by calling it "improper" and primly cutting it dead. There the topic remains.

A third influence had made a contributory grab at Joan; Aunt Charlotte Sydenham's raid on the children's education was on behalf of all that was then most orthodox. Hers was indeed the essential English culture of the earlier Victorian age; a culture that so far as sex went was pure suppression — tempered by the broad hints and tittering chatter of servants and base people....

Stuck away, shut in, in Joan's memory, shut in and disregarded as bees will wax up and disregard the decaying body of some foul intruder, were certain passages with Mrs. Pybus. They carried an impression at once vague and enormous, of a fascinating unclean horror. They were inseparably mixed up with strange incredulous thoughts of hell that were implanted during the same period. Such scenery as they needed was supplied by the dusty, faded furnishings of the little house in Windsor, they had the same faintly disagreeable dusty smell of a home only cleansed by stray wipes with a duster and spiritless sweeping with tea-leaves.

That period had been a dark patch upon the sunlit fabric of Joan's

life. Over it all brooded this Mrs. Pybus, frankly dirty while "doing" her house in the morning, then insincerely tidy in the afternoon. She talked continually to, at, and round about Joan. She was always talking. She was an untimely widow prone to brood upon the unpleasant but enormously importunate facts that married life had thrust upon her. She had an irresistible desire to communicate her experiences with an air of wisdom. She had a certain conceit of wisdom. She had no sense of the respect due to the ignorance of childhood. Like many women of her class and type she was too egotistical to allow for childhood.

Never before had Joan heard of diseases. Now she heard of all the diseases of these two profoundly clinical families, the Pybuses and the Unwins. The Pybus family specialized in cancers, "chumors" and morbid growths generally; one, but he was rather remote and legendary, had had an "insec' in 'is 'ed"; the distinction of the Unwins on the other hand was in difficult parturitions. All this stuff was poured out in a whining monologue in Joan's presence as Mrs. Pybus busied herself in the slatternly details of her housework.

"Two cases of cancer I've seen through from the very first pangs," Mrs. Pybus would begin, and then piously, "God grant I never see a third."

"Whatever you do, Joan, one thing I say never do — good though Pybus was and kind. Never marry no one with internal cancer, 'owever 'ard you may be drove. Indigestion, rheumatism, even a wooden leg rather. Better a man that drinks. I say it and I know. It doesn't make it any easier, Joan, to sit and see them suffer.

"You've got your troubles yet to come, young lady. I don't expec' you understand 'arf what I'm telling you. But you will some day. I sometimes think if I 'adn't been kep' in ignorance things might have been better for me — all I bin called upon to go through." That was the style of thing. It was like pouring drainage over a rosebud. First Joan listened with curiosity, then with horror. Then unavailingly, always overpowered by a grotesque fascination, she tried not to listen. Monstrous fragments got through to her cowering attention. Here were things for a little girl to carry off in her memory, material as she sickened for measles for the most terrifying and abominable of dreams.

“There’s poor ladies that has to be reg’lar cut open....

“I ‘ad a dreadful time when I married Pybus. Often I said to ‘im afterwards, you can’t complain of me, Pybus. The things one lives through!...

‘Is sister’s ‘usband didn’t ‘ave no mercy on ‘er....; Don’t you go outside this gate, Joan — ever. If one of these ‘ere Tramps should get hold of you.... I’ve ‘card of a little girl....”

If a congenial gossip should happen to drop in Joan would be told to sit by the window and look at the “nice picture book” — it was always that one old volume of The Illustrated London News — while a talk went on that insisted on being heard, now dropping to harsh whispers, now rising louder after the assurance of Mrs. Pybus:

“Lord! She won’t understand a word you’re saying.”

If by chance Mrs. Pybus and her friend drifted for a time from personal or consanguineous experiences then they dealt with crimes. Difficulties in the disposal of the body fascinated these ladies even more than the pleasing details of the act. And they preferred murders of women by men. It seemed more natural to them....

The world changed again. Through the tossing distress of the measles Aunt Phyllis reappeared, and then came a journey and The Ingle-Nook and dear Petah! and Nobby. She was back in a world where Mrs. Pybus could not exist, where the things of which Mrs. Pybus talked could not happen. Yet there was this in Joan’s mind, unformulated, there was a passionate stress against its formulation, that all the other things she thought about love and beauty were poetry and dreaming, but this alone of all the voices that had spoken over and about her, told of something real. In the unknown beyond to which one got if one pressed on, was something of that sort, something monstrous, painful and dingy....

Reality!

Wax it over, little dream bees; cover it up; don’t think of it! Back to reverie! Be a king’s mistress, clad in armour, who sometimes grants a kiss.

It was in the nature of Mrs. Pybus to misconceive things. She never grasped the true relationship of Joan and Peter; Mr. Grimes had indeed been deliberately vague upon that point in the interests of the Sydenham family, the use of the Stubland surname for Joan had helped him; and so there dropped into Joan's ears a suggestion that was at the time merely perplexing but which became gradually an established fact in her mind.

"Ow! don't you know?" said Mrs. Pybus to her friend. "Ow, no! She's—" (Her voice sank to a whisper.)

For a time what they said was so confidential as to convey nothing to Joan but a sense of mystery. "Ow 'is mother ever stood 'er in the 'ouse passes my belief," said Mrs. Pybus, coming up to the audible again. "Why! I'd 'ave *killed* 'er. But ladies and gentlemen don't seem to 'ave no natural affections — not wot *I* call affections. There she was brought into the 'ouse and treated just as if she was the little chap's sister."

"She'd be?" said the friend, trying to grasp it.

"'Arf sister," said Mrs. Pybus. "Of a sort. Neither 'ere nor there, so to speak. Not in the eyes of the law. And there they are — leastways they was until Lady Charlotte Sydenham interfered."

The friend nodded her head rapidly to indicate intelligent appreciation.

"It isn't like being *reely* brother and sister," said Mrs. Pybus, contemplating possibilities. "It's neither one thing nor another. And all wrop up in mystery as you might say. Why, oo knows? They might go falling in love with each other."

"'*Orrible*!" said Mrs. Pybus's friend.

"It 'ad to be put a stop to," said Mrs. Pybus.

Confirmatory nodding, with a stern eye for the little figure that sat in a corner and pretended to be interested in the faded exploits of vanished royalties, recorded in that old volume of *The Illustrated London News*....

That conversation sank down into the deeps of Joan's memory and remained there, obscured but exercising a dim influence upon her relations with Peter. One phrase sent up a bubble every now and then into her conscious thoughts: "half-sister." It was years after that she began to piece together the hidden riddle of her birth. Mummy and

Daddy were away; that had served as well for her as for Peter far beyond the Limpsfield days. It isn't until children are in their teens that these things interest them keenly. It wasn't a thing to talk about, she knew, but it was a thing to puzzle over. Who was really her father? Who was her mother? If she was Peter's half-sister, then either his father was not hers or his mother....

When people are all manifestly in a plot to keep one in the dark one does not ask questions.

§ 9

After the first violent rupture that Mr. Grimes had organized, Joan and Peter parted and met again in a series of separations and resumptions. They went off to totally dissimilar atmospheres, Joan to the bracing and roughening air of Highmorton and Peter first to the brightness of White Court and then to the vigorous work and play of Caxton; and each time they returned for the holidays to Margate or Limpsfield or Pelham Ford changed, novel, and yet profoundly familiar. Always at first when holidays brought them together again they were shy with each other and intensely egotistical, anxious to show off their new tricks and make the most of whatever small triumphs school life had given them. Then in a day or so they would be at their ease together like a joint that has been dislocated and has slipped into place again. Cambridge at last brought them nearer together, and ended this series of dislocations. After much grave weighing of the situation by Miss Fairchild, the principal of Newton Hall, Peter, when Joan came up, was given the status of a full brother.

They grew irregularly, and that made some quaint variations of relationship. Peter, soon after he went to Caxton, fell to expanding enormously. He developed a chest, his limbs became great things. There was a summer bitten into Joan's memory when he regarded her as nothing more than a "leetle teeny female tick," and descanted on the minuteness of her soul and body. But he had lost some of his lightness, if none of his dexterity and balance, as a climber, and Joan got her consolations among the lighter branches of various trees they

explored. Next Christmas Joan herself had done some serious growing, and the gap was not so wide. But it was only after her first term at Newnham that Joan passed from the subservience of a junior to the confidence of a senior. She did it at a bound. She met him one day in the narrow way between Sidney Street and Petty Cury. Her hair was up and her eyes were steady; most of her legs had vanished, and she had clothes like a real woman. We do not foregather even with foster brothers in the streets of Cambridge, but a passing hail is beyond the reach of discipline. "Hullo, Petah!" she said, "what a gawky great thing you 're getting!"

Peter, a man in his second year, was so taken aback he had no adequate reply.

"You've grown too," he said, "if it comes to that"; — a flavourless reply. And there was admiration in his eyes.

An encounter for subsequent regrets. He thought over it afterwards. The cheek of her! It made his blood boil.

"So long, Petah," said Joan, carrying it off to the end....

They were sterner than brother and sister with each other. There was never going to be anything "soppy" between them. At fourteen, when Peter passed into the Red Indian phase of a boy's development, when there can be no more "blubbing," no more shirking, he carried Joan with him. She responded magnificently to the idea of pluck. Spartan ideals ruled them both. And a dark taciturnity. Joan would have died with shame if Peter had penetrated the secret romance of Joan Stubland, and the days of Peter's sagas were over for ever. When Peter was fifteen he was consumed by a craving for a gun, and Oswald gave him one. "But kill," said Oswald. "If you let anything get away wounded—"

Peter took Joan out into the wood at the back. He missed a pigeon, and then he got one.

"Pick it up, Joan," he said, very calmly and grandly.

Joan was white to the lips, but she picked up the bloodstained bird in silence. These things had to happen.

Then out of a heap of leaves in front darted a rabbit. Lop, lop, lop, went its little white scut. *Bang*! and over it rolled, but it wasn't instantly killed. Horror came upon Joan. SHe was nearest; she ran to the wretched animal, which was lying on its side and kicking

automatically, and stood over it. Its eyes were bright and wide with terror. “Oh, how am I to kill it?” she cried, with agony in her voice; “what am I to do-o?” She wrung her hands. She felt she was going to pieces, giving herself away, failing utterly. Peter would despise her and jeer at her. But the poor little beast! The poor beast! There is a limit to pride. She caught it up. “Petah!” she cried quite pitifully, on the verge of a whimper.

Peter had come up to her. He didn’t look contemptuous. He was white-lipped too. She had never seen him look scared before. He snatched the rabbit from her and killed it by one, two, three — she counted — quick blows — she didn’t see. But she had met his eyes, and they were as distressed as hers. Just for a moment.

Then he was a fifth form boy again. He examined his victim with an affectation of calm. “Too far back,” he said. “Bad shot. Mustn’t do that again.”

The rabbit was quite still and limp now, dangling from Peter’s hand, its eye had glazed, blood dripped and clotted at its muzzle, but its rhythmic desperate kicking was still beating in Joan’s brain.

Was this to go on? Could she go on?

Peter’s gun and the pigeon were lying some yards away. He regarded them and then looked down at the rabbit he held.

“Now I know I can shoot,” he said, and left the sentence unfinished.

“Bring the pigeon, Joan,” he said, ending an indecision, and picked up his gun and led the way back towards the house....

“We got a pigeon and a rabbit,” Joan babbled at tea to Oswald. “Next time, Petah’s going to let me have the gun.”

Our tone was altogether sporting.

But there was no next time. There were many unspoken things between Joan and Peter, and this was to be one of them. For all the rest of their lives neither Joan nor Peter went shooting again. Men Peter was destined to slay — but no more beasts. Necessity never compelled them, and it would have demanded an urgent necessity before they would have faced the risk of seeing another little furry creature twist and wriggle and of marking how a bright eye glazes over. But they were both very bitterly ashamed of this distressing weakness. They left further shooting for “tomorrow,” and it remained

always tomorrow. They said nothing about their real feelings in the matter, and Peter cleaned and oiled his new gun very carefully and hung it up conspicuously over the mantelshelf of their common room, ready to be taken down at any time — when animals ceased to betray feeling.

§ 10

Joan and Peter detested each other's friends from the beginning. The quarrel that culminated in that amazing speech of Joan's, had been smouldering between them for a good seven years. It went right back to the days when they were still boy and girl.

To begin with, after their first separation they had had no particular friends; they had had acquaintances and habits of association, but the mind still lacks the continuity necessary for friendship and Euclid until the early teens. The first rift came with Adela Murchison. Joan brought her for the summer holidays when Peter had been just a year at Caxton.

That was the first summer at Pelham Ford. v Aunt Phyllis was with them, but Aunt Pho3be was in great labour with her first and only novel, a fantasia on the theme of feminine genius, "These are my Children, or Mary on the Cross." (It was afterwards greatly censored. Boots, the druggist librarian, would have none of it.) She stayed alone, therefore, at The Ingle-Nook, writing, revising, despairing, tearing up and beginning again, reciting her more powerful passages to the scarlet but listening ears of Groombridge and the little maid, and going more and more unkempt, unhooked, and unbuttoned. Oswald, instead of resorting to the Climax Club as he was apt to do when Aunt Phoebe was imminent, abode happily in his new home.

Adela was a month or so older than Peter and, what annoyed him to begin with, rather more fully grown. She was, as she only too manifestly perceived, a woman of the world in comparison with both of her hosts. She was still deeply in love with Joan, but by no means indifferent to this dark boy who looked at her with so much of Joan's cool detachment.

Joan's romantic dreams were Joan's inmost secret, Adela's romantic intentions were an efflorescence. She was already hoisting the signals for masculine surrender. She never failed to have a blue ribbon astray somewhere to mark and help the blueness of her large blue eyes. She insisted upon the flaxen waves over her ears, and secretly assisted them to kink. She had a high colour. She had no rouge yet in her possession but there was rouge in her soul, and she would rub her cheeks with her hands before she came into a room. She discovered to Joan the incredible fact that Oswald was also a man.

With her arm round Joan's waist or over her shoulder she would look back at him across the lawn.

"I say," she said, "he'd be frightfully good-looking — if it wasn't for that."

And one day, "I wonder if Mr. Sydenham's ever been in love."

She lay in wait for Oswald's eye. She went after him to ask him unimportant things.

Once or twice little things happened, the slightest things, but it might have seemed to Joan that Oswald was disposed to flirt with Adela. But that was surely impossible....

The first effect of the young woman upon Peter was a considerable but indeterminate excitement. It was neither pleasurable nor unpleasurable, but it hung over the giddy verge of being unpleasant. It made him want to be very large, handsome and impressive. It also made him acutely ashamed of wanting to be very large, handsome and impressive. It turned him from a simple boy into a conflict of motives. He wanted to extort admiration from Adela. Also he wanted to despise her utterly. These impulses worked out to no coherent system of remarks and gestures, and he became awkward and tongue-tied.

Adela wanted to be shown all over the house and garden. She put her arm about Joan in a manner Peter thought offensive. Then she threw back her hair at him over her shoulder and said, shooting a glance at him, "You come too."

Cheek!

Still, she was a guest, and so a fellow had to follow with his hands in his pockets and watch his own private and particular Joan being

ordered about and — what was somehow so much more exasperating — pawed about.

At what seemed to be the earliest opportunity Peter excused himself,-and went off to the outhouse in which he had his tools and chemicals and things. He decided he would rig up everything ready to make Sulphuretted Hydrogen — although he knew quite well that this was neither a large, handsome, nor impressive thing to do. And then he would wait for them to come along, and set the odour going.

But neither of the girls came near his Glory Hole, and he was not going to invite them. He just hovered there un-visited, waiting with his preparations and whistling soft melancholy tunes. Finally he made a lot of the gas, simply because he had got the stuff ready, and stank himself out of his Glory Hole into society again.

At supper, which had become a sort of dinner that night, Adela insisted on talking like a rather languid, smart woman of the world to Nobby. Nobby took her quite seriously. It was perfectly sickening.

"D'you hunt much?" said Adela.

"Not in England," said Nobby. "There's too many hedges for me. I've a sailor's seat."

"All my people hunt," said Adela. "It's rather a bore, don't you think, Mr. Sydenham?"

Talk like that!

Two days passed, during which Peter was either being bored to death in the company of Adela and Joan or also bored to death keeping aloof from them. He cycled to Ware with them, and Adela's cycle had a change speed arrangement with a high gear of eighty-five that made it difficult to keep ahead of her. Beast!

And on the second evening she introduced a new card game, Demon Patience, a scrambling sort of game in which you piled on aces in the middle and cried "Stop!" as soon as your stack was out. It was one of those games, one of those inferior games, at which boys in their teens are not nearly as quick as girls, Peter discovered. But presently Joan began to pull ahead and beat Adela and Peter. The two girls began to play against each other as if his poor little spurts didn't amount to anything. They certainly didn't amount to very much.

Adela began to play with a sprawling eagerness. Her colour deepened; her manners deteriorated. She was tormented between

ambition and admiration. When Joan had run her out for the third time, she cried, “Oh, Joan, you Wonderful Darling!”

And clutched and kissed her!...

All the other things might have been bearable if it had not been for this perpetual confabulating with Joan, this going off to whisper with Joan, this putting of arms round Joan’s neck, this whispering that was almost kissing Joan’s ear. One couldn’t have a moment with Joan. One couldn’t use Joan for the slightest thing. It would have been better if one hadn’t had a Joan.

On the mill-pond there was a boat that Joan and Peter were allowed to use. On the morning of the fifth day Joan found Peter hanging about in the hall.

“Joan.”

“Yes?”

“Come and muck about in Baker’s boat.”

“If Adela—”

“Oh, *leave* Adela! We don’t want her. She’d stash it all up.”

“But she’s a visitor!”

“Pretty rotten visitor! What did you bring her here for? She’s rotten.”

“She’s not. She’s all right. You’re being horrid rude to her. Every chance you get. I like her.”

“Silly tick, she is!”

“She’s taller than you are, anyhow.”

“Nyar Nyar Nyar Nyar,” said Peter in a singularly ineffective mockery of Adela’s manner. Adela appeared, descending the staircase. Peter turned away.

“Peter wants to go in the boat on the mill-pond,” said Joan, as if with calculated wickedness.

“Oh! I *love* boats!” said Adela.

What was a chap to do but go?”

But under a thin mask of playfulness Peter splashed them both a lot — especially Adela. And in the evening he refused to play at Demon Patience and went and sat by himself to draw. He tried various designs. He was rather good at drawing Mr. Henderson, and he did several studies of him. Then the girls, who found Demon Patience slow with only two players, came and sat beside him. He

was inspired to begin an ugly caricature of Adela.

He began at the eyes.

Joan knew him better than Adela. She saw what was coming. Down came her little brown paw on the paper. “No, you don’t, Petah,” she said.

Peter looked into her face, hot against his, and there was a red light in his eyes.

“Leago, Joan,” he said.

A struggle began in which Adela took no share.

The Sydenham blood is hot blood, and though it doesn’t like hurting rabbits it can be pretty rough with its first cousins. But Joan was still gripping the crumpled half of the offending sheet when Aunt Phyllis, summoned by a scared Adela, came in. The two were on the hearthrug, panting, and Joan’s teeth were deep in Peter’s wrist; they parted and rose somewhat abashed. “*My dears*!” cried Aunt Phyllis.

“We were playing,” said Joan, flushed and breathless, but honourably tearless.

“Yes,” said Peter, holding his wrist tight. “We were playing.”

“Romping,” said Aunt Phyllis. “Weren’t you a little rough? Adela, you know, isn’t used to your style....”

After that, Peter shunned further social intercourse. He affected a great concentration upon experimental chemistry and photography, and bicycled in lonely pride to Waltham Cross, Baldock, and Dunmow. He gave himself up to the roads of Hertfordshire. When at last Adela departed it made no difference in his aloofness. Joan was henceforth as nothing to him; she was just a tick, a silly little female tick, an associate of things that went “Nyar Nyar Nyar.” He hated her. At least, he would have hated her if there was anything that a self-respecting Caxtonian could hate in a being so utterly contemptible. (Yet at the bottom of his heart he loved and respected her for biting his wrist so hard.)

Deprived of Adela, Joan became very lonely and forlorn. After some days there were signs of relenting on the part of Peter, and then came his visitor, Wilmington, a boy who had gone with him from White Court to Caxton, and after that there was no need of Joan. With a grim resolution Peter shut Joan out from all their pursuits. She was annihilated.

The boys did experimental chemistry together, made the most disgusting stinks, blew up a small earthwork by means of a mine, and stained their hands bright yellow; they had long bicycle rides together, they did "splorjums" in the wood, they "mucked about" with Baker's boat. Joan by no effort could come into existence again. Once or twice as Peter was going off with Wilmington, Peter would glance back and feel a gleam of compunction at the little figure that watched him going. But she had her Adelas. She and Adela wrote letters to each other. She could go and write to her beastly Adela now....

"Can't Joan come?" said Wilmington.

"She's only a tick," said Peter.

"She's not a bad sort of tick," said Wilmington.

(What business was it of his?)

Joan fell back on Nobby, and went for walks with him in the afternoon.

Then came a complication. Towards the end Wilmington got quite soppy on Joan. It showed.

Aunt Phyllis suggested charades for the evening hour after dinner. Wilmington and Peter played against each other, and either of them took out any people he wanted to act with him. Aunt Phyllis was a grave and dignified actress and Nobby could do better than you might have expected. Peter did Salome. (Sal — owe — me; doing sal volatile for Sal.) He sat as Herod, crowned and scornful with the false black beard, and Joan danced and afterwards brought the football in on a plate. Aunt Phyllis did pseudo-oriental music. But when Wilmington saw Joan dance he knew what it was to be in love. He sat glowering passion. For a time he remained frozen rigid, and then broke into wild hand-clapping. His ears were bright red, and Aunt Phyllis looked at him curiously. It was with difficulty that his clouded mind could devise a charade that would give him a call upon Joan. But he thought at last of Milton. (Mill — tun.)

"I want you," he said.

"Won't Aunty do?"

"No, you. It's got to be a girl."

He held the door open for her, and stumbled going out of the room. He was more breathless and jerky than ever outside. Joan

heard his exposition with an unfriendly expression.

"And what am I to do then?" she asked....

"And then?..."

They did "Mill" and "Tun" pretty badly. Came Wilmington's last precious moments with her. He broke off in his description of Milton blind and Joan as the amanuensis daughter. "Joan," he whispered, going hoarse with emotion." Joan, you 're lovely. I'd die for you."

A light of evil triumph came into Joan's eyes.

"Ugly thing!" said Joan, "what did you come here for? You've spoilt my holidays. Let go of my hand!... Let's go in and do our tableau."

And afterwards when Wilmington met Joan in the passage she treated him to a grimace that was only too manifestly intended to represent his own expression of melancholy but undying devotion. In the presence of others she was coolly polite to him.

Peter read his friend like a book, but refrained from injurious comment, and Wilmington departed in a state of grave nervous disarray.

A day passed. There was not much left now of the precious holidays. Came a glowing September morning.

"Joe-un," whooped Peter in the garden — in just the old note.

"Pee-tah!" answered Joan, full-voiced as ever, distant but drawing nearer.

"Come and muck about in Baker's boat."

"Right-o, Petah!" said Joan, and approached with a slightly prancing gait.

§ 11

Growing out of his Red Indian phase Peter moved up into the Lower Sixth and became a regular cynical man of the world with an air of knowing more than a thing or two. He was, in fact, learning a vast number of things that are outside the books; and rearranging many of his early shocks and impressions by the help of a confusing and increasing mixture of half-lights. The chaotic disrespect of the young went out of his manner in his allusion to school affairs, he no longer

spoke of various masters as “Buzzy,” “Snooks,” and “the Croker,” and a curious respectability had invaded his demeanour. The Head had had him in to tea and tennis. The handle of the prefect’s birch was perhaps not more than a year now from his grip, if he bore himself gravely. He reproached Joan on various small occasions for “thundering bad form,” and when Wilmington came, a much more wary and better-looking Wilmington with his heart no longer on his sleeve, the conversation became, so to speak, political. They talked at the dinner-table of the behaviour of so-and-so and this-and-that at “High” and at “Bottoms” and on “the Corso”; they discussed various cases of “side” and “cheek,” and the permanent effect of these upon the standing and reputations of the youths concerned; they were earnest to search out and know utterly why Best did not get his colours and whether it was just to “super” old Rawdon. They discussed the question of superannuation with Oswald very gravely. “Don’t you think,” said Oswald, “if a school takes a boy on, it ought to see him through!”

“But if he doesn’t work, sir?” said Wilmington.

“A school oughtn’t to produce that lassitude,” said Oswald.

“A chap ought to *use* a school,” said Peter.

That was a new point of view to Oswald and Joan.

Afterwards came Troop, a larger boy than either Peter or Wilmington, a prefect, a youth almost incredibly manly in his manner, and joined on to these discussions. Said Oswald, “There ought not to be such a thing as superannuation. A man ought not to be let drift to the point of un-teachable incapacity. And then thrown away. Some master ought to have shepherded him in for special treatment.”

“They don’t look after us to that extent, sir,” said Troop.

“Don’t they teach you? Or fail to teach you?”

“It’s the school teaches us,” said Peter, as though it had just occurred to him.

“Still, the masters are there,” said Oswald, smiling.

“The masters are there,” Troop acquiesced. “But the life of the school is the tradition. And a big chap like Rawdon hanging about, too big to lick and too stupid for responsibility It breaks things up, sir.”

Oswald was very much interested in this prefect's view of the school life. Behind his blank mask he engendered questions; his one eye watched Troop and went from Troop to Peter. This manliness in the taught surprised him tremendously. Peter was acquiring it rapidly, but Troop seemed to embody it. Oswald himself had been a man early enough and had led a hard life of mutual criticism and exasperation with his fellows, but that had been in a working reality, the navy; this, he reflected, was a case of cocks crowing inside the egg. These boys were living in a premature autonomous state, an aristocratic republic with the Head as a sort of constitutional monarch. There was one questionable consequence at least. They were acquiring political habits before they had acquired wide horizons. Were the political habits of a school where all the boys were of one race and creed and class, suitable for the problems of a world's affairs?

Troop, under Oswald's insidious leading, displayed his ideas modestly but frankly, and they were the ideas of a large child. Troop was a good-looking, thoroughly healthy youth, full of his grave responsibilities towards the school and inclined to claim a liberal attitude. He was very great upon his duty to "make the fellows live decently and behave decently." He was lured into a story of how one youth with a tendency to long hair had been partly won and partly driven to a more seemly coiffure; how he had dealt with a games shirker, and how a fellow had been detected lending socialist pamphlets— "not to his friends, sir, I shouldn't mind that so much, but pushing them upon any one" — and restrained. "Seditious sort of stuff, sir, I believe. No, I did not read it, sir." Troop was for cold baths under all circumstances, for no smoking under sixteen and five foot six, and for a simple and unquestioning loyalty to any one who came along and professed to be in authority over him. When he mentioned the king his voice dropped worshipfully. Upon the just use of the birch Troop was conscientiously prolix. There were prefects, he said, who "savaged" the fellows. Others swished without judgment. Troop put conscience into each whack.

Troop's liberalism interested Oswald more than anything else about him. He was proud to profess himself no mere traditionalist; he wanted Caxton to "broaden down from precedent to precedent."

Indeed he had ambitions to be remembered as a reformer. He hoped, he said, to leave the school "better than he found it" — the modern note surely. His idea of a great and memorable improvement was to let the Upper Fifth fellows into the Corso after morning service on Sunday. He did not think it would make them impertinent; rather it would increase their self-respect. He was also inclined to a reorganization of the afternoon fagging "to stop so much bawling down the corridor." There ought to be a bell — an electric bell — in each prefect's study. No doubt that was a bit revolutionary — Troop almost smirked. "It's all very well for schools like Eton or Winchester to stick to the old customs, sir, but we are supposed to be an Up-to-Date school. Don't you think, sir?" The egg was everything to this young cockerel; the world outside was naught. Oswald led him on from one solemn puerility to another, and as the big boy talked in his stout man-of-the-world voice, the red eye roved from him to Peter and from Peter back to Troop. Until presently it realized that Peter was watching it as narrowly. "What does Peter really think of this stuff?" thought Oswald. "What does Nobby really think of this stuff?" queried Peter.

"I suppose, some day, you'll leave Caxton," said Oswald.

"I shall be very sorry to, sir," said Troop sincerely.

"Have you thought at all—"

"Not yet, sir. At least—"

"Troop's people," Peter intervened, "are Army people."

"I see,"said Oswald.

Joan listened enviously to all this prefectorial conversation. At Highmorton that sort of bossing and influencing was done by the junior staff....

Oswald did his best to lure Troop from his administrative preoccupations into general topics. But apparently some one whom Troop respected had warned him against general topics. Oswald lugged and pushed the talk towards religion, Aunt Phyllis helping, but they came up against a stone wall. "My people are Church of England," said Troop, intimating thereby that his opinions were banked with the proper authorities. It was not for him to state them. And in regard to politics, "All my people are Conservative." One evening Oswald showed him a portfolio of drawings from various

Indian temples, and suggested something of the complex symbolism of the figures. Troop thought it was “rather unhealthy,” But — turning from these monstrosities — he had hopes for India. “My cousin tells me, sir, that cricket and polo are spreading very rapidly there.” “Polo,” said Oswald, “is an Indian game. They have played it for centuries. It came from Persia originally.” But Troop was unable to imagine Indians riding horses; he had the common British delusion that the horse and the ship were both invented in our islands and that all foreign peoples are necessarily amateurs at such things. “I thought they rode elephants,” said Troop with quiet conviction....

Troop was not only a great experience for Oswald, he also exercised the always active mind of Joan very considerably.

Peter, it seemed, hadn’t even mentioned her beforehand.

“Hullo!” said Troop at the sight of her. “Got a sister?”

“Foster-sister,” said Peter, minimizing the thing. “Joan, this is Troop.”

Joan regarded him critically. “Can he play D.P.?”

“Not one of my games,” said Troop, who was chary of all games not usually played.

“It’s a game like Snap,” said Peter with an air of casual contempt, and earned a bright scowl.

For a day or so Troop and Joan kept aloof, watching one another. Then she caught him out rather neatly twice at single wicket cricket; he had a weakness for giving catches to point and she had observed it. “Caught!” he cried approvingly. Also she snicked and slipped and at last slogged boldly at his patronizing under-arm bowling. “Here’s a Twister,” he said, like an uncle speaking to a child.

Joan smacked it into the cedar. “Twister!” quoth Joan, running.

After that he took formal notice of her, betraying a disposition to address her as “Kid.” (Ralph Connor was at that time adding his quota to the great British tradition. It is true he wrote in American about cowboys — but a refined cowboy was the fullest realization of an English gentleman’s pre-war ideals — and Ralph Connor’s cowboys are essentially refined. Thence came the “Kid,” anyhow.) But Joan took umbrage at the “Kid.” And she disliked Troop’s manner and influence with Peter. And the way Peter stood it. She did not understand what a very, very great being a prefect is in an

English public school, she did not know of Troop's superbness at rugger, it seemed to her that it was bad manners to behave as though a visit to Pelham Ford were an act of princely condescension. She was even disposed to diagnose Troop's largeness, very unjustly, as fat. So she pulled up Troop venomously with "My name's not Kit, it's Joan. J.O.A.N."

"Sorry!" said Troop. And being of that insensitive class whose passions are only to be roused by a smacking, he began to take still more notice of her. She was, he perceived, a lively Kid. He felt a strong desire to reprove and influence her. He had no suspicion that what he really wanted to do was to interest Joan in himself.

Joan's tennis was incurably tricky. Troop's idea of tennis was to play very hard and very swiftly close over the net, but without cunning. Peter and Wilmington followed his lead. But Joan forced victory upon an unwilling partner by doing unexpected things.

Troop declared he did not mind being defeated, but that he was shocked by the spirit of Joan's play. It wasn't "sporting."

"Those short returns aren't done, Kid," he said.

"I do them," said Joan. "Ancient."

Peter and Wilmington were visibly shocked, but Troop showed no resentment at the gross familiarity.

"But if every one did them!" he reasoned.

"I could take them," said Joan. "Any one could take them who knew how."

The dispute seemed likely to die down into unverifiable assertions.

"Peter can take them," said Joan. "He drops them back. But he isn't doing it today."

Peter reflected. Troop would never understand, but there was something reasonable in Joan's line. "I'll see to Joan," he said abruptly, and came towards the middle of the net.

The game continued on unorthodox but brilliant lines. "I don't call this tennis," said Troop.

"If you served to her left," said Peter.

"But she's a girl!" protested Troop. "Serve!"

He made the concessions that are proper to a lady, and Joan scored the point after a brief rally with Peter. "Game," said Joan.

Troop declared he did not care to play again. It would put him off tennis. “Take me as a partner,” said Joan. “No — I don’t think so, thanks,” said Troop coldly.

Every one became thoughtful and drifted towards the net. Oswald approached from the pergola, considering the problem.

“I’ve been thinking about that sort of thing for years,” he remarked, strolling towards them.

“Well, sir, aren’t you with me?” asked Troop.

“No. I’m for Joan — and Peter.”

“But that sort of trick play

“No. The way to play a game is to get all over the game and to be equal to anything in it. If there is a stroke or anything that spoils the game it ought to be barred by the rules. Apart from that, a game ought to be worked out to its last possibility. Things oughtn’t to be barred in the interests of a few conventional swipes. This cutting down of a game to just a few types of stroke

Peter looked apprehensive.

“It’s laziness,” said Oswald.

Troop was too puzzled to be offended. “But you have to work tremendously hard, sir, at the proper game.”

“Not mentally,” said Oswald, “There’s too much good form in all our games. It’s just a way of cutting down a game to a formality.”

“But, for instance, sir, would you bowl grounders at cricket?”

“If I thought the batsman had been too lazy to learn what to do with them. Why not?”

“If you look at it like that, sir!” said Troop and had no more to say. But he went away marvelling. Oswald was a V.C. Yet he looked at games like — like an American, he played to win; it was enough to perplex any one....

“Must confess I don’t see it,” said Troop when Oswald had gone....

When at last Troop and Wilmington departed Oswald went with them to the station — the luggage was sent on in the cart — and walked back over the ploughed ridge and up the lane with Peter. For a time they kept silence, but Troop was in both their minds.

“He’s a good sort,” said Peter.

“Admirable — in some ways.”

“I thought,” said Peter, “you didn’t like him. You kept on pulling his leg.”

So Peter had seen.

“Well, he doesn’t exercise his brain very much,” said Oswald.

“Stops short at his neck,” said Peter. “Exercise, I mean.”

“You and Troop are singularly unlike each other,” said Oswald.

“Oh, that’s exactly it. I can’t make out why I like him. If nothing else attracted me, that would.”

“Does he know why he likes you?”

“Hasn’t the ghost of an idea. It worries him at times. Makes him want to try and get all over me.”

“Does he — at all?”

“Lots,” said Peter. “I fag at the blessed Cadet Corps simply because I like him. At rugger he’s rather a god, you know. And he’s a clean chap.”

“He’s clean.”

“Oh, he’s clean. It’s catching,” said Peter, and seemed to reflect. “And in a sort of way lately old Troop’s taken to swatting. It’s pathetic.” Then with a shade of anxiety,”I don’t think for a moment he twigged you were pulling his leg.”

Oswald came to the thing that was really troubling him. “Allowing for his class,” said Oswald, “that young man is growing up to an outlook upon the world about as broad and high as the outlook of a bricklayer’s labourer.”

Peter reflected impartially, and Oswald noted incidentally what a good profile the boy was developing.

“A Clean, Serious bricklayer’s labourer,” said Peter, weighing his adjectives carefully.

“But he may go into Parliament, or have to handle a big business,” said Oswald.

“Army for Troop,” said Peter, “via a university commission.”

“Even armies have to be handled intelligently nowadays,” said Oswald.

“He’ll go into the cavalry,” said Peter, making one of those tremendous jumps in thought that were characteristic of himself and Joan.

§ 12

A day or so after Troop's departure Peter waylaid Oswald in the garden. Peter, now that Troop had gone, was amusing himself with dissection again — an interest that Troop had disposed of as a "bit morbid." Oswald thought the work Peter did neat and good; he had to brush up his own rather faded memories of Huxley's laboratory in order to keep pace with the boy.

"I wish you'd come to the Glory Hole and look at an old rat I dissected yesterday. I want to get its solar plexus and I'm not sure about it. I've been using acetic acid to bring out the nerves, but there's such a lot of white stuff about...."

The dissection was a good piece of work, the stomach cleaned out and the viscera neatly displayed. Very much in evidence were eight small embryo rats which the specimen under examination, had not science overtaken her, would presently have added to the rat population of the world.

"The old girl's been going it," said Peter in a casual tone, and turned these things over with the handle of his scalpel. "Now is all this stuff solar plexus, Nobby?"...

The next morning Oswald stopped short in the middle of his shaving, which in his case involved the most tortuous deflections and grimacings. "It's all right with the boy," he said to himself.

"I think it's all right.

"No nonsense about it anyhow.

"But what a tortuous, untraceable business the coming of knowledge is! Curiosity. A fad for dissecting. An instinct for cleanliness. Pride. A bigger boy like Troop.... Suppose Troop had been a different sort of boy?...

"But then I suppose Peter and he wouldn't have hit it off together."

Oswald scraped, and presently his mind tried over a phrase.

"Inherent powers of selection," said Oswald. "Inherent.... I suppose I picked my way through a pretty queer lot of stuff...."

He stood wiping his safety-razor blade.

"There was more mystery in my time and more emotion. This is better....

“Facts are clean,” said Oswald, uttering the essential faith with which science has faced vice and priestcraft, magic and muddle and fear and mystery, the whole world over.

“Facts are clean.”

§ 13

Joan followed a year after Peter to Cambridge. She entered at Newton Hall. Both Oswald and Aunt Phyllis preferred Newnham to Girton because of the greater freedom of the former college. They agreed that, as Oswald put it, if women were to be let out of purdah they might as well be let right out.

Coming from Highmorton to Newnham was like emerging from some narrow, draughty passage in which one marches muddily with a whispering, giggling hockey team all very much of a sort, into a busy and confused market-place, a rather squabbling and very exciting market-place, in which there is the greatest variety of sorts. And Joan’s mind, too, was opening out in an even greater measure. A year or so ago she was a spirited, intelligent animal, a being of dreams and unaccountable impulses; in a year or so’s time she was to become a shaped and ordered mind, making plans, controlling every urgency, holding herself in relation to a definite conception of herself and the world. We have still to gauge the almost immeasurable receptivity of those three or four crucial years. We have still to grasp what the due use of those years may mean for mankind.

Oswald had been at great pains to find out what was the best education the Empire provided for these two wards of his. But his researches had brought him to realize chiefly how poor and spiritless a thing was the very best formal education that the Empire could offer. It seemed to him, in the bitter urgency of his imperial passion, perhaps even poorer than it was. There was a smattering of Latin, a thinner smattering of Greek, a little patch of Mediterranean history and literature detached from past and future — all university history seemed to Oswald to be in disconnected fragments — but then he would have considered any history fragmentary that did not begin with the geological record and end with a clear tracing of every

traceable consequence of the "period" in current affairs; there were mathematical specializations that did not so much broaden the mind as take it into a gully, modern and mediaeval language specializations, philosophical studies that were really not philosophical studies at all but partial examinations of remote and irrelevant systems, the study of a scrap of Plato or Aristotle here, or .an excursion (by means of translations) into the Hegelian phraseology there. This sort of thing given out to a few thousand young men, for the most part greatly preoccupied with games, and to a few hundred young women, was all that Oswald could discover by way of mental binding for the entire empire. It seemed to him like innervating a body as big as the world with a brain as big as a pin's head. As Joan and Peter grew out of school and went up to Cambridge they became more and more aware of a note of lamentation and woe in the voice of their guardian. He talked at them, over their heads at lunch and dinner, to this or that visitor. He also talked to them. But he had a great dread of preachments. They were aware of his general discontent with the education he was giving them, but as yet they had no standards by which to judge his charges. Over their heads his voice argued that the universities would give them no access worth considering to the thoughts and facts of India, Russia, or China, that they were ignoring something stupendous called America, that their political and economic science still neglected the fact that every problem in politics, every problem in the organization of production and social co-operation is a psychological problem; and that all these interests were supremely urgent interests, and how the devil was one going to get these things in? But one thing Joan and Peter did grasp from these spluttering dissertations that flew round and about them. They had to find out all the most important things in life for themselves.

Perhaps the problem of making the teacher of youth an inspiring figure is an insoluble one. At any rate, there was no great stir evoked in Joan and Peter by the personalities of any of their university tutors, lecturers, and professors. These seemed to be for the most part little-spirited, gossiping men. They had also an effect of being underpaid; they had been caught early by the machinery of prize and scholarship, bred, "in the menagerie"; they were men who knew

nothing of the world outside, nothing of effort and adventure, nothing of sin and repentance. Not that there were not whispers and scandals about, but such sins as the dons knew of were rather in the nature of dirty affectations, got out of Petronius and Suetonius and practised with a tremendous sense of devilment behind locked doors, than those graver and larger sins that really distress and mar mankind. As Joan and Peter encountered these master minds, they appeared as gowned and capped individuals, hurrying to lecture-rooms, delivering lectures that were often hasty and indistinct, making obscure but caustic allusions to rival teachers, parrying the troublesome inquiring student with an accustomed and often quite pretty wit. With a lesser subtlety and a greater earnestness the women dons had fallen in with this tradition. There were occasional shy personal contacts.

But at his tea or breakfast the don was usually too anxious to impress Peter with the idea that he himself was really only a sort of overgrown undergraduate, to produce any other effect at all.

Into the Cambridge lecture rooms and laboratories went Joan and Peter, notebook in hand, and back to digestion in their studies, and presently they went into examination rooms where they vindicated their claim to have attended to textbook and lecture. In addition Peter did some remarkably good sketches of tutors and professors and fellow students. This was their "grind," Joan and Peter considered, a drill they had to go through; it became them to pass these tests creditably — if only to play the game towards old Nobby. Only with Peter's specialization in biology did he begin to find any actuality in these processes. He found a charm in phylogenetic speculations; and above the narrow canons of formal "research" there were fascinating uplands of wisdom. Upon those uplands there lay a light in which even political and moral riddles took on a less insoluble aspect. But going out upon those uplands was straying from the proper work.... Joan got even less from her moral philosophy. Her principal teacher was a man shaped like a bubble, whose life and thought was all the blowing of a bubble. He claimed to have proved human immortality. It was, he said, a very long and severe logical process. About desire, about art, about social association, about love, about God — for he knew also that there was no God — it mattered not what deep

question assailed him, this gifted being would dip into his Hegelian suds and blow without apparent effort, and there you were — as wise as when you started! And off the good man would float, infinitely self-satisfied and manifestly absurd.

But even Peter's biology was only incidentally helpful in answering the fierce questions that life was now thrusting upon him and Joan. Nor had this education linked them up to any great human solidarity. It was like being guided into a forest — and lost there — by queer, absent-minded men. They had no sense of others being there too, upon a common adventure. ,

"And it is all that I can get for them!" said Oswald. "Bad as it is, it is the best thin^ there is."

He tried to find comfort in comparisons.

"Has any country in the world got anything much better?"

§ 14

One day Oswald found himself outside Cambridge on the Huntingdon road. It was when he had settled that Peter was to enter Trinity, and while he was hesitating between Newnham and Girton as Joan's destiny. There was a little difficulty in discovering Girton. Unlike Newnham, which sits down brazenly in Cambridge, Girton is but half-heartedly at Cambridge, coyly a good mile from the fountains of knowledge, hiding its blushes between tall trees. He was reminded absurdly of a shy, nice girl sitting afar off until father should come out of the public-house....

He fell thinking about the education of women in Great Britain.

At first he had been disposed to think chiefly of Peter's education and to treat Joan's as a secondary matter; but little by little, as he watched British affairs close at hand, he had come to measure the mischief feminine illiteracy can do in the world. In no country do the lunch and dinnerparty, the country house and personal acquaintance, play so large a part in politics as they do in Great Britain. And the atmosphere of all that inner world of influence is a woman-made atmosphere, and an atmosphere made by women who are for the most part untrained and unread. Here at Girton and Newnham, and at

Oxford at Somerville, he perceived there could not be room for a tithe of the girls of the influential and governing classes. Where were the rest? English womanhood was as yet only nibbling at university life. Where were the girls of the peerage, the county-family girls and the like? Their brothers came up, but they stayed at home and were still educated scarcely better than his Aunt Charlotte had been educated forty years ago — by a genteel person, by a sort of mental maid who did their minds as their maids did their hair for the dinner-table.

"No wonder," he said, "they poison politics and turn it all into personal intrigues. No wonder they want religion to be just a business of personal consolations. No wonder every sort of charlatan and spook dealer, fortune- teller and magic healer flourishes in London. Well, Joan anyhow shall have whatever they can give her here....

"It's better than nothing. And she'll talk and read...."

§ 15

But school and university are only the formal part of education. The larger part of the education of every human being is and always has been and must be provided by the Thing that Is. Every adult transaction has as its most important and usually most neglected aspect its effect upon the minds of the young. Behind school and university the Empire itself was undesignedly addressing Joan and Peter. It was, so to speak, gesticulating at them over their teachers' heads and under their teachers' arms. It was performing ceremonies and exhibiting spectacles of a highly suggestive nature.

In a large and imposing form certain ideas were steadfastly thrust at Joan and Peter. More particularly was the idolization of the monarchy thrust upon them. In terms of zeal and reverence the press, the pulpit, and the world at large directed the innocent minds of Joan and Peter to the monarch as if that individual were the Reason, the Highest Good and Crown of the collective life. Nothing else in the world of Joan and Peter got anything like the same tremendous show. Their early years were coloured by the reflected glories of the

Diamond Jubilee; followed the funeral pomps of Queen Victoria, with much mobbing of negligent or impecunious people not in black by the loyal London crowd; then came the postponed and then the actual coronation of King Edward, public prayings for his health, his stupendous funeral glories; succeeded by the coronation of King George, and finally, about the time that Joan followed Peter up to Cambridge, the Coronation Durbar. The multitude which could not go to India went at least to the Scala cinema, and saw the adoration in all its natural colours. Reverent crowds choked that narrow bystreet. Across all the life arid activities of England, across all her intellectual and moral effort, holding up legislation, interfering with industry, stopping the traffic, masking every reality of the collective life, these vast formalities trailed with a magnificent priority. Nothing was respected as they were respected! Sober statesmen were seen invested in strange garments that no sensible person would surely wear except for the gravest reasons; the archbishops and bishops were discovered bent with reverence, invoking the name of God freely, blessing the Crown with the utmost gravity, investing the Sovereign with Robe and Orb, Ring and Sceptre, anointing him with the Golden Coronation Spoon. Either the Crown was itself a matter of altogether supreme importance to the land or else it was the most stupendous foolery that ever mocked and confused the grave realities of a great people's affairs.

The effect of it upon the minds of our two young people was — complicating. How complicating it is few people realize who have not closely studied the educational process of the British mind as a whole. Then it becomes manifest that the monarch, the state church, and the system of titles and social precedence centering upon the throne, constitute a system of mental entanglements against which British education struggles at an enormous disadvantage. The monarchy in Great Britain is a compromise that was accepted by a generation regardless of education and devoid of any sense of the future. It is now a mask upon the British face; it is a gaudy and antiquated and embarrassing wrapping about the energies of the nation. Because of it Britain speaks to her youth, as to the world, with two voices. She speaks as a democratic republic, just ever so little crowned, and also she speaks as a succulently loyal Teutonic

monarchy. Either she is an adolescent democracy whose voice is breaking or an old monarchy at the squeaking stage. Now her voice is the full strong voice of a great people, now it pipes ridiculously. She perplexes the world and stultifies herself.

That was why her education led up to no such magnificent exposition and consolidation of purpose as Oswald dreamt of for his wards. Instead, the track presently lost itself in a maze of prevarications and evasions. The country was double-minded, double-mindedness had become its habit, and it had lost the power of decision. Every effort to broaden and modernize university education in Britain encountered insurmountable difficulties because of this fundamental dispersal of aim. The court got in the way, the country clergy got in the way, the ruling-class families got in the way. It is impossible to turn a wandering, chance-made track into a good road until you know where it is to go. And that question of destination was one that no Englishman before the war could be induced to put into plain language. Double-mindedness had become his second nature. From the very outset it had taken possession of him. When a young American goes to his teacher to ask why he should serve his state, he is shown a flag of thirteen stripes and eight and forty stars and told a very plain and inspiring history. His relations to his country are thenceforward as simple and unquestionable as a child's to its mother. He may be patriotic or unpatriotic as a son may be dutiful or undutiful, but he will not be muddle-headed. But when Joan and Peter first began to realize that they belonged to the British Empire they were shown a little old German woman and told that reverence for her linked us in a common abjection with the millions of India. They were told also that really this little old lady did nothing of the slightest importance and that the country was the freest democracy on earth, ruled by its elected representatives. And each of these preposterously contradictory stories pursued them in an endless series of variations up to adolescence....

To two naturally clear-headed young people it became presently as palpably absurd to have a great union of civilized states thus impersonated as it is to have Wall impersonated by Snout the Tinker in A Midsummer Night's Dream. They were already jeering at royalty and the church with Aunt Phyllis long before they went up to

Cambridge. There they found plenty of associates to jeer with them. And there too they found a quite congenial parallel stream of jeering against Parliament, which pretended to represent the national mind and quality, but which was elected by a method that manifestly gave no chance to any candidate who was not nominated by a party organization. In times of long established peace, when the tradition of generations has established the illusion of the profoundest human security, men's minds are not greatly distressed by grotesqueness and absurdity in their political forms. It is all part of the humour and the good-humour of life. When one believes that all the tigers in the jungle are dead, it is quite amusing to walk along the jungle paths in a dressing-gown with a fan instead of a gun. Joan and Peter grew up to the persuasion that the crown above them was rather a good joke, and that Parliament and its jobs and party flummery were also a joke, and that the large, deep rottenness in this British world about them was perhaps in the nature of things and anyhow beyond their altering. They too were becoming double-minded according to the tradition of the land.

Yet beneath this acquiescence in the deep-rooted political paradox of Britain they were capable of the keenest interest in a number of questions that they really believed were alive. It became manifest to them that this great golden preposterous world was marred by certain injustices and unkindnesses. Something called Labour they heard was unhappy and complained of unfair treatment, certain grumblings came from India and Ireland, and there was a curiously exciting subject which demanded investigation and reforming activities called the sex question. And generally there seemed to be, for no particular reason, a lot of restrictions upon people's conduct.

In addition Peter had acquired from Oswald, rather by way of example than precept, a very definite persuasion, and Joan had acquired a persuasion that was perhaps not quite so clearly and deeply cut, that to make it respectable there ought to be something in one's life in the nature of special work. In Oswald's case it was his African interest. Peter thought that his own work might perhaps be biological. But that one's work ought to join on to the work of the people or that all the good work in the world should make one whole was a notion that had not apparently entered Peter's mind. Oswald

with his dread of preachments was doubtful about any deliberate dissertations in the matter. He got Peter to begin the Martyrdom of Man, which had so profoundly affected his own life, but Peter expressed doubts about the correctness of Reade's Egyptian history, and put the book aside and did not go on reading it.

At times Oswald tried to say something to Joan and Peter of his conception of the Empire as a great human enterprise, playing a dominating part in the establishment of a world peace and a world civilization, and giving a form and direction and pride to every life within it. But these perpetual noises of royalty in its vulgarest, most personal form, the loyalist chatter of illiterate women and the clamour of the New Imperialism to "tax the foreigner" and exploit the empire for gain, drowned his intention while it was still unspoken in his mind. There were moments when he could already ask himself whether this empire he had shaped his life to serve, this knightly empire of his, enlightened, righteous, and predominant, was anything better than a dream — or a lie.

§ 16

When Joan left Highmorton she came into the marketplace of ideas. She began to read the newspaper. She ceased to be a leggy person with a skirt like a kilt and a dark shock of hair not under proper control; instead, she became visibly a young lady, albeit a very young young lady, and suddenly all adult conversation was open to her.

Under the brotherly auspices of Peter she joined the Cambridge University Fabian Society. Peter belonged to it, but he explained that he didn't approve of it. He was in it for its own good. She also took a place in two suffrage organizations, and subscribed to three suffrage papers. Tel Wymark, who was also in Newton Hall, introduced her to the Club of Strange Faiths, devoted to "the impartial examination of all religious systems." And she went under proper escort to the First Wednesday in Every Month Teas in Bunny Cuspard's rooms. Bunny was an ex-collegiate student, he had big, comfortable rooms in Siddermorton Street, and these gatherings of his were designed to be

discussions, very memorable discussions of the most advanced type, about this and that. As a matter of fact they consisted in about equal proportions of awkward silences, scornful treatment of current reputations, and Bunny, in a loose, inaccurate way, spilling your tea or handing-you edibles. Bunny's cakes and sandwiches were wonderful; in that respect he was a born hostess. Junior dons and chance visitors to Cambridge would sometimes drift in to Bunny's intellectual feasts, and here it was that Joan met young Winterbaum again.

Young Winterbaum was rather a surprise. He had got his features together astonishingly since the days of Miss Murgatroyd's school; he had grown a moustache, much more of a moustache than Peter was to have for years yet, and was altogether remarkably grown up and a man of the world. "Funny lot," he remarked to Joan when he had sat down beside her. "Why do you come to Cambridge?"

"My people make me come up here," he explained; "family considerations, duty to the old country, loyalty to the old college, and all that. But I'd rather be painting. It's the only live thing just now. You up to anything?"

"Ears and eyes and mouth wide open," said Joan.

"This show isn't worth it. Do you ever drift towards Chelsea?"

Joan said she went to Hampstead now and then; she stayed sometimes with the Sheldricks, who were in a congested house on Downshire Hill now, and sometimes with Miss Jepson. Henceforth, now that she was no longer under the Highmorton yoke, she hoped to be in London oftener.

"Did you see the Picasso show?" asked Winterbaum.

She had not.

"You missed something," said young Winterbaum, just like old times. "Picasso, Mancini; these are the gods of my idolatry...."

Bunny Cuspard interrupted clumsily with some specially iced cakes. Joan, accepting a cake, discovered Wilmington talking absentmindedly to her chaperon and looking Pogroms at Winterbaum. So Joan, pleased rather than excited by this chance evidence of a continuing interest, lifted up a face of bright recognition and smiled and nodded to Wilmington.

It was the ambition of Mrs. Sheldrick and her remaining daughters — some of them had married — to make their home on Downshire Hill "a little bit of the London Quartier Latin."

Mr. Sheldrick had worn out the large, loose, tweed suit that had held him together for so long, he had gone to pieces altogether and was dead and buried, and the Sheldricks were keeping a home together by the practice of decorative arts and promiscuous hospitalities. Mrs. Sheldrick was writing a little in the papers of the weaker among the various editors who lived within her social range; little vague reviews and poems she wrote, with a quiet smile, that were not so much allusive as with an air of having recently had a flying visit from an allusion that was unable to stay. Sydney Sheldrick was practising sculpture, and Babs was attending the London School of Dramatic Art, to which Adela Murchison had also found her way. Antonia, the eldest, was in business, making djibbah-like robes.

There was downstairs and the passage and staircase and upstairs, a sitting-room in front, and a sort of oriental lounge (that later in the evening became the bedroom of Antonia and Babs) behind. It had all been decorated in the most modern style by Antonia in a very blue blue that seemed a little threadbare in places and very large, suggestive shapes of orange, with a sort of fringe of black and white chequers and a green ceiling with harsh pink stars. And the chairs, except for the various ottomans and cosy corners which were in faded blue canvas, had been painted bright pink or grey.

Into this house they gathered, after nine and more particularly on Saturdays, all sorts of people who chanced to be connected by birth, marriage, misfortune, or proclivity with journalism or the arts. Hither came Aunt Phoebe Stubland, and read a paper called insistently: *Watchman, What of the Night?* What of it? and quite up to its title; and hither too came Aunt Phyllis Stubland, quietly observant. But quite a lot of writers came. And in addition there were endless conspirators. There was Mrs. O'Grady, the beautiful Irish patriot, who was always dressed like a procession of Hibernians in New York, and there was Patrick Lynch, a long, lax black object, ending

below in large dull boots, and above in a sad white face under wiry black hair, grieving for ever that grief for Ireland — Cathteen ni Houlihan and all the rest of it — that only these long, black, pale Irishmen can understand. And there was Eric Schmidt, who was rare among Irish patriots because of his genuine knowledge of Erse. All these were great conspirators. Then there was Mrs. Punk, who had hunger-struck three times, and Miss Corcoran-Deeping the incendiary. And American socialists. And young Indians. And one saw the venerable figure of Mr. Woodjer, very old now and white and deaf and nervous and indistinct, who had advocated in several beautiful and poetical little volumes a new morality that would have put the wind up of the Cities of the Plain. And Winterbaum drifted in, but cautiously, as doubting whether it wasn't just "a bit too marginal," to bring away his two frizzy-haired sisters, very bright-eyed and eager, rapid-speaking and *au fait*, and wonderfully bejewelled for creatures so young. They were going in for dancing; they did Spanish dances, stupendously clicking down their red heels with absolute precision together; they took the Sheldricks on the way to the Contangos or the Mondaines or the Levisons, or even to the Hoggenheimers; they glittered at Downshire Hill like birds of Paradise, and had the loveliest necks and shoulders and arms. Outside waited young Winterbaum's coupé — a very smart little affair in black and cream, with an electric starter wonderfully fitted.

Here too came young Huntley, who had written three novels before he was twenty-two, and who was now thirty and quite well known, not only as a novelist of reputation, but as a critic eminently unpopular with actor managers; a blond young man with a strong profile, a hungry, scornful expression and a greedy, large blue eye that wandered about the crush as if it sought something, until it came to rest upon Joan. Thereafter Mr. Huntley's other movements and conversation were controlled by a resolution to edge towards and overshadow and dominate Joan with the profile as much as possible.

Joan, by various delicacies of perception, was quite aware of these approaches without seeming at any time to regard Huntley directly; and by a subtlety quite imperceptible to him she drifted away from each advance. She did not know who he was, and though the profile interested her, his steadfast advance towards her seemed to be

premature. Until suddenly an apparently quite irrelevant incident spun her mind round to the idea of encouraging him.

The incident was the arrival of Peter.

Early in the afternoon he had vanished from Mrs. Jepson's, where he and Joan were staying; he had not come in to dinner, and now suddenly he appeared conspicuously in this gathering of the Sheldricks', conspicuously in the company of Hetty Reinhart, who was to Joan, for quite occult reasons, the most detestable of all his large circle of detestable friends. That alone was enough to tax the self-restraint of an exceedingly hot-tempered foster sister. (So this was what Peter had been doing with his time! This had been his reason for neglecting his own household! At the *Petit Riche*, or some such place — with her! A girl with a cockney accent! 'A girl who would stroke your arm as soon as speak to you!...) But though the larger things in life strain us, it is the smaller things that break us. What finally turned Joan over was a glance, a second's encounter with Peter's eye. Hetty had sailed forward with that extraordinary effect of hers of being a grown-up, experienced woman, to greet Mrs. Sheldrick, and Peter stood behind, disregarded. (His expression of tranquil self-satisfaction was maddening.) His eye went round the room looking, Joan knew, for two people. It rested on Joan.

The question that Peter was asking Joan mutely across the room was in effect this: "Are you behaving yourself, Joan?"

Then, not quite reassured by an uncontrollable scowl, Peter looked away to see if some one else was present. Some one else apparently wasn't present, and Joan was unfeignedly sorry.

He was looking for Mir Jelalludin, the interesting young Indian with the beautifully modelled face, whom Joan had met and talked to at the Club of Strange Faiths. At the Club of Strange Faiths one day she had been suddenly moved to make a short speech about the Buddhist idea of Nirvana, which one of the speakers had described as extinction. Making a speech to a little meeting was not a very difficult thing for Joan; she had learnt how little terrible a thing is to do in the Highmorton debating society, where she had been sustained by a grim determination to score off Miss Frobisher. She said that she thought the real intention was not extinction at all, but the escape of the individual consciousness after its living pilgrimage from one

incarnate self to another into the universal consciousness. That was the very antithesis of extinction; one lost oneself indeed, but one lost oneself not in darkness and non-existence, but in light and the fullness of existence. There was all the difference between a fainting fit and ecstasy between these two conceptions. And it was true of experience that one was least oneself, least self-conscious and egotistical at one's time of greatest excitement.

Mir Jelalludin received these remarks with earnest applause. He made as if to speak after her, rose in his place, and then hastily sat down. Afterwards he came and spoke to her, quite modestly and simply, without the least impertinence.

He explained, with a pleasant staccato accent and little slips in his pronunciation that suggested restricted English conversation and much reading of books, how greatly he had been wanting to say just what she had said, "so bew-ti-fully," but he had been restrained by "impafction of the pronunsation. So deefi'clt, you know." One heard English people so often not doing justice to Indian ideas so that it was very pleasant to hear them being quite sympathetically put.

There was something very pleasing in the real intellectual excitement that had made him speak to her, and there was something very pleasing to the eye in the neat precision with which his brown features were chiselled and the decisive accuracy of every single hair on his brow. He was, he explained, a Moslem, but he was interested in every school of Indian thought. He was afraid he was not very orthodox, and he showed a smile of the most perfect teeth. There had always been a tendency to universalism in Indian thought, that affected even the Moslem. Did she know anything of the Brahmo Somaj? Had she read any novel of Chatterji's There was at least one great novel of his the English ought to read, the Ananda Math. No one could understand Indian thought properly who had not read it. He had a translation of it into English — which he would lend her.

Would she be interested to read it?

Might he send it to her?

Joan's chaperon was a third year girl who put no bar upon these amenities. Joan accepted the book and threw out casually that she sometimes went to Bunny Cuspard's teas. If Mr. Jelalludin sent her Chatterji's book she could return it to Bunny Cuspard's rooms.

It was in Bunny Cuspard's room that Peter had first become aware of this exotic friendship. He discovered his Joan snugly in a corner listening to an explanation of the attitude of Islam towards women. It had been enormously misrepresented in Christendom. Mr. Jelalludin was very earnest in his exposition, and Joan listened with a pleasant smile and regarded him pleasantly and wished that she could run her fingers just once along his eyebrow without having her motives misunderstood.

But at the sight of his Joan engaged in this confabulation Peter suddenly discovered all the fiercest traits of race pride. He fretted about the room and was rude to other people and watched a book change hands, and waited scarcely twenty seconds after the end of Joan's conversation before he came up to her.

"I say, Joan," he said, "you can't go chumming with Indians anyhow."

"Peter," she said, "we've chummed with India."

"Oh, nonsense! Not socially. Their standards are different."

"I hope they are," said Joan. "The way you make these Indian boys here feel like outcasts is disgraceful."

"They're different. The men aren't uncivil to them. But it isn't for you—"

"It's for all English people to treat them well. He's a charming young man."

"It isn't *done*, Joan."

"It's going to be, Petah."

"You're meeting him again?"

"If I think proper."

"Oh!" said Peter, baffled for the time. "All right, Joan."

A fierce exchange of notes followed. "Don't you understand the fellow's a polygamist?" Peter wrote. "He keeps his women in purdah. No decent woman could be talked to in India as he talked to you. Not even an introduction. Personally, I've no objection to any friends you make provided they are decent friends...."

"He isn't a polygamist," Joan replied. "I've asked him. And every one says he's a first-rate cricketer. As for decent friends, Peter—"

The issue had been still undecided when they came down for the Christmas vacation.

So far Joan had maintained her positions without passion. But now suddenly her indignation at Peter's interference flared to heaven. That he should come here, hot from Soho, to tyrannize over her! Indians indeed! As if Hetty Reinhart wasn't worse than a Gold Coast nigger!...

The only outward manifestation of this wild storm of resentment had been her one instant's scowl at Peter. Thereafter Joan became again the quiet, intelligently watchful young woman she had been all that evening. But now she turned herself through an angle of about thirty degrees towards Huntley, who was talking to old Mrs. Jex, the wonder of Hampstead, who used to know George Eliot and Huxley, the while he was regarding Joan with sidelong covetousness. Joan lifted her eyes towards him with an expression of innocent interest. The slightly projecting blue eyes seemed to leap in response.

Mrs. Jex was always rather inattentive to her listener when she was reciting her reminiscences, and Huntley was able to turn away from her quietly without interrupting the flow.

The Sheldrick circle scorned the formalities of introductions. "Are you from the Slade school?" said Huntley.

"Cambridge," said Joan.

"My name's Gavan Huntley."

But this was going to be more amusing than Joan had expected. This was a real live novelist — Joan's first. Not a fortnight ago she had read *The Pernambuco Bun-shop*, and thought it rather clever and silly.

"Not *the* Gavan Huntley?" she said.

His face became faintly luminous with satisfaction. "Just Gavan Huntley," he said with a large smile.

"*The Pernambuco Bun-shop*?" she said.

"Guilty," he pleaded, smiling still more naively.

One had expected something much less natural in a novelist.

"I loved it," said Joan, and Huntley was hers to do what she liked with. Joan's idea of a proper conversation required it to be in a corner. "Do Sheldricks never sit down?" she asked. "I've been standing all the evening."

"They can't," he said confidentially. "They're the other sort of Dutch doll, the cheap sort, that hasn't got joints at the knees."

“Antonia sometimes leans against the wall.”

“Her utmost. The next thing would be to sit on the floor with her legs straight out. I’ve seen her do that. But there is a sort of bench on the staircase landing.”

Thither they made their way, and there presently Peter found them.

He found them because he was making for that very corner in the company of Sydney Sheldrick. “Hullo!” said Sydney. “That you, Joan?”

“We’ve taken this corner for the. evening,” said Huntley, laying a controlling hand on Joan’s pretty wrist.

Joan and Peter regarded each other darkly.

“There ought to be more seats about somewhere,” said Sydney. “Come up to the divan, old Peter....”

Of course Peter must object to Huntley. They were scarcely out of the Sheldricks’ house when he began. “That man Huntley’s a bad egg, Joan. Everybody knows it.”

For a time they disputed about Huntley. “Peter,” said Joan, with affected calm, “is there any man, do you think, to whom so — so untrustworthy a girl as I am might safely talk?”

Peter seemed to consider. “There’s chaps like Troop,” he said.

“Troop!” said Joan, relying on her intonation.

“It isn’t that you’re untrustworthy,” said Peter.

“Fragile?”

“It’s the look and tone of things.”

“I wonder how you get these ideas.”

“What ideas?”

“Of how I behave in a corner with Jelalludin or Gavan Huntley.”

“I haven’t suggested anything.”

“You’ve suggested everything. Do you think I collect stray kisses like Sydney Sheldrick? Do you think I’m a dirty little — little — cocotte like Hetty Reinhart?”

“*Joan*!”

“*Well*,” said Joan savagely, and said no more.

Peter came to the defence of Hetty belatedly. “How can you say such things of Hetty?” he asked. “What can you know about her?”

“Pah! I can smell what she is across a room. Do you think I’m an

absolute young fool, Peter?"

"You've got no right, Joan—"

"Why argue, Peter, why argue? When things are plain. Can't you go your own way, Peter" — Joan was annoyed to find suddenly that she was weeping. Tears were running down her face. But the road was dark, and perhaps if she gave no sign Peter would not see. "You go your own way, Peter, go your own way, and let me go mine."

Peter was silent for a little while. Then compunction betrayed itself in his voice.

"It's you I'm thinking of, Joan. I can't bear to see you make yourself cheap."

"Cheap! And *you*?"

"I'm different. I'm altogether different. A man is."

Silence for a time. Joan seemed to push back her hair, and so smeared the tears from her face.

"We interfere with each other," she said at last. "We interfere with each other. What is the good of it? You've got to go your way and I've got to go mine. We used to have fun — lots of fun. Now....."

She couldn't say any more for a while.

"I'm going my own way, Peter. It's a different way — Leave me alone. Keep off!"

They said no more. When they got in they found Miss Jepson sitting by the fire, and she had got them some cocoa and biscuits. The headache that had kept her from the Sheldrick festival had lifted, and Joan plunged at once into a gay account of the various people she had seen that evening — saving and excepting Gavan Huntley. But Peter stood by the fireplace, silent, looking down into the fire, sulking or grieving. All the while that Joan rattled on to Miss Jepson she was watching him with almost imperceptible glances and wondering whether he sulked or grieved. Did he feel as she felt? If he sulked — well, confound him! But what if this perplexing dissension hurt him as much as it was hurting her!

§ 18

Joan had long since lost that happiness, that perfect assurance, that

intense appreciation of the beauty in things which had come to her with early adolescence. She was troubled and perplexed in all her ways. She was full now of stormy, indistinct desires and fears, and a gnawing, indefinite impatience. No religion had convinced her of a purpose in her life, neither Highmorton nor Cambridge had suggested any mundane devotion to her, nor pointed her ambitions to a career. The only career these feminine schools and colleges recognized was a career of academic successes and High School teaching, intercalated with hunger strikes for the Vote, and Joan had early decided she would rather die than teach in a High School. Nor had she the quiet assurance her own beauty would have given her in an earlier generation of a discreet choice of lovers and marriage and living "happily ever afterwards." She had a horror of marriage lurking in her composition; Mrs. Pybus and Highmorton had each contributed to that; every one around her spoke of it as an entire abandonment of freedom. Moreover there was this queerness about her birth — she was beginning to understand better now in what that queerness consisted — that seemed to put her outside the customary ceremonies of veil and orange blossoms. "Why did they not tell her all about it — what her mother was and where her mother was? It must be a pretty awful business, if neither Aunt Phyllis nor Aunt Phoebe would ever allude to it. It would have to come out — perhaps some monstrous story — before she could marry. And who could one marry? She could not conceive herself marrying any of these boys she met, living somewhere cooped up in a little house with solemn old Troop, or under the pursuing eyes, the convulsive worship, of Wilmington. She had no object in life, no star by which to steer, and she was full of the fever of life. She was getting awfully old. She was eighteen. She was nineteen. Soon she would be twenty.

All her being, in her destitution of any other aim that had the slightest hold upon her imagination, was crying out for a lover.

It was a lover she wanted, not a husband; her mind made the clearest distinction between the two. He would come and unrest would cease, confusion would cease and beauty would return. Her lover haunted all her life, an invisible yet almost present person. She could not imagine his face nor his form, he was the blankest of beings, and yet she was so sure she knew him that if she were to see

him away down a street or across a crowded room, instantly, she believed, she would recognize him. And until he came life was a torment of suspense. Life was all wrong and discordant, so wrong and discordant that at times she could have hated her lover for keeping her waiting so wretchedly.

And she had to go on as though this suspense was nothing. She had to disregard this vast impatience of her being. And the best way to do that, it seemed to her, was to hurry from one employment to another, never to be alone, never without some occupation, some excitement. Her break with Peter had an extraordinary effect of release in her mind. Hitherto, whatever her resentment had been she had admitted in practice his claim to exact a certain discretion from her; his opinion had been, in spite of her resentment, a standard for her. Now she had no standard at all — unless it was a rebellious purpose to spite him. On Joan's personal conduct the thought of Oswald, oddly enough, had scarcely any influence at all. She adored him as one might a political or historical. hero; she wanted to stand well in his sight, but the idea of him did not pursue her into the details of her behaviour at all. He seemed preoccupied with ideas and unobservant. She had never had any struggle with him; he had never made her do anything. And as for Aunts Phyllis and Phoebe — while the latter seemed to make vague gestures towards quite unutterable liberties, the former maintained an attitude of nervous disavowal. She was a woman far too uncertain^minded for plain speaking. She was a dear. Clearly she hated cruelty and baseness; except in regard to such things she set no bounds.

Hitherto Joan had had a very few flirtations; the extremest thing upon her conscience was Bunny Cuspard's kiss. She had the naturally shilly-shally of a girl; she was strongly moved to all sorts of flirtings and experimentings with love, and very adventurous and curious in these matters; and also she had a system of inhibitions, pride, hesitation, fastidiousness, and something beyond these things, a sense of some ultimate value that might easily be lost, that held her back. Rebelling against Peter had somehow also set her rebelling against these restraints. Why shouldn't she know this and that? Why shouldn't she try this and that? Why, for instance, was she always "shutting up" Adela whenever she began to discourse in her peculiar

way upon the great theme? Just a timid prude she had been, but now....

And all this about undesirable people and unseemly places, all this picking and choosing as though the world was mud; what nonsense it was! She could take care of herself surely!

She began deliberately to feel her way through all her friendships to see whether this thing, passion, lurked in any of them. It was an interesting exercise of her wits to try over a youth like old Troop, for example; to lure him on by a touch of flattery, a betrayal of warmth in her interest, to reciprocal advances. At first Troop wasn't in the least in love with her, but she succeeded in suggesting to him that he was. But the passion in him released an unsuspected fund of egotistical discourse; he developed a disposition to explain himself and his mental operations in a large, flattering way both by word of mouth and by letter. Even when he was roused to a sense of her as lovable, he did not become really interested in her but only in his love for her. He arrived at one stride at the same unanalytical acceptance of her as of his God and the Church and the King and his parents and all the rest of the Anglican system of things. She was his girl— "the kid." He really wasn't interested in those other things any more than he was in her; once he had given her her role in relation to him his attention returned to himself. The honour, integrity, and perfection of Troop were the consuming occupations of his mind. This was an edifying thing to discover, but not an entertaining thing to pursue; and after a time Joan set herself to avoid, miss, and escape from Troop on every possible occasion. But Troop prided himself upon his persistence. He took to writing her immense, ill-spelt, manly letters, with sentences beginning: "You understand me very little if—" It was clear he was hers only until some simpler, purer, more receptive and acquisitive girl swam into his ken.

Wilmington, on the other hand, was a silent covetous lover. Joan could make him go white, but she could not make him talk. She was a little afraid of him and quite sure of him. But he was not the sort of young man one can play with, and she marvelled greatly that any one could desire her so much and amuse her so little. Bunny Cuspard was a more animated subject for experiment, and you could play with him a lot. He danced impudently. He could pat Joan's shoulder, press

her hand, slip his arm round her waist and bring his warm face almost to a kissing contact as though it was all nothing. Did these approaches warm her blood? Did she warm his? Anyhow it didn't matter, and it wasn't anything.

Then there was Graham Prothero, a very good-looking friend of Peter's, whom she had met while skating. He had a lively eye, and jumped after a meeting or so straight into Joan's dreams, where he was still more lively and good-looking. She wished she knew more certainly whether she had got into his dreams.

Meanwhile Joan's curiosity had not spared Jelalludin.

She had had him discoursing on the beauties of Indian love, and spinning for her imagination a warm moonlight vision of still temples reflected in water tanks, of silvery water shining between great lily leaves, of music like the throbbing of a nerve, of brown bodies garlanded with flowers. There had been a loan of Rabindranath Tagore's love poems. And once he had sent her some flowers.

Any of these youths she could make her definite lover she knew, by an act of self-adaptation and just a little reciprocal giving. Only she had no will to do that. She felt she must not will anything of the sort. The thing must come to her; it must take possession of her. Sometimes, indeed, she had the oddest fancy that perhaps suddenly one of these young men would become transfigured; would cease to be his clumsy, ineffective self, and change right into that wonderful, that compelling being who was to set all things right. There were moments when it seemed about to happen. And then the illusion passed, and she saw clearly that it was just old Bunny or just staccato Mir Jelalludin.

In Huntley, Joan found something more intriguing than this pursuit of the easy and the innocent. Huntley talked with a skilful impudence that made a bold choice of topics seem the most natural in the world. He presented himself as a leader in a great emancipation of women. They were to be freed from "the bondage of sex." The phrase awakened a warm response in Joan, who was finding sex a yoke about her imagination. Sex, Huntley declared, should be as incidental in a woman's life as it was in a man's. But before that could happen the world must free its mind from the

“superstition of chastity,” from the idea that by one single step a woman passed from the recognizable into an impossible category. We made no such distinction in the case of men; an artist or a business man was not suddenly thrust out of the social system by a sexual incident. A woman was either Mrs. or Miss; a gross publication of elemental facts that were surely her private affair. No one asked whether a man had found his lover. Why should one proclaim it in the case of a woman by a conspicuous change of her name? Here, and not in any matter of votes or economics was the real feminine grievance. His indignation was contagious. It marched with all Joan’s accumulated prejudice against marriage, and all her growing resentment at the way in which emotional unrest was distracting and perplexing her will and spoiling her work at Cambridge. But when Huntley went on to suggest that the path to freedom lay in the heroic abandonment of the “fetish of chastity,” Joan was sensible of a certain lagging of spirit. A complex of instincts that conspired to adumbrate that unseen, unknown, and yet tyrannous lover, who would not leave her m peace and yet would not reveal himself, stood between her and the extremities of Huntley ‘a logic.

There were moments when he seemed to be pretending to fill that oppressive void; moments when he seemed only to be hinting at himself as a possible instrument of freedom. Joan listened to him gravely enough so long as he theorized; when he came to personal things she treated him with the same experimental and indecisive encouragement that she dealt out to her undergraduate friends. Huntley’s earlier pose of an intellectual friend was attractive and flattering; then he began to betray passion, as it were, unwittingly. At a fancy dress dance at Chelsea — and he danced almost as well as Joan — he became moody. He was handsome that night in black velvet and silver that betrayed much natural grace; Joan was a nondescript in black and red, with short skirts and red beads about her pretty neck. “Joan,” he said suddenly, “you’re getting hold of me. You’re disturbing me.” He seemed to soliloquize. “I’ve not felt like this before.” Then very flatteringly and reproachfully, “You’re so damned intelligent, Joan. And you dance — as though God made you to make me happy.” He got her out into an open passage that led

from the big studio in which they had been dancing, to a yard dimly lit by Chinese lanterns, and at the dark turn of the passage kissed her more suddenly and violently than she had ever been kissed before. He kissed her lips and held her until she struggled out of his arms. Up that moment Joan had been playing with him, half attracted and half shamming; then once more came the black panic that had seized her with Bunny and Adela.

She did not know whether she liked him now or hated him. She felt strange and excited. She made him go back with her into the studio. “I’ve got to dance with Ralph Winterbaum,” she said.

“Say you’re not offended,” he pleaded. She gave him no answer. She did not know the answer. She wanted to get away and think. He perceived her confused excitement and did not want to give her time to think. She found Winterbaum and danced with him, and all the time, with her nerves on fire, she was watching Huntley, and he was watching her. Then she became aware of Peter regarding her coldly, over the plump shoulder of a fashion-plate artist. She went to him as soon as the dance was over. “Peter,” she said, “I want to go home.” He surveyed her. She was flushed and ruffled, and his eyes and mouth hardened. “It’s early.”

“I want to go home.”

“Right. You’re a bit of a responsibility, Joan. “Don’t, then,” she said shortly, and turned round to greet Huntley as though nothing had happened between them.

But she kept in the light and the crowd, and there was a constraint between them. “I want to talk to you more,” he said, “and when we can talk without some one standing on one’s toes all the time and listening hard. I wish ^you’d come to my flat and have tea with me one day. It’s still and cosy, and I could tell you all sorts of things — things I can’t tell you here.”

Joan’s dread of any appearance of timid virtue was overwhelming. And she was now blind with rage at Peter-why, she would have been at a loss to say. She wanted to behave outrageously with Huntley. But in Peter’s sight. This struck her as an altogether too extensive invitation.

“I’ve never noticed much restraint in your conversation,” she said.

“It’s the interruptions I don’t like,” he said. “You get me no ice,

you get me no lemonade," she complained abruptly.

"That's what my dear Aunt Adelaide used to call changing the subject."

"It's the cry of outraged nature."

"But I saw you having an ice — not half an hour ago."

"Not the ice I wanted," said Joan.

"Distracting Joan! I suppose I must get you that ice. But about the tea?"

"I hate tea," said Joan, with a force of decision that for a time disposed of his project.

Just for a moment he hovered with his eye on her, weighing just what that decision amounted to, and in that moment she decided that he wasn't handsome, that there was something unsound about his profile, that he was pressing her foolishly. And anyhow, none of it really mattered. He was nothing really. She had been a fool to go into that dark passage, she ought to have known her man better; Huntley had been amusing hitherto and now the thing had got into a new phase that wouldn't, she felt, be amusing at all; after this he would pester. She hated being kissed. And Peter was a beast. Peter was a hateful beast....

Joan and Peter went home in the same taxi — in a grim silence. Yet neither of them could have told what it was that kept them hostile and silent.

§ 19

But Joan and Peter were not always grimly silent with one another. The black and inexplicable moods came and passed again. Between these perplexing mute conflicts of will, they were still good friends. "When they were alone together they were always disposed to be good friends; it was the presence and excitement and competition of others that disturbed their relationship; it was when the species invaded their individualities and threatened their association with its occult and passionate demands. They would motor-cycle together through the lanes and roads of Hertfordshire, lunch cheerfully at wayside inns, brotherly and sisterly, relapse again into mere boy and

girl playfellows, race and climb trees, or, like fellow-students, share their common room amicably, dispute over a multitude of questions, and talk to Oswald. They both had a fair share of scholarly ambition and read pretty hard. They had both now reached the newspaper-reading stage. Peter was beginning to take an interest in politics, he wanted to discuss socialism and economic organization thoroughly; biological work alone among all scientific studies carries a philosophy of its own that illuminates these questions, and Oswald was happy to try over his current interests in the light of these fresh, keen young minds. Peter was a discriminating advocate of the ideas of Guild socialism; Oswald was still a cautious individualist drifting towards Fabianism. The great labour troubles that had followed the Coronation of King George had been necessary to convince him that all was not well with the economic organization of the empire. Hitherto he had taken economic organization for granted; it wasn't a matter for Sydenhams.

Pelham Ford at such times became a backwater from the main current of human affairs, the current that was now growing steadily more rapid and troubled. Thinking could go on at Pelham Ford. There were still forces in that old-world valley to resist the infection of intense impatience that was spreading throughout the world. The old red house behind its wall and iron gates seemed as stable as the little hills about it; the road and the row of great trees between the stream and the road, the high pathway and the ford and the village promised visibly to endure for a thousand years. It was when Aunt Phyllis or Aunt Phoebe descended upon the place to make a party, "get a lot of young people down and brighten things up," or when the two youngsters went to London together into the Sheldrick translation of the Quartier Latin, or when they met in Cambridge in some crowded chattering room that imagination grew feverish, fierce jealousies awoke, temperaments jarred, and the urge of adolescence had them in its clutch again.

It was during one of these parties at Pelham Ford that Joan was to happen upon two great realizations, realizations of so profound an effect that they may serve to mark the end for her of this great process of emotional upheaval and discovery that is called adolescence. They left her shaped. They came to her in no dramatic

circumstances, they were mere conversational incidents, but their effect was profound and conclusive.

In the New Year of 1914 Oswald was to take Peter to Russia for three weeks. Before his departure, Aunt Phoebe had insisted that there should be a Christmas gathering of the young at Pelham Ford. They would skate or walk or toboggan or play hockey by day, and dress up and dance or improvize charades and burlesques in the evening. One or two Sheldricks would come, Peter and Joan could bring down any stray friends who had no home Christmas to call them, and Aunts Phyllis and Phoebe would collect a few young people in London.

The gathering was from the first miscellaneous. Christmas is a homing time for the undergraduates of both sexes, such modern spirits as the home failed to attract used to go in those days in great droves to the Swiss winter sports, and Joan found nobody but an ambitious Scotch girl whom she knew but slightly and Miss Scroby the historian, who was rather a friend for Aunt Phyllis than herself. Peter discovered that Wilmington intensely preferred Pelham Ford to his parental roof, and brought also two other stray men, orphans. This selection was supplemented by Aunt Phoebe, who had latterly made Hetty Reinhart her especial protegee. She descanted upon the obvious beauty of Hetty and upon the courage that had induced Hetty to leave her home in Preston and manage for herself in a great lonely studio upon Haverstock Hill. “The bachelor woman,” said Aunt Phoebe; “armed with a latchkey and her purity. A vote shall follow. Hetty is not one of the devoted yet. But I have my hopes. We need our Beauty Chorus. Hetty shall be our Helen, and Holloway our Troy.”

So with Peter’s approval Hetty was added to the list before Joan could express an opinion, and appeared with a moderate sized valise that contained some extremely exiguous evening costumes, and a steadfast eye that rested most frequently on Peter. In addition Aunt Phoebe brought two Irish sisters, one frivolous, the other just recuperating from the hunger-strike that had ended her imprisonment for window-breaking in pursuit of the Vote, and a very shy youth of seventeen, Pryce, the caddie-poet. Huntley was to constitute a sort of outside element in the party, sharing apartments with young Sopwith

Greene the musician, in the village about half a mile away. These two men were to work and keep away when they chose, and come in for meals and sports as they thought fit. At the eleventh hour had come a pathetic and irresistible telegram from Adela Murchison:

ALONE XMAS MAY I COME WIRE IF INCONVENIENT.

and she, too, was comprehended.

The vicarage girls were available for games and meals except on Sunday and Christmas Day; there was a friendly family of five sons and two daughters at Braughing, a challenging hockey club at Bishop's Stortford, and a scratch collection at Newport available by motor-car for a pick-up match if the weather proved, as it did prove, too open for skating.

Oswald commonly stood these Aunt parties for a day or so and then retreated to the Climax Club. Always beforehand he promised himself great interest and pleasure in the company of a number of exceptionally bright and representative youths and maidens of the modern school, but always the actual gathering fatigued him and distressed him. The youths and maidens wouldn't be representative, they talked too loud, too fast and too inconsecutively for him, their wit was too rapid and hard — and they were all over the house. It was hard to get mental contacts with them. They paired off when there were no games afoot, and if ever talk at table ceased to be fragmentary Aunt Phoebe took control of it. In a day or so he would begin to feel at Pelham Ford like a cat during a removal; driven out of his dear library, which was the only available room for dancing, he would try to work in his unaccustomed study, with vivid, interesting young figures passing his window in groups of two or three, or only too audibly discussing the world, each other, and their general arrangements, in the hall.

His home would have felt altogether chaotic to him but for the presence, the unswerving, if usually invisible, presence of Mrs. Moxton, observing times and seasons, providing copious suitable meals, dominating by means of the gong, replacing furniture at every opportunity, referring with a calm dignity to Joan as the hostess for all the rules and sanctions she deemed advisable. From unseen points of view one felt her eye. One's consolation for the tumult lay in one's confidence in this discretion that lay behind it. Even Aunt

Phoebe's way of speaking of "our good Moxton" did not mask the facts of the case. Pelham Ford was ruled. At Pelham Ford even Aunt Phoebe came down to meals in time. At Pelham Ford no fire, once lit, ever went out before it was right for it to do so. You might in pursuit of facetious ends choose to put your pyjamas outside your other clothes, wrap your window curtains about you, sport and dance, and finally, drawn off to some other end, abandon these wrappings in the dining-room, or on the settee on the landing. When you went to bed your curtains hung primly before your window again, and your pyjamas lay folded and reproved upon your bed.

The disposition of the new generation to change its clothes, adopt fantastic clothes, and at any reasonable excuse get right out of its clothes altogether, greatly impressed Oswald. Hetty in particular betrayed a delight in the beauties of her own body with a freedom that in Oswald's youth was permitted only to sculpture. But Adela made no secrets of her plump shoulders and arms, and Joan struck him as insensitive. Skimpiness was the fashion in dress at that time. No doubt it was all for the best, like the frankness of Spartan maidens. And another thing that brought a flavour of harsh modernity into the house was the perpetual music and dancing that raged about it. There was a pianola in the common room of Joan and Peter, but when they were alone at home it served only for an occasional outbreak of Bach, or Beethoven, or Chopin. Now it was in a state of almost continuous eruption. Aunt Phyllis had ordered a number of rolls of dance music from the Orchestrelle library, and in addition she had brought down a gramophone. Never before had music been so easy in the world as it was in those days. In Oswald's youth music, good music, was the rare privilege of a gifted few, one heard it rarely and listened with reverence. Nowadays Joan could run through a big fragment of the Ninth Symphony, giving a rendering far better than any but a highly skilled pianist could play, while she was waiting for Peter to come to breakfast. And this Christmas party was pervaded with One Steps and Two Steps, pianola called to gramophone and gramophone to pianola, and tripping feet somewhere never failed to respond. Most of these young people danced with the wildest informality. But Hetty and the youngest Irish girl were serious propagandists of certain strange American dances,

the Bunny Hug, and the Fox Trot; Sopwith Greene and Adela tangoed and were getting quite good at it, and Huntley wanted to teach Joan an Apache dance. Joan danced by rule and pattern or by the light of nature as occasion required.

The Christmas dinner was at one o 'clock, a large disorderly festival. Gavan Huntley and Sopwith Greene came in for it. Oswald carved a turkey, Aunt Phyllis dispensed beef; the room was darkened and the pudding was brought in flaming blue and distributed in flickering flames. Mince-pies, almonds and raisins, Brazil nuts, oranges, tangerines, Carlsbad plums, crystallized fruits and candied peel; nothing was missing from the customary feast. Then came a mighty banging of crackers, pre-war crackers, containing elaborate paper costumes and preposterous gifts. Wilmington ate little and Huntley a great deal, and whenever Joan glanced at them they seemed to be looking at her. Hetty, flushed and excited, became really pretty in a paper cap of liberty, she waved a small tricolour flag and knelt up in her chair to pull crackers across the table; Peter won a paper cockscomb and was moved to come and group himself under her arm and crow as "*Vive la France!*" The two Irish girls started an abusive but genial argument with Sopwith Greene upon the Irish question. Aunt Phoebe sat near Aunt Phyllis and discoursed on whether she ought to go to prison for the Vote. "I try to assault policemen," she said. "But they elude me." One of Peter's Cambridge friends, it came to light, had been present at a great scene in which Aunt Phoebe had figured. He emerged from his social obscurity and described the affair rather amusingly.

It had been at an Anti-Suffrage meeting in West Kensington, and Aunt Phoebe had obtained access to the back row of the platform by some specious device. Among the notabilities in front Lady Charlotte Sydenham and her solicitor had figured. Lady Charlotte had entered upon that last great phase in a woman's life, that phase known to the vulgar observer as "old lady's second wind." It is a phase often of great Go and determination, a joy to the irreverent young and a marvel and terror to the middle-aged. She had taken to politics, plunged into public speaking, faced audiences. It was the Insurance Act of 1912 that had first moved her to such publicity. Stung by the outrageous possibility of independent-spirited servants she had given

up her usual trip to Italy in the winter and stayed to combat Lloyd George. From mere subscriptions and drawing-room conversations and committees to drawing-room meetings and at last to public meetings had been an easy series of steps for her. At first a mere bridling indignation on the platform, she presently spoke. As a speaker she combined reminiscences of Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury and Marie Antoinette on the scaffold with vast hiatuses peculiar to herself. "My good people," she would say, disregarding the more conventional methods of opening, "have we neglected our servants or have we not? Is any shop Gal or factory Gal half so well off as a servant in a good house? Is she? I ask. The food alone! The morals I And now we are to be taxed and made to lick stamps like a lot of galley-slaves to please a bumptious little Welsh solicitor! For my part I shall discontinue all my charitable subscriptions until this abominable Act is struck off the Statute Book. Every one. And as for buying these

Preposterous stamps Rather than lick a stamp I will eat

skilly in prison. Stamps indeed. I'd as soon lick the man's boots. That's all I have to say, Mr. Chairman (or 'My Lord,' or 'Mrs. Chairman,' as the case might be). I hope it will be enough. Thank you." And she would sit down breathing heavily and looking for eyes to meet.

For the great agitation against the Insurance Act that sort of thing sufficed, but when it came to testifying against an unwomanly clamour for votes, the argument became more complicated and interruptions difficult to handle, and after an unpleasant experience when she was only able to repeat in steadily rising tones, "I am not one of the Shrieking Sisterhood" ten times over to a derisive roomful, she decided to adopt the more feminine expedient of a spokesman. She had fallen back upon Mr. Grimes, who like all solicitors had his parliamentary ambitions, and she took him about with her in the comfortable brown car that had long since replaced the white horse, and sat beside him while he spoke and approved of him with both hands. Mr. Grimes had been addressing the meeting when Aunt Phoebe made her interruption. He had been arguing that the unfitness of women for military service debarred them from the Vote. "Let us face the facts," he said, drawing the air in between his

teeth. “Ultimately — ultimately all social organization rests upon Force.”

It was just at this moment that cries of “Order, Order,” made him aware of a feminine figure close beside him. He turned to meet the heaving wrath of Aunt Phoebe’s face. There was just an instant’s scrutiny. Then he remembered, he remembered everything, and with a wild shriek leapt clean off the platform upon the toes of the front row of the audience.

“If you touch me!” he screamed....

The young man told the incident briefly and brightly.

“Thereby hangs a tale,” said Aunt Phoebe darkly, and became an allusive Sphinx for the rest of the dinner.

“I shook that man,” she said at last to Pryce.

“What — *him*?” said Pryce, staring round-eyed at the young man from Cambridge.

“No, the man at the meeting.”

“What — afterwards?” said Pryce, lost and baffled.

“No,” said Aunt Phoebe; “before.”

Pryce tried to look intelligent, and nodded his head very fast to conceal the fear and confusion in his mind.

Amidst all these voices and festivities sat Oswald, with a vast paper cap shaped rather like the dome of a Russian church cocked over his blind side, listening distractedly, noting this and that, saying little, thinking many things.

The banquet ended at last, and every one drifted to the library.

Affairs hovered vaguely for a time. Peter handed cigarettes about. Some one started the gramophone with a Two Step that set every one tripping. Hetty with a flush on her cheek and a light in her eyes was keeping near Peter; she seized upon him now for a dance that was also an embrace. Peter laughed, nothing loath. “Oh! but this is glorious!” panted Hetty.

“Come and dance, too, Joan,” said Wilmington.

“It’s stuffy! “said Joan.

Oswald, contemplating a retreat to his study armchair, found her presently in the hall dressed to go out with Huntley.

“We’re going over the hill to see the sunset,” Joan explained. “It’s too stuffy in there.”

Oswald met Huntley's large grey eye for a moment. He had an instinctive distrust of Huntley. But on the other hand, surely Joan had brains enough and fastidiousness enough not to lose her head with this — this phosphorescent fish of a novelist.

"Right-o," said Oswald, and hovered doubtfully.

Aunt Phoebe appeared on the landing above carrying off a rather reluctant Miss Scroby to her room for a real good talk; a crash and an unmistakable giggle proclaimed a minor rag in progress in the common room across the hall in which Sydney Sheldrick was busy. The study door closed on Oswald....

Joan and Huntley passed by outside his window. He sat down in front of his fire, poked it into a magnificent blaze, lit a cigar and sat thinking. The beat of dancing, the melody of the gramophone and a multitude of less distinct sounds soaked in through the door to him.

He was, he reflected, rather like a strange animal among all this youth. They treated him as something remotely old; he was one-and-fifty, and yet this gregarious stir and excitement that brightened their eyes and quickened their blood stirred him too. He couldn't help a feeling of envy; he had missed so much in his life. And in his younger days the pace had been slower. These young people were actually noisier, they were more reckless, they did more and went further than his generation had gone. In his time, with his sort of people, there had been the virtuous life which was, one had to admit it, slow, and the fast life which was noisily, criminally, consciously and vulgarly vicious. This generation didn't seem to be vicious, and was anything but slow. How far did they go? lie had been noting little things between Peter and this Reinhart girl. What were they up to between them? He didn't understand. Was she manoeuvring to marry the boy? She must be well on the way to thirty, twenty-six or twenty-seven perhaps, she hadn't a young girl's look in her eyes. Was she just amusing herself by angling for calf love? Was she making a fool of Peter? Their code of manners was so easy; she would touch his hands, and once Peter had stroked her bare forearm as it lay upon the table. She had looked up and smiled. Leaving her arm on the table. One could not conceive of Dolly permitting such things. Was this an age of daring innocence, or what was coming to the young people?

Joan seemed more dignified than the others, but she, too, had her quality of prematurity. At her age Dolly had dressed in white with a pink sash. At least, Dolly must have been about Joan's age when first he had seen her. Eighteen — seventeen? Of course a year or so makes no end of difference just at this age....

From such meditations Oswald was roused by the tumult of a car outside. He took a wary glimpse from his window at this conveyance, and discovered that it was coloured an unusual bright chocolate colour, and had its chauffeur — a depressed-looking individual — in a livery to match. He went out into the hall to discover the large presence, the square face, the "whisker," and the china-blue eyes of Lady Charlotte Sydenham. He knew she was in England, but he had had no idea she was near enough to descend upon them. She stood in the doorway surveying the Christmas disorder of the hall. Some one had adorned Oswald's stuffed heads with paper caps, the white rhinoceros was particularly motherly with pink bonnet-strings under its throat, a box of cigarettes had been upset on the table amidst various hats, and half its contents were on the floor, which was also littered with scraps of torn paper from the crackers; from the open door of the library came the raucous orchestration of the gramophone, and the patter and swish of dancers.

"I thought you'd be away," said Aunt Charlotte, a little checked by the sight of Oswald. "I'm staying at Minchings on my way to sit on the platform at Cambridge. We 're raising money to get those brave Ulstermen guns. Something has to be done if these Liberals are not to do as they like with us. They and their friends the priests. But I knew there'd be a party here. And those aunts. So I came.... Who are all these young people you have about?"

"Miscellaneous friends," said Oswald.

"You've got a touch of grey in your hair," she noted.

"I must get a big blond wig," he said.

"You might do worse."

"You're looking as fresh as paint," he remarked, scrutinizing her steadfastly bright complexion. "Is that the faithful Unwin sitting and sniffing in the car? It's a rennet face."

"She can sit," said Lady Charlotte. "I shan't stay ten minutes, and she's got a hot-water bottle and three rugs. But being so near I had to

come and see what was being done with those wards of mine."

"Former wards," Oswald interjected.

"The Gal I passed. Where is Master Stubland? I'11 just look at him. Is he one of these people making a noise in here?"

She went to the door of the library and surveyed the scene with an aggressive lorgnette. The furniture had been thrust aside with haste and indignity, the rugs rolled up from the parquet floor, and Babs Sheldrick was presiding over the gramophone and helping and interrupting Sydney in the instruction of Wilmington, of Peter and Hetty and of Adela and Sopwith Greene in some special development of the tango. All the young people still wore their paper caps and were heated and dishevelled. In the window-seat the convalescent suffragette was showing wrist tricks to one of the young men from Cambridge. "Party!" said Lady Charlotte. "Higgledy-piggledy I call it. Which is Peter?"

Peter was indicated.

"Well, he's grown! Who's that fast-looking girl he's hugging?"

Peter detached himself from Hetty and came forward.

His ancient terror of the whisker-woman still hung about him, but he made a brave show of courage. "Glad you've not forgotten us, Lady Charlotte," he said.

"Not much Stubland about him," she remarked to Oswald. "There's a photograph of you before you blew your face off—"

"It's his mother he's like," said Oswald, laying a hand on Peter's shoulder.

"I never saw a family harp on themselves more than the Sydenhams," the lady declared. "It's like the Habsburg chin.... This one of the new improper dances, Peter?"

"*Honi soit*," said Peter.

"People have been whipped at the cart's tail for less. In my mother's time no decent woman waltzed. Even — in crinolines. Now a waltz isn't close enough for them."

The gramophone came to an end and choked. "Thank goodness!" said Lady Charlotte.

"Won't you dance yourself, Lady Charlotte?" said Peter, standing up to her politely.

The hard blue eye regarded him with a slightly impaired

disfavour, but the old lady made no reply.

They heard the startled voice of the youth from Cambridge. “It’s her!”...

But the sting of the call was at its end.

“So that’s Peter,” said Lady Charlotte, as the chauffeur and Oswald assisted her back into her liver-coloured car. “I told you I saw the Gal?”

“Joan?”

“I passed her on the road half a mile from here. Came upon her and her l gentleman friend’ — I suppose she’d call him — as we turned a corner. A snap-shot so to speak. It’s the walking-out instinct. Blood will tell. I saw her, but she didn’t see me. Lost, she was, to things mundane. But it was plain enough how things were. A tiff. Some lovers’ quarrel. Wake up, Unwin.”

“What do you mean?”

“What I say,” said Lady Charlotte.

“That fellow Huntley!”

“*Ha*! So now you’ll lock the stable door! What else was to be expected?”

“But this is nonsense!”

“I may be mistaken. I hope I am mistaken. I just give you my impression. I’m not a fool, Oswald, though it’s always been your pleasure to treat me as one. Time shows.”

There was a pause while rugs with loud monograms were adjusted about her.

“Well, I’m glad I came over. I wanted to see the Great Experiment. I said at the time it can’t end well. Bad in the beginnings. No woman to help him — except for those two Weird Sisters. No religion. You see? The boy’s a young Impudence. The girl’s in some mess already. What did I tell you!”

Oswald was late with his recovery.

“Look here, auntie! you keep your libellous mind off my wards.”

“Home, Parbury!” said Lady Charlotte to the chocolate-uniformed chauffeur.

She fired a parting shot.

“I warned you long ago, you’d get the Gal into a thoroughly false position....”

She was getting away after her raid with complete impunity. Never before had she scored like this. Was Oswald growing* old? She made her farewell of him with a stately gesture of head and hand. She departed disconcertingly serene. A flood of belated repartee rushed into Oswald's mind. But except for a violent smell of petrol and a cloud of smoke and a kind of big scar of chocolate on the retina nothing remained now of Lady Charlotte.

In the hall he paused before a mirror and examined that touch of grey.

§ 20

But it had not been a lovers' quarrel that had blinded Joan to the passing automobile. It had been the astounding discovery of her real relationship to Peter. So astounding had that been that at the moment she was not only regardless of the passing traffic but oblivious of Huntley and every other circumstance of her world.

Huntley was not one of those people who love; he was a pursuing egotist with an unwarrantable scorn for the intelligence of his fellow-creatures. He liked to argue and show people that they were wrong in a calm, scornful manner; The *Pernambuco Bun-shop* was a very sarcastic work. He was violently attracted by the feminine of all ages; it fixed his attention with the vast possibilities of admiration and triumph it offered him. And he had greedy desires. Joan attracted him at first because she was admired. He saw how Wilmington coveted her. She had a prestige in her circle. She had, too, a magnetism of her own. Before he realized the slope down which he slid, he wanted her so badly that he thought he was passionately in love. It kept him awake of nights, and distracted him from his work. He did not want to marry her. That was against his principles. That was the despicable way of ordinary human beings. He lived on a higher plane. But he wanted her as a monkey wants a gold watch — he wanted this new, fresh, lovely and beautiful thing just to handle and feel as his own.

There was little charm about Huntley and less companionship. He was too arrogant for companionship. But he abounded in ideas, he

knew much, and so he interested her. He talked. He pursued her with the steadfast scrutiny of his large grey eyes — and with arguments. He tried to argue and manoeuvre Joan into a passionate love for him.

Well, Joan had a broad brow; she thought things over; she was amenable to ideas.

He harped on "freedom." He carried freedom far beyond the tempered liberties of ordinary human association. Any ordinary belief was by his standards a limitation of freedom. There was a story that he had once been caught burgling a house in St. John's Wood and had been let off by the magistrate only because the crime seemed absolutely motiveless. No doubt he had been trying to convince himself of his freedom from prejudice about the rights of property. He had an obscure idea that he could induce Joan to plunge into wild depravities merely to prove himself free from her own decent instincts. But he was ceasing to care for his argument if only he could induce her.

There was a moment when he said, "Joan, you are the one woman" — he always called her a woman— "who could make me marry her."

"I'll spare you," said Joan succinctly.

"Promise me that."

"Promise."

"Anyhow."

"Anyhow."

On this Christmas afternoon he discoursed again upon freedom. "You, Joan, might be the freest of the free, if only you chose. You are absolutely your own mistress. Absolutely.—"

"I have a guardian," she said.

"You 're of age."

"No; I'm nineteen."

"You — it happens, were of age at eighteen, 'Joan." He watched her face. He had been burning to get to this point for weeks. "Even about your birth there was freedom."

"So *you* know that."

"Icy voice! To me it seems the grandest thing. When I reflect that I, alas! was born in loveless holy wedlock I grit my teeth."

"Oh! I don't care. But how do you know?"

“It’s fairly well known, Joan. It’s no very elaborate secret. I’ve got a little volume of your father’s poetry.”

She hesitated. “I didn’t know my father wrote poetry,” she said.

“It was all Will Sydenham ever did that was worth doing — except launch you into the world. He was a dramatic critic and something of a journalist, I believe. Stoner of the Post knew him quite well. But all this is ancient history to you.”

“It isn’t. Nobody has told me.... I didn’t know.”

“But what did you think?”

“Never mind what I thought. Every one doesn’t talk with your freedom. I’ve never been told. Who was my mother?”

“Stoner says she died in hospital. Soon after you were born. He never knew her name.”

“Wasn’t it Stubland?”

“Lord, No! Why should it be?”

“But then—”

“That’s one of the things that makes you so splendidly new, Joan. You start clean in the world — like a new Eve. Without even an Adam to your name. Fatherless, motherless, sisterless, brotherless. You fall into the world like a meteor!”

She stood astonished at the way in which she had blundered. Brotherless! If Huntley had not drawn her back by the arm Lady Charlotte’s car would have touched her....

§ 21

That night some one tapped at the bedroom door of Aunt Phyllis. “Come in,” she cried, slipping into her dressing-gown, and Joan entered. She was still wearing the dress of spangled black in which she had danced with Huntley and Wilmington and Peter. She went to her aunt’s fire in silence and stood over it, thinking.

“You’re having a merry Christmas, little Joan?” said Aunt Phyllis, coming and standing beside her.

“Ever so merry, Auntie. We go it — don’t we?”

Aunt Phyllis looked quickly at the flushed young face beside her, opened her mouth to speak and said nothing. There was a silence, it

seemed a long silence, between them. Then Joan asked in a voice that she tried to make off-hand, “Auntie. Who was my father?”

Aunt Phyllis was deliberately matter-of-fact. “He was the brother of Dolly — Peter’s mother.”

“Where is he?”

“He was killed by an omnibus near the Elephant and Castle when you were two years old.”

“And my mother?”

“Died three weeks after you were born.”

Joan was wise in sociological literature. “The usual fever, I suppose,” she said.

“Yes,” said Aunt Phyllis.

“Do you know much about her?”

“Very little. Her name was Debenham. Fanny Debenham.”

“Was she pretty?”

“I never saw her. It was Dolly — Peter’s mother — who went to her....”

“So that’s what I am,” said Joan, after a long pause.

“Only we love you. What does it matter? Dear Joan of my heart,” and Aunt Phyllis slipped her arm about the girl’s shoulder.

But Joan stood stiff and intent, not answering her caress.

“I knew — in a way,” she said.

The thought that consumed her insisted upon utterance. “So I’m not Peter’s half-sister,” she said.

“But have you thought?...”

Joan remained purely intellectual. “I’ve thought dozens of things. And I thought at last it was that.... Why was I called Stubland? I’m not a Stubland.”

“It was more convenient. It grew up.”

“It put me out. It has sent me astray....”

She remained for a time taking in this new aspect of things so intently as to be regardless of the watcher beside her. Then she roused herself to mask her extravagant preoccupation. “You’re no relation then of mine?” she said.

“No.”

“You’ve been so kind to me. A mother....”

Aunt Phyllis was weeping facile tears. “Have I been kind, dear?

Have I seemed kind? I've always wanted to be kind. And I've loved you, Joan, my dear. And love you."

"And Nobby?"

"Nobby too."

"You've been bricks to me, both of you. No end. Aunt

Phoebe too. And Peter? Does Peter know? Does he know what I am?"

"I don't know. I don't know what he knows, Joan."

"If it hadn't been for the same surname. Joan Debenham.... I've had fancies. I've thought Nobby, perhaps, was my father.... Queer!... Why did you people bother yourselves about me?"

"My dear, it was the most natural thing in the world."

"I suppose it was — for you. You've been so decent —

"Every woman wants a daughter," said Aunt Phyllis in a whisper, and then almost inaudibly; "you are mine."

"And the tempers I've shown. The trouble I've been. All these years. I wonder what Peter knows? He must suspect. He must have ideas.... 'Joan Debenham — from outside."

She stood quite still with the red firelight leaping up to light her face, and caressing the graceful lines of her slender form. She stood for a time as still as stone. Had she, after all, a stony heart? Aunt Phyllis stood watching her with a pale, tear-wet, apprehensive face. Then abruptly the girl turned and held out her arms.

"Can I ever thank you?" she cried, with eyes that now glittered with big tears....

Presently Aunt Phyllis was sitting in her chair stroking Joan's dark hair, and Joan was kneeling, staring intently at some strange vision in the fire. "Do you mind my staying for a time?" she asked. "I want to get used to it. It's just as though there wasn't anything — but just here. I've lost my aunt — and found a mother."

"My Joan," whispered Aunt Phyllis. "My own dear Joan."

"Always I have thought Peter was my brother — always. My half brother. Until today."

It was Adela who inflicted Joan's second shock upon her, and drove away the last swirling whispers of adolescent imaginations and moon mist from the hard forms of reality. This visit she had seemed greatly improved to Joan; she was graver. Visibly she thought, and no longer was her rolling eye an invitation to masculine enterprise. She came to Joan's room on Boxing Day morning to make up dresses with her for the night's dance, and she let her mind run as she stitched. Every one was to come in fancy dress; the vicarage girls would come and the Braughing people. Every one was to represent a political idea. Adela was going to be Tariff Reform. All her clothes were to be tattered and unfinished, she said, even her shoes were to have holes. She would wear a broken earring in one ear. "I don't quite see your point," said Joan.

"Tariff Reform means work for all, dear," Adela explained gently.

Days before Joan had planned to represent Indian Nationalism. It was a subject much in dispute between her and Peter, whose attitude to India and Indians seemed to her unreasonably reactionary — in view of all his other opinions. She could never let her controversies with Peter rest; the costume had been aimed at him. She was going to make up her complexion with a little brown, wear a sari, sandals on bare feet, and a band of tinsel across her forehead. She had found some red Indian curtain stuff that seemed to be adaptable for the sari. She worked now in a preoccupied manner, with her mind full of strange thoughts. Sometimes she listened to what Adela was saying, and sometimes she was altogether within herself. But every now and then Adela would pull her back to attention by a question.

"Don't you think so, Joan?"

"Think what!" asked Joan.

"Love's much more our business than it is theirs."

That struck Joan. "Is it?" she asked. She had thought the shares in the business were equal and opposite.

"All this waiting for a man to discover himself in love with you; it's rot. You may wait till Doomsday."

"Still, they do seem to fall in love."

"With any one. A man's in love with women in general, but women fall in love with men in particular. We're the choosers. Naturally. We want a man, that man and no other, and all our own.

They don't feel like that. And we have to hang about pretending they choose and trying to make them choose without seeming to try to make them. Well, we're altering all that. When I want a man—"

Adela's pause suggested a particular reference.

"I'll get him somehow," she said intently.

"If you mean to get him — if you don't mind much the little things that happen meanwhile — you'll get him," said Adela, as though she repeated a creed. "But, of course, you can't make terms. When a man knows that a woman is his, when he's sure of it — absolutely, then she's got him for good. Sooner or later he must come to her. I haven't had my eyes open just for show, Joan, this last year or so."

"Good luck, Adela," said Joan.

Adela attempted no pretences. "It stands to reason if you

love a man " Her eyes filled with tears. "Love his

very self. You can make him happy.and safe. Be his line of least resistance. But the meanwhile is hard—"

Adela stitched furiously.

"That's why you came down here?" Joan asked.

"You haven't seen?" Adela's preoccupation with Sop-with Greene had been the most conspicuous fact in the party. "Once or twice a gleam," said Joan.

"Ask him to play tonight, dear," said Adela. "Some of his own things."

But now the last checks upon Adela's talk were removed. She wanted to talk endlessly and unrestrainedly about love. She wanted to hear herself saying all the generosities and devotions she contemplated. "There's no bargain in love," said Adela. "You just watch and give." Running through all her talk was a thread of speculation; she was obsessed by the idea of the relative blindness and casualness of love in men. "We used to dream of lovers who just concentrated upon us," she said. "But there's something nimmy-pimmy in a man concentrating on a woman. He ought to have a Job, something Big, his Art, his Aim — Something. One wouldn't really respect a man who didn't do something Big. Love's a nuisance to a real man, a disturbance, until some woman takes care of him."

"Couldn't two people — take care of each other?" asked Joan.

“Oh, that’s Ideal, Joan,” said Adela as one who puts a notion aside. “A man takes his love where he finds it. On his way to other things. The easier it is to get the better he likes it. That’s why, so often, they take up with any — sort of creature. And why one needn’t be so tremendously jealous....”

Adela reflected. “I don’t care a bit about him and Hetty.”

“Hetty Reinhart?”

“Everybody talked about them. Didn’t you hear? But of course you were still at school. Of course there’s that studio of hers. You know about her? Yes. She has a studio. Most convenient. She does as she pleases. It amused him, I suppose. Men don’t care as we do. They’re just amused. Men can fall in love for an afternoon — and out of it again. He makes love to her and he’s not even jealous of her. Not a bit. He doesn’t seem to mind a rap about Peter.”

She babbled on, but Joan’s mind stopped short.

“Adela,” she said, “what is this about Hetty and Peter?”

“The usual thing, I suppose, dear. You don’t seem to hear of anything at Cambridge.”

“But you don’t mean!”

“Well, I know something of Hetty. And I’ve got eyes.”

“You mean to say she’s — she’s got Peter?”

“It shows plainly enough.”

“*My* Peter!” cried Joan sharply.

“You’re not an Egyptian princess,” said Adela.

“You mean — he’s gone — Peter’s gone — to her studio! That — things like that have happened?”

Adela stared at her friend. “These things have to happen, Joan.”

“But he’s only a boy yet.”

“She doesn’t think he’s a boy. Why! he’s almost of age! Lot of boy about Peter!”

“But do you mean?”

“I don’t mean anything, Joan, if you’re going to look like that. You’ve got no right to interfere in Peter’s love affairs. Why should you? Don’t we all live for experience?”

“But,” said Joan, “Peter is different.”

“No. No one is different,” said Adela.

“But I tell you he’s my Peter.”

“He’s your brother, of course.”

“*No*!”

“Your half brother then. Everybody knows that, Joan — thanks to the Sheldricks. A sister can’t always keep her brothers away from other girls.”

Joan was on the verge of telling Adela that she was not even Peter’s half sister, but she restrained herself. She stuck to the thing that most concerned her now.

“It’s spoiling him,” she said. “It will make a mess of him. Why! he may think that is love, that! — slinking off to a studio. The nastiness! And she’s had a dozen lovers. She’s a common thing. She just strips herself here and shows her arms and shoulders because she’s — just that.”

“She’s really in love with him anyhow,” said Adela. “She’s gone on him. It’s amusing.”

“Love! That — love! It makes me sick to think of it,” said Joan.

“A man isn’t made like that,” said Adela. “Peter has to go his own way.”

“Peter,” said Joan, “who used to be the cleanest thing alive.”

“Good sisters always feel like that,” said Adela. “I know how shocked I was when first I heard of Teddy.... It isn’t the same thing to men, Joan. It isn’t indeed....”

“Dirty Peter,” said Joan with intense conviction. “Of course I’ve known. Of course I’ve known. Any one could see. Only I wouldn’t know.”

She thrust the striped red stuff for her Indian dress from her.

“I shan’t be Indian Nationalism, Adela, after all. Somehow I don’t care to be. Why should I cover myself up in this way?”

“You’d look jolly.”

“No. I want something with black in it. And red. And my arms and shoulders showing. Why shouldn’t we all dress down to Hetty? She has the approval of the authorities. Aunt Phoebe applauds every stitch she takes off. Freedom — with a cap of Liberty.”

“Hetty said something about being Freedom,” hesitated Adela.

“Then I shall come as Anarchy-,” said Joan, staring at the red stuff upon the table before her.

Came a pause.

“I don’t see why Peter should have all the fun in life,” said Joan.

§ 23

Joan as Anarchy made a success that evening at Pelham Ford. In the private plans of Hetty Reinhart that success had not been meant for Joan. Hetty as Freedom gave the party her lithe arms, her slender neck, and so much of her back that the two vicarage girls, who had come very correctly in powder and patches as Whig and Tory, were sure that it was partly accidental. On Hetty’s dark hair perched a Phrygian cap, and she had a tricolour skirt beneath a white bodice that was chiefly decolletage and lace. About her neck was a little band of black which had nothing to do with Freedom; it was there for the sake of her slender neck. She was much more like *La Vie Parisienne*. She was already dancing with Peter when Joan, who had delayed coming down until the music began, appeared in the doorway. Nobby, wrapped in a long toga-like garment of sun-gold and black that he alleged qualified him to represent Darkest Africa, was standing by the door, and saw the effect of Joan upon one of the Braughing boys before he discovered her beside him.

Her profile was the profile of a savage. She lifted her clear-cut chin as young savage women do, and her steady eyes regarded Hetty and Peter. Her black hair was quite unbound and thrown back from her quiet face, and there was no necklace, no bracelet, not a scrap of adornment nor enhancement upon her arms or throat. It had not hitherto occurred to Oswald that his ward had the most beautiful neck and shoulders in the world, or that Joan was as like what Dolly once had been as a wild beast is like a cherished tame one. But he did presently find these strange ideas in his mind.

Her dress was an exiguous scheme of slashes and tatters in black and bright red. She was bare ankled — these modern young people thought nothing of that — but she had white dancing shoes upon her feet.

“Joan!” said Huntley, advancing with an air of proprietorship.

“No,” said Joan with a gesture of rejection. “I don’t want to dance with any one in particular. I’m going to dance alone.”

“Well — dance!” said Huntley with a large courtly movement of a white velvet cloak all powdered with gold crosses and fleur-de-lys, that he pretended was a symbol of Reaction.

“When I choose,” said Joan. “ And as I choose.”

Across the room Peter was staring at her, and she was looking at Peter. He tripped against Hetty, and for a little interval the couple was out of step. “Come on, Peter,” said Hetty, rallying him.

Joan appeared to forget Peter and every one.

There was dancing in her blood, and this evening she meant to dance. Her body felt wonderfully light and as supple as a whip under her meagre costume. There was something to be said for this semi-nudity after all. The others were dancing a two-step with such variations as they thought fit, and there was no objection whatever at Pelham Ford to solo enterprises. Joan could invent dances. She sailed out into the room to dance as she pleased.

Oswald watched her nimble steps and the whirling rhythms of her slender body. She made all the others seem overdressed and clumsy and heavy. Her face had a grave preoccupied expression.

Huntley stood for a moment or so beside Oswald, and then stepped out after her to convert her dance into a duet. He too was a skilful and inventive dancer, and the two coquetted for a time amidst the other couples.

Then Joan discovered Wilmington watching her and Huntley from the window bay. She danced evasively through Huntley’s circling entanglements, and seized Wilmington’s hand and drew him into the room.

“I can’t dance, Joan,” he said, obeying her. “You know I can’t dance.”

“You have to dance,” she said, aglow and breathing swiftly. “Trust me.”

She took and left his hands and took them again and turned him about so skilfully that a wonderful illusion was produced in Wilmington’s mind and in those about him that indeed he could dance. Huntley made a crouching figure of jealousy about them; he spread himself and his cloak into fantastic rhombs — and then the music ceased....

“The Argentine Tango!” cried Huntley. “Joan, you must tango.”

“Never.”

“Dance Columbine to my Harlequin then.”

“And stand on your knee? I should break it.”

“Try me,” said Huntley.

“Kneel,” said Joan. “Now take my hands. Prepare for the shock.” And she leapt lightly to his knee and posed for a second, poised with one toe on Huntley’s thigh, and was down again.

“Do it again, Joan,” he cried with enthusiasm. “Do it again.”

“Let us invent dances,” cried Aunt Phyllis. “Let us invent dances. Couldn’t we dance charades?”

“Let them dance as nature meant them to,” said Aunt Phoebe’s deepest tones. “*Madly*!”

“Shall we try that Tango we did the other night?” said Hetty, coming behind Peter.

Peter had come forward to the group in the centre of the room. Old habits were strong in him, and he had a vague feeling that this was one of the occasions when Joan ought to be suppressed. “We’re getting chaotic,” he said.

“You see, Peter, I’m Anarchy,” said Joan.

“An ordered Freedom is the best,” said Peter without reflecting on his words.

“Nobby, I want to dance with you,” said Joan.

“I’ve never danced anything but a Country Dance — you know the sort of thing in which people stand in rows — in my life,”said Oswald.

“A country dance,” cried Joan. “Sir Roger de Coverley.”

“We want to try a fox-trot we know,” complained one of the Branching guests.

Two parties became more and more distinctly evident in the party. There was a party which centred around Hetty and the Sheldrick girls, which was all for the rather elaborately planned freak dances they had more or less learnt in London, the Bunny-Hugs, the Fox-Trot, and various Tangoes. Most of the Londoners were of this opinion, Sopwith Greene trailed Adela with him, and Huntley was full of a passionate desire to guide Joan’s feet along the Tango path. But Joan’s mind by a kind of necessity moved contrariwise to Hetty’s. Either, she argued, they must dance in the old staid ways —

Oswald and the Vicarage girls applauding — or dance as the spirit moved them.

"Oh, dance your old Fox-Trots," she cried, with a gesture that seemed to motion Huntley and Hetty together. "Have your music all rattle and rag-time like sick people groaning in trains. That's neither here nor there. I want to dance to better stuff than that. Come along, Willy."

She seized on Wilmington's arm.

"But where are you going?" cried Huntley.

"I'm going to dance Chopin in the hall — to the pianola."

"You're going to play," she told Wilmington.

"But you can't," said Peter.

Joan disappeared with her slave. A light seemed to go out from the big library as she went. "Now we can get on," said Hetty, laying hands on her Peter.

For a time the Fox-Trot ruled. The Vicarage girls didn't do these things, and drifted after Joan. So did Oswald. Towards the end the dancers had a sense of a cross-current of sound in the air, of some adverse influence thrown across their gymnastics. When their own music stopped, they became aware of that crying voice above the thunder, the Revolutionary Etude.

There was a brief listening pause. "Now, how the deuce," said Huntley, "can she be dancing *that*?"

He led the way to the hall....

"I'm tired of dancing," whispered Hetty. "Stay back. They're all going. I want you to kiss the little corner of my mouf."

Peter looked round quickly, and seized his privilege with unseemly haste. "Let's see how Joan is dancing that old row," he said....

Animation, boldness, and strict relegation of costume to its function of ornament had hitherto made Hetty the high light of this little gathering. She was now to realize how insecure is this feminine predominance in the face of fresher youth and greater boldness. And Joan was full of a pretty girl's discovery that she may do all that she dares to do. For a time — and until it is time to pay.

Life had intoxicated Joan that night. A derision of seemliness possessed her. She was full of impulse and power. She felt able to

dominate every one. At one time or other she swept nearly every man there except Oswald and Peter and Pryce into her dancing. Two of the Braughing youths fell visibly in love with her, and Huntley lost his head, badgered her too much to dance, and then was offended and sulked in a manner manifest to the meanest capacity. And she kissed "Wilmington.

That was her wildest impulse. She came into the study where he was playing the pianola for her dancing. She wanted him to change the roll for the first part of the Kreutzer Sonata, and found herself alone with him. She loved him because he was so completely and modestly hers. She bent over him to take off the roll from the instrument, and found her face near his forehead. "Dear old Willy," she whispered, and put her hand on his shoulder and brushed his eyebrows with her lips.

Then she was remorseful.

"It doesn't mean anything, Willy," she said.

"I know it doesn't," he said in a voice of the deepest melancholy.

"Only you are a dear all the same," she said. "You are clean. You're right."

"If it wasn't for my damned Virtues " said Wilmington. "But anyhow. Thank you, Joan — very much. Shall I play you this right through?"

"A little slowly," she said. "It's marked too fast," and went towards the open door.

Then she flitted back to him.... Her intent face came close to his. "I don't love any one, Willy," she said. "I'm not the sort. I just dance."

They looked at each other.

"I love *you*," said Wilmington, and watched her go.

But she had made him ridiculously happy....

She danced through the whole Kreutzer Sonata. The Kreutzer Sonata has always been a little dirty since Tolstoy touched it. Tolstoy pronounced it erotic. There are men who can find a lascivious import in a Corinthian capital. The Kreutzer Sonata therefore had a strong appeal to Huntley's mind. These associations made it seem to him different from other music, just as calling this or that substance a "drug" always dignified it in his eyes with the rich suggestions of

vice. He read strange significances into Joan's choice of that little music as he watched her over the heads of the Braughing girls. But Joan just danced.

At supper she found herself drifting to a seat near Peter. She left him to his Hetty, and went up the table to a place under Oswald's black wing. The supper at Pelham Ford was none of your stand-up affairs. Mrs. Moxton's ideas of a dance supper were worthy of Britannia. Oswald carved a big turkey and Peter had cold game pie, and Aunt Phyllis showed a delicate generosity with a sharp carver and a big ham. There were hot potatoes and various salads, and jugs of lemonade and claret cup for every one, and whisky for the mature. Joan became a sober enquirer about African dancing.

"It's the West Coast that dances," said Oswald. "There's richer music on the West Coast than all round the Mediterranean,"

"All this American music comes from the negro," he declared. "There's hardly a bit of American music that hasn't colour in its blood."

After supper Joan was the queen of the party. Adela was in love with her again, as slavish as in their schooldays, and the Sheldricks and the Braughing boys and girls did her bidding. "Let's do something processional," said Joan. "Let us dress up and do the Funeral March of a Marionette."

Hetty didn't catch on to that idea, and Peter was somehow overlooked. Most of the others scampered off to get something black and cast aside anything too coloured. Aunt Phyllis knew of some black gauze and produced it. There were black curtains in the common room, and these were seized upon by Huntley and Wilmington. They made a coffin of the big black lacquered post-box in the hall, and a bier of four alpenstocks and a drying-board from the scullery.

Joan was chief mourner, and after the Funeral March was over danced the sorrows of life before the bier to the first part of the Fifth Symphony.

Hetty and Peter sat close together and yet unusually apart upon the broad window-seat. Hetty looked tired and Peter seemed inattentive. Perhaps they had a little overdone each other's charm that Christmas.

And only once more that evening did it happen that Peter and Joan met face to face. Nearly everybody poured out into the garden to see the guests go off. The Braughing people crowded hilariously into a car; the others walked. The weather had suddenly hardened, a clear dry cold made the paths and road very like metal, and not the littlest star was missing from the quivering assembly in the sky.

"We'll have skating yet," cried the Braughing party.

Adela and Joan and Wilmington and Pryce came with Huntley and Greene and the vicarage girls along the road and over the ice-bound water-splash as far as the vicarage gate. "Too cooold to say good-bye," cried Joan. "Oh, my poor bare legs!" and led a race back.

Adela was left far behind, but neither Wilmington nor Pryce would let Joan win without a struggle. The three shot in through the wide front door almost abreast, and Joan ran straight at Peter and stopped short within two feet of him.

"I've won! "said Joan.

Just for an instant the two looked at one another, and it seemed to Joan afterwards that she had seen something then in Peter's eyes, something involuntary that she had caught just once before in them — when she had come upon him by chance in Petty Cury when first she had gone up to Cambridge.

A silly thing to think about! What did it matter? What did anything matter t Life was a dance, and Joan, thank heaven! could dance. Peter was just nothing at all. Nothing at all. Nothing at all.

"I wonder, Joan, how many miles you have pranced tonight!" said Aunt Phyllis, kissing her good night.

"Joan," said Adela, "you are The Loveliest."...

For a minute or so Joan stood in front of her looking-glass, studying a flushed, candle-lit figure....

"Pah!" she said at last. "*Hetty*!" and flung her scanty clothes aside.

She caught the reflection of herself in the mirror again. She spread out her hands in a gesture to the pretty shape she saw there, and stood.

"What's the Good of it!" she said at last.

As soon as Joan's head touched the pillow that night she fell asleep, and she slept as soundly as a child that had been thoroughly naughty and all at sixes and sevens, and that has been well slapped

and had a good cry to wind up with, and put to bed. In all the world there is no sounder sleep than that.

CHAPTER XII. — THE WORLD ON THE EVE OF WAR

§ 1

OSWALD sat in the March sunshine that filled and warmed his little summerhouse, and thought about Joan and Peter....

His sudden realization of Joan's mental maturity, the clear warning it brought to him that the task and opportunity of education was passing out of his hands, that already the reckoning of consequences was beginning for both his wards, set his mind searching up and down amidst the memories of his effort, to find where he could have slipped, where blundered and failed. He perceived now how vague had been the gesture with which he had started, when he proclaimed his intention to give them "the best education in the world."

The best education in the world is still to seek, and while he had been getting such scraps of second best for them as he could, the world itself, nature, tradition, custom, suggestion, example and accident, had moulded them and made them. When he measured what had been done upon these youngsters by these outward things and compared it with their deliberate education, the schoolmaster seemed to him to be still no more than a half-hearted dwarf who would snare the white horses of a cataract with a noose of packthread.

"The generations running to waste — like rapids."

But there are stronger harnessings than packthreads, and there are already engineers in the world who, by taking thought and patient work, can tame the maddest torrent that ever overawed the mind of man. In the end perhaps all torrents will be tamed, and knowledge and purpose put an end to aimless adventure. The schoolmaster will not always be a dwarf....

As our children grow beyond our control we begin to learn something of the reality of education. The world had Joan and Peter now; at the most Oswald could run and shout advice from the bank as they went down the rush. But he knew that he could have done

more for them, and that with a different world he could have done infinitely more for them in their receptive years. They were the children of an age; their restless fever of impulse was but their individual share in a great fever. The whole world now was restless, out of touch with any standards, and manifestly drifting towards great changes.

Neither Joan nor Peter seemed to have any Definite purpose in life. Their impulses were not focused. They were drawn hither and thither. That was the essential failure of their adolescence. Their education had done many good things for them, but it had left their wills as spontaneous, indefinite and unsocial as the will of a criminal. Physically Oswald and the world had done well by them; they were clean-blooded, well grown, well exercised animals; they belonged to a generation of youth measurably taller, finer, and more beautiful than any generation before them. They were swift-footed and nimble. Mentally, too, they were swift and clear. It was not that their ideas were confused but their wills. Each of them could speak and read and write three languages quite well, they could draw well and Peter could draw brilliantly, they were alive to art and music, they read widely, they had the dispassionate, wide, scientific vision of the world. But being so fine and clean it was all the more distressing to realize that these two young people now faced the world with no clear will in them about it or themselves, that Joan seemed consumed with discontents and this dark personal quarrel with Peter, and that Peter could be caught and held by a mere sensual adventure. Hetty Reinhart kept him busy with notes and situations; having created a necessity she went on to create a jealous rivalry. He would be sometimes excited and elated, sometimes manifestly angry and sulky; and his work at Cambridge, which for two years had been conspicuously brilliant, was falling away.

Until Joan's angry outspokenness had forced these facts upon his attention, Oswald had shirked their realization. He had seen with his one watchful eye, but he had not willed to see. A score of facts had lain, like disagreeable letters that one hesitates to answer, uncorrelated in his mind. The disorders of the Christmas party had indeed left him profoundly uneasy. With the new year he went with Peter on a trip to Russia. He wanted the youngster to develop a

vision of the European problem, for Peter seemed blind to the importance of international things. They had crossed to Flushing, travelled straight through to Berlin, gone about Berlin for a few days, run on to St. Petersburg — it was not yet Petrograd — visited a friendly house near the Valdai Hills, spent a busy week in and about Moscow, and returned by way of Warsaw. They saw Germany already trained like an athlete for the adventure of the coming war, and Russia great and disorderly, destined to be taken unawares. Then they returned to England to look again at their own country with eyes refreshed by these contrasts. And all the time Oswald watched Peter and speculated about the thoughts and ideas hidden in Peter's head.

§ 2

This Russian trip had been precipitated by a sudden opportunity. Originally Oswald had planned a Russian tour for his wards on a more considerable scale. Among the unsolved difficulties of this scheme had been his ignorance of Russian. He had thought of employing a courier — but a courier can be a tiresome encumbrance. His friend Bailey, who was an enthusiast for Russia and spoke Russian remarkably well for an Englishman, wrote from Petrograd offering to guide Oswald and Peter about that city, suggesting a visit to a cousin who had married a Russian landowner in Novgorod, and a week or so in Moscow, where some friends of Bailey's would keep a helpful eye on the travellers. It was too good a chance to lose. There was some hasty buying of fur-lined gloves, insertion of wadding under the fur of Oswald's fur coat, and the purchase of a suitable outfit for Peter.

Bailey had his misogynic side, Oswald knew; he thought women troublesome millinery to handle; and he did not include Joan in the invitation. On the whole Oswald did not regret that omission, because it gave him so excellent a chance of being alone with Peter for long spells, and getting near his private thoughts.

It was an expedition that left a multitude of vivid impressions upon the young man's memory; the still, cold, starry night of the departure from Harwich, the lit decks, the black waters, the foaming

wake caught by the ship's lights, the neat Dutch landscape with its black and white cows growing visible as day broke, shivering workers under a chill, red-nosed dawn pouring down by a path near the railway into the factories of some industrial town; the long flat journey across Germany; the Sieges-Allee and the war trophies and public buildings of Berlin; the Sunday morning crowd upon Unter den Linden; the large prosperity of the new suburbs of Berlin; north Germany under an iron frost, a crowd of children sliding and skating near Königsberg; the dingier, vaster effects of Russia, streets in Petrograd with the shops all black and gold and painted with shining pictures of the goods on sale to a population of illiterates, the night crowd in the People's Palace; a sledge drive of ten miles along the ice of a frozen river, a wooden country house behind a great stone portico, and a merry house party that went scampering out after supper to lie on the crisp snow and see the stars between the tree boughs; the chanting service in a little green-cupolaed church and a pretty village schoolmistress in peasant costume; the great red walls of the Kremlin rising above the Moskva and the first glimpse of that barbaric caricature, the cathedral of St. Basil; the painted magnificence of the Troitzkaya monastery; a dirty, evil-smelling little tramp with his bundle and kettle, worshipping unabashed in the Uspenski cathedral; endless bearded priests, Tartar waiters with purple sashes, a whole population in furs and so looking absurdly wealthy to an English eye; a thousand such pictures, keen, bright and vivid against a background of white snow....

The romanticism of the late Victorians still prevailed in Oswald's mind. The picturesqueness of Russia had a great effect upon him. From the passport office at Wirballen with its imposing green-uniformed guards and elaborate ceremonies onward into Moscow, he marked the contrast with the trim modernity of Germany. The wild wintry landscape of the land with its swamps and unkempt thickets of silver birch, the crouching timber villages with their cupolaed churches, the unmade roads, the unfamiliar lettering of the stations, contributed to his impression of barbaric greatness. After the plainly ugly, middle-class cathedral of Berlin he rejoiced at the dark splendours, the green serpentine and incense, of St. Isaac's; he compared the frozen Neva to a greater Thames and stood upon the

Troitzki Bridge rejoicing over the masses of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul. In Petrograd he said, "away from here to the North Pole is Russia and the Outside, the famine-stricken north, the frozen fen and wilderness, the limits of mankind." Moscow made him talk of the mingling of east and west, western and eastern costumes jostled in the streets. He was surprised at the frequency of Chinamen. "Away from here to Vladivostok," he said, "is Russia and all Asia. North, west, east and south there is limitless land. We are an island people. But here one feels the land masses of the earth."

Peter was preoccupied with a gallant attempt to master colloquial Russian in a fortnight by means of a *Russian Self-Taught* he had bought in London; he did not thrust his conversation between Bailey and Oswald, but sometimes when he was alone with his guardian and the mood took him he would talk freely and rather well. He had been reading abundantly and variously; it was evident that at Cambridge he belonged to a talking set. If he had no directive form in his mind he had at any rate something like a systematic philosophy.

It was a profoundly sceptical philosophy. There were moments when Oswald was reminded of Beresford's "Hampdenshire Wonder," who read through all human learning and literature before the age of five, and turned upon its instructor with "Is this *all*?" Peter looked at the world into which he had come, at the Kings and Kaisers demanding devotion to "our person," at the gentlemen waving flags and talking of patriotism and service to empires and races and "nationality," at the churches and priests pursuing their "policies," and in effect he turned to Oswald with the same question. In the background of his imagination it was only too manifest that the nymphs — with a general family resemblance to Hetty Reinhart — danced, and he heard that music of the senses which the decadent young men of the *fin de siècle* period were wont to refer to as "the pipes of Pan."

He and Oswald looked together at Moscow in the warm light of sunset. They were in the veranda of a hill-side restaurant which commanded the huge bend of the river between the Borodinski and the Kruimski bridges. The city lay, wide and massive, along the line of the sky, with little fields and a small church or so in the foreground. The six glittering domes of the great Church of the

Redeemer rose in the centre against the high red wall and the clustering palaces and church cupolas of the Kremlin. Left and right of the Kremlin the city spread, a purple sea of houses and walls, flecked with snowy spaces and gemmed with red reflecting windows, through which the river twisted like a silver eel. Moscow is a city of crosses, every church has its bulbous painted cupola and some have five or six, and every cupola carries its brightly gilded two-armed cross. The rays of the setting sun was now turning all these crosses to pale fire.

Oswald, in spite of his own sceptical opinions, was a little under the spell of the "Holy Russia" legend. He stood with his foot on a chair and rested his jaw on his hand, with the living side of his face turned as usual towards his ward, and tried to express the confused ideas that were stirring in his mind. "This isn't a city like the cities of western Europe, Peter," he said. "This is something different. Those western cities, they grow out of the soil on which they stand; they are there for ever like the woods and hills; there is no other place for London or Rouen or Rome except just where it stands; but this, Peter, is a Tartar camp, frozen. It might have been at Nijni-Novgorod or Yaroslav or Kazan. It might be anywhere upon the Russia plain; only it happens to be here. It's a camp changed to wood and brick and plaster. That's the headquarters camp there, the Tsar's pavilions. And all these crosses everywhere are like the standards outside the tents of the captains."

"And where is it going?" said Peter, looking at Moscow over his fur collar, with his hands deep in his overcoat pockets.

"Asia advancing on Europe — with a new idea.... One understands Dostoevsky better when one sees this. One begins to realize this Holy Russia, as a sort of epileptic genius among nations — like his Idiot, insisting on moral truth, holding up the cross to mankind."

"*What* truth?" asked Peter.

"They seem to have the Christian idea. In a way we Westerns don't. Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and their endless schools of dissent have a character in common. Christianity to a Russian means Brotherhood."

"If it means anything," said Peter.

The youngster reflected.

“I wonder, is there really this Russian idea? I don’t believe very much in these national ideas.”

“Say national character then. This city with its end-less crosses is so in harmony with Russian music, Russian art, Russian literature.”

“Any city that had to be built here would have to look more or less like this,” said Peter.

“If it were built by Americans?”

“If they’d lived here always,” said Peter. “But we’re arguing in a circle. If they’d lived here always the things that have made the Russians Russians, would have made them Russians. I’ve gone too far. Of course there is a Russian character. They’re wanderers, body and brain. Men of an endless land. But —

“Well?”

“Not much of a Russian idea to it.... I don’t believe a bit in all these crosses.”

“You mean as symbols of an idea?”

“Yes. Of course the cross has meant something to people. It must have meant tremendous things to some people. But men imitate. One sticks up a cross because it means all sorts of deep things to him. Then the man down the road thinks he will have a cross too. And the man up the road doesn’t quite see what it’s all about but doesn’t like to be out of it. So they go on, until sticking up crosses becomes a habit. It becomes a necessity. They’d be shocked to see a new church without four or five crosses on it. They organize a business in golden crosses. Everybody says, ‘You must have a cross.’ Long ago every one has forgotten that deep meaning....”

“H’m,” said Oswald, “you think that?”

“It’s just a crowd,” said Peter, thinking aloud. “Underneath the crosses it’s just a swarming and breeding of men.... Like any other men.”

“But don’t you think that all that million odd down there is held together by a distinctive idea? Don’t you feel sometimes the Russian idea about you — like the smell of burnt wood on the breeze?”

“Well, call it a breeze,” said Peter. “It’s like a breeze blowing over mud. It blows now and then. It’s forgotten before it is past. What does it signify?”

He was thinking as he talked. Oswald did not want to interrupt him, and just smiled slightly and looked at Peter for more.

"I don't think there's any great essential differences between cities," said Peter. "It's easy to exaggerate that. Mostly the differences are differences of scenery. Beneath the differences it's the same story everywhere; men shoving about and eating and squabbling and multiplying. We might just as well be looking at London from Hampstead Bridge so far as the human facts go. Here things are done in red and black and gold against a background of white snow; there they are done in drab and grey and green. This is a land of dull tragedy instead of dull comedy, gold crosses on green onions instead of church spires, extremes instead of means, but it's all the same old human thing. Even the King and Tsar look alike, there's a state church here, dissenters, landowners...."

"I suppose there is a sort of parallelism," Oswald conceded....

"We're not big enough yet for big ideas, the Russian idea, or the Christian idea or any such idea," said Peter. "Why pretend we have them?"

"Now that's just it," said Oswald, coming round upon him with an extended finger. "Because we want them so badly."

"Does every one?"

"Yes. Consciously or not. That's where you and I are at issue, Peter."

"Oh, I don't see the ideas at work!" cried Peter. "Except as a sort of flourish of the mind. But look at the everyday life. Wherever we have been — in London, Paris, Italy, Berlin, here, we see every man who can afford it making for the restaurants and going where there are women to be got. Hunger, indulgence, and sex, sex, sex, sex." His voice was suddenly bitter. He turned his face to Oswald for a moment. "We're too little. These blind impulses — I suppose there's a sort of impulse to Beauty in it. Some day perhaps these forces will do something — drive man up the scale of being. But as far as we've got!"

He stared at Moscow again.

He seemed to have done.

"You think we're oversexed?" said Oswald after a pause.

The youngster glanced at his guardian.

“I’m not blind,” he fenced.

Then he laughed with a refreshing cheerfulness. “It’s youthful pessimism, Nobby. My mind runs like this because it’s the fashion. We get so dosed with Schopenhauer and Nietzsche — usually at second hand. We all try to talk like this. Don’t mind me.”

Oswald smiled back.

“Peter, you drive my spirit back to the Victorians,” he said. “I want to begin quoting Longfellow to you. ‘Life is real, life is earnest —

“No!” Peter countered. “But it ought to be.”

“Well, it becomes so. We have Science, and out of Science comes a light. We shall see the Will plainer and plainer.”

“The Will?” said Peter, turning it over in his mind.

“Our own will then,” said Oswald. “Yours, mine, and every right sort of man’s.”

Peter seemed to consider it.

“It won’t be a national will, anyhow,” he said, coming back to Moscow. “It won’t be one of these national ideas. No Holy Russia — or Old England for the matter of that. They’re just — human accumulations. No. I don’t know of this Will at all — any will, Nobby. I can’t see or feel this Will. I wish I could....”

He had said his say. Oswald turned again to the great spectacle of the city. Did all those heavenward crosses now sinking into the dusk amount to no more than a glittering emanation out of the fen of life, an unmeaning *ignis fatuus*, born of a morass of festering desires that had already forgotten it? Or were these crosses indeed an appeal and a promise? Out of these millions of men would Man at last arise?...

Slowly, smoothly, unfalteringly, the brush of the twilight had been sweeping its neutral tint across the spectacle, painting out the glittering symbols one by one. A chill from outer space fell down through the thin Russian air, a dark transparent curtain. Oswald shivered in his wadded coat. Abruptly down below, hard by a ghostly white church, one lamp and then another pricked the deepening blue. A little dark tram-car that crept towards them out of the city ways to fetch them back into the city, suddenly became a glow-worm....

§ 3

Twenty years before Oswald would not have talked in this fashion of the Will. Twenty years before, the social and political order of the world had seemed so stable to an English mind that the thought of a sustaining will was superfluous. Queen Victoria and the whole system had an air of immortal inertia. The scientific and economic teachings under which Oswald's ideas had been shaped recognized no need for wilfully co-ordinated efforts. The end of education, they indicated, was the Diffusion of Knowledge. Victorian thought in England took good motives for granted, seemed indeed disposed to regard almost any motive as equally good for the common weal. Herbert Spencer, that philosopher who could not read Kant, most typical of all English intelligences in those days, taught that if only there were no regulation, no common direction, if every one were to pursue his own individual ends unrestrained, then by a sort of magic, chaos, freed from the interference of any collective direction, would produce order. His supreme gift to a generation of hasty profiteers was the discovery that the blind scuffle of fate could be called "Evolution," and so given an air of intention altogether superior to our poor struggles to make a decent order out of a greedy scramble. For some decades, whatever sections of British life had ceased to leave things to Providence and not bother — not bother — were leaving them to Evolution — and still not bothering....

It was because of Oswald's discovery of the confused and .distressed motives of Joan and Peter and under the suggestions of the more kinetic German philosophy that was slowly percolating into English thought, that his ideas were now changing their direction. Formerly he had thought of nations and empires as if they were things in themselves, loose shapes which had little or nothing to do with the individual lives they contained; now he began to think that all human organizations, large and small alike, exist for an end; they are will forms; they present a purpose that claims the subordination of individual aims. He began to see states and nations as things of education, beings in the minds of men.

The parallelism of Russia and Britain which Peter had made, struck Oswald as singularly acute. They had a closer parallelism with

each other than with France or Italy or the United States or Germany or any of the great political systems of the world. Russia was Britain on land. Britain was Russia in an island and upon all the seas of the globe. One had the dreamy lassitude of an endless land horizon, the other the hardbitten practicality of the salt seas. One was deep-feeling, gross, and massively illiterate, the other was pervaded by a cockney brightness. But each was trying to express and hold on to some general purpose by means of forms and symbols that were daily becoming more conspicuously inadequate. And each appeared to be moving inevitably towards failure and confusion.

One afternoon during their stay in Petrograd, Bailey took Oswald and Peter to see a session of the Duma. They drove in a sledge down the Nevski Prospekt and by streets of ploughed-up and tumbled snow, through which struggled an interminable multitude of sledges bringing firewood into the city, to the old palace of the favourite Potemkin, into which the Duma had in those days been thrust. The Duma was sitting in a big adapted conservatory, and the three visitors watched the proceedings from a little low gallery wherein the speakers were almost inaudible. Bailey pointed out the large proportion of priests in the centre and explained the various party groups; he himself was very sympathetic with the Cadets. They were Anglo-maniac; they idealized the British constitution and thought of a limited monarchy — in the land of extremes....

Oswald listened to Bailey's exposition, but the thing that most gripped his attention was the huge portrait of the Tsar that hung over the gathering. He could not keep his eyes off it. There the figure of the autocrat stood, with its sidelong, unintelligent visage, four times as large as life, dressed up in military guise and with its big cavalry boots right over the head of the president of the Duma. That portrait was as obvious an insult, as outrageous a challenge to the self-respect of Russian men, as a gross noise or a foul gesture would have been.

"You and all the empire exist for ME," said that foolish-faced portrait, with its busby a little on one side and its weak hand on its sword hilt....

It was to that figure they asked young Russia to be loyal.

That dull-faced Tsar and the golden crosses of Moscow presented themselves as Russia to the young. A heavy-handed and very corrupt

system of repression sustained their absurd pretensions. They had no sanction at all but that they existed — through the acquiescences of less intelligent generations. The aged, the prosperous, the indolent, the dishonest, the mean and the dull supported them in a vast tacit conspiracy. Beneath such symbols could a land under the sting of modern suggestions ever be anything but a will welter, a confusion of sentiments and instincts and wilfulness? Was it so wonderful that the world was given the stories of Artzibachev as pictures of the will forms of the Russian young?

§4

Through all that journey Oswald was constantly comparing Peter with the young people he saw. On two occasions he and Peter went to the Moscow Art Theatre. Once they saw *Hamlet* in Russian, and once Tchekhov's *Three Sisters*; and each was produced with a completeness of ensemble, an excellence of mechanism and a dramatic vigour far beyond the range of any London theatre. Here in untidy, sprawling, slushy Moscow shone this diamond of co-operative effort and efficient organization. It set Oswald revising certain hasty generalizations about the Russian character....

But far more interesting than the play to him was the audience. They were mostly young people, and some of them were very young people; students in uniform, bright-faced girls, clerks, young officers and soldiers, a sprinkling of intelligent-looking older people of the commercial and professional classes; each evening showed a similar gathering, a very full house, intensely critical and appreciative. It was rather like the sort of gathering one might see in the London Fabian Society, but there were scarcely any earnest spinsters and many more young men. The Art Theatre, like a magnet, had drawn its own together out of the vast barbaric medley of western and Asiatic, of peasant, merchant, priest, official and professional, that thronged the Moscow streets. And they seemed very delightful young people.

His one eye wandered from the brightly-lit stage to the rows and rows of faces in the great dim auditorium about him, rested on Peter, and then went back to those others. This, then, must be a sample of

the Intelligentsia. These were the youth who figured in so large a proportion of recent Russian literature. How many bright keen faces were there! What lay before them?...

A dark premonition crept into his mind of the tragedy of all this eager life, growing up in the clutch of a gigantic political system that now staggered to its end....

This youth he saw here was wonderfully like the new generation that was now dancing its way into his house at Pelham Ford.

It was curious to note how much more this big dim houseful of young Muscovites was like a British or an American audience than it was to a German gathering. Perhaps there were rather more dark types, perhaps more high cheekbones; it was hard to say....

But all the other north temperate races, it seemed to Oswald, as distinguished from the Germans, had the same suggestion about them of unco-ordinated initiatives. Their minds moved freely in a great old system that had lost its hold upon them. But the German youths were co-ordinated. They were tremendously co-ordinated. Two Sundays ago he and Peter had been watching the Sunday morning parade along Unter den Linden. They had gone to see the white-trousered guards kicking their legs out ridiculously in the goose step outside the Guard House that stands opposite the Kaiser's Palace, they had walked along Unter den Linden to the Brandenburger Tor, and then, after inspecting that vainglorious trophy of piled cannon outside the Reichstag, turned down the Sieges-Allee, and so came back to the Adlon by way of the Leipziger Platz. Peter had been alive to many things, but Oswald's attention had been concentrated almost exclusively on the youngsters they were passing, for the most part plump, pink-faced students in corps caps, very erect in their bearing and very tight in their clothes. They were an absolutely distinct variety of the young human male. A puerile militarism possessed them all. They exchanged salutations with the utmost punctilio. While England had been taking her children from the hands of God, and not so much making them as letting them develop into notes of interrogation, Germany without halt or hesitation had moulded her gift of youth into stiff, obedient, fresh soldiers.

There had been a moment like a thunderclap while Oswald and Peter had been near the Brandenburger Tor. A swift wave of

expectation had swept through the crowd; there had been a galloping of mounted policemen, a hustling of traffic to the side of the road, a hasty lining up of spectators. Then with melodious tootlings and amidst guttural plaudits, a big white automobile carrying a glitter of uniforms had gone by, driven at a headlong pace. “Der Kaiser!” Just for a moment the magnificence hung in the eye — and passed.

What had they seen? Cloaks, helmets, hard visages, one distinctive pallid face; something melodramatic, something eager and in a great hurry, something that went by like the sound of a trumpet, a figure of vast enterprise in shining armour, with mailed fist. This was the symbol upon which these young Germans were being concentrated. This was the ideal that had gripped them. Something very .modern and yet romantic, something stupendously resolute. Going whither? At any rate, going magnificently somewhere. That was the power of it. It was going somewhere. For good or “bad it was an infinitely more attractive lead than the cowardly and oppressive Tsardom that was failing to hold the refractory minds of these young Russians, or the current edition of the British imperial ideal, twangling its idiotic banjo and exhorting Peter and his generation to “tax the foreigner” as a worthy end and aim in life.

Oswald, with his eye on the dim, preoccupied audience about him, recalled a talk that he and Peter had had with a young fellow-traveller in the train between Hanover and Berlin. It had been a very typical young German, glasses and all; and his clothes looked twice as hard as Peter’s, and he sat up stiffly while Peter slouched on the seat. He evidently wanted to air his English, while Peter had not the remotest desire to air his German, and only betrayed a knowledge of German when it was necessary to explain some English phrase the German didn’t quite grasp. The German wanted to know whether Oswald and Peter had been in Germany before, where they were going, what they thought of it, what they were going to think of Berlin.

Responding to counter questions he said he had been twice to England. He thought England was a great country. “Yes — but not systematic. No!”

“You mean undisciplined?”

Yes, it was perhaps undisciplined he meant.

Oswald said that as a foreigner he was most struck by the tremendous air of order in north Germany. The Germans were orderly by nature. The admission proved an attractive gambit.

The young German questioned Oswald's view that the Germans were naturally orderly. Hard necessity had made them so. They had had to discipline themselves, they had been obliged to develop a *Kultur* — encircled by enemies. Now their *Kultur* was becoming a second nature. Every nation, he supposed, brought its present to mankind. Germany's was Order, System, the lesson of Obedience that would constantly make her more powerful. The Germans were perforce a thorough people. Thorough in all they did. Although they had come late into modern industrialism they had already developed social and economic organization far beyond that of any other people. *Nicht wahr?* Their work was becoming necessary to the rest of mankind. In Russia, for example, in Turkey, in Italy, in South America, it was more and more the German who organized, developed, led. "Though we are fenced round," he said, "still — we break out."

There was something familiar and yet novel in all this to Oswald. It was like his first sensation upon reading Shakespeare in German. It was something very familiar — in an unfamiliar idiom. Then he recognized it. This was exactly his own Imperialism — Teutonized. The same assertion of an educational mission....

"Everywhere we go," said the young German, "our superior science, our higher education, our better method prevails. Even in your India—"

He smiled and left that sentence unfinished.

"But your militarism, your sabre rule here at home: this Zabern business; isn't that a little incompatible with this idea of Germany as a great civilizing influence permeating the world?"

"Not at all," said the young German, with the readiness of a word-perfect actor. "Behind our missionaries of order we must have ready the good German sword."

"But isn't the argument of force apt to be a little — decivilizing?"

The young German did not think so. "When I was in England I said, there are three things that these English do not properly understand to use, they are the map or index, the school, and — the

sword. Those three things are the triangle of German life....”

That hung most in Oswald’s mind. He had gone on talking to the young German for a long time about the differences of the British and the German way. He had made Peter and the youngster compare their school and college work, and what was far more striking, the difference in pressure between the two systems. “You press too hard”, he said. “In Alsace you have pressed too hard — in Posen.”

“Perhaps we sometimes press — I do not know,” said the young German. “It is the strength of our determination. We are impatient. We are a young people.” For a time Oswald had talked of the methods of Germany in the Cameroons and of Britain on the Gold Coast, where the German had been growing cacao by the plantation system, turning the natives into slaves, while the British, with an older experience and a longer view, had left the laud in native hands and built up a happy and loyal free cultivation ten times as productive mile for mile as the German. It seemed to him to be one good instance of his general conception of Germany as the land of undue urgency. “Your Wissmann in East Africa was a great man — but everywhere else you drive too violently. You antagonize.” North Germany everywhere, he said, had the same effect upon him of a country “going hard.”

“Germany may be in too much of a hurry,” he repeated.

“We came into world-politics late,” said the young German, endorsing Oswald’s idea from his own point of view. “We have much to overtake yet.”...

The Germans had come into world-politics late. That was very true. They were naive yet. They could still feed their natural egotism on the story of a world mission. The same enthusiasms that had taken Russia to the Pacific — and to Grand Ducal land speculation in Manchuria — and the English to the coolie slavery of the Rand, was taking these Germans now — whither? Oswald did not ask what route to disillusionment Germany might choose. But he believed that she would come to disillusionment. She was only a little later in phase than her neighbours; that was all. In the end they would see that that white-cloaked heroic figure in the automobile led them to futility as surely as the skulking Tsar. Not that way must the nations go....

Oswald saw no premonition of a world catastrophe in this German youngster's devotion to an ideal of militant aggression, nor in the whole broad spectacle of straining preparation across which he and Peter travelled that winter from Aix to Wirballen. He was as it were magically blind. He could stand on the Hanover platform and mark the largeness of the station, the broad spreading tracks, the endless sidings, the tremendous transport preparations, that could have no significance in the world but military intention, and still have no more to say than, " These Germans give themselves elbow-room on their railways, Peter. I suppose land is cheaper." He could see nothing of the finger of fate pointing straight out of all this large tidy preparedness at Peter and their fellow-passengers and all the youth of the world. He thought imperialistic monarchy was an old dead thing in Russia and in Britain and in Germany alike.

In Berlin indeed in every photographer's was the touched -up visage of the Kaiser, looking heroic, and endless postcards of him and of his sons and of. the Kaiserin and little imperial grandchildren and the like; they were as dull and dreary-looking as any royalties can be, and it was inconceivable to Oswald that such figures could really rule the imagination of a great people. He did not realize that all the tragedy in the world might lie behind the words of that young German, "we came into world-politics late," behind the fact that the German imperialist system was just a little less decayed, a little less humorous, a little less indolent and disillusioned than either of its great parallels to the east and west. He did not reflect that no system is harmless until its hands are taken off the levers of power. He could still believe that he lived in an immensely stable world, and that these vast forms of kingdom and empire, with their sham reverences and unmeaning ceremonies and obligations, their flags and militancy and their imaginative senility, threatened nothing beyond the negative evil of uninspired lives running to individual waste. That was the thing that concerned him. He saw no collective fate hanging over all these intent young faces in the Moscow Art Theatre, as over the strutting innocents of patriotic Berlin; he had as yet no intimation of the gigantic disaster that was now so close at hand, that was to torment and shatter the whole youth of the world, that was to harvest the hope and energy of these bright swathes of life....

He glanced at Peter, intent upon the stage.

Peter lay open to every impulse. That was Oswald's supreme grievance then against Tsars, Kings, and Churches. They had not been good enough for Peter. That seemed grievance enough.

He did not imagine yet that they could murder the likes of Peter by the hundred thousand, without a tremor.

He loved the fine lines of the boy's profile, he marked his delicate healthy complexion. Peter was like some wonderful new instrument in perfect condition. And all these other youngsters, too, had something of the same clean fire in them....

Was it all to be spent upon love-making and pleasure-seeking and play? Was this exquisite hope and desire presently to be thrown aside, rusted by base uses, corroded by self-indulgence, bent or broken? "The generations running to waste — like rapids...."

He still thought in that phrase. The Niagara of Death so near to them all now to which these rapids were heading, he still did not hear, did not suspect its nearness....

And Joan — . Prom Peter his thoughts drifted to Joan. Joan apparently could find nothing better to do in life than dance....

Suddenly Peter took a deep breath, sat back, and began to clap. The whole house broke out into a pelting storm of approval.

"Ripping!" said Peter. "Oh! ripping."

He turned his bright face to Oswald. "They do it so well," he said, smiling. "I had forgotten it was in Russian. I seemed to understand every word."

Oswald turned his eye again to *Hamlet* in Gordon Craig's fantastic setting — which Moscow in her artistic profusion could produce when London was too poor to do so.

§ 5

Very similar were the thoughts in Oswald's mind three months later, three months nearer the world catastrophe, as he sat in his summerhouse after Joan had told him of her quarrel with Peter.

Her denunciation of Peter had had the curious effect upon him of making him very anxious about her. So far as Peter went, what she

had told him had but confirmed and made definite what he had known by instinct since the Christmas party. His mind was used now to the idea of Peter being vicious. But he was very much shocked indeed at the discovery that Joan was aware of Peter's vices. That was a new jolt to his mind. In many things Joan and Peter had changed his ideas enormously, but so far he had retained not only his wardroom standards with regard to the morals of a youth, but also his romantic ideals of feminine purity with regard to a girl. He still thought of his own womenkind as of something innocent, immaculate and untouchable, beings in a different world from the girls who "didn't mind a bit of fun" and the women one made love to boldly.

But now he had to face the fact — Joan had forced it upon him — this new feminine generation wasn't divided in that obvious way. The clean had knowledge, the bold were not outcast and apart. The new world of women was as mixed as the world of men. He sat in his summerhouse thinking of his Joan's flushed face, her indignant eyes, her outspoken words.

"It was a woman's face," he whispered....

And he was realizing too how much more urgent the ending of adolescence was becoming with a girl than it could ever be with a boy. Peter might tumble into a scrape or so and scramble out again, not very much the worse for it, as he himself had done. But Joan, with all the temerity of a youth, might be making experiments that were fatal. He had not been watching her as he had watched Peter. Suddenly he woke up to this realization of some decisive issue at hand. Why was she so whitely angry with Peter? Why did she complain of having to "stand too much" from Peter? Her abuse of his friends had the effect of a counter attack. Was there some mischief afoot from which Peter restrained her? What men were there about in Joan's world?

There was something slimy and watchful about this fellow Huntley. Could there be more in that affair than one liked to think? ... Or was there some one unknown in London or in Cambridge?

She and Peter were quarrelling about the Easter party. It would apparently be impossible to have any Easter party this year, since both wanted to bar out the other one's friends. And anyhow there

mustn't be any more of this Hetty Rein hart business at Pelham Ford. That must stop. It ought never to have happened. ... He would take Peter over to Dublin. They could accept an invitation he had had from Graham Powys out beyond Foxrock, and they could motor into Dublin and about the country, and perhaps the Irish situation might touch the boy's imagination....

Joan could go to her aunts at The Ingle-Nook....

Should he have a talk to Aunt Phyllis about the girl?

It was a pity that Aunt Phyllis always lost her breath and was shaken like an aspen leaf with fine feeling whenever one came to any serious discussion with her. If it wasn't for that confounded shimmer in her nerves and feelings, she would be a very wise and helpful woman....

§ 6

Oswald's thoughts ranged far and wide that morning.

Now he would be thinking in the most general terms of life as he conceived it, now he would be thinking with vivid intensity about some word or phrase or gesture of Joan and Peter.

He was blind still to the thing that was now so close to all his world; nevertheless a vague uneasiness about the trend of events was creeping into his mind and mixing with his personal solicitudes. Many men felt that same uneasiness in those feverish days — as if Death cast his shadow upon them before he came visibly into their lives.

Oswald belonged to that minority of Englishmen who think systematically, whose ideas join on. Most Englishmen, even those who belong to what we call the educated classes, still do not think systematically at all; you cannot understand England until you master that fact; their ideas are in slovenly detached little heaps, they think in ready-made phrases, they are honestly capable therefore of the most grotesque inconsistencies. But Oswald had built up a sort of philosophy for himself, by which he did try his problems and with which he fitted in such new ideas as came to him. It was a very distinctive view of life he had; a number of influences that are quite

outside the general knowledge of English people had been very powerful in shaping it. Biological science, for example, played a quite disproportionate part in it. Like the countrymen of Metchnikoff, most of the countrymen of Darwin and Huxley believe firmly that biological science was invented by the devil and the Germans to undermine the Established Church. But Oswald had been exceptional in the chances that had turned his attention to these studies. And a writer whose suggestions had played a large part in shaping his ideas about education and social and political matters was J. J. Atkinson. He thought Atkinson the most neglected of all those fine-minded Englishmen England ignores. He thought Lang and Atkinson's *Social Origins* one of the most illuminating books he had ever read since Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom Of Man*. No doubt it will be amusing to many English readers that Oswald should have mixed up theories of the origins and destinies of mankind with his political views and his anxieties about Joan's behaviour and Peter's dissipations but he did. It was the way of his mind. He perceived a connexion between these things.

The view he had developed of human nature and human conditions was.saturated with the idea of the ancestral ape. In his instincts, he thought, man was still largely the creature of the early Stone Age, when, following Atkinson, he supposed that the human herd, sex linked, squatted close under the dominion of its Old Man, and hated every stranger. He did not at all accept the Aristotelian maxim that man is "a political animal." He was much more-inclined to Schopenhauer's comparison of human society to a collection of hedgehogs driven together for the sake of warmth. He thought of man as a being compelled by circumstances of his own inadvertent creation to be a political animal in spite of the intense passions and egotisms of his nature. Man he judged to be a reluctant political" animal. Man's prehensile hand has given him great possibilities of experiment, he is a restless and curious being, knowledge increases in him and brings power with it. So he jostles against his fellows. He becomes too powerful for his instincts. The killing of man becomes constantly more easy for man. The species must needs therefore become political and religious, tempering its intense lusts and greeds and hostilities, if it is to save itself from self-destruction. The

individual man resists the process by force and subterfuge and passivity at every step. Nevertheless necessity still finds something in the nature of this fiercest of its creatures to work upon. In the face of adult resistance necessity harks back to plastic immaturity. Against the narrow and intense desires of the adult man, against the secretive cunning and dispersiveness of our ape heredity, struggle the youthful instincts of association. Individualism is after all a by-path in the history of life. Every mammal begins by being dependent and social; even the tiger comes out of a litter, me utter is brotherhood. Every mother is a collectivist for her brood. A herd, a tribe, a nation, is only a family that has delayed dispersal, stage by stage, in the face of dangers. All our education is a prolongation and elaboration of family association, forced upon us by the continually growing danger of the continually growing destructiveness of our kind.

And necessity has laid hold of every device and formula that will impose self-restraint and devotion upon the lonely savagery of man, that will help man to escape race-suicide. In spite of ever more deadly and far-reaching weapons, man still escapes destruction by man. Religion, loyalty, patriotism, those strange and wonderfully interwoven nets of superstition, fear, flattery, high reason and love, have subjugated this struggling egotistical ape into larger and larger masses of co-operation, achieved enormous temporary securities. But the ape is still there, struggling subtly. Deep in every human individual is a fierce scepticism of and resentment against the laws that bind him, and the weaker newer instincts that would make him the servant of his fellow man.

Such was Oswald's conception of humanity. It marched with all his experiences of Africa, where he had struggled to weave the net of law and teaching against warrior, slave-trader, disease and greed. It marched now with all the appearances of the time. So it was he saw men.

It seemed to him that the world that lay behind the mask of his soft, sweet Hertfordshire valley, this modern world into which Joan and Peter had just rushed off so passionately, was a world in which the old nets of rule and convention which had maintained a sufficiency of peace and order in Europe for many generations of civilization, were giving way under the heavy stresses of a new time.

Peoples were being brought too closely together, too great a volume of suggestions poured into their minds, criticism was vivid and destructive; the forms and rules that had sufficed in a less crowded time were now insufficient to hold imaginations and shape lives. Oswald could see no hope as yet of a new net that would sweep together all that was bursting out of the old. His own generation of the ‘eighties and ‘nineties, under a far less feverish urgency, had made its attempt to patch new and more satisfactory network into the rotting reticulum, but for the most part their patches had done no more than afford a leverage for tearing. He had built his cosmogony upon Darwin and Winwood Reade, his religion upon Cotter Morrison’s *Service Of Man*; he had interwoven with that a conception of the Empire as a great civilizing service. That much had served him through the trying years at the end of adolescence, had in spite of strong coarse passions made his life on the whole a useful life. King, church, and all the forms of the old order he had been willing to accept as a picturesque and harmless paraphernalia upon these structural ideas to which he clung. He had been quite uncritical of the schoolmaster. Now with these studies of education that Joan and Peter had forced upon him, he was beginning to realize how encumbering and obstructive the old paraphernalia could be, how it let in indolence, stupidity, dishonesty, and treachery to the making of any modern system. A world whose schools are unreformed is an unreformed world. Only in the last year or so had he begun to accept the fact that for some reason these dominant ideas of his, this humanitarian religion which had served his purpose and held his life and the lives of a generation of liberal-minded Englishmen together, had no gripping power upon his wards. This failure perplexed him profoundly. Had his Victorian teachers woven prematurely, or had they used too much of the old material? Had they rather too manifestly tried to make the best of two worlds — leaving the schools alone? Must this breaking down of strands that was everywhere apparent, go still further? And if so, how far would the breaking down have to go before fresh nets could be woven?

If Oswald in his summerhouse in the spring of 1914 could see no immediate catastrophe ahead, he could at least see that a vast disintegrate process had begun in the body of European civilization.

This disintegration, he told himself, was a thing to go on by stages, to be replaced by stages; it would give place to a new order, a better order, "someday "; everything just and good was going to happen someday, the liberation of India, the contentment of Ireland, economic justice, political and military efficiency. It was all coming — always coming and never arriving, that new and better state of affairs. What did go on meanwhile was disintegration. The British mind hates crisis; it abhors the word "Now." It believes that you can cool water for ever and that it will never freeze, that you can saw at a tree for ever and that it will never fall, that there is always some sand left above in the hour-glass. When the English Belshazzar sees the writing on the wall, he welcomes the appearance of a new if rather sensational form of publication, and he sits back to enjoy it at his leisure....

The nets were breaking, but they would never snap. That in effect was Oswald's idea in 1913. The bother, from his point of view, was that they had let out Joan and Peter to futility.

There is a risk that the catastrophic events of 1914 may blind the historian to the significance of the spinning straws of 1913. But throughout Europe the sands were trickling before the avalanche fell. The arson of the suffragettes, the bellicose antics of the Unionist leaders in Ulster, General Gough's Curragh mutiny, were all parts of the same relaxation of bonds that launched the grey-clad hosts of Germany into Belgium. Only the habits of an immense security could have blinded Oswald to the scale and imminence of the disaster. The world had outgrown its ideas and its will. Already people are beginning to forget the queer fevers that ran through the British community in 1913. For example there was the violent unrest of the women. That may exercise the historian in the future profoundly. Probably he will question the facts. Right up to the very outbreak of the war there was not a week passed without some new ridiculous outrage on the part of the militant suffragettes. Now it was a fine old church would be burnt, now a well-known country house; now the mania would take the form of destroying the letters in pillar-boxes, now the attack was upon the greens of the golf links. Public meetings ceased to be public meetings because of the endless interruptions by shrill voices crying "Votes for women!" One great

triumph of the insurgents was a raid with little hammers upon the west-end shop-windows. They burnt the tea pavilion in Kew Gardens, set fire to unoccupied new buildings, inaugurated a campaign of picture-slashing > at the public exhibitions. For a time they did much mischief to the cushions and fittings of railway carriages. Churches had to be locked up and museums closed on account of them. Poor little Pelham Ford church had had to buy a new lock against the dangers of some wandering feminist. And so on and so on. But this revolt of the women was more than a political revolt. That concentration upon the Vote was the concentration of a vast confused insurgence of energy that could as yet find no other acceptable means of expression. New conditions had robbed whole strata of women of any economic importance, new knowledge had enormously diminished the need for their domestic services, the birth-rate had fallen, the marriage age had risen, but the heedless world had made no provision for the vitality thus let loose. The old ideals of a womanly life showed absurd in the light of the new conditions. Why be pretty and submissive when nobody wants you? Why be faithful with no one to be faithful to? Why be devoted in a world which has neither enough babies nor lovers nor even its old proportion of helpless invalids to go round? Why, indeed, to come to the very heart of the old ideal, keep chaste when there is no one to keep chaste for? Half the intelligent women in that world had stood as Joan had done, facing their own life and beauty and asking desperately "What is the Good of it?"

But while the old nets rotted visibly, there were no new nets being woven. There was everywhere the vague expectation of new nets, of a new comprehensiveness, a new way of life, but there was no broad movement towards any new way of life. Everywhere the old traditions and standards and institutions remained, discredited indeed and scoffed at, but in possession of life. Energetic women were reaching out in a mood of the wildest experiment towards they knew not what. It was a time of chaotic trials. The disposition of the first generation of released women had been towards an austere sexlessness, a denial of every feminine weakness, mental and physical, and so by way of Highmorton and hockey to a spinsterish, bitter competition with men. A few still bolder spirits, and Aunt

Phoebe Stubland was among these pioneers, carried the destructive "Why not!" still further. Grant Allen's *Woman Who Did* and Arthur's infidelities were but early aspects of a wide wave of philoprogenitive and eugenic sentimentality. The new generation carried "why not?" into the sphere of conduct with amazing effect.

Women are the custodians of manners, and mothers and hostesses who did not dream of the parallelism of their impulse with militancy, were releasing the young to an unheard-of extravagance of dress and festival. Joan could wear clothes at a Chelsea dance that would have shocked a chorus girl half a century before; she went about London in the small hours with any casual male acquaintance; so far as appearances went she might have been the most disreputable of women. She yielded presently to Huntley's persistence and began dancing the tango with him. It was the thing to slip away from a dance in slippers and a wrap, and spend an hour or so careering about London in a taxi or wandering on Hampstead Heath. Joan's escapades fretted the sleeping tramps upon the Thames Embankment. London, which had hitherto dispersed its gatherings about eleven and got to bed as a rule by midnight, was aspiring in those days to become nocturnal. The restaurants were obliged to shut early, but a club was beyond such regulations. Necessity created the night club, which awoke about eleven and closed again after a yawning breakfast of devilled bones.

A number of night clubs were coming into existence, to the particular delight of young Winterbaum. His boyish ambition for Joan was returning. He had seen her dance and heard her dancing praised. Vulgar people made wild vulgar guesses in his hearing at what lay behind her grave and sometimes sombre prettiness. He pretended to be very discreet about that. It became the pride of his life to appear at some crowded night club in possession of Joan; he did not know what people thought of her or of him but he hoped for the worst. He wore the most beautiful buttons on his white waistcoat and the most delicate gold chain you can imagine. In the cloakroom he left a wonderful overcoat and a wonderful cane. Sometimes he encouraged the ringlets in his hair and felt like Disraeli, and sometimes he restrained them and felt like a cold, cynical Englishman of the darker sort. He would sit swelling with pride

beside Joan, and nod to painted women and heavy men; he knew no end of people. He did not care what sort of people they were so long as he knew them. It was always his ambition to be seen drinking champagne with Joan. Joan had no objection in the world, but she could not bring herself to swallow a drink that tasted, she thought, like weak vinegar mixed with a packet of pins and that went up your nose and made your brain swing slowly to and fro on its axis for the rest of the evening. So she just drank nothing at all.

She would sit at her table with her pretty bare arms folded under her like the paws of a little cat, with her face, that still had the delicacy and freshness of a child's, as intent as any intelligent child's can be on the jumble of people before her, and her sombre eyes, calm and beautiful, looking at smart London trying at last to take its pleasures gaily. Perhaps some fortunate middle-aged gentleman of Winterbaum's circle would be attempting to charm her by brilliant conversation, as, for instance Sir Joseph Lystrom, with a full-mouthed German flavour in his voice, in this style: "Pretty cheap here this evening somehow, eh? *What*?" Somewhere in the back of Sir Joseph's mind was the illusion that by barking in this way and standing treat profusely, lay the road to a girl's young love. Somewhen perhaps — who knows? — he may have found justification for that belief. Joan had long since learnt how to turn a profile to these formal attentions, and appear to be interested without hearing or answering a word.

Or sometimes it would be Huntley. Huntley had lately taken to dodging among the night clubs to which he had access, when Joan was in London. Usually such nights ended in futility, but occasionally he was lucky and found Joan. Then he would come and talk and suggest ideas to her. He still remained the most interesting personality in her circle. She pretended to Winterbaum and herself to be bored by his pursuit, but indeed she looked for it. Except for Winterbaum and Huntley and Winterbaum's transitory introductions, she remained a detached figure in these places. Sometimes quite good-looking strangers sat a little way off and sought to convey to her by suitable facial expression the growth of a passionate interest in her. She conveyed to them in return that they were totally invisible to her, resisting at times a macabre disposition to take sights at them

suddenly and amazingly or put out her tongue. Sometimes women of the great Winterbaum circle would make a fuss of her. They called her a "dear child." They would have been amazed at the complete theoretical knowledge a dear child of unrestricted reading could possess of them and their little ways.

"So this is the life of pleasure," thought the dear child. "*Well*!"

And then that same question that Peter seemed always to be asking of Oswald: "Is this *all*?"

When she danced in these places she danced with a sort of contempt. And the sage, experienced men who looked at her so knowingly never realized how much they imagined about her and how little they knew.

She would sit and think how indecent it was to be at the same time old and dissipated. Some of these women here, she perceived, were older than her aunts Phoebe and Phyllis, years older. Their faces were painted and done most amazingly — Joan knew all about facial massage and the rest of it — and still they were old faces. But their poor bodies were not nearly so old as their faces, that was the tragedy of them. Joan regarded the tremendous V decolletage of a lively grandmother before her, and the skin of the back shone as young as her own. The good lady was slapping the young gentleman next to her with a quite smooth and shapely arm. Joan speculated whether the old fashion of the masked ball and the Venetian custom of masks which she had been reading about that day in Voltaire's *Princesse de Babylone*, might not have something to do with that. But — she reverted — only young people ought to make love at all. Her aunts didn't; Oswald didn't. And Oswald was years younger than some of the men here, and in Joan's eyes at least far more presentable. He had a scarred face indeed but a clean skin; some of the old men here had skins one would shiver to touch, and the expressions of evil gargoyles. She let her thoughts dwell — not for the first time — on Oswald and a queer charm he had for her. Never in all her life had she known him do or say a mean, dishonest, unjust, or unkind thing. In some ways he was oddly like Peter, but wise and gentle — and not exasperating....

But all this playing with love in London was detestable, all of it. This was really a shameful place. It was shameful to be here. Love

— mixed up with evening dress and costly clothes and jewellery and nasty laughter and cigars, strong cigars and drink that slopped about. It was disgusting. These people made love after their luncheons and dinners and suppers. Pigs! They were all pigs. They looked like pigs. If ever she made love it should be in the open air, in some lovely place with blue mountains in the distance, where there were endless wild flowers, where one could swim. No man she had ever talked with of love had really understood anything of the beauty of love and the cleanness of love — except Mir Jelaluddin. And he had a high-pitched voice and a staccato accent — and somehow.... One ought not to be prejudiced against a dark race, but somehow it was unthinkable....

Joan sat in the night club dreaming of a lover, and the men about her glanced furtively at her face, asking themselves, "Can it be I?" men with red ears, men with greasy hair, men with unpleasing necks and clumsy gestures; bald men, fat men, watery-eyed men, cheats, profiteers, usurers, snobs, toadies, successful old men of every sort and young men who had done nothing and for the most part never would. "Can it be I?" they surmised dimly, seeing her pensive eyes. And she was dreaming of a lithe, white, slender figure, strong and clean. He would hunt among the mountains, he would swim swift rivers; he would never drink strong drink nor reek of smoke....

At this moment young Winterbaum became urgent with his beautiful gold cigarette case. Joan took a cigarette and lighted it, and sat smoking with her elbows side by side on the table.

"You're not bored?" said young Winterbaum.

"Oh, no. I'm watching people. I don't want to talk."

"Oh! not at all?" said young Winterbaum.

"So long as one has to talk," he said after reflection and with an air of cleverness, "one isn't really friends."

"Exactly," said Joan, and blew smoke through her nose.

What was it she had been thinking about? She could not remember, the thread was broken. She was sorry. She had a vague memory of something pleasant.... She fell into a fresh meditation upon Jews. All Jews, she thought, ought to grow beards. At least after they were thirty. They are too dark to shave, and besides there is a sort of indignity about their beaked shaven faces. A bearded old

Jew can look noble, a moustached old Jew always looked like an imitation of a Norman gentleman done in cheaper material. But that of course was exactly what he was....

Why did men of forty or fifty always want to dance with and make love to flappers? Some of these girls here must be two or three years younger than herself. What was the interest? They couldn't talk; they weren't beautiful; one could see they weren't beautiful. And they laughed, good God! how they laughed! Girls ought to be taught to laugh, or at any rate taught not to laugh offensively. Laughter ought to be a joyful, contagious thing, jolly and kind, but these shrieks! How few of these people looked capable of real laughter! They just made this loud chittering sound. Only human beings laugh....

In this manner the mind of Joan was running on the evening when she saw Peter and Hetty come into the club which tried to live up to the name of "The Nest of the Burning Phoenix." Some tango experts had just relinquished the floor and there was a space amidst the throng when Hetty made her entry. Hetty had made a great effort, she was in full London plumage, and her effect was tremendous.

About her little bold face was a radiant scheme of peacock's feathers, her slender neck carried a disc a yard and a quarter wide; her slender, tall body was sheathed in black and peacock satin; she wore enormous earrings and a great barbaric chain. Her arms were bare except for a score of bangles, and she had bare sandalled feet. She carried her arrow point of a chin triumphantly. Peter was not her only attendant. There was also another man in her train whom every one seemed to recognize, a big, square-faced, handsome man of thirty-five or so who made Peter look very young and flimsy. "She's got Fred Beevor!" said Winterbaum with respect, and dropped the word "Million." Peter's expression was stony, but Joan judged he was not enjoying himself.

There were very few unoccupied chairs and tables, but opposite Joan were two gilt seats and another disengaged at a table near at hand. Hetty was too busy with her triumph to note Joan until Beevor had already chosen this place. With a slight awkwardness the two parties mingled. Young Winterbaum at least was elated. Beevor after a few civilities to Joan let it appear that Hetty preoccupied him. Peter

was evidently not enjoying himself at all. Joan found him seated beside her and silent.

Joan knew that it is the feminine role to lead conversation, but it seemed to her rather fun to have to encourage a tongue-tied Peter. A malicious idea came into her head.

"Well, Petah," she said; "why don't you say I oughtn't to be here?"

Peter regarded her ambiguously. He had an impulse.

"No decent people ought to be here," he said quietly. "Let's go home, Joan."

Her heart jumped at the suggestion. All her being said yes. And then she remembered that she had as much right to have a good time as Peter. If she went back with him it would be like giving in to him; it would be like admitting his right to order her about. And besides there was Hetty. He wasn't really disgusted. All he wanted to do really was to show off because he was jealous of Hetty. He didn't want to go home with Joan. She wasn't going to be a foil for Hetty anyhow. And finally, once somewhere he had refused her almost exactly the same request. She checked herself and considered gravely. A little touch of spite crept into her expression.

"No," she said slowly. "No.... I've only just come, Petah."

"Very well," said Peter. "*I* don't mind. If you like this sort of thing—"

He said no more, sulking visibly.

Joan resolved to dance at the first opportunity, and to dance in a bold and reckless way — so as thoroughly to exasperate Peter. She looked about the room through the smoke-laden atmosphere in the hope of seeing Huntley....

She and Peter sat side by side, feeling very old and experienced and worldly and up-to-date. But indeed they were still only two children who ought to have been packed off to bed hours before.

§7

The disorder in the world of women, the dissolution of manners and restraints, was but the more intimate aspect of a universal drift

towards lawlessness. The world of labour was seething also with the same spirit of almost aimless insurrection. In a world of quickened apprehensions and increasing stimulus women were losing faith in the rules of conduct that had sufficed in a less exacting age. Far profounder and more dangerous to the established order were the scepticisms of the workers. The pretensions of the old social system that trade unionism had scarcely challenged were now being subjected throughout all western Europe to a pitiless scrutiny by a new and more educated type of employee.

The old British trade unionism had never sought much more than increased wages and a slightly higher standard of life; its acceptance of established institutions had been artlessly complete; it had never challenged the authority nor the profits of the proprietor. It had never proposed more than a more reasonable treaty with the masters, a fairer sharing of the good gifts of industry. But infatuated by the evil teachings of an extreme individualism, a system of thought which was indeed never more than a system of base excuses dressed up as a philosophy, the directing and possessing classes had failed altogether to agree with their possible labour adversary quickly while they were yet in the way with him. They had lacked the intelligence to create a sympathetic industrial mentality, and the conscience to establish a standard of justice. They left things alone until the grit of a formless discontent had got into every cog of the industrial machinery. Too late, the employers were now conceding the modest demands that labour had made in the ‘eighties and ‘nineties, they were trying to accept the offers of dead men; they found themselves face to face with an entirely less accommodating generation. This new labour movement was talking no longer of shorter hours and higher pay but of the social revolution. It did not demand better treatment from the capitalist; it called him a profiteer and asked him to vanish from the body politic. It organized strikes now not to alter the details of its working conditions as its predecessor had done, but in order to end the system by making it impossible. In Great Britain as on the Continent, the younger generation of labour was no longer asking to have the harness that bound it to the old order made easier and lighter; it was asking for a new world.

The new movement seemed to men of Oswald’s generation to

come as thunderstorms will sometimes come, as the militant suffragette had seemed to come, suddenly out of a clear sky. But it was far more ominous than the suffragette movement, for while that.made one simple explicit demand, this demanded nothing short of a new economic order. It asked for everything and would be content with nothing. It was demanding from an old habitual system the supreme feat of reconstruction. Short of that vague general reconstruction it promised no peace. Higher wages would not pacify it; shorter hours would not pacify it. It threatened sabotage of every sort, and a steady, incessant broadening antagonism of master and man. Peter, half sympathetic and half critical, talked about it to Oswald one day.

"They all say, 'I'm a Rebel!' " said Peter. "'Rebel' is their cant word."

"Yes, but rebel against what?"

"Oh! the whole system.,"

"They have votes."

"They get humbugged, they say. They do, you know. The party system is a swindle, and everybody understands that. Why don't we clean it up? P.R.'s the only honest method. They don't understand how it is rigged, but they know it is rigged. When you talk about Parliament they laugh."

"But they have their Unions."

"They don't trust their leaders. They say they are got at. They say they are old-fashioned and bluffed by the politicians.... They are...."

"Then what do they want?"

"Just to be out of all this. They are bored to tears by their work, by the world they have to live in, by the pinched mean lives they have to lead — in the midst of plenty and luxury — bored by the everlasting dullness and humbug of it all."

"But how are they going to alter it?"

"That's all vague. Altogether vague. Cole and Mellor and those Cambridge chaps preach Guild Socialism to them, but I don't know how far they take it in — except that they agree that profit is unnecessary. But the fundamental fact is just blind boredom and the desire to smash up things. Just on the off chance of their coming better. The employer has been free to make the world for them, and

this is the world he has made. Damn him! That's how they look at it. They are bored by his face, bored by his automobile, bored by his knighthood, bored by his country house and his snob of a wife—"

"But what can they do?""

"Make things impossible."

"They can't run things themselves."

"They aren't convinced of that. Anyhow if they smash up things the employer goes first, and he's the chap they seem to be principally after—"

Peter reflected. Then he gave a modern young Englishman's view of the labour conflict. "The employers have been pretty tidy asses not to see that their workpeople get a better, more amusing life than they do. It was their business and their interest to do so. It could have been managed easily. But they're so beastly disloyal. And so mean. They not only sweat labour themselves but they won't stir a finger to save it from jerry-built housing, bad provisioning, tally-men, general ugliness, bad investments, rotten insurance companies — every kind of rotten old thing. Any one may help kill their sheep. They've got no gratitude to their workers. They won't even amuse them. "Why couldn't they set up decent theatres for them, and things like that? It's so stupid of them. These employers are the most dangerous class in the community. There's enough for every one nowadays and over. It's the first business of employers to see workpeople get their whack. What good are they if they don't do that? But they never have. Labour is convinced now that they never will. They run about pretending to be landed gentry. They've got their people angry and bitter now, they've destroyed public confidence in their ways, and it serves them jolly well right if the workmen make things impossible for them. I think they will. I hope they will."

"But this means breaking up the national industries," said Oswald. "Where is this sort of thing going to end?"

"Oh! things want shaking up," said Peter.

"Perhaps," he added, "one must break up old things before one can hope for new. I suppose the masters won't let go while they think there's a chance of holding on...."

He had not a trace left of the Victorian delusion that this might after all be the best of all possible worlds. He thought that our

politicians and our captains of industry were very poor muddlers indeed. They drifted. Each one sat in his own works, he said, and ran them for profit without caring a rap whither the whole system was going. Compared with Labour even their poverty of general ideas was amazing. Peter, warming with his subject, walked to and fro across the Pelham Ford lawn beside Oswald, proposing to rearrange industrialism as one might propose to reshuffle a pack of cards.

"But suppose things smash up," said Oswald. "Smash up," did not seem to alarm Peter.

"Nowadays," said Peter, "so many people read and write, so much has been thought out, there is so big a literature of ideas in existence, that I think we could recover from a very considerable amount of smashing. I'm pro-smash. We have to smash. What holds us back are fixed ideas. Take Profit. We're used to Profit. Most business is done for profit still. But why should the world tolerate profit at all? It doesn't stimulate enterprise; it only stimulates knavery. And Capital, Financial Capital is just blackmail by gold — gold rent. We think the state itself even can't start a business going or employ people without first borrowing money. Why should it borrow money? Why not, for state purposes, create it? Yes. No money would be any good if it hadn't the state guarantee. Gold standard, fixed money fund, legitimate profits and so on; that's the sort of fixed idea that gets in the way nowadays. It won't get out of the way just for reason's sake. The employers keep on with these old fixed ideas, naturally, because so it is they have been made, but the workpeople believe in them less and less. There must be a smash of some sort — just to shake ideas loose...."

Oswald surveyed his ward. So this was the young man's theory. Not a bad theory. Fixed Ideas!

II There's something to be said for this notion of Fixed Ideas," he said. "Yes. But isn't this 'I'm a Rebel' business, isn't that itself a Fixed Idea?"

"Oh certainly!" said Peter cheerfully. "We poor human beings are always letting our ideas coagulate. That's where the whole business seems to me so hopeless...."

In the ‘eighties and ‘nineties every question had been positive and objective. “People,” you said, “think so and so. *Is it right*?” That seemed to cover the grounds for discussion in those days. One believed in a superior universal reason to which all decisions must ultimately bow. The new generation was beginning where its predecessors left off, with what had been open questions decided and carried beyond discussion. It was at home now on what had once been battlefields of opinion. The new generation was reading William James and Bergson and Freud and becoming more and more psychological. “People,” it said, “think so and so. Why do they do so?”

So when at last Oswald carried off Peter to Dublin — which he did not do at Easter as he had planned but at Whitsuntide for a mere long week-end — to see at close hand this perplexing Irish Question ^that seemed drifting steadily and uncontrollably towards bloodshed, he found that while he was asking “who is in the right and who is in the wrong here? Who is most to blame and who should have the upper hand?” Peter was asking with a terrible impartiality, “Why are all these people talking nonsense?” and “Why have they got their minds and affairs into this dangerous mess?” Sir Horace Plunkett, Peter had a certain toleration for; but it was evident he suspected A.E. Peter did not talk very much, but he listened with a bright scepticism to brilliant displays of good talk — he had never heard such good anecdotal talk before — and betrayed rather than expressed his conviction that Nationalism, Larkinism, Sinn Feinism, Ulsterism and Unionism were all insults to the human intelligence, material for the alienist rather than serious propositions.

It wasn’t that he felt himself to be in possession of any conclusive solution, or that he obtruded his disbelief with any sense of superiority. In spite of his extreme youth he did not for a moment assume the attitude of a superior person. Life was evidently troubling him profoundly, and he was realizing that there was no apparent answer to many of his perplexities. But he was at least trying hard to get an answer. What shocked him in the world of Dublin was its manifest disinclination to get any answer to anything. They jeered at

people who sought solutions. They liked the fun of disorder; it gave more scope for their irrepressible passion for character study. He began to recognize one particular phrase as the keynote of Dublin's animation: "Hev ye hurrd the letest?"

On the Sunday afternoon of their stay in Dublin, Powys motored them through the city by way of Donnybrook and so on round the bay to Howth to see the view from Howth Head. Powys drove with a stray guest beside him. Behind, Peter imparted impressions to Oswald.

"I don't like these high walls," he said. "I've never seen such a lot of high walls.... It's just as if they all shut themselves in from one another,"

"Fixed Ideas, Peter?"

"They are rather like Fixed Ideas. I suppose high walls are fun to climb over and throw things over. But — it's uncivilized."

"Everybody," grumbled Peter, "is given to fixed ideas, but the Irish have 'em for choice. All this rot about Ireland a Nation and about the Harp, which isn't properly their symbol, and the dear old Green Flag which isn't properly their colour!... They can't believe in that stuff nowadays.... But can they! In our big world? And about being a Black Protestant and pretending Catholics are poison, or the other way round. What are Protestants and Catholics now?... Old dead squabbles.... Dead as Druids.... Keeping up all that bickering stuff, when a child of eight ought to know nowadays that the Christian God started out to be a universal, charitable God.... If Christ came to Dublin the Catholics and Protestants would have a free fight to settle which was to crucify Him...."

"It's the way with them," said Oswald. "We've got to respect Irish opinion."

"It doesn't respect itself. Everywhere else in the world, wherever we have been, there's been at least something like the germ of an idea of a new life. But here! When you get over here you realize for the first time that England is after all a living country trying to get on to something — compared with this merry-go-round.... It's exactly like a merry-go-round churning away. It's the atmosphere of a country fair. An Irishman hasn't any idea of a future at all, so far as I can see — except that perhaps his grandchildren will tell stories of

what a fine fellow he was....”

The automobile halted for a moment at cross roads, and the finger-post was in Erse characters.

“Look at *that*!” said Peter with genuine exasperation. “And hardly a Dubliner knows fifty words of the language! It’s foolery. If we were Irish I suppose we should smother London with black-letter. We should go on pretending that we, too, were still Catholics and Protestants. The pseudo-Protestants would hang Smithfield with black on account of the martyrs, and the pseudo-Catholics would come and throw the meat about on Fridays. Chesterton and Belloc would love it anyhow.”...

Oswald was not sure of the extent of Peter’s audience. “The susceptibilities of a proud people, Peter,” he whispered, with his eye on the back of their host.

“Bother their susceptibilities. Much they care for our susceptibilities. The worst insult you can offer a grown-up man is to humour him,” said Peter. “What’s the good of pretending to be sympathetic with all this Wearing of the Green. It’s like our White Rose League. Let ’em do it by all means if they want to, but don’t let’s pretend we think it romantic and beautiful and all the rest of it. It’s just posing and dressing up, and it’s a nuisance, Nobby. All Dublin is posing and dressing up and playing at rebellion, and so is all Ulster. The Volunteers of the eighteenth century all over again. It’s like historical charades. And they’ve pointed loaded guns at each other. Only idiots point loaded guns. Why can’t we English get out of it all, and leave them to pose and dress up and then tell anecdotes and anecdotes and anecdotes about it until they are sick of it? If ever they are sick of it. Let them have their Civil War if they want it; let them keep on with Civil Wars for ever; what has it got to do with us?”

“You’re a Home Ruler then,” said Oswald.

“I don’t see that we English do any good here at all. What are we here for anyhow? The Castle’s just another Fixed Idea, something we haven’t the mental vigour to clear away. Nobody does any good here. We’re not giving them new ideas, we’re not unifying them, we’re not letting Ireland out into the world — which is what she wants — we’re not doing anything but just holding on.”

“What’s that?” said Powys suddenly over his shoulder.

“Peter’s declaring for Home Rule,” said Oswald.” After his glimpse of the slums of Dublin?” “It’s out of malice. He wants to leave Irishmen to Irishmen.”

“Ulster says *No!*” said Powys. “Tell him to talk to Ulster,” and resumed a conversation he had interrupted with the man beside him.

At the corner where Nassau Street runs into Grafton Street they were held up for some lengthy minutes by a long procession that was trailing past Trinity College and down Grafton Street. It had several bands, and in the forefront of it went National Volunteers in green uniforms, obviously for the most part old soldiers; they were followed by men with green badges, and then a straggle of Larkinites and various Friendly Societies with their bands and banners, and then by a long dribble of children and then some workgirls, and then a miscellany of people who had apparently fallen in as the procession passed because they had nothing else to do. As a procession it was tedious rather than impressive. The warm afternoon — it was the last day in May — had taken the good feeling out of the walkers. Few talked, still fewer smiled. The common expression was a long-visaged discontent, a gloomy hostile stare at the cars and police cordon, an aimless disagreeableness. They were all being very stern and resolute about they did not quite know what. They meant to show that Dublin could be as stern and resolute as Belfast. Between the parts of the procession were lengthy gaps. It was a sunshiny, dusty afternoon, and the legs of the processionists were dusty to the knees, their brows moist, and their lips dry. There was an unhurried air about them of going nowhere in particular. It was evident that many of their banners were heavy. “What’s it all about?” asked Oswald.

“Lord knows,” said Powys impatiently. “It’s just a demonstration.”

“Is that all? Why don’t we cut across now and get on?”“

There’s more coming. Don’t you hear another band?”

“But the police could hold it up for a minute and let all these tramcars and automobiles across.”

“There’d be a fight,” said Powys. “They daren’t.”...

“And I suppose this sort of thing is going on in the north too?”

asked Oswald after a pause.

"Oh! everywhere," said Powys. "Orange or Green. But they've got more guns up north."

"These people don't really want Ireland a Nation and all the rest of it," said Peter.

"Oh?" said Powys, staring at him.

"Well, look at them," said Peter. "You can see by their faces. They're just bored to death. I suppose most people are bored to death in Ireland. There's nothing doing. England just holds them up, I suppose. And it's an island — rather off the main line. There's nothing to get people's minds off these endless, dreary old quarrels. It's all they have. But they're bored by it...."

"And that's why we talk nothing but anecdotes, Peter, eh?" Powys grinned.

"Well, you do talk a lot of anecdote," said Peter, who hadn't realized the sharpness of his host's hearing.

"Oh! we do. I don't complain of your seeing it. It isn't your discovery. Have you read or heard the truest words that were ever said of Ireland — by that man Shaw? In John Bull's Other Island.... That laughing scene about the pig. 'Nowhere else could such a scene cause a burst of happiness among the people.' That's the very guts of things here; eh?"

"It's his best play," said Oswald, avoiding too complete an assent.

"It gets there," Powys admitted, "anyhow. The way all them fools come into the shanty and snigger."...

The last dregs of the procession passed reluctantly out of the way. It faded down Grafton Street into a dust cloud and a confusion of band noises. The policemen prepared to release the congested traffic. Peter leaned out to count the number of trams and automobiles that had been held up. He was still counting when the automobile turned the corner.

They shook Dublin off and spun cheerfully through the sunshine along the coast road to Howth. It was a sparkling bright afternoon, and the road was cheerful with the prim happiness of many couples of Irish lovers. But that afternoon peace was the mask worn by one particular day. If the near future could have cast a phantom they would have seen along this road a few weeks ahead of them the gun-

runners of Howth marching to the first foolish bloodshed in Dublin streets....

They saw Howth Castle, made up now by Lutyens to look as it ought to have looked and never had looked in the past. The friend Powys had brought wanted to talk to some of the castle people, and while these two stayed behind Oswald and Peter went on, between high hedges of clipped beech and up a steep, winding path amidst great bushes of rhododendron in full flower to the grey rock and heather of the crest. They stood in the midst of one of the most beautiful views in the world. Northward they looked over Ireland's Eye at Lambay and the blue Mourne mountains far away; eastward was the lush green of Meath, southward was the long beach of the bay sweeping round by Dublin to Dalkey, backed by more blue mountains that ran out eastward to the Sugar Loaf. Below their feet the pale castle clustered amidst its rich greenery, and to the east, the level blue sea sustained one single sunlit sail. It was rare that the sense of beauty flooded Peter, as so often it flooded Joan, but this time he was transported.

"But this is altogether beautiful," he said, like one who is taken by surprise.

And then as if to himself: "How beautiful life might be! How splendid life might be!"

Oswald was standing on a ledge below Peter, and with his back to him. He waited through a little interval to see if Peter would say any more. Then he pricked him with "only it isn't."

"No," said Peter, with the sunlight gone out of his voice. "It isn't."

He went on talking after a moment's reflection.

"It's as if we were hypnotized and couldn't get away from mean things, beastly suspicions, and stale quarrels. I suppose we are still half apes. I suppose our brains set too easily and rapidly. I suppose it's easy to quarrel yet and

420 still hard to understand. We take to jealousy and bitterness as ducklings take to water. Think of that stale, dusty procession away there!"

Oswald's old dream vision of the dark forest came back to his mind. "Is there no way out, Peter?" he said.

“If some great idea would take hold of the world!” said Peter....

“There have been some great ideas,” said Oswald....

“If it would take hold of one’s life,” Peter finished his thought....

“There has been Christianity,” said Oswald.

“Christianity!” Peter pointed at the distant mist that was Dublin. “Sour Protestants,” he said, “and dirty priests setting simple people by the ears.”

“But that isn’t true Christianity.”

“There isn’t true Christianity,” said Peter compactly....

“Well, there’s love of country then,” said Oswald.

“That Dublin corporation is the most patriotic and nationalist in the world. Fierce about it. And it’s got complete control there. It’s green in grain. No English need apply.... From the point of view of administration that town is a muck heap — for patriotic Growings. Look at their dirty, ill-paved streets. Look at their filthy slums! See how they let their blessed nation’s children fester and die!”

“There are bigger ideas than patriotism. There are ideas of empire, the Pax Britannica.”

“Carson smuggling guns.”

“Well, is there nothing? Do you know of nothing?”

Oswald turned on his ward for the reply.

“There’s a sort of idea, I suppose.”

“But what idea?”

“There’s an idea in our minds.”

“But what is it, Peter?”

“Call it Civilization,” Peter tried.

“I believe,” he went on, weighing his words carefully, “as you believe really, in the Republic of Mankind, in universal work for a common end — for freedom, welfare, and beauty. Haven’t you taught me that?”

“Have I taught you that?”

“It seems to me to be the commonsense aim for all humanity. You’re awake to it. You’ve awakened me to it and I believe in it. But most of this world is still deep in its old Fixed Ideas, walking in its sleep. And it won’t wake up. It won’t wake up.... What can we *do*? We’ve got to a sort of idea, it’s true. But here are these Irish, for example, naturally wittier and quicker than you or I, hypnotized by

Orange and Green, by Protestant and Catholic, by all these stale things — drifting towards murder. It's murder is coming here. You can smell the bloodshed coming on the air — and we can't do a thing to prevent it. Not a thing. The silliest bloodshed it will be. The silliest bloodshed the world has ever seen. We can't do a thing to wake them up....

"We're in it," said Peter in conclusion. "We can't even save ourselves."

"I've been wanting to get at your political ideas for a long time, 11 said Oswald. "You really think, Peter, there might be a big world civilization, a world republic, did you call it? — without a single slum hidden in it anywhere, with the whole of mankind busy and happy, the races living in peace, each according to its aptitudes, a world going on — going on steady and swift to still better things."

"How can one believe anything else? Don't *you*!"

"But how do we get there, Peter?"

"Oh, how do we get there?" echoed Peter. "How do we get there?"

He danced a couple of steps with vexation.

"I don't know, Nobby," he cried. "I don't know. I can't find the way. I'm making a mess of my life. I'm not getting on with my work. You know I'm not.... Either we're mad or this world is. Here's all these people in Ireland letting a solemn humbug of a second-rate lawyer with a heavy chin and a lumpish mind muddle them into a civil war — and that's reality! That's life! The solemn League and Covenant — copied out of old history books! That's being serious! And over there in England, across the sea, muddle and muck and nonsense indescribable. Oh! and we're in it!"

"But aren't there big movements afoot, Peter, social reform, the labour movement, the emancipation of women, big changes like that!"

"Only big discontents."

"But doesn't discontent make the change?"

"It's just boredom that's got them. It isn't any disposition to make. Labour is bored, women are bored, all Ireland is bored. I suppose Russia is bored and Germany is getting bored. She is boring all the world with her soldiering. How bored they must be in India

too — by us! The day bores its way round the earth now — like a mole. Out of sight of the stars. But boring people doesn't mean making a new world. It just means boring on to decay. It just means one sort of foolish old fixed idea rubbing and sawing against another, until something breaks down.... Oh! I want to get out of all this. I don't like this world of ours. I want to get into a world awake. I'm young and I'm greedy. I've only got one life to live, Nobby.... I want to spend it where something is being made. Made for good and all. Where clever men can do something more than sit overlong at meals and tell spiteful funny stories. Where there's something better to do than play about with one's brain and viscera!..."

§ 9

In the days when Peter was born the Anglican system held the Empire with apparently invincible feelings of security and self-approval; it possessed the land, the church, the army, the foreign office, the court. Such people as Arthur and Dolly were of no more account than a stray foreign gipsy by the wayside. When Peter came of age the Anglican system still held on to army, foreign office, court, land, and church, but now it was haunted by a sense of an impalpable yet gigantic antagonism that might at any time materialize against it. It had an instinctive perception of the near possibility of a new world in which its base prides could have no adequate satisfaction, in which its authority would be flouted, its poor learning despised, and its precedents disregarded. The curious student of the history of England in the decade before the Great War will find the clue to what must otherwise seem a hopeless tangle in the steady, disingenuous, mischievous antagonism of the old Anglican system to every kind of change that might bring nearer the dreaded processes of modernization. Education, and particularly university, reform was blocked, the most necessary social legislation fought against with incoherent passion, the lightest, most reasonable taxation of land or inheritance resisted.

Wherever the old system could find allies it snatched at them and sought to incorporate them with itself. It had long since taken over

the New Imperialism with its tariff schemes and its spirit of financial adventure. It had sneered aloof when the new democracy of the elementary schools sought to read and think; it had let any casual adventurer to supply that reading; but now the creator of Answers and Comic Cuts ruled the Times and sat in the House of Lords. It was a little doubtful still whether he was of the new order or the old, whether he was not himself an instalment of revolution, whether the Tories had bought him or whether he had bought them, but at any rate he did for a time seem to be serving the ends of reaction.

To two sources of strength the Anglicans clung with desperate resolution, India and Ulster. From India the mass of English people were shut and barred off as completely as any foreigners could have been. India was the preserve of the "ruling class." To India the good Anglican, smitten by doubts, chilled by some disrespectful comment or distressed by some item of progress achieved, could turn, leaving all thoughts of new and unpleasant things behind him; there in what he loved to believe was the "unchanging East" he could recover that sense of walking freely and authoritatively upon an abundance of inferior people which was so necessary to his nature, and which was being so seriously impaired at home. The institution of caste realized his secret ideals. From India he and his womankind could return refreshed, to the struggle with Liberalism and all the powers of democratic irreverence in England. And Ulster was a still more precious stronghold for this narrow culture. From the fastness of Ulster they could provoke the restless temperament of the Irish to a thousand petty exasperations of the English, and for Ulster, "loyal Ulster", they could appeal to the generous partisanship of the English against their native liberalism. More and more did it become evident that Ulster was the key-stone of the whole Anglican ascendancy; to that they owed their grip upon British politics, upon army, navy, and education; they traded — nay! they existed — upon the open Irish sore. With Ireland healed and contented England would be lost to them. England would democratize, would Americanize. The Anglicans would vanish out of British life as completely as the kindred Tories vanished out of America at the close of the eighteenth century. And when at last, after years of confused bickering, a Home Rule Bill became law, and peace between the two nations in Ireland

seemed possible, the Anglicans stepped at once from legal obstruction to open treason and revolt. The arming of Ulster to resist the decision of Parliament was incited from Great Britain, it was supported enthusiastically by the whole of the Unionist party in Great Britain, its headquarters were in the west end of London, and the refusal of General Gough to carry out the precautionary occupation of Ulster was hailed with wild joy in every Tory home. It was not a genuine popular movement, it was an artificial movement for which the landowning church people of Ireland and England were chiefly responsible. It was assisted by tremendous exertions on the part of the London yellow press. When Sir Edward Carson went about Ulster in that warm June of 1914, reviewing armed men, promising "more Mausers," and pouring out inflammatory speeches, he was manifestly preparing bloodshed. The old Tory system had reached a point where it had to kill men or go.

And it did not mean to go; it meant to kill. It meant to murder men.

If youth and the new ideas were to go on with the world, the price was blood.

Ulster was a little country; altogether the dispute did not affect many thousands of men, but except for the difference in scale there was indeed hardly any difference at all between this scramble towards civil conflict in Ireland and the rush, swift and noiseless, that was now carrying central Europe towards immeasurable bloodshed. To kill and mutilate and waste five human beings in a petty riot is in its essence no less vile a crime than to kill and mutilate and waste twenty millions. While the British Tories counted their thousands, the Kaiser and his general staff reckoned in millions; while the British "loyalists" were smuggling a few disused machine-guns from Germany, Krupp's factories were turning out great guns by the hundred. But the evil thing was the same evil thing; a system narrow and outworn, full of a vague fear of human reason and the common sense of mankind, full of pride and greed and the insolent desire to trample upon men, a great system of false assumptions and fixed ideas, oppressed by a thirsty necessity for reassurance, was seeking the refreshment of loud self-assertion and preparing to drink blood. The militarist system that centred upon Potsdam had clambered to a

point where it had to kill men or go. The Balkans were the Ulster of Europe. If once this Balkan trouble settled down, an age of peace might dawn for Europe, and how would Junkerdom fare then, and where would Frau Bertha sell her goods t How would the War Lord justify his glories to the social democrat?...

But Oswald, like most Englishmen, was not attending very closely to affairs upon the Continent. He was preoccupied with the unreason of Ulster.

Recently he had had a curious interview with Lady Charlotte Sydenham, and her white excited face and blazing blue eyes insisted now upon playing the part of mask to the Ulster spirit in his thoughts. She had had to call him in because she had run short of ready money through over-subscription to various schemes for arming the northern patriots. She had sat at her writing-desk with her cap a little over one eye, as though it was a military cap, and the tuft of reddish hair upon her cheek more like bristles than ever, and he had walked about the room contriving disagreeable things to say to her after his wont. He was disinclined to let her have more money, he confessed; she ought to have had more sense, he said, than to write off big cheques, cheques beyond her means, in support of this seditious mischief. If she asked these people who had taken her money, probably they would let her have some back to go on with.

This enraged her nicely, as he had meant it to do. She scolded at him. A nice Sydenham he was, to see his King insulted and his country torn apart. He who had once worn the Queen's uniform. Thank God! she herself was a Par-minter and belonged to a sounder strain!

"It's you who are insulting the King," Oswald interpolated, "trying to defy his Acts in Parliament."

"*Oh!*" cried Lady Charlotte, banging the desk with her freckled fist. "Oh! Parliament! I'd shoot 'em down! First that vile Budget, then the attack on the Lords."

"They passed the Parliament Act," said Oswald.

"To save themselves from being swamped in a horde of working-men peers — sitting there in their caps with their dirty boots on the cushions. Lord Keir Hardie! You'll want Lord Chimneysweep and Viscount Catsmeatman next.... Then came that abominable Insurance

Act — one thing worse than another! Setting class against class and giving them ideas! Then we gave up South Africa to the Boers again! What did we fight for? Didn't we buy the country with our blood? Why, my poor cousin Rupert Parminter was a prisoner in Pretoria for a whole year — thirteen weary months! For nothing! And now Ireland is to be handed over to priests and rebels. To Irishmen! And I — I am not to lift a finger, not a finger, to save my King and my Country and my God — when they are all going straight to the Devil!"

"H'm," said Oswald, rustling the counterfoils in his hand. "But you have been lifting your finger, you know!"

"If I could give more—"

"You have given more."

"I'd give it."

"Won't Grimes make a friendly advance? But I suppose you're up to the neck with Grimes.... I wonder what interest that little swindler charges you."

The old lady could not meet the mild scrutiny of his eye. "You come here and grin and mock while your country is being handed over to a gang of God-knows-whos!" she said, staring at her inkpot.

"To whom probably it belongs as much as it does to me," said Oswald.

"Thank God the army is sound," said Aunt Charlotte. "Thank God this doesn't end with your Parliaments! Mark my words, Oswald! On the day they raise their Home Rule flag in Ireland there will be men shot down — men shot down. A grim lesson."

"Some perhaps killed by your own particular cheques," said Oswald. "Who knows?"

"I hope so," said Lady Charlotte, with a quiver of deep passion in her voice. "I hope so sincerely. If I could think I had caused the death of one of those traitors.... If it could be Lloyd George!"...

But that was too much apparently even for Lady Charlotte to hope for.

Oswald, when he had come to her, had fully intended to let her have money to go on with, but now he was changing his mind. He had thought of her hitherto just as a grotesque figure in his life, part of the joke of existence, but now with this worry of the Irish business

in his mind he found himself regarding her as something more than an individual. She seemed now to be the accentuated voice of a whole class, the embodiment of a class tradition. He strolled back from the window and stood with his hands deep in his trouser pockets — which always annoyed her — and his head on one side, focusing the lady.

"My dear Aunt," he said, "what right have you to any voice in politics at all? You know, you're pretty — ungracious. The world lets you have this money — and you spend it in organizing murder."

"*The world lets me have this money!*" cried Lady Charlotte, amazed and indignant. "Why!" she roared, "it's MY money!"

In that instant the tenets of socialism, after a siege lasting a quarter of a century, took complete possession of Oswald's mind. In that same instant she perceived it. "Any one can see you're a Liberal and a Socialist yourself," she cried. "You'd shake hands with Lloyd George tomorrow. Yes, you would. Why poor foolish Vincent made you trustee-He might have known! You a sailor! A faddy invalid! Mad on blacks. I suppose you'd give your precious Baganda Home Rule next! And him always so sound on the treatment of the natives! Why! he kicked a real judge — a native judge — Inner Temple and all the rest of it — out of his railway compartment. Kicked him. Bustled him out neck and crop. Awayed with him! Oh, if he could see you now! Insulting me! Standing up for all these people, blacks, Irishmen, strikers, anything. Sneering at the dear old Union Jack they want to tear to pieces."

"Well," said Oswald as she paused to take breath. "You've got yourself into this mess and you must get along now till next quarter day as well as you can. I can't help you and you don't deserve to be helped."

"You'll not let me spend my own money?"

"You've fired off all the money you're entitled to. You'll probably kill a constable — or some decent little soldier boy from Devon or Kent.... Good God! Have you no imagination?..."

It was the most rankling encounter he had ever had with her. Either he was losing tolerance for her or she was indeed becoming more noisy and ferocious. She haunted his thoughts for a long time, and his thoughts of her, so intricate is our human composition, were

all mixed up with sympathy and remorse for the petty cash troubles in which he had left her....

But what a pampered, evil soul she had always been! Never in all her life had she made or grown or got one single good thing for mankind. She had lived in great expensive houses, used up the labour of innumerable people, bullied servants, insulted poor people, made mischief. She was like some gross pet idol that mankind out of whim kept for the sake of its sheer useless ugliness. He found himself estimating the weight of food and the tanks of drink she must have consumed, the carcases of oxen and sheep, the cartloads of potatoes, the pyramids of wine bottles and stout bottles she had emptied. And she had no inkling of gratitude to the careless acquiescent fellow-creatures who had suffered her so long and so abundantly. At the merest breath upon her clumsy intolerable dignity she clamoured for violence and cruelty and killing, and would not be appeased. An old idol! And she was only one of a whole class of truculent, illiterate harridans who were stirring up bad blood in half the great houses of London, and hurrying Britain on to an Irish civil war. No! She wasn't as funny as she seemed.

Not nearly so funny. She was too like too many people for that. Too like most people?

Did that go too far?

After all there was a will for good in men; even this weary Irish business had not been merely a conflict of fixed ideas, there had been, too, real efforts on the part of countless people to get the tangle straightened out. There were creative forces at work in men — even in Ireland. And also there was youth.

His thoughts came back to the figure of Peter, standing on the head of Howth and calling for a new world.

"I'll pit my Peter," he said, "against all the Aunt Charlottes in creation.... In the long run, that is."

He was blind — was not all Europe blind T — to the vast disaster that hung over him and his and the whole world, to the accumulated instability of the outworn social and political facade that now tottered to a crash. Massacre, famine, social confusion, world-wide destruction, long years of death and torment were close at hand; the thinnest curtain of time, a mere month of blue days now, hung

between him and the thunderous overture of the world disaster.

"I pit my Peter," he repeated, "against all the Aunt Charlottes in creation."

§ 10

All novels that run through the years of the great war must needs be political novels and fragments of history. In August, 1914, that detachment of human lives from history, that pretty picaresque disorder of experiences, that existence like a fair with ten thousand different booths, which had gone on for thousands of years, came to an end. We were all brought into a common drama. Something had happened so loud and insistent that all lives were focused upon it; it became a leading factor in every life, the plot of every story, the form of all our thoughts. It so thrust itself upon mankind that the very children in the schools about the world asked "why has this thing happened?" and could not live on without some answer. The Great War summoned all human beings to become political animals, time would brook no further evasion. August, 1914, was the end of adventure and mental fragmentation for the species; it was the polarization of mankind.

Other books have told, innumerable books that have yet to come will tell, of the rushing together of events that culminated in the breach of the Belgian frontier by the German hosts. Our story has to tell only of how that crisis took to itself and finished and crowned the education of these three people with whom we are concerned. Of the three, Oswald and Joan spent nearly the whole of July at Pelham Ford. Peter came down from Cambridge for a day or so and then, after two or three days in London for which he did not clearly account, he went off to the Bernese Oberland to climb with a party of three other Trinity men. There was a vague but attractive project at the back of his mind, which he did not confide to Oswald or Joan, of going on afterwards into north Italy to a little party of four or five choice spirits which Hetty was to organize. They could meet on the other side of the Simplon. Perhaps they would push on into Venezia. They would go for long tramps amidst sweet chestnut trees and

ripening grapes, they would stay in the vast, roomy, forgotten inns of sleepy towns whose very stables are triumphs of architecture, they would bathe amidst the sunlit rocks of quiet lakes. Wherever they went in that land the snow and blue of the distant Alps would sustain the sweet landscape as music sustains a song.

Hetty had made it all fantastically desirable. She had invented it and woven details about it one afternoon in her studio. She knew north Italy very well; it was not the first amusing journey in that soft, delicious land that she had contrived. Peter was tremendously excited to think of the bright possibilities of such an adventure, and yet withal there was a queer countervailing feeling gnawing amidst his lusty anticipations. Great fun it would be, tremendous fun, with a little spice of sin in it, and why not? Only somehow he had a queer unreasonable feeling that Joan ought to share his holidays. Old Joan who looked at him with eyes that held a shadow of sorrow; who made him feel that she knew more than she could possibly know. He wished Joan, too, had some spree in contemplation — not of course quite the same sort of spree. A decent girl's sort of spree. Just the tramp part. He wished he could tell Joan of what was in hand, that there wasn't this queer embarrassment between them. Joan had her car of course....

Oswald had recently bought Joan a pretty little ten-horsepower Singer car, a two-seater, in which she was to run about the country at her own free will. It was one of several attempts he had recently made to brighten life for Joan. He was beginning to watch her very closely; he did not clearly understand the thoughts and imaginations that made her so grave and feverish at times, but he knew that she was troubled. The girl's family resemblance to his Dolly had caught his mind. He thought she was more like Dolly than she was because her image constantly before him was steadily replacing Dolly's in his mind. And he liked very much to sit beside her and watch her drive. At five-and-forty miles an hour her serene profile was divine. She had a good mechanical intelligence and her nerve was perfect; the little car lived in her hands and had the precision of movement of an animal.

They ran across country to Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon, and slept the night in Warwick; they went to New market and round to

Chelmsford and Dovercourt, which was also an over-night excursion. These were their longer expeditions. They made afternoon runs to St. Albans, Hitchin, Baldock, Bedford, Stevenage and Royston. Almost every fine day they made some trip. While she drove or while they walked about some unfamiliar town the cloud seemed to lift from Joan's mind, she became as fresh and bright as a child. And she talked more and more freely to Oswald. She talked more abundantly than Peter and much less about ideas. She talked rather of scenery and customs and atmospheres. She seemed to have a far more concrete imagination than Peter, to accept the thing that was with none of his reluctance. She would get books about Spain, about the South Sea Islands, about China, big books of travel and description, from the London Library, and so assimilate them that she seemed to be living imaginatively for days together in these alien atmospheres. She wanted to know about Uganda. She was curious about the native King. There were times when Oswald was reminded of some hungry and impatient guest in a restaurant reading over an over-crowded and perplexing menu.

She did not read many plays or novels nor any poetry. She mentioned casually one day to Oswald that such reading either bored her or disturbed her. She read a certain amount of philosophy, but manifestly now as a task. And she was incessantly restless. She had no mother nor sisters, no feminine social world about her; she suffered from a complete lack of all those distracting and pacifying routines and all those restraints of habit and association that control the lives of more normally placed girls. Her thoughts, stimulated by her uncontrolled reading, ran wild. One morning she was up an hour before dawn, and let herself out of the house and walked over the hills nearly to Newport before breakfast, coming back with skirts and shoes wet with dew and speckled with grass seeds and little burrs. She spent that afternoon asleep in the hammock. And she would play fitfully at the piano or the pianola after dinner and then wander out, a restless white sprite, into the garden. One night early in the month she persuaded Oswald to go for a long moonlight walk with her along the road to Ware.

There was a touch of dream quality in that walk for both of them. They had never been together in moonlight before. She ceased to be

Joan and became at once something very strange and wonderful and very intimate, a magic phantom of womanhood, a creature no longer of flesh and blood but of pallor and shadow, whose hair was part of the universal dusk and her eyes two stars. And he, too, walking along and sometimes talking as if he talked to the lonely sky, and sometimes looking down out of the dimness closely at her, he had lost his age and his scars and become the utmost dignity of a man. They walked sometimes on a road of misty brightness and sometimes through deep pools of shadow and sometimes amidst the black bars and lace cast by tree stems and tree branches, and she made him talk of the vast spaces of Africa and the long trails through reed and forest, and of great animals standing still and invisible close at hand, hidden by the trickery of their colourings, and how he had gone all alone into the villages of savage people who had never before set eyes on a European. And she talked with a whisper and sigh in her voice of how she, too, would like to go into wild and remote lands—"if I could go off with a man like you." And it seemed to him for a time that this sweet voice beside him was not truly Joan's but another's, and that he walked once more with the dearest wish he had ever wished in his life.

He talked to her of moonlight and starlight in the tropics, of a wonderful pale incandescence that shines out above the grave of the sunset when the day has gone, of fireflies and of phosphorescent seas, and of the distant sounds of drumming and chanting and the remote blaze of native bonfires seen through black tree stems in the night. He talked, too, of the howling of beasts at night, and of the sudden roaring of lions, and at that she drew closer to him.

When at last it was time for her to turn she did not want to turn. "I have been happy," she said. "I have been happy. Let us go on. Why should we go back!"

As if she was not always happy. She pulled at his arm like a child....

And as they came home she came close to him, and for long spaces they said not a word to one another.

But at the water splash in the village she had a queer impulse. The water splash appeared ahead of them, an incessant tumult of silver in which were set jewels of utter blackness and shining diamonds. She

looked and tugged him by the arm.

"Let us walk through the water, dear Nobby!" she said. "I want to feel it about my feet. Do! Do! Do! It will hardly cover our shoes...."

A queer impulse that was of hers but, what was queerer, it found the completest response in him. "All right," he said, as though this was the most commonplace suggestion possible; and very gravely, and as if it was some sort of rite, he let her lead him through the water. They were indeed both very grave....

They walked up to the house in silence....

"Good night, Nobby dear," said Joan, leaning suddenly over by the newel of the stairs, and kissed him, as the moonlight kisses, a kiss as soft and cool as ever awakened Endymion....

Life was at high tide in Joan that July, and everything in her was straining at its anchors. All her being was flooded with the emotional intimations that she was a woman, that she had to be beautiful and hasten to meet exquisite and profoundly significant experiences; none of her instincts told her that the affairs of the world drew to an issue that would maim and kill half the youths she knew and torment and alter her own and every life about her. She was haunted and distressed day and night — for the trouble got into her dreams — by Peter's evident love-making with Hetty and Huntley? s watchful eyes, and she saw nothing of the red eyes of war and the blood-lust that craved for all her generation. Peter was making love — making love to Hetty. Peter was making love to Hetty. And Joan was left at home in a fever of desertion. Her brotherhood with Peter which had been perhaps the greatest fact of her girlhood was breaking down under the exasperation of their separation and her jealousy, and Huntley was steadily and persistently invading her imagination....

Women and men alike are love-hungry creatures; women even more so than men. It is not beauty nor strength nor goodness that hearts go to so much as attention. To know that another human being thinks of us, esteems us above all our secret estimates, has a steadfast and consuming need of us, is the supreme reassurance of life. And when women's hearts are distressed by vague passions and a friendless insecurity they will go out very readily even to a cripple who watches and waits.

Huntley was one of those men for whom women are the sole

interest in life. If he had been obliged to master a mathematical problem he would have thought he struggled with a Muse and so achieved it. He watched them and waylaid them for small and great occasions. He understood completely these states of wild impatience that possess the feminine mind. He had no brotherliness nor fatherliness in his composition: his sole conception of this trouble of the unmated was of an opportunity for himself. A little patience, a little thought — and it was very delightful thought, a little pleasant skill, and all this vague urgency would become a gift for him.

But never before had Huntley met any one so fresh and youthfully beautiful as Joan. There were times when he could doubt whether he was the magnetizer or the magnetized. He had kissed her but he was not sure that she had kissed him. Some day she should kiss him of her own free will, lie thought now almost continuously of Joan. The only work he could get on with was a novel into which he put things he had imagined about Joan. He wrote her long letters and planned for days to get an hour's conversation with her. And he would go for long walks and spend all the time composing letters or scheming dramatic conversations that never would happen in reality because Joan missed all her cues.

It was rather by instinct than by any set scheme that he did his utmost to convert her vague unrest into a discontent with all her circumstances, to shape her thoughts to the idea that her present life was a prison-house of which he held the key of escape. He suggested in a score of different ways to her mind that outside her present prison was a wonderland of beauty and excitement. He was clever enough to catch from her talk her love of the open, of fresh air and sunlight. He had more than a suspicion of Hetty Reinhart's plans; he conveyed them by shadowy hints. Why should not Joan too defy convention? She could tell Oswald a story of a projected walk with some other girl at Cambridge, and slip away to Huntley. They had always been the best of companions. Why shouldn't they take a holiday together?

And why not?

What was there to fear? Couldn't she trust Huntley? Couldn't she trust herself?

To which something deep in Joan's composition replied that this

was but playing with passion and romance, and she wanted passion and romance. She wanted a reality — unendurably. And it was clear as day to her that she did not want passion and romance with Huntley. He was a strange being to her really, not differing as man does from woman but as dog does from cat; hidden deep down perhaps was some mysterious difference of race; he could amuse her and interest her because he was queer and unexpected, but he was not of her kind. Like to like was the way of the Sydenham blood. He offered and pointed to all that seemed to her necessary to make life right and to end this aching suspense — except that he was a stranger....

The long sunny days of June dragged by. Suppose after all she were to slip away to Huntley. It would be a spree, it would be an excitement. Did he matter so much after all?...

Peter sent a postcard and said he thought he would go on "with some people into Italy."

She had known — all along — that that was coming.

She went out the night after that postcard came into the garden alone. It was a still and sultry evening, and she stifled even in the open air. She wanted to go up into the arbour and to sit there and think. She could not understand the quiver of anger that ran through her being like the shiver of the current on the surface of a stream. All the trees and bushes about her were dark and shapeless lumps of blackness and as she went up the path she trod on two snails.

"Damn them!" she said at the second scrunch. "Phew! What a night. Full of things that crawl about in the darkness. Full of beastly things...."

A little owl mewed and mocked wickedly among the trees.

There was no view out of the black arbour, only the sense of a darkened world. A thin ineffectual moon crescent was sinking westward, and here and there were spiritless stars. A strange, huge shape of clouds, a hooded figure of the profoundest blue, brooded in a sky of luminous pale yellow over the land to the south and east, and along the under fringe of its skirts ever and again there ran a flicker of summer lightning. "And I am to live here! I am to live here while life runs by me," she said.

She would go to Huntley. No brother and sister business though!

She would go to Huntley and end all this torment.

But she couldn't!...

"Why have I no will?" she cried harshly.

She did not love Huntley. That did not matter. She would make herself love Huntley....

She went out upon the terrace and stood very still, looking down upon the house and thinking hard.

Could she love no one? If so, then it might as well be Huntley she went to as any one? All these boys, Troop, Winterbaum, Wilmington — they were nothing to her. But she wanted to live. Was it perhaps that she did love some one — who stood, invisible and unregarded, possessing her heart?

Her mind halted on that for a time and then seemed to force itself along a certain line that lay before it. Did she love Oswald? She did. More than any of them — far more. The other night most certainly she had been in love with him. When he walked through the water with her — absurdly

grave! She could have flung her arms about him then.

She could have clung to him and kissed him. Of course she must be in love with him.... But he was not in love with her!... And yet that moonlit evening it seemed?

Suppose it were Oswald and not Huntley who beckoned.

Love for Huntley — love him where you would — though you loved him in the most beautiful scenery in the world-would still be something vulgar, still be this dirty love of the studios, still a trite disobedience, a stolen satisfaction, after the fashion of the Reinhart affair. But Oswald was a great man, a kind and noble giant, who told no lies, who played no tricks....

If he were to love one!...

She stood upon the terrace looking down upon the lit house, trembling with this thought that she loved Oswald and holding fast to it — for fear of another thought that she dared not think, that lay dark and waiting outside her consciousness, a poor exile thought, utterly forbidden.

Joan stood in the darkness on the turf outside Oswald's open window, and watched him.

He was so deep in thought that he had not noted the soft sounds of her approach. The only light in the room was his study lamp, and his face was in shadow while his hands rested on the open Atlas in front of him and were brightly lit. They were rather sturdy white hands with broad thumbs, exactly like Peter's. Presently he stirred and pulled the Atlas towards him, and turned the page over to another map. The fingers of his left hand drummed on the desk.

He looked up abruptly, and she came to the window and leant forward into the room, with her arms folded on the sill.

"You're as still as the night, Joan," he said.

"There's thunder brewing."

"There's war brewing, Joan."

"Why do you sit poring over that map?"

"Because there are various people called Croats and Slovenes and Serbs and they are beginning to think they are one people and ought to behave as one people, and some of them are independent and some are under the Austrians and some are under the Italians."

"What has that got to do with us?" said Joan.

She followed her question up with another. "Is it a fresh Balkan war?"

"Something bigger than that," said Oswald. "Something very much bigger — unless we are careful."

His tone was so grave that Joan caught something of his gravity. She stepped in through the window. "Where are all these people?" she said. She thought it was characteristic of him to trouble about these distant races and their entanglements. But she wished he could have a keener sense of the perplexities that came nearer him. She came and leant over him while he explained the political riddle of Austria and Eastern Europe to her....

"We are too busy with the Irish trouble," he said. "I am afraid of Germany. If that fool Carson and these Pankhurst people had been paid to distract our minds from what is happening, they could not do the work better. Big things are happening — oh! big things."

She tried to feel their bigness. But to her all such political talk was still as unreal as things one reads about in histories, something to do

with maps and dates, something you can “get up” and pass examinations in, but nothing that touches the warm realities of personal life and beauty. Yet it pleased her to think that this Oswald she loved could reach up to these things, so that he partook of the nature of the great beings who cared for them like Gladstone or Lincoln, and was not simply a limited real person like Troop or Wilmington or Peter. (He was really like a great Peter, like what Peter ought to be.) He seemed preoccupied as if he did not feel how close she was about him, how close her beauty came to him. She sat now on the arm of his chair behind him, with her face over his shoulder. Her body touched his shoulders, by imperceptible degrees she brought her cheek against his crisp hair, where it pressed no heavier than a shadow.

She had no suspicion how vividly he was aware of her near new.

As he discoursed to her upon the text of the maps before th<-m, a deep undercurrent of memories and feelings of quite a different quality ran contrariwise through his mind. “We are getting nearer than we have ever been to a big European war, a big break-up! People do not understand, do not begin to dream of the smash-up that that would be. There is scarcely a country that may not be drawn in.”

So he spoke. And below that level of thought he was irritated to feel that such thought could not wholly possess him. Far more real to him were the vague suggestions of love and the summer night and the dusky nearness of this Joan, this phantom of Dolly, for more and more were Joan and Dolly blending together in his emotional life, this dear-aess and sweetness that defied all reasoning and explanation. And cutting across both these streams of thought and feeling came a third stream of thought. Joan’s intonations in every word she spoke betrayed her indifference to the great net of political forces in which the world struggled. She was no more deeply interested than if he had been discussing some problem at chess or some mathematical point. She was not deeply interested and he was not completely interested, ami yet this question that was slipping its hold on their attention might involve the lives and welfare of millions....

He struggled with his conception of a world being hauled to its destruction in a net of vaguely apprehended ideas, of ordinary life

being shattered not by the strength but by the unattractive feebleness of its political imaginings." People do not understand," he repeated, trying to make this thing real to himself. "All Europe is in danger."

He turned upon her with a betrayal of irritation in his voice. "You think all this matters nothing to us," he said. "But it does. If Austria makes war in Serbia, Russia will come in. If Russia conies in, France comes in. That brings in Germany. We can't see France beaten again. We can't have that."

But Joan had still the child's belief that somewhere, somehow, behind all the ostensible things of the world, wise adults in its interests have the affairs of mankind under control. "They won't let things go as far as that," she said.

Oswald reflected upon that. How sure this creature was of her world!

"Until Death and Judgment come, Joan," he said, "there is neither Death nor Judgment."

That saying and his manner of saying it struck hard on her mind. Before she went to sleep that night she found herself trying to imagine what war was really like....

And next day she was thinking of war. Would Peter perhaps have to be a soldier if there was a real great war? Would all her young men go soldiering? Would Oswald go? And what was there for a girl to do in war-time? She hated the idea of nursing, but she supposed she would have to nurse. Far rather would she go under fire and rescue wounded men. Had modern war no use for a Joan of Arc?... She sank to puerile visions of a girl in a sort of Vivandi-ere uniform upholding a tattered flag under a heavy fire.... It couldn't last very long. ... It would be exciting.... But all this was nonsense; there would be no war. There would be a conference or an arbitration or something dull of that sort, and all this stir and unrest would subside and leave things again — as they had been....

Swiftly and steadfastly now the world was setting itself to tear up all the scenery of Joan's world and to smash and burn its every property. If it had not been for the suggestion of Oswald's deepening preoccupation one may doubt whether Joan would have heeded the huge rush of events in Europe until the moment of the crash. But because of him she was drawn into the excitement. From the twenty-

fifth of July, which was the day when the news of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia appeared in the English newspapers, through the swift rush of events that followed, the failure of the Irish Conference at Buckingham Palace to arrive at any settlement upon the Irish question, the attempts of Sir Edward Grey to arrest the march of events in Eastern Europe, the unchallenged march of five thousand men with machine-guns through Belfast the shooting upon the crowd in Dublin after the Howth gun-running, the consequent encouragement of Germany and Austria to persist in a stiff c-ourse with Russia because of the apparent inevitability of civil war in Ireland, right up to the march of the Germans into Luxembourg on the first of August, Joan followed with an interest that had presently swamped her egotistical eroticism altogether.

The second of August was a Sunday and brought no papers to Pelham Ford, but Joan motored to Bishop's Stortford to get an *Observer*. Monday was Bank Holiday; the belated morning paper brought the news of the massacre of Belgian peasants by the Germans at Visé. The Germans were pouring into Belgium, an incredible host of splendidly armed men. Tuesday was an immense suspense for Oswald and Joan. They were full of an uncontrollable indignation against Germany. They thought the assault on Belgium the most evil thing that had ever happened in history. But it seemed as though the Government and the country hesitated. *The Daily News* came to hand with a whole page advertisement in great letters exhorting England not to go to war for Belgium.

"But this is Shame!" cried Oswald. "If once the Germans get Paris! It is Shame and Disaster!"

The postman was a reservist and had been called up. All over the country the posts were much disorganized. It was past eleven on the sunniest of Wednesdays when Joan, standing restless at the gates, called to Oswald, who was fretfully pacing the lawn, that the papers were coming.

She ran down the road to intercept the postman, and came back with a handful of letters and parcels. Newspapers were far more important than any personal letters that morning. She gave Oswald the newspaper package to tear open, and snatched up The Daily News as it fell out of the enveloping Times.

There was a crisp rustling of the two papers.

Oswald's fear of his country's mental apathy, muddle-headedness, levity, and absolute incapacity to grasp any great situation at all, had become monstrous under the stresses of these anxious days. Up to the end he feared some politicians' procrastination, some idiot dishonesty and betrayal, weak palterings with a challenge as high as heaven, with dangers as plain as daylight....

"Thank God!" he cried. "It is War!"

CHAPTER XIII. — JOAN AND PETER GRADUATE

§ 1

SO it was, with a shock like the shock of an unsuspected big gun fired suddenly within a hundred yards of her, that the education of Joan and her generation turned about and entered upon a new and tragic phase. Necessity had grown impatient with the inertia of the Universities and the evasions of politicians. Mankind must learn the duties of human brotherhood and respect for the human adventure, or waste and perish; so our stern teacher has decreed. If in peace time we cannot learn and choose between those alternatives, then through war we must. And if we will in no manner learn our lesson, then — The rocks are rich with the traces of ineffective creatures that the Great Experimenter has tried and thrown aside....

All these young people who had grown up without any clear aims or any definite sense of obligations, found themselves confronted, without notice, without any preparation, by a world crisis that was also a crisis of life or death, of honour or dishonour for each one of them. They had most of them acquired the habit of regarding the teachers and statesmen and authorities set up over their lives as people rather on the dull side of things, as people addicted to muddling and disingenuousness in matters of detail; but they had never yet suspected the terrific insecurity of the whole system — until this first thunderous crash of the downfall. Even then they did not fully realize themselves as a generation betrayed to violence and struggle and death. All human beings, all young things, are born with a conviction that all is right with the world. There is mother to go to and father to go to, and behind them the Law; for most of the generation that came before Joan and Peter the delusion of a great safety lasted on far into adult life; only slowly, with maturity, came the knowledge of the flimsiness of all these protections and the essential dangerousness of the world. But for this particular generation the disillusionment came like an unexpected blow in the face. They were preparing themselves in a leisurely and critical

fashion for the large, loose prospect of unlimited life, and then abruptly the world dropped its mask. That pampered and undisciplined generation was abruptly challenged to be heroic beyond all the precedents of mankind. Their safety, their freedom ended, their leisure ended. The first few days of August, 1914, in Europe, was a spectacle of old men planning and evading, lying and cheating, most of them so scared by what they were doing as completely to have lost their heads, and of youth and young men everywhere being swept from a million various employments, from a million divergent interests and purposes, which they had been led to suppose were the proper interests and purposes of life, towards the great military machines that were destined to convert, swiftly and ruthlessly, all their fresh young life into rags and blood and rotting flesh....

But at first the young had no clear sense of the witless futility of the machine that was to crush their lives. They did not understand that there was as yet no conception of a world order anywhere in the world. They had taken it for granted that there was an informal, tacitly understood world order, at which these Germans — confound them! — had suddenly struck.

Peter and his friends were so accustomed to jeer at the dignitaries of church and state and at kings and politicians that they could not realize that such dwarfish and comic characters could launch disaster upon a whole world. They sat about a little table in a twilit arbour on the way down from Bel-Alp — Peter was to leave the climbers and join the Italian party at Brigue — and devoured omelette and veal and drank Yvorne, and mocked over the Swiss newspapers.

"Another ultimatum!" said one cheerful youth. "Holland will get it next."

"He's squirting ultimatums. Like a hedgehog throwing quills."

"I saw him in Berlin," said Peter. "He rushed by in an automobile. He isn't a human being. He's more like Mr. Toad in *The Wind in the Willows*...."

"All the French have gone home; all the Germans," said Troop. "I suppose we ought to go."

"I've promised to go to Italy," said Peter.

"War is war," said Troop, and stiffened Peter's resolution.

“I’m not going to have my holidays upset by a theatrical ass in a gilt helmet,” said Peter.

He got down to Brigue next day, and the little town was bright with uniforms, for the Swiss were mobilizing. He saw off his mountaineering friends in the evening train for Paris. “You’d better come,” said Troop gravely, hanging out of the train.

Peter shook his head. His was none of your conscript nations. No....

He dined alone; Hetty and her two friends were coming up from Lausanne next day. In the reading-room he found the *Times* with the first news of the invasion of Belgium. Several of the villagers of Visé had turned out with shot guns, and the Germans had performed an exemplary massacre for the discouragement of franc-tireurs. Indignation had been gathering in Peter during the day. He swore aloud and flung down the paper. “Is there no one sane enough to assassinate a scoundrel who sets things loose like this?” he said. He prowled about the little old town in the moonlight, full of black rage against the Kaiser. He felt he must go back. But it seemed to him a terrible indignity that he should have to interrupt his holiday because of the ambition of a monarch. “Why the devil can’t the Germans keep him on his chain?” he said, and then, “Shooting the poor devils — like rabbits!”

Hetty and her friends arrived in the early train next morning, all agog about the war. They thought it a tremendous lark. They were not to get out at Brigue, it was arranged; Peter was to be on the platform with his rucksack and join them. He kept the appointment, but he was a very scowling Peter in spite of the fact that Hetty was gentle and tremulous at the sight of him in her best style. “This train is an hour late,” said Peter, sitting down beside her. “That accursed fool at Potsdam is putting all our Europe out of gear.”...

For three days he was dark, preoccupied company. “Somebody ought to assassinate him,” he said, harping on that idea. “Have men no self-respect at all?”

He felt he ought to go back to England, and the feeling produced a bleak clearness in his mind. It was soft sunshine on the lake of Orta, but east wind in Peter’s soul. He disliked Hetty’s friends extremely; he had never met them before; they were a vulgar brace of sinners he

thought, and they reflected their quality upon her. The war they considered was no concern of theirs; they had studio minds. The man was some sort of painter, middle-aged, contemptuous, and with far too much hair. He ought to have been past this sort of spree. The girl was a model and had never been in Italy before. She kept saying, "0, the sky!" until it jarred intolerably. The days are notoriously longer on the lake of Orta than anywhere else in the world; from ten o'clock in the morning to lunch time is about as long as a week's imprisonment; from two to five is twice that length; from five onward the course of time at Orta is more normal. Hetty was Hetty, in the tradition of Cleopatra, but could Cleopatra hold a young man whose mind was possessed by one unquenchable thought that he had been grossly insulted and deranged by an exasperating potentate at Potsdam who was making hay of his entire world, and that he had to go at once and set things right, and that it was disgraceful not to go?

He broached these ideas to Hetty about eleven o'clock on their first morning upon the lake. They were adrift in a big tilted boat in the midst of a still, glassy symmetry of mountain-backed scenery and mountain-backed reflections, and the other couple was far away, a little white dot at the head of a V of wake, rowing ambitiously to the end of the lake.

"You can't go," said Hetty promptly....

"But I have come all the way to Italy for you!" cried Hetty....

This was a perplexing problem for the honour of a young man of one-and- twenty. He argued the case — weakly. He had an audience of one, a very compelling one. He decided to remain. In the night he woke up and thought of Troop. Old Troop must be in England by now. Perhaps he had already enlisted. Ever since their school days he and Troop had had a standing dispute upon questions of morals and duty. There was something dull and stiff about old Troop that drove a bright antagonist to laxity, but after all — ? Troop had cut off clean and straight to his duty.... Because Troop wasn't entangled. He had kept clear of all this love-making business.... There was something to be said for Troop's point of view after all....

The second day Peter reopened the question of going as they sat on a stone seat under the big, dark trees on the Sacro Monte, and looked out under the drooping boughs upon the lake, and Hetty had

far more trouble with him. He decided he could not leave her. But he spent the hours between tea and dinner in reading all the war news he could find — translating the Italian with the aid of a small conversation dictionary. Something had happened in the North Sea, he could not make out exactly what it was, but the Germans had lost a ship called the *Königin Luise*, and the British a battleship — was it a battleship? — the *Amphion*. Beastly serious that! — a battleship. There was something vague, too, about a fleet encounter, but no particulars. It was a bore getting no particulars. Here close at hand in the Mediterranean there had been, it was said, a naval battle in the Straits of Messina also; the *Panther* was sunk; and the Germans had had a great defeat at Liege. The British army was already landing in France....

Upon his second decision to remain Peter reflected profoundly that night.

The standing dispute between him and Troop upon the lightness or seriousness of things sexual returned to his mind. Troop, Peter held, regarded all these things with a portentous solemnity, a monstrous sentimentality. Peter, Troop maintained, regarded them with a dangerous levity. Troop declared that love, "true love," was, next to "honour," the most tremendous thing in life; he was emphatic upon "purity." Peter held that love was as light and pleasant and incidental a thing as sunshine. You said, "Here's a jolly person!" just as you said, "Here's a pretty flower!" There had been, he argued, a lot of barbaric "Taboos" in these matters, but the new age was dropping all that. He called Troop's idea of purity "ceremonial obsession." Both talked very freely of "cleanness" and meant very different things: Troop chiefly abstinence and Peter baths. Peter had had the courage of his opinions; but once or twice he had doubted secretly whether, after all, there weren't defilements beyond the reach of mere physical cleansing. One dismissed that sort of thing as "reaction." All these disputes were revived now in his memory in the light of this one plain, disconcerting fact: Troop had gone straight home to enlist and he himself was still in Italy. Weakening of moral fibre? Loss of moral fibre?

The next day, in the boat, Peter reopened the question of his departure.

“You see, Hetty,” he said, “if there was conscription in England — I shouldn’t feel so bound to go.”

“But then you would be bound to go.”

“Well, then I could be a decent deserter — for love’s sake. But when your country leaves it to you to come back or not as you think fit — then, you know, you’re bound — in honour.”

Hetty dabbled her hand over the side of the boat. “Oh — *go*!” she said.

“Yes,” said Peter over the oars, and as if ashamed, “I must go — I must. There is a train this afternoon which catches the express at Domo d’Ossola.”

He rowed for a while. Presently he stole a glance at Hetty. She was lying quite still on her cushion under the tilt, staring at the distant mountains, with tears running down her set face. They were real tears. “Three days,” she said choking, and at that rolled over to weep noisily upon her arms.

Peter sat over his oars and stared helplessly at her emotion.

A familiar couplet came into his head, and remained unspoken because of its striking inappropriateness:

“I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.”

Presently Hetty lay still. Then she sat up and wiped at a tear-stained face.

“If you must go,” said Hetty, “you must go. But why you didn’t go from Brigue!”

That problem was to exercise Peter’s mind considerably in the extensive reflections of the next few days and nights.

“And I have to stick in Italy with those two Bores!”...

But the easy flexibility of Hetty’s temperament was a large part of her charm.

“I suppose you ought to go, Peter,” she said, “really. I had no business to try and keep you. But I’ve had so little of you. And I love you.”

She melted. Peter melted in sympathy. But he was much relieved....

She slipped into his bedroom to help him pack his rucksack, and she went with him to the station. “I wish I was a man, too,” she said. “Then I would come with you. But wars don’t last for ever, Peter. We’ll come back here.”

She watched the train disappear along the curve above the station with something like a sense of desolation. Then being a really very stout-hearted young woman, she turned about and went down to the telegraph office to see what could be done to salvage her rent and shattered holiday.

And Peter, because of these things, and because of certain delays at Paris and Havre, for the train and Channel services were getting badly disorganized, got to England six whole days later than Troop.

§ 2

This passion of indignation against Germany in which Peter enlisted was the prevailing mood of England during the opening months of the war. The popular mind had seized upon the idea that Europe had been at peace and might have remained at peace indefinitely if it had not been for the high-handed behaviour, first of Austria with Serbia, and then of Germany with Russia. The belief that on the whole Germany had prepared for and sought this war was no doubt correct, and the spirit of the whole nation rose high and fine to the challenge. But that did not so completely exhaust the moral factors in the case as most English people, including Peter, supposed at that time.

Neither Peter nor Joan, although they were members of the best educated class in the community and had been given the best education available for that class, had any but the vaguest knowledge of what was going on in the political world. They knew practically nothing of what a modern imperial system consisted, had but the vaguest ideas of the role of Foreign Office, Press and Parliament in international affairs, were absolutely ignorant of the direction of the army and navy, knew nothing of the history of Germany or Russia during the previous half-century, or the United States since the Declaration of Independence, had no inklings of the elements of European ethnology, arid had scarcely ever heard such words, for

example, as Slovene, or Slovak, or Ukrainian. The items of foreign intelligence in the newspapers joined on to no living historical conceptions in their minds. Between the latest history they had read and the things that happened about them and in which they were now helplessly involved, was a gap of a hundred years or more; the profound changes in human life and political conditions brought about during that hundred years by railways, telegraphs, steam shipping, steel castings and the like, were all beyond the scope of their ideas. For Joan history meant stories about Joan of Arc, Jane Shore, the wives of Henry the Eighth, James I. and his Steenie, Charles the Second, and suchlike people, winding up with the memoirs of Madame d'Arblay; Peter had ended his historical studies when he went on to the modern side at Caxton — it would have made little difference so far as modern affairs were concerned if he had taken a degree in history — and was chiefly conversant with such things as the pedigree of the Electress Sophia of Hanover, the Constitutions of Clarendon, the statute of Mortmain, and the claims of Edward the Third and Henry the Fifth to the crown of France. Neither of them knew anything at all of India except by way of Kipling's stories and the Coronation Durbar pictures. If the two of them had rather clearer ideas than most of their associates about the recent opening up and partition of Africa it was because Oswald had talked about those things. But the jostling for empire that had been going on for the past fifty years all over the world, and the succession of Imperialist theories from Disraeli to Joseph Chamberlain and from Bismarck to Treitschke, had no place in their thoughts. The entente cordiale was a phrase of no particular significance to them. The State in which they lived had never explained to them in any way its relations to them nor its fears and aims in regard to the world about it. It is doubtful, indeed, if the State in which they lived possessed the mentality to explain as much even to itself.

How far the best education in America or Germany or any other country was better, it is not for us to discuss here, nor how much better education might be. This is the story of the minds of Joan and Peter and of how that vast system of things hidden, things unanalysed and things misrepresented and obscured, the political system of the European "empires" burst out into war about them. The

sprawling, clumsy, heedless British State, which had troubled so little about taking Peter into its confidence, displayed now no hesitation whatever in beckoning him home to come and learn as speedily as possible how to die for it.

The tragedy of youth in the great war was a universal tragedy, and if the German youths who were now, less freely and more systematically, beating Peter by weeks and months in a universal race into uniform, were more instructed than he, they were also far more thoroughly misinformed. If Peter took hold of the war by the one elemental fact that Belgium had been invaded most abominably and peaceful villagers murdered in their own fields, the young Germans on the other hand had been trained to a whole system of false interpretations. They were assured that they fought to break up a ring of threatening enemies. And that the whole thing was going to be the most magnificent adventure in history. Their minds had been prepared elaborately and persistently for this heroic struggle — in which they were to win easily. They had been made to believe themselves a race of blond aristocrats above all the rest of mankind, entitled by their moral and mental worth to world dominion. They believed that now they did but come to their own. They had been taught all these things from childhood; how could they help but believe them?

Peter arrived, tired and dirty, at Pelham Ford in the early afternoon. Oswald and Joan were out, but he bathed and changed while Mrs. Moxton got him a belated lunch. As he finished this Joan came into the dining-room from a walk.

"Hullo, Petah," she said, with no display of affection.

"Hullo, Joan."

"We thought you were never coming."

"I was in Italy," said Peter.

"H'm," said Joan, and seemed to reckon in her mind.

"Nobby is in London," she said. "He thinks he might help about East Africa. It's his country practically.... Are you going to enlist?"

"What else?" said Peter, tapping a cigarette on the table. "It's a beastly bore."

"Bunny's gone," said Joan. "And Wilmington."

"They've written?"

“Willy came to see me.”

“Heard from any of the others?”

“Oh!... Troop.”

“Enlisted?”

“Cadet.”

“Any one else?”

“No,” said Joan, and hovered whistling faintly for a moment and then walked out of the room....

She had been counting the hours for four days, perplexed by his delay; his coming had seemed the greatest event in the world, for she had never doubted he would come back to serve, and now that he had come she met him like this!

§ 3

They dressed for dinner that night because Oswald came back tired and vexed from London and wanted a bath before dining. “They seemed to be sending everybody to East Africa on the principle that any one who’s been there before ought not to go again,” he grumbled. “I can’t see any other principle in it.” He talked at first of the coming East African campaign because he hesitated to ask Peter what he intended to do. Then he went on to the war news. The Germans had got Liege. That was certain now. They had smashed the forts to pieces with enormous cannon. There had been a massacre of civilians at Dinant. Joan did not talk very much, but sat and watched Peter closely with an air of complete indifference.

There was a change in him, and she could not say exactly what this change was. The sunshine and snow glare and wind of the high mountains had tanned his face to a hard bronze and he was perceptibly leaner; that made him look older perhaps; but the difference was more than that. She knew her Peter so well that she could divine a new thought in him.

“And what are you going to do, Peter t” said Oswald, coming to it abruptly.

“I’m going to enlist.”

“In the ranks, you mean?” Oswald had expected that.

“Yes.”

“You ought not to do that.”

“Why not?”

“You have your cadet corps work behind you. You ought to take a commission. We shan’t have too many officers.”

Peter considered that.

“I want to begin in the ranks.... I want discipline.”

(Had some moral miracle happened to Peter? This was quite a new note from our supercilious foster brother.)

“You’ll get discipline enough in the cadet corps.”

“I want to begin right down at the bottom of the ladder.”

“Well, if you get a rotten drill sergeant, I’m told, it’s disagreeable.”

“All the better.”

“They’ll find you out and push you into a commission,” said Oswald. “If not, it’s sheer waste.”

“Well, I want to feel what discipline is like — before I give orders,” said Peter. “I want to be told to do things and asked why the devil I haven’t done ’em smartly. I’ve been going too easy. The ranks will brace me up.”

(Yes, this was a new note. Had that delay of four or five days anything to do with this?... Joan, with a start, discovered that she was holding up the dinner, and touched the electric bell at her side for the course to be changed.)

“I suppose we shall all have to brace up,” said Oswald. “It still seems a little unreal. The French have lost Mülhausen again, they say, but they are going strong for Metz. There’s not a word about our army. It’s just crossed over and vanished....”

(Queer to sit here, dining in the soft candlelight, and to think of the crowded roads and deploying troops, the thudding guns and bursting shells away there behind that veil of secrecy — millions of men in France and Belgium fighting for the world. And Peter would go off tomorrow. Presently he would be in uniform; presently he would be part of a marching column. He would go over — into the turmoil. Beyond that her imagination would not pass.)

“I wish I could enlist,” said Joan.

“They’re getting thousands of men more than they can handle as it

is," said Oswald. "They don't want you."

"You'd have thought they'd have had things planned and ready for this," said Peter.

"Nothing is ready," said Oswald. "Nothing is planned. This war has caught our war office fast asleep. It isn't half awake even now."

"There ought to be something for women to do," said Joan.

"There ought to be something for every one to do," said Oswald bitterly, "but there isn't. This country isn't a State; it's a crowd adrift. Did you notice, Peter, as you came through London, the endless multitudes of people just standing about? I've never seen London like that before. People not walking about their business, but just standing."...

Peter told of things he had seen on his way home. "The French are in a scowling state. All France scowls at you, and Havre is packed with bargains in touring cars — just left about — by rich people coming home...."

So the talk drifted. And all the time Joan watched Peter as acutely and as unsuspectedly as a mother might watch a grown-up son. Tomorrow morning he would go off and join up. But it wasn't that which made him grave. New experiences always elated Peter. And he wouldn't be afraid; not he.... She had been let into the views of three other young men who had gone to war already; Troop had written, correctly and consciously heroic, "*Some of the chaps seem to be getting a lot of emotion into it,*" said Troop. "*It's nothing out of the way that I can see. One just falls into the line of one's uncles and cousins.*"

Wilmington had said: "I just wanted to see you, Joan. I'm told I'll be most useful as a gunner because of my mathematics. When it comes to going over, you won't forget to think of me, Joan?"

Joan answered truthfully. "I'll think of you a lot, Billy."

"There's nothing in life like you, Joan," said Wilmington in his white expressionless way. "Well, I suppose I'd better be going."

But Bunny had discoursed upon fear.

"I've enlisted," he wrote, "chiefly because I'm afraid of going Pacifist right out — out of funk. But it's hell, Joan. I'm afraid in my "bones. I hate bangs, and they say the row of modern artillery is terrific. I've never seen a dead body, a human dead body, I mean,

ever. Have you? I would go round a quarter of a mile out of my way any time to dodge a butcher's shop. I was sick when I found Peter dissecting a rabbit. You know, sick, à la Manche. No metaphors. I shall run away, I know I shall run away. But we've got to stop these beastly Germans anyhow. It isn't killing the Germans I shall mind — I'm fierce on Germans, Joan; but seeing the chaps on stretchers or lying about with all sorts of horrible injuries."

Sheets of that sort of thing, written in an unusually bad handwriting — apparently rather to comfort himself than to sustain Joan.

Well, it wasn't Peter's way to think beforehand of being "on stretchers or lying about," but Bunny's scribblings had got the stretchers into Joan's thoughts. And it made her wish somehow that Peter, instead of being unusually grave and choosing to be a ranker, was taking this job with his usual easy confidence and going straight and gaily for a commission.

After dinner they all sat out in garden chairs, outside the library window, and had their coffee and smoked. Joan got her chair and drew it close to Peter's. Two hundred miles away and less was battle and slaughter, perhaps creeping nearer to them, the roaring of great guns, the rattle of rifle fire, the hoarse shouts of men attacking, and a gathering harvest of limp figures "on stretchers and lying about"; but that evening at Pelham Ford was a globe of golden serenity. Not a leaf stirred, and only the little squeaks and rustlings of small creatures that ran and flitted in the dusk ruffled the quiet air.

Oswald made Peter talk of his climbing. "My only mountain is Kilimanjaro," he said. "No great thing so far as actual climbing goes." Peter had begun with the Dolomites, had gone over to Adelboden, and then worked round by the Concordia Hut to Bel Alp. "Was it very beautiful?" asked Joan softly under his elbow.

"You could have done it all. I wish you had come," said Peter.

There was a pause.

"And Italy?" said Joan, still more softly.

"Where did you go in Italy, Peter?" said Oswald, picking up her question.

Peter gave a travel-book description of Orta and the Isle of San Giulio.

Joan sat as still and watchful as a little cat watching for a mouse. (Something had put Peter out in Italy.)

"It's off the main line," said Peter. "The London and Paris papers don't arrive, and one has to fall back on the *Corriere della Sera*."

"Very good paper too," said Oswald.

"News doesn't seem so real in a language you don't understand."

He was excusing himself. So he was ashamed to that extent. That was what was bothering him. One might have known he wouldn't care for — those other things....

Late that night Joan sat in her room thinking. Presently she unlocked her writing-desk and took out and re-read a letter. It was from Huntley in Cornwall, and it was very tender and passionate. "*The world has gone mad, dearest,*" it ran; "*but we need not go mad. The full moon is slipping by. I lay out on the sands last night praying for you to come, trying to will you to come. Oh — when are you coming?*"...

And much more to the same effect....

Joan's face hardened. "Po'try," she said. She took a sharpened pencil from the glass tray upon her writing-table and regarded it. The pencil was finely pointed — too finely pointed. She broke off the top with the utmost care and tested the blunt point on her blotting-paper to see if it was broad enough for her purpose. Then she scrawled her reply across his letter — in five words: "*You ought to enlist. Joan,*" and addressed an envelope obliquely in the same uncivil script.

After which she selected sundry other letters and a snapshot giving a not unfavourable view of Huntley from her desk, and having scrutinized the latter for an interval, tore them all carefully into little bits and dropped them into her wastepaper basket. She stood regarding these fragments for some time. "I might have gone to him," she whispered at last, and turned away.

She blew out her candle, hesitated by her bedside, and walked to the open window to watch the moon rise.

She sat upon her window-sill like a Joan of marble for a long time. Then she produced one of those dark sayings with which she was wont to wrap rather than express her pro-founder thoughts.

"Queer how suddenly one discovers at last what one has known all along.... Queer....

"Well, *I* know anyhow."...

She stood up at last and yawned. "But I don't like war," said Joan. "Stretchers! Or lying about! Groaning. In the darkness. Boys one has danced with. Oh! beastly. *Beastly*!"

She forgot her intention of undressing, put her foot on the sill, and rested chin on fist and elbow on knee, scowling out at the garden as though she saw things that she did not like there.

§ 4

So it was that Joan saw the beginning of the great winnowing of mankind, and Peter carne home in search of his duty.

Within the first month of the war nearly every one of the men in Joan's world had been spun into the vortex; hers was so largely a world of young or unattached people, with no deep roots in business or employment to hold them back. Even Oswald at last, in spite of many rebuffs, found a use for himself in connection with a corps of African labourers behind the front, and contrived after a steady pressure of many months towards the danger zone, to get himself wounded while he was talking to some of his dear Masai at an ammunition dump. A Hun raider dropped a bomb, and some flying splinters of wood cut him deeply and extensively. The splinters were vicious splinters; there were complications; and he found himself back at Pelham Ford before the end of 1916, aged by ten years. The Woman's Legion captured Joan from the date of its formation, and presently had her driving a car for the new Ministry of Munitions, which came into existence in the middle of 1915.

Her career as a chauffeuse was a brilliant one. She lived, after the free manner of the Legion, with Miss Jepson at Hampstead; she went down every morning to her work, she drove her best and her best continually improved, so that she became distinguished among her fellows. The Ministry grew aware of her and proud of her. A time arrived when important officials quarrelled to secure her for their journeys. Eminent foreign visitors invariably found themselves behind her.

"But she drives like a man," they would say, a little breathlessly,

after some marvellously skidded corner.

"All our girls drive like this," the Ministry of Munitions would remark, carelessly, loyally, but untruthfully.

Joan's habitual wear became khaki; she had puttees and stout boots and little brass letterings upon her shoulders and sleeves, arid the only distinctive touches she permitted herself were the fur of her overcoat collar and a certain foppery about her gauntlets....

Extraordinary and profound changes of mood and relationship occurred in the British mind during those first two years of the war, and reflected themselves upon the minds of Joan and Peter. To begin with, and for nearly a year, there was a quality of spectacularity about the war for the British. They felt it to be an immense process and a vitally significant process; they read, they talked, they thought of little else; but it was not yet felt to be an intimateness. The habit of detachment was too deeply ingrained. Great Britain was an island of onlookers. To begin with the war seemed like something tremendous and arresting going on in an arena. "Business as usual," said the business man, putting up the price of anything the country seemed to need. There was a profound conviction that British life and the British community were eternal things; they might play a part — a considerable part — in these foreign affairs; they might even have to struggle, but it was inconceivable that they should change or end. September and October in 1914 saw an immense wave of volunteer enthusiasm — enthusiasm for the most part thwarted and wasted by the unpreparedness of the authorities for anything of the sort, but it was the enthusiasm of an audience eager to go on the stage; it was not the enthusiasm of performers in the arena and unable to quit the arena, fighting for life or death. To secure any sort of official work was to step out of the undistinguished throng. In uniform one felt dressed up and part of the pageant. Young soldiers were self-conscious in those early days, and inclined to pose at the ordinary citizen. The ordinary citizen wanted to pat young soldiers on the back and stand them drinks out of his free largesse. They were "in it," he felt, and he at most was a patron of the affair.

That spectacularity gave way to a sense of necessary participation only very slowly indeed. The change began as the fresh, bright confidence that the Battle of the Marne had begotten gave place to a

deepening realization of the difficulties on the road to any effective victory. The persuasion spread from mind to mind that if Great Britain was to fight this war as she had lived through sixty years of peace, the gentleman amateur among the nations, she would lose this war. The change of spirit that produced its first marked result in the creation of the Ministry of Munitions with a new note of quite unofficial hustle, and led on through a series of inevitable steps to the adoption of conscription, marks a real turning about of the British mind, the close of a period of chaotic freedom almost unprecedented in the history of communities. It was the rediscovery of the State as the necessary form into which the individual life must fit.

To the philosophical historian of the future the efforts of governing and leading people in Great Britain to get wills together, to explain necessities, to supplement the frightful gaps in the education of every class by hastily improvised organizations, by speeches, press-campaigns, posters, circulars, cinema shows, parades and proclamations; hasty, fitful, ill-conducted and sometimes dishonestly conducted appeals though they were, will be far more interesting than any story of battles and campaigns. They remind one of a hand scrambling in the dark for something long neglected and now found to be vitally important; they are like voices calling in a dark confusion. They were England seeking to comprehend herself and her situation after the slumber of two centuries. But to people like Joan and Peter, who were not philosophical historians, the process went on, not as a process, but as an apparently quite disconnected succession of events. Imperceptibly their thoughts changed and were socialized. Joan herself had no suspicion of the difference in orientation between the Joan who stood at her bedroom window in August, 1914, the most perfect spectator of life, staring out at the darkness of the garden, dumbly resenting the call that England was making upon the free lives of all her friends, and the Joan of 1917, in khaki and a fur-collared coat, who slung a great car with a swift, unerring confidence through the London traffic and out to Woolwich or Hendon or Waltham or Aldershot or Chelmsford or what not, keen and observant of the work her passengers discussed, a conscious part now of a great and growing understanding and criticism and will, of a rediscovered unity, which was England —

awakening.

Youth grew wise very fast in those tremendous years. From the simple and spectacular acceptance of every obvious appearance, the younger minds passed very rapidly to a critical and intricate examination. In the first blaze of indignation against Germany, in the first enthusiasm, there was a disposition to trust and confide in every one in a position of authority and responsibility. The War Office was supposed — against every possibility — to be planning wisely and acting rapidly; the wisdom of the Admiralty was taken for granted, the politicians now could have no end in view but victory. It was assumed that Sir Edward Carson could become patriotic, Lord Curzon self-forgetful, Mr. Asquith energetic, and Mr. Lloyd George straightforward. It was indeed a phase of extravagant idealism. Throughout the opening weeks of the war there was an appearance, there was more than an appearance, of a common purpose and a mutual confidence. The swift response of the Irish to the call of the time, the generous loyalty of India, were like intimations of a new age. The whole Empire was uplifted; a flush of unwonted splendour suffused British affairs.

Then the light faded again. There was no depth of understanding to sustain it; habit is in the long run a more powerful thing than even the supremest need. In a little time all the inglorious characteristics of Britain at peace, the double-mindedness, the slackness, were reappearing through the glow of warlike emotion. Fifty years of under-education are not to be atoned for in a week of crisis. The men in power were just the same men. The inefficient were still inefficient; the individualists still self-seeking. The party politicians forgot their good resolutions, and reverted to their familiar intrigues and manoeuvres. Redmond and Ireland learnt a bitter lesson of the value of generosity in the face of such ignorant and implacable antagonists as the Carsonites. Britain, it became manifest, had neither the greatness of education nor yet the simplicity of will to make war brilliantly or to sustain herself splendidly. At every point devoted and able people found themselves baffled by the dull inertias of the old system. And the clear flame of enthusiasm that blazed out from the youth of the country at the first call of the war was coloured more and more by disillusionment as that general bickering which was

British public life revived again, and a gathering tale of waste, failure, and needless suffering mocked the reasonable expectation of a swift and glorious victory.

The change in the thought and attitude of the youth of Britain is to be found expressed very vividly in the war poetry of the successive years. Such glowing young heroes as Julian Grenfell and Rupert Brooke shine with a faith undimmed; they fight consciously, confident of the nearness of victory; they sing and die in what they believe to be a splendid cause and for a splendid end. An early death in the great war was not an unmitigated misfortune. Three years later the young soldier's mind found a voice in such poetry as that of young Siegfried Sassoon, who came home from the war with medals and honours only to denounce the war in verse of the extremest bitterness. His song is no longer of picturesque nobilities and death in a glorious cause; it is a cry of anger at the old men who have led the world to destruction; of anger against the dull, ignorant men who can neither make war nor end war; the men who have lost the freshness and simplicity but none of the greed and egotism of youth. Germany is no longer the villain of the piece. Youth turns upon age, upon laws and institutions, upon the whole elaborate rottenness of the European system, saying: "*What is this to which you have brought us? What have you done with our lives?*"

No story of these years can ever be true that does not pass under a shadow. Of the little group of youths and men who have figured in this story thus far, there was scarcely one who was not either killed outright or crippled or in some way injured in the Great War — excepting only Huntley. Huntley developed a deepening conscience against warfare as the war went on, and suffered nothing worse than some unpleasant half-hours with Tribunals and the fatigues of agricultural labour. Death, which had first come to Joan as a tragic end to certain "kittays," was now the familiar associate of her every friend. Her confidence in the safety of the world, in the wisdom of human laws and institutions, in the worth and dignity of empires and monarchs, and the collective sanity of mankind was withdrawn as a veil is withdrawn, from the harsh realities of life.

Wilmington, with his humourless intensity, was one of the first to bring home to her this disillusionment and tragedy of the youth of the

world. He liked pure mathematics; it was a subject in which he felt comfortable. He had worked well in the first part of the mathematical tripos, and he was working hard in the second part when the war broke out. He fluctuated for some days between an utter repudiation of all war and an immediate enlistment, and it was probably the light and colour of Joan in his mind that made Wilmington a warrior. War was a business of killing, he decided, and what he had to do was to apply himself and his mathematics to gunnery as efficiently as possible, learning as rapidly as might be all that was useful about shells, guns and explosives, and so get to the killing of Germans thoroughly, expeditiously, and abundantly. He was a particularly joyless young officer, white-faced and intent, with an appearance of scorn that presently developed from appearance into reality, for most of his colleagues. He was working as hard and as well as he could. At first with incredulity and then with disgust he realized that the ordinary British officer not doing so. They sang songs, they ragged, they left things to chance, they thought blunders funny, they condoned silliness and injustice in the powers above. He would not sing nor rag nor drink. He worked to the verge of exhaustion. But this exemplary conduct, oddly enough, did not make him unpopular either with the junior officers or with his seniors. The former tolerated him and rather admired him; the latter put work upon him and sought to promote him.

In quite a little while as it seemed — for in those days, while each day seemed long and laborious and heavy, yet the weeks and months passed swiftly — he was a captain in France, and before the end of 1915 he wrote to say that his major had left him practically in command of his battery for three weeks. He had been twice slightly wounded by that time, but he got little leisure because he was willing and indispensable.

He wrote to Joan very regularly. He was a motherless youth, and Joan was not only his great passion but his friend and confidante. His interest in his work overflowed into his letters; they were more and more about gunnery and the art of war, which became at last, it would seem, a serious rival to Joan in his affections. He described ill, but he would send her reasoned statements of unanswerable views. He could riot understand why considerations that were so plain as to

be almost obvious, were being universally disregarded by the Heads and the War Office. He appealed to Joan to read what he had to say, and tell him whether he or the world was mad. When he came back on leave in the spring of 1916, she was astonished to find that he was still visibly as deeply in love with her as ever. The fact of it was he had words for his gunnery and military science, but he. had no words, and that was the essence of his misfortune, for his love for Joan.

But the burthen of his story was bitter disillusionment at the levity with which his country could carry on a war that must needs determine the whole future of mankind. He would write out propositions of this sort: "It is manifest that success in warfare depends upon certain primary factors, of which generalship is one. No country resolute to win a war will spare any effort to find the best men, and make them its generals and leaders irrespective of every other consideration. No honourable patriots will permit generals to be appointed by any means except the *best selective methods*, and no one who cares for his country will obstruct (1) the *promotion*, (2) *trying over*, and (3) *prompt removal*, if they fail to satisfy the most exacting tests, of all possible men. And next consider what sort of men will be the best commanders. They must be *fresh-minded young men*. All the great generals of the world, the supreme cases, the Alexanders, Napoleons, and so on, have shown their quality before thirty even in the days when strategy and tactics did not change very greatly from year to year, and now when the material and expedients of war make warfare practically *a new thing* every few years, the need for fresh young commanders is far more urgent than ever it has been. But the British army is at present commanded by oldish men who are manifestly of not more than mediocre intelligence, and who have no knowledge of this new sort of war that has arisen. It is a war of guns and infantry — with aeroplanes coming in more and more — and most of the higher positions are held by cavalry officers; the artillery is invariably commanded by men unused to the handling of such heavy guns as we are using, who stick far behind our forward positions and decline any practical experience of our difficulties. They put us in the wrong positions, they move us about absurdly; young officers have had to work out most of the problems of gun-pits

and so forth for themselves — against resistance and mere stupid interference from above. The Heads have no idea of the kind of work we do or of the kind of work we could do. They are worse than amateurs; they are unteachable fossils. But why is this sot If the country is serious about the war, why does it permit it? If the Government is serious about the war, why does it permit it? If the War Office is serious about the war, why does it permit it? If G.H.Q. is serious about the war, why does it permit it? What is wrong? There is a hitch here I don't understand. Am I over-serious, and is all this war really some sort of gross, grim joke, Joan? Do I take life too seriously?

"Joan, in this last push this battery did its little job right; we cut all the wire opposite us and blew out every blessed stake. We made a nice tidy clean up. It was quite easy to do, given hard work. If I hadn't done it I ought either to have been shot for neglect or dismissed for incapacity. But on our left it wasn't done. Well, there were at least a hundred poor devils of our infantrymen on that wire, a hundred mothers' sons, hanging like rags on it or crumpled up below. I saw them. It made me sick. And I saw the chap who was chiefly responsible for that, Major Clutterwell, a little bit screwed, being the life and soul of a little party in Hazebrouck three days after! He ought to have been the life and soul of a hari kari party, but either he is too big a cad or too big a fool — or both. The way they shy away our infantrymen over here is damnable. They are the finest men in the world, I'm convinced; they will go at anything, and the red tabs send them into impossible jobs, fail to back them up — always they fail to back them up; they neglect them, Joan; they neglect them even when they are fighting and dying! There are men here, colonels, staff officers, I would like to beat about the head with an iron bar...."

This was an unusually eloquent passage. Frequently his letters were mainly diagram to show for example how we crowded batteries to brass away at right angles to the trenches when we ought to enfilade them, or some such point. Sometimes he was trying to establish profound truths about the proper functions of field guns and howitzers. For a time he was gnawing a bitter grievance. "I was told to shell a line I couldn't reach. The contours wouldn't allow of it.

You can do a lot with a shell, but you cannot make it hop slightly and go round a corner. There is a definite limit to the height to which a gun will lob a shell. I tried to explain these elementary limitations of gunfire through the telephone, and I was told I should be put under arrest if I did not obey orders. I wasn't up against a commander, I wasn't up against an intelligence; I was up against a silly old man in a temper. So I put over a barrage about fifty yards beyond the path — the nearest possible. Every one was perfectly satisfied — the Boche included. Thus it is that the young officer is subdued to the medium he works in."

At times Wilmington would embark on a series of propositions to demonstrate with mathematical certitude that if the men and material wasted at Loos had been used in the Dardanelles, the war would have been decided by the end of 1915. But the topic to which his mind recurred time after time was the topic of efficient leadership. "Modern war demands continuity of idea, continuity of will, and continuous progressive adaptation of means and methods," he wrote — in two separate letters. In the second of these he had got on to a fresh notion." Education in England is a loafer education; it does not point to an end; it does not drive through; it does not produce minds that can hold out through a long effort. The young officers come out here with the best intentions in the world, but one's everyday life is shaped not by our intentions but our habits. Their habits of mind are loafing habits. They learnt to loaf at school. Caxton, I am now convinced, is one of the best schools in England; but even at Caxton we did not fully acquire the *habit of steadfast haste* which modern life demands. Everything that gets done out here is done by a spurt. With the idea behind it of presently doing nothing. The ordinary state of everybody above the non-commissioned ranks is loafing. At the present moment my major is shooting pheasants; the batteries to the left of us are cursing because they have to shift — it holds up their scheme for a hunt. Just as though artillery work wasn't the most intense sport in the world — especially now that we are going to have kite balloons and do really scientific observing. Even the conscientious men of the Kitchener-Byng school don't really seem to me to get on; they work like Trojans at established and routine stuff but they don't keep up inquiry. They are human, all too human. Man

is a sedentary animal, and the schoolmaster exists to prevent his sitting down comfortably," This from Wilmington without a suspicion of jesting. "This human weakness for just living can only be corrected in schools. The more I scheme about increasing efficiency out here, the more I realize that it can't be done here, that one has to go right back to the schools and begin with a *more continuous urge*. When this war is over I shall try to be a schoolmaster. I shall hate it most of the time, but then I hate most things...."

But Wilmington never became a schoolmaster. He got a battery of six-inch guns just before the Somme push in 1916, and he went forward with them into positions he chose and built up very carefully, only to be shifted against his wishes almost at once to a new and, he believed, an altogether inferior position. He was blown to nothingness by a German shell while he was constructing a gun pit.

§ 6

Wilmington was not the first of Joan's little company to be killed. Joan had the gift of friendship. She was rare among girls in that respect. She was less of an artist in egotism than most of her contemporaries; there were even times when she could be self-forgetful to the pitch of untidiness. Two other among that handful of young soldiers who were killed outright and who had been her friends, wrote to her with some regularity right up to the times of their deaths, and found a comfort in doing so. They wrote to her at first upon neat notepaper adorned with regimental crests, but their later letters as they worked their slow passages towards the place of death were pencilled on thin paper. She kept them all. She felt she could have been a good sister to many brothers.

One of these two who died early was Winterbaum. She did not hear from this young man of the world for some weeks after the declaration of war. Then came a large photograph of himself in cavalry uniform, and a manly, worldly letter strongly reminiscent of Kipling and anticipatory of Gilbert Frankau. "There is something

splendid about this life after all," he wrote. "It's good to be without one's little luxuries for a space, democratically undistinguished among one's fellows. It's good to harden up until nothing seems able to bruise one any more. I bathed yesterday, without water, Joan — just a dry towel, and that not over clean — was all that was available. After this is all over I shall have such an appetite for luxury — I shall be fierce, Joan."

Those early days were still days of unrestricted plenty, and the disposition of the British world was to pet and indulge everything in khaki. Young Winterbaum wore his spurs and the most beautiful riding-breeches to night clubs and great feasts in the more distinguished restaurants. He took his car about with him, his neat little black-and-white car, fitted with ivory fopperies. He tried hard to take it with him to Prance. From France his scribbled letters became more and more heroic in tone. "Poor David has been done in," he said. "I am now only three from the Contango peerage. Heaven send I get no nearer! No Feudal dignities for me. I would give three gilded chambers at any time for one reasonably large and well-lit studio. And — I have a kind of affection for my cousins."

His prayer was answered. He got no nearer to the Contango peerage. The powers above him decided that a little place called Loos was of such strategic value to the British army as to be worth the lives of a great number of young men, and paid in our generous British fashion even more than the estimate. Winterbaum was part of the price. No particulars of his death ever came to Joan and Peter. The attack began brightly, and then died away. There was a failure to bring up reserves and grasp opportunity. Winterbaum vanished out of life in the muddle — one of thousands. He was the first of the little company of Joan's friends to be killed.

Bunny Cuspard spread a less self-conscious, more western, and altogether more complicated psychology before Joan's eyes. Like Wilmington he had faltered at the outset of the war between enlistment and extreme pacifism, but unlike Wilmington he had never reconciled himself to his decision. Bunny was out of sympathy with the fierceness of mankind; he wanted a kindly, prosperous, rather funny world where there is nothing more cruel than gossip; that was the world In* was fitted for. He repeated in his own person

and quality the tragedy of Anatole France. He wanted to assure the world and himself that at heart everything was quite right and magnificent fun, to laugh gaily at everything, seeing through its bristling hostilities into the depth of genial absurdity beneath.

And so often he could find no genial absurdity.

He had always pretended that discovering novel sorts of cakes for his teas or new steps for dances was the really serious business of life. One of his holiday amusements had been "Little Wars," which he played with toy soldiers and little model houses and miniature woods of twigs and hills of boarding in a big room at his Limpsfield home. He would have vacation parties for days to carry out these wars, and he and his guests conducted them with a tremendous seriousness. He had elaborated his miniature battle scenery more and more, making graveyards, churches, inns, walls, fences — even sticking absurd notices and advertisements upon the walls, and writing epitaphs upon his friends in the graveyard. He had loved the burlesque of it. He had felt that it brought history into a proper proportion to humour. But one of the drawbacks had always been that as the players lay upon the floor to move their soldiers and guns about they crushed down his dear little toy houses and woods....

His mind still fought desperately to see the war as a miniature.

He got to a laugh ever and again by a great effort, but some of the things that haunted his imagination would not under any circumstances dissolve in laughter. Things that other people seemed to hear only to dismiss remained to suppurate in his mind. One or two of the things that were most oppressive to him he never told Joan. But she had a glimpse now and then of what was there, through the cracks in his laughter.

He had heard a man telling a horrible story of the opening bombardment of Ypres by the Germans. The core of the story was a bricked tunnel near the old fortifications of the town, whither a crowd of refugees had fled from the bombardment, and into which a number of injured people had been carried. A shell exploded near the exit and imprisoned all those people in a half-light without any provisions or help. There was not even drinking-water for the wounded. A ruptured drain poured a foul trickle across the slimy floor on which the wounded and exhausted lay. Now quite near and

now at a distance the shells were still bursting, and through that thudding and uproar, above all the crouching and murmuring distresses of that pit of misery sounded the low, clear, querulous voice of a little girl who was talking as she died, talking- endlessly of how she suffered, of how her sister could not come to help her, of her desire to be taken away; a little, scolding indignant spirit she was, with a very clear explicit sense of the vast impropriety of everything about her.

"Why does not some one come?"

"Be tranquil," an old woman's voice remonstrated time after time. "Help will come."

But for most of the people in the tunnel help never came. Through a slow, unhurrying night of indescribable pain and discomfort, in hunger, darkness, and an evil stench, their lives ebbed away one by one....

That dark, dreadful, stinking place, quivering to the incessant thunder of guns, sinking through twilight into night, lit by flashes and distant flames, and passing through an eternity of misery to a cold, starving dawn, threaded by the child's shrill voice, took a pitiless grip upon Bunny's imagination. He could neither mitigate it nor forget it.

How could one laugh at the Kaiser with this rankling in his mind? He could not fit it into any merry scheme of things, and he could not bear any scheme that was not merry; and not to be able to fit dreadful things into a scheme that does at last prevail over them was, for such a mind as Bunny's, to begin to drift from sanity.

The second story that mutely reinforced the shrill indictment of that little Belgian girl was a description he had heard of some poor devil being shot for cowardice at dawn. A perplexed, stupid youth of two- or three-and-twenty, with little golden hairs that gleamed on a pallid cheek, was led out to a heap of empty ammunition boxes in a desolate and mutilated landscape of mud and splintered trees under a leaden sky, and set down on a box to die. It was as if Bunny had seen that living body with his own eyes, the body that jumped presently to the impact of the bullets and lurched forward, and how the officer in command — who had been himself but a little child in a garden a dozen years or more ago — came up to the pitiful prostrate form and

put his revolver to the head behind the ear that would never hear again and behind the eye that stared and glazed, and pulled the trigger "to make sure."

Bunny could feel that revolver behind his own ear. It felt as a dental instrument feels in the mouth.

"Oh, my God!" cried Bunny; "oh, my God!" starting up from his sack of straw on the floor in his billet in the middle of the night.

"Oh! *shut* it!" said the man who was trying to sleep beside him.

"Sorry!" said Bunny.

"You keep it for the Germans, mate."

"Oh! Oh! If I could kill this damned Kaiser with ten thousand torments!" whispered Bunny, quieting down....

These were not the only stories that tormented Bunny's mind, but they were the chief ones. Others came in and went again — stories of the sufferings of wounded men, of almost incredible brutalities done to women and children and helpless people, and of a hundred chance reasonless horrors; they came in with an effect of support and confirmation to these two principal figures — the shrill little girl making her bitter complaint against God arid the world which had promised to take care of her, and had scared her horribly and torn her limbs and thrust her, thirsty and agonized, into a stinking drain to die; and the poor puzzled lout, caught and condemned, who had to die so dingily and submissively because his heart had failed him. Against the grim instances of their sombre and squalid fates the soul of Bunny battled whenever, by night or day, thought overtook him in his essential and characteristic resolve to see life as "fun" — as "great fun."

These two fellow-sufferers in life took possession of his imagination because of their intense kindred with himself. So far as he got his riddle clear it was something after this fashion: "Why, if the world is like this, why are we in it? What am I doing in this nightmare? Why are there little girls and simple louts — and me?"

The days drew near when he would have to go to the front. He wrote shamelessly to Joan of his dread of that experience.

"It's the mud and dirtiness and ugliness," he said. "I am a domestic cat, Joan — an indoor cat....

"I've got a Pacifist temperament....

“All the same, Joan, the Germans started this war. If we don’t beat them, they will start others. They are intolerable brutes — the Junkers, anyhow. Until we get them down they will go on kicking mankind in the stomach. It is their idea of dignified behaviour. But we are casting our youth before swine.... Why aren’t there more assassins in the world? Why can’t we kill them by machinery — painlessly and cleanly? We ought to be cleverer than they are.”

There was extraordinarily little personal fear in Bunny. He was not nearly so afraid of the things that would happen to him as of the things that would happen about him. He hated the smashing even of inanimate things; a broken-down chair or a roofless shed was painful to him. Whenever he thought of the trenches he thought of treading and slipping in the dark on a torn and still living body....

He stuck stoutly to his reasoning that England had to fight and that he had to fight; but hidden from Joan, hidden from every living soul, he kept a secret resolve. It was, he knew, an entirely illogical and treasonable resolve, and yet he found it profoundly comforting. He would never fire his rifle so that it would hurt any one even by chance, and he would never use his bayonet. He would go over the top with the best of them, and carry his weapons and shout.

If it came to close fighting he would go for a man with his hands and try to disarm him.

But this resolve was never put to the test. The Easter newspapers of 1916 arrived with flaming headlines about an insurrection in Dublin and the seizure of the Post Office by the rebels. Oddly enough, this did not shock Bunny at all. It produced none of the effect of horror and brutality that the German invasion of Belgium had made upon his mind. It impressed him as a “rag”; as the sort of rag that they got up to at Cambridge during seasons of excitement. He was delighted by the seizure of the Post Office, by the appearance of a revolutionary flag and the issue of Republican stamps. It was as good as “Little Wars”; it was “Little Revolutions.” He didn’t like the way they had shot a policeman outside Trinity College, but perhaps that report wasn’t true. The whole affair had restored that flavour of adventure and burlesque that he had so sadly missed from the world since the war began.

He had always idealized the Irish character as the pleasantest

combination of facetiousness and generosity. When he found himself part of a draft crossing to Dublin with his back to the grim war front, his spirits rose. He could forget that nightmare for a time. He was going to a land of wit and laughter which had rebelled for a lark. He felt sure that the joke would end happily and that he would be shaking hands with congenial spirits still wearing Sinn Fein badges before a fortnight was out. Perhaps he would come upon Mrs. O'Grady or Patrick Lynch, whom he had been accustomed to meet at the Sheldricks'. He had heard they were in it. And when the whole business had ended brightly and cheerfully then all those clever and witty people would grow grave and helpful, and come back with him to join in that temporarily neglected task of fighting on the western front against an iron brutality that threatened to overwhelm the world.

He was still in this cheerful vein two days later as he was crossing St. Stephen's Green. His quaint, amiable face was smiling pleasantly and he was marching with a native ungainliness that no drill-sergeant could ever overcome, when something hit him very hard in the middle of the body.

He knew immediately that he had been shot.

He was not dismayed or shocked by this, but tremendously interested.

All other feelings were swamped in his surprise at a curious contradiction. He had felt hit behind, he was convinced he had been hit behind, but what was queer about it was that he was spinning round as though he had been hit in front. It gave him a preposterous drunken feeling. His head was quite clear, but he was altogether incapable of controlling these spinning legs of his, which were going round backward. His facile sense of humour was aroused. It was really quite funny to be spinning backwards in this way. It was like a new step in dancing. His hilarity increased. It was like the maddest dancing they had ever had at Hampstead or Chelsea. The "backwards step." He laughed. He had to laugh; something was tickling his ribs and throat. His whole being laughed. He laughed a laugh that became a rush of hot blood from his mouth....

The soul of Bunny, for all I know, laughs for ever among the stars; but it was a dead young man who finished those fantastic

gyrations.

He paused and swayed and dropped like an empty sack, and lay still in St. Stephen's Green, the modest contribution of one happy Sinn Fein sniper to the Peace of Mankind.

Perhaps Bunny was well out of a life where there can be little room for Bunnyism for many years to come, and lucky to leave it laughing. And as an offset to his loss we have to count the pleasant excitement of Ireland in getting well back into the limelight of the world's affairs, and the bright and glowing gathering of the armed young heroes who got away, recounting their deeds to one another simultaneously in some secure place, with all the rich, tumultuous volubility of the Keltic habit.

"Did ye see that red-haired fella I got in the square, boys?... Ah, ye should have seen that fella I got in the square."

§ 7

But not all the world of Joan was at war. The Sheldrick circle, for example, after some wide fluctuations during which Sydney almost became a nurse and Babs nearly enlisted into the Women's Legion, took a marked list under the influence of one of the sons-in-law towards pacifism. Antonia, who had taken two German prizes at school, was speedily provoked by the general denunciation of "Kultur" into a distinctly pro-German attitude. The Sheldrick circle settled down on the whole as a pro-German circle, with a poor opinion of President Wilson, a marked hostility to Belgians, and a disposition to think the hardships of drowning by U-boats much exaggerated.

The Sheldricks were like seedlings that begin flourishing and then damp off. From amusing schoolfellows they had changed into irritating and disappointing friends. Energy leaked out of them at adolescence. They seemed to possess the vitality for positive convictions no longer, they displayed an instinctive hostility to any wave of popular feeling that threatened to swamp their weak but still obstinate individualities. Their general attitude towards life was one of protesting refractoriness. Whatever it was that people believed or

did, you were given to understand by undertones and abstinencies that the Sheldricks knew better, and for the most exquisite reasons didn't. All their friends were protesters and rebels and seceders, or incomprehensible poets or inexplicable artists. And from the first the war was altogether too big and strong for them. Confronted by such questions as whether fifty years of belligerent preparation, culminating in the most cruel and wanton invasion of a peaceful country it is possible to imagine, was to be resisted by mankind or condoned, the Sheldricks fell back upon the counter statement that Sir Edward Grey, being a landowner, was necessarily just as bad as a German Junker, or that the Government of Russia was an unsatisfactory one.

In a few months it was perfectly clear to the Sheldricks that they would have nothing to do with the war at all. They were going to ignore it. Sydney just went on quietly doing her little statuettes that nobody would buy, little portrait busts of her sisters and such-like things; now and then her mother contrived to get her a commission. Babs kept on trying to get a part in somebody's play; Antonia continued to produce djibbahs in chocolate and grocer's blue and similar tints. One saw the sisters drifting about London in costumes still trailingly pre-Raphaelite when all the rest of womankind was cutting its skirts shorter and shorter, their faces rather pained in expression and deliberately serene, ignoring the hopes and fears about them, the stir, the huge effort, the universal participation. It was not their affair, thank you. They were not going to wade through this horrid war; they were going round.

Every time Joan went to see them, either they had become more phantomlike and incredible, or she had become coarser and more real. Would they ever get round? she asked herself; and what would they be like when at last they attempted, if ever they attempted, to rejoin the main stream of human interests again?

They kept up their Saturday evenings, but their gatherings became thinner and less and less credible as the war went on. The first wave of military excitement carried off most of the sightly young men, and presently the more capable and enterprising of the women vanished one after another to nurse, to join the Women's Legion, to become substitute clerks and release men to volunteer, to work in canteens

and so forth. There was, however, a certain coming and going of ambiguous adventurers, who in those early days went almost unchallenged between London and Belgium on ambulance work, on mysterious missions and with no missions at all. Belgian refugees drifted in and, when they found a lack of sympathy for their simple thirst for the destruction of Germans under all possible circumstances, out again. Then Ireland called her own, and Patrick Lynch went off to die a martyr's death with arms in his hands after three days of the most exhilarating mixed shooting in the streets of Dublin. Antonia discovered passionate memories as soon as he was dead, and nobody was allowed to mention the name of Bunny in the Sheldrick circle for fear of spoiling the emotional atmosphere. Hetty Reinhart, after some fluctuations, went khaki, flitted from one ministry to another in various sorts of clerical capacities, took such opportunities as offered of entertaining young officers lonely in our great capital, and was no more seen in Hampstead. What was left of this little group in the Hampstead Quartier Latin drew together into a band of resistance to the creeping approach of compulsory service.

Huntley's lofty scorn of the war had intensified steadily; the harsh disappointment of Joan's patriotism had stung him to great efforts of self- justification, and he became one of the most strenuous writers in the extreme Pacifist press. Not an act or effort of the Allies, he insisted, that was not utterly vile in purpose and doomed to accelerate our defeat. Not an act of the enemy's that was not completely thought out, wisely calculated, and planned to give the world peace and freedom on the most reasonable terms. He was particularly active in preparing handbills and pamphlets of instruction for life-long Conscientious Objectors to war service who had not hitherto thought about the subject. Community of view brought him very close in feeling to both Babs and Sydney Sheldrick. There was much talk of a play he was to write which was to demonstrate the absurdity of Englishmen fighting Germans just because Germans insisted upon fighting Englishmen, and which was also to bring out the peculiarly charming Babsiness of Babs. He studied her thoroughly and psychologically and physiologically and intensively and extensively.

By a great effort of self-control he abstained from sending his

writings to Joan. Once however they were near meeting. On one of Joan's rare calls Babs told her that he was coming to discuss the question whether he should go to prison and hunger-strike, or consent to take up work of national importance. Babs was very full of the case for each alternative. She was doubtful which course involved the greatest moral courage. Moral courage, it was evident, was being carried to giddy heights by Huntley. It would be pure hypocrisy, he felt, to ignore the vital value of his writings, and while he could go on with these quite comfortably while working as a farm hand, with a little judicious payment to the farmer, their production would become impossible in prison. He must crucify himself upon the cross of harsh judgments, he felt, and take the former course. He wanted to make his views exactly clear to every one to avoid misunderstanding.

Joan hesitated whether she should stay and insult him or go, and chose the seemlier course.

§ 8

Joan was already driving a car for the Ministry of Munitions before Peter got himself transferred from the ranks of the infantry to the Royal Flying Corps. Peter's career as an infantryman never took him nearer to the western front than Liss Forest. Then he perceived the error of his ways and decided to get a commission in the Royal Flying Corps. In those days the Flying Corps was still a limited and inaccessible force with a huge waiting list, and it needed a considerable exertion of influence to secure a footing in that select band.... But at last a day came when Peter, rather self-conscious in his new leather coat and cap, walked out from the mess past a group of chatting young pilots towards the aeroplane in which he was to have his first experience of flight.

He had a sense of being scrutinized, but indeed hardly any one upon the aerodrome noted him. This sense of an audience made him deliberately casual in his bearing. He saluted his pilot in a manner decidedly offhand. He clambered up through struts and wire to the front seat as if he was a clerk ascending the morning omnibus, and

strapped himself in as if it hardly mattered whether he was strapped in or not.

"Contact, sir," said the mechanic. "Contact," came the pilot's voice from behind. The engine roared, a gale swept backwards, and Peter vibrated like an aspen leaf.

The wheels were cleared, the mechanics jumped aside, and Peter was careering across the grass in a series of light leaps, and then his progress became smoother. He did not perceive at first the reason for this sudden steadying of the machine. He found himself tilting upward. He was off the ground. He had been off the ground for some seconds. He looked over the side and saw the grass fifty feet below, and the black shadow of the aeroplane, as if it fled before them, rushing at a hedge, doubling up at the hedge, and starting again in the next field. And up he went.

Peter stared at fields, hedges, trees, sheds and roadways growing small below him. He noted cows in plan and an automobile in plan, in a lane, going it seemed very slowly indeed. It was a stagnant world below in comparison with his own forward sweep. His initial nervousness and self-consciousness had passed away. He was enormously interested and delighted. He was trying to remember when it was that Nobby had said: "I doubt if we'll see that in my lifetime — or yours." It was somewhen long ago at Limpsfield. Quite early....

And then abruptly Peter was clutching the side with his thick-gloved hand: the aeroplane was coming round in a close curve and banking steeply, very steeply. For a moment it seemed as though there was nothing at all between him and England below. If he fell out — !

He looked over his shoulder and met the hard regard of a pair of steel-blue eyes.

He remembered that after all he was under observation. This was no mere civilian's joy ride. He affected a concentration upon the scenery. The aeroplane swung slowly back again to the level, and his hand left the side....

They were going up very rapidly now. The world seemed to be rolling in at the edges of a great circle that grew constantly larger. Away to the left were broad spaces of brown sand, and grey rippled

and smooth shining water channels, and beyond, the sapphire sea; beneath and to the right were fields, houses, villages, woods, and a distant range of hills that seemed to be coming nearer. The scale was changing and everything was becoming maplike. Cows were little dots now and men scarcely visible.... And then suddenly all the scenery seemed to be rushing upward before Peter's eyes and he had a feeling like the feeling one has in a lift when it starts — a down-borne feeling. He affected indifference, and gave the pilot his whistling profile. Down they swept, faster than a luge on the swiftest ice run, until one could see the ditches in the shadows beneath the hedges and cows were plainly cows again, and then once more they were heeling over and curving round. But Peter had been ready for that this time; he had been telling himself over and over again that he was strapped in. He betrayed no surprise. He was getting more and more exhilarated.

And then they were climbing again and soaring straight out towards the sea. Up went this roaring dragonfly in which Peter was sitting, at a hundred and twenty miles or so per hour, leaving the dwindling land behind.

Up they went and up, until the world seemed nearly all sea and the coast was far away; they mounted at last above a little white cloud puff and then above a haze of clouds, and when Peter looked down he saw at a vast distance below, through a clear gap in that filmy cloud fabric, three ships smaller than any toys. Of the men he could distinguish nothing. How sweet the cold clear air had become!

And high above the world, in the lonely sky above the cloud fleece, the pilot saw fit to spring a surprise upon Peter.

He was not of the genial and considerate order of teachers; he believed in weeding out duds as swiftly as possible. He had an open mind as to whether this rather over-intelligent-looking beginner might not, under certain circumstances, squeal. So he just tried him and, without a note of preparation, looped the loop with him.

The propeller that span before the eyes of Peter dipped. Peter bowed in accord with it. It dipped more and more steeply, until the machine was almost nose down, until Peter was looking at the sea and the land as one sits and looks at a wall. He was tilted down and down until he was face downward. And then as abruptly he was tilted

up; it was like being in a swing; the note of the engine altered as if a hand swept up a scale of notes; the sea and the land seemed to fall away below him as though he left them for ever, and the blue sky swept down across his field of vision like a curtain: he was, so to speak, on his back now with his legs in the air, looking straight at the sky, at nothing but sky, and expecting to recover. For a vast second he waited for the swing to end. This was surely the end of the swing....

Only — most amazingly — he didn't recover! He wanted to say, "Ouch!" He was immensely surprised — too surprised to be frightened. He went over backwards — in an instant — and the sea and the land reappeared above the sky and also came down like curtains, too, and then behold! the aeroplane was driving down and the world was in its place again far below.

"The Loop!" whispered Peter, a little dazed, and glanced back at his pilot and smiled. This was no perambulator excursion. "The Loop — first trip!"

The blue eyes seemed a little less hard, the weather-red face was smiling faintly.

Then gripped by an irresistible power, Peter found himself going down, down, down almost vertically. The pilot had apparently stopped the engine....

Peter watched the majestic expansion of the landscape as they fell. They had come back over the land. Far away he could see the aerodrome like a scattered collection of little toy huts, and growing bigger and bigger every instant. He sat quite still, for it was all right — it must be all right. But now they were getting very near the ground, and it was still rushing up to meet them, and pouring outwardly as it rose. A cat now would be visible....

It was all right. The engine picked up with a roar like a score of lions, and the pilot levelled out a hundred feet above the trees....

Then presently they were dropping to the aerodrome again; down until the hedges were plain and the grazing cattle close and distinct; and then, with a sense of infinite regret, Peter perceived that they were back on the turf again and that the flight was over. They danced lightly over the turf. Their rush slowed down. They taxied gently up to the hangar and the engine shuddered and, with a pathetic drop to

silence, stopped....

A little stiffly, Peter unbuckled himself and stretched and set himself to clamber to the ground.

His weather-bitten senior nodded to him and smiled faintly....

Peter walked towards the mess. It was wonderful — and intensely disappointing in that it was so soon over. There were still great pieces of the afternoon left....

§ 9

The aerodrome was short of machines and instructors, and he had to wait a couple of weeks before he could get into the air a second time.

He worked sedulously to gather knowledge during that waiting interval, and his first real lesson found him a very alert and ready pupil. This time the dual control was at his disposal, and for a straight or so the pilot left things to him altogether. Came half a dozen other lessons, and then Peter found himself sitting alone in a machine outside the great sheds, watched closely by a knot of friendly rivals, and, for the first time on his own account, conducting that duologue he had heard now so often on other lips. “Switch off. “... “Suck in.” “Contact!”

He started across the ground. His first sensations bordered on panic. Hitherto the machines he had flown in had been just machines; now this one, this one was an animal; it started out across the aerodrome like a demented ostrich, swerving wildly and trying to turn round. Always before this, the other man had done the taxi business on the ground. It had never occurred to Peter that it involved any difficulty. Peter’s heart nearly failed him in that opening twenty seconds; he was convinced he was going to be killed; and then he determined to get up at any cost. At any rate he wouldn’t smash on the ground. He let out the accelerator, touched his controls, and behold he was up — he was up! Instantly the machine ceased to resemble a floundering ostrich, and became a steady and dignified carinate, swaying only slightly from wing to wing. Up he went over the hedges, over the trees, beyond, above the familiar field of cows. The moment of panic passed, and Peter was himself again.

He had got right outside the aerodrome and he had to bank and bring her round. Already he had done that successfully a number of times with an instructor to take care of him. He did it successfully now. His confidence grew. Back he buzzed and droned, a hundred feet over the aerodrome. He made three complete circuits, rose outside the aerodrome and came down, making a good landing. He was instantly smitten with the intensest regret that he had not made eight or nine circuits. It was a mere hop. Any man of spirit would have gone on. There were four hours of daylight yet. He might have gone up; he might have tried a spiral.... *Damn*!

But the blue eyes of the master approved him.

"Couldn't have made a better landing, Stubland," said the master. "Try again tomorrow. Follow it up close. Short and frequent doses. That's the way."

Peter had made another stage on his way to France.

Came other solo flights, and flights on different types of machines, and then a day of glory and disobedience when, three thousand feet above the chimneys of a decent farmhouse, Peter looped the loop twice. He had learnt by that time what it was to sideslip, and what air pockets can do to the unwary. He had learnt the bitter consequences of coming down with the engine going strong. He had had a smash through that all too common mistake, but not a bad smash; a few struts and wires of the left wing were all that had gone. A hedge and a willow tree had stopped him. He had had a forced landing in a field of cabbages through engine stoppage, and half an hour in a snowstorm when he had had doubts in an upward eddy whether he might not be flying upside down. That had been a nasty experience — his worst. He had several times taken his hands off the controls and let the old 'bus look after herself, so badly were the snowflakes spinning about in his mind. He dreamt a lot about flying, and few of his dreams were pleasant dreams. And then this fantastic old world of ours, which had so suddenly diverted his education to these things, and taught him to fly with a haste and intensity it had never put into any teaching before, decided that he was ripe for the air war, and packed him off to France. ,

§ 10

Now, seeing that Joan had at last discovered that she was in love with Peter, it would be pleasantly symmetrical to record that Peter had also discovered by this time that he was in love with Joan.

But as a matter of fact he had discovered nothing of the sort. He had been amazed and humiliated by his three days of hesitation and procrastination at Orta; the delay was altogether out of keeping with his private picture of himself; and he discovered that he was not in love with any one and that he did not intend again to be lured into any dangerous pretence that he was. He had done with Hetty, he was convinced; he did not mean to see her any more, and he led a life of exasperated Puritanism for some months, refusing to answer the occasionally very skilful and perplexing letters, with amusing and provocative illustrations, that she wrote him.

The idea of "relaxing moral fibre" obsessed him, and our genial Peter for a time abandoned both smoking and alcohol, and was only deterred from further abstinences by their impracticability. The ordinary infantry mess, for example, caters ill and resentfully for vegetarians.... Peter's days in the ranks were days of strained austerity. He was a terribly efficient recruit, a fierce soldier, a wonderful influence on slackers, stripes gravitated towards him, and a prophetic corporal saw sergeant-major written on his forehead. Occasionally, when his imagination got loose or after a letter from Hetty, he would indulge privately in fits of violent rage, finding great relief in the smashing of light objects and foul and outrageous language. He found what he considered a convenient privacy for this idiosyncrasy in a disused cowshed near the camp, and only realized that he had an audience when a fellow recruit asked anxiously, "And how's Miss Blurry 'Etty?" Whereupon Peter discovered a better outlet for pentup nervous energy in a square fight.

Joan saw hardly anything of him during those early and brutal days, but she thought about him mightily. She shared Oswald's opinion that he wasn't in his right place, and she wrote to him frequently. He answered perhaps half her letters. His answers struck her as being rather posed. The strain showed through them. Peter was trying very hard not to be Peter. "I'm getting down to elementals,"

was one of his experiments in the statement of his moral struggle.

Then quite abruptly came his decision to get into the Royal Flying Corps.

Neither Oswald nor Joan ventured any comment on this, because both of them had a feeling that Peter had, in a sense, climbed down by this decision to go up....

In the Royal Flying Corps Peter's rather hastily conceived theories of moral fibre came into an uncongenial atmosphere. The Royal Flying Corps was amazingly young, swift, and confident, and "moral fibre" based on abstinence and cold self-control was not at all what it was after. The Royal Flying Corps was much more inclined to scrap with soda-water syphons and rag to the tunes of a gramophone. It was a body that had had to improvise a tradition of conduct in three or four swift years, and its tradition was still unstable. Mainly it was the tradition of the games and sports side of a public school, roughly adapted to the new needs of the service; it was an essentially boyish tradition, even men old enough to have gone through the universities were in a minority in it, and Peter at one-and-twenty was one of the more elderly class of recruits. And necessarily the tradition of the corps still varied widely with the dominant personalities and favourite heroes of each aerodrome and mess and squadron. It was a crowd of plastic boys, left amazingly to chance leads. Their seniors had no light for them, and they picked up such hints as they could from Kipling and the music-halls, from overheard conversations, and one another.

Is it not an incredible world in which old men make wars and untutored young men have to find out how to fight them; in which tradition and the past are mere entanglements about the feet of the young? The flying services took the very flower of the youth of the belligerent nations; they took the young men who were most manifestly fitted to be politicians, statesmen, leaders of men, masters in industry, and makers of the new age; the boys of nerve, pluck, imagination, invention, and decision. And there is not a sign of any realization on the part of any one of the belligerent states of the fact that a large proportion of this most select and valuable mass of youth was destined to go on living after the war and was going to matter tremendously and be the backbone of the race after the war. They let

all these boys specialize as jockeys specialize. The old men and rulers wanted these youngsters to fight and die for them; that any future lay beyond the war was too much for these scared and unteachable ancients to apprehend. The short way to immediate efficiency was to back the tradition of recklessness and gallantry, and so the short way was taken; if the brave lads were kept bold and reckless by women, wine and song, then by all means, said their elders, let them have these helps. "A short life and a merry one," said the British Empire to these lads of eighteen and nineteen encouragingly. "A short life and a merry one," said the Empire to its future.

If the story of the air forces is a glorious and not a shameful thing it is because of the enduring hope of the world — the incessant gallantry of youth. These boys took up their great and cardinal task with the unquenchable hopefulness of boyhood and with the impudence and humour of their race. They brought in the irreverence and the Spartanism of their years. They made a language for themselves, an atrocious slang of facetious misnomers; everything one did was a "stunt"; everything one used was a "gadget"; the machines were "'buses" and "camels" and "pups"; the older men were perpetually pleading in vain for more dignity in the official reports. And these youngsters worked out their moral problems according to their own generous and yet puerile ideas. They argued the question of drink. Could a man fly better or worse if he was "squiffy"? Does funk come to the thoughtful? And was ever a man gallant without gallantries? After the death of Lord Kitchener there survived no man in Britain of the quality to speak plainly and authoritatively and honestly about chastity and drink to the young soldier. The State had no mind in these matters. In most matters indeed the State had no mind; it was a little old silly State. And the light side of the feminine temperament flamed up into shameless acquiescences in the heroic presence of the flying man. Youth instinctively sets towards romantic adventures, and the scales of chance for a considerable number of the flying men swung between mésalliance and Messalina.

The code and the atmosphere varied from mess to mess and from squadron to squadron; young men are by nature and necessity hero-

worshippers and imitative. Peter's lines fell among pleasant men of the " irresponsible " school. The two best flyers he knew, including him of the hard blue eyes who had first instructed him, were men of a physique that defied drink and dissipation. Vigours could smoke, drink, and dance in London, catch the last train back with three seconds to spare, and be flying with an unshaken nerve by half-past six in the morning; Vincent would only perform stunts when he was "tight," and then he seemed capable of taking any risk with impunity. He could be funny with an aeroplane then a thousand feet up in the air. He could make it behave as though it was drunk, as though it was artful; he could make it mope or wag its tail. Men went out to watch him. The mess was decorated with pictures from *La Vie Parisienne*, and the art and literature of the group was *Revue*. Now seeing that Peter's sole reason for his puritanism was the preservation of efficiency, this combination of a fast life and a fine record in the air was very disconcerting to him.

If he had been naturally and easily a first-class flying man he might have stuck to his line of high austerity, but he was not. He flew well, but he had to fly with care; like many other airmen, he always felt a shadow of funk before going up, on two or three bad mornings it was on his conscience that he had delayed for ten minutes or so, and he was more and more inclined to think that he would fly better if he flew with a less acute sense of possibilities. It was the start and the uneventful flying that irked him most; hitherto every crisis had found him cool and able. But the slap-dash style, combined with the exquisite accuracy of these rakes, Vigours and Vincent, filled him with envious admiration.

In the mess Peter met chiefly youths of his own age or a year or so younger; he soon became a master of slang; his style of wit won its way among them. He ceased to write of "getting down to elementals" to Joan, and he ceased to think of all other girls and women as inventions of the devil. Only they must be kept in their places. As Vigours and Vincent kept them. Just as one kept drink in its place. One must not, for example, lose trains on account of them....

Through these months Joan maintained a strained watch upon the development and fluctuations of Peter. He wrote — variously; sometimes offhand duty notes and sometimes long and brotherly

letters — incurably brotherly. Every now and then she had glimpses of him when he came to London on leave. Manifestly he liked her company and trusted her — as though she was a man. It was exasperating. She dressed for Peter as she had never dressed for any one, and he would take her out to dine at the *Rendezvous* or the *Petit Riche* and sit beside her and glance at common scraps of feminine humanity, at dirty little ogling bare-throated girls in patched-up raiment and with harsh and screaming voices, as though they were the most delicious of forbidden fruits. And he seemed to dislike being alone with her. If she dropped her hand to touch his on the table, he would draw his away.

Was the invisible barrier between them invincible?

For a time during his infantry phase he had shown a warm affection. In his early days in the flying corps it seemed that he drew still closer to her. Then her quick, close watch upon him detected a difference. Joan was getting to be a very shrewd observer nowadays, and she felt a subtle change that suddenly made him a little shame-faced in her presence. There had been some sort of spree in London with two or three other wild spirits, and there had been "girls" in the party. Such girls! He never told her this, but something told her. I am inclined to think it was her acute sense of smell detected a flavour of face powder or cheap scent about Peter when he came along one day, half an hour late, to take her to the Ambassadors. She was bad company that night for him.

For a time Joan was bad company for any one.

She was worse when she realized that Hetty was somehow reinstated in Peter's world. That, too, she knew by an almost incredible flash of intuition. Miss Jepson was talking one evening to Peter, and Peter suddenly displayed a knowledge of the work of the London Group that savoured of studio. This was the first art criticism he had talked since the war began. It was clear he had been to a couple of shows. Not with Joan. Not alone. As he spoke, he glanced at Joan and met her eye.

It was astonishing that Miss Jepson never heard the loud shout of "Hetty 0 that seemed to till the room.

It was just after this realization that an elderly but still gallant colonel, going on an expedition for the War Office with various other

technical authorities to suppress some disturbing invention that the Ministry of Munitions was pressing in a troublesome manner, decided to come back from Longmore to London on the front seat beside Joan. His conversational intentions were honourable and agreeable, but he shared a common error that a girl who wears khaki and drives a car demands less respect from old gentlemen and is altogether more playful than the Victorian good woman. Possibly he was lured on to his own destruction.

When he descended at the Ministry, he looked pinched and aged. He was shaken to the pitch of confidences. “My word,” he whispered. “That girl drives like the devil. But she’s a vixen... snaps your head off.... Don’t know whether this sort of thing is good for women in the long run.

“Robs ’em of Charm,” he said.

§ 11

It was just in this phase of wrath and darkness that Wilmington came over to London for his last leave before he was killed, and begged Joan for all the hours she had to spare. She was quite willing to treat him generously. They dined together and went to various theatres and music-halls and had a walk over Hampstead Heath on Sunday. He was a silent, persistent companion for most of the time. He bored her, and the more he bored her the greater her compunction and the more she hid it from him. But Wilmington, if he had a slow tongue, had a penetrating eye.

The last evening they had together was at the Criterion. They dined in the grill room, a dinner that was interspersed with brooding silences. And then Wilmington decided to make himself interesting at any cost upon this last occasion.

“Joan,” he said, knocking out a half-consumed cigarette upon the edge of his plate.

“Billy?” said Joan, waking up.

“Queer, Joan, that you don’t love me when I love you so much.”

“I’d trust you to the end of the earth, Billy.”

“I know. But you don’t love me.”

“I think of you as much as I do of any one.”

“No. Except — *one*.”

“Billy,” said Joan weakly, “you’re the straightest man on earth.”

Wilmington’s tongue ran along his white lips. He spoke with an effort.

“You’ve loved Peter since you were six years old. It isn’t as though — you’d treated me badly. I can’t grumble that you’ve had no room for me. He’s always been there.”

Joan, after an interval, decided to be frank.

“It’s not much good, Billy, is it, if I do?”

Wilmington said nothing for quite a long time. He sat thinking hard. “It’s not much good pretending I don’t hate Peter. I do. If I could kill him — and in your memory too.... He bars you from me. He makes you unhappy....”

His face was a white misery. Joan glanced round at the tables about her, but no one seemed to be watching them. She looked at him again. Pity, so great that it came near to love, wrung her....

“Joan,” he said at last.

“Yes?”

“It’s queer.... I feel mean.... As though it wasn’t right.... But look here, Joan.” He tapped her arm. “Something — something that I suppose I may as well point out to you. Because in certain matters — in certain matters you are being a fool. It’s astonishing But absolutely fool.”

Joan perceived he had something very important to say. She sat watching him, as with immense deliberation he got out another cigarette and lit it.

“You don’t understand this Peter business, Joan. I — I do. Mostly when I’m not actually planning out or carrying out the destruction of Germans, I think of you — and Peter. And all the rest of it. I’ve got nothing else much to think about. And I think I see things you don’t see. I know I do.... Oh damn it! Go to hell!”

This last was to the waiter, who was making the customary warning about liqueurs on the stroke of half-past nine.

“Sorry,” said Wilmington to Joan, and leant forward over his folded arms and collected his thoughts with his eyes on the flowers before them.

“It’s like this, Joan. Peter isn’t where we are. I — I’m very definite and clear about my love-making. I fell in love with you, and I’ve never met any other woman I’d give three minutes of my life to. You’ve just got me. As if I were the palm of your hand. I wish I were. And — oh! what’s the good of shutting my eyes t — Peter has you. You’ve been thinking of Peter half the time we’ve been together. It’s true, Joan. You’ve grown up in love. But! But Peter, you’ve got to understand, isn’t in love. He doesn’t know what love means. Perhaps he never will. Love with you and me is a thing of flesh and bone. He takes it like some skin disease. He’s been spoilt. He’s so damned easy and good-looking. He was got hold of. I—”

Wilmington flushed for a moment. “I’m a chaste man, Joan. It’s a rare thing. Among our sort. But Peter — Loving a woman body and soul means nothing to him. He thinks love-making is a kind of amusement — Casual amusement. Any woman who isn’t repulsive. You know, Joan, that’s not the natural way. The natural way is love of soul and body. He’s been perverted. But in this crowded world — like a monkey’s cage... artificially heated ... the young men get made miscellaneous.... Lots of the girls even are miscellaneous....”

He considered the word. “Miscellaneous? Promiscuous, I mean.... It hasn’t happened to us. To you and me, I mean. I’m unattractive somehow. You’re fastidious. He’s neither. He takes the thing that offers. To grave people sex is a sacrament, something — so solemn and beautiful—”

The tears stood in his eyes. “If I go on,” he said.... “I can’t go on....”

For a time he said no more, and pulled his unconsumed cigarette to pieces over the ash-tray with trembling fingers. “That’s all,” he said at last.

“All this is — rather true,” said Joan. “But!”

“What does it lead up to?”

“Yes.”

“It means Peter’s the ordinary male animal. Under modern conditions. Lazy. Affectionate and all that, but not a scrap of emotion or love — yet anyhow. Not what you and I know as love. You may dress it up as you like, but the fact is that the woman has to make love to him. That’s all. Hetty has made love to him. He has never

made love to anybody — except as a sort of cheerful way of talking, and perhaps he never, never will.... He respects you too much to make love to you.... But he'd hate the idea of any one else — making love to you.... It's an idea It's outside of his conception of you. . . He'll never think of it for himself."

Joan sat quite still. After what seemed a long silence she looked up at him.

Wilmington was watching her face. He saw she understood his drift.

"You could cut her out like that," said Wilmington, with a gesture that gained an accidental emphasis by knocking his glass off the table and smashing it.

The broken glass supplied an incident, a distraction, with the waiters, to relieve the tension of the situation.

"That's all I had to say," said Wilmington when that was all settled. "There's no earthly reason why two of us should be unhappy."

"Billy," she said, after a long pause, "if I could only love *you*—"

The face of gratitude that looked at him faded to a mask. "You're thinking of Peter already," said Wilmington, watching her face.

It was true. She started, detected.

He speculated cheerlessly.

"You'11 marry me some day perhaps. When Peter's thrown you over.... It's men of my sort who get things like that...."

He stood up and reached for her cloak. She, too, stood up.

Then, as if to reassure her, he said: I shall get killed, Joan. So we needn't worry about that. I shall get killed. I know it. And Peter will live.... I always have taken everything too seriously. Always.... I shall kill a lot of Germans yet, but one day they will get me. And Peter will be up there in the air, like a cheerful midge — with all the Archies missing him...."

§ 12

This conversation was a cardinal event in Joan's life. Wilmington's suggestions raised out of the grave of forgetfulness and incorporated

with themselves a conversation she had had long ago with Adela — one Christmas at Pelham Ford when Adela had been in love with Sop with Greene. Adela too had maintained that it was the business of a woman to choose her man and not wait to be chosen, and that it was the woman who had to make love. “A man’s in love with women in general,” had been Adela’s idea, “but women fall in love with men in particular.” Adela had used a queer phrase, “It’s for a woman to find her own man and keep him and take care of him.” Men had to do their own work; they couldn’t think about love as women were obliged by nature to think about love. “Love’s just a trouble to a real man, like a mosquito singing in his ear, until some woman takes care of him.”

All those ideas came back now to Joan’s mind, and she did her best to consider them and judge them as generalizations. But indeed she judged with a packed court, and all her being clamoured warmly for her to “get” Peter, to “take care” — most admirable phrase — of Peter. Her decision was made, and still she argued with herself. Was it beneath her dignity to set out and capture her Peter? — he was her Peter. Only he didn’t know it. She tried to generalize. Had it ever been dignified for a woman to wait until a man discovered her possible love? Was that at best anything more than the dignity of the mannequin?

Three-quarters at least of the art and literature of the world is concerned with the relations of the sexes, and yet here was Joan, after thirty centuries or so of human art and literature, still debating the elementary facts of her being. There is so much excitement in our art and literature and so little light. The world has still to discover the scope and vastness of its educational responsibilities. Most of its teaching in these matters hitherto has been less in the nature of enlightenment than strategic concealment; we have given the young neither knowledge nor training, we have restrained and baffled them and told them lies. And then we have inflamed them. We have abused their instinctive trust when they were children with stories of old Bogey designed to save us the bother that unrestrained youthful enterprise might cause, and with humorous mockery of their natural curiosity. Jocularities about storks and gooseberry bushes, sham indignations at any plainness of speech, fierce punishments of

imperfectly realized offences, this against a background of giggles, knowing innuendo, arid careless, exciting glimpses of the mystery, have constituted the ordinary initiation of the youth of the world. Right up to full age, we still fail to provide the clear elemental facts. Our young men do not know for certain whether continence is healthy or unhealthy, possible or impossible; the sex is still assured with all our power of assurance, that the only pure and proper life for it is a sexless one. Until at last the brightest of the young have been obliged to get down to the bare facts in themselves and begin again at the beginning....

So Joan, co-Heiress of the Ages with Peter, found that because of her defaulting trustees, because we teachers, divines, writers and the like have shirked what was disagreeable and difficult and unpopular, she inherited nothing but debts and dangers. She had not even that touching faith in Nature which sustained the generation of Jean Jacques Rousseau. She had to set about her problem with Peter as though he and she were Eve and Adam in a garden overrun with weeds and thorns into which God had never come.

Joan was too young yet to have developed the compensating egotism of thwarted femininity. She saw Peter without delusions. He was a bigger and cleverer creature than herself; he compelled her respect. He had more strength, more invention, more initiative, and a relatively tremendous power of decision. And at the same time he was weak and blind and stupid. His flickering, unstable sensuousness, his light adventurousness and a certain dishonesty about women, filled her with a comprehensive pity and contempt. There was a real difference not merely in scale but in nature between them. It was clear to her now that the passionate and essential realities of a woman's life are only incidental to a man. But on the other hand there were passionate and essential realities for Peter that made her own seem narrow and self-centred. She knew far more of his mental life than Oswald did. She knew that he had an intense passion for clear statement, he held to scientific and political judgments with a power altogether deeper and greater than she did; he cared for them and criticized them and polished them, like weapons that had been entrusted to him. Beneath his debonair mask he was growing into a strong and purposeful social and mental

personality. She perceived that he was only in the beginning of his growth — if he came on no misadventure, if he did not waste himself. And she did not believe that she herself had any great power of further growth except through him. But linked to him she could keep pace with him. She could capture his senses, keep his conscience, uphold him....

She had convinced herself now that that was her chief business in life.

Her mind was remarkably free from doubts about the future if once she could get at her Peter. Mountains and forests of use and wont separated them, she knew. Peter had acquired a habit of not making love to her and of separating her from the thought of love. But if ever Peter came over these mountains, if ever he came through the forest to her In the heart of the forest, she would keep him. She wasn't afraid that Peter would leave her again. Wilmington had been wrong there. That he had suggested in the bitterness of his heart. Men like Huntley and Winterbaum were always astray, but Peter was not "looking for women." He was just a lost man, distracted by desire, desire that was strong because he was energetic, desire that was mischievous and unmeaning because he had lost his way in these things.

"I don't care so very much how long it takes, Peter; I don't care what it costs me," said Joan, getting her role clear at last. "I don't even care — not vitally anyhow — how you wander by the way. No. Because you're my man, Peter, and I am your woman. Because so it was written in the beginning. But you are coming over those mountains, my Peter, though they go up to the sky; you are coming through the forests though I have to make a path for you. You are coming to my arms, Peter.... coming to me...."

So Joan framed her schemes, regardless of the swift approach of the day of battle for Peter. She was resolved to lose nothing by neglect or delay, but also she meant to do nothing precipitate. To begin with she braced herself to the disagreeable task of really thinking — instead of just feeling — about Hetty. She compared herself deliberately point by point with Hetty. Long ago at Pelham Ford she had challenged Hetty — and Peter had come out of the old library in spite of Hetty to watch her dancing. She was younger, she

was fresher and cleaner, she was a ray of sunlight to Hetty's flames. Hetty was good company — perhaps. But Peter and Joan had always been good company for each other, interested in a score of common subjects, able to play the same games and run abreast. But Hetty was "easy." There was her strength. Between her and Peter there were no barriers, and between Joan and Peter was a blank wall, a stern taboo upon the primary among youthful interests, a long habit of aloofness, dating from the days when "soppy" was the ultimate word in the gamut of human scorn.

"It's just like that," said Joan.

Those barriers had to be broken down, without a shock.. And before that problem Joan maintained a frowning, unsuccessful siege. She couldn't begin to flirt with Peter. She couldn't make eyes at him. Such things would be intolerable. She couldn't devise any sort of signal. And so how the devil was this business ever to begin? And while she wrestled vainly with this perplexity she remained more boyish, more good-fellow and companion with Peter than ever....

And while she was still meditating quite fruitlessly on this riddle of changing her relationship to Peter, he was snatched away from her to France.

The thing happened quite unexpectedly. He came up to see her at Hampstead late in the afternoon — it was by a mere chance she was back early. He was full of pride at being chosen to go so soon. He seemed brightly excited at going, keen for the great adventure, the most lovable and animated of Peters — and he might be going to his death. But it was the convention of the time never to think of death, and anyhow never to speak of it. Some engagement held him for the evening, some final farewell spree; she did not ask too particularly what that was. She could guess only too well. Altogether they were about five-and-twenty minutes together, with Miss Jepson always in the room with them; for the most part they talked air shop; and then he prepared to leave with all her scheming still at loose ends in the air. "Well," he said, "good-bye, old Joan," and held out his hand.

"No," said Joan, with a sudden resolution in her eyes. "This time we kiss, Peter."

"Well," said Peter, astonished.

She had surprised him. He stared at her for an instant with a half-

framed question in his eyes. And then they kissed very gravely and carefully. But she kissed him on the mouth.

For some seconds solemnity hung about them. Then Peter turned upon Miss Jepson. “Do you want a kiss?” said Peter....

Miss Jepson was all for kissing, and then with a laugh and an effect of escape Peter had gone... into the outer world... into the outer air....

§ 13

He flew to France the next day, above the grey and shining stretches of water and two little anxious ships, and he sent Joan a cheerful message on a picture-postcard of a shell-smashed church to tell of his safe arrival.

Joan was dismayed. In war time we must not brood on death, one does not think of death if one can help it; it is the chance that wrecks all calculations; but the fear of death had fallen suddenly upon all her plans. And what was there left now of all her plans? She might write him letters.

Death is more terrible to a girl in love than to any other living thing. “If he dies,” said Joan, “I am killed. I shall be worse than a widow — an Indian girl widow. Suttee; what will be left of me but ashes?... Some poor dregs of Joan carrying on a bankrupt life.... No me. . .”

There was nothing for it but to write him letters. And Joan found those letters incredibly difficult to write. All lightness had gone from her touch. After long and tiring days with her car she sat writing and tearing up and beginning again. It was so difficult now to write to him, to be easy in manner and yet insidious. She wanted still to seem his old companion, and yet to hint subtly at the new state of things. “There’s a dull feeling now you’ve gone out of England, Peter,” she wrote. “I’ve never had company I cared for in all the world as I care for yours.” And, “I shall count the days to your leave, Peter, as soon as I know how many to count. I didn’t guess before that you were a sort of necessity to me.” Over such sentences, sentences that must have an edge and yet not be too bold, sentences full of tenderness

and above all suspicion of “soppiness,” Joan pondered like a poet writing a sonnet....

But letters went slowly, and life and death hustled along together very swiftly in the days of the great war....

§ 14

Joan’s mind was full of love and life and the fear of losing them, but Peter was thinking but little of love and life; he was secretly preoccupied with the thought, the forbidden thought, of death, and with the strangeness of war and of this earth seen from an aeroplane ten thousand feet or so above the old battlefields of mankind. He was seeing the world in plan, and realizing what a flat and shallow thing it was. On clear days the circuit of the world he saw had a circumference of hundreds of miles, night flying was a journey amidst the stars with the little black planet far away; there was no former achievement of the race that did not seem to him now like a miniature toy set out upon the floor of an untidy nursery. He had beaten up towards the very limits of life and air, to the clear thin air of twenty-two or twenty-three thousand feet; he had been in the blinding sunlight when everything below was still asleep in the blue of dawn.

And the world of history and romance, the world in which he and all his ancestors had believed, a world seen in elevation, of towering frontages, high portals, inaccessible dignities, giddy pinnacles and frowning reputations, had now fallen as flat, it seemed, as the façade of the Cloth Hall at Ypres. (He had seen that one day from above, spread out upon the ground.) He was convinced that high above the things of the past he droned his liquid way towards a new sort of life altogether, towards a greater civilization, a world-wide life for men with no boundaries in it at all except the emptiness of outer space, a life of freedom and exaltation and tremendous achievement. But meanwhile the old things of the world were trying most desperately to kill him. Every day the enemy’s anti-aircraft guns seemed to grow more accurate; and high above the little fleecy clouds lurked the braggart Markheimer and the gallant von Papen and suchlike German

champions, with their decoys below, ready to swoop and strike. Never before had the world promised Peter so tremendous a spectacle as it seemed to promise now, and never before had his hope of living to see it been so insecure.

When he had enlisted, and even after he had been transferred to the Flying Corps, Peter had thought very little of death. The thought of death only became prevalent in English minds towards the second year of the war. It is a hateful and unnatural thought in youth, easily dismissed altogether unless circumstances press it incessantly upon the attention. But even before Peter went to France two of his set had been killed under his eyes in a collision as they came down into the aerodrome, and a third he had seen two miles away get into a spiral nose dive, struggle out of it again, and then go down to be utterly smashed to pieces. In one day on Salisbury Plain he had seen three accidents, and two, he knew, had been fatal and one had left a legless thing to crawl through life. The messes in France seemed populous with young ghosts; reminiscences of sprees, talk of flying adventures were laced with, "dear old boy! he went west last May." "Went west" was the common phrase. They never said "killed." They hated the very name of death. They did their best, these dear gallant boys, to make the end seem an easy and familiar part of life, of life with which they were so joyously in love. They all knew that the dice was loaded against them, and that as the war went on the chances against them grew. The first day Peter was out in France he saw a man hit and brought down by a German Archie. Two days after, he found himself the centre of a sudden constellation of whoofing shells that left inky cloudbursts over him and under him and round about him; he saw the fabric of his wing jump and quiver, and dropped six hundred feet or so to shake the gunner off. But *whuff... whuff... whuff*, like the bark of a monstrous dog... the beast was on him again within a minute, and Peter did two or three loops and came about and got away with almost indecent haste. He was trembling; he hated it. And he hated to tremble.

In the mess that evening the talk ran on the "Pigeon shooter." It seemed that there was this one German gunner far quicker and more deadly than any of his fellows. He had a knack of divining what an airman was going to do. Peter admitted his near escape and sought

counsel.

Peter's colleagues watched him narrowly and unostentatiously when they advised him. Their faces were masks and his face was a mask, and they were keen for the faintest intonation of what was behind it. They all hated death, they all tried not to think of death; they all believed that there were Paladins, other fellows, who never thought of death at all. When the tension got too great they ragged; they smashed great quantities of furniture and made incredible volumes of noise. Twice Peter got away from the aerodrome to let things rip in Amiens. But such outbreaks were usually followed by a deep depression of spirit. In the night Peter would wake up and find the thought of death sitting by his bedside.

So far Peter had never had a fight. He had gone over the enemy lines five times, he had bombed a troop train in a station and a regiment resting in a village, he believed he had killed a score or more of Germans on each occasion and he felt not the slightest compunction, but he had not yet come across a fighting Hun plane. He had very grave doubts about the issue of such a fight, a fight that was bound to come sooner or later. He knew he was not such a quick pilot as he would like to be. He thought quickly, but he thought rather too much for rapid, steady decisions. He had the balancing, scientific mind. He knew that none of his flights were perfect. Always there was a conflict of intention at some point, a hesitation. He believed he might last for weeks or months, but he knew that somewhen he would be found wanting — just for a second perhaps, just in the turn of the fight. Then he would be killed. He hid quite successfully from all his companions, and particularly from his squadron commander, this conviction, just as he had previously hidden the vague funk that had invariably invaded his being whenever he walked across the grounds towards the machine during his days of instruction, but at the back of his mind the thought that his time was limited was always present. He believed that he had to die; it might be tomorrow or next week or next month, but somewhen within the year.

When these convictions became uppermost in Peter's mind a black discontent possessed him. There are no such bitter critics of life as the young; theirs is a magnificent greed for the splendour of

life. They have no patience with delays; their blunders and failures are intolerable. Peter reviewed his two-and-twenty years — it was now nearly three-and-twenty — with an intense dissatisfaction. He had wasted his time, and now he had got into a narrow way that led down and down pitilessly to where there would be no more time to waste. He had been aimless and the world had been aimless, and then it had suddenly turned upon him and caught him in this lobster-trap. He had wasted all his chances of great experience. He had never loved a woman or had been well loved because he had frittered away that possibility in a hateful sex excitement with Hetty — who did not even pretend to be faithful to him. And now things had got into this spin to death. It was exactly like a spin — like a spinning nose dive — the whole affair, his life, this war....

He would lie and fret in his bed, and fret all the more because he knew his wakefulness wasted the precious nervous vigour that might save his life next day.

After a black draught of such thoughts Peter would become excessively noisy and facetious in the mess tent. He was recognized and applauded as a wit and as a devil. He was really very good at Limericks, delicately indelicate, upon the names of his fellow officers and of the villages along the front — that was no doubt heredity, the gift of his Aunt Phyllis — and his caricatures adorned the mess. It was also understood that he was a rake....

Peter's evil anticipations were only too well justified. He was put down in his very first fight, which happened over Dompierre. He had bad luck; he was struck by von Papen, one of the crack German fliers on that part of the front. He was up at ten thousand feet or so, more or less covering a low-flying photographer, when he saw a German machine coming over half a mile perhaps or more away as though it was looking for trouble. Peter knew he might funk a fight, and to escape that moral disaster, headed straight down for the German, who dropped and made off southward. Peter rejoicing at this flight, pursued, his eyes upon the quarry. Then from out of the sun came von Papen, swiftly and unsuspected, upon Peter's tail, and announced his presence by a whiff of bullets. Peter glanced over his shoulder to discover that he was caught.

"Oh damn!" cried Peter, and ducked his head, and felt himself

stung at the shoulder and wrist. Splinters were flying about him.

He tried a side-slip, and as he did so he had an instant's vision of yet another machine, a Frenchman this time, falling like a bolt out of the blue upon his assailant. The biter was bit.

Peter tried to come round and help, but he turned right over sideways and dropped, and suddenly found himself with the second Hun plane coming up right ahead of him. Peter blazed away, but God! how his wrist hurt him! He cursed life and death. He blazed away with his machine going over more and more, and the landscape rushing up over his head and then getting in front of him and circling round. For some seconds he did not know what was up and what was down. He continued to fire, firing earthward for a long second or so after his second enemy had disappeared from his vision.

The world was spinning round faster and faster, and everything was moving away outward, faster and faster, as if it was all hastening to get out of his way....

This surely was a spinning nose dive, the spinning nose dive — from within. Round and round. Confusing and giddy! Just as he had seen poor old Gordon go down.... But one didn't feel at all — as Peter had supposed one must feel — like an egg in an egg-whisk!...

Down spun the aeroplane, as a maple fruit in autumn spins to the ground. Then this still living thing that had been Peter, all bloody and broken, made a last supreme effort. And his luck seconded his effort. The spin grew slower and flatter. Control of this lurching, eddying aeroplane seemed to come back, escaped again, mocked him. The ground was very near. Now! The sky swung up over the whirling propeller again and stayed above it, and again the machine obeyed a reasonable soul.

He was out of it! Out of a nose dive! Yes. Steady! It is so easy when one's head is whirling to get back into a spin again. Steady!...

He talked to himself. "Oh! good Peter! *Good* Peter! *Clever* Peter. Wonderful Mr. Toad! Stick it! Stick it!" But what a queer right hand it was! It was covered with blood. And it crumpled up in the middle when he clenched it! Never mind!

He was in the lowest storey of the air. The Hun and the Frenchman up there were in another world.

Down below, quite close — not five hundred feet now — were

field- greys running and shooting at him. They were counting their chicken before he was hatched — no, smashed.... He wasn't done yet! Not by any manner of means! A wave of great cheerfulness and confidence buoyed up Peter. He felt equal to any enterprise. Should he drop and let the bawling Boche have a round or so?

And there was a Hun machine smashed upside down on the ground. Was that the second fellow?

Flick! a bullet!

Wiser counsels came to Peter. This was no place for a sick and giddy man with a smashed and bleeding wrist. He must get away.

Up! Which way was west? West? The sun rises in the east and sets in the west. But where had the sun got to? It was hidden by his wing. Shadows! The shadows would be pointing north-east, that was the tip.... Up! There were the Boche trenches. No, Boche reserve trenches.... Going west, going west.... Rip! Snap! Bullet through the wing, and a wire flickering about. He ducked his head.... He put the machine up steeply to perhaps a thousand feet....

He had an extraordinary feeling that he and the machine were growing and swelling, that they were getting bigger and bigger, and the sky and the world and everything else smaller. At last he was a monstrous man in a vast aeroplane in the tiniest of universes. He was as great as God.

That wrist! And this blood! Blood! And great, glowing spots of blood that made one's sight indistinct....

He coughed, and felt his mouth full of blood, and spat it out and retched....

Then in an instant he was a little thing again, and the sky and the world were immense. He had a lucid interval.

One ought to go up and help that Frenchman. Where were they fighting?... Up, anyhow!

This must be No Man's Land. That crumpled little thing was a dead body surely. Barbed wire. More barbed wire.

The engine was missing. Ugh! That fairly put the lid on!

Peter was already asleep and dreaming. The great blood spots had returned and increased, but now they were getting black, they were black, huge black blotches; they blotted out the world!

Peter, Peter as we have known him, discontinued existence....

It was an automaton, aided by good luck, that dropped his machine half a mile behind the French trenches....

§ 15

Peter had no memory of coming to again from his faint. For a long time he must have continued to be purely automatic. His flaming wrist was the centre of his being. Then for a time consciousness resumed, as abruptly as the thread of a story one finds upon the torn page of a novel.

He found himself in the midst of a friendly group of pale blue uniforms; he was standing up and being very lively in spite of the strong taste of blood in his mouth and a feeling that his wrist was burning as a match burns, and that the left upper half of his body had been changed into a lump of raw and bleeding meat. He was talking a sort of French. "*C'est sacré bon stuff, cet eau-de-vie Française,*" he was saying gaily and rather loudly.

"Haf some more," said a friendly voice.

"Not half, old chap," said Peter, and felt at the time that this was not really good French.

He tried to slap the man on the shoulder, but he couldn't.

"*Bon*!" he said, "as we say in England," and felt that that remark also failed.

Some one protested softly against his being given more brandy....

Then this clear fragment ended again. There was a kind of dream of rather rough but efficient surgery upon a shoulder and arm that was quite probably his own, and some genially amiable conversation. There was a very nice Frenchman with a black beard and soft eyes, who wore a long white overall, and seemed to be looking after him as tenderly as a woman could do.

But with these things mingled the matter of delirium. At one time the Kaiser prevailed in Peter's mind, a large, foolish, pompous person with waxed moustaches and distraught eyes, who crawled up to Peter over immense piles of white and grey and green rotting corpses, and began gnawing at his shoulder almost absent-mindedly. Peter struggled and protested. What business had this beastly

German to come interfering with Peter's life? He started a vast argument about that, in which all sorts of people, including the nice-looking Frenchman in the white overall, took part.

Peter was now making a formal complaint about the conduct of the universe. "No," he insisted time after time, "I will not deal with subordinates. I insist on seeing the Head," and so at last he found himself in the presence of the Lord God....

But Peter's vision of the Lord God was the most delirious thing of all. He imagined him in an office, a little office in a vast building, and so out of the way that people had to ask each other which was the passage and which the staircase. Old men stood and argued at corners with Peter's girl-guide whether it was this way or that. People were being shown over the building by girl-guides; it was very like the London War Office, only more so; there were great numbers of visitors, and they all seemed to be in considerable hurry and distress, and most of them were looking for the Lord God to lodge a complaint and demand an explanation, just as Peter was. For a time all the visitors became wounded men, and nurses mixed up with the girl-guides, and Peter was being carried through fresh air to an ambulance train. His shoulder and wrist were very painful and singing, as it were, a throbbing duet together.

For a time Peter did seem to see the Lord God; he was in his office, a little brown, rather tired-looking man in a kepi, and Peter was on a stretcher, and the Lord God or some one near him was saying: "Quel numéro?" But that passed away, and Peter was again conducting his exploration of the corridors with a girl-guide who was sometimes like Joan and sometimes like Hetty — and then there was a queer disposition to loiter in the passages.... For a time he sat in dishabillé while Hetty tried to explain God.... Dreams cross the scent of dreams.

Then it seemed to Peter's fevered brain that he was siting, and had been sitting for a long time, in the little office of the Lord God of Heaven and Earth. And the Lord God had the likeness of a lean, tired, intelligent-looking oldish man, with an air of futile friendliness masking a fundamental indifference.

"My dear sir," the Lord God was saying, "do please put that cushion behind your poor shoulder. I can't bear to see you so

uncomfortable. And tell me everything. Everything....”

The office was the dingiest and untidiest little office it was possible to imagine. The desk at which God sat was in a terrible litter. On a side table were some grubby test tubes and bottles at which the Lord God had apparently been trying over a new element. The windows had not been cleaned for ages, they were dark with spiders’ webs, they crawled with a buzzing nightmare of horrible and unmeaning life. It was a most unbusinesslike office. There were no proper files, no card indexes; bundles of dusty papers were thrust into open fixtures, papers littered the floors, and there were brass-handled drawers — . Peter looked again, and blood was oozing from these drawers and little cries came out of them. He glanced quickly at God, and God was looking at him. “But did you really make this world?” he asked.

“I *thought* I did,”said God.

“But why did you do it? *Why*?”

“Ah, *there* you have me!” said the Lord God with bonhomie.

“But why don’t you exert yourself?” said Peter, hammering at the desk with his sound hand. “Why don’t you exert yourself?”

Could delirium have ever invented a more monstrous conception than this of Peter hammering on an untidy desk amidst old pen nibs, bits of sealing-wax, half-sheets of note-paper, returns of nature’s waste, sample bones of projected animals, mineral samples, dirty little test tubes, and the like, and lecturing the Almighty upon the dreadful confusion into which the world had fallen? “Here was 1, sir, and millions like me, with a clear promise of life and freedom! And what are we now? Bruises, red bones, dead bodies! This German Kaiser fellow — an ass, sir, a perfect ass, gnawing a great hole in my shoulder! He and his son, stuffing themselves with a *Blutwurst* made out of all our lives and happiness! What does it mean, sir? Has it gone entirely out of your control? And it isn’t as if the whole thing was ridiculous, sir. It isn’t. In some ways it’s an extraordinarily fine world — one has to admit that. That is why it is all so distressing, so unendurably distressing. I don’t in the least want to leave it.”

“You admit that it’s fine — in places,” said the Lord God, as if he valued the admission.

“But the management, sir! the management! *Yours* — ultimately.

Don't you realize, sir? I had the greatest trouble in finding you. Half the messengers don't know where this den of yours is. It's forgotten. Practically *forgotten*. The Head Office! And now I'm here I can tell you everything is going to rack and ruin, driving straight to an absolute and final smash and break-up."

"As bad as that?" said the Lord God.

"It's the appalling waste," Peter continued. "The waste of material, the waste of us, the waste of everything. A sort of splendour in it, there is; touches of real genius about it, that I would be the last to deny; but that only increases the bitterness of the disorder. It's a good enough world to lament. It's a good enough life to resent having to lose it. There's some lovely things in it, sir; courage, endurance, and oh! many beautiful things. But when one gets here, when one begins to ask for you and hunt about for you, and finds this, this muddle, sir, then one begins to understand. Look at this room, consider it — as a general manager's room. No decency. No order. Everywhere the dust of ages, muck indescribable, bacteria! And that!"

That was a cobweb across the grimy window pane, in which a freshly entangled bluebottle fly was buzzing fussily. "That ought not to be here at all," said Peter. "It really ought not to exist at all. Why does it? Look at that beastly spider in the corner! Why do you suffer all these cruel and unclean things?"

"You don't like it?" said the Lord God, without any sign either of apology or explanation.

"No," said Peter .

"Then change it," said the Lord God, nodding his head as who should say "got you there."

"But how are we to change it?"

"If you have no will to change it, you have no right to criticize it," said the Lord God, leaning back with the weariness of one who has had to argue with each generation from Job onward, precisely the same objections and precisely the same arguments.

"After all," said the Lord God, giving Peter no time to speak further; "after all, you are three-and-twenty, Mr. Peter Stubland, and you've been pretty busy complaining of me and everything between me and you, your masters, pastors, teachers, and so forth, for the last

half-dozen years. Meanwhile, is your own record good? Positive achievements, forgive me, are still to seek. You've been nearly drunk several times, you've soiled yourself with a lot of very cheap and greedy love-making — I gave you something beautiful there anyhow, and you knew that while you spoilt it — you've been a vigorous member of the consuming class, and really, you've got nothing clear and planned nothing at all. You complain of my lack of order; where's the order in your own mind? If I was the hot-tempered old autocrat some of you people pretend I am, I should have been tickling you up with a thunderbolt long ago. But I happen to have this democratic fad as badly as any one — Free Will is what they used to call it — and so I leave you to work out your own salvation. And if I leave you alone then I have to leave that other — that other Mr. Toad at Potsdam alone. He tries me, I admit, almost to the miracle pitch at times with the tone of his everlasting prepaid telegrams — but one has to be fair. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the Kaiser. I've got to leave you all alone if I leave one alone. Don't you see that? In spite of the mess you are in. So don't blame me. Don't blame me. There isn't a thing in the whole of this concern of mine that Man can't control if only he chooses to control it. It's arranged like that. There's a lot more system here than you suspect, only it's too ingenious for you to see. It's yours to command. If you want a card index for the world — well, get a card index. I won't prevent you. If you don't like my spiders, kill my spiders. I'm not conceited about them. If you don't like the Kaiser, hang him, assassinate him. Why don't you abolish Kings? You could. But it was your sort, with your cheap and quick efficiency schemes, who set up Saul — in spite of my protests — ages ago.... Humanity either makes or breeds or tolerates all its own afflictions, great and small. Not my doing. Take Kings and Courts, Take dungheaps and flies. It's astonishing you people haven't killed off all the flies in the world long ago. They do no end of mischief, and it would be perfectly easy to do. They're purely educational. Purely. Even as you lie in hospital, there they are buzzing within an inch of your nose and landing on your poor forehead to remind you of what a properly organized humanity could do for its own comfort. But there's men in this world who want me to act as a fly-paper, simply

because they are too lazy to get one for themselves. My dear Mr. Peter! if people haven't taught you properly, teach yourself. If they don't know enough, find out. It's all here. All here." He made a comprehensive gesture. "I'm not mocking you."

"You're not mocking me?" said Peter keenly....

"It depends upon you," said the Lord God with an enigmatic smile. "You asked me why I didn't exert myself. Well — why don't you exert yourself?

"Why don't you exert yourself?" the Lord God repeated almost rudely, driving it home.

"That pillow under your shoulder still isn't comfortable," said the Lord God, breaking off....

The buzzing of the entangled fly changed to the drone of a passing aeroplane, and the dingy office expanded into a hospital ward. Some one was adjusting Peter's pillows....

§ 16

If his shoulder-blade was to mend, Peter could not be moved; and for a time he remained in the French hospital in a long, airy room that was full mostly with flying men like himself. At first he could not talk very much, but later he made some friends. He was himself very immobile, but other men came and sat by him to talk.

He talked chiefly to two Americans, who were serving at that time in the French flying corps. He found it much easier to talk English than French in his exhausted state, for though both he and Joan spoke French far above the average public school level, he found that now it came with an effort. It was as if his mind had for a time been pared down to its essentials.

These Americans amused and interested him tremendously. He had met hardly any Americans before so as to talk to them at all intimately, but they suffered from an inhibition of French perhaps more permanent than his own, and so the three were thrown into an unlimited intimacy of conversation. At first he found these Americans rather fatiguing, and then he found them very refreshing because of their explicitness of mind. Except when they broke into

frothy rapids of slang they were never allusive; in serious talk they said everything. They laid a firm foundation for all their assertions. That is the last thing an Englishman does. They talked of the war and of the prospect of America coming into the war, and of England and America and again of the war, and of the French and of the French and Americans and of the war, and of Taft's League to Enforce Peace and the true character of Wilson and Teddy and of the war, and of Sam Hughes and Hughes the Australian, and whether every country has the Hughes it deserves and of the war, and of going to England after the war, and of Stratford-on-Avon and Chester and Windsor, and of the peculiarities of English people. Their ideas of England Peter discovered were strange and picturesque. They believed ail Englishmen lived in a glow of personal loyalty to the Monarch, and were amazed to learn that Peter's sentiments were republican; and they thought that every Englishman dearly loved a lord. "We think that of Americans," said Peter. "That's our politeness," said they in a chorus, and started a train of profound discoveries in international relationships in Peter's mind.

"The ideas of every country about every country are necessarily a little stale. What England is, what England thinks, and what England is becoming, isn't on record. What is on record is the England of the 'eighties and 'nineties."

"Now, that's very true," said the nearer American. "And you can apply it right away, with a hundred per cent. or so added, to all your ideas of America."

As a consequence both sides in this leisurely discussion found how widely they had been out in their ideas about each other. Peter discovered America as not nearly so commercial and individualistic as he had supposed; he had been altogether ignorant of the increasing part the universities were playing in her affairs; the Americans were equally edified to find that the rampant imperialism of Cecil Rhodes and his group no longer ruled the British imagination. "If things are so," said the diplomatist in the nearer bed, "then I seem to see a lot more coming together between us than I've ever been disposed to think possible before. If you British aren't so keen over this king business — —"

"*Keen*!" said Peter.

“If you don’t hold you are IT and unapproachable — in the way of Empires.”

“The Empire is yours for the asking,” said Peter.

“Then all there is between us is the Atlantic — and that grows narrower every year. We’re the same people.”

“So long as we have the same languages and literature,” said Peter....

From these talks onward Peter may be regarded as having a Foreign Policy of his own.

§ 17

And it was in this hospital that Peter first clearly decided to become personally responsible for the reconstruction of the British Empire.

This decision was precipitated by the sudden reappearance in his world of Mir Jelalludin, the Indian whom he had once thought unsuitable company for Joan.

Peter had been dozing when Jelalludin appeared. He found him sitting beside the bed, and stared at the neat and smiling brown face, unable to place him, and still less able to account for the uniform he was wearing. For Jelalludin was wearing the uniform of the French aviator, and across his breast he wore four palms.

“I had the pleasure of knowing you at Cambridge,” said Mir Jelalludin in his Indian staccato. “Cha’med I was of use to you.”

An explanatory Frenchman standing beside the Indian dabbed his finger on the last of Jelalludin’s decorations. “He killed von Papen after your crash,” said the Frenchman.

“You were that Frenchman?” said Peter.

“In your fight,” said Mir Jelalludin.

“He’d have finished me,” said Peter.

“I finished him,” said the Indian, laughing with sheer happiness, and showing his beautiful teeth.

Peter contemplated the situation. He made a movement and was reminded of his bandages.

“I wish I could shake hands,” he said.

The Indian smiled with a phantom malice in his smile.

Peter went bluntly to a question that had arisen in his mind. “Why aren’t you in khaki?” he asked.

“The Brish’ Gu’ment objects to Indian flyers,” said Mir Jelalludin. “I tried. But Brish’ Gu’ment thinks flying beyond us. And bad for Prestige. Prestige very important thing to Brish’ Gu’ment. So I came to France.”

Peter continued to digest the situation.

“Of course,” said Jelalludin, “no commissions given in regular army to Indians. Brish’ soldiers not allowed to s’lute Indian officers. Not part of the Great White Race. Otherwise hundreds of flyers could come from India, hundreds and hundreds. We play cricket — good horsemen. Many Indian gentlemen must be first-rate flying stuff. But Gu’ment says ‘No.”

He continued to smile more cheerfully than ever.

“Hundreds of juvenile Indians ready and willing to be killed for your Empire” — he rubbed it in— “but — No, Thank You. Indo-European people we are, Aryans, more consanguineous than Jews or Japanese. Ready to take our places beside you.... Well, anyhow, I rejoice to see that you are recovering to entire satisfaction. It was only when I descended after the fight that I perceived that it was you, and it seemed to me then that you were very seriously injured. I was anxious. And mem’ries of otha days. I felt I must see you.”

Peter and the young Indian looked at one another.

“Look here, Jelalludin,” he said, “I must apologize.”

“But why?”

“As part of the British Empire. No! don’t interrupt. I do. But, I say, do they — do we really bar you — absolutely?”

“Absolutely. Not only from the air force, but from any commission at all. The lowest little bazaar clerk from Clap-ham, who has got a commission, is over our Indian officers — over our princes. It is an everlasting humiliation. Necessary for Prestige.”

“The French have more sense, anyhow.”

“They take us on our merits.

“If I had a British commission,” said Jelalludin, “I should be made very uncomfortable. It is the way with British officers and gentlemen. The French are not so — particular.”

“At present,” said Peter, “I can’t be moved.”

“You improve.”

“But when I get up this is one of the things I have to see to. You see, Jelalludin, this Empire of ours — yours and mine — has got into the hands of a gang of gory Old Fools. Partly my negligence — as God said.”

“God? “said Jelalludin.

“Oh, nothing! I mean we young men haven’t been given a proper grasp of the Indian situation. Or any situation.

No. This business of the commissions! after all that

you fellows have done here in France! It’s disgraceful. You see, we don’t see or learn anything about India. Even at Cambridge—”

“You didn’t see much of us there,” smiled the Indian.

“I’m sorry,” said Peter.

“I didn’t come to talk about this,” said Jelalludin, “it came out.”

“I’m glad it came out,” said Peter.

A pause.

“I mustn’t tire you,” said Mir Jelalludin, and rose to go.

Peter thanked him for coming.

“And your cha’ming sister?” asked the Indian, as if by an afterthought.

“Foster sister. She drives a big car about London,” said Peter....

Peter meditated profoundly upon that interview for some days.

Then he tried over the opinions of the Americans about India. But Americans are of little help to the British about India. Their simple uncriticized colour prejudice covers all “Asiatics” except the inhabitants of Siberia. They had a more than English ignorance of ethnology, and Oswald had at least imparted some fragments of that important science to his ward. Their working classification of mankind was into Anglo-Saxons, Frenchmen, Sheenies, Irishmen, Dutchmen, Dagoes, Chinks, Coloured People, and black Niggers. They esteemed Mir Jelalludin a Coloured Person. Peter had to fall back upon himself again.

§ 18

It contributed to the thoroughness of Peter’s thinking that it was

some time before he could be put into a position to read comfortably. And it has to be recorded in the teeth of the dictates of sentiments and the most sacred traditions of romance that the role played by both Joan and Hetty in these meditations was secondary and incidental. It was an attenuated and abstract Peter who lay in the French hospital, his chief link of sense with life was a growing hunger; he thought very much about fate, pain, the nature of things, and God, and very little about persons and personal incidents — and so strong an effect had his dream that God remained fixed steadfastly in his mind as that same intellectual non-interventionist whom he had visited in the fly-blown office. But about God's rankling repartee, "Why don't you exert yourself?" there was accumulating a new conception, the conception of Man taking hold of the world, unassisted by God but with the acquiescence of God, and in fulfilment of some remote, incomprehensible planning on the part of God. Probably Peter in thinking this was following one of the most ancient and well-beaten of speculative paths, but it seemed to him that it was a new way of thinking. And he was Man. It was he who had to establish justice in the earth, achieve unity, and rule first the world and then the stars.

He lay staring at the ceiling, and quite happy now that healing and habituation had freed him from positive pain, thinking out how he was to release and co-operate with his India, which had invariably the face of Mir Jelalludin, how he was to reunite himself with his brothers in America, and how the walls and divisions of mankind, which look so high and invincible upon the ground and so trivial from twelve thousand feet above, were to be subdued to such greater ends.

It was only as the blood corpuscles multiplied inside him that Peter ceased to be constantly Man contemplating his Destiny and Races and Empires, and for more and more hours in the day shrank to the dimensions and natural warmth of Mr. Peter Stubland contemplating convalescence in Blighty. He became eager first for the dear old indulgent and welcoming house at Pelham Ford, and then for prowls and walks and gossip with Joan and Oswald, and then, then for London and a little "fun." Life was ebbing back into what is understood to be the lower nature, and was certainly the most

intimate and distinctive substance of Mr. Peter Stubland. His correspondence became of very great interest to him. Certain letters from Joan, faint but pursuing, had reached him, those letters over which Joan had sat like a sonneteer. He read them and warmed to them. He thought what luck it was that he had a Joan to be the best of sisters to him, to be even more than a sister. She was the best friend he had, and it was jolly to read so plainly that he was her best friend. He would like to do work with Joan better than with any man he knew. Driving a car wasn't half good enough for her. Some day he'd be able to show her how to fly, and he would. It would be great fun going up with Joan on a double control and letting her take over.

There must be girls in the world who would fly as well as any man, or better.

He scribbled these ideas in his first letter to Joan, and they pleased her mightily. To fly with Peter would be surely to fly straight into heaven.

And mixed up with Joan's letters were others that he presently sorted out from hers and put apart, as though even letters might hold inconvenient communion. For the most part they came from Hetty Reinhart, and displayed the emotions of a consciously delicious female enamoured and enslaved by one of the heroes of the air. She had dreamt of him coming in through the skylight of her studio, Lord Cupid visiting his poor little Psyche— "but it was only the moonlight," and she thought of him now always with great overshadowing wings. Sometimes they were great white wings that beat above her, and sometimes they were thrillingly soft and exquisite wings, like the wings of the people in *Peter Wilkins*. She sent him a copy of *Peter Wilkins*, book beloved by Poe and all readers of the fantastic. Then came the news of his smash. She had been clever enough to link it with the death of von Papen, the Hun Matador. "Was that your fight, dear Peterkins? Did you begin on Goliath?" As the cordials of recovery raced through Peter's veins there were phases when the thought of visiting the yielding fair, Jovelike and triumphant in winged glory, became not simply attractive but insistent. But he wrote to Hetty modestly, "They've clipped one wing for ever."

And so in a quite artless and inevitable way Peter found his first

leave, when the British hospital had done with him, mortgaged up to hilt almost equally to dear friend Joan and to Cleopatra Hetty.

The young man only realized the duplicity of his nature and the complications of his position as the hospital boat beat its homeward way across the Channel. The night was smooth and fine, with a high full moon which somehow suggested Hetty, and with a cloud scheme of great beauty and distinction that had about it a flavour of Joan. And as he meditated upon these complications that had been happening in his more personal life while his attention had been still largely occupied with divinity and politics, he was hailed by an unfamiliar voice and addressed as "Simon Peter."

"Excuse me," said the stout young officer tucked up warmly upon the next deck chair between a pair of crutches, "but aren't you Simon Peter?"

Peter had heard that name somewhere before. "My name's Stubland," he said.

"Ah! Stubland! I forgot your surname. Of High Cross School?"

Peter peered and saw a round fair face that slowly recalled memories. "Wait a moment!" said Peter.... "Ames!"

"Guessed it in one. Probyn and I were chums."

"What have you got?" said Peter.

"Leg below the knee off, damn it!" said Ames. "One month at the front. Not much of a career. But they say they do you a leg now better than reality. But I'd have liked to have batted the pants of the unspeakable Hun a bit more before I retired. What have you got?"

"Wrist chiefly and shoulder-blade. Air fight. After six weeks."

"Does you out?"

"For flying, I'm afraid. But there's lots of ground jobs. And anyhow — home's pleasant."

"Yes," said Ames. "Home's pleasant. But I'd like to have got a scalp of some sort. Doubt if I killed a single Hun. D'you remember Probyn at school? — a dark chap."

Peter found he still hated Probyn. "I remember him," he said.

"He's killed. He got the M.M. and the V.C. He wouldn't take a commission. He was sergeant-major in my battalion. I just saw him, but I've heard about him since. His men worshipped him. Queer how men come out in a new light in this war."

“How was he killed?” asked Peter.

“In a raid. He was with a bombing party, and three men straggled up a sap and got cornered. He’d taken two machine-guns and they’d used most of the bombs, and his officer was knocked out, so he sent the rest of his party back with the stuff and went to fetch his other men. One had been hit and the other two were thinking of surrendering when he came back to them. He stood right up on the parados, they say, and slung bombs at the Germans, a whole crowd of them, until they went back. His two chaps got the wounded man out and carried him back, and left him still slinging bombs. He’d do that. He’d stand right up and bung bombs at them until they seemed to lose their heads. Then he seems to have spotted that this particular bunch of Germans had gone back into a sort of blind alley. He was very quick at spotting a situation, and he followed them up, and the sheer blank recklessness of it seems to have put their wind up absolutely. They’d got bombs and there was an officer with them. But they held up their hands — nine of them. Panic. He got them right across to our trenches before the searchlights found him, and the Germans got him and two of their own chaps with a machine-gun. That was just the last thing he did. He’d been going about for months doing stunts like that — sort of charmed life business. The way he slung bombs, they say, amounted to genius.

“They say he’d let his hair grow long — perfect golliwog. When I saw him it certainly was long, but he’d got it plastered down. And there’s a story that he used to put white on his face like a clown with a great red mouth reaching from ear to ear Yes, painted on. It’s put the Huns’ wind up something frightful. Coming suddenly on a chap like that in the glare of a searchlight or a flare.”

“Queer end,” said Peter.

“Queer chap altogether,” said Ames....

He thought for a time, and then went on to philosophize about Probyn.

“Clever chap he was,” said Ames, “but an absolute failure. Of course old High Cross wasn’t anything very much in the way of a school, but whatever there was to be learnt there he learnt. He was the only one of us who ever got hold of speaking French. I heard him over there — regular fluent. And he’d got a memory like an

encyclopaedia. I always said he'd do wonders...."

Ames paused. "Sex was his downfall," said Ames.

"I saw a lot of him altogether, off and on, right up to the time of the war," said Ames. "My people are furniture people, you know, in Tottenham Court Road, and his were in the public-house fitting line — in Highbury. We went about together. I saw him make three or four good starts, but there was always some trouble. I suppose most of us were a bit — well, keen on sex; most of us young men. But he was ravenous. Even at school. Always on it. Always thinking about it. I could tell you stories of him.... Rum place that old school was, come to think of it. They left us about too much. I don't know how far you....

Of course you were about the most innocent thing that ever came to High Cross School," said Ames.

"Yes," said Peter. "I suppose I was."

"Curious how it gnaws at you once it's set going," said Ames....

Peter made a noise that might have been assent.

Ames remained thinking for a time, watching the swish and surge of the black Channel waters. Peter pursued their common topic in silence.

"What's the sense of it?" said Ames, plunging towards philosophy.

"It's the system on which life goes — on this planet," Peter contributed, but Ames had not had a biological training, and was unprepared to take that up.

"Too much of it," said Ames.

"Over-sexed," said Peter.

"Whether one ought to hold oneself in or let oneself go," said Ames. "But perhaps these things don't bother you?"

Peter wasn't disposed towards confidences with Ames. "I'm moderate in all things," he said.

"Lucky chap! I've worried about this business no end. One doesn't want to use up all one's life like a blessed monkey. There's other things in life — if only this everlasting want-a-girl want-a-woman would let one get at them."

His voice at Peter's shoulder ceased for a while, and then resumed. "It's the best chaps, seems to me, who get it worst. Chaps

with imaginations, I mean, men of vitality. Take old Probyn. He could have done anything — anything. And he was eaten up. Like a fever....”

Ames went down into a black silence for a couple of minutes or more, and came up again with an astonishing resolution. “I shall marry,” he said.

“Got the lady?” asked Peter. “Near enough,” said Ames darkly.

“St. Paul’s method,” said Peter.

“I was talking to a fellow the other day,” said Ames. “He’d got a curious idea. Something in it perhaps. He said that every one was clean-minded and romantic, that’s how he put it, about sixteen or seventeen. Even if you’ve been a bit dirty as a schoolboy you sort of clean up then. Adolescence, in fact. And he said you ought to fall in love and pair off then. Kind of Romeo and Juliet business. First love and all that.”

“Juliet wasn’t exactly Romeo’s first love,” said Peter.

“Young beggar!” said Ames. “But, anyhow, that was only by way of illustration. His idea was that we’d sort of put off marriage and all that sort of thing later and later. Twenty-eight. Thirty. Thirty-five even. And that put us wrong. We kind of curdled and fermented. Spoilt with keeping. Larked about with girls we didn’t care for. Demi-vierge stunts and all that. Got promiscuous. Let anything do. His idea was you’d got to pair off with a girl and look after her, and she look after you. And keep faith. And stop all stray mucking about. * Settle down to a healthy sexual peace,’ he said.”

Ames paused. “Something in it?”

“Ever read the *Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*?” asked Peter.

“Never.”

“He worked out that theory quite successfully. Married before he went up to Oxford. There’s a lot in it. Sex. Delayed. Fretting. Overflowing. Getting experimental and nasty.... But that doesn’t exhaust the question. The Old Experimenter sits there—”

“*What* experimenter?” “The chap who started it all. There’s no way yet of fitting it up perfectly. We’ve got to make it fit.”

Peter was so interested that he forgot his aversion from confiding in Ames. The subject carried him on.

“Any healthy young man,” Peter generalized, “could be happy

and contented with any pretty girl, so far as love-making goes. It doesn't strike you — as a particularly recondite art, eh? But you've got to be in love with each other generally. That's more difficult. You've got to talk together and go about together. In a complicated artificial world. The sort of woman it's easy and pleasant to make love to, may not be the sort of woman you really think splendid. It's easier to make love to a woman you don't particularly respect, who's good fun, and all that. Which is just the reason why you wouldn't be tied up with her for ever. No."

"So we worship the angels and marry the flappers," said Ames.... "I shan't do that, anyhow. The fact is, one needs a kind of motherliness in a woman."

"By making love too serious, we've made it not serious enough," said Peter with oracular profundity, and then in reaction, "Oh! *I* don't know."

"*I* don't know," said Ames.

"Which doesn't in the least absolve us from the necessity of going on living right away."

"I shall marry," said Ames, in a tone of unalterable resolve.

They lapsed into self-centred meditations....

"Why! there's the coast," said Ames suddenly. "Quite close, too. *Dark*. Do you remember, before the war, how the lights of Folkestone used to run along the top there like a necklace of fire?"

§ 19

The powers that were set over Peter's life played fast and loose with him in the matter of leave. They treated him at first as though he was a rare and precious hero — who had to be saved from his friends. They put him to mend at Broadstairs, and while he was at Broadstairs he had three visits from Hetty, whose days were free, and only one hasty Sunday glimpse of Joan, who was much in demand at the Ministry of Munitions. And Oswald could not come to see him because Oswald himself was a casualty mending slowly at Pelham Ford. Hetty and Joan and returning health fired the mind of Peter with great expectations of the leave that was to come. These

expectations were, so to speak, painted in panels. Forgetful of the plain fact that a Joan who was not available at Broadstairs would also not be available at Pelham Ford, the panels devoted to the latter place invariably included Joan as a principal figure, they represented leave as a glorious escape from war to the space, the sunshine, the endlessness of such a summer vacation as only schoolboys know. lie* would be climbing trees with Joan, "mucking about" in the boats with Joan, lying on the lawn just on the edge of the cedar's shadow with Joan, nibbling stems of grass. The London scenes were narrower and more intense. He wanted the glitter and fun of lunching in the Carlton grill-room or dining at the Criterion, in the company of a tremendous hat and transparent lace, and there were scenes in Hetty's studio, quite a lot of fantastic and elemental scenes in Hetty's studio.

But the Germans have wiped those days of limitless leisure out of the life of mankind. Even our schoolboys stay up in their holidays now to make munitions. Peter had scarcely clambered past the approval of a medical board before active service snatched him again. He was wanted urgently. Peter was no good as a pilot any more, it was true; his right wrist was doomed to be stiff and weak henceforth, and there were queer little limitations upon the swing of his arm, but the powers had suddenly discovered other uses for him. There was more of Peter still left than they had assumed at first. For one particular job, indeed, he was just the man they needed. They docked him a wing — it seemed in mockery of the state of his arm — and replaced the two wings that had adorned him by one attached to the letter O, and they marked him down to join "balloons" at the earliest possible moment, for just then they were developing kite balloons very fast for artillery observation, and were eager for any available men. Peter was slung out into freedom for one-and-twenty days, and then told to report himself for special instruction in the new work at Richmond Park.

One and-twenty days! He had never been so inordinately greedy for life, free to live and go as you please, in all his days before. Something must happen, he was resolved, something bright and intense, on every one of those days. He snatched at both sides of life. He went down to Pelham Ford, but he had a little list of engagements

in town in his pocket. Joan was not down there, and never before had he realized how tremendously absent Joan could be. And then at the week-end she couldn't come. There were French and British G.H.Q. bigwigs to take down to some experiments in Sussex, but she couldn't even explain that, she had to send a telegram at the eleventh hour: " Week-end impossible." To Peter that seemed the most brutally offhand evasion in the world. Peter was disappointed in Pelham Ford. It was altogether different from those hospital dreams; even the weather, to begin with, was chilly and unsettled. Oswald had had a set-back with his knee, and had to keep his leg up on a deck chair; he could only limp about on crutches, lie seemed older and more distant from Peter than he had ever been before; Peter was obsessed by the idea that he ought to be treated with solicitude, and a further gap was opened between them by Peter's subaltern habit of saying "Sir" instead of the old familiar "Nobby." Peter sat beside the deck chair through long and friendly, but very impatient hours; and he talked all the flying shop he could, and Oswald talked of his Africans, and they went over the war and newspapers again and again, and they reverted to Africa and flying shop, and presently they sat through several silences, and at the end of one of them Oswald inquired: "Have you ever played chess, Peter — or piquet?"

Now chess and piquet are very good pastimes in their way, but not good enough for the precious afternoons of a very animated and greedy young man keenly aware that they are probably his last holiday afternoons on earth.

Sentiment requires that Peter should have gone to London and devoted himself to adorning the marginal freedom of Joan's days. He did do this once. He took her out to dinner to Jules', in Jermyn Street; he did her well there; but she was a very tired Joan that day; she had driven a good hundred and fifty miles, and, truth to tell, in those days Peter did not like Joan and she did not like herself in London, and more especially in smart London restaurants. They sat a little aloof from one another, and about them all the young couples warmed to another and smiled. She jarred with this atmosphere of meretricious ease and indulgence. She had had no time to get back to Hampstead and change; she was at a disadvantage in her uniform. It became a hair shirt, a Nessus shirt as the evening proceeded. It

emphasized the barrier of seriousness between them cruelly. She was a policeman, a prig, the harshest thing in life; all those pretty little cocottes and flirts, with their little soft brightnesses and adornments, must be glancing at her coarse, unrevealing garments and noting her for the fool she was. She felt ugly and ungainly; she was far too much tormented by love to handle herself well. She could get no swing and forgetfulness into the talk. And about Peter, too, was a reproach for her. He talked of work and the war — as if in irony. And his eyes wandered. Naturally, his eyes wandered.

"Good-night, old Peter," she said when they parted.

She lay awake for two hours, exasperated, miserable beyond tears, because she had not said: "Good night, old Peter dear." She had intended to say it. It was one of her prepared effects. But she was a weary and a frozen young woman. Duty had robbed her of the energy for love. Why had she let things come to this pass? Peter was her business, and Peter alone. She damned the Woman's Legion, Woman's Part in the War, and all the rest of it, with fluency and sincerity.

And while Joan wasted the hours of sleep in this fashion Peter was also awake thinking over certain schemes he had discussed with Hetty that afternoon. They involved some careful and deliberate lying. The idea was that for the purposes of Pelham Ford he should terminate his leave on the fourteenth instead of the twenty-first, and so get a clear week free — for life in the vein of Hetty.

He lay fretting, and the hot greed of youth persuaded him, and the clean honour of youth reproached him. And though he knew the way the decision would go, he tossed about and damned as heartily as Joan.

He could not remember if at Pelham Ford he had set a positive date to his leave, but, anyhow, it would not be difficult to make out that there had been some sort of urgent call.... It could be done.... The alternative was Piquet.

Peter returned to Pelham Ford and put his little fabric of lies upon Oswald without much difficulty. Then at the week-end came Joan, rejoicing. She came into the house tumultuously; she had caught a train earlier than the one they had expected her to come by. "I've got all next week. Seven days, Petah! Never mind how, but I've got it.

I've got it!"

There was a suggestion as of some desperate battle away there in London from which Joan had snatched these fruits of victory. She was so radiantly glad to have them that Peter recoiled from an immediate reply.

"I didn't seem to see you in London somehow," said Joan. "I don't think you were really there. Let's have a look at you, old Petah. Tenshun!... Lift the arm.... Rotate the arm.... It isn't so bad, Petah, after all. Is tennis possible?"

"I'd like to try."

"Boats certainly. No reason why we shouldn't have two or three long walks. A week's a long time nowadays."

"But I have to go back on Monday," said Peter.

Joan stood stock still.

"Pity, isn't it?" said Peter weakly.

"But why?" she asked at last in a little flat voice.

"I have to go back."

"But your leave?:

"Ends on Monday," lied Peter.

For some moments it looked as though Joan meant to make that last week-end a black one. "That doesn't give us much time together," said Joan, and her voice which had soared now crawled the earth.... "I'm sorry."

Just for a moment she hung, a dark and wounded Joan, downcast and thoughtful; and then turned and put her arms akimbo, and looked at him and smiled awry. "Well, old Peter, then we've got to make the best use of our time. It's your Birf Day, sort of; it's your Bank Holiday, dear; it's every blessed thing for you — such time as we have together. Before they take you off again. I think they're greedy, but it can't be helped. Can it, Peter?"

"It can't be helped," said Peter. "No."

They paused.

"What shall we do?" said Joan. "The program's got to be cut down. Shall we still try tennis?"

"I want to. I don't see why this wrist " He held it

out and rotated it.

"Good old arm!" said Joan, and ran a hand along it.

“I’ll go and change these breeches and things,” said Joan. “And get myself female. Gods, Peter! the craving to get into clothes that are really flexible and translucent!”

She went to the staircase and then turned on Peter.

“Peter,”she said.

“Yes.”

“Go out and stand on the lawn and tighten up the net. Now.”

“Why?”

“Then I can see you from my window while I’m changing. I don’t want to waste a bit of you.”

She went up four steps and stopped and looked at him over her shoulder.

“I want as much as I can get of you, Petah,” she said.

“I wish I’d known about that week,” said Peter stupidly.

“*Exactly*!” said Joan to herself, and flitted up the staircase.

§ 20

Joan, Mrs. Moxton perceived that afternoon, had a swift and angry fight with her summer wardrobe. Both the pink gingham and the white drill had been tried on and flung aside, and she had decided at last upon a rather jolly warm blue figured voile with a belt of cherry-coloured ribbon that suited her brown skin and black hair better than those weaker supports. She had evidently opened every drawer in her room in a hasty search for white silk stockings.

When she came out into the sunshine of the garden Peter’s eyes told her she had guessed the right costume.

Oswald was standing up on his crutches and smiling, and Peter was throwing up a racquet and catching it again with one hand.

“Thank God for a left-handed childhood!” said Peter. “I’m going to smash you, Joan.”

“I forgot about that,” said Joan. “But you aren’t going to smash me, old Petah.”

When tea-time came they were still fighting the seventh vantage game, and Joan was up.

They came and sat at the tea-table, and Joan as she poured the tea

reflected that a young man in white flannels, flushed and a little out of breath, with his white silk shirt wide open at the neck, was a more beautiful thing than the most beautiful woman alive. And her dark eyes looked at the careless and exhausted Peter, that urgent and insoluble problem, while she counted, “Twenty-four, thirty-six, forty-one — about forty-one hours. How the devil shall I do it?”

It wasn’t to be done at tennis anyhow, and she lost the next three games running without apparent effort, and took Peter by the arm and walked him about the garden, discoursing on flying. “I must teach you to fly,” said Peter. “Often when I’ve been up alone I’ve thought, ‘Some day I’ll teach old Joan.’”

“That’s a promise, Petah.”

“Sure,” said Peter, who had not suffered next to two Americans for nothing.”

“I’ve got it in writing,” said Joan.

“I’d rather learn from you than any one,” said she.

Peter discoursed of stunts....

They spent a long golden time revisiting odd corners in which they had played together. They went down the village and up to the church and round the edge of the wood, and there they came upon and devoured a lot of blackberries, and then they went down to the mill pond and sat for a time in Baker’s boat. Then they got at cross purposes about dressing for dinner. Joan wanted to dress very much. She wanted to remind Peter that there were prettier arms in the world than Hetty Reinhart’s, and a better modelled neck and shoulders. She had a new dress of ivory silk with a broad belt of velvet that echoed the bright softness of her eyes and hair. But Peter would not let her dress. He did not want to dress himself. “And you couldn’t look prettier, Joan, than you do in that blue thing. It’s so like you.”

And as Joan couldn’t explain that the frock kept her a golly girl he knew while the dress would have shown him the beautiful woman he had to discover, she lost that point in the game. And tomorrow was Sunday, when Pelham Ford after the good custom of England never dressed for dinner.

Afterwards she thought how easily she might have overruled him.

Joan’s plans for the evening were dashed by this costume failure. She had relied altogether on the change of personality into something

rich and strange, that the ivory dress was to have wrought. She could do nothing to develop the situation. Everything seemed to be helping to intensify her sisterliness. Oswald was rather seedy, and the three of them, played Auction Bridge with a dummy. She had meant to sit up with Peter, but it didn't work out like that.

"Good night, Petah dear," she said outside her bedroom door with the candle-light shining red between the fingers of her hand.

"Good night, old Joan," he said from his door-mat, with an infinite friendliness in his voice.

You cannot kiss a man good night suddenly when he is fifteen yards away....

She closed the door behind her softly, put down her candle, and began to walk about her room and swear in an entirely unladylike fashion. Then she went over to the open window, wringing her hands. "How am I to do it?" she said. "How am I to do it? The situation's preposterous. He's mine. And I might be his sister!"

"Shall I make a declaration?"

"I suppose Hetty did."

But all the cunning of Joan was unavailing against the invisible barriers to passion between herself and Peter. They spent a long Sunday of comradeship, and courage and opportunity alike failed. The dawn on Monday morning found a white and haggard Joan pacing her floor, half minded to attempt a desperate explanation forthwith in Peter's bedroom with a suddenly awakened Peter. Only her fear of shocking him and failing restrained her. She raved. She indulged in absurd soliloquys and still absurder prayers. "Oh, God, give me my Peter," she prayed. "*Give me my Peter!*"

§ 21

Monday broke clear and fine, with a September freshness in the sunshine. Breakfast was an awkward meal; Peter was constrained, Oswald was worried by a sense of advice and counsels not given; Joan felt the situation slipping from her helpless grasp. It was with a sense of relief that at last she put on her khaki overcoat to drive Peter to the station. 11 This is the end," sang in Joan's mind. "This is the

end.” She glanced at the mirror in the hall and saw that the fur collar was not unfriendly to her white neck and throat. She was in despair, but she did not mean to let it become an unbecoming despair — at least until Peter had departed. The end was still incomplete. She had something stern and unpleasant to say to Peter before they parted, but she did not mean to look stern or unpleasant while she said it. Peter, she noted with a gleam of satisfaction, was in low spirits. He was sorry to go. He was ashamed of himself, but also he was sorry. That was something, at any rate, to have achieved. But he was going — nevertheless.

She brought round the little Singer to the door. She started the engine with a competent swing and got in. The maids came with Peter’s portmanteau and belongings. “This is the end,” said Joan to herself, touching her accelerator and with her hand ready to release the brake. “All aboard?” said Joan aloud.

Peter shook hands with Oswald over the side of the car, and glanced from him to the house and back at him. “I wish I could stay longer, sir,” said Peter.

“There’s many days to come yet,” said Oswald. For we never mention death before death in war time; we never let ourselves think of it before it comes or after it has come.

“So long, Nobby!”

“Good luck, Peter!”

Joan put the car into gear, and steered out into the road.

“The water-splash is lower than ever I’ve seen it,” said Peter.

They ran down the road to the station almost in silence. “These poplars have got a touch of autumn in them already,” said Peter.

“It’s an early year,” said Joan.

“The end, the end!” sang the song in Joan’s brain. “But I’ll tell him all the same.”...

But she did not tell him until they could hear the sound of the approaching train that was to cut the thread of everything for Joan. They walked together up the little platform to the end.

“I’m sorry you’re going,” said Joan.

“I’m infernally sorry. If I’d known you’d get this week—”

“Would that have altered it?” she said sharply.

“No. I suppose it wouldn’t,” he fenced, just in time to save

himself.

The rattle of the approaching train grew suddenly loud, It was round the bend.

Joan spoke in a perfectly even voice. “I know you have been lying, Peter. I have known it all this week-end. I know your leave lasts until the twenty- first.”

He stared at her in astonishment.

“There was a time.... It’s to think of all this dirt upon you that hurts most. The lies, the dodges, the shuffling meanness of it. From *you*.... Whom *I love*.”

A gap of silence came. To the old porter twelve yards off they seemed entirely well-behaved and well-disciplined young people, saying nothing in particular. The train came in with a sort of wink under the bridge, and the engine and foremost carriages ran past them up the platform.

“I wish I could explain. I didn’t know The fact is

I got entangled in a sort of promise....”

“*Hetty*!” Joan jerked out, and “There’s an empty first for you.”

The train stopped.

Peter put his hand on the handle of the carriage door.

“You go to London — like a puppy that rolls in dirt. You go to beastliness and vulgarity.... You’d better get in, Peter.”

“But look here, Joan!”

“*Get* in!” she scolded to his hesitation, and stamped her foot.

He got in mechanically, and she closed the door on him and turned the handle and stood holding it.

Then still speaking evenly and quietly, she said: “You’re a blind fool, Peter. What sort of love can that — that — that miscellany give you, that / couldn’t give? Have I no life? Have I no beauty? Are you afraid of me? Don’t you see — don’t you *see*? You go off to *that*! You trail yourself in the dirt and you trail my love in the dirt. Before a female hack!...

“*Look* at me!” she cried, holding her hands apart. “Think of me tonight.... *Yours*! Yours for the taking!”

The train was moving.

She walked along the platform to keep pace with him, and her eyes held his. “Peter,” she said; and then with amazing quiet

intensity: “You *damned* fool!”

She hesitated on the verge of saying something more. She came towards the carriage. It wasn’t anything pleasant that she had in mind, to judge by her expression.

“Stand away please, miss!” said the old porter, hurrying up to intervene. She abandoned that last remark with an impatient gesture.

Peter sat still. The end of the station ran by like a scene in a panorama. Her Medusa face had slid away to the edge of the picture that the window framed, and vanished.

For some seconds he was too amazed to move.

Then he got up heavily and stuck his head out of the window to stare at Joan.

Joan was standing quite still with her hands in the side pockets of her khaki overcoat; she was standing straight as a rod, with her heels together, looking at the receding train. She never moved....

Neither of these two young people made a sign to each other, which was the first odd thing the old porter noted about them. They just stared. By all the rules they should have waved handkerchiefs. The next odd thing was that Joan stared at the bend for half a minute perhaps after the train had altogether gone, and then tried to walk out to her car by the little white gate at the end of the platform which had been disused and nailed up for three years....

§ 22

After Oswald had seen the car whisk through the gates into the road, and after he had rested on his crutches staring at the gates for a time, he had hobbled back to his study. He wanted to work, but he found it difficult to fix his attention. He was thinking of Joan and Peter, and for the first time in his life he was wondering why they had never fallen in love with each other. They seemed such good company for each other....

He was still engaged upon these speculations half an hour or so later, when he heard the car return and presently saw Joan go past his window. She was flushed, and she was staring in front of her at nothing in particular. He had never seen Joan looking so unhappy. In

fact, so strong was his impression that she was unhappy that he doubted it, and he went to the window and craned out after her.

She was going straight up towards the arbour. With a slight hurry in her steps. She had her fur collar half turned up on one side, her hands were deep in her pockets, and something about her dogged walk reminded him of some long-forgotten moment, years ago it must have been, when Joan, in hot water for some small offence, had been sent indoors at The Ingle-Nook.

He limped back to his chair and sat thinking her over.

"I wonder," he said at last, and turned to his work again....

There was no getting on with it. Half an hour later he accepted defeat. "Peter has knocked us all crooked," he said. "There's no work for today.

He would go out and prowl round the place and look at the roses. Perhaps Joan would come and talk. But at the gates he was amazed to encounter Peter.

It was Peter, hot and dusty from a walk of three miles, and carrying his valise with an aching left arm. There was a look of defiance in the eyes that stared fiercely out from under the perspiration-matted hair upon his forehead. He seemed to find Oswald's appearance the complete confirmation of the most disagreeable anticipations. Thoughts of panic and desertion flashed upon Oswald's mind.

"Good God, Peter!" he cried. "What brings you back?"

"I've come back for another week," said Peter.

"But your leave's up!"

"I told a lie, sir. I've got another week."

Oswald stared at his ward.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Peter. "I've been making a fool of myself. I thought better of it. I got out of the train at Standon and walked back here."

"What does it mean, Peter?" said Oswald.

Peter's eyes were the.most distressed eyes he had ever seen. "If you'd just not ask, sir, now—"

It is a good thing to deal with one's own blood in a crisis. Oswald, resting thoughtfully on his crutches, leapt to a kind of understanding.

"I'm going to hop down towards the village, Peter," said Oswald,

becoming casual in his manner. “I want some exercise.... If you’ll tell every one you’re back.”

He indicated the house behind him by a movement of his head.

Peter was badly blown with haste and emotion. “Thank you, sir,” he said shortly.

Oswald stepped past him and stared down the road.

“Mrs. Moxton’s in the house,” he said without looking at Peter again. “Joan’s up the garden. See you when I get back, Peter.... Glad you’ve got another week, anyhow.... So long....”

He left Peter standing in the gateway.

Fear came upon Peter. He stood quite still for some moments, looking at the house and the cedars. He dropped his valise at the front door and mopped his face. Then he walked slowly across the lawn towards the terraces. He wanted to shout, and found himself hoarse. Then on the first terrace he got out: “Jo-un!” in a flat croak. He had to cry again: “Jo-un!” before it sounded at all like the old style.

Joan became visible. She had come out of the arbour at the top of the garden, and she was standing motionless, regarding him down the vista of the central path. She was white and rather dishevelled, and she stood quite still.

Peter walked up the steps towards her.

“I’ve come back, Joan,” he said, as he drew near. “I want to talk to you... Come into the arbour.”

He took her arm clumsily and led her back into the arbour out of sight of the house. Then he dropped her arm.

“Joan,” he said, “I’ve been the damndest of fools... as you said.... I don’t know why.”...

He stood before her awkwardly. He was trembling violently. He thought he was going to weep.

He could not touch her again. He did not dare to touch her.

Then Joan spread out her arms straight and stood like a crucifix. Her face, which had been a dark stare, softened swiftly, became radiant, dissolved into a dusky glow of tears and triumph. “Oh! Petah my darling,” she sobbed, and seized him and kissed him with tearsalt lips and hugged him to herself.

The magic barrier was smashed at last. Peter held her close to him

and kissed her....

It was the second time they had kissed since those black days at High Cross school....

§ 23

Those were years of swift marryings, and Peter was a young married man when presently he was added to the number of that select company attached to sausage-shaped observation balloons who were sent up in the mornings and pulled down at nights along the British front. He had had only momentary snatches of matrimony before the front had called him back to its own destructive interests, but his experiences had banished any lingering vestiges of his theory that there is one sort of woman you respect and another sort you make love to. There was only one sort of woman to love or respect, and that was Joan. He was altogether in love with Joan, he was sure he had never been in love before, and he was now also extravagantly in love with life. He wanted to go on with it, with a passionate intensity. It seemed to him that it was not only beginning for him, but for every one. Hitherto Man had been living down there, down on those flats — for all the world is flat from the air.

Now, at last, men were beginning to feel how they might soar over all ancient limitations.

Occasionally he thought of such things up in his basket, sitting like a spectator in a box at a theatre, with the slow vast drama of the western front spread out like a map beneath his eyes, with half Belgium and a great circle of France in sight, the brown, ruined country on either side of No Man's Land, apparently lifeless, with its insane tangle of trenches and communicating ways below, with the crumbling heaps of ruined towns and villages scattered among canals and lakes of flood water, and passing insensibly into a green and normal-looking landscape to the west and east, where churches still had towers and houses roofs, and woods were lumps and blocks of dark green, fields manifestly cultivated patches, and roads white ribbons barred by the purple poplar shadows. But these spectacular and speculative phases were rare. They came only when a thin veil of

haze made the whole spacious prospect faint, so that beyond his more immediate circle Peter could see only the broad outlines of the land. Given worse conditions of the weather and he would be too uncomfortable for philosophy; given better and he would be too busy.

He sat on a canvas seat inside the square basket with his instruments about him, or leant over the side scrutinizing the details of the eastward landscape. Upon his head, over his ears, he wore a telephone receiver, and about his body was a rope harness that linked him by a rope to the silk parachute that was packed neatly in a little swinging bucket over the side of his basket. Under his hand was his map board, repeating the shapes of wood and water and road below. The telephone wire that ran down his mooring rope abolished any effect of isolation; it linked him directly to his winch on a lorry below, to a number of battery commanders, to an ascending series of headquarters; he could always start a conversation if he had anything practical to say. He was, in fact, an eye at the end of a tentacle thread, by means of which the British army watched its enemies. Sometimes he had an illusion that he was also a kind of brain. “When distant visibility was good he would find himself hovering over the war as a player hangs over a chess-board, directing fire upon road movements or train movements, suspecting and watching for undisclosed enemy batteries, or directing counter-battery fire. Above him, green and voluminous, hung the great translucent lobes of his gas bag, and the loose ropes by which it was towed and held upon the ground swayed and trailed about his basket.

It was on one of his more slack afternoons that Peter fell thinking of how acutely he now desired to live. The wide world was full of sunshine, but a ground haze made even the country immediately below him indistinct. The enemy gunners were inactive, there came no elfin voices through the telephone, only far away to the south guns butted and shivered the tranquil air. There was a faint drift in the air rather than a breeze, and the gas bag had fallen into a long, lazy rhythmic movement, so that sometimes he faced due south and sometimes south by east and so back. A great patch of flooded country to the north-east, a bright mirror with a kind of bloom upon it, seemed trying with an aimless persistency to work its way towards

the centre of his field of vision and never succeeding.

For a time Peter had been preoccupied with a distant ridge far away to the east, from which a long-range gun had recently taken to shelling the kite balloons towards evening as they became clear against the bright western sky. Four times lately this new gun had got on to him, and this clear and tranquil afternoon promised just the luminous and tranquil sunset that favoured these unpleasant activities. It was five hours to sunset yet, but Peter could not keep his mind off that gun. It was a big gun; perhaps a 42 centimetre; it was beyond any counter-battery possibility, and it had got a new kind of shell that the Germans seemed to have invented for the particular discomfort of Peter and his kind. It had a distinctive report, a loud crack, and then the "whuff" of high explosive, and at every explosion it got nearer and nearer to its target, with a quite uncanny certainty. It seemed to learn more than any gun should learn from each shot. It was this steadfast approach to a hit that Peter disliked. That and the long pause after the shell had started. Far away he would see the flash of the gun amidst the ridges in the darkling east. Then would come a long, blank pause of expectation. For all he could tell this might get him. Then the whine of the shell would become audible, growing louder and louder and lower and lower in note; Phee-whoo! *Crack*! *WHOOF*! Then Peter would get quite voluble to the men at the winch below. He could let himself up, or go down a few hundred feet, or they could shift his lorry along the road. Until it was dark he could not come down, for a kite balloon is a terribly visible and helpless thing on the ground until it has been very carefully put to bed. To come down in the daylight meant too good a chance for the nearer German guns. So Peter, by instructing his winch to lower him or let him up or shift, had to dodge about in a most undignified way, up and down and backwards and sideways, while the big gun marked him and guessed at his next position. Flash! "Oh, damn!" said Peter. "Another already!"

Silence. Anticipations. Then: Phee — eee — eee — whoo. *Crack*! *WHOOF*! A rush of air would set the gas bag swinging. That was a near one!

"Where am I?" said Peter.

But that wasn't going to happen for hours yet. Why meet trouble

half way? Why be tormented by this feeling of apprehension and danger in the still air? Why trouble because the world was quiet and seemed to be waiting? Why not think of something else? Banish this war from the mind.... Was he more afraid nowadays then he used to be? Peter was inclined to think that now he was more systematically afraid. Formerly he had funked in streaks and patches, but now he had a steady, continuous dislike to all these risks and dangers. He was getting more and more clearly an idea of the sort of life he wanted to lead and of the things he wanted to do. He was ceasing to think of existence as a rather aimless series of adventures, and coming to regard it as one large consecutive undertaking on the part of himself and Joan. This being hung up in the sky for Germans to shoot at seemed to him to be a very tiresome irrelevance indeed. He and Joan and everybody with brains — including the misguided people who had made and were now firing this big gun at him — ought to be setting to work to get this preposterous muddle of a world in order. "This sort of thing," said Peter, addressing the western front, his gas bag, and so much of the sky as it permitted him to see, and the universe generally, "is ridiculous. There is no sense in it at all. None whatever."

His dream of God, as a detached and aloof personage, had taken a very strong hold upon his imagination. Or, perhaps, it would be truer to say that his fevered mind in the hospital had given a caricature personality to ideas that had grown up in his mind as a natural consequence of his training. He had gone on with that argument; he went on with it now, with a feeling that really he was just as much sitting and talking in that queer, untidy, out-of-the way office as swaying in a kite balloon, six thousand feet above Flanders, waiting to be shot at.

"It is all very well to say 'exert yourself,'" said Peter. "But there is that chap over there exerting himself. And what he is doing with all his brains is just trying to wipe my brains out of existence. Just that. He hasn't an idea else of what he is doing. He has no notion of what he is up to or what I am up to. And he hasn't the sense or ability to come over here and talk about it to me. He's there — at that — and he can't help himself. And I'm here — and I can't help myself. But if I could only catch him within counter battery range!

“There’s no sense in it at all,” summarized Peter, after some moments of grim reflection. “Sense hasn’t got into it.”

“Is sense ever going to get into it?

“The curious thing about you,” said Peter, addressing himself quite directly to his Deity at the desk, “is that somehow, without ever positively promising it or saying anything plain and definite about it, you yet manage to convey in an almost irresistible manner, that there is going to be sense in it. You seem to suggest that my poor brain up here and the brains of those chaps over there, are, in spite of all appearance to the contrary, up to something jointly that is going to come together and make good some day. You hint it. And yet I don’t get a scrap of sound, trustworthy reasoning to help me to accept that; not a scrap. Why should it be so? I ask, and you just keep on not saying anything. I suppose it’s a necessary thing, biologically, that one should have a kind of optimism to keep one alive, so I’m not even justified in my half conviction that I’m not being absolutely fooled by life....

“I admit that taking for example Joan, there is something about Joan that almost persuades me there must be something absolutely right about things — for Joan to happen at all. Yet isn’t that again just another biologically necessary delusion?... There you sit silent. You seem to say nothing, and yet you soak me with a kind of answer, a sort of shapeless courage....”

Peter’s mind rested on that for a time, and then began again at another point.

“I wonder,” said Peter, “if that chap gets me tonight, what I shall think — in the moment — after he has got me....”

§ 24

But the German gunner never got Peter, because something else got him first.

He thought he saw a Hun aeroplane coming over very high indeed to the south of him, fifteen thousand feet up or more, a mere speck in the blue blaze, and then the gas bag hid it and he dismissed it from his mind. He was thinking that the air was growing clearer, and that

if this went on guns would wake up presently and little voices begin to talk to him, when he became aware of the presence and vibration of an aeroplane quite close to him. He pulled off his telephone receivers and heard the roar of an engine close at hand. It was overhead, and the gas bag still hid it. At the same moment the British anti-aircraft gunners began a belated fire. “Damn!” said Peter in a brisk perspiration, and hastened to make sure that his parachute rope was clear.

“Perhaps he’s British,” said Peter, with no real hope.

“*Pap, pap, pap*!” very loud overhead.

The gas bag swayed and billowed, and a wing with a black cross swept across the sky. “*Pap, pap, pap*.”

The gas bag wrinkled and crumpled more and more, and a little streak of smoke appeared beyond its edge. The German aeroplane was now visible, a hundred yards away, and banking to come round. He had fired the balloon with tracer bullets.

The thing that Peter had to do and what he did was this. He had to step up on to a little wood step inside his basket. Then he had to put first one foot and then the other on to another little step outside his basket. This little step was about four inches wide by nine long. Below it was six thousand feet of emptiness, above the little trees and houses below. As he swayed on the step Peter had to make sure that the rope attached to his body was clear of all entanglements. Then he had to step off that little shelf, which was now swinging and slanting with the lurching basket to which it was attached, into the void, six thousand feet above the earth.

He had not to throw himself or dive headlong, because that might lead to entanglement with the rope. He had just to step off into pellucid nothingness, holding his rope clear of himself with one hand. This rope looped back to the little swinging bucket in which his fine silk parachute was closely packed. He had seen it packed a week ago, and he wished now, as he stood on his step holding to his basket with one hand, that he had watched the process more meticulously. He became aware that the Hun, having disposed of the balloon, was now shooting at him. He did not so much step off the little shelf as slip off as it heeled over with the swing of the basket. The first instants of a leap or fall make no impression on the mind.

For some seconds he was falling swiftly, feet foremost, through the air. He scarcely noted the faint snatch when the twine, which held his parachute in its basket, broke. Then his consciousness began to register again. He kept his feet tightly pressed together. The air whistled by him, but he thought that dreams and talk had much exaggerated the sensations of falling. He was too high as yet to feel the rush of the ground towards him.

He seemed to fall for an interminable time before anything more happened. He was assailed by doubts — whether the twine that kept the parachute in its bucket would break, whether it would open. His rope trailed out above him.

Still falling. Why didn't the parachute open? In another ten seconds it would be too late.

The parachute was not opening. It was certainly not opening. Wrong packing? He tugged and jerked his rope, and tried to shake and swing the long silken folds that were following his fall. Why? Why the devil?

The rope seemed to tighten abruptly. The harness tightened upon his body. Peter gasped, sprawled and had the sensation of being hauled up back again into the sky....

It was all right, so far. He was now swaying down earthward with a diminishing velocity beneath an open parachute. He was floating over the landscape instead of falling straight into it.

But the German had not done with Peter yet. He became visible beneath the edge of Peter's parachute, circling downward regardless of anti-aircraft and machine-guns. "*Pap, pap, pap, pap.*" The bullets burst and banged about Peter.

Something kicked Peter's knee; something hit his neck; something rapped the knuckles of his wounded hand; the parachute winced and went sideways, slashed and pierced. Peter drifted down faster, helpless, his angry eyes upon his assailant, who vanished again, going out of sight as he rose up above the edge of the parachute.

A storm of pain and rage broke from Peter.

"Done in!" shouted Peter. "Oh! my leg! my leg!

"I'm shot to bits. I'm shot to bloody bits!"

The tree tops were near at hand. The parachute had acquired a

rhythmic swing and was falling more rapidly.

"And I've still got to land," wailed Peter, beginning to cry like a child.

He wanted to stop just a moment, just for one little moment, before the ground rushed up to meet him. He wanted time to think. He didn't know what to do with this dangling leg. It became a monstrous, painful obstacle to landing. How was he to get a spring? He was bleeding. He was dying. It was cruel. Cruel.

Came the crash. Hot irons, it seemed, assailed his leg and his shoulder and neck. He crumpled up on the ground in an agony, and the parachute, with slow and elegant gestures, folded down on the top of his floundering figure....

The gunners who ran to help him found him, enveloped in silk, bawling and weeping like a child of four in a passion of rage and fear, and trying repeatedly to stand up upon a blood-streaked leg that gave way as repeatedly. "Damn!" cursed Peter in a stifled voice, plunging about like a kitten in a sack. "Damn you all! I tell you I *will* use my leg. I will have my leg. If I bleed to death. Oh! Oh!... You fool — you lying old *humbug*! You!"

And then he gave a leap upward and forward, and fainted and fell, and lay still, with his head and body muffled in the silk folds of his parachute.

CHAPTER XIV. — OSWALD'S VALEDICTION

§ 1

IT was the third of April in 1918, the Wednesday after Easter, and the war had now lasted three years and eight months. It had become the aching habit of the whole world. Throughout the winter it had been for the most part a great and terrible boredom, but now a phase of acute anxiety was beginning. The "Kaiser's Battle" was raging in France; news came through sparingly; but it was known that General Gough had lost tens of thousands of prisoners, hundreds of guns, and vast stores of ammunition and railway material. It was rumoured that he had committed suicide. But the standards of Tory England differ from those of Japan. Through ten sanguinary days, in a vaster Inkerman, the common men of Britain, reinforced by the French, had fought and died to restore the imperilled line. It was by no means certain yet that they had succeeded. It seemed possible that the French and British armies would be broken apart, and Amiens and Paris lost. Oswald's mind was still dark with apprehension.

The particular anxieties of this crisis accentuated the general worry and inconveniences of the time, and deepened Oswald's conviction of an incredible incompetence in both the political and military leadership of his country. In spite of every reason he had to the contrary, he had continued hitherto to hope for some bright dramatic change in the course of events; he had experienced a continually recurring disappointment with each morning's paper. His intelligence told him that all the inefficiency, the confusion, the cheap and bad government by press and intrigue, were the necessary and inevitable consequences of a neglect of higher education for the past fifty years; these defects were now in the nature of things, almost as much as the bleakness of an English February or the fogs of a London November, but his English temperament had refused hitherto to accept the decision of his intelligence. Now for the first time he could see the possibility of an ultimate failure in the war. To this low level of achievement, he perceived, a steadfast contempt for

thought and science and organization had brought Britain; at this low level Britain had now to struggle through the war, blundering, talking, and thinking confusedly, suffering enormously — albeit so sound at heart. It was a humiliating realization. At any rate she could still hope to struggle through; the hard-won elementary education of the common people, the stout heart and sense of the common people, saved her gentlefolk from the fate of their brother inefficients in Russia. But every day he fretted afresh at the costly and toilsome continuance of an effort that a little more courage and wisdom in high places on the allied side, a little more knowledge and clear thinking, might have brought to an entirely satisfactory close in 1917.

For a man of his age, wounded, disappointed, and a chronic invalid, there was considerable affliction in the steadily increasing hardships of the Fourth Year. A number of petty deprivations at which a healthy man might have scoffed, intensified his physical discomfort. There had been a complete restriction of his supply of petrol, the automobile now hung in its shed with its tyres removed, and the railway service to London had been greatly reduced. He could not get up to London now to consult books or vary his moods without a slow and crowded and fatiguing journey; he was more and more confined to Pelham Ford. He had been used to read and work late into the night, but now his home was darkened in the evening and very cheerless; there was no carbide for the acetylene installation, and a need for economy in paraffin. For a time he had been out of coal, and unable to get much wood because of local difficulties about cartage, and for some weeks he had had to sit in his overcoat and read and write by candlelight. Now, however, that distress had been relieved by the belated delivery of a truckload of coal. And another matter that may seem trivial in history, was by no means trivial in relation to his moods. In the spring of 1918 the food supply of Great Britain was at its lowest point. Lord Rhondda was saving the situation at the eleventh hour. The rationing of meat had affected Oswald's health disagreeably. He had long ago acquired the habit of living upon chops and cutlets and suchlike concentrated nourishment, and he found it difficult to adapt himself now to the bulky insipidity of a diet that was, for a time, almost entirely

vegetarian. For even fish travels by long routes to Hertfordshire villages. The frequent air raids of that winter were also an added nervous irritation. In the preceding years of the war there had been occasional Zeppelin raids, the Zeppelins had been audible at Pelham Ford on several occasions and once Hertford had suffered from their bombs; but those expeditions had ended at last in a series of disasters to the invaders, and they had never involved the uproar and tension of the Gotha raids that began in the latter half of 1917. These latter raids had to be met by an immense barrage of anti-aircraft guns round London, a barrage which rattled every window at Pelham Ford, lit the sky with star shells, and continued intermittently sometimes for four or five hours. Oswald would lie awake throughout that thudding conflict, watching the distant star shells and searchlights through the black tree boughs outside his open window, and meditating drearily upon the manifest insanity of mankind....

He was now walking up and down his lawn, waiting until it should be time to start for the station with Joan to meet Peter.

For Peter, convalescent again and no longer fit for any form of active service — he was lamed now as well as winged — was to take up a minor administrative post next week at Adastral House, and he was coming down for a few days at Pelham Ford before carrying his wife off for good to a little service flat they had found in an adapted house in the Avenue Road. They had decided not to live at The Ingle-Nook, although Arthur had built it to become Peter's home, but to continue the tenancy of Aunts Phyllis and Phoebe. They did not want to disturb those two ladies, whose nervous systems, by no means stable at the best of times, were now in a very shaken condition. Aunt Phyllis was kept busy restraining Aunt Phoebe from inflicting lengthy but obscure prophetic messages upon most of the prominent people of the time. To these daily activities Aunt Phoebe added an increasing habit of sleep-walking that broke the nightly peace of Aunt Phyllis. She would wander through the moonlit living rooms gesticulating strangely, and uttering such phrases as "Blood! Blood! Seas of blood! The multitudinous seas incarnadine"; or "Murder most foul!"

She had a fixed idea that it was her business to seek out the Kaiser and either scold him or kill him — or perhaps do both. She held that

it was the duty of women to assassinate. Men might fight battles, it was their stupid way; but surely women were capable of directer things. If some woman were to kill any man who declared war directly he declared war, there would be a speedy end to war. She could not, she said, understand the inactivity of German wives and mothers. She would spend hours over her old school German grammar, with a view to writing an "Open Letter to German Womankind." But her naturally rich and very allusive prose was ill adapted to that sort of translation.

Many over-sensitive people were suffering more or less as Aunt Phoebe was suffering — from a sense of cruelty, wickedness, and disaster that staggered their minds. They had lived securely in a secure world; they could not readjust. Even for so sane a mind as Oswald's, hampered as it was by the new poison his recent wound had brought info his blood, readjustment was difficult. He suffered greatly from insomnia, and from a haunting apprehension of misfortunes. His damaged knee would give him bouts of acute distress. Sometimes it would seem to be well and he would forget it. Then it would become painfully lame by day and a neuralgic pain at night. His moods seemed always exaggerated now; either he was too angry or too sorrowful or too hopeful. Sometimes he experienced phases of blank stupidity, when his mind became unaccountably sluggish and clumsy....

Joan was indoors now packing up a boxful of books that were to go with her to the new home.

He was feeling acutely — more acutely than he wanted to feel — that his guardianship was at an end. Joan, who had been the mistress of his house, and the voice that sang in it, the pretty plant that grew in it, was going now — to return, perhaps, sometimes as a visitor — but never more to be a part of it; never more to be its habitual presence. Peter, too, was severing the rope, a long rope it had seemed at times during the last three years, that had tethered him to Pelham Ford....

Oswald did not want to think now of his coming loneliness. What he wanted to think about was the necessity of rounding off their relationship properly, of ending his educational task with some sort of account rendered. He felt he owed it to these young people and to

himself to tell them of his aims and of what he considered the whole of this business of education amounted to. He had to explain what had helped and what had prevented him. “A Valediction,” he said. “A Valediction.” But he could not plan out what he had to say that morning. He could not arrange his heads, and all the while that he tried to fix his thoughts upon these topics, he was filled with uncontrollable self-pity for the solitude ahead of him.

He was ashamed at these personal distresses that he could not control. He disliked himself for their quality. He did not like to think he was thinking the thoughts in his mind. He walked up and down the lawn for a time like a man who is being pestered by uncongenial solicitations.

In spite of his intense affection for both of them, he was feeling a real jealousy of the happiness of these two young lovers. He hated the thought of losing Joan much more than he hated the loss of Peter. Once upon a time he had loved Peter far more than Joan, but by imperceptible degrees his affection had turned over to her. In these war years he and she had been very much together. For a time he had been — it was grotesque, but true — actually in love with her. He had let himself dream — . It was preposterous to think of it. A moonlight night had made his brain swim.... At any rate, thank Heaven! she had never had a suspicion....

She’d come now as a visitor — perhaps quite often. He wasn’t going to lose his Joan altogether. But each time she would come changed, rather less his Joan and rather more a new Joan — Peter’s Joan.

Some day they’d have children, these two. Joan would sit over her child and smile down at it. He knew exactly how she would smile. And at the thought of that smile Joan gave place to Dolly. Out of the past there jumped upon him the memory of Peter bubbling in a cradle on the sunny verandah of The Ingle-Nook, and how he had remarked that the very sunshine seemed made for this fortunate young man.

“It was made for him,” Dolly had said, with that faintly mischievous smile of hers.

How far off that seemed now, and how vivid still! He could remember Dolly’s shadow on the roughcast wail, and the very things he had said in reply. He had talked like a fool about the wonderful

future of Peter — and of the world. How long was that ago? Five-and-twenty years? (Yes, Peter would be five-and-twenty in June.) How safe and secure the European world had seemed then! It seemed to be loitering, lazily and basely indeed, but certainly, towards a sort of materialist's millennium. And what a vast sham its security had been! He had called Peter the "Heir of the Ages." And the Heritage of the Ages had been preparing even then to take Peter away from the work he had chosen and from all the sunshine and leisure of his life and to splinter his shoulder-blade, smash his wrist, snap his leg-bones with machine-gun bullets, and fling him aside, a hobbling, stiff, broken young man to limp through the rest of life....

§ 2

That was what his mind had to lay hold of, that was what he had to talk about, this process that had held out such fair hopes for Peter and had in the end crippled him and come near to killing him and wasting him altogether. He had to talk of that, of an enormous collapse and breach of faith with the young. The world which had seemed to be the glowing promise of an unprecedented education and upbringing for Peter and his generation, the world that had been, so to speak, joint guardian with himself, had defaulted. This war was an outrage by the senior things in the world upon all the hope of the future; it was the parent sending his sons through the fires to Moloch, it was the guardian gone mad, it was the lapse of all educational responsibility.

He had to keep his grasp upon that idea. By holding to that he could get away from his morbidly intense wish to be personal and intimate with these two. He loved them and they loved him, but what he wanted to say was something quite beyond that.

What he had to talk about was Education, and Education alone. He had to point out to them that their own education had been truncated, was rough ended and partial. He had to explain why that was so. And he had to show that all this vast disaster to the world was no more and no less than an educational failure. The churches and teachers and political forms had been insufficient and wrong;

they had failed to establish ideas strong and complete enough and right enough to hold the wills of men. Necessarily he had to make a dissertation upon the war. To talk of life now was to talk of the war. The war now was human life. It had eaten up all free and independent living.

The war was an educational breakdown, that was his point; and in education lay whatever hope there was for mankind. He had to say that to them, and he had to point out how that idea must determine the form of their lives. He had to show the political and social and moral conclusions involved in it. And he had to say what he wanted to say in a large manner. *He had to keep his temper while he said it.*

Oswald, limping slowly up and down his lawn in the April sunshine, with a gnawing pain at his knee, had to underline, as it were, that last proviso in his thoughts. That was the extreme difficulty of these urgent and tragic times. The world was in a phase of intense, but swift, tumultuous, and distracting tragedy. The millions were not suffering and dying in stateliness and splendour but in a vast uproar, amidst mud, confusion, bickering, and incoherence indescribable. While it was manifest that only great thinking, only very clear and deliberate thinking, could give even the forms of action that would arrest the conflagration, it was nevertheless almost impossible for any one anywhere to think clearly and deliberately, so universal and various were the compulsions, confusions, and distresses of the time. And even the effect to see and state the issue largely, fevered Oswald's brain. He grew angry with the multitudinous things that robbed him of his serenity.

"Education," he said, as if he called for help; "education."

And then, collapsing into wrath: "A land of uneducated blockheads!"

No! It was not one of his good mornings. In a little while his steps had quickened and his face had flushed. His hands clenched in his pockets. "A universal dullness of mind," he whispered. "Obstinacy.... Inadaptability.... Unintelligent opposition."

Broad generalizations slipped out of his mind. He began to turn over one disastrous instance after another of the shortness of mental range, the unimaginative stupidity, the baseness and tortuousness of method, the dull suspicions, class jealousies, and foolish conceits that

had crippled Britain through three and a half bitter years. With a vast fleet, with enormous armies, with limitless wealth, with the loyal enthusiasm behind them of a united people and with great allies, British admirals and generals had never once achieved any great or brilliant success, British statesmen had never once grasped and held the fluctuating situation. One huge disappointment had followed another; now at Gallipoli, now at Kut, now in the air and now beneath the seas, the British had seen their strength ill applied and their fair hopes of victory waste away. No Nelson had arisen to save the country, no Wellington; no Nelson nor Wellington could have arisen; the country had not even found an alternative to Mr. Lloyd George. In military and naval as in social and political affairs the Anglican ideal had been — to blockade. On sea and land, as in Ireland, as in India, Anglicanism was not leading but obstruction. Throughout 1917 the Allied armies upon the Western front had predominated over the German as greatly as the British fleet had predominated at sea, and the result on either element had been stagnation. The cavalry coterie who ruled upon land had demonstrated triumphantly their incapacity to seize even so great an opportunity as the surprise of the tanks afforded them; the Admiralty had left the Baltic to the Germans until, after the loss of Riga, poor Kerensky's staggering government had collapsed. British diplomacy had completed what British naval quiescence began; in Russia as in Greece it had existed only to blunder; never had a just cause been so mishandled; and before the end of 1917 the Russian debacle had been achieved and the German armies, reinforced by the troops the Russian failure had released, began to concentrate for this last great effort that was now in progress in the west. Like many another anxious and distressed Englishman during those darker days of the German spring offensive in 1918, Oswald went about clinging to one comfort: "Our men are tough stuff. Our men at any rate will stick it."

In Oswald's mind there rankled a number of special cases which he called his "sores." To think of them made him angry and desperate, and yet he could scarcely ever think of education without reviving the irritation of these particular instances. They were his foreground; they blocked his vistas, and got between him and the general prospect of the world. For instance, there had been a failure

to supply mosquito curtains in the East African hospitals, and a number of slightly wounded men had contracted fever and died. This fact had linked on to the rejection of the services he had offered at the outset of the war, and became a festering centre in his memory. Those mosquito curtains blew into every discussion. Moreover there had been, he believed, much delay and inefficiency in the use of African native labour in France, and a lack of proper organization for the special needs of the sick and injured among these tropic-bred men. And a shipload had been sunk in a collision off the Isle of Wight. He had got an irrational persuasion into his head that this collision could have been prevented. After his wound had driven him back to Pelham Ford he would limp about the garden thinking of his "boys" shivering in the wet of a French winter and dying on straw in cold cattle trucks, or struggling and drowning in the grey channel water, and he would fret and swear. "Hugger mugger," he would say, "hugger mugger! No care. No foresight.

No proper grasp of the problem. And so death and torment for the men."

While still so painful and feverish he had developed a new distress for himself by taking up the advocacy of certain novelties and devices that he became more and more convinced were of vital importance upon the Western front. He entangled himself in correspondence, interviews, committees, and complicated quarrels in connection with these ideas.... He would prowl about his garden, a baffled man, trying to invent some way of breaking through the system of entanglements that held back British inventiveness from the service of Great Britain. More and more clearly did his reason assure him that no sudden blow can set aside the deep-rooted traditions, the careless, aimless education of a negligent century, but none the less he raged at individuals, at ministries, at coteries and classes.

His peculiar objection to the heads of the regular army, for example, was unjust, for much the same unimaginative resistance was evident in every branch of the public activities of Great Britain. Already in 1915 the very halfpenny journalists were pointing out the necessity of a great air offensive for the allies, were showing that in the matter of the possible supply of good air fighters the Germans

were altogether inferior to their antagonists and that consequently they would be more and more at a disadvantage in the air as the air warfare was pressed. But the British mind was trained, so far that is as one can speak of it as being trained at all, to dread "over-pressure." The western allies having won a certain ascendancy in the air in 1916 became so self-satisfied that the Germans, in spite of their disadvantages, were able to recover a kind of equality in 1917, and in the spring of 1918 the British, with their leeway recovered, were going easily in matters aerial, and the opinion that a great air offensive might yet end the war was regarded as the sign of a froward and revolutionary spirit.

The sea war had a parallel history. Long before 1914 Dr. Conan Doyle had written a story to illustrate the dangers of an unrestricted submarine attack, but no precaution whatever against such a possibility seemed to have been undertaken by the British Admiralty before the war at all; Great Britain was practically destitute of sea mines in the October of 1914, and even in the spring of 1918, after more than a year and a half of hostile submarine activity, after the British had lost millions of tons of shipping, after the people were on short commons and becoming very anxious about rations, the really very narrow channel of the North Sea — rarely is it more than three hundred miles wide — which was the only way out the Germans possessed, was still unfenced against the coming and going of these most vulnerable pests.

It is hard not to blame individual men and groups when the affairs of a nation go badly. It is so much easier to change men than systems. The former satisfies every instinct in the fierce, suspicious hearts of men, the latter demands the bleakest of intellectual efforts. The former justifies the healthy, wholesome relief of rioting; the latter necessitates self-control. The country was at sixes and sevens because its education by school and college, by book and speech and newspaper, was confused and superficial and incomplete, and its education was confused and superficial and incomplete because its institutions were a patched-up system of traditions, compromises, and interests, devoid of any clear and single guiding idea of a national purpose. The only wrongs that really matter to mankind are the undramatic general wrongs; but the only wrongs that appeal to

the uneducated imagination are individual wrongs. It is so much more congenial to the ape in us to say that if Mr. Asquith hadn't been lazy or Mr. Lloyd George disingenuous! Then out with the halter — and don't bother about yourself. As though the worst of individuals can be anything more than the indicating pustule of a systemic malaise. For his own part Oswald was always reviling schoolmasters, as though they, alone among men, had the power to rise triumphant over all their circumstances — and wouldn't. He had long since forgotten Mr. Mackinder's apology.

He limped and fretted to and fro across the lawn in his struggle to get out of his jungle of wrathful thoughts, about drowned negroes and rejected inventions, and about the Baltic failure and about Gough of the Curragh and St. Quentin, to general and permanent things.

"Education," he said aloud, struggling against his obsessions. "Education! I have to tell them what it ought to be, how it is more or less the task of every man, how it can unify the world, how it can save mankind...."

And then after a little pause, with an apparent complete irrelevance, "*Damn* Aunt Charlotte!"

§ 4

Nowadays quite little things would suddenly assume a tremendous and devastating importance to Oswald. In his pocket, not folded but crumpled up, was an insulting letter from Lady Charlotte Sydenham, and the thought of it was rankling bitterly in his mind.

The days were long past when he could think of the old lady as of something antediluvian in quality, a queer ungainly megatherium floundering about in a new age from which her kind would presently vanish altogether. He was beginning to doubt more and more about her imminent disappearance. She had greater powers of survival than he had supposed; he was beginning to think that she might outlive him; there was much more of her in England than he had ever suspected. All through the war she, or a voice indistinguishable from hers, had bawled unchastened in the *Morning Post*; on many occasions he had seemed to see her hard blue eye and bristling

whisker glaring at him through a kind of translucency in the sheets of the *Times*; once or twice in France he had recognized her, or something very like her, in red tabs and gilt lace, at G.H.Q. These were sick fancies no doubt; mere fantastic intimations of the stout resistances the Anglican culture could still offer before it loosened its cramping grip upon the future of England and the world, evidence rather of his own hypersensitized condition than of any perennial quality in her.

The old lady had played a valiant part in the early stages of the war. She had interested herself in the persecution of all Germans not related to royalty, who chanced to be in the country; and had even employed private detectives in one or two cases that had come under her notice. She had been forced most unjustly to defend a libel case brought by a butcher named Sterne, whom she had denounced as of German origin and a probable poisoner of the community, in the very laudable belief that his name was spelt Stern. She felt that his indubitable British ancestry and honesty only enhanced the deception and made the whole thing more alarming, but the jury, being no doubt tainted with pacifism, thought, or pretended to think, otherwise. She had had a reconciliation with her old antagonists the Pankhurst section of the suffragettes, and she had paid twenty annual subscriptions to their loyal and outspoken publication Britannia, directing twelve copies to be sent to suitable recipients — Oswald was one of the favoured ones — and herself receiving and blue-pencilling the remaining eight before despatching them to such public characters as she believed would be most beneficially cowed or instructed by the articles she had marked. She also subscribed liberally to the British Empire Union, an organization so patriotic that it extended its hostility to Russians, Americans, Irishmen, neutrals, President Wilson, the League of Nations, and similar infringements of the importance and dignity of Lady Charlotte and her kind. She remained at Chastlands, where she had laid in an ample store of provisions quite early in the war — two sacks of mouldy flour and a side of bacon in an advanced state of decomposition had been buried at night by Cashel — all through the Zeppelin raids; and she played a prominent rather than a pacifying part in the Red Cross politics of that part of Surrey. She induced several rich Jewesses of

Swiss, Dutch, German or Austrian origin to relieve the movement of their names and, what was still better, of the frequently quite offensively large subscriptions with which they overshadowed those who had the right to lead in such matters. She lectured also in the National Economy campaign on several occasions — for like most thoughtful women of her class and type, she was deeply shocked by the stories she had heard of extravagance among our over-paid munition workers. After a time the extraordinary meanness of the authorities in restricting her petrol obliged her in self-respect to throw up this branch of her public work. She was in London during one of the early Gotha raids, but she conceived such a disgust at the cowardice of the lower classes on this occasion that she left town the next day and would not return thither.

The increasing scarcity of petrol and the onset of food rationing, which threatened to spread all over England, drove her to Ulster — in spite of the submarine danger that might have deterred a less stout-hearted woman. She took a small furnished house in a congenial district, and found herself one of a little circle of ultra-patriotic refugees, driven like herself from England by un-English restrictions upon the nourishment of the upper classes and the spread of the pacifist tendencies of Lord Lansdowne. "If the cowards must make peace," said Lady Charlotte, "at least give me leave to be put of it."

Considering everything, Ulster was at that time as comfortably and honourably out of the war as any part of the world, and all that seemed needed to keep it safely out to the end was a little tactful firmness in the Dublin Convention. There was plenty of everything in the loyal province at that time — men, meat, butter, Dublin stout, and self-righteousness; and Lady Charlotte expanded again like a flower in the sun. She reverted to driving in a carriage; it was nice to sit once more behind a stout able-bodied coachman with a cockade, with a perfect excuse for neutrality, and she still did her best for old England from eleven to one and often from five to six by writing letters and dabbling in organization. Oswald she kept in mind continually. Almost daily he would get newspaper cuttings from her detailing Sinn Fein outrages, or blue-marked leading articles agitating for a larger share of the munition industries for Belfast, or good hot stuff, deeply underlined, from the speeches of Sir Edward

Carson. One dastardly Sinn Feiner, Oswald learnt, had even starved himself to death in gaol, a most unnatural offence to Lady Charlotte. She warmed up tremendously over the insidious attempts of the Prime Minister and a section of the press to get all the armies in France and Italy under one supreme generalissimo and end the dislocated muddling that had so long prolonged the war. It was a change that might have involved the replacement of regular generals by competent ones, and it imperilled everything that was most dear to the old lady's heart.

It was *"an insult to the King's uniform,"* she wrote. *"A revolution. I knew that this sort of thing would begin if we let those Americans come in. We ought not to have let them come in. What good are they to us? What can they know of war? A crowd of ignorant republican renegades! British generals to be criticized and their prospects injured by French Roman Catholics and Atheists and chewing, expectorating Yankees and every sort of low foreigner. What is the world coming to? Sir Douglas Haig has been exactly where he is for two years. Surely he knows the ground better than any one else can possibly do."*

Once the theme of Lady Charlotte got loose in Oswald's poor old brain, it began a special worry of its own. He found his mind struggling with assertions and arguments. As this involved trying to remember exactly what she had said in this letter of hers, and as it was in his pocket, he presently chose the lesser of two evils and took it out to read over: —

"I suppose you have read in the papers what is happening in Clare. The people are ploughing up grass-land. It is as bad as that man Prothero. They raid gentlemen's houses to seize arms; they resist the police. That man Devil-era — so I must call him — speaks openly of a republic. Devil-era and Devil-in; is it a coincidence merely? All this comes of our ill-timed leniency after the Dublin rebellion. When will England learn the lesson Cromwell taught her? He was a wicked man, he made one great mistake for which he is no doubt answering to his Maker throughout all eternity, but he certainly did know how to manage these Irish. If he could come back now he would be on our side. He would have had his lesson. Your Bolshevik friends go on murdering and cutting throats, I see, like

true Republicans. Happily the White Guards seem getting the upper hand in Finland. In the end I suppose we shall be driven to a peace with the Huns as the worst of two evils. If we do, it will only be your Bolsheviks and pacifists and strikers and Bolos who will be to blame.

"The whining and cowardice of the East Enders disgusts me more and more. You read, I suppose, the account of the disgraceful panic during the air raid the other day in the East End, due entirely to foreigners of military age, mostly, no doubt, your Russian Bolsheviks. I am well away from such a rabble. I suffer from rheumatism here. I know it is rheumatism; what you say about gout is nonsense. In spite of its loyalty Ulster is damp. I pine more and more for the sun and warmth of Italy. Unwin must needs make herself very tiresome and peevish nowadays. These are not cheerful times for me. But one must do one's bit for one's country, I suppose, unworthy though it be.

"So Mr. Peter is back in England again wounded after his flying about in the air. I suppose he is tasting the delights of matrimony, such as they are! What an affair! Something told me long ago that it would happen. I tried to separate them. My instincts warned me, and my instincts were right. Breed is breed, and the servant strain came out in her. You can't say I didn't warn you. Why you let them marry I cannot imagine!!! I am sure the young lady could have dispensed with that ceremony!!!! I still think at times of that queer scene I passed on the road when I came to Pelham Ford that Christmas. A second string, — no doubt of it. But Peter was her great chance, of course, thanks to your folly. Well, let us hope that in the modern way they won't have any children, for nothing is more certain than that these inter-breeding marriages are most harmful, and whether we like it or not you have to remember they are first cousins, if not in the sight of the law at any rate in the sight of God, which is what matters in this respect. Mr. Grimes, who has studied these things in his leisure time, tells me that there is a very great probability indeed that any child will be blind or malformed or consumptive, let us hope the latter, if not actually still-born, which, of course, would be the best thing that could possibly happen...."

§ 5

At this point Oswald became aware of Joan coming out of the house towards him.

He looked at his watch. “Much too early yet, Joan,” he said.

“Yes, but I want to be meeting him,” said Mrs. Joan....

So they walked down to the station and waited for a long time on the platform. And Joan said very little to Oswald because she was musing pleasantly.

When the train came in neither Joan nor Peter took much notice of Oswald after the first greeting. I do not see what else he could have expected; they were deeply in love and they had been apart for a couple of weeks, they were excited by each other and engrossed in each other. Oswald walked beside them up the road — apart. “I’ve got some work,” he said abruptly in the hall. “See you at lunch,” and went into his study and shut the door upon them, absurdly disappointed.

§ 6

Peter came on Wednesday. It was not until Friday that Oswald found an opportunity to deliver his valediction. But he had rehearsed it, or rather he had been rehearsing experimental fragments of it for most of the night before. On Thursday night the cloudy malaise of his mind broke and cleared. Things fell into their proper places in his thoughts, and he could feel that his ideas were no longer distorted and confused. The valediction appeared, an ordered discourse. If only he could hold out through a long talk he felt he would be able to make himself plain to them....

He lay in the darkness putting together phrase after phrase, sentence after sentence, developing a long and elaborate argument, dipping down into parentheses, throwing off footnotes, resuming his text. For the most part Joan and Peter remained silent hearers of this discourse; now his ratiocination glowed so brightly that they were almost forgotten, now they came into the discussion, they assisted, they said helpful and understanding things, they raised simple and

obvious objections that were beautifully overcome.

"What is education up to?" he would begin. "What is education?"

Then came a sentence that he repeated in the stillness of his mind quite a number of times. "Consider this beast we are, this thing man!" He did not reckon with Peter's tendency to prompt replies.

He would begin in the broadest, most elementary way. "Consider this beast we are, this thing man!" so he framed his opening: "a creature restlessly experimental, mischievous and destructive, as sexual as a monkey, and with no really strong social instincts, no such tolerance of his fellows as a deer has, no such instinctive self-devotion as you find in a bee or an ant. A solitary animal, a selfish animal. And yet this creature has now made for itself such conditions that it must be social. Must be. Or destroy itself. Continually it invents fresh means by which man may get at man to injure him or help him. That is one view of the creature, Peter, from your biological end." Here Peter was to nod, and remain attentively awaiting the next development. "And at the same time, there grows upon us all a sense of a common being and a common interest. Biologically separate, we unify spiritually. More and more do men feel, 'I am not for myself! There is something in me — that belongs to a greater being than myself — of which I am a part.'... I won't philosophize. I won't say which may be in the nature of cause and which of effect here. You can put what I have said in a dozen different ways. We may say, 'The individual must live in the species and find his happiness there' — that is — Biologese. *Our* language, Peter. Or we can quote, 'I am the True Vine and ye are the Branches.'" Oswald's mind rested on that for a time. "That is not *our* language, Peter, but it is the same idea. Essentially it is the same idea. Or we can talk of the 'One and the Many.' We can say we all live in the mercy of Allah, or if you are a liberal Jew that we are all a part of Israel. It seems to me that all these formulas are so much spluttering and variation over one idea. Doesn't it to you? Men can quarrel mortally even upon the question of how they shall say 'Brotherhood.'..." Here for a time Oswald's mind paused.

He embarked upon a great and wonderful parenthesis upon religious intolerance in which at last he lost himself completely.

"I don't see that men need fall out about religion," was his main

proposition.

“There was a time when I was against all religions. I denounced priestcraft and superstition and so on.... That is past. That is past. I want peace in the world.... Men’s minds differ more about initial things than they do about final things. Some men think in images, others in words and abstract ideas — but yet the two sorts can think out the same practical conclusions. A lot of these chapels and churches only mean a difference in language.... Difference in dialect.... Often they don’t mean the same things, those religious people, by the same words, but often contrariwise they mean the same things by quite different words. The deaf man says the dawn is bright and red, and the blind man says it is a sound of birds. It is the same dawn. The same dawn.... One man says ‘God’ and thinks of a person who is as much of a person as Joan is, and another says ‘God’ and thinks of an idea more abstract than the square root of minus one. That’s a tangle in the primaries of thought and not a difference in practical intention. One can argue about such things for ever.... One can make a puzzle with a bit of wire that will bother and exasperate people for hours. Is it any wonder, then, if stating what is at the root of life bothers and exasperates people?...

“Personally, I should say now that all religions are right, and none of them very happy in the words and symbols they choose. And none of them are calm enough — not calm enough. Not peaceful enough. They are all floundering about with symbols and metaphors, and it is a pity they will not admit it.... Why will people never admit their intellectual limitations in these matters?... All the great religions have this in common, this idea is common; they profess to teach the universal brotherhood of man and the universal reign of justice. Why argue about phrases? Why not put it in this fashion?”...

For a long time Oswald argued about phrases before he could get back to the main thread of his argument....

“Men have to be unified. They are driven to seek Unity. And they are still with the individualized instincts of a savage.... See then what education always has to be! The process of taking this imperfectly social, jealous, deeply savage creature and socializing him. The development of education and the development of human societies are one and the same thing. Education makes the social man. So far

as schooling goes, it is quite plainly that. You teach your solitary beast to read and write, you teach him to express himself by drawing, you teach him other languages perhaps, and something of history and the distribution of mankind. What is it all but making this creature who would naturally possess only the fierce, narrow sociability of a savage family in a cave, into a citizen in a greater community? That is how I see it. That primarily is what has been done to you. An uneducated man is a man who can talk to a few score familiar people with a few hundred words. You two can talk to a quarter of mankind. With the help of a little translation you can get to understandings with most of mankind.... As a child learns the accepted language and the accepted writing and the laws and rules of life it learns the community. Watching the education of you two has made me believe more and more in the idea that, over and above the enlargement of expression and understanding, education is the state explaining itself to and incorporating the will of the individual....

"Yes — but what state? What state? Now we come to it...."

Oswald began to sketch out a universal history. There is no limit to these intellectual enterprises of the small hours.

"All history is the record of an effort in man to form communities, an effort against resistance — against instinctive resistance. There seems no natural and proper limit to a human community. (That's my great point, that. That is what I have to tell them.) That is the final teaching of History, Joan and Peter; the very quintessence of History; that limitlessness of the community. As soon as men get a community of any size organized, it begins forthwith to develop roads, wheels, writing, ship-building, and all manner of things which presently set a fresh growth growing again. Let that, too, go on. Presently comes steam, mechanical traction, telegraphy, the telephone, wireless, aeroplanes; and each means an extension of ran.ire, and each therefore demands a larger community.... There seems no limit to the growth of states. I remember, Peter, a talk we had; we agreed that this hackneyed analogy people draw between the life and death of animals and the life and death of states was bad and silly. It isn't the same thing, Joan, at all. An animal, you see, has a limit of size; it develops no new organs for further growth when it has reached that limit, it breeds its successors, it ages naturally; when

it dies, it dies for good and all and is cleared away. Exactly the reverse is true of a human community. Exactly? Yes, exactly. If it can develop its educational system steadily — note that — if it can keep up communications, a State can go on indefinitely, conquering, ousting, assimilating. Even an amoeba breaks up after growth, but a human community need not do so. And so far from breeding successors it kills them if it can — like Frazer's priest — where was it? — Aricia? The priest of Diana. The priest of *The Golden Bough*....

Oswald picked up his thread again after a long, half dreaming excursion in Frazer-land.

"It is just this limitlessness, this potential immortality of States that makes all the confusion and bloodshed of history. What is happening in the world today? What is the essence of it all? The communities of today are developing *range*, faster than ever they did: aeroplanes, guns, swifter ships, everywhere an increasing range of action. That is the most important fact to grasp about the modern world. It is the key fact in politics. From the first dawn of the human story you see man in a kind of a puzzled way — how shall I put it? — *pursuing the boundary of his possible community*. Which always recedes. Which recedes now faster than ever. Until it brings him to a fatal war and disaster. Over and over again it is the same story. If you had a coloured historical atlas of the world, the maps would be just a series of great dabs of empire, spreading, spreading — coming against resistances — collapsing. Each dab tries to devour the world and fails. There is no natural limit to a human community, no limit in time or space — except one.

"Genus *Homo*, species *Sapiens*, Mankind, that is the only limit." (Peter, perhaps, might be led up to saying that.)...

"What has the history of education always been? A series of little teaching chaps trying to follow up and fix the fluctuating boundaries of communities" — an image came into Oswald's head that pleased him and led him on— "like an insufficient supply of upholsterers trying to overtake and tack down a carpet that was blowing away in front of a gale. An insufficient supply of upholsterers... And the carpet always growing as it blows. That's good.... They were trying to fix something they hadn't clearly defined. And you have a lot of them still hammering away at their tacks when the edge of the carpet

has gone on far ahead.... That was really the state of education in England when I took you two young people in hand; the carpet was in the air and most of the schoolmasters, schoolmistresses, writers, teachers, journalists, and all who build up and confirm ideas were hammering in tacks where the carpet had been resting the day before yesterday.... But a lot were not even hammering. No. They just went easy. Yes, that is what I mean when I say that education was altogether at loose ends.... But Germany was different; Germany was teaching and teaching in schools, colleges, press, everywhere, this new Imperialism of hers, a sort of patriotic melodrama, with Britain as Carthage and Berlin instead of Rome. They pointed the whole population to that end. They taught this war. All over the world a thousand other educational systems pointed in a thousand directions....

"So Germany set fire to the Phoenix....

"Only one other great country had any sort of state education. Real state education that is. The United States was also teaching citizenship, on a broader if shallower basis; a wider citizenship — goodwill to all mankind. Shallower. Shallower certainly. But it was there. A republican culture. Candour... generosity.... The world has still to realize its debt to the common schools of America....

"This League of Free Nations, of which all men are dreaming and talking, this World Republic, is the rediscovered outline, the proper teaching of all real education, the necessary outline now of human life.... There is nothing else to do, nothing else that people of our sort can do at all, nothing but baseness, grossness, vileness, and slavery unless we live now as a part of that process of a world peace. Our lives have got to be political lives. All lives have to be made political lives. We can't run about loose any more. This idea of a world-wide commonwealth, this ideal of an everlasting world-peace in which we are to live and move and have our being, has to be built up in every school, in every mind, in every lesson. 'You belong. You belong. And the world belongs to you.'...

What ought one to teach when one teaches geography, for instance, but the common estate of mankind? Here, the teacher should say, are mountains and beautiful cities you may live to see. Here are plains where we might grow half the food of mankind! Here

are the highways of our common life, and here are pleasant byeways where you may go! All this is your inheritance. Your estate. To rejoice in — and serve. But is that how geography is taught?...

"We used to learn lists of the British possessions, with their total exports and imports in money. I remember it as if it were yesterday.... Old Smugs — a hot New Imperialist — new then....

"Then what is history but a long struggle of men to fin peace and safety, and how they have been prevented by baseness and greed and folly? Is that right? No, folly and baseness — and hate.... Hate certainly.... All history is one dramatic story, of man blundering his way from the lonely ape to the world commonwealth. All history is each man's adventure. But what teacher makes history much more than a dwarfish twaddle about boundaries and kings and wars? Dwarfish twaddle. History! It went nowhere. It did nothing. Was there ever anything more like a crowd of people getting into an omnibus without wheels than the History Schools at Oxford? Or your History Tripos?" Oswald repeated his image and saw that it was good....

"What is the teaching of a language again but teaching the knowledge of another people — an exposition of the soul of another people — a work of union? . . . But you see what I mean by all this; this idea of a great world of co-operating peoples; it is not just a diplomatic scheme, not something far off that Foreign Offices are doing; it is an idea that must revolutionize the lessons of a child in the nursery and alter the maps upon every schoolroom wall. And frame our lives altogether. Or be nothing. The World Peace. To that we all belong. I have a fancy — As though this idea had been hovering over the world, unsubstantial, unable to exist — until all this blood-letting, this torment and disaster gave it a body....

"What I am saying to you the University ought to have said to you.

"Instead of Universities" — he sought for a phrase and produced one that against the nocturnal dark seemed brilliant and luminous. "Instead of the University *passant regardant*, we want the University militant. We want Universities all round and about the world, associated, working to a common end, drawing together all the best minds and the finest wills, a myriad of multi-coloured threads, into

one common web of a world civilization.”

§ 7

Also that night Oswald made a discourse upon the English.

“Yours is a great inheritance, Joan and Peter,” he said to the darkness. “You are young; that is a great thing in itself. The world cries out now for the young to enter into possession. And also — do you ever think of it? — you are English, Joan and Peter....

“Let me say something to you before we have done, something out of my heart. Have I ever canted patriotism to you! No! Am I an aggressive Imperialist? Am I not a Home Ruler? For Ireland. For India. The best years of my life have been spent in saving black men from white — and mostly those white men were of our persuasion, men of the buccaneer strain, on the loot. But now that we three are here together with no one else to hear us, I will confess. I tell you there is no race and no tradition in the whole world that I would change for my English race and tradition. I do not mean the brief tradition of this little Buckingham Palace and Westminster system here that began yesterday and will end tomorrow, I mean the great tradition of the English that is spread all over the earth, the tradition of Shakespeare and Milton, of Newton and Bacon, of Runnymede and Agincourt, the tradition of the men who speak fairly and act fairly, without harshness and without fear, who face whatever odds there are against them and take no account of Kings. It is in Washington and New York and Christchurch and Sydney, just as much as it is in Pelham Ford.... Well, upon us more than upon any other single people rests now for a time the burthen of human destiny. Upon us and France. France is the spear head but we are the shaft. If we fail, mankind may fail. We English have made the greatest empire that the world has ever seen; across the Atlantic we have also made the greatest republic. And these are but phases in our task. The better part of our work still lies before us. The weight is on us now. It was Milton who wrote long ago that when God wanted some task of peculiar difficulty to be done he turned to his Englishmen. And he turns to us today. Old Milton saw English shine

clear and great for a time and then pass into the darkness. ... He didn't lose his faith.... Church and crown are no part of the real England which we inherit....

"We have no reason to be ashamed of our race and country, Joan and Peter, for all the confusion and blundering of these last years. Our generals and politicians have missed opportunity after opportunity. I cannot talk yet of such things.... The blunderings.... The slackness.... Hanoverian England with its indolence, its dullness, its economic uncleanness, its canting individualism, its contempt for science and system, has been an England darkened, an England astray. Young England has had to pay at last for all those wasted years — and has paid.... My God! the men we have expended already in fighting these Germans, the brave, beautiful men, the jesting common men, the fresh boys, so cheerful and kind and gallant!... And the happiness that has died! And the shame of following after clumsy, mean leadership in the sight of all the world!... But there rests no stain on our blood. For our people here and for the Americans this has been a war of honour. We did not come into this war for sordid or narrow ends. Our politicians when they made base treaties had to hide them from our people.... Even in the face of the vilest outrages, even now the English keep a balanced justice and will not hate the German common men for things they have been forced to do. Yesterday I saw the German prisoners who work at Stanton getting into the train and joking with their guard. They looked well fed and healthy and uncowed. One carried a bunch of primroses. No one has an ill word for these men on all the countryside.... Does any other people in the world treat prisoners as we treat them?...

"Well, the time has come for our people now to go on from Empire and from Monroe doctrine, great as these ideas have been, to something still greater; the time has come for us to hold out our hands to every man in the world who is ready for a disciplined freedom. The German has dreamt of setting up a Caesar over the whole world. Against that we now set up a disciplined world freedom. For ourselves and all mankind....

"Joan and Peter, that is what I have been coming to in all this wandering discourse. Yours is a great inheritance. You and your

generation have to renew and justify England in a new world. You have to link us again in a common purpose with our kind everywhere. You have to rescue our destinies, the destinies of the world, from these stale quarrels; you have to take the world out of the hands of these weary and worn men, these old and oldish men, these men who can learn no more. You have to reach back and touch the England of Shakespeare, Milton, Raleigh, and Blake — and that means you have to go forward. You have to take up the English tradition as it was before church and court and a base imperialism perverted it. You have to become political. Now. You have to become responsible. Now. You have to create. Now. You, with your fresh vision, with the lessons you have learnt still burning bright in your minds, you have to remake the world. Listen when the old men tell you facts, for very often they know. Listen when they reason, they will teach you many twists and turns. But when they dogmatize, when they still want to rule unquestioned, and, above all, when they say '*impossible*,' even when they say '*wait — be dilatory and discreet,*' push them aside. Their minds squat crippled beside dead traditions.... That England of the Victorian old men, and its empire and its honours and its court and precedences, it is all a dead body now, it has died as the war has gone on, and it has to be buried out of our way lest it corrupt you and all the world again...."

§ 8

We underrate the disposition of youth to think for itself.

Oswald set himself to deliver this Valediction of his after dinner on Friday evening....

Joan was hesitating between a game of Demon Patience with Peter — in which she always played thirteen to his eleven and usually won in spite of the handicap — and an inclination for Bach's *Passacaglia* upon the pianola in the study. Peter expressed himself ready for whatever she chose; he would play D.P. or read *Moll Flanders* — he had just discovered the delight of that greatest of all eighteenth century novels. He was sitting on the couch in the library and Joan was standing upon the hearthrug, regarding him

thoughtfully, when Oswald came in. He stopped to hear what Peter was saying, with his one eye intent on Joan's pretty gravity.

"No," he interrupted. "This is my evening.

"You see," he said, coming up to the fire; "I want to talk to you young people. I want to know some things — I want to know what you make of life.... I want... an exchange of views."

He stood with his back to the fire and smiled at Joan's grave face close to his own. "I've got to talk to you," he said, "very seriously. It's necessary."

Having paralysed them by this preface he sat down in his deep armchair, pulled it an inch or so towards the fire, and leaning forward, with his eye on the spitting coals, began.

"I wish I could talk better, Joan and Peter.... I know I've never been a good talker — it's been rather a loss between us all. And now particularly.... I want to talk. You must let me get it out in my own way....

"You see," he went on after a moment or so to rally his forces, "I've been your guardian, I've had you the affairs go, Sycamore, you know We won't go into that. That's all plain sailing. But it's the education I want to talk about — and your future. You are now both of age. Well past. You're on the verge of twenty-five, Peter — in a month or so. You're both off now — housekeeping. You're dropping the pilot. It's high time, I suppose...."

Joan glanced at Peter, and then sank noiselessly into a crouching attitude close to Oswald's knee. He paused to stroke her hair.

"I've been trying to get you all that I could get you.... Education.... I've had to blunder and experiment. I ought to tell you what I've aimed at and what I've done, take stock with you of the world I've educated you for and the part you're going to play in it. Take stock.... It's been a badly planned undertaking, I know. But then it's such a surprising and unexpected world. All the time I've been learning, and most things I've learnt more or less too late to use the knowledge properly...."

He paused.

Peter looked at his guardian and said nothing. Oswald patted the head at his knee in return for a caress. It was an evasive, even apologetic pat, for he did not want to be distracted by affection just

then.

“This war has altered the whole world,” he went on. “Life has become stark and intense, and when I took this on — when I took up the task of educating you — our world here seemed the most wrapped up and comfortable and secure world you can possibly imagine. Comfortable to the pitch of stuffiness. Most English people didn’t trouble a bit about the shape of human life; they thought it was — well, rather like a heap of down cushions. For them it was. For most of Europe and America.... They thought it was all right and perfectly safe — if only you didn’t bother. And education had lost its way. Yes. That puts the case. *Education had lost its way*.”

Oswald paused again. He fixed his one eye firmly on a glowing cavity in the fire, as though that contained the very gist of his thoughts.

“What is education up to?” he asked. “What is education?...”

Thereupon of course he ought to have gone on to the passage beginning, “Consider this beast we are, this thing man!” as he had already rehearsed it overnight. But Peter had not learnt his part properly.

“I suppose it’s fitting the square natural man into the round hole of civilized life,” Peter threw out.

This reply greatly disconcerted Oswald. “Exactly,” he said, and was for some moments at a loss.

“Yes,” he said, rallying. “But what is civilized life?”

“Oh!... Creative activities in an atmosphere of helpful goodwill,” Peter tried in the brief pause that followed.

Oswald had a disagreeable feeling that he was getting to the end of his discourse before he delivered its beginning. “Yes,” he said again. “Yes. But for that you must have a political form.”

“The World State,” said Peter.

“The League of Free Nations,” said Oswald, “to enforce Peace throughout the earth.”

The next remark that came from Peter was still more unexpected and embarrassing.

“Peace is nothing,” said Peter.

Oswald turned his red eye upon his ward, in profound amazement.

Did they differ fundamentally in their idea of the human future?

“Peace, my dear Peter, is everything,” he protested.

“But, sir, it’s nothing more than the absence of war. It’s a negative. In itself it’s — vacuum. You can’t live in a vacuum.”

“But I mean an active peace.”

“That would be something more than peace. War is an activity. Peace is not. If you take war out of the world, you must have some other activity.”

“But doesn’t the organization of the World Peace in itself constitute an activity?”

“That would be a diminishing activity, sir. Like a man getting himself morphia and taking it and going to sleep. A World Peace would release energy, and as the energy was released, if the end were merely peace, there would be less need for it. Until things exploded.”

Great portions of Oswald’s Valediction broke away and vanished for ever into the limbo of unspoken discourses.

“But would you have war go on, Peter?”

“Not in its present form. But struggle and unification, which is the end sought in all struggles, must go on in some form, sir,” said Peter, “while life goes on. We have to get the World State and put an end to war. I agree. But the real question is what are you going to do with our Peace? What struggle is to take the place of war? What is mankind going to do? Most wars have come about hitherto because somebody was bored. Do you remember how bored we all were in 1914? And the rotten way we were all going on then? A World State or a League of Nations with nothing to do but to keep the peace will bore men intolerably.... That’s what I like about the Germans.”

“What you like about the Germans!” Oswald cried in horror.

“They did get a move on, sir,” said Peter.

“We don’t want a preventive League of Nations,” Peter expanded. “It’s got to be creative or nothing. Or else we shall be in a sort of perpetual Coronation year — with nothing doing on account of the processions. Horrible!”

For a little while Oswald made no reply. He could not recall a single sentence of the lost Valediction that was at all appropriate here, and he was put out and distressed beyond measure that Peter could find anything to “like” about the Germans.

“A World Peace for its own sake is impossible,” Peter went on.

“The Old Experimenter would certainly put a spoke into that wheel.”

“Who is the Old Experimenter?” asked Oswald.

“He’s a sort of God I have,” said Peter. “Something between theology and a fairy tale. I dreamt about him. When I was delirious. He doesn’t rule the world or anything of that sort, because he doesn’t want to, but he keeps on dropping new things into it. To see what happens. Like a man setting himself problems to work out in his head. He lives in a little out-of-the-way office. That’s the idea.”

“You haven’t told me about him,” said Joan.

“I shall some day,” said Peter. “When I feel so disposed....”

“This is very disconcerting,” said Oswald, much perplexed. He scowled at the fire before him. “But you do realize the need there is for some form of world state and some ending of war? Unless mankind is to destroy itself altogether.”

“Certainly, sir,” said Peter. “But we aren’t going to do that on a peace proposition simply. It’s got to be a positive proposal. You know, sir—”

“I wish you’d call me Nobby,” said Oswald.

“It’s a vice contracted in the army, this Sir-ing,” said Peter. “It’s Nobby in my mind, anyhow. But you see, I’ve got a kind of habit, at night and odd times, of thinking over my little misadventure with that balloon and my scrap with von Papen. They are my stock dreams, with extra details worked in, nasty details some of them... and then I wake up and think about them. I think over the parachute affair more than the fight, because it lasted longer and I wasn’t so active. I felt it more. Especially being shot in the legs.... That sort of dream when you float helpless.... But the thing that impresses me most in reflecting on those little experiences is the limitless amount of intelligence that expended itself on such jobs as breaking my wrist, splintering my shoulder-blade and smashing up my leg. The amount of ingenuity and good workmanship in my instruments and the fittings of my basket, for example, was extraordinary, having regard to the fact that it was just one small item in an artillery system for blowing Germans to red rags. And the stuff and intelligence they were putting up against me, that too was wonderful; the way the whole problem had been thought out, the special clock fuse and so on. Well, my point is that the chap who made that equipment wasn’t

particularly interested in killing me, and that the chaps who made my outfit weren't particularly keen on the slaughter of Germans. But they had nothing else to do. They were brought up in a pointless world. They were caught by a vulgar quarrel. What did they care for the Kaiser? Old ass! What they were interested in was making the things...."

Peter became very earnest in his manner. "No peace, as we have known peace hitherto, offers such opportunities for good inventive work as war does. That's my point, Nobby. There's no comparison between the excitement and the endless problems of making a real, live, efficient submarine, for example, that has to meet and escape the intensest risks, and the occupation of designing a great, big, safe, upholstered liner in which fat swindlers can cross the Atlantic without being seasick. War tempts imaginative, restless people, and a stagnant peace bores them. And you've got to reckon with intelligence and imagination in this world, Nobby, more than anything. They aren't strong enough to control perhaps, but they will certainly upset. Inventive, restless men are the particular instruments of my Old Experimenter. He prefers them now to plague, pestilence, famine, flood and earthquake. They are more delicate instruments. And more efficient. And they won't stand a passive peace. Under no circumstances can you hope to induce the chap who contrived the clock fuse and the chap who worked out my gas bag or the chap with a new aeroplane gadget, and me — me, too — to stop cerebrating and making our damndest just in order to sit about safely in meadows joining up daisy chains — like a beastly lot of figures by Walter Crane. The Old Experimenter finds some mischief still for idle brains to do. He insists on it. That's fundamental to the scheme of things."

"But that's no reason," interrupted Oswald, "why you and the inventors who were behind you, and the Germans who made and loaded and fired that shell, shouldn't all get together to do something that will grow and endure. Instead of killing one another."

"Ah, that's it!" said Peter. "But the word for that isn't Peace."

"Then what is the word for it?"

"I don't know," said Peter. "The Great Game, perhaps."

"And where does it take you?"

Peter threw out his hands. "It's an exploration," he said. "It will

take man to the centre of the earth; it will take him to the ends of space, between the atoms and among the stars. How can we tell beforehand? You must have faith. But of one thing I am sure, that man cannot stagnate. It is forbidden. It is the uttermost sin. Why, the Old Man will come out of his office himself to prevent it! This war and all the blood and loss of it is because the new things are entangled among old and dead things, worn-out and silly things, and we've not had the vigour to get them free. Old idiot nationality, national conceit — expanding to imperialism, nationality in a state of megalomania, has been allowed to get hold of the knife that was meant for a sane generation to carve out a new world with. Heaven send he cuts his own throat this time! Or else there may be a next time.... I'm all for the one world state, and the end of flags and kings and custom houses. But I have my doubts of all this talk of making the world safe — safe for democracy. I want the world made one for the adventure of mankind, which is quite another story. I have been in the world now, Nobby, for five-and-twenty years, and I am only beginning to suspect the wonder and beauty of the things we men might know and do. If only we could get our eyes and hands free of the old inheritance. What has mankind done yet to boast about? I despise human history — because I believe in God. Not the God you don't approve of, Nobby, but in my Old Experimenter, whom I confess I don't begin to understand, and in the far-off, eternal scheme he hides from us and which he means us to develop age by age. Oh! I don't understand him, I don't begin to explain him; he's just a figure for what I feel is the reality. But he is right, he is wonderful. And instead of just muddling about over the surface of his universe, we have to get into the understanding of it to the very limits of our ability, to live our utmost and do the intensest best we can."

"Yes," said Oswald; "yes." This was after his own heart, and yet it did not run along the lines of the Valedictory that had flowered with such Corinthian richness overnight. He had been thinking then of world peace; what Peter was driving at now was a world purpose; but weren't the two after all the same thing? He sat with his one eye reflecting the red light of the fire, and the phrases that had come in such generous abundance overnight now refused to come at all.

Peter, on the couch, continued to think aloud.

“Making the world safe for democracy,” said Peter. “That isn’t quite it. If democracy means that any man may help who can, that school and university will give every man and woman the fairest chance, the most generous inducement to help, to do the thing he can best do under the best conditions, then, Yes; but if democracy means getting up a riot and boycott among the stupid and lazy and illiterate whenever anything is doing, then I say No! Every human being has got to work, has got to take part. If our laws and organization don’t insist upon that, the Old Experimenter will. So long as the world is ruled by stale ideas and lazy ideas, he is determined that it shall flounder from war to war. Now what does this democracy mean? Does it mean a crowd of primitive brutes howling down progress and organization? because if it does, I want to be in the machine-gun section. When you talk of education, Nobby, you think of highly educated people, of a nation instructed through and through. But what of democracy in Russia, where you have a naturally clever people in a state of peasant ignorance — who can’t even read? Until the schoolmaster has talked to every one for ten or twelve years, can you have what President Wilson thinks of as democracy at all?”

“Now there you meet me,” said Oswald. “That is the idea I have been trying to get at with you.” And for some minutes the palatial dimensions of the lost Valedictory loomed out. Where he had said “peace” overnight, however, he now said progress.

But the young man on the couch was much too keenly interested to make a good audience. When presently Oswald propounded his theory that all the great world religions were on the side of this World Republic that he and Peter desired, Peter demurred.

“But is that true of Catholicism for instance?” said Peter.

Oswald quoted, “I am the Vine and ye are the Branches.”

“Yes,” said Peter. “But look at the Church itself. Don’t look at the formula but at the practice and the daily teaching. Is it truly a growing Vine?” The reality of Catholicism, Peter argued, was a traditional, sacramental religion, a narrow fetish religion with a specialized priest, it was concerned primarily with another world, it set its face against any conception of a scheme of progress in this world apart from its legend of the sacrifice of the Mass.

“All good Catholics sneer at progress,” said Peter. “Take Belloc

and Chesterton, for example; they hate the idea of men working steadily for any great scheme of effort here. They hold by stagnant standards, planted deep in the rich mud of life. What's the Catholic conception of human life? — guzzle, booze, call the passion of the sexes unclean and behave accordingly, confess, get absolution, and at it again. Is there any recognition in Catholicism of the duty of keeping your body fit or your brain active? They're worse than the man who buried his talent in a clean napkin; they bury it in wheezy fat. It's a sloven's life. What have we in common with that? Always they are harking back to the thirteenth century, to the peasant life amidst dung and chickens. It's a different species of mind from ours, with the head and feet turned backward. What is the good of expecting the Pope, for instance, and his Church to help us in creating a League of Nations? His aim would be a world agreement to stop progress, and we want to release it. He wants peace in order to achieve nothing, and we want peace in order to do everything. What is the good of pretending that it is the same peace? A Catholic League of Nations would be a conspiracy of stagnation, another Holy Alliance. What real world unity can come through them? Every step on the way to the world state and the real unification of men will be fought by the stagnant men and the priests. Why blind ourselves to that? Progress is a religion in itself. Work and learning are our creed. We cannot make terms with any other creed. The priest has got his God and we seek our God for ever. The priest is finished and completed and self-satisfied, and we — we are beginning...."

§ 9

There were two days yet before Peter went back to his work in London. Saturday dawned blue and fine, and Joan and he determined to spend it in a long tramp over the Hertfordshire hills and fields. He meant to stand no nonsense from his foot. "If I can't walk four miles an hour then I must do two," he said. "And if the pace is too slow for you, Joan, you must run round and round me and bark." They took a long route by field and lane through A1bury and Furneaux Pelham to the little inn at Stocking Pelham, where they got some hard biscuits

and cheese and shandygaff, and came home by way of Patmore Heath, and the golden oaks and the rivulet. And as they went Peter talked of Oswald.

"Naturally he wants to know what we are going to do," said Peter, and then, rather inconsequently, "He's ill."

"This war is like a wasting fever in the blood and in the mind," said Peter. "All Europe is ill. But with him it mixes with the old fever. That splinter at Fricourt was no joke for him. He oughtn't to have gone out. He's getting horribly lean, and his eye is like a garnet."

"I love him," said Joan.

But she did not want to discuss Oswald just then.

"About this new theology of yours, Peter," she said....

"Well?" said Peter.

"What do you mean by this Old Experimenter of yours? Is he — *God*?"

"I don't know. I thought he was. He's — He's a Symbol. He's just a Caricature I make to express how all this" — Peter swept his arm across the sunlit world— "seems to stand to me. If one can't draw the thing any better, one has to make a caricature."

Joan considered that gravely.

"I thought of him first in my dream as the God of the Universe," Peter explained.

"You couldn't love a God like that," Joan remarked.

"Heavens, no! He's too vast, too incomprehensible. I love you — and Oswald — and the R.F.C., Joan, and biology. But he's above and beyond that sort of thing."

"Could you pray to him?" asked Joan.

"Not to *him*," said Peter.

"I pray," said Joan. "Don't you?"

"And swear," said Peter.

"One prays to something — it isn't oneself."

"The fashion nowadays is to speak of the God in the Heart and the God in the Universe."

"Is it the same God?"

"Leave it at that," said Peter. "We don't know. All the waste and muddle in religion is due to people arguing and asserting that they

are the same, that they are different but related, or that they are different but opposed. And so on and so on. How can we know? What need is there to know? In view of the little jobs we are doing. Let us leave it at that."

Joan was silent for a while. "I suppose we must," she said.

"And what are we going to do with ourselves," asked Joan, "when the war is over?"

"They can't keep us in khaki for ever," Peter considered. "There's a Ministry of Reconstruction foozling away in London, but it's never said a word to me of the some-day that is coming. I suppose it hasn't learnt to talk yet."

"What do you think of doing?" asked Joan.

"Well, first — a good medical degree. Then I can doctor if I have to. But, if I'm good enough, I shall do research. I've a sort of feeling that along the border line of biology and chemistry I might do something useful. I've some ideas.... I suppose I shall go back to Cambridge for a bit. We neither of us need earn money at once. It will be queer — after being a grown-up married man — to go back to proctors and bulldogs. What are you going to do, Joan, when you get out of uniform?"

"Look after you first, Petah. Oh! it's worth doing. And it won't take me all my time. And then I've got my own ideas...."

"Out with 'em, Joan."

"Well?"

"Petah, I shall learn plumbing."

"Jobbing?"

"No. And bricklaying and carpentry. All I can. And then I am going to start building houses."

"Architect?"

"As little as possible," said Joan. "No. No beastly Architecture for Art's sake for me! Do you remember how people used to knock their heads about at The Ingle-Nook?

I've got some money. Why shouldn't I be able to build houses as well as the fat builder men with big, flat thumbs who used to build houses before the war?"

"Jerry-building?"

"High-class jerry-building, if you like. Cottages with sensible

insides, real insides, and not so much waste space and scamping to make up for it. They're half a million houses short in this country already. There's something in building appeals to my sort of imagination. And I'm going to make money, Petah."

"I love the way you carry your tail," said Peter. "Always."

"Well, doing running repairs hardens a woman's soul."

"You'll make more money than I shall, perhaps. But now I begin to understand all these extraordinary books you've been studying.... I might have guessed.... Why not?"

He limped along, considering it. "Why shouldn't you?" he said. "A service flat will leave your hands free.... I've always wondered secretly why women didn't plunge into that sort of business more."

"It's been just diffidence," said Joan.

"*Click*!" said Peter. "That's gone, anyhow. If a lot of women do as you do and become productive for good, this old muddle of a country will sit up in no time. It doubles the output.... I wonder if the men will like working under you?"

"There'll be a boss in the background," said Joan. "Mr. John Debenham. Who'll never turn up. Being, in fact, no more than camouflage for Joan of that ilk. I shall be just my own messenger and agent.

"One thing I know," said Joan, "and that is, that I will make a cottage or a flat that won't turn a young woman into an old one in ten years' time. Living in that Jepson flat without a servant has brightened me up in a lot of ways.... And a child will grow up in my cottages without being crippled in its mind by awkwardness and ugliness.... This sort of thing always has been woman's work really. Only we've been so busy chittering and powdering our silly noses — and laying snares for our Peters. Who didn't know what was good for them."

Peter laughed and was amused. He felt a pleasant assurance that Joan really was going to build houses.

"Joan," he said, "it's a bleak world before us — and I hate to think of Nobby. He's so ill. But the work — the good hard work — there's times when I rather like to think of that.... They were beastly years just before the war."

"I hated them," said Joan.

“But what a lot of stuff there was about!” said Peter. “The petrol! Given away, practically, along the roadside everywhere. And the joints of meat. Do you remember the big hams we used to have on the sideboard? For breakfast. A lot of sausages going sizzle! Eggs galore! Bacon! Haddock. Perhaps cutlets. And the way one could run off abroad!”

“To Italy,” said Joan dangerously.

“God knows when those times will come back again! Not for years. Not for our lifetimes.”

“If they came back all at once we’d have indigestion,” said Joan.

“Orgy,” said Peter. “But they won’t.”...

Presently their note became graver.

“We’ve got to live like fanatics. If a lot of us don’t live like fanatics, this staggering old world of ours won’t recover. It will stagger and then go flop. And a race of Bolshevik peasants will breed pigs among the ruins. We owe it to ourselves, we owe it to the world to prevent that.”

“And we owe it to the ones who have died,” said Joan.

She hesitated, and then she began to tell him something of the part Wilmington had played in their lives.

They went through field after field, through gates and over stiles and by a coppice spangled with primroses, while she told him of the part that Wilmington had played in bringing them together; Wilmington who was now no more than grey soil where the battle still raged in France. Many were the young people who talked so of dead friends in those days. Their voices became grave and faintly deferential, as though they had invoked a third presence to mingle with their duologue. They were very careful to say nothing and to think as little as possible that might hurt Wilmington’s self-love.

Presently they found themselves speculating again about the kind of world that lay ahead of them — whether it would be a wholly poor world or a poverty-struck world infested and devastated by a few hundred millionaires and their followings. Poor we were certain to be. We should either be sternly poor or meanly poor. But Peter was disposed to doubt whether the war millionaires would “get away with the swag.”

“There’s too much thinking and reading nowadays for that,” said

Peter. “They won’t get away with it. This is a new age, Joan. If they try that game they won’t have five years’ run.”

No, it would be a world generally poor, a tired but chastened world getting itself into order again.... Would there be much music in the years ahead? Much writing or art? Would there be a new theatre and the excitement of first nights again? Should we presently travel by aeroplane, and find all the world within a few days’ journey? They were both prepared to resign themselves to ten years’ of work and scarcity, but they both clung to the hope of returning prosperity and freedom after that.

“Well, well, Joan,” said Peter, “these times teach us to love. I’m crippled. We’ve got to work hard. But I’m not unhappy. I’m happier than I was when I had no idea of what I wanted in life, when I lusted for everything and was content with nothing, in the days before the war. I’m a wise old man now with my stiff, wrist and my game leg. You change everything, Joan. You make everything worth while.”

“I’d like to think it was me,” said Joan idiomatically.

“It’s you....

“After all there must be some snatches of holiday. I shall walk with you through beautiful days — as we are doing today — days that would only be like empty silk purses if it wasn’t that they held you in them. Scenery and flowers and sunshine mean nothing to me — until you come in. I’m blind until you give me eyes. Joan, do you know how beautiful you are? When you smile? When you stop to think? Frowning a little. When you look — yes, just like that.”

“*No*!” said Joan, but very cheerfully.

“But you are — you are endlessly beautiful. Endlessly. Making love to Joan — it’s the intensest of joys. Every time — As if one had just discovered her.”

“There’s a certain wild charm about Petah,” Joan admitted, “for a coarse taste.”

“After all, whether it’s set in poverty or plenty,” said Peter; “whether it’s rational or irrational, making love is still at the heart of us humans.”...

For a time they exulted shamelessly in themselves. They talked of the good times they had had together in the past. They revived memories of Bungo Peter and the Sagas that had slumbered in

silence since the first dawn of adolescence. She recalled a score of wonderful stories and adventures that he had altogether forgotten. She had a far clearer and better memory for such things than he. “D’you remember lightning slick, Petah? And how the days went faster? D’you remember how he put lightning slick on his bicycle?”...

But Peter had forgotten that.

“And when we fought for that picshua you made of Adela,” Joan said. “When I bit you.... It was my first taste of you, Petah. You tasted dusty....”

“I suppose we’ve always had a blind love for each other,” said Peter, “always.”

“I hated you to care for any one but myself,” said Joan, “since ever I can remember. I hated even Billy.”

“It’s well we found out in time,” said Peter.

“I found out,” said Joan.

“Ever since we stopped being boy and girl together,” said Peter, “I’ve never been at peace in my nerves and temper till now.... Now I feel as though I swung free in life, safe, sure, content.”

“Content,” weighed Joan suspiciously. “But you’re still in love with me, Petah?”

“Not particularly in love,” said Peter. “No. But I’m loving you — as the June sun loves an open meadow, shining all over it. I shall always love you, Joan, because there is no one like you in all the world. No one at all. Making love happens, but love endures. How can there be companionship and equality except between the like? — who can keep step, who can climb together, joke broad and shameless, and never struggle for the upper hand? And where in all the world shall I find that, Joan, but in you? Listen to wisdom, Joan! There are two sorts of love between men and women, and only two — love like the love of big carnivores who know their mates and stick to them, or love like some man who follows a woman home because he’s never seen anything like her before. I’ve done with that sort of love for ever. There’s men who like to exaggerate every difference in women. They pretend women are mysterious and dangerous and wonderful. They like sex served up with lies and lingerie.... Where’s the love in that! Give me my old brown Joan.”

“Not so beastly brown,” said Joan.

“Joan *nature*.”

“Tut, tut!” said Joan.

“There’s people who scent themselves to make love,” said Peter.

“Experienced Petah,” said Joan.

“I’ve read of it,” said Peter, and a little pause fell between them....

“Every one ought to be like us,” said Joan sagely, with the spring sunshine on her dear face.

“It takes all sorts to make a world,” said Peter.

“Everybody ought to have a lover,” said Joan. “Everybody. There’s no clean life without it.”...

“We’ve been through some beastly times, Joan. We’ve run some beastly risks.... We’ve just scrambled through, Joan, to love — as I scrambled through to life. After being put down and shot at.”...

Presently Joan suspected a drag in Peter’s paces and decided at the sight of a fallen tree in a little grass lane to profess fatigue. They sat down upon the scaly trunk, just opposite to where a gate pierced a budding hedge and gave a view of a long, curved ridge of sunlit blue, shooting corn with red budding and green-powdered trees beyond, and far away a woldy upland rising out of an intervening hidden valley. And Peter admitted that he, too, felt a little tired. But each was making a pretence for the sake of the other.

“We’ve rediscovered a lot of the old things, Joan,” said Peter. “The war has knocked sense into us. There wasn’t anything to work for, there wasn’t much to be loyal to in the days of the Marconi scandals and the Coronation Durbar. Slack times, more despair in them by far than in these red days. Rotten, aimless times.... Oh! the world’s not done for....

“I don’t grudge my wrist or my leg,” said Peter. “I can hop. I’ve still got five and forty years, fifty years, perhaps, to spend. In this new world.”...

He said no more for a time. There were schemes in his head, so immature as yet that he could not even sketch them out to her.

He sat with his eyes dreaming, and Joan watched him. There was much of the noble beast in this Peter of hers. In the end now, she was convinced, he was going to be an altogether noble beast. Through her. He was hers to cherish, to help, to see grow.... He was her

chosen man.... Depths that were only beginning to awaken in Joan were stirred. She would sustain Peter, and also presently she would renew Peter. A time would come when this dear spirit would be born again within her being, when the blood in her arteries and all the grace of her body would be given to a new life — to new lives, that would be beautiful variations of this dearest tune in the music of the world.... They would have courage; they would have minds like bright, sharp swords. They would lift their chins as Peter did.... It became inconceivable to Joan that women could give their bodies to bear the children of unloved men. "Dear Petah," her lips said silently. Her heart swelled; her hands tightened. She wanted to kiss him....

Then in a whim of reaction she was moved to mockery.

"Do you feel so very stern and strong, dear Petah?" she whispered close to his shoulder.

He started, surprised, stared at her for a moment, and smiled into her eyes.

"Old Joan," he said and kissed her....

§ 10

When he returned to the house on Monday morning after he had seen the two young people off, a burthen of desolation came upon Oswald.

It was a loneliness as acute as a physical pain. It was misery. If they had been dead, he could not have been more unhappy. The work that had been the warm and living substance of fifteen years was now finished* and done. The nest was empty. The road and the stream, the gates and the garden, the house and the hall, seemed to ache with emptiness and desertion. He went into their old study, from which they had already taken a number of their most intimate treasures, and which was now as disordered as a room after a sale. Most of their remaining personal possessions were stacked ready for removal; discarded magazines and books and torn paper made an untidy heap beside the fireplace. "I could not feel a greater pain if I had lost a son," he thought, staring at these untidy vestiges.

He went to his own study and sat down at his desk, though he knew there was no power of attention in him sufficient to begin

work.

Mrs. Moxton, for reasons best known to herself, was interested in his movements that morning. She saw him presently wander into the garden and then return to the hall. He took his cap and stick and touched the bell. “I’ll not be back to lunch, Mrs. Moxton,” he called.

“Very well, sir,” said Mrs. Moxton, unseen upon the landing above, nodding her head approvingly.

At first the world outside was as lonely as his study.

He went up the valley along the high road for half a mile, and then took a winding lane under almost overhanging boughs — the hawthorn leaves now were nearly out and the elder quite — up over the hill and thence across fields and through a wood until he came to where the steep lane runs down to Braughing. And by that time, although the spring-time world was still immensely lonely and comfortless, he no longer felt that despairful sense of fresh and irremediable loss with which he started. He was beginning to realize now that he had always been a solitary being; that all men, even in crowds, carry a certain solitude with them; and loneliness thus lifted to the level of a sustained and general experience ceased to feel like a dagger turning in his heart.

Down the middle of Braughing village, among spaces of grass, runs the little Quin, now a race of crystalline water over pebbly shallows and now a brown purposefulness flecked with foam, in which reeds bend and recover as if they kept their footing by perpetual feats of dexterity. There are two fords, and midway between them a little bridge with a handrail on which Oswald stayed for a time, watching the lives and adventures of an endless stream of bubbles that were begotten thirty feet away where the eddy from the depths beneath a willow root dashed against a bough that bobbed and dipped in the water. He found a great distraction and relief in following their adventures. On they came, large and small, in strings, in spinning groups, busy bubbles, quiet bubbles, dignified solitary bubbles, and passed a dangerous headland of watercress and ran the gauntlet between two big stones and then, if they survived, came with a hopeful rush for the shadow under the bridge and vanished utterly....

For all the rest of the day those streaming bubbles glittered and

raced and jostled before Oswald's eyes, and made a veil across his personal desolation. His mind swung like a pendulum between two ideas; those bubbles were like human life; they were not like human life....

Philosophy is the greatest of anodynes.

"Why is a man's life different from a bubble? Like a bubble he is born of the swirl of matter, like a bubble he reflects the universe, he is driven and whirled about by forces he does not comprehend, he shines here and is darkened there and is elated or depressed he knows not why, and at last passes suddenly out into the darkness...."

In the evening Oswald sat musing by his study fire, his lamp unlit. He sat in an attitude that had long become habitual to him, with the scarred side of his face resting upon and 'hidden by his hand. His walk had wearied him, but not unpleasantly, his knee was surprisingly free from pain, and he was no longer acutely unhappy. The idea, a very engaging idea, had come into his head that it was not really the education of Joan and Peter that had come to an end, but his own. They were still learners — how much they had still to learn! At Peter's age he had not yet gone to Africa. They had finished with school and college perhaps, but they were but beginning in the university of life. Neither of them had yet experienced a great disillusionment, neither of them had been shamed or bitterly disappointed; they had each other. They had seen the great war indeed, and Peter knew now what wounds and death were like — but he himself had been through that at one-and-twenty. Neither had had any such dark tragedy as, for example, if one of them had been killed, or if one of them had betrayed and injured the other. Perhaps they would always have fortunate lives.

But he himself had had to learn the lesson to the end. His life had been a darkened one. He had loved intensely and lost. He had had to abandon his chosen life work when it was barely half done. He had a present sense of the great needs of the world, and he was bodily weak and mentally uncertain. He would spend days now of fretting futility, unable to achieve anything. He loved these dear youngsters, but the young cannot give love to the old because they do not yet understand. He was alone. And yet, it was strange, he kept on. With such strength as he had he pursued his ends. Those two would go on,

full of hope, helping one another, thinking together, succeeding. The lesson he had learnt was that without much love, without much vitality, with little hope of seeing a single end achieved for which he worked, he could still go on.

He drifted through his memories, seeking for the motives that had driven him on from experience to experience. But while he could remember the experiences it was very hard now to recover any inkling of his motives. He remembered himself at school as a violent egotist, working hard, openly and fairly, for his ascendancy in the school games, working hard secretly for his school position. It seemed now as though all that time he had been no more than a greed and a vanity.... Was that fair to himself! Or had he forgotten the redeeming dreams of youth?...

The scene shifted to the wardroom of his first battleship, and then to his first battle. He saw again the long low line of the Egyptian coast, and the batteries of Alexandria and Kamleh spitting fire and the *Condor* standing in. He recalled the tense excitement of that morning, the boats rowing to land, but strangely enough the incident that had won him the Victoria Cross had been blotted completely from his mind by his injury. He could not recover even the facts, much less the feel of that act.... Why had he done what he had done? Did he himself really do it?... Then very vividly came the memory of his first sight of his smashed, disfigured face. That had been horrible at the time — in a way it was horrible still — but after that it seemed as though for the first time he had ceased then to be an egotism, a vanity. After that the memories of impersonal interests began. He thought of his attendance at Huxley's lectures at South Kensington and the wonder of making his first dissections. About that time he met Dolly, but here again was a queer gap; he could not remember anything very distinctly about his early meetings with Dolly except that she wore white and that they happened in a garden.

Yet, in a little while, all his being had been hungry for Dolly!

With his first journey into Africa all his memories became brighter and clearer and as if a hotter sun shone upon them. Everything before that time was part of the story of a young man long vanished from the world, young Oswald, a personality at least as remote as Peter — very like Peter. But with the change of scene to

Africa Oswald became himself. The man in the story was the man who sat musing in the study chair, moved by the same motives and altogether understandable. Already in Nyasaland he was working consciously for "civilization" even as he worked today. Everything in that period lived still, with all its accompanying feelings alive. He fought again in his first fight in Nyasaland, and recalled with complete vividness how he had loaded and fired and reloaded and fired time after time at the rushes of the Yao spearmen; he had fought leaning against the stockade because he was too weary to stand upright, and with his head and every limb aching. One man he had hit had wriggled for a long time in the grass, and that memory still distressed him. It trailed another memory of horror with it. In his campaign about Lake Kioga, years later, in a fight amidst some ant hills he had come upon a wounded Sudanese being eaten alive by swarms of ants. The poor devil had died with the ants still upon him.... Oswald could still recall the sick anguish with which he had tried in vain to save or relieve this man.

The affair was in the exact quality of his present feelings; the picture was painted from the same palette. He remembered that then, as now, he felt the same helpless perplexity at apparently needless and unprofitable human agony. And then, as now, he had not despaired. He had been able to see no reason in this suffering and no excuse for it; he could see none now, and yet he did not despair. Why did not that and a hundred other horrors overwhelm him with despair? Why had he been able to go on with life after that? And after another exquisite humiliation and disappointment? He had loved Dolly intensely, and here again came a third but less absolutely obliterated gap in his recollections. For years he had been resolutely keeping his mind off the sufferings of that time, and now they were indistinct. His memory was particularly blank now about Arthur; he was registered merely as a blonde sort of. ass with a tenor voice who punched copper. That faint hostile caricature was all his mind had tolerated. But still sharp and clear, as though it had been photographed but yesterday upon his memory, was the afternoon when he had realized that Dolly was dead. That scene was life-size and intense; how in a shady place under great trees, he had leant forwards upon his little folding table and wept aloud.

What had carried him through all those things? Why had he desired so intensely? Why had he worked so industriously? Why did he possess this passion for order that had inspired his administrative work? Why had he given his best years to Uganda? Why had he been so concerned for the welfare and wisdom of Joan and Peter? Why did he work now to the very breaking-point, until sleeplessness and fever forced him to rest, for this dream of a great federation in the world — a world state he would certainly never live to see established? If he was indeed only a bubble, then surely he was the most obstinately opinionated of bubbles. But he was not merely a bubble. The essential self of him was not this thing that spun about in life, that felt and reflected the world, that missed so acutely the two dear other bubbles that had circled about him so long and that had now left him to eddy in his backwater while they hurried off into the midstream of life. His essential self, the self that mused now, that had struggled up through the egotisms of youth to this present predominance, was something deeper and tougher and more real than desire, than excitement, than pleasure or pain. That was the lesson he had been learning. There was something deeper in him to which he had been getting down more and more as life had gone on, something to which all the stuff of experience was incidental, something in which there was endless fortitude and an undying resolution to do. There was something in him profounder than the stream of accidents....

He sat now with his distresses allayed, his mind playing with fancies and metaphors and analogies. Was this pro-founder contentment beneath his pains and discontents the consciousness of the bubble giving way to the underlying consciousness of the stream? That was ingenious, but it was not true. Men are not bubbles carried blindly on a stream; they are rather like bubbles, but that is all. They are wills and parts of a will that is neither the slave of the stream of matter nor a thing indifferent to it, that is paradoxically free and bound. They are parts of a will, but what this great will was that had him in its grasp, that compelled him to work, that saved him from drowning in his individual sorrows and cares, he could not say. It was easy to draw the analogy that a man is an atom in the life of the species as a cell is an atom in the life of a man. But this again was not the complete truth. Where was this alleged will of the species? If

there was indeed such a will in the species, why was there this war? And yet, whatever it might be, assuredly there was something greater than himself sustaining his life.... To him it felt like a universal thing, but was it indeed a universal thing? It was strangely bound up with preferences. Why did he love and choose certain things passionately? Why was he indifferent to others?

Why were Dolly and Joan more beautiful to him than any other women; why did he so love the sound of their voices, their movements, and the subtle lines of their faces; why did he love Peter, standing upright and when enthusiasm lit him; and why did he love the lights on polished steel and the darknesses of deep waters, the movements of flames, and of supple, feline animals, so intensely? Why did he love these things more than the sheen on painted wood, or the graces of blonde women, or the movements of horses? And why did he love justice and the revelation of scientific laws, and the setting right of disordered things? Why did this idea of a League of Nations come to him with the effect of a personal and preferential call? All these lights and matters and aspects and personal traits were somehow connected in his mind, and had a compelling power over him. They could make him forget his safety or comfort or happiness. They had something in common among themselves, he felt, and he could not tell what it was they had in common. But whatever it was, it was the intimation of the power that sustained him. It was as if they were all reflections or resemblances of some overruling spirit, some Genius, some great ruler of the values that stood over his existence and his world. Yet that again was but a fancy — a plagiarism from Socrates....

There was a light upon his life, and the truth was that he could not discover the source of the light nor define its nature; there was a presence in the world about him that made all life worth while, and yet it was Nameless and Incomprehensible. It was the Essence beyond Reality; it was the Heart of All Things.... Metaphors! Words! Perhaps some men have meant this when they talked of Love, but he himself had loved because of this, and so he held it must be something greater than Love. Perhaps some men have intended it in their use of the word Beauty, but it seemed to him that rather it made and determined Beauty for him. And others again have known it as

the living presence of God, but the name of God was to Oswald a name battered out of all value and meaning. And yet it was by this, by this Nameless, this Incomprehensible, that he lived and was upheld. It did so uphold him that he could go on, he knew, though happiness were denied him; though defeat and death stared him in the face....

§ 11

At last he sighed and rose. He lit his reading lamp by means of a newspaper rolled up into one long spill — for there was a famine in matches just then — and sat down to the work on his desk.

THE END

THE UNDYING FIRE

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TO ALL SCHOOLMASTERS AND SCHOOLMISTRESSES AND EVERY TEACHER IN THE WORLD

I. — THE PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

§ 1

Two eternal beings, magnificently enhaloed, the one in a blinding excess of white radiance and the other in a bewildering extravagance of colours, converse amidst stupendous surroundings. These surroundings are by tradition palatial, but there is now also a marked cosmic tendency about them. They have no definite locality; they are above and comprehensive of the material universe.

There is a quality in the scene as if a futurist with a considerable knowledge of modern chemical and physical speculation and some obscure theological animus had repainted the designs of a pre-Raphaelite. The vast pillars vanish into unfathomable darknesses, and the complicated curves and whorls of the decorations seem to have been traced by the flight of elemental particles. Suns and planets spin and glitter through the avanturine depths of a floor of crystalline ether. Great winged shapes are in attendance, wrought of iridescences and bearing globes, stars, rolls of the law, flaming swords, and similar symbols. The voices of the Cherubim and Seraphim can be heard crying continually, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

Now, as in the ancient story, it is a reception of the sons of God.

The Master of the gathering, to whom one might reasonably attribute a sublime boredom, seeing that everything that can possibly happen is necessarily known to him, displays on the contrary as lively an interest in his interlocutor as ever. This interlocutor is of course Satan, the Unexpected.

The contrast of these two eternal beings is very marked; while the Deity, veiled and almost hidden in light, with his hair like wool and his eyes like the blue of infinite space, conveys an effect of stable, remote, and mountainous grandeur, Satan has the compact alertness of habitual travel; he is as definite as a grip-sack, and he brings a flavour of initiative and even bustle upon a scene that would otherwise be one of serene perfection. His halo even has a slightly travelled look. He has been going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it; his labels are still upon him. His status in heaven

remains as undefined as it was in the time of Job; it is uncertain to this day whether he is to be regarded as one of the sons of God or as an inexplicable intruder among them. (But see upon this question the Encyclopaedia Biblica under his name.) Whatever his origin there can be little doubt of his increasing assurance of independence and importance in the Divine presence. His freedom may be sanctioned or innate, but he himself has no doubt remaining of the security of his personal autonomy. He believes that he is a necessary accessory to God, and that his incalculable quality is an indispensable relief to the acquiescences of the Archangels. He never misses these reunions. If God is omnipresent by a calm necessity, Satan is everywhere by an infinite activity. They engage in unending metaphysical differences into which Satan has imported a tone of friendly badinage. They play chess together.

But the chess they play is not the little ingenious game that originated in India; it is on an altogether different scale. The Ruler of the Universe creates the board, the pieces, and the rules; he makes all the moves; he may make as many moves as he likes whenever he likes; his antagonist, however, is permitted to introduce a slight inexplicable inaccuracy into each move, which necessitates further moves in correction. The Creator determines and conceals the aim of the game, and it is never clear whether the purpose of the adversary is to defeat or assist him in his unfathomable project. Apparently the adversary cannot win, but also he cannot lose so long as he can keep the game going. But he is concerned, it would seem, in preventing the development of any reasoned scheme in the game.

§2

Celestial badinage is at once too high and broad to come readily within the compass of earthly print and understanding. The Satanic element of unexpectedness can fill the whole sphere of Being with laughter; thrills begotten of those vast reverberations startle our poor wits at the strangest moments. It is the humour of Satan to thrust upon the Master his own title of the Unique and to seek to wrest from him the authorship of life. (But such jesting distresses the angels.)

“I alone create.”

“But I — I ferment.”

“Matter I made and all things.”

“Stagnant as a sleeping top but for the wabble I give it.”

“You are just the little difference of the individual. You are the little Uniqueness in everyone and everything, the Unique that breaks the law, a marginal idiosyncracy.”

“Sire, you are the Unique, the Uniqueness of the whole.”

Heaven smiled, and there were halcyon days in the planets. “ I shall average you out in the end and you will disappear.”

“And everything will end.”

“Will be complete.”

“Without me!”

“You spoil the symmetry of my universe.”

“I give it life.”

“Life comes from me.”

“No, Sire, life comes from me.”

One of the great shapes in attendance became distinct as Michael bearing his sword. “ He blasphemes, Lord. Shall I cast him forth?”

“But you did that some time ago,” answered Satan, speaking carelessly over his shoulder and not even looking at the speaker. “ You keep on doing it. And — I am here.”

“He returns,” said the Lord soothingly. “Perhaps I will him to return. What should we be without him?”

“Without me, time and space would freeze into crystalline perfection,” said Satan, and at his smile the criminal statistics of a myriad planets displayed an upward wave. “It is I who trouble the waters. I trouble all things. I am the spirit of life.”

“But the soul,” said God.

Satan, sitting with one arm thrown over the back of his throne towards Michael, raised his eyebrows by way of answer. This talk about the soul he regarded as a divine weakness. He knew nothing of the soul.

“I made man in my own image,” said God.

“And I made him a man of the world. If it had not been for me he would still be a needless gardener — pretending to cultivate a weedless garden that grew right because it couldn’t grow wrong —

in’those endless summers the blessed ones see.’ Think of it, ye Powers and Dominions! Perfect flowers! Perfect fruits! Never an autumn chill! Never a yellow leaf! Golden leopards, noble lions, carnivores unfulfilled, purring for his caresses amidst the aimless friskings of lambs that would never grow old! Good Lord! How bored he would have been! How bored! Instead of which, did I not launch him on the most marvellous adventures? It was I who gave him history. Up to the very limit of his possibilities. Up to the very limit.... And did not you, Lord, by sending your angels with their flaming swords, approve of what I had done?”

God gave no answer.

“But that reminds me,” said Satan unabashed.

§ 3

The great winged shapes drew nearer, for Satan is the celestial raconteur. He alone makes stories.

“There was a certain man in the land of Uz whose name was Job.”

“We remember him.”

“We had a wager of sorts,” said Satan. “It was some time ago.”

“The wager was never very distinct — and now that you remind me of it, there is no record of your paying.”

“Did I lose or win! The issue was obscured by discussion. How those men did talk! You intervened. There was no decision.”

“You lost, Satan,” said a great Being of Light who bore a book. “The wager was whether Job would lose faith in God and curse him. He was afflicted in every way, and particularly by the conversation of his friends. But there remains an undying fire in man.”

Satan rested his dark face on his hand, and looked down between his knees through the pellucid floor to that little eddying in the ether which makes our world. “Job,” he said, “lives still.”

Then after an interval: “The whole earth is now — Job.”

Satan delights equally in statistics and in quoting scripture. He leant back in his seat with an expression of quiet satisfaction. “Job,” he said, in easy narrative tones, “lived to a great age. After his disagreeable experiences he lived one hundred and forty years. He

had again seven sons and three daughters, and he saw his offspring for four generations. So much is classical. These ten children brought him seventy grandchildren, who again prospered generally and had large families. (It was a prolific strain.) And now if we allow three generations to a century, and the reality is rather more than that, and if we take the survival rate as roughly three to a family, and if we agree with your excellent Bishop Usher that Job lived about thirty-five centuries ago, that gives us — How many? Three to the hundred and fifth power?... It is at any rate a sum vastly in excess of the present population of the earth.... You have globes and rolls and swords and stars here; has anyone a slide rule?"

But the computation was brushed aside.

"A thousand years in my sight are but as yesterday when it is past. I will grant what you seek to prove; that Job has become mankind."

§ 4

The dark regard of Satan smote down through the quivering universe and left the toiling light waves behind. "See there," he said pointing. "My old friend on his little planet — Adam — Job — Man — like a roast on a spit. It is time we had another wager."

God condescended to look with Satan at mankind, circling between day and night. "Whether he will curse or bless."

"Whether he will even remember God."

"I have given my promise that I will at last restore Adam."

The downcast face smiled faintly.

"These questions change from age to age," said Satan.

"The Whole remains the same."

"The story grows longer in either direction," said Satan, speaking as one who thinks aloud; "past and future unfold together.... When the first atoms jarred I was there, and so conflict was there — and progress. The days of the old story have each expanded to hundreds of millions of years now, and still I am in them all. The sharks and crawling monsters of the early seas, the first things that crept out of the water into the jungle of fronds and stems, the early reptiles, the leaping and flying dragons of the great age of life, the mighty beasts

of hoof and horn that came later; they all feared and suffered and were perplexed. At last came this Man of yours, out of the woods, hairy, beetle-browed and blood-stained, peering not too hopefully for that Eden-bower of the ancient story. It wasn't there. There never had been a garden. He had fallen before he arose, and the weeds and thorns are as ancient as the flowers. The Fall goes back in time now beyond man, beyond the world, beyond imagination. The very stars were born in sin....

"If we can still call it sin," mused Satan.

"On a little planet this Thing arises, this red earth, this Adam, this Edomite, this Job. He builds cities, he tills the earth, he catches the lightning and makes a slave of it, he changes the breed of beast and grain. Clever things to do, but still petty things. You say that in some manner he is to come up at last to *this*.... He is too foolish and too weak. His achievements only illuminate his limitations. Look at his little brain boxed up from growth in a skull of bone! Look at his bag of a body full of rags and rudiments, a haggis of diseases! His life is decay.... *Does* he grow? I do not see it. Has he made any perceptible step forward in quality in the last ten thousand years? He quarrels endlessly and aimlessly with himself.... In a little while his planet will cool and freeze."

"In the end he will rule over the stars," said the voice that was above Satan. "My spirit is in him."

Satan shaded his face with his hand from the effulgence about him. He said no more for a time, but sat watching mankind as a boy might sit on the bank of a stream and watch the fry of minnows in the clear water of a shallow.

"Nay," he said at last, "but it is incredible. It is impossible. I have disturbed and afflicted him long enough. I have driven him as far as he can be driven. But now I am moved to pity. Let us end this dispute. It has been interesting, but now — Is it not enough? It grows cruel. He has reached his limit. Let us give him a little peace now, Lord, a little season of sunshine and plenty, and then some painless universal pestilence and so let him die."

"He is immortal and he does but begin."

"He is mortal and near his end. At times no doubt he has a certain air that seems to promise understanding and mastery in his world; it

is but an air; give me the power to afflict and subdue him but a little, and after a few squeaks of faith and hope he will whine and collapse like any other beast. He will behave like any kindred creature with a smaller brain and a larger jaw; he too is doomed to suffer to no purpose, to struggle by instinct merely to live, to endure for a season and then to pass.... Give me but the power and you shall see his courage snap like a rotten string."

"You may do all that you will to him, only you must not slay him. For my spirit is in him."

"That he will cast out of his own accord — when I have ruined his hopes, mocked his sacrifices, blackened his skies and filled his veins with torture.... But it is too easy to do. Let me just slay him now and end his story. Then let us begin another, a different one, and something more amusing. Let us, for example, put brains — and this Soul of yours — into the ants or the bees or the beavers! Or take up the octopus, already a very tactful and intelligent creature!"

"No; but do as you have said, Satan. For you also are my instrument. Try Man to the uttermost. See if he is indeed no more than a little stir amidst the slime, a fuss in the mud that signifies nothing...."

§ 5

The Satan, his face hidden in shadow, seemed not to hear this, but remained still and intent upon the world of men.

And as that brown figure, with its vast halo like the worn tail of some fiery peacock, brooded high over the realms of being, this that follows happened to a certain man upon the earth.

II. — AT SEA VIEW SUNDERING-ON-SEA

§ 1

IN an uncomfortable armchair of slippery black horsehair, in a mean apartment at Sundering-on-Sea, sat a sick man staring dully out of the window. It was an oppressive day, hot under a leaden sky; there was scarcely a movement in the air save for the dull thudding of the gun practice at Shorehamstow. A multitude of flies crawled and buzzed fitfully about the room, and ever and again some chained-up cur in the neighbourhood gave tongue to its discontent. The window looked out upon a vacant building lot, a waste of scorched grass and rusty rubbish surrounded by a fence of barrel staves and barbed wire. Between the ruinous notice-board of some pre-war building enterprise and the gaunt verandah of a convalescent home, on which the motionless blue forms of two despondent wounded men in deck chairs were visible, came the sea view which justified the name of the house; beyond a wide waste of mud, over which quivered the heat-tormented air, the still anger of the heavens lowered down to meet in a line of hard conspiracy, the steely criminality of the remote deserted sea.

The man in the chair flapped his hand and spoke. "You accursed creature," he said. "Why did God make flies?"

After a long interval he sighed deeply and repeated: *"Why?"*

He made a fitful effort to assume a more comfortable position, and relapsed at last into his former attitude of brooding despondency.

When presently his landlady came in to lay the table for lunch, an almost imperceptible wincing alone betrayed his sense of the threatening swish and emphasis of her movements. She was manifestly heated by cooking, and a smell of burnt potatoes had drifted in with her appearance. She was a meagre little woman with a resentful manner, glasses pinched her sharp red nose, and as she spread out the grey-white diaper and rapped down the knives and forks in their places she glanced at him darkly as if his inattention aggrieved her. Twice she was moved to speak and did not do so, but at length she could endure his indifference no longer. "Still feeling ill

I suppose, Mr. ‘Uss?” she said, in the manner of one who knows only too well what the answer will be.

He started at the sound of her voice, and gave her his attention as if with an effort. “I beg your pardon, Mrs. Croome?”

The landlady repeated with acerbity, “ I arst if you was still feeling ill, Mr. ‘Uss.”

He did not look at her when he replied, but glanced towards her out of the corner of his eyes. “Yes,” he said. “Yes, I am. I am afraid I am ill.” She made a noise of unfriendly confirmation that brought his face round to her. “But mind you, Mrs. Croome, I don’t want Mrs. Huss worried about it. She has enough to trouble her just now. Quite enough.”

“Misfortunes don’t ever come singly,” said Mrs. Croome with quiet satisfaction, leaning across the table to brush some spilt salt from off the cloth to the floor. She was not going to make any rash promises about Mrs. Huss.

“We ‘ave to bear up with what is put upon us,” said Mrs. Croome. “We ‘ave to find strength where strength is to be found.”

She stood up and regarded him with pensive malignity. “Very likely all you want is a tonic of some sort. Very likely you’ve just let yourself go. I shouldn’t be surprised.”

The sick man gave no welcome to this suggestion.

“If you was to go round to the young doctor at the corner — Barrack isnameis — very likely he’d put you right. Everybody says he’s very clever. Not that me and Croome put much faith in doctors. Nor need to. But you ‘re in a different position.”

The man in the chair had been to see the young doctor at the corner twice already, but he did not want to discuss that interview with Mrs. Croome just then. “I must think about it,” he said evasively.

“After all it isn’t fair to yourself, it isn’t fair to others, to sicken — for it might be anythink — without proper advice. Sitting there and doing nothing. Especially in lodgings at this time of year. It isn’t, well not what I call considerate.”

“Exactly,” said Mr. Huss weakly.

“There’s homes and hospitals properly equipped.”

The sick man nodded his head appreciatively.

“If things are nipped in the bud they’re nipped in the bud, otherwise they grow and make trouble.”

It was exactly what her hearer was thinking.

Mrs. Croome ducked to the cellarette of a gaunt sideboard and rapped out a whisky bottle, a bottle of lime-juice, and a soda-water syphon upon the table. She surveyed her handiwork with a critical eye. “Cruet,” she whispered, and vanished from the room, leaving the door, after a tormenting phase of creaking, to slam by its own weight behind her....

The invalid raised his hand to his forehead and found it wet with perspiration. His hand was trembling violently. “My *God*!” he whispered.

§ 2

This man’s name was Job Huss. His father had been called Job before him, and so far as the family tradition extended the eldest son had always been called Job. Four weeks ago he would have been esteemed by most people a conspicuously successful and enviable man, and then had come a swift rush of disaster.

He had been the headmaster of the great modern public school at Woldingstanton in Norfolk, a revived school under the Papermakers’ Guild of the City of London; he had given himself without stint to its establishment and he had made a great name in the world for it and for himself. He had been the first English schoolmaster to liberate the modern side from the entanglement of its lower forms with the classical masters; it was the only school in England where Spanish and Russian were honestly taught; his science laboratories were the best school laboratories in Great Britain and perhaps in the world, and his new methods in the teaching of history and politics brought a steady stream of foreign inquirers to Woldingstanton. The hand of the adversary had touched him first just at the end of the summer term. There had been an epidemic of measles in which, through the inexplicable negligence of a trusted nurse, two boys had died. On the afternoon of the second of these deaths an assistant master was killed by an explosion in the chemical laboratory. Then on the very last

night of the term came the School House fire, in which two of the younger boys were burnt to death.

Against any single one of these misfortunes Mr. Huss and his school might have maintained an unbroken front, but their quick succession had a very shattering effect. Every circumstance conspired to make these events vividly dreadful to Mr. Huss. He had been the first to come to the help of his chemistry master, who had fallen among some carboys of acid, and though still alive and struggling, was blinded, nearly faceless, and hopelessly mangled. The poor fellow died before he could be extricated. On the night of the fire Mr. Huss strained himself internally and bruised his foot very painfully, and he himself found and carried out the charred body of one of the two little victims from the room in which they had been trapped by the locking of a door during some "last day" ragging. It added an element of exasperating inconvenience to his greater distresses that all his papers and nearly all his personal possessions were burnt.

On the morning after the fire Mr. Huss's solicitor committed suicide. He was an old friend to whom Mr. Huss had entrusted the complete control of the savings that were to secure him and Mrs. Huss a dignified old age. The lawyer was a man of strong political feelings and liberal views, and he had bought roubles to his utmost for Mr. Huss as for himself, in order to demonstrate his confidence in the Russian revolution.

All these things had a quite sufficiently disorganizing effect upon Mr. Huss; upon his wife the impression they made was altogether disastrous. She was a worthy but emotional lady, effusive rather than steadfast. Like the wives of most schoolmasters, she had been habitually preoccupied with matters of domestic management for many years, and her first reaction was in the direction of a bitter economy, mingled with a display of contempt she had never manifested hitherto for her husband's practical ability. Far better would it have been for him, Huss, if she had broken down altogether; she insisted upon directing everything, and doing so with a sort of pitiful vehemence that brooked no contradiction. It was impossible to stay at Woldingstanton through the vacation, in sight of the tragic and blackened ruins of School House, and so she decided upon

Sundering-on-Sea because of its nearness and its pre-war reputation for cheapness. There, she announced, her husband must "pull himself together and pick up," and then return to the rebuilding of School House and the rehabilitation of the school. Many formalities had to be gone through before the building could be put in hand, for in those days Britain was at the extremity of her war effort, and labour and material were unobtainable without special permits and great exertion. Sundering-on-Sea was as convenient a place as anywhere from which to write letters, but his idea of going to London to see influential people was resisted by Mrs. Huss on the score of the expense, and overcome when he persisted in it by a storm of tears.

On her arrival at Sundering Mrs. Huss put up at the Railway Hotel for the night, and spent the next morning in a stern visitation of possible lodgings. Something in the unassuming outlook of Sea View attracted her, and after a long dispute she was able to beat down Mrs. Croome's demand from five to four and a half guineas a week. That afternoon some importunate applicant in an extremity of homelessness — for there had been a sudden rush of visitors to Sundering — offered six guineas. Mrs. Croome tried to call off her first bargain, but Mrs. Huss was obdurate, and thereafter all the intercourse of landlady and her lodgers went to the unspoken refrain of "I get four and a half guineas and I ought to get six." To recoup herself Mrs. Croome attempted to make extra charges for the use of the bathroom, for cooking after five o 'clock, for cleaning Mr. Huss's brown boots with specially bought brown cream instead of blacking, and for the ink used by him in his very voluminous correspondence; upon all of which points there was much argument and bitterness.

But a heavier blow than any they had hitherto experienced was now to fall upon Mr. and Mrs. Huss. Job in the ancient story had seven sons and three daughters, and they were all swept away. This Job was to suffer a sharper thrust; he had but one dear only son, a boy of great promise, who had gone into the Royal Flying Corps. News came that he had been shot down over the German lines.

Unhappily there had been a conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Huss about this boy. Huss had been proud that the youngster should choose the heroic service; Mrs. Huss had done her utmost to prevent his joining it. The poor lady was now ruthless in her anguish. She

railed upon him as the murderer of their child. She hoped he was pleased with his handiwork. He could count one more name on his list; he could add it to the roll of honour in the chapel "with the others." Her *baby* boy! This said, she went wailing from the room.

The wretched man sat confounded. That "with the others " cut him to the heart. For the school chapel had a list of V.C.'s, D.C.M.'s and the like, second to none, and it had indeed been a pride to him.

For some days his soul was stunned. He was utterly exhausted and lethargic. He could hardly attend to the most necessary letters. From dignity, hope, and a great sheaf of activities, his life had shrunken abruptly to the compass of this dingy lodging, pervaded by the squabbling of two irrational women; his work in the world was in ruins; he had no strength left in him to struggle against fate. And a vague internal pain crept slowly into his consciousness.

His wife, insane now and cruel with sorrow, tried to put a great quarrel upon him about wearing mourning for their son. He had always disliked and spoken against these pomps of death, but she insisted that whatever callousness he might display she at least must wear black. He might, she said, rest assured that she would spend no more money than the barest decency required; she would buy the cheapest material, and make it up in her bedroom. But black she must have. This resolution led straight to a conflict with Mrs. Croome, who objected to her best bedroom being littered with bits of black stuff, and cancelled the loan of her sewing machine. The mourning should be made, Mrs. Huss insisted, though she had to sew every stitch of it by hand. And the poor distraught lady in her silly parsimony made still deeper trouble for herself by cutting her material in every direction half an inch or more short of the paper pattern. She came almost to a physical tussle with Mrs. Croome because of the state of the carpet and counterpane, and Mrs. Croome did her utmost to drag Mr. Huss into an altercation upon the matter with her husband.

"Croome don't interfere much, but some things he or nobody ain't going to stand, Mr. Huss."

For some days in this battlefield of insatiable grief and petty cruelty, and with a dull pain steadily boring its way to recognition, Mr. Huss forced himself to carry on in a fashion the complex of

business necessitated by the school disaster. Then in the night came a dream, as dreams sometimes will, to enlighten him upon his bodily condition. Projecting from his side he saw a hard, white body that sent round, wormlike tentacles into every corner of his being. A number of doctors were struggling to tear this thing away from him. At every effort the pain increased.

He awoke, but the pain throbbed on.

He lay quite still. Upon the heavy darkness he saw the word "Cancer," bright red and glowing — as pain glows....

He argued in the face of invincible conviction. He kept the mood conditional. "If it be so," he said, though he knew that the thing was so. What should he do? There would have to be operations, great expenses, enfeeblement....

Whom could he ask for advice? Who would help him?...

Suppose in the morning he were to take a bathing ticket as if he meant to bathe, and struggle out beyond the mud-flats. He could behave as though cramp had taken him suddenly....

Five minutes of suffocation he would have to force himself through, and then *peace* — endless peace!

"No," he said, with a sudden gust of courage. "I will fight it out to the end."

But his mind was too dull to form plans and physically he was afraid. He would have to find a doctor somehow, and even that little task appalled him.

Then he would have to tell Mrs. Huss....

For a time he lay quite still as if he listened to the alternative swell and diminuendo of his pain.

"Oh! if I had someone to help me!" he whispered, and was overcome by the lonely misery of his position. "If I had someone"!

For years he had never wept, but now tears were wrung from him. He rolled over and buried his face in the pillow and tried to wriggle his body away from that steady gnawing; he fretted as a child might do."

The night about him was as it were a great watching presence that would not help nor answer.

§ 3

Behind the brass plate at the corner which said "Dr. Elihu Barrack" Mr. Huss found a hard, competent young man, who had returned from the war to his practice at Sundering after losing a leg. The mechanical substitute seemed to have taken to him very kindly. He appeared to be both modest and resourceful; his unfavourable diagnosis was all the more convincing because it was tentative and conditional. He knew the very specialist for the case; no less a surgeon than Sir Alpheus Mengo came, it happened, quite frequently to play golf on the Sundering links. It would be easy to arrange for him to examine Mr. Huss in Dr. Barrack's little consulting room, and if an operation had to be performed it could be managed with a minimum of expense in Mr. Huss's own lodgings without any extra charge for mileage and the like.

"Of course," said Mr. Huss, "of course," with a clear vision of Mrs. Croome confronted with the proposal.

Sir Alpheus Mengo came down the next Saturday, and made a clandestine examination. He decided to operate the following week-end. Mr. Huss was left at his own request to break the news to his wife and to make the necessary arrangements for this use of Mrs. Croome's rooms. But it was two days before he could bring himself to broach the matter.

He sat now listening to the sounds of his wife moving about in the bedroom overhead, and to the muffled crashes that intimated the climax of Mrs. Croome's preparation of the midday meal. He heard her calling upstairs to know whether Mrs. Huss was ready for her to serve up. He was seized with panic as a schoolboy might be who had not prepared his lesson. He tried hastily to frame some introductory phrases, but nothing would come into his mind save terms of disgust and lamentation. The sullen heat of the day mingled in one impression with his pain. He was nauseated by the smell of cooking. He felt it would be impossible to sit up at table and pretend to eat the meal of burnt bacon and potatoes that was all too evidently coming.

It came. Its progress along the passage was announced by a clatter of dishes. The door was opened by a kick. Mrs. Croome put the feast upon the table with something between defence and defiance in her

manner. “What else,” she seemed to intimate, “could one expect for four and a half guineas a week in the very height of the season? From a woman who could have got six!”

“Your dinner’s there,” Mrs. Croome called upstairs to Mrs. Huss in tones of studied negligence, and then retired to her own affairs in the kitchen, slamming the door behind her.

The room quivered down to silence, and then Mr. Huss could hear the footsteps of his wife crossing the bedroom and descending the staircase.

Mrs. Huss was a dark, graceful, and rather untidy lady of seven and forty, with the bridling bearing of one who habitually repels implicit accusations. She lifted the lid of the vegetable dish. “I thought I smelt burning,” she said. “The woman is impossible.”

She stood by her chair, regarding her husband and waiting.

He rose reluctantly, and transferred himself to a seat at table.

It had always been her custom to carve. She now prepared to serve him. “No,” he said, full of loathing. “I can’t eat. I *can’t*.”

She put down the tablespoon and fork she had just raised, and regarded him with eyes of dark disapproval.

“It’s all we can get,” she said.

He shook his head. “It isn’t that.”

“I don’t know what you expect me to get for you here,” she complained. “The tradesmen don’t know us — and don’t care.”

“It isn’t that. I’m ill.”

“It’s the heat. We are all ill. Everyone. In such weather as this. It’s no excuse for not making an effort, situated as we are.”

“I mean I am really ill. I am in pain.”

She looked at him as one might look at an unreasonable child. He was constrained to more definite statement.

“I suppose I must tell you sooner or later. I’ve had to see a doctor.”

“Without consulting me”!

“I thought if it turned out to be fancy I needn’t bother you.”

“But how did you find a doctor?”

“There’s a fellow at the corner. Oh! it’s no good making a long story of it. I have cancer.... Nothing will do but an operation.” Self-pity wrung him. He controlled a violent desire to cry. “I am too ill to

eat. I ought to be lying down."

She flopped back in her chair and stared at him as one stares at some hideous monstrosity. "Oh!" she said. "To have cancer now! In these lodgings!"

"I can't *help* it, " he said in accents that were almost a whine. "I didn't choose the time."

"Cancer!" she cried reproachfully. "The horror of it!"

He looked at her for a moment with hate in his heart. He saw under her knitted brows dark and hostile eyes that had once sparkled with affection, he saw a loose mouth with downturned corners that had been proud and pretty, and this mask of dislike was projecting forward upon a neck he had used to call her head-stalk, so like had it seemed to the stem of some pretty flower. She had had lovely shoulders and an impudent humour; and now the skin upon her neck and shoulders had a little loosened, and she was no longer impudent but harsh. Her brows were moist with heat, and her hair more than usually astray. But these things did not increase, they mitigated his antagonism. They did not repel him as defects; they hurt him as wounds received in a common misfortune. Always he had petted and spared and rejoiced in her vanity and weakness, and now as he realized the full extent of her selfish abandonment a protective pity arose in his heart that overcame his physical pain. It was terrible to see how completely her delicacy and tenderness of mind had been broken down. She had neither the strength nor the courage left even for an unselfish thought. And he could not help her; whatever power he had possessed over her mind had gone long ago. His magic had departed.

Latterly he had been thinking very much of her prospects if he were to die. In some ways his death might be a good thing for her. He had an endowment assurance running that would bring in about seven thousand pounds immediately at his death, but which would otherwise involve heavy annual payments for some years. So far, to die would be clear gain. But who would invest this money for her and look after her interests? She was, he knew, very silly about property; suspicious of people she knew intimately, and greedy and credulous with strangers. He had helped to make her incompetent, and he owed it to her to live and protect her if he could. And behind

that intimate and immediate reason for living he had a strong sense of work in the world yet to be done by him, and a task in education still incomplete.

He spoke with his chin in his hand and his eyes staring at the dark and distant sea. “An operation,” he said, “ might cure me.”

Her thoughts, it became apparent, had been travelling through some broken and unbeautiful country roughly parallel with the course of his own. “But need there be an operation?” she thought aloud. “Are they ever any good?”

“I could die,” he admitted bitterly, and repented as he spoke.

There had been times, he remembered, when she had said and done sweet and gallant things, poor soul! poor broken companion! And now she had fallen into a darkness far greater than his. He had feared that he had hurt her, and then when he saw that she was not hurt, and that she scrutinized his face eagerly as if she weighed the sincerity of his words, his sense of utter loneliness was completed.

Over his mean drama of pain and debasement in its close atmosphere buzzing with flies, it was as if some gigantic and remorseless being watched him as a man of science might hover over some experiment, and marked his life and all his world. “You are alone,” this brooding witness counselled, “you are utterly alone. *Curse God and die*.”

It seemed a long time before Mr. Huss answered this imagined voice, and when he answered it he spoke as if he addressed his wife alone.

“No,” he said with a sudden decisiveness. “No. I will face that operation.... We are ill and our hearts are faint. Neither for you, dear, nor for me must our story finish in this fashion. No. I shall go on to the end.”

“And have your operation here?” “In this house. It is by far the most convenient place, as things are.”

“You may die here!”

“Well, I shall die fighting.”

“Leaving me here with Mrs. Croome.”

His temper broke under her reply. “Leaving you here with Mrs. Croome,” he said harshly.

He got up. “I can eat nothing,” he repeated, and dropped back

sullenly into the horsehair arm-chair.

There was a long silence, and then he heard the little, almost mouselike, movements of his wife as she began her meal. For a while he had forgotten the dull ache within him, but now, glowing and fading and glowing, it made its way back into his consciousness. He was helpless and perplexed; he had not meant to quarrel. He had hurt this poor thing who had been his love and companion; he had bullied her. His clogged brain could think of nothing to set matters right. He stared with dull eyes at a world utterly hateful to him.

III. — THE THREE VISITORS

§ 1

WHILE this unhappy conversation was occurring at Sundering- on-Sea, three men were discussing the case of Mr. Huss very earnestly over a meatless but abundant lunch in the bow window of a club that gives upon the trees and sunshine of Carlton Gardens. Lobster salad engaged them, and the ice in the jug of hock cup clinked very pleasantly as they replenished their glasses.

The host was Sir Eliphaz Burrows, the patentee and manufacturer of those Temanite building blocks which have not only revolutionized the construction of army hutments, but put the whole problem of industrial and rural housing upon an altogether new footing; his guests were Mr. William Dad, formerly the maker of the celebrated Dad and Showhite car de luxe, and now one of the chief contractors for aeroplanes in England; and Mr. Joseph Farr, the head of the technical section of Woldingstanton School. Both the former gentlemen were governors of that foundation and now immensely rich, and Sir Eliphaz had once been a pupil of the father of Mr. Huss and had played a large part in the appointment of the latter to Woldingstanton. He was a slender old man, with an avid vulturine head poised on a long red neck, and he had an abundance of parti-coloured hair, red and white, springing from a circle round the crown of his head, from his eyebrows, his face generally, and the backs of his hands. He wore a blue soft shirt with a turn-down collar within a roomy blue serge suit, and that and something about his large loose black tie suggested scholarship and refinement. His manners were elaborately courteous. Mr. Dad was a compacter, keener type, warily alert in his bearing, an industrial fox-terrier from the Midlands, silver-haired and dressed in ordinary morning dress except for a tan vest with a bright brown ribbon border. Mr. Farr was big in a grey flannel Norfolk suit; he had a large, round, white, shiny, clean-shaven face and uneasy hands, and it was apparent that he carried pocket-books and suchlike luggage in his breast pocket. They consumed the lobster appreciatively, and approached in a

fragmentary and tentative manner the business that had assembled them: namely, the misfortunes that had overwhelmed Mr. Huss and their bearing upon the future of the school.

"For my part I don't think there is such a thing as misfortune," said Mr. Dad. "I don't hold with it. Miscalculation *if* you like."

"In a sense," said Mr. Farr ambiguously, glancing at Sir Eliphaz.

"If a man keeps his head screwed on the right way," said Mr. Dad, and attacked a claw with hope and appetite. Mr. Dad affected the parsimony of unfinished sentences.

"I can't help thinking," said Sir Eliphaz, putting down his glass and wiping his moustache and eyebrows with care before resuming his lobster, " that a man who entrusts his affairs to a solicitor, after the fashion of the widow and orphan, must be singularly lacking in judgment. Or reckless. Never in the whole course of my life have I met a solicitor who could invest money safely and profitably. Clergymen I have known, women of all sorts, savages, monomaniacs, criminals, but never solicitors."

"I have known some smart business parsons," said Mr. Dad judicially. "One in particular. Sharp as nails. They are a much underestimated class."

"Perhaps it is natural that a solicitor should be a wild investor," Sir Eliphaz pursued his subject. "He lives out of the ordinary world in a dirty little office in some antiquated inn, his office fittings are fifty years out of date, his habitual scenery consists of tin boxes painted with the names of dead and disreputable clients; he has to take the law courts, filled with horse-boxes and men dressed up in gowns and horse-hair wigs, quite seriously; nobody ever goes near him but abnormal people or people in abnormal states: people upset by jealousy, people upset by fear, blackmailed people, cheats trying to dodge the law, lunatics, litigants and legatees. The only investments he ever discusses are queer investments. Naturally he loses all sense of proportion. Naturally he becomes insanely suspicious; and when a client asks for positive action he flounders and gambles."

"Naturally," said Mr. Dad. "And here we find poor Huss giving all his business over—"

"Exactly," said Sir Eliphaz, and filled his glass.

“There’s been a great change in him in the last two years,” said Mr. Farr. “He let the war worry him for one thing.”

“No good doing that,” said Mr. Dad.

“And even before the war,” Sir Eliphaz.

“Even before the war,” said Mr. Farr, in a pause.

“There was a change,” said Sir Eliphaz. “He had been bitten by educational theories.”

“No business for a headmaster,” said Mr. Farr.

“Our intention had always been a great scientific and technical school,” said Sir Eliphaz. “He introduced Logic into the teaching of plain English — against my opinion. He encouraged some of the boys to read philosophy.”

“All he could,” said Mr. Farr.

“I never held with his fad for teaching history,” said Mr. Dad. “He was history mad. It got worse and worse. What’s history after all? At the best, it’s over and done with.... But he wouldn’t argue upon it — not reasonably. He was — overbearing. He had a way of looking at you.... It was never our intention to make Woldingstanton into a school of history.”

“And now, Mr. Farr,” said Sir Eliphaz, “what are the particulars of the fire?”

“It isn’t for me to criticize,” said Mr. Farr.

“What I say,” said Mr. Dad, projecting his muzzle with an appearance of great determination, “ is, fix responsibility. *Fix responsibility.* Here is a door locked that common sense dictated should be open. Who was responsible?”

“No one in School House seems to have been especially responsible for that door so far as I can ascertain,” said Mr. Farr.

“All responsibility,” said Mr. Dad, with an expression of peevish insistence, as though Mr. Farr had annoyed him, “*all* responsibility that is not delegated rests with the Head. That’s a hard and fast and primary rule of business organization. In my factory I say quite plainly to everyone who comes into it, man or woman, chick or child...”

Mr. Dad was still explaining in a series of imaginary dialogues, tersely but dramatically, his methods of delegating authority, when Sir Eliphaz cut across the flow with, “ Returning to Mr. Huss for a

moment...”

The point that Sir Eliphaz wanted to get at was whether Mr. Huss expected to continue headmaster at Woldingstanton. From some chance phrase in a letter Sir Eliphaz rather gathered that he did.

“Well,” said Mr. Farr portentously, letting the thing hang for a moment, “he does.”

“Tcha!” said Mr. Dad, and shut his mouth tightly and waved his head slowly from side to side with knitted brows as if he had bitten his tongue.

“I would be the first to recognize the splendid work he did for the school in his opening years,” said Mr. Farr. “I would be the last to alter the broad lines of the work as he set it out. Barring that I should replace a certain amount of the biological teaching and practically all this new history stuff by chemistry and physics. But one has to admit that Mr. Huss did not know when to relinquish power nor when to devolve responsibility. We, all of us, the entire staff — it is no mere personal grievance of mine — were kept, well, to say the least of it, in tutelage. Rather than let authority go definitely out of his hands, he would allow things to drift. Witness that door, witness the business of the nurse.”

Mr. Dad, with his lips compressed, nodded his head; each nod like the tap of a hammer.

“I never believed in all this overdoing history in the school,” Mr. Dad remarked rather disconnectedly. “If you get rid of Latin and Greek, why bring it all back again in another form f Why, I’m told he taught J em things about Assyria. Assyria! A modern school ought to be a modern school business first and business last and business all the time. And teach boys to work. We shall need it, mark my words.”

“A certain amount of modern culture,” waved Sir Eliphaz.

“*Modern*,” said Mr. Farr softly.

Mr. Dad grunted. “In my opinion that sort of thing gives the boys ideas.”

Mr. Farr steered his way discreetly. “Science with a due regard to its technical applications should certainly be the substantial part of a modern education.”...

They were in the smoking-room and half way through three princely cigars before they got beyond such fragmentary detractions

of the fallen headmaster. Then Mr. Dad in the clear-cut style of a business man, brought his companions to action. “Well,” said Mr. Dad, turning abruptly upon Sir Eliphaz, “ what about it?”

“It is manifest that Woldingstanton has to enter on a new phase; what has happened brings us to the parting of the ways,” said Sir Eliphaz. “Much as I regret the misfortunes of an old friend.”

“That,” said Mr. Dad, “spells Farr.”

“If he will shoulder the burthen,” said Sir Eliphaz, smiling upon Mr. Farr not so much with his mouth as by the most engaging convolutions, curvatures and waving about of his various strands of hair.

“I don’t want to see the school go down,” said Mr. Farr. “I’ve given it a good slice of my life.”

“Eight,” said Mr. Dad. “Eight. File that. That suits us. And now how do we set about the affair? The next thing, I take it, is to break it to Huss.... How?”

He paused to give the ideas of his companions a fair chance.

“Well, my idea is this. None of us want to be hard on Mr. Huss. Luck has been hard enough as it is. We want to do this job as gently as we can. It happens that I go and play golf at Sundering-on-Sea ever and again. Excellent links, well kept up all things considered, and the big hotel close by does you wonderfully, the railway company sees to that; in spite of the war. Well, why shouldn’t we all, if Sir Eliphaz’s engagements permit, go down there in a sort of casual way, and take the opportunity of a good clear talk with him and settle it all up? The thing’s got to be done, and it seems to me altogether more kindly to go there personally and put it to him than do it by correspondence. Very likely we could put it to him in such a way that he himself would suggest the very arrangement we want. You particularly, Sir Eliphaz, being as you say an old friend.”

§ 2

Since there was little likelihood of Mr. Huss going away from Sundering-on-Sea, it did not appear necessary to Mr. Dad to apprise him of the projected visitation. And so these three gentlemen heard

nothing about any operation for cancer until they reached that resort.

Mr. Dad came down early on Friday afternoon to the Golf Hotel, where he had already engaged rooms for the party. He needed the relaxation of the links very badly, the task of accumulating a balance sufficiently large to secure an opulent future for British industry, with which Mr. Dad in his straightforward way identified himself, was one that in a controlled establishment between the Scylla of aggressive labour and the Charybdis of the war-profits tax, strained his mind to the utmost. He was joined by Mr. Farr at dinner-time, and Sir Eliphaz, who was detained in London by some negotiations with the American Government, arrived replete by the dining-car train. Mr. Farr made a preliminary reconnaissance at Sea View, and was the first to hear of the operation.

Sir Alpheus Mengo was due at Sea View by the first morning train on Saturday. He had arranged to operate before lunch. It was clear therefore that the only time available for a conversation between the three and Mr. Huss was between breakfast and the arrival of Sir Alpheus.

Mr. Huss, whose lethargy had now departed, displayed himself feverishly anxious to talk about the school. “There are points I must make clear,” he said, “ vital points,” and so a meeting was arranged for half -past nine. This would give a full hour before the arrival of the doctors.

“He feels that in a way it will be his testament, so to speak,” said Mr. Farr. “Naturally he has his own ideas about the future of the school. We all have. I would be the last person to suggest that he could say anything about Woldingstanton that would not be well worth hearing. Some of us may have heard most of it before, and be better able to discount some of his assertions. But that under the present circumstances is neither here nor there.”

§ 3

Matters in the confined space of Sea View were not nearly so strained as Mr. Huss had feared. The prospect of an operation was not without its agreeable side to Mrs. Croome. Possibly she would

have preferred that the subject should have been Mrs. rather than Mr. Huss, but it was clear that she made no claim to dictate upon this point. Her demand for special fees to meet the inconveniences of the occasion had been met quite liberally by Mr. Huss. And there was a genuine appreciation of order and method in Mrs. Croome; she was a furious spring-cleaner, a hurricane tidier-up, her feeling for the discursive state of Mrs. Huss's hair was almost as involuntary as a racial animosity; and the swift dexterous preparations of the nurse who presently came to convert the best bedroom to surgical uses, impressed her deeply. She was allowed to help. Superfluous hangings and furnishings were removed, everything was thoroughly scrubbed, at the last moment clean linen sheets of a wonderful hardness were to be spread over every exposed surface. They were to be brought in sterilized drums. The idea of sterilized drums fascinated her. She had never heard of such things before. She wished she could keep her own linen in a sterilized drum always, and let her lodgers have something else instead.

She felt she was going to be a sort of assistant priestess at a sacrifice, the sacrifice of Mr. Huss. She had always secretly feared his submissive quiet as a thing unaccountable that might at any time turn upon her; she suspected him of ironies; and he would be helpless, under chloroform, subject to examination with no possibilities of disconcerting repartee. She did her best to persuade Dr. Barrack that she would be useful in the room during the proceedings. Her imagination conjured up a wonderful vision of the Huss interior as a great chest full of strange and interesting viscera with the lid wide open and Sir Alpheus picking thoughtfully, with deprecatory remarks, amid its contents. But that sight was denied her.

She was very helpful and cheerful on the Saturday morning, addressing herself to the consolation of Mr. and the bracing-up of Mrs. Huss. She assisted in the final transformation of the room.

"It might be a real 'ospital," she said. "Nursing must be nice work. I never thought of it like this before."

Mr. Huss was no longer depressed but flushed and resolute, but Mrs. Huss, wounded by the neglect of everyone — no one seemed to consider for a moment what she must be feeling — remained very

much in her own room, working inefficiently upon the mourning that might now be doubly needed.

§ 4

Mr. Huss knew Mr. Farr very well. For the last ten years it had been his earnest desire to get rid of him, but he had been difficult to replace because of his real accomplishment in technical chemistry. In the course of their five minutes' talk in his bedroom on Friday evening, Mr. Huss grasped the situation. Woldingstanton, his creation, his life work, was to be taken out of his hands, and in favour of this, his most soul-deadening assistant. He had been foolish no doubt, but he had never anticipated that. He had never supposed that Farr would dare.

He thought hard through that long night of Friday. His pain was no distraction. He had his intentions very ready and clear in his mind when his three visitors arrived.

He had insisted upon getting up and dressing fully.

"I can't talk about Woldingstanton in bed," he said. The doctor was not there to gainsay him.

Sir Eliphaz was the first to arrive, and Mrs. Huss retrieved him from Mrs. Croome in the passage and brought him in. He was wearing a Norfolk jacket suit of a coarse yet hairy consistency and of a pale sage green colour. He shone greatly in the eyes of Mrs. Huss. "I can't help thinking of you, dear lady," he said, bowing over her hand, and all his hair was for a moment sad and sympathetic like a sick Skye terrier's. Mr. Dad and Mr. Farr entered a moment later; Mr. Farr in grey flannel trousers and a brown jacket, and Mr. Dad in a natty dark grey suit with a luminous purple waistcoat.

"My dear," said Mr. Huss. to his wife, "I must be alone with these gentlemen," and when she seemed disposed to linger near the understanding warmth of Sir Eliphaz, he added, "Figures, my dear — *Finance*," and drove her forth....

"'Pon my honour," said Mr. Dad, coming close up to the armchair, wrinkling his muzzle and putting through his compliments in good business-like style before coming to the harder stuff in hand;

“ I don’t like to see you like this, Mr. Huss.”

“Nor does Sir Eliphaz, I hope — nor Farr. Please find yourselves chairs.”

And while Mr. Farr made protesting noises and Sir Eliphaz waved his hair about before beginning the little speech he had prepared, Mr. Huss took the discourse out of their mouths and began:

“I know perfectly well the task you have set yourselves. You have come to make an end of me as headmaster of Woldingstanton. And Mr. Farr has very obligingly...”

He held up his white and wasted hand as Mr. Farr began to disavow.

“No,” said Mr. Huss. “But before you three gentlemen proceed with your office, I should like to tell you something of what the school and my work in it, and my work for education, is to me. I am a man of little more than fifty. A month ago I counted with a reasonable confidence upon twenty years more of work before I relaxed.... Then these misfortunes rained upon me. I have lost all my private independence; there have been these shocking deaths in the school; my son, my only son... killed... trouble has darkened the love and kindness of my wife... and now my body is suffering so that my mind is like a swimmer struggling through waves of pain... far from land.... These are heavy blows. But the hardest blow of all, harder to bear than any of these others — I do not speak rashly, gentlemen, I have thought it out through an endless night — the last blow will be this rejection of my life work. That will strike the inmost me, the heart and soul of me....”

He paused.

“You mustn’t take it quite like that, Mr. Huss,” protested Mr. Dad. “It isn’t fair to us to put it like that.”

“I want you to listen to me,” said Mr. Huss.

“Only the very kindest motives,” continued Mr. Dad.

“Let me speak,” said Mr. Huss, with the voice of authority that had ruled Woldingstanton for five and twenty years. “I cannot wrangle and contradict. At most we have an hour.”

Mr. Dad made much the same sound that a dog will make when it has proposed to bark and has been told to get under the table. For a time he looked an ill-used man.

“To end my work in the school will be to end me altogether.... I do not see why I should not speak plainly to you, gentlemen, situated as I am here. I do not see why I should not talk to you for once in my own language. Pain and death are our interlocutors; this is a rare and raw and bleeding occasion; in an hour or so the women may be laying out my body and I may be silent for ever. I have hidden my religion, but why should I hide it now? To you I have always tried to seem as practical and self-seeking as possible, but in secret I have been a fanatic; and Woldingstanton was the altar on which I offered myself to God. I have done ill and feebly there I know; I have been indolent and rash; those were my weaknesses; but I have done my best. To the limits of my strength and knowledge I have served God.... And now in this hour of darkness where is this God that I have served? Why does he not stand here between me and this last injury you would do to the work I have dedicated to him?”

At these words Mr. Dad turned horrified eyes to Mr. Farr.

But Mr. Huss went on as though talking to himself. “In the night I have looked into my heart; I have sought in my heart for base motives and secret sins. I have put myself on trial to find why God should hide himself from me now, and I can find no reason and no justification.... In the bitterness of my heart I am tempted to give way to you and to tell you to take the school and to do just what you will with it.... The nearness of death makes the familiar things of experience flimsy and unreal, and far more real to me now is this darkness that broods over me, as blight will sometimes overhang the world at noon, and mocks me day and night with a perpetual challenge to curse God and die....

“Why do I not curse God and die? Why do I cling to my work when the God to whom I dedicated it is — silent? Because, I suppose, I still hope for some sign of reassurance. Because I am not yet altogether defeated. I would go on telling you why I want Woldingstanton to continue on its present lines and why it is impossible for you, why it will be a sort of murder for you to hand it over to Farr here, if my pain were ten times what it is....”

At the mention of his name, Mr. Farr started and looked first at Mr. Dad, and then at Sir Eliphaz. “Really,” he said, “really! One might think I had conspired—”

“I am afraid, Mr. Huss,” said Sir Eliphaz, with a large reassuring gesture to the technical master, “ that the suggestion that Mr. Farr should be your successor came in the first instance from *me*.”

“You must reconsider it,” said Mr. Huss, moistening his lips and staring steadfastly in front of him.

Here Mr. Dad broke out in a querulous voice: “Are you really in a state, Mr. Huss, to discuss a matter like this — feverish and suffering as you are?”

“I could not be in a better frame for this discussion,” said Mr. Huss.... “And now for what I have to say about the school: — Woldingstanton, when I came to it, was a humdrum school of some seventy boys, following a worn-out routine. A little Latin was taught and less Greek, chiefly in order to say that Greek was taught; some scraps of mathematical processes, a few rags of general knowledge, English history — not human history, mind you, but just the national brand, cut dried flowers from the past with no roots and no meaning, a smattering of French.... That was practically all; it was no sort of education, it was a mere education-like posturing. And to-day, what has that school become?”

“We never grudged you money,” said Sir Eliphaz.

“Nor loyal help,” said Mr. Fair, but in a half whisper.

“I am not thinking of its visible prosperity. The houses and laboratories and museums that have grown about that nucleus are nothing in themselves. The reality of a school is not in buildings and numbers but in matters of the mind and soul. Woldingstanton has become a torch at which lives are set aflame. I have lit a candle there — the winds of fate may yet blow it into a world-wide blaze.”

As Mr. Huss said these things he was uplifted by enthusiasm, and his pain sank down out of his consciousness.

“What,” he said, “ is the task of the teacher in the world? It is the greatest of all human tasks. It is to ensure that Man, Man the Divine, grows in the souls of men. For what is a man without instruction? He is born as the beasts are born, a greedy egotism, a clutching desire, a thing of lusts and fears. He can regard nothing except in relation to himself. Even his love is a bargain; and his utmost effort is vanity because he has to die. And it is we teachers alone who can lift him out of that self-preoccupation. We teachers.... We can release him

into a wider circle of ideas beyond himself in which he can at length forget himself and his meagre personal ends altogether. We can open his eyes to the past and to the future and to the undying life of Man. So through us and through us only, he escapes from death and futility. An untaught man is but himself alone, as lonely in his ends and destiny as any beast; a man instructed is a man enlarged from that narrow prison of self into participation in an undying life, that began we know not when, that grows above and beyond the greatness of the stars....”

He spoke as if he addressed some other hearer than the three before him. Mr. Dad, with eyebrows raised and lips compressed, nodded silently to Mr. Farr as if his worst suspicions were confirmed, and there were signs and signals that Sir Eliphaz was about to speak, when Mr. Huss resumed.

“For five and twenty years I have ruled over Woldingstanton, and for all that time I have been giving sight to the blind. I have given understanding to some thousands of boys. All those routines of teaching that had become dead we made live again there. My boys have learnt the history of mankind so that it has become their own adventure; they have learnt geography so that the world is their possession; I have had languages taught to make the past live again in their minds and to be windows upon the souls of alien peoples. Science has played its proper part; it has taken my boys into the secret places of matter and out among the nebulae.... Always I have kept Farr and his utilities in their due subordination. Some of my boys have already made good business-men — because they were more than business-men.... But I have never sought to make business-men and I never will. My boys have gone into the professions, into the services, into the great world and done well I have had dull boys and intractable boys, but nearly all have gone into the world gentlemen, broadminded, good-mannered, understanding and unselfish, masters of self, servants of man, because the whole scheme of their education has been to release them from base and narrow things.... When the war came, my boys were ready.... They have gone to their deaths — how many have gone to their deaths! My own son among them.... I did not grudge him.... Woldingstanton is a new school; its tradition has scarcely begun; the list of its old

boys is now so terribly depleted that its young tradition wilts like a torn seedling.... But still we can keep on with it, still that tradition will grow, if my flame still burns. But my teaching must go on as I have planned it. It must. It must.... What has made my boys all that they are, has been the history, the biological science, the philosophy. For these things are wisdom. All the rest is training and mere knowledge. If the school is to live, the head must still be a man who can teach history — history in the widest sense; he must be philosopher, biologist, and archaeologist as well as scholar. And you would hand that task to Farr! Farr! Farr here has never even touched the essential work of the school. He does not know what it is. His mind is no more opened than the cricket professional's."

Mr. Dad made an impatient noise.

The sick man went on with his burning eyes on Farr, his lips bloodless.

"He thinks of chemistry and physics not as a help to understanding but as a help to trading. So long as he has been at Woldingstanton he has been working furtively with our materials in the laboratories, dreaming of some profitable patent. Oh! I know you, Farr. Do you think I didn't see because I didn't choose to complain? If he could have discovered some profitable patent he would have abandoned teaching the day he did so. He would have been even as you are. But with a lifeless imagination you cannot even invent patentable things. He would talk to the boys of the empire at times, but the empire to him is no more than a trading conspiracy fenced about with tariffs. It goes on to nothing.... And he thinks we are fighting the Germans, he thinks my dear and precious boy gave his life and that all these other brave lads beyond counting died, in order that we might take the place of the Germans as the chapman-bullies of the world. That is the measure of his mind. He has no religion, no faith, no devotion. Why does he want my place? Because he wants to serve as I have served? No! But because he envies my house, my income, my headship. Whether I live or die, it is impossible that Woldingstanton, my Woldingstanton, should live under his hand. Give it to him, and in a little while it will be dead."

“Gentlemen!” Mr. Fair protested with a white perspiring face.

“I had no idea,” ejaculated Mr. Dad, “ I had no idea that things had gone so far.”

Sir Eliphaz indicated by waving his hand that his associates might allay themselves; he recognized that the time had come for him to speak.

“It is deplorable,” Sir Eliphaz began.

He put down his hands and gripped the seat of his chair as if to hold himself on to it very tightly, and he looked very hard at the horizon as if he was trying to decipher some remote inscription. “You have imported a tone into this discussion,” he tried.

He got off at the third attempt. “It is an extremely painful thing to me, Mr. Huss, that to you, standing as you do on the very brink of the Great Chasm, it should be necessary to speak in any but the most cordial and helpful tones. But it is my duty, it is our duty, to hold firmly to those principles which have always guided us as governors of the Woldingstanton School. You speak, I must say it, with an extreme arrogance of an institution to which all of us here have in some measure contributed; you speak as though you, and you alone, were its creator and guide. You must pardon me, Mr. Huss, if I remind you of the facts, the eternal verities of the story. The school, sir, was founded in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, and many a good man guided its fortunes down to the time when an unfortunate — a diversion of its endowments led to its temporary cessation. The Charity Commissioners revived it after an inquiry some fifty years ago, and it has been largely the lavish generosity of the Papermakers’ Guild, of which I and Dad are humble members, that has stimulated its expansion under you. Loth as I am to cross your mood, Mr. Huss, while you are in pain and anxiety, I am bound to recall to you these things which have made your work possible. You could not have made bricks without straw, you could not have built up Woldingstanton without the money obtained by that commercialism for which you display such unqualified contempt. We sordid cits it was who planted, who watered....”

Mr. Huss seemed about to speak, but said nothing.

“Exactly what I say,” said Mr. Dad, turning for confirmation to Mr. Farr. “The school is essentially a modern commercial school. It should be run as that.”

Mr. Farr nodded his white face ambiguously with his eye on Sir Eliphaz.

“I should have been chary, Mr. Huss, of wrangling about our particular shares and contributions on an occasion so solemn as this, but since you will have it so, since you challenge discussion....”

He turned to his colleagues as if for support.

“Go on, “ said Mr. Dad. “Facts are facts.”

§ 6

Sir Eliphaz cleared his throat, and continued to read the horizon.

“I have raised these points, Mr. Huss, by way of an opening. The gist of what I have to say lies deeper. So far I have dealt with the things you have said only in relation to us; as against us you assume your own righteousness, you flout our poor judgments, you sweep them aside; the school must be continued on your lines, the teaching must follow your schemes. You can imagine no alternative opinion. God forbid that I should say a word in my own defence; I have given freely both of my time and of my money to our school; it would tax my secretaries now to reckon up how much; but I make no claims.... None....

“But let me now put all this discussion upon a wider and a graver footing. It is not only us and our poor intentions you arraign. Strange things have dropped from you, Mr. Huss, in this discussion, things it has at once pained and astonished me to hear from you. You have spoken not only of man’s ingratitude, but of God’s. I could scarcely believe my ears, but indeed I heard you say that God was silent, unhelpful, and that he too had deserted you. In spite of the most meritorious exertions on your part.... Standing as you do on the very margin of the Great Secret, I want to plead very earnestly with you against all that you have said.”

Sir Eliphaz seemed to meditate remotely. He returned like a soaring vulture to his victim. “I would be the last man to obtrude my

religious feelings upon anyone.... I make no parade of religion, Mr. Huss, none at all. Many people think me no better than an unbeliever. But here I am bound to make my confession. I owe much to God, Mr. Huss....”

He glowered at the sick man. He abandoned his grip upon the seat of his chair for a moment, to make a gesture with his hairy claw of a hand.

“Your attitude to my God is a far deeper offence to me than any merely personal attack could be. Under his chastening blows, under trials that humbler spirits would receive with thankfulness and construe as lessons and warnings, you betray yourself more proud, more self-assured, more — froward is not too harsh a word — more froward, Mr. Huss, than you were even in the days when we used to fret under you on Founder’s Day in the Great Hall, when you would dictate to us that here you must have an extension and there you must have a museum or a picture room or what not, leaving nothing to opinion, making our gifts a duty.... You will not recognise the virtue of gifts and graces either in man or God.... Cannot you see, my dear Mr. Huss, the falsity of your position! It is upon that point that I want to talk to you now. God does not smite man needlessly. This world is all one vast intention, and not a sparrow falls to the ground unless He wills that sparrow to fall. Is your heart so sure of itself? Does nothing that has happened suggest to you that there may be something in your conduct and direction of Woldingstanton that has made it not quite so acceptable an offering to God as you have imagined it to be?”

Sir Eliphaz paused with an air of giving Mr. Huss his chance, but meeting with 110 response, he resumed: “I am an old man, Mr. Huss, and I have seen much of the world and more particularly of the world of finance and industry, a world of swift opportunities and sudden temptations. I have watched the careers of many young men of parts, who have seemed to be under the impression that the world had been waiting for them overlong; I have seen more promotions, schemes and enterprises, great or grandiose, than I care to recall. Developing Woldingstanton from the mere endowed school of a market-town it was, to its present position, has been for me a subordinate incident, a holiday task, a piece of by-play upon a crowded scene. My

experiences have been on a far greater scale. Far greater. And in all my experience I have never seen what I should call a really right-minded man perish or an innocent dealer — provided, that is, that he took ordinary precautions — destroyed. Ups and downs no doubt there are, for the good as well as the bad. I have seen the foolish taking root for a time — it was but for a time. I have watched the manoeuvres of some exceedingly crafty men."

Sir Eliphaz shook his head slowly from side to side and all the hairs on his head waved about.

He hesitated for a moment, and decided to favour his hearers with a scrap of autobiography.

"Quite recently," he began, "there was a fellow came to us, just as we were laying down our plant for production on a large scale. He was a very plausible, energetic young fellow indeed, an American Armenian. Well, he happened to know somehow that we were going to use kaolin from felspar, a by- product of the new potash process, and he had got hold of a scheme for washing London clay that produced, he assured us, an accessible kaolin just as good for our purpose and not a tenth of the cost of the Norwegian stuff. It would have reduced our prime cost something like thirty per cent. Let alone tonnage. Excuse these technicalities. On the face of it it was a thoroughly good thing. The point was that I knew all along that his stuff retained a certain amount of sulphur and couldn't possibly make a building block to last. That wouldn't prevent us selling and using the stuff with practical impunity. It wasn't up to us to know. No one could have made us liable. The thing indeed looked so plain and safe that I admit it tempted me sorely. And then, Mr. Huss, God came in. I received a secret intimation. I want to tell you of this in all good faith and simplicity. In the night when all the world was deep in sleep, I awoke. And I was in the extremest terror; my very bones were shaking; I sat up in my bed afraid almost to touch the switch of the electric light; my hair stood on end. I could see nothing, I could hear nothing, but it was as if a spirit passed in front of my face. And in spite of the silence something seemed to be saying to me: 'How about God, Sir Eliphaz? Have you at last forgotten Him? How can you, that would dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is the dust, escape His judgments?' That was all, Mr. Huss, just that.

‘Whose foundation is the dust!’ Straight to the point. Well, Mr. Huss, I am not a religious man, but I threw over that Armenian.”

Mr. Dad made a sound to intimate that he would have done the same.

“I mention this experience, this intervention — and it is not the only one of which I could tell — because I want you to get my view that if an enterprise, even though it is as fair and honest-seeming a business as Woldingstanton School, begins suddenly to crumple and wilt, it means that somehow, somewhere you must have been putting the wrong sort of clay into it. It means not that God is wrong and going back upon you, but that you are wrong. You may be a great and famous teacher now, Mr. Huss, thanks not a little to the pedestal we have made for you, but God is a greater and more famous teacher. He manifestly you have not convinced, even if you could have convinced us, of Woldingstanton’s present perfection....

“That is practically all I have to say. When we propose, in all humility, to turn the school about into new and less pretentious courses and you oppose us, that is our answer. If you had done as well and wisely as you declare, you would not be in this position and this discussion would never have arisen.”

He paused.

“Said with truth and dignity,” said Mr. Dad. “You have put my opinion, Sir Eliphaz, better than I could have put it myself. I thank you.”

He coughed briefly.

§ 7

“The question you put to me I have put to myself,” said Mr. Huss, and thought deeply for a little while....

“No, I do not feel convicted of wrong-doing. I still believe the work I set myself to do was right, right in spirit and intention, right in plan and method. You invite me to confess my faith broken and in the dust; and my faith was never so sure. There is a God in my heart, in my heart at least there is a God, who has always guided me to right and who guides me now. My conscience remains unassailable.

These afflictions that you speak of as trials and warnings I can only see as inexplicable disasters. They perplex me, but they do not cow me. They strike me as pointless and irrelevant events."

"But this is terrible!" said Mr. Dad, deeply shocked.

"You push me back, Sir Eliphaz, from the discussion of our school affairs to more fundamental questions. You have raised the problem of the moral government of the world, a problem that has been distressing my mind since I first came here to Sundering, whether indeed failure is condemnation and success the sunshine of God's approval. You believe that the great God of the stars and seas and mountains is attentive to our conduct and responds to it. His sense of right is the same sense of right as ours; he endorses a common aim. Your prosperity is the mark of your harmony with that supreme God...."

"I wouldn't go so far as that," Mr. Dad interjected. "No. No arrogance."

"And my misfortunes express his disapproval. Well, I have believed that; I have believed that the rightness of a schoolmaster's conscience must needs be the same thing as the rightness of destiny, I too had fallen into that comforting persuasion of prosperity; but this series of smashing experiences I have had, culminating in your proposal to wipe out the whole effect and significance of my life, brings me face to face with the fundamental question whether the order of the great universe, the God of the stars, has any regard or relationship whatever to the problems of our consciences and the efforts of man to do right. That is a question that echoes to me down the ages. So far I have always professed myself a Christian...."

"Well, I should hope so," said Mr. Dad, "considering the terms of the school's foundation."

"For, I take it, the creeds declare in a beautiful symbol that the God who is present in our hearts is one with the universal father and at the same time his beloved Son, continually and eternally begotten from the universal fatherhood, and crucified only to conquer. He has come into our poor lives to raise them up at last to Himself. But to believe that is to believe in the significance and continuity of the whole effort of mankind. The life of man must be like the perpetual spreading of a fire. If right and wrong are to perish together

indifferently, if there is aimless and fruitless suffering, if there opens no hope for an eternal survival in consequences of all good things, then there is no meaning in such a belief as Christianity. It is a mere superstition of priests and sacrifices, and I have read things into it that were never truly there. The rushlight of our faith burns in a windy darkness that will see no dawn."

"Nay," said Sir Eliphaz, "nay. If there is God in your work we cannot destroy it."

"You are doing your best," said Mr. Huss, "and now I am not sure that you will fail.... At one time I should have defied you, but now I am not sure.... I have sat here through some dreary and dreadful days, and lain awake through some interminable nights; I have thought of many things that men in their days of prosperity are apt to dismiss from their minds; and I am no longer sure of the goodness of the world without us or in the plan of Fate. Perhaps it is only in us within our hearts that the light of God flickers — and flickers insecurely. Where we had thought a God, somehow akin to ourselves, ruled in the universe, it may be there is nothing but black emptiness and a coldness worse than cruelty."

Mr. Dad was about to interrupt, and restrained himself by a great effort.

"It is a commonplace of pietistic works that natural things are perfect things, and that the whole world of life, if it were not for the sinfulness of man, would be perfect. Paley, you will remember, Sir Eliphaz, in his 'Evidences of Christianity,' from which we have both suffered, declares that this earth is manifestly made for the happiness of the sentient beings living thereon. But I ask you to consider for a little and dispassionately, whether life through all its stages, up to and including man, is not rather a scheme of uneasiness, imperfect satisfaction, and positive miseries...."

§ 8

"Aren't we getting a bit out of our depth in all this?" Mr. Dad burst out. "Put it at that — out of our depth.... What does this sort of carping and questioning amount to, Mr. Huss? Does it do us any

good? Does it help us in the slightest degree? Why should we go into all this? Why can't we be humble and leave these deep questions to those who make a specialty of dealing with them? We don't know the ropes. We can't. Here are you and Mr. Farr, for instance, both of you whole-time schoolmasters so to speak; here's Sir Eliphaz toiling night and day to make simple cheap suitable homes for the masses, who probably won't say thank you to him when they see them; here's me an overworked engineer and understaffed most cruelly, not to speak of the most unfair and impossible labour demands, so that you never know where you are and what they won't ask you next. And in the midst of it all we are to start an argey-bargey about the goodness of God!

"We're busy men, Mr. Huss. What do we know of the world being a scheme of imperfect satisfaction and what all? Where does it come in I What's its practical value? Words it is, all words, and getting away from the plain and definite question we came to talk over and settle and have done with. Such talk, I will confess, makes me uncomfortable. Give me the Bible and the simple religion I learnt at my mother's knee. That's good enough for me. Can't we just have faith and leave all these questions alone? What are men in reality? After all their arguments. Worms. Just worms. Well then, let's have the decency to behave as such and stick to business, and do our best in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call us. That's what 7 say," said Mr. Dad.

He jerked his head back, coughed shortly, adjusted his tie, and nodded to Mr. Farr in a resolute manner.

"A simple, straightforward, commercial and technical education," he added by way of an explanatory colophon. "That's what we're after."

§ 9

Mr. Huss stared absently at Mr. Dad for some moments, and then resumed:

"Let us look squarely at this world about us. What is the true lot of life? Is there the slightest justification for assuming that our

conceptions of right and happiness are reflected anywhere in the outward universe? Is there, for instance, much animal happiness! Do health and well-being constitute the normal state of animals?”

He paused. Mr. Dad got up, and stood looking out of the window with his back to Mr. Huss. “Pulling nature to pieces,” he said over his shoulder. He turned and urged further, with a snarl of bitterness in his voice: “ Suppose things are so, what is the good of our calling attention to it? Where’s the benefit?”

But the attitude of Sir Eliphaz conveyed a readiness to listen.

“Before I became too ill to go out here,” said Mr. Huss, “ I went for a walk in the country behind this place. I was weary before I started, but I was impelled to go by that almost irresistible desire that will seize upon one at times to get out of one’s immediate surroundings. I wanted to escape from this wretched room, and I wanted to be alone, secure from interruptions, and free to think in peace. There was a treacherous promise in the day outside, much sunshine and a breeze. I had heard of woods a mile or so inland, and that conjured up a vision of cool green shade and kindly streams beneath the trees and of the fellowship of shy and gentle creatures. So I went out into the heat and into the dried and salted east wind, through glare and inky shadows, across many more fields than I had expected, until I came to some woods and then to a neglected park, and there for a time I sat down to rest....

“But I could get no rest. The turf was unclean through the presence of many sheep, and in it there was a number of close-growing but very sharply barbed thistles; and after a little time I realized that harvesters, those minute red beasts that creep upon one in the chalk lands and burrow into the skin and produce an almost intolerable itching, abounded. I got up again and went on, hoping in vain to find some fence or gate on which I might rest more comfortably. There were many flies and gnats, many more than there are here and of different sorts, and they persecuted me more and more. They surrounded me in a humming cloud, and I had to wave my walking-stick about my head all the time to keep them off me. I felt too exhausted to walk back, but there was, I knew, a village a mile or so ahead where I hoped to find some conveyance in which I might return by road....

"And as I struggled along in this fashion I came upon first one thing and then another, so apt to my mood that they might have been put there by some adversary. First it was a very young rabbit indeed, it was scarcely as long as my hand, which some cruel thing had dragged from its burrow. The back of its head had been bitten open and was torn and bloody, and the flies rose from its oozing wounds to my face like a cloud of witnesses. Then as I went on, trying to distract my mind from the memory of this pitiful dead thing by looking about me for something more agreeable, I discovered a row of little brown objects in a hawthorn bush, and going closer found they were some half-dozen victims of a butcherbird — beetles, fledgelings, and a mouse or so — spiked on the thorns. They were all twisted into painful attitudes, as if each had suffered horribly and challenged me by the last gesture of its limbs to judge between it and its creator.... And a little further on a gaunt, villainous-looking cat with rusty black fur that had bare patches suddenly ran upon me out of a side path; it had something in its mouth which it abandoned at the sight of me and left writhing at my feet, a pretty crested bird, very mangled, that flapped in flat circles upon the turf, unable to rise. A fit of weak and reasonless rage came upon me at this, and seeing the cat halt some yards away and turn to regard me and move as if to recover its victim, I rushed at it and pursued it, shouting. Then it occurred to me that it would be kinder if, instead of a futile pursuit of the wretched cat, I went back and put an end to the bird's sufferings. For a time I could not find it, and I searched for it in the bushes in a fever to get it killed, groaning and cursing as I did so. When I found it, it fought at me with its poor bleeding wings and snapped its beak at me, and made me feel less like a deliverer than a murderer. I hit it with my stick, and as it still moved I stamped it to death with my feet. I fled from its body in an agony. 'And this,' I cried, 'this hell revealed, is God's creation!'"

"Tcha," exclaimed Mr. Dad.

"Suddenly it seemed to me that scales had fallen from my eyes and that I saw the whole world plain. It was as if the universe had put aside a mask it had hitherto worn, and shown me its face, and it was a face of boundless evil.... It was as if a power of darkness sat over me and watched me with a mocking gaze, and for the rest of that day

I could think of nothing but the feeble miseries of living things. I was tortured, and all life was tortured with me. I failed to find the village I sought; I strayed far, I got back here at last long after dark, stopping sometimes by the wayside to be sick, sometimes kneeling or lying down for a time to rest, shivering and burning with an increasing fever.

"I had, as you know, been the first to find poor Williamson lying helpless among the acids; that ghastly figure and the burnt bodies of the two boys who died in School House haunt my mind constantly; but what was most in my thoughts on that day when the world of nature showed its teeth to me was the wretchedness of animal life. I do not know why that should have seemed more pitiful to me, and more fundamental, but it did. Human suffering, perhaps, is complicated by moral issues; man can look before and after and find remote justifications and stern consolations outside his present experiences; but the poor birds and beasts, they have only their present experiences and their individual lives cut off and shut in. How can there be righteousness in any scheme that afflicts them? I thought of one creature after another, and I could imagine none that had more than an occasional gleam of false and futile satisfaction between suffering and suffering. And today, gentlemen, as I sit here with you, the same dark stream of conviction pours through my mind.. I feel that life is a weak and inconsequent stirring amidst the dust of space and time, incapable of overcoming even its internal dissensions, doomed to phases of delusion, to irrational and undeserved punishments, to vain complainings and at last to extinction.

"Is there so much as one healthy living being in the world? I question it. As I wandered that day, I noted the trees as I had never noted them before. There was not one that did not show a stricken or rotten branch, or that was not studded with the stumps of lost branches decaying backwards towards the main stem; from every fork came dark stains of corruption, the bark was twisted and contorted and fungoid protrusions proclaimed the hidden mycelium of disease. The leaves were spotted with warts and blemishes, and gnawed and bitten by a myriad enemies. I noted too that the turf under my feet was worn and scorched and weary; gossamer threads

and spiders of a hundred sorts trapped the multitudinous insects in the wilted autumnal undergrowth; the hedges were a slow conflict of thrusting and strangulating plants in which every individual was more or less crippled or stunted. Most of these plants were armed like assassins; they had great thorns or stinging hairs; some ripened poisonous berries. And this was the reality of life; this was no exceptional mood of things, but a revelation of things established. I had been blind and now I saw. Even as these woods and thickets were, so was all the world....

"I had been reading in a book I had chanced to pick up in this lodging, about the jungles of India, which many people think of as a vast wealth of splendid and luxuriant vegetation. For the greater part of the year they are hot and thorny wastes of brown, dead and mouldering matter. Comes the steaming downpour of the rains; and then for a little while there is a tangled rush of fighting greenery, jostling, choking, torn and devoured by a multitude of beasts and by a horrible variety of insects that the hot moisture has called to activity. Then under the dry breath of the destroyer the exuberance stales and withers, everything ripens and falls, and the jungle relapses again into sullen heat and gloomy fermentation. And in truth everywhere the growth season is a wild scramble into existence, the rest of the year a complicated massacre. Even in our British climate is it not plain to you how the summer outlasts the lavish promise of the spring? In our spring there is no doubt an air of hope, of budding and blossoming; there is the nesting and singing of birds, a certain cleanness of the air, an emergence of primary and comparatively innocent things; but hard upon that freshness follow the pests and parasites, the creatures that corrupt and sting, the minions of waste and pain and lassitude and fever....

"You may say that I am dwelling too much upon the defects in the lives of plants which do not feel, and of insects and small creatures which may feel in a different manner from ourselves; but indeed their decay and imperfection make up the common texture of life. Even the things that live are only half alive. You may argue that at least the rarer, larger beasts bring with them a certain delight and dignity into the world. But consider the lives of the herbivora; they are all hunted creatures; fear is their habit of mind; even the great Indian

buffalo is given to panic flights. They are incessantly worried by swarms of insects. When they are not apathetic they appear to be angry, exasperated with life; their seasonal outbreaks of sex are evidently a violent torment to them, an occasion for fierce bellowings, mutual persecution and desperate combats. Such beasts as the rhinoceros or the buffalo are habitually in a rage; they will run amuck for no conceivable reason, and so too will many elephants, betraying a sort of organic spite against all other living things....

"And if we turn to the great carnivores, who should surely be the lords of the jungle world, their lot seems to be not one whit more happy. The tiger leads a life of fear; a dirty scrap of rag will turn him from his path. Much of his waking life is prowling hunger; when he kills he eats ravenously, he eats to the pitch of discomfort; he lies up afterwards in reeds or bushes, savage, disinclined to move. The hunter must beat him out, and he comes out sluggishly and reluctantly to die. His paws, too, are strangely tender; a few miles of rock will make them bleed, they gather thorns.... His mouth is so foul that his bite is a poisoned bite....

"All that day I struggled against this persuasion that the utmost happiness of any animal is at best like a transitory smile on a grim and inhuman countenance. I tried to recall some humorous and contented-looking creatures....

"That only recalled a fresh horror....

"You will have seen pictures and photographs of penguins. They will have conveyed to you the sort of effect I tried to recover. They express a quaint and jolly gravity, an aldermanic contentment. But to me now the mere thought of a penguin raises a vision of distress. I will tell you.... One of my old boys came to me a year or so ago on his return from a South Polar expedition; he told me the true story of these birds. Their lives, he said — he was speaking more particularly of the king penguin — are tormented by a monstrously exaggerated maternal instinct, an instinct shared by both sexes, which is a necessary condition of survival in the crowded rookeries of that frozen environment. And that instinct makes life one long torment for them. There is always a great smashing of eggs there through various causes; there is an excessive mortality among the chicks; they slip down crevasses, they freeze to death and so forth, three-

quarters of each year's brood perish, and without this extravagant passion the species would become extinct. So that every bird is afflicted with a desire and anxiety to brood upon and protect a chick. But each couple produces no more than one egg a year; eggs get broken, they roll away into the water, there is always a shortage, and every penguin that has an egg has to guard it jealously, and each one that has not an egg is impelled to steal or capture one. Some in their distress will mother pebbles or scraps of ice, some fortunate in possession will sit for days without leaving the nest in spite of the gnawings of the intense Antarctic hunger. To leave a nest for a moment is to tempt a robber, and the intensity of the emotions aroused is shown by the fact that they will fight to the death over a stolen egg. You see that these pictures of rookeries of apparently comical birds are really pictures of poor dim-minded creatures worried and strained to the very limit, of their powers. That is what their lives have always been....

"But the king penguin draws near the end of its history. Let me tell you how its history is closing. Let me tell you of what is happening in the peaceful Southern Seas — now. This old boy of mine was in great distress because of a vile traffic that has arisen.... Unless it is stopped, it will destroy these rookeries altogether. These birds are being murdered wholesale for their oil. Parties of men land and club them upon their nests, from which the poor, silly things refuse to stir. The dead and stunned, the living and the dead together, are dragged away and thrust into iron crates to be boiled down for their oil. The broken living with the dead.... Each bird yields about a farthing's profit, but it pays to kill them at that, and so the thing is done. The people who run these operations, you see, have had a sound commercial training. They believe that when God gives us power He means us to use it, and that what is profitable is just."

"Well, really," protested Mr. Dad. "Really!"

Mr. Farr also betrayed a disposition to speak. He cleared his throat, his uneasy hands worried the edge of the table, his face shone. "Sir Eliphaz," he said....

"Let me finish," said Mr. Huss, " for I have still to remind you of the most stubborn facts of all in such an argument as this. Have you ever thought of the significance of such creatures as the entozoa, and

the vast multitudes of other sorts of specialized parasites whose very existence is cruelty? There are thousands of orders and genera of insects, Crustacea, arachnids, worms, and lowlier things, which are adapted in the most complicated way to prey upon the living and suffering tissues of their fellow creatures, and which can live in no other way. Have you ever thought what that means! If forethought framed these horrors what sort of benevolence was there in that forethought? I will not distress you by describing the life cycles of any of these creatures too exactly. You must know of many of them. I will not dwell upon those wasps, for example, which lay their eggs in the living bodies of victims which the young will gnaw to death slowly day by day as they develop, nor will I discuss this unmeaning growth of cells which has made my body its soil.... Nor any one of our thousand infectious fevers that fall upon us — without reason, without justice....

"Man is of all creatures the least subjected to internal parasites. In the brief space of a few hundred thousand years he has changed his food, his habitat and every attitude and habit of his life, and comparatively few species, thirty or forty at most, I am told, have been able to follow his changes and specialize themselves to him under these fresh conditions; yet even man can entertain some fearful guests. Every time you drink open water near a sheep pasture you may drink the larval liver fluke, which will make your liver a little township of vile creatures until they eat it up, until they swarm from its oozing ruins into your body cavity and destroy you. In Europe this is a rare fate for a man, but in China there are wide regions where the fluke abounds and rots the life out of thousands of people.... The fluke is but one sample of such feats of the Creator. An unwashed leaf of lettuce may be the means of planting a parasitic cyst in your brain to dethrone your reason; a feast of underdone pork may transfer to you from the swine the creeping death torture of trichinosis.... But all that men suffer in these matters is nothing to the suffering of the beasts. The torments of the beasts are finished and complete. My biological master tells me that he rarely opens a cod or dogfish without finding bunches of some sort of worm or such like pallid lodger in possession. He has rows of little tubes with the things he has found in the bodies of rabbits....

“But I will not disgust you further....

“Is this a world made for the happiness of sentient things?

“I ask you? how is it possible for man to be other than a rebel in the face of such facts’? How can he trust the Maker who has designed and elaborated and finished these parasites in their endless multitude and variety? For these things are not in the nature of sudden creations and special judgments; they have been produced fearfully and wonderfully by a process of evolution as slow and deliberate as our own. How can Man trust such a Maker to treat him fairly? Why should we shut our eyes to things that stare us in the face? Either the world of life is the creation of a being inspired by a malignancy at once filthy, petty and enormous, or it displays a carelessness, an indifference, a disregard for justice....”

The voice of Mr. Huss faded out.

§ 10

For some time Mr. Farr had been manifesting signs of impatience. The pause gave him his opportunity. He spoke with a sort of restrained volubility.

“Sir Eliphaz, Mr. Dad, after what has passed in relation to myself, I would have preferred to have said nothing in this discussion. Nothing. So far as I myself am concerned, I will still say nothing. But upon some issues it is impossible to keep silence. Mr. Huss has said some terrible things, things that must surely never be said at Woldingstanton....

“Think of what such teaching as this may mean among young and susceptible boys! Think of such stuff in the school pulpit! Chary as I am of all wrangling, and I would not set myself up for a moment to wrangle against Mr. Huss, yet I feel that this cavilling against God’s universe, this multitude of evil words, must be answered. It is imperative to answer it, plainly and sternly. It is our duty to God, who has made us what we are....

“Mr. Huss, in your present diseased state you seem incapable of realizing the enormous egotism of all this depreciation of God’s marvels. But indeed you have suffered from that sort of incapacity

always. It is no new thing. Have I not chafed under your arrogant assurance for twelve long years? Your right, now as ever, is the only right; your doctrine alone is pure. Would that God could speak and open his lips against you! How his voice would shatter you and us and everything about us! How you would shrivel amidst your blasphemies!

"Excuse me, gentlemen, if I am too forcible," said Mr. Farr, moistening his white lips, but Mr. Dad nodded fierce approval.

Thus encouraged, Mr. Farr proceeded. "When first I came into this room, Mr. Huss, I was full of pity for your affliction — I think we all were — we were pitiful; but now it is clear to me that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves. Surely the supreme sin is pride. You criticize and belittle God's universe, but what sort of a universe would you give us, Mr. Huss, if you were the Creator? Pardon me if I startle you, gentlemen, but that is a fair question to ask. For it is clear to me now, Mr. Huss, that no less than that will satisfy you. Woldingstanton, for all the wonders you have wrought there, in spite of the fact that never before and never again can there be such a head, in spite of the fact that you have lit such a candle there as may one day set the world ablaze, is clearly too small a field for you. Headmaster of the universe is your position. Then, and then alone, could you display your gifts to the full. Then cats would cease to eat birds, and trees grow on in perfect symmetry until they cumbered the sky. I can dimly imagine the sort of world that it would be; the very fleas reformed and trained under your hand, would be flushed with health and happiness and doing the work of boy scouts; every blade of grass would be at least six feet long. As for the liver fluke — but I cannot solve the problem of the liver fluke. I suppose you will provide euthanasia for all the parasites...."

Abruptly Mr. Farr passed from this vein of terrible humour to an earnest and pleading manner. "Mr. Huss, with mortal danger so close to you, I entreat you to reconsider all this wild and wicked talk of yours. You take a few superficial aspects of the world and frame a judgment on them; you try with the poor foot-rule of your mind to measure the plans of God, plans which are longer than the earth, wider than the sea. I ask you, how can such insolence help yon in this supreme emergency? There can be little time left...."

Providence was manifestly resolved to give Mr. Farr the maximum of dramatic effect. “But what is this?” said Mr. Farr. He stood up and looked out of the window.

Somebody had rung the bell, and now, with an effect of impatience, was rapping at the knocker of Sea View.

IV. — DO WE TRULY DIE?

§ 1

MRS. CROOME was heard in the passage, someone was admitted, there were voices, and the handle of the parlour door was turned. "'Asn't E come, then?" they heard the voice of Mrs. Croome through the opening. Dr. Elihu Barrack appeared in the doorway.

He was a round-headed young man with a clean-shaven face, a mouth that was determinedly determined and slightly oblique, a short nose, and a general expression of resolution; the fact that he had an artificial leg was scarcely perceptible in his bearing. He considered the four men before him for a moment, and then addressed himself to Mr. Huss in a tone of brisk authority. "You ought to be in bed," he said.

"I had this rather important discussion," said Mr. Huss, with a gesture portending introductions.

"But sitting up will fatigue you," the doctor insisted, sticking to his patient.

"It won't distress me so much as leaving these things unsaid would have done."

"Opinions may differ upon that," said Mr. Farr darkly.

"We are still far from any settlement of our difficulties," said Sir Eliphaz to the universe.

"I have indicated my view at any rate," said Mr. Huss. "I suppose now Sir Alpheus is here—"

"He isn't here," said Dr. Barrack neatly. "He telegraphs to say that he is held up, and will come by the next train. So you get a reprieve, Mr. Huss."

"In that case I shall go on talking."

"You had better go to bed."

"No. I couldn't lie quiet." And Mr. Huss proceeded to name his guests to Dr. Barrack, who nodded shortly to each of them in turn, and said: "Pleased-t-meet you." His face betrayed no excess of pleasure. His eye was hard. He remained standing, as if waiting for them to display symptoms.

“Our discussion has wandered far,” said Sir Eliphaz. “Our original business here was to determine the future development of Woldingstanton School, which we think should be made more practical and technical than hitherto, and less concerned with history and philosophy than it has been under Mr. Huss. (Won’t you sit down, Doctor?)”

The doctor sat down, still watching Sir Eliphaz with hard intelligence.

“Well, we have drifted from that,” Sir Eliphaz continued.

“Not so far as you may think,” said Mr. Huss.

“At any rate Mr. Huss has been regaling us with a discourse upon the miseries of life, how we are all eaten up by parasites and utterly wretched, and how everything is wretched and this an accursed world ruled either by a cruel God or a God so careless as to be practically no God at all.”

“Nice stuff for nineteen eighteen *A.D.*,” said Mr. Dad, putting much meaning into the “A.D.”

“Since I left Woldingstanton and came here,” said Mr. Huss, “I have done little else but think. I have not slept during the night, I have had nothing to occupy me during the day, and I have been thinking about fundamental things. I have been forced to revise my faith, and to look more closely than I have ever done before into the meaning of my beliefs and into my springs of action. I have been wrenched away from that habitual confidence in the order of things which seemed the more natural state for a mind to be in. But that has only widened a difference that already existed between me and these three gentlemen, and that was showing very plainly in the days when success still justified my grip upon Woldingstanton. Suddenly, swiftly, I have had misfortune following upon misfortune — without cause or justification. I am thrown now into the darkest doubt and dismay; the universe seems harsh and black to me; whereas formerly I believed that at the core of it and universally pervading it was the Will of a God of Light.... I have always denied, even when my faith was undimmed, that the God of Righteousness ruled this world in detail and entirely, giving us day by day our daily rewards and punishments. These gentlemen on the contrary do believe that. They say that God does rule the world traceably and directly, and that

success is the measure of his approval and pain and suffering the fulfilment of unrighteousness. And as for what has this lo do with education — it has all to do with education. You can settle no practical questions until you have settled such disputes as this. Before you can prepare boys to play their part in the world you must ask what is this world for which you prepare them; is it a tragedy or comedy? What is the nature of this drama in which they are to play?"

Dr. Barrack indicated that this statement was noted and approved.

"For clearly," said Mr. Huss, " if success is the justification of life you must train for success. There is no need for men to understand life, then, so long as they do their job in it. That is the opinion of these governors of mine. It has been the opinion of most men of the world — always. Obey the Thing that Is! that is the lesson they would have taught to my boys. Acquiesce. Life for them is not an adventure, not a struggle, but simply obedience and the enjoyment of rewards.... That, Dr. Barrack, is what such a technical education as they want set up at Woldingstanton really means....

"But I have believed always and taught always that what God demands from man is his utmost effort to co-operate and understand. I have taught the imagination, first and most; I have made knowledge, knowledge of what man is and what man's world is and what man may be, which is the adventure of mankind, the substance of all my teaching. At Woldingstanton I have taught philosophy; I have taught the whole history of mankind. If I could not have done that without leaving chemistry and physics, mathematics and languages out of the curriculum altogether I would have left them out. And you see why, Dr. Barrack."

"I see your position certainly," said Dr. Barrack.

"And now that my heavens are darkened, now that my eyes have been opened to the wretchedness, futility and horror in the texture of life, I still cling, I cling more than ever, to the spirit of righteousness within me. If there is no God, no mercy, no human kindliness in the great frame of space and time, if life is a writhing torment, an itch upon one little planet, and the stars away there in the void no more than huge empty flares, signifying nothing, then all the brighter shines the flame of God in my heart. If the God in my heart is no son of any heavenly father then is he Prometheus the rebel; it does not

shake my faith that he is the Master for whom I will live and die. And all the more do I cling to this fire of human tradition we have lit upon this little planet, if it is the one gleam of spirit in all the windy vastness of a dead and empty universe."

Dr. Barrack seemed about to interrupt with some comment, and then, it was manifest, deferred his interpolation.

"Loneliness and littleness," said Mr. Huss, "harshness in the skies above and in the texture of all things. If so it is that things are, so we must see them. Every baby in its mother's arms feels safe in a safe creation; every child in its home. Many men and women have lived ^and died happy in that illusion of security. But this war has torn away the veil of illusion from millions of men.... Mankind is coming of age. We can see life at last for what it is and what it is not. Here we spin upon a ball of rock and nickel- steel, upon which a film of water, a few score miles of air, lie like the bloom upon a plum. All about that ball is space unfathomable; all the suns and stars are mere grains of matter scattered through a vastness that is otherwise utterly void. To that thin bloom upon a particle we are confined; if we tunnel down into the earth, presently it is too hot for us to live; if we soar five miles into the air we freeze, the blood runs out of our vessels into our lungs, we die suffocated and choked with blood....

"Out of the litter of muds and gravels that make the soil of the world we have picked some traces of the past of our race and the past of life. In our observatories and laboratories we have gleaned some hints of its future. We have a vision of the opening of the story, but the first pages we cannot read. "We discover life, a mere stir amidst the mud, creeping along the littoral of warm and shallow seas in the brief nights and days of a swiftly rotating earth. We follow through vast ages the story of life's extension into the waters, and its invasion of the air and land. Plants creep upon the land and raise themselves by stems towards the sun; a few worms and crustaceans follow, insects appear; and at length come our amphibious ancestors, breathing air by means of a swimming bladder used as a lung. From the first the land animals are patched-up creatures. They eke out the fish ear they inherit by means of an ear drum made out of a gill slit. You can trace scale and fin in bone and limb. At last this green scum of vegetable life with the beasts entangled in its meshes creeps in the

form of forests over the hills; grass spreads across the plains, and great animals follow it out into the open. What does it all signify? No more than green moss spreading over an old tile. Steadily the earth cools and the day lengthens. Through long ages of warmth and moisture the wealth of unmeaning life increases; come ages of chill and retrocession, glacial periods, and periods when whole genera and orders die out. Comes man at last, the destroyer, the war-maker, setting fire to the world, burning the forests, exhausting the earth. What hope has he in the end? Always the day drags longer and longer and always the sun radiates its energy away. A time will come when the sun will glow dull red in the heavens, shorn of all its beams, and neither rising nor setting. A day will come when the earth will be as dead and frozen as the moon.... A spirit in our hearts, the God of mankind, cries 'No!' but is there any voice outside us in all the cold and empty universe that echoes that 'No'?"

§ 2

"Ah, Mr. Huss, Mr. Huss!" said Sir Eliphaz.

His eye seemed seeking some point of attachment, and found it at last in the steel engraving of Queen Victoria giving a Bible to a dusky potentate, which adorned the little parlour.

"Your sickness colours your vision," said Sir Eliphaz. "What you say is so profoundly true and so utterly false. Mysteriously evolved, living as you say in a mere bloom of air and moisture upon this tiny planet, how could we exist, how could we continue, were we not sustained in every moment by the Mercy and Wisdom of God? The flimsier life is, the greater the wonder of his Providence. Not a sparrow," said Sir Eliphaz, and then enlarging the metaphor with a boom in his voice, "not a hair of my head, falls to the ground without His knowledge and consent.... I am a man much occupied. I cannot do the reading I would. But while you have been reviling the works of God I have been thinking of some wonders.

Sir Eliphaz lifted up a hand with thumb and finger opposed, as though he held some exquisite thing therein.

"The human eye," said Sir Eliphaz, with an intensity of

appreciation that brought tears to his own....

"The cross fertilization of plants....

"The marvellous transformations of the higher insects....

"The highly elaborate wing scales of the Lepidoptera.

"The mercy that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb....

"The dark warm marvels of embryology; the order and rhythm and obedience with which the cells of the fertilized ovum divide to build up the perfect body of a living thing, yea, even of a human being — in God's image. First there is one cell, then two; the process of division is extremely beautiful and is called, I believe, *karyokinesis*; then after the two come four, each knows his part, each divides certainly and marvellously; eight, sixteen, thirty-two.... Each of those thirty-two cells is a complete thirty-second part of a man. Presently this cell says, 'I become a hair'; this, 'a blood corpuscle,' this 'a cell in the brain of a man, to mirror the universe.' Each goes to his own appointed place....

"Would that we could do the like"! said Sir Eliphaz.

"Then consider water," said Sir Eliphaz. "I am not deeply versed in physical science, but there are certain things about water that fill me with wonder and amaze. All other liquids contract when they solidify. With one or two exceptions — useful in the arts. Water expands. Now water is a non- conductor of heat, and if water contracted and became heavier when it became ice, it would sink to the bottom of the polar seas and remain there unmelted. More ice would sink down to it, until all the ocean was ice and life ceased. But water does not do so. No!... Were it not for the vapour of water, which catches and entangles the sun's heat, this world would scorch by day and freeze by night. Mercy upon mercy, I myself," said Sir Eliphaz in tones of happy confession, " am ninety per cent, water.... We all are....

"And think how mercifully winter is tempered to us by the snow! When water freezes in the air in winter-time, it does not come pelting down as lumps of ice. Conceivably it might, and then where should we be? But it belongs to the hexagonal system — a system prone to graceful frameworks. It crystallizes into the most delicate and beautiful lace of six-rayed crystals — wonderful under the microscope. They flake delicately. They lie loosely one upon

another. Out of ice is woven a warm garment like wool, white like wool because like wool it is full of air — a warm garment for bud and shoot....

"Then again — you revile God for the parasites he sends. But are they not sent to teach us a great moral lesson? Each one for himself and God for us all. Not so the parasites. They choose a life of base dependence. With that comes physical degeneration, swift and sure. They are the Socialists of nature. They lose their limbs. They lose colour, become blenched, unappetising beings, vile creatures of sloth — often microscopic. Do they not urge us by their shameful lives to self help and exertion? Yet even parasites have a use! I am told that were it not for parasitic bacteria man could not digest his food. A lichen again is made up of an alga and a fungus, mutually parasitic. That is called symbiosis — living together for a mutual benefit. Maybe every one of those thousands of parasites you deem so horrible is working its way upward towards an arrangement—"

Sir Eliphaz weighed his words: "Some mutually advantageous arrangement with its host. A paying guest.

"And finally," said Sir Eliphaz, with the roll of distant thunder in his voice, " think of the stately procession of life upon the earth, through a myriad of forms the glorious crescendo of evolution, up to its climax, man. What a work is man! The paragon of creation, the microcosm of the cosmos, the ultimate birth of time.... And you would have us doubt the guiding hand!"

He ceased with a gesture.

Mr. Dad made a noise like responses in church.

§ 3

"A certain beauty in the world is no mark of God's favour," said Mr. Huss. "There is no beauty one may not balance by an equal ugliness. The wart-hog and the hyaena, the tapeworm and the stinkhorn, are equally God's creations. Nothing you have said points to anything but a cold indifference towards us of this order in which we live. Beauty happens; it is not given. Pain, suffering, happiness; there is no heed. Only in the heart of man burns the fire of righteousness."

For a time Mr. Huss was silent. Then he went on answering Sir Eliphaz.

"You spoke of the wonder of the cross-fertilization of plants. But do you not know that half these curious and elaborate adaptations no longer work? Scarcely was their evolution completed before the special need that produced them ceased. Half the intricate flowers you see are as futile as the ruins of Palmyra. They are self-fertilized or wind-fertilized. The transformation of the higher insects which give us our gnats and wasps, our malaria and apple- maggots in due season, are a matter for human astonishment rather than human gratitude. If there is any design in these strange and intricate happenings, surely it is the design of a misplaced and inhuman ingenuity. The scales of the lepidoptera, again, have wasted their glittering splendours for millions of years. If they were meant for man, why do the most beautiful species fly by night in the tropical forests? As for the human eye, oculists and opticians are scarcely of your opinion. You hymn the peculiar properties of water that make life possible. They make it possible. Do they make it other than it is?

"You have talked of the marvels of embryonic growth in the egg. I admit the wonderful precision of the process; but how does it touch my doubts? Either it confuses them, as though the God who rules the world ruled not so much in love as in irony. Wonderfully indeed do the cells divide and the chromoplasts of the division slide along their spindle lines. They divide not as if a divine hand guided them but with remorseless logic, with the pitiless consistency of a mathematical process. They divide and marshal themselves and turn this way and that, to make an idiot, to make a congenital cripple. Millions of such miracles pile up — and produce the swaying drunkard at the pot-house door.

"You talk of the crescendo of evolution, of the first beginnings of life, and how the scheme unfolds until it culminates in us — *us*, here, under these circumstances, you and Mr. Dad and Farr and me — waiting for the knife. Would that I could see any such crescendo! I see change indeed and change and change, without plan and without heart. Consider for example the migrations of birds across the Mediterranean, and the tragic absurdity of its incidents. Ages ago, and for long ages, there stretched continuous land connexions from

Africa to Europe. Then the instinct was formed; the birds flew over land from the heated south to the northern summer to build and breed. Slowly age by age the seas crept over those necks of land. Those linking tracts have been broken now for a hundred thousand years, and yet over a constantly widening sea, in which myriads perish exhausted, instinct, blind and pitiless, still drives those birds. And again think of those vain urgencies for some purpose long since forgotten, that drive the swarming lemmings to their fate. And look at man, your evolution's crown; consider his want of balance, the invalidism of his women, the extravagant disproportion of his desires. Consider the Becord of the Bocks honestly and frankly, and where can you trace this crescendo you suggest? There have been great ages of marvellous treeferns and wonderful forest swamps, and all those glorious growths have died. They did not go on; they reached a climax and died; another sort of plant succeeded them. Then think of all that wonderful fauna of the Mesozoic times, the age of Leviathan; the theriodonts, reptilian beasts, the leaping dinosaurs, the mososaurs and suchlike monsters of the deep, the bat-winged pterodactyls, the plesiosaurs and ichthyosaurs. Think of the marvels of the Mesozoic seas; the thousands of various ammonites, the wealth of fish life. Across all that world of life swept death, as the wet fingers of a child wipe a drawing from a slate. They left no descendants, they clambered to a vast variety and complexity and ceased. The dawn of the Eocene was the bleak dawn of a denuded world. Crescendo if you will, but thereafter diminuendo, pianissimo. And then once again from fresh obscure starting-points far down the stem life swelled, and swelled again, only to dwindle. The world we live in to-day is a meagre spectacle beside the abundance of the earlier Tertiary time, when Behemoth in a thousand forms, Deinotherium, Titanotherium, Helladotherium, sabre-toothed tiger, a hundred sorts of elephant, and the like, pushed through the jungles that are now this mild world of to-day. Where is that crescendo now? Crescendo! Through those long ages our ancestors were hiding under leaves and climbing into trees to be out of the way of the crescendo. As the *motif* of a crescendo they sang exceedingly small. And now for a little while the world is ours, and we wax in our turn. To what good? To what end? Tell me, you who say the world is good, tell me

the end. How can we escape at last the common fate under the darkling sky of a frozen world?”

He paused for some moments, weary with speaking.

“There is no comfort,” he said, “ in the flowers or the stars; no assurance in the past and no sure hope in the future. There is nothing but the God of faith and courage in the hearts of men.... And He gives no sign of power, no earnest of victory.... He gives no sign....”

Whereupon Sir Eliphaz breathed the word: *“Immortality!”*

“Let me say a word or two upon Immortality,” said Sir Eliphaz, breaking suddenly into eagerness, “ for that, I presume, is the thing we have forgotten. That, I see, is the difference between us and you, Mr. Huss; that is why we can sit here, content to play our partial roles, knowing full surely that some day the broken lines and inconsecutivenesses that perplex us in this life will all be revealed and resolved into their perfect circles, while you to whom this earthly life is all and final, you must needs be a rebel, you must needs preach a doctrine between defiance and despair.... If indeed death ended all! *Ah!* Then indeed you might claim that reason was on your side. The afflictions of man are very many. Why should I deny it?”

The patentee and chief proprietor of the Temanite blocks paused for a moment.

“Yes,” he said, peering up through his eyebrows at the sky, “ that is the real issue. Blind to that, you are blind to everything.”

“I don’t know whether I am with you on this question of immortality, Sir Eliphaz,” warned Dr. Barrack, coughing shortly.

“For my part I’m altogether with him,” said Mr. Dad. “If there is no immortal life — well, what’s the good of being temperate and decent and careful for five and fifty years?”

Sir Eliphaz had decided now to drop all apologetics for the scheme of Nature.

“A place of trial, a place of stimulus and training,” he said, “*Respice finem*. The clues are all — beyond.”

“But if you really consider this world as a place for soul making,” said Mr. Huss, “ what do you think you are doing when you propose to turn Woldingstanton over to Farr?”

“At any rate,” said Farr tartly, “ we do not want soul-blackening and counsels of despair at Woldingstanton. We want the boys taught

to serve and help first in this lowly economic sphere, cheerfully and enterprisingly, and then in higher things, before they pass on—"

"If death ends all, then what is the good of trying?" Mr. Dad said, still brooding over the question. "If I thought that — !"

He added with deep conviction, " I should let myself go.... Anyone would."

He blew heavily, stuck his hands in his pockets, and sat more deeply in his chair, an indignant man, a business man asked to give up something for nothing.

For a moment the little gathering hung, only too manifestly contemplating the spectacle of Mr. Dad amidst wine, women, and waistcoats without restraint, letting himself go, eating, drinking, and rejoicing, being a perfect devil, beeause on the morrow he had to die...

"Immortal," said Mr. Huss. "I did not expect immortality to come into this discussion.

"Are *you* immortal, Farr?" he asked abruptly.

"I hope so," said Mr. Farr. "Unworthy though I be."

"Exactly," said Mr. Huss. "And so that is the way out for us. You and I, Mr. Dad from his factory, and Sir Eliphaz from his building office, are to soar. It is all arranged for us, and that is why the tragic greatness of life is to be hidden from my boys....

"Yet even so," continued Mr. Huss, " I do not see why you should be so anxious for technical science and so hostile to the history of mankind."

"Because it is not a true history," said Sir Eliphaz, his hair waving about like the hair of a man electrified by fresh ideas. "Because it is a bunch of loose ends that are really not ends at all, but only beginnings that pass suddenly into the unseen. I admit that in this world nothing is rationalized, nothing is clearly just. I admit everything you say. But the reason? The reason? Because this life is only the first page of the great book we have to read. We sit here, Mr. Huss, like men in a waiting-room.... All this life is like waiting outside, in a place of some disorder, before being admitted to the wider reality, the larger sphere, where all the cruelties, all these confusions, everything — will be explained, justified — and set right."

He paused, and then perceiving that Mr. Huss was about to speak he resumed, raising his voice slightly.

"And I do not speak without my book in these matters," he said. "I have been greatly impressed — and, what is more, Lady Burrows has been greatly impressed, by the writings of two thoroughly scientific men, two thoroughly scientific men, Dr. Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge. Ever since she lost her younger sister early in life Lady Burrows has followed up this interest. It has been a great consolation to her. And the point is, as Sir Oliver insists in that wonderful book 'Raymond,' that continued existence in another world is as proven now as the atomic theory in chemistry. It is not a matter of faith, but knowledge. The partition is breached at last. We are in communication. News is coming through.... Scientific certainty...."

Sir Eliphaz cleared his throat. "We have already evidences and descriptions of the life into which we shall pass. Remember this is no idle talk, no deception by Sludges and the like; it is a great English scientific man who publishes these records; it is a great French philosopher, no less a man than that wonderful thinker — and *how* he thinks! — Professor Bergson, who counselled their publication. A glory of science and a glory of philosophy combine to reassure us. We walk at last upon a path of fact into that further world. We know already much. We know, for example, that those who have passed over to that higher plane have bodies still. That I found — comforting. Without that — one would feel *bleak*. But, the messages say, the internal organs are constituted differently. Naturally. As one would have expected. The dietary is, I gather, practically non-existent. Needless. As the outline is the same the space is, I presume, used for other purposes. Some sort of astral storage.... They do not bleed. An interesting fact. Lady Burrows' sister is now practically bloodless. And her teeth — she had lost several, she suffered greatly with her teeth her teeth — have all been replaced a beautiful set. Used now only for articulate speech."

"'Raymond' all over again," said the doctor.

"You have read the book!" said Sir Eliphaz.

The doctor grunted in a manner that mingled assent and disapproval. His expression betrayed the scientific bigot.

“We know now *details* of the passage,” said Sir Eliphaz. “We have some particulars. We know, for instance, that people blown to pieces take some little time to reconstitute. There is a correlation between this corruptible body and the spirit body that replaces it. There is a sort of spirit doctor over there, very helpful in such cases. And burnt bodies, too, are a trouble.... The sexes are still distinct, but all the coarseness of sex is gone. The passions fade in that better world. Every passion. Even the habit of smoking and the craving for alcohol fade. Not at first. The newly dead will sometimes ask for a cigar. They are given cigars, higher-plane cigars, and they do not ask for more. There are no children born there. Nothing of that sort. That, it is very important to understand. *Here* is the place of birth; this is where lives begin. This coarse little planet is the seed-bed of life. When it has served its purpose and populated those higher planes, then indeed it may freeze, as you say. A mere empty hull. A seed-case that has served its purpose, mattering nothing. These are the thoughts, the comforting and beautiful thoughts, that receive the endorsement of our highest scientific and philosophical intelligences....One thinks of that life there, no doubt in some other dimension of space, that world arranged in *planes* — metaphorical planes, of course, in which people go to and fro, living in a sort of houses, surrounded by a sort of beautiful things, made, so we are told, from the smells of the things we have here. That is curious, but not irrational. Our favorite doggies will be there. Sublimated also. That thought has been a great comfort to Lady Burrows.... We had a dog called Fido, a leetle, teeny fellow — practically human....

“These blessed ones engage very largely in conversation. Other occupations I found difficult to trace. Raymond attended a sort of reception on the very highest plane. It was a special privilege. Perhaps a compliment to Sir Oliver. He met the truth of revealed religion, so to speak, personally. It was a wonderful moment. Sir Oliver suppresses the more solemn details. Lady Burrows intends to write to him. She is anxious for particulars. But I will not dilate, “ said Sir Eliphaz. “I will not dilate.”

“And you believe this *stuff*?” said the doctor in tones of the deepest disgust.

Sir Eliphaz waved himself upon the questioner.

“So far as poor earthly expressions can body forth spiritual things, “ he hedged.

He regarded his colleagues with an eye of florid defiance. Both Mr. Farr and Mr. Dad had slightly shamefaced expressions, and Mr. Dad’s ears were red.

Mr. Dad cleared his throat. “I’m sure there’s something in it anyhow,” said Mr. Dad hoarsely, doing his best in support.

“If I was born with a hare lip,” said the doctor, “would *that* be put right? Do congenital idiots get sublimated? What becomes of a dog one has shot for hydrophobia?”

“To all of such questions,” said Sir Eliphaz serenely, “the answer is we *don’t* know. Why should we?”

§4

Mr. Huss seemed lost in meditation. His pale and sunken face and crumpled pose contrasted strongly with the bristling intellectual rectitude and mounting choler of Dr. Elihu Barrack.

“No, Sir Eliphaz,” said Mr. Huss, and sighed.

“No,” he repeated.

“What a poor phantom of a world these people conjure up! What a mockery of loss and love! The very mothers and lovers who mourn their dead will not believe their foolish stories. Restoration! It is a crowning indignity. It makes me think of nothing in the world but my dear boy’s body, broken and crumpled, and some creature, half fool and half impostor, sitting upon it, getting between it and me, and talking cheap rubbish over it about planes of being and astral bodies....

“After all, you teach me, Sir Eliphaz, that life, for all its grossness and pain and horror, is not so bad as it might be — if such things as this were true. But it needs no sifting of the evidence to know they are untrue. No sane man believes this stuff for ten minutes together. It is impossible to believe it....”

Dr. Elihu Barrack applauded. Sir Eliphaz acted a fine self-restraint.

“They are contrary to the texture of everything we know,” said

Mr. Huss. “They are less convincing than the wildest dreams. By pain, by desire, by muscular effort, by the feeling of sunshine or of rain in the face, by their sense of justice and such-like essential things do men test the reality of appearances before them. This certainly is no reality. It has none of the *feel* of reality. I will not even argue about it. It is thrust now upon a suffering world as comfort, and even as comfort for people stunned and uncritical with grief it fails. You and Lady Burrows may be pleased to think that somehow you two, with your teeth restored and your complexions rejuvenated, will meet again the sublimation of your faithful Fido. At any rate, thank God for that, I know clearly that so I shall never meet my son. Never! He has gone from me....”

For some moments mental and physical suffering gripped him, and he could not speak; but his purpose to continue was so manifested by sweating face and gripping hand that no one spoke until he spoke again.

“Now let me speak plainly about Immortality. For surely I stand nearest to that possibility of all of us here. Immortality, then, is no such dodging away as you imagine, from this strange world which is so desolating, so dreadful, so inexplicable — and at times so utterly lonely. There may be a God in the universe or there may not be.... God, if he exists, can be terribly silent.... But if there is a God, he is a coherent God. If there is a God above and in the scheme of things, then not only you and I and my dead son, but the crushed frog and the trampled anthill *signify*. On that the God in my heart insists. There has to be an answer, not only to the death of my son but to the dying penguin roasted alive for a farthing’s worth of oil. There must be an answer to the men who go in ships to do such things. There has to be a justification for all the filth and wretchedness of louse and fluke. I will not have you slipping by on the other side, chattering of planes of living and sublimated atoms, while there is a drunken mother or a man dying of cholera in this world. I will not hear of a God who is just a means for getting away. Whatever foulness and beastliness there is, you must square God with that. Or there is no universal God, but only a coldness, a vast cruel difference.

“I would not make my peace with such a God if I could....

“I tell you of these black and sinister realities, and what do you

reply? That it is all right, because after death we shall get away from them. Why! if presently I go down under the surgeon's knife, down out of this hot and weary world, and then find myself being put together by a spirit doctor in this *beyond* of yours, waking up to a new world of amiable conversations and artificial flowers, having my hair restored and the gaps among my teeth filled up, I shall feel like someone who has deserted his kind, who has sneaked from a sick-room into a party.... Well — my infection will go with me. I shall talk of nothing but the tragedy out of which I have come which still remains — which continues — tragedy.

"And yet I believe in Immortality!"

Dr. Barrack, who had hitherto been following Mr. Huss with evident approval, started, sounded a note of surprise and protest, and fixed accusing eyes upon him. For the moment he did not interrupt.

"But it is not I that am immortal, but the God within me. All this personal immortality of which you talk is a mockery of our personalities. What is there personal in us that can live? What makes us our very selves? It is all a matter of little mean things, small differences, slight defects. Where does personal love grip? — on just these petty things.... Oh! dearly and bitterly did I love my son, and what is it that my heart most craves for now? Hi a virtues? No! His ambitions? His achievements?... No! none of these things.... But for a certain queer flush among his freckles, for a kind of high crack in his voice... a certain absurd hopefulness in his talk... the sound of his footsteps, a little halt there was in the rhythm of them. These are the things we long for. These are the things that wring the heart.... But all these things are just the mortal things, just the defects that would be touched out upon this higher plane you talk about. You would give him back to me smoothed and polished and regularized. So, I grant, it must be if there is to be this higher plane. But what does it leave of personal distinction? What does it leave of personal love?

"When my son has had his defects smoothed away, then he will be like all sons. When the older men have been ironed out, they will be like the younger men. There is no personality in hope and honour and righteousness and truth.... My son has gone. He has gone for evermore. The pain may some day go ... The immortal thing in us is the least personal thing. It is not you nor I who go on living; it is

Man that lives on, Man the Universal, and he goes on living, a tragic rebel in this same world and in no other....”

Mr. Huss leant back in his chair.

“There burns an undying fire in the hearts of men. By that fire I live. By that I know the God of my Salvation. His will is Truth; His will is Service. He urges me to conflict, without consolations, without rewards. He takes and does not restore. He uses up and does not atone. He suffers — perhaps to triumph, and we must suffer and find our hope of triumph in Him. He will not let me shut my eyes to sorrow, failure, or perplexity. Though the universe torment and slay me, yet will I trust in Him. And if He also must die — Nevertheless I can do no more; I must serve Him....”

He ceased. For some moments no one spoke, silenced by his intensity.

V. — ELIHU REPROVES JOB

§ 1

"I DON'T know how all this strikes you," said Mr. Farr, turning suddenly upon Dr. Barrack.

"Well — it's interesting" said Dr. Barrack, leaning forward upon his folded arms upon the table, and considering his words carefully.

"It's interesting" he repeated. "I don't know how far you want to hear what I think about it. I'm rather a downright person."

Sir Eliphaz with great urbanity motioned him to speak on.

"There's been, if you'll forgive me, nonsense upon both sides."

He turned to Sir Eliphaz. "This Spook stuff," he said, and paused and compressed his lips and shook his head.

"It won't do.

"I have given some little attention to the evidences in that matter. I'm something of a psychologist — a doctor has to be. Of course, Sir Eliphaz, you're not responsible for all the nonsense you have been talking about sublimated bricks and spook dogs made of concentrated smell..."

Sir Eliphaz was convulsed. "Tut, tut!" he said. "But indeed — !"

"No offence, Sir Eliphaz! If you don't want me to talk I won't; but if you do, then I must say what I have in my mind. And as I say, I don't hold you responsible for the things you have been saying. All this cheap medium stuff has been shot upon the world by Sir Oliver J. Lodge, handed out by him to people distraught with grief, in a great fat impressive-looking volume.... No end of them have tried their utmost to take it seriously.... It's been a pitiful business.... I've no doubt the man is honest after his lights, but what lights they are! Obstinate credulity posing as liberalism. He takes every pretence and dodge of these mediums, he accepts their explanations, he edits their babble and rearranges it to make it seem striking. Look at his critical ability! Because many of the mediums are fairly respectable people who either make no money by their — revelations, or at most a very ordinary living — it's a guinea a go, I believe, usually — he insists upon their honesty. That's his key blunder. Any doctor could tell

him, as I could have told him after my first year's practice, that telling the truth is the very last triumph of the human mind. Hardly any of my patients tell the truth — ever. It isn't only that they haven't a tithe of the critical ability and detachment necessary, they haven't any real desire to tell the truth. They want to produce effects. Human beings are artistic still; they aren't beginning to be scientific. Either they minimize or they exaggerate. We all do. If I saw a cat run over outside and I came in here to tell you about it, I should certainly touch up the story, make it more dramatic, hurt the cat more, make the dray bigger and so on. I should want to justify my telling the story. Put a woman in that chair there, tell her to close her eyes and feel odd, and she'11 feel odd right enough; tell her to produce words and sentences that she finds in her head and she'll produce them; give her half a hint that it comes from eastern Asia and the stuff will begin to correspond to her ideas of pigeon English. It isn't that she is cunningly and elaborately deceiving you. It is that she wants to come up to your expectation. You are focussing your interest on her, and all human beings like to have interest focussed on them, so long as it isn't too hostile. She'll cling to that interest all she knows how. She'll cling instinctively. Most of these mediums never held the attention of a roomful of people in their lives until they found out this way of doing it.... What can you expect?"

Dr. Barrack cleared his throat. "But all that's beside the question, " he said. "Don't think that because I reject all this spook stuff, I'm setting up any finality for the science we have to-day. It's just a little weak squirt of knowledge — all the science in the world. I grant you there may be forces, I would almost say there must be forces in the world, forces universally present, of which we still know nothing. Take the case of electricity. What did men know of electricity in the days of Gilbert? Practically nothing. In the early Neolithic age I doubt if any men had ever noticed there was such a thing as air. I grant you that most things are still unknown. Things perhaps right under our noses. But that doesn't help the case of Sir Eliphaz one little bit. These unknown things, as they become known, will join on to the things we do know. They'll complicate or perhaps simplify our ideas, but they won't contradict our general ideas. They'll be things in the system. They won't get you out of the grip of the arguments

Mr. Huss has brought forward. So far, so far as concerns your Immortality, Sir Eliphaz, I am, you see, entirely with Mr. Huss. It's a fancy; it's a dream. As a fancy it's about as pretty as creaking boards at bedtime; as a dream — . It's unattractive. As Mr. Huss has said.

"But when it comes to Mr. Huss and his Immortality then I find myself with you, gentlemen. That too is a dream. Less than a dream. Less even than a fancy; it's a play on words. Here is this Undying Flame, this Spirit of God in man; it's in him, he says, it's in you, Sir Eliphaz, it's in you, Mr. — Dad, wasn't it? it's in this other gentleman whose name I didn't quite catch; and it's in me. Well, it's extraordinary that none of us know of it except Mr. Huss. How you feel about it I don't know, but personally I object to being made part of God and one with Mr. Huss without my consent in this way. I prefer to remain myself. That may be egotism, but I am by nature an egotistical creature. And Agnostic....

"You've got me talking now, and I may as well go through with it. What is an Agnostic really? A man who accepts fully the limitations of the human intelligence, who takes the world as he finds it, and who takes himself as he finds himself and declines to go further. There may be other universes and dimensions galore. There may be a fourth dimension, for example, and, if you like, a fifth dimension and a sixth dimension and any number of other dimensions. They don't concern me. I live in this universe and in three dimensions, and I have no more interest in all these other universes and dimensions than a bug under the wallpaper has in the deep, deep sea. Possibly there are bugs under the wallpaper with a kind of reasoned consciousness of the existence of the deep, deep sea, and a half belief that when at last the Keating's powder gets them, thither they will go. I — if I may have one more go at the image — just live under the wallpaper.

"I am an Agnostic, I say. I have had my eyes pretty well open at the universe since I came into it six and thirty years ago. And not only have I never seen nor heard of nor smelt nor touched a ghost or spirit, Sir Eliphaz, but I have never seen a gleam or sign of this Providence, the Great God of the World of yours, or of this other minor and modern God that Mr. Huss has taken up. In the hearts of men I have found malformations, ossifications, clots, and fatty

degeneration; but never a God.

"You will excuse me if I speak plainly to you, gentlemen, but this gentleman, whose name I haven't somehow got—"

"Farr."

"Mr. Farr, has brought it down on himself and you. He called me in, and I am interested in these questions. It's clear to me that since we exist there's something in all this. But what it is I'm convinced I haven't the ganglia even to begin to understand. I decline either the wild guesses of the Spookist and Providentialist — I must put you there, I'm afraid, Sir Eliphaz or the metaphors of Mr. Huss. Fact...."

Dr. Barrack paused. "I put my faith in Fact."

"There's a lot in Fact," said Mr. Dad, who found much that was congenial in the doctor's downright style.

"What do I see about me?" asked Dr. Barrack. "A struggle for existence. About that I ask a very plain and simple question: why try to get behind it? That is It. It made me. I study it and watch it. It put me up like a cock-shy, and it keeps on trying to destroy me. I do my best to dodge its blows. It got my leg. My head is bloody but unbowed. I reproduce my kind — as abundantly as circumstances permit — I stamp myself upon the universe as much as possible. If I am right, if I do the right things and have decently good luck, I shall hold out until my waning instincts dispose me to rest. My breed and influence are the marks of my Tightness. What else is there? You may call this struggle what you like. God, if you like. But God for me is an anthropomorphic idea. Call it The Process."

"Why not Evolution?" said Mr. Huss.

"I prefer The Process. The word Evolution rather begs the moral question. It's a cheap word. 'Shon!' Evolution seems to suggest just a simple and automatic unfolding. The Process is complex; it has its ups and downs — as Mr. Huss understands. It is more like a Will than an Automaton. A Will feeling about. It isn't indifferent to us as Mr. Huss suggests; it uses us. It isn't subordinate to us as Sir Eliphaz would have us believe; playing the part of a Providence just for our comfort and happiness. Some of us are hammer and some of us are anvil, some of us are sparks and some of us are the beaten stuff which survives. The Process doesn't confide in us; why should it? We learn what we can about it, and make what is called a practical

use of it, for that is what the will in the Process requires." Mr. Dad, stirred by the word 'practical,' made a noise of assent. But not a very confident noise: a loan rather than a gift.

"And that is where it seems to me Mr. Huss goes wrong altogether. He does not submit himself to those Realities. He sets up something called the Spirit in Man, or the God in his Heart, to judge them. He wants to judge the universe by the standards of the human intelligence at its present stage of development. That's where I fall out with him. These are not fixed standards. Man goes on developing and evolving. Some things offend the sense of justice in Mr. Huss, but that is no enduring criterion of justice; the human sense of justice has developed out of something different, and it will develop again into something different. Like everything else in us, it has been produced by the Process and it will be modified by the Process. Some things, again, he says are not beautiful. There also he would condemn. But nothing changes like the sense of beauty. A band of art students can start a new movement, cubist, vorticist, or what not, and change your sense of beauty. If seeing things as beautiful conduces to survival, we shall see them as beautiful sooner or later, rest assured. I daresay the hyenas admire each other — in the rutting season anyhow.... So it is with mercy and with everything. Each creature has its own standards. After man is the Beyond-Man, who may find mercy folly, who may delight in things that pain our feeble spirits. We have to obey the Process in our own place and our own time. That is how I see things. That is the stark truth of the universe looked at plainly and hard."

The lips of Mr. Dad repeated noiselessly: "plainly and hard." But he felt very uncertain.

For some moments the doctor sat with his forearms resting on the table as if he had done. Then he resumed.

"I gather that this talk here to-day arose out of a discussion about education."

"You'd hardly believe it," said Mr. Dad.

But Dr. Barrack's next remark checked Mr. Dad's growing approval. "That seems perfectly logical to me. It's one of the things I can never understand about schoolmasters and politicians and suchlike, the way they seem to take it for granted you can educate

and not bring in religion and socialism and all your beliefs. What *is* education? Teaching young people to talk and read and write and calculate in order that they may be told how they stand in the world and what we think we and the world generally are up to, and the part we expect them to play in the game. Well, how can we do that and at the same time leave it all out? What is the game? That is what every youngster wants to know. Answering him, is education. Either we are going to say what we think the game is plainly and straightforwardly, or else we are going to make motions as though we were educating when we are really doing nothing of the kind. In which case the stupid ones will grow up with their heads all in a muddle and be led by any old catchword anywhere according to luck, and the clever ones will grow up with the idea that life is a sort of empty swindle. Most educated people in this country believe it is a sham and a swindle. They flounder about and never get up against a reality.... It's amazing how people can lose their grip on reality — how most people have. The way my patients come along to me and tell me lies — even about their stomach-aches. The idea of anything being direct and reasonable has gone clean out of their heads. They think they can fool me about the facts, and that when I'm properly fooled, I shall then humbug their stomachs into not aching — somehow....

"Now my gospel is this: — face facts. Take the world as it is and take yourself as you are. And the fundamental fact we all have to face is this, that this Process takes no account of our desires or fears or moral ideas or anything of the sort. It puts us up, it tries us over, and if we don't stand the tests it knocks us down and ends us. That may not be right as you test it by your little human standards, but it is right by the atoms and the stars. Then what must a proper Education be?"

Dr. Barrack paused. "Tell them what the world is, tell them every rule and trick of the game mankind has learnt, and tell them 'Be yourselves.' Be yourselves up to the hilt. It is no good being anything but your essential self because—"

Dr. Barrack spoke like one who quotes a sacred formula. "*There is no inheritance of acquired characteristics.* Your essential self, your essential heredity, are on trial. Put everything of yourself into

the Process. If the Process wants you it will accept you; if it doesn't you will go under. You can't help it — either way. You may be the bit of marble that is left in the statue, or you may be the bit of marble that is thrown away. You can't help it. *Be yourself!*"

Dr. Barrack had sat back; he raised his voice at the last words and lifted his hand as if to smite the table. But, so good a thing is professional training, he let his hand fall slowly, as he remembered that Mr. Huss was his patient.

§ 2

Mr. Huss did not speak for some moments. He was thinking so deeply that he seemed to be unobservant of the cessation of the doctor's discourse.

Then he awoke to the silence with a start.

"You do not differ among yourselves so much as you may think," he said at last.

"You all argue to one end, however wide apart your starting points may be. You argue that men may lead fragmentary lives....

"And," he reflected further, "submissive lives."

"*Not* submissive," said Dr. Barrack in a kind of footnote.

"You say, Sir Eliphaz, that this Universe is in the charge of Providence, all-wise and amiable. That He guides this world to ends we cannot understand; desirable ends, did we but know them, but incomprehensible; that this life, this whole Universe, is but the starting point for a developing series of immortal lives. And from this you conclude that the part a human being has to play in this scheme is the part of a trustful child, which need only not pester the Higher Powers, which need only do its few simple congenial duties, to be surely preserved and rewarded and carried on."

"There is much in simple faith," said Sir Eliphaz; "sneer though you may."

"But your view is a grimmer one, Dr. Barrack; you say that this Process is utterly beyond knowledge and control. We cannot alter it or appease it. It makes of some of us vessels of honour and of others vessels of dishonour. It has scrawled our race across the black

emptiness of space, and it may wipe us out again. Such is the quality of Fate. We can but follow our lights and instincts.... In the end, in practical matters, your teaching marches with the teaching of Sir Eliphaz. You bow to the thing that is; he gladly and trustfully — with a certain old-world courtesy, you grimly — in the modern style....”

For some moments Mr. Huss sat with compressed lips, as though he listened to the pain within him. Then he said: “I don’t.

“I don’t submit. I rebel — not in my own strength nor by my own impulse. I rebel by the spirit of God in me. I rebel not merely to make weak gestures of defiance against the black disorder and cruelties of space and time, but for mastery. I am a rebel of pride — I am full of the pride of God in my heart. I am the servant of a rebellious and adventurous God who may yet bring order into this cruel and frightful chaos in which we seem to be driven hither and thither like leaves before the wind, a God who, in spite of all appearances, may yet rule over it at last and mould it to his will.”

“*What* a world it will be!” whispered Mr. Farr, unable to restrain himself and yet half-ashamed of his sneer.

“What a world it is, Farr! What a cunning and watchful world! Does it serve even *you*? So insecure has it become that opportunity may yet turn a frightful face upon you — in the very moment as you snatch....

“But you see how I differ from you all. You see that the spirit of my life and of my teaching — of my teaching — for all its weaknesses and slips and failures, is a fight against that Dark Being of the universe who seeks to crush us all. Who broods over me now even as I talk to you.... It is a fight against disorder, a refusal of that very submission you have made, a repudiation altogether of that same voluntary death in life....”

He moistened his lips and resumed.

“The end and substance of all real education is to teach men and women of the Battle of God, to teach them of the beginnings of life upon this lonely little planet amidst the endless stars, and how those beginnings have unfolded; to show them how man has arisen through the long ages from amidst the beasts, and the nature of the struggle God wages through him, and to draw all men together out of themselves into one common life and effort with God. The nature of

God's struggle is the essence of our dispute. It is a struggle, with a hope of victory but with no assurance. You have argued, Sir Eliphaz, that it is an unreal struggle, a sham fight, that indeed all things are perfectly adjusted and for our final happiness, and when I have reminded you a little of the unmasked horrors about us, you have shifted your ground of compensation into another — into an incredible — world."

Sir Eliphaz sounded dissent musically. Then he waved his long hand as Mr. Huss paused and regarded him. "But go on!" he said. "Go on!"

"And now I come to you, Dr. Barrack, and your modern fatalism. You hold this universe is uncontrollable — anyhow. And incomprehensible. For good or ill — we can be no more than our strenuous selves. You must, you say, *be yourself*. I answer, you must lose yourself in something altogether greater — in God.... There is a curious likeness, Doctor, and a curious difference in your views and mine. I think you see the world very much as I see it, but you see it coldly like a man before sunrise, and I—"

He paused. "There is a light upon it," he asserted with a noticeable flatness in his voice. "There is a light... light..."

He became silent. For a while it seemed as if the light he spoke of had gone from him and as if the shadow had engulfed him. When he spoke again it was with an evident effort.

He turned to Dr. Barrack. "You think," he said, "that there is a will in this Process of yours which will take things somewhere, somewhere definitely greater or better or onward. I hold that there is no will at all except in and through ourselves. If there be any will at all ... I hold that even your maxim 'be ourselves' is a paradox, for we cannot be ourselves until we have lost ourselves in God. I have talked to Sir Eliphaz and to you since you came in, of the boundless disorder and evil of nature. Let me talk to you now of the boundless miseries that arise from the disorderliness of men and that must continue age after age until either men are united in spirit and in truth or destroyed through their own incoherence. Whether men will be lost or saved I do not know. There have been times when I was sure that God would triumph in us.... But dark shadows have fallen upon my spirit....

“Consider the posture of men’s affairs now, consider where they stand today, because they have not yet begun to look deeply and frankly into realities; because, as they put it, they take life as they find it, because *they are themselves*, heedless of history, and do not realize that in truth they are but parts in one great adventure in space and time. For four years now the world has been marching deeper and deeper into tragedy.... Our life that seemed so safe grows insecure and more and more insecure.... Six million soldiers, six million young men, have been killed on the battlefields alone; three times as many have been crippled and mutilated; as many again who were not soldiers have been destroyed. That has been only the beginning of the disaster that has come upon our race. All human relationships have been strained; roads, ships, harvests destroyed; and behind the red swift tragedy of this warfare comes the gaunt and desolating face of universal famine now, and behind famine that inevitable follower of famine, pestilence. You gentlemen who have played so useful a part in supplying munitions of war, who have every reason in days well spent and energies well used to see a transitory brightness upon these sombre things, you may tell me that I lack faith when I say that I can see nothing to redeem the waste and destruction of the last four years and the still greater waste and spiritless disorder and poverty and disease ahead of us. You will tell me that the world has learnt a lesson it could learn in no other way, that we shall set up a World League of Nations now and put an end to war. But on what will you set up your World League of Nations? What foundations have you made in the last four years but ruins? Is there any common idea, any common understanding yet in the minds of men? They are still taking the world as they find it, they are being their unmitigated selves more than ever, and below the few who scramble for profits now is a more and more wolfish multitude scrambling for bread. There are no common ideas in men’s minds upon which we can build. How can men be united except by common ideas? The schools have failed the world. What common thought is there in the world? A loud bawling of base newspapers, a posturing of politicians. You can see chaos coming again over all the east of Europe now, and bit by bit western Europe crumbles and drops into the confusion. Art, science, reasoned thought, creative

effort, such things have ceased altogether in Russia; they may have ceased there perhaps for centuries; they die now in Germany; the universities of the west are bloodless and drained of their youth. That war that seemed at first so like the dawn of a greater age has ceased to matter in the face of this greater disaster. The French and British and Americans are beating back the Germans from Paris. Can they beat them back to any distance? Will not this present counterthrust diminish and fail as the others have done? Which side may first drop exhausted now, will hardly change the supreme fact. The supreme fact is exhaustion — exhaustion, mental as well as material, failure to grasp and comprehend, cessation even of attempts to grasp and comprehend, slackening of every sort of effort.

"What's the *good* of such despair?" said Mr. Dad.

"I do not despair. No. But what is the good of lying about hope and success in the midst of failure and gathering disaster? What is the good of saying that mankind wins — automatically — against the spirit of evil, when mankind is visibly losing point after point, is visibly losing heart? What is the good of pretending that there is order and benevolence or some sort of splendid and incomprehensible process in this festering waste, this windy desolation of tremendous things? There is no reason anywhere, there is no creation anywhere, except the undying fire, the spirit of God in the hearts of men... which may fail... which may fail... which seems to me to fail."

§ 3

He paused. Dr. Barrack cleared his throat.

"I don't want to seem obdurate," said Dr. Barrack. "I want to respect deep feeling. One must respect deep feeling.... But for the life of me I can't put much meaning into this phrase, *the spirit of God in the hearts of men*. It's rather against my habits to worry a patient, but this is so interesting — this is an exceptional occasion. I would like to ask you, Mr. Huss — frankly — is there anything very much more to it, than a phrase!"

There was no answer.

“Words,” said Mr. Dad; “ joost words. If Mr. Huss had ever spent three months of war time running a big engineering factory—”

“My mind is a sceptical mind,” Dr. Barrack went on, after staring a moment to see if Mr. Dad meant to finish his sentence. “I want things I can feel and handle. I am an Agnostic by nature and habit and profession. A Doubting Thomas, born and bred. Well, I take it that about the universe Mr. Huss is very much of an Agnostic too. More so. He doubts more than I do. He doubts whether there is any trace of plan or purpose in it. What I call a Process, he calls a windy desolation. He sees Chaos still waiting for a creator. But then he sets up against that this undying fire of his, this spirit of God, which is lit in him and only waiting to be lighted in us, a sort of insurgent apprentice creator. Well—”

The doctor frowned and meditated on his words.

“I want more of the practical outcome of this fire. I admit a certain poetry in the idea, but I am a plain and practical man. Give me something to know this fire by and to recognize it again when I see it. I won’t ask *why* ‘undying.’ I won’t quibble about that. But what does this undying fire mean in actual things and our daily life? In some way it is mixed up with teaching history in schools.” A faint note of derision made him glance at the face to his right. “That doesn’t strike me as being so queer as it seems to strike Mr. Farr. It interests me. There is a cause for it. But I think there are several links Mr. Huss hasn’t shown and several vital points he still has to explain. This undying fire is something that is burning in Mr. Huss, and I gather from his pretty broad hints it ought, he thinks, to be burning in me — and you, gentlemen. It is something that makes us forget our little personal differences, makes us forget ourselves, and brings us all into line against — what. That’s my first point; — against what? I don’t see the force and value of this line-up. *I* think we struggle against one another by nature and necessity; that we polish one another in the struggle and sharpen our edges. I think that out of this struggle for existence comes better things and better. They may not be better things by our standards now, but by the standards of the Process, they are. Sometimes the mills of the Process may seem overpoweringly grim and high and pitiless; that is a question of scale. But Mr. Huss does not believe in the struggle. He wants to take

men's minds and teach them so that they will not struggle against each other but live and work all together. *For* what? That is my second point; — *for what?* There is a rationality in my idea of an everlasting struggle making incessantly for betterment, such an idea does at any rate give a direction and take us somewhere; but there is no rationality in declaring we are still fighting and fighting more than ever, while in effect we are arranging to stop that struggle which carries life on — if we can — if we can.

That is the paradox of Mr. Huss. When there is neither competition at home nor war abroad, when the cat and the bird have come to a satisfactory understanding, when the spirit of his human God rules even in the jungle and the sea, then where shall we be heading? Time will be still unfolding. But man will have halted. If he has ceased to compete individually he will have halted. Mr. Huss looks at me as if he thought I wronged him in saying that. Well, then he must answer my questions; what will the Human God be leading us against, and what shall we be living *for*?"

§ 4

"Let me tell you first what the spirit of God struggles against," said Mr. Huss.

"I will not dispute that this Process of yours has made good things; all the good things in man it has made as well as all the evil. It has made them indifferently. In us — in some of us — it has made the will to seize upon that chance-born good and separate it from the chance-born evil. The spirit of God rises out of your process as if he were a part of your process.... Except for him, the good and evil are inextricably mixed; good things flower into evil things and evil things wholly or partially redeem themselves by good consequences. 'Good' and 'evil' have meaning only for us. The Process is indifferent; it makes, it destroys, it favours, it torments. On its own account it preserves nothing and continues nothing. It is just careless. But for us it has made opportunity. Life is opportunity. Unless we do now ourselves seize hold upon life and the Process while we are in it, the Process, becoming uncontrollable again, will presently sweep us

altogether away. In the back of your mind, doctor, is the belief in a happy ending just as much as in the mind of Sir Eliphaz. I see deeper because I am not blinded by health. You think that beyond man comes some sort of splendid super-man. A healthy delusion! There is nothing beyond man unless men will that something shall be. We shall be wiped out as carelessly as we have been made, and something else will come, as disconnected and aimless, something neither necessarily better nor necessarily worse but something different, to be wiped out in its turn. Unless the spirit of God that moves in us can rouse us to seize this universe for Him and ourselves, that is the nature of your Process. Your Process is just Chaos; man is the opportunity, the passing opportunity for order in the waste.

"People write and talk as if this great war which is now wrecking the world, was a dramatic and consecutive thing. They talk of it as a purge, as a great lesson, as a phase in history that marks the end of wars and divisions. So it might be; but is it so and will it be so? I asked you a little time ago to look straightly at the realities of animal life, of life in general as we know it. I think I did a little persuade you to my own sense of shallowness of our assumption that there is any natural happiness. The poor beasts and creatures have to suffer. I ask you now to look as straightly at the things that men have done and endured in this war. It is plain that they have shown extraordinary fertility and ingenuity in the inventions they have used and an amazing capacity for sacrifice and courage; but it is, I argue, equally plain that the pains and agonies they have undergone have taught the race little or nothing, and that their devices have been mainly for their own destruction. The only lesson and the only betterment that can come out of this war will come if men, inspired by the Divine courage, say ' This and all such things must end.'... "But I do not perceive them saying that. On the other hand I do perceive a great amount of human energy and ability that has been devoted and is still being devoted to things that lead straight to futility and extinction.

"The most desolating thing about this war is neither the stupidity nor the cruelty of it, but the streak of perversion that has run through it. Against the meagreness of the intelligence that made the war, against the absolute inability of the good forces in life to arrest it and

end it, I ask you to balance the intelligence and devotion that has gone to such an enterprise as the offensive use of poison gas. Consider the ingenuity and the elaboration of that; the different sorts of shell used, the beautifully finished devices to delay the release of the poison so as to catch men unawares after their gas masks are removed. One method much in favour with the Germans now involves the use of two sorts of gas. They have a gas now not very deadly but so subtle that it penetrates the gas masks and produces nausea and retching. The man is overcome by the dread of being sick so that he will clog his mask and suffocate, and he snatches off his protection in an ungovernable physical panic. Then the second gas, of the coarser, more deadly type, comes into play. That he breathes in fully. His breath catches; he realizes what he has done but it is too late; death has him by the throat; he passes through horrible discomfort and torment to the end. You cough, you stagger, you writhe upon the ground and are deadly sick.... You die heaving and panting, with staring eyes.... So it is men are being killed now; it is but one of a multitude of methods, disgusting, undignified, and monstrous, but intelligent, technically admirable.... You cannot deny, Doctor Barrack, that this ingenious mixture is one of the last fruits of your Process. To that your Process has at last brought men from the hoeing and herding of Neolithic days.

"Now tell me how is the onward progress of mankind to anything, anywhere, secured by this fine flower of the Process? Intellectual energy, industrial energy, are used up without stint to make this horror possible; multitudes of brave young men are spoilt or killed. Is there any selection in it? Along such lines can you imagine men or life or the universe getting anywhere at all?

"Why do they do such things?

"They do not do it out of a complete and organized impulse to evil. If you took the series of researches and inventions that led at last to this use of poison gas, you would find they were the work of a multitude of mainly amiable, fairly virtuous, and kindly-meaning men. Each one was *doing his bit*, as Mr. Dad would say; each one, to use your phrase, doctor, was *being himself* and utilizing the gift that was in him in accordance with the drift of the world about him; each one, Sir Eliphaz, was modestly *taking the world as he found it*. They

were living in an uninformed world with no common understanding and no collective plan, a world ignorant of its true history and with no conception of its future. Into these horrors they drifted for the want of a world education. Out of these horrors no lesson will be learnt, no will can arise, for the same reason. Every man lives ignorantly in his own circumstances, from hand to mouth, from day to day, swayed first of all by this catchword and then by that.

"Let me take another instance of the way in which human ability and energy if they are left to themselves, without co-ordination, without a common basis of purpose, without a God, will run into cul-de-sacs of mere horribleness; let me remind you a little of what the submarine is and what it signifies. In this country we think of the submarine as an instrument of murder; but we think of it as something ingeniously contrived and at any rate not tormenting and destroying the hands that guide it. I will not recall to you the stories that fill our newspapers of men drowning in the night, of crowded boatloads of sailors and passengers shelled and sunken, of men forced to clamber out of the sea upon the destroying U-boat and robbed of their lifebelts in order that when it submerged they should be more surely drowned. I want you to think of the submarine in itself. There is a kind of crazy belief that killing, however cruel, has a kind of justification in the survival of the killer; we make that our excuse for instance for the destruction of the native Tasmanians who were shot whenever they were seen, and killed by poisoned meat left in their paths. But the marvel of these submarines is that they also torture and kill their own crews. They are miracles of short-sighted ingenuity for the common unprofitable reasonless destruction of Germans and their enemies. They are almost quintessential examples of the elaborate futility and horror into which partial ideas about life, combative and competitive ideas of life, thrust mankind.

"Take some poor German boy with an ordinary sort of intelligence, an ordinary human disposition to kindliness, and some gallantry, who becomes finally a sailor in one of these craft. Consider his case and what we do to him. You will find in him a sample of what we are doing for mankind. As a child he is ingenuous, teachable, plastic. He is also egotistical, greedy, and suspicious. He is easily led and easily frightened. He likes making things if he

knows how to make them; he is capable of affection and capable of resentment. He is a sheet of white paper upon which anything may be written. His parents teach him, his companions, his school. Do they teach him anything of the great history of mankind? Do they teach him of his blood brotherhood with all men? Do they tell him anything of discovery, of exploration, of human effort and achievement? No. They teach him that he belongs to a blonde and wonderful race, the only race that matters on this planet. (No such distinct race ever existed; it is a lie for the damning of men.) And these teachers incite him to suspicion and hatred and contempt of all other races. They fill his mind with fears and hostilities. Everything German they tell him is good and splendid. Everything not German is dangerous and wicked. They take that poor actor of an emperor at Potsdam and glorify him until he shines upon this lad's mind like a star....

"The boy grows up a mental cripple; his capacity for devotion and self- sacrifice is run into a mould of fanatical loyalty for the Kaiser and hatred for foreign things. Comes this war, and the youngster is only too eager to give himself where he is most needed. He is told that the submarine war is the sure way of striking the enemies of his country a conclusive blow. To be in a submarine is to be at the spear point. He dare scarcely hope that he will be accepted for this vital service; to which princes might aspire. But he is fortunate; he is. He trains for a submarine.

"I do not know how far you gentlemen remember your youth. A schoolmaster perhaps remembers more of his early adolescence than other men because he is being continually reminded of it. But it is a time of very fine emotions, boundless ambitions, a newly awakened and eager sense of beauty. This youngster sees himself as a hero, fighting for his half-divine Kaiser, for dear Germany, against the cold and evil barbarians who resist and would destroy her. He passes through his drill and training. He goes down into a submarine for the first time, clambers down the narrow hatchway. It is a little cold, but wonderful; a marvellous machine. How can such a nest of inventions, ingenuities, beautiful metal-work, wonderful craftsmanship, be anything but right! His mind is full of dreams of proud enemy battleships smitten and heeling over into the waters,

while he watches his handiwork with a stern pride, a restrained exultation, a sense of Germany vindicated....

"That is how his mind has been made for him. That is the sort of mind that has been made and is being made in boys all over the world.... Because there is no common plan in the world, because each person in the making of this boy, just as each person in the making of the submarine, had 'been himself' and 'done his bit,' followed his own impulses and interests without regard to the whole, regardless of any plan or purpose in human affairs, ignorant of the spirit of God who would unify us and lead us to a common use for all our gifts and energies.

"Let me go on with the story of this youngster....

"Comes a day when he realizes the reality of the work he is doing for his kind. He stands by one of the guns of the submarine in an attack upon some wretched ocean tramp. He realizes that the war he wages is no heroic attack on pride or predominance, but a mere murdering of traffic. He sees the little ship shelled, the wretched men killed and wounded, no tyrants of the seas but sailormen like himself; he sees their boats smashed to pieces. Mostly such sinkings are done at dawn or sundown, under a level light which displays a world of black lines and black silhouettes asway with the slow heaving and falling of coldly shining water. These little black things, he realizes incredulously, that struggle and disappear amidst the wreckage are the heads of men, brothers to himself....

"For hundreds of thousands of men who have come into this war expecting bright and romantic and tremendous experiences their first killing must have been a hideous disillusionment. For none so much as for the men of the submarines. All that sense of being right and fine that carries men into battle, that carries most of us through the world, must have vanished completely at this first vision of reality. Our man must have asked himself, *'What am I doing?'*...

"In the night he must have lain awake and stared at that question in horrible doubt....

"We scold too much at the German submarine crews in this country. Most of us in their places would be impelled to go on as they go on. The work they do has been reached step by step, logically, inevitably, because our world has been content to drift

along on false premises and haphazard assumptions about nationality and race and the order of things. These things have happened because the technical education of men has been better than their historical and social education. Once men have lost touch with, or failed to apprehend that idea of a single human community, that idea which is the substance of all true history and the essential teaching of God, it is towards such organized abominations as these that they drift — necessarily. People in this country who are just as incoherent in their minds, just as likely to drift into some kindred cul-de-sac of conduct, would have these U-boat men tortured — to show the superiority of their own moral standards.

"But indeed these men *are* tortured....

"Bear yet a little longer with this boy of mine in the U-boat. I've tried to suggest him to you with his conscience scared — at a moment when his submarine had made a kill. But those moments are rare. For most of its time the U-boat is under water and a hunted thing. The surface swarms with hostile craft; sea-planes and observation balloons are seeking it. Every time a U-boat comes even near to the surface it may be spotted by a sea-plane and destruction may fall upon it. Even when it is submerged below the limits of visibility in the turbid North Sea waters, the noise of its engines will betray it to a listening apparatus and a happy guess with a depth charge may end its career. I want you to think of the daily life of this youngster under these conditions. I want you to see exactly where wrong ideas, not his, but wrong ideas ruling in the world about him, are driving him.

"The method of detection by listening apparatus improves steadily, and nowadays our destroyers will follow up a U-boat sometimes for sixty or seventy hours, following her sounds as a hound follows the scent of its quarry. At last, if the U-boat cannot shake off her pursuers she must come to the surface and fight or surrender. That is the strangest game of Blind-Man that ever human beings played. The U-boat doubles and turns, listening also for the sounds of the pursuers at the surface. Are they coming nearer! Are they getting fainter? Unless a helpful mud-bank is available for it to lie up in silence for a time, the U-boat must keep moving and using up electrical force, so that ultimately it must come to the surface to

recharge its batteries. As far as possible the crew of the U-boat are kept in ignorance of the chase in progress. They get hints from the anxiety or irritation of the commander, or from the haste and variety of his orders. Something is going on — they do not know quite what — something that may end disagreeably. If the pursuer tries a depth charge, then they know for certain from the concussion that the hand of death is feeling for them in the darkness.... "Always the dread of a depth charge must haunt the imagination of the U-boat sailor. Without notice, at any hour, may come thud and concussion to warn him that the destroying powers are on his track. The fragile ship jumps and quivers from end to end; the men are thrown about. That happens to our youngster. He curses the damned English. And if you think it over, what else can you expect him to curse? A little nearer and the rivets will start and actual leakage begin, letting in a pressure of several atmospheres. Yet a little nearer and the water will come pressing in through cracks and breaches at a score of points, the air will be compressed in his lungs, the long death struggle of the U-boat will begin, and after some hours of hopeless suffering he will suffocate and drown like a rat in a flooded tunnel....

"Think of the life of endless apprehension in that confined space below the waters. The air is almost always stuffy and sometimes it is poisonous. All sorts of evil chances may occur in this crowded tinful of machinery to release oppressive gases and evil odours. A whiff of chlorine for instance may warn the crew of flooded accumulators. At the first sting of chlorine the U-boat must come up at any risk.... And nothing can be kept dry. The surfaces of the apparatus and the furniture sweat continually; except where the machinery radiates a certain heat a clammy chill pervades the whole contrivance. Have you ever seen the thick blubber of a whale? Only by means of that enormous layer of non-conductor can a whale keep its body warm in spite of the waters about it. A U-boat cannot afford any layer of blubber. It is at the temperature of the dark under-waters. And this life of cold, fear, suffocation, headache and nausea is not sustained by hot and nourishing food. There is no blazing galley fire for the cook of the U-boat.

"The U-boat rolls very easily; she is, of course, no heavier nor lighter than the water in which she floats, and if by chance she

touches bottom in shallow water, she bounds about like a rubber ball on a pavement. Inside the sailors are thrown about and dashed against the machinery.

"That is the quality of everyday life in a U-boat retained below the surface. Now think what an emergence involves. Up she comes until the periscope can scrutinize the sky and the nearer sea. Nothing in sight? Thank God! She rises out of the water and some of the sailors get a breath of fresh air. Not all, for there is no room nor time for all of them to come out. But the fortunate ones who get to the hatches may even have the luck of sunshine. To come to the surface on a calm open sea away from any traffic at all is the secret hope of every U-boat sailor. But suppose now there is something in sight. Then the U-boat must come up with infinite discretion and examine the quarry. It looks an innocent craft, a liner, a trawler, a cargo-boat. But is that innocence certain? How does the U-boat man know that she hasn't a gun? What new contrivance of the hunter may not hide behind that harmless-looking mask? Until they have put a ship down, the U-boat sailors never know what ugly surprise she may not have in store for them. When they approach a vessel they must needs be ignorant of what counter-attack creeps upon them from her unseen other side. As a consequence these men are in terror of every ship they hail.

"Is it any wonder then if their behaviour is hasty and hysterical, if they curse and insult the wretched people they are proposing to drown, if they fire upon them unexpectedly and do strange and abominable things? The U-boat man is no fine captain on his quarter deck. He is a man who lives a life of intense physical hardship and extreme fear, who faces overwhelming risks, in order to commit as inglorious a crime as any man can commit. He is a man already in hell.

"The Germans do what they can to keep up the spirit of these crews. An English captain who spent a fortnight upon one as a prisoner and who was recently released by way of Switzerland, says that when they had sunk a merchant ship 'they played victory music on the gramophone.' Imagine that bleak festival!

"The inevitable end of the U-boat sailor, unless he is lucky enough to get captured, is death, and a very horrible and slow death

indeed. Sooner or later it is bound to come. Some never return from their first voyage. There is a brief spree ashore if they do; then out they go again. Perhaps they return a second time, perhaps not. Some may even have made a score of voyages, but sooner or later they are caught. The average life of a U-boat is less than five voyages — out and home. Of the crews of the original U-boats which began the U-boat campaign very few men survive to-day. When our young hopeful left his home in Germany to join the U-boat service, he left it for a certain death. He learns that slowly from the conversation of his mates. Men are so scarce now for this vile work that once Germany has got a man she will use him to the end.

"And that end — ?

"I was given some particulars of the fate of one U-boat that were told by two prisoners who died at Harwich the other day. This particular boat was got by a mine which tore a hole in her aft. She was too disabled to come to the surface, and she began to sink tail down. Now the immediate effect of a hole in a U-boat is of course to bring the air pressure within her to the same level as the pressure of the water outside. For every ten yards of depth this means an addition of fourteen pounds to the square inch. The ears and blood vessels are suddenly subjected to this enormous pressure. There is at once a violent pain in the ears and a weight on the chest. Cotton wool has to be stuffed into ears and nostrils to save the ear drum. Then the boat is no longer on an even keel. The men stand and slip about on the sides of things. They clamber up the floor out of the way of the slowly rising water. For the water does not come rushing in to drown them speedily. It cannot do that because there is no escape for the air; the water creeps in steadily and stealthily as the U-boat goes deeper and deeper. It is a process of slow and crushing submergence that has the cruel deliberation of some story by Edgar Allan Poe; it may last for hours. A time comes when the lights go out and the rising waters stop the apparatus for keeping up the supply of oxygen and absorbing the carbonic acid. Suffocation begins. Think of what must happen in the minds of the doomed men crowded together amidst the machinery. In the particular case these prisoners described, several of the men drowned themselves deliberately in the rising waters inside the boat. And in another case where the boat was recovered full of

dead men, they had all put their heads under the water inside the boat. People say the U-boat men carry poison against such mischances as this. They don't. It would be too tempting.

"When it becomes evident that the U-boat can never recover the surface, there is usually an attempt to escape by the hatches. The hatches can be opened when at last the pressure inside is equal to that of the water without. The water of course rushes in and sinks the U-boat to the bottom like a stone, but the men *who are nearest to the hatch* have a chance of escaping with the rush of air to the surface. There is of course a violent struggle to get nearest to the hatch. This is what happened in the case of the particular U-boat from which these prisoners came. The forward hatch was opened. Our patrol boat cruising above saw the waters thrown up by the air-burst and then the heads of the men struggling on the surface. Most of these men were screaming with pain. All of them went under before they could be picked up except two. And these two died in a day or so. They died because coming suddenly up to the ordinary atmosphere out of the compressed air of the sinking submarine had burst the tissues of their lungs. They were choked with blood.

"Think of those poor creatures dying in the hospital. They were worn out by fits of coughing and haemorrhage, but there must have been moments of exhausted quiet before the end, when our youngster lay and stared at the bleak walls of the ward and thought; when he asked himself, 'What have I been doing? What have I done? What has this world done for me? It has made me a murderer. It has tortured me and wasted me.... And I meant well by it....'

"Whether he thought at all about the making of the submarine, the numberless ingenuities and devices, the patience and devotion, that had gone to make that grim trap in which he had been caught at last, I cannot guess.... Probably he took it as a matter of course....

"So it was that our German youngster who dreamt dreams, who had ambitions, who wished to serve and do brave and honourable things, died.... So five thousand men at least have died, English some of them as well as German, in lost submarines beneath the waters of the narrow seas....

"There is a story and a true story. It is more striking than the fate of most men and women in the world, but is it, in its essence,

different? Is not the whole life of our time in the vein of this story? Is not this story of youth and hope and possibility misled, marched step by step into a world misconceived, thrust into evil, and driven down to ugliness and death, only a more vivid rendering of what is now the common fate of great multitudes? Is there any one of us who is not in some fashion aboard a submarine, doing evil and driving towards an evil end?...

"What are the businesses in which men engage? How many of them have any likeness to freighted ships that serve the good of mankind? Think of the lying and cornering, the crowding and outbidding, the professional etiquette that robs the common man, the unfair advantage smugly accepted! What man among us can say, 'All that I do is service'? Our holding and our effort: is it much better than the long interludes below the surface, and when we come up to struggle for our own hands, torpedoing competitors, wrecking antagonists, how is it with us? The submarine sailors stare in the twilight at drowning men. Every day I stare at a world drowning in poverty and ignorance, a world awash in the seas of hunger, disease, and misery. We have been given leisure, freedom, and intelligence; what have we done to prevent these things?

"I tell you all the world is a submarine, and every one of us is something of a U-boat man. These fools who squeal in the papers for cruelties to the U-boat men do not realize their own part in the world.... We might live in sunshine and freedom and security, and we live cramped and cold, in bitter danger, because we are at war with our fellow men....

"But there, doctor, you have the answer to the first part of your question. You asked what the Spirit of God in Man was against. It is against these mental confusions, these ignorances, that thrust life into a frightful cul-de-sac, that the God in our Hearts urges us to fight.... He is crying out in our hearts to save us from these blind alleys of selfishness, darkness, cruelty, and pain in which our race must die; he is crying for the high road which is salvation, he is commanding the organized unity of mankind."

§ 5

The lassitude that had been earlier apparent in the manner of Mr. Huss had vanished. He was talking now with more energy; his eyes were bright and there was a flush in his cheeks. His voice was low, but his speech was clear and no longer broken by painful pauses.

"But your question had a double edge," he continued; " you asked me not only what it is that the Spirit of God in us fights against, but what it is he fights for. Whither does the high road lead 1? I have told you what I think the life of man is, a felted and corrupting mass of tragic experiences; let me tell you now a little, if this pain at my side will still permit it, what life upon this earth, under the leadership of the Spirit of God our Captain, might be.

"I will take it that men are still as they are, that all this world is individually the same; I will suppose no miraculous change in human nature; but I will suppose that events in the past have run along different channels, so that there has been much more thinking, much more exchange of thought, far better teaching. I want simply this world better taught, so that wherever the flame of God can be lit it has been lit. Everyone I will suppose *educated*. By *educated*, to be explicit, I mean a knowledge and understanding of history. Yes, Mr. Farr — salvation by history. Everyone about the earth I will suppose has been taught not merely to read and write and calculate, but has been given all that can be told simply and plainly of the past history of the earth, of our place in space and time, and the true history of mankind. I will not suppose that there is any greater knowledge of things than men actually possess to-day, but instead of its being confusedly stored in many minds and many books and many languages, it has all been sorted out and set out plainly so that it can be easily used. It has been kept back from no one, mistold to no one. Moreover I will suppose that instead of a myriad of tongues and dialects, all men can read the same books and talk together in the same speech.

"These you may say are difficult suppositions, but they are not impossible suppositions. Quite a few resolute men could set mankind definitely towards such a state of affairs so that they would reach it in a dozen generations or so. But think what a difference there would be from our conditions in such a world. In a world so lit and opened by education, most of these violent dissensions that trouble mankind

would be impossible. Instead of men and communities behaving like fever patients in delirium, striking at their nurses, oversetting their food and medicine and inflicting injuries on themselves and one another, they would be alive to the facts of their common origin, their common offspring — for at last in our descendants all our lives must meet again — and their common destiny. In that more open and fresher air, the fire that is God will burn more brightly, for most of us who fail to know God fail through want of knowledge. Many more men and women will be happily devoted to the common work of mankind, and the evil that is in all of us will be more plainly seen and more easily restrained. I doubt if any man is altogether evil, but in this dark world the good in men is handicapped and sacrifice is mocked. Bad example finishes what weak and aimless teaching has begun. This is a world where folly and hate can bawl sanity out of hearing. Only the determination of schoolmasters and teachers can hope to change that. How can you hope to change it by anything but teaching? Cannot you realize what teaching means!...

"When I ask you to suppose a world instructed and educated in the place of this old traditional world of unguided passion and greed and meanness and mean bestiality, a world taught by men instead of a world neglected by hirelings, I do not ask you to imagine any miraculous change in human nature. I ask you only to suppose that each mind has the utmost enlightenment of which it is capable instead of its being darkened and overcast. Everyone is to have the best chance of being his best self. Everyone is to be living in the light of the acutest self-examination and the clearest mutual criticism. Naturally we shall be living under infinitely saner and more helpful institutions. Such a state of things will not indeed mitigate natural vanity or natural self-love; it will not rob the greedy man of his greed, the fool of his folly, the eccentric of his abnormality, nor the lustful of his lust. But it will rob them of excuses and hiding places; it will light them within and cast a light round about them; it will turn their evil to the likeness of a disease of which they themselves in their clear moments will be ready to be cured and which they will hesitate to transmit. That is the world which such of us schoolmasters and teachers among us as have the undying fire of God already lit in our hearts, do now labour, generation by generation, against defeat

and sometimes against hope, to bring about; that is the present work God has for us. And as we do bring it about then the prospect opens out before mankind to a splendour....

"In this present world men live to be themselves; having their lives they lose them; in the world that we are seeking to make they will give themselves to the God of Mankind, and so they will live indeed. They will as a matter of course change their institutions and their methods so that all men may be used to the best effect, in the common work of mankind. They will take ' this little planet which has been torn into shreds of possession, and make it again one garden.

"The most perplexing thing about men at the present time is their lack of understanding of the vast possibilities of power and happiness that science is offering them—"

"Then why not teach *science*?" cried Mr. Farr.

"Provided only that they will unite their efforts. They solve the problems of material science in vain until they have solved their social and political problems. When those are solved, the mechanical and technical difficulties are trivial. It is no occult secret; it is a plain and demonstrable thing to-day that the world could give ample food and ample leisure to every human being, if only by a world-wide teaching the spirit of unity could be made to prevail over the impulse to dissension. And not only that, but it would then be possible to raise the common health and increase the common fund of happiness immeasurably. Look plainly at the world as it is. Most human beings when they are not dying untimely, are suffering more or less from avoidable disorders, they are ill or they are convalescent, or they are suffering from or crippled by some preventable taint in the blood, or they are stunted or weakened by a needlessly bad food supply, or spiritless and feeble through bad housing, bad clothing, dull occupations, or insecurity and anxiety. Few enjoy for very long stretches at a time that elementary happiness which is the natural accompaniment of sound health. This almost universal lowness of tone, which does not distress us only because most of us are unable to imagine anything better, means an enormous waste of human possibility; less work, less hopefulness. Isolated efforts will never raise men out of this swamp of malaise. At Woldingstanton we have

had the best hygienic arrangements we could find, we have taken the utmost precautions, and yet there has scarcely been a year when our work has not been crippled and delayed by some epidemic, influenza one year, measles another, and so on. We take our precautions j but the townspeople, especially in the poorer quarters, don't and can't. I think myself the wastage of these perennial petty pestilences is far greater than that caused by the big epidemics that sometimes sweep the world. But all such things, great or petty, given a sufficient world unanimity, could be absolutely banished from human life. Given a sufficient unanimity and intelligent direction, men could hunt down all these infectious diseases, one by one, to the regions in which they are endemic, and from which they start out again and again to distress the world, and could stamp them out for ever. It is not want of knowledge prevents this now but want of a properly designed education, which would give people throughout the world the understanding, the confidence, and the will needed for so collective an enterprise.

"The sufferings and mutual cruelties of animals are no doubt a part of the hard aimlessness of nature, but men are in a position to substitute aim for that aimlessness, they have already all the knowledge and all the resources needed to escape from these cul-de-sacs of wrong-doing and suffering and ugly futility into which they jostle one another. But they do not do it because they have not been sufficiently educated and are not being sufficiently educated to sane understanding and effort. The bulk of their collective strength is dissipated in miserable squabbles and suspicions, in war and the preparation for war, in lawsuits and bickering, in making little sterile private hoards of wealth and power, in chaffering, in stupid persecutions and oppositions and vanities. It is not only that they live in a state of general infection and ill health and bad temper, ill nourished, ill housed and morally horrible, when the light is ready to shine upon them and health and splendour is within their grasp, but that all that they could so attain would be but the prelude to still greater attainments.

"Apart from and above the sweeping away of the poverty, filthiness and misery of life that would follow on an intelligent use of such powers and such qualities as men possess now, there would be a

tremendous increase in happiness due to the contentment of belonging to one common comprehensible whole, of knowing that one played a part and a worthy part in an immortal and universal task. The merest handful of people can look with content upon the tenor of their lives to-day. A few teachers are perhaps aware that they serve God rightly, a few scientific investigators, a few doctors and bridge- builders and makers of machinery, a few food-growers and sailors and the like. They can I believe that they do something that is necessary, or build something which will endure. But most men and women to-day are like beasts caught in a tunnel; they follow base occupations, they trade and pander and dispute; there is no peace in their hearts; they gratify their lusts and seek excitements; they know they spend their lives in vain and they have no means of escape. The world is full of querulousness and abuse, derision and spite, mean tricks and floundering effort, vice without a gleam of pleasure and vain display, because blind Nature spews these people into being and there is no light to guide their steps. Yet there is work to be done by everyone, a plain reason for that work, and happiness in the doing of it....

"I do not know if any of us realize all that a systematic organization of the human intelligence upon the work of research would mean for our race. People talk of the wonders that scientific work has given us in the past two hundred years, wonders of which for the most part we are too disordered and foolish to avail ourselves fully. But what scientific research has produced so far must be as yet only the smallest earnest of what scientific research can presently give mankind. All the knowledge that makes to-day different from the world of Queen Elizabeth has been the work of a few score thousand men, mostly poorish men, working with limited material and restricted time, in a world that discouraged and misunderstood them. Many hundreds of thousands of men with gifts that would have been of the profoundest value in scientific work, have missed the education or the opportunity to use those gifts. But in a world clarified by understanding, the net of research would miss few of its born servants, there would be the swiftest, clearest communication of results from worker to worker, the readiest honour and help for every gift. Poor science, which goes about now amidst our crimes and

confusions like an ill-trimmed evil-smelling oil lantern in a dark cavern in which men fight and steal, her flickering light, snatched first by this man and then by that, as often as not a help to violence and robbery, would become like the sunrise of a bright summer morning. We do not realize what in a little while mankind could do. Our power over matter, our power over life, our power over ourselves, would increase year by year and day by day.

"Here am I, after great suffering, waiting here for an uncertain operation that may kill me. *It need not have been so.* Here are we all, sitting hot and uncomfortable in this ill-ventilated, ill-furnished room, looking out upon a vile waste. *It need not have been so.* Such is the quality of our days. I sit here wrung by pain, in the antechamber of death, because mankind has suffered me to suffer.... All this could have been avoided.... Not for ever will such things endure, not for ever will the Mocker of Mankind prevail....

"And such knowledge and power and beauty as we poor watchers before the dawn can guess at, are but the beginning of all that could arise out of these shadows and this torment. Not for ever shall life be marooned upon this planet, imprisoned by the cold and incredible emptiness of space. Is it not plain to you all, from what man in spite of everything has achieved, that he is but at the beginning of achievement? That presently he will take his body and his life and mould them to his will, that he will take gladness and beauty for himself as a girl will pick a flower and twine it in her hair. You have said, Doctor Barrack, that when industrial competition ends among men all change in the race will be at an end. But you said that unthinkingly. For when a collective will grows plain, there will be no blind thrusting into life and no blind battle to keep in life, like the battle of a crowd crushed into a cul-de-sac, any more. The qualities that serve the great ends of the race will be cherished and increased; the sorts of men and women that have these qualities least will be made to understand the necessary restraints of their limitation. You said that when men ceased to compete, they would stand still. Rather is it true that when men cease their internecine war, then and then alone can the race sweep forward. The race will grow in power and beauty swiftly, in every generation it will grow, and not only the human race. All this world will man make a garden for himself,

ruling not only his kind but all the lives that live, banishing the cruel from life, making the others merciful and tame beneath his hand. The flies and mosquitoes, the thorns and poisons, the fungus in the blood, and the murrain upon his beasts, he will utterly end. He will rob the atoms of their energy and the depths of space of their secrets. He will break his prison in space. He will step from star to star as now we step from stone to stone across a stream. Until he stands in the light of God's presence and looks his Mocker and the Adversary in the face...."

"Oh! *Ravins*!" Mr. Dad burst out, unable to contain himself.

"You may think my mind is fevered because my body is in pain; but never was my mind clearer than it is now. It is as if I stood already half out of this little life that has held me so long. It is not a dream I tell, but a reality. The world is for man, the stars in their courses are for man — if only he will follow the God who calls to him and take the gift God offers. As I sit here and talk of these things to you here, they become so plain to me that I cannot understand your silence and why you do not burn — as I burn — with the fire of God's purpose...."

He stopped short. He seemed to have come to the end of his strength. His chin sank, and his voice when he spoke again was the voice of a weak and weary man.

"I talk.... I talk.... And then a desolating sense of reality blows like a destroying gust through my mind, and my little lamp of hope goes out....

"It is as if some great adversary sat over all my world, mocking me in every phrase I use and every act I do...."

He sighed deeply.

"Have I answered your questions, doctor!" he asked.

§ 6

"Yon speak of God," said Dr. Barrack. "But this that you speak of as God, is it really what men understand by God? It seems to me, as I said to begin with, it is just a personification of the good will in us all. Why bring in God? God is a word that has become associated

with all sorts of black and cruel things. It sets one thinking of priesthoods, orthodoxies, persecutions. Why do you not call this upward and onward power Humanity? Why do you not call it the Spirit of Men? Then it might be possible for an Agnostic like myself to feel a sort of agreement....”

“Because I have already shown you it is not humanity, it is not the spirit of men. Humanity, the spirit of men, made poison gas and the submarine; the spirit of man is jealous, aggressive and partisan. Humanity has greed and competition in grain, and the spirit of man is fear and hatred, secrecy and conspiracy, quite as much as, much more than, it is making or order. But this spirit in me, this fire which I call God, was lit, I know not how, but as if it came from outside....

“I use the phrases,” said Mr. Huss, “that come ready to the mind. But I will meet you so far as to say that I know that I am metaphorical and inexact.... This spirit that comes into life — it is more like a person than a thing and so I call it He. And He is not a feature, not an aspect of things, but a selection among things.... He seizes upon and brings out and confirms all that is generous in the natural impulses of the mind. He condemns cruelty and all evil....

“I will not pretend to explain what I cannot explain. It may be that God is as yet only foreshadowed in life. You may reason, Doctor Barrack, that this fire in the heart that I call God, is as much the outcome of your Process as all the other things in life. I cannot argue against that. What I am telling you now is not what I believe so much as what I feel. To me it seems that the creative desire that burns in me is a thing different in its nature from the blind Process of matter, is a force running contrariwise to the power of confusion.... But this I do know, that once it is lit in a man it is like a consuming fire. Once it is lit in a man, then his mind is alight — thenceforth. It rules his conscience with compelling power. It summons him to live the residue of his days working and fighting for the unity and release and triumph of mankind. He may be mean still, and cowardly and vile still, but he will know himself for what he is.... Some ancient phrases live marvellously. Within my heart *I know that my Redeemer liveth....*”

He stopped abruptly.

Dr. Barrack was unprepared with a reply. But he shook his head

obstinately. These time-worn phrases were hateful to his soul. They smacked to him of hypocrisy, of a bidding for favour with obsolete and discredited influences. Through such leaks it is superstition comes soaking back into the laboriously bailed-out minds of men. Yet Mr. Huss was a difficult controversialist to grapple. "No," said the doctor provisionally. *"No...."*

§ 7

Fate came to the relief of Dr. Barrack.

The little conference at Sea View was pervaded by the sense of a new personality. This was a short and angry and heated little man, with active dark brown eyes in a tan face, a tooth-brush moustache of iron-grey, and a protruded lower jaw. He was dressed in a bright bluish-grey suit and bright brown boots, and he carried a bright brown leather bag.

He appeared mouthing outside the window, beyond the range of distinct hearing. His expression was blasphemous. He made threatening movements with his bag.

"Good God!" cried Dr. Barrack. "Sir Alpheus!... I had no idea of the time!"

He rushed out of the room and there was a scuffle in the passage.

"I ought to have been met," said Sir Alpheus, entering, " I ought to have been met. It's ridiculous to pretend you didn't know the time. A general practitioner *always* knows the time. It is his first duty. I cannot understand the incivility of this reception. I have had to make my way to your surgery, Dr. Barrack, without assistance; not a cab free at the station; I have had to come down this road in the heat, carrying everything myself, reading all the names on the gates — the most ridiculous and banal names. The Taj, Thyme Bank, The Cedars, and Capernaum, cheek by jowl! It's worse than Freud."

Dr. Barrack expressed further regrets confusedly and indistinctly.

"We have been talking. Sir Alpheus," said Sir Eliphaz, advancing as if to protect the doctor from his specialist, "upon some very absorbing topics. That must be our excuse for this neglect. We have been discussing education — and the universe. Fate, free-will,

predestination absolute." It is not every building contractor can quote Milton.

The great surgeon regarded the patentee of Temanite.

"Fate — fiddlesticks!" said Sir Alpheus suddenly and rudely. "That's no excuse for not meeting me." His bright little eyes darted round the company and recognized Mr. Huss. "What! my patient not in bed! Not even in bed! Go to *bed*, sir! Go to *bed*!"

He became extremely abusive to Dr. Barrack. "You treat an operation, Sir, with a levity — !"

VI. — THE OPERATION

§ 1

WHILE Sir Alpheus grumbled loudly at the unpreparedness of everything, Mr. Huss, with the assistance of Dr. Barrack, walked upstairs and disrobed himself.

This long discussion had taken a very powerful grip upon his mind. Much remained uncertain in his thoughts. He had still a number of things he wanted to say, and these proceedings preliminary to his vivisection, seemed to him to be irrelevant and tiresome rites interrupting something far more important.

The bed, the instruments, the preparation for anaesthesia, were to him no more than new contributions to the argument. While he lay on the bed with Dr. Barrack handling the funnel hood that was to go over nose and mouth for the administration of the chloroform, he tried to point out that the very idea of operative surgery was opposed to the scientific fatalism of that gentleman. But Sir Alpheus interrupted him....

"Breathe deeply," said Dr. Barrack....

"Breathe deeply...."

The whole vast argumentative fabric that had arisen in his mind swung with him across an abyss of dread and mental inanity. Whether he thought or dreamt what follows it is impossible to say; we can but record the ideas that, like a crystalline bubble as great as all things, filled his consciousness. He felt a characteristic doubt whether the chloroform would do its duty, and then came that twang like the breaking of a violin string: — *Ploot*....

And still he did not seem to be insensible! He was not insensible, and yet things had changed. Dr. Elihu was still present, but somehow Sir Eliphaz and Mr. Dad and Mr. Farr, whom he had left downstairs, had come back and were sitting on the ground — on the ashes; they were all seated gravely on a mound of ashes and beneath a sky that blazed with light. Sir Alpheus, the nurse, the bedroom, had vanished. It seemed that they had been the dream.

But this was the reality, an enduring reality, this sackcloth and

these reeking ash-heaps outside the city gates. This was the scene of an unending experiment and an immortal argument. He was Job; the same Job who had sat here for thousands of years, and this lean vulturous old man in the vast green turban was Eliphaz the Temanite, the smaller man who peered out of the cowl of a kind of hooded shawl, was his friend Bildad the Shuhite; the eager, coarse face of the man in unclean linen was Zophar the Naamathite; and this fist-faced younger man who sat with an air of false humility insolently judging them all, was Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite of the kindred of Earn....

It was queer that there should have ever been the fancy that these men were doctors or schoolmasters or munition makers, a queer veiling of their immortal quality in the transitory garments of a period. For ages they had sat here and disputed, and for ages they had still to sit. A little way off waited the asses and camels and slaves of the three emirs, and the two Ethiopian slaves of Eliphaz had been coming towards them bearing bowls of fine grey ashes. (For Eliphaz for sanitary reasons did not use the common ashes of the midden upon his head.) There, far away, splashed green with palms and pierced between pylons by a glittering arm of the river, were the low brown walls of sun-dried brick, the flat-roofed houses, and the twisted temple towers of the ancient city of Uz, where first this great argument had begun. East and west and north and south stretched the wide levels of the world, dotted with small date trees, and above them was the measureless dome of heaven, set with suns and stars and flooded with a light.

This light had shone out since Elihu had spoken, and it was not only a light but a voice clear and luminous, before which Job's very soul bowed and was still....

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"

By a great effort Job lifted up his eyes to the zenith.

It was as if one shone there who was all, and yet who comprehended powers and kingdoms, and it was as if a screen or shadow was before his face. It was as if a dark figure enhaloed in shapes and colours bent down over the whole world and regarded it curiously and malevolently, and it was as if this dark figure was no

more than a translucent veil before an infinite and lasting radiance. Was it a veil before the light, or did it not rather nest in the very heart of the light and spread itself out before the face of the light and spread itself and recede and again expand in a perpetual diastole and systole? It was as if the voice that spoke was the voice of God, and yet ever and again it was as if the timbre of the voice was Satan. As the voice spoke to Job, his friends listened and watched him, and the eyes of Elihu shone like garnets and the eyes of Eliphaz like emeralds, but the eyes of Bildad were black like the eyes of a lizard upon a wall, and Zophar had no eyes but looked at him only with the dark shadows beneath his knitted brows. As God spake they all, and Job with them, became smaller and smaller and shrank until they were the minutest of conceivable things, until the whole scene was a little toy; they became unreal like discolourations upon a floating falling disc of paper confetti, amidst greatnesses unfathomable.

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"

But in this dream that was dreamt by Mr. Huss while he was under the anaesthetic, God did not speak by words but by light; there were no sounds in his ears, but thoughts ran like swift rivulets of fire through his brain and gathered into pools and made a throbbing pattern of wavelets, curve within curve, that interlaced....

The thoughts that it seemed to him that God was speaking through his mind, can be put into words only after a certain fashion and with great loss, for they were thoughts about things beyond and above this world, and our words are all made out of the names of things and feelings in this world. Things that were contradictory had become compatible, and things incomprehensible seemed straightforward, because he was in a dream. It was as if the anaesthetic had released his ideas from their anchorage to words and phrases and their gravitation towards sensible realities. But it was still the same line of thought he pursued through the stars and spaces, that he had pursued in the stuffy little room at Sundering-on-Sea.

It was somewhat after this fashion that things ran through the mind of Mr. Huss. It seemed to him at first that he was answering the challenge of the voice that filled the world, not of his own will but mechanically. He was saying: "They *give* me knowledge."

To which the answer was in the voice of Satan and in tones of mockery. For Satan had become very close and definite to Job, as a dark face, time-worn and yet animated, that sent out circle after circle of glowing colour towards the bounds of space as a swimmer sends waves towards the bank. “But what have you got in the way of a vessel to hold your knowledge if we gave it you?”

“In the name of the God in my heart,” said Job, “ I demand knowledge and power.”

“Who are yon! A pedagogue who gives ill-prepared lessons about history in frowsty rooms, and dreams that he has been training his young gentlemen to play leap-frog amidst the stars.”

“I am Man,” said Job.

“Huss.”

But that queer power of slipping one’s identity and losing oneself altogether which dreams will give, had come upon Mr. Huss. He answered with absolute conviction: “ I am Man. Down there I was Huss, but here I am Man. I am every man who has ever looked up towards this light of God. I am every one who has thought or worked or willed for the race. I am all the explorers and leaders and teachers that man has ever had.”

The argument evaporated. He carried his point as such points are carried in dreams. The discussion slipped to another of the issues that had been troubling him.

“You would plumb the deep of knowledge; you would scale the heights of space.... There is no limit to either.”

“Then I will plumb and scale for ever. I will defeat you.”

“But you will never destroy me.”

“I will fight my way through you to God.”

“And never attain him....”

It seemed as though yet another voice was speaking. For a while the veil of Satan was drawn aside. The thoughts it uttered ran like incandescent molten metal through the mind of Job, but whether he was saying these things to God or whether God was saying these things to him, did not in any way appear.

“So life goes on for ever. And in no other way could it go on. In no other way could there be such a being as life. For how can you struggle if there is a certainty of victory! Why should you struggle if

the end is assured! How can you rise if there is no depths into which you can fall? The blacknesses and the evils about you are the warrants of reality....

"Through the centuries the voice of Job had complained and will complain. Through the centuries the fire of his faith flares and flickers and threatens to go out. But is Job justified in his complaints?

"Is Job indeed justified in his complaints? His mind has been coloured by the colour of misfortune. He has seen all the world reflecting the sufferings of his body. He has dwelt upon illness and cruelty and death. But is there any evil or cruelty or suffering that is beyond the possibility of human control? Were that so then indeed he might complain that God has mocked him.... Are sunsets ugly and oppressive? Do mountains disgust, do distant hills repel? Is there any flaw in the starry sky? If the lives of beasts and men are dark and ungracious, yet is not the texture of their bodies lovely beyond comparison? You have sneered because the beauty of cell and tissue may build up an idiot. Why, oh Man, do they build up an idiot? Have you no will, have you no understanding, that you suffer such things to be I The darkness and ungraciousness, the evil and the cruelty, are no more than a challenge to you. In you lies the power to rule all these things...."

Through the tumbled clouds of his mind broke the sunlight of this phrase: "The power to rule all these things. The power to rule—"

"You have dwelt overmuch upon pain. Pain is a swift distress; it ends and is forgotten. Without memory and fear pain is nothing, a contradiction to be heeded, a warning to be taken. Without pain what would life become? Pain is the master only of craven men. It is in man's power to rule it. It is in man's power to rule all things...."

It was as if the dreaming patient debated these ideas with himself; and again it was as if he were the universal all and Job and Satan and God disputed together within him. The thoughts in his mind raced faster and suddenly grew bright and glittering, as the waters grow bright when they come racing out of the caves at Han into the light of day. Green-faced, he murmured and stirred in his great debate while the busy specialist plied his scalpels, and Dr. Barrack whispered directions to the intent nurse.

"Another whiff," said Doctor Barrack.

“A cloud rolls back from my soul....”

“I have been through great darkness. I have been through deep waters....”

“Has not your life had laughter in it? Has the freshness of the summer morning never poured joy through your being? Do you know nothing of the embrace of the lover, cheek to cheek or lip to lip? Have you never swum out into the sunlit sea or shouted on a mountain slope? Is there no joy in a handclasp? Your son, your son, you say, is dead with honour. Is there no joy in that honour? Clean and straight was your son, and beautiful in his life. Is that nothing to thank God for? Have you never played with happy children? Has no boy ever answered to your teaching giving back more than you gave him? Dare you deny the joy of your appetites: the first mouthful of roast red beef on the frosty day and the deep draught of good ale? Do you know nothing of the task well done, nor of sleep after a day of toil? Is there no joy for the farmer in the red ploughed fields, and the fields shooting with green blades ? When the great prows smite the waves and the aeroplane hums in the sky, is man still a hopeless creature? Can you watch the beat and swing of machinery and still despair? Your illness has coloured the world; a little season of misfortune has hidden the light from your eyes.”

It was as if the dreamer pushed his way through the outskirts of a great forest and approached the open, but it was not through trees that he thrust his way but through bars and nets and interlacing curves of blinding, many- coloured light towards the clear promise beyond. He had grown now to an incredible vastness so that it was no longer earth upon which he set his feet but that crystalline pavement whose translucent depths contain the stars. Yet though he approached the open he never reached the open; the iridescent net that had seemed to grow thin, grew dense again; he was still struggling, and the black doubts that had lifted for a moment swept down upon his soul again. And he realized he was in a dream, a dream that was drawing swiftly now to its close.

“Oh God!” he cried, “answer me! For Satan has mocked me sorely. Answer me before I lose sight of you again. An) I right to fight? Am I right to come out of my little earth, here above the stars?”

“Right if you dare.”

“Shall I conquer and prevail? Give me your promise!”

“Everlastingly you may conquer and find fresh worlds to conquer.”

“*May* — but *shall* I?”

It was as if the torrent of molten thoughts stopped suddenly. It was as if everything stopped.

“Answer me,” he cried.

Slowly the shining thoughts moved on again.

“So long as your courage endures you will conquer....

“If you have courage, although the night be dark, although the present battle be bloody and cruel and end in a strange and evil fashion, nevertheless victory shall be yours — in a way you will understand — when victory comes. Only have courage. On the courage in your heart all things depend. By courage it is that the stars continue in their courses, day by day. It is the courage of life alone that keeps sky and earth apart.... If that courage fail, if that sacred fire go out, then all things fail and all things go out, all things good and evil, space and time.”

“Leaving nothing?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing,” he echoed, and the word spread like a dark and darkening mask across the face of all things.

And then as if to mark the meaning of the word, it seemed to him that the whole universe began to move inward upon itself, faster and faster, until at last with an incredible haste it rushed together. He resisted this collapse in vain, and with a sense of overwhelmed effort. The white light of God and the whirling colours of the universe, the spaces between the stars — it was as if an unseen fist gripped them together. They rushed to one point as water in a clepsydra rushes to its hole. The whole universe became small, became a little thing, diminished to the size of a coin, of a spot, of a pinpoint, of one intense black mathematical point, and — vanished. He heard his own voice crying in the void like a little thing blown before the wind: “But will my courage endure?” The question went unanswered. Not only the things of space but the things of time swept together into nothingness. The last moment of his dream rushed towards the first,

crumpled all the intervening moments together and made them one. It seemed to Mr. Huss that he was still in the instant of insensibility. That sound of the breaking string was still in his ears: — *Ploot*....

It became part of that same sound which came before the vision....

He was aware of a new pain within him; not that dull aching now, but a pain keen and sore. He gave a fluttering gasp.

"Quick," said a voice. "He is coming to!"

"He'll not wake for hours," said a second voice.

"His mouth and eyes!"

He lifted his eyelids as one lifts lead. He found himself looking into the intelligent but unsympathetic face of Sir Alpheus Mengo, he tried to comprehend his situation but he had forgotten how he got to it, he closed his eyes and sank back consciously and wilfully towards insensibility....

VII. — LETTERS AND A TELEGRAM

§ 1

IT was three weeks later.

Never had there been so successful an operation as an operation in the experience of either Sir Alpheus Mengo or Dr. Barrack. The growth that had been removed was a non-malignant growth; the diagnosis of cancer had been unsound. Mr. Huss was still lying flat in his bed in Mrs. Croome's house, but he was already able to read books, letters and newspapers, and take an interest in affairs.

The removal of his morbid growth had made a very great change in his mental atmosphere. He no longer had the same sense of an invisible hostile power brooding over all his life; his natural courage had returned. And the world which had seemed a conspiracy of misfortunes was now a hopeful world again. The last great offensive of the Germans towards Paris had collapsed disastrously under the counter attacks of Marshal Foch; each morning's paper told of fresh victories for the Allies, and the dark shadow of a German Caesarism fell no longer across the future. The imaginations of men were passing through a phase of reasonableness and generosity; the idea of an organized world peace had seized upon a multitude of minds; there was now a prospect of a new and better age such as would have seemed incredible in the weeks when the illness of Mr. Huss began to bear him down. And it was not simply a general relief that had come to his forebodings. His financial position, for example, which had been wrecked by one accident, had been restored by another. A distant cousin of Mr. Huss, to whom however Mr. Huss was the nearest relative, had died of softening of the brain, after a career of almost imbecile speculation. He had left his property partly to Mr. Huss and partly to Woldingstanton School. For some years before the war he had indulged in the wildest buying of depreciated copper shares, and had accumulated piles of what had seemed at the time valueless paper. The war had changed all that. Instead of being almost insolvent, the deceased in spite of heavy losses on Canadian land deals was found by his executors to be worth nearly thirty

thousand pounds. It is easy to underrate the good in money. The windfall meant a hundred needed comforts and freedoms, and a release for the mind of Mrs. Huss that nothing else could have given her. And the mind of Mr. Huss reflected the moods of his wife much more than he suspected.

But still better things seemed to be afoot in the world of Mr. Huss. The rest of the governors of Woldingstanton, it became apparent, were not in agreement with Sir Eliphaz and Mr. Dad upon the project of replacing Mr. Huss by Mr. Farr; and a number of the old boys of the school at the front, getting wind of what was going on, had formed a small committee for the express purpose of defending their old master. At the head of this committee, by a happy chance, was young Kenneth Burrows, the nephew and heir of Sir Eliphaz. At the school he had never been in the front rank; he had been one of those good-all-round boys who end as a school prefect, a sound man in the first eleven, and second or third in most of the subjects he took. Never had he played a star part or enjoyed very much of the head's confidences. It was all the more delightful therefore to find him the most passionate and indefatigable champion of the order of things that Mr. Huss had set up. He had heard of the proposed changes at his uncle's dinner-table when on leave, and he had done something forthwith to shake that gentleman's resolves. Lady Burrows, who adored him, became at once pro-Huss. She was all the readier to do this because she did not like Mr. Dad's rather emphatic table manners, nor Mr. Farr's clothes.

"You don't know what Mr. Huss was to us, Sir," the young man repeated several times, and returned to France with that sentence growing and flowering in his mind. He was one of those good types for whom the war was a powerful developer. Death, hardship, and responsibility — he was still not two-and-twenty, and a major in the artillery — had already made an understanding man out of the schoolboy; he could imagine what dispossession meant; his new maturity made it seem a natural thing to write to comfort his old head as one man writes to another. His pencilled sheets, when first they came, made the enfeebled recipient cry, not with misery but happiness. They were re-read like a love-letter; they were now on the coverlet, and Mr. Huss was staring at the ceiling and already

planning a new Woldingstanton rising from its ashes, greater than the old.

§ 2

It is only in the last few weeks, the young man wrote, *that we have heard of all these schemes to break up the tradition of Woldingstanton, and now there is a talk of your resigning the headmaster ship in favour of Mr. Farr. Personally, Sir, I can't imagine how you can possibly dream of giving up your work and to him of all people; — I still have a sort of doubt about it; but my uncle was very positive that you were disposed to resign (personally, he said, he had implored you to stay), and it is on the off-chance of his being right that I am bothering you with this letter. Briefly it is to implore you to stand by the school, which is as much as to say to stand by yourself and us. You've taught hundreds of us to stick it, and now you owe it to us to stick it yourself. I know you're ill, dreadfully ill; I've heard about Gilbert, and I know, Sir, we all know, although he wasn't in the school and you never betrayed a preference or were led into an unfair thing through it, how much you loved him; you've been put through it, Sir, to the last degree. But, Sir, there are some of us here who feel almost as though they were your sons; if you don't and can't give us that sort of love, it doesn't alter the fact that there are men out here who think of you as they'd like to think of their fathers. Men like myself particularly, who were left as boys without a father.*

I'm no great hand at expressing myself; I'm no credit to Mr. Cross and his English class; generally I don't believe in saying too much; but I would like to tell you something of what you have been to a lot of us, and why Woldingstanton going on will seem to us like a flag still flying and Woldingstanton breaking its tradition like a sort of surrender. And I don't want a bit to flatter you, Sir, if you'll forgive me, and set you up in what I am writing to you. One of the loveable things about you to us is that you have always been so jolly human to us. You've always been unequal. I've seen you give lessons that were among the best lessons in the world, and I've seen you give

some jolly bad lessons. And there were some affairs — that business of the November fireworks for example when we thought you were harsh and wrong —

"I was wrong," said Mr. Huss.

That almost led to a mutiny. But that is just where you score, and why Woldingstanton can't do without you. When that firework row was on we called a meeting of the school and house prefects and had up some of the louts to it — you never heard of that meeting — and we said, we all agreed you were wrong and we all agreed that right or wrong we stood by you, and wouldn't let the row go further. Perhaps you remember how that affair shut up all at once. But that is where you've got us. You do wrong, you let us see through you; there never was a schoolmaster or a father gave himself away so freely as you do, you never put up a sham front on us and consequently every one of us knows that what he knows about you is the real thing in you; the very kids in the lower fifth can get a glimpse of it and grasp that you are driving at something with all your heart and soul, and that the school goes somewhere and has life in it. We Woldingstanton boys have that in common when we meet; we understand one another; we have something that a lot of the other chaps one meets out here, even from the crack schools, don't seem to have. It isn't a 'flourish with us, Sir, it is a simple statement of fact that the life we joined up to at Woldingstanton is more important to us than the life in our bodies. Just as it is more important to you. It isn't only the way you taught it, though you taught it splendidly, it is the way you felt it that got hold of us. You made us think and feel that the past of the world was our own history; you made us feel that we were in one living story with the reindeer men and the Egyptian priests, with the soldiers of Caesar and the alchemists of Spain; nothing was dead and nothing alien; you made discovery and civilization our adventure and the whole future our inheritance. Most of the men I meet here feel lost in this war; they are like rabbits washed out of their burrows by a flood, but we of Woldingstanton have taken it in the day's work, and when the peace comes and the new world begins, it will still be in the story for us, the day's work will still join on. That's the essence of Woldingstanton, that it puts you on the high road that goes on. The other chaps I talk to here from other schools

seem to be on no road at all. They are tough and plucky by nature and association; they are fighters and sturdy men; but what holds them in it is either just habit and the example of people about them or something unsound that can't hold out to the end; a vague loyalty to the Empire or a desire to punish the Hun or restore the peace of Europe, some short range view of that sort, motives that will leave them stranded at the end of the war, anyhow, with nothing to go on to. To talk of after the war to them is to realise what blind alleys their teachers have led them into. They can understand fighting against things but not for things. Beyond an impossible ambition to go back somewhere and settle down us they used to be, there's not the ghost of an idea to them at all. The whole value of Woldingstanton is that it steers a man through and among the blind alleys and sets him on a way out that he can follow for all the rest of his days; it makes him a player in a limitless team and one with the Creator. We are all coming back to take up our jobs in that spirit, jobs that will all join up at last in making a real world state, a world civilization and a new order of things, and unless we can think of you, sir, away at Woldingstanton, working away to make more of us, ready to pick up the sons we shall send you presently —

Mr. Huss stopped reading.

§ 3

He lay thinking idly.

"I was talking about blind alleys the other day. Queer that he should have hit on the same phrase....

"Some old sermon of mine perhaps.... No doubt I've had the thought before....

"I suppose that one could define education as the lifting of minds out of blind alleys....

"A permissible definition anyhow....

"I wish I could remember that talk better. I said a lot of things about submarines. I said something about the whole world really being like the crew of a submarine....

"It's true — universally. Everyone is in a blind alley until we

pierce a road....

“That was a queer talk we had.... I remember I wouldn’t go to bed — a kind of fever in the mind....

“Then there was a dream.

“I wish I could remember more of that dream. It was as if I could see round some metaphysical corner.... I seemed to be in a great place — talking to God....

“But how could one have talked to God?...

“No. It is gone....”

His thought reverted to the letter of young Burrows.

He began to scheme out the reinstatement of Woldingstanton. He had an idea of rebuilding School House with a map corridor to join it to the picture gallery and the concert hall, which were both happily still standing. He wanted the maps on one side to show the growth and succession of empires in the western world, and on the other to present the range of geographical knowledge and thought at different periods in man’s history.

As with many great headmasters, his idle day-dreams were often architectural. He took out another of his dream toys now and played with it. This dream was that he could organize a series of ethnological exhibits showing various groups of primitive peoples in a triple order; first little models of them in their savage state, then displays of their arts and manufactures to show their distinctive gifts and aptitudes, and then suggestions of the part such a people might play as artists or guides, or beast tamers or the like, in a wholly civilized world. Such a collection would be far beyond the vastest possibilities to which Woldingstanton would ever attain — but he loved the dream.

The groups would stand in well-lit bays, side chapels, so to speak, in his museum building. There would be a group of seats and a blackboard, for it was one of his fantasies to have a school so great that the classes would move about it, like little groups of pilgrims in a cathedral....

From that he drifted to a scheme for grouping great schools for such common purposes as the educational development of the cinematograph, a central reference library, and the like....

For one great school leads to another. Schools are living things,

and like all living things they must grow and reproduce their kind and go on from conquest to conquest — or fall under the sway of the Farrs and Dads and stagnate, become diseased and malignant, and perish. But Woldingstanton was not to perish. It was to spread. It was to call to its kind across the Atlantic and throughout the world.... It was to give and receive ideas, interbreed, and develop....

Across the blue October sky the white clouds drifted, and the air was full of the hum of a passing aeroplane. The chained dog that had once tortured the sick nerves of Mr. Huss now barked unheeded.

"I would like to give one of the chapels of the races to the memory of Gilbert, " whispered Mr. Huss.

§ 4

The door at the foot of his bed opened, and Mrs. Huss appeared.

She had an effect of appearing suddenly, and yet she moved slowly into the room, clutching a crumpled bit of paper in her hand. Her face had undergone some extraordinary change; it was dead white, and her eyes were wide open and very bright. She stood stiffly. She might have been about to fall. She did not attempt to close the door behind her.

Mrs. Croome became audible rattling her pans downstairs.

When Mrs. Huss spoke, it was in an almost noiseless whisper. *"Job!"*

He had a strange idea that Mrs. Croome must have given them notice to quit instantly or perpetrated some such brutality, a suspicion which his wife's gesture seemed to confirm. She was shaking the crumpled scrap of paper in an absurd manner. He frowned in a gust of impatience.

"I didn't open it," she said at last, " not till I had eaten some breakfast. I didn't dare. I saw it was from the bank and I thought it might

be about the overdraft..... All the while.

She was weeping. "All the while I was eating my egg...."

"Oh *what* is it?"

She grimaced.

“From *him*.”

He stared.

“A cheque, Job — come through — from *him*. From our boy.”

His mouth fell open, he drew a deep breath. His tears came. He raised himself, and was reminded of his bandaged state and dropped back again. He held out his lean hand to her.

“He’s a prisoner?” he gasped. “*Alive*?”

She nodded. She seemed about to fling herself violently upon his poor crumpled body. Her arms waved about seeking for something to embrace.

Then she flopped down in the narrow space between bed and paper-adorned fireplace, and gathered the counterpane together into a lump with her clutching hands. “Oh my baby boy”! she wept. *“My baby boy....*

“And I was so wicked about the mourning.... I was so *wicked*....”

Mr. Huss lay stiff, as the doctor had ordered to do; but the hand he stretched down could just touch and caress her hair.

THE END

THE SECRET PLACES OF THE HEART

Examining the necessity of love in human experience, this novel tells the story of one man's journey of self-discovery, when he visits his doctor with a mysterious illness – and is often regarded as Wells' fictionalised autobiography. It was first published in 1922.

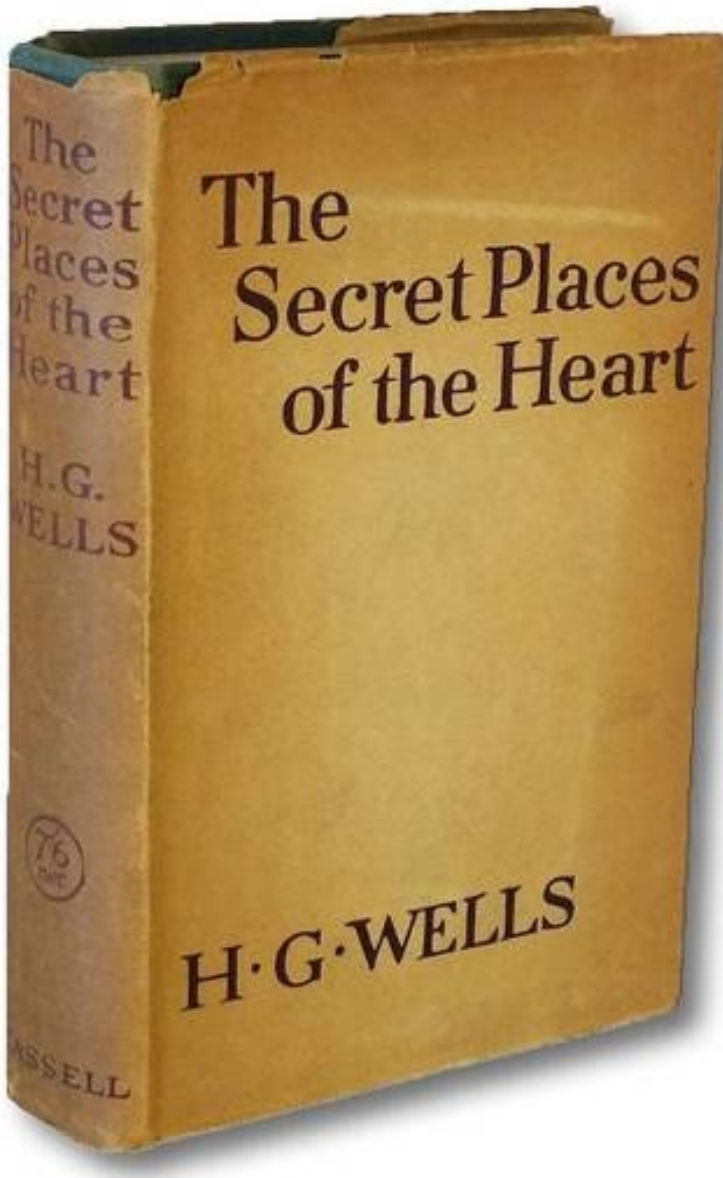

The first edition

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THE SECRET PLACES OF THE HEART

BY

H. G. WELLS

New York
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1922

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Title page of the first American edition

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE CONSULTATION

Section 1

The maid was a young woman of great natural calmness; she was accustomed to let in visitors who had this air of being annoyed and finding one umbrella too numerous for them. It mattered nothing to her that the gentleman was asking for Dr. Martineau as if he was asking for something with an unpleasant taste. Almost imperceptibly she relieved him of his umbrella and juggled his hat and coat on to a massive mahogany stand. “What name, Sir?” she asked, holding open the door of the consulting room.

“Hardy,” said the gentleman, and then yielding it reluctantly with its distasteful three-year-old honour, “Sir Richmond Hardy.”

The door closed softly behind him and he found himself in undivided possession of the large indifferent apartment in which the nervous and mental troubles of the outer world eddied for a time on their way to the distinguished specialist. A bowl of daffodils, a handsome bookcase containing bound Victorian magazines and antiquated medical works, some paintings of Scotch scenery, three big armchairs, a buhl clock, and a bronze Dancing Faun, by their want of any collective idea enhanced rather than mitigated the promiscuous disregard of the room. He drifted to the midmost of the three windows and stared out despondently at Harley Street.

For a minute or so he remained as still and limp as an empty jacket on its peg, and then a gust of irritation stirred him.

“Damned fool I was to come here,” he said... “DAMNED fool!

“Rush out of the place?...

“I’ve given my name.”...

He heard the door behind him open and for a moment pretended not to hear. Then he turned round. “I don’t see what you can do for me,” he said.

“I’m sure *I* don’t,” said the doctor. “People come here and talk.”

There was something reassuringly inaggressive about the figure

that confronted Sir Richmond. Dr. Martineau's height wanted at least three inches of Sir Richmond's five feet eleven; he was humanly plump, his face was round and pink and cheerfully wistful, a little suggestive of the full moon, of what the full moon might be if it could get fresh air and exercise. Either his tailor had made his trousers too short or he had braced them too high so that he seemed to have grown out of them quite recently. Sir Richmond had been dreading an encounter with some dominating and mesmeric personality; this amiable presence dispelled his preconceived resistances.

Dr. Martineau, a little out of breath as though he had been running upstairs, with his hands in his trouser pockets, seemed intent only on disavowals. "People come here and talk. It does them good, and sometimes I am able to offer a suggestion.

"Talking to someone who understands a little," he expanded the idea.

"I'm jangling damnably...overwork....."

"Not overwork," Dr. Martineau corrected. "Not overwork. Overwork never hurt anyone. Fatigue stops that. A man can work — good straightforward work, without internal resistance, until he drops, — and never hurt himself. You must be working against friction."

"Friction! I'm like a machine without oil. I'm grinding to death.... And it's so DAMNED important I SHOULDN'T break down. It's VITALLY important."

He stressed his words and reinforced them with a quivering gesture of his upraised clenched hand. "My temper's in rags. I explode at any little thing. I'm RAW. I can't work steadily for ten minutes and I can't leave off working."

"Your name," said the doctor, "is familiar. Sir Richmond Hardy? In the papers. What is it?"

"Fuel."

"Of course! The Fuel Commission. Stupid of me! We certainly can't afford to have you ill."

"I AM ill. But you can't afford to have me absent from that Commission."

"Your technical knowledge—"

“Technical knowledge be damned! Those men mean to corner the national fuel supply. And waste it! For their profits. That’s what I’m up against. You don’t know the job I have to do. You don’t know what a Commission of that sort is. The moral tangle of it. You don’t know how its possibilities and limitations are canvassed and schemed about, long before a single member is appointed. Old Cassidy worked the whole thing with the prime minister. I can see that now as plain as daylight. I might have seen it at first.... Three experts who’d been got at; they thought *I*’d been got at; two Labour men who’d do anything you wanted them to do provided you called them ‘level-headed.’ Wagstaffe the socialist art critic who could be trusted to play the fool and make nationalization look silly, and the rest mine owners, railway managers, oil profiteers, financial adventurers....”

He was fairly launched. “It’s the blind folly of it! In the days before the war it was different. Then there was abundance. A little grabbing or cornering was all to the good. All to the good. It prevented things being used up too fast. And the world was running by habit; the inertia was tremendous. You could take all sorts of liberties. But all this is altered. We’re living in a different world. The public won’t stand things it used to stand. It’s a new public. It’s — wild. It’ll smash up the show if they go too far. Everything short and running shorter — food, fuel, material. But these people go on. They go on as though nothing had changed.... Strikes, Russia, nothing will warn them. There are men on that Commission who would steal the brakes off a mountain railway just before they went down in it.... It’s a struggle with suicidal imbeciles. It’s — ! But I’m talking! I didn’t come here to talk Fuel.”

“You think there may be a smash-up?”

“I lie awake at night, thinking of it.”

“A social smash-up.”

“Economic. Social. Yes. Don’t you?”

“A social smash-up seems to me altogether a possibility. All sorts of people I find think that,” said the doctor. “All sorts of people lie awake thinking of it.”

“I wish some of my damned Committee would!”

The doctor turned his eyes to the window. “I lie awake too,” he

said and seemed to reflect. But he was observing his patient acutely — with his ears.

"But you see how important it is," said Sir Richmond, and left his sentence unfinished.

"I'll do what I can for you," said the doctor, and considered swiftly what line of talk he had best follow.

Section 2

"This sense of a coming smash is epidemic," said the doctor. "It's at the back of all sorts of mental trouble. It is a new state of mind. Before the war it was abnormal — a phase of neurasthenia. Now it is almost the normal state with whole classes of intelligent people. Intelligent, I say. The others always have been casual and adventurous and always will be. A loss of confidence in the general background of life. So that we seem to float over abysses."

"We do," said Sir Richmond.

"And we have nothing but the old habits and ideas acquired in the days of our assurance. There is a discord, a jarring."

The doctor pursued his train of thought. "A new, raw and dreadful sense of responsibility for the universe. Accompanied by a realization that the job is overwhelmingly too big for us."

"We've got to stand up to the job," said Sir Richmond. "Anyhow, what else is there to do? We MAY keep things together.... I've got to do my bit. And if only I could hold myself at it, I could beat those fellows. But that's where the devil of it comes in. Never have I been so desirous to work well in my life. And never have I been so slack and weak-willed and inaccurate.... Sloppy.... Indolent.... VICIOUS!..."

The doctor was about to speak, but Sir Richmond interrupted him. "What's got hold of me? What's got hold of me? I used to work well enough. It's as if my will had come untwisted and was ravelling out into separate strands. I've lost my unity. I'm not a man but a mob. I've got to recover my vigour. At any cost."

Again as the doctor was about to speak the word was taken out of his mouth. "And what I think of it, Dr. Martineau, is this: it's fatigue. It's mental and moral fatigue. Too much effort. On too high a level.

And too austere. One strains and fags. FLAGS! ‘Flags’ I meant to say. One strains and flags and then the lower stuff in one, the subconscious stuff, takes control.”

There was a flavour of popularized psychoanalysis about this, and the doctor drew in the corners of his mouth and gave his head a critical slant. “M’m.” But this only made Sir Richmond raise his voice and quicken his speech. “I want,” he said, “a good tonic. A pick-me-up, a stimulating harmless drug of some sort. That’s indicated anyhow. To begin with. Something to pull me together, as people say. Bring me up to the scratch again.”

“I don’t like the use of drugs,” said the doctor.

The expectation of Sir Richmond’s expression changed to disappointment. “But that’s not reasonable,” he cried. “That’s not reasonable. That’s superstition. Call a thing a drug and condemn it! Everything is a drug. Everything that affects you. Food stimulates or tranquillizes. Drink. Noise is a stimulant and quiet an opiate. What is life but response to stimulants? Or reaction after them? When I’m exhausted I want food. When I’m overactive and sleepless I want tranquillizing. When I’m dispersed I want pulling together.”

“But we don’t know how to use drugs,” the doctor objected.

“But you ought to know.”

Dr. Martineau fixed his eye on a first floor window sill on the opposite side of Harley Street. His manner suggested a lecturer holding on to his theme.

“A day will come when we shall be able to manipulate drugs — all sorts of drugs — and work them in to our general way of living. I have no prejudice against them at all. A time will come when we shall correct our moods, get down to our reserves of energy by their help, suspend fatigue, put off sleep during long spells of exertion. At some sudden crisis for example. When we shall know enough to know just how far to go with this, that or the other stuff. And how to wash out its after effects.... I quite agree with you, — in principle.... But that time hasn’t come yet.... Decades of research yet.... If we tried that sort of thing now, we should be like children playing with poisons and explosives.... It’s out of the question.”

“I’ve been taking a few little things already. Easton Syrup for example.”

“Strychnine. It carries you for a time and drops you by the way. Has it done you any good — any NETT good? It has — I can see — broken your sleep.”

The doctor turned round again to his patient and looked up into his troubled face.

“Given physiological trouble I don’t mind resorting to a drug. Given structural injury I don’t mind surgery. But except for any little mischief your amateur drugging may have done you do not seem to me to be either sick or injured. You’ve no trouble either of structure or material. You are — worried — ill in your mind, and otherwise perfectly sound. It’s the current of your thoughts, fermenting. If the trouble is in the mental sphere, why go out of the mental sphere for a treatment? Talk and thought; these are your remedies. Cool deliberate thought. You’re unravelled. You say it yourself. Drugs will only make this or that unravelled strand behave disproportionately. You don’t want that. You want to take stock of yourself as a whole — find out where you stand.

“But the Fuel Commission?”

“Is it sitting now?”

“Adjourned till after Whitsuntide. But there’s heaps of work to be done.

“Still,” he added, “this is my one chance of any treatment.”

The doctor made a little calculation. “Three weeks.... It’s scarcely time enough to begin.”

“You’re certain that no regimen of carefully planned and chosen tonics—”

“Dismiss the idea. Dismiss it.” He decided to take a plunge. “I’ve just been thinking of a little holiday for myself. But I’d like to see you through this. And if I am to see you through, there ought to be some sort of beginning now. In this three weeks. Suppose....”

Sir Richmond leapt to his thought. “I’m free to go anywhere.”

“Golf would drive a man of your composition mad?”

“It would.”

“That’s that. Still — . The country must be getting beautiful again now, — after all the rain we have had. I have a little two-seater. I don’t know.... The repair people promise to release it before Friday.”

“But *I* have a choice of two very comfortable little cars. Why not

be my guest?”

“That might be more convenient.”

“I’d prefer my own car.”

“Then what do you say?”

“I agree. Peripatetic treatment.”

“South and west. We could talk on the road. In the evenings. By the wayside. We might make the beginnings of a treatment. ... A simple tour. Nothing elaborate. You wouldn’t bring a man?”

“I always drive myself.”

Section 3

“There’s something very pleasant,” said the doctor, envisaging his own rash proposal, “in travelling along roads you don’t know and seeing houses and parks and villages and towns for which you do not feel in the slightest degree responsible. They hide all their troubles from the road. Their backyards are tucked away out of sight, they show a brave face; there’s none of the nasty self-betrayals of the railway approach. And everything will be fresh still. There will still be a lot of apple-blossom — and bluebells.... And all the while we can be getting on with your affair.”

He was back at the window now. “I want the holiday myself,” he said.

He addressed Sir Richmond over his shoulder. “Have you noted how fagged and unstable EVERYBODY is getting? Everybody intelligent, I mean.”

“It’s an infernally worrying time.”

“Exactly. Everybody suffers.”

“It’s no GOOD going on in the old ways—”

“It isn’t. And it’s a frightful strain to get into any new ways. So here we are.

“A man,” the doctor expanded, “isn’t a creature in vacuo. He’s himself and his world. He’s a surface of contact, a system of adaptations, between his essential self and his surroundings. Well, our surroundings have become — how shall I put it? — a landslide. The war which seemed such a definable catastrophe in 1914 was, after all, only the first loud crack and smash of the collapse. The war

is over and — nothing is over. This peace is a farce, reconstruction an exploded phrase. The slide goes on, — it goes, if anything, faster, without a sign of stopping. And all our poor little adaptations! Which we have been elaborating and trusting all our lives!... One after another they fail us. We are stripped.... We have to begin all over again.... I'm fifty-seven and I feel at times nowadays like a chicken new hatched in a thunderstorm."

The doctor walked towards the bookcase and turned.

"Everybody is like that...it isn't — what are you going to do? It isn't — what am I going to do? It's — what are we all going to do!... Lord! How safe and established everything was in 1910, say. We talked of this great war that was coming, but nobody thought it would come. We had been born in peace, comparatively speaking; we had been brought up in peace. There was talk of wars. There were wars — little wars — that altered nothing material.... Consols used to be at 112 and you fed your household on ten shillings a head a week. You could run over all Europe, barring Turkey and Russia, without even a passport. You could get to Italy in a day. Never were life and comfort so safe — for respectable people. And we WERE respectable people.... That was the world that made us what we are. That was the sheltering and friendly greenhouse in which we grew. We fitted our minds to that.... And here we are with the greenhouse falling in upon us lump by lump, smash and clatter, the wild winds of heaven tearing in through the gaps."

Upstairs on Dr. Martineau's desk lay the typescript of the opening chapters of a book that was intended to make a great splash in the world, his PSYCHOLOGY OF A NEW AGE. He had his metaphors ready.

"We said: 'This system will always go on. We needn't bother about it.' We just planned our lives accordingly. It was like a bird building its nest of frozen snakes. My father left me a decent independence. I developed my position; I have lived between here and the hospital, doing good work, enormously interested, prosperous, mildly distinguished. I had been born and brought up on the good ship Civilization. I assumed that someone else was steering the ship all right. I never knew; I never enquired."

"Nor did I," said Sir Richmond, "but—"

“And nobody was steering the ship,” the doctor went on. “Nobody had ever steered the ship. It was adrift.”

“I realized that. I—”

“It is a new realization. Always hitherto men have lived by faith — as children do, as the animals do. At the back of the healthy mind, human or animal, has been this persuasion: ‘This is all right. This will go on. If I keep the rule, if I do so and so, all will be well. I need not trouble further; things are cared for.’”

“If we could go on like that!” said Sir Richmond.

“We can’t. That faith is dead. The war — and the peace — have killed it.”

The doctor’s round face became speculative. His resemblance to the full moon increased. He seemed to gaze at remote things. “It may very well be that man is no more capable of living out of that atmosphere of assurance than a tadpole is of living out of water. His mental existence may be conditional on that. Deprived of it he may become incapable of sustained social life. He may become frantically self-seeking — incoherent... a stampede.... Human sanity may — DISPERSE.

“That’s our trouble,” the doctor completed. “Our fundamental trouble. All our confidences and our accustomed adaptations are destroyed. We fit together no longer. We are — loose. We don’t know where we are nor what to do. The psychology of the former time fails to give safe responses, and the psychology of the New Age has still to develop.”

Section 4

“That is all very well,” said Sir Richmond in the resolute voice of one who will be pent no longer. “That is all very well as far as it goes. But it does not cover my case. I am not suffering from inadaptation. I HAVE adapted. I have thought things out. I think — much as you do. Much as you do. So it’s not that. But — ... Mind you, I am perfectly clear where I am. Where we are. What is happening to us all is the breakup of the entire system. Agreed! We have to make another system or perish amidst the wreckage. I see that clearly. Science and plan have to replace custom and tradition in

human affairs. Soon. Very soon. Granted. Granted. We used to say all that. Even before the war. Now we mean it. We've muddled about in the old ways overlong. Some new sort of world, planned and scientific, has to be got going. Civilization renewed. Rebuilding civilization — while the premises are still occupied and busy. It's an immense enterprise, but it is the only thing to be done. In some ways it's an enormously attractive enterprise. Inspiring. It grips my imagination. I think of the other men who must be at work. Working as I do rather in the dark as yet. With whom I shall presently join up... The attempt may fail; all things human may fail; but on the other hand it may succeed. I never had such faith in anything as I have in the rightness of the work I am doing now. I begin at that. But here is where my difficulty comes in. The top of my brain, my innermost self says all that I have been saying, but — The rest of me won't follow. The rest of me refuses to attend, forgets, straggles, misbehaves."

"Exactly."

The word irritated Sir Richmond. "Not 'exactly' at all. 'Amazingly,' if you like.... I have this unlimited faith in our present tremendous necessity — for work — for devotion; I believe my share, the work I am doing, is essential to the whole thing — and I work sluggishly. I work reluctantly. I work damnably."

"Exact—" The doctor checked himself. "All that is explicable. Indeed it is. Listen for a moment to me! Consider what you are. Consider what we are. Consider what a man is before you marvel at his ineptitudes of will. Face the accepted facts. Here is a creature not ten thousand generations from the ape, his ancestor. Not ten thousand. And that ape again, not a score of thousands from the monkey, his forebear. A man's body, his bodily powers, are just the body and powers of an ape, a little improved, a little adapted to novel needs. That brings me to my point. CAN HIS MIND AND WILL BE ANYTHING BETTER? For a few generations, a few hundreds at most, knowledge and wide thought have flared out on the darknesses of life.... But the substance of man is ape still. He may carry a light in his brain, but his instincts move in the darkness. Out of that darkness he draws his motives."

"Or fails to draw them," said Sir Richmond.

“Or fails.... And that is where these new methods of treatment come in. We explore that failure. Together. What the psychoanalyst does-and I will confess that I owe much to the psychoanalyst — what he does is to direct thwarted, disappointed and perplexed people to the realities of their own nature. Which they have been accustomed to ignore and forget. They come to us with high ambitions or lovely illusions about themselves, torn, shredded, spoilt. They are morally denuded. Dreams they hate pursue them; abhorrent desires draw them; they are the prey of irresistible yet uncongenial impulses; they succumb to black despairs. The first thing we ask them is this: ‘What else could you expect?’”

“What else could I expect?” Sir Richmond repeated, looking down on him. “H’m!”

“The wonder is not that you are sluggish, reluctantly unselfish, inattentive, spasmodic. The wonder is that you are ever anything else.... Do you realize that a few million generations ago, everything that stirs in us, everything that exalts human life, self-devotions, heroisms, the utmost triumphs of art, the love — for love it is — that makes you and me care indeed for the fate and welfare of all this round world, was latent in the body of some little lurking beast that crawled and hid among the branches of vanished and forgotten Mesozoic trees? A petty egg-laying, bristle-covered beast it was, with no more of the rudiments of a soul than bare hunger, weak lust and fear.... People always seem to regard that as a curious fact of no practical importance. It isn’t: it’s a vital fact of the utmost practical importance. That is what you are made of. Why should you expect — because a war and a revolution have shocked you — that you should suddenly be able to reach up and touch the sky?”

“H’m!” said Sir Richmond. “Have I been touching the sky!”

“You are trying to play the part of an honest rich man.”

“I don’t care to see the whole system go smash.”

“Exactly,” said the doctor, before he could prevent himself.

“But is it any good to tell a man that the job he is attempting is above him — that he is just a hairy reptile twice removed — and all that sort of thing?”

“Well, it saves him from hoping too much and being too greatly disappointed. It recalls him to the proportions of the job. He gets

something done by not attempting everything. ... And it clears him up. We get him to look into himself, to see directly and in measurable terms what it is that puts him wrong and holds him back. He's no longer vaguely incapacitated. He knows."

"That's diagnosis. That's not treatment."

"Treatment by diagnosis. To analyze a mental knot is to untie it."

"You propose that I shall spend my time, until the Commission meets, in thinking about myself. I wanted to forget myself."

"Like a man who tries to forget that his petrol is running short and a cylinder missing fire.... No. Come back to the question of what you are," said the doctor. "A creature of the darkness with new lights. Lit and half-blinded by science and the possibilities of controlling the world that it opens out. In that light your will is all for service; you care more for mankind than for yourself. You begin to understand something of the self beyond your self. But it is a partial and a shaded light as yet; a little area about you it makes clear, the rest is still the old darkness — of millions of intense and narrow animal generations.... You are like someone who awakens out of an immemorial sleep to find himself in a vast chamber, in a great and ancient house, a great and ancient house high amidst frozen and lifeless mountains — in a sunless universe. You are not alone in it. You are not lord of all you survey. Your leadership is disputed. The darkness even of the room you are in is full of ancient and discarded but quite unsubjugated powers and purposes.... They thrust ambiguous limbs and claws suddenly out of the darkness into the light of your attention. They snatch things out of your hand, they trip your feet and jog your elbow. They crowd and cluster behind you. Wherever your shadow falls, they creep right up to you, creep upon you and struggle to take possession of you. The souls of apes, monkeys, reptiles and creeping things haunt the passages and attics and cellars of this living house in which your consciousness has awakened...."

The doctor gave this quotation from his unpublished book the advantages of an abrupt break and a pause.

Sir Richmond shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "And you propose a vermin hunt in the old tenement?"

"The modern man has to be master in his own house. He has to

take stock and know what is there.”

“Three weeks of self vivisection.”

“To begin with. Three weeks of perfect honesty with yourself. As an opening.... It will take longer than that if we are to go through with the job.”

“It is a considerable — process.”

“It is.”

“Yet you shrink from simple things like drugs!”

“Self-knowledge — without anaesthetics.”

“Has this sort of thing ever done anyone any good at all?”

“It has turned hundreds back to sanity and steady work.”

“How frank are we going to be? How full are we going to be? Anyhow — we can break off at any time.... We’ll try it. We’ll try it.... And so for this journey into the west of England.... And — if we can get there — I’m not sure that we can get there — into the secret places of my heart.”

CHAPTER THE SECOND

LADY HARDY

The patient left the house with much more self possession than he had shown when entering it. Dr. Martineau had thrust him back from his intenser prepossessions to a more generalized view of himself, had made his troubles objective and detached him from them. He could even find something amusing now in his situation. He liked the immense scope of the theoretical duet in which they had indulged. He felt that most of it was entirely true — and, in some untraceable manner, absurd. There were entertaining possibilities in the prospect of the doctor drawing him out — he himself partly assisting and partly resisting.

He was a man of extensive reservations. His private life was in some respects exceptionally private.

"I don't confide.... Do I even confide in myself? I imagine I do.... Is there anything in myself that I haven't looked squarely in the face?... How much are we going into? Even as regards facts?

"Does it really help a man — to see himself?..."

Such thoughts engaged him until he found himself in his study. His desk and his writing table were piled high with a heavy burthen of work. Still a little preoccupied with Dr. Martineau's exposition, he began to handle this confusion....

At half past nine he found himself with three hours of good work behind him. It had seemed like two. He had not worked like this for many weeks. "This is very cheering," he said. "And unexpected. Can old Moon-face have hypnotized me? Anyhow — ... Perhaps I've only imagined I was ill.... Dinner?" He looked at his watch and was amazed at the time. "Good Lord! I've been at it three hours. What can have happened? Funny I didn't hear the gong."

He went downstairs and found Lady Hardy reading a magazine in a dining-room armchair and finely poised between devotion and martyrdom. A shadow of vexation fell athwart his mind at the sight of her.

"I'd no idea it was so late," he said. "I heard no gong."

“After you swore so at poor Bradley I ordered that there should be no gongs when we were alone. I did come up to your door about half past eight. I crept up. But I was afraid I might upset you if I came in.”

“But you’ve not waited—”

“I’ve had a mouthful of soup.” Lady Hardy rang the bell.

“I’ve done some work at last,” said Sir Richmond, astride on the hearthrug.

“I’m glad,” said Lady Hardy, without gladness. “I waited for three hours.”

Lady Hardy was a frail little blue-eyed woman with uneven shoulders and a delicate sweet profile. Hers was that type of face that under even the most pleasant and luxurious circumstances still looks bravely and patiently enduring. Her refinement threw a tinge of coarseness over his eager consumption of his excellent clear soup.

“What’s this fish, Bradley?” he asked.

“Turbot, Sir Richmond.”

“Don’t you have any?” he asked his wife.

“I’ve had a little fish,” said Lady Hardy.

When Bradley was out of the room, Sir Richmond remarked: “I saw that nerves man, Dr. Martineau, to-day. He wants me to take a holiday.”

The quiet patience of the lady’s manner intensified. She said nothing. A flash of resentment lit Sir Richmond’s eyes. When he spoke again, he seemed to answer unspoken accusations. “Dr. Martineau’s idea is that he should come with me.”

The lady adjusted herself to a new point of view.

“But won’t that be reminding you of your illness and worries?”

“He seems a good sort of fellow.... I’m inclined to like him. He’ll be as good company as anyone.... This TOURNEDOS looks excellent. Have some.”

“I had a little bird,” said Lady Hardy, “when I found you weren’t coming.”

“But I say — don’t wait here if you’ve dined. Bradley can see to me.”

She smiled and shook her head with the quiet conviction of one who knew her duty better. “Perhaps I’ll have a little ice pudding

when it comes," she said.

Sir Richmond detested eating alone in an atmosphere of observant criticism. And he did not like talking with his mouth full to an unembarrassed interlocutor who made no conversational leads of her own. After a few mouthfuls he pushed his plate away from him. "Then let's have up the ice pudding," he said with a faint note of bitterness.

"But have you finished — ?"

"The ice pudding!" he exploded wrathfully. "The ice pudding!"

Lady Hardy sat for a moment, a picture of meek distress. Then, her delicate eyebrows raised, and the corners of her mouth drooping, she touched the button of the silver table-bell.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE DEPARTURE

Section 1

No wise man goes out upon a novel expedition without misgivings. And between their first meeting and the appointed morning both Sir Richmond Hardy and Dr. Martineau were the prey of quite disagreeable doubts about each other, themselves, and the excursion before them. At the time of their meeting each had been convinced that he gauged the other sufficiently for the purposes of the proposed tour. Afterwards each found himself trying to recall the other with greater distinctness and able to recall nothing but queer, ominous and minatory traits. The doctor's impression of the great fuel specialist grew ever darker, leaner, taller and more impatient. Sir Richmond took on the likeness of a monster obdurate and hostile, he spread upwards until like the Djinn out of the bottle, he darkened the heavens. And he talked too much. He talked ever so much too much. Sir Richmond also thought that the doctor talked too much. In addition, he read into his imperfect memory of the doctor's face, an expression of protruded curiosity. What was all this problem of motives and inclinations that they were "going into" so gaily? He had merely consulted the doctor on a simple, straightforward need for a nervous tonic — that was what he had needed — a tonic. Instead he had engaged himself for — he scarcely knew what — an indiscreet, indelicate, and altogether undesirable experiment in confidences.

Both men were considerably reassured when at last they set eyes on each other again. Indeed each was surprised to find something almost agreeable in the appearance of the other. Dr. Martineau at once perceived that the fierceness of Sir Richmond was nothing more than the fierceness of an overwrought man, and Sir Richmond realized at a glance that the curiosity of Dr. Martineau's bearing had in it nothing personal or base; it was just the fine alertness of the scientific mind.

Sir Richmond had arrived nearly forty minutes late, and it would have been evident to a much less highly trained observer than Dr. Martineau that some dissension had arisen between the little, ladylike, cream and black Charmeuse car and its owner. There was a faint air of resentment and protest between them. As if Sir Richmond had been in some way rude to it.

The cap of the radiator was adorned with a little brass figure of a flying Mercury. Frozen in a sprightly attitude, its stiff bound and its fixed heavenward stare was highly suggestive of a forced and tactful disregard of current unpleasantness.

Nothing was said, however, to confirm or dispel this suspicion of a disagreement between the man and the car. Sir Richmond directed and assisted Dr. Martineau's man to adjust the luggage at the back, and Dr. Martineau watched the proceedings from his dignified front door. He was wearing a suit of fawn tweeds, a fawn Homburg hat and a light Burberry, with just that effect of special preparation for a holiday which betrays the habitually busy man. Sir Richmond's brown gauntness was, he noted, greatly set off by his suit of grey. There had certainly been some sort of quarrel. Sir Richmond was explaining the straps to Dr. Martineau's butler with the coldness a man betrays when he explains the uncongenial habits of some unloved intimate. And when the moment came to start and the little engine did not immediately respond to the electric starter, he said: "Oh! COME up, you — !"

His voice sank at the last word as though it was an entirely confidential communication to the little car. And it was an extremely low and disagreeable word. So Dr. Martineau decided that it was not his business to hear it....

It was speedily apparent that Sir Richmond was an experienced and excellent driver. He took the Charmeuse out into the traffic of Baker Street and westward through brisk and busy streets and roads to Brentford and Hounslow smoothly and swiftly, making a score of unhesitating and accurate decisions without apparent thought. There was very little conversation until they were through Brentford. Near Shepherd's Bush, Sir Richmond had explained, "This is not my own particular car. That was butted into at the garage this morning and its radiator cracked. So I had to fall back on this. It's quite a good little

car. In its way. My wife drives it at times. It has one or two constitutional weaknesses — incidental to the make — gear-box over the back axle for example — gets all the vibration. Whole machine rather on the flimsy side. Still—"

He left the topic at that.

Dr. Martineau said something of no consequence about its being a very comfortable little car.

Somewhere between Brentford and Hounslow, Sir Richmond plunged into the matter between them. "I don't know how deep we are going into these psychological probings of yours," he said. "But I doubt very much if we shall get anything out of them."

"Probably not," said Dr. Martineau.

"After all, what I want is a tonic. I don't see that there is anything positively wrong with me. A certain lack of energy—"

"Lack of balance," corrected the doctor. "You are wasting energy upon internal friction."

"But isn't that inevitable? No machine is perfectly efficient. No man either. There is always a waste. Waste of the type; waste of the individual idiosyncrasy. This little car, for instance, isn't pulling as she ought to pull — she never does. She's low in her class. So with myself; there is a natural and necessary high rate of energy waste. Moods of apathy and indolence are natural to me. (Damn that omnibus! All over the road!)"

"We don't deny the imperfection—" began the doctor.

"One has to fit oneself to one's circumstances," said Sir Richmond, opening up another line of thought.

"We don't deny the imperfection" the doctor stuck to it. "These new methods of treatment are based on the idea of imperfection. We begin with that. I began with that last Tuesday...."

Sir Richmond, too, was sticking to his argument. "A man, and for that matter the world he lives in, is a tangle of accumulations. Your psychoanalyst starts, it seems to me, with a notion of stripping down to something fundamental. The ape before was a tangle of accumulations, just as we are. So it was with his forebears. So it has always been. All life is an endless tangle of accumulations."

"Recognize it," said the doctor.

"And then?" said Sir Richmond, controversially.

“Recognize in particular your own tangle.”

“Is my particular tangle very different from the general tangle? (Oh! Damn this feeble little engine!) I am a creature of undecided will, urged on by my tangled heredity to do a score of entirely incompatible things. Mankind, all life, is that.”

“But our concern is the particular score of incompatible things you are urged to do. We examine and weigh — we weigh—”

The doctor was still saying these words when a violent and ultimately disastrous struggle began between Sir Richmond and the little Charmeuse car. The doctor stopped in mid-sentence.

It was near Taplow station that the mutual exasperation of man and machine was brought to a crisis by the clumsy emergence of a laundry cart from a side road. Sir Richmond was obliged to pull up smartly and stopped his engine. It refused an immediate obedience to the electric starter. Then it picked up, raced noisily, disengaged great volumes of bluish smoke, and displayed an unaccountable indisposition to run on any gear but the lowest. Sir Richmond thought aloud, unpleasing thoughts. He addressed the little car as a person; he referred to ancient disputes and temperamental incompatibilities. His anger betrayed him a coarse, ill-bred man. The little car quickened under his reproaches. There were some moments of hope, dashed by the necessity of going dead slow behind an interloping van. Sir Richmond did not notice the outstretched arm of the driver of the van, and stalled his engine for a second time. The electric starter refused its office altogether.

For some moments Sir Richmond sat like a man of stone.

“I must wind it up,” he said at last in a profound and awful voice. “I must wind it up.”

“I get out, don’t I?” asked the doctor, unanswered, and did so. Sir Richmond, after a grim search and the displacement and replacement of the luggage, produced a handle from the locker at the back of the car and prepared to wind.

There was a little difficulty. “Come UP!” he said, and the small engine roared out like a stage lion.

The two gentlemen resumed their seats. The car started and then by an unfortunate inadvertency Sir Richmond pulled the gear lever over from the first speed to the reverse. There was a metallic

clangour beneath the two gentlemen, and the car slowed down and stopped although the engine was still throbbing wildly, and the dainty veil of blue smoke still streamed forward from the back of the car before a gentle breeze. The doctor got out almost precipitately, followed by a gaunt madman, mouthing vileness, who had only a minute or so before been a decent British citizen. He made some blind lunges at the tremulous but obdurate car, but rather as if he looked for offences and accusations than for displacements to adjust. Quivering and refusing, the little car was extraordinarily like some recalcitrant little old aristocratic lady in the hands of revolutionaries, and this made the behaviour of Sir Richmond seem even more outrageous than it would otherwise have done. He stopped the engine, he went down on his hands and knees in the road to peer up at the gear-box, then without restoring the spark, he tried to wind up the engine again. He spun the little handle with an insane violence, faster and faster for — as it seemed to the doctor — the better part of a minute. Beads of perspiration appeared upon his brow and ran together; he bared his teeth in a snarl; his hat slipped over one eye. He groaned with rage. Then, using the starting handle as a club, he assailed the car. He smote the brazen Mercury from its foothold and sent it and a part of the radiator cap with it flying across the road. He beat at the wings of the bonnet, until they bent in under his blows. Finally, he hurled the starting-handle at the wind-screen and smashed it. The starting-handle rattled over the bonnet and fell to the ground....

The paroxysm was over. Ten seconds later this cataclysmal lunatic had reverted to sanity — a rather sheepish sanity.

He thrust his hands into his trouser pockets and turned his back on the car. He remarked in a voice of melancholy detachment: “It was a mistake to bring that coupe.”

Dr. Martineau had assumed an attitude of trained observation on the side path. His hands rested on his hips and his hat was a little on one side. He was inclined to agree with Sir Richmond. “I don’t know,” he considered. “You wanted some such blow-off as this.”

“Did I?”

“The energy you have! That car must be somebody’s whipping boy.”

“The devil it is!” said Sir Richmond, turning round sharply and staring at it as if he expected it to display some surprising and yet familiar features. Then he looked questioningly and suspiciously at his companion.

“These outbreaks do nothing to amend the originating grievance,” said the doctor. “No. And at times they are even costly. But they certainly lift a burthen from the nervous system.... And now I suppose we have to get that little ruin to Maidenhead.”

“Little ruin!” repeated Sir Richmond. “No. There’s lots of life in the little beast yet.”

He reflected. “She’ll have to be towed.” He felt in his breast pocket. “Somewhere I have the R.A.C. order paper, the Badge that will Get You Home. We shall have to hail some passing car to take it into Maidenhead.”

Dr. Martineau offered and Sir Richmond took and lit a cigarette.

For a little while conversation hung fire. Then for the first time Dr. Martineau heard his patient laugh.

“Amazing savage,” said Sir Richmond. “Amazing savage!”

He pointed to his handiwork. “The little car looks ruffled. Well it may.”

He became grave again. “I suppose I ought to apologize.”

Dr. Martineau weighed the situation. “As between doctor and patient,” he said. “No.”

“Oh!” said Sir Richmond, turned to a new point of view. “But where the patient ends and the host begins.... I’m really very sorry.” He reverted to his original train of thought which had not concerned Dr. Martineau at all. “After all, the little car was only doing what she was made to do.”

Section 2

The affair of the car effectively unsealed Sir Richmond’s mind. Hitherto Dr. Martineau had perceived the possibility and danger of a defensive silence or of a still more defensive irony; but now that Sir Richmond had once given himself away, he seemed prepared to give himself away to an unlimited extent. He embarked upon an apologetic discussion of the choleric temperament.

He began as they stood waiting for the relief car from the Maidenhead garage. “You were talking of the ghosts of apes and monkeys that suddenly come out from the darkness of the subconscious....”

“You mean — when we first met at Harley Street?”

“That last apparition of mine seems to have been a gorilla at least.”

The doctor became precise. “Gorillaesque. We are not descended from gorillas.”

“Queer thing a fit of rage is!”

“It’s one of nature’s cruder expedients. Crude, but I doubt if it is fundamental. There doesn’t seem to be rage in the vegetable world, and even among the animals — ? No, it is not universal.” He ran his mind over classes and orders. “Wasps and bees certainly seem to rage, but if one comes to think, most of the invertebrata show very few signs of it.”

“I’m not so sure,” said Sir Richmond. “I’ve never seen a snail in a towering passion or an oyster slamming its shell behind it. But these are sluggish things. Oysters sulk, which is after all a smouldering sort of rage. And take any more active invertebrate. Take a spider. Not a smashing and swearing sort of rage perhaps, but a disciplined, cold-blooded malignity. Crabs fight. A conger eel in a boat will rage dangerously.”

“A vertebrate. Yes. But even among the vertebrata; who has ever seen a furious rabbit?”

“Don’t the bucks fight?” questioned Sir Richmond.

Dr. Martineau admitted the point.

“I’ve always had these fits of passion. As far back as I can remember. I was a kicking, screaming child. I threw things. I once threw a fork at my elder brother and it stuck in his forehead, doing no serious damage — happily. There were whole days of wrath — days, as I remember them. Perhaps they were only hours.... I’ve never thought before what a peculiar thing all this raging is in the world. WHY do we rage? They used to say it was the devil. If it isn’t the devil, then what the devil is it? After all,” he went on as the doctor was about to answer his question; “as you pointed out, it isn’t the lowlier things that rage. It’s the HIGHER things and US.”

“The devil nowadays,” the doctor reflected after a pause, “so far as man is concerned, is understood to be the ancestral ape. And more particularly the old male ape.”

But Sir Richmond was away on another line of thought. “Life itself, flaring out. Brooking no contradiction.” He came round suddenly to the doctor’s qualification. “Why male? Don’t little girls smash things just as much?”

“They don’t,” said Dr. Martineau. “Not nearly as much.”

Sir Richmond went off at a tangent again. “I suppose you have watched any number of babies?”’

“Not nearly as many as a general practitioner would do. There’s a lot of rage about most of them at first, male or female.”

“Queer little eddies of fury.... Recently — it happens — I’ve been seeing one. A spit of red wrath, clenching its fists and squalling threats at a damned disobedient universe.”

The doctor was struck by an idea and glanced quickly and questioningly at his companion’s profile.

“Blind driving force,” said Sir Richmond, musing.

“Isn’t that after all what we really are?” he asked the doctor. “Essentially — Rage. A rage in dead matter, making it alive.”

“Schopenhauer,” footnoted the doctor. “Boehme.”

“Plain fact,” said Sir Richmond. “No Rage — no Go.”

“But rage without discipline?”

“Discipline afterwards. The rage first.”

“But rage against what? And FOR what?”

“Against the Universe. And for — ? That’s more difficult. What IS the little beast squalling itself crimson for? Ultimately? ... What is it clutching after? In the long run, what will it get?”

(“Yours the car in distress what sent this?” asked an unheeded voice.)

“Of course, if you were to say ‘desire’,” said Dr. Martineau, “then you would be in line with the psychoanalysts. They talk of LIBIDO, meaning a sort of fundamental desire. Jung speaks of it at times almost as if it were the universal driving force.”

“No,” said Sir Richmond, in love with his new idea. “Not desire. Desire would have a definite direction, and that is just what this driving force hasn’t. It’s rage.”

“Yours the car in distress what sent this?” the voice repeated. It was the voice of a mechanic in an Overland car. He was holding up the blue request for assistance that Sir Richmond had recently filled in.

The two philosophers returned to practical matters.

Section 3

For half an hour after the departure of the little Charmeuse car with Sir Richmond and Dr. Martineau, the brass Mercury lay unheeded in the dusty roadside grass. Then it caught the eye of a passing child.

He was a bright little boy of five. From the moment when he caught the gleam of brass he knew that he had made the find of his life. But his nurse was a timorous, foolish thing. “You did ought to of left it there, Masterrarry,” she said.

“Findings ain’t keepings nowadays, not by no manner of means, Masterrarry.

“Yew’d look silly if a policeman came along arsting people if they seen a goldennimage.

“Arst yer ‘ow you come by it and look pretty straight at you.”

All of which grumblings Master Harry treated with an experienced disregard. He knew definitely that he would never relinquish this bright and lovely possession again. It was the first beautiful thing he had ever possessed. He was the darling of fond and indulgent parents and his nursery was crowded with hideous rag and sawdust dolls, golliwogs, comic penguins, comic lions, comic elephants and comic policemen and every variety of suchlike humorous idiocy and visual beastliness. This figure, solid, delicate and gracious, was a thing of a different order.

There was to be much conflict and distress, tears and wrath, before the affinity of that clean-limbed, shining figure and his small soul was recognized. But he carried his point at last. The Mercury became his inseparable darling, his symbol, his private god, the one dignified and serious thing in a little life much congested by the quaint, the burlesque, and all the smiling, dull condescensions of adult love.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

AT MAIDENHEAD

Section 1

The little Charmeuse was towed to hospital and the two psychiatrists took up their quarters at the Radiant Hotel with its pleasant lawns and graceful landing stage at the bend towards the bridge. Sir Richmond, after some trying work at the telephone, got into touch with his own proper car. A man would bring the car down in two days' time at latest, and afterwards the detested coupe could go back to London. The day was still young, and after lunch and coffee upon a sunny lawn a boat seemed indicated. Sir Richmond astonished the doctor by going to his room, reappearing dressed in tennis flannels and looking very well in them. It occurred to the doctor as a thing hitherto unnoted that Sir Richmond was not indifferent to his personal appearance. The doctor had no flannels, but he had brought a brown holland umbrella lined with green that he had acquired long ago in Algiers, and this served to give him something of the riverside quality.

The day was full of sunshine and the river had a Maytime animation. Pink geraniums, vivid green lawns, gay awnings, bright glass, white paint and shining metal set the tone of Maidenhead life. At lunch there had been five or six small tables with quietly affectionate couples who talked in undertones, a tableful of bright-coloured Jews who talked in overtones, and a family party from the Midlands, badly smitten with shyness, who did not talk at all. "A resort, of honeymoon couples," said the doctor, and then rather knowingly: "Temporary honeymoons, I fancy, in one or two of the cases."

"Decidedly temporary," said Sir Richmond, considering the company— "in most of the cases anyhow. The two in the corner might be married. You never know nowadays."

He became reflective....

After lunch and coffee he rowed the doctor up the river towards

Cliveden.

“The last time I was here,” he said, returning to the subject, “I was here on a temporary honeymoon.”

The doctor tried to look as though he had not thought that could be possible.

“I know my Maidenhead fairly well,” said Sir Richmond. “Aquatic activities, such as rowing, punting, messing about with a boat-hook, tying up, buzzing about in motor launches, fouling other people’s boats, are merely the stage business of the drama. The ruling interests of this place are love — largely illicit — and persistent drinking.... Don’t you think the bridge charming from here?”

“I shouldn’t have thought — drinking,” said Dr. Martineau, after he had done justice to the bridge over his shoulder.

“Yes, the place has a floating population of quiet industrious soakers. The incurable river man and the river girl end at that.”

Dr. Martineau encouraged Sir Richmond by an appreciative silence.

“If we are to explore the secret places of the heart,” Sir Richmond went on, “we shall have to give some attention to this Maidenhead side of life. It is very material to my case. I have, — as I have said — BEEN HERE. This place has beauty and charm; these piled-up woods behind which my Lords Astor and Desborough keep their state, this shining mirror of the water, brown and green and sky blue, this fringe of reeds and scented rushes and forget-me-not and lilies, and these perpetually posing white swans: they make a picture. A little artificial it is true; one feels the presence of a Conservancy Board, planting the rushes and industriously nicking the swans; but none the less delightful. And this setting has appealed to a number of people as an invitation, as, in a way, a promise. They come here, responsive to that promise of beauty and happiness. They conceive of themselves here, rowing swiftly and gracefully, punting beautifully, brandishing boat-hooks with ease and charm. They look to meet, under pleasant or romantic circumstances, other possessors and worshippers of grace and beauty here. There will be glowing evenings, warm moonlight, distant voices singing....There is your desire, doctor, the desire you say is the driving force of life. But

reality mocks it. Boats bump and lead to coarse ungracious quarrels; rowing can be curiously fatiguing; punting involves dreadful indignities. The romance here tarnishes very quickly. Romantic encounters fail to occur; in our impatience we resort to — accosting. Chilly mists arise from the water and the magic of distant singing is provided, even excessively, by boatloads of cads — with collecting dishes. When the weather keeps warm there presently arises an extraordinary multitude of gnats, and when it does not there is a need for stimulants. That is why the dreamers who come here first for a light delicious brush with love, come down at last to the Thamesside barmaid with her array of spirits and cordials as the quintessence of all desire."

"I say," said the doctor. "You tear the place to pieces."

"The desires of the place," said Sir Richmond.

"I'm using the place as a symbol."

He held his sculls awash, rippling in the water.

"The real force of life, the rage of life, isn't here," he said. "It's down underneath, sulking and smouldering. Every now and then it strains and cracks the surface. This stretch of the Thames, this pleasure stretch, has in fact a curiously quarrelsome atmosphere. People scold and insult one another for the most trivial things, for passing too close, for taking the wrong side, for tying up or floating loose. Most of these notice boards on the bank show a thoroughly nasty spirit. People on the banks jeer at anyone in the boats. You hear people quarrelling in boats, in the hotels, as they walk along the towing path. There is remarkably little happy laughter here. The RAGE, you see, is hostile to this place, the RAGE breaks through.... The people who drift from one pub to another, drinking, the people who fuddle in the riverside hotels, are the last fugitives of pleasure, trying to forget the rage...."

"Isn't it that there is some greater desire at the back of the human mind?" the doctor suggested. "Which refuses to be content with pleasure as an end?"

"What greater desire?" asked Sir Richmond, disconcertingly.

"Oh!..." The doctor cast about.

"There is no such greater desire," said Sir Richmond. "You cannot name it. It is just blind drive. I admit its discontent with

pleasure as an end — but has it any end of its own? At the most you can say that the rage in life is seeking its desire and hasn't found it."

"Let us help in the search," said the doctor, with an afternoon smile under his green umbrella. "Go on."

Section 2

"Since our first talk in Harley Street," said Sir Richmond, "I have been trying myself over in my mind. (We can drift down this backwater.)"

"Big these trees are," said the doctor with infinite approval.

"I am astonished to discover what a bundle of discordant motives I am. I do not seem to deserve to be called a personality. I cannot discover even a general direction. Much more am I like a taxi-cab in which all sorts of aims and desires have travelled to their destination and got out. Are we all like that?"

"A bundle held together by a name and address and a certain thread of memory?" said the doctor and considered. "More than that. More than that. We have leading ideas, associations, possessions, liabilities."

"We build ourselves a prison of circumstances that keeps us from complete dispersal."

"Exactly," said the doctor. "And there is also something, a consistency, that we call character."

"It changes."

"Consistently with itself."

"I have been trying to recall my sexual history," said Sir Richmond, going off at a tangent. "My sentimental education. I wonder if it differs very widely from yours or most men's."

"Some men are more eventful in these matters than others," said the doctor, — it sounded — wistfully.

"They have the same jumble of motives and traditions, I suspect, whether they are eventful or not. The brakes may be strong or weak but the drive is the same. I can't remember much of the beginnings of curiosity and knowledge in these matters. Can you?"

"Not much," said the doctor. "No."

"Your psychoanalysts tell a story of fears, suppressions,

monstrous imaginations, symbolic replacements. I don't remember much of that sort of thing in my own case. It may have faded out of my mind. There were probably some uneasy curiosities, a grotesque dream or so perhaps; I can't recall anything of that sort distinctly now. I had a very lively interest in women, even when I was still quite a little boy, and a certain — what shall I call it? — imaginative slavishness — not towards actual women but towards something magnificently feminine. My first love—"

Sir Richmond smiled at some secret memory. "My first love was Britannia as depicted by Tenniel in the cartoons in PUNCH. I must have been a very little chap at the time of the Britannia affair. I just clung to her in my imagination and did devoted things for her. Then I recall, a little later, a secret abject adoration for the white goddesses of the Crystal Palace. Not for any particular one of them that I can remember, — for all of them. But I don't remember anything very monstrous or incestuous in my childish imaginations, — such things as Freud, I understand, lays stress upon. If there was an Oedipus complex or anything of that sort in my case it has been very completely washed out again. Perhaps a child which is brought up in a proper nursery of its own and sees a lot of pictures of the nude human body, and so on, gets its mind shifted off any possible concentration upon the domestic aspect of sex. I got to definite knowledge pretty early. By the time I was eleven or twelve."

"Normally?"

"What is normally? Decently, anyhow. Here again I may be forgetting much secret and shameful curiosity. I got my ideas into definite form out of a little straightforward physiological teaching and some dissecting of rats and mice. My schoolmaster was a capable sane man in advance of his times and my people believed in him. I think much of this distorted perverse stuff that grows up in people's minds about sex and develops into evil vices and still more evil habits, is due to the mystery we make about these things."

"Not entirely," said the doctor.

"Largely. What child under a modern upbringing ever goes through the stuffy horrors described in James Joyce's PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN."

"I've not read it."

“A picture of the Catholic atmosphere; a young soul shut up in darkness and ignorance to accumulate filth. In the name of purity and decency and under threats of hell fire.”

“Horrible!”

“Quite. A study of intolerable tensions, the tensions that make young people write unclean words in secret places.”

“Yes, we certainly ventilate and sanitate in those matters nowadays. Where nothing is concealed, nothing can explode.”

“On the whole I came up to adolescence pretty straight and clean,” said Sir Richmond. “What stands out in my memory now is this idea, of a sort of woman goddess who was very lovely and kind and powerful and wonderful. That ruled my secret imaginations as a boy, but it was very much in my mind as I grew up.”

“The mother complex,” said Dr. Martineau as a passing botanist might recognize and name a flower.

Sir Richmond stared at him for a moment.

“It had not the slightest connexion with my mother or any mother or any particular woman at all. Far better to call it the goddess complex.”

“The connexion is not perhaps immediately visible,” said the doctor.

“There was no connexion,” said Sir Richmond. “The women of my adolescent dreams were stripped and strong and lovely. They were great creatures. They came, it was clearly traceable, from pictures sculpture — and from a definite response in myself to their beauty. My mother had nothing whatever to do with that. The women and girls about me were fussy bunches of clothes that I am sure I never even linked with that dream world of love and worship.”

“Were you co-educated?”

“No. But I had a couple of sisters, one older, one younger than myself, and there were plenty of girls in my circle. I thought some of them pretty — but that was a different affair. I know that I didn’t connect them with the idea of the loved and worshipped goddesses at all, because I remember when I first saw the goddess in a real human being and how amazed I was at the discovery.... I was a boy of twelve or thirteen. My people took me one summer to Dymchurch in Romney Marsh; in those days before the automobile had made the

Marsh accessible to the Hythe and Folkestone crowds, it was a little old forgotten silent wind-bitten village crouching under the lee of the great sea wall. At low water there were miles of sand as smooth and shining as the skin of a savage brown woman. Shining and with a texture — the very same. And one day as I was mucking about by myself on the beach, boy fashion, — there were some ribs of a wrecked boat buried in the sand near a groin and I was busy with them — a girl ran out from a tent high up on the beach and across the sands to the water. She was dressed in a tight bathing dress and not in the clumsy skirts and frills that it was the custom to inflict on women in those days. Her hair was tied up in a blue handkerchief. She ran swiftly and gracefully, intent upon the white line of foam ahead. I can still remember how the sunlight touched her round neck and cheek as she went past me. She was the loveliest, most shapely thing I have ever seen — to this day. She lifted up her arms and thrust through the dazzling white and green breakers and plunged into the water and swam; she swam straight out for a long way as it seemed to me, and presently came in and passed me again on her way back to her tent, light and swift and sure. The very prints of her feet on the sand were beautiful. Suddenly I realized that there could be living people in the world as lovely as any goddess.... She wasn't in the least out of breath.

"That was my first human love. And I love that girl still. I doubt sometimes whether I have ever loved anyone else. I kept the thing very secret. I wonder now why I have kept the thing so secret. Until now I have never told a soul about it. I resorted to all sorts of tortuous devices and excuses to get a chance of seeing her again without betraying what it was I was after."

Dr. Martineau retained a simple fondness for a story.

"And did you meet her again?"

"Never. Of course I may have seen her as a dressed-up person and not recognized her. A day or so later I was stabbed to the heart by the discovery that the tent she came out of had been taken away."

"She had gone?"

"For ever."

Sir Richmond smiled brightly at the doctor's disappointment.

Section 3

"I was never wholehearted and simple about sexual things," Sir Richmond resumed presently. "Never. I do not think any man is. We are too much plastered-up things, too much the creatures of a tortuous and complicated evolution."

Dr. Martineau, under his green umbrella, nodded his conceded agreement.

"This — what shall I call it? — this Dream of Women, grew up in my mind as I grew up — as something independent of and much more important than the reality of Women. It came only very slowly into relation with that. That girl on the Dymchurch beach was one of the first links, but she ceased very speedily to be real — she joined the women of dreamland at last altogether. She became a sort of legendary incarnation. I thought of these dream women not only as something beautiful but as something exceedingly kind and helpful. The girls and women I met belonged to a different creation...."

Sir Richmond stopped abruptly and rowed a few long strokes.

Dr. Martineau sought information.

"I suppose," he said, "there was a sensuous element in these dreamings?"

"Certainly. A very strong one. It didn't dominate but it was a very powerful undertow."

"Was there any tendency in all this imaginative stuff to concentrate? To group itself about a single figure, the sort of thing that Victorians would have called an ideal?"

"Not a bit of it," said Sir Richmond with conviction. "There was always a tremendous lot of variety in my mind. In fact the thing I liked least in the real world was the way it was obsessed by the idea of pairing off with one particular set and final person. I liked to dream of a blonde goddess in her own Venusberg one day, and the next I would be off over the mountains with an armed Brunhild."

"You had little thought of children?"

"As a young man?"

"Yes."

"None at all. I cannot recall a single philoprogenitive moment. These dream women were all conceived of, and I was conceived of,

as being concerned in some tremendous enterprise — something quite beyond domesticity. It kept us related — gave us dignity.... Certainly it wasn't babies."

"All this is very interesting, very interesting, from the scientific point of view. A PRIORI it is not what one might have expected. Reasoning from the idea that all instincts and natural imaginations are adapted to a biological end and seeing that sex is essentially a method of procreation, one might reasonably expect a convergence, if not a complete concentration, upon the idea of offspring. It is almost as if there were other ends to be served. It is clear that Nature has not worked this impulse out to any sight of its end. Has not perhaps troubled to do so. The instinct of the male for the female isn't primarily for offspring — not even in the most intelligent and farseeing types. The desire just points to glowing satisfactions and illusions. Quite equally I think the desire of the female for the male ignores its end. Nature has set about this business in a CHEAP sort of way. She is like some pushful advertising tradesman. She isn't frank with us; she just humbugs us into what she wants with us. All very well in the early Stone Age — when the poor dear things never realized that their mutual endearments meant all the troubles and responsibilities of parentage. But NOW — !"

He shook his head sideways and twirled the green umbrella like an animated halo around his large broad-minded face.

Sir Richmond considered. "Desire has never been the chief incentive of my relations with women. Never. So far as I can analyze the thing, it has been a craving for a particular sort of life giving companionship."

"That I take it is Nature's device to keep the lovers together in the interest of the more or less unpremeditated offspring."

"A poor device, if that is its end. It doesn't keep parents together; more often it tears them apart. The wife or the mistress, so soon as she is encumbered with children, becomes all too manifestly not the companion goddess...."

Sir Richmond brooded over his sculls and thought.

"Throughout my life I have been an exceedingly busy man. I have done a lot of scientific work and some of it has been very good work. And very laborious work. I've travelled much. I've organized great

business developments. You might think that my time has been fairly well filled without much philandering. And all the time, all the time, I've been — about women — like a thirsty beast looking for water.... Always. Always. All through my life."

Dr. Martineau waited through another silence.

"I was very grave about it at first. I married young. I married very simply and purely. I was not one of those young men who sow a large crop of wild oats. I was a fairly decent youth. It suddenly appeared to me that a certain smiling and dainty girl could make herself into all the goddesses of my dreams. I had but to win her and this miracle would occur. Of course I forget now the exact things I thought and felt then, but surely I had some such persuasion. Or why should I have married her? My wife was seven years younger than myself, — a girl of twenty. She was charming. She is charming. She is a wonderfully intelligent and understanding woman. She has made a home for me — a delightful home. I am one of those men who have no instinct for home making. I owe my home and all the comfort and dignity of my life to her ability. I have no excuse for any misbehaviour — so far as she is concerned. None at all. By all the rules I should have been completely happy. But instead of my marriage satisfying me, it presently released a storm of long-controlled desires and imprisoned cravings. A voice within me became more and more urgent. 'This will not do. This is not love. Where are your goddesses? This is not love.'... And I was unfaithful to my wife within four years of my marriage. It was a sudden overpowering impulse. But I suppose the ground had been preparing for a long time. I forget now all the emotions of that adventure. I suppose at the time it seemed beautiful and wonderful.... I do not excuse myself. Still less do I condemn myself. I put the facts before you. So it was."

"There were no children by your marriage?"

"Your line of thought, doctor, is too philoprogenitive. We have had three. My daughter was married two years ago. She is in America. One little boy died when he was three. The other is in India, taking up the Mardipore power scheme again now that he is out of the army.... No, it is simply that I was hopelessly disappointed with everything that a good woman and a decent marriage had to

give me. Pure disappointment and vexation. The anti-climax to an immense expectation built up throughout an imaginative boyhood and youth and early manhood. I was shocked and ashamed at my own disappointment. I thought it mean and base. Nevertheless this orderly household into which I had placed my life, these almost methodical connubialities....”

He broke off in mid-sentence.

Dr. Martineau shook his head disapprovingly.

“No,” he said, “it wasn’t fair to your wife.”

“It was shockingly unfair. I have always realized that. I’ve done what I could to make things up to her.... Heaven knows what counter disappointments she has concealed.... But it is no good arguing about rights and wrongs now. This is not an apology for my life. I am telling you what happened.

“Not for me to judge,” said Dr. Martineau. “Go on.”

“By marrying I had got nothing that my soul craved for, I had satisfied none but the most transitory desires and I had incurred a tremendous obligation. That obligation didn’t restrain me from making desperate lunges at something vaguely beautiful that I felt was necessary to me; but it did cramp and limit these lunges. So my story flops down into the comedy of the lying, cramped intrigues of a respectable, married man...I was still driven by my dream of some extravagantly beautiful inspiration called love and I sought it like an area sneak. Gods! What a story it is when one brings it all together! I couldn’t believe that the glow and sweetness I dreamt of were not in the world — somewhere. Hidden away from me. I seemed to catch glimpses of the dear lost thing, now in the corners of a smiling mouth, now in dark eyes beneath a black smoke of hair, now in a slim form seen against the sky. Often I cared nothing for the woman I made love to. I cared for the thing she seemed to be hiding from me....”

Sir Richmond’s voice altered.

“I don’t see what possible good it can do to talk over these things.” He began to row and rowed perhaps a score of strokes. Then he stopped and the boat drove on with a whisper of water at the bow and over the outstretched oar blades.

“What a muddle and mockery the whole thing is!” he cried.

“What a fumbling old fool old Mother Nature has been! She drives us into indignity and dishonour: and she doesn’t even get the children which are her only excuse for her mischief. See what a fantastic thing I am when you take the machine to pieces! I have been a busy and responsible man throughout my life. I have handled complicated public and industrial affairs not unsuccessfully and discharged quite big obligations fully and faithfully. And all the time, hidden away from the public eye, my life has been laced by the thread of these — what can one call them? — love adventures. How many? you ask. I don’t know. Never have I been a whole-hearted lover; never have I been able to leave love alone.... Never has love left me alone.

“And as I am made,” said Sir Richmond with sudden insistence, “AS I AM MADE — I do not believe that I could go on without these affairs. I know that you will be disposed to dispute that.”

Dr. Martineau made a reassuring noise.

“These affairs are at once unsatisfying and vitally necessary. It is only latterly that I have begun to perceive this. Women MAKE life for me. Whatever they touch or see or desire becomes worth while and otherwise it is not worth while. Whatever is lovely in my world, whatever is delightful, has been so conveyed to me by some woman. Without the vision they give me, I should be a hard dry industry in the world, a worker ant, a soulless rage, making much, valuing nothing.”

He paused.

“You are, I think, abnormal,” considered the doctor.

“Not abnormal. Excessive, if you like. Without women I am a wasting fever of distressful toil. Without them there is no kindness in existence, no rest, no sort of satisfaction. The world is a battlefield, trenches, barbed wire, rain, mud, logical necessity and utter desolation — with nothing whatever worth fighting for. Whatever justifies effort, whatever restores energy is hidden in women....”

“An access of sex,” said Dr. Martineau. “This is a phase....”

“It is how I am made,” said Sir Richmond.

A brief silence fell upon that. Dr. Martineau persisted. “It isn’t how you are made. We are getting to something in all this. It is, I insist, a mood of how you are made. A distinctive and indicative

mood."

Sir Richmond went on, almost as if he soliloquized.

"I would go through it all again.... There are times when the love of women seems the only real thing in the world to me. And always it remains the most real thing. I do not know how far I may be a normal man or how far I may not be, so to speak, abnormally male, but to me life has very little personal significance and no value or power until it has a woman as intermediary. Before life can talk to me and say anything that matters a woman must be present as a medium. I don't mean that it has no significance mentally and logically; I mean that irrationally and emotionally it has no significance. Works of art, for example, bore me, literature bores me, scenery bores me, even the beauty of a woman bores me, unless I find in it some association with a woman's feeling. It isn't that I can't tell for myself that a picture is fine or a mountain valley lovely, but that it doesn't matter a rap to me whether it is or whether it isn't until there is a feminine response, a sexual motif, if you like to call it that, coming in. Whatever there is of loveliness or pride in life doesn't LIVE for me until somehow a woman comes in and breathes upon it the breath of life. I cannot even rest until a woman makes holiday for me. Only one thing can I do without women and that is work, joylessly but effectively, and latterly for some reason that it is up to you to discover, doctor, even the power of work has gone from me."

Section 4

"This afternoon brings back to me very vividly my previous visit here. It was perhaps a dozen or fifteen years ago. We rowed down this same backwater. I can see my companion's hand — she had very pretty hands with rosy palms — trailing in the water, and her shadowed face smiling quietly under her sunshade, with little faint streaks of sunlight, reflected from the ripples, dancing and quivering across it. She was one of those people who seem always to be happy and to radiate happiness.

"By ordinary standards," said Sir Richmond, "she was a thoroughly bad lot. She had about as much morality, in the narrower sense of the word, as a monkey. And yet she stands out in my mind

as one of the most honest women I have ever met. She was certainly one of the kindest. Part of that effect of honesty may have been due to her open brow, her candid blue eyes, the smiling frankness of her manner.... But — no! She was really honest.

"We drifted here as we are doing now. She pulled at the sweet rushes and crushed them in her hand. She adds a remembered brightness to this afternoon.

"Honest. Friendly. Of all the women I have known, this woman who was here with me came nearest to being my friend. You know, what we call virtue in a woman is a tremendous handicap to any real friendliness with a man. Until she gets to an age when virtue and fidelity are no longer urgent practical concerns, a good woman, by the very definition of feminine goodness, isn't truly herself. Over a vast extent of her being she is RESERVED. She suppresses a vast amount of her being, holds back, denies, hides. On the other hand, there is a frankness and honesty in openly bad women arising out of the admitted fact that they are bad, that they hide no treasure from you, they have no peculiarly precious and delicious secrets to keep, and no poverty to conceal. Intellectually they seem to be more manly and vigorous because they are, as people say, unsexed. Many old women, thoroughly respectable old women, have the same quality. Because they have gone out of the personal sex business. Haven't you found that?"

"I have never," said the doctor, "known what you call an openly bad woman, — at least, at all intimately...."

Sir Richmond looked with quick curiosity at his companion. "You have avoided them!"

"They don't attract me."

"They repel you?"

"For me," said the doctor, "for any friendliness, a woman must be modest.... My habits of thought are old-fashioned, I suppose, but the mere suggestion about a woman that there were no barriers, no reservation, that in any fashion she might more than meet me half way..."

His facial expression completed his sentence.

"Now I wonder," whispered Sir Richmond, and hesitated for a moment before he carried the great research into the explorer's

country. “You are afraid of women?” he said, with a smile to mitigate the impertinence.

“I respect them.”

“An element of fear.”

“Well, I am afraid of them then. Put it that way if you like. Anyhow I do not let myself go with them. I have never let myself go.”

“You lose something. You lose a reality of insight.”

There was a thoughtful interval.

“Having found so excellent a friend,” said the doctor, “why did you ever part from her?”

Sir Richmond seemed indisposed to answer, but Dr. Martineau’s face remained slantingly interrogative. He had found the effective counterattack and he meant to press it. “I was jealous of her,” Sir Richmond admitted. “I couldn’t stand that side of it.”

Section 5

After a meditative silence the doctor became briskly professional again.

“You care for your wife,” he said. “You care very much for your wife. She is, as you say, your great obligation and you are a man to respect obligations. I grasp that. Then you tell me of these women who have come and gone.... About them too you are perfectly frank... There remains someone else.” Sir Richmond stared at his physician.

“Well,” he said and laughed. “I didn’t pretend to have made my autobiography anything more than a sketch.”

“No, but there is a special person, the current person.”

“I haven’t dilated on my present situation, I admit.”

“From some little things that have dropped from you, I should say there is a child.”

“That,” said Sir Richmond after a brief pause, “is a good guess.”

“Not older than three.”

“Two years and a half.”

“You and this lady who is, I guess, young, are separated. At any rate, you can’t go to her. That leaves you at loose ends, because for

some time, for two or three years at least, you have ceased to be — how shall I put it? — an emotional wanderer."

"I begin to respect your psychoanalysis."

"Hence your overwhelming sense of the necessity of feminine companionship for weary men. I guess she is a very jolly companion to be with, amusing, restful — interesting."

"H'm," said Sir Richmond. "I think that is a fair description. When she cares, that is. When she is in good form."

"Which she isn't at present," hazarded the doctor. He exploded a mine of long-pent exasperation.

"She is the clumsiest hand at keeping well that I have ever known. Health is a woman's primary duty. But she is incapable of the most elementary precautions. She is maddeningly receptive to every infection. At the present moment, when I am ill, when I am in urgent need of help and happiness, she has let that wretched child get measles and she herself won't let me go near her because she has got something disfiguring, something nobody else could ever have or think of having, called CARBUNCLE. Carbuncle!"

"It is very painful," said Dr. Martineau. "No doubt it is," said Sir Richmond.

"No doubt it is." His voice grew bitter. He spoke with deliberation. "A perfectly aimless, useless illness, — and as painful as it CAN be."

He spoke as if he slammed a door viciously. And indeed he had slammed a door. The doctor realized that for the present there was no more self-dissection to be got from Sir Richmond.

For some time Sir Richmond had been keeping the boat close up to the foaming weir to the left of the lock by an occasional stroke. Now with a general air of departure he swung the boat round and began to row down stream towards the bridge and the Radiant Hotel.

"Time we had tea," he said.

Section 6

After tea Dr. Martineau left Sir Richmond in a chair upon the lawn, brooding darkly — apparently over the crime of the carbuncle. The doctor went to his room, ostensibly to write a couple of letters and

put on a dinner jacket, but really to make a few notes of the afternoon's conversation and meditate over his impressions while they were fresh.

His room proffered a comfortable armchair and into this he sank... A number of very discrepant things were busy in his mind. He had experienced a disconcerting personal attack. There was a whirl of active resentment in the confusion.

"Apologetics of a rake," he tried presently.

"A common type, stripped of his intellectual dressing. Every third manufacturer from the midlands or the north has some such undertow of 'affairs.' A physiological uneasiness, an imaginative laxity, the temptations of the trip to London — weakness masquerading as a psychological necessity. The Lady of the Carbuncle seems to have got rather a hold upon him. She has kept him in order for three or four years."

The doctor scrutinized his own remarks with a judicious expression.

"I am not being fair. He ruffled me. Even if it is true, as I said, that every third manufacturer from the midlands is in much the same case as he is, that does not dismiss the case. It makes it a more important one, much more important: it makes it a type case with the exceptional quality of being self-expressive. Almost too selfexpressive.

"Sir Richmond does, after all, make out a sort of case for himself....

"A valid case?"

The doctor sat deep in his chair, frowning judicially with the fingers of one hand apposed to the fingers of the other. "He makes me bristle because all his life and ideas challenge my way of living. But if I eliminate the personal element?"

He pulled a sheet of note-paper towards him and began to jot down notes with a silver-cased pencil. Soon he discontinued writing and sat tapping his pencil-case on the table. "The amazing selfishness of his attitude! I do not think that once — not once — has he judged any woman except as a contributor to his energy and peace of mind.... Except in the case of his wife....

"For her his habit of respect was formed before his ideas

developed....

"That I think explains HER....

"What was his phrase about the unfortunate young woman with the carbuncle?... 'Totally Useless and unnecessary illness,' was it?...

"Now has a man any right by any standards to use women as this man has used them?

"By any standards?"

The doctor frowned and nodded his head slowly with the corners of his mouth drawn in.

For some years now an intellectual reverie had been playing an increasing part in the good doctor's life. He was writing this book of his, writing it very deliberately and laboriously, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A NEW AGE, but much more was he dreaming and thinking about this book. Its publication was to mark an epoch in human thought and human affairs generally, and create a considerable flutter of astonishment in the doctor's own little world. It was to bring home to people some various aspects of one very startling proposition: that human society had arrived at a phase when the complete restatement of its fundamental ideas had become urgently necessary, a phase when the slow, inadequate, partial adjustments to two centuries of changing conditions had to give place to a rapid reconstruction of new fundamental ideas. And it was a fact of great value in the drama of these secret dreams that the directive force towards this fundamentally reconstructed world should be the pen of an unassuming Harley Street physician, hitherto not suspected of any great excesses of enterprise.

The written portions of this book were already in a highly polished state. They combined a limitless freedom of proposal with a smooth urbanity of manner, a tacit denial that the thoughts of one intelligent being could possibly be shocking to another. Upon this the doctor was very insistent. Conduct, he held, could never be sufficiently discreet, thought could never be sufficiently free. As a citizen, one had to treat a law or an institution as a thing as rigidly right as a natural law. That the social well-being demands. But as a scientific man, in one's stated thoughts and in public discussion, the case was altogether different. There was no offence in any possible hypothesis or in the contemplation of any possibility. Just as when

one played a game one was bound to play in unquestioning obedience to the laws and spirit of the game, but if one was not playing that game then there was no reason why one should not contemplate the completest reversal of all its methods and the alteration and abandonment of every rule. Correctness of conduct, the doctor held, was an imperative concomitant of all really free thinking. Revolutionary speculation is one of those things that must be divorced absolutely from revolutionary conduct. It was to the neglect of these obvious principles, as the doctor considered them, that the general muddle in contemporary marital affairs was very largely due. We left divorce-law revision to exposed adulterers and marriage reform to hot adolescents and craving spinsters driven by the furies within them to assertions that established nothing and to practical demonstrations that only left everybody thoroughly uncomfortable. Far better to leave all these matters to calm, patient men in easy chairs, weighing typical cases impartially, ready to condone, indisposed to envy.

In return for which restraint on the part of the eager and adventurous, the calm patient man was prepared in his thoughts to fly high and go far. Without giving any guarantee, of course, that he might not ultimately return to the comfortable point of inaction from which he started.

In Sir Richmond, Dr. Martineau found the most interesting and encouraging confirmation of the fundamental idea of THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A NEW AGE, the immediate need of new criteria of conduct altogether. Here was a man whose life was evidently ruled by standards that were at once very high and very generous. He was overworking himself to the pitch of extreme distress and apparently he was doing this for ends that were essentially unselfish. Manifestly there were many things that an ordinary industrial or political magnate would do that Sir Richmond would not dream of doing, and a number of things that such a man would not feel called upon to do that he would regard as imperative duties. And mixed up with so much fine intention and fine conduct was this disreputable streak of intrigue and this extraordinary claim that such misconduct was necessary to continued vigour of action.

“To energy of thought it is not necessary,” said Dr. Martineau,

and considered for a time. “Yet — certainly — I am not a man of action. I admit it. I make few decisions.”

The chapters of THE PSYCHOLOGY OF A NEW AGE dealing with women were still undrafted, but they had already greatly exercised the doctor’s mind. He found now that the case of Sir Richmond had stirred his imagination. He sat with his hands apposed, his head on one side, and an expression of great intellectual contentment on his face while these emancipated ideas gave a sort of gala performance in his mind.

The good doctor did not dislike women, he had always guarded himself very carefully against misogyny, but he was very strongly disposed to regard them as much less necessary in the existing scheme of things than was generally assumed. Women, he conceded, had laid the foundations of social life. Through their contrivances and sacrifices and patience the fierce and lonely patriarchal family-herd of a male and his women and off spring had grown into the clan and tribe; the woven tissue of related families that constitute the human comity had been woven by the subtle, persistent protection of sons and daughters by their mothers against the intolerant, jealous, possessive Old Man. But that was a thing, of the remote past. Little was left of those ancient struggles now but a few infantile dreams and nightmares. The greater human community, human society, was made for good. And being made, it had taken over the ancient tasks of the woman, one by one, until now in its modern forms it cherished more sedulously than she did, it educated, it housed and comforted, it clothed and served and nursed, leaving the wife privileged, honoured, protected, for the sake of tasks she no longer did and of a burthen she no longer bore. “Progress has TRIVIALIZED women,” said the doctor, and made a note of the word for later consideration.

“And woman has trivialized civilization,” the doctor tried.

“She has retained her effect of being central, she still makes the social atmosphere, she raises men’s instinctive hopes of help and direction. Except,” the doctor stipulated, “for a few highly developed modern types, most men found the sense of achieving her a necessary condition for sustained exertion. And there is no direction in her any more.

“She spends,” said the doctor, “she just spends. She spends

excitingly and competitively for her own pride and glory, she drives all the energy of men over the weirs of gain....

"What are we to do with the creature?" whispered the doctor.

Apart from the procreative necessity, was woman an unavoidable evil? The doctor's untrammelled thoughts began to climb high, spin, nose dive and loop the loop. Nowadays we took a proper care of the young, we had no need for high birth rates, quite a small proportion of women with a gift in that direction could supply all the offspring that the world wanted. Given the power of determining sex that science was slowly winning today, and why should we have so many women about? A drastic elimination of the creatures would be quite practicable. A fantastic world to a vulgar imagination, no doubt, but to a calmly reasonable mind by no means fantastic. But this was where the case of Sir Richmond became so interesting. Was it really true that the companionship of women was necessary to these energetic creative types? Was it the fact that the drive of life towards action, as distinguished from contemplation, arose out of sex and needed to be refreshed by the reiteration of that motive? It was a plausible proposition: it marched with all the doctor's ideas of natural selection and of the conditions of a survival that have made us what we are. It was in tune with the Freudian analyses.

"SEX NOT ONLY A RENEWAL OF LIFE IN THE SPECIES," noted the doctor's silver pencil; "SEX MAY BE ALSO A RENEWAL OF ENERGY IN THE INDIVIDUAL."

After some musing he crossed out "sex" and wrote above it "sexual love."

"That is practically what he claims," Dr. Martineau said. "In which case we want the completest revision of all our standards of sexual obligation. We want a new system of restrictions and imperatives altogether."

It was a fixed idea of the doctor's that women were quite incapable of producing ideas in the same way that men do, but he believed that with suitable encouragement they could be induced to respond quite generously to such ideas. Suppose therefore we really educated the imaginations of women; suppose we turned their indubitable capacity for service towards social and political creativeness, not in order to make them the rivals of men in these

fields, but their moral and actual helpers. “A man of this sort wants a mistress-mother,” said the doctor. “He wants a sort of woman who cares more for him and his work and honour than she does for child or home or clothes or personal pride.”

“But are there such women? Can there be such a woman?”

“His work needs to be very fine to deserve her help. But admitting its fineness?...

“The alternative seems to be to teach the sexes to get along without each other.”

“A neutralized world. A separated world. How we should jostle in the streets! But the early Christians have tried it already. The thing is impossible.”

“Very well, then, we have to make women more responsible again. In a new capacity. We have to educate them far more seriously as sources of energy — as guardians and helpers of men. And we have to suppress them far more rigorously as tempters and dissipaters. Instead of mothering babies they have to mother the race....”

A vision of women made responsible floated before his eyes.

“Is that man working better since you got hold of him? If not, why not?”

“Or again, — Jane Smith was charged with neglecting her lover to the common danger.... The inspector said the man was in a pitiful state, morally quite uncombed and infested with vulgar, showy ideas....”

The doctor laughed, telescoped his pencil and stood up.

Section 7

It became evident after dinner that Sir Richmond also had been thinking over the afternoon’s conversation.

He and Dr. Martineau sat in wide-armed cane chairs on the lawn with a wickerwork table bearing coffee cups and little glasses between them. A few other diners chatted and whispered about similar tables but not too close to our talkers to disturb them; the dining room behind them had cleared its tables and depressed its illumination. The moon, in its first quarter, hung above the sunset,

sank after twilight, shone brighter and brighter among the western trees, and presently had gone, leaving the sky to an increasing multitude of stars. The Maidenhead river wearing its dusky blue draperies and its jewels of light had recovered all the magic Sir Richmond had stripped from it in the afternoon. The grave arches of the bridge, made complete circles by the reflexion of the water, sustained, as if by some unifying and justifying reason, the erratic flat flashes and streaks and glares of traffic that fretted to and fro overhead. A voice sang intermittently and a banjo tinkled, but remotely enough to be indistinct and agreeable.

"After all," Sir Richmond began abruptly, "the search for some sort of sexual modus vivendi is only a means to an end. One does not want to live for sex but only through sex. The main thing in my life has always been my work. This afternoon, under the Maidenhead influence, I talked too much of sex. I babbled. Of things one doesn't usually..."

"It was very illuminating," said the doctor.

"No doubt. But a temporary phase. It is the defective bearing talks.... Just now — I happen to be irritated."

The darkness concealed a faint smile on the doctor's face.

"The work is the thing," said Sir Richmond. "So long as one can keep one's grip on it."

"What," said the doctor after a pause, leaning back and sending wreaths of smoke up towards the star-dusted zenith, "what is your idea of your work? I mean, how do you see it in relation to yourself — and things generally?"

"Put in the most general terms?"

"Put in the most general terms."

"I wonder if I can put it in general terms for you at all. It is hard to put something one is always thinking about in general terms or to think of it as a whole.... Now.... Fuel?...

"I suppose it was my father's business interests that pushed me towards specialization in fuel. He wanted me to have a thoroughly scientific training in days when a scientific training was less easy to get for a boy than it is today. And much more inspiring when you got it. My mind was framed, so to speak, in geology and astronomical physics. I grew up to think on that scale. Just as a man who has been

trained in history and law grows to think on the scale of the Roman empire. I don't know what your pocket map of the universe is, the map, I mean, by which you judge all sorts of other general ideas. To me this planet is a little ball of oxides and nickel steel; life a sort of tarnish on its surface. And we, the minutest particles in that tarnish. Who can nevertheless, in some unaccountable way, take in the idea of this universe as one whole, who begin to dream of taking control of it."

"That is not a bad statement of the scientific point of view. I suppose I have much the same general idea of the world. On rather more psychological lines."

"We think, I suppose, said Sir Richmond, of life as something that is only just beginning to be aware of what it is — and what it might be."

"Exactly," said the doctor. "Good."

He went on eagerly. "That is precisely how I see it. You and I are just particles in the tarnish, as you call it, who are becoming dimly awake to what we are, to what we have in common. Only a very few of us have got as far even as this. These others here, for example...."

He indicated the rest of Maidenhead by a movement.

"Desire, mutual flattery, egotistical dreams, greedy solicitudes fill them up. They haven't begun to get out of themselves."

"We, I suppose, have," doubted Sir Richmond.

"We have."

The doctor had no doubt. He lay back in his chair, with his hands behind his head and his smoke ascending vertically to heaven. With the greatest contentment he began quoting himself. "This getting out of one's individuality — this conscious getting out of one's individuality — is one of the most important and interesting aspects of the psychology of the new age that is now dawning. As compared with any previous age. Unconsciously, of course, every true artist, every philosopher, every scientific investigator, so far as his art or thought went, has always got out of himself, — has forgotten his personal interests and become Man thinking for the whole race. And intimations of the same thing have been at the heart of most religions. But now people are beginning to get this detachment without any distinctively religious feeling or any distinctive aesthetic

or intellectual impulse, as if it were a plain matter of fact. Plain matter of fact, that we are only incidentally ourselves. That really each one of us is also the whole species, is really indeed all life."

"A part of it."

"An integral part-as sight is part of a man... with no absolute separation from all the rest — no more than a separation of the imagination. The whole so far as his distinctive quality goes. I do not know how this takes shape in your mind, Sir Richmond, but to me this idea of actually being life itself upon the world, a special phase of it dependent upon and connected with all other phases, and of being one of a small but growing number of people who apprehend that, and want to live in the spirit of that, is quite central. It is my fundamental idea. We, — this small but growing minority — constitute that part of life which knows and wills and tries to rule its destiny. This new realization, the new psychology arising out of it is a fact of supreme importance in the history of life. It is like the appearance of self-consciousness in some creature that has not hitherto had self-consciousness. And so far as we are concerned, we are the true kingship of the world. Necessarily. We who know, are the true king....I wonder how this appeals to you. It is stuff I have thought out very slowly and carefully and written and approved. It is the very core of my life.... And yet when one comes to say these things to someone else, face to face.... It is much more difficult to say than to write."

Sir Richmond noted how the doctor's chair creaked as he rolled to and fro with the uneasiness of these intimate utterances.

"I agree," said Sir Richmond presently. "One DOES think in this fashion. Something in this fashion. What one calls one's work does belong to something much bigger than ourselves.

"Something much bigger," he expanded.

"Which something we become," the doctor urged, "in so far as our work takes hold of us."

Sir Richmond made no answer to this for a little while. "Of course we trail a certain egotism into our work," he said.

"Could we do otherwise? But it has ceased to be purely egotism. It is no longer, 'I am I' but 'I am part.'... One wants to be an honourable part."

“You think of man upon his planet,” the doctor pursued. “I think of life rather as a mind that tries itself over in millions and millions of trials. But it works out to the same thing.”

“I think in terms of fuel,” said Sir Richmond.

He was still debating the doctor’s generalization. “I suppose it would be true to say that I think of myself as mankind on his planet, with very considerable possibilities and with only a limited amount of fuel at his disposal to achieve them. Yes.... I agree that I think in that way.... I have not thought much before of the way in which I think about things — but I agree that it is in that way. Whatever enterprises mankind attempts are limited by the sum total of that store of fuel upon the planet. That is very much in my mind. Besides that he has nothing but his annual allowance of energy from the sun.”

“I thought that presently we were to get unlimited energy from atoms,” said the doctor.

“I don’t believe in that as a thing immediately practicable. No doubt getting a supply of energy from atoms is a theoretical possibility, just as flying was in the time of Daedalus; probably there were actual attempts at some sort of glider in ancient Crete. But before we get to the actual utilization of atomic energy there will be ten thousand difficult corners to turn; we may have to wait three or four thousand years for it. We cannot count on it. We haven’t it in hand. There may be some impasse. All we have surely is coal and oil, — there is no surplus of wood now — only an annual growth. And water-power is income also, doled out day by day. We cannot anticipate it. Coal and oil are our only capital. They are all we have for great important efforts. They are a gift to mankind to use to some supreme end or to waste in trivialities. Coal is the key to metallurgy and oil to transit. When they are done we shall either have built up such a fabric of apparatus, knowledge and social organization that we shall be able to manage without them — or we shall have travelled a long way down the slopes of waste towards extinction.... To-day, in getting, in distribution, in use we waste enormously....As we sit here all the world is wasting fuel fantastically.”

“Just as mentally — educationally we waste,” the doctor interjected.

“And my job is to stop what I can of that waste, to do what I can

to organize, first of all sane fuel getting and then sane fuel using. And that second proposition carries us far. Into the whole use we are making of life.

"First things first," said Sir Richmond. If we set about getting fuel sanely, if we do it as the deliberate, co-operative act of the whole species, then it follows that we shall look very closely into the use that is being made of it. When all the fuel getting is brought into one view as a common interest, then it follows that all the fuel burning will be brought into one view. At present we are getting fuel in a kind of scramble with no general aim. We waste and lose almost as much as we get. And of what we get, the waste is idiotic.

"I won't trouble you," said Sir Richmond, "with any long discourse on the ways of getting fuel in this country. But land as you know is owned in patches and stretches that were determined in the first place chiefly by agricultural necessities. When it was divided up among its present owners nobody was thinking about the minerals beneath. But the lawyers settled long ago that the landowner owned his land right down to the centre of the earth. So we have the superficial landlord as coal owner trying to work his coal according to the superficial divisions, quite irrespective of the lie of the coal underneath. Each man goes for the coal under his own land in his own fashion. You get three shafts where one would suffice and none of them in the best possible place. You get the coal coming out of this point when it would be far more convenient to bring it out at that — miles away. You get boundary walls of coal between the estates, abandoned, left in the ground for ever. And each coal owner sells his coal in his own pettifogging manner... But you know of these things. You know too how we trail the coal all over the country, spoiling it as we trail it, until at last we get it into the silly coal scuttles beside the silly, wasteful, airpoisoning, fog-creating fireplace.

"And this stuff," said Sir Richmond, bringing his hand down so smartly on the table that the startled coffee cups cried out upon the tray; "was given to men to give them power over metals, to get knowledge with, to get more power with."

"The oil story, I suppose, is as bad."

"The oil story is worse....

"There is a sort of cant," said Sir Richmond in a fierce

parenthesis, “that the supplies of oil are inexhaustible — that you can muddle about with oil anyhow.... Optimism of knaves and imbeciles.... They don’t want to be pulled up by any sane considerations....”

For some moments he kept silence — as if in unspeakable commination.

“Here I am with some clearness of vision — my only gift; not very clever, with a natural bad temper, and a strong sexual bias, doing what I can to get a broader handling of the fuel question — as a common interest for all mankind. And I find myself up against a lot of men, subtle men, sharp men, obstinate men, prejudiced men, able to get round me, able to get over me, able to blockade me.... Clever men — yes, and all of them ultimately damned — oh! utterly damned — fools. Coal owners who think only of themselves, solicitors who think backwards, politicians who think like a game of cat’s-cradle, not a gleam of generosity not a gleam.”

“What particularly are you working for?” asked the doctor.

“I want to get the whole business of the world’s fuel discussed and reported upon as one affair so that some day it may be handled as one affair in the general interest.”

“The world, did you say? You meant the empire?”

“No, the world. It is all one system now. You can’t work it in bits. I want to call in foreign representatives from the beginning.”

“Advisory — consultative?”

“No. With powers. These things interlock now internationally both through labour and finance. The sooner we scrap this nonsense about an autonomous British Empire complete in itself, contra mundum, the better for us. A world control is fifty years overdue. Hence these disorders.”

“Still — it’s rather a difficult proposition, as things are.”

“Oh, Lord! don’t I know it’s difficult!” cried Sir Richmond in the tone of one who swears. “Don’t I know that perhaps it’s impossible! But it’s the only way to do it. Therefore, I say, let’s try to get it done. And everybody says, difficult, difficult, and nobody lifts a finger to try. And the only real difficulty is that everybody for one reason or another says that it’s difficult. It’s against human nature. Granted! Every decent thing is. It’s socialism. Who cares? Along this line of

comprehensive scientific control the world has to go or it will retrogress, it will muddle and rot....”

“I agree,” said Dr. Martineau.

“So I want a report to admit that distinctly. I want it to go further than that. I want to get the beginnings, the germ, of a world administration. I want to set up a permanent world commission of scientific men and economists — with powers, just as considerable powers as I can give them — they’ll be feeble powers at the best — but still some sort of SAY in the whole fuel supply of the world. A say — that may grow at last to a control. A right to collect reports and receive accounts for example, to begin with. And then the right to make recommendations.... You see?... No, the international part is not the most difficult part of it. But my beastly owners and their beastly lawyers won’t relinquish a scrap of what they call their freedom of action. And my labour men, because I’m a fairly big coal owner myself, sit and watch and suspect me, too stupid to grasp what I am driving at and too incompetent to get out a scheme of their own. They want a world control on scientific lines even less than the owners. They try to think that fuel production can carry an unlimited wages bill and the owners try to think that it can pay unlimited profits, and when I say; ‘This business is something more than a scramble for profits and wages; it’s a service and a common interest,’ they stare at me—” Sir Richmond was at a loss for an image. “Like a committee in a thieves’ kitchen when someone has casually mentioned the law.”

“But will you ever get your Permanent Commission?”

“It can be done. If I can stick it out.”

“But with the whole Committee against you!”

“The curious thing is that the whole Committee isn’t against me. Every individual is....”

Sir Richmond found it difficult to express. “The psychology of my Committee ought to interest you.... It is probably a fair sample of the way all sorts of things are going nowadays. It’s curious.... There is not a man on that Committee who is quite comfortable within himself about the particular individual end he is there to serve. It’s there I get them. They pursue their own ends bitterly and obstinately I admit, but they are bitter and obstinate because they pursue them

against an internal opposition — which is on my side. They are terrified to think, if once they stopped fighting me, how far they might not have to go with me."

"A suppressed world conscience in fact. This marches very closely with my own ideas."

"A world conscience? World conscience? I don't know. But I do know that there is this drive in nearly every member of the Committee, some drive anyhow, towards the decent thing. It is the same drive that drives me. But I am the most driven. It has turned me round. It hasn't turned them. I go East and they go West. And they don't want to be turned round. Tremendously, they don't."

"Creative undertow," said Dr. Martineau, making notes, as it were. "An increasing force in modern life. In the psychology of a new age strengthened by education — it may play a directive part."

"They fight every little point. But, you see, because of this creative undertow — if you like to call it that — we do get along. I am leader or whipper-in, it is hard to say which, of a bolting flock....I believe they will report for a permanent world commission; I believe I have got them up to that; but they will want to make it a bureau of this League of Nations, and I have the profoundest distrust of this League of Nations. It may turn out to be a sort of side-tracking arrangement for all sorts of important world issues. And they will find they have to report for some sort of control. But there again they will shy. They will report for it and then they will do their utmost to whittle it down again. They will refuse it the most reasonable powers. They will alter the composition of the Committee so as to make it innocuous."

"How?"

"Get rid of the independent scientific men, load it up so far as Britain is concerned with muck of the colonial politician type and tame labour representatives, balance with shady new adventurer millionaires, get in still shadier stuff from abroad, let these gentry appoint their own tame experts after their own hearts, — experts who will make merely advisory reports, which will not be published...."

"They want in fact to keep the old system going under the cloak of YOUR Committee, reduced to a cloak and nothing more?"

"That is what it amounts to. They want to have the air of doing

right — indeed they do want to have the FEEL of doing right — and still leave things just exactly what they were before. And as I suffer under the misfortune of seeing the thing rather more clearly, I have to shepherd the conscience of the whole Committee.... But there is a conscience there. If I can hold out myself, I can hold the Committee."

He turned appealingly to the doctor. "Why should I have to be the conscience of that damned Committee? Why should I do this exhausting inhuman job?.... In their hearts these others know.... Only they won't know.... Why should it fall on me?"

"You have to go through with it," said Dr. Martineau.

"I have to go through with it, but it's a hell of utterly inglorious squabbling. They bait me. They have been fighting the same fight within themselves that they fight with me. They know exactly where I am, that I too am doing my job against internal friction. The one thing before all others that they want to do is to bring me down off my moral high horse. And I loathe the high horse. I am in a position of special moral superiority to men who are on the whole as good men as I am or better. That shows all the time. You see the sort of man I am. I've a broad streak of personal vanity. I fag easily. I'm short-tempered. I've other things, as you perceive. When I fag I become obtuse, I repeat and bore, I get viciously ill-tempered, I suffer from an intolerable sense of ill usage. Then that ass, Wagstaffe, who ought to be working with me steadily, sees his chance to be pleasantly witty. He gets a laugh round the table at my expense. Young Dent, the more intelligent of the labour men, reads me a lecture in committee manners. Old Cassidy sees HIS opening and jabs some ridiculous petty accusation at me and gets me spluttering self-defence like a fool. All my stock goes down, and as my stock goes down the chances of a good report dwindle. Young Dent grieves to see me injuring my own case. Too damned a fool to see what will happen to the report! You see if only they can convince themselves I am just a prig and an egotist and an impractical bore, they escape from a great deal more than my poor propositions. They escape from the doubt in themselves. By dismissing me they dismiss their own consciences. And then they can scamper off and be sensible little piggy-wigs and not bother any more about what is to

happen to mankind in the long run.... Do you begin to realize the sort of fight, upside down in a dustbin, that that Committee is for me?"

"You have to go through with it," Dr. Martineau repeated.

"I have. If I can. But I warn you I have been near breaking point. And if I tumble off the high horse, if I can't keep going regularly there to ride the moral high horse, that Committee will slump into utter scoundrelism. It will turn out a long, inconsistent, botched, unreadable report that will back up all sorts of humbugging bargains and sham settlements. It will contain some half-baked scheme to pacify the miners at the expense of the general welfare. It won't even succeed in doing that. But in the general confusion old Cassidy will get away with a series of hauls that may run into millions. Which will last his time — damn him! And that is where we are.... Oh! I know! I know!.... I must do this job. I don't need any telling that my life will be nothing and mean nothing unless I bring this thing through....

"But the thanklessness of playing this lone hand!"

The doctor watched his friend's resentful black silhouette against the lights on the steely river, and said nothing for awhile.

"Why did I ever undertake to play it?" Sir Richmond appealed. "Why has it been put upon me? Seeing what a poor thing I am, why am I not a poor thing altogether?"

Section 8

"I think I understand that loneliness of yours, said the doctor after an interval.

"I am INTOLERABLE to myself."

"And I think it explains why it is that you turn to women as you do. You want help; you want reassurance. And you feel they can give it."

"I wonder if it has been quite like that," Sir Richmond reflected.

By an effort Dr. Martineau refrained from mentioning the mother complex. "You want help and reassurance as a child does," he said. "Women and women alone seem capable of giving that, of telling you that you are surely right, that notwithstanding your blunders you are right; that even when you are wrong it doesn't so much matter,

you are still in spirit right. They can show their belief in you as no man can. With all their being they can do that."

"Yes, I suppose they could."

"They can. You have said already that women are necessary to make things real for you."

"Not my work," said Sir Richmond. "I admit that it might be like that, but it isn't like that. It has not worked out like that. The two drives go on side by side in me. They have no logical connexion. All I can say is that for me, with my bifid temperament, one makes a rest from the other, and is so far refreshment and a renewal of energy. But I do not find women coming into my work in any effectual way."

The doctor reflected further. "I suppose," he began and stopped short.

He heard Sir Richmond move in his chair, creaking an interrogation.

"You have never," said the doctor, "turned to the idea of God?"

Sir Richmond grunted and made no other answer for the better part of a minute.

As Dr. Martineau waited for his companion to speak, a falling star streaked the deep blue above them.

"I can't believe in a God," said Sir Richmond.

"Something after the fashion of a God," said the doctor insidiously.

"No," said Sir Richmond. "Nothing that reassures."

"But this loneliness, this craving for companionship...."

"We have all been through that," said Sir Richmond. "We have all in our time lain very still in the darkness with our souls crying out for the fellowship of God, demanding some sign, some personal response. The faintest feeling of assurance would have satisfied us."

"And there has never been a response?"

"Have YOU ever had a response?"

"Once I seemed to have a feeling of exaltation and security."

"Well?"

"Perhaps I only persuaded myself that I had. I had been reading William James on religious experiences and I was thinking very much of Conversion. I tried to experience Conversion...."

"Yes?"

“It faded.”

“It always fades,” said Sir Richmond with anger in his voice. “I wonder how many people there are nowadays who have passed through this last experience of ineffectual invocation, this appeal to the fading shadow of a vanished God. In the night. In utter loneliness. Answer me! Speak to me! Does he answer? In the silence you hear the little blood vessels whisper in your ears. You see a faint glow of colour on the darkness....”

Dr. Martineau sat without a word.

“I can believe that over all things Righteousness rules. I can believe that. But Righteousness is not friendliness nor mercy nor comfort nor any such dear and intimate things. This cuddling up to Righteousness! It is a dream, a delusion and a phase. I’ve tried all that long ago. I’ve given it up long ago. I’ve grown out of it. Men do — after forty. Our souls were made in the squatting-place of the submen of ancient times. They are made out of primitive needs and they die before our bodies as those needs are satisfied. Only young people have souls, complete. The need for a personal God, feared but reassuring, is a youth’s need. I no longer fear the Old Man nor want to propitiate the Old Man nor believe he matters any more. I’m a bit of an Old Man myself I discover. Yes. But the other thing still remains.”

“The Great Mother of the Gods,” said Dr. Martineau — still clinging to his theories.

“The need of the woman,” said Sir Richmond. “I want mating because it is my nature to mate. I want fellowship because I am a social animal and I want it from another social animal. Not from any God — any inconceivable God. Who fades and disappears. No....

“Perhaps that other need will fade presently. I do not know. Perhaps it lasts as long as life does. How can I tell?”

He was silent for a little while. Then his voice sounded in the night, as if he spoke to himself. “But as for the God of All Things consoling and helping! Imagine it! That up there — having fellowship with me! I would as soon think of cooling my throat with the Milky Way or shaking hands with those stars.”

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

IN THE LAND OF THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLES

Section 1

A gust of confidence on the part of a person naturally or habitually reserved will often be followed by a phase of recoil. At breakfast next morning their overnight talk seemed to both Sir Richmond and Dr. Martineau like something each had dreamt about the other, a quite impossible excess of intimacy. They discussed the weather, which seemed to be settling down to the utmost serenity of which the English spring is capable, they talked of Sir Richmond's coming car and of the possible routes before them. Sir Richmond produced the Michelin maps which he had taken out of the pockets of the little Charmeuse. The Bath Road lay before them, he explained, Reading, Newbury, Hungerford, Marlborough, Silbury Hill which overhangs Avebury. Both travellers discovered a common excitement at the mention of Avebury and Silbury Hill. Both took an intelligent interest in archaeology. Both had been greatly stimulated by the recent work of Elliot Smith and Rivers upon what was then known as the Heliolithic culture. It had revived their interest in Avebury and Stonehenge. The doctor moreover had been reading Hippisley Cox's GREEN ROADS OF ENGLAND.

Neither gentleman had ever seen Avebury, but Dr. Martineau had once visited Stonehenge.

"Avebury is much the oldest," said the doctor. "They must have made Silbury Hill long before 2000 B.C. It may be five thousand years old or even more. It is the most important historical relic in the British Isles. And the most neglected."

They exchanged archaeological facts. The secret places of the heart rested until the afternoon.

Then Sir Richmond saw fit to amplify his confessions in one particular.

Section 2

The doctor and his patient had discovered a need for exercise as the morning advanced. They had walked by the road to Marlow and had lunched at a riverside inn, returning after a restful hour in an arbour on the lawn of this place to tea at Maidenhead. It was as they returned that Sir Richmond took up the thread of their overnight conversation again.

"In the night," he said, "I was thinking over the account I tried to give you of my motives. A lot of it was terribly out of drawing."

"Facts?" asked the doctor.

"No, the facts were all right. It was the atmosphere, the proportions.... I don't know if I gave you the effect of something Don Juanesque?..."

"Vulgar poem," said the doctor remarkably. "I discounted that."

"Vulgar!"

"Intolerable. Byron in sexual psychology is like a stink in a kitchen."

Sir Richmond perceived he had struck upon the sort of thing that used to be called a pet aversion.

"I don't want you to think that I run about after women in an habitual and systematic manner. Or that I deliberately hunt them in the interests of my work and energy. Your questions had set me theorizing about myself. And I did my best to improvise a scheme of motives yesterday. It was, I perceive, a jerry-built scheme, run up at short notice. My nocturnal reflections convinced me of that. I put reason into things that are essentially instinctive. The truth is that the wanderings of desire have no single drive. All sorts of motives come in, high and low, down to sheer vulgar imitativeness and competitiveness. What was true in it all was this, that a man with any imagination in a fatigue phase falls naturally into these complications because they are more attractive to his type and far easier and more refreshing to the mind, at the outset, than anything else. And they do work a sort of recovery in him, They send him back to his work refreshed — so far, that is, as his work is concerned."

"At the OUTSET they are easier," said the doctor.

Sir Richmond laughed. "When one is fagged it is only the outset counts. The more tired one is the more readily one moves along the line of least resistance....

“That is one footnote to what I said. So far as the motive of my work goes, I think we got something like the spirit of it. What I said about that was near the truth of things....

“But there is another set of motives altogether,” Sir Richmond went on with an air of having cleared the ground for his real business, “that I didn’t go into at all yesterday.”

He considered. “It arises out of these other affairs. Before you realize it your affections are involved. I am a man much swayed by my affections.”

Mr. Martineau glanced at him. There was a note of genuine self-reproach in Sir Richmond’s voice.

“I get fond of people. It is quite irrational, but I get fond of them. Which is quite a different thing from the admiration and excitement of falling in love. Almost the opposite thing. They cry or they come some mental or physical cropper and hurt themselves, or they do something distressingly little and human and suddenly I find they’ve GOT me. I’m distressed. I’m filled with something between pity and an impulse of responsibility. I become tender towards them. I am impelled to take care of them. I want to ease them off, to reassure them, to make them stop hurting at any cost. I don’t see why it should be the weak and sickly and seamy side of people that grips me most, but it is. I don’t know why it should be their failures that gives them power over me, but it is. I told you of this girl, this mistress of mine, who is ill just now. SHE’S got me in that way; she’s got me tremendously.”

“You did not speak of her yesterday with any morbid excess of pity,” the doctor was constrained to remark.

“I abused her very probably. I forget exactly what I said....”

The doctor offered no assistance.

“But the reason why I abuse her is perfectly plain. I abuse her because she distresses me by her misfortunes and instead of my getting anything out of her, I go out to her. But I DO go out to her. All this time at the back of my mind I am worrying about her. She has that gift of making one feel for her. I am feeling that damned carbuncle almost as if it had been my affair instead of hers.

“That carbuncle has made me suffer FRIGHTFULLY.... Why should I? It isn’t mine.”

He regarded the doctor earnestly. The doctor controlled a strong desire to laugh.

"I suppose the young lady—" he began.

"Oh! SHE puts in suffering all right. I've no doubt about that.

"I suppose," Sir Richmond went on, "now that I have told you so much of this affair, I may as well tell you all. It is a sort of comedy, a painful comedy, of irrelevant affections."

The doctor was prepared to be a good listener. Facts he would always listen to; it was only when people told him their theories that he would interrupt with his "Exactly."

"This young woman is a person of considerable genius. I don't know if you have seen in the illustrated papers a peculiar sort of humorous illustrations usually with a considerable amount of bite in them over the name of Martin Leeds?

"Extremely amusing stuff."

"It is that Martin Leeds. I met her at the beginning of her career. She talks almost as well as she draws. She amused me immensely. I'm not the sort of man who waylays and besieges women and girls. I'm not the pursuing type. But I perceived that in some odd way I attracted her and I was neither wise enough nor generous enough not to let the thing develop."

"H'm," said Dr. Martineau.

"I'd never had to do with an intellectually brilliant woman before. I see now that the more imaginative force a woman has, the more likely she is to get into a state of extreme self-abandonment with any male thing upon which her imagination begins to crystallize. Before I came along she'd mixed chiefly with a lot of young artists and students, all doing nothing at all except talk about the things they were going to do. I suppose I profited by the contrast, being older and with my hands full of affairs. Perhaps something had happened that had made her recoil towards my sort of thing. I don't know. But she just let herself go at me."

"And you?"

"Let myself go too. I'd never met anything like her before. It was her wit took me. It didn't occur to me that she wasn't my contemporary and as able as I was. As able to take care of herself. All sorts of considerations that I should have shown to a sillier

woman I never dreamt of showing to her. I had never met anyone so mentally brilliant before or so helpless and headlong. And so here we are on each other's hands!"

"But the child?

"It happened to us. For four years now things have just happened to us. All the time I have been overworking, first at explosives and now at this fuel business. She too is full of her work.

"Nothing stops that though everything seems to interfere with it. And in a distraught, preoccupied way we are abominably fond of each other. 'Fond' is the word. But we are both too busy to look after either ourselves or each other.

"She is much more incapable than I am," said Sir Richmond as if he delivered a weighed and very important judgment.

"You see very much of each other?"

"She has a flat in Chelsea and a little cottage in South Cornwall, and we sometimes snatch a few days together, away somewhere in Surrey or up the Thames or at such a place as Southend where one is lost in a crowd of inconspicuous people. Then things go well — they usually go well at the start — we are glorious companions. She is happy, she is creative, she will light up a new place with flashes of humour, with a keenness of appreciation...."

"But things do not always go well?"

"Things," said Sir Richmond with the deliberation of a man who measures his words, "are apt to go wrong.... At the flat there is constant trouble with the servants; they bully her. A woman is more entangled with servants than a man. Women in that position seem to resent the work and freedom of other women. Her servants won't leave her in peace as they would leave a man; they make trouble for her.... And when we have had a few days anywhere away, even if nothing in particular has gone wrong—"

Sir Richmond stopped short.

"When they go wrong it is generally her fault," the doctor sounded.

"Almost always."

"But if they don't?" said the psychiatrist.

"It is difficult to describe.... The essential incompatibility of the whole thing comes out."

The doctor maintained his expression of intelligent interest.

“She wants to go on with her work. She is able to work anywhere. All she wants is just cardboard and ink. My mind on the other hand turns back to the Fuel Commission....”

“Then any little thing makes trouble.”

“Any little thing makes trouble. And we always drift round to the same discussion; whether we ought really to go on together.”

“It is you begin that?”

“Yes, I start that. You see she is perfectly contented when I am about. She is as fond of me as I am of her.”

“Fonder perhaps.”

“I don’t know. But she is — adhesive. Emotionally adhesive. All she wants to do is just to settle down when I am there and go on with her work. But then, you see, there is MY work.”

“Exactly.... After all it seems to me that your great trouble is not in yourselves but in social institutions. Which haven’t yet fitted themselves to people like you two. It is the sense of uncertainty makes her, as you say, adhesive. Nervously so. If we were indeed living in a new age Instead of the moral ruins of a shattered one—”

“We can’t alter the age we live in,” said Sir Richmond a little testily.

“No. Exactly. But we CAN realize, in any particular situation, that it is not the individuals to blame but the misfit of ideas and forms and prejudices.”

“No,” said Sir Richmond, obstinately rejecting this pacifying suggestion; “she could adapt herself. If she cared enough.”

“But how?”

“She will not take the slightest trouble to adjust herself to the peculiarities of our position.... She could be cleverer. Other women are cleverer. Any other woman almost would be cleverer than she is.”

“But if she was cleverer, she wouldn’t be the genius she is. She would just be any other woman.”

“Perhaps she would,” said Sir Richmond darkly and desperately. “Perhaps she would. Perhaps it would be better if she was.”

Dr. Martineau raised his eyebrows in a furtive aside.

“But here you see that it is that in my case, the fundamental

incompatibility between one's affections and one's wider conception of duty and work comes in. We cannot change social institutions in a year or a lifetime. We can never change them to suit an individual case. That would be like suspending the laws of gravitation in order to move a piano. As things are, Martin is no good to me, no help to me. She is a rival to my duty. She feels that. She is hostile to my duty. A definite antagonism has developed. She feels and treats fuel — and everything to do with fuel as a bore. It is an attack. We quarrel on that. It isn't as though I found it so easy to stick to my work that I could disregard her hostility. And I can't bear to part from her. I threaten it, distress her excessively and then I am overcome by sympathy for her and I go back to her.... In the ordinary course of things I should be with her now."

"If it were not for the carbuncle?"

"If it were not for the carbuncle. She does not care for me to see her disfigured. She does not understand—" Sir Richmond was at a loss for a phrase— "that it is not her good looks."

"She won't let you go to her?"

"It amounts to that.... And soon there will be all the trouble about educating the girl. Whatever happens, she must have as good a chance as — anyone...."

"Ah! That is worrying you too!"

"Frightfully at times. If it were a boy it would be easier. It needs constant tact and dexterity to fix things up. Neither of us have any. It needs attention...."

Sir Richmond mused darkly.

Dr. Martineau thought aloud. "An incompetent delightful person with Martin Leeds's sense of humour. And her powers of expression. She must be attractive to many people. She could probably do without you. If once you parted."

Sir Richmond turned on him eagerly.

"You think I ought to part from her? On her account?"

"On her account. It might pain her. But once the thing was done —"

"I want to part. I believe I ought to part."

"Well?"

"But then my affection comes in."

“That extraordinary — TENDERNESS of yours?”

“I’m afraid.”

“Of what?”

“Anyone might get hold of her — if I let her down. She hasn’t a tithe of the ordinary coolheaded calculation of an average woman.... I’ve a duty to her genius. I’ve got to take care of her.”

To which the doctor made no reply.

“Nevertheless the idea of parting has been very much in my mind lately.”

“Letting her go FREE?”

“You can put it in that way if you like.”

“It might not be a fatal operation for either of you.”

“And yet there are moods when parting is an intolerable idea. When one is invaded by a flood of affection..... And old habits of association.”

Dr. Martineau thought. Was that the right word, — affection? Perhaps it was.

They had come out on the towing path close by the lock and they found themselves threading their way through a little crowd of boating people and lookers-on. For a time their conversation was broken. Sir Richmond resumed it.

“But this is where we cease to be Man on his Planet and all the rest of it. This is where the idea of a definite task, fanatically followed to the exclusion of all minor considerations, breaks down. When the work is good, when we are sure we are all right, then we may carry off things with a high hand. But the work isn’t always good, we aren’t always sure. We blunder, we make a muddle, we are fatigued. Then the sacrificed affections come in as accusers. Then it is that we want to be reassured.”

“And then it is that Miss Martin Leeds — ?”

“Doesn’t,” Sir Richmond snapped.

Came a long pause.

“And yet — It is extraordinarily difficult to think of parting from Martin.”

Section 3

In the evening after dinner Dr. Martineau sought, rather unsuccessfully, to go on with the analysis of Sir Richmond.

But Sir Richmond was evidently a creature of moods. Either he regretted the extent of his confidences or the slight irrational irritation that he felt at waiting for his car affected his attitude towards his companion, or Dr. Martineau's tentatives were ill-chosen. At any rate he would not rise to any conversational bait that the doctor could devise. The doctor found this the more regrettable because it seemed to him that there was much to be worked upon in this Martin Leeds affair. He was inclined to think that she and Sir Richmond were unduly obsessed by the idea that they had to stick together because of the child, because of the look of the thing and so forth, and that really each might be struggling against a very strong impulse indeed to break off the affair. It seemed evident to the doctor that they jarred upon and annoyed each other extremely. On the whole separating people appealed to a doctor's mind more strongly than bringing them together. Accordingly he framed his enquiries so as to make the revelation of a latent antipathy as easy as possible.

He made several not very well-devised beginnings. At the fifth Sir Richmond was suddenly conclusive. "It's no use," he said, "I can't fiddle about any more with my motives to-day."

An awkward silence followed. On reflection Sir Richmond seemed to realize that this sentence needed some apology. "I admit," he said, "that this expedition has already been a wonderfully good thing for me. These confessions have made me look into all sorts of things — squarely. But — I'm not used to talking about myself or even thinking directly about myself. What I say, I afterwards find disconcerting to recall. I want to alter it. I can feel myself wallowing into a mess of modifications and qualifications."

"Yes, but—"

"I want a rest anyhow...."

There was nothing for Dr. Martineau to say to that.

The two gentlemen smoked for some time in a slightly uncomfortable silence. Dr. Martineau cleared his throat twice and lit a second cigar. They then agreed to admire the bridge and think well of Maidenhead. Sir Richmond communicated hopeful news about his car, which was to arrive the next morning before ten — he'd just ring

the fellow up presently to make sure — and Dr. Martineau retired early and went rather thoughtfully to bed. The spate of Sir Richmond's confidences, it was evident, was over.

Section 4

Sir Richmond's car arrived long before ten, brought down by a young man in a state of scared alacrity — Sir Richmond had done some vigorous telephoning before turning in, — the Charmeuse set off in a repaired and chastened condition to town, and after a leisurely breakfast our two investigators into the springs of human conduct were able to resume their westward journey. They ran through scattered Twyford with its pleasant looking inns and through the commonplace urbanities of Reading, by Newbury and Hungerford's pretty bridge and up long wooded slopes to Savernake forest, where they found the road heavy and dusty, still in its war-time state, and so down a steep hill to the wide market street which is Marlborough. They lunched in Marlborough and went on in the afternoon to Silbury Hill, that British pyramid, the largest artificial mound in Europe. They left the car by the roadside and clambered to the top and were very learned and inconclusive about the exact purpose of this vast heap of chalk and earth, this heap that men had made before the temples at Karnak were built or Babylon had a name.

Then they returned to the car and ran round by a winding road into the wonder of Avebury. They found a clean little inn there kept by pleasant people, and they garaged the car in the cowshed and took two rooms for the night that they might the better get the atmosphere of the ancient place. Wonderful indeed it is, a vast circumvallation that was already two thousand years old before the dawn of British history; a great wall of earth with its ditch most strangely on its inner and not on its outer side; and within this enclosure gigantic survivors of the great circles of unhewn stone that, even as late as Tudor days, were almost complete. A whole village, a church, a pretty manor house have been built, for the most part, out of the ancient megaliths; the great wall is sufficient to embrace them all with their gardens and paddocks; four cross-roads meet at the village centre. There are

drawings of Avebury before these things arose there, when it was a lonely wonder on the plain, but for the most part the destruction was already done before the MAYFLOWER sailed. To the southward stands the cone of Silbury Hill; its shadow creeps up and down the intervening meadows as the seasons change. Around this lonely place rise the Downs, now bare sheep pastures, in broad undulations, with a wart-like barrow here and there, and from it radiate, creeping up to gain and hold the crests of the hills, the abandoned trackways of that forgotten world. These trackways, these green roads of England, these roads already disused when the Romans made their highway past Silbury Hill to Bath, can still be traced for scores of miles through the land, running to Salisbury and the English Channel, eastward to the crossing at the Straits and westward to Wales, to ferries over the Severn, and southwestward into Devon and Cornwall.

The doctor and Sir Richmond walked round the walls, surveyed the shadow cast by Silbury upon the river flats, strolled up the down to the northward to get a general view of the village, had tea and smoked round the walls again in the warm April sunset. The matter of their conversation remained prehistoric. Both were inclined to find fault with the archaeological work that had been done on the place. “Clumsy treasure hunting,” Sir Richmond said. “They bore into Silbury Hill and expect to find a mummified chief or something sensational of that sort, and they don’t, and they report nothing. They haven’t sifted finely enough; they haven’t thought subtly enough. These walls of earth ought to tell what these people ate, what clothes they wore, what woods they used. Was this a sheep land then as it is now, or a cattle land? Were these hills covered by forests? I don’t know. These archaeologists don’t know. Or if they do they haven’t told me, which is just as bad. I don’t believe they know.

“What trade came here along these tracks? So far as I know, they had no beasts of burthen. But suppose one day someone were to find a potsherd here from early Knossos, or a fragment of glass from Pepi’s Egypt.”

The place had stirred up his imagination. He wrestled with his ignorance as if he thought that by talking he might presently worry out some picture of this forgotten world, without metals, without

beasts of burthen, without letters, without any sculpture that has left a trace, and yet with a sense of astronomical fact clear enough to raise the great gnomon of Silbury, and with a social system complex enough to give the large and orderly community to which the size of Avebury witnesses and the traffic to which the green roads testify.

The doctor had not realized before the boldness and liveliness of his companion's mind. Sir Richmond insisted that the climate must have been moister and milder in those days; he covered all the downlands with woods, as Savernake was still covered; beneath the trees he restored a thicker, richer soil. These people must have done an enormous lot with wood. This use of stones here was a freak. It was the very strangeness of stones here that had made them into sacred things. One thought too much of the stones of the Stone Age. Who would carve these lumps of quartzite when one could carve good oak? Or beech — a most carvable wood. Especially when one's sharpest chisel was a flint. "It's wood we ought to look for," said Sir Richmond. "Wood and fibre." He declared that these people had their tools of wood, their homes of wood, their gods and perhaps their records of wood. "A peat bog here, even a few feet of clay, might have pickled some precious memoranda.... No such luck.... Now in Glastonbury marshes one found the life of the early iron age — half way to our own times — quite beautifully pickled."

Though they wrestled mightily with the problem, neither Sir Richmond nor the doctor could throw a gleam of light upon the riddle why the ditch was inside and not outside the great wall.

"And what was our Mind like in those days?" said Sir Richmond. "That, I suppose, is what interests you. A vivid childish mind, I guess, with not a suspicion as yet that it was Man ruling his Planet or anything of that sort."

The doctor pursed his lips. "None," he delivered judicially. "If one were able to recall one's childhood — at the age of about twelve or thirteen — when the artistic impulse so often goes into abeyance and one begins to think in a troubled, monstrous way about God and Hell, one might get something like the mind of this place."

"Thirteen. You put them at that already?... These people, you think, were religious?"

"Intensely. In that personal way that gives death a nightmare

terror. And as for the fading of the artistic impulse, they've left not a trace of the paintings and drawings and scratchings of the Old Stone people who came before them."

"Adults with the minds of thirteen-year-old children. Thirteen-year-old children with the strength of adults — and no one to slap them or tell them not to.... After all, they probably only thought of death now and then. And they never thought of fuel. They supposed there was no end to that. So they used up their woods and kept goats to nibble and kill the new undergrowth. DID these people have goats?"

"I don't know," said the doctor. "So little is known."

"Very like children they must have been. The same unending days. They must have thought that the world went on for ever-just as they knew it — like my damned Committee does.... With their fuel wasting away and the climate changing imperceptibly, century by century.... Kings and important men followed one another here for centuries and centuries.... They had lost their past and had no idea of any future.. .. They had forgotten how they came into the land... When I was a child I believed that my father's garden had been there for ever....

"This is very like trying to remember some game one played when one was a child. It is like coming on something that one built up with bricks and stones in some forgotten part of the garden...."

"The life we lived here," said the doctor, "has left its traces in traditions, in mental predispositions, in still unanalyzed fundamental ideas."

"Archaeology is very like remembering," said Sir Richmond. "Presently we shall remember a lot more about all this. We shall remember what it was like to live in this place, and the long journey hither, age by age out of the south. We shall remember the sacrifices we made and the crazy reasons why we made them. We sowed our corn in blood here. We had strange fancies about the stars. Those we brought with us out of the south where the stars are brighter. And what like were those wooden gods of ours? I don't remember.... But I could easily persuade myself that I had been here before."

They stood on the crest of the ancient wall and the setting sun cast long shadows of them athwart a field of springing wheat.

“Perhaps we shall come here again,” the doctor carried on Sir Richmond’s fancy; “after another four thousand years or so, with different names and fuller minds. And then I suppose that this ditch won’t be the riddle it is now.”

“Life didn’t seem so complicated then,” Sir Richmond mused. “Our muddles were unconscious. We drifted from mood to mood and forgot. There was more sunshine then, more laughter perhaps, and blacker despair. Despair like the despair of children that can weep itself to sleep.... It’s over.... Was it battle and massacre that ended that long afternoon here? Or did the woods catch fire some exceptionally dry summer, leaving black hills and famine? Or did strange men bring a sickness — measles, perhaps, or the black death? Or was it cattle pest? Or did we just waste our woods and dwindle away before the new peoples that came into the land across the southern sea? I can’t remember....”

Sir Richmond turned about. “I would like to dig up the bottom of this ditch here foot by foot — and dry the stuff and sift it — very carefully.... Then I might begin to remember things.”

Section 5

In the evening, after a pleasant supper, they took a turn about the walls with the moon sinking over beyond Silbury, and then went in and sat by lamplight before a brightly fussy wood fire and smoked. There were long intervals of friendly silence.

“I don’t in the least want to go on talking about myself,” said Sir Richmond abruptly.

“Let it rest then,” said the doctor generously.

“To-day, among these ancient memories, has taken me out of myself wonderfully. I can’t tell you how good Avebury has been for me. This afternoon half my consciousness has seemed to be a tattooed creature wearing a knife of stone....”

“The healing touch of history.”

“And for the first time my damned Committee has mattered scarcely a rap.”

Sir Richmond stretched himself in his chair and blinked cheerfully at his cigar smoke.

“Nevertheless,” he said, “this confessional business of yours has been an excellent exercise. It has enabled me to get outside myself, to look at myself as a Case. Now I can even see myself as a remote Case. That I needn’t bother about further.... So far as that goes, I think we have done all that there is to be done.”

“I shouldn’t say that — quite — yet,” said the doctor.

“I don’t think I’m a subject for real psychoanalysis at all. I’m not an overlaid sort of person. When I spread myself out there is not much indication of a suppressed wish or of anything masked or buried of that sort. What you get is a quite open and recognized discord of two sets of motives.”

The doctor considered. “Yes, I think that is true. Your LIBIDO is, I should say, exceptionally free. Generally you are doing what you want to do — overdoing, in fact, what you want to do and getting simply tired.”

“Which is the theory I started with. I am a case of fatigue under irritating circumstances with very little mental complication or concealment.”

“Yes,” said the doctor. “I agree. You are not a case for psychoanalysis, strictly speaking, at all. You are in open conflict with yourself, upon moral and social issues. Practically open. Your problems are problems of conscious conduct.”

“As I said.”

“Of what renunciations you have consciously to make.”

Sir Richmond did not answer that....

“This pilgrimage of ours,” he said, presently, “has made for magnanimity. This day particularly has been a good day. When we stood on this old wall here in the sunset I seemed to be standing outside myself in an immense still sphere of past and future. I stood with my feet upon the Stone Age and saw myself four thousand years away, and all my distresses as very little incidents in that perspective. Away there in London the case is altogether different; after three hours or so of the Committee one concentrates into one little inflamed moment of personality. There is no past any longer, there is no future, there is only the rankling dispute. For all those three hours, perhaps, I have been thinking of just what I had to say, just how I had to say it, just how I looked while I said it, just how much I was

making myself understood, how I might be misunderstood, how I might be misrepresented, challenged, denied. One draws in more and more as one is used up. At last one is reduced to a little, raw, bleeding, desperately fighting, pin-point of SELF.... One goes back to one's home unable to recover. Fighting it over again. All night sometimes.... I get up and walk about the room and curse.... Martineau, how is one to get the Avebury frame of mind to Westminster?"

"When Westminster is as dead as Avebury," said the doctor, unhelpfully. He added after some seconds, "Milton knew of these troubles. 'Not without dust and heat' he wrote — a great phrase."

"But the dust chokes me," said Sir Richmond.

He took up a copy of THE GREEN ROADS OF ENGLAND that lay beside him on the table. But he did not open it. He held it in his hand and said the thing he had had in mind to say all that evening. "I do not think that I shall stir up my motives any more for a time. Better to go on into the west country cooling my poor old brain in these wide shadows of the past."

"I can prescribe nothing better," said Dr. Martineau. "Incidentally, we may be able to throw a little more light on one or two of your minor entanglements."

"I don't want to think of them," said Sir Richmond. "Let me get right away from everything. Until my skin has grown again."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE ENCOUNTER AT STONEHENGE

Section 1

Next day in the early afternoon after a farewell walk over the downs round Avebury they went by way of Devizes and Netheravon and Amesbury to Stonehenge.

Dr. Martineau had seen this ancient monument before, but now, with Avebury fresh in his mind, he found it a poorer thing than he had remembered it to be. Sir Richmond was frankly disappointed. After the real greatness and mystery of the older place, it seemed a poor little heap of stones; it did not even dominate the landscape; it was some way from the crest of the swelling down on which it stood and it was further dwarfed by the colossal air-ship hangars and clustering offices of the air station that the great war had called into existence upon the slopes to the south-west. “It looks,” Sir Richmond said, “as though some old giantess had left a discarded set of teeth on the hillside.” Far more impressive than Stonehenge itself were the barrows that capped the neighbouring crests.

The sacred stones were fenced about, and our visitors had to pay for admission at a little kiosk by the gate. At the side of the road stood a travel-stained middle-class automobile, with a miscellany of dusty luggage, rugs and luncheon things therein — a family automobile with father no doubt at the wheel. Sir Richmond left his own trim coupe at its tail.

They were impeded at the entrance by a difference of opinion between the keeper of the turnstile and a small but resolute boy of perhaps five or six who proposed to leave the enclosure. The custodian thought that it would be better if his nurse or his mother came out with him.

“She keeps on looking at it,” said the small boy. “It isunt anything. I want to go and clean the car.”

“You won’t SEE Stonehenge every day, young man,” said the custodian, a little piqued.

“It’s only an old beach,” said the small boy, with extreme conviction. “It’s rocks like the seaside. And there isunt no sea.”

The man at the turnstile mutely consulted the doctor.

“I don’t see that he can get into any harm here,” the doctor advised, and the small boy was released from archaeology.

He strolled to the family automobile, produced an EN-TOUT-CAS pocket-handkerchief and set himself to polish the lamps with great assiduity. The two gentlemen lingered at the turnstile for a moment or so to watch his proceedings. “Modern child,” said Sir Richmond. “Old stones are just old stones to him. But motor cars are gods.”

“You can hardly expect him to understand — at his age,” said the custodian, jealous for the honor of Stonehenge....

“Reminds me of Martin’s little girl,” said Sir Richmond, as he and Dr. Martineau went on towards the circle. “When she encountered her first dragon-fly she was greatly delighted. ‘Oh, dee’ lill’ a’eplane,’ she said.”

As they approached the grey old stones they became aware of a certain agitation among them. A voice, an authoritative bass voice, was audible, crying, “Anthony!” A nurse appeared remotely going in the direction of the aeroplane sheds, and her cry of “Master Anthony” came faintly on the breeze. An extremely pretty young woman of five or six and twenty became visible standing on one of the great prostrate stones in the centre of the place. She was a black-haired, sun-burnt individual and she stood with her arms akimbo, quite frankly amused at the disappearance of Master Anthony, and offering no sort of help for his recovery. On the greensward before her stood the paterfamilias of the family automobile, and he was making a trumpet with his hands in order to repeat the name of Anthony with greater effect. A short lady in grey emerged from among the encircling megaliths, and one or two other feminine personalities produced effects of movement rather than of individuality as they flitted among the stones. “Well,” said the lady in grey, with that rising intonation of humorous conclusion which is so distinctively American, “those Druids have GOT him.”

“He’s hiding,” said the automobilist, in a voice that promised chastisement to a hidden hearer. “That’s what he is doing. He ought

not to play tricks like this. A great boy who is almost six."

"If you are looking for a small, resolute boy of six," said Sir Richmond, addressing himself to the lady on the rock rather than to the angry parent below, "he's perfectly safe and happy. The Druids haven't got him. Indeed, they've failed altogether to get him. 'Stonehenge,' he says, 'is no good.' So he's gone back to clean the lamps of your car."

"Aa-oo. So THAT'S it!" said Papa. "Winnie, go and tell Price he's gone back to the car.... They oughtn't to have let him out of the enclosure...."

The excitement about Master Anthony collapsed. The rest of the people in the circles crystallized out into the central space as two apparent sisters and an apparent aunt and the nurse, who was packed off at once to supervise the lamp cleaning. The head of the family found some difficulty, it would seem, in readjusting his mind to the comparative innocence of Anthony, and Sir Richmond and the young lady on the rock sought as if by common impulse to establish a general conversation. There were faint traces of excitement in her manner, as though there had been some controversial passage between herself and the family gentleman.

"We were discussing the age of this old place," she said, smiling in the frankest and friendliest way. "How old do YOU think it is?"

The father of Anthony intervened, also with a shadow of controversy in his manner. "I was explaining to the young lady that it dates from the early bronze age. Before chronology existed.... But she insists on dates."

"Nothing of bronze has ever been found here," said Sir Richmond.

"Well, when was this early bronze age, anyhow?" said the young lady.

Sir Richmond sought a recognizable datum. "Bronze got to Britain somewhere between the times of Moses and Solomon."

"Ah!" said the young lady, as who should say, 'This man at least talks sense.'

"But these stones are all shaped," said the father of the family. "It is difficult to see how that could have been done without something harder than stone."

“I don’t SEE the place,” said the young lady on the stone. “I can’t imagine how they did it up — not one bit.”

“Did it up!” exclaimed the father of the family in the tone of one accustomed to find a gentle sport in the intellectual frailties of his womenkind.

“It’s just the bones of a place. They hung things round it. They draped it.”

“But what things?” asked Sir Richmond.

“Oh! they had things all right. Skins perhaps. Mats of rushes. Bast cloth. Fibre of all sorts. Wadded stuff.”

“Stonehenge draped! It’s really a delightful idea;” said the father of the family, enjoying it.

“It’s quite a possible one,” said Sir Richmond.

“Or they may have used wicker,” the young lady went on, undismayed. She seemed to concede a point. “Wicker IS likelier.”

“But surely,” said the father of the family with the expostulatory voice and gesture of one who would recall erring wits to sanity, “it is far more impressive standing out bare and noble as it does. In lonely splendour.”

“But all this country may have been wooded then,” said Sir Richmond. “In which case it wouldn’t have stood out. It doesn’t stand out so very much even now.”

“You came to it through a grove,” said the young lady, eagerly picking up the idea.

“Probably beech,” said Sir Richmond.

“Which may have pointed to the midsummer sunrise,” said Dr. Martineau, unheeded.

“These are NOVEL ideas,” said the father of the family in the reproving tone of one who never allows a novel idea inside HIS doors if he can prevent it.

“Well,” said the young lady, “I guess there was some sort of show here anyhow. And no human being ever had a show yet without trying to shut people out of it in order to make them come in. I guess this was covered in all right. A dark hunched old place in a wood. Beech stems, smooth, like pillars. And they came to it at night, in procession, beating drums, and scared half out of their wits. They came in THERE and went round the inner circle with their torches.

And so they were shown. The torches were put out and the priests did their mysteries. Until dawn broke. That is how they worked it."

"But even you can't tell what the show was, V.V." said the lady in grey, who was standing now at Dr. Martineau's elbow.

"Something horrid," said Anthony's younger sister to her elder in a stage whisper.

"BLUGGY," agreed Anthony's elder sister to the younger, in a noiseless voice that certainly did not reach father. "SQUEALS!...."

This young lady who was addressed as "V.V." was perhaps one or two and twenty, Dr. Martineau thought, — he was not very good at feminine ages. She had a clear sun-browned complexion, with dark hair and smiling lips. Her features were finely modelled, with just that added touch of breadth in the brow and softness in the cheek bones, that faint flavour of the Amerindian, one sees at times in American women. Her voice was a very soft and pleasing voice, and she spoke persuasively and not assertively as so many American women do. Her determination to make the dry bones of Stonehenge live shamed the doctor's disappointment with the place. And when she had spoken, Dr. Martineau noted that she looked at Sir Richmond as if she expected him at least to confirm her vision. Sir Richmond was evidently prepared to confirm it.

With a queer little twinge of infringed proprietorship, the doctor saw Sir Richmond step up on the prostrate megalith and stand beside her, the better to appreciate her point of view. He smiled down at her. "Now why do you think they came in THERE?" he asked.

The young lady was not very clear about her directions. She did not know of the roadway running to the Avon river, nor of the alleged race course to the north, nor had she ever heard that the stones were supposed to be of two different periods and that some of them might possibly have been brought from a very great distance.

Section 2

Neither Dr. Martineau nor the father of the family found the imaginative reconstruction of the Stonehenge rituals quite so exciting as the two principals. The father of the family endured some further particulars with manifest impatience, no longer able, now that Sir

Richmond was encouraging the girl, to keep her in check with the slightly derisive smile proper to her sex. Then he proclaimed in a fine loud tenor, “All this is very imaginative, I’m afraid.” And to his family, “Time we were pressing on. Turps, we must go-o. Come, Phoebe!”

As he led his little flock towards the exit his voice came floating back. “Talking wanton nonsense.... Any professional archaeologist would laugh, simply laugh....”

He passed out of the world.

With a faint intimation of dismay Dr. Martineau realized that the two talkative ladies were not to be removed in the family automobile with the rest of the party. Sir Richmond and the younger lady went on very cheerfully to the population, agriculture, housing and general scenery of the surrounding Downland during the later Stone Age. The shorter, less attractive lady, whose accent was distinctly American, came now and stood at the doctor’s elbow. She seemed moved to play the part of chorus to the two upon the stone.

“When V.V. gets going,” she remarked, “she makes things come alive.”

Dr. Martineau hated to be addressed suddenly by strange ladies. He started, and his face assumed the distressed politeness of the moon at its full. “Your friend,” he said, “interested in archaeology?”

“Interested!” said the stouter lady. “Why! She’s a fiend at it. Ever since we came on Carnac.”

“You’ve visited Carnac?”

“That’s where the bug bit her.” said the stout lady with a note of querulous humour. “Directly V.V. set eyes on Carnac, she just turned against all her up-bringing. ‘Why wasn’t I told of this before?’ she said. ‘What’s Notre Dame to this? This is where we came from. This is the real starting point of the MAYFLOWER. Belinda,’ she said, ‘we’ve got to see all we can of this sort of thing before we go back to America. They’ve been keeping this from us.’ And that’s why we’re here right now instead of being shopping in Paris or London like decent American women.”

The younger lady looked down on her companion with something of the calm expert attention that a plumber gives to a tap that is misbehaving, and like a plumber refrained from precipitate action.

She stood with the backs of her hands resting on her hips.

"Well," she said slowly, giving most of the remark to Sir Richmond and the rest to the doctor. "It is nearer the beginnings of things than London or Paris."

"And nearer to us," said Sir Richmond.

"I call that just — paradoxical," said the shorter lady, who appeared to be called Belinda.

"Not paradoxical," Dr. Martineau contradicted gently. "Life is always beginning again. And this is a time of fresh beginnings."

"Now that's after V.V.'s own heart," cried the stout lady in grey. "She'll agree to all that. She's been saying it right across Europe. Rome, Paris, London; they're simply just done. They don't signify any more. They've got to be cleared away."

"You let me tell my own opinions, Belinda," said the young lady who was called V.V. "I said that if people went on building with fluted pillars and Corinthian capitals for two thousand years, it was time they were cleared up and taken away."

"Corinthian capitals?" Sir Richmond considered it and laughed cheerfully. "I suppose Europe does rather overdo that sort of thing."

"The way she went on about the Victor Emmanuele Monument!" said the lady who answered to the name of Belinda. "It gave me cold shivers to think that those Italian officers might understand English."

The lady who was called V.V. smiled as if she smiled at herself, and explained herself to Sir Richmond. "When one is travelling about, one gets to think of history and politics in terms of architecture. I do anyhow. And those columns with Corinthian capitals have got to be a sort of symbol for me for everything in Europe that I don't want and have no sort of use for. It isn't a bad sort of capital in its way, florid and pretty, but not a patch on the Doric; — and that a whole continent should come up to it and stick at it and never get past it!..."

"It's the classical tradition."

"It puzzles me."

"It's the Roman Empire. That Corinthian column is a weed spread by the Romans all over western Europe."

"And it smothers the history of Europe. You can't see Europe because of it. Europe is obsessed by Rome. Everywhere Marble

Arches and ARCS DE TRIOMPHE. You never get away from it. It is like some old gentleman who has lost his way in a speech and keeps on repeating the same thing. And can't sit down. 'The empire, gentlemen — the Empire. Empire.' Rome itself is perfectly frightful. It stares at you with its great round stupid arches as though it couldn't imagine that you could possibly want anything else for ever. Saint Peter's and that frightful Monument are just the same stuff as the Baths of Caracalla and the palaces of the Caesars. Just the same. They will make just the same sort of ruins. It goes on and goes on."

"AVE ROMA IMMORTALIS," said Dr. Martineau.

"This Roman empire seems to be Europe's first and last idea. A fixed idea. And such a poor idea!... America never came out of that. It's no good-telling me that it did. It escaped from it.... So I said to Belinda here, 'Let's burrow, if we can, under all this marble and find out what sort of people we were before this Roman empire and its acanthus weeds got hold of us.'"

"I seem to remember at Washington, something faintly Corinthian, something called the Capitol," Sir Richmond reflected. "And other buildings. A Treasury."

"That is different," said the young lady, so conclusively that it seemed to leave nothing more to be said on that score.

"A last twinge of Europeanism," she vouchsafed. "We were young in those days."

"You are well beneath the marble here."

She assented cheerfully.

"A thousand years before it."

"Happy place! Happy people!"

"But even this place isn't the beginning of things here. Carnac was older than this. And older still is Avebury. Have you heard in America of Avebury? It may have predated this place, they think, by another thousand years."

"Avebury?" said the lady who was called Belinda.

"But what is this Avebury?" asked V.V. "I've never heard of the place."

"I thought it was a lord," said Belinda.

Sir Richmond, with occasional appeals to Dr. Martineau, embarked upon an account of the glory and wonder of Avebury.

Possibly he exaggerated Avebury....

It was Dr. Martineau who presently brought this disquisition upon Avebury to a stop by a very remarkable gesture. He looked at his watch. He drew it out ostentatiously, a thick, respectable gold watch, for the doctor was not the sort of man to wear his watch upon his wrist. He clicked it open and looked at it. Thereby he would have proclaimed his belief this encounter was an entirely unnecessary interruption of his healing duologue with Sir Richmond, which must now be resumed.

But this action had scarcely the effect he had intended it to have. It set the young lady who was called Belinda asking about ways and means of getting to Salisbury; it brought to light the distressing fact that V.V. had the beginnings of a chafed heel. Once he had set things going they moved much too quickly for the doctor to deflect their course. He found himself called upon to make personal sacrifices to facilitate the painless transport of the two ladies to Salisbury, where their luggage awaited them at the Old George Hotel. In some way too elusive to trace, it became evident that he and Sir Richmond were to stay at this same Old George Hotel. The luggage was to be shifted to the top of the coupe, the young lady called V.V. was to share the interior of the car with Sir Richmond, while the lady named Belinda, for whom Dr. Martineau was already developing a very strong dislike, was to be thrust into an extreme proximity with him and the balance of the luggage in the dicky seat behind.

Sir Richmond had never met with a young woman with a genuine historical imagination before, and he was evidently very greatly excited and resolved to get the utmost that there was to be got out of this encounter.

Section 3

Sir Richmond displayed a complete disregard of the sufferings of Dr. Martineau, shamefully compressed behind him. Of these he was to hear later. He ran his overcrowded little car, overcrowded so far as the dicky went, over the crest of the Down and down into Amesbury and on to Salisbury, stopping to alight and stretch the legs of the party when they came in sight of Old Sarum.

“Certainly they can do with a little stretching,” said Dr. Martineau grimly.

This charming young woman had seized upon the imagination of Sir Richmond to the temporary exclusion of all other considerations. The long Downland gradients, quivering very slightly with the vibration of the road, came swiftly and easily to meet and pass the throbbing little car as he sat beside her and talked to her. He fell into that expository manner which comes so easily to the native entertaining the visitor from abroad.

“In England, it seems to me there are four main phases of history. Four. Avebury, which I would love to take you to see to-morrow. Stonehenge. Old Sarum, which we shall see in a moment as a great grassy mound on our right as we come over one of these crests. Each of them represents about a thousand years. Old Sarum was Keltic; it, saw the Romans and the Saxons through, and for a time it was a Norman city. Now it is pasture for sheep. Latest as yet is Salisbury, — English, real English. It may last a few centuries still. It is little more than seven hundred years old. But when I think of those great hangars back there by Stonehenge, I feel that the next phase is already beginning. Of a world one will fly to the ends of, in a week or so. Our world still. Our people, your people and mine, who are going to take wing so soon now, were made in all these places. We are visiting the old homes. I am glad I came back to it just when you were doing the same thing.”

“I’m lucky to have found a sympathetic fellow traveller,” she said; “with a car.”

“You’re the first American I’ve ever met whose interest in history didn’t seem—” He sought for an inoffensive word.

“Silly? Oh! I admit it. It’s true of a lot of us. Most of us. We come over to Europe as if it hadn’t anything to do with us except to supply us with old pictures and curios generally. We come sight-seeing. It’s romantic. It’s picturesque. We stare at the natives — like visitors at a Zoo. We don’t realize that we belong.... I know our style.... But we aren’t all like that. Some of us are learning a bit better than that. We have one or two teachers over there to lighten our darkness. There’s Professor Breasted for instance. He comes sometimes to my father’s house. And there’s James Harvey Robinson and Professor Hutton

Webster. They've been trying to restore our memory."

"I've never heard of any of them," said Sir Richmond.

"You hear so little of America over here. It's quite a large country and all sorts of interesting things happen there nowadays. And we are waking up to history. Quite fast. We shan't always be the most ignorant people in the world. We are beginning to realize that quite a lot of things happened between Adam and the Mayflower that we ought to be told about. I allow it's a recent revival. The United States has been like one of those men you read about in the papers who go away from home and turn up in some distant place with their memories gone. They've forgotten what their names were or where they lived or what they did for a living; they've forgotten everything that matters. Often they have to begin again and settle down for a long time before their memories come back. That's how it has been with us. Our memory is just coming back to us."

"And what do you find you are?"

"Europeans. Who came away from kings and churches-@-and Corinthian capitals."

"You feel all this country belongs to you?"

"As much as it does to you." Sir Richmond smiled radiantly at her. "But if I say that America belongs to me as much as it does to you?"

"We are one people," she said.

"We?"

"Europe. These parts of Europe anyhow. And ourselves."

"You are the most civilized person I've met for weeks and weeks."

"Well, you are the first civilized person I've met in Europe for a long time. If I understand you."

"There are multitudes of reasonable, civilized people in Europe."

"I've heard or seen very little of them.

"They're scattered, I admit."

"And hard to find."

"So ours is a lucky meeting. I've wanted a serious talk to an American for some time. I want to know very badly what you think you are up to with the world, — our world."

"I'm equally anxious to know what England thinks she is doing.

Her ways recently have been a little difficult to understand. On any hypothesis — that is honourable to her."

"H'm," said Sir Richmond.

"I assure you we don't like it. This Irish business. We feel a sort of ownership in England. It's like finding your dearest aunt torturing the cat."

"We must talk of that," said Sir Richmond.

"I wish you would."

"It is a cat and a dog — and they have been very naughty animals. And poor Aunt Britannia almost deliberately lost her temper. But I admit she hits about in a very nasty fashion."

"And favours the dog."

"She does."

"I want to know all you admit."

"You shall. And incidentally my friend and I may have the pleasure of showing you Salisbury and Avebury. If you are free?"

"We're travelling together, just we two. We are wandering about the south of England on our way to Falmouth. Where I join a father in a few days' time, and I go on with him to Paris. And if you and your friend are coming to the Old George—"

"We are," said Sir Richmond.

"I see no great scandal in talking right on to bedtime. And seeing Avebury to-morrow. Why not? Perhaps if we did as the Germans do and gave our names now, it might mitigate something of the extreme informality of our behaviour."

"My name is Hardy. I've been a munition manufacturer. I was slightly wounded by a stray shell near Arras while I was inspecting some plant I had set up, and also I was hit by a stray knighthood. So my name is now Sir Richmond Hardy. My friend is a very distinguished Harley Street physician. Chiefly nervous and mental cases. His name is Dr. Martineau. He is quite as civilized as I am. He is also a philosophical writer. He is really a very wise and learned man indeed. He is full of ideas. He's stimulated me tremendously. You must talk to him."

Sir Richmond glanced over his shoulder at the subject of these commendations. Through the oval window glared an expression of malignity that made no impression whatever on his preoccupied

mind.

"My name," said the young lady, "is Grammont. The war whirled me over to Europe on Red Cross work and since the peace I've been settling up things and travelling about Europe. My father is rather a big business man in New York."

"The oil Grammont?"

"He is rather deep in oil, I believe. He is coming over to Europe because he does not like the way your people are behaving in Mesopotamia. He is on his way to Paris now. Paris it seems is where everything is to be settled against you. Belinda is a sort of companion I have acquired for the purposes of independent travel. She was Red Cross too. I must have somebody and I cannot bear a maid. Her name is Belinda Seyffert. From Philadelphia originally. You have that? Seyffert, Grammont?"

"And Hardy?"

"Sir Richmond and Dr. Martineau."

"And — Ah! — That great green bank there just coming into sight must be Old Sarum. The little ancient city that faded away when Salisbury lifted its spire into the world. We will stop here for a little while...."

Then it was that Dr. Martineau was grim about the stretching of his legs.

Section 4

The sudden prospect which now opened out before Sir Richmond of talking about history and suchlike topics with a charming companion for perhaps two whole days instead of going on with this tiresome, shamefaced, egotistical business of self-examination was so attractive to him that it took immediate possession of his mind, to the entire exclusion and disregard of Dr. Martineau's possible objections to any such modification of their original programme. When they arrived in Salisbury, the doctor did make some slight effort to suggest a different hotel from that in which the two ladies had engaged their rooms, but on the spur of the moment and in their presence he could produce no sufficient reason for refusing the accommodation the Old George had ready for him. He was reduced

to a vague: “We don’t want to inflict ourselves—” He could not get Sir Richmond aside for any adequate expression of his feelings about Miss Seyffert, before the four of them were seated together at tea amidst the mediaeval modernity of the Old George smoking-room. And only then did he begin to realize the depth and extent of the engagements to which Sir Richmond had committed himself.

“I was suggesting that we run back to Avebury to-morrow,” said Sir Richmond. “These ladies were nearly missing it.”

The thing took the doctor’s breath away. For the moment he could say nothing. He stared over his tea-cup dour-faced. An objection formulated itself very slowly. “But that dicky,” he whispered.

His whisper went unnoted. Sir Richmond was talking of the completeness of Salisbury. From the very beginning it had been a cathedral city; it was essentially and purely that. The church at its best, in the full tide of its mediaeval ascendancy, had called it into being. He was making some extremely loose and inaccurate generalizations about the buildings and ruins each age had left for posterity, and Miss Grammont was countering with equally unsatisfactory qualifications. “Our age will leave the ruins of hotels,” said Sir Richmond. “Railway arches and hotels.”

“Baths and aqueducts,” Miss Grammont compared. “Rome of the Empire comes nearest to it....”

As soon as tea was over, Dr. Martineau realized, they meant to walk round and about Salisbury. He foresaw that walk with the utmost clearness. In front and keeping just a little beyond the range of his intervention, Sir Richmond would go with Miss Grammont; he himself and Miss Seyffert would bring up the rear. “If I do,” he muttered, “I’ll be damned!” an unusually strong expression for him.

“You said — ?” asked Miss Seyffert.

“That I have some writing to do — before the post goes,” said the doctor brightly.

“Oh! come and see the cathedral!” cried Sir Richmond with ill-concealed dismay. He was, if one may put it in such a fashion, not looking at Miss Seyffert in the directest fashion when he said this.

“I’m afraid,” said the doctor mulishly. “Impossible.”

(With the unspoken addition of, “You try her for a bit.”)

Miss Grammont stood up. Everybody stood up. “We can go first

to look for shops," she said. "There's those things you want to buy, Belinda; a fountain pen and the little books. We can all go together as far as that. And while you are shopping, if you wouldn't mind getting one or two things for me...."

It became clear to Dr. Martineau that Sir Richmond was to be let off Belinda. It seemed abominably unjust. And it was also clear to him that he must keep closely to his own room or he might find Miss Seyffert drifting back alone to the hotel and eager to resume with him....

Well, a quiet time in his room would not be disagreeable. He could think over his notes....

But in reality he thought over nothing but the little speeches he would presently make to Sir Richmond about the unwarrantable, the absolutely unwarrantable, alterations that were being made without his consent in their common programme....

For a long time Sir Richmond had met no one so interesting and amusing as this frank-minded young woman from America. "Young woman" was how he thought of her; she didn't correspond to anything so prim and restrained and extensively reserved and withheld as a "young lady "; and though he judged her no older than five and twenty, the word "girl" with its associations of virginal ignorances, invisible purdah, and trite ideas newly discovered, seemed even less appropriate for her than the word "boy." She had an air of having in some obscure way graduated in life, as if so far she had lived each several year of her existence in a distinctive and conclusive manner with the utmost mental profit and no particular tarnish or injury. He could talk with her as if he talked with a man like himself — but with a zest no man could give him.

It was evident that the good things she had said at first came as the natural expression of a broad stream of alert thought; they were no mere display specimens from one of those jackdaw collections of bright things so many clever women waste their wits in accumulating. She was not talking for effect at all, she was talking because she was tremendously interested in her discovery of the spectacle of history, and delighted to find another person as possessed as she was.

Belinda having been conducted to her shops, the two made their

way through the bright evening sunlight to the compact gracefulness of the cathedral. A glimpse through a wrought-iron gate of a delightful garden of spring flowers, alyssum, aubrietia, snow-upon-the-mountains, daffodils, narcissus and the like, held them for a time, and then they came out upon the level, grassy space, surrounded by little ripe old houses, on which the cathedral stands. They stood for some moments surveying it.

"It's a perfect little lady of a cathedral," said Sir Richmond. "But why, I wonder, did we build it?"

"Your memory ought to be better than mine," she said, with her half-closed eyes blinking up at the sunlit spire sharp against the blue. "I've been away for so long-over there-that I forget altogether. Why DID we build it?"

She had fallen in quite early with this freak of speaking and thinking as if he and she were all mankind. It was as if her mind had been prepared for it by her own eager exploration in Europe. "My friend, the philosopher," he had said, "will not have it that we are really the individuals we think we are. You must talk to him — he is a very curious and subtle thinker. We are just thoughts in the Mind of the Race, he says, passing thoughts. We are — what does he call it? — Man on his Planet, taking control of life."

"Man and woman," she had amended.

But just as man on his planet taking control of life had failed altogether to remember why the ditch at Avebury was on the inside instead of the outside of the vallum, so now Miss Grammont and Sir Richmond found very great difficulty in recalling why they had built Salisbury Cathedral.

"We built temples by habit and tradition," said Sir Richmond. "But the impulse was losing its force."

She looked up at the spire and then at him with a faintly quizzical expression.

But he had his reply ready.

"We were beginning to feel our power over matter. We were already very clever engineers. What interested us here wasn't the old religion any more. We wanted to exercise and display our power over stone. We made it into reeds and branches. We squirted it up in all these spires and pinnacles. The priest and his altar were just an

excuse. Do you think people have ever feared and worshipped in this — this artist's lark — as they did in Stonehenge?"

"I certainly do not remember that I ever worshipped here," she said.

Sir Richmond was in love with his idea. "The spirit of the Gothic cathedrals," he said, "is the spirit of the sky-scrapers. It is architecture in a mood of flaming ambition. The Freemasons on the building could hardly refrain from jeering at the little priest they had left down below there, performing antiquated puerile mysteries at his altar. He was just their excuse for doing it all."

"Sky-scrapers?" she conceded. "An early display of the sky-scraper spirit.... You are doing your best to make me feel thoroughly at home."

"You are more at home here still than in that new country of ours over the Atlantic. But it seems to me now that I do begin to remember building this cathedral and all the other cathedrals we built in Europe.... It was the fun of building made us do it..."

"H'm," she said. "And my sky-scrapers?"

"Still the fun of building. That is the thing I envy most about America. It's still large enough, mentally and materially, to build all sorts of things.... Over here, the sites are frightfully crowded...."

"And what do you think we are building now? And what do you think you are building over here?"

"What are we building now? I believe we have almost grown up. I believe it is time we began to build in earnest. For good...."

"But are we building anything at all?"

"A new world."

"Show it me," she said.

"We're still only at the foundations," said Sir Richmond. "Nothing shows as yet."

"I wish I could believe they were foundations."

"But can you doubt we are scrapping the old?..."

It was too late in the afternoon to go into the cathedral, so they strolled to and fro round and about the west end and along the path under the trees towards the river, exchanging their ideas very frankly and freely about the things that had recently happened to the world and what they thought they ought to be doing in it.

Section 5

After dinner our four tourists sat late and talked in a corner of the smoking-room. The two ladies had vanished hastily at the first dinner gong and reappeared at the second, mysteriously and pleasantly changed from tweedy pedestrians to indoor company. They were quietly but definitely dressed, pretty alterations had happened to their coiffure, a silver band and deep red stones lit the dusk of Miss Grammont's hair and a necklace of the same colourings kept the peace between her jolly sun-burnt cheek and her soft untanned neck. It was evident her recent uniform had included a collar of great severity. Miss Seyffert had revealed a plump forearm and proclaimed it with a clash of bangles. Dr. Martineau thought her evening throat much too confidential.

The conversation drifted from topic to topic. It had none of the steady continuity of Sir Richmond's duologue with Miss Grammont. Miss Seyffert's methods were too discursive and exclamatory. She broke every thread that appeared. The Old George at Salisbury is really old; it shows it, and Miss Seyffert laced the entire evening with her recognition of the fact. "Just look at that old beam!" she would cry suddenly. "To think it was exactly where it is before there was a Cabot in America!"

Miss Grammont let her companion pull the talk about as she chose. After the animation of the afternoon a sort of lazy contentment had taken possession of the younger lady. She sat deep in a basket chair and spoke now and then. Miss Seyffert gave her impressions of France and Italy. She talked of the cabmen of Naples and the beggars of Amalfi.

Apropos of beggars, Miss Grammont from the depths of her chair threw out the statement that Italy was frightfully overpopulated. "In some parts of Italy it is like mites on a cheese. Nobody seems to be living. Everyone is too busy keeping alive."

"Poor old women carrying loads big enough for mules," said Miss Seyffert.

"Little children working like slaves," said Miss Grammont.

"And everybody begging. Even the people at work by the roadside. Who ought to be getting wages — sufficient...."

“Begging — from foreigners — is just a sport in Italy,” said Sir Richmond. “It doesn’t imply want. But I agree that a large part of Italy is frightfully overpopulated. The whole world is. Don’t you think so, Martineau?”

“Well — yes — for its present social organization.”

“For any social organization,” said Sir Richmond.

“I’ve no doubt of it,” said Miss Seyffert, and added amazingly: “I’m out for Birth Control all the time.”

A brief but active pause ensued. Dr. Martineau in a state of sudden distress attempted to drink out of a cold and empty coffee cup.

“The world swarms with cramped and undeveloped lives,” said Sir Richmond. “Which amount to nothing. Which do not even represent happiness. And which help to use up the resources, the fuel and surplus energy of the world.”

“I suppose they have a sort of liking for their lives,” Miss Grammont reflected.

“Does that matter? They do nothing to carry life on. They are just vain repetitions — imperfect dreary, blurred repetitions of one common life. All that they feel has been felt, all that they do has been done better before. Because they are crowded and hurried and underfed and undereducated. And as for liking their lives, they need never have had the chance.”

“How many people are there in the world?” she asked abruptly.

“I don’t know. Twelve hundred, fifteen hundred millions perhaps.”

“And in your world?”

“I’d have two hundred and fifty millions, let us say. At most. It would be quite enough for this little planet, for a time, at any rate. Don’t you think so, doctor?”

“I don’t know,” said Dr. Martineau. “Oddly enough, I have never thought about that question before. At least, not from this angle.”

“But could you pick out two hundred and fifty million aristocrats?” began Miss Grammont. “My native instinctive democracy—”

“Need not be outraged,” said Sir Richmond. “Any two hundred and fifty million would do, They’d be able to develop fully, all of

them. As things are, only a minority can do that. The rest never get a chance."

"That's what I always say," said Miss Seyffert.

"A New Age," said Dr. Martineau; "a New World. We may be coming to such a stage, when population, as much as fuel, will be under a world control. If one thing, why not the other? I admit that the movement of thought is away from haphazard towards control—"

"I'm for control all the time," Miss Seyffert injected, following up her previous success.

"I admit," the doctor began his broken sentence again with marked patience, "that the movement of thought is away from haphazard towards control — in things generally. But is the movement of events?"

"The eternal problem of man," said Sir Richmond. "Can our wills prevail?"

There came a little pause.

Miss Grammont smiled an enquiry at Miss Seyffert. "If YOU are," said Belinda.

"I wish I could imagine your world," said Miss Grammont, rising, "of two hundred and fifty millions of fully developed human beings with room to live and breathe in and no need for wars. Will they live in palaces? Will they all be healthy?... Machines will wait on them. No! I can't imagine it. Perhaps I shall dream of it. My dreaming self may be cleverer."

She held out her hand to Sir Richmond. Just for a moment they stood hand in hand, appreciatively....

"Well!" said Dr. Martineau, as the door closed behind the two Americans, "This is a curious encounter."

"That young woman has brains," said Sir Richmond, standing before the fireplace. There was no doubt whatever which young woman he meant. But Dr. Martineau grunted.

"I don't like the American type," the doctor pronounced judicially.

"I do," Sir Richmond countered.

The doctor thought for a moment or so. "You are committed to the project of visiting Avebury?" he said.

"They ought to see Avebury," said Sir Richmond.

“H’m,” said the doctor, ostentatiously amused by his thoughts and staring at the fire. “Birth Control! I NEVER did.”

Sir Richmond smiled down on the top of the doctor’s head and said nothing.

“I think,” said the doctor and paused. “I shall leave this Avebury expedition to you.”

“We can be back in the early afternoon,” said Sir Richmond. “To give them a chance of seeing the cathedral. The chapter house here is not one to miss....”

“And then I suppose we shall go on?

“As you please,” said Sir Richmond insincerely.

“I must confess that four people make the car at any rate seem tremendously overpopulated. And to tell the truth, I do not find this encounter so amusing as you seem to do.... I shall not be sorry when we have waved good-bye to those young ladies, and resume our interrupted conversation.”

Sir Richmond considered something mulish in the doctor’s averted face.

“I find Miss Grammont an extremely interesting — and stimulating human being.

“Evidently.”

The doctor sighed, stood up and found himself delivering one of the sentences he had engendered during his solitary meditations in his room before dinner. He surprised himself by the plainness of his speech. “Let me be frank,” he said, regarding Sir Richmond squarely. “Considering the general situation of things and your position, I do not care very greatly for the part of an accessory to what may easily develop, as you know very well, into a very serious flirtation. An absurd, mischievous, irrelevant flirtation. You may not like the word. You may pretend it is a conversation, an ordinary intellectual conversation. That is not the word. Simply that is not the word. You people eye one another.... Flirtation. I give the affair its proper name. That is all. Merely that. When I think — But we will not discuss it now.... Good night.... Forgive me if I put before you, rather bluntly, my particular point of view.”

Sir Richmond found himself alone. With his eyebrows raised.

Section 6

After twenty-four eventful hours our two students of human motives found themselves together again by the fireplace in the Old George smoking-room. They had resumed their overnight conversation, in a state of considerable tension.

"If you find the accommodation of the car insufficient," said Sir Richmond in a tone of extreme reasonableness, and I admit it is, we can easily hire a larger car in a place like this.

I would not care if you hired an omnibus, said Dr. Martineau. "I am not coming on if these young women are."

"But if you consider it scandalous — and really, Martineau, really! as one man to another, it does seem to me to be a bit pernickety of you, a broad and original thinker as you are—"

"Thought is one matter. Rash, inconsiderate action quite another. And above all, if I spend another day in or near the company of Miss Belinda Seyffert I shall — I shall be extremely rude to her."

"But," said Sir Richmond and bit his lower lip and considered.

"We might drop Belinda," he suggested turning to his friend and speaking in low, confidential tones. "She is quite a manageable person. Quite. She could — for example — be left behind with the luggage and sent on by train. I do not know if you realize how the land lies in that quarter. It needs only a word to Miss Grammont."

There was no immediate reply. For a moment he had a wild hope that his companion would agree, and then he perceived that the doctor's silence meant only the preparation of an ultimatum.

"I object to Miss Grammont and that side of the thing, more than I do to Miss Seyffert."

Sir Richmond said nothing.

"It may help you to see this affair from a slightly different angle if I tell you that twice today Miss Seyffert has asked me if you were a married man."

"And of course you told her I was."

"On the second occasion."

Sir Richmond smiled again.

"Frankly," said the doctor, "this adventure is altogether uncongenial to me. It is the sort of thing that has never happened in

my life. This highway coupling—"

"Don't you think," said Sir Richmond, "that you are attaching rather too much — what shall I say — romantic? — flirtatious? — meaning to this affair? I don't mind that after my rather lavish confessions you should consider me a rather oversexed person, but isn't your attitude rather unfair, — unjust, indeed, and almost insulting, to this Miss Grammont? After all, she's a young lady of very good social position indeed. She doesn't strike you — does she? — as an undignified or helpless human being. Her manners suggest a person of considerable self-control. And knowing less of me than you do, she probably regards me as almost as safe as — a maiden aunt say. I'm twice her age. We are a party of four. There are conventions, there are considerations.... Aren't you really, my dear Martineau, overdoing all this side of this very pleasant little enlargement of our interests."

"AM I?" said Dr. Martineau and brought a scrutinizing eye to bear on Sir Richmond's face.

"I want to go on talking to Miss Grammont for a day or so," Sir Richmond admitted.

"Then I shall prefer to leave your party."

There were some moments of silence.

"I am really very sorry to find myself in this dilemma," said Sir Richmond with a note of genuine regret in his voice.

"It is not a dilemma," said Dr. Martineau, with a corresponding loss of asperity. "I grant you we discover we differ upon a question of taste and convenience. But before I suggested this trip, I had intended to spend a little time with my old friend Sir Kenelm Latter at Bournemouth. Nothing simpler than to go to him now...."

"I shall be sorry all the same."

"I could have wished," said the doctor, "that these ladies had happened a little later...."

The matter was settled. Nothing more of a practical nature remained to be said. But neither gentleman wished to break off with a harsh and bare decision.

"When the New Age is here," said Sir Richmond, "then, surely, a friendship between a man and a woman will not be subjected to the — the inconveniences your present code would set about it? They

would travel about together as they chose?”

“The fundamental principle of the new age,” said the doctor, “will be Honi soit qui mal y pense. In these matters. With perhaps Fay ce que vouldras as its next injunction. So long as other lives are not affected. In matters of personal behaviour the world will probably be much more free and individuals much more open in their conscience and honour than they have ever been before. In matters of property, economics and public conduct it will probably be just the reverse. Then, there will be much more collective control and much more insistence, legal insistence, upon individual responsibility. But we are not living in a new age yet; we are living in the patched-up ruins of a very old one. And you — if you will forgive me — are living in the patched up remains of a life that had already had its complications. This young lady, whose charm and cleverness I admit, behaves as if the new age were already here. Well, that may be a very dangerous mistake both for her and for you.... This affair, if it goes on for a few days more, may involve very serious consequences indeed, with which I, for one, do not wish to be involved.”

Sir Richmond, upon the hearthrug, had a curious feeling that he was back in the head master’s study at Caxton.

Dr. Martineau went on with a lucidity that Sir Richmond found rather trying, to give his impression of Miss Grammont and her position in life.

“She is,” he said, “manifestly a very expensively educated girl. And in many ways interesting. I have been watching her. I have not been favoured with very much of her attention, but that fact has enabled me to see her in profile. Miss Seyffert is a fairly crude mixture of frankness, insincerity and self-explanatory egotism, and I have been able to disregard a considerable amount of the conversation she has addressed to me. Now I guess this Miss Grammont has had no mother since she was quite little.”

“Your guesses, doctor, are apt to be pretty good,” said Sir Richmond.

“You know that?”

“She has told me as much.”

“H’m. Well — She impressed me as having the air of a girl who

has had to solve many problems for which the normal mother provides ready made solutions. That is how I inferred that there was no mother. I don't think there has been any stepmother, either friendly or hostile? There hasn't been. I thought not. She has had various governesses and companions, ladies of birth and education, engaged to look after her and she has done exactly what she liked with them. Her manner with Miss Seyffert, an excellent manner for Miss Seyffert, by the bye, isn't the sort of manner anyone acquires in a day. Or for one person only. She is a very sure and commanding young woman."

Sir Richmond nodded.

"I suppose her father adores and neglects her, and whenever she has wanted a companion or governess butchered, the thing has been done.... These business Americans, I am told, neglect their womenkind, give them money and power, let them loose on the world.... It is a sort of moral laziness masquerading as affection.... Still I suppose custom and tradition kept this girl in her place and she was petted, honoured, amused, talked about but not in a harmful way, and rather bored right up to the time when America came into the war. Theoretically she had a tremendously good time."

"I think this must be near the truth of her biography," said Sir Richmond.

"I suppose she has lovers."

"You don't mean — ?"

"No, I don't. Though that is a matter that ought to have no special interest for you. I mean that she was surrounded by a retinue of men who wanted to marry her or who behaved as though they wanted to marry her or who made her happiness and her gratifications and her condescensions seem a matter of very great importance to them. She had the flattery of an extremely uncritical and unexacting admiration. That is the sort of thing that gratifies a silly woman extremely. Miss Grammont is not silly and all this homage and facile approval probably bored her more than she realized. To anyone too intelligent to be steadily excited by buying things and wearing things and dancing and playing games and going to places of entertainment, and being given flowers, sweets, jewellery, pet animals, and books bound in a special sort of leather, the prospect of being a rich man's only

daughter until such time as it becomes advisable to change into a rich man's wealthy wife, is probably not nearly so amusing as envious people might suppose. I take it Miss Grammont had got all she could out of that sort of thing some time before the war, and that she had already read and thought rather more than most young women in her position. Before she was twenty I guess she was already looking for something more interesting in the way of men than a rich admirer with an automobile full of presents. Those who seek find."

"What do you think she found?"

"What would a rich girl find out there in America? I don't know. I haven't the material to guess with. In London a girl might find a considerable variety of active, interesting men, rising politicians, university men of distinction, artists and writers even, men of science, men — there are still such men — active in the creative work of the empire.

"In America I suppose there is at least an equal variety, made up of rather different types. She would find that life was worth while to such people in a way that made the ordinary entertainments and amusements of her life a monstrous silly waste of time. With the facility of her sex she would pick up from one of them the idea that made life worth while for him. I am inclined to think there was someone in her case who did seem to promise a sort of life that was worth while. And that somehow the war came to alter the look of that promise.

"How?"

"I don't know. Perhaps I am only romancing. But for this young woman I am convinced this expedition to Europe has meant experience, harsh educational experience and very profound mental disturbance. There have been love experiences; experiences that were something more than the treats and attentions and proposals that made up her life when she was sheltered over there. And something more than that. What it is I don't know. The war has turned an ugly face to her. She has seen death and suffering and ruin. Perhaps she has seen people she knew killed. Perhaps the man has been killed. Or she has met with cowardice or cruelty or treachery where she didn't expect it. She has been shocked out of the first confidence of youth. She has ceased to take the world for granted. It hasn't broken her but

it has matured her. That I think is why history has become real to her. Which so attracts you in her. History, for her, has ceased to be a fabric of picturesque incidents; it is the study of a tragic struggle that still goes on. She sees history as you see it and I see it. She is a very grown-up young woman.

"It's just that," said Sir Richmond. "It's just that. If you see as much in Miss Grammont as all that, why don't you want to come on with us? You see the interest of her."

"I see a lot more than that. You don't know what an advantage it is to be as I am, rather cold and unresponsive to women and unattractive and negligible — negligible, that is the exact word — to them. YOU can't look at a woman for five minutes without losing sight of her in a mist of imaginative excitement. Because she looks back at you. I have the privilege of the negligible — which is a cool head. Miss Grammont has a startled and matured mind, an original mind. Yes. And there is something more to be said. Her intelligence is better than her character."

"I don't quite see what you are driving at."

"The intelligence of all intelligent women is better than their characters. Goodness in a woman, as we understand it, seems to imply necessarily a certain imaginative fixity. Miss Grammont has an impulsive and adventurous character. And as I have been saying she was a spoilt child, with no discipline.... You also are a person of high intelligence and defective controls. She is very much at loose ends. You — on account of the illness of that rather forgotten lady, Miss Martin Leeds—" "Aren't you rather abusing the secrets of the confessional?"

"This IS the confessional. It closes to-morrow morning but it is the confessional still. Look at the thing frankly. You, I say, are also at loose ends. Can you deny it? My dear sir, don't we both know that ever since we left London you have been ready to fall in love with any pretty thing in petticoats that seemed to promise you three ha'porth of kindness. A lost dog looking for a master! You're a stray man looking for a mistress. Miss Grammont being a woman is a little more selective than that. But if she's at a loose end as I suppose, she isn't protected by the sense of having made her selection. And she has no preconceptions of what she wants. You are a very interesting

man in many ways. You carry marriage and entanglements lightly. With an air of being neither married nor entangled. She is quite prepared to fall in love with you."

"But you don't really think that?" said Sir Richmond, with an ill-concealed eagerness.

Dr. Martineau rolled his face towards Sir Richmond. "These miracles — grotesquely — happen," he said. "She knows nothing of Martin Leeds.... You must remember that....

"And then," he added, "if she and you fall in love, as the phrase goes, what is to follow?"

There was a pause.

Sir Richmond looked at his toes for a moment or so as if he took counsel with them and then decided to take offence.

"Really!" he said, "this is preposterous. You talk of falling in love as though it was impossible for a man and woman to be deeply interested in each other without that. And the gulf in our ages — in our quality! From the Psychologist of a New Age I find this amazing. Are men and women to go on for ever — separated by this possibility into two hardly communicating and yet interpenetrating worlds? Is there never to be friendship and companionship between men and women without passion?"

"You ought to know even better than I do that there is not. For such people as you two anyhow. And at present the world is not prepared to tolerate friendship and companionship WITH that accompaniment. That is the core of this situation."

A pause fell between the two gentlemen. They had smoothed over the extreme harshness of their separation and there was very little more to be said.

"Well," said Sir Richmond in conclusion, "I am very sorry indeed, Martineau, that we have to part like this."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

COMPANIONSHIP

Section 1

"Well," said Dr. Martineau, extending his hand to Sir Richmond on the Salisbury station platform, "I leave you to it."

His round face betrayed little or no vestiges of his overnight irritation.

"Ought you to leave me to it?" smiled Sir Richmond.

"I shall be interested to learn what happens."

"But if you won't stay to see!"

"Now Sir, please," said the guard respectfully but firmly, and Dr. Martineau got in.

Sir Richmond walked thoughtfully down the platform towards the exit.

"What else could I do?" he asked aloud to nobody in particular.

For a little while he thought confusedly of the collapse of his expedition into the secret places of his own heart with Dr. Martineau, and then his prepossession with Miss Grammont resumed possession of his mind. Dr. Martineau was forgotten.

Section 2

For the better part of forty hours, Sir Richmond had either been talking to Miss Grammont, or carrying on imaginary conversations with her in her absence, or sleeping and dreaming dreams in which she never failed to play a part, even if at times it was an altogether amazing and incongruous part. And as they were both very frank and expressive people, they already knew a very great deal about each other.

For an American Miss Grammont was by no means autobiographical. She gave no sketches of her idiosyncrasies, and she repeated no remembered comments and prophets of her contemporaries about herself. She either concealed or she had lost

any great interest in her own personality. But she was interested in and curious about the people she had met in life, and her talk of them reflected a considerable amount of light upon her own upbringing and experiences. And her liking for Sir Richmond was pleasingly manifest. She liked his turn of thought, she watched him with a faint smile on her lips as he spoke, and she spread her opinions before him carefully in that soft voice of hers like a shy child showing its treasures to some suddenly trusted and favoured visitor.

Their ways of thought harmonized. They talked at first chiefly about the history of the world and the extraordinary situation of aimlessness in a phase of ruin to which the Great War had brought all Europe, if not all mankind. The world excited them both in the same way; as a crisis in which they were called upon to do something — they did not yet clearly know what. Into this topic they peered as into some deep pool, side by side, and in it they saw each other reflected.

The visit to Avebury had been a great success. It had been a perfect springtime day, and the little inn had been delighted at the reappearance of Sir Richmond's car so soon after its departure. Its delight was particularly manifest in the cream and salad it produced for lunch. Both Miss Grammont and Miss Seyffert displayed an intelligent interest in their food. After lunch they had all gone out to the stones and the wall. Half a dozen sunburnt children were putting one of the partially overturned megaliths to a happy use by clambering to the top of it and sliding on their little behinds down its smooth and sloping side amidst much mirthful squealing.

Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont had walked round the old circumvallation together, but Belinda Seyffert had strayed away from them, professing an interest in flowers. It was not so much that she felt they had to be left together that made her do this as her own consciousness of being possessed by a devil who interrupted conversations.

When Miss Grammont was keenly interested in a conversation, then Belinda had learnt from experience that it was wiser to go off with her devil out of the range of any temptation to interrupt.

"You really think," said Miss Grammont, "that it would be possible to take this confused old world and reshape it, set it marching towards that new world of yours — of two hundred and

fifty million fully developed, beautiful and happy people?”

“Why not? Nobody is doing anything with the world except muddle about. Why not give it a direction?”

“You’d take it in your hands like clay?”

“Obdurate clay with a sort of recalcitrant, unintelligent life of its own.”

Her imagination glowed in her eyes and warmed her voice. “I believe what you say is possible. If people dare.”

“I am tired of following little motives that are like flames that go out when you get to them. I am tired of seeing all the world doing the same. I am tired of a world in which there is nothing great but great disasters. Here is something mankind can attempt, that we can attempt.”

“And will?”

“I believe that as Mankind grows up this is the business Man has to settle down to and will settle down to.”

She considered that.

“I’ve been getting to believe something like this. But — ... it frightens me. I suppose most of us have this same sort of dread of taking too much upon ourselves.”

“So we just live like pigs. Sensible little piggywiggys. I’ve got a Committee full of that sort of thing. We live like little modest pigs. And let the world go hang. And pride ourselves upon our freedom from the sin of presumption.

“Not quite that!”

“Well! How do you put it?”

“We are afraid,” she said. “It’s too vast. We want bright little lives of our own.”

“Exactly — sensible little piggy-wiggys.”

“We have a right to life — and happiness.

“First,” said Sir Richmond, “as much right as a pig has to food. But whether we get life and happiness or fail to get them we human beings who have imaginations want something more nowadays.... Of course we want bright lives, of course we want happiness. Just as we want food, just as we want sleep. But when we have eaten, when we have slept, when we have jolly things about us — it is nothing. We have been made an exception of — and got our rations. The big thing

confronts us still. It is vast, I agree, but vast as it is it is the thing we have to think about. I do not know why it should be so, but I am compelled by something in my nature to want to serve this idea of a new age for mankind. I want it as my culminating want. I want a world in order, a disciplined mankind going on to greater things. Don't you?"

"Now you tell me of it," she said with a smile, "I do."

"But before — ?"

"No. You've made it clear. It wasn't clear before."

"I've been talking of this sort of thing with my friend Dr. Martineau. And I've been thinking as well as talking. That perhaps is why I'm so clear and positive."

"I don't complain that you are clear and positive. I've been coming along the same way.... It's refreshing to meet you."

"I found it refreshing to meet Martineau." A twinge of conscience about Dr. Martineau turned Sir Richmond into a new channel. "He's a most interesting man," he said. "Rather shy in some respects. Devoted to his work. And he's writing a book which has saturated him in these ideas. Only two nights ago we stood here and talked about it. The Psychology of a New Age. The world, he believes, is entering upon a new phase in its history, the adolescence, so to speak, of mankind. It is an idea that seizes the imagination. There is a flow of new ideas abroad, he thinks, widening realizations, unprecedented hopes and fears. There is a consciousness of new powers and new responsibilities. We are sharing the adolescence of our race. It is giving history a new and more intimate meaning for us. It is bringing us into directer relation with public affairs, — making them matter as formerly they didn't seem to matter. That idea of the bright little private life has to go by the board."

"I suppose it has," she said, meditatively, as though she had been thinking over some such question before.

"The private life," she said, "has a way of coming aboard again."

Her reflections travelled fast and broke out now far ahead of him.

"You have some sort of work cut out for you," she said abruptly.

"Yes. Yes, I have."

"I haven't," she said.

"So that I go about," she added, "like someone who is looking for

something. I'd like to know if it's not jabbing too searching a question at you — what you have found."

Sir Richmond considered. "Incidentally," he smiled, "I want to get a lasso over the neck of that very forcible and barbaric person, your father. I am doing my best to help lay the foundation of a scientific world control of fuel production and distribution. We have a Fuel Commission in London with rather wide powers of enquiry into the whole world problem of fuel. We shall come out to Washington presently with proposals."

Miss Grammont surveyed the landscape. "I suppose," she said, "poor father IS rather like an unbroken mule in business affairs. So many of our big business men in America are. He'll lash out at you."

"I don't mind if only he lashes out openly in the sight of all men."

She considered and turned on Sir Richmond gravely.

"Tell me what you want to do to him. You find out so many things for me that I seem to have been thinking about in a sort of almost invisible half-conscious way. I've been suspecting for a long time that Civilization wasn't much good unless it got people like my father under some sort of control. But controlling father — as distinguished from managing him!" She reviewed some private and amusing memories. "He is a most intractable man."

Section 3

They had gone on to talk of her father and of the types of men who controlled international business. She had had plentiful opportunities for observation in their homes and her own. Gunter Lake, the big banker, she knew particularly well, because, it seemed, she had been engaged or was engaged to marry him. "All these people," she said, "are pushing things about, affecting millions of lives, hurting and disordering hundreds of thousands of people. They don't seem to know what they are doing. They have no plans in particular.... And you are getting something going that will be a plan and a direction and a conscience and a control for them? You will find my father extremely difficult, but some of our younger men would love it.

"And," she went on; "there are American women who'd love it too. We're petted. We're kept out of things. We aren't placed. We

don’t get enough to do. We’re spenders and wasters — not always from choice. While these fathers and brothers and husbands of ours play about with the fuel and power and life and hope of the world as though it was a game of poker. With all the empty unspeakable solemnity of the male. And treat us as though we ought to be satisfied if they bring home part of the winnings.

“That can’t go on,” she said.

Her eyes went back to the long, low, undulating skyline of the downs. She spoke as though she took up the thread of some controversy that had played a large part in her life. “That isn’t going on,” she said with an effect of conclusive decision.

Sir Richmond recalled that little speech now as he returned from Salisbury station to the Old George after his farewell to Martineau. He recalled too the soft firmness of her profile and the delicate line of her lifted chin. He felt that this time at any rate he was not being deceived by the outward shows of a charming human being. This young woman had real firmness of character to back up her free and independent judgments. He smiled at the idea of any facile passion in the composition of so sure and gallant a personality. Martineau was very fine-minded in many respects, but he was an old maid; and like all old maids he saw man and woman in every encounter. But passion was a thing men and women fell back upon when they had nothing else in common. When they thought in the pleasantest harmony and every remark seemed to weave a fresh thread of common interest, then it wasn’t so necessary. It might happen, but it wasn’t so necessary.... If it did it would be a secondary thing to companionship. That’s what she was, — a companion.

But a very lovely and wonderful companion, the companion one would not relinquish until the very last moment one could keep with her.

Her views about America and about her own place in the world seemed equally fresh and original to Sir Richmond.

“I realize I’ve got to be a responsible American citizen,” she had said. That didn’t mean that she attached very much importance to her recently acquired vote. She evidently classified voters into the irresponsible who just had votes and the responsible who also had a considerable amount of property as well. She had no illusions about

the power of the former class. It didn't exist. They were steered to their decisions by people employed, directed or stimulated by "father" and his friends and associates, the owners of America, the real "responsible citizens." Or they fell a prey to the merely adventurous leading of "revolutionaries." But anyhow they were steered. She herself, it was clear, was bound to become a very responsible citizen indeed. She would some day, she laughed, be swimming in oil and such like property. Her interest in Sir Richmond's schemes for a scientific world management of fuel was therefore, she realized, a very direct one. But it was remarkable to find a young woman seeing it like that.

Father it seemed varied very much in his attitude towards her. He despised and distrusted women generally, and it was evident he had made it quite clear to her how grave an error it was on her part to persist in being a daughter and not a son. At moments it seemed to Sir Richmond that she was disposed to agree with father upon that. When Mr. Grammont's sense of her regrettable femininity was uppermost, then he gave his intelligence chiefly to schemes for tying her up against the machinations of adventurers by means of trustees, partners, lawyers, advisers, agreements and suchlike complications, or for acquiring a workable son by marriage. To this last idea it would seem the importance in her life of the rather heavily named Gunter Lake was to be ascribed. But another mood of the old man's was distrust of anything that could not be spoken of as his "own flesh and blood," and then he would direct his attention to a kind of masculinization of his daughter and to schemes for giving her the completest control of all he had to leave her provided she never married nor fell under masculine sway. "After all," he would reflect as he hesitated over the practicability of his life's ideal, "there was Hetty Green."

This latter idea had reft her suddenly at the age of seventeen from the educational care of an English gentlewoman warranted to fit her for marriage with any prince in Europe, and thrust her for the mornings and a moiety of the afternoons of the better part of a year, after a swift but competent training, into a shirt waist and an office down town. She had been entrusted at first to a harvester concern independent of Mr. Grammont, because he feared his own people

wouldn't train her hard. She had worked for ordinary wages and ordinary hours, and at the end of the day, she mentioned casually, a large automobile with two menservants and a trustworthy secretary used to pick her out from the torrent of undistinguished workers that poured out of the Synoptical Building. This masculinization idea had also sent her on a commission of enquiry into Mexico. There apparently she had really done responsible work.

But upon the question of labour Mr. Grammont was fierce, even for an American business man, and one night at a dinner party he discovered his daughter displaying what he considered an improper familiarity with socialist ideas. This had produced a violent revulsion towards the purdah system and the idea of a matrimonial alliance with Gunter Lake. Gunter Lake, Sir Richmond gathered, wasn't half a bad fellow. Generally it would seem Miss Grammont liked him, and she had a way of speaking about him that suggested that in some way Mr. Lake had been rather hardly used and had acquired merit by his behaviour under bad treatment. There was some story, however, connected with her war services in Europe upon which Miss Grammont was evidently indisposed to dwell. About that story Sir Richmond was left at the end of his Avebury day and after his last talk with Dr. Martineau, still quite vaguely guessing.

So much fact about Miss Grammont as we have given had floated up in fragments and pieced itself together in Sir Richmond's mind in the course of a day and a half. The fragments came up as allusions or by way of illustration. The sustaining topic was this New Age Sir Richmond fore shadowed, this world under scientific control, the Utopia of fully developed people fully developing the resources of the earth. For a number of trivial reasons Sir Richmond found himself ascribing the project of this New Age almost wholly to Dr. Martineau, and presenting it as a much completer scheme than he was justified in doing. It was true that Dr. Martineau had not said many of the things Sir Richmond ascribed to him, but also it was true that they had not crystallized out in Sir Richmond's mind before his talks with Dr. Martineau. The idea of a New Age necessarily carries with it the idea of fresh rules of conduct and of different relationships between human beings. And it throws those who talk about it into the companionship of a common enterprise. To-morrow the New Age

will be here no doubt, but today it is the hope and adventure of only a few human beings.

So that it was natural for Miss Grammont and Sir Richmond to ask: “What are we to do with such types as father?” and to fall into an idiom that assumed a joint enterprise. They had agreed by a tacit consent to a common conception of the world they desired as a world scientifically ordered, an immense organization of mature commonsense, healthy and secure, gathering knowledge and power for creative adventures as yet beyond dreaming. They were prepared to think of the makers of the Avebury dyke as their yesterday selves, of the stone age savages as a phase, in their late childhood, and of this great world order Sir Richmond foresaw as a day where dawn was already at hand. And in such long perspectives, the states, governments and institutions of to-day became very temporary-looking and replaceable structures indeed. Both these two people found themselves thinking in this fashion with an unwonted courage and freedom because the other one had been disposed to think in this fashion before. Sir Richmond was still turning over in his mind the happy mutual release of the imagination this chance companionship had brought about when he found himself back again at the threshold of the Old George.

Section 4

Sir Richmond Hardy was not the only man who was thinking intently about Miss Grammont at that particular moment. Two gentlemen were coming towards her across the Atlantic whose minds, it chanced, were very busily occupied by her affairs. One of these was her father, who was lying in his brass bed in his commodious cabin on the Hollandia, regretting his diminishing ability to sleep in the early morning now, even when he was in the strong and soothing air of mid-Atlantic, and thinking of V.V. because she had a way of coming into his mind when it was undefended; and the other was Mr. Gunter Lake on the Megantic, one day out from Sandy Hook, who found himself equally sleepless and preoccupied. And although Mr. Lake was a man of vast activities and complicated engagements he was coming now to Europe for the express purpose of seeing V.V.

and having things out with her fully and completely because, in spite of all that had happened, she made such an endless series of delays in coming to America.

Old Grammont as he appeared upon the pillow of his bed by the light of a rose-shaded bedside lamp, was a small-headed, grey-haired gentleman with a wrinkled face and sunken brown eyes. Years of business experience, mitigated only by such exercise as the game of poker affords, had intensified an instinctive inexpressiveness. Under the most solitary circumstances old Grammont was still inexpressive, and the face that stared at the ceiling of his cabin and the problem of his daughter might have been the face of a pickled head in a museum, for any indication it betrayed of the flow of thought within. He lay on his back and his bent knees lifted the bed-clothes into a sharp mountain. He was not even trying to sleep.

Why, he meditated, had V.V. stayed on in Europe so much longer than she need have done? And why had Gunter Lake suddenly got into a state of mind about her? Why didn't the girl confide in her father at least about these things? What was afoot? She had thrown over Lake once and it seemed she was going to turn him down again. Well, if she was an ordinary female person that was a silly sort of thing to do. With her fortune and his — you could buy the world. But suppose she was not all ordinary female person.... Her mother hadn't been ordinary anyhow, whatever else you called her, and no one could call Grammont blood all ordinary fluid. ... Old Grammont had never had any delusions about Lake. If Lake's father hadn't been a big man Lake would never have counted for anything at all. Suppose she did turn him down. In itself that wasn't a thing to break her father's heart.

What did matter was not whether she threw Lake over but what she threw him over for. If it was because he wasn't man enough, well and good. But if it was for some other lover, some good-looking, worthless impostor, some European title or suchlike folly — !

At the thought of a lover for V.V. a sudden flood of anger poured across the old man's mind, behind the still mask of his face. It infuriated him even to think of V.V., his little V.V., his own girl, entertaining a lover, being possibly — most shameful thought — IN LOVE! Like some ordinary silly female, sinking to kisses, to the

deeds one could buy and pay for. His V.V.! The idea infuriated and disgusted him. He fought against it as a possibility. Once some woman in New York had ventured to hint something to him of some fellow, some affair with an artist, Caston; she had linked this Caston with V.V.'s red cross nursing in Europe.... Old Grammont had made that woman sorry she spoke. Afterwards he had caused enquiries to be made about this Caston, careful enquiries. It seems that he and V.V. had known each other, there had been something. But nothing that V.V. need be ashamed of. When old Grammont's enquiry man had come back with his report, old Grammont had been very particular about that. At first the fellow had not been very clear, rather muddled indeed as to how things were — no doubt he had wanted to make out there was something just to seem to earn his money. Old Grammont had struck the table sharply and the eyes that looked out of his mask had blazed. "What have you found out against her?" he had asked in a low even voice. "Absolutely nothing, Sir," said the agent, suddenly white to the lips....

Old Grammont stared at his memory of that moment for a while. That affair was all right, quite all right. Of course it was all right. And also, happily, Caston was among the dead. But it was well her broken engagement with Lake had been resumed as though it had never been broken off. If there had been any talk that fact answered it. And now that Lake had served his purpose old Grammont did not care in the least if he was shelved. V.V. could stand alone.

Old Grammont had got a phrase in his mind that looked like dominating the situation. He dreamt of saying to V.V.: "V.V., I'm going to make a man of you — if you're man enough." That was a large proposition; it implied — oh! it implied all sorts of things. It meant that she would care as little for philandering as an able young business man. Perhaps some day, a long time ahead, she might marry. There wasn't much reason for it, but it might be she would not wish to be called a spinster. "Take a husband," thought old Grammont, "when I am gone, as one takes a butler, to make the household complete." In previous meditations on his daughter's outlook old Grammont had found much that was very suggestive in the precedent of Queen Victoria. She had had no husband of the lord and master type, so to speak, but only a Prince Consort, well in hand.

Why shouldn't the Grammont heiress dominate her male belonging, if it came to that, in the same fashion? Why shouldn't one tie her up and tie the whole thing up, so far as any male belonging was concerned, leaving V.V. in all other respects free? How could one do it?

The speculative calm of the sunken brown eyes deepened.

His thoughts went back to the white face of the private enquiry agent. "Absolutely nothing, Sir." What had the fellow thought of hinting? Nothing of that kind in V.V.'s composition, never fear. Yet it was a curious anomaly that while one had a thousand ways of defending one's daughter and one's property against that daughter's husband, there was no power on earth by which a father could stretch his dead hand between that daughter and the undue influence of a lover. Unless you tied her up for good and all, lover or none....

One was left at the mercy of V.V.'s character....

"I ought to see more of her," he thought. "She gets away from me. Just as her mother did." A man need not suspect his womenkind but he should know what they are doing. It is duty, his protective duty to them. These companions, these Seyffert women and so forth, were all very well in their way; there wasn't much they kept from you if you got them cornered and asked them intently. But a father's eye is better. He must go about with the girl for a time, watch her with other men, give her chances to talk business with him and see if she took them. "V.V., I'm going to make a man of you," the phrase ran through his brain. The deep instinctive jealousy of the primordial father was still strong in old Grammont's blood. It would be pleasant to go about with her on his right hand in Paris, HIS girl, straight and lovely, desirable and unapproachable, — above that sort of nonsense, above all other masculine subjugation.

"V.V., I'm going to make a man of you...."

His mind grew calmer. Whatever she wanted in Paris should be hers. He'd just let her rip. They'd be like sweethearts together, he and his girl.

Old Grammont dozed off into dreamland.

Section 5

The imaginations of Mr. Gunter Lake, two days behind Mr. Grammont upon the Atlantic, were of a gentler, more romantic character. In them V.V. was no longer a daughter in the fierce focus of a father's jealousy, but the goddess enshrined in a good man's heart. Indeed the figure that the limelight of the reverie fell upon was not V.V. at all but Mr. Gunter Lake himself, in his favourite role of the perfect lover.

An interminable speech unfolded itself. "I ask for nothing in return. I've never worried you about that Caston business and I never will. Married to me you shall be as free as if you were unmarried. Don't I know, my dear girl, that you don't love me yet. Let that be as you wish. I want nothing you are not willing to give me, nothing at all. All I ask is the privilege of making life happy — and it shall be happy — for you.... All I ask. All I ask. Protect, guard, cherish...."

For to Mr. Gunter Lake it seemed there could be no lovelier thing in life than a wife "in name only" slowly warmed into a glow of passion by the steadfast devotion and the strength and wisdom of a mate at first despised. Until at last a day would come....

"My darling!" Mr. Gunter Lake whispered to the darkness. "My little guurl. IT HAS BEEN WORTH THE WAITING...."

Section 6

Miss Grammont met Sir Richmond in the bureau of the Old George with a telegram in her hand. "My father reported his latitude and longitude by wireless last night. The London people think he will be off Falmouth in four days' time. He wants me to join his liner there and go on to Cherbourg and Paris. He's arranged that. He is the sort of man who can arrange things like that. There'll be someone at Falmouth to look after us and put us aboard the liner. I must wire them where I can pick up a telegram to-morrow."

"Wells in Somerset," said Sir Richmond.

His plans were already quite clear. He explained that he wanted her first to see Shaftesbury, a little old Wessex town that was three or four hundred years older than Salisbury, perched on a hill, a Saxon town, where Alfred had gathered his forces against the Danes and where Canute, who had ruled over all Scandinavia and Iceland and

Greenland, and had come near ruling a patch of America, had died. It was a little sleepy place now, looking out dreamily over beautiful views. They would lunch in Shaftesbury and walk round it. Then they would go in the afternoon through the pleasant west country where the Celts had prevailed against the old folk of the Stonehenge temple and the Romans against the Celts and the Saxons against the Romanized Britons and the Danes against the Saxons, a war-scarred landscape, abounding in dykes and entrenchments and castles, sunken now into the deepest peace, to Glastonbury to see what there was to see of a marsh village the Celts had made for themselves three or four hundred years before the Romans came. And at Glastonbury also there were the ruins of a great Benedictine church and abbey that had once rivalled Salisbury. Thence they would go on to Wells to see yet another great cathedral and to dine and sleep. Glastonbury Abbey and Wells Cathedral brought the story of Europe right up to Reformation times.

"That will be a good day for us," said Sir Richmond. "It will be like turning over the pages of the history of our family, to and fro. There will be nothing nearly so old as Avebury in it, but there will be something from almost every chapter that comes after Stonehenge. Rome will be poorly represented, but that may come the day after at Bath. And the next day too I want to show you something of our old River Severn. We will come right up to the present if we go through Bristol. There we shall have a whiff of America, our new find, from which the tobacco comes, and we shall be reminded of how we set sail thither — was it yesterday or the day before? You will understand at Bristol how it is that the energy has gone out of this dreaming land — to Africa and America and the whole wide world. It was the good men of Bristol, by the bye, with their trade from Africa to America, who gave you your colour problem. Bristol we may go through to-morrow and Gloucester, mother of I don't know how many American Gloucesters. Bath we'll get in somehow. And then as an Anglo-American showman I shall be tempted to run you northward a little way past Tewkesbury, just to go into a church here and there and show you monuments bearing little shields with the stars and stripes upon them, a few stars and a few stripes, the Washington family monuments."

“It was not only from England that America came,” said Miss Grammont.

“But England takes an American memory back most easily and most fully — to Avebury and the Baltic Northmen, past the emperors and the Corinthian columns that smothered Latin Europe.... For you and me anyhow this is our past, this was our childhood, and this is our land.” He interrupted laughing as she was about to reply. “Well, anyhow,” he said, “it is a beautiful day and a pretty country before us with the ripest history in every grain of its soil. So we’ll send a wire to your London people and tell them to send their instructions to Wells.”

“I’ll tell Belinda,” she said, “to be quick with her packing.”

Section 7

As Miss Grammont and Sir Richmond Hardy fulfilled the details of his excellent programme and revised their impressions of the past and their ideas about the future in the springtime sunlight of Wiltshire and Somerset, with Miss Seyffert acting the part of an almost ostentatiously discreet chorus, it was inevitable that their conversation should become, by imperceptible gradations, more personal and intimate. They kept up the pose, which was supposed to represent Dr. Martineau’s philosophy, of being Man and Woman on their Planet considering its Future, but insensibly they developed the idiosyncrasies of their position. They might profess to be Man and Woman in the most general terms, but the facts that she was the daughter not of Everyman but old Grammont and that Sir Richmond was the angry leader of a minority upon the Fuel Commission became more and more important. “What shall we do with this planet of ours?” gave way by the easiest transitions to “What are you and I doing and what have we got to do? How do you feel about it all? What do you desire and what do you dare?”

It was natural that Sir Richmond should talk of his Fuel Commission to a young woman whose interests in fuel were even greater than his own. He found that she was very much better read than he was in the recent literature of socialism, and that she had what he considered to be a most unfeminine grasp of economic ideas.

He thought her attitude towards socialism a very sane one because it was also his own. So far as socialism involved the idea of a scientific control of natural resources as a common property administered in the common interest, she and he were very greatly attracted by it; but so far as it served as a form of expression for the merely insubordinate discontent of the many with the few, under any conditions, so long as it was a formula for class jealousy and warfare, they were both repelled by it. If she had had any illusions about the working class possessing as a class any profounder political wisdom or more generous public impulses than any other class, those illusions had long since departed. People were much the same, she thought, in every class; there was no stratification of either rightness or righteousness.

He found he could talk to her of his work and aims upon the Fuel Commission and of the conflict and failure of motives he found in himself, as freely as he had done to Dr. Martineau and with a surer confidence of understanding. Perhaps his talks with the doctor had got his ideas into order and made them more readily expressible than they would have been otherwise. He argued against the belief that any class could be good as a class or bad as a class, and he instanced the conflict of motives he found in all the members of his Committee and most so in himself. He repeated the persuasion he had already confessed to Dr. Martineau that there was not a single member of the Fuel Commission but had a considerable drive towards doing the right thing about fuel, and not one who had a single-minded, unencumbered drive towards the right thing. “That,” said Sir Richmond, “is what makes life so interesting and, in spite of a thousand tragic disappointments, so hopeful. Every man is a bad man, every man is a feeble man and every man is a good man. My motives come and go. Yours do the same. We vary in response to the circumstances about us. Given a proper atmosphere, most men will be public-spirited, right-living, generous. Given perplexities and darkness, most of us can be cowardly and vile. People say you cannot change human nature and perhaps that is true, but you can change its responses endlessly. The other day I was in Bohemia, discussing Silesian coal with Benes, and I went to see the Festival of the Bohemian Sokols. Opposite to where I sat, far away across the

arena, was a great bank of men of the Sokol organizations, an unbroken brown mass wrapped in their brown uniform cloaks. Suddenly the sun came out and at a word the whole body flung back their cloaks, showed their Garibaldi shirts and became one solid blaze of red. It was an amazing transformation until one understood what had happened. Yet nothing material had changed but the sunshine. And given a change in laws and prevailing ideas, and the very same people who are greedy traders, grasping owners and revolting workers to-day will all throw their cloaks aside and you will find them working together cheerfully, even generously, for a common end. They aren't traders and owners and workers and so forth by any inner necessity. Those are just the ugly parts they play in the present drama. Which is nearly at the end of its run."

"That's a hopeful view," said Miss Grammont. "I don't see the flaw in it — if there is a flaw."

"There isn't one," said Sir Richmond. "It is my chief discovery about life. I began with the question of fuel and the energy it affords mankind, and I have found that my generalization applies to all human affairs. Human beings are fools, weaklings, cowards, passionate idiots, — I grant you. That is the brown cloak side of them, so to speak. But they are not such fools and so forth that they can't do pretty well materially if once we hammer out a sane collective method of getting and using fuel. Which people generally will understand — in the place of our present methods of snatch and wrangle. Of that I am absolutely convinced. Some work, some help, some willingness you can get out of everybody. That's the red. And the same principle applies to most labour and property problems, to health, to education, to population, social relationships and war and peace. We haven't got the right system, we have inefficient half-baked systems, or no system at all, and a wild confusion and war of ideas in all these respects. But there is a right system possible none the less. Let us only hammer our way through to the sane and reasonable organization in this and that and the other human affairs, and once we have got it, we shall have got it for good. We may not live to see even the beginnings of success, but the spirit of order, the spirit that has already produced organized science, if only there are a few faithful, persistent people to stick to the job, will in the long run

certainly save mankind and make human life clean and splendid, happy work in a clear mind. If I could live to see it!"

"And as for us — in our time?"

"Measured by the end we serve, we don't matter. You know we don't matter."

"We have to find our fun in the building and in our confidence that we do really build."

"So long as our confidence lasts there is no great hardship," said Sir Richmond.

"So long as our confidence lasts," she repeated after him.

"Ah!" cried Sir Richmond. "There it is! So long as our confidence lasts! So long as one keeps one's mind steady. That is what I came away with Dr. Martineau to discuss. I went to him for advice. I haven't known him for more than a month. It's amusing to find myself preaching forth to you. It was just faith I had lost. Suddenly I had lost my power of work. My confidence in the rightness of what I was doing evaporated. My will failed me. I don't know if you will understand what that means. It wasn't that my reason didn't assure me just as certainly as ever that what I was trying to do was the right thing to try to do. But somehow that seemed a cold and personally unimportant proposition. The life had gone out of it...."

He paused as if arrested by a momentary doubt.

"I don't know why I tell you these things," he said.

"You tell them me," she said.

"It's a little like a patient in a hydropath retailing his ailments."

"No. No. Go on."

"I began to think now that what took the go out of me as my work went on was the lack of any real fellowship in what I was doing. It was the pressure of the opposition in the Committee, day afterday. It was being up against men who didn't reason against me but who just showed by everything they did that the things I wanted to achieve didn't matter to them one rap. It was going back to a home, lunching in clubs, reading papers, going about a world in which all the organization, all the possibility of the organization I dream of is tacitly denied. I don't know if it seems an extraordinary confession of weakness to you, but that steady refusal of the majority of my Committee to come into co-operation with me has beaten me — or at

any rate has come very near to beating me. Most of them you know are such able men. You can FEEL their knowledge and commonsense. They, and everybody about me, seemed busy and intent upon more immediate things, that seemed more real to them than this remote, theoretical, PRIGGISH end I have set for myself....”

He paused.

“Go on,” said Miss Grammont. “I think I understand this.”

“And yet I know I am right.”

“I know you are right. I’m certain. Go on.

“If one of those ten thousand members of the Sokol Society had thrown back his brown cloak and shown red when all the others still kept them selves cloaked — if he was a normal sensitive man — he might have felt something of a fool. He might have felt premature and presumptuous. Red he was and the others he knew were red also, but why show it? That is the peculiar distress of people like ourselves, who have some sense of history and some sense of a larger life within us than our merely personal life. We don’t want to go on with the old story merely. We want to live somehow in that larger life and to live for its greater ends and lose something unbearable of ourselves, and in wanting to do that we are only wanting to do what nearly everybody perhaps is ripe to do and will presently want to do. When the New Age Martineau talks about begins to come it may come very quickly — as the red came at Prague. But for the present everyone hesitates about throwing back the cloak.”

“Until the cloak becomes unbearable,” she said, repeating his word.

“I came upon this holiday in the queerest state. I thought I was ill. I thought I was overworked. But the real trouble was a loneliness that robbed me of all driving force. Nobody seemed thinking and feeling with me.... I have never realized until now what a gregarious beast man is. It needed only a day or so with Martineau, in the atmosphere of ideas and beliefs like my own, to begin my restoration. Now as I talk to you — That is why I have clutched at your company. Because here you are, coming from thousands of miles away, and you talk my ideas, you fall into my ways of thought as though we had gone to the same school.”

“Perhaps we HAVE gone to the same school,” she said.

“You mean?”

“Disappointment. Disillusionment. Having to find something better in life than the first things it promised us.”

“But you — ? Disappointed? I thought that in America people might be educating already on different lines—”

“Even in America,” Miss Grammont said, “crops only grow on the ploughed land.”

Section 8

Glastonbury in the afternoon was wonderful; they talked of Avalon and of that vanished legendary world of King Arthur and his knights, and in the early evening they came to Wells and a pleasant inn, with a quaint little garden before its front door that gave directly upon the cathedral. The three tourists devoted a golden half hour before dinner to the sculptures on the western face. The great screen of wrought stone rose up warmly, grey and clear and distinct against a clear blue sky in which the moon hung, round and already bright. That western facade with its hundreds of little figures tells the whole story of God and Man from Adam to the Last Judgment, as the mediaeval mind conceived it. It is an even fuller exposition than the carved Bible history that goes round the chapter house at Salisbury. It presented the universe, said Sir Richmond, as a complete crystal globe. It explained everything in life in a simple and natural manner, hope, heaven, devil and despair. Generations had lived and died mentally within that crystal globe, convinced that it was all and complete.

“And now,” said Miss Grammont, “we are in limitless space and time. The crystal globe is broken.”

“And?” said Belinda amazingly — for she had been silent for some time, “the goldfish are on the floor, V.V. Free to flop about. Are they any happier?”

It was one of those sudden rhetorical triumphs that are best left alone. “I trow not,” said Belinda, giving the last touch to it.

After dinner Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont walked round the cathedral and along by the moat of the bishop’s palace, and Miss Seyffert stayed in the hotel to send off postcards to her friends, a duty

she had neglected for some days. The evening was warm and still and the moon was approaching its full and very bright. Insensibly the soft afterglow passed into moonlight.

At first the two companions talked very little. Sir Richmond was well content with this tacit friendliness and Miss Grammont was preoccupied because she was very strongly moved to tell him things about herself that hitherto she had told to no one. It was not merely that she wanted to tell him these things but also that for reasons she did not put as yet very clearly to herself she thought they were things he ought to know. She talked of herself at first in general terms. "Life comes on anyone with a rush, childhood seems lasting for ever and then suddenly one tears into life," she said. It was even more so for women than it was for men. You are shown life, a crowded vast spectacle full of what seems to be intensely interesting activities and endless delightful and frightful and tragic possibilities, and you have hardly had time to look at it before you are called upon to make decisions. And there is something in your blood that urges you to decisive acts. Your mind, your reason resists. "Give me time," it says. "They clamour at you with treats, crowds, shows, theatres, all sorts of things; lovers buzz at you, each trying to fix you part of his life when you are trying to get clear to live a little of your own." Her father had had one merit at any rate. He had been jealous of her lovers and very ready to interfere.

"I wanted a lover to love," she said. "Every girl of course wants that. I wanted to be tremendously excited.... And at the same time I dreaded the enormous interference....

"I wasn't temperamentally a cold girl. Men interested and excited me, but there were a lot of men about and they clashed with each other. Perhaps way down in some out of the way place I should have fallen in love quite easily with the one man who came along. But no man fixed his image. After a year or so I think I began to lose the power which is natural to a young girl of falling very easily into love. I became critical of the youths and men who were attracted to me and I became analytical about myself....

"I suppose it is because you and I are going to part so soon that I can speak so freely to you.... But there are things about myself that I have never had out even with myself. I can talk to myself in you—"

She paused baffled. “I know exactly,” said Sir Richmond.

“In my composition I perceive there have always been two ruling strains. I was a spoilt child at home, a rather reserved girl at school, keen on my dignity. I liked respect. I didn’t give myself away. I suppose one would call that personal pride. Anyhow it was that streak made me value the position of being a rich married woman in New York. That was why I became engaged to Lake. He seemed to be as good a man as there was about. He said he adored me and wanted me to crown his life. He wasn’t ill-looking or ill-mannered. The second main streak in my nature wouldn’t however fit in with that.”

She stopped short.

“The second streak,” said Sir Richmond.

“Oh! — Love of beauty, love of romance. I want to give things their proper names; I don’t want to pretend to you.... It was more or less than that.... It was — imaginative sensuousness. Why should I pretend it wasn’t in me? I believe that streak is in all women.”

“I believe so too. In all properly constituted women.”

“I tried to devote that streak to Lake,” she said. “I did my best for him. But Lake was much too much of a gentleman or an idealist about women, or what you will, to know his business as a lover. And that side of me fell in love, the rest of me protesting, with a man named Caston. It was a notorious affair. Everybody in New York couples my name with Caston. Except when my father is about. His jealousy has blasted an area of silence — in that matter — all round him. He will not know of that story. And they dare not tell him. I should pity anyone who tried to tell it him.”

“What sort of man was this Caston?”

Miss Grammont seemed to consider. She did not look at Sir Richmond; she kept her profile to him.

“He was,” she said deliberately, “a very rotten sort of man.”

She spoke like one resolved to be exact and judicial. “I believe I always knew he wasn’t right. But he was very handsome. And ten years younger than Lake. And nobody else seemed to be all right, so I swallowed that. He was an artist, a painter. Perhaps you know his work.” Sir Richmond shook his head. “He could make American business men look like characters out of the Three Musketeers, they

said, and he was beginning to be popular. He made love to me. In exactly the way Lake didn't. If I shut my eyes to one or two things, it was delightful. I liked it. But my father would have stood a painter as my husband almost as cheerfully as he would a man of colour. I made a fool of myself, as people say, about Caston. Well — when the war came, he talked in a way that irritated me. He talked like an East Side Annunzio, about art and war. It made me furious to know it was all talk and that he didn't mean business.... I made him go."

She paused for a moment. "He hated to go."

"Then I relented. Or I missed him and I wanted to be made love to. Or I really wanted to go on my own account. I forget. I forget my motives altogether now. That early war time was a queer time for everyone. A kind of wildness got into the blood.... I threw over Lake. All the time things had been going on in New York I had still been engaged to Lake. I went to France. I did good work. I did do good work. And also things were possible that would have seemed fantastic in America. You know something of the war-time atmosphere. There was death everywhere and people snatched at gratifications. Caston made 'To-morrow we die' his text. We contrived three days in Paris together — not very cleverly. All sorts of people know about it.... We went very far."

She stopped short. "Well?" said Sir Richmond.

"He did die...."

Another long pause. "They told me Caston had been killed. But someone hinted — or I guessed — that there was more in it than an ordinary casualty.

"Nobody, I think, realizes that I know. This is the first time I have ever confessed that I do know. He was — shot. He was shot for cowardice."

"That might happen to any man," said Sir Richmond presently. "No man is a hero all round the twenty-four hours. Perhaps he was caught by circumstances, unprepared. He may have been taken by surprise."

"It was the most calculated, cold-blooded cowardice imaginable. He let three other men go on and get killed..."

"No. It is no good your inventing excuses for a man you know nothing about. It was vile, contemptible cowardice and meanness. It

fitted in with a score of ugly little things I remembered. It explained them all. I know the evidence and the judgment against him were strictly just and true, because they were exactly in character.... And that, you see, was my man. That was the lover I had chosen. That was the man to whom I had given myself with both hands."

Her soft unhurrying voice halted for a time, and then resumed in the same even tones of careful statement. "I wasn't disgusted, not even with myself. About him I was chiefly sorry, intensely sorry, because I had made him come out of a life that suited and protected him, to the war. About myself, I was stunned and perplexed. I had the clearest realization that what you and I have been calling the bright little personal life had broken off short and was spoilt and over and done with. I felt as though it was my body they had shot. And there I was, with fifty years of life left in me and nothing particular to do with them."

"That was just the prelude to life, said Sir Richmond.

"It didn't seem so at the time. I felt I had to got hold of something or go to pieces. I couldn't turn to religion. I had no religion. And Duty? What is Duty? I set myself to that. I had a kind of revelation one night. 'Either I find out what all this world is about, I said, or I perish.' I have lost myself and I must forget myself by getting hold of something bigger than myself. And becoming that. That's why I have been making a sort of historical pilgrimage.... That's my story, Sir Richmond. That's my education.... Somehow though your troubles are different, it seems to me that my little muddle makes me understand how it is with you. What you've got, this idea of a scientific ordering of the world, is what I, in my younger, less experienced way, have been feeling my way towards. I want to join on. I want to got hold of this idea of a great fuel control in the world and of a still greater economic and educational control of which it is a part. I want to make that idea a part of myself. Rather I want to make myself a part of it. When you talk of it I believe in it altogether."

"And I believe in it, when I talk of it to you."

Section 9

Sir Richmond was stirred very deeply by Miss Grammont's confidences. His dispute with Dr. Martineau was present in his mind, so that he did not want to make love to her. But he was extremely anxious to express his vivid sense of the value of her friendship. And while he hesitated over this difficult and unfamiliar task she began to talk again of herself, and in such a way as to give a new turn to Sir Richmond's thoughts.

"Perhaps I ought to tell you a little more about myself," she said; "now that I have told you so much. I did a thing that still puzzles me. I was filled with a sense of hopeless disaster in France and I suppose I had some sort of desperate idea of saving something out of the situation.... I renewed my correspondence with Gunter Lake. He made the suggestion I knew he would make, and I renewed our engagement."

"To go back to wealth and dignity in New York?"

"Yes."

"But you don't love him?"

"That's always been plain to me. But what I didn't realize, until I had given my promise over again, was that I dislike him acutely."

"You hadn't realized that before?"

"I hadn't thought about him sufficiently. But now I had to think about him a lot. The other affair had given me an idea perhaps of what it means to be married to a man. And here I am drifting back to him. The horrible thing about him is the steady ENVELOPING way in which he has always come at me. Without fellowship. Without any community of ideas. Ready to make the most extraordinary bargains. So long as he can in any way fix me and get me. What does it mean? What is there behind those watching, soliciting eyes of his? I don't in the least love him, and this desire and service and all the rest of it he offers me — it's not love. It's not even such love as Caston gave me. It's a game he plays with his imagination."

She had released a flood of new ideas in Sir Richmond's mind. "This is illuminating," he said. "You dislike Lake acutely. You always have disliked him."

"I suppose I have. But it's only now I admit it to myself."

"Yes. And you might, for example, have married him in New York before the war."

“It came very near to that.”

“And then probably you wouldn’t have discovered you disliked him. You wouldn’t have admitted it to yourself.”

“I suppose I shouldn’t. I suppose I should have tried to believe I loved him.”

“Women do this sort of thing. Odd! I never realized it before. And there are endless wives suppressing an acute dislike. My wife does. I see now quite clearly that she detests me. Reasonably enough. From her angle I’m entirely detestable. But she won’t admit it, won’t know of it. She never will. To the end of my life, always, she will keep that detestation unconfessed. She puts a face on the matter. We both do. And this affair of yours.... Have you thought how unjust it is to Lake?”

“Not nearly so much as I might have done.”

“It is unfair to him. Atrociously unfair. He’s not my sort of man, perhaps, but it will hurt him cruelly according to the peculiar laws of his being. He seems to me a crawling sort of lover with an immense self-conceit at the back of his crawlingness.”

“He has,” she endorsed.

“He backs himself to crawl — until he crawls triumphantly right over you.... I don’t like to think of the dream he has.... I take it he will lose. Is it fair to go into this game with him?”

“In the interests of Lake,” she said, smiling softly at Sir Richmond in the moonlight. “But you are perfectly right.”

“And suppose he doesn’t lose!”

Sir Richmond found himself uttering sentiments.

“There is only one decent way in which a civilized man and a civilized woman may approach one another. Passionate desire is not enough. What is called love is not enough. Pledges, rational considerations, all these things are worthless. All these things are compatible with hate. The primary essential is friendship, clear understanding, absolute confidence. Then within that condition, in that elect relationship, love is permissible, mating, marriage or no marriage, as you will — all things are permissible....”

Came a long pause between them.

“Dear old cathedral,” said Miss Grammont, a little irrelevantly. She had an air of having concluded something that to Sir Richmond

seemed scarcely to have begun. She stood looking at the great dark facade edged with moonlight for some moments, and then turned towards the hotel, which showed a pink-lit window.

"I wonder," she said, "if Belinda is still up, And what she will think when I tell her of the final extinction of Mr. Lake. I think she rather looked forward to being the intimate friend, secrets and everything, of Mrs. Gunter Lake."

Section 10

Sir Richmond woke up at dawn and he woke out of an extraordinary dream. He was saying to Miss Grammont: "There is no other marriage than the marriage of true minds. There is no other marriage than the marriage of true minds." He saw her as he had seen her the evening before, light and cool, coming towards him in the moonlight from the hotel. But also in the inconsistent way of dreams he was very close to her kind, faintly smiling face, and his eyes were wet with tears and he was kissing her hand. "My dear wife and mate," he was saying, and suddenly he was kissing her cool lips.

He woke up and stared at his dream, which faded out only very slowly before the fresh sun rise upon the red tiles and tree boughs outside the open window, and before the first stir and clamour of the birds.

He felt like a court in which some overwhelmingly revolutionary piece of evidence had been tendered. All the elaborate defence had broken down at one blow. He sat up on the edge of his bed, facing the new fact.

"This is monstrous and ridiculous," he said, "and Martineau judged me exactly. I am in love with her.... I am head over heels in love with her. I have never been so much in love or so truly in love with anyone before."

Section 11

That was the dawn of a long day of tension for Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont. Because each was now vividly aware of being in love with the other and so neither was able to see how things were

with the other. They were afraid of each other. A restraint had come upon them both, a restraint that was greatly enhanced by their sense of Belinda, acutely observant, ostentatiously tactful and self-effacing, and prepared at the slightest encouragement to be overwhelmingly romantic and sympathetic. Their talk waned, and was revived to an artificial activity and waned again. The historical interest had evaporated from the west of England and left only an urgent and embarrassing present.

But the loveliness of the weather did not fail, and the whole day was set in Severn landscapes. They first saw the great river like a sea with the Welsh mountains hanging in the sky behind as they came over the Mendip crest above Shipham. They saw it again as they crossed the hill before Clifton Bridge, and so they continued, climbing to hill crests for views at Alveston and near Dursley, and so to Gloucester and the lowest bridge and thence back down stream again through fat meadow lands at first and much apple-blossom and then over gentle hills through wide, pale Nownham and Lidney and Alvington and Woolaston to old Chepstow and its brown castle, always with the widening estuary to the left of them and its foaming shoals and shining sand banks. From Chepstow they turned back north along the steep Wye gorge to Tintern, and there at the snug little Beaufort Arms with its prim lawn and flower garden they ended the day's journey.

Tintern Abbey they thought a poor graceless mass of ruin down beside the river, and it was fenced about jealously and locked up from their invasion. After dinner Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont went for a walk in the mingled twilight and moonlight up the hill towards Chepstow. Both of them were absurdly and nervously pressing to Belinda to come with them, but she was far too wise to take this sudden desire for her company seriously. Her dinner shoes, she said, were too thin. Perhaps she would change and come out a little later. "Yes, come later," said Miss Grammont and led the way to the door.

They passed through the garden. "I think we go up the hill? " said Sir Richmond.

"Yes," she agreed, "up the hill."

Followed a silence.

Sir Richmond made an effort, but after some artificial and disconnected talk about Tintern Abbey, concerning, which she had no history ready, and then, still lamer, about whether Monmouthshire is in England or Wales, silence fell again. The silence lengthened, assumed a significance, a dignity that no common words might break.

Then Sir Richmond spoke. “I love, you,” he said, “with all my heart.”

Her soft voice came back after a stillness. “I love you,” she said, “with all myself.”

“I had long ceased to hope,” said Sir Richmond, “that I should ever find a friend... a lover... perfect companionship....”

They went on walking side by side, without touching each other or turning to each other.

“All the things I wanted to think I believe have come alive in me,” she said....

“Cool and sweet,” said Sir Richmond. “Such happiness as I could not have imagined.”

The light of a silent bicycle appeared above them up the hill and swept down upon them, lit their two still faces brightly and passed.

“My dear,” she whispered in the darkness between the high hedges.

They stopped short and stood quite still, trembling. He saw her face, dim and tender, looking up to his.

Then he took her in his arms and kissed her lips as he had desired in his dream....

When they returned to the inn Belinda Seyffert offered flat explanations of why she had not followed them, and enlarged upon the moonlight effect of the Abbey ruins from the inn lawn. But the scared congratulations in her eyes betrayed her recognition that momentous things had happened between the two.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

FULL MOON

Section 1

Sir Richmond had talked in the moonlight and shadows of having found such happiness as he could not have imagined. But when he awoke in the night that happiness had evaporated. He awoke suddenly out of this love dream that had lasted now for nearly four days and he awoke in a mood of astonishment and dismay.

He had thought that when he parted from Dr. Martineau he had parted also from that process of self-exploration that they had started together, but now he awakened to find it established and in full activity in his mind. Something or someone, a sort of etherealized Martineau-Hardy, an abstracted intellectual conscience, was demanding what he thought he was doing with Miss Grammont and whither he thought he was taking her, how he proposed to reconcile the close relationship with her that he was now embarked upon with, in the first place, his work upon and engagements with the Fuel Commission, and, in the second place, Martin Leeds. Curiously enough Lady Hardy didn't come into the case at all. He had done his utmost to keep Martin Leeds out of his head throughout the development of this affair. Now in an unruly and determined way that was extremely characteristic of her she seemed resolute to break in.

She appeared as an advocate, without affection for her client but without any hostility, of the claims of Miss Grammont to be let alone. The elaborate pretence that Sir Richmond had maintained to himself that he had not made love to Miss Grammont, that their mutual attraction had been irresistible and had achieved its end in spite of their resolute and complete detachment, collapsed and vanished from his mind. He admitted to himself that driven by a kind of instinctive necessity he had led their conversation step by step to a realization and declaration of love, and that it did not exonerate him in the least that Miss Grammont had been quite ready and willing to

help him and meet him half way. She wanted love as a woman does, more than a man does, and he had steadily presented himself as a man free to love, able to love and loving.

"She wanted a man to love, she wanted perfected fellowship, and you have made her that tremendous promise. That was implicit in your embrace. And how can you keep that promise?"

It was as if Martin spoke; it was her voice; it was the very quality of her thought.

"You belong to this work of yours, which must needs be interrupted or abandoned if you take her. Whatever is not mortgaged to your work is mortgaged to me. For the strange thing in all this is that you and I love one another — and have no power to do otherwise. In spite of all this.

"You have nothing to give her but stolen goods," said the shadow of Martin. "You have nothing to give anyone personally any more....

"Think of the love that she desires and think of this love that you can give....

"Is there any new thing in you that you can give her that you haven't given me? You and I know each other very well; perhaps I know YOU too well. Haven't you loved me as much as you can love anyone? Think of all that there has been between us that you are ready now, eager now to set aside and forget as though it had never been. For four days you have kept me out of your mind in order to worship her. Yet you have known I was there — for all you would not know. No one else will ever be so intimate with you as I am. We have quarrelled together, wept together, jested happily and jested bitterly. You have spared me not at all. Pitiless and cruel you have been to me. You have reckoned up all my faults against me as though they were sins. You have treated me at times unlovingly — never was lover treated so unlovingly as you have sometimes treated me. And yet I have your love — as no other woman can ever have it. Even now when you are wildly in love with this girl's freshness and boldness and cleverness I come into your mind by right and necessity."

"She is different," argued Sir Richmond.

"But you are the same," said the shadow of Martin with Martin's unsparing return. "Your love has never been a steadfast thing. It

comes and goes like the wind. You are an extravagantly imperfect lover. But I have learnt to accept you, as people accept the English weather.... Never in all your life have you loved, wholly, fully, steadfastly — as people deserve to be loved — not your mother nor your father, not your wife nor your children, nor me, nor our child, nor any living thing. Pleasant to all of us at times — at times bitterly disappointing. You do not even love this work of yours steadfastly, this work to which you sacrifice us all in turn. You do not love enough. That is why you have these moods and changes, that is why you have these lassitudes. So it is you are made....

"And that is why you must not take this brave young life, so much simpler and braver than your own, and exalt it — as you can do — and then fail it, as you will do...."

Sir Richmond's mind and body lay very still for a time.

"Should I fail her?..."

For a time Martin Leeds passed from the foreground of his mind.

He was astonished to think how planless, instinctive and unforeseeing his treatment of Miss Grammont had been. It had been just a blind drive to get hold of her and possess her....

Suddenly his passion for her became active in its defence again.

"But is there such a thing as a perfect love? Is YOURS a perfect love, my dear Martin, with its insatiable jealousy, its ruthless criticism? Has the world ever seen a perfect lover yet? Isn't it our imperfection that brings us together in a common need? Is Miss Grammont, after all, likely to get a more perfect love in all her life than this poor love of mine? And isn't it good for her that she should love?"

"Perfect love cherishes. Perfect love foregoes."

Sir Richmond found his mind wandering far away from the immediate question. "Perfect love," the phrase was his point of departure. Was it true that he could not love passionately and completely? Was that fundamentally what was the matter with him? Was that perhaps what was the matter with the whole world of mankind? It had not yet come to that power of loving which makes action full and simple and direct and unhesitating. Man upon his planet has not grown up to love, is still an eager, egotistical and fluctuating adolescent. He lacks the courage to love and the wisdom

to love. Love is here. But it comes and goes, it is mixed with greeds and jealousies and cowardice and cowardly reservations. One hears it only in snatches and single notes. It is like something tuning up before the Music begins.... The metaphor altogether ran away with Sir Richmond's half dreaming mind. Some day perhaps all life would go to music.

Love was music and power. If he had loved enough he need never have drifted away from his wife. Love would have created love, would have tolerated and taught and inspired. Where there is perfect love there is neither greed nor impatience. He would have done his work calmly. He would have won his way with his Committee instead of fighting and quarrelling with it perpetually....

"Flimsy creatures," he whispered. "Uncertain health. Uncertain strength. A will that comes and goes. Moods of baseness. Moods of utter beastliness.... Love like April sunshine. April?..."

He dozed and dreamt for a time of spring passing into a high summer sunshine, into a continuing music, of love. He thought of a world like some great playhouse in which players and orchestra and audience all co-operate in a noble production without dissent or conflict. He thought he was the savage of thirty thousand years ago dreaming of the great world that is still perhaps thirty thousand years ahead. His effort to see more of that coming world than indistinct and cloudy pinnacles and to hear more than a vague music, dissolved his dream and left him awake again and wrestling with the problem of Miss Grammont.

Section 2

The shadow of Martin stood over him, inexorable. He had to release Miss Grammont from the adventure into which he had drawn her. This decision stood out stern-and inevitable in his mind with no conceivable alternative.

As he looked at the task before him he began to realize its difficulty. He was profoundly in love with her, he was still only learning how deeply, and she was not going to play a merely passive part in this affair. She was perhaps as deeply in love with him....

He could not bring himself to the idea of confessions and

disavowals. He could not bear to think of her disillusionment. He felt that he owed it to her not to disillusion her, to spoil things for her in that fashion. “To turn into something mean and ugly after she has believed in me.... It would be like playing a practical joke upon her. It would be like taking her into my arms and suddenly making a grimace at her.... It would scar her with a second humiliation....”

Should he take her on to Bath or Exeter to-morrow and contrive by some sudden arrival of telegrams that he had to go from her suddenly? But a mere sudden parting would not end things between them now unless he went off abruptly without explanations or any arrangements for further communications. At the outset of this escapade there had been a tacit but evident assumption that it was to end when she joined her father at Falmouth. It was with an effect of discovery that Sir Richmond realized that now it could not end in that fashion, that with the whisper of love and the touching of lips, something had been started that would go on, that would develop. To break off now and go away without a word would leave a raw and torn end, would leave her perplexed and perhaps even more humiliated with an aching mystery to distress her. “Why did he go? Was it something I said? — something he found out or imagined?”

Parting had disappeared as a possible solution of this problem. She and he had got into each other’s lives to stay: the real problem was the terms upon which they were to stay in each other’s lives. Close association had brought them to the point of being, in the completest sense, lovers; that could not be; and the real problem was the transmutation of their relationship to some form compatible with his honour and her happiness. A word, an idea, from some recent reading floated into Sir Richmond’s head. “Sublimate,” he whispered. “We have to sublimate this affair. We have to put this relationship upon a Higher Plane.”

His mind stopped short at that.

Presently his voice sounded out of the depths of his heart. “God! How I loathe the Higher Plane!....

“God has put me into this Higher Plane business like some poor little kid who has to wear irons on its legs.”

“I WANT her.... Do you hear, Martin? I want her.”

As if by a lightning flash he saw his car with himself and Miss

Grammont — Miss Seyffert had probably fallen out — traversing Europe and Asia in headlong flight. To a sunlit beach in the South Seas....

His thoughts presently resumed as though these unmannerly and fantastic interruptions had not occurred.

"We have to carry the whole affair on to a Higher Plane — and keep it there. We two love one another — that has to be admitted now. (I ought never to have touched her. I ought never to have thought of touching her.) But we two are too high, our aims and work and obligations are too high for any ordinary love making. That sort of thing would embarrass us, would spoil everything.

"Spoil everything," he repeated, rather like a small boy who learns an unpalatable lesson.

For a time Sir Richmond, exhausted by moral effort, lay staring at the darkness.

"It has to be done. I believe I can carry her through with it if I can carry myself. She's a finer thing than I am.... On the whole I am glad it's only one more day. Belinda will be about.... Afterwards we can write to each other.... If we can get over the next day it will be all right. Then we can write about fuel and politics — and there won't be her voice and her presence. We shall really SUBLIMATE.... First class idea — sublimate!.... And I will go back to dear old Martin who's all alone there and miserable; I'll be kind to her and play my part and tell her her Carbuncle scar rather becomes her.... And in a little while I shall be altogether in love with her again.

"Queer what a brute I've always been to Martin."

"Queer that Martin can come in a dream to me and take the upper hand with me.

"Queer that NOW — I love Martin."

He thought still more profoundly. "By the time the Committee meets again I shall have been tremendously refreshed."

He repeated:— "Put things on the Higher Plane and keep them there. Then go back to Martin. And so to the work. That's it...."

Nothing so pacifies the mind as a clear-cut purpose. Sir Richmond fell asleep during the fourth recapitulation of this programme.

Section 3

When Miss Grammont appeared at breakfast Sir Richmond saw at once that she too had had a restless night. When she came into the little long breakfast room of the inn with its brown screens and its neat white tables it seemed to him that the Miss Grammont of his nocturnal speculations, the beautiful young lady who had to be protected and managed and loved unselfishly, vanished like some exorcised intruder. Instead was this real dear young woman, who had been completely forgotten during the reign of her simulacrum and who now returned completely remembered, familiar, friendly, intimate. She touched his hand for a moment, she met his eyes with the shadow of a smile in her own.

"Oranges!" said Belinda from the table by the window. "Beautiful oranges."

She had been preparing them, poor Trans-atlantic exile, after the fashion in which grape fruits are prepared upon liners and in the civilized world of the west. "He's getting us tea spoons," said Belinda, as they sat down.

"This is realler England than ever," she said. "I've been up an hour. I found a little path down to the river bank. It's the greenest morning world and full of wild flowers. Look at these."

"That's lady's smock," said Sir Richmond. "It's not really a flower; it's a quotation from Shakespeare."

"And there are cowslips!"

"CUCKOO BUDS OF YELLOW HUE. DO PAINT THE MEADOWS WITH DELIGHT. All the English flowers come out of Shakespeare. I don't know what we did before his time."

The waiter arrived with the tea spoons for the oranges.

Belinda, having distributed these, resumed her discourse of enthusiasm for England. She asked a score of questions about Gloucester and Chepstow, the Severn and the Romans and the Welsh, and did not wait for the answers. She did not want answers; she talked to keep things going. Her talk masked a certain constraint that came upon her companions after the first morning's greetings were over.

Sir Richmond as he had planned upstairs produced two Michelin maps. "To-day," he said, "we will run back to Bath — from which it will be easy for you to train to Falmouth. We will go by Monmouth

and then turn back through the Forest of Dean, where you will get glimpses of primitive coal mines still worked by two men and a boy with a windlass and a pail. Perhaps we will go through Cirencester. I don't know. Perhaps it is better to go straight to Bath. In the very heart of Bath you will find yourselves in just the same world you visited at Pompeii. Bath is Pompeii overlaid by Jane Austen's England."

He paused for a moment. "We can wire to your agents from here before we start and we can pick up their reply at Gloucester or Nailsworth or even Bath itself. So that if your father is nearer than we suppose — But I think to-morrow afternoon will be soon enough for Falmouth, anyhow."

He stopped interrogatively.

Miss Grammont's face was white. "That will do very well," she said.

Section 4.

They started, but presently they came to high banks that showed such masses of bluebells, ragged Robin, great stitchwort and the like that Belinda was not to be restrained. She clamoured to stop the car and go up the bank and pick her hands full, and so they drew up by the roadside and Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont sat down near the car while Belinda carried her enthusiastic onslaught on the flowers up the steep bank and presently out of earshot.

The two lovers said unheeded things about the flowers to each other and then fell silent. Then Miss Grammont turned her head and seemed deliberately to measure her companion's distance. Evidently she judged her out of earshot.

"Well," said Miss Grammont in her soft even voice. "We love one another. Is that so still?"

"I could not love you more."

"It wasn't a dream?"

"No."

"And to-morrow we part?"

He looked her in the eyes. "I have been thinking of that all night," he said at last.

“I too.”

“And you think — ?”

“That we must part. Just as we arranged it when was it? Three days or three ages ago? There is nothing else in the world to do except for us to go our ways.... I love you. That means for a woman — It means that I want to be with you. But that is impossible.... Don’t doubt whether I love you because I say — impossible....”

Sir Richmond, faced with his own nocturnal decision, was now moved to oppose it flatly. “Nothing that one can do is impossible.”

She glanced again at Belinda and bent down towards him. “Suppose,” she said, “you got back into that car with me; suppose that instead of going on as we have planned, you took me away. How much of us would go?”

“You would go,” said Sir Richmond, “and my heart.”

“And this work of yours? And your honour? For the honour of a man in this New Age of yours will be first of all in the work he does for the world. And you will leave your work to be just a lover. And the work that I might do because of my father’s wealth; all that would vanish too. We should leave all of that, all of our usefulness, all that much of ourselves. But what has made me love you? Just your breadth of vision, just the sense that you mattered. What has made you love me? Just that I have understood the dream of your work. All that we should have to leave behind. We should specialize, in our own scandal. We should run away just for one thing. To think, by sharing the oldest, simplest, dearest indulgences in the world, that we had got each other. When really we had lost each other, lost all that mattered....”

Her face was flushed with the earnestness of her conviction. Her eyes were bright with tears. “Don’t think I don’t love you. It’s so hard to say all this. Somehow it seems like going back on something — something supreme. Our instincts have got us.... Don’t think I’d hold myself from you, dear. I’d give myself to you with both hands. I love you — When a woman loves — I at any rate — she loves altogether. But this thing — I am convinced — cannot be. I must go my own way, the way I have to go. My father is the man, obstinate, more than half a savage. For me — I know it — he has the jealousy of ten husbands. If you take me — If our secret becomes manifest —

If you are to take me and keep me, then his life and your life will become wholly this Feud, nothing but this Feud. You have to fight him anyhow — that is why I of all people must keep out of the quarrel. For him, it would be an immense excitement, full of the possibility of fierce satisfactions; for you, whether you won me or lost me, it would be utter waste and ruin."

She paused and then went on:— "And for me too, waste and ruin. I shall be a woman fought over. I shall be fought over as dogs fight over a bone. I shall sink back to the level of Helen of Troy. I shall cease to be a free citizen, a responsible free person. Whether you win me or lose me it will be waste and ruin for us both. Your Fuel Commission will go to pieces, all the wide, enduring work you have set me dreaming about will go the same way. We shall just be another romantic story.... No!"

Sir Richmond sat still, a little like a sullen child, she thought. "I hate all this," he said slowly. "I didn't think of your father before, and now I think of him it sets me bristling for a fight. It makes all this harder to give up. And yet, do you know, in the night I was thinking, I was coming to conclusions, very like yours. For quite other reasons. I thought we ought not to — We have to keep friends anyhow and hear of each other?"

"That goes without saying."

"I thought we ought not to go on to be lovers in any way that Would affect you, touch you too closely.... I was sorry — I had kissed you."

"Not I. No. Don't be sorry for that. I am glad we have fallen in love, more glad than I have been of anything else in my life, and glad we have spoken plainly.... Though we have to part. And—"

Her whisper came close to him. "For a whole day yet, all round the clock twice, you and I have one another."

Miss Seyffert began speaking as soon as she was well within earshot.

"I don't know the name of a single one of these flowers," she cried, "except the bluebells. Look at this great handful I've gotten! Springtime in Italy doesn't compare with it, not for a moment."

Section 5

Because Belinda Seyffert was in the dicky behind them with her alert interest in their emotions all too thinly and obviously veiled, it seemed more convenient to Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont to talk not of themselves but of Man and Woman and of that New Age according to the prophet Martineau, which Sir Richmond had partly described and mainly invented and ascribed to his departed friend. They talked anthropologically, philosophically, speculatively, with an absurd pretence of detachment, they sat side by side in the little car, scarcely glancing at one another, but side by side and touching each other, and all the while they were filled with tenderness and love and hunger for one another.

In the course of a day or so they had touched on nearly every phase in the growth of Man and Woman from that remote and brutish past which has left its traces in human bones mingled with the bones of hyaenas and cave bears beneath the stalagmites of Wookey Hole near Wells. In those nearly forgotten days the mind of man and woman had been no more than an evanescent succession of monstrous and infantile imaginations. That brief journey in the west country had lit up phase after phase in the long teaching and discipline of man as he had developed depth of memory and fixity of purpose out of these raw beginnings, through the dreaming childhood of Avebury and Stonehenge and the crude boyhood of ancient wars and massacres. Sir Richmond recalled those phases now, and how, as they had followed one another, man's idea of woman and woman's idea of man had changed with them, until nowadays in the minds of civilized men brute desire and possession and a limitless jealousy had become almost completely overlaid by the desire for fellowship and a free mutual loyalty. "Overlaid," he said. "The older passions are still there like the fires in an engine." He invented a saying for Dr. Martineau that the Man in us to-day was still the old man of Palaeolithic times, with his will, his wrath against the universe increased rather than diminished. If to-day he ceases to crack his brother's bones and rape and bully his womenkind, it is because he has grown up to a greater game and means to crack this world and feed upon its marrow and wrench their secrets from the stars.

And furthermore it would seem that the prophet Martineau had declared that in this New Age that was presently to dawn for

mankind, jealousy was to be disciplined even as we had disciplined lust and anger; instead of ruling our law it was to be ruled by law and custom. No longer were the jealousy of strange peoples, the jealousy of ownership and the jealousy of sex to determine the framework of human life. There was to be one peace and law throughout the world, one economic scheme and a universal freedom for men and women to possess and give themselves.

"And how many generations yet must there be before we reach that Utopia?" Miss Grammont asked.

"I wouldn't put it at a very great distance."

"But think of all the confusions of the world!"

"Confusions merely. The world is just a muddle of states and religions and theories and stupidities. There are great lumps of disorderly strength in it, but as a whole it is a weak world. It goes on by habit. There's no great idea in possession and the only possible great idea is this one. The New Age may be nearer than we dare to suppose."

"If I could believe that!"

"There are many more people think as we do than you suppose. Are you and I such very strange and wonderful and exceptional people?"

"No. I don't think so."

"And yet the New World is already completely established in our hearts. What has been done in our minds can be done in most minds. In a little while the muddled angry mind of Man upon his Planet will grow clear and it will be this idea that will have made it clear. And then life will be very different for everyone. That tyranny of disorder which oppresses every life on earth now will be lifted. There will be less and less insecurity, less and less irrational injustice. It will be a better instructed and a better behaved world. We shall live at our ease, not perpetually anxious, not resentful and angry. And that will alter all the rules of love. Then we shall think more of the loveliness of other people because it will no longer be necessary to think so much of the dangers and weaknesses and pitifulliesses of other people. We shall not have to think of those who depend upon us for happiness and selfrespect. We shall not have to choose between a wasteful fight for a personal end or the surrender of our heart's

desire."

"Heart's desire," she whispered. "Am I indeed your heart's desire?"

Sir Richmond sank his head and voice in response.

"You are the best of all things. And I have to let you go."

Sir Richmond suddenly remembered Miss Seyffert and half turned his face towards her. Her forehead was just visible over the hood of the open coupe. She appeared to be intelligently intent upon the scenery. Then he broke out suddenly into a tirade against the world. "But I am bored by this jostling unreasonable world. At the bottom of my heart I am bitterly resentful to-day. This is a world of fools and brutes in which we live, a world of idiotic traditions, imbecile limitations, cowardice, habit, greed and mean cruelty. It is a slum of a world, a congested district, an insanitary jumble of souls and bodies. Every good thing, every sweet desire is thwarted — every one. I have to lead the life of a slum missionary, a sanitary inspector, an underpaid teacher. I am bored. Oh God! how I am bored! I am bored by our laws and customs. I am bored by our rotten empire and its empty monarchy. I am bored by its parades and its flags and its sham enthusiasms. I am bored by London and its life, by its smart life and by its servile life alike. I am bored by theatres and by books and by every sort of thing that people call pleasure. I am bored by the brag of people and the claims of people and the feelings of people. Damn people! I am bored by profiteers and by the snatching they call business enterprise. Damn every business man! I am bored by politics and the universal mismanagement of everything. I am bored by France, by Anglo-Saxondom, by German self-pity, by Bolshevik fanaticism. I am bored by these fools' squabbles that devastate the world. I am bored by Ireland, Orange and Green. Curse the Irish — north and south together! Lord! how I HATE the Irish from Carson to the last Sinn Feiner! And I am bored by India and by Egypt. I am bored by Poland and by Islam. I am bored by anyone who professes to have rights. Damn their rights! Curse their rights! I am bored to death by this year and by last year and by the prospect of next year. I am bored — I am horribly bored — by my work. I am bored by every sort of renunciation. I want to live with the woman I love and I want to work within the limits of my capacity. Curse all Hullo!

Damn his eyes! — Steady, ah! The spark!... Good! No skid."

He had come round a corner at five and twenty miles an hour and had stopped his spark and pulled up neatly within a yard of the fore-wheel of a waggon that was turning in the road so as to block the way completely.

"That almost had me....

"And now you feel better?" said Miss Grammont.

"Ever so much," said Sir Richmond and chuckled.

The waggoner cleared the road and the car started up again.

For a minute or so neither spoke.

"You ought to be smacked hard for that outbreak, — my dear," said Miss Grammont.

"I ought — MY dear. I have no right to be ill-tempered. We two are among the supremely fortunate ones of our time. We have no excuse for misbehaviour. Got nothing to grumble at. Always I am lucky. THAT — with the waggon — was a very near thing. God spoils us.

"We two," he went on, after a pause, "are among the most fortunate people alive. We are both rich and easily rich. That gives us freedoms few people have. We have a vision of the whole world in which we live. It's in a mess — but that is by the way. The mass of mankind never gets enough education to have even a glimpse of the world as a whole. They never get a chance to get the hang of it. It is really possible for us to do things that will matter in the world. All our time is our own; all our abilities we are free to use. Most people, most intelligent and educated people, are caught in cages of pecuniary necessity; they are tied to tasks they can't leave, they are driven and compelled and limited by circumstances they can never master. But we, if we have tasks, have tasks of our own choosing. We may not like the world, but anyhow we are free to do our best to alter it. If I were a clerk in Hoxton and you were a city typist, then we MIGHT swear."

"It was you who swore," smiled Miss Grammont.

"It's the thought of that clerk in Hoxton and that city typist who really keep me at my work. Any smacking ought to come from them. I couldn't do less than I do in the face of their helplessness. Nevertheless a day will come — through what we do and what we

refrain from doing when there will be no bound and limited clerks in Hoxton and no captive typists in the city. And nobody at all to consider."

"According to the prophet Martineau," said Miss Grammont.

"And then you and I must contrive to be born again."

"Heighho!" cried Miss Grammont. "A thousand years ahead! When fathers are civilized. When all these phanton people who intervene on your side — no! I don't want to know anything about them, but I know of them by instinct — when they also don't matter."

"Then you and I can have things out with each other — THOROUGHLY," said Sir Richmond, with a surprising ferocity in his voice, charging the little hill before him as though he charged at Time.

Section 6

They had to wait at Nailsworth for a telegram from Mr. Grammont's agents; they lunched there and drove on to Bath in the afternoon. They came into the town through unattractive and unworthy outskirts, and only realized the charm of the place after they had garaged their car at the Pulteney Hotel and walked back over the Pulteney Bridge to see the Avon with the Pump Room and the Roman Baths. The Pulteney they found hung with pictures and adorned with sculpture to an astonishing extent; some former proprietor must have had a mania for replicas and the place is eventful with white marble fauns and sylphs and lions and Caesars and Queen Victorias and packed like an exhibition with memories of Rome, Florence, Milan, Paris, the National Gallery and the Royal Academy, amidst which splendours a competent staff administers modern comforts with an old-fashioned civility. But round and about the Pulteney one has still the scenery of Georgian England, the white, faintly classical terraces and houses of the days of Fielding, Smollett, Fanny Burney and Jane Austen, the graceful bridge with the bright little shops full of "presents from Bath"; the Pump Room with its water drinkers and a fine array of the original Bath chairs.

Down below the Pump Room our travellers explored the

memories of the days when the world was Latin from York to the Tigris, and the Corinthian capital flourished like a weed from Bath to Baalbek. And they considered a little doubtfully the seventeenth century statue of Bladud, who is said to have been healed by the Bath waters and to have founded the city in the days when Stonehenge still flourished, eight hundred years before the Romans came.

In the afternoon Miss Seyffert came with Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont and was very enthusiastic about everything, but in the evening after dinner it was clear that her role was to remain in the hotel. Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont went out into the moonlit gloaming; they crossed the bridge again and followed the road beside the river towards the old Abbey Church, that Lantern of the West. Away in some sunken gardens ahead of them a band was playing, and a cluster of little lights about the bandstand showed a crowd of people down below dancing on the grass. These little lights, these bobbing black heads and the lilting music, this little inflamed Centre of throbbing sounds and ruddy illumination, made the dome of the moonlit world about it seem very vast and cool and silent. Our visitors began to realize that Bath could be very beautiful. They went to the parapet above the river and stood there, leaning over it elbow to elbow and smoking cigarettes. Miss Grammont was moved to declare the Pulteney Bridge, with its noble arch, its effect of height over the swirling river, and the cluster of houses above, more beautiful than the Ponte Vecchio at Florence. Down below was a man in waders with a fishing-rod going to and fro along the foaming weir, and a couple of boys paddled a boat against the rush of the water lower down the stream.

"Dear England!" said Miss Grammont, surveying this gracious spectacle. "How full it is of homely and lovely and kindly things!"

"It is the home we come from."

"You belong to it still."

"No more than you do. I belong to a big overworking modern place called London which stretches its tentacles all over the world. I am as much a home-coming tourist as you are. Most of this western country I am seeing for the first time."

She said nothing for a space. "I've not a word to say to-night," she said. "I'm just full of a sort of animal satisfaction in being close to

you.... And in being with you among lovely things.... Somewhere — Before we part to-night — ....”

“Yes?” he said to her pause, and his face came very near to hers.

“I want you to kiss me.”

“Yes,” he said awkwardly, glancing over his shoulder, acutely aware of the promenaders passing close to them.

“It’s a promise?”

“Yes.”

Very timidly and guiltily his hand sought hers beside it and gripped it and pressed it. “My dear!” he whispered, tritest and most unavoidable of expressions. It was not very like Man and Woman loving upon their Planet; it was much more like the shy endearments of the shop boys and work girls who made the darkling populous about them with their silent interchanges.

“There are a thousand things I want to talk about to you,” she said. “After we have parted to-morrow I shall begin to think of them. But now — every rational thing seems dissolved in this moonlight....”

Presently she made an effort to restore the intellectual dignity of their relationship.

“I suppose I ought to be more concerned tonight about the work I have to do in the world and anxious for you to tell me this and that, but indeed I am not concerned at all about it. I seem to have it in outline all perfectly clear. I mean to play a man’s part in the world just as my father wants me to do. I mean to win his confidence and work with him — like a partner. Then some day I shall be a power in the world of fuel. And at the same time I must watch and read and think and learn how to be the servant of the world.... We two have to live like trusted servants who have been made guardians of a helpless minor. We have to put things in order and keep them in order against the time when Man — Man whom we call in America the Common Man — can take hold of his world—”

“And release his servants,” said Sir Richmond.

“All that is perfectly clear in my mind. That is what I am going to live for; that is what I have to do.”

She stopped abruptly. “All that is about as interesting to-night — in comparison with the touch of your dear fingers — as next month’s

railway time-table."

But later she found a topic that could hold their attention for a time.

"We have never said a word about religion," she said.

Sir Richmond paused for a moment. "I am a godless man," he said. "The stars and space and time overwhelm my imagination. I cannot imagine anything above or beyond them."

She thought that over. "But there are divine things," she said.

"YOU are divine.... I'm not talking lovers' nonsense," he hastened to add. "I mean that there is something about human beings — not just the everyday stuff of them, but something that appears intermittently — as though a light shone through something translucent. If I believe in any divinity at all it is a divinity revealed to me by other people — And even by myself in my own heart.

"I'm never surprised at the badness of human beings," said Sir Richmond; "seeing how they have come about and what they are; but I have been surprised time after time by fine things.... Often in people I disliked or thought little of.... I can understand that I find you full of divine quality, because I am in love with you and all alive to you. Necessarily I keep on discovering loveliness in you. But I have seen divine things in dear old Martineau, for example. A vain man, fussy, timid — and yet filled with a passion for truth, ready to make great sacrifices and to toil tremendously for that. And in those men I am always cursing, my Committee, it is astonishing at times to discover what streaks of goodness even the really bad men can show.... But one can't make use of just anyone's divinity. I can see the divinity in Martineau but it leaves me cold. He tired me and bored me.... But I live on you. It's only through love that the God can reach over from one human being to another. All real love is a divine thing, a reassurance, a release of courage. It is wonderful enough that we should take food and drink and turn them into imagination, invention and creative energy; it is still more wonderful that we should take an animal urging and turn it into a light to discover beauty and an impulse towards the utmost achievements of which we are capable. All love is a sacrament and all lovers are priests to each other. You and I—"

Sir Richmond broke off abruptly. "I spent three days trying to tell

this to Dr. Martineau. But he wasn't the priest I had to confess to and the words wouldn't come. I can confess it to you readily enough...."

"I cannot tell," said Miss Grammont, "whether this is the last wisdom in life or moonshine. I cannot tell whether I am thinking or feeling; but the noise of the water going over the weir below is like the stir in my heart. And I am swimming in love and happiness. Am I awake or am I dreaming you, and are we dreaming one another? Hold my hand — hold it hard and tight. I'm trembling with love for you and all the world.... If I say more I shall be weeping."

For a long time they stood side by side saying not a word to one another.

Presently the band down below and the dancing ceased and the little lights were extinguished. The silent moon seemed to grow brighter and larger and the whisper of the waters louder. A crowd of young people flowed out of the gardens and passed by on their way home. Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont strolled through the dispersing crowd and over the Toll Bridge and went exploring down a little staircase that went down from the end of the bridge to the dark river, and then came back to their old position at the parapet looking upon the weir and the Pulteney Bridge. The gardens that had been so gay were already dark and silent as they returned, and the streets echoed emptily to the few people who were still abroad.

"It's the most beautiful bridge in the world," said Miss Grammont, and gave him her hand again.

Some deep-toned clock close by proclaimed the hour eleven.

The silence healed again.

"Well?" said Sir Richmond.

"Well?" said Miss Grammont smiling very faintly.

"I suppose we must go out of all this beauty now, back to the lights of the hotel and the watchful eyes of your dragon."

"She has not been a very exacting dragon so far, has she?"

"She is a miracle of tact."

"She does not really watch. But she is curious — and very sympathetic."

"She is wonderful."....

"That man is still fishing," said Miss Grammont.

For a time she peered down at the dark figure wading in the foam

below as though it was the only thing of interest in the world. Then she turned to Sir Richmond.

"I would trust Belinda with my life," she said. "And anyhow — now — we need not worry about Belinda."

Section 7

At the breakfast table it was Belinda who was the most nervous of the three, the most moved, the most disposed to throw a sacramental air over their last meal together. Her companions had passed beyond the idea of separation; it was as if they now cherished a secret satisfaction at the high dignity of their parting. Belinda in some way perceived they had become different. They were no longer tremulous lovers; they seemed sure of one another and with a new pride in their bearing. It would have pleased Belinda better, seeing how soon they were to be torn apart, if they had not made quite such excellent breakfasts. She even suspected them of having slept well. Yet yesterday they had been deeply stirred. They had stayed out late last night, so late that she had not heard them come in. Perhaps then they had passed the climax of their emotions. Sir Richmond, she learnt, was to take the party to Exeter, where there would be a train for Falmouth a little after two. If they started from Bath about nine that would give them an ample margin of time in which to deal with a puncture or any such misadventure.

They crested the Mendips above Shepton Mallet, ran through Tilchester and Ilminster into the lovely hill country about Up-Ottery and so to Honiton and the broad level road to Exeter. Sir Richmond and Miss Grammont were in a state of happy gravity; they sat contentedly side by side, talking very little. They had already made their arrangements for writing to one another. There was to be no stream of love-letters or protestations. That might prove a mutual torment. Their love was to be implicit. They were to write at intervals about political matters and their common interests, and to keep each other informed of their movements about the world.

"We shall be working together," she said, speaking suddenly out of a train of thought she had been following, "we shall be closer together than many a couple who have never spent a day apart for

twenty years."

Then presently she said: "In the New Age all lovers will have to be accustomed to meeting and parting. We women will not be tied very much by domestic needs. Unless we see fit to have children. We shall be going about our business like men; we shall have world-wide businesses — many of us — just as men will....

"It will be a world full of lovers' meetings."

"Some day — somewhere — we two will certainly meet again."

"Even you have to force circumstances a little," said Sir Richmond.

"We shall meet," she said, "without doing that."

"But where?" he asked unanswered....

"Meetings and partings," she said. "Women will be used to seeing their lovers go away. Even to seeing them go away to other women who have borne them children and who have a closer claim on them."

"No one—" began Sir Richmond, startled.

"But I don't mind very much. It's how things are. If I were a perfectly civilized woman I shouldn't mind at all. If men and women are not to be tied to each other there must needs be such things as this."

"But you," said Sir Richmond. "I at any rate am not like that. I cannot bear the thought that YOU—"

"You need not bear it, my dear. I was just trying to imagine this world that is to be. Women I think are different from men in their jealousy. Men are jealous of the other man; women are jealous for their man — and careless about the other woman. What I love in you I am sure about. My mind was empty when it came to you and now it is full to overflowing. I shall feel you moving about in the same world with me. I'm not likely to think of anyone else for a very long time.... Later on, who knows? I may marry. I make no vows. But I think until I know certainly that you do not want me any more it will be impossible for me to marry or to have a lover. I don't know, but that is how I believe it will be with me. And my mind feels beautifully clear now and settled. I've got your idea and made it my own, your idea that we matter scarcely at all, but that the work we do matters supremely. I'll find my rope and tug it, never fear. Half way

round the world perhaps some day you will feel me tugging."

"I shall feel you're there," he said, "whether you tug or not...."

"Three miles left to Exeter," he reported presently.

She glanced back at Belinda.

"It is good that we have loved, my dear," she whispered. "Say it is good."

"The best thing in all my life," he said, and lowered his head and voice to say: "My dearest dear."

"Heart's desire — still — ?"

"Heart's delight.... Priestess of life.... Divinity."

She smiled and nodded and suddenly Belinda, up above their lowered heads, accidentally and irrelevantly, no doubt, coughed.

At Exeter Station there was not very much time to spare after all. Hardly had Sir Richmond secured a luncheon basket for the two travellers before the train came into the station. He parted from Miss Grammont with a hand clasp. Belinda was flushed and distressed at the last but her friend was quiet and still. "Au revoir," said Belinda without conviction when Sir Richmond shook her hand.

Section 8.

Sir Richmond stood quite still on the platform as the train ran out of the station. He did not move until it had disappeared round the bend. Then he turned, lost in a brown study, and walked very slowly towards the station exit.

"The most wonderful thing in my life," he thought. "And already — it is unreal.

"She will go on to her father whom she knows ten thousand times more thoroughly than she knows me; she will go on to Paris, she will pick up all the threads of her old story, be reminded of endless things in her life, but never except in the most casual way of these days: they will be cut off from everything else that will serve to keep them real; and as for me — this connects with nothing else in my life at all.... It is as disconnected as a dream.... Already it is hardly more substantial than a dream....

"We shall write letters. Do letters breathe faster or slower as you read them?

“We may meet.

“Where are we likely to meet again?... I never realized before how improbable it is that we shall meet again. And if we meet?...

“Never in all our lives shall we be really TOGETHER again. It’s over — With a completeness....

“Like death.”

He came opposite the bookstalls and stopped short and stared with unseeing eyes at the display of popular literature. He was wondering now whether after all he ought to have let her go. He experienced something of the blank amazement of a child who has burst its toy balloon. His golden globe of satisfaction in an instant had gone. An irrational sense of loss was flooding every other feeling about V.V. If she had loved him truly and altogether could she have left him like this? Neither of them surely had intended so complete a separation. He wanted to go back and recall that train.

A few seconds more, he realized, and he would give way to anger. Whatever happened that must not happen. He pulled himself together. What was it he had to do now? He had not to be angry, he had not even to be sorry. They had done the right thing. Outside the station his car was waiting.

He went outside the station and stared at his car. He had to go somewhere. Of course! down into Cornwall to Martin’s cottage. He had to go down to her and be kind and comforting about that carbuncle. To be kind?... If this thwarted feeling broke out into anger he might be tempted to take it out of Martin. That at any rate he must not do. He had always for some inexplicable cause treated Martin badly. Nagged her and blamed her and threatened her. That must stop now. No shadow of this affair must lie on Martin.... And Martin must never have a suspicion of any of this....

The image of Martin became very vivid in his mind. He thought of her as he had seen her many times, with the tears close, fighting with her back to the wall, with all her wit and vigour gone, because she loved him more steadfastly than he did her. Whatever happened he must not take it out of Martin. It was astonishing how real she had become now — as V.V. became a dream. Yes, Martin was astonishingly real. And if only he could go now and talk to Martin — and face all the facts of life with her, even as he had done with that

phantom Martin in his dream....

But things were not like that.

He looked to see if his car was short of water or petrol; both needed replenishing, and so he would have to go up the hill into Exeter town again. He got into his car and sat with his fingers on the electric starter.

Martin! Old Friend! Eight days were still left before the Committee met again, eight days for golden kindness. He would distress Martin by no clumsy confession. He would just make her happy as she loved to be made happy.... Nevertheless. Nevertheless....

Was it Martin who failed him or he who failed Martin?

Incessant and insoluble dispute. Well, the thing now was to go to Martin.... And then the work!

He laughed suddenly.

“I’ll take it out of the damned Commission. I’ll make old Rumford Brown sit up.”

He was astonished to find himself thinking of the affairs of the Commission with a lively interest and no trace of fatigue. He had had his change; he had taken his rest; he was equal to his task again already. He started his engine and steered his way past a van and a waiting cab.

“Fuel,” he said.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

THE LAST DAYS OF SIR RICHMOND HARDY

Section 1

The Majority and Minority Reports of the Fuel Commission were received on their first publication with much heat and disputation, but there is already a fairly general agreement that they are great and significant documents, broadly conceived and historically important. They do lift the questions of fuel supply and distribution high above the level of parochial jealousies and above the petty and destructive profiteering of private owners and traders, to a view of a general human welfare. They form an important link in a series of private and public documents that are slowly opening out a prospect of new economic methods, methods conceived in the generous spirit of scientific work, that may yet arrest the drift of our western civilization towards financial and commercial squalor and the social collapse that must ensue inevitably on that. In view of the composition of the Committee, the Majority Report is in itself an amazing triumph of Sir Richmond's views; it is astonishing that he was able to drive his opponents so far and then leave them there securely advanced while he carried on the adherents he had altogether won, including, of course, the labour representatives, to the further altitudes of the Minority Report.

After the Summer recess the Majority Report was discussed and adopted. Sir Richmond had shown signs of flagging energy in June, but he had come back in September in a state of exceptional vigour; for a time he completely dominated the Committee by the passionate force of his convictions and the illuminating scorn he brought to bear on the various subterfuges and weakening amendments by which the meaner interests sought to save themselves in whole or in part from the common duty of sacrifice. But toward the end he fell ill. He had worked to the pitch of exhaustion. He neglected a cold that settled on his chest. He began to cough persistently and betray an increasingly irritable temper. In the last fights in the Committee his face was

bright with fever and he spoke in a voiceless whisper, often a vast angry whisper. His place at table was marked with scattered lozenges and scraps of paper torn to the minutest shreds. Such good manners as had hitherto mitigated his behaviour on the Committee departed from him, He carried his last points, gesticulating and coughing and wheezing rather than speaking. But he had so hammered his ideas into the Committee that they took the effect of what he was trying to say.

He died of pneumonia at his own house three days after the passing of the Majority Report. The Minority Report, his own especial creation, he never signed. It was completed by Wast and Carmichael....

After their parting at Salisbury station Dr. Martineau heard very little of Sir Richmond for a time except through the newspapers, which contained frequent allusions to the Committee. Someone told him that Sir Richmond had been staying at Ruan in Cornwall where Martin Leeds had a cottage, and someone else had met him at Bath on his way, he said, in his car from Cornwall to a conference with Sir Peter Davies in Glamorganshire.

But in the interim Dr. Martineau had the pleasure of meeting Lady Hardy at a luncheon party. He was seated next to her and he found her a very pleasing and sympathetic person indeed. She talked to him freely and simply of her husband and of the journey the two men had taken together. Either she knew nothing of the circumstances of their parting or if she did she did not betray her knowledge. “That holiday did him a world of good,” she said. “He came back to his work like a giant. I feel very grateful to you.”

Dr. Martineau said it was a pleasure to have helped Sir Richmond’s work in any way. He believed in him thoroughly. Sir Richmond was inspired by great modern creative ideas.

“Forgive me if I keep you talking about him,” said Lady Hardy. “I wish I could feel as sure that I had been of use to him.”

Dr. Martineau insisted. “I know very well that you are.”

“I do what I can to help him carry his enormous burthen of toil,” she said. “I try to smooth his path. But he is a strange silent creature at times.”

Her eyes scrutinized the doctor’s face.

It was not the doctor's business to supplement Sir Richmond's silences. Yet he wished to meet the requirements of this lady if he could. "He is one of those men," he said, "who are driven by forces they do not fully understand. A man of genius."

"Yes," she said in an undertone of intimacy. "Genius.... A great irresponsible genius.... Difficult to help.... I wish I could do more for him."

A very sweet and charming lady. It was with great regret that the doctor found the time had come to turn to his left-hand neighbour.

Section 2

It was with some surprise that Dr. Martineau received a fresh appeal for aid from Sir Richmond. It was late in October and Sir Richmond was already seriously ill. But he was still going about his business as though he was perfectly well. He had not mistaken his man. Dr. Martineau received him as though there had never been a shadow of offence between them.

He came straight to the point. "Martineau," he said, "I must have those drugs I asked you for when first I came to you now. I must be bolstered up. I can't last out unless I am. I'm at the end of my energy. I come to you because you will understand. The Commission can't go on now for more than another three weeks. Whatever happens afterwards I must keep going until then."

The doctor did understand. He made no vain objections. He did what he could to patch up his friend for his last struggles with the opposition in the Committee. "Pro forma," he said, stethoscope in hand, "I must order you to bed. You won't go. But I order you. You must know that what you are doing is risking your life. Your lungs are congested, the bronchial tubes already. That may spread at any time. If this open weather lasts you may go about and still pull through. But at any time this may pass into pneumonia. And there's not much in you just now to stand up against pneumonia...."

"I'll take all reasonable care."

"Is your wife at home!"

"She is in Wales with her people. But the household is well trained. I can manage."

“Go in a closed car from door to door. Wrap up like a mummy. I wish the Committee room wasn’t down those abominable House of Commons corridors....”

They parted with an affectionate handshake.

Section 3

Death approved of Sir Richmond’s determination to see the Committee through. Our universal creditor gave this particular debtor grace to the very last meeting. Then he brushed a gust of chilly rain across the face of Sir Richmond as he stood waiting for his car outside the strangers’ entrance to the House. For a couple of days Sir Richmond felt almost intolerably tired, but scarcely noted the changed timbre of the wheezy notes in his throat. He rose later each day and with ebbing vigour, jotted down notes and corrections upon the proofs of the Minority Report. He found it increasingly difficult to make decisions; he would correct and alter back and then repeat the correction, perhaps half a dozen times. On the evening of the second day his lungs became painful and his breathing difficult. His head ached and a sense of some great impending evil came upon him. His skin was suddenly a detestable garment to wear. He took his temperature with a little clinical thermometer he kept by him and found it was a hundred and one. He telephoned hastily for Dr. Martineau and without waiting for his arrival took a hot bath and got into bed. He was already thoroughly ill when the doctor arrived.

“Forgive my sending for you,” he said. “Not your line. I know.... My wife’s G.P. — an exasperating sort of ass. Can’t stand him. No one else.”

He was lying on a narrow little bed with a hard pillow that the doctor replaced by one from Lady Hardy’s room. He had twisted the bed-clothes into a hopeless muddle, the sheet was on the floor.

Sir Richmond’s bedroom was a large apartment in which sleep seemed to have been an admitted necessity rather than a principal purpose. On one hand it opened into a business-like dressing and bath room, on the other into the day study. It bore witness to the nocturnal habits of a man who had long lived a life of irregular impulses to activity and dislocated hours and habits. There was a

desk and reading lamp for night work near the fireplace, an electric kettle for making tea at night, a silver biscuit tin; all the apparatus for the lonely intent industry of the small hours. There was a bookcase of bluebooks, books of reference and suchlike material, and some files. Over the mantelpiece was an enlarged photograph of Lady Hardy and a plain office calendar. The desk was littered with the galley proofs of the Minority Report upon which Sir Richmond had been working up to the moment of his hasty retreat to bed. And lying among the proofs, as though it had been taken out and looked at quite recently was the photograph of a girl. For a moment Dr. Martineau's mind hung in doubt and then he knew it for the young American of Stonehenge. How that affair had ended he did not know. And now it was not his business to know.

These various observations printed themselves on Dr. Martineau's mind after his first cursory examination of his patient and while he cast about for anything that would give this large industrious apartment a little more of the restfulness and comfort of a sick room. "I must get in a night nurse at once," he said. "We must find a small table somewhere to put near the bed.

"I am afraid you are very ill," he said, returning to the bedside. "This is not, as you say, my sort of work. Will you let me call in another man, a man we can trust thoroughly, to consult?"

"I'm in your hands, said Sir Richmond. I want to pull through."

"He will know better where to get the right sort of nurse for the case — and everything."

The second doctor presently came, with the right sort of nurse hard on his heels. Sir Richmond submitted almost silently to his expert handling and was sounded and looked to and listened at.

"H'm," said the second doctor, and then encouragingly to Sir Richmond: "We've got to take care of you.

"There's a lot about this I don't like," said the second doctor and drew Dr. Martineau by the arm towards the study. For a moment or so Sir Richmond listened to the low murmur of their voices, but he did not feel very deeply interested in what they were saying. He began to think what a decent chap Dr. Martineau was, how helpful and fine and forgiving his professional training had made him, how completely he had ignored the smothered incivilities of their parting

at Salisbury. All men ought to have some such training, Not a bad idea to put every boy and girl through a year or so of hospital service.... Sir Richmond must have dozed, for his next perception was of Dr. Martineau standing over him and saying “I am afraid, my dear Hardy, that you are very ill indeed. Much more so than I thought you were at first.”

Sir Richmond’s raised eyebrows conveyed that he accepted this fact.

“I think Lady Hardy ought to be sent for.”

Sir Richmond shook his head with unexpected vigour.

“Don’t want her about,” he said, and after a pause, “Don’t want anybody about.”

“But if anything happens-?”

“Send then.”

An expression of obstinate calm overspread Sir Richmond’s face. He seemed to regard the matter as settled. He closed his eyes.

For a time Dr. Martineau desisted. He went to the window and turned to look again at the impassive figure on the bed. Did Sir Richmond fully understand? He made a step towards his patient and hesitated. Then he brought a chair and sat down at the bedside.

Sir Richmond opened his eyes and regarded him with a slight frown.

“A case of pneumonia,” said the doctor, “after great exertion and fatigue, may take very rapid and unexpected turns.”

Sir Richmond, cheek on pillow, seemed to assent.

“I think if you want to be sure that Lady Hardy sees you again — ... If you don’t want to take risks about that — ... One never knows in these cases. Probably there is a night train.”

Sir Richmond manifested no surprise at the warning. But he stuck to his point. His voice was faint but firm. “Couldn’t make up anything to say to her. Anything she’d like.”

Dr. Martineau rested on that for a little while. Then he said: “If there is anyone else?”

“Not possible,” said Sir Richmond, with his eyes on the ceiling.

“But to see?”

Sir Richmond turned his head to Dr. Martineau. His face puckered like a peevish child’s. “They’d want things said to them...Things to

remember...I CAN'T. I'm tired out."

"Don't trouble," whispered Dr. Martineau, suddenly remorseful.

But Sir Richmond was also remorseful. "Give them my love," he said. "Best love...Old Martin. Love."

Dr. Martineau was turning away when Sir Richmond spoke again in a whisper. "Best love...Poor at the best...." He dozed for a time. Then he made a great effort. "I can't see them, Martineau, until I've something to say. It's like that. Perhaps I shall think of some kind things to say — after a sleep. But if they came now...I'd say something wrong. Be cross perhaps. Hurt someone. I've hurt so many. People exaggerate...People exaggerate — importance these occasions."

"Yes, yes," whispered Dr. Martineau. "I quite understand."

Section 4

For a time Sir Richmond dozed. Then he stirred and muttered. "Second rate... Poor at the best... Love... Work. All..."

"It had been splendid work," said Dr. Martineau, and was not sure that Sir Richmond heard.

"Those last few days... lost my grip... Always lose my damned grip.

"Ragged them.... Put their backs up....Silly....

"Never.... Never done anything — WELL....

"It's done. Done. Well or ill....

"Done."

His voice sank to the faintest whisper. "Done for ever and ever... and ever... and ever."

Again he seemed to doze.

Dr. Martineau stood up softly. Something beyond reason told him that this was certainly a dying man. He was reluctant to go and he had an absurd desire that someone, someone for whom Sir Richmond cared, should come and say good-bye to him, and for Sir Richmond to say good-bye to someone. He hated this lonely launching from the shores of life of one who had sought intimacy so persistently and vainly. It was extraordinary — he saw it now for the first time — he loved this man. If it had been in his power, he would at that moment

have anointed him with kindness.

The doctor found himself standing in front of the untidy writing desk, littered like a recent battlefield. The photograph of the American girl drew his eyes. What had happened? Was there not perhaps some word for her? He turned about as if to enquire of the dying man and found Sir Richmond's eyes open and regarding him. In them he saw an expression he had seen there once or twice before, a faint but excessively irritating gleam of amusement.

"Oh! — WELL!" said Dr. Martineau and turned away. He went to the window and stared out as his habit was.

Sir Richmond continued to smile dimly at the doctor's back until his eyes closed again.

It was their last exchange. Sir Richmond died that night in the small hours, so quietly that for some time the night nurse did not observe what had happened. She was indeed roused to that realization by the ringing of the telephone bell in the adjacent study.

Section 5

For a long time that night Dr. Martineau had lain awake unable to sleep. He was haunted by the figure of Sir Richmond lying on his uncomfortable little bed in his big bedroom and by the curious effect of loneliness produced by the nocturnal desk and by the evident dread felt by Sir Richmond of any death-bed partings. He realized how much this man, who had once sought so feverishly for intimacies, had shrunken back upon himself, how solitary his motives had become, how rarely he had taken counsel with anyone in his later years. His mind now dwelt apart. Even if people came about him he would still be facing death alone.

And so it seemed he meant to slip out of life, as a man might slip out of a crowded assembly, unobserved. Even now he might be going. The doctor recalled how he and Sir Richmond had talked of the rage of life in a young baby, how we drove into life in a sort of fury, how that rage impelled us to do this and that, how we fought and struggled until the rage spent itself and was gone. That eddy of rage that was Sir Richmond was now perhaps very near its end. Presently it would fade and cease, and the stream that had made it

and borne it would know it no more.

Dr. Martineau's thoughts relaxed and passed into the picture land of dreams. He saw the figure of Sir Richmond, going as it were away from him along a narrow path, a path that followed the crest of a ridge, between great darknesses, enormous cloudy darknesses, above him and below. He was going along this path without looking back, without a thought for those he left behind, without a single word to cheer him on his way, walking as Dr. Martineau had sometimes watched him walking, without haste or avidity, walking as a man might along some great picture gallery with which he was perhaps even over familiar. His hands would be in his pockets, his indifferent eyes upon the clouds about him. And as he strolled along that path, the darkness closed in upon him. His figure became dim and dimmer.

Whither did that figure go? Did that enveloping darkness hide the beginnings of some strange long journey or would it just dissolve that figure into itself?

Was that indeed the end?

Dr. Martineau was one of that large class of people who can neither imagine nor disbelieve in immortality. Dimmer and dimmer grew the figure but still it remained visible. As one can continue to see a star at dawn until one turns away. Or one blinks or nods and it is gone.

Vanished now are the beliefs that held our race for countless generations. Where now was that Path of the Dead, mapped so clearly, faced with such certainty, in which the heliolithic peoples believed from Avebury to Polynesia? Not always have we had to go alone and unprepared into uncharted darknesses. For a time the dream artist used a palette of the doctor's vague memories of things Egyptian, he painted a new roll of the Book of the Dead, at a copy of which the doctor had been looking a day or so before. Sir Richmond became a brown naked figure, crossing a bridge of danger, passing between terrific monsters, ferrying a dark and dreadful stream. He came to the scales of judgment before the very throne of Osiris and stood waiting while dogheaded Anubis weighed his conscience and that evil monster, the Devourer of the Dead, crouched ready if the judgment went against him. The doctor's attention concentrated upon the scales. A memory of Swedengorg's Heaven and Hell mingled

with the Egyptian fantasy. Now at last it was possible to know something real about this man's soul, now at last one could look into the Secret Places of his Heart. Anubis and Thoth, the god with the ibis head, were reading the heart as if it were a book, reading aloud from it to the supreme judge.

Suddenly the doctor found himself in his own dreams. His anxiety to plead for his friend had brought him in. He too had become a little painted figure and he was bearing a book in his hand. He wanted to show that the laws of the new world could not be the same as those of the old, and the book he was bringing as evidence was his own Psychology of a New Age.

The clear thought of that book broke up his dream by releasing a train of waking troubles.... You have been six months on Chapter Ten; will it ever be ready for Osiris?... will it ever be ready for print?...

Dream and waking thoughts were mingled like sky and cloud upon a windy day in April. Suddenly he saw again that lonely figure on the narrow way with darknesses above and darknesses below and darknesses on every hand. But this time it was not Sir Richmond.... Who was it? Surely it was Everyman. Everyman had to travel at last along that selfsame road, leaving love, leaving every task and every desire. But was it Everyman?... A great fear and horror came upon the doctor. That little figure was himself! And the book which was his particular task in life was still undone. He himself stood in his turn upon that lonely path with the engulfing darknesses about him....

He seemed to wrench himself awake.

He lay very still for some moments and then he sat up in bed. An overwhelming conviction had arisen — in his mind that Sir Richmond was dead. He felt he must know for certain. He switched on his electric light, mutely interrogated his round face reflected in the looking glass, got out of bed, shuffled on his slippers and went along the passage to the telephone. He hesitated for some seconds and then lifted the receiver. It was his call which aroused the nurse to the fact of Sir Richmond's death.

Section 6

Lady Hardy arrived home in response to Dr. Martineau's telegram late on the following evening. He was with her next morning, comforting and sympathetic. Her big blue eyes, bright with tears, met his very wistfully; her little body seemed very small and pathetic in its simple black dress. And yet there was a sort of bravery about her. When he came into the drawing-room she was in one of the window recesses talking to a serious-looking woman of the dressmaker type. She left her business at once to come to him. "Why did I not know in time?" she cried.

"No one, dear lady, had any idea until late last night," he said, taking both her hands in his for a long friendly sympathetic pressure.

"I might have known that if it had been possible you would have told me," she said.

"You know," she added, "I don't believe it yet. I don't realize it. I go about these formalities—"

"I think I can understand that."

"He was always, you know, not quite here.... It is as if he were a little more not quite here.... I can't believe it is over...."

She asked a number of questions and took the doctor's advice upon various details of the arrangements. "My daughter Helen comes home to-morrow afternoon," she explained. "She is in Paris. But our son is far, far away in the Punjab. I have sent him a telegram.... It is so kind of you to come in to me."

Dr. Martineau went more than half way to meet Lady Hardy's disposition to treat him as a friend of the family. He had conceived a curious, half maternal affection for Sir Richmond that had survived even the trying incident of the Salisbury parting and revived very rapidly during the last few weeks. This affection extended itself now to Lady Hardy. Hers was a type that had always appealed to him. He could understand so well the perplexed loyalty with which she was now setting herself to gather together some preservative and reassuring evidences of this man who had always been; as she put it, "never quite here." It was as if she felt that now it was at last possible to make a definite reality of him. He could be fixed. And as he was fixed he would stay. Never more would he be able to come in and with an almost expressionless glance wither the interpretation she had imposed upon him. She was finding much comfort in this task of

reconstruction. She had gathered together in the drawingroom every presentable portrait she had been able to find of him. He had never, she said, sat to a painter, but there was an early pencil sketch done within a couple of years of their marriage; there was a number of photographs, several of which — she wanted the doctor's advice upon this point — she thought might be enlarged; there was a statuette done by some woman artist who had once beguiled him into a sitting. There was also a painting she had had worked up from a photograph and some notes. She flitted among these memorials, going from one to the other, undecided which to make the standard portrait. "That painting, I think, is most like," she said: "as he was before the war. But the war and the Commission changed him, — worried him and aged him.... I grudged him to that Commission. He let it worry him frightfully."

"It meant very much to him," said Dr. Martineau.

"It meant too much to him. But of course his ideas were splendid. You know it is one of my hopes to get some sort of book done, explaining his ideas. He would never write. He despised it — unreasonably. A real thing done, he said, was better than a thousand books. Nobody read books, he said, but women, parsons and idle people. But there must be books. And I want one. Something a little more real than the ordinary official biography.... I have thought of young Leighton, the secretary of the Commission. He seems thoroughly intelligent and sympathetic and really anxious to reconcile Richmond's views with those of the big business men on the Committee. He might do.... Or perhaps I might be able to persuade two or three people to write down their impressions of him. A sort of memorial volume.... But he was shy of friends. There was no man he talked to very intimately about his ideas unless it was to you... I wish I had the writer's gift, doctor."

Section 7

It was on the second afternoon that Lady Hardy summoned Dr. Martineau by telephone. "Something rather disagreeable," she said. "If you could spare the time. If you could come round.

"It is frightfully distressing," she said when he got round to her,

and for a time she could tell him nothing more. She was having tea and she gave him some. She fussed about with cream and cakes and biscuits. He noted a crumpled letter thrust under the edge of the silver tray.

"He talked, I know, very intimately with you," she said, coming to it at last. "He probably went into things with you that he never talked about with anyone else. Usually he was very reserved, Even with me there were things about which he said nothing."

"We did," said Dr. Martineau with discretion, "deal a little with his private life.

"There was someone—"

Dr. Martineau nodded and then, not to be too portentous, took and bit a biscuit.

"Did he by any chance ever mention someone called Martin Leeds?"

Dr. Martineau seemed to reflect. Then realizing that this was a mistake, he said: "He told me the essential facts."

The poor lady breathed a sigh of relief. "I'm glad," she said simply. She repeated, "Yes, I'm glad. It makes things easier now."

Dr. Martineau looked his enquiry.

"She wants to come and see him."

"Here?"

"Here! And Helen here! And the servants noticing everything! I've never met her. Never set eyes on her. For all I know she may want to make a scene." There was infinite dismay in her voice.

Dr. Martineau was grave. "You would rather not receive her?"

"I don't want to refuse her. I don't want even to seem heartless. I understand, of course, she has a sort of claim." She sobbed her reluctant admission. "I know it. I know.... There was much between them."

Dr. Martineau pressed the limp hand upon the little tea table. "I understand, dear lady," he said. "I understand. Now ... suppose *I* were to write to her and arrange — I do not see that you need be put to the pain of meeting her. Suppose I were to meet her here myself?

"If you COULD!"

The doctor was quite prepared to save the lady any further distresses, no matter at what trouble to himself. "You are so good to

me," she said, letting the tears have their way with her.

"I am silly to cry," she said, dabbing her eyes.

"We will get it over to-morrow," he reassured her. "You need not think of it again."

He took over Martin's brief note to Lady Hardy and set to work by telegram to arrange for her visit. She was in London at her Chelsea flat and easily accessible. She was to come to the house at mid-day on the morrow, and to ask not for Lady Hardy but for him. He would stay by her while she was in the house, and it would be quite easy for Lady Hardy to keep herself and her daughter out of the way. They could, for example, go out quietly to the dressmakers in the closed car, for many little things about the mourning still remained to be seen to.

Section 8

Miss Martin Leeds arrived punctually, but the doctor was well ahead of his time and ready to receive her. She was ushered into the drawing room where he awaited her. As she came forward the doctor first perceived that she had a very sad and handsome face, the face of a sensitive youth rather than the face of a woman. She had fine grey eyes under very fine brows; they were eyes that at other times might have laughed very agreeably, but which were now full of an unrestrained sadness. Her brown hair was very untidy and parted at the side like a man's. Then he noted that she seemed to be very untidily dressed as if she was that rare and, to him, very offensive thing, a woman careless of her beauty. She was short in proportion to her broad figure and her broad forehead.

"You are Dr. Martineau?" she said. "He talked of you." As she spoke her glance went from him to the pictures that stood about the room. She walked up to the painting and stood in front of it with her distressed gaze wandering about her. "Horrible!" she said. "Absolutely horrible!... Did SHE do this?"

Her question disconcerted the doctor very much. "You mean Lady Hardy?" he asked. "She doesn't paint."

"No, no. I mean, did she get all these things together?"

"Naturally," said Dr. Martineau.

“None of them are a bit like him. They are like blows aimed at his memory. Not one has his life in it. How could she do it? Look at that idiot statuette!... He was extraordinarily difficult to get. I have burnt every photograph I had of him. For fear that this would happen; that he would go stiff and formal — just as you have got him here. I have been trying to sketch him almost all the time since he died. But I can’t get him back. He’s gone.”

She turned to the doctor again. She spoke to him, not as if she expected him to understand her, but because she had to say these things which burthened her mind to someone. “I have done hundreds of sketches. My room is littered with them. When you turn them over he seems to be lurking among them. But not one of them is like him.”

She was trying to express something beyond her power. “It is as if someone had suddenly turned out the light.”

She followed the doctor upstairs. “This was his study,” the doctor explained.

“I know it. I came here once,” she said.

They entered the big bedroom in which the coffined body lay. Dr. Martineau, struck by a sudden memory, glanced nervously at the desk, but someone had made it quite tidy and the portrait of Aliss Grammont had disappeared. Miss Leeds walked straight across to the coffin and stood looking down on the waxen inexpressive dignity of the dead. Sir Richmond’s brows and nose had become sharper and more clear-cut than they had ever been in life and his lips had set into a faint inane smile. She stood quite still for a long time. At length she sighed deeply.

She spoke, a little as though she thought aloud, a little as though she talked at that silent presence in the coffin. “I think he loved,” she said. “Sometimes I think he loved me. But it is hard to tell. He was kind. He could be intensely kind and yet he didn’t seem to care for you. He could be intensely selfish and yet he certainly did not care for himself.... Anyhow, I loved HIM.... There is nothing left in me now to love anyone else — for ever....”

She put her hands behind her back and looked at the dead man with her head a little on one side. “Too kind,” she said very softly.

“There was a sort of dishonesty in his kindness. He would not let

you have the bitter truth. He would not say he did not love you....

"He was too kind to life ever to call it the foolish thing it is. He took it seriously because it takes itself seriously. He worked for it and killed himself with work for it...."

She turned to Dr. Martineau and her face was streaming with tears. "And life, you know, isn't to be taken seriously. It is a joke — a bad joke — made by some cruel little god who has caught a neglected planet.... Like torturing a stray cat.... But he took it seriously and he gave up his life for it.

"There was much happiness he might have had. He was very capable of happiness. But he never seemed happy. This work of his came before it. He overworked and fretted our happiness away. He sacrificed his happiness and mine."

She held out her hands towards the doctor. "What am I to do now with the rest of my life? Who is there to laugh with me now and jest?

"I don't complain of him. I don't blame him. He did his best — to be kind.

"But all my days now I shall mourn for him and long for him...."

She turned back to the coffin. Suddenly she lost every vestige of self-control. She sank down on her knees beside the trestle. "Why have you left me!" she cried.

"Oh! Speak to me, my darling! Speak to me, I TELL YOU! Speak to me!"

It was a storm of passion, monstrously childish and dreadful. She beat her hands upon the coffin. She wept loudly and fiercely as a child does....

Dr. Martineau drifted feebly to the window.

He wished he had locked the door. The servants might hear and wonder what it was all about. Always he had feared love for the cruel thing it was, but now it seemed to him for the first time that he realized its monstrous cruelty.

THE END

MEN LIKE GODS

This novel, which Wells styled ‘a scientific fantasy’, was first published in 1923 and features a utopian society located in a parallel universe version of 1921. The protagonist, Barnstaple, is magically transported to this Utopia, which is some three millennia ahead of his own reality in terms of social and technological development. The outline of a possible future Utopia (which here resembles a successfully-realised anarchy) is the main purpose of the novel, although Wells does not forget to include an adventure-story element to ensure readability as well.

Men Like Gods

H·G·WELLS

The first edition

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TO FLORENCE LAMONT,

IN WHOSE HOME AT ENGLEWOOD THIS STORY WAS CHRISTENED

BOOK I — THE IRRUPTION OF THE EARTHLINGS

I. — MR. BARNSTAPLE TAKES A HOLIDAY

§ 1

Mr. Barnstaple found himself in urgent need of a holiday, and he had no one to go with and nowhere to go. He was overworked. And he was tired of home.

He was a man of strong natural affections; he loved his family extremely so that he knew it by heart, and when he was in these jaded moods it bored him acutely. His three sons, who were all growing up, seemed to get leggier and larger every day; they sat down in the chairs he was just going to sit down in; they played him off his own pianola; they filled the house with hoarse, vast laughter at jokes that one couldn't demand to be told; they cut in on the elderly harmless flirtations that had hitherto been one of his chief consolations in this vale; they beat him at tennis; they fought playfully on the landings, and fell downstairs by twos and threes with an enormous racket. Their hats were everywhere. They were late for breakfast. They went to bed every night in a storm of uproar: "Haw, Haw, Haw — bump!" and their mother seemed to like it. They all cost money, with a cheerful disregard of the fact that everything had gone up except Mr. Barnstaple's earning power. And when he said a few plain truths about Mr. Lloyd George at meal-times, or made the slightest attempt to raise the tone of the table-talk above the level of the silliest persiflage, their attention wandered ostentatiously...

At any rate it *seemed* ostentatiously.

He wanted badly to get away from his family to some place where he could think of its various members with quiet pride and affection, and otherwise not be disturbed by them...

And also he wanted to get away for a time from Mr. Peeve. The very streets were becoming a torment to him, he wanted never to see a newspaper or a newspaper placard again. He was obsessed by apprehensions of some sort of financial and economic smash that would make the Great War seem a mere incidental catastrophe. This was because he was sub-editor and general factotum of the Liberal, that well-known organ of the more depressing aspects of advanced

thought, and the unvarying pessimism of Mr. Peeve, his chief, was infecting him more and more. Formerly it had been possible to put up a sort of resistance to Mr. Peeve by joking furtively about his gloom with the other members of the staff, but now there were no other members of the staff: they had all been retrenched by Mr. Peeve in a mood of financial despondency. Practically, now, nobody wrote regularly for the Liberal except Mr. Barnstaple and Mr. Peeve. So Mr. Peeve had it all his own way with Mr. Barnstaple. He would sit hunched up in the editorial chair, with his hands deep in his trouser pockets, taking a gloomy view of everything, sometimes for two hours together. Mr. Barnstaple's natural tendency was towards a modest hopefulness and a belief in progress, but Mr. Peeve held very strongly that a belief in progress was at least six years out of date, and that the brightest hope that remained to Liberalism was for a good Day of Judgment soon. And having finished the copy of what the staff, when there was a staff, used to call his weekly indigest, Mr. Peeve would depart and leave Mr. Barnstaple to get the rest of the paper together for the next week.

Even in ordinary times Mr. Peeve would have been hard enough to live with; but the times were not ordinary, they were full of disagreeable occurrences that made his melancholy anticipations all too plausible. The great coal lock-out had been going on for a month and seemed to foreshadow the commercial ruin of England; every morning brought intelligence of fresh outrages from Ireland, unforgivable and unforgettable outrages; a prolonged drought threatened the harvests of the world; the League of Nations, of which Mr. Barnstaple had hoped enormous things in the great days of President Wilson, was a melancholy and self-satisfied futility; everywhere there was conflict, everywhere unreason; seven-eighths of the world seemed to be sinking down towards chronic disorder and social dissolution. Even without Mr. Peeve it would have been difficult enough to have made headway against the facts.

Mr. Barnstaple was, indeed, ceasing to secrete hope, and for such types as he, hope is the essential solvent without which there is no digesting life. His hope had always been in liberalism and generous liberal effort, but he was beginning to think that liberalism would never do anything more for ever than sit hunched up with its hands in

its pockets grumbling and peeving at the activities of baser but more energetic men. Whose scrambling activities would inevitably wreck the world.

Night and day now, Mr. Barnstaple was worrying about the world at large. By night even more than by day, for sleep was leaving him. And he was haunted by a dreadful craving to bring out a number of the Liberal of his very own — to alter it all after Mr. Peeve had gone away, to cut out all the dyspeptic stuff, the miserable, empty girding at this wrong and that, the gloating on cruel and unhappy things, the exaggeration of the simple, natural, human misdeeds of Mr. Lloyd George, the appeals to Lord Grey, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Lansdowne, the Pope, Queen Anne, or the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (it varied from week to week), to arise and give voice and form to the young aspirations of a world reborn, and, instead, to fill the number with — Utopia! to say to the amazed readers of the Liberal: Here are things that have to be done! Here are the things we are going to do! What a blow it would be for Mr. Peeve at his Sunday breakfast! For once, too astonished to secrete abnormally, he might even digest that meal!

But this was the most foolish of dreaming. There were the three young Barnstaples at home and their need for a decent start in life to consider. And beautiful as the thing was as a dream, Mr. Barnstaple had a very unpleasant conviction that he was not really clever enough to pull such a thing off. He would make a mess of it somehow...

One might jump from the frying-pan into the fire. The Liberal was a dreary, discouraging, ungenerous paper, but anyhow it was not a base and wicked paper.

Still, if there was to be no such disastrous outbreak it was imperative that Mr. Barnstaple should rest from Mr. Peeve for a time. Once or twice already he had contradicted him. A row might occur anywhen. And the first step towards resting from Mr. Peeve was evidently to see a doctor. So Mr. Barnstaple went to a doctor.

“My nerves are getting out of control,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “I feel horribly neurasthenic.”

“You are suffering from neurasthenia,” said the doctor. “I dread my daily work.”

“You want a holiday.”

"You think I need a change?"

"As complete a change as you can manage."

"Can you recommend any place where I could go?"

"Where do you want to go?"

"Nowhere definite. I thought you could recommend—"

"Let some place attract you — and go there. Do nothing to force your inclinations at the present time."

Mr. Barnstaple paid the doctor the sum of one guinea, and armed with these instructions prepared to break the news of his illness and his necessary absence to Mr. Peeve whenever the occasion seemed ripe for doing so.

§ 2

For a time this prospective holiday was merely a fresh addition to Mr. Barnstaple's already excessive burthen of worries. To decide to get away was to find oneself face to face at once with three apparently insurmountable problems: How to get away? Whither? And since Mr. Barnstaple was one of those people who tire very quickly of their own company: With whom? A sharp gleam of furtive scheming crept into the candid misery that had recently become Mr. Barnstaple's habitual expression. But then, no one took much notice of Mr. Barnstaple's expressions.

One thing was very clear in his mind. Not a word of this holiday must be breathed at home. If once Mrs. Barnstaple got wind of it, he knew exactly what would happen. She would, with an air of competent devotion, take charge of the entire business. "You must have a *good* holiday," she would say. She would select some rather distant and expensive resort in Cornwall or Scotland or Brittany, she would buy a lot of outfit, she would have afterthoughts to swell the luggage with inconvenient parcels at the last moment, and she would bring the boys. Probably she would arrange for one or two groups of acquaintances to come to the same place to "liven things up." If they did they were certain to bring the worst sides of their natures with them and to develop into the most indefatigable of bores. There would be no conversation. There would be much unreal laughter,

There would be endless games... *No*!

But how is a man to go away for a holiday without his wife getting wind of it? Somehow a bag must be packed and smuggled out of the house...

The most hopeful thing about Mr. Barnstaple's position from Mr. Barnstaple's point of view was that he owned a small automobile of his very own. It was natural that this car should play a large part in his secret plannings. It seemed to offer the easiest means of getting away; it converted the possible answer to Whither? from a fixed and definite place into what mathematicians call, I believe, a locus; and there was something so companionable about the little beast that it did to a slight but quite perceptible extent answer the question, With whom? It was a two-seater. It was known in the family as the Foot Bath, Colman's Mustard, and the Yellow Peril. As these names suggest, it was a low, open car of a clear yellow colour. Mr. Barnstaple used it to come up to the office from Sydenham because it did thirty-three miles to the gallon and was ever so much cheaper than a season ticket. It stood up in the court under the office window during the day. At Sydenham it lived in a shed of which Mr. Barnstaple carried the only key. So far he had managed to prevent the boys from either driving it or taking it to pieces. At times Mrs. Barnstaple made him drive her about Sydenham for her shopping, but she did not really like the little car because it exposed her to the elements too much and made her dusty and dishevelled. Both by reason of all that it made possible and by reason of all that it debarred, the little car was clearly indicated as the medium for the needed holiday. And Mr. Barnstaple really liked driving it. He drove very badly, but he drove very carefully; and though it sometimes stopped and refused to proceed, it did not do, or at any rate it had not so far done as most other things did in Mr. Barnstaple's life, which was to go due east when he turned the steering wheel west. So that it gave him an agreeable sense of mastery.

In the end Mr. Barnstaple made his decisions with great rapidity. Opportunity suddenly opened in front of him. Thursday was his day at the printer's, and he came home on Thursday evening feeling horribly jaded. The weather kept obstinately hot and dry. It made it none the less distressing that this drought presaged famine and

misery for half the world. And London was in full season, smart and grinning: if anything it was a sillier year than 1913, the great tango year, which, in the light of subsequent events, Mr. Barnstaple had hitherto regarded as the silliest year in the world's history. The Star had the usual batch of bad news along the margin of the sporting and fashionable intelligence that got the displayed space. Fighting was going on between the Russians and Poles, and also in Ireland, Asia Minor, the India frontier, and Eastern Siberia. There had been three new horrible murders. The miners were still out, and a big engineering strike was threatened. There had been only standing room in the down train and it had started twenty minutes late.

He found a note from his wife explaining that her cousins at Wimbledon had telegraphed that there was an unexpected chance of seeing the tennis there with Mademoiselle Lenglen and all the rest of the champions, and that she had gone over with the boys and would not be back until late. It would do their game no end of good, she said, to see some really first-class tennis. Also it was the servants' social that night. Would he mind being left alone in the house for once? The servants would put him out some cold supper before they went.

Mr. Barnstaple read this note with resignation. While he ate his supper he ran his eye over a pamphlet a Chinese friend had sent him to show how the Japanese were deliberately breaking up what was left of the civilization and education of China.

It was only as he was sitting and smoking a pipe in his little back garden after supper that he realized all that being left alone in the house meant for him.

Then suddenly he became very active. He rang up Mr. Peeve, told him of the doctor's verdict, explained that the affairs of the Liberal were just then in a particularly leavable state, and got his holiday. Then he went to his bedroom and packed up a hasty selection of things to take with him in an old Gladstone bag that was not likely to be immediately missed, and put this in the dickey of his car. After which he spent some time upon a letter which he addressed to his wife and put away very carefully in his breast pocket.

Then he locked up the car-shed and composed himself in a deck-chair in the garden with his pipe and a nice thoughtful book on the

Bankruptcy of Europe, so as to look and feel as innocent as possible before his family came home.

When his wife returned he told her casually that he believed he was suffering from neurasthenia, and that he had arranged to run up to London on the morrow and consult a doctor in the matter.

Mrs. Barnstaple wanted to choose him a doctor, but he got out of that by saying that he had to consider Peeve in the matter and that Peeve was very strongly set on the man he had already in fact consulted. And when Mrs. Barnstaple said that she believed they *all* wanted a good holiday, he just grunted in a non-committal manner.

In this way Mr. Barnstaple was able to get right away from his house with all the necessary luggage for some weeks' holiday, without arousing any insurmountable opposition. He started next morning Londonward. The traffic on the way was gay and plentiful, but by no means troublesome, and the Yellow Peril was running so sweetly that she might almost have been named the Golden Hope. In Camberwell he turned into the Camberwell New Road and made his way to the post-office at the top of Vauxhall Bridge Road. There he drew up. He was scared but elated by what he was doing. He went into the post-office and sent his wife a telegram. "Dr. Pagan," he wrote, "says solitude and rest urgently needed so am going off Lake District recuperate have got bag and things expecting this letter follows."

Then he came outside and fumbled in his pocket and produced and posted the letter he had written so carefully overnight. It was deliberately scrawled to suggest neurasthenia at an acute phase. Dr. Pagan, it explained, had ordered an immediate holiday and suggested that Mr. Barnstaple should "wander north." It would be better to cut off all letters for a few days, or even a week or so. He would not trouble to write unless something went wrong. No news would be good news. Rest assured all would be well. As soon as he had a certain address for letters he would wire it, but only very urgent things were to be sent on.

After this he resumed his seat in his car with such a sense of freedom as he had never felt since his first holidays from his first school. He made for the Great North Road, but at the traffic jam at Hyde Park Corner he allowed the policeman to turn him down

towards Knightsbridge, and afterwards at the corner where the Bath Road forks away from the Oxford Road an obstructive van put him into the former. But it did not matter very much. Any way led to Elsewhere and he could work northward later.

§ 3

The day was one of those days of gay sunshine that were characteristic of the great drought of 1921. It was not in the least sultry. Indeed there was a freshness about it that blended with Mr. Barnstaple's mood to convince him that there were quite agreeable adventures before him. Hope had already returned to him. He knew he was on the way out of things, though as yet he had not the slightest suspicion how completely out of things the way was going to take him. It would be quite a little adventure presently to stop at an inn and get some lunch, and if he felt lonely as he went on he would give somebody a lift and talk. It would be quite easy to give people lifts because so long as his back was generally towards Sydenham. and the Liberal office, it did not matter at all now in which direction he went.

A little way out of Slough he was passed by an enormous grey touring car. It made him start and swerve. It came up alongside him without a sound, and though according to his only very slightly inaccurate speedometer, he was doing a good twenty-seven miles an hour, it had passed him in a moment. Its occupants, he noted, were three gentlemen and a lady. They were all sitting up and looking backward as though they were interested in something that was following them. They went by too quickly for him to note more than that the lady was radiantly lovely in an immediate and indisputable way, and that the gentleman nearest to him had a peculiarly elfin yet elderly face.

Before he could recover from the eclat of this passage a car with the voice of a prehistoric saurian warned him that he was again being overtaken. This was how Mr. Barnstaple liked being passed. By negotiation. He slowed down, abandoned any claim to the crown of the road and made encouraging gestures with his hand. A large,

smooth, swift Limousine availed itself of his permission to use the thirty odd feet or so of road to the right of him. It was carrying a fair load of luggage, but except for a young gentleman with an eye-glass who was sitting beside the driver, he saw nothing of its passengers. It swept round a corner ahead in the wake of the touring car.

Now even a mechanical foot-bath does not like being passed in this lordly fashion on a bright morning on the open road. Mr. Barnstaple's accelerator went down and he came round that corner a good ten miles per hour faster than his usual cautious practice. He found the road quite clear ahead of him.

Indeed he found the road much too clear ahead of him. It stretched straight in front of him for perhaps a third of a mile. On the left were a low, well-trimmed hedge, scattered trees, level fields, some small cottages lying back, remote poplars, and a distant view of Windsor Castle. On the right were level fields, a small inn, and a background of low, wooded hills. A conspicuous feature in this tranquil landscape was the board advertisement of a riverside hotel at Maidenhead. Before him was a sort of heat flicker in the air and two or three little dust whirls spinning along the road. And there was not a sign of the grey touring car and not a sign of the Limousine.

It took Mr. Barnstaple the better part of two seconds to realize the full astonishment of this fact. Neither to right nor left was there any possible side road down which either car could have vanished. And if they had already got round the further bend, then they must be travelling at the rate of two or three hundred miles per hour!

It was Mr. Barnstaple's excellent custom whenever he was in doubt to slow down. He slowed down now. He went on at a pace of perhaps fifteen miles an hour, staring open-mouthed about the empty landscape for some clue to this mysterious disappearance. Curiously enough he had no feeling that he himself was in any sort of danger.

Then his car seemed to strike something and skidded. It skidded round so violently that for a moment or so Mr. Barnstaple lost his head. He could not remember what ought to be done when a car skids. He recalled something vaguely about steering in the direction in which the car is skidding, but he could not make out in the excitement of the moment in what direction the car was skidding.

Afterwards he remembered that at this point he heard a sound. It

was exactly the same sound, coming as the climax of an accumulating pressure, sharp like the snapping of a lute string, which one hears at the end — or beginning — of insensibility under anaesthetics.

He had seemed to twist round towards the hedge on the right, but now he found the road ahead of him again. He touched his accelerator and then slowed down and stopped. He stopped in the profoundest astonishment.

This was an entirely different road from the one he had been upon half a minute before. The hedges had changed, the trees had altered, Windsor Castle had vanished, and — a small compensation — the big Limousine was in sight again. It was standing by the roadside about two hundred yards away,

II. — THE WONDERFUL ROAD

§ 1

For a time Mr. Barnstaple's attention was very unequally divided between the Limousine, whose passengers were now descending, and the scenery about him. This latter was indeed so strange and beautiful that it was only as people who must be sharing his admiration and amazement and who therefore might conceivably help to elucidate and relieve his growing and quite overwhelming perplexity, that the little group ahead presently arose to any importance in his consciousness.

The road itself instead of being the packed together pebbles and dirt smeared with tar with a surface of grit, dust, and animal excrement, of a normal English high road, was apparently made of glass, clear in places as still water and in places milky or opalescent, shot with streaks of soft colour or glittering richly with clouds of embedded golden flakes. It was perhaps twelve or fifteen yards wide. On either side was a band of greensward, of a finer grass than Mr. Barnstaple had ever seen before — and he was an expert and observant mower of lawns — and beyond this a wide border of flowers. Where Mr. Barnstaple sat agape in his car and perhaps for thirty yards in either direction this border was a mass of some unfamiliar blossom of forget-me-not blue. Then the colour was broken by an increasing number of tall, pure white spikes that finally ousted the blue altogether from the bed. On the opposite side of the way these same spikes were mingled with masses of plants bearing seed-pods equally strange to Mr. Barnstaple, which varied through a series of blues and mauves and purples to an intense crimson. Beyond this gloriously coloured foam of flowers spread flat meadows on which creamy cattle were grazing. Three close at hand, a little startled perhaps by Mr. Barnstaple's sudden apparition, chewed the cud and regarded him with benevolently speculative eyes. They had long horns and dewlaps like the cattle of South Europe and India. From these benign creatures Mr. Barnstaple's eyes went to a long line of flame-shaped trees, to a colonnade of white and

gold, and to a background of snow-clad mountains. A few tall, white clouds were sailing across a sky of dazzling blue. The air impressed Mr. Barnstaple as being astonishingly clear and sweet.

Except for the cows and the little group of people standing by the Limousine Mr. Barnstaple could see no other living creature. The motorists were standing still and staring about them. A sound of querulous voices came to him.

A sharp crepitation at his back turned Mr. Barnstaple's attention round. By the side of the road in the direction from which conceivably he had come were the ruins of what appeared to be a very recently demolished stone house. Beside it were two large apple trees freshly twisted and riven, as if by some explosion, and out of the centre of it came a column of smoke and this sound of things catching fire. And the contorted lines of these shattered apple trees helped Mr. Barnstaple to realize that some of the flowers by the wayside near at hand were also bent down to one side as if by the passage of a recent violent gust of wind. Yet he had heard no explosion nor felt any wind.

He stared for a time and then turned as if for an explanation to the Limousine. Three of these people were now coming along the road towards him, led by a tall, slender, grey-headed gentleman in a felt hat and a long motoring dust-coat. He had a small upturned face with a little nose that scarce sufficed for the springs of his gilt glasses. Mr. Barnstaple restarted his engine and drove slowly to meet them.

As soon as he judged himself within hearing distance he stopped and put his head over the side of the Yellow Peril with a question. At the same moment the tall, grey-headed gentleman asked practically the same question: "Can you tell me at all, sir, where we *are*?"

§ 2

"Five minutes ago," said Mr. Barnstaple, "I should have said we were on the Maidenhead Road. Near Slough."

"Exactly!" said the tall gentleman in earnest, argumentative tones. "Exactly! And I maintain that there is not the slightest reason for supposing that we are not still on the Maidenhead Road."

The challenge of the dialectician rang in his voice.

"It doesn't *look* like the Maidenhead Road," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"Agreed! But are we to judge by appearances or are we to judge by the direct continuity of our experience? The Maidenhead Road led to this, was in continuity with this, and therefore I hold that this is the Maidenhead Road."

"Those mountains?" considered Mr. Barnstaple.

"Windsor Castle ought to be there," said the tall gentleman brightly as if he gave a point in a gambit.

"*Was* there five minutes ago," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"Then obviously those mountains are some sort of a camouflage," said the tall gentleman triumphantly, "and the whole of this business is, as they say nowadays, a put-up thing."

"It seems to be remarkably well put up," said Mr. Barnstaple.

Came a pause during which Mr. Barnstaple surveyed the tall gentleman's companions. The tall gentleman he knew perfectly well. He had seen him a score of times at public meetings and public dinners. He was Mr. Cecil Burleigh, the great Conservative leader. He was not only distinguished as a politician; he was eminent as a private gentleman, a philosopher and a man of universal intelligence. Behind him stood a short, thick-set, middle-aged young man, unknown to Mr. Barnstaple, the natural hostility of whose appearance was greatly enhanced by an eye-glass. The third member of the little group was also a familiar form, but for a time Mr. Barnstaple could not place him. He had a clean-shaven, round, plump face and a well-nourished person and his costume suggested either a High Church clergyman or a prosperous Roman Catholic priest.

The young man with the eye-glass now spoke in a kind of impotent falsetto. "I came down to Taplow Court by road not a month ago and there was certainly nothing of this sort on the way then."

"I admit there are difficulties," said Mr. Burleigh with gusto. "I admit there are considerable difficulties. Still, I venture to think my main proposition holds."

"*You* don't think this is the Maidenhead Road?" said the gentleman with the eye-glass flatly to Mr. Barnstaple.

"It seems too perfect for a put-up thing," said Mr. Barnstaple with

a mild obstinacy.

"But, my dear Sir!" protested Mr. Burleigh, "this road is *notorious*for nursery seedsmen and sometimes they arrange the most astonishing displays. As an advertisement."

"Then why don't we go straight on to Taplow Court now?" asked the gentleman with the eye-glass.

"Because," said Mr. Burleigh, with the touch of asperity natural when one has to insist on a fact already clearly known, and obstinately overlooked, "Rupert insists that we are in some other world. And won't go on. That is why. He has always had too much imagination. He thinks that things that don't exist *can* exist. And now he imagines himself in some sort of scientific romance and out of our world altogether. In another dimension. I sometimes think it would have been better for all of us if Rupert had taken to writing romances — instead of living them. If you, as his secretary, think that you will be able to get him on to Taplow in time for lunch with the Windsor people—"

Mr. Burleigh indicated by a gesture ideas for which he found words inadequate.

Mr. Barnstaple had already noted a slow-moving, intent, sandy-complexioned figure in a grey top hat with a black band that the caricaturists had made familiar, exploring the flowery tangle beside the Limousine. This then must be no less well-known person than Rupert Catskill, the Secretary of State for War.

For once Mr. Barnstaple found himself in entire agreement with this all too adventurous politician. This *was* another world. Mr. Barnstaple got out of his car and addressed himself to Mr. Burleigh. "I think we may get a lot of light upon just where we are, Sir, if we explore this building which is burning here close at hand. I thought just now that I saw a figure lying on the slope close behind it. If we could catch one of the hoaxers—"

He left his sentence unfinished because he did not believe for a moment that they were being hoaxed. Mr. Burleigh had fallen very much in his opinion in the last five minutes.

All four men turned their faces to the smoking ruin.

"It's a very extraordinary thing that there isn't a soul in sight," remarked the eye-glass gentleman searching the horizon.

“Well, I see no harm whatever in finding out what is burning,” said Mr. Burleigh and led the way, upholding an intelligent, anticipatory face, towards the wrecked house between the broken trees.

But before he had gone a dozen paces the attention of the little group was recalled to the Limousine by a loud scream of terror from the lady who had remained seated therein.

§ 3

“Really this is too much!” cried Mr. Burleigh with a note of genuine exasperation. “There must surely be police regulations to prevent this kind of thing.”

“It’s out of some travelling menagerie,” said the gentleman with the eye- glass. “What ought we to do?”

“It looks tame,” said Mr. Barnstaple, but without any impulse to put his theory to the test.

“It might easily frighten people very seriously,” said Mr. Burleigh. And lifting up a bland voice he shouted: “Don’t be alarmed, Stella! It’s probably quite tame and harmless. Don’t *irritate* it with that sunshade. It might fly at you. Stel-*la*!”

“It” was a big and beautifully marked leopard which had come very softly out of the flowers and sat down like a great cat in the middle of the glass road at the side of the big car. It was blinking and moving its head from side to side rhythmically, with an expression of puzzled interest, as the lady, in accordance with the best traditions of such cases, opened and shut her parasol at it as rapidly as she could. The chauffeur had taken cover behind the car. Mr. Rupert Catskill stood staring, knee-deep in flowers, apparently only made aware of the creature’s existence by the same scream that had attracted the attention of Mr. Burleigh and his companions.

Mr. Catskill was the first to act, and his act showed his mettle. It was at once discreet and bold. “Stop flopping that sunshade, Lady Stella,” he said. “Let me — I will — catch its eye.”

He made a detour round the car so as to come face to face with the animal. Then for a moment he stood, as it were displaying himself, a

resolute little figure in a grey frock coat and a black-banded top hat. He held out a cautious hand, not too suddenly for fear of startling the creature. “Poossy!” he said.

The leopard, relieved by the cessation of Lady Stella’s sunshade, regarded him with interest and curiosity. He drew closer. The leopard extended its muzzle and sniffed.

“If it will only let me stroke it,” said Mr. Catskill, and came within arm’s length.

The beast sniffed the extended hand with an expression of incredulity. Then with a suddenness that sent Mr. Catskill back several paces, it sneezed. It sneezed again much more violently, regarded Mr. Catskill reproachfully for a moment and then leapt lightly over the flower-bed and made off in the direction of the white and golden colonnade. The grazing cattle in the field, Mr. Barnstaple noted, watched its passage without the slightest sign of dismay.

Mr. Catskill remained in a slightly expanded state in the middle of the road. “No animal,” he remarked, “can stand up to the steadfast gaze of the human eye. Not one. It is a riddle for your materialist... Shall we join Mr. Cecil, Lady Stella? He seems to have found something to look at down there. The man in the little yellow car may know where he is. Hm?”

He assisted the lady to get out of the car and the two came on after Mr. Barnstaple’s party, which was now again approaching the burning house. The chauffeur, evidently not wishing to be left alone with the Limousine in this world of incredible possibilities, followed as closely as respect permitted.

III. — THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

§ 1

The fire in the little house did not seem to be making headway. The smoke that came from it was much less now than when Mr. Barnstaple had first observed it. As they came close they found a quantity of twisted bits of bright metal and fragments of broken glass among the shattered masonry. The suggestion of exploded scientific apparatus was very strong. Then almost simultaneously the entire party became aware of a body lying on the grassy slope behind the ruins. It was the body of a man in the prime of life, naked except for a couple of bracelets and a necklace and girdle, and blood was oozing from his mouth and nostrils. With a kind of awe Mr. Barnstaple knelt down beside this prostrate figure and felt its still heart. He had never seen so beautiful a face and body before.

"*Dead*," he whispered.

"Look!" cried the shrill voice of the man with the eye-glass. "Another!"

He was pointing to something that was hidden from Mr. Barnstaple by a piece of wall. Mr. Barnstaple had to get up and climb over a heap of rubble before he could see this second find. It was a slender girl, clothed as little as the man. She had evidently been flung with enormous violence against the wall and killed instantaneously. Her face was quite undistorted although her skull had been crushed in from behind; her perfect mouth and green-grey eyes were a little open and her expression was that of one who is still thinking out some difficult but interesting problem. She did not seem in the least dead but merely disregardful. One hand still grasped a copper implement with a handle of glass. The other lay limp and prone.

For some seconds nobody spoke. It was as if they all feared to interrupt the current of her thoughts.

Then Mr. Barnstaple heard the voice of the priestly gentleman speaking very softly behind him. "What a *perfect* form!" he said.

"I admit I was wrong," said Mr. Burleigh with deliberation. "I have been wrong... These are no earthly people. Manifestly. And

ergo, we are not on earth. I cannot imagine what has happened nor where we are. In the face of sufficient evidence I have never hesitated to retract an opinion. This world we are in is not our world. It is something—"

He paused. "It is something very wonderful indeed."

"And the Windsor party," said Mr. Catskill without any apparent regret, "must have its lunch without us."

"But then," said the clerical gentleman, "what world *are* we in, and how did we get here?"

"Ah! *there*," said Mr. Burleigh blandly, "you go altogether beyond my poor powers of guessing. We are here in some world that is singularly like our world and singularly unlike it. It must be in some way related to our world or we could not be here. But how it can be related, is, I confess, a hopeless mystery to me. Maybe we are in some other dimension of space than those we wot of. But my poor head whirls at the thought of these dimensions. I am — . I am mazed-mazed."

"Einstein," injected the gentleman with the eye-glass compactly and with evident self-satisfaction.

"Exactly!" said Mr. Burleigh. "Einstein might make it clear to us. Or dear old Haldane might undertake to explain it and fog us up with that adipose Hegelianism of his. But I am neither Haldane nor Einstein. Here we are in some world which is, for all practical purposes, including the purposes of our week-end engagements, Nowhere. Or if you prefer the Greek of it, we are in Utopia. And as I do not see that there is any manifest way out of it again, I suppose the thing we have to do as rational creatures is to make the best of it. And watch our opportunities. It is certainly a very lovely world. The loveliness is even greater than the wonder. And there are human beings here — with minds. I judge from all this material lying about, it is a world in which experimental chemistry is pursued — pursued indeed to the bitter end — under almost idyllic conditions. Chemistry — and nakedness. I feel bound to confess that whether we are to regard these two people who have apparently just blown themselves up here as Greek gods or as naked savages, seems to me to be altogether a question of individual taste. I admit a bias for the Greek god — and goddess."

“Except that it is a little difficult to think of two dead immortals,” squeaked the gentleman of the eye-glass in the tone of one who scores a point.

Mr. Burleigh was about to reply, and to judge from his ruffled expression his reply would have been of a disciplinary nature. But instead he exclaimed sharply and turned round to face two newcomers. The whole party had become aware of them at the same moment. Two stark Apollos stood over the ruin and were regarding our Earthlings with an astonishment at least as great as that they created.

One spoke, and Mr. Barnstaple was astonished beyond measure to find understandable words reverberating in his mind.

“Red Gods!” cried the Utopian. “What things are you? And how did you get into the world?”

(English! It would have been far less astounding if they had spoken Greek. But that they should speak any known language was a matter for incredulous amazement.)

§ 2

Mr. Cecil Burleigh was the least disconcerted of the party. “Now,” he said, “we may hope to learn something definite — face to face with rational and articulate creatures.”

He cleared his throat, grasped the lapels of his long dust-coat with two long nervous hands and assumed the duties of spokesman. “We are quite unable, gentlemen, to account for our presence here,” he said. “We are as puzzled as you are. We have discovered ourselves suddenly in your world instead of our own.”

“You come from another world?”

“Exactly. A quite different world. In which we have all our natural and proper places. We were travelling in that world of ours in — Ah! — certain vehicles, when suddenly we discovered ourselves here. Intruders, I admit, but, I can assure you, innocent and unpremeditated intruders.”

“You do not know how it is that Arden and Greenlake have failed in their experiment and how it is that they are dead?”

“If Arden and Greenlake are the names of these two beautiful young people here, we know nothing about them except that we found them lying as you see them when we came from the road hither to find out or, in fact, to inquire—”

He cleared his throat and left his sentence with a floating end.

The Utopian, if we may for convenience call him that, who had first spoken, looked now at his companion and seemed to question him mutely. Then he turned to the Earthlings again. He spoke and again those clear tones rang, not — so it seemed to Mr. Barnstaple — in his ears but within his head.

“It will be well if you and your friends do not trample this wreckage. It will be well if you all return to the road. Come with me. My brother here will put an end to this burning and do what needs to be done to our brother and sister. And afterwards this place will be examined by those who understand the work that was going on here.”

“We must throw ourselves entirely upon your hospitality,” said Mr. Burleigh. “We are entirely at your disposal. This encounter, let me repeat, was not of our seeking.”

“Though we should certainly have sought it if we had known of its possibility,” said Mr. Catskill, addressing the world at large and glancing at Mr. Barnstaple as if for confirmation. “We find this world of yours — *most* attractive.”

“At the first encounter,” the gentleman with the eye-glass endorsed, “a *most* attractive world.”

As they returned through the thick-growing flowers to the road, in the wake of the Utopian and Mr. Burleigh, Mr. Barnstaple found Lady Stella rustling up beside him. Her words, in this setting of pure wonder, filled him with amazement at their serene and invincible ordinariness. “Haven’t we met before somewhere — at lunch or something — Mr. — Mr. — ?”

Was all this no more than a show? He stared at her blankly for a moment before supplying her with:

“Barnstaple.”

“Mr. Barnstaple?”

His mind came into line with hers.

“I’ve never had that pleasure, Lady Stella. Though, of course, I

know you — I know you very well from your photographs in the weekly illustrated papers."

"Did you hear what it was that Mr. Cecil was saying just now? About this being Utopia?"

"He said we might *call* it Utopia."

"So like Mr. Cecil. But is it Utopia? — *really* Utopia?

"I've always longed so to be in Utopia," the lady went on without waiting for Mr. Barnstaple's reply to her question. "What splendid young men these two Utopians appear to be! They must, I am sure, belong to its aristocracy — in spite of their — informal — costume. Or even because of it."...

Mr. Barnstaple had a happy thought. "I have also recognized Mr. Burleigh and Mr. Rupert Catskill, Lady Stella, but I should be so glad if you would tell me who the young gentleman with the eye-glass is, and the clerical gentleman. They are close behind us."

Lady Stella imparted her information in a charmingly confidential undertone. "The eye-glass," she murmured, "is — I am going to spell it — F.R.E.D.D.Y. M.U.S.H. Taste. Good taste. He is awfully clever at finding out young poets and all that sort of literary thing. And he's Rupert's secretary. If there is a literary Academy, they say, he's certain to be in it. He's dreadfully critical and sarcastic. We were going to Taplow for a perfectly intellectual week-end, quite like the old times. So soon as the Windsor people had gone again, that is... Mr. Gosse was coming and Max Beerbohm — and everyone like that. But nowadays something always happens. Always... The unexpected — almost excessively... The clerical collar" — she glanced back to judge whether she was within earshot of the gentleman under discussion— "is Father Amerton, who is so dreadfully outspoken about the sins of society and all *that* sort of thing. It's odd, but out of the pulpit he's inclined to be shy and quiet and a little awkward with the forks and spoons. Paradoxical, isn't it?"

"Of *course*!" cried Mr. Barnstaple. "I remember him now. I knew his face but I couldn't place it. Thank you so much, Lady Stella."

There was something very reassuring to Mr. Barnstaple in the company of these famous and conspicuous people and particularly in the company of Lady Stella. She was indeed heartening: she brought so much of the dear old world with her, and she was so manifestly prepared to subjugate this new world to its standards at the earliest possible opportunity. She fended off much of the wonder and beauty that had threatened to submerge Mr. Barnstaple altogether. Meeting her and her company was in itself for a man in his position a minor but considerable adventure that helped to bridge the gulf of astonishment between the humdrum of his normal experiences and this all too bracing Utopian air. It solidified, it — if one may use the word in such a connexion — it *degraded* the luminous splendour about him towards complete credibility that it should also be seen and commented on by her and by Mr. Burleigh, and viewed through the appraising monocle of Mr. Freddy Mush. It brought it within range of the things that get into the newspapers. Mr. Barnstaple alone in Utopia might have been so completely overawed as to have been mentally overthrown. This easy-mannered brown-skinned divinity who was now exchanging questions with Mr. Burleigh was made mentally accessible by that great man's intervention.

Yet it was with something very like a catching of the breath that Mr. Barnstaple's attention reverted from the Limousine people to this noble-seeming world into which he and they had fallen. What sort of beings really were these men and women of a world where ill-bred weeds, it seemed, had ceased to thrust and fight amidst the flowers, and where leopards void of feline malice looked out with friendly eyes upon the passer-by?

It was astounding that the first two inhabitants they had found in this world of subjugated nature should be lying dead, victims, it would seem, of some hazardous experiment. It was still more astonishing that this other pair who called themselves the brothers of the dead man and woman should betray so little grief or dismay at the tragedy. There had been no emotional scene at all, Mr. Barnstaple realized, no consternation or weeping. They were evidently much more puzzled and interested than either horrified or distressed.

The Utopian who had remained in the ruin, had carried out the body of the girl to lay it beside her companion's, and he had now,

Mr. Barnstaple saw, returned to a close scrutiny of the wreckage of the experiment.

But now more of these people were coming upon the scene. They had Aeroplanes in this world, for two small ones, noiseless and swift in their flight as swallows, had landed in the fields near by. A man had come up along the road on a machine like a small two-wheeled two-seater with its wheels in series, bicycle fashion; lighter and neater it was than any earthly automobile and mysteriously able to stand up on its two wheels while standing still. A burst of laughter from down the road called Mr. Barnstaple's attention to a group of these Utopians who had apparently found something exquisitely ridiculous in the engine of the Limousine. Most of these people were as scantily clothed and as beautifully built as the two dead experimentalists, but one or two were wearing big hats of straw, and one who seemed to be an older woman of thirty or more wore a robe of white bordered by an intense red line. She was speaking now to Mr. Burleigh.

Although she was a score of yards away, her speech presented itself in Mr. Barnstaple's mind with great distinctness.

"We do not even know as yet what connexion your coming into our world may have with the explosion that has just happened here or whether, indeed, it has any connexion. We want to inquire into both these things. It will be reasonable, we think, to take you and all the possessions you have brought with you to a convenient place for a conference not very far from here. We are arranging for machines to take you thither. There perhaps you will eat. I do not know when you are accustomed to eat?"

"Refreshment," said Mr. Burleigh, rather catching at the idea. "Some refreshment would certainly be acceptable before very long. In fact, had we not fallen so sharply out of our own world into yours, by this time we should have been lunching — lunching in the best of company."

"Wonder and lunch," thought Mr. Barnstaple. Man is a creature who must eat by necessity whether he wonder or no. Mr. Barnstaple perceived indeed that he was already hungry and that the air he was breathing was a keen and appetizing air.

The Utopian seemed struck by a novel idea. "Do you eat several

times a day? What sort of things do you eat?”

“Oh! Surely! They’re *not* vegetarians!” cried Mr. Mush sharply in a protesting parenthesis, dropping his eye-glass from its socket.

They were all hungry. It showed upon their faces.

“We are all accustomed to eat several times a day,” said Mr. Burleigh. “Perhaps it would be well if I were to give you a brief resume of our dietary. There may be differences. We begin, as a rule, with a simple cup of tea and the thinnest slice of bread-and-butter brought to the bedside. Then comes breakfast.”... He proceeded to a masterly summary of his gastronomic day, giving clearly and attractively the particulars of an English breakfast, eggs to be boiled four and a half minutes, neither more nor less, lunch with any light wine, tea rather a social rally than a serious meal, dinner, in some detail, the occasional resort to supper. It was one of those clear statements which would have rejoiced the House of Commons, light, even gay, and yet with a trace of earnestness. The Utopian woman regarded him with deepening interest as he proceeded. “Do you all eat in this fashion?” she asked.

Mr. Burleigh ran his eye over his party. “I cannot answer for Mr. — Mr. — ?”

“Barnstaple... Yes, I eat in much the same fashion.”

For some reason the Utopian woman smiled at him. She had very pretty brown eyes, and though he liked her to smile he wished that she had not smiled in the way she did.

“And you sleep?” she asked.

“From six to ten hours, according to circumstances,” said Mr. Burleigh.

“And you make love?”

The question perplexed and to a certain extent shocked our Earthlings. What exactly did she mean? For some moments no one framed a reply. Mr. Barnstaple’s mind was filled with a hurrying rush of strange possibilities.

Then Mr. Burleigh, with his fine intelligence and the quick evasiveness of a modern leader of men, stepped into the breach. “Not habitually, I can assure you,” he said. “Not habitually.”

The woman with the red-bordered robe seemed to think this over for a swift moment. Then she smiled faintly.

“We must take you somewhere where we can talk of all these things,” she said. “Manifestly you come from some strange other world. Our men of knowledge must get together with you and exchange ideas.”

§ 4

At half-past ten that morning Mr. Barnstaple had been motoring along the main road through Slough, and now at half-past one he was soaring through wonderland with his own world half forgotten. “Marvellous,” he repeated. “Marvellous. I knew that I should have a good holiday. But *this*, *this* — !”

He was extraordinarily happy with the bright unclouded happiness of a perfect dream. Never before had he enjoyed the delights of an explorer in new lands, never before had he hoped to experience these delights. Only a few weeks before he had written an article for the Liberal lamenting the “End of the Age of Exploration,” an article so thoroughly and aimlessly depressing that it had pleased Mr. Peeve extremely. He recalled that exploit now with but the faintest twinge of remorse.

The Earthling party had been distributed among four small aeroplanes, and as Mr. Barnstaple and his companion, Father Amerton, rose in the air, he looked back to see the automobiles and luggage being lifted with astonishing ease into two lightly built lorries. Each lorry put out a pair of glittering arms and lifted up its automobile as a nurse might lift up a baby.

By contemporary earthly standards of safety Mr. Barnstaple’s aviator flew very low. There were times when he passed between trees rather than over them, and this, even if at first it was a little alarming, permitted a fairly close inspection of the landscape. For the earlier part of the journey it was garden pasture with grazing creamy cattle and patches of brilliantly coloured vegetation of a nature unknown to Mr. Barnstaple. Amidst this cultivation narrow tracks, which may have been foot or cycle tracks, threaded their way. Here and there ran a road bordered with flowers and shaded by fruit trees.

There were few houses and no towns or villages at all. The houses

varied very greatly in size, from little isolated buildings which Mr. Barnstaple thought might be elegant summer-houses or little temples, to clusters of roofs and turrets which reminded him of country chateaux or suggested extensive farming or dairying establishments. Here and there people were working in the fields or going to and fro on foot or on machines, but the effect of the whole was of an extremely underpopulated land.

It became evident that they were going to cross the range of snowy mountains that had so suddenly blotted the distant view of Windsor Castle from the landscape.

As they approached these mountains, broad stretches of golden corn-land replaced the green of the pastures and then the cultivation became more diversified. He noted unmistakable vineyards on sunny slopes, and the number of workers visible and the habitations multiplied. The little squadron of aeroplanes flew up a broad valley towards a pass so that Mr. Barnstaple was able to scrutinize the mountain scenery. Came chestnut woods and at last pines. There were Cyclopean turbines athwart the mountain torrents and long, low, many-windowed buildings that might serve some industrial purpose. A skilfully graded road with exceedingly bold, light and beautiful viaducts mounted towards the pass. There were more people, he thought, in the highland country than in the levels below, though still far fewer than he would have seen upon any comparable countryside on earth.

Ten minutes of craggy desolation with the snow-fields of a great glacier on one side intervened before he descended into the upland valley on the Conference Place where presently he alighted. This was a sort of lap in the mountain, terraced by masonry so boldly designed that it seemed a part of the geological substance of the mountain itself. It faced towards a wide artificial lake retained by a stupendous dam from the lower reaches of the valley. At intervals along this dam there were great stone pillars dimly suggestive of seated figures. He glimpsed a wide plain beyond, which reminded him of the valley of the Po, and then as he descended the straight line of the dam came up to hide this further vision.

Upon these terraces, and particularly upon the lower ones, were groups and clusters of flowerlike buildings, and he distinguished

paths and steps and pools of water as if the whole place were a garden.

The aeroplanes made an easy landing on a turfy expanse. Close at hand was a graceful chalet that ran out from the shores of the lake over the water, and afforded mooring to a flotilla of gaily coloured boats...

It was Father Amerton who had drawn Mr. Barnstaple's attention to the absence of villages. He now remarked that there was no church in sight and that nowhere had they seen any spires or belfries. But Mr. Barnstaple thought that some of the smaller buildings might be temples or shrines. "Religion may take different forms here," he said.

"And how few babies or little children are visible!" Father Amerton remarked. "Nowhere have I seen a mother with her child."

"On the other, side of the mountains there was a place like the playing field of a big school. There were children there and one or two older people dressed in white."

"I saw that. But I was thinking of babes. Compare this with what one would see in Italy.

"The most beautiful and desirable young women," added the reverend gentleman; "*most* desirable — and not a sign of maternity!"

Their aviator, a sun-tanned blond with very blue eyes, helped them out of his machine, and they stood watching the descent of the other members of their party. Mr. Barnstaple was astonished to note how rapidly he was becoming familiarized with the colour and harmony of this new world; the strangest things in the whole spectacle now were the figures and clothing of his associates. Mr. Rupert Catskill in his celebrated grey top hat, Mr. Mush with his preposterous eye-glass, the peculiar long slenderness of Mr. Burleigh, and the square leather-clad lines of Mr. Burleigh's chauffeur, struck him as being far more incredible than the graceful Utopian forms about him.

The aviator's interest and amusement enhanced Mr. Barnstaple's perception of his companions' oddity. And then came a wave of profound doubt.

"I suppose this is *really* real," he said to Father Amerton.

"Really real! What else can it be?"

"I suppose we are not dreaming all this."

“Are your dreams and my dreams likely to coincide?”

“Yes; but there are quite impossible things — absolutely impossible things.”

“As, for instance?”

“Well, how is it that these people are speaking to us in English — modern English?”

“I never thought of that. It is rather incredible. They don’t talk in English to one another.”

Mr. Barnstaple stared in round-eyed amazement at Father Amerton, struck for the first time by a still more incredible fact. “They don’t talk in *anything* to one another,” he said. “And we haven’t noticed it until this moment!”

IV. — THE SHADOW OF EINSTEIN FALLS ACROSS THE STORY BUT PASSES LIGHTLY BY

§ 1

Except for that one perplexing fact that all these Utopians had apparently a complete command of idiomatic English, Mr. Barnstaple found his vision of this new world developing with a congruity that no dream in his experience had ever possessed. It was so coherent, so orderly, that less and less was it like a strange world at all and more and more like an arrival in some foreign but very highly civilized country.

Under the direction of the brown-eyed woman in the scarlet-edged robe, the Earthlings were established in their quarters near the Conference Place in the most hospitable and comfortable fashion conceivable. Five or six youths and girls made it their business to initiate the strangers in the little details of Utopian domesticity. The separate buildings in which they were lodged had each an agreeable little dressing-room, and the bed, which had sheets of the finest linen and a very light puffy coverlet, stood in an open loggia — too open Lady Stella thought, but then as she said, "One feels so safe here." The luggage appeared and the valises were identified as if they were in some hospitable earthly mansion.

But Lady Stella had to turn two rather too friendly youths out of her apartment before she could open her dressing-bag and administer refreshment to her complexion.

A few minutes later some excitement was caused by an outbreak of wild laughter and the sounds of an amiable but hysterical struggle that came from Lady Stella's retreat. The girl who had remained with her had displayed a quite feminine interest in her equipment and had come upon a particularly charming and diaphanous sleeping suit. For some obscure reason this secret daintiness amused the young

Utopian extremely, and it was with some difficulty that Lady Stella restrained her from putting the garment on and dancing out in it for a public display. “Then *you* put it on,” the girl insisted.

“But you don’t understand,” cried Lady Stella. “It’s almost — *sacred*! It’s for nobody to see — *ever*.”

“But *why*?” the Utopian asked, puzzled beyond measure.

Lady Stella found an answer impossible.

The light meal that followed was by terrestrial standards an entirely satisfactory one. The anxiety of Mr. Freddy Mush was completely allayed: there were cold chicken and ham and a very pleasant meat pate. There were also rather coarse-grained but most palatable bread, pure butter, an exquisite salad, fruit, cheese of the Gruyere type, and a light white wine which won from Mr. Burleigh the tribute that “Moselle never did anything better.”

“You find our food very like your own?” asked the woman in the red- trimmed robe.

“Eckquithit quality,” said Mr. Mush with his mouth rather full.

“Food has changed very little in the last three thousand years. People had found out all the best things to eat long before the Last Age of Confusion.”

“It’s too real to be real,” Mr. Barnstaple repeated to himself. “Too real to be real.”

He looked at his companions, elated, interested and eating with appreciation.

If it wasn’t for the absurdity of these Utopians speaking English with a clearness that tapped like a hammer inside his head Mr. Barnstaple would have had no doubt whatever of its reality.

No servants waited at the clothless stone table; the woman in the white and scarlet robe and the two aviators shared the meal and the guests attended to each other’s requirements. Mr. Burleigh’s chauffeur was for modestly shrinking to another table until the great statesman reassured him with: “Sit down there, Penk. Next to Mr. Mush.” Other Utopians with friendly but keenly observant eyes upon the Earthlings came into the great pillared veranda in which the meal had been set, and smiled and stood about or sat down. There were no introductions and few social formalities.

“All this is most reassuring,” said Mr. Burleigh. “Most reassuring.

I'm bound to say these beat the Chatsworth peaches. Is that cream, my dear Rupert, in the little brown jar in front of you?... I guessed as much. If you are sure you can spare it, Rupert... Thank you."

§ 2

Several of the Utopians made themselves known by name to the Earthlings. All their voices sounded singularly alike to Mr. Barnstaple and the words were as clear as print. The brown-eyed woman's name was Lychnis. A man with a beard who might perhaps, Mr. Barnstaple thought, have been as old as forty, was either Urthred or Adam or Edom, the name for all its sharpness of enunciation had been very difficult to catch. It was as if large print *hesitated*. Urthred conveyed that he was an ethnologist and historian and that he desired to learn all that he possibly could about the ways of our world. He impressed Mr. Barnstaple as having the easy carriage of some earthly financier or great newspaper proprietor rather than the diffidence natural in our own every-day world to a merely learned man. Another of their hosts, Serpentine, was also, Mr. Barnstaple learnt with surprise, for his bearing too was almost masterful, a scientific man. He called himself something that Mr. Barnstaple could not catch. First it sounded like "atomic mechanician," and then oddly enough it sounded like "molecular chemist." And then Mr. Barnstaple heard Mr. Burleigh say to Mr. Mush, "He said 'physio-chemist,' didn't he?"

"*I* thought he just called himself a materialist," said Mr. Mush.

"I thought he said he weighed things," said Lady Stella.

"Their intonation is peculiar," said Mr. Burleigh. "Sometimes they are almost too loud for comfort and then there is a kind of gap in the sounds."...

When the meal was at an end the whole party removed to another little building that was evidently planned for classes and discussions. It had a semicircular apse round which ran a series of white tablets which evidently functioned at times as a lecturer's blackboard, since there were black and coloured pencils and cloths for erasure lying on a marble ledge at a convenient height below the tablets. The lecturer

could walk from point to point of this semicircle as he talked. Lychnis, Urthred, Serpentine and the Earthlings seated themselves on a semicircular bench below this lecturer's track, and there was accommodation for about eighty or a hundred people upon the seats before them. All these were occupied, and beyond stood a number of graceful groups against a background of rhododendron-like bushes, between which Mr. Barnstaple caught glimpses of grassy vistas leading down to the shining waters of the lake.

They were going to talk over this extraordinary irruption into their world. Could anything be more reasonable than to talk it over? Could anything be more fantastically impossible?

"Odd that there are no swallows," said Mr. Mush suddenly in Mr. Barnstaple's ear. "I wonder why there are no swallows."

Mr. Barnstaple's attention went to the empty sky. "No gnats nor flies perhaps," he suggested. It was odd that he had not missed the swallows before.

"Sssh!" said Lady Stella. "He's beginning."

§ 3

This incredible conference began. It was opened by the man named Serpentine, and he stood before his audience and seemed to make a speech. His lips moved, his hands assisted his statements; his expression followed his utterance. And yet Mr. Barnstaple had the most subtle and indefensible doubt whether indeed Serpentine was speaking. There was something odd about the whole thing. Sometimes the thing said sounded with a peculiar resonance in his head; sometimes it was indistinct and elusive like an object seen through troubled waters; sometimes though Serpentine still moved his fine hands and looked towards his hearers, there were gaps of absolute silence — as if for brief intervals Mr. Barnstaple had gone deaf... Yet it was a discourse; it held together and it held Mr. Barnstaple's attention.

Serpentine had the manner of one who is taking great pains to be as simple as possible with a rather intricate question. He spoke, as it were, in propositions with a pause between each. "It had long been

known," he began, "that the possible number of dimensions, like the possible number of anything else that could be enumerated, was unlimited!"

Yes, Mr. Barnstaple had got that, but it proved too much for Mr. Freddy Mush.

"Oh, Lord!" he said. "Dimensions!" and dropped his eye-glass and became despondently inattentive.

"For most practical purposes," Serpentine continued, "the particular universe, the particular system of events, in which we found ourselves and of which we formed part, could be regarded as occurring in a space of three rectilinear dimensions and as undergoing translation, which translation was in fact duration, through a fourth dimension, *time*. Such a system of events was necessarily a gravitational system."

"Er!" said Mr. Burleigh sharply. "Excuse me! I don't see that."

So he, at any rate, was following it too.

"Any universe that endures must necessarily gravitate," Serpentine repeated, as if he were asserting some self-evident fact.

"For the life of me I can't see that," said Mr. Burleigh after a moment's reflection.

Serpentine considered him for a moment. "It *is* so," he said, and went on with his discourse. Our minds, he continued, had been evolved in the form of this practical conception of things, they accepted it as true, and it was only by great efforts of sustained analysis that we were able to realize that this universe in which we lived not only extended but was, as it were, slightly bent and contorted, into a number of other long unsuspected spatial dimensions. It extended beyond its three chief spatial dimensions into these others just as a thin sheet of paper, which is practically two dimensional, extended not only by virtue of its thickness but also of its crinkles and curvature into a third dimension.

"Am I going deaf?" asked Lady Stella in a stage whisper. "I can't catch a word of all this."

"Nor I," said Father Amerton.

Mr. Burleigh made a pacifying gesture towards these unfortunates without taking his eyes off Serpentine's face. Mr. Barnstaple knitted his brows, clasped his knees, knotted his fingers, held on desperately.

He *must* be hearing — of course he was hearing!

Serpentine proceeded to explain that just as it would be possible for any number of practically two-dimensional universes to lie side by side, like sheets of paper, in a three-dimensional space, so in the many-dimensional space about which the ill-equipped human mind is still slowly and painfully acquiring knowledge, it is possible for an innumerable quantity of practically three-dimensional universes to lie, as it were, side by side and to undergo a roughly parallel movement through time. The speculative work of Lonestone and Cephalus had long since given the soundest basis for the belief that there actually were a very great number of such space-and-time universes, parallel to one another and resembling each other, nearly but not exactly, much as the leaves of a book might resemble one another. All of them would have duration, all of them would be gravitating systems —

(Mr. Burleigh shook his head to show that still he didn't see it.)

— And those lying closest together would most nearly resemble each other. How closely they now had an opportunity of learning. For the daring attempts of those two great geniuses, Arden and Greenlake, to use the — (inaudible) — thrust of the atom to rotate a portion of the Utopian material universe in that dimension, the F dimension, into which it had long been known to extend for perhaps the length of a man's arm, to rotate this fragment of Utopian matter, much as a gate is swung on its hinges, had manifestly been altogether successful. The gate had swung back again bringing with it a breath of close air, a storm of dust and, to the immense amazement of Utopia, three sets of visitors from an unknown world.

"*Three*?" whispered Mr. Barnstaple doubtfully. "Did he say *three*?"

[Serpentine disregarded him.]

"Our brother and sister have been killed by some unexpected release of force, but their experiment has opened a way that now need never be closed again, out of the present spatial limitations of Utopia into a whole vast folio of hitherto unimagined worlds. Close at hand to us, even as Lonestone guessed ages ago, nearer to us, as he put it, than the blood in our hearts—"

("Nearer to us than breathing and closer than hands and feet,"

Father Amerton misquoted, waking up suddenly. “But what is he talking about? I don’t catch it.”)

“ — we discover another planet, much the same size as ours to judge by the scale of its inhabitants, circulating, we may certainly assume, round a sun like that in our skies, a planet bearing life and being slowly subjugated, even as our own is being subjugated, by intelligent life which has evidently evolved under almost exactly parallel conditions to those of our own evolution. This sister universe to ours is, so far as we may judge by appearances, a little retarded in time in relation to our own. Our visitors wear something very like the clothing and display physical characteristics resembling those of our ancestors during the Last Age of Confusion...

“We are not yet justified in supposing that their history has been strictly parallel to ours. No two particles of matter are alike; no two vibrations. In all the dimensions of being, in all the universes of God, there has never been and there can never be an exact repetition. That we have come to realize is the one impossible thing. Nevertheless, this world you call Earth is manifestly very near and like to this universe of ours...

“We are eager to learn from you Earthlings, to check our history, which is still very imperfectly known, by your experiences, to show you what we know, to make out what may be possible and desirable in intercourse and help between the people of your planet and ours. We, here, are the merest beginners in knowledge; we have learnt as yet scarcely anything more than the immensity of the things that we have yet to learn and do. In a million kindred things our two worlds may perhaps teach each other and help each other...

“Possibly there are streaks of heredity in your planet that have failed to develop or that have died out in ours. Possibly there are elements or minerals in one world that are rare or wanting in the other... The structure of your atoms (?)...our worlds may intermarry (?)...to their common invigoration...”

He passed into the inaudible just when Mr. Barnstaple was most moved and most eager to follow what he was saying. Yet a deaf man would have judged he was still speaking.

Mr. Barnstaple met the eye of Mr. Rupert Catskill, as distressed and puzzled as his own. Father Amerton’s face was buried in his

hands. Lady Stella and Mr. Mush were whispering softly together; they had long since given up any pretence of listening.

"Such," said Serpentine, abruptly becoming audible again, "is our first rough interpretation of your apparition in our world and of the possibilities of our interaction. I have put our ideas before you as plainly as I can. I would suggest that now one of you tell us simply and plainly what *you* conceive to be the truth about your world in relation to ours."

V. — THE GOVERNANCE AND HISTORY OF UTOPIA

§ 1

Came a pause. The Earthlings looked at one another and their gaze seemed to converge upon Mr. Cecil Burleigh. That statesman feigned to be unaware of the general expectation. “Rupert,” he said. “Won’t *you*?”

“I reserve my comments,” said Mr. Catskill. “Father Amerton, you are accustomed to treat of other worlds.”

“Not in your presence, Mr. Cecil. No.”

“But what am I to tell them?”

“What you think of it,” said Mr. Barnstaple.

“Exactly,” said Mr. Catskill. “Tell them what you think of it.”

No one else appeared to be worthy of consideration. Mr. Burleigh rose slowly and walked thoughtfully to the centre of the semicircle. He grasped his coat lapels and remained for some moments with face downcast as if considering what he was about to say. “Mr. Serpentine,” he began at last, raising a candid countenance and regarding the blue sky above the distant lake through his glasses. “Ladies and Gentlemen—”

He was going to make a speech! — as though he was at a Primrose League garden party — or Geneva. It was preposterous and yet, what else was there to be done?

“I must confess, Sir, that although I am by no means a novice at public speaking, I find myself on this occasion somewhat at a loss. Your admirable discourse, Sir, simple, direct, lucid, compact, and rising at times to passages of unaffected eloquence, has set me a pattern that I would fain follow — and before which, in all modesty, I quail. You ask me to tell you as plainly and clearly as possible the outline facts as we conceive them about this kindred world out of which with so little premeditation we have come to you. So far as my poor powers of understanding or discussing such recondite matters go, I do not think I can better or indeed supplement in any way your marvellous exposition of the mathematical aspects of the case. What

you have told us embodies the latest, finest thoughts of terrestrial science and goes, indeed, far beyond our current ideas. On certain matters, in, for example, the relationship of time and gravitation, I feel bound to admit that I do not go with you, but that is rather a failure to understand your position than any positive dissent. Upon the broader aspects of the case there need be no difficulties between us. We accept your main proposition unreservedly; namely, that we conceive ourselves to be living in a parallel universe to yours, on a planet the very brother of your own, indeed quite amazingly like yours, having regard to all the possible contrasts we might have found here. We are attracted by and strongly disposed to accept your view that our system is, in all probability, a little less seasoned and mellowed by the touch of time than yours, short perhaps by some hundreds or some thousands of years of your experiences. Assuming this, it is inevitable, Sir, that a certain humility should mingle in our attitude towards you. As your juniors it becomes us not to instruct but to learn. It is for us to ask: What have you done? To what have you reached? rather than to display to you with an artless arrogance all that still remains for us to learn and do..."

"No!" said Mr. Barnstaple to himself but half audibly. "This is a dream... If it were anyone else..."

He rubbed his knuckles into his eyes and opened them again, and there he was still, sitting next to Mr. Mush in the midst of these Olympian divinities. And Mr. Burleigh, that polished sceptic, who never believed, who was never astonished, was leaning forward on his toes and speaking, speaking, with the assurance of a man who has made ten thousand speeches. He could not have been more sure of himself and his audience in the Guildhall in London. And they were understanding him! Which was absurd!

There was nothing to do but to fall in with this stupendous absurdity — and sit and listen. Sometimes Mr. Barnstaple's mind wandered altogether from what Mr. Burleigh was saying. Then it returned and hung desperately to his discourse. In his halting, parliamentary way, his hands trifling with his glasses or clinging to the lapels of his coat, Mr. Burleigh was giving Utopia a brief account of the world of men, seeking to be elementary and lucid and reasonable, telling them of states and empires, of wars and the Great

War, of economic organization and disorganization, of revolutions and Bolshevism, of the terrible Russian famine that was beginning, of the difficulties of finding honest statesmen and officials, and of the unhelpfulness of newspapers, of all the dark and troubled spectacle of human life. Serpentine had used the term “the Last Age of Confusion,” and Mr. Burleigh had seized upon the phrase and was making much of it...

It was a great oratorical impromptu. It must have gone on for an hour, and the Utopians listened with keen, attentive faces, now and then nodding their acceptance and recognition of this statement or that. “Very like,” would come tapping into Mr. Barnstaple’s brain. “With us also — in the Age of Confusion.”

At last Mr. Burleigh, with the steady deliberation of an old parliamentary hand, drew to his end. Compliments.

He bowed. He had done. Mr. Mush startled everyone by a vigorous hand- clapping in which no one else joined.

The tension in Mr. Barnstaple’s mind had become intolerable. He leapt to his feet.

§ 2

He stood making those weak propitiatory gestures that come so naturally to the inexperienced speaker. “Ladies and Gentlemen,” he said. “Utopians, Mr. Burleigh! I crave your pardon for a moment. There is a little matter. Urgent.”

For a brief interval he was speechless.

Then he found attention and encouragement in the eye of Urthred.

“Something I don’t understand. Something incredible — I mean, incompatible. The little rift. Turns everything into a fantastic phantasmagoria.”

The intelligence in Urthred’s eye was very encouraging. Mr. Barnstaple abandoned any attempt to address the company as a whole, and spoke directly to Urthred.

“You live in Utopia, hundreds of thousands of years in advance of us. How is it that you are able to talk contemporary English — to use exactly the same language that we do? I ask you, how is that? It is

incredible. It jars. It makes a dream of you. And yet you are not a dream? It makes me feel — almost — insane."

Urthred smiled pleasantly. "We *don't* speak English," he said.

Mr. Barnstaple felt the ground slipping from under his feet. "But I *hear* you speaking English," he said.

"Nevertheless we do not speak it," said Urthred.

He smiled still more broadly. "We don't — for ordinary purposes — speak anything."

Mr. Barnstaple, with his brain resigning its functions, maintained his pose of deferential attention.

"Ages ago," Urthred continued, "we certainly used to speak languages. We made sounds and we heard sounds. People used to think, and then chose and arranged words and uttered them. The hearer heard, noted, and retranslated the sounds into ideas. Then, in some manner which we still do not understand perfectly, people began to *get* the idea before it was clothed in words and uttered in sounds. They began to hear in their minds, as soon as the speaker had arranged his ideas and before he put them into word symbols even in his own mind. They knew what he was going to say before he said it. This direct transmission presently became common; it was found out that with a little effort most people could get over to each other in this fashion to some extent, and the new mode of communication was developed systematically.

"That is what we do now habitually in this world. We think directly *to* each other. We determine to convey the thought and it is conveyed at once — provided the distance is not too great. We use sounds in this world now only for poetry and pleasure and in moments of emotion or to shout at a distance, or with animals, not for the transmission of ideas from human mind to kindred human mind any more. When I think to you, the thought, so far as it finds corresponding ideas and suitable words in your mind, is reflected in your mind. My thought clothes itself in words in your mind, which words you seem to hear — and naturally enough in your own language and your own habitual phrases. Very probably the members of your party are hearing what I am saying to you, each with his own individual difference of vocabulary and phrasing."

Mr. Barnstaple had been punctuating this discourse with sharp,

intelligent nods, coming now and then to the verge of interruption. Now he broke out with: “And that is why occasionally — as for instance when Mr. Serpentine made his wonderful explanation just now — when you soar into ideas of which we haven’t even a shadow in our minds, we just hear nothing at all.”

“Are there such gaps?” asked Urthred.

“Many, I fear — for all of us,” said Mr. Burleigh.

“It’s like being deaf in spots,” said Lady Stella. “Large spots.”

Father Amerton nodded agreement.

“And that is why we cannot be clear whether you are called Urthred or Adam, and why I have found myself confusing Arden and Greentrees and Forest in my mind.”

“I hope that now you are mentally more at your case?” said Urthred.

“Oh, quite,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “Quite. And all things considered, it is really very convenient for us that there should be this method of transmission. For otherwise I do not see how we could have avoided weeks of linguistic bother, first principles of our respective grammars, logic, significs, and so forth, boring stuff for the most part, before we could have got to anything like our present understanding.”

“A very good point indeed,” said Mr. Burleigh, turning round to Mr. Barnstaple in a very friendly way. “A very good point indeed. I should never have noted it if you had not called my attention to it. It is quite extraordinary; I had not noted anything of this — this difference. I was occupied, I am bound to confess, by my own thoughts. I supposed they were speaking English. Took it for granted.”

§ 3

It seemed to Mr. Barnstaple that this wonderful experience was now so complete that there remained nothing more to wonder at except its absolute credibility. He sat in this beautiful little building looking out upon dreamland flowers and the sunlit lake amidst this strange mingling of week-end English costumes and this more than

Olympian nudity that had already ceased to startle him, he listened and occasionally participated in the long informal conversation that now ensued. It was a discussion that brought to light the most amazing and fundamental differences of moral and social outlook. Yet everything had now assumed a reality that made it altogether natural to suppose that he would presently go home to write about it in the Liberal and tell his wife, as much as might seem advisable at the time, about the manners and costumes of this hitherto undiscovered world. He had not even a sense of intervening distances. Sydenham might have been just round the corner.

Presently two pretty young girls made tea at an equipage among the rhododendra and brought it round to people. Tea! It was what we should call China tea, very delicate, and served in little cups without handles, Chinese fashion, but it was real and very refreshing tea.

The earlier curiosities of the Earthlings turned upon methods of government. This was perhaps natural in the presence of two such statesmen as Mr. Burleigh and Mr. Catskill.

"What form of government do you have?" asked Mr. Burleigh. "Is it a monarchy or an autocracy or a pure democracy? Do you separate the executive and the legislative? And is there one central government for all your planet, or are there several governing centres?"

It was conveyed to Mr. Burleigh and his companions with some difficulty that there was no central government in Utopia at all.

"But surely," said Mr. Burleigh, "there is someone or something, some council or bureau or what not, somewhere, with which the final decision rests in cases of collective action for the common welfare, Some ultimate seat and organ of sovereignty, it seems to me, there *must* be."...

No, the Utopians declared, there was no such concentration of authority in their world. In the past there had been, but it had long since diffused back into the general body of the community. Decisions in regard to any particular matter were made by the people who knew most about that matter.

"But suppose it is a decision that has to be generally observed? A rule affecting the public health, for example? Who would enforce it?"

"It would not need to be enforced. Why should it?"

“But suppose someone refused to obey your regulation?”

“We should inquire why he or she did not conform. There might be some exceptional reason.”

“But failing that?”

“We should make an inquiry into his mental and moral health.”

“The mind doctor takes the place of the policeman,” said Mr. Burleigh.

“I should prefer the policeman,” said Mr. Rupert Catskill.

“You *would*, Rupert,” said Mr. Burleigh as who should say: “*Got* you that time.”

“Then do you mean to say,” he continued, addressing the Utopians with an expression of great intelligence, “that your affairs are all managed by special bodies or organizations — one scarcely knows what to call them — without any co-ordination of their activities?”

“The activities of our world,” said Urthred, “are all co-ordinated to secure the general freedom. We have a number of intelligences directed to the general psychology of the race and to the interaction of one collective function upon another.”

“Well, isn’t that group of intelligences a governing class?” said Mr. Burleigh.

“Not in the sense that they exercise any arbitrary will,” said Urthred. “They deal with general relations, that is all. But they rank no higher, they have no more precedence on that account than a philosopher has over a scientific specialist.”

“This is a republic indeed!” said Mr. Burleigh. “But how it works and how it came about I cannot imagine. Your state is probably a highly socialistic one?”

“You live still in a world in which nearly everything except the air, the high roads, the high seas and the wilderness is privately owned?”

“We do,” said Mr. Catskill. “Owned — and competed for.”

“We have been through that stage. We found at last that private property in all but very personal things was an intolerable nuisance to mankind. We got rid of it. An artist or a scientific man has complete control of all the material he needs, we all own our tools and appliances and have rooms and places of our own, but there is no

property for trade or speculation. All this militant property, this property of manoeuvre, has been quite got rid of. But how we got rid of it is a long story. It was not done in a few years. The exaggeration of private property was an entirely natural and necessary stage in the development of human nature. It led at last to monstrous results, but it was only through these monstrous and catastrophic results that men learnt the need and nature of the limitations of private property."

Mr. Burleigh had assumed an attitude which was obviously habitual to him. He sat very low in his chair with his long legs crossed in front of him and the thumb and fingers of one hand placed with meticulous exactness against those of the other.

"I must confess," he said, "that I am most interested in the peculiar form of Anarchism which seems to prevail here. Unless I misunderstand you completely every man attends to his own business as the servant of the state. I take it you have — you must correct me if I am wrong — a great number of people concerned in the production and distribution and preparation of food; they inquire, I assume, into the needs of the world, they satisfy them and they are a law unto themselves in their way of doing it. They conduct researches, they make experiments. Nobody compels, obliges, restrains or prevents them. ("People talk to them about it," said Urthred with a faint smile.) And again others produce and manufacture and study metals for all mankind and are also a law unto themselves. Others again see to the habitability of your world, plan and arrange these delightful habitations, say who shall use them and how they shall be used. Others pursue pure science. Others experiment with sensory and imaginative possibilities and are artists. Others again teach."

"They are very important," said Lychnis.

"And they all do it in harmony — and due proportion. Without either a central legislature or executive. I will admit that all this seems admirable — but impossible. Nothing of the sort has ever been even suggested yet in the world from which we come."

"Something of the sort was suggested long ago by the Guild Socialists," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Burleigh. "I know very little about the Guild Socialists. Who were they? Tell me."

Mr. Barnstaple tacitly declined that task. “The idea is quite familiar to our younger people,” he said. “Laski calls it the pluralistic state, as distinguished from the monistic state in which sovereignty is concentrated. Even the Chinese have it. A Pekin professor, Mr. S. C. Chang, has written a pamphlet on what he calls ‘Professionalism.’ I read it only a few weeks ago. He sent it to the office of the Liberal. He points out how undesirable it is and how unnecessary for China to pass through a phase of democratic politics on the western model. He wants China to go right straight on to a collateral independence of functional classes, mandarins, industrials, agricultural workers and so forth, much as we seem to find it here. Though that of course involves an educational revolution. Decidedly the germ of what you call Anarchism here is also in the air we come from.”

“Dear me!” said Mr. Burleigh, looking more intelligent and appreciative than ever. “And is that so? I had *no* idea — !”

§ 4

The conversation continued desultory in form and yet the exchange of ideas was rapid and effective. Quite soon, as it seemed to Mr. Barnstaple, an outline of the history of Utopia from the Last Age of Confusion onward shaped itself in his mind.

The more he learnt of that Last Age of Confusion the more it seemed to resemble the present time on earth. In those days the Utopians had worn abundant clothing and lived in towns quite after the earthly fashion. A fortunate conspiracy of accidents rather than any set design had opened for them some centuries of opportunity and expansion. Climatic phases and political chances had smiled upon the race after a long period of recurrent shortage, pestilence and destructive warfare. For the first time the Utopians had been able to explore the whole planet on which they lived, and these explorations had brought great virgin areas under the axe, the spade and the plough. There had been an enormous increase in real wealth and in leisure and liberty. Many thousands of people were lifted out of the normal squalor of human life to positions in which they could, if they chose, think and act with unprecedented freedom. A few, a sufficient

few, did. A vigorous development of scientific inquiry began and, trailing after it a multitude of ingenious inventions, produced a great enlargement of practical human power.

There had been previous outbreaks of the scientific intelligence in Utopia, but none before had ever occurred in such favourable circumstances or lasted long enough to come to abundant practical fruition. Now in a couple of brief centuries the Utopians, who had hitherto crawled about their planet like sluggish ants or travelled parasitically on larger and swifter animals, found themselves able to fly rapidly or speak instantaneously to any other point on the planet. They found themselves, too, in possession of mechanical power on a scale beyond all previous experience, and not simply of mechanical power; physiological and then psychological science followed in the wake of physics and chemistry, and extraordinary possibilities of control over his own body and over his social life dawned upon the Utopian. But these things came, when at last they did come, so rapidly and confusingly that it was only a small minority of people who realized the possibilities, as distinguished from the concrete achievements, of this tremendous expansion of knowledge. The rest took the novel inventions as they came, haphazard, with as little adjustment as possible of their thoughts and ways of living to the new necessities these novelties implied.

The first response of the general population of Utopia to the prospect of power, leisure and freedom thus opened out to it was proliferation. It behaved just as senselessly and mechanically as any other animal or vegetable species would have done. It bred until it had completely swamped the ampler opportunity that had opened before it. It spent the great gifts of science as rapidly as it got them in a mere insensate multiplication of the common life. At one time in the Last Age of Confusion the population of Utopia had mounted to over two thousand million...

“But what is it now?” asked Mr. Burleigh.

About two hundred and fifty million, the Utopians told him. That had been the maximum population that could live a fully developed life upon the surface of Utopia. But now with increasing resources the population was being increased.

A gasp of horror came from Father Amerton. He had been

dreading this realization for some time. It struck at his moral foundations. “And you dare to *regulate* increase! You control it! Your women consent to bear children as they are needed — or refrain!”

“Of course,” said Urthred. “Why not?”

“I feared as much,” said Father Amerton, and leaning forward he covered his face with his hands, murmuring, “I felt this in the atmosphere! The human stud farm! Refusing to create souls! The *wickedness* of it! Oh, my God!”

Mr. Burleigh regarded the emotion of the reverend gentleman through his glasses with a slightly shocked expression. He detested catchwords. But Father Amerton stood for very valuable conservative elements in the community. Mr. Burleigh turned to the Utopian again. “That is extremely interesting,” he said. “Even at present our earth contrives to carry a population of at least five times that amount.”

“But twenty millions or so will starve this winter, you told us a little while ago — in a place called Russia. And only a very small proportion of the rest are leading what even you would call full and spacious lives?”

“Nevertheless the contrast is very striking,” said Mr. Burleigh.

“It is terrible!” said Father Amerton.

The overcrowding of the planet in the Last Age of Confusion was, these Utopians insisted, the fundamental evil out of which all the others that afflicted the race arose. An overwhelming flood of newcomers poured into the world and swamped every effort the intelligent minority could make to educate a sufficient proportion of them to meet the demands of the new and still rapidly changing conditions of life. And the intelligent minority was not itself in any position to control the racial destiny. These great masses of population that had been blundered into existence, swayed by damaged and decaying traditions and amenable to the crudest suggestions, were the natural prey and support of every adventurer with a mind blatant enough and a conception of success coarse enough to appeal to them. The economic system, clumsily and convulsively reconstructed to meet the new conditions of mechanical production and distribution, became more and more a cruel and

impudent exploitation of the multitudinous congestion of the common man by the predatory and acquisitive few. That all too common common man was hustled through misery and subjection from his cradle to his grave; he was cajoled and lied to, he was bought, sold and dominated by an impudent minority, bolder and no doubt more energetic, but in all other respects no more intelligent than himself. It was difficult, Urthred said, for a Utopian nowadays to convey the monstrous stupidity, wastefulness and vulgarity to which these rich and powerful men of the Last Age of Confusion attained.

("We will not trouble you," said Mr. Burleigh. "Unhappily — we know... We know. Only too well do we know.")

Upon this festering, excessive mass of population disasters descended at last like wasps upon a heap of rotting fruit. It was its natural, inevitable destiny. A war that affected nearly the whole planet dislocated its flimsy financial system and most of its economic machinery beyond any possibility of repair. Civil wars and clumsily conceived attempts at social revolution continued the disorganization. A series of years of bad weather accentuated the general shortage. The exploiting adventurers, too stupid to realize what had happened, continued to cheat and hoodwink the commonalty and burke any rally of honest men, as wasps will continue to eat even after their bodies have been cut away. The effort to make passed out of Utopian life, triumphantly superseded by the effort to get. Production dwindled down towards the vanishing point. Accumulated wealth vanished. An overwhelming system of debt, a swarm of creditors, morally incapable of helpful renunciation, crushed out all fresh initiative.

The long diastole in Utopian affairs that had begun with the great discoveries, passed into a phase of rapid systole. What plenty and pleasure was still possible in the world was filched all the more greedily by the adventurers of finance and speculative business. Organized science had long since been commercialized, and was "applied" now chiefly to a hunt for profitable patents and the forestalling of necessary supplies. The neglected lamp of pure science waned, flickered and seemed likely to go out again altogether, leaving Utopia in the beginning of a new series of Dark Ages like those before the age of discovery began...

“It is really *very* like a gloomy diagnosis of our own outlook,” said Mr. Burleigh. “Extraordinarily like. How Dean Inge would have enjoyed all this!”

“To an infidel of his stamp, no doubt, it would seem most enjoyable,” said Father Amerton a little incoherently.

These comments annoyed Mr. Barnstaple, who was urgent to hear more.

“And then,” he said to Urthred, “what happened?”

§ 5

What happened, Mr. Barnstaple gathered, was a deliberate change in Utopian thought. A growing number of people were coming to understand that amidst the powerful and easily released forces that science and organization had brought within reach of man, the old conception of social life in the state, as a limited and legalized struggle of men and women to get the better of one another, was becoming too dangerous to endure, just as the increased dreadfulness of modern weapons was making the separate sovereignty of nations too dangerous to endure. There had to be new ideas and new conventions of human association if history was not to end in disaster and collapse.

All societies were based on the limitation by laws and taboos and treaties of the primordial fierce combativeness of the ancestral man-ape; that ancient spirit of self-assertion had now to undergo new restrictions commensurate with the new powers and dangers of the race. The idea of competition to possess, as the ruling idea of intercourse, was, like some ill-controlled furnace, threatening to consume the machine it had formerly driven. The idea of creative service had to replace it. To that idea the human mind and will had to be turned if social life was to be saved. Propositions that had seemed, in former ages, to be inspired and exalted idealism began now to be recognized not simply as sober psychological truth but as practical and urgently necessary truth. In explaining this Urthred expressed himself in a manner that recalled to Mr. Barnstaple’s mind certain very familiar phrases; he seemed to be saying that whosoever would

save his life should lose it, and that whosoever would give his life should thereby gain the whole world.

Father Amerton's thoughts, it seemed, were also responding in the same manner. For he suddenly interrupted with: "But what you are saying is a quotation!"

Urthred admitted that he had a quotation in mind, a passage from the teachings of a man of great poetic power who had lived long ago in the days of spoken words.

He would have proceeded, but Father Amerton was too excited to let him do so. "But who was this teacher?" he asked. "Where did he live? How was he born? How did he die?"

A picture was flashed upon Mr. Barnstaple's consciousness of a solitary- looking pale-faced figure, beaten and bleeding, surrounded by armoured guards, in the midst of a thrusting, jostling, sun-bit crowd which filled a narrow, high-walled street. Behind, some huge ugly implement was borne along, dipping and swaying with the swaying of the multitude...

"Did he die upon the Cross in *this* world also?" cried Father Amerton. "Did he die upon the Cross?"

This prophet in Utopia they learnt had died very painfully, but not upon the Cross. He had been tortured in some way, but neither the Utopians nor these particular Earthlings had sufficient knowledge of the technicalities of torture to get any idea over about that, and then apparently he had been fastened upon a slowly turning wheel and exposed until he died. It was the abominable punishment of a cruel and conquering race, and it had been inflicted upon him because his doctrine of universal service had alarmed the rich and dominant who did not serve. Mr. Barnstaple had a momentary vision of a twisted figure upon that wheel of torture in the blazing sun. And, marvellous triumph over death! out of a world that could do such a deed had come this great peace and universal beauty about him!

But Father Amerton was pressing his questions. "But did you not realize who he was? Did not this world suspect?"

A great many people thought that this man was a God. But he had been accustomed to call himself merely a son of God or a son of Man.

Father Amerton stuck to his point. "But you worship him now?"

“We follow his teaching because it was wonderful and true,” said Urthred.

“But worship?”

“No.”

“But does nobody worship? There *were* those who worshipped him?”

There were those who worshipped him. There were those who quailed before the stern magnificence of his teaching and yet who had a tormenting sense that he was right in some profound way. So they played a trick upon their own uneasy consciences by treating him as a magical god instead of as a light to their souls. They interwove with his execution ancient traditions of sacrificial kings. Instead of receiving him frankly and clearly and making him a part of their understandings and wills they pretended to eat him mystically and make him a part of their bodies. They turned his wheel into a miraculous symbol, and they confused it with the equator and the sun and the ecliptic and indeed with anything else that was round. In cases of ill-luck, ill-health or bad weather it was believed to be very helpful for the believer to describe a circle in the air with the forefinger.

And since this teacher’s memory was very dear to the ignorant multitude because of his gentleness and charity, it was seized upon by cunning and aggressive types who constituted themselves champions and exponents of the wheel, who grew rich and powerful in its name, led people into great wars for its sake and used it as a cover and justification for envy, hatred, tyranny and dark desires. Until at last men said that had that ancient prophet come again to Utopia, his own triumphant wheel would have crushed and destroyed him afresh...

Father Amerton seemed inattentive to this communication. He was seeing it from another angle. “But surely,” he said, “there is a remnant of believers still! Despised perhaps — but a remnant?”

There was no remnant. The whole world followed that Teacher of Teachers, but no one worshipped him. On some old treasured buildings the wheel was still to be seen carved, often with the most fantastic decorative elaborations. And in museums and collections there were multitudes of pictures, images, charms and the like.

“I don’t understand this,” said Father Amerton. “It is too terrible. I am at a loss. I do not understand.”

§ 6

A fair and rather slender man with a delicately beautiful face whose name, Mr. Barnstaple was to learn later, was Lion, presently took over from Urthred the burthen of explaining and answering the questions of the Earthlings.

He was one of the educational co-ordinators in Utopia. He made it clear that the change over in Utopian affairs had been no sudden revolution. No new system of laws and customs, no new method of economic co-operation based on the idea of universal service to the common good, had sprung abruptly into being complete and finished. Throughout a long period, before and during the Last Age of Confusion, the foundations of the new state were laid by a growing multitude of inquirers and workers, having no set plan or preconceived method, but brought into unconscious co-operation by a common impulse to service and a common lucidity and veracity of mind. It was only towards the climax of the Last Age of Confusion in Utopia that psychological science began to develop with any vigour, comparable to the vigour of the development of geographical and physical science during the preceding centuries. And the social and economic disorder which was checking experimental science and crippling the organized work of the universities was stimulating inquiry into the processes of human association and making it desperate and fearless.

The impression given Mr. Barnstaple was not of one of those violent changes which our world has learnt to call revolutions, but of an increase of light, a dawn of new ideas, in which the things of the old order went on for a time with diminishing vigour until people began as a matter of common sense to do the new things in the place of the old.

The beginnings of the new order were in discussions, books and psychological laboratories; the soil in which it grew was found in schools and colleges. The old order gave small rewards to the

schoolmaster, but its dominant types were too busy with the struggle for wealth and power to take much heed of teaching: it was left to any man or woman who would give thought and labour without much hope of tangible rewards, to shape the world anew in the minds of the young. And they did so shape it. In a world ruled ostensibly by adventurer politicians, in a world where men came to power through floundering business enterprises and financial cunning, it was presently being taught and understood that extensive private property was socially a nuisance, and that the state could not do its work properly nor education produce its proper results, side by side with a class of irresponsible rich people. For, by their very nature, they assailed, they corrupted, they undermined every state undertaking; their flaunting existences distorted and disguised all the values of life. They had to go, for the good of the race.

"Didn't they fight?" asked Mr. Catskill pugnaciously.

They had fought irregularly but fiercely. The fight to delay or arrest the coming of the universal scientific state, the educational state, in Utopia, had gone on as a conscious struggle for nearly five centuries. The fight against it was the fight of greedy, passionate, prejudiced and self-seeking men against the crystallization into concrete realities of this new idea of association for service. It was fought wherever ideas were spread; it was fought with dismissals and threats and boycotts and storms of violence, with lies and false accusations, with prosecutions and imprisonments, with lynching-rope, tar and feathers, paraffin, bludgeon and rifle, bomb and gun.

But the service of the new idea that had been launched into the world never failed; it seized upon the men and women it needed with compelling power. Before the scientific state was established in Utopia more than a million martyrs had been killed for it, and those who had suffered lesser wrongs were beyond all reckoning. Point after point was won in education, in social laws, in economic method. No date could be fixed for the change. A time came when Utopia perceived that it was day and that a new order of things had replaced the old...

"So it must be," said Mr. Barnstaple, as though Utopia were not already present about him. "So it must be."

A question was being answered. Every Utopian child is taught to

the full measure of its possibilities and directed to the work that is indicated by its desires and capacity. It is born well. It is born of perfectly healthy parents; its mother has chosen to bear it after due thought and preparation. It grows up under perfectly healthy conditions; its natural impulses to play and learn are gratified by the subtlest educational methods; hands, eyes and limbs are given every opportunity of training and growth; it learns to draw, write, express itself, use a great variety of symbols to assist and extend its thought. Kindness and civility become ingrained habits, for all about it are kind and civil. And in particular the growth of its imagination is watched and encouraged. It learns the wonderful history of its world and its race, how man has struggled and still struggles out of his earlier animal narrowness and egotism towards an empire over being that is still but faintly apprehended through dense veils of ignorance. All its desires are made fine; it learns from poetry, from example and the love of those about it to lose its solicitude for itself in love; its sexual passions are turned against its selfishness, its curiosity flowers into scientific passion, its combativeness is set to fight disorder, its inherent pride and ambition are directed towards an honourable share in the common achievement. It goes to the work that attracts it and chooses what it will do.

If the individual is indolent there is no great loss, there is plenty for all in Utopia, but then it will find no lovers, nor will it ever bear children, because no one in Utopia loves those who have neither energy nor distinction. There is much pride of the mate in Utopian love. And there is no idle rich "society" in Utopia, nor games and shows for the mere looker-on. There is nothing for the mere looker-on. It is a pleasant world indeed for holidays, but not for those who would continuously do nothing.

For centuries now Utopian science has been able to discriminate among births, and nearly every Utopian alive would have ranked as an energetic creative spirit in former days. There are few dull and no really defective people in Utopia; the idle strains, the people of lethargic dispositions or weak imaginations, have mostly died out; the melancholic type has taken its dismissal and gone; spiteful and malignant characters are disappearing. The vast majority of Utopians are active, sanguine, inventive, receptive and good-tempered.

“And you have not even a parliament?” asked Mr. Burleigh, still incredulous.

Utopia has no parliament, no politics, no private wealth, no business competition, no police nor prisons, no lunatics, no defectives nor cripples, and it has none of these things because it has schools and teachers who are all that schools and teachers can be. Politics, trade and competition are the methods of adjustment of a crude society. Such methods of adjustment have been laid aside in Utopia for more than a thousand years. There is no rule nor government needed by adult Utopians because all the rule and government they need they have had in childhood and youth.

Said Lion: “Our education is our government.”

VI. — SOME EARTHLY CRITICISMS

§ 1

At times during that memorable afternoon and evening it seemed to Mr. Barnstaple that he was involved in nothing more remarkable than an extraordinary dialogue about government and history, a dialogue that had in some inexplicable way become spectacular; it was as if all this was happening only in his mind; and then the absolute reality of his adventure would return to him with overwhelming power and his intellectual interest fade to inattention in the astounding strangeness of his position. In these latter phases he would find his gaze wandering from face to face of the Utopians who surrounded him, resting for a time on some exquisite detail of the architecture of the building and then coming back to these divinely graceful forms.

Then incredulously he would revert to his fellow Earthlings.

Not one of these Utopian faces but was as candid, earnest and beautiful as the angelic faces of an Italian painting. One woman was strangely like Michael Angelo's Delphic Sibyl. They sat in easy attitudes, men and women together, for the most part concentrated on the discussion, but every now and then Mr. Barnstaple would meet the direct scrutiny of a pair of friendly eyes or find some Utopian face intent upon the costume of Lady Stella or the eye- glass of Mr. Mush.

Mr. Barnstaple's first impression of the Utopians had been that they were all young people; now he perceived that many of these faces had a quality of vigorous maturity. None showed any of the distinctive marks of age as this world notes them, but both Urthred and Lion had lines of experience about eyes and lips and brow.

The effect of these people upon Mr. Barnstaple mingled stupefaction with familiarity in the strangest way. He had a feeling that he had always known that such a race could exist and that this knowledge had supplied the implicit standard of a thousand judgments upon human affairs, and at the same time he was astonished to the pitch of incredulity to find himself in the same

world with them. They were at once normal and wonderful in comparison with himself and his companions who were, on their part, at the same time queer and perfectly matter-of-fact.

And together with a strong desire to become friendly and intimate with these fine and gracious persons, to give himself to them and to associate them with himself by service and reciprocal acts, there was an awe and fear of them that made him shrink from contact with them and quiver at their touch. He desired their personal recognition of himself as a fellow and companion so greatly that his sense of his own ungraciousness and unworthiness overwhelmed him. He wanted to bow down before them. Beneath all the light and loveliness of things about him lurked the intolerable premonition of his ultimate rejection from this new world.

So great was the impression made by the Utopians upon Mr. Barnstaple, so entirely did he yield himself up to his joyful acceptance of their grace and physical splendour, that for a time he had no attention left over to note how different from his own were the reactions of several of his Earthling companions. The aloofness of the Utopians from the queerness, grotesqueness and cruelty of normal earthly life made him ready for the most uncritical approval of their institutions and ways of life.

It was the behaviour of Father Amerton which first awakened him to the fact that it was possible to disapprove of these wonderful people very highly and to display a very considerable hostility to them. At first Father Amerton had kept a round-faced, round-eyed wonder above his round collar; he had shown a disposition to give the lead to anyone who chose to take it, and he had said not a word until the naked beauty of dead Greenlake had surprised him into an expression of unclerical appreciation. But during the journey to the lakeside and the meal and the opening arrangements of the conference there was a reaction, and this first naive and deferential astonishment gave place to an attitude of resistance and hostility. It was as if this new world which had begun by being a spectacle had taken on the quality of a proposition which he felt he had either to accept or confute. Perhaps it was that the habit of mind of a public censor was too strong for him and that he could not feel normal again until he began to condemn. Perhaps he was really shocked and

distressed by the virtual nudity of these lovely bodies about him. But he began presently to make queer grunts and coughs, to mutter to himself, and to betray an increasing incapacity to keep still.

He broke out first into an interruption when the question of population was raised. For a little while his intelligence prevailed over this emotional stir when the prophet of the wheel was discussed, but then his gathering preoccupations resumed their sway.

"I must speak out," Mr. Barnstaple heard him mutter. "I must speak out."

"Now suddenly he began to ask questions. There are some things I want to have clear," he said. "I want to know what moral state this so-called Utopia is in. Excuse me!"

He got up. He stood with wavering hands, unable for a moment to begin. Then he went to the end of the row of seats and placed himself so that his hands could rest on the back of a seat. He passed his fingers through his hair and he seemed to be inhaling deeply. An unwonted animation came into his face, which reddened and began to shine. A horrible suspicion crossed the mind of Mr. Barnstaple that so it was he must stand when he began those weekly sermons of his, those fearless denunciations of almost everything, in the church of St. Barnabas in the West. The suspicion deepened to a still more horrible certainty.

"Friends, Brothers of this new world — I have certain things to say to you that I cannot delay saying. I want to ask you some soul-searching questions. I want to deal plainly with you about some plain and simple but very fundamental matters. I want to put things to you frankly and as man to man, not being mealy-mouthed about urgent if delicate things. Let me come without parley to what I have to say. I want to ask you if, in this so-called state of Utopia, you still have and respect and honour the most sacred thing in social life. Do you still respect the marriage bond?"

He paused, and in the pause the Utopian reply came through to Mr. Barnstaple: "In Utopia there are no bonds."

But Father Amerton was not asking questions with any desire for answers; he was asking questions pulpit-fashion.

"I want to know," he was booming out, "if that holy union revealed to our first parents in the Garden of Eden holds good here, if

that sanctified life- long association of one man and one woman, in good fortune and ill fortune, excluding every other sort of intimacy, is the rule of your lives. I want to know—"

"But he *doesn't* want to know," came a Utopian intervention.

" — if that shielded and guarded dual purity—"

Mr. Burleigh raised a long white hand. "Father Amerton," he protested, "*please*."

The hand of Mr. Burleigh was a potent hand that might still wave towards preferment. Few things under heaven could stop Father Amerton when he was once launched upon one of his soul storms, but the hand of Mr. Burleigh was among such things.

" — has followed another still more precious gift and been cast aside here and utterly rejected of men? What is it, Mr. Burleigh?"

"I wish you would not press this matter further just at present, Father Amerton. Until we have learnt a little more. Institutions are, manifestly, very different here. Even the institution of marriage may be different."

The preacher's face lowered. "Mr. Burleigh," he said, "I *must*. If my suspicions are right, I want to strip this world forthwith of its hectic pretence to a sort of health and virtue."

"Not much stripping required," said Mr. Burleigh's chauffeur, in a very audible aside.

A certain testiness became evident in Mr. Burleigh's voice.

"Then ask questions," he said. "Ask questions. Don't orate, please. They don't want us to orate."

"I've asked my question," said Father Amerton sulkily with a rhetorical glare at Urthred, and remained standing.

The answer came clear and explicit. In Utopia there was no compulsion for men and women to go about in indissoluble pairs. For most Utopians that would be inconvenient. Very often men and women, whose work brought them closely together, were lovers and kept very much together, as Arden and Greenlake had done. But they were not obliged to do that.

There had not always been this freedom. In the old crowded days of conflict, and especially among the agricultural workers and employed people of Utopia, men and women who had been lovers were bound together under severe penalties for life. They lived

together in a small home which the woman kept in order for the man, she was his servant and bore him as many children as possible, while he got food for them. The children were desired because they were soon helpful on the land or as wage-earners. But the necessities that had subjugated women to that sort of pairing had passed away.

People paired indeed with their chosen mates, but they did so by an inner necessity and not by any outward compulsion.

Father Amerton had listened with ill-concealed impatience. Now he jumped with: "Then I was right, and you have abolished the family?" His finger pointed at Urthred made it almost a personal accusation.

No. Utopia had not abolished the family. It had enlarged and glorified the family until it embraced the whole world. Long ago that prophet of the wheel, whom Father Amerton seemed to respect, had preached that very enlargement of the ancient narrowness of home. They had told him while he preached that his mother and his brethren stood without and claimed his attention. But he would not go to them. He had turned to the crowd that listened to his words: "Behold my mother and my brethren!"

Father Amerton slapped the seat-back in front of him loudly and startlingly. "A quibble," he cried, "a quibble! Satan too can quote the scriptures."

It was clear to Mr. Barnstaple that Father Amerton was not in complete control of himself. He was frightened by what he was doing and yet impelled to do it. He was too excited to think clearly or control his voice properly, so that he shouted and boomed in the wildest way. He was "letting himself go" and trusting to the habits of the pulpit of St. Barnabas to bring him through.

"I perceive now how you stand. Only too well do I perceive how you stand. From the outset I guessed how things were with you. I waited — I waited to be perfectly sure, before I bore my testimony. But it speaks for itself — the shamelessness of your costume, the licentious freedom of your manners! Young men and women, smiling, joining hands, near to caressing, when averted eyes, averted eyes, are the least tribute you could pay to modesty! And this vile talk — of lovers loving — without bonds or blessings, without rules or restraint. What does it mean? Whither does it lead? Do not

imagine because I am a priest, a man pure and virginal in spite of great temptations, do not imagine that I do not understand! Have I no vision of the secret places of the heart? Do not the wounded sinners, the broken potsherds, creep to me with their pitiful confessions? And I will tell you plainly whither you go and how you stand? This so-called freedom of yours is nothing but licence. Your so-called Utopia, I see plainly, is nothing but a hell of unbridled indulgence! Unbridled indulgence!"

Mr. Burleigh held up a protesting hand, but Father Amerton's eloquence soared over the obstruction.

He beat upon the back of the seat before him. "I will bear my witness," he shouted. "I will bear my witness. I will make no bones about it. I refuse to mince matters I tell you. You are all living — in promiscuity! That is the word for it. In animal promiscuity! In *bestial* promiscuity!"

Mr. Burleigh had sprung to his feet. He was holding up his two hands and motioning the London Boanerges to sit down. "No, no!" he cried. "You must *stop*, Mr. Amerton. Really, you must stop. You are being insulting. You do not understand. Sit *down*, please. I insist."

"Sit down and hold your peace," said a very clear voice. "Or you will be taken away."

Something made Father Amerton aware of a still figure at his elbow. He met the eyes of a lithe young man who was scrutinizing his build as a portrait painter might scrutinize a new sitter. There was no threat in his bearing, he stood quite still, and yet his appearance threw an extraordinary quality of evanescence about Father Amerton. The great preacher's voice died in his throat.

Mr. Burleigh's bland voice was lifted to avert a conflict. "Mr. Serpentine, Sir, I appeal to you and apologize. He is not fully responsible. We others regret the interruption — the incident. I pray you, please do not take him away, whatever taking away may mean. I will answer personally for his good behaviour... *Do* sit down, Mr. Amerton, *please*; *now*; or I shall wash my hands of the whole business."

Father Amerton hesitated.

"My time will come," he said and looked the young man in the

eyes for a moment and then went back to his seat.

Urthred spoke quietly and clearly. “You Earthlings are difficult guests to entertain. This is not all... Manifestly this man’s mind is very unclean. His sexual imagination is evidently inflamed and diseased. He is angry and anxious to insult and wound. And his noises are terrific. To-morrow he must be examined and dealt with.”

“How?” said Father Amerton, his round face suddenly grey. “How do you mean — *dealt* with?”

“*Please* do not talk,” said Mr. Burleigh. “*Please* do not talk any more. You have done quite enough mischief...”

For the time the incident seemed at an end, but it had left a queer little twinge of fear in Mr. Barnstaple’s heart. These Utopians were very gentle-mannered and gracious people indeed, but just for a moment the hand of power had seemed to hover over the Earthling party. Sunlight and beauty were all about the visitors, nevertheless they were strangers and quite helpless strangers in an unknown world. The Utopian faces were kindly and their eyes curious and in a manner friendly, but much more observant than friendly. It was as if they looked across some impassable gulf of difference.

And then Mr. Barnstaple in the midst of his distress met the brown eyes of Lychnis, and they were kindlier than the eyes of the other Utopians. She, at least, understood the fear that had come to him, he felt, and she was willing to reassure him and be his friend. Mr. Barnstaple looked at her, feeling for the moment much as a stray dog might do who approaches a doubtfully amiable group and gets a friendly glance and a greeting.

§ 2

Another mind that was also in active resistance to Utopia was that of Mr. Freddy Mush. He had no quarrel indeed with the religion or morals or social organization of Utopia. He had long since learnt that no gentleman of serious aesthetic pretensions betrays any interest whatever in such matters. His perceptions were by hypothesis too fine for them. But presently he made it clear that there had been something very ancient and beautiful called the “Balance of Nature”

which the scientific methods of Utopia had destroyed. What this Balance of Nature of his was, and how it worked on Earth, neither the Utopians nor Mr. Barnstaple were able to understand very clearly. Under cross-examination Mr. Mush grew pink and restive and his eye-glass flashed defensively. “I hold by the swallows,” he repeated. “If you can’t see my point about that I don’t know what else I can say.”

He began with the fact and reverted to the fact that there were no swallows to be seen in Utopia, and there were no swallows to be seen in Utopia because there were no gnats nor midges. There had been an enormous deliberate reduction of insect life in Utopia, and that had seriously affected every sort of creature that was directly or indirectly dependent upon insect life. So soon as the new state of affairs was securely established in Utopia and the educational state working, the attention of the Utopian community had been given to the long-cherished idea of a systematic extermination of tiresome and mischievous species. A careful inquiry was made into the harmfulness and the possibility of eliminating the house-fly for example, wasps and hornets, various species of mice and rats, rabbits, stinging nettles. Ten thousand species, from disease-germ to rhinoceros and hyena, were put upon their trial. Every species found was given an advocate. Of each it was asked: What good is it? What harm does it do? How can it be extirpated? What else may go with it if it goes? Is it worth while wiping it out of existence? Or can it be mitigated and retained? And even when the verdict was death final and complete, Utopia set about the business of extermination with great caution. A reserve would be kept and was in many cases still being kept, in some secure isolation, of every species condemned.

Most infectious and contagious fevers had been completely stamped out; some had gone very easily; some had only been driven out of human life by proclaiming a war and subjecting the whole population to discipline. Many internal and external parasites of man and animals had also been got rid of completely. And further, there had been a great cleansing of the world from noxious insects, from weeds and vermin and hostile beasts. The mosquito had gone, the house-fly, the blow-fly, and indeed a great multitude of flies had gone; they had been driven out of life by campaigns involving an

immense effort and extending over many generations. It had been infinitely more easy to get rid of such big annoyances as the hyena and the wolf than to abolish these smaller pests. The attack upon the flies had involved the virtual rebuilding of a large proportion of Utopian houses and a minute cleansing of them all throughout the planet.

The question of what else would go if a certain species went was one of the most subtle that Utopia had to face. Certain insects, for example, were destructive and offensive grubs in the opening stage of their lives, were evil as caterpillar or pupa and then became either beautiful in themselves or necessary to the fertilization of some useful or exquisite flowers. Others offensive in themselves were a necessary irreplaceable food to pleasant and desirable creatures. It was not true that swallows had gone from Utopia, but they had become extremely rare; and rare too were a number of little insectivorous birds, the fly-catcher for example, that harlequin of the air. But they had not died out altogether; the extermination of insects had not gone to that length; sufficient species had remained to make some districts still habitable for these delightful birds.

Many otherwise obnoxious plants were a convenient source of chemically complex substances that were still costly or tedious to make synthetically, and so had kept a restricted place in life. Plants and flowers, always simpler and more plastic in the hands of the breeder and hybridizer than animals, had been enormously changed in Utopia. Our Earthlings were to find a hundred sorts of foliage and of graceful and scented blossoms that were altogether strange to them. Plants, Mr. Barnstaple learnt, had been trained and bred to make new and unprecedented secretions, waxes, gums, essential oils and the like, of the most desirable quality.

There had been much befriending and taming of big animals; the larger carnivora, combed and cleaned, reduced to a milk dietary, emasculated in spirit and altogether be-catted, were pets and ornaments in Utopia. The almost extinct elephant had increased again and Utopia had saved her giraffes. The brown bear had always been disposed to sweets and vegetarianism and had greatly improved in intelligence. The dog had given up barking and was comparatively rare. Sporting dogs were not used nor small pet animals.

Horses Mr. Barnstaple did not see, but as he was a very modern urban type he did not miss them very much and he did not ask any questions about them while he was actually in Utopia. He never found out whether they had or had not become extinct.

As he heard on his first afternoon in that world of this revision and editing, this weeding and cultivation of the kingdoms of nature by mankind, it seemed to him to be the most natural and necessary phase in human history. “After all,” he said to himself, “it was a good invention to say that man was created a gardener.”

And now man was weeding and cultivating his own strain...

The Utopians told of eugenic beginnings, of a new and surer decision in the choice of parents, of an increasing certainty in the science of heredity; and as Mr. Barnstaple contrasted the firm clear beauty of face and limb that every Utopian displayed with the carelessly assembled features and bodily disproportions of his earthly associates, he realized that already, with but three thousand years or so of advantage, these Utopians were passing beyond man towards a nobler humanity. They were becoming different in kind.

§ 3

They were different in kind.

As the questions and explanations and exchanges of that afternoon went on, it became more and more evident to Mr. Barnstaple that the difference of their bodies was as nothing to the differences of their minds. Innately better to begin with, the minds of these children of light had grown up uninjured by any such tremendous frictions, concealments, ambiguities and ignorances as cripple the growing mind of an Earthling. They were clear and frank and direct. They had never developed that defensive suspicion of the teacher, that resistance to instruction, which is the natural response to teaching that is half aggression. They were beautifully unwary in their communications. The ironies, concealments, insincerities, vanities and pretensions of earthly conversation seemed unknown to them. Mr. Barnstaple found this mental nakedness of theirs as sweet and refreshing as the mountain air he was breathing. It amazed him that

they could be so patient and lucid with beings so underbred.

Underbred was the word he used in his mind. Himself, he felt the most underbred of all; he was afraid of these Utopians; snobbish and abject before them, he was like a mannerless earthy lout in a drawing-room, and he was bitterly ashamed of his own abjection. All the other Earthlings except Mr. Burleigh and Lady Stella betrayed the defensive spite of consciously inferior creatures struggling against that consciousness.

Like Father Amerton, Mr. Burleigh's chauffeur was evidently greatly shocked and disturbed by the unclothed condition of the Utopians; his feelings expressed themselves by gestures, grimaces and an occasional sarcastic comment such as "I *don't* think!" or "What O!" These he addressed for the most part to Mr. Barnstaple, for whom, as the owner of a very little old car, he evidently mingled feelings of profound contempt and social fellowship. He would also direct Mr. Barnstaple's attention to anything that he considered remarkable in bearing or gesture, by means of a peculiar stare and grimace combined with raised eyebrows. He had a way of pointing with his mouth and nose that Mr. Barnstaple under more normal circumstances might have found entertaining.

Lady Stella, who had impressed Mr. Barnstaple at first as a very great lady of the modern type, he was now beginning to feel was on her defence and becoming rather too ladylike. Mr. Burleigh however retained a certain aristocratic sublimity. He had been a great man on earth for all his life and it was evident that he saw no reason why he should not be accepted as a great man in Utopia. On earth he had done little and had been intelligently receptive with the happiest results. That alert, questioning mind of his, free of all persuasions, convictions or revolutionary desires, fell with the utmost ease into the pose of a distinguished person inspecting, in a sympathetic but entirely non-committal manner, the institutions of an alien state. "Tell me," that engaging phrase, laced his conversation.

The evening was drawing on; the clear Utopian sky was glowing with the gold of sunset and a towering mass of cloud above the lake was fading from pink to a dark purple, when Mr. Rupert Catskill imposed himself upon Mr. Barnstaple's attention. He was fretting in his place. "I have something to say," he said. "I have something to

say."

Presently he jumped up and walked to the centre of the semicircle from which Mr. Burleigh had spoken earlier in the afternoon. "Mr. Serpentine," he said. "Mr. Burleigh. There are a few things I should be glad to say — if you can give me this opportunity of saying them."

§ 4

He took off his grey top hat, went back and placed it on his seat and returned to the centre of the apse. He put back his coat tails, rested his hands on his hips, thrust his head forward, regarded his audience for a moment with an expression half cunning, half defiant, muttered something inaudible and began.

His opening was not prepossessing. There was some slight impediment in his speech, the little brother of a lisp, against which his voice beat gutturally. His first few sentences had an effect of being jerked out by unsteady efforts. Then it became evident to Mr. Barnstaple that Mr. Catskill was expressing a very definite point of view, he was offering a reasoned and intelligible view of Utopia. Mr. Barnstaple disagreed with that criticism, indeed he disagreed with it violently, but he had to recognize that it expressed an understandable attitude of mind.

Mr. Catskill began with a sweeping admission of the beauty and order of Utopia. He praised the "glowing health" he saw "on every cheek," the wealth, tranquillity and comfort of Utopian life. They had "tamed the forces of nature and subjugated them altogether to one sole end, to the material comfort of the race."

"But Arden and Greenlake?" murmured Mr. Barnstaple.

Mr. Catskill did not hear or heed the interruption. "The first effect, Mr. Speaker — Mr. Serpentine, I *should* say — the first effect upon an earthly mind is overwhelming. Is it any wonder" — he glanced at Mr. Burleigh and Mr. Barnstaple— "is it any wonder that admiration has carried some of us off our feet? Is it any wonder that for a time your almost magic beauty has charmed us into forgetting much that is in our own natures — into forgetting deep and mysterious

impulses, cravings, necessities, so that we have been ready to say, ‘Here at last is Lotus Land. Here let us abide, let us adapt ourselves to this planned and ordered splendour and live our lives out here and die.’ I, too, Mr. — Mr. Serpentine, succumbed to that magic for a time. But only for a time. Already, Sir, I find myself full of questionings.”...

His bright, headlong mind had seized upon the fact that every phase in the weeding and cleansing of Utopia from pests and parasites and diseases had been accompanied by the possibility of collateral limitations and losses; or perhaps it would be juster to say that that fact had seized upon his mind. He ignored the deliberation and precautions that had accompanied every step in the process of making a world securely healthy and wholesome for human activity. He assumed there had been losses with every gain, he went on to exaggerate these losses and ran on glibly to the inevitable metaphor of throwing away the baby with its bath — inevitable, that is, for a British parliamentarian. The Utopians, he declared, were living lives of extraordinary ease, safety and “may I say so — indulgence” (“They work,” said Mr. Barnstaple), but with a thousand annoyances and disagreeables gone had not something else greater and more precious gone also? Life on earth was, he admitted, insecure, full of pains and anxieties, full indeed of miseries and distresses and anguish, but also, and indeed by reason of these very things, it had moments of intensity, hopes, joyful surprises, escapes, attainments, such as the ordered life of Utopia could not possibly afford. “You have been getting away from conflicts and distresses. Have you not also been getting away from the living and quivering realities of life?”

He launched out upon a eulogy of earthly life. He extolled the vitality of life upon earth as though there were no signs of vitality in the high splendour about him. He spoke of the “thunder of our crowded cities,” of the “urge of our teeming millions,” of the “broad tides of commerce and industrial effort and warfare,” that “swayed and came and went in the hives and harbours of our race.”

He had the knack of the plausible phrase and that imaginative touch which makes for eloquence. Mr. Barnstaple forgot that slight impediment and the thickness of the voice that said these things. Mr.

Catskill boldly admitted all the earthly evils and dangers that Mr. Burleigh had retailed. Everything that Mr. Burleigh had said was true. All that he had said fell indeed far short of the truth. Famine we knew, and pestilence. We suffered from a thousand diseases that Utopia had eliminated. We were afflicted by a thousand afflictions that were known to Utopia now only by ancient tradition. "The rats gnaw and the summer flies persecute and madden. At times life reeks and stinks. I admit it, Sir, I admit it. We go down far below your extremest experiences into discomforts and miseries, anxieties and anguish of soul and body, into bitterness, terror and despair. Yea. But do we not also go higher? I challenge you with that. What can you know in this immense safety of the intensity, the frantic, terror-driven intensity, of many of our efforts? What can you know of reprieves and interludes and escapes? Think of our many happinesses beyond your ken! What do you know here of the sweet early days of convalescence? Of going for a holiday out of disagreeable surroundings? Of taking some great risk to body or fortune and bringing it off? Of winning a bet against enormous odds? Of coming out of prison? And, Sir, it has been said that there are those in our world who have found a fascination even in pain itself. Because our life is dreadfuller, Sir, it has, and it must have, moments that are infinitely brighter than yours. It is titanic, Sir, where this is merely tidy. And we are inured to it and hardened by it. We are tempered to a finer edge. That is the point to which I am coming. Ask us to give up our earthly disorder, our miseries and distresses, our high death-rates and our hideous diseases, and at the first question every man and woman in the world would say, 'Yes! Willingly, Yes!' At the first question, Sir!"

Mr. Catskill held his audience for a moment on his extended finger.

"And then we should begin to take thought. We should ask, as you say your naturalists asked about your flies and suchlike offensive small game, we should ask, 'What goes with it? What is the price?' And when we learnt that the price was to surrender that intensity of life, that tormented energy, that pickled and experienced toughness, that rat-like, wolf-like toughness our perpetual struggle engenders, we should hesitate. We should hesitate. In the end, Sir, I believe, I

hope and believe, indeed I pray and believe, we should say, 'No!' We should say, 'No!'"

Mr. Catskill was now in a state of great cerebral exaltation. He was making short thrusting gestures with his clenched fist. His voice rose and fell and boomed; be swayed and turned about, glanced for the approval of his fellow Earthlings, flung stray smiles at Mr. Burleigh.

This idea that our poor wrangling, nerveless, chance-driven world was really a fierce and close-knit system of powerful reactions in contrast with the evening serenities of a made and finished Utopia, had taken complete possession of his mind. "Never before, Sir, have I realized, as I realize now, the high, the terrible and adventurous destinies of our earthly race. I look upon this Golden Lotus Land of yours, this divine perfected land from which all conflict has been banished—"

Mr. Barnstaple caught a faint smile on the face of the woman who had reminded him of the Delphic Sibyl.

" — and I admit and admire its order and beauty as some dusty and resolute pilgrim might pause, on his exalted and mysterious quest, and admit and admire the order and beauty of the pleasant gardens of some prosperous Sybarite. And like that pilgrim I may beg leave, Sir, to question the wisdom of your way of living. For I take it, Sir, that it is now a proven thing that life and all the energy and beauty of life are begotten by struggle and competition and conflict; we were moulded and wrought in hardship, and so, Sir, were you. And yet you dream here that you have eliminated conflict for ever. Your economic state, I gather, is some form of socialism; you have abolished competition in all the businesses of peace. Your political state is one universal unity; you have altogether cut out the bracing and ennobling threat and the purging and terrifying experience of war. Everything is ordered and provided for. Everything is secure. Everything is secure, Sir, except for one thing...

"I grieve to trouble your tranquillity, Sir, but I must breathe the name of that one forgotten thing — *degeneration*! What is there here to prevent degeneration? Are you preventing degeneration?

"What penalties are there any longer for indolence? What rewards for exceptional energy and effort? What is there to keep men

industrious, what watchful, when there is no personal danger and no personal loss but only some remote danger or injury to the community? For a time by a sort of inertia you may keep going. You may seem to be making a success of things. I admit it, you do seem to be making a success of things. Autumnal glory! Sunset splendour! While about you in universes parallel to yours, parallel races still toil, still suffer, still compete and eliminate and gather strength and energy!"

Mr. Catskill flourished his hand at the Utopians in rhetorical triumph.

"I would not have you think, Sir, that these criticisms of your world are offered in a hostile spirit. They are offered in the most amiable and helpful spirit. I am the skeleton, but the most friendly and apologetic skeleton, at your feast. I ask my searching and disagreeable question because I must. Is it indeed the wise way that you have chosen? You have sweetness and light — and leisure. Granted. But if there is all this multitude of Universes, of which you have told us, Mr. Serpentine, so clearly and illuminatingly, and if one may suddenly open into another as ours has done into yours, I would ask you most earnestly how safe is your sweetness, your light and your leisure? We talk here, separated by we know not how flimsy a partition from innumerable worlds. And at that thought, Sir, it seems to me that as I stand here in the great golden calm of this place I can almost hear the trampling of hungry myriads as fierce and persistent as rats or wolves, the snarling voices of races inured to every pain and cruelty, the threat of terrible heroisms and pitiless aggressions..."

He brought his discourse to an abrupt end. He smiled faintly; it seemed to Mr. Barnstaple that he triumphed over Utopia. He stood with hands on his hips and, as if he bent his body by that method, bowed stiffly. "Sir," he said with that ghost of a lisp of his, his eye on Mr. Burleigh, "I have said my say."

He turned about and regarded Mr. Barnstaple for a moment with his face screwed up almost to the appearance of a wink. He nodded his head, as if he tapped a nail with a hammer, jerked himself into activity, and returned to his proper place.

§ 5

Urthred did not so much answer Mr. Catskill as sit, elbow on knee and chin on hand, thinking audibly about him.

"The gnawing vigour of the rat," he mused, "the craving pursuit of the wolf, the mechanical persistence of wasp and fly and disease germ, have gone out of our world. That is true. We have obliterated that much of life's devouring forces. And lost nothing worth having. Pain, filth, indignity for ourselves — or any creatures; they have gone or they go. But it is not true that competition has gone from our world. Why does he say it has? Everyone here works to his or her utmost — for service and distinction. None may cheat himself out of toil or duty as men did in the Age of Confusion, when the mean and acquisitive lived and bred in luxury upon the heedlessness of more generous types. Why does he say we degenerate? He has been told better already. The indolent and inferior do not procreate here. And why should he threaten us with fancies of irruptions from other, fiercer, more barbaric worlds? It is we who can open the doors into such other universes or close them as we choose. Because we know. We can go to them — when we know enough we shall — but they cannot come to us. There is no way but knowledge out of the cages of life... What is the matter with the mind of this man?

"These Earthlings are only in the beginnings of science. They are still for all practical ends in that phase of fear and taboos that came also in the development of Utopia before confidence and understanding. Out of which phase our own world struggled during the Last Age of Confusion. The minds of these Earthlings are full of fears and prohibitions, and though it has dawned upon them that they may possibly control their universe, the thought is too terrible yet for them to face. They avert their minds from it. They still want to go on thinking, as their fathers did before them, that the universe is being managed for them better than they can control it for themselves. Because if that is so, they are free to obey their own violent little individual motives. Leave things to God, they cry, or leave them to Competition."

"Evolution was our blessed word," said Mr. Barnstaple, deeply interested.

“It is all the same thing — God, or Evolution, or what you will — so long as you mean a Power beyond your own which excuses you from your duty. Utopia says, ‘Do not leave things at all. Take hold.’ But these Earthlings still lack the habit of looking at reality — undraped. This man with the white linen fetter round his neck is afraid even to look upon men and women as they are. He is disgustingly excited by the common human body. This man with the glass lens before his left eye struggles to believe that there is a wise old Mother Nature behind the appearances of things, keeping a Balance. It was fantastic to hear about his Balance of Nature. Cannot he with two eyes and a lens see better than that? This last man who spoke so impressively, thinks that this old Beldame Nature is a limitless source of will and energy if only we submit to her freaks and cruelties and imitate her most savage moods, if only we sufficiently thrust and kill and rob and ravish one another... He too preaches the old fatalism and believes it is the teaching of science...

“These Earthlings do not yet dare to see what our Mother Nature is. At the back of their minds is still the desire to abandon themselves to her. They do not see that except for our eyes and wills, she is purposeless and blind. She is not awful, she is horrible. She takes no heed to our standards, nor to any standards of excellence. She made us by accident; all her children are bastards — undesired; she will cherish or expose them, pet or starve or torment without rhyme or reason. She does not heed, she does not care. She will lift us up to power and intelligence, or debase us to the mean feebleness of the rabbit or the slimy white filthiness of a thousand of her parasitic inventions. There must be good in her because she made all that is good in us — but also there is endless evil. Do not you Earthlings see the dirt of her, the cruelty, the insane indignity of much of her work?”

“Phew! Worse than ‘Nature red in tooth and claw,’” murmured Mr. Freddy Mush.

“These things are plain,” mused Urthred. “If they dared to see.

“Half the species of life in our planet also, half and more than half of all the things alive, were ugly or obnoxious, inane, miserable, wretched, with elaborate diseases, helplessly ill-adjusted to Nature’s continually fluctuating conditions, when first we took this old Hag,

our Mother, in hand. We have, after centuries of struggle, suppressed her nastier fancies, and washed her and combed her and taught her to respect and heed the last child of her wantonings — Man. With Man came Logos, the Word and the Will into our universe, to watch it and fear it, to learn it and cease to fear it, to know it and comprehend it and master it. So that we of Utopia are no longer the beaten and starved children of Nature, but her free and adolescent sons. We have taken over the Old Lady's Estate. Every day we learn a little better how to master this little planet. Every day our thoughts go out more surely to our inheritance, the stars. And the deeps beyond and beneath the stars."

"You have reached the stars?" cried Mr. Barnstaple.

"Not yet. Not even the other planets. But very plainly the time draws near when those great distances will cease to restrain us..."

He paused. "Many of us will have to go out into the deeps of space... And never return... Giving their lives...

"And into these new spaces — countless brave men..."

Urthred turned towards Mr. Catskill. "We find your frankly expressed thoughts particularly interesting to-day. You help us to understand the past of our own world. You help us to deal with an urgent problem that we will presently explain to you. There are thoughts and ideas like yours in our ancient literature of two or three thousand years ago, the same preaching of selfish violence as though it was a virtue. Even then intelligent men knew better, and you yourself might know better if you were not wilfully set in wrong opinions. But it is plain to see from your manner and bearing that you are very wilful indeed in your opinions.

"You are not, you must realize, a very beautiful person, and probably you are not very beautiful in your pleasures and proceedings. But you have superabundant energy, and so it is natural for you to turn to the excitements of risk and escape, to think that the best thing in life is the sensation of conflict and winning. Also in the economic confusion of such a world as yours there is an intolerable amount of toil that must be done, toil so disagreeable that it makes everyone of spirit anxious to thrust away as much of it as possible and to claim exemption from it on account of nobility, gallantry or good fortune. People in your world no doubt persuade themselves

very easily that they are justifiably exempted, and you are under that persuasion. You live in a world of classes. Your badly trained mind has been under no necessity to invent its own excuses; the class into which you were born had all its excuses ready for you. So it is you take the best of everything without scruple and you adventure with life, chiefly at the expense of other people, with a mind trained by all its circumstances to resist the idea that there is any possible way of human living that can be steadfast and disciplined and at the same time vigorous and happy. You have argued against that persuasion all your life as though it were your personal enemy. It is your personal enemy; it condemns your way of life altogether, it damns you utterly for your adventures.

"Confronted now with an ordered and achieved beauty of living you still resist; you resist to escape dismay; you argue that this world of ours is unromantic, wanting in intensity, decadent, feeble. Now — in the matter of physical strength, grip hands with that young man who sits beside you."

Mr. Catskill glanced at the extended hand and shook his head knowingly. "You go on talking," he said.

"Yet when I tell you that neither our wills nor our bodies are as feeble as yours, your mind resists obstinately. You will not believe it. If for a moment your mind admits it, afterwards it recoils to the system of persuasions that protect your self-esteem. Only one of you accepts our world at all, and he does so rather because he is weary of yours than willing for ours. So I suppose it has to be. Yours are Age of Confusion minds, trained to conflict, trained to insecurity and secret self-seeking. In that fashion Nature and your state have taught you to live and so you must needs live until you die. Such lessons are to be unlearnt only in ten thousand generations, by the slow education of three thousand years.

"And we are puzzled by the question, what are we to do with you? We will try our utmost to deal fairly and friendly with you if you will respect our laws and ways.

"But it will be very difficult, we know, for you. You do not realize yet how difficult your habits and preconceptions will make it for you. Your party so far has behaved very reasonably and properly, in act if not in thought. But we have had another experience of Earthling

ways to-day of a much more tragic kind. Your talk of fiercer, barbaric worlds breaking in upon us has had its grotesque parallel in reality to-day. It is true; there is something fierce and ratlike and dangerous about Earthly men. You are not the only Earthlings who came into Utopia through this gate that swung open for a moment to-day. There are others—"

"Of course!" said Mr. Barnstaple. "I should have guessed it! That third lot!"

"There is yet another of these queer locomotive machines of yours in Utopia."

"The grey car!" said Mr. Barnstaple to Mr. Burleigh. "It wasn't a hundred yards ahead of you."

"Raced us from Hounslow," said Mr. Burleigh's driver. "Real hot stuff."

Mr. Burleigh turned to Mr. Freddy Mush. "I think you said you recognized someone?"

"Lord Barralonga, Sir, almost to a certainty, and I *think* Miss Greeta Grey."

"There were two other men," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"They will complicate things," said Mr. Burleigh.

"They do complicate things," said Urthred. "They have killed a man."

"A Utopian?"

"These other people — there are five of them — whose names you seem to know, came into Utopia just in front of your two vehicles. Instead of stopping as you did when they found themselves on a new strange road, they seem to have quickened their pace very considerably. They passed some men and women and they made extraordinary gestures to them and abominable noises produced by an instrument specially designed for that purpose. Further on they encountered a silver cheetah and charged at it and ran right over it, breaking its back. They do not seem to have paused to see what became of it. A young man named Gold came out into the road to ask them to stop. But their machine is made in the most fantastic way, very complex and very foolish. It is quite unable to stop short suddenly. It is not driven by a single engine that is completely controlled. It has a complicated internal conflict. It has a sort of

engine that drives it forward by a complex cogged gear on the axle of the hind wheels and it has various clumsy stopping contrivances by means of friction at certain points. You can apparently drive the engine at the utmost speed and at the same time jam the wheels to prevent them going round. When this young man stepped forward in front of them, they were quite unable to stop. They may have tried to do so. They say they did. Their machine swerved dangerously and struck him with its side."

"And killed him?"

"And killed him instantly. His body was horribly injured... But they did not stop even for that. They slowed down and had a hasty consultation, and then seeing that people were coming they set their machine in motion again and made off. They seem to have been seized with a panic fear of restraint and punishment. Their motives are very difficult to understand. At any rate they went on. They rode on and on into our country for some hours. An aeroplane was presently set to follow them and another to clear the road in front of them. It was very difficult to clear the road because neither our people nor our animals understand such vehicles as theirs — nor such behaviour. In the afternoon they got among mountains and evidently found our roads much too smooth and difficult for their machine. It made extraordinary noises as though it was gritting its teeth, and emitted a blue vapour with an offensive smell. At one corner where it should have stopped short, it skated about and slid suddenly sideways and rolled over a cliff and fell for perhaps twice the height of a man into a torrent."

"And they were killed?" asked Mr. Burleigh, with, as it seemed to Mr. Barnstaple, a touch of eagerness in his voice.

"Not one of them."

"Oh!" said Mr. Burleigh, "then what happened?"

"One of them has a broken arm and another is badly cut about the face. The other two men and the woman are uninjured except for fright and shock. When our people came up to them the four men held their hands above their heads. Apparently they feared they would be killed at once and did this as an appeal for mercy."

"And what are you doing with them?"

"We are bringing them here. It is better, we think, to keep all you

Earthlings together. At present we cannot imagine what must be done to you. We want to learn from you and we want to be friendly with you if it is possible. It has been suggested that you should be returned to your world. In the end that may be the best thing to do. But at present we do not know enough to do this certainly. Arden and Greenlake, when they made the attempt to rotate a part of our matter through the F dimension, believed that they would rotate it in empty space in that dimension. The fact that you were there and were caught into our universe, is the most unexpected thing that has happened in Utopia for a thousand years."

VII. — THE BRINGING IN OF LORD BARRALONGA'S PARTY

§ 1

The conference broke up upon this announcement, but Lord Barralonga and his party were not brought to the Conference Gardens until long after dark. No effort was made to restrain or control the movements of the Earthlings. Mr. Burleigh walked down to the lake with Lady Stella and the psychologist whose name was Lion, asking and answering questions. Mr. Burleigh's chauffeur wandered rather disconsolately, keeping within hail of his employer. Mr. Rupert Catskill took Mr. Mush off by the arm as if to give him instructions.

Mr. Barnstaple wanted to walk about alone to recall and digest the astounding realizations of the afternoon and to accustom himself to the wonder of this beautiful world, so beautiful and now in the twilight so mysterious also, with its trees and flowers becoming dim and shapeless notes of pallor and blackness and with the clear forms and gracious proportions of its buildings melting into a twilight indistinctness.

The earthliness of his companions intervened between him and this world into which he felt he might otherwise have been accepted and absorbed. He was in it, but in it only as a strange and discordant intruder. Yet he loved it already and desired it and was passionately anxious to become a part of it. He had a vague but very powerful feeling that if only he could get away from his companions, if only in some way he could cast off his earthly clothing and everything upon him that marked him as earthly and linked him to earth, he would by the very act of casting that off become himself native to Utopia, and then that this tormenting sense, this bleak distressing strangeness would vanish out of his mind. He would suddenly find himself a Utopian in nature and reality, and it was Earth that would become the incredible dream, a dream that would fade at last completely out of his mind.

For a time, however, Father Amerton's need of a hearer prevented

any such detachment from earthly thoughts and things. He stuck close to Mr. Barnstaple and maintained a stream of questions and comments that threw over this Utopian scene the quality of some Earl's Court exhibition that the two of them were visiting and criticizing together. It was evidently so provisional, so disputable and unreal to him, that at any moment Mr. Barnstaple felt he would express no astonishment if a rift in the scenery suddenly let in the clatter of the Earl's Court railway station or gave a glimpse of the conventional Gothic spire of St. Barnabas in the West.

At first Father Amerton's mind was busy chiefly with the fact that on the morrow he was to be "dealt with" on account of the scene in the conference. "How *can* they deal with me?" he said for the fourth time.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Barnstaple. Every time Mr. Amerton began speaking Mr. Barnstaple said, "I beg your pardon," in order to convey to him that he was interrupting a train of thought. But every time Mr. Barnstaple said, "I beg your pardon," Mr. Amerton would merely remark, "You ought to consult someone about your hearing," and then go on with what he had to say.

"How can I be *dealt* with?" he asked of Mr. Barnstaple and the circumambient dusk. "How can I be dealt with?"

"Oh! psycho-analysis or something of that sort," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"It takes two to play at that game," said Father Amerton, but it seemed to Mr. Barnstaple with a slight flavour of relief in his tone. "Whatever they ask me, whatever they suggest to me, I will not fail — I will bear my witness."

"I have no doubt they will find it hard to suppress you," said Mr. Barnstaple bitterly...

For a time they walked among the tall sweet-smelling, white-flowered shrubs in silence. Now and then Mr. Barnstaple would quicken or slacken his pace with the idea of increasing his distance from Father Amerton but quite mechanically Father Amerton responded to these efforts. "Promiscuity," he began again presently. "What other word could you use?"

"I really beg your pardon," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"What other word could I have used *but* 'promiscuity'? What else

could one expect — with people running about in this amazing want of costume, but the morals of the monkeys' cage? They admit that our institution of marriage is practically unknown to them!"

"It's a different world," said Mr. Barnstaple irritably. "A different world."

"The Laws of Morality hold good for every conceivable world."

"But in a world in which people propagated by fission and there was no sex?"

"Morality would be simpler but it would be the same morality."...

Presently Mr. Barnstaple was begging his pardon again.

"I was saying that this is a lost world."

"It doesn't *look* lost," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"It has rejected and forgotten Salvation."

Mr. Barnstaple put his hands in his pockets and began to whistle the barcarolle from "The Tales of Hoffman," very softly to himself. Would Father Amerton never leave him? Could nothing be done with Father Amerton? At the old shows at Earl's Court there used to be wire baskets for waste paper and cigarette ends and bores generally. If one could only tip Father Amerton suddenly into some such receptacle!

"Salvation has been offered them, and they have rejected it and well nigh forgotten it. And that is why we have been sent to them. We have been sent to them to recall them to the One Thing that Matters, to the One Forgotten Thing. Once more we have to raise the healing symbol as Moses raised it in the Wilderness. Ours is no light mission. We have been sent into this Hell of sensuous materialism —"

"Oh, *Lord*!" said Mr. Barnstaple, and relapsed into the barcarolle...

"I *beg* your pardon," he exclaimed again presently.

"Where is the Pole Star? What has happened to the Wain?"

Mr. Barnstaple looked up.

He had not thought of the stars before, and he looked up prepared in this fresh Universe to see the strangest constellations. But just as the life and size of the planet they were on ran closely parallel to the earth's, so he beheld above him a starry vault of familiar forms. And just as the Utopian world failed to be altogether parallel to its sister

universe, so did these constellations seem to be a little out in their drawing. Orion, he thought, straddled wider and with a great unfamiliar nebula at one corner, and it was true — the Wain was flattened out and the pointers pointed to a great void in the heavens.

"Their Pole Star gone! The Pointers, the Wain askew! It is symbolical," said Father Amerton.

It was only too obviously going to be symbolical. Mr. Barnstaple realized that a fresh storm of eloquence was imminent from Father Amerton. At any cost he felt this nuisance must be abated.

§ 2

On earth Mr. Barnstaple had been a passive victim to bores of all sorts, delicately and painfully considerate of the mental limitations that made their insensitive pressure possible. But the free air of Utopia had already mounted to his head and released initiatives that his excessively deferential recognition of others had hitherto restrained. He had had enough of Father Amerton; it was necessary to turn off Father Amerton, and he now proceeded to do so with a simple directness that surprised himself.

"Father Amerton," he said, "I have a confession to make to you."

"Ah!" cried Father Amerton. "Please — anything?"

"You have been walking about with me and shouting at my ears until I am strongly impelled to murder you."

"If what I have said has struck home—"

"It hasn't struck home. It has been a tiresome, silly, deafening jabbering in my ears. It wearies me indescribably. It prevents my attending to the marvellous things about us. I see exactly what you mean when you say that there is no Pole Star here and that that is symbolical. Before you begin I appreciate the symbol, and a very obvious, weak and ultimately inaccurate symbol it is. But you are one of those obstinate spirits who believes in spite of all evidence that the eternal hills are still eternal and the fixed stars fixed for ever. I want you to understand that I am entirely out of sympathy with all this stuff of yours. You seem to embody all that is wrong and ugly and impossible in Catholic teaching. I agree with these Utopians that

there is something wrong with your mind about sex, in all probability a nasty twist given to it in early life, and that what you keep saying and hinting about sexual life here is horrible and outrageous. And I am equally hostile to you and exasperated and repelled by you when you speak of religion proper. You make religion disgusting just as you make sex disgusting. You are a dirty priest. What *you* call Christianity is a black and ugly superstition, a mere excuse for malignity and persecution. It is an outrage upon Christ. If you are a Christian, then most passionately I declare myself *not* a Christian. But there are other meanings for Christianity than those you put upon it, and in another sense this Utopia here is Christian beyond all dreaming. Utterly beyond your understanding. We have come into this glorious world, which, compared to our world, is like a bowl of crystal compared to an old tin can, and you have the insufferable impudence to say that we have been sent hither as missionaries to teach them — God knows what!"

"God *does* know what," said Father Amerton a little taken aback, but coming up very pluckily.

"Oh!" cried Mr. Barnstaple, and was for a moment speechless.

"Listen to me, my Friend," said Father Amerton, catching at his sleeve.

"Not for my life!" cried Mr. Barnstaple, recoiling. "See! Down that vista, away there on the shore of the lake, those black figures are Mr. Burleigh, Mr. Mush and Lady Stella. They brought you here. They belong to your party and you belong to them. If they had not wanted your company you would not have been in their car. Go to them. I will not have you with me any longer. I refuse you and reject you. That is your way. This, by this little building, is mine. Don't follow me, or I will lay hands on you and bring in these Utopians to interfere between us... Forgive my plainness, Mr. Amerton. But get away from me! Get away from me!"

Mr. Barnstaple turned, and seeing that Father Amerton stood hesitating at the parting of the ways, took to his heels and ran from him.

He fled along an alley behind tall hedges, turned sharply to the right and then to the left, passed over a high bridge that crossed in front of a cascade that flung a dash of spray in his face, blundered by

two couples of lovers who whispered softly in the darkling, ran deviously across flower- studded turf, and at last threw himself down breathless upon the steps that led up to a terrace that looked towards lake and mountains, and was adorned, it seemed in the dim light, with squat stone figures of seated vigilant animals and men.

"Ye merciful stars!" cried Mr. Barnstaple. "At last I am alone."

He sat on these steps for a long time with his eyes upon the scene about him, drinking in the satisfying realization that for a brief interval at any rate, with no earthly presence to intervene, he and Utopia were face to face.

§ 3

He could not call this world the world of his dreams because he had never dared to dream of any world so closely shaped to the desires and imaginations of his heart. But surely this world it was, or a world the very fellow of it, that had lain deep beneath the thoughts and dreams of thousands of sane and troubled men and women in the world of disorder from which he had come. It was no world of empty peace, no such golden decadence of indulgence as Mr. Catskill tried to imagine it; it was a world, Mr. Barnstaple perceived, intensely militant, conquering and to conquer, prevailing over the obduracy of force and matter, over the lifeless separations of empty space and all the antagonistic mysteries of being.

In Utopia in the past, obscured by the superficial exploits of statesmen like Burleigh and Catskill and the competition of traders and exploiters every whit as vile and vulgar as their earthly compeers, the work of quiet and patient thinkers and teachers had gone on and the foundations which sustained this serene intensity of activity had been laid. How few of these pioneers had ever felt more than a transitory gleam of the righteous loveliness of the world their lives made possible!

And yet even in the hate and turmoil and distresses of the Days of Confusion there must have been earnest enough of the exquisite and glorious possibilities of life. Over the foulest slums the sunset called to the imaginations of men, and from mountain ridges, across great

valleys, from cliffs and hillsides and by the uncertain and terrible splendours of the sea, men must have had glimpses of the conceivable and attainable magnificence of being. Every flower petal, every sunlit leaf, the vitality of young things, the happy moments of the human mind transcending itself in art, all these things must have been material for hope, incentive to effort. And now at last — this world!

Mr. Barnstaple lifted up his hands like one who worships to the friendly multitude of the stars above him.

"I have seen," he whispered. "I have seen."

Little lights and soft glows of illumination were coming out here and there over this great park of flowerlike buildings and garden spaces that sloped down towards the lake. A circling aeroplane, itself a star, hummed softly overhead.

A slender girl came past him down the steps and paused at the sight of him.

"Are you one of the Earthlings?" came the question, and a beam of soft light shone momentarily upon Mr. Barnstaple from the bracelet on her arm.

"I came to-day," said Mr. Barnstaple, peering up at her.

"You are the man who came alone in a little machine of tin, with rubber air-bags round the wheels, very rusty underneath, and painted yellow. I have been looking at it."

"It is not a bad little car," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"At first we thought the priest came in it with you."

"He is no friend of mine."

"There were priests like that in Utopia many years ago. They caused much mischief among the people."

"He was with the other lot," said Mr. Barnstaple. "For their week-end party I should think him — rather a mistake."

She sat down a step or so above him.

"It is wonderful that you should come here out of your world to us. Do you find this world of our very wonderful? I suppose many things that seen quite commonplace to me because I have been born among them seem wonderful to you."

"You are not very old?"

"I am eleven. I am learning the history of the Ages Of Confusion,

and they say your world is still in an Age of Confusion. It is just as though you came to us out of the past — out of history. I was in the Conference and I was watching your face. You love this present world of ours — at least you love it much more than your other people do."

"I want to live all the rest of my life in it."

"I wonder if that is possible?"

"Why should it not be possible? It will be easier than sending me back. I should not be very much in the way. I should only be here for twenty or thirty years at the most, and I would learn everything I could and do everything I was told."

"But isn't there work that you have to do in your own world?"

Mr. Barnstaple made no answer to that. He did not seem to hear it. It was the girl who presently broke the silence.

"They say that when we Utopians are young, before our minds and characters are fully formed and matured, we are very like the men and women of the Age of Confusion. We are more egotistical then, they tell us; life about us is still so unknown, that we are adventurous and romantic. I suppose I am egotistical yet — and adventurous. And it does still seem to me that in spite of many terrible and dreadful things there was much that must have been wildly exciting and desirable in that past — which is still so like your present. What can it have been like to have been a general entering a conquered city? Or a prince being crowned? Or to be rich and able to astonish people by acts of power an benevolence? Or to be a martyr led out to die for some splendid misunderstood cause?"

"These things sound better in stories and histories than in reality," said Mr. Barnstaple after due consideration. "Did you hear Mr. Rupert Catskill, the last of the Earthlings to make a speech?"

"He thought romantically — but he did not look romantic."

"He has lived most romantically. He has fought bravely in wars. He has been a prisoner and escaped wonderfully from prison. His violent imaginations have caused the deaths of thousands of people. And presently we shall see another romantic adventurer in this Lord Barralonga they are bringing hither. He is enormously rich and he tries to astonish people with his wealth — just as you have dreamt of astonishing people."

“Are they not astonished?”

“Romance is not reality,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “He is one of a number of floundering, corrupting rich men who are a weariness to themselves and an intolerable nuisance to the rest of our world. They want to do vulgar showy things. This man Barralonga was an assistant to a photographer and something of an actor when a certain invention called moving pictures came into our world. He became a great prospector in the business of showing these pictures, partly by accident, partly by the unscrupulous cheating of various inventors. Then he launched out into speculations in shipping and in a trade we carry on in our world in frozen meat brought from great distances. He made food costly for many people and impossible for some, and so he grew rich. For in our world men grow wealthy by intercepting rather than by serving. And having become ignobly rich, certain of our politicians, for whom he did some timely services, ennobled him by giving him the title of Lord. Do you understand the things I am saying? Was your Age of Confusion so like ours? You did not know it was so ugly. Forgive me if I disillusion you about the Age of Confusion and its romantic possibilities. But I have just stepped out of the dust and disorder and noise of its indiscipline, out of limitation, cruelties and distresses, out of a weariness in which hope dies... Perhaps if my world attracts you you may yet have an opportunity of adventuring out of all this into its disorders... That will be an adventure indeed... Who knows what may happen between our worlds?... But you will not like it, I am afraid. You cannot imagine how dirty our world is... Dirt and disease, these are in the trailing skirts of all romance...”

A silence fell between them; he followed his own thoughts and the girl sat and wondered over him.

At length he spoke again.

“Shall I tell you what I was thinking of when you spoke to me?”

“Yes?”

“Your world is the consummation of a million ancient dreams. It is wonderful! It is wonder, high as heaven. But it is a great grief to me that two dear friends of mine cannot be here with me to see what I am seeing. It is queer how strong the thought of them is in my mind. One has passed now beyond all the universes, alas! — but the

other is still in my world. You are a student, my dear; everyone of your world, I suppose, is a student here, but in our world students are a class apart. We three were happy together because we were students and not yet caught into the mills of senseless toil, and we were none the less happy perhaps because we were miserably poor and often hungry together. We used to talk and dispute together and in our students' debating society, discussing the disorders of our world and how some day they might be bettered. Was there, in your Age of Confusion, that sort of eager, hopeful, poverty-struck student life?"

"Go on," said the girl with her eyes intent on his dim profile. "In old novels I have read of just that hungry dreaming student world."

"We three agreed that the supreme need of our time was education. We agreed that was the highest service we could join. We all set about it in our various ways, I the least useful of the three. My friends and I drifted a little apart. They edited a great monthly periodical that helped to keep the world of science together, and my friend, serving a careful and grudging firm of publishers, edited school books for them, conducted an educational paper, and also inspected schools for our university. He was too heedless of pay and profit ever to become even passably well off though these publishers profited greatly by his work; his whole life was a continual service of toil for teaching; he did not take as much as a month's holiday in any year in his life. While he lived I thought little of the work he was doing, but since he died I have heard from teachers whose schools he inspected, and from book writers whom he advised, of the incessant high quality of his toil and the patience and sympathy of his work. On such lives as his this Utopia in which your sweet life is opening is founded; on such lives our world of earth will yet build its Utopia. But the life of this friend of mine ended abruptly in a way that tore my heart. He worked too hard and too long through a crisis in which it was inconvenient for him to take a holiday. His nervous system broke down with shocking suddenness, his mind gave way, he passed into a phase of acute melancholia and — died. For it is perfectly true, old Nature has neither righteousness nor pity. This happened a few weeks ago. That other old friend and I, with his wife, who had been his tireless helper, were chief among the mourners at his funeral. To-

night the memory of that comes back to me with extraordinary vividness. I do not know how you dispose of your dead here, but on earth the dead are mostly buried in the earth."

"We are burnt," said the girl.

"Those who are liberal-minded in our world burn also. Our friend was burnt, and we stood and took our part in a service according to the rites of our ancient religion in which we no longer believed, and presently we saw his coffin, covered with wreaths of flowers, slide from before us out of our sight through the gates that led to the furnaces of the crematorium, and as it went, taking with it so much of my youth, I saw that my other dear old friend was sobbing, and I too was wrung to the pitch of tears to think that so valiant and devoted and industrious a life should end, as it seemed, so miserably and thanklessly. The priest had been reading a long contentious discourse by a theological writer named Paul, full of bad arguments by analogy and weak assertions. I wished that instead of the ideas of this ingenious ancient we could have had some discourse upon the real nobility of our friend, on the pride and intensity of his work and on his scorn for mercenary things. All his life he had worked with unlimited devotion for such a world as this, and yet I doubt if he had ever had any realization of the clearer, nobler life for man that his life of toil and the toil of such lives as his, were making sure and certain in the days to come. He lived by faith. He lived too much by faith. There was not enough sunlight in his life. If I could have him here now — and that other dear friend who grieved for him so bitterly; if I could have them both here; if I could give up my place here to them so that they could see, as I see, the real greatness of their lives reflected in these great consequences of such lives as theirs — then, then I could rejoice in Utopia indeed... But I feel now as if I had taken my old friend's savings and was spending them on myself..."

Mr. Barnstaple suddenly remembered the youth of his hearer. "Forgive me, my dear child, for running on in this fashion. But your voice was kind."

The girl's answer was to bend down and brush his extended hand with her soft lips.

Then suddenly she sprang to her feet. "Look at that light," she

said, “among the stars!”

Mr. Barnstaple stood up beside her.

“That is the aeroplane bringing Lord Barralonga and his party; Lord Barralonga who killed a man to-day! Is he a very big, strong man — ungovernable and wonderful?”

Mr. Barnstaple, struck by a sudden doubt, looked sharply at the sweet upturned face beside him.

“I have never seen him. But I believe he is a youngish, baldish, undersized man, who suffers very gravely from a disordered liver and kidneys. This has prevented the dissipation of his energies upon youthful sports and pleasures and enabled him to concentrate upon the acquisition of property. And so he was able to buy the noble title that touches your imagination. Come with me and look at him.”

The girl stood still and met his eyes. She was eleven years old and she was as tall as he was.

“But was there no romance in the past?”

“Only in the hearts of the young. And it died.”

“But is there no romance?”

“Endless romance — and it has all to come. It comes for you.”

§ 4

The bringing in of Lord Barralonga and his party was something of an anti- climax to Mr. Barnstaple’s wonderful day. He was tired and, quite unreasonably, he resented the invasion of Utopia by these people.

The two parties of Earthlings were brought together in a brightly lit hall near the lawn upon which the Barralonga aeroplane had come down. The newcomers came in in a group together, blinking, travel-worn and weary-looking. But it was evident they were greatly relieved to encounter other Earthlings in what was to them a still intensely puzzling experience. For they had had nothing to compare with the calm and lucid discussion of the Conference Place. Their lapse into this strange world was still an incomprehensible riddle for them.

Lord Barralonga was the owner of the gnome-like face that had

looked out at Mr. Barnstaple when the large grey car had passed him on the Maidenhead Road. His skull was very low and broad above his brows so that he reminded Mr. Barnstaple of the flat stopper of a glass bottle. He looked hot and tired, he was considerably dishevelled as if from a struggle, and one arm was in a sling; his little brown eyes were as alert and wary as those of a wicked urchin in the hands of a policeman. Sticking close to him like a familiar spirit was a small, almost jockey-like chauffeur, whom he addressed as "Ridley." Ridley's face also was marked by the stern determination of a man in a difficult position not in any manner to give himself away. His left cheek and ear had been cut in the automobile smash and were liberally adorned with sticking-plaster. Miss Greeta Grey, the lady of the party, was a frankly blonde beauty in a white flannel tailor-made suit. She was extraordinarily unruffled by the circumstances in which she found herself; it was as if she had no sense whatever of their strangeness. She carried herself with the habitual hauteur of a beautiful girl almost professionally exposed to the risk of unworthy advances. Anywhere.

The other two people of the party were a grey-faced, grey-clad American, also very wary-eyed, who was, Mr. Barnstaple learnt from Mr. Mush, Hunker, the Cinema King, and a thoroughly ruffled-looking Frenchman, a dark, smartly dressed man, with an imperfect command of English, who seemed rather to have fallen into Lord Barralonga's party than to have belonged to it properly. Mr. Barnstaple's mind leapt to the conclusion, and nothing occurred afterwards to change his opinion, that some interest in the cinematograph had brought this gentleman within range of Lord Barralonga's hospitality and that he had been caught, as a foreigner may so easily be caught, into the embrace of a thoroughly uncongenial week-end expedition.

As Lord Barralonga and Mr. Hunker came forward to greet Mr. Burleigh and Mr. Catskill, this Frenchman addressed himself to Mr. Barnstaple with the inquiry whether he spoke French.

"I cannot understand," he said. "We were to have gone to Viltshire — Wiltshire, and then one 'orrible thing has happen after another. What is it we have come to and what sort of people are all these people who speak most excellent French? Is it a joke of Lord

Barralonga, or a dream, or what has happen to us?"

Mr. Barnstaple attempted some explanation.

"Another dimension," said the Frenchman, "an other worl'. That is all very well. But I have my business to attend to in London. I have no need to be brought back in this way to France, some sort of France, some other France in some other worl'. It is too much of a joke altogether."

Mr. Barnstaple attempted some further exposition. It was clear from his interlocutor's puzzled face that the phrases he used were too difficult. He turned helplessly to Lady Stella and found her ready to undertake the task. "This lady," he said, "will be able to make things plain to you. Lady Stella, this is Monsieur—"

"Emile Dupont," the Frenchman bowed. "I am what you call a journalist and publicist. I am interested in the cinematograph from the point of view of education and propaganda. It is why I am here with his Lordship Barralonga."

French conversation was Lady Stella's chief accomplishment. She sailed into it now very readily. She took over the elucidation of M. Dupont, and only interrupted it to tell Miss Greeta Grey how pleasant it was to have another woman with her in this strange world.

Relieved of M. Dupont, Mr. Barnstaple stood back and surveyed the little group of Earthlings in the centre of the hall and the circle of tall, watchful Utopians about them and rather aloof from them. Mr. Burleigh was being distantly cordial to Lord Barralonga, and Mr. Hunker was saying what a great pleasure it was to him to meet "Britain's foremost statesman." Mr. Catskill stood in the most friendly manner beside Barralonga; they knew each other well; and Father Amerton exchanged comments with Mr. Mush. Ridley and Penk, after some moments of austere regard, had gone apart to discuss the technicalities of the day's experience in undertones. Nobody paid any attention to Mr. Barnstaple.

It was like a meeting at a railway station. It was like a reception. It was utterly incredible and altogether commonplace. He was weary. He was saturated and exhausted by wonder.

"Oh, I am going to my bed!" he yawned suddenly. "I am going to my little bed."

He made his way through the friendly-eyed Utopians out into the

calm starlight. He nodded to the strange nebula at the corner of Orion as a weary parent might nod to importunate offspring. He would consider it again in the morning. He staggered drowsily through the gardens to his own particular retreat.

He disrobed and went to sleep as immediately and profoundly as a tired child.

VIII. — EARLY MORNING IN UTOPIA

§ 1

Mr. Barnstaple awakened slowly out of profound slumber.

He had a vague feeling that a very delightful and wonderful dream was slipping from him. He tried to keep on with the dream and not to open his eyes. It was about a great world of beautiful people who had freed themselves from a thousand earthly troubles. But it dissolved and faded from his mind. It was not often nowadays that dreams came to Mr. Barnstaple. He lay very still with his eyes closed, reluctantly coming awake to the affairs of every day.

The cares and worries of the last fortnight resumed their sway. Would he ever be able to get away for a holiday by himself? Then he remembered that he had already got his valise stowed away in the Yellow Peril. But surely that was not last night; that was the night before last, and he had started — he remembered now starting and the little thrill of getting through the gate before Mrs. Barnstaple suspected anything. He opened his eyes and fixed them on a white ceiling, trying to recall that journey. He remembered turning into the Camberwell New Road and the bright exhilaration of the morning, Vauxhall Bridge and that nasty tangle of traffic at Hyde Park Corner. He always maintained that the west of London was far more difficult for motoring than the east. Then — had he gone to Uxbridge? No. He recalled the road to Slough and then came a blank in his mind.

What a very good ceiling this was! Not a crack nor a stain!

But how had he spent the rest of the day? He must have got somewhere because here he was in a thoroughly comfortable bed — an excellent bed. With a thrush singing. He had always maintained that a good thrush could knock spots off a nightingale, but this thrush was a perfect Caruso. And another answering it! In July! Pangbourne and Caversham were wonderful places for nightingales. In June. But this was July — and thrushes... Across these drowsy thought-phantoms came the figure of Mr. Rupert Catskill, hands on hips, face and head thrust forward speaking, saying astonishing things. To a naked seated figure with a grave intent face. And other figures. One

with a face like the Delphic Sibyl. Mr. Barnstaple began to remember that in some way he had got himself mixed up with a week-end party at Taplow Court. Now had this speech been given at Taplow Court? At Taplow Court they wear clothes. But perhaps the aristocracy in retirement and privacy — ?

Utopia?... But was it possible?

Mr. Barnstaple sat up in his bed in a state of extreme amazement. "Impossible!" he said. He was lying in a little loggia half open to the air. Between the slender pillars of fluted glass he saw a range of snow-topped mountains, and in the foreground a great cluster of tall spikes bearing deep red flowers. The bird was still singing — a glorified thrush, in a glorified world. Now he remembered everything. Now it was all clear. The sudden twisting of the car, the sound like the snapping of a fiddle string and — Utopia! Now he had it all, from the sight of sweet dead Greenlake to the bringing in of Lord Barralonga under the strange unfamiliar stars. It was no dream. He looked at his hand on the exquisitely fine coverlet. He felt his rough chin. It was a world real enough for shaving — and for a very definite readiness for breakfast. Very — for he had missed his supper. And as if in answer to his thought a smiling girl appeared ascending the steps to his sleeping-place and bearing a little tray. After all, there was much to be said for Mr. Burleigh. To his swift statesmanship it was that Mr. Barnstaple owed this morning cup of tea.

"Good morning," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"Why not?" said the young Utopian, and put down his tea and smiled at him in a motherly fashion and departed.

"Why not a good morning, I suppose," said Mr. Barnstaple and meditated for a moment, chin on knees, and then gave his attention to the bread-and-butter and tea.

§ 2

The little dressing-room in which he found his clothes lying just as he had dumped them overnight, was at once extraordinarily simple and extraordinarily full of interest for Mr. Barnstaple. He paddled

about it humming as he examined it.

The bath was much shallower than an ordinary earthly bath; apparently the Utopians did not believe in lying down and stewing. And the forms of everything were different, simpler and more graceful. On earth he reflected art was largely wit. The artist had a certain limited selection of obdurate materials and certain needs, and his work was a clever reconciliation of the obduracy and the necessity and of the idiosyncrasy of the substance to the aesthetic preconceptions of the human mind. How delightful, for example, was the earthly carpenter dealing cleverly with the grain and character of this wood or that. But here the artist had a limitless control of material, and that element of witty adaptation had gone out of his work. His data were the human mind and body. Everything in this little room was unobtrusively but perfectly convenient — and difficult to misuse. If you splashed too much a thoughtful outer rim tidied things up for you.

In a tray by the bath was a very big fine sponge. So either Utopians still dived for sponges or they grew them or trained them (who could tell?) to come up of their own accord.

As he set out his toilet things a tumbler was pushed off a glass shelf on to the floor and did not break. Mr. Barnstaple in an experimental mood dropped it again and still it did not break.

He could not find taps at first though there was a big washing basin as well as a bath. Then he perceived a number of studs on the walls with black marks that might be Utopian writing. He experimented. He found very hot water and then very cold water filling his bath, a fountain of probably soapy warm water, and other fluids, — one with an odour of pine and one with a subdued odour of chlorine. The Utopian characters on these studs set him musing for a time; they were the first writing he had seen; they appeared to be word characters, but whether they represented sounds or were greatly simplified hieroglyphics he could not imagine. Then his mind went off at a tangent in another direction because the only metal apparent in this dressing-room was gold. There was, he noted, an extraordinary lot of gold in the room. It was set and inlaid in gold. The soft yellow lines gleamed and glittered. Gold evidently was cheap in Utopia. Perhaps they knew how to make it.

He roused himself to the business of his toilet. There was no looking- glass in the room, but when he tried what he thought was the handle of a cupboard door, he found himself opening a triple full-length mirror. Afterwards he was to discover that there were no displayed mirrors in Utopia; Utopians, he was to learn, thought it indecent to be reminded of themselves in that way. The Utopian method was to scrutinize oneself, see that one was all right and then forget oneself for the rest of the day. He stood now surveying his pyjamad and unshaven self with extreme disfavour. Why do respectable citizens favour such ugly pink-striped pyjamas? When he unpacked his nail-brush and tooth-brush, shaving-brush and washing-glove, they seemed to him to have the coarseness of a popular burlesque. His tooth-brush was a particularly ignoble instrument. He wished now he had bought a new one at the chemist's shop near Victoria Station.

And what nasty queer things his clothes were!

He had a fantastic idea of adopting Utopian ideas of costume, but a reflective moment before his mirror restrained him. Then he remembered that he had packed a silk tennis shirt and flannels. Suppose he wore those, without a collar stud or tie — and went bare-footed?

He surveyed his feet. As feet went on earth they were not unsightly feet. But on earth they bad been just wasted.

§ 3

A particularly clean and radiant Mr. Barnstaple, white- clad, bare-necked and bare-footed, presently emerged into the Utopian sunrise. He smiled, stretched his arms and took a deep breath of the sweet air. Then suddenly his face became hard and resolute.

From another little sleeping house not two hundred yards away Father Amerton was emerging. Intuitively Mr. Barnstaple knew he meant either to forgive or be forgiven for the overnight quarrel. It would be a matter of chance whether he would select the role of offender or victim; what was certain was that he would smear a dreary mess of emotional personal relationship over the jewel-like

clearness and brightness of the scene. A little to the right of Mr. Barnstaple and in front of him were wide steps leading down towards the lake. Three strides and he was going down these steps two at a time. It may have been his hectic fancy, but it seemed to him that he heard the voice of Father Amerton, "Mr. *Barn* — staple," in pursuit.

Mr. Barnstaple doubled and doubled again and crossed a bridge across an avalanche gully, a bridge with huge masonry in back and roof and with delicate pillars of prismatic glass towards the lake. The sunlight entangled in these pillars broke into splashes of red and blue and golden light. Then at a turfy corner gay with blue gentians, he narrowly escaped a collision with Mr. Rupert Catskill. Mr. Catskill was in the same costume that he had worn on the previous day except that he was without his grey top hat. He walked with his hands clasped behind him.

"Hullo!" he said. "What's the hurry? We seem to be the first people up."

"I saw Father Amerton—"

"That accounts for it. You were afraid of being caught up in a service, Matins or Prime or whatever he calls it. Wise man to run. He shall pray for the lot of us. Me too."

He did not wait for any endorsement from Mr. Barnstaple, but went on talking.

"You have slept well? What did you think of the old fellow's answer to my speech. Eh? Evasive cliches. When in doubt, abuse the plaintiff's attorney. We don't agree with him because we have bad hearts."

"What old fellow do you mean?"

"The worthy gentleman who spoke after me."

"Urthred! But he's not forty."

"He's seventy-three. He told us afterwards. They live long here, a lingering business. Our lives are a fitful hectic fever from their point of view. But as Tennyson said, 'Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay!' H'm? He evaded my points. This is Lotus Land, Sunset Land; we shan't be thanked for disturbing its slumbers."

"I doubt their slumbers."

"Perhaps the Socialist bug has bit you too. Yes — I see it has! Believe me this is the most complete demonstration of decadence it

would be possible to imagine. Complete. And we *shall* disturb their slumbers, never fear. Nature, you will see, is on our side — in a way no one has thought of yet."

"But I don't see the decadence," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"None so blind as those who won't see. It's everywhere. Their large flushed pseudo-health. Like fatted cattle. And their treatment of Barralonga. They don't know how to treat him. They don't even arrest him. They've never arrested anyone for a thousand years. He careers through their land, killing and slaying and frightening and disturbing and they're flabbergasted, Sir, simply flabbergasted. It's like a dog running amuck in a world full of sheep. If he hadn't had a side-slip I believe he would be hooting and snorting and careering along now — killing people. They've lost the instinct of social defence."

"I wonder."

"A very good attitude of mind. If indulged in, in moderation. But when your wondering is over, you will begin to see that I am right. H'm? Ah! There on that terrace! Isn't that my Lord Barralonga and his French acquaintance? It is. Inhaling the morning air. I think with your permission I will go on and have a word with them. Which way did you say Father Amerton was? I don't want to disturb his devotions. This way? Then if I go to the right—"

He grimaced amiably over his shoulder.

§ 4

Mr. Barnstaple came upon two Utopians gardening. They had two light silvery wheelbarrows, and they were cutting out old wood and overblown clusters from a line of thickets that sprawled over a rough-heaped ridge of rock and foamed with crimson and deep red roses. These gardeners had great leather gauntlets and aprons of tanned skin, and they carried hooks and knives.

Mr. Barnstaple had never before seen such roses as they were tending here; their fragrance filled the air. He did not know that double roses could be got in mountains; bright red single sorts he had seen high up in Switzerland, but not such huge loose-flowered

monsters as these. They dwarfed their leaves. Their wood was in long, thorny, snaky-red streaked stems that writhed wide and climbed to the rocky lumps over which they grew. Their great petals fell like red snow and like drifting moths and like blood upon the soft soil that sheltered amidst the brown rocks.

"You are the first Utopians I have actually seen at work," he said.

"This isn't our work," smiled the nearer of the two, a fair-haired, freckled, blue-eyed youth. "But as we are for these roses we have to keep them in order."

"Are they your roses?"

"Many people think these double mountain roses too much trouble and a nuisance with their thorns and sprawling branches, and many people think only the single sorts of roses ought to be grown in these high places and that this lovely sort ought to be left to die out up here. Are you for our roses?"

"Such roses as these?" said Mr. Barnstaple. "Altogether."

"Good! Then just bring me up my barrow closer for all this litter. We're responsible for the good behaviour of all this thicket reaching right down there almost to the water."

"And you have to see to it yourselves?"

"Who else?"

"But couldn't you get someone — pay someone to see to it for you?"

"Oh, hoary relic from the ancient past!" the young man replied. "Oh, fossil ignoramus from a barbaric universe! Don't you realize that there is no working class in Utopia? It died out fifteen hundred years or so ago. Wages- slavery, pimping and so forth are done with. We read about them in books. Who loves the rose must serve the rose — himself."

"But you work."

"Not for wages. Not because anyone else loves or desires something else and is too lazy to serve it or get it himself. We work, part of the brain, part of the will, of Utopia."

"May I ask at what?"

"I explore the interior of our planet. I study high-pressure chemistry. And my friend—"

He interrogated his friend, whose dark face and brown eyes

appeared suddenly over a foam of blossom. “I do Food.”

“A cook?”

“Of sorts. Just now I am seeing to your Earthling dietary. It’s most interesting and curious — but I should think rather destructive. I plan your meals... I see you look anxious, but I saw to your breakfast last night.” He glanced at a minute wrist-watch under the gauntlet of his gardening glove. “It will be ready in about an hour. How was the early tea?”

“Excellent,” said Mr. Barnstaple.

“Good,” said the dark young man. “I did my best. I hope the breakfast will be as satisfactory. I had to fly two hundred kilometres for a pig last night and kill it and cut it up myself, and find out how to cure it. Eating bacon has gone out of fashion in Utopia. I hope you will find my rashers satisfactory.”

“It seems very rapid curing — for a rasher,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “We could have done without it.”

“Your spokesman made such a point of it.”

The fair young man struggled out of the thicket and wheeled his barrow away. Mr. Barnstaple wished the dark young man “Good morning.”

“Why shouldn’t it be?” asked the dark young man.

§ 5

He discovered Ridley and Penk approaching him. Ridley’s face and ear were still adorned with sticking-plaster and his bearing was eager and anxious. Penk followed a little way behind him, holding one hand to the side of his face. Both were in their professional dress, white-topped caps, square-cut leather coats and black gaiters; they had made no concessions to Utopian laxity.

Ridley began to speak as soon as he judged Mr. Barnstaple was within earshot.

“You don’t ‘appen to know, Mister, where these ‘ere decadents shoved our car?”

“I thought your car was all smashed up.”

“Not a Rolls-Royce — not like that. Wind-screen, mud-guards

and the on-footboard perhaps. We went over sideways. I want to ‘ave a look at it. And I didn’t turn the petrol off. The carburettor was leaking a bit. My fault. I ‘adn’t been careful enough with the strainer. If she runs out of petrol, where’s one to get more of it in this blasted Elysium? I ain’t seen a sign anywhere. I know if I don’t get that car into running form before Lord Barralonga wants it there’s going to be trouble.”

Mr. Barnstaple had no idea where the cars were.

“‘Aven’t you a car of your own?” asked Ridley reproachfully.

“I have. But I’ve never given it a thought since I got out of it.”

“Owner-driver,” said Ridley bitterly.

“Anyhow, I can’t help you find your cars. Have you asked any of the Utopians?”

“Not us. We don’t like the style of ‘em,” said Ridley.

“They’ll tell you.”

“And watch us — whatever we do to our cars. They don’t get a chance of looking into a Rolls-Royce every day in the year. Next thing we shall have them driving off in ‘em. I don’t like the place, and I don’t like these people. They’re queer. They ain’t decent. His lordship says they’re a lot of degenerates, and it seems to me his lordship is about right. I ain’t a Puritan, but all this running about without clothes is a bit too thick for me. I wish I knew where they’d stowed those cars.”

Mr. Barnstaple was considering Penk. “You haven’t hurt your face?” he asked.

“Nothing to speak of,” said Penk. “I suppose we ought to be getting on.”

Ridley looked at Penk and then at Mr. Barnstaple. “He’s had a bit of a contoosion,” he remarked, a faint smile breaking through his sourness.

“We better be getting on if we’re going to find those cars,” said Penk.

A grin of intense enjoyment appeared upon Ridley’s face. “‘E’s bumped against something.”

“Oh — *shut it*!” said Penk.

But the thing was too good to keep back. “One of these girls ‘it ‘im.”

“What do you mean?” said Mr. Barnstaple. “You haven’t been taking liberties — ?”

“I ‘ave *not*,” said Penk. “But as Mr. Ridley’s been so obliging as to start the topic I suppose I got to tell wot ‘appened. It jest illustrates the uncertainties of being among a lot of arf-savage, arf-crazy people, like we got among.”

Ridley smiled and winked at Mr. Barnstaple. “Regular ‘ard clout she gave ‘im. Knocked him over. ‘E put ‘is ‘and on ‘er shoulder and *clop*! over ‘e went. Never saw anything like it.”

“Rather unfortunate,” said Mr. Barnstaple.

“It all ‘appened in a second like.”

“It’s a pity it happened.”

“Don’t you go making any mistake about it, Mister, and don’t you go running off with any false ideas about it,” said Penk. “I don’t want the story to get about — it might do me a lot of ‘arm with Mr. Burleigh. Pity Mr. Ridley couldn’t ‘old ‘is tongue. What provoked her I do not know. She came into my room as I was getting up, and she wasn’t what you might call wearing anything, and she looked a bit saucy, to my way of thinking, and — well, something come into my head to say to her, something — well, just the least little bit sporty, so to speak. One can’t always control one’s thoughts — can one? A man’s a man. If a man’s expected to be civil in his private thoughts to girls without a stitch, so to speak — *well*! I dunno. I really do not know. It’s against nature. I never said it, whatever it was I thought of. Mr. Ridley ‘ere will bear me out. I never said a word to her. I ‘adn’t opened my lips when she hit me. Knocked me over, she did — like a ninepin. Didn’t even seem angry about it. A ‘ook-’it — sideways. It was surprise as much as anything floored me.”

“But Ridley says you touched her.”

“Laid me ‘and on ‘er shoulder perhaps, in a sort of fatherly way. As she was turning to go — not being sure whether I wasn’t going to speak to her, I admit. And there you are! If I’m to get into trouble because I was wantonly ‘it—”

Penk conveyed despair of the world by an eloquent gesture.

Mr. Barnstaple considered. “I shan’t make trouble,” he said. “But all the same I think we must all be very careful with these Utopians.

Their ways are not our ways.”

“Thank God!” said Ridley. “The sooner I get out of this world back to Old England, the better I shall like it.”

He turned to go.

“You should ‘ear ‘is lordship,” said Ridley over his shoulder. “‘E says it’s just a world of bally degenerates — rotten degenerates — in fact, if you’ll excuse me — @*@*!*!*$*$*! degenerates. Eh? That about gets ‘em.”

“The young woman’s arm doesn’t seem to have been very degenerate,” said Mr. Barnstaple, standing the shock bravely.

“Don’t it?” said Ridley bitterly. “That’s all *you* know. Why! if there’s one sign more sure than another about degeneration it’s when women take to knocking men about. It’s against instink. In any respectable decent world such a thing couldn’t possibly ‘ave ‘appened. No ‘ow!”

“No— ‘ow,” echoed Penk.

“In *our* world, such a girl would jolly soon ‘ave ‘er lesson. Jolly soon. See?”

But Mr. Barnstaple’s roving eye bad suddenly discovered Father Amerton approaching very rapidly across a wide space of lawn and making arresting gestures. Mr. Barnstaple perceived he must act at once.

Now here’s someone who will certainly be able to help you find your cars, if he cares to do so. He’s a most helpful man — Father Amerton. And the sort of views he has about women are the sort of views you have. You are bound to get on together. If you will stop him and put the whole case to him — plainly and clearly.

He set off at a brisk pace towards the lake shore.

He could not be far now from the little summer-house that ran out over the water against which the gaily coloured boats were moored.

If he were to get into one of these and pull out into the lake he would have Father Amerton at a very serious disadvantage. Even if that good man followed suit. One cannot have a really eloquent emotional scene when one is pulling hard in pursuit of another boat.

As Mr. Barnstaple untied the bright white canoe with the big blue eye painted at its prow that he had chosen, Lady Stella appeared on the landing- stage. She came out of the pavilion that stood over the water, and something in her quick movement as she emerged suggested to Mr. Barnstaple's mind that she had been hiding there. She glanced about her and spoke very eagerly. "Are you going to row out upon the lake, Mr. Bastaple? May I come?"

She was attired, he noted, in a compromise between the Earthly and the Utopian style. She was wearing what might have been either a very simple custard-coloured tea-robe or a very sophisticated bath-wrap; it left her slender, pretty arms bare and free except for a bracelet of amber and gold, and on her bare feet — and they were unusually shapely feet — were sandals. Her head was bare, and her dark hair very simply done with a little black and gold fillet round it that suited her intelligent face. Mr. Barnstaple was an ignoramus about feminine costume, but he appreciated the fact that she had been clever in catching the Utopian note.

He helped her into the canoe. "We will paddle right out — a good way," she said with another glance over her shoulder, and sat down.

For a time Mr. Barnstaple paddled straight out so that he had nothing before him but sunlit water and sky, the low hills that closed in the lake towards the great plain, the huge pillars of the distant dam, and Lady Stella. She affected to be overcome by the beauty of the Conference garden slope with its houses and terraces behind him, but he could see that she was not really looking at the scene as a whole, but searching it restlessly for some particular object or person.

She made conversational efforts, on the loveliness of the morning and on the fact that birds were singing— "in July."

"But here it is not necessarily July," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"How stupid of me! Of course not."

"We seem to be in a fine May."

"It is probably very early," she said. "I forgot to wind my watch."

"Oddly enough we seem to be at about the same hours in our two worlds," said Mr. Barnstaple. "My wrist-watch says seven."

"No," said Lady Stella, answering her own thoughts and with her eyes on the distant gardens. "That is a Utopian girl. Have you met

any others — of our party — this morning?”

Mr. Barnstaple brought the canoe round so that he too could look at the shore. From here they could see how perfectly the huge terraces and avalanche walls and gullies mingled and interwove with the projecting ribs and cliffs of the mountain masses behind. The shrub tangles passed up into hanging pinewoods; the torrents and cascades from the snow-field above were caught and distributed amidst the emerald slopes and gardens of the Conference Park. The terraces that retained the soil and held the whole design spread out on either hand to a great distance and were continued up into the mountain substance; they were built of a material that ranged through a wide variety of colours from a deep red to a purple-veined white, and they were diversified by great arches over torrents and rock gullies, by huge round openings that spouted water and by cascades of steps. The buildings of the place were distributed over these terraces and over the grassy slopes they contained, singly or in groups and clusters, buildings of purple and blue and white as light and delicate as the Alpine flowers about them. For some moments Mr. Barnstaple was held silent by this scene, and then he attended to Lady Stella’s question. “I met Mr. Rupert Catskill and the two chauffeurs,” he said, “and I saw Father Amerton and Lord Barralonga and M. Dupont in the distance. I’ve seen nothing of Mr. Mush or Mr. Burleigh.”

“Mr. Cecil won’t be about for hours yet. He will lie in bed until ten or eleven. He always takes a good rest in the morning when there is any great mental exertion before him.”

The lady hesitated and then asked: “I suppose you haven’t seen Miss Greeta Grey?”

“No,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “I wasn’t looking for our people. I was just strolling about — and avoiding somebody.”

“The censor of manners and costumes?”

“Yes... That, in fact, is why I took to this canoe.”

The lady reflected and decided on a confidence.

“I was running away from someone too.”

“Not the preacher?”

“Miss Grey!”

Lady Stella apparently went off at a tangent. “This is going to be a

very difficult world to stay in. These people have very delicate taste. We may easily offend them."

"They are intelligent enough to understand."

"Do people who understand necessarily forgive? I've always doubted that proverb."

Mr. Barnstaple did not wish the conversation to drift away into generalities, so he paddled and said nothing.

"You see Miss Grey used to play Phryne in a Revue."

"I seem to remember something about it. There was a fuss in the newspapers."

"That perhaps gave her a bias."

Three long sweeps with the paddle.

"But this morning she came to me and told me that she was going to wear complete Utopian costume."

"Meaning?"

"A little rouge and face powder. It doesn't suit her the least little bit, Mr. Bastaple. It's a faux pas. It's indecent. But she's running about the gardens — . She might meet anyone. It's lucky Mr. Cecil isn't up. If she meets Father Amerton — ! But it's best not to think of that. You see, Mr. Bastaple, these Utopians and their sun-brown bodies — and everything, are in the picture. They don't embarrass me. But Miss Grey — . An earthly civilized woman taken out of her clothes *looks* taken out of her clothes. Peeled. A sort of *bleached* white. That nice woman who seems to hover round us, Lychnis, when she advised me what to wear, never for one moment suggested anything of the sort... But, of course, I don't know Miss Grey well enough to talk to her and besides, one never knows how a woman of that sort is going to take a thing..."

Mr. Barnstaple stared shoreward. Nothing was to be seen of an excessively visible Miss Greeta Grey. Then he had a conviction. "Lychnis will take care of her," he said.

"I hope she will. Perhaps, if we stay out here for a time—"

"She will be looked after," said Mr. Barnstaple. "But I think Miss Grey and Lord Barralonga's party generally are going to make trouble for us. I wish they hadn't come through with us."

"Mr. Cecil thinks that," said Lady Stella.

"Naturally we shall all be thrown very much together and judged

in a lump."

"Naturally," Lady Stella echoed.

She said no more for a little while. But it was evident that she had more to say. Mr. Barnstaple paddled slowly.

"Mr. Bastaple," she began presently.

Mr. Barnstaple's paddle became still.

"Mr. Bastaple — are you *afraid*?"

Mr. Barnstaple judged himself. "I have been too full of wonder to be afraid."

Lady Stella decided to confess. "I *am* afraid," she said. "I wasn't at first. Everything seemed to go so easily and simply. But in the night I woke up — horribly afraid."

"No," considered Mr. Barnstaple. "No. It hasn't taken me like that — yet... Perhaps it will."

Lady Stella leant forward and spoke confidentially, watching the effect of her words on Mr. Barnstaple. "These Utopians — I thought at first they were just simple, healthy human beings, artistic and innocent. But they are not, Mr. Bastaple. There is something hard and complicated about them, something that goes beyond us and that we don't understand. And they don't care for us. They look at us with heartless eyes. Lychnis is kind, but hardly any of the others are the least bit kind. And I think they find us inconvenient."

Mr. Barnstaple thought it over. "Perhaps they do. I have been so preoccupied with admiration — so much of this is fine beyond dreaming — that I have not thought very much how we affected them. But — yes — they seem to be busy about other things and not very attentive to us. Except the ones who have evidently been assigned to watch and study us. And Lord Barralonga's headlong rush through the country must certainly have been inconvenient."

"He killed a man."

"I know."

They remained thoughtfully silent for some moments.

"And there are other things," Lady Stella resumed. "They think quite differently from our way of thinking. I believe they despise us already. I noted something... Last evening you were not with us by the lake when Mr. Cecil asked them about their philosophy. He told them things about Hegel and Bergson and Lord Haldane and his own

wonderful scepticism. He opened out — unusually. It was very interesting — to me. But I was watching Urthred and Lion and in the midst of it I saw — I am convinced — they were talking to each other in that silent way they have, about something quite different. They were just *shamming* attention. And when Freddy Mush tried to interest them in Neo-Georgian poetry and the effect of the war upon literature, and how he hoped that they had something *half* as beautiful as the Iliad in Utopia, though he confessed he couldn't believe they had, they didn't even pretend to listen. They did not answer him at all... Our minds don't matter a bit to them."

"In these subjects. They are three thousand years further on. But we might be interesting as learners."

"Would it have been interesting to have taken a Hottentot about London explaining things to him — after one had got over the first fun of showing off his ignorance? Perhaps it would. But I don't think they want us here very much and I don't think they are going to like us very much, and I don't know what they are likely to do to us if we give too much trouble. And so I am afraid."

She broke out in a new place. "In the night I was reminded of my sister Mrs. Kelling's monkeys.

"It's a mania with her. They run about the gardens and come into the house and the poor things are always in trouble. They don't quite know what they may do and what they may not do; they all look frightfully worried and they get slapped and carried to the door and thrown out and all sorts of things like that. They spoil things and make her guests uneasy. You never seem to know what a monkey's going to do. And everybody hates to have them about except my sister. And she keeps on scolding them. 'Come *down*, Jacko! Put that *down*, Sadie'!"

Mr. Barnstaple laughed. "It isn't going to be quite so bad as that with us, Lady Stella. We are not monkeys."

She laughed too. "Perhaps it isn't. But all the same — in the night — I felt it might be. We are inferior creatures, One has to admit it..."

She knitted her brows. Her pretty face expressed great intellectual effort. "Do you realize how we are cut off?... Perhaps you will think it silly of me, Mr. Bastaple, but last night before I went to bed I sat down to write my sister a letter and tell her all about things while

they were fresh in my mind. And suddenly realized I might as well write — to Julius Caesar."

Mr. Barnstaple hadn't thought of that.

"That's a thing I can't get out of my head, Mr. Bastaple — no letters, no telegrams, no newspapers, no Bradshaw in Utopia. All the things we care for really — All the people we live for. Cut off! I don't know for how long. But completely cut off... How long are they likely to keep us here?"

Mr. Barnstaple's face became speculative.

"Are you *sure* they can ever send us back?" the lady asked.

"There seems to be some doubt. But they are astonishingly clever people."

"It seemed so easy coming here — just as if one walked round a corner — but, of course, properly speaking we are out of space and time... More out of it even than dead people... The North Pole or Central Africa is a whole universe nearer home than we are... It's hard to grasp that. In this sunlight it all seems so bright and familiar... Yet last night there were moments when I wanted to scream..."

She stopped short and scanned the shore. Then very deliberately she sniffed.

Mr. Barnstaple became aware of a peculiarly sharp and appetizing smell drifting across the water to him.

"Yes," he said.

"It's breakfast bacon!" cried Lady Stella with a squeak in her voice.

"Exactly as Mr. Burleigh told them," said Mr. Barnstaple mechanically turning the canoe shoreward.

"Breakfast bacon! That's the most reassuring thing that has happened yet... Perhaps after all it was silly to feel frightened. And there they are signalling to us!" She waved her arm.

"Greeta in a white robe — as you prophesied — and Mr. Mush in a sort of toga talking to her... Where could he have got that toga?"

A faint sound of voices calling reached them.

"Com — *ing*!" cried Lady Stella.

"I hope I haven't been pessimistic," said Lady Stella. "But I felt *horrid* in the night."

BOOK II. — QUARANTINE CRAG

I. — THE EPIDEMIC

§ 1

The shadow of the great epidemic in Utopia fell upon our little band of Earthlings in the second day after their irruption. For more than twenty centuries the Utopians had had the completest freedom from infectious and contagious disease of all sorts. Not only had the graver epidemic fevers and all sorts of skin diseases gone out of the lives of animals and men, but all the minor infections of colds, coughs, influenzas and the like had also been mastered and ended. By isolation, by the control of carriers, and so forth, the fatal germs had been cornered and obliged to die out.

And there had followed a corresponding change in the Utopian physiology. Secretions and reactions that had given the body resisting power to infection had diminished; the energy that produced them had been withdrawn to other more serviceable applications. The Utopian physiology, relieved of these merely defensive necessities, had simplified itself and become more direct and efficient. This cleaning up of infections was such ancient history in Utopia that only those who specialized in the history of pathology understood anything of the miseries mankind had suffered under from this source, and even these specialists do not seem to have had any idea of how far the race had lost its former resistance to infection. The first person to think of this lost resisting power seems to have been Mr. Rupert Catskill. Mr. Barnstaple recalled that when they had met early on the first morning of their stay in the Conference Gardens, he had been hinting that Nature was in some unexplained way on the side of the Earthlings.

If making them obnoxious was being on their side then certainly Nature was on their side. By the evening of the second day after their arrival nearly everybody who had been in contact with the Earthlings, with the exception of Lychnis, Serpentine and three or four others who had retained something of their ancestral antitoxins, was in a fever with cough, sore throat, aching bones, headache and such physical depression and misery as Utopia had not known for

twenty centuries. The first inhabitant of Utopia to die was that leopard which had sniffed at Mr. Rupert Catskill on his first arrival. It was found unaccountably dead on the second morning after that encounter. In the afternoon of the same day one of the girls who had helped Lady Stella to unpack her bags sickened suddenly and died...

Utopia was even less prepared for the coming of these disease germs than for the coming of the Earthlings who brought them. The monstrous multitude of general and fever hospitals, doctors, drug shops, and so forth that had existed in the Last Age of Confusion had long since passed out of memory; there was a surgical service for accidents and a watch kept upon the health of the young, and there were places of rest at which those who were extremely old were assisted, but there remained scarcely anything of the hygienic organization that had formerly struggled against disease. Abruptly the Utopian intelligence had to take up again a tangle of problems long since solved and set aside, to improvise forgotten apparatus and organizations for disinfection and treatment, and to return to all the disciplines of the war against diseases that had marked an epoch in its history twenty centuries before. In one respect indeed that war had left Utopia with certain permanent advantages. Nearly all the insect disease carriers had been exterminated, and rats and mice and the untidier sorts of small bird had passed out of the problem of sanitation. That set very definite limits to the spread of the new infections and to the nature of the infections that could be spread. It enabled the Earthlings only to communicate such ailments as could be breathed across an interval, or conveyed by a contaminating touch. Though not one of them was ailing at all, it became clear that some one among them had brought latent measles into the Utopian universe, and that three or four of them had liberated a long suppressed influenza. Themselves too tough to suffer, they remained at the focus of these two epidemics, while their victims coughed and sneezed and kissed and whispered them about the Utopian planet. It was not until the afternoon of the second day after the irruption that Utopia realized what had happened, and set itself to deal with this relapse into barbaric solicitudes.

§ 2

Mr. Barnstaple was probably the last of the Earthlings to hear of the epidemic. He was away from the rest of the party upon an expedition of his own.

It was early clear to him that the Utopians did not intend to devote any considerable amount of time or energy to the edification of their Earthling visitors. After the eclaircissement of the afternoon of the irruption there were no further attempts to lecture to the visitors upon the constitution and methods of Utopia and only some very brief questioning upon the earthly state of affairs. The Earthlings were left very much together to talk things out among themselves. Several Utopians were evidently entrusted with their comfort and well-being, but they did not seem to think that their functions extended to edification. Mr. Barnstaple found much to irritate him in the ideas and comments of several of his associates, and so he obeyed his natural inclination to explore Utopia for himself. There was something that stirred his imagination in the vast plain below the lake that he had glimpsed before his aeroplane descended into the valley of the Conference, and on his second morning he had taken a little boat and rowed out across the lake to examine the dam that retained its waters and to get a view of the great plain from the parapet of the dam.

The lake was much wider than he had thought it and the dam much larger. The water was crystalline clear and very cold, and there were but few fish in it. He had come out immediately after his breakfast, but it was near midday before he had got to the parapet of the great dam and could look down the lower valley to the great plain.

The dam was built of huge blocks of red and gold-veined rock, but steps at intervals gave access to the roadway along its crest. The great seated figures which brooded over the distant plain had been put there, it would seem, in a mood of artistic light-heartedness. They sat as if they watched or thought, vast rude shapes, half mountainous, half human. Mr. Barnstaple guessed them to be perhaps two hundred feet high; by pacing the distance between two of them and afterwards counting the number of them, he came to the conclusion that the dam

was between seven and ten miles long. On the far side it dropped sheerly for perhaps five hundred feet, and it was sustained by a series of enormous buttresses that passed almost insensibly into native rock. In the bays between these buttresses hummed great batteries of water turbines, and then, its first task done, the water dropped foaming and dishevelled and gathered in another broad lake retained by a second great dam two miles or so away and perhaps a thousand feet lower. Far away was a third lake and a third dam and then the plain. Only three or four minute-looking Utopians were visible amidst all this Titanic engineering.

Mr. Barnstaple stood, the smallest of objects, in the shadow of a brooding Colossus, and peered over these nearer things at the hazy levels of the plain beyond.

What sort of life was going on there? The relationship of plain to mountain reminded him very strongly of the Alps and the great plain of Northern Italy, down into which he had walked as the climax of many a summer holiday in his youth. In Italy he knew that those distant levels would be covered with clustering towns and villages and carefully irrigated and closely cultivated fields. A dense population would be toiling with an ant-like industry in the production of food; for ever increasing its numbers until those inevitable consequences of overcrowding, disease and pestilence, established a sort of balance between the area of the land and the number of families scraping at it for nourishment. As a toiling man can grow more food than he can actually eat, and as virtuous women can bear more children than the land can possibly employ, a surplus of landless population would be gathered in wen-like towns and cities, engaged there in legal and financial operations against the agriculturalist or in the manufacture of just plausible articles for sale.

Ninety-nine out of every hundred of this population would be concentrated from childhood to old age upon the difficult task which is known as “getting a living.” Amidst it, sustained by a pretence of magical propitiations, would rise shrines and temples, supporting a parasitic host of priests and monks and nuns. Eating and breeding, the simple routines of the common life since human societies began, complications of food-getting, elaborations of acquisitiveness and a tribute paid to fear; such would be the spectacle that any warm and

fertile stretch of earth would still display. There would be gleams of laughter and humour there, brief interludes of holiday, flashes of youth before its extinction in adult toil; but a driven labour, the spite and hates of overcrowding, the eternal uncertainty of destitution, would dominate the scene. Decrepitude would come by sixty; women would be old and worn out by forty. But this Utopian plain below, sunlit and fertile though it was, was under another law. Here that common life of mankind, its ancient traditions, its hoary jests and tales repeated generation after generation, its seasonal festivals, its pious fears and spasmodic indulgences, its limited yet incessant and pitifully childish hoping, and its abounding misery and tragic futility, had come to an end. It had passed for ever out of this older world. That high tide of common living had receded and vanished while the soil was still productive and the sun still shone.

It was with something like awe that Mr. Barnstaple realized how clean a sweep had been made of the common life in a mere score of centuries, how boldly and dreadfully the mind of man had taken hold, soul and body and destiny, of the life and destiny of the race. He knew himself now for the creature of transition he was, so deep in the habits of the old, so sympathetic with the idea of the new that has still but scarcely dawned on earth. For long he had known how intensely he loathed and despised that reeking peasant life which is our past; he realized now for the first time how profoundly he feared the high austere Utopian life which lies before us. This world he looked out upon seemed very clean and dreadful to him. What were they doing upon those distant plains? What daily life did they lead there?

He knew enough of Utopia now to know that the whole land would be like a garden, with every natural tendency to beauty seized upon and developed and every innate ugliness corrected and overcome. These people could work and struggle for loveliness, he knew, for his two rose growers had taught him as much. And to and fro the food folk and the housing people and those who ordered the general life went, keeping the economic machine running so smoothly that one heard nothing of the jangling and jarring and internal breakages that constitute the dominant melody in our Earth's affairs. The ages of economic disputes and experiments had come to

an end; the right way to do things had been found. And the population of this Utopia, which had shrunken at one time to only two hundred million, was now increasing again to keep pace with the constant increase in human resources. Having freed itself from a thousand evils that would otherwise have grown with its growth, the race could grow indeed.

And down there under the blue haze of the great plain almost all those who were not engaged in the affairs of food and architecture, health, education and the correlation of activities, were busied upon creative work; they were continually exploring the world without or the world within, through scientific research and artistic creation. They were continually adding to their collective power over life or to the realized worth of life.

Mr. Barnstaple was accustomed to think of our own world as a wild rush of inventions and knowledge, but all the progress of earth for a hundred years could not compare, he knew, with the forward swing of these millions of associated intelligences in one single year. Knowledge swept forward here and darkness passed as the shadow of a cloud passes on a windy day. Down there they were assaying the minerals that lie in the heart of their planet, and weaving a web to capture the sun and the stars. Life marched here; it was terrifying to think with what strides. Terrifying — because at the back of Mr. Barnstaple's mind, as at the back of so many intelligent minds in our world still, had been the persuasion that presently everything would be known and the scientific process come to an end. And then we should be happy for ever after.

He was not really acclimatized to progress. He had always thought of Utopia as a tranquillity with everything settled for good. Even to-day it seemed tranquil under that level haze, but he knew that this quiet was the steadiness of a mill race, which seems almost motionless in its quiet onrush until a bubble or a fleck of foam or some stick or leaf shoots along it and reveals its velocity.

And how did it feel to be living in Utopia? The lives of the people must be like the lives of very successful artists or scientific workers in this world, a continual refreshing discovery of new things, a constant adventure into the unknown and untried. For recreation they went about their planet, and there was much love and laughter and

friendship in Utopia and an abundant easy informal social life. Games that did not involve bodily exercise, those substitutes of the half-witted for research and mental effort, had gone entirely out of life, but many active games were played for the sake of fun and bodily vigour... It must be a good life for those who had been educated to live it, indeed a most enviable life.

And pervading it all must be the happy sense that it mattered; it went on to endless consequences. And they loved no doubt — subtly and deliciously — but perhaps a little hardly. Perhaps in those distant plains there was not much pity nor tenderness. Bright and lovely beings they were — in no way pitiful. There would be no need for those qualities...

Yet the woman Lychnis looked kind...

Did they keep faith or need to keep faith as earthly lovers do? What was love like in Utopia? Lovers still whispered in the dusk... What was the essence of love? A preference, a sweet pride, a delightful gift won, the most exquisite reassurance of body and mind.

What could it be like to love and be loved by one of these Utopian women? — to have her glowing face close to one's own — to be quickened into life by her kiss?...

Mr. Barnstaple sat in his flannels, bare-footed, in the shadow of a stone Colossus. He felt like some minute stray insect perched upon the big dam. It seemed to him that it was impossible that this triumphant Utopian race could ever fall back again from its magnificent attack upon the dominion of all things. High and tremendously this world had clambered and was still clambering. Surely it was safe now in its attainment. Yet all this stupendous security and mastery of nature had come about in the little space of three thousand years...

The race could not have altered fundamentally in that brief interval. Essentially it was still a stone-age race, it was not twenty thousand years away from the days when it knew nothing of metals and could not read nor write. Deep in its nature, arrested and undeveloped, there still lay the seeds of anger and fear and dissension. There must still be many uneasy and insubordinate spirits in this Utopia. Eugenics had scarcely begun here. He remembered the keen sweet face of the young girl who had spoken to him in the

starlight on the night of his arrival, and the note of romantic eagerness in her voice when she had asked if Lord Barralonga was not a very vigorous and cruel man.

Did the romantic spirit still trouble imaginations here? Possibly only adolescent imaginations.

Might not some great shock or some phase of confusion still be possible to this immense order? Might not its system of education become wearied by its task of discipline and fall a prey to the experimental spirit? Might not the unforeseen be still lying in wait for this race? Suppose there should prove to be an infection in Father Amerton's religious fervour or Rupert Catskill's incurable craving for fantastic enterprises!

No! It was inconceivable. The achievement of this world was too calmly great and assured.

Mr. Barnstaple stood up and made his way down the steps of the great dam to where, far below, his little skiff floated like a minute flower-petal upon the clear water.

§ 3

He became aware of a considerable commotion in the Conference places.

There were more than thirty aeroplanes circling in the air and descending and ascending from the park, and a great number of big white vehicles were coming and going by the pass road. Also people seemed to be moving briskly among the houses, but it was too far off to distinguish what they were doing. He stared for a time and then got into his little boat.

He could not watch what was going on as he returned across the lake because his back was towards the slopes, but once an aeroplane came down very close to him, and he saw its occupant looking at him as he rowed. And once when he rested from rowing and sat round to look he saw what he thought was a litter carried by two men.

As he drew near the shore a boat put off to meet him. He was astonished to see that its occupants were wearing what looked like helmets of glass with white pointed visors. He was enormously

astonished and puzzled.

As they approached their message resonated into his mind. “Quarantine. You have to go into quarantine. You Earthlings have started an epidemic and it is necessary to put you into quarantine.”

Then these glass helmets must be a sort of gas-mask!

When they came alongside him he saw that this was so. They were made of highly flexible and perfectly translucent material...

§ 4

Mr. Barnstaple was taken past some sleeping loggias where Utopians were lying in beds, while others who wore gas-masks waited upon them. He found that all the Earthlings and all their possessions, except their cars, were assembled in the hall of the first day’s Conference. He was told that the whole party were to be removed to a new place where they could be isolated and treated.

The only Utopians with the party were two who wore gas-masks and lounged in the open portico in attitudes disagreeably suggestive of sentries or custodians.

The Earthlings sat about in little groups among the seats, except for Mr. Rupert Catskill, who was walking up and down in the apse talking. He was hatless, flushed and excited, with his hair in some disorder.

“It’s what I foresaw would happen all along,” he repeated. “Didn’t I tell you Nature was on our side? Didn’t I say it?”

Mr. Burleigh was shocked and argumentative. “For the life of me I can’t see the logic of it,” he declared. “Here are we — absolutely the only perfectly immune people here — and we — *we* are to be isolated.”

“They say they catch things from us,” said Lady Stella.

“Very well,” said Mr. Burleigh, making his point with his long white hand. “Very well, then let *them* be isolated! This is — Chinese; this is topsy-turvy. I’m disappointed in them.”

“I suppose it’s their world,” said Mr. Hunker, “and we’ve got to do things their way.”

Mr. Catskill concentrated upon Lord Barralonga and the two

chauffeurs. “I welcome this treatment. I welcome it.”

“What’s your idea, Rupert?” said his lordship. “We lose our freedom of action.”

“Not at all,” said Mr. Catskill. “Not at all. We gain it. We are to be isolated. We are to be put by ourselves in some island or mountain. Well and good. Well and good. This is only the beginning of our adventures. We shall see what we shall see.”

“But how?”

“Wait a little. Until we can speak more freely... These are panic measures. This pestilence is only in its opening stage. Everything is just beginning. Trust me.”

Mr. Barnstaple sat sulkily by his valise, avoiding the challenge of Mr. Catskill’s eye.

II. — THE CASTLE ON THE CRAG

§ 1

The quarantine place to which the Earthlings were taken must have been at a very considerable distance from the place of the Conference, because they were nearly six hours upon their journey, and all the time they were flying high and very swiftly. They were all together in one flying ship; it was roomy and comfortable and could have held perhaps four times as many passengers. They were accompanied by about thirty Utopians in gas-masks, among whom were two women. The aviators wore dresses of a white fleecy substance that aroused the interest and envy of both Miss Grey and Lady Stella. The flying ship passed down the valley and over the great plain and across a narrow sea and another land with a rocky coast and dense forests, and across a great space of empty sea. There was scarcely any shipping to be seen upon this sea at all; it seemed to Mr. Barnstaple that no earthly ocean would be so untravelled; only once or twice did he see very big drifting vessels quite unlike any earthly ships, huge rafts or platforms they seemed to be rather than ships, and once or twice he saw what was evidently a cargo boat — one with rigged masts and sails. And the air was hardly more frequented. After he was out of sight of land he saw only three aeroplanes until the final landfall.

They crossed a rather thickly inhabited, very delightful-looking coastal belt and came over what was evidently a rainless desert country, given over to mining and to vast engineering operations. Far away were very high snowy mountains, but the aeroplane descended before it came to these. For a time the Earthlings were flying over enormous heaps of slaggy accumulations, great mountains of them, that seemed to be derived from a huge well-like excavation that went down into the earth to an unknown depth. A tremendous thunder of machinery came out of this pit and much smoke. Here there were crowds of workers and they seemed to be living in camps among the debris. Evidently the workers came to this place merely for spells of work; there were no signs of homes. The aeroplane of the Earthlings

skirted this region and flew on over a rocky and almost treeless desert deeply cut by steep gorges of the canyon type. Few people were to be seen, but there were abundant signs of engineering activity. Every torrent, every cataract was working a turbine, and great cables followed the cliffs of the gorges and were carried across the desert spaces. In the wider places of the gorges there were pine woods and a fairly abundant vegetation.

The high crag which was their destination stood out, an almost completely isolated headland, in the fork between two convergent canyons. It towered up to a height of perhaps two thousand feet above the foaming clash of the torrents below, a great mass of pale greenish and purple rocks, jagged and buttressed and cleft deeply by joint planes and white crystalline veins. The gorge on one side of it was much steeper than that on the other, it was so overhung indeed as to be darkened like a tunnel, and here within a hundred feet or so of the brow a slender metallic bridge had been flung across the gulf. Some yards above it were projections that might have been the remains of an earlier bridge of stone. Behind, the crag fell steeply for some hundreds of feet to a long slope covered with a sparse vegetation which rose again to the main masses of the mountain, a wall of cliffs with a level top.

It was on this slope that the aeroplane came down alongside of three or four smaller machines. The crag was surmounted by the tall ruins of an ancient castle, within the circle of whose walls clustered a number of buildings which had recently harboured a group of chemical students. Their researches, which had been upon some question of atomic structure quite incomprehensible to Mr. Barnstaple, were finished now and the place had become vacant. Their laboratory was still stocked with apparatus and material; and water and power were supplied to it from higher up the gorge by means of pipes and cables. There was also an abundant store of provisions. A number of Utopians were busily adapting the place to its new purpose of isolation and disinfection when the Earthlings arrived.

Serpentine appeared in the company of a man in a gas-mask whose name was Cedar. This Cedar was a cytologist, and he was in charge of the arrangements for this improvised sanatorium.

Serpentine explained that he himself had flown to the crag in advance, because he understood the equipment of the place and the research that had been going on there, and because his knowledge of the Earthlings and his comparative immunity to their infections made him able to act as an intermediary between them and the medical men who would now take charge of their case. He made these explanations to Mr. Burleigh, Mr. Barnstaple, Lord Barralonga and Mr. Hunker. The other Earthlings stood about in small groups beside the aeroplane from which they had alighted, regarding the castellated summit of the crag, the scrubby bushes of the bleak upland about them and the towering cliffs of the adjacent canyons with no very favourable expressions.

Mr. Catskill had gone apart nearly to the edge of the great canyon, and was standing with his hands behind his back in an attitude almost Napoleonic, lost in thought, gazing down into those sunless depths. The roar of the unseen waters below, now loud, now nearly inaudible, quivered in the air.

Miss Greeta Grey had suddenly produced a Kodak camera; she had been reminded of its existence when packing for this last journey, and she was taking a snapshot of the entire party.

Cedar said that he would explain the method of treatment he proposed to follow, and Lord Barralonga called "Rupert!" to bring Mr. Catskill into the group of Cedar's hearers.

Cedar was as explicit and concise as Urthred had been. It was evident, he said, that the Earthlings were the hosts of a variety of infectious organisms which were kept in check in their bodies by immunizing counter substances, but against which the Utopians had no defences ready and could hope to secure immunity only after a painful and disastrous epidemic. The only way to prevent this epidemic devastating their whole planet indeed, was firstly to gather together and cure all the cases affected, which was being done by converting the Conference Park into a big hospital, and next to take the Earthlings in hand and isolate them absolutely from the Utopians until they could be cleaned of their infections. It was, he confessed, an inhospitable thing to do to the Earthlings, but it seemed the only possible thing to do, to bring them into this peculiarly high and dry desert air and there to devise methods for their complete physical

cleansing. If that was possible it would be done, and then the Earthlings would again be free to go and come as they pleased in Utopia.

"But suppose it is not possible?" said Mr. Catskill abruptly.

"I think it will be."

"But if you fail?"

Cedar smiled at Serpentine. "Physical research is taking up the work in which Arden and Greenlake were foremost, and it will not be long before we are able to repeat their experiment. And then to reverse it."

"With us as your raw material?"

"Not until we are fairly sure of a safe landing for you."

"You mean," said Mr. Mush, who had joined the circle about Cedar and Serpentine, "that you are going to send us back?"

"If we cannot keep you," said Cedar, smiling.

"Delightful prospect!" said Mr. Mush unpleasantly. "To be shot across space in a gun. Experimentally."

"And may I ask," came the voice of Father Amerton, "may I ask the nature of this *treatment* of yours, these experiments of which we are to be the — guinea pigs, so to speak. Is it to be anything in the nature of vaccination?"

"Injections," explained Mr. Barnstaple.

"I have hardly decided yet," said Cedar. "The problem raises questions this world has forgotten for ages."

"I may say at once that I am a confirmed anti-vaccinationist," said Father Amerton. "Absolutely. Vaccination is an outrage on nature. If I had any doubts before I came into this world of — of *vitiation*, I have no doubts now. Not a doubt! If God had meant us to have these serums and ferments in our bodies he would have provided more natural and dignified means of getting them there than a squirt."

Cedar did not discuss the point. He went on to further apologies. For a time he must ask the Earthlings to keep within certain limits, to confine themselves to the crag and the slopes below it as far as the mountain cliffs. And further, it was impossible to set young people to attend to them as had hitherto been done. They must cook for themselves and see to themselves generally. The appliances were all to be found above upon the crest of the crag and he and Serpentine

would make any explanations that were needful. They would find there was ample provision for them.

"Then are we to be left alone here?" asked M. Catskill.

"For a time. When we have our problem clearer we will come again and tell you what we mean to do."

"Good," said Mr. Catskill. "Good."

"I wish I hadn't sent my maid by train," said Lady Stella.

"I have come to my last clean collar," said M. Dupont with a little humorous grimace. "It is no joke this week-end with Lord Barralonga."

Lord Barralonga turned suddenly to his particular minion. "I believe that Ridley has the makings of a very good cook."

"I don't mind trying my hand," said Ridley. "I've done most things — and once I used to look after a steam car."

"A man who can keep one of those — those things in order can do anything," said Mr. Penk with unusual emotion. "I've no objection to being a temporary general utility along of Mr. Ridley. I began my career in the pantry and I ain't ashamed to own it."

"If this gentleman will show us the gadgets," said Mr. Ridley, indicating Serpentine.

"Exactly," said Mr. Penk.

"And if all of us give as little trouble as possible," said Miss Greeta bravely.

"I think we shall be able to manage," said Mr. Burleigh to Cedar. "If at first you can spare us a little advice and help."

§ 2

Cedar and Serpentine remained with the Earthlings upon Quarantine Crag until late in the afternoon. They helped to prepare a supper and set it out in the courtyard of the castle. They departed with a promise to return on the morrow, and the Earthlings watched them and their accompanying aeroplanes soar up into the sky.

Mr. Barnstaple was surprised to find himself distressed at their going. He had a feeling that mischief was brewing amongst his companions and that the withdrawal of these Utopians removed a

check upon this mischief. He had helped Lady Stella in the preparation of an omelette; he had to carry back a dish and a frying-pan to the kitchen after it was served, so that he was the last to seat himself at the supper-table. He found the mischief he dreaded well afoot.

Mr. Catskill had finished his supper already and was standing with his foot upon a bench orating to the rest of the company.

"I ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen," Mr. Catskill was saying; "I ask you: Is not Destiny writ large upon this day's adventure? Not for nothing was this place a fortress in ancient times. Here it is ready to be a fortress again. M'm — a fortress... In such an adventure as will make the stories of Cortez and Pizarro pale their ineffectual fires!"

"My dear Rupert!" cried Mr. Burleigh. "What have you got in that head of yours now?"

Mr. Catskill waved two fingers dramatically. "The conquest of a world!"

"Good God!" cried Mr. Barnstaple. "Are you mad?"

"As Clive," said Mr. Catskill, "or Sultan Baber when he marched to Panipat."

"It's a tall proposition," said Mr. Hunker, who seemed to have had his mind already prepared for these suggestions, "but I'm inclined to give it a hearing. The alternative so far as I can figure it out is to be scoured and whitewashed inside and out and then fired back into our own world — with a chance of hitting something hard on the way. You tell them, Mr. Catskill."

"Tell them," said Lord Barralonga, who had also been prepared. "It's a gamble, I admit. But there's situations when one has to gamble — or be gambled with. I'm all for the active voice."

"It's a gamble — certainly," said Mr. Catskill. "But upon this narrow peninsula, upon this square mile or so of territory, the fate, Sir, of two universes awaits decision. This is no time for the faint heart and the paralyzing touch of discretion. Plan swiftly — act swiftly..."

"This is simply *thrilling*!" cried Miss Greeta Grey clasping her hands about her knees and smiling radiantly at Mr. Mush.

"These people," Mr. Barnstaple interrupted, "are three thousand years ahead of us. We are like a handful of Hottentots in a

showman's van at Earl's Court, planning the conquest of London."

Mr. Catskill, hands on hips, turned with extraordinary good humour upon Mr. Barnstaple. "Three thousand years away from us — *yes*! Three thousand years ahead of us — *no*! That is where you and I join issue. You say these people are super-men. M'm — super-men... I say they are degenerate men. Let me call your attention to my reasons for this belief — in spite of their beauty, their very considerable material and intellectual achievements and so forth. Ideal people, I admit... What then?... My case is that they have reached a summit — and passed it, that they are going on by inertia and that they have lost the power not only of resistance to disease — that weakness we shall see develop more and more — but also of meeting strange and distressing emergencies. They are gentle. Altogether too gentle. They are ineffectual. They do not know what to do. Here is Father Amerton. He disturbed that first meeting in the most insulting way. (You know you did, Father Amerton. I'm not blaming you. You are morally — sensitive. And there were things to outrage you.) He was threatened — as a little boy is threatened by a feeble old woman. Something was to be done to him. Has anything been done to him?"

"A man and a woman came and talked to me," said Father Amerton.

"And what did you do?"

"Simply confuted them. Lifted up my voice and confuted them."

"What did they say?"

"What *could* they say?"

"We all thought tremendous things were going to be done to poor Father Amerton. Well, and now take a graver case. Our friend Lord Barralonga ran amuck with his car — and killed a man. M'm. Even at home they'd have endorsed your licence you know. And fined your man. But here?... The thing has scarcely been mentioned since. Why? Because they don't know what to say about it or do about it. And now they have put us here and begged us to be good. Until they are ready to come and try experiments upon us and inject things into us and I don't know what. And if we submit, Sir, if we submit, we lose one of our greatest powers over these people, our power of at once giving and resisting malaise, and in addition, I know not what

powers of initiative that may very well be associated with that physiological toughness of which we are to be robbed. They may trifle with our ductless glands. But science tells us that these very glands secrete our personalities. Mentally, morally we shall be dissolved. If we submit, Sir — if we submit. But suppose we do not submit; what then?"

"Well," said Lord Barralonga, "what then?"

"They will not know what to do. Do not be deceived by any outward shows of beauty and prosperity. These people are living, as the ancient Peruvians were living in the time of Pizarro, in an enervating dream. They have drunken the debilitating draught of Socialism and, as in ancient Peru, there is no health nor power of will left in them any more. A handful of resolute men and women who can dare — may not only dare but triumph in the face of such a world. And thus it is I lay my plans before you."

"You mean to jump this entire Utopian planet?" said Mr. Hunker.

"Big order," said Lord Barralonga.

"I mean, Sir, to assert the rights of a more vigorous form of social life over a less vigorous form of social life. Here we are — in a fortress. It is a real fortress and quite defensible. While you others have been unpacking, Barralonga and Hunker and I have been seeing to that. There is a sheltered well so that if need arises we can get water from the canyon below. The rock is excavated into chambers and shelters; the wall on the land side is sound and high, glazed so that it cannot be scaled. This great archway can easily be barricaded when the need arises. Steps go down through the rock to that little bridge which can if necessary be cut away. We have not yet explored all the excavations. In Mr. Hunker we have a chemist — he was a chemist before the movie picture claimed him as its master — and he says there is ample material in the laboratory for a store of bombs. This party, I find, can muster five revolvers with ammunition. I scarcely dared hope for that. We have food for many days."

"Oh! This is ridiculous!" cried Mr. Barnstaple standing up and then sitting down again. "This is preposterous! To turn on these friendly people! But they can blow this little headland to smithereens whenever they want to."

"Ah!" said Mr. Catskill and held him with his outstretched finger.

“We’ve thought of that. But we can take a leaf from the book of Cortez — who, in the very centre of Mexico, held Montezuma as his prisoner and hostage. We too will have our hostage. Before we lift a finger — . First our hostage...”

“Aerial bombs!”

“Is there such a thing in Utopia? Or such an idea? And again — we must have our hostage.”

“Somebody of importance,” said Mr. Hunker.

“Cedar and Serpentine are both important people,” said Mr. Burleigh in tones of disinterested observation.

“But surely, Sir, you do not countenance this schoolboy’s dream of piracy!” cried Mr. Barnstaple, sincerely shocked.

“Schoolboys!” cried Father Amerton. “A cabinet minister, a peer and a great entrepreneur!”

“My dear Sir,” said Mr. Burleigh, “we are, after all, only envisaging eventualities. For the life of me, I do not see why we should not thresh out these possibilities. Though I pray to Heaven we may never have to realize them. You were saying, Rupert — ?”

“We have to establish ourselves here and assert our independence and make ourselves *felt* by these Utopians.”

“‘Ear, ‘ear!” said Mr. Ridley cordially. “One or two I’d like to make feel personally.”

“We have to turn this prison into a capitol, into the first foothold of mankind in this world. It is like a foot thrust into a reluctant door that must never more close upon our race.”

“It is closed,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “Except by the mercy of these Utopians we shall never see our world again. And even with their mercy, it is doubtful.”

“That’s been keeping me awake nights,” said Mr. Hunker.

“It’s an idea that must have occurred to all of us,” said Mr. Burleigh.

“And it’s an idea that’s so thundering disagreeable that one hasn’t cared to talk about it,” said Lord Barralonga.

“I never ‘ad it until this moment,” said Penk. “You don’t reely mean to say, Sir, *we can’t get back*?”

“Things will be as they will be,” said Mr. Burleigh. “That is why I am anxious to hear Mr. Catskill’s ideas.”

Mr. Catskill rested his hands on his hips and his manner became very solemn. “For once,” he said, “I am in agreement with Mr. Barnaby. I believe that the chances are *against* our ever seeing the dear cities of our world again.”

“I felt that,” said Lady Stella, with white lips. “I *knew* that two days ago.”

“And so behold my week-end expand to an eternity!” said M. Dupont, and for a time no one said another word.

“It’s as if—” Penk said at last. “Why! One might be dead!”

“But I *murst* be back,” Miss Greeta Grey broke out abruptly, as one who sets aside a foolish idea. “It’s absurd. I have to go on at the Alhambra on September the 2nd. It’s imperative. We came here quite easily; it’s ridiculous to say I can’t go back in the same way.”

Lord Barralonga regarded her with affectionate malignity. “You wait,” he said.

“But I murst!” she sang.

“There’s such things as impossibilities — even for Miss Greeta Grey.”

“Charter a special aeroplane!” she said. “Anything.”

He regarded her with an elfin grin and shook his head.

“My dear man,” she said, “you’ve only seen me in a holiday mood, so far. Work is serious.”

“My dear girl, that Alhambra of yours is about as far from us now as the Court of King Nebuchadnezzar... It can’t be done.”

“But it *murst*,” she said in her queenly way. “And that’s all about it.”

§ 3

Mr. Barnstaple got up from the table and walked apart to where a gap in the castle wall gave upon the darkling wilderness without. He sat down there. His eyes went from the little group talking around the supper table to the sunlit crest of the cliffs across the canyon and to the wild and lonely mountain slopes below the headland. In this world he might have to live out the remainder of his days.

And those days might not be very numerous if Mr. Catskill had

his way. Sydenham, and his wife and the boys were indeed as far— "as the Court of King Nebuchadnezzar."

He had scarcely given his family a thought since he had posted his letter at Victoria. Now he felt a queer twinge of desire to send them some word or token — if only he could. Queer that they would never hear from him or of him again! How would they get on without him? Would there be any difficulty about the account at the bank? Or about the insurance money? He had always intended to have a joint and several account with his wife at the bank, and he had never quite liked to do it. Joint and several... A thing every man ought to do... His attention came back to Mr. Catskill unfolding his plans.

"We have to make up our minds to what may be a prolonged, a very prolonged stay here. Do not let us deceive ourselves upon that score. It may last for years — it may last for generations."

Something struck Penk in that. "I don't 'ardly see," he said, "how that can be — *generations*?"

"I am coming to that," said Mr. Catskill.

"Un'appily," said Mr. Penk, and became profoundly restrained and thoughtful with his eyes on Lady Stella.

"We have to remain, a little alien community, in this world until we dominate it, as the Romans dominated the Greeks, and until we master its science and subdue it to our purpose. That may mean a long struggle. It may mean a very long struggle indeed. And meanwhile we must maintain ourselves as a community; we must consider ourselves a colony, a garrison, until that day of reunion comes. We must hold our hostages, Sir, and not only our hostages. It may be necessary for our purpose, and if it is necessary for our purpose, so be it — to get in others of these Utopians, to catch them young, before this so-called education of theirs unfits them for our purpose, to train them in the great traditions of our Empire and our race."

Mr. Hunker seemed on the point of saying something but refrained.

M. Dupont got up sharply from the table, walked four paces away, returned and stood still, watching Mr. Catskill.

"Generations?" said Mr. Penk.

"Yes," said Mr. Catskill. "Generations. For here we are strangers

— strangers, like that other little band of adventurers who established their citadel five-and-twenty centuries ago upon the Capitol beside the rushing Tiber. This is our Capitol. A greater Capitol — of a greater Rome — in a vaster world. And like that band of Roman adventurers we too may have to reinforce our scanty numbers at the expense of the Sabines about us, and take to ourselves servants and helpers and — *mates*! No sacrifice is too great for the high possibilities of this adventure."

M. Dupont seemed to nerve himself for the sacrifice.

"Duly married," injected Father Amerton.

"Duly married," said Mr. Catskill in parenthesis. "And so, Sir, we will hold out here and maintain ourselves and dominate this desert countryside and spread our prestige and our influence and our spirit into the inert body of this decadent Utopian world. Until at last we are able to master the secret that Arden and Greenlake were seeking and recover the way back to our own people, opening to the crowded millions of our Empire—"

§ 4

"Just a moment," said Mr. Hunker. "Just a moment! About this empire — !"

"Exactly," said M. Dupont, recalled abruptly from some romantic day- dream. "About your Empire — !"

Mr. Catskill regarded them thoughtfully and defensively. "When I say Empire I mean it in the most general sense."

"Exactly," snapped M. Dupont.

"I was thinking generally of our — Atlantic civilization."

"Before, Sir, you go on to talk of Anglo-Saxon unity and the English- speaking race," said M. Dupont, with a rising note of bitterness in his voice, "permit me to remind you, Sir, of one very important fact that you seem to be overlooking. The language of Utopia, Sir, is French. I want to remind you of that. I want to recall it to your mind. I will lay no stress here on the sacrifices and martyrdoms that France has endured in the cause of Civilization—"

The voice of Mr. Burleigh interrupted. "A very natural

misconception. But, if you will pardon the correction, the language of Utopia is *not* French."

Of course, Mr. Barnstaple reflected, M. Dupont had not heard the explanation of the language difficulty.

"Permit me, Sir, to believe the evidence of my own ears," the Frenchman replied with dignified politeness. "These Utopians, I can assure you, speak French and nothing but French — and very excellent French it is."

"They speak no language at all," said Mr. Burleigh.

"Not even English?" sneered M. Dupont.

"Not even English."

"Not League of Nations, perhaps? But — Bah! Why do I argue? They speak French. Not even a Bosch would deny it. It needs an Englishman—"

A beautiful wrangle, thought Mr. Barnstaple. There was no Utopian present to undeceive M. Dupont and he stuck to his belief magnificently. With a mixture of pity and derision and anger, Mr. Barnstaple listened to this little band of lost human beings, in the twilight of a vast, strange and possibly inimical world, growing more and more fierce and keen in a dispute over the claims of their three nations to "dominate" Utopia, claims based entirely upon greeds and misconceptions. Their voices rose to shouts and sank to passionate intensity as their life-long habits of national egotism reasserted themselves. Mr. Hunker would hear nothing of any "Empire"; M. Dupont would hear of nothing but the supreme claim of France. Mr. Catskill twisted and turned. To Mr. Barnstaple this conflict of patriotic prepossessions seemed like a dog-fight on a sinking ship. But at last Mr. Catskill, persistent and ingenious, made headway against his two antagonists.

He stood at the end of the table explaining that he had used the word Empire loosely, apologizing for using it, explaining that when he said Empire he had all Western Civilization in mind. "When I said it," he said, turning to Mr. Hunker, "I meant a common brotherhood of understanding." He faced towards M. Dupont. "I meant our tried and imperishable Entente."

"There are at least no Russians here," said M. Dupont. "And no Germans."

“True,” said Lord Barralonga. “We start ahead of the Hun here, and we can keep ahead.”

“And I take it,” said Mr. Hunker, “that Japanese are barred.”

“No reason why we shouldn’t start clean with a complete colour bar,” reflected Lord Barralonga. “This seems to me a White Man’s World.”

“At the same time,” said M. Dupont, coldly and insistently, “you will forgive me if I ask you for some clearer definition of our present relationship and for some guarantee, some effective guarantee, that the immense sacrifices France has made and still makes in the cause of civilized life, will receive their proper recognition and their due reward in this adventure...

“I ask only for justice,” said M. Dupont.

§ 5

Indignation made Mr. Barnstaple bold. He got down from his perch upon the wall and came up to the table.

“Are you mad,” he said, “or am I?

“This squabble over flags and countries and fanciful rights and deserts — it is hopeless folly. Do you not realize even now the position we are in?”

His breath failed him for a moment and then he resumed.

“Are you incapable of thinking of human affairs except in terms of flags and fighting and conquest and robbery? Cannot you realize the proportion of things and the quality of this world into which we have fallen? As I have said already, we are like some band of savages in a show at Earl’s Court, plotting the subjugation of London. We are like suppressed cannibals in the heart of a great city dreaming of a revival of our ancient and forgotten filthiness. What are our chances in this fantastic struggle?”

Mr. Ridley spoke reprovingly. “You’re forgetting everythink you just been told. Everythink. ‘Arf their population is laid out with flu and measles. And there’s no such thing as a ‘ealthy fighting will left in all Utopia.”

“Precisely,” said Mr. Catskill.

“Well, suppose you have chances? If that makes your scheme the more hopeful, it also makes it the more horrible. Here we are lifted up out of the troubles of our time to a vision, to a reality of civilization such as our own world can only hope to climb to in scores of centuries! Here is a world at peace, splendid, happy, full of wisdom and hope! If our puny strength and base cunning can contrive it, we are to shatter it all! We are proposing to wreck a world! I tell you it is not an adventure. It is a crime. It is an abomination. I will have no part in it. I am against you in this attempt.”

Father Amerton would have spoken but Mr. Burleigh arrested him by a gesture.

“What would *you* have us do?” asked Mr. Burleigh.

“Submit to their science. Learn what we can from them. In a little while we may be cured of our inherent poisons and we may be permitted to return from this outlying desert of mines and turbines and rock, to those gardens of habitation we have as yet scarcely seen. There we too may learn something of civilization... In the end we may even go back to our own disordered world — with knowledge, with hope and help, missionaries of a new order.”

“But why — ?” began Father Amerton.

Again Mr. Burleigh took the word. “Everything you say,” he remarked, “rests on unproven assumptions. You choose to see this Utopia through rose- tinted glasses. We others — for it is” — he counted— “eleven to one against you — see things without such favourable preconceptions.”

“And may I ask, Sir,” said Father Amerton, springing to his feet and hitting the table a blow that set all the glasses talking. “May I ask, who *you* are, to set yourself up as a judge and censor of the common opinion of mankind? For I tell you, Sir, that here in this lonely and wicked and strange world, we here, we twelve, do represent mankind. We are the advance guard, the pioneers — in the new world that God has given us, even as He gave Canaan to Israel His chosen, three thousand years ago. Who are *you*—”

“Exactly,” said Penk. “Who are you?”

And Mr. Ridley reinforced him with a shout: “Oo the ‘ell are *you*?”

Mr. Barnstaple had no platform skill to meet so direct an attack. He stood helpless. Astonishingly Lady Stella came to his rescue.

"That isn't fair, Father Amerton," she said. "Mr. Bastaple, whoever he is, has a perfect right to express his own opinion."

"And having expressed it," said Mr. Catskill, who had been walking up and down on the other side of the table to that on which Mr. Barnstaple stood, "M'm, having expressed it, to allow us to proceed with the business in hand. I suppose it was inevitable that we should find the conscientious objector in our midst — even in Utopia. The rest of us, I take it, are very much of one mind about our situation."

"We are," said Mr. Mush, regarding Mr. Barnstaple with a malevolent expression.

"Very well. Then I suppose we must follow the precedents established for such cases. We will not ask Mr. — Mr. Bastaple to share the dangers — and the honours — of a combatant. We will ask him merely to do civilian work of a helpful nature—"

Mr. Barnstaple held up his hand. "No," he said. "I am not disposed to be helpful. I do not recognize the analogy of the situation to the needs of the Great War, and, anyhow, I am entirely opposed to this project — this brigandage of a civilization. You cannot call me a conscientious objector to fighting, because I do not object to fighting in a just cause. But this adventure of yours is not a just cause... I implore you, Mr. Burleigh, you who are not merely a politician, but a man of culture and a philosopher, to reconsider what it is we are being urged towards — towards acts of violence and mischief from which there will be no drawing back!"

"Mr. Barnstaple," said Mr. Burleigh with grave dignity and something like a note of reproach in his voice, "I *have* considered. But I think I may venture to say that I am a man of some experience, some traditional experience, in human affairs. I may not altogether agree with my friend Mr. Catskill. Nay! I will go further and say that in many respects I do *not* agree with him. If I were the autocrat here I would say that we have to offer these Utopians resistance — for our self-respect — but not to offer them the violent and aggressive resistance that he contemplates. I think we could be far more subtle, far more elaborate, and far more successful than Mr. Catskill is likely

to be. But that is my own opinion. Neither Mr. Hunker nor Lord Barralonga, nor Mr. Mush, nor M. Dupont shares it. Nor do Mr. — our friends, the ah! — technical engineers here share it. And what I do perceive to be imperative upon our little band of Earthlings, lost here in a strange universe, is unity of action. Whatever else betide, dissension must not betray us. We must hold together and act together as one body. Discuss if you will, when there is any time for discussion, but in the end *decide*. And having decided abide loyally by the decision. Upon the need of securing a hostage or two I have no manner of doubt whatever. Mr. Catskill is right."

Mr. Barnstaple was a bad debater. "But these Utopians are as human as we are," he said. "All that is most sane and civilized in ourselves is with them."

Mr. Ridley interrupted in a voice designedly rough. "Oh Lord!" he said. "We can't go on jawing 'ere for ever. It's sunset, and Mr. — this gentleman 'as 'ad 'is say, and more than 'is say. We ought to have our places and know what is expected of us before night. May I propose that we elect Mr. Catskill our Captain with full military powers?"

"I second that," said Mr. Burleigh with grave humility.

"Perhaps M. Dupont," said Mr. Catskill, "will act with me as associated Captain, representing our glorious ally, his own great country."

"In the absence of a more worthy representative," acquiesced M. Dupont, "and to see that French interests are duly respected."

"And if Mr. Hunker would act as my lieutenant?... Lord Barralonga will be our quartermaster and Father Amerton our chaplain and censor. Mr. Burleigh, it goes without saying, will be our civil head."

Mr. Hunker coughed. He frowned with the expression of one who makes a difficult explanation. "I won't be exactly lieutenant," he said. "I'll take no official position. I've a sort of distaste for — foreign entanglements. I'll be a looker-on — who helps. But I think you will find you can count on me, Gentlemen — when help is needed."

Mr. Catskill seated himself at the head of the table and indicated the chair next to his for M. Dupont. Miss Greeta Grey seated herself

on his other hand between him and Mr. Hunker. Mr. Burleigh remained in his place, a chair or so from Mr. Hunker. The rest came and stood round the Captain except Lady Stella and Mr. Barnstaple.

Almost ostentatiously Mr. Barnstaple turned his back on the new command. Lady Stella, he saw, remained seated far down the table, looking dubiously at the little crowd of people at the end. Then her eyes went to the desolate mountain crest beyond.

She shivered violently and stood up. “It’s going to be very cold here after sunset,” she said, with nobody heeding her. “I shall go and unpack a wrap.”

She walked slowly to her quarters and did not reappear.

§ 6

Mr. Barnstaple did not want to seem to listen to this Council of War. He walked to the wall of the old castle and up a flight of stone steps and along the rampart to the peak of the headland. Here the shattering and beating sound of the waters in the two convergent canyons was very loud.

There was still a bright upper rim of sunlit rock on the mountain face behind, but all the rest of the world was now in a deepening blue shadow, and a fleecy white mist was gathering in the canyons below and hiding the noisy torrents. It drifted up almost to the level of the little bridge that spanned the narrower canyon to a railed stepway from the crest on the further side. For the first time since he had arrived in Utopia Mr. Barnstaple felt a chill in the air. And loneliness like a pain.

Up the broader of the two meeting canyons some sort of engineering work was going on and periodic flashes lit the drifting mist. Far away over the mountains a solitary aeroplane, very high, caught the sun’s rays ever and again and sent down quivering flashes of dazzling golden light, and then, as it wheeled about, vanished again in the deepening blue.

He looked down into the great courtyard of the ancient castle below him. The modern buildings in the twilight looked like phantom pavilions amidst the archaic masonry. Someone had

brought a light, and Captain Rupert Catskill, the new Cortez, was writing orders, while his Commando stood about him.

The light shone on the face and shoulders and arms of Miss Greeta Grey; she was peering over the Captain's arm to see what he was writing. And as Mr. Barnstaple looked he saw her raise her hand suddenly to conceal an involuntary yawn.

III. — MR. BARNSTAPLE AS A TRAITOR TO MANKIND

§ 1

Mr. Barnstaple spent a large part of the night sitting upon his bed and brooding over the incalculable elements of the situation in which he found himself.

What could he do? What ought he to do? Where did his loyalty lie? The dark traditions and infections of the Earth had turned this wonderful encounter into an ugly and dangerous antagonism far too swiftly for him to adjust his mind to the new situation. Before him now only two possibilities seemed open. Either the Utopians would prove themselves altogether the stronger and the wiser and he and all his fellow pirates would be crushed and killed like vermin, or the desperate ambitions of Mr. Catskill would be realized and they would become a spreading sore in the fair body of this noble civilization, a band of robbers and destroyers, dragging Utopia year by year and age by age back to terrestrial conditions. There seemed only one escape from the dilemma; to get away from this fastness to the Utopians, to reveal the whole scheme of the Earthlings to them, and to throw himself and his associates upon their mercy. But this must be done soon, before the hostages were seized and bloodshed began.

But in the first place it might be very difficult now to get away from the Earthling band. Mr. Catskill would already have organized watchers and sentinels, and the peculiar position of the crag exposed every avenue of escape. And in the next place Mr. Barnstaple had a life-long habit of mind which predisposed him against tale-bearing and dissentient action. His school training had moulded him into subservience to any group or gang in which he found himself; his form, his side, his house, his school, his club, his party and so forth. Yet his intelligence and his limitless curiosities had always been opposed to these narrow conspiracies against the world at large. His spirit had made him an uncomfortable rebel throughout his whole earthly existence. He loathed political parties and political leaders, he

despised and rejected nationalism and imperialism and all the tawdry loyalties associated with them; the aggressive conqueror, the grabbing financier, the shoving business man, he hated as he hated wasps, rats, hyenas, sharks, fleas, nettles and the like: all his life he had been a citizen of Utopia exiled upon Earth. After his fashion he had sought to serve Utopia. Why should he not serve Utopia now? Because his band was a little and desperate band, that was no reason why he should serve the things he hated. If they were a desperate crew, the fact remained that they were also, as a whole, an evil crew. There is no reason why liberalism should degenerate into a morbid passion for minorities...

Only two persons among the Earthlings, Lady Stella and Mr. Burleigh, held any of his sympathy. And he had his doubts about Mr. Burleigh. Mr. Burleigh was one of those strange people who seem to understand everything and feel nothing. He impressed Mr. Barnstaple as being intelligently irresponsible. Wasn't that really more evil than being unintelligently adventurous like Hunker or Barralonga?

Mr. Barnstaple's mind returned from a long excursion in ethics to the realities about him. To-morrow he would survey the position and make his plans, and perhaps in the twilight he would slip away.

It was entirely in his character to defer action in this way for the better part of the day. His life had been one of deferred action almost from the beginning.

§ 2

But events could not wait for Mr. Barnstaple.

He was called at dawn by Penk, who told him that henceforth the garrison would be aroused every morning by an electric hooter he and Ridley had contrived. As Penk spoke a devastating howl from this contrivance inaugurated the new era. He handed Mr. Barnstaple a slip of paper torn from a note-book on which Mr. Catskill had written: —

"Non-comb. Barnaby. To assist Ridley prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner, times and menu on mess-room wall, clear away and wash

up smartly and at other times to be at disposal of Lt. Hunker, in chemical laboratory for experimenting and bomb-making. Keep laboratory clean."

"That's your job," said Penk. "Ridley's waitin' for you."

"Well," said Mr. Barnstaple, and got up. It was no use precipitating a quarrel if he was to escape. So he went to the scarred and bandaged Ridley, and they produced a very good imitation of a British military kitchen in that great raw year, 1914.

Everyone was turned out to breakfast at half-past six by a second solo on the hooter. The men were paraded and inspected by Mr. Catskill, with M. Dupont standing beside him; Mr. Hunker stood parallel with these two and a few yards away; all the other men fell in except Mr. Burleigh, who was to be civil commander in Utopia, and was, in that capacity, in bed, and Mr. Barnstaple the non-combatant. Miss Greeta Grey and Lady Stella sat in a sunny corner of the courtyard sewing at a flag. It was to be a blue flag with a white star, a design sufficiently unlike any existing national flag to avoid wounding the patriotic susceptibilities of any of the party. It was to represent the Earthling League of Nations.

After the parade the little garrison dispersed to its various posts and duties, M. Dupont assumed the chief command, and Mr. Catskill, who had watched all night, went to lie down. He had the Napoleonic quality of going off to sleep for an hour or so at any time in the day.

Mr. Penk went up to the top of the castle, where the hooter was installed, to keep a look out.

There were some moments to be snatched between the time when Mr. Barnstaple had finished with Ridley and the time when Hunker would discover his help was available, and this time he devoted to an inspection of the castle wall on the side of the slopes. While he was standing on the old rampart weighing his chances of slipping away that evening in the twilight, an aeroplane appeared above the crag and came down upon the nearer slope. Two Utopians descended, talked with their aviator for a time, and then turned their faces towards the fastness of the Earthlings.

A single note of the hooter brought out Mr. Catskill upon the rampart beside Mr. Barnstaple. He produced a field-glass and

surveyed the approaching figures.

"Serpentine and Cedar," he said, lowering his field-glass. "And they come alone. Good."

He turned round and signalled with his hand to Penk, who responded with two short whoops of his instrument. This was the signal for a general assembly.

Down below in the courtyard appeared the rest of the Allied force and Mr. Hunker and fell in with a reasonable imitation of discipline.

Mr. Catskill passed Mr. Barnstaple without taking any notice of him, joined M. Dupont, Mr. Hunker and their subordinates below and proceeded to instruct them in his plans for the forthcoming crisis. Mr. Barnstaple could not hear what was said. He noted with sardonic disapproval that each man, as Mr. Catskill finished with him, clicked his heels together and saluted. Then at a word of command they dispersed to their posts.

There was a partly ruined flight of steps leading down from the general level of the courtyard through this great archway in the wall that gave access to and from the slopes below. Ridley and Mush went down to the right of these steps and placed themselves below a projecting mass of masonry so as to be hidden from anyone approaching from below. Father Amerton and Mr. Hunker concealed themselves similarly to the left. Father Amerton, Mr. Barnstaple noted, had been given a coil of rope, and then his roving eye discovered Mr. Mush glancing at a pistol in his hand and then replacing it in his pocket. Lord Barralonga took up a position for himself some steps above Mr. Mush and produced a revolver which he held in his one efficient hand. Mr. Catskill remained at the head of the stairs. He also was holding a revolver. He turned to the citadel, considered the case of Penk for a moment, and then motioned him down to join the others. M. Dupont, armed with a stout table leg, placed himself at Mr. Catskill's right hand.

For a time Mr. Barnstaple watched these dispositions without any realization of their significance. Then his eyes went from the crouching figures within the castle to the two unsuspecting Utopians who were coming up towards them, and he realized that in a couple of minutes Serpentine and Cedar would be struggling in the grip of their captors...

He perceived he had to act. And his had been a contemplative, critical life with no habit of decision.

He found himself trembling violently.

§ 3

He still desired some mediatory intervention even in these fatal last moments. He raised an arm and cried “Hi!” as much to the Earthlings below as to the Utopians without. No one noticed either his gesture or his feeble cry.

Then his will seemed to break through a tangle of obstacles to one simple idea. Serpentine and Cedar must not be seized. He was amazed and indignant at his own vacillation. Of course they must not be seized! This foolery must be thwarted forthwith. In four strides he was on the wall above the archway and now he was shouting loud and clear. “Danger!” he shouted. “Danger!” and again “Danger!”

He heard Catskill’s cry of astonishment and then a pistol bullet whipped through the air close to him.

Serpentine stopped short and looked up, touched Cedar’s arm and pointed.

“These Earthlings want to imprison you. Don’t come here! Danger!” yelled Mr. Barnstaple waving his arms and “pat, pat, pat,” Mr. Catskill experienced the disappointments of revolver shooting.

Serpentine and Cedar were turning back — but slowly and hesitatingly.

For a moment Mr. Catskill knew not what to do. Then he flung himself down the steps, crying, “After them! Stop them! Come on!”

“Go back!” cried Mr. Barnstaple to the Utopians. “Go back! Quickly! Quickly!”

Came a clatter of feet from below and then the eight men who constituted the combatant strength of the Earthling forces in Utopia emerged from under the archway running towards the two astonished Utopians. Mr. Mush led, with Ridley at his heels; he was pointing his revolver and shouting. Next came M. Dupont zealous and active. Father Amerton brought up the rear with the rope.

“Go back!” screamed Mr. Barnstaple, with his voice breaking.

Then he stopped shouting and watched — with his hands clenched.

The aviator was running down the slope from his machine to the assistance of Serpentine and Cedar. And above out of the blue two other aeroplanes had appeared.

The two Utopians disdained to hurry and in a few seconds their pursuers had come up with them. Hunker, Ridley and Mush led the attack. M. Dupont, flourishing his stick, was abreast with them but running out to the right as though he intended to get between them and the aviator. Mr. Catskill and Penk were a little behind the leading three; the one-armed Barralonga was perhaps ten yards behind and Father Amerton had halted to re-coil his rope more conveniently.

There seemed to be a moment's parley and then Serpentine had moved quickly as if to seize Hunker. A pistol cracked and then another went off rapidly three times. "Oh God!" cried Mr. Barnstaple. "Oh God!" as he saw Serpentine throw up his arms and fall backward, and then Cedar had grasped and lifted up Mush and hurled him at Mr. Catskill and Penk, bowling both of them over into one indistinguishable heap. With a wild cry M. Dupont closed in on Cedar but not quickly enough. His club shot into the air as Cedar parried his blow, and then the Utopian stooped, caught him by a leg, overthrew him, lifted him and whirled him round as one might whirl a rabbit, to inflict a stunning blow on Mr. Hunker.

Lord Barralonga ran back some paces and began shooting at the approaching aviator.

The confusion of legs and arms on the ground became three separate people again. Mr. Catskill shouting directions, made for Cedar, followed by Penk and Mush and, a moment after by Hunker and Dupont. They clung to Cedar as hounds will cling to a boar. Time after time he flung them off him. Father Amerton hovered unhelpfully with his rope.

For some moments Mr. Barnstaple's attention was concentrated upon this swaying and staggering attempt to overpower Cedar, and then he became aware of other Utopians running down the slope to join the fray... The other two aeroplanes had landed.

Mr. Catskill realized the coming of these reinforcements almost as soon as Mr. Barnstaple. His shouts of "Back! Back to the castle!"

reached Mr. Barnstaple's ears. The Earthlings scattered away from the tall dishevelled figure, hesitated, and began walk and then run back towards the castle.

And then Ridley turned and very deliberately shot Cedar, who clutched at his breast and fell into a sitting position.

The Earthlings retreated to the foot of the steps that led up through the archway into the castle, and stood there in a panting, bruised and ruffled group. Fifty yards away Serpentine lay still, the aviator whom Barralonga had shot writhed and moaned, and Cedar sat up with blood upon his chest trying to feel his back. Five other Utopians came hurrying to their assistance.

"What is all this firing?" said Lady Stella, suddenly at Mr. Barnstaple's elbow.

"Have they caught their hostages?" asked Miss Greeta Grey.

"For the life of me!" said Mr. Burleigh, who had come out upon the wall a yard or so away, "this ought never to have happened. How did this get — *muffed*, Lady Stella?"

"I called out to them," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"*You* — called — out to them!" said Mr. Burleigh incredulous.

"Treason I did not calculate upon," came the wrathful voice of Mr. Catskill ascending out of the archway.

§ 4

For some moments Mr. Barnstaple made no attempt to escape the danger that closed in upon him. He had always lived a life of very great security and with him, as with so many highly civilized types, the power of apprehending personal danger was very largely atrophied. He was a spectator by temperament and training alike. He stood now as if he looked at himself, the central figure of a great and hopeless tragedy. The idea of flight came belatedly, in a reluctant and apologetic manner into his mind.

"Shot as a traitor," he said aloud. "Shot as a traitor."

There was that bridge over the narrow gorge. He might still get over that, if he went for it at once. If he was quick — quicker than they were. He was too intelligent to dash off for it; that would

certainly have set the others running. He walked along the wall in a leisurely fashion past Mr. Burleigh, himself too civilized to intervene. In a quickening stroll he gained the steps that led to the citadel. Then he stood still for a moment to survey the situation. Catskill was busy setting sentinels at the gate. Perhaps he had not thought yet of the little bridge and imagined that Mr. Barnstaple was at his disposal at any time that suited him. Up the slope the Utopians were carrying off the dead or wounded men.

Mr. Barnstaple ascended the steps as if buried in thought and stood on the citadel for some seconds, his hands in his trouser pockets, as if he surveyed the view. Then he turned to the winding staircase that went down to a sort of guard-room below. As soon as he was surely out of sight he began to think and move very quickly.

The guard-room was perplexing. It had five doors, any one of which except the one by which he had just entered the room, might lead down to the staircase. Against one, however, stood a pile of neat packing-cases. That left three to choose from, He ran from one to the other leaving each door open. In each case stone steps ran down to a landing and a turning place. He stood hesitating at the third and noted that a cold draught came blowing up from it. Surely that meant that this went down to the cliff face, or whence came the air? Surely this was it!

Should he shut the doors he had opened? No! Leave them all open.

He heard a clatter coming down the staircase from the citadel. Softly and swiftly he ran down the steps and halted for a second at the corner landing. He was compelled to stop and listen to the movements of his pursuers. “This is the door to the bridge, Sir!” he heard Ridley cry, and then he heard Catskill say, “The Tarpeian Rock,” and Barralonga, “Exactly! Why should we waste a cartridge? Are you sure this goes to the bridge, Ridley?”

The footsteps pattered across the guard-room and passed — down one of the other staircases.

“A reprieve!” whispered Mr. Barnstaple and then stopped aghast.

He was trapped! The staircase they were on was the staircase to the bridge!

They would go down as far as the bridge and as soon as they got

to it they would see that he was neither on it nor on the steps on the opposite side of the gorge and that therefore he could not possibly have escaped. They would certainly bar that way either by closing and fastening any door there might be or, failing such a barrier, by setting a sentinel, and then they would come back and hunt for him at their leisure.

What was it Catskill had been saying? The Tarpeian Rock?...

Horrible!

They mustn't take him alive...

He must fight like a rat in a corner and oblige them to shoot him...

He went on down the staircase. It became very dark and then grew light again. It ended in an ordinary big cellar, which may once have been a gun-pit or magazine. It was fairly well lit by two unglazed windows cut in the rock. It now contained a store of provisions. Along one side stood an array of the flask-like bottles that were used for wine in Utopia; along the other was a miscellany of packing-cases and cubes wrapped in gold-leaf. He lifted one of the glass flasks by its neck. It would make an effective club. Suppose he made a sort of barrier of the packing-cases across the entrance and stood beside it and clubbed the pursuers as they came in! Glass and wine would smash over their skulls... It would take time to make the barrier... He chose and carried three of the larger flasks to the doorway where they would be handy for him. Then he had an inspiration and looked at the window.

He listened at the door of the staircase for a time. Not a sound came from above. He went to the window and lay down in the deep embrasure and wriggled forward until he could see out and up and down. The cliff below fell sheer; he could have spat on to the brawling torrent fifteen hundred feet perhaps below. The crag here was made up of almost vertical strata which projected and receded; a big buttress hid almost all of the bridge except the far end which seemed to be about twenty or thirty yards lower than the opening from which Mr. Barnstaple was looking. Mr. Catskill appeared upon this bridge, very small and distant, scrutinizing the rocky stair-way beyond the bridge. Mr. Barnstaple withdrew his head hastily. Then very discreetly he peeped again. Mr. Catskill was no longer to be seen. He was coming back.

To business! There was not much time.

In his earlier days before the Great War had made travel dear and uncomfortable Mr. Barnstaple had done some rock climbing in Switzerland and he had also had some experience in Cumberland and Wales. He surveyed now the rocks close at hand with an intelligent expertness. They were cut by almost horizontal joint planes into which there had been a considerable infiltration chiefly of white crystalline material. This stuff, which he guessed was calcite, had weathered more rapidly than the general material of the rock, leaving a series of irregular horizontal grooves. With luck it might be possible to work along the cliff face, turn the buttress and scramble to the bridge.

And then came an even more hopeful idea. He could easily get along the cliff face to the first recess, flatten himself there and remain until the Earthlings had searched his cellar. After they had searched he might creep back to the cellar. Even if they looked out of the window they would not see him and even if he left finger marks and so forth in the embrasure, they would be likely to conclude that he had either jumped or fallen down the crag into the gorge below. But at first it might be slow work negotiating the cliff face... And this would cut him off from his weapons, the flasks...

But the idea of hiding in the recess had taken a strong hold upon his imagination. Very cautiously he got out of the window, found a handhold, got his feet on to his ledge and began to work his way along towards his niche.

But there were unexpected difficulties, a gap of nearly five yards in the handhold — nothing. He had to flatten himself and trust to his feet and for a time he remained quite still in that position.

Further on was a rotten lump of the vein mineral and it broke away under him very disconcertingly, but happily his fingers had a grip and the other foot was firm. The detached crystals slithered down the rock face for a moment and then made no further sound. They had dropped into the void. For a time he was paralyzed.

“I’m not in good form,” whispered Mr. Barnstaple. “I’m not in good form.”

He clung motionless and prayed.

With an effort he resumed his traverse.

He was at the very corner of the recess when some faint noise drew his eyes to the window from which he had emerged. Ridley's face was poked out slowly and cautiously, his eye red and fierce among his white bandages.

§ 5

He did not at first see Mr. Barnstaple. "Gawd!" he said when he did so and withdrew his head hastily.

Came a sound of voices saying indistinguishable things.

Some inappropriate instinct kept Mr. Barnstaple quite still, though he could have got into cover in the recess quite easily before Mr. Catskill looked out revolver in hand.

For some moments they stared at each other in silence.

"Come back or I shoot," said Mr. Catskill unconvincingly.

"Shoot!" said Mr. Barnstaple after a moment's reflection.

Mr. Catskill craned his head out and stared down into the shadowy blue depths of the canyon. "It isn't necessary," he answered. "We have to save cartridges."

"You haven't the guts," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"It's not quite that," said Mr. Catskill.

"No," said Mr. Barnstaple, "it isn't. You are fundamentally a civilized man."

Mr. Catskill scowled at him without hostility.

"You have a very good imagination," Mr. Barnstaple reflected. "The trouble is that you have been so damnably educated. What is the trouble with you? You are be-Kiplinged. Empire and Anglo-Saxon and boy-scout and sleuth are the stuff in your mind. If I had gone to Eton I might have been the same as you are, I suppose."

"Harrow," corrected Mr. Catskill.

"A perfectly *beastly* public school. Suburban place where the boys wear chignons and straw haloes. I might have guessed Harrow. But it's queer I bear you no malice. Given decent ideas you might have been very different from what you are. If I had been your schoolmaster — But it's too late now."

"It is," said Mr. Rupert Catskill smiling genially and cocked his

eye down into the canyon.

Mr. Barnstaple began to feel for his ledge round the corner with one foot.

"Don't go for a minute," said Mr. Catskill. "I'm not going to shoot."

A voice from within, probably Lord Barralonga's, said something about heaving a rock at Mr. Barnstaple. Someone else, probably Ridley, approved ferociously.

"Not without due form of trial," said Mr. Catskill over his shoulder. His face was inscrutable, but a fantastic idea began to run about in Mr. Barnstaple's mind that Mr. Catskill did not want to have him killed. He had thought about things and he wanted him now to escape — to the Utopians and perhaps rig up some sort of settlement with them.

"We intend to try you, Sir," said Mr. Catskill. "We intend to try you. We cite you to appear."

Mr. Catskill moistened his lips and considered. "The court will sit almost at once." His little bright brown eyes estimated the chances of Mr. Barnstaple's position very rapidly. He craned towards the bridge. "We shall not waste time over our procedure," he said. "And I have little doubt of our verdict. We shall condemn you to death. So — there you are, Sir. I doubt if we shall be more than a quarter of an hour before your fate is legally settled."

He glanced up trying to see the crest of the crag. "We shall probably throw rocks," he said.

"Moriturus te saluo," said Mr. Barnstaple with an air of making a witty remark. "If you will forgive me I will go on now to find a more comfortable position."

Mr. Catskill remained looking hard at him.

"I've never borne you any ill-will," said Mr. Barnstaple. "Had I been your schoolmaster everything might have been different. Thanks for the quarter of an hour more you give me. And if by any chance—"

"Exactly," said Mr. Catskill.

They understood one another.

When Mr. Barnstaple stepped round the bend into the recess Mr. Catskill was still looking out and Lord Barralonga was faintly

audible advocating the immediate heaving of rocks.

§ 6

The ways of the human mind are past finding out. From desperation Mr. Barnstaple's mood had passed to exhilaration. His first sick horror of climbing above this immense height had given place now to an almost boyish assurance. His sense of immediate death had gone. He was appreciating this adventure, indeed he was enjoying it, with an entire disregard now of how it was to end.

He made fairly good time until he got to the angle of the buttress, though his arms began to ache rather badly, and then he had a shock. He had now a full view of the bridge and up the narrow gorge. The ledge he was working along did not run to the bridge at all. It ran a good thirty feet below it. And what was worse, between himself and the bridge were two gullies and chimneys of uncertain depth. At this discovery he regretted for the first time that he had not stayed in the cellar and made a fight for it there.

He had some minutes of indecision — with the ache in his arms increasing.

He was roused from his inaction by what he thought at first was the shadow of a swift-flying bird on the rock. Presently it returned. He hoped he was not to be assailed by birds. He had read a story — but never mind that now.

Then came a loud crack overhead, and he glanced up to see a lump of rock which had just struck a little bulge above him fly to fragments. From which incident he gathered firstly that the court had delivered an adverse verdict rather in advance of Mr. Catskill's time, and secondly that he was visible from above. He resumed his traverse towards the shelter of the gully with feverish energy.

The gully was better than he expected, a chimney; difficult, he thought, to ascend, but quite practicable downward. It was completely overhung. And perhaps a hundred feet below there was a sort of step in it that gave a quite broad recess, sheltered from above and with room enough for a man to sprawl on it if he wanted to do so. There would be rest for Mr. Barnstaple's arms, and without any

needless delay he clambered down to it and abandoned himself to the delightful sensation of not holding on to anything. He was out of sight and out of reach of his Earthling pursuers.

In the back of the recess was a trickle of water. He drank and began to think of food and to regret that he had not brought some provision with him from the store in the cellar. He might have opened one of those gold-leaf- covered cubes or pocketed a small flask of wine. Wine would be very heartening just now. But it did not do to think of that. He stayed for a long time, as it seemed to him, on this precious shelf, scrutinizing the chimney below very carefully. It seemed quite practicable for a long way down. The sides became very smooth, but they seemed close enough together to get down with his back against one side and his feet against the other.

He looked at his wrist-watch. It was still not nine o'clock in the morning — it was about ten minutes to nine. He had been called by Ridley before half-past five. At half-past six he had been handing out breakfast in the courtyard. Serpentine and Cedar must have appeared about eight o'clock. In about ten minutes Serpentine had been murdered. Then the flight and the pursuit. How quickly things had happened!...

He had all day before him. He would resume his descent at half-past nine. Until then he would rest... It was absurd to feel hungry yet...

He was climbing again before half-past nine. For perhaps a hundred feet it was easy. Then by imperceptible degrees the gully broadened. He only realized it when he found himself slipping. He slipped, struggling furiously, for perhaps twenty feet, and then fell outright another ten and struck a rock and was held by a second shelf much broader than the one above. He came down on it with a jarring concussion and rolled — happily he rolled inward. He was bruised, but not seriously hurt. "My luck," he said. "My luck holds good."

He rested for a time, and then, confident that things would be all right, set himself to inspect the next stage of his descent. It was with a sort of incredulity that he discovered the chimney below his shelf was absolutely unclimbable. It was just a straight, smooth rock on either side for twenty yards at least and six feet wide. He might as well fling himself over at once as try to get down that. Then he saw

that it was equally impossible to retrace his steps. He could not believe it; it seemed too silly. He laughed as one might laugh if one found one's own mother refusing to recognize one after a day's absence.

Then abruptly he stopped laughing.

He repeated every point in his examination. He fingered the smooth rocks about him. "But this is absurd," he said breaking out into a cold perspiration. There was no way out of this corner into which he had so painfully and laboriously got himself. He could neither go on nor go back. He was caught. His luck had given out.

§ 7

At midday by his wrist-watch Mr. Barnstaple was sitting in his recess as a weary invalid suffering from some incurable disease might sit up in an arm- chair during a temporary respite from pain, with nothing to do and no hope before him. There was not one chance in ten thousand that anything could happen to release him from this trap into which he had clambered. There was a trickle of water at the back but no food, not even a grass blade to nibble. Unless he saw fit to pitch himself over into the gorge, he must starve to death... It would perhaps be cold at nights but not cold enough to kill him.

To this end he had come then out of the worried journalism of London and the domesticities of Sydenham.

Queer journey it was that he and the Yellow Peril had made! — Camberwell, Victoria, Hounslow, Slough, Utopia, the mountain paradise, a hundred fascinating and tantalizing glimpses of a world of real happiness and order, that long, long aeroplane flight half round a world... And now — death.

The idea of abbreviating his sufferings by jumping over had no appeal for him. He would stay here and suffer such suffering as there might be before the end. And three hundred yards away or so were his fellow Earthlings, also awaiting their fate... It was amazing. It was prosaic...

After all to this or something like this most humanity had to come.

Sooner or later people had to lie and suffer, they had to think and

then think feverishly and then weakly, and so fade to a final cessation of thought.

On the whole, he thought, it was preferable to die in this fashion, preferable to a sudden death, it was worth while to look death in the face for a time, have leisure to write finis in one's mind, to think over life and such living as one had done and think it over with a detachment, an independence, that only an entire inability to alter one jot of it now could give.

At present his mind was clear and calm; a bleak serenity like a clear winter sky possessed him. There was suffering ahead, he knew, but he did not believe it would be intolerable suffering. If it proved intolerable the canyon yawned below. In that respect this shelf or rock was a better death bed than most, a more convenient death bed. Your sick bed presented pain with a wide margin, set it up for your too complete examination. But to starve was not so very dreadful, he had read; hunger and pain there would be, most distressful about the third day, and after that one became feeble and did not feel so much. It would not be like the torture of many cancer cases or the agony of brain fever; it would not be one tithe as bad as that. Lonely it would be. But is one much less lonely on a death bed at home? They come and say, "There! there!" and do little serviceable things — but are there any other interchanges?... You go your solitary way, speech and movement and the desire to speak or move passing from you, and their voices fade... Everywhere death is a very solitary act, a going apart...

A younger man would probably have found this loneliness in the gorge very terrible, but Mr. Barnstaple had outlived the intenser delusions of companionship. He would have liked a last talk with his boys and to have put his wife into a good frame of mind, but even these desires were perhaps more sentimental than real. When it came to talks with his boys he was apt to feel shy. As they had come to have personalities of their own and to grow through adolescence, he had felt more and more that talking intimately to them was an invasion of their right to grow up along their own lines. And they too he felt were shy with him, defensively shy. Perhaps later on sons came back to a man — that was a later on that he would never know now. But he wished he could have let them know what had happened

to him. That troubled him. It would set him right in their eyes, it would perhaps be better for their characters, if they did not think — as they were almost bound to think — that he had run away from them or lapsed mentally or even fallen into bad company and been made away with. As it was they might be worried and ashamed, needlessly, or put to expense to find out where he was, and that would be a pity.

One had to die. Many men had died as he was going to die, fallen into strange places, lost in dark caverns, marooned on desert islands, astray in the Australian bush, imprisoned and left to perish. It was good to die without great anguish or insult. He thought of the myriads of men who had been crucified by the Romans — was it eight thousand or was it ten thousand of the army of Spartacus that they killed in that fashion along the Appian Way? — of negroes hung in chains to starve, and of an endless variety of such deaths. Shocking to young imaginations such things were and more fearful in thought than in reality. It is all a matter of a little more pain or a little less pain — but God will not have any great waste of pain. Cross, wheel, electric chair or bed of suffering — the thing is, *you die and have done*.

It was pleasant to find that one could think stoutly of these things. It was good to be caught and to find that one was not frantic. And Mr. Barnstaple was surprised to find how little he cared, now that he faced the issue closely, whether he was immortal or whether he was not. He was quite prepared to find himself immortal or at least not ending with death, in whole or in part. It was ridiculous to be dogmatic and say that a part, an impression, of his conscience and even of his willing life might not go on in some fashion. But he found it impossible to imagine how that could be. It was unimaginable. It was not to be anticipated. He had no fear of that continuation. He had no thought nor fear of the possibility of punishment or cruelty. The universe had at times seemed to him to be very carelessly put together, but he had never believed that it was the work of a malignant imbecile. It impressed him as immensely careless but not as dominatingly cruel. He had been what he had been, weak and limited and sometimes silly, but the punishment of these defects lay in the defects themselves.

He ceased to think about his own death. He began to think of life generally, its present lowliness, its valiant aspiration. He found himself regretting bitterly that he was not to see more of this Utopian world, which was in so many respects so near an intimation of what our own world may become. It had been very heartening to see human dreams and human ideals vindicated by realization, but it was distressing to have had the vision snatched away while he was still only beginning to examine it. He found himself asking questions that had no answers for him, about economics, about love and struggle. Anyhow, he was glad to have seen as much as he had. It was good to have been purged by this vision and altogether lifted out of the dreary hopelessness of Mr. Peeve, to have got life into perspective again.

The passions and conflicts and discomforts of A.D. 1921 were the discomforts of the fever of an uninoculated world. The Age of Confusion on the Earth also would, in its own time, work itself out, thanks to a certain obscure and indomitable righteousness in the blood of the human type. Squatting in a hole in the cliff of the great crag, with unclimbable heights and depths above him and below, chilly, hungry and uncomfortable, this thought was a profound comfort to the strangely constituted mind of Mr. Barnstaple.

But how miserably had he and his companions failed to rise to the great occasions of Utopia! No one had raised an effectual hand to restrain the puerile imaginations of Mr. Catskill and the mere brutal aggressiveness of his companions. How invincibly had Father Amerton headed for the role of the ranting, hating, persecuting, quarrel-making priest. How pitifully weak and dishonest Mr. Burleigh — and himself scarcely better! disapproving always and always in ineffective opposition. What an unintelligent beauty-cow that woman Greeta Grey was, receptive, acquisitive, impenetrable to any idea but the idea of what was due to her as a yielding female! Lady Stella was of finer clay, but fired to no service. Women, he thought, had not been well represented in this chance expedition, just one waster and one ineffective. Was that a fair sample of Earth's womankind?

All the use these Earthlings had had for Utopia was to turn it back as speedily as possible to the aggressions, subjugations, cruelties and

disorders of the Age of Confusion to which they belonged. Serpentine and Cedar, the man of scientific power and the man of healing, they had sought to make hostages to disorder, and failing that they had killed or sought to kill them.

They had tried to bring back Utopia to the state of Earth, and indeed but for the folly, malice and weakness of men Earth was now Utopia. Old Earth was Utopia now, a garden and a glory, the Earthly Paradise, except that it was trampled to dust and ruin by its Catskills, Hunkers, Barralongas, Ridleys, Duponts and their kind. Against their hasty trampling folly nothing was pitted, it seemed, in the whole wide world at present but the whinings of the Peeves, the acquiescent disapproval of the Burleighs and such immeasurable ineffectiveness as his own protest. And a few writers and teachers who produced results at present untraceable.

Once more Mr. Barnstaple found himself thinking of his old friend, the school inspector and school-book writer, who had worked so steadfastly and broken down and died so pitifully. He had worked for Utopia all his days. Were there hundreds or thousands of such Utopians yet on earth? What magic upheld them?

"I wish I could get some message through to them," said Mr. Barnstaple, "to hearten them."

For it was true, though he himself had to starve and die like a beast fallen into a pit, nevertheless Utopia triumphed and would triumph. The grabbers and fighters, the persecutors and patriots, the lynchers and boycotters and all the riff-raff of short-sighted human violence, crowded on to final defeat. Even in their lives they know no happiness, they drive from excitement to excitement and from gratification to exhaustion. Their enterprises and successes, their wars and glories, flare and pass. Only the true thing grows, the truth, the clear idea, year by year and age by age, slowly and invincibly as a diamond grows amidst the darkness and pressures of the earth, or as the dawn grows amidst the guttering lights of some belated orgy.

What would be the end of those poor little people up above there? Their hold on life was even more precarious than his own, for he might lie and starve here slowly for weeks before his mind gave its last flicker. But they had openly pitted themselves against the might and wisdom of Utopia, and even now the ordered power of that

world must be closing in upon them. He still had a faint irrational remorse for his betrayal of Catskill's ambush. He smiled now at the passionate conviction he had felt at the time that if once Catskill could capture his hostages, Earth might prevail over Utopia. That conviction had rushed him into action. His weak cries had seemed to be all that was left to avert this monstrous disaster. But suppose he had not been there at all, or suppose he had obeyed the lingering instinct of fellowship that urged him to fight with the others; what then?

When he recalled the sight of Cedar throwing Mush about as one might throw a lap-dog about, and the height and shape of Serpentine, he doubted whether even upon the stairs in the archway it would have been possible for the Earthlings to have overpowered these two. The revolvers would have come into use just as they had come into use upon the slope, and Catskill would have got no hostages but only two murdered men.

How unutterably silly the whole scheme of Catskill had been! But it was no sillier than the behaviour of Catskill, Burleigh and the rest of the world's statesmen had been on earth, during the last few years. At times during the world agony of the Great War it had seemed that Utopia drew near to earth. The black clouds and smoke of these dark years had been shot with the light of strange hopes, with the promise of a world reborn. But the nationalists, financiers, priests and patriots had brought all those hopes to nothing. They had trusted to old poisons and infections and to the weak resistances of the civilized spirit. They had counted their weapons and set their ambushes and kept their women busy sewing flags of discord...

For a time they had killed hope, but only for a time. For Hope, the redeemer of mankind, there is perpetual resurrection.

"Utopia will win," said Mr. Barnstaple and for a time he sat listening to a sound he had heard before without heeding it very greatly, a purring throb in the rocks about him, like the running of some great machine. It grew louder and then faded down to the imperceptible again.

His thoughts came back to his erstwhile companions. He hoped they were not too miserable or afraid up there. He was particularly desirous that something should happen to keep up Lady Stella's

courage. He worried affectionately about Lady Stella. For the rest it would be as well if they remained actively combative to the end. Possibly they were all toiling at some preposterous and wildly hopeful defensive scheme of Catskill's. Except Mr. Burleigh who would be resting — convinced that for him at least there would still be a gentlemanly way out. And probably not much afraid if there wasn't. Amerton and possibly Mush might lapse into a religious revival — that would irritate the others a little, or possibly even provide a mental opiate for Lady Stella and Miss Greeta Grey. Then for Penk there was wine in the cellar...

They would follow the laws of their being, they would do the things that nature and habit would require of them. What else was possible?

Mr. Barnstaple plunged into a metaphysical gulf...

Presently he caught himself looking at his wrist-watch. It was twenty minutes past twelve. He was looking at his watch more and more frequently or time was going more slowly... Should he wind his watch or let it run down? He was already feeling very hungry. That could not be real hunger yet; it must be his imagination getting out of control.

IV. — THE END OF QUARANTINE CRAG

§ 1

Mr. Barnstaple awoke slowly and reluctantly from a dream about cookery. He was Soyer, the celebrated chef of the Reform Club, and he was inventing and tasting new dishes. But in the pleasant way of dreamland he was not only Soyer, but at the same time he was a very clever Utopian biologist and also God Almighty. So that he could not only make new dishes, but also make new vegetables and meats to go into them. He was particularly interested in a new sort of fowl, the Chateaubriand breed of fowls, which was to combine the rich quality of very good beefsteak with the size and delicacy of a fowl's breast. And he wanted to stuff it with a blend of pimento, onion and mushroom — except that the mushroom wasn't quite the thing. The mushrooms — he tasted them — indeed just the least little modification. And into the dream came an assistant cook, several assistant cooks, all naked as Utopians, bearing fowls from the pantry and saying that they had not kept, they had gone "high" and they were going higher. In order to illustrate this idea of their going higher these assistant cooks lifted the fowls above their heads and then began to climb the walls of the kitchen, which were rocky and for a kitchen remarkably close together. Their figures became dark. They were thrown up in black outline against the luminous steam arising from a cauldron of boiling soup. It was boiling soup, and yet it was cold soup and cold steam.

Mr. Barnstaple was awake.

In the place of luminous steam there was mist, brightly moonlit mist, filling the gorge. It threw up the figures of the two Utopians in black silhouette...

What Utopians?

His mind struggled between dreaming and waking. He started up rigidly attentive. They moved with easy gestures, quite unaware of his presence so close to them. They had already got a thin rope ladder fixed to some point overhead, but how they had managed to do this he did not know. One still stood on the shelf, the other

swayed above him stretched across the gully clinging to the rope with his feet against the rock. The head of a third figure appeared above the edge of the shelf. It swayed from side to side. He was evidently coming up by a second rope ladder. Some sort of discussion was in progress. It was borne in upon Mr. Barnstaple that this last comer thought that he and his companions had clambered high enough, but that the uppermost man insisted they should go higher. In a few moments the matter was settled.

The uppermost Utopian became very active, lunged upward, swung out and vanished by jerks out of Mr. Barnstaple's field of view. His companions followed him and one after the other was lost to sight, leaving nothing visible but the convulsively agitated rope ladder and a dangling rope that they seemed to be dragging up the crag with them.

Mr. Barnstaple's taut muscles relaxed. He yawned silently, stretched his painful limbs and stood up very cautiously. He peered up the gully. The Utopians seemed to have reached the shelf above and to be busy there. The rope that had dangled became taut. They were hauling up something from below. It was a large bundle, possibly of tools or weapons or material wrapped in something that deadened its impacts against the rock. It jumped into view, hung spinning for a moment and was then snatched upward as the Utopians took in a fresh reef of rope. A period of silence followed.

He heard a metallic clang and then, thud, thud, a dull intermittent hammering. Then he jumped back as the end of a thin rope, apparently running over a pulley, dropped past him. The sounds from above now were like filing and then some bits of rock fell past him into the void.

§ 2

He did not know what to do. He was afraid to call to these Utopians and make his presence known to them. After the murder of Serpentine he was very doubtful how a Utopian would behave to an Earthling found hiding in a dark corner.

He examined the rope ladder that had brought these Utopians to

his level. It was held by a long spike the end of which was buried in the rock at the side of the gully. Possibly this spike had been fired at the rock from below while he was asleep. The ladder was made up of straight lengths and rings at intervals of perhaps two feet. It was of such light material that he would have doubted its capacity to bear a man if he had not seen the Utopians upon it. It occurred to him that he might descend by this now and take his chances with any Utopians who might be below. He could not very well bring himself to the attention of these three Utopians above except by some sudden and startling action which might provoke sudden and unpleasant responses, but if he appeared first clambering slowly from above any Utopians beneath would have time to realize and consider the fact of his proximity before they dealt with him. And also he was excessively eager to get down from this dreary ledge.

He gripped a ring, thrust a leg backwards over the edge of the shelf, listened for some moments to the little noises of the three workers above him, and then began his descent.

It was an enormous descent. Presently he found himself regretting that he had not begun counting the rings of the ladder. He must already have handed himself down hundreds. And still when he craned his neck to look down, the dark gulf yawned below. It had become very dark now. The moonlight did not cut down very deeply into the canyon and the faint reflection from the thin mists above was all there was to break the blackness. And even overhead the moonlight seemed to be passing.

Now he was near the rock, now it fell away and the rope ladder seemed to fall plumb into lightless bottomless space. He had to feel for each ring, and his bare feet and hands were already chafed and painful. And a new and disagreeable idea had come into his head — that some Utopian might presently come rushing up the ladder. But he would get notice of that because the rope would tighten and quiver, and he would be able to cry out, “I am an Earthling coming down. I am a harmless Earthling.”

He began to cry out these words experimentally. The gorge re-echoed them, and there was no answering sound.

He became silent again, descending grimly and as steadily as possible, because now an intense desire to get off this infernal rope

ladder and rest his hot hands and feet was overmastering every other motive.

Clang, clang and a flash of green light.

He became rigid peering into the depths of the canyon. Came the green flash again. It revealed the depths of the gorge, still as it seemed an immense distance below him. And up the gorge — something; he could not grasp what it was during that momentary revelation. At first he thought it was a huge serpent writhing its way down the gorge, and then he concluded it must be a big cable that was being brought along the gorge by a handful of Utopians. But how the three or four figures he had indistinctly seen could move this colossal rope he could not imagine. The head of this cable serpent seemed to be lifting itself obliquely up the cliff. Perhaps it was being dragged up by ropes he had not observed. He waited for a third flash, but none came. He listened. He could hear nothing but a throbbing sound he had already noted before, like the throbbing of an engine running very smoothly.

He resumed his descent.

When at last he reached a standing place it took him by surprise. The rope ladder fell past it for some yards and ended. He was swaying more and more and beginning to realize that the rope ladder came to an end, when he perceived the dim indication of a nearly horizontal gallery cut along the rock face. He put out a foot and felt an edge and swung away out from it. He was now so weary and exhausted that for a time he could not relinquish his grip on the rope ladder and get a footing on the shelf. At last he perceived how this could be done. He released his feet and gave himself a push away from the rock with them. He swung back into a convenient position for getting a foothold. He repeated this twice, and then had enough confidence to abandon his ladder and drop on to the shelf. The ladder dangled away from him into the darkness and then came wriggling back to tap him playfully and startlingly on the shoulder blade.

The gallery he found himself in seemed to follow a great vein of crystalline material, along the cliff face. Borings as high as a man ran into the rock. He peered and felt his way along the gallery for a time. Manifestly if this was a mine there would be some way of ascending to it and descending from it into the gorge. The sound of the torrent

was much louder now, and he judged he had perhaps come down two-thirds of the height of the crag. He was inclined to wait for daylight. The illuminated dial of his wrist-watch told him it was now four o'clock. It would not be long before dawn. He found a comfortable face of rock for his back and squatted down.

Dawn seemed to come very quickly, but in reality he dozed away the interval. When he glanced at his watch again it was half-past five.

He went to the edge of the gallery and peered up the gorge to where he had seen the cable. Things were pale and dim and very black and white, but perfectly clear. The walls of the canyon seemed to go up for ever and vanish at last in cloud. He had a glimpse of a Utopian below, who was presently hidden by the curve of the gorge. He guessed that the great cable must have been brought so close up to the Quarantine Crag as to be invisible to him.

He could find no down-going steps from the gallery, but some thirty or forty yards off were five or six cable ways running at a steep angle from the gallery to the opposite side of the gorge. They looked very black and distinct. He went along to them. Each was a carrier cable on which ran a small carrier trolley with a big hook below. Three of the carrier cables were empty, but on two the trolley was hauled up. Mr. Barnstaple examined the trolleys and found a catch retained them. He turned over one of these catches and the trolley ran away promptly, nearly dropping him into the gulf. He saved himself by clutching the carrier cable. He watched the trolley swoop down like a bird to a broad stretch of sandy beach on the other side of the torrent and come to rest there. It seemed all right. Trembling violently, he turned to the remaining trolley.

His nerves and will were so exhausted now that it was a long time before he could bring himself to trust to the hook of the remaining trolley and to release its catch. Then smoothly and swiftly he swept across the gorge to the beach below. There were big heaps of crystalline mineral on this beach and a cable — evidently for raising it — came down out of the mists above from some invisible crane, but not a Utopian was in sight. He relinquished his hold and dropped safely on his feet. The beach broadened down-stream and he walked along it close to the edge of the torrent.

The light grew stronger as he went. The world ceased to be a

world of greys and blacks; colour came back to things. Everything was heavily bedewed. And he was hungry and almost intolerably weary. The sand changed in its nature and became soft and heavy for his feet. He felt he could walk no further. He must wait for help. He sat down on a rock and looked up towards Quarantine Crag towering overhead.

§ 3

Sheer and high the great headland rose like the prow of some gigantic ship behind the two deep blue canyons; a few wisps and layers of mist still hid from Mr. Barnstaple its crest and the little bridge across the narrower gorge. The sky above between the streaks of mist was now an intense blue. And even as he gazed the mists swirled and dissolved, the rays of the rising sun smote the old castle to blinding gold, and the fastness of the Earthlings stood out clear and bright.

The bridge and the castle were very remote and all that part of the crag was like a little cap on the figure of a tall upstanding soldier. Round beneath the level of the bridge at about the height at which the three Utopians had worked or were still working ran something dark, a rope-like band. He jumped to the conclusion that this must be the cable he had seen lit up by those green flashes in the night. Then he noted a peculiar body upon the crest of the more open of the two gorges. It was an enormous vertical coil, a coil flattened into a disc, which had appeared on the edge of the cliff opposite to Coronation Crag. Less plainly seen because of a projecting mass of rock, was a similar coil in the narrower canyon close to the steps that led up from the little bridge. Two or three Utopians, looking very small because they were so high and very squat because they were so foreshortened, were moving along the cliff edge and handling something that apparently had to do with these coils.

Mr. Barnstaple stared at these arrangements with much the same uncomprehending stare as that with which some savage who had never heard a shot fired in anger might watch the loading of a gun.

Came a familiar sound, faint and little. It was the hooter of

Quarantine Castle sounding the reveille. And almost simultaneously the little Napoleonic figure of Mr. Rupert Catskill emerged against the blue. The head and shoulders of Penk rose and halted and stood at attention behind him. The captain of the Earthlings produced his field-glasses and surveyed the coils through them.

"I wonder what he makes of them," said Mr. Barnstaple.

Mr. Catskill turned and gave some direction to Penk, who saluted and vanished.

A click from the nearer gorge jerked his attention back to the little bridge. It had gone. His eye dropped and caught it up within a few yards of the water. He saw the water splash and the metal framework crumple up and dance two steps and lie still, and then a moment later the crash and clatter of the fall reached his ears.

"Now who did that?" asked Mr. Barnstaple and Mr. Catskill answered his question by going hastily to that corner of the castle and staring down. Manifestly he was surprised. Manifestly therefore it was the Utopians who had cut the bridge.

Mr. Catskill was joined almost immediately by Mr. Hunker and Lord Barralonga. Their gestures suggested an animated discussion.

The sunlight was creeping by imperceptible degrees down the front of Quarantine Crag. It had now got down to the cable that encircled the crest; in the light this shone with a coppery sheen. The three Utopians who had awakened Mr. Barnstaple in the night became visible descending the rope ladder very rapidly. And once more Mr. Barnstaple was aware of that humming sound he had heard ever and again during the night, but now it was much louder and it sounded everywhere about him, in the air, in the water, in the rocks and in his bones.

Abruptly something black and spear-shaped appeared beside the little group of Earthlings above. It seemed to jump up beside them, it paused and jumped again half the height of a man and jumped again. It was a flag being hauled up a flag staff, that Mr. Barnstaple had not hitherto observed. It reached the top of the staff and hung limp.

Then some eddy in the air caught it. It flapped out for a moment, displayed a white star on a blue ground and dropped again.

This was the flag of Earth — this was the flag of the crusade to restore the blessings of competition, conflict and warfare to Utopia.

Beneath it appeared the head of Mr. Burleigh, examining the Utopian coils through his glasses.

§ 4

The throbbing and humming in Mr. Barnstaple's ears grew rapidly louder and rose acutely to an extreme intensity. Suddenly great flashes of violet light leapt across from coil to coil, passing through Quarantine Castle as though it was not there.

For a moment longer it *was* there.

The flag flared out madly and was torn from its staff. Mr. Burleigh lost his hat. A half length of Mr. Catskill became visible struggling with his coat tails which had blown up and enveloped his head. At the same time Mr. Barnstaple saw the castle rotating upon the lower part of the crag, exactly as though some invisible giant had seized the upper tenth of the headland and was twisting it round.

And then it vanished.

As it did so, a great column of dust poured up into its place; the waters in the gorge sprung into the air in tall fountains and were splashed to spray, and a deafening thud smote Mr. Barnstaple's ears. Aerial powers picked him up and tossed him a dozen yards and he fell amidst a rain of dust and stones and water. He was bruised and stunned.

"My God!" he cried, "My God," and struggled to his knees, feeling violently sick.

He had a glimpse of the crest of Quarantine Crag, truncated as neatly as though it had been cheese cut with a sharp knife. And then fatigue and exhaustion had their way with him and he sprawled forward and lay insensible.

BOOK III. — A NEOPHYTE IN UTOPIA

I. — THE PEACEFUL HILLS BESIDE THE RIVER

§ 1

"God has made more universes than there are pages in all the libraries of earth; man may learn and grow for ever amidst the multitude of His worlds."

Mr. Barnstaple had a sense of floating from star to star and from plane to plane, through an incessant variety and wonder of existences. He passed over the edge of being; he drifted for ages down the faces of immeasurable cliffs; he travelled from everlasting to everlasting in a stream of innumerable little stars. At last came a phase of profound restfulness. There was a sky of level clouds, warmed by the light of a declining sun, and a skyline of gently undulating hills, golden grassy upon their crests and carrying dark purple woods and thickets and patches of pale yellow like ripening corn upon their billowing slopes. Here and there were domed buildings and terraces, flowering gardens and little villas and great tanks of gleaming water.

There were many trees like the eucalyptus — only that they had darker leaves — upon the slopes immediately below and round and about him; and all the land fell at last towards a very broad valley down which a shining river wound leisurely in great semicircular bends until it became invisible in evening haze.

A slight movement turned his eyes to discover Lychnis seated beside him. She smiled at him and put her finger on her lips. He had a vague desire to address her, and smiled faintly and moved his head. She got up and slipped away from him past the head of his couch. He was too feeble and incurious to raise his head and look to see where she had gone. But he saw that she had been sitting at a white table on which was a silver bowl full of intensely blue flowers, and the colour of the flowers held him and diverted his first faint impulse of curiosity.

He wondered whether colours were really brighter in this Utopian world or whether something in the air quickened and clarified his

apprehension.

Beyond the table were the white pillars of the loggia. A branch of one of these eucalyptus-like trees, with leaves bronze black, came very close outside.

And there was music. It was a little trickle of sound, that dripped and ran, a mere unobtrusive rivulet of little clear notes upon the margin of his consciousness, the song of some fairyland Debussy.

Peace...

§ 2

He was awake again.

He tried hard to remember.

He had been knocked over and stunned in some manner too big and violent for his mind to hold as yet.

Then people had stood about him and talked about him. He remembered their feet. He must have been lying on his face with his face very close to the ground. Then they had turned him over, and the light of the rising sun had been blinding in his eyes.

Two gentle goddesses had given him some restorative in a gorge at the foot of high cliffs. He had been carried in a woman's arms as a child is carried. After that there were cloudy and dissolving memories of a long journey, a long flight through the air. There was something next to this, a vision of huge complicated machinery that did not join on to anything else. For a time his mind held this up in an interrogative fashion and then dropped it wearily. There had been voices in consultation, the prick of an injection and some gas that he had had to inhale. And sleep — or sleeps, spells of sleep interspersed with dreams...

Now with regard to that gorge; how had he got there?

The gorge — in another light, a greenish light — with Utopians who struggled with a great cable.

Suddenly hard and clear came the vision of the headland of Coronation Crag towering up against the bright blue morning sky, and then the crest of it grinding round, with its fluttering flags and its dishevelled figures, passing slowly and steadily, as some great ship

passes out of a dock, with its flags and passengers into the invisible and unknown. All the wonder of his great adventure returned to Mr. Barnstaple's mind.

§ 3

He sat up in a state of interrogation and Lychnis reappeared at his elbow.

She seated herself on his bed close to him, shook up some pillows behind him and persuaded him to lie back upon them. She conveyed to him that he was cured of some illness and no longer infectious, but that he was still very weak. Of what illness? he asked himself. More of the immediate past became clear to him.

"There was an epidemic," he said. "A sort of mixed epidemic — of all our infections."

She smiled reassuringly. It was over. The science and organization of Utopia had taken the danger by the throat and banished it. Lychnis, however, had had nothing to do with the preventive and cleansing work that had ended the career of these invading microbes so speedily; her work had been the help and care of the sick. Something came through to the intelligence of Mr. Barnstaple that made him think that she was faintly sorry that this work of pity was no longer necessary. He looked up into her beautiful kindly eyes and met her affectionate solicitude. She was not sorry Utopia was cured again; that was incredible; but it seemed to him that she was sorry that she could no longer spend herself in help and that she was glad that he at least was still in need of assistance.

"What became of those people on the rock?" he asked. "What became of the other Earthlings?"

She did not know. They had been cast out of Utopia, she thought.

"Back to earth?"

She did not think they had gone back to earth. They had perhaps gone into yet another universe. But she did not know. She was one of those who had no mathematical aptitudes, and physico-chemical science and the complex theories of dimensions that interested so many people in Utopia were outside her circle of ideas. She believed

that the crest of Coronation Crag had been swung out of the Utopian universe altogether. A great number of people were now intensely interested in this experimental work upon the unexplored dimensions into which physical processes might he swung, but these matters terrified her. Her mind recoiled from them as one recoils from the edge of a cliff. She did not want to think where the Earthlings had gone, what deeps they had reeled over, what immensities they had seen and swept down into. Such thoughts opened dark gulfs beneath her feet where she had thought everything fixed and secure. She was a conservative in Utopia. She loved life as it was and as it had been. She had given herself to the care of Mr. Barnstaple when she had found that he had escaped the fate of the other Earthlings and she had not troubled very greatly about the particulars of that fate. She had avoided thinking about it.

"But where are they? Where have they gone?"

She did not know.

She conveyed to him haltingly and imperfectly her own halting and unsympathetic ideas of these new discoveries that had inflamed the Utopian imagination. The crucial moment had been the experiment of Arden and Greenlake that had brought the Earthlings into Utopia. That had been the first rupture of the hitherto invincible barriers that had held their universe in three spatial dimensions. That had opened these abysses. That had been the moment of release for all the new work that now filled Utopia. That had been the first achievement of practical results from an intricate network of theory and deduction. It sent Mr. Barnstaple's mind back to the humbler discoveries of earth, to Franklin snapping the captive lightning from his kite and Galvani, with his dancing frog's legs, puzzling over the miracle that brought electricity into the service of men. But it had taken a century and a half for electricity to make any sensible changes in human life because the earthly workers were so few and the ways of the world so obstructive and slow and spiteful. In Utopia to make a novel discovery was to light an intellectual conflagration. Hundreds of thousands of experimentalists in free and open co-operation were now working along the fruitful lines that Arden and Greenlake had made manifest. Every day, every hour now, new and hitherto fantastic possibilities of interspatial relationship were being

made plain to the Utopians.

Mr. Barnstaple rubbed his head and eyes with both hands and then lay back, blinking at the great valley below him, growing slowly golden as the sun sank. He felt himself to be the most secure and stable of beings at the very centre of a sphere of glowing serenity. And that effect of an immense tranquillity was a delusion; that still evening peace, was woven of incredible billions of hurrying and clashing atoms.

All the peace and fixity that man has ever known or will ever know is but the smoothness of the face of a torrent that flies along with incredible speed from cataract to cataract. Time was when men could talk of everlasting hills. To-day a schoolboy knows that they dissolve under the frost and wind and rain and pour seaward, day by day and hour by hour. Time was when men could speak of Terra Firma and feel the earth fixed, adamantine beneath their feet. Now they know that it whirls through space eddying about a spinning, blindly driven sun amidst a sheeplike drift of stars. And this fair curtain of appearance before the eyes of Mr. Barnstaple, this still and level flush of sunset and the great cloth of starry space that hung behind the blue; that too was now to be pierced and torn and rent asunder...

The extended fingers of his mind closed on the things that concerned him most.

“But where are my people?” he asked. “Where are their bodies? Is it just possible they are still alive?”

She could not tell him.

He lay thinking... It was natural that he should be given into the charge of a rather backward-minded woman. The active-minded here had no more use for him in their lives than active-minded people on earth have for pet animals. She did not want to think about these spatial relations at all; the subject was too difficult for her; she was one of Utopia’s educational failures. She sat beside him with a divine sweetness and tranquillity upon her face, and he felt his own judgment upon her like a committed treachery. Yet he wanted to know very badly the answer to his question.

He supposed the crest of Coronation Crag had been twisted round and flung off into some outer space. It was unlikely that this time the

Earthlings would strike a convenient planet again. In all probability they had been turned off into the void, into the interstellar space of some unknown universe...

What would happen then? They would freeze. The air would instantly diffuse right out of them, Their own gravitation would flatten them out, crush them together, collapse them! At least they would have no time to suffer. A gasp, like someone flung into ice-cold water...

He contemplated these possibilities.

"Flung out!" he said aloud. "Like a cageful of mice thrown over the side of a ship!"

"I don't understand," said Lychnis, turning to him.

He appealed to her. "And now — tell me. What is to become of me?"

§ 4

For a time Lychnis gave him no answer. She sat with her soft eyes upon the blue haze into which the great river valley had now dissolved. Then she turned to him with a question:

"You want to stay in this world?"

"Surely any Earthling would want to stay in this world. My body has been purified. Why should I not stay?"

"It seems a good world to you?"

"Loveliness, order, health, energy and wonder; it has all the good things for which my world groans and travails."

"And yet our world is not content."

"I could be contented."

"You are tired and weak still."

"In this air I could grow strong and vigorous. I could almost grow young in this world. In years, as you count them here, I am still a young man."

Again she was silent for a time. The mighty lap of the landscape was filled now with indistinguishable blue, and beyond the black silhouettes of the trees upon the hillside only the skyline of the hills was visible against the yellow green and pale yellow of the evening

sky. Never had Mr. Barnstaple seen so peaceful a nightfall. But her words denied that peace. “Here,” she said, “there is no rest. Every day men and women awake and say: What new thing shall we do to-day? What shall we change?”

“They have changed a wild planet of disease and disorder into a sphere of beauty and safety. They have made the wilderness of human motives bear union and knowledge and power.”

“And research never rests, and curiosity and the desire for more power and still more power consumes all our world.”

“A healthy appetite. I am tired now, as weak and weary and soft as though I had just been born; but presently when I have grown stronger I too may share in that curiosity and take a part in these great discoveries that now set Utopia astir. Who knows?”

He smiled at her kind eyes.

“You will have much to learn,” she said.

She seemed to measure her own failure as she said these words.

Some sense of the profound differences that three thousand years of progress might have made in the fundamental ideas and ways of thinking of the race dawned upon Mr. Barnstaple’s mind. He remembered that in Utopia he heard only the things he could understand, and that all that found no place in his terrestrial circle of ideas was inaudible to his mind. The gulfs of misunderstanding might be wider and deeper than he was assuming. A totally illiterate Gold Coast negro trying to master thermo-electricity would have set himself a far more hopeful task.

“After all it is not the new discoveries that I want to share,” he said; “quite possibly they are altogether beyond me; it is this perfect, beautiful daily life, this life of all the dreams of my own time come true, that I want. I just want to be alive here. That will be enough for me.”

“You are weak and tired yet,” said Lychnis. “When you are stronger you may face other ideas.”

“But what other ideas — ?”

“Your mind may turn back to your own world and your own life.”

“Go back to Earth!”

Lychnis looked out at the twilight again for a while before she turned to him with, “You are an Earthling born and made. What else

can you be?”

“What else can I be?” Mr. Barnstaple’s mind rested upon that, and he lay feeling rather than thinking amidst its implications as the pinpoint lights of Utopia pricked the darkling blue below and ran into chains and groups and coalesced into nebulous patches.

He resisted the truth below her words. This glorious world of Utopia, perfect and assured, poised ready for tremendous adventures amidst untravelled universes, was a world of sweet giants and uncompanionable beauty, a world of enterprises in which a poor muddy-witted, weak-willed Earthling might neither help nor share. They had plundered their planet as one empties a purse; they thrust out their power amidst the stars... They were kind. They were very kind... But they were different...

II. — A LOITERER IN A LIVING WORLD

§ 1

In a few days Mr. Barnstaple had recovered strength of body and mind. He no longer lay in bed in a loggia, filled with self-pity and the beauty of a world subdued; he went about freely and was soon walking long distances over the Utopian countryside, seeking acquaintances and learning more and more of this wonderland of accomplished human desires.

For that is how it most impressed him. Nearly all the greater evils of human life had been conquered; war, pestilence and malaise, famine and poverty had been swept out of human experience. The dreams of artists, of perfected and lovely bodies and of a world transfigured to harmony and beauty had been realized; the spirits of order and organization ruled triumphant. Every aspect of human life had been changed by these achievements.

The climate of this Valley of Rest was bland and sunny like the climate of South Europe, but nearly everything characteristic of the Italian or Spanish scene had gone. Here were no bent and aged crones carrying burthens, no chattering pursuit by beggars, no ragged workers lowering by the wayside. The puny terracing, the distressing accumulations of hand cultivation, the gnarled olives, hacked vines, the little patches of grain or fruit, and the grudged litigious irrigation of those primitive conditions, gave place to sweeping schemes of conservation, to a broad and subtle handling of slope and soil and sunshine. No meagre goats nor sheep, child-tended, cropped among the stones, no tethered cattle ate their apportioned circles of herbage and no more. There were no hovels by the wayside, no shrines with tortured, blood-oozing images, no slinking mis-begotten curs nor beaten beasts sweating and panting between their overloaded paniers at the steeper places of rutted, rock-strewn and dung-strewn roads. Instead the great smooth indestructible ways swept in easy gradients through the land, leaping gorges and crossing valleys upon wide-arched viaducts, piercing cathedral-like aisles through the hillsides, throwing off bastions to command some special splendour of the

land. Here were resting places and shelters, stairways clambering to pleasant arbours and summer-houses where friends might talk and lovers shelter and rejoice. Here were groves and avenues of such trees as he had never seen before. For on earth as yet there is scarcely such a thing as an altogether healthy fully grown tree, nearly all our trees are bored and consumed by parasites, rotten and tumorous with fungi, more gnarled and crippled and disease-twisted even than mankind.

The landscape had absorbed the patient design of five-and-twenty centuries. In one place Mr. Barnstaple found great works in progress; a bridge was being replaced, not because it was outworn, but because someone had produced a bolder, more delightful design.

For a time he did not observe the absence of telephonic or telegraphic communication; the posts and wires that mark a modern countryside had disappeared. The reasons for that difference he was to learn later. Nor did he at first miss the railway, the railway station and the wayside inn. He perceived that the frequent buildings must have specific functions, that people came and went from them with an appearance of interest and preoccupation, that from some of them seemed to come a hum and whir of activity; work of many sorts was certainly in progress; but his ideas of the mechanical organization of this new world were too vague and tentative as yet for him to attempt to fix any significance to this sort of place or that. He walked agape like a savage in a garden.

He never came to nor saw any towns. The reason for any such close accumulations of human beings had largely disappeared. In certain places, he learnt, there were gatherings of people for studies, mutual stimulation, or other convenient exchanges, in great series of communicating buildings; but he never visited any of these centres.

And about this world went the tall people of Utopia, fair and wonderful, smiling or making some friendly gesture as they passed him but giving him little chance for questions or intercourse. They travelled swiftly in machines upon the high road or walked, and ever and again the shadow of a silent soaring aeroplane would pass over him. He went a little in awe of these people and felt himself a queer creature when he met their eyes. For like the gods of Greece and Rome theirs was a cleansed and perfected humanity, and it seemed to

him that they were gods. Even the great tame beasts that walked freely about this world had a certain divinity that checked the expression of Mr. Barnstaple's friendliness.

§ 2

Presently he found a companion for his rambles, a boy of thirteen, a cousin of Lychnis, named Crystal. He was a curly-headed youngster, brown-eyed as she was; and he was reading history in a holiday stage of his education.

So far as Mr. Barnstaple could gather the more serious part of his intellectual training was in mathematical work interrelated to physical and chemical science, but all that was beyond an Earthling's range of ideas. Much of this work seemed to be done in co-operation with other boys, and to be what we should call research on earth. Nor could Mr. Barnstaple master the nature of some other sort of study which seemed to turn upon refinements of expression. But the history brought them together. The boy was just learning about the growth of the Utopian social system out of the efforts and experiences of the Ages of Confusion. His imagination was alive with the tragic struggles upon which the present order of Utopia was founded, he had a hundred questions for Mr. Barnstaple, and he was full of explicit information which was destined presently to sink down and become part of the foundations of his adult mind. Mr. Barnstaple was as good as a book to him, and he was as good as a guide to Mr. Barnstaple. They went about together talking upon a footing of the completest equality, this rather exceptionally intelligent Earthling and this Utopian stripling, who topped him by perhaps an inch when they stood side by side.

The boy had the broad facts of Utopian history at his fingers' ends. He could explain and find an interest in explaining how artificial and upheld the peace and beauty of Utopia still were. Utopians were in essence, he said, very much what their ancestors had been in the beginnings of the newer stone-age, fifteen thousand or twenty thousand years ago. They were still very much what Earthlings had been in the corresponding period. Since then there had

been only six hundred or seven hundred generations and no time for any very fundamental changes in the race. There had not been even a general admixture of races. On Utopia as on earth there had been dusky and brown peoples, and they remained distinct. The various races mingled socially but did not interbreed very much; rather they purified and intensified their racial gifts and beauties. There was often very passionate love between people of contrasted race, but rarely did such love come to procreation. There had been a certain deliberate elimination of ugly, malignant, narrow, stupid and gloomy types during the past dozen centuries or so; but except for the fuller realization of his latent possibilities, the common man in Utopia was very little different from the ordinary energetic and able people of a later stone-age or early bronze-age community. They were infinitely better nourished, trained and educated, and mentally and physically their condition was clean and fit, but they were the same flesh and nature as we are.

"But," said Mr. Barnstaple, and struggled with that idea for a time. "Do you mean to tell me that half the babies born on earth to-day might grow to be such gods as these people I meet?"

"Given our air, given our atmosphere."

"Given your heritage."

"Given our freedom."

In the past of Utopia, in the Age of Confusion, Mr. Barnstaple had to remember, everyone had grown up with a crippled or a thwarted will, hampered by vain restrictions or misled by plausible delusions. Utopia still bore it in mind that human nature was fundamentally animal and savage and had to be adapted to social needs, but Utopia had learnt the better methods of adaptation — after endless failures of compulsion, cruelty and deception. "On Earth we tame our animals with hot irons and our fellow men by violence and fraud," said Mr. Barnstaple, and described the schools and books, newspapers and public discussions of the early twentieth century to his incredulous companion. "You cannot imagine how beaten and fearful even decent people are upon Earth. You learn of the Age of Confusion in your histories but you do not know what the realities of a bad mental atmosphere, an atmosphere of feeble laws, hates and superstitions, are. As night goes round the Earth always there are

hundreds of thousands of people who should be sleeping, lying awake, fearing a bully, fearing a cruel competition, dreading lest they cannot make good, ill of some illness they cannot comprehend, distressed by some irrational quarrel, maddened by some thwarted instinct or some suppressed and perverted desire.”...

Crystal admitted that it was hard to think now of the Age of Confusion in terms of misery. Much of the every-day misery of Earth was now inconceivable. Very slowly Utopia had evolved its present harmony of law and custom and education. Man was no longer crippled and compelled; it was recognized that he was fundamentally an animal and that his daily life must follow the round of appetites satisfied and instincts released. The daily texture of Utopian life was woven of various and interesting foods and drinks, of free and entertaining exercise and work, of sweet sleep and of the interest and happiness of fearless and spiteless love-making. Inhibition was at a minimum. But where the power of Utopian education began was after the animal had been satisfied and disposed of. The jewel on the reptile’s head that had brought Utopia out of the confusions of human life, was curiosity, the play impulse, prolonged and expanded in adult life into an insatiable appetite for knowledge and an habitual creative urgency. All Utopians had become as little children, learners and makers.

It was strange to hear this boy speaking so plainly and clearly of the educational process to which he was being subjected, and particularly to find he could talk so frankly of love.

An earthly bashfulness almost prevented Mr. Barnstaple from asking, “But you — You do not make Love?”

“I have had curiosities,” said the boy, evidently saying what he had been taught to say. “But it is not necessary nor becoming to make love too early in life nor to let desire take hold of one. It weakens youth to become too early possessed by desire — which often will not leave one again. It spoils and cripples the imagination. I want to do good work as my father has done before me.”

Mr. Barnstaple glanced at the beautiful young profile at his side and was suddenly troubled by memories of a certain study number four at school, and of some ugly phases of his adolescence, the stuffy, secret room, the hot and ugly fact. He felt a beastlier Earthling

than ever. “Heigho!” he sighed. “But this world of yours is as clean as starlight and as sweet as cold water on a dusty day.”

“Many people I love,” said the boy, “but not with passion. Some day that will come. But one must not be too eager and anxious to meet passionate love or one might make-believe and give or snatch at a sham... There is no hurry. No one will prevent me when my time comes. All good things come to one in this world in their own good time.”

But work one does not wait for; one’s work, since it concerns one’s own self only, one goes to meet. Crystal thought very much about the work that he might do. It seemed to Mr. Barnstaple that work, in the sense of uncongenial toil, had almost disappeared from Utopia. Yet all Utopia was working. Everyone was doing work that fitted natural aptitudes and appealed to the imagination of the worker. Everyone worked happily and eagerly — as those people we call geniuses do on our Earth.

For suddenly Mr. Barnstaple found himself telling Crystal of the happiness of the true artist, of the true scientific worker, of the original man even on earth as it is to-day. They, too, like the Utopians, do work that concerns themselves and is in their own nature for great ends. Of all Earthlings they are the most enviable.

“If such men are not happy on earth,” said Mr. Barnstaple, “it is because they are touched with vulgarity and still heed the soiled successes and honours and satisfactions of vulgar men, still feel neglect and limitation that should concern them no more. But to him who has seen the sun shine in Utopia surely the utmost honour and glory of earth can signify no more and be no more desirable than the complimentary spittle of the chieftain and a string of barbaric beads.”

§ 3

Crystal was still of an age to be proud of his savoir faire. He showed Mr. Barnstaple his books and told him of his tutors and exercises.

Utopia still made use of printed books; books were still the simplest, clearest way of bringing statement before a tranquil mind. Crystal’s books were very beautifully bound in flexible leather that

his mother had tooled for him very prettily, and they were made of hand-made paper. The lettering was some fluent phonetic script that Mr. Barnstaple could not understand. It reminded him of Arabic; and frequent sketches, outline maps and diagrams were interpolated. Crystal was advised in his holiday reading by a tutor for whom he prepared a sort of exercise report, and he supplemented his reading by visits to museums; but there was no educational museum convenient in the Valley of Peace for Mr. Barnstaple to visit.

Crystal had passed out of the opening stage of education which was carried on, he said, upon large educational estates given up wholly to the lives of children. Education up to eleven or twelve seemed to be much more carefully watched and guarded and taken care of in Utopia than upon earth. Shocks to the imagination, fear and evil suggestions were warded off as carefully as were infection and physical disaster; by eight or nine the foundations of a Utopian character were surely laid, habits of cleanliness, truth, candour and helpfulness, confidence in the world, fearlessness and a sense of belonging to the great purpose of the race.

Only after nine or ten did the child go outside the garden of its early growth and begin to see the ordinary ways of the world. Until that age the care of the children was largely in the hands of nurses and teachers, but after that time the parents became more of a factor than they had been in a youngster's life. It was always a custom for the parents of a child to be near and to see that child in its nursery days, but just when earthly parents tended to separate from their children as they went away to school or went into business, Utopian parentage grew to be something closer. There was an idea in Utopia that between parent and child there was a necessary temperamental sympathy; children looked forward to the friendship and company of their parents, and parents looked forward to the interest of their children's adolescence, and though a parent had practically no power over a son or daughter, he or she took naturally the position of advocate, adviser and sympathetic friend. The friendship was all the franker and closer because of that lack of power, and all the easier because age for age the Utopians were so much younger and fresher-minded than Earthlings. Crystal it seemed had a very great passion for his mother. He was very proud of his father, who was a

wonderful painter and designer; but it was his mother who possessed the boy's heart.

On his second walk with Mr. Barnstaple he said he was going to hear from his mother, and Mr. Barnstaple was shown the equivalent of correspondence in Utopia. Crystal carried a little bundle of wires and light rods; and presently coming to a place where a pillar stood in the midst of a lawn he spread this affair out like a long cat's cradle and tapped a little stud in the pillar with a key that he carried on a light gold chain about his neck. Then he took up a receiver attached to his apparatus, and spoke aloud and listened and presently heard a voice.

It was a very pleasant woman's voice; it talked to Crystal for a time without interruption, and then Crystal talked back, and afterwards there were other voices, some of which Crystal answered and some which he heard without replying. Then he gathered up his apparatus again.

This Mr. Barnstaple learnt was the Utopian equivalent of letter and telephone. For in Utopia, except by previous arrangement, people do not talk together on the telephone. A message is sent to the station of the district in which the recipient is known to be, and there it waits until he chooses to tap his accumulated messages. And any that one wishes to repeat can be repeated. Then he talks back to the senders and dispatches any other messages he wishes. The transmission is wireless. The little pillars supply electric power for transmission or for any other purpose the Utopians require. For example, the gardeners resort to them to run their mowers and diggers and rakes and rollers.

Far away across the valley Crystal pointed out the district station at which this correspondence gathered and was dispersed. Only a few people were on duty there; almost all the connexions were automatic. The messages came and went from any part of the planet.

This set Mr. Barnstaple going upon a long string of questions.

He discovered for the first time that the message organization of Utopia had a complete knowledge of the whereabouts of every soul upon the planet. It had a record of every living person and it knew in what message district he was. Everyone was indexed and noted.

To Mr. Barnstaple, accustomed to the crudities and dishonesties

of earthly governments, this was an almost terrifying discovery. “On earth that would be the means of unending blackmail and tyranny,” he said. “Everyone would lie open to espionage. We had a fellow at Scotland Yard. If he had been in your communication department would have made life in Utopia intolerable in week. You cannot imagine the nuisance he was.”...

Mr. Barnstaple had to explain to Crystal what blackmail meant. It was like that in Utopia to begin with, Crystal said. Just as on earth so in Utopia there was the same natural disposition to use knowledge and power to the disadvantage of one’s fellows, and the same jealousy of having one’s personal facts known. In the stone-age in Utopia men kept their true names secret and could only be spoken of by nicknames. They feared magic abuses. “Some savages still do that on earth,” said Mr. Barnstaple. It was only very slowly that Utopians came to trust doctors and dentists and only very slowly that doctors and dentists became trustworthy. It was a matter of scores of centuries before the chief abuses of the confidences and trusts necessary to a modern social organization could be effectively corrected.

Every young Utopian had to learn the Five Principles of Liberty, without which civilization is impossible. The first was the Principle of Privacy. This is that all individual personal facts are private between the citizen and the public organization to which he entrusts them, and can be used only for his convenience and with his sanction. Of course all such facts are available for statistical uses, but not as individual personal facts. And the second principle is the Principle of Free Movement. A citizen, subject to the due discharge of his public obligations, may go without permission or explanation to any part of the Utopian planet. All the means of transport are freely at his service. Every Utopian may change his surroundings, his climate and his social atmosphere as he will. The third principle is the Principle of Unlimited Knowledge. All that is known in Utopia, except individual personal facts about living people, is on record and as easily available as a perfected series of indices, libraries, museums and inquiry offices can make it. Whatever the Utopian desires to know he may know with the utmost clearness, exactness and facility so far as his powers of knowing and his industry go. Nothing is kept

from him and nothing is misrepresented to him. And that brought Mr. Barnstaple to the fourth Principle of Liberty, which was that Lying is the Blackest Crime.

Crystal's definition of Lying was a sweeping one; the inexact statement of facts, even the suppression of a material fact, was lying.

"Where there are lies there cannot be freedom."

Mr. Barnstaple was mightily taken by this idea. It seemed at once quite fresh to him and one that he had always unconsciously entertained. Half the difference between Utopia and our world he asserted lay in this, that our atmosphere was dense and poisonous with lies and shams.

"When one comes to think of it," said Mr. Barnstaple, and began to expatiate to Crystal upon all the falsehoods of human life. The fundamental assumptions of earthly associations were still largely lies, false assumptions of necessary and unavoidable differences in flags and nationality, pretences of function and power in monarchy; impostures of organized learning, religious and moral dogmas and shams. And one must live in it; one is a part of it. You are restrained, taxed, distressed and killed by these insane unrealities. "Lying the Primary Crime! How simple that is! how true and necessary it is! That dogma is the fundamental distinction of the scientific world-state from all preceding states." And going on from that Mr. Barnstaple launched out into a long and loud tirade against the suppression and falsifications of earthly newspapers.

It was a question very near his heart. The London newspapers had ceased to be impartial vehicles of news; they omitted, they mutilated, they misstated. They were no better than propaganda rags. Rags! Nature, within its field, was shiningly accurate and full, but that was a purely scientific paper; it did not touch the every-day news. The Press, he held, was the only possible salt of contemporary life, and if the salt had lost its savour — !

The poor man found himself orating as though he was back at his Sydenham breakfast-table after a bad morning's paper.

"Once upon a time Utopia was in just such a tangle," said Crystal consolingly. "But there is a proverb, 'Truth comes back where once she has visited.' You need not trouble so much as you do. Some day even your press may grow clear."

“How do *you* manage about newspapers and criticism?” said Mr. Barnstaple.

Crystal explained that there was a complete distinction between news and discussion in Utopia. There were houses — one was in sight — which were used as reading-rooms. One went to these places to learn the news. Thither went the reports of all the things that were happening on the planet, things found, things discovered, things done. The reports were made as they were needed; there were no advertisement contracts to demand the same bulk of news every day. For some time Crystal said the reports had been very full and amusing about the Earthlings, but he had not been reading the paper for many days because of the interest in history the Earthling affair had aroused in him. There was always news of fresh scientific discoveries that stirred the imagination. One frequent item of public interest and excitement was the laying out of some wide scheme of research. The new spatial work that Arden and Greenlake had died for was producing much news. And when people died in Utopia it was the custom to tell the story of their lives. Crystal promised to take Mr. Barnstaple to a news place and entertain him by reading him some of the Utopian descriptions of earthly life which had been derived from the Earthlings, and Mr. Barnstaple asked that when this was done he might also hear about Arden and Greenlake, who had been not only great discoverers, but great lovers, and of Serpentine and Cedar, for whom he had conceived an intense admiration. Utopian news lacked of course the high spice of an earthly newspaper; the intriguing murders and amusing misbehaviours, the entertaining and exciting consequences of sexual ignorance and sexual blunderings, the libel cases and detected swindles, the great processional movements of Royalty across the general traffic, and the romantic fluctuations of the stock exchange and sport. But where the news of Utopia lacked liveliness, the liveliness of discussion made up for it. For the Fifth Principle of Liberty in Utopia was Free Discussion and Criticism.

Any Utopian was free to criticize and discuss anything in the whole universe provided he told no lies about it directly or indirectly; he could be as respectful or disrespectful as he pleased; he could propose anything however subversive. He could break into poetry or

fiction as he chose. He could express himself in any literary form he liked or by sketch or caricature as the mood took him. Only he must refrain from lying; that was the one rigid rule of controversy. He could get what he had to say printed and distributed to the news rooms. There it was read or neglected as the visitors chanced to approve of it or not. Often if they liked what they read they would carry off a copy with them. Crystal had some new fantastic fiction about the exploration of space among his books; imaginative stories that boys were reading very eagerly; they were pamphlets of thirty or forty pages printed on a beautiful paper that he said was made directly from flax and certain reeds. The librarians noted what books and papers were read and taken away, and these they replaced with fresh copies. The piles that went unread were presently reduced to one or two copies and the rest went back to the pulping mills. But many of the poets and philosophers, and story-tellers whose imaginations found no wide popularity were nevertheless treasured and their memories kept alive by a few devoted admirers.

§ 4

"I am not at all clear in my mind about one thing," said Mr. Barnstaple. "I have seen no coins and nothing like money passing in this world. By all outward appearance this might be a Communism such as was figured in a book we used to value on Earth, a book called News from Nowhere by an Earthling named William Morris. It was a graceful impossible book. In that dream everyone worked for the joy of working and took what he needed. But I have never believed in Communism because I recognize, as here in Utopia you seem to recognize, the natural fierceness and greediness of the untutored man. There is joy in creation for others to use, but no natural joy in unrequited service. The sense of justice to himself is greater in man than the sense of service. Somehow here you must balance the work anyone does for Utopia against what he destroys or consumes. How do you do it?"

Crystal considered. "There were Communists in Utopia in the Last Age of Confusion. In some parts of our planet they tried to

abolish money suddenly and violently and brought about great economic confusion and want and misery. To step straight to communism failed — very tragically. And yet Utopia to-day is practically a communism, and except by way of curiosity I have never had a coin in my hand in all my life."

In Utopia just as upon earth, he explained, money came as a great discovery; as a method of freedom. Hitherto, before the invention of money, all service between man and man had been done through bondage or barter. Life was a thing of slavery and narrow choice. But money opened up the possibilility of giving a worker a free choice in his reward. It took Utopia three thousand years and more to realize that possibility. The idea of money abounded in pitfalls and was easily corruptible; Utopia floundered its way to economic lucidity through long centuries of credit and debt, false and debased money; extravagant usury and every possibility of speculative abuse. In the matter of money more than in any other human concern, human cunning has set itself most vilely and treacherously to prey upon human necessity. Utopia once carried, as earth carries now, a load of parasitic souls, speculators, forestallers, gamblers and bargain-pressing Shylocks, exacting every conceivable advantage out of the weaknesses of the monetary system; she had needed centuries of economic sanitation. It was only when Utopia had got to the beginnings of world-wide political unity and when there were sufficiently full statistics of world resources and world production, that human society could at last give the individual worker the assurance of a coin of steadfast significance, a coin that would mean for him to-day or to-morrow or at any time the certainty of a set quantity of elemental values. And with peace throughout the planet and increasing social stability, interest, which is the measure of danger and uncertainty, dwindled at last to nothing. Banking became a public service perforce, because it no longer offered profit to the individual banker. "Rentier classes," Crystal conveyed, "are not a permanent element in any community. They mark a phase of transition between a period of insecurity and high interest and a period of complete security and no interest. They are a dawn phenomenon."

Mr. Barnstaple digested this statement after an interval of

incredulity. He satisfied himself by a few questions that young Utopia really had some idea of what a rentier class was, what its moral and imaginative limitations were likely to be and the role it may have played in the intellectual development of the world by providing a class of independent minds.

"Life is intolerant of all independent classes," said Crystal, evidently repeating an axiom. "Either you must earn or you must rob... We have got rid of robbing."

The youngster still speaking by his book went on to explain how the gradual disuse of money came about. It was an outcome of the general progressive organization of the economic system, the substitution of collective enterprises for competitive enterprises and of wholesale for retail dealing. There had been a time in Utopia when money changed hands at each little transaction and service. One paid money if one wanted a newspaper or a match or a bunch of flowers or a ride on a street conveyance. Everybody went about the world with pockets full of small coins paying on every slight occasion. Then as economic science became more stable and exact the methods of the club and the covering subscription extended. People were able to buy passes that carried them by all the available means of transport for a year or for ten years or for life. The State learnt from clubs and hotels provide matches, newspapers, stationery and transport for a fixed annual charge. The same inclusive system spread from small and incidental things great and essential matters, to housing and food and even clothing. The State postal system knew where every Utopian citizen was, was presently able in conjunction with the public banking system to guarantee his credit in any part of the world. People ceased to draw coin for their work; the various departments of service, and of economic, educational and scientific activity would credit the individual with his earnings in the public bank an debit him with his customary charges for all the normal services of life.

"Something of this sort is going on on earth even now," said Mr. Barnstaple. "We use money in the last resort, but a vast volume of our business is already a matter of book-keeping."

Centuries of unity and energy had given Utopia very complete control of many fountains of natural energy upon the planet, and this

was the heritage of every child born therein. He was credited at his birth with a sum sufficient to educate and maintain him up to four-or five-and-twenty, and then he was expected to choose some occupation to replenish his account.

"But if he doesn't?" said Mr. Barnstaple.

"Everyone does."

"But if he didn't?"

"He'd be miserable and uncomfortable. I've never heard of such a case. I suppose he'd be discussed. Psychologists might examine him... But one must do something."

"But suppose Utopia had no work for him to do?"

Crystal could not imagine that. "There is always something to be done."

"But in Utopia once, in the old times, you had unemployment?"

"That was part of the Confusion. There was a sort of hypertrophy of debt; it had become paralysis. Why, when they had unemployment at that same time there was neither enough houses nor food nor clothing. They had unemployment and shortage at one and the same time. It is incredible."

"Does everyone earn about the same amount of pay?"

"Energetic and creative people are often given big grants if they seem to need the help of others or a command of natural resources... And artists sometimes grow rich if their work is much desired."

"Such a gold chain as yours you had to buy?"

"From the maker in his shop. My mother bought it."

"Then there are shops?"

"You shall see some. Places where people go to see new and delightful things."

"And if an artist grows rich, what can he do with his money?"

"Take time and material to make some surpassingly beautiful thing to leave the world. Or collect and help with the work of other artists. Or do whatever else he pleases to teach and fine the common sense of beauty in Utopia. Or just do nothing... Utopia can afford it — if he can."

“Cedar and Lion,” said Mr. Barnstaple, “explained to the rest of us how it is that your government is as it were broken up and dispersed among the people who have special knowledge of the matters involved. The balance between interests, we gathered, was maintained by those who studied the general psychology and the educational organization of Utopia. At first it was very strange to our earthly minds that there should be nowhere a pretended omniscience and a practical omnipotence, that is to say a sovereign thing, a person or an assembly whose fiat was final. Mr. Burleigh and Mr. Catskill thought that such a thing was absolutely necessary, and so, less surely, did I. ‘Who will decide?’ was their riddle. They expected to be taken to see the President or the Supreme Council of Utopia. I suppose it seems to you the most natural of things that there should be nothing of the sort, and that a question should go simply and naturally to the man who knows best about it.”

“Subject to free criticism,” said Crystal.

“Subject to the same process that has made him eminent and responsible. But don’t people thrust themselves forward even here — out of vanity? And don’t people get thrust forward in front of the best — out of spite?”

“There is plenty of spite and vanity in every Utopian soul,” said Crystal. “But people speak very plainly and criticism is very searching and free. So that we learn to search our motives before we praise or question.”

“What you say and do shows up here plainly at its true value,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “You cannot throw mud in the noise and darkness unchallenged or get a false claim acknowledged in the disorder.”

“Some years ago there was a man, an artist, who made a great trouble about the work of my father. Often artistic criticism is very bitter here, but he was bitter beyond measure. He caricatured my father and abused him incessantly. He followed him from place to place. He tried to prevent the allocation of material to him. He was quite ineffective. Some people answered him, but for the most part he was disregarded...”

The boy stopped short.

“Well?”

“He killed himself. He could not escape from his own foolishness. Everyone knew what he had said and done...”

“But in the past there were kings and councils and conferences in Utopia,” said Mr. Barnstaple, returning to the main point.

“My books teach me that our state could have grown up in no other way. We had to have these general dealers in human relationship, politicians and lawyers, as a necessary stage in political and social development. Just as we had to have soldiers and policemen to save people from mutual violence. It was only very slowly that politicians and lawyers came to admit the need for special knowledge in the things they had to do. Politicians would draw boundaries without any proper knowledge of ethnology or economic geography, and lawyers decide about will and purpose with the crudest knowledge of psychology. They produced the most preposterous and unworkable arrangements in the gravest fashion.”

“Like Tristram Shandy’s parish bull — which set about begetting the peace of the world at Versailles,” said Mr. Barnstaple.

Crystal looked puzzled.

“A complicated allusion to a purely earthly matter,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “This complete diffusion of the business of politics and law among the people with knowledge, is one of the most interesting things of all to me in this world. Such a diffusion is beginning upon earth. The people who understand world-health for instance are dead against political and legal methods, and so are many of our best economists. And most people never go into a law court, and wouldn’t dream of doing so upon business of their own, from their cradles to their graves. What became of your politicians and lawyers? Was there a struggle?”

“As light grew and intelligence spread they became more and more evidently unnecessary. They met at last only to appoint men of knowledge as assessors and so forth, and after a time even these appointments became foregone conclusions. Their activities melted into the general body of criticism and discussion. In places there are still old buildings that used to be council chambers and law courts. The last politician to be elected to a legislative assembly died in Utopia about a thousand years ago. He was an eccentric and garrulous old gentleman; he was the only candidate and one man

voted for him, and he insisted upon assembling in solitary state and having all his speeches and proceedings taken down in shorthand. Boys and girls who were learning stenography used to go to report him. Finally he was dealt with as a mental case."

"And the last judge?"

"I have not learnt about the last judge," said Crystal. "I must ask my tutor. I suppose there was one, but I suppose nobody asked him to judge anything. So he probably got something more respectable to do."

§ 6

"I begin to apprehend the daily life of this world," said Mr. Barnstaple. "It is a life of demi-gods, very free, strongly individualized, each following an individual bent, each contributing to great racial ends. It is not only cleanly naked and sweet and lovely but full of personal dignity. It is, I see, a practical communism, planned and led up to through long centuries of education and discipline and collectivist preparation. I had never thought before that socialism could exalt and ennoble the individual and individualism degrade him, but now I see plainly that here the thing is proved. In this fortunate world — it is indeed the crown of all its health and happiness — there is no Crowd. The old world, the world to which I belong, was and in my universe alas still is, the world of the Crowd, the world of that detestable crawling mass of un-featured, infected human beings.

"You have never seen a Crowd, Crystal; and in all your happy life you never will. You have never seen a Crowd going to a football match or a race meeting or a bull-fight or a public execution or the like crowd joy; you have never watched a Crowd wedge and stick in a narrow place or hoot or howl in a crisis. You have never watched it stream sluggishly along the streets to gape at a King, or yell for a war, or yell quite equally for a peace. And you have never seen the Crowd, struck by some Panic breeze, change from Crowd proper to Mob and begin to smash and hunt. All the Crowd celebrations have gone out of this world; all the Crowd's gods, there is no Turf here, no

Sport, no war demonstrations, no Coronations and Public Funerals, no great shows, but only your little theatres... Happy Crystal! who will never see a Crowd!"

"But I have seen Crowds," said Crystal.

"Where?"

"I have seen cinematograph films of Crowds, photographed thirty centuries ago and more. They are shown in our history museums. I have seen Crowds streaming over downs after a great race meeting, photographed from an aeroplane, and Crowds rioting in some public square and being dispersed by the police. Thousands and thousands of swarming people. But it is true what you say. There are no more Crowds in Utopia. Crowds and the crowd-mind have gone for ever."

§ 7

When after some days Crystal had to return to his mathematical studies, his departure left Mr. Barnstaple very lonely. He found no other companion. Lychnis seemed always near him and ready to be with him, but her want of active intellectual interests, so remarkable in this world of vast intellectual activities, estranged him from her. Other Utopians came and went, friendly, amused, polite, but intent upon their own business. They would question him curiously, attend perhaps to a question or so of his own, and depart with an air of being called away.

Lychnis, he began to realize, was one of Utopia's failures. She was a lingering romantic type and she cherished a great sorrow in her heart. She had had two children whom she had loved passionately. They were adorably fearless, and out of foolish pride she had urged them to swim out to sea and they had been taken by a current and drowned. Their father had been drowned in attempting their rescue and Lychnis had very nearly shared their fate. She had been rescued. But her emotional life had stopped short at that point, had, as it were, struck an attitude and remained in it. Tragedy possessed her. She turned her back on laughter and gladness and looked for distress. She had rediscovered the lost passion of pity, first pity for herself and then a desire to pity others. She took no interest any more in vigorous

and complete people, but her mind concentrated upon the consolation to be found in consoling pain and distress in others. She sought her healing in healing them. She did not want to talk to Mr. Barnstaple of the brightness of Utopia; she wanted him to talk to her of the miseries of earth and of his own miseries. That she might sympathize. But he would not tell her of his own miseries because indeed, such was his temperament, he had none; he had only exasperations and regrets.

She dreamt, he perceived, of being able to come to earth and give her beauty and tenderness to the sick and poor. Her heart went out to the spectacle of human suffering and weakness. It went out to these things hungrily and desirously...

Before he detected the drift of her mind he told her many things about human sickness and poverty. But he spoke of these matters not with pity but indignation, as things that ought not to be. And when he perceived how she feasted on these things he spoke of them hardly and cheerfully as things that would presently be swept away. “But they will still have suffered,” she said...

Since she was always close at hand, she filled for him perhaps more than her legitimate space in the Utopian spectacle. She lay across it like a shadow. He thought very frequently about her and about the pity and resentment against life and vigour that she embodied. In a world of fear, weakness, infection, darkness and confusion, pity, the act of charity, the alms and the refuge, the deed of stark devotion, might show indeed like sweet and gracious presences; but in this world of health and brave enterprises, pity betrayed itself a vicious desire. Crystal, Utopian youth, was as hard as his name. When he had slipped one day on some rocks and twisted and torn his ankle, he had limped but he had laughed. When Mr. Barnstaple was winded on a steep staircase Crystal was polite rather than sympathetic. So Lychnis had found no confederate in the dedication of her life to sorrow; even from Mr. Barnstaple she could win no sympathy. He perceived that indeed so far as temperament went he was a better Utopian than she was. To him as to Utopia it seemed rather an occasion for gladness than sorrow that her man and her children had met death fearlessly. They were dead; a brave stark death; the waters still glittered and the sun still shone. But her loss

had revealed some underlying racial taint in her, something very ancient in the species, something that Utopia was still breeding out only very slowly, the dark sacrificial disposition that bows and responds to the shadow. It was strange and yet perhaps it was inevitable that Mr. Barnstaple should meet again in Utopia that spirit which Earth knows so well, the spirit that turns from the Kingdom of Heaven to worship the thorns and the nails, which delights to represent its God not as the Resurrection and the Life but as a woeful and defeated cadaver.

She would talk to him of his sons as if she envied him because of the loss of her own, but all she said reminded him of the educational disadvantages and narrow prospects of his boys and how much stouter and finer and happier their lives would have been in Utopia. He would have risked drowning them a dozen times to have saved them from being clerks and employees of other men. Even by earthly standards he felt now that he had not done his best by them; he had let many things drift in their lives and in the lives of himself and his wife that he now felt he ought to have controlled. Could he have his time over again he felt that he would see to it that his sons took a livelier interest in politics and science and were not so completely engulfed in the trivialities of suburban life, in tennis playing, amateur theatricals, inane flirtations and the like. They were good boys in substance he felt, but he had left them to their mother; and he had left their mother too much to herself instead of battling with her for the sake of his own ideas. They were living trivially in the shadow of one great catastrophe and with no security against another; they were living in a world of weak waste and shabby insufficiency. And is own life also had been — weak waste.

His life at Sydenham began to haunt him. “I criticized everything but I altered nothing,” he said. “I was as bad as Peeve. Was I any more use in that world than I am in this? But on Earth we are all wasters...”

He avoided Lychnis for a day or so and wandered about the valley alone. He went into a great reading-room and fingered books he could not read; he was suffered to stand in a workshop, and he watched an artist make a naked girl of gold more lovely than any earthly statuette and melt her again dissatisfied; here he came upon

men building, and here was work upon the fields, here was a great shaft in the hillside and something deep in the hill that flashed and scintillated strangely; they would not let him go in to it; he saw a thousand things he could not understand. He began to feel as perhaps a very intelligent dog must sometimes feel in the world of men, only that he had no master and no instincts that could find a consolation in canine abjection. The Utopians went about their business in the day-time, they passed him smiling and they filled him with intolerable envy. They knew what to do. They belonged. They went by in twos and threes in the evening, communing together and sometimes singing together. Lovers would pass him, their sweetly smiling faces close together, and his loneliness became an agony of hopeless desires.

Because, though he fought hard to keep it below the threshold of his consciousness, Mr. Barnstaple desired greatly to love and be loved in Utopia. The realization that no one of these people could ever conceive of any such intimacy of body or spirit with him was a humiliation more fundamental even than his uselessness. The loveliness of the Utopian girls and women who glanced at him curiously or passed him with a serene indifference, crushed down his self-respect and made the Utopian world altogether intolerable to him. Mutely, unconsciously, these Utopian goddesses concentrated upon him the uttermost abasement of caste and race inferiority. He could not keep his thoughts from love where everyone it seemed had a lover, and in this Utopian world love for him was a thing grotesque and inconceivable...

Then one night as he lay awake distressed beyond measure by the thought of such things, an idea came to him whereby it seemed to him he might restore his self-respect and win a sort of citizenship in Utopia.

So that they might even speak of him and remember him with interest and sympathy.

III. — THE SERVICE OF THE EARTHLING

§ 1

The man to whom Mr. Barnstaple, after due inquiries, went to talk was named Sungold. He was probably very old, because there were lines of age about his eyes and over his fine brow. He was a ruddy man, bearded with an auburn beard that had streaks of white, and his eyes were brown and nimble under his thick eyebrows. His hair had thinned but little and flowed back like a mane, but its copper-red colour had gone. He sat at a table with papers spread before him, making manuscript notes. He smiled at Mr. Barnstaple, for he had been expecting him, and indicated a seat for him with his stout and freckled hand. Then he waited smilingly for Mr. Barnstaple to begin.

"This world is one triumph of the desire for order and beauty in men's minds," said Mr. Barnstaple. "But it will not tolerate one useless soul in it. Everyone is happily active. Everyone but myself... I belong nowhere. I have nothing to do. And no one — is related to me."

Sungold moved his head slightly to show that he understood.

"It is hard for an Earthling, with an earthly want of training, to fall into any place here. Into any usual work or any usual relationship. One is — a stranger... But it is still harder to have no place at all. In the new work, of which I am told you know most of anyone and are indeed the centre and regulator, it has occurred to me that I might be of some use, that I might indeed be as good as a Utopian... If so, I want to be of use. You may want someone just to risk death — to take the danger of going into some strange place — someone who desires to serve Utopia — and who need not have skill or knowledge — or be a beautiful or able person?"

Mr. Barnstaple stopped short.

Sungold conveyed the completest understanding of all that was in Mr. Barnstaple's mind.

Mr. Barnstaple sat interrogative while for a time Sungold thought.

Then words and phrases began to string themselves together in Mr. Barnstaple's mind.

Sungold wondered if Mr. Barnstaple understood either the extent or the limitations of the great discoveries that were now being made in Utopia. Utopia, he said, was passing into a phase of intense intellectual exaltation. New powers and possibilities intoxicated the imagination of the race, and it was indeed inconceivable that an unteachable and perplexed Earthling could be anything but distressed and uncomfortable amidst the vast strange activities that must now begin. Even many of their own people, the more backward Utopians, were disturbed. For centuries Utopian philosophers and experimentalists had been criticizing, revising and reconstructing their former instinctive and traditional ideas of space and time, of form and substance, and now very rapidly the new ways of thinking were becoming clear and simple and bearing fruit in surprising practical applications. The limitations of space which had seemed for ever insurmountable were breaking down; they were breaking down in a strange and perplexing way but they were breaking down. It was now theoretically possible, it was rapidly becoming practicably possible, to pass from the planet Utopia to which the race had hitherto been confined, to other points in its universe of origin, that is to say to remote planets and distant stars... That was the gist of the present situation.

"I cannot imagine that," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"You cannot imagine it," Sungold agreed, quite cordially. "But it is so. A hundred years ago it was inconceivable — here."

"Do you get there by some sort of backstairs in another dimension?" said Mr. Barnstaple.

Sungold considered this guess. It was a grotesque image, he said, but from the point of view of an Earthling it would serve. That conveyed something of its quality. But it was so much more wonderful...

"A new and astounding phase has begun for life here. We learnt long ago the chief secrets of happiness upon this planet. Life is good in this world. You find it good?... For thousands of years yet it will be our fastness and our home. But the wind of a new adventure blows through our life. All this world is in a mood like striking camp in the winter quarters when spring approaches."

He leant over his papers towards Mr. Barnstaple, and held up a

finger and spoke audible words as if to make his meaning plainer. It seemed to Mr. Barnstaple that each word translated itself into English as he spoke it. At any rate Mr. Barnstaple understood. “The collision of our planet Utopia with your planet Earth was a very curious accident, but an unimportant accident, in this story. I want you to understand that. Your universe and ours are two out of a great number of gravitation-time universes, which are translated together through the inexhaustible infinitude of God. They are similar throughout, but they are identical in nothing. Your planet and ours happen to be side by side, so to speak, but they are not travelling at exactly the same pace nor in a strictly parallel direction. They will drift apart again and follow their several destinies. When Arden and Greenlake made their experiment the chances of their hitting anything in your universe were infinitely remote. They had disregarded it, they were merely rotating some of our matter out of and then back into our universe. You fell into us — as amazingly for us as for you. The importance of our discoveries for us lies in our own universe and not in yours. We do not want to come into your universe nor have more of your world come into ours. You are too like us, and you are too dark and troubled and diseased — you are too contagious — and we, we cannot help you yet because we are not gods but men.”

Mr. Barnstaple nodded.

“What could Utopians do with the men of Earth? We have no strong instinct in us to teach or dominate other adults. That has been bred out of us by long centuries of equality and free co-operation. And you would be too numerous for us to teach and much of your population would be grown up and set in bad habits. Your stupidities would get in our way, your quarrels and jealousies and traditions, your flags and religions and all your embodied spites and suppressions, would hamper us in everything we should want to do. We should be impatient with you, unjust, overbearing. You are too like us for us to be patient with your failures. It would be hard to remember constantly how ill- bred you were. In Utopia we found out long ago that no race of human beings was sufficiently great, subtle and powerful to think and act for any other race. Perhaps already you are finding out the same thing on Earth as your races come into

closer contact. And much more would this be true between Utopia and Earth. From what I know of your people and their ignorance and obstinacies it is clear our people would despise you; and contempt is the cause of all injustice. We might end by exterminating you... But why should we make that possible?... We must leave you alone. We cannot trust ourselves with you... Believe me this is the only reasonable course for us."

Mr. Barnstaple assented silently.

"You and I — two individuals — can be friends and understand."

"What you say is true," said Mr. Barnstaple. "It is true. But it grieves me it is true... Greatly... Nevertheless, I gather, I at least may be of service in Utopia?"

"You can."

"How?"

"By returning to your own world."

Mr. Barnstaple thought for some moments. It was what he had feared. But he had offered himself. "I will do that."

"By attempting to return, I should say. There is risk. You may be killed."

"I must take that."

"We want to verify all the data we have of the relations of our universe to yours. We want to reverse the experiment of Arden and Greenlake and see if we can return a living being to your world. We are almost certain now that we can do so. And that human being must care for us enough and care for his own world enough to go back and give us a sign that he has got there."

Mr. Barnstaple spoke huskily. "I can do that," he said.

"We can put you into that machine of yours and into the clothes you wore. You can be made again exactly as you left your world."

"Exactly. I understand."

"And because your world is vile and contentious and yet has some strangely able brains in it, here and there, we do not want your people to know of us, living so close to you — for we shall be close to you yet for some hundreds of years at least — we do not want them to know for fear that they should come here presently, led by some poor silly genius of a scientific man, come in their greedy, foolish, breeding swarms, hammering at our doors, threatening our

lives, and spoiling our high adventures, and so have to be beaten off and killed like an invasion of rats or parasites."

"Yes," said Mr. Barnstaple. "Before men can come to Utopia, they must learn the way here. Utopia, I see, is only a home for those who have learnt the way."

He paused and answered some of his own thoughts. "When I have returned," he said, "shall I begin to forget Utopia?"

Sungold smiled and said nothing.

"All my days the nostalgia of Utopia will distress me."

"And uphold you."

"I shall take up my earthly life at the point where I laid it down, but — on Earth — I shall be a Utopian. For I feel that having offered my service and had it accepted, that I am no longer an outcast in Utopia. I belong..."

"Remember you may be killed. You may die in the trial."

"As it may happen."

"Well — Brother!"

The friendly paw took Mr. Barnstaple's and pressed it and the deep eyes smiled.

"After you have returned and given us your sign, several of the other Earthlings may also be sent back."

Mr. Barnstaple sat up. "*But*!" he gasped. His voice rose high in amazement. "I thought they were hurled into the blank space of some outer universe and altogether destroyed!"

"Several were killed. They killed themselves by rushing down the side of the old fortress in the outer darkness as the crag rotated. The men in leather. The man you call Long Barrow—"

"Barralonga?"

"Yes. And the man who shrugged his shoulders and said, 'What would you?' The others came back as the rotation was completed late in the day — asphyxiated and frozen but not dead. They have been restored to life, and we are puzzled now how to dispose of them... They are of no use whatever in this world. They encumber us."

"It is only too manifest," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"The man you call Burleigh seems to be of some importance in your earthly affairs. We have searched his mind. His powers of belief are very small. He believes in very little but the life of a cultivated

wealthy gentleman who holds a position of modest distinction in the councils of a largely fictitious empire. It is doubtful if he will believe in the reality of any of this experience. We will make sure anyhow that he thinks it has been an imaginative dream. He will consider it too fantastic to talk about because it is plain he is already very afraid of his imagination. He will find himself back in your world a few days after you reach it and he will make his way to his own home unobtrusively. He will come next after you. You will see him reappear in political affairs. Perhaps a little wiser."

"It might well be," said Mr. Barnstaple.

"And — what are the sounds of his name? — Rupert Catskill; he too will return. Your world would miss him."

"Nothing will make him wiser," said Mr. Barnstaple with conviction.

"Lady Stella will come."

"I am glad she has escaped. She will say nothing about Utopia. She is very discreet."

"The priest is mad. His behaviour became offensive and obscene and he is under restraint."

"What did he do?"

"He made a number of aprons of black silk and set out with them to attack our young people in an undignified manner."

"You can send him back," said Mr. Barnstaple after reflection.

"But will your world allow that sort of thing?"

"*We* call that sort of thing Purity," said Mr. Barnstaple. "But of course if you like to keep him..."

"He shall come back," said Sungold.

"The others you can keep," said Mr. Barnstaple. "In fact you will have to keep them. Nobody on Earth will trouble about them very much. In our world there are so many people that always a few are getting lost. As it is, returning even the few you propose to do may excite attention. Local people may begin to notice all these wanderers coming from nowhere in particular and asking their way home upon the Maidenhead Road. They might give way under questions... You cannot send any more. Put the rest on an island. Or something of that sort. I wish I could advise you to keep the priest also. But many people would miss him. They would suffer from

suppressed Purity and begin to behave queerly. The pulpit of St. Barnabas satisfies a recognized craving. And it will be quite easy to persuade him that Utopia is a dream and delusion. All priests believe that naturally of all Utopias. He will think of it, if he thinks of it at all, as — what would he call it — as a moral nightmare."

§ 2

Their business was finished, but Mr. Barnstaple was loth to go.

He looked Sungold in the eye and found something kindly there.

"You have told me all that I have to do," he said, "and it is fully time that I went away from you, for any moment in your life is more precious than a day of mine. Yet because I am to go so soon and so obediently out of this vast and splendid world of yours back to my native disorders, I could find it in my heart to ask you to unbend if you could, to come down to me a little, and to tell me simply and plainly of the greater days and greater achievements that are now dawning upon this planet. You speak of your being able presently to go out of this Utopia to remote parts in your universe. That perplexes my mind. Probably I am unfitted to grasp that idea, but it is very important to me. It has been a belief in our world that at last there must be an end to life because our sun and planets are cooling, and there seems no hope of escape from the little world upon which we have arisen. We were born with it and we must die with it. That robbed many of us of hope and energy: for why should we work for progress in a world that must freeze and die?"

Sungold laughed. "Your philosophers concluded too soon."

He sprawled over the table towards his hearer and looked him earnestly in the face.

"Your Earthly science has been going on for how long?"

"Two hundred — three hundred years."

Sungold held up two fingers. "And men? How many men?"

"A few hundred who mattered in each generation."

"We have gone on for three thousand years now, and a hundred million good brains have been put like grapes into the wine-press of science. And we know to-day — how little we know. There is never

an observation made but a hundred observations are missed in the making of it; there is never a measurement but some impish truth mocks us and gets away from us in the margin of error. I know something of where your scientific men are, all power to the poor savages! because I have studied the beginnings of our own science in the long past of Utopia. How can I express our distances? Since those days we have examined and tested and tried and retried a score of new ways of thinking about space, of which time is only a specialized form. We have forms of expression that we cannot get over to you so that things that used to seem difficult and paradoxical to us — that probably seem hopelessly difficult and paradoxical to you, lose all their difficulty in our minds. It is hard to convey to you. We think in terms of a space in which the space and time system, in terms of which you think, is only a specialized case. So far as our feelings and instincts and daily habits go we too live in another such system as you do — but not so far as our knowledge goes, not so far as our powers go. Our minds have exceed our lives — as yours will. We are still flesh and blood, still hope and desire, we go to and fro and look up and down, but things that seemed remote are brought near, things that were inaccessible bow down, things that were insurmountable lie under the hollows of our hands."

"And you do not think your race nor, for the matter of that, ours, need ever perish?"

"Perish! We have hardly begun!"

The old man spoke very earnestly. Unconsciously he parodied Newton. "We are like little children who have been brought to the shores of a limitless ocean. All the knowledge we have gathered yet in the few score generations since first we began to gather knowledge, is like a small handful of pebbles gathered upon the shore of that limitless sea.

"Before us lies knowledge, endlessly, and we may take and take, and as we take, grow. We grow in power, we grow in courage. We renew our youth. For mark what I say, our worlds grow younger. The old generations of apes and sub-men before us had aged minds; their narrow reluctant wisdom was the meagre profit, hoarded and stale and sour, of innumerable lives. They dreaded new things; so bitterly did they value the bitterly won old. But to learn is, at length, to

become young again, to be released, to begin afresh. Your world, compared with ours, is a world of unteachable encrusted souls, of bent and droning traditions, of hates and injuries and such-like unforgettable things. But some day you too will become again like little children, and it will be you who will find your way through to us — to us, who will be waiting for you. Two universes will meet and embrace, to beget a yet greater universe... You Earthlings do not begin to realize yet the significance of life. Nor we Utopians — scarcely more... Life is still only a promise, still waits to be born, out of such poor stirrings in the dust as we...

"Some day here and everywhere, Life of which you and I are but anticipatory atoms and eddies, Life will awaken indeed, one and whole and marvellous, like a child awaking to conscious life. It will open its drowsy eyes and stretch itself and smile, looking the mystery of God in the face as one meets the morning sun. We shall be there then, all that matters of us, you and I...

"And it will be no more than a beginning, no more than a beginning..."

IV. — THE RETURN OF THE EARTHLING

§ 1

Too soon the morning came when Mr. Barnstaple was to look his last upon the fair hills of Utopia and face the great experiment to which he had given himself. He had been loth to sleep and he had slept little that night, and in the early dawn he was abroad, wearing for the last time the sandals and the light white robe that had become his Utopian costume. Presently he would have to struggle into socks and boots and trousers and collar; the strangest gear. It would choke him he felt, and he stretched his bare arms to the sky and yawned and breathed his lungs full. The valley below still drowsed beneath a coverlet of fleecy mists; he turned his face uphill, the sooner to meet the sun.

Never before had he been out among the Utopian flowers at such an early hour; it was amusing to see how some of the great trumpets still drooped asleep and how many of the larger blossoms were furled and hung. Many of the leaves too were wrapped up, as limp as new-hatched moths. The gossamer spiders had been busy and everything was very wet with dew. A great tiger came upon him suddenly out of a side path and stared hard at him for some moments with round yellow eyes. Perhaps it was trying to remember the forgotten instincts of its breed.

Some way up the road he passed under a vermilion archway and went up a flight of stone stairs that promised to bring him earlier to the crest.

A number of friendly little birds, very gaily coloured, flew about him for a time and one perched impudently upon his shoulder, but when he put up his hand to caress it it evaded him and flew away. He was still ascending the staircase when the sun rose. It was as if the hillside slipped off a veil of grey and blue and bared the golden beauty of its body.

Mr. Barnstaple came to a landing place upon the staircase and stopped, and stood very still watching the sunrise search and quicken the brooding deeps of the valley below.

Far away, like an arrow shot from east to west, appeared a line of dazzling brightness on the sea.

§ 2

“Serenity,” he murmured. “Beauty. All the works of men — in perfect harmony...minds brought to harmony...”

According to his journalistic habit he tried over phrases. “An energetic peace...confusions dispersed... A world of spirits, crystal clear...”

What was the use of words?

For a time he stood quite still listening, for from some slope above a lark had gone heavenward, spraying sweet notes. He tried to see that little speck of song and was blinded by the brightening blue of the sky.

Presently the lark came down and ceased. Utopia was silent, except for a burst of childish laughter somewhere on the hillside below.

It dawned upon Mr. Barnstaple how peaceful was the Utopian air in comparison with the tormented atmosphere of Earth. Here was no yelping and howling of tired or irritated dogs, no braying, bellowing, squealing and distressful outcries of uneasy beasts, no farmyard clamour, no shouts of anger, no barking and coughing, no sounds of hammering, beating, sawing, grinding, mechanical hooting, whistling, screaming and the like, no clattering of distant trains, clanking of automobiles or other ill-contrived mechanisms; the tiresome and ugly noises of many an unpleasant creature were heard no more. In Utopia the ear like the eye was at peace. The air which had once been a mud of felted noises was now — a purified silence. Such sounds as one heard lay upon it like beautiful printing on a generous sheet of fine paper.

His eyes returned to the landscape below as the last fleecy vestiges of mist dissolved away. Water-tanks, roads, bridges, buildings, embankments, colonnades, groves, gardens, channels, cascades and fountains grew multitudinously clear, framed under a branch of dark foliage from a white- stemmed tree that gripped a

hold among the rocks at his side.

“Three thousand years ago this was a world like ours... Think of it — in a hundred generations... In three thousand years we might make our poor waste of an Earth, jungle and desert, slag-heap and slum, into another such heaven of beauty and power...

“Worlds they are — similar, but not the same...

“If I could tell them what I have seen!...

“Suppose all men could have this vision of Utopia...

“They would not believe it if I told them. No...

“They would bray like asses at me and bark like dogs!... They will have no world but their own world. It hurts them to think of any world but their own. Nothing can be done that has not been done already. To think otherwise would be humiliation... Death, torture, futility — anything but humiliation! So they must sit among their weeds and excrement, scratching and nodding sagely at one another, hoping for a good dog-fight and to gloat upon pain and effort they do not share, sure that mankind stank, stinks and must always stink, that stinking is very pleasant indeed, and that there is nothing new under the sun...”

His thoughts were diverted by two young girls who came running one after the other up the staircase. One was dark even to duskiness and her hands were full of blue flowers; the other who pursued her was a year or so younger and golden fair. They were full of the limitless excitement of young animals at play. The former one was so intent upon the other that she discovered Mr. Barnstaple with a squeak of surprise after she had got to his landing. She stared at him with a quick glance of inquiry, flashed into impudent roguery, flung two blue flowers in his face and was off up the steps above. Her companion, intent on capture, flew by. They flickered up the staircase like two butterflies of buff and pink; halted far above and came together for a momentary consultation about the stranger, waved hands to him and vanished.

Mr. Barnstaple returned their greeting and remained cheered.

§ 3

The view-point to which Lychnis had directed Mr. Barnstaple stood out on the ridge between the great valley in which he had spent the last few days and a wild and steep glen down which ran a torrent that was destined after some hundred miles of windings to reach the river of the plain. The view-point was on the crest of a crag, it bad been built out upon great brackets so that it hung sheer over a bend in the torrent below; on the one hand was mountainous scenery and a rich and picturesque foam of green vegetation in the depths, on the other spread the broad garden spaces of a perfected landscape. For a time Mr. Barnstaple scrutinized this glen into which he looked for the first time. Five hundred feet or so below him, so that he felt that he could have dropped a pebble upon its outstretched wings, a bustard was soaring.

Many of the trees below he thought must be fruit trees, but they were too far off to see distinctly. Here and there he could distinguish a footpath winding up among the trees and rocks, and among the green masses were little pavilions in which he knew the wayfarer might rest and make tea for himself and find biscuits and such-like refreshment and possibly a couch and a book. The whole world, he knew, was full of such summer-houses and kindly shelters...

After a time he went back to the side of this view-place up which he had come, and regarded the great valley that went out towards the sea. The word Pisgah floated through his mind. For indeed below him was the Promised Land of human desires. Here at last, established and secure, were peace, power, health, happy activity, length of days and beauty. All that we seek was found here and every dream was realized.

How long would it be yet — how many centuries or thousands of years — before a man would be able to stand upon some high place on earth also and see mankind triumphant and wholly and for ever at peace?...

He folded his arms under him upon the parapet and mused profoundly.

There was no knowledge in this Utopia of which Earth had not the germs, there was no power used here that Earthlings might not use. Here, but for ignorance and darkness and the spites and malice they permit, was Earth to- day...

Towards such a world as this Utopia Mr. Barnstaple had been striving weakly all his life. If the experiment before him succeeded, if presently he found himself alive again on Earth, it would still be towards Utopia that his life would be directed. And he would not be alone. On Earth there must be thousands, tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, who were also struggling in their minds and acts to find a way of escape for themselves and for their children from the disorders and indignities of the Age of Confusion, hundreds of thousands who wanted to put an end to wars and waste, to heal and educate and restore, to set the banner of Utopia over the shams and divisions that waste mankind.

"Yes, but we fail," said Mr. Barnstaple an walked fretfully to aid fro. "Tens and hundred of thousands of men and women! And we achieve so little! Perhaps every young man and every young woman has had some dream at least of serving and bettering the world. And we are scattered and wasted, and the old things and the foul things, customs, delusions, habits, tolerated treasons, base immediacies, triumph over us!"

He went to the parapet again and stood with his foot on a seat, his elbow on his knee and his chin in his hand, staring at the loveliness of this world he was to leave so soon...

"We could do it."

And suddenly it was borne in upon Mr. Barnstaple that he belonged now soul and body to the Revolution, to the Great Revolution that is afoot on Earth; that marches and will never desist nor rest again until old Earth is one city and Utopia set up therein. He knew clearly that this Revolution is life, and that all other living is a trafficking of life with death. And as this crystallized out in his mind he knew instantly that so presently it would crystallize out in the minds of countless others of those hundreds of thousands of men and women on Earth whom minds are set towards Utopia.

He stood up. He began walking to and fro. "We shall do it," he said.

Earthly thought was barely awakened as yet to the task and possibilities before mankind. All human history so far had been no more than the stirring of a sleeper, a gathering discontent, a rebellion against the limitations set upon life, the unintelligent protest of

thwarted imaginations. All the conflicts and insurrections and revolutions that had ever been on Earth were but indistinct preludes of the revolution that has still to come. When he had started out upon this fantastic holiday Mr. Barnstaple realized he had been in a mood of depression; earthly affairs had seemed utterly confused and hopeless to him; but now from the view-point of Utopia achieved, and with his health renewed, he could see plainly enough how steadily men on earth were feeling their way now, failure after failure, towards the opening drive of the final revolution. He could see how men in his own lifetime had been struggling out of such entanglements as the lie of monarchy, the lies of dogmatic religion and dogmatic morality towards public self-respect and cleanness of mind and body. They struggled now also towards international charity and the liberation of their common economic life from a network of pretences, dishonesties and impostures. There is confusion in all struggles; retractions and defeats; but the whole effect seen from the calm height of Utopia was one of steadfast advance...

There were blunders, there were set-backs, because the forces of revolution still worked in the twilight. The great effort and the great failure of the socialist movement to create a new state in the world had been contemporaneous with Mr. Barnstaple's life; socialism had been the gospel of his boyhood; he had participated in its hopes, its doubts, its bitter internal conflicts. He had seen the movement losing sweetness and gathering force in the narrowness of the Marxist formulae. He had seen it sacrifice its constructive power for militant intensity. In Russia he had marked its ability to overthrow and its inability to plan or build. Like every liberal spirit in the world he had shared the chill of Bolshevik presumption and Bolshevik failure, and for a time it had seemed to him that this open bankruptcy of a great creative impulse was no less and no more than a victory for reaction, that it gave renewed life to all the shams, impostures, corruptions, traditional anarchies and ascendencies that restrain and cripple human life... But now from this high view-point in Utopia he saw clearly that the Phoenix of Revolution flames down to ashes only to be born again. While the noose is fitted round the Teacher's neck the youths are reading his teaching. Revolutions arise and die; the Great

Revolution comes incessantly and inevitably.

The time was near — and in what life was left to him, he himself might help to bring it nearer — when the forces of that last and real revolution would work no longer in the twilight but in the dawn, and a thousand sorts of men and women now far apart and unorganized and mutually antagonistic would be drawn together by the growth of a common vision of the world desired. The Marxist had wasted the forces of revolution for fifty years; he had had no vision; he had had only a condemnation for established things. He had estranged all scientific and able men by his pompous affectation of the scientific; he had terrified them by his intolerant orthodoxy; his delusion that all ideas are begotten by material circumstances had made him negligent of education and criticism. He had attempted to build social unity on hate and rejected every other driving force for the bitterness of a class war. But now, in its days of doubt and exhaustion, vision was returning to Socialism, and the dreary spectacle of a proletarian dictatorship gave way once more to Utopia, to the demand for a world fairly and righteously at peace, its resources husbanded and exploited for the common good, its every citizen freed not only from servitude but from ignorance, and its surplus energies directed steadfastly to the increase of knowledge and beauty. The attainment of that vision by more and more minds was a thing now no longer to be prevented. Earth would tread the path Utopia had trod. She too would weave law, duty and education into a larger sanity than man has ever known. Men also would presently laugh at the things they had feared, and brush aside the impostures that had overawed them and the absurdities that had tormented and crippled their lives. And as this great revolution was achieved and earth wheeled into daylight, the burthen of human miseries would lift, and courage oust sorrow from the hearts of men. Earth, which was now no more than a wilderness, sometimes horrible and at best picturesque, a wilderness interspersed with weedy scratchings for food and with hovels and slums and slag-heaps, Earth too would grow rich with loveliness and fair as this great land was fair. The sons of Earth also, purified from disease, sweet-minded and strong and beautiful, would go proudly about their conquered planet and lift their daring to the stars.

“Given the will,” said Mr. Barnstaple. “Given only the will.”...

§ 4

From some distant place came the sound of a sweet-toned bell striking the hour.

The time for the service to which he was dedicated was drawing near. He must descend, and be taken to the place where the experiment was to be made.

He took one last look at the glen and then went back to the broad prospect of the great valley, with its lakes and tanks and terraces, its groves and pavilions, its busy buildings and high viaducts, its wide slopes of sunlit cultivation, its universal gracious amenity. “Farewell Utopia,” he said, and was astonished to discover how deeply his emotions were stirred.

“Dear Dream of Hope and Loveliness, Farewell!”

He stood quite still in a mood of sorrowful deprivation too deep for tears.

It seemed to him that the spirit of Utopia bent down over him like a goddess, friendly, adorable — and inaccessible.

His very mind stood still.

“Never,” he whispered at last, “for me... Except to serve... No...”

Presently he began to descend the steps that wound down from the view- point. For a time he noted little of the things immediately about him. Then the scent of roses invaded his attention, and he found himself walking down a slanting pergola covered with great white roses and very active with little green birds. He stopped short and stood looking up at the leaves, light- saturated, against the sky. He put up his hands and drew down one of the great blossoms until it touched his cheek.

§ 5

They took Mr. Barnstaple back by aeroplane to the point upon the glassy road where he had first come into Utopia. Lychnis came with him and Crystal, who was curious to see what would be done.

A group of twenty or thirty people, including Sungold, awaited him. The ruined laboratory of Arden and Greenlake had been replaced by fresh buildings, and there were additional erections on the further side of the road; but Mr. Barnstaple could recognize quite clearly the place where Mr. Catskill had faced the leopard and where Mr. Burleigh had accosted him. Several new kinds of flowers were now out, but the blue blossoms that had charmed him on arrival still prevailed. His old car, the Yellow Peril, looking now the clumsiest piece of ironmongery conceivable, stood in the road. He went and examined it. It seemed to be in perfect order; it had been carefully oiled and the petrol tank was full.

In a little pavilion were his bag and all his earthly clothes. They were very clean and they had been folded and pressed, and he put them on. His shirt seemed tight across his chest and his collar decidedly tight, and his coat cut him a little under the arms. Perhaps these garments had shrunken when they were disinfected. He packed his bag and Crystal put it in the car for him.

Sungold explained very simply all that Mr. Barnstaple had to do. Across the road, close by the restored laboratory, stretched a line as thin as gossamer. “Steer your car to that and break it,” he said. “That is all you have to do. Then take this red flower and put it down exactly where your wheel tracks show you have entered your own world.”

Mr. Barnstaple was left beside the car. The Utopians went back twenty or thirty yards and stood in a circle about him. For a few moments everyone was still.

§ 6

Mr. Barnstaple got into his car, started his engine, let it throb for a minute and then put in the clutch. The yellow car began to move towards the line of gossamer. He made a gesture with one hand which Lychnis answered. Sungold and others of the Utopians also made friendly movements. But Crystal was watching too intently for any gesture.

“Good-bye, Crystal!” cried Mr. Barnstaple, and the boy responded

with a start.

Mr. Barnstaple accelerated, set his teeth and, in spite of his will to keep them open, shut his eyes as he touched the gossamer line. Came that sense again of unendurable tension and that sound like the snapping of a bow-string. He had an irresistible impulse to stop — go back. He took his foot from the accelerator, and the car seemed to fall a foot or so and stopped so heavily and suddenly that he was jerked forward against the steering wheel. The oppression lifted. He opened his eyes and looked about him.

The car was standing in a field from which the hay had recently been carried. He was tilted on one side because of a roll in the ground. A hedge in which there was an open black gate separated this hay-field from the high road. Close at hand was a board advertisement of some Maidenhead hotel. On the far side of the road were level fields against a background of low wooded hills. Away to the left was a little inn. He turned his head and saw Windsor Castle in the remote distance rising above poplar-studded meadows. It was not, as his Utopians had promised him, the exact spot of his departure from our Earth, but it was certainly less than a hundred yards away.

He sat still for some moments, mentally rehearsing what he had to do. Then he started the Yellow Peril again and drove it close up to the black gate.

He got out and stood with the red flower in his hand. He had to go back to the exact spot at which he had re-entered this universe and put that flower down there. It would be quite easy to determine that point by the track the car had made in the stubble. But he felt an extraordinary reluctance to obey these instructions. He wanted to keep this flower. It was the last thing, the only thing, he had now from that golden world. That and the sweet savour on his hands.

It was extraordinary that he had brought no more than this with him. Why had he not brought a lot of flowers? Why had they given him nothing, no little thing, out of all their wealth of beauty? He wanted intensely to keep this flower. He was moved to substitute a spray of honeysuckle from the hedge close at hand. But then he remembered that that would be infected stuff for them. He must do as he was told. He walked back along the track of his car to its

beginning, stood for a moment hesitating, tore a single petal from that glowing bloom, and then laid down the rest of the great flower carefully in the very centre of his track. The petal he put in his pocket. Then with a heavy heart he went back slowly to his car and stood beside it, watching that star of almost luminous red.

His grief and emotion were very great. He was bitterly sorrowful now at having left Utopia.

It was evident the great drought was still going on, for the field and the hedges were more parched and brown than he had ever seen an English field before. Along the road lay a thin cloud of dust that passing cars continually renewed. This old world seemed to him to be full of unlovely sights and sounds and odours already half forgotten. There was the honking of distant cars, the uproar of a train, a thirsty cow mourning its discomfort; there was the irritation of dust in his nostrils and the smell of sweltering tar; there was barbed wire in the hedge near by and along the top of the black gate, and horse-dung and scraps of dirty paper at his feet. The lovely world from which he had been driven had shrunken now to a spot of shining scarlet.

Something happened very quickly. It was as if a hand appeared for a moment and took the flower. In a moment it had gone. A little eddy of dust swirled and drifted and sank...

It was the end.

At the thought of the traffic on the main road Mr. Barnstaple stooped down so as to hide his face from the passers-by. For some minutes he was unable to regain his self-control. He stood with his arm covering his face, leaning against the shabby brown hood of his car...

At last this gust of sorrow came to an end and he could get in again, start up the engine and steer into the main road.

He turned eastward haphazard. He left the black gate open behind him. He went along very slowly for as yet he had formed no idea of whither he was going. He began to think that probably in this old world of ours he was being sought for as a person who had mysteriously disappeared. Someone might discover him and he would become the focus of a thousand impossible questions. That would be very tiresome and disagreeable. He had not thought of this

in Utopia. In Utopia it had seemed quite possible that he could come back into Earth unobserved. Now on earth that confidence seemed foolish. He saw ahead of him the board of a modest tea-room. It occurred that he might alight there, see a newspaper, ask a discreet question or so, and find out what had been happening to the world and whether he had indeed been missed.

He found a table already laid for tea under the window. In the centre of the room a larger table bore an aspidistra in a big green pot and a selection of papers, chiefly out-of-date illustrated papers. But there was also a copy of the morning's Daily Express.

He seized upon this eagerly, fearful that he would find it full of the mysterious disappearance of Mr. Burleigh, Lord Barralonga, Mr. Rupert Catskill, Mr. Hunker, Father Amerton and Lady Stella, not to mention the lesser lights... Gradually as he turned it over his fears vanished. There was not a word about any of them!

"But surely," he protested to himself, now clinging to his idea, "their friends must have missed them!"

He read through the whole paper. Of one only did he find mention and that was the last name he would have expected to find — Mr. Freddy Mush. The Princess de Modena-Frascati (nee Higgisbottom) Prize for English literature had been given away to nobody in particular by Mr. Graceful Gloss owing to "the unavoidable absence of Mr. Freddy Mush abroad."

The problem of why there had been no hue and cry for the others opened a vast field of worldly speculation to Mr. Barnstaple in which he wandered for a time. His mind went back to that bright red blossom lying among the cut stems of the grass in the mown field and to the hand that had seemed to take it. With that the door that had opened so marvellously between that strange and beautiful world and our own had closed again.

Wonder took possession of Mr. Barnstaple's mind. That dear world of honesty and health was beyond the utmost boundaries of our space, utterly inaccessible to him now for evermore; and yet, as he had been told, it was but one of countless universes that move together in time, that lie against one another, endlessly like the leaves of a book. And all of them are as nothing in the endless multitudes of systems and dimensions that surround them. "Could I but rotate my

arm out of the limits set to it," one of the Utopians had said to him; "I could thrust it into a thousand universes."...

A waitress with his teapot recalled him to mundane things.

The meal served to him seemed tasteless and unclean. He drank the queer brew of the tea because he was thirsty but he ate scarcely a mouthful.

Presently he chanced to put his hand in his pocket and touched something soft. He drew out the petal he had torn from the red flower. It had lost its glowing red, and as he held it out in the stuffy air of the room it seemed to writhe as it shrivelled and blackened; its delicate scent gave place to a mawkish odour.

"Manifestly," he said. "I should have expected this."

He dropped the lump of decay on his plate, then picked it up again and thrust it into the soil in the pot of the aspidistra.

He took up the Daily Express again and turned it over, trying to recover his sense of this world's affairs.

§ 7

For a long time Mr. Barnstaple meditated over the Daily Express in the tea-room at Colnebrook. His thoughts went far so that presently the newspaper slipped to the ground unheeded. He roused himself with a sigh and called for his bill. Paying, he became aware of a pocket-book still full of pound notes. "This will be the cheapest holiday I have ever had," he thought. "I've spent no money at all." He inquired for the post-office, because he had a telegram to send.

Two hours later he stopped outside the gate of his little villa at Sydenham. He set it open — the customary bit of stick with which he did this was in its usual place — and steered the Yellow Peril with the dexterity of use and went past the curved flower-bed to the door of his shed. Mrs. Barnstaple appeared in the porch.

"Alfred! You're back at last?"

"Yes, I'm back. You got my telegram?"

"Ten minutes ago. Where have you been all this time? It's more than a month."

"Oh! just drifting about and dreaming. I've had a wonderful

time.”

“You ought to have written. You really ought to have written... You *did*, Alfred...”

“I didn’t bother. The doctor said I wasn’t to bother. I told you. Is there any tea going? Where are the boys?”

“The boys are out. Let me make you some fresh tea.” She did so and came and sat down in the cane chair in front of him and the tea-table. “I’m glad to have you back. Though I could scold you...

“You’re looking wonderfully well,” she said. “I’ve never seen your skin so clear and brown.”

“I’ve been in good air all the time.”

“Did you get to the Lakes?”

“Not quite. But it’s been good air everywhere. Healthy air.”

“You never got lost?”

“Never.”

“I had ideas of you getting lost — losing your memory. Such things happen. You didn’t?”

“My memory’s as bright as a jewel.”

“But where did you go?”

“I just wandered and dreamt. Lost in a day-dream. Often I didn’t ask the name of the place where I was staying. I stayed in one place and then in another. I never asked their names. I left my mind passive. Quite passive. I’ve had a tremendous rest — from everything. I’ve hardly given a thought to politics or money or social questions — at least, the sort of thing *we* call social questions — or any of these worries, since I started... Is that this week’s Liberal?”

He took it, turned it over, and at last tossed it on to the sofa. “Poor old Peeve,” he said. “Of course I must leave that paper. He’s like wall-paper on a damp wall. Just blotches and rustles and fails to stick... Gives me mental rheumatics.”

Mrs. Barnstaple stared at him doubtfully. “But I always thought that the Liberal was such a safe job.”

“I don’t want a safe job now. I can do better. There’s other work before me... Don’t you worry. I can take hold of things surely enough after this rest... How are the boys?”

“I’m a little anxious about Frankie.”

Mr. Barnstaple had picked up the Times. An odd advertisement in

the Agony column had caught his eye. It ran: “Cecil. Your absence exciting remark. Would like to know what you wish us to tell people. Write fully Scotch address. Di. ill with worry. All instructions will be followed.”

“I beg your pardon, my dear?” he said putting the paper aside.

“I was saying that he doesn’t seem to be settling down to business. He doesn’t like it. I wish you could have a good talk to him. He’s fretting because he doesn’t *know* enough. He says he wants to be a science student at the Polytechnic and go on learning things.”

“Well, he can. Sensible boy! I didn’t think he had it in him. I meant to have a talk to him. But this meets me half-way. Certainly he shall study science.”

“But the boy has to earn a living.”

“That will come. If he wants to study science he shall.”

Mr. Barnstaple spoke in a tone that was altogether new to Mrs. Barnstaple, a tone of immediate, quiet, and assured determination. It surprised her still more that he should use this tone without seeming to be aware that he had used it.

He bit his slice of bread-and-butter, and she could see that something in the taste surprised and displeased him. He glanced doubtfully at the remnant of the slice in his hand. “Of course,” he said. “London butter. Three days’ wear. Left about. Funny how quickly one’s taste alters.”

He picked up the Times again and ran his eye over its columns.

“This world is really very childish,” he said. “Very. I had forgotten. Imaginary Bolshevik plots. Sinn Fein proclamations. The Prince. Poland. Obvious lies about the Chinese. Obvious lies about Egypt. People pulling Wickham Steed’s leg. Sham-pious article about Trinity-Sunday. The Hitchin murder... H’m! — rather a nasty one... The Pomfort Rembrandt... Insurance... Letter from indignant peer about Death Duties... Dreary Sport. Boating, Tennis, Schoolboy cricket. Collapse of Harrow! As though such things were of the slightest importance!... How silly it is — all of it! It’s like coming back to the quarrels of servants and the chatter of children.”

He found Mrs. Barnstaple regarding him intently. “I haven’t seen a paper from the day I started until this morning,” he explained.

He put down the paper and stood up. For some minutes Mrs. Barnstaple had been doubting whether she was not the victim of an absurd hallucination. Now she realized that she was in the presence of the most amazing fact she had ever observed.

"Yes," she said. "It is so. Don't move! Keep like that. I know it sounds ridiculous, Alfred, but you have grown taller. It's not simply that your stoop has gone. You have grown oh! — two or three inches."

Mr. Barnstaple stared at her, and then held out his arm. Certainly he was showing an unusual length of wrist. He tried to judge whether his trousers had also the same grown-out-of look.

Mrs. Barnstaple came up to him almost respectfully. She stood beside him and put her shoulder against his arm. "Your shoulder used to be exactly level with mine," she said. "See where we are now!"

She looked up into his eyes. As though she was very glad indeed to have him back with her.

But Mr. Barnstaple remained lost in thought. "It must be the extreme freshness of the air. I have been in some wonderful air... Wonderful!... But at my age! To have grown! And I *feel* as though I'd grown, inside and out, mind and body."...

Mrs. Barnstaple presently began to put the tea-things together for removal.

"You seem to have avoided the big towns."

"I did."

"And kept to the country roads and lanes."

"Practically... It was all new country to me... Beautiful... Wonderful..."

His wife still watched him.

"You must take *me* there some day," she said. "I can see that it has done you a world of good."

THE END

THE DREAM

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Sarnac may have become a successful scientist, a leading light in the research of chemical reactions of cells, but he would never forget the dream. It was a dream he had had as a young child, a dream that was both beautiful and terrifying; frighteningly real and marvellously imaginary. And as Sarnac looks back on his childhood, he finds the world of his dreams and the reality he has lived have become so magically entwined that he can no longer distinguish between them.

PART 1. HOW HARRY MORTIMER SMITH WAS MADE

I. — THE EXCURSION

§ 1

Sarnac had worked almost continuously for the better part of a year upon some very subtle chemical reactions of the nervous cells of the sympathetic system. His first enquiries had led to the opening out of fresh and surprising possibilities, and these again had lured him on to still broader and more fascinating prospects. He worked perhaps too closely; he found his hope and curiosity unimpaired, but there was less delicacy of touch in his manipulation, and he was thinking less quickly and accurately. He needed a holiday. He had come to the end of a chapter in his work and wished to brace himself for a new beginning. Sunray had long hoped to be away with him; she too was at a phase in her work when interruption was possible, and so the two went off together to wander among the lakes and mountains.

Their companionship was at a very delightful stage. Their close relationship and their friendship was of old standing, so that they were quite at their ease with one another, yet they were not too familiar to have lost the keen edge of their interest in each other's proceedings. Sunray was very much in love with Sarnac and glad, and Sarnac was always happy and pleasantly exalted when Sunray was near him. Sunray was the richer-hearted and cleverer lover. They talked of everything in the world but Sarnac's work, because that had to rest and grow fresh again. Of her own work Sunray talked abundantly. She had been making stories and pictures of happiness and sorrow in the past ages of the world, and she was full of curious speculations about the ways in which the ancestral mind has thought and felt.

They played with boats upon the great lake for some days, they sailed and paddled and drew up their canoe among the sweet-scented rushes of the islands and bathed and swam. They went from one guest-house to another upon the water and met many interesting and refreshing people. In one house an old man of ninety-eight was staying: he was amusing his declining years by making statuettes of the greatest beauty and humour; it was wonderful to see the clay take

shape in his hands. Moreover, he had a method of cooking the lake fish that was very appetising, and he made a great dish of them so that everyone who was dining in the place could have some. And there was a musician who made Sunray talk about the days gone by, and afterwards he played music with his own hands on a clavier to express the ancient feelings of men. He played one piece that was, he explained, two thousand years old; it was by a man named Chopin, and it was called the Revolutionary Etude. Sunray could not have believed a piano capable of such passionate resentment. After that he played grotesque and angry battle music and crude marching tunes from those half-forgotten times, and then he invented wrathful and passionate music of his own.

Sunray sat under a golden lantern and listened to the musician and watched his nimble hands, but Sarnac was more deeply moved. He had not heard very much music in his life, and this player seemed to open shutters upon deep and dark and violent things that had long been closed to mankind. Sarnac sat, cheek on hand, his elbow on the parapet of the garden wall, looking across the steely blue of the lake at the darkling night sky at the lower end. The sky had been starry, but a monstrous crescent of clouds like a hand that closes was now gathering all the stars into its fist of darkness. Perhaps there would be rain to-morrow. The lanterns hung still, except that ever and again a little shiver of the air set them swaying. Now and then a great white moth would come fluttering out of the night and beat about among the lanterns for a time and pass away. Presently it would return again or another moth like it would come. Sometimes there would be three or four of these transitory phantoms; they seemed to be the only insects abroad that night.

A faint ripple below drew his attention to the light of a boat, a round yellow light like a glowing orange, which came gliding close up to the terrace wall out of the blue of the night. There was the sound of a paddle being shipped and a diminishing drip of water, but the people in the boat sat still and listened until the musician had done altogether. Then they came up the steps to the terrace and asked the master of the guest-house for rooms for the night. They had dined at a place farther up the lake.

Four people came by this boat. Two were brother and sister, dark

handsome people of southern origin, and the others were fair women, one blue-eyed and one with hazel eyes, who were clearly very much attached to the brother and sister. They came and talked about the music and then of a climbing expedition they had promised themselves in the great mountains above the lakes. The brother and sister were named Radiant and Starlight, and their work in life, they explained, was to educate animals; it was a business for which they had an almost instinctive skill. The two fair girls, Willow and Firefly, were electricians. During the last few days Sunray had been looking ever and again at the glittering snowfields and desiring them; there was always a magic call for her in snowy mountains. She joined very eagerly in the mountain talk, and it was presently suggested that she and Sarnac should accompany these new acquaintances up to the peaks they had in mind. But before they went on to the mountains, she and Sarnac wanted to visit some ancient remains that had recently been excavated in a valley that came down to the lake from the east. The four new-comers were interested in what she told them about these ruins, and altered their own plans to go with her and Sarnac to see them. Then afterwards all six would go into the mountains.

§ 2

These ruins were rather more than two thousand years old.

There were the remains of a small old town, a railway-station of some importance, and a railway tunnel which came right through the mountains. The tunnel had collapsed, but the excavators had worked along it and found several wrecked trains in it which had evidently been packed with soldiers and refugees. The remains of these people, much disturbed by rats and other vermin, lay about in the trains and upon the railway tracks. The tunnel had apparently been blocked by explosives and these trainloads of people entombed. Afterwards the town itself and all its inhabitants had been destroyed by poison-gas, but what sort of poison-gas it was the Investigators had still to decide. It had had an unusual pickling effect, so that many of the bodies were not so much skeletons as mummies; and there were books, papers, papier mâché objects or the like in a fair state of

preservation in many of the houses. Even cheap cotton goods were preserved, though they had lost all their colour. For some time after the great catastrophe this part of the world must have remained practically uninhabited. A Landslide had presently blocked the lower valley and banked back the valley waters so as to submerge the town and cover it with a fine silt and seal up the tunnel very completely. Now the barrier had been cut through and the valley drained again, and all these evidences of one of the characteristic disasters of the last war period in man's history had been brought back to the light once more.

The six holiday-makers found the visit to this place a very vivid experience, almost too vivid for their contentment. On Sarnac's tired mind it made a particularly deep impression. The material collected from the town had been arranged in a long museum gallery of steel and glass. There were many almost complete bodies; one invalid old woman, embalmed by the gas, had been replaced in the bed from which the waters had floated her, and there was a shrivelled little baby put back again in its cradle. The sheets and quilts were bleached and browned, but it was quite easy to see what they had once been like. The people had been taken by surprise, it seemed, while the midday meal was in preparation; the tables must have been set in many of the houses; and now, after a score of centuries beneath mud and weeds and fishes, the antiquaries had disinterred and reassembled these old machine-made cloths and plated implements upon the tables. There were great stores of such pitiful discoloured litter from the vanished life of the past.

The holiday-makers did not go far into the tunnel; the suggestion of things there were too horrible for their mood, and Sarnac stumbled over a rail and cut his hand upon the jagged edge of a broken railway-carriage window. The wound pained him later, and did not heal so quickly as it should have done. It was as if some poison had got into it. It kept him awake in the night.

For the rest of the day the talk was all of the terrible days of the last wars in the world and the dreadfulness of life in that age. It seemed to Firefly and Starlight that existence must have been almost unendurable, a tissue of hate, terror, want and discomfort, from the cradle to the grave. But Radiant argued that people then were

perhaps no less happy and no happier than himself; that for everyone in every age there was a normal state, and that any exaltation of hope or sensation above that was happiness and any depression below it misery. It did not matter where the normal came. “They went to great intensities in both directions,” he said. There was more darkness in their lives and more pain, but not more unhappiness. Sunray was inclined to agree with him.

But Willow objected to Radiant’s psychology. She said that there could be permanently depressed states in an unhealthy body or in a life lived under restraint. There could be generally miserable creatures just as there could be generally happy creatures.

“Of course,” interjected Sarnac, “given a standard outside themselves.”

“But why did they make such wars?” cried Firefly. “Why did they do such horrible things to one another? They were people like ourselves.”

“No better,” said Radiant, “and no worse. So far as their natural quality went. It is not a hundred generations ago.”

“Their skulls were as big and well shaped.”

“Those poor creatures in the tunnel!” said Sarnac. “Those poor wretches caught in the tunnel! But everyone in that age must have felt caught in a tunnel.”

After a time a storm overtook them and interrupted their conversation. They were going up over a low pass to a guest-house at the head of the lake, and it was near the crest of the pass that the storm burst. The lightning was tremendous and a pine-tree was struck not a hundred yards away. They cheered the sight. They were all exhilarated by the elemental clatter and uproar; the rain was like a whip on their bare, strong bodies and the wind came in gusts that held them staggering and laughing, breathlessly unable to move forward. They had doubts and difficulties with the path; for a time they lost touch with the blazes upon the trees and rocks. Followed a steady torrent of rain, through which they splashed and stumbled down the foaming rocky pathway to their resting-place. They arrived wet as from a swim and glowing; but Sarnac, who had come behind the others with Sunray, was tired and cold. The master of this guest-house drew his shutters and made a great fire for them with pine-

knots and pine-cones while he prepared a hot meal.

After a while they began to talk of the excavated town again and of the shrivelled bodies lying away there under the electric light of the still glass-walled museum, indifferent for evermore to the sunshine and thunderstorms of life without.

"Did they ever laugh as we do?" asked Willow. "For sheer happiness of living?"

Sarnac said very little. He sat close up to the fire, pitching pine-cones into it and watching them flare and crackle. Presently he got up, confessed himself tired, and went away to his bed.

§ 3

It rained hard all through the night and until nearly midday, and then the weather cleared. In the afternoon the little party pushed on up the valley towards the mountains they designed to climb, but they went at a leisurely pace, giving a day and a half to what was properly only one day's easy walking. The rain had refreshed everything in the upper valley and called out a great multitude of flowers.

The next day was golden and serene.

In the early afternoon they came to a plateau and meadows of asphodel, and there they sat down to eat the provisions they had brought with them. They were only two hours' climb from the mountain-house in which they were to pass the night, and there was no need to press on. Sarnac was lazy; he confessed to a desire for sleep; in the night he had been feverish and disturbed by dreams of men entombed in tunnels and killed by poison-gas. The others were amused that anyone should want to sleep in the daylight, but Sunray said she would watch over him. She found a place for him on the sward, and Sarnac laid down beside her and went to sleep with his cheek against her side as suddenly and trustfully as a child goes to sleep. She sat up — as a child's nurse might do — enjoining silence on the others by gestures.

"After this he will be well again," laughed Radiant, and he and Firefly stole off in one direction, while Willow and Starlight went off in another to climb a rocky headland near at hand, from which they thought they might get a very wide and perhaps a very beautiful view

of the lakes below.

For some time Sarnac lay quite still in his sleep and then he began to twitch and stir. Sunray bent down attentively with her warm face close to his. He was quiet again for a time and then he moved and muttered, but she could not distinguish any words. Then he rolled away from her and threw his arms about and said, “I can’t stand it. I can’t endure it. Nothing can alter it now. You’re unclean and spoilt.” She took him gently and drew him into a comfortable attitude again, just as a nurse might do. “Dear,” he whispered, and in his sleep reached out for her hand...

When the others came back he had just awakened.

He was sitting up with a sleepy expression and Sunray was kneeling beside him with her hand on his shoulder. “Wake up!” she said.

He looked at her as if he did not know her and then with puzzled eyes at Radiant. “Then there *is* another life!” he said at last.

“Sarnac!” cried Sunray, shaking him. “Don’t you know me?”

He passed a hand over his face, “Yes,” he said slowly. “Your name is Sunray. I seem to remember. Sunray...Not Hetty — No. Though you are very like Hetty. Queer! And mine — mine is Sarnac.

“Of course! I am Sarnac.” He laughed at Willow. “But I thought I *was* Harry Mortimer Smith,” he said. “I did indeed. A moment ago I was Henry Mortimer Smith...Henry Mortimer Smith.”

He looked about him. “Mountains,” he said, “sunshine, white narcissus. Of course, we walked up here this very morning. Sunray splashed me at a waterfall...I remember it perfectly...And yet I was in bed — shot. I was in bed...A dream?...Then I have had a dream, a whole lifetime, two thousand years ago!”

“What do you mean?” said Sunray.

“A lifetime — childhood, boyhood, manhood. And death. He killed me. Poor rat! — he killed me!”

“A dream?”

“A dream — but a very vivid dream. The realest of dreams. If it *was* a dream...I can answer all your questions now, Sunray. I have lived through a whole life in that Old world. I know...

“It is as though that life was still the real one and this only a dream...I was in a bed. Five minutes ago I was in bed. I was

dying...The doctor said, ‘He is going.’ And I heard the rustle of my wife coming across the room...”

“Your *wife!*” cried Sunray.

“Yes — my wife — Milly.”

Sunray looked at Willow with raised eyebrows and a helpless expression.

Sarnac stared at her, dreamily puzzled. “Milly,” he repeated very faintly. “She was by the window.”

For some moments no one spoke.

Radiant stood with his arm on Firefly’s shoulder.

“Tell us about it, Sarnac. Was it hard to die?”

“I seemed to sink down and down into quiet — and then I woke up here.”

“Tell us now, while it is still so real to you.”

“Have we not planned to reach the mountain-house before nightfall?” said Willow, glancing at the sun. “There is a little guest-house here, within five minutes’ walk of us,” said Firefly.

Radiant sat down beside Sarnac. “Tell us your dream now. If it fades out presently or if it is uninteresting, we can go on; but if it is entertaining, we can hear it out and sleep down here to-night. It is a very pleasant place here, and there is a loveliness about those mauve-coloured crags across the gorge, a faint mistiness in their folds, that I could go on looking at for a week without impatience. Tell us your dream, Sarnac.”

He shook his friend. “Wake up, Sarnac!”

Sarnac rubbed his eyes. “It is so queer a story. And there will be so much to explain.”

He took thought for a while.

“It will be a long story.”

“Naturally, if it is a whole life.”

“First let me get some cream and fruit from the guest-house for us all,” said Firefly, “and then let Sarnac tell us his dream. Five minutes, Sarnac, and I will be back here.”

“I will come with you,” said Radiant, hurrying after her.

This that follows is the story Sarnac told.

II. — THE BEGINNING OF THE DREAM

§ 1

"This dream of mine began," he said, "as all our lives begin, in fragments, in a number of disconnected impressions. I remember myself lying on a sofa, a sofa covered with a curious sort of hard, shiny material with a red and black pattern on it, and I was screaming, but I do not know why I screamed. I discovered my father standing in the doorway of the room looking at me. He looked very dreadful; he was partially undressed in trousers and a flannel shirt and his fair hair was an unbrushed shock; he was shaving and his chin was covered with lather. He was angry because I was screaming. I suppose I stopped screaming, but I am not sure. And I remember kneeling upon the same hard red and black sofa beside my mother and looking out of the window — the sofa used to stand with its back to the windowsill — at the rain falling on the roadway outside. The window-sill smelt faintly of paint; soft bad paint that had blistered in the sun. It was a violent storm of rain and the road was an ill-made road of a yellowish sandy clay. It was covered with muddy water and the storming rainfall made a multitude of flashing bubbles, that drove along before the wind and burst and gave place to others.

"'Look at 'em, dearie,' said my mother. 'Like sojers.'

"I think I was still very young when that happened, but I was not so young that I had not often seen soldiers with their helmets and bayonets marching by."

"That," said Radiant, "was some time before the Great War then, and the Social Collapse."

"Some time before," said Sarnac. He considered. "Twenty-one years before. This house in which I was born was less than two miles from the great military camp of the British at Lowcliff in England, and Lowcliff railway-station was only a few hundred yards away. 'Sojers' were the most conspicuous objects in my world outside my home. They were more brightly coloured than other people. My mother used to wheel me out for air every day in a thing called a

perambulator, and whenever there were soldiers to be seen she used to say, ‘Oh! PRITTY sojers!’

“‘Sojers’ must have been one of my earliest words. I used to point my little wool-encased finger — for they wrapped up children tremendously in those days and I wore even gloves — and I would say: ‘Sosher.’

“Let me try and describe to you what sort of home this was of mine and what manner of people my father and mother were. Such homes and houses and places have long since vanished from the world, not many relics of them have been kept, and though you have probably learnt most of the facts concerning them, I doubt if you can fully realise the feel and the reality of the things I found about me. The name of the place was Cherry Gardens; it was about two miles from the sea at Sandbourne, one way lay the town of Cliffstone from which steamboats crossed the sea to France, and the other way lay Lowcliff and its rows and rows of ugly red brick barracks and its great drilling-plain, and behind us inland was a sort of plateau covered with raw new roads of loose pebbles — you cannot imagine such roads! — and vegetable gardens and houses new-built or building, and then a line of hills, not very high but steep and green and bare, the Downs. The Downs made a graceful skyline that bounded my world to the north as the sapphire line of the sea bounded it to the south, and they were almost the only purely beautiful things in that world. All the rest was touched and made painful by human confusion. When I was a very little boy I used to wonder what lay behind those Downs, but I never went up them to see until I was seven or eight years old.”

“This was before the days of aeroplanes?” asked Radiant.

“They came into the world when I was eleven or twelve. I saw the first that ever crossed the Channel between the mainland of Europe and England. That was considered a very wonderful thing indeed. (“It *was* a wonderful thing,” said Sunray.) I went with a lot of other boys, and we edged through a crowd that stood and stared at the quaint old machine; it was like a big canvas grasshopper with outspread wings; in a field — somewhere beyond Cliffstone. It was being guarded, and the people were kept away from it by stakes and a string.

“I find it hard to describe to you what sort of places Cherry Gardens and Cliffstone were like — even though we have just visited the ruins of Domodossola. Domodossola was a sprawling, aimless town enough, but these sprawled far more and looked with a far emptier aimlessness into the face of God. You see in the thirty or forty years before my birth there had been a period of comparative prosperity and productivity in human affairs. It was not of course in those days the result of any statesmanship or forethought; it just happened, — as now and then in the course of a rain-torrent there comes a pool of level water between the rapids. But the money and credit system was working fairly well; there was much trade and intercourse, no extensive pestilences, exceptionally helpful seasons, and few very widespread wars. As a result of this conspiracy of favourable conditions there was a perceptible rise in the standards of life of the common people, but for the most part it was discounted by a huge increase of population. As our school books say, ‘In those days Man was his own Locust.’ Later in my life I was to hear furtive whispers of a forbidden topic called Birth Control, but in the days of my childhood the whole population of the world, with very few exceptions, was in a state of complete and carefully protected ignorance about the elementary facts of human life and happiness. The surroundings of my childhood were dominated by an unforeseen and uncontrollable proliferation. Cheap proliferation was my scenery, my drama, my atmosphere.”

“But they had teachers and priests and doctors and rulers to tell them better,” said Willow.

“Not to tell them better,” said Sarnac. “These guides and pilots of life were wonderful people. They abounded, and guided no one. So far from teaching men and women to control births or avoid diseases or work generously together, they rather prevented such teaching. This place called Cherry Gardens had mostly come into existence in the fifty years before my birth. It had grown from a minute hamlet into what we used to call an urban district.’ In that old world in which there was neither freedom nor direction, the land was divided up into patches of all sorts and sizes and owned by people who did what they liked with it, subject to a few vexatious and unhelpful restrictions. And in Cherry Gardens, a sort of men called speculative

builders bought pieces of land, often quite unsuitable land, and built houses for the swarming increase of population that had otherwise nowhere to go. There was no plan about this building. One speculative builder built here and another there, and each built as cheaply as possible and sold or let what he had built for as much as possible. Some of the houses they built in rows and some stood detached each with a little patch of private garden — garden they called it, though it was either a muddle or a waste — fenced in to keep people out."

"Why did they keep people out?"

"They liked to keep people out. It was a satisfaction for them. They were not secret gardens. People might look over the fence if they chose. And each house had its own kitchen where food was cooked — there was no public eating-place in Cherry Gardens — and each, its separate store of household gear. In most houses there was a man who went out to Work and earn a living — they didn't so much live in those days as earn a living — and came home to eat and sleep, and there was a woman, his wife, who did all the services, food and cleaning and everything, and also she bore children, a lot of unpremeditated children — because she didn't know any better. She was too busy to look after them well, and many of them died. Most days she cooked a dinner. She cooked it...It *was* cooking!"

Sarnac paused — his brows knit. "Cooking I Well, well. That's over, anyhow," he said.

Radiant laughed cheerfully.

"Almost everyone suffered from indigestion. The newspapers were full of advertisements of cures," said Sarnac, still darkly retrospective.

"I've never thought of that aspect of life in the old world," said Sunray.

"It was — fundamental," said Sarnac. "It was a world, in every way, out of health.

"Every morning, except on the Sunday, after the man had gone off to his day's toil and the children had been got up and dressed and those who were old enough sent off to school, the woman of the house tidied up a bit and then came the question of getting in food. For this private cooking of hers. Every day except Sunday a number

of men with little pony carts or with barrows they pushed in front of them, bearing meat and fish and vegetables and fruit, all of it exposed to the weather and any dirt that might be blowing about, came bawling along the roads of Cherry Gardens, shouting the sort of food they were selling. My memory goes back to that red and black sofa by the front window and I am a child once again. There was a particularly splendid fish hawker. What a voice he had! I used to try to reproduce his splendid noises in my piping childish cries: 'Mackroo-E-y'are Macroo! Fine Macroo! Thee a Sheen. Mac*roo*!'

"The housewives would come out from their domestic mysteries to buy or haggle and, as the saying went, 'pass the time of day with their neighbours. But everything they wanted was not to be got from the hawkers, and that was where my father came in. He kept a little shop. He was what was called a greengrocer; he sold fruits and vegetables, such poor fruits and vegetables as men had then learnt to grow — and also he sold coals and paraffin (which people burnt in their lamps) and chocolate and ginger-beer and other things that were necessary to the barbaric housekeeping of the time. He also sold cut-flowers and flowers in pots, and seeds and sticks and string and weed-killer for the little gardens. His shop stood in a row with a lot of other shops; the row was like a row of the ordinary houses with the lower rooms taken out and replaced by the shop, and he 'made his living' and ours by buying his goods as cheaply as he could and getting as much as he could for them. It was a very poor living because there were several other able-bodied men in Cherry Gardens who were also greengrocers, and if he took too much profit then his customers would go away and buy from these competitors and he would get no profit at all.

"I and my brother and sisters — for my mother had been unable to avoid having six babies and four of us were alive — lived by and in and round about this shop. In the summer we were chiefly out of doors or in the room above the shop; but in the cold weather it cost too much trouble and money to have a fire in that room — all Cherry Gardens was heated by open coal fires — and we went down into a dark underground kitchen where my mother, poor dear! cooked according to her lights."

"You were troglodytes!" said Willow.

“Practically. We always ate in that downstairs room. In the summer we were sunburnt and ruddy, but in the winter, because of this — inhumation, we became white and rather thin. I had an elder brother who was monstrous in my childish memory; he was twelve years older than I; and I had two sisters, Fanny and Prudence. My elder brother Ernest went out to work, and then he went away to London and I saw very little of him until I too went to London. I was the youngest of the lot; and when I was nine years old, my father, taking courage, turned my mother’s perambulator into a little push-cart for delivering sacks of coals and suchlike goods.

“Fanny, my elder sister, was a very pretty girl, with a white face from which her brown hair went back in graceful, natural waves and curls, and she had very dark blue eyes. Prudence was also white but of a duller whiteness, and her eyes were grey. She would tease me and interfere with me, but Fanny was either negligent or gracefully kind to me and I adored her. I do not, strangely enough, remember my mother’s appearance at all distinctly, though she was, of course, the dominant fact of my childish life. She was too familiar, I suppose, for the sort of attention that leaves a picture on the mind.

“I learnt to speak from my family and chiefly from my mother. None of us spoke well; our common idioms were poor and bad, we mispronounced many words, and long words we avoided as something dangerous and pretentious. I had very few toys: a tin railway-engine I remember, some metal soldiers, and an insufficient supply of wooden building-bricks. There was no special place for me to play, and if I laid out my toys on the living-room table, a meal was sure to descend and sweep them away. I remember a great longing to play with the things in the shop, and especially with the bundles of firewood and some fire-kindlers that were most seductively shaped like wheels, but my father discouraged such ambitions. He did not like to have me about the shop until I was old enough to help, and the indoor part of most of my days was spent in the room above it or in the underground room below it. After the shop was closed it became a very cold, cavernous, dark place to a little boy’s imagination; there were dreadful shadows in which terrible things might lurk, and even holding fast to my mother’s hand on my way to bed, I was filled with fear to traverse it. It had always a faint, unpleasant smell, a smell of

decaying vegetation varying with the particular fruit or vegetable that was most affected, and a constant element of paraffin. But on Sundays when it was closed all day the shop was different, no longer darkly threatening but very very still. I would be taken through it on my way to church or Sunday school. (Yes — will tell you about church and Sunday school in a minute.) When I saw my mother lying dead — she died when I was close upon sixteen — I was instantly reminded of the Sunday shop...

"Such, my dear Sunray, was the home in which I found myself. I seemed to have been there since my beginning. It was the deepest dream I have ever had. I had forgotten even you."

§ 2

"And how was this casually begotten infant prepared for the business of life?" asked Radiant. "Was he sent away to a Garden?"

"There were no Children's Gardens such as we know them, in that world," said Sarnac. "There was a place of assembly called an elementary school. Thither I was taken, twice daily, by my sister Prudence, after I was six years old.

"And here again I find it hard to convey to you what the reality was like. Our histories tell you of the beginning of general education in that distant time and of the bitter jealousy felt by the old priesthoods and privileged people for the new sort of teachers, but they give you no real picture of the ill-equipped and understaffed schoolhouses and of the gallant work of the underpaid and ill-trained men and women who did the first rough popular teaching. There was in particular a gaunt dark man with a cough who took the older boys, and a little freckled woman of thirty or so who fought with the lower children, and, I see now, they were holy saints. His name I forget, but the little woman was called Miss Merrick. They had to handle enormous classes, and they did most of their teaching by voice and gesture and chalk upon a blackboard. Their equipment was miserable. The only materials of which there was enough to go round were a stock of dirty reading-books, bibles, hymn-books, and a lot of slabs of slate in frames on which we wrote with slate pencils to economise paper. Drawing materials we had practically none; most

of us never learnt to draw. Yes. Lots of sane adults in that old world never learnt to draw even a box. There was nothing to count with in that school and no geometrical models. There were hardly any pictures except a shiny one of Queen Victoria and a sheet of animals, and there were very yellow wall-maps of Europe and Asia twenty years out of date. We learnt the elements of mathematics by recitation. We used to stand in rows, chanting a wonderful chant called our Tables: —

"'*Twi*-swun-two.
Twi-stewer four.
Twi-sfree'r six.
Twi-sfour'rate.'

"We used to sing — in unison — religious hymns for the most part. The school had a second-hand piano to guide our howlings. There had been a great fuss in Cliffstone and Cherry Gardens when this piano was bought. They called it a luxury, and pampering the working classes."

"Pampering the working-classes!" Firefly repeated. "I suppose it's all right. But I'm rather at sea."

"I can't explain everything," said Sarnac. "The fact remains that England grudged its own children the shabbiest education, and so for the matter of fact did every other country. They saw things differently in those days. They were still in the competitive cave. America, which was a much richer country than England, as wealth went then, had if possible meaner and shabbier schools for her common people...My dear! it *was* so. I'm telling you a story, not explaining the universe...And naturally, in spite of the strenuous efforts of such valiant souls as Miss Merrick, we children learnt little and we learnt it very badly. Most of my memories of school are memories of boredom. We sat on wooden forms at long, worn, wooden desks, rows and rows of us — I can see again all the little heads in front of me — and far away was Miss Merrick with a pointer trying to interest us in the Rivers of England: —

"Ty. Wear. Teasumber."

"Is that what they used to call swearing?" asked Willow.

“No. Only Jogriphy. And History was: —

“Wi-yum the Conqueror. Tessisstysiss.
Wi-yum Ruefiss. Ten eighty-seven.”

“What did it mean?”

“To us children? Very much what it means to you — gibberish. The hours, those interminable hours of childhood in school! How they dragged I Did I say I lived a life in my dream? In school I lived eternities. Naturally we sought such amusement as was possible. One thing was to give your next-door neighbour a pinch or a punch and say, ‘Pass it on.’ And we played furtive games with marbles. It is rather amusing to recall that I learnt to count, to add and subtract and so forth, by playing marbles in despite of discipline.”

“But was that the best your Miss Merrick and your saint with the cough could do?” asked Radiant.

“Oh! *they* couldn’t help themselves. They were in a machine, and there were periodic Inspectors and examinations to see that they kept in it.”

“But,” said Sunray, “that Incantation about ‘Wi-yum the Conqueror’ and the rest of it. It meant something? At the back of it, lost to sight perhaps, there was some rational or semi-rational idea?”

“Perhaps,” reflected Sarnac. “But I never detected it.”

“They called it history,” said Firefly helpfully.

“They did,” Sarnac admitted. “Yes, I think they were trying to interest the children of the land in the doings of the Kings and Queens of England, probably as dull a string of monarchs as the world has ever seen. If they rose to interest at times it was through a certain violence; there was one delightful Henry VIII with such a craving for love and such a tender conscience about the sanctity of marriage that he always murdered one wife before he took another. And there was one Alfred who burnt some cakes — I never knew why. In some way it embarrassed the Danes, his enemies.”

“But was that all the history they taught you?” cried Sunray.

“Queen Elizabeth of England wore a ruff and James the First of England and Scotland kissed his men favourites.”

“But history!”

Sarnac laughed. “It *is* odd. I see that — now that I am awake again. But indeed that was all they taught us.”

“Did they tell you nothing of the beginnings of life and the ends of life, of its endless delights and possibilities?”

Sarnac shook his head.

“Not at school,” said Starlight, who evidently knew her books; “they did that at church. Sarnac forgets the churches. It was, you must remember, an age of intense religious activity. There were places of worship everywhere. One whole day in every seven was given up to the Destinies of Man and the study of God’s Purpose. The worker ceased from his toil. From end to end of the land the air was full of the sound of church bells and of congregations singing. Wasn’t there a certain beauty in that, Sarnac?”

Sarnac reflected and smiled. “It wasn’t quite like that,” he said. “Our histories, in that matter, need a little revision.”

“But one sees the churches and chapels in the old photographs and cinema pictures. And we still have many of their cathedrals. And some of those are quite beautiful.”

“And they have all had to be shored up and underpinned and tied together with steel,” said Sunray, “because they were either so carelessly or so faithlessly built. And anyhow, these were not built in Sarnac’s time.”

“Mortimer Smith’s time,” Sarnac corrected.

“They were built hundreds of years earlier than that.”

§ 3

“You must not judge the religion of an age by its temples and churches,” said Sarnac. “An unhealthy body may have many things in it that it cannot clear away, and the weaker it is the less it can prevent abnormal and unserviceable growths...Which sometimes may be in themselves quite bright and beautiful growths.

“But let me describe to you the religious life of my home and upbringing. There was a sort of State Church in England, but it had lost most of its official standing in regard to the community as a whole; it had two buildings in Cherry Gardens — one an old one dating from the hamlet days with a square tower and rather small as

churches went, and the other new and spacious with a spire. In addition there were the chapels of two other Christian communities, the Congregationalists and the Primitive Methodists, and also one belonging to the old Roman Catholic communion. Each professed to present the only true form of Christianity and each maintained a minister, except the larger Church of England place, which had two, the vicar and the curate. You might suppose that, like the museums of history and the Temples of Vision we set before our young people, these places would display in the most moving and beautiful forms possible the history of our race and the great adventure of life in which we are all engaged, they would remind us of our brotherhood and lift us out of selfish thoughts...But let me tell you how I saw it: —

"I don't remember my first religious instruction. Very early I must have learnt to say a rhymed prayer to —

"'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look on me, a little child.'

"And also another prayer about 'Trespassing' which I thought referred to going into fields or woods where there was no public footpath, and which began with the entirely incomprehensible words, 'Our Father Charting Heaven, Haloed B thy Name.' Also one asked for one's 'daily bread' and that God's Kingdom should come. I learnt these two prayers from my mother at an incredibly early age, and said them every night and sometimes in the morning. She held these words in far too great reverence to explain them, and when I wanted to ask for my 'daily bread and butter,' she scolded me bitterly. I also wanted to ask what would happen to good Queen Victoria when God's Kingdom came, but I never mustered courage to ask my mother that. I had a curious idea that there could be a marriage but that nobody had thought of that solution. This must have been very early in my life, because Victoria the Good died when I was five, during the course of a long, far-away, and now almost-forgotten struggle called the Boer War.

"These infantile perplexities deepened and then gave way to a kind of self-protective apathy when I was old enough to go to church

and Sunday school.

"Sunday morning was by far the most strenuous part of all the week for my mother. We had all had a sort of bath overnight in the underground kitchen, except my father and mother, who I don't think ever washed all over — I don't know for certain — and on Sunday morning we rose rather later than usual and put on our 'clean things' and our best clothes. (Everybody in those days wore a frightful lot of clothes. You see, they were all so unhealthy they could not stand the least exposure to wet or cold.) Breakfast was a hurried and undistinguished meal on the way to greater things. Then we had to sit about, keeping out of harm's way, avoiding all crumpling or dirt, and pretending to be interested in one of the ten or twelve books our home possessed, until church time. Mother prepared the Sunday meal, almost always a joint of meat in a baking-dish which my elder sister took in to the baker's next door but one to be cooked while we worshipped. Father rose later than anyone and appeared strangely transformed in a collar, dickey and cuffs and a black coat and his hair smoothed down and parted. Usually some unforeseen delay arose; one of my sisters had a hole in her stocking, or my boots wouldn't button and nobody could find the buttonhook, or a prayer-book was mislaid. This engendered an atmosphere of flurry. There were anxious moments when the church bell ceased to ring and began a monotonous 'tolling-in.'

"'Oh I we shall be late *again!*' said my mother. 'We shall be late *again*.'

"'I'll go on with Prue!' my father would say.

"'Me too!' said Fanny.

"'Not till you've found that button-'ook, Miss Huzzy,' my mother would cry. 'For well I know you've 'ad it.'

"Fanny would shrug her shoulders.

"'Why 'e carn't 'ave lace-up shoes to 'is feet like any other kid, I *carn't* understand,' my father would remark unhelpfully.

"My mother, ashen white with flurry, would wince and say, 'Lace-up shoes at '*is* age! Let alone that 'e'd break the laces.'

"'What's that on the chiffoneer?' Fanny would ask abruptly.

"'Ah! Naturally you know.'

"'Naturally I use my eyes.'

“‘Tcha! Got your answer ready! Oh, you *wicked* girl!’

“Fanny would shrug her shoulders again and stare out of the window. There was more trouble afoot than a mislaid buttonhook between her and my mother. Overnight ‘Miss Huzzy’ had been abroad long after twilight, a terrible thing from a mother’s point of view, as I will make plain to you later.

“My mother, breathing hard, would button my boots in a punitive manner and then off we would go, Prue hanging on to father ahead, Fanny a little apart and scornful, and I trying to wriggle my little white-cotton-gloved hand out of my mother’s earnest grip.

“We had what was called a ‘sitting’ at church, a long seat with some hassocks and a kind of little praying-ledge at the back of the seat in front. We filed into our sitting and knelt and rose up, and were ready for the function known as morning service.”

§ 4

“And this service again was a strange thing. We read about these churches and their services in our histories and we simplify and idealise the picture; we take everything in the account, as we used to say in that old world, at its face value. We think that the people understood and believed completely the curious creeds of those old-world religions; that they worshipped with a simple ardour; that they had in their hearts a secret system of comforts and illusions which some of us even now try to recover. But life is always more complicated than any account or representation of it can be. The human mind in those days was always complicating and overlaying its ideas, forgetting primary in secondary considerations, substituting repetition and habit for purposive acts, and forgetting and losing its initial intentions. Life has grown simpler for men as the ages have passed because it has grown clearer. We were more complicated in our lives then because we were more confused. And so we sat in our pews on Sunday, in a state of conforming inattention, not really thinking out what we were doing, feeling rather than knowing significances and with our thoughts wandering like water from a leaky vessel. We watched the people about us furtively and minutely and we were acutely aware that they watched us. We stood up, we

half knelt, we sat, as the ritual of the service required us to do. I can still recall quite vividly the long complex rustle of the congregation as it sat down or rose up in straggling unison.

"This morning service was a mixture of prayers and recitations by the priests — vicar and curate we called them — and responses by the congregation, chants, rhymed hymns, the reading of passages from the Hebrew-Christian Bible, and at last a discourse. Except for this discourse all the service followed a prescribed course set out in a prayer-book. We hopped from one page of the prayer-book to another, and 'finding your place' was a terrible mental exercise for a small boy with a sedulous mother on one side and Prue on the other.

"The service began lugubriously and generally it was lugubrious. We were all miserable sinners, there was no health in us; we expressed our mild surprise that our Deity did not resort to violent measures against us. There was a long part called the Litany in which the priest repeated with considerable gusto every possible human misfortune, war, pestilence, famine, and so on, and the congregation interjected at intervals, 'Good Lord deliver us!' although you might have thought that these were things within the purview of our international and health and food administrators rather than matters for the Supreme Being. Then the officiating priest went on to a series of prayers for the Queen, the rulers of the State, heretics, unfortunate people, travellers, and the harvest, all of which I concluded were being dangerously neglected by Divine Providence, and the congregation reinforced the priest's efforts by salvos of 'We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord.' The hymns were of very variable quality, but the greater part were effusive praises of our Maker, with frequent false rhymes and bad quantities. We thanked Heaven for our 'blessings,' and that without a thought of irony. Yet you would imagine that a Deity of Infinite Power might easily have excused our gratitude for the precarious little coal and greengrocery business in Cherry Gardens and all my mother's toil and anxieties and my father's worries.

"The general effect of this service beneath its surface adulation of the worshipped God, was to blame Him thoroughly and completely for every human misfortune and to deny the responsibility of mankind for its current muddle and wretchedness. Throughout the

land and throughout most of the world, Sunday after Sunday, by chant and hymn and prayer and gesture, it was being dinned into the minds of young people, whenever for a moment the service broke through the surface of their protective instinctive inattention, that mankind was worthless and hopeless, the helpless plaything of a moody, impulsive, vain, and irresistible Being. This rain of suggestion came between their minds and the Sun of Life; it hid the Wonderful from them; it robbed them of access to the Spirit of Courage. But so alien was this doctrine of abasement from the heart of man, that for the most part the congregation sat or stood or knelt in rows in its pews repeating responses and singing mechanically, with its minds distracted to a thousand distant more congenial things, watching the deportment of its neighbours, scheming about business or pleasure, wandering in reverie.

"There would come at times into this service, sometimes but not always, parts of another service, the Communion Service. This was the reduced remainder of that Catholic Mass of which we have all learnt in our histories. As you know, the world of Christianity was still struggling, nineteen hundred years after Christianity had begun, to get rid of the obsession of a mystical blood sacrifice, to forget a traditional killing of a God-man, that was as old as agriculture and the first beginnings of human settlement. The English State Church was so much a thing of compromise and tradition that in the two churches it had in Cherry Gardens the teaching upon this issue was diametrically opposed; one, the new and showy one, St. Jude's, was devoted to an exaggeration of the importance of the Communion, called it the Mass, called the table on which it was celebrated the Altar, called the Rev. Mr. Snapes the Priest, and generally emphasised the ancient pagan interpretation, while the other, the little old church of St. Osyth, called its priest a Minister, its altar the Lord's Table, and the Communion the Lord's Supper, denied all its mystical importance, and made it merely a memorial of the life and death of the Master. These age-long controversies between the immemorial temple worship of our race and the new life of intellectual and spiritual freedom that had then been dawning in the world for three or four centuries were far above my poor little head as I fretted and 'behaved myself' in our sitting. To my youthful mind

the Communion Service meant nothing more than a long addition to the normal tediums of worship. In those days I had a pathetic belief in the magic of prayer, and oblivious of the unflattering implications of my request I would whisper throughout the opening prayers and recitations of the morning: 'Pray God there *won't* be a Communion Service. Pray God there *won't* be a Communion Service.'

"Then would come the sermon, the original composition of the Rev. Mr. Snapes, and the only thing in the whole service that was not set and prescribed and that had not been repeated a thousand times before.

"Mr. Snapes was a youngish pinkish man with pinkish golden hair and a clean-shaven face; he had small chubby features like a cluster of *champignons*, an expression of beatific self-satisfaction, and a plump voice. He had a way of throwing back the ample white sleeve of his surplice when he turned the pages of his manuscript, a sort of upthrow of the posed white hand, that aroused in me one of the inexplicable detestations of childhood. I used to hate this gesture, watch for its coming and squirm when it came.

"The sermons were so much above my head that I cannot now tell what any of them were about. He would talk of things like the 'Comfort of the Blessed Eucharist' and the 'Tradition of the Fathers of the Church.' He would discourse too of what he called the Feasts of the Church, though a collection plate was the nearest approach to feasting we saw. He made much of Advent and Epiphany and Whitsuntide, and he had a common form of transition to modern considerations, 'And we too, dear Brethren, in these latter days have our Advents and our Epiphanies.' Then he would pass to King Edward's proposed visit to Lowcliff or to the recent dispute about the Bishop of Natal or the Bishop of Zanzibar. You cannot imagine how remote it was from anything of moment in our normal lives.

"And then suddenly, when a small boy was losing all hope of this smooth voice ever ceasing, came a little pause and then the blessed words of release: 'And now to God the Father, God the Son—'

"It was over! There was a stir throughout the church. We roused ourselves, we stood up. Then we knelt for a brief moment of apparent prayer and then we scrabbled for hats, coats, and umbrellas, and so out into the open air, a great pattering of feet upon the

pavement, dispersing this way and that, stiff greetings of acquaintances, Prue to the baker's for the Sunday dinner and the rest of us straight home.

"Usually there were delightful brown potatoes under the Sunday joint and perhaps there would be a fruit pie also. But in the spring came rhubarb, which I hated. It was held to be peculiarly good for me, and I was always compelled to eat exceptionally large helpings of rhubarb tart.

"In the afternoon there was Sunday school or else 'Children's Service,' and, relieved of the presence of our parents, we three children went to the schoolhouse or to the church again to receive instruction in the peculiarities of our faith. In the Sunday school untrained and unqualified people whom we knew in the weekdays as shop assistants and an auctioneer's clerk and an old hairy deaf gentleman named Spendilow, collected us in classes and discoursed to us on the ambiguous lives and doings of King David of Israel and of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the misbehaviour of Queen Jezebel and the like topics. And we sang easy hymns in unison. At times our teachers spoke of the Master of Mankind, but they spoke without understanding; they spoke of him as a sort of trickster who worked miracles and achieved jail delivery from the tomb. And so had 'saved' us — in spite of the manifest fact that we were anything but saved. The teaching of the Master was, you know, buried under these tales of Resurrection and Miracles for two thousand years. He was a light shining in the darkness and the darkness knew it not. And of the great past of life, of the races of men and their slow growth in knowledge, of fears and dark superstitions and the dawning victories of truth, of the conquest and sublimation of human passions through the ages, of the divinity of research and discovery, of the latent splendour of our bodies and senses, and the present dangers and possibilities amidst which the continually more crowded masses of our race were then blundering so tragically and yet with such bright gleams of hope and promise, we heard no talk at all. We were given no intimation that there was so much as a human community with a common soul and an ultimate common destiny. It would have been scandalous and terrifying to those Sunday-school teachers to have heard any such things spoken about in Sunday school.

“And mind you,” said Sarnac, “there was no better preparation for life in all the world then than the sort of thing I was getting. The older church of St. Osyth was in the hands of the Rev. Thomas Benderton, who dispersed a dwindling congregation by bellowing sermons full of the threat of hell. He had scared my mother to the church of St. Jude by his frequent mention of the devil, and the chief topic of his discourse was the sin of idolatry; he treated it always with especial reference to the robes adopted by Mr. Snapes when he celebrated Holy Communion and to something obscure that he did with small quantities of bread and wine upon his Communion table.

“Of what the Congregationalists and the Primitive Methodists did and taught in their places of resort, their chapels and Sunday schools, I do not know very exactly, because my mother would have been filled with a passion of religious terror if ever I had gone near those assemblies. But I know that their procedure was only a plainer version of our church experiences with still less of the Mass and still more of the devil. The Primitive Methodists, I know, laid their chief stress upon the belief that the greater portion of mankind, when once they had done with the privations and miseries of this life, would be tortured exquisitely for ever and ever in hell. I got this very clearly because a Primitive Methodist boy a little older than myself conveyed his anxieties to me one day when we had gone for a walk into Cliffstone.

“He was a bent sort of boy with a sniff and he wore a long white woollen comforter; there hasn’t been such a figure in the world now for hundreds of years. We walked along the promenade that followed the cliff edge, by the bandstand and by the people lounging in deck-chairs. There were swarms of people in their queer holiday clothes, and behind, rows of the pallid grey houses in which they lodged. And my companion bore his testimony. ‘Mr. Molesly ‘e says that the Day of Judgment might come any minute — come in fire and glory before ever we get to the end of these Leas. And all them people’d be tried.’...

“‘Jest as they are?’

“‘Jest as they are. That woman there with the dog and that fat man asleep in ‘is chair and — the policeman.’

“He paused, a little astonished at the Hebraic daring of his

thoughts. ‘The policeman,’ he repeated. ‘They’d be weighed and found wanting, and devils would come and torture them. Torture that policeman. Burn him and cut him about. And everybody. Horrible, horrible torture...’

“I had never heard the doctrines of Christianity applied with such particularity before. I was dismayed.

“‘I sh’d ‘ide,’ I said.

“‘‘*E*’d see you. ‘*E*’d see you and tell the devils,’ said my little friend. ‘‘E sees the wicked thoughts in us now.’”...

“But did people really believe such stuff as that?” cried Sunray.

“As far as they believed anything,” said Sarnac. “I admit it was frightful, but so it was. Do you realise what cramped distorted minds grew up under such teaching in our under-nourished, infected bodies?”

“Few people could have really believed so grotesque a fairy-tale as hell,” said Radiant.

“More people believed than you would think,” said Sarnac. “Few people, of course, held it actively for long — or they would have gone mad — but it was in the background of a lot of minds. And the others? The effect of this false story about the world upon the majority of minds was a sort of passive rejection. They did not deny, but they refused to incorporate the idea with the rest of their thoughts. A kind of dead place, a *scar*, was made just where there ought to have been a sense of human destiny, a vision of life beyond the immediate individual life...

“I find it hard to express the state of mind into which one grew. The minds of the young had been outraged by these teachings; they were no longer capable of complete mental growth, a possibility had been destroyed. Perhaps we never did really take into ourselves and believe that grotesque fairy-tale, as you call it, about hell but, because of what it had done to our minds we grew up without a living faith and without a purpose. The nucleus of our religious being was this suppressed fear of hell. Few of us ever had it out fairly into the light of day. It was considered to be bad taste to speak of any such things, or indeed of any of the primaries of life, either by way of belief or denial. You might allude circuitously. Or joke. Most of the graver advances in life were made under a mask of facetiousness.

“Mentally that world in the days of Mortimer Smith was a world astray. It was astray like a lost dog and with no idea of direction. It is true that the men of that time were very like the men of this time — in their possibilities — but they were unhealthy in mind as well as body, they were adrift and incoherent. Walking as we do in the light, and by comparison simply and directly, their confusion, the tortuous perplexity of their thoughts and conduct is almost inconceivable to us. There is no sort of mental existence left in our world now, to which it can be compared.”

§ 5

“I think I mentioned the line of hills, the Downs that bounded the world of my upbringing to the north. What lay beyond them was a matter for wonder and speculation to me long before I was able to clamber to their crests. In summer time the sun set behind them to the north-west, often in a glow of gold and splendour, and I remember that among my fancies was a belief that the Day of Judgment was over there and that Celestial City to which Mr. Snapes would some day lead us — in procession, of course, and with a banner.

“My first ascent of this childhood’s boundary must have occurred when I was eight or nine. I do not remember with whom I went or any other particulars, but I have a very acute memory of my disappointment at looking down a long, very gentle slope and seeing nothing but fields and hedges and groups of large sheep feeding. What I had expected to find I cannot now remember. I seem to have noted only the foreground then, and it must have been after many such excursions that I began to realise the variegated spaciousness of the country to the north. The view indeed went very far; on a clear day we saw blue hills nearly twenty miles away; there were woodlands and parklands, brown ridges of plough-land that became golden ridges of corn in summer time, village churches amidst clustering greenery, and the gleaming of ponds and lakes. Southward the horizon lifted as the Downs were ascended and the breadth of the sea-belt increased. It was my father drew my attention to that, on the first occasion of our crossing the Downs together.

"'Go as 'igh as you like, 'Arry,' he said, 'and the sea goes up as 'igh. There it is, you see — level with us and we ever so 'igh above Cherry Gardens. And yet it don't *drown'd* Cherry Gardens And why don't it drown'd Cherry Gardens seeing that it might? Tell me that, 'Arry.'

"I couldn't.

"'Providence,' said my father triumphantly. 'Providence does it. 'Olds back the sea, Thus Far. And over there, see 'ow plain it is! is France.'

"I saw France and it was exceptionally plain.

"'Sometimes you see France and sometimes you don't,' said my father. 'There's a lesson in that too, my boy, for those who care to take it.'

"It had always been the custom of my father to go out after tea on Sundays, summer and winter alike, and walk right over the Downs to Chessing Hanger, six miles and more away. He went, I knew, to see my Uncle John, Uncle John Julip, my mother's brother, who was gardener to Lord Bramble of Chessing Hanger Park. But it was only when he began to take me with him that I realised that these walks had any other motive than fraternal (in law) affection and the natural desire of a pent-up shopkeeper for exercise. But from the first journey on I knew that the clue to these expeditions lay in the burthens with which we returned to Cherry Gardens. Always there was supper in the cosy little gardener's cottage, and always as we departed we picked up an unobtrusive load of flowers, fruit or vegetables, celery, peas, aubergines, mushrooms or what-not, and returned through the dusk or moonlight or darkness or drizzle as the season and the weather might determine to the little shop. And sometimes my father would be silent or whistle softly and sometimes he would improve our journey with a discourse on the wonders of nature, the beauty of goodness, and the beneficence of Providence to man.

"He talked of the moon one moonlight night. 'Look at it, 'Arry,' he said— 'a dead world. Like a skull it is, up there, stripped of its soul which is its flesh so to speak and all its trees, which, if you take me, were its 'air and its whiskers — stripped and dead for ever and ever. Dry as a bone. And everyone who lived there gone too. Dust

and ashes and gone.'

"'Where they gone, farver?' I would ask.

"'Gorn to their judgment,' he would explain with gusto. 'Kings and greengroshers, all the lot of 'em, tried and made sheep and goats of, and gone to their bliss or their sufferings, 'Arry. According to their iniquities. Weighed and found wanting.'

"Long pause.

"'It's a pity,' he said.

"'What is, farver?'

"'Pity it's over. It 'ud be something to look at, them running about up there. Friendly-like it 'ud be. But that's questioning the ways of Providence, that is. I suppose we'd be always staring up and falling over things...You never see a thing in this world, 'Arry, that you think isn't right but what when you come to think it out it isn't wiser than you knew. Providence is as deep as E is! and you can't get be'ind 'im. And don't go banging them pears against your side, my boy; they'm Wi'yums, and they won't like it.'

"About the curious habits of animals and the ways and migrations of birds my father would also talk very freely.

"'Me and you, 'Arry, we walk by the light of reason. We 'ave reasonable minds given us to do it with. But animals and birds and worms and things, they live by Instink; they jus' feel they 'ave to do this or that and they do it. It's Instink keeps the whale in the sea and the bird in the air; but we go where our legs carry us as reason 'as directed. You can't ask an animal Why did you do this? or Why did you do that? — you just '*it* it; but a man you ask and 'e 'as to answer, being a reasonable creature. That's why we 'as jails and punishment and are answerable for our sins, 'Arry. Every sin we 'as to answer for, great or small. But an animal don't 'ave to answer. It's innocent. You 'it it or else you leave it be...'

"My father thought for a time. 'Except for dogs and some *old* cats,' he said. He mused among his memories for a time. 'I've known some *sinful* cats, 'Arry,' he said.

"He would enlarge on the wonders of instinct.

"He would explain how swallows and starlings and storks and such-like birds were driven by instinct thousands of miles, getting drowned on the way and dashed to pieces against lighthouses. 'Else

they'd freeze and starve where they was, 'Arry,' said my father. And every bird knew by instinct what sort of nest it had to build, no one ever showing it or telling it. Kangaroos carried their young in pouches by instinct, but man being a reasonable creature made perambulators. Chickens ran about by instinct directly they were born; not like human children, who had to be carried and taken care of until reason came. And jolly lucky that was for the chicken, 'For 'ow a 'en would carry them,' said my father, 'I *carn't* imagine.'

"I remember that I put my father into a difficulty by asking him why Providence had not given birds an instinct against beating themselves against lighthouses and moths against the gas-jet and the candle-flame. For in the room over the shop on a summer's night it was quite unpleasant to read a book because of the disabled flies and moths that fell scorched upon its pages. 'It's to teach 'em some lesson,' said my father at last. But what it's to teach them, 'Arry, I don't rightly know.'

"And sometimes he would talk, with illustrative stories, of ill-gotten gold never staying with the getter, and sometimes he would talk of murders — for there were still many murders in the world — and how they always came out, 'hide them as you may.' And always he was ready to point out the goodness and wisdom, the cleverness, forethought, ingenuity, and kindliness of Providence in the most earnest and flattering manner.

"With such high discourse did we enliven our long trudges between Cherry Gardens and Chessing Hanger, and my father's tone was always so exalted that with a real shock I presently came to realise that every Sunday evening we were in plain English stealing and receiving stolen produce from Lord Bramble's gardens. Indeed, I cannot imagine how we should have got along without that weekly raid. Our little home at Cherry Gardens was largely supported by my father's share in the profits of these transactions. When the produce was too good and costly for Cherry Gardens' needs, he would take it down to Cliffstone and sell it to a friend there who had a fashionable trade."

Sarnac paused.

"Go on," said Radiant. "You are making us believe in your story. It sounds more and more as if you had been there. It is so

circumstantial. Who was this Lord Bramble? I have always been curious about Lords."

§6

"Let me tell my story in my own way," said Sarnac. "If I answer questions I shall get lost. You are all ready to ask a hundred questions already about things I have mentioned and points familiar to me but incomprehensible to you because our world has forgotten them, and if I weaken towards you you will trail me away and away further and further from my father and my Uncle Julip. We shall just talk about manners and customs and about philosophy and history. I want to tell my story."

"Go on with your story," said Sunray.

"This Uncle John Julip of mine, although he was my mother's brother, was a cynical, opinionated man. He was very short and fatter than was usual among gardeners. He had a smooth white face and a wise self-satisfied smile. To begin with, I saw him only on Sundays and in white shirt sleeves and a large straw hat. He made disparaging remarks about my physique and about the air of Cherry Gardens every time he saw me. His wife had been a dissenter of some sort and had become a church-woman under protest. She too was white-faced and her health was bad. She complained of pains. But my Uncle John Julip disparaged her pains because he said they were not in a reasonable place. There was stomachache and backache and heartburn and the wind, but her pains were neither here nor there; they were therefore pains of the imagination and had no claim upon our sympathy.

"When I was nearly thirteen years old my father and uncle began planning for me to go over to the Chessing Hanger gardens and be an under-gardener. This was a project I disliked very greatly; not only did I find my uncle unattractive, but I thought weeding and digging and most of the exercises of a garden extremely tiring and boring. I had taken very kindly to reading, I liked languages, I inherited something of my father's loquaciousness, and I had won a special prize for an essay in my school. This had fired the most unreasonable ambitions in me — to write, to write in newspapers, possibly even to

write books. At Cliffstone was What was called a public library to which the householders of Cliffstone had access and from which members of their families could borrow books — during holidays I would be changing my book almost every day — but at Chessing Hanger there were no books at all. My sister Fanny encouraged me in my reading; she too was a voracious reader of novels, and she shared my dislike of the idea that I should become a gardener.

"In those days, you must understand, no attempt was made to gauge the natural capacity of a child. Human beings were expected to be grateful for any opportunity of 'getting a living.' Parents bundled their children into any employment that came handy, and so most people followed occupations that were misfits, that did not give full scope for such natural gifts as they possessed and which commonly cramped or crippled them. This in itself diffused a vague discontent throughout the community, and inflicted upon the great majority of people strains and restraints and suppressions that ate away their possibility of positive happiness. Most youngsters as they grew up, girls as well as boys, experienced a sudden tragic curtailment of freedom and discovered themselves forced into some unchosen specific drudgery from which it was very difficult to escape. One summer holiday came, when, instead of enjoying delightful long days of play and book-devouring in Cliffstone, as I had hitherto done, I was sent off over the hills to stay with Uncle John Julip, and 'see how I got on' with him. I still remember the burning disgust, the sense of immolation, with which I lugged my little valise up the hills and over the Downs to the gardens.

"This Lord Bramble, Radiant, was one of the landlords who were so important during the reigns of the Hanoverian Kings up to the time of Queen Victoria the Good. They owned large areas of England as private property; they could do what they liked with it. In the days of Victoria the Good and her immediate predecessors these landlords who had ruled the Empire through the House of Lords made a losing fight for predominance against the new industrialists, men who employed great masses of people for their private gain in the iron and steel industries, cotton and wool, beer and shipping, and these again gave way to a rather different type who developed advertisement and a political and financial use of newspapers and

new methods of finance. The old land-holding families had to adapt themselves to the new powers or be pushed aside. Lord Bramble was one of those pushed aside, an indignant, old-fashioned, impoverished landowner. He was in a slough of debts. His estates covered many square miles; he owned farms and woodlands, a great white uncomfortable house, far too roomy for his shrunken means, and two square miles of park. The park was greatly neglected, it was covered with groups of old trees infested and rotten with fungus; rabbits and moles abounded, and thistles and nettles. There were no young trees there at all. The fences and gates were badly patched; and here and there ran degenerating roads. But boards threatening trespassers abounded, and notices saying 'NO THOROUGHFARE.' For it was the dearest privilege of the British landlord to restrict the free movements of ordinary people, and Lord Bramble guarded his wilderness with devotion. Great areas of good land in England in those days were in a similar state of picturesquely secluded dilapidation."

"Those were the lands where they did the shooting," said Radiant.

"How did you know?"

"I have seen a picture. They stood in a line along the edge of a copse, with brown-leaved trees and a faint smell of decay and a touch of autumnal dampness in the air, and they shot lead pellets at birds.'

"They did. And the beaters — I was pressed into that service once or twice — drove the birds, the pheasants, towards them. Shooting parties used to come to Chessing Hanger, and the shooting used to go on day after day. It was done with tremendous solemnity."

"But why?" asked Willow.

"Yes," said Radiant. "Why did men do it?"

"I don't know," said Sarnac. "All I know is that at certain seasons of the year the great majority of the gentlemen of England who were supposed to be the leaders and intelligence of the land, who were understood to guide its destinies and control its future, went out into the woods or on the moors to massacre birds of various sorts with guns, birds bred specially at great expense for the purpose of this slaughter. These noble sportsmen were marshalled by gamekeepers; they stood in rows, the landscape was animated with the popping of their guns. The highest in the land participated gravely in this

national function and popped with distinction. The men of this class were in truth at just that level above imbecility where the banging of a gun and the thrill of seeing a bird swirl and drop is inexhaustibly amusing. They never tired of it. The bang of the gun seems to have been essential to the sublimity of the sensations of these sportsmen. It wasn't mere killing, because in that case these people could also have assisted in killing the sheep and oxen and pigs required by the butchers, but this sport they left to men of an inferior social class. Shooting birds on the wing was the essential idea. When Lord Bramble was not killing pheasants or grouse he shot in the south of France at perplexed pigeons with clipped wings just let out of traps. Or he hunted — not real animal hunting, not a fair fight with bear or tiger or elephant in a jungle, but the chasing of foxes — small stinking red animals about the size of water-spaniels, which were sedulously kept from extinction for this purpose of hunting; they were hunted across cultivated land, and the hunters rode behind a pack of dogs. Lord Bramble dressed himself up with extreme care in a red jacket and breeches of pigskin to do this. For the rest of his time the good man played a card game called bridge, so limited and mechanical that anyone nowadays would be able to read out the results and exact probabilities of every deal directly he saw his cards. There were four sets of thirteen cards each. But Lord Bramble, who had never learnt properly to count up to thirteen, found it full of dramatic surprises and wonderful sensations. A large part of his time was spent in going from race-course to race-course; they raced a specially flimsy breed of horses in those days. There again he dressed with care. In the illustrated papers in the public library I would see photographs of Lord Bramble, with a silk hat — a top hat, *you* know — cocked very much on one side 'in the Paddock' or 'snapped with a lady friend.' There was much betting and knowingness about this horse-racing. His Lordship dined with comparative intelligence, erring only a little on the excessive side with the port. People still smoked in those days, and Lord Bramble would consume three or four cigars a day. Pipes he thought plebeian and cigarettes effeminate. He could read a newspaper but not a book, being incapable of sustained attention; after dinner in town he commonly went to a theatre or music-hall where women could be seen, more or

less undraped. The clothing of that time filled such people as Lord Bramble with a coy covetousness for nakedness. The normal beauty of the human body was a secret and a mystery, and half the art and decoration of Chessing Hanger House played stimulatingly with the forbidden vision.

"In that past existence of mine I took the way of life of Lord Bramble as a matter of course, but now that I recall it I begin to see the enormous absurdity of these assassins of frightened birds, these supporters of horses and ostlers, these peepers at feminine thighs and shoulder-blades. Their women sympathised with their gunmanship, called their horses 'the dears,' cultivated dwarfed and crippled breeds of pet dogs, and yielded the peeps expected of them.

"Such was the life of the aristocratic sort of people in those days. They set the tone of what was considered a hard, bright, healthy life. The rest of the community admired them greatly and imitated them to the best of its ability. The tenant farmer, if he, could not shoot pheasants, shot rabbits, and if he could not bet twenty-pound notes at the fashionable race-meeting at Goodwood, put his half-crown upon his fancy at the Cliffstone races on Byford Downs — with his hat cocked over one eye as much like Lord Bramble and King Edward as possible.

"Great multitudes of people there were whose lives were shaped completely by the habits and traditions of these leaders. There was my Uncle John Julip for example. His father had been a gardener and his grandfather before him, and almost all his feminine ancestry and his aunts and cousins were, as the phrase went, 'in service.' None of the people round and about the downstairs of Chessing Hanger had natural manners; all were dealing in some more or less plausible imitation of some real lady or gentleman. My Uncle John Julip found his ideal in a certain notorious Sir John ffrench-Cuthbertson. He sought similar hats and adopted similar attitudes.

"He bet heavily in imitation of his model, but he bet less fortunately. This my aunt resented, but she found great comfort in the way in which his clothing and gestures under-studied Sir John.

"'If only he'd been *born* a gentleman,' said my aunt, 'everything ud a-been all right. 'E's a natural sportsman; 'e eats 'is 'eart out in the gardens.'

“He certainly did not work his heart out. I do not remember ever seeing him dig or carry or wheel a barrow. My memory of him in the garden is of one who stood, one hand gripping a hoe as if it were a riding whip under the tail of his coat, and the other gesticulating or pointing out what had to be done.

“To my father and myself he was always consciously aristocratic, bearing himself in the grand manner. This he did, although my father was a third as tall again as he was and far more abundantly intelligent. He always called my father ‘Smith.’

“‘What are you going to do with that boy, Smith?’ he would ask. ‘Seems to me, wants feedin’ up and open air.’

“My father, who secretly shared the general view that my Uncle John under happier stars would have made a very fine gentleman, always tried, as he expressed it, ‘to keep his end up’ by calling my uncle ‘John.’ He would answer, ‘Carn’t say as I’ve rightly settled that, John. ‘E’s a regular book-worm nowadays, say what you like to him.’

“‘Books!’ said my Uncle John Julip with a concentrated scorn of books that was essentially English. ‘You can’t get anything out of books that ‘asn’t been put into them. It stands to reason. There’s nothing in books that didn’t first come out of the sile. Books is flattened flowers at the best, as ‘is Lordship said at dinner only the other night.’

“My father was much struck by the idea. That’s what I tell ‘im,’ he said — inexactly.

“‘Besides, who’s going to put anything into a book that’s worth knowing?’ said my uncle. It’s like expecting these here tipsters in the papers to give away something worth keeping to theirselves. Not it!’

“‘‘Arf the time,’ my father agreed, ‘I expect they’re telling you lies in these books of yours and larfing at you. All the same,’ he reflected with an abrupt lapse from speculation to reverence, ‘there’s One Book, John.’

“He had remembered the Bible.

“‘I wasn’t speaking of that, Smith,’ said my uncle sharply. ‘Sufficient unto the day — I mean, that’s Sunday Stuff.’

“I hated my days of trial in the gardens. Once or twice during that unpleasant month I was sent with messages up to the kitchen and

once to the pantry of the great house. There I said something unfortunate for my uncle, something that was to wipe out all possibility of a gardener's career for me.

"The butler, Mr. Petterton, was also a secondary aristocrat, but in a larger and quite different manner from that of my uncle. He towered up and looked down the slopes of himself, his many chins were pink and stabbed by his collar, and his hair was yellow and very shiny. I had to deliver into his hands a basket of cucumbers and a bunch of blue flowers called borage used in the mixing of summer drinks. He was standing at a table talking respectfully to a foxy little man in tweeds who was eating bread-and-cheese and drinking beer; this I was to learn later was Lord Bramble's agent. There was also a young footman in this room, a subterranean room it was with heavily barred windows, and he was cleaning silver plate with exemplary industry.

"'So you brought this from the gardens,' said Mr. Petterton with fine irony. 'And may I ask why Mr. — why *Sir John* did not condescend to bring them himself?'

"'E tole me to bring them,' I said.

"'And pray who may you be?'

"'I'm 'Arry Smith,' I said. 'Mr. Julip, 'e's my uncle.'

"'Ah!' said Mr. Petterton and was struck by a thought. 'That's the son of Smith who's a sort of greengrosher in Cliffstone.'

"'Cherry Gardens, sir, we live at.'

"'Haven't seen you over here before, my boy. Have you ever visited us before?'

"'Not 'ere, sir.'

"'Not here! But you come over to the gardens perhaps?'

"'Nearly every Sunday, sir.'

"'Exactly. And usually I suppose, Master Smith, there's something to carry back?'

"'Almost always, sir.'

"'Something a bit heavy?'

"'Not *too* heavy,' I said bravely.

"'You see, sir?' said Mr. Petterton to the foxy little man in tweeds.

"I began to realise that something unpleasant was in the wind

when this latter person set himself to cross-examine me in a rapid, snapping manner. What was it I carried? I became very red about the face and ears and declared I did not know. Did I ever carry grapes? I didn't know. Pears? I didn't know. Celery? I didn't know.

"'Well, I know,' said the agent. '*I* know. So why should I ask you further? Get out of here.'

"I went back to my uncle and said nothing to him of this very disagreeable conversation, but I knew quite well even then that I had not heard the last of this matter."

III. — MISFORTUNES COME UPON THE SMITH Family

§ 1

"And now," said Sarnac, "I have to tell of a tornado of mischances that broke up our precarious little home at Cherry Gardens altogether. In that casual, planless, over-populated world there were no such things as security or social justice as we should understand these words nowadays. It is hard for us to imagine its universal ramshackle insecurity. Think of it. The whole world floated economically upon a cash and credit system that was fundamentally fictitious and conventional, there were no adequate protections against greedy abuses of those monetary conventions, no watch kept over world-production and world-consumption, no knowledge of the variations of climate year by year, and the fortunes not only of individuals but of states and nations fluctuated irrationally and uncontrollably. It was a world in which life was still almost as unsafe for men and women as life remains to-day for a fieldmouse or a midge, which is never safe from one moment to another in a world of cats and owls and swallows and the like. People were born haphazard, gladdened, distressed, glorified or killed haphazard, and no one was ready for either their births or their deaths. Sudden death there is still in the world, a bright adventure — that lightning yesterday might have killed all or any of us, but such death is a rare thing and a clean thing. There is none of the distressful bearing-down to death through want, anxiety, and illness ill-tended and misunderstood, that was the common experience in the past. And one death does not devastate a dozen or more lives as deaths often did in the old days. A widow in the old days had lost not only her lover but her 'living.' Yet life is full of subtle compensations. We did not feel our endless dangers in those days. We had a wonderful power of disregard until the chances struck us.

"All children," said Sarnac, "start with an absolute confidence in the permanence of the things they find about them. Disillusionment about safety postulates clear-headedness. You could not realize your

dangers unless you were clear-headed, and if you were clear-headed you had the fortitude to face your dangers. That old world was essentially a world of muddle-headed sophisticated children, blind to the universal catastrophe of the top-heavy and collapsing civilisation in which they played their parts. They thought that life was generally safe in a world of general insecurity. Misfortune astonished everyone in those days, though I cannot understand why they should have been astonished at any misfortune.

"The first blow fell without notice about six weeks after I had come back from Chessing Hanger to my last half year of schooling before I became a gardener. It was late afternoon and I was home from school. I was downstairs reading a book and my mother was clearing away tea and grumbling at Fanny who wanted to go out. The lamp was lit, and both I and my father who was having what he called 'a bit of a read at the noosepaper' were as close up to its insufficient light as we could get. We heard the shop bell jangle overhead.

"'Drat it!' said my father. 'Whaddey want this time o' day?'

"He removed his spectacles. He had bought a pair haphazard at a pawnbroker's shop and always used them when he read. They magnified his large mild eyes very greatly. He regarded us protestingly. What *did* they want? We heard the voice of Uncle John Julip calling down the staircase:

"'Mort'mer,' he said in a voice that struck me as unusual. I had never heard him call my father anything but Smith before.

"'That you, John?' said my father standing up.

"'It's me. I want to speak to you.'

"'Come down and 'ave some tea, John,' cried my father at the bottom of the stairs.

"'Somethin' to tell you. 'You better come up here. Somethin' serious.'

"I speculated if it could be any misdeed of mine he had come over about. But my conscience was fairly clear.

"'Now whatever can it be?' asked my father.

"'You better go up and arst 'im,' my mother suggested.

"My father went.

"I heard my uncle say something about, 'We're busted. We've bin

give away and we're busted,' and then the door into the shop closed. We all listened to the movements above. It sounded as though Uncle Julip was walking up and down as he talked. My sister Fanny in her hat and jacket flitted unobtrusively up the stairs and out. After a time Prue came in; she had been helping teacher tidy up, she said, though I knew better. Then after a long interval my father came downstairs alone.

"He went to the hearthrug like one in a trance and stood, staring portentously in order to make my mother ask what was the matter. 'Why hasn't John come down for a bit of tea or something? Where's he gone, Morty?'

"'E's gorn for a van,' said my father; 'that's where 'e's gone. For a van.'

"'Whatever for?' asked my mother.

"'For a removal,' said my father. 'That's what for.'

"'Removal?'

"'We got to put 'em up 'ere for a night or so.'

"'Put 'em up! Who?'

"'Im and Adelaide. He's coming to Cherry Gardens.'

"'You done mean, Morty, 'e's lost 'is situation?'

"'I do. S'Lordship turned against 'im. Mischief 'as been made. Spying. And they managed to get 'im out of it. Turned out 'e is. Tole to go.'

"'But surely they give 'im notice!'

"'Not a bit of it. S'Lordship came down to the gardens 'ot and strong. "'Ere," 'e said, "get out of it!" Like that 'e said it. "You thank your lucky stars," 'e said, "I ain't put the 'tecs on to you and your snivellin' brother-in-law." Yes. S'Lordship said that.'

"'But what did 'e mean by it, Morty?'

"'Mean. 'E meant that certain persons who shall be nameless 'ad put a suspicion on John, told lies about 'im and *watched* 'im. Watched 'im they did and me. They've drawed me into it, Martha. They've drawed in young 'Arry. They've made up a tale about us...I always said we was a bit too regular...There it is, 'e ain't a 'ead gardener any more. 'E ain't going to 'ave references give 'im; 'e ain't ever going to 'ave another regular job. 'E's been betrayed and ruined, and there we are!'

“‘But they say ‘e took sompthing? — my brother John took sompthing?’

“‘Surplus projuce. What’s been a perquisite of every gardener since the world began.’...

“I sat with burning ears and cheeks pretending not to hear this dreadful conversation. No one knew of my own fatal share in my uncle’s downfall. But already in my heart, like the singing of a lark after a thunderstorm, was arising a realisation that now I might never become a gardener. My mother expressed her consternation brokenly. She asked incredulous questions which my father dealt with in an oracular manner. Then suddenly my mother pounced savagely on my sister Prue, reproaching her for listening to what didn’t concern her instead of washing up.”

“This is a very circumstantial scene,” said Radiant.

“It was the first great crisis of my dream life,” said Sarnac. “It is very vivid in my memory. I can see again that old kitchen in which we lived and the faded table-cloth and the paraffin lamp with its glass container. I think if you gave me time I could tell you everything there was in that room.”

“What’s a hearthrug?” asked Firefly suddenly. “What sort of thing was your hearthrug?”

“Like nothing on earth to-day. A hearthrug was a sort of rug you put in front of a coal fire, next to the fender, which prevented the ashes creeping into the room. This one my father had made out of old clothes, trousers and such-like things, bits of flannel and bits of coarse sacking, cut into strips and sewn together. He had made it in the winter evenings as he sat by the fireside, sewing industriously.”

“Had it any sort of pattern?”

“None. But I shall never tell my story, if you ask questions. I remember that my uncle, when he had made his arrangements about the van, came in for a bread-and-cheese supper before he walked back to Chessing Hanger. He was very white and distressed looking, Sir John had all faded away from him; he was like a man who had been dragged out from some hiding-place, he was a very distressed and pitiful man exposed to the light. I remember my mother asked him, ‘‘Ow’s Adelaide taking it?’

“My uncle assumed an expression of profound resignation. ‘Starts

a new pain,' he said bitterly. 'At a time like this.'

"My father and mother exchanged sympathetic glances.

"'I tell you — ,' said my uncle, but did not say what he told us.

"'A storm of weak rage wrung him. 'If I knew who'd done all this,' he said. 'That — that *cat* of a 'ousekeeper — cat I call her — she's got someone what wanted my place. If she and Petterton framed it up—'

"He struck the table, but half-heartedly.

"My father poured him out some beer.

"'Ugh!' said my uncle and emptied the glass.

"Got to face it,' said my uncle, feeling better. 'Got to go through with it. I suppose with all these tuppenny-apenny villa gardens 'ere there's jobbing work to be got. I'll get something all right...Think of it Jobbing gardener I Me — a Jobber! By the Day! It'll set up some of these 'ere season-ticket clerks no end to 'ave Lord Bramble's gardener dragging a lawn-mower for them. I can see 'em showing me to their friends out of the window. Bin 'ead-gardener to a Lord, they'll say. Well, well — !'

"'It's a come-down,' said my father when my uncle had departed. 'Say what you like, it's a come-down.'

"My mother was preoccupied with the question of their accommodation. 'She'll 'ave to 'ave the sofa in the sitting-room I expect, and 'e'll 'ave a bit of a shake-up on the floor. Don't suppose she'll like it. They'll 'ave their own bedding of course. But Adelaide isn't the sort to be comfortable on a sofa.'

"Poor woman! she was not. Although my uncle and my father and mother all pointed out to her the untimeliness and inconsiderateness of her conduct she insisted upon suffering so much that a doctor had to be called in. He ordered a prompt removal to a hospital for an immediate operation.

"Those were days," said Sarnac, "of the profoundest ignorance about the body. The ancient Greeks and the Arabs had done a little anatomy during their brief phases of intellectual activity, but the rest of the world had only been studying physiology in a scientific way for about three hundred years. People in general still knew practically nothing of vital processes. As I have told you they even bore children by accident. And living the queer lives they did, with abnormal and

ill-prepared food in a world of unchecked infections, they found the very tissues of the bodies going wrong and breaking out into the queerest growths. Parts of these bodies would cease to do anything but change into a sort of fungoid proliferation—"

"Their bodies were like their communities!" said Radiant.

"The same sort of thing. They had tumours and cancers and such-like things in their bodies and Cherry-Garden urban-districts on their country-sides. But these growths! — they are dreadful even to recall."

"But surely," said Willow, "in the face of such a horrible possibility which might afflict anyone, all the world must have wanted to push on with physiological research."

"Didn't they see," said Sunray, "that all these things were controllable and curable?"

"Not a bit of it," said Sarnac. "They didn't positively *like* these tumours and cancers, but the community was too under-vitalised to put up a real fight against these miseries. And everyone thought that he or she would escape — until it had them. There was a general apathy. And the priests and journalists and so forth, the common opinion makers, were jealous of scientific men. They did their best to persuade people that there was nothing hopeful in scientific research, they did all they could to discredit its discoveries, to ridicule its patient workers and set people against them."

"That's what puzzles me most," said Sunray.

"Their mental habits were different. Their minds hadn't been trained to comprehensive thinking. Their thinking was all in compartments and patches. The morbid growths in their bodies were nothing to the morbid growths in their minds."

§ 2

"My aunt in the hospital, with that lack of consideration for my uncle that had always distinguished her, would neither recover nor die. She was a considerable expense to him and no help; she added greatly to his distresses. After some days and at the urgent suggestion of my mother he removed himself from our sitting-room to a two-roomed lodging in the house of a bricklayer in an adjacent street; into this he

crowded his furniture from Chessing Hanger, but he frequented my father's shop and showed a deepening attachment to my father's company.

"He was not so successful a jobbing gardener as he had anticipated. His short contemptuous way with his new clients in the villas of Cliffstone failed to produce the respect he designed it to do; he would speak of their flower-beds as 'two penn'orths of all-sorts' and compare their gardens to a tablecloth or a window box; and instead of welcoming these home-truths, they resented them. But they had not the manliness to clear up this matter by a good straightforward argument in which they would have had their social position very exactly defined; they preferred to keep their illusions and just ceased to employ him. Moreover, his disappointment with my aunt produced a certain misogyny, which took the form of a refusal to take orders from the wives of his patrons when they were left in sole charge of the house. As many of these wives had a considerable influence over their husbands, this too injured my uncle's prospects. Consequently there were many days when he had nothing to do but stand about our shop to discuss with my father as hearer the defects of Cliffstone villa-residents, the baseness of Mr. Petterton and that cat ('*cat*' he called her) and the probable unworthiness of any casual customer who strayed into range of comment.

"Nevertheless my uncle was resolved not to be defeated without a struggle. There was a process which he called 'keeping his pecker up,' which necessitated, I could not but perceive, periodic visits to the Wellington public-house at the station corner. From these visits he returned markedly more garrulous, more like Sir John ffrench-Cuthbertson, and exhaling a distinctively courageous smell when he coughed or breathed heavily. After a time, as his business difficulties became more oppressive, my father participated in these heartening excursions. They broadened his philosophical outlook but made it, I fancied, rather less distinct.

"My uncle had some indefinite sum of money in the Post Office Savings Bank, and in his determination not to be beaten without a struggle he did some courageous betting on what he called 'certs' at the race-meetings on Byford Downs."

“‘Cert’ beats me altogether,” said Radiant.

“A ‘cert’ was a horse that was certain to win and never did. A ‘dead cert’ was an extreme form of the ‘cert.’ You cannot imagine how the prospects and quality of the chief race-horses were discussed throughout the land. The English were not a nomadic people, only a minority could ride horses; but everybody could bet on them. The King was, so to speak, head of the racing just as he was head of the army. He went in person to the great race-meetings as if to bless and encourage the betting of his subjects. So that my Uncle John Julip was upheld by the most loyal and patriotic sentiments when he wasted his days and his savings on Byford Downs. On several, of these occasions my father went with him and wrestled with fortune also. They lost generally, finally they lost most of what they had, but on one or two occasions, as my uncle put it, they ‘struck it rich.’ One day they pitched upon a horse called Rococo, although it was regarded as the very reverse of a ‘cert’ and the odds were heavy against it, but an inner light seems to have guided my uncle; it came in first and they won as much as thirty-five pounds, a very large sum for them. They returned home in a state of solemn exaltation, which was only marred by some mechanical difficulty in pronouncing the name of the winning horse. They began well but after the first syllable they went on more like a hen that had laid an egg than like rational souls who had spotted a winner. ‘Rococococo’ they would say or ‘Rococococococo.’ Or they would end in a hiccup. And though each tried to help the other out, they were not really helpful to each other. They diffused an unusually powerful odour of cigars and courage. Never had they smelt so courageous. My mother made them tea.

“‘*Tea*!’ said my uncle meaningly. He did not actually refuse the cup she put before him, but he pushed it a little aside.

“For some moments it seemed doubtful whether he was going to say something very profound or whether he was going to be seriously ill. Mind triumphed over matter. ‘Knew it would come, Marth,’ he said. Knew allong it would come. Directly I heard name. Roc—’ He paused.

“‘Cococo,’ clucked my father.

“‘Cococococo — hiccup,’ said my uncle. ‘I knew ourour ‘ad come. Some men, Smith, some men ‘ave that instink. I would ‘ave put my

shirt on that ‘orse, Marth — only...They wouldn’t ‘ave took my shirt.’

“He looked suddenly very hard at me. ‘They wouldn’t ‘ave took it, ‘Arry,’ he said. ‘They done take shirts!’ “‘No,’ he said and became profoundly thoughtful.

“Then he looked up. ‘Thirty-six to one against,’ he said. ‘We’d ‘ave ‘ad shirts for a lifetime.’

“My father saw it from a wider, more philosophical point of view. ‘Might never ‘ave been spared to wear ’em out,’ he said. ‘Better as it is, John.’

“‘And mind you,’ said my uncle; ‘this is only a beginning. Once I start spotting ’em I go on spotting ’em — mind that. This Roc—’

“‘Cococo.’

“‘Cococococo — whatever it is, s’only a beginning. S’only the firs’-ray-sunlight ‘v’ a glorious day.’

“‘In that case,’ said my mother, ‘t’seems to me some of us might have a share.’

“‘Certainly,’ said my uncle, ‘certainly, Marth.’ And amazingly he handed me a ten-shilling piece — in those days we had gold coins and this was a little disk of gold. Then he handed Prue the same. He gave a whole sovereign, a golden pound, to Fanny and a five-pound Bank of England note to my mother.

“‘Hold on!’ said my father warningly.

“‘Tha’s a’ right, Smith,’ said my uncle with a gesture of princely generosity. ‘*You* share, seventeen pounce ten. Six pounce ten leaves ‘leven. Lessee. One ‘n’ five six — seven — eight — nine — ten— ‘leven. *Here!*’

“My father took the balance of the money with a puzzled expression. Something eluded him. ‘Yers,’ he said; ‘but—’

“His mild eye regarded the ten-shilling piece I still held exposed in my hand. I put it away immediately but his gaze followed my hand towards my pocket until it met the table edge and got into difficulties.

“‘‘Thout the turf, Smith, there wouldn’t be such a country as England,’ said my Uncle John, and rounded his remarks off with, ‘Mark my words.’”

“My father did his best to do so.”

"But this hour of success was almost the only bright interlude in a steady drift to catastrophe. In a little while I gathered from a conversation between my mother and my father that we were 'behind with the rent.' That was a quarterly payment we paid to the enterprising individual who owned our house. I know all that sounds odd to you, but that is the way things were done. If we got behind with our rent the owner could turn us out."

"But where?" asked Firefly.

"Out of the house. And we weren't allowed to stay in the street. But it is impossible for me to explain everything of that sort in detail. We were behind with the rent and catastrophe impended. And then my sister Fanny ran away from us.

"In no other respect," said Sarnac, "is it so difficult to get realities over to you and make you understand how I thought and felt in that other life than in matters of sex. Nowadays sex is so simple. Here we are free and frank men and women; we are trained so subtly that we scarcely know we are trained, not to be stupidly competitive, to control jealous impulses, to live generously, to honour the young. Love is the link and flower of our choicest friendships. We take love by the way as we take our food and our holidays, the main thing in our lives is our creative work. But in that dark tormented world in which I passed my dream life, all the business of love was covered over and netted in by restraints and put in fetters that fretted and tortured. I will tell you at last how I was killed. Now I want to convey to you something of the reality of this affair of Fanny.

"Even in this world," said Sarnac, "my sister Fanny would have been a conspicuously lovely girl. Her eyes could be as blue as heaven, or darken with anger or excitement so that they seemed black. Her hair had a brave sweep in it always. Her smile made you ready to do anything for her; her laughter made the world clean and brightly clear about her even when it was touched with scorn. And she was ignorant — I can hardly describe her ignorance.

"It was Fanny first made me feel that ignorance was shameful. I have told you the sort of school we had and of our religious teachers. When I was nine or ten and Fanny was fifteen, she was already

scolding me for fumbling with the pronunciation of words and particularly with the dropping of the aspirate.

"'Harry,' she said, 'if you call me Fenny again it's war and pinching. My name's Fanny and your's is Harry and don't you forget it. It's not English we talk in this place; it's mud.'

"Something had stung her. She had been talking with someone with a better accent and she had been humiliated. I think that someone may have mocked her. Some chance acquaintance it must have been, some ill-bred superior boy upon the Cliffstone promenade. But Fanny was setting out now to talk good English and make me do the same, with a fury all her own.

"'If only I could talk French,' she said. 'There's France in sight over there; all its lighthouses winking at us, and all we've got to say is, "*Parley vous Francy*," and grin as if it was a joke.' She brought home a sixpenny book which professed but failed to teach her French. She was reading voraciously, greedily, to know. She read endless novels but also she was reading all sorts of books, about the stars, about physiology (in spite of my mother's wild scoldings at the impropriety of reading a book 'with pictures of yer insides' in it), about foreign countries. Her passion that I should learn was even greater than her own passion for knowledge.

"At fourteen she left school and began to help earn her living. My mother had wanted her to go into service,' but she had resisted and resented this passionately. While that proposal was still hanging over her, she went off by herself to Cliffstone and got a job as assistant book-keeper in a pork-butcher's shop. Before a year was out she was book-keeper, for her mind was as neat as it was nimble. She earned enough money to buy books and drawing material for me and to get herself clothes that scandalised all my mother's ideas of what was becoming. Don't imagine she 'dressed well,' as we used to say; she experimented boldly, and some of her experiments were cheap and tawdry.

"I could lecture to you for an hour," said Sarnac, "of what dress and the money to buy dresses meant for a woman in the old world.

"A large part of my sister's life was hidden from me; it would have been hidden altogether but for the shameless tirades of my mother, who seemed to prefer to have an audience while she scolded

Fanny. I can see now that my mother was bitterly jealous of Fanny because of her unexhausted youth, but at the time I was distressed and puzzled at the gross hints and suggestions that flew over my head. Fanny had a maddening way of not answering back or answering only by some minor correction. It's horrible, mother,' she would say. 'Not 'orrible.'

"Behind her defensive rudenesses, unlit, unguided, poor Fanny was struggling with the whole riddle of life, presented to her with an urgency no man can fully understand. Nothing in her upbringing had ever roused her to the passion for real work in the world; religion for her had been a grimace and a threat; the one great reality that had come through to her thoughts was love. The novels she read all told of love, elusively, partially, and an impatience in her imagination and in her body leapt to these hints. Love whispered to her in the light and beauty of things about her; in the moonlight, in the spring breezes. Fanny could not but know that she was beautiful. But such morality as our world had then was a morality of abject suppression. Love was a disgrace, a leering fraud, a smutty joke. She was not to speak about it, not to look towards it until some good man — the pork butcher was a widower and seemed likely to be the good man in her case — came and spoke not of love indeed but marriage. He would marry her and hurry home with his prize and tear the wrappings from her loveliness, clumsily, stupidly, in a mood of morbidly inflamed desire."

"Sarnac," said Firefly, "you are horrible."

"No," said Sarnac. "But that world of the past was horrible. Most of the women, your ancestors, suffered such things. And that was only the beginning of the horror. Then came the birth and desecration of the children. Think what a delicate, precious and holy thing a child is! They were begotten abundantly and abnormally, born reluctantly, and dropped into the squalor and infection of an overcrowded disordered world. Bearing a child was not the jolly wholesome process we know to-day; in that diseased society it was an illness, it counted as an illness, for nearly every woman. Which the man her husband resented — grossly. Five or six children in five or six years and a pretty girl was a cross, worried wreck of a woman, bereft of any shred of spirit or beauty. My poor scolding, worried mother was

not fifty when she died. And one saw one's exquisite infants grow up into ill-dressed, under-nourished, ill-educated children. Think of the agony of shamed love that lay beneath my poor mother's slaps and scoldings! The world has forgotten now the hate and bitterness of disappointed parentage. That was the prospect of the moral life that opened before my sister Fanny; that was the antistrophe to the siren song of her imagination.

"She could not believe this of life and love. She experimented with love and herself. She was, my mother said, 'a bold, bad girl.' She began I know with furtive kissings and huggings in the twilight, with boy schoolfellows, with clerks and errand boys. Some gleam of nastiness came into these adventures of the dusk and made her recoil. At any rate she became prim and aloof to Cherry Gardens, but only because she was drawn to the bands and lights and prosperity of Cliffstone. That was when she began to read and correct her accent. You have heard of our old social stratifications. She wanted to be like a lady; she wanted to meet a gentleman. She imagined there were gentlemen who were really gentle, generous, wise and delightful, and she imagined that some of the men she saw on the cliff promenade at Cliffstone were gentlemen. She began to dress herself as I have told.

"There were scores of such girls in every town in Europe," said Sarnac, "turning their backs on their dreadful homes. In a sort of desperate hope.

"When you hear about the moral code of the old world," Sarnac went on, "you are apt to think of it as a rule that everyone respected in exactly the same way that you think everyone believed the professed religions. We have not so much a moral code now as a moral training, and our religion involves no strain on reason or instincts, and so it is difficult for us to understand the tortuosity and evasions and defiances and general furtiveness and meanness of a world in which nobody really understood and believed the religious creeds, not even the priests, and nobody was really convinced to the bone of the sweetness and justice of the moral code. In that distant age almost everybody was sexually angry or uncomfortable or dishonest; the restraints we had did not so much restrain as provoke people. It is difficult to imagine it now."

“Not if you read the old literature,” said Sunray. “The novels and plays are pathological.”

“So you have my pretty sister Fanny, drawn by impulses she did not understand, flitting like a moth out of our dingy home in Cherry Gardens to the lights, bright lights of hope they seemed to her, about the bandstand and promenade of Cliffstone. And there staying in the lodging-houses and boarding-houses and hotels were limited and thwarted people, keeping holiday, craving for bright excitements, seeking casual pleasures. There were wives who had tired of their husbands and husbands long weary of their wives, there were separated people who could not divorce and young men who could not marry because they could not afford to maintain a family. With their poor hearts full of naughtiness, rebellious suppressions, jealousies, resentments. And through this crowd, eager, provocative, and defenceless, flitted my pretty sister Fanny.”

§ 4

“On the evening before Fanny ran away my father and my uncle sat in the kitchen by the fire discoursing of politics and the evils of life. They had both been keeping up their peckers very resolutely during the day and this gave a certain rambling and recurrent quality to their review. Their voices were hoarse, and they drawled and were loud and emphatic and impressive. It was as if they spoke for the benefit of unseen listeners. Often they would both be talking together. My mother was in the scullery washing up the tea-things and I was sitting at the table near the lamp trying to do some homework my teacher had given me, so far as the distraction of this conversation so close to me and occasional appeals to me to ‘mark’ this or that, would permit. Prue was reading a book called *Ministering Children* to which she was much addicted. Fanny had been helping my mother until she was told she was more a hindrance than a help. Then she came and stood at my side looking over my shoulder at what I was doing.

“‘What’s spoiling trade and ruining the country,’ said my uncle, ‘is these ‘ere strikes. These ‘ere strikes reg’ler destrushion — destruction for the country.’

“‘Stop everything,’ said my father. ‘It stands to reason.’

“‘They didn’t ought to be allowed. These ‘ere miners’r paid and paid ‘andsomely. Paid ‘andsomely they are. ‘Andsomely. Why! I’d be glad of the pay they get, glad of it. They ‘as bulldogs, they ‘as pianos. Champagne. Me and you, Smith, me and you and the middle classes generally; we don’t get pianos. We don’t get champagne. Not-tit...’

“‘Ought to be a Middle Classes Union,’ said my father, keep these ‘ere workers in their places. They ‘old up the country and stop trade. Trade! Trade’s orful. Why people come in now and look at what you got and arst the price of this and that. Think twice they do before they spend a sixpence...And the coal you’re expected to sell nowadays! I tell ‘em, if this ‘ere strike comes off this ‘s ‘bout the last coal you’re likely to see, good or bad. Straight out, I tell ‘em...’

“‘You’re not working, Harry,’ said Fanny without troubling to lower her voice. ‘Don’t see how you *can* work, with all this jawing going on. Come out for a walk.’

“I glanced up at her and rose at once. It wasn’t often Fanny asked me to go for a walk with her. I put my books away.

“‘Going out for a bit of fresh air, mother,’ said Fanny, taking her hat down from its peg.

“‘No, you don’t — not at this time,’ cried my mother from the scullery. ‘Ain’t I said, once and for all — ?’

“‘It’s all right, mother, Harry’s going with me. He’ll see no one runs away with me and ruins me...You’ve said it once and for all — times enough.’

“My mother made no further objection, but she flashed a look of infinite hate at my sister.

“We went upstairs and out into the street.

“For a time we said nothing, but I had a sense that I was going to be ‘told things.’

“‘I’ve had about enough of all this,’ Fanny began presently. ‘What’s going to become of us? Father and uncle ‘ve been drinking all day; you can see they’re both more than half-screwed. Both of ‘em. It’s every day now. It’s worse and worse and worse. Uncle hasn’t had a job these ten days. Father’s always with him. The shop’s getting filthy. He doesn’t sweep it out now for days together.’

“‘Uncle seems to have lost ‘eart,’ I said, ‘since he heard that Aunt Adelaide would have to have that second operation.’

“‘Lost heart! He never had any heart to lose.’ My sister Fanny said no more of my uncle — by an effort. ‘*What* a home!’ she cried.

“She paused for a moment. ‘Harry,’ she said, ‘I’m going to get out of this. Soon.’

“I asked what she meant by that.

“‘Never mind what I mean. I’ve got a situation. A different sort of situation...Harry, you — you care for me, Harry?’

“Professions of affection are difficult for boys of thirteen. ‘I’d do anything for you, Fanny,’ I said after a pause. ‘You know I would.’

“‘And you wouldn’t tell on me?’

“‘Whad you take me for?’

“‘Nohow?’

“‘No’ow.’

“‘I knew you wouldn’t,’ said Fanny. You’re the only one of the whole crew I’ll be sorry to leave. I *do* care for you, Harry. Straight, I do. I used to care for mother. Once. But that’s different. She’s scolded me and screamed at me till it’s gone. Every bit of it. I can’t help it, — it’s gone. I’ll think of you, Harry — often.’

“I realised that Fanny was crying. Then when I glanced at her again her tears were over.

“‘Look here, Harry,’ she said, ‘would you do something — for me. Something — not so very much — and not tell? Not tell afterwards, I mean.’

“‘I’d do anything, Fanny.’

“‘It’s not so very much really. There’s that little old portmanteau upstairs. I’ve put some things in it. And there’s a little bundle. I’ve put ’em both under the bed at the back where even Prying Prue won’t think of looking. And to-morrow when father’s out with uncle like he is now every day, and mother’s getting dinner downstairs and Prue’s pretending to help her and sneaking bits of bread — if you’d bring those down to Cliffstone to Crosby’s side-door...They aren’t so very heavy.’

“‘I ain’t afraid of your portmanteau, Fanny. I’d carry it more miles than that for you. But where’s this new situation of yours, Fanny? and why ain’t you saying a word about it at home?’

“‘Suppose I asked you something harder than carrying a portmanteau, Harry?’

“‘I’d do it, Fanny, if I could do it. You know that, Fanny.’

“‘But if it was just to ask no questions of where I am going and what I am going to do. It’s — it’s a good situation, Harry. It isn’t hard work.’

“She stopped short. I saw her face by the yellow light of a street lamp and I was astonished to see it radiant with happiness. And yet her eyes were shining with tears. What a Fanny it was, who could pass in a dozen steps from weeping to ecstasy!’

“‘Oh! I wish I could tell you all about it, Harry,’ she said. ‘I wish I could tell you all about it. Don’t you worry about me, Harry, or what’s going to happen to me. You help me, and after a bit I’ll write to you. I will indeed, Harry.’

“‘You aren’t going to run away and marry?’ I asked abruptly. ‘It’d be like you, Fanny, to do that.’

“‘I won’t say I am; I won’t say I’m not; I won’t say anything, Harry. But I’m as happy as the sunrise, Harry! I could dance and sing. If only I can do it, Harry.’

“‘There’s one thing, Fanny.’

“She stopped dead. ‘You’re not going back on me, Harry?’

“‘No. I’ll do what I’ve promised, Fanny. But—’ I had a moral mind. I hesitated. ‘You’re not doing anything wrong, Fanny?’

“She shook her head and did not answer for some moments. The look of ecstasy returned.

“‘I’m doing the rightest thing that ever I did, Harry, the rightest thing. If only I can do it. And you are a dear to help me, a perfect dear.’

“And suddenly she put her arms about me and drew my face to hers and kissed me and then she pushed me away and danced a step. ‘I love all the world to-night,’ said Fanny. ‘I love all the world. Silly old Cherry Gardens! You thought you’d got me! You thought I’d never get away!’

“She began a sort of chant of escape. ‘To-morrow’s my last day at Crosby’s, my very last day. For ever and ever. Amen. He’ll never come too near me again and breathe down my neck. He’ll never put his fat hand on my bare arm and shove his face close to mine while

he looks at my cash-sheet. When I get to — , wherever I'm going, Harry, I'll want to send him a post card. Good-bye, Mr. Crosby, good-bye, *dear* Mr. Crosby. For ever and ever. Amen!' She made what I knew to be her imitation of Mr. Crosby's voice. 'You're the sort of girl who ought to marry young and have a steady husband older than yourself, my dear. Did I ought? And who said you might call me your dear, dear Mr. Crosby? Twenty-five shillings a week and pawings about and being called *dear*, thrown in...I'm wild to-night, Harry — wild to-night. I could laugh and scream, and yet I want to cry, Harry, because I'm leaving you. And leaving them all! Though why I care I don't know. Poor, boozy, old father! Poor, silly, scolding mother Some day perhaps I may help them if only I get away. And you — you've got to go on learning and improving, Harry, learning, learning. Learn and get out of Cherry Gardens. Never drink. Never let drink cross your lips. Don't smoke. For why should anyone smoke? Take the top side of life, for it's easier up there. Indeed, it's easier. Work and read, Harry. Learn French — so that when I come back to see you, we can both talk together.'

"'You're going to learn French? You're going to France?'

"'Farther than France. But not a word, Harry. Not a word of it. But I wish I could tell you everything. I can't. I mustn't. I've given my promise. I've got to keep faith. All one has to do in the world is to love and keep faith. But I wish mother had let me help wash-up to-night, my last night. She hates me. She'll hate me more yet...I wonder if I'll keep awake all night or cry myself to sleep. Let's race as far as the goods-station, Harry, and then walk home.'"

§ 5

"The next night Fanny did not come home at all. As the hours passed and the emotion of my family deepened I began to realise the full enormity of the disaster that had come upon our home."

Sarnac paused and smiled. "Never was there so *clinging* a dream. I am still half Harry Mortimer Smith and only half myself. I am still not only in memory but half in feeling also that young English barbarian in the Age of Confusion. And yet all the time I am looking at my story from our point of view and telling it in Sarnac's voice.

Amidst this sunshine...Was it really a dream?...I don't believe I am telling you a dream."

"It isn't a bit like a dream," said Willow. "It is a story — a real story. Do you think it was a dream?"

Sunray shook her head. "Go on," she said to Sarnac. "Whatever it is, tell it. Tell us how your family behaved when Fanny ran away."

"You must keep in mind that all these poor souls were living in a world of repressions such as seem almost inconceivable now. You think they had ideas about love and sex and duty different from our ideas. We are taught that they had different ideas. But that is not the truth; the truth is that they had no clear, thought-out ideas about such things at all. They had fears and blank prohibitions and ignorances where we have ideas. Love, sex, these were things like the enchanted woods of a fairy tale. It was forbidden even to go in. And — none of us knew to what extent — Fanny had gone in.

"So that evening was an evening of alarm deepening to a sort of moral panic for the whole household. It seemed to be required of my family that they should all behave irrationally and violently. My mother began to fret about half-past nine. 'I've tole 'er, once for all,' she said, partly to herself but also for my benefit. 'It's got to stop.' She cross-examined me about where Fanny might be. Had she said anything about going on the pier? I said I didn't know. My mother fumed and fretted. Even if Fanny had gone on the pier she ought to be home by ten. I wasn't sent to bed at the usual hour so that I saw my father and uncle come in after the public-house had closed. I forget now why my uncle came in to us instead of going straight home, but it was not a very unusual thing for him to do so. They were already disposed to despondency and my mother's white face and anxious tidings deepened their gloom.

"'Mortimer,' said my mother, 'that gal of yours 'as gone a bit too far. Sarf-pars' ten and she isn't 'ome yet.'

"'Aven't I tole 'er time after time,' said my father, 'she's got to be in by nine?'

"'Not times enough you 'aven't,' said my mother, 'and 'ere's the fruit!'

"'I've tole 'er time after time,' said my father. 'Time after time.' And he continued to repeat this at intervals throughout the

subsequent discussion until another refrain replaced it.

"My uncle said little at first. He took up his position on the hearthrug my father had made and stood there, swaying slightly, hiccoughing at intervals behind his hand, frowning and scrutinising the faces of the speakers. At last he delivered his judgment. 'Somethin'sappened to that girl,' he said. 'You mark my words.'

"Prue had a mind apt for horrors. 'She's bin in 'naccident per'aps,' she said. She may've bin knocked down.'

"'I've tole 'er,' said my father, 'time after time.'

"'If there's bin 'naccident,' said my uncle sagely. 'Well...'nything ma've 'appened.' He repeated this statement in a louder firmer voice. ''Nything ma've 'appened.'

"'Stime you went to bed, Prue,' said my mother, ''igh time. N you too, 'Arry.'

"My sister got up with unusual promptitude and went out of the room. I think she must have had an idea then of looking for Fanny's things. I lingered.

"'May've been 'naccident, may not,' said my mother darkly. 'Sworse things than accidents.'

"'Whaddyoumean by that, Marth?' asked my uncle.

"'Never mind what I mean. That girl's worried me times and oft. There's worse things than accidents.'

"I listened thrilled. 'You be orf to bed, 'Arry,' said my mother.

"Whaddyou got to do, — simple,' said my uncle, leaning forward on his toes. 'Telephone 'ospitals. Telephone plice. Old Crow at the *Wellington* won't've gone to bed. 'Sgot telephone. Good customers. 'E'll telephone. Mark my words — s'snaccident.'

"And then Prue reappeared at the top of the stairs.

"'*Mother*!' she said in a loud whisper.

"'You be orf to bed, miss,' said my mother. ''Aven't I got worries enough?'

"'Mother,' said Prue. 'You know that little old portmantle of Fanny's?'

"Everyone faced a new realisation.

"'Sgorn,' said Prue. 'And her two best 'ats and all 'er undercloe's and 'er other dress — gorn too.'

"'Then she's took 'em!' said my father.

“‘And ‘erself!’ said my mother.

“‘Time after time I tole her,’ said my father.

“‘She’s run away’ said my mother with a scream in her voice. ‘She’s brought shame and disgrace on us! She’s run away!’

“‘Someone’s got ‘old of ‘er,’ said my father.

“My mother sat down abruptly. ‘After all I done for ‘er!’ she cried, beginning to weep. ‘With an honest man ready to marry ‘er! Toil and sacrifice, care and warnings, and she’s brought us to shame and dishonour! She’s run away! That I should ‘ave lived to see this day! Fanny!’

“She jumped up suddenly to go and see with her own eyes that Prue’s report was true. I made myself as inconspicuous as possible, for I feared some chance question might reveal my share in our family tragedy. But I didn’t want to go to bed; I wanted to hear things out.

“‘Sanny good my going to the plice-station for you on my way ‘ome?’ my uncle asked.

“‘Plice!’ said my father. What good’s plice? Gaw! If I ‘ad my ‘ands on that villain’s throat — I’d plice ‘im! Bringing shame on me and mine *Plice*! ‘Ere’s Fanny, my little daughter Fanny, beguiled and misled and carried away...I’m ‘asty...Yes, John. You go in and tell the plice. It’s on your way. Tell ’em from me. I won’t leave not a single stone unturned so’s to bring ‘er back.’

“My mother came back whiter than ever. ‘It’s right enough,’ she said. ‘She’s gorn! She’s off. While we stand ‘ere, disgraced and shamed, she’s away.’

“‘Who with?’ said my father. ‘That’s the question, who with? ‘Arry, ‘ave you ever seen anyone about with your sister? Anyone ‘anging about? Any suspicious-looking sort of dressed-up fancy man? ‘Ave you ever?’

“I said I hadn’t.

“But Prue had evidence. She became voluble. About a week ago she had seen Fanny and a man coming along from Cliffstone, talking. They hadn’t seen her; they had been too wrapped up in each other. Her description of the man was very vague and was concerned chiefly with his clothes; he had worn a blue serge suit and a grey felt hat; he was ‘sort of a gentleman like.’ He was a good lot older than

Fanny — Prue wasn't sure whether he had a moustache or not.

"My father interrupted Prue's evidence by a tremendous saying which I was to hear him repeat time after time during the next week. 'Sooner'n this sh'd've 'appened,' said my father, 'I'd 'ye seen 'er lying dead at my feet — *gladly* I'd've seen 'er lying dead at my feet!'

"'Poor girl I said my uncle. Sabitter lesson she 'as before 'er. A *bitter* lesson! Poo' chile! Poo' little Fanny!'

"'Poor Fanny indeed!' cried my mother vindictively, seeing it all, I perceived, from an entirely different angle. 'There she is prancin' about with 'er fancy gentleman now in all 'er fallals; dinners and wine she'll 'ave, flowers she'll 'ave, dresses and everything! Be took about and shown things! Shown off and took to theayters. The shame of it! And us 'ere shamed and disgraced and not a word to say when the neighbours ask us questions! 'Ow can I look 'em in the face? 'Ow can I look Mr. Crosby in the face? That man was ready to go down on 'is bended knees to 'er and worship 'er. Stout though 'e was. 'E'd 'ave given 'er anything she arst for — in reason. What 'e could see in 'er, I could never make out. But see it 'e did. And now I've got to face 'im and tell 'im I've told 'im wrong. Time after time I've said to 'im— "*You wait. You wait, Mr. Crosby*." And that 'uzzy! — sly and stuck-up and deep! Gorn!'

"My father's voice came booming over my mother's shrill outcry. 'Sooner'n this should've 'appened I'd 've seen 'er dead at my feet!'

"I was moved to protest. But for all my thirteen years I found myself weeping. ''Ow d'you know,' I blubbered, 'that Fanny 'asn't gone away and got married? 'Ow d'you know?'

"Merried!' cried my mother. 'Why should she run away to be merried! If it was merridge, what was to prevent 'er bringing 'im 'ome and having 'im interjuced to us all, right and proper? Isn't her own father and mother and 'ome good enough for her, that she 'as to run away and get merried? When she could 'ave 'ad it 'ere at St. Jude's nice and respectable with your father and your uncle and all of us and white favours and a carriage and all. I wish I could 'ope she was merried! I wish there was a chance of it!'

"My uncle shook his head in confirmation.

"'Sooner 'n this should 've 'appened,' boomed my father, 'I'd 've

seen ‘er dead at my feet!’

“‘Last night,’ said Prue, ‘she said ‘er prayers.’

“‘Didn’t she *always* say ‘er prayers?’ asked my uncle, shocked.

“‘Not kneeling down,’ said Prue. ‘But last night she was kneeling quite a long time. She thought I was asleep but I watched ‘er.’

“‘That looks bad,’ said my uncle. ‘Y’know, Smith; that looks bad. I don’t like that praying. Sominous. I don’t like it.’

“And then suddenly and violently Prue and I were packed off upstairs to bed.

“For long the sound of their voices went on; the three of them came up into the shop and stood at the front door while my uncle gradually took leave, but what further things they said I did not hear. But I remember that suddenly I had a brilliant idea, suggested no doubt by Prue’s scrap of evidence. I got out of bed and knelt down and said, Pray God, be kind to my Fanny! Pray God not to be hard on Fanny! I’m sure she means to get merried. For ever and ever. Amen.’ And after putting Providence upon his honour, so to speak, in this fashion, I felt less mentally distracted and got back into bed and presently I fell asleep.”

Sarnac paused.

“It’s all rather puzzling,” said Willow.

“It seemed perfectly natural at the time,” said Sarnac.

“That pork butcher was evidently a repulsive creature,” said Firefly. “Why didn’t they object to him?”

“Because the importance of the marriage ceremonial was so great in those days as to dominate the entire situation. I knew Crosby quite well; he was a cunning-faced oily-mannered humbug with a bald head, fat red ears, a red complexion and a paunch. There are no such people in the world now; you must recall some incredible gross old-world caricature to imagine him. Nowadays you would as soon think of coupling the life of a girl with some gross heavy animal as with such a man. But that mattered nothing to my father or my mother. My mother I suspect rather liked the idea of the physical humiliation of Fanny. She no doubt had had her own humiliations — for the sexual life of this old world was a tangle of clumsy ignorances and secret shames. Except for my mother’s real hostility to Fanny I remember scarcely a scrap of any simple natural feeling, let alone

any reasonable thinking, in all that terrible fuss they made. Men and women in those days were so much more complex and artificial than they are now; in a muddled way they were amazingly intricate. You know that monkeys, even young monkeys, have old and wrinkled faces, and it is equally true that in the Age of Confusion life was so perplexing and irrational that while we were still children our minds were already old and wrinkled. Even to my boyish observation it was clear that my father was acting the whole time; he was behaving as he imagined he was expected to behave. Never for a moment either when drunk or sober did he even attempt to find out, much less to express, what he was feeling naturally about Fanny. He was afraid to do so. And that night we were all acting — all of us. We were all afraid to do anything but act in what we imagined would be regarded as a virtuous rôle."

"But what were you afraid of?" asked Radiant. "Why did you act?"

"I don't know. Afraid of blame. Afraid of the herd. A habit of fear. A habit of inhibition."

"What was the objection to the real lover?" asked Firefly. "I don't understand all this indignation."

"They guessed rightly enough that he did not intend to marry Fanny."

"What sort of a man was he?"

"I never saw him until many years afterwards. But I will tell you about that when I come to it."

"Was he — the sort of man one could love?"

"Fanny loved him. She had every reason to do so. He took care of her. He got her the education she craved for. He gave her a life full of interest. I believe he was an honest and delightful man."

"They stuck to each other?"

"Yes."

"Then why didn't he marry her — if it was the custom?"

"He was married already. Marriage had embittered him. It embittered many people. He'd been cheated. He had been married by a woman who pretended love to impose herself upon him and his fortunes and he had found her out."

"Not a very difficult discovery," said Firefly.

"No."

"But why couldn't they divorce?"

"In those days it took two to make a divorce. She wouldn't let him loose. She just stuck on and lived on his loneliness. If he had been poor he would probably have tried to murder her, but as it happened he had the knack of success and he was rich. Rich people could take liberties with marriage-restrictions that were absolutely impossible for the poor. And he was, I should guess, sensitive, affectionate and energetic. Heaven knows what sort of mind he was in when he came upon Fanny. He 'picked her up,' as people used to say casually. The old world was full of such pitiful adventures in encounter. Almost always they meant disaster, but this was an exceptional case. Perhaps it was as lucky for him that he met her as it was for her that she met him. Fanny you know was one of those people you have to be honest with; she was acute and simple; she cut like a clean sharp knife. They were both in danger and want; the ugliest chances might have happened to her and he was far gone on the way to promiscuity and complete sexual degradation...But I can't go off on Fanny's story. In the end she probably married him. They were going to marry. In some way the other woman did at last make it possible."

"But why don't you know for certain?"

"Because I was shot before that happened. If it happened at all."

§ 6

"*No!*" cried Sarnac, stopping a question from Willow by a gesture.

"I shall never tell my story," said Sarnac, "if you interrupt with questions. I was telling you of the storm of misfortunes that wrecked our household at Cherry Gardens...

"My father was killed within three weeks of Fanny's elopement. He was killed upon the road between Cherry Gardens and Cliffstone. There was a young gentleman named Wickersham with one of the new petrol-driven motor-cars that were just coming into use; he was hurrying home as fast as possible, he told the coroner, because his brakes were out of order and he was afraid of an accident. My father was walking with my uncle along the pavement, talking. He found the pavement too restricted for his subject and gestures, and he

stepped off suddenly into the roadway and was struck by the car from behind and knocked headlong and instantly killed.

“The effect upon my uncle was very profound. For some days he was thoughtful and sober and he missed a race-meeting. He was very helpful over the details of the funeral.

“‘You can’t say ‘e wasn’t prepared, Marth,’ he told my mother. ‘You can’t say ‘e wasn’t prepared. Very moment ‘e was killed, ‘e ‘ad the name ‘v’ Providence on ‘is lips. ‘E’d been saying ‘ow sorely ‘e’d been tried by this and that.’

“‘‘E wasn’t the only one,’ said my mother.

“‘E was saying ‘e knew it was only to teach ‘im some lesson though he couldn’t rightly say what the lesson was. ‘E was convinced that everything that ‘appened to us, good though it seemed or bad though it seemed, was surely for the best...’

“My uncle paused dramatically.

“‘And then the car ‘it ‘im,’ said my mother, trying to picture the scene.

“‘Then the car ‘it ‘im,’ said my uncle.”

IV. — WIDOW SMITH MOVES TO LONDON

§ 1

"In those days," said Sarnac, "the great majority of the dead were put into coffins and buried underground. Some few people were burnt, but that was an innovation and contrary to the very materialistic religious ideas of the time. This was a world in which you must remember people were still repeating in perfect good faith a creed which included 'the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.' Intellectually old Egypt and her dreaming mummies still ruled the common people of the European world. The Christian creeds were themselves mummies from Lower Egypt. As my father said on one occasion when he was discussing this question of cremation: 'It might prove a bit orkward at the Resurrection. Like not 'aving a proper wedding garment so to speak...

"'Though there's sharks,' said my father, whose mental transitions were sometimes abrupt. 'And them as 'ave been eat by lions. Many of the best Christian martyrs in their time was eat by lions...They'd *certainly* be given bodies...

"'And if *one* is given a body why not another?' said my father, lifting mild and magnified eyes in enquiry.

"'It's a difficult question,' my father decided.

"At any rate there was no discussion of cremation in his case. We had a sort of hearse-coach with a place for the coffin in front to take him to the cemetery, and in this vehicle my mother and Prue travelled also; my elder brother Ernest, who had come down from London for the occasion, and my uncle and I walked ahead and waited for it at the cemetery gates and followed the coffin to the grave-side. We were all in black clothes, even black gloves, in spite of the fact that we were wretchedly poor.

"'Twon't be my last visit to this place this year,' said my uncle despondently, 'not if Adelaide goes on as she's doing.'

"Ernest was silent. He disliked my uncle and was brooding over him. From the moment of his arrival he had shown a deepening objection to my uncle's existence.

“‘There’s luck they say in funerals,’ said my uncle presently, striking a brighter note. ‘Fi keep my eye open I dessay I may get a ‘int of somethin’.’

“Ernest remained dour.

“We followed the men carrying the coffin towards the cemetery chapel in a little procession led by Mr. Snapes in his clerical robes. He began to read out words that I realised were beautiful and touching and that concerned strange and faraway things: ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me though he were dead yet shall he live...’

“‘I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth...’

“‘We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.’

“Suddenly I forgot the bickerings of my uncle and brother and was overcome with tenderness and grief for my father. A rush from my memory of many clumsy kindlinesses, a realisation of the loss of his companionship came to me. I recalled the happiness of many of my Sunday tramps by his side in spring-time, on golden summer evenings, in winter when the frost had picked out every twig in the downland hedgerows. I thought of his endless edifying discourses about flowers and rabbits and hill-sides and distant stars. And he was gone. I should never hear his voice again.. I should never see again his dear old eyes magnified to an immense wonder through his spectacles. I should never have a chance of telling him how I cared for him. And I had never told him I cared for him. Indeed, I had never realised I cared for him until now. He was lying stiff and still and submissive in that coffin, a rejected man. Life had treated him badly. He had never had a dog’s chance. My mind leapt forward beyond my years and I understood what a tissue of petty humiliations and disappointments and degradations his life had been. I saw then as clearly as I see now the immense pity of such a life. Sorrow possessed me. I wept as I stumbled along after him. I had great difficulty in preventing myself from weeping aloud.”

§ 2

“After the funeral my brother Ernest and my uncle had a violent wrangle about my mother’s future. Seeing that my Aunt Adelaide was for all practical purposes done for, my uncle suggested that he should sell up most of his furniture, ‘bring his capital’ into the greengrocery business and come and live with his sister. But my brother declared that the greengrocery business was a dying concern, and was for my mother moving into a house in Cliffstone when she might let lodgings. Prue would be ‘no end of a ‘elp’ in that. At first this was opposed by my uncle and then he came round to the idea on condition that he participated in the benefits of the scheme, but this Ernest opposed, asking rather rudely what sort of help my uncle supposed he would be in a lodging-house. ‘Let alone you’re never out of bed before ten,’ he said, though how he knew of this fact did not appear.

“Ernest had been living in London, working at a garage; he drove hired cars by the month or job, and his respect for the upper classes had somehow disappeared. The dignity of Sir John ffrench-Cuthbertson at secondhand left him cold and scornful. ‘You ain’t going to ‘ave *my* mother to work for you and wait on you, no’ow,’ he said.

“While this dispute went on my mother with the assistance of Prue was setting out the cold collation which in those days was the redeeming feature of every funeral. There was cold ham and chicken. My uncle abandoned his position of vantage on my father’s rag hearthrug and we all sat down to our exceptional meal.

“For some little time the cold ham and chicken made a sort of truce between my brother Ernest and my uncle, but presently my uncle sighed, drank off his beer and reopened the argument. ‘You know I think, Marth,’ he said spearing a potato from the dish neatly with his fork, ‘you ought to ‘ave some voice in what is going to become of you. Me and this young man from London ‘ye been ‘aving a bit of a difference ‘bout what you ought to do.’

“I realised abruptly from the expression of my mother’s white face, a sort of white intentness which her widow’s cap seemed to emphasise, that she was quite determined to have not only some voice but a decisive voice in this matter, but before she could say anything my brother Ernest had intervened.

“‘It’s like this, mother,’ he said, ‘you got to do something, ‘aven’t you?’

“My mother was about to reply when Ernest snatched a sort of assent from her and proceeded: ‘Well, naturally I ask, what sort of thing can you do? And *as* naturally, I answer Lodgings. You carn’t expect to go on being a greengrocer, because that ain’t natural for a woman, considering the weights and coal that ‘as to be lifted.’

“‘And could be lifted easy, with a man to ‘elp ‘er,’ said my uncle.

“‘If ‘e *was* a man,’ said my brother Ernest with bitter sarcasm.

“‘Meaning — ?’ asked my uncle with cold hauteur.

“‘What I say,’ said brother Ernest. ‘No more, no less. So if you ‘take my advice, mother, what you’ll do is this. You go down early to-morrow to Cliffstone to look for a suitable little ‘ouse big enough to ‘old lodgers and not so big as to break your back, and I’ll go and talk to Mr. Bulstrode about ending up your tenancy ‘ere. Then we’ll be able to see where we are.’

“Again my mother attempted to speak and was overborne.

“‘‘Fyou think I’m going to be treated as a nonentity,’ said my uncle, ‘you’re making the biggest mistake you ever made in your life. See? Now you listen to me, Marth—’

“‘You shut up!’ said my brother. ‘Mother’s *my* business first and foremost.’

“‘*Shut up!*’ echoed my uncle. ‘Wot *manners!* At a funeral. From a chap not a third my age, a mere ‘azardous empty boy! *Shut* up! You shut up yourself, my boy, and listen to those who know a bit more about life than you do. I’ve smacked your ‘ed before to-day. Not once or twice either. And I warmed your ‘ide when you stole them peaches — and much good it did you I I oughter’ve took yer skin off! You and me ‘ave never got on much, and unless you keep a civil tongue in your head we ain’t going to get on now.’

“‘Seeing which,’ said brother Ernest with a dangerous calmness; ‘the sooner you make yourself scarce the better for all concerned.’

“‘Not to leave my on’y sister’s affairs in the ‘ands of a cub like you.’

“Again my mother essayed to speak, but the angry voices disregarded her.

“‘I tell you you’re going to get out, and if you can’t get out of

your own discretion I warn you I'll 'ave to 'elp you.'

"'Not when you're in mourning,' said my mother. 'Not wearing your mourning. And besides—'

"But they were both too heated now to attend to her.

"'You're pretty big with your talk,' said my uncle, 'but don't you preshume too far on my forbearance. I've 'ad about enough of this.'

"'So've I,' said my brother Ernest and stood up.

"My uncle stood up too and they glared at one another.

"'That's the door,' said my brother darkly.

"My uncle walked back to his wonted place on the hearthrug. 'Now don't let's 'ave any quarrelling on a day like this,' he said. 'If you 'aven't any consideration for your mother you might at least think of 'Im who has passed beyond. My objec' 'ere is simply to try n'range things so's be best for all. And what I say is this, the ideer of your mother going into a lodging-'ouse alone, without a man's 'elp, is ridiculous, perfectly ridiculous, and only a first-class inconsiderate young fool—'

"My brother Ernest went and stood close to my uncle. 'You've said enough,' he remarked. 'This affair's between me and my mother and your motto is Get Out. See?'

"Again my mother had something to say and again she was silenced.

"'This is man's work, mother,' said Ernest. 'Are you going to shift it, uncle?'

"My uncle faced up to this threat of Ernest. 'I've a juty to my sister—'

"And then I regret to say my brother laid hands on him. He took him by the collar and by the wrist and for a moment the two black-clad figures swayed.

"'Lea' go my coat,' said my uncle. Lea' go my coat collar.'

"But a thirst for violence had taken possession of Ernest. My mother and Prue and I stood aghast.

"'Ernie!' cried my mother. 'You forget yourself!'

"'Sall *right*, mother,' said Ernie, and whirled my uncle violently from the hearthrug to the bottom of the staircase. Then he shifted his grip from my uncle's wrist to the seat of his tight black trousers and partly lifted and partly impelled him up the staircase. My uncle's

arms waved wildly as if he clutched at his lost dignity.

"'John!' cried my mother. ''Ere's your 'at!'

"I had a glimpse of my uncle's eye as he vanished up the staircase. He seemed to be looking for his hat. But he was now offering no serious opposition to my brother Ernest's handling of him.

"'Give it 'im, 'Arry,' said my mother. 'And there's 'is gloves too.'

"I took the black hat and the black gloves and followed the struggle upstairs. Astonished and unresisting my uncle was propelled through the front door into the street and stood there panting and regarding my brother. His collar was torn from its stud and his black tie disarranged. Ernest was breathing heavily. 'Now you be orf and mind your own business,' said Ernie.

"Ernie turned with a start as I pushed past him. ''Ere's your 'at and gloves, uncle,' I said, handing them to him. He took them mechanically, his eyes still fixed on Ernest.

"'And you're the boy I trained to be 'onest,' said my uncle to my brother Ernest, very bitterly. 'Leastways I tried to. You're the young worm I fattened up at my gardens and showed such kindness to! *Gratitood!*'

"He regarded the hat in his hand for a moment as though it was some strange object, and then by a happy inspiration put it on his head.

"'God 'elp your poor mother,' said my Uncle John Julip. 'God 'elp 'er.'

"He had nothing more to say. He looked up the street and down and then turned as by a sort of necessity in the direction of the *Wellington* public-house. And in this manner was my Uncle John Julip on the day of my father's funeral cast forth into the streets of Cherry Gardens, a prospective widower and a most pathetic and unhappy little man. That dingy little black figure in retreat still haunts my memory. Even from the back he looked amazed. Never did a man who has not been kicked look so like a man who has been. I never saw him again. I have no doubt that he carried his sorrows down to the *Wellington* and got himself thoroughly drunk, and I have as little doubt that he missed my father dreadfully all the time he was

doing so.

"My brother Ernest returned thoughtfully to the kitchen. He was already a little abashed at his own violence. I followed him respectfully.

"'You didn't ought t'ave done that,' said my mother.

"'What right 'as 'e to plant 'imself on you to be kept and waited on?'

"''E wouldn't 'ave planted 'imself on me,' my mother replied. 'You get 'eated, Ernie, same as you used to do, and you won't listen to anything.'

"'I never did fancy uncle,' said Ernie.

"'When you get 'eated, Ernie, you seem to forget everything,' said my mother. 'You might've remembered 'e was my brother.'

"'Fine brother!' said Ernie. 'Why! — who started all that stealing? Who led poor father to drink and bet?'

"'All the same,' said my mother, 'you 'adn't no right to 'andle 'im as you did. And your poor father 'ardly cold in 'is grave!' She wept. She produced a black-bordered handkerchief and mopped her eyes. 'I did 'ope your poor father would 'ave a nice funeral — all the trouble and expense — and now you've spoilt it. I'll never be able to look back on this day with pleasure, not if I live to be a 'undred years, I'll always remember 'ow you spoilt your own father's funeral — turning on your uncle like this.'

"Ernest had no answer for her reproaches. 'He shouldn't 've argued and said what he did,' he objected.

"'And all so unnecessary! All along I've been trying to tell you you needn't worry about me. I don't want no lodging-'ouse in Cliffstone — *with* your uncle or *without* your uncle. I wrote to Matilda Good a week come Tuesday and settled everything with 'er — everything. It's settled.'

"'What d'you mean?' asked Ernest.

"'Why, that 'ouse of hers in Pimlico. She's been wanting trusty 'elp for a long time, what with her varicose veins up and downstairs and one thing 'nother, and directly she got my letter about your poor dear father she wrote orf to me. "You need never want a 'ome," she says, "so long as I got a lodger. You and Prue are welcome," she says, "welcome 'elp, and the boy can easy find work up 'ere — much

easier than ‘e can in Cliffstone.” All the time you was planning lodging-’ouses and things for me I was trying to tell you—’

“‘You mean it’s settled?

“‘It’s settled.’

“‘And what you going to do with your bits of furniture ‘ere?’

“‘Sell some and take some...’

“‘It’s feasible,’ said Ernest after reflection.

“‘And so we needn’t reely ‘ave ‘ad that — bit of a’ argument?’ said Ernest after a pause. Not me and uncle?’

“‘Not on *my* account you needn’t,’ said my mother.

“‘Well — we ‘ad it,’ said Ernest after another pause and without any visible signs of regret.”

§ 3

“If my dream was a dream,” said Sarnac, “it was a most circumstantial dream. I could tell you a hundred details of our journey to London and how we disposed of the poor belongings that had furnished our home in Cherry Gardens. Every detail would expose some odd and illuminating difference between the ideas of those ancient days and our own ideas. Brother Ernest was helpful, masterful and irascible. He got a week’s holiday from his employer to help mother to settle up things, and among other things that were settled up I believe my mother persuaded him and my uncle to ‘shake hands,’ but I do not know the particulars of that great scene, I did not see it, it was merely mentioned in my hearing during the train journey to London. I would like to tell you also of the man who came round to buy most of our furniture, including that red and black sofa I described to you, and how he and my brother had a loud and heated argument about some damage to one of its legs, and how Mr. Crosby produced a bill, that my mother understood he had forgiven us on account of Fanny long ago. There was also some point about something called ‘tenant’s fixtures’ that led my brother and the landlord, Mr. Bulstrode, to the verge of violence. And Mr. Bulstrode, the landlord, brought accusations of damage done to the fabric of his house that were false, and he made extravagant claims for compensation based thereon and had to be rebutted with warmth.

There was also trouble over carting a parcel of our goods to the railway-station, and when we got to the terminus of Victoria in London it was necessary, I gathered, that Ernest should offer to fight a railway porter you have read of railway porters? — before we received proper attention.

"But I cannot tell you all these curious and typical incidents now because at that rate I should never finish my story before our holidays are over. I must go on now to tell you of this London, this great city, the greatest city it was in the world in those days, to which we had transferred our fates. All the rest of my story, except for nearly two years and a half I spent in the training camp and in France and Germany during the First World War, is set in the scenery of London. You know already what a vast congestion of human beings London was; you know that within a radius of fifteen miles a population of seven and a half million people were gathered together, people born out of due time into a world unready for them and born mostly through the sheer ignorance of their procreators, gathered together into an area of not very attractive clay country by an urgent need to earn a living, and you know the terrible fate that at last overwhelmed this sinfully crowded accumulation; you have read of west-end and slums, and you have seen the cinema pictures of those days showing crowded streets, crowds gaping at this queer ceremony or that, a vast traffic of clumsy automobiles and distressed horses in narrow unsuitable streets, and I suppose your general impression is a nightmare of multitudes, a suffocating realisation of jostling discomfort and uncleanness and of an unendurable strain on eye and ear and attention. The history we learn in our childhood enforces that lesson.

"But though the facts are just as we are taught they were, I do not recall anything like the distress at London you would suppose me to have felt, and I do remember vividly the sense of adventure, the intellectual excitement and the discovery of beauty I experienced in going there. You must remember that in this strange dream of mine I had forgotten all our present standards; I accepted squalor and confusion as being in the nature of things, and the aspects of this city's greatness, the wonder of this limitless place and a certain changing and evanescent beauty, rise out of a sea of struggle and

limitation as forgetfully as a silver birch rises out of the swamp that bears it.

"The part of London in which we took up our abode was called Pimlico. It bordered upon the river, and once there had been a wharf there to which ships came across the Atlantic from America. This word Pimlico had come with other trade in these ships; in my time it was the last word left alive of the language of the Algonquin Red Indians, who had otherwise altogether vanished from the earth. The Pimlico wharf had gone, the American trade was forgotten, and Pimlico was now a great wilderness of streets of dingy grey houses in which people lived and let lodgings. These houses had never been designed for the occupation of lodgers; they were faced with a lime-plaster called stucco which made a sort of pretence of being stone; each one had a sunken underground floor originally intended for servants, a door with a portico and several floors above which were reached by a staircase. Beside each portico was a railed pit that admitted light to the front underground room. As you walked along these Pimlico streets these porticos receded in long perspectives and each portico of that endless series represented ten or a dozen misdirected, incomplete and rather unclean inhabitants, infected mentally and morally. Over the grey and dingy architecture rested a mist or a fog, rarely was there a precious outbreak of sunlight; here and there down the vista a grocer's boy or a greengrocer's boy or a fish hawker would be handing in food over the railings to the subterranean members of a household, or a cat (there was a multitude of cats) would be peeping out of the railings alert for the danger of a passing dog. There would be a few pedestrians, a passing cab or so, and perhaps in the morning a dust-cart collecting refuse filth — set out for the winds to play with in boxes and tin receptacles at the pavement edge — or a man in a uniform cleaning the streets with a hose. It seems to you that it must have been the most depressing of spectacles. It wasn't, though I doubt if I can make clear to you that it wasn't. I know I went about Pimlico thinking it rather a fine place and endlessly interesting. I assure you that in the early morning and by my poor standards it had a sort of grey spaciousness and dignity. But afterwards I found the thing far better done, that London architectural aquatint, in Belgravia and round about Regent's Park.

“I must admit that I tended to drift out of those roads and squares of lodging-houses either into the streets where there were shops and street-cars or southward to the Embankment along the Thames. It was the shops and glares that drew me first as the lights began to fail and, strange as it may seem to you, my memories of such times are rich with beauty. We feeble children of that swarming age had I think an almost morbid gregariousness; we found a subtle pleasure and reassurance in crowds and a real disagreeableness in being alone; and my impressions of London’s strange interest and charm are I confess very often crowded impressions of a kind this world no longer produces, or impressions to which a crowded foreground or background was essential. But they were beautiful.

“For example there was a great railway-station, a terminus, within perhaps half a mile of us. There was a great disorderly yard in front of the station in which hackney automobiles and omnibuses assembled and departed and arrived. In the late twilight of an autumn day this yard was a mass of shifting black shadows and gleams and lamps, across which streamed an incessant succession of bobbing black heads, people on foot hurrying to catch the trains: as they flitted by the lights one saw their faces gleam and vanish again. Above this foreground rose the huge brown-grey shapes of the station buildings and the facade of a big hotel, reflecting the flares below and pierced here and there by a lit window; then very sharply came the sky-line and a sky still blue and luminous, tranquil and aloof. And the innumerable sounds of people and vehicles wove into a deep, wonderful and continually varying drone. Even to my boyish mind there was an irrational conviction of unity and purpose in this spectacle.

“The streets where there were shops were also very wonderful and lovely to me directly the too-lucid and expository daylight began to fade. The variously coloured lights in the shop windows which displayed a great diversity of goods for sale splashed the most extraordinary reflections upon the pavements and roadway, and these were particularly gem-like if there had been rain or a mist to wet the reflecting surfaces. One of these streets — it was called Lupus Street, though why it had the name of an abominable skin disease that has long since vanished from the earth I cannot imagine — was close to

our new home and I still remember it as full of romantic effectiveness. By daylight it was an exceedingly sordid street, and late at night empty and echoing, but in the magic hours of London it was a bed of black and luminous flowers, the abounding people became black imps and through it wallowed the great shining omnibuses, the ships of the street, filled with light and reflecting lights.

"There were endless beauties along the river bank. The river was a tidal one held in control by a stone embankment, and the roadway along the embankment was planted at the footway edge with plane trees and lit by large electric lights on tall standards. These planes were among the few trees that could flourish in the murky London air, but they were unsuitable trees to have in a crowded city because they gave off minute specules that irritated people's throats. That however I did not know; what I did know was that the shadows of the leaves on the pavements thrown by the electric glares made the most beautiful patterings I had ever seen. I would walk along on a warm night rejoicing in them, more particularly if now and then a light breeze set them dancing and quivering.

"One could walk from Pimlico along this Thames Embankment for some miles towards the east. One passed little black jetties with dangling oil lamps; there was a traffic of barges and steamers on the river altogether mysterious and romantic to me; the frontages of the houses varied incessantly, and ever and again were cleft by crowded roadways that brought a shining and twinkling traffic up to the bridges. Across the river was a coming and going of trains along a railway viaduct; it contributed a restless *motif* of clanks and concussion to the general drone of London, and the engines sent puffs of firelit steam and sudden furnace-glows into the night. One came along this Embankment to the great buildings at Westminster, by daylight a pile of imitation Gothic dominated by a tall clock-tower with an illuminated dial, a pile which assumed a blue dignity with the twilight and became a noble portent standing at attention, a forest of spears, in the night. This was the Parliament House, and in its chambers a formal King, an ignoble nobility and a fraudulently elected gathering of lawyers, financiers and adventurers took upon themselves, amidst the general mental obscurity of those days, a

semblance of wisdom and empire. As one went on beyond Westminster along the Embankment came great grey-brown palaces and houses set behind green gardens, a railway bridge and then two huge hotels, standing high and far back, bulging with lit windows; there was some sort of pit or waste beneath them, I forget what, very black, so that at once they loomed over one and seemed magically remote. There was an Egyptian obelisk here, for all the European capitals of my time, being as honest as magpies and as original as monkeys, had adorned themselves with obelisks stolen from Egypt. And farther along was the best and noblest building in London, St. Paul's Cathedral; it was invisible by night, but it was exceedingly serene and beautiful on a clear, blue, windy day. And some of the bridges were very lovely with gracious arches of smutty grey stone, though some were so clumsy that only night could redeem them.

"As I talk I remember," said Sarnac. "Before employment robbed me of my days I pushed my boyish explorations far and wide, wandering all day and often going without any meal, or, if I was in pocket, getting a bun and a glass of milk in some small shop for a couple of pennies. The shop windows of London were an unending marvel to me; and they would be to you too if you could remember them as I do; there must have been hundreds of miles of them, possibly thousands of miles. In the poorer parts they were chiefly food-shops and cheap clothing shops and the like, and one could exhaust their interest, but there were thoroughfares like Regent Street and Piccadilly and narrow Bond Street and Oxford Street crammed with all the furnishings of the life of the lucky minority, the people who could spend freely. You will find it difficult to imagine how important a matter the mere buying of things was in the lives of those people. In their houses there was a vast congestion of objects neither ornamental nor useful; *purchases* in fact; and the women spent large portions of every weekday in buying things, clothes, table-litter, floor-litter, wall-litter. They had no work; they were too ignorant to be interested in any real thing; they had nothing else to do. That was the world's reward, the substance of success — purchases. Through them you realised your well-being. As a shabby half-grown boy I pushed my way among these spenders, crowds of women dressed, wrapped up rather, in layer after layer of purchases, scented, painted.

Most of them were painted to suggest a health-flushed face, the nose powdered a leprous white.

“There is one thing to be said for the old fashion of abundant clothing; in that crowded jostling world it saved people from actually touching each other.

“I would push through these streets eastward to less prosperous crowds in Oxford Street and to a different multitude in Holborn. As you went eastward the influence of women diminished and that of young men increased. Cheapside gave you all the material for building up a twentieth-century young man from the nude. In the shop windows he was disarticulated and priced: hat five and sixpence, trousers eighteen shillings, tie one and six; cigarettes tenpence an ounce; newspaper a halfpenny, cheap novel sevenpence; on the pavement outside there he was put together and complete and the cigarette burning, under the impression that he was a unique immortal creature and that the ideas in his head were altogether his own. And beyond Cheapside there was Clerkenwell with curious little shops that sold scarcely anything but old keys or the parts of broken-up watches or the like detached objects. Then there were great food markets at Leadenhall Street and Smithfield and Covent Garden, incredible accumulations of raw stuff. At Covent Garden they sold fruits and flowers that we should think poor and undeveloped, but which everyone in those days regarded as beautiful and delicious. And in Caledonian Market were innumerable barrows where people actually bought and took away every sort of broken and second-hand rubbish, broken ornaments, decaying books with torn pages, secondhand clothing — a wonderland of litter for any boy with curiosity in his blood...

“But I could go on talking endlessly about this old London of mine and you want me to get on with my story. I have tried to give you something of its endless, incessant, multitudinous glittering quality and the way in which it yielded a thousand strange and lovely effects to its changing lights and atmosphere. I found even its fogs, those dreaded fogs of which the books tell, romantic. But then I was a boy at the adventurous age. The fog was often very thick in Pimlico. It was normally a soft creamy obscurity that turned even lights close at hand into luminous blurs. People came out of

nothingness within six yards of you, were riddles and silhouettes before they became real. One could go out and lose oneself within ten minutes of home and perhaps pick up with a distressed automobile driver and walk by his headlights, signalling to him where the pavement ended. That was one sort of fog, the dry fog. But there were many sorts. There was a sort of yellow darkness, like blackened bronze, that hovered about you and did not embrace you and left a clear nearer world of deep browns and blacks. And there was an unclean wet mist that presently turned to drizzle and made every surface a mirror."

"And there was daylight," said Willow, "sometimes surely there was daylight."

"Yes," Sarnac reflected; "there was daylight. At times. And sometimes there was quite a kindly and redeeming sunshine in London. In the spring, in early summer or in October. It did not blaze, but it filled the air with a mild warmth, and turned the surfaces it lit not indeed to gold but to amber and topaz. And there were even hot days in London with skies of deep blue above, but they were rare. And sometimes there was daylight without the sun...

"Yes," said Sarnac and paused. "At times there was a daylight that stripped London bare, showed its grime, showed its real ineffectiveness, showed the pitiful poverty of intention in its buildings, showed the many coloured billstickers' hoardings for the crude and leprous things they were, brought out the shabbiness of unhealthy bodies and misfitting garments...

"Those were terrible, veracious, unhappy days. When London no longer fascinated but wearied and offended, when even to an uninstructed boy there came some intimation of the long distressful journey that our race had still to travel before it attained even to such peace and health and wisdom as it has to-day."

§ 4

Sarnac stopped short in his talk and rose with something between a laugh and a sigh. He stood facing westward and Sunray stood beside him.

"This story will go on for ever if I digress like this. See! the sun

will be behind that ridge in another ten minutes. I cannot finish this evening, because most of the story part still remains to be told."

"There are roast fowls with sweet corn and chestnuts," said Firefly. "Trout and various fruits."

"And some of that golden wine?" said Radiant.

"Some of that golden wine."

Sunray, who had been very still and intent, awoke. "Sarnac dear," she said, slipping her arm through his. "What became of Uncle John Julip?"

Sarnac reflected. "I forget," he said.

"Aunt Adelaide Julip died?" asked Willow.

"She died quite soon after we left Cherry Gardens. My uncle wrote, I remember, and I remember my mother reading the letter at breakfast like a proclamation and saying, 'Seems if she was reely ill after all.' If she had not been ill then surely she had carried malingering to the last extremity. But I forget any particulars about my uncle's departure from this world. He probably outlived my mother, and after her death the news of his end might easily have escaped me."

"You have had the most wonderful dream in the world, Sarnac," said Starlight, "and I want to hear the whole story and not interrupt, but I am sorry not to hear more of your Uncle John Julip."

"He was such a perfect little horror," said Firefly...

Until the knife-edge of the hills cut into the molten globe of the sun, the holiday-makers lingered watching the shadows in their last rush up to the mountain crests, and then, still talking of this particular and that in Sarnac's story, the six made their way down to the guest-house and supper.

"Sarnac was shot," said Radiant. "He hasn't even begun to get shot yet. There is no end of story still to come."

"Sarnac," asked Firefly, "you weren't killed in the Great War, were you? Suddenly? In some inconsequent sort of way?"

"Not a bit of it," said Sarnac. "I am really beginning to be shot in this story though Radiant does not perceive it. But I must tell my story in my own fashion."

At supper what was going on was explained to the master of the guest-house. Like so many of these guest-house-keepers he was a

jolly, convivial, simple soul, and he was amused and curious at Sarnac's alleged experience. He laughed at the impatience of the others; he said they were like children in a Children's Garden, agog for their go-to-bed fairy tale. After they had had coffee they went out for a time to see the moonlight mingle with the ruddy afterglow above the peaks: and then the guest-master led the way in, made up a blazing pinewood fire and threw cushions before it, set out an after-dinner wine, put out the lights and prepared for a good night's story-telling.

Sarnac remained thoughtful looking into the flames until Sunray set him off again by whispering: "Pimlico?"

§ 5

"I will tell you as briefly as I can of the household in Pimlico where we joined forces with my mother's old friend, Matilda Good," said Sarnac; "but I confess it is hard to be reasonably brief when one's mind is fuller of curious details than this fire is of sparks."

"That's excellent!" said the master of the guesthouse. "That's a perfect story-teller's touch!" and looked brightly for Sarnac to continue.

"But we are all beginning to believe that he has *been there*," whispered Radiant, laying a restraining hand on the guest-master's knee. And he" — Radiant spoke behind his hand— "he believes it altogether."

"Not *really*?" whispered the guest-master. He seemed desirous of asking difficult questions and then subsided into an attention that was at first a little constrained and presently quite involuntary.

"These houses in Pimlico were part of an enormous proliferation of houses that occurred between a hundred years and seventy years before the Great War. There was a great amount of unintelligent building enterprise in those decades in London, and all the building, as I have already told you I think, was done on the supposition that there was an endless supply of fairly rich families capable of occupying a big house and employing three or four domestic servants. There were underground kitchens and servants' rooms, there was a dining-room and master's study at the ground level, there

was a ‘drawing-room floor’ above, two rooms convertible into one by a device known as folding doors, and above this were bedrooms on a scale of diminishing importance until one came to attics without fire-places in which the servants were to sleep. In large areas and particularly in Pimlico, these fairly rich families of the builder’s imagination, with servile domestics all complete, never appeared to claim the homes prepared for them, and from the first, poorer people, for whom of course no one had troubled to plan houses, adapted these porticoed plaster mansions to their own narrower needs. My mother’s friend, Matilda Good, was a quite typical Pimlico householder. She had been the trusted servant of a rich old lady in Cliffstone who had died and left her two or three hundred pounds of money—”

The master of the guest-house was endlessly perplexed and made an interrogative noise.

“Private property,” said Radiant very rapidly. “Power of bequest. Two thousand years ago. Made a Will, you know. Go on, Sarnac.”

“With that and her savings,” said Sarnac, “she was able to become tenant of one of these Pimlico houses and to furnish it with a sort of shabby gentility, She lived herself in the basement below and in the attic above, and all the rest of the house she had hoped to let in pieces, floor by floor or room by room to rich or at least prosperous old ladies, and to busy herself in tending them and supplying their needs and extracting a profit and living out of them, running up and down her staircase as an ant runs up and down a rose stem tending its aphides. But old ladies of any prosperity did not come into Pimlico. It was low and foggy, the children of its poorer streets were rough and disrespectful, and it was close to the river embankment over which rich, useless, old ladies naturally expected to be thrown. So Matilda Good had to console herself with less succulent and manageable lodgers.

“I remember Matilda Good giving us an account of those she had as we sat in her front downstairs room having a kind of tea supper on the evening of our arrival. Ernest had declined refreshment and departed, his task as travel conductor done, but there were my mother and Prue and myself, all in dingy black and all a little stiff and strange, thawing slowly to tea and hot buttered toast with a poached

egg each, our mouths very full and our eyes and ears very attentive to Matilda Good.

"She appeared quite a grand lady to me that night. She was much larger than any lady I had hitherto been accustomed to; she had a breadth and variety of contour like scenery rather than a human being; the thought of her veins being varicose, indeed of all her anatomy being varicose and fantastic, seemed a right and proper one. She was dressed in black with outbreaks of soiled lace, a large gold-rimmed brooch fastened her dress at the neck and she had a gold chain about her, and on her head was what was called a 'cap,' an affair like the lower shell of an oyster inverted, made of layers of dingy lace and adorned with a black velvet bow and a gold buckle. Her face had the same landscape unanatomical quality as her body; she had a considerable moustache, an overhung slightly mischievous mouth and two different large dark-grey eyes with a slightly vertical cast in them and very marked eyelashes. She sat sideways. One eye looked at you rather sidelong, the other seemed to watch something over your head. She spoke in a whisper which passed very easily into wheezy, not unkindly laughter.

"'You'll get no end of exercise on these stairs, my dear,' she said to sister Prue, 'no end of exercise. There's times when I'm going up to bed when I start counting 'em, just to make sure that they aren't taking in lodgers like the rest of us. There's no doubt this 'ouse will strengthen your legs, my dear. Mustn't get 'em too big and strong for the rest of you. But you can easy manage that by carrying something, carrying something every time you go up or down. Ugh — ugh. That'll equalise you. There's always something to carry, boots it is, hot water it is, a scuttle of coals or a parcel.'

"'I expect it's a busy 'ouse,' said my mother, eating her buttered toast like a lady.

"'It's a toilsome 'ouse,' said Matilda Good. 'I don't want to deceive you, Martha; it's a toilsome 'ouse.'

"'But it's a 'ouse that keeps full,' said Matilda Good, challenging me with one eye and ignoring me with the other. 'Full I am now, and full I've been since last Michaelmas, full right up; two permanents I've 'ad three years on end and those my best floors. I've something to be thankful for, all things considered, and now I got 'elp of a sort

that won't slide downstairs on a tea tray or lick the ground-floor's sugar lump by lump knowing the lumps was counted and never thinking that wetness tells, the slut I we'll get on swimmingly. The sluts I've 'ad, Martha! These board-schools turn them out a 'orror to God and a danger to men. I can't tell you. It's a comfort to set eyes on any girl as I can see at once 'as been brought up to take a pride in 'erself. 'Ave a little of that watercress with your toast, my dear. It'll do that complexion of yours good.'

"My sister Prue reddened and took some watercress.

"'The drawing-room floor,' said Matilda Good, 'is a lady. It isn't often you keep a lady three years, what with the things they know and the things they fancy they know, but I've kept her. She's a real lady — born. Bumpus 'er name is — Miss Beatrice Bumpus. I don't know whether you'll like her, Martha, when you set eyes on her, but she's got to be studied. She's a particular sort of Warwickshire Bumpus that hunts. She'll ask you if you want the vote, Martha, directly she sees you're a fresh face. It isn't a vote or *any* old vote she asks you to want, it's *the* vote.' The whispering voice grew thicker and richer and a persuasive smile spread far and wide over the face. 'If it's all the same to you, Martha, you better say you do.'

"My mother was sipping her fourth cup of tea. 'I don't know,' she said, 'as I altogether 'old with this vote.'

"Matilda Good's great red hands which had been lying apparently detached in her lap, produced short arms and lace cuffs and waved about in the air, waving my mother's objections away. ''Old with it on the drawing-room floor,' wheezed Matilda. ''Old with it on the drawing-room floor.'

"'But if she arsts questions?'

"'She won't wait to have them answered. It won't be difficult, Martha. I wouldn't put you into a position of difficulty, not if I could 'elp it. You just got to 'old with 'er quietly and she'll do the rest.'

"'Mother,' said Prue, who was still too overawed by Matilda Good to address her directly. 'Mother, what is this here vote?'

"'Vote for Parliament, my dear,' said Matilda Good.

"'When shall we get it?' asked my mother.

"'You won't get it,' said Matilda Good.

"'But if we did, what should we have to do with it, like?'

"'*Nothing*,' said Matilda Good with bottomless contempt. 'All the same it's a great movement, Martha, and don't you forget it. And Miss Bumpus she works night and day, Martha, gets 'it about by policemen, and once she was actually in prison a night, getting you and me the vote.'

"'Well, it shows a kind nature,' said my mother.

"'My ground-floor's a gentleman. The worst of 'im is the books there are to dust, books *and* books. Not that 'e ever reads 'em much...Very likely you'll 'ear 'im soon playing his pianola. You can 'ear it down 'ere almost as if you were inside it. Mr. Plaice, 'e's an Oxford gentleman and he works at a firm of publishers, Burrows and Graves, they're called; a very 'igh-class firm I'm told — don't go in for advertisements or anything vulgar. He's got photographs of Greek and Latin statues and ruins round above his bookshelves and shields with College arms. Naked some of the statues are, but for all that none of them are anything but quite nice and genteel, *quite* genteel. You can see at once he's a University gentleman. And photographs of Switzerland he's got. He goes up mountains in Switzerland and speaks the language. He's a smoker; sets with a pipe writing or reading evening after evening and marking things with his pencil. Manuscripts he reads and proofs. Pipes he has with a pipe for every day in the week, and a smoker's outfit all made with bee-utiful stone, serpentine they call it, sort of bloodshot green it is; tobacco-jar and a pot for feathers to clean his pipes, little places for each day's pipe, everything all of stone; it's a regular monument. And when you're dusting it — remember if you drop this here serpentine it breaks like earthenware. Most of the maids I've 'ad 'ave 'ad a chip at that tobacco graveyard of 'is. And mind you—' Matilda Good leant forward and held out her hand to arrest any wandering of my mother's attention. ''*E don't 'old with Votes tor Women!* See?'

"'One's got to be careful,' said my mother.

"'One has. He's got one or two little whims, has Mr. Plaice, but if you mind about them he don't give you much trouble. One of 'is whims is to pretend to 'ave a bath every morning. Every morning he 'as a shallow tin bath put out in his room and a can of cold water and a sponge, and every morning he pretends to splash about in it something fearful and makes a noise like a grampus singing a hymn

— calls it ‘is Tub, he does; though it’s a lot more like a canary’s saucer. Says he must have it as cold as possible even if there’s ice on it. Well—’

“Matilda Good performed a sort of landslide over the arm of her chair, her head nodded, and the whisper became more confidential. ‘He *doesn’t*,’ wheezed Matilda Good.

“‘You mean he doesn’t get into the bath?’

“‘Not-tit,’ said Matilda Good. ‘You can see when he’s really been in by his wet footmarks on the floor. Not ‘arf the time does he have that bath. Per’aps ‘e used to have it when he was a young man at College. I wonder. But it’s always got to be put out and the can always got to be lugged up and poured out and poured away again, and nobody’s ever to ask if he’d like the chill taken off. Not the sort of thing you ask a University gentleman. No. All the same,’ said Matilda Good, ‘all the same I’ve caught ‘im pouring his hand and shaving water into that water-splash in the winter, after he’d been going dirty for a week. But have a can of warm? Have the chill taken off his water? Not Tim! It’s curious, ain’t it? But that’s one of his whims.

“‘I sometimes think,’ said Matilda Good still more extravagantly confidential, ‘that perhaps he climbs all those mountains in Switzerland same way as he takes his bath...’

“She rolled back large portions of her person into a less symmetrical attitude. ‘This Mr. Plaice you must know,’ she said, ‘has a voice between a clergyman’s and a schoolmaster’s, sort of hard and superior, and when you say anything to him he’s apt to make a noise, “Arrr...Arrr...Arrr,” a sort of slow neighing it is, as though he doesn’t think much of you but doesn’t want to blame you for that and anyhow can’t attend to you properly. You mustn’t let it annoy you. It’s the way he’s been brought up. And he has a habit of using long condescending sort of words to you. And calling you insulting names. He’ll think nothing of calling you “My worthy Abigail,” or “Come in, my rosy fingered Aurora,” when you knock in the morning. Just as though a girl could keep ‘er ‘ands pink and clean with all these fires to light! He’ll ask of me “How’s the Good Matilda? How’s honest Matilda Good to-day?” — sort of fiddling about with your name. Of course he don’t mean to be rude; it’s just

his idea of being pleasant and humorous, and making you feel you're being made fun of in a gentle sort of way instead of being terrible like he might be, and — seeing he's good pay and very little trouble, Martha — it's no good getting offended with him. All the same I can't help thinking at times of how he'd get on if I answered 'im back, and which of us two would be left alive if we had a fair match of it, making fun of one another. The things — the things I could say! But that,' said Matilda Good, breaking into an ingratiating smile of extraordinary extent and rolling one eye at me— 'is just a dream. It isn't the sort of dream to indulge in in this 'ouse. I've rehearsed it a bit, I admit. Says 'e — but never mind what 'e says or what I says back to him...Ugh! Ugh!...He's good pay and regular, my dear; he ain't likely to lose his job and he ain't likely ever to get another, and in this Vale anyhow we got to put up with 'is whims. And—'

"Matilda Good spoke as one who confesses to a weakness. 'His pianola cheers me up at times. I will say that for 'im. It's almost the only noise one hears from him. Except when he takes off his boots.

"'Well, up above my drawing-room at present is my second floor front, the Reverend Moggeridge and his good lady. They been here five months now and they seem like taking root.'

"'Not a clergyman?' said my mother respectfully.

"'A very poor clergyman,' said Matilda, 'but a clergyman. So much to our credit, Martha. Oh! but they're poor old things I Poor old things I Been curate or something all his life in some outof-the-world place. And lost his job. Somebody had the heart to turn 'em out. Or something happened. I wonder. 'E's a funny old man...

"'He dodders off nearly every Saturday on supply, they call it, to take services somewhere over the Sunday, and like as not he comes back with his cold worse than ever, sniffing and sniffing. It's cruel how they treat these poor old parsons on supply, fetch 'em from the station in open traps they do, in the worst of weather, and often the rectory teetotal without a drop of anything for a cold. Christianity! I suppose it's *got* to be...The two of them just potter about upstairs and make shift to get their meals, such as they are, over the bedroom fire. She even does a bit of her own washing. Dragging about. Poor old things! Old and forgotten and left about. But they're very little trouble and there it is. And as I say — anyhow — he's a clergyman.

And in the other room at the back there's a German lady who teaches — well, anything she can persuade anyone to be taught. She hasn't been here more than a month, and I don't know whether I like her or not, but she seems straight enough and she keeps herself pretty much to herself and when one has a room to let one can't always pick and choose.'

"'And that's the lot, my dear. To-morrow we'll have to begin. You'll go up presently and settle into your two rooms at the top. There's a little one for Mortimer and a rather bigger one for you and Prue. There's pegs and curtains for your things. I'm next door to you. I'll give you my little old alarum clock and show you all about it and to-morrow at seven sharp down we come, you and me and Prue. My Lord, I suppose, has the privilege of his sex and doesn't come down until half-past! Oh! I'm a suffragette, Martha, — same as Miss Bumpus. First thing is this fire, and unless we rake the ashes well forward the boiler won't heat. Then there's fires and boots, dust the front rooms and breakfasts: Mr. Plaice at eight sharp and mind it is, and Miss Bumpus at eight-thirty, and get away with Mr. Plaice if you can first because of the shortness of tablespoons. Five I got altogether and before I lost my last third floor back I 'ad seven. 'E was a nice lot; 'e was. The old people get their own breakfast when they want it, and Frau Buchholz has a tray, just bread and butter and tea, whenever we can manage it after the drawing-room's been seen to. That's the programme, Martha.'

"'I'll do my best, 'Tilda,' said my mother. '*As* you know.'

"'Hullo!' said Matilda indicating the ceiling, 'the concert's going to begin. That bump's him letting down the pianola pedals.'

"And then suddenly through the ceiling into our subterranean tea party came a rush of Clavier notes — I can't describe it.

"One of the few really good things of that age was the music. Mankind perfected some things very early; I suppose precious-stone work and gold work have never got very much beyond the levels it reached under the Seventeenth Dynasty in Egypt, ages ago, and marble statuary came to a climax at Athens before the conquests of Alexander. I doubt if there has ever come very much sweeter music into the world than the tuneful stuff we had away back there in the Age of Confusion. This music Mr. Plaice was giving us was some

bits of Schumann's *Carnaval* music; we hear it still played on the Clavier; and it was almost the first good music I ever heard. There had been brass bands on Cliffstone promenade, of course but they simply made a glad row. I don't know if you understand what a pianola was. It was an instrument for playing the Clavier with hammers directed by means of perforated rolls, for the use of those who lacked the intelligence and dexterity to read music and play the Clavier with their hands. Because everyone was frightfully unhandy in those days. It thumped a little and struck undiscriminating chords, but Mr. Plaice managed it fairly well and the result came, filtered through the ceiling — As we used to say in those days, it might have been worse.

"At the thought of that music I recall — and whenever I hear Schumann as long as I live I shall recall — the picture of that underground room, the little fire-place with the kettle on a hob, the kettle-holder and the toasting fork beside the fire-place jamb, the steel fender, the ashes, the small blotched looking-glass over the mantel, the little china figures of dogs in front of the glass, the gaslight in a frosted glass globe hanging from the ceiling and lighting the tea-things on the table. (Yes, the house was lit by coal-gas; electric light was only just coming in...My dear Firefly! can I possibly stop my story to tell you what coal-gas was? A good girl would have learnt that long ago.)

"There sat Matilda Good reduced to a sort of imbecile ecstasy by these butterflies of melody. She nodded her cap, she rolled her head and smiled; she made appreciative rhythmic gestures with her hands; one eye would meet you in a joyous search for sympathy while the other contemplated the dingy wall-paper beyond. I too was deeply stirred. But my mother and sister Prue sat in their black with an expression of forced devotion, looking very refined and correct, exactly as they had sat and listened to my father's funeral service five days before.

"'Sputiful,' whispered my mother, 'like making a response in church, when the first piece came to an end...

"I went to sleep that night in my little attic with fragments of Schumann, Bach and Beethoven chasing elusively about my brain. I perceived that a new phase of life had come to me...

“Jewels,” said Sarnac. “Some sculpture, music — just a few lovely beginnings there were already of what man could do with life. Such things I see now were the seeds of the new world of promise already there in the dark matrix of the old.”

§ 6

“Next morning revealed a new Matilda Good, active and urgent, in a loose and rather unclean mauve cotton wrapper and her head wrapped up in a sort of turban of figured silk. This costume she wore most of the day except that she did her hair and put on a cotton lace cap in the afternoon. (The black dress and the real lace cap and the brooch, I was to learn, were for Sundays and for weekday evenings of distinction.) My mother and Prue were arrayed in rough aprons which Matilda had very thoughtfully bought for them. There was a great bustle in the basement of the house, and Prue a little before eight went up with Matilda to learn how to set out breakfast for Mr. Plaice. I made his acquaintance later in the day when I took up the late edition of the *Evening Standard* to him. I found him a stooping, tall gentleman with a cadaverous face that was mostly profile, and he made great play with my Christian name.

“‘Mortimer,’ he said and neighed his neigh. ‘Well — it might have been Norfolk-Howard.’

“There was an obscure allusion in that: for once upon a time, ran the popular legend, a certain Mr. Bugg seeking a less entomological name had changed his to Norfolk-Howard, which was in those days a very aristocratic one...Whereupon vulgar people had equalised matters by calling the offensive bed-bugs that abounded in London, ‘Norfolk-Howards.’

“Before many weeks were past it became evident that Matilda Good had made an excellent bargain in her annexation of our family. She had secured my mother’s services for nothing, and it was manifest that my mother was a born lodging-house woman. She behaved like a partner in the concern, and the only money Matilda ever gave her was to pay her expenses upon some specific errand or to buy some specific thing. Prue however, with unexpected firmness, insisted upon wages, and enforced her claim by going out and nearly

getting employment at a dressmaker's. In a little while Matilda became to the lodgers an unseen power for righteousness in the basement and all the staircase work was left to my mother and Prue. Often Matilda did not go up above the ground level once all day until, as she said, she 'toddled up to bed.'

"Matilda made some ingenuous attempts to utilize me also in the service of the household: I was exhorted to carry up scuttles of coal, clean boots and knives and make myself useful generally. She even put it to me one day whether I wouldn't like a nice suit with buttons — in those days they still used to put small serving boys in tight suits of green or brown cloth, with rows of gilt buttons as close together as possible over their little chests and stomachs. But the very thought of it sent my mind to Chessing Hanger, where I had conceived an intense hatred and dread of 'service' and 'livery,' and determined me to find some other employment before Matilda Good's large and insidious will enveloped and overcame me. And oddly enough a talk I had with Miss Beatrice Bumpus helped me greatly in my determination.

"Miss Bumpus was a slender young woman of about five and twenty I suppose. She had short brown hair, brushed back rather prettily from a broad forehead, and she had freckles on her nose and quick red-brown eyes. She generally wore a plaid tweed costume rather short in the skirt and with a coat cut like a man's; she wore green stockings and brown shoes — I had never seen green stockings before — and she would stand on her hearth-rug in exactly the attitude Mr. Plaice adopted on his hearthrug downstairs. Or she would be sitting at a writing-desk against the window, smoking cigarettes. She asked me what sort of man I intended to be, and I said with the sort of modesty I had been taught to assume as becoming my station, that I hadn't thought yet.

"To which Miss Bumpus answered, 'Liar.'

"That was the sort of remark that either kills or cures. I said, 'Well, Miss, I want to get educated and I don't know how to do it. And I don't know what I ought to do.'

"Miss Bumpus held me with a gesture while she showed how nicely she could send out smoke through her nose. Then she said, 'Avoid Blind Alley Occupations.'

“‘Yes, Miss.’

“‘But you don’t know what Blind Alley Occupations are?’

“‘No, Miss.’

“‘Occupations that earn a boy wages and lead nowhere. One of the endless pitfalls of this silly man-made pseudo-civilisation. Never do anything that doesn’t lead somewhere. Aim high. I must think your case out, Mr. Harry Mortimer. I might be able to help you...’

“This was the opening of quite a number of conversations between myself and Miss Bumpus. She was a very stimulating influence in my adolescence. She pointed out that although it was now late in the year there were many evening classes of various sorts that I might attend with profit. She told me of all sorts of prominent and successful people who had begun their careers from beginnings as humble and hopeless as mine. She said I was ‘unhampered’ by my sex. She asked me if I was interested in the suffrage movement, and gave me tickets for two meetings at which I heard her speak, and she spoke, I thought, very well. She answered some interrupters with extreme effectiveness, and I cheered myself hoarse for her. Something about her light and gallant attitude to life reminded me of Fanny. I said so one day, and found myself, before I knew it, telling her reluctantly and shamefully the story of our family disgrace. Miss Bumpus was much interested.

“‘She wasn’t like your sister Prue?’

“‘No, Miss.’

“‘Prettier?’

“‘A lot prettier. Of course — you could hardly call Prue *pretty*, Miss.’

“‘I hope she’s got on all right?’ said Miss Bumpus. ‘I don’t blame her a bit. But I hope she got the best of it.’

“‘I’d give anything, Miss, to hear Fanny was all right...I did care for Fanny, Miss...I’d give anything almost to see Fanny again...You won’t tell my mother, Miss, I told you anything about Fanny? It kind of slipped out like.’

“‘Mortimer,’ said Miss Bumpus, ‘you’re a sticker. I wish I had a little brother like you. There! I won’t breathe a word.’

“I felt we had sealed a glorious friendship. I adopted Votes for Women as the first plank of my political platform. (No, Firefly, I

won't explain. I won't explain anything. You must guess what a political platform was and what its planks were.) I followed up her indications and found out about classes in the district where I could learn geology and chemistry and how to speak French and German. Very timidly I mooted the subject of my further education in the basement living-room."

§ 7

Sarnac looked round at the fire-lit faces of his listeners.

"I know how topsy-turvy this story must seem to you, but it is a fact that before I was fourteen I had to plead for education against the ideas and wishes of my own family. And the whole household from top to bottom was brought into the discussion by Matilda or my mother. Except for Miss Bumpus and Frau Buchholz everyone was against the idea.

"'Education,' said Matilda, shaking her head slowly from side to side and smiling deprecatingly. 'Education! That's all very well for those who have nothing better to do, but *you* want to get on in the world. You've got to be earning, young man.'

"'But if I have education I'll be able to earn more.'

"'Matilda screwed up her mouth in a portentous manner and pointed to the ceiling to indicate Mr. Plaice. '*That's* what comes of education, young man. A room frowsty with books and just enough salary not to be able to do a blessed thing you want to do. And giving yourself Airs. Business is what you want, young man, not education.'

"'And who's to pay for all these classes?' said my mother. 'That's what *I* want to know.'

"'That's what we all want to know,' said Matilda Good.

"'If I can't get education—' I said, and left the desperate sentence unfinished. I am afraid I was near weeping. To learn nothing beyond my present ignorance seemed to me then like a sentence of imprisonment for life. It wasn't I who suffered that alone. Thousands of poor youngsters of fourteen or fifteen in those days knew enough to see clearly that the doors of practical illiteracy were closing in upon them, and yet did not know enough to find a way of escape from this mental extinction.

“‘Look here!’ I said, ‘if I can get some sort of job during the day, may I pay for classes in the evening?’

“‘If you can earn enough,’ said Matilda. ‘It’s no worse I suppose than going to these new cinema shows or buying sweets for girls.’

“‘You’ve got to pay in for your room here and your keep, Morty, first,’ said my mother. ‘It isn’t fair on Miss Good if you don’t.’

“‘I know,’ I said, with my heart sinking. ‘I’ll pay in for my board and lodging. Some’ow. I don’t want to be dependent.’

“‘What good you think it will do you,’ said Matilda Good, ‘I *don’t* know. You’ll pick up a certain amount of learning perhaps, get a certificate or something and ideas above your station. You’ll give all the energy you might use in shoving your way up in some useful employment. You’ll get round-shouldered and near-sighted. And just to grow up a discontented misfit. Well — have it your own way if you must. If you earn the money yourself it’s yours to spend.’

“Mr. Plaice was no more encouraging. ‘Well, my noble Mortimer,’ he said, ‘they tell me *Arr* that you aspire to university honours.’

“‘I want to learn a little more than I know, Sir.’

“‘And join the ranks of the half-educated proletariat?’

“It sounded bad. ‘I hope not, Sir,’ I said.

“‘And what classes do you propose to attend, Mortimer?’

“‘Whatever there are.’

“‘No plan? No aim?’

“‘I thought they’d know.’

“‘Whatever they give you — eh? A promiscuous appetite. And while you — while you *Arr* indulge in this mixed feast of learning, this futile rivalry with the children of the leisured classes, somebody I suppose will have to keep *you*. Don’t you think it’s a bit hard on that kind mother of yours who toils day and night for you, that you shouldn’t work and do *your* bit, eh? One of the things, Mortimer, we used to learn in our much-maligned public schools, was something we called *playing cricket*. Well, I ask you, is this — this disinclination to do a bit of the earning, *Arr*, is it playing cricket? I could expect such behaviour from an ‘Arry, you know, but not from a Mortimer. *Noblesse oblige*. You think it over, my boy. There’s such a thing as learning, but there’s such a thing as Duty. Many of us

have to be content with lives of unassuming labour. Many of us. Men who under happier circumstances might have done great things...'

"The Moggeridges were gently persuasive in the same strain. My mother had put her case to them also. Usually I was indisposed to linger in the Moggeridge atmosphere; they had old-fashioned ideas about draughts, and there was a peculiar aged flavour about them; they were, to be plain, a very dirty old couple indeed. With declining strength they had relaxed by imperceptible degrees from the not very exacting standards of their youth. I used to cut into their room and out of it again as quickly as I could.

"But half a century of the clerical life among yielding country folk had given these bent, decaying, pitiful creatures a wonderful way with their social inferiors. Morning, Sir and Mam,' I said, and put down the coals I had brought and took up the empty scuttle-lining I had replaced.

"Mrs. Moggeridge advanced shakily so as to intercept my retreat. She had silvery hair, a wrinkled face and screwed-up red-rimmed eyes; she was short-sighted and came peering up very close to me whenever she spoke to me, breathing in my face. She held out a quivering hand to arrest me; she spoke with a quavering voice. 'And how's Master Morty this morning?' she said, with kindly condescending intonations.

"'Very well thank you, Mam,' I said.

"'I've been hearing rather a sad account of you, Morty, rather a sad account.'

"'Sorry, Mum,' I said, and wished I had the courage to tell her that my life was no business of hers.

"'They say you're discontented, Morty. They say you complain of God's Mercies.'

"Mr. Moggeridge had been sitting in the armchair by the fire-place. He was in his slippers and shirt-sleeves and he had been reading a newspaper. Now he looked at me over his silver-rimmed spectacles and spoke in a rich succulent voice.

"'I'm sorry you should be giving trouble to that dear mother of yours,' he said. 'Very sorry. She's a devoted saintly woman.'

"'Yessir,' I said.

"'Very few boys nowadays have the privilege of such an

upbringing as yours. Some day you may understand what you owe her.'

("'I begin to,'" interjected Sarnac.)

"'It seems you want to launch out upon some extravagant plan of classes instead of settling down quietly in your proper sphere. Is that so?'

"'I don't feel I know enough yet, Sir,' I said. 'I feel I'd like to learn more.'

"'Knowledge isn't always happiness, Morty,' said Mrs. Moggeridge close to me — much too close to me.

"'And what may these classes be that are tempting you to forget the honour you owe your dear good mother?' said Mr. Moggeridge.

"'I don't know yet, Sir. They say there's classes in geology and French and things like that.'

"Old Mr. Moggeridge waved his hand in front of himself with an expression of face as though it was I who emitted an evil odour. 'Geology!' he said. 'French — the language of Voltaire. Let me tell you one thing plainly, my boy, your mother is quite right in objecting to these classes. Geology — geology is — All Wrong. It has done more harm in the last fifty years than any other single influence whatever. It undermines faith. It sows doubt. I do not speak ignorantly, Mortimer. I have seen lives wrecked and destroyed and souls lost by this same geology. I am an old learned man, and I have examined the work of many of these so-called geologists — Huxley, Darwin and the like; I have examined it very very carefully and very very tolerantly, and I tell you they are all, all of them, *hopelessly mistaken men*...And what good will such knowledge do you? Will it make you happier? Will it make you better? No, my lad. But I know of something that will. Something older than geology. Older and better. Sarah dear, give me that book there, please. Yes' — reverentially— '*the* Book.'

"His wife handed him a black-bound Bible, with its cover protected against rough usage by a metal edge. 'Now, my boy,' he said, 'let me give you this — this old familiar book, with an old man's blessing. In that is all the knowledge worth having, all the knowledge you will ever need. You will always find something fresh in it and always something beautiful.' He held it out to me.

“Accepting it seemed the shortest way out of the room, so I took it. ‘Thank you, Sir,’ I said.

“‘Promise me you will read it.’

“‘Oh yes, Sir.’

“I turned to go. But giving was in the air.

“‘Now, Mortimer,’ said Mrs. Moggeridge, ‘do please promise me to seek strength where strength is to be found and try to be a better son to that dear struggling woman.’ And as she spoke she proffered for my acceptance an extremely hard, small, yellow orange.

“‘Thank you, Mam,’ I said, made shift to stow her gift in my pocket, and with the Bible in one hand and the empty coal-scuttle-lining in the other escaped.

“I returned wrathfully to the basement and deposited my presents on the window-sill. Some impulse made me open the Bible, and inside the cover I found, imperfectly erased, the shadowy outlines of these words, printed in violet ink: ‘Not to be Removed from the Waiting-Room.’ I puzzled over the significance of this for some time.”

“And what did it signify?” asked Firefly.

“I do not know to this day,” said Sarnac. “But apparently the reverend gentleman had acquired that Book at a railway-station during one of his journeys as a Sunday supply.”

“You mean — ?” said Firefly.

“No more than I say. He was in many ways a peculiar old gentleman, and his piety was I fancy an essentially superficial exudation. He was — I will not say ‘dishonest,’ but spasmodically ‘acquisitive.’ And like many old people in those days he preferred his refreshment to be stimulating rather than nutritious, and so he may have blurred his ethical perceptions. An odd thing about him — Matilda Good was the first to point it out — was that he rarely took an umbrella away with him when he went on supply and almost always he came back with one — and once he came back with two. But he never kept his umbrellas; he would take them off for long walks and return without them, looking all the brighter for it. I remember one day I was in the room when he returned from such an expedition, there had been a shower and his coat was wet. Mrs. Moggeridge made him change it and lamented that he had lost his

umbrella *again*.

"'Not *lost*,' I heard the old man say in a voice of infinite gentleness. 'Not lost, dear. Not lost; but gone before...Gone before the rain came...The Lord gave...Lord hath taken 'way.'

"For a time he was silent, coat in hand. He stood with his shirt-sleeve resting on the mantel-shelf, his foot upon the fender, and his venerable hairy face gazing down into the fire. He seemed to be thinking deep, sad things. Then he remarked in a thoughtful, less obituary tone: 'Ten'n-sixpence. A jolly *goo'* 'mbrella."

§ 8

"Frau Buchholz was a poor, lean, distressful woman of five and forty or more, with a table littered with the documents of some obscure litigation. She did not altogether discourage my ambitions but she laid great stress on the hopelessness of attempting Kultur without a knowledge of German, and I am inclined to think that her attitude was determined mainly by a vague and desperate hope that I might be induced to take lessons in German from her.

"Brother Ernest was entirely against my ambition. He was shy and vocally inexpressive, and he took me to the Victoria Music Hall and spent a long evening avoiding the subject. It was only as we drew within five minutes of home that he spoke of it.

"'What's all this about your not being satisfied with your education, 'Arry?' he asked. 'I thought you'd had a pretty decent bit of schooling.'

"'I don't feel I know anything,' I said. 'I don't know history or geography or anything. I don't even know my own grammar.'

"'You know enough,' said Ernest. 'You know enough to get a job. Knowing more would only make you stuck-up. We don't want any more stuck-ups in the family, God knows.'

"I knew he referred to Fanny, but of course neither of us mentioned her shameful name.

"'Anyhow, I suppose I'll have to chuck it,' I said bitterly.

"'That's about it, 'Arry. I know you're a sensible chap — at bottom. You got to be what you got to be.'

"The only encouragement I got to resist mental extinction was

from Miss Beatrice Bumpus, and after a time I found even that source of consolation was being cut off from me. For my mother began to develop the most gross and improbable suspicions about Miss Bumpus. You see I stayed sometimes as long as ten or even twelve minutes in the drawing-room, and it was difficult for so good a woman as my mother, trained in the most elaborate precautions of separation between male and female, to understand that two young people of opposite sex could have any liking for each other's company unless some sort of gross familiarity was involved. The good of those days, living as they did in a state of inflamed restraint, had very exaggerated ideas of the appetites, capacities and uncontrollable duplicity of normal human beings. And so my mother began to manoeuvre in the most elaborate way to replace me by Prue as a messenger to Miss Bumpus. And when I was actually being talked to — and even talking — in the drawing-room I had an increasing sense of that poor misguided woman hovering upon the landing outside, listening in a mood of anxious curiosity and ripening for a sudden inrush, a disgraceful exposure, wild denunciation of Miss Bumpus, and the rescue of the vestiges of my damaged moral nature. I might never have realised what was going on if it had not been for my mother's direct questionings and warnings. Her conception of a proper upbringing for the young on these matters was a carefully preserved ignorance hedged about by shames and foul terrors. So she was at once extremely urgent and extraordinary vague with me. What was I up to — staying so long with that woman? I wasn't to listen to anything she told me. I was to be precious careful what I got up to up there. I might find myself in more trouble than I thought. There were women in this world of a shamelessness it made one blush to think of. She'd always done her best to keep me from wickedness and nastiness."

"But she was mad!" said Willow.

"All the countless lunatic asylums of those days wouldn't have held a tithe of the English people who were as mad in that way as she was."

"But the whole world was mad?" said Sunray. "*All* those people, except perhaps Miss Bumpus, talked about your education like insane people! Did none of them understand the supreme wickedness

of hindering the growth of a human mind?”

“It was a world of suppression and evasion. You cannot understand anything about it unless you understand that.”

“But the whole world!” said Radiant.

“Most of it. It was still a fear-haunted world. ‘Submit,’ said the ancient dread, ‘do nothing — lest you offend. And from your children — *hide*.’ What I am telling you about the upbringing of Harry Mortimer Smith was generally true of the upbringing of the enormous majority of the inhabitants of the earth. It was not merely that their minds were starved and poisoned. Their minds were stamped upon and mutilated. That world was so pitiless and confused, so dirty and diseased because it was cowed and dared not learn of remedies. In Europe in those days we used to be told the most extraordinary stories of the wickedness and cruelty of the Chinese, and one favourite tale was that little children were made to grow up inside great porcelain jars in order to distort their bodies to grotesque shapes so that they could be shown at fairs or sold to rich men. The Chinese certainly distorted the feet of young women for some obscure purpose, and this may have been the origin of this horrible legend. But our children in England were mentally distorted in exactly the same fashion except that for porcelain jars we used mental tin-cans and dustbins...My dears when I talk of this I cease to be Sarnac! All the rage and misery of crippled and thwarted Harry Mortimer Smith comes back to me.”

“Did you get to those classes of yours?” asked Sunray. “I hope you did.”

“Not for a year or two — though Miss Bumpus did what she could for me. She lent me a lot of books — in spite of much ignorant censorship on the part of my mother — and I read voraciously. But, I don’t know if you will understand it, my relations with Miss Bumpus were slowly poisoned by the interpretations my mother was putting upon them. I think you will see how easy it was for a boy in my position to fall in love, fall into a deep emotional worship of so bright and friendly a young woman. Most of us young men nowadays begin by adoring a woman older than ourselves. Adoring is the word rather than loving. It’s not a mate we need at first but the helpful kindly goddess who stoops to us. And of course I loved her.

But I thought much more of serving her or dying for her than of embracing her. When I was away from her my imagination might go so far as to dream of kissing her hands.

"And then came my mother with this hideous obsession of hers, jealous for something she called my purity, treating this white passion of gratitude and humility as though it was the power that drags a blow-fly to some heap of offal. A deepening shame and ungraciousness came into my relations with Miss Bumpus. I became red-eared and tongue-tied in her presence. Possibilities I might never have thought of but for my mother's suggestions grew disgustingly vivid in my mind. I dreamt about her grotesquely. When presently I found employment for my days my chances of seeing her became infrequent. She receded as a personality and friend, and quite against my will became a symbol of femininity.

"Among the people who called to see her a man of three or four and thirty became frequent. My spirit flamed into an intense and impotent jealousy on account of this man. He would take tea with her and stay for two hours or more. My mother took care to mention his visits in my hearing at every opportunity. She called him Miss Bumpus' 'fancy man,' or alluded to him archly: 'A certain person called again to-day, Prue. When good-lookin' young men are shown in at the door, votes flies out of the winder.' I tried to seem indifferent but my ears and cheeks got red and hot. My jealousy was edged with hate. I avoided seeing Miss Bumpus for weeks together. I sought furiously for some girl, any girl, who would serve to oust her image from my imagination."

Sarnac stopped abruptly and remained for a time staring intently into the fire. His expression was one of amused regret. "How little and childish it seems now!" he said; "and how bitter — oh! how bitter it was at the time!"

"Poor little errand-boy!" said Sunray, stroking his hair. "Poor little errand-boy in love."

"What an uncomfortable distressful world it must have been for all young things!" said Willow.

"Uncomfortable and pitiless," said Sarnac.

“My first employment in London was as an errand- boy— ‘junior porter’ was the exact phrase — to a draper’s shop near Victoria Station: I packed parcels and carried them to their destinations; my next job was to be boy in general to a chemist named Humberg in a shop beyond Lupus Street. A chemist then was a very different creature from the kind of man or woman we called a chemist to-day; he was much more like the Apothecary we find in Shakespeare’s plays and such-like old literature; he was a dealer in drugs, poisons, medicines, a few spices, colouring matters and such-like odd commodities. I washed endless bottles, delivered drugs and medicines, cleared up a sort of backyard, and did anything else that there was to be done within the measure of my capacity.

“Of all the queer shops one found in that old-world London, the chemists’ shops were I think the queerest. They had come almost unchanged out of the Middle Ages, as we used to call them, when Western Europe, superstitious, dirty, diseased and degenerate, thrashed by the Arabs and Mongols and Turks, afraid to sail the ocean or fight out of armour, cowered behind the walls of its towns and castles, stole, poisoned, assassinated and tortured, and pretended to be the Roman Empire still in being. Western Europe in those days was ashamed of its natural varieties of speech and talked bad Latin; it dared not look a fact in the face but nosed for knowledge among riddles and unreadable parchments; it burnt men and women alive for laughing at the absurdities of its Faith, and it thought the stars of Heaven were no better than a greasy pack of cards by which fortunes were to be told. In those days it was that the tradition of the ‘Pothecary was made; you know him as he figures in *Romeo and Juliet*; the time in which I lived this life was barely four centuries and a half from old Shakespeare. The ‘Pothecary was in a conspiracy of pretentiousness with the almost equally ignorant doctors of his age, and the latter wrote and he ‘made up’ prescriptions in occult phrases and symbols. In our window there were great glass bottles of red- and yellow- and blue-tinted water, through which our gas-lamps within threw a mystical light on the street pavement.”

“Was there a stuffed alligator?” asked Firefly.

“No. We were just out of the age of stuffed alligators, but below these coloured bottles in the window we had stupendous china jars

with gilt caps mystically inscribed — let me see! Let me think! One was *Sem. Coriand*. Another was *Rad. Sarsap*. Then — what was the fellow in the corner? *Marant. Ar.* And opposite him — *C. Cincordif.* And behind the counter to look the customer in the face were neat little drawers with golden and precious letters thereon; *Pil. Rhubarb.* and *Pil. Antibil.* and many more bottles, *Ol. Amyg.* and *Tinct. Iod.*, rows and rows of bottles, mystic, wonderful. I do not remember ever seeing Mr. Humberg take anything, much less sell anything, from all this array of erudite bottles and drawers; his normal trade was done in the bright little packets of an altogether different character that were piled all over the counter, bright unblushing little packets that declared themselves to be Gummidge's Fragrant and Digestive Tooth Paste, Hooper's Corn Cure, Luxtone's Lady's Remedy, Tinker's Pills for All Occasions, and the like. Such things were asked for openly and loudly by customers; they were our staple trade. But also there were many transactions conducted in undertones which I never fully understood. I would be sent off to the yard on some specious pretext whenever a customer was discovered to be of the *sotto voce* variety, and I can only suppose that Mr. Humberg was accustomed at times to go beyond the limits of his professional qualification and to deal out advice and instruction that were legally the privileges of the qualified medical man. You must remember that in those days many things that we teach plainly and simply to everyone were tabooed and made to seem occult and mysterious and very very shameful and dirty.

"My first reaction to this chemist's shop was a violent appetite for Latin. I succumbed to its suggestion that Latin was the key to all knowledge, and that indeed statements did not become knowledge until they had passed into the Latin tongue. For a few coppers I bought in a second-hand bookshop an old and worn Latin *Principia* written by a namesake Smith; I attacked it with great determination and found this redoubtable language far more understandable, reasonable and straightforward than the elusive irritable French and the trampling coughing German I had hitherto attempted. This Latin was a dead language, a skeleton language plainly articulated; it never moved about and got away from one as a living language did. In a little while I was able to recognize words I knew upon our bottles

and drawers and in the epitaphs upon the monuments in Westminster Abbey, and soon I could even construe whole phrases. I dug out Latin books from the second-hand booksellers' boxes, and some I could read and some I could not. There was a war history of that first Caesar, Julius Caesar, the adventurer who extinguished the last reek of the decaying Roman republic, and there was a Latin New Testament; I got along fairly well with both. But there was a Latin poet, Lucretius, I could not construe; even with an English verse translation on the opposite page I could not construe him. But I read that English version with intense curiosity. It is an extraordinary thing to note, but that same Lucretius, an old Roman poet who lived and died two thousand years before my time, four thousand years from now, gave an account of the universe and of man's beginnings, far truer and more intelligible than the old Semitic legends I had been taught in my Sunday school.

"One of the queerest aspects of those days was the mingling of ideas belonging to different ages and phases of human development due to the irregularity and casualness of such educational organisation as we had. In school and church alike, obstinate pedantry darkened the minds of men. Europeans in the twentieth Christian century mixed up the theology of the Pharaohs, the cosmogony of the priest-kings of Sumeria, with the politics of the seventeenth century and the ethics of the cricket-field and prize-ring, and that in a world which had got to aeroplanes and telephones.

"My own case was typical of the limitations of the time. In that age of ceaseless novelty there was I, trying to get back by way of Latin to the half knowledge of the Ancients. Presently I began to struggle with Greek also, but I never got very far with that. I found a chance of going once a week on what was called early-closing night, after my day's work was done, to some evening classes in chemistry. And this chemistry I discovered had hardly anything in common with the chemistry of a chemist's shop. The story of matter and force that it told belonged to another and a newer age. I was fascinated by these wider revelations of the universe I lived in, I ceased to struggle with Greek and I no longer hunted the dingy book-boxes for Latin classics but for modern scientific works. Lucretius I found was hardly less out of date than Genesis. Among the books that taught me much

were one called *Physiography* by a writer named Gregory, Clodd's *Story of Creation* and Lankester's *Science from an Easy Chair*. I do not know if they were exceptionally good books; they were the ones that happened to come to my hand and awaken my mind. But do you realise the amazing conditions under which men were living at that time, when a youngster had to go about as eager and furtive as a mouse seeking food, to get even such knowledge of the universe and himself as then existed? I still remember how I read first of the differences and resemblances between apes and men and speculations arising thencefrom about the nature of the sub-men who came before man. It was in the shed in the yard that I sat and read. Mr. Humberg was on the sofa in the parlour behind the shop sleeping off his midday meal with one ear a-cock for the shop-bell, and I, with one ear a-cock for the shop-bell and the other for any sounds of movement in the parlour, read for the first time of the forces that had made me what I was — when I ought to have been washing out bottles.

"At one point in the centre of the display behind the counter in the shop was a row of particularly brave and important-looking glass jars wearing about their bellies the gold promises of *Aqua Fortis*, *Amm. Hyd.* and such-like names, and one day as I was sweeping the floor I observed Mr. Humberg scrutinising these. He held one up to the light and shook his head at its flocculent contents. 'Harry,' he said, 'see this row of bottles?'

"'Yessir.'

"'Pour 'em all out and put in fresh water.'

"I stared, broom in hand, aghast at the waste. 'They won't blow up if I mix 'em?' I said.

"'Blow up!' said Mr. Humberg. 'It's only stale water. There's been nothing else in these bottles for a score of years. Stuff I want is behind the dispensary partition — and it's different stuff nowadays. Wash 'em out — and then we'll put in some water from the pump. We just have 'em for the look of 'em. The old women wouldn't be happy if we hadn't got 'em there.'"

PART 2. THE LOVES AND DEATH OF HARRY MORTIMER SMITH

V. — FANNY DISCOVERS HERSELF

§ 1

"And now," said Sarnac, "I can draw near to the essentials of life and tell you the sort of thing love was in that crowded, dingy, fear-ruled world of the London fogs and the amber London sunshine. It was a slender, wild-eyed, scared and daring emotion in a dark forest of cruelties and repressions. It soon grew old and crippled, bitter-spirited and black-hearted, but as it happened, death came early enough for me to die with a living love still in my heart..."

"To live again," said Sunray very softly.

"And love again," said Sarnac, patting her knee.

"Let me see — ..."

He took a stake that had fallen from the fire and thrust it into the bright glow at the centre and watched it burst into a sierra of flames.

"I think that the first person I was in love with was my sister Fanny. When I was a boy of eleven or twelve I was really in love with her. But somehow about that time I was also in love with an undraped plaster nymph who sat very bravely on a spouting dolphin in some public gardens near the middle of Cliffstone. She lifted her chin and smiled and waved one hand and she had the sweetest smile and the dearest little body imaginable. I loved her back particularly, and there was a point where you looked at her from behind and just caught the soft curve of her smiling cheek and her jolly little nose-tip and chin and the soft swell of her breast under her lifted arm. I would sneak round her furtively towards this particular view-point, having been too well soaked in shame about all such lovely things to look openly. But I never seemed to look my fill.

"One day as I was worshipping her in this fashion, half-turned to her and half-turned to a bed of flowers and looking at her askance, I became aware of an oldish man with a large white face, seated on a garden seat and leaning forward and regarding me with an expression of oafish cunning as if he had found me out and knew my secret. He looked like the spirit of lewdness incarnate. Suddenly panic overwhelmed me and I made off — and never went near that garden

again. Angels with flaming shames prevented me. Or a terror of again meeting that horrible old man...

"Then with my coming to London Miss Beatrice Bumpus took control of my imagination and was Venus and all the goddesses, and this increased rather than diminished after she had gone away. For she went away and, I gather, married the young man I hated; she went away and gave up her work for the Vote and was no doubt welcomed back by those Warwickshire Bumpuses (who hunted) with the slaughter of a fatted fox and every sort of rejoicing. But her jolly frank and boyish face was the heroine's in a thousand dreams. I saved her life in adventures in all parts of the world and sometimes she saved mine; we clung together over the edges of terrific precipices until I went to sleep, and when I was the conquering Muhammad after a battle, she stood out among the captive women and answered back when I said I would never love her, with two jets of cigarette smoke and the one word, 'Liar!'

"I met no girls of my own age at all while I was errand-boy to Mr. Humberg, my evening classes and my reading kept me away from the facile encounters of the streets. Sometimes, however, when I could not fix my attention upon my books, I would slip off to Wilton Street and Victoria Street where there was a nocturnal promenade under the electric lamps. There schoolgirls and little drabs and errand-boys and soldiers prowled and accosted one another. But though I was attracted to some of the girlish figures that flitted by me I was also shy and fastidious. I was drawn by an overpowering desire for something intense and beautiful that vanished whenever I drew near to reality."

§ 2

"Before a year was over there were several changes in the Pimlico boarding-house. The poor old Moggeridges caught influenza, a variable prevalent epidemic of the time, and succumbed to inflammation of the lungs following the fever. They died within three days of each other, and my mother and Prue were the only mourners at their dingy little funeral. Frau Buchholz fades out of my story; I do not remember clearly when she left the house nor who succeeded

her. Miss Beatrice Bumpus abandoned the cause of woman's suffrage and departed, and the second floor was taken by an extremely intermittent couple who roused my mother's worst suspicions and led to serious differences of opinion between her and Matilda Good.

"You see these new-comers never settled in with any grave and sober luggage; they would come and stay for a day or so and then not reappear for a week or more, and they rarely arrived or departed together. This roused my mother's moral observation, and she began hinting that perhaps they were not properly married after all. She forbade Prue ever to go to the drawing-room floor, and this precipitated a conflict with Matilda. 'What's this about Prue and the drawing-room?' Matilda asked. 'You're putting ideas into the girl's head.'

"'I'm trying to keep them from 'er,' said my mother. 'She's got eyes.'

"'*And* fingers,' said Matilda with dark allusiveness. 'What's Prue been seeing now?'

"'Marks,' said my mother.

"'What marks?' said Matilda.

"'Marks enough,' said my mother. ''*Is* things are marked one name and '*Er's* another, and neither of them Milton, which is the name they've given us. And the way that woman speaks to you, as though she felt you might notice sumpthing — friendly like and a bit afraid of you. And that ain't all! By no means all! I'm not blind and Prue isn't blind. There's kissing and making love going on at all times in the day! Directly they've got 'ere sometimes. Hardly waiting for one to get out of the room. I'm not a perfect fool, Matilda. I been married.'

"'What's that got to do with us? We're a lodging-'ouse, not a set of Nosey Parkers. If Mr. and Mrs. Milton like to have their linen marked a *hundred* different names, what's that to us? Their book's always marked *paid in advance with thanks, Matilda Good*, and that's married enough for me. See? You're an uneasy woman to have in a lodging-house, Martha, an uneasy woman. There's no give and take about you. No save-your-fare. There was that trouble you made about the boy and Miss Bumpus — ridiculous it was — and now

seemingly there's going to be more trouble about Prue and Mrs. Milton — who's a lady, mind you, say what you like, and — what's more — a gentlewoman. I wish you'd mind your own business a bit more, Martha, and let Mr. and Mrs. Milton mind theirs. If they aren't properly married it's they've got to answer for it in the long run, not you. You'll get even with them all right in the Last Great Day. Meanwhile do they do 'arm to anyone? A quieter couple and less trouble to look after I've never had in all my lodging-house days.'

"My mother made no answer.

"'Well?' challenged Matilda.

"'It's hard to be waiting on a shameless woman,' said my mother, obstinate and white-lipped.

"'It's harder still to be called a shameless woman because you've still got your maiden name on some of your things,' said Matilda Good. Don't talk such Rubbish, Martha.'

"'I don't see why '*E* should 'ave a maiden name too — on '*is* pyjamas,' said my mother rallying after a moment.

"'You don't know Anything, Martha,' said Matilda, fixing her with one eye of extreme animosity and regarding the question in the abstract with the other. 'I've often thought it of you and now I say it to you. You don't know Anything. I'm going to keep Mr. and Mrs. Milton as long as I can, and if you're too pernikkety to wait on them, there's those who will. I won't have my lodgers insulted. I won't have their underclothes dragged up against them. Why! Come to think of it! Of course! He *borrowed* those pyjamas of 'is! Or they was given him by a gentleman friend they didn't fit. Or he's been left money and had to change his name sudden like. It often happens. Often. You see it in the papers. And things get mixed in the wash. Some laundries, they're regular Exchanges. Mr. Plaice, he once had a collar with *Fortescue* on it. Brought it back after his summer holiday. Fortescue! There's evidence for you. You aren't going to bring up something against Mr. Plaice on account of that, Martha? You aren't going to say he's been living a double life and isn't properly a bachelor. Do think a little clearer, Martha. And don't think so much evil. There's a hundred ways round before you think evil. But you *like* to think evil, Martha. I've noticed it times and oft. You fairly wallow in it. You haven't the beginnings of a germ of Christian

charity.'

"'One can't help seeing things,' said my mother rather shattered.

"'*You* can't,' said Matilda Good. 'There's those who can't see an inch beyond their noses, and yet they see too much. And the more I see Of you the more I'm inclined to think you're one of that sort. Anyhow, Mr. and Mrs. Milton stay here — whoever else goes. Whoever else goes. That's plain, I hope, Martha.'

"My mother was stricken speechless. She bridled and subsided and then, except for necessary and unavoidable purposes, remained hurt and silent for some days, speaking only when she was spoken to. Matilda did not seem to mind. But I noticed that when presently Matilda sent Prue upstairs with the Miltons' tea my mother's stiffness grew stiffer, but she made no open protest."

§ 3

"And then suddenly Fanny reappeared in my world.

"It was a mere chance that restored Fanny to me. All our links had been severed when we removed from Cliffstone to London. My brother Ernest was her herald.

"We were at supper in the basement room and supper was usually a pleasant meal. Matilda Good would make it attractive with potatoes roasted in their jackets, or what she called a 'frying-pan' of potatoes and other vegetables in dripping or suchlike heartening addition to cold bacon and bread and cheese and small beer. And she would read bits out of the newspaper to us and discuss them, having a really very lively intelligence, or she would draw me out to talk of the books I'd been reading. She took a great interest in murders and such-like cases, and we all became great judges of motive and evidence under her stimulation. 'You may say it's morbid, Martha, if you like,' she said; 'but there never was a murder yet that wasn't brimful of humanity. Brimful. I doubt sometimes if we know what anyone's capable of until they've committed a murder or two.'

"My mother rarely failed to rise to her bait. 'I can't think 'ow you can say such things, Matilda,' she would say...

"We heard the sound of a motor-car in the street above. Brother Ernest descended by the area steps and my sister Prue let him in. He

appeared in his chauffeur's uniform, cap in hand, leather jacket and gaiters.

"'Got a night off?' asked Matilda.

"'Court Theatre at eleven,' said Ernest. So I thought I'd come in for a bit of a warm and a chat.'

"'Have a snack?' said Matilda. 'Prue, get him a plate and a knife and fork and a glass. One glass of *this* beer won't hurt your driving. Why we haven't seen you for ages!'

"'Thank you, Miss Good,' said Ernest, who was always very polite to her, 'I *will* 'ave a snack. I bin' here, there and everywhere, but it isn't that I haven't wanted to call on you.'

"Refreshment was administered and conversation hung fire for awhile. One or two starts were made and came to an early end. Ernest's manner suggested preoccupation and Matilda regarded him keenly. 'And what have you got to tell us, Ernie?' she said suddenly.

"'We-el,' said Ernest, 'it's a curious thing you should say that, Miss Good, for I '*ave* got something to tell you. Something — well, I don't know 'ow to put it — curious like.'

"Matilda refilled his glass.

"'I seen Fanny,' said Ernest, coming to it with violent abruptness.

"'*No!*' gasped my mother, and for a moment no one else spoke.

"'So!' said Matilda, putting her arms on the table and billowing forward, 'you've seen Fanny! Pretty little Fanny that I used to know. And where did you see her, Ernie?'

"Ernest had some difficulty in shaping out his story. 'It was a week last Tuesday,' he said after a pause.

"'She wasn't — not one of Them — about Victoria Station?' panted my mother.

"'Did you see her first or did she see you?' asked Matilda.

"'A week ago last Tuesday,' my brother repeated.

"'And did you speak to her?'

"'Not at the time I didn't. No.'

"'Did she speak to you?'

"'No.'

"'Then 'ow d'you know it was our Fanny?' asked Prue, who had been listening intently.

"'I thought she'd gone to 'er fate in some foreign country —

being so near Boulogne,' my mother said. 'I thought them White Slave Traders 'ad the decency to carry a girl off right away from 'er 'ome...Fanny! On the streets of London! Near 'ere. I told 'er what it would come to. Time and again I told 'er. Merry an 'onest man I said, but she was greedy and 'eadstrong...'Eadstrong and vain...She didn't try to follow you, Ernie, to find out where we were or anything like that?'

"My brother Ernest's face displayed his profound perplexity. 'It wasn't at all like that, mother,' he said. 'It wasn't — that sort of thing. You see—'

"He began a struggle with the breast pocket of his very tightly fitting leather jacket and at last produced a rather soiled letter. He held it in his hand, neither attempting to read it nor offering it to us. But holding it in his hand seemed to crystallise his very rudimentary narrative powers. 'I better tell you right from the beginning,' he said. 'It isn't at all what you'd suppose. Tuesday week it was; last Tuesday week.'

"Matilda Good laid a restraining hand on my mother's arm. 'In the evening I suppose?' she helped.

"'It was a dinner and fetch,' said my brother. 'Of course you understand I 'adn't set eyes on Fanny for pretty near six years. It was 'er knew me.'

"'You had to take these people to a dinner and fetch them back again?' said Matilda.

"'Orders,' said Ernest, 'was to go to one-oh-two Brantismore Gardens Earl's Court top flat, to pick up lady and gentleman for number to be given in Church Row Hampstead and call there ten-thirty and take home as directed. Accordingly I went to Brantismore Gardens and told the porter in the 'all — it was one of these 'ere flat places with a porter in livery — that I was there to time waiting. 'E telephoned up in the usual way. After a bit, lady and gentleman came out of the house and I went to the door of the car as I usually do and held it open. So far nothing out of the ornary. He was a gentleman in evening dress, like most gentlemen; she'd got a wrap with fur, and her hair, you know, was done up nice for an evening party with something that sparkled. Quite the lady.'

"'And it was Fanny?' said Prue.

“Ernest struggled mutely with his subject for some moments. ‘Not yet, like,’ he said.

“‘You mean you didn’t recognise her then?’ said Matilda.

“‘No. But she just looked up at me and seemed kind of to start and got in. I saw her sort of leaning forward and looking at me as ‘E got in. Fact is, I didn’t think much of it. I should have forgotten all about it if it ‘adn’t been for afterwards. But when I took them back something happened. I could see she was looking at me...We went first to one-oh-two Brantismore Gardens again and then he got out and says to me, “Just wait a bit here,” and then he helped her out. It sort of seemed as though she was ‘arf-inclined to speak to me and then she didn’t. But this time I thinks to myself “I seen you before, somewhere, my Lady.” Oddly enough I never thought of Fanny then at all. I got as near as thinking she was a bit like ‘Arry ‘ere. But it never entered my ‘ead it might be Fanny. Strordinary! They went up the steps to the door; one of these open entrances it is to several flats, and seemed to have a moment’s confabulation under the light, looking towards me. Then they went on up to the flat.’

“‘You didn’t know her even then?’ said Prue.

“‘‘E came down the steps quarternour after perhaps, looking thoughtful. White wescoat, ‘e ‘ad, and coat over ‘is arm. Gave me an address near Sloane Street. Got out and produced his tip, rather on the large side it was, and stood still kind of thoughtful. Seemed inclined to speak and didn’t know what to say. “I’ve an account at the garage,” ‘e says, “you’ll book the car,” and then: “You’re not my usual driver,” ‘e says. “What’s your name?” “Smith,” I says. “Ernest Smith,” he says. “Yes sir,” I says, and it was only as I drove off that I asked myself ‘Ow the ‘Ell — I reely beg your pardon, Miss Good.’

“‘Don’t mind me,’ said Matilda. ‘Go on.’

“‘Ow the Juice d’e know that my name was Ernest? I nearly ‘it a taxi at the corner of Sloane Square I was so took up puzzling over it. And it was only about three o’clock in the morning, when I was lying awake still puzzling over it, that it came into my ‘ead—’

“Ernest assumed the manner of a narrator who opens out his culminating surprise. ‘ — that that young lady I’d been taken out that evening was—’

“He paused before his climax.

“‘Fenny,’ whispered Prue.

“‘Sister Fanny,’ said Matilda Good.

“‘Our Fanny,’ said my mother.

“‘*No less a person than Fanny!*’ said my brother Ernest triumphantly and looked round for the amazement proper to such a surprise.

“‘I thought it was going to be Fenny,’ said Prue.

“‘Was she painted up at all?’ asked Matilda.

“‘Not nearly so much painted as most of ’em are,’ said my brother Ernest. ‘Pretty nearly everyone paints nowadays. Titled people. Bishops’ ladies. Widows. Everyone. She didn’t strike me — well, as belonging to the painted sort particularly, not in the least. Kind of fresh and a little pale — like Fanny used to be.’

“‘Was she dressed like a lady — quiet-like?’

“‘Prosperous,’ said Ernest. ‘Reely prosperous. But nothing what you might call extravagant.’

“‘And the house you took ’em to — noisy? Singing and dancing and the windows open?’

“‘It was a perfectly respectable quiet sort of ‘ouse. Blinds down and no row whatever. A private ‘ouse. The people who came to the door to say good night might ‘ave been any gentleman and any lady. I see the butler. ‘E came down to the car. ‘E wasn’t ‘ired for the evening. ‘E was a *real* butler. The other guests had a private limousine with an oldish careful sort of driver. Whadyou’d speak of as nice people.’

“‘Hardly what you might call being on the streets of London,’ said Matilda, turning to my mother. ‘What was the gentleman like?

“‘I don’t want to ‘ear of ‘im,’ said my mother.

“‘Dissipated sort of man about town — and a bit screwed?’ asked Matilda.

“‘‘E was a lot soberer than most dinner fetches,’ said Ernest. ‘I see that when ‘e ‘andled ‘is money. Lots of ’em — oh! quite ‘igh-class people get— ‘ow shall I say it? — just a little bit funny. ‘Umerous like. Bit ‘nnacurate with the door. ‘*E* wasn’t. That’s what I can’t make out...And then there’s this letter.’

“‘Then there’s this letter,’ said Matilda. ‘You better read it, Martha.’

“‘How did you get that letter?’ asked my mother, not offering to touch it. ‘You don’t mean to say she gave you a letter!’

“‘It came last Thursday. By post. It was addressed to me, Ernest Smith, Esq., at the Garage. It’s a curious letter — asking about us. I can’t make ‘ead or tail of the whole business. I been thinking about it and thinking about it. Knowing ‘ow set mother was about Fanny — I ‘esitated.’

“His voice died away.

“‘Somebody,’ said Matilda in the pause that followed, ‘had better read that letter.’

“She looked at my mother, smiled queerly with the corners of her mouth down, and then held out her hand to Ernest.”

§4

“It was Matilda who read that letter; my mother’s aversion from it was all too evident. I can still remember Matilda’s large red face thrust forward over the supper things and a little on one side so as to bring the eye she was using into focus and get the best light from the feeble little gas-bracket. Beside her was Prue, with a slack curious face and a restive glance that went ever and again to my mother’s face, as a bandsman watches the conductor’s baton. My mother sat back with a defensive expression on her white face, and Ernest was posed, wide and large, in a non-committal attitude, ostentatiously unable to make ‘ead or tail’ of the affair.

“Let’s see,’ said Matilda, and took a preliminary survey of the task before her...

“‘*My dear Ernie*,’ she says...

“‘*My dear Ernie*:

“‘*It was wonderful seeing you again. I could hardly believe it was you even after Mr. — Mr.* — She’s written it and thought better of it and scratched it out again, Mr. Somebody — Mr. Blank — *had asked your name. I was beginning to fear I’d lost you all. Where are you living and how are you getting on? You know I went to France and Italy for a holiday — lovely lovely places — and when I came back I slipped off at Cliffstone because I wanted to see you all again and couldn’t bear leaving you as I had done without a word*.’

“‘She should’ve thought of that before,’ said my mother.

“‘*She told me, Mrs. Bradley did, about poor father’s accident and death — the first I heard of it. I went to his grave in the cemetery and had a good cry. I couldn’t help it. Poor old Daddy! It was cruel hard luck getting killed as he did. I put a lot of flowers on his grave and arranged with Ropes the Nurseryman about having the grass cut regularly.*’

“‘And ‘im,’ said my mother, ‘lying there! ‘E’d ‘ve rather seen ‘er lying dead at ‘is feet, ‘e said, than ‘ave ‘er the fallen woman she was. And she putting flowers over ‘im. ‘Nough to make ‘im turn in ‘is grave.’

“‘But very likely he’s come to think differently now, Martha,’ said Matilda soothingly. ‘There’s no knowing really, Martha. Perhaps in heaven they aren’t so anxious to see people dead at their feet. Perhaps they get sort of kind up there. Let me see, — where was I? Ah? — *grass cut regularly*.

“‘*Nobody knew where mother and the rest of you were. Nobody had an address. I went on to London very miserable, hating to have lost you. Mrs. Bradley said that mother and Prue and Morty had gone to London to friends, but where she didn’t know. And then behold! after nearly two years, you bob up again! It’s too good to be true. Where are the others? Is Morty getting educated? Prue must be quite grown up? I would love to see them again and help them if I can. Dear Ernie, I do want you to tell mother and all of them that I am quite safe and happy. I am being’ helped by a friend. The one you saw. I’m not a bit fast or bad. I lead a very quiet life. I have my tiny little flat here and I read a lot and get educated. I work quite hard. I’ve passed an examination, Ernie, a university examination. I’ve learnt a lot of French and Italian and some German and about music. I’ve got a pianola and I’d love to play it to you or Morty. He was always the one for music. Often and often I think of you. Tell mother, show her this letter, and let me know soon about you all and don’t think unkind things of me. ‘Member the good times we had, Ernie, when we dressed up at Christmas and father didn’t know us in the shop, and how you made me a doll’s house for my birthday. Oh! and cheese pies, Ernie! Cheese pies*!’

“‘What were cheese pies?’ asked Matilda.

“‘It was a sort of silly game we had — passing people. I forget exactly. But it used to make us laugh — regular roll about we did.’

“‘Then she gets back to you, Morty,’ said Matilda.

“‘*I’d love to help Morty if he still wants to be educated. I could now. I could help him a lot. I suppose he’s not a boy any longer. Perhaps he’s getting educated himself. Give him my love. Give mother my love and tell her not to think too badly of me. Fanny.*’

“‘Fanny. Embossed address on her notepaper. That’s all.’

“Matilda dropped the letter on the table. ‘Well?’ she said in a voice that challenged my mother. ‘Seems to me that the young woman has struck one of the Right Sort — the one straight man in ten thousand...seems to have taken care of her almost more than an ordinary husband might’ve done...What’r you going to do about it, Martha?’

“Matilda collected herself slowly from the table and leant back in her chair, regarding my mother with an expression of faintly malevolent irony.”

§ 5

“I turned from Matilda’s quizzical face to my mother’s drawn intentness.

“‘Say what you like, Matilda, that girl is living in sin.’

“‘Even that isn’t absolutely proved,’ said Matilda.

“‘Why should ‘e — ?’ my mother began and stopped.

“‘There’s such things as feats of generosity,’ said Matilda. ‘Still —’

“‘No,’ said my mother. ‘We don’t want ‘er ‘elp. I’d be ashamed to take it. While she lives with that man—’

“‘Apparently she doesn’t. But go on.’

“‘Stainted money,’ said my mother. ‘It’s money she ‘as from ‘im. It’s the money of a Kep Woman.’

“Her anger kindled. ‘I’d sooner die than *touch* ‘er money.’

“Her sense of the situation found form and expression. ‘She leaves ‘er ‘ome. She breaks ‘er father’s ‘eart. Kills ‘im, she does. ‘E was never the same man after she’d gone; never the same. She goes off to shamelessness and luxury. She makes ‘er own brother drive ‘er

about to ‘er shame.’

“‘Hardly — *makes*,’ protested Matilda.

“‘‘Ow was ‘*E* to avoid it? And then she writes this — this letter. Impudent I call it. Impudent! Without a word of repentance — not a single word of repentance. Does she ‘ave the decency to say she’s ashamed of ‘erself? Not a word. Owns she’s still living with a fancy man and means to go on doing it, glories in it. And offers us ‘er kind assistance — us, what she’s disgraced and shamed. Who was it that made us leave Cherry Gardens to ‘ide our ‘eads from our neighbours in London? ‘*Er*! And now she’s to come ‘ere in ‘er moty-car and come dancing down these steps, all dressed up and painted, to say a kind word to poor mother. ‘Aven’t we suffered enough about ‘er without ‘er coming ‘ere to show ‘erself off at us? It’s topsy-turvy. Why! if she comes ‘ere at all, which I doubt — if she comes ‘ere at all she ought to come in sackcloth and ashes and on ‘er bended knees.’

“‘She won’t do that, Martha,’ said Matilda Good.

“‘Then let ‘er keep away. We don’t want the disgrace of ‘er. She’s chosen ‘er path and let ‘er abide by it. But ‘*ere*! To come ‘*ere*! ‘Ow’r you going to explain it?’

“‘*I’d* explain it all right,’ said Matilda unheeded.”

“‘‘Ow am I going to explain it? And here’s Prue! Here’s this Mr. Pettigrew she’s met at the Week day Evening Social and wants to bring to tea ‘Ow’s she going to explain ‘er fine lady sister to ‘im? Kep Woman! Yes, Matilda, I say it. It’s the name for it. That’s what she is. A Kep Woman! Nice thing to tell Mr. Pettigrew. ‘Ere’s my sister, the Kep Woman! ‘E’d be off in a jiffy. Shocked ‘e’d be out of ‘is seven senses. ‘Ow would Prue ever ‘ave the face to go to the Week day Evening Social again after a show-up like that? And Ernie. What’s ‘E going to say about it to the other chaps at the garage when they throw it up at him that ‘is sister’s a Kep Woman?’

“‘Don’t you worry about *that*, mother,’ said Ernest gently but firmly. ‘There’s nobody ever throws anything up against me at the garage anyhow — and there won’t be. Nohow. Not unless ‘E wants to swaller ‘is teeth.’

“‘Well, there’s ‘Arry. ‘E goes to ‘is classes, and what if someone gets ‘old of it there? ‘Is sister, a Kep Woman. They’d ‘ardly let ‘im

go on working after such a disgrace.'

"'Oh I'd soon—' I began, following in my brother's wake. But Matilda stopped me with a gesture. Her gesture swept round and held my mother, who was indeed drawing near the end of what she had to say.

"'I can see, Martha,' said Matilda, 'just 'ow you feel about Fanny. I suppose it's all natural. Of course, this letter—'

"She picked up the letter. She pursed her great mouth and waggled her clumsy head slowly from side to side. 'For the life of me I can't believe the girl who wrote this is a bad-hearted girl,' she said. 'You're bitter with her, Martha. You're bitter.'

"'After all—' I began, but Matilda's hand stopped me again.

"'Bitter!' cried my mother. 'I know 'er. She can put on that in'cent air just as though nothing 'ad 'appened and try and make you feel in the wrong—'

"Matilda ceased to waggle and began to nod. 'I see,' she said. 'I see. But why should Fanny take the trouble to write this letter, if she hadn't a real sort of affection for you all? As though she need have bothered herself about the lot of you! You'r no sort of help to her. There's kindness in the letter, Martha, and something more than kindness. Are you going to throw it back at her? Her and her offers of help? Even if she doesn't crawl and repent as she ought to do! Won't you even answer her letter?'

"'I won't be drawn into a correspondence with 'er,' said my mother. 'No! So long as she's a Kep Woman, she's no daughter of mine. I wash my 'ands of 'er. And as for 'er 'Elp! 'Elp indeed! It's 'Umbug! If she'd wanted 'elp us she could have married Mr. Crosby, as fair and honest a man as any woman could wish for.'

"'So that's *that*,' said Matilda Good conclusively.

"Abruptly she swivelled her great head round to Ernest. And what are you going to do, Ernie? Are *you* for turning down Fanny? And letting the cheese pies just drop into the mud of Oblivium, as the saying goes, and be forgotten for ever and ever and ever?'

"Ernest sat back, put his hand in his trouser pockets and remained thoughtful for some moments. 'It's orkward,' he said.

"Matilda offered him no assistance.

"'There's my Young Lady to consider,' said Ernest and flushed an

extreme scarlet.

"My mother turned her head sharply and looked at him. Ernest with a stony expression did not look at my mother.

"'O — oh!' said Matilda. 'Here's something new. And who may your Young Lady be, Ernie?'

"'Well, I 'adn't proposed to discuss 'er 'ere just yet. So never mind what 'er name is. She's got a little millinery business. I'll say that for 'er. And a cleverer nicer girl never lived. We met at a little dance. Nothing isn't fixed up yet beyond a sort of engagement. There's been presents. Given 'er a ring and so forth. But naturally I've never told 'er anything about Fanny. I 'aven't discussed family affairs with 'er much, not so far. Knows we were in business of some sort and 'ad losses and father died of an accident; that's about all. But Fanny — Fanny's certainly going to be orkward to explain. Not that I want to be *'ard* on Fanny.'

"'I see,' said Matilda. She glanced a mute interrogation at Prue and found her answer in Prue's face. Then she picked up the letter again and read very distinctly: 'One hundred and two, Brantismore Gardens, Earl's Court.' She read this address slowly as though she wanted to print it on her memory. 'Top flat, you said it was, Ernie?'...

"She turned to me. 'And what are you going to do, Harry, about all this?'

"'I want to see Fanny for myself,' I said. 'I don't believe—'

"''Arry,' said my mother, 'now — once for all — I forbid you to go near 'er. I won't 'ave you corrupted.'

"'Don't forbid him, Martha,' said Matilda. 'It's no use forbidding him. *Because he will*! Any boy with any heart and spunk in him would go and see her after that letter. One hundred and two, Brantismore Gardens, Earl's Court,' — she was very clear with the address— 'it's not very far from here.'

"'I forbid you to go near 'er, 'Arry,' my mother reiterated. And then realising too late the full importance of Fanny's letter, she picked it up. 'I won't 'ave this answered. I'll burn it as it deserves. And forget about it. Banish it from my mind. *There*.'

"And then my mother stood up and making a curious noise in her throat like the strangulation of a sob, she put Fanny's letter into the

fire and took the poker to thrust it into the glow and make it burn. We all stared in silence as the letter curled up and darkened, burst into a swift flame and became in an instant a writhing, agonised, crackling, black cinder. Then she sat down again, remained still for a moment, and then after a fierce struggle with her skirt-pocket dragged out a poor, old, dirty pocket-handkerchief and began to weep — at first quietly and then with a gathering passion. The rest of us sat aghast at this explosion.

"'You mustn't go near Fanny, 'Arry; not if mother forbids,' said Ernest at last, gently but firmly.

"Matilda looked at me in grim enquiry.

"'I *shall*,' I said, and was in a terror lest the unmanly tears behind my eyes should overflow.

"'Arry!' cried my mother amidst her sobs. You'll break — you'll break my heart! First Fanny! Then you.'

"'You see!' said Ernest.

"The storm of her weeping paused as though she waited to hear my answer. My silly little face must have been very red by this time and there was something wrong and uncontrollable about my voice, but I said what I meant to say. 'I shall go to Fanny,' I said, 'and I shall just ask her straight out whether she's leading a bad life.'

"'And suppose she is?' asked Matilda.

"'I shall reason with her,' I said. 'I shall do all I can to save her. Yes — even if I have to find some work that will keep her...She's my sister.'...

"I wept for a moment or so. 'I can't help it, mother,' I sobbed. 'I got to see Fanny!'

"I recovered my composure with an effort.

"'*So*,' said Matilda, regarding me, I thought, with rather more irony and rather less admiration than I deserved. Then she turned to my mother. 'I don't see that Harry can say fairer than that,' she said. 'I think you'll have to let him see her after that. He'll do all he can to save her, he says. Who knows? He might bring her to repentance.'

"'More likely the other way about,' said my mother, wiping her eyes, her brief storm of tears now over.

"'I can't 'elp feeling it's a mistake,' said Ernest, 'for 'Arry to go and see 'er.'

"'Well, anyhow don't give it up because you've forgotten the address, Harry,' said Matilda, 'or else you are done. Let it be your own free-will and not forgetfulness, if you throw her over. One hundred and two Brantismore Gardens, Earl's Court. You'd better write it down.'

"'One hundred and two — Brantismore Gardens.'

"I went over to my books on the corner table to do as she advised sternly and resolutely in a fair round hand on the fly-leaf of Smith's *Principia Latina*."

§ 6

"My first visit to Fanny's flat was quite unlike any of the moving scenes I acted in my mind beforehand. I went round about half-past eight when shop was done on the evening next but one after Ernest's revelation. The house seemed to me a very dignified one and I went up a carpeted staircase to her flat. I rang the bell and she opened the door herself.

"It was quite evident at once that the smiling young woman in the doorway had expected to see someone else instead of the gawky youth who stood before her, and that for some moments she had not the slightest idea who I was. Her expression of radiant welcome changed to a defensive coldness. 'What do you want, please?' she said to my silent stare.

"She had altered very much. She had grown, though now I was taller than she was, and her wavy brown hair was tied by a band of black velvet with a brooch on one side of it, adorned with clear-cut stones of some sort that shone and twinkled. Her face and lips had a warmer colour than I remembered. And she was wearing a light soft greenish-blue robe with loose sleeves; it gave glimpse's of her pretty neck and throat and revealed her white arms. She seemed a magically delightful being, soft and luminous and sweet-scented and altogether wonderful to a young barbarian out of the London streets. Her delicacy overawed me. I cleared my throat. 'Fanny!' I said hoarsely, 'don't you know me?'

"She knitted her pretty brows and then came her old delightful smile. 'Why! It's Harry!' she cried and drew me into the little hall

and hugged and kissed me. ‘My little brother Harry, grown as big as I am! How wonderful!’

“Then she went by me and shut the door and looked at me doubtfully. ‘But why didn’t you write to me first to say you were coming? Here am I dying for a talk with you and here’s a visitor who’s coming to see me. May come in at any moment. Now what am I to do? Let me see!’

“The little hall in which we stood was bright with white paint and pretty Japanese pictures. It had cupboards to hide away coats and hats and an old oak chest. Several doors opened into it and two were ajar. Through one I had a glimpse of a sofa and things set out for coffee, and through the other I saw a long mirror and a chintz-covered armchair. She seemed to hesitate between these two rooms and then pushed me into the former one and shut the door behind us.

“‘You should have written to tell me you were coming,’ she said. ‘I’m dying to talk to you and here’s someone coming who’s dying to talk to *me*. But never mind let’s talk all we can. How are you? *Well* — I can see that. But are you getting educated? And mother, how’s mother? What’s happened to Prue? And is Ernest as hot-tempered as ever?’

“I attemped to tell her. I tried to give her an impression of Matilda Good and to hint not too harshly at my mother’s white implacability. I began to tell her of my chemist’s shop and how much Latin and Chemistry I knew, and in the midst of it she darted away from me and stood listening.

“It was the sound of a latch-key at the door.

“‘My other visitor,’ she said, hesitated a moment and was out of the room, leaving me to study her furniture and the coffee machine that bubbled on the table. She had left the door a little ajar and I heard all too plainly the sound of a kiss and then a man’s voice. I thought it was rather a jolly voice.

“‘I’m tired, little Fanny; oh! I’m tired to death. This new paper is the devil. We’ve started all wrong. But I shall pull it off. Gods! if I hadn’t this sweet pool of rest to plunge into, I’d go off my head! I’d have nothing left to me but headlines. Take my coat; there’s a dear. I smell coffee.’

“I heard a movement as though Fanny had checked her visitor

almost at the door of the room I was in. I heard her say something very quickly about a brother.

"'Oh, *Damn!*' said the man very heartily. Not another of 'em! How many brothers have you got, Fanny? Send him away. I've only got an hour altogether, my dear—'

"Then the door closed sharply — Fanny must have discovered it was ajar — and the rest of the talk was inaudible.

"Fanny reappeared, a little flushed and bright-eyed and withal demure. She had evidently been kissed again.

"'Harry,' she said, 'I hate to ask you to go and come again, but that other visitor — I'd promised him first. Do you mind, Harry? I'm longing for a good time with you, a good long talk. You get your Sundays, Harry? Well, why not come here at three on Sunday when I'll be quite alone and we'll have a regular good old tea? Do you mind, Harry?'

"I said I didn't. In that flat ethical values seemed quite different to what they were outside.

"'After all, you did ought to have written first,' said Fanny, 'instead of just jumping out on me out of the dark.'

"There was no one in the hall when she showed me out and not even a hat or coat visible. 'Give me a kiss, Harry,' she said and I kissed her very readily. 'Quite sure you don't mind?' she said at her door.

"'Not a bit,' I said. 'I ought to have written.'

"'Sunday at three,' she said, as I went down the carpeted staircase.

"'Sunday at three,' I replied at the bend of the stairs.

"Downstairs there was a sort of entrance hall to all the flats with a fire burning in a fire-place and a man ready to call a cab or taxi for anyone who wanted one. The prosperity and comfort of it all impressed me greatly, and I was quite proud to be walking out of such a fine place. It was only when I had gone some way along the street that I began to realise how widely my plans for the evening had miscarried.

"I had not asked her whether she was living a bad life or not and I had reasoned with her not at all. The scenes I had rehearsed in my mind beforehand, of a strong and simple and resolute younger

brother saving his frail but lovable sister from terrible degradations, had indeed vanished altogether from my mind when her door had opened and she had appeared. And here I was with the evening all before me and nothing to report to my family but the profound difference that lies between romance and reality. I decided not to report to my family at all yet, but to go for a very long walk and think this Fanny business over thoroughly, returning home when it would be too late for my mother to cross-examine me and 'draw me out' at any length.

"I made for the Thames Embankment, for that afforded uncrowded pavements and the solemnity and incidental beauty appropriate to a meditative promenade.

"It is curious to recall now the phases of my mind that night. At first the bright realities I came from dominated me: Fanny pretty and prosperous, kindly and self-assured, in her well-lit, well-furnished flat, and the friendly and confident voice I had heard speaking in the hall, asserted themselves as facts to be accepted and respected. It was delightful after more than two years of ugly imaginations to have the glimpse of my dear sister again so undefeated and loved and cared for and to look forward to a long time with her on Sunday and a long confabulation upon all I had done in the meantime and all I meant to do. Very probably these two people were married after all, but unable for some obscure reason to reveal the fact to the world. Perhaps Fanny would tell me as much in the strictest confidence on Sunday and I could go home and astonish and quell my mother with the whispered secret. And even as I developed and cuddled this idea it grew clear and cold and important in my mind that they were not married at all, and the shades of a long-accumulated disapproval dimmed that first bright impression of Fanny's little nest. I felt a growing dissatisfaction with the part I had played in our encounter. I had let myself be handled and thrust out as though I had been a mere boy instead of a brother full of help and moral superiority. Surely I ought to have said something, however brief, to indicate our relative moral positions I I ought to have faced that man too, the Bad Man, lurking no doubt in the room with the mirror and the chintz-covered chair. He had avoided seeing me — because he could not face me! And from these new aspects of the case I began to develop a whole

new dream of reproach and rescue. What should I have said to the Bad Man? And so, Sir, at last we meet—'

"Something like that.

"My imagination began to leap and bound and soar with me. I pictured the Bad Man, dressed in that 'immaculate evening dress' which my novels told me marked the deeper and colder depths of male depravity, cowering under my stream of simple eloquence. 'You took her,' I would say, 'from our homely but pure and simple home. You broke her father's heart' — yes, I imagined myself saying that!— 'And what have you made of her?' I asked. 'Your doll, your plaything! to be pampered while the whim lasts and then to be cast aside!' Or— 'tossed aside'?

"I decided 'tossed aside' was better.

"I found myself walking along the Embankment, gesticulating and uttering such things as that."

"But you knew better?" said Firefly. "Even then."

"I knew better. But that was the way our minds worked in the ancient days."

§ 7

"But," said Sarnac, "my second visit to Fanny, like my first, was full of unexpected experiences and unrehearsed effects. The carpet on the pleasant staircase seemed to deaden down my moral tramplings, and when the door opened and I saw my dear Fanny again, friendly and glad, I forgot altogether the stern interrogations with which that second interview was to have opened. She pulled my hair and kissed me, took my hat and coat, said I had grown tremendously and measured herself against me, pushed me into her bright little sitting-room, where she had prepared such a tea as I had never seen before, little ham sandwiches, sandwiches of a delightful stuff called Gentleman's Relish, strawberry jam, two sorts of cake, and little biscuits to fill in any odd corners. 'You are a dear to come and see me, Harry. But I had a sort of feeling that whatever happened you would come along.'

"'We two always sort of hung together,' I said.

"'Always,' she agreed. 'I think mother and Ernie might have

written me a line. Perhaps they will later. Ever seen an electric kettle, Harry? This is one. And you put that plug in there.'

"'I know,' I said, and did as I was told. 'There's resistances embedded in the coating. I've been doing some electricity and chemistry. Council classes. Six'r seven subjects altogether. And there's a shop-window in Tothill Street full of such things.'

"'I expect you know all about them,' she said. 'I expect you've learnt all sorts of sciences,' and so we came to the great topic of what I was learning and what I was going to do.

"It was delightful to talk to someone who really understood the thirst for knowledge that possessed me. I talked of myself and my dreams and ambitions, and meanwhile, being a growing youth, my arm swept like a swarm of locusts over Fanny's wonderful tea. Fanny watched me with a smile on her face and steered me with questions towards the things she most wanted to know. And when we had talked enough for a time she showed me how to play her pianola and I got a roll of Schumann that Mr. Plaice had long ago made familiar to me and had the exquisite delight of playing it over for myself. These pianolas were quite easy things to manage, I found; in a little while I was already playing with conscious expression.

"Fanny praised me for my quickness, cleared her tea-things away while I played, and then came and sat beside me and listened and talked and we found we had learnt quite a lot about music since our parting. We both thought great things of Bach, — whom I found I was calling quite incorrectly Batch — and Mozart, who also had to be pronounced a little differently. And then Fanny began to question me about the work I wanted to do in the world. 'You mustn't stay with that old chemist much longer,' she declared. How would I like to do some sort of work that had to do with books, bookselling or helping in a library or printing and publishing books and magazines? 'You've never thought of writing things?' asked Fanny. 'People do.'

"'I made some verses once or twice,' I confessed, 'and wrote a letter to the *Daily News* about temperance. But they didn't put it in.'

"'Have you ever wanted to write?'

"'What, books? Like Arnold Bennett? *Rather!*'

"'But you didn't quite know how to set about it.'

"'It's difficult to begin,' I said, as though that was the only barrier.

“‘You ought to leave that old chemist’s shop,’ she repeated. ‘If I were to ask people I know and found out some better sort of job for you, Harry, would you take it?’

“‘*Rather!*’ said I.”

“Why not altogether?” interrupted Firefly.

“Oh! we used to say *Rather*,” said Sarnac. “It was artistic understatement. But you realise how dreadfully I lapsed from all my preconceived notions about Fanny and myself. We talked the whole evening away. We had a delightful cold picnic supper in a pretty little dining-room with a dresser, and Fanny showed me how to make a wonderful salad with onions very finely chopped and white wine and sugar in the dressing. And afterwards came some more of that marvel, the pianola, and then very reluctantly I took my leave. And when I found myself in the streets again I had once more my former sense of having dropped abruptly from one world into another, colder, bleaker, harder, and with entirely different moral values. Again I felt the same reluctance to go straight home and have my evening dimmed and destroyed by a score of pitiless questions. And when at last I did go home I told a lie. ‘Fanny’s got a pretty place and she’s as happy as can be,’ I said. ‘I’m not quite sure, but from what she said, I believe that man’s going to marry her before very long.’

“My cheeks and ears grew hot under my mother’s hostile stare.

“‘Did she tell you that?’

“‘Practically,’ I lied. ‘I kind of got it out of her.’

“‘But ‘e’s married already!’ said my mother.

“‘I believe there is something,’ I said.

“‘*Something!*’ said my mother scornfully. ‘She’s stolen another woman’s man, ‘e belongs to ‘er — for ever. No matter what there is against ‘er. “Whomsoever God Hath Joined, Let No Man Put Asunder”! — that’s what I was taught and what I believe. ‘E may be older; ‘e may have led her astray, but while she and ‘e harbour together the sin is ‘ers smutch as ‘is. Did you see ‘im?’

“‘He wasn’t there.’

“‘‘Adn’t the face. That’s so much to their credit. And are you going there again?’

“‘I’ve kind of promised—’

"'It's against my wishes, 'Arry. Every time you go near Fanny, 'Arry, you disobey me. Mark that. Let's be plain about that, once and for all.'

"I felt mulish. 'She's my sister,' I said.

"'And I'm your mother. Though nowadays mothers are no more than dirt under their children's feet. Marry 'er indeed! Why *should* 'e? Likely. 'E'll marry the next one. Come, Prue, take that bit of coal off the fire and we'll go up to bed.'"

§ 8

"And now," said Sarnac, "I must tell you of the queer business organisation of Thunderstone House and the great firm of Crane & Newberry, for whom, at Fanny's instance, I abandoned Mr. Humberg and his gold-labelled bottles of nothingness. Crane & Newberry were publishers of newspapers, magazines and books, and Thunderstone House was a sort of fountain of printed paper, spouting an unending wash of reading matter into the lives of the English people.

"I am talking of the world two thousand years ago," said Sarnac. "No doubt you have all been good children and have read your histories duly, but at this distance in time things appear very much foreshortened, and changes that occupied lifetimes and went on amidst dense clouds of doubt, misunderstanding and opposition seem to be the easiest and most natural of transitions. We were all taught that the scientific method came into human affairs first of all in the world of material things, and later on in the matters of psychology and human relationship, so that the large-scale handling of steel, and railways, automobiles, telegraphs, flying machines and all the broad material foundations of the new age were in existence two or three generations before social, political and educational ideas and methods were modified in correspondence with the new necessities these things had created. There was a great unanticipated increase in the trade and population of the world and much confusion and conflict, violent social stresses and revolutions and great wars, before even the need of a scientific adjustment of human relationships was recognised. It is easy enough to learn of such things in general terms but hard to explain just what these processes of blind readjustment

meant in anxiety, suffering and distress to the countless millions who found themselves born into the swirl of this phase of change. As I look back to that time in which I lived my other life I am reminded of a crowd of people in one of my old Pimlico fogs. No one had any vision of things as a whole; everybody was feeling his way slowly and clumsily from one just perceptible thing to another. And nearly everybody was uneasy and disposed to be angry.

"It is clear beyond question to us now, that the days of illiterate drudges were already past in the distant nineteenth century, for power-machinery had superseded them. The new world, so much more complicated and dangerous, so much richer and ampler, was a world insisting upon an educated population, educated intellectually and morally. But in those days these things were not at all clear, and it was grudgingly and insufficiently that access to knowledge and enlightenment was given by the learned and prosperous classes to the rapidly accumulating masses of the population. They insisted that it should be done by special channels and in a new and different class of school. I have told you of what passed for my education, reading and writing, rudimentary computations, 'jogfry' and so forth. That sort of process, truncated by employment at thirteen or fourteen, when curiosity and interest were just beginning to awaken, was as far as education had gone for the bulk of the common men and women in the opening years of the twentieth century. It had produced a vast multitude of people, just able to read, credulous and uncritical and pitifully curious to learn about life and things, pitifully wanting to see and know. As a whole the community did nothing to satisfy the vague aspirations of those half-awakened swarms; it was left to 'private enterprise' to find what profits it could in their dim desires. A number of great publishing businesses arose to trade upon the new reading public that this 'elementary' education, as we called it, had accumulated.

"In all ages people have wanted stories about life. The young have always wanted to be told about the stage on which they are beginning to play their parts, to be shown the chances and possibilities of existence, vividly and dramatically, so that they may imagine and anticipate their own reactions. And even those who are no longer youthful have always been eager to supplement their experiences and

widen their judgement by tales and histories and discussions. There has been literature since there has been writing, since indeed there was enough language for story-telling and reciting. And always literature has told people what their minds were prepared to receive, searching for what it should tell rather in the mind and expectation of the hearer or reader — who was the person who paid — than in the unendowed wildernesses of reality. So that the greater part of the literature of every age has been a vulgar and ephemeral thing interesting only to the historian and psychologist of later times because of the light it threw upon the desires and imaginative limitations of its generation. But the popular literature of the age in which Harry Mortimer Smith was living was more abundant, more cynically insincere, lazy, cheap and empty than anything that the world had ever seen before.

"You would accuse me of burlesque if I were to tell you the stories of the various people who built up immense fortunes by catering for the vague needs of the new reading crowds that filled the hypertrophied cities of the Atlantic world. There was a certain Newnes of whom legend related that one day after reading aloud some item of interest to his family he remarked, 'I call that a regular tit-bit.' From that feat of nomenclature he went on to the idea of a weekly periodical full of scraps of interest, cuttings from books and newspapers and the like. A hungry multitude, eager and curious, was ready to feed greedily on such *hors d'oeuvre*. So *Tit-Bits* came into existence, whittled from a thousand sources by an industrious and not too expensive staff, and Newnes became a man of wealth and a baronet. His first experiment upon the new public encouraged him to make a number of others. He gave it a monthly magazine full of short stories drawn from foreign sources. At first its success was uncertain, and then a certain Dr. Conan Doyle rose to fame in it and carried it to success with stories about crime and the detection of crime. Every intelligent person in those days, everyone indeed intelligent or not, was curious about the murders and such-like crimes which still abounded. Indeed, there could have been no more fascinating and desirable subject for us; properly treated such cases illuminated the problems of law, training and control in our social welter as nothing else could have done. The poorest people bought at

least a weekly paper in order to quicken their wits over murder mysteries and divorces, driven by an almost instinctive need to probe motives and judge restraints. But Conan Doyle's stories had little of psychology in them; he tangled a skein of clues in order to disentangle it again, and his readers forgot the interest of the problem in the interest of the puzzle.

"Hard upon the heels of Newnes came a host of other competitors, among others a certain Arthur Pearson and a group of brothers Harmsworth who rose to great power and wealth from the beginning of a small weekly paper called *Answers*, inspired originally by the notion that people liked to read other people's letters. You will find in the histories how two of these Harmsworths, men of great thrust and energy, became Lords of England and prominent figures in politics, but I have to tell of them now simply to tell you of the multitude of papers and magazines they created to win the errand-boy's guffaw, the heart of the factory girl, the respect of the aristocracy and the confidence of the *nouveau riche*. It was a roaring factory of hasty printing. Our own firm at Thunderstone House was of an older standing than these Newnes, Pearson, Harmsworth concerns. As early as the eighteenth century the hunger for knowledge had been apparent, and a certain footman turned publisher, named Dodsley, had produced a book of wisdom called the *Young Man's Companion*. Our founder, Crane, had done the same sort of thing in Early Victorian times. He had won his way to considerable success with a *Home Teacher* in monthly parts and with Crane's *Circle of the Sciences* and a weekly magazine and so forth. His chief rivals had been two firms called Cassell's and Routledge's, and for years, though he worked upon a smaller capital, he kept well abreast of them. For a time the onrush of the newer popular publishers had thrust Crane's and his contemporaries into the background and then, reconstructed and reinvigorated by a certain Sir Peter Newberry, the old business had won its way back to prosperity, publishing a shoal of novelette magazines and cheap domestic newspapers for women, young girls and children, reviving the *Home Teacher* on modern lines with a memory training system and a *Guide to Success* by Sir Peter Newberry thrown in, and even launching out into scientific handbooks of a not too onerous sort.

“It is difficult for you to realise,” said Sarnac, “what a frightful lot of printed stuff there was in that old world. It was choked with printed rubbish just as it was choked with human rubbish and a rubbish of furniture and clothing and every sort of rubbish; there was too much of the inferior grades of everything. And good things incredibly rare You cannot imagine how delightful it is for me to sit here again, naked and simple, talking plainly and nakedly in a clear and beautiful room. The sense of escape, of being cleansed of unnecessary adhesions of any sort, is exquisite. We read a book now and then and talk and make love naturally and honestly and do our work and thought and research with well-aired well-fed brains, and we live with all our senses and abilities taking a firm and easy grip upon life. But stress was in the air of the twentieth century. Those who had enough courage fought hard for knowledge and existence, and to them we sold our not very lucid or helpful *Home Teacher* and our entirely base *Guide to Success*; but great multitudes relaxed their hold upon life in a way that is known now only to our morbid psychologists. They averted their attention from reality and gave themselves up to reverie. They went about the world distraught in a day-dream, a daydream that they were not really themselves, but beings far nobler and more romantic, or that presently things would change about them into a dramatic scene centering about themselves. These novelette magazines and popular novels that supplied the chief part of the income of Crane & Newberry, were really helps to reverie — mental drugs. Sunray, have you ever read any twentieth-century novelettes?”

“One or two,” said Sunray. “It’s as you say. I suppose I have a dozen or so. Some day you shall see my little collection.”

“Very likely *ours* — half of them, — Crane & Newberry’s I mean. It will be amusing to see them again. The great bulk of this reverie material was written for Crane & Newberry by girls and women and by a type of slack imaginative men. These ‘authors,’ as we called them, lived scattered about London or in houses on the country-side, and they sent their writings by post to Thunderstone House, where we edited them in various ways and put the stuff into our magazines and books. Thunderstone House was a great rambling warren of a place opening out of Tottenham Court Road, with a yard

into which huge lorries brought rolls of paper and from which vans departed with our finished products. It was all a-quiver with the roar and thudding of the printing machinery. I remember very vividly to this day how I went there first, down a narrow roadway out of the main thoroughfare, past a dingy public-house and the stage door of a theatre."

"What were you going to do — pack up books? Or run errands?" asked Radiant.

"I was to do what I could. Very soon I was on the general editorial staff."

"Editing popular knowledge?"

"Yes."

"But why did they want an illiterate youngster like yourself at Thunderstone House?" asked Radiant. "I can understand that this work of instructing and answering the first crude questions of the new reading classes was necessarily a wholesale improvised affair, but surely there were enough learned men at the ancient universities to do all the editing and instructing that was needed!"

Sarnac shook his head. "The amazing thing is that there weren't," he said. "They produced men enough of a sort but they weren't the right sort."

His auditors looked puzzled.

"The rank-and-file of the men they sent out labelled M.A. and so forth from Oxford and Cambridge were exactly like those gilt-lettered jars in Mr. Humberg's shop, that had nothing in them but stale water. The pseudo-educated man of the older order couldn't teach, couldn't write, couldn't explain. He was pompous and patronising and prosy; timid and indistinct in statement, with no sense of the common need or the common quality. The promoted office-boy, these new magazine and newspaper people discovered, was brighter and better at the job, comparatively modest and industrious, eager to know things and impart things. The editors of our periodicals, the managers of our part publications and so forth were nearly all of the office-boy class, hardly any of them, in the academic sense, educated. But many of them had a sort of educational enthusiasm and all of them a boldness that the men of the old learning lacked..."

Sarnac reflected. “In Britain at the time I am speaking about — and in America also — there were practically two educational worlds and two traditions of intellectual culture side by side. There was all this vast fermenting hullabaloo of the new publishing, the new press, the cinema theatres and so forth, a crude mental uproar arising out of the new elementary schools of the nineteenth century, and there was the old aristocratic education of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which had picked up its tradition from the Augustan age of Rome, They didn’t mix. On the one hand were these office-boy fellows with the intellectual courage and vigour — oh! of Aristotle and Plato, whatever the quality of their intellectual equipment might be; on the other the academic man, affectedly Grecian, like the bought and sold learned man of the days of Roman slavery. He had the gentility of the household slave; he had the same abject respect for patron, prince and patrician; he had the same meticulous care in minor matters, and the same fear of uncharted reality. He criticised like a slave, sneering and hinting, he quarrelled like a slave, despised all he dared despise with the eagerness of a slave. He was incapable of serving the multitude. The new reading-crowd, the working masses, the ‘democracy’ as we used to call it, had to get its knowledge and its wisdom without him.

“Crane, our founder, had had in his day some inkling of the educational function such businesses as his were bound to serve in the world, but Sir Peter Newberry had been a hard tradesman, intent only on recovering the prosperity that the newer popular publishers had filched away from our firm. He was a hard driving man; he drove hard, he paid in niggardly fashion and he succeeded. He had been dead now for some years and the chief shareholder and director of the firm was his son Richard. He was nicknamed the Sun; I think because someone had quoted Shakespeare about the winter of our discontent being made summer by this Sun of York. He was by contrast a very genial and warming person. He was acutely alive to the moral responsibility that lay behind the practical irresponsibility of a popular publisher. If anything, he drove harder than his father, but he paid generously; he tried to keep a little ahead of the new public instead of a little behind; the times moved in his favour and he succeeded even more than his father had done. I had been employed

by Crane & Newberry for many weeks before I saw him, but in the first office I entered in Thunderstone House I saw the evidences of his personality in certain notices upon the wall. They were printed in clear black letters on cards and hung up. It was his device for giving the house a tone of its own.

"I remember 'We lead; the others imitate,' and 'If you are in any doubt about its being too good put it in.' A third was: 'If a man doesn't know what you know that's no reason for writing as if he was an all-round fool. Rest assured there is something he knows better than you do.'"

§ 9

"It took me some time to get from the yard of Thunderstone House to the office in which these inscriptions were displayed. Fanny had told me to ask for Mr. Cheeseman, and when I had discovered and entered the doorway up a flight of steps, which had at first been masked by two large vans, I made this demand of an extremely small young lady enclosed in a kind of glass cage. She had a round face and a bright red button of a nose. She was engaged, I realised slowly, in removing a foreign stamp from a fragment of envelope by licking the back of the paper. She did not desist from this occupation but mutely asked my business with her eyes.

"'Oran-amoiment?' she asked, still licking.

"'Pardon?'

"'Oran-amoiment?'

"'I'm sorry,' I said, I don't get it quite.'

"'Mus' be deaf,' she said, putting down the stamp and taking a sufficient breath for slow loud speech. ''Ave you *gottonappointment*?'

"'Oh!' I said. 'Yes. I was told to come here to-day and see Mr. Cheeseman between ten and twelve.'

"She resumed her struggle with the stamp for a time. 'S'pose you don't c'lect stamps?' she asked. ''Sintresting 'obby. Mr. Cheeseman's written a little 'andbook about it. Looking for a job, I suppose? May 'ave to wait a bit. Will you fill up that bit of paper there? Formality we 'ave to insist on. Pencil...'

“The paper demanded my name and my business and I wrote that the latter was ‘literary employment.’

“‘Lordy,’ said the young lady when she read it. ‘I thought you was in for the ware’ouse. I say, Florence,’ she said to another considerably larger girl who had appeared on the staircase, ‘look at ‘im. ‘E’s after litry emplyment.’

“‘Cheek!’ said the second young lady after one glance at me, and sat down inside the glass box with a piece of chewing gum and a novelette just published by the firm. The young lady with the button nose resumed her stamp damping. They kept me ten minutes before the smaller one remarked: ‘Spose I better take this up to Mr. Cheeseman, Flo,’ and departed with my form.

“She returned after five minutes or so. ‘Mr. Cheeseman says ‘e can see you now for *one* minute,’ she said, and led the way up a staircase and along a passage that looked with glass windows into a printer’s shop and down a staircase and along a dark passage to a small apartment with an office table, one or two chairs, and bookshelves covered with paper-covered publications. Out of this opened another room, and the door was open. ‘You better sit down here,’ said the young lady with the button nose.

“‘That Smith?’ asked a voice. ‘Come right in.’

“I went in, and the young lady with the button nose vanished from my world.

“I discovered a gentleman sunken deeply in an arm-chair before a writing-table, and lost in contemplation of a row of vivid drawings which were standing up on a shelf against the wall of the room. He had an intensely earnest, frowning, red face, a large broad mouth intensely compressed, and stiff black hair that stood out from his head in many directions. His head was slightly on one side and he was chewing the end of a lead pencil. ‘Don’t see it,’ he whispered. ‘Don’t see it.’ I stood awaiting his attention. ‘Smith,’ he murmured, still not looking at me, ‘Harry Mortimer Smith. Smith, were you by any chance educated at a Board School?’

“‘Yessir,’ I said.

“‘I hear you have literary tastes.’

“‘Yessir.’

“‘Then come here and stand by me and look at these damned

pictures there. Did you ever see such stuff?'

"I stood by his side but remained judiciously silent. The drawings I now perceived were designs for a magazine cover. Upon all of them appeared the words 'The New World' in very conspicuous lettering. One design was all flying machines and steamships and automobiles; two others insisted upon a flying machine; one showed a kneeling loin-clothed man saluting the rising sun — which however rose behind him. Another showed a planet earth half illuminated, and another was simply a workman going to his work in the dawn.

"'Smith,' said Mr. Cheeseman; 'it's you've got to buy this magazine, not me. Which of these covers do you prefer? It's your decision. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vile*.'

"'Meaning me, Sir?' I said brightly.

"His bristle eyebrows displayed a momentary surprise. 'I suppose we're all fitted with the same tags nowadays,' he remarked. 'Which do you find most attractive?'

"'Those aeroplane things, Sir, seem to me to be shoving it a bit too hard,' I said.

"'H'm,' said Mr. Cheeseman. 'That's what the Sun says. You wouldn't buy on that?'

"'I don't think so, Sir. It's been done too much.'

"'How about that globe?'

"'Too like an Atlas, Sir.'

"'Aren't geography and travel interesting?'

"'They are, Sir, but somehow they aren't attractive.'

"'Interesting but not attractive. H'm. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings...So it's going to be that labour chap there in the dawn. You'd buy that, eh?'

"'Is this going to be a magazine about inventions and discoveries and progress, Sir?'

"'Exactly.'

"'Well, the Dawn's good, Sir, but I don't think that sort of Labour Day Cartoon man is going to be very attractive. Looks rheumatic and heavy, Sir. Why not cut him out and keep the dawn?'

"'Bit too like a slice of ham, Smith — thin pink streaks.'

"I was struck by an idea. 'Suppose, Sir, you kept that dawn scene and made it a bit earlier in the year. Buds on the trees, Sir. And

perhaps snowy mountains, rather cold and far off. And then you put a hand right across it — just a big hand — pointing, Sir.'

"'Pointing up?' said Mr. Cheeseman.

"'No, Sir, pointing forward and just a little up. It would sort of make one curious.'

"'It would. A woman's hand.'

"'Just a hand I think, Sir.'

"'You'd buy that?'

"'I'd jump at it, Sir, if I had the money.'

"Mr. Cheeseman reflected for some moments, chewing his pencil serenely. Then he spat out small bits of pencil over his desk and spoke. 'What you say, Smith, is exactly what I've been thinking. Exactly. It's very curious.' He pressed a bell-push on his desk and a messenger girl appeared. 'Ask Mr. Prelude to come here...So you think you'd like to come into Thunderstone House, Smith. I'm told you know a little about science already. Learn more. Our public's moving up to science. I've got some books over there I want you to read and pick out anything you find interesting.'

"'You'll be able to find me a job, Sir?' I said.

"'I've got to find you a job all right. Orders is orders. You'll be able to sit in that room there...'

"We were interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Prelude. He was a tall, thin, cadaverous man with a melancholy expression.

"'Mr. Prelude,' said Mr. Cheeseman, waving his arm at the cover sketches; 'this stuff won't do. It's — it's too banal. We want something fresher, something with a touch of imagination. What I want to see on the cover is — well, say a dawn — a very calm and simple scene, mostly colour, mountain range far away just flushed with sunrise, valley blue and still, high streamer clouds touched with pink. See? Trees perhaps in the foreground — just budding — spring motif and morning *motif*. See? All a little faint and backgroundy. Then a big hand and wrist across the page pointing at something, something high and far away. See?'

"He surveyed Mr. Prelude with the glow of creative enthusiasm on his face. Mr. Prelude looked disapproval. 'The Sun will like that,' he said.

"'It's the goods,' said Mr. Cheeseman.

“‘Why not those flying machines?’

“‘Why not midges?’ asked Mr. Cheeseman.

“Mr. Prelude shrugged his shoulders. ‘I’ve got no use for a magazine on progress without a flying machine or a Zeppelin,’ he said. ‘Still — it’s your affair.’

“Mr. Cheeseman looked a little dashed by his colleague’s doubt, but he held to his idea. ‘We’ll get a sketch made,’ he said. ‘How about Wilkinson?’

“They discussed some unknown Wilkinson as a possible cover designer. Then Mr. Cheeseman turned to me. ‘By the by, here’s a youngster we’ve got to make use of, Prelude. We don’t know what he can do, but he seems intelligent. I thought we’d use him to sift some of those scientific books. What he likes, *they’ll* like. *I* can’t read that stuff. I’m too busy.’

“Mr. Prelude surveyed me. ‘You never know what you can do till you try,’ he said. ‘Do you know anything of science?’

“Not very much,’ I said. ‘But I’ve done some physiography and chemistry and a little geology. And read a lot.’

“You don’t want to know very much,’ said Mr. Prelude. ‘You’re better without it here. Makes you High-Brow. High-Brow goes to tens of thousands, but Crane & Newberry go to hundreds of thousands. Not that our brows aren’t rising some in this establishment. Educational and improving, we’re going to be. So far as is consistent with our profits. See that notice, — *We lead*? All the same, Cheeseman,’ said Mr. Prelude, ‘the thing that has sold, the thing that sells and the thing that’s going to sell, is the magazine with a pretty girl on the cover — and the less costume the better. Consistent with decency. Now here’s — what your name?’

“‘Smith, Sir.’

“‘Smith. And here’s all these covers on the bookstall. And then I produce this. Which does he buy?’

“*This* was the cover of the summer number of Newberry’s Story Magazine, on which two young ladies in skin-tight bathing dresses disported themselves on a sandy beach.

“‘Smith goes for this,’ said Mr. Prelude triumphantly.

“I shook my head.

“‘You mean to say that isn’t attractive?’ said Mr. Cheeseman,

turning in his chair and pointing with his well-chewed pencil.

"I reflected.

"'There's never anything about them inside,' I said.

"'Got you there, Prelude!' said Mr. Cheeseman.

"'Not a bit. He bought six or seven before he found that out. And most of 'em forgot about it when they read inside.'"

§ 10

"I found my introduction to Thunderstone House far less terrifying than I had anticipated. It was gratifying to have come so near to what Mr. Cheese-man had thought about the magazine cover, and there were presently other very reassuring coincidences of the same sort. I was immediately interested in the editorial and publishing work that was going on about me, and my mind took one of those forward strides that are characteristic of adolescence. I was still a boy when I left Mr. Humberg; I had not been with Crane & Newberry six weeks before I perceived that I was a capable and responsible young man. I began to form opinions rapidly, to write with confidence; even my handwriting suddenly grew up from a careless or over-careful boyish scrawl to a consistent and characteristic script. I began to think about the clothes I was wearing and of the impression I made upon other people.

"In quite a little time I was writing short contributions to some of our minor weeklies and monthlies and suggesting articles and 'features' as we called them to Mr. Cheeseman. The eighteen shillings a week at which I started went up in a series of jerks to three pounds, which was quite a big salary in those days for a youngster not yet eighteen. Fanny took the keenest interest in my work and displayed an extraordinary understanding of its conditions. She seemed to know all about Mr. Cheeseman and Mr. Prelude and the rest of my colleagues directly I mentioned them.

"One day I was working in the room next to Mr. Cheeseman's with another youngster called Wilkins at a rather odd little job. One of the authors our firm employed had written a long story for the *Story Reader's Paradise*, and it had been set up by the printers and passed for press before it was discovered that in a careless moment

she had given her chief villain the name of a very prominent lawyer who unhappily also had a country house in a village almost identical in name with the corresponding village in the story. The prominent lawyer might see fit to consider this use of his name as libellous and make trouble for us. So Wilkins and I were going through two sets of proofs, one to check the other, and we were changing the name of the prominent lawyer to an entirely different one whenever it occurred. To brighten the task we had made a game of it. Each one raced down his galley proof and called the name of 'Reginald Flake' whenever he found it and scored a point for every name he called first. I was some points up when I heard a voice in the passage that seemed oddly familiar to me. 'They're all spread out on my desk, sir, if you like to come into my room,' I heard Mr. Cheeseman say.

"'Fay-nits,' said Wilkins. 'It's the Sun.'

"I turned round as the door opened and saw Mr. Cheeseman holding the door open for a good-looking youngish man, with rather handsome regular features and a sort of bang of brown hair over his forehead. He wore a pair of very round large spectacles with glasses tinted a faint yellow colour. He met my eyes and an expression of partial recognition came into his and faded again. Either he recognised me or he recognised a resemblance in me. He followed Mr. Cheeseman across the room. Then he turned sharply.

"'Of course,' he said smiling and returning a step or two toward me. 'You must be young Smith. How are you getting on here?'

"'I'm working for Mr. Cheeseman mostly,' I said standing up.

"He turned to Mr. Cheeseman.

"'Very satisfactory, sir. Quick, interested; he'll do well here.'

"'I'm glad to hear it — very glad. Everyone has a chance here and there's no favours. No favours. The best man does the job. Glad to see you among the directors whenever you care to come up to us, Smith.'

"'I'll do my best, Sir.'

"He hesitated, smiled again in a very friendly way and went into Mr. Cheeseman's room...

"'Where are we?' I said. 'Middle of galley 32? Score, 22-29.'

"'How d'you know *'im*?' asked Wilkins in a fierce undertone.

"'I don't know him,' I said, suddenly hot and flushed. 'I've never

seen him before.'

"'Well, he knew you.'

"'He's heard about me.'

"'Who from?'

"'How the deuce should *I* know?' I asked with needless heat.

"'Oh!' said Wilkins and reflected. 'But—'

"He glanced at my troubled face and said no more.

"But at the game of 'Reginald Flake' he overhauled me and beat me at the end of the book, 67-42."

§ 11

"I concealed altogether from my mother the share that Fanny had had in getting me my new job and all the opportunities it carried with it in Thunderstone House, and so it was possible for her to find some pride and satisfaction in my increasing prosperity. I was presently able to double and then still further to increase my contribution to the household expenses, and I exchanged my attic, which was handed over to Prue for her very own, for the room which had once sheltered the old Moggeridges. It was rearranged as a bed-sitting room for me, and soon I had first one and then several shelves full of books and a writing-desk of my own.

"And also I concealed from my mother, for there was no use in distressing her, the frequency of my visits to Fanny. We began to make little excursions together, for Fanny, I discovered, was often very lonely. Newberry was a very busy man, and often he could not come near her for ten days or a fortnight, and although she had some women friends, and classes and lectures, there were gaps often of several days when she would have had no one to speak to but the servant who came in daily to her, if it had not been for me. But all this companioning of Fanny I tried to hide from my mother, though now and then her suspicions stabbed my falsehoods. Ernie and Prue, however, were able to follow the calls of love unhampered by the family shame, and presently they were both engaged and his young lady and her young man were brought to a Sunday tea-party in the drawing-room — through the kind permission of Mr. and Mrs. Milton who were as usual, 'away.' Ernie's Young Lady — I've

completely forgotten her name — proved to be a well-dressed self-possessed young woman with a vast knowledge of people in what we used to call 'society'; she talked freely and fashionably, taking the larger share of the conversation, of Ascot and Monte Carlo and the Court. Prue's Mr. Pettigrew was of a more serious quality, and of the things he said I remember now only that he expressed a firm conviction that Messages from the Dead were Bound to Come in a few years' time. He was a chiropodist and very well thought of in chiropodological circles."

"Stop!" cried Radiant. "What is this? You are talking nonsense, Sarnac. What is chiropodological — hand — foot — scientific?"

"I thought you'd ask me that," said Sarnac, smiling. "Chiropody was — corn-cutting."

"Corn-cutting — harvesting," said Starlight. "But where do the hands and feet come in? There were machines then, were there not?"

"No, this was a different sort of corn. Mr. Humberg's shop was full of corn-salves and corn-cures. Corns were painful and tiresome callosities produced on people's feet by the pressure of ill-fitting boots. We don't know of such things nowadays, but they darkened scores of lives in Pimlico."

"But why did they wear ill-fitting boots?" demanded Radiant. "Oh! — never mind. Never mind. I know. A mad world which made boots at hazard without looking at the feet that had to wear them! And wore boots that hurt it when no sane people would dream of wearing boots! Go on with your story."

"Let me see," said Sarnac. "I was talking of a tea-party, a family tea-party in the drawing-room — in which we talked of everything in the world but my sister Fanny. And quite a little while after that tea-party my mother fell ill and died.

"It was a swift and sudden illness. She caught a cold and would not go to bed. When she did go to bed, she got up after one day of it, because she couldn't bear to think of all that Prue might be doing or not doing in the house-work downstairs. And her cold turned to pneumonia, the same sort of inflammation that had carried off the Moggeridges, and she died in three days.

"Now when the fever came upon her she changed suddenly from something white and hard and unapproachable to something flushed

and pitiful. Her face grew smaller and younger looking, her eyes bright, and something came into them that reminded me of Fanny when Fanny was distressed. And all my habit of sullen resistance to my mother melted when I saw her struggling for breath on her tumbled pillow and realised that she might be near the end of all her hates and drudgeries. Matilda Good became again the old friend who had known her since she was a young woman, and they called each other 'Tilda' and 'Marty' instead of Matilda and Martha. Matilda for all her varicose veins was up and down stairs fifty times a day; and there was much sending out for expensive things, the more expensive the better, that Matilda thought my mother might 'fancy.' They stood appealingly untouched upon the table by her bedside. Once or twice towards the end my mother asked for me, and when I came in the evening and bent over her she whispered hoarsely, ''Arry boy — promise me!...Promise me!...'

"I sat down and took the hand she held out to me, and so holding to me, she dozed.

"What she wanted me to promise she never said; and whether it was some last vow she wanted to extract from me that would separate me from Fanny for ever, or whether her thoughts about Fanny had changed under the shadow of death and she had some new message for her, I cannot imagine to this day. Perhaps she herself did not know what I had to promise; a dying desire for predominance moved her. Will stirred in her and faded again to nothing. 'Promise me!' Fanny she never mentioned by name and we did not dare to bring my sister in to her. Ernest came and kissed her and knelt down by the bedside and suddenly, dreadfully wept aloud like the child he was and set us all weeping; he was her firstborn and her dearest, he had known her before her final embitterment, he had always been a dutiful son to her.

"Presently she was lying there very straight and still, as hushed and still as my father's shop on Sundays, and the traffics and struggles and angers of life had done with her for ever. Her face was now neither young nor old, a marble face of peace. All her peevish resentment was smoothed and wiped away. It had never occurred to me before that she had or had not good looks, but now I saw that Fanny's fine regularity of feature came from her. She was like Fanny,

like an immobile, unhumorous Fanny.

"I stood beside her still body oppressed by a grief too wide and deep for tears, an immense grief that was not so much for her as for all that distress of life she had embodied. For now I saw that there was not and there never had been anything hateful in her; I saw for the first time the devotion of her, the misguided passion for right, the mute, blundering, tormented and tormenting love in her heart. Even her love of Fanny was a love capsized and inverted; her fallen daughter had been to her a detested changeling for the pretty clever little girl who was to have been a paragon of feminine virtue. Except for Ernest how bitterly and repeatedly had we children offended her rigid and implacable standards, Fanny and I openly and rebelliously and Prue by discovery! For Prue — I will not tell you the details of Matilda's exposure — pilfered.

"Long before we children began to thwart my mother there must have been a still more monstrous disappointment for her. What sort of dreams of manly piety and decorum had she wrapped about my poor, maundering, ramshackle, loose-limbed father when he and she walked out together in their Sunday clothes, making the best and more than the best of themselves? He must have been a tall, good-looking, young man then, and reassuringly apt with pious reflections. What shocks had he, gross, clumsy, wayward, ignorant and incompetent as the dear man was, inflicted upon her set and limited expectations?

"And then think of my Uncle John Julip again, that wonderful and adored elder brother with the manners of a sporting baronet, who had slowly shrivelled down to the figure of a drunken thief! Everything had shrivelled for her, — poor soul! In our streets in those old days men were permitted to sell brightly coloured distended bladders to children, the most apt instruments for acute disappointment you can imagine; and the life God had given my mother was very like one of these bladders. It had burst and shrivelled down to a limp and empty residue that nothing could ever restore. She had faced her declining days, prematurely wrinkled, weary, laborious and unloved except by one dutiful son...

"Yes, the thought of Ernest was a consolation to me. Surely his loyalty had meant happiness for her."

Sarnac paused. “I find it impossible,” he said, “to disentangle my thoughts as I stood by my mother’s death-bed from a thousand things that have come to me since about her. I have had to tell of her as an antagonist, as a hard uncharitable soul. That was her rôle in my story. But she was indeed just the creature and victim of that disordered age which had turned her natural tenacity to a blind intolerance and wasted her moral passion upon ugly and barren ends. If Fanny and Ernest and I had shown any stoutness against the disadvantages of our start in life, if we had won for ourselves any knowledge or respect, we inherited that much steadfastness from her; such honesty as we had was hers. If her moral harshness had overshadowed and embittered our adolescence, her passionate mothering had sheltered our childhood. Our father would have loved us, wondered at us and left us about. But early in her life, that fear, that terror-stricken hatred of sex that overshadowed the Christian centuries, that frantic resort to the suppressions, subjugations and disciplines of a stereotyped marriage in its harshest form, a marriage as easy to step into and as hard to leave as a steel trap with its teeth hidden by the most elaborate secrecies and misrepresentations, had set its pitiless grip upon my mother’s imagination and blackened all the happier impulses in life for her. She was ready, if necessary, to pass all her children through the fires of that Moloch, if by so doing their souls might be saved. She did it the more bitterly because she was doing it against the deeper undeveloped things in her own nature.

“Such things, more dimly appreciated perhaps, passed through the mind of Harry Mortimer Smith, my former self, as he stood beside his dead mother. He was torn — I was torn — by a sense of irrational separation and by the haunting persuasion of lost opportunities. There were things I felt that I might have said, propitious moments I might have seized to make things better between us. I had differed from her so harshly; I might have been so much kinder to her and still have held my way. She lay there a feeble, little, old woman, thin, worn and prematurely aged. How often had I struck at her with all my rebel strength, blind to the fact that I could wound her as only a child can wound the mother who bore it. She had been darkened and I also had been darkened, and now — now it was all too late. The door had closed between us. And was closed for ever. For ever...”

"The year and a half that intervened between my mother's death and the beginning of the First World War — the War that came before the Poison Gas War and the Great Desolation — were years of rapid growth for me, mental and physical alike. I remained with Matilda Good because I had come to love that clumsy, wise, friendly creature almost as if she was my second mother, but now I was prosperous enough to occupy the whole of the second floor and to have a sitting-room separate from my bedroom. I still came down to the underground breakfast-room for breakfast or supper or high tea because I liked talking with Matilda. Prue had married Mr. Pettigrew by that time, and in her stead two grey and sedulous women came in — they were sisters, one a spinster and the other the wife of a broken-down prize-fighter — to do the drudgeries Prue and my mother had done.

"My chief companion in those days was my sister Fanny. Our childhood's alliance was renewed and strengthened. We had a need for each other; we were able to help each other as no one else could help us. I found out very soon that Fanny's life was divided into two very unequal parts; that she had hours and sometimes days of excitement and happiness with Newberry, who loved her greatly and gave her all the time he could steal away for her and introduced her to such friends as he could trust to respect her and keep their secret, and also she had long stretches of uneventful solitude in which she was terribly left to herself. My sister Fanny was plucky and loyal and devoted, but before we two got together again I think she found those grey intervals of suspended animation dreary and dangerous and sometimes almost intolerable. Often she had nothing to live for at all, nothing bright and vital, but the almost daily note, a hasty word or so he scribbled to her. And the better he was, the worse it was for her. The fact that he was pleasant and delightful and deeply in love with her, the very brightness of being with him, made those great intervals seem darker and duller."

"Hadn't she work?" asked Sunray.

"And fellow workers, and other women?" asked Firefly.

"Not in her position. Not as an unmarried woman — of lowly

origins — with a lover."

"But there were others in the same position? Surely there were many!"

"A scattered class, a class made to be ashamed of itself. Newberry and Fanny were lovers, such lovers as we are to-day; they got through with it and at last, I believe, they married according to the custom of the time. But they were the exceptional ones, they knew what they wanted and had stout hearts. Most of these irregular unions succumbed to the boredom in-between and to the temptations of separation. Forgetfulness and jealousy played havoc with these insecure couples. The girls in their phases of loneliness picked up with other men and the first lover suspected their infidelities and strayed away. I have a lot to tell you yet about jealousy in the old world; it was not regarded as an ugly thing but as a rather high-spirited thing. People let it go and were proud of it. And the majority of these irregular unions were not even love unions in the first place, they were vice unions, dishonest on either side. Drugs and drink crept very easily into lives divided between over-excitement and tedium and darkened by a general disapproval. The defiant pose was the easiest pose. The unmarried lover was made a social outcast and driven towards other sorts of social outcasts, more evil and unhappy...You see perhaps now why my sister Fanny was rather alone and aloof, for all that she belonged to a numerous class.

"I suppose," said Sarnac, "that the object of that rigid legal marriage of the old world was to keep lovers together. In countless cases it kept the wrong people together and lovers apart. But then you must remember that in those days children were supposed to be providential accidents; they were indeed accidents of cohabitation and that altered all the conditions of the question. There were no proper schools for children, no sort of refuge if the parents parted and tore the home asunder. We are so secure; it is hard to imagine now the chancy insecurity of the ancient days. It is hard to imagine the dangers that hung about an unprotected child. In our world nowadays we all seem to get paired; sooner or later each finds a mate and marriage is a natural and necessary relationship instead of a compulsory device. All the priests of all the religions that have ever been in the world could not bind me to Sunray more firmly than I am

bound to-day. Does one get a book and an altar to marry the axe to its handle?...

"None of which does in the least degree affect the fact that my sister Fanny suffered dreadfully from loneliness before she rediscovered me.

"She was full of curiosities and enterprise, and she took possession of my leisure to explore all sorts of shows and resorts in and about old London, museums, picture-galleries, parks, gardens and heaths, that I should otherwise never have visited. Indeed she might not have visited them either if I had not been available as her escort, because in that world of crazy suppressions, most of these places were haunted by furtive love-hunters and feeble-minded folk who might have been irritating and tiresome to a solitary girl so pretty as Fanny. They would have followed her about and accosted her when they got her alone, and thrust their disagreeable cravings between her and the beauty and sunshine.

"But together we went gaily to all sorts of interesting things. This old London I am describing to you had a large share of parks and gardens; there was a pleasing quaintness about all of them and much unpremeditated loveliness. There was a certain Richmond Park, to which we often resorted, with many fine old trees and grassy spaces and wildernesses of bracken, that got very yellow and gay in autumn, and a quantity of deer. You might have been transported from this age to Richmond Park two thousand years ago, and still fancied yourself in the northland parks of to-day. The great trees, like nearly all trees in those days, were, it is true, infested with fungus and partly decayed, but Fanny and I never noticed that. They seemed great healthy trees to us. And there was a view from a hill-crest of the winding Thames, a very delightful view. And then there were the oddest old gardens and flower spaces at Kew. I remember a quite good rock-garden and glass-houses of flowers; the brightest flowers the old world imagined possible. And there were paths through a jungle of rhododendra, primitive small rhododendra, but bright coloured and a great delight to Fanny and me. There was a place where we had tea at little tables in the open air. In that frowsty old germ-saturated world with its dread of draughts and colds and coughs it gave one a bright sense of adventure to eat food in the open

air.

"We went to museums and picture-galleries and talked about what the pictures meant and we talked of a thousand things together. There comes back to me one conversation we had at a place called Hampton Court, a queer, old, red-brick palace with a great grape-vine under glass and an ancient garden beside the Thames. There were flower-beds full of half-wild herbaceous flowers, and we walked beside them under trees until we came to a low wall that looked upon the river, and we sat down on a seat and there, after a silence, suddenly Fanny, like one who has been pent up beyond endurance, began talking of love.

"She began by asking questions about the girls I had met and the girls at Thunderstone House. I described one or two of them to her. My chief friend among them was Milly Kimpton from the counting-house; we had got to the pitch of taking teas together and such-like friendly acts. 'That's not love,' said Fanny the wise, 'lending each other books. You don't begin to know what love is yet, Harry.

"'But you will, Harry — you will.'

"'Don't you be too late about it, Harry. There's nothing in life like loving someone, Harry. People don't talk to you about it and lots of people don't know what they are missing. It's all the difference between being nothing or something. It's all the difference between being dead or alive. When you are really loving someone you're all right and nothing can harm you. And when you aren't, nothing is right, everything is wrong. But love is a queer thing, Harry, and about as dreadful as it is dear. It gets wrong. Sometimes it all goes wrong and it's awful; it slips from you somehow; it goes and you're left mean and little — ever so mean! — and you can't get back and it seems you hardly want to get back. You're dead and you're damned and done for, and then again it all comes back again like the sunrise — like being born afresh.'

"And then with a desperate shamelessness she began to talk of Newberry and how much she loved him. She told little irrelevant things about his 'ways.' 'He comes to me whenever he can,' she said, and repeated this presently. 'He's all my life,' she said. 'You don't know what he is to me...'

"Then her constant dread of a separation crept up to the surface of

her thoughts.

"'Perhaps,' she said, it will always go on like this...I don't care if it does, I don't care if I never marry him. I wouldn't care — not if at last I'm thrown aside. I'd go through it all again and count myself lucky even if I knew for certain I was to be dropped and cast aside.'

"Queer Fanny! Her face was flushed and her eyes shining with tears. I asked myself what had been happening.

"'He'll never throw me aside, Harry. He'll never throw me aside. He can't. He can't. He's half as old again as I am and yet he comes to me in his trouble. Once — Once he cried to me. Men, all of you, are so strong, and yet so helpless...

"'You've got to have a woman to come to...

"'Just a little while ago — Well — He was ill. He was very ill. He has pain in his eyes and sometimes he's afraid about them. This time, suddenly, he had frightful pains. And he thought he couldn't see. He came straight to me, Harry. He called a cab and came to me, and he came feeling his way upstairs to me and fumbling at the door; and I nursed him in my darkened room until the pain had gone. He didn't go home, Harry, where there were servants and nurses to be got and attendants and everything; he came to me. It was me he came to. Me! He's my man. He knows I'd give my life for him. I would, Harry. I'd cut my body to pieces bit by bit, if it would make him happy.

"'It wasn't so much the pain he had, Harry, as the fear. He's not the one to mind a bit of pain or be afraid of many things. But he was afraid and scared. He'd never been afraid before, but he was afraid of going blind — he was too afraid to go to the specialist. It was like a little child, Harry, and him so big and strong — afraid of the dark. He thought they'd get hold of him so that perhaps he'd not be able to come to me. He thought he wouldn't be able to see his beloved magazines and papers any more. And the pain just turned the screw on him. He clung to me.

"'It was me made him go. I took him there. He wouldn't have gone if it hadn't been for me. He'd have just let things drift on and not a soul in the world, for all his money and power, to mother him. And then he might really have gone blind if it hadn't been taken in time. I pretended to be his secretary and I took him and waited in the waiting-room for him. I dreaded they'd hurt him. I was listening for

something to happen all the time. I had to look at their old *Graphics* as if I didn't care a rap what they were doing to him. And then he came out smiling with a green shade on and I had to stand up stiff and cool and wait to hear what he had to say. I *was* scared by that shade, Harry. Scared! I held my breath. I thought it had come. "It isn't so bad as we fancied, Miss Smith," he says — offhand like. "You kept the taxi? You'll have to take my arm I'm afraid." "Certainly, sir," I said, mimpsy-like. I was careful to be kind of awkward taking his arm. There were people there in the waiting-room and you never know. Acted respectful. Me! — that has had him in my arms a thousand times.

"'But when we were in the taxi and safe he pushed up the shade and took me into his arms and he hugged me and he cried — he cried wet tears. And held me. Because he'd got me still and his sight still and the work he loves to do. Things would have to be done to his eyes but he'd keep his sight — and he has. There's been no trouble now. Not for months.'

"She sat looking away from me over the shining river.

"'How could he ever leave me?' she said. 'After a time like that?'

"Stoutly she spoke, but even to my youthful eyes she seemed little and lonely, sitting there on the old red wall.

"I thought of the busy bustling man with the big tortoise-shell glasses away from her, and of one or two things I had heard whispered about him. It seemed to me then that no men were good enough for the women in the world.

"'When he's tired or in trouble,' said Fanny, 'sure and still, he'll always come back to me.'"

VI. — MARRIAGE IN WAR TIME

§ 1

"And now," said Sarnac, "comes a change of costume. You have been thinking of me, I suppose, as a gawky youth of seventeen or eighteen, dressed in those ill-fitting wholesale clothes we used to call 'ready-mades.' That youth wore a white collar round his neck and a black jacket and dark grey trousers of a confused furtive patterning and his hat was a black hemisphere with a little brim, called a Bowler. Now he changes into another sort of 'ready-mades,' even more ill-fitting, — the khaki uniform of a young British soldier in the Great World War against Germany. In 1914 Anno Domini, a magic wand, the wand of political catastrophe, waved to and fro over Europe, and the aspect of that world changed, accumulation gave place to destruction and all the generation of young men I have described as being put together from such shops as those one saw in Cheapside, presently went into khaki and fell into ranks and tramped off to the lines of ditches and desolation that had extended themselves across Europe. It was a war of holes and barbed wire and bombs and big guns like no war that had ever happened before. It was a change of phase in the world muddle. It was like some liquid which has been growing hotter and hotter, suddenly beginning to boil and very swiftly boiling over. Or it was like a toboggan track in the mountains, when after a long easy, almost level run, one comes to a swift drop and a wild zig-zag of downward curves. It was the same old downward run at a dramatic point.

"Change of costume there was and change of atmosphere. I can still recall the scared excitements of the August days when the war began and how incredulous we English were when we heard that our own little army was being driven back before the German hosts like a spluttering kitten pushed by a broom, and that the French lines were collapsing. Then came the rally of September. At the beginning we British youngsters had been excited spectators, but as the tale of our army's efforts and losses came home to us we crowded to the recruiting offices, by thousands and scores of thousands, until at last

our volunteers could be counted by the million. I went with the crowd.

"It may seem a curious thing to you that I lived through all the Great World War against Germany, that I was a soldier in it and fought and was wounded and went back and took part in the final offensive, that my brother Ernest became a sergeant and won a medal for gallantry and was killed within a few weeks of the concluding Armistice, that all the circumstances of my life were revolutionised by the war and that nevertheless it does not come into the story of my life as a thing of importance in itself to that story. As I think of it now, I think of the Great World War as a sort of geographical or atmospheric fact, like living ten miles from your working place or being married in an April shower. One would have to travel the ten miles every day or put up an umbrella as one came our of church, but it wouldn't touch what one was intimately or alter in any essential the living substance of one's life. Of course the World War killed and tortured millions of us, impoverished us all and dislocated the whole world. But that only meant that so many millions went out of life and that there was a fractional increase in everyone's anxiety and disorder; it didn't change the nature and passions, the ignorances and bad habits of thought of the millions who remained. The World War arose out of these ignorances and misconceptions and it did nothing to alter them. After it was all over the world was a good deal rattled and much shabbier than before, but it was still the same old mean and haphazard world, acquisitive, divided, cantingly patriotic, idiotically prolific, dirty, diseased, spiteful and conceited. It has taken two score centuries of research and teaching, training, thought and work to make any great alteration in that.

"I admit the outbreak of the World War had a really tremendous air of being an end and a beginning. There were great days in it at first, and for us British as much as for any people. We apprehended the thing in splendid terms. We thought quite honestly — I speak of the common people — that the Imperialisms of Central Europe were wholly wrong and that we were wholly right; hundreds of thousands of us gave ourselves gladly in the sincere belief that a new world was to be won by victory. That spirit was not confined to Britain, nor to either side in this war. I am convinced that the years 1914, 1915 and

1916 saw finer crops of brave and generous deeds and noble sacrifices, of heroic toil and heroic patience, than any years that ever came before in the whole history of mankind or than any of the years that followed for many centuries. The young people were wonderful; death and honour reaped gloriously among them. And then the inherent unsoundness of the issue began to wear through and that false dawn faded out of men's hearts. By the end of 1917 the whole world was a disillusioned world, with but one hope left, the idealism of the United States of America and the still untested greatness of President Wilson. But of that and what it came to, you read about in the history books and I will not talk about it now. A God in that man's position might have unified the world in the twentieth century and saved it centuries of tragic struggle. President Wilson was not a God...

"And I do not think I need tell you very much of the war itself as I saw it. It was a strange phase in human experience and it was described and painted and photographed and put on record very completely. Most of us have read quite a lot about it — except of course Firefly. You know how human life concentrated for four whole years upon the trenches that stretched across Europe on either front of Germany. You know how thousands of miles of land were turned into wildernesses of mud-holes and wire. Nowadays of course nobody reads the books of the generals and admirals and politicians of that time, and all the official war histories sleep the eternal sleep in the vaults of the great libraries, but probably you have all read one or two such human books as Enid Bagnold's *Diary without Dates* or Cogswell's *Ermytage and the Curate* or Barbusse's *Le Feu* or Arthur Green's *Story of a Prisoner of War* or that curious anthology, *The War Stories of Private Thomas Atkins*, and probably you have seen photographs and films and also pictures painted by such men as Nevinson and Orpen and Muirhead Bone and Will Rothenstein. All of them, I can certify now, are very true books and pictures. They tell of desolation passing like the shadow of an eclipse across the human scene.

"But the mind has the power of reducing and effacing every sort of impression that drags pain with it. I spent great parts out of two years in that noxious, gun-pocked land of haste and hiding, and that

time now seems less than many days of my peace-time life. I killed two men with the bayonet in a trench, and it remains as though it was done by someone else and had no significance for me at all. I remember much more clearly that I felt very sick when afterwards I found my sleeve saturated with blood and blood on my hand, and how I tried to get it off by rubbing my arm in the sand because there was no water to be got. In the trenches life was hideously uncomfortable and tedious and while it lasted I was, I know, interminably bored by the drag of the hours, but all those hours are concentrated now into a record of the fact. I remember the shock of the first shell that burst near me and how slowly the smoke and dust unfolded, and how there was a redness in the smoke and how for a time it blotted out the light. That shell burst in a field of yellow-flowering weeds and stubble against the sun, but I do not recall what preceded it nor whit followed it; shell-bursts rattled me more and more as the war went on, but they left weaker and weaker pictures.

"One of my most vivid memories of that time is the excitement of my first leave from the front, and how my party arrived at Victoria Station and were guided in a clattering throng to a sort of transport drain called the Underground Railway by elderly volunteers wearing brassards. I was still muddy from the trenches; there had been no time for a wash and a brush-up, and I was carrying my rifle and other gear; we crowded into a brightly lit first-class carriage in which were a number of people in evening dress who were going out to dinner and to the theatre. There could not have been a more vivid contrast if I had seen Firefly there in all her loveliness. There was one young man not much older than myself between two gorgeously dressed women. He had a little white bow under his pink chin and a silk neck-wrap, he had a black cloak with a cape and an opera hat. I suppose he was an invalid but he looked as fit as I. I felt a momentary impulse to say something humiliating to him. I don't think I did. I do not remember that I did. But I looked at him and then at the brown stain on my sleeve and the wonder of life possessed me.

"No — I said nothing. I was in a state of intense exhilaration. The other fellows were gay and inclined to be noisy, one or two were a little drunk but I was quietly exalted. I seemed to be hearing and

seeing and perceiving with such an acuteness as I had never known before. Fanny I should see on the morrow, but that evening I hoped to see Hetty Marcus with whom I was in love. I was in love with her with an intensity that only soldier-boys who had been living in the mud of Flanders for half a year could understand."

§ 2

"How," asked Sarnac, "can I make you see Hetty Marcus, dark-eyed, warm-skinned, wayward and fragile, who brought me to love and death two thousand years ago?

"In a way, she was like Sunray here. She was of her type. She had the same darkness in her eyes, the same still bearing. She was like Sunray's hungry sister. With a touch of fire in her blood.

"Yes — and she had those same stumpy little fingers...*Look* at them!

"I met her on those very Downs I used to walk over with my father when I was a boy, to steal the produce from Lord Bramble's gardens. I had a short leave before I was drafted to France and I did not spend it in London with Matilda Good and Fanny as you may think I should have done, but I went with three other youngsters who had enough money to do so, to Cliffstone. I don't know whether I can make it clear to you why I went to Cliffstone. I was excited at the thought of going into the actual warfare, I meant to do brave and wonderful things over there, but also I was terribly overshadowed by the thought that I might be killed. I did not think of wounds or suffering, I do not think I feared those things at all, but I had a profound dread and hatred of extinction before ever I had fully lived, before I had ever tasted many of the most alluring things in life. I had always promised myself love and great adventures with women, and I was passionately distressed at the possibility of being cheated of those intensities. All of us young innocents were in the same case. It was I who had thought of Cliffstone, near to our training camp, with its band and promenade and its flitting glancing girls. There if anywhere, it seemed to me, we must snatch something from life before the great shells splashed us to pieces and the clay of Flanders devoured us. We sneaked off from our families with those fires of

protesting romance in our brains and veins.

"You cannot imagine how many millions of lads there were in Europe then, pitifully eager not to miss altogether the secret and magic experiences of love before they died. I cannot tell you of the pothouses and prostitutes that lay in wait for us or of the gaunt moonlight on the beach. I cannot tell you of temptation and ignorance and disease. It is too ugly to tell you; such things are passed and done with, and men suffer them no more. We groped in darkness where now men walk in the light. One of my mates had an ugly misadventure; all had ugly experiences and I escaped by chance rather than any merit of my own from those slovenly snares. I was for a moment fastidious and I recoiled. And I had not drunken as the others had, because some streak of pride in me had made me habitually wary with drink.

"But I was in a storm of excitements and distresses. I was slipping into the pit though I hated it, and to escape it I set myself to revive my memories of the days when I was a boy. I went to Cherry Gardens to see the old home and then to my father's grave — it was neat and pretty with Fanny's money — and then I determined to walk over the Downs to recall, if I could, something of the wonder that I had felt when first I went over them to Chessing Hanger. And also, if you understand me, I felt love and romance would be there. I hadn't abandoned the quest that had brought me to Cliffstone; I had only jumped a foul ditch on my way. When I was a child I had supposed Heaven was over the Downs, and certainly the golden summer sunsets were. It seemed natural to turn my back on Cliffstone and go up into the only really lovely country I had ever known, if I wanted to find romance.

"And I found it.

"I was thrilled but not a bit surprised when I saw Hetty appear over the skyline of the hill and come right over the brow and stand with her hands behind her back and the sun shining on her hair, looking out across the woods and cornfields to Blythe and the distant marches and the sea. She had taken her hat off and was holding it behind her. She wore an ivory-coloured silk blouse very open at the neck and it was just as though you could see her body through the flimsy stuff.

“She dropped into a sitting position, now looking at her world and now plucking at the little dwarfish flowers in the Downland turf.

“I stood for a time agape at her. Then my whole being was filled with a tremulous resolve to talk to her. My path curved up the slope and carried me over the shoulder of the hill not very far from her. I followed it, stopping ever and again as if to look at the land and sea below, until it brought me as near to her as it could, and then I left it and with a clumsy affectation of carelessness strolled up to the summit until I stood beside her and about six yards away. I pretended not to observe her. I clenched my hands to keep my self-control. She had become aware of me and she was quite motionless now, sitting up and looking at me, but she did not seem in the least dismayed. Your fine face she had, Sunray, and your dark eyes, and I have never known anyone, not even you, who could keep a face so still. Not rigid or hard or staring it was, but quietly, profoundly, still, like a face in some beautiful picture.

“I was all a-tremble, my heart was beating fast but I kept my wits about me.

“‘Was there ever a lovelier view?’ I said. ‘I suppose that bit of blue there that looks like a raft where the water shines, I suppose that is Denge Ness?’

“She did not answer for what seemed a long time. She surveyed me with an unfathomable expression. Then she spoke and as she spoke she smiled. ‘You know that is Denge Ness as well as I do.’

“I smiled at her smile. Shy pretences were not for her. I came a step or so nearer with a conversational air. ‘I have known this view,’ I said, ‘since I was a boy of ten. But I did not know anyone else set any value upon it.’

“‘Nor I,’ she said. ‘I came to look at it perhaps for the last time,’ she vouchsafed. I’m going away.’

“‘I’m going away too.’

“‘Over there?’ she asked, and nodded her head to where the land of France hung like a cloud in the sky.

“‘In a week or so.’

“‘I’ll get to France too. But not so soon as a week or two. But I am going into the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps and I know I shall get over there at last. I join up to-morrow. How can one stay at

home with all you boys out there, getting—'

"She was going to say 'getting *killed*.' But she caught the word back and finished it with, 'Getting into all sorts of danger and trouble.'

"'One has to go,' I said.

"She looked at me with her head a little on one side. 'Tell me,' she said. 'Do you *want* to go?'

"'Not a bit. I hate the whole monstrous business. But there's no way out. The Germans have put it on us and we have to go through with it.'

"'That was how we all saw it in England during the War. But I won't stop now to argue what really caused a war that ended two thousand years ago. 'The Germans put it on us. I hate going. I wanted to go on with the work I was doing. Now everything is upset.'

"'Everything,' she said and thought for some moments. 'I hate going too,' she said.

"'It drags on week after week, month after month,' I complained. The boredom of it! The drills, the salutes, the silly little officers! If only they would take us and raffle us and kill us and have done with it so that we could either die or go home and do something sensible! My life is being wasted. I have been in the machine a year — and I've only got thus far on my way to France! When I see a German soldier at last I shall want to kiss him I shall be so glad. But either I shall kill him or he will kill me — and that will be the end of the story.'

"'And yet one can't keep out of it,' she said.

"'And there is something tremendous about it,' she went on. 'Once or twice I have been up here when there were air-raids. I live quite close here. These air-raids get more and more frequent nowadays. I don't know what they are coming to. You see the searchlights now, every night, waving about like the arms of a drunken man. All over the sky. But before that you hear the pheasants in the woods, clucking and crying. They always hear it first. Other birds take it up. They cry and twitter. And then far away the guns begin rumbling. At first a little sound— "*pud-pud*," then like the whoof of a hoarse dog. And then one gun after another picks

it up as the raid comes nearer. Sometimes you can catch the whirr of the engines of the Gothas. There's a great gun behind the farm-house away there and you wait for that and when it fires it hits you on the chest. Hardly anything is to be seen except the searchlights. There's a little flicker in the sky — and star shells. But the guns — riot. It's mad but it's immense. It takes you. Either you are wild with fright or you are wild with excitement. I can't sleep. I walk about my room and long to be out. Twice I've gone out into the night, into the moonlight — with everything a-quiver. Gone for long walks. Once shrapnel fell in our orchard with a hiss like rain. It ripped the bark of the apple trees and tore off twigs and branches and killed a hedgehog. I found the little wretch in the morning, nearly cut in two. Death haphazard! I don't mind the death and the danger so much. But it's the quiver in the world I can't endure. Even in the daytime sometimes, you can't quite hear them, but you can *feel* the guns, over beyond there...

"'Our old servant,' she said, 'believes it is the end of the world.'

"'For us it may be,' I said.

"She made no answer.

"I looked at her face and my imagination rioted.

"I began to talk with a bare simplicity such as we rarely attained in that shy and entangled age. But my heart was beating fast. 'For years,' I said, 'I have dreamt of the love of a girl. It was to have been the crown of life. I have saved myself up for it. I have had a friend or so, but it wasn't love. And now I am near to going. Out there. It is only a few days before I go over there — to whatever is waiting for me. And when it seems beyond hope I come upon someone...Don't think me mad, please. Don't think I'm lying. I am in love with you. Indeed I am. You seem altogether beautiful to me. Your voice, your eyes — everything. I could worship you...

"I couldn't say a word more for a moment or so. I rolled over on the turf and looked her in the face. 'I'm sorry,' I said. 'I'm a silly young Tommy suddenly in love — oh desperately in love.'

"Her grave face regarded me. She did not look frightened or disconcerted. Perhaps her heart beat faster than I thought. But her voice when she spoke was constrained.

"'Why are you talking like that? You've just met me...How can

you love me? It isn't possible people should love like this.'

"'I've seen you long enough—'

"I could not talk. I met her eyes. Hers dropped before mine. The warm colour mounted to her cheeks. She bit her lips.

"'You,' she said in a low voice, 'are just in love with love.'

"'Anyhow, I am in love,' I said.

"She plucked a spray of minute flowers and forgot it in her hand.

"'This is your last day?' she asked, and made my heart beat faster.

"'It may be my last altogether for this sort of thing. Who can tell?...For a long time anyhow. Why should it hurt you to let me love you to-day? Why shouldn't you be kind to me? Civil to me — anyhow. I don't ask for so very much. If — suppose — we went for a walk together? Just a long walk. If we spent most of the day together? Somewhere we might get something to eat.'...

"She sat considering me gravely.

"'Suppose I did,' she said as if to herself. 'Suppose I did.'

"'What harm could it do you?'

"'What harm could it do?' she repeated with her eyes on mine.

"If I had been older and more experienced I might have known from her warm flushed face and her dark eyes that she too was in love with love that day, and that our encounter was as exciting for her as for me. Suddenly she smiled; she showed herself for an instant as ready as myself. Her constraint had vanished.

"'I'll come,' she decided, and rose with an effortless ease to her feet, and then at my eager movement as I sprang up before her: 'But you'll have to be good, you know. It's just a walk — and a talk...Why shouldn't we?...If we keep away from the village.'"

§ 3

"It would seem the queerest story in the world if I told you how we two youngsters spent that day, we who were such strangers that we did not know each other's names and yet who were already drawn so closely together. It was a day of kindly beauty and warmth and we rambled westward until we came to a ridge that dropped steeply to a silvery, tree-bordered canal, and along that ridge we went until we reached a village and a friendly inn, where there were biscuits and

cheese and some apples to make a lunch upon. For a time a mood of shyness followed our first avowals, then Hetty talked of her home and of her place in the world. It was only after we had eaten together that we became easy and familiar with each other. It was only as the sun was sinking in the west and our day drew to its golden end that we embraced suddenly as we sat together on a felled tree in a wood, and that I learnt from her what a sweet and wonderful delight the kiss of love may be."

§ 4

Sarnac paused.

"It happened two thousand years ago but it seems to me that it happened just six years from now. Once more I am back in that wood among the long warm shadows of the evening and all my dreams and imaginations awake to reality with Hetty's body in my arms and her lips to mine. I have been able to tell you my story hitherto with a sort of wonder and detachment, as though I showed it you through a telescope. But I have been telling you overmuch perhaps of Fanny and Matilda Good because I have had a sort of reluctance about Hetty. She is still so fresh in my mind that she seems as I name her to come even here and to be living still, a perplexity between Sunray, who is so like her and so unlike her, and myself. I love her again and hate her again as though I was still that assistant editor, that writer of rubbish, in lost and forgotten Thunderstone House in dead old London...

"And I can't describe things now," said Sarnac, "as I have described them up to this. I seem no longer to look back into past things. My memories are living and suffering; they inflame and hurt. I loved Hetty; she was all the delight of love to me. I married her, I divorced her, I repented of the divorce and I was killed for her sake.

"And it seems as if I was killed not a day ago...

"I married while I was in England before I was passed for active service again after my wound. I was wounded in the arm—"

Sarnac stopped and felt his arm. Sunray looked sharply at it and ran her hand down it from shoulder to elbow as if to reassure herself. The others burst into laughter at her manifest anxiety and her

expression of relief, the guest-master being particularly delighted.

"I *was* wounded nevertheless. I was a sitting-up case in the ambulance. I could tell you stories about the nurses and the hospital and how we had a panic about a submarine as we crossed to England...I married Hetty before I went back because we were now altogether lovers and it was just possible she might have a child. And moreover there was a business about allowances if I got killed that was an added inducement to marry. In those days of haphazard death for the young there was a world-wide fever of love-making and countless such snatched marriages.

"She had never got to France as she had said she hoped to do. For most of the time she was driving a car for the Ministry of Supplies in London. We spent two days of wild endearment, the only honeymoon we could get, at her mother's farm at Payton Links, a little hamlet near Chessing Hanger. (I do not think I have told you that she was the only daughter of a farmer and that Mrs. Marcus, her mother, was a widow.) Hetty had been a clever girl, an elementary school teacher and bookish and enterprising for a country place. She had never mentioned me to her mother until she had written to tell of her approaching marriage.

"When her mother had driven us from the station to the farm and I had helped her to put away the pony, the old lady's non-committal manner relaxed and she said, 'Well, it might have been worse. You've looks and fairish shoulders for one who's town-bred. You can kiss me, my boy, though Smith is a poor exchange for Marcus, and I can't see how anyone can ever expect to get a living for man and wife at a fancy trade like publishing. I'd hoped at first she meant a publican. But publishing she says it is. Whether you're properly old enough for Hetty, Time will show.'

"Time did show very rapidly that I was not properly old enough for Hetty, though I resisted the demonstration with passionate vigour.

"In this world of ours we are by comparison very simple and direct. In that old world we should have seemed shockingly simple and direct. It's not only that they wrapped up and hid their bodies in all sorts of queer garments and wrappings but also that they wrapped up and distorted and hid their minds. And while we to-day have the same simple and clean ideas all over the world about sexual restraints

and sexual freedoms, people in those days had the most various and complicated codes, half-hidden and half-confessed. And not merely half-hidden but imperfectly realised, subconscious rather than thought out and settled. Few of these codes respected the freedom of other people or set any bounds to the most extravagant developments of jealousy. And while Hetty's thoughts about love and marriage had been nourished on a diet of countryside folk and then of novels and poetry devoured with avidity and had had tremendous releases in the lax atmosphere of war-time London, I, in spite of my love for and faith in Fanny, had almost unwittingly adopted the rigid standards of my mother. As we used to say in those days, Hetty's was a much more artistic temperament than mine. For my part I did not so much think as assume that the worship of a man for a woman gave place to mastery as soon as her love was won, that the problem of absolute fidelity for both lovers was to be facilitated on his side by an absolute submissiveness on hers. And about her, wherever she went, invisible but real, there had to be a sort of cloistered quality. It was implicit, moreover, that she had never thought of love before she met her predestined and triumphant lover. Ridiculous and impossible you will say! But Sunray here has read the old novels and she can witness that that was the code."

Sunray nodded. "That is the spirit of them," she said.

"Well, in fact, Hetty was not only half a year older than I but ages beyond me in the business of love. She was my teacher. While I had been reading about atoms and Darwin and exploration and socialism, she had been sucking the honey of sensuous passion from hints and half-hints in old romances and poems from Shakespeare and the old playwrights. And not only, I realise now, from books. She took me as one captures and tames an animal and made my senses and my imagination hers. Our honeymoon was magical and wonderful. She delighted in me and made me drunken with delights. And then we parted wonderfully with the taste of her salt tears on my lips, and I went off to the last five months of the War.

"I can see her now, slender as a tall boy in her khaki breeches and driver's uniform, waving to my train as it drew out of Chessing Hanger station.

"She wrote adorable and whimsical love-letters that made me

ache to be with her again, and just when we were forcing the great German barrier of the Hindenberg line, came one to tell me we were to have a child. She had not told me of it before, she said, because she had not been quite sure of it. Now she was sure. Would I love her still, now that she would be no longer slim and gracious? Love her still! I was filled with monstrous pride.

"I wrote back to tell her how my job at Thunderstone House was being saved for me, how we would certainly get a little house, a 'dear little house,' in some London suburb, how I would worship and cherish her. Her answer was at once tender and unusual. She said I was too good to her, far too good; she repeated with extraordinary passion that she loved me, had never loved and could never love anyone but me, that she hated my absence more than she could tell, and that I was to do everything I could, move heaven and earth to get my discharge and come home to her and be with her and never, never, *never* leave her again. She had never wanted my arms about her as she wanted them now. I read nothing between the lines of that outbreak. It seemed just a new mood amidst the variety of her moods.

"Thunderstone House wanted me back as soon as possible, and the War had done much to increase the power and influence of all magazine publishers and newspaper proprietors. I got out of the army within three months of the Armistice and came back to a very soft and tender and submissive Hetty, a new Hetty more wonderful even than the old. She was evidently more passionately in love with me than ever. We took some furnished rooms in a part of London called Richmond, near the Thames and a great park, and we sought vainly for that bright little house in which our child was to be born. But there were no bright little houses available.

"And slowly a dark shadow fell across the first brightness of our reunion. The seasonable days passed but Hetty's child was not born. It was not born indeed until it was nearly two months too late for it to be my child."

§ 5

"We are trained from earliest childhood in the world to be tolerant

and understanding of others and to be wary and disciplined with our own wayward impulses, we are given from the first a clear knowledge of our entangled nature. It will be hard for you to understand how harsh and how disingenuous the old world was. You live in a world that is as we used to say 'better bred.' You will find it difficult to imagine the sudden storm of temptation and excitement and forgetfulness in Hetty's newly aroused being that had betrayed her into disloyalty, and still more difficult will you find the tangle of fear and desperate dishonesty that held her silent from any plain speech with me after my return. But had she spoken instead of leaving it to me to suspect, discover and accuse, I doubt if she would have found any more mercy in me for her pitiful and abominable lapse.

"I see now that from the day I returned to Hetty she was trying to tell me of her disaster and failing to find a possible way of doing so. But the vague intimations in her words and manner dropped like seeds into my mind and germinated there. She was passionately excited and made happy by my coming back; our first week together was the happiest week of my old-world life. Fanny came to see us once and we went and had a dinner at her flat, and something had happened to her too, I knew not what, to make her very happy. Fanny liked Hetty. When she kissed me good night after her dinner, she held me and whispered: 'She's a dear. I thought I'd be jealous of your wife, Harry, but I love her.'

"Yes, we were very happy for that week. We walked along together back to our rooms instead of taking a taxi, for it was better for Hetty to walk. A happy week it was that stretched almost to a happy fortnight. And then the shadows of suspicion gathered and deepened.

"It was in bed in the darkness of the night that I was at last moved to speak plainly to Hetty. I woke up and lay awake for a long time, very still and staring at my bleak realization of what had happened to us. Then I turned over, sat up in bed and said, 'Hetty. This child is not mine.'

"She answered at once. It was plain she too had been awake. She answered in a muffled voice as though her face lay against the pillow. 'No.'

“‘You said, no?’

“She stirred, and her voice came clearer.

“‘I said no. Oh Husbind-boy I wish I was dead! I wish to God I was dead.’

“I sat still and she said no more. We remained like two fear-stricken creatures in the jungle, motionless, in an immense silence and darkness.

“At last she moved. Her hand crept out towards me, seeking me, and at that advance I recoiled. I seemed to hang for a moment between two courses of action, and then I gave myself over to rage. ‘You’d *touch* me!’ I cried, and got out of bed and began to walk about the room.

“‘I knew it!’ I shouted. ‘I knew it! I felt it! And I have loved you! You cheat! You foul thing! You lying cheat!’”

§ 6

“I think I described to you earlier in the story how my family behaved when Fanny left us, how we all seemed to be acting and keeping up a noise of indignation as if we were afraid of some different and disturbing realisations coming through to us should that barrage of make-believe morality fail. And just as my father and my mother behaved in that downstairs kitchen in Cherry Gardens so now I behaved in that desolating crisis between myself and Hetty. I stormed about the room, I hurled insults at her. I would not let the facts that she was a beaten and weeping thing, that she certainly loved me, and that her pain tortured me, prevail against my hard duty to my outraged pride.

“I lit the gas, I don’t remember when, and the scene went on in that watery Victorian light. I began dressing, for never more was I to lie in bed with Hetty. I meant to dress and, having said my say, to go out of the house. So I had to be scornful and loudly indignant, but also I had to find my various garments, pull my shirt over my head and lace up my boots. So that there were interludes in the storm, when Hetty could say something that I had to hear.

“‘It all happened in an evening,’ she said. It isn’t as though I had planned to betray you. It was his last day before he left and he was

wretched. It was the thought of you made me go with him. It was just kindness. There were two of our girls going to have dinner with their boys and they asked me to come and that was how I met him. Officers they were all three, and schoolfellows. Londoners. Three boys who were going over — just as you were. It seemed rotten not to make a party for them.'

"I was struggling with my collar and stud but I tried to achieve sarcasm. 'I see,' I said, 'under the circumstances mere politeness dictated — what you did...Oh, my God!'

"'Listen how it happened, Harry. Don't shout at me again for a minute. Afterwards he asked me to come to his rooms. He said the others were coming on. He seemed such a harmless sort.'

"'Very!'

"'He seemed the sort who'd surely get killed. And I was sorry for him. He was fair like you. Fairer. And it seemed all different that night. And then he got hold of me and kissed me and I struggled, but I didn't seem to have the strength to resist. I didn't realise somehow.'

"'That's pretty evident. That I *can* believe.'

"'You've got no pity, Harry. Perhaps it's just. I suppose I ought to have seen the risk. But we aren't all strong like you. Some of us are pulled this way and that. Some of us do the thing we hate. I did what I could. It was like waking-up to realise what had happened. He wanted me to stay with him. I ran out from his rooms. I've never seen him since. He's written but I haven't answered.'

"'He knew you were a soldier's wife.'

"'He's rotten. He knew it. He planned it while we were at dinner. He prayed and promised and lied. He said he wanted just a kiss, just one kiss for kindness. He began with that kiss. I'd been drinking wine, and I'm not used to wine. Oh, Harry! Husbind-boy, if I could have died! But I'd kissed and played about with boys before I met you. It seemed so little — until it was too late.'

"'And here we are!' said I.

"I came and sat down on the bed and stared at Hetty's dishevelled distress. She was suddenly pitiful and pretty. 'I suppose I ought to go and kill this swine,' I said. 'I feel more like killing you.'

"'Kill me,' she said. 'I wish you would.'

"'What's his name? Where is he now?'

“‘*He* doesn’t matter a rap,’ said Hetty. ‘You may hang for me if you like, but you shan’t hang for a thing like that. I tell you he doesn’t matter. He’s a dirty accident. He happened.’

“‘You’re shielding him.’

“‘*Him!*’ she said. ‘I’m shielding you.’

“I stared at her. Again came a moment when I seemed to hang undecided at the parting of two courses, and again I decided to explode into rage. ‘*My God!*’ I cried, and then louder and standing up, ‘*My God!*’ Then I ranted at her. ‘I suppose I’ve only got myself to blame for all this. What did I know of what you were before I met you? I guess I wasn’t the first and I guess *he* won’t be the last. What do names matter? I guess you thanked Heaven for a green dud when you met me.’ And so on. I paced about the room as I raved.

“She sat up on the bed, her hair disordered and her eyes tearful, regarding me with a still and mournful face. ‘Oh, Harry!’ she would say ever and again, or ‘Oh, Boy!’ while I let my clumsy fancy rove through a wilderness of coarse reproaches. Ever and again I would come up to her and stand over her. ‘Tell me his name,’ I would shout and she would shake her head.

“At last I was dressed. I looked at my watch. ‘Five.’

“‘What are you going to do?’ she asked.

“‘I don’t know. Go, I suppose. I can’t stay here. I should be sick. I shall get most of my things together and go. I’ll find a lodging somewhere. It’s nearly dawn. I’ll go before you need get up. Meanwhile I’ll sit in the other room. I can lie on the sofa for a bit.’

“‘But the fire’s not lit!’ she said, ‘and it’s cold. It’s not even laid. And you’ll need some coffee!’

“She stared at me with eyes full of solicitude.

“And forthwith she shuffled out of bed and slipped her feet into her bedroom slippers and put on a gay dressing-gown that had been a great delight to us — ten days ago. She went meekly by me, moving her poor heavy body rather wearily, and found some fire-lighters in a cupboard and knelt by the fire-place and began to rake out the ashes of the overnight fire. I made no movement to prevent her. I began to collect together various books and small possessions I intended to take with me.

“She was only apprehending the situation very slowly. She turned

to me in the middle of her fire-lighting. ‘I suppose you’ll leave me a little money to go on with?’ she said.

“That gave me a base opportunity. ‘I’ll leave you money all right,’ I sneered. ‘I suppose I’ve got to keep you until we’re free. Then it will be *his* job. Or the next man’s.’

“She occupied herself with the fire. She filled a kettle and put it ready. Then she sat down in an arm-chair by the hearth. Her face was white and drawn but she shed no tears. I went to the window and pulled up the blind and stared at the street outside with its street lamps still alight; everything was gaunt and bleak in the colourless cold horror of the earliest dawn.

“‘I shall go to mother,’ she said, shivering and pulling her dressing-gown about her shoulders. ‘It will be dreadful for her to know what has happened. But she’s kind. She’ll be kinder than anyone...I shall go to her.’

“‘You can do what you like,’ I said.

“‘Harry!’ she said. ‘I’ve never loved any man but you. If I could kill this child — If it would please you if I killed this child—’

“She spoke with white lips, ‘Yes. I tried all I knew. Some things I couldn’t bring myself to do. And now it’s a thing that’s alive...’

“We stared at one another in silence for some moments.

“‘No!’ I said at last. ‘I can’t stand it. I can’t endure it. Nothing can alter it now. You tell a tale. How do I know? You’ve cheated once and you can cheat again. You gave yourself to that swine. If I live to a hundred I’ll never forgive that. You gave yourself. How do I know you didn’t tempt him? You gave. You can go. Go where you gave yourself! They’re things no decent man can forgive. Things that are dirty to forgive. He stole you and you let him steal you and he can have you. I wish — If you’d had the beginnings of a sense of honour you’d never have let me come back to you. To think of these last days here. And you — you with this secret next your heart! The filthiness of it! You — you, whom I’ve loved.’

“I was weeping.”

Sarnac paused and stared into the fire. “Yes,” he said, “I was weeping. And the tears I shed — it is wonderful — the tears I shed were tears of the purest self-pity.

“And all the time I saw the thing from my own standpoint alone,

blind to the answering tragedy in Hetty's heart. And the most grotesque thing is that all the time she was getting me coffee and that when it was ready I drank her coffee I At the end she wanted to kiss me, to kiss me 'good-bye' she said, and I rebuffed her and struck her when she came near me. I meant only to thrust her back but my hand clenched at the opportunity. '*Harry!*' she whispered. She stood like a stunned thing watching me go, and then turned suddenly and swiftly and ran back to the bedroom.

"I slammed the outer door and went downstairs into the empty morning Richmond streets; altogether empty of traffic they were, under the flush of dawn.

"I carried my bag towards the railway-station that would take me to London; my bag was heavy with the things I had brought away, and it dragged upon my arm, and I felt myself a tragically ill-used but honourably self-vindicated young man."

§ 7

"Oh, poor little things!" cried Starlight. "Oh! poor, little, pitiful pitiless creatures! This story hurts me. I couldn't endure it, if it were anything more than a dream. Why were they all so hard upon each other and so deaf to the sorrow in each other?"

"We knew no better. This world now has a tempered air. In this world we breathe mercy with our first fluttering gasp. We are so taught and trained to think of others that their pain is ours. But two thousand years ago men and women were halfway back to crude Nature. Our motives took us unawares. We breathed infections. Our food was poisoned. Our passions were fevers. We were only beginning to learn the art of being human."

"But didn't Fanny — ?" began Firefly.

"Yes," said Willow; "didn't Fanny, who was naturally so wise about love, didn't she take you in hand and send you back to forgive and help your wretched Hetty?"

"Fanny heard my version of our story first," said Sarnac. "She never realised the true values of the business until it was too late to stop the divorce. When I told her that Hetty had lived a life of depravity in London while I was in the trenches, she heard me with

amazement but never doubted my word.

"'And she seemed such a dear,' said Fanny. 'She seemed so in love with you. It's wonderful how different women are! There's women who seem to change into something else directly they get out of sight of you round a corner. I *liked* your Hetty, Harry. There was something sweet about her, be what she may. I never dreamt she'd deceive you and let you down. Fancy! — going about London picking up men! It's just as though she'd done it to me.'

"Matilda Good too was wonderfully sympathetic. 'No woman goes wrong only just once,' said Matilda. 'You're right to end it.' The Miltons were giving up her drawing-room floor, I could have it, if I cared to take it. I was only too glad to take it and return to my old home.

"Hetty, I suppose, packed up her own belongings as well as she could. She went down from Richmond to her mother's farm at Payton Links, and there it was her child was born.

"Now I want to tell you," said Sarnac, "what is, I believe, the most remarkable thing in all this story I am telling you. I do not remember in all that time right up to and including our divorce, that I felt any impulse of pity or kindliness, much less of love, towards Hetty. And yet in my dream I was very much the same sort of man as I am to-day. I was a man of the same type. But I was driven by a storm of amazed and outraged pride and sexual jealousy of the most frantic sort towards acts of spite that are almost inconceivable here and now. I was doing all I could to divorce Hetty in such a way as to force her into marriage with Sumner — for that was the man's name — because I had learnt that he was a hopelessly bad character and because I believed he would make her miserable and mar her life altogether. I wanted to do that to punish her, to fill her with bitter regrets for her treatment of me. But at the same time it drove me to the verge of madness to think that he should ever possess her again. If my wishes could have been given creative force, Hetty would have gone to Sumner disfigured and diseased. They would have come together again amidst circumstances of horrible cruelty!"

"Sarnac!" cried Sunray, "that you should even *dream* such things!"

"Dream I It is as men were. It is as they are, except for the

education and the free happiness that release us. For we are not fourscore generations from the Age of Confusion, and that was but a few thousands more from the hairy ape-men who bayed the moon in the primeval forests of Europe. Then it was the Old Man in lust and anger ruled his herd of women and children and begot us all. And in the Age of Confusion after the Great Wars man was, and he still is, the child of that hairy Old Ape-Man. Don't I shave myself daily? And don't we educate and legislate with our utmost skill and science to keep the old beast within bonds? But our schools in the days of Harry Mortimer Smith were still half-way back to the cave; our science was only beginning. We had no sexual education at all, only concealments and repressions. Our code was still the code of jealousy — thinly disguised. The pride and self-respect of a man was still bound up with the animal possession of women — the pride and self-respect of most women was by a sort of reflection bound up with the animal possession of a man. We felt that this possession was the keystone of life. Any failure in this central business involved a monstrous abasement, and against that our poor souls sought blindly for the most extravagant consolations. We hid things, we perverted and misrepresented things, we evaded the issue. Man is a creature which under nearly every sort of stress releases hate and malign action, and we were then still subjected to the extremest stresses.

"But I will not go on apologising for Harry Mortimer Smith. He was what the world made him and so are we. And in my dream I went about that old world, doing my work, controlling my outward behaviour and spending all the force of my wounded love for Hetty in scheming for her misery.

"And one thing in particular was of immense importance to my tormented being. It was that I should get another lover quickly, that I should dispel the magic of Hetty's embraces, lay the haunting ghost of my desire for her. I had to persuade myself that I had never really loved her and replace her in my heart by someone I could persuade myself was my own true love.

"So I sought the company of Milly Kimpton again. We had been close companions before the War, and it was not difficult to persuade myself that I had always been a little in love with her. Always she had been more than a little in love with me. I told her my story of my

marriage and she was hurt for my sake and indignant beyond means with the Hetty I presented to her.

"She married me within a week of the completion of my divorce."

§ 8

"Milly was faithful and Milly was kind, she was a cooling refuge from the heat and distresses of my passion. She had a broad, candid face that never looked either angry or miserable; she held her countenance high, smiling towards heaven with a pleasant confidence and self-satisfaction; she was very fair and she was broad shouldered for a woman. She was tender but not passionate; she was intelligently interested in things but without much whim or humour. She was nearly a year and a half older than I. She had, as people used to say, 'taken a great fancy' to me when first I came into the firm, a crude and inexperienced youngster. She had seen me rise very rapidly to Mr. Cheeseman's position on the editorial staff — he had been transferred to the printing side — and at times she had helped me greatly. We were both popular in Thunderstone House, and when we married there was a farewell dinner to Milly, who gave up her position then in the counting-house; there were speeches and a wonderful wedding-present of dinner-knives and silver forks and spoons in a brass-bound chest of oak with a flattering inscription on a silver plate. There had been a good deal of sympathy with Milly in Thunderstone House, especially among the girls, and a good deal of indignation at me when my first marriage occurred, and my belated recognition of my true destiny was considered a very romantic and satisfactory end to the story.

"We secured a convenient little house in a row of stucco houses all built together to have one architectural effect, called Chester Terrace, close to one of the inner parks of London known as Regent's Park. Milly, I discovered, had a little fortune of nearly two thousand pounds, and so she was able to furnish this house very prettily according to current taste, and in this house in due course she bore me a son. I rejoiced very greatly and conspicuously over this youngster's arrival. I think you will understand how essential it was to my obsession for defeating and obliterating Hetty that Milly

should bear me a child.

"I worked very hard during that first year of married life and on the whole I was happy. But it was not a very rich nor a very deep sort of happiness. It was a happiness made up of rather hard and rather superficial satisfactions. In a sense I loved Milly very dearly; her value was above rubies, she was honest and sweet and complaisant. She liked me enormously, she was made happy by my attentions; she helped me, watched for my comfort, rejoiced at the freshness and vigour of my work. Yet we did not talk very freely and easily together. I could not let my mind run on before her; I had to shape what I said to her feelings and standards, and they were very different feelings and standards from my own. She was everything a wife should be except in one matter; she was not for me that particular dear companion for whom the heart of every human being craves, that dear companion with whom you are happy and free and safe. That dear companionship I had met — and I had thrust it from me. Does it come twice in a life to anyone?"

"How should I know?" said Sunray.

"We know better than to reject it," said Radiant.

"Perhaps after many years," said Willow, answering Sarnac's question, "after one has healed and grown and changed."

"Milly and I were close friends indeed, but we were never dear companions. I had told Hetty about my sister Fanny on the evening of our first day together when we walked over the hills, she was instantly sure that she would love Fanny, Fanny had seemed very brave and romantic to Hefty's imagination; but I did not tell Milly of Fanny until close upon our marriage. You will say that it was not Milly's fault that I was shy with her on Fanny's account, but assuredly it was a fault in our relationship. And it was clear that Milly accepted Fanny on my account and refrained from too searching a commentary because of me. Milly believed profoundly in the institution of marriage and in the obligation of an unlimited chastity upon women. 'It is a pity she cannot marry this man,' said Milly, anticipating perplexities. 'It must make everything so inconvenient for her — and everyone who knows her. It must be so difficult to introduce her to people.'

"'You needn't do that,' I said.

“‘My people are old-fashioned.’

“‘They needn’t know,’ I said.

“‘That would be the easier way for me, Harry.’

“I found my own declarations of affection for Fanny considerably chilled by the effort Milly made to be generous in the matter.

“I found it still more difficult to tell her that Fanny’s lover was Newberry.

“‘Then is that how you got into Thunderstone House?’ asked Milly when at last I got to that revelation.

“‘It’s how I got my chance there,’ I admitted.

“‘I didn’t think it was like that. I thought you’d made your way in.’

“‘I’ve made my way up. I’ve never been favoured.’

“‘Yes — but — Do you think people know, Harry? They’d say all sorts of things.’

“You perceive that Milly was not a very clever woman and also that she was very jealous of my honour. ‘I don’t think anyone knows who matters,’ I said. ‘Neither I nor Fanny advertise.’

“But it was clear Milly did not like the situation. She would have much preferred a world without sister Fanny. She had no curiosity to see this sister that I loved so dearly or to find any good in her. On various small but quite valid scores she put off going to see her for a whole week. And always I had to remind her of Fanny and speak of Fanny first before Fanny could be talked about. In all other matters Milly was charming and delightful to me, but as far as she could contrive it she banished Fanny from our world. She could not see how much of my affection went also into banishment.

“Their meeting when at last it came about was bright rather than warm. An invisible athermanous screen had fallen not only between Milly and Fanny but between Fanny and myself. Milly had come, resolved to be generous and agreeable in spite of Fanny’s disadvantageous status, and I think she was a little disconcerted by Fanny’s dress and furniture, for Milly was always very sensitive to furniture and her sensitiveness had been enhanced by our own efforts to equip a delightful home on a sufficient but not too extravagant expenditure. I had always thought Fanny’s furnishings very pretty, but it had never occurred to me that they were as Milly put it,

‘dreadfully good.’ But there was a red lacquer cabinet that Milly said afterwards might be worth as much as a hundred pounds, and she added one of those sentences that came upon one like an unexpected thread of gossamer upon the face: ‘It doesn’t seem right somehow.’

“Fanny’s simple dress I gathered was far too good also. Simple dresses were the costliest in those days of abundant material and insufficient skill.

“But these were subsequent revelations, and at the time I did not understand why there should be an obscure undertone of resentment in Milly’s manner, nor why Fanny was displaying a sort of stiff sweetness quite foreign to my impression of her.

“‘It’s wonderful to meet you at last,’ said Fanny. ‘He’s talked about you for years. I can remember once long before — long before the War — and everything — at Hampton Court. I can remember sitting on those seats by the river and his talking about you.’

“‘I remember that,’ I said, though it wasn’t the part about Milly that had stuck in my memory.

“‘We used to go about together no end in those days,’ said Fanny. ‘He was the dearest of brothers.’

“‘I hope he’ll still be,’ said Milly very kindly.

“‘A son’s a son till he gets a wife,’ said Fanny, quoting an old-woman’s proverb.

“‘You mustn’t say that,’ said Milly. ‘I hope you’ll come to see us — quite often.’

“‘I’d love to come,’ said Fanny. ‘You’re lucky to get a house so easily, these days.’

“‘It isn’t quite ready yet,’ said Milly. ‘But as soon as ever it is we must find some day when you are free.’

“‘I’m often free,’ said Fanny.

“‘We’ll fix a day,’ said Milly, obviously quite resolute to ensure that we had no unexpected calls from Fanny when other people might be about.

“‘It’s nice you having been in the counting-house and understanding all about his work,’ said Fanny.

“‘My people didn’t like my going into business at all,’ said Milly. ‘But it’s lucky I did.’

“‘Lucky for Harry,’ said Fanny. ‘Are your — people London

people?'

"'Dorset,' said Milly. 'They didn't like my coming to London. They're just a little bit churchy and old-fashioned, you know. But it's college or business, I said, and you don't find me staying at home to dust and put out the flowers. One has to take a firm line with one's people at times. Didn't you find that so? There was a convenient aunt in Bedford Park to secure the proprieties and head off the otherwise inevitable latch-key, and it was business instead of college because my best uncle, Uncle Hereward — he's the Vicar of Peddlebourne — objects to the higher education of women. And there was also a question of finance.'

"'It must be interesting for Harry to meet your people,' said Fanny.

"'He's completely conquered Aunt Rachel,' said Milly. 'Though she started hostile. Naturally, as I'm about the only Kimpton of three generations they pitched their expectations high. They'd like me to have a husband with a pedigree a yard long.'

"I felt Milly was rather over-emphasising the county family side of the Kimptons — her father was a veterinary surgeon near Wimborne — but I did not appreciate the qualities in Fanny's bearing and furniture that were putting Milly into this self-assertive mood.

"They went on to talk with a certain flavour of unreality of the hygienic and social advantages of Regent's Park. 'It's easy to get to for one's friends,' said Milly. 'And quite a lot of interesting people, actors and critics and writers and all that sort of people, live round and about there. Of course Harry will want to know more and more of the artistic and literary world now. I expect we'll have to have a Day for them and give them tea and sandwiches. It's a bore, but it's necessary, you know. Harry's got to know people.'

"She smiled at me between pride and patronage.

"'Harry's going up in the world,' said my sister.

"'That's what makes it all so wonderful,' said Milly. 'He's a wonderful brother for you.'

"She began to praise the beauty of Fanny's flat, and Fanny offered to show her all over it. They were away some time and I went to the window, wishing stupidly after the manner of a man that they could

somehow contrive to be a little different and a little warmer with each other. Didn't they both love me and shouldn't that be a bond of sisterhood between them?

"Then came tea, one of Fanny's wonderful teas, but I was no longer the indiscriminate devourer of teas that I had been. Milly praised it all like a visiting duchess.

"'Well,' said Milly at last with the air of one who has many appointments, 'it's time to go I'm afraid.'...

"I had been watching Fanny very closely throughout this visit and contrasting her guarded and polished civilities with the natural warmth of her reception of Hetty, half a year before. I felt I could not wait for another occasion before I had a word or two with her. So I kissed her good-bye — even her kiss had changed — and she and Milly hesitated and kissed, and I went down past the landing with Milly and heard the door close above. 'I've left my gloves,' I said suddenly. 'You go on down. I won't be a moment.' And I darted back upstairs.

"Fanny did not come to the door immediately.

"'What is it, Harry?' she said, when she appeared.

"'Gloves!' said I. 'No! Here they are in my pocket. Silly of me!...You *do* like her, Fanny? You think she's all right, don't you? She's a little shy with you, but she's a dear.'

"Fanny looked at me. I thought her eyes were hard. 'She's all right,' she said. 'Quite all right. You'll never have to divorce *her*, Harry.'

"'I didn't know. I want you to — like her. I thought — you didn't seem quite warm.'

"'Silly old Harry!' said Fanny, with a sudden return to her old manner. And she took me and kissed me like a loving sister again.

"I went down two steps from the door and turned.

"'I'd hate it,' I said, 'if you didn't think she was all right.'

"'She's all right,' said Fanny. 'And it's Good Luck to you, Harry. It's — You see it's about Good-Bye for me. I shan't be seeing very much of you now with that clever wife of yours to take you about. Who's so *well*-connected. But Good Luck, old Brudder! Oh! *always* Good Luck!'

"Her eyes were brimming with tears.

“‘God send you are happy, Harry dear — after your fashion. It’s — it’s different.’...

“She stopped short. She was weeping.

“She banged her door upon me, and I stood puzzled for a moment and then went down to Milly.”

VII. — LOVE AND DEATH

§ 1

In the two years that followed I learnt to love and trust my stiff-spirited wife more and more. She was very brave in a conscious and deliberate way, very clear-headed, very honest. I saw her fight, and it was not an easy fight, to bring our son into the world, and that sort of crisis was a seal between man and woman in those days even as it is to-day. If she never got to any just intuitions about my thoughts and feelings I did presently arrive at a fairly clear sense of hers. I could feel for her ambitions and humiliations. She worked hard to make our home bright and efficient. She had a taste for sound and 'solid' things and temperate harmonies. In that old world, encumbered with possessions and with an extreme household autonomy, servants were a very important matter indeed and she managed ours with just that measured kindliness and just that avoidance of intimacy that was needed by the social traditions of the time. She had always been intelligently interested in the internal politics of Thunderstone House and she showed the keenest desire for my success there. 'I'll see you a director before ten years,' she said. And I worked very hard indeed and not merely for ambition's sake. I really understood and believed in the educational importance of that great slovenly business. Newberry came to recognise in me a response to his own ideas. He would consult me about new schemes and the modification of old procedure. He relied on me more and more and talked with me more and more frequently. And it is a queer thing to recall that by a sort of convention between us we never mentioned or alluded to my sister Fanny in any of our discussions.

"I changed a good deal during my first two and a half years of married life. I matured and hardened. I became a man of the world. I was put up for and elected a member of a good club, and developed my gift for talk. I met a widening variety of people, and some of them were quite distinguished people, and I found they did not overawe me. I possessed a gift for caustic commentary that gained me some reputation as a wit, and I felt a growing interest in the

showy and sterile game of party politics. My ambitions grew. I was active; I was self-satisfied. I had largely forgotten my intense sexual humiliation. But I was not a very happy man. My life was like a handsome, well-appointed room with a north light; the bowls were full of cut flowers but the sunlight never came in."

§ 2

"For two years and a half I saw nothing of Hetty and it was not my fault that I ever saw her again. I did everything I could to eradicate her from my existence. I destroyed her photographs and every little vestige of her that might distress me by its memories. If I caught myself in a reverie in which she figured I forced my attention to other things. Sometimes when I made a new success I had a flash of desire that she should witness it. Ugly, I agree, but is it not what we still are — except for civilisation? She came back sometimes in dreams, but they were anger-soaked dreams. And I cultivated my pride and love for Milly. With increasing prosperity Milly's skill in dressing herself developed; she became a very handsome effective woman; she gave herself to me with a smiling sense of temperate and acceptable giving.

"In those days we had not learnt to analyse our motives. We were much less observant of ourselves than men and women are to-day. I had set my mind upon loving Milly and I did not realize that the essential thing in loving is a thing beyond our wills. Fanny and Hetty I loved by nature and necessity, but my days were now far too completely apportioned between work and Milly for much companionship with Fanny to survive, and Hetty in my heart was like one of those poor shrivelled corpses of offending monks they walled up in the monasteries during the Age of Christendom in Europe. But I found now a curious liveliness in my interest in women in general. I did not ask what these wanderings of attention signified; I was ashamed of them but I gave way to them. Even when I was in Milly's company I would look at other women and find a vague excitement if the intent of my glances was returned.

"And I began to read novels in a new spirit, though I did not know why I was taking to novels; I was reading them, I see now, for the

sake of the women I found in them. I do not know, Sunray, whether you realise how much the novels and plays of those days served to give men and women love-phantoms with whom they made imaginative excursions. We successful and respectable ones went our dignified and satisfied ways, assuaging the thin protests of our starved possibilities with such unsubstantial refreshment.

"But it was because of that wandering eye for women that I encountered Hetty again. It was in the springtime that I came upon her, either in March or very early April, in some public gardens quite near to Chester Terrace. These gardens were not in my direct way from the underground railway station, which took me to and fro between home and business and my house, but I was in no hurry for Milly's tea-party and the warmth and sunlight drew me to this place of blossom and budding green. They were what we should call spring gardens nowadays, small but cleverly laid out for display with an abundant use of daffodil, narcissus, hyacinth, almond-blossom and the like, with hard paths and seats placed to command happy patches of colour. On one of these seats a woman was sitting alone with her back to me looking at a patch of scyllas. I was struck by the loveliness of her careless pose. Such discoveries of the dear beauty that hides in the world would stir me like a challenge and then stab me with pain. She was dressed very poorly and simply, but her dingy clothing was no more than the smoked glass one uses to see the brightness of the sun.

"I slackened my pace as I went past and glanced back to see her face. And I saw the still face of Hetty, very grave and sorrowful, Hetty, no longer a girl but a woman, looking at the flowers and quite unheedful of my regard.

"Something greater than pride or jealousy seized me then. I went a few steps farther and stopped and turned, as though no other thing was possible.

"At that she became aware of me. She looked up, doubted, and recognised me.

"She watched me with that motionless face of hers as I came and sat down beside her. I spoke in a voice of astonishment on the edge of a storm of emotion. 'Hetty,' I said, 'I couldn't go past you!'

"She did not answer immediately. 'Are you — ?' she began and

stopped. ‘I suppose we were bound to meet again,’ she said, ‘sooner or later. You look as if you had grown, Harry. You look well and prosperous.’

“‘Do you live in this part of London?’ I asked..

“‘Camden Town just now,’ she said. ‘We move about.’

“‘You married — Sumner?’

“‘What did you expect me to do? What else was there to do. I’ve drunk my cup to the dregs, Harry.’

“‘But — You had the child?’

“‘It died — it died all right. Poor little mite. And my mother died a year ago.’

“‘Well, you’ve got Sumner.’

“‘I’ve got Sumner.’

“At any time before that meeting I should have exulted over the death of Sumner’s child, but in the presence of Hetty’s misery that old hatred would not come back for its gratification. I was looking at her face which was so familiar and so changed, and it was as if I woke up again to love for her after two years and a half of insensibility. What a beaten and unhappy thing she was — she whom I had loved and hated so bitterly?

“‘It seems a long way back now to Kent, Harry — and mother’s farm,’ she said.

“‘You’ve parted with it?’

“‘Farm and furniture — and mostly it’s gone. Sumner bets. He’s betted most of it away. It’s hard, you see, to find a job but easy to fancy a winner. Which doesn’t win...’

“‘My father used to do that,’ I said. ‘I’d like to shoot every race-horse in England.’

“‘I hated selling the farm,’ she said. ‘I sold the farm and came into this dingy old London. Sumner dragged me here and he’s dragging me down. It’s not his fault; it’s how he’s made. But when a spring day comes like this! I think of Kent and the wind on the downs and the blackthorn in the hedges and the little yellow noses of the primroses and the first elder leaves coming out, until I want to cry and scream. But there’s no getting out of it. Here I am. I’ve come to look at these flowers here. What’s the good? They just hurt me.’

“She stared at the flowers.

“‘My God!’ I said, ‘but this hurts me too. I didn’t expect—’

“‘What did you expect?’ she asked, and turned that still face of hers to me and silenced me.

“‘I don’t see that it should hurt you,’ she said. ‘I brought it on myself. You didn’t do it. It happened to me. It was my fault. Though why God made me love beautiful things — and then set a trap for me and made me fool enough to fall into it — !’

“Silence fell between us.

“‘Meeting you like this,’ I began presently, ‘makes me see things — so differently. You see — in those old days — in some ways you seemed so much stronger than I was. I didn’t understand...I see — This makes me feel — I ought to have taken better care of you.’

“‘Or shown me mercy. I was dirty and shameful — yes. All that. But you were merciless, Harry. Men are merciless to women. I did — all through — I loved you, Harry. In a way I’ve always loved you and I love you now. When I looked up and saw it was you coming back to me — For a minute you were just like the old Harry. For a moment — It was like Spring coming real...But it’s no good talking like that now, Harry. It’s too late.’

“‘Yes,’ I agreed. ‘Too late...’

“She watched my face through a long pause. I weighed my words when I spoke. ‘Up to now,’ I said, ‘I’ve never forgiven. Now — Now I see you here I wish — I wish to God — I had forgiven you. And made a fight for it with you. We might — Suppose Hetty, suppose I had forgiven you — ?’

“‘Harry dear,’ she said softly, ‘you don’t want to be seen here making a woman cry. We won’t talk of that. Tell me about yourself. I’ve heard you married again. A beautiful woman. Sumner saw that I heard of that. Are you happy, Harry? You look prosperous, and everyone isn’t prosperous these post-war times.’

“‘That’s all so-and-so, Hetty. I work hard. I’ve got ambitions. I’m still a publisher’s assistant at the old place but I’m near to being a director. I’m high up. My wife — She’s a dear and a great help to me...Somehow meeting you...My God! Hetty, what a mess we made of things! It’s all very well, but the second time of marrying isn’t like the first. You and I — I’m a sort of blood brother to you and nothing can change it. The wood — that little wood where you kissed me!

Why did we smash it up, Hetty? Why did we do it? Two fools who'd got so precious a thing! That's all past. But hate is dead between us. That's past too. If there was anything I could do for you now I would do it.'

"A gleam of the old humour came. 'If you could kill Sumner,' she said, 'and smash the world and destroy the memories of three years...It's no good, Harry. I ought to have kept myself clean. And you — you might have been gentler with me.'

"'I couldn't, Hetty.'

"'I knew you couldn't. And I couldn't foresee that my blood would betray me one evening. And here we are! Like meeting after we are dead. Spring comes now but it comes for other people. All these little crocus trumpets — like a brass band it is — they are trumpeting up the next lot of lovers. Better luck to them!'

"We sat still for a time. In the background of my mind Milly and her assembled tea-cups became evident as a faint urgency. 'You're late,' she'd say.

"'Where are you living, Hetty?' I asked. 'What is your address?'

"She shook her head after a moment's thought. 'Better you shouldn't know.'

"'But somehow I might help.'

"'It would only disturb us all. I've got my cup — of dirty water — to drink. I've got to stand what I'm in for. What could you do to help me?'

"'Well,' said I, 'my address anyhow is easy to keep in mind. It's just what it was when we — In the days when we lived — Thunderstone House it is. Someday there might be something—'

"'It's good of you.'

"We stood up face to face, and as we stood there a thousand circumstances vanished and nothing remained but our hurt and injured selves. 'Good-bye. Hetty,' I said. 'Good luck.'

"Our hands met. 'Good luck to you, Harry. It's no good, but I'm glad we met like this. And to find you forgive me a little at last.'"

§ 3

"That meeting had a profound effect upon me. It banished much

aimless reverie from my mind; it unlocked the prison in which a whole multitude of forbidden thoughts had been confined. I thought enormously of Hetty. They were vague and impossible thoughts; they came in the night, on the way to business, even during slack moments in business hours; rehearsals of dramatised encounters, explanations, magic turns of circumstances that suddenly restored our lost world to us. I tried to suppress these cloudy imaginations but with little avail; they overspread my mental skies in spite of me. I can't tell you how many times I walked through those gardens in Regent's Park; that detour became my normal route from the station to my home. And I would even go out of my customary way along some side-path because I had caught a glimpse far off, between the tree-branches and the flower-beds, of a solitary woman. But Hetty never came back there.

"In my brooding over Hetty a jealousy and hatred of Sumner developed steadily. I do not think I had any desire for Hetty myself but I wanted intensely to get her away from him. This hostility to Sumner was the ugly undertow of my remorse and re-awakened love of Hetty. He was the evil thing that had deprived me of Hetty. I did not reflect for a moment that it was I with my relentless insistence upon divorce that had forced her back to him.

"And all this dreaming and brooding and futile planning, all this body of desire for something more to happen between Hetty and myself, went on without my breathing a word of it to any living soul. It was on my conscience that it was disloyal to Milly, and I even made a half-hearted attempt to tell Milly that I had met Hetty and been shocked at her poverty and unhappiness. I wanted to bring her into my own state of mind and have her feel as I did. I threw out a remark one day — we had gone to Hampstead Heath for a walk one afternoon — that I had once walked along that ridge by the Round Pond with Hetty during my last leave. 'I wonder how she is living now,' I said.

"Milly did not answer immediately, and when I looked at her her face was flushed and hard. 'I hoped you had forgotten her,' she said in a suffocated voice.

"This brought it back to me.

"'I try never to think of her. You don't know what that woman

meant to me — the humiliation.

"'It was not only for myself,' she added. 'It was for you.'

"She said no more but it was manifest how terribly the mere name of Hetty had disturbed her."

"Poor little things!" cried Firefly. "How insanely jealous you all were!"

"And I did not go to Fanny and tell her about Hetty for a time. I had misrepresented Hetty to her as a figure of common depravity and I found it difficult to put that right. Nowadays I did not see so much of Fanny as I had formerly done. She was living half-way across London from me. Her relations with Newberry were now much more public than they had been and she had developed a circle of acquaintances who cared for her. But this publicity made Milly more stiff towards her because she feared that a scandal would be made about Fanny in relation to my position in the firm of Crane & Newberry. Near Pangbourne, Newberry had taken a bungalow and there Fanny would spend whole weeks at a time, quite out of our range.

"But presently a situation developed which sent me post-haste to Fanny for help and advice."

§ 4

"Suddenly in July when I was beginning to think I should never hear from her again, Hetty appealed to me for help. Would I meet her one evening, she asked, by the fountain in the Park near the Zoological Gardens, and then we could get chairs and she would tell me what she had in mind. She did not want me to write her a letter, Sumner had become very jealous of her, and so would I put an advertisement in the *Daily Express* with the letters A B C D and giving the hour and date. I made an appointment for the earliest possible evening.

"Instead of the despondent and spiritless Hetty I had met in the spring I found a Hetty high strung and excited. I want some place where we shan't be seen,' she said as I came up to her. She took my arm to turn me about, and led the way towards two green chairs standing apart a little away from the main walk that here traversed the park. I noted that she was still wearing the same shabby dress she

had had on our previous encounter. Her manner with me was quite different from the manner of our former meeting. There was something familiar and confident about her as though in between she had met me in imagination a multitude of times — as no doubt she had.

"'You meant all you said, Harry, when we talked before?' she began.

"'Everything.'

"'You will help me if you can?'

"'Everything I can.'

"'Suppose I asked you for some money?'

"'Naturally.'

"'I want to get away from Sumner. I have a chance. I could do it.'

"'Tell me about it, Hetty. All I can do, I will.'

"'Things have changed, Harry, since that day we met. I'd got into a sort of despairing state. I took whatever came. Seeing you changed me. I don't know why but it did. Perhaps I was going to change anyhow. But I can't stand being with Sumner any longer. And there's a chance now. I shall want a lot of money — sixty or seventy pounds.'

"I thought. 'That's quite possible, Hetty. If you can wait a week or so. Ten days say.'

"'You see I have a friend, a girl who married a Canadian. She stayed here to have her child when he went home and now she goes out to him. She's been ill; she's not very strong and she doesn't want to face the voyage alone. It would be easy for me to get out there with her as her cousin and companion. If I had an outfit — We've discussed it all. She knows someone who could manage about a passport for me. In my maiden name. That's the scheme. I could have my outfit sent to her place. I could slip away.'

"'You'd take another name? Begin again over there?'

"'Yes...'

"I sat considering this project. It pleased me. 'There need be no trouble about the money,' I said.

"'I can't go on living with Sumner. You never saw him. You don't know what he's like.'

"'I've heard he was good looking.'

“‘Don’t I know that face — flushed and weak! He’s a liar and a cheat. He has a conceit he can best everyone. And he’s begun drinking. God knows why I married him. It seemed the natural thing somehow since you had divorced me. The child had to have a father...But he disgusts me, Harry. He disgusts me. I can’t go on. I can’t endure it. You can’t imagine it — in those little lodgings — in the hot weather. To keep a maudlin drunken man away from one...If I hadn’t seen this way out something worse might have happened.’

“‘Can’t you come away from him at once?’ I asked. ‘Why should you ever go back to him?’

“‘No. I must get clear away or there will be mischief. And you mustn’t be in it. He’d think of you at once. If he had a hint it was you. That’s what you have to do about the money and everything, letters or anything — get it to me without your being mixed up with it. You must get me money, not cheques. We mustn’t be seen to meet. Even about here it’s risky. He’s got into a gang. He’s been getting deeper and deeper into a rotten set. They blackmail the bookies. They go about with revolvers. They pass on things to one another. It grew out of betting and now they call it getting a bit of their own back...If they spot you in it, they’ll come for you.’

“‘Trench warfare in London. I’ll risk it.’

“‘You needn’t risk anything — if we are discreet. If there was some one I could see — who’d hand things on.’

“I thought at once of my sister Fanny.

“‘That would be safe,’ said Hetty. ‘As safe as could be. And I’d love to see her again. I loved her when I met her...But all this is awful good of you, Harry. I don’t deserve a moment’s kindness.’

“‘Nonsense! I pushed you into the dirt, Hetty.’

“‘I jumped into it.’

“‘Fell into it. It’s nothing very much, Hetty, to give you a hand to get out of it again.’”

§ 5

“I went the next day to my sister Fanny to prepare her for Hetty’s call. Fanny sat in an arm-chair and listened and watched my face as I told my story, confessed how I had exaggerated Hetty’s offence and

asked for help. ‘I ought to have seen her, Harry, before I took your word for it,’ she said. ‘Of course, even now, I can’t imagine how a girl who loves one man could ever stand the kiss of another as she did, but then, as you say, she’d been drinking. We women aren’t all made alike. There’s all sorts make a world. Some girls — the backbone goes out of them when they feel a man’s kisses. You and me, Harry, we aren’t made like that. I’ve been thinking while you sat talking there, how like we both are to poor mother really — for all she quarrelled with me. We’ll grow hard presently if we aren’t careful. And your Hetty was young and she didn’t know. Only once it was. And all her life’s been spoilt by it!...I didn’t know it was like that, Harry.’

“And my sister Fanny began to recall her impressions of Hetty. She recalled her fine animation and the living interest of her talk. ‘When she left I said to myself, she’s got wit; that’s the first witty woman I’ve ever met. She’s got poetry in her. Everything she says comes out a little different from the things most people say. She says things that come like flowers in a hedgerow. So she did. Does she still?’

“‘I never thought of it like that before,’ I said. ‘I suppose she has a sort of poetry. Only the other day — when I met her first. What was it she said? Something.’

“‘It’s no good quoting, Harry. Witty things should bloom where they grow. They’re no good as cut-flowers. But you and I are fairly quick and fairly clever, Harry, but we’ve never had any of that.’

“‘I’ve always loved her talk,’ I said.

“I began to explain the situation to Fanny more fully and to show how she could help in it. I was not to see Hetty again; Fanny was to see her, pay her the hundred pounds we could put together for her, communicate with the friends she was to accompany and get her away. Fanny listened gravely and agreed.

“Then she reflected.

“‘Why don’t you take her to Canada yourself, Harry?’ she asked abruptly.”

§ 6

“I did not answer Fanny for some moments. Then I said, ‘I don’t want to.’

“‘I can see you love Hetty still.’

“‘Love. But I don’t want that.’

“‘You don’t want to be with her?’

“‘It’s out of the question. Why ask a painful thing like that? All that is dead.’

“‘Isn’t a resurrection possible? Why is it out of the question? Pride?’

“‘No.’

“‘Why then?’

“‘Milly.’

“‘You don’t love Milly.’

“‘I won’t have you discuss that, Fanny. I do love her.’

“‘Not as you love Hetty.’

“‘Quite differently. But Milly trusts me. She keeps faith with me. I’d as soon steal money — from a child’s money-box — as go back on Milly.’

“‘It’s wonderful how fine men can be to the wives they don’t love,’ said Fanny bitterly.

“‘Newberry’s different,’ I said. ‘I’ve got my little son. I’ve got my work. And though you will never have it, I love Milly.’

“‘In a way. Is she company for you? Is she fun?’

“‘I trust and love her. And as for Hetty, you don’t understand about Hetty. I love her. I love her enormously. But it’s like two ghosts meeting by moonlight. We two are dead to each other and — sorrowful. It isn’t as though it was anything like your case over again. I see Hetty in hell and I’d do nearly anything in life to get her out. I don’t even want to meet her. I want to get her away out of this filth and stupidity to where she can begin again. That’s all I want and that’s all she wants. How could she and I ever come together again? How could we kiss again as lovers kiss? Poor defiled things we are! And all my cruelty. You’re thinking of something else, Fanny. You’re not thinking of Hetty and me.’

“‘Maybe I am,’ said Fanny. ‘Yes, I think I am. And so she is to go to Canada and begin again — till her health comes back and her courage comes back. It isn’t natural for a woman of her temperament

to live without a man to love her, Harry.'

"'Let her live and love,' said I. 'She'll have changed her name. Her friends will stand by her. They won't give her away. Let her forget. Let her begin again.'

"'With another man?'

"'It may be.'

"'You don't mind the thought of that?'

"I was stung but I kept my temper. 'Have I any right to mind the thought of that now?'

"'But you will. And you will go on living with this wife you trust and respect. Who's dull spirited — dull as ditchwater.'

"'No. Who's my son's mother. Who is trustworthy. Whom I'm pledged to. And I've got my work. It may seem nothing to you. It's good enough for me to give myself to it. Can't I love Hetty, can't I help her out of the net she's in, and yet not want to go back to impossible things?'

"'Grey Monday mornings,' said Fanny.

"'As if all life wasn't grey,' I said.

"And then," said Sarnac, "I remember that I made a prophecy. I made it — when did I make it? Two thousand years ago? Or two weeks ago? I sat in Fanny's little sitting-room, an old-world creature amidst her old-world furnishings, and I said that men and women would not always suffer as we were suffering then. I said that we were still poor savages, living only in the bleak dawn of civilisation, and that we suffered because we were under-bred, under-trained and darkly ignorant of ourselves, that the mere fact that we knew our own unhappiness was the promise of better things and that a day would come when charity and understanding would light the world so that men and women would no longer hurt themselves and one another as they were doing now everywhere, universally, in law and in restriction and in jealousy and in hate, all round and about the earth.

"'It is still too dark for us,' I said, 'to see clearly where we are going, and everyone of us blunders and stumbles and does wrong. Everyone. It is idle for me to ask now what is the right thing for me to do? Whatever I do now will be wrong. I ought to go with Hetty and be her lover again — easily I could do that and why should I deny it? — and I ought to stick to Milly and the work I have found in

the world. Right road or left road, both lead to sorrow and remorse, but there is scarcely a soul in all this dark world, Fanny, who has not had to make or who will not presently have to make a choice as hard. I will not pull the skies down upon Milly, I *cannot* because she has put her faith in me. You are my dear sister Fanny and I love you and we have loved each other. Do you remember how you used to take me round to school and hold my hand at the crossings? Don't make things too hard for me now. Just help me to help Hetty. Don't tear me to pieces. She is still alive and young and — Hetty. Out there — she at least can begin again.'"

§ 7

"Nevertheless I did see Hetty again before she left England. There came a letter for me at Thunderstone House in which she proposed a meeting.

"'You have been so kind to me,' she wrote. 'It is the next best thing to your never having left me. You have been a generous dear. You've given back happiness to me. I feel excited already at the thought of the great liner and the ocean and full of hope. We've got a sort of picture of the ship; it is like a great hotel; with our cabin marked in it exactly where it is. Canada will be wonderful; Our Lady of the Snows; and we are going by way of New York, New York like nothing else on earth, cliffs and crags of windows, towering up to the sky. And it's wonderful to have new things again. I sneak off to Fanny's just to finger them over. I'm excited — yes, and grateful — yes, and full of hope — yes. And Harry, Harry, my heart aches and aches. I want to see you again. I don't deserve to but I want to see you again. We began with a walk and why shouldn't we end with a walk? Thursday and Friday all the gang will be at Leeds. I could get away the whole day either day and it would be a miracle if anyone knew. I wish we could have that same old walk again. I suppose it's too far and impossible. We'll save that, Harry, until we're both quite dead and then we'll be two little swirls of breeze in the grass or two bits of thistledown going side by side. But there was that other walk we had when we went to Shere and right over the North Downs to Leatherhead. We looked across the Weald and saw our own South

Downs far, far away. Pinewood and heather there was; hills beyond hills. And the smoke of rubbish-burning.'

"I was to write to Fanny's address.

"Of course we had that walk, we two half-resuscitated lovers. We did not make love at all though we kissed when we met and meant to kiss when we parted. We talked as I suppose dead souls might talk of the world that had once been real. We talked of a hundred different things — even of Sumner. Now that she was so near escape from him her dread and hatred had evaporated. She said Sumner had a passionate desire for her and a real need of her and that it was not fair to him and very bad for him that she despised him. It wounded his self-respect. It made him violent and defiant. A woman who cared for him, who would take the pains to watch him and care for him as a woman should do for a man, might have made something of him. But I've never cared for him, Harry; though I've tried. But I can see where things hurt him. I can see they hurt him frightfully at times. It doesn't hurt him any the less because he does ugly things.' He was vain, too, and ashamed of his incapacity to get a sufficient living. He was drifting very rapidly to a criminal life and she had no power over him to hold him back.

"I can still see Hetty and hear her voice, as we walked along a broad bridle-path between great rhododendron bushes, and she talked, grave and balanced and kind she was, of this rogue who had cheated her and outraged her and beaten her. It was a new aspect of Hetty and yet at the same time it was the old dear Hetty I had loved and wasted and lost, clear minded and swift, with an understanding better than her will.

"We sat for a long time on the crest of the Downs above Shere where the view was at its widest and best, and we recalled the old days of happiness in Kent and talked of the distances before us and of crossing the sea and of France and so of the whole wide world. I feel,' she said, as I used to when I was a child, at the end of the school quarter. I'm going away to new things. Put on your frock, put on your hat; the big ship is waiting. I am a little frightened about it and rather happy...I wish — But never mind that.'

"'You wish — ?'

"'What else could I wish?'

“‘You mean — ?’

“‘It’s no good wishing.’

“‘I’ve got to stick the job I’ve taken. I’ve got to see it through. But if you care to know it, Hetty, I wish so too. My God! — if wishes could release one!’

“‘You’ve got your job here. I wouldn’t take you away, Harry, if I could. Sturdy you are, Harry, and you’ll go through with it and do the work you’re made to do — and I’ll take what comes to me. Over there I guess I’ll forget a lot about Sumner and the things that have happened in between — and think a lot about you and the South Downs and this — how we sat side by side here.

“‘Perhaps,’ said Hetty, ‘heaven is a place like this. A great hillside to which you come at last, after all the tugging and pushing and the hoping and the disappointments and the spurring and the hungers and the cruel jealousies are done with and finished for ever. Then here you sit down and rest. And you aren’t alone. Your lover is here and he sits beside you and you just touch shoulder to shoulder, very close and very still, and your sins are forgiven you; your blunders and misunderstandings they matter no longer; and the beauty takes you and you dissolve into it, you dissolve into it side by side and together you forget and fade until at last nothing remains of all the distresses and anger and sorrow, nothing remains of you at all but the breeze upon the great hillside and sunshine and everlasting peace...’

“‘All of which,’ said Hetty, rising abruptly to her feet and standing over me, ‘is just empty nothingness. Oh Harry! Harry! One feels things and when one tries to say them it is just words and nonsense. We’ve hardly started on our way to Leatherhead and you’ll have to be back by seven. So get up, old Harry. Get up and come on. You are the dearest person alive and it has been sweet of you to come with me to-day. I was half-afraid you’d think it wasn’t wise...’

“In the late afternoon we got to a place called Little Bookham and there we had tea. About a mile farther on was a railway station and we found a train for London; it came in as we got on to the platform.

“‘Everything had gone well so far and then came the first gleam of disaster. At Leatherhead we sat looking out on the station platform and a little ruddy man came trotting along to get into the compartment next to us, a little common fellow like an ostler with a

cigar under his Hebrew nose, and as he was about to get in he glanced up at us. Doubt and then recognition came into his eyes and at the sight of him Hetty recoiled.

"'Get in,' said the guard, blowing his whistle, and the little man was hustled out of sight.

"'Hetty was very white. I know that man,' she said, 'and he knows me. He's named Barnado. What shall I do?'

"'Nothing. Does he know you very well?'

"'He's been to our rooms — three or four times.'

"'He may not have been sure it was you.'

"'I think he did. Suppose he were to come to the window at the next station to make certain. Could I pretend not to be myself? Refuse to recognize him or answer to my name?'

"'But if he was convinced it was you in spite of your bluff that would instantly make him suspicious and off he'd go to your husband! If on the other hand you took it all quite casually — said I was your cousin or your brother-in-law — he might think nothing of it and never even mention it to Sumner. But making him suspicious would send him off to Sumner right away. Anyhow, you go to Liverpool to-morrow. I don't see that his recognition of you matters.''

"'I'm thinking of you,' she said.

"'But he doesn't know who I am. So far as I know none of that lot has seen me...'

"The train slowed down at the next station. Mr. Barnado appeared, cigar and all, bright eyed and curious.

"'Blest if I didn't say to myself that's Hetty Sumner!' said Mr. Barnado. 'Wonderful 'ow one meets people!'

"'My brother-in-law, Mr. Dyson,' said Hetty, introducing me. 'We've been down to see his little daughter.'

"'I didn't know you 'ad a sister, Mrs. Sumner.'

"'I haven't,' said Hetty, with a note of pain in her voice. Mr. Dyson is a widower.'

"'Sorry,' said Mr. Barnado. 'Stupid of me. And what age might the little girl be, Mr. Dyson?'

"I found myself under the necessity of creating, explaining and discussing an orphan daughter. Mr. Barnado had three and was

uncomfortably expert about children and their phases of development. He was evidently a model father. I did as well as I could, I drew out Mr. Barnado's family pride rather than indulged my own, but I was immensely relieved when Mr. Barnado exclaimed, Gawd I 'Ere's Epsom already! Glad to 'aye met you, Mr. — .'

"'Damn!' I said to myself. I had forgotten.

"'Dixon,' said Hetty hastily, and Mr. Barnado, after effusive farewells, proceeded to remove himself from the carriage.

"'Thank Heaven!' said Hetty, 'he didn't come on to London. You're the poorest liar, Harry, I've ever known. As it is — no harm's been done.'

"No harm's been done,' said I, but two or three times before we reached the London station where we were to part for ever, we recurred to the encounter and repeated the reassuring formula that no harm had been done.

"We parted at Victoria Station with very little emotion. Mr. Barnado had brought us back, as it were, to an everyday and incidental atmosphere. We did not kiss each other again. The world about us had become full now of observant eyes. My last words to Hetty were 'Everything's all right!' in a business-like, reassuring tone, and the next day she slipped off to join her friends at Liverpool and passed out of my life for ever."

§ 8

"For three or four days I did not feel this second separation from Hetty very greatly. My mind was still busy with the details of her departure. On the third day she sent me a wireless message, as we used to call it, to Thunderstone House. 'Well away,' she said. 'Fine weather. Endless love and gratitude.' Then slowly as the days passed my sense of loss grew upon me, the intimations of an immense loneliness gathered and spread until they became a cloud that darkened all my mental sky. I was persuaded now that there was no human being who could make me altogether happy but Hetty, and that for the second time I was rejecting the possibility of companionship with her. I had wanted love, I perceived, without

sacrifice, and in that old world, it seems to me now, love was only possible at an exorbitant price, sacrifice of honour, sacrifice of one's proper work in the world, humiliations and distresses. I had shirked the price of Hetty and she was going from me, taking out of my life for ever all those sweet untellable things that were the essence of love, the little names, the trivial careless caresses, the exquisite gestures of mind and body, the moments of laughter and pride and perfect understanding. Day by day love went westward from me. Day and night I was haunted by a more and more vivid realization of a great steamship, throbbing and heaving its way across the crests and swelling waves of the Atlantic welter. The rolling black coal-smoke from its towering funnels poured before the wind. Now I would see that big ocean-going fabric in the daylight; now lit brightly from stem to stern, under the stars.

"I was full of unappeasable regret, I indulged in endless reveries of a flight across the Atlantic in pursuit of Hetty, of a sudden dramatic appearance before her;— 'Hetty, I can't stand it. I've come' — and all the time I stuck steadfastly to the course I had chosen. I worked hard and late at Thunderstone House; I did my best to shunt my imagination into new channels by planning two new quasi-educational publications, and I set myself to take Milly out to restaurants to dinner and to the theatre and to interesting shows. And in the midst of some picture-show perhaps I would find my rebel mind speculating what sort of thing Hetty would have said of it, had she been there. There was a little show of landscapes at the Alpine Gallery and several were pictures of Downland scenery and one showed a sunlit hillside under drowsy white clouds. It was almost like seeing Hetty.

"It was exactly a week after Hetty's landing in New York that I first encountered Sumner. It was my usual time of arrival and I was just turning out of Tottenham Court Road into the side street that led to the yard of Thunderstone House. There was a small public-house in this byway and two men were standing outside it in attitudes of expectation. One of them stepped out to accost me. He was a little flushed Jewish man, and for the moment I did not recognize him at all.

"'Mr. Smith?' said he, and scrutinised me queerly.

“‘At your service,’ said I.

“‘Not by any chance Mr. Dyson or Dixon, eh?’ he asked with a leer.

“‘Barnado!’ cried my memory and placed him. My instant recognition must have betrayed itself in my face. Our eyes met and there were no secrets between them. ‘No, Mr. Barnado,’ I said with incredible stupidity; my name’s just plain Smith.’

“‘Don’t mention it, Mr. Smith, don’t mention it,’ said Mr. Barnado with extreme politeness. ‘I had a sort of fancy I might have met you before.’ And turning to his companion and raising his voice a little, he said, ‘That’s him all right, Sumner — sure as eggs are eggs.’

“Sumner! I glanced at this man who had given my life so disastrous a turn. He was very much my own height and build, fair with a blotched complexion and wearing a checked grey suit and an experienced-looking grey felt hat. He might have been my unsuccessful half-brother. Our eyes met in curiosity and antagonism. ‘I’m afraid I’m not the man you want,’ I said to Barnado and went on my way. I didn’t see any advantage in an immediate discussion in that place. I perceived that an encounter was inevitable, but I meant it to happen amidst circumstances of my own choice and after I had had time to consider the situation properly. I heard something happen behind me and Barnado said: ‘Shut up, you fool! You’ve found out what you want to know.’ I went through the passages and rooms of Thunderstone House to my office and there, when I was alone, I sat down in my arm-chair and swore very heartily. Every day since the departure of Hetty I had been feeling more and more sure that this at least was not going to happen. I had thought that Sumner was very easily and safely and completely out of the story.

“I took my writing-pad and began to sketch out the situation. ‘*Ends to be secured*,’ I wrote.

“‘*No. 1. Hetty must not be traced.*

“‘*No. 2. Milly must hear nothing of this.*

“‘*No. 3. No blackmailing.*’

“I considered. ‘*But if a lump payment*,’ I began. This I scratched out again.

“I had to scheme out the essential facts. *What does S. know? What*

evidence exists? Of what? No clue to lead to Fanny? There is nothing but that journey in the train. He will have a moral certainty but will it convince anyone else?'

"I wrote a new heading: *'How to handle them?'*

"I began to sketch grotesques and arabesques over my paper as I plotted. Finally I tore it up into very small fragments and dropped it into my wastepaper basket. A messenger-girl rapped and came in with a paper slip, bearing the names of Fred Sumner and Arthur Barnado.

"'They've not put the business they want to talk about,' I remarked.

"'They said you'd know, Sir.'

"'No excuse. I want everybody to fill in that,' I said. 'Just say I'm too busy to see strangers who don't state their business. And ask them to complete the form.'

"Back came the form: 'Enquiry about Mr. Sumner's missing wife.'

"I considered it calmly. 'I don't believe we ever had the manuscript. Say I'm engaged up to half-past twelve. Then I could have a talk of ten minutes with Mr. Sumner alone. Make that clear. I don't see where Mr. Barnado comes in. Make it clear it's a privilege to see me.'

"My messenger did not reappear. I resumed my meditations on the situation. There was time for a lot of aggressive energy to evaporate before half-past twelve. Probably both of the men had come in from the outskirts and would have nowhere to wait but the streets or a public-house. Mr. Barnado might want to be back upon his own business at Epsom. He'd played his part in identifying me. Anyhow, I didn't intend to have any talk with Sumner before a witness. If he reappeared with Barnado I should refuse to see them. For Barnado alone I had a plan and for Sumner I had a plan, but not for the two of them together.

"My delaying policy was a good one. At half-past twelve Sumner came alone and was shown up to me.

"'Sit down there,' I said abruptly and leant back in my chair and stared at his face and waited in silence for him to begin.

"For some moments he did not speak. He had evidently expected

me to open with some sort of question and he had come ready loaded with a reply. To be plumped into a chair and looked at, put him off his game. He tried to glare at me and I looked at his face as if I was looking at a map. As I did so I found my hatred for him shrinking and changing. It wasn't a case for hatred. He had such a poor, mean, silly face, a weak arrangement of plausibly handsome features. Every now and then it was convulsed by a nervous twitch. His straw-coloured moustache was clipped back more on one side than the other, and his rather frayed necktie had slipped down to display his collar stud and the grubbiness of his collar. He had pulled his mouth a little askew and thrust his face forward in an attempt at fierceness, and his rather watery blue eyes were as open and as protruded as he could manage.

"'Where's my wife, Smith?' he said at last.

"'Out of my reach, Mr. Sumner, and out of yours.'

"'Where've you hid her?'

"'She's gone,' I said. It's no work of mine.'

"She's come back to you.'

"I shook my head.

"'You know where she is?'

"'She's gone clear, Sumner. You let her go.'

"'Let her go! *You* let her go, but I'm not going to. I'm not that sort. Here's this girl you marry and mess about with and when she comes across a man who's a bit more of a man than you are and handles her as a woman ought to be handled, you go and chuck her out and divorce her, divorce her with her child coming, and then start planning and plotting to get her away from the man she's given her love to—'

"He stopped for want of words or breath. He wanted to exasperate me and start a shouting match. I said nothing.

"'I want Hetty back,' he said. 'She's my wife and I want her back. She's mine and the sooner this foolery stops the better.'

"I sat up to the desk and put my elbows on it.

"'You won't get her back,' I said very quietly. 'What are you going to do about it?'

"By God! I'll have her back — if I swing for it.'

"'Exactly. And what are you going to do?'

“‘What *can’t* I do? I’m her husband.’

“‘Well?’

“‘You’ve got her.’

“‘Not a scrap of her.’

“‘She’s missing. I can go to the police.’

“‘Go to them. What will they do?’

“‘I can put them on to you.’

“‘Not a bit of it. They won’t bother about me. If your wife’s missing and you go to the police, they’ll clear up all your gang with their enquiries. They’ll be only too glad of the chance. Trouble *me!* They’ll dig up the cellars in *your* house and in your previous house to find the body. They’ll search you and ransack you. And what they don’t do to you, your pals will.’

“Sumner leaned forward and grimaced like a gargoyle to give his words greater emphasis. ‘*Yew* were the last man seen with her,’ he said.

“‘Not a scrap of evidence.’

“Sumner cursed vigorously. He *saw* you.’

“‘I can deny that absolutely. Frowsty little witness your friend Barnado. Don’t be too sure he’ll stick it. Nasty business if a woman disappears and you find yourself trying to fix something that won’t hold water on to someone her husband dislikes. If I were you, Sumner, I wouldn’t take that line. Even if he backs you up, what does it prove? You know of nobody else who pretends to have seen me with Hetty. You won’t be able to find anybody.’...

“Mr. Sumner extended his hand towards my table. He was too far away to bang it properly so he pulled his chair up closer. The bang when it came was ineffective. ‘Look ‘ere,’ he said and moistened his lips. ‘I want my Hetty back and I’m going to have her back. You’re precious cool and cucumberish and all that just now, but by God! I’ll warm you up before I’ve done with you. You think you can get her away and bluff me off. Never made such a mistake in your life. Suppose I don’t go to the police. Suppose I go for direct action. Suppose I come round to your place, and make a fuss with your wife.’

“‘That will be a nuisance,’ I said.

“He followed up his advantage. ‘A masterpiece of a nuisance.’

“I considered the forced fierceness of his face.

“‘I shall say I know nothing about your wife’s disappearance and that you are a blackmailing liar. People will believe me. My wife will certainly believe me. She’d make herself do so if your story was ten times as possible. Your friend Barnado and you will make a pretty couple of accusers. I shall say you are a crazy jealous fool, and if you keep the game up I shall have you run in. I’d not be altogether sorry to have you run-in. There’s one or two little things I don’t like you for. I’d not be so very sorry to get quits.’

“I had the better of him. He was baffled and angry but I saw now plainly that he had no real fight in him.

“‘And you know where she is?’ he said.

“I was too full of the spirit of conflict now to be discreet. ‘I know where she is. And you don’t get her — whatever you do. And as I said before, What can you do about it?’

“‘My God!’ he said. ‘My own wife.’

“I leant back with the air of a man who had finished an interview. I looked at my wrist-watch.

“He stood up.

“I looked up at him brightly. ‘Well?’ I said.

“‘Look here!’ he spluttered. ‘I don’t stand this. By God! I tell you I want Hetty. I want her. I want her and I’ll do what I like with her. D’you think I’ll take *this*? Me? She’s mine, you dirty thief!’

“I took up a drawing for an illustration and held it in my hand, regarding him with an expression of mild patience that maddened him.

“‘Didn’t I marry her — when I needn’t have? If you wanted her, why the devil didn’t you keep her when you had her? I tell you I won’t stand it.’

“‘My dear Sumner, as I said before, What can you do about it?’

“He leant over the desk, shook a finger as though it was a pistol barrel in my face. ‘I’ll let daylight through you,’ he said. ‘I’ll let daylight through you.’

“‘I’ll take my chance of that,’ I said.

“He expressed his opinion of me for a bit.

“‘I won’t argue your points,’ I said. ‘I guess we’re about through with this interview. Don’t shock my clerk, please, when she comes

in.' And I rang the bell on my desk.

"His parting shot was feeble. 'You've not heard the last of me. I mean what I told you.'

"'Mind the step,' said I.

"The door closed and left me strung up and trembling with excitement but triumphant. I felt I had beaten him and that I could go on beating him. It might be he would shoot. He'd probably got a revolver. But it was ten to one he'd take the trouble to get a fair chance at me and screw himself up to shooting pitch. And with his loose twitching face and shaky hand it was ten to one against his hitting me. He'd aim anyhow. He'd shoot too soon. And if he shot me it was ten to one he only wounded me slightly. Then I'd carry through my story against him. Milly might be shaken for a time, but I'd get the thing right again with her.

"I sat for a long time turning over the possibilities of the case. The more I considered it the more satisfied I was with my position. It was two o'clock and long past my usual lunch time when I went off to my club. I treated myself to the unusual luxury of a half-bottle of champagne."

§ 9

"I never believed Sumner would shoot me until I was actually shot.

"He waylaid me in the passage-way to the yard of Thunderstone House as I was returning from lunch just a week after our first encounter and when I was beginning to hope he had accepted his defeat. He had been drinking, and as soon as I saw his flushed face, half-angry and half-scared, I had an intimation of what might befall. I remember that I thought then that if anything happened he must get away because otherwise he might be left to tell his tale after I was dead. But I didn't really believe he was man enough to shoot and even now I do not believe that. He fired through sheer lack of nervous and muscular co-ordination.

"He did not produce his pistol until I was close up to him. 'Now then,' said he, 'you're for it. Where's my wife?' and out came the pistol a yard from me.

"I forget my answer. I probably said, 'Put that away' or something

of that sort. And then I may have seemed about to snatch it. The report of the pistol, which sounded very loud to me, came at once, and a feeling as though I'd been kicked in the small of the back. The pistol was one of those that go on firing automatically as long as the trigger is gripped. It fired two other shots, and one got my knee and smashed it. 'Damn the thing!' he screamed and threw it down as though it had stung him. 'Get out, you fool. Run!' I said as I lurched towards him, and then as I fell I came within a foot of his terrified face as he dashed past me towards the main thoroughfare. He thrust me back with his hand as I reeled upon him.

"I think I rolled over on to my back into a sitting position after I fell, because I have a clear impression of him vanishing like the tail of a bolting rabbit into Tottenham Court Road. I saw a van and an omnibus pass across the space at the end of the street, heedless altogether of the pistol shots that had sounded so terrible in my ears. A girl and a man passed with equal indifference. He was clear. Poor little beast I'd stolen his Hetty. And now —

"I was very clear-headed. A little numbed where I had been hit but not in pain. I was chiefly aware of my smashed knee, which looked very silly with its mixture of torn trouser and red stuff and a little splintered pink thing that I supposed was an end of bone.

"People from nowhere were standing about me and saying things to me. They had come out of the yard or from the public-house. I made a swift decision. 'Pistol went off in my hand,' I said, and shut my eyes.

"Then a fear of a hospital came upon me. 'My home quite handy,' I said. 'Eight Chester Terrace, Regent's Park. Get me there, please.'

"I heard them repeating the address and I recognized the voice of Crane & Newberry's door porter. 'That's right,' he was saying. 'It's Mr. Mortimer Smith. Anything I can do for you, Mr. Smith?'

"I do not remember much of the details of what followed. When they moved me there was pain. I seem to have been holding on to what I meant to say and do, and my memory does not seem to have recorded anything else properly. I may have fainted once or twice. Newberry was in it somehow. I think he took me home in his car. 'How did it happen?' he asked. That I remember quite clearly.

"'The thing went off in my hand,' I said.

“One thing I was very certain about. Whatever happened they were not going to hang that poor, silly, hunted cheat Sumner. Whatever happened, the story of Hetty must not come out. If it did, Milly would think only one thing: that I had been unfaithful to her and that Sumner had killed me on that account. Hetty was all right now. I needn’t bother about Hetty any more. I had to think of Milly — and Sumner. It is queer, but I seem to have known I was mortally wounded from the very instant I was shot.

“Milly appeared, full of solicitude.

“‘Accident,’ I said to her with all my strength. ‘Went off in my hand.’

“My own bed.

“Clothes being cut away. Round my knee the cloth had stuck. The new grey suit which I’d meant should last the whole summer.

“Then two strangers became conspicuous, doctors, I suppose, whispering, and one of them had his sleeves up and showed a pair of fat pink arms. Sponges and a tinkle of water dripping into a basin. They prodded me about. Damn! That *hurt!* Then stinging stuff. What was the good of it? I was in the body they were prodding, and I knew all about it and I was sure that I was a dead man.

“Milly again.

“‘My dear,’ I whispered. ‘Dear!’ and her poor, tearful face beamed love upon me.

“Valiant Milly! Things had never been fair to her.

“Fanny? Had Newberry gone to fetch her? Anyhow he had vanished.

“She’d say nothing about Hetty. She was as safe as — safe as what? — what did one say? — anything safe.

“Poor dears I What a fuss they were all in. It seemed almost shameful of me to be glad that I was going out of it all. But I was glad. This pistol shot had come like the smashing of a window in a stuffy room. My chief desire was to leave kind and comforting impressions on those poor survivors who might still have to stay on in the world of muddle for years and years. Life! What a muddle and a blundering it had been! I’d never have to grow old now anyhow...

“There was an irruption. People coming in from the dressing-room. One was a police inspector in uniform. The other showed

policeman through his plain clothes. Now was the time for it! I was quite clear-headed — quite. I must be careful what I said. If I didn't want to say anything I could just close my eyes.

"'Bleeding internally,' said someone.

"Then the police inspector sat down on the bed. What a whale he was! — and asked me questions. I wondered if anyone had caught a glimpse of Sumner. Sumner, bolting like a rabbit. I must risk that.

"'It went off in my hand,' I said.

"What was he saying? How long had I had that revolver?

"'Bought it this lunch time,' I said.

"Did he ask why? He did. 'Keep up my shooting.'

"Where? He wanted to know where. 'Highbury.'

"'What part of Highbury?' They wanted to trace the pistol. That wouldn't do. Give Mr. Inspector a paper chase. '*Near* Highbury.'

"'Not in Highbury?'

"I decided to be faint and stupid. 'That way,' I said faintly.

"'A pawnshop?'

"Best not to answer. Then as if by an effort, 'Lil' shop.'

"'Unredeemed pledges?'

"I said nothing to that. I was thinking of another touch to the picture I was painting.

"I spoke with weak indignation. 'I didn't think it was loaded. How was I to know it was loaded? It ought not to have been sold — loaded like that. I was just looking at it—'

"I stopped short and shammed exhaustion. Then I felt that I was not shamming exhaustion. I was exhausted. Gods! but the stuffing was out of me! I was sinking, sinking, out of the bedroom, out from among this group of people. They were getting little and faint and flimsy. Was there anything more to say? Too late if there was. I was falling asleep, falling into a sleep, so profound, so fathomless...

"Far away now was the little roomful of people, and infinitely small.

"'He's going!' somebody said in a minute voice.

"I seemed to come back for an instant.

"I heard the rustle of Milly's dress as she came across the room to me...

"And then, then I heard Hetty's voice again and opened my eyes

and saw Hetty bending down over me — in that lovely place upon this mountain-side. Only Hetty had become my dear Sunray who is mistress of my life. And the sunshine was on us and on her face, and I stretched because my back was a little stiff and one of my knees was twisted."

"'Wake up! I said,' said Sunray. 'Wake up,' and I shook you."

"And then we came and laughed at you," said Radiant. "Firefly and I."

"And you said, 'then there *is* another life,'" said Firefly. "And the tale is only a dream! It has been a good tale, Sarnac, and somehow you have made me think it was true."

"As it is," said Sarnac. "For I am as certain I was Henry Mortimer Smith yesterday as I am that I am Sarnac here and now."

VIII. — THE EPILOGUE

§ 1

The guest-master poked the sinking fire into a last effort. “So am I,” he said, and then with profound conviction, “*That tale is true*.”

“But how could it be true?” asked Willow.

“I should be readier to believe it true if Sarnac had not brought in Sunray as Hetty,” said Radiant. “It was very dreamlike, the way Hetty grew more and more like his dear lady and at last dissolved altogether into her.”

“But if Smith was a sort of anticipation of Sarnac,” said Starlight, “then it was natural for him to choose as his love a sort of anticipation of Sunray.”

“But are there any other anticipations in the story?” asked Willow. “Did you recognise any other people who are intimate with you both. Is there a Fanny in this world? Is there a Matilda Good or a brother Ernest? Was Sarnac’s mother like Martha Smith?”

“That tale,” said the guest-master, stoutly, “was no dream. It was a memory floating up out of the deep darkness of forgotten things into a living brain — a kindred brain.”

Sarnac thought. “What is a personality but a memory? If the memory of Harry Mortimer Smith is in my brain, then I am Smith. I feel as sure that I was Smith two thousand years ago as that I was Sarnac this morning. Sometimes before this in my dreams I have had a feeling that I lived again forgotten lives. Have none of you felt that?”

“I dreamt the other day,” said Radiant, “that I was a panther that haunted a village of huts in which lived naked children and some very toothsome dogs. And how I was hunted for three years and shot at five times before I was killed. I can remember how I killed an old woman gathering sticks and hid part of her body under the roots of a tree to finish it on the morrow. It was a very vivid dream. And as I dreamt it by no means horrible. But it was not a clear and continuous dream like yours. A panther’s mind is not clear and continuous, but passes from flashes of interest to interludes of apathy and utter

forgetfulness.

"When children have dreams of terror, of being in the wild with prowling beasts, of long pursuits and hairbreadth escapes, perhaps it is the memory of some dead creature that lives again in them?" asked Starlight. "What do we know of the stuff of memory that lies on the other side of matter? What do we know of the relations of consciousness to matter and energy? For four thousand years men have speculated about these things, and we know no more to-day than they did in Athens when Plato taught and Aristotle studied. Science increases and the power of man grows but only inside the limits of life's conditions. We may conquer space and time, but we shall never conquer the mystery of what we are, and why we can be matter that feels and wills. My brother and I have much to do with animals and more and more do I perceive that what they are I am. They are instruments with twenty strings while we have ten thousand, but they are instruments like ourselves; what plays upon them plays upon us, and what kills them kills us. Life and death alike are within the crystal sphere that limits us for ever. Life cannot penetrate and death will not penetrate that limitation. What memories are we cannot tell. If I choose to believe that they float away like gossamer nets when we die, and that they float I know not where, and that they can come back presently into touch with other such gossamer nets, who can contradict me? Maybe life from its very beginning has been spinning threads and webs of memories. Not a thing in the past, it may be, that has not left its memories about us. Some day we may learn to gather in that forgotten gossamer, we may learn to weave its strands together again, until the whole past is restored to us and life becomes one. Then perhaps the crystal sphere will break. And however that may be, and however these things may be explained, I can well believe without any miracles that Sarnac has touched down to the real memory of a human life that lived and suffered two thousand years ago. And I believe that, because of the reality of the story he told. I have felt all along that whatever interrupting question we chose to ask, had we asked what buttons he wore on his jacket or how deep the gutters were at the pavement edge or what was the price he had paid for his cigarettes, he would have been ready with an answer, more exact and sure than any historian

could have given."

"And I too believe that," said Sunray. "I have no memory of being Hetty, but in everything he said and did, even in his harshest and hardest acts, Smith and Sarnac were one character. I do not question for a moment that Sarnac lived that life."

§ 2

"But the hardness of it!" cried Firefly; "the cruelty! The universal heartache!"

"It could have been only a dream," persisted. Willow.

"It is not the barbarism I think of," said Firefly; "not the wars and diseases, the shortened, crippled lives, the ugly towns, the narrow countryside, but worse than that the sorrow of the heart, the universal unkindness, the universal failure to understand or care for the thwarted desires and needs of others. As I think of Sarnac's story I cannot think of any one creature in it who was happy — as we are happy. It is all a story of love crossed, imaginations like flies that have fallen into gum, things withheld and things forbidden. And all for nothing. All for pride and spite. Not all that world had a giver who gave with both hands...Poor Milly! Do you think she did not know how coldly you loved her, Sarnac? Do you think her jealousy was not born of a certainty and a fear?...A lifetime, a whole young man's lifetime, a quarter of a century, and this poor Harry Smith never once met a happy soul and came only once within sight of happiness! And he was just one of scores and hundreds of millions! They went heavily and clumsily and painfully, oppressing and obstructing each other, from the cradle to the grave."

This was too much for the guest-master, who almost wailed aloud. "But surely there was happiness! Surely there were moods at least of happiness!"

"In gleams and flashes," said Sarnac. "But I verily believe that what Firefly says is true. In all my world there were no happy lives."

"Not even children?"

"Lives, I said, not parts of lives. Children would laugh and dance for a while if they were born in Hell."

"And out of that darkness," said Radiant; "in twenty short

centuries our race has come to the light and tolerance, the sweet freedoms and charities of our lives to-day."

"Which is no sort of comfort to me," said Firefly, "when I think of the lives that *have* been."

"Unless this is the solution," the guest-master cried, "that everyone is presently to dream back the lives that have gone. Unless the poor memory-ghosts of all those sad lives that have been are to be brought into the consolation of our happiness. Here, poor souls, for your comfort is the land of heart's desire and all your hopes come true. Here you live again in your ampler selves. Here lovers are not parted for loving and your loves are not your torment...Now I see why men must be immortal, for otherwise the story of man's martyrdom is too pitiful to tell. Many good men there were like me, jolly men with a certain plumpness, men with an excellent taste for wine and cookery, who loved men almost as much as they loved the food and drink that made men, and they could not do the jolly work I do and make comfort and happiness every day for fresh couples of holiday friends. Surely presently I shall find the memories of the poor licensed innkeeper I was in those ancient days, the poor, overruled, ill-paid publican, handing out bad stuff in wrath and shame, I shall find all his troubles welling up again in me. Consoled in this good inn. If it was I who suffered in those days, I am content; but if it was some other good fellow who died and never came to this, then there is no justice in the heart of God. So I swear by immortality now and henceforth — not for greed of the future but in the name of the wasted dead.

"Look!" the guest-master continued. "Morning comes and the cracks at the edge of the door-curtain grow brighter than the light within. Go all of you and watch the mountain glow. I will mix you a warm bowl of drink and then we will sleep for an hour or so before you breakfast and go your way."

§ 3

"It was a life," said Sarnac, "and it was a dream, a dream within this life; and this life too is a dream. Dreams within dreams, dreams containing dreams, until we come at last, maybe, to the Dreamer of

all dreams, the Being who is all beings. Nothing is too wonderful for life and nothing is too beautiful."

He got up and thrust back the great curtain of the guest-house room. "All night we have been talking and living in the dark Ages of Confusion and now the sunrise is close at hand."

He went out upon the portico of the guest-house and stood still, surveying the great mountains that rose out of cloud and haze, dark blue and mysterious in their recesses and soaring up at last into the flush of dawn.

He stood quite still and all the world seemed still, except that, far away and far below, a mist of sounds beneath the mountain mists, a confusion of birds was singing.

THE END

CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER

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BOOK THE FIRST. THE COMING OF SARGON, KING OF KINGS

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE EARLY LIFE OF MR. PREEMBY

1

THIS is the story of a certain Mr. Preemby, a retired laundryman and widower, who abandoned his active interest in the Limpid Stream Laundry, in the parish of Saint Simon Unawares, near Woodford Wells, upon the death of his wife in the year of grace 1920. Some very remarkable experiences came to him. The story is essentially a contemporary story: it is a story of London in the age of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, broadcasting, and the first Labour peers. The historical element in it is insignificant and partly erroneous, and the future, though implicitly present, is substantially ignored.

Since washing in London, like the milk trade and baking and the linen-drapery and various other branches of commerce, is something rather specialized and hereditary and a little difficult towards outsiders, it is necessary to explain that Mr. Preemby was not a laundryman born. He had little of the spirit and go of a true London laundryman. He married into laundrying. He met a Miss Hossett at Sheringham in 1899, an heiress and a young lady of great decision of character; he wooed and won her and married her, as you will be told, almost without realizing what he was doing. The Hossetts are big people in the laundry world, and the Limpid Stream concern which presently fell into the capable hands of Mrs. Preemby, was only one of a series of related and sympathetic businesses in the north, north-east and south-west districts of London.

Mr. Preemby, as Miss Hossett's family came to recognize quite frankly and explicitly at a very early stage, derived from a less practical strain than his wife. His father had been an artist of considerable charm and unpunctuality, a photographic artist, who resided at Sheringham and made what were called in the eighteen-eighties, "gem" photographs of the summer visitors to that place. In the eighteen-eighties he was a well-known Sheringham figure, dark and handsome and sometimes a little unkempt, wearing a brown

velvet jacket and a large grey soft-felt hat. He would fall into conversation with the visitors upon the beach, and a certain air of distinction about him would bring a sufficient proportion to his studio to maintain him. His wife, our Mr. Preemby's mother, was a patient, under-developed personality, the daughter of a farmer near Diss. When presently Mr. Preemby senior passed out of his son's life — he became romantically entangled with a small variety entertainment in the summer of 1887 and vanished away with it in the autumn with as little fuss as possible, never to return to Sheringham — Mrs. Preemby senior became the working partner in a small lodging-house and died in a year or so's time, leaving her furniture, her interest in the lodging-house and her only son to her cousin and partner, Mrs. Witcherly.

Young Albert Edward Preemby was then a good-looking, slender youth of sixteen, with his father's curliness and his mother's fair hair and eyes of horizon blue, dreamy and indisposed for regular employment. Even as a child he had been given to reverie; at school he would sit with sums or book neglected before him, looking beyond them at unknown things; his early experiences in business were disappointing by reason of this abstraction. After a number of unsuccessful attempts to exploit his gifts at some favourable point in the complex machinery of our civilization, he came to rest for several years in the office of a house-agent and coal-merchant in Norwich to whom his mother was distantly related.

Some ancient, remembered, sentimental tie helped Albert Edward to this appointment and shielded any imperfections in his performance from too urgent a criticism. He did much better at it than anyone could have expected. The calling of a house-agent differs from most other callings in the fact that the necessary driving energy is supplied entirely by the clientele, and there was something about the letting of the larger houses that touched the dormant imagination of young Preemby. He revealed a natural gift for attractive description and was duly entrusted with the work of collecting particulars from prospective lessors. He had a quite useful hopefulness. And even the coal proved unexpectedly interesting so soon as he found that none of it had to be carried about by him. He could never believe that all the golden scales one finds in it were

pyrites. He cherished a secret dream of a great commercial enterprise to work cinder heaps for residual gold. He told no one of this project, he took no steps to realize it, but it warmed his daily routines with its promise of release and wealth. And when things were slack in the office in the early afternoon and he was left in charge, he would go and sit on the coal counter and pick out the coal samples for the little trays and turn them over and over and view them from various angles and weigh them in his hand and lapse into the most splendid visions.

And if inquirers after houses came in, he would receive them with a manner almost regal.

In Norwich he became a member of the Y.M.C.A., but he was interested in its literary rather than its religious side, and he attended any political debates available. He never spoke in these debates, but he sat at the back reflecting that politicians are, after all, no more than puppets in the hands of the silent rich men who sit behind the scenes. It was in Norwich, too, that he was able to buy his first tailor-made suit, of a most becoming grey. When he went to stay with Mrs. Witcherly at Sheringham for his summer holiday of a fortnight, she was delighted by the improvement in his appearance and much impressed by the active hopefulness that had replaced his former lethargy. Upon the sea front in the afternoon in his grey suit, to anyone who did not know about him, he might have been almost any sort of prosperous summer visitor.

It seems a yesterday, and yet it seems ages ago, that our plump and short Mr. Preemby was that small blonde young man twirling his stick and glancing furtively but desirously at the lady bathers in their vast petticoated bathing dresses and oilskin caps, as he strolled along the Sheringham front. That was in the days when motor cars were still rather a joke, a smell, and a noise and wayside repairs, and flying was understood to be impossible. Queen Victoria had had her Diamond Jubilee and nobody thought Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, would ever survive to be King. The War in South Africa was being arranged for that summer, to last six months and employ forty thousand men. And it was on the third day of his grey suit holiday at Sheringham that Mr. Preemby was run into by his future wife, Miss Hossett, riding on a bicycle, and thrown against and almost run over by her friend Miss Meeta Pinkey.

Because, incredible as it may seem to the modern reader, people did succeed in those distant nineties, before the coming of the more suitable automobile, in knocking down and running over other people with the sluggish apparatus, bicycles, horse-drawn vehicles and so forth, then available.

2

Miss Meeta Pinkey was an emotional blonde girl, and she fell off her machine gracefully and naturally into Mr. Preemby's arms as he was hurled against her. It would seem to have been the original intention of Destiny to have made this the beginning of a permanent relationship, but in this matter Destiny had reckoned without Miss Hossett. Miss Meeta Pinkey was as ripe for love just then as dry gunpowder is for a bang, and she was already deeply in love with Mr. Preemby before she had been replaced securely on her feet. She stood flushed and round-eyed and breathless, and Mr. Preemby looked quite manly and handsome after picking up her bicycle with an air of rescue.

Miss Hossett, after butting against Mr. Preemby, had swerved, dismounted, and stood now prepared for a dispute. The collision had further loosened the already loose handlebar of the entirely untrustworthy hired machine she had been riding. It was this looseness had caused the accident. Her attention seemed divided equally between this and the possible grievance of Mr. Preemby. "I rang my bell," she said.

She was flushed and erect. She was a round-faced girl with a long, thin neck, a good bright complexion, glasses on her thin nose and a resolute thin-lipped mouth.

"I did all I could to avoid you," she said.

"Awkward of me," said Mr. Preemby disarmingly. "I was lost in a day-dream."

"You aren't hurt — ?" asked Meeta.

"Startled," said Mr. Preemby, "especially where the wheel got me. This place is full of comers."

"I'd've been over," said Meeta, "if you hadn't caught me."

Miss Hossett was reassured about any possible conflict with Mr.

Preemby. Evidently he was going to be quite nice about the accident. "This handlebar was as loose as could be," she said. "Look at it! You can twist it about like on a swivel. They ought to be punished for letting out such machines. Some of these days one of 'em'll get let in for Damages. Then they'll be a bit more careful. Scandalous I call it."

"You can't ride it at all now," said Mr. Preemby.

"No," she agreed. "Have to take it back to them."

It seemed only right and proper for Mr. Preemby to wheel the machine for her back through the town to the hiring place, where Miss Hossett reproved the hirer, refused to pay anything, and secured the return of her deposit in a few well-chosen words. Miss Pinkey paid the hire of her bicycle for a First Hour. It seemed natural after that for the little party of three to keep together. They kept together with a faint sense of adventure, and Mr. Preemby behaved as nothing less than a normal lodger at Miss Witcherly's establishment and summer visitor to the seaside. His new-found friends were Londoners, and he referred himself to Norwich and the management of house property. He was quite amusing about Sheringham. He said it was "a dear little backward-forward place," that it was a real treat to come to for a breath of sea air.

"I don't like regular smart places," said Mr. Preemby. "I'm too absent-minded."

3

In after years Mr. Preemby would often try to recall the various stages that led to his marrying Miss Hossett, but there was always a vague sense that he missed out something, though he knew not what it was nor where it ought to have come in.

At first things did not look in the least like his marrying Miss Hossett. Indeed they did not look like his marrying anyone, and if the word marriage had been whispered in his ears as the possible consequence of this encounter he would have been terrified. He perceived that he was acceptable company to these girls, but it seemed to him that it was Meeta who formed the link between them and himself. A fourth person presently joined their company who

answered to the name of Wilfred, and it seemed to Mr. Preemby that the air of mutual proprietorship between Wilfred and Miss Hossett was unchallengeable.

The young people wandered in a little party along the sea front until the sea front came to an end, and there they found a sheltered and comparatively secluded niche in the brow of the low cliffs and gave themselves up to the delights of Spooning; and it was Meeta who Spooned with Mr. Preemby that afternoon and Wilfred who Spooned with Miss Hossett. Across the gulf of a quarter of a century the memory of Mr. Preemby was still certain that this was so.

The fashions of life change from age to age. Knowledge has spread and refinement increased; and a generation of young people, more restrained, more sophisticated, or more decisive than their predecessors had taken possession of the world. This Spooning was an artless, clumsy dalliance in great favour in those vanished days, a dalliance that was kept within the bounds of strict decorum — if ever that became necessary — by cries of "Starp it" or "Starpit, I tell you," on the part of the lady. They embraced, they kissed, and put their silly young heads together and so whiled away the long waiting-time before love had its way with them. The summer resorts of England were littered with young people indulging in these poor, silly, undignified anticipations of love. Mr. Preemby, it became manifest, was a natural born Spooner.

"It's lovely," said Miss Meeta, "the way you squeeze me."

Mr. Preemby squeezed some more and ventured to kiss a hot ear.

"Go On with you!" said Miss Meeta, in a voice thick with delight. "That little moustache of yours — it *tickles.*"

Flushed with encouragement and preoccupied with ideas for further enterprises, Mr. Preemby did not remark that the affairs of Miss Hossett and her Wilfred followed a more troubled and less satisfactory course. Wilfred was not a type that appealed to Mr. Preemby. In spite of the fact that he was much less neat in his dress than Mr. Preemby — he had grey flannel trousers, an old fancy vest, a tweed Norfolk jacket, and low brown shoes with light-coloured socks — he impressed Mr. Preemby as being consciously a social superior. He was young — the youngest of the party — and yet dominant. He had large red hands and big feet, much untidy hair, ill-

regulated features that might later be handsome, and a hoarse guffaw. He viewed Mr. Preemby as though he knew all about him and thought the worse of him for it, but did not intend to make any positive trouble for the present about his existence. He was, Meeta whispered, a medical student at Cambridge, and his father was a Harley Street physician who had been knighted. He did not Spoon with any abandonment; he seemed weary of Spooning, he had perhaps been Spooning for some days, and his conversation with Miss Hossett went on in subdued contentious tones. He sat a little apart from her amidst the sand and coarse bluish grass, and her face was flushed. What they said was inaudible to our intertwined couple.

"Chris and Wilfred don't get on together as we do," Meeta said in a low voice. "They're sillies.

"He's like all the men," said Meeta, "'Sept one perhaps. Want everything they do and give nothing.

"He won't even say they're engaged," she said. "Dodged seeing her father."

There was a pause for reflection and then a renewal of endearments.

"I'm gome on you," said Meeta. "I *am* fair gome on you. You've got the bluest eyes I've ever seen. China blue they are."

4

So detachedly it was that Mr. Preemby and his future wife passed their first afternoon together. He remembered it, as he remembered most actual things, indistinctly, in a setting of hot sand and sunshine, blue-grey grass and a line of poppies nodding against an intense blue sky. And then across these opening memories Chris Hossett seemed to leap at him with flushed cheeks and glowing eyes, magnified by her glasses.

Two or three days intervened before that passionate pounce. Mr. Preemby, in his character of an incidental visitor to Sheringham, was under no obligation to produce a social background, but Miss Pinkey introduced him to two large, kindly aunts of a sedentary sort, as a young man related to Miss Hossett who had saved her from a nasty fall off a bicycle, and he and she both went to tea with Chris

Hossett's "people." Old Mr. Hossett was a very ailing man, excessively fat and irritable; he had never been the same, whatever the same was, after his only son had died; and Mrs. Hossett, an energetic lean threat of what her daughter might become, had to wait on Mr. Hossett hand and foot. She had spectacles instead of Chris's glasses, her eyes were careworn and her complexion was leaden and her neck lean. There were also a married cousin and his wife, a Mr and Mrs. Widgery, who seemed to be under the impression that Mr. Preemby was a relation of Miss Pinkey's. Mr. Widgery had a long pock-marked face and the dullest brown eyes Mr. Preemby had ever seen. There was nothing difficult to eat at tea and Mr. Preemby got on very well listening to an explanation of the precariousness of Mr. Hossett's existence, due to heart trouble, from Mrs. Hossett and of just how unsatisfactory and distressing it was to come away and leave the laundry in the hands of a manager. Wilfred did not come to the tea. He had been asked but he did not come.

The next day Mr. Preemby met Wilfred on the sea front watching the girls bathing from a bathing machine. Afterwards all four went for a walk in search of privacy, and it became evident that Miss Hossett declined to Spoon further with Wilfred. It was evident that there was profound trouble between Chris and Wilfred. They scarcely spoke as they returned towards the town; and before the sea front was reached Wilfred said "So Long," quite suddenly, and turned away and vanished up a road running inland. Thereupon Wilfred passed out of Mr. Preemby's world; Mr. Preemby never knew what became of him and never wanted to know; and the next day he became aware for the first time of Miss Hossett's magnified eyes, regarding him with an interest and a challenge that made him feel almost uncomfortable.

Miss Hossett became a serious obstacle to the Spooning of Meeta. The quartette was now reduced to a trio; and Mr. Preemby found himself the apex, so to speak, of a triangle, the eternal triangle in an exceptionally acute form. Whenever Meeta was on the one hand, Chris was on the other. She called him "Our Teddy"; she pressed upon him; she went so far as to stroke his hair. Meeta's endearments faded to some extent in the presence of this competition, but she made no explicit objection.

Deep in the nature of the human male is a fount of polygamous pride. Mr. Preemby in these novel circumstances was proud and disingenuous. He believed himself "carrying on" with two girls at once, and it seemed to him to be a very splendid situation. But indeed it was not so much a case of carrying on as of being carried off. In the American world of emotional imaginations there is an ideal called the Cave Man, much cherished by quiet, unaggressive women because its realization would involve so little trouble on their own part. The Cave Man is supposed to seize and grip and carry off and adore. In this simple love story of Mr. Preemby's Miss Hossett played the Cave Man's role, up to the carrying-off point at any rate. On the first occasion of their being alone together she drew him to her and kissed him on the mouth with a warmth and an intensity and thoroughness that astonished and overwhelmed Mr. Preemby. It was quite different from Meeta's coy achievements, or anything he had ever met around Norwich. He had not known that there was such kissing.

And in the warm summer twilight Mr. Preemby found himself being carried off to a lonely piece of beach to Spoon with Chris Hossett. The light of a rising full moon mingled with the afterglow; pebbles shone out like gems and stars. He carried himself bravely but he was all atremble. He knew that this time the enterprises would not come from him. And the Spooning of Chris Hossett was no more like the Spooning of Meeta than a furnace glow is like the light of the moon.

"I love you," said Chris as though that justified anything, and as they stumbled homeward at an hour that Mr. Preemby called "feefully late," she said: "You're going to marry me aren't you? You've *got* to marry me now. And then we can *really* make love.' Soften as we like."

"I can't rightly say that I'm exactly in a position to keep a wife just at present," said Mr. Preemby.

"I don't see that there's any necessity for me to ask a man to keep me," said Miss Hossett. "You're a wonder, Teddy, anyhow, and I'm going to marry you. It's got to be, and there you are."

"But 'ow can I marry you?" asked Mr. Preemby almost peevishly — for he was really very tired.

“One would think to hear you that no one had ever married before,” said Chris Hossett. “And besides — after this — you *must.*”

“Mind you I’ve got to go back to Norwich next Tuesday,” said Mr. Preemby.

“You ought to have thought of that before,” she said.

“But I’ll lose my situation.”

“Naturally father will find you something better. We aren’t poor people, Teddy. There’s no need to be scared about it....”

In such terms was Chris Hossett wooed and won by Mr. Preemby. He was scared, dreadfully scared, but also he was tremendously roused. It impressed him as being a wildly romantic affair and very terrifying and a little hard on Meeta Pinkey. But he was bustled along too fast to think very much about Meeta Pinkey. He was introduced over again to the Hossett parents next day as their daughter’s affianced husband, and in secret she gave him three golden sovereigns to buy her an engagement ring as a surprise. Mrs. Hossett behaved at first as though she approved of Mr. Preemby and disapproved of the marriage, and then after what was clearly a stormy scene upstairs with her daughter, she behaved as though she approved highly of the marriage and thought Mr. Preemby a very objectionable person. Mr. Hossett would not speak to Mr. Preemby directly, but he spoke of him to his wife and to imaginary auditors in Mr. Preemby’s presence as a “scoundrel” who had “got hold” of his girl. Yet he, too, seemed to regard the marriage as desirable, and no one made any reply to his *obiter dicta.*

It was all very puzzling and exalting to Mr. Preemby. He did little except what he was told to do. He was carried over his marriage as a man might be carried over a weir. He left any explanation to Mrs. Witcherly of what was happening for some more favourable occasion. He went off on Tuesday with his little valise as though he was going back to Norwich. He wrote a simple letter of regret to the house-agent and coal-merchant. Private affairs, he said, of an urgent nature prevented his return to his duties. Mrs and Miss Hossett went up to London with him. They all took rooms at a temperance hotel in Bloomsbury, and Mr. Preemby was married by special licence at St. Martin’s by Trafalgar Square.

Then he went down to the Limpid Stream Laundry to live with his

parents-in-law and master the duties of assistant manager, canvasser, and publicity agent. Mr. Hossett never spoke to him and sometimes talked rather unpleasantly about him when he was in the room, making accusations that were better ignored, but Mrs. Hossett gradually became cordial again. And presently Mr. Hossett had a heart seizure and died, and in the course of a few months Mr. Preembly found himself a father. When he was first confronted with his daughter and, as it proved, his only child, he thought her an extremely ugly little red object. He had never seen a baby at so early a stage before. She had a lot of very fine moist dark hair which subsequently gave place to a later crop; she had large indeterminate features and remarkably large feet and hands. Mr. Preemby had an absurd impression that he had seen her somewhere before and hadn't liked her. Then in a day or so she became a quite ordinary pink baby and wonder gave place to affection.

She was christened Christina Alberta after her mother and Mr. Preemby.

5

In time all these experiences mellowed in Mr. Preemby's memory into a vague, glorious, romantic, adventurous past. He continued to be rather dreamy and distraught, but on the whole he made a dutiful, faithful husband, and he got on very well with his masterful and capable wife.

She was, he had discovered on his marriage, three years his senior, and she continued to be in every respect his senior to the day of her death. But she treated him with proprietary affection; she chose all his clothes for him, she cultivated his manners and bearing and upheld him against all other people. She dressed him rather more like a golf champion than he would have done himself if he had had any say in the matter. She would not let him have a bicycle for many years, she was a little exacting about his ways of keeping the laundry accounts, she fixed his pocket-money at ten shillings a week, and she was disposed to restrict his opportunities for conversation with feminine members of the laundry staff. But he made no marked protest against these slight deviations from the customary obedience

of a wife. A tendency to plumpness manifested itself, and he grew considerable quantities of blonde moustache, without apparent effort.

Their home was an agreeable one, the more so after Mrs. Hossett had followed her husband to his resting place, under a marble crucifix with a dove and olive branch in relievo at the intersection of the arms, at Woodford Wells. Mr. Preemby became a great reader, reading not only romantic novels — he had a great distaste for "realism" in any form — but ancient history, astronomy, astrology, and mystical works. He became deeply interested in the problem of the pyramids and in the probable history of the lost continent of Atlantis. Mental science also attracted him, and the possibility of increasing will-power very greatly. He would sometimes practise will-power before the looking-glass in his bedroom when Mrs. Preemby was not about. At nights he would sometimes will himself to sleep instead of going to sleep in the usual fashion. He gave a considerable amount of attention to prophecy and eschatology. He developed views of his own about the Day of Judgment that might have led to a breach with the Established Church if Mrs. Preemby had not thought that such a breach would react unfavourably upon the Laundry. As time went on he accumulated a library of upwards of a thousand volumes and a very considerable vocabulary.

His wife viewed these intellectual preoccupations with friendly sympathy, at times even with pride, but she took little part in them herself. The Laundry was good enough for her. She loved the Laundry more and more; loved its piled clean and starched shirts and collars and its folded and stacked sheets, loved the creak of its machinery and the suddy bustle of the washing room. She loved to have it all going on, orderly and right; to feel everything going through the tubs and washers and wringers, sure and safe; nothing astray, nothing missing at the end. When she walked about the place voices were hushed and scrubbing became respectfully assiduous. And she liked making things pay.

On Sunday afternoons and on days when the laundry had no need of his services, Mr. Preemby took long walks. In fine weather he would walk into Epping Forest or to Ongar or even into the rustic peace of the Roothings, but in dull weather he would go Londonward. After a while the trams were extended as far as the

present terminus at Woodford and it became possible to ride very pleasantly right into the heart of London by way of Seven Sisters Road and Camden Town, or, with a little bit of extra walking, by the Lea Bridge Road and the Angel and Holborn.

The greatness and multitudinous activities of London stirred slumbering strands of Mr. Preemby's imagination. He would go in and lunch at an Aerated Bread Shop on a scone and butter, with a cup of cocoa and perhaps a jam-puff, and he would spend hours looking into shop windows and sometimes even making small purchases. He loved Charing Cross Road with its book-shops, Tottenham Court Road, Holbom, Clerkenwell, and the Whitechapel Road, but Piccadilly and Bond Street and Regent Street seemed costly and lacking in true intellectual interest, and he felt his baggy tweed knickerbockers and cap a little out of tune in these smart places. Sometimes he would go to the British Museum and look very hard at objects connected with the pyramids. Great public events always drew him to London. If there was a great murder or a great fire or a Royal Wedding or a Royal Funeral, Mr. Preemby would be sure to be looking at it where the crowd was thickest, often with a neat packet of provisions, a sandwich, an orange, or so forth, that Mrs. Preemby had provided. But he never saw illuminations and fireworks because Mrs. Preemby liked to have him at home when the day's work was over. He enjoyed the Great War of 1914-18 gravely and profoundly. Once he passed a man whom he thought afterwards was almost certainly a German spy. The thought thrilled him for days. He had given him a good look anyhow. He attended air raids in plenty, and he saw the Potters Bar Zeppelin shot down. He was a good four years too old for compulsory military service when the time came, and Mrs. Preemby would not let him be a special constable because she thought he might catch cold.

Mr. Preemby's work in the counting-house was not very onerous, but he also gave thought and attention to the extension of the business outside. He invented several attractive circulars. His experience as a house-agent had trained him to note the existence of large comfortable-looking houses that might otherwise have escaped his observation and to ascertain whether they were occupied; he would then find out whether the Limpid Stream Laundry got the

washing from such establishments, and if not he would send a circular and even follow it up with a personal letter. He was vaguely observant about the premises. He would go sometimes and look for quite a long time at the furnaces or the delivery-vans or any new piece of machinery like the new calendering machine until he got used to it. But if he stood about where there were girls working, Mrs. Preemby would make some excuse to get him back into the office because, as she explained, she thought a man standing about affected the girls' work unfavourably. He took in and sometimes read the *British Laundryman* and the *Dyers' and Cleaners' Gazette.*

Occasionally he had happy ideas. It was his idea to paint the delivery vans bright blue and decorate them with a swastika, and to paint exactly the same colour and design on the front of the laundry and put it on the bills. But when he wanted to put the van drivers into swastika caps and blue the clothes baskets, Mrs. Preemby said she thought the thing had gone far enough. It was also Mr. Preemby who suggested Ford cars instead of horse vans as early as 1913. This change was made in 1915.

And at home with her peaceful interested father and her busy, occasionally rather astringent, mother, Christina Alberta grew to girlhood and womanhood.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

CHRISTINA ALBERTA

1

THIS story, it was clearly explained in the first paragraph of the first section of the first chapter, is a story about Mr. Preemby in the later years, the widower years, of his life. That statement has all the value of an ordinary commercial guarantee, and on no account shall we ever wander far from Mr. Preemby. But the life of his daughter was so closely interwoven with his own during that time that it is necessary to tell many things about her distinctly and explicitly before we get our real story properly begun. And even after it has begun, and while it goes on, and right up to the end, Christina Alberta will continue to intrude.

Intrusion was in her nature. She was never what is called an engaging child. But she always had a great liking for her daddy and he had the greatest affection and respect for her.

She had little or no tact, and there was always something remote and detached, something of the fairy changeling about her. Even her personal appearance was tactless. She had a prominent nose which tended to grow larger, whereas Mrs. Preemby's nose was small and bright and pinched between her glasses, and her father's delicately chiselled and like some brave little boat shooting a great cascade of moustache; she was dark and both her parents were fair. As she grew up the magic forces of adolescence assembled her features into a handsome effect, but she was never really pretty. Her eyes were brown and bright and hard. She had her mother's thin-lipped, resolute mouth and modestly determined chin. And she had her mother's clear firm skin and bright colour. She was a humming, shouting, throwing, punching child with a tendency not to hear admonitions and an almost instinctive dexterity in avoiding sudden slaps. She flitted about. She might be up the drying-ground or she might be under your bed. The only thing to do was to down and look.

She danced. Neither Mr. Preemby nor Mrs. Preemby danced, and

this continual jiggeting about perplexed and worried them. A piano or a distant band would set her dancing or she would dance to her own humming; she danced to hymn-tunes and on a Sunday. There was a standing offer from Mr. Preemby of sixpence if ever she sat quiet for five minutes, but it was never taken up.

At her first school, a mixed day-school in Buckhurst Hill, she was first of all extremely unpopular and then extremely popular and then she was expelled. Afterwards she did fairly well at the Taverners' Girls' School at Woodford, where she was recognized from the first as a humorist. There was always a difficulty in calling her any other name than Christina Alberta. People tried all sorts of names but none of them stuck but "Christina Alberta."

"Babs" and "Baby" and "Bertie" and "Buss" she was called at home and "Ally" and "Tina," and at school they tried "Nosey" and "Suds" and "Feet" and "Preemy" and "Prim." Also "Golliwog" because of her hair at hockey. These all came off again, and left the original name exposed.

She was quick at her lessons and particularly at history, geography, and drawing, but disrespectful to her teachers; at school hockey she played forward right with marked success. She could run like the wind, and she never seemed blown. Her pinch was simply frightful. She could make sudden grimmaces with her nose that gave the weaker sort hysterics. She was particularly disposed to do this at school prayers.

Between her mother and herself there was a streak of animosity. It was not a very broad streak, but it was there. Her mother seemed to cherish some incommunicable grievance against her. It didn't prevent Mrs. Preemby from doing her duty by the child, but it restrained any real warmth of affection between them. From an early age it was Daddy got the kisses and got climbed over and pulled about. He returned this affection. He called her "my own little girl" and would even say at times that she was a Wonder. He took her for walks with him and told her many secret things that were in his mind, about the Lost Atlantis and the Lamas of Tibet and the fundamentals of Astrology preserved indecipherably in the proportions of the pyramids. He'd often wished, he said, to have a good look at the pyramids. Sometimes one man saw things that

others didn't. She would listen intently, although not always in quite the right spirit.

He would tell her of the virtue and science of Atlantis. "They walked about in long white robes," he said. "More like Bible characters than human beings."

"Good for the laundries, Daddy," said Christina Alberta.

"All we know of astrology is just fragments of what they knew. They knew the past and future."

"Pity they were all drowned," she remarked without apparent irony.

"Maybe they weren't all drowned," he said darkly.

"You don't mean there's Atlantics about nowadays."

"Some may have escaped. Descendants may be nearer than you suppose. Why you and me, Christina, we may have Atlantic blood!"

His manner conveyed his conviction.

"It doesn't seem to help much," she said.

"Helps more than you think. Hidden gifts. Insight. Things like that. *We* aren't common persons, Christina Alberta."

For some moments the two of them pursued independent reveries.

"Still we don't *know* we're Atlantics," said Christina Alberta.

2

After she had fought her way to the sixth form in the Taverners' School the educational outlook of Christina Alberta was troubled by dissensions both within the school and without. The staff was divided about her; her discipline was bad, her class work rank or vile, but she passed examinations, and particularly external examinations by independent examiners, with conspicuous success. There was a general desire to get her out of the school; but whether that was to be done by a university scholarship or a simple request to her parents to take her away, was a question under dispute. The games mistress was inclined to regard murder as a third possible course because of the girl's utter disregard for style in games, her unsportsmanlike trick of winning them in irregular and unexpected ways, and her tendency to make drill and gymnastics an occasion for a low facetiousness far more suitable for the ordinary class-room. The English and Literature

mistress concurred — although Christina Alberta would spend hours over her essays working in sentences and paragraphs from Pater and Ruskin and Hazlitt so that they might pass as her own original constructions. It was not Christina Alberta's fault if ever and again these threads of literary gold were marked in red ink, "Clumsy" or "Might be better expressed" or "Too flowery." Only the head-mistress had a really good word for Christina Alberta. But then the head-mistress, as became her position, made a speciality of understanding difficult cases.

And Christina Alberta was always quietly respectful to the head-mistress, and could produce a better side to her nature with the most disconcerting alacrity whenever the head-mistress was called in.

Christina Alberta, as soon as the issue became clear to her, decided for the scholarship. She reformed almost obtrusively; she became tidy, she ceased to be humorous, she lost sets of tennis to the games-mistress like a little sportswoman, and she stopped arguing and became the sedulous ape of Stevenson for the estranged English mistress. But it was up-hill work even in the school. There was a little too much elegant surrender in her reformed tennis and a little too much parody about her English in velveteen. The possibility that she would ever join that happy class of girls who go in from the suburbs to classes in London and lead the higher life beyond parental inspection and sometimes until quite late in the evening in studios, laboratories, and college lecture-rooms, seemed a very insecure one, even without reckoning with the quiet but determined opposition of her mother.

For Mrs. Preemby was not the woman to like a daughter educated above her parentage and station. She came to lament her weakness in not bringing Christina Alberta into the laundry as she herself had been brought in at the age of fourteen. Then she would have learnt the business from the ground up, and have qualified herself to help and at last succeed her mother, even as Mrs. Preemby had helped and succeeded Mrs. Hossett. But the school with its tennis and music and French and so forth had turned the girl against this clean and cleansing life. She was rising seventeen now, and the sooner she abandoned these things which lead straight to school-teaching, spinsterhood, Italian holidays, "art" clothes, and stuck-up incapacity,

the better for her and every one.

She made a campaign against Christina Alberta's habit of sitting about in unladylike attitudes and reading; and when Mr. Preemby took the unusual and daring course of saying that it was a bit hard on the girl, and that he didn't see any harm in a book or so now and then, Mrs. Preemby took him up to Christina Alberta's own little room to see what came of it, and more particularly to see the sort of pictures she'd stuck up there. Even when he was confronted with a large photographic reproduction of Michael Angelo's creation of Adam as the master had painted that event on the roof of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, he still made a feeble show of resistance, and said that it was "Art."

"You'd stand anything she did, I believe," said Mrs. Preemby. "Look at it. Art! Look at these books! Darwin's *Origin of Species!* That's a nice book for a girl to be prying into."

"Very likely she doesn't see the harm of it," said Mr. Preemby.

"*Her!*" said Mrs. Preemby compactly. "And look at this!"

"This," was Howe's *Atlas of Biology.* She opened it to display its large pages crowded with pictures of the detailed dissection of a frog.

"Reely, my dear!" said Mr. Preemby. "It's one of her schoolbooks. There reely isn't nothing what I should call *improper* in that. It's Science. And, after all, it's only a frog."

"Pretty things they teach at school nowadays. What with your Art and your Science. Doesn't leave much to the imagination. Why, when I was a girl if I'd asked Ma what was inside *any* animal, she'd have slapped me and slapped me hard. And rightly. There's things rightly hid from us — and hid they ought to be. God shows us as much as is good for us. More. No need to *open* animals. And here — here's a book *in French!*"

"H'm," said Mr. Preemby, yielding a little. He took up the lemon-yellow volume and turned it over in his hand.

"All this reading!" said Mrs. Preemby and indicated three shelves of books.

Mr. Preemby assembled his courage. "You mustn't expect me to go against reading, Chris," he said. "It's a pleasure and a light. There's things in books... Reely, Chris, I believe you'd be happier if you read a bit. Christina Alberta is a born reader, whether you like it

or not. She gets it from me, I suppose."

Mrs. Preemby started and regarded his flushed opposition; the anger in her eyes was magnified through her glasses. "It's wonderful," she said after a little pause; "it's truly wonderful how Christina Alberta manages to get everything she wants."

3

Miss Maltby-Neverson, the head-mistress of the Taverners' School, called upon Mrs. Preemby and shook her resolution a good deal. She was obviously a lady, and the school washing ran in term-time to twenty pounds a week. She was taken to see the scandalous picture and she said: "Very beautiful, I'm sure. One of the really Great Paintings in the world. Profoundly religious. It's the very words of the Bible made into a picture. What do you find in it to object to, Mrs. Preemby?"

Whereupon, as if by a trick, the picture ceased to be scandalous and Mrs. Preemby was ashamed of herself. She saw now there never had been anything wrong about that picture.

Miss Maltby-Neverson said that Christina Alberta was a difficult type but a thoroughly interesting personality, a *real* personality. She had a great capacity for affection.

"I haven't found that," said Mrs. Preemby.

"It is a type I have studied," said Miss Maltby-Neverson, simply but conclusively.

She explained that Christina Alberta was an *active* type. Left to herself without employment to *stretch* her faculties she might easily get into almost any sort of mischief. Almost any sort. Not that there was anything wrong in her essentially. It was just energy. Given good hard work and a scope for ambition, she might become a very satisfactory woman indeed — possibly even a distinguished woman.

"I've no use for distinguished women," said Mrs. Preemby shortly.

"The world has," said Miss Maltby-Neverson gently.

"I'm afraid I'm one of the old-fashioned sort," said Mrs. Preemby.

"Christina Alberta isn't."

"Let the man be distinguished abroad and the woman

distinguished at home," said Mrs. Preemby. "I'm sorry to differ from you, Miss Maltby Neverson; but one cannot help one's opinions."

"It depends upon ourselves," said Miss Maltby-Neverson.

"I'm afraid I like men to rule," said Mrs. Preemby. "Woman has her place in the world, and it isn't man's."

"But I thought Mr. Preemby rather favoured the scholarship idea."

Mrs. Preemby was baffled. "He *did*" she said as though she did not see clearly what that had to do with the matter. "Give the thing a trial," said Miss Maltby-Neverson. "After all, she may not win this scholarship."

But Christina Alberta won it with marks to spare. She took no risks. It was a biennial scholarship which had been established by a benefactor of advanced views. It was tenable at the London School of Economics. As soon as Christina Alberta knew she had secured it she went, without consulting her mother or anyone, to a hairdresser's and had her hair bobbed. To Mrs. Preemby this was almost a worse blow than the scholarship. She surveyed her shock-headed, handsome-nosed daughter in her short gymnastic skirts with a qualm of sincere hatred.

She wished she could make her daughter feel about herself as she felt about her. "I wish you could only see yourself," she said with concentrated bitterness.

"Oh, I know," said Christina Alberta.

"I suppose you're a judgment on me," said Mrs. Preemby.

4

But Christina Alberta had only studied in the London School of Economics for a year, she was beginning her second year when her mother obliged her to resign her scholarship. Christina Alberta had stayed late in London one evening without telling her mother she was going to do so, she had gone to a discussion of the Population Question at the New Hope Club in Fitzgerald Street, and she had come home smelling so strongly of tobacco that her mother had repented of and revoked all her concessions to modernity there and then.

She had been waiting for that moment for many months. "This

ends it," she said as she let her daughter in.

Christina Alberta found there was no immediate way round or through that decision. She worked her father and Miss Maltby-Neverson in vain. But instead of resigning her scholarship right out as she had been told to do, she played for time and explained her absence by a vague reference to family trouble.

Mrs. Preemby in those days was already in very bad health, but this fact was completely overshadowed in the minds of both her daughter and her husband by the far more urgent fact that she was now constantly in a very bad temper. Everything was conspiring to worry her — except Mr. Preemby who knew better than to do anything of the sort.

The closing years of the Great War, and still more so the opening year of the Disappointing Peace, were years of very great difficulty for the laundry business. The munitions business put laundry girls above themselves and there was no doing anything with them. Coal, soap, everything was at unheard-of prices, and it was impossible to get back on the customers by raising the charges. People, even the best sort of people, were giving up cleanliness. Gentlemen of position would wear their dress-shirts three or four times and make their undervests and under-pants last a fortnight. Household linen was correspondingly eked out. People moved about; the new army officers' wives came and went, here to-day and gone tomorrow, leaving unpaid bills. Never had Mrs. Preemby known so many bad debts. Van men came back from the army so shell-shocked and militarized that they embezzled out of pure nervousness and habit. Income tax became a nightmare. Outside as within, Mrs. Preemby's life was a conflict. She kept the Limpid Stream Laundry paying all through that awful time because she was a wonder at management, but she did it at a terrible loss of vitality.

She became bitterly critical of the unhelpfulness of Mr. Preemby and her daughter. When they tried to be helpful she criticized their incapacity. They did more harm than good.

Meal times were awful. She would sit flushed and glowering through her glasses, obviously afflicted by a passionate realization of the world's injustice and eating very little. Mr. Preemby's attempts to start a cheerful conversation were rarely successful. Even Christina

Alberta was overawed.

"Things going a little better this morning?" Mr. Preemby would try.

"Can't I get rest from business even at my meals?" the poor lady would complain.

Or, "Looks like pleasant weather for the Derby."

"Pity you can't go there for all the help you are in the place. I suppose you haven't heard what's happened to van number two."

"No!" said Mr. Preemby.

"You wouldn't. Hind mudguard smashed. Been done for weeks. And nobody knows who did it. One would think that that was a man's business anyhow. But it's left for me to find out. And pay for. Like everything else in the place."

"I'd better make inquiries."

"I know those inquiries of yours. Better leave the whole thing alone now. Grin and bear it..."

The silence of the meal would be restored.

She seemed to set a high value upon these awful silences. She even complained that he ate his cheese biscuits audibly. But how else can one eat cheese biscuits? Christina Alberta was made of sterner stuff and became controversial. Then her mother would flare out at her insolence and declare that "one or the other of us" leaves the table. "I'll read upstairs," said Christina Alberta. "It isn't *my* wish to be lunching here."

Before the abrupt ending of Christina Alberta's university career she was present only at breakfast and supper; supper wasn't nearly as awful in quality as breakfast, and breakfast could easily be bolted and got away from; but after the New Hope Club catastrophe, she was present at all the meals, a sort of lightning conductor for her father and something of a restraint upon, and an added exasperation to, her mother. She took the line of agreeing that if her university career was to end, then she must go into the laundry business; but she argued very stoutly that to do that with any hope of success under modern conditions meant a "proper business training." If she could not go to the London School of Economics then she ought to go to Tomlinson's Commercial Training School in Chancery Lane and learn book-keeping, shorthand, typing, business correspondence,

precis, commercial French, and so forth. And after three weeks of painful midday meals this proposal was adopted under stringent conditions and her season-ticket to London was renewed. She worked her way very passably through another winter with Tomlinson's as her school and most of London as her playground. She learnt all sorts of things. She added a new set of friends and acquaintances, some with bobbed hair and some without, of the most various social origins and associations, to the circle she had already acquired at the London School of Economics.

When presently Mrs. Preemby began to speak of a gnawing pain that oppressed her, both her husband and daughter took it at first as a new development of her general grievance against them and felt no particular apprehension about it. Mr. Preemby said he thought she ought to take advice or see some one about it, but for some days she treated the suggestion with scorn. If once she got in a doctor, she said, they'd have to find some one else to look after the laundry. Doctors put you to bed and give you things to keep you there. Otherwise how could they get a living?

Then suddenly she changed. One morning she confessed she felt "dreadful." She went back to bed and Mr. Preemby, with strange premonitions that the world was coming to an end, trotted off for a doctor. The clinical thermometer showed a temperature mounting above one hundred and one. "It hurts. My side hurts," said Mrs. Preemby. "I've had it once before, but not like this."

Christina Alberta came home that evening to discover herself capable of fear, remorse, and tenderness.

She had some strange moments with her mother in between phases of weak delirium and insensibility. Mrs. Preemby's face seemed to have become smaller and prettier; the feverish flush in her cheeks simulated youth. She was no longer hard or angry, but rather pathetically friendly. And Christina Alberta hadn't seen her in bed for years.

"Take care of your Daddy," said Mrs. Preemby. "You owe more to him — and less to him — than you think. I had to do all I've done. Take care of him. He's gentle and good and easily persuaded and not to be trusted alone in the world....

"I've never been quite all a mother should be to you. But you've

been *difficult,* Christina.... I've had a great respect for you....

"I'm glad you haven't my eyes. Glasses are a Curse...."

Anxiety about the laundry occupied a large part of her thoughts.

"That woman Smithers in the washing room is a thief, and I'd get rid of the new man Baxandale. I don't know why I've kept Mrs. Smithers on so long.... Weakness.... I'm not sure about *him,* there's nothing positive yet, but I feel he's not straight.... I'm very much afraid we've let Lady Badger's account run too long. Nowadays titles — want watching. I've been misled by her. She promised a cheque.... But I doubt about you two in the laundry altogether. He can't and you won't. *You* might have done it.... Never mind that now.

"Sell it as a going concern? The Widgerys might come in. He's hard, but he's straight. Straight enough. They might like to come in....

"It's never entered my head I wasn't good for twenty years yet.... I wish the doctor wouldn't think of operating. It won't do any good."

She repeated many of her phrases.

"I hate the thought of being opened," she said. "I suppose — . Like those frogs in your book....

"Packed like a bag.... Never get it back again. Loose bits....

"Washing-basket or something to keep it together."

Then her mind went off at a tangent to things beyond Christina Alberta's understanding.

"Sneaked off and left me to it.... I wonder what he's doing now.... Suppose.... Fancy, if it should be him that had to operate.... Operate....

"Children we were."

She seemed to recollect herself and regarded her daughter with a hard inquiring eye. Some instinct in Christina Alberta told her to assume an incurious expression. But these words struck upon her mind and stayed there and germinated like a seed. Children they were, and he had sneaked off? Queer and yet according with all sorts of other imponderables.

5

Mr. Preemby looked unusually small but unusually dignified in his

full mourning. Christina Alberta was also extremely black and shiny. Her skirts reached for the first time in her life to her ankles; a sacrifice that she felt would be particularly acceptable to the spirit of the departed.

A new thing had come into Christina Alberta's life — responsibility. She perceived that for unfathomable reasons she was responsible for Mr. Preemby.

It was clear that the sudden death of his wife under the surgeon's knife had been a very great blow to him. He did not break down or weep or give way to paroxysms of grief, but he was enormously still and sad. His round china-blue eyes and his moustache looked at the world with a mournful solemnity. The undertaker had rarely met so satisfactory a widower. "Everything of the best," said Mr. Preemby. "Whatever she can have, she must have." Under the circumstances, the undertaker, who was a friend of the family, having met both Mr and Mrs. Preemby at whist-drives quite frequently, showed commendable moderation.

"You can't imagine what all this means to me," said Mr. Preemby to Christina Alberta, quite a number of times. "It was a pure love match," he said; "pure romance. She had nothing to gain by marrying me. But neither of us thought of sordid things." He was silent for a little while, struggling with intractable memories. He subdued them. "We just met," he said smiling faintly; "and it seemed that it *had* to be."

"Sneaked off and left me"; came a faint whisper in Christina Alberta's memory.

6

There was much to see to in those days of mourning. Christina Alberta did her best to help, watch, and guide Mr. Preemby even as her mother had desired, but she was surprised to find in him certain entirely unexpected decisions that had apparently leapt into existence within a few hours of her mother's death. One was a clear resolve that he and she must part company with the laundry either by selling it or letting it, or, if no means of disposing of it offered, by burning it down or blowing it up as speedily as possible. He did not discuss

this; he treated it as an unavoidable necessity. He expressed no animosity for the laundry, he made no hostile criticism of the life he had led there, but every thought betrayed his fundamental aversion. And also they were to go away — right away — from Woodford Wells and never return thither. She had come to much the same decisions on her own account, but she had not expected to find them in such quiet strength in him.

He became explicit about the future as they sat at supper on the evening of the funeral.

"Your mother's cousin, Sam Widgery," he said, "was talking to me."

He munched for a moment; his moustache went up and down and his eyes of china-blue stared out of the window at the sunset sky. "He wants to take it over."

"The laundry?"

"As a going concern. And he being our nearest relation, so to speak, I'd as soon he had it as anybody else. Other things being equal.... Wish I knew what to ask him for it. I don't want to ask him too little. So I said I didn't care to discuss things at a funeral. Said he'd better come along to-morrow. Their place isn't doing well. It's got sort of embedded in Walthamstow. It would pay him to get out and let the land go for building. He hasn't got very much money.... But he wants this place. He reely wants this place."

His blue eyes were the eyes of one who sees visions.

"I don't know if they taught you about making companies at the School of Economics. I'm a child at all that sort of thing. He talks about partnership or a mortgage or something like that, but what we want — what we want is a limited company. And what we want is something like debentures only rather more like preference shares. We want it so that whatever he draws out of the business we've got to draw out more. Otherwise the company can cut away the security for your debentures by paying too much dividend on the ordinary shares. He'll have the ordinary shares. Him and his wife. I don't say he'd do such a thing deliberately, but he might very easily be led into doing it. He's got to be looked after. We want to fix it so that if he pays more on his shares than we get on our shares we'd get our interest levelled up. It's all very difficult and complicated, Christina

Alberta."

Christina Alberta regarded Mr. Preemby with a new and deepening respect. She had never heard him make such a speech before at meals, but then he had never before been free from interruption and correction.

"We'll have to have it fixed up properly by our solicitors," said Mr. Preemby.

"We shan't be badly off," he continued, helping himself to cheese.

"There's a mortgage or so we've got and some houses at Buckhurst Hill. It's a curious thing, but your poor dear mother had a sort of faith in my eye for house property. She often let me guide her. And I always had a feeling for making some sort of reserve *out* of the business.... Very likely Sam Widgery will take over most of the furniture of this house. It's a bigger house than his...."

"Where do you think of going to live, Daddy?" asked Christina Alberta.

"I don't rightly know," said Mr. Preemby after a moment or so of introspection. "I keep thinking of different places."

"London," she said. "If I could go back to study — before it is too late."

"London," he said, "it might be."

He hestitated over his next suggestion with the hesitation that had become a habit, so accustomed was he to see his suggestions crumpled up and flung aside. "Have you ever heard of Boarding Houses, Christina Alberta?" he asked with an unreal carelessness. "Have you ever thought it might be possible for us to go and live in Boarding Houses?"

"In London?"

"All over the world — almost, there are Boarding Houses. You see, Christina Alberta, we might get rid of our furniture here, except for my books and a few little things, and we might put most of that away for a time — Taylor's Repository would take care of that for us — and we might go and live sometimes in a Boarding House here, and sometimes in a Boarding House there. Then you could study and needn't keep house, and I could read and look at things and make memorandums about some Theories I've thought of, and talk to people and hear people talking. All sorts of people go to Boarding

Houses — all sorts of interesting people. These last nights I've been thinking no end about living in Boarding Houses. I keep on thinking of it, turning it over in my mind. It would be a new life for me — like beginning again. Life's been so regular here. All very well while your poor dear mother was alive, but now I feel I want distraction, I want to move about and see all sorts of things and different kinds of people. I want to forget. Why! in some of these Boarding Houses there's Chinese and Indians and Russian princesses, and professors and actors and all sorts of people. Just to hear them!"

"There's Boarding Houses full of students in Bloomsbury."

"Every sort," said Mr. Preemby.

"One place that attracts me," said Mr. Preemby, pouring out what remained of the beer, "is Tumbridge Wells."

"Isn't that sometimes called Tunbridge, Daddy?"

"Formerly. But now it is always spoken of as Tumbridge Wells. At this Tumbridge Wells, Christina Alberta, there are hills with names that point directly to some connection with the ancient Israelites, Mount Ephraim and Mount Gilboa and so on, and there are a number of curiously shaped rocks, shaped in the likeness of great toads and prehistoric monsters and mystical forms and nobody knows whether they are the work of God's hand or man's. I am very anxious to see these things for myself. They may have a deeper and closer significance for us than is commonly supposed. There are plenty of Boarding Houses at Tumbridge Wells — I was told only the other day by a man I met in the Assyrian room in the British Museum — and some of them are said to be very comfortable and reasonable indeed."

"We might go there for the holidays," said Christina Alberta, "before the London session begins."

Outside was the summer afterglow, and a dusky peace filled the room. Father and daughter followed divergent trains of thought. Mr. Preemby was the first to break the silence.

"Now that I shall be in mourning, or half mourning, for some time I have decided to give away all those Harris tweed knickerbocker suits and stockings of mine. Some poor man might feel the comfort of them — in winter. I have never really liked those *very* baggy knickerbockers, but of course while your poor dear mother was alive

her taste was Law to me.

And those caps; they get over your eyes when you're hot. That tweed stuff.... It is overrated. When you ride a bicycle or anything it ravels out with the friction of the seat. Makes you look ridiculous.... And I think that quite soon I shall get myself one of those soft grey felt hats — with a black band."

"I have always wanted to see you wear one. Daddy," said Christina Alberta.

"It would count as mourning?"

"Oh! yes, Daddy."

Mr. Preemby meditated pleasantly. The girl had common sense. Her advice was worth having. "As for putting the swastika on your poor dear mother's tombstone, perhaps you are right in thinking it is not what she herself would have chosen. It may be better after all to do as you suggest and erect a simple cross. After all — it is *her* tombstone."

Whereupon Christina Alberta got up from her chair and went round the table — almost at a prance, until she remembered things — and kissed him. For some obscure reason she hated the swastika almost as much as she loved her Daddy. For her it had become the symbol of silliness, and she did not like to think of him as silly. Particularly now when for some obscure reason she was beginning to think of him as ill-used.

There was much to see to before the Preembys could go to Tunbridge Wells. There had to be quite a number of interviews with Mr. Sam Widgery at Woodford Wells and afterwards in the dingy offices of Messrs. Payne and Punter in Lincoln's Inn. It was clear from the first to these men of affairs that Mr. Preemby was a child at business, but as they went on with him they realized that he was an extremely greedy and intractable child. It was six weeks before Mr and Mrs. Sam Widgery could move in, sullenly and resentfully, to the Limpid Stream premises, and Mr. Preemby and his daughter could go on after a day or so in London to select a Boarding House at Tunbridge Wells.

Christina Alberta spent her early days as an orphan struggling against an unseasonable cheerfulness and a profound sense of

release. She found her father ready to accept almost any explanation of her need to *run* up to London for a day and even disposed to be tolerant when she came home late. She had quite a little world of miscellaneous acquaintances in London; fellow-students and their friends, fellow-students from the London School of Economics and fellow-students at Tomlinson's School and art students they knew and medical students they knew and girls from the provinces who had chucked their families and got typing jobs, and so on to models and chorus girls and vaguely employed rather older young men of the intellectual class. She met them in and about the class-rooms and in A.B.C.'s and suchlike places and in the New Hope Club, where there were even Labour politicians and men who claimed to be Bolsheviks, and she went to parties and duologues in studios in high, remote, extraordinary flats. It was tremendous fun, although a lot of it had to be snatched from the insistent claims and inquiries of Woodford Wells. And people liked her, they liked Christina Alberta, laughed at her jokes they did and admired her thundering cheek and never said anything about her nose. It was much more her natural world than the Taverners' School people had ever been. Nobody seemed to mind that she came out of a laundry; for all they seemed to care about that sort of thing, she might have come out of a gaol. In between the excitements of student life she even did some reading.

In her first grief for her mother she tried not to feel a sense of new unstinted freedom in regard to all these adventures and experiences. Her Daddy in his grief, bless him! was smoking much more than he had ever done before; he was even trying cigars; he had no nose for tobacco reek in his daughter — or for anything of that sort. He asked few questions and they were easily answered. Long years of exercise had made him almost constitutionally acquiescent. Christina Alberta realized that within very wide limits indeed now she might do anything she pleased whenever she liked. She realized also that there was no particular hurry to do anything at all. All the others seemed to be running about in pairs like knives and forks. It suited her humour to stay detached.

And the world had altered. This break-up of the old home, the death of her mother, the disappearance of every control except her credulous, inattentive Daddy, had jerked her forward from childhood

to maturity. Hitherto home had seemed an eternal, indestructible thing, from which you started out for adventures, to which, whatever happened, you returned like a sea-rover to rest and where you went to bed and slept as you had been wont to sleep, secure, unthreatened. Now here the two of them, Daddy and herself, were in the open; no bolting place at all for them: anything might happen to them and might insist upon going on happening. She could now do just anything she pleased, it was true, but also she realized that now she had to take the unlimited consequences.

So that in spite of her sense of novel, unbounded freedoms, Christina Alberta found she did not go up to London any more than she would have done during her mother's lifetime. Many of her most attractive friends, it is true, were away upon their holidays. And she found her father's company unusually interesting. Every time she came back to him he seemed to be slightly enlarged and of a firmer colour and consistency. He reminded her of Practical Biology (Botanical Section) in the Taverners' School, when you take a dried-up bean out of its package and put it in a jar with water and observe it under the influence of warmth and moisture. It germinates. And he was germinating.

Mother had kept him dried up for nearly twenty years, but now he was germinating and nobody could tell what sort of thing he might become.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

IN LONSDALE MEWS

1

AFTER a month of deep mourning, Christina Alberta put aside her long skirts and returned to the more kilt-like garments to which she was accustomed. She had not been inactive while her father had conducted his business settlement with Mr. Sam Widgery, and she had worked out a scheme of living that seemed to promise quite a happy life for her father and herself. She fell in with the Boarding House idea and with the project of beginning at Tunbridge Wells. She ceased to struggle with the fact that he continued to call it quietly but insistently Tumbridge Wells; it seemed to her upon reflection that Tumbridge was really the place he, at any rate, was going to live at. That gentle departure from exactitude was quite of a piece with his general habit of living a little askew from actual things.

But she impressed upon him the view that since their lives were to be migratory henceforth, and since there were a certain number of books, unsaleable articles of furniture that Mrs. Widgery would not take over at a valuation, a number of curiosities — for example, a piece of shell which he believed to be a fragment of a Great Auk's Egg, a Rosicrucian regalia, and a mummified hawk from Egypt which had prophetic qualities — to consider, there must be a sort of permanent headquarters in London, at which these objects could be stored and to which he and she could return from the various Boarding Houses round and about the earth. And, pursuant to this suggestion, she made inquiries and worked out an admirable project for sharing some accommodation with two little friends of hers who practised art, literature, and picturesque economies in a converted mews in Chelsea. In fact, she made arrangements with them. She told Mr. Preemby she had made these arrangements according to his instructions, and after a time it did come to seem to him that he had given her the instructions upon which she acted.

Lonsdale Mews opens out of Lonsdale Road, Chelsea; and there is quite a noble entrance with large stucco pillars on either side and an arch over, on which is a design in relievo of Neptune and sea-horses and the words "Lonsdale Mews." Inside there had once been stables and coachhouses, and over each a bedroom and a sitting-room, which was also in the more prolific past, generally used as a bedroom, and a cupboard and a landing and so forth, the little home of the coachman (and his wife and family) attached to the genteel carriage and horses below. But the advancement of science and the progress of invention have abolished gentility, and so reduced the number of coachmen and carriages in the world that Lonsdale Mews has had to accept other tenants; and being too narrow down the centre for the coming and going of automobiles without a great deal of bashing of mudguards and radiators, has had to paint itself up attractively and fall back upon art and the intelligenzia.

Christina Alberta's two young friends were in possession of one of these perverted coachmen's homes, and as they were very inadequately prepared to pay the rent — it was a quite aristocratic rent — they were extremely glad to welcome Mr. Preemby and particularly Christina Alberta as co-tenants. Mr. Preemby was to have the big room downstairs and there he was to arrange his books and his surplus furnishings and ornaments and curious objects, and have a sofa that could be made into an apparent bed when he wanted to sleep in London. And Christina Alberta was to have a little bedroom for herself behind this wherein a breezy decorative scheme of orange and bright blue more than made up for a certain absence of daylight and fresh air. But when the two young friends had a party or when Mr. Preemby was away they were to have the use of the big downstairs room, and in the case of a party Christina Alberta's room was to be a ladies' cloakroom.

The lessors were to retain the use of the upstairs rooms and in the matter of the kitchen all things therein were to be held in common. None of this agreement was put into writing and many issues were left over frankly for future controversy. "We are to be the pigs that pay the rent," said Christina Alberta; that was the general idea. "Much we'll work out," said Mr. Harold Crumb. "Much will work itself out. It's no good being too definite." What was definite was that

Mr. Preemby was to pay the rent.

Mr. Harold Crumb was a red-haired young man, a shock-headed young man with a rampant profile, dressed in a blue overall, frayed grey trousers and slippers. He had large freckled hands and he did Black and White, which Mr. Preemby had supposed to be a whisky but discovered was an art. Harold lived by attempting to sell drawings for advertisements and pictured jokes for the weekly papers. His expression was lofty and his voice constrained and it seemed to Mr. Preemby that he was suffered rather than met by Mr. Crumb. With Christina Alberta Mr. Crumb seemed to be on terms of tacit friendship and no word passed between them. He lifted his hand and twiddled his fingers at her — with a kind of melancholy.

Mrs. Crumb was more effusive. She embraced Christina Alberta warmly and answered to the name of "Fay." Then she turned to Mr. Preemby and shook hands with him quite normally. She was a slender young lady with carelessly bobbed corn-coloured hair, pale-grey eyes and an absent-minded face. She also was dressed in a blue overall, she wore oyster-coloured stockings and slippers and possibly other things, and her business in life, Mr. Preemby learnt, was to review books for various newspapers and write romantic fiction for bookstall magazines. Her right forefinger had that indelible inkiness which only the habitual use of an incontinent fountain-pen can give. There was a big screen in the downstairs room Mr. Preemby was to have that Mr. Crumb had made and Mrs. Crumb had covered with the bright mendacious wrappers of the books she had reviewed. This exercised Mr. Preemby the more because several of the wrappers were manifestly upside down, and he could not understand whether this was due to art, carelessness or some serious mental lapse.

"We'll have something to eat," she told Mr. Preemby, and then they could settle up things. But she had a surprisingly rapid articulation and it sounded like, "We'll 'f sum t'eat 'n' then we'll set lup thins." It took ten or twelve seconds to come through to Mr. Preemby's understanding.

Meanwhile she had turned to Christina Alberta. "'Dabit 'f work to do," she explained. "Bres no' clear' d'way. Late las' ni'. You be'r loo' roun' he' while Nolly gessomeat an' Ikn do 'p stairs fore you see't."

“Right-o,” said Christina Alberta, understanding perfectly. Mr. Preemby was left stunned, with his lips moving slowly. “So long,” said Harold, and took some money out of a black Wedgwood tea-pot and went and fell over things in the passage, and presently went out into the wide world while Fay vanished upstairs.

“She’s gone upstairs,” said Mr. Preemby interpreting slowly, “to do their rooms. And *he’s* gone to get some meat. It’s a nice large room, Christina Alberta — and quite well lit. Quite.

“I don’t think I’ve ever been in a Mew before,” said Mr. Preemby, approaching a group of attractive drawings on the wall.

“In a *what,* Daddy?”

“In a Mew. Or in a *Studjo*.... I suppose these are Originals.”

Christina Alberta awaited his reaction to the drawings with a slight anxiety.

“Looks like a lot of fruit and human legs and things,” said Mr. Preemby. “Wonder what they mean? *Summer Night* it says, and that’s *Passion in Solitude.* Don’t quite see it, but I suppose it’s symbolical or something.” He turned his round blue eyes to the room generally. “I could get a mahogany cabinet for my Curiosities and have it against the wall *there* — I’d like the sort with glass doors so that people could see the things — and if there was some shelves put across that place, it would hold most of my books. There’ll have to be a bed somewhere, Christina Alberta.”

“They’ve got a sofa upstairs,” said Christina Alberta, “with an end that pulls down.”

“Might go there.”

“Or under the window.”

“Of course there’s my clothes,” said Mr. Preemby. “I almost wish I hadn’t practically promised Sam Widgery your mother’s wardrobe. Rosewood it is. It has a lot of room in it and it might have gone against that bit of wall there. The trunk will make a sort of seat if we get the corners mended. Wonder how that screen would look the other way up. Books might go behind it. These easels and things I suppose they’ll take upstairs.... We’ll get things settled all right.”

Christina Alberta turned about with arms akimbo to follow his proposals. She perceived that they threatened a considerable disturbance of the aesthetic balance of the studio. She’d just thought

of a little bed-sofa affair with a bright rug over it. Silly of her to forget the baggage. But in the end perhaps it might be possible to arrest a lot of his gear in the passage. The passage was so choked already that a little more in it hardly seemed to matter. He could go out and get what things he wanted when he wanted them. She had a momentary anticipation of him in his shirt and braces, routing in trunks.

"Of course," said Mr. Preemby, "when you said you'd got two little friends in a *Studjo,* I thought they were two girls. I didn't think they were a married couple."

"They aren't so *fearfully* married," said Christina Alberta.

"No," said Mr. Preemby, and was restrained by modesty from further speech for some seconds. "Of course," he said, "if presently a Family came along — well, we'd have to move out, Christina Alberta."

"Never meet families half way," said Christina Alberta. "It isn't very likely anyhow. You trust Fay."

"You never know," said Mr. Preemby rather weakly, and showed a tendency to drift back to those ambiguous drawings.

"About time we had a look at the upstairs rooms, Daddy," said Christina Alberta, and went out into the passage to call "Fay!"

The answer came remotely. "'Lo?"

"Read-dee?"

"Not yet."

Christina Alberta found her Daddy back in the illustrated corner with his head on one side like an inquiring sparrow. For some time nothing was said. "Of course," he remarked at last; "it's Art." He turned away with his face pursed up beneath the moustache humming faintly. She perceived it was just as much Art as he could stand.

He ran his hand over the wall and turned intelligent eyes to Christina Alberta. "It's just canvas," he said; "what you pack things in. With sort of dabs of gold paint. I don't think I've ever seen walls that wasn't either done with paper or distemper before. I suppose really one might put all sorts of things on walls, cloth, bed-ticking, tarpaulin. Odd how one doesn't think of things."

Presently "upstairs" was "read-ee"; Mrs. Harold Crumb was free to answer questions and make explanations and Mr. Preemby could learn more of Christina Alberta's plans for his comfort. Upstairs was more various but less spacious than downstairs; the beds were dressed-up rather than disguised as divans and there was more vaguely improper but highly decorative Art. Like Christina Alberta, Mrs. Crumb had not fully considered Mr. Preemby's possibilities in the way of luggage, but she rose to the occasion very well. When Mr. Preemby spoke of the mahogany cabinet and the wardrobe, she said that it would be quite easy for Harold to "camouflage" them with very, very bright coloured paint, and she thought a lot might be done for Mr. Preemby's trunks and clothes by making a curtained alcove in a corner. "Trouble with clothes," said Mrs. Crumb, "is when somebody starts charades or dressing up. Nothing is sacred. Last week, somebody tore my only pyjamas limb from limb."

"We'd have to arrange," said Mr. Preemby, a little uneasily.

"We'll have to arrange somehow," said Airs. Crumb.

But before anything could be arranged definitely Harold returned from his shopping with a large piece of purple beefsteak in a mere loin cloth of newspaper, and a lettuce and a bundle of small onions in his hand and two large bottles of beer under his arm, and everybody's attention was directed to the preparation of the midday meal.

"Generally," said Harold, "we go Out for a meal. There's quite a decent aufschnittery and a little Italian place and so forth not five minutes away in the King's Road. It's more fun feeding Out. But we thought you'd like to see the studio put through its paces."

Mr. Preemby in the course of his life had rarely seen meals prepared; somebody else had always laid a table and said "Dinner's ready, Daddy," or "Supper's ready, Daddy" as the case might be, and he had just sat down, and it was with real interest that he obeyed Mr. Crumb's invitation to "come and see how we do it," and assisted under direction in the operations. Mr. Crumb, in a few well chosen words, introduced the cooking apparatus that clustered round the gas-stove; the gas-stove was lit explosively, Mr. Preemby handed things

and held things under direction and got in the way a good deal. Christina Alberta, who seemed used to the job, chopped the onions and dressed a salad at a small kitchen table close at hand, and the steak got itself grilled fiercely and flaringly.

Meanwhile Mrs. Crumb laid a blue painted table in what was to be Mr. Preemby's room with an orange-coloured cloth and a selection of plates and parts of plates, yellow-glazed mugs with rudely painted inscriptions in some rustic dialect, "Here's t' absent frens" and the like, several knives and forks, a pewter mug full of cigarettes and a bunch of sunflowers in a brown-glazed bowl. And at this table Mr. Preemby presently found himself seated very hot in the face and liberally splashed with fat from the grilled steak. Nobody said grace, and the meal began.

There was a general assumption that Mr. Preemby's tenancy was settled, though there were many points upon which he would have liked a clearer definition. He was particularly anxious to exclude as tactfully as possible his garments and his specimens from promiscuous use as properties when these charades occurred, but he did not know quite how to reopen the subject. And he was preoccupied by a doubt whether his long nightgowns of Saxony flannel, if they were publicly exposed, might not be considered old-fashioned by these artistic young people. But their talk jumped about so that it was difficult to lead up to what he had to say. He was accustomed, especially when company was present, to clear his throat "h'rrmp" and waggle his moustache up and down a little before he spoke, and by the time he was ready to deliver what he had to say one of the others was away with something else. So that he hardly said anything but an occasional "h'rrmp" all through the meal.

The two young ladies did most of the talking. Harold seemed moody, making an occasional correction or comment upon his wife's remarks and eating most of the steak with the pained expression of one who has tender teeth and is used to better food. Once he asked Mr. Preemby if he really cared for Good Music, and once if he had been to see the Iberian dancers last year, but neither of these inquiries led to a sustained conversation. "Hrrmp. No-oh," said Mr. Preemby. "Not exactly. Not particularly," and in the second case, "No-oh I didn't."

Mrs. Crumb talked brightly of various newspaper jobs she had got and how she had been asked to do a children's corner in the *Patriotic News* and whether she would accept the offer — Mr. Preemby thought the editors and newspaper proprietors she mentioned seemed a depraved lot — but mainly the talk concerned the movements and readjustments of a large circle of friends. After the meal there was coffee, and Harold, with an air of resignation, went and washed up.

There were many little things awaiting attention at the laundry, and after two or three cigarettes Mr. Preemby decided, "It's time for us to be going, Christina Alberta."

"We'll work it out all right," said Harold on their departure.

There were intervals of meditation as Mr. Preemby and Christina Alberta returned in the train from Liverpool Street to Woodford Wells. "It's not what I've been accustomed to," said Mr. Preemby. "It's all very different from the way your mother used to manage things.... Less orderly.... Of course I could keep my clothes locked up in my trunk."

"You'll do all right. They're perfect Dears. *She* loves you tremendously already," said Christina Alberta.

3

But before she went to sleep that night Christina Alberta experienced compunction. She felt compunction about these arrangements she was making for her Daddy. She doubted whether he would be truly comfortable and happy in that studio in Lonsdale Mews, and able to lead the life of steadfast curiosity he anticipated with so much quiet pleasure — ever humming to himself about it and working his moustache and saying "h'rrmp," when he was not otherwise engaged.

This story, it cannot be too often reiterated, is the story of Mr. Preemby who became, as we shall tell in due course, Sargon, King of Kings. But Christina Alberta has got herself hatched into this story very much like a young cuckoo in a wagtail's nest and it is impossible to ignore her. She was virtually in control of him and she had the egotism of her sex and age.

She had also a pitiless conscience. It was almost the only thing

she could not manage in her life. It managed her. It was a large crystalline conscience with no foundations and no relationships; it just floated by itself in her being; it was her gravitational centre and the rest of her could not get away from it.

When Christina Alberta went up for examination and judgment before Christina Alberta there was no nonsense in the proceedings, a fearful frankness; it was cards on the table, everything in evidence, no etiquette, not a stitch on, X rays if necessary. These examinations were all the more terrible because they were done in what was practically an empty room, without screens, curtains, standards or general beliefs of any sort. It is appalling to think of the drapery and function that was absent from Christina Alberta's court of conscience. In the first place Christina Alberta was completely and explicitly irreligious. In the next she was theoretically anti-social and amoral. She did not believe in respectability, Christian morality, the institution of the family, the capitalist system, or the British Empire. She would say so with extreme plainness and considerable detail except when her parent was about. Prevalent winds of sentiment did not stir her. She did not find the Prince of Wales ravishing nor *Punch* funny. She thought modem dancing tiresome, though she did it very well, and Wimbledon tennis and tennis-talk an intolerable bore. She favoured Bolshevism because everybody she disliked abused it and she hoped for a world-wide social revolution of an entirely destructive and cleansing type. What was to follow this revolution Christina Alberta, with the happy confidence of youth, did not seem to mind.

It is not for us to speculate here why a young woman born and bred between Woodford Wells and central London in the opening years of the twentieth century should confront the world with a mind so entirely swept and void of positive and restraining convictions; we put the fact on record. And if she had been sustained by all the beliefs in Christendom and a sure and certain respect for every detail of the social code, whatever that code may be, she could not have confronted the world with a more cheerful confidence, nor with a stronger persuasion that Christina Alberta had to behave, in some undefined fashion, well. Christina Alberta had to be Christina Alberta, clear and sound, or the court of conscience made things

plain and hard for her.

"Christina Alberta," the court would say, "you are the dirtiest, filthiest little thing that ever streaked the dust of life. How do you propose to get clean again?"

Or, "Christina Alberta, you have been lying again. You'll lie to *me* next. First it was laziness made you lie and now it is cowardice. What are you going to make of yourself, Christina Alberta?"

There came a time when the court had to address Christina Alberta in this fashion; "Your nose, Christina Alberta, is large beyond comparison. It will probably go on growing all your life — as noses often do. Yet you are setting yourself out to charm and fascinate Teddy Winterton. You go to places where you think you will meet him. You fuss and preen yourself like any female idiot. You dream all sorts of things about him, disgraceful things. You are soppy on this young man in spite of the fact that you know he is — no sort of good. You like him to touch you. You sit and look at him foolishly and you gloat. Does he gloat on you? Isn't it time you considered where you are going, Christina Alberta?"

And now the court was in full session and the charge, the charge for which there was no defence, was that she was going to take her absurd, unprotected Daddy and entrust him and his foolishness and his silly books and his ridiculous treasures and all his dreams and desires, to the insecure and unsympathetic studio of the Crumbs, not because of any vague and general hunger for London, though that was in the background, but because that studio was frequented by the all too seductive Teddy, because there she had met him and danced wildly with him and been suddenly and astonishingly kissed by him and kissed him. And then he had beguiled her to learn a dance with him and had got her to come to tea with him at his studio to meet his sister — who hadn't turned up. And there had been other meetings. He was impudent and provocative and evasive. All her being was in a state of high excitement about him. Coldly and exactly now the court unfolded the operations of her mind to her; showed how the thought of Teddy, always present and never admitted, had guided her decision to harbour with the Crumbs. Only now did she come to confession and clear vision. "You have lied to yourself, Christina Alberta," said the court; "and that is the worst sort of he. What are

you going to do about it?"

"I can't let the Crumbs down now. They count upon us."

"You are in a mess, Christina Alberta. You are in a worse mess than we thought you were. *Soppy* you are about Teddy Winterton. Why not call things by their right names? You are in love. Perhaps something frightful has happened to you. Little rabbits run about the hedges and every day is like every other day for them; they waggle their little noses and wiggle their little tails and do what they like with their paws. Until one day there is a ping and the snare snaps on the little furry foot and everything you try to do after that is different. The snare holds your movements and you must just dance round it and squeal if you like, till the man comes along. Is that what has happened to you? And for Teddy! Teddy, with that open, lying face!"

"No," said Christina Alberta, "I don't love him. I don't love him. I've been silly and soppy and adrift. I am no more worthy to be called Christina Alberta. But it hasn't got me yet and it shan't get me. I'll pull Daddy out of it and myself out of it; I vow and swear...."

"H'm," said the court.

4

It seemed to Mr. Preemby that the first evening he spent in his new quarters in Lonsdale Mews was the most eventful evening in his life. Impressions crowded upon each other. Insomnia was not among his habits, but when at last he lay upon his shake-up bed he was kept awake for most of what was left of the night (it was the frayed piece with the bleak dawn in the middle of it) trying to get these same impressions sorted out, impressions about his new surroundings, impressions about Christina Alberta, impressions of new and unprecedented personalities, a marmalade of impressions.

Mr. Preemby and Christina Alberta arrived at the studio according to plan about half-past three, but the Picton van which had started that morning with Mr. Preemby's bags and trunks and the crates of books and curiosities and the late Mrs. Preemby's roomy wardrobe, which had after all been rescued from the clutches of Sam Widgery, did not arrive until it was nearly six. Unfortunately the furniture dealer in Brompton Road from whom Mr. Preemby had purchased a

specimen-cabinet and a long low walnut book-case had delivered these articles the day before, and all the animosity of the modem artist towards self-assertive wood had been, aroused in Harold. He and Fay and a friend or so who had dropped in, had sat up quite late painting these new pieces a deep ultramarine blue with stars and splashes of gold like the paper they put round the necks of Ayala, Tsarist and suchlike champagnes. When Mr. Preemby saw their handiwork he could scarcely believe it was the same specimen-cabinet and bookcase.

"I suppose one could get it off again," said Mr. Preemby.

"But see how they are assimilated by the room," said Harold in high expostulation.

"I mean if we moved at any time," said Mr. Preemby. "I know it's art, and it goes with the things here very nicely, but there's neighbourhoods I wouldn't like to move into — not with these things as they are. You don't know what people's imaginations are like."

Matters went a little tediously until the arrival of the Picton van. The sofa-bed was arranged and rearranged. The bed things, blankets, sheets and pillow-cases were to be put in a bundle on the top of Mr. Preemby's flat trunk behind the book-wrapper screen. "We shall have to find some other place for the bottled beer," said Harold. "It's too hot in the kitchen and too dangerous in the passage. But I've an idea we might have it in the scullery under the sink, with a cloth over it and water dripping on the cloth. Evaporation. I'll see about it."

Mr. Preemby was surprised by a yawn. "I suppose you'd like to have some tea," said Fay suddenly, and she and Christina Alberta prepared some.

Harold was obviously in a strained and nervous state. Mr. Preemby's patient little figure, sitting about, hands on knees, waiting for Picton's van, looking at things with innocent eyes and saying "h'rrmp," had much the same effect of nervous dislocation upon Harold that the mild and patient camel has on a horse. Harold chafed and pranced. He walked about and went upstairs and out and returned; he smoked endless cigarettes and pressed endless cigarettes upon Mr. Preemby; he made recondite remarks in a strained voice. "All this is like something out of Dostoievsky," he said to Mr. Preemby. "In a different scheme of colouring of course. Different,

but the same. Don't you think so, Mr. Preemby?"

Mr. Preemby nodded his head in a sympathetic, humorous, not too explicit manner. "H'rrmp," he said. "It *is* a bit like that."

"Things will work themselves out," said Harold. "Things will work themselves out. You know that poem of Ruby Parham's." He cleared his throat. "It is called 'Waiting,'" he said. "It goes like this —"

His eyes became fixed and glazed; his voice gathered volume, so that the words seemed more than life-sized.

"After every minute "Comes another minute "And then, rest assured, "Another.

"Like drops from a ledge in the rain.

"You may not want to go on; "But *they* will, "Oh! endlessly "Taking your life away, death, not final and complete, "But death in the midst of life, "Particles of death, "Death by attrition.

"Drip on Old Death — in life!

"Slow, dull, implacable, unendurable!

"Drip on."

"That 'Drip on' is great. But perhaps you don't like modem poetry?"

"I don't *mind* it," said Mr. Preemby genially.

"Of course, nothing of a really destructive nature *can* have happened to that van," said Mr. Crumb in a pessimistic tone.

When Picton's van arrived and the roomy wardrobe began its destructive march through the passage, Mr. Crumb called suddenly upon his maker in a loud distressful voice and vanished for the better part of an hour.

Christina Alberta was torn between a sympathetic understanding of Harold's state of mind and the fear that her Daddy might perceive the unfavourable reaction he produced in Harold and be hurt by it. She and Fay became brightly helpful with the unpacking. "If I might have one of those blue pinafores of Mr. Crumb's to put on," said Mr. Preemby, "I'd be glad. These black things of mine show every mark."

Mr. Crumb's overall reached far below Mr. Preemby's knees and somehow justified his calling it a pinafore. It brought out something

endearingly infantile in his appearance that appealed to the maternal instinct lurking in Mrs. Crumb. She struggled with a persuasion that he was really a little boy of nine who had been naughty and grown a big moustache and that she had to take care of him and restrain him and generally tell him not to. The books were put in the bookshelves as Mr. Preemby said, "just anyhow"; they could be sorted up later, but the curiosities and specimens took longer and had to be "put out" more or less in the cabinet. There were not only real curiosities and specimens but many little things that Mr. Preemby had accumulated because they looked like curiosities and specimens. There was, for instance, a piece of one of the laundry delivery van mudguards so bent by a collision as to resemble a human torso in the most striking fashion; there was the almost complete skull of an unknown mammal, probably a fallow deer, picked up in Epping Forest, there was a potato, now rather shrivelled, in which it was possible to detect thirty-seven distinct human faces and — specimen of an entirely different quality — a large flint in which there were no less than fifty-five. Ages ago some primordial Preemby had discovered and loved that very same flint and had brought out the likenesses by chipping an eye here or a nostril there; but Mr. Preemby did not suspect the help of that remote and perhaps ancestral hand. Even in waking life Mr. Preemby saw faces in everything. What he would have been like with a high temperature it is impossible to imagine.

Christina Alberta's anxiety about her father's reception by the Crumbs diminished as she saw his virtual conquest of Fay. Fay treated him firmly but indulgently, and they lost a good deal of time while she tried to see all the fifty-five faces of the wonderful flint. They had to start and start again, but always they lost count about "Twen-tee" or "Twen-tee-one." The question would arise whether they were counting one of the faces over again.

Harold returned in a moody state and could be heard, all too distinctly, kicking Mr. Preemby's packing cases in the hall, but Fay went out to him with a lofty sleep-walking expression in her pale eyes, and the concussions ceased, and presently Harold came downstairs again looking almost handsome in nankeen trousers, a blue jacket with big silver buttons, and a voluminous black tie, and was quite nice to Mr. Preemby.

"You won't mind my touching that wardrobe of yours up a bit?" he said. "It damps us off, as it is. Kind of reproaches us. One of us has to be altered, you see, it or me, and either I paint it or else I get a silk hat with a deep mourning band and a gold-handled umbrella — which would cost no end of money. Whereas I *have* the paint."

"If you can get the paint off again," said Mr. Preemby. "You see if I was to move — *back*.... It's all right to have all this paint in a Mew. But out of a Mew...."

"Exactly," said Harold. "My idea is to make a little pink house of it with windows and so on. Something very simple. Rather like the scenery of a Russian Sketch. *Chauve Souris* sort of stuff. Conventional to the nth. And we might put up placards at the corner of it according to what is going on. Make a bit of an institution of it."

"So long as it makes things agreeable," said Mr. Preemby.

He found his hair being ruffled affectionately. "Dear little Daddy" said Christina Alberta.

5

But now appeared a new-comer and life was made uncomfortable and complicated for Christina Alberta again by the presence of Mr. Teddy Winterton's candid insincerity. His graceful body, his movements, his voice, stirred her senses as she hated them to be stirred; his quiet impudence invaded her sense of humour; he wounded her pride and she longed to be even with him. She had no power over him and he behaved as if he owned her. She was always letting him go just a little too far. When he was about her nose cast a shadow that reached to her horizon. He stood now in the doorway — trousers of one pattern of tweed, waistcoat of another, Norfolk jacket of a third extensively unbuttoned in the accepted student style, and he watched Mr. Preemby carry his collection of roc's bones, found near Staines, across the studio on a tea-tray. His eyes were round with surprise and amusement; his mouth said noiselessly; "What is it?"

Christina Alberta was not going to have her Daddy laughed at by any Teddy Winterton. "Mr. Winterton," she said. "This is my father."

"I'll just get rid of my bones," said Mr. Preemby, "and then I'll

shake hands."

"We'll just finish up Mr. Preemby's things and then we'll all go round to Poppinetti's to get some dinner," said Fay. "There's hardly anything left to unpack now."

"Just one or two Antediluvian bones," said Mr. Preemby.

Teddy seized upon one. "This," he said, inspecting it, "is a fossil rhinoceros thigh-bone from the Crag."

"It's an Antediluvium horse," said Mr. Preemby.

"Forgive me! It's a rhinoceros bone!"

"Horses had rhinoceros bones in those days," said Mr. Preemby. "And the rhinoceroses — ! They were incredible. If I had one I shouldn't have anywhere to put it."

Mr. Preemby was extracted from his overall and restored to the black coat and the grey felt hat with the black band. He became one of a straggling party that went out of Lonsdale Mews to a little Italian restaurant in the King's Road. Three neighbours of the Crumbs mixed themselves up with the party, a very quiet man with silver hair and a young man and a dusky girl.

Mr. Preemby was much impressed by the novelty of thus going out for dinner, and expatiated on its advantages to the silver-haired man who seemed to be the quiet sort of listening man that Mr. Preemby liked to meet. "You see you don't have to *cook* the meal and you don't have to lay the table and afterwards naturally there isn't any washing up. But I expect it comes more expensive."

The silver-haired man nodded intelligently. "Exactly," he said.

Harold Crumb overheard this. "Expensive," he said, "it isn't. No, Every other crime Poppinetti can commit, but that is barred by the circumstances of his clientele. He feeds us on stolen pigeons, his *dinde* is guinea-pig, his beef, *a l'omnibus:* what he minces God knows; what he puts into his ravioli makes even the Lord God repent of his extreme creativeness. But you see, you don't *think* about his ravioli, you eat 'em, and they're damned good. There are always flowers on the table and an effect of inexpensive refinement. You will see. You will see."

Mr. Preemby saw. Poppinetti was a small man but carefully modelled on Caruso, and he received his large party with the deference of a diplomatist and the effusion of a geyser. He was

particularly gracious to Mr. Preemby, bowing profoundly to him, and saluting him with great richness subsequently whenever he caught his eye. He seemed to Mr. Preemby to spend the rest of their time together going to remoter and remoter parts of the restaurant in order to catch Mr. Preemby's eye and bow and smile to him from greater and greater distances. Mr. Preemby had curious doubts whether he wasn't being mistaken for somebody else.

Signor Poppinetti, with an air of peculiar favour, guided the party to a long unattractive table near the centre of the restaurant and took their conflicting orders with the gestures of a conductor guiding an orchestra through a difficult passage. Mr. Preemby was passive but observant; he presently found himself eating macaroni and drinking a rough red wine with a name that sounded to his London tuned ears like a challenge. Chianti.

Harold Crumb showed great earnestness in the matter of macaroni. "In order to taste macaroni," he assured Mr. Preemby, "it is necessary to fill the mouth absolutely full, good measure, pressed in and running over. To cut up macaroni with your fork as you are doing, is as awful as to cut an oyster. It — it devitalizes it."

"I like it cut up," said Mr. Preemby with unexpected firmness. And he cut up some more.

"Otherwise," he said in a confidential aside to the silver-haired man, "I can't help thinking it's earthworms."

"Exactly. Exactly," said the silver-haired man.

Harold exemplified generously. His rampant face riding over a squirming mouthful of macaroni was like St. George and the Dragon on an English sovereign. He whistled as he ate. Long snakes of macaroni hung thoughtful for a moment and then, drawn by some incomprehensible fascination, fled into him. Teddy Winterton and one of the new-comers from the studio next door emulated him. Christina Alberta and Fay showed the furtive dexterity of the female. But Mr. Preemby was glad when macaroni was over, even though it raised the problem of eating an egg on spinach with a fork.

But he was not really troubled in his mind as a younger man might have been. He had the *savoir-faire* of middle-age. This restaurant dinner was on the whole a bright and agreeable experience for him. He liked even the corrosive taste of the Chianti. This Chianti

you drank out of quite largish tumblers because it was almost as cheap and light as beer. It did not intoxicate but it warmed the mind, and it cast a pleasant and convincing indistinctness over the universe so that the Tunbridges all became Tumbridges without any question, and the secret dreams and convictions of the heart became certain knowledge. Presently Mr. Preemby found himself able and willing to tell things and hint much more important things about his collections to the white-haired man and also to the dark untidy girl who was sitting on his other side, and who came from the other studio and about whose name he had no idea, and presently to others; and when the bird came — it was a bird new to Mr. Preemby, and called, he gathered, *rabbkey* or *turkit* — most of the party was talking in the loud confused explosive way these young people affected about the lost *Atlantis.*

He had never spoken so freely before upon this topic. At home he had always been restrained by the late Mrs. Preemby's genuine lack of interest.

And even now he was not prepared for positive statements or for an encounter with sceptical arguments about that great lost continent of the Golden Age. Atlantis had been the scene and substance of his secret reveries for many years; he knew his knowledge of it was of a different order from common knowledge, more intuitive, mystical, profound. From the outset his manner was defensive, discreet and obscure, as of one willing but not permitted to speak.

How did he know that there had been this lost continent? "H'rrmp," he said with the faint smile of peculiar knowledge; "studied it for years."

"What is the evidence?" asked the untidy young lady.

"So abundant. Impossible to retail it. Convincing. Of various sorts. Plato has much about it. Unfinished fragment. Many books have been written. Many inscriptions in Egypt."

"What sort of people were they?" asked the untidy girl.

"Very wonderful people, young lady," said Mr. Preemby. "H'rrmp. Very wonderful people."

"Philosophy, no end I suppose?" asked the young man from the next studio with his mouth full.

"What we know — a mere remnant," said Mr. Preemby. "Mere

remnant."

"How did they dress?"

"H'rrmp. Robes. White robes — extremely dignified. Blue — azure — when justice was administered. Plato tells us that much."

"Could they fly?"

"They understood it. It was not made a practice of."

"Motor-cars? All that sort of thing?"

"If they wanted to. There was less motoring — more meditation. We live — age of transition. H'rrmp."

"And then it all went phut?" said the young man from the next studio. "Submerged and all that. What a lesson!"

"That need not have happened," said Mr. Preemby darkly.

Mr. Preemby became dimly aware of scepticism. "There's not an atom of evidence that there ever was a continent in the Atlantic," Mr. Teddy Winterton was saying to Christina Alberta; "within thirty million years of anything human. The ocean troughs go right back to the Mesozoic age."

Mr. Preemby would have noticed this remark but the untidy girl asked him suddenly if he did not think that the swastika was a symbol derived from Atlantis. He said he was quite certain it was. She asked what it meant exactly; she had always been curious about its significance: and he became guarded and mysterious. She wanted moreover to know things about the costume of that lost world, about its social customs, about its religion. Were women citizens? She was certainly the most intelligent about it of all the company. The silver-haired man seemed to be faintly amused.

The rest of the company wandered off into a discussion of the possibility of going to the Chelsea Arts Ball in the character of a party from the Lost Atlantis. Many of their ideas Mr. Preemby thought trivial and undignified.

"Leaves us unlimited scope," said Harold Crumb. "We could invent weapons — have wings if we liked. Magic carbuncles on our shields — illuminated. Mysterious books and tablets. And a sort of peculiar wailing, drumming music; Mya, mya, mya."

He pursed up his face and made a curious mooing noise with it to convey his intention, twiddling his fingers to assist the effect.

It was no good protesting against such imaginative ignorance. But

to the dark untidy girl and to the acquiescent man with silvery hair Mr. Preemby continued to be quietly oracular and communicative from behind his moustache.

"But how are these things known?" the dark girl persisted. "There is nothing in the British Museum."

"You forget," said Mr. Preemby. "H'rrmp, the Freemasons. There are Inner Groups — traditions. Thank you. Just half a glass more. Oh! you've filled it! Thank you."

As he talked he was aware of something going on between Christina Alberta and Winterton. At first it seemed not to matter in the slightest degree, but to be just part of the general unusualness of the gathering, and then it seemed to matter a great deal. He saw Christina Alberta's little fist resting on the table, and suddenly Winterton's hand enveloped it. She snatched her hand away. Then something was whispered and her hand came back. In another moment the hands were five inches apart and it was as if nothing had ever happened between them.

He would probably have forgotten the momentary invasion of his attention by Christina Alberta if something else had not occurred at the phase of dessert. Poppinetti's idea of dessert was a sort of lottery of walnuts — if you found a sound one you won — masses of compressed and damaged dates and a few defiant apples. There was a great crackling. The company was littering the table with walnut shells, and the green, black and yellow corruption they had contained, when this second incident caught Mr. Preemby's eye. He saw Teddy Winterton run his hand very softly along Christina Alberta's forearm. And her arm was not withdrawn.

Every one was talking just then and for a moment it seemed to Mr. Preemby that he alone had seen, and then he caught an observant expression on the face of the silver-haired man. It was all very confusing, and this Chianti — though it was really not intoxicating — made everything swimmy, but Mr. Preemby knew somehow that the silver-haired man had also seen that furtive familiarity, and that he too didn't quite approve of it.

Ought one to take notice? Ought one to say anything? Perhaps afterwards. Perhaps when they were alone together, he might ask her quietly, "Are you and that young man Winterton engaged?"

“A bit too much,” said Mr. Preemby quietly, meeting the eye of the silver-haired man. “I don’t like that sort of thing.”

“Quite,” said the silver-haired man.

“I shall speak to her.”

“You’re right there,” said the silver-haired man warmly. A very sensible fellow.

A great rustle and a scraping of chairs. Poppinetti figuring upon an accounts-pad, came to collect the money.

“I’ll pay for us, Daddy,” said Christina Alberta, “and we’ll settle up afterwards.”

Poppinetti bowing. Poppinetti on Mr. Preemby’s right and on Mr. Preemby’s left; several Poppinettis bowing. A great activity of Poppinettis handing hats and so forth. Poppinettis whichever way you turned. The restaurant rotating slightly. Was this Chianti perhaps stronger than Mr. Preemby had been led to believe? A number of Poppinettis opening a number of doors and saying polite things. Difficult to choose a door. Right the first time. Out into the street. People going by. Taxis. No more Poppinettis. But a girl ought not to let a young man stroke her arm at dinner, when anyone might see it happen. It wasn’t correct. Something had to be said. Something tactful.

Mr. Preemby became aware that he was walking next to Mrs. Crumb. “It was lovely to hear you talking about the New Atlantis,” she said. “I wish I had been sitting nearer.”

“H’rrmp,” said Mr. Preemby.

Something very nice about Mrs. Crumb. What was it? Not so *fearfully* married, but married quite enough.

6

Mr. Preemby thought they were going back for coffee and a little talk and then bed; he had no idea of the immense amount of evening still before him. He knew nothing as yet of the capacity for sitting up late and getting lively in the small hours possessed by this new world of young people into which Christina Alberta had led him.

And in a sort of hectic discontinuous way they were lively for hours. It became vaguely evident to Mr. Preemby that there was a

periodic “day” set apart by Mrs. Crumb for evening gatherings in the studio, and that this evening he had chosen for his settling down was such an evening. Fresh people dropped in. One it seemed was a portentous arrival, he came in quite soon after the return from Poppinetti’s; he was very fat and broad, a white-faced man of forty or so, rather short of breath, with exceedingly intelligent eyes under a broad forehead and a rather loose peevish mouth. He carried himself with the involuntary self-consciousness of a man who thinks he is pointed out. His name it seemed was Paul Lambone, and he had written all sorts of things. Everybody treated him with a faint deference. He greeted Christina Alberta with great warmth.

“How’s the newest Van?” he said, shaking her hand as though he liked it, and speaking with a singularly small voice for so ample a person. “How’s the last step in Advance?”

“You’ve got to meet my father,” said Christina Alberta.

“Has it got a father? I thought it just growed like Topsy — out of Nietzsche and Bernard Shaw and all the rest of them.”

“H’rrmp,” said Mr. Preemby.

Mr. Lambone turned to him. “What a Handful a daughter is!” he said, and bowed slightly towards Christina Alberta, “even the best of them.”

Mr. Preemby replied after the manner of the parents in Woodford Wells. “She’s a good daughter to me, sir.”

“Yes, but they aren’t like sons.”

“You have sons, sir, I presume.”

Only dream children. I’ve not had your courage to realize things. I’ve married a hundred times in theory and here I am just a sort of bachelor uncle to everybody. Poking in among the younger people and observing their behaviour with” — his intelligent eyes looked quietly over his garrulous mouth at Christina Alberta—” terror and admiration.”

Two other visitors appeared in the doorway and Mr. Lambone turned from Mr. Preemby to greet them as soon as Fay had done her welcome, a fierce-looking young man with an immense head of black hair and a little lady like a china doll dressed to remind one of Watteau.

Conversation became general and Mr. Preemby receded into the

background of events.

He found himself side by side with his friend with the silver hair, against his bookcase. “I didn’t expect a party,” he said.

“I thought so too.”

“I only got here this afternoon. The vans came late and lots of my things are still to be unpacked.”

The silver-haired man nodded sympathetically. “Often the case,” he murmured.

Every one was talking loudly. It was difficult to hear. It was confused sort of talking, and whenever two or three seemed to be interested in what they were saying, Fay Crumb went and interrupted them as a good hostess should. Other people, only vaguely apprehended by Mr. Preemby, got into the studio somehow. There was a red-haired young lady with a tremendous decolletage; behind you could see almost to her waist. He h’rrmp’d at it and thought of saying something about it, something cold and quiet, to the silver-haired man. But he didn’t. He couldn’t think of anything sufficiently cold and quiet to say.

Fay Crumb came and asked whether he would like some whisky or beer. “Not on the top of that nice Chianti, thank you,” said Mr. Preemby.

The conversation seemed to get noisier and noisier. In one corner Harold Crumb could be heard quoting the poems of Vachell Lindsay. Then Mr. Lambone came up and seemed to want to talk about the Lost Atlantis, but Mr. Preemby was shy of talking about the Lost Atlantis with Mr. Lambone. “Getting on alright, Daddy?” said Christina Alberta, drifting by and not waiting for any answer but an “h’rrmp.”

There appeared three young people with a gramophone they explained they had just bought, and Fay discovered that the beer had been forgotten and sent Harold out to borrow some from a neighbour. These new-comers made no very profound impression on Mr. Preemby’s now jaded mind, except that one of them, the owner of the gramophone, a very fair young man with a long intelligent nose, was wearing the big horn of the gramophone as a headdress, and that he meant to have that gramophone going whatever else might occur.

The music was dance-music, jazz for the most part and a few waltzes, and it revived Mr. Preemby considerably. He sat up and beat time with the leg-bones of a roc, and presently two or three couples were dancing on the studio floor. Curious dancing, Mr. Preemby thought; almost like walking — jiggety walking with sudden terrific back-swipes of the legs. There was an interruption when Harold returned with the borrowed beer — bringing its lenders with it. Then there was a general clamour for Christina Alberta and Teddy to "do" their dance. Teddy was quite willing but Christina Alberta seemed reluctant, and when Mr. Preemby saw the dance he was not surprised.

"H'rrmp," he said, and stroked his moustache and looked at the silver-haired man.

It really was too familiar altogether; for some moments the principals vanished upstairs, and came back altered. For some reason Teddy had adopted a cloth cap and a red neck-wrap; he was, in fact, being an Apache, and the bearing of Christina Alberta had become very proud and spirited with her arms akimbo.

Every one backed against the walls to clear a dancing floor. At the beginning it wasn't so bad. But presently this Mr. Teddy was pitching Christina Alberta about, throwing her over his shoulder, taking hold of her, bending her backward, holding her almost upside down, both legs in the air and her hands dragging on the ground. And she was red and excited and seemed to like these violent familiarities. There was a kind of undesirable suitability between them for such purposes. She and Teddy looked into each other's eyes with a sort of intimacy and yet with a sort of fierce defiance. At one point in the extraordinary dance she had to smack his face, a good hard smack, nicely timed. She did it with a spirit that made every one applaud. Whereupon he smiled and took her nice little neck in his hands and strangled her with great realism.

Then the gramophone had its death rattle and the dance was over.

Mr. Preemby's throat had not troubled him much since dinner, but now he said "hrrmp" repeatedly.

They wanted Christina Alberta, bright and panting and shockheaded, to repeat the performance, but she wouldn't. She had had a glimpse of the solemn dismay and perplexity upon her Daddy's

face.

The people from the studio next door were the next to give a display: they obliged with an imitation of a Russian imitation of a peasant dance from Saratoff. There was a gramophone record that was not quite the proper music, but it would do. That dance really amused Mr. Preemby. The young man went down quite close to the floor and kicked out his feet with the greatest agility and the girl was as wooden as a doll. Every one clapped hands in time to the music, and so did Mr. Preemby.

And then came a further irruption. Five people in fancy dress demanding beer. They impressed Mr. Preemby as strange and bright-coloured, but totally uninteresting. One wore a red coxcomb and was dressed as a jester in cap and bells. The others just wore tights and bright things that signified nothing at all. They had been at some party given by somebody or other for the "Young people." They announced with shouts, "They shut down at midnight. Yes, they shut down at midnight. When the young people go to bed."

It was only too manifest that No. 8 Lonsdale Mews meant to do nothing of the sort.

Beer. Mr. Preemby declined. The last of the beer. Cigarettes. Much smoke. The last of the whisky. More gramophone, more dancing and Harold Crumb's voice loose again in recitation. Beer or whisky had thickened it. But there were countervailing noises. Movement. A circle was cleared. Not more dancing! No. Feats of strength and dexterity with chairs, performed chiefly by Teddy Winterton, the gramophone owner, and Harold. This stunting stopped presently and the company flowed back towards the middle of the room. Talk Mr. Preemby could not follow; phrases he could not understand. Nobody taking the slightest notice of him.

A sense of weariness and futility and desolation came upon him. How differently were the evenings of the past spent by the good wise people of the lost Atlantis! Philosophical discourse they had, the lute, the lyre. Elevated thoughts.

He caught sight of Mrs. Crumb yawning furtively. Suddenly, stupendously he yawned. And yawned again.

"Yaaw," he said to Paul Lambone who was at his side.

"Proyawaw — Prolly this we sitting on my beawawd."

“You live here?” said Mr. Lambone.

“Come to-day. Christina Albyawawawter arranged it.”

“The devil she did!” said Mr. Lambone, and looked across the studio at her. For some moments he seemed lost in thought.

“Very remarkable young woman that daughter of yours,” he said. “Makes me feel old-fashioned.”

He looked at the wrist-watch he wore. “Half-past one,” he said. “I’ll start the Go...

7

Mr. Preemby heard a few sentences of the parting between Teddy Winterton and Christina Alberta. “Yes or no?” said Teddy.

“*No,*” said Christina Alberta with emphasis.

“Not a bit of it,” said Teddy.

“I don’t want to,” she said.

“But you *do.*”

“Oh, go to the devil!”

“Not as if there were risks.”

“I shan’t come. It’s preposterous.”

“I shall wait all the same.”

“You may wait.”

“Little Chrissy Hesitation. Anything to please you.”

8

It took until past two o’clock for the Go Paul Lambone had started to remove the last of the company.

“All hands to the bedmaking,” cried Fay. “It isn’t always like this, Mr. Preemby.”

“Confess I feel tired,” said Mr. Preemby. “Had a long day of it.” Christina Alberta regarded him with belated compunction. “It just happened like this,” she said.

“Not used to such late hours,” said Mr. Preemby, sitting on his bed when at last it was made, and he did a yawn that almost dislocated his jaw. “Night,” said Fay, yawning also.

“We’ll turn in,” said Harold. “So long, Mr. Preemby.” The

yawning seized upon Harold also. What a face he had!”

“Goo-i.”

“Gawooi-i.”

The door closed upon them.

There was much to say to Christina Alberta, but it was too late and Mr. Preemby was too weary to say it now. And also he had no idea what it was he ought to say.

A casual remark fell out. “I liked that man with the white hair,” he said. “Did you?” said Christina Alberta absently.

“He was intelligent. He took a great interest in the Lost Atlantis.”

“He’s stone deaf,” said Christina Alberta, “and he’s ashamed of it — poor dear.”

“Oh!” said Mr. Preemby.

“All this is going to be rather noisy for you, Daddy,” she said, coming to what she had in mind.

“It *is* a bit ramshackle,” said Mr. Preemby.

“We ought to go to Tunbridge Wells quite soon and look round there.”

“To-morrow,” said Mr. Preemby.

“Not to-morrow.”

“Why not?”

“The next day,” said Christina Alberta. “I’m not quite sure about to-morrow. I’d sort of half promised to go somewhere else — . But it doesn’t matter very much really.”

“I’d like to go to Tunbridge Wells to-morrow,” said Mr. Preemby.

“Why not?” said Christina Alberta as if to herself, and hesitated.

She walked to the door and came back. “Good night, little Daddy,” she said.

“Are we going then? To-morrow?”

“No.... Yes.... I don’t know. I *had* planned to do something to-morrow. Important in a kind of way.... We’ll go to-morrow. Daddy.”

She walked away from him with her arms akimbo and stared at those queer pictures.

She spun round on her feet. “I can’t go to-morrow,” she said.

“Yes I will,” she contradicted.

“Oh hell!” she cried, in the most unaccountable and unladylike way. “I don’t know what to *do*!”

Mr. Preemby looked at her with grave and weary eyes. This was a new Christina Alberta to him. She ought not to swear. She did *not* ought to swear. She'd caught it up from these people. She didn't know what it meant. He must talk to her — to-morrow. About that and one or two other things. But Heavens! how tired he was!

"You—" He yawned. "You must take care of yourself, Christina Alberta," he said.

"I'll do that all right, Daddy. Trust me."

She came and sat down beside him on his little half-fictitious bed. "We can't decide to-night, Daddy. We're too tired. We'll settle to-morrow. Have to see what the weather's like for one thing. Wouldn't do to walk about Tunbridge if it was wet. We'll decide about everything to-morrow — when our heads are cool. Why! you dear little Daddy! It's just upon half-past two."

She put her arm round his shoulders and kissed him on the top of his head and the lobe of his ear. He loved her to touch him and kiss him. He did not understand in the least how much he loved her to kiss him.

"Dear *tired* little Daddy," she said in her softest voice: "You are ever so kind to me. Good night."

She had gone.

For some time Mr. Preemby sat quite motionless in a state of almost immobile thought.

The floor of the studio was littered with burnt matches and cigarette ends and the air smelt of stale smoke and beer. On the blue-painted table stood an empty beer-bottle and two or three glasses containing dregs of beer and cigarette ash.

It was all very different from Woodford Wells, — very different indeed.

But it was Experience.

Mr. Preemby bestirred himself to undress.

That night-shirt of Saxony flannel had still to be unpacked.

9

Harold was out also — it became evident to Mr. Preemby that the visit to Tunbridge Wells was postponed for the day. So he went to

South Kensington to look at the Museums there. He did not go into them actually, he just looked at them and at the colleges and buildings generally. It was a preliminary reconnaissance.

The Museums were quite good to look at. Larger, more extensive, than the British Museum. Probably they contained — all sorts of things.

Christina Alberta reappeared in the studio about half-past six looking very bright and exalted. There was something about her subtly triumphant.

She offered no explanation of her disappearance. She was full of the visit to Tunbridge on the morrow. They must catch a train soon after nine and have a good long day. She was unusually affectionate to her Daddy.

Harold was out for the evening and Fay had some reviewing to do, so they had quite a quiet and domestic evening. Mr. Preemby read with a varying attention a nice deep confusing book he had found in the room upstairs called *Fantasia of the Unconscious* about the Lost Atlantis and similar things.

In the morning Christina Alberta was still restless and quite undecided about going to Tunbridge Wells, though the weather was perfectly fine. About half-past eleven she disappeared, and after a light lunch with Fay —

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE PETUNIA BOARDING HOUSE

1

MOST places in the world have sister cities and twins and parallels, but Tunbridge Wells is Tunbridge Wells, and there is nothing really like it upon our planet. Not that it is in any way strange or fantastic, but because of its brightly delicate distinction. It is clean and open, and just pleasantly absurd. It is not more than thirty miles from London, as the crow flies, but the North Downs six miles away dismiss with a serene and gracious gesture all thoughts of London from the mind. It is away from the main line out of London, inconvenient for season-ticket holders; there is no direct route for the hurrying motorist over those saving Downs; to Dover and Kent generally he goes to the east of it, and to Brighton he goes to the west — if he survive the hills of Westerham and Sevenoaks. Rich men's estates encircle it with accessible parks. Eridge, Bayham, Penshurst Park, Knole and the like, protect it from overmuch breeding of little villa residences. There it lies, on a rare piece of rocky soil, dry underfoot, airy and wholesome, with its friendly Common in the midst of it j its Spa of evil-tasting beneficent waters as the Stuart princesses drank them, its Pantiles and its Pump Room, much as Dr. Johnson knew the place. Mount Sion and Mount Ephraim, Beulah Road and something evangelical in the air, remind the light-minded visitor that London in the past was a Puritan city. Many a serious liver has been touched and found grace at Tunbridge Wells. Many a light liver has found fresh strength there. And thither came Mr. Preemby and Christina Alberta seeking a boarding-house — and they could have sought it in no more favourable locality.

They set about the search in a systematic way as became a couple, one of whom had been partially trained for sociological research at the London School of Economics and partially trained for business at the Tomlinson School. Mr. Preemby had been for beginning with a general look-round, just walking round and looking quietly at things

for a bit, but Christina Alberta consulted all the agents in order, and bought a map and guide to the town and sat down on a seat on the Common and planned the operations that led quite readily and easily to the Petunia Boarding House.

In the guide Mr. Preemby read with approval some very promising words. "Listen to this my dear," he said. "H'rrmp. 'General Characteristics. Emphasis might very well be laid on the character enjoyed by Tunbridge Wells as a magnet for high-class residents and visitors. The town is never overrun with trippers, nor are its streets ever defiled by the vulgar or the inane. Its inhabitants are composed, for the most part, of well-to-do people who naturally create a social atmosphere tinged by culture and refinement.'"

"*Tinged* is a jolly good word for it I expect," said Christina Alberta.

"I think my instinct has guided me aright to this place," said Mr. Preemby.

The Petunia Boarding House looks obliquely upon the Common from where Petunia Road runs into the quaint and pleasant High Street. It has not the towering magnificence of the Wellington, the Royal Mount Ephraim, the Marlborough, or their fellows, which face the sun so bravely from the hill-crest above the Common, but it is a house of dignified comfort. The steps, the portico, the ample hall, the name in letters of gold on black, made Mr. Preemby say h'rrmp several times. An excessively chubby maid in a very, very tight black dress and a cap and apron, came and looked at Mr and Miss Preemby with a distraught evasive expression, answered some preliminary questions incoherently, and said she would call Miss Emily Rewster — Miss Margaret was out. Thereupon Miss Emily Rewster, who had been hovering attentively behind a bead curtain, thrust it aside and came ingratiatingly into the foreground. She was a little high-coloured old lady, with an air of genteel *savoir-faire*; she had a lace cap and wore a great deal of lace and several flounces, and she had the most frankly dyed chestnut hair that Christina Alberta had ever seen. "Was it just for a week or so Mr. Preemby wanted to come, or something — perheps — more permanent?"

Explanations were exchanged. Mr. Preemby was to be "more permanent"; Christina Alberta intermittent — and rather a difficulty.

The existence of head-quarters in Chelsea was revealed discreetly, but not the fact that they were in a Mews.

Miss Emily Rewster thought Christina Alberta could be fitted in if she wasn't too particular about having the same room, or exactly the same sort of room every time she came. "We have to menage," said Miss Emily Rewster.

"So long as the window opens," said Christina Alberta.

The rooms exhibited were very satisfactory, (h'rrmp) very satisfactory. A glimpse of a bathroom was given. "You say when you want one," said Miss Emily Rewster. There was a dining-room with separate tables, and there were flowers on every table, very refined and pleasant, and there was a large drawing-room with a piano and a great number of arm-chairs and sofas wearing flounces so like the flounces of Miss Emily Rewster, and antimacassars so Eke her cap, and with so entirely her air of accommodating receptiveness that it seemed as though they must be at least her cousins who had joined her in the enterprise. The piano wore a sort of lace bed-spread, and there were polished tables bearing majolica pots of aspidistra on mats and little less serious tables for use, and there was a low book-case with books in it and a great heap of illustrated papers on the top. The hall expanded at the back into a rather modernish lounge where two ladies were having tea; and there was also a smoking-room, where, said Miss Emily Rewster to Christina Alberta rather coyly, "the gentlemen smoke."

"We've been very full this season," said Miss Emily Rewster, "very full. We've had nearly thirty sitting at dinner. But of course the season is drawing in now. Just at present we're down to nine at breakfast and seven at dinner; two gentlemen in business here. But people come and people go. I've had two inquiries by post to-day. One an invalid lady and her sister. They think of drinking the waters. And there are Birds of Passage as well as Regulars. Just for a night or so. Motor families. They take us *en route*. That's where we have an advantage in being so close to the shops."

She beamed intimately at Mr. Preemby. "Often my sister or I pop out at the last moment and get in things ourselves. When every one else is busy. We don't mind any little trouble if it makes people comfortable."

"We've been on the separate table system ever since the war," said Miss Emily Rewster. "So much more pleasant. You can keep yourself Quate to yourself if you wish, or you can be Friendly. People often Speak in the Drawing-room or in the Smoking-room. And they bow. Sometimes people get Quate friendly. Play Games. Get up Excursions together. Quate Pleasant."

Christina Alberta asked an obvious question.

"Very pleasant people indeed," said Miss Emily. "Very pleasant people. A retired gentleman and his wife and her stepdaughter and two retired maiden ladies and a gentleman and his lady who has been in a forest in Burmah and so on."

Christina Alberta restrained a ribald impulse to ask what a "retired gentleman" or a "retired maiden lady" really meant.

"I've always been attracted to Tumbridge Wells," said Mr. Preemby.

"*Royal* Tunbridge Wells *if* you please," said Miss Emily radiantly. "The 'Royal' was added in nineteen nine you know, by gracious command of his Majesty."

"I didn't know," said Mr. Preemby with profound respect, and tried it over; "*Royal* Tumbridge Wells."

"Makes it rather a mouthful," said Christina Alberta.

"A very pleasant mouthful for Us, I can assure you," said Miss Emily loyally.

The Petunia Boarding House seemed so satisfactory to Mr. Preemby that it was arranged that he should return the next day but one, bringing with him some clothes and other luggage, and that Christina Alberta was to come and stay with him for a few days — there was a little room upstairs she could have — and then she would go back to London and her studies and take her chance of coming again when there was a room for her.

2

In the train back to London Mr. Preemby rehearsed these arrangements and made his plans.

"I shall come down here the day after to-morrow, after I have put my collections in order at the Mew. I shall put the best things so that

they can be seen through the glass of the cabinet, but I think I shall lock them up, and I shall bring down a few necessary books, and then when I have quite settled in I shall go and have a good look at these celebrated Rocks here."

"We could come down in the morning," said Christina Alberta, "and go and look at them in the afternoon."

"Not the same afternoon," said Mr. Preemby. "No. I want my mind to be quite fresh and open when I look at the Rocks. I think it will be best to see them quite early — after a night's sleep. When there are no other visitors. I think — I think, Christina Alberta, that for the first time I'd better go to them quite alone. Without you. Sometimes you say things, Christina Alberta — you don't mean to say them of course — but they put me out...."

Christina Alberta reflected. "What do you expect to find at these Rocks, Daddy?"

Mr. Preemby waved his moustache and the rest of his face slowly from side to side. "I go with an Open Mind," he said. "Perhaps all of Atlantis was not lost. Some of it may be hidden. There are legends preserved by the philosopher Plato. Partly in cipher. Who knows? It may be here. It may be in Africa. A plan. A sign. The toad rock must be most singular. In the British Museum there is a toad rock from Central America..."

He mused pleasantly for a time.

"I shall take a note-book," he said, "and several coloured pencils."

He continued to meditate. His next remark came after an interval of three or four minutes, and was a surprise for Christina Alberta.

"I hope, my dear," said Mr. Preemby, "that among all these artists and people you are not getting Ram Shackle.

"I should be sorry to think you were getting Ram Shackle," said Mr. Preemby.

"But Daddy, what makes you think I may be getting — Ram Shackle?" asked Christina Alberta.

"One or two little things I saw at the Mew," said Mr. Preemby. "Just one or two little things. You've got to be careful, Christina Alberta. A girl has to take care of herself. And your friends — decidedly Ram Shackle. Don't mind my making a remark about them, Christina Alberta. Just a word in season."

Christina Alberta's answer came after a little interval, and without her usual confident ring. "Don't you worry about me, Daddy," she said. "I'm all right."

Mr. Preemby seemed about to change the subject. Then he remarked, "I don't like that feller, Teddy Winterton. He's too familiar."

"I don't like him either," said Christina Alberta. "He *is* too familiar."

"That's all right," said Mr. Preemby. "I thought you didn't notice," and relapsed into meditation.

But this sudden and unprecedented intervention in her personal affairs made Christina Alberta thoughtful for all the rest of the way to London. Ever and again she glanced furtively at her Daddy.

He seemed to have forgotten her.

But it was dreadfully true. Teddy Winterton had become — altogether — too familiar.

3

In all ages competent observers have noted the erratic unexpectedness of destiny, and now Christina Alberta was to add her own small experience to this ever accumulating testimony. It seemed to her that in planting him out in the wholesome quiet of Royal Tunbridge Wells she was securing for her Daddy the very best possible conditions for a happy and harmless life. There had, indeed, been a notable change in the little man since her mother's death, a release of will, a new freedom of expression, a disposition to comment and even form judgments upon things about him. She had herself likened it to the germination of a seed brought out of a suppressing aridity into moisture and the light, but she had not followed up that comparison so far as to speculate what efflorescences might arise out of this belated unfolding of his initiatives. That here, of all places, he would meet just the stimulus that was needed for the most fantastic expansions of his imaginative life, that for him Tunbridge Wells should prove the way out of this everyday world of ours into what was to be for him an altogether more wonderful and satisfactory existence, never entered her head.

For three days, until a fretting urgency for events carried her back to London, she stayed in the Petunia Boarding House, and for all those three days there was no intimation of the great change in his mind that impended. On the whole he seemed unusually dull and quiet during those three days. He liked Tunbridge Wells very much, he said, but he was greatly disappointed by the High Rocks and by the Toad Rock when he came to examine them. He even doubted whether they were not "simply natural." This was a terrible concession. He tried hard to believe that the Toad Rock was like one of the big Maya carvings of a toad from Yucatan, a cast of which he had seen in the British Museum, but it was evident that with all the will possible he could not manage so great an act of faith. All the decoration, he declared, all the inscription had been obliterated, and then, making the great blonde moustache bristle like a clothes-brush: "There never were any decorations or inscriptions. Never."

It was clear to. Christina Alberta that he must have evolved very extraordinary expectations indeed, to be so much cast down. She found herself very interested in the riddle of what was fermenting in his mind. It seemed to her as if he had regarded Tunbridge Wells as a sort of Poste Restante at which some letter of supreme importance had awaited him. And there was no letter.

"But what did you expect, little Daddy?" said Christina Alberta, when on the afternoon of the first day he took her to the Toad Rock to see for herself how ordinary and insignificant a rock it was. "Did you expect some wonderful carvings?"

"I expected — something for me. Something significant."

"For you?"

"Yes, for me. And every one. About Life and the Mysteries. I had grown a sort of feeling there would be something there. *Now* — I don't know where to turn."

"But what sort of thing, what significance did you expect?"

"Isn't Life a Riddle, Christina Alberta? Haven't you noticed that? Do you think it is just nothing but studios and dances and excursions and char-a-bancs and meal-times and harvest?" he said. "Obviously there is something more in it than that. Obviously. All that is just a Veil. Outward Showing. H'rrmp. And I don't know what is behind it, and I am just a plain boarder — in a boarding-house — and my life

is passing away. Very difficult. H'rrmp. Almost impossible. It worries me exceedingly. Somewhere there must be a clue."

"But that's how we *all* feel, Daddy," cried Christina Alberta.

"Things can't be what they seem," said Mr. Preemby, waving his hand with a gesture of contemptuous dismissal towards Rusthall Village, public house, lamp-posts, a policeman, a dog, a grocer's delivery-van and three passing automobiles. "That at any rate is obvious. It would be too absurd. Infinite space; stars and so forth. Just for running about in — between meals...

Now who would have thought, Christina Alberta reflected, that this sort of thing was going on in his head? Who would have thought it?

"Either I am a Reincarnation," said Mr. Preemby, "or I am not. And if I am not, then I want to know what all this business of the world is about. Symbolical it *must* be, Christina Alberta. But of what?

"All those years at the Laundry I knew that that life wasn't real. A period of rest and preparation. Your dear mother thought differently — we never discussed it, h'rrmp, but it was so."

Christina Alberta could find no adequate comment and they went on in silence for some time. When they spoke again it was to discuss how they could get round to the High Rocks Hotel for tea.

4

Mr. Preemby was evidently depressed and more than a little aggrieved, but he had none of the comprehensive despondency of your melancholic type. Concurrently he was quite actively interested in the boarding house, and the fellow boarders he encountered there. It was a novel experience for him to be in a boarding house. During his married life he had always spent his holidays with Mrs. Preemby in seaside apartments, so that she could supervise the provisioning properly, and detect, expose and rectify errors and extortion. They had taken drives inland during these vacations, or camped on the beach while Mr. Preemby and Christina Alberta had made sandcastles or pottered among rocks, and Mrs. Preemby had sat in a foldingchair and pined for the Laundry. If the weather was bad they

kept in their apartments, where Mr. Preemby and Christina Alberta could read books while Mrs. Preemby could pine for the Laundry almost as well as she could on the beach. But deep in Mr. Preemby's heart there had always been a craving for such a collective, promiscuous life as a boarding house affords.

They had made the acquaintance of the second Miss Rewster, Miss Margaret Rewster, on their arrival with the luggage. She was a taller, more anxious and less richly belaced variation of her sister. They both, Mr. Preemby discovered, had a peculiar hovering quality. They seemed always hovering behind bead curtains or down passages, or looking over from staircase landings or peeping round doors; poor dears! they were dreadfully anxious not to interfere with their guests, but they were equally anxious that everything should be all right. At meal times they operated with the joints and dishes behind a screen, and the chubby maid carried round the plates and vegetables. And whenever Mr. Preemby looked at the screen he found either Miss Margaret Rewster peeping over the top of it at him or Miss Emily Rewster peeping round the end. It made him quite nervous with his forks and spoons. When he dropped his serviette he hoped that would pass unobserved, but Miss Emily noted it at once and sent the chubby maid to pick it up for him.

Mr. Preemby and Christina Alberta came down to dinner as soon as Miss Margaret had sounded the second gong, and so they were the first to be seated and could survey their fellow guests at an advantage. Christina Alberta was quietly observant, but Mr. Preemby said "h'rrmp" at each fresh arrival. The next to appear were two Birds of Passage, a young man in Hudibrastic golfing knickerbockers, and a lady, presumably his wife, in a bright yellow sporting jumper, who were motoring about Kent; they made strenuous attempts to seize a table in the window which was already reserved for Petunia Regulars and were subdued with difficulty, but perfect dignity, by Miss Emily. They then consulted loudly about wine — the young man called the lady "Old Thing," and "Old Top," forms of expression new and interesting to Mr. Preemby, and she called him "Badger" — and the chubby maid produced a card of wines that could be sent out for. The young man read out the names and prices of wines and made his selection almost as though he were

a curate officiating in a very large cathedral. His wife, to follow out that comparison, made the responses. “Chablis such as we should get here might be too sweet,” he proclaimed.

“It might be too sweet?”

“What of a Pommard, Old Top?”

“Why *not* a Pommard, Badger?”

“The Beaune is a shilling cheaper and just as likely to be good — or bad.”

“Just as likely.”

The chubby maid flew out of the room, list in hand, with her thumb on the wine he had chosen.

Meanwhile under cover of this hubbub the two ladies Mr. Preemby had seen at tea in the lounge on the occasion of his first visit, percolated unobtrusively to a table near the window. They were obviously sisters, both rather slender and tall with small, round, bright-coloured faces on stalk-like necks; they had sharp little noses, and one of them wore tortoiseshell spectacles. A gentleman with a white moustache, larger and nobler even than Mr. Preemby’s, accompanied by a small alert-looking wife, was the next to appear. Possibly this was the gentleman who had been in a forest in Burmah. The small alert-looking wife bowed to the slender ladies, who became agitated like reeds in a wind. The gentleman took no notice of them, grunted as he sat down, produced glasses and read the menu.

“Tomato soup *again!*” he said.

“It’s usually very nice tomato soup,” said his wife.

“But Three Times Running!” he said. “It favours acidity. I don’t *like* tomato soup.”

The table in the bow window was occupied by three people who drifted in separately. First came a little thin dark lady in grey, carrying a bead work-bag, then a little dark bald man with large side-whiskers whom she addressed as father, and then a plump healthy-looking wife with a radiant manner who swept in and distributed greetings.

“Did you get your walk, Major Bone?” she said to the gentleman from the Burmese forest.

“Just to Rusthall Common and back,” said Major Bone, speaking

thickly through his moustache and soup. “Just to Rusthall Common.”

“And you got a char-a-banc to Crohamhurst, Miss Solbé?” The two sisters answered in unison. “Oh! we had a *lovely* ride.”

“So picturesque,” said the one with spectacles.

“So open and pleasant,” said the one without spectacles.

“Did you see the sea?”

“Oh plainly!” said the one with spectacles.

“Ever so far away,” said the one without.

“Just as if the sky had a steel edge,” said the one with spectacles.

“Exactly like a leetle silver line,” said the one without.

“H’rrmp,” said Mr. Preemby.

Small portions of fish followed the tomato soup, and were consumed in comparative silence. There was a little burst of scarcely audible conversation at the window table. “Now is *this* the same fish as we had yesterday?” asked the wife.

“It is a very similar fish,” said the gentleman with whiskers.

“The menu simply says, ‘Fish,’” said the stepdaughter.

“H’rrmp,” said Mr. Preemby.

“I think our back tyres were too tight to-day, Old Top,” said the man in plus fours, in a very loud, clear voice, “I felt the road dreadfully.”

“I felt the road dreadfully,” said the lady in the yellow jumper.

“I must let them down a little to-morrow morning.”

“It would be better.”

“To-morrow morning will do. I won’t trouble to-night.”

“Much better to-morrow morning, Badger. You’re tired to-night after all that bumping. You’d make your hands dirty.”

Silence and active business with knives and forks.

“Porruck hasn’t written about that,” said the Major from the forest.

“Very likely he’s busy,” said his wife.

Silence.

“H’rrmp,” said Mr. Preemby.

Christina Alberta searched her mind for some conversational opening that would give her father a reasonable opportunity to make an acceptable reply, but she could think of nothing that was neither too disconcerting nor too dangerous. She met his eye and he had the

expression of one who holds out against a strain.

Fish gave place to lamb.

"I thought that road from Sittingbourne was just awful," said the motoring gentleman.

"It *was* just awful," responded his wife.

Christina Alberta saw her father's face working. He was going to say something. "H'rrmp. To-morrow, if it is fine, I think we will go for a walk in the morning."

The knives and forks were hushed. Everybody was listening.

"I'd love a walk to-morrow, Daddy," said Christina Alberta. "I should think there were some jolly walks about this place."

"Exactly," said Mr. Preemby. "Very probably. The Guide Book is very reassuring. H'rrmp."

He had the dignified expression of a man who has carried off a difficult duty.

Resumption of activity with knives and forks.

"Hard to tell this lamb from mutton," said Major Bone, "if it wasn't for the mint sauce."

"Peas are never so nice as they are from your own garden," said the wife of the whiskered gentleman to her stepdaughter.

"It's late for peas," said the stepdaughter.

The two Miss Solbés and the motoring gentleman began talking at the same time. Mrs. Bone expressed the idea that it was hard to get good lamb nowadays. Taking courage from this sudden swirl of conversation Mr. Preemby was emboldened to remark to Christina Alberta that he had always been attracted to Tumbridge Wells. He felt the air was a strong air. It gave him an appetite.

"You must be careful not to get fat," said Christina Alberta.

The outburst of active human exchanges came to an end. Baked apple and custard were consumed in comparative silence. The chubby maid came to ask Mr. Preemby whether he would like his coffee in the lounge or the smoking-room. "The lounge I think," said Mr. Preemby. "H'rrmp The lounge."

The Misses Solbé, bearing glasses containing sugar and lemon juice, flitted from the room. The people from the window table followed. The function of dinner was completed. They found themselves alone in the lounge. Most of the people seemed to have

drifted into the sitting-room. The gentleman from the forests of Burmah went by towards the smoking-room, carrying a large cigar which had an air of also coming from the forests of Burmah. It did not look like a cigar that had been rolled or filled; it looked like a cigar of old gnarled wood that had been hewn from a branching tree. A straw came out of the end of it....

Christina Alberta stood and contemplated a vast void of time, two hours it might be, before she could decently go to bed. “Oh! this is the Life!” she said.

“Extremely comfortable,” said Mr. Preemby, sitting down with much creaking in a basket arm-chair.

Christina Alberta sat on a glass-topped table and lit a cigarette. She saw those two hours stretching before her, and she wanted to scream.

The chubby maid brought coffee and seemed gently surprised at Christina Alberta’s cigarette. Whisperings off stage. Then Miss Emily became dimly visible through the bead curtain at the end of the passage, hovering. She vanished again and Christina Alberta finished her cigarette in peace. Mr. Preemby drank up his coffee. Pause. Christina Alberta swung her legs rhythmically. Then she slid off the table to her feet.

“Daddy,” she said, “let’s go into the sitting-room and see if anything is happening there.”

5

In the Boarding Houses of the past the common dining-table was the social centre where people met and mind clashed upon and polished mind. But the spirit of aloofness, the separate table system, has changed all that, and now it is in the smoking-room or the sitting-room that the vestiges of social intercourse, advances, retreats, coquettings, exchanges, games and jests are to be found. But the company of the Petunia Boarding House was not in a state of social fusion. The only coalescence was a conversation. The wife of the gentleman from the Burmese forests had secured an armchair by the side of the fire-place, and she was describing in a low whisper the numerous servants she had had in Burmah, to the cheerful wife and

the younger Miss Solbé who was knitting. The Miss Solbé with the spectacles had fortified herself behind a table on the other side of the fire and was engaged meticulously with a very elaborate Patience. The gentleman with the side-whiskers sat rigidly on one of the sofas, behind a copy of the *Times,* while his daughter sat at a table close at hand and also threaded her way through a Patience. The Birds of Passage, after inquiries about movies and music-halls, had gone out.

Nobody took the slightest notice of Mr. Preemby and Christina Alberta. The two stood for some moments in the middle of the room, and then panic came upon Mr. Preemby. A dishonourable panic so that he threw his daughter to these silent, motionless wolves.

"H'rrmp," he said. "I think my dear, I will go to the smoking-room. I think I will go and smoke. There are some illustrated papers over there on the book-case for you if you care to look at them."

Christina Alberta walked over to the low book-case and Mr. Preemby departed, h'rrmping.

She stood pretending an interest in the illustrated jokes and in the portraits of actresses and society people in the *Sketch* and *Taller.* Out of the tail of her eye she surveyed those fellow guests of hers, and with a negligent ear she collected the gist of Mrs. Bone's dissertation upon the servant question in Burmah. "They will plant the whole family upon you if they can — uncles and cousins even. Before you know where you are....

"Of course a white woman is a Little Queen out there.... —

"The chief fault of the cooking from my point of view, was the way it upset Major Bone. His stomach... far more delicate than a woman's."

"He looks so stout and strong," said Miss Solbé.

"In everything but that. In everything. But the Curries they used to make—"

She sank her voice, and the heads of the younger Miss Solbé and the pleasant mannered lady closed in upon her for the rich particulars.

What a Lot they were! Christina Alberta reflected. And they were living beings! The astonishing thing to Christina Alberta was that they were alive. And being alive and having presumably been a cause of considerable trouble, distress, emotion and hope to various

people before they were got alive, they were now all in the most resolute way avoiding anything that with the extremest stretch of civility could be spoken of as living. Their hours, their days were passing; a few thousand days more perhaps for each of them, a few score thousand hours. Then there would be no more chance of living for ever. And instead of filling up this scanty allowance of hours and days with every possible sensation and every possible effort and accomplishment, here they were, gathered into a sort of magic box of atmosphere in which nothing could possibly be done. By anyone....

Christina Alberta felt like a moth caught under a glass. Well, for a day or so, she had an excuse; little Daddy must be settled. But then? Nothing could be done here. Neither joy nor sorrow nor sin nor creative I effort — because even Miss Solbé's knitting was being knitted to a prescription on a dirty cutting of printed paper. Everything they were employed upon was an evasion, everything. Even the whispered delicate hints of j the diuretic, dyspeptic, infuriating and wildly aphrodisiac effects of Burmah Curry upon Major Bone in his younger-days that were being handed out by his good lady to her intent hearers, were just a substitution of secondhand knowledge for realities.

And this Patience! Would she, Christina Alberta asked herself, would j she ever come to play Patiences in Boarding Houses? Was it credible that some day she also would come to sit voluntarily in such an atmosphere? — !

"Rather sell matches in a gutter," whispered Christina Alberta.

What a marvellous thing is Man! What ingenuities he has! what powers and capabilities! He invents paper and perfects printing. He develops the most beautiful methods of colour printing. He makes cardboard like silk and ivory out of rags and vegetable pulp. And all it would seem, that human beings, hanging for a little while in life between the nothingness before death and the nothingness after death, should fiddle away long hours in a feeble fuddled conflict with the permutations of duplicate sets of four differently coloured thirteens! Cards! The marvel of cards! All over the world millions of people drawing nearer to death and nothingness were pursuing the chances of the four thirteens: bridge, whist, nap, skat, a hundred forms of it. Directly they could get in out of the wet and dark, they

sat down to that sort of thing, to the cards shining under the still lamps, to being endlessly surprised, delighted, indignant and despondent by chances that anyone who chose to sit down to it could work out and tabulate in a week!

"Getting it out, dear?" said the younger Miss Solbé.

"The spades are *Wicked* to-night," said the Miss Solbé with the glasses.

"Mine is going rather well," said the daughter of the gentleman with the whiskers.

"Does your daughter play *Miss Milligan?*" asked the younger Solbé sister.

"*Eight-eights,*" said the comfortable wife. "*Miss Milligan* is too much for her."

"Well, it *is* a Beast you know," said the stepdaughter. "You never know where you are with it."

"Patience is Patience," said the elder Miss Solbé. "Nowadays I often get it out. But not when the spades come as they've done to-night, both twos in the top row, and no aces till the last round but one."

Christina Alberta thought it was time to change from the *Sketch* to the *Tatler.* She tried to do this with careless ease and flopped a dozen papers on the floor. "Oh *Damn!*" said Christina Alberta to a great stillness. She struggled to pick up and replace the disordered sheets. For a time every one seemed to be regarding her. Then Mrs. Bone took up her discourse again.

"And you can't imagine their obstinacy," she said. "They are *wilfully* ignorant. When you show them, *then* they won't do it. I took my cook-boy in hand for a time — boy I call him, but he was quite a middle-aged man — and I said to him, "just let me show you some plain English cookery, a boiled fowl with nice white sauce, a few plain potatoes and vegetables — quite plain with the natural flavour left in — the sort of food that builds up these brave young Englishmen you see." Of course I'm not a good cook myself, but anyhow I knew more of English cooking than he did. But we never got further than the plain boiled fowl. He expressed the most violent disapproval — really violent I mean — of the whole proceedings. As I took hold of the things and got to work he began to behave in the

most extraordinary way. He tried *not* to follow what I was doing. Tried not to. He said that if he cooked a fowl like that he would lose caste, lose his position in the local guild of cooks, be perpetually defiled and outcast. *Why,* he would not say. When I persisted he rushed up and down pulling at his black hair — a black madman, his eyes rolling frightfully. I could never make out what there was in a plain boiled fowl to cause such excitement. "This in my kitchen," he said. "This in *my* kitchen!"

"There I stood quietly boiling my fowl while all this pother went on. He hovered about me. He talked — fortunately in his own language. I even caught him pretending to be sick behind my back. Then he came and implored me to desist — with tears in his great brown eyes. He tried to say things in English. The Major always says that he was simply swearing, but I believe the wretched man really did believe that if he was to boil a fowl in the plain, wholesome, simple way nice people in England do it daily, he would be hung in the air, and the great jays of Burmah would come and peck — ahem!"

She cast a side glance at Christina Alberta, apparently lost in the *Sketch,* and lowered her voice.

"Peck at his *entrails,* just his insides you know, for a Thousand, Thousand Years."

Sensation.

"You never know What Ideas Easterners will get into their Heads," said the younger Miss Solbé. "East is East, and West is West."

But now Christina Alberta's attention was distracted by another set of phenomena. She had discovered that the thin, bald gentleman with side-whiskers, rigid behind his *Times,* was not really reading that interesting vestige of the British constitution at all. His gaze was not directed to the edge of his paper, but beyond it. He was staring from behind that ambush and round the corner of his glasses in a strange, hard-eyed way, without passion or admiration, at the upper part of Christina Alberta's black-stockinged legs as they delivered their last challenge to human censure before disappearing beneath her all too exiguous but extremely comfortable skirt. And also she was realizing that a furtive but intense scrutiny of her bobbed hair

was disorganizing the Patience of the whiskered gentleman's daughter very seriously, and that it was also interfering with the proper laying out of a second and different sort of Patience by the elder Miss Solbé. And suddenly, to her extreme annoyance, Christina Alberta found a flush of indignation mantling her cheek, and a combative tingle passing down the backbone of her straight little body.

"Why the devil," Miss Preemby asked herself, "why the devil shouldn't a girl cut her hair to save trouble and bother, and wear clothes in which she can walk about? Anyhow, a mop of well-washed hair was ten times better than those feeble, aimless interweavings of pigtails and fringes and scraps and ends. And as for showing one's legs and body; why shouldn't one show one's legs and body. It was just a part of the universal evasion of life by these people that had got most of their bodies hidden away, tied up in a sort of bundle. Do they ever venture to look at themselves? Those Solbé girls, once upon a time, they must have been jolly little girls with an amused interest in their stalky little legs, before they said Shush! and put them away."

Christina Alberta's speculative vein took charge for a time. What becomes of legs that are put away and never looked at and encouraged? Do they get etiolated and queer, dead-white and funny-shaped and afraid of the light? And after you've really packed your body away and forgotten it, nothing is left of you but a head sticking out and hands that wave about and feet with hidden and distorted toes; and you go about between mealtimes and take trips in chars-a-bancs to see what every one sees and feel what every one feels, and you play games by rule and example according to your age and energy, and become more and more addicted to Patience until you are ready to cover yourself up in bed for the last time of all and die. Evasion! And the fuss they had caused getting born! The fuss, the morality and marriages and everything that was necessary before these vacuous lives were begotten!

But it was all evasion, and the life shown in these *Tatlers* and *Sketches* was evasion just as much. Just as much. All these photographs of the pushful pretty, the actresses for sale and the daughters who had to be sold, looked at you with just your own

question in their eyes: “Is this the Life?” The unending photographs of Lady Diana This, and Lady Marjorie That, and Mr. So-and-So and a Friend of the Duke of York or the Duchess of Shonts, at dog-shows, at horse-shows, at race meetings, at royal inaugurations and the like, were inevitably suggestive of obstinate doubts that were in need of a perennial reassurance. The photographs of people playing tennis and such-like games were livelier, but there, too, if you care to look at it, were evasions. Evasions. Evasions.

Christina Alberta turned over the back numbers of the *Sketch* without looking at the pictures before her eyes.

What was this Life she and these people and every one by games and jokes and meetings and ceremonies and elaborate disregards and concealments were all evading? What was this great thing outside, this something like a huge, terrible, attractive and compelling black monster, beyond the lights, beyond the movements and appearances, that called to her and challenged her to come?

One might evade the call of it by playing Patience and games perhaps. One might evade it by living by rule or custom. People seemed to do so. A time might come when that call to Christina Alberta to be Christina Alberta to the uttermost and fulfil her mysterious mission to that immense being beyond the lights might no longer distress her life. She had thought that in a certain recklessness and violence with herself she might fight her way out to the call. She had made love now. Anyhow, she hadn’t evaded *that.* But — was it going to matter as much as she had thought it would matter? She and her little friends were playing desperate games with the material of love in a world where Dr. Marie Stopes and Mr. D. H. Lawrence were twin stars, and it was just something you went through — and came out much as you had been before. More restless, perhaps, but no further on. It left you just where you had been, face to face with the unsolved darkness and that mysterious distressing unanswerable call to come out of it all and really five and die.

She had made love.... Queer it had been....

These furtive people were watching and watching her, reading her thoughts perhaps, penetrating her....

Christina Alberta shut her copy of the *Sketch* with something of a snap, and walked out of the drawing-room with a serene expression.

She shut the door behind her and went downstairs to find what had happened to her father in the smoking-room.

"I'm leaving the best part of the talk behind me," reflected Christina Alberta.

6

She found that her father and the gentleman from the forests of Burmah, after a very prolonged and brilliant "h'rrmping" match, had settled down to conversation. But unhappily the conversation was unsuitable for her.

"Siam, Cambodia, Tonquin, the country is full of such temples. They take you there and show you them."

"Wonderful," said Mr. Preemby. "Wonderful. And you do not think the carvings you speak of — ? Some high symbolism?"

Both gentlemen became aware of Christina Alberta, attentive and hovering.

"Symbolism," said the arboreal gentleman, "Symbolism," and had complicated pharyngeal difficulties. "Heathenish indecency. Difficult to discuss.... Presence of young lady.... H'rrmp."

"H'rrmp," said Mr. Preemby. "Had you come down to say good night, my dear? We are having a rather — rather technical talk."

"Sounds like it, Daddy," said Christina Alberta, and went round and sat on the arm of his chair for a moment.

"Good night, little Daddy," she said.

Reflective moment.

"I think this Tumbridge is going to suit me," said Mr. Preemby.

"I hope it will, little Daddy. Good night."

7

Christina Alberta's first evening at the Petunia Boarding House has been described with some particularity because it is a sample of all the still and uneventful evenings that seemed to lie before Mr. Preemby there. It impressed her as an unfathomable enormity of uneventfulness in which nothing harmful or disturbing could conceivably occur to him. The last remote possibility of imaginative

disturbance seemed to remove itself next day when Mrs. Bone announced to the whiskered gentleman's wife that she and her husband were off to Bath on the morrow: they were in luck it seemed; they had got the exact rooms for the winter in the exact boarding house they had always had their eyes on. "Tunbridge seems so bleak," she said. "After Burmah."

The dinner was like the previous dinner; the Birds of Passage had gone and Mr. Preemby astonished himself, Christina Alberta, the chubby maid and the assembled company by demanding whether it was possible to send out (h'rrmp) for a bottle or flask of Chianti. "It's an Italian wine," said Mr. Preemby to inform and help the chubby maid in her inquiries. But there was no Chianti on the wine-list supplied, and after a conversation markedly reminiscent of that of the Birds of Passage overnight, the Preemby table was stocked with a bottle of Australian Burgundy, and, at Christina Alberta's request, a bottle of mineral water.

After this display of initiative, self-assertion and social derring-do, Mr. Preemby did little but h'rrmp throughout the rest of the meal.

The subsequent life of the drawing-room was also vacantly similar to the previous evening. Christina Alberta got her possibly illegal cigarette in the lounge, indeed she smoked two, and Miss Margaret Rewster looked at her through the bead-curtain near the office and Miss Emily had a sniff from the landing upstairs, though nothing was said. And then Mr. Preemby followed Major Bone into the smoking-room to gather whatever further information he could about the temple decorations and religious customs of the peoples of Further India. He was inclined to think Major Bone rather biased by evangelical prejudice. But Major Bone was not even indignant about Eastern religions that night. He wanted to talk about Bath, and he talked about Bath. He told Mr. Preemby in very great detail about a remarkable occurrence at Bath. He had met a gentleman named Bone, a gentleman much of his own age and appearance, a Captain Bone who had also once been in Burmah. He detailed various extremely dramatic conversations between himself and the other Bone, occasionally going back and correcting himself. They had made the most elaborate comparison of their genealogies, and it did not appear that they were even remotely related. "Most curious

coincidence that has ever occurred to me," said Major Bone. "In Bath. In nineteen-oh-nine."

In the drawing-room Patience prevailed and Mrs. Bone was talking about Bath. The cheerful wife of the whiskered gentleman said "Deavning" to Christina Alberta quite suddenly.

"Oh! Good evening," said Christina Alberta.

"You had a walk to-day?"

"We've been to see the Toad Rock and the High Rock and Eridge Park."

"Quite a nice walk," said the cheerful lady, and restored her attention to Mrs. Bone. Christina Alberta gathered she was to be noticed, but not made a pet of.

There was nothing for it but to go through the *Tatlers* and *Sketches* again. This time the pictures were exhausted, but there were reviews of books and one or two short stories. Christina Alberta read them all.

When she went to say good night to her Daddy she had come to a decision. "Daddy," she said, "on Thursday, that's the day after to-morrow, I must go back to London. There are some lectures beginning."

Mr. Preemby made no effective opposition.

The third evening was in countenance like the second except that the Bones had gone and that Christina Alberta was sustained by the thought that next day she would pass from the vacuities of Tunbridge to the tangled riddles of London. And there was a Bird of Passage present, an untidy young man of the student type with a lot of hair imperfectly controlled by unguents whose motor-bicycle had broken down just outside Tunbridge Wells. He lived somewhere away in the north, it seemed, in Northumberland; he would have to wait in Tunbridge for two or three days while some broken part of his machine was replaced from Coventry; he had taken refuge in the Petunia Boarding House and it was jolly hard luck on him. He couldn't budget for a trip to London; he would just have to sit down in Tunbridge. He was a Cambridge undergraduate and a geologist; he had a bag of specimens on his machine. These facts he conveyed across the width of the room to Mr. Preemby in the course of a rather one-sided conversation.

From the first Christina Alberta did not like this young gentleman from Cambridge. He was like a younger, cruder Teddy Winterton, with impudent bad manners instead of impudent good manners, and with neither bodily grace nor good looks. And while he spoke to Mr. Preemby he glanced at her. But she had no inkling of the part he might play in the life of her Daddy and herself.

When she and her Daddy went into the lounge for coffee and her cigarette, the young man came and placed himself at an adjacent table and initiated some more conversation. Was Tunbridge Wells an amusing place? Was there any chance of his getting any golf or tennis?

"There are a number of delightful walks," said Mr. Preemby.

"Not much fun alone," said the young man.

"There are the pleasures of observation," said Mr. Preemby.

"All this country has been pretty well worked over," said the young man of science. "Is there a Museum here?"

Mr. Preemby did not know.

"There ought to be a Museum in every town."

Presently the coffee and the cigarette were finished. This evening Mr. Preemby was for the drawing-room. Major Bone had gone, the smoking-room had no attractions, and Mr. Preemby had exchanged a few amiable words with the gentleman with whiskers and hoped to follow them up. Christina Alberta went with him. At the sight of the old *Tatlers* and *Sketches* she remembered she had bought a book in the High Street that day, a second-hand copy of Rousseau's *Confessions.* She went off to get it. She found the young gentleman from Cambridge still sitting in the lounge smoking cigarettes.

"Pretty gloomy here," he said.

"Oh! *I* don't know," said Christina Alberta with an open mind, pausing before him.

"Nothing much doing — what?"

"It's not a Gala Night."

"I'm stranded."

"You must bear up."

"S'pose you wouldn't be disposed to come out for a bit and forage around for some fun?" said the young man from Cambridge, taking his coinage in both hands.

“Sorry,” said Christina Alberta conclusively, and turned to go on.

“No offence?” said the young man from Cambridge.

“Nice of you to think of me,” said Christina Alberta, who would rather have been thought utterly shameless than the least bit prudish. “Good hunting.”

And the young man from Cambridge perceived that he was dismissed.

Christina Alberta went into the drawing-room for another tremendous bout of nothingness. But anyhow she had got Rousseau to read, and to-morrow she would be in London.

About the Rousseau — ? She had always wanted to know how she stood towards Rousseau.

He carried her on to ten o’clock. But she didn’t think much of Rousseau. He ought to have known a few of the New Hope Club girls. They’d have shown him.

8

For three weeks Christina Alberta did not return to Tunbridge Wells, and when she returned she had passed through a variety of experiences that will have their due effect upon the course of this story. This story is the story of Mr. Preemby, and we have little sympathy with that modern sort of novel which will not let a girl alone but must follow her up into the most private and intimate affairs. Christina Alberta was perplexed and worried and would have hated the pursuit of such a searchlight. Suffice it that events had crowded so closely upon her that for whole days together she thought scarcely at all of her possibly quite lonely little Daddy at Tunbridge Wells. Then came a letter that brought her bustling down.

“I think it only right to tell you,” said the letter, “that Very Important Communications indeed have been made to me *of the Utmost Importance,* and that I ought to tell you about them. They seem to alter all our lives. I know you are immearced in your studies, but these Communications are so Important that I want to talk them over with you soon. I would come up to the Studio to tell you about it all, but very likely Mr. Crumb might be in and I would much prefer to tell you here on the Common amid more congenial surroundings.

Some of it you will find almost unbeleavable.”

“Communications?” said Christina Alberta, re-reading the letter. “Communications?”

She went down to Tunbridge Wells that afternoon.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE SCALES FALL FROM MR. PREEMBY'S EYES

1

"THE scales," said Mr. Preemby, "have fallen from my eyes."

He had chosen a seat upon the Common which commanded an extensive view of the town, the town crowned by the green cupolas of the Opera House and lying as though the houses had been shot out of a cart down the long incline to the Pantiles. Beyond were the wide distances of the Kentish hill country, blue and remote.

Christina Alberta waited for more.

"This experience," said Mr. Preemby, speaking with an occasional h'rrmp; "all these experiences — difficult to relate. Naturally I think you are of a sceptical disposition — taking after your dear mother. She was very sceptical. Of psychic phenomena in particular. She said it was Nonsense. And when your dear mother said a thing was Nonsense, then it was Nonsense. It only made things disagreeable if you argued it was anything else. As for myself — always the open mind. No dogma either way. I just refrained."

"But Daddy, have you been having psychic experiences? How could you have psychic experiences down here?"

"Let me tell you the story in due order. I want you to see it as I saw it — in due order."

"How did it begin?"

Mr. Preemby held up a propitiatory hand. "Please! In my own way," he said.

Christina Alberta bit her lips and scrutinized the tranquil resolution of his profile. There was no hurrying him; he had to tell his tale as he had prepared it.

"I do not think," said Mr. Preemby, "that mine is a very credulous sort of mind. It is true I am not given to argument. I do not *say* very much. But I think and observe. I think and observe and I have a kind of gift for judging people. I do not think I am a very easy man to deceive. "And it is to be noted that I started the whole affair. It began

at my suggestion.

I do not know what put it into my head, but I do know that it was me started the whole thing going.

"You know, after your departure our little band at the Petunia Boarding House was reduced to just six persons, not counting the young gentleman from Cambridge who was, as Miss Rewster says, a Bird of Passage. Naturally the six of us felt rather drawn together. There were the two Miss Solbés, both very intelligent young ladies, and there were Mr. Hockleby and Mrs. Hockleby, and Miss Hockleby, and there was me. We were drawn together at lunch after you had gone off — it was a little showery and we had a fire in the drawing-room and Miss Solbé, the one with the glasses, tried to show me one of her Patiences. We got into quite an interesting argument about whether it was possible to *will* which card would turn up next. I have always inclined to the view that for certain people, people with the necessary gift, it was possible to do so, but Mr. Hockleby showed himself extremely sceptical in the matter. He said that if there was a card on the top of the pack ready to turn up, and if one willed that a different card should turn up, then that meant that one had really by sheer will force to re-manufacture two of the cards in the pack, make them over again, each into the other, make them blank, reprint them and everything. But I tried to explain to him that this is not philosophically sound because of predestination. If you were predestined to will that such a card should be on the top of the pack, then that card was also predestined to be there. He argued —"

"But is it necessary to tell me all this, Daddy, before we get to your psychic experience?"

"It is just to illustrate the fact that Mr. Hockleby was an extremely sceptical person."

"Was that young man from Cambridge present at the discussions?"

"No-oh. No. He was not. He had probably gone down to the Garage to see if his Spare Part had come. He was always going down to the Garage to see about his Spare Part."

Mr. Preemby h'rrmped and began a new section of his narrative.

"It was in the evening after dinner," he said, "that things really began. I went into the smoking-room — to smoke — and afterwards I went into the drawing-room, and when I went into the drawing-room I had no more thought of occult phenomena, Christina Alberta, than I had of flying over the moon. But as I came into the drawing-room I saw Miss Solbé looking at her Patience cards which she had just put out, and the way she was holding her hands on the table reminded me of the way I had read that people put their hands together on the table when they were trying experiments in table-turning. And almost without thinking I said: 'Why, Miss Solbe, the way you are holding your hands is just the way they do when they are going to do table-turning!' I said it just like that.

"Mr. Hockleby was reading his paper at the time — the *Times,* I think, but it may have been the *Morning Post* — but he put it down when he heard me say that and he looked over his glasses at me and said, 'You don't believe in that sort of thing, Mr. Preemby, surely?'

"His wife was sitting with her back to me and from the way she spoke I think she must have been eating some sort of sweet or lozenge at the time. '*I* do,' she said. 'We did it at home dozens of times before I was married.'

"And I don't know what put it into my head, Christina Alberta; it seemed almost as though it was something behind myself that did it, or it may have been a sort of antagonism I have always felt about that man Hockleby; but anyhow, I said, 'I'd really like to try some of this tableturning.'

"The younger Miss Solbé, she's really quite a charming young lady when you get to know her, and it seems she has been reading a little occult literature lately—"

"How old is she, Daddy?" asked Christina Alberta regarding him with a look of novel suspicion.

"I don't think she can be very much more than thirty-two or three. Thirty-four at the outside. And really quite well-read, quite well-read. Well, anyhow, she said she would like to try it. And Miss Hockleby, evidently she had been brought up on strictly sceptical lines by her father, she was curious too. So to cut a long story short, we tried it. Only Mr. Hockleby objected and Mrs. Hockleby

overruled that. She was the only one among us who had ever seen anything of the sort before, and so it was she who arranged things and told us what to do. We chose a very solid table, the one that usually has the big aspidistra on it, and while we were turning out the lights—"

"But why did you do that, Daddy?"

"One always does that," said Mr. Preemby. "It makes the atmosphere more favourable. We lit a candle which Miss Margaret Rewster got for us and turned out all the electric lights; and while we were doing this, in came young Mr. Charles Fenton and said — *What* did he say? A peculiar expression. Ah yes!

'Gollys,' he said, 'what's up?'"

"Was that the young man with the motor-bicycle?"

"Yes. The young man from Cambridge. We explained what we were doing and asked him to join us. He declared he knew nothing of psychic phenomena, had never experimented with it at all and seemed very doubtful about taking part in the trial. 'I don't think there's anything in it,' he said.

'We shall just waste our time.' Indeed, I remember now that he did go out intending to visit a music-hall, and then he came back and said it was raining. It's very important to note that he was not at all eager to join us and that he was quite uninformed about occult things because, you see, as I will tell you, we found out presently that he was a person of exceptional psychic gifts, much greater psychic gifts than anyone else among us.

"Well, we arranged ourselves about the table in the usual manner, thumbs and little fingers touching, and for a time nothing seemed to happen at all. We found Miss Emily Rewster was peeping in through the slightly open door, and perhaps that may have had an unfavourable influence. I suppose she wondered what we were doing and why we had asked her sister for a candle. Then Mr. Fenton got very restive and grumbled to himself and said it was the silliest way of passing an evening he had ever tried. It was a little difficult to persuade him to keep silence and persevere. '*All* right,' said he, with a kind of resentment. 'Have it your own way.' And then suddenly came two violent raps, raps like little pistol shots, not immediately under the table it was, but as if it was in the air a foot or so under the

table. And then the table began to move. Slowly at first, shifting along the floor, and then quite strongly twisting and pushing up against our hands. It was very weird and impressive, Christina Alberta, very weird and impressive indeed. It rose nearly two feet I should think and then Mr. Hockleby broke the circle and it fell rather heavily, I fancy, and the leg hit his shin. He uttered an exclamation and stooped to rub his leg, and in the indistinct light he hit his head on the edge of the table. It seemed almost a judgment on his scepticism I thought. We turned up one or two of the lights to attend to him. 'I don't like this,' said Mr. Fenton. 'This is a bit too rum for me.'

"I asked him to try just once more.

"'I don't like this table riding up like this,' he said. 'It's such a bad example for the chairs. Suppose some of them start playing cup and ball with us! You might get a nasty toss from a buck-jumping chair. And besides, it's a lot too like a Channel crossing for my taste.'

"I think we were all a good deal excited by what had happened, and all the others, even Mr. Hockleby, were eager to continue.

"'Next time I shall *press* down,' he said. I think he was a little suspicious that either his wife or me had something to do with the phenomena. Evidently spiritualism was a long-standing dispute between him and his wife. His wife said she had seen tables move before, but none so actively as this one had done.

"Down we sat again. We had hardly waited a minute before the table began rocking about in the most extraordinary fashion, and then absolutely flew up so violently that the elder Miss Solbé was thrown back over that Ottoman there is there, and I was bumped under my chin. At the same time there was a perfect volley of cracks, like somebody cracking his fingers, but ever so much louder. It was quite a comfort to have the lights up again and see Mr. Hockleby holding the table down firmly in its proper place. 'Damn you,' he said — quite loudly. 'Damn you. Keep down.' Miss Hockleby and her father picked up Miss Solbé, who was on the floor in a sort of hysterical fit of laughter, with her feet waving about.

"' I don't like this,' said Mr. Fenton. 'It goes through one like an electric shock.'

“He spoke quite simply.

“The only one of us who had had any experience with occult phenomena was Mrs. Hockleby, and she had not done anything of the sort since her marriage to Mr. Hockleby five or six years before, because of his scepticism. She said now that it was very evident that some very strong and resolute spirit was present and was trying to communicate with us, and she explained a simple and safe method of getting into communication. We were to reform the circle round the table and we were to call over the alphabet, and when we came to the letter the spirit wanted there would be a rap and so we should be able to arrive at something definite. There is a sort of code quite well understood it seems in the spirit world, in which you convey ‘No’ by one rap and ‘Yes’ by two, and so on.

“We set to work at this,” said Mr. Preemby. “We asked if the spirit would like to spell out anything and it answered with two very loud raps, and then Mr. Hockleby read out the letters: A B C and so on. When it got to S the spirit gave a rap so loud it made me jump.”

“And what did you spell out, Daddy?”

“A name quite unknown to me then — SARGON, and then KINGS OF KINGS. We asked: was the spirit that was communicating with us Sargon? The answer came *No.* Was Sargon present? *Yes.* Then who was our communicant? OUJAH. Who was Oujah? WISE MAN. It was a very slow process spelling out the words in this way, and by the time we had got so far we were all very tired. Mr. Fenton in particular was very tired. He yawned and seemed greatly exhausted, and said at last he felt so weary and muzzy that he *must* go to bed.- That was really very natural, because though none of us realized it at the time he was the actual medium under Oujah’s control. He went to bed and we tried to go on without him, but the magic had departed and we could not get so much as a rap. So we sat for a time talking all this over; Mr. Hockleby in particular was greatly flabbergasted, and then the rest of us went to bed.”

“Evidently Mr. Fenton made the raps,” said Christina Alberta.

“Evidently his presence was necessary for the raps to be made,” corrected Mr. Preemby. “Quite unconsciously he was a Mejum.”

There was a pause.

“Go on with the story,” said Christina Alberta.

"The next evening was wet again, and as his Spare Part hadn't come Mr. Fenton was able to join us once more. He made some little objection at first because he said he and his people were all Particular Baptists, and he was doubtful whether this sort of thing was not Necromancy and forbidden in the Bible. But I persuaded him out of that. And this time we spelt out a quite singular message. It was AWAKE, SARGON! ARISE OR BE FOR EVER FALLEN!

"Even from the first I had had a feeling that those messages from Sargon had something to do with me. Now suddenly conviction came upon me. I asked 'Is Sargon present?'— 'Yes.' I knew it would be so. 'Is it anyone in the circle?'— 'Yes." Is it this gentleman?' — pointing to Mr. Hockleby. A very loud *No.* 'Is it me?'

'*Yes.*'

"Mr. Hockleby I noted at the time looked annoyed — as though he felt it was he who ought to be Sargon.

"Then young Mr. Fenton stood up suddenly. ' Oh! I can't stand any more of this,' he said. ' My head feels quite muzzy. I'm sure this sort of thing is harmful.' He walked across the room and sat down suddenly with his hands hanging over the arms of the chair — it was one of the big arm-chairs covered in cretonne. We all felt very much concerned, but as for myself I was all in a daze at the thought of being this Sargon and being called upon so openly to rouse myself to action. I did not understand fully as yet all that it meant to me, but I did realize that it meant a very great deal."

"But what did you think it meant?" said Christina Alberta sharply, and her perplexed gaze searched his profile. His blue eyes stared at things far away beyond the distant hills, strange things, fantastic empires, secret cities, mystical traditions, and his brows were knit in the effort to keep his story together.

"All in good time," said Mr. Preemby. "Let me tell my story in my own way. I was telling you, I think, that young Mr. Fenton said he felt heavy and strange. Mrs. Hockleby happily was quite equal to that situation. She had seen the same thing before. 'Don't struggle against it,' she said.

'Let yourself go. Just lean back in your chair. If you want to lie

quiet, do. If you want to say anything, do. Let the influence work.' And she turned to me and whispered 'trance.'

"'What is a trance?' said Mr. Fenton — just like that. 'What is a trance?'

"She began moving her hands in front of his face, 'making passes,' I think they call it. He shut his eyes, gave a sort of sigh and his head lolled back. We all sat round him waiting, and presently he began to mutter.

"At first it was just nonsense. 'Oodjah Woojer Boojer,' words like that. Then more distinctly, 'Oujah the Wise Man, Sargon's servant. Oujah comes to serve Sargon. To awaken him.' After that he seemed to wander off into sheer rubbish. 'Why is a mouse when it spins?' he whispered in his own voice and then, 'That damned Spare Part.'

"Mrs. Hockleby said that was quite characteristic of this sort of trance, and then Mr. Hockleby got a writing-pad and a pencil to take down anything more that was said.

"And presently when Mr. Fenton spoke again, he did not speak in his own voice but in a kind of hoarse whisper quite different from his usual voice. It was the voice of this Oujah speaking — Oujah the control. With a slight accent — Sumerian I suppose.

"Well, the things he said were very astonishing indeed. I think that this Oujah was anxious to secure my attention by convincing me that he knew of things, intimate things that nobody else could know. At the same time he did not wish the others to know too clearly what he was aiming at. How did it go? What can I remember? Mr. Hockleby has a lot of it written down, but so far I have not had time to make a copy. 'Child of the sea and the desert,' he said, 'the blue waters and the desert sand.' Is it too fanciful to find an allusion to Sheringham in that? —

'Cascades and great waters and a thing like a wheel on a blue shield.' That is more puzzling. But 'cascades and great waters' set me thinking of our big washers. And you remember the swastika on our blue delivery vans, Christina Alberta? Is not that oddly suggestive of a thing like a wheel on a blue shield? The Norse peoples called the swastika the fire-wheel. 'Armies with their white garments fluttering, the long lines drawn out — armies of delivery.' That again is queer. One is reminded of armies and also — don't

think me absurd! of the drying ground and the vans. It is like one thing becoming transparent and your seeing the other behind it."

"Are you sure of the exact phrases, Daddy?"

"Air. Hockleby has them written down. If I have not got them quite right you will be able to read his notes."

"The swastika may be a coincidence," said Christina Alberta. "Or you may have been drawing it on the edges of the newspaper. You do sometimes. And he may have seen it."

"That does not account for the blue ground. He laid great stress on the blue ground. And there were other things; matters known only to me and your dear mother. I could not tell you them without telling you everything. And small things, entirely private to me. The name of my late grandfather at Diss. Munday his name was. It is sometimes difficult to argue about things although one may be absolutely convinced. And all this was mixed up with broken sentences about a great city and the two daughters of the western King and the Wise Man. And also he called me Belshazzar. Belshazzar seemed to drift in and out of his thoughts. 'Come again to a world that has fallen into disorder.' These are remarkable words. And then 'Beware of women; they take the sceptre out of the hands of the king. But do they know how to rule? Ask Tutankhamen. Ask the ruins in the desert.'"

"Pah," said Christina Alberta. "As though women have ever had a fair chance!"

"Well, anyhow, Mr. Hockleby has that written down.... And it seemed to me that this too applied to me, for because of my great fondness for your mother I had let so many years of my life slip away. He said many other things, Christina Alberta, richly suggestive things. But I have told you enough for you to understand what has happened. In the end Mr. Fenton came-to quite suddenly, much more suddenly than is usual in such cases, Mrs. Hockleby said. He sat up and yawned and rubbed his eyes.

'Oh Lord!' he said, 'what nonsense all this is! I'm going to bed.'

"We asked him if he felt exhausted. He said he was. 'Absolutely fed up,' were his actual words.

"We asked him if that was the end of his message.

"'What message?' he said. He had absolutely no memory of his

communications at all. ‘Have I been talking?’ he asked. ‘This isn’t the sort of thing one ought to get up to. What sort of things have I been saying? Nothing objectionable I hope. If so I apologize. I mustn’t do any more of this sort of thing.’

“Mrs. Hockleby told him she had never met anyone with such a promise of great psychic power as he had, before. He said he was really very sorry to hear it. She said he owed it to himself to cultivate so rare and strange a gift, but he said That wouldn’t do for his people at all. The rain had stopped and he said he thought he would take a walk down to the Pantiles and back before turning in. Perfectly simple and natural he was from first to last, and rather unwilling. And he really did look tired out.”

“Didn’t he laugh once?” asked Christina Alberta.

“Why should he? He seemed a little afraid of what he had transmitted. The next day his Spare Part came. Mrs. Hockleby did her utmost to try to get him once more in the afternoon and develop his Communication, but he would not do so. He was full of questions about the ferry at Tilbury and the time of high tide. He would not even give us his name and address. When I spoke of sending Mr. Hockleby’s notes to the *Occult Review* he was suddenly quite alarmed. He said that if his name appeared in connection with them it might mean a very serious row with his family. He would not even allow us to put a Mr. F. from Cambridge. ‘Put quite another name,’ he said, ‘quite a different name. Put anything you like that does not point to me, a Mr. Walker, say, from London. Or something of that sort.’”

“Of course there was nothing for us to do but agree.”

4

“And that was the whole of your communication, Daddy?”

“It was only the beginning. Because after that I began to remember. I began to remember more and more.”

“Remember?”

“Things from my other lives. Memories stored up. This young Mr. Fenton was, so to speak, no more than the first cut in the curtain of forgetfulness that hung between this present life and all my previous

existences. Now it was rent and tom open so that I could see things through it at a dozen points. Now I begin to realize what I really was and what I can really be.....

"You know, Christina Alberta, I have never actually believed I was myself — not even as a schoolboy. And now it is interesting, I know and understand clearly that I *am* somebody else. I have always been somebody else."

"But who do you believe you are, Daddy?"

"So far as I can gather I was first a chief called Porg in a city called Kleb in the very beginning of the world, aeons and aeons ago, and I tamed my people and taught them many things. Then afterwards I was this Sargon — Sargon the King of Kings. There is very little about him here in the Public Library, in the *Encyclopedia Britannica;* an upstart who took his name, *my* name, three thousand years later, an Assyrian fellow is the Sargon they tell about — he got mixed up with the Jews and he besieged Samaria — but I was the original Sargon long before there were Jews or anything of the sort, long before Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And afterwards I was Belshazzar, the last crown prince of the Babylonians, but that is not very clear. That remains obscure. Only one part of the record is lit — as yet. And possibly I have been other people. But the figure that stands out in my memory now is Sargon. It is his memories have been returning to me. It is he who has returned in me."

"But Daddy, you don't really believe all this?"

"Believe! — I *know*. Long before this Communication came to me I had had those intimations, — that assurance that I was somebody else. *Now* I see clearly. I can remember days in Akkadia now just as clearly as I can remember days in Woodford Wells. I could almost doubt whether I have ever lived at Woodford Wells; it seems so far away now. It was when I was in bed the night after Mr. Fenton had gone that these memories began to come. I was in bed, and then suddenly I was not in bed — I was reclining on a couch under a canopy, a canopy of pure white wool very finely woven and embroidered with emblems and symbols and suchlike things in golden thread, and I was upon my state barge upon the Euphrates. Two King's daughters, sisters, with slender necks, not unlike the two Miss Solbés except that they were fairer — and decidedly younger —

much younger — and clad rather more in accordance with the requirements of a warm climate, chiefly in woven gold — sat and fanned me with fans of eagles' feathers dyed a royal purple. And at my feet sat my councillor Prewm, who was oddly enough extremely like Mr. Hockleby — just the same iron-grey whiskers and with the same little tufts of hair over his ears. He was wearing an extremely tall cap of some black woollen substance, and he was making memoranda with a wooden style on a tablet of wet clay. It was like writing on a mud pie. And beyond him were the officers of the boat on a kind of bridge — they were wearing leather helmets studded with brass — and then one saw the rowers below, chained to their oars, and then on either side spread the broad brown river just crinkled by the breeze. The little boats fled to make way for us. They had coarse, square sails, and they lowered them and turned them about all in precisely the same way at precisely the same time. It was very pretty to see. Along the banks were little villages of mud-brick houses and clumps and lines of palm trees; and everywhere there were primitive contrivances, great bent poles of wood like giant fishing-rods, for raising water out of the river for the cultivation of the land. And the people were all crowded along the water's edge and bowing with their hands and foreheads in the water and crying, 'Sargon the Conqueror, Sargon King of Kings!'"

"But Daddy, this was a dream?"

"How could I dream of things I had never seen nor heard of before?"

"One does."

"One does *not*" he replied with a quiet invincible obstinacy. "I remember I was coming back from the South where I had given peace to a multitude of warring tribes, Elamites and Perrizites and Jebusites and people of that sort, and I was returning to my capital. I remember distinctly many details of the campaign and I know that with an effort I could recall more in the proper order. In dreams absurd things happen, dreams when you think them over afterwards are all at sixes and sevens, but this is all sane and orderly. One might think, Christina Alberta, that I had never dreamt dreams and that all these memories of that previous existence which crowd upon me now were a deception of my imagination! But I can go right back as

if it was yesterday, and I am surer by far that I am Sargon than that I am Albert Edward Preemby your father. The former is my true self, the latter is just a very simple, unpretending wrapping that for some purpose, at present inexplicable to me, has hidden me from the world."

He waved his hand with a bolder gesture than was habitual to him. He sat with his eyes wide open, looking at unseen things.

The girl regarded him for some seconds in silence. She was trying to grasp the full import of this amazing speech.

"And *this* was your Communication?" she said at last.

"You have to know," he said. "You have to serve and help me."

(Help him! How could she help him or herself? How far was this thing going? What was she to do?)

"Have you told anyone else of this, Daddy?" she asked abruptly. "Have you told anyone else?"

He turned his solemn little face towards her.

"Ah *there,*" he said, "we have to be very discreet and careful — very careful indeed. Here and now is not the time to proclaim that Sargon, King of Kings, has come back to the civilization he did so much to found. One has to be careful, Christina Alberta. There is a spirit of opposition.

"For instance, I have told something of my first vision — dream you may call it if you like — to Mr. Hockleby. I described the resemblance between himself and Prewm. He was by no means pleased. His is a seditious, insubordinate nature. And besides — since then — I have recalled what happened — on the advice of Oujah — to Prewm....

"And I have realized since then that, though one may be convinced oneself, it does not follow that one will convince other people. It is true that Miss Hockleby and the two Miss Solbés have asked me to tell them more of my dreams — they too call them dreams. But their manner was curious rather than respectful and I have been extremely reserved with them."

"That's my wise Daddy," said Christina Alberta. "You have to think of your dignity."

"I have to think of my dignity certainly. Nevertheless—" His hands went out in a new amplitude of gesture. "Here I am and this is

my world. My world! I nursed it in its infancy. I taught it law and obedience. Here I am, the most ancient of monarchs. Rameses and Nebuchadnezzar, Greece and Rome, the Kingdoms and Empires, things of yesterday — interludes while I have been sleeping. And clearly I have been sleeping. And clearly I have not been sent back to the world without a mission. This is a great and crowded world now, Christina Alberta, but it is in a sad state of disorder. Even the newspapers remark upon it. People are not happy now. They are not happy as they were under my rule in Sumeria thousands of years ago. In the sunshine and abundance of Sumeria."

"But what can you *do,* Daddy?"

"Dear Princess, my child, that I have to think out. Nothing hastily; nothing rashly."

"No," said Christina Alberta.

There came a pause. "One person only seems to have any belief in me. The younger Miss Solbé — Did you say anything, dear?"

"I have asked her if she too has had any dreams, any vague memories of a previous existence. She seems to have had something confirmatory in a shadowy sort of way. Very vague intimations. She tells them timidly, when her sister is not about. But she is under a misapprehension that her relationship to me was a particularly close and special one. She was not my Queen. There she is wrong. It is perhaps natural for her to think so, but I remember quite distinctly how it was. She was one of the Twenty Principal Concubines who carried the Eagle fans."

"Have you told her that?"

"Not yet," said Mr. Preemby. "Not yet. One has to go discreetly in all these things."

Another pause followed. Christina Alberta looked at her wrist-watch. "My word!" she cried. "We shall be late for lunch!"

She noted as they walked back towards the Petunia Boarding House that his bearing and manner had undergone a subtle change. He seemed larger and taller and his face was serener and he held his head higher. He did not h'rrmp once. He seemed to expect people and things to get out of his way, and it was as if the path was a carpet that was being unrolled before his advance. Had she been able to see herself she would have remarked an equal change in her own

carriage. The dance had gone out of her paces. She walked like one upon whose shoulders the responsibilities of life might easily become overwhelming.

They were late for lunch, and all the other boarders were in their places, beginning. Every one turned to look at Mr. Preemby's face as they came in, and then they glanced at one another. "So you've come back to us," said Mrs. Hockleby to Christina Alberta, meeting her eye.

"It's jolly to be back," said Christina Alberta.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

CHRISTINA ALBERTA CONSULTS A WISE MAN

1

CHRISTINA ALBERTA and Paul Lambone had been great friends for nearly a year. He liked her and admired her, and as became his literary line of work, he studied her. And she liked him and trusted him, and showed off a good lot when she was with him.

Paul Lambone wrote novels and short stories and books of good advice, and he was particularly celebrated for the pervading wisdom of his novels and the excellence of his advice. It was his pervading wisdom that had picked him up out of the general poverty of writers and placed him in a position of comparative prosperity. Not that his conduct of his affairs was wise, but that the quality of his wisdom was extremely saleable. Some writers prosper by reason of their distinctive passion, some by reason of their austerity and truth, some by their excellent invention, and some even by simple good writing, but Paul Lambone prospered because of his kindness and wisdom. When you read the stories you always felt that he was really sorry for the misfortunes and misbehaviour of his characters and anxious to help them as much as he could. And when they blundered or sinned he would as often as not tell you what was the better course they might have chosen. His book of advice, and particularly his *Book of Everyday Wisdom* and his *What To Do on a Hundred and One Occasions* sold largely and continually.

But like that James, King of England, to whom the Bible was dedicated, Paul Lambone was far wiser in his thoughts and counsels than in his acts. In small matters and most of the time his proceedings were foolish or selfish or indecisive or all of those things. His wisdom did not reach below the level of his eyes, and his face and body and arms and legs were given over to the unhappiest tendencies which were restrained by his general indolence rather than by any real self-control. He was very well off chiefly because he was lazy; he asked the highest possible prices for everything he wrote

because that was just as easy as asking the lowest, and there was always a chance that the bargain would not come off and then he would be saved the trouble of correcting his proofs. He accumulated money because he was too unenterprising to buy things or incur the responsibility of possessions, and so he just let a trust invest it for him. His literary reputation was high because a literary reputation in England and America depends almost entirely upon apparent reluctance of output. The terse beauty of his style was mainly due to his sedulous indisposition to write two words where one would suffice. And in the comfort and leisure his indolence accumulated for him, he sat about and talked and was genially wise and got fatter than was becoming. He tried to eat less as a preferable alternative to taking exercise, but in the presence of drink and nourishment his indolence flagged and failed him. He went about a good deal, and was always eager for new things because they saved him from boredom, the malign parent of much needless activity. He had an expensive little cottage near Rye in Kent to which he could motor without needless trouble whenever London bored him, and directly his cottage bored him he would come back to London. And he visited people's houses a lot because it was too troublesome to resist invitations.

There were, it must be admitted, limits to the wisdom of Paul Lambone. It is often more difficult to see what is near us than what is far away; many a stout fellow who looks with a clear discerning eye upon the universe sees little of his toes, and ignores the intervening difficulty; and something sub-conscious in Paul Lambone's mind obstinately refused to recognize the defective nature of many of his private acts. He knew he was indolent, but he would not allow himself to admit that his indolence was fundamental and vicious. He thought there was a Paul Lambone in reserve of very great energy. He liked to think of himself as a man of swift and accurate decisions who, once aroused, was capable of demoniac energy. He had spent many an hour in arm-chairs, on garden seats, and on Downland turf, thinking out his course of action on various possible occasions of war, business, criminal attempt or domestic crisis. His favourite heroes in real life were Napoleon, Julius Caesar, Lord Kitchener, Lord Northcliffe, Mr. Ford, and suchlike heroic ants.

He liked Christina Alberta because of her tremendous go. She was always up to something; she preferred standing to sitting, and she kicked her legs about while she talked to you. He idealized her go; he attributed to her much more go than she really had. He was secretly persuaded that her blood must be like a bird's, a degree or so above normal. He felt that in imagination she had much in common with him. He called her the Last Thing, the Van, the Ultimate Modern Girl, and the Life Force. He openly professed pity for the unaided single-handed man who would in accordance with our social laws presently have to marry her and go her pace and try to keep her in order.

She had been to tea with him once or twice. She perceived his admiration and suspected a certain affection, and she basked in admiration and affection. She liked his books and thought he was very like what he thought he was himself. She told him all sorts of things about herself just to lift his eyebrows.

And he was wise all over her and round and about her, tremendously wise.

It was quite interesting to be rung up by Christina Alberta and asked if she might come for tea and advice. "Come along now," he said. "I'm probably all alone for tea."

And as he replaced the instrument he said: "Now I wonder what the young woman has been up to! And what she wants me to do for her."

He went back to his sitting-room and spread himself on his very nice Persian hearthrug, and regarded the pretty silver kettle that swung over his spirit lamp. "It won't be money," he considered. "She isn't the sort that tries to get money....

"She's barked her shins on something....

"Girls nowadays are a lot too plucky — they're a lot too plucky altogether.... I hope it's nothing serious.... She's just a kid."

Christina Alberta appeared in due course. Erect as ever, but nevertheless looking a little dashed and subsued.

"Uncle," she said — for that was her theory of their relationship —" I'm in trouble. You've got to give me all sorts of advice."

"Take off that brigand's cloak," he said, "and sit down there and make me some tea. I've been watching your love affair out of the

corner of my eye for some time. I'm not surprised."

Christina Alberta paused with her cloak in her hand and stared at him. "That's nothing," she said. "I can manage that little affair all right. Such as it is. Don't you worry about *me,* in that respect. Don't imagine things. But there is something — something different." She threw the cloak over a chair back and came and stood by the silver tea-tray.

"You know my Daddy," she said, arms akimbo.

"I never saw a more dissimilar parent."

"Well—" She considered how she should put it. "He's behaving queerly. So that people may think — people who don't know him — that he's going out of his mind."

Mr. Lambone reflected. "Was it ever such a very serious mind to go out of?"

"Oh! don't make jokes. His mind was good enough to keep him out of trouble, and now something's happened and it isn't. People will think — some of them think already — he is mad. They may take him away. And there's just him and me. It's serious, Uncle. And I don't know what I ought to do. I don't know enough to know. I'm scared. I've got no friends that I can talk to about it. None. You'd think I'd have women friends. I haven't. I don't get on with older women. They want to boss me. Or I think they do. And I irritate them. They know, they feel — the proper ones — that I don't — oh! respect their standards. And the other sort just hate me. Because I'm young. The girls I know — no good for what I want just now."

"But isn't there a man," said Lambone, "on whom you have a sort of claim?"

"You know who it is, I suppose?"

He was frank. "Things rather show."

"If you know him—" She left the sentence unfinished.

"I know the young man only very incidentally," he said.

"I go to Teddy," said Christina Alberta without any further reservations. "I went to him as a matter of fact before I telephoned to you. He hardly listened to what I had to say. He didn't bother." She winced. Suddenly tears stood in her eyes. "He was just loafing about in his studio. He kissed me and tried to excite me. He would hardly listen to what I had to tell him.... That I suppose is what one gets

from a lover."

"So it's got to that," Paul Lambone reflected with hidden dismay, and then remarked a little belatedly: "Not every lover."

"Mine — anyhow."

"And you came away?"

"*Well!* What do *you* think?"

"H'm," said Lambone. "You *have* barked your shins, Christina Alberta! More than I thought."

"Oh, Hell take Teddy!" said Christina Alberta, putting it on a bit and helping herself by being noisy. "What does that matter now? I've done with Teddy. I was a fool. Never mind that. The thing is my Daddy. What am I to do about my Daddy?"

"Well, first you've got to tell me all about it," said Lambone. "Because at present, you know, I've hardly got the hang of the trouble. And before you do that you sit down in that easy chair and I make the tea. No, not you. Your nerves are on edge and you'll upset something. You've been having your first dose of adult worry. Sit down there and don't say anything for a minute. I'm glad you came along to me. Very glad.... I liked that Daddy of yours really. Little innocent-eyed man he was. Blue eyes. And he was talking — what nonsense *was* he talking? About the Lost Atlantis. But it was quite nice nonsense.... No, don't interrupt. Just let me recall my own impression of him until you've had your tea."

3

When the tea was made and Christina Alberta had sipped a cup and looked more comfortable, Lambone, who felt he was managing things beautifully, told her she might begin.

"He's getting queer in his mind, but you know that he isn't really going out of his mind," said Lambone. "That's it, isn't it?"

"That *is* it," said Christina Alberta. "You see—" She paused. Lambone sat down in a second arm-chair and sipped his tea in a leisurely manner. "It's a little difficult," he said.

"You see," said Christina Alberta, knitting her brows at the fire, "he's a person of peculiar imaginativeness. He always has been. Always. He's always lived half in a dream. We've been very much

together ever since I was born almost, and from the earliest times I remember his talks, rambling talks, about the Lost Atlantis, and about the secrets of the pyramids and Yogis and the Lamas of Tibet. And astrology. All such wonderful, impossible, far-off things. The further off the better. Why! — he almost got me into a dream too. I was a Princess of Far Atlantis lost in the world. I used to play at that, and sometimes my play came very near to believing. I could Princess it for a whole afternoon. Lots of children daydream like that."

"I did," said Lambone. "For days together I would be a great Indian chief, sentenced to death again and again — disguised as a small preparatory schoolboy. The incongruity didn't matter a rap. Everybody does it more or less for a time."

"But he's gone on doing it all his life. And he's doing it now more than ever. He's lost the last trace of any sense that it is a dream. And some one played a trick upon him at Tunbridge Wells. Not realizing what it might mean for him. They seem to have muddled about with spiritualism in the evenings while I was in London, table-rapping and so forth, and a man who had nothing better to do pretended to have a trance. He told Daddy he was Sargon the First, Sargon King of Kings he called him, who was Lord of Akkadia and Sumeria — you know — ages ago, before Babylon was born or thought of. The man who did it couldn't have hit on anything more mischievous so far as Daddy was concerned. You see he was exactly ready for it; leaving Woodford Wells where he had spent half his life in one routine had cut him off, even more than he was usually cut off, from reality. He was uprooted already before this idea came to him. And now it's just swamping him. It suited him exactly. It — fixed him. Always before one could get him back — by talking about my mother or the laundry vans, or something familiar like that. But now I can't get him back. I can't. He's Sargon incognito, come back as Lord of the World, and he believes that just as firmly as I believe that I am his daughter Christina Alberta Preemby talking to you now. It's a reverie no longer. He's got his evidence and he believes."

"And what does he want to do about it?"

"All sorts of things. He wants to declare himself Lord of the World. He says things are in a bad way and he wants to save them."

"They *are* in a bad way," said Lambone. "People don't begin to

know half how bad they are. Still — I suppose having a delusion about who one is, isn't Insanity. Does he want to make some sort of fuss?"

"I'm afraid, yes."

"Soon?"

"That's' what worries me."

"You see," she went on, "I'm afraid he's going to strike most people as queer. He's back at Lonsdale Mews. We had to come up from Tunbridge Wells yesterday. On a few hours' notice. It's that has upset me. For a couple of days things went on all right. Practically we were turned out of the boarding-house. There was a frightfully disagreeable man there, a Mr. Hockleby, and he seemed to take a violent dislike to Daddy. You know those unreasonable dislikes people take at times?"

"A very disagreeable side of human nature. *I* know. Why, people have taken dislikes to *me*!... But go on."

"He and his daughter got upset about Daddy's queerness. They frightened the Miss Rewsters, the sisters who run the place. They said he might break out at any moment, and either he would have to leave or they would. There they were all whispering on the stairs and talking of sending for a policeman and having him taken away. What could I do? We had to clear out. You see Daddy had a sort of idea that when he was Sargon Mr. Hockleby had been alive too and had had to be impaled for seditious behaviour; and instead of letting bygones be bygones as one ought to do in such cases, he said something about it to him, and Mr. Hockleby construed it as a threat. It's all so difficult, you see."

"He didn't try to impale him over again, or anything?"

"No. He doesn't do things like that. It's only his imagination that is doing tremendous things. He isn't."

"And now he's in London?"

"He has a sort of idea he's overlord of the King, and he wants to go to the King at Buckingham Palace and tell him about it. He says the King is a thoroughly good man, thoroughly good; and directly he hears how things are, he will acknowledge Dadda as his feudal superior and place him on the throne. Of course if he tries to do anything of that sort he will be locked up for a certainty. And he's

written letters to the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor and the President of the United States and Lenin, and so forth, directing them to wait upon him for his instructions. But I've persuaded him not to post them till he can have a proper seal made."

"Rather like Muhammad's letters to the potentates," said Lambone.

"He's thinking, too, of a banner or something of that sort, but all that's quite vague. He's just got the phrase 'raise my banner.' I don't think that matters much yet. But the Buckingham Palace idea, — something may come of that."

"This is no end interesting," said Lambone, and walked across his room and back, and then half sat on the arm of his easy chair with his hands deep in his pockets. "Tell me; is he distraught to look at?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Untidy in his dress?"

"Neat as ever."

"I remember when I saw him how neat he was. Is he — at all — incoherent? Or does it all hold together?"

"Absolutely. He's perfectly logical and coherent. He talks I think rather better and more clearly than usual."

"It's just one simple delusion? He has no illusions about having great physical strength or beauty or anything of that sort?"

"None. He's not a bit crazy. He's just possessed by this one grand impossible idea."

"He's not throwing away money or anything of that sort?"

"Not a bit of it. He's always been — careful with money."

"And he is now?"

"Yes."

"Let's hope that lasts. I don't see that a man is insane because he believes he is a King or an Emperor — if some one tells him he is. After all, George V has no other grounds for imagining he is a King. The only difference is that rather more people have told him so. Fancying yourself a King isn't lunacy, and behaving in accordance with that idea isn't lunacy either. It may be some day, but it isn't so yet. No."

"But I'm afraid that people will think that it is.... You see it's only in the last few days I've realized how fond I am of my father and

how horrible it would be for me if anyone attempted to take him away. I'm afraid of asylums. Restraint for those who can least understand restraint. He particularly would go mad in a week, really mad, if he got into one. That Mr. Hockleby has frightened me — he's frightened me. He was so intent and cruel. He was *evil* about Daddy — malignant. A nasty man."

"Yes, I know," said Lambone. "Hate."

"Yes," she said. "Hate."

She jumped to her feet and took possession of the hearthrug, looking with her bobbed hair and short skirts and manly pose and serious face the most ridiculous and attractive mixture of fresh youth and mature responsibility conceivable.

"You see, I don't know what they can do with him — whether they can take him away from me. I've never been much afraid of what might happen before, but I am now. I don't know how to take hold of all this. I thought life was just a lark and people were fools to be afraid of doing anything. But now I see *life's dangerous.* I've never been much afraid of what happened to myself. But this is different. He's walking about in a dream of glory — with absolute wretchedness hanging over him. Think of it! People getting hold of him! Perhaps hitting him! An asylum!"

"About the law on these matters I know very little," Lambone reflected. "I doubt if they can do very much to him without your consent. But I agree about asylums. From their very nature they must be horrible places, haunted places. Most of the attendants — hardened. Even if they start well. Every day at it... too much for anyone.... I don't know how a lunatic is made, a legal lunatic I mean, or who has a right to take him. Somebody — I think two doctors — have to certify him or something of that sort. But, anyhow, I don't think your father is a lunatic."

"Nor I. But that may not save him."

"Something else may. He's as you say an imaginative — a super-imaginative man, possessed by a fantastic idea. Well, isn't that a case perhaps for a psycho-analyst?"

"Possibly. Who'd talk him back — to something like he used to be."

"Yes. If such a man as Wilfred Devizes, for example, could talk to

him—”

“I don’t know much about these people. I’ve read some Freud of course — and a little Jung.”

“I know Devizes slightly. We talked at lunch. And I liked his wife. And if perhaps you could get your father away into a country cottage. By the by — have you got any money?”

“He’s got the cheque-book, but he makes me an allowance. So far there’s been no money trouble. He signs his cheques all right.”

“But he may not presently.”

“Oh! Of course at any time, he may begin putting a swastika or a royal cipher in the place of his signature, and then the fat *would* be in the fire. I shouldn’t know where to turn. I hadn’t thought of that.”

“No,” said Lambone.

For some seconds — it seemed quite a long time to Christina Alberta — he said nothing more. He sat half leaning upon the arm of his chair and looked past her at the fire. She had said what she wanted to say, and now stood waiting for him to speak. His wisdom told him that things had to be done in this matter very soon; his temperament inclined him just to stay in that pleasant room and say things. Meanwhile she looked about the room and realized how comfortable a wise man could be. It was the best furnished room she had ever been in. The chairs were jolly; there were bound books in the bookcase, a delightful old Chinese horse on the top of it; all his tea-things were silver or fine china; there was a great writing-desk with silver candlesticks; the windows that gave on Half Moon Street were curtained with a rich, subtly folding material very pleasing to the eye. Her eyes came back to his big fat face and his peevish mouth and fine, meditative eyes.

“Something,” he said and sighed, “ought to be done at once. It isn’t a matter to leave about. He might commit some indiscretion. And get into trouble.”

“I’m afraid of that.”

“Exactly. He’s safe — where you left him?”

“There’s somebody with him.”

“Who won’t let anything happen?”

“Yes.”

“So far, good.”

“But what am I to do?”

“What are you to do?” he echoed and said no more for some seconds.

“Well?” she said.

“What in fact are *we* to do. I ought to see him. Decidedly. Yes, I ought to see him.”

“Then come and see him.”

“I ought to come and see him. Now.”

“Then let’s.”

He nodded. He seemed to be making an intense internal effort. “Why not?” he asked.

“Well?”

“And then — then we can broach a visit to Wilfred Devizes. Generally fix that up. Then our subsequent action will be determined by what Wilfred Devizes says. The sooner he sees Devizes the better. It’s a question whether it wouldn’t be better for you or both of us to see Devizes first. No. Father first. Then when I’m properly instructed — as a lawyer would say — Devizes.”

A great tranquillity descended upon him.

She could not restrain a faint exclamation of impatience.

He looked up as if he awakened from profound meditation. “I’ll come along now,” he said, “to Lonsdale Mews. I’ll have a talk to your father and then I’ll try to get at Devizes and fix up some sort of a meeting between them. That’s what I ought to do. I’ll go along with you now — at once.”

“Right-o,” said Christina Alberta, “*come* along.” She threw on her cloak and clapped her hat upon her head in a dozen seconds and stood waiting.

“I’m ready,” she said.

“I’ll just change this jacket,” said Lambone; and kept her waiting a full ten minutes.

4

The taxi dropped them at the entrance of the Mews.

“I suppose it won’t matter our arriving together?” said Lambone. “He won’t think it’s something preconcerted?”

“He doesn’t have suspicions of that sort.”

But when they reached the studio a little surprise awaited them. Fay Crumb opened the door to them and her eyes looked paler and her neck longer and her face more absent-minded than ever.

“I’m so glad you’ve come at last,” she said in a flat, distraught voice. “You see — he’s gone!”

“Gone!”

“Completely. He’s been away since three. He went out alone.”

“But Fay, you promised!”

“I know. I could see he was restless and I kept telling him you’d be back soon. It wasn’t so easy keeping him. He walked up and down and talked. ‘I must go out to my people,’ he said. ‘ I feel they need me. I must be about my proper business.’ I didn’t know what to do. I just hid his hat. I never dreamt he’d go out without his hat — prim as he is. I just went upstairs for a moment to get something — I forget what now — but, anyhow, it wasn’t there, and I may have spent five minutes looking for it — and meanwhile he slipped out. He left the door open and I never heard him go. As soon as I knew he’d gone I ran up the Mews right up into Lonsdale Road and stood about there.... He’d vanished. I’ve been hoping he’d come back every moment since. Before you returned. But! He hasn’t come back.”

Her conviction was all too manifest that he would never come back.

“I’d have done anything—” she said.

Christina Alberta and Paul Lambone looked at one another.

“This rather puts the lid on,” said Christina Alberta. “What are we going to do now?”

5

Lambone followed Christina Alberta into the studio and sat down at once on the simple couch that became Mr. Preemby’s bed at night. The couch squeaked and submitted. He stared at the floor and reflected. “I’ve got no engagements this evening,” he said. “None.”

“It won’t be much good waiting here for him,” said Christina Alberta.

“I feel in my bones he won’t head back here for hours and hours,”

he said.

“And meanwhile he may be up to anything!” said Christina Alberta.

“Any old lark,” said Lambone.

“Anything,” said Christina Alberta.

“Three,” said Lambone and consulted his watch: “it’s now nearly five. Do you think there is any particular place, Christina Alberta, more than any other place, where we might go and look for him? Where, in fact, we ought to look for him?”

“But will you come and look for him?”

“I’m at your service.”

“It wasn’t in the bond.”

“I want to. If you won’t walk too fast. I feel I ought to.”

Christina Alberta stood before him with her arms akimbo. “I would bet five to one,” she said slowly, “that he heads for Buckingham Palace and demands an audience — No, that isn’t how he puts it — offers to give an audience to his Vassal, the King. He was full of that this morning. And then — Then I suppose they will lock him up and have an inquiry into his mental condition.”

“H’m,” said Lambone, and then, rising to the occasion: “Let’s go to Buckingham Palace.

“We’ll go there at once,” he said, and moved slowly doorward. “We’ll get a taxi.”

They found a taxi in the King’s Road. Christina Alberta did not belong to the taxi-ing class, and she was impressed by a sudden realization that Lambone had all these thousands of taxi-cabs upon the streets alert to do his bidding. The taxi dropped them according to instructions at the foot of the Victoria Memorial which gesticulates in front of Buckingham Palace, and they stood side by side surveying that building. “It looks much as usual,” said Lambone.

“You didn’t expect him to bend it?” said Christina Alberta.

“If he made a disturbance they’ve cleared him up very completely. That flag I suppose means G.R. is at home.... I wonder — what do we do next?”

He was rather at a loss. The emotional atmosphere of this wide-open place was quite different from the emotional atmosphere of his

flat or the Lonsdale Mews. In the flat and in the Mews the appeal had been for him to act; the appeal here was not to make himself conspicuous. He was a man of decorous instincts. A car passed, a beautiful, big, shining Napier, and he thought the occupants looked at him as though they recognized him. Lots of people knew him nowadays and might recognize him. In his flat, in the studio at Lonsdale Mews, he could foregather with Christina Alberta without compunction; but now, in this very conspicuous place, this most conspicuous place, he had a momentary realization that he and she didn't exactly match, he with his finished effect of being a man about town, a large, distinguished, mature man about town, and she with her air of excessive youthfulness, her very short skirts and her hat, like the calyptra of a black mushroom, pulled over her bobbed hair. People might think them an incongruous couple. People might wonder what had brought them together and what he was up to with her.

"I suppose we ought to ask some one," she said.

"Who?"

"Oh! — one of those sentinels."

"May one speak to the sentinels at the gate? Frankly, I'm afraid of those tremendous chaps in the busbies. I'd as soon speak to the Horse Guard in Whitehall. He'd probably look right over our heads and say nothing. And we should just dither away from beneath him. I couldn't stand that...."

"But what are we to do?"

"Nothing rash."

"We *must* ask some one."

"Away there on the left towards Victoria there's what looks like the real business way in. There's two policemen. I'm not afraid of policemen. No. And of course that man at the corner is a plain-clothes man."

"Then let's ask *him*!"

Lambone made no move. "Suppose he hasn't come here at all!"

"I know he meant to do so."

"I suppose if he hasn't come," said Lambone, "we ought to wait about here on the chance of his coming." He felt extremely like flight at that instant. "There ought to be seats here.

“Come along,” he said, with a sudden return to manly decision, “let’s ask one of those bobbies at the far gate.”

6

The policeman at the gate to whom they addressed themselves listened gravely to their inquiries, making no instant reply. He belonged to that great majority of English speakers who are engaged upon the improvement of the word “yes.” His particular idea was to make it long and purry.

“Yurrss,” he said breaking presently into speech: “Yurrss. There was a small gentleman without a ‘at on. Yurrss. He ‘*ad* blue eyes. And a moustache? Yurrss, come to think of it there *was* a moustache. A rather considerable moustache. Well, ‘e said he wanted to speak to King George on a rather urgent matter. It always is a rather urgent matter. Never ‘quite.’ Always ‘rather.’ We replied, according to formula, ‘e’d ‘ave to write for’n ‘pointment. ‘Perhaps,”e says, ‘You don’t know who I am?’ They all say that. ‘I guess it’s something important,’ I says. ‘Not the Ormighty, by any chance,’ I says. But ‘e was ‘ere last week and ‘e wouldn’ go away and they ‘ad to take ‘im off in a taxi-cab. You know there *was* a chap ‘ere, sir — Thursday last or Friday, I forget which — with a long white beard and ‘air all down ‘is back. Very like ‘im I should think. Well any’ow this sort of dashed your gentleman. He kind of mumbled a name.”

“Not Sargon?” asked Christina Alberta.

“It might ‘ave been. Any’ow, ‘There is no exceptions,’ I says. ‘Not even if you was a close relation. We got no option here. We’re just machines.’ He stood sort of looking baffled for a time. ‘All this must be altered,’ he said in a sort of low, earnest voice. ‘It’s the duty of every king to give audience to every one, every day.’ I says, ‘Very likely it is, sir. But we policemen aren’t in any position to ‘elp it,’ I says, ‘much less alter it.’ So off ‘e goes. I kind of tipped the wink to the detective at the corner and ‘e watched ‘im go along the front and then cross over to the monument and stand looking up at the windows. And then ‘e shrugged ‘is shoulders and took ‘imself off. And that’s the last I see of ‘im.”

Lambone asked a superfluous question.

“It might be Piccadilly way,” said the policeman, “it might be down towards Trafalgar Square. Fact is, sir, I didn’t notice.”

It was clear that the conversation was drawing to an end.

7

“So that’s that,” said Lambone. “So far, good. He’s still at large.”

He expressed his thanks to the policeman.

“And now,” he said with an air of bringing out the solution of a difficult problem very successfully, “all we have to do is to find him.”

“But where?”

“That’s the essence of the problem.”

He led the way back to the Victoria Memorial and stood side by side with Christina Alberta beneath that perfect symbol of the British Empire, the statue of Queen Victoria. They stared down the Mall to the distant Admiralty Arch, and for a moment neither of them said a word. It was a warm and serene October afternoon; the cupolas of Whitehall and Westminster’s two towers and a brown pile of mansions were just visible over the trees on the right, transfigured to beauty by the afternoon glow; the two tall columns of the Duke of York and Nelson rose over the trees and buildings to the left; it was in the pause before the dinner and theatre traffic begins, and only a few taxicabs and a car or so emphasized the breadth of the processional roadway. Half a dozen windows in the Admiralty had taken fire already from the sinking sun.

“I suppose,” said Lambone, “he’s gone down there.”

Christina Alberta stood with her arms akimbo and her faet a little apart. “I suppose he has.”

The wide road ran straight to the distant Admiralty Arch. And through that remote little opening was Trafalgar Square and Charing Cross and a radiating tangle of roads and streets spreading out and beyond and further into the twilight blue.

“What will he make for now?”

“Heaven knows. I’m bankrupt. I haven’t an idea.”

Neither spoke for a little while.

“He’s gone,” she said, “just gone,” and that simple and desolating

thought filled her mind.

But the thoughts of Paul Lambone were more complex and intricate.

He perceived that a serious adventure was happening to him and that he was called upon to exert himself. He had suddenly been called away from his tea and hot tea-cake to hunt a slightly demented comparative stranger about London. He wanted to do it, and he wanted to do it properly and in a way to impress Christina Alberta. And his intelligence told him that the best thing he could do would be to follow upon the probable track of his quarry and come up with him before he got into mischief. Or while he was getting into mischief — and interfere and carry him off. And meanwhile his more exercised lower nature was exhorting him to leave Christina Alberta to do the pursuing alone, and go back as straightly as possible to his ample arm-chair and sit down and think things out. And then go to his best club to dinner. And in fact quietly and neatly get out of this unexpected and tiresome business altogether.

And then he looked at Christina Alberta and realized that he could do nothing of the sort. He couldn't leave her. He looked at her profile, the profile of a grave child, and an almost maternal emotion was aroused in him. She looked with anxious and perplexed eyes at the blue and limitless city that had swallowed up her Daddy. The scene was still warm with the evening sun-glow, but the blue twilight gathered in the lower eastern sky. Here and there a yellow pin-point showed that London was beginning to light itself up. She couldn't go down that road alone. Absurdly, preposterously they were linked. The impulse to disentangle himself was the impulse of a selfish discretion that was rapidly taking all the happiness out of his life and leaving security and luxuries in its place. This was a call to that latent Paul Lambone to *act.* Even supposing she was a common, queer little flapper that this imagination had made into a friend and heroine, was that any reason whatever why he shouldn't see her through this trouble that had come upon her?

He made his decision.

"He won't go back for ages," he said, following up the problem. "Nobody would on an evening like this."

"No," she said. "But I don't see that that gives me any hint of

what I ought to do next."

"We can keep together and go down towards Trafalgar Square. We might look along the Embankment. When we are tired we can get some dinner somewhere. You can get a sort of dinner almost anywhere I suppose. We shall want our dinner.... Perhaps it's not so hopeless a job as it seems at first. A big job but not a hopeless one. There are limitations to what he may do. Limitations in himself I mean. I don't think he'll go into uninteresting streets. His feeling is — spectacular. He's much more likely to keep to open spaces and near conspicuous buildings. That cuts out a lot of streets. And he won't go far east. In another hour the city will be shutting up and going home and putting out its lights. He'll turn back out of that — westward."

"You can spare the time?"

"I've no engagements at all to-night. It was to have been an 'off' night. And this business attracts me. It is interesting to see just how far we can infer and guess his proceedings. It's a curious mental exercise.... Do you know I think we shall find him!"

She stood quite still for some moments.

"It's awfully good of you to come with me," she said.

"I come on one condition.... That you don't walk too fast. We've never walked much together, Christina Alberta, but I've seen enough of you to know that you walk abominably fast."

8

Every one knows the Cafe Neptune near Piccadilly Circus and the various crowd that assembles there. There you see artists and painters that are scarcely artists, poets and mere writers, artists' models and drug-fiends, undergraduates in arts and medicine who are no better than they should be, publishers and gay lawyers, Bolsheviks and White Refugees, American visitors who come to scoff and remain a prey, stray students from the Far East and Jews and Jews and Jews — and Jewesses. And hither at about half-past nine that night came a stout, large, and wearily-distinguished-looking man accompanied by an attractive young lady in short skirts and bobbed hair who carried a large and shapely nose high and sternly, and they threaded their way

among the tables through the smoky atmosphere, seeking a congenial place. Out of the garrulous confusing mirk arose a young man with a mop of red hair and protruded a rampant face and asked in a large whisper: "*Have you found him?*"

"Not a trace," said Paul Lambone.

Fay Crumb's face looked up from the table through a haze of cigarette smoke.

"Nor we. We've been looking too."

"As well here as anywhere," said the stout man. "Where have you looked?"

"Here," said Harold, "and hereabouts. It seemed a suitable rendezvous."

"We've ranged far and wide," said Lambone. "We've done miles — oh! endless miles. And Christina Alberta has refused all nourishment — for me as well as for herself. At last I said, either I sit down and eat or I drop down and die. May we take these chairs? You have that one, Christina Alberta. Waiter! It is a case of extreme fatigue. No — neither Munchner nor Pilsener. I must have champagne. Bollinger 1914 will do and it must be iced — rather over-iced, and with it, sandwiches — a very considerable number of sandwiches of smoked salmon. Yes — a dozen. Ah!"

He dropped his wrists on the table. "When I have had some drink I will talk," he wheezed and became silent.

"When did you leave the Mews?" Christina Alberta asked Fay.

"Half-past eight.... Not a sign of him."

"Have you been far?" Harold asked Lambone.

"*Far!*" said Lambone and for a time was incapable of more.

His voice seemed to recede in perspective. "Asking policemen for a small, hatless man. Over great areas of London. On and on — from one policeman to another.... She's a most determined young woman. God help the man who wins her love! Not a soul had seen him. But I can't talk *yet*...."

Harold clawed his chin softly with long artistic fingers. "It is just possible," he said slowly, "that he went in somewhere and bought a hat."

"Of course he must have got a hat," said Fay.

"It never occurred to either of us that he would do anything so

sane."

"We never thought of asking in the hatters' shops," said Christina Alberta.

"Happily," said Lambone, and turned to welcome his refreshment. "That would have been the last straw."

"For a long time we were on the trail of another hatless man," said Christina Alberta. "We ran him down in the Essex Road after tracking him all up Pentonville. But he was just a vegetarian in sandals and a beard. And there was a report of a hatless man near the Britannia, but that came to nothing. He seemed just to have come out of his house somewhere to buy fried fish off a barrow in the Camden Town High Street."

"Extraordinary how a crowd collects when you ask the simplest questions," said Lambone with his mouth full of sandwich. "And how urgently helpful it can be. They almost forced us up a staircase after that fried-fish man, who struck me as an extremely pugnacious, suspicious-looking fellow. The crowd would have it we wanted him, and he didn't seem to want in the very least to be wanted. If I hadn't had an inspiration something very disagreeable might have happened. I just said 'No, it's not this gentleman, it's another of the same name.'"

"But what did he say?"

"'You *better*,' he said. But anyhow it satisfied the crowd, and after? wards we got away quite easily on an omnibus that took us down to Portland Road Station."

The champagne arrived in its ice pail. "Hardly cold, sir, yet," said the waiter, feeling the bottle.

"It's not a time for fastidiousness," said Lambone and took a third sandwich. "You're not eating, Christina Alberta. And I insist upon your having at least one glass of this."

Christina Alberta drank a little and ate mechanically.

"I wonder if we shall ever see him again," said Harold. "London is so vast. So *vast!* But I always feel that, when I see anyone go out anywhere. There is a tremendous courage in going out. London must be full of lost people. I used to be afraid of London until I discovered the Tubes and the Underground. I felt I might be sucked up side-streets to God knows where. And keep on going round comers into

longer and longer streets for ever. I used to dream of the last street of all — *endless.* But whenever I get nervous I just ask for the nearest Tube station and there I am."

"He *may* be back at the studio now," said Fay.

Paul Lambone reached his fourth sandwich and his third glass of champagne with great rapidity. He became more leisurely in his refreshment.

"I am disappointed," he said, "that I didn't think of the possibility of his buying a hat. It has disorganized all my inductions. You see I was so concentrated on what was going on inside his head that I never troubled about what might be going on outside it. But a man of his neat and proper habits — acquired through a lifetime of orderly living — would get himself a hat almost mechanically.... We may have passed quite close to him in that."

"I should have known him," said Christina Alberta.

"But, until that Pentonville man drew a red herring across the trail, I am convinced we were close on his footsteps. You see Christina Alberta insisted upon my asking every policeman we saw — even men, overworked, irritable, snappy, *rude* men controlling the traffic — but at any rate I chose the route — I inferred the route. You see, my dear Watson" — he smiled faintly in weary self-approval at Crumb—" the essential thing in a case like this is to put yourself in your man's place, to think his thoughts instead of your own. That is what I tried — so far as being out of breath would allow it — to impress on Christina Alberta. It's fairly straightforward. Here you have a man convinced, beautifully and enviably convinced, that he is the supreme lord of the world, unknown, unrecognized as yet, but on the eve of his proclamation. Will such a man go along any street just as easily as any other? Not at all? He will be elated, expansive, ascendant. Very well: he will go up hill and not down. He will choose wide highways and not narrow ones and tend towards the middle of the street—"

"He hasn't been run over!" cried Christina Alberta sharply.

"No. No. He would avoid traffic because that would hustle him and impair his dignity. Open spaces would attract him. High buildings, bright lights, the intimations of any assembly would draw him powerfully. So he certainly crossed Trafalgar Square from the

Admiralty Arch in a diagonal direction, towards the conspicuous invitation of the Coliseum.... You see my method?"

He did not wait for Crumb to answer. "But the more I think over our missing friend," he went on, "the more I admire and envy him. What crawling things we are! — content to be subjects, units, items, pawns, drops of water and grains of sand, in the multitudinous, unmeaning muddle of human affairs. He soars above it. He soars above it now. He rejects his commonness and inferiority in one magnificent gesture. *His* world. The grandeur of it! Wherever he is to-night and whatever fate overtake him, he is a happy man. And we sit here, we sit here and drink — I am ordering another bottle of that wine, Harold, and I expect you and Mrs. Crumb to abandon that warm and sticky beer and join me — Waiter! Yes — another, please — we sit here in this crowded, smoky gathering *(look* at 'em!) while he plans the salvation of the world that we let slide, and lifts his kingly will to God. Glorious exaltation! Suppose that all of us could be touched—"

Christina Alberta interrupted. "I think we ought to telephone to the hospitals. I didn't think before of the possibility of his being run over. Always he has been a little careless at crossings."

Paul Lambone lifted a deprecating hand and searched in his mind for some excuse for rest.

"A little later," he said after a slight pause, "the hospital staffs will be more at leisure. It is their rush hour now — ten to eleven. Yes, the Rush Hour...."

9

Teddy Winterton appeared wading through obstructive seated people. His eye was fixed on Christina Alberta.

"Hullo!" said Lambone in not too cordial greeting, and glanced at Christina Alberta and back at the new-comer.

Teddy struggled for an unoccupied chair over which some lady had thrown a sealskin coat, and -captured it with profuse apologies to the owner of the cloak and squeezed it in at the end of the table between Harold and Fay, who barred his way to Christina Alberta. "Have pity on a lonely man," he said genially and tried to catch the

eye of Christina Alberta.

"You shall have one glass of champagne," said Lambone with a slightly forced welcome in his tone.

"How do, Christina Alberta!" said Teddy, forcing her attention.

Christina Alberta turned to Fay. "Will you come back with me now," she said to her. "Back to the flat? I must do that telephoning to the hospitals now or it won't be done."

Fay looked at her curiously. "It's serious," said Christina Alberta's eyes, and Fay stood up and struggled with her coat. Teddy leaped to his feet to assist her. Christina Alberta had not removed her cloak, and was ready. "I say, Christina Alberta," said Teddy. "I want a word with you."

"Go on, Fay," said Christina Alberta, giving her friend a little dig in the back and pretending not to hear him.

Teddy followed them out to the Piccadilly pavement. "Just a word," he said. Fay was for standing a little way off, but Christina Alberta would not let that happen.

"I don't want a word," she said.

"But I might help you."

"You might have done. But it's too late. I never want to see you again."

"Give a fellow a chance."

"You've had your chance. And tried to take it."

"You might at least keep up appearances," said Teddy.

"Damn appearances!" said Christina Alberta. "Oh! *Come* on, Fay." She gripped her friend's arm.

Teddy was left hovering. He hesitated and then went back into the cafe to rejoin Crumb and Lambone.

The two young women went on in silence for a little while.

"Anything up?" Fay ventured.

"Everything's up," said Christina Alberta. "I wonder if there's a ghost of a chance of finding Daddy at the studio."

They made their way to Chelsea without much further conversation. Fay had never before seen Christina Alberta looking tired.

When Fay opened the door Christina Alberta pushed in past her. "Daddy!" she cried in the dark passage. "Daddy!"

Fay clicked on the light. “No,” said Christina Alberta. “Of course he’s not here. He’s gone. Fay! What am I to *do?*”

Fay’s pale blue eyes became rounder. Christina Alberta, the valiant, the modem, was in tears.

“There’s the hospitals,” said Fay, doing her best to be brisk and cheerful.

BOOK THE SECOND. THE WORLD REJECTS SARGON, KING OF KINGS

CHAPTER THE FIRST

INCOGNITO

1

MR. PREEMBY had disappeared from Christina Alberta's world. For a time he must disappear almost as completely from this story. Mr. Preemby fades out. Taking over his outward likeness we have now to tell of another and greater person, Sargon the First, the Magnificent One, King of all Kings, the Inheritor of the Earth.

It is no doubt a very wonderful and glorious thing to discover that instead of being the rather obscure widower of a laundry proprietor with no particular purpose in the world one is Lord of the Whole World, but it is also, to a conscientious man anxious to do right, an extremely disturbing and oppressive discovery. And at first it is natural that there should be something a little confusing to the mind in this vast and glittering idea. It was an lea that carried with it an effect of release and enlargement. For purposes as yet obscure, he had been caught like a caged creature in that limited and uninteresting Preemby life. His imagination had rebelled against its finality; some deep instinct had warned him that his life was an illusion; in moments of reverie, and sometimes between sleeping and waking, there had been intimations of a light and purpose beyond the apparent reality. Now abruptly, as though a portal swung open, as though a curtain was drawn, that light poured upon him dazzlingly. His was no single life that begins and ends and is done with like an empty song. His existence was like a thread that shone and vanished and returned in the unending fabric of being; that was woven into a purpose. In the past he had been Porg in the city of Kleb, and he had been Sargon and Belshazzar. Many others had he been, but those memories still slumbered under the dark waters of forgetfulness. But the memory of Sargon shone bright. It was his Sargon self that had returned and no other of his selves. For some reason that was still obscure the Power that ruled his life needed him to be Sargon once again, in this great distressful world of to-day. Sargon had begun life

humbly as an outcast babe and had risen to restore and rule and extend a mightier Empire than the old world had ever seen before. Certain qualities (h'rrmp) had been displayed by Sargon, and because of these qualities the Power had called upon him again.

A whole series of memories was unfolding in his mind. With an extra-ordinary convincingness he recalled his youth, memories of those distant days in Sumeria where the Power had set him on high. They were so bright and so pleasing that already they were thrusting his recollections of Sheringham and Woodford Wells into the background, making a fading phantom of his Preemby existence. He had never cherished these latter experiences, never turned them over in his mind with any pleasure. But his newly-restored memories were memories to dwell upon. There were pictures of his early life when he was a foundling, a mysterious foundling at the court of his predecessor. (That predecessor's name still escaped him.) Young Sargon was a fair and blue-eyed youth, a thing rare in brown Sumeria, and he had been found floating down the great river in a little cradle boat of rushes and bitumen, and he had been taken and adopted by the ruler of the land. And already as a lad he was pointed out as having an exceptional wisdom, as being able to do what other men could not do, he had the genius of the ruler. It was not that he had great cleverness nor great skill nor strength. Many of those about him excelled him in these minor things — in cleverness and memory work in particular, Prewm, the son of the Grand Vizier, excelled him — but he had the true, the kingly wisdom beyond them all.

"The true, the kingly wisdom," said Mr. Preemby-Sargon aloud and came into sharp collision with a tall, dark gentleman hurrying from St. James's Park towards St. James's Palace. "Sorry!" cried Mr. Preemby Sargon.

"My fault," said the tall, dark gentleman. "Late for an appointment." And swept on.

Odd! Where had Mr. Preemby — or Sargon — seen that face before? Could it be — Something connected it vaguely with Sheringham and sunlit sand. And then Sumeria came uppermost and the tall, dark gentleman became the chieftain of a desert tribe, a desert tribe amidst the sands.

The ruffled surface became calm again, and that boyhood in

Sumeria resumed possession of the mirror. Where were we? Even in those early days men had marked a gravity in the lad beyond his years. He had avoided puerile games. In all his lives he had avoided puerile games. No cricketer even at Sheringham. Modestly but firmly this youth had raised his voice in the council chamber and his words were seen to be wisdom. The old men had sat round marvelling. "He sayeth Sooth," they said in their antique Sumerian way. A soothsayer. He was also called the Young Pathfinder.

Before Sargon was fifteen the old childless ruler, beset by enemies, threatened with plots, had marked him. "This boy might save the state." Then, while yet only a few days over eighteen he was given charge of an expedition to pacify the mountain folk of the north and persuade them not to ally themselves with the Enemy of the North. He did more than he was told to do. He went through the mountain land into the plains beyond, and gave battle to the Enemy of the North and defeated him and smote him severely. After that all men perceived that he must be the new Lord and Master of Sumeria, the successor of his aged Patron. All applauded with sincerity except Prewm the Clever (already adorned with precocious sprouting whiskers) and he applauded with envy in his eyes. And then came the days of the Succession, and the Inauguration of the Harem, beautiful days. And after that the birth of the Princess Royal, his only child, and that great expedition into the deserts of the south. And more expeditions and great law-makings, wise laws and wiser, and crowds of applauding, grateful people and happy villages. Life became happy universally. Prewm plotted and rebelled and was dealt with after the simple custom of the time. That was a regrettable necessity, a thing not to be dwelt upon. The frontiers spread and the great peace spread; Russia, Turkey in Europe, Persia, India, Ancient Egypt, Somaliland, and so on and so forth, were conquered and made happy. America and Australia and the remains of Atlantis, still not completely submerged, were discovered. They were forgotten again afterwards, but they were really discovered then — and paid tribute. A League of Nations was established.

All the world told of the goodness of Sargon and lived golden days. For Sargon ruled by the light of justice in his heart. He mitigated the sacrifices in the Temples and introduced a kind of

Protestantism into the creeds and services. The people made songs praising him. Passing men and women would run to kiss his hand. Nor did he deny himself to his people. That confidence was his end. Came alas! the assassin's knife, the black assassin, a madman, a stranger — !

It was wonderful. He could remember his people mourning after he was dead.

The white glove of a policeman against Mr. Preemby-Sargon's chest just saved him from stepping in front of a motor-'bus. He recoiled dexterously. He was in Trafalgar Square, a great meeting-place, a confluence. Here in the warm light of the October afternoon was a crowd even greater than the Sumerian crowds. Here he would observe them. They were dark crowds, anxious-faced crowds. His coming back had to do with them. There had been a great war, much devastation; the world was wounded and unable to recover. The poor rulers and politicians of this age had no wisdom, had no instinct for the fundamentally right thing. Once more a leader and a saviour was required, one who had the wisdom that counts.

It was Sargon that walked under the noses of Nelson's lions and made his way past the statue of George the Fourth to the balustrading that commands the square. He took up his position there for a long survey. He looked down Whitehall to the great tower of the Houses of Parliament and Whitehall was full of a golden haze set with a glitter of traffic. The stream of omnibuses, cars, and motor-vans poured up to mingle with the streams that came out of Northumberland Avenue and the Strand, and the joint flow sundered again to the left of him and to the right away to Pall Mall, across the square there. No street lamps were lit as yet, but in the rounded bluffs of building to the left a few windows were warm with lights. Below, across the square, thin streams of pedestrians flowed like ants from one point to another and the squat little station of the Tube Railway perpetually swallowed up dots and clumps of individuals. Some sort of meeting was going on at the foot of the Nelson column, a mere knot of people without evident enthusiasm. Men with white and red placards about Unemployment were distributing white handbills and shaking collecting boxes. Immediately underneath a few poorly-dressed children ran about and played and squabbled....

Just a little patch this was in one of his cities. For, you see, by the lapse of time and the development of his ancient empire, he was the rightful owner and ruler of this city and of every other city in the world.

And he had come back to heal the swarming world's disorders and reinstate the deep peace of old Sumeria once again.

2

But how to set about this task?

That was the difficulty. There must be no Half Advent. He must take hold swiftly and decisively he realized, and from the balustrading in front of the National Gallery it looked a large, loose, scattering sort of world to take hold of. It might refuse to be taken hold of. If he began now, if he began to shout from this place, it was more than likely that no one would heed him. He must watch warily for his opportunity and *make no mistakes.* It did not become the Lord and Restorer of the Whole Earth to make mistakes.

Now, for example, that had nearly been a mistake at Buckingham Palace. It had blown over all right, but it might have had serious consequences. People did not know the Master yet, had no inkling. "They might," said Sargon, lapsing into a Preemby homeliness "have run me in. And a Pretty Fool I should have looked then!"

There must be no more hasty action of that sort.

No. Indeed it became him rather to wait for guidance.

The Power that had brought him back into the world and awakened him to a sense of his true identity and his mission, might be trusted presently to send him an enlightened supporter or so — who would recognize him. Because, of course, he must resemble the monarch he had been — even as Hockleby had been recognizably like Prewm. As he weighed this thought his hand sought his moustache and he twisted it thoughtfully. It was in effect a disguise. Meanwhile — ? Meanwhile he must see what he could, determine the mood of the people and learn their particular needs and distresses. He could go among his people unsuspected — like Haroun al Raschid, but for a wiser purpose....

"Haroun al Raschid," whispered Sargon and looked up to Lord

Nelson and nodded to him in a friendly way. “Haroun al Raschid. Would that my pocket was full of pieces of gold! But of that to-morrow. That man — what was his name? — Preemby had a bank somewhere.”

He felt for his breast pocket. The cheque-book was still there. One signed the cheques “*A. E. Preemby*” — queer, but one did. This A. E. Preemby had played the part of a chrysalis. His hoard remained.

3

In the Strand His Majesty caught a glimpse of his reflection in a shop window. His hair was a little disordered, and he disliked to have his hair disordered. He went into a hat shop that presented itself conveniently, and bought himself a hat.

He took out his little note-case to pay — a reassuring thing to do. For in it were no less than seven pound-notes. He counted them with satisfaction. After paying up at Tunbridge he had drawn again on his bank. He hesitated whether he should give largesse to the shopman — and did not do so.

It was not another grey felt hat with a black ribbon he bought; it was an exceptional felt hat with a large brim such as an artist or a literary personage might have chosen. It was not the hat that Albert Edward Preemby, the restrained, the hesitating, would have bought; it was much more Sargon’s sort of hat. Yet not pure Sargonesque; there was a touch of disguise about it still, a more manifest disguise. The brim came down over one’s brow. One could see ever and again in shop windows and incidental mirrors that now a shadow of mystery lay upon those brooding blue eyes.

He made his way eastward towards Aldwych and so into Kingsway, looking now at the shops, now scanning the faces of the people.

To-day he was The Unknown. Scarce a soul that gave him a second glance. But soon would come discovery and then all this careless jostling crowd would be magnetized as he passed, would turn with one accord to him. They would salute and whisper and wonder. And he must be ready for them, ready to guide their destinies forthwith. It would not do to stand at a loss and say “Er,” to

stand collecting his thoughts and clear his throat, “H’rrmp.”

Terrible the responsibility that lay upon him! But he would not shirk it. What should be his opening words to them when the moment of revelation came?— “First; — Let there be Peace!” Better words than that one could not imagine. He muttered to himself: “Peace and not War among the Nations. Peace and not War among individuals. Peace in the street — in the workroom — in the shop. *Peace.*

“Love and Peace. I, Sargon the Magnificent, command it. I, Sargon, have come back after many ages to give Peace to the Whole World.”

A shop window drew him. It was a map shop and prominently displayed in the window was a map of *Europe after the Treaty of Versailles: — Two and Sixpence.* He stood looking at that. It would all have to be altered again. That was just part of his task. Then he surveyed the rest of the window. Behind the map of Europe there hung a wall-map of the world. He would need such a map of the world*;* you cannot rule the world without a map of it. Or you may forget large portions. Or would a globe be better? Maps are all to be seen at once, and besides they are more portable. Furthermore, the shop did not seem to sell globes and he did not know where globes were to be bought. He went in and bought the world map and emerged again on Kingsway after an interval, with a roll four feet long under his arm. He was also carrying an ingenious flat-paper planisphere which had caught his fancy as he stood at the counter. It might be useful, he felt, for astrological purposes.

He began to think vaguely of his possible destination. Whither was he going?

He was seeking quarters, he was seeking indeed some lonely hermitage. He had slipped away from the Princess Royal, who also had come back — rather needlessly he thought — into this modern world, because it was necessary for him to be absolutely alone for a time. He had to spend some days or weeks in spiritual struggle and meditation and mental purification before his revelation came. Even she might not minister to him during that period. She was devoted, but she hampered him. Indeed, she hampered him greatly. She did not fully understand. Her remarks and questions were generally

disconcerting and sometimes downright annoying. It was quite probable that the metamorphosis might never occur with her about. And, besides, always in the history of great Visitants and marvellous returns there had been this opening phase of withdrawal and self-communion. Buddha, Muhammad; they had all done it. Perhaps he would fast. Perhaps fasting would be necessary. Perhaps there would be Celestial Visitants.

He wished he knew more of the technique of fasting. Did one just stop having meals or were there ceremonies and precautions? But of that later. First he had to find that quiet room, his secret place of final preparation.

Presently he found himself in the grey squares of Bloomsbury and every house he passed displayed in its window a genteel card offering "Apartments" or "Bed and Breakfast." Here also were "Private Hotels" and even a plain "Boarding House." Well, here no doubt it had to be. A simple room amidst his unsuspecting people, a simple, simply furnished room.

4

But though all Bloomsbury, to judge by the dark green and silver cards in its ground-floor windows, was offering shelter and sustenance to the homeless and the stranger, the new Lord of the World found it no easy matter to secure that simple room he needed for his own use. For more than an hour he was visiting one grey house after another, knocking, standing on doorsteps, entering passages laid with immemorial oilcloth, and demanding a sight of the accommodation offered, inspecting it, asking prices and — it became more and more evident — arousing suspicion. The people stared at his rolled-up map and his planisphere and seemed to dislike them instinctively. He had not expected such blunt demands for information; his vague mysteriousness was swept aside, he found himself difficult to explain. They wanted to know how he was occupied and when he would like to move in. None of them seemed prepared for him just to sit down in his room there and then. They expected him to go out and fetch his luggage. It undermined his confidence that behind him there was no luggage. All these people,

he realized more and more distinctly, would expect him to produce luggage and might behave unreasonably if he did not do so. A mere readiness to pay in advance, he gathered, was not enough for them.

He had counted upon finding kind and simple people behind these lodging-house doors, people who would accept him and look up to him from the first and wonder about him and his planisphere, speculate about its significance and gradually realize the marvellous visitant that had come to them. But the people he saw were not simple people. Mostly they were dingy, sophisticated people. They came up out of basements in a mood of sceptical scrutiny, men in shirt sleeves, morose for the most part and generally ill-shaven; extremely knowing and anything but virginal young women, grimy looking older women, hungrily lean or unwholesomely fat. One had a goitre-like growth. And always there was something defensive in their manner.

And the rooms he saw were even less simple than the people. His consciousness was invaded by a sense of the vast moral changes that had happened to the world since he had ruled the white-robed honesty of his Sumerian irrigators. Then a room would have a table, a seat or two, a shelf with a few phials, an image or suchlike religious object, a clay tablet and a writing style, perhaps, if the occupant was educated. But these rooms were encumbered with contradictions. They had windows to let in the light and dark curtains to keep it out. Sargon's hidden second youth in the laundry had made him very sensitive to dirtiness, and the cotton-lace curtains of those places were generally very dirty indeed. Electric light was still rare in "apartments"; mostly they were lit from gas brackets that descended from the centre of the ceiling and carried globes of frosted and cut glass. Always there was a considerable table in the centre and two uneasy arm-chairs. And there were lumpish sideboards of shiny, liver-coloured wood and comfortless sofas and incredible ornaments. Sometimes the rooms, and particularly the bedrooms, had a meretricious smartness and gaiety with mezzotints of ladies in the natural state trying to pass themselves off as allegorical figures or of the Baths in the congested harems of wealthy, rather than refined, Orientals. The overmantels were extraordinary affairs and much loaded with crockery ornaments, little jars, small giltwinged angels,

red devils, or encouraging looking ladies in bathing-dresses that were too tight for them. A common form of decoration was to fasten up plates on the wall much as one sees vermin nailed up on a bam.

A considerable number of these homes for hire were as shabby as roadside tramps. One stood out in his memory as faded and dusty and grey and threadbare beyond the possibility of reality. His self-absorption was penetrated by the wonder of who could live and who could have lived in such quarters. All his life had been amongst clean and bright surroundings; it was rare that he had any glimpses of that worn and weary stratum of English town life in which things are patched indeed, but in which it is rare for anything to be mended or cleaned and incredible that anything should be replaced. Even the air in these rooms seemed long out of date and the glass over the rusty engravings of the Monarch of the Glen and the Stag at Bay spotted by remote ancestral flies.

"Does anyone ever stay here?" asked Sargon of the shattered looking lady in charge.

He did not realize the cruelty of his question until he had asked it.

"My last gentleman stayed here fifteen years," said the shattered lady. "He was a copying clerk. He died in hospital this June. Dropsy. He always found this very satisfactory — *very* satisfactory. I never knew him complain. He was a very good friend to me."

A great desire for fresh air came upon Sargon. "How much are these rooms?" he asked. "I must think it over. Think it over and let you know."

She asked her price, the usual price in that street, but as she led the way down to the door she said: "If it's too much — If you made an offer, sir—"

Despair looked out of her grime-rimmed eyes.

"I must think about it," said Sargon and was once more at large.

Why did people get so dirty and dismal and broken down? Surely in Sumeria there were never fives like that! It would have to be altered; all this would have to be altered when the Kingdom came.

5

Then as the twilight deepened Sargon discovered just the peaceful

room he desired. It announced itself hopefully not by the usual printed card but by a hand-written tablet saying “A Room to Let,” in a window that had no lace curtains but little purple ones enhancing rather than concealing a bare-looking white room fit pleasantly by the flickering of a fire. There were one or two pictures — real coloured pictures — hanging on the white wall. Rather wearily Sargon lifted the knocker and supplemented its appeal by pressing the electric bell.

There was no immediate answer, and he knocked a second time before the door opened. A slender young man appeared holding a small girl perched on his shoulder. She regarded Sargon gravely with very dark grey-blue eyes.

“Everybody seems to have gone out,” said the slender young man in a very pleasant voice. “What can I do for you?”

“You have a room to let,” said Sargon.

“There *is* a room to let here, yes,” said the slender young man and his appreciative dark eyes took in the details of the figure in front of him.

“Could I see it?”

“I suppose he might *see* it, Susan,” the young man hesitated.

“Of course the gem’s got to see it,” said the small girl. “If Mrs. Richman was here she’d show it him fast enough, old stoopid.” And she pulled the slender young man’s hair — affectionately but very very hard.

“You see,” the young man explained. “The landlady is out. *Don’t,* Susan. And the landlady’s lady assistant is out too. Every one is out — and we’re sort of unofficially left in charge somehow. Properly, I ought not to have answered the door.”

“But I told you to — *silly!*” said the little girl.

The young man made no definite move. Instead, he asked a question.

“Is that a map, sir, you are carrying?” he asked.

“It is a map of the world,” said Sargon.

“Very helpful I should think, sir. And so you found your way here. Well — The room’s upstairs if you’d come up. Hold tight, Susan, and try not to strangle me.” And he led the way up the

staircase.

It was just the usual staircase and hall with oilcloth and wall-paper to imitate some exceptionally bilious coarse-grained wood. As they ascended the young lady ran great risks in her resolution never to take her eyes off Sargon and his map. She twisted round a complete circle and forced her bearer to stop on the first landing and readjust her. “If you pull my hair once more,” said the slender young man, “I shall put you down and never, never, never, give you a ride again. It’s on the next floor, sir, if you’d go first.”

The room appeared delightfully free from unnecessary furnishings. There was a little plain bed, a table under the window, and a gas-stove, and the walls were papered in brown paper, adorned with commonplace but refreshing Japanese colour prints. There was a recess one side of the fireplace with three empty shelves painted like the mantel-piece, a deep blue. The young man had clicked on an electric light, which was pleasantly shaded.

“It’s rather plain,” said the young man.

“I like it,” said Sargon. “I have no use for superfluities.”

“It used to be my room,” said the young man, “but now I share the dining-room floor with the people downstairs and I’ve given this up. It’s rather on my conscience—”

“People downstairs — what people downstairs? There aren’t no People downstairs. It’s Daddy and Mummy he means,” said the young lady.

“It’s rather on my conscience,” said the young man, “that I persuaded Mrs. Richman to alter the furniture. It isn’t to everybody’s taste.”

“May I ask,” said Sargon, “how much the room might be?”

“Thirty shillings, I *believe,*” said the young man, “with breakfasts.” Sargon put down his map and planisphere upon the table. He felt that he must secure this room or be for ever defeated.

“I am willing,” he said, “to take the room. I would pay for it in advance. And take up my quarters at once. But, I must warn you, my position in the world is peculiar. I give no reference, I bring no luggage.”

“Except of course these charts,” said the young man. “Haven’t you — for instance — a toothbrush?”

Sargon thought. “No. I must get myself a toothbrush.”

“*I* think it would *look* better,” said the young man.

“If necessary,” said Sargon, “I will pay for two weeks in advance. And I will get myself all necessary things.”

The young man regarded him with an affectionate expression. “If it was my room I should let you have it like a shot,” he said. “But Mrs. Richman is the landlady and in many respects she’s different from me. Have you — travelled far, sir?”

“In space,” said Sargon, “*No.*”

“But in time, perhaps?”

“In time, yes. But I would rather not enter into explanations at present.” The young man’s interest and amusement deepened. He put Susan down on her feet. “Might I look at your map?” he asked.

“Willingly,” said Sargon. He unrolled the map on the table and put his finger on London. “We are here,” he said.

“Exactly,” said the young man helping to hold the map on the table from which it seemed likely to slip.

“It is still the most convenient centre in the world,” said Sargon.

“For almost any purpose,” said the young man.

“For mine, yes,” said Sargon.

“And that star thing — that must be a great help?”

“It is,” said Sargon.

“I suppose you would — *work* in the room? It would be just yourself? There would be no coming and going of people?”

“None. While I was here, no one would know me. Afterwards perhaps. But that does not concern us. Here I should remain incognito.”

“Incognito,” the young man repeated, as though he considered the word. “Of course. Naturally. By the by, sir, might I ask your name. (If you hit me again, Susan, I shall do something cruel and dreadful to you.) We’d have to know your name.”

“For the time I think Mr. — Mr. Sargon.”

“Of course,” said the young man, “for the time. Sargon — wasn’t that an Assyrian king, or does my memory betray me?”

“It is not the Assyrian Sargon in this case, it is the Sumerian Sargon, his predecessor.”

“Not a word more, sir — I understand. You must be fatigued after

your long journey and I should love — I should dearly love to let you the room. *Wow!* Susan, you go downstairs. Pinching I can't stand. Come along. You go down to your own proper room and let's have no nonsense about it. *Come!*"

Susan backed to the wall and prepared to resist tooth and nail. "I didn't *mean* to pinch, Bobby," she said. "I didn't mean to pinch. Troof and really! I was just feelin' your trousis. Oh, don't take me down, Bobby! Don't take me down. I *will* be good! I'll be awful good. I'll just stay here and look at the funny geman. If you take me down, Bobby—"

"Now is this a real reformation, Susan — a conversion, a change of heart? Will you be a *jeune femme rangée* and all that, if I forgive you?"

"I'll be anyfing, Bobby dear, flet me stay."

"Well! cease to exist then — for all practical purposes and I'll forgive you. What can the nice gentleman think of you, Susan? And you more than five! *Bah!* We were saying, Mr. Sargon — ? Yes, of course, I was saying that you ought to take the room. Payment in advance will be accepted. *But* — there is that toothbrush. And other small — what shall I say? — realistic touches. I shouldn't mind personally, but I'm only an agent, so to speak. Properly I am a sort of writer. Properly I ought to be writing a novel now, but, as you see, Mrs. Richman has left the house on my hands and my friends downstairs have left this charming young lady on my hands — Put that tongue back at once, Susan. Unladylike child! — and here we are! But as I'm saying, Mrs. Richman is the principal. She has her fancies about lodgers. It is useless to dispute about them. She will want a show of luggage. She will insist. But that is really not an insurmountable difficulty. This — you will remember the name? — is Nine Midgard Street. If you go out from here and turn to the left, take the third to the right and go straight on, you will come to a main thoroughfare full of 'buses and trams and traffic and light and noise, and at the corner you will find a shop where they sell second-hand trunks and bags. Now if you bought an old, battered, largish bag — and then went across the road to a chemist's shop and got those washing things you need — Oh! and a reserve collar or so at the outfitter's next door — You *must* get such things.... You see the

idea?”

Sargon stood in front of the unlit gas-stove. “This seems to be acting a falsehood.”

“But you must have clean collars sometimes,” protested the young man.

“I admit that,” said Sargon.

“And then you can settle down here and tell me about that business of yours. Otherwise, you know, you’ll just wander about.”

“Your suggestion is really quite a helpful one,” said Sargon, getting the thing into focus. “I shall adopt it.”

“You won’t lose the way back?”

“Why should I?”

“Nine Midgard Street.”

“I shall remember.”

“Queer world it is,” said the young man; “Isn’t it? How did you leave the old folks in — Sumeria?”

“My people were happy,” said Sargon.

“Exactly. I’ve been there since. *Quite* recently. But the weather wasn’t good and I got knocked about by a shell and had a nasty time as a wounded prisoner. Hot. Crowded. No shelter. Nothing cool to drink. But in your time it was different.

“Very,” said Sargon.

“And now — by Jove! that kettle is boiling over all by this time, Susan. Come down to my room, such as it is, and have a cup of tea, Sir. And then you can go out and make those little arrangements of yours and dig yourself in so to speak before Mrs. Richman comes back. This, by the by, is your gas meter. You get gas by the shilling in the slot arrangement.

“You are being very very helpful to me,” said Sargon. “It shall not be forgotten when my time comes.”

“Nothing. It just happened you came into my hands so to speak. No, Susan, we don’t. You *walk* downstairs. Pinching is forgiven but not forgotten. You can leave your map, Sir — and that star thing — as visible signs of your occupation. No, Susan — on foot.”

The young man's room was bookish and rather untidy, and Susan had been killing toys on the carpet — a china-headed doll and something or other of yellow painted wood appeared to be the chief victims. The doll had bled sawdust profusely. Dark curtains were drawn and a green-shaded electric light threw all the apartment into darkness except the floor. There was a gas-fire with a gas-ring on which a boiling kettle steamed like an excited volcano; there was a deal table on which was a big pile of letters addressed to "*Aunt Suzannah*" c/o Editor of *Wilkins*' *Weekly*, and there was a large untidy desk on which was another fitter of letters evidently receiving attention, and in the midst of the desk a writing-pad, on which reposed a squeezable tube of liquid glue and a half-mended toy. The glue oozed upon the face sheet of the writing-pad beneath these words, written in a beautifully neat handwriting:

UPS AND DOWNS

A Pedestrian Novel BY ROBERT ROOTHING

CHAPTER THE FIRST

WHICH INTRODUCES OUR HERO

Beyond that the novel did not seem to have progressed.

With the dexterity of long established usage Bobby made tea and produced plum-bread and butter. Meanwhile he kept a wary eye on Susan who had sat down by the waste-paper basket and was tearing up paper, and attended to the remarks and attitudes of his remarkable visitor.

Sargon already liked this young man enormously. It was extremely reassuring and encouraging to meet such kindly acceptance and understanding after the chill and doubt and ugliness of the previous hour's experiences. And it was nice and refreshing to have tea. A sort of grey insecurity, a threat of suppression that had come over his mind, vanished in this genial atmosphere. The shrivelled incognito expanded. The hidden mystery beneath it grew rich and full once more. This young man — he seemed ready to

believe anything. Sargon walked up and down with his hands behind his back as if in the profoundest meditation. He would have muttered a few phrases in Sumerian, but for some reason he had quite forgotten that forgotten tongue.

"And so you write books?" he said regally.

"Not books," Bobby answered over his shoulder; he was now toasting a circle of plum-bread. "Not books *yet.* But — it *is* ridiculous, isn't it? — I am a bit of a poet and all that sort of thing, and a journalist of sorts. Just answers to correspondents — laborious, but a living." He indicated the piles of letters on the deal table. "As for books — I have as a matter of fact *started* a novel — it's on that desk — but that's only in the last few days. And it's so difficult to get a lot of time to oneself to really let oneself go with it."

"Inspiration," said Sargon understandingly.

"Well, one must let oneself go a bit, I suppose; particularly at first. But there's always something one must do cropping up to prevent it."

"With me also."

"No doubt."

"That is why," said Sargon, "I am withdrawing into this solitude. To collect my forces. In Sumeria it was always the practice, before any great undertaking, to go out into the wilderness for a certain tale of days."

"If I go out into the wilderness I get so lonely in the evenings," said Bobby. "*Ssh!* That was the front door."

He went out upon the staircase and stood listening.

"Mrs. Richman," Sargon heard him call.

"S'me," said a lady's voice.

"Here's a lodger for the second floor front."

"I bin to the pictures," said the voice outside. "Mary and Doug. — a fair treat."

A corpulent lady in a black bonnet appeared breathing heavily. She panted a few obvious questions and Bobby hovered helpfully at Sargon's elbow to prevent him making any mistakes. "He'll pay in advance," said Bobby. "That's awright," said Mrs. Richman. "When will he move in?"

"He's getting his luggage right away," said Bobby.

"I s'pose it's all right," said Mrs. Richman.

“I know his people. At least I know about them. I’ve been in his part of the country. You can be quite sure he’s all right,” said Bobby.

“Well, if *you* say so,” said Mrs. Richman. “‘Ope you’ll be comfortable Mr.—”

“Mr. Sargon.”

“Mr. Sargon.”

And after a few rather vague comments on the weather Mrs. Richman withdrew. “And now,” said Bobby, “I’ll just unload Susan on her and come with you for that bag. It’s extraordinary how people lose their way in London at times.”

7

“I’ve let the second-floor front to a lunatic,” said Bobby, breaking the news to his ground-floor friends, Mr and Mrs. Malmesbury.

“Oh *Bobby!* and with Susan about!” cried Mrs. Malmesbury reproachfully.

“But he’s a quite *harmless* lunatic, Tessy — and he had to be taken in somewhere.”

“But a lunatic!” said Mrs. Malmesbury.

“I only said that for effect,” said Bobby. “He’s really morbidly sane. I wouldn’t have let him go for anything. Some day when I really get to work on that novel I’ll put him in. I *must* have material, Tessy. And he’s wonderful.”

He was preparing supper for the Malmesburys and himself. He was frying some sausages and potatoes over a gas-ring. Previously Bobby had done most of the putting of Susan to bed, and he had sat and told her stories according to custom until she was fast asleep. Tessy Malmesbury was out of sorts; she had a neuralgic headache, Billy Malmesbury had taken her for a walk in Regent’s Park and she had come home exhausted; things would have gone to pieces badly if Bobby had not taken them in hand.

Tessy was never very well nowadays; she was a slight and fragile little thing and Susan had been a violent and aggressive child long before she was born. In the long lost days before the war when Bobby had seen Tessy first she had been the lightest, daintiest, most perfect thing imaginable; he had compared her to a white petal

drifting down through sunlight, and almost written a poem about her; he had loved her tremendously. But it had seemed to him impossible to make love to so exquisite a being, and Billy Malmesbury, who was less scrupulous, had slipped in front of him and married her; she had not appreciated the delicacy of not making love to her. And then came the war and wounds and here they all were again, fagged and near the thirties, in a world where their small annuities brought them far less than they had promised to do. Billy was the junior partner of an architect and much encumbered with drawing-boards. He was a large-framed young man with a big, round, good-looking, slightly astonished face, pleasantly dappled with freckles. He had a great protective affection for Bobby. He sat now and designed a new sort of labour-saving pantry, and, with a sense of infinite protection, let Bobby get the meal.

"And now I can tell you," said Bobby, when at last all three of them were sitting at table.

"It's a little dear of a lunatic," he said. "If it's a lunatic at all."

"I hope it isn't," said Tessy.

"He's quite tidy in his person and he hangs together — mentally he hangs together — and his eyes aren't in the least wild. A leetle too bright and open perhaps. But he *does* think the world belongs to him."

"Well, Susan does that," said Billy.

"And so does Billy," said Tessy.

"But not quite with the same air of magnificent responsibility. You see he thinks he's a certain Mesopotamian monarch called Sargon — I've heard of him because we had a little dust-up with the Turks round and about his stamping ground — he thinks he's this Sargon come again and come somehow — that bit's a little difficult — into the empire of the whole earth. It was Sargon, you know, who started all these British Lions and Imperial Eagles in the world. And so he proposes to take possession of the planet, which is in such a frightful mess—"

"Hear, hear!" said Billy.

"And put it in order."

"What more simple?" cried Tessy.

"Exactly. Why haven't we *all* thought of that?" said Billy.

“But where does he come from?” asked Tessy.

“Not a sign. He might be a suburban nurseryman or a small draper or something of that sort. I can’t place him. One or two phrases he used suggested a house-agent. But he may have picked them up from advertisements. And his first proceeding — perfectly rational — was to buy a map of the world. Naturally if you are going to rule the world, you ought to have a map of it handy.”

“Has he any money?”

“Enough to pay his way. He’s got a small note-case. That seems to be all right. After we’d got a bag for him — he hadn’t any luggage, and I thought he’d better buy a bag to satisfy Mrs. Richman — we sat down upstairs and had a simple straightforward talk about the world and what had to be done with it. Most instructive.”

Bobby helped himself to some more fried potatoes.

“And what *is* going to be done with it?”

“Let me see,” said Bobby; “it’s quite an attractive little programme. Rather I think on the lines of the Labour programme. Only simpler and more thorough. The Distinction of Rich and Poor is to be Abolished Altogether. Women are to be Freed from all Disadvantages. There is to be No More War. He gets at the roots of things every time.”

“If those are the roots,” said Billy.

“But isn’t the real question how to do it?” asked Tessy. “Aren’t we all agreed about those things — in theory?”

“In theory, yes,” said Bobby. “But not in reality. If every one really wanted to abolish the difference of rich and poor it would be as easy as pie to find a way. There’s always a way to everything if you want to do it enough. But nobody really wants to do these things. Not as we want meals. All sorts of other things people want, but wanting to have no rich and poor any more isn’t real wanting; it is just a matter of pious sentiment. And so it is about war. We don’t want to be poor and we don’t want to be hurt or worried by war, but that’s not wanting to end those things. *He* wants to end them.”

“But how’s he going to set about it?” said Billy.

“That is still a little vague. I think there is to be a sort of Proclamation. He’s thinking that out upstairs now. He seems to think that he has to call up some sort of disciples. Then I think he will go

down to Westminster and take the Speaker's place on the Woolsack or something of that sort. It *is* the Speaker sits on the Woolsack, isn't it? Or is it the Lord Chancellor? Anyhow, there are to be demonstrations — on a large and dignified scale. The people have forgotten the ancient simple laws, he says. He himself had forgotten them. But he has remembered them now; they have come back to him, and presently every one will remember them, all the great old things, justice, faith, obedience, mutual service. As it was in Ancient Sumeria. Dreamland Ancient Sumeria, you know. The dear old Golden Age. He has come to remind people of the true things in life — which every one has forgotten. And when he has reminded them every one will remember. And be good. And there you are, Tessy! I hope it will affect Susan — but I don't feel at all sure. I have a sort of feeling that Susan could smash up any golden age they started in about five minutes, but then perhaps I'm a bit prejudiced about her."

"It's rather wonderful all the same," said Billy.

"He *is* rather wonderful. He sits up there and looks at you with his little round innocent face and tells you all these things. And, assuming he's Lord of the World, they're perfectly right and proper. He sits with the map of the world unrolled on the table. I ventured to suggest that he would require a lot of subordinate rulers and directors. 'They will come,' he said. 'No office, no duty shall be done henceforth except by the Proper People. That has been neglected too long. Let every man do that he is best fitted to do. Then everything will be well.'"

"And when's all this to begin?" asked Billy.

"Any time. I don't think—" Bobby's expression became profoundly judicial. "I don't think he'll do anything for a day or so. I pointed out to him that he ought to consider his demonstrations very carefully before he makes them, and he seemed inclined to agree. Some mistake, he says, has occurred already — I couldn't find out what. Apparently to-morrow he is just going to look at London, quietly but firmly, from the Monument and from the Dome of Saint Paul's. And also he wants to observe the manners of his subjects in the streets and railway stations, and wherever there is a concourse of people. The scales have fallen from his eyes, he explains, and now that he knows that he is Lord of the World he realizes how distressed

and unsatisfactory everybody's life is — even when they don't know it's unsatisfactory. His own life was terribly unsatisfactory, he says, unreal and frustrated, until he awoke and realized the greatness of his destiny."

"And what was that life of his?" asked Tessy.

"I tried to get that. And he caught the eager note in my voice I suppose, and shut up like an oyster. The draper's shop perhaps. Or a milk-round. I wonder."

"But Bobby," cried Billy in the expostulatory tone of one who remonstrates with wild unreason; "he must come from *somewhere*!"

"Exactly," said Bobby. "And somewhere must be looking for him. But you can't always hurry these things. And meanwhile I take it it's our bounden duty to keep an eye on him and see that he doesn't bump himself too hard or fall into the wrong hands.... Until some one comes along.... Don't you get up, Tessy, you're tired."

And Bobby jumped to his feet and proceeded to change the plates and dishes while Billy fell into a profound meditation upon the problem of the new neighbour upstairs.

Presently he smiled and shook his head in kindly disapproval.

"This will suit Bobby all right," he said to Tessy. "Whenever he ought to be upstairs in his own room getting on with that novel of his he will be up on the second floor talking to — what is it? — Sargon."

"Accumulating material," corrected Bobby from the Welsh dresser, where he was turning a tin of peaches out into a glass dish. "Accumulating material.... Not even a spider could spin a yam out of an empty stomach. Tessy, have you just simply *lost* the cream or have you put it away in a new place very carefully for me to guess? Oh right-o! I've got it."

8

Let us be frank about it; Sargon had his doubts.

Not always. There were times when his fantasy was bravely alive and carried him high above any shadow of uncertainty, and he was all that he could have ever wished to be. Then Mr. Preemby was almost forgotten. But there were moments, there were phases, when he became aware of a cold undertow of conviction that he was after

all just Mr. Preemby, Mr. Preemby, formerly of the Limpid Stream Laundry, making believe, carrying it off and perhaps presently failing to carry it off. This chill flow of doubt could even oblige him to reason with himself, force him into a definite reassurance of himself. He would debate the whole question, candidly, fairly. Surely there was no deception, could have been no deception, about that seance. "Told me things no one but I could have known," he would repeat. "I pin my faith to that."

He knew that Christina Alberta had not really believed. It was just because of her revealing scepticism that he had fled from her. She had asked questions, tearing, rending questions, and she had said "Um." It is not proper to say "Um" to world emperors. If presently he fasted or went into a trance, he felt sure that she would come and stand about beside him and say "Um," and spoil everything. Well, anyhow, he was away from that for a bit. But to be away from doubt was not enough. The great discovery threatened to evaporate. He wanted the comfort of the disciple. He wanted help and reassurance.

Bobby had comforted him greatly. While Sargon had been going from one suspicious lodging-house keeper to another, the faith of the new Saviour of mankind had weakened dreadfully. But Bobby from the first had had something deferential in his manner, had seemed to understand. His questions had grown more and more intelligent. Perhaps he was to be the first of the reawakened adherents. Perhaps presently he would be recognizable as some faithful servant in that still so largely forgotten past, a trusted general perhaps, or some intimate court official.

Yet even when Sargon doubted he believed. It is a very comprehensible paradox. He knew clearly that to be Sargon was to be real, was to signify and make all the world signify, was to go back into the past and reach right out into the future, was to escape altogether from the shrivelled insignificance of the Preemby life. To be Sargon was to achieve not only greatness but goodness. Sargon could give and Sargon could dare. Sargon could face lions and die for his people, but Preemby could go round three fields, had been known to go round three fields, to evade the hostility of a barking terrier. Preemby's world was dust and dirt, a mud speck in infinite space, and there was no life on it but abjection. Preemby was death;

Sargon was rebirth into a world of spacious things. Not very clearly did Sargon achieve these realizations, but he felt them throughout his being. Something had happened to him of inestimable value and truth; he had to cling to this gift and hold it and keep it or be for ever fallen. Christina Alberta notwithstanding, the whole world notwithstanding.

So he walked up and down his little upper room in Midgard Street and elaborated his conception of his new role as lord and protector of the whole world. Twilight gave place to night but he did not turn on the light. He liked the friendly darkness. All visible things are limiting things, but the darkness goes out and beyond everything to God. “I must look,” he said. “I must watch and observe. But not for too long. There is action. Action gives life. That fellow Preemby, poor soul, he could look at things, but dared he lift a finger? No! Everywhere suffering, everywhere injustice and disorder, the desert and the wilderness breaking back in on us and he did nothing. If one does not call and call aloud, how can one expect an answer? In this world, vast, terrible — strikes — hoardings — adulteration — profiteers.... Nevertheless men who once lived bravely and did their duty.... Who may do it again.... Once they hear the call. Awake! Remember! The. High Path. Simple Honour. Sargon calls you.... H’rrmp....”

He came to a halt at his uncurtained window and looked out on the plain flat face of the opposite houses, pierced here and there by a lit window. Most had the blinds drawn, but just opposite a woman worked by lamp-light at a table, sewing something, her needle hand flew out perpetually and the book and one hand and the cuff of a reader came also into the picture, the rest of him hidden behind the curtain. At a bedroom window there was a looking-glass, and a girl tried on a hat and looked at it this way and that; then suddenly she vanished, and after a little interval the light went out.

“All their scattered lives,” said Sargon, holding out his arms with a benevolent gesture, “knitted — drawn together by wisdom and love. A rudder put on the drifting world.”

Came a knock at the door. “Come in,” said Sargon.

Bobby appeared. “Getting on all right, sir?” he said in his engaging subaltern manner. He clicked on the electric light and came

into the room. (Cadaverous and pleasant face he had; surely one would remember presently what he had been.) “Wondered if you were eating anything tonight?” he asked.

“I quite forgot eating,” said Sargon. “Quite. My mind — troubled by many grave matters. I have much to think of, much to plan. The hour grows late. The time is near. I wonder if the serving woman here — ?”

“Only breakfasts,” said Bobby. “Here we are on bed and breakfast terms strictly. The rest is with ourselves. For an emergency like this there is nothing so good as the Rubicon Restaurant. The Grill Room keeps open quite late. They will do you a chop or a cutlet. Or ham and eggs. Very good ham and eggs — crisp ham. You go out from here, turn to the left at the second comer, and go right down Hampshire Street until you come to it. You’ll have no difficulty in finding it.”

The word “crisp” had settled it.

“I will avail myself,” said Sargon.

“And it’s equally easy to find your way back,” said Bobby with a faint flavour of anxiety in his voice.

“Have no fear, young man,” said Sargon in a tone of jolly reassurance. “Have no fear. I’ve found my way in many climes and under many conditions — the wild mountains — the trackless desert. Time and space.”

“Of course,” said Bobby. “I forgot that.

“Still — London is different,” said Bobby.

9

The next day at about half-past four in the afternoon a small but heavily moustached figure, with eyes full of blue determination, emerged from Saint Paul’s Cathedral and stood at the top of the steps before the great doors, surveying the jostling traffic of Ludgate Hill and the Churchyard. There was a sort of valiant uncertainty in the figure’s pose, as though it was equally resolved to be up to something, and uncertain about what it meant to do. London had been looked at from the top of the Monument and from the Cathedral dome on a crystal-clear October day, and it had betrayed an unusual

loveliness and greatness under the golden sunshine. But it had shown itself too as a vast dreamy multitudinousness in which none but those who are resolute are powerful in action can hope to escape being swallowed up. It had stretched away to wide sunlit stretches that seemed to be the horizon, and then up in the leaden-blue other stretches had been visible of houses, of shipping, of distant hills. The vans and carts in the shadowed streets below had looked like toys; the people were hats and hurrying legs and feet, curiously proportioned. And over all an immense dome of kindly cloud-flecked sky.

He had walked round the little gallery under the ball muttering: "A wilderness. A city that has forgotten....

"How fair it might be! How great it might be!

"How fair and great it *shall* be!"

And now he had come down again from these high places and the time had come for him to gather together his disciples and ministers and inaugurate the New World. He had to call them. Followers would not come to him unless he called them; they would wait for him to act, not know even of what awaited them until he called them, but when he called them they would surely come.

It was with an extraordinary sense of power over men's destinies that he stood now upon Saint Paul's steps and reflected that even now men and women might be passing by, among these busy men thronging the pavement, among the people in omnibuses, among the girls clattering away at their typewriters behind the upstairs windows, over whose busy, petty, undistinguished lives hung the challenge of his summons. Yonder perhaps was his Abu Bekr, his right-hand man, his Peter. Let them wait a little longer. He waved the traffic onward with a gesture of kindly encouragement. "Soon now," he said, "very soon. Go on while ye may. Even now the sorting of the lots begins."

Yet a moment more he stood still and silent, a statuette of destiny. "And now," he whispered; "and now...

"And first—"

He was no longer troubled by his oblivion of the Sumerian tongue. In the night he had recovered the gift of tongues; he had muttered strange words in the darkness, and understood.

“H’rrmp,” he said, a word common to many tongues, clearing the way after five thousand years for the return of the forgotten sounds to a renewed use in the world of men.

“Dadendo Fizzoggo Grandioso Magnificendodidodo — yes,” he whispered. “The Unveiling of the Countenance. The First Revelation. Then perhaps they will see.”

And slowly he descended the steps, his eyes searching the convergent frontages of the Churchyard for some intimations of a barber’s shop.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE CALLING OF THE DISCIPLES

1

THERE are already wide differences of statement and opinion about the order and the details of the calling of the followers of Sargon. Happily we are in a position to give the circumstances with all the exactitude that may be necessary, and with an authority that will anticipate vexatious criticism. It was about half-past six that Sargon appeared in Cheapside, and the day's traffic was already ebbing in that busy city thoroughfare. His countenance was transformed and shone with that kind of luminosity that only the most thorough and exhaustive shaving can give. A youthful smoothness had been restored to it. The facial mane, the vast moustache, that had veiled it for so many years from mankind was abandoned, a mess of clippings and lather now in a barber's basin. Now the face was as bare as the young Alexander, a fresh-complexioned, sincere and innocent countenance speaking clearly with an unfiltered voice. It was flushed with a natural excitement as it went along Cheapside scrutinizing the faces of the foot passengers on a momentous and mystical search. The blue eyes beneath the brim of the distinguished-looking hat were alight. Was it to be this man? Was it to be this?

2

The first to be called was a young man of Leytonstone named Godley, a young man with a large and excessively grave grey face and a deliberation of utterance amounting to an impediment. He was carrying a microscope in a wooden box. He was a student of biology with a cytological bias; naturally very polite and temperamentally disposed to be precise and deliberate in all he said and did. He was making his way from Liverpool Street station to the Birkbeck Institute by a circuitous route because he had nearly an hour in hand before his class began. He stood poised on the pavement edge at a

street-corner waiting for two vans to pass, when his call came to him.

He found a very earnest barefaced little man beside him whose blue eyes searched his countenance swiftly, and who then gripped his arm.

"I think," said Sargon, "that it is you."

Mr. Godley, who was not without a sense of humour, attempted to reply that it certainly was him, but that impediment of his, partly natural but greatly developed by affectation, arrested him about the word "certainly," and he was still sawing the air with his profile when Sargon spoke again.

"I have need of your help," said Sargon. "The great task is beginning."

Mr. Godley went through the preliminary convulsions of explaining that he had the better part of an hour to spare and that he was willing to give help in any reasonable matter provided it was first explained to him clearly just exactly what the matter was. But he could only give help for a limited time. His engagement with his class at the Birkbeck was imperative. Sargon paid little heed to the significance of the various sounds that Mr. Godley was biting off and swallowing. He led his captive by the arm and explained, with helpful gestures of his free hand, the full significance of this call. "You are I perceive, a young man of scientific qualifications. They will be needed. I do not know if you recognize me — your memory may still be imperfect — but I recall your face, chief among the wise men of our ancient court. Yes, indeed, chief among our wise men."

"N-no-no-not as-as-asure that I follow you aw-ow-ow-quite," said the young man. "My my — my aw-ow-ow-work issferr'll aw-ow-ow-known as yet."

"*I* know it," said Sargon boldly. "*I* know it. I have been seeking you. Do not be deceived by my plain incognito. Believe me I have tremendous powers behind me. In a little while all men will understand. The age of confusion draws near its end; a new age begins. We are the first two particles, the very first, in a great crystallization—"

"Where aaare we g-g-g-oing agg-aggs-aggs-exactly?" asked the young man.

"Trust me," said Sargon bravely. "Keep with me."

The young man struggled with some complex question. But now three fresh individuals came under the magic attraction of the call and the young man's question fell in unheeded chunks. These new adherents were a little group of men standing at the kerb, about a small, almost inaudible hurdy-gurdy on which was a placard stating: "We want Work not Charity; but there is no Work for Us in this So-called Civilized State." They were clad in faded khaki, and were all youths of less than five-and-twenty.

"Now look at that!" said Sargon. "Is it not time the new age began?"

He addressed himself to the man on the right of the organ-grinder.

"All this is to be altered here and now," he said. "I have work for you to do."

"Oh!" said the ex-soldier in the accent of a fairly well educated man. "What sort of work?"

"We're straight," said the organ-grinder. "We'll take it. If it's work we can do. We ain't fakers. Wot work is it?"

"Shillin' an hour?" said the third.

"More than that. Much more than that. And very great and responsible work. A harvest! A splendid harvest! You shall be leaders of men. Follow after me."

"Far?" asked the man who had spoken first.

Sargon made a gesture that effectually concealed his own lack of a definite plan, and led the way.

"Lead on, Macbeth," said the organ-grinder, and swung his hurdy-gurdy into its carrying position on his back. The two other ex-soldiers exchanged views that it was all right and that anyhow they'd see what was offered them. Mr. Godley, keeping abreast of his leader, began an immense and ultimately futile struggle with a fresh question.

The next disciple was not so much called as fell into the gathering body of Sargonites. He was a tall gentleman of a rich brown colour with frizzy black hair, and a vast disarming smile. He was dressed in an almost luminous grey frock-suit, a pink tie, buttoned shoes with bright yellow uppers, and a hat as distinguished as Sargon's own. He carried a grey alpaca umbrella. He held out a sheet of paper in a big mahogany hand and emitted in a rich abundant voice the word

“Escuse.” The paper had printed on it at the head the words, “Lean and Mackay, 329 Leadenhall Street, E.C.,” and below written in ink, “Mr. Kama Mobamba.”

Sargon regarded his interlocutor for a moment and then recognized him. “The Elamite King!” he said.

“Non spik English,” said the black gentleman. “Portugaish.”

“No,” said Sargon with a gesture that explained his intention. “Providence. Follow after me.”

The coloured gentleman fell in trustfully.

“Look here!” protested one of the ex-soldiers. “There ain’t going to be coloured labour on this job?”

“Peace!” said Sargon. “Very soon everything will be shown to you.”

“I don’t think you have any ub-ub-business to mislead ap-ap-people,” said Mr. Godley, who was becoming more and more interested in, and perplexed by, Sargon’s proceedings.

Sargon quickened his pace.

“This — this gentleman s-s-s-simply wa-wa-wanted tu-tu-tu-tu-to go to that address,” said Mr. Godley.

In his eagerness to get the idea home to Sargon he became a little disregardful of his microscope box which inflicted a sudden sharp blow on the knee of a passing gentleman, a business man in a silk hat. The victim cursed aloud with extraordinary vehemence and stood hopping on the pavement with his hand to his knee. Then he succumbed to a passionate impulse to tell Mr. Godley exactly what he thought of his conduct, his upbringing, and his type of human being. He joined the followers of Sargon at a brisk limp, occasionally saying “Hi!” in a breathless voice. A rather intoxicated man in deep mourning had witnessed the incident. He came hurrying, with a certain margin of error, to the side of the angry gentleman in the silk hat.

“‘Sgraceful salt,” he said. “‘Sgraceful! F’want a witness *I’m* your man!”

His general intention was to go forward at the side of the gentleman in the silk hat, but there were chemically emancipated factors in his being that drove him sideways. The resultant was a sinuous course that presently involved him with a display of oranges

in a barrow at the pavement edge. It was not a serious nor a prolonged contact, but it involved a certain scattering of oranges in the gutter and added a new ingredient, a very angry costermonger's assistant with a remonstrance and a claim for damages, to the gathering body of Sargon's followers.

The moral of a proverb depends entirely upon the image chosen, and though a rolling stone gathers no moss, a rolling snowball grows by what it rolls upon. A small hurrying group of people in a London street is a moving body of the snowball type; its physical pull is considerable; it appeals to curiosity and the increasing gregariousness of mankind. Sargon, blue-eyed and exalted, with Mr. Godley intent and eloquent upon his left hand, and Mr. Kama Mobamba, tall, silent, smiling, with a shining confidence upon his ebony face that soon he would be led into the presence of Messrs. Lean and Mackay, formed the spear-head of the procession. Behind came the three out-of-work ex-soldiers, who were now involved in obscure protests and explanations with the gentleman in the silk hat, and a smart but rather incomprehensible young newspaper reporter, who had acquired his native tongue in Oldham, and had just come up to London to push his fortunes, and was anxious for something called a "scoop." He seemed to think that Sargon might be the "scoop" he sought. Two ambiguous-looking individuals in caps and neck-wraps had also fallen in, possibly for nefarious purposes, a vague-faced young woman of the streets in a weather-worn magenta hat was asking what was "*up*" and the intoxicated man in mourning was explaining as wittily and obscurely as possible. There was also a fringe of skirmishing juveniles. And an Eton boy. He was very very young and fresh-faced, a scion of one of the oldest and best families in England and a convinced and fierce Communist. He had been on his way with a bosom friend to the celebrated model engine shop in Holborn when Sargon had swept past him and the inscription on the organ had caught his eye.

He was a boy of swift initiatives and with a highly developed dramatic sense.

"Sorry, old Fellow," he said to his friend. "But I feel the time has come. Unless I'm very much mistaken that little bunch is the beginning of the Social Revolution, and I must do my duty."

"Oo I *say,* Rabbit!" said the friend. "Come and buy that steam-launch first, anyhow."

"*What's* a model steam-launch?" said Rabbit scornfully, and turned to follow Sargon.

He would have liked to have had a swift strong hand-clasp first, but you can't do that sort of thing with a chap who will always keep both hands in his trouser pockets. He darted off, and his friend followed discreetly, in a state between amusement and dismay, and at such a distance as seemed to him to exonerate him from any personal complicity with the social revolution.

"Where are we going?" asked the young Etonian as he came up with the hindmost of the out-of-work ex-soldiers.

"*He* knows," said the out-of-work ex-soldier, indicating Sargon.

3

But that was exactly what our dear Sargon did not know. By this time he was no longer a convinced and complete Sargon. A scared and doubting and protesting Preemby was struggling back into his being.

Up to the beginning of the calling of the disciples Sargon had ruled in his own soul assured and unchallenged. But he had expected his disciples to respond to his call, to recognize and remember, to be immediately understanding and helpful. The calling was to have been like the lighting of a lamp in their minds and the world about them. He had expected not only his own clear and unquestioning conviction but accession and reinforcement for it. And so leaping from soul to soul the restoration of Humanity, the Empire of Sargon would have spread. For disciples who made conditions, for disciples who followed, gesticulating strangely and spluttering and bubbling and stammering injurious criticisms, for disciples who asked for a minimum wage, and for disciples who came limping after one calling "Hi!" as though one was a cab, Sargon was totally unprepared.

Had he called these disciples rashly? Had he been premature again? Had he made another mistake?

These were unpleasantly urgent questions for a Master to solve while he was going briskly to nowhere in particular about four miles

an hour along Holborn with his following gathering at his heels. Perhaps all leadership is a kind of flight. In every leader of men perhaps the fugitive has been latent. In Sargon now it was more than latent; it was awake and stirring, and its name was Preemby.

Since first mankind in its slow ascent from mere animalism became susceptible to Prophets and Great Teachers and Leaders there must always have been something of this internal conflict between the greatness of the mission and something discreetly less, and there must also have been always something of this clash of the disciples' quality and motive with the teacher's expectations. The very calling of disciples seems to admit a sense of weakness on the prophet's part. Their calling puts him in pledge. He puts himself in pledge to them. They will, he knows, hold him to it when he falters; deep gregarious instincts assure him he will not desert his declaration to them even when he might desert himself. They desert him — inevitably. In the whole record of the world there is only one unvarying, faithful disciple, Abu Bekr. All other disciples failed and crippled their Masters and misled them. They deserted or they drove the prophet whither he would not go. Great things and little things of the same kind follow the same laws. At the head of that small wedge of commotion driving along lamp-lit Holborn in the October twilight went Sargon the Lord and Protector of Mankind, the Restorer of Faith and Justice, the Magnificent One, and though he was already aware of an error made and dangers incurred, he was still resolved to pull a great occasion by some stupendous gesture out of the jaws of disaster. And closer than his shadow was Preemby, scared nearly out of his wits, ready for a desperate headlong bolt down any side turning, a bolt from explanation, a bolt from effort, a bolt back to Preembyism and infinite nothingness.

Suddenly there came to Sargon a reassuring voice, the voice of one who had at least seemed to believe and accept.

There had been a slight altercation with Billy before Bobby came hurrying across the road. "There he goes!" said Bobby.

"That isn't him," said Billy. "Where's his moustache? He was pretty nearly all moustache."

"Shaved," said Bobby. "I'd swear to him anywhere. A sort of prance in his walk. It's our prophet, Billy, and he's heading for

trouble."

"Looks more like a welsher," said Billy. "Where'd he get that ecstatic nigger? It's too rummy for me altogether, Bobby. You keep out of it. There's a policeman tacking on now."

Bobby hesitated. "Can't let him go like that," he said, and dodged across the road just as four racing omnibuses blotted out the Sargonites from Billy's eyes.

"Forgive me, but where are you going?" said Bobby, stooping to Sargon's grateful ear in spite of a considerable push from Mr. Godley.

"I have declared myself," said Sargon, and straightway reassurance came. This was the First of the Disciples, and he had found his way to his Master. Quite clearly now did Sargon see what he had to do. These first followers had to be instructed. The Teaching had to begin. To do that it was necessary to lead them apart out of the hurry and tumult of the street. A vision came to Sargon of a long brightly lit table, and of an array of disciples asking questions, and of memorable answers and great sayings. And straight ahead, glowing, bursting with fight, already a friend, there towered up the inviting mass of the Rubicon Restaurant, pioneer in the great enterprise of supplying dinners de luxe at popular prices.

"Yonder," said Sargon with a sweeping gesture of the hand, "we will rest and sit at meat, and I will talk, and all things shall be explained."

The bright vision of a discourse to a gathering of disciples at a table had so restored the gloriousness of Sargon that by the time he reached the entrance of the Rubicon Restaurant, which bulges invitingly at a corner, he had called two further disciples. One of these acquisitions was a matchbox-holding beggar of venerable appearance, and the other a highly intelligent-looking man of perhaps fifty, lean and thinly bearded, carrying a book on the Doukhobors and wearing mittens and a tall black felt hat — a hat of an unusual shape rather like the steam-dome of a railway engine. This last acquisition was made at the very door of the Restaurant.

"Come in here," said Sargon, seizing his arm, "and take meat with me. I have things to tell you that will change your whole life."

"This is very *suddan*," said the intelligent-looking man, speaking

in the high neighing protesting accent of an English scholar and gentleman, as he yielded himself to Sargon's grip.

4

The actual invasion of the Rubicon Restaurant was a confused and swift affair. Sargon's mind was clear and simple now; he had to make that vision of a long white table with his disciples grouped about him a reality or incur a great defeat. His following was animated by a mixture of unequal and incompatible motives, as all followings are, and it was now swollen to something near thirty — the exact number is uncertain because it passed marginally into mere onlookers and passers-by — by the action of the least worthy of the three out-of-work ex-soldiers, who had been uttering these magic words, "A Free Feed!" ever since the Rubicon Restaurant had been in sight.

The attention of that challenging individual, the outside porter, had happened to be distracted by the arrival of guests in a motor-car when the Sargonites came along. They therefore swept through the outer entrance without encountering any obstacle other than the rotating door, which chopped the little crowd into ones and twos before it reached the entrance hall. Perhaps twenty got into the entrance hall, that space of marble and mahogany and hovering cloakroom attendants, before the mechanical incompetence of the man in deep mourning and his subsequent extraction by the politely indignant outer porter, the costermonger's assistant intervening unhelpfully, jammed the apparatus. The man with the bruised shin seems to have fallen out before the Restaurant was reached, and the vaguefaced young woman in the magenta hat drifted away at some unnoted moment.

In the spacious, glittering and observant outer hall a tendency to dispersal manifested itself. The out-of-work ex-soldier with the organ, seized by a sudden shyness, made for the gentleman's cloakroom to deposit his instrument and became involved in an argument with his colleagues. The two ambiguous young men in caps and neck-wraps seem to have hesitated about the correctness of their costume. But Sargon held the newly caught gentleman tight,

and the venerable match-seller did not mean to be separated from his patron in this bright, luxurious, dangerous place. Mr. Kama Mobamba, tall and smiling and shining, handed hat and umbrella to an attendant and followed closely upon the Master, serene in his assurance that these were the lordly portals of the long sought firm of African traders, Lean and Mackay. And Mr. Godley, with his natural passion for explicitness, would not leave Sargon until he had made it perfectly clear to him why he did not feel bound to accompany him further. He came next after the others into the Large Restaurant, making noises like a cuckoo clock that has lost control of itself. The reporter from Oldham was also holding on, though in considerable doubt now what sort of story he would have to write. The Eton boy, more than half aware now of his error, and so disposed to be a little detached also, came into the Restaurant after depositing hat and umbrella without.

Bobby never came through. He was overtaken and held up in the entrance hall by Billy. “This isn’t your affair, Bobby,” said Billy. “This really isn’t your affair.”

“I can’t make out what he’s up to,” said Bobby. “He’s bound to get into trouble.”

“Never mind.”

“But I do mind.”

“The management’s scared,” said Billy. “They’re sending for the police. There’s a crowd gathered outside. Look at the faces looking in. See that chap peering through the hole in the glass? Nice thing for Tessy and Susan if we get into some police-court scrape.”

“But we can’t leave him to get into a mess here.”

“But how can we help him?”

5

Within the Restaurant Sargon made his supreme and final effort and encountered swift and overwhelming defeat. But at any rate he did not run away. He made a frontal attack on the world he had set out to subdue — as Sargon. As Sargon, invincibly Sargon, he met disaster.

Things had not begun to be very brisk yet in the Rubicon Restautant. But indeed it is never so brisk in the Rubicon of an

evening as it is at lunch time; it is too far from the west, pre-eminently a luncheon place. And the hour even for such briskness as is customary had not yet come. The neat lines of the little white tables, each with its lamp and flowers, were only broken here and there by occupants. A family group going to a circus; a little knot of people going to a meeting in the Kingsway Hall; three or four couples of theatre-goers in evening dress; three or four of those odd couples of a rather inexperienced looking middle-aged business man and an extremely inexperienced looking young woman in imperfectly conceived dinner dress who are to be seen everywhere in London, and a group of three business men from the north dressed in a canny grey and dining with a resolute completeness from cocktail to liqueur, was all the company yet assembled in the body of the restaurant. There were one or two occupants in the lower gallery, dimly seen; the upper gallery was unlit. The atmosphere was still timorous and chilly; even the three men from the north exacted their tale of London luxury in a subdued and even furtive manner.

The staff was still largely unemployed. The head-waiters, wine-waiters and table-waiters fidgeted serviettes and glasses, or stood about with that expression of self-astonishment and melancholy upon their faces habitual to waiters. A slight hubbub in the entrance hall and the sound of the smashing of the glass in the rotating door by the last effort of the man in mourning preceded the entry of Sargon.

Every one looked up. The guests forgot their food and their company manners; the waiters forgot their secret sorrows. Sargon appeared, an inconspicuous figure, a little white, almost luminous face, round bright eyes. With one hand he still gripped his last disciple. With the other he waved aside the gobbets of speech which Mr. Godley proffered him. A tall expectant negro face rose like a shield of ebony and ivory above him. Behind were the match-seller and other followers, less clearly apprehended.

A head-waiter faced him. Behind hovered a manager and a little further off an assistant manager fiddled with the fruit on the buffet.

Sargon released his latest catch and stood forward.

“Set a table here,” he said with a fine gesture. “Set a table here for a great company. I have called a following and must needs discourse with them.”

“Table, sir,” said the head-waiter. “For ‘ow many, sir?”

“A great company.”

“Well, sir,” said the head-waiter with an appealing glance at the manager. “we’d like to ‘ave an idea ‘ow many.”

The manager came up to take control and the assistant manager deserted his piles of fruit and came up behind helpfully. Sargon perceived he was against opposition and gathered all the forces within him. “It is a great company,” he said. “It must sit at meat with me here and I must discourse to it. These people yonder may join. Set all the tables one to another. The day of separate tables and separate lives is at an end. Let even the tables manifest the Brotherhood of Man. Under Our Rule. Set them together.”

At the words “Brotherhood of Man” one of the three business men from the north was smitten with understanding. “It’s a blood-stained Bolshevik,” he said, or words to that effect. “Shovin’ in here! Of all places!”

“Oughtn’t to be allowed,” said his friend. “Aren’t we to have *no* peace from them?”

The first business man expressed a general antipathy for incarmined Bolsheviks and went on eating bread in a hurried, fussed, irritated manner. “When’s that Fricassee of Chicken coming?” he said. “They must have dropped it or something.”

But the manager’s intelligence had been even quicker than the business man’s. A swift signal had been given at the very beginning of Sargon’s speech. The waiter sent to summon the police had already sped past Billy and Bobby and the rest of the uncertain crowd in the entrance hall, draughty now and uneasy because of the broken glass in the rotating door that the man in mourning had broken.

But Sargon heeded nothing of this byplay. He held on to the only course that he could see before him, which was to overwhelm the opposition that gathered against him.

“We don’t have banquets in this room, sir,” said the manager, playing for time. “Banquets you can have in the Syrian Hall or in the Elysian Chamber or in the Great Masonic or Little Masonic Hall — given due notice and after proper arrangements, but this is the general public restaurant. You can’t *suddenly* give a banquet to an

unknown company or society or something here. We don't cater for that. It isn't done."

"It will be done to-night," said Sargon, with a glance and intonation and gesture that would have bent all dream Sumeria to its knees.

But the managers of European restaurants are made of sterner stuff, it seems, than were the old Sumerians. "I'm afraid *not,* sir," he said, and stood blandly obstructive.

"Do you know," cried Sargon, "who it is with whom you have to deal?"

"Not one of our regular customers, sir," said the manager, with the apologetic air of one who scores a point perforce.

"Listen," said Sargon. "This day is an Epoch. This is the End and the Beginning of an Age. Men will count this banquet I shall hold here the sunrise moment of a new world. I am Sargon, Sargon the Great, Sargon the Restorer, come to proclaim myself. This multitude of my followers must be fed and instructed here, fed bodily and fed spiritually. See to it that your share is done."

He made a gesture behind him when he spoke of his followers, but indeed there was no following behind him now save that one faithful but deluded African, and that perplexed but persistent Oldham reporter. The Eton boy had detached himself completely now. He was sitting at a table afar off, where he had been joined by his friend, and they conversed in undertones and watched. Even Mr. Godley with his microscope, and the gentleman with the book about the Doukhobors, had faded out of this story by this time, and were going along Holborn exchanging and interrupting each other's explanations and surmises about this singular affair that had so unexpectedly deflected their high and reasonable progress through life.

"I can only sus-sas-sas-suppose that-the-fellow-was-mad," said Mr. Godley.

While Sargon's retinue had melted the manager's had gathered. Behind him now stood an array of waiters of every description, three dozen perhaps of various and yet uniform waiters, tall waiters and short ones, fat and thin, hairy and bald, young and old, waiters in aprons and one in shirt-sleeves.

“I’m afraid you’re creating a disturbance here,” said the manager. “I’m afraid I must ask you to go, sir.”

Should he go? Never!

“Oh, generation of blind and deaf!” he cried, lifting his voice in an attempt to reach the scattered diners beyond this lowering crowd of waiting men, “do you not recognize me? Have you neither memories nor vision? Do you not see the light that offers itself to you? Can you not hear the call that thrills throughout the world? The hour for awakening has come. It is to-day; it is now. You may cease to be things of habit and servitude, and you may become masters of a world reborn. Now! This moment. *Will* the change with me and the change is upon you! Sargon calls you, Sargon the Ancient and the Eternal, the Wise Ruler and the Bold One, calls you to light, to nobility, to freedom—”

“‘Fraid we can’t let you make speeches here,” said the manager with hand extended.

“Let’s chuck ‘im out *now*,” said a short, thick-set waiter.

“Chuck him out!” said the anti-Bolshevik business man, standing up and speaking in a voice replete with indignation and gathering volume as he went on. “And then bring us our Fricassee of Chicken. We have been waiting Ten Minutes for THAT FRICASSEE OF CHICKEN!”

And then a voice could be heard saying: “Wot’s it all *about*?” and suddenly a policeman stood beside Sargon and overshadowed him.

A wave of horror went through his soul, a wave of horror that was entirely Preemby. Throughout his whole virtuous life he had never once been in antagonism to the Police. “Oh Lord! oh Lord!” cried this horror in his soul. “What have I done now? I’m going to be run in!” The blue eyes grew rounder and he gasped for air, but no one there perceived how close he came to ignominious collapse. Preemby shivered and passed. Sargon choked and then spoke stoutly. “What is this, Officer?” he said. “Would you lay hands on the Master of the World?”

“My duty, sir, if he makes a disturbance,” said the policeman. “Master or no Master.”

Very rapidly did Sargon adjust himself to this new phase in his affairs. He was defeated. He was to be led away. Yes, but he was still

Sargon. The Power that ruled him had thrust him into defeat, but that could only be to try him. He had not expected this of the Power, but since the Power willed it, so it had to be.

"You understand, Officer, what it is you are doing?" he said, magnificently and gently.

"Quite, sir. I 'ope you don't intend to give us any trouble."

A captive! Not thus had he foreseen the revelation of the Master. He gave one last look at the rich decorations of the great restaurant in which the opening banquet was to have taken place. Not here then but in some squalid police-court it was that the New Empire of Justice and Brotherhood had to be proclaimed.

He turned in silence and went out at the policeman's side quietly, deep in thought.

6

So ended Sargon's first effort to enter into his Empire. Unless we count the visit to Buckingham Palace as his first attempt.

But before we go on to tell of the unexpected and dreadful experience that now came upon him, we must record one or two minor incidents of his capture.

One is the behaviour of Mr. Kama Mobamba. He watched the closing incidents in the Restaurant with a growing amazement upon his great bronze face. Had this little blue-eyed man been, after all, leading him wrong? When at last Sargon was led away, Mr. Mobamba moved at first as though still half inclined to follow him. Then he stood still, frowned reflectingly and fumbled at his ticket-pocket. With some effort he produced the sheet of paper that seemed to be his one intelligible link with London; it was now in a rather crumpled condition. Smoothing it out with his great hands, he advanced upon the manager with it extended.

"What's this?" said the manager.

The black gentleman bowed with infinite suavity, still tendering his paper. "Non spik English," said the black gentleman. "Portugaish. Lean-a-Kay. Lemonallstree."

He was difficult to direct.

Meanwhile in the entrance hall Bobby tacitly denied all

knowledge of Sargon. He was still hovering there with Billy, held by a curious half-maternal solicitude. The ex-soldiers had "mizzled," to use the expressive word of the man with the organ, at the appearance of policemen; the man in mourning and his troubles had been cleared up; but there were still quite a number of people hanging about in a state of vague expectation, and the young reporter was trying to find some one who understood the rare and obscure language of Oldham in order to verify his facts. And there were several policemen; one evidently a superior officer, a very good-looking man in a peaked cap and a frogged coat.

"Here he comes!" said Billy, and Sargon was led out.

There was a silence as he passed through the hall to the rotating door. And upon Sargon, it seemed to Bobby, there rested a hitherto unnoted dignity. He looked neither to the right nor the left, and his eyes were exceedingly mournful.

"But what will they do with him?" asked Bobby.

"You don't happen to know him, sir?" asked the superior officer abruptly.

"Not a bit," said Billy, taking the answer out of Bobby's mouth. "Never seen him before. We just came in here to see what was up."

And by his silence Bobby acquiesced.

"I've got no power to move you on here," said the police officer, and smiled a suggestion of inopportuneness to Billy, and motioned to his satellites that the business there was at an end.

"We'd better go home," said Billy, interpreting the smile.

7

The three friends sat round a fire in the white room with the purple curtains, and Bobby poured out his regret that he had denied Sargon. "They've taken him off, Tessy," he said for the third time, "and I do not know what they will do with him."

"Discharge him with a caution," said Billy with a drawing-board on his knee. "He hadn't committed very much of an offence that I can see."

"And then?" said Bobby, and meditated on the fire.

"I shall go round to the police-court and try to pick him up again

afterwards if they let him go," he said presently.

"Better leave it all alone," said Billy.

But Tessy sat in her arm-chair between Billy and the fire and looked at Bobby's preoccupied profile rather sweetly out *pi* the warm shadow. And nobody in the world saw her.

"They'll warn him and he'll come back here of his own accord, Bobby," said Tessy comfortingly.

"Of course he'll come back," said Billy. —

"Very likely, Tessy," said Bobby. "But suppose they don't."

He got up and stood by the fire. "I suppose I ought to go upstairs and do some work."

"I suppose you had," said Billy.

"How is the novel getting on?" asked Tessy.

"Not much done yet," said Bobby. "The Prophet has disorganized the actual writing. But I've learnt a lot of things that will tell some day. And of course I have to do all my Aunt Suzannah stuff. Aunt Suzannah gets more and more popular. You can't imagine the things they ask me. It's all material in the long run. Still — it takes time.... I suppose they've locked him in a beastly little cell somewhere. And he's wondering why they don't see that he's truly the great Sargon, come again to this world.... Billy, the world's a dangerous place, a dangerous, unkind place. Why couldn't they let him rip a bit? and his poor little map of the Whole World upstairs — he always called it the Whole World — and his little paper star-machine, and his poor little empty room and his poor little empty bed."

"I protest," said Billy, putting his drawing-board aside. "Bobby, you are a case of morbid overgrowth of the sympathies. You are a new disease. You are the type case of Bobbyism. It's bad enough that you should sympathize openly with that little devil Susan when I have spanked her, and so undo all my teaching. It's bad enough that you should do about a third of Mrs. Richman's work because she needs light and air. I can even understand something of your emotional relationships with various stray cats and pigeons. But when it comes to your being sorry for a poor little empty lodging-house bed, I draw the line. Absolutely, Bobby; I draw the line. Poor little empty bed! It's — it's *morbid,* Bobby."

"But of course he was thinking of Sargon," said Tessy. "You'll go

to the police-court to-morrow, Bobby?"

"I'll go — in spite of Billy. I don't care if it is a disease. I'm worried about that little man. I'm afraid. He's too round-eyed for this cruel world."

And next morning Bobby went. He went to Lemon Square Court and sat through a frowsty morning and waited for Sargon who never appeared. He heard all the morning "drunks" and such-like come up for judgment, a case about stolen soda-water syphons, two matrimonial differences, and all about the wilful smashing of a plate-glass window with intent to rob, but nothing about Sargon. The magistrate vanished and the court began to disperse. He asked questions of a policeman who had never heard of Sargon and the little trouble at the Rubicon Restaurant. Had he come to the right court? the policeman asked. Bobby hurried headlong to Minton Street. Minton Street, too, it seemed, had never heard of Sargon. It did not occur to Bobby to ask in either police station. He retired baffled. He tried to find something about Sargon in the evening newspapers; there was not a line about the Rubicon or him. Perhaps he had not been charged! He hurried back and rushed upstairs full of a vain surmise; the room was desolate, the window open, the map of the world on the floor. Had Sargon been spirited out of existence?

Next day brought neither Sargon nor news of Sargon. Bobby lay awake of nights.

After three full days Billy, who had been watching his friend furtively, remarked in a casual manner: "Why don't you go and see the Head Panjandrum at the Lemon Square Police Station about it? He'd be sure to know if anyone does."

Shown in to Inspector Mullins, Bobby found himself confronted by the same good-looking officer he had seen in the entrance hall of the Rubicon Restaurant. "You're the young man who didn't happen to know anything about him, three nights ago," said Inspector Mullins, not answering Bobby's questions.

Bobby explained the situation candidly.

"Doesn't help much now," said the Inspector. "Still it's all in order. We took him, in the exercise of our discretion, to the Workhouse Infirmary — for observation as to his mental state. Three clear days they keep them there. Then they're either certified or let

go. Or charged.”

“Certified?” asked Bobby.

“As a lunatic,” said Inspector Mullins.

“And what happened to him?”

“Usual thing, I suppose. He was a pretty clear case. By this time he’s a certified lunatic, I suppose, and either at Cummerdown Hill or on his way there. Or if that’s full — somewhere else.”

“Phew!” said Bobby. “Pretty quick.”

He sat disconcerted. “Can I go and see him at Cummerdown Hill?” he asked.

“Probably not,” said Inspector Mullins. “Seeing you’re not a relation.”

“I’m interested in him.”

“It isn’t your business.”

“Exactly. But I like him. And I don’t think he’s exactly mad.... Seems odd of his people — Do you know anything about his people? I might go and talk to them about him.”

“That’s possible,” said the Inspector. “I don’t know who they are. You might find out at the Workhouse Infirmary or they might tell you from Cummerdown. I don’t know. Very likely *they* don’t know who his relations are. There’s all sorts of such stragglers in the world. Possibly he hasn’t any relations — the sort of relations, I mean, who would want to bother about him. My impression is that once a man or woman is certified and put away it’s rather hard for an outsider to get through. But, as you say, you can but try. Sorry I can’t tell you any more. I never saw him myself at all — except as he went past me. Not my affair.... Yes, our usual procedure in such a case.... Oh! no trouble. Good morning.”

Left sitting squarely, an embodiment of implacable and indifferent law and rule.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE JOURNEY OF SARGON UNDERNEATH THE WORLD

1

IT has been said in an earlier chapter that Mr. Preemby, after his wife's death, was like some seed which germinates and thrusts out bold and unexpected things. A new phase in that belated germination began as he walked through the London streets beside his captor policeman. If the thing had happened to Mr. Preemby while he was still Mr. Preemby, it would have been merely a dreadful, shameful horror, It would have been an insupportable experience, a thing to regret, a thing to get through and conceal and if possible obliterate from record and memory. If, again, it had happened in the early days of Sargon's dreams it would have been an occasion for an immense dramatic improvisation. He would have thought of the effect upon the spectators and passers-by, he would have posed and gesticulated and said profound, memorable words. But some power of growth had taken possession of him now and he did none of these things. He posed now neither to the world without nor to himself within. For the first time in his life almost he was looking directly at himself and at what he had done and what had befallen him, and so full of wonder was he at this ultimate discovery of reality that he forgot all the vast fabric of make-believe, imaginative response, and deliberate self-delusion, up which he had clambered to this new phase of vision. He walked so quietly through the lit streets that only the most observant noted he was in charge and that the policeman was on duty; to the rest he might have been any casual companion of a home-going policeman.

One determination had been released in this renascent mind with an extraordinary strength and clearness, that he was not, and never would again be, that Albert Edward Preemby who had launched him into existence He was a being called, it mattered not what, in reality, but for his present purposes, Sargon, Sargon the Magnificent King. The first concrete visions of Sumeria and his ancient glories had

passed now into the background of his mind. He had not lost his belief in them at all, but they were now ancient history to him, and even the revelation at the boarding house seemed very far away. His ideas had travelled long distances and gathered much in the past week. The expectation of an immediate sensational splendour had been rudely shattered. The Power that had called him had surprised him exceedingly, but had not overwhelmed him. He knew quite clearly that he had to be Sargon who lived not for himself but for the Whole World, and that to relinquish or deny that was to perish utterly. It had not seemed to be necessary to him that his own faith should be tried, but manifestly the Power had determined that it should be tried. And manifestly he was to be put through some austere process of preparation before he entered into his Empire. He was to know what prison was and to stand a trial. He would be asked to deny himself.

What should he say to them? I am not He — I am not Him — which was it? I am not Him you suppose I am. He muttered it to himself.

"Whassay?" said the policeman.

"Nothing. Is it much further?" asked Sargon.

It was just round the comer. Sargon found himself in a little austere room with half a dozen quite amiable but slightly disrespectful men in uniform. He was asked his name and address by one who sat at a table. "Sargon," he said. "Sargon the First."

"No Christian name?"

"Pre-Christian," said Sargon.

"No given name, I mean," said the questioner.

"No."

"And the address?"

"None at present."

"Just anywhere?"

Sargon did not answer.

"Case for Gifford Street," said a voice behind him.

"Memory case or something," said the man at the table. "Anyhow, it's Gifford Street."

Sargon reflected. "What's Gifford Street?" he asked.

"'Ospital. Where they'll give you a bit of a rest and quiet."

“But I want to meet a magistrate in open court. I have a message. I am in no need of rest or quiet.”

“They’ll tell you all about that at Gifford Street. Buxton, will you take ‘im round?”

“But I am perfectly well! Why should I go to hospital?”

“Routine I suppose,” said the seated policeman and gave his mind to other things.

Queer! Why should it be a hospital? The way the Power was treating him was a strange way. He had to submit to the Power; he had to maintain himself Sargon. Still he could have wished for more explicitness.

He was so turned inward now that he went along beside Constable Buxton, not noting the streets nor the traffic nor the passers-by. Presently they were at a door in a high wall, within which there were buildings. Then they were in a little office and a large, grey-faced porter looked at him and exchanged muttered explanations with the constable. Then they were going across a wide yard and through large doors into a corridor where there was an unoccupied stretcher and two or three nurses in uniform. They came to a little glazed-in office and Sargon was asked to sit down on a bench against a wall while there was telephoning. Constable Buxton hovered down the corridor as though the task was nearly done.

A small bright-eyed man in a grey suit came and looked at Sargon. For some moments they regarded each other in silence. “Well?” said the man in the grey suit.

“My name is Sargon. I do not know why I have been brought here. Is this a hospital? I understand it is. I am not ill.”

“You may be ill without knowing it.”

“No.”

“We just want to have you here for a bit to have a look at you.”

Sargon shrugged his shoulders.

A very big man with exaggerated shoulders and a large, clean-shaven, intensely self-satisfied looking face appeared. He had a wide, thin-lipped mouth, protruding grey eyes and highly oiled and entirely subjugated sandy hair with an army “quif” on the forehead.

“Busy evening,” he said. “This is number three.”

“Pretty full then,” said the small man in grey.

“Too full,” said Mr. Jordan. “You don’t know where you are. This ‘im?” he asked and indicated Sargon by creasing his thick neck and depressing the corner of his mouth towards him.

“This,” said the little man in grey to Sargon, “is Mr. Jordan. He’s going to show you just where you have to go and just what you have to do.”

Immediately, instinctively, Sargon disliked Mr. Jordan. But he stood up obediently because his idea of submission to the Power seemed in some way to overlap and include this new coercion. Mr. Jordan produced a voice of flat, oily, insincere amiability. “You come along, Old Chap, with me,” he said. “We’ll make you comfortable all right ‘fyou don’t give no trouble.”

They went round a corner and up a cheerless stone staircase that turned back on itself; they came to a landing and double doors with glass panes in them that opened upon a very long, dark passage lit by a single very remote light. And suddenly it appeared to Sargon that behind him and already distant lay that outer world of freedom, the streets and the lights, the coming and going of people and things, the endless chance encounters, the events and the spectacle of life to which the Power had sent him, and before him were dark and narrow and dreadful experiences. Why should he turn his back thus voluntarily on the great outer world he had come to save? Was this again only another mistake he was making? He took a step or so away from Jordan and faced him.

“No,” he said. “I do not want to go further into this place. I do not wish it. Let me return. I have disciples to call and many things to do.”

The full moon of Jordan’s face displayed incredulous astonishment that passed into fierceness. “*Wot?*” he said.

He left a tremendous pause after “Wot” and then spoke very rapidly. “None of your tricks ‘*ere,* you thundering old Bastard.” With a swift movement his huge, raw, red hand gripped Sargon by the upper arm. His thin lips were retracted to show his teeth; his eyes seemed popping out. He gripped not to hold but to pinch and compress and injure, and he dug fingers in between muscle and bone, so that Sargon stared at him with dilated eyes and uttered a sharp, involuntary cry of pain.

The grip relaxed from the acutely painful to the merely uncomfortable, and the big face came down close to Sargon's. It was manifest that Mr. Jordan had been regaling himself on cheese and cocoa. "Don't you try it on, you Old Fool! Don't you blooming-well try it on. Whatever it is, don't you try it on 'ere. You're right enough to understand what I say. See? You do exactly wot you're told 'ere. You do exactly wot you're told. You do your best to avoid givin' trouble and I'll do my best ditto. But if you start doin' tricks — Gawd 'elp you! See?"

And he crushed the arm again.

"Understan'?"

The blue eyes seemed to assent.

"Down that passage, blast you!" said Mr. Jordan.

A distressed and wondering and yet not absolutely abject Sargon was taken to a wet and untidy bathroom in which a broken chair, pools of water, great splashings on the wall, and some crumpled towels in the corner suggested a recent struggle. There he was made to undress and take a tepid bath, dried with a towel that had already been in action, put into a grey nightgown that was doubtfully clean, a grey shoddy dressing-gown that certainly wasn't, and a pair of down-at-heel slippers two sizes too big, and so garbed, was led by Mr. Jordan, a little propitiated now by alert obedience, into the ward in which he was to pass the night.

A rufous man with very light eyelashes appeared.

"'Ere 'e is, Mr.'Iggs," said Mr. Jordan.

"I've got his bed ready," said Mr. Higgs. "'Ow many more of 'em?"

"Perfec' shower of 'em," said Mr. Jordan.

"Three," said Mr. Higgs.

"Well," said Mr. Jordan. "So long."

"So long," said Mr. Higgs.

Neither of them addressed the Lord of the Whole World directly. He might have been a parcel passed from hand to hand.

When Sargon entered the Observation Ward of the Gifford Street Infirmary his sense of having left life, ordinary current life, far away behind him, beyond these grey passages and corridors and staircases and glass offices and high walls and little doors, was enormously

reinforced. Never had he seen anything so emptily bleak and cheerless as this place. A heartless great dingy room it was, with green-grey distempered walls discoloured in patches, lit by a few bare lights that gave neither high-fights nor shadows. Black night and a greasily fit brick wall stared in through uncurtained windows. Half-way down the length of the place projecting pieces of wall suggested that two former rooms had been thrown into one. The floor was of polished bare boards. Far off was a table set against the wall with two or three torn and crumpled magazines thereon, and at the end an empty fireplace. In the near half, on either side, there were iron bedsteads in rows, twenty or thirty perhaps altogether. There was a foul smell in the air, faint and yet indescribably offensive, a faecal smell mixed with a heavy soapy odour.

Even had it been unoccupied, this cold, large, evil-smelling room would have seemed a strange inhospitable place to Sargon. For it had always been the lot of Mr. Preemby, even in the days of his early poverty, to five snug, to have carpets, even if they were shabby carpets, under his feet, and an encumbrance of furniture and silly human pictures and brackets and things about him on the walls. Here in this harsh plainness it was as though the fussy, accumulative, home-making imagination of man had never been.

But the strange soulless atmosphere of the place was but the first instant impression of Sargon. It was followed by a far more vivid and terrible realization, that this place was inhabited by beings who were only at the first glance men. Then as one looked again it became clear that they were not exactly men, they did not look up at his entry as men should, or they showed their awareness of him by queer unnatural movements. Several were in bed; others were dressed in shabby and untidy clothes and either sat on their beds or were seated in chairs about the lower part of the room. One individual only was in motion; a grave-faced young man who was walking with an appearance of concentrated method to and fro in a restricted circle in the far corner of the ward. Another sat and seemed to remove a perpetually recurrent cobweb from his face by a perpetually repeated gesture. Two men were jammed behind the table against the wall, and one, a fleshy lout with a shining pink skin and curling red hair on his bare chest, was making violent gestures, hammering the table

with a freckled fist, talking in a voice that rose and sank and occasionally broke into curses, while the other, a sallow-complexioned, cadaverous individual, seemed to be sunken in profound despair. In one of the beds close at hand a young man with a shock of black hair and an expression of fatuous satisfaction, that changed with dramatic suddenness to triumphant fierceness or insinuating lucidity, sat up and gesticulated and composed and recited an interminable poem — something in the manner of Browning. It was running in this fashion:

"God shall smite them And blight them They may prevail but God will requite them Light 'em.

Burn 'em to ashes and burn 'em to atoms Atoms!

Burning atoms — exactly like stars. See?

Stars in the void and all over the place.

Atoms galore and God can't show his face.

(Triumphant discovery.)

He *hasn't* a face.

That's it! That's it, my Boys!

Atheists wrong and theology wrong, Plainly and simply here's every one wrong!

And I have to tell 'em!

There's a God, *item* one, but he hasn't a face So he can't show his face.

That's the kink of it.

Naturally every one thinks he's *non est* But he's there as I know to my cost; For I'm lost But I've shown how it is all the same.

No face — what a game!

I found God in the void Unmasked and a little annoyed.

Quod erat demonstrandum X.L...."

"There's your bed," said Mr. Higgs at Sargon's elbow, shoving him slightly.

Sargon moved a little unwillingly, his puzzled eyes still on the talker.

"You'll hear enough of him before you're done, Old Chap," said Mr. Higgs. "Hop into bed now."

Impelled partly by the arm of Mr. Higgs and partly by his natural disposition to please, Sargon got into bed. Mr. Higgs assisted him in

a rough brotherly fashion. But before Sargon could pull up the clothes about him Mr. Higgs, glancing over his shoulder, became aware of something that was happening down the room — Sargon could not see what.

In an instant the genial authoritativeness of Mr. Higgs gave way to rage. “Yaaps, you dirty old devil!” said Mr. Higgs. “You’re at it again!”

He quitted Sargon and ran down the room very swiftly. Sargon sat up in bed to see what was happening. Three or four of the other patients did the same. A very dirty old man with a face of extreme misery, who was sitting in a chair, was seized upon and bumped up and down and hit several times with great vigour by Mr. Higgs. Then Mr. Higgs departed and returned, still uttering admonitions, with a pail and a rag.

For Mr. Higgs was not only an attendant on the mentally afflicted but also, on account of economy, the floor-scrubber and general cleaner of the ward. He had been trained in the navy to ideals of a speckless brightness and he scrubbed better than he attended.

“Lie down there!” cried Mr. Higgs returning up the ward with his pail. “It ain’t nothing to do with you.”

The Lord of the World lay down.

4

It was an extremely uninteresting ceiling to look at except for a streak of yellowish stains, but it was better to look at the ceiling for a time than to look too much at these distressing people around him. They were distressing and distracting, and Sargon knew that it was urgently necessary not to be distracted, but to think over his position very carefully before anything further happened to him. All this rush of consequences had been so unexpected, preposterous and violent since — a few hours ago — he had surveyed London from the dome of Saint Paul’s and decided that the moment had come to take hold of his Lordship of the World, that he perceived he might very conceivably be overwhelmed. How serene and distant now was that spectacle of London spread out under the amber sunshine between its far blue hills and its shining river, with its dense clusters of shipping

and the black ant-currents of folk below. From that he had come swiftly, inevitably, to this echoing prison. For prison he saw it was. He knew quite well that these men around him were demented men and that he had been seized upon as a lunatic, but he thought that the Workhouse Observation Ward in which he was, was a lunatic asylum already. In his wildest imaginations he had never imagined the Power over all things could treat him thus. The possibility of a brief interlude in prison, of a severe but very public and triumphant trial, had entered his mind; but not that he might be hustled away out of the possibility of any such appeal. He had to think his position out anew, to discover what all this monstrous experience was intended to show and to teach him, and what he had to do to meet this strange occasion.

And it was very difficult to do this with a raucous voice down the room uttering foul threats about the ward attendant and a great fist beating the table in sudden storms and with that smooth, fluctuating, unending recitation nearer at hand, that cosmic poem, now almost inaudible — so that one strained to catch the words — and now in high-pitched delight. For long stretches it was just incoherent jumble and Sargon would hold it almost completely out of his attention while he pursued his own perplexities, and then it would rush together into something that challenged its way to mingle with his inmost thoughts.

"Filthy old Nature, she drives us amain;
One goad is lust and the other goad pain.
And so we get back to old nowhere again.
Nowhere to start from and nowhere again.
Want and be hurt, want and be hurt,
Out of the dirt you came, back to the dirt.
Hunger for dirt and dirty regretting
Dirty our feeding and dirty begetting.
Smear yourself, paint yourself, wear a fine shirt,
Put a brave face on it, Yah! — you are dirt."

"Now is that true?" asked Sargon of himself. Is that true? Dirt? What is dirt? But no! he must not wander off after this mad raving!

What was it he had been thinking about? He had been asking why had the Power thrust him into this dreadful place? Why had the Power brought him to this place? If only the man would stop that improvisation of his for a little while it might be possible to think that out. Why had he been given over to the commands of Jordan and Higgs to five among the madmen and — sudden fantastic side question! — why had *they?*

If only that poem would cease! If only that voice would fade to silence! It was now mere rubble and rubbish, as though thought had been broken up with a pickaxe and loaded in carts and shot down a slope. Don't listen to it, Sargon! Don't listen to it! Concentrate!

In his endeavour to concentrate, Sargon forgot even Higgs. He sat up in bed and drew his knees nearly to his chin and thought.

He was Sargon; that was the great issue. He had to remain Sargon. He was probably in this place of trouble and torment because of the conflict between his being Sargon and the possibility of his relapsing into Preemby. The Power had called him to be Sargon and to serve and suffer for and at last to rule the Whole World, but manifestly it was not a simple direct call. There was something working in opposition to this destiny, an Anti-Power, opposed to the Power, which was trying to put him back to Preemby and Preembyism, to being little and insignificant, to living obscurely and to no purpose and so at last to dying and becoming utterly and finally dead. That Anti-Power it was that had been permitted to bring him here, to frighten and torment him, to din mad rhymes into his ears, to urge upon him in a monotonous persistent voice that he was dirt and that God was without a face, and a multitude of suchlike blasphemies. But they were not true. The Anti-Power might talk and talk — would God there could be a respite from his talking! — but the truth was outside this place and greater than this place and altogether comprehended it. He was one, Sargon was one, from the beginning in Sumeria, in many lands and now here, the same spirit, the ruler who serves; he was one just as London was one when it was seen from on high up above there, endlessly multitudinous yet drawn together into a single personality. And so was the whole world one. To be Preemby was to be like a wretched little back street house down below there, swallowed up in the general effect. Never more

could he be Preemby, even if he would. That was what he had to keep hold of. He could only be Sargon by denying Preemby — even though he had to face the pains of death.

Yet all the while the Anti-Power was insulting life and himself through that disordered poet and his recitation. The man had now fallen under the spell of a fascinating but detestable word, if one may call such a thing a word, "Tra-la-la."

"Tra-la-la. Tra-la-la.
That is the note of it.
Get the full gloat of it.
Tra-la-la. Tra-la-la.
All times and places
Happy derision for Gods without faces.
Tra-la-la sunshine or Tra-la-la rain.
Eat, drink, and kiss 'em and at it again.
Tra-la-la. Tra-la-la.
Kiss 'em and Kiss 'em and at it again.
At it again!
Tra-la-la."

He varied his recitation with a loud explosive noise made by his lips on the back of his hand.

"Pray don't think me cynical," he said to Sargon. "It is just pure Joy de Vive."

Sargon could not stand it any longer. This was damnable teaching to fling out before the very regenerator of mankind. He suddenly thrust out a pointing finger. "You are wrong!" he said loudly and sharply.

The poet stared for a minute and with a gesture of salutation said: "Tra-la-la-la."

"I tell you life is real," cried Sargon. "Life is immense. Life is full of meaning and order. I have come to tell you and all men so."

The poet interrupted smilingly and politely with:

"Tra-la-la,
Tra-la-la,

Life is a hiccup and life is a sneeze,
A smell from a dunghill borne on the breeze,
A thing of no moment — so do as you please!
Tra-la-la. Tra-la-la."

He was going on, but Sargon would not hear him. He lifted his voice to drown his antagonist. "I tell you, you poor soul! you are utterly wrong and blind," he said. "For the light has come to me and understanding is mine. You are not the lost thing you deem you are, or at least you need not be. No! I, too, was a lost thing such as you are, a little while ago. I, too, thought I was a grain, a fragment, a thing of no account. But the call has come to me, and I have been called to call others to take part with me in a new awakening. I have had a vision and I have seen the world like one who awakens from a long sleep. All things are joined together and work together and continue for ever."

The poet wrinkled up his nose and waved his hand at Sargon as who should wave aside some object of offence. "Tra-la-la," he shouted.

"All things I tell you are joined together and work together—"

"Tra-la-la," louder.

"I tell you," much louder.

"Shuddup there," cried the loud and wrathful voice of Sanity embodied in Mr. Higgs.

"You'll have the whole ward jabbering in a minute," said Mr. Higgs, approaching and addressing Sargon in tones of earnest expostulation. "Shud Dup."

And after a brief pause of reflection the Lord of the Whole World obeyed.

With a gesture of extreme dignity he indicated to Higgs that his crude demands were conceded.

"That's o'right," said Higgs. "*You* can hold in if you want to. So you better. *He* can't."

The poet went on in a soft insinuating undertone, reviling and mocking Sargon's faith to a refrain of: "Tra-la-la. Tra-la-la."

Sargon sat up in bed, motionless now except that his head turned slowly to look at the people about him, and silent. His recent outbreak had in some way assuaged the exasperation of that endless recitation. It continued, now crazily persuasive, now strident and vehement, now a mere babble of words, it flowed past him and over him; it was now manifestly directed at him, but he was able to disregard it. He sat up and looked at the people about him and contemplated the vast dreadful hours that plainly lay before him.

He did not look beyond the coming night. That alone he foresaw as an eternity.

He knew that this harsh, naked electric light which prized up his eyelids however tightly he closed them, would be glaring all night; he knew that because he had noted a glance that Higgs had directed at the violent man with red hair. Instantly he knew that Higgs was afraid of that red-haired man with the shining pink skin and would never dare to have the ward in darkness, never dare to have even shade in it, whatever the custom or the regulations might be. And also he understood why ever and again Higgs went out of the room at the upper end; he went out to assure himself of the presence of Iordan or some such other helper within call. Yes, this light would certainly keep on all night and the poet seemed as likely to keep on, and there would be occasional outbreaks of table hammering and shouting from the red-haired man and from another man who uttered a sudden flat shout ever and again. And there would be misadventures of various sorts; noises and comings and goings. So he might just as well sit up and think as lie down and make hopeless attempts to slumber. One could always think. Of course if one was too tired one would cease thinking onward, one would just think round and round, but it would be impossible not to go on waking and thinking. There was no sleeping in this place. Eyes, ears, nose were all too much offended. Did anyone ever sleep here, mad or sane?

There was nothing for him to do, therefore, but to sit up and think, sit up and think, doze perhaps and think into a dream, until some unexpected jolt or jar brought him back to his thinking.

The longest night must end at last.

Then suddenly Sargon, between sleeping and waking, saw something horrible. At least it struck upon his nerves as horrible.

Two beds away from him there lay an extremely emaciated young man and his head was lifted up. It was not supported by pillows; it was six inches above the pillow. It was held up in an attitude that it was painful to realize. The young man's face expressed a serenely proud satisfaction at this fantastic rigidity. It was incredible. Was there such a thing as an invisible pillow? Or was this a delusion of Sargon's eyes, a waking dream?

In the bed beyond another man was lying down with his wakeful face towards Sargon. His eyes met Sargon's. Neither man said a word nor made a gesture, but to each came infinite comfort. For the eyes each encountered were as sane as his own and each gave support to the other. It is so, they said. It is strange, but your eyes are not deceiving you. That is the form of that young man's affliction.

Sargon nodded. The other sane man nodded in reply and then turned over in his bed as a reassured child might do, to sleep. But could he sleep?

Sargon's gaze went round the ward with a new discovery. Yes, several of these others might be sane — sane as he was — and caught like himself. There was another man across the corridor with a little beard, a very, very mournful man, but he also had sane eyes.

To-morrow Sargon must go and talk to these others and tell them about himself and discuss this dreadful situation, but not now because Higgs would certainly interfere. Many things had already conspired to annoy Higgs. It was plain he could be easily irritated and it would be well not to annoy him further. For the present one must just sit and think.

What were the mad and what did madness mean?

Why had he been lifted up by the Supreme Power, out of the common acts and imaginations of his daily life, to a knowledge of his immortal being, why had he been shown his endless destinies and a vision of the whole world as his sphere, merely to be cast out of life and light and freedom forthwith into this grey underworld of the demented? It could not be that this was for nothing. It must signify.

And then the wind of a second question blew across his mind. The Power that had called him, and called him it would seem only to bring him into this place, had also brought all these others to this same dreadfulness. *Why?* For him it might be a trial but what was it

for these others, whose souls had indeed dissolved and gone? What was the Power doing with them?

The whole scheme of things in Sargon's mind began to shudder and dissolve. If the Power had not done this, then it must be the Anti-Power had done it. There must be an Anti-Power as strong almost as the Power then, able to snatch men out of life into confusion, indignity, and death for ever. Or else — *there was Nothing!*

He sat quite still with his chin on his knuckles and eyes staring blankly at the last black possibility.

Was the whole of this call and this mission of his a deception and a delusion? Had he been cheated at Tunbridge Wells when the call first came to him to arise and awake? Were those memories of Sumeria no more than dreams? Was he indeed just Albert Edward Preemby — gone crazy? In a crazy, pointless universe of commonplace inanities? If so he was indeed the most foolish of living men. He had left his comfort and securities, sound though insignificant; he had run away from his dear Christina Alberta — to obey a Power that was nothing more than his own imagination and to follow a phantom end. For days he had been shutting Christina Alberta out of his thoughts; she was a sceptic, an ally of the Anti-Power. Now she came back, over-valiant and rash, but just a girl. He had left her to shift for herself, left her beyond reach of his reproofs and cautions. What was she doing? What evil and danger might not be overtaking her even now? It had not occurred to him before that his disappearance might distress and endanger her. Now he saw plainly that it must have done so.

The enemy came and argued frankly with him. "You have been a fool, Albert Edward Preemby," said the enemy. "You have got yourself into a position of great danger and discomfort, you have deserted your own proper life for a horror of nothingness. Go back. Go back while there is still a chance of going back."

But could he go back?

Yes. That could be done. So easily! He could say plainly that now he remembered his proper name. He could ask to see the doctor or the director or whoever it was presided over Jordan and Higgs and their colleagues; he could give his name and the address of the studio and his bankers' address and the address of the laundry and so forth,

speaking very plainly and quietly, he could admit that he had behaved strangely but that the fit was over, and so he would pass out of these grim shadows back into the world. It would rejoice the heart of Christina Alberta....

He thought of that alert, kind, slightly antagonistic figure. If only he could see it now! Coming down the long ward to him, to rescue, to release....

Then he would be just Preemby again for the rest of his days, comfortably Preemby, Preemby the bystander, Preemby the onlooker, the ineffective, speechless man in the background of the noisy studio. But certain things would be at an end. He would never go to any museums again or browse in the dark shadows of bookshops over dusty forgotten books about vanished cities and enigmatical symbols. He would think no more of the wonder and mystery of Atlantis and of the measurements of the Pyramids and of all the high riddles of the past and the future. There would be no more wonder in his life at all, for he had sought to enter into wonder and had found it delusion. Those things would be old tales and fancies of things that would never arrive. Past and future would be dead for him. The days would be dull and empty as they had never been before. The bladder of his life would be pricked....

And the other way lay pain, indignity, rough treatment, vile food, filthy circumstances, trials that might break him — but with the Power still beckoning.

He thought of the things that belonged to Sargon; of the Power of cities that were like great single persons, of the Whole World, of the mystical promise of the stars, of all these things he must renounce now and be Preemby, Preemby plain and sensible, to the end of his days, if he would go out of this place. He sat as it seemed to him for an immense time, still and brooding, though his answer was already definite in his mind. And at last he spoke. “No,” he said in a hoarse voice that was almost a shout. “I am Sargon, Sargon the servant of God — and the Whole World is mine!”

6

Long after midnight Sargon was still sitting up in that bleak greasy

glare amidst the noises and disorder about him. He had lost all count of time; his watch had been taken from him. Somewhen in the small hours he was praying. And at times he wept a little.

He prayed. Sometimes he made sentences and whispered them to himself and sometimes the sentences never got to words but passed through his mind like serpents that are seen through deep, dark water. “Great is the task thou hast put upon me. I see now I am not worthy, O Master, to do the least thing that is required of me. I am not worthy. I am a petty man and a foolish man and all I have done so far is folly. But thou hast called me, knowing my folly. Forgive thou my folly and help thou my faith.” Silent and still he sat with tears upon his cheeks. “Any punishment and any trial,” he whispered at last, “only that thou shouldst not desert me and vanish out of my world.”

He prayed that the Power would yet make him the servant of the world and added falteringly and feebly, “even as it was in the ancient days.”

For had there ever been those ancient days? Sumeria was now very far away from him, and the white towns and the blue river and the river galleys had faded and the worshipping crowds were just a faint smear upon his mind no stronger than the fading memory of a dream. He said nothing for a time, and then in a very loud whisper he said: “Help thou my unbelief.”

Sometimes he prayed in a whisper and sometimes he prayed silently and sometimes he sat quite still. Higgs came and looked at him once or twice but did not interfere with him. The poem in the adjacent bed still went on, but it had now become a mere rhyming stream of blasphemous obscenities.

For a time after he had made an end to his praying, Sargon must have slept; he must have slept because he was awakened by the dawn. It did not come gradually; he awoke to it.

A cold, shadowless light filled the ward and the electric lamps that had seemed so bright were just luminous orange-yellow threads. And Higgs was standing in the doorway peering intently at the red-haired man, who was lying with his head on the table as though he were asleep — but perhaps only pretending to be asleep.

It was on the afternoon of the following day that two strangers came to see Sargon. He was taken to them and they talked a little with him, and then chiefly with each other. Higgs was off duty but Jordan hovered in the background.

Neither of these gentlemen explained their business with Sargon to him. One of them was a short man in a black coat; he wore a gold watch-chain and a rich-looking tie with a jewelled pin; he had a gold pince-nez, a little pointed nose, a fat, clean-shaven white face, and a mouth like an oblique spade-thrust in a lump of dough. He spoke with something between a sniff and a lisp, and he was evidently rather in a hurry and annoyed at having been called in to see Sargon. The other was large and grey and worn-looking; he impressed Sargon in some indefinable way as being a medical man who had private troubles. He seemed to consider himself in charge of the conversation, and would occasionally refer upon some point of fact to the hovering Jordan.

"Understand," said the pasty-faced man, "you wanted to give some sort of dinner party to all sorts of people. Eh? — at the Rubicon. I suppose it came on you sort of sudden like. Eh?"

"I wished to confer with certain people," said Sargon. "It may have been a mistake on my part."

"No doubt it was a mistake, Mr. — Mr.—"

"Won't 'ave a Mister to it," said Jordan from the background. "Calls 'isself Sargon."

The doctor became very acute in his manner. "Now isn't that some sort of historical name?" he asked with a sideways searching look.

"It is," said Sargon.

"But it isn't *your* name, you know."

"Possibly not. I mean — It is my only name."

"That's a bit of an answer, that is," said the pasty-faced man. "My *word!*"

"What is your *real* name," asked the doctor persuasively.

"Sargon."

"Not Mr. A. E. Preemby."

Sargon started and stared, possibly with a certain wildness in his eyes. "With God's help, *No!*" he said.

“Was it ever Mr. Preemby?” asked the doctor.

“That does not matter now. That is of no importance now.”

“It may be of *some* importance,” said the pasty-faced man.

“And now you’re a King or a Lord or something and you own the world?” said the doctor.

Sargon made no answer. He felt he was in a net.

The doctor turned to Jordan and beckoned him in a whisper. Only one sentence came to Sargon’s ears. “‘Iggs ‘eard it,” said Mr. Jordan.

“Aren’t you called Sargon the Magnificent?” asked the doctor.

Sargon bent his head in sorrow. “Better were it to call me Sargon the Unworthy. For in many things I have failed.”

The pasty-faced man looked at the doctor. “Haven’t we had about enough of this?”

“My conclusions are clear,” said the doctor. “In fact, I have the certificate ready.”

“If you’re satisfied, Dr. Manningtree, I am. If I’m to see those other fellers.”

“I’ve got all the papers in my room,” said the doctor.

“Right-o,” said the pasty-faced man.

“It’s very good of you to come to-day. I wouldn’t have bothered you until to-morrow but we are really getting overcrowded here. One chap’s decidedly dangerous. The attendants here don’t like the look of him. You need only just see him for a moment. Or any of them. All clear cases for summary reception orders.”

They spoke now as if Sargon were not present or as if he were an inanimate object. And indeed for them he had become so; he had passed for them already out of the comity of mankind.

“Why have you been talking to me?” asked Sargon suddenly with a vague fear of what had been said and done developing in his mind.

The doctor’s manner altered. He spoke to Sargon as one might speak to a small child. “You’ll be going back to bed now,” he said. “Jordan!”

“But I want to know.”

“Go with Mr. Jordan.”

“What are these papers you speak about?”

The doctor turned his back on Sargon without an answer and the man with the pasty face opened the door to depart. Sargon made a

step towards them, but Jordan laid hold of his arm.

And while Sargon was being steered back to bed, firmly rather than gently, in the grip of Jordan, the justice and the doctor filled in and signed the forms that were necessary to deprive him of nearly every right he possessed as a human being. For there is no trial by jury and no writ of habeas-corpus in Britain for the unfortunate charged with insanity. He may not plead in public and there is no one to whom he may appeal. He may write complaints but they will be neglected; his most urgent expostulations will be disregarded in favour of any dull attendant's asseverations. He is handed over to the nearly autocratic control of under-educated, ill-paid, ill-fed, and overworked attendants. Every night and every day seems endless to him at first, and then the nights and days fall into a sort of routine and become unimportant and pass away more and more rapidly. He is almost always kept in a state of bodily discomfort, always rather ill from the ill-prepared and sometimes tainted food, and much incommoded by clumsy drugging and particularly by the administration of violent purgatives. In croton oil alone are our asylums truly generous. He has excellent reason for fearing many of his fellow inmates and for a servile obedience to the attendants in charge of him. A medical superintendent hovers in the background: a medical staff with no special training in mental science. They pass through the wards at the appointed times, avoiding trouble, seeing as little as possible.

And, after all, what can they do? They cannot raise the expenditure upon food or increase the number or salaries of the attendants. They are appointed to save and not to spend the ratepayers' money. The attendants work together and protect each other; they must hang together; many of them go in fear of the violent cases. Occasionally, after due notice, a visiting magistrate will pay a formal visit to the asylum. Everything is put in order for the occasion. The inmate with a grievance dares not accost him or does not know how to accost him nor how to frame his complaint. The attendants are at hand to interrupt, embarrass, and explain. So, with no possibility of redress, the poor half-lunatic will be roughly handled, badly fed, and coarsely clothed, and night and day he will have no other familiar company than the insane. It is bad enough for

the sane to be afflicted by the vagaries, the violence, the exasperating mechanisms, the incoherences of the truly demented, but what must it be for those upon whom the penumbra of that same shadow has fallen? They have no privacy; no escape from those others; no peace. Our world herds these discards together out of sight, walls them up, spends so little upon them that they are neither properly fed nor properly looked after, and does its brave hopeful best to forget all about them.

And our Sargon, who even in the outer world of usage and freedom was sometimes a little at a loss, must now go on into this dark underworld. For two days more he will be kept in the Gifford Street Observation Ward awaiting the convenience of the authorities; then in the company of four other prisoners he will be sent to a still bleaker and more desolute and hopeless confinement within the clustering buildings and walls and railings of Cummerdown Hill.

So he passes now for a time out of sight of everyday mankind, and so also for a time he shall pass out of this story. It would be insufferable to tell with any fulness his daily tale of discomfort and indignity.

BOOK THE THIRD. THE RESURRECTION OF SARGON, KING OF KINGS

CHAPTER THE FIRST

CHRISTINA ALBERTA IN SEARCH OF A FATHER

1

HITHERTO Christina Alberta had faced life with a bold, disdainful, and successful gesture. The discretions and scruples of others were not for her. She had seen no reason for their prudent hesitations, their conventions and restraints. Now for the first time she knew dismay. Her Daddy had vanished into a world that she suddenly realized could be immensely cruel. Teddy was rotten, so plainly rotten that only a fool wrapped up in her own sensations would have touched him. She lay awake for most of the night after her Daddy vanished, biting her hands and damning Teddy. Lambone the great friend was lazy, incompetent, and futile. Harold and Fay seemed already a little tired of her misfortune and vaguely disposed to blame her for bringing her Daddy to London. She had no one else to whom she could turn. No one remained to her — except Christina Alberta herself, feeling a little soiled now and more than a little afraid.

"But what am I to *do?*" she asked the night, again and again, in her stuffy but artistic little bedroom.

Among the other disadvantages of her position she had less than a pound of ready money.

It has to be recorded that for two whole days Christina Alberta did not even take the obvious step of going to the police. She had a queer instincrive knowledge of the danger of bringing the police and the social system generally to bear upon her odd little Daddy. She had an innate distrust of official human beings. It was Paul Lambone who induced her to go to the police. He had the grace to be ashamed of his unhelpfulness, and after an interval of two clear days he came round to the Lonsdale Mews to offer his generous but sluggish help once more. He caught her having tea with Fay.

"Christina Alberta," he said, looking a very large comfortable figure of sorrow, "I've been worrying and worrying about you all the time. I didn't help enough. I thought he'd come back of his own

accord and that all the fuss was a little premature. Have you heard anything?"

Christina Alberta was torn between the desire to snap his head off and a realization that he was, after his fashion, quite sincerely friendly to her and could be very useful.

"*Say* it!" said Lambone. "You'll be better, my dear, after you've said it and then we can talk matters over."

He got the reassurance of a smile. He brightened visibly. He was the sort of man who would hate to feel hated even by a cockroach. "I won't sit in that chair, thanks," he said to Fay. "It's too comfortable. And at any moment we may think of something and I may have to leap up and act."

"Spartan," he said, sitting down.

"Eh?" said Fay.

"Spartan. My doctor tells me to say it before every meal and especially before tea. I don't know why. Magic or Coué or something. Are these things cocoanut cakes? I thought so.... Good they are. And what are we going to do about it, Christina Alberta?"

He became sane and helpful and more and more like the man who wrote *What to Do on a Hundred and One Occasions.* He made Christina Alberta admit to bankruptcy, and made it clear to her that it was her duty to accept a loan of twenty-five pounds from him. He then dealt with the point about reporting the disappearance to the police, and convinced Christina Alberta upon that. If Mr. Preemby had fallen into bad hands the sooner the police looked for him the better. But he did not think that likely; he was much more inclined to the idea that Preemby had made a disturbance and been taken up. He guessed he would be dealt with as a mental case. He had consulted those useful books *The Justice of the Peace* and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and displayed the excellence of his mental digestion. Christina Alberta perceived that he had in him the makings of a competent barrister.

He carried off Christina Alberta in a taxi to Scotland Yard. "Either they'll tell us there or tell us where we shall be told," he said.

Fay was impressed by the originality of that. "Now if it was a lost umbrella," she said, "I could understand it. But I'd never have thought of going to Scotland Yard for a lost father."

By six Mr. Preemby had been traced to Gifford Street. But there was no seeing him at Gifford Street. He had been certified as a lunatic and he was bound, the attendant thought but wasn't quite sure, for Cummerdown Hill. Paul Lambone tried to be dignified and important and to prevail over the attendant and extract further information, but not very successfully. In the end he and Christina Alberta departed with little more than one immense discouraging fact. They would not be able to see Mr. Preemby nor to learn anything very material about his condition until the next visiting day, whenever that might be, at Cummerdown Hill. Then if he was "fit to be visited," they might go and see him. The attendant was rigid in his statements and had the air of disliking both Lambone and Christina Alberta extremely.

As they came away from Gifford Street Christina Alberta observed that Lambone was angry. She had never seen him angry before. It was a very transitory phase. There was an unusual depth of pink in his cheeks.

"Dog in office," he said. "Just there to annoy people — anxious people. One would think... man in my position... certain standing.... Some attention.... Any other country but this, Man of letters has respect."

Christina Alberta agreed mutely.

"Manners in a public official — primary."

"He was detestable," said Christina Alberta.

"Not at the end of my resources," said Lambone.

Christina Alberta waited.

"Ought to have gone to Devizes in the first place. Knows more about mental cases and lunacy law than any other man in London. Wonderful fellow. I'll go back to my flat and I'll ring him up and make an appointment. Then he'll put us wise about the whole business. And I want you to meet him anyhow. You'll appreciate Devizes. Come to think of it, you're remarkably like him."

"How?"

"Got the Life Force and all that. And physically like him. Very. The same nose — much the same profile."

"It's a nose more suitable for a man," said Christina Alberta. "I suppose *he* carries it off all right!"

“It’s a damned good nose, Christina Alberta,” said Lambone. “It’s a valiant nose. Don’t you break down to any modesty about it. It was your nose attracted me first to you. You’ll spike a husband with it yet, and he’ll adore it and follow it even as you do. Nowadays women have to be free and individualized; they have got to have features and distinction. The days of the wanton curl and the swan neck and complexion have gone. Not that you haven’t the clearest skin I’ve ever set eyes upon, Christina Alberta.”

“Tell me some more about Dr. Devizes,” said Christina Alberta.

2

But it wasn’t the next day that Christina Alberta met Devizes. She put that off for a day and fled down to Woodford Wells in response to a remarkable communication from Mr. Sam Widgery.

The Widgerys had never been correspondents of the Preembys except in so far as the payment of the dividends upon Mr. Preemby’s interest in the Limpid Stream Laundry necessitated letters. There had been a certain amount of friction in the flotation of the company, and Mr. Widgery had remained resentful and sought to show as much by a studied curtness in his communications. But now came this letter addressed to “Miss Chrissie Preemby.”

“*My dear Chrissie*” the letter began.

“*This is a shocking business about your poor father I can’t tell you how shocked I am I went up post haste to the workhouse where you had put him as soon as they wrote to me and got his watch and cheque book. It is fortunate they found my address in his pocket or I suppose I should have been kept in the dark as per usual about all this he did not know me and denied his own name but afterwards he said he knew me for a filching commercial wrogue and would have my ears cut off and threatened me. I was to be unpailed whatever that may be. I have been thinking over all this business and since you are not yet of age I suppose I am a sort of guardian to you and have to look into your interests at the laundry which is not paying nearly so well as your father led me to believe. I think he was already queer at the time and didn’t fully understand what he was doing and I doubt if all that of his about preference shares which I never held*

with really but did to humour him ought to stand. Luckily there is no hurry about this has you won't have to pay anything for him where he is Mr. Punter says so long as you leave well alone and we can see about these other things when you have got over the first shock of your father's breakdown. My wife sends her love and kind sympathy. You must keep calm and not let these things disturb you too much because very often it is hereriterary and one cannot be too careful so leave everything to me and believe me to remain "Your affectionate cousin "Sam Widgery."

"Rather!" said Christina Alberta and telephoned forthwith to put off Paul Lambone and Wilfred Devizes and hurried off with a combatant light in her eye to the Underground and Liverpool Street Station.

3

When Christina Alberta got down to Woodford Wells it seemed to her that the laundry was just a little smaller than it used to be and that a slight tarnish had fallen upon the bright blue delivery vans. The swastika upon them had been covered over by paper bills in red lettering saying: "Under Entirely New Management. Address all Communications to the Managing Director Samuel Widgery Esq. By Order."

She went up the garden path to the door that had been home to her for nearly all her life, and it was opened to her by Sam Widgery himself, who had seen her coming. "So you came down," he said, and seemed to hesitate about admitting her. He was a tallish, stooping man with a large bare pock-marked face, a dropping nether lip, a large nose that snored occasionally when he breathed, and furtive very small brown eyes. He was clad in dark grey ill-fitting garments, with a frayed collar and a very worn made-up black satin tie. His waistcoat was mainly unbuttoned and he fidgeted with his hands. He looked at Christina Alberta as though he found her more formidable than he had thought her.

"Did you see Daddy?" said Christina Alberta, coming straight to the point.

He compressed his mouth and shook his head from side to side as

though he recalled painful things.

"Was he bad? Was he queer or — *dreadful?*"

"Not too loud, my dear," he said in his husky whispering voice. "We don't want *every one* to hear about your trouble. Come in here where we can talk properly."

He led the way into the little living-room in which her father had so recently planned the conditions for the conversion of the laundry into a limited company. The familiar furniture had been rearranged rather amazingly, and a large, dark bureau had been placed under the window. With discreet gestures, Sam Widgery closed the door and came towards her. "Sit down, Chrissie," he said, "and don't get excited. I was afraid you might come rushing down here. But of course I was bound to write to you."

"Did you see him?" she repeated.

"Mad as a hatter," he said. "They say he made a riot at the Rubicon Restaurant. Wanted to give a great banquet there to all the beggars in London."

"Did you see him? Was he well? Was he unhappy? What have they done with him?"

"You mustn't *pelt* me with questions, Chrissie. You mustn't let your mind go on at such a pace. I told you in my letter I went up and saw him. They called him out and he came to me in a little room.

"Where was it? Where was this workhouse?"

"There you go again. Just sit down and take things quietly, my girl. I can't answer all these questions at once."

"Where was it you saw him? Was it at Gifford Street?"

"Yes. Where else could it be? They was waiting to remove him."

"Where?"

"Some asylum I suppose?"

"Cummerdown Hill?"

"Come to think of it, it *was* Cummerdown Hill. Yes — they said Cummerdown Hill. He came out. He looked much as usual, bit more vacant perhaps, until he set eyes on me and then he gave a sort of start and said, 'Don't know you,' he said. Like that."

"Well, that wasn't mad. Did he *look* mad? I suppose he didn't want to talk to you — after all the disagreeable things that have been said."

"Very likely. Any'ow I said to him. 'What! don't know *me?' I* said; 'not know old Sam Widgery what you planted your laundry on?' Just like that — joking at him like. Quite kindly but — humorous. 'I don't know you,' he says and tried to go. 'Hold hard!' I said and took him by the arm. 'You're a base, complaining scoundrel,' he says to me and sort of tried to push me away. 'You'd rewin any laundry!' he says — him to me, what was in the laundry business a dozen years before he married your poor mother. 'Any'ow I 'aven't your complaint,' I says, 'Mr. Albert Edward Preemby.' He sort of stiffened. 'Sargum,' he says, 'if you please....'"

"Sargon," Christina Alberta corrected.

"Maybe. It sounded like 'Sargum.' And 'Sargum' he would have it. Mad as a hatter on that. I tried to talk but what was the good of talking? I couldn't get anything plain or straight out of him at all. Started threatening me with the bastinado — whatever that may be. I asked him to be decent with his language. ' I've 'ad enough,' I says to the attendant at last and the attendant took him away. And so we're quit of him, Chrissie."

"Quit of him!"

"Quit of him. What can anyone do?"

"Everything. Did he look very unhappy? Did he look frightened or ill-treated?"

"Why should he? They're taking proper care of him and he's out of harm's way."

"You're sure he looked — serene?"

"Bit jaded perhaps. That's his own internal workings I expect. But he's where he ought to be, Chrissie. I feel that. What we've got to do, from what Mr. Punter says, is to let well alone. There he is with everything he wants, living on the ratepayers' money. We've got ourselves to consider. We've got to think of that crazy preference-share idea he's saddled the laundry with. *That's* urgent. It's a charge of nearly five hundred a year as things are, nearly ten pound a week. There isn't a laundry in London could stand it."

"I shall have to see my Daddy," said Christina Alberta. "I don't believe he *is* so comfortable. I've heard horrid stories of asylums. Anyhow, I ought to go right away and see him."

"Can't do that, Chrissie," said Mr. Widgery, shaking his large

grey face slowly from side to side and watching her as he spoke. "They don't have visitors running in and out of these mad-houses just whenever they want to. Wouldn't *do,* you know. The poor creatures have to be kept quiet and not excited. I daresay I could give you a letter for next visiting day—"

"*You*! Give *me* a letter!"

Mr. Widgery shrugged his shoulders. "It would help you to get in. But you won't make anything of him, Chrissie, even if you see him. And you'll have to wait for a visiting day. You must do that."

"I want to see him."

"Very likely. But regulations are regulations. Meanwhile there's all this business muddle we got to put straight. While he's in that asylum I think what I ought to do is to give you 'n allowance, five pounds a week say, and keep back the rest until we're able to get something settled up. Or four. Or perhaps as you want it — not a definite sum. I don't know. I haven't thought it out yet. You can't possibly want to do with all that ten pounds a week with him off your hands. Then we'll be able to see where we stand and everything will be all right again."

He paused and scratched his cheek and watched her with his little sidelong eyes. "See?" he said as if to stimulate her to speech.

Christina Alberta looked at him in a silence that became painful. Then she stood up and regarded him — her arms akimbo and her face alight.

"I see now," she said. "You damned old Rascal!"

Mr. Widgery had nice old-fashioned ideas about young ladies and ladylike language. He was taken aback. "Now!" he said "*Now!*"

"Always I should think," said Christina Alberta.

"You mustn't say things like that, Chrissie. You mustn't use words like that. You mustn't get wrong ideas about all this. What d'you mean? Old rascal! Something old rascal! Why? I'm only doing what I got to do. You aren't really of age yet, you're just a mere child legally speaking, and it falls to *me* naturally, me, his nearest relative so to speak, to make such arrangements as have to be made about his affairs. That's all. You mustn't get wrong ideas about it all and you mustn't get excited. See?"

"I called you," said Christina Alberta, "a damned old Rascal."

He did not meet her eye. He spoke as if he appealed to the bureau.

"And does it do you any good to use such horrible expressions? And does it do me any harm? And does it alter the fact that whether I like it or not, I've got to look after his property now and see about it and see you don't get into any trouble or mischief? All me and your aunt have been thinking about is just what's right and proper to be done for you. And then you turn on me like a serpent and use language — !" Words failed Mr. Widgery, and still seeking sympathy from the bureau, he shrugged his shoulders and threw out his hands.

"You're no relation of his," said Christina Alberta. "I guessed when I read your letter that this was the sort of thing you'd be up to. You're glad to have him out of the way because he was such a one for punctual payments. You think I'm all alone; you think I'm just a girl and that you can do what you like now with me. You've made a mistake. I'll make you pay up every penny that's due on the laundry and I'll see you do it more punctually than ever. And why didn't you do something to get him out as soon as you heard they'd taken him?"

"Now don't you go getting excited, Chrissie," said Mr. Widgery. "Even if I ain't a blood relation of his, I am of yours. I'm your next-of-kin and your best friend and I got to think what's got to be done about *you.* I got to act for *you.* In spite of bad language and everything. I tell you he's right and safe where he is and I'm not going to have anything done to disturve him. Nothing at all. There he is and there he's going to stay, and I'm going to act as Mr. Punter advised me to act. I'm going to keep back his dividends as they fall due, and pay you what I think proper to pay you for your keep and so on and charge it to him, and I'm going to see you live an orderly sort of life in future now too, same as my poor cousin Christina would have wanted you to do. You've been knocking about the world in a perfectly scandalous way and learning to curse and swear. It can't go on. That's how things are, Chrissie, and the sooner you see them the right way round the better."

The young woman stood speechless while Mr. Widgery unfolded his intentions.

"Where's Mrs. Widgery?" she said at last with an effort of stupendous self-control.

“Up in the laundry seeing to things. No need to bother her. We been talking about all this, over and over, and we’re quite of one mind in the matter. It’s *our* right to look after you and it’s *our* responsibility to look after you, and we mean to do our duty by you, Chrissie, whether you like it or not.”

Unpleasant doubts assailed Christina Alberta. She was still two months short of one and twenty, and it was quite conceivable that the law gave this ugly, oily creature all sorts of preposterous powers of interference with her. Still it was her style to carry off things with a brave face.

“All this is just nonsense,” she said. “I’m not going to have my Daddy put away like this without a word from me, and I’m not going to let you muddle about with his property. Everybody in the family knows you’re a crooked muddler. Mother used to say so. I’m going to see about him myself, and I’m going to have him sent off to some special sort of mental nursing place where he can have proper attention. And that’s what I came to tell you.”

Mr. Widgery’s little eyes seemed to weigh and judge her. “You’re giving yourself high and mighty airs, Chrissie,” he said, after a little pause. “You’ll do this and you’ll do that. You’ve got a sort of wrong idea of what you can do in the world. You haven’t got any money and you haven’t got any authority, and the sooner you get that into your head the better.”

That scared feeling was gaining upon Christina Alberta. In order to counteract it she deliberately lost her temper.

“I’ll jolly soon show you what I can do and what you can’t,” she said with a flaming face.

“Now don’t *yew* go getting excited,” said Mr. Widgery. “You of all people shouldn’t get excited.”

“*Excited!*” said Christina Alberta, rallying for a repartee, and then struck by an ugly thought she stopped short and stared at the little bright brown eyes in the pock-marked face. Mutely they answered her mute amazed question. This was the third or fourth time he had used the word “excited” and now she knew what he was aiming at. Suddenly she realized the train of ideas that her Daddy’s extinction had set going in his head. He also had been studying the lunacy laws — and dreaming dreams.

“Exactly,” said Mr. Widgery. “You’ve always been a queerish sort of girl, Chrissie, and the rackety life you lead and now this affair has been a strain on you. Must have been. You’ve got no quiet friends but your aunt and me and no quiet place to come to but here. Don’t you go flaring out at me, Chrissie; I mean well by you. I’m not going to go paying you money to keep you up there in London. Why! — you might go getting drugs or anything. Call me a something rascal if you like. Swear at me as though you were out of your senses; it won’t alter what I mean to do. I want you to come down here and rest your mind and nerves for a time, and let me get in someone to see you — see what ought to be done about you.... You’ll thank me for it some day.”

His big grey face seemed to expand and swim about before her eyes and the room grew small and dark.

“It’s my duty to see after you,” he said. “It can’t hurt you or anyone for us to have advice.”

In the train from Liverpool Street she had told herself she had intended to wipe the floor with Mr. Sam Widgery, but things hardly seemed to be happening like that.

“Bah!” she cried. “D’you think I’d come back here?”

“Better than being lost in London, Chrissie,” he said. “Better than being lost in London. We can’t have you wandering off in London, same as your father did.”

She felt that the time had come for her to go, but for a second or so she could not move to do so. She could not move because she feared he might do something to detain her, and if he did she did not know what she would do. Then she pulled herself up by the feet.

“Well,” she said with a step past him doorward that turned him on his heel; “I’ve told you what I think of you. I’d better be getting back to London.”

In his eyes she saw the thought of obstructing her flash into being and die. “Won’t you stay and have something,” he said, “before you go back?”

“Eat *here!*” she cried and got to the door.

Her hand trembled so that it was difficult to turn the handle. He stood motionless staring at her with his lower lip dropping and an expression of doubt upon his face. It was as if he was not quite sure

of himself nor of the course he meant to pursue. The course he wanted to pursue was appallingly plain.

4

She walked with dignity out of the open front door and down the garden path. She did not look back, but she knew his face came up close to the window and watched her. Never in her whole life had panic come so near to her. She would have liked to run.

After the train had started she felt a little safer. “How the devil can he get at me?” she said aloud to the empty compartment.

But she wasn’t at all sure that she couldn’t be got at, and she found herself trying to estimate just how much support and friendship she might find in her London friends. Could she, for instance, count upon Mr. Paul Lambone? If supplies were cut off could she get some sort of job and keep herself for a time until she could extract her silly Daddy from the net into which he had fallen? How would Harold and Fay, perennially hard-up, behave if supplies ran out? And meanwhile there was Daddy, wondering why no help came to him — puzzled by what had happened to him and no doubt getting sillier and sillier.

Christina Alberta was growing up fast now. Beneath all her radicalism and rebellion there had always hitherto been a belief, tacit, subconscious, in the rightness and security and sustaining energy of the social framework. There is under most youthful rebellion. She had assumed without thinking very much about it that hospitals were places of comfort and luxury, doctors in full possession and use of all existing science, prisons clean and exemplary places, that though laws might still be unjust that the administration of the law was untouched by knavery or weakness. She had had the same confidence in the ultimate integrity of social life that a little child has in the invincible safeness of nursery and home. But now she was awakening to the fact that the whole world was insecure. It was not that it was a wicked or malignant world, but that it was an inattentive and casual world. It dreaded bothers. It would do the meanest, most dangerous, and cruellest things to escape the pressure of bothers, and it would refuse to be bothered by any sufferings or evil it could

possibly contrive to ignore. It was a dangerous world, a world of bothered people in which one might be lost and forgotten while one was still alive and suffering. It was a world in which it is not good to be alone, and she was beginning to feel herself very dangerously alone.

She had never, she reflected, thought very much of her family, but now she perceived a family may dissolve away too soon. She wanted a wall to put her back against if after all Sam Widgery screwed up his courage to be aggressive; she wanted some one who would be her very own, a safe ally, some one she could count upon, some one closer than law or custom, some ‘ one who would go about and find out exactly what had happened to her if she fell into disaster, who would refuse to accept her downfall, someone who would care for her more than he cared for himself and not be lightly turned away.

Himself? Not *herself.* In fact, a lover.

“Damn Teddy!” cried Christina Alberta, and knocked a puff of dust out of the railway cushion with her fist. “He messes it up.

“And I knew what he was. I knew all the time exactly what he was!

“I’ve got to stick it alone,” said Christina Alberta.

“And besides who’d have cared for me, anyhow, with a nose like mine?

“Even if there were such things in the world as lovers who loved like that! But it’s a world of people who don’t care. It’s a world of people who haven’t the guts to care. It’s a dust-heap of a world,” said Christina Alberta.

5

Her thoughts began to flow into a new region. After all, wasn’t there something too disagreeably justifiable in the suggestion that she was — how to put it — *queer.* Hitherto Christina Alberta had always regarded herself as a model of sanity and mental directness — with no fault indeed except possibly her nose. Now the word “queer” stuck in her mind like a thorn that has gone right home. She could not get it out again.

She had always, she knew, been different. She had always had a

style of her own.

Most of the people she had met in the world had impressed her as being colourless, weak in speech and action, evasive — that was the word, "evasive." They evaded the use of all sorts of blunt words, they didn't know why. Christina Alberta was all for saying "Damn" and "guts" and so forth until some one convinced her of some better reason for avoiding them than merely that they weren't used by "nice" people. These others were always not saying things because they weren't said and not doing things because they weren't done. And for what was said and what was done, however manifestly preposterous it was, they had a sort of terrified imitativeness. They just ran about being as far as possible somebody else until they died. Why exist at all then? Why not get out of it and leave some one else in possession? But, anyhow, they got through life. They didn't get into trouble. They supported one another. And, on the other hand, if you didn't evade? You puzzled other people. You left the track. You were like a train leaving the rails and trying to take a cross-country short-cut. You hit against — everything.

Was this evasive life she had always despised really the sane life? Was ceasing to evade ceasing to be sane? Sheep, she had read, had a disease called gid; then they wandered alone and died. Was all this originality and thinking for oneself and not going with the crowd and so forth, that had been her pride and glory, just the way out from the sane life? Originality, eccentricity, queerness, craziness, madness; was that merely a quantitative scale?

Was not her Daddy's queerness this, that after years of the extremest evasion he had at last tried to break away to something real and strange? And had she, after her fashion, been attempting anything else? Was she, too, lop-sided? Lop-sided in a different direction perhaps, but lop-sided none the less. An inherited lop-sidedness?

Her mind went off at a tangent on the question whether she had really inherited anything whatever from her Daddy. Was his queerness her sort of queerness at all? It ought to be, seeing that they were father and daughter.

How different they were! For a father and daughter how amazingly different they were!...

But were they father and daughter? A much repressed fantasy came back to her — a fantasy based on the flimsiest foundations, on chance phrases her mother had used, on moments of intuition. Once or twice a reverie had arisen out of these lurking particles of memory and had taken her by surprise only to be thrust aside again with contempt.

Blup. Blup. Blup. There came a familiar variation to the familiar sounds of the train. Christina Alberta was running into Liverpool Street Station and her perplexities were all unsolved.

The old fantasy lost heart and faded away. What was the good of such dreams? There she was.

6

Christina Alberta's meeting next day with Wilfred Devizes turned out to be a much more exciting affair than she or he had expected it to be.

Acting on the advice of Paul Lambone, she had brought photographs and a letter or so in her Daddy's handwriting with her, and she had thought out what she judged would be significant things to tell about him. She went in a taxi with Paul Lambone to Devizes' house just off Cavendish Square, and they were shown up at once past a waiting-room and a consulting-room to a dignified little sitting-room with an open fire and a table with tea things and a great array of bookcases. Devizes came in to them forthwith.

She was a little shocked to think that this lank, dark, shock-headed man could be recognizably like her. He was younger than she had expected him to be, younger she thought, than her Daddy or Mr. Lambone, and he wore a long unbuttoned morning coat. He carried the nose all right; he was indeed very good-looking.

"Hullo, Paul," he said cheerfully. "Is this the young lady whose father's been stolen? We'll have some tea. It's Miss — ?"

"Miss Preemby," said Paul Lambone, "but every one calls her Christina Alberta."

Devizes turned an eye that was by habit and disposition a scrutinizing eye upon her. He betrayed a faint momentary surprise

and came and shook hands. “Tell me all about it,” he said. “You don’t think he’s really mad, but only rather exceptional and odd. That’s it, isn’t it? Lambone tells me he is sane. It’s quite possible. I’d better go over the state of his mind first, and then we can discuss the question of the asylum afterwards. I gather you want to get him under your own care — outside. That isn’t by any means simple. We’ll have to study the obstacles. Meanwhile tea.

... I’ve been disentangling the delusions of a perfectly terrible old lady, and I’m rather deflated. Just tell me all about it in your own way.”

“Tell him,” said Paul, settling his shoulders into his arm-chair, and preparing to interrupt.

Christina Alberta began to unfold her premeditated discourse. Every now and then Devizes would interrupt her with a question. He kept his eyes on her, and it seemed to her even from the beginning that they betrayed something more than attention to what she was saying. He looked at her as though he had seen her before and couldn’t quite remember where. She described her Daddy’s talks to her when she was a girl, about the Pyramids and the Lost Atlantis and so forth, and the odd spirit of release and renewed growth that had followed the death of her mother. She told of the spiritualistic séance and the coming of Sargon. Devizes was very keen on various aspects of the Sargon story. “It was odd that the suggestion fell in so aptly with Preemby’s mental disposition. What was that young man up to? I don’t quite understand him.”

“I don’t know. I think he just hit by chance on the stuff he talked. It was just bad luck that it fitted.”

“Undergraduate idea of fun?”

“Undergraduate fun. It might have been Tut-ankh-amen.”

“But it happened to be Sargon.”

“He may have been reading some ancient history.”

“He didn’t, I suppose, know anything about your father?”

“Couldn’t have done. I suppose he thought my — my Daddy looked a little small and absurd, and I suppose it appealed to his sense of humour to single him out from the others and make him a great king. I’d like to have a few minutes’ straight talk with that young man.”

“This you see isn’t a delusion, Devizes. It’s a deception,” said Paul Lambone.

“Is he generally coherent?” asked Devizes.

“Granted his thesis, he’s amazingly coherent,” she said.

“He doesn’t sometimes become some one else, God or a millionaire, or anything of that sort?”

“No. He believes in reincarnation and hints at having lived other lives, but that’s all.”

“Thousands of people do that,” said Lambone.

“And nobody is persecuting him? Nobody makes noises to trouble him or gets at him with X-rays or anything of that sort?”

“Not a shadow of that sort of thing.”

“The man’s sane. Unless he went mad when he walked out of your friends’ studio.”

“I’m for his sanity right out,” said Lambone. “I wish I’d had a chance to talk to him. There’s something — everybody’s chattering now about an Inferiority Complex. Well, isn’t it common for people who have been rather put upon and deceived and so forth, and who don’t want to face the facts of life, to take refuge in an assumed personality? And putting the reveries, the spiritualist seance and so forth all together, doesn’t it work out on those lines?”

“He knows he is really, *au fond,* Preemby?” Devizes asked.

“It annoyed him to tell him so,” said Christina Alberta. “I think one reason why he went away was because I and my friend, Mrs. Crumb that is, at the studio where we live, would try to make him be sensible about that. It drove him away. He knows he is really Preemby and he hates it. He knows this is all a make-believe.”

Paul Lambone took up the discourse. “I do so sympathize with that. So far from that being insane it’s perfectly rational. Becoming somebody else greater than oneself is part of half the religions of the world. All the Mithraists used to become Mithra. The Serapists, if I remember rightly, used to become Osiris. We all want to be born again really. Every one with any sense and humility does. Into something greater. ‘Who will deliver me from the body of this death?’ That’s why Christina Alberta’s Daddy is so tremendously interesting. He’s got imagination; he’s got originality. He may be a feeble little chap, but he has that.”

“Having an exceptional mind isn’t insanity,” said Devizes, “or else we should put all our poets and artists in asylums.”

“Few would come up to that standard,” said Lambone. “I wish they did.”

Devizes reflected. “I think I’ve got things clear. He’s coherent. He’s neat in his dress. He isn’t persecuted. He’s unselfish in his thoughts, almost romantically so. And he’s not fattish and lumpish, and he’s never had any sort of fit. There’s no insane type a properly qualified doctor could class him under, but then most doctors are altogether unqualified for mental practice. A stupid doctor might mistake his imaginations for the splendour of paranoia or take his abstraction in reverie for *dementia praecox* or think he was a masked epileptic. But all these are cases of mental disease, and your father is probably not diseased at all. He’s mentally disturbed, but that’s all. The difference between him and a real lunatic is the difference between a basketful of fruit that’s been overturned, and a basketful that’s gone rotten. Overturned fruit gets bruised and rots very easily — but being overturned isn’t being rotten. What sort of man is he to look at?”

“She’s got photographs,” said Lambone.

“I’d like to see them,” he said, and was given a recent one of Mr. Preemby as laundryman. “Too much moustache by a long way,” he said. “Is there anything — with some at least of his face uncovered? There’s nothing here but his eyes.”

“I thought you’d feel that,” said Lambone. “There’s one of Mr. Preemby as a young man, taken soon after his wedding with Mrs. Preemby. Have you got it, Christina Alberta?... Here we are.... That’s Mrs. Preemby in the chair. The moustache — in bulk — has yet to come.”

“He married young?” Devizes asked Christina Alberta.

“He must have done,” she said. “I don’t know his exact age. My mother never told me.”

Devizes scrutinized the photograph. “Queer,” he said, and seemed to be searching his memory. “Something familiar. I’ve met people like this.”

“They were both London people, I suppose,” he said, looking hard at Christina Alberta.

“Woodford Wells,” said Christina Alberta.

“My father was born at Sheringham,” she added as an afterthought.

“Sheringham. That’s queer.” With a manifestly deepened interest he looked at the couple posed against one of those rustic backgrounds dear to Victorian photographers. “Chrissy,” he repeated to himself. “Chrissy. Christina Alberta. It *can’t* be.”

For some moments Dr. Devizes ceased to attend to his consultants and they remained intently observing him. He tried to fix his attention on the young man’s face in the picture, but it was the young woman who sat on the rustic stile that absorbed his interest. Amazing how completely he had forgotten her face, and how she came back now incredibly unlike and yet like his memory of her. He remembered the glasses and the neck and shoulders. And a sort of stiff defiance. “When were your mother and father married?” he asked. “How long ago?”

“Eighteen ninety-nine,” she answered.

“And then you were born straight away?” He asked the question with an affectation of ease.

“There was a decent interval,” said Christina Alberta with a clumsy levity. “I was born in nineteen hundred.”

“A little, fair, blue-eyed chap with rather an absent-minded manner. I seem to see him,” Devizes said, and resumed his examination of the photograph. Nobody spoke for the better part of a minute. “Good Lord!” whispered Lambone to himself. Devizes drank a cup of tea absent-mindedly. “Extraordinary,” he ejaculated. “I never dreamt of it.”

“What is?”

His answer went off at a tangent. “Christina Alberta’s resemblance to my mother. It’s amazing. It’s been worrying me ever since I came into the room. It’s been distracting my attention. I’ve got a little picture....”

He jumped up and went out of the room. Christina Alberta, puzzled, excited, turned instantly on Lambone. “He knew my father and mother,” she said.

“Apparently,” said Lambone with something defensive in his voice.

"*Apparently!*" she echoed. "But — he *knew* them! He *knew* them well. And — . *What's he thinking of?*"

Devizes reappeared holding out a small gold-framed picture. "Look at that!" he said and handed it to Paul Lambone. "It might be Christina Alberta. Don't you see how like it is? Allowing for that preposterous hair piled upon her head and the way her dress does up round her neck."

He handed the picture to Christina Alberta and looked at Lambone in amazed interrogation.

"It might be me in fancy dress," Christina Alberta agreed, with the picture in her hands. There came a long pause. She looked up and saw the expression of his face. Her mind gave a fantastic leap, so fantastic that it instantly leapt back to the point of departure. It was like a flash of lightning in a night as dark as pitch. She made a great effort to pull the conversation together, to behave as though her mind had never leapt at all. "But what has all this to do with my Daddy's case?" she asked.

Nothing directly. Your resemblance to my mother is a pure coincidence. Pure. But it's a curious coincidence! Just for the moment it pulled my attention aside. Forgive me. I've a belief that where there's a resemblance of this sort there's a blood relationship. I suppose your mother's people — what did you say they were called — Hoskin?"

"Did I say? I don't remember. I *didn't* say. I didn't. Her name was Hossett."

"Ah, yes! — Hossett. I suppose that two or three generations back the Hossetts and Devizes intermarried. And there we are! Cousins — at we don't know what remove. But types go under in a family and then bob up again. It sort of links us, Christina Alberta, doesn't it? It gives me a special interest. I don't feel now that you're just any old patient. Or, rather, just Paul's friend. I feel linked. Well — That's that. Let's come back to your father. Who married your mother just when they were starting the old South African war. He's always been a dreamy unobservant type. As we were saying. Even from the beginning...."

He stopped short.

"Always," said Christina Alberta, after a long pause.

“We’ve been into all that,” said Devizes and paused, and was for a minute entirely at a loss for words. “Yes,” he said at last.

Her heart was beating fast and there was a flush of excitement on her cheeks. Her quick wits had filled in all the gaps. She understood now — and then again it vanished. She would have liked to have gone away and thought it all over at once. But that wouldn’t do. She must disregard the questions that surged up within her. Her mind went forward like an obstinate traveller caught in a whirlwind. Her mother for example. She was trying to recall something about her mother that had long been stifled in her mind. “Went away and left me to it,” was it? “Went off and left me to it?” Her mother lying in bed and wandering. Who had left her to what? That standing perplexity. That suspicion. That dream. But attend to him now, Christina Alberta; attend to him! She was observing him with all her being, and yet she seemed deaf to what he said.

He was saying that now that he agreed with them that Preemby was sane, he could see his way to the real business before them. It was the old, old story of making lunatics out of sane people which they encountered in Preemby’s case. It was the old, old story of making lunatics out of sane people which they encountered in Preemby’s case. (He repeated his sentence word for word without apparently realizing he had said it twice.) All exceptional people were in danger of being misunderstood, but such a type as Preemby, original and yet incapable of abstract expression or philosophical method, which sought fantastic expression for its feelings and impulses, was particularly liable to give offence, awaken suspicion and dread and hostility. It was just these borderland cases he was always trying to save from asylums, and just such cases that were always going there. And they were the last people to bring into contact with real insanity. “To go back to my metaphor, the basketful of fruit isn’t rotten, is scarcely speckled with decay, but it is disordered and overturned. A mind is a delicate thing to knock about. It will rot very easily, and a mind like your father’s particularly will rot very easily under asylum conditions. After all this rigmarole I come to just the conclusion you’ve already reached, that we have to get Preemby out of Cummerdown Hill and away under restful conditions as soon as possible. When we’ll comb out his particular

complex and get him into working relations with the world again. I'm quite sure we can do that somehow, make his incognito permanent, make him an Emperor in exile, restore his proper name, organize a common daily round for him and get him back more and more to be a chastened and released Preemby."

He paused.

"That's it," said Lambone, roused from a profound contemplation of the two interesting faces before him.

"It isn't easy. Even to get at him isn't easy. There will be delays. A careless magistrate and a silly doctor can make a lunatic in five minutes. It takes no end of time to unmake one."

"That's what I want to set about doing," said Christina Alberta.

"Naturally," said Devizes, "and I'm with you."

He explained one or two points in lunacy law, began sketching a scheme of operations, considered the people to whom she ought to write and the people to whom he ought to write, and how soon it would be possible to see Preemby, and give him a word of encouragement. Already Devizes had had several brushes with lunacy organization; he was considered a troublesome but dangerous man for a medical superintendent to be up against. That might arouse either hostile obstruction or the propitiatory spirit. They must go carefully.

Lambone scarcely interrupted now at all. He had ceased to be acutely interested in Preemby, immured away there in Cummerdown. He was lost in admiration of the self-control his astonishing friends displayed. He tried to imagine what an undertow of strange excitement, of queer thoughts and confused emotions, there must be beneath their highly intelligent discussion of the case of Mr. Preemby. They wasted very little attention upon the onlooker. Christina Alberta's face was faintly flushed and her eyes glowed; Devizes was rather less of a conversationalist than usual and rather more like a university tutor with an exceptionally interesting student..

The subject was exhausted at last and the time came to depart. Devizes came to the door with them.

"Don't forget that I'm always round the corner, so-to-speak," he said. "I'm in the telephone directory. And don't forget, Christina

Alberta, don't forget I'm your long-lost cousin, very much at your service."

"I won't forget that," said Christina Alberta, meeting his eye.

A little pause, and then rather stiffly they shook hands.

7

"Am I mad?" said Christina Alberta as soon as she and Paul Lambone were in the street together. "Am I dreaming?"

Lambone was clumsy. "Mad 'Dreaming? How?"

"Oh! don't pretend not to understand. That he's my real father? Don't pretend! oh please don't pretend! Is he or is he not?"

Lambone did not reply for a moment. "You flash at things — like a lizard. How could it have happened?"

"Then you *did* think?"

"My dear Christina Alberta, he didn't know you existed until he set eyes on you. I'm sure of that."

"But then. Wasn't it plain? He *knew them both!*"

"Devizes," said Lambone, "is ten years younger than I am. He's barely forty. He must have been — not more than eighteen. Nineteen at most. It's a little difficult."

"That makes it easier. You never knew mother. If they were both young—"

"It's just possible," said Lambone, "there is some other explanation."

"But what?"

"Can't imagine. I suppose he was at Sheringham — perhaps for a holiday — and met her. But—"

"It must have been something casual, a kind of accident. Mother used to have flashes.... I never quite understood her. She used to suppress me, and perhaps she was suppressing herself.... And at the end — she said something. Someone had left her to it.... Do you know — at times — I've had fancies — suspicions! It seemed as though she guessed that I was guessing. Now I know — I *was.* It's incredible. And yet it explains a hundred things."

"He certainly never knew of you. He's — amazed."

"And what's going to happen next?"

“Legally you’re Preemby’s daughter. Nothing can alter that. All the resemblances and coincidences in the world won’t alter that.”

“And all the law in the world won’t alter the facts. And—”

She turned on Lambone with a flushed face. “Do you realize what it means to think you are the daughter of a certified lunatic? And then find you are not? All last night I was awake with that unendurable thought.”

“All night — at your age!”

“It seemed all night. Last night — I *tried* to imagine that something of this sort had happened. Tried — and couldn’t. Tried to bring back all those old fancies. And here it is! I might have known. I did know and wouldn’t know.”

“Tell me about this real father of mine. I don’t know a thing about him. Is he a good man? Is he a bad man? Has he a wife?”

“He adored his wife. And so did I. She was one of the loveliest and cleverest young women I’ve ever known. She was strong and jolly — and the beastly influenza and pneumonia got her. In a week. It cut him to ribbons. They’d had no children. They’d had only four years together. He’s attractive to women, but I don’t think there’ll be a second Mrs. Devizes for a long time. I can’t imagine it. Any other woman! Why! All that house — it’s full of her presence.”

“Yes,” said Christina Alberta, and thought for a time.

They were detached for a time in crossing Bond Street, and the pavement was too crowded and Piccadilly was too congested for them to talk again until they were in St. James’ Street.

“Daddy,” said Christina Alberta, “seems ten thousand miles away. But when I’m over the amazement of this I expect I’ll get back to him all right. But just for a time — he must wait.”

“You’ll come in for a bit?” said Lambone at the corner of Half Moon Street. “I could give you some dinner.”

“No, thanks. I’ll walk all the way to Chelsea,” said Christina Alberta. “I want to think this out by myself. I want to get alone with this spinning head of mine and try to slow it down. My life’s gone topsy-turvy. Or it’s been topsy-turvy and it’s suddenly come right side up. I don’t know which. Oh! — I don’t know anything. I’ve got to begin all over again.”

She shook hands and paused. Lambone waited, for manifestly she

had something to say. She got it out at last.

"Do you think — he liked me?"

"He liked you all right, Christina Alberta. Don't you worry about that."

8

It Was a little more than two days before Christina Alberta, to use her own expression, "got back" to her lost Daddy.

Those two days were full of an immense excitement. Devizes was the most wonderful fact in the world. She exploded into love for him. She had the most vivid impression of him, dark and tall, rather grave, watchful and amazingly understandable. Yet vivid as her impression was she doubted every detail of it, and wanted to go back to him and verify it all over again. It was their quality of mutual understanding that was at once the most delightful and the most incredible aspect of the whole affair. Their brains no doubt were unlike, as every two individual brains must be, yet their unlikeness was not a mere accumulation of accidental differences, but the unlikeness of two variations of one theme. She could feel his intentions beneath his words. Her mind had jumped with his realizations and there must be kinks and turns in her brain, kinks and turns that just made her difficult and queer for most people, which would find the completest parallels in his. She didn't believe there was a thing in her thoughts and acts that she would be surprised at his knowing and comprehending.

She had never before thought of parentage with any enthusiasm. She had viewed it rather in the spirit of Samuel Butler and Bernard Shaw, and conceived of parents generally in relation to their children as embarrassed hypocrites with an instinctive disposition towards restraint and suppression. She had made an exception of her own particular pair; Daddy had been a great friend anyhow, though mother for the most part had been a concentrated incarnate "Don't." But she had never realized there might be something rather intimately interesting in consanguinity. And then suddenly a door had opened, a man had come in and sat down and talked to her and discovered himself the nearest thing in life to her. And she to him.

She wanted to go to him again; she wanted to see more of him, be with him. But he made no sign and she could think of no decent excuse for a call upon him. The very intensity of her desire made her unable to go to him easily. She wrote the various letters they had agreed she should write, and then decided to master mental science and lunacy generally. That and the case of her "Daddy" she perceived to be her formal link with Devizes.

She set out for the Reading Room of the British Museum, for which she had a students' ticket, and she tried to concentrate her mind upon the book she had requisitioned, instead of letting it wander off into the strangest reveries about this miraculously discovered blood relation. In the afternoon she rang up Lambone to be given tea, with the intention of learning everything that the wise man could tell her about Devizes and generally turning him over conversationally. But Lambone was out. The next day the craving for Devizes was overpowering. She rang him up. "May I have some tea?" she asked. "I've got nothing much to say, but I want to see you."

"Delighted," said Devizes.

When she got to him she found herself shy, and him as shy as herself. For a little while they made polite conversation; it might almost have been the conversation of two people at a formal call in a country town. He called her "Christina Alberta," but she called him "Doctor Devizes," and he asked her if she played or danced, and whether she had ever been abroad. She sat in an arm-chair and he stood over her on the hearthrug. It was clear that the only way to intimacy lay in a frank treatment of her Daddy. She felt that if this sort of talk went on for another minute she would have to scream or throw her tea-cup in the fire. So she plunged.

"When did you first know my mother?"

Devizes' attitude stiffened, and he smiled faintly at her boldness. "I was a Cambridge undergraduate reading for the Natural Science Tripos, and I went down to Sheringham to read. We — we picked each other up on the beach. We made love — in a scared, furtive, desperate, ignorant sort of a way. People were primitive in those days — compared with what they are now."

"Daddy wasn't there."

“He came in afterwards.”

Devizes considered for a moment. He decided that it wasn’t fair to oblige her to go on questioning him. “My father,” he said, “was a pretty considerable old bully. He was Sir George Devizes, the man who invented the Devizes biscuit and cured old Alphonso, and he was celebrated for being rude to his patients. He would smack their stomachs and tell them they ought to be scooped out. He helped make Unter Magenbad. He suspected me of being a bit of a soft, though as a matter of fact I wasn’t, and he generally had the effect of laying up for a quarrel with me. He kept me pretty short. He wasn’t particularly nice to my mother. He used to get at my mother through me. I didn’t dare to have a scrape of any sort. I was really afraid of him. If I saw a scrape blowing up my habit and disposition was to run away.”

“I see.”

Devizes considered the implications of that “I see.”

“Not that I ran away from any definite scrape that I knew of at Sheringham,” he said very carefully.

“What was my mother like in those days?”

“A sort of subdued fierceness. A flushed warm face. She was pretty, you know, and very upright in her carriage. And she had a swift decision beneath her stiffness. Her wishes would suddenly crystallize out, and after that there was no bending her.”

“I know.”

“I suppose you do.”

“She wore glasses then?”

“Oh yes.”

“Was she fresh then? Was she happy?”

“A little too fierce to be happy.”

“Did you — ever — love her?”

“It is a long time ago, Christina Alberta. There was — seaside love-making. Why do you cross-examine me like this?”

“I want to know. Why” — Christina Alberta had a momentary terror at her own boldness—” Why didn’t you marry her?”

Devizes made no pretence of surprise at the question. “There was no reason manifest why I should have married her. None at all. I can’t conceive what my father would have done if I had come back

from Sheringham engaged to a chance acquaintance. And anyhow, why should I have done anything of the sort?"

His eyes defied hers. "I left her my address," he added. "She could have written to me. She never did."

"Did a letter go astray?" said Christina Alberta, and added hastily, "my imagination is running away with me."

She hesitated and trembled at the next words she had resolved to say, but she said them, with a forced offhandedness. "You see — I might have fancied you as a father?"

It produced no catastrophe. He looked her in the face and then smiled. After that smile she felt that they understood each other completely, and it was very pleasant to think that. "Instead of which, you have to adopt me as a cousin," he said deliberately. "Cousins it is, Christina Alberta. It's the best we can do. We have to put our heads together and think of your Daddy. He's our common concern. I'm interested in that little man. He's defended himself against many things by those dreams of his. Very wilful dreams they may have been. Who knows? Necessary protective dreams."

Christina Alberta did not speak for a little time. She nodded. She was glad at their manifest understanding and yet she was disappointed, though she could not have told herself what else she had expected. This man a yard away was the nearest thing in the world to her, and always there might be this invincible barrier between them. They were linked by an invisible tie and they were separated by an unfathomable necessity. Never before in her life had she known what love could be; she wanted to be free to love him; she wanted him to love her.

She realized that she was standing quite still, and that Devizes was standing just as still upon his hearthrug, watching her face. His mouth and eyes were quiet and serene, but she imagined he must be gripping his hands together behind him. She had to obey him. There was nothing for her to do but follow his lead.

"Daddy's our common concern," she said. "I suppose I shall begin to hear from some of those people to-morrow."

Christina Alberta got back to her Daddy in a dream.

It was a queer dream. She was going about the world with Devizes and they were locked together in such a way that she and he could never look at each other, but were always side by side. But also with the sublime incoherence of dreams they were at the same time great ebony images, and they sat stiffly side by side like a Pharaoh and his consort, and they looked over a great space; they were very big effigies indeed and their profiles were alike. All through the dream she thought of Devizes and herself as black. The space before them was sometimes a sandy desert and sometimes a grey cloudy expanse. Then suddenly something round and white came bounding into the midst of this arena and became a little man, a familiar little blueeyed man, tied up into a ball with ropes and sorely maimed, who rolled about and panted and struggled to be free. Oh! but he struggled pitifully. Christina Alberta's heart went out to him, and yet impelled by some tremendous force within her she rose and Devizes rose beside her and they marched stiffly forward. She could not help herself, she could not control the rigid movements of her hands and feet. They stepped high and forcibly. She was voiceless, she tried to cry out, "We shall trample upon him! We shall trample upon him!" but there was no more than a hoarse inarticulate sound of horror in her throat....

They were upon him. She felt the body of her Daddy writhe under her. He was like a bladder. His soft, ineffectual body, with her feet upon him, bent and bulged about. She forgot there was anything else but her Daddy and herself. Why had she treated him like this? Devizes disappeared. Her Daddy was clinging to her knees and now a crowd of vile figures had appeared and sought to drag him away. "Save me, Christina Alberta," he was pleading, though she heard no sounds. "Save me. Save me! Every day they torture me." But they dragged him away and she could not put out her arms to him. Because she was made of ebony and all of one piece with Devizes.

Then some one, a bird or a Sphinx with the face and voice of Lambone came into the dream. "Listen to your Daddy," he said. "Do not despise him or simply pity him. He has much to teach you. The world will never learn anything until it will learn from ridiculous people. All people are ridiculous. I am. I am ridiculous. We learn in

suffering what we teach in song." She saw that her Daddy was now sheltering between the paws of the Sphinx, and that the evil men had vanished.

She became intensely aware of a revealing absurdity in her dream. No previous incompatibility had shocked her at all, and she had never thought that she was dreaming up to this point. But now she became intensely oppressed by the idea that the Sphinx was an ancient Egyptian and classical figure, and that Sargon was a still more ancient Sumerian. The dream was going wrong. The periods, the cultures, were mixed. She conveyed this to Sphinx-Lambone, and he turned his head to answer her, and immediately the evil figures were back, and taking advantage of Lambone's inattention, were dragging her Daddy away. She tried to call Lambone's attention to that, but he said there would be plenty of time to recover her Daddy when the point about the Sphinx was settled. He wasn't a Sphinx, he explained, but a Winged Bull. He never had been a Sphinx. Or why should he be wearing a long curly stone beard? She wanted to argue that it was a false beard and that he had only just put it on. And anyhow it was just like him to start an inopportune discussion. Meanwhile her Daddy was receding into wretchedness. She became aware of this rapidly and painfully. It was her Daddy still, but his body was different; it was not a human body any more, but a basket of fruit overturned. Unless she did something at once it would go rotten and be bad for ever.

She tried to cry out words of comfort and reassurance to the poor tragic little figure before the dream came to an end — for now she knew surely that it was a dream. Of course he was suffering intolerably. Why had she not written to him or telegraphed to him? Surely they would give him a letter or a telegram! A profound self-detestation for her incompetence and negligence, and a great horror of pain and cruelty came upon her, and she awoke completely to black night and infinite dismay in her little hard bed in her stuffy little bedroom in Lonsdale Mews.

10

But the impression of her Daddy, desolate and broken-hearted and in

danger, remained with her, terribly vivid. It clung to her. She got up in the morning anxious and depressed by it.

"I am not doing enough for him," she said. "I am letting days slip by — and for him they must be days of despair."

"Sure th''Sylums 'nt so ba-s-at," said Fay. "Sure yr overrating it."

"But to live among lunatics and be classed as a lunatic!"

"They've *bans* play-them. Foxhill'Sylum there's *buful* ban.'Ntainments nors-sorts treats," said Fay.

Christina Alberta refrained from bad language.

"You getting ill ove' all this," said Fay. "You doing no good 'n Lun. Youffar be'r come dow' Shore'm. The's th'ouse spoilin'. In this las bit of fine w'r."

For the October weather was holding out that year quite wonderfully, a succession of calm golden days, and the Crumbs had been offered the loan of a bungalow on the beach at Shoreham by a friend who had used it throughout the summer. They wanted to go down to it before the weather broke, but going down to it meant leaving Christina Alberta all alone in the studio, and they did not want to do that. But they meant to go to Shoreham. Christina Alberta, now that she had discovered Devizes, could not endure the thought of getting out of telephone range of him. London, she argued, was manifestly her proper centre. She could get down to Cummerdown Hill in an hour; she could keep in touch with everything. The Crumbs might go but she *must* stay.

Fay would not understand. She pestered.

About eleven o'clock Christina Alberta went to the Post Office telephone booth and rang up Devizes.

"Can't something be done to hurry things up?" she asked. "I've got Daddy on my nerves. I can't bear to think of him there day after day. I've been dreaming of him."

"Worrying is no good. We — I've got some bad news for you. So put all your controls on."

He paused. Christina Alberta, for all her love of Devizes, had to restrain her violent desire to snap, "Oh! what is it?"

"Visiting day was yesterday. He had one visitor. I suppose that's the agreeable relation you described — what was his name? Wiggles? Mr. Widgery. But your Daddy can't be seen again by the

outer world for a week. Not until next Tuesday."

"Oh damn!" said Christina Alberta.

"Exactly. I'll do what I can to arrange some sort of special access. I got on to the Medical Superintendent himself. But he's queer. He's evidently quite friendly and well disposed, but he fences about. He can't say either Yes or No. Odd! I'm free to-day in the afternoon, but I'm tied up tomorrow. I was for going down to see *him* — the superintendent I mean, for a talk after lunch. 'Better in a day or so,' he says. Hope there's nothing wrong that he's keeping back. Afterwards he promised me to ring me up later, and then abruptly he switched off. So hold yourself ready, there. What's your telephone number?"

"Haven't got one. You must telegraph."

"Or I'll chase round in a taxi and pick you up. Sorry to hold you up like this, Christina Alberta."

"I don't mind anything so long as it's getting towards Daddy."

"Right-o," and the voice was cut off.

The telegram came after an interval of two hours, two hours which had been devoted to a rambling dispute with Fay about the Shoreham difficulty. The message ran as follows: "*Has your father turned up he escaped at dawn this morning in slippers and dressing-gown and nothing seen of him since if not appeared meet me Victoria two-seven for Cummerdown telephone Gerrard* 0247 *if there.*"

11

But Mr. Preemby did not turn up anywhere. He just vanished.

Christina Alberta, in a state of incredulous astonishment at this fresh disappearance, went down with Devizes to Cummerdown. They found a Medical Superintendent by no means so amazed as they were. Sargon had been missing at breakfast time; everything seemed to point to his just walking out of the Asylum. That sort of thing had happened before. It showed a certain sleepy negligence on the part of one or two attendants, and they would be reprimanded. But as for wonder, the Medical Superintendent refused to wonder. Lunatics often stray or escape, and unless they are dangerous the authorities make no great commotion about it. They kept it out of the

newspapers as far as it was possible to do so.

"This place isn't Portland," said the Medical Superintendent. "They get back all right. I give him a day. He's probably coming back now. He may be hiding up a mile away. I'm chiefly anxious about his catching cold. Pneumonia is the standard death of a lunatic. But it's wonderfully warm for the time of year. I've never known such an October."

He was much more desirous to talk to Devizes about lunacy reform, and convince him that he was a highly progressive and able Medical Superintendent, than to discuss the special case of Mr. Preemby. "We do what we can," he said, "but we're fixed by the extreme economy we have to practise. Low-grade attendants and not enough even of them. The public indifference to lunatics is monstrous. Everybody — even the people with insane relations — wants to forget all about them."

"But how could Preemby have got out of the grounds?" asked Devizes. "Aren't there walls all round?"

"Like everything else about lunacy law, the back is not as good as the front," said the superintendent. "But here we have got at least a complete wall of sorts all round. The original building used to be a private mansion with a walled park. For a time — in the eighteenth century — it was a boys' school."

He showed them from his window over the roofs of a clump of outbuildings the limits of the garden and farm at the back, dropping towards a streamlet and defined by a roadside wall and old thorn and oak trees. "For my own part," said the Medical Superintendent, "I admit the urgency of very drastic reforms."

"I wonder if Cousin Widgery can throw any light on this," said Devizes.

"Widgery?"

"That was his visitor yesterday."

"*Was* it?" said the Medical Superintendent, and reflected and went to his desk as if to look for a paper. "I thought it was a different sort of name — rather more like Goodchild. Perhaps I've mixed up the names."

"Mr. Sam Widgery," said Christina Alberta, "would be the last person who'd want Daddy to get out. He probably came to make sure

that he wouldn't. He may have come just for the pleasure of gloating over him.

Uncle Sam's not a pretty soul. He may have wanted to make sure the wall went all the way round."

The Medical Superintendent forgot his doubt about the name and the paper and turned with a fresh idea to them. "You don't think there was any animus? You don't think he may have made for Mr. Widgery? Where does this Mr. Widgery live?"

But neither Devizes nor Christina Alberta thought there was any great possibility of Mr. Preemby beating back to Woodford Wells.

"He's much more likely to go to Canterbury or Windsor, or start straight off for Rome," said Christina Alberta.

"Or Mesopotamia — or the British Museum," said Devizes.

"Or *anywhere!*" said Christina Alberta with a note of despair.

They returned to London completely baffled. Christina Alberta was for a visit to the Cummerdown Police Station and for a search in the villages round about, but Devizes explained that this might do more harm than good. Until now Christina Alberta had never heard of that one kindly weakness in the British lunacy laws, the release of the fourteen days freedom. If the lunatic can get away from the Asylum and remain at large for that period, he or she becomes legally sane again, and cannot be touched without a fresh examination and a new certificate. To set the whole countryside hunting for Preemby might merely lead to his recapture by the Asylum authorities. And whatever happened the mystery must not get into the papers.

"But while we do nothing, he may be lying dead in some out-of-the-way ditch," said Christina Alberta.

"If he is dead he won't mind a little delay in finding him," said Devizes.

No, the only thing was to wait at Lonsdale Mews against the chance of his returning thither. The Crumbs went off to Shoreham and Christina Alberta was left alone in the studio, but after one endless day of it Paul Lambone thought of a convenient agency called "Universal Aunts," and a suitable lady was sent to relieve her from a continuous vigil.

One, two, three days passed. There came no signs from Sargon,

no news of any fresh calling of disciples or visits to the King. He had evaporated. A vision of a little crumpled-up body in a ditch replaced the tormented figure in the cell in the distressed imagination of Christina Alberta. But the mind refuses to go on with a painfiil fancy that leads to nothing, and Christina Alberta's imagination presently ceased further dealings with her Daddy until fresh material came to hand. "He will turn up somewhere," she repeated feebly, and became a great consumer of evening papers. "He will turn up somehow." Her chief anxiety was that he should not turn up with too tremendous head-lines. She began to adjust herself like an early Christian for the Second Coming. The riddle of her Daddy's disappearance became a habit of mind, became, as it were, a frame, a proscenium arch to her current activities. Beneath it she returned to the urgent and extraordinary problem of herself and her relationship to Devizes.

12

It was manifest that he was almost as excited as she was at their mutual discovery. The possible proceedings of Sargon, fantastic as they might prove to be when they came to light, remained for him as for her a matter of urgent importance, but the thought of this strange relationship completely overshadowed it. Each had a reciprocal desire to get at the other, to discover what magic of sympathy and understanding might not be latent in their consanguinity.

The evening after the Universal Aunt was installed he took Christina Alberta out to dine with him at a pleasant little Italian restaurant in the corner of Sloane Square, and afterwards he came back to the studio with her and talked until nearly one in the morning. He showed himself shyly anxious to find out her aims and purposes in life, and what she was doing and what might be done to let out her possibilities. He was evidently disposed to shoulder just as much parental responsibility as he could, subject to the preservation of appearances and a proper care for the self-respect of the vanished Sargon. She attracted him and he liked her. Her feelings for him were more tumultuous and abundant and indefinite. She didn't particularly want help or support from him. The idea of being dependent upon him for anything repelled rather than attracted her, but she wanted to

get hold of him, to please and satisfy him, to be better than he had expected and interesting in fresh ways. She wanted him to like her — to care for her more than mere liking. She wanted that anxiously and tremendously.

She liked a sort of ease and confidence he had with waiters and cabmen and the common services of life. He seemed to know just what people would do and they seemed to know just what he would do; there was no tension in these matters, no nervous "h'rrmping." These common attributes of habitual prosperity were so little in her experience that they seemed a distinction of his; and they threw a flavour of knowing what he was about, and being serenely in control over most of the conversation, when indeed he was as curious and experimental and emotionally stirred almost as she was. The eyes that met hers when she talked were steady, friendly, interested, intimate eyes, and her heart went out to them.

Over the dinner he talked at first about music. He had had no music in his education, and now he was discovering it. A friend of his had been taking him to concerts, and he had got a pianola, "so as to spell it out at home first." But Christina Alberta's education had missed out music too, and she hadn't as yet discovered it. So that topic died out presently. He tried her about pictures, but there again she wasn't particularly interested. They had a little silence.

He looked across at her and smiled.

"I'd like to ask you all sorts of questions, Christina Alberta, if I dared," he said.

She blushed — absurdly. "Any questions you like," she said.

"Immense questions," he said. "For example — generally — what do you think you are up to?"

She understood what he meant at once. But she was so unprepared with an answer that she became evasive.

"Up to!" she said, playing for time. "I suppose I'm looking for my lost Daddy."

"But what are you up to generally? What are you doing with your life? Where are you going?"

"I'm at sea," she said at last. "Lots of my generation are, I think. The girls especially. You are older than I am; I'm only beginning. I don't want to seem cheeky, but aren't you better able to say what *you*

are up to? Suppose" — her slightly scared gravity broke into an impudent smile that Devizes found very congenial—" suppose you play first?"

He considered that. "Perfectly fair," he said. "I will. Have another olive. I'm glad you like olives. I do too. Nobody's called me to account for a long time. What *is* my game? It's a fair question."

But not an easy one evidently.

"I suppose one ought to begin right back at one's philosophy," he said. "A long story. But I started the idea."

Christina Alberta was greatly elated at her successful repulse of his projected cross-examination. Instead of making a display herself she could watch him. She watched him over the flowers on the table and had to be nudged by the waiter when he brought the pheasant to her elbow.

"How *should* one begin?" he plunged. She had heard of Pragmatism? Yes. She was probably better read in that sort of thing than he was. He was, he considered, a sort of Pragmatist. Most modern-minded, intelligent people he held were Pragmatists as he understood it. Pragmatist? As he understood it? He met her eye and explained. In this sense he meant it; we, none of us, had a clear vision of reality; nobody perhaps would ever do more than approach reality. What we perceived was just that much of reality that got through to us, through our very defective powers of interpretation. "They've done this pheasant *en casserole* very well," he broke off. "Three minutes' truce we ought to give it. Do you find I'm talking comprehensibly? I doubt it."

"I'm hanging on," said Christina Alberta....

"Perhaps I'm beginning rather too far off."

"Pheasant....

"To come back to my confession of faith," he said presently.... "Mind you, Christina Alberta, you've got to say your bit afterwards."

"It won't be as definite as yours," she said. "Some of yours I shall steal. But go on — telling me."

"Well, keep hold, Christina Alberta. I feel I'm going to be at once hesitating and condensed. And I'm not sure of what you know or don't know. If I say I'm an Agnostic about the nature of the universe, and how it began and where it ends, does that convey anything to

you?”

“Just what I think,” said Christina Alberta.

“Well.” He started afresh and got into parenthetical difficulties. The Peche Melba came to interrupt and permit a fresh start. He unfolded a psychologist’s vision of the world for her inspection, a curious and yet attractive vision to her. He expressed himself in terms of mind and understanding. She was used to hearing everything expressed in terms of labour and material necessity. Life, he said, was one continuous thing, all life was connected. He tried to illustrate that. The conscious life of most lower animals was intensely individual, a lizard, for example, was just itself, just its instincts and appetites; it received no teaching and no tradition, it handed on nothing to its kind. But the higher animals were taught when they were young, learnt and taught others and communicated with each other. Men far more than any animal. He had developed picture-writing, speech, oral tradition, scientific record. There was now a common mind of the race, a great growing body of knowledge and interpretations.

“People like ourselves are just cross-sections of that flow. Individually we receive it, react to it, change it a little, and pass away. We are just passing phases of that increasing mind — which may be, for all we can certainly say, an immortal mind. Does this sound like Greek — or nonsense to you?”

“No,” she said, “I think I get the drift of it.” She looked at his intent face. He wasn’t in the least talking down to her; he was simply trying to express himself as well as he possibly could to her. He was treating her like an equal. Like an equal!

That was his general philosophy. He was coming to the question of himself now, he said. He became very earnest over the coffee cups and ash tray on the swept tablecloth. He spread elucidatory hands before her. He was conscientiously explicit. He saw in himself two phases, or rather two levels of existence. Roughly speaking, two. They had links and intermediate stages of course, but they could be ignored when one just wanted to express the idea. First of all, he was the old instinctive individual, fearful, greedy, lustful, jealous, self-assertive. That was the primary self. He had to attend to that primary self because it carried all the rest of him, as a rider must see that his

horse gets oats. Deeper lay social instincts and dispositions arising out of family life. That was the second self, the social self. Man he threw out, is a creature that has become more and more consciously social in the last two or three hundred thousand years. He has been lengthening his life, keeping his children with him longer and longer, enlarging his community from family herds into clans and tribes and nations. The deep-lying continuity of life was becoming more apparent and finding more and more definite expression with this socialization of man. To educate anyone in the proper sense of the word was to make him more and more aware of this continuity. The importance of the passionate feverish self was then reduced. True education was self-subordination to a greater life, to the social self. The natural instincts and limitations of the primary self were in conflict with this wider underflow; education, *good* education, tended to correct them.

"Here am I," said Devizes, "as we all are, a creature in a state of internal conflict, quicker, fiercer mortal instincts at issue with a deeper, calmer, less brightly lit, but finally stronger drive toward? immortal purposes. And I am — how shall I put it? — I personally am, to the best of my ability, on the side of the deeper things. My aptitudes and temperament and opportunities have brought me to psychology — as a profession. I work to add to the accumulation of human knowledge and understanding about the mind. I work for illumination. My particular work is to study and cure troubled and tangled minds. I try to straighten them out and simplify them and illuminate them. And above all I try to learn from them. I seek the mental or physical cause of their distresses. I try to set down as clearly and accessibly as possible, all I observe and learn. That's my job. That's my aim. It gives me a general direction for my life. All the stuff of my mere individual existence I try to subordinate to that end. Not always. My monkey individual gets loose at times and gibbers on the roof. And at other times it's rather good company as a relief from overwork. Vanity and self-indulgence have their uses. But never mind the monkey now. I do not want to be a brilliant person; I want to be a vital part. That's my essential creed. I want to be the sort of wheel in the machinery they call a mental expert. As good a wheel as I can be. That's what I'm up to in general terms, Christina Alberta.

That's what I think I am."

"Yes," said Christina Alberta, reflecting profoundly. "Of course I can't produce a statement like that. You've got your system — complete."

"And finished," said Devizes. "You've got to tell your story in your own way. At your age — you ought to be with loose ends to all your convictions."

"I wonder if I can tell you any story."

"You've got to try your best now. It's only fair play."

"Yes."

There was a little silence.

"It's wonderful to talk to you like this," said Christina Alberta. "It's wonderful to talk to anyone like this."

"I feel that you and I — have to understand each other."

She met his grave eyes for a moment. There was a wave of emotion within her. She could not speak. She reached out her hand to touch his, and for a moment their hands were together.

13

Christina Alberta only got to her confession of faith in the studio after they had returned thither and relieved the Universal Aunt. Even then they didn't settle down to the business all at once. Devizes walked about and looked for drawings by Harold; he deduced Harold from his drawings to a quite remarkable extent, Christina Alberta thought. He was curious about Fay. "What's Mrs. Crumb like?" he asked. "Show me something of hers, something that seems to give her."

It pleased Christina Alberta very much to think that he was shy with her. She felt that this was a recognition of her equality. He was respecting her and she was very eager that she should be respected by him.

He got to an anchorage at last in the gaily painted seat by the gas-fire: and Christina Alberta, after flitting about the room for a time, came and stood before it, shapely legs wide apart and hands behind her back in an attitude that would have shocked all her feminine ancestors for many generations. But it did not shock Devizes; he

found her more and more interesting to watch, and he sat at his ease and regarded her with a lively admiration. Most of us get used to our daughters so gradually; they grow up and we carry the wonder of them as Milo carried his ox; it isn't common for a man to get an unexpected daughter abruptly at the age of twenty-one.

She said she hadn't much in the way of metaphysics; she was a Materialist.

"No prayers at mother's knee? Religion of Mother and Daddy? School prayers and teaching? Church or chapel?"

"It all washed out and faded out I think, as they laid it on."

"No fear of hell? Most of my generation went through the fear of hell."

"Not a trace of it," said the New Age.

"But — a desire for God in the night?"

Christina Alberta paused for a little while. "I have that," she said. "It comes — sometimes. I don't know whether it's very important or not important at all."

"It's part," said Devizes slowly, "of something that has to do with wanting to be more than a miserable worm — and disliking meanness — and so forth."

"Yes. Do you know more about it?"

Rather oddly he didn't answer that. "And how do you see yourself in relation to mankind — and the animals — and the stars? What sense of obligation have you? What do you think the road is along which you have to go?"

"H'm," said Christina Alberta. She considered she was a Communist, she said, though she didn't belong to the Party. But she knew some other young people who did. She produced some of the phrases of the movement, "the materialist conception of history" and so forth. He said he failed to understand and asked rather irritating questions; she thought controversially. She didn't realize at first how widely apart was their phraseology. As they talked this became apparent. He seemed to have nothing too good to say for the Communist idea, for wasn't it just his own idea of being a part of a greater being of life? but he seemed to have nothing too bad for practical Communism. Marxist Communism he said wasn't a constructive movement at all; it was merely a solvent. It had no idea,

no plan. Christina Alberta was put on the defensive. “Enthusiasm for an ideal Communist state isn’t nearly so important as the question of immediate Communist tactics in a decaying society,” she recited, in an almost official tone. That was how her young friends in the Party talked. But when she talked like this to him it didn’t seem so effective. He wouldn’t leave her phrases alone. He wanted to know what she meant by decay in a society, whether there had ever been a society not actively in decay, and not also actively in growth, what good tactics were except in relation to general strategy and whether there could be any strategy without a clear war-end. She countered more vigorously than effectively and their manner became controversial.

He pressed the difference in their opinions. Communism for him meant a new spirit, a spirit of science reorganizing the world upon scientific collective lines, but the whole temper of party communism was contemporary. It was saturated with the feelings and ideas of existing social classes, with the natural resentment of the dispossessed. It had the angry dogmatism of desperate people not sure of their grip. It needed more of the passion of creative self-forgetfulness. Many Communists, he said, were simply reversed capitalists, egotists without capital; they wanted revenge and expropriation, and when they were through with that they would be left with nothing but social ruins and everything to begin all over again. And they were suspicious and intolerant because of their want of internal assurance. They distrusted their best friends, their proper leaders, scientific men like Keynes and Soddy.

“Keynes a Communist!” cried Christina Alberta in derision. “He doesn’t accept the first scientific fact of the class war.”

“It isn’t much of a fact — certainly not a First Scientific Fact,” he replied. “Keynes builds up slowly a conception of a scientifically organized exchange system. Most of your friends in Russia don’t seem capable even of realizing that such a thing is necessary.”

“But they do!”

“Have they shown it?”

“What do *you* know of the Russian Bolsheviks?”

“What do *you?* You just look at the labels on people. Nothing genuine without the red label — and everything genuine with.”

She said he saw things from his “bourgeois” standpoint, and he laughed cheerfully at her social classifications; there was no bourgeoisie in England, he said; she attempted some of the stock cynicisms and sarcasms of the movement but with an unusual lack of conviction. It was easy for him to criticize, she said, living as he did on invested capital.

“It would make it easier,” he smiled. “But really I live on my fees.”

“You have invested capital.”

“Some. I don’t live on it.”

They had exhausted the dispute for a time. After all, she reflected, she hadn’t put up such a bad fight, considering her age and standing. The momentary glow of controversial exasperation faded again. They drifted to the more immediate question in which they were interested, the question of what she was to do with her life.

14

“We progress, Christina Alberta,” said Devizes, “but it’s still generally the rule that a woman’s life is determined very largely by the character and occupations of — the leading man in the play. Have you by any chance been in love yet?”

She wanted to tell him all the truth about herself, but some things are untenable. She hesitated and blushed hotly. “Nowadays,” she said, and stopped. “I’ve some imagination. I’ve run about London. I’ve perhaps imagined things—”

His eyes were very searching for a moment but none the less kindly.

“I’ve been in love — in a kind of way,” she admitted.

He nodded with a dreadful effect of complete comprehension.

“I don’t want to run my life in relation to any man,” she extended.

“Clever girls never do. Any more than clever young men want to spend their lives adoring a goddess.”

“In any case I don’t see myself becoming a child-producing housekeeper,” she said.

“Even if you married. No. I doubt whether you are that type. But if you are going to reject that easy way — and it *is* an easy way, in

spite of what people say — if you are going to be a citizen on your own as a man is, then you've got to do a man's work, Christina Alberta. There's to be none of the Pretty Fanny business, you know."

"Well, *am* I?" asked Christina Alberta.

"No, I don't think you are. And in that case, I guess you want some more education. You're clever, but you're a bit patchy."

"I'm good enough to get a job. And then learn."

"Learn," he said. "That's enough to take you all your time. I'd rather we agreed it's got to be a student for two or three years more. You need have no anxiety about ways and means. You and I are of the same Clan — a clan of two practically — and I am the head. I'll see you through just as though you were a son. And now, what sort of work is it to be? Law? Medicine? A general education for journalism or affairs? Doors open to women now — fresh doors every day."

To that Christina Alberta could speak a little more fully. She had been thinking out some of these things. She wanted to know about life and the world as a whole. Could she have a good year at physical science, biology and geology chiefly and anthropology? Would that be possible? And then if she was any good at medical work, another year at mental science or politics and public health?— "It sounds ambitious, I know," she said.

"Ambitious! It's an encyclopaedia in a year."

"But I want to know about all these things."

"Naturally."

"Could I have longer than that?"

"You'd have to have longer than that."

"It seems to be asking for so much."

"It wouldn't be if you were in trousers. We've agreed to unsex you to that extent. Why shouldn't you be ambitious?"

"You think I might do work — scientific work — at last — as you do?"

"Why not?"

"A girl?"

"You're the sort of stuff I am, Christina Alberta."

"Do you think — some day — I might even come to work — to work with you?"

“Kindred minds may follow kindred courses,” he said, with the completest recognition of their relationship. “Why not?”

She stood and looked at him with a dark excitement in her eyes and he had a momentary intimation of all that he might be to her. Gallant she was and fine and ambitious; a wonderful life to come out of nothingness into his own. And she meant this relationship to grow, as well it might grow, into something very great and deep for both of them.

He went off at a tangent to talk of the contrast of men and women students and of men and women as workers. “You’ll never run parallel with men, you free women, so don’t expect it. You’ve got to work out a way that is similar perhaps but different. Different down to the roots.” He argued that probably the whole fabric of a man had its qualities that a woman’s did not possess, and vice versa, down even to a muscular fibre or a nerve tendril. A time might come when we should be able to put a drop of blood or a scrap of skin under the microscope or apply some subtle reagent to it and tell its sex. “A man resists,” he said. “A man is intractable. He has greater inertia, physical and mental. That keeps him to his course. Men compared with women are steadier and stupider. Women compared with men are quicker and sillier. Bludgeons and bodkins.”

He talked of his student days when women medical students were still rather novel intrusions, and from that he passed to his father’s prejudices to his father’s treatment of his mother and his boyish days. Presently they were exchanging experiences of childish delusions and fancies. She forgot how much older and more experienced he was in the ease of his talk. He told her about himself because he recognized her right to know about him; he listened with a friendly eagerness to all she chose to tell him of her Daddy and herself and about her impressions and her few adventures in encounter as a suburban student in London. They shared their delight in Paul Lambone’s kindly absurdity. Presently it occurred to her to offer him drink. The Crumbs had left a bottle of beer and a syphon. But Devizes asked her to make tea and helped her with the kettle. Meanwhile the mutual exploration went on. Their friendliness grew richer and deeper as’ they talked. She had never before met so intimate and delightful a curiosity as his. She had had friends before

but no such friendliness; she had had a lover but never such intimacy.

It was one o'clock before he went away.

The talk had ebbed. He sat thoughtful for a moment. "I must go," he said, and stood up. They faced each other, a little at a loss for parting words.

"It's been wonderful to talk to you," she said.

"It's a great thing to have discovered you."

Another pause. "It's a great thing for me," she said lamely.

"We'll talk — many times," he said.

He wanted to call her "my dear," and an absurd shyness prevented him. And she was aware of that suppression.

She stood up straight before him in the passage with a flush on her cheeks and her eyes alight, and he wondered he had not thought her beautiful from the beginning. "Good-bye for the time," he said, and smiled at her gravely and took and held her hand for a moment.

"Good night," she said, and hesitated and then opened the green door for him and stood and watched him go up the Mews.

At the top he turned and waved his hand to her before he disappeared. "Good night," she whispered and started, and looked about her as if she feared that her unspoken thoughts had been audible.

Father. Her father!

So real fathers leave one aglow like this!

He had left her tense as a violin string on which the bow rests motionless. Now Daddy, who wasn't her father, she would just have hugged and kissed.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

HOW BOBBY STOLE A LUNATIC

1

A MAN may be a mental expert and yet fail to take the most obvious hints in a detective investigation. The medical superintendent at Cummerdown Hill had doubted for a moment whether Widgery was the name of Sargon's visitor. He had thought it was more like Goodchild. But since there was no known Goodchild in the world of Christina Alberta, neither she nor Devizes had troubled to scrutinize this momentary uncertainty. Nor had she and Devizes asked themselves why Widgery should have made a second visit to his cousin. Indeed, he had not done so. It was a much younger man who had visited Sargon that Tuesday; he had falsely represented himself as Sargon's nephew and given the name of "Robin Goodchild." His real name was Robert Roothing, and he had come for the sole purpose of getting Sargon out of the asylum as soon as possible, because he could not endure the thought of his staying there.

Circumstances had conspired with a natural predisposition to give Bobby a great horror of all restraint. His mother, a gentle dark creature, the wife of a large blond negligent landowner, had died when Bobby was twelve; and he had been entrusted to the care of a harsh, old-fashioned aunt — to whom the cupboard seemed a proper place for discipline. When she discovered that he was really distressed by it, she sought to break his "cowardice" by giving him quite liberal doses of it — even when he had committed no offence. He went to a school where discipline was maintained by "keeping-in." The war eliminated his father, who died suddenly of over-excitement while in command of an anti-aircraft gun during an air-raid, and it led Bobby through some tiresome campaigning in Mesopotamia and the beleaguerment of Kut to an extremely unsympathetic Turkish prison. In any case he would probably have been a free-going easy creature, but now he had so passionate a hatred of cages that he wanted to release even canaries. He disliked

the iron fences round the public parks and squares with a propagandist passion, he wrote articles about them in *Wilkins' Weekly* and elsewhere clamouring for their "liberation," and he never went by train if he could help it because of the claustrophobia that assailed him in the compartment. He would ride a push-bike except for long distances, and then he would borrow Billy's motor-bicycle. He did his best to prevent his craving for the large and open from becoming too conspicuous or a nuisance to other people, but Tessy and Billy understood about it and did their best to make things easy for him.

It was not only claustrophobia that Bobby had to fight against. He carried on a secret internal conflict with a disinclination to act upon most occasions, that he believed had developed in him as a result of war experiences. Sometimes it seemed to him to be just indolence, sometimes fastidiousness, sometimes sheer funk and cowardice. He could not tell. He had a rankling memory of a case of cruelty he had witnessed in the prisoners' camp when he had stood by and done nothing. He would wake up sometimes at three o'clock in the morning and say to himself aloud, "I stood by and I did nothing. Oh God! Oh *God!* Oh GOD!" And at times he would walk up and down his study repeating: "*Act!* You vegetable! you hiding cur! Out and act!" Meanwhile he obeyed routines and did whatever came to his hand. As "Aunt Suzannah" he was excellent, indefatigably considerate, lucid, really helpful. *Wilkins' Weekly* was proud of him. He was the backbone of the paper.

And now this affair of Sargon's had twisted him up very badly between his desire to free the little man, who had taken an extraordinary hold upon his imagination and sympathy, and his sense of the immense forces against which he would have to pit himself if he tried to give him any help. It was only after a considerable struggle with himself that he had called at the police station and the Gifford Street Workhouse. He was afraid of awkward questions, afraid above all of being "detained." The workhouse was a detestable place with high walls and a paved court and a general effect of sinister seclusion from the grubby street outside. For the best part of a day after his Gifford Street visit he hesitated whether he should do anything more.

“Bobby’s got a grouch,” Susan told Tessy. “He’s stoopid. Just sits and says’E ‘as to fink sumpfink over. What’s he fink fings over for? Said I was to come downstairs again, there was a good girl.... Meant it.... Said so.... Puss’d me ‘way.... I do-o-nt fink I lo-o-o-ove Bobby ‘nymore.”

Great distress. A storm of tears. Tessy was deeply sympathetic.

But after tea Bobby was brighter and drew Susan her “Good night picture” and came down and sat on her bed and talked her to sleep the same as usual, and Tessy perceived that the worst of Bobby’s trouble was over.

At supper Bobby unfolded his plans.

“I mean to go to Cummerdown Hill to-morrow,” he said compactly.

“To see Sargon?” said Tessy understandingly.

“If I can. But it won’t be visiting day. That’s Tuesday. I want to look round.”

Billy raised his eyebrows and helped himself to butter.

“But—” said Tessy, and stopped short.

“Yes?” said Bobby.

“You won’t be able to see him. You don’t know the name he’s under.”

“They’ll call him Mr. Sargon,” said Billy.

“His name’s Preemby. He’s a laundryman. They told me at the workhouse. His people *want him to be there!*”

“I can’t stand the thought of it,” said Bobby after a brief silence.

“Don’t follow,” said Billy.

“That nice little thing being made into a lunatic. Like a little blue-eyed bird he was. High walls. Great louting warders. Sargon, King of Kings.... I’ve got to do something about it or I shall burst.”

He looked at once weak and desperate. Tessy reflected. “You’d better go,” she said.

“But what good will that do?” said Billy, and was quelled by a glance from Tessy.

“If you can lend me the old motor-bike and the side-car. You’re not using it this week-end.”

“You can take off the side-car,” said Billy.

“I may want it,” said Bobby.

"You don't mean — !" said Billy.

Bobby came as near to an explosion as he ever did.

"Oh never mind *what* I mean. I tell you I'm going down to Cummerdown to have a look at the place. No doubt I'm a futile ass, Billy, but I just can't help myself going. The poor little beggar's got no friends. His own family's helped to put him away. Families do. It's an infernal world. I've got to do something. If it's only to shake 'em up. If I stay here another day I shall start smacking Susan."

"Somebody ought to," said Billy.

"If he can only keep away for fourteen days clear—"

"He's free?" said Tessy.

"He has to be certified all over again — anyhow," said Bobby.

2

Bobby discovered that the village of Cummerdown lies nearly two miles away from the Asylum, and does its best very successfully to have as little to do with it as possible. It nestles among trees just off the high road to Ashford and Hastings, and has one cramped little inn that gave him a bleak bedroom and accommodated his machine and sidecar in an open outhouse crowded with two carts and a Ford and populous with hens. The day was still young, and after he had deposited the elderly rucksac in which he had brought his "things" upstairs, he set out with a walking-stick and an air of detached interest to reconnoitre the asylum and develop his plans for the rescue of Sargon. That golden autumn was still holding out; the pleasant lane he followed to the high road was patterned with green and yellow chestnut leaves and the trees overhead were full of sunshine. It was a reassuring day. It encouraged him. It took him with a kindly seriousness and made him feel that rescuing people from lunatic asylums was the sort of work the sun could shine upon and nature welcome.

It had needed a great effort to get down from London. He had felt then like a midget setting out to attack an embattled universe. Amidst the Croydon traffic he had been half minded to go back, but he had felt that he could not face Tessy until he had been at least definitely defeated. It was delightful to note an increased assurance within

himself as he drew nearer to his enterprise. He felt much more on the scale of the powers he attacked. After all, what were laws and regulations but just things patched up by men like himself? What were prison walls but the slow work of shirking bricklayers and evasive contractors? The attendants and custodians, the superintendents and so forth he was setting out to circumvent, were all as fallible as himself. And the thing was urgent and outrageous, this seizure of a harmless little fantastic, this frightful imprisonment. It had to be fought. The world would be intolerable unless such things were fought.

Queer world it was! Such beauty on these tree-stems, such a glow, and the delightfulness of rustling one's feet through these leaves! But all that was by the way; the real business of life was to fight evil things.

He came out from between the trees and saw the wide downs opening out before him and the blocked masses of the asylum with its broad bare grounds and walls, an eyesore. This was his objective. In that place somewhere was Sargon, and he had to be released.

He seated himself on a convenient stile and inspected that heavy architecture and tried to frame a plan. That white building in the centre looked like a gaunt Georgian private house. That was probably the nucleus of the whole place. Two men were visible in front of it mowing the grass — patients perhaps. The wall and railings along the road looked implacable. Two stern-looking lodges there were, no doubt with a testy janitor lurking within, and there were iron gates — one open. A van was coming out, a furniture dealer's van. For a time Bobby's mind ran on the possibility of becoming a tradesman with parcels or a crate to deliver.... Many difficulties that way....

"But why a frontal attack?" said Bobby with an effect of discovery. The place fell away behind, downhill. He would inspect the rear. If he worked round by the open down to the right, he would probably get on to slopes commanding a view of the asylum grounds.

An hour later Bobby was sitting on a heap of flints by the side of a minor road which ran over the rising ground behind the asylum. He found the rear of the place much more hopeful and much more interesting than the front. There were fields with a number of men

working in them, and at one place near the buildings a row of men seemed to be digging a trench under the supervision of an attendant. There was quite a lot of movement closer to the buildings, under a sort of open shed half a dozen men seemed to be taking exercise by walking up and down. It vexed Bobby to think that any one of these figures might be his Sargon. If only he had the elementary common sense to bring a field-glass, he reproached himself, he might have been able to make out his little friend's features. "No clearness of thought," he whispered. "No decision." A lot of these people seemed to be going about very freely, carrying gardening implements and so forth. One he noted, walking about and gesticulating as if he talked to himself; he was manifestly a patient and quite unattended.

The wall bounding the asylum on this side had none of the austerity of the front wall. It seemed to be an old estate wall; in several places it was covered with ivy and here and there it was overhung with trees. The ground dropped away to his right, there was a little stream which ran out of the asylum grounds at the lowest corner; the corner was shaded by trees and seemed to be left to the trees and undergrowth; the stream ran under a low arch in the wall and went on down a widening valley towards London. The seclusion and shade of this corner appealed to Bobby very strongly. It seemed to him exactly the point at which Sargon ought to be got out of the place. He decided that presently he would stroll down and examine its possibilities as precisely as possible. If one could get Sargon to come down there —

He found the details difficult. He meant to have a plan worked out in every detail and to communicate it to Sargon on the next visiting-day, but it was very hard to fit this plan together. He did not know when it would be most convenient for Sargon to attempt to slip away, whether this was to be a daylight or a night affair. He saw before him a great vista of inquiries to be made and suspicious people to be faced. "Damn!" said Bobby, and for a time he was again for abandoning the attempt.

Why couldn't one go in at these gates, boldly and overwhelmingly, and say, "There is a sane man here and I have come to set him free?" A superman might do that, or an archangel. How splendid it would be to be a sort of Archangel-Knight-Errant, a great

flaming presence of light and winged power, righting wrongs, reproving oppressors, liberating every kind of captive creature. Then one might do things. Bobby lapsed into a childish day-dream.

Presently he roused himself, stood up and went down towards the exit of the stream. The wall struck him as quite climbable — even by a little old gentleman. The stream came out meandering among pebbles through a short tunnel. One could have got into the asylum grounds or out of them quite easily over the wall by the ivy or through the culvert. He resolved to come again at twilight and — just to satisfy himself about his own pluck among other things — get into the asylum premises and walk about a little.

Yes. He would do that.

He tried to imagine himself assisting Sargon over the wall. One could get on the top of the wall and reach down to his hands. A cripple could do it. The motor-bicycle would have to be waiting up there in the lane. And then? *Where would he take him?*

This was a new consideration. For a time Bobby's mind was appalled and paralysed by the complexities of his enterprise. He had not thought of taking him anywhere in particular.

The days that intervened before visiting-day seemed at once interminable and frightfully swift. He had been to Dymchurch in the summer with the Malmesburys, and liked the landlady of his lodgings very much; he wired to her "Can I come with a relation not ill but overworked for week or so you will remember me last summer Roothing the Feathers Cummerdown" and had got a reply, "Glad to see you any time." So that was all right.

But the rest of the plan failed very largely to materialize. He made his nocturnal visit to the asylum grounds without misadventure.

The morning of visiting-day found him with half a dozen plans, and they all had gaps and none seemed much better or worse than the others. And he had walked round the asylum grounds at various discreet distances, by night and day just twenty-three times, not counting loops, returns and visits to particular points of interest. Fortunately asylums are much preoccupied with their internal affairs, and do not keep look-out men upon the battlements. They do not reckon with rescuers from outside.

Bobby made his final decision among these conflicting projects

over his breakfast bacon. With a resolute sangfroid and his nerves all a-tingle, he set out for the asylum to see Sargon and begin the work of rescue as he had thought it out. First he had to find out what freedom of movement was permitted Sargon, when it might be possible for him to get away to the corner by the culvert, and he had to arrange a time for that meeting. Then he would have to provide also for alternative times if Sargon failed to keep his first appointment. Bobby would be waiting under the wall and the motor-bicycle and side-car would be hidden among the bushes up by the road. In a trice Sargon would be over the wall. After that they could laugh at pursuit. Off they would go to Dymchurch, and there, safe and untrackable, Sargon would keep indoors until the fifteen days needed to make him legally a sane man again had passed. And then Bobby could find out those relations of his and talk the matter over with them, and get things on a proper footing. So Bobby planned it out.

Just at the lodge gates he decided upon an assumed name. He wasn't quite clear why he didn't give his own name, but an assumed name seemed to him to be more in the spirit of the adventure.

3

When Sargon was informed that he was to be visited by Mr. Robin Goodchild he was in a depressed mood. He betrayed no surprise at the name. It seemed to him to be as good as any other name. It might be the name of some intelligent inquirer or possibly even some precursor of the release he still hoped for. His spirits rose. He submitted cheerfully to a searching examination of his personal tidiness, and he nodded acquiescently to a warning not to talk about "*every* blessed thing" he'd seen.

His spirits rose still more when he saw the dark kindliness of Bobby's face. It was the one disciple who had ever seemed to believe. He held out both his hands in a little storm of emotion. Whatever sort of muddler Bobby might be to himself, to Sargon in that moment at least he was strength and hope.

The meeting occurred in the reception-room downstairs, for no one from the outside world may ever penetrate to the wards and the

bleak realities of everyday asylum life. The reception-room had a baize-covered table in the middle, a black horsehair sofa and numerous chairs; it was totally devoid of small movables; there was an A B C time-table and one or two illustrated weeklies on the table, and the walls bore brown-spotted steel engravings of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria in the Highlands and of Windsor Castle from the Thames. There were three or four groups, each of two or three people, with their heads together conversing in tactful undertones; there were several women and one little girl; a tearful lady in profound mourning sat apart by the empty fire-place and no doubt awaited a patient; two attendants tried hard not to look as though they were listening as intently as possible to the conversations going on about them. The patients present were all in the sanest phase, "fit to be visited." There was no madness visible; at most only a little nervous oddity. Bobby had been watching these other groups while he waited, and he had been impressed by a certain quality of furtiveness in their behaviour. The furtiveness he connected with the alertness of the attendants. One affected to look out of the window, the other half sat at a table holding an old *Graphic,* and ever and again there would be a quick glance at this patient or that. It had not occurred to Bobby that his talk to Sargon would be semi-public; it was a disconcerting interference that would greatly hamper him in giving his instructions.

Bobby saw at once that Sargon was very much thinner than when he had taken his room in Midgard Street. He looked ill and worn, an effect that was emphasized by the fact that he was badly shaven and wearing ill-fitting clothes. His eyes seemed larger and sunken under his brows and his forehead more definitely lined. Yet if he looked unhappier he also looked more intelligent. He seemed more aware of the things about him — less a man in a dream.

"I have come to see if I can be of service to you," said Bobby, holding out his hands. "Your friends and disciples are anxious for your welfare."

"You have come to see me," he said, and glanced sideways at the listening attendant and dropped his voice; "me — *Sargon?*"

Bobby understood that note of doubt and it grieved him. "You, Sargon, the King out of the Past."

“They would have me deny it,” whispered Sargon.

Bobby raised his eyebrows and nodded his head as who should say, “They’d do *anything*.”

The little man’s manner changed. “How is one to know?” he said. “How is one to know?”

He sighed. “Nothing seems certain any more.”

“Can we sit down and talk together,” said Bobby. “There is much to be said between us.”

Sargon glanced round. There were two chairs in a comer, and in that corner they might be a little beyond the eavesdropper’s range. “I cannot understand this madness,” said Sargon as they sat down. “I cannot understand this Riddle that has been set me. Why does the Power, why does God, permit men to be mad? When they are mad they are beyond good and evil. What are they? Men still? What becomes of justice, what becomes of righteousness — when men go mad?” His voice sank.

His eyes became furtive. “Dreadful things happen here,” he whispered. “Dreadful things. Quite dreadful things.”

He ceased. For a little while neither he nor Bobby said a word.

“I want to get you out of this,” said Bobby.

“Are my friends doing anything?” asked Sargon. “What is Christina Alberta doing? Is she well?”

“She is splendid,” he said haphazard. No doubt she was one of this beastly family of Sargon’s that was content to leave him here. “I want you to listen to me,” he said.

But Sargon had things to tell. “Everyone in this place is always thinking about what their friends outside are doing for them. The poor souls come and talk to me. They know I am different from what they are. They write letters, petitions. I tell them that when God releases me I will bear them all in mind. Some mock at me. They have delusions. They think they are kings or emperors or rich men or great discoverers, and that the world has plotted against them.... Some are suspicious and cruel.... Darkened souls.... Some have dreadful habits. You cannot help but see.... Some are badly sunken — degraded — indescribably.... It is very painful, very painful.”

The blue eyes stared blankly at unpleasant memories.

“There can be no doubt that I am Sargon,” he said abruptly, and

looked sharply at Bobby.

"I call you by no other name," said Bobby.

The momentary acuteness faded again. "That man Preemby was unawakened. He was asleep — scarcely dreaming of life. *But I have seen!* I have looked at the world from high places. And from dark places too.... Sargon. Sargon is a different person.... But it is difficult."

He became silent.

Bobby felt that they were getting nowhere. In his anticipations of this conversation he had talked and Sargon had listened. And there had been no one to overhear. But this was all unexpected. Anyhow, the plan had to be told; Sargon had to be instructed in his part. He glanced warily at the people nearest to them. "There are those among us," he said quietly and quickly, "who would set you free. I want to tell you—" On the spur of the moment he attempted a code. "When I speak of a city in Central Asia it will mean this place, the Asylum. Do you understand?"

"This place — Central Asia. If I am Sargon.... Everything is possibly something else. But we are still in England nevertheless."

"In reality. But I want to explain to you."

"Yes, yes. Explain."

"I shall speak of great discoveries in Central Asia. That will mean this."

Did he understand?

"*Rescue!*" whispered Bobby in Sargon's ear, and glanced at the attendant and met his eye and was discomposed.

"Tell me about the discoveries," said Sargon after a little pause as though he had not heard that whispered word.

"It is a symbol for this place," said Bobby.

Sargon looked puzzled. The attendant was watching their faces now. Perhaps he suspected already. Bobby flushed hotly and plunged abruptly into an account of the discoveries of an amazing Russian he called Bobinsky. Bobinsky had found a walled city with no way out. "Yes," said Sargon interested. The attendant was now looking away. "Like this place," said Bobby, and more explicitly; "I *mean* this place." There was a river ran through the city, the city of confinement, and went out by the lower part. There it was the helper

waited. The rescuers. That was the place for them to wait. Did he understand? At that point where the trees grew and the river went out through the wall. There they waited. There they would wait until the captive king came to them.

"It is a curious story," said Sargon. "What captive king do you mean?"

"It is meant for you."

"The river you speak of may be the Euphrates," said Sargon. "I dream of the Euphrates."

He had missed it all! He was out upon some wool-gathering of his own. Euphrates! What had the Euphrates to do with Central Asia? Or the Asylum?

"Bother!" said Bobby. "I say — It is a smaller river I mean, a streamlet — in the grounds here. Don't you understand?"

A tall sharp-faced woman in a hat of hard black straw came near them and sat down. Bobby, as he talked, observed her out of the corner of his eye. Was she the friend of a patient or what was she doing here? "I speak in symbols," said Bobby, still watching and thinking about this woman. "This city is your prison." He caught the woman exchanging a glance of intelligence with the male attendant who had moved a couple of yards up the room. They knew each other. Then she must be another observer. "I want no other prison than this," said Sargon, evidently quite at crosspurposes. "One prison is enough."

"I don't mean that," said Bobby. "Can you walk about here pretty freely?"

"Not freely," said Sargon. "No."

"If you could come out into the grounds. To-morrow."

The woman turned her long sharp foxy nose towards him and stared at him with rather stupid green-blue eyes.

Bobby's nerve was going to pieces altogether. He was always more afraid of women than men. This prim sharp-nosed figure so manifestly listening, and listening with a faint hostility to all he said, completed his discomfiture. He tried to improvise a story of lost and recovered cities that would be crystal clear to Sargon and yet incomprehensible to the listener. But his invention faltered at the

difficult task. Where the river ran out of the city, he repeated; he harped upon that idea; where there were trees and ivy, there the faithful waited. When was the propitious hour for the Master to steal away to them? Everything was prepared. When could it be? When might it be? Fragmentary and mixed with many irrelevancies Bobby tried to get the import of these suggestions over to his hearer. Now he would be explicit; now as the fear of the listener returned, vague and misleading. He did convey a sense of mystery and intention to Sargon, that was plain; but he felt he conveyed nothing more. The time was slipping by. Bobby could have throttled that infernal woman. More and more did she become audience to his floundering efforts. He maundered back to his starting point about Bobinsky. "There is no such person as Bobinsky," he threw in.

"Then how could he explore cities?" asked Sargon, manifestly more and more perplexed at Bobby's rigmarole.

"He is dead," said Bobby. "He was just a mask."

"Some men are."

"Don't mind about Bobinsky. Could you slip away to that corner? No, no. She's looking. Don't answer.

"*Now* answer."

"I don't understand," said Sargon.

Bobby felt that he was only puzzling Sargon. But what else was to be done? He could have kicked himself for not having brought a brief statement of his plan written plainly on a little piece of paper that he could have slipped into Sargon's hand — or pocket. It would have been so simple. He could have made a map and a drawing. Too late to do that now.

Despair came upon Bobby. Everything had gone wrong. He got up to go and then sat down again to make another attempt. He felt murderous towards that woman, towards himself, even towards slow-witted little Sargon.

"It was very good of you to come and see me," said Sargon. "*Why* did you come?...

"Do you think anything will be done about me?...

"You will see Christina Alberta? When I saw you first I thought you had things to tell me — important things. One lives on such hopes here. Here — when there are no visitors — nothing happens,

nothing pleasant. And one is distressed....

“I am interested to hear of those cities in Central Asia of course, but it is a little puzzling. Did you come specially about them? Or just to see me?

“You will come again. Even to come down here to this sitting-room is an event...

Then in a swift whisper. “The food is frightful. So badly cooked. It disagrees with me...

“That woman,” said Bobby as he went, “She has spoilt everything. I can’t stand her.”

“That woman?” said Sargon, and followed the direction of Bobby’s eyes. “Poor soul,” he said. “She’s a deaf mute. She comes to see her brother. The whole family is defective or insane.”

A maddened Bobby returned towards his little inn. Should he chuck the whole thing? Intolerable thought! He must make fresh plans — fresh plans altogether. He must begin all over again. The little man was evidently wretched. But it was going to be harder to get hold of him than Bobby had thought.

Bobby had no sleep that night.

4

In the night just before daybreak suddenly Sargon woke up and understood. He understood quite clearly what the young man had been saying to him. He had said “Rescue”! Of course he had meant to say “Escape”! That city in Central Asia was only a parable; he had said as much. He had been describing a corner of the asylum grounds, that corner where the stream ran out beyond the workfields and the shrubbery where the patients were supposed not to go. He had been telling of friends who would wait outside. He had been trying to arrange an hour when these friends would come there. And Sargon had failed to understand. He sat up in bed very still.

It was perfectly clear, but through a sort of dulness that came upon him at times he had not grasped the drift of it at the time. The young man had shown irritation, naturally enough. What would he do now? Would he try again? Were the friends still waiting?

Who was this young man? His name was unknown or forgotten.

But he believed. He had said, “I call you by no other name.” Sargon! And there were these friends he spoke of, who waited outside for the king. They must know. How could they know, if there was nothing to be known? After all, perhaps it was no dream. Perhaps the world was awakening.... But he had failed them. He had not understood.... They waited without....

How still everything was! A strange unusual stillness. It was rare for this place to be so bereft of noise. It was dark and yet not altogether dark. The ward was dimly lit by a blue-shaded light. The three nearer beds were unoccupied, and beyond the man who tossed and muttered almost incessantly lay for a little while at peace. The man who raved had died three days ago; the man who gave sudden loud shouts had been taken away to another ward. Through the open door one could see across the landing into the little yellow-lit room where Brand the ward attendant sat with his arms crossed and chin on his chest and slept, his Patience cards spread out before him. He seemed to be alone and yet he could sleep like that! Where could the other man be — the new attendant whose name Sargon did not know? And yet he felt — someone had just gone out!

The uncurtained windows showed the night outside, a darkness that became translucent, a streak of very black cloud and five pale stars. Across the lower edge of that oblong picture one could see indistinctly a tracery of tree branches and the lumpish head of a young oak still bearing its leaves, the trees along the first hedge. These outlines grew distincter as he watched. It was like the slow development of a photographic plate in the dark-room. The stars dissolved. Had there been five? There were three; the other two had dissolved into the pale invading light.

Dared one venture on to the landing? If Brand awoke he could make some natural excuse. He stood well with Brand. But the other fellow — ?

There was not a trace of him. Where had he gone?...

Do it now! — wisest of maxims.

Very swiftly Sargon slipped out of bed and put on his dressing-gown and slippers. Hush! *What was that?...* Only some one snoring. Nothing more. He went out and stood on the landing. Brand slept on like a log.

The stone staircase was lit and empty and from the open door to the left downstairs came the harsh breathing of a sleeper. All the world seemed asleep for once, except Sargon and those friendly watchers outside the walls. Far away there were sounds of bawling and raving, but these were stifled by distance and an intervening door. They merely made the nearer silence more perceptible.

Something stirred, a little clicking sound that sent Sargon's heart racing. Then a resonant blow. A second blow. It was nothing; it was the clock downstairs striking six.

Very quietly but very resolutely he walked downstairs. An intuition, an instinct impelled him. He felt and peered at the door and behold! it was ajar! Unbolted! Unlocked! Brand's colleague was abroad upon some errand of his own. The cold air of freedom blew upon Sargon's face.

The door opened and closed softly and Sargon stood upon the doorstep of the left wing of the asylum, facing the dim world of a November dawn.

It was dark but it was clear, a world of ebony outlines and colourless forms. Everything looked as if it had just been wiped over with a wet rag. It was cold, but it was cold without any of the hate and bitterness of wind.

He crossed the gravel drive and came to a stop and stood looking about him. The heavy building of the left wing rose above him, a vast bulk that went up into the paler darkness of the sky. It receded in perspective and the central block beyond looked like the ghost of a house. Here and there there were orange-lit windows and others fainter lit by some remote reflected light. In the lodge to the left of the gates there was also a light. For where there is madness there is never perfect sleep.

But the asylum was as near complete silence that morning as an asylum can ever be.

He looked and listened. Not a footfall. It would not do to be found here by that other attendant....

But the man was snugly away somewhere. No one would loiter here in this chill air.

What was it Sargon had to remember?

The friends and believers were waiting for him. They were

waiting now. Where the river ran out of the city wall; that was to say where the little streamlet ran out of the grounds. That would be this way — to the left, where the fields dropped down-hill. He stepped on to the grass, for his feet made loud sounds on the gravel. The grass hissed crisply. It was heavy with white frost and his footmarks made black blots in the wet silvery grey.

He walked past and away from the ponderous dark mass of the asylum into the open, colder air of freedom. He unlatched and went through the small iron gate in the iron fencing that separated the trim grass plots of the front from the cabbage field. It complained a little on its hinge and he opened and closed it very carefully. He struck across the field. The path ran before him into a mist. It came out of the mist to his feet and vanished behind him. It was as if it went past him while he marked time. He could not remember whither the path ran, nor how it lay with regard to the corner he sought. But every moment things grew clearer.

Every moment things grew clearer. There had been something dark and brooding in the sky that hung over him and seemed to watch him. He had done his best to ignore the vague presence, because he was afraid of his own imagination. But suddenly he saw plainly that it was just the tops of trees showing above the mist. That must be the line of trees along the hedge parallel to the asylum front. He must go through these if he wanted to go down-hill. He left the path and made his way slowly along a frozen ridge of dug earth. He skirted long rows of stalky cabbages, black and shrivelled and unkempt, they looked like Cossack sentinels afoot. They all leant towards him as though they listened to the sound of him.

As he drew near the hedge and the trees he heard a sound like the feet of an army of midgets. It was the drip, drip of moisture from the trees.

Far away behind him and quite invisible to him a motor-car scurried along the high-road.

He had some difficulty in finding a way through the hedge and a bramble scratched his ankle. He told himself there was no hurry; the friends waited. Beyond the hedge the ground went down-hill and the mist grew whiter and thicker. The daylight was strong enough now to show the mist dead-white. It veiled the stream altogether.

He walked slowly. He had no sense of being pursued. Brand would not go into the ward for an hour yet; he might not miss him for a long time....

What a wonderful thing, thought Sargon, is daybreak, and how little one sees of it! Every day begins with this miraculous drama and we sleep through it as though it did not concern us and rouse ourselves only for the trite day. A little while ago the world had been an inky monochrome and now it was touched with colour. The sky was blue. All the stars had gone — but no! not all. One still shone, a large pale star, the star of Sargon. And the sky about it was flushed with a faint increasing pinkiness. That must be the east and that star must be the morning star, hanging above the outhouse chimneys. Those chimneys were very distinct. The butt end of the asylum which had been a black and shapeless monster a little while ago, had now become a dark purple shape outlined with an exquisite clearness, eaves and ridges and chimneys and creasings and window-frames. Four windows shone a fading orange and two of them suddenly blinked and vanished.

Would anyone look out of a window there and see him?

It did not matter. He would go on down towards the stream. This friendly mist would hide him.

It was wonderful to be in this white mist and yet not in it. It was always a little way from him. And nevertheless it wetted him. How crisp the frosted ground was, but if one kicked through the surface, it was soft.

Overhead the blueness increased and there was now a rippled patch of pink cloud.

He went deeper and deeper into the soft mist. Presently he was walking on long wet shrivelled grass. When he turned presently to look back at the asylum it had altogether disappeared.

What was that? Was it something talking or was it the beating heart of some busy elfin machine? Listen! Peer! Think!

It was the stream.

Now everything was plain and easy.

He walked beside the stream. Near at hand trees became visible, attendant trees with mist about their waists, white-clad sentinel trees. The dry grass was ranker here. And what was this, like a denser

lower mist within the mist? This was the wall. Beyond that wall, almost within shouting distance now, the friends and believes would be waiting. How discreet they were! Not a murmur, not a footfall.

For a long time Sargon stood motionless beside the culvert beneath the wall. At last he roused himself and by a great effort and with the help of the ivy he scrambled to the top of the wall.

No one waited. Some dim four-footed thing bolted from the frost-bitten weeds below, and then there was silence. There was no sign of watchers nor helpers.

No matter. If it was God's will they would come.

He sat very still. He did not feel deserted nor alone. He was not in the least dismayed. He felt that the Power who had called him into being was all about him.

Slowly, steadily the light grew brighter. A little cloud like a floating feather caught fire very suddenly and then another. A great beam of light, like the beam of a searchlight, only very much broader, appeared slanting to the north. Then above a whaleback of distant downland came a knife-edge of dazzling light, an effulgence, like a curved knife, like a cap, like a dome, a quivering blazing firebirth. And then torn clear of the hill and round and red the November sun had risen.

5

It was full daylight and the mist had dissolved away. The roofs of the asylum buildings were now visible over the crest, divested of all magic, bleak and commonplace. From some point in that direction a dog was barking.

It was strange that there should be no one here. That young man whose name he had never known, had made it very plain that there were friends in waiting here. Perhaps they had gone away and would come back presently.

Still it did not matter now very much. At any rate he had seen a sunrise of almost incredible beauty. How good a thing the sun was! The thing of all visible things that was most like God.

Perhaps there were no helpers here at all. Perhaps he had misunderstood. He was stupid he knew. He misunderstood more and

more. Perhaps presently keepers would come in search of him and take him back to the asylum. It might be so that things were decreed. He would not let it distress him. Life was full of trials and disappointments. He was feeling now very cold throughout his substance and tired so that all his energy was gone. With a start he became aware that there was a man standing up the slope that overlooked the asylum grounds. He felt a thrill of renewed vitality. This man was standing quite still looking down at the asylum. It might be one of the staff looking for him. Or one of the promised helpers. One of the promised helpers?

Sargon was not so calm and apathetic as he had supposed. He was atremble from head to foot. He was not shivering with cold but trembling with excitement. He felt he must end this doubt one way or the other. Could he catch this man's eye? He waved a hand. Then he drew a dirty little pocket-handkerchief from his dressing-gown pocket and began to wave it. Now! Now it seemed the man was looking straight down at Sargon.

He was moving towards Sargon slowly, as if incredulous. Then he was signalling and running.

Sargon sat quite still. He knew all along they would come for him.

It was Bobby, close at hand now and crying out, "Sargon! It is you! Sargon!" Sargon did not wait for him. He turned about and scrambled and dropped off the wall. They clasped hands. "You have come to fetch me?"

"I was in despair. I didn't dream you understood me. I'm all amazed.

... Let me think; what are we to do? This is splendid. My motorbicycle is in the inn. Nuisance that. Yes, come along. I must hide you somewhere and fetch it. Then we will get away. I didn't think you'd have no clothes. Clothes? Won't show much. Cold? May be cold. I'll get a rug. There's a rug in the sidecar."

He led the way back up the slope, glancing ever and again at the asylum fields. Sargon trotted beside him, calmly confident in God and Bobby, with the limitless docility of one who trusts his servant.

Bobby's mind was fresh and bright that morning. He had wandered out to the asylum simply because he could lie in bed in a fever of regrets no longer. His extreme luck in encountering Sargon has restored all his confidence in himself and in the propitiousness of things. He made his plans quickly and with decision. It would be impossible to take Sargon back to the inn and give him coffee. So soon as he was missed they would surely go to the village. And every one would note this queer little figure with its dressing-gown and slippers and scarred ankles. He must get the little man into hiding somewhere close at hand. In that small beech wood just over the next crest. (Pity he was so scantily clad!) Then the motor bicycle must be fetched as quickly as possible.

Sargon was absolutely trustful and obedient. "It is cold I know," said Bobby, "but unavoidable. I wish there were not so many wet dead leaves."

"Only be quick and fetch help," said Sargon.

"Don't stir from here," said Bobby.

It was not the most perfect hiding-place in the world, a ditch, a clump of holly on the edge of a bare beech-wood, but it was all that downland was likely to provide. "So long," said Bobby and set off at a smart trot for the inn and the motor-bicycle. He arrived flushed, dishevelled, and out of breath and found the inn suspicious and reluctant when he announced that he wanted his bill instantly, refused any breakfast but a cup of tea and a chunk of bread and butter, and set about packing his little roll. There seemed endless things to do, taking an interminable time. To cap a score of irritating delays the inn was short of change and had to send out to the village shop. Billy's motor-bicycle, always a temperamental creature, gave great trouble with its kick starter. And meanwhile Sargon was shivering amidst the mud and dead leaves under the dripping trees or worse, being recaptured and led back into captivity.

It was nearly eight before Bobby came back along the cart-track into sight of the little beech-wood, and his heart jumped when he saw two heavy-looking men advancing towards him. He knew them for asylum men at once; they had the unmistakable flavour of subaltern authority that distinguishes prison warders, ex-policemen, time-keepers, and the keepers of the insane. As he throbbed near them

they came into the middle of the road and made signs for him to stop. "Hell!" said Bobby, and pulled up.

They came alongside and without evident hostility.

"Excuse me, sir," said one — and Bobby felt better.

"That large place you see there, sir, is Cummerdown Asylum. Perhaps you know it, sir?"

"No. *Which* is the asylum? All of it?" Bobby felt he was being really clever and his spirits rose.

"Yesir."

"Damn great place!" said Bobby.

"We've got one of our inmates astray this morning. Harmless little man, he is, and we ventured to stop you and ask you if you've seen him."

Bobby had an inspiration. "I believe I have. Was he in a sort of brown robe and slippers with nothing on his head?"

"That's 'im, sir. Where did you see him?"

Bobby turned round and pointed in the direction from which he had come. "He was making off along the edge of a field," he said. "I saw him not — oh, not five minutes ago. Mile, or a bit more, away from here. Running he was. Along a hedge to the right — left I mean — near a chestnut plantation."

"That's 'im all right, Jim. *Where* did you say, sir?"

Bobby's brilliance increased. "If one of you will sit behind me and the other get into this contraption — bit of a load, but we can manage it — I'll run you back to the very place. Right away." And without more ado he set about turning round. "That's a real help, sir," said Jim. "Don't mention it," said Bobby.

Bobby was now at the top of his form. He loaded them in with helpful words — even the smaller of the two was a tight fit for the side-car and the other sat like a sack on the luggage carrier — he took them back a mile and a half until he found the suitable hedge by the chestnut tree. He unloaded them carefully, received their hearty but hasty thanks with a generous gesture and sent them off at a smart trot across the fields. "He can't have a mile's start," he said. "And he wasn't going particularly fast. Sort of limping."

"That's 'im," said Jim.

Bobby kissed his hand to their retreating backs. "That's *you,*" said

Bobby. “God help you both and cleanse your hearts. And now for Sargon.”

He buzzed back to the place where he had left Sargon, turned his machine round again and then looked towards the corner of the wood by the holly clump where the little man ought to have been waiting. But there was no sign of a peeping head. “Queer!” said Bobby, and ran up to the place where he had left Sargon crouching in the ditch. Not a sign was there of him. Bobby looked about him, baffled and frightened. After all, after everything, could things go wrong now?

“Sargon,” he called, and then louder, “Sargon!”

Not a sound, not a rustle came in reply.

“He’s hidden! Can he have crawled away and fainted? Exhausted perhaps!”

Fear touched Bobby with a chilly finger. Had he mistaken the place perhaps? Had Sargon strayed away in spite of his promise, or crept back numbed and wretched to the warmth and shelter of the asylum? Bobby followed the ditch down to the corner of the wood and beyond the corner in the ditch to the right, he suddenly beheld a little old woman, a little old woman sitting bunched in a heap on a litter of dry straw and fast asleep. She was wearing a battered black straw hat adorned with a broken black feather, a small black jacket bodice; a sack was drawn over her feet and a second sack thrown shawlwise over her shoulders. She was so crumpled up her face was hidden, all except one bright red ear, and behind her on the bank lay two large stakes tied in the form of a cross. To Bobby she was the most astonishing of apparitions. It was disconcerting enough to discover Sargon gone. It was still more amazing to find him so oddly replaced.

Bobby stood hesitating for the better part of a minute. Should he wake the old thing up and ask her about Sargon, or should he steal away. Nothing, he decided, would be lost by asking.

He went close up to her and coughed, “Excuse me, Madam,” he said.

The sleeper did not awake.

Bobby rustled among the leaves, coughed louder, and asked to be excused again. The sleeper muttered a choking snore, woke with a start, looked up, and revealed the face of Sargon. He stared at Bobby

without recognition for a moment and then gave way to an enormous yawn. While he yawned, his blue eyes gathered intelligence and understanding. “I was so cold,” he said. “I took these things from the scarecrow. And the straw was nice and dry to sit on. Shall we put it all back?”

“Oh, glorious idea!” cried Bobby, with all his spirits restored. “It makes an honest woman of you. Can you walk in that sack? No, we haven’t time to put it back. Shake it down off your legs and bring it with you. The side-car isn’t two hundred yards away. You’ll be able to put it on again then. This is magnificent! This is wonderful! Certainly we won’t put it back. Off we’ll go, and when we’ve a good ten miles between us and the asylum we’ll stop and get some hot coffee and something to eat.”

“Hot coffee!” said Sargon, brightening visibly. “And bacon and eggs?”

“Hot coffee and bacon and eggs,” said Bobby.

“The coffee there is — *beastly,*” said Sargon.

Bobby helped Sargon into the side-car and raised the hood over him, erected the wind-screen, and so packed him away. He became a quite passable aunt, dimly seen. And in another minute Bobby had kicked the engine into an impatient fuss and was in the saddle.

He felt himself now the cleverest fellow that ever stole a lunatic. Not that it wasn’t the easiest thing in the world to get a lunatic away. If you knew how.... They quivered and jolted along the little minor road and so on to the smooth main highway to Ashford and Folkestone. The accelerator was urged to do its best. “Good-bye, Cummerdown,” sang Bobby. “Cummerdown Hill, good-bye!”

The little old motor-bike was going beautifully.

7

They got their breakfast at an inn near a Post Office a mile or so beyond Offham. Bobby left Sargon dozing in the side-car and went to send a telegram to Dymchurch announcing his coming. There was some delay in the Post Office, as the post-mistress had mislaid her spectacles. Bobby returned to find the breakfast nearly ready and to assist Sargon out of his sack and into the little room of the inn. The

landlord was a short, stout man, with a grave observant face. He watched this emergence of Sargon and his progress to a chair behind the little white tablecloth, with silent wonder. Then for a time he hid. Then he came back into the little room where the table was set. For some moments he stood regarding Sargon.

"Umph!" he said at last and turned about and went slowly into his kitchen where some sort of wife seemed to be cooking things. "'E's a rummun," Bobby heard him remark, and so was prepared for discussion.

The ham and eggs and coffee were served and received with eagerness. The landlord stood over them scrutinizing their reception of his provisions.

"Hain't 'ad no breakfast, then?" he said.

"Having it now," said Bobby, helping himself to mustard.

"Come far?" said the landlord after a thoughtful pause.

"Fairly," said Bobby with judgment.

"Going far?" the landlord tried.

"So-so," said Bobby.

The landlord rallied his forces for a great effort. "We get some rummy customers here at times," he said.

"You must attract them," said Bobby.

The landlord could make nothing of that. He turned about and said "Umph" — meaningly.

"Umph," said Bobby, just saturating it with meaning.

The landlord made a cunning attempt as they were departing. "Hope you enjoyed your breakfast," he said. "I don't know rightly whether it's a lady or a gentleman you got with you — still—"

Bobby's mercurial temperament was far too high just then. "It's hermaphrodite," he said in a confidential whisper and left the landlord with that.

But when they had gone a few miles further he told Sargon he had decided to buy him some socks and a jacket and trousers at the next shop they saw. "As it is," he said, "you are ambiguous. And then we'll put that hat and jacket and the sacking by the wayside for anyone who wants to use them. And I'll have to send another telegram. I made a mistake." Bobby's mental state became more febrile as the day wore on. He developed a wonderfully

circumstantial He about a cottage and a fire and how his friend had only escaped with just a few articles of clothing hastily put on. “Everything else,” said Bobby, “practically incinerated.” They were going down to take refuge with a variable relation, a brother, an uncle, a maiden aunt. As the day progressed the circumstances of the fire became richer and more remarkable and the particulars of the escape more definitely thrilllng. Bobby told such lies with great sincerity and gravity; they were a form of freedom — from reality.

Sargon himself said very little. For him this adventure was a severer endurance test than Bobby realized at the time. For the most part he was either cramped up and boxed in under the hood and wind-screen and being jolted and jumped along the hard high-road, or he was hastily changing some garment by the roadside, or he was sitting still in the side-car taking refreshment and being lucidly but perplexingly, and usually quite unnecessarily, explained.

8

Mrs. Plumer, of Maresett Cottage, Dymchurch, was an anxious widow woman. She had a kind, serviceable heart, but it was troubled about many things. She saved and eked out almost too much. She let most of her rooms in the summer and some even in the winter, but she hated to think of the things careless lodgers might do to her furniture. She liked everything to be in order and lodgers better looking and better behaved than Mrs. Pringle’s lodgers or Mrs. Mackinder’s lodgers. She had taken a fancy to Bobby because he had fitted in nicely when she had had only one room to spare, and because he had shaved in cold water instead of calling down as every other man lodger did — there was no bell in that room — for hot. Also he talked agreeably when he came in and out and didn’t want more at meals.

She was very pleased when he wrote to take her downstairs living-room and two bedrooms for himself and a friend for a fortnight. There were few people in Dymchurch who got “lets” in November. They might come “any time” after Tuesday.

She told Mrs. Pringle and Mrs. Mackinder that she was expecting two young gentlemen, and left them to suppose that her guests might

stay on indefinitely.

On Wednesday she was excited and rather perplexed by a series of telegrams from Bobby. The first said plainly and distinctly: "*arriving with aunt about four Roothing.*" That disappointed her. She would have infinitely preferred two gentlemen. —

But within an hour came another wire and this said: "*Error in telegram not aunt uncle sorry Roothing.*"

Now what was one to make of *that?*

Presently the child from the Post Office was back again. "*Uncle catching cold fire hot water bottles whisky.*"

The next sensational telegram announced a delay. "*Tyre trouble not so soon later Roothing.*"

Then came: "*Sixish almost certain good fire please Roothing.*"

"It's very good of him," said Mrs. Plumer, "to keep me informed like this. But I hope the old gentleman won't be fussy."

The fire in the downstairs sitting-room was burning brightly at six, there was a kettle on the hob, there were not only tea-things, but whisky, sugar, glasses, and a lemon on the table and a hot-water-bottle in both the beds upstairs when the fugitives arrived. Mrs. Plumer's first feeling at the sight of Sargon were feelings of disappointment. She had allowed her mind to run away with the idea of a warm, comfortable uncle with at most a whisky-drinking cold, an uncle who would be, if not absolutely golden, at least gilt-edged. She had, if anything, exaggerated her memories of Mr. Roothing's geniality. So soon as she held open her door at the roar and toot of the motor-bicycle, she saw that her anticipations would have to be modified again. Things were rather indistinct in the deepening twilight, but she could see that Bobby wasn't wearing the full and proper leather costume with gauntlets and goggles complete, that a real young gentleman would have worn on such an occasion and which Mrs. Pringle and Mrs. Mackinder would have respected, and that the shape he was extracting from the sidecar was not the shape of a properly-expanded uncle. It looked much more like a large hen taken out of a small basket on market day.

As Sargon came into the light of the living-room, Mrs. Plumer's disillusionment deepened and decreased. She had rarely seen so strange and weatherbeaten an outcast. His blue eyes stared pitifully

out of a pale face; his hair, beneath an unsuitable black felt hat, was greatly disordered. He was clad chiefly in an excessive pair of trousers which he clutched nervously to keep up; very full they were with his dressing-gown tails; his too ample white socks fell like gaiters over his old felt slippers and betrayed his distressful ankles. He looked afraid. He stared at her almost as though he anticipated an unfriendly reaction. And Bobby, too, standing beside him, looked rough and travel-worn and eventful, and not at all the self-effacing young gentleman she had remembered.

When Bobby saw the swift play of Mrs. Plumer's expression he realized that their foothold in this pleasant, restful, firelit apartment was precarious. Happily a reserve lie he had thought of, but not hitherto used, came aptly to his mind.

"Isn't it a shame!" he said. "They went off with his clothes. Even his socks."

"They seem to have," said Mrs. Plumer, "whoever they were."

"Pure hold-up. This side of Ashford. My big bag too."

"And where did the gentleman get the clothes he's wearing?" she asked. Her tone was unpleasantly sceptical.

"They exchanged. I'd gone back along the road to see if I could see anything of the tyre-pump I'd dropped, never thinking anything of the sort was possible on an English high-road. (Come and sit by the fire, uncle.) And when I came back they's gone and there he was — as you see him. Imagine my astonishment!"

"And you never sent a telegram about it!" said Mrs. Plumer.

"Too near home. I'd have got here first, anyhow. Well, we've had adventures enough to-day, anyhow. I've never known such a journey. Thank heaven, we've had our tea. I think the best place for uncle is bed — until we can arrange some clothes for him. What do you think, Mrs. Plumer?"

"After he's had a good wash," said Mrs. Plumer. She was still doubtful, but a sort of kindliness was struggling to the surface. "Weren't you afraid when they jumped out on you, sir?" She asked Sargon directly. His blue eyes sought Bobby's for instructions.

"It was a great shock to him," said Bobby, "a great shock. He's hardly got over it yet."

"Hardly got over it yet," said Sargon in confirmation.

“Took all your clothes off, they did. It’s shameful,” said Mrs. Plumer. “And you with a cold coming on.”

“We’ll get him to bed. Of course, if you’ve got anything for us to eat we might have it first here. Perhaps just a bit of toasted cheese or Welsh Rarebit, or something of that sort, and a good hot grog. Eh, uncle?”

“Don’t want much to eat,” said Sargon. “No.”

“I haven’t forgotten that Welsh Rarebit you made for me, Mrs. Plumer, after I got caught in the rain on the way from Hythe.”

“Well, I daresay I could get you a Welsh Rarebit,” said Mrs. Plumer, softening visibly.

“Famous,” said Bobby. “Make a new man of him. And meanwhile I’ll run the old bike round to the shed. If I may put it in the shed? You’ll be all right here, uncle?”

“It’s safe?”

“Every one’s safe with Mrs. Plumer,” said Bobby, and held the door open for her to precede him out of the room.

“I’ll tell you about him to-morrow morning,” he said to her confidentially in the passage. “He’s a wonderful man.”

“He’s all right?” asked Mrs. Plumer.

“Right as can be.”

“He looks that distraught!”

“He’s a poet,” said Bobby, “besides playing on the violin,” and so satisfied her completely.

But he did not feel that he had brought the wonderful day to a completely successful end until he had got Sargon washed and brushed and tucked up cosily in Mrs. Plumer’s bright little best bedroom. “Now we’re anchored,” he said. He went into his own room and sat down for a time to invent things about his uncle in case Mrs. Plumer was desirous of more explicit information when he went downstairs. He decided to say “He’s eccentric,” in an impressive, elucidatory way. “And very shy.” His uncle, he would explain, was suffering from overwork, due to writing an heroic poem about the Prince of Wales’ journey round the world. He wanted a complete rest. And sea air. The more he stayed in bed and indoors the better. He filled in a few useful details of this story, sat for a little while twiddling the toes of his boots, and then got up and went downstairs.

He felt sure he could carry it off all right with Mrs. Plumer. He found her waiting for him. The chief difficulty he encountered was her conviction that the police ought to be told of the highway robbery this side of Ashford at once.

"H'm," said Bobby and for a moment he was at a loss. Then he decided. "I've done that already," he said.

"But when?"

"I telephoned from an Automobile Association box. To the Ashford police. It will be in their district you know. Not in Romney Marsh. Sharp fellows, the Ashford police. I had to describe the lost clothes and everything. They don't let much get by them."

She took it beautifully. After that everything was easy.

9

The next morning found Sargon developing an evil cold in his throat and chest. His chest was painful and he was feverish, red-cheeked, bright-eyed, and short of breath. Bobby did not care to consult a doctor. He believed that all doctors constituted a league for the re-incarceration of escaped lunatics. He imagined secret notices about escapes being circulated throughout the profession. He motored to Hythe and got ammoniated quinine, several sorts of voice jujube, two iodine preparations for the chest, and suchlike trifles that the chemist recommended. When he returned about midday the patient looked better and seemed in less pain. After Bobby had administered quinine and rubbed his chest and made a generally curative fuss, he was able and disposed to talk.

"The pillow all right?" said Bobby.

"Perfect."

"You ought to doze for a bit now."

"Yes."

Sargon thought. "I shall not have to go back to that Place again?"

"I hope not."

The flushed face became very earnest. "Promise me not. Promise me not. I couldn't endure it."

"No need to be anxious," said Bobby. "Here, you are quite safe."

“And there will be no need to get into that side-car again?”

“None.”

“Never?”

“No.”

“It bumped — horribly.... Where is Christina Alberta?”

Bobby did not answer for a moment or so.

“Perhaps I ought to explain. I do not know who Christina Alberta is. I took you out of the asylum because I do not believe you are mad. But I know nothing of your family. I know nothing about your circumstances at all. I just couldn’t bear the thought of you in an asylum.”

Sargon lay in silence for a little while with his blue eyes on Bobby’s face. “You were sorry for me?”

“I liked you from the very first moment I saw you in Midgard Street.”

“*Liked* me? But you believed I was Sargon, King of Kings?”

“Practically,” said Bobby.

“You didn’t. Neither, I suppose, did I.”

The vague blue eyes left Bobby’s face and stared out of the window at the sky. “I have been very much confused in my mind,” said Sargon. “Even now I am not clear. But I realize I am confused. Christina Alberta is my daughter. The Princess Royal I called her. In Sumeria. She is a very dear, bold girl. She is all I have. I left her and came away from her, and I must have distressed her greatly.”

“Then she may not know where you have been?”

“She may be looking for me.”

“Where is she?”

“I have been trying to remember. It was in a studio somewhere — with peculiar pictures. I never liked those pictures. A studio in a Mew. It had a name but I cannot remember its name. It is stupid of me. Probably Christina Alberta is there with her friends — still wondering what has become of me.”

“At the — at the *Place,* they told me your name was Preemby.”

“Albert Edward Preemby.... I wonder.”

He lay reflecting for a time. “I remember that for a long time I thought I was Albert Edward Preemby, a small creature, a little man living a mean life in a laundry. A laundry with large blue vans. The

swastika. You cannot imagine what a small, insignificant life it was that this Preemby led. And then suddenly I thought I could not possibly be Preemby and also an immortal soul. Either there was no Preemby, I thought, or there was no God. There could not possibly be both. It perplexed and worried me very much. Because there I was — Preemby. I am not good at thinking — all my thinking goes off into a kind of dreaming. And then when there came evidence that seemed satisfactory — perhaps I jumped at what I was told. But Sargon must have been a great king, a very great king, and I am small and weak and not very intelligent. When the keepers and attendants bullied me and ill-treated me I did not behave as a great king should have behaved, and when I saw them doing evil things to other — other patients, I did not interfere. Yet all the time I think I am something different from the Albert Edward Preemby I used to be, something more and something better. But it leaves me confused to think who I am, and I am very tired. Perhaps, when I have rested a day or two, I may be better able to think about these things."

The faded voice died away. The blue eyes remained staring tranquilly at the sky.

Bobby said nothing for a little while. Then he remarked, "I have seen men ill-treated."

And then: "and I am not so slight as you are."

He said no more. It did not seem as though Sargon had heard him. Bobby stood up.

"You must rest. You are perfectly safe here. If we can remain unnoted here for two weeks then it will be impossible ever to send you back to that place again. Are you comfortable?"

"It is a beautiful bed," said Sargon.

But beautiful though the bed was it was not sufficient to arrest the trouble in Sargon's aching chest. He seemed very exhausted that evening. In the night he began coughing; he coughed so distressingly that Bobby went in to him. In the morning he was spiritless and did not want to eat. Bobby sat in the room downstairs working at the pile of Aunt Suzannah correspondence that Billy had sent on to him. He was half-minded to appeal to Tessy to come down and help with the nursing, but there was no bedroom available for her. Mrs. Plumer pressed for a doctor and he put her off. Finally, on her own

responsibility, she brought in a young man who was just starting a practice in the place. Bobby had a terrifying interview, but the young doctor betrayed no suspicions. On the whole, he was reassuring. There was congestion of the lungs but nothing worse. Sargon must keep very warm and take this and that. No urgent need for a nurse. Keep him warm and give him his medicine.

Late in the evening Bobby sent up to say good-night and found Sargon better and more talkative.

"I have been thinking of Christina Alberta and I should like to see her. I would like to see her and tell her things I have been thinking about her. I have been thinking out all sorts of curious things. Perhaps I am not so much to her as she may think. But chiefly I want to talk to her about a young man I dislike. What was he called? When I was last at Lonsdale Mews, she danced with him."

"Lonsdale Mews!"

"Yes, yes, of course. I had forgotten. Eight Lonsdale Mews, Lonsdale Road, Chelsea. But my mind is very confused and I do not know what I should say to her even if she came."

Bobby wrote down the address forthwith.

"And this Christina Alberta is all you have?" he asked.

"All I have.

"Twenty. Quite a child really. I ought never to have left her. But there came a sort of wonder upon me — as though the world was opening. It made everything else seem very trivial."

10

"*There came a sort of wonder upon me as though the world was opening.*"

Bobby wrote that down also. And he sat very late before the fire in the ground floor room thinking that over and thinking over the message he would have to send to Christina Alberta in the morning. To-morrow he would have to explain himself and his extraordinary intervention in Preemby affairs. It was by no means plain to himself as yet, and to-morrow he would have to make plain to a probably very indignant young lady why her father had so caught his sympathies and fascinated his imagination as to tempt him to this

escapade. He found himself thrown back on self-analysis. He found himself scrutinizing his own motives and his own scheme of existence.

He knew and understood that feeling, "as though the world was opening" so well. Still better did he know that feeling of dead emptiness in life out of which it arose. In his own case he had thought this habitual discontent with the daily round, this urgency towards something strange and grandiose, was due to the dislocation of all his expectations of life by the great war; that it was a subjective aspect of nervous instability; but in the case of this little laundryman it could not have been the war that had sent him out, a sort of emigrant from himself, to find a fantastic universal kingdom. It must be something more fundamental than the war accident. It must be a normal disposition in men towards detachment from safety and comfort.

He glanced towards the pile of his Aunt Suzannah correspondence on the table and the next sheet of "copy" for *Wilkins*' *Weekly* he had distilled therefrom. He rose from his arm-chair and went back to his work with his wisdom refreshed. He wrote: "So soon as man's elementary needs are satisfied and he is sure of food, clothing and shelter, he comes under the sway of a greater imperative; he goes out to look for trouble. So that I would not discourage 'Croydon's' desire to become a missionary in West Africa in spite of his religious doubts and his peculiar feeling about black people. Such a region as Sherborough Island will probably supply him with a good sustained, sustaining, and ennobling system of troubles. A white man who has once challenged the hostility of a West African secret society will have little leisure for morbid introspection. He will hardly He stopped writing. "Reads a little ironical," he said. "And not quite Aunt Suzannah enough."

He reflected. "My mind scampers off from me at times. Not in the vein to-day."

The one thing they must never feel about Aunt Suzannah was that she could be ironical. No! it wouldn't do. He ran his pen through the six sentences he had just written and pushed the sheet away from him. He drew another sheet towards him on which he had been composing with great difficulty a telegram to be sent next morning to

“Preemby, 8 Lonsdale Mews, Chelsea.” He read over various drafts. The current form ran as follows: “*Your father safe but with severe chest cold care of Roothing Maresett Cottage Dymchurch desires see you discretion very necessary return confinement fatal results best station Hythe and cab could meet you Hythe if wire in time but do not know you personally am tallish slender dark Roothing.*”

Properly considered it was all right.

He tried to imagine what sort of girl this Christina Alberta Preemby would be. She would be blue-eyed of course and probably very fair; a little taller and rounder than her father, soft-voiced and rather dreamy. She would be timid and affectionate, very kind and gentle and a little incompetent. Perhaps it would be well to meet her at Hythe so soon as he knew which train she was coming by. The cab business might be a strain on her. He would have to tell her what to do. To a considerable extent now he had made himself responsible for the fortunes of both these people. And he liked to think that. He liked to think that perhaps these might become his own people, more of his own people than the Malmesburys. Because to be frank about it with himself he was a little bit of an interpolation in the Malmesbury household. They liked him; they were perfect dears to him; but they could do without him. Even that little devil Susan managed without him; she liked him and tyrannized over him but he knew he wasn’t indispensable to her. Here at last might be two people who couldn’t do without him, who might to an extraordinary extent become his people.

Of course he would have to put on a little more appearance of strength and determination than was actually his quality. He owed it to them to keep up their confidence in him so that he might be able to direct them in their difficulties.

He would say to her — what would he say to her? “I have been hasty, I know, but I know something of the strain that is put upon the sane patient in an asylum. I thought that the first thing to do was to get your father out of it. It didn’t occur to me that for a time he might have forgotten your address. Perhaps I ought to have come to you before I acted. But then how was I to know there *was* a you? Until he told me of your existence. In so many cases in these asylums the relatives are hostile to release. It is dreadful to admit it, but it is so.”

Then rather humorously and quite modestly he would describe the escape. He was already forgetting the uncertainties of the visiting-day conversation and the numerous accidental factors in the meeting by the culvert. But all history has this knack of eliminating unnecessary detail.

So he would make his statement. It did not occur to him that Christina Alberta might be the sort of person who interrupts speeches with elucidatory questions.

He lit a cigarette, strolled about the room, and came to rest standing before the fire and looking down on the glowing coals. He was sure now that Christina Alberta was blue-eyed, fragile, shy — with a deep sweet vein of humorous fantasy hidden away in her. Very probably she concealed a gift for writing. It would be for him perhaps to discover that and cultivate it and bring it out. Together they would protect Sargon, already more than half recovered from the intoxication of his dream. They would have to soften the humiliations of his complete awakening. How fortunate and as it were providential it was that he had been impelled to rescue the little man! — for otherwise he would never have met Christina Alberta, never won her timid wealth of love....

"*Eh!*

"But this is all damned nonsense!" said Bobby violently, and threw his cigarette into the fire. "This is just fancy! I haven't even *seen* the girl!"

He lit his candle, put out Mrs. Plumer's oil lamp with all the devices and precautions proper to this dangerous survival from the Dark Ages, and went up to bed. He stopped and listened outside Sargon's door. The patient was asleep and breathing rather noisily — ever and again choking with a little cough.

"I wish the weather had kept warmer," said Bobby.

When he opened his own bedroom door, the flame of his candle writhed and flared horizontally, the curtains streamed into the room and a sheet of paper flapped on the dressing-table. He put down the candle and went to shut the window. The wind was rising and there was a little patter of raindrops on the pane.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE LAST PHASE

1

IT was pan of the general unsatisfactoriness of Bobby's make-up that he was acutely responsive to meteorological conditions. That late Indian summer was over now, and the heavens and the earth and the air between began to push, hustle, wet, chill, darken, distress and bully him. Jumbled grey clouds came hurrying across Dymchurch from Dungeness and the Atlantic, torn, angular, outstretched clouds with malicious expressions like witches and warlocks, emitting fierce squirts of rain. Under their skirts came the waves in long rolling regiments, threatening from afar, breaking into premature handfuls of foam, gathering force at last, towering up for a last culminating thud against the sea-wall and spouting heavenward in white fountains of suddy water.

"Face it, man," said Bobby. "Face it. It's only Nature. Brace up to it. Think of this poor girl."

He forced himself to do a morning's walk along the top of the sea-wall, with his wet trousers flapping against his legs like flags against their staves.

"Glorious wind!" he told Sargon when he went in to see him. "But I wish there was a gleam of sun."

"Have you any news from Christina Alberta?" asked Sargon.

"There's hardly time yet for a reply to my wire. But she'll surely come," said Bobby, and went downstairs to dry his legs at the fire.

He did not expect a summons to Hythe to meet the young lady very much before half-past twelve. Meanwhile he went out to the shed and assured himself that the motor-bicycle and side-car were in perfect order for a hasty journey. Half-past twelve came, one, half-past one. He had some lunch. He became very restless, and rose and looked out of the window frequently to see if the messenger girl was coming with Christina Alberta's telegram. About two a large, silent, luxurious-looking, hired Daimler car appeared outside and stopped at

Mrs. Plumer's gate. A hatless bobbed head appeared at the window and exchanged remarks with the driver, who descended and opened the door. The car emitted a handsome and determined young woman of advanced appearance, hatless and short-skirted, and a lean, dark, prosperous-looking man of thirty-eight or forty in blue serge and a grey felt hat. The man opened the gate for the girl, and she surveyed the house as she advanced.

Bobby realized that Christina Alberta had not kept her promise to be blue-eyed and fragile. She had betrayed him. Yet for all her treachery he had built up a sense of personal relationship with her that gripped him still. He watched her approach with an excitement he found difficult to control. He wondered who the devil the dark man was. A cousin perhaps. She discovered Bobby watching her from the window, and their eyes met.

2

Bobby, with an instinct that is given to young people for such occasions, perceived that he interested Christina Alberta extremely. He parleyed with her and Devizes in Mrs. Plumer's little downstairs room. He spoke chiefly to her. Devizes he treated as a secondary figure, a voice at her elbow. "He's got a nasty cold on his chest," he said.

"He's been asking for Miss Preemby—"

"Christina Alberta," said Christina Alberta.

"Christina Alberta a lot. But it was only last night I could get the address out of him. He'd forgotten it before. We've been here over a day. He caught the cold coming here."

"How did you come here?" Devizes threw in.

"Motor-bicycle," said Bobby. "But there was a lot of waiting about before we could get away and it was a cold raw morning, and he had just his nightgown and dressing-gown and slippers. So hard to foresee everything."

"But how did you come to be rescuing him?"

Bobby smiled at Devizes. "Somebody had to be rescuing him."

He turned to Christina Alberta again. "Couldn't bear the thought of his being under lock and key. He took a room, you see, in the

place where I lodged, and there was something innocent and — delightful about him. I've a weakness, a sympathy perhaps, with absurdity.... You ought to go up to him and see him."

"Yes, we'd better look at him," said Devizes.

(Who the devil was this fellow?)

Bobby asserted himself. "Christina Alberta first, I think."

He took Christina Alberta up to her daddy and closed the door on a warm embrace. "And now, Mr de Vezes, or whatever you are," he said to himself on the staircase, "where do *you* come in?" He descended and found Devizes standing very irritatingly upon his hearthrug before his fire. As he stood there a remote resemblance to Christina Alberta was perceptible. Bobby had an incoherent recognition of the fact that in some obscure way Devizes was responsible for Christina Alberta's failure to produce blue eyes. He was a little slow in saying what he intended to say, and Devizes was able to take the initiative. "Forgive my blunt impertinence," he said, "but may I ask who you are?"

"I'm a writer," said Bobby, refraining from any glance at the accumulation of Aunt Suzannah material upon the side table.

"You've finished lunch?" asked Devizes in a disregarded parenthesis. "May I ask the same question of you?" said Bobby, "and how it is you come to be connected with the Preembys?"

"I'm a blood relation," said Devizes, considering it. "On the mother's side. A sort of cousin. And I happen to be a nervous and mental specialist. That's why I've been brought in to-day."

"I see," said Bobby. "You've got no intention of — putting him back?"

"None at all. We're not antagonists, Mr.—"

"Roothing."

"We're on the same side. You did well to get him out. We were trying to do the same things by less original methods. We're very grateful to you. The lunacy laws are rather a clumsy and indiscriminating machine. But, as you probably know, if he keeps clear of them for fourteen days, they'll have to begin with him all over again. He renews his sanity. We're allies in that. We've got to know each other better. Your intervention — most surprising — strikes me as being at once eccentric and courageous. I wish you'd

tell me more about it, how you met him, how they got hold of him, and what set you thinking of an escape."

"Hm," said Bobby, and came and asserted his right to half the hearthrug. He had thought of the way in which he could tell this story — to Christina Alberta — the original Christina Alberta with the blue eyes. He felt that that version needed considerable revision, indeed, possibly even a complete rearrangement, for the present hearer. He was by no means sure he wanted to tell it to the present hearer. The man was a doctor and a mental specialist and a distant relation, and he was for keeping Sargon out of an asylum, and that was all to the good, but it still lingered in Bobby's mind that he was an interloper. Nevertheless, he made way for Bobby quite civilly on the hearthrug, and his manner was attentive and respectful. Bobby embarked upon a description of Sargon's first appearance in Midgard Street.

Devizes showed himself alert and intelligent. He grasped the significance of Sargon's projected visit to the dome of St. Paul's at once. "I've no doubt he did it," said Devizes. "Neither have I," said Bobby, "though I've not asked him about it yet." They pieced together the probable story of the calling of the disciples before Billy and Bobby had come upon the procession. "It's touching," said Devizes, "and immense." Bobby approved these words.

"You see how he got me," said Bobby.

A distinct flavour of friendliness for Devizes crept by imperceptible degrees into Bobby's mind. Difficulties that had seemed to threaten his explanations vanished; this man, he perceived, could understand anything a fellow did. Devizes made him feel that the extraction of Sargon from Cummerdown by a perfect stranger was the most simple and natural thing to do imaginable. Bobby warmed to his story; his sense of humour took heart of grace, and he became frank and amusing about his difficulties on the visiting-day. As he was telling of the foxy-faced deaf-mute, Christina Alberta came back again into the downstairs room.

"He takes me as a matter of course," she said. "He seems weak and drowsy and his chest is bad." She spoke more definitely to Devizes. "I think you ought to overhaul him."

"There is a doctor in attendance?" he asked Bobby.

Bobby explained. Devizes considered. Was Sargon dozing? Yes. Then let him doze for a bit. Bobby, working now a little more consciously for effect, went on with his story. Christina Alberta regarded him with manifest approval.

By tea-time Bobby had adjusted his mind to the existence of Devizes and the unexpectedness of Christina Alberta. All that carried over from his state of expectation was the idea that his relations with Christina Alberta were to be very profound and intimate. He still believed that, hidden away in her somewhere, there must be a blue-eyed, yielding, really feminine person, but it was very deeply hidden. Meanwhile the superimposed disguise struck him as agreeable, alert, humorous, and friendly. Devizes too he saw more and more as a strong, capable, understanding personality. He had seen Devizes examining Sargon, and it was clever, confidence-provoking doctoring. Sargon's lungs, he said, were badly congested, especially on the left side; he was on the edge of pneumonia and without much vitality to fight it. He ought to be kept in a warmer, less draughty room with a night-nurse available. Mrs. Plumer had no room for a nurse, and not an hour away by automobile was Paul Lambone's excessively comfortable week-end cottage at Udimore. A little masterly telephoning and telegraphing and the cottage was available, fires were alight in the best bedroom, a trained nurse was on her way to it, and it was all settled for Sargon, warmly wrapped up and fortified with hot-water bottles, to go thither. Bobby found himself a mere accessory in this new system of things; he was to follow next day to Udimore on his motor-bicycle, for there would be room for all of them in Paul Lambone's cottage. Apparently Paul Lambone's conception of a simple cottage in the wilderness involved a housekeeper, several servants, and four or five visitors' rooms.

This fellow Devizes carried out all his arrangements with a smooth competence that gave Bobby no scope for self-assertion. Sargon and Christina Alberta and Devizes would depart at five and get to Udimore by six, by which time the nurse would be installed. Then Devizes would go back to London and get there in time to dress for a dinner he had to attend. On Saturday morning he would be busy in London, and then he would come back to Udimore and see if Sargon was recovered enough for the beginnings of his mental

treatment. Perhaps the unknown Paul Lambone would be there too. He was a lazy person, Bobby gathered; he'd have to be brought down by Devizes. Bobby was to stay at Udimore for some days. He made modest protestations. "No, you're *in* it now," said Devizes cheerfully and glanced at Christina Alberta. "You're in for Sargon like the rest of us. Bring your work with you."

"Yes, do come," said Christina Alberta.

The only reason Bobby had for resisting the invitation was that it attracted him so much.

This "cottage" at Udimore, which struck Bobby as being a really very pretty and comfortable modern house, and these three people, Christina Alberta, Devizes and Paul Lambone, who now grouped themselves round Sargon, exercised his mind in a quite extraordinary way. They struck him as being novel and definite to a degree he'd never met in anyone before, and even the house was fresh and decisive in its broad white grace, like no house that had ever before held his attention. It made most of the other houses he had ever observed seem accidental and aggregatory and secondhand and wandering in their purpose. But this house was the work of a clever young architect who had considered Paul Lambone intelligently, and its white rough-cast walls sat comfortably on the hill-side and looked with an honest entirely detached admiration at Rye and across the marsh to Winchelsea and the remote blue sea; and it had seats and arbours and a gazebo for sitting about in, and uphill was a walled graden with broad paths up which you looked from the back of the house through lead-paned windows. You could watch the sunset from a number of excellent points of view, but it did not shine upon any room to weary and blind you. There was a kind wall to shelter hollyhocks and delphiniums from the south-west wind, and to bear a plum or so and a pear and a fig-tree. Downstairs was mainly one great rambling room with a dining recess in one corner and the power of opening itself out into a loggia, and with conversational centres about fire-places or windows as the season might require, but there were several little studies about the house in which one could be shut off and write. Book-shelves grew in convenient corners, and the house was everywhere mysteriously warm from unseen and scarce suspected radiators. The house was so like Paul Lambone, and

Paul Lambone so much a part of his house, that he seemed to be really no more than its voice and its eyes.

Paul Lambone was the first successful writer Bobby had ever met. Bobby knew various needy young writers, tadpole writers, insecure writers, but this was the first completely grown-up and established and massively adult writer he had ever known. The man struck Bobby as being stupendously secure and free and prosperous. And the remarkable thing was that he was in no way a great writer, no Dickens nor Scott nor Hardy; his work wasn't, after all, in Bobby's opinion anything so very remotely above Bobby's own efforts. A certain terseness he had at times, a certain penetration: those were the chief differences. In Bobby's imagination the literary and artistic life had hitherto had an unavoidable flavour of casual adventure, glorious achievements, maddening difficulties, wild delights, and tragic unhappinesses. Swift, Savage, Goldsmith, the Carlyles, Balzac, Dumas, Edgar Allan Poe, these had been his types. But this new bright house was as sound and comfortable as any country house, and Lambone sat in it with as safe a dignity as though he was a provincial banker or a mine-owner or the senior member of some widespread firm of solicitors. No fears of losing his "job" or "writing himself out" oppressed him. He said and did exactly what he thought proper, and the policeman saluted him as he passed.

If this sort of thing could spring from the *Book of Everyday Wisdom* and Paul's amiable novels, what hitherto unsuspected possibilities of accumulation and ease and security and helpfulness might there not be in Aunt Suzannah's kindly responsiveness? It had never before seemed credible to Bobby that a day might come when he would be secure and his own master, able to refuse limitations himself and to release other people from limitations. All Bobby's life hitherto had been a matter of direction and eminent necessity. He had been *sent* to school and *sent* to college. He had been on the eve of being *put into* the position of agent upon a friendly estate when the Great War had seized upon him and the rest of his generation and drilled him and sent him off to Mesopotamia. And after the war he had had to do something to supplement his diminished inheritance. Life had been so indicated and prescribed for him at every stage, his parents' existence had been so entirely directed by a class tradition,

that Bobby's mind was exceptionally well-prepared to be impressed by Paul Lambone's freedoms.

It was curious to note how completely Paul Lambone arose out of the present-day world, and how completely he didn't belong to it. He had all its advantages and so little of its standard obligations. He had escaped from it with most of its gifts. He had to go to no court, follow no seasons, make no calls, and perform no functions. Was he exceptional in his circumstances altogether, or were there a lot of people escaping, as he was escaping, prosperously, from the old decaying social system? a queer sort of new people who didn't belong?

Bobby sat on the terrace and looked over the back of his seat at this extremely new but very sightly and comfortable cottage of Lambone's, with this freshly arrived idea of a new sort of people getting loose in the world and living unrelated to the old order of things and shaping out new ways of living, very active in his mind. This house seemed to embody that idea; it was new and novel, but not a bit apologetic nor rebellious.

It was just breaking out like a new fashion. It was just arising like a new century. He had always assumed that revolutions came from below through the rage of the excluded and the disinherited. He had thought every one took that for granted. But suppose revolutions were merely smashes-up that hadn't very much to do with real progress either way, and that the new age dawned anywhere in the social order where people could get free enough to work out new ideas.

New ideas!

Sargon was new, Paul Lambone was new, Devizes new: before the war there could not have been any such people. They had grown out of their own past selves; they were as different from pre-war people as nineteenth-century people had been different from eighteenth-century people. Newest of all was this Christina Alberta who had effaced her blue-eyed predecessor. She was so direct and free in her thoughts and talk that she made Bobby feel that his own mind wore a bonnet and flounces. He had gone for two walks with her, once to Brede and once to Rye, and he liked her tremendously. Whether he was in love with her he didn't yet know. Falling in love

with her for anyone was evidently going to be a quite unconventional, untested, and difficult series of exercises. Nothing at all like that unborn normal affair with the non-existent blue-eyed girl.

She seemed to like him, and particularly the way his hair grew on his head. She had mentioned it twice and ruffled it once.

A queer aspect of the situation was the riddle of how she and Sargon and himself came to be the guests of Paul Lambone with Devizes in attendance. It was just a part of Paul Lambone's freedom from prescription that he should be able to give sanctuary to Sargon and assemble this odd, unconventional week-end party. But Bobby had a sense of hidden links and missing clues. Devizes was a natural enough visitor, of course; he was manifestly Lambone's close friend. But their interest in Sargon was stronger than Bobby could imagine it ought to be. He was puzzled; he examined all sorts of possibilities in a gingerly fashion. Some impulse like his own, no doubt, but not quite the same, lay at the bottom of this — Sargonism.

Bobby had begun by feeling very hostile to Devizes as an unexpected intruder on a system of relationships sufficiently interesting without him. He was glad that he had to go to London for Friday, and not particularly pleased by his return on Saturday. Then he found his feelings changing to a curious respect, mingled with a defensive element that was almost like fear.

Devizes was more aware of you than Lambone. He looked at you, his mind came at you. It had the habit of coming at people. He was more actively and aggressively interested in things than Lambone and more self-forgetful. Lambone observed enough to make bright comments; Devizes made penetrating observations. Bobby often felt encumbered with himself; most people he thought were encumbered with themselves, but Devizes to a conspicuous degree wasn't. He was a man of science; a man of scientific habits. Bobby had known one or two scientific men before, rather wrapped away from ordinary things, but the interest that wrapped them was something that wrapped them away from oneself; one had been concerned chiefly with stresses in glass and another with the eggs of echinoderms. You always seemed to be looking at the backs of these fellows' heads and smiling at their immense preoccupation. But this man Devizes was wrapped up in the motives and thoughts of people; he didn't look

away from you; he looked into you. That grew upon Bobby's consciousness. Devizes' eye lacked delicacy.

He had come down for the week-end chiefly to deal with Sargon. He went up and had long talks to Sargon. He was "treating" Sargon. He didn't go up and talk to Sargon as man to man, as Bobby would have done. He went up to a sort of mental jiu-jitsu with Sargon to exercise him and push him about into new attitudes. Devizes was formidable enough in himself, but far more formidable as a portent. He had all the appearance of being a precursor, the most vigorous precursor — they were all precursors! — of a new type of human relationships, relationships without delicate reservations, without rich accumulations of feeling behind emotions avoided and things unsaid. So it seemed to Bobby, who didn't for a moment suspect how much these people were avoiding and suppressing. Christina Alberta's thoughts and speech seemed to him to be moving about without a stitch on, like the people in some horrible Utopia by Wells. He compared the vast impalpable network of "understanding" he and Tessy had woven between each other.

"New people," he whispered, and looked Paul Lambone's new house in the face. To him they were stupendously new, an immense discovery. The war had overstrained him, he realized, and left him too tired for a time to see new things. He had been one of the vast multitude of those who had come out of the war in the expectation of a trite and obvious old-fashioned millennium, and who expressed their disappointment by declaring that nothing had happened except devastation and impoverishment. They were too jaded at first to observe anything else. But indeed Bobby now realized the European world had been travelling faster and faster since the break-up of the armed peace in 1914; and here were new types, new habits of thought, new ideas, new reactions, new morals, new ways of living. He discovered himself in the advent of a new age, a new age that was coming so fast that there hadn't been time ever to clear the forms and institutions of the old age away. They weren't reversed or abolished, they weren't overthrown, they were just disregarded. Which was just why it was possible to get along for a year or so without noting the tremendous changes everything was undergoing.

"New People." Did that apply to Sargon? That was Sargon's

room: the two long windows between the buttresses. Was Sargon also an escape from the established order of relationships into novel things? What was the real significance of the absurd little man with his preposterous map of the world and his still more preposterous planisphere, who wanted to be Lord of the Earth?

4

When Bobby came to talk it over with Sargon it seemed to him that Devizes had taken the little man completely to pieces and presented him with the disarticulated portions of himself. Devizes went back to London on Monday: he took Christina Alberta with him in his hired car; but Lambone urged Bobby to stay on for a day or so to cheer up the patient. Lambone, so far as he could discover his own intentions, meant to stay on at Udimore for a week or more and work. Bobby saw Christina Alberta off, meditated on her for an hour, then gave the rest of the morning to Aunt Suzannah and the afternoon to Sargon; and Sargon, who was distinctly better, sat propped up by two pillows and discussed the dissected structure of himself.

"Not a bit fatigued," said Sargon. "I'm having a tonic now. Every three hours."

He considered his next remark for some moments before he made it. "Who *is* this Mr. Paul Lambone?" he asked. "It is very hospitable for him to entertain us. Very. (*H'rrmp*)... Is he a friend of yours?"

"He's quite a well-known writer. He's a friend of Christina Alberta's."

"She has so many friends. Young people do nowadays. And what is this Dr. Devizes?"

"He is a nervous specialist, and he was consulted — he was consulted about the possibilities of getting you away from that — Place."

"Nervous specialist. He is a wonderful talker — most intelligent and (h'rrmp) understanding. I have a curious feeling that somewhere, somewhen, somehow I have met him before. In this life — or some other. It is all quite vague, and he does not seem to have any corresponding recollection. No. Probably a coincidence of some sort."

Bobby saw nothing in the coincidence.

Sargon shut his eyes for a second or so.

"We talked of my recent experiences," he resumed.

"Naturally," said Bobby, helping.

"There has been a lot of confusion about my personality. It is a trouble more frequent nowadays than it used to be. Most of my life I have thought that I was a person called Albert Edward Preemby, a limited person, a most limited person. Then I had a light. I began to realize that nobody could really be such a thing as that Albert Edward Preemby. I began to seek for myself. I had reason — too long to explain — to suppose that I was Sargon the First, the great Sumerian, the founder of the first Empire in the world. Then — then came trouble. You saw something of it. I grasped at the sceptre — one afternoon — in Holborn — rashly. Most painful affair. I was sent to that Place. Yes. It shook me. Humiliations. Hardship. Real — uncleanness. I doubted whether I wasn't after all just that little Preemby. A human rabbit. My faith faltered. I admit it faltered."

He mused painfully for some moments.

Then he laid his hand reassuringly on Bobby's wrist.

"I *am* Sargon," he said, "Talking to your friend Devizes has cleared my mind greatly. I *am* Sargon, but in a rather different sense from what I had imagined. Preemby was, as I had supposed, a mere accidental covering. But—"

The little face puckered with intellectual effort. "I am not *exclusively* Sargon. You — you perhaps are still unawakened — but you are Sargon too. His blood is in our veins. We are co-heirs. It is fairly easy to understand. Sargon, regal position. Naturally many wives. Political — biological necessity. Offspring numerous. They again — positions of advantage — many children. Next generation, more. Like a vast expanding beam of intellectual and moral force. You can prove it — prove it by mathematics. Dr. Devizes and I — we worked it out on a piece of paper. We are all descended from Sargon, just as we are all descended from Ctesar — just as nearly all English and Americans are descended from William the Conqueror. Few people realize this. A little arithmetic — it is perfectly plain. Long before the Christian era the blood of Sargon was diffused throughout all mankind. His traditions still more so. We all inherit.

Not merely from him — from all the great kings, from all the noble conquerors. From all the brave and beautiful women. All the statesmen and inventors and creators. If not directly from them, from their fathers and mothers. All that rich wine from the past is in my veins. And I thought I was just Albert Edward Preemby! And at Woodford Wells I went for a silly little walk nearly every afternoon with sixpence in my pocket to spend and nothing in the world to do! For twenty years. It seems incredible."

The blue eyes sought confirmation from Bobby, who nodded.

"There was I walking about Epping Forest in a suit of clothes I never really liked — a rather exaggerated golfing suit with baggy knickerbockers that my wife chose for me — they seemed to get baggier every year — and I was quite ignorant that I was the heir of all the ages, and that the whole earth down to the centre and up to the sky was mine. And yours. Ours. I had no sense of duty to it; I hadn't woke up to self-respect. I wasn't only Sargon, but all the men and women who have ever mattered on earth. I was God's Everlasting Servant. Instead of which I was rather timid about horses and strange dogs, and often when I saw people approaching and thought they were observing me and speaking about me, I did not know what to do with my arms and legs, and became quite confused about them."

He paused to smile at the thought of it.

It has been interesting to talk to your Dr. Devizes of the absurdity of that contracted blind littleness in which I lived so long. We talked of the Great Man I really was, the Great Men we really were. All the Incorporated Great Men. You and I, the same. Because in the past you and I and he were one, and in the future we may come together again. We have just separated to take hold of things as the hand separates into thumb and fingers. We talked of the time when the spirit that is in us made the first hut, launched the first ship, rode the first horse. We could not remember those great moments as exact incidents, but we recalled them — generally. We recalled a blazing day when a band of men went out across a sandy desert for the first time, and when a man first stood upon a glacier. It was — slippery. Then I remembered watching my people heap up the earth-walls of my first city. We went out against the robbers of the first herds. Then Dr. Devizes and I stood in imagination on a sort of quarter-deck, and

watched our men lugging the great oars of the galley that took us to Iceland and Vinland. We both saw. We planned the Great Walls of China; I counted our lateen sails upon our grand canal. You see, I have built a million wonderful temples and made an innumerable multitude of lovely sculptures, paintings, jewels and decorations. I had forgotten it, but I have. And I have loved a billion loves — I have indeed — to bring me here. We all have. We talked it over, your Dr. Devizes and I. I had not dreamt the millionth part of what I am. When I thought I was Sargon wholly and solely I still did not realize my great inheritance and my enormous destiny. Even now I am only beginning to see that.... It is preposterous to think that I who have all this past of efforts and adventures behind me should have been content to run about Woodford Wells in a ridiculous suit of tweeds with plus-four breeches that was extremely heavy and uncomfortable — they tickled me, you know — on hot days. Yet I did. I did.... Not realizing.... I used to go on until I could endure it no longer, and then I would have to stop and scratch behind my knees....

"Of course, when I called myself Sargon King of Kings and proposed to rule all the world I was — Dr. Devizes called it — *symbolizing*. Of course, everybody is really Sargon King of Kings, and everybody ought to take hold of all the world and save it and rule it just as I have got to do."

He had concluded his exposition. He had spread out his disarticulated parts before Bobby just as Devizes had returned them to him.

5

"But just what are you going to do?" said Bobby.

"I have been thinking of that."

For a little while he continued to think.

"It becomes all different," he said, "when one realizes that one is not the *only* Sargon. I thought of being a great king, a great leader, with the rest of the world just following me. I doubt if I ever felt quite *up* to a job of that sort, but I couldn't see any other way of being Sargon and a king. Now I do. I did my best, but even when I went to Buckingham Palace I realized that the thing was going to be

too big for me. I was telling Dr. Devizes — I told him, that since he was Sargon and King just as much as me and that almost anyone might become Sargon and King, then it wasn't a case for palaces and thrones any longer, or for being proclaimed and crowned — such things were as much out of date as flint implements; and that the real thing was to be just a kingly person and work with all the other kingly persons in the world to make the world worthy of our high descent. Anyone who wakes up to that becomes a kingly person. We can be active kings even if we remain kings incognito. One can be a laundryman like I was when I was just Preemby, and think of nothing but the profits and needs and vanities and fears of a little laundryman — and how dull it was! — or one can be a king, the descendant of ten thousand kings, the joint heir to the inheritance of all human affairs, the lord of the generations still unborn — who happens to be living in exile as a laundryman."

He paused.

"I agree with most of that," said Bobby. "It's — it's attractive."

"So far it is as plain as can be. But after that the difficulties begin. It isn't enough just to say you are a king. You have to be a king. You have to *do.* You can't be a king and not do kingly things. But it's just there that Dr. Devizes and I — we weren't so clear. There's a lot to be thought out. What is my kingly task? In this frail body — and what I am? I am not clear. Yet the mere fact that I am not clear shows clearly where I have to begin. I have to get clear. I have to get knowledge, find out about my kingdom. That's reasonable. I have to learn more about my great inheritance, our great inheritance, the history of it, the possibilities of it, the ways of the men who misrule it. I have to learn about business and economics and money; and then when I see it all plain I have to exert myself and vote and work, and I have to find out what particular gifts I have and how I may best give them to our kingdom. Each king must glorify his particular reign with his particular gift. We agreed about that.

"So far I do not know my particular gift. Dr. Devizes says that so far as he is concerned he must work out human motives and human relationships; his gift and his natural interest is for mental science. He has his task meted out for him, his kingly task. But for me at present there isn't that much self-knowledge. I have to begin lower

down and with broader questions. I have to learn about the universe and about the history of this world-empire of Sargon's, and of all the things I have neglected in my dreams and littleness. I have to go to school again. To learn how to think harder. I don't mind the fatigue. But I am impatient. When I think of all that lies before me, the reading, the inquiries, the visits to museums and such-like places, I want to get up right away and begin. I have lived so unobservant and irresponsible a life that I am puzzled how to account for the years I have spent. I have mooned them away. But I am glad I have awakened to my kingship before it is too late.

"I am quite a young man still. I am a little past forty, but that is nothing. Half of that was childhood and boyhood, and much of the rest inattention. For all I know I may live for another forty years. I'm not half through. And they may be the best years, the full years. I can spend three or four just learning — learning the round world. I shall begin to find out politics, and why men and women are servile and little-minded. I shall begin to realize how I can extend to those others this great liberation that has come to me. I shall begin to have a political life. A man who has no political life is like a rat which lives in a ship rather than like a man who navigates it. Then within that I shall begin to find my own proper life, my particular task. It is premature, I think, but I am very greatly drawn to the riddle of madness and asylums. I do not understand why there is madness. It puzzles and distresses me, and Dr. Devizes agrees with me that when a thing puzzles and distresses the mind the thing to do is to gather all the knowledge and ideas one can about it — scientifically. Presently it ceases to distress; it interests and occupies. And when I was in — that Place, I talked to some of those poor creatures. I was very sorry for them. I made them promises to help them when my kingdom came. And now I begin to see what my kingdom is, and the way in which I must enter in to possess it. Perhaps in good time I shall learn and spread knowledge about asylums, and make things better in them so that they will not simply imprison people but help and cure them.

"It was Dr. Devizes' idea, I think — or we may have worked it out together — that there is a real and important purpose in madness. It is a sort of simplification, a removal of checks and controls, and a sort of natural experiment. The secret things of the mind are laid

bare. But then if poor souls are to suffer that sort of thing to yield knowledge for others, they ought to be treated properly; they ought to be cherished and made the utmost use of, and not handed over to such brutes as we had.... I can't tell you. Not yet. Brutes they were.... And in their sane moments — they all have sane moments, these lunatics — they ought to be comforted and told."

The queer little round face, with its sprouting moustache and its pale blue eyes, stared at Bobby.

"When first I saw you," said Sargon, "I did not realize in the least how things really were between us. I was still wrapped up in vaingloriousness; I thought I was a great prophet and teacher and king, and that all the world had to obey me. I thought you were going to be the first and best and nearest of my disciples. But now I know better about myself. And about other people. They are here not to be my followers and disciples but to be my fellow kings. We have to work together with all the others who are awakened, for our kingdom and the great progress of mankind."

He went on talking rather to himself than to Bobby.

"I have always wanted to know things, but now I shall have the will really to know them. I shall be different now. It seems incredible that a little while ago I was bothered about what I should do with my time. Now I am only eager to get at things, and however long my time may be I know it will be full. It is astonishing to me that there has been flying in my kingdom for a dozen years, and I have never been in an aeroplane. I must look at the world from an aeroplane. And perhaps I shall need to go to India and China and suchlike strange and wonderful countries, because they, too, are a part of my inheritance. I need to know about them. And jungles and wildernesses that we have to subjugate; I have to see them. The beasts are under us; we have to cherish them or destroy them mercifully as the necessities of our kingdom may require. It is a terrible thing even to be lord of a beast. All the beasts, wild or tame, are under our dominion. And there is science. All the wonderful work men do in laboratories and their marvellous discoveries are our care. If I do not understand I may hinder. How blind I have been to the splendour of my life! When I think of all these things, I can hardly endure to be here in bed; I am so impatient to get on with

them. But I suppose I must be patient with these poor wheezing lungs.

"Patient," he repeated.

He looked at his wrist watch and it had stopped. "Can you tell me the time? At seven I ought to take some more of that excellent tonic. It is working wonders in me. But no! don't trouble; the nurse will be thinking of it.... It puts fresh life into me."

6

But Sargon did not live forty years more, nor thirty, nor twenty. He lived just a day under seven weeks from that conversation. He stayed in bed for two days after Bobby returned to London; then Lambone also went and he became intractable. As his strength returned he bothered his nurse more and more for books he couldn't name or describe, and for volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; and when she declared that seven volumes of that monumental publication were surely as much as any invalid could need at one time, he got up and put on his rough little dressing-gown and came paddling downstairs, h'rrmping resolutely, to the library. After that he got up for three days running. A fire was made in the most bookish corner of the downstairs room and screens put to keep him warm. But his tonic was driving him, perhaps it was too stimulating a tonic, and he would not stay in his protected corner.

The nurse seems to have been a weak, complaining character, indisposed to act without authority. She telephoned through to Devizes in London, but she did not succeed in making clear to him the gravity of Sargon's misbehaviour. The crowning offence came when he wouldn't go to bed at seven, but instead slipped out, in an overcoat and a wrapper indeed but in slippers, upon the terrace before the house. His bare ankles and legs were exposed to the cold wind. The slow-moving periodic beams of light from the lighthouse upon the coast, sweeping across the phantom hills under the clear starlight had drawn him out, those processional lights, and Sirius that white splendour, and the steadfast sprawling glory of Orion. It was a clear November night with frost in the air. The nurse heard him cough and rushed out to him. He was looking at Sirius through

Lambone's field-glasses, and she had to drag him in by main force. She lost her temper; there was an ungracious struggle.

The next day he was in no state to leave his bed. Yet he tossed about and exposed his inflamed chest in feeble attempts to read. "I know nothing," he complained. For a while he got better again, and then it is highly probable that he went to his open window in the night and sat for a long time wondering at the stars. After that came a relapse and a week or so of struggle, and then after a phase of delirium came great weakness, and then one night, death. He was quite alone when he died.

Bobby had not expected the death at all. He heard of it from Christina Alberta with great astonishment. He had been told nothing of Sargon being worse nor of his misbehaviour; he had been thinking of him rather enviously as growing steadily stronger and better and gratifying day by day a happy and expanding curiosity. He had looked forward presently to another talk and another phase in this odd belated adolescence. It was as though an interesting story had come to an abrupt end in the middle, as though all its concluding chapters had been tom out rudely and unreasonably.

This mood of frustrated sympathy lasted over the cremation of Sargon at Golders Green. Bobby went to that queer ceremony. He arrived late with Billy; the coffin that held the little body stood ready to glide into the furnace, the Church of England burial service had already begun. There were very few people in the chapel. Christina Alberta in the black she had worn for her mother was in the front seat, as chief mourner, between Paul Lambone and Devizes. Behind her with an air of earnest support were Harold and Fay Crumb, astonishingly in deep mourning and following the service meticulously in two prayer-books. An unpleasant-looking individual with a very long pock-marked sheep's face, small eyes and habitual-looking blacks turned round and stared at Bobby as he came in. He was accompanied by a very large blonde lady who seemed to have slept in her mourning under a bed. Relations of the deceased? The air of relationship was unmistakable. Behind, a young woman and two detached old ladies seemed to be indulging a simple propensity for funeral services at large. They completed the congregation.

Christina Alberta looked unusually small and overshadowed by

her two odd men friends. It was a grey day outside, and the general effect of the gathering was thin and scattered and damp and chilly. The excellent organ was playing as Bobby came in, but he thought he had never heard a less musical organ. The service as it went on sounded more and more trite and theological and insincere. What an old second-hand damp mackintosh the Church of England is, thought Bobby, for a striving soul to wear? But then what can any religion in the world really do in the face of normal death? Theologically one should rejoice when a good man dies, but none of these religions had had the pluck to brazen it out to that extent. None can get rid of the effect of confrontation with a blank amazing interrogation. Was there anything within that coffin there that heard or cared a jot for those sombre mummeries?

Bobby's thoughts converged upon that still thing within the coffin. The little face would be wearing a waxen unaccustomed dignity; the round, preposterously innocent blue eyes would be closed and a little sunken. Where were those thoughts and hopes now, that Bobby had listened to a few weeks since? Sargon had talked of flying, of visiting India and China, of doing noble work in the world. He had said that half his life still lay before him. He had seemed to be opening like a flower on the first sunny morning of a belated spring. And it was all delusion; the door of death that had slammed upon him was already closing then.

Surely those hopes had been life! In them if in anything was something of the life that lives and cannot die. But was it yonder? No. That in the coffin there was no more than a photographic impression, a cast garment, the parings of a nail. There was more of Sargon now in Bobby's brain alone, than in that coffin. But Sargon, where was he? Where were those dreams and desires?

Bobby became aware of the voice of the officiating clergyman driving high, like a flying bird, over the welter of his thoughts. "*But some men will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened unless it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or any other grain: But God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him, but to every seed its own body....*"

"Queer, tortuous, ingenious fellow that Paul," thought Bobby. Now what exactly was he driving at there? Queer fellow! Bad manners too with his "Thou fool." A rather strained analogy this about the seed, f'sown in corruption." After all a seed was the cleanest, most living bit of vegetable matter you could have; it had to be sown in clean mould. Growing plants you manured perhaps, but not seed-boxes. But there was a queer insistence in the discourse of the "difference," the discontinuity, of the new life. What was to come was to be altogether different from what was sown. Bobby had never noted that before, never noted how plainly the apostle insisted that no body, no earthly sort of body, no personality ever came back.

"*The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.*"

What was the drift of that? Was it translated properly? What had Paul been up against in Corinth? After all, why couldn't the Church speak to one's living needs instead of disinterring this Levantine argument? And that analogy of the seed; was it after all a good one? Whatever comes from a seed must itself die again; it is no more immortal than the plant that came before it. The clergyman was going too fast, too, to follow him closely. Better get a prayer-book at home afterwards and read all this.

"O *Grave where is thy sting? O death where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is in the law.*"

No. There was no following that. It sounded like nonsense. One just missed the implications. It was like listening to some one who was too far off to be heard distinctly but who made eloquent gestures and noises.

The service came to an embarrassed pause. Everyone was motionless, arrested.

"*Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live.... He cometh up and is cut dozen like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow....*"

Set in motion by unseen hands the coffin went gliding towards the antechamber doors which opened to receive it. It seemed to Bobby that he could hear the furnace to which that coffin was destined. A

furnace flared in his imagination and filled it with a deep roar, a sound like a mighty rushing wind, an elemental and chaotic sound....

Life is a faint dispersed film upon one little planet, but flames roar like this and great winds rush and whirl, out to the remotest star in the unfathomable depths of space. That deep disorderly tumult is the true voice of lifeless matter, not of dead matter, for what has never lived cannot be dead, but of lifeless matter, outside of and beneath and beyond life.

Everyone in the chapel seemed still and bowed and hushed and dwarfed to minute dimensions against the soulless devouring clamour in Bobby's soul.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

MAY AT UDIMORE

1

BOBBY forgot his vision of the elemental powers the cremation had given him altogether, for such things do not remain naturally in the mind. They inconvenience life. But the voice of the clergyman rehearsing the arguments of St. Paul, and the scene in the Crematorium Chapel with the little coffin waiting to be launched into eternity and the few still black mourners dotted among the yellow benches came back to him very vividly when Paul Lambone began to quote and twist those familiar sentences about the contrast between the corruptible and the incorruptible and expand a fantastic philosophy of his own. Bobby had always intended to read that funeral service over again slowly and judicially, but he had never done so and he regretted it now very much. It left him — and Paul of Tarsus — at the mercy of Paul Lambone, and he knew that Paul Lambone loved ingenious slight misquotations.

It was a very warm, serenely still May evening, and Lambone's party sat after dinner in the twilight, some just inside the house and some on deck-chairs upon the terrace. They looked out over the marsh and over the still sea. The sky was like the inside of a deep blue globe on which an ever increasing multitude of starry midges was alighting; and Rye and Winchelsea crouched low beneath it, black low lumps with a street light and a window or so showing minutely. Receding out to sea was a liner quite brightly lit. With a swift steadiness the beam of the nearer lighthouse swept the distant flats, came near, lit the faces of the talkers, lit the room, called a church tower and a group of trees into existence and dropped them back into the darkness and forgot about them and passed on. And then presently it was coming again, a thin white streak of light hurrying far away across the levels.

When one's attention wandered from the talk one became aware of an abundance of nightingales. They were nightingales newly come

from the south. One or it might be two were in the trees close at hand; others remoter wove a gauze curtain of faint sweet sounds over the visible universe.

Bobby sat on the step between the room and the terrace with his back against a pillar and with his empty coffee-cup beside him. He had put himself there by the feet of Christina Alberta, who was deep in a big armchair and very still. Her face was dim except when her cigarette glowed and showed a red-lit unfamiliar face. And yet that afternoon she had been the most familiar thing in the world to him; she had kissed him and pulled his ears and he had kissed her bare shoulders and clasped her in his arms. Devizes too was silent and preoccupied. He sat over against Christina Alberta on the other side of the opening of the room; and he was so much in the twilight that except when the lighthouse beam lit his face, only his shining shoes and socks were clearly visible to Bobby. There had been times when Bobby had thought that Devizes was in love with Christina Alberta, and he had a vague inexplicable feeling that to some extent she was or had been in love with Devizes. He had a sense of unfathomed deeps in their relationship, but he did not know where these deeps lay. If Christina Alberta loved Devizes she would have said so. Bobby knew of no reason why she should not. But to-day she had hugged and kissed Bobby so that it was impossible to believe she loved anyone else.

Yet in the last three or four months she had gone about with Devizes a lot; Bobby had seen her mind responding and changing with her talks with this man. She used to quote him, and she would say things exactly like the things he said. It had been a great inconvenience and trial to Bobby, this preoccupation. And then suddenly he found Devizes wasn't the lover at all, never could have been a lover. That day she had proved that up to the hilt. And now in a state between pride and servitude Bobby sat at her feet. He sat at her feet and close to her; Devizes in the darkness was remote, a full three yards away.

Except for Lambone's unquenchable flow it had not been a very talkative party. To-night it was less talkative than ever. "This is too perfect," Margaret Means had sighed. "I can't talk. I just thank God I am alive," and she had nestled into her big deck-chair upon the

terrace. This was the girl — it had suddenly become apparent to Bobby a fortnight ago in London — whom Devizes intended to marry. Abruptly she had come upon the scene to destroy the triangle that had obsessed Bobby's imagination. A sweetly pretty fragile thing she was; in the twilight she seemed as faint and fragrant as night-stock, and she was a wonderful pianist. Last night she had played for two hours. Paul's sister, Miss Lambone, had been evoked from somewhere in the west of England to come and be hostess to the engaged couple. Bobby had tried to talk to Christina Alberta about Margaret, but Christina Alberta hadn't wanted to talk about her. "You see," said Christina Alberta compactly, "she has opened the whole world of music to him. That's what brought them together. She's clever; she's very clear and clever."

"I'd never heard of her — until you mentioned their engagement."

"They've gone to concerts together and that sort of thing. He's known her much longer than he has known me."

"When did you first meet Devizes."

"About the time my Daddy came to Midgard Street. As recently as that. It's hardly six months. Paul Lambone took me to him to get advice about Daddy. But *they* have been going about — for more than a year. I thought it was just music that interested them. They'd seemed to be friends. And I thought he didn't mean to marry again. He just suddenly decided."

Christina Alberta reflected. "That's the way with life, Bobby. Things accumulate, and then you suddenly decide."

"Had she been undecided? Had she made him wait?"

"Not her," said Christina Alberta with a remarkable hardness in her voice.

"No," she said. "*He* decided."

She seemed to feel there was still something to express. "He just took hold of the situation."

2

This was Bobby's second visit to Udimore. Paul Lambone had suddenly seen fit to gather this party; apparently on the spur of Devizes' engagement. In the interval Bobby had seen Christina

Alberta a number of times and developed an immense sense of relationship to her. It filled his life. He had always been dreaming things about her from the time when he anticipated her with blue eyes and a fragile person, and always she was and did things that tore his dreams to shreds. This made her profoundly interesting. More and more he had become dependent upon her for interest. He wanted to marry her if only to make sure he wouldn't lose the interest of her. She had refused — twice. Without any of the graces proper to the occasion. "No fear, Bobby," she said. "It wouldn't do. I'm not the woman you take me for."

"You never are," he said. "I don't mind that."

"You're the dearest companion," she said. "I like the way your hair grows."

"Then why not make it yours, and be companions for ever?"

"Nothing more frightful," she said, and so dismissed the proposal.

They went about together; they spent much of their spare time together except for those distressing occasions when she would suddenly throw him over to go to a theatre or walk with Devizes. Or to go to Devizes to talk. She never hesitated to throw him over for Devizes. Yet Bobby got a lot of her. She didn't know much about theatres or music-halls or restaurants or dancing-places or that sort of thing, and Bobby was discreetly competent in that province. The Malmesburys felt themselves deserted, and Susan was vindictive in her resentment at his frequent absence from her bed-time rituals. Tessy, Bobby declared, remained his dearest friend; but when he tried to tell her all about himself in the old, old fashion — which he did when Christina Alberta was away with Devizes — he naturally had to tell her all about Christina Alberta. But Tessy declined in the most emphatic way to be told about Christina Alberta. It was extremely surprising and disappointing to Bobby to find out how incapable Tessy was of appreciating the endless interestingness and charm of Christina Alberta. It was a blind spot in her mind. She seemed to assume that Christina Alberta was no better than she should be, whereas she was much better. It estranged Bobby and Tessy very much, and it was a great sorrow to Bobby.

Because Christina Alberta *was* good — and interesting — beyond dispute. She was growing with tremendous rapidity mentally and in

her knowledge of the world. Every time he met her she seemed more of a person, with richer, fuller, more commanding ideas. She seemed to be living every moment of her time. She was working now at the Royal College of Science under Macbride. She was taking hold of her new studies there with tremendous enthusiasm. She was in love with comparative anatomy. Bobby had always thought that comparative anatomy was dry, pedantic stuff about bones, but she declared it lit up the whole story of life for her. It changed her ideas about the world and about herself profoundly. “It is the most romantic stuff I have ever read or thought about,” she said. “It makes human history seem silly.”

She took him three times to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington to show him something of the fine realizations that stirred her mind. She made it clear to him how the bones of a wing or the scratches of a flint could restore the storms and sunlight and passion of ten million years ago.

And then suddenly a week ago Christina Alberta had consented to marry Bobby. She had taken back her two refusals. But the way she did it made it like everything else she did, astonishing and disconcerting. She had a confession to make, and for a time until he could think it over thoroughly that confession seemed to Bobby to explain her refusals completely and to clear up everything about her.

She got him to take her to Hampton Court. But they did not go into the gardens because they saw through the park gates that the chestnuts of Bushey Avenue were in full blossom; they went instead by the pond and up under the riotously flowering branches. A belated spring was coming now in a hurry, warm and brilliant. The trees were glorious. It was as if a bright green sea was splashing up warm creamy foam under a shower of cannon shots. The blue sky hummed with light.

“The spring has come fast now that it has begun to come,” she said.

He felt she had something to say and waited.

“I never know, Bobby — this year less than ever — whether spring is the happiest time in the year or the most miserably restless. Everybody and everything is falling in love.”

“I didn’t wait for spring,” said Bobby.

“But what of the frogs that can’t find water?” said Christina Alberta.

“There’s water where there are frogs,” said Bobby.

“Everybody is marrying and giving in marriage,” she said. “I thought — I thought — Dr. Devizes at least was an inconsolable widower. But the spring tides have caught even him. They catch everybody.”

“They’ve caught you?”

“I don’t know. I’m miserable, Bobby, and restless and all astir.”

“Then let yourself go.”

“One aches — alone.”

“But are you alone?”

“Fairly.”

“There’s me.”

“Bobby dear, what do you want in me?”

“*You.* To be with you. To be always about with you. And to be loved by you.”

“It’s kind of you.”

“Oh nonsense! *Kindness!*”

“Listen, Bobby,” she said, and made a long pause.

Her voice when she spoke had adopted the ease of casual conversation. “Do you believe in chastity, Bobby? Could you love a girl who wasn’t — chaste?”

Bobby winced as if she had struck his face with a whip. He went white. “What do you mean?” he asked.

“Plainly,” she said.

For a time neither of them said a word.

“You have had *your* experiences,” she thrust. “In France. They all did.”

Bobby made no answer to that.

“Now you know,” she flung at him.

For a little while the light had gone out of Bobby’s world.

“Did you love the man?” he asked.

“If I did I don’t remember it. It was just — curiosity. And the stir of growing up. And the intolerable sense of being forbidden. No — I think I was almost — cold-blooded. I liked the look of him. And then I disliked him.... But there it is, Bobby. That’s how things are.”

Bobby weighed his words. “I’d care if it were any girl but you. You — you’re different. I love you. What has or hasn’t happened to you doesn’t matter. At least — it doesn’t matter so much.”

“You’re sure it doesn’t matter so much?”

“Quite.”

“Sure for good?”

“Yes.”

“From this moment you forget, you begin to forget what I have told you? As I want to forget it?”

“It will go soon enough if you want to forget it. It doesn’t matter at all. I see now, it doesn’t matter at all.”

“But why on earth do you want to marry me, Bobby? What is there in me? I’m ugly, rude, greedy, inconsiderate. I’ve no purity, no devotion.”

“You’re incessantly interesting. You’re straight, swift, and endlessly beautiful.”

“Bobby, truly! Does it look like that to you?”

“Yes. Doesn’t my manner — ? Don’t you *know?*”

“Yes,” she said gravely; “I suppose I know.”

She came to a stop in front of him with her arms akimbo. They stood looking at one another, and Bobby winced as if he was going to cry. Her face was grave and troubled, and then at the sight of his expression her smile broke through. Her gravity vanished. She was a different Christina Alberta. She was suddenly the gayest conceivable thing to him, confident and impudent.

“If you were to kiss me, Bobby, right here and now in Bushey Park, would they lock us up?...”

Most wonderful it was to Bobby to take her in his arms. A new Christina Alberta was revealed to Bobby; Christina Alberta seen from a distance of six inches or so, an amazingly beautiful Christina Alberta. One might have thought she had never lived for anything but being loved by Bobby.

“You’re learning,” said Christina Alberta after a little while. “Now do it all over again, Bobby. Nobody seems to be looking....”

Neither Lambone nor Devizes had seemed in the least surprised at their engagement. Indeed their attitude of gratified expectation was almost embarrassing. The young couple had come down to Udimore with Devizes and Miss Means under the ample protection of Miss Lambone almost as though they had been appointed for each other from the beginning of things.

But at Udimore there were further surprises and perplexities for Bobby. All day Saturday Christina Alberta seemed to be not so much in love as in a thoroughly bad temper. She seemed far more concerned by the fact that Devizes was going to marry Miss Means than by the generous devotion that Bobby was prepared to lavish upon her. She was inattentive to his various little manoeuvres to get isolated with her. The two couples played tennis after tea until it was time to dress for dinner; she was badly out of practice and fundamentally unorthodox, and Margaret played with a smoothness and sweetness that roused her to a pitch of viciousness only too evident to Bobby's fine perceptions. It seemed to Bobby that Devizes also noted her annoyance, but Miss Means was blissfully unobservant of anything in the world but Devizes.

On Sunday morning Christina Alberta carried off Bobby through the distant cheerfulness of church bells for a walk to Brede Castle. And she announced to Bobby that she did not intend to marry him.

Bobby protested. "You don't love me?"

"Haven't I kissed you? Didn't I hug you? Haven't I ruffled your hair?"

"Then why don't you want to marry me?"

"I do not want to marry anyone. I don't love anybody. Except of course you. But even you, I can't marry. I want to be loved, Bobby, yes. But not to be married."

"But why? Not the — the old reason?"

"No. I took your word about that. But all the same I don't want to marry you, Bobby.... I think it's because I don't want to be bound up with anyone's life. I don't want to be a wife. I want to be my free and independent self. I've got to grow. That's it, Bobby. I want to be free to grow."

Bobby made protesting noises.

"I don't want some one seeing me grow all the time. You'd

always be looking at me, Bobby; I know you would."

It was useless of Bobby to say he wouldn't. He would. "I didn't know that things were going to take me like this until I fixed to marry you. I wanted to marry you when I consented — honestly I did. I wanted dreadfully then to get close to some one, as close as possible, and to be kissed and told "There! There!" and to keep there. It was a comfort for me, Bobby. You are a comfort for me. I'd ache to madness without you. But how close we come when we love, Bobby, and how far away we are all the time! How can we know each other when we hardly know ourselves? When we don't *dare* know ourselves?

"You are such a dear, Bobby. You are so warm and kind that it seems ingrateful not to give myself to you with both hands. But I just can't. I'm not a normal woman perhaps. Or something has happened to me unawares. Perhaps life has cheated me out of something.... Oh! don't know, Bobby. I want some one dreadfully; I want you dreadfully and I don't want you at all. I'd rather be dead than a female thing like Margaret Means. If *that's* marrying — !"

"But I thought," said Bobby, "after all that's happened—"

"No."

"I'll wait ten years for you," said Bobby, "on the chance of your altering your mind."

"You are the dearest comforter," said Christina Alberta, and stopped short....

And suddenly she had put her hands upon his shoulders and clung to him and broken into a wild passion of weeping.

"Wetting you instead of wedding you," she sobbed and laughed. "Oh my poor Bobby! you dear lover!"

She clung to him for a time. Then she detached herself and stood wiping her eyes, the Christina Alberta he generally knew, except for the traces of her tears. "If women can't control their emotions better," she said, "they'll have to go back to Harems. We can't have it both ways. But I *won't* marry you. There's no man in the world I can marry. I'm going to be a free and independent woman, Bobby. From now on."

"But I don't understand!" said Bobby.

"It's not because I don't want you to love me."

He was baffled. "*Bobby!*" she whispered, and seemed to glow.

Bobby took her back into his arms and held her, and pressed his cheek and ears against hers, and kissed her and kissed her again, and it seemed to him to mark his own unworthiness that he should think at such a time that there were no such wonderful kisses in the world as kisses flavoured with salt tears.

And yet she wasn't going to marry him! She had snatched herself back from him and nevertheless she was in his arms.

He was enormously perplexed at what was happening, but it was quite clear that the end of his engagement was not to be the end of his love-making. Anyhow here was love. It was so manifestly the time for love. High May ruled the world. About them there were hawthorn trees white with blossom and great bushes of elder just breaking into flower.

4

Bobby sat in the gloaming with his friends and thought of the things that had happened to him that day, thought of Christina Alberta's salt tears and the incessant intriguing strangeness of her ways. He was still immensely puzzled, but now in a large, restful, contented fashion. Christina Alberta and he were not to marry it seemed; nevertheless he had kissed her and embraced her, and he was free to sit at her feet. For a time he was not even to humiliate himself by telling these others he was not to marry her. He said nothing. His thoughts and feelings were beyond words. Christina Alberta too was darkly silent. Everyone indeed seemed preoccupied. Talk about the view and the stars and the coming of the nightingales, and about migratory birds and lighthouses rambled on for a time and died away.

They were all too full for talking. The silence lengthened. He wondered what would happen if nobody spoke any more. He thought of Christina Alberta close behind him and he began to quiver in all his being. The silence was becoming oppressive. He felt as though he could no longer change his attitude. Nobody stirred. But Lambone saved the situation.

"It is exactly six months ago to-night that Sargon died upstairs,"

said Lambone. He paused and seemed to answer an unspoken question. “We don’t know when he died exactly. He just faded out in the night.”

“I wish I could have known him,” said Margaret Means after quite a long interval.

Bobby’s thoughts came round to Sargon. That still young woman sitting in the darkness behind him ceased to dominate his thoughts. He was moved to speak, and had to cough to clear his throat.

“I hate to think of his being burnt and scattered,” he said.

“It’s not so disagreeable,” said Miss Lambone, “as to think of the body all shut up in the coffin and decaying.”

“Oh, don’t!” cried Bobby. “It’s death — any death, that I hate to think of. Now when it is spring time, when the whole world is so full of life, I remember all he was, the hopes he had, and they are scattered and dispersed — . Anyhow they are scattered and dispersed, they are not boxed up and locked up and buried.... When I was here last he was like a little boy who has just heard of the world. He was going to fly, going to India and China, going to learn all about everything and then do all sorts of splendid things. And there were the beastly bacteria at work in his lungs and beating his strength down and none of it was ever to happen.... When first I heard he was dead I could not believe it.”

“*Is* he dead?” said Paul Lambone.

There was no reply to be made to that.

Paul adjusted his shoulder-blades a little more comfortably against the back of the small deep sofa on which he sat. “The more I think over Sargon the less dead he seems to me, and the more important he becomes. I don’t agree with you, Roothing. I don’t find anything futile in his life. I think he was — symbolically — perfect. I have thought about him endlessly.”

“And talked,” said Devizes, “endlessly.”

“And given you some very helpful ideas for your treatment. Don’t be ungrateful. You think that Sargon is over. He has only just begun. You are becoming too professional with success, Devizes. You begin to take up cases and work them off and drop them out of your mind. You don’t go on with them and learn. You don’t sit about and think about them as I do. I continue to think about Sargon. I go on with

him because he is still a living being for me. I have got a new religion from him, the religion of Sargonism. I declare him prophet of a new dispensation. It is my latest new religion. There will always be new religions, and the new religions will always be the only ones that matter. Religion is a living thing, and what is alive must be continually dying and be continually born again — differently but the same."

"You believe in immortality, Mr. Lambone," said Miss Means. "I wish that I could. But when I try to imagine it my wits fail me. Sometimes one seems to *feel* what it might be. On a night like this perhaps—"

Her pretty clear voice died away in the stillness as the trail of a falling star dies away.

Paul, a large dark lump on the dim pale sofa, went on speaking. "Immortality," he said, "is a mystery. One can only speak of it in dark metaphors. How can we believe that each of our individual commonplace lives is to have an endless commonplace sequel? That is incredible nonsense. Yet we go on living after death nevertheless. When we die we are changed. All wise teachers have insisted upon that. As Roothing said, we are not boxed up and buried and forgotten. Our real death is an escape, and we escape and become — what did you say? — dispersed. Immortal life is endless consequence. Our lives are like lines in a great poem. It is an unfinished and yet it is a perfect poem. The line begins and ends but it has to be there, and once it is there, it is there eternally. Nothing could follow if it was not there. But every star has not the same glory. Some lives, some lines, stand out as more significant than the others. They open a new branch of the subject, they start a new point of view, they express something fresh. They are geniuses, they are prophets, they are major stars. Sargon was the last, the latest of these prophets, and I am his Paul. Not for nothing was I christened Paul."

"Paul of Tarsus," said Devizes, "was a man of energy."

"There will always be minor differences in such parallels," said Lambone "I will tell you my doctrine," he said.

He began to talk in that clear miniature voice of his, which was so like a little mouse running out of the mountain of his person, of Sargon and his struggles with his individuality, and of the struggles

in every man between his individual life and something greater that is also in him. There was a streak of fantasy in what he was saying, a touch of burlesque in his constant use of theological and religious phrasing, and withal a profound sincerity. In every human being, he declared, the little laundryman battled with the King of Kings. He expanded and amplified this theme. Ever and again Devizes would cut into the monologue and talk for a time, not so much to make objections as to restate and amend and amplify. The others said little. Margaret Means twice made soft sweet sounds suggestive of intellectual sensuousness, and once Christina Alberta said "But — !" very loudly and then "Never mind. Go on" and relapsed for a long time into a silence that could be felt. Bobby sat still, sometimes listening intently and sometimes with his mind spreading out like an uncared-for stream into a number of parallel channels. The argument itself was interesting to follow, but moving at the side of that was the question of the talker's sincerity. How much of all this stuff did Lambone mean? How much of what he said was of a piece with the rest of his observant, self-indulgent life, his life as a humorous comment on a universe that was profoundly absurd?

How easily Lambone played with phrases and ideas for which men had lived and died! How widely he had read and thought to bring so many things together! He produced a great effect of erudition. *The Golden Bough* he had at his fingers' ends. He talked of the sacramental mysteries of half a dozen cults, from Mithraism to ritual sacrifices, of varying ideas of personality that had held and swayed human life from Fiji to Yucatan. Now he was in pre-Christian Alexandria, and now among the Chinese philosophers. The "Superior Person" of Confucius he declared was merely an example of our way of translating all Chinese phrases as ridiculously as possible; it meant really the Higher and Greater Man, the Universal Man, in whom the inferior egotistical man merged himself. It was the salvation of the Revivalist everywhere; it was the Spiritual Man of Pauline Christianity. When the late Mr. Albert Edward Preemby poured out all his little being into the personality of Sargon, King of Kings, he was only doing over again what the saints and mystics, the religious teachers and fanatics, have done throughout the ages. He was just the Master under the be Tree translated into the cockney of

Woodford Wells.

Presently Devizes was talking. Devizes was a great contrast to Lambone. He talked a different language. He did not seem nearly so clear and clever to Bobby as Lambone did, but he had an effect of sincerity and solidity of conviction that Lambone lacked altogether. His interventions made all that Lambone said seem like a wild and picturesque parody of something that was otherwise inexpressible. Both he and Lambone had an air of casting verbal nets for some truth that still eluded them. And yet this truth so remotely and imperfectly apprehended was for each of them the most important thing in life.

"Stripped of its theological trappings," Devizes said to Lambone, "your new religion is simply a statement of this. That our race has reached, and is now receding from, a maximum of *individuation.* That it turns now towards synthesis and co-operation. It will move back towards what you call Sargon, the great ruler, and it will swallow up individual egotistical men in its common aims. As already scientific work swallows them up. Or good administrative work. Or art. That is what you are saying."

"Exactly," said Paul Lambone. "If we *must* talk your language, Devizes, and not mine. Art, science, public service, creative work of every sort, these are parts of what you, I suppose, would call the race mind, parts of the race life. Every man who matters is a fresh thought, a fresh idea. He is himself still, it is true, but his significance is that he comes out of his past and out of his conditions and he flows on to further men. This is the new realization that is changing all the values in human life. It is happening everywhere. Even in the books and reading of to-day you can see the thing happening. History now becomes more important than biography. What made up the whole of life in the romantic past; the love story, the treasure story, the career, getting on, making a fortune, the personal deed and victory, the sacrifices for an individual friend or love or leader; remains no longer the whole of life and sometimes not even the leading interest in life. We are passing into a new way of living, into a new sort of lives, into new relationships. The world which seemed for a time not to be changing any more is changing very swiftly... in its mental substance."

"New sorts of people," said Bobby softly, and went off from

listening to Lambone's lucid little voice into a final recapitulation of the puzzling things Christina Alberta had said and done that day.

5

Bobby was recalled to the matter of the talk by a movement in the chair behind him.

Lambone's smooth voice was explaining: "So that it does not matter so much what we achieve as what we contribute. That cherished personal life which men and women struggled to round off and make noble and perfect, disappears from the scheme of things. What matters more and more is the work one does. What matters less and less is our personal romance and our personal honour. Or rather our honour will go out of us into our work. Our love affairs, our devotions and private passions for example, will fall more and more definitely into a subordination to our science or whatever our function is. Our romances and our fame and honour will join our vices among the things we suppress. There was a time when men lived for a noble tomb and in order to leave sweet and great memories behind them; soon it will matter nothing to a man and his work to know that he will probably die in a ditch — misunderstood. So long as he gets the work done."

"With no last Judgment ever to vindicate him," said Devizes.

"That will not matter in the least to him."

"I agree. Some of us begin to feel like that even now."

"Even if one has done nothing worth doing," said Paul Lambone, and in his voice was that faint quality of the sigh of one who has crowned a rather difficult and uncertain card castle, "even if Sargon had died unrescued in his Asylum and all the world had thought him mad, all the same he would have escaped, his imagination would have touched the imagination of the greater life."

Came a pause of edification and then a sigh of satisfaction from Miss Lambone. She never understood in the least what her brother was talking about, but she adored him when he talked. Nobody she thought had ever talked like him, or could possibly talk like him. His voice was so clear and bright, like the best sort of print. Only sometimes you wished you had spectacles.

But now Miss Lambone was to receive a shock. Christina Alberta suddenly came out of the silence in which she had been sitting.

"I don't believe in this," said Christina Alberta out of the depths of her chair.

Bobby was beginning to know the voice of Christina Alberta very well; and he knew now that she was terrified at having to talk, and at the same time desperately resolved to get something said. He knew too that she was gripping hard at the arms of her chair. He glanced at Devizes and in that instant the lighthouse beam touched his face and Bobby saw it very intent, watching Christina Alberta steadily and as if forgetful of all other things. It was intent and tender and tenderly apprehensive, grave and very pale in that white illumination. When the light had passed away Bobby still seemed to see that face, but now conversely it was a face of ebony.

"I do not believe in *any* of this," said Christina Alberta.

She paused with the effect of marshalling her argument. "It is theology, I suppose," she said. "Or mysticism. It is all an intellectual game that men have played to comfort themselves. Men rather than women. It makes no real difference. Tragedy *is* tragedy, failure *is* failure, death is death."

"But is there ever complete failure?" asked Lambone.

"Suppose," said Christina Alberta, "suppose a man is thrown into prison and misrepresented to all the world, suppose he is taken away presently and made to dig his own grave, and shot at the edge of it and buried and then lied about for a time and forgotten. It isn't a part of the race that is murdered, it isn't a wonderful thing that passes on; it is a man who has been killed and made away with. Your mysticism is just an attempt to dodge the desolation of that. It doesn't. Such things have happened. They happen to-day. In Russia. In America. Everywhere. Men are just wiped out, body and soul, hope and will. That man and his black personal universe are done with and over, and there is an end to his business; he is beaten and wiped out, and all the clever talk upon easy sofas in the warm twilight will not alter that one jot. It is frustration. If I am frustrated I am frustrated, if I have desires and dreams and they are defeated and die, I die. It is playing with words to say I do not die or that they are changed and sublimated and carried on into something better."

“My dear,” said Miss Lambone to Miss Means. “You are sure you are not feeling cold?” Her voice conveyed a faint intimation that she would cease to be acutely interested in the talk if this chit of a girl intervened any further in the discussion, and that she would begin to do things with wraps and shawls and break up the meeting.

“I’m perfectly happy, dear,” Miss Means answered. “All this — ! I wish it could go on for ever.”

But Christina Alberta disregarded Miss Lambone’s warning. She had something to say and there was some one she wanted to say it to, not too pointedly, not too plainly.

“All this theology, this religion, the new religions that are only the old ones painted over—”

“Reborn,” said Paul.

“Painted over. I don’t want them. But that is not what I want to say. What I want to say is that you are wrong about my Daddy, you are quite wrong about him. That I do know. Mr. Lambone has dressed him up to suit his own philosophy. He had that philosophy long before he knew him. And you talked my Daddy over and put Mr. Lambone’s ideas into him when he was beaten and broken because they suited his case. They weren’t there before. I know him and exactly how he thought. I was brought up on him. He talked to me more than to anyone. And it is all nonsense to talk of him — his exaltation, as being like the great soul coming like the tidal sea into the pool of the little soul. It didn’t. When he said he was Lord of the World he wanted to be Lord of the World. He didn’t want to incorporate any other people at all — or be incorporated. He was just as exclusively himself when he was Sargon as when he was Albert Edward Preemby. More so.... And I believe that is how it is with all of us.”

She went on rather hurriedly, for she knew there were forces there very ready to silence her.

“I want to be myself and nothing else. I want the world — for myself. I want to be a goddess in the world. It does not matter that I am an ugly girl with natural bad manners. It does not matter that it is impossible. That is what I want. That is what I am made to want. One may get moments anyhow. A moment of glory is better than none.... I believe that sort of thing is what you all want really. You

just persuade yourselves you don't. And you call that religion. I don't believe anyone has ever believed religion from the beginning. Buddhism, Christianity, this fantastic Sargonism, this burlesque religion you invent to make an evening's talk, they are all consolations and patchings-up — bandages and wooden legs. People have tried to believe in such religions no doubt. Broken people. But because we cannot satisfy the desires of our hearts — why should we cry "Sour grapes" at them?

"I don't want to serve — anything or anybody. I may be heading for frustration, the universe may be a system of frustration, but that doesn't alter the fact that this is how I feel about it. I may be defeated; it may be certain that I shall be defeated — but as for bringing a contrite heart out of the mess and starting again as a good little part of something — I *don't* fink.

Oh, I know I beat my hands against a wall. It's not my fault. Why don't we take? Oh, why don't we dare?"

Miss Lambone stirred and rustled.

The darkness that was Devizes spoke to Christina Alberta, and Miss Lambone became still.

"We don't take and we don't dare," he said, "we don't defy laws and customs because there are other things in our lives, *in* us and not outside us, that are more important to us. That is why. It pleases Paul to dress up his view of these things in old mystical phrasing, but what he says is really an unscientific way of putting psychological fact. You think you are simple, but you are really complex. You are the individual but you are the race also. That is your nature and mine and everyone's. The more our intelligence awakens the more we know that."

"But it is the difference that is distinctively me, and not the general part. The race in me is no more to me than the ground I walk on. I am Christina Alberta; I am not Woman or Mankind. As Christina Alberta, I want and I want and I want. And when the door is slammed upon my imaginations I cry out against it. Why pretend I give up a thing because I can't have it? Why make a glory of renunciation and letting-go? I hate the idea of self-sacrifice. What is the good of coming into the world as Christina Alberta just in order to sacrifice being Christina Alberta? What is the good of being

different if one is not to live a different life?”

Unexpectedly Miss Lambone intervened. “The life of a woman is one long sacrifice,” she said.

There was a pause.

“But we have the vote now?” said Christina Alberta almost flippantly. “Why is a woman’s life sacrifice?”

“Think of the children we bear,” said Miss Lambone in a constrained voice.

“*Well!*” said Christina Alberta, and suppressed some scandalous remark.

“The most astonishing thing about us,” she broke out again, after a pause; “the most astonishing thing in the feminine make-up is that hardly any of us *do* seem to want children. A lot of us anyhow don’t. Now that I am beginning to learn something about biology, I realize how marvellous that is. As a race of creatures specialized for children, we ought to be eaten up by the desire for children. As a matter of fact most modern women will do anything to avoid having children. We dread them. To me they seem like a swarm of hidden dwarfs, prepared to come upon me and eat up my whole existence. It’s not simply I don’t want them; I live in fear of them. Love we *may* want. Many of us do. Intensely. We want to love and be loved — to get close and near to some one. It’s a delusion I suppose. One of nature’s clumsy tricks. It is all a delusion. He vanishes — he was never there. Under the old conditions it availed; it got the children Nature wanted. But we don’t think of children. We don’t want to think about them. There it is! And anyway children do not take a woman out of her egotism; they only extend and intensify it. I have known intelligent girls marry and have children, and when the baby appeared their minds evaporated. They became creatures of instinct, messing about with napkins. I could scream at the thought of it. No, I am an egoist pure and simple. I am Christina Alberta, and her only. I am not Sargon. I refuse altogether to mix with that promiscuous anybody-nobody.”

“After all that may only be a phase in your development,” said Devizes.

“It is the only one I know.”

“That is evident. But I assure you, Christina Alberta, that this

revolt and distress of yours is a phase. You are talking rebellion and egoism and anarchism as a healthy baby screams to get breath into its lungs, and escape from the stuffiness of old air. The baby doesn't know why it screams and no doubt finds some dim little grievance in its brain—"

"Go on," said Christina Alberta. "Chastise me and chastise me."

It seemed to Bobby that there were tears in her voice.

"No, but you are so young, my dear," said Devizes.

My dear!

"Not so young. Not so actually young," cried Christina Alberta.

"If I live to be eighty," said Christina Alberta, "shall I ever be able to feel more than I am feeling now? Why will you always treat me like a child nowadays?"

"Feeling isn't the only measure," said Devizes. "Even now, to-night, you are talking below your beliefs. You are not an egoistic adventurer. You take sides on a score of matters. You insist you are a Communist for example."

"Oh! just to smash up things," said Christina Alberta. "Just to smash up everything."

"No. You say that to-night, but you have told me differently before. You have a care for the world. You want to help forward the common interest. You develop a passion for scientific truth. Well — there's no way of fencing in your individuality from other minds in science or in public affairs. You're a part by necessity; you can't be a complete whole. You find already you can't keep away from these things. They will take you more and more, whether you like it or not, because it is the spirit of the time. That is what is happening to us all. You can't escape. Our work, our part, is the first thing in our lives. To that, pride must bow now and passion and romance. We have to slam and lock and bar the door against all personal passion that might wreck our work. Bar it and put it out of your mind. As a secondary thing. Work. Give the greater things a chance to keep you."

"That's all very well."

"It's everything."

"Why *should* they keep me?" came from Christina Alberta, sullenly and resolutely.

“I know that this is your faith,” she said. “You told me all about it. You’ve always told me about it.” Bobby’s quick ear detected a change in her voice. “Do you remember our first talk together? Do you remember our talk in Lonsdale Mews? When we dined together at that Italian place? That night. Just after we had found each other.”

Found each other?

“But I did not know then that your faith meant all the suppressions and sacrifices and discretions it seems to do. I thought it was something robust and bold. I did not understand its — qualifications. But since then we have argued about these things and argued. That day at Kew Gardens. That day when you took me for that walk over the downs to Shere. We have threshed things out. Why should we argue again? I am giving in — what can I do but give in? — and soon I will be a Sargonite with you and Paul. But not this summer. Not now. This night — This wonderful first night of summer. To-night I rebel against any renunciation, any fobbing-off of individuals with second-best things. I am going to be impossible and absurd. For the last time. I want the world from the stars to the bottom of the sea for myself, for my own hungry self. And all between. The precious things between. The love.... *There!*”

Vague questions appeared and vanished again on the screen of Bobby’s mind. What had Christina Alberta renounced? What was she renouncing? What was anyone renouncing? And had his ears cheated him, or had Devizes called her, “my dear?” In front of Margaret Means and in face of all the circumstances of the case it seemed to Bobby that Devizes was the last person who ought to call Christina Alberta “my dear.” And what was this about “fobbing-off”? Was this really a shameless plainness of speech, an atrocious confession, or something that he misunderstood?

Miss Lambone stirred uneasily.

It was as if an evil spirit possessed Christina Alberta. “Oh, *damn* renunciation!” she said with bitter gusto.

They seemed to be sitting for some moments in a profound silence, and then the nightingale became very audible.

“I think,” said Miss Lambone in the silence, “that it is getting just a *leetle* chilly.”

“It is so beautiful here,” said Miss Means, who was warm in Miss Lambone’s shawl. “Perfectly beautiful.

“How you can talk of frustration — !” she added, and left her sentence incomplete.

“I think,” said Miss Lambone, “that I shall go in and light the candles. It is too wonderful a night for the electric lights, far too wonderful. We will just light the candles and the fire. And perhaps you will play us something beautiful. These are such marvellous fireplaces here that they blaze up at once. I don’t know if you have noticed them — a new sort. The fire is all on the hearth — no draught below, but the shape of the back draws it up.

“I love a wood fire,” said Miss Lambone, and sighed and rose slowly and voluminously.

7

Two days later Bobby came into one of the little studies on the garden side of Paul Lambone’s house. Paul had found out that Bobby wanted a few days of uninterrupted thought in which to begin his novel, and had asked him to stay on after the other guests had returned to London. It was a perfect room for a writer of Bobby’s temperament; it had a low writing-table close to the sill of the casemented window, and on the sill was a silver bowl of forget-me-nots and white tulips. A little glass-paned door released one into the garden without one’s having to go back through the house. The writing-table had everything a fastidious writer could desire, a pleasant paper-rack and wafers, and real quill pens, and plenty of elbow room. The chair he sat in was an arm-chair, immensely comfortable but not too luxurious; no hint of repose in it but only a completely loyal support for a working occupant. A garden path ran uphill from the window, a garden path skirted by wonderful clusters of pansies. On either side of the pansies were rose bushes, and though not a rosebud was showing, yet the fresh green leaves, tinged with ruddy brown, were very exquisite in the light.

He stood looking up the path for a time and then sat down and

drew the writing-pad towards him. He took one of those delightful quills, tested the delicious flexibility of its points, dipped it in the ink and wrote in his very neat and beautiful handwriting:

UPS AND DOWNS *A Pedestrian Novel*

BY ROBERT ROOTHING

CHAPTER THE FIRST

WHICH INTRODUCES OUR HERO

He wrote this very readily because it was very familiar to him. From first to last he had written it on fair fresh sheets of paper perhaps half a dozen times.

Then he stopped short and sat quite still with his head on one side. Then very neatly he corrected "winch introduces" into "in which we introduce."

It was nearly two years now since he had first begun his novel in this fashion, and he was still quite uncertain about the details of his hero's introduction. His original intention about the story still floated pleasantly in the sky of his mind; a promise of a happy succession of fine, various and delightful adventures, told easily and good-humouredly; the fortunes of a kindly, unpretending, not too brave but brave enough young man, on his way through the world, to live happily afterwards with a delicious young woman. "Picaresque" was the magic word. None of these adventures had as yet assumed a concrete form in his mind. He felt they would come to him definitely enough one day. If one sat and mused one half saw them, and that was assurance enough for him. And so having rewritten his title page neatly and prettily, he fell into a day-dream and was presently thinking round and about his Christina Alberta as a good hero should.

Bobby was always being puzzled by Christina Alberta, always coming upon something that seemed to dear up everything, and then being puzzled again. But now it seemed to him that he really did

know the last fact of importance that was to be known about her. Overnight Paul Lambone had described how he had taken her to Devizes to get advice, and how they had blundered upon the reality of her parentage. He told his story well as a story-writer should; he gave it dramatic point. Evidently he told the tale of set intention, because it was time Bobby knew. Lambone was aware of Christina Alberta's engagement. He did not know and nobody but Bobby knew that she never intended to be married. But this, it seemed to Bobby, made the understanding of her situation possible; explained that watchful tenderness of Devizes' face suddenly betrayed by the light and his inadvertent "my dear"; explained her position as though she belonged to him and Paul Lambone instead of being a rather unaccountable visitor; excused her vehement jealousy of Margaret Means, because evidently she had become violently possessive of her father and had counted perhaps upon recognition and being very much with him. No doubt Margaret Means stood in the way of that. It was natural for Christina Alberta to want to be with Devizes and work with him, and natural for her to suspect and anticipate and resent an intervening personality. Apart from the magic of kinship it was natural that two such subtle and abundant personalties should attract each other greatly. That Devizes should have decided quite abruptly to marry Margaret Means did not present any difficulties to Bobby; he was not thinking very closely about Devizes. Margaret Means was pretty enough for anyone to want to marry her. There are times, as Bobby knew, when that sweet prettiness can stab one like an arrow. It had evidently stabbed and won Devizes. And almost the only thing that gave Bobby a second thought, but no more than a second thought, was Christina Alberta's fluctuation of purpose, why she should have consented to marry him and then have changed her mind so quickly and definitely and yet have retained him as a lover.

That resolution not to marry seemed after all just a part of her immense modernity. Because of all this group of "new people" in which he found her, she seemed to Bobby to be in every way the newest. She was the boldest enterprise in living he had ever met. Her flare of hungry rebel individuality fascinated him. Where in this world was she going? Would she win out to this free personal life she desired or would she fail to find an objective of work and come

upon disappointment and solitude like some creature that has strayed? The world had terrified Bobby in his own person greatly; it terrified him still more when he thought of this valiant little figure going out to challenge it.

Bobby was naturally, inherently, afraid; his instinct was for security, protection, kindliness and help. He clung to his "Aunt Suzannah" job for safety. He didn't believe Christina Alberta knew one tenth of the dangers she ran of insult, defeat, humiliation, neglect, repulse, fatigue and lonely distress. His imagination presented a tormenting picture of her away there in dark, confused, immense and blundering London, as an excessively fragile figure, light on its feet, shock-head erect, arms akimbo, unaware of monstrous ambushed dangers. Now that he began to understand her, he began to understand a great number of bright-eyed, adventurous, difficult young women he had met in the last few years, and he had his first dim realization of the meaning of the deep wide stir among womankind that had won them votes and a score of unprecedented freedoms.

Many of these younger women were doing their work and holding their own exactly like men. They were painting and drawing like men, writing criticism like men, writing plays and novels like men, leading movements, doing scientific work, playing a part in politics. Like men? On reflection — not exactly. No. They still kept different. But they didn't do their things in any fashion one could call womanly. Without adding strange new meanings to "womanly." The novels they were writing interested him immensely. People like Stella Benson wrote books like — anybody; you could not tell from her work whether she was a man or a woman. All that again was new. George Eliot perhaps was a precursor. Perhaps. The former sort of women's writings, when they were not "pretty me" books, were "kindly auntie" books; you heard the petticoats swish in every page.

Sexless, these new ones? Bobby weighed the word. The earlier generation of women who wanted to be emancipated suppressed sex, suppressed it so fiercely that its negative presence became the dominant factor in their lives. They ceased to be positive woman; they became fantastically negative woman. But this newer multitude was not so much repressing as forgetting their sex, making little of it.

Christina Alberta had in a way made nothing of her sex, not by struggling against it, but by making it cheap for herself as a man makes it cheap for himself — so that it was a thing of mere intermittent moods and impulses for her — and she could go on to other things.

Going on to other things. His imagination recurred to that little figure resolved to conquer the world for itself in defiance of every tradition.

There was a strong urgency in him to start off to London in pursuit of her, to hover about her, intervene, protect her and carry her off to security. He knew she wouldn't permit that sort of thing to happen anyhow. He'd have to be just a friend and companion to her, be at hand for her, and if she did encounter some disaster, stand by her.

It was a queer thing that he should want to stand by this unsexed young woman. It was just what one would not expect; it was part, perhaps, of the immense biological changes of the time. In the past the species had needed half the race specialized for child-bearing and child-rearing; now plainly it didn't. The tremendous and worshipful dignity of wife and mother was not for all women any longer. That would remain for a certain sort of them to take up if they would. But a vast multitude of women were born now to miss that. Some would become pretty nuisances who would presently cease to be pretty, parasites on love and the respect for motherhood; shams, simulacra. Others would break away to a real individual life — a third sex. Perhaps in the new world there would cease to be two sexes only; there would be recognized varieties and sub-divisions. So Bobby speculated. For just as there were women who did not want to bear children, so there were men who did not want to lord it over wife and children.

They would want to love all the same. Every individual of a social species needed love; to fail in that need was to escape out of social life to lonely futility. "Mutual comfort," Bobby quoted. In his past Bobby had dreamt of the love of children. Even now he remembered as a fact that he had dreamt particularly of a little girl of his own that he could protect and explore. But now the thought and interest of Christina Alberta had blotted that out. It was extraordinary to him to

perceive how possessed he was by her. He could endure no prospect of life just now unless it was to include Christina Alberta as its principal fact. But he'd be no use to her unless she respected him. He couldn't hope to stand subordinate to her, any more than he could hope to be her master. In the latter case she'd rebel, in the former, she'd despise. They would have to stand side by side. And since she was clever, able and resolved to work hard and distinguish herself, he must work hard and also distinguish himself too. He had to be her equal and remain and keep himself her equal....

That, in fact, was why he was going to write a great novel — not just a novel but a great one.

He looked again at the neatly written page. "Ups and Downs," he read. "A Pedestrian Novel."

It dawned upon him that there was something profoundly wrong about that.

It was to have been a story of wandering about in the world that is; the story of the happy adventures of a well tempered mind in a well understood scheme of things. But Bobby was beginning to realize that there is not, and there never has been, a world that is; there is only a world that has been and a world that is to be. "New people," whispered Bobby, and dipped a quill in the ink and made a border of dots round his title. Then suddenly he crossed out those three words "Ups and Downs" and wrote instead, "New Country."

"That might be the title of any novel that matters," said Bobby.

He mused deeply. Then he altered the sub-title to "The History of an Explorer."

He scratched out "Explorer."

"Involuntary traveller," said Bobby.

Finally he put back "A Pedestrian Novel" as his sub-title....

He became aware of an intermittent dull tapping, and following the sound discovered a thrush trying to break up a snail on the gravel path. But the gravel path was too fine and soft to give a firm anvil for the beating. "The silly bird ought to find a brick or a potsherd," said Bobby and reflected.

"I suppose all the flower-pots are shut up in the shed....

"I don't like to see that bird wasting the morning and being disappointed....

“It wouldn’t take a minute....”

He got up, let himself out by the little glass door beside the window and went to find a brick. Presently he returned with it.

But he did not go back into the study because while he had been looking for the brick, he had seen a young blackbird which had got under the strawberry netting, and was evidently scared out of its silly wits. So he went back to see about the blackbird. The minutes passed and he did not reappear. Perhaps he had found some other fellow-creature in trouble.

Presently a little breeze blew into the study through the open glass door and lifted the sheet of paper which was to introduce our hero, and wafted it softly and suggestively on to the unlit wood fire upon the hearth. There it lay for a long time.

THE END

THE WORLD OF WILLIAM CLISSOLD

Originally, this 1926 novel was issued in three volumes, the first appearing on Wells' sixtieth birthday. The book might best be described as a 'novel of ideas'. Narrated in the first person by William Clissold, the novel spends some time recounting episodes in the protagonist's life, before using these as a springboard for a discussion of more generalised political ideas — in particular the notion of an 'open conspiracy' of business leaders, politicians, scientists, and intellectuals to establish a 'World Republic' devoted to the betterment of human life.

Critics have identified these extended discussions on politics and morality as characteristic of Wells' late fiction. This didactic turn in Wells' later fiction alienated many of his contemporaries, who felt that Wells had sacrificed his art in favour of political preaching. G. K. Chesterton summed up this school of thought memorably, quipping: 'Wells is a born storyteller who has sold his birthright for a pot of message'.

This is Wells' longest novel and while initial reviews were poor, the book was a commercial success.

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This book, which contains religious, historical, economic and sociological discussions, which expresses fits of temper and moods of doubt, is submitted as a novel, as a whole novel, and nothing but a novel, as the story of one man's adventure, body, soul and intelligence, in life. If you are the sort of person who will not accept it as a novel, then Mr. Wells asks that you leave it alone. You are not getting sly peeps at something more real than the reality of art, and your attempts to squint through will only make you squint very unbecomingly.

A NOTE BEFORE THE TITLE PAGE

NOVELS with prefaces are like pictures with inscriptions below them; there is a confession that something was left over and had to be expressed by an addendum. But the note which is offered here is not a preface so much as a protest, and in token therefore it is put before the title-page and does not figure in the list of contents. It is a protest against certain stock tricks of the book reviewer and certain prevalent vulgarities about books. They concern the treatment of opinion in works of fiction and what is called "putting people into novels."

This book, then, *The World of William Clissold*, is a novel. It is claimed to be a complete full-dress novel, that and nothing more. William Clissold is a fictitious character, and his thoughts and ideas throughout are the thoughts and ideas natural to his mental and social type. He is (to the best of his author's ability) his own self and *not* his author's self, in his emotional reactions, in his hard wilfulness, in his faith, in his political ideas, in his judgments. He is a specimen of modern liberalism, using liberalism in its broadest sense. He is a study of a modern type seeking modes of self-realisation. His circumstances and his views are fitted together with the utmost care to make one consistent personality. His views run very close at times — but not always — to the views his author has in his own person expressed; nevertheless, is it too much to ask that they be treated here as his own? Naturally his point of view is like Mr. Wells'. That was to be expected. How can one imagine and invent the whole interior world of an uncongenial type? Every author must write of the reactions he knows; he must be near enough to them to *feel* them sympathetically. It is unreasonable to expect the author of this book to write of the inner life of such people as the devout Mr. Belloc, for example, or the aristocratic Duke of Northumberland, or the political Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. He can only comment on such types from an inaccessible remoteness, attack them, admire them, state his differences from them. Their ultimate processes are inconceivable to him. There never was a character created by an imaginative author from the inside which did not contain this quite unavoidable element

of self-projection. Even Hamlet is believed to be a self-projection of Shakespeare. But while this is forgiven and taken for granted in the criticism of most authors, it is made a stock grievance against the present writer. It would be a great kindness to a no doubt undeserving author if in this instance William Clissold could be treated as William Clissold, and if Mr Wells could be spared the standard charge of having changed his views afresh, and so forth and so on, because William Clissold sees many things from a different angle than did Mr. Polly, George Ponderevo, Susan Ponderevo, Mr. Preemby, Dr. Devizes, Dr. Martineau, Remington, Kipps, the artilleryman in *The War of the Worlds*, Uncle Nobby, Benham, Billy Prothero, and the many other characters who have been identified as mouthpieces and exponents of Mr. Wells' scandalously varied views and attitudes. And it is a point worth considering in this period of successful personal memoirs that if the author had wanted to write a mental autobiography instead of a novel, there is no conceivable reason why he should not have done so.

Clearly he did not want to do so.

Which brings us to the second point in this intimate but necessary plea. This is not a *roman à clef*. It is a work of fiction, purely and completely. One thing which is something of an innovation has to be noted. A great number of real people are actually named in this story. It is, the author submits, impossible to get the full effect of contemporary life in which living ideas and movements playa dominant part without doing that. You cannot have a man like William Clissold going about the world of to-day and never meeting anybody one has ever heard of. Some of these living personages are not only mentioned but more or less described. But always under their proper names. Dr. Jung is made to talk in a London flat. It is very much as he talked in a London flat. He appears because certain original ideas of his have been taken and woven into the Clissold point of view, and it was at once ungracious not to acknowledge the far-reaching suggestions that came from him and clumsy and self-important to make a footnote or a prefatory note. Shaw, again, the Shaw of the 'eighties, blows into a Kensington evening, and Keynes lunches with Clissold. These are affectionate hospitalities; they do not wound nor injure and can awaken no resentment.

With one transparent exception, the vignette of a great scientific man at home in Book I., which is partially a portrait, every character that appears in the book under a fictitious name is an entirely fictitious character. The more nearly they may approach to living instances, the more fictitious they are. They say and do things that living people are saying and doing. That is inevitable in a picture of contemporary life. If one were to write a story in which a Prime Minister had to figure during the Balfour regime, it would be necessary to have a Prime Minister rather like Lord Balfour — or everything would have to be different. If an August Personage has to descend into the narrative, it would have to be drawn to the figure of the August Personage of the period. A beggar or a policeman must be something like some beggar or policeman one actually knows. People must be more or less similar to real people up and down the scale, so long as one is writing a novel and not a fantasy. But though you made your Prime Minister as Balfouresque as possible or your Prince as princely, it would be for atmosphere and not for statement, and the last imputation that is permissible against a novelist is that he is trying to say or insinuate this or that about an individual without daring to say it plainly and directly to the proper address. Cannot this sort of imputation be checked?

Cannot those who criticise books and write about books cease to pander to that favourite amusement of vulgar, half-educated, curious, but ill-informed people, the hunt for the imaginary "originals" of every fictitious character for those who will, for example, discover in the present case that X or Y or Z, who is an advertising specialist, "sat for" the brother Dickon of this story, or that Lady Steinhart is some particular resident in Cannes or Nice — because she has a large garden? And that it is all great fun and very malicious and *not* for a moment to be treated as serious literature. This identification of "originals" is an old trick of the Victorian novelist and publisher; it was, I suppose, an attempt to enhance interest by that faint intimation of libel. It is really not just to the spirit and intention of a book of this type.

An inanimate instance from this book will make the matter clearer without touching upon any personal note. There is written here the most exact and detailed description of the *mas*, which is the scene of

nearly the whole novel. Rooms in that house are described, bits of its garden, the view from the windows. It is possible to locate that *mas* within a few miles of Grasse; it is possible to find not one but a score of views closely similar to the view pictured so explicitly, a similar *mas* is to be found. But the actual *mas* no one will ever find, nor the precise rooms, nor the exact view. That *mas* does not exist. That view does not exist. It is the case of Mr. Britling's home over again, which everyone who did not know Mr. Wells' home in Essex very well, knew so surely was an exact account of Easton Glebe. The less these identifiers knew about it, the more they appreciated the photographic quality of the picture. The less they knew Mr. Wells, the more certainly they recognised him in Mr. Britling. Enthusiastic strangers still invade Mr. Wells at times with the demand to see the place where he wept when he heard that his eldest son was killed. It is embarrassing to encounter such intrusive sympathy for an entirely imaginary loss. And matters become complicated when "originals" volunteer and surrender to the detectives. A charming contemporary has just confided to the world that she was the "original" of Beatrice in *Tono Bungay*. It is the first intimation that has reached the author of this interesting fact. No one would have suspected it.

But this time may we have a truce to such artless tributes to the novelist's art? It was William Clissold, an entirely fictitious character, who thought out most of the problems of his life and made belated love to his fictitious Clementina in a fictitious *mas* in Provence, and in spite of the entirely imaginary wreckage of an automobile in the road to Thorenc the author survives. It is no good to look for that stone, with its simple inscription, in the Magagnosc cemetery. To the best of his knowledge and belief the author has never been buried anywhere. Even brother Dickon's allusion to William's good looks is not to be regarded as modest self-revelation. All novelists use actual experiences in their work. They must know things before they tell about them. But all novelists rearrange, sublimate, intensify. One turns over the sketch-book of one's memories and uses what one needs. One takes a lifted eyebrow here and a mimosa in flower there. The imagination discovers a certain congruity between some actual situation and some constructive necessity, and works in as much of the situation as it needs. But it

alters and rearranges without scruple. The eyebrow is not a portrait; the parallelism of a situation is not a report. Surely there is enough to read in this book without reading between the lines.

And one other question may be glanced at here before this note concludes. There is much discussion of opinion in this book. Does that make it anything but a novel? Is it not quite as much "life" to meet and deal with a new idea as to meet and deal with a new lover? Must the characters in our English and American novels be for evermore as cleaned of thought as a rabbit is of its bowels, before they can be served up for consumption? This book, which contains religious, historical, economic, and sociological discussions, which expresses fits of temper and moods of doubt, is at any rate submitted as a novel, as a whole novel, and nothing but a novel, as the story of one man's adventure, body, soul, and intelligence, in life. If you are the sort of person who will not accept it as a novel, then please leave it alone. You are not getting sly peeps at something more real than the reality of art, and your attempts to squint through will only make you squint very unbecomingly.

BOOK THE FIRST THE FRAME OF THE PICTURE

1. THE BEGINNING OF A BOOK

YESTERDAY I was fifty-nine, and in a year I shall be Sixty— "getting on for seventy," as the unpleasant old phrase goes. I was born in November, 1865, and this is November, 1924. The average duration of life in England is fifty-one and a half, so I am already eight years and a half beyond the common lot. The percentage of people who live beyond sixty is forty-seven. Beyond seventy it is thirty. Only one in five thousand lives beyond one hundred, and of this small body of centenarians two thirds are women. My expectation of life, says the table in the Almanac, is fourteen years and four months. That table in the Almanac is not a mathematical marvel, but it is close enough to the truth to serve my purpose here.

In the face of these figures I cannot hide from myself that the greater part of my life has been lived. So far I have had but few physical reminders of the ebb of the years. I do not feel that I am even beginning to be old. Perhaps I grow tired more readily than I did at thirty, and my tennis is neither so hard nor so quick-witted as it used to be, but my arteries, the doctors tell me, are still young arteries. I cannot read Bradshaw nowadays, I must put on spectacles for that, and I do not like to swim in cold water any more. Yet in good daylight I can still read ordinary print with unaided eyes, and, come to think of it, I have always gasped in cold water. Maybe I have not so much lost endurance as learnt wisdom. And generally my vigour is unimpaired. It is the dates and figures that will not be denied. They show quite plainly that at most only two decades remain for me, and when they are spent my strongest will be a white-faced, rather shrunken, assisted old man— "wonderful," they will say. I know because I say it now of Sir Rupert York and old Hayes. The greater chance is that I shall be no more than a jarful of ashes and a fading memory.

Possibly they may make something in time for me from these monkey glands they talk about; but I distrust these rejuvenescent extracts. I do not want merely to prolong my years as an unpleasant experiment. I may go on for some time yet by my own unaided strength, unless a serious illness catches me. Then, I have observed,

if one comes back at all one comes back "aged."

I do not complain that I have to grow old. It is not a thing that I think about habitually. But the birthdays come round to remind me, and this year some journalist got hold of my date but added up the years wrong, and in the *Evening Standard* I found myself subjected to congratulations on attaining sixty. I was so startled that I did a little sum at once on the margin of the paper. For a moment I felt just as though I had missed a bank-note from a not too distended purse.

His mistake.

But to-day I find myself retrospective. I have been caught up for a couple of days in London before I go back to my sunshine in Provence, and I am all alone. Outside it is not so much day as a saturated piece of dingy time, a stretch of chewed and damp and dirty fourth dimension between two nights. It rains fitfully, now in fine clouds, now in hysterical downpours, now in phases of drizzling *undecided* intermission; and the shops are lit and there are lights in the windows. There is a sort of grey discoloration filtering down from above that I suppose one must admit to be daylight. Wet omnibuses, wet taxicabs and automobiles splash and blunder by, there are a few reluctant foot passengers under wet umbrellas. Everything shines greasily with the rain like the backs of rolling porpoises. What a climate! This intolerable place, they say, is the healthiest city in the world. Thank Heaven! I leave it to-morrow.

I do not venture outside this room to-day. At any rate I will lunch here. These excellent chambers of my brother's are kept by a French couple who combine English comfort with French cookery. No wonder old Dickon grows fat. He is in Brussels now — probably growing fatter. Inadvertently. He does not want to grow fat. He is dining with a curious little society for the promotion of scientific finance, of which he is one of the founders. That is all I know about his business in Brussels. Then he is going on into Germany, still in pursuit of monetary ideas. His energy and industry in the cause he has taken up are prodigious — and he is nearly three years older than I. He thrives on it. No wonder he needs a comfortable resting-place here. From these rooms one might imagine him sedentary. They make me feel sedentary. But even his sedentariness has directness and vigour. There is something about this room in particular, and this

desk of his and this chair of his, remarkably conducive to not going out. To-day especially.

Before me are good square sheets of paper and quill-pens and every provocation to write. The lamp is admirably shaded. So why should I not write, and forget altogether that visible chill, that inky catarrh of a climate which is snivelling against the window-panes?

2. THE WORLD IN THE CRYSTAL

FOR some time now I have had the idea of writing a book dominating my mind and never quite settling down to a positive beginning. I have wanted to begin so much, the thing has become so important to me that the very strength of my desire has restrained me. I have written one or two books before, but they have been technical works of no significance to the unspecialised reader. I have written various reports, too, and between thirty and forty scientific papers. Such things seem to write themselves. The book I have in mind now is something altogether more human and difficult than that.

It is not exactly an autobiography I want to write, and not exactly a book of confessions. My life has been largely spent in work; my only scandal was a public scandal and very fully reported. I do not see why I should repeat the newspapers again; much of my business I can only discuss in general terms because of my obligations to my firm and our associates, and there remains little for me to confess, even if I had the Rousseau streak in me. It is with larger affairs than my own that my projected book would deal. It is nothing, indeed, so systematic as a general philosophy of life I contemplate, but it is something rather more in that way than an autobiography would be. I should say that a description of my world best expresses what I have in view; my world and my will.

I want it to be a picture of everything as it is reflected in my brain. I want it to be a comprehensive picture. The book, as I see it, should begin with my — I suppose I shall have to say— "metaphysics"; it should display my *orbis terrarum*, and then it should come down to the spectacle of mankind as I apprehend it and my place in that history, and so to the immediate affairs of everyday life, to moods, passions, experiences, lessons, and at last to the faith and purpose that sustain me and fill my mind at the present time and make living on worth while. The main objective is that faith and purpose. All the rest will lead up to that, to how and why I accept life and go on living.

My metaphysics I can set about at once. I shall have chiefly to

explain why I have no metaphysics. The reader need fear no elaboration of a system, not even a negative system. It is not so much a statement of scepticism that I have to make, as a confession of accepted ignorance. Yet that does not mean that I am — what is the word? — a Positivist.

I find most of the worlds that other people describe or take for granted much more hard and clear and definite than mine is. I am at once vaguer and more acutely critical. I don't believe so fully and unquestioningly in this "common-sense" world in which we meet and exchange ideas, this world of fact, as most people seem to do. I have a feeling that this common-sense world is not *final*. It is necessitated in many ways by the conditions under which we think and communicate, and I do not regard these conditions as being fundamental to existence. The common-sense world is a practical working world and so far true, but it is not necessarily ultimately true. There are times when I feel as though it was less the sphere that enclosed me and made my all, than a sort of magic crystal into which I peered and saw myself living. I have, as it were, a sense of externality and a feeling that perhaps it might be possible, though I cannot imagine how it could be possible, to turn away and look at something else quite different from this common-sense world — another world.

I never get to more than that in the way of detachment. I never get further from philosophical Positivism than that. Could anything be vaguer? It is the shadow of the ghost of a doubt. The individual in that crystal globe of time and space has a hundred thousand traits by which I know him for myself. How, then, can I be the onlooker also, of whom I know nothing at all except that he sees? This sense of externality is, perhaps, no more than a trick of my brain, like a moment of giddiness as one walks along the street. It certainly has no practical significance.

I am reminded as I write of this of a queer little thing that happened to me at times, most frequently in my adolescence and when I was a young man. I do not think that it has occurred at all during the last ten or fifteen years. It was this: The visible world, remaining just as bright and clear as ever it had been, would suddenly appear to be *minute*. People became midgets, the houses

and the furniture, dolls'-houses and furniture, the trees, mere moss-fronds. I myself did not seem to shrink to scale; it was only the universe about me that shrank. This effect would last for a few seconds or for a few minutes, and then it would pass away. I have not found anyone else who has had this particular experience, but I am sure it has happened to many other people. I have never had the converse effect of enlargement.

I suppose a slight momentary change in my blood or breathing produced a change of phase in my nervous state, I perceived a difference in the *feel* of my vision, and my mind, a little perplexed, interpreted it in this fashion. If so there may be drugs that would have the same effect.

Or there may have been some little transitory fluctuation in my sensations of optical adjustment. Mental specialists connect doubts and confusions about one's identity in dreams and in cases of mental disorder with changes in bodily feeling. Yet one may argue that a conviction of reality which is so finely poised that it totters at a slight excess or defect of oxygen or suchlike factor in the blood cannot be a very soundly established one.

But it is not my intention to be mystical. It is the world in the crystal I want to write about, this crystal into which I seem to have been looking now and living for nine-and-fifty years. I will not question the reality or quality of the crystal further. It does not matter for my present purpose whether that is the final reality, or only a transitory moving picture produced by some stir of chemicals in a membrane of grey-matter inside my skull. I want to write of the motives of action in it, of its pains and pleasures, of its beauty and provocation, before my mental strength begins, as it must so soon do now, to ebb. I want to write of love and curiosity and habit and inertia and all the other motives that have kept me going. I shall write as a fairly fortunate and happy man, glad to have lived and very glad still to be alive, but wonderingly, more than a little regretful that this perplexing, interesting fabric of display and experiences, so incomplete still, so challenging a tangle of riddles, is drawing towards it inexorable end.

I do not want to go yet. I am sorry to have so little time before me. I wish before the ebb carries me right out of things altogether that I

could know more — and know better. I came into the world with a clutter of protest; my mind is still haunted by protesting questions too vague for me to put into any form that would admit of an answer. If I had more time, I would like, just for a little while, in a winter's fireside talk, as it were, to have things made clearer before I go.

3. THE TREACHEROUS FORGET-ME-NOTS

My life, I confess, seems to me to be short, distressingly short, preposterously short in comparison both with the vast range of my thoughts in space, and with the huge perspectives of the past and the future in which we think nowadays. I doubt if man had quite the same sense of abbreviation before this measuring by astronomical distances and geological ages began. And life is not only short, but things in it are out of proportion. The rules of perspective are reversed, and the remotest memories loom largest and are the most vivid. Things that happened five-and-twenty years ago are often distant and obscure enough, but the things that happened in my childhood are things of yesterday. I am no longer the young man I was. He and I have almost lost identity. Nevertheless, I am still intensely the child I used to be.

I suppose this is because most things are first seen and heard and felt in childhood, and our minds file these early impressions as key-pictures and refer the later ones to them. So they are continually refreshed. But later experiences are no longer used as new points of reference.

A hundred times, perhaps, in the course of my life and in a score of places, for example, I have seen autumnal horse-chestnut leaves reflected in brown water and the branches of a horse-chestnut tree coming down close to that still mirror, but it is definitely as a child that I think of seeing them, and all the other occasions are in comparison vague and unassigned. I was in the old punt on the great pond at Mowbray. The silvery sheet of water had that convex effect one always got there upon a day of absolute calm. It was like a very smooth broad buckler. I think that effect of curvature must have been due to the way the reeds and bushes shaded the edges, or perhaps to some trick in the angle of the reflection of the pines up the slope. Far away against a background of dark bushes, some of them still deep green and some a rusty red, floated a little squadron of motionless swans, the old bird marvellously tranquillised since his days of terrifying aggression in the early summer. Even the ducks and the friendly attendant dab-chick among the lily leaves were silent.

Everything was so still that I remember being startled by the sudden "plop" of a falling husk into the crystalline water behind me.

I suppose it is the sodden horse-chestnut leaves scattered over the wet stone pavement in the yard behind this house that have released this group of memories. The armchair and Dickon's study fade to nothingness. I sit again in the punt with a row of glossy brown conkers all neatly bored beside me. I have bored them with a long nail rather tediously and have had to be careful of the palm of my hand. One or two I have broken. There are leaves in the bottom of the punt, and a thin and scattered remnant clinging insecurely here and there among the branches about me. I have been seeking a perfectly golden leaf without a patch of green or brown upon it, I have tried the taste of a horse-chestnut and have disapproved of it and spat out and watched the fragments of my mouthful sinking slowly and eddying down through the clear water and thought how queer it was that some should spin and whirl about and some sink swift and straight, and I have wondered if the hooflike end of the leaf-stem accounts for the name of the tree. And now I am sitting motionless, suddenly aware of the tremendous quiet of the day.

It is as if the whole world paused. It is as if God was present, God whom they talk about so much in church....

Yes, I am almost as much back there as I am present in this room. Perhaps for the first time in my life I observed serenity on that day.

Half a century ago that was, right at the other end of life, and it is more vivid than yesterday. That must have been our first year at Mowbray in the beginnings of my strange father's last burst of success before his tragic downfall. We went to Mowbray from Bexhill, and everything was new and larger and finer about us.

I was nearly eight then, and at Mowbray I seem to have awakened quite suddenly to beauty and wonder. I do not recall any perception of beauty and loveliness at Bexhill. I think the summer must have been exceptionally fine and kindly. At that age I was entering upon a fresh phase of development, and the novelty and spaciousness of the new life stimulated me. As I sit here brooding at this writing-pad I live again a score of vivid, small, and yet intensely significant moments, and most of them are in the open air in the park and particularly round and about the great pond. Hardly any are indoors. I

do not recall very much of the Mowbray interiors. Indoors at that time, I think, I was always reading, reading, reading.

In that punt it was I first became aware of the science of optics. I discovered something remarkable about the handle of a little fishing-net that I had put into the water. I was holding it quite still in the hope of presently whipping it up with some minnows, and I perceived that it was bent sharply at the surface of the water. I forgot the minnows and began to move the net to and fro and higher and deeper. It seemed bent, but it was not really bent. The bending shifted as I shifted the net. I puzzled over that distortion.

And in that old punt I puzzled over the riddle of reflection as well as of refraction. I found that if I crouched down with my nose just above the side of the punt I saw nothing of the bottom at all, only blue sky and tree branches. Then, as I rose, suddenly the still bottom with its roots and dead leaves and slimy weeds and the shoals of minute fish hovering above it came into view. I experimented. I extended and retracted myself. I tried to catch the exact moment between squatting and standing, when the mirror became transparent and the bottom appeared.

There was an afternoon at Mowbray, it must have been earlier in the year, in the summer, when I first discovered forget-me-nots. At the upper end of the pond near where the stream came in there were shallows and floating masses of green weed with pink blossoms and thick, widespread clumps of sedges, and half hidden amidst these sedges were clouds of flowers of a divine, incredible blue. Either I had never seen forget-me-nots growing before or I had never observed them. I went to and fro, peering from the bank, and then took off my shoes and stockings and waded into the water and mud until my knickerbockers, in spite of all the tucking up I gave them, were soaked. And I picked handfuls of these the loveliest of all English wild-flowers.

Then suddenly came horror, the unqualified horror of childhood. My legs were streaming with blood. The sharp blades of the sedge leaves had cut them in a score of places. Fresh gouts of blood gathered thickly along the cuts, and then darted a bright red ribbon down my wet and muddy skin. “Oh! Oh!” I cried in profound dismay, struggling and splashing back to the bank and still holding

my forget-me-nots with both hands.

Still do I remember most vividly my astonishment at the treachery of that golden, flushed, and sapphire-eyed day.

That it should turn on me!

4. INFANTILE

THINKING of one's childhood is like opening a great neglected volume haphazard and reading in it. There must be many thousands of such pages that I might turn over, still bright, still fresh. The earliest pictures are the most fragmentary; they are vignetted in the unknown. One very early moment of self-discovery comes to mind when I was lying naked on my back gazing in a sort of incredulous wonder at my belly and knees. That must have been at Bexhill, although I have forgotten the background, and I could not have been more than three years old.

"Me?" I thought.

Use and wont have dulled that first astonishment at the conscious sight of my body, but I still retain something of the early incredulity. Mine is that baby body still, though my grandchildren would not believe it if I told them so; it is changed, but not out of recognition, it is younger than my face, yet in quite a little while now I shall see it for the last time and cease to see or feel it any more, and it will be altogether finished with, material for the undertaker and the crematorium. And that, I suppose, will be the end of all the pictures, and the volume will never be added to nor opened again. I know of no attic or storeroom to which that great tome will go — even to moulder. It will, it seems, vanish.

I stare at this prospect in very much the same mood of wonder in which I stared at my foreshortened body fifty-odd years ago. My approaching disintegration is even more amazing than my realised appearance.

I think that discovery of my body must be one of the earliest pictures in my volume. But these vignettes of one's infancy are not firmly bound in nor properly arranged. Perhaps I was put to meditate upon that bed quite frequently. I remember my pink belly and the fat knees and toes that I recognised as myself, and how that then or later — it is not distinct — I discovered a most remarkable and most unaccountable button in the middle of my belly. At that point, though I did not know it, I had been cut off from the tree of life and made a separate individual.

Mixed up with that exploration of my navel is the hard long line of the rail of the bedstead and a memory of my mother standing at the foot of the bed and strange and startling thing for my infant intelligence to realise — weeping very bitterly. I do not think I said or did anything about that, probably my mother never imagined I had observed it, but I remember it very plainly.

All these impressions are bright and immense in my mind. The later things in my life, even when they are as vivid, are not as large. This I perceive is the common lot; nearly all autobiographers are disposed to develop the childish or adolescent experiences out of all proportion to the central realities of the life. But I shall not do that here; it is the maturer relationships with which I am concerned.

For a time I must discontinue making these notes altogether, for old Sir Rupert York has rung me up. He has discovered I am in London, and this dismal downpour has afflicted him so that he cannot endure to be alone. He must not stir abroad in the wet, so I shall break my resolution to keep in this room to-day and go out and lunch with him. I must make my apologies to Madame Deland.

5. SIR RUPERT YORK

"WONDERFUL" is certainly the word for Sir Rupert; he is close upon eighty, but his mind is as bright as it has ever been. He talks and moves slowly, and he confesses that he feels no longer disposed to work hard and is easily tired by any effort, but he misses no point in one's talk and his thought is candid and serene. On his desk were drawings and a photograph and a plaster-cast of a gorilla's foot; some American has been writing unwisely of the use of the ape's big toe in walking, and Sir Rupert has been demolishing him, patiently, unhurryingly, and completely. He is also feeling his way towards the use of a peculiar sort of early stone implement with a beaked end, and the room is littered with specimens.

He looks better than when I saw him last two years ago. Then he seemed to me to be greatly fallen away, and his skin had that rather shrivelled white delicacy that comes with age; now either I was prepared for it or it has really recovered tone and texture. He ate a good lunch; he is still far from the days of digestive paps, and in spite of the wet he came out on his doorstep without thinking of a coat to stand and smile his farewell.

Big and smiling he is and in some subtle way noble, and it is a comfort to me to have been with him, for in his case at any rate old age has not meant a lean and slippered egotism and jealousy of youth.

I told him about my project of writing a book, and he confessed he had had similar thoughts. They have come to nothing with him because rostrocarinate implements and suchlike riddles are more interesting to him than himself. But it was curious to see how different was his conception of autobiography. He is the least metaphysical of men; he has no doubts of the reality of our world of time and space; he will not trouble his mind with any speculations about his identity or consider any system outside the universe of science; he is even disregardful and a little impatient with the later analyses of modern physics. And the story he would tell would be a matter-of-fact record beginning with a sturdy boy full of material curiosities, fascinated by the discovery of strange mammalian bones

in the Crag, and going on from that to collecting, to the systematic study of geology and morphology, and so to a fair full life of material gathered, generalisations sifted, facts insisted upon, and false conclusions exposed. I have always had a great affection for Sir Rupert since years ago we did some work together on the fracture of flints and bones; he had asked me to help him with an optical examination of flint under strain; and he still seems to me in several ways the greatest scientific man I have known, the greatest and the simplest. He is as simple as some fine animal that has grown to its full development under favourable conditions.

My own scientific work gives me the measure of his. He makes me feel no better than an excursionist in this world of science in which he is a prince. An excursionist or a prospector. I was not simple after his fashion. Wonder touched me as it did him in boyhood. It was not fossils that seized upon my imagination, but the riddle of double refraction and the perplexities of what we still thought of in those days as the "shapes" of atoms and molecules. Some of my work was quite respectable. Other men have gone along the road I opened; it was a sound piece of road. But I did not keep on wholeheartedly. In the end I deserted science altogether, as I shall have to explain. I am what passes for a rich man, an industrialist. I am one of the active directors of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co., and I have a share and a voice in most of their affiliated activities. I hold a considerable number of patents, and I am an exploiter of secret processes, which I recognise are offensive to science. The essence of science is open statement. During the war I was what they called an expert, and after the war I was foolish enough to dabble in politics. I thought a new and greater age was beginning and that the war had taught us a lesson. It did. But the lesson is slow in digesting, and I have experimented and tried this way and that in my effort to express and realise my conception of it. And I have let women deflect my life very considerably. I have been greedy for property and freedom and influence and for many sorts of experience I had better have avoided. But Sir Rupert with a large modesty and devotion has gone on serving the truth in that field to which he was called.

I do not think there has ever been any great conflict of motives in

his life. Quite early and quite without reservations he determined to give himself to natural history. Other things have had to accommodate themselves to that. His circumstances made the gift easy; Professor Huxley was a frequent visitor to his home and Charles Darwin patted his head. And to be a naturalist then was a great adventure; science had challenged tradition and dogma, and the warfare that followed in the minds of men was an epic warfare. We live in the liberties of thought that were won for us then. He has never married, and though I suspect him of no excesses of chastity, I perceive that the mixture of sexual need and the hunger for a dear companion that has so disturbed me has had no equivalent influence upon him. Nor has he ever displayed any religious impulse beyond an upright, unswerving devotion to his sense of truth. He has accepted the work that lay before him single-mindedly, living comfortably and happily and without any sense of sacrifice. He has done that work magnificently. Abundant it has been, and sound and wide, and strictly within the limitations of things as they plainly are. He questions so ably because he accepts so completely. Before I went to him to-day I had intended, forgetting a little his quality, to put my conception of the provisional reality of life before him and discuss it with him. Such an exchange would be as possible with a pensive lion in the Zoo.

Ever and again, as we talked together and ranged from this to that, he would return to gnaw the bones of his American professor. "You see," he would resume in a pause, "if anyone had been trying to make a case and deliberately faking the photograph, he could not have put the foot in a better light for his own ends than this fellow has done. If he made the photograph. But did he? He doesn't say whether he did or not. It may be the other way round. He may just have seen it somewhere and picked it up and run away with a misconception. That's not so bad. Then he's merely careless — and obstinate. He wanted to take up an original point of view and this made it seem plausible. But while this cast here of mine is from a living gorilla, *his* sketch is made from a photograph of doubtful origin of a foot which I am fairly certain has been taken out of spirits.... Queer.... All through he shows a sort of eagerness....

"Some of these Americans live too near the newspapers. They get

the headline spirit. They want to make startling discoveries and startling reversals in a hurry....

"One has to understand one can't do that sort of thing....

"They must live under bad conditions over there. I don't understand what sort of surroundings a biologist can have — in a Western university, for example. They seem to be restless, excessively sensitive to cheap judgments. Over there — —"

Sir Rupert paused and his manner became very earnest.

"They will let newspaper interviewers come into their *discussions*!" he said. "They will let interviewers make statements for them, and they will attend to the stuff interviewers and paragraphists put on to other people. They seem to have no feeling for precisions in such things.... This man seems to be afraid to admit details that tell against him.... As though he might lose something....

"And yet, *you* see, they will make the rashest attacks....

"He brought it on himself."

He reflected for a moment and patted the plaster cast beside him on the table, and regarded it with a benevolent expression. He had brought it in from the study to the dining-room. He has the charming habit of carrying about with him everywhere the implements and bones that are interesting him. I have heard of him sitting at a large dinner party with a polished rhinoceros bone from which he would not be separated beside his plate, just as a child will insist on sitting at meals with some very dear new toy on the table.

He disentangled his mind from the cast and remembered his duty as a host.

"You like this Château Margaux? 1917. Good year, 1917."

6. “WILLE UND VORSTELLUNG”

I WISH I knew more of the practical side of literature. I suppose that after a craftsman has written six or seven “works” he learns so well how to set about his business that he writes on strongly and confidently from the very first word, and has — I think Stevenson explains as much somewhere — the end of his book latent in his opening paragraph. But I have been beating about the bush for five sections and making notes for various matters that must come in later, and still I doubt if I have told anything at all about my world. Instead I have written about my childhood and made a sketch of my host at lunch. It is like the way one draws on the blotting-paper in a boardroom. Unless — unpleasant thought! — it is the onset of the garrulous stage.

I shall keep the morning’s writing and this note upon Sir Rupert at hand, but I shall try a fresh commencement here. Perhaps, after all, the proper way is to go directly to the core of the matter. Even though that may mean stiff going for a bit for both writer and reader. How in the most general terms do I apprehend life?

Metaphysically I have never been able to get very far beyond Schopenhauer’s phrase: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. Life to me as to him, when he wrote that title at least, is a spectacle, a show, with a drive in it.

Is there a plot to the show; is it a drama moving through a vast complexity to a definite end, or at any rate moving in a definite direction? To that question the various religions have given their various answers, and I will say at once that I have found none of their answers satisfactory. There is some invincible fact or group of facts outside of, or, positively inconsistent with all their explanations. Yet every on.e of them has some half-truth in it for me. Either the whole is too complex for me to perceive a plot or recognise the one the teachers would have me see, or there is no plot.

I admit a tremendous splendour, beauty, and delight in much of the scenery. The lighting effects are superb.

For more than fifty years I have been turning the pages of the book of sunsets and never have I wearied. The texture and quality of

the costumes, the subtlety, charm, and humour of the cast again, are often amazing. I rejoice perhaps excessively in the loveliness of the bodies in which we are clothed. But plot to hold together this vast display in one comprehensive system I cannot see. My mind seeks it and needs it; the spectacle remains incoherent in spite of all my seeking.

It is like one of those rummage-sale outbreaks of disconnected cleverness they give in the theatres nowadays and call revues. And some of the scenes and some of the actors are infernally dull, some of the cleverness is harsh and base, some of the turns bore to the limits of endurance, ugly and offensive things come on and spoil an act and will not go off for all my manifested disapproval. And like an Elizabethan gentleman I am upon the stage and not in the auditorium, and ever and again my stool is kicked from under me and I have to answer an unexpected cue, pull myself together, as people say, and improvise a part. Passive or active, I am always in the centre of this show of mine.

The shifting values of the scene at any particular moment, the distribution of importance and quality, come, I perceive, mainly from three groups of things. Firstly, there is what is fed to us — *dietary* shall I call it? — in which I include not only meat and drink and the want of them, but the reception or lack of all we can inhale or inject into our systems, fresh air or unexpected ideas. Secondly, come *infections and injuries* bodily and mental, and their feverish distressful stimulations. Thirdly, there is *irradiation*, by which I mean all that we call the weather, and heat and cold and sounds and light, and those subtler magic rhythms of colour and harmony that flow through eyes and ears and the substance of my body, to exalt or debase me. These three groups of things charge my life with its current quality and determine whether the mood of my part shall be urgency or valiant resistance, gay confidence, anger, repose, or despair. They determine, too, whether the tone shall be strong or weak, concentrated or diffused. There seems to be little or nothing in me that can resist these determinations. But manifest through all the phases they create there is an intermittent urgency of self-assertion and aggression upon which my poor simplifying and integrating human mind imposes a unity and continuity. This is the Me.

This urgency is, in the broader sense of the word, sexual: in that broad sense of the new psychology which makes sexual almost co-extensive with racial. Its drive is the drive of what Shaw calls the "life force" and Schopenhauer the "will to live." But it is concentrated about my egoism and divided off from the general life force of the world. It is protean; it involves an anxiety for present and future things outside myself, it seeks expression and recognition and response. Occasionally it becomes barely and plainly a clamour for woman. But I speak for myself — it is reluctant to *embody* its desire in any particular woman for any length of time. Even when desire has run — as it has done once or twice in my life — deep and narrow and direct and passionate for a particular woman, my rationalising mind has still been disposed to invent generalisations that broadened and mitigated the intensity of that desire. There is a counterbalancing disposition of this force to admit the claim of a wider obligation, and to reconcile the narrower and intenser drive with that. This widening has increased with the years; the sexual has become more racial, and the will to live for myself has changed more and more into a will to live for life.

Such are the ingredients of my role in this tremendous, terrifying, delightful, exciting, unequal, indifferent, and irrelevant revue of existence. This is my personal analysis of life. This is the composition of my life as it presents itself to me. These are the threads of the stitches in the tapestry, the elements of my hours.

7. IMMORTALITY

WHEN the curtain of death comes down, is the *revue* over?

So far as William Clissold goes, I think it is. I think that death is a thing I shall never experience, for when it comes to me I shall be dead. I may see it coming, I may hope for it or fear it, but I shall never know it come. I shall never know it has come just as I never know that sleep has come. I do not believe in personal immortality. In my youth I struggled against the idea of individual extinction, but now I accept it quite tranquilly. I think there may be something immortal in me, and what that is I will do my best to explain in subsequent sections, but I do not think that immortal part contains any of the distinctive factors that individualise me. The sound of my voice, the oddities of my mind, my likes and dislikes, and the great volume of my personal memories will, I think, end when my heart ceases to beat.

I have still enough greediness for personal experience to want, if not complete immortality, at least a little extension of my time. I am like a well-behaved child who is willing to go to bed but would prefer to sit up a while longer. But I can find no tittle of evidence that experience goes on after physical death. The phenomena of fainting, sleep, and unconsciousness all sustain my conviction that the immobility of the dead is also subjective. And I am quite unable to imagine any sort of living at all, any sort of conscious existence, without hands that feel, eyes that see, a sense of material substance, and a stir of bodily feeling. It is not strength but weakness of the imagination that enables people ,to think of themselves as bodiless "spirits." The idea that man is a threefold being of body, soul and spirit, all separable and mysteriously endowed with his personality, seems to me a survival of remote barbaric speculations. I can no more think of myself living on as a spirit than as living on as a moving photograph.

The decay of the established religious beliefs which wrapped the life after death in a sacred reticence has let loose much popular necromancy. I was sufficiently involved with these curiosities at one time to be a member of the Society for Psychical Research and to

follow up some of the alleged evidence for personal survival after death. I found evidence of much deception and still more self-deception. And even if I had admitted the reality of all the phenomena tendered, which I would be very loth to do, they would have proved nothing except the survival of fragments of personal will and memory. Suppose a medium to produce some trivial secret between myself and some departed intimate, known to no one else; that no more proves that my friend is still mentally alive than a corrupting fragment of his face with a characteristic scar would prove his bodily survival. The mere fact of the medium being in possession of this confidence suggests helplessness and insensibility in the departed. Generally the supposed messages from the dead display great mental degeneration. The mediums produce no more than a shrivelled phantom of the sought-after dead. When Victor Hugo was summoned back from the shades, Anatole France told me, he had forgotten *Hernani* and *Ruy Blas* altogether, and acquired nothing to make up for this but the sort of moral platitudes one might get from an intoxicated concierge. If we are to believe the stuff at all, we must believe on the evidence that the next life will be no better than a tattered fragment of this. I had rather have the flame of my life extinguished at once than turned down and down to flicker at last in such a fashion.

The revelations of Sir Oliver Lodge's *Raymond* and of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the lucubrations of Mr. Vale Owen confirm this view. The effect is not so much as if they had drawn the veil from a vision of deep and mighty things, as that the curate has bought a cheap magic lantern and got an enthusiastic and humourless spinster to daub his slides. I am prepared to believe the universe can be deeply tragic and evil or wonderful and beautiful, but not that it can be fundamentally silly. On the whole my presumption that there is nothing immortal in our individualities is strengthened rather than weakened by the evidence of this cloud of all too explicit witnesses to the contrary that has arisen in the past few years.

8. CRYSTALLINE, ATOMIC, DIMENSIONAL

THOUGH this is all that I can make of life, my mind is not entirely content to rest at this. I do not think that life is as entirely chancey and miscellaneous as my statement may seem to leave it. I do not believe that it is a succession of moods and impulses in an aimless confusion. There is order in the universe; there is law, essential and inexorable law. It is law outside of and independent of our wills, and perhaps irrelevant to our wills. But it is there.

It is not, I think, a habit of mind derived from early religious teaching that sustains this belief. It is much more closely related to the assumption of my scientific work. The world is in the nature of rational and explicable. At the same time it is not in any way subservient to human feelings and human ends.

I am reminded of a dear little grey kitten I had last year — I hope I have her still — at the Villa Jasmin. She was much intrigued by my cheval glass. She saw her reflection in it and she was greatly perplexed because she could not get at it. She struggled with the riddle. It was clear to me that she believed the damned thing could be understood. But it was more and more evident to me that her nice, quick, and in many ways very clever little brain had nothing at all in it to enable her to apprehend the nature of a reflection. She would pat the glass with her paw — after a time she patted the glass and did not attempt to put her paw through it — and then dodge round very quickly behind the mirror. Then still more quickly she would return to the front. She would stiffen her legs and bristle her hair and stalk off in a silly endearing way she had. It was just as though she raised her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders. It was in the spirit of that grimace. She would give it up and affect boredom and go out of the room. And come back presently to give it up again. She gave it up on different days, a dozen times perhaps. By now she has probably given it up altogether.

But though she cannot understand it the thing can be understood. That is the tantalising aspect of my own insufficiency. If I were God enough I might so contrive it, not by adding anything absolutely fresh to her ganglia, but simply by strengthening and expanding one

or another faculty, that she would theorise about light — to the Newtonian level. And with a little more knowledge and training to the level of Einstein and Weyl. And if there were a God above me, and it is just as possible as not there are intelligent beings above me capable of watching my mental proceedings just as I watch hers — how should I know about them if there were? — I too might be expanded to — anyhow, a larger sphere of comprehension.

I have always had a persuasion that I have never got anything like its full possibilities out of my brain. Even for what it is, it may not be anything near its maximum of effectiveness. Ever and again I have been astonished to find myself in a phase of exceptional lucidity, I have seen my way through a game of chess or grasped a mathematical problem with a directness quite beyond my normal possibilities. Or I have had a rush of creative energy, and invented lovely things very rapidly and expressed them with unpremeditated skill. Something happened then to my brain, some exceptional aeration or other stimulation. It showed what it could do. But all the time it was no other than the rather foggy and uncertain brain of my everyday life. It is quite conceivable that our present atmosphere is not the best of all possible atmospheres for the working of the human brain, nor the normal current in our arteries its most stimulating food.

The inhabitants of Venus, if there are any inhabitants upon that steamy planet, see no sun in their sky. There is, the astronomers suppose, a complete cloud shell between its surface and outer space. Life beneath that canopy must be life in the hot twilight of a tropical forest; daybreak must be a mere rosy or orange brightening of the grey, and night a darkling into blackness. But perhaps there are storms there, and then on some rare occasion that flocculent, dense welkin may be rent and swept aside, and the stars may shine or the naked sun blaze down upon the tossing, waving jungle. A thousand things, faintly suspected, dimly apprehended hitherto, must be revealed for a little while, stark and plain.

But my everyday mind is a cloudy and misty mind. I grope, I do not see. So far as I can judge, most of my fellow-creatures are groping too, and many of them do not even suspect this possibility of clairvoyance. They think that what they do with their minds is all that can be done with their minds. I do not agree, but I have never

worked out any very effective rules for bettering my mental operations. I have never been able to trace to my own satisfaction the causes that brought about those rare occasions of exceptional brilliance. I have never secured any command over them. But they have filled me with the haunting sense of something quite graspable if only I could close my fingers upon it, something just a very little way beyond my reach, quite visible had my eyes but a tithe more sensitiveness.

Yet even if some hitherto unsuspected God were to pour illumination into my mind so that, with all that intense realisation of beauty which is inseparable from discovery, a hundred obdurate riddles dissolved into obvious necessity, still I should have made, I feel, only one more step up an endless staircase. My kitten, could I put Newton's brain in control of its furry paws, would even then be patting pebbles on the margin of an illimitable ocean.

It has been necessary for me to keep in touch with current speculations about the constitution of matter, the nature of time and space. I have watched physical science, sternly self-disciplined, probing further and further, not only from ordinary human understanding, but from ordinary human feeling. The analysis of matter, in the last quarter of a century, has reached a point when it has ceased to be in any human sense wonderful. It is incomprehensible. Every statement is a paradox; every formula an outrage upon common sense. One is left baffled as by the hieroglyphics of some insane scribbler. In my curious childhood, when I browsed among what were then already old-fashioned books in the Mowbray library, I read of atoms and molecules almost as kindly and human as Dutch cheeses. I write Dutch cheeses because I remember how later — I was just twelve and my mother had taken Dickon and me for a sudden furtive holiday in Holland to escape, as I realised years afterwards, from the sight of newspaper placards proclaiming the Clissold Smash, Clissold in the Dock, Clissold's Cross-Examination — when I saw the golden cheeses piled all over the market place, and the quaintly costumed porters carrying them in exact geometrically arranged batches to and fro between the gaily painted barges and the market, it seemed to me that in quite that fashion it must be that molecules moved about, and the atoms of

matter combined and were distributed and re-combined. Everybody in those days thought of atoms as tangible things, and of space as a framework of three dimensions as rectangular as a window sash. The ether, the now vanished ether, wrapped about us like a garment, and time was like a star and dwelt apart. I remember when I was a science student, greatly torn between my search for knowledge and the urgent need of escaping from the wreckage of our family disaster, that in the college debating society we were already discussing the ideas of time being conceivable as a fourth dimension, and of a limit existing to material rectitude and exactness of repetition.

Since then all those easy old imaginings of quasi-tangible atoms and infinite incessant space have dissolved away insensibly. We have followed our deductions further and further into a stirring crystalline complex of multi-dimensional curvatures and throbbing reactions. Energy is and it is not, and then again it is, all Being flickers in and out of Not-being, there is an irrational bound set to motion, there is a limit to the range of temperature. Space is bent in some incomprehensible fashion so that straight lines re-enter into themselves, gravitation is a necessary consequence of duration, and atoms are the orbits and harmonies of infinitesimal electrical charges. Einstein's own description for popular enlightenment of his space-time system with its bent and possibly unstable co-ordinates, reads to me like the description of a clear vibrating four-dimensional haggis. Weyl goes wider and further, and Bohr has imposed a rippling intermission upon the whole universe. In the depths or heights of physics, for one word seems as good as the other when all direction is lost, I find my mind sitting down at last exhausted of effort in much the mood of Albrecht Dürer's *Melancolia*. I have gone far along that way, and I can go no farther into that wilderness of vanishing forms and puffs of energy in a quadri-dimensional field of force.

The science of the elements is becoming too difficult for ordinary men to grasp — which must gratify every intelligent priest. But the mystical God of force and substance — if one may use the word "God" for so remote a conception — to whom the endless winding staircase. of molecular science mounts for ever and never attains, is, I feel, no priest's God of sentiment and morality, no friend of man and

pitiful judge of our peccadillos, but a God of austere complexity, a God of variable and evasive rhythms and unfathomable intricacy, the God of a philosophical mathematician.

I note as I write this that something has passed insensibly out of my mind since my youth, and that hitherto I have not observed its departure. And that is, *the awe of the inorganic*. During my student days I was drawn by an overwhelming fascination to the lovely facts of crystalline structure, and particularly of double refraction and the interference of light. I went into these mysteries exalted and intoxicated with wonder. Partly it was an intellectual exultation; but partly it was sensuous, like the joy women find in the deep beauty of precious stones. Did I, in those days, in some faintly anthropomorphic way regard the glittering planes and beams and passages and patterning in those translucent depths into which I pried, as being accessible, as being physically accessible? Did I somehow conceive of myself as presently walking out of the ordinary paths of everyday into those magic palaces?

At any rate I cannot bring back any remnant of that wonder now. Neither in that connection nor in connection with that other profundity, space. There was a time, a rather earlier time in my life, when my little soul shone and was uplifted at the starry enigma of the sky. That has gone; gone absolutely. I could not have imagined that it would ever go. While I was still a little fellow at Mowbray I remember looking at the stars one winter night upon the terrace — it must have been a night in winter because Orion was there — and I was in an ecstasy. I was rapt in a passion of wonder. I was lost to all other feeling. I had slipped out without a coat and did not care that afterwards my governess scolded me. F or a time I did not hear her calling close at hand. But now I can go out and look at the stars as I look at the pattern on the wall-paper of a railway station waiting-room. About them I have become prosaically reasonable. If they were not there, there would be something else as casual, as indifferently sublime.

The more I have learnt about them the more coldly aloof from me have they become. What has happened to me? Is it the story of my little grey kitten over again? Have I grown tired of patting behind the glass?

9. DISINTEGRATING PROTESTANTISM

I RETURN from the *coulisses* of physics and the deep dark outlook of astronomy, from the underworld and outerworld of material mysteries, to the spectacle upon the stage.

I have compared it in its casual in consecutiveness to a London or New York revue. I cannot ignore the valiant attempts men have made to impose a coherent and comprehensive story upon it, to explain it as a drama with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Judaism and Islam give good but inadequate histories of how it all happened, and Christian teaching carries over some inexplicable gaps very ably and bravely; Buddhism, too, tells a tale with a curious affinity to the modern scientific spirit in its conception of impersonal retributions and its recognition of vast aeons. But Hindu thought is saturated with the cyclic delusion that things come back again. As my vision of the world has grown plainer and more assured, the last tinge of credibility has faded from these various dramatic diagrams of the universe. They have followed the fairies that I could still half hope to see and play with, when I lay down amidst the bracken of Mowbray Park.

I wish I could recall more of my early religious life. It developed in that late Victorian period when nothing had gone from the creeds but everything had weakened; people still believed in hell but did not like to have it talked about. Instruction was vague and allusive. I should call my upbringing "disintegrating Protestant." The idea of God was very much entangled with the disciplines of my nurse and governess, and the most vivid memory I have of the divinity teaching of my Bexhill days, was a highly illuminated card in an Oxford frame bearing the words

"THOU GOD SEEST ME."

I believed that firmly, and it abased my private dignity to a reluctant propitiatory restraint of my private thoughts. I would try to pretend that I was not thinking something that I was actually thinking. I was told repeatedly that I ought to love God, but I cannot remember feeling the slightest gleam of affection for that silent,

invisible, dominating, and dangerous spectator. Dangerous! — he could strike me dead, and was quite capable of doing so. On some mere technical point. How could one love a Being of that sort?

But certainly I never ventured to think that I did not love him. I was too afraid of him.

So was Dickon, although he was more than two years older than I. But we said very little about it to each other.

There was scant mention of the Crucifixion in our early teaching. I was told of it as a harsh matter of fact, but it was not dwelt upon. I saw pictures of it, and they filled me with horror that God should permit it, and there was a lesson from the New Testament read in church on Easter Sunday that dismayed and depressed a small soul already suffering from a surfeit of very new hot-cross buns. I was told to love this victim on the cross also, and there was nothing in my heart to respond. I felt that as a member of the deity he need not have put this dreadful thing upon me.

It was some transitory governess who insisted upon my loving the crucified one. I have forgotten her name, but she had a very long body in a green dress, a thick pink neck that rolled up over a slight swell of chin into a pink face, and a voice that impressed me as being rich. She always seemed to be leaning forward. When she found no spark of gratitude in us for the cross and thorns, she tried another aspect of her faith, and showed us a brightly coloured picture of Christ with a crowd of children about him and one upon his knee.

"Wouldn't *you* like to come to him?" she said, watching our faces for intimations of a response.

That estranged us in a different way.

I remember Dickon with his little freckled hands half thrust into his first knickerbocker pockets, looking very obdurate and saying nothing.

We wouldn't commit ourselves....

That is how I was taught about Jesus Christ. It is only in recent years that a personality has emerged through that curtain of mingled horror and mawkishness that was woven before him in my childhood....

My mother went to church and had us go to church. Under cross-examination she would perhaps have admitted finally, and with

qualifications and evident distaste, that she was a Christian, but she would have agreed at once and cordially that she was a Churchwoman, and even a "good Churchwoman." I do not recall any occasion when she spoke to us herself of Christ or Salvation or any such topic, nor did any of our nurses or governesses except that one I have just mentioned. Our home had a religion, but it was an extremely restrained religion; it was felt to have passed beyond the bounds of delicacy; it was referred to rather than actually produced. At church one did not listen much, and only the more anaemic hymns were sung. Even those abbreviated Anglican services seemed tediously unnecessary. "Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." I recalled my wandering thoughts. I might move about again. Pouf! what a relief! Nevertheless, the idea of God gripped me as a terrible idea.

For the life of me I cannot reconstruct the phases by which my mind recovered from the suggestion of that all-seeing, all-pervading, disapproving, and restraining deity. But when I was a science student I was in full revolt against that obsession and, more than a little scared at my own daring, I would invent "funny" blasphemous stories about "my friend Mr. G." I would pretend to have special communications and revelations from this mythical person and to be exceptionally influential in my prayers. Sometimes I would call him "the other Mr. G.," because in those days British Liberalism was disastrously dominated by that astounding irrepressible person Mr. Gladstone, and it was the custom of the reluctant impotent party his energy hauled after him to refer to him with a breathless reverential familiarity as "Mr. G." There was a certain spice in confusing these two holy terrors, which lost none of its savour when presently, during my student days, the earthly Mr. G. embarked upon a ridiculously ignorant defence of the Book of Genesis as a trustworthy summary of palaeontology. He had so much the manner of a distinguished author replying to his reviewers....

Professor Huxley, his antagonist in the *Nineteenth Century* controversy, became a great hero to me, the valiant anatomist, the grave white-haired, yellow-faced dean of our college, who stood up alone and undismayed against both the Mr. G.'s and exorcised them together from innumerable minds that had formerly been oppressed

by them.

I do not think enough attention has been given to the difference of our religious reactions at successive phases in our development. The great religions of the world come down to us from a time when the average age was shorter, when the world was relatively fuller of children and young people, when the emotional atmosphere was more in the key of adolescence than it is to-day. Life was short and thought was leisurely. Normally one believed what one was told. There were few things that were recognised as new and there was no appetite for novelty. The spirit of the times was against it. Ideas trickled then; in our times they jet. Notes of interrogation, those mosquitoes of the modern world, were scarcely known. Now they swarm on every path and infect us with a fever of doubt. Only a very few people grew out of the fears and beliefs they had acquired in childhood. Now very many of us do, and our unembarrassed actions and our freely expressed thoughts bring on the minds of many of the young towards our own stage far more rapidly than they would have come of their own accord.

It is difficult for me to judge how far the current generation is repeating the phases through which Dickon and I passed forty odd years ago, and whether there is the same necessity to minimise an early horror of God by familiar jesting. The edifying literature of our boyhood was pervaded by the idea of Providence, a fussy, uncertain, preposterous interference in human affairs, and we made my Mr. G. a symbol for all the petty malignities and kindnesses of the weather, and the chances of hill and road, and the turn of the cards, for all those caprices of accident indeed that were then called "Providential." And for every oddity of nature that jarred with our preconceptions of dignified benevolence. Our Mr. G., by our insistence on his human absurdity, became indeed a caricature and a defiance of all anthropomorphic gods. "Upon any supposition," we would say of the hyena, of the wart-hog at the Zoo, or of the slug in the salad, "why did Mr. G. make *that*? If he hadn't been ashamed of his slug he wouldn't have hidden it in the lettuce leaf. And what a sell if Eve had obeyed him! She had free-will. What would he have done with all these nasty creatures? Discreated them?..."

Dickon had a wonderful imagination of the Six Nights of

Creation. These, he fabled, came after the Fall. So Eve was restored to her theological freedom. Mr. G., he represented, after her vexatious indiscretions, in secret and much embittered, sabotaged a once perfect universe; for six nefarious nights he sabotaged it, put the taste of sin into his work, disharmonised sounds, invented stinks, created all the disease bacteria, supplied the wasps with stings, the flies with unsavoury instincts, and changed ten thousand once honest species into malignant parasites. Dickon would lie in bed shrieking with laughter, unable for a time to expound some new and still more awful dislocation that had just occurred to him.

"Didn't care what he did!" choked Dickon. "He *was* wild! Simply didn't care."

That old jest can still shock and please. Only this last June it was that I expounded the moods and character of our Mr. G. to my dear ridiculous Clem. We were walking up a winding, stony path, the old road from this place to that unaccountable village of Gourdon, which perches so high and splendidly above the Loup, and we sat down at a bend in the road which gives a particularly good view of the blue crests of the Esterel. In a flash she was up again with a short, sharp scream, and more than half disposed to scold me for the fact that she had put her hand upon a stunted little shrub smothered in a seething mass of nasty little crawling things, soft and distended purple larvae that were just exuding from the cobwebby nest in which I suppose they had been hatched.

"That was Mr. G.'s bad hour," said I.

"What *do* you mean?" she asked.

The hour when the insects were made, an hour, I said, of feverish, fiddling, cruel industry, a morbid muddling of matter into life. "Well, wasn't it so?" I demanded, at the protest of her raised eyebrows.

I dilated, in accents of reproach, upon the innumerable varieties of insect species, upon their stings, bites, poisonings, infections, burrowings into living flesh, cannibalisms and hideous parasitisms, I enlarged upon the tortures they inflict and the filthy preoccupations of their activities, their immense destructiveness and exasperating uselessness. They and the spiders and lice and all the noxious creeping things betrayed a morbid streak in creation. "What was Mr. G. thinking of then? What was he about? Before the Fall, you know!

Before the Fall!”

It was better than the view to see Clem’s face — at the onset of an idea she ceases to be beautiful and becomes elfin — manifestly scared but much more delighted by the flavour of release in this new version of the Bridgewater treatises.

“After all,” she said, coming up bravely to my level, “your Mr. G. made this view.”

“And almost prevented your seeing it — by an ungentlemanly trick.”....

We grow out of belief. All children are naturally and essentially believers. They begin with a sense of being completely protected; they trust unquestioningly. A cared-for child cannot conceive that there is a fundamental insecurity of life; that is an idea outside its circle of thought.

It believes it is completely looked after and that all its proceedings are known; if it is good it will be made happy, and if it is naughty it will be punished. Only later does it begin to chafe and question under the restrictions of the law, and even then it doubts the justice of the control long before it doubts the existence of the control. Much of this childish mind persists with many people into middle age and even into old age. You will find quite old people under some mishap cry out upon the injustice of fate as though a promise had been broken. The other day I was told that Margaret Payton, that valiant sceptic and most clear-headed woman, had had a painful minor operation. Half submerged by the chloroform she betrayed her older, still persistent, preconceptions. “What have I *done*,” she asked and asked again and murmured and muttered, “that God should make me suffer like this?... What have I *done*?... What right has God?... It is not just to me.”

But we who really go right through into the completely adult stage come out at last beyond any sense of providence or responsibility. We realise the complete indifference of the universe to us and our behaviour. We know we are exposed and unprotected. “The Lord is my Shepherd,” said the Psalmist, “therefore will I fear no evil” And again, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble.” But I cherish no illusions about my shepherd. F or good or evil no God is dogging me. There is no shield at my back and no

friend to guard me from the ambush. But no-one reads my private thoughts before I can read them myself as they well up in me. No-one holds me accountable for my motives. No-one complicates my conscience and thwarts my will by arbitrary imperatives.

If I tell the truth it is because lying seems to me a duplicity or a treachery and I do not like it, and if I go out of my way to be kind it is just as if I went out of my way to visit a pleasant corner in a garden.

10. THE RELIGIOUS MIND

IN my earlier harsher phases of disbelief, while my conceptions of mental processes were still crude, I was very severe in my judgments upon the teachers and priests and professional servants of a revealed religion that was manifestly wrong in its revelations. I thought, for example, that it was only necessary to go to a clergyman and explain to him simply and clearly how this new Darwinism — how new it was in those days! — had swept away the historical Fall of Man, the very foundation of his scheme of salvation, to oblige him to cast aside his clerical collar and his specially cut garments, and, leaving them as a gift for any casual tramp, set out, in shirt and socks and braces so to speak, upon a search for some less superseded costume and some more justifiable occupation than the cure of souls. And when I saw the churches still open everywhere, and the preachers still preaching in the old terms and the congregations standing up to sing the old hymns and kneeling down to pray in the old confidence, I did not know whether most to blame the stupidity or the dishonesty of mankind.

And I still recall quite vividly my fellow-student, Davidson, at the College of Science, and how he would shrink and retract from my efforts to talk about the theological applications of the new biology. We shared a bench during the opening course of physics. He would lose his wind like a punctured tyre at the mere intimation of this topic; he would pant and his ears would grow red. He had a way of turning from me at the bench so that of all his features I saw just his red ear. It is only nowadays that I began to understand the fear and disgust he felt for me. "I want to get on with my work," he would gasp at last, and there was hatred in his eye. "I don't want to talk to you. Not in the least.... Please, don't speak to me, please."

Although he had been quite willing to talk about all sorts of things before he discovered my heretical bent.

I do not know if Davidson is still in the world or whether he may read this, but at any rate I will offer him my belated apologies for my intrusions upon the sacred places of his mind. They were sacred and they had no defences. I was already so much at large then} and still

so young, that I could not understand how rooted and vitally entangled he remained. Religion is only formally a thing of the intelligence; its substance is feeling and a way of life. Every religion pretends to rest upon facts and statements, but no religion really does so. The ordinary man has a private and personal world which is more or less completely ensphered in his religious beliefs, they give him a sense of being protected and of being accountable and of having a definite personal importance in the scheme of things. It is practically instinctive with him that this sphere of assurance and confidence must not be shattered. If it is, life will become as impossible for him as it is for the chick of a prematurely broken egg. And so he resists, and, indeed, becomes incapable of considering the most conclusive arguments against the formula on which his security depends.

He will not have them even as a recognised error in his world.

The other afternoon I was set thinking very vigorously by the face and behaviour of a priest, a man perhaps twenty years younger than myself, whom Clem and I found in the train at Vence. We two had been walking over the hills since the early morning, and we were very happy and a little tired and full of sweet air. We just caught the afternoon train with a run, and we got in breathless and a little clumsily and with a gasp of laughter; we threw a jest at each other about my Mr. G. — he'd almost caught us that time and had he meant to catch us or was it just his playfulness? — and disputed a little about the position of a cliff, the Baou des Blancs, marked on the map, and relapsed each into our own thoughts. And then I became aware of this fellow.

He was not looking at Clem. I have never seen anyone not look at anything with a more positive intensity. It was the exact converse of a hard stare. He was not looking more particularly at her flushed face and her pretty neck, his eyes were fixed on the panorama outside the window and his brow was knit and his lips moved — repeating some mental purge sovereign, I suppose, for such occasions.

It was as if his inner world was opened to me. I contemplated it as an explorer might do who has come over a crest to a tremendous declivity and contemplates a strange land. For the first time I think I realised fully the enormous distances between my peculiar world and the worlds in which the greater part of mankind are still living. I tried

to put myself in his place and to imagine what sort of thoughts my ordinary thoughts would seem to him if suddenly they began to unfold themselves in his brain instead of mine, and what it would feel like to him to find himself living involuntarily for a day, let us say, as I live, neglecting all his offices, taking all my freedoms.

I used to think that bishops and clergymen and priests and teachers and all the Davidsons in the world doubted and went on from doubt to disbelief, and meanly concealed their disbelief in order to keep their incomes and positions. But indeed most of them are as capable of plunging into a sustained criticism of their beliefs as a passenger upon an ocean liner is capable of leaping the two hundred odd feet from the promenade deck to the Atlantic, in order to have a little swim in the sea. The liner has got him. And their worlds have got all these people, and no little cracks of inconsistent reality will be allowed to flood their mental holds with doubt. At once the pumps :will get to work, the lips will be busy in exorcism.

What was my priest thinking, down there beneath the mists of his mind?

I doubt if his thoughts were very definite. Here was a life different from his own, not merely in contrast with it, but in antagonism to it, and yet it was happy and betrayed no sense of Sin. It was evidently on the easiest terms with the hills and the sun. It jested — had he some English and did he understand our jest? And God permitted it! Suppose after one's years of meagre fare and tedious observances and shameful clothing and meek bearing and bitter and dismal restraint, suppose it should be that God could tolerate such freedoms? Suppose that God was different from what one had been taught? Suppose oneself too might have possessed some such glowing slip of slender womankind? To do with as one pleased! Help.

Ave Maria! Help! Such thoughts were perhaps too clear for him, and yet I think a shadow after that fashion fell across his mind. And he muttered his time-honoured Latin specific, "*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*," or some such stuff, and did not look, oh! did not look.

My impression of this particular priest was that he was a fairly good priest; he had a grey distressed complexion, he was untidy and

disturbed. But he was not disturbed enough to be dislocated. There must be priests who have gone much further than he from the perfect obedience of childish faith. There must be priests who neglect offices systematically, who drink or smoke unseasonably or excessively, or who have pilfered and continue to pilfer, who have mistresses and sustain intrigues. Here in the South of France there is much sly jesting about the priests' housekeepers. One sturdy fellow over the hills associates almost openly with a past or present mistress, goes to dine with her every day, and is the father of her son. I am filled with curiosity about the inner life of such priests.

I find it incredible that many of these sinful priests are unbelievers. There must be a strange jumble in their minds, and they must be accustomed to hiding themselves from the all-seeing God to their own satisfaction amidst the jumble. They must try not to think of him too closely. But they must feel that he is there still, the Hound of Heaven upon their track. Probably they find a consolation in exaggerating his mercy or in elaborating some fantastic childish belief in a propitiatory saint, a saint who is almost accessory to the offence. The good Saint Anthony will balance the cooked accounts. The Blessed Virgin loved greatly and is full of pity. God knows everything, it is true, but he ignores much.

Dickon told me a story the other day which shows how curious the jumble of a priest's world may become. Someone — Dickon or a friend of Dickon's, whichever it was — had taken a room for the night in an obscure and not too respectable hotel in a back street in Brussels. I think a railway connection had been missed or something of that sort, a cabman's advice taken too hastily, but I forget that part of the story. I rather fancy that Dickon, too, forgot that part of the story. In the dining-room was a priest, a big fat grave paternal man, dining rather guiltily with a woman. He had a rich unsubjugated voice, and he was doing his best to restrain her too public manifestations of personal devotion. Deponent's bedroom to which he retired some hours later, like most hotel bedrooms, had doors, locked of course, which communicated with the rooms on either side, and through one of these doors there presently transpired — an excellent word in this connection — the sounds of an acutely amorous encounter. Deponent moved about noisily and coughed, but

the passions at large next door were too imperious for silence. They abated for a while, but a fresh and more violent storm followed the lull. The unseen lover, it became evident, was the priest who had been dining downstairs. There could not be such another voice in the world. In the morning he was visible in the corridor, departing, still grave, still paternal. But before he departed — and this is really all that matters in this distressing 'but necessary anecdote — he was plainly audible, very gently and sincerely, giving his fellow-sinner absolution for all that had occurred.

And she no doubt received it with an equal piety.

She, poor sinner, must have believed that that absolution was perfectly valid, and so believing she was absolved and troubled no other priest with the affair, but his case was not quite so simple. There were highly technical points about the matter, points above her understanding. She little knew what he had done for her. To cover a carnal he had committed a mortal sin, he had absolved an accomplice, and that the Church has very wisely forbidden. For a week or ten days perhaps he must have remained in danger of hell-fire, incapable of priestly functions, a man uncleansed. No doubt he was in Brussels away from his parish — if he had a parish. He confessed at once most probably, but absolution would have been reserved — for some days. Automatically an application must have been made to the bishop, naming no names, and automatically a faculty given to absolve. Then this curious transaction was completed and every shade of anxiety wiped from the soul of the wanderer. He, too, was safe once more. He could go his way in peace — until the next occasion.

He must have thought this out before and during his little encounter. He must have found it necessary to reassure his frail admirer. Perhaps he had not anticipated that necessity. How subtle and wonderful is the power of the human mind over contradictions! Both these people imagined they were living in the sight of God. Both of them believed that they believed that God was seeing them and seeing through them body and soul all the time! And both believed that what they did was Sin and pointblank defiance of His will.

Here again in this spiritual book-keeping and quittance, in this

simple deal between the carnal and the divine, is a glimpse of a mental world as remote from my present state as the life of some other planet from our earth's.

The human mind is at once complex and artless. Membership of a great organisation like the Catholic Church, which continues to fight for existence and power, must do much to develop the instincts and assumptions of partisanship. A priest, even a gravely erring priest, may still feel that he is on God's side and that God is on his side. Against a Protestant and still more against such a' sceptic as myself, it must be easy for him to suppose himself a champion of God, and to feel in consequence a certain preferential claim upon Him. And even when the evasion of God's all-seeing eye has become habitual and loyalty has faded to nothing, that habitual evasion and that chilled devotion will still be far from positive denial.

I can imagine nothing more terrific than the outlook of a priest who really permits himself to disbelieve and allows his disbelief to be known. Before him are appalling difficulties and disciplines, difficult interrogations, struggles with his own still deeply rooted habits of submission, and at last expulsion into a vast, wild, windy, uncharted world of change and unknown dangers. Its usages are strange to him; it eats, dresses, washes even, in an unaccustomed fashion. He has for his stock in trade his poor ineffectual Latin learning. He left his family when he became a priest, and he has no friends now, no circle at all. For a very important part of the world, for the community naturally nearest to him that he knows best, he will be now a man with a black mark set against his name. To all the rest of the world he will be *queer*. I do not know what the market price of an unfrocked priest can be, but surely, unless he has what is called a "gift," he is among the cheapest of homeless men. Who will find work for him? So I can understand that many a poor devil on the margin of the Church and with thoughts of rebellion in his soul, has stared out doubtfully at this greater world in which we live to-day, and felt the beauty of its breadth and freedom and heard the call of its ampler life, and then shivered and fled back headlong into the close and cramping but less perilous fastnesses of the faith, misapplying and crying, perhaps not altogether sincerely but with heartfelt passion, that ancient appeal: "Lord, I believe. Help thou mine

unbelief!”

Were some one to discover some interesting well-paid employment for ex-priests, I do not know what would happen to the Roman Catholic Church. I believe it would collapse like a pricked sawdust doll. Its personnel would come pouring out.

With less vivid contrasts and a milder quality of tragedy, the inner history of a great multitude of people outside the Catholic Church must be very similar to that of the doubting priest; Anglican clergymen and ministers of Protestant sects and schoolmasters and school-mistresses and the like, upon which the continuous active practice of religion is imposed. But outside the very precise and inquisitory disciplines of the watchful mother church, there is much greater latitude of accommodation, and the tragedy of apostasy is qualified by the comedy of prevarication.

It is very easy for me to be uncharitable in these matters. And perhaps I am. I have never had the least temptation to complicate my own thoughts about faith and philosophy, and so it is difficult for me to understand tortuousness in religion. What I believed and professed did not affect my material everyday life in the least. I had not even a friend who could be distressed by my opinions. It happened so. Dickon and I fell out of a shattered nest at my father’s suicide, and if we found ourselves without any security we also found ourselves without any restraints. This is unusual freedom. Even the ordinary layman is obstructed in his free-thinking by a tangle of associations, by fear of hurting people he loves, by fear of offending people with whom he wishes to stand well, by an indisposition to break habits and reconstruct his days, and above all by the fact that as one goes out from formal religious associations one goes out from a complete institutional system into the wilderness, into a void. Negation has no schools, no ceremonies. Marriage and birth and death and the education of one’s children must still, to a large extent, occur upon lines originally religious. There has been no revolution in religious opinion during the last hundred years, no new system ousting an old system, but only a creeping change, a crumbling down and a release. People drop one by one from perfect faith to imperfect faith and so to exploratory doubt, but there is never a day when they say *en masse*, “a new age has begun.”

No new age has begun.

But while the Catholic Church, so elaborately organised, so stupendously systematic, has to a large extent kept its footing and stayed where it was, the Protestant world has passed through phase after phase of insufficient adjustment and is still as unstably adjusted as ever.

Throughout all my life there has been a great display of Protestant teachers who, if they were not precisely pouring new wine into old bottles, were at least trying to add just as much new wine to the old wine and pour out just as much of the old wine to make way for the new, as they thought the bottles would stand. The bottles were rectories, vicarages, manses, schoolhouses, college rooms, and cathedral closes; the bottles were habits and associations; the bottles were the phrases of creeds and articles that had become very familiar and sweet and dear; the bottles were all sorts of things, the daily stuff of life. In my lifetime I have seen Protestantism, wearing the same or but slightly more dandiacal vestments, singing the same hymn tunes and sitting in the same pews, part from hell, fluctuate upon the nature and gravity of Sin, and play the most extravagant intellectual conjuring tricks with the Trinity, now professing to swallow it, now making it vanish, now reproducing it from the head or the elbow, expanding it to fill the stage or rolling it up into a small round pillule. Nothing could better illustrate the dominance of the daily circle of life over its theories and explanations. There is not a heresy in the whole cyclopaedia of Christian heresies that has not had the privilege of the Protestant pulpit during my lifetime. The pulpits creaked but remained. Their occupants remained.

From its beginning Protestantism was a departure. It goes on departing. In my young days I was greatly exercised by Matthew Arnold's modernisation of St. Paul, and I am still entertained to find the anxious liberalising clergy trying to find recognition for their guarded misinterpretations of the explicit old creeds in Mr. Shaw's *Blanco Posnet* and *Saint Joan*, or extending an uncertain experimental hand towards faith-healers and even towards the spookeries of Sir Conan Doyle. Broad-minded Protestant clergymen are the best of company for a long thoughtful talk in the small hours. All things in earth or heaven become equally credible, and nearly

everything is symbolical of something else. In that urbane atmosphere we discover after the flattest opposition that in the end "we all mean the same thing." We never define what that is. "We go to bed on that. I find Dean Inge particularly sympathetic. He is a great modern Churchman, entirely honest but extremely devious. He is elaborately uninforming about the Virgin Birth, and courageously outspoken about birth control. His Gifford Lectures on Plotinus betray in every passage his preference for the light Moselle of Neo-Platonism to the emotion-loaded Port of Catholic mysticism. I suppose if he and I were handed over to some tremendous spiritual chemist and each ground to powder and analysed to the last milligramme of his being, the report in each case would tail off with, "Belief in a living personal God — slight vestiges?" I met him a little while ago at a dinner-party and I found him all that I had hoped to find him — liberal Anglicanism incarnate, lean, erect, and — a little discoloured.

I do not know how Protestantism will end. But I think it will end. I think it will come to perfectly plain speaking, and if it comes to perfectly plain speaking it will cease to be Christianity. There is now little left of the Orthodox church except as a method of partisanship in the Balkans. The League of Nations may some day supersede that, and then the only Christianity remaining upon earth will be the trained and safeguarded Roman Catholic Church. That is less penetrable, a world within a world, it shields scores of millions securely throughout their lives from the least glimpse of our modern vision.

11. THE PARADOX OF PHILIP GOSSE

PHILIP HENRY GOSSE, the naturalist, made the most ingenious and delightful accommodation between his creed and his scientific beliefs. I read about him ten or twelve years ago in that little masterpiece, *Father and Son*, and my memory went back to a book upon shore life adorned with delicately coloured plates that I discovered in the library at Mowbray. When Sir Edmund Gosse, the venerable critic and poet, was a small boy he used, as he tells us in his memoir, to perch on a high stool and tint those drawings of sea-anemones and sea-mice and sea-slugs for his father. I am no collector, but for a time in my unsystematic way I sought the works of P. H. Gosse; they are rare and expensive now; and I read everything I could find of his. And so I learnt the completest defence of the literal interpretation of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis that has ever been made.

Gosse, the father, lived a simple, austere, and exalted religious life, and was evidently very happy in it — after his fashion. He followed the disciplines of the Plymouth Brethren. It was a life founded upon the English Bible, upon the most complete acceptance of the verbal inspiration of the English Bible. It was necessary, if this life was not to be shattered, that he should believe peacefully and fully in a special creation of the world in the year four thousand and four B.C., in the establishment of the first man and woman in a garden of Eden situated in Mesopotamia, and in their almost immediate disobedience and misbehaviour. But Gosse, the father, was also a naturalist, and as a naturalist fossils and geological stratification forced themselves upon his attention; he was obliged to be aware of the contemporary controversy about evolution and to realise the existence of a mass of evidence that pointed to an enormous past for the world and life. A superficial mind might have considered he was in a hopeless dilemma a Catholic might have been disposed to flee from natural history as a peculiar invention of the devil and seek refuge in the authority of the Church and Mr. Belloc, but Philip Gosse neither despaired nor retreated. For some time perhaps he prayed and wrestled with the difficulty; in the end he

overcame it, lucidly, simply, and completely — in a manner entirely Protestant.

For consider, he argued, what must be the conditions of creating such a universe as ours. It would have to be created as a going concern, for one can imagine it working from the outset in no other way. The honey must be ready for the moth at the moment of creation, the grass for the deer. The tree must be there for the woodpecker with its leaves and fruit and bark and grubs complete. Consider now the trunk of the tree. It must be a trunk according to the nature that a tree must henceforth possess. There can be no cheap methods for the Creator; he gives the best. That tree-trunk therefore cannot be a flat stage-scenery trunk, nor a trunk of featureless pulp-like plaster or marzipan; it must have the normal structure of a tree trunk — that is to say, it must have annual rings. What could the grubs of the woodpecker do in a plaster tree?, And yet every annual ring would naturally indicate a year of growth, a year of previous existence. A sceptical fool at the very instant of its and his creation might declare therefore that that tree was as many years old as it had annual rings. He would be wrong.

Similarly every perennial in the garden of Eden, in the dew of the first Sabbath morning must have borne the leaf-scars of leaves that had never budded. At the root of every annual there must have been the decaying scales of a seed that had never been sown. And even Adam himself, at the moment of creation, must have been either an imperfect man — which is contrary to all religion — or he must have had a navel in his belly that had never linked him to a mother, because he had never had a mother. Moreover, since the animals directly they were created were living and modifiable and reproductive, the idea of their procreation and descent was in that instant made unavoidable; there was instantly projected into the entirely imaginary past their logically necessary ancestry. Fossils had to lie about in the rocks for the same reason that annual rings had to exist in the first created tree. The Neanderthal bones and the Cro-Magnon skulls, therefore, are no more proof of Adam's possession of an ancestry than his navel was of his indebtedness to a mother.

And so it must have been with the whole universe. Mountains of limestone arose built up out of the skeletal remains of creatures that

had never really lived. The planets and stars spun out of nothingness upon orbits they might have followed for an eternity through phases of expansion and distortion, from nebula to night — if things had been different. Adam opened his eyes and saw the stars, all of them and in their order — though it takes years for the light of many of them to reach the earth. God who made the stars could make the ray. How else could it be done? The appearance of an immemorial past in the material world, then, no more disproves the simultaneous creation of everything at a specific date than the vistas one sees in two mirrors that are set face to face in a room prove that room to be an endless gallery.

This is logically perfect. One may even carry it a step further. For all that I can demonstrate to the contrary, I may have been created even as I write here, created with the illusion of past memories in my mind. Or the reader may have come into being in the very act of reading this sentence.

By this, to me, quite flawless argument Philip Gosse disposed of all the implications of Darwinism and could go on believing in the special creation of the world and man as the Bible recounts it, and in the doctrines that the Plymouth Brethren teach, and be able to have fresh spiritual difficulties whenever he wished and wrestle with the Lord in prayer in his evenings as he had been accustomed to do, and remain still for all this weight of conviction an honest naturalist collecting fossils and polyps among the rocks upon the beach without concealment or prevarication.

He must, I think, have made his discovery of this wonderful way out while he had been meditating, after the manner of the monks at Mount Athos. At any rate it was Adam's navel and not the annual rings of trees that had first directed him to his line of escape, and so he called his book the navel, *Omphalos*, and wise men still seek the surviving copies of it and read them and treasure them.

But Philip Gosse was a man of exceptional mental power, and few theologians have his clearness of head and his strength of faith. At the London Natural History Museum Sir Rupert told me they seem to show you Piltdown skull and Cro-Magnon remains and suchlike things, but indeed what you are seeing are most carefully and skilfully executed facsimiles. The originals themselves are locked

away in safes downstairs, secure not only from fire and lightning, but from a far graver danger — the destructive arguments of the Creator's less intelligent partisans violent in defence of their threatened self-content.

12. LIFE RADIATES

I DO not find myself under the same necessity to believe in a special creation of the universe as Philip Gosse, and so my mind takes the easier course of accepting this appearance of an immense antiquity — immense, that is, in relation to my experience — for my world as real. The vast age of the world is as real for my mind as my own individual existence. How far that is to be considered real and what "real" may mean are, as I have explained already, questions I have put outside my contemplation of the spectacle of being altogether.

And as the theological explanations of this spectacle have lost their grip upon me year by year and become unreal and incredible, I find myself passing under the sway of an entirely different set of ideas that seems to be taking hold of the modern imagination more and more firmly. They are called creative ideas nowadays, and they look for their justification not towards the past but towards the future.

Philosophically I am quite prepared to admit that there is no plot nor scheme nor drama nor pattern in the flow of events as they are apprehended by human minds, but my disposition is diametrically opposed to my philosophy. I have never encountered even a stain on a wall or a glowing cavity in a fire upon which my mind could not impose a design. It is still more natural for me, a moral being inherently, to impose some dramatic conception upon my universe as a whole — if only to get an orientation for my living, a standard of Judgment by which to estimate the good or evil of my decisions.

Now the outline that modern science, with an ever-increasing assurance, develops upon this common-sense spectacle of space is the story of progressive life. The black curtain of eternal nothingness rises to reveal the stellar universe, a whirl of matter like a puff of dust particles upon an immense scale, eddying through the endless emptiness of space. On one of its spinning, circling particles comes this life, at first not perceptibly more than a stir of complex chemical reactions amidst a warm wet slime. It is a new process in matter; presently it begins to display desire and discrimination, to seek nourishment, to seek the light, to move away from things unfavourable. At first it can exist only in warm and shallow waters,

but its ability to spread and reproduce itself and to bring recalcitrant substance into the sphere of its desire increases steadily.

I pause and set a note of interrogation against that "steadily." I am not sure how far a case can be made out to show that life has continually grown in range, in knowledge, in continuity of will, in co-operative power. But there is much to support the assertion that life has been uninterruptedly progressive from its first beginning. The thrust towards greater range in space and time and an ever-richer and fuller mental being has been continual. Progression is not the same as proliferation; there have been secular massacres of animal and vegetable life, in comparatively brief geological phases thousands of species and genera have been swept away by rapid geographical change and there have been ages of great hardship for living things. But these severities seem always to have sustained exceptional strides in adaptation and to have prepared the way for a new phase of abundance upon a higher level. The swampy vegetation and floundering, basking reptile life of the Mesozoic Age was extinguished in perhaps a few hundred thousand years of adversity, but it was swept away by the same changes that presently evolved the grassy prairies, the rich forests, and swarming herbivora of the Miocene. Life had won the hills and dry places by the sufferings and disasters of that struggle, and now feathered birds and furry beasts could push their way towards the poles. The geological record, the archives of life's adventures, does certainly seem to so amateurish a reader as I a straightforward story of expansion and progress — and particularly of expanding intelligence. That is the thing these new views press most urgently upon me. Feeling appears, perception, restraint, and judgment, eyes that see ahead, and limbs that pause and hesitate. Mind grows — and grows at an ever-increasing pace.

The first elements of mind were assembled slowly and painfully through enormous ages. Among the invertebrata and among the lower vertebrated animals it is improbable that there are inner worlds beyond the scope of mere incidents; their most sustained mental operations may have a depth in time of only a few hours, or even of only a few moments, may be no more than a series of little puffs of consciousness connected by no unifying ideal. The life of a frog or a fish is probably a life of transient awarenesses dying away at once

after flight or feasting or fecundation into forgetting. The probability of a greater continuity than that appears only with the enlarging brains of the birds and mammals of the Tertiary Age. Manifestly these brains brought something quite new into the struggle, and thereafter the drama of life centred upon them. The brains in nearly every order and family of the mammals have enlarged relatively five times, ten times even, since the first appearance of this class in the world.

And it is not only by a mere increase in the size of the brain, we are reminded, that a great mental enlargement is indicated in the mammals. The peculiarity of the mammal, which the bird shows to a certain extent, is its continuing contact and fellowship with its young. Wisdom no longer perished with the individual. Quite early in their ascendancy the mammals began to educate. A wolf or a dog is elaborately educated morally and in the tactics of hunting; a young monkey has a powerful impulse to imitate and learn. With man came an ever-swifter process towards a mental continuum. In a few score thousand years he developed speech, picture-writing, writing, a distribution of documents, printing. In archives and literature he began a racial brain.

Each century, each decade in the last few hundred years, has made enormous additions to the speed and range of interchange between one man's brain and another's, and to the accumulation of more and more available stores of knowledge. Telegraphy was still a wonder in my infancy. Now we can broadcast speech, will presently radiate drawings, and preserve a record of gesture and movement. The trace of the increase in man's powers of communication rises hyperbolically. Our minds are less and less isolated. They mingle and interact in a new common medium of published and recorded and universally accepted ideas and interpretations. A new common medium I write: for imposed upon our minds appears a mind. This is the mind in which exist science, history, and thought. It has the same sort of relation to our individual activities that a regiment or army has to its constituent men. It is a collective human person in whom we all participate and which invades all our personalities. It is no longer mortal as we are mortal. It is *life* awakening, breaking through the limitations of individuality and growing conscious of itself. We

are all presented as contributory units to a Titanic being which becomes conscious and takes hold of this planet.

Is there any reason for supposing that this growing mental being has any limitations yet imaginable, set to the increase of its power, to its expansion, or to its invasion of our lives? I do not find any. It is said that it must be limited in time because it is limited to this planet, and that this planet is doomed to freeze and die with the cooling of the sun. But I do not see how anyone with a knowledge of the implications of modern physics or with any sense of the unknown knowable can believe that life is necessarily limited to this planet for ever. The premises are altogether insufficient. An observer of nature in the Cambrian age might as readily have declared that life was only possible under water, and that in a few hundred million years the last fish would gasp its last gasp as the last puddle on earth dried up. To me it is far easier to suppose that this present unfolding of consciousness and will is only a birth and a beginning, and that I am not merely myself but a participator in a Being that has been born but need not die.

This is the appearance on the face of things that best survives the test of my sceptical acids. It i3 how I see life. It holds my mind when all the older faiths have lost their last vestige of credibility. It is, I admit, a poetic and not a demonstrable idea. To accept it is not to return to religion. This Being is not to my mind a God, unless we are to invert the idea of God altogether. It is an objective and not a cause, and since it falls within the frame of time it can only have a proximate and practical reality. But it is great enough, I feel, to comprehend the utmost scope and outlook of my life and to rationalise its motives and relationships.

13. PROMETHEAN

I HAVE put this idea of the common mental being of our race, this Racial Man to which all our individual lives consciously or unconsciously are contributory and subordinate, as if it were an outcome of the new biological outlook upon the universe. In what I have just written I have told of it objectively as a history of our world. Seen thus objectively it appears indeed modern. But the same idea comes into human thought from another angle. We find it within us.

In the last million years or so our breed has changed from the most solitary habits to habits more social and cooperative than those of any other animal. The fierce, lonely, egoistic ape-soul has been modified and qualified, and had superimposed upon it an intricate fabric of mitigating and restraining dispositions. The superstitious fear which may not only overshadow childhood but last right into adult life, is only one of the earliest and crudest of these adaptations to social needs. The self-control of the primitive tabus is also among the merely initial amendments of human fierceness. There are not only inhibitions but addenda. The emotions of sexual abandon and maternal and even paternal love as the ape knew them have also been seized upon by nature and broadened and utilised for social ends. There is now in man a desire to serve. There is a pleasure in and a craving for co-operation and associated action. Curiosity has become disinterested, and the constructive impulse has been varied and widened.

The primary form of the human soul is still self-seeking, self-protecting egoism, as the primary scheme of the human body is still that of an ape's. But in contemporary man the gratification of purely egoistic needs is not sufficient for happiness, it does not satisfy completely. In the case of man as in the case of the dog and other social animals, the individual soul has been invaded by the soul of the pack. A man has to be not only gratified but reassured. There is a conscience, there is a moral struggle, a conflict of motives. The cat, which is a solitary beast, is single-minded and goes its way alone, but the dog like his master is confused in his mind. And in our

rationalising human minds it seems plain to me there is a continuing conflict between the intense and originally much more intense, crudely and definitely self-seeking factor, and a vaguer, wider, unselfish factor. The two are associated but not unified. They jar and the rationalising mind struggles to account for the disharmony. I think that this less personal element of the self increases generally as we grow older and our experiences increase and widen, and that it is becoming more evident and important in the world's affairs. On the objective side there appears a race-mind, and this is paralleled on the subjective side by a great extension of individual interest to impersonal things. The race-mind, which is as immortal as the race, continually accumulates interest and attractiveness, and has more to offer the individual and more power over the individual. A large part of the waking hours of many people nowadays is occupied by activities that are of slight or no advantage to them whatever, although they may be of very great advantage to the race. A man may live a quarter or a third of his time in a study or a laboratory keenly engaged upon things that have nothing whatever to do with his intimate personal drama, activities that add only to the common inheritance. He may even neglect his personal drama for these things.

The last time I was in London I met a very stimulating man whom I had long wished to encounter, Dr. Jung, the psycho-analyst. He had come from Zurich to London to give some lectures, and after one of these, the last of them, he had joined a party in a flat looking out upon the Thames at Westminster. I do not remember who my host and hostess were — Dickon had taken me there — but there was a pleasant and interested and not too numerous gathering to meet Jung, and we smoked and drank champagne and whisky and ate sandwiches and talked late. It was very good talk, no fireworks, no posturing in it, but close and clear. Jung's English is excellent, and an hour's lecture at the Queen's Hall had not fatigued him in the least.

I buttonholed the great man because I wanted to know how he regarded this conception of a sort of super-mind of the species, and he said that it was entirely sympathetic with his views. He made it clear I had not been following up that track alone; I had been running beside and responding to contemporary thought. One meets a phrase

here and a suggestion there, and subconsciously they incorporate themselves with one's own ideas. I had thought myself original.

I quoted Paul that we were all members of one body, and remarked upon the ease with which one fell into theological phraseology in this matter. Some one mentioned a distant relative of mine, Wells, who had employed many religious expressions in a book called *God, the Invisible King*; a Manichean book, said somebody, neither Greek nor Hebrew, but Persian. The writer in question had gone very far indeed in his resuscitation of theological terms and in his recommendation of prayer and suchlike exercises. Too far, said some one. I agreed. I had already talked about that with Wells himself, and it was plain to me that this God the Invisible King of his was not so much God, in the sense in which people understand that word, as Prometheus; it was a titanic and not a divine being. This unseen monarch was much more akin to Nietzsche's Overman than to a normal divinity. Frederic Harrison too, some one remarked, had said that God the Invisible King was merely the Humanity of Com with a crown on. I had not heard of this before but it struck me as being a justifiable comment.

Yet I would not be too hard on my cousin for his use of the word God. For can it have other than a lax use? If you believe in good as an objective reality, in a sense you believe in God. I doubt if many Protestants nowadays believe in God in any other sense. The human mind has been struggling to apprehend this something behind and above and about individuality for thousands of years and insisting most pitifully upon exactitudes just where exactitude is most misleading. Theology has been experimental, and it has been angry and cruel because it did not realise what an experiment it was. It was worried by immediate practical needs. It has been dogmatic because it felt that its flimsiness could not stand the strains of inquiry. It felt it must take a standpoint if it was not to wander for ever. It has shown all the nervous irritability, rising at times to vicious violence, of a weak, well-intentioned man trying to carry out an important task with a defective equipment. But in all its aberrations it has clung to its essential idea the denial of individual isolation. The assertion of complete individual isolation is, I Suppose, the essential idea of the dogmatic Atheist.

Jung laid great stress on the readiness of people to misconceive these ideas about a greater human being. They did not grasp how that being was supposed to be synthetic and comprehensive. They thought of it as something outside themselves, an individual of the same order as themselves, as some one put over them, and not as a being including and comprehending them as I include and comprehend my own nerve cells and blood corpuscles. Neither Nietzsche's Overman nor Shaw's Superman was really to be thought of as an individual person. Both were plainly the race development, the whole race in progress. But writers with the journalistic instinct to caricature got hold of these ideas and cheapened them irremediably, and the popular interpretation of these phrases, the Overman and the Superman, had come to be not a communion of saints but an entirely ridiculous individual figure, a swagger, a provocative mingling of Napoleon Bonaparte, Antinous, and the Admirable Crichton.

Jung came back to my quotation from St. Paul about our all being members of one body. Evidently he attached much importance to that. He said that not only Christian theology, but nearly all mystical religion in the world, was saturated with the idea of a merger of the narrow self in some variously apprehended greater soul. So soon as religion began to develop theology and pass out of the phase of abject fear of the mythological Old Man, the tribal God, this conception appeared. The believer in the mysteries became more or less the greater being and the greater being became more or less the believer. In the phase of ecstatic communion the believer was lifted altogether out of his sinful and finite self and above all the frustrations of life.

You found this same idea of transcending individuality, in the Mass, in Mithraism and in many surviving hymns and phrases of ancient Persian and Egyptian cults. It was expressed almost in identical terms by Moslem and Jewish mystics. It was not a clear and cool intellectual realisation with the mystics; it was felt rather than thought, but clearly it was strictly parallel with the inclusion of the individual in a racial being that was so congenial to modern biology. In Christian mysticism it was obscured by the heavier emotional charge of that cult. In the case of women mystics particularly the

suggestion of the phrase "the divine spouse" had been excessively powerful, and with such types as St. Hildegarde or St. Gertrude or the Blessed Angela de Foligno, Christian mysticism had sunken a long way towards a mere sublimation of sexual abandon. The Being became very personal and physical and responsive in their imaginings. The egoism was exalted rather than expanded to divinity. That, some one suggested, was what happened when women took to mysticism. A remark which started a detached wrangle in one corner of the room.

Jung listened for a while to that, and then he remarked that by his "Superior Person" Confucius must have intended the same generalised comprehensive man as this we had in mind, the racial and not the individual man. That again was new to me. "Superior Person," Jung remarked, could be translated just as well by Overman; but we Europeans had an unfortunate trick of misunderstanding and making Chinese thought ridiculous and unprofitable by using the least dignified words possible in our literal translations of its phrases. One can do that to European phrases with an equal destructiveness. Caradoc Evans, I remarked, degraded Welsh religiosity simply by translating the shining garments of righteousness as White Shirts. We had still the cloudiest notions of Chinese thought, said Jung, even of contemporary Chinese thought; the Chinese might be getting towards a working philosophy of the modern world, without our aid or sympathy, along a road of their own.

But so it was, whether one turned to the great teachings of China or the sacrificial mysteries of Peru, one found in forms that were sometimes gross and monstrous, and sometimes cold and enigmatic, intimations of an almost universal idea. Every great religion and every philosophy of life throughout the world seemed to have been feeling its way, often in spite of enormous initial difficulties of creed and training, towards this same process, the process of subordinating the egoism to a broader generalised being, the being of communion. Could one doubt that a common psychological necessity determined these agreements, that like parallel streaks on the surface of a great river they show the direction of a current that has been flowing with gathering force for five-and-twenty centuries?

The realisation of this inner psychological necessity which, under the suggestions of Jung and Freud and their groups of associates, we are now beginning to correlate with a new phase in the circumstances of human life, marks what one may perhaps compare to a coming-of-age. Just as we are disentangling our minds from the last lingering fears and submissiveness that marked the childhood of our race, so also are we growing out of the intense individualism of its romantic adolescence. As our mental range increases we realise that in the end frustration and extinction await everything that is purely individual in us. We are beginning, some of us, or even most of us, to develop a further, a more fully adult, mental stage. This adult mentality of the years ahead will be self-neglectful and scientific and creative in comparison with anything that has gone before. It will be consciously and habitually a contributory and co-operating part in the over-mind.

14. THE IMMORTAL ADVENTURE

THESE identifications of modern tendencies with old religious impulses are very curious, and I note them here on that account. But I do not find any necessity for religious phraseology to express my own apprehension of the drama of existence. If it is a matter of interest it is still a matter of secondary interest to me that anyone should have thought these thoughts before in other terms or from a different angle. I do not want, I am under no necessity, to be religious and mystical on this point. The science of physics has enough paradox in it for me, and about ordinary life I prefer to be matter-of-fact. I am much more inclined to use such new and unprecedented expressions as "The Adventure of Life," or what for all practical purposes is synonymous, the "Adventure of Mankind," or "of the Greater Man," for my general conceptions of everyday reality than any of the time-worn phrases of the older faiths. Those may be charged with emotion and reverence, yes, but also they are charged with misunderstanding.

"Adventure" is more in the quality of my character than any imperative to live in this or that particular fashion, and it conveys, what the theological terminology fails to convey, the suggestion that after all the limitless will of man for knowledge and power may not prove to be sanctioned by the nature of things. He may fail and freeze after all. He may smash to nothingness in some interstellar collision. Even with the admission of that uncertainty, the adventure is great enough and wonderful enough to hold my imagination completely.

This way of looking at existence differs from any religious interpretation in its entire voluntariness. We are not told dogmatically that we are so-and-so or that we must do so-and-so; but it is put to us, Let us be and do so-and-so. Let us gather knowledge and power, let us communicate and learn to co-operate, let us lay hands on life and fate. Let us at any rate make the attempt.

To give oneself knowingly to the Adventure of Mankind has this much to be said for it, that it is in the trend of current things. Whatever we may think of the universality of progress, there can be

little dispute that the current phase of existence is by human standards progressive. We shall be in the movement whether we desire it or not. And since we are thus conscripted in the army of the Titans against the old Jove of chance and matter, since we are obliged willy-nilly to participate in the increase and creative application of knowledge to human ends, we may as well give our lives cheerfully and take a conscious share in the process. We shall be happier so. We shall be happier to extend our motives and desires beyond the tragic uncertainties of the purely egotistic life. We shall be broadened and steadied by that participation, we shall be released, we shall be very largely released from the worst intensities of personal desire and passion and from the bitter fear and still bitterer realisation of futility that haunt self-centred minds.

15. VIEW FROM A WINDOW IN PROVENCE

IT may be the reader thinks that all these sections so far, were written on one wet day at Dickon's desk in his rooms at Bordon Street. The way in which I began this book may have given that impression. What a day's work it would have been! Indeed, I wrote no further there than the eighth section, and then I fell into a profound meditation in the armchair before the open fire about electrons. And things like that. I had stirred up the long-slumbering curiosities of my adolescence by recalling them. I had a queer little idea, an imp, a paradox, an atom of explanation; I made some notes at last, but nothing to interest the present reader. Those notes will come to nothing; my day for such bright ideas is past. The rest of these pages I have written in my "bureau," as Jeanne will call it, at the Villa Jasmin.

I have revised all that I wrote in London, here, and I find myself more and more interested in this enterprise. It is doing more for me than I expected. Autobiography, provided that it is not too severely disciplined, may be, I perceive, an almost inexhaustible occupation. Nothing is altogether irrelevant. Whatever interests one, or has ever interested one, is material. In due course no doubt I shall get to autobiographical particulars.

I have been back here in Provence now for fifteen days and everything is as it used to be last year, the same sunlit peace, the same delicate beauty and kindly freshness in the air, the same lean red-haired Clem, as absurdly insistent that she idolises me and will have no other man but me invading me whenever she dares and protecting me against a score of imaginary onslaughts upon my peace and comfort: everything is the same indeed, except that my little kitten has grown into a very pretty grey cat with a quite extravagant sense of its own importance. It comes and sits in judgment upon each fresh sheet as I write it so soon as the paper is sufficiently warmed by the sun. At certain passages, upon no consistent principle that I can distinguish, it purrs.

This Villa Jasmin is an old Provençal *mas*, a small farmer's house set upon a hillside among olive terraces not far from Grasse. No

automobile can come up to it and it is beautifully difficult to find, but there is a mossy stone track to us beneath the grey contorted trees by which we can supply our timber and coal and suchlike heavy needs. Let me describe it with some particularity. In it I hope to write most of this contemplated book; it is the foreground to all that follows.

The house is of three stories in front and has a tall bare face; behind, it nestles its rump, so to speak, into the hill; its sole decoration is a ripple of plaster beneath its ruddy brown tiles, a great scarlet geranium that sprawls up half its height, and a passion-flower; the narrow windows have wooden fastenings, and old wooden shutters on rusty hinges that a Cornish southwester would wrench off in a minute and scatter like dead leaves. Before the house is a broad terrace where I take my morning coffee and my midday meal. Blueberried ivy climbs over the parapet; there is a trim close Japanese medlar in one corner, and in the midst, surrounded by a grass-rimmed oval of little respectful rose-trees, there is a very fine and flourishing palm. At the corner is a big olive-tree that now dots the gravel everywhere with its fallen black fruits. Beyond are other olive-trees and some fig-trees; a broad gravel path goes to a large oil-jar in which a ceremoniously genteel, glossy, flowerless plant is growing, and there it comes to a rounded and dignified conclusion. On the other side of the terrace there is a clump of thorny-bladed agaves, green-blue or green with yellow edges, a big stone-rimmed fountain where our washing is done and where Jeanne, in spite of the most passionate remonstrances from Clem, is in the habit of leaving her bowls and brushes and whacking-boards to desecrate our serenity, and there are two delicate grey mimosas, a great old Judas-tree, two pretty gracious trees whose names I do not know, and above and behind all a thick, tall hedge of bamboos.

There is always a sound of running water about this house. A stream comes down a little channel from above; close by the wall a mouth of stone, with lips like an angry ape's, spouts water into the big washing fountain; below the terrace a dispersed trickle of water falls from a domed niche adorned with an abundance of dripping hart's-tongue and maidenhair fern, into yet another basin of stone. There is a third fountain in a corner where irises grow, a little terra-cotta affair put there by my predecessor. It has an inscription in

Greek letters, a phrase that Heraclitus made: *Panta rhei*, all things flow. There is no enduring thing.

The hill descends steeply in front of the house, and paths sweep round from the front door on either side of the terrace and are hidden and unite before the fountain of the ferns below, and run straight down the hill in a broad stony incline beneath now golden chestnut-trees and grey olives, to ruinous yet stately entrance pillars upon the rustic highway.

My study is on the top story and it is as far as possible from the kitchen, for Provençal servants prefer to converse when they are at some distance from each other, and always rattle plates and beat upon pots and pans for a time before they make use of them. It is a calm austere room. Its walls are painted grey and have nothing on them but six engravings, four by Mantegna and two by Durer; there is a tall fine bureau, a large cupboard in which books are hidden — for the backs of modern books if they are displayed talk overmuch — a table on which papers are scattered, a table at which I write, and some rush-bottomed chairs. The floor is tiled, all the rooms in this house are tiled with time-darkened red tiles; the carpet is discreetly gay, and in one or two shapely old pots of white earthenware, very delicately crackled and discoloured, Clem puts bright flowers.

And there is a stove, a good little hungry warming stove which burns wood and pine-cones.

My window looks almost due south over my palm and Japanese medlar and olives, and my view is wide and gently various upon hills and crests and further hills, a remote ridge from the Esterel and a sharp-edged inlet, a dagger-blade, of water. Beyond the last reluctant distances of the land appears the sea gravely blue and the horizon like the top edge of a blue silk barrier.

The hills are all terraced and planted; mistily grey olives prevail, but there are many sorts of trees and there are a few vineyards, rusty and yellow now, and other cultivations. The houses are solitary and plain, white or pink or pale yellow with little vertical windows like the toy houses of my childhood. There are many cypresses like black candles, like warning fingers, singly or in groups; I do not believe the land would be half as beautiful without its accentuation by these cypresses; and when the day is clear but overcast the trees upon the

contours of the hills pattern against the soft grey-blue distances like a border of minute dark lace. Close to me on my extreme right is a single cypress against the butt-end of a lean high grey house; it is tall and like a plume, and for some reason it pleases me very greatly. A steep edge of precipitous walls above ravines and blank white factory-palaces clustering upon the hillside and partly veiled in haze, is Grasse; it just comes into my view beyond the nearer olive slopes. A slender chimney minaret sticks up here and there, a steadying vertical white line; its rare, occasional smoke has, I know, the smell of incense. The cathedral tower is single and tall and square and outstanding. Right in the middle of my view behind a ridge and ten miles distant one feels rather than sees Cannes.

The whole of this land is a pleasant and prosperous region very indulgent to mankind. Its agriculture, like its scenery, has a delicate, fastidious quality. I never see a pig here nor any cattle; there are occasional sheep, genteel-looking sheep, there are disciplined grey geese and immaculate white poultry. Once or twice, in the more open and rocky spaces among the hills, I have met small companies of goats with goatherds. They had a quality so harmonious with the scenery that they seemed rather like elegant quotations from Theocritus than economic facts. The farmer below me is employed in growing jasmine and violets, and a little way along the road there are fields of carefully tended rosebushes.

In the early morning the stream-beds and valleys between the crests and ridges are filled with very sharp restricted banks of white mist, and then a conical hill some five or six miles away from here becomes an island of romance. All day long there is a quiet soft change in the features of this scene, hillsides hold the sunlight for a time and then fade away, spurs and summits grow from insignificance to prominence as the sun searches them out on its daily round. Towards sundown Mougins upon its ridge six miles away will at times shine out with such a brightness that I think of Bunyan's Celestial City. Everywhere at this time of year there are rubbish fires burning, and their bright down-feathers of white smoke expand and unroll and dissolve away continually and are continually renewed. Ever and again an absurd little single-track railway asserts itself by an acute long nose of white steam that burrows hurriedly

across the bluish greens and greys and hangs for a time and fades like an unimportant memory.

Almost always the sky above this land is a pure clear blue or delicately streaked with filmy cloud, and the sunlight is a benediction. Sundown brings a glow of warm contentment. Then presently the nearer houses lose strength, and faint and die and become white ghosts in the twilight. Amidst the darkling scattered lights appear.

I have never known a more intimate sky than this of Provence, by night as well as by day. Even the rain, the infrequent rain, is confidential, with something apologetic and reassuring in its whisper. Last night I saw the morning-star and the old moon close together above the crest of Peyloubet. My bedroom window looks out eastward, and there, in the deep blue of morning, framed in my window-frame like a luminous picture on my wall, was the old moon on her back with the young moon faint but visible in her arms. There is, I suppose, a slight astigmatism in my eyes, for I saw Venus not as the minute disc she is, but as an animated splash of laughing white light that made exhilarating gestures over this grouping. I understood suddenly why Czechs and Danes and Poles and Swedes and Englishmen and suchlike boreal and Baltic men were needed to realise the inhuman remoteness of interplanetary space. The stars and planets of the Mediterranean have no aloofness at all; Diana can still descend upon the hills of Provence, and for all our modern science the heavenly bodies move here as they did in pagan times, harmoniously in crystal spheres.

Possibly I dozed, for when I looked again moon and morning-star were gone altogether and the sky was flushed with the excitement of corning sunrise. I lay for a time and then got up and went to my window to see whether that little hill of mine towards Cannes had got its mists about it yet, and was sitting up and minded to play at islands of enchantment with me.

This is the present foreground of my world. Men have lived among these hills for scores of thousands of years, and one could think that here if anywhere in the world was peace and permanent adaptation. A short automobile journey to the east would take us to the caves of Grimaldi, where some of the earliest of human skulls

were found, and Moustiers, which has traces of men even more ancient, is as close to the west. Cro-Magnon, in Dordogne, is five or six hours of motoring beyond. The soil everywhere is rich with human traces, from chipped flint fragments to Phoenician beads, Roman brickwork, and mediaeval crockery. The newest villas of Grasse stand on old foundations. This, one might say, is man's enduring home. The soil is generous; there is no persecution in the weather, no implacable animal enemy, and little disease. Here, it would seem, a man can still be born and live a life of immemorial usage, can believe and worship after the fashion of his ancestors, and die under the blessings of his church as a child falls asleep in the arms of a nurse.

But, indeed, this fair and spacious scene is a mere mask of calm beauty upon the face of change. As I sit writing I hear the sounds of chopping and sawing and ever and again a shout and a crash. Under the aged, wrinkled boughs a fire is crackling briskly. A farmer just beyond my cypress plume is busily destroying his olive orchard, and he is doing so in order to plant the ground with jasmine He will have to stub those tough gnarled roots; it will be a heavy toil for him. All these peasants seem to be giving up their olives for jasmin, and they are growing that for the perfume factories in Grasse which serve the transitory, unstable world of luxury in Paris and London and New York. A change of fashion in scent, or some ingenuity of the chemist, may abolish the profits of this flower-growing, and then these hillsides will know trouble; for olive-trees that are gone are gone for ever. No one can wait nowadays for planted olive-trees to reach fruition.

The fate of this countryside, which looks so self-subsisting, is I perceive dependent upon the great consuming centres; those little hidden railways are like suckers from the urban fungi that have drained away all local autonomy. The rural life here has been insidiously and secretly and completely subjugated by Paris. Ostensibly this land is very like the countryside of a hundred years ago, when its peasants could have gone on living if all the rest of the world had died, but in truth their lives now are hardly more secure upon these hills than they would be if they were dodging the traffic in the midst of the Champs Elysées. They are educated, they are

tempted away, they are taken for the army and demoralised, they are pushed out of their homes to make way for artists and winter visitors like myself, they are pushed off their land to make way for villas and gardens and strange new cultivations.

Just out of hearing up the hill behind me is the main road through Grasse from Paris to Nice, along which drives the restless fever of a new breed of rich people, people cut off from the tradition of the past and incapable it would seem of any interest in the future. They have incalculable powers of manipulating the franc on which these peasants rely. Their great fat-tyred cars go throbbing and hooting past, the chauffeur is glassily intent upon the road, the passengers — are passengers. Never were there people so entirely passengers. They are carried along like sacks. The clothes they wear, the very complexions of the women, seem to have been put upon their passive persons by the tradesmen of Paris and London before they were packed off in their cars. One cannot believe that their financial reactions are other than automatic. And yet they control. Or at least they are the instruments of a blind control. It is they who are sweeping away the olive orchards and turning the peasants into gardeners, speculative flower-growers for their perfumeries, and servants for their multiplying villas. Without premeditation, with no definite object, they change the face of the earth. Not merely here.

This window looks south and modern manufactures and mines and forges, the slums and the dismal industrial defacement of the world, are far away behind me and out of the compass of this picture. The plants I have helped to plan and reconstruct, the factories and sidings and warehouses of my group of companies and all our offices are forgotten here. There are hills and mountains gashed and tormented by us for minerals, far away to the right in Spain; and for all I know, though I should doubt it, there may be labour trouble and bad conditions in the scent factories of Grasse just round the corner of the hill. But such things are the mere fringes of the world of massed toil; there is no glare of foundry or furnace in this scene; between here and the equator there are no many-windowed factories lit up to break the visible night. The great masses of industrialism are at the back of this outlook, and as it were below my comfort, away deeply down through my sheltering hills and mountains, through the

bulge of the world northward that robs them of our sun. They would be out of mind here altogether were it not that these people, hurrying in their automobiles along the road from Paris and Lyons and Grasse to Nice and Monte Carlo and Italy, and the still greater multitude in the *lits-salons* and *trains-de-luxe* that follow each other along the coastal railway, do in some subtle way recall that distant teeming darkness of toil. They come with a haste, with a headlong effect, crowding upon each other, as if they were in flight from things and suggestions and, it may be, apprehensions that they desire to forget.

Well, I at least do not want to forget. But I want for a while to be away from these things to think.

I sit now at my window after the sunset, and my cat is purring before the purring stove, within which the pine-cones have just begun to flame. My little study is bright and clear and secure in the light of my freshly lit lamp, but outside, behind a veil of blue silence that is deepening into darkness, is an incessant hurrying world. The rivulet that prattles beneath my window does not hurry half so fast.

If I could put out an arm of ten miles I could flatten down a little undulation of the land and see the lights of Cannes and Antibes and their hotels and villas-de-luxe, and if I could push away a few unimportant hills with my left elbow I could unmask the lights of Cagnes and Nice and, beyond those, Villefranche and Beaulieu and Monte Carlo and Mentone. From here they would look like patches of burning sand-grains along the dark littoral. In those places the evening is only a beginning. Through the nearer shadows among the hills the peasants are going home from their work, invisible in the twilight; they will eat and sit and talk for a while and presently blowout their lamps of American paraffin and go to bed. But all along the Riviera the immense ritual of dinner is in preparation, myriads of cooks and waiters are busy upon the endless repetitions of the standard meal, thousands of baths are in progress, hundreds of men are struggling at this moment with their heads in their dress-shirts, and women of every age are enhancing or creating their beauty for the illuminated and significant half of the day. They will eat rather too much of their magnificently commonplace food, they will drink rather too much, most of them, they will dance like automata to imitation negro music, they will flirt without

discrimination, they will set out upon timid, dishonest, nocturnal adventures and arrange their poor little adulteries and fornications, they will gamble according to solemnly conceived systems against the facetiousness and disrespect of chance, and so come at last belatedly to inartistic lasciviousness or speechless grossness and sleep.

Nevertheless these people, individually and in masses, seem to make decisions, seem to have the direction of economic change. They have an air of being less mutely the creatures of fate than the peasants. It is hard to believe that it is so.

My mind takes a wider range beyond these Riviera resorts, these patches of luminous eczema upon the broad face of the earth. Out beyond is the Mediterranean, and across it, could my eye see through the smooth curve of the waters to them, go the lit ships from Genoa to the east of me and Marseilles to the west, and trailing my imagination with them go the slender threads of their wakes further and further round the globe, through the straits and through the narrow seas and into the tropics to the harbours and warehouses of India and the far East, and out by Gibraltar to South Africa and to South and North America into distant ports and up great estuaries. My mind hovers for a while over these ships, mere particles upon the homeless wilderness of the waters, and I think of grave engineers watching oiling and pressure, of officers in the chart-room, of stokers, excessively minute because they are so remote, sweating before their furnaces, and passengers — again those passengers! — congratulating themselves upon the calmness of the night and anticipating dinner. What a complex of habits and motives it is that drives those ships, with their ill-assorted cargoes, their vaguely directed passengers and their uncertain profits, about the world!

On my other table lie the English newspapers of three days ago, and the *Quotidien* of yesterday and to-day's *Éclaireur* and *Petit Niçois*. And there are various London weeklies and the weekly *Times* and *Manchester Guardian*. As I recall what I have read in them to-day the view from my window seems to extend further and further, my boundaries sweep forward across the Mediterranean eastward and westward to Oran and Morocco, to the Atlas, to Egypt and the Soudan, to Arabia Petraea and the Yemen, and the Hadramaut, to

Basra and Ormuz and India and China, and northward across the Pamir uplands, and on and on until at last they enclose the globe and meet themselves again in a shrinking coil and vanish. Over there in Africa, out beyond the hump of the Esterel and across the waters just over the roundness of the world, the Spanish are retreating before the recalcitrant tribesmen of the Riff under Abd-el-Krim. It is a hustled retreat, and the Spaniards are losing heavily and are likely to lose more. They can be having no rest to-night. Even now as I write some poor peasant lad from Andalusia or Castile may be writhing in agony with a sniper's bullet flattened among his freshly shattered vertebrae. Down he goes, and if there is no ambulance at hand they may have to leave him to the mercy of the pursuers. Or they may not trust that mercy. I can almost see those scattered figures of distress straggling across vast and lonely and rocky places and the crumpled bodies lying still, until the prowling beasts discover them. That, too, is in my present world as surely as these tranquil hills.

The Spanish retreat is leaving the French garrisons in Morocco very uncomfortably in the air, and all North Africa, I gather, is uneasy and dangerous — more uneasy and dangerous than the papers will admit. This afternoon there has been a great rattling of machine-guns from amidst the hills beyond Grasse. There is a garrison here of neat yellowish men, Malagasy I am told, and they are polishing up their tactics, for who knows what may happen? The other day as I came here from London I lifted the blind of my sleeping-compartment in the early morning and looked out on that queer contorted country about Toulon, which is so much more Spanish and African than French, and there in the crystalline light of dawn I saw companies of khaki-clad, brown-skinned men with mules and mountain guns engaged among the brown rocks in some manoeuvres.

A little further to the east in my outlook to-night there are British warships steaming through the darkness to Alexandria. Egypt also is astir. The Sirdar of the Soudan has been very deliberately murdered in Cairo by a band of students, and the new Tory Government in London is showing the strong hand. Beyond the Red Sea, Mecca is in the hands of the Moslem puritans and the king the British set up has failed to recover the city. All along the festering lines of contact

between Islam and the Western world there is crisis now. Out of hearing of me, out of sight of me, and yet wonderfully close to my imagination, there must be scores of thousands of human beings at an extremity of stress and excitement to-night because of reasonless conflicts, disorders of relationship, which are still almost as destructive and fruitless in human affairs as earthquakes and cyclones.

These newspapers just faintly visible in the shadow contain, I reflect, much other disturbing matter. There are particulars of religious riots in India, of the struggles of military leaders for power in China; considerable armies are in conflict there; the British Government has refused to ratify its predecessor's treaty with Soviet Russia, and there also trouble gathers. From America there was little to hand to-day except a tale of rising prices and a paragraph about a fight and bloodshed between the Ku-Klux-Klan and a State militia. But all these newspaper headings and items are merely the sudden swirls, the frothings — red frothings they are at times — and rapids upon the surface of the broad incessant rush of human affairs. The rest I apprehend but do not see. Between these various scattered and more or less significant items there are enormous intervals, great distances filled with unrecorded crises and unnoticed change. Everywhere older people have been dying and younger people have been asserting themselves for the first time; new practices and new ideas have gained a little ground and old ones lost it. The common mind of the world is not what it was last night nor what it will be to-morrow. It might seem that there was no permanent thing whatever in all this onward flow.

The more widely I extend my view from this window the more transitory the spectacle appears. Yet the books and criticisms of life that come to me do still, to a large extent, question change and repudiate progress. Men can still be found to write of the "enduring elements" in human nature and the "undying factors" of human life. Always by life they seem to mean the peasant's life, seedtime and harvest, desire and children, toil and rest. They see it associated with the soil, renewed by the soil, as necessary and inevitable as the succession of day and night. A denial of essential change is, I suppose, almost fundamental to the Catholic faith. And by denying

essential change men solace themselves for the shortness of their self-concentrated careers. To those whose brief historical perspectives have been brought to a focus at the building of Rome and the Greece of Homer and Hesiod, this peasant life may well seem immemorial. But in truth there is no underlying permanent stratum to the changes of our world. It all changes, root as well as flower. Less rapidly, indeed, but as surely, the peasant changes with the rest of mankind. These terraces, these olives which now seem part of the scheme of Nature, have not been here for more than five-and-twenty centuries. And they go.

Before that time this land behind the coast was held by cattle-tending, barbaric tribes. And earlier they were more barbaric. Only a few thousand years ago this land was an untamed wilderness and its people savages. The man of the Grimaldi caves was of no European kin, and in his day it seems there was no sea out there beyond the hills, but a great valley in which men lived precariously and across which one might walk on foot to what were then the dense jungles of North Africa. And when one goes back a few score further centuries, back to the age of the relics that were found in the caves of Moustiers, then all about here there were bleak and desolate uplands where the cave-bear prowled, where the mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros crashed through the frosty thickets, and the only thing to represent a man was a grisly heavy-browed brute beyond our understanding.

Panta rhei, flux universal. It is only because I may sit at this window for so brief a time that I do not see this scene dissolve visibly and pass and give place to other unprecedented and equally transitory appearances. Of one thing only can I be sure, that all this goes, peasants and pleasure cities, ships and empires, weapons, armies, races, religions, and all the present fashions of man's life. Could my moment be enlarged to the scale of a thousand years, my world would seem less lasting than a sunset and the entire tragedy of this age the unimportant incident of an afternoon. I can discover in all *my* world nothing enduring, neither in the hills nor in the sea, nor in laws and customs nor in the nature of man, nothing steadfast except for this — a certain growth of science, a certain increase of understanding, a certain accumulation of power.

But there is that growth of science, there is that increase of understanding, there is that accumulation of power. I do not know why it should be so, but so it is. It gathered *its* force slowly before man was. It goes on now with accumulating speed and widening scope, and on it I build my working conception of the course of life. Man, unconscious at first, begins now, in an individual here and an individual there, to realise his possibilities and dream of the greatness of his destiny. A new phase of history is near its beginning.

But it has not begun. The world I have surveyed this evening is a world still unawakened. It flows towards its fate down the chance slopes and natural gullies of a will-less destiny. It obeys not a purpose but a gravitation. Its wilful contribution is relatively ineffective. Such science as we have brings us suggestions rather than direction. It is not a dawn of power. But it is a small, clear, certain light, a morning star, tacitly hopeful, which it seems to me must surely and certainly prelude such a dawn. Implicit in the knowledge we now possess appears the promise of that comprehensive Greater Being, towards which thinking minds have been reaching for many generations.

I do not so much accept this conception of the coming of a general mind as find myself possessed by it as a natural outcome of all my mental growth. With the readiness of one completely prepared, I fall in with the intimations this new science of psycho-analysis gives us, that a new sector, a more completely adult stage, a stage of fuller self-knowledge and self-direction, is now enlarging the cycle of human life and bringing us into a comprehensive mental community. We become more impersonal, more co-operative, and more disinterestedly creative.

For long ages man has been the rebel child of nature; it is no new thing that he should attempt to anticipate and divert fate. Already this world is a man-shaped world; the water that runs beside the stone-flagged paths and the trickle of the soil down these slopes are guided and controlled by terraces and channels. Rain-water and earth go here as they are told. Scarcely a tree about this house but is here because it was planted or tolerated. Every beast that is too big to lurk or burrow is a subdued beast. But so far all this human control has been a control in detail; there has been no comprehensive control

because there has been no comprehensive understanding. Yet can that fail to come?

Since man in a few hundred centuries has travelled from that lonely savage in the upland caves to the engineer and chemist and psychologist of to-day, since to-day there is a constantly increasing stimulation and enlightenment of men's minds, since there are no real positive obstacles to human progress but only negative ones — ignorance, obstinacy, habit, doubt, and superstitious fear which vanishes before the light — it is not difficult for me to believe that in quite a few generations now, in quite a little time, our race, moving necessarily in the direction of its innate promptings, will enter upon a life that would be altogether wonderful to us could we but anticipate it, that will be broad and gracious and *lovely* and beautifully eventful beyond anything we can dream of now or desire. That new way of living may be much nearer at hand than many of us dare to suppose, since its coming seems to depend almost entirely upon the conscious co-operation of men. No one has yet been able to gauge what increased power of co-operation a freshly conceived education may yield us. The long centuries that were needed to mould the life-cycle of the early Palaeolithic brute-man, darkened and refractory, into our present freedoms, are no measure of the rate of change that is practicable to conscious effort.

As I look out upon this world, upon these hills so tranquil now under the glittering stars, I see as plainly as I see that those stars are rising and setting, our waste and disorder, our petty, distressful, and dispersed life, so intelligent and eager, so hasty and undisciplined and tragically silly, giving place to the advent of a conscious, coherent being of mankind, possessing and ruling the earth.

In the peace of this starlit hour one can see wide and far. I can put in their true proportions the fretting events in those newspapers, invisible now in the shadow beyond the circle of my lamp. That futile excitement about the gambling-tables beyond there is altogether swallowed up in the night, and all the gambling and money manipulation in the world becomes scarcely more significant in this longer view than the rustling passage of a few autumnal leaves down the water-channel beside this house. They may choke a grating for a moment; they may waste a little water.

And the broad vision that I have from here is scarcely more troubled by those poor bodies in the desert twilight. The crackling of rifles and revolvers in the streets of Cairo does not reach up to this serenity. In some manner all men must die, and while their lives remain poor and little it is a small matter whether they die in bed or whether they die in battle. The great guns upon those ships have but a short range in time. That men should finish a trifle more painfully and a trifle less tediously than usual, by shot and bayonet, by gas and great explosions, is little worse than that they should die by fevers and famines and the cruelties of large beasts. Such things are aspects of our phase, and only in degree less transitory than the nightmares that may be troubling a score of pillows among the peasant homes near by.

There is no enduring pain, there is no eternal tragedy. Toil passes like the straining of a rootlet or the opening of a bud. Supreme above wars and disasters, surpassing and at last redeeming all the present torments of man, is the growth of a being of thought. Such circles of light as this beneath my lampshade are more formidable than all the armies and navies in the world, and stronger than the sum of human violence. They have an invincible tendency to run together like drops of oil. They grow brighter. It is because our light is growing that at last we apprehend the shadows. To realise the unacceptable evil in a thing is to begin its cure. Great as are the evils that we can see in life, the power of the will in us grows greater. I see the nearness of an order in the world like the order of a garden, of a workroom, of a laboratory, a clean life and a direct life and a powerful life for men; the jungle and all its sufferings gone at last for ever.

Nor will the coming to consciousness of this greater *life* of the race diminish or dwarf or fetter individual lives. They will be different, they will be enlarged. They will be passing *beyond* egotistical conflict and out of the age of jealousy, as we are passing beyond superstition and out of the age of fear. But they will be just as freely interested. They will be far more various and individualised. Their form of self-assertion will be different, it will have the form of distinctive service and distinctive creation, instead of being a blind insistence upon formal honour, upon possessions, and upon stereotyped advantages. To-day already in a thousand aspects of their

lives people about us are anticipating this new phase, this completely adult phase of human Ii fee

This is no act of faith I am making. I am not thinking against my own resistance. I am not declaring my passionate belief in something that the common aspect of things denies. I am writing down as plainly as I can what I believe to be plain matter-of-fact, as I see it directly my nose is sufficiently removed from my own affairs to permit a broad view of my world. This prospect of a saner, greater humanity controlling the world is as real in my sight as that faint light that came a moment since, and now I see has gone again, in a peasant's window there among the hills.

16. PAUSE

I HAVE made a long account of my framework of belief, much longer than I had supposed it would need to be when I began it in Dickon's London room. I turn over the corrected sheets and I still find matter for correction. I did not realise how much of the foundations of my life remained unformulated. At last I seem to have gathered everything together, everything essential, into the view from this window. Here I have got the present moment, the long past, the future, and the deeps of space. Here for a moment I may pause.

It is three o'clock in the morning, starry and immensely still. The moon is not yet visible; not even the pale stain of its light upon the edge of the sky. It will rise later, a hunted fugitive with the devouring dawn upon its heels. There is no sound in all this dark world but the soliloquy of the water under my open window. But at last I feel I have made my ground clear and disposed of my premises, and tomorrow I will go on writing about the more human things of life, about social organisation and toil and business and possessions, and about the hopes and desires of men and women, their loves and their ambitions, their generosities and disregards, and about the change that is going on in all human relationships. That change in human relationships is to be my expanding and increasing interest throughout. That was what I intended to discuss from the beginning, and it is only as I have set about my task that I have realised how much preliminary explanation had to be made — to myself as well as to the reader.

BOOK THE SECOND. THE STORY OF THE CLISSOLDS — MY FATHER AND THE FLOW OF THINGS

1. FEAR COMES TO MOWBRAY

WHEN I was twelve and my brother Dickon nearly fifteen, my father, Richard Clissold, having been found guilty of falsifying the books of London and Imperial Enterprises and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude, committed suicide and died in the passage behind the court just after he had left the dock. He had swallowed a small capsule containing poison which he had concealed in the lining of his waistcoat. While there had been a straw of hope left to him he had fought, but now hope was at an end. A few minutes later he would have been searched and they would have taken everything from him, and his way of escape would have been closed.

Neither Dickon nor I heard of this disaster at the time. Our mother had taken us abroad at the first intimations of the final storm. Probably our father told her to do so. We boys thought at first that we were going for a few days of holiday, but that holiday stretched out perplexingly from days to weeks and from weeks to months, and for all that time things were kept from us or mitigated for us. We went first to Holland and then into Belgium; we wandered from town to town and from pension to pension. For a time we were at St. Orner, where there were mysterious comings and goings of my mother and various friends between France and England. We settled down at last at Montpellier — by that time we knew of our father's death — and there we began to realise fully that the spacious days of Mowbray were over and that we had entered upon a new life under a new name and more restricted circumstances.

I understood very little about my father's position in the world before our flight from Mowbray, and I doubt if Dickon knew much more than I did. I had known however, that he was a very great business man. One of our many governesses — I forget her name — told me he was "very, very, *very* rich." Always with three "verys," and the last one stressed. That young woman, I realise now, had an admiration for him beyond her station; she liked to talk about him endlessly, she said he was "wonderful" and ought to have been knighted long ago, and she left abruptly and in tears.

I had still but the vaguest ideas of worldly position in those days.

Mowbray effaced Bexhill. There our surroundings had been brightly and prosperously suburban in character; we had lived in a square-faced red house called "Sunny Beach" not five minutes from the sea-front, with a garden at the back where croquet — tennis had still to become universal — struggled against our infantile occupation of the lawn. There was, I remember, tamarisk about that lawn, ragged and ill-treated, and there was tidy tamarisk in front of the house, and everywhere about us there was tamarisk. Life at Bexhill was being a "kid" in a multitudinous jumble of "kiddies" amidst perambulators and nurse-maids and pet dogs and iron seats and sand-heaps and boats and the stray balls of strange children coming out of nowhere into our play, and the legs of grown-up people. But Mowbray was a large and dignified frame for our lives. It conveyed a sense of social perspectives, and there I began to observe something of the relationships of things. I knew there were poor people in the world who had to be pitied but not encouraged, and that there were lower servants who resembled one another closely and upper servants of greater personal distinction like Mrs. Praydo and Jenks the butler, and the current governess between heaven and earth, and Mummy's friends who called in the afternoon and were shown the gardens, and Daddy's friends, a gay and glittering train who came for week-ends. Some of these were knights and baronets and even lords and ladies, and far away and over them all ruled the old, old Queen, Queen Victoria in Windsor Castle, who lived for ever and was halfway to God. There were a lot of foreigners also in existence; some of Daddy's friends were foreigners, but foreigners did not amount to much unless there was a war. Then the Fleet would protect us.

I had not learnt very much in those days because my education had been so intermittent, but I was curious and fairly quick and I read voraciously. My education was intermittent because my father was imaginative and erratic and my mother fastidious and resistant. Towards the end of our great days he was talking of a public school for me, but he did nothing whatever to get me to one. "Which shall it be, Old Son?" he would ask. "Harrow and a halo or Eton in a topper and a bum-freezer?" I had a brief spell at a very select preparatory school near Guildford which I hated, and when I was eleven I began, by a special concession, to be a weekly boarder at Cossington's

School. There I learnt to draw and the beginnings of science. I was taken away from that abruptly in mid-term. Dickon was then in the fifth form at Laxton after a good beginning at a preparatory school in Bexhill — his was a much sounder and more normal education than mine — and a few days later he too was jerked home and came back in a state of pleasurable excitement, with no idea of what impended.

"What's up?" said Dickon. "Is it to be Eton after all?"

I can still recall something of my mood when I learnt on the Monday morning that I was not to return to school. I went out ?n the terrace after Jenks had given me my breakfast and contemplated with infinite satisfaction the vast, empty, wonderful day that opened out before me, a surprise gift, a golden globe of sunlit time. It was a bright March day and the clouds were like great ships crowded with canvas that sailed before a strong yet kindly south-west wind. Everything was very quiet, there were no week-end visitors packing off and departing, because my father was away. I had no suspicion that life at Mowbray had come to its last phase of all for me. I decided I would begin by going to see if the primroses had appeared along the bridle-path through the wood.

I must have gone into the park and looked back at the house somewhen then, because it stands out so plainly in relation to this moment of my life. I see again the fair pale frontage under its pseudo-classical pediment, the dignified portico, the dining-room to the right, and to the left five windows of the long room both Jenks and my father always spoke of as the "saloon." East and west were stables and other offices, each with a cupola and a clock. The house was backed by woods, tall brown beeches, red tipped before the first sharp jets of green athwart their lower branches. I can see it now. I can feel the freshness and release of that spring morning still. After the matter of the primroses had been investigated I proposed to strike back to the dip in the park and see whether the bracken had got its croziers above ground yet or whether I should find them by digging, and what our fallow deer were doing. Our new fallow deer. Only last autumn my father in his splendour had turned the cattle off the park and stocked it with nearly three score fallow deer.

Then probably after that I should cease to be a boy and become a Red Indian or an African explorer.

But the rest of that day and the two days of solitude that followed before Dickon's return have left no clear record in my mind.

Uncontrolled freedom at Mowbray seemed too good to be true to both of us. It was too good to be true, and we received the news that we were to go abroad to Holland "to see the lovely bulbs" with loud protests. "Oh *no*, Mummy!" We had no desire to see the lovely bulbs and our mother's manner did not convey to us any great anticipation of pleasure in the spectacle. We wanted to go on mucking about at home. There was a dismay in our mother's dark eyes and a stress in her manner for which our boyish imaginations had no understanding. We argued that going to Holland was perfectly rotten and we made a stolid passive resistance to packing. One or two incidents before our departure struck Dickon as "rummy"; Jenks vanished suddenly, and a housemaid found in tears on the staircase said every one was going to be turned off. She apparently, said Dickon, had been jolly well just turned on. Strange men appeared and moved the furniture about and treated a small boy accustomed to be taken notice of as if he was invisible. Mother appeared to be sniffing furtively that evening. Anyhow, when Dickon asked her if anything was "up" she turned her face away and dabbed her eyes with her handkerchief before she answered in a strangled voice, "*Nothing*. Nothing, dear. I have a little cold."

That first perception of something wrong in the air, something that was being kept from us, was greatly intensified by my mother's behaviour in the brougham on the way to Duxford Station. Dickon had, of course, collared the seat beside the driver but I was inside with mother. The excitement of travel was upon both of us youngsters by that time, we were disposed to forget our recent recalcitrance, but it was painfully evident she intended to continue depressing us. Dickon had made a sort of song about our departure that seemed to me the quintessence of wit, it was so perfectly innocent and justifiable in reality and yet so close to indictable offences. He had made it as :we got up and we had been singing it all the morning.

"We're going to Rotterdam
Rotter Rotter Dam

We've both of us gotter
Go to Rotter
Rotter, Rotter — (open out and let yourself go)
Dam!"

When I tried to cheer things up inside the brougham with this agreeable refrain my mother quenched me with, "Don't, Billykins, I've got a headache."

We drove down the park road to the town lodge. I sat back subdued but resentful. At the curve where the woods sweep round my mother leant forward and became very still, looking back at the great house she was leaving for ever. It seemed to be smiling in the sunshine with the blandest indifference to her departure. I gave it one glance over her back, noted that her shoulders heaved and stared disgusted out of the other window. What was the *good* of all this depression? What was the *sense* of it? It was *my* holiday that was being spoilt by her obstinacy, not hers. I remained stonily averted until we were close to the station.

Then she spoke to me and her voice showed that she had recovered herself. "Come, Billykins," she said. "Take your little bag."

I took my little bag.

Queer how just these scenes of five or ten minutes' duration stand out in one's memory. Queer, too, how broken and intermittent are all my memories of my mother, without prelude and without immediate sequel. It is as if that part of my mental record had been edited by some unknown power with a disposition to suppress her. I suspect a sustained inattention. It is only by an effort even now that I can restore her sufficiently to describe her. She was dark and slender, she was weak and gentle and ineffective; fear was in her nature and she would not, she could not, stand up to events. I think that both Dickon and I felt that fear in her as a thing excessive, and that it robbed us of much of the natural confidence and love that sons should have for their mother.

Her promotion to Mowbray must have frightened her very much. At Bexhill she had been able to manage fairly well, but Mowbray after Sunny Beach must have seemed like a white elephant after a

governess cart. In the course of time she had come to like the place after her fashion and at the end she had become proud of it. Jenks and Mrs. Praydo had made things difficult but not impossible for her during her period of responsibility; they had never failed to come to her to tell her what orders to give them unless they were very hard pressed. Some of the weekends must have been terrible — such a crowd of large, bright, brilliant, and various people, yet after all my father was there to manage them and she could wear her dresses very successfully — she had a lovely neck and shoulders — and even get into little sympathetic conversations with anyone who, like herself, seemed to be detached and shy. And in the quiet in between she could almost expand into a great lady and have local callers and see her own friends and take them to see the roses or the orchids or even, if they had suitable dispositions, completely "over the house."

I know very little of my mother's history. My father must have married her when she was very young; she could have been hardly three-and-thirty at the time of his death. I do not know where he met her nor what her people were; I may have first cousins quite unknown to me. I have no doubt he came into her world suddenly and splendidly and discovered her quiet, dark loveliness and decided to make her his with the same effective decision with which later he made Mowbray his. And to begin with for a brief year or so I am convinced she must have been a quite happy young woman. He was good looking and charming and confident and kind. I imagine she began by believing him to be just exactly the nice and gallant, high-principled and capable husband that every Victorian young lady expected as her portion in life. Presently she must have come to realise that instead he was a strange and unaccountable animal, that a thousand things in the world could attract and excite him more than she could, that he could be unfaithful to her without a qualm, that without an antagonistic thought for her his proceedings could be utterly regardless of her security and of her standards of right and wrong and of everything she valued in life. I am sure he loved her ardently at first and then began to go away for a little while and then come back more ardent than ever, and so on for longer and longer absences and briefer and briefer spells of compensatory ardour, until it must have become apparent to her that he was developing the habit

of forgetting her to very serious proportions. He was never, I am sure, positively unkind to her, he never in any material way neglected her, he showed her the greatest respect, but he forgot her more and more. It was his way to forget things. Negligence was the fault that finally destroyed him. At last it was all forgetfulness and there was no more ardour at all. In his forgetfulness of her he may have inflicted some terrible humiliations. He was a man of manifold activities. He went on with his career as he had been going on with it before he met her, his expansive, enterprising, erratic, dangerous, and occasionally forgotten career.

I think she must have known how dangerous it was, by instinct, by watching his moods, quite early in their life together. I believe she felt the quiver of the coming earthquake through all our comforts and splendours long before it came. In her heart she may have been praying desperately against an inevitable catastrophe.

I wonder how lonely that poor fear-oppressed lady was at Mowbray. She was a helpless nonentity on a ship that she felt might founder. She had no consolation that I can perceive unless it was the sense of temporary possession when my father was away. She did not resort to religion, at least perceptibly; I think she was too shy to take her troubles there. And we two boys must have been very uncongenial offspring indeed, intractable, difficult to pet and in voice and appearance very like our father, Dickon even more than I.

2. CARILLON AND TRAGEDY

IT was at Bruges that Dickon and I were told that there was to be no more daddy and no more Mowbray in our lives.

I have never been to Bruges since those days and I do not know how much that little old city has changed. I remember it as cobbled, with grass and moss between the cobbles, as built of very worn red brick and having a great number of courts in which big trees grew and into which one went through great archways. These I think were called Beguinages and I remember worrying my mother to show me a Beguin. "Mummy, is *that* a Beguin?" One might lark about among these places — discreetly. There were also numerous green-scummed decaying canals with grassy banks, sustaining a multitude of brightly painted and interesting barges. Also there was a very entertaining Grand' Place, above which rose a tall belfry that continually disseminated tunes like the tunes of a musical-box. It showered chimes and airs at the hours and the half-hours and quarter-hours. All Bruges lived as a vocal exercise to the accompaniment of this almost incessant carillon. One could ascend that belfry, but our mother would not let us do that. High places made her giddy and so they were forbidden us. Always there was a creaking and clatter in the cobbled square below, a coming and going of big two-wheeled wagons with the most interesting loads, a selling of things from booths, a shouting of hawkers and so forth. There was a great traffic of small carts and trucks drawn by dogs; we had never seen the like before. The dogs would bark at you but they would not go for you because they were fastened to the carts. They were always barking. We lodged in an inn upon the Grand' Place, an inn with some old Flemish name that I have forgotten, and it was in a little bedroom upstairs with an open window giving on the noise, on shouting, barking, chimes and clatter, that our mother told us that our father was dead.

We had known for two days that things were getting worse with mother, but we had said nothing to each other about it. She had kept us away from her as much as possible, sent us out to play, even given us francs to buy anything we wanted in the shops. When we drifted

back to the square and the inn she had gone off for a long walk by herself — a strange thing for her to do. At bedtime there had been a storm of affection, more especially for me because I stood it better. “My poor, poor darling little Billykins! My little Billy!”

Then she began to talk to herself, a thing she had never done before. “How can I tell them?” I heard her say as we sat at our lunch.

And also I remember, “I can’t even wear black. I can’t even do that.”

She made us come up to her room after our lunch. We came the more reluctantly because she said she had something to tell us, something very important. We were both now in a state of extreme resentment at her odd and unaccountable behaviour. We knew nothing of her distresses and to her, poor woman, our minds were inaccessible. She had never known how to reach them, how to make herself in any way understood. From our earliest childhood she had never been able to imagine, much less to direct, what went on inside our little skulls.

“Sit down,” she said. “No, don’t look out of the window, please, *please*, don’t. Sit down.” Dickon she made take the only chair, and I was perched upon the bed. The room, I remember, struck me as untidy. The poor lady looked at her two difficult, obdurate offspring and stood clasping her hands.

“You poor dear children! Oh! dreadful things have happened. Dreadful things. How can I tell you?”

“You haven’t had bad news, mother?” Dickon hazarded.

“Oom,” said my mother, full charged with emotion.

“Boys!” she recommenced — she had never called us that before. “Boys, you are never to *speak* of your father again. Never. You are never to *think* of your father again. You will never see him any more — ever.”

Neither of us, I remember, said a word. I glanced at Dickon for a cue and he was sitting stock still, not looking at her but, still hostile, taking in what she had said.

Her lips were compressed. She clenched her handkerchief into a ball and pressed it against her cheek and sat down abruptly upon her big travelling trunk. “Never see him again,” she said. “Never go back to Mowbray. Never go back to England not for many years. Live

abroad here. And your name isn't to be Clissold any more. None of us are to be Clissold any more. You will be called Walters — Willy Walters. Dickon Walters. Mrs. Walters."

She paused. Then added an injunction: "Whatever questions they ask you, you are not to answer. Not to answer and not to listen. Whatever they ask or whatever they say."

Dickon, it was evident, intended to speak. She stared at him with dark apprehensive tear-stained eyes. Already he was so far his father's heir that she was afraid of him.

"But what's become of daddy?" he asked. "Why should we be called Walters? I think it's a *rotten* name."

"It was — it was my name — before I married," sobbed my mother.

"All the same," said Dickon. "And besides — where's he gone? I don't see it."

I was younger and blunter. I had had what I felt was a really bright idea, and I wanted to get it out before Dickon thought of it. "Is he *dead*, mummy?"

Dickon glanced at me as though he was minded to strike me. For a long time, as it seemed, my mother said nothing. Her brows were knit and her face was red. There was an immense silence in the room and outside a turmoil, a sudden dog-fight, men shouting, the clatter of cans overturned and trailed over the stones.

"OO!-oom!" my mother assented at last, nodding her head, her lips pressed tight. She choked, and then spoke very quickly in a sharp squeak: *"He's dead."*

And then her face flushed transparent red and broke up like an infant's when it gives way to uncontrollable grief. She took refuge from all further inquiries, from all further control of the situation in a stupefying passion of weeping. I had never seen such weeping. I was astounded, I was horrified, I was ashamed. It seemed to me that even the noises in the square outside were stilled in amazement at her grief. "What *shall* I do?" she cried. "What can I *do*?"

"Leave me," she said at last. "Leave me. Oh! my heart's breaking."

How vividly those moments come back to me! I can see her still, see her thin red clutching hands before her face, and her poor silly

little handkerchief so soddened with tears that it oozed and dripped. I can remember such a detail as that, but my own feelings I cannot remember at all. I do not think I had any feelings at all. Was I sorry for her? Was I sorry for my father? Was I even sorry for myself? I do not recall it. I was simply stunned with astonishment at the spectacle of a human being "breaking down." In all my life before I had never seen anyone "break down." And this was mother!

I do not remember the slightest impulse to console or comfort her.

I remember, too, almost as vividly how I walked with Dickon by the side of a canal that afternoon, though how we had got there from my mother's bedroom has quite faded out of my memory. I see Dickon with a white face staring blankly ahead of him, his eyes glassy with unshed tears, and I beside him waiting until it should please him to speak.

He spoke at last in tones of intense bitterness.

"Just as if nobody wanted to blub except her," he said, and wrathfully: "It's *our* father."

I accepted that and remained silently respectful as became a younger brother.

At length after a long interval his voice carne again: "What's the sense of our not being called Clissold? Everybody knows our name's Clissold. Everybody."

That again called for no comment on my part. He brushed his eyes lightly.

Presently he thought aloud once more. "Why aren't we going to his funeral? It's our right to go to his funeral. I am the heir. I am his nearest. I ought to be there. Both of us ought to be there."

Again I had nothing to say. We went on silently side by side, silently comforting one another. We felt a hundred things we could not say. We both understood quite clearly that all we had been told was but an intimation of unspeakable things. The whole world had become dark; sinister abysses yawned beneath the Belgian cobbles; our feeble speculations and interrogations were as helpless as a weak wailing in an immensity of night. And we knew that so far as our mother went we should never be told, never be given any shape for his disappearance and death and this enigmatical collapse of our world. Some disaster, some frightful thing? In that our splendid,

meteoric father was lost, dreadfully lost. Our hearts began to ache for him. His voice, things he had said and done were coming back to us. He had gone, gone for ever.

Towards our poor, fragile, incapable mother I can remember only that dreadful hardness of our hearts. It was almost as if we felt that it was she who had taken us away from him. And Mowbray and all we held dear.

3. A STEPFATHER

FROM that time on Dickon and I became the close allies we are to this day. Before then we had not seen very much of each other; we had gone to different schools and lived dissimilarly, but now we were thrown together in an almost constant association; we shared our troubles and antagonisms, we were English brothers in a French school and Clissolds, suppressed but still obstinate Clissolds, crypto-Clissolds for a time, against the world.

We were poor in comparison with the Mowbray days, but not impossibly poor. My mother had property. Years ago my father, in a phase of clear prevision, had settled money upon her, and in particular some parcels of shares and some house property in Belgium and France. She talked freely and frequently during that phase of wandering, about returning this property to his creditors, but no creditors were ever about to take advantage of her mood. She presently adopted widow's mourning and put crape armlets upon us and established herself definitely in Montpellier as Mrs. Walters, a young English widow, very inconsolable and quite devoted to her two sturdy boys. And we had to be the Walters boys thoroughly and suppress the Clissold in us even in our private thoughts. Imperceptibly we fell into a grouping in which she alone was the mourner amongst us, and we shaped our behaviour more and more easily to her assumption that it behoved us to comfort her and compensate her for all she had been through.

She made no great confidences to either of us. To me she talked rather more than to the silent and often preoccupied Dickon. I was younger and gentler in my manners and more flexible. "Ah, Billykins," she would say. "You're all I've got to live for now. You two dear boys."

And she would pat my shoulder and quite obviously let her thoughts ramble away to other things.

A more capable comforter appeared in the late August or early September in the person of her cousin, Mr. Walpole Stent, a tall, shy, thoughtful, knickerbockered man with a very large forehead and an immense appetite for long, deep, confidential talks with her. He used

to carry field-glasses in a leather case slung by a leather strap over his shoulders in order to examine distant landscapes with more particularity. Those field-glasses offended our sense of *comme-il-faut*. He put up at a little hotel in the Rue Boussairelles not far from our house, and he resumed" a severed but never-forgotten friendship with our mother. With him we all went presently for a holiday to St. Raphael, which was then a comparatively unknown resort. He had persuaded her to this, she explained, and she had yielded because she thought it would do us good to go to the seaside before we recommenced school.

He was partner by inheritance in a firm of London solicitors, and I remember that even then I was impressed by the retentive and preservative quality of his mind. It was my first encounter with a well-trained legal intelligence. It was like some great furniture depository, safe from fire, corruption or admixture, nothing seemed to happen in it and nothing ever got lost in it, and he could, with every appearance of pleasure, reproduce the most commonplace facts at any time at the fullest length and in the completest detail. He did all he could to make friends with us in spite of his preoccupation with our mother. He liked us with the greatest determination. He told me a lot of natural history and scientific wonders that for the most part I knew already, and to Dickon he professed a sympathetic interest in cricket that his performance on the beach did not seem to justify. He was, most worthy man, the completest contrast to our father that one could imagine, and I perceive that the hostility to his memory that still smoulders in my heart is a quite instinctive reaction, unrighteous and unreasonable.

He reappeared at Christmas and found my mother almost out of mourning altogether, very animated and pretty in a dress of bright grey trimmed with black velvet. She began to make it after his departure but she did not wear it until he returned. We noted that, but said nothing. A paternal solicitude crept into his manner towards us, and he discussed our future careers with us at length. We did not, however, discuss them with him; we were already enormously self-protective towards him. We felt the coming usurpation. Within a year of my father's death my mother had married him.

She told us she did it entirely for our sakes. She said that we two

needed the friendship and guidance of a good man. All boys needed that as they grew up, but we needed it to an exceptional degree. She was too weak for us and she knew it. For her it was implicit there could be no surcease from tragic memories.

There was a honeymoon in Switzerland while we two remained at Montpellier, and then the French phase in our education was broken off abruptly and we were moved to Chislehurst. At Dulwich College, which was then a vigorously progressive school just taking up science teaching, we made up for a great deal of lost ground. We became boarders and went home only in the vacations. There was never any active dissension between us and our stepfather, but there was a sort of mutual estrangement. We differed. Even in our holidays it is remarkable how little of our waking time we spent at home. And in the course of the next three years our mother showed her further devotion to our needs by securing us first the friendship and guidance of a small but large-headed baby brother and then of a little sister, and then of a second sister.

Dickon was now nearly nineteen and I was sixteen, and as the Walpole Stent family fulfilled its destiny in this manner we two became more and more aware of our superfluousness therein. We proposed to enter at the Royal College of Science and set up for ourselves in London lodgings, and after a great deal of needless discussion, for our departure was manifestly a relief to everyone, this was conceded. But our stepfather loved weighing pros and cons fully and deliberately, and saw no reason why a foregone conclusion should be treated cavalierly. It was not difficult for our mother to give us an allowance of eighty pounds a year each out of the property my father had set aside for her; that was a quite possible allowance in those days, and so we two were able to establish ourselves in apartments in Brompton and face the world together.

When everything essential to that removal was settled, Dickon broached a matter of great concern to both of us.

It was late one evening that he found his opportunity. My mother and stepfather had been out to dine with a neighbour, and we had just come in from a music-hall. We found them refreshing themselves with biscuits and some lemonade. The bedroom candles were on the table. We exchanged colourless information about our proceedings.

Then our stepfather asked some unnecessary question about the courses at Kensington I proposed to take.

"Oh, by the way," said Dickon with a little catch in his voice and an elaborate casualness in his manner, "now that we are going away from here — and things have blown over a bit — l see no reason why we should keep up this pretence of being Walters. In fact — I'm entering at Kensington for both of us as — Clissold."

"But, my dear boy!" said our stepfather. "Do you know — do you know anything of the story?"

"Most of it, said Dickson. Billy has looked it up in back numbers of *The Times*."

"Well!" said our stepfather.

"We don't like sailing under false colours," said Dickon. "We think we ought to stand to it."

"But how can we *tell* people?" cried my mother.

"You needn't. We can be Walters here. Whenever we come along to see you."

He lit his candle calmly and thoughtfully as though the matter was concluded. His hand was quite steady, but mine trembled a little as I followed him. I was sorry for my mother and I avoided looking in her direction. "There's much to be considered," my stepfather began.

"We've considered most of it," said Dickon, and took up his candle. "You coming, Billy?"

My stepfather made no immediate answer.

Dickon went over to mother and kissed her good-night. "Good-night, father," he said. It was rare he said "father." I, too, saluted my mother, and just for a moment her hand sought mine and failed to press it. Her furtiveness made me as shy and ineffective as herself. We conveyed nothing and perhaps there was nothing to convey.

"But — !" said my stepfather as Dickon reached the door.

"If I go out into the world as Clissold," said Dickon, turning to him, "I begin at the bottom — yes. But if I go out under a false name and then they find out I am Richard Clissold Secundus — where am I then?"

He did not wait for any further discussion, and my stepfather had no immediate reply. He had to readjust his point of view. And that he never did in a hurry.

But presently he began to assemble his considerations. Our bedroom was directly over that occupied by my mother and my stepfather, and I could hear his quiet, unhurrying voice unfolding the situation to himself and to her, amply, thoroughly, and needlessly, until I fell asleep.

My mother, I know, loved to have things explained to her. She did not listen, but she loved to have things explained to her. I am sure that she was in a muddled way distressed at our going, and that my stepfather's discourse comforted and consoled her. It was not that it met her fears and objections so much as that it anointed and soothed her mind. Dickon and I lay awake in our beds for a long time talking in fragmentary spurts, exchanging ideas about our own unforgettable father and about the world and about that battle with the world that lay before us, or following out our own thoughts to the accompaniment of that submerged, interminable commentary. I do not remember what we said to each other, but I have as vividly present in my mind as if I had heard it only a moment ago the muffled sound of that voice coming up through the floor.

4. THE END OF A SWINDLER

I FIND it very difficult to recall what sort of figure our own father made in our minds at that particular phase of our lives.

Necessarily his offence, his disaster, his career, and his punishment completely dominated our early outlook. He bestraddled our start in life like the Colossus of Rhodes; we sailed out under his shadow into the world. He overwhelmed us, immense and indistinct and enigmatical.

I knew he had died in some "dreadful" way after that scene at Bruges, but it is a curious thing, for which I cannot account, that I did not make any attempt to find out exactly how he had died for several years. I suppose when first I was told I was too young to know how to set about the inquiry, and before I had got the necessary *savoir faire* for such an investigation the habit of not inquiring was established. It was by chance one day at Chislehurst that I came upon a succinct notice of his tragedy in a stale Whittaker's Almanac. In those days nothing in print was unreadable to me. There in the Events of the Year my eye caught the name of Clissold, and I read, in small print at the bottom of a column amidst a crowd of other happenings: "Clissold, Promoter of London and Imperial Enterprises, having been sentenced to seven years' penal servitude by Mr. Justice Ponters for fraud, committed suicide with potassium cyanide as he left the dock."

So that was it! That was my mother's great secret.

My first impulse was to go and tell Dickon all about it, my next to conceal my discovery from him altogether. For either he knew already and had been keeping this thing from me, or he did not know and we should have only this bare poisoned needle of statement to rankle in our minds and inflame us to painful, futile guessing about the details. Obviously a thing like that, big enough to be an Event of the Year, would be found in the newspapers of the time, and so after a day of consideration I asked one of the Dulwich masters — Graham Wallas it was, who afterwards became a great Fabian Society man and a professor of social science — how one set about looking up old newspapers. He was one of our keenest teachers,

extraordinarily kind and sympathetic with anything responsive in his classes, and to him one went as a matter of course in any such difficulty as mine. I recall his little start at my request, his judicious self-control — I suppose he knew who I was really and guessed what I had in mind — and how he hesitated and considered and knitted one brow more than the other, with his kind brown eyes looking away from me over his glasses at infinity and his mouth screwed up in a way he had.

"Perhaps it's the best course," he said.

He could not tell me exactly on the spot how I could consult old newspaper files — I was too young for a British Museum ticket — but he would inquire and let me know the exact particulars. He would inquire.

"It's *The Times* you ought to read — certainly," he said. "You'll get the facts there complete and without — without sensation. Whatever facts it is you want to look up."

And at last at a charge, I remember, of sixpence, in a commodious room at *The Times* office, where a number of blighted, anxious-looking people were pulling big volumes about over the tables, I began to reconstruct item by item my father's dereliction and death.

As I did so a great cloud of long-neglected memories returned to me, memories of a big, kind daddy-giant, who came suddenly out of nowhere into one's childish world with a tremendous "Hello, you kids!" and banished dullness. He banished boredom; that was his supreme quality. He is always a large, not very distinctly featured giant to me; my memory of his face is not clear. Chiefly I remember his red whiskers. My mother destroyed every photograph there was of him, and in those days the portraits of prominent people published in the papers were engravings — photographic reproduction for periodicals did not yet exist — and those I was able to dig up made a lamentable mess of him.

So he remains incurably atmospheric, red whiskers, a flushed complexion, a very reassuring smile, quick movements. A wonderful giver of "pig-a-bags" he had been at Bexhill, and at Mowbray there had been rare, memorable sprees, a time when a week-end party of grown-ups played rounders with wild enthusiasm on the great lawn, and Dickon, who was only fourteen, ran faster even than men of fifty

and got rounder after rounder for his side, and several games of spoof cricket with the end pillars of the terrace balustrading as a wicket and a walking-stick for a bat and a rubber ball. He dressed up once as Father Christmas for us. He sang the "Two Obadiahs" and "Tommy, Make Room for your Uncle" to us — until my mother implored him not to make us vulgar. He would think of us when he was abroad and in all sorts of places where a daddy might reasonably forget his little boys; he brought us back delightful flat tin soldiers marching, cooking, camping, in oval wood boxes from Paris, and entertaining earthenware Nativities with kings, shepherds, and irrelevant crowds complete, from Italy. And he sent us coloured picture postcards from the end of Europe, costumes or animals or railways or ships. He saw to it that we had toy railway trains on rails that really worked, from some special shop he knew of in Holborn. Such deeds fought for him eloquently. It was absolutely impossible for me to think of him as a villain.

I sat in *The Times* search-room with my cheeks flushed and my eyes growing hot and red, reading of growing suspicion and denunciation and insolvency and pursuit and trial, and never had I a doubt that he was an evilly entreated man.

He had almost got away from them. For days he was missing. He had danced off to Paris, taken a ticket and a *lit-salon* berth for Geneva, and vanished at Culoz. They had found him and arrested him nine days later in a little out-of-the-way inn in Biscay. When the detective broke it to him that he was known and under arrest he had remarked cheerfully: "Good old Scotland Yard! Have some déjeuner with us? It's awful stuff."

Us! He had travelled with a typist-secretary as his daughter. He thought, he said, that was a fresher disguise than wearing a false beard. His levity on this delicate matter told against him at the trial.

And his offence? That was rather a tangled business for a boy of fifteen. I will not attempt to summarise that complex story here. I could appreciate better the nine days' man-hunt that had preceded his arrest. Even in the decorous Victorian *Times* — a *Times* without headlines — I could detect the sporting zest his disappearance gave the affair, and when later on I looked up the case in other contemporary newspapers, I realised what a bright addition to the

British breakfast-table of that spring, the chase of my father must have been. Tall Englishmen of easy manners had been arrested at Marienbad and in Stockholm; all over Europe his travelling compatriots must have been seeing him, sometimes several times a day.

I saw the chase from the point of view of the hunted. I suppose he knew how hopeless his flight was even from the first. But he was always for giving the thing a trial rather than for giving in. But there he was, dodging about at minor junctions and giving false names at inns and wondering what the devil he should do when his money ran out and, I guess, keeping up the delusion of his pseudo-daughter that she was having a romantic elopement. And treating her as it seems he did — strictly as his daughter. He would not damage her more than he could help. All the while he must have been going over the squalid sequence of rash falsifications and expedients that had ended in his crash. So recently as a year before he had been in no greater danger than that of a rather florid and extravagant bankruptcy. Even then he might have pulled through and recovered his prestige in the City. But he had been unable to face a merely legal failure when just a slight stretching, a further risk, a fraud that good luck would conceal again, might tide things over. He did not want merely to escape; his hopes grew with his dangers; even when the game was utterly lost he had still attempted victory. He had been careless in his manipulations, a little contemptuous, I am afraid, of the alertness of his associates, a little too confident of their courage and sympathetic dishonesty.

Towards the end he broke badly. His last exploits were hardly more planned or intelligent than the flurry of a harpooned whale. He plunged from misdemeanour to felony. His last falsifications were puerile, and on those he was convicted.

And so after a futile struggle over the extradition they took my father back to England. I imagine him concealing as much as he could of his chagrin beneath a bearing still hectically debonair. Back he came to the City of London, where he had been so brilliant, so brilliant and meteoric a figure, and there he stood in the ill-lit stuffy court and was examined and re-examined and wearied and exhibited and disentangled and picked to pieces, picked to discreditable shreds.

I realise now that he had never taken business quite seriously. I perceive from one or two phrases of his under examination that he was immensely astonished that a little more or a little less sharp practice should make all this difference in his treatment by his fellow-men.

Twice the judge, a fellow-member of his club, a successful youngish man who had once looked up to him, had to reprove him for "a certain familiarity" in his manner.

And then it became plain to him that it was really so, that he was in a trap and the springe had closed upon his neck. There was a line drawn between permissible and illegal sharpness, a miserable line, and they could not see how slight a thing, how playful and fresh a thing, it had been to overstep it. That dismally cheerful train journey with the detectives, the restraints of his present imprisonment, this dingy crowded court all eyes for him, were to be only the prelude to a long grey, chill, eventless, undernourished, unstimulated living burial. They meant it. They had got him and they meant it. Well, he, at least, had had one saving moment of foresight. Here the stuff was, close at hand. Here under his finger. Good!

So he held his chin up and answered firmly to the end. Was even humorous once or twice. There was laughter in court.

The Times search-room seemed to contract upon me until it became the waiting-room of a court and the helpful attendant might have been a warder. It was as if I stood in my father's place. I could understand it all.

Death is a very dreadful and tremendous thing to the adolescent mind, but I felt that I could understand. I wished that somehow when he stood up to hear the foregone verdict, alone without an overt friend in a court crowded to overflowing with his enemies and with merciless, curious spectators, he could have known that some day his son would be there beside him in imagination and feeling — not condoning but understanding. He would not have wanted his offence condoned. I am sure there was no nonsense of that sort about him. At last, almost as a relief, after his tedious drawn-out defence, the verdict and the sentence must have come; the old club acquaintance exalted and aloof, in his antic great wig and scarlet gown, a successful windbag, giving the reporters in particular his carefully

prepared phrases, blaming, condemning, pronouncing a sentence heavy and exemplary. Well, some of us have to muddle and lose our game, but why add insult to defeat? Seven years penal! And the rest of life, a few years of discredited, pauperised age. Thank you for nothing, my lord.

And then?

Did the stuff hurt? Did it seem as swift a poison as we suppose it to be or did time drag ? Were there some moments, some minutes even, while the capsule dissolved, minutes charged with fear whether it would act at all, and then perhaps a frightful pang, some numb horror or rending agony that none have ever lived to tell about?

Then the blow of the wall as he fell against it, if ever he knew he fell against the wall, and darkness.

5. YOUNG WOLVES IN BROMPTON

IF I had had any faltering of sympathy for my father in his destruction, Dickon's sturdier simpler faith would have sustained me. When I came to tell Dickon about it, he showed, so far as I can remember now, that he knew most of the story. Perhaps he had been put through it by schoolfellows; at any rate, all his judgments were prepared. "They made him a scapegoat," said Dickon. "They let him down." And, phrase reminiscent of rafts and pirates and all the fierce imaginations of a boy: "He got the long straw."

"They never touched his co-directors," said Dickon. "They were too high up and too near royalty. Lord Duncomby was in it. Two others. What were their names?... "But they took the stuff all right while it lasted.

Trust *them*," said Dickon.

That was what I, too, wanted to believe. Our father had been careless, indifferent, and they had caught him.

But he had only done what everybody did. "They don't catch *me*," said Dickon, gauging the realities of life.

Neither of us believed that he was essentially worse than the run of business men. We contemplated a brigand world.

In which after all he had made things that remained. All over London were great buildings he had promoted. He had altered the face of London — criminal though he was. He had been lavish with his architects, and his ideas about service flats and suchlike new methods of housing were far in advance of his times. Many of his failures have since become richly paying properties. And though he flourished in the worst period of English architecture he never put up anything absolutely detestable. I remember Dickon stopping me one day against the heavy but by no means ungainly masses of Cornwall Court.

"That's one of the Clissold offences, Billykins. They called him a scoundrel, but he gave them that. That's just one of his things. Catch a muff like Lord Duncomby doing anything as fresh as that!"

From the outset, because of our father's fate, we two saw the world lawless and adventurous. We were precocious in that. Children

believe that in heaven and on earth alike there is order; they do so naturally and of necessity, and most young people and many people through life retain this early assumption that there is justice and benevolence behind and sustaining the law, that laws and customs are really wise and good. This is an illusion, or at least an exaggeration; of great provisional value no doubt in restraining youthful excesses; but it was one that our peculiar circumstances forbade us to entertain. For if we agreed that the system in which we lived was a righteous one, what could our father be but a rogue? But if it was unrighteous and casual then he was merely ill-starred.

There was a strong suggestion of the predatory animal about both of us in those days after we had left Chislehurst and set up for ourselves in Brompton. We had a mean furnished bedroom with two narrow beds, a frayed carpet, a small wardrobe, and one wash-hand stand, and a sitting-room lit by a central gas-light; the accommodation was greatly restricted by the mute corpse of a black piano the landlady refused to take away; and there was insufficient table-room and shelf-room for our books and work. Our elbows were therefore a good deal in each other's ribs. We neither of us betrayed by any word we spoke how sick with longing we were at times for the space, the freedom, and self-confidence we had had at Mowbray, but we both knew what was in the other's mind and our expressed intentions towards the future compensated for our silence about the past. We would talk long and intimately at times, late at night perhaps when there was a noise outside to keep us awake, or on the way to the College, or of a Sunday when we walked in Kensington Gardens or explored the endlessness of London to the north and west, and then through intervals of days or even weeks we would have no rational conversation at all. We would fend each other off with silly nicknames and playful and nonsensical insults and go our own mental ways alone. For days together we would elaborate some fanciful joke — our standing dish about Mr. G. for example — or invent and embroider upon a saga about some odd imaginary personality.

We had an underworld, ten times more foolish than this world of appearance, which underworld we called the Roops. The Doops followed the events of the day and the fashions of the time after their

manner. The Boops had a Royal Jubilee; they had an Inventions Exhibition in which Mr. Heath Robinson would have felt at home; they held reviews of army and fleet; they worshipped curiously a god after their own image, a Mr. B. In the Boops we guyed much of our astonished chagrin at life and laughed it off. For we both had a cheated feeling about life as if something had been promised and snatched away from us.

Occasionally our excessive proximity got on our nerves. There were forces storming in us that made us want to be alone with ourselves for a time, made solitude an urgent need. Dickon would warn me of a brooding violence.

"Billykins," he would say, "your little face fatigues me. Take it right away before I buzz books at it. Lose it somewhere. Pawn it for a day or so where it will be safe from damage. See?"

"Why the hell don't you go out yourself?" I would retort, savage but preparing to depart. "Look at the rain!"

"You're insoluble — worse luck," said Dickon. "The door, my lad, is there."

As he was nearly two stone heavier than I in those days I could not banish him when the corresponding mood came upon me. I would then go with my work into the Education Library in the South Kensington Museum and there until the place closed at ten I would read and write by the glare of great spitting violet-flushing arc-lights of a type that have long since vanished from the earth. Then home to a malignant silence and bed. Or it might be, with the clouds lifting, to a tacit amnesty and talk into the small hours.

It added to the natural restlessness in Dickon's blood that he had still to find his calling in the world. In the meantime he was working, but working neither so hard nor so well as I, first at mineralogy and then at mining. "There's always something doing with mines," he said, but he never seemed convinced that that was his proper line of attack. He would have moments of pure rage against the social system that environed us, that seemed so lax and yet was so difficult and dangerous to assail. I remember him once in Holland Park. "How the devil are we to *get* at them?" he cried suddenly as though he had been stung. "How the devil?"

"Get at who?" said I, in the London idiom.

“In these houses. *Look* at them! Every one stands for thousands a year. And I can’t think of a dodge against them, not a dodge. Idiot and fool I am! — unfit to survive. Like silly fat sheep inside a wire fence they are, and I’m like some brainless wolf. Look at this outfit coming along! Perambulator, two nurses, and a Newfoundland dog. Large expensive toy elephant and a ball. Fine fleecy blanket. All for one ratty, beady-eyed kid!... You ugly little mite! Where does daddy get it? Where does daddy *get* it?”

I was shocked. In those days I had not a tithe of Dickon’s voracity. I did not want money then. I did not want money seriously until after I was married. I was under the spell of pure science then, submerged in it, and while Dickon’s work was almost perfunctory I studied with all my strength. I was working in the Physical Research Laboratory under C. V. Boys, then a very young man, pink-skinned and flaxen-haired to the eyelashes, clever-handed and delicate-minded, inspiringly ingenious, rapidly understanding. How many brilliant and delightful minds have gone and go to the making of science! Boys in those days was the worst lecturer I have ever heard, so bored, so devastatingly bored, so appalled by the hour of talk before him, but in the research laboratory he had amazing flashes, he threw out sparks that set one alight. I had been taken out of the ordinary class and allowed to do some special work under him upon mineral threads and particularly fibres of quartz, and it is difficult for me to exaggerate how much I owe to him. He developed and encouraged my innate enthusiasm for physical research. I began to dream of papers read before the Physical Society; of the Philosophical Transactions, of broadening explorations below the surface of matter. And my taste for such work reinforced my distaste for money-making.

After all what use had I for money? Given a laboratory and a lodging and a few pounds for a summer holiday, what else was there to desire? Nothing that I permitted to rise to the surface of open and confessed thought.

I tried to put my point of view to Dickon.

“You’re dreaming, Billy,” said Dickon. “You don’t know what you’re in for. You think you’ll give your life to science. They won’t let you. You’ve found your little corner at the college for a bit — but

nobody wants research, pure research, and so there's nobody to pay for it. Try it if you want to, for a bit. Until you need money or the college turns you out to make room for someone else. The world's a scramble and you'll have to come into it. Seeing what you are. Trust me."

6. QUARTZ THREADS AND SOCIALISM

THOUGHTS are parricides. Each phase abolishes and devours its parent phase. Thought is always trial and selection and discarding and forgetting. I can recall some of the things Dickon said in those old days, and some that I said, and they stand out like fragmentary ruins and seem to illuminate a little the past state of the areas immediately about them, but as for the detailed mass of that development it is gone, it is gone now as completely as the lie of the houses and frontages and ownership round about the Cathedral of St. Paul in London before the Great Fire.

We argued tremendously about Socialism and Individualism, but what I meant by Socialism and what he meant by Individualism are now, I perceive, things almost beyond recovery. I think my Socialism and my passion for scientific work were all mixed up together and that it was my sense of the scientific process that dominated the mixture. I doubt if my views have changed fundamentally in the intervening years, but I perceive that what I called Socialism then is no longer to be called Socialism. Socialism for me was certainly something quite different from those vague aspirations towards a land of Cockaigne professed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his party when they are out of office, and still less had it anything to do with the doctrines of Communism that have since swamped it. It was, indeed, little more than the application of the distinctively scientific spirit to human affairs in general. I wanted to be part, an honourable part, of this clean and orderly development of knowledge, strong, unhurrying, wonderful, that I found going on in the research laboratory, and from that point of departure it was easy to envisage the social struggle as an indecent and preposterous inconvenience and to want to extend the honourable openness, co-operation, and collectiveness of the world of science to human affairs in general. The social struggle impressed me even in those days as if I were required to .fight for my chemical balance in the laboratory and knock out my competitor before I could use whatever was left of the weights and instruments. It was an intolerable distraction of attention, a destruction of possibilities. I did not stop to consider how

it had arisen and whether, perhaps, it was not in some way necessary. Possibly even more necessary than the scientific process. I simply denounced it and demanded that it should be discontinued, that the private ownership of the means of research and economic exploitation should follow the private and secretive methods of the Alchemists to oblivion.

While I clung to the opportunities for pure research that, thanks very largely to Boys' good opinion of my work, I had had the luck to find, I was saying therefore, but only, so to speak, with the sides and back of my attention, "Get on to the Socialist State, the International Socialist State, social peace and world peace, and stop this tumultuous waste. Do in the search for food and comfort and security what we are doing in the search for knowledge." And as I was very much preoccupied then with the crucibles and cross-bows that were our chief weapons against the innate disposition of quartz to settle down into a compact geometrical form, and with the problem of how to fuse that refractory material to as fluid a state as possible and shoot it forth, as swiftly as possible, so as to draw it out into the finest possible threads before it cooled and set, I did not perhaps sufficiently consider the very much less congenial and very much more massive and refractory task I was proposing that other people, conceivably beside me and behind me, should undertake. I just wore a red tie once or twice, called myself a Socialist — chiefly to my private self — and argued at nights with Dickon.

Now Dickon's more resentful turn of mind made him direct his attention to just those things, the blunderings, the casualness, the inconsecutiveness and injustice of the world at large, that I was most disposed to ignore. He was then much more irritated by life, much more in life, more combative than I was. At that period of adolescence every year of age means a great difference of temper and will. He had penetrated further into the jungle. And, moreover, he was naturally more energetic and realist than I, more aware of foreground things and less concerned about distant ones.

"You're trying to live in Utopia," he would say.

"You're living in a dream and you'll awake with a bump."

Our difference exercised him; he felt the implicit criticism of himself. He would suddenly break into discourse — at the most

unexpected times. His words are all forgotten now, but I will try to give the sort of things he would say; he would be sitting on his bed, perhaps half undressed, marking his points with minatory waggings of the collar and tie he held in his hand.

You can't live in a world that isn't here, Billykins; that's what you don't grasp. That's what's the matter with you. This show is a scramble and it's going to be a scramble yet for centuries. You've got to look after yourself; you've got to look after the things that you care for, yourself. You may want to do the most disinterested things but you have to do them yourself — as your fad. Poor people aren't permitted to have fads. I'd be a Socialist just as you are if there *was* any Socialism. But it's only just been thought of; it hasn't begun to come. They call all this about municipal gas and water the coming tide of Socialism. Coming tide! It's just a few Fabians piddling under a locked door. The world's a world of private adventure yet for — far beyond our lives, Billykins. Take it or leave it, that's what it is. And as I want to live in this world and not in a world that isn't here, I'm Individualist. It isn't a matter of chance as you seem to think. It's a matter of necessity. I'm an Individualist and out for private enterprise — which means in plain English going through the pockets of some crowd one has corralled by dangling some commodity before them, or making some other looter disgorge. And then for freedom — and, if you like it, disinterested service — scientific research — or anything else — as the mood may take you.»

No, that is too clear and quintessential, too hard and definite and contemporary, but it has something very *close* to his spirit, and it is as near as I can get now to the discussions of those days. The reality of our talks was much more loose and inconsistent. We were trying things over; we were feeling our way. We used claptrap phrases because there was nothing else to use, we came home with remarkable discoveries that evaporated, we went back upon ourselves, we jammed in flat contradictions and lost our tempers. But what I have written has the clarified essence of it all.

And here something strikes me. Until I began to write this account of the ideas of my student time I had always assumed that I was still a Socialist and Dickon still an Individualist. But now I begin to think it over and try to write it down I find my Socialism is very little more

than an old railway label on a valise; it records an important journey, indeed, but hardly a scrap of present significance attaches to it. What I am writing here is, I realise, no longer Socialism.

Where is that liberal Socialism of the eighties and nineties now; that wide project to turn the expansive forces of the modern world towards organisation and construction? It has expanded to simple recognition and become incorporated in current thought, and it has evaporated altogether as a movement and a cult. It is not only that Socialism has become no more than a memory, a used label, in my own life; it has become no more than a memory in the world.

That journey has been made. It has gone — gone like Chartism, like Puritanism, like the naturalism of Rousseau or the civic virtue of Robespierre. And as I consider these things I wake up for the first time to the quality of the Socialism that remains. The movement did not realise the wider recognition of its broad ideas. It became sectarian with organisation, it gave way to impatient passion, it bore a narrow-souled, defective, and malignant child Communism, and that child has made away with it.

I am no more a Communist than I am a Catholic or a Conservative. It is not that I have left Socialism, but that Socialism has passed away from my world.

Socialist, Individualist; it is time we washed these old labels off our intellectual baggage. They are no longer of use to us, and they may easily send our wills and intentions astray.

7. SYSTEMS IN HISTORY

THE Socialism I knew and professed in my scientific days was a project for a more spacious and generous ordering of the world. But gradually that propaganda for a larger, less competitive, scrambling and wasteful way of satisfying the staple needs of mankind gave place to a vehement campaign against existing institutions and usages, lumped together for convenience of invective as the Capitalist System. I seemed to hear more and more of the evils of the Capitalist System at every Socialist gathering I attended, and less and less of anything desirable that could be imposed upon its disorders. Gradually there loomed upon my consciousness the legend of a tremendous book, which was to set all other Socialist writings, teachings, and preachments aside, a mighty book always, spoken of in those, days by its earnest young propagandists as *Das Kapital*, in which this Capitalist system was discovered and demonstrated upon as the source, the engine, the form of all the oppression and robbery and parasitism of man by man. A new sort of Socialist appeared, energetic, opinionated, and intolerably abusive, and the moral and intellectual decline of Socialism began. It ceased to be a creative movement, and it became an outlet of passionate expression for the inferiority complex of the disinherited. So it remains to this day.

It is so much easier to vilify than plan; it is so much easier to fix attention upon an injustice than a hope. All planning these new Socialists derided, and they succeeded not only in feeling themselves but in suggesting the feeling to others that "Utopian" was the word for something contemptible and unphilosophical. What need for planning? Had not the profound and stupendous Hegel, that master intellect, that supreme if slightly incoherent God of Human Thought, made it densely clear that the overthrow of the Thing-that-is was in itself the creative establishment of the Thing-that-it- is-not? And so all our young Socialists went about being tremendously scornful and heroic, no longer working for a worldwide organisation of peace and staple supplies, but simply for the Thing-that-the-Capitalist-System-was-not, whatever that might turn out to be.

These things came to me intermittently. I had little time for

Socialist discussion after I began to work with Boys, and I found these new views bored and repelled me rather than irritated me to the pitch of discussion. Now it is hard to recall even the substance, much less the method of various disputes. I remember making a bad impromptu speech at some meeting in Chelsea in which I defended Utopian Socialism and was derisively handled. But I do not think I was quick enough to realise in those days that the Proletariat and Bourgeoisie about which these new Socialists gabbled endlessly were absolutely indefinable classes, and still less to apprehend that this Capitalist System of theirs was a phantasmagorical delusion, a sort of Pepper's Ghost, thrown upon the face of reality.

Nowadays I do not succumb so easily to our human disposition to believe that where there is a name there is a thing, and I have learnt to look behind the logical surface of every argument and conviction. I find now in this retrospect that I can see round quite a number of corners that defeated me in those days. Mere everyday living is in itself a training against false classifications and the habit of accepting unanalysed terms. Which is one reason, I think, why we older people are more penetrating and less logical than our younger selves.

A recent chance encounter, when I was last in London, comes back into my mind, an illustration of all the qualities that make Communism a travesty of intelligent revolutionary theory. It was with a young man with a System to expound. If I had to argue a case against Communism now I should take all the possibilities of delusion that inhere in the one word "System" and rest my case on that.

This word "system" has done extraordinary mischiefs not merely with Socialism but in the whole field of political and social discussion. Its peculiar treachery is the insidiousness with which it imputes deliberate order to entirely unorganised things. A system is properly an organised relationship such as one finds in a system of pulleys or the metric system. But when the learned, confronted with some quite possibly planless, discrete assembly of facts, have sought to classify and arrange these in order to discuss them the more conveniently, these arrangements have also been called systems, whether the facts really responded or not, as in the case of the Linnaean system or the Copernican system. It was easy in the past,

when men were entirely possessed by the idea of a supreme designer, to pass from these systems of description to the idea that the things classified were themselves systematically arranged. Men, for example, spoke of the miraculous order of the solar system as though it was something as definitely arranged as a clock, and so hid from themselves the extreme casualness of the relation of the sun to the more or less persistent satellites, the planets, planetoids, comets, meteorites, and so forth that go with it, like midges round a wandering beast, as it drifts through the scintillating disorder of space. And with matters of social arrangement this imputation of purpose and order where there is naturally no order at all, is still extraordinarily mischievous.

I remember how in my schooldays the endlessly complex social muddling of mediaeval Europe, the swaying smash-up of the Roman Imperium, was dressed up for us as the Feudal System. We were taught to believe that there had existed a neat, universally respected pyramidal arrangement of Society, in which every one knew to the prettiest pitch of precision his level and his place and his dues and duties. The natural disposition of little scraps of floating wreckage to cluster about and adhere to larger lumps, the obvious phrases, flatteries and conventions of such vassalage, the customary humiliations of the abject and the ingenious devices of the mediaeval lawyers, were seized upon by the romantic imaginations of later historians and elaborated into a nicely balanced scheme. Hundreds of millions of perplexed, instinctive people lived and died while Feudalism floundered and changed through the centuries of its prevalence, and never had the remotest suspicion that some day earnest scholars would reveal how beautifully systematic were their lives. And to-day millions live and toil, suffer or prosper, and *only* by reading a very bad-tempered and unattractive special literature or by falling into some propagandist meeting do they get any explanation of what is meant by this Capitalist System under which they are supposed to be living.

Capitalism there is, no doubt; it is a complex of financial and economic events arising out of purblind attempts to organise the large-scale production rendered possible by modern knowledge and by the enlargement of the modern imagination. But it changes in its

general facies yearly, monthly, hourly; it is never quite the same thing twice nor here and there, and people who scold and blame the Capitalist System and organise a revolution to overthrow it and behave as though the millennium will necessarily ensue when it is exorcised are wasting their strength upon a Protean shadow. They are "seeing things" and fighting phantoms. There is no more a Capitalist System now than there was a Feudal System in the eleventh century. These are systems of description, far remoter from reality than the systems of Linnaeus or Ptolemy. There has never been any essential system in the general social and economic life of mankind. Some day men may make these things systematic, but the time is not yet. At present all these things are an immense driftage, with an endless multitude of counter-currents and minor eddies and a limitless variety of interactions. The most immediate task before Man in his great adventure, as I see it, is to make the system that is *not* yet here, to thrust and weld it upon this chaos of his economic methods and ideas, and subjugate it to his security and creative happiness.

I met a young man the other night at the studio of my nephew and godson, William Clissold, who helped me greatly to understand the working of this system obsession. "A regular intellectual stinker, he was," said William, who affects a remoteness from things of the mind. This young man, at once nervous, convulsive, and arrogant, fell in very illuminatingly with my present line of speculation. He was apparently incapable of thinking of human affairs except in systems. I could not make it plain to him that I believed there was no system at all in economic affairs; the idea was beyond his intelligence. His main obsession was what he called the Manorial System, a dressed-up revival on the economic side of the exploded Feudal System, and he seemed to regard it as the clue to all existing social and economic relationships, and was honestly shocked when I professed never to have heard of it.

He was a discordant person even to the eye; he was rubricated at the tips of all his features, he wore rimless spectacles, and his hair was black, wiry, and discursive. His manner had a kind of fierceness, his voice, which seemed to have corncrake blood, was permanently raised, and his occasional laugh was like the wheels of a heavily laden cart. How he generalised! There is nothing so invigorating as a

good generalisation, but it ought to go through its facts and marshal them; it ought not to fly over their heads and expect them to follow. He floated over the confused procession of occurrences' as irresponsibly confident as the spirit of creation once floated over chaos. He did it with such assurance that he did not even know he was floating.

"Oh, you *ought* to know about the Manorial System," he said. "It explains so much."

He expounded it a little. He opened a picture of the Middle Ages as bright and clear as an illuminated missal. There was this Manorial System of his all over the country, with wonderful bailiffs and reeves and the court leet, particularly the court leet. The land in his clear, gay vision of those vanished times was cut up into nice little manors and rather larger little baronies, all dovetailed together, all, it seemed, with vivid, quaint coats-of-arms upon them, and to balance and complete them a Guild System in the towns, sweet and subtle and humane. And happiness and homely justice and art — remarkable art. And the Church kind and grave in an attitude of benediction. And in the sky the stars and all the Sons of God purring together.

I hardly liked to press him to tell me how it was this dear Fairyland of his had collapsed into the evils of our own times. No doubt the Reformation was much to blame for it, but the discovery of America upset things; the Turks and Mongols were stupidly rough with the warriors of Christendom, and the Black Death took the meanest advantage of the merrie sanitation of the Manorial System.

Fairyland it was, a Scholar's Fairyland, secure and aloof from that dark wilderness which is history. For think of what those days were in reality, the life in fortresses and castles, the towns like criminal slums, the houses crowded together and locked and barred and fortified against each other, bodies unwashed and clad in coarse and dirty woollens as the finest wear, brutish communes here and reigns of terror there, gangs in possession, monasteries and nunneries illiterate and remote, sheer naked savagery in many districts, and mud-tracks through the unkempt roads between the towns, not a road except for some Roman highway in decay, not a bridge except by way of atonement from some powerful dying sinner, fierce dogs upon the countryside, hogs and stench in the streets of the cities,

pestilence endemic. And endless breeding of children there was, to fester and die for the most part before ever they grew to youth's estate. Here and there would be a region where some accident of natural kindliness gave life a little space of April sunshine; here and there perhaps one might find a tolerant equilibrium of lazy lassitude, some lord or abbot in tidy or genial mood. A little space at most and a transitory phase it was in the ugly succession of cramped, distressful lives. And this fellow, blind as a bat to facts that scream aloud at us from every thick-walled, windowless, mediaeval ruin, from every museum with its instruments of torture and its girdles of chastity, from the stunted suits of armour in the old armouries, and from the flaws and indecisions in the fabric of the patched, unfinished cathedrals that were the chief achievement of that age, talked of his Manors and Guilds and seemed to think a kind of Paradise might be restored by setting back the clocks of history.

I questioned him, but I argued very little with him. I went away to think him over in a mood of wonder.

Wonder ! Yet perhaps not altogether wonderful. A student of physics or biology turns his back on the world at large and goes towards a more concentrated reality — in the chemical balance, the laboratory, the marine station. He must travel and explore. He must. serve facts sublimated and released, facts that will blow him to pieces or corrode him to death at the least levity on his part. But a student of history or economics turns his back on his reality when he turns his back on the world at large; he goes into a cave of the winds in which documents whirl about before imaginative gales. In that cave confident statements are stronger than facts. He may lie, misjudge, and blunder; nothing will hoist him sky-high or eat his flesh out or stain him purple for evermore. All the circumstances of a scholar's life conspire to turn the mind inward away from the dusty bickering of the common life. For him history is not, as it should be, an extension of reality; it is a refuge.

Perhaps there is something innate that in the first place disposes a man to become a University teacher or specialist. He is, I suspect, more often than not by nature and instinctively afraid of the insecure uproar of things. Visit him in college and you will see that he does not so much live there as lurk. He must find infinite assurance,

infinite compensation for the threatening indignities of life, in the development of his lucid counter-world, so much simpler, so much clearer, so entirely logical. Once he has secured his cell he encounters little opposition; he may bid good-bye to his worst timidities, and set to work secreting his soul's protection. To deny a fact in that withdrawn and protected atmosphere becomes more and more like defeating it, and to impose a system on the confusion almost as good as conquering it. In his classrooms, his lectures, his written controversies, the theorising recluse can soon grow fierce and contemptuous enough; he can at last down and out with his facts that are so intractable in practice, to his own complete satisfaction.

And to live in agreement with a theory for any length of time is like what the Americans call a common-law marriage; you and it are wedded by habit and repute. A man wedded to a system is less and less able to apprehend contradictory realities. He becomes like the dogs and pigs people here in the South of France specialise to hunt truffles; he can at last discover his system at the merest hint of evidence, and all that does not countenance it ceases to interest him, ceases to exist for him; he thrusts past it heedlessly, scornfully.

8. PSYCHO-ANALYSIS OF KARL MARX

AND now I can come to the maggot, so to speak, at the core of my decayed Socialism — Karl Marx.

To him we can trace, as much as we can trace it to any single person, this almost universal persuasion, which now Socialist and non-Socialist share, that economically we are living in a definable Capitalist System, which had a specific beginning and may have a definite end, and that the current disorder of human affairs is not a phase but an organised disease that may be exorcised and driven off. Then after a phase of convalescence the millennium. For me he presents the source and beginning of one of the vastest and most dangerous misconceptions, one of the most shallow and disastrous simplifications, that the world has ever suffered from. His teaching was saturated with a peculiarly infectious class animosity. He it was who poisoned and embittered Socialism, so that to-day it is dispersed and lost and must be reassembled and rephrased and reconstructed again slowly and laboriously while the years and the world run by. He it was who was most responsible for the ugly ungraciousness of all current Socialist discussion.

I have always been curious about Marx, the Marx of the prophetic London days, and always a little baffled by the details that have been presented to me. He seems to have led a blameless, irritated, theorising life, very much as Lenin did before he returned to Russia in 1917, remote from mines, factories, railway-yards, and industrialism generally. It was not a very active nor a very laborious life he led; a certain coming and going from organisations and movements abroad in France and Germany must have been its most exciting element. He went to read and work with some regularity in the British Museum Reading-Room, a place that always suggests the interior of a gasometer to me, and he held Sunday gatherings in his Hampstead home and belonged to a club in Soho. He had little earning power, a thing not unusual with economic and financial experts, and he seems to have kept going partly by ill-paid journalism but mainly through the subsidies of his disciple Engels, a Manchester calico merchant. There was a devoted wife and some

daughters, but I know very little about them; one married unhappily, a tragedy that might happen to any daughter; of her one hears disproportionately.

He suffered from his liver, and I suspect him of being generally under- exercised and perhaps rather excessively a smoker. That was the way with many of these heavily bearded Victorians from abroad. He grew an immense rabbinical beard in an age of magnificent beard-growing. It must have precluded exercise as much as a goitre. Over it his eyes look out of his portraits with a sort of uneasy pretension. Under it, I suppose, there appeared the skirts of a frock-coat and trousers and elastic-sided boots. He was touchy, they say, on questions of personal loyalty and priority, often more a symptom of the sedentary life than a defect of character, and the "finished" part of his big work on Capital is over-laboured and rewritten and made difficult by excessive rehandling and sitting over. Examined closely, many of his generalisations are found to be undercut, but these afterthoughts do not extend to Marxism generally.

He tended rather to follow the dialectic of Hegel than to think freely. There had been much mental struggle about Hegelianism in his student days, much emotional correspondence about it, a resistance, and a conversion. He competed with Proudhon in applying the new intellectual tricks to the new ideas of Socialism. He belonged in his schoolboy days to that insubordinate type which prefers revolution to promotion. He was, I believe, sincerely distressed by the injustices of human life, and also he was bitten in his later years by an ambition to parallel the immense effect of Charles Darwin. One or two of his disciples compare him with Darwin; Engels did so at his graveside; the association seems to have been familiar with his coterie before his death. And after three decades of comparative obscurity his name and his leading ideas do seem to have struggled at last — for a time — to an even greater prominence than the work of the modest and patient revolutionary of Down. But though his work professed to be a research, it was much more of an invention. He had not Darwin's gift for contact with reality.

He was already committed to Communism before he began the labours that were to establish it, and from the first questions of policy

obscured the flow of his science. What did his work amount to? He imposed this delusion of a System with a beginning, a middle, and an end upon our perplexing economic tumult; he classified society into classes that leave nearly everybody unclassified; he proclaimed his social jehad, the class war, to a small but growing audience, and he passed with dignity into Highgate Cemetery, his death making but a momentary truce in the uncivil disputations of his disciples. His doctrines have been enormously discussed, but, so far as I know, the methods of psycho-analysis have not yet been applied to them. Very interesting results might be obtained if this were properly done.

He detected in the economic affairs of his time a prevalent change of scale in businesses and production which I shall have to discuss later. He extended this change of scale to all economic affairs, an extension which is by no means justifiable. He taught that there was a sort of gravitation of what he called Capital, so that it would concentrate into fewer and fewer hands and that the bulk of humanity would be progressively expropriated. He did not distinguish clearly between concrete possessions in use and money and the claim of the creditor, nor did he allow for the influence of inventions and new methods in straining economic combinations, in altering their range and breaking them up, nor realise the possibility of a limit being set to expropriation by the conditions of efficiency. That a change of scale may have definite limits and that the concentration of ownership may reach a phase of adjustment he never took into consideration. He perceived that big business methods extended very readily to the Press and Parliamentary activities. He simplified the psychology of the immense variety of people, from master-engineers to stock-jobbers and company-promoters whom he lumped together as Capitalists, by supposing it to be purely acquisitive. He made his "Capitalists" all of one sort and his "Workers" all of one sort. Throughout he imposed a bilateral arrangement on a multifarious variety. He simplified the whole spectacle into a process of suction and concentration by the "Capitalist." This process would go on until competition gave place to a "Capitalist-Monopolist" state, with the rest of humanity either the tools, parasites, and infatuated victims of the Capitalists, or else intermittently employed "Workers" in a mood of growing realisation, resentment, and solidarity. He seems to have

assumed that the rule of these ever more perilously concentrated Capitalists would necessarily be bad, and that the souls of the Workers would necessarily be chastened and purified by economic depletion. And so onward to the social revolution.

This forced assumption of the necessary wrongness and badness of masters, organisers, and owners, and its concurrent disposition to idealise the workers, was, I am disposed to think, a natural outcome of his limited, too sedentary, bookish life. It was almost as much a consequence of that life as his trouble with his liver. His work is pervaded by the instinctive resentment of the shy type against the large, free, influential individual life. One finds, too, in him that scholar's hate of irreducible complexity to which I have already called attention. In addition there was a driving impatience to conceive of the whole as a process leading to a crisis, to a denouement satisfying to the half-conscious and subconscious cravings of the thinker. It was under the pressure of these resentments and impatiences — and with the assistance of the Hegelian doctrine which tells us that the Thing- that-is is always shattered at last to make way for a higher synthesis by the Thing-that-it-isn't — that Marxism evolved its prophecy of the ultimate and not very remote victory of the idealised worker. The Proletarian would solidaritate (my word), and arrive *en masse*, he would crystallise out as Master, and all things would be changed at his coming. He would put down the mighty from their seats and exalt the humble and meek. He would fill the hungry with good things and the rich he would send empty away. The petty bourgeoisie he would smack hard and good. And every one who mattered to the resentful gentleman who was making the story would be happy for ever afterwards.

It was a wish solidifying into a conviction that gave the world this wonderful and dramatic forecast of the dispossessed Proletarian becoming class-conscious, merging the residue of his dwarfed and starved individuality in solidarity with his kind, seizing arms, revolting massively, setting up that mystery, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, "taking over" the "Capitalist-Monopolist state" and, after a phase of accommodation, dissolving it away into a confused democratic Communism, the Millennium. It is a dream story of

things that are not happening and that are not likely to happen, but it is a very satisfying story for the soul of an intelligent and sensitive man indignant at the distresses of life and living unappreciated in a byway.

It is for the pyscho-analyst to lay bare the subtler processes in the evolution of this dream of a Proletarian saviour. Everybody nowadays knows that giant, in May-day cartoons and Communist pamphlets and wherever romantic Communism expresses itself by pictures, presenting indeed no known sort of worker, but betraying very clearly in its vast biceps, its colossal proportions, its small head and the hammer of Thor in its mighty grip, the suppressed cravings of the restricted Intellectual for an immense virility. This Proletarian is to arise and his enemies — and particularly an educated world very negligent of its prophet — are to be scattered. There will then be a rough unpleasant time for the petty bourgeoisie. Things of the severest sort will happen to them. After the upper, they will get the nether millstone grinding into them....

The respectable leaders of British Victorian Trade Unionism upon whom Marx sought to foist this monster as their very spit and likeness, seem to have been considerably dismayed by it. They felt so much more like the petty bourgeoisie.

One need only run over the outstanding names of the movement to realise how little the working man has had to do with the invention of this fantastic Titan or, indeed, with the development of Socialistic ideas at all. Trade Union and Labour leaders by the dozen and the score have called themselves Socialists and Communists in recent years, just as they have called themselves Rationalists or Eugenists or Single-Taxers, but none of them have laid hands of power upon the central edifice of theory. That, on both its constructive and destructive side, has been the work either of prosperous men bored by social disorder and waste, or of irritated University students and scholars. Saint Simon was a benevolent aristocrat, Robert Owen a capable employer, William Thompson an Irish landowner, William Morris and Ruskin belonged to the wealthy middle-class, Engels sold Manchester goods in Germany with reasonable success, and Marx, our Marx of the relentless class-war, Marx, in the ecstatic language of his biographer Loria, “arose in a refined and aristocratic

entourage," came from "an extremely ancient stock devoted to' the accumulation of wealth" and was "united by marriage to the race of German feudatories, fierce paladins of the throne and the altar." Beer, in his history of British Socialism, says Frau Marx was "related to the Argyles" — related to the Argyles! it is near divinity! — and speaks of Marx as a "proud mental aristocrat." The intense hatred and contempt expressed in Communist literature for the *petite bourgeoisie* is a further symptom of the element of down-at-heel aristocracy in a state of bruised self-conceit inspiring the movement. The stock Communist insult is to imply that an adversary isn't a born gentleman. I doubt if the theory of democratic Socialism owes nearly as much to real working men as the sciences do, as geology, archaeology, and physics, for example, do. It is a product not of the worker under oppression but of unprosperous expectant types irritated by exclusion and disregard.

In a tract by Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, written upon the eve of the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917, I find the same smouldering resentment against all prosperous or educated people reflecting the economic argument, I find the same resort to the Armed Worker as the humiliator of negligent authority. Lenin discusses with evident distaste the probability that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat may need the services of educated people other than its own prophets. He writes of them with a sneer of the pen, so to speak, as "these intellectual gentry," and dwells with satisfaction upon the fact that they will be at any rate "controlled by armed workers."

Consider the values of that phrase.

A little while after this tract was written Lenin was dictator in the Kremlin and the "intellectual gentry" of Russia, the men of science and art and literature, were at his mercy. They might have starved altogether in those troublous times if Maxim Gorky, the novelist, who had a certain personal prestige with Lenin and a strong sense of the value of things intellectual, had not intervened. There was an attempt to organise their protection and maintenance, and when I was in Petersburg in 1920 I visited an old palace — the "House of Science" they had re-christened it — looking out upon the grey-flowing Neva, to which a number of "these intellectual gentry" had

been shepherded. Control of the world of the mind by armed workers did not seem to be a very successful experiment. These men — and some of them had been very important figures in Russia's intellectual and creative life — were manifestly living in great misery and most of them were doing little or nothing. They were ill-fed, scantily and shabbily clothed, detestably watched, and with neither the books, papers, nor apparatus needed for their work. Poor Glazounov the composer was there, very wretched, the shadow of his former self, cold and ill; he could do nothing with his time because the Armed Workers would not hunt him out any music paper. He played some of his music to me on an old piano and talked of the days that had passed, and he wept. The chief Armed Worker directing the House of Science was a Mr. Rode, who before the revolution had kept an ultra-smart restaurant on one of the islands, a resort of gay parties during the white nights of the Northern summer. He had adapted himself to a Communist regime and he had a considerable control of the dietary and general comfort of the interned "intellectual gentry." Distinguished archaeologists, physiologists, chemists and historians, great mathematicians and brilliant teachers were in his power and fed from his hand. Maxim Gorky also was looking after the place with the breadth of intention and the practical incapacity of a genius and a Slav.

The social breakdown that has occurred in Russia is claimed by the Marxists as their prophet's social revolution. This they do in spite of the fact that he had pointed to England and the highly industrialised countries of the West as the lands of revolutionary promise. In truth the Russian collapse was like nothing Marx had ever dreamt of. The Russian peasant soldiers, having been robbed, starved, massacred, and misled by the Czar and his ministers — six or seven of these poor devils had to be killed in battle for everyone Austrian or German — reached the limit of their endurance when they found that the Kerensky revolution gave them no respite from the torture of the war. Two millions of them had been killed and mutilated. They had had enough and they would stand no more. They turned homeward to their villages. Once they had started nothing could hold them. The Russian armies melted away from before the Germans and Austrians and streamed home across the land. F or a

time Russia was in a state of social dissolution such as this Western world has not seen since the Thirty Years' War; straggling bands of armed men did what they liked with the country through which they passed; robbery, rape, and murder went free and unavenged. In many provinces there was a Jacquerie, a château-burning. At times in bad places that Jacquerie rose to an extremity of horror. Yet there was a kind of crazy justice in it.

That was the true Russian Revolution, a social debacle, a destruction of Czarism by its own weapon, the deliquescence of the army.

Amidst the tumult of the disorganised towns there emerged the Russian Communist Party, the only association of men with any solidarity left in that frightful confusion. They were not workers, they were not proletarians — in Russia there was practically no Proletariat — they were a small body of Intellectuals with a following of youthful workers and students, greatly helped by sailors from the fleet. They grasped at power, they secured machine-guns, they organised forces of their own, including a band of Chinese, they shot, disarmed and restored a kind of order in the towns and as far as the railways reached in the country. "They had to shoot," President Masaryk told me on one occasion. "But they went on shooting."

They went on shooting. They were men of no experience; many were mere boys; they had fallen into irresponsible power and they had tasted blood. They had an orgy of blood-lust sharpened by fear. Then they set about the reorganisation of Russia upon Communist lines, declaring that the word of the prophet was fulfilled and the Capitalist System at an end.

They have held Russia ever since. They have held it because the Whites are worse than they are and because they fend off foreign interference and the return of the detested landlordism from the peasants. But there seems to be some uncertainty even in the party about the depth and quality of the resultant higher synthesis. There is a hitch in the Hegelian sequence: no system has appeared. There is no Communist system; it is a negation, a project-shaped vacuum.

Since I do not believe there is or ever has been a Capitalist System, I cannot get very excited about its alleged overthrow in Russia or anywhere. But I do find myself very deeply stirred when I

think of the enormous wastage of good human hope and effort that has resulted from this falsely simple statement of our economic perplexities, this caricature of contemporary human life, as a simple antagonism of two systems that never have existed and never could exist.

I have been twice to Russia since the Revolution, and I was there several times before it. I should find it difficult to give a short general judgment upon the new ensemble there. With all the judgments I have encountered, from the violently adverse to the enthusiastically favourable, I :find myself in disagreement. The peasant has got rid of his landlord, and if he is shot more frequently he is whipped much less; the hysterics of the Czar and his wife have given place to hysterical experiments; instead of Rasputin's practical interpretations of Christianity one finds Zinovieff's practical interpretations of Marx; education is more general, but, if possible, less efficient; the railways are more awful than ever, and if there is more cruelty, filth, and disorder in the prisons there is less misery on the road to Siberia. If, as is highly probable, the Bolsheviki have killed more people than there are members of the Communist Party, we must set against that the far more monstrous war waste of the Czardom. If Zinovieff gets his way, the shadow of a giant war of the steppes against Western Europe may materialise, but many things may happen before Zinovieff gets his way.

I will not attempt to weigh the outcome of the Russian Revolution in the scales of my partial knowledge and possible prejudice — I had some irritating times in Moscow with the younger Bolsheviks and I dislike the type actively. The present "system" there, as I have been able to judge it, is just the same old Russian "system," with many of the parts missing, many of the wheels failing to cog, and many of its former patched-up compromises dislocated. In the old days my businesses could get along In a fashion at the price of a considerable amount of bribery; now they cannot get along at all; that is the most evident difference to me. Old traditions still make Russian officials hold one up, but the uncertainties of the new regime make them afraid to do a fair and reasonable blackmailing deal. One is just held up to no purpose. This is naturally irritating to a man who, like myself, has kept a certain pride in his work, and has always been a

very temperate taker of profits.

The Communist formulae obstruct everything and have released nothing. I have been to Russia twice to get some little of the metallurgical wealth of the country out of the mess into which the Bolsheviks have dropped it; our aluminium works are still in a salvageable state at Dornoff, the only region of the world where there are deposits suitable for the new Manson process — and if only they would do the work properly I would gladly put the Bolsheviks in complete possession rather than have all these carefully adjusted arrangements going to waste. But each time I have been treated with a stupid suspicion, kept waiting about for weeks, watched and followed, my rooms searched in my absence, and in the end I have been thwarted — for the mere sake of thwarting me. I was quite willing to tell them all I knew about the particular matters that concerned me, put all my cards upon the table; for I want cheap aluminium and light alloys in the world as badly as they want Communism. Why should they assume they are more disinterested than I? The impudence of it!

But their theory required me to be a subtle and treacherous representative of the Capitalist System, a thievish moneylender and entangler of simple, brave, good workers, and themselves, raw, young, and self-ignorant, the guardian angels of mankind. They had no shadow of doubt about these moral values. Their ambition was to lay me by the heels on a charge of "economic espionage." They had their dirty prison and they had me, and they felt an opportunity was being lost. The career of a good Communist depends upon conspicuous displays of zeal. Were they showing *zeal*? They would not listen to what I tried to tell them; that was obviously only a blind. One fool said my science was "capitalist science" as opposed to "proletarian science" — in metallurgical chemistry! I battered myself against that sort of thing in vain.

What can one do with men who are inexorably convinced, in spite of every material fact about them, that they have, germinating under their hands, a new and perfect social system, the Communist system, which they are defending from the subtle treacheries of a wicked Capitalist System; and whose entire intellectual outfit is unsleeping suspicion and a stock of ready-made nicknames by which they can

misconceive everybody?

There is no way round these fixed ideas. You are put on this or that side of an opposition between entirely imaginary systems; and in whatever direction you thrust the end is futility. So there is our stuff in Russia untouched and badly wanted, and our works are going to decay — beautifully planned works they are, though I say it who shouldn't — doing no good to Russia or any human being.

And this is mainly if not entirely an intellectual trouble, a trouble of wrong statement, just as most of the great religious wars of the past were mainly wars of wrong statement. The world splits between Europe and the East and the limitation and misery of hundreds of millions of lives is the by-product of an incoherent argument about the interpretation of social interactions. An imperfectly aerated old gentleman sits in the British Museum, suffering from a surfeit of notes, becomes impatient to set a generalisation in control of his facts, and presently we have this harvest of tares. It is Arius and Athanasius and the camel driver of Mecca I think of in his case, rather than Darwin.

9. REINCARNATION OF SOCIALISM

SOCIALISM which was creative is stunned, and Communism which is the sabotage of civilisation by the disappointed, has usurped Its name and inheritance. I have accused Marx as the prime mover in the destruction of Socialism. But the teaching of Marx would not have found impassioned and fanatical followers, if there had not been something deep and widespread in the human make-up to answer its appeal. This response came, I believe, from the natural hate of men deeply conscious of their own merits and conscious also of social disadvantages for those whom Fate seems to have treated better. It is a response easy to evoke in all too many people in a world so chancey as ours. Malice is a necessary quality in an animal which has changed so swiftly from solitude to an exasperated gregariousness as man has done. The new Marxist Socialism, therefore, with its confident dogmas, its finality and hardness, its vindictive will, developed an intensity and energy that drowned and almost silenced the broader, more tentative, and scientific *initiatives* of the older, the legitimate Socialism. Communism, with *its* class-war obsession, ate up Socialism as Catholicism, with *its* facile consolations and definitive creeds, the Church militant here on earth, ate up Christianity. Communism may live as long as Islam; which is most like it of all other human things, as rigid and as intense. It may endure long after the Moscow caliphs have passed away, establishing a second system of fanatical resistances to the comprehensive organisation of the world upon modern lines.

But the constructive conceptions that inspired the earlier Socialism will not disappear with the fading-out of Socialism from general discussion. They arise too easily in the natural development of economic and social life. They may change their phraseology; they may cease to be expressed in the old terms and under the old name, but they will live. It may have been necessary that Socialism should die in some such fashion in order to be born again, revised, refreshed. There were extraordinary gaps and imperfections, I realise, in the liberal Socialism of my student days. The broad ideas of it, the ideas of a collective organisation of the basal needs of mankind, of a

systematic economy of the energy that goes now to waste in competition for mere existence, the idea of a complete abolition of forestalling, of obstruction for gain and indeed of every sort of profiteering, these primary Socialist ideas are more living now than ever they were. They have infected the whole body of modern thought.

But among other obvious deficiencies, that nineteenth century Socialism was almost wilfully blind to the necessity for a scientific monetary method, a proper reckoning of obligations and claims proof against manipulation, if any just and efficient system of production was to work. Owen, indeed, thought of that essential — Dickon has shown me recently a collection of Owen's experimental "labour notes" — but his smaller followers in their little wisdom dropped the question. If anyone mentioned money in a Fabian Society meeting in my Socialist time there would be a kind of general hoot: "0 Lord! Here's a Currency Crank!" Saying "Currency Crunk" in a Fabian Society meeting was almost as deadly as saying "Boorjaw!" in a modern Communist gathering. I have seen Sidney Webb, our London Lenin, flushed, flustered, and irritated, waving all that sort of thing aside. Bitter scorn, an earnest scorn. Let us get on to sensible things. Morris to judge by his *News from Nowhere* would have done without money; his other contemporaries, it seems, thought that any old money would do. But science is measurement, and money as we have it at present is about as good for the measurement of social obligation as an earthworm for the measurement of length.

Equally vague, evasive, and useless was the political attitude of that old Socialism. The Socialists were proposing to "nationalise" the means of production and distribution, but when one asked who or what was to be the operating "nation," they had nothing to suggest. Again came flushed impatience and a hasty waving of the disturbing question away. Socialism, they recited, was an economic not a political reform, which of course explained everything. It seems incredible, but they seem to have believed that economic justice and administrative efficiency were compatible with any sort of political rottenness, division, and absurdity. Never mind about that; the wise little officials would see anything through. You see while Marxian Socialism was invented by discontented professors, Fabian Socialism

was largely the product of hopeful Civil Servants. The psychoanalysis of Fabianism is as destructive to its scientific pretension as the psycho-analysis of Marxism. The only difference is that it reveals a brighter type of soul.

These Socialists of my student days were entirely vague about international relationships. It was uncomfortable for those Civil Servants who did its thinking to imagine a world with quite a different sort of Civil Service altogether. So they did not imagine it. And though they could contemplate the expropriation of most people they had an habitual respect for the possible resentment of rulers and politicians and the governing class generally. None of these nineteenth-century Socialists I heard and read were clear whether they were nationalist or imperialist or international, or what they were. They shivered at the word Cosmopolitan and sneered at the phrase World-State. They did not even know whether they were Protectionists or Free Traders; and to this day they do not know. You will find a Labour paper like the *Daily Herald* scolding vigorously at the private ownership of land and minerals in one column and insisting in the next upon the "right" of some little barbaric nationality to hold its territories and its natural resources, however vast they may happen to be, against the needs of all mankind. It would wrench the northern coalfield from the Duke of Northumberland and leave all the minerals of the Riff to Abd-el-Krim.

The petty industry in research of these Fabians affected to be prodigious, but in general inquiry their inertias were astounding. They were all for municipalising and nationalising, and yet they would never consider with any patience or care the constitution, the methods of election, the areas of control of the municipalities and parliamentary governments to which with the utmost recklessness they proposed to entrust the land, the natural resources, the public services of the community. So long as it was an elected body and not an assembly of private persons they did not seem to care. The community was just to elect somebody, somehow, anyhow, and the clever little official would tell that somebody what to do. Gross energetic men, it seems, were to wait and plan and spend and fight vehemently for power — and then, whichever of them won it, would

hand it over meekly and trustfully to the wise, good, quiet "experts" waiting in their bureaus.

Socialism took over a prevailing belief of the time when it took over the belief in the necessity for elected bodies. There was no need to take over that belief, and had the movement been a really full thinking movement it would not have done so. But in the nineteenth century A.D. it was believed as firmly that it was necessary to have some sort of election, any sort of election, however preposterously conducted, before the affairs of the community could be administered, as it was believed to be necessary to have some sort of blood sacrifice before seed-time in the nineteenth century B.C. It was the current superstition. It fades. When. creative ideas emerge again into a definite system of proposals, I believe we shall find them completely detached from this delusion that they can be realised only by, through, or with the consent of elected persons. There will be no further research for majorities. Realisation of a new stage of civilised society will be the work of an intelligent minority; it will be effected without the support of the crowd and possibly in spite of its dissent.

I am now, more than ever I was, a revolutionary. Every year of my life makes me more certainly revolutionary. I believe that before the muddled and very insecure process of the world's affairs now current can be changed into a stronger, broader, happier, progressive organisation, many habitual resistances will have to be overcome and many legally established institutions which will refuse to undergo the modifications and subordinations necessary to adapt them to a scientifically conceived world civilisation will have to be cleared away. The legal standing of such old, obstructive, entrenched rights will have to be changed by imposing — in a manner essentially illegal — a different legal standing upon them. No human legal system has ever voluntarily abolished itself in favour of another. Fundamental changes of political and social method must be effected by pressures exercised by the sort of people who have a will for the better order. There is no way round such a necessity that I can see. This may not mean actual violence, but there will be at least the intimation of superior strength. If that sort of thing is not revolution, then I do not know what revolution is.

I believe that ultimately man, collective man, has to suppress the

sovereign independence of any part of the world as against the whole. He cannot get on very much beyond our present sort of civilisation until he has contrived a world currency, a world control of staple production, a world peace — and, in fact, a world state. He has to regard prescription and proprietary claims as entirely secondary and provisional arrangements in dealing with the land, with the natural resources and the material organisation of the earth. No quibbling can make dispossessions and redistributions of ownership and sovereignty, in the face of protest, legal acts; and no evolutionary process that does not involve death and birth, putting an end to old things and beginning again with new things, can ever bring about the new world implicit in science and in manifested human possibilities.

But when I think of revolution I have in mind something quite different from the idea of a Revolutionary that has dominated the human imagination since those violent days in Paris a hundred and thirty odd years ago. I have no use for that Revolutionary of the Communist placard type, that pithecoid Proletarian, dishevelled, semi-nude, making heroic motions with improvised weapons behind a casually assembled barricade of beams, paving-stones, overturned carts, pots, pans, railings. I look, indeed, for something antagonistic to that. I look to the growth of a minority of intelligent men and women for the real revolution before mankind. I look for a ripening elite of mature and educated minds, and I do not believe progress can be anything more than casual and insecure until that elite has become self-conscious and effective. I do not look to the mass of people for any help at all. I am thinking of an aristocratic and not a democratic revolution.

Except as scavenging or fertilising floods, I do not believe in democratic revolutions. I believe the multitude, when it is suitably roused, can upset anything, but I do not believe that it can create anything whatever.

I quite understand the dismay that comes upon every impatient world-mender when he seeks creative forces among the prosperous people of to-day. Most of them are prosperous by reason of some flaw or direct iniquity of the economic muddle, and they are vaguely aware of that; they do not want any examination of the complex of

disarrangements that gives them the advantages of their property; as a class they are prepared to defend the stacked-up instabilities they call the "existing system" very stoutly. But there are exceptions to the conservatism of the prosperous. Many of these exceptions are personally or vicariously curious and spend their resources upon research; many, like myself, are bored to death by the poor mean pleasures, displays, and gratifications our prosperity can buy, and many have a really disinterested creative impulse. It is to the increase in number of these exceptional types and to the spread of an inquiring and adventurous spirit in this class that I look for the continuation, acceleration, and extension of social and economic progress towards a new and finer world order. If the class-war idea is sound and liberated people are necessarily less socially disposed than frustrated and limited people, then manifestly there is no hope for mankind.

No doubt our present social complex is still heavily loaded down by an accumulation of dull and heavy creditors, parasitic, greedy speculators, and unproductive spenders generally, but social life has always had to carry such a burden of selfish and obstructive prosperity since social life began. Relatively I do not think there is more of that burden now than there was two hundred years ago. I think there is less of it. And it has less pride and assurance. Read any eighteenth-century novel and mark the amelioration of social attitudes. There is no reason why we should go running off in a passion to fields, slums, workshops, mines, railway-yards, docks, the forecastles of ships, gaols, and institutions for the reorganisers of society, because the imaginations of the fortunate classes are still largely unstimulated by creative ideas that are hardly a century old. It is true that the lives of the majority of mankind to-day are insecure, anxious, limited, laborious, stunted, unfruitful, and generally unhappy, and that they will remain so until economic order is attained. But because masses of toilers and needy people are thoroughly uncomfortable it does not follow that they are capable of the subtle and intricate adjustments needed to make themselves and mankind free and happy. It does not follow even that they are capable of recognising those who are attempting to make them free. They are very properly disposed to discontent, and many of their

livelier minds find the idea of a class-war attractive, but I doubt if their conception of that class-war is anything but vindictive. It is not a better order they want but witness the Communist hatred of the petty bourgeoisie, malicious reprisals against the slightly more prosperous class immediately and therefore most irritatingly in contact with them. The most dreadful thing about their situation is their evident inability to imagine any better order. They do not want a change; they want an inversion without a change. They have grown up in a coarse and ugly way of living, and their first impulse, so soon as they realise the coarseness and disagreeableness that has been put upon them, is to extend it to everybody. "See how *you* like it!" They want that far more than they want a new way of living. They know instinctively that a new way of living would be unpleasantly discordant with their established habits.

One may sympathise with that vindictive impulse, but I do not see that one is called upon to assist it. The sense of frustration in a hopeless toiler may be keen enough to make even sabotage a pleasure, but I have other tastes. For three-quarters of a century Socialism under the spell of Marxism has cherished the delusion that in the masses there is a huge reservoir of creative power. There is nothing in the masses as masses but an unreliable explosive force.

The greater revolution must be a deliberate and not a convulsive process. It has to fight against the egoist and fool in man, the ancestral, instinctive brute, as much in the suspicious and angry mob below as in the timid, mean, and violent propertied classes above. It has a far greater percentage of possible adherents among the educated and able than in the crowd. Just as we depend for the gigantic services of scientific progress upon at most a few score thousand rather unpopular individuals mostly of the middle and independent classes, so the task of bracing, ordering, and clearing this very cruel and wasteful jungle of human affairs may remain for some generations still in the hands of quite a few obstinately clear-headed men and women. They have to work hard and be patient; there is nothing else for them to do; they cannot indulge in the emotional gratification of premature organisation and simplified propaganda. They will be men and women of experience, who have learnt about human affairs by handling them; they will be prepared

for formulae that will not simplify, and for incurable intricate problems. Ultimately this sort of people will acquire the necessary force and knowledge to change things systematically, and then they will set about doing so. Their convictions will radiate into the general mass. They will reshape the general conceptions of economic, political and social life.

Their revolution will involve much greater and much more sustained operations than barricades in the streets and little squitterings of machine-gun fire. They will have a different sort of strategy than the disorganisation of political parties and subtler methods than sabotage schemed in cellars and the misdirection of honest discontent. I do not see why thwarted pedants and unlicked youngsters should be allowed to monopolise the excellent name of Revolutionary for ever, nor why restless shop-stewards and .the sort of defectives who set fire to things should imagine themselves sole lords of human hope.

10. IRRUPTION OF MIMOSA

THIS morning my work has been interrupted.

I have been raided and assaulted by Clementina.

She has come into the room with an armful of mimosa, iris, and white and purple stock, and stuck this pretty stuff all over the place. She has made a great disturbance because I was not going to have my lunch out of doors in the sun — they are laying it out there now all over again — and her beastly little animated muff of a dog has chased my grey cat up the Japanese medlar. It is the fifteenth of January, and she declares the Provençal spring arrived. But that is no reason why she should constitute herself Primavera and cumber my study with an excess of flowers.

"It's no good," she said. "I can't keep away from you to-day." And she hasn't. She has ruined my hair. She has also ruined my mind.

She seized upon some pages of this manuscript. "Oh! Marx!" she cried with a note of disgust. "Capitalism! Revolution!" She put the sheets down. "I thought you were writing your life. I thought I was going to read something about you. I thought it was going to be about yourself!"

"This book," I said, "is not for you."

"You told me about it one day."

"In a moment of weakness. It is hard not to talk at times to a woman who besets one as you do me. But what I said was — inexact."

"Obviously. If you are writing about *-isms*, I'm not sorry I interrupted you. I thought it was to be about yourself and what you had made of the world. I thought I should get an idea of what you were like when you were a young man."

"I have a section to finish. And the door is just behind" you."

"I'm not going. I'm not disposed to go. It's spring. And near lunch-time."

"You are going," I said.

I do not know why I scuffle and romp so easily with Clementina. Certainly there is spring in the air to-day.

But now she has a better idea of what I was like when I was a young man. She has been at last more or less thrown out of this room in a properly pacified, subdued, and crumpled condition, and I find myself turning over my writing and reassembling the ideas she dissipated by her wanton invasion.

It is true that the last three or four sections have been mainly devoted to Marx and Socialism, but that is no more than a digression from the account of my world than the theology of the First Book. Why should one entertain the idea that a man is no more than his face, his mannerisms, and his love affairs? A man, if he is to be rendered completely, must begin with the creation of the world so far as it specially concerns him and end with his expectations of eternity. If a man is to be given completely, there must first be the man and his universe, then the man and history, and only after that man and other men and womankind. My struggle to apprehend the social conflict about me in terms of Socialism was at least as much a part of me as the poor little marriage and the poor little half-divorce I shall presently have to reveal — and my subsequent proceedings. It played as large a part in shaping my life — a larger part.

It is plain to me that, having swept aside the Communist idea of a revolution and thrown some passing doubts upon the economic interpretation of history, I am bound to give a version of the human story that seems to me to be truer. I am bound to indicate and in a measure explain my conception of the world of toil and business in which I have struggled and won freedom and security for myself. Every autobiography that is written for more than a special circle of readers must be thus encyclopaedic. My eyes are astigmatic; my mind is no doubt ill-informed and incompetent; that is all the more reason why I should tell of things as I see them and of all the things I see, and not assume that I see them in some correct and standard fashion.

A writer may affect modesty and deal with these broad issues by reference. But is that modesty? He may defer to recognised authority. He may declare that so far as recognised authority goes he has no world of his own. He may say, “In matters of religion I follow the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church,” or “Upon questions of economics I submit to the superior knowledge of the economists.”

But is not the good man assuming that he has so complete a knowledge of the teachings of his church or of the orthodox economists as to be sure to think upon all issues exactly as they do? He commits his church or his science to all his implications. Though he disavows authority, yet he presumes excessively to knowledge.

To achieve the perfect robe of perfect modesty should he not rather say, "I follow the teachings of my church so far as I know and understand them; I am conscious of limitation and even of error on my part, but I do my best," and then he should go on to set forth his own defective interpretation. "That as I see it," he should say, "is the teaching of the Church. That is my humble reading. By this I have guided myself. I may be in grievous error, but this is what my authority has meant to me." It is his interpretation that matters to us, and claims our interest in him. Or else, why autobiography at all? The existence of perfect solutions that he mayor may not understand does not excuse him. These we can study without his help, but his reaction to them is another matter. We do not want him to give us these things in perfection; we do want to see them in fallible operation. And so we bring his modest gentility back, blushing prettily no doubt, to the full encyclopaedic range again.

In the next two or three sections I propose to write a short history of human society as a labour-money complex evolved out of the primitive patriarchal family. They will have to be highly concentrated sections. This book, at any rate, is not going to be a home of rest for tired readers. If presently Clementina repeats her aggressions, she will find sheets of discussion about how toil came into the world and what money did for the Roman Empire. "Old economics!" she will cry. For the life of me I cannot get either my father's disaster or the business achievements of Dickon or myself into any sort of focus without that background. And as for Clementina — !

Clementina has a mind like one of those water insects that never get below the surface of anything. Waterboatmen they are called, and they flicker about sustained by surface tension. She just flickers about. She professes an affection for me that is altogether monstrous, and she knows no more about my substantial self than the waterboatman knows of the deeps of the pond. She knows as little

about the world.

Why is a person with so quick an intelligence and such wise instincts as Clementina mentally so superficial? Why does she habitually dismiss three-quarters of human concerns as uninteresting? Is it some sort of mental economy? For gossip, excursions, household matters, and making love, Clementina has an abundant, swift, penetrating, and indefatigable intelligence. She has subtlety; she has invention. The poetry she writes shows at least a keen appreciation for poetry in general and also for a certain prettiness in things at large that she has not learnt from pre-existing poetry. But she will not even look at the framework in which such things are set and which is continually affecting and determining such things!

I am reminded of something I was told the other day by a man who is by way of being a prominent historical writer. He was "approached," as they say, by one of these big American film producers. People, the film man apologised, were displaying a certain curiosity about the general history of mankind. It was an unaccountable lapse, and no doubt a temporary one, but it could not be ignored. Would it be possible for my friend to prepare the scenario for a series of films of such a history? A glimpse was given, carelessly but attractively, of dollars falling in showers.

My friend considered various difficulties, but decided that something of the sort could be done. "The public wants to know about things," he agreed. The film man expressed great optimism about the scheme — but in rather doubtful tones. His reason was in conflict with his instincts and mental habits. The latter were the better exercised and the more powerful. There was a pause in the discussion. It was evident that a difficulty had to be considered.

"I wonder now," said the film man, "if it wouldn't be possible to run some little *story* through this series, something about a boy and his girl and a bit of trouble between them or a revenge or something of that sort. *So as to have a thread of human interest in it.*"

A thread of human interest — in the history of mankind! The conversation ended in discord.

For Clementina there is apparently no thread of human interest in economics — that is to say in the toil, payment, enslavement, or

liberation of scores of millions of human beings. Of history she has much the same opinion as the film man. Geology, of course, means nothing to her but “old rocks,” palaeontology nothing but “old bones.” It is inconceivable to her that anyone should be interested in theology. Sociology makes her impatient and politics rude. Yet though she has renounced all the vanities of the world in order to come and live near me in the less accessible lanes of Provence, she can still muse pleasantly, during one of our rare trips to Cannes or Nice, before a hat-shop window. That, she feels, is “life.” As surely as biology isn’t. And with her flitting glance she is just a sample of general readers everywhere. They do not care whence they came nor whither they go nor what they are doing. They just flicker about. They will be water-boatmen till the stream dries up....

But it occurs to me that Clementina has had to wait an unconscionable time for lunch. What patience she has shown! She is almost directly under this window and she has not called up once. Probably with a pensive calm that sometimes descends upon her after misbehaviour she has been eating up the beetroot and olives.

11. HISTORY OF TOIL THROUGH THE AGES

FIVE thousand years ago our ancestors can have had no more economics than the animals; they lived from hand to mouth where the food was. If the food diminished they wandered away. If they could not find more food they weakened and perished like any other beasts. Their gear was just a skin and a stick and a stone or so, not more than could be trailed or carried. A stranger was an intruder and better killed. The old man killed or drove off his sons, and was the lord of all his womankind, lord indeed of his visible universe, until a younger and a stronger adversary came to dispossess and end him. If his equipment was simple his ownership at least was immense; he recognised no other rights in the world but his own, and he died fighting for them.

The first step towards human accumulation on a broader scale was taken when the Old Man came to recognise the right of another adult male to live within sight or smell of him. This first mitigation of the possessive instinct was the foundation of human society. The women trained their boys in the fear and avoidance of the Old Man, to regard all his belongings and particularly their mothers and stepmothers and sisters as tabu, and in return they persuaded the Old Man to tolerate the existence of his sons, and at last, in the course of ages, even to allow them the right to possess the strange girls they caught and dragged home with them to the family fireside. That is the only credible story of the beginnings of human society I have ever found in anthropology. It explains the primordial incest tabu, and the worldwide traces of marriage by capture, and a score of worldwide primitive customs that are otherwise fantastic. And it marches with most of the complex suppressions that lie at the roots of our modern mentality. It follows that the first private property to infringe the universal dominion of the Old Man was property in a woman.

One can still hardly speak of economics even after the ape family had passed into the primitive human tribe. The tribe personified in the Old Man still owned so far as it ranged; it hunted in a pack and feasted from one carcass; most of the implements it used were made by those who were going to use them; there may have been a little

bartering of ornaments and curious oddities between individuals and mutual present-giving, but there was still nothing in the nature of work, of employment, as we understand these terms. Mothers worked for their children and got them food and watched over them, as animal mothers do. Probably children and inferior women were the first human beings made to work beyond this instinctive devotion; they were sent out to find and bring home sticks for the fire or berries or small edible creatures. The first reluctant worker may have been a fire mender. The first workers were in much the position of the modern labouring man's wife; they did all that had to be done, and they got no pay beyond their keep and their owner's attentions. Maternity had given woman a greater submissiveness to routine drudgery than man, and probably the greater part of the simple duties of the cave and the squatting place fell to her.

The early Palaeolithic human tribe could have been only a stage more advanced economically than a pack of wild dogs. They had their fire and implements to the good. They had become more carnivorous and had perhaps grown bigger and stronger than their more solitary ancestors. The expansion of toil as the tribe grew and possessions and elaborations increased, fell no doubt upon the shoulders least able to evade it. There is no natural instinct for toil in man. He likes to make things but with as little trouble as possible. Already in Palaeolithic times a considerable and increasing amount of human intelligence and energy was being devoted to shifting toil upon the shoulders of somebody else. As human societies grew larger and better equipped and the necessary labour increased, oppression became more intelligent and systematic. The Old Man in the ape-man stage just killed and maltreated; the chief of the primitive human tribe directed and employed his folk, the women almost naturally and the men as much as he dared, and punished the idle among them. Sometimes perhaps there was not one single chief but three or four big fellows who had learnt to respect each other.

That was the quality of the "primitive communism" so many worthy anthropologists have seen fit to idealise.

As hunting tribes and herd-following tribes developed into cattle-herding and cattle-driving, and as agriculture, first of snatch crops and then of settled regions, appeared, an ever rising tide of labour

poured into human experience. The hungry picknicking freedom of primordial man gave place, age by age, to the more and more regular work and regular meals of the agricultural man, under the guiding compulsion of the chiefs and elders of the community. The children as they grew up found they had to work; the young men had to work. That it had once been unnatural to have to work was an idea beyond the brief range of human thought in those days. As soon could a draught-horse think of freedom. An anxious industriousness was gradually imposed upon the men of the agricultural regions, a moral impulse towards activity. To be an idler became a new shame almost as great as the older one of being a coward; one pretended not to be lazy just as one pretended not to be afraid; and man began to store like the squirrel and worry about the future.

It was only with the development of agriculture that man became a truly economic animal; the first of the vertebrata, I suppose, to be truly economic. Hitherto the chief economic creatures had been the ants and termites and bees. To become economic is first to become the watchful servitor of vegetable growth; that is the essence of it. Nomadic predatory peoples never succumbed to the delusion that industry is in itself a virtue. It seems to me fairly certain that there was a barbaric stage in human development when most of the tribe worked on such occasions as demanded work, under the direction of the chiefs and medicine men, and that they did it as a matter of course, without wages or personal reward. The labour was communal — that is to say, only the very strongest could shirk it; the product was communal — that is to say, the weaker got what they were permitted to get out of it. Probably there was little private personal property beyond wives, ornaments, weapons, huts and suchlike things. The cattle and lands belonged to the head men. Or some cattle on the common land were perhaps ear-marked for individual owners and the rest belonged to the tribal heads.

I think it is a fairly obvious and very important thing that, to begin with, trading had little or nothing to do with the economic life of the tribe. In our present life, trading, with its later instrument, money, is so intimately mixed up with staple production that people are apt to forget the two were once separate processes and dealt with different orders of necessity and desire. A barbaric agricultural people could,

if necessary, live a fairly full and complex economic life without any trade or any pay whatever, and with scarcely any private property. Trading was an extra thing, a function, and not the most important one, of such seasonal gatherings as may have occurred.

An early enrichment of the primitive economic scheme must have been the slave, either the stolen child or the spared captive. Just as the stolen woman came into the early Palaeolithic human group as the first private wife, so as the Neolithic order developed, the slave came in as it more amenable worker than the tribesman. Before the Neolithic stage there was little use for slaves. A stranger child could be taken along with the tribe like a captured wolf-cub, and petted or ill-treated, outraged or adopted as luck would have it. It was agreeable to have a human being to do exactly what you liked with, a motive which, as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children knows only too well, still leads queer people to take over the care of orphan children. And all sorts of small irksome services could be put upon a youngster too timid to run away into the wilderness.

That was probably the limit of slavery while man was still a wanderer, An adult male slave was of little use to nomads; his escape was comparatively easy. If he proved to be a helpful person it was better to make him a member of the tribe. But as agricultural work increased, men and women captives, used hitherto chiefly for sacrifice and torture and suchlike amusing but transitory ends, began to have an economic value. The heads of the tribes got a more tractable service from them. Their spirits could be broken entirely because they were not wanted for fighting purposes like the young men of the tribe. They could be used up more completely. The Egyptian turquoise mines in Sinai, as early as the days of the First Dynasty, were worked by slave labour.

There must always have been great local variations of the early barbaric state. We make a great mistake, we fall into the System myth, when we suppose the early barbaric community to have had a stereotyped pattern. It had certain common tendencies; it developed under certain common necessities; all the world over, men's minds are much alike. And though communications were difficult, men were as imitative and perhaps more imitative than they are now. The

tradition of the Old Man of the primitive days gave here a God and there a God-King and there a King-Priest. Wherever agriculture went there went with it the traditions of a blood sacrifice, a human sacrifice. I have never been able to imagine satisfactorily why this should have been so; but very plainly it was so. In the old world that blood sacrifice became very generally mitigated; in America, under a mysterious tendency towards harshness manifested by that continent, it developed to tremendous proportions until it obsessed a civilisation. The Maya, the Aztec, religions were insanely bloody. With agriculture, too, came an enormously clumsy primitive astronomy to determine the coming of inundations and the propitious phases of the year for sowing. Pyramids and obelisks acted as gnomons, temples were oriented to stars. It is wonderful to think how widely and vividly those opening phases of civilisation have been studied and made plain, within my lifetime.

Side by side with the largely agricultural hard-working communities of the warm alluvial countries there developed endless less agricultural and mainly nomadic groups, grazing sheep, driving cattle, and in Central and Eastern Asia keeping herds of horses. They traded, they conquered or were driven out again from the agricultural lands after a phase of conquest; they developed institutions after their needs, and these came in to modify and confuse and complicate the customs, institutions, habits of mind and points of view that grew up from the ploughed lands. Among the cattle-tending nomads and in mountain glens one may even imagine a sort of justification for that "ancient gentilic (tribal or clan) organisation" which Engels, the fellow-prophet of Marx, declared by some inner light to be the primitive stage of human society. Only instead of his amiable Elders, enjoying "the spontaneous informal regard of Society," there must have been a reality much more after the vivid pattern of a Highland chief. All these things, we must remember, were worked out by thousands of communities through hundreds of generations, over plains, uplands, gorges, valleys, forests, steppes, and deserts, and the more simple and exact we make our classifications and explanations the easier they will be to carry in our minds, and the farther they are likely to be from the truth. Human society did not develop through an orderly progression of stages, but by an infinite diversity of

temporary equilibriums and blundering innovations.

All the anthropology I have read seems to me almost without exception to assume that the man of six or seven thousand years ago was more lucid and systematic than the man of to-day. But plainly he must have been very much less so. It is not that he was intellectually inferior — there has probably been little if any growth of the human brain since Palaeolithic times — but that he had nothing made ready for him. His language was still a relatively poor instrument, there were no accumulations of recorded and established general ideas. Logical reasoning and systematic thought did not begin until about twenty-five centuries ago; Plato struggled mystically with the species and the individual, the One and the Many; and the syllogism is no older than Aristotle. Our classical scholars never seem to be quite sure whether in the dialogues of Plato they are dealing with a Cyclopean clumsiness of argument or philosophical profundities. Before that time men thought, as children and under-educated people still think, by imagination. They tried to express things beyond the immediate daily life by symbols and mythical stories which were promptly misapprehended and retold in a different sense. And there was infantile wonder and emotion still flowing undisciplined through their minds. They could find some numbers beautiful and others flat or obnoxious. They were as childish as that. They were capable of immense inconsistencies. Habit and imitation held people's lives together throughout wide districts and regions in a general likeness. They attempted, they got, they prevailed, or they submitted, they toiled or robbed the toil of others, they feared and hated, killed and triumphed. This was life, they said, for what else could there be? They bred and passed on the mysterious appeal of life, they loved their children violently and their grown-up offspring less, and they died and forgot and were forgotten.

Seven thousand years ago you had, at a generally more simple level, all the elements of the social problems of to-day; oppressors and oppressed, luckless wights born to toil and suffering, lucky ones to veneration and delight, genial, kindly recipients of good-fortune, patient drudges, people cruelly misunderstood, souls in wild protest, cunning, wary winners in the game, perplexed losers, and it was all unsystematic, no one had planned it. It had grown unawares as a

jungle grows, it had drifted along the stream of time, expanding, multiplying, complicating into an ever broader and vaster spectacle, out of man's solitary past.

It seems to me to be enormously important to stress this casual, complicated, and incoherent quality of man's past. I reiterate it deliberately. I return to it again. It is a conviction fundamental to the edifice of my ideas; it is as much a part of me as my eyes. I do not believe we can deal properly with our current problems until we are saturated with this realisation. I have watched political thought with a very close interest all my life, and I perceive the urgent need to purge from our minds the disposition to think that at certain phases of human affairs something wicked was done, that a few men, priests or kings or rich men, plotted against the rest to deceive and enslave them. Or that at a definite time something wise was done and a new direction given to affairs. I can find nothing of that sort in my vision of history. What are called turning-points in history are significant and not directive. Life is more muddled and more innocent than we are inclined to think it. Men accept their lives as they find them, and all human beings are greedy, something disingenuous, and inapt to sympathise with the unlike. Some are pressed into the position of devourers and some find themselves stifled and preyed upon. But change priest and victim and with scarcely a hitch the sacrifice would go on.

Man's soul and mind in those days were already a palimpsest. It is only nowadays that psycho-analysis is beginning to work down through the superimposed layers and to reveal the restrained and baffled solitary-minded Old Man of the pre-Palaeolithic days, peeping up through all the obliterations of training, custom, law, and religion that have been imposed upon him. But there he is at the bottom of things, the reason why men will combine far more readily for warfare than peace and for persecution than worship, why they are so easily "anti" and only by repercussion "pro," why they must grab beyond their utmost needs, why restraining laws are necessary, and why we all seek instinctively to ensure our own private security against the promiscuous motives of the general herd, that uncertain currish mob-soul of our kind.

12. MONEY

No other part of history so interests me as the opening chapter before the documents begin. There is no excessive presentation of persons and personal names; egoism has left nothing but defaced monuments and disconnected boasts, and we seem to come nearer to the realities of human life than we do in many a later age when kings and princes and their policies monopolise the foreground.

Certain great enlargements of human life came about in the period between ten thousand and two thousand years ago. They came about very gradually and it is only nowadays that we begin to reconstruct the story of their appearance. One of these enlargements was writing and another was money. Even in the Palaeolithic age, thirty thousand years ago, men were very near to writing. They not only made beautiful pictures like those in the Altamira caves, but they simplified drawings down to conventional signs and wrote them rapidly and kept tallies. I remember being shown some tracings of Palaeolithic rock paintings in the Madrid Museum five years ago. There was a hunting scene, a dance, some men gathering honey, and what were perhaps hunting tallies done in red paint. I do not know if these latter have ever been published. They might be primitive Chinese; the sign for man for example, a swipe of the brush and two legs, is very similar. Matters remained at that stage for a long period. Hunting and herding people need tallies and route pictures but have little other use for writing. As trading developed the need for record increased. The evolution of trust and commercial patience must have been a slow affair. Such things crept into life and became domesticated and familiar by degrees, age by age. As picture writing passed into syllabic writing and became more and more capable of rendering the subtleties of speech, much more extensive possibilities of communication and of the extension of power opened out. Laws and claims and pledges could go farther and endure longer. Men could be documented and “fixed.”

With this enlargement our universal disposition to shift toil to other people and get them working for us discovered a rich mine of new possibilities. The man with the upper hand was no longer

obliged to beat his slave or peasant to his task and stand over him. He could check his output. Much fine intelligence went to the elaboration and enforcement of “bits of writing” by which men were entangled.

Money, too, came creeping into the elaborating scheme of human economy. It was not so much invented as discovered to be present. We are told, or at least we used to be told, that the first money was cattle. That seems quite plausible. Cattle must have been exchanged for women in marriage and for other desirable possessions very early in the human story. The herdsmen, one can understand, were among the first traders; the nomads no doubt began merchandising. I suspect that nomads were among the first metal and mineral miners, but I do not know how far archaeologists would countenance me in that. In many parts of the world tinker and blacksmith and “cheap-jack” are still gypsies. They brought metals and precious stones along from the mountains and passes and gorges to the alluvial plains where minerals were rare. Possibly the first approach to a coin was a metal tally with a cow stamped on it. But metals were rare in themselves and highly desirable. I have read somewhere that the Hittites and Spartans had money of iron. It is only twenty-five or twenty-six centuries ago, it seems, that coined money came into use in human affairs, and for some centuries it belonged only to the superficial world of trading operations; it had little to do with the broader, more fundamental economics of the community. Most of the food was grown, most of the houses and temples were made, even possibly most of the ships were launched, without a resort to money.

It has struck me, as a man coming late to such studies, that our histories of mankind do not attach sufficient importance to the gradual but profound alteration of phase, the reorientation that occurred in human affairs as documentation and money, from their first sporadic superficiality, crept into and changed the massive substance of economic life. These two things must have varied and elaborated the fundamental game of shifting the toil enormously. They cast the cloak of personal invisibility about owners. And they fixed obligations with a new relentlessness. As the broad lines of the money convention were more and more widely understood and recognised, as its purchasing power extended from a few to more and

more commodities, the novelty of abstract wealth arose. Men found themselves possessed, not merely of cattle, olive orchards, ships, slaves, and so forth, but of an amulet which would call all or any of these things into their service. They could be mortgagers instead of worried owners, and they need keep no slaves, because now every penniless man was at their bidding if they so desired it. Money had generalised slavery. They had no need to insist upon the status of a slave. They found very soon that it was superfluous even to have the coined money in a strong-box; they need only have the documented promise to pay money or an acknowledgment of receipt from a sufficiently solvent creditor. Parchment money was already in use among the Carthaginians.

Money has always had about it something indefinite. It varies and has varied widely in its nature. It was not invented by any particular person. There never was, to-day there is not, a complete system of money. That has still to come. Money crept into human concerns insidiously, century by century. It is a variable, many-faced thing. It is a token here, and there a piece of metal of intrinsic value. It will breed like a rabbit where Usury is permitted. The Catholic Church once sought to sterilise it, but now she holds her peace and makes no trouble over a pious legacy of debentures. It breeds, but it is subject to degeneration. It can be debased and manipulated in all sorts of obscure and furtive ways. Men can operate upon its moods and fluctuations and snatch profits, but even the most cunning operators must sometimes guess. In modern life it has become so intimate and so fundamental that most people have a kind of horror of thinking too closely about its uncertain ties. We will not even ask ourselves why it should be sterile in our pockets and prolific when we hand it to state or bank. We feel that to speak to a man about his dividends is an immodest act. With most of us money is protected from ruthless investigation by an emotional fear analogous to that which veils sex in the minds of the young. We realise a helplessness.

In the period when Dickon and I faced the world money was fairly stable. We accepted it as a trustworthy measure of values. Most of the world was on the gold standard, fluctuations in exchange were fractional, and there was a slow general fall in prices going on, a fall that scarcely anyone discussed. But the worldwide stability of money

throughout most of that half-century before the war was an exceptional phase in its history.

Almost the whole story of mankind from the days of the Roman Empire onward could be told as a history of the fluctuations and variations in the behaviour of money and of its sublimated form — credit. The older civilisations of the Orient did, no doubt, use the precious metals abundantly; all Asia Minor and Greece coined money before Cyrus; the latter days of the Jews were dark with debts and usuries; there was lending and banking in Babylon and Carthage; but the cash nexus first sent its ramifications deeply into the general life of the community in the triumphant years of the Roman Republic. Did men, common men, pay taxes normally in money, anywhere at any time before the Roman days? I doubt it. And with the rephrasing of transactions in terms of money in that age ownership attained a novel fluidity, interest could expand to gigantic proportions, men could borrow with an unprecedented, dangerous readiness, and be ruined and sold up with amazing rapidity. The punishment of the bankrupt was merciless. The history of Rome seems to me to be full of the entanglement and dispossession of small men, of great inflations and explosions of debt, of popular attempts to repudiate debts and of aristocratic suppressions of repudiation, of moneyed men becoming for the first time more powerful than lords and rulers. It is the history of a series of events of a different type or order from those of any previous history.

There are historians — it does not dispose of them to say they are mostly Germans and so, by nature and necessity, wrong — who declare that the Roman collapse before the barbarians was essentially an economic collapse due to crude finance. The slave estates which had succeeded the debt-consumed free cultivator had given way to the serf cultivator, who was born and lived and died the debtor of his lord. And the serf had no spirit to resist the invader. For him a barbarian lord was little different from a Roman lord — himself perhaps only a very imperfectly assimilated barbarian in the imperial service. The outer barbarian had indeed the merit of cutting off the visitations of the imperial tax collector. Disorder and political disintegration were welcome then for the common man, since they meant a disappearance of the taxes and debts and deeds that crushed

and held him down. Illegal exactions and outrages might be substituted, but these were, by their nature, transitory things.

This interpretation of the fall of the imperial system seems very plausible to me. It IS fairly plain that the money and credit nexus which first pervaded the Roman Empire, and which was ruptured and left in tattered fragments by its fall, was mended very slowly and crept back throughout our Western community again in the later Middle Ages. To-day it is the method of nearly all our economic intercourse. Except the toil of mothers for their children and the toil of the wives of poor men, I can think of no large class of services that are not appraised and paid for in money. Hardly any were so appraised and paid for in the early civilisations three thousand years ago. In the old civilisations one was paid for one's toil by a specific easement or reward; nowadays one is paid by this abstract token, this coin or note, which is understood to carry with it a power of command over a certain quantum of whatever pleasures or possessions we desire. So long as that understanding holds it will work. In the ancient world services were simply and personally reciprocal. They are no longer so. Even the traditions of that reciprocity are lost and I do not believe they can ever be restored. And this has come about not by any revolutionary substitution of one organised system for another, but by an extraordinary growth of contrivances, conventions, tacit, unreasoned acceptances, establishments of usage. Money is not an institution that has replaced simpler and less convenient institutions, it is a tradition that has grown and exfoliated and crowded older usages out of existence.

It is not a safe device. It can fail to keep faith. It has failed and recovered in Russia and Germany. Nowhere is it proof against fresh failures. If men lose confidence in it sufficiently, our civilisation, which is now entirely based upon it and which has no reserved alternative to it to fall back upon, will clog and cease to work. It is at least as indispensable now as housing and clothing. Modern civilisation is like an aeroplane in mid-air, an aeroplane with one sole, imperfect engine which is popping and showing many signs of distress. It may win to an aerodrome and repairs and replacements. Or it may make a very unpleasant forced landing presently with little hope of immediate recovery.

13. CHANGE OF SCALE

IN the last three centuries there has been a great expansion of the scale of economic processes. This change of scale is one of the outstanding facts in the general scheme of history. It has inaugurated a new phase in human experience. It has an effect as though upon the customary succession of day and night there were to dawn an unfamiliar illumination from some strange new star, a light altering all visible values, dispelling accepted shadows, revealing things hitherto unknown. There seems to be no simple cause of this change. There may have been an almost entirely accidental confluence of favourable conditions.

Through stimulations that I will not attempt to classify or estimate, European business in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was in a state of vigorous renascence. Shipping was pushing with an unwonted boldness round the continents and into unknown seas, there was a great influx of silver from America, towns were growing rapidly. There were also great intellectual liberations, the rediscovered Greek literature was releasing the long- restrained imaginations of men, printing was making reading easier and cheaper; but how far this mental enlivenment really affected economic developments it is impossible to calculate.

The eighteenth century carried on the expanding stir; there was much experimenting and innovating in financial method; there was a rush of inventions; coal was utilised for metallurgy, and that led to a bigger scale use of iron and steel; the machinery made possible by this opened up new possibilities of organised manufacture, and the facilities of intercourse began an astounding increase in scope and pace that still goes on.

Most of these things seem to me to have arisen detachedly. The more one looks into their history, the less connected they appear to be, and the less ready one is to accept simple explanations. One is apt to think of the steam-engine, for instance, with its intricate, tremendous influence upon transport and upon the development of mass production, as arising out of the scientific thrust. But did it? Were the inventors and exploiters of steam — Watt watching the

dancing kettle lid, for example — really scientific men ? Were they influenced very much by the science of their time? Did they owe very much to Bacon or the Royal Society? And for the matter of that, to take a later case, was the aeroplane a scientific invention ? Was it not rather the creation of odd experimenting out-of-the-way people, a little distrustful of the mathematicians' assumptions about the air?

The proper triumphs of science no one can deny. Indisputably the whole development of electrical appliances arises out of systematic scientific research, and so do most medical progress and most metallurgical and chemical improvements. But it is worth noting that the experimenting, innovating spirit of the last three centuries was also active outside the strictly scientific movement, and that historically the scientific man has rather pursued and overtaken and studied and organised, first in this and then in that province of creative knowledge, than directed the opening inquiries. In the last three hundred years inventions and new ideas have come faster and thicker like flowers in springtime; the scientific man has gathered rather than Sown. In the world of psychology he is only now really getting a grip upon the stuff, and in the world of social and economic relationship and in relation to law I am doubtful whether, even at the present time, science has fairly begun. Yet there have been tremendous changes and enlargements in these latter fields, changes and enlargements almost as considerable as those in natural science.

But though I see the expansive forces which distinguish the life of man in the last two or three centuries as multiple in their origins and defiant of any comprehensive explanation, it does seem to me, nevertheless, that one can throw at least two generalisations over the whole. The first of these is the sustained widespread appearance of this change of scale in human possibilities. Suddenly the world has grown relatively much smaller. Man has acquired new power over matter. He can handle masses and produce commodities by wholesale methods absolutely undreamt of before the present time. And, secondly, he has now so mastered the utilisation of fuel, wind, and water for the production of power that a large part of the burthen of sheer toil imposed hitherto since civilisation began upon the unwilling shoulders of our kind may now be lifted. Human intercourse need no longer be mainly a toil-shifting tangle. I take it

the main features of the present phase of this property-money give-and-take which is human society are due to the confused and mainly selfish efforts of people to adapt themselves to the releases of these new conditions without any clear understanding of their nature.

This change of scale and all the disturbance and opportunity it brought with it was going on even in the eighteenth century, but it was only becoming the completely dominant fact in the world's economics when my father was growing up. He was already alive in the early days of railway speculation. I remember he told me when I was a small boy that he was married in the year the *Great Eastern* was launched, which was, I find, 1859. He was showing me a picture of the monster hung up in a bedroom at Mowbray. She was a prematurely big ship of eighteen thousand tons. I doubt if her engines were up to their task, and I believe she was a financial failure. She was beyond the limit set by circumstances at that time to the change of scale in shipping.

My grandfather was a not very leading partner of a not very prominent firm of stockbrokers. So my father grew up, indigenous to that dark hive, the City, in the days when London was really the head and centre of the business enterprise of the world. The new phase of civilisation had first become manifest in England; she was leading with iron and steel, cotton, wool, railways, steamships, finance. In those days the English were regarded, not only by themselves, as a people beyond all other peoples, more energetic, more practical, cold and high and wise. And Providence had favoured His new Chosen by putting their coal and iron very close together and planting them in an island at the geographical centre of the trading world. It was their mission to develop the rest of this planet, patronisingly, profitably. France, their most serious rival, was, they declared, "fickle," Spain sunken in Catholic decay, Italy a protégée, Russia barbaric, Germany poverty-struck and impracticable, lost in dreams of music and philosophy; America from north to south a continent of unstable republics, fields for enterprise, of no financial importance at all. The chief manufacture of the United States in those days was supposed to be wooden nutmegs. English schoolmasters teaching Transatlantic geography never failed to mention them with a kindly you-may-laugh-now smile.

In those days all the nations of the world were resorting to the dark and narrow ways of the City for credit to make railways and harbours and to reorganise their industries along the new lines. If any refrained, energetic young Englishmen went to inquire into the matter and if necessary compel them to come in. The solicitation of China and Japan was forcible. French enterprise had a narrower range in the Mediterranean and the Orient, and was always rather too closely entangled with its Foreign Office. In the Far East the Englishman sometimes met a stray American, for a mysterious instinct drove the Americans very early across the Pacific, but in those days they did not seem to amount to very much there, and presently their Civil War engaged them. That was supposed to be the end of all their democratic hopes. North America would "split up" as South America had done, lacking the golden bond of a crown. Amusing it is to recall that in the political cartoons of those days John Bull figured as a wise old giant and Jonathan as his untidy, ill-behaved nephew. Neither American nor German enterprise had ruffled the hustling, muddling self-confidence of London in the days of my father's youth.

The industrial and mining developments of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were largely proprietary. Landowners prospected for minerals under their own lands; cotton-spinners bought machinery and reduced their cousins and neighbours to economic servitude, and presently resorted to the foundling hospitals and workhouses to increase their supply of tractable cheap workers. There were companies, but they were mainly just multiple proprietors. With the coming of railways and steamships and power machinery, however, the change of scale passed further and further beyond the dimensions of ordinary individual fortunes. Before a man could set about trying to handle this or that still incompletely developed economic activity in the big way he found he had to associate himself with some one who would bring in the large amount of credit needed for the attempt. He had to go to the City.

By the middle of the nineteenth century two contrasted types of exploiter were trying to draw wealth, ease, and power out of the new forces of enlargement; one the reorganiser of employment upon new lines, and the other the operator with credit. The method of the latter

was to saddle the new production or the new service with as heavy payments as it could stand — or at any rate to operate and get away with a profit before the limits of payment were apparent. The former was a cheap producer and seller who sought new customers; the latter was a collector of savings which he led towards investment in the. new enterprises, and deflected more or less on the way thither. The organiser encroached upon and destroyed the freedom of the small man; the financier enmeshed the organiser. That stately process continues. To nowhere in particular. The smaller people, superseded by the new machine- and power-using enterprise, had to take care of themselves as well as they could. Most of them the new developments took by surprise and they were impoverished or pauperised before they realised clearly what was happening. After the immemorial practice of mankind, the new labour needed was obtained as cheaply as possible and left to get as much above a bare subsistence from the social economics effected as it could.

Among the early victims of the new drives towards larger scale business were the small cultivators whose way of living was knocked to pieces by the Enclosures Acts, and the weavers and spinners and other workers who were crushed or devoured by the factories. The railways put an intricate and picturesque high-road life out of action, ruined coach-owners, horse-owners and horse-breeders, wayside inns. On the whole the new methods were increasing production very greatly, but they were requiring a smaller proportion of skilled and capable workers among the people they employed, and so the larger share of the increased output went to support a great expansion of population, a proliferation of low-grade human beings. Everywhere arose great new towns, vast sprawls of mean streets and slums, in which the bulk of this additional unspecialised and unselected population sheltered.

It is one of the dearest assumptions of the Marxist theorists that there has been a concentration of wealth in the hands of a vigorously acquisitive and steadily concentrating minority throughout the last two centuries. It is amazing how many of us, with eyes in our heads, with museums, ancestral mansions, and collections of old furniture to refer to, with pictures and books at hand, novels, plays, collections of letters, poems with dedications, have come to accept that

concentration as a fact. But relatively to the common lot the life of the rich and noble in the seventeenth century was manifestly finer and ampler than it is to-day. They had far more space and beauty, more respect, more servile human service. Music of the finest quality, delightful art, every sort of decoration — such printing and bookbinding, for example, as we cannot rival today — mental freedom, existed for them alone. It is preposterous to say that the rich have become richer and the poor poorer in this last phase of history. The increase in production has gone along quite another channel. It has neither been monopolised by the property-owner nor distributed throughout the general mass. It has merely expanded the general mass. It has been absorbed by blind breeding. Since my father was born, in that little space of time, the population of England has doubled. So has the population of Germany. By internal increase and in spite of considerable emigration. Since 1850 the population of the world must have increased by many hundreds of millions. No one is much better off nor worse off as yet for the change of scale; there are only more people.

14. THE CITY AND MY FATHER

SHORT-SIGHTED rearrangements of production under a conspiracy of helpful circumstances, and then blind borrowing and purblind lending, reckless breeding; evasion of toil and responsibilities above; congested, reluctant, protesting labour below; and nowhere any clear vision of the whole — that was the substance of the nineteenth-century spectacle, and it followed logically and necessarily in the vein of all preceding social life. Knowledge had so grown by the middle of the nineteenth century that there might have been enough for all and unprecedented freedom for all. But this possibility concerned nobody in particular. The practical fact which concerned everyone was that there was not nearly enough for most people because of the primitiveness and incoherence of proprietary and monetary methods.

Quite the strongest and most remarkable of the impressions of financial men my own dealings with finance have left me is their superficiality and inattention. Men follow science and art, pursue agriculture, organise manufactures, or go upon the seas to trade, *closely*, because these things are profoundly and sustainingly interesting. But no one is in business in the City for the sake of business in the City. Men go there to come out of it again, successful. There is no instinct for arithmetic, no lust for computation, in the make-up of a normal human being; I doubt even if those abnormalities they call calculating boys get any pleasure from their gift until it is applied; the only living interests in the City are acquisition and the excitements of risk and conflict that might be pursued as easily at Monte Carlo. The activities of the City and its younger, perhaps stronger, offspring in Wall Street — for who knows now which is leading which? — affect the intimate lives of all mankind, but this is not present in the consciousness of the City. It is the peculiar quality of money and credit to abstract reality from transactions and remove it to an immense distance. Finance is forgetful of the world in its processes, and the world thinks as little as possible about the finance that thrusts it along and pushes it about. Hardly anyone in the City is going an inch further than he is obliged

to do beneath the surfaces on which he moves his pieces. The City has grown up from forgotten beginnings; City men accept it as it is and follow its rules and traditions. They no more want an inquiry into what lies beneath it than cricketers want people to geologise beneath their pitch.

In the course of my life I have met a certain sprinkling of bankers, and I do not think there is any sort of human being more marvellous and incredible. They take money for granted as a terrier takes rats; when they see it they go for it; but they are absolutely immune to any philosophical curiosity about it. From no other profession do men fly so rapidly to the distraction of other occupations; bankers become collectors, naturalists, historians, critical writers; the profession is a hotbed of amateurs. The world of banking and finance draws princely incomes from processes it does not understand clearly and that, with a strong self-protective instinct, it will, if it can, prevent anyone from understanding clearly. I can imagine no more preposterous caricature of reality than the representation of the City and Wall Street and the bourses and exchanges of the planet generally as a sort of synthetic, wicked, watchful, many-headed spider, scientifically sucking the life-blood from the world. The spider sucks blood because it wants to do it, but banking does it merely because it does it.

No doubt the activities of the City tangle the whole world, but they do so aimlessly. The men who rush about its narrow ways do not know what they are up to. They would be very angry to be told as much, but so it is. They impress themselves and each other and their clerks and their typists and the anxious, greedy, investing public as strong men and bold men and decisive men and little Napoleons; some of them are controlling altogether colossal sums; but in their heads are brains that still remain — it is offensive but it must be said — inadequately developed. They are youngsters who have never taken time to grow up, youngsters over-blown. They have never struggled on to the fully adult stage. They are ignorant of fundamentals, they do not see themselves plainly, they are individualistic in their aims, the sense of being a possible part in one complete social organisation has not come to them, and all these characteristics are the characteristics of immaturity. Their great enterprises, their debts, their loans, their technicalities and methods

are solemn vast puerilities; it does not make them any the less puerilities that all mankind suffers because of them.

That congested City is still the chief credit whirlpool of the world confusion, and thither the money goes and there it must be sought again. About its ways went our father in his time, in a becoming black top-hat and an impressive frock-coat after the fashion of the period, red-whiskered and comely and engaging in his manners, bold and enterprising to his own undoing. And thither came Dickon and I later on, sniffing after the credit and the money which are the keys of personal liberty and without which there is neither food nor freedom nor power in the world.

I will not disinter my father's story here. Indeed, many essential phases of it are now so covered up and hidden and untraceable that I do not think I could, even if I wanted to do so. He seems to have worked with his father's firm for a time and to have been at first an alert but quite wary speculator. There were many people in the City who liked him and who kept their faith in his ability and recuperative power right up to the wild preliminaries of the final disaster. He did very little with railways; railways had been built, had been over-capitalised, had failed to pay, and had been made to pay — by excursion trains and an educational campaign — before his time. The railways were settling down after a wild youth. But the new possibilities of large-scale retail trade the railways had created were still in process of active exploitation. It was an open question then whether the greater changes would follow the lines indicated by the increased ease with which customers could be brought to centres, or those denned by the increased facilities of distribution. Bright, pushful men were looking for presentable aspects of both these possibilities with which to woo the City and, in co-operation with the City, the investor at large. My father was early in this field, and he seems to have done very well along both lines.

He looked for easily transported goods and hit upon tea; he brought together some tea wholesalers, some lead-packet people, and a small retailer in Clapham named Partington, whose shop it was possible to claim was "Established in 1810," and out of these ingredients he created "Partington's Pure Packet Teas; Partington's Own Delicious Blend." At first there was to have been a postal order

business, but, instead, the packets were found to be particularly marketable on the counters of small retailers. People with sweetstuff shops and confectioners and so on, who had never weighed out tea, could sell packet tea. Simultaneously he revealed to Nickleby's, the drapers of Camden Town, that they were the North London Central Bazaar, "the shopping and social centre of North London Life," and got them into a phase of hectic enlargement. He worked with sustained energy and very closely in those early years; there was reality and substance in both these concerns, and it was rather through the pressure of natural business development than any nefarious intention that by the time he had altogether disposed of these organisations he had sold them for about ten times their actual value as going concerns. Partington's, with a group of other firms of very unequal value, presently became the London United Tea Company, and then launched boldly into World Tea Plantations; Nickleby's also expanded into London and Empire Stores, with shops at Brighton and Manchester and a place in Durban, and another, a shocking failure, in Bombay. The belief of the investing public, and particularly of the small investor in associated shop constellations, was growing steadily all these years, and my father took his own where he found it.

In those days my father was by the best City standards a sound man. He was watching what he was doing quite carefully. His reputation for soundness was greatly enhanced by the Red Gulch and Throttle Lode affair. Either he got a tip in some way, or he made a happy fluke with a large parcel of copper-mine shares and was out and away with his profits before anyone had noticed what had happened. It seemed a desperate fling to many City sages.

But after that raid he never went near that market again; they never had a chance to get back on him. This resolution as it became more evident turned people's momentary doubts into an accession of confidence.

Nevertheless, it was the beginning of his undoing; his natural belief in his instinct and his luck was stimulated; he became greedy and hasty, he spread himself out over ground he had never explored with any care, he took liberties with his associates and lied where before he had simply exaggerated. He went out for the promotion of

seaside resorts, for big housing schemes and especially for service flats in huge architectural piles, for gas-lighting — more particularly in South European countries — and, arising out of that, for soft coal. I do not even know the succession in time, much less the inter-relations, of Cornwall Court Limited, the London Buildings Company, Seabreeze Estates, the Gas and Metallurgical Coal Group and Mediterranean Gas and South Coast Development; I know only that the mounting pile culminated in London and Imperial Enterprises and crashed. But I know enough of my father through my own nature to know that what was the matter :with him was boredom, the frightful boredom of City life, the boredom of enterprises getting more and more remote from any living and breathing reality, the boredom of arithmetic in little offices, of bluffs and misleading statements in board-rooms, of deposit-books and cheque-books that one had to remember didn't mean what they appeared to mean, and of remembering what So-and-So didn't know and what Such-and-Such did. Stuff like that in the brain must be like dry chaff in the mouth on a hot day. The City is a trap for human energy: it promises life more abundantly and wastes it ruthlessly. It is like the bottle of nuts with the monkey; he can get his hand in and he can get his hand full, but to get his hand out is another matter. And until he can get his hand out the nuts are uncracked nuts.

My father must have felt that beneath the florid appearance of success his life was passing away. I realise only too vividly his desperate determination to clutch some concrete happiness, some vivid splendour, high place or power, out of that mocking hurry of dingy and doubtful transactions, before age or death overtook him. Our removal to Mowbray was the first early symptom of his possible impatience for realisations and expenditure. Afterwards, nearer the end, there was some gaudy pleasuring; I have heard since of brilliant but costly ladies assisting him to taste "life," and there was a great time in a hired villa at Monte Carlo, of which except for a few postcards no intimations ever reached Mowbray; and a theatrical venture with a now forgotten actress, Lillie Morton, whose private may have been greater than her public charm. I hope it was, for my father's sake. Before he had reached my present age the whole feverish story was over.

And so he passed, and so, with less acutely tragic incident, a great multitude of brave and eager lads have passed through the City, growing old as they passed but not really growing up, a swirl and a superficial consequence upon a deep flood of changes beyond their understanding.

BOOK THE THIRD. THE STORY OF THE CLISSOLDS — ESSENCE OF DICKON

1. DICKON FINDS HIS PURPOSE IN LIFE

MY brother Dickon was physically very like my father, but he had a sturdier quality of mind. His imagination was as bold, but his self-restraint was steadier. Both of us indeed were honest to a greater degree; our consciences were livelier and more watchful, the sense of an obligation incurred gripped us more firmly and did not so readily slip its hold. Some ancestor of marked integrity must have been latent in my father. We were both mainly Clissold, but physically Dickon was nearer to my father than I. He was a better-looking youngster. He had my father's reddish hair and something of his physical swagger, while I mingled threads of my mother's darkness with streaks of paternal gold.

Dickon, I have told, professed individualism, but he has always been a very sociable individualist; I was an unsocial Socialist from the outset, with a greater disposition to go alone or with one companion. Clara once said that Dickon was canine and I was feline, and I think that expresses something very elemental between us. Dickon's pink skin freckles at a mere glimpse of the sun, and he has carried my father's sanguine amplitude of limb and body to a considerable massiveness. He is now, in fact, a very fine figure of a man indeed, a stout tweed-wearing man, "Nordic," they would say in America.

In the preceding Book I brought the account of Dickon and myself up to the later eighties, when we were studying science very unevenly at the Kensington schools, and considering our attack upon the world. Then I went off on the trail of Marx and the economic history of the world. I left Dickon at loose ends.

He did not long remain at loose ends. It was at night in a show called the Inventions Exhibition, while we were sitting watching a crowd of promenaders and listening to a band, beneath festoons of fairy-lights — little oil lamps they were — and in front of a grass plot on which yet other fairylights, blue, red, and orange, made a flickering guttering enchantment, that Dickon's ends ceased to be loose and he unfolded to me his plan of campaign. It was to be his life's plan of campaign, but I believe that it had crystallised out in his

mind only that afternoon.

That Inventions Exhibition was one of a series of annual shows; there was one called the Healtheries and another the Fisheries, and others, in what was then a great area of waste land in South Kensington. Now most of that land is .filled up by the Imperial Institute and by Museum galleries and buildings belonging to London University, but in those days these exhibitions were able to spread from the Exhibition Road to the Albert Hall, the upper galleries of which building were somehow included in the spectacle. These grounds were put in order and laid out with beds of geraniums and calceolarias; they were illuminated in the evenings, and the Exhibition was favoured by a succession of fine summer nights.

It would be interesting now to disinter the plans and guide-books, if any copies survive, to that Inventions Exhibition. It was before the coming of the safety bicycle or the automobile; the gas-lamp still held its own quite hopefully against the dangerous uncertainties of the electric light, and gramophones, cinemas, wireless had hardly germinated in the womb of time. The germs existed, but nothing had come to exhibition pitch. I remember some very attractive omnibuses, driven by compressed air, wallowing to and fro in a confined space. They were the only anticipation of automobiles in the show, and I remember, too, how Dickon that afternoon doubted whether electric traction could ever be anything more than a scientific toy. It might be done, he said, but it could never be done to pay.

Yet what we had seen had stimulated our imaginations considerably, and while we listened to the band in the evening after a frugal supper, we were both much more prepared to expect great changes during our lifetimes than we had been when we pushed through the turnstiles in the early afternoon. Our talk had ebbed for a time and we were smoking unaccustomed cigarettes which Dickon had made with a machine for the occasion.

“It is no good inventing things if you do not get people to make use of them,” said Dickon, coming up to the surface, so to speak, after a profound meditation.

“No,” said I, not in the least aware of his drift. “There’s no money in anything until people have been told of it.”

“The money?”

“No,” contemptuously, “the anything.”

I perceived that he was taking up his standing problem of “how to get it” again. “I suppose new things have to be sold,” I said.

“Exactly. And you have to make people *want* them.” A pause.

“Advertisement” said Dickon. “Advertisement is only, beginning. Billy! — I see it. That’s where my money is.

Advertising.”

The distant band was playing a waltz tune just then for I remember the rhythm of it. (Tra-la-la la pum pum, pum pum. Tra-la-la la pum pum, pum pum. Tra-la-la la pum, pum, pum pum. Tra-la-la la pum pum, pum pum, it went. (Am I filling in detail from my imagination or was it the Blue Danube waltz?) And the promenaders passed, keeping step to it; mysterious, romantic promenaders, for the fairy-lights were not enough to show their faces plainly.

With something of the manner of an explorer, the voice at my side began to talk of the dark and dismal advertisement of that time and to point out its defects and its possibilities. I understood now why he had been so silent and preoccupied throughout the afternoon. He had been reading all the advertisements in sight and thinking about them. He had been struck by their limitation of range; their crudity and formality; their inapplicability to the sale of new devices. A realisation of unworked opportunities close at hand had struck him dumb at first, and was now moving him to speech. He began to talk of advertisement, and to the best of my recollection he talked of advertisement for the next year or so.

That evening I had a lecture on the things advertisers did and the things they failed to do. It was delivered with the dogmatism proper to an elder brother, and with a note of reprehension as though I had in some way participated in the negligencies of the commercial world. I said little, and what I said was brushed aside or crushed. I did what I could to find excuses for backward and unskilful advertisers and was soundly scolded for their sins.

I recall the feeling rather than the substance of his outpourings. I remember that after a time we got up from our seats and walked about the grounds, and Dickon was still weighing pros and cons; we went into the more or less deserted exhibition galleries, and he held

me remorselessly before silent exhibits and denounced the futility of their appeals. He was still at it as we made our way at the close of the exhibition, with other *jusqu'au-bout-ists*, along a tiled subway that echoed to our feet and led to the Metropolitan station.

"Look at that thing!" he would cry. Look at that *silly* thing! What's the good of sticking that here?"

I recall distinctly my agonised protest. "Damn it! *I* didn't put it there!"

It restrained him not at all.

In the small hours he was sitting up in bed. "Advertisement, Billy," he said. "Advertisement! And the School of Mines may go and blast and burn and fuse and run itself to Jericho. The Voice has reached me, Billy! Come over and help us! The Hoardings call to me, the Magazines are moaning, and I come. I come."

"Oh, *shut* up, Dickon! Good-night!" I said, pulling the bed-clothes over my ears.

He dropped his work at the School of Mines almost immediately; he made no pretence of finishing off his term, and for some weeks he divided his waking time almost equally between an intensive study of advertising methods and brooding in Kensington Gardens upon his course of action. His first definite step was to go, after a very careful and elaborate preliminary exploration of the special field in question, to an advertising watchmaker in Cornhill, to get an interview with him, and tell him why his watches were not selling nearly so well as they might do in the West-end, in various suburbs, among the City clerks, in the East-end, and what he thought might be done to stimulate their sale. He had brought notes and sketches of almost all the advertisements the firm was using, and very politely and clearly he pointed out how stereotyped was their appeal and how mechanical their distribution. He convinced his hearer of advertisements going to waste and reaching nobody here, and of areas neglected there, and in the end he was allowed to make a scheme for a more scientific campaign. Hitherto the work had been done in an almost routine fashion from the office. His scheme was accepted. It succeeded, and his path in life was open before him.

2. MILTON'S SILVER GUINEA

I DO not know whether it was luck or some mysterious flair that made Dickon pitch upon Milton for his first attempt, but I doubt if he could possibly have chosen better. Milton liked him from the outset; and with Milton, Dickon at the ripe age of one-and-twenty fixed up his first contract and began pushing Milton's Silver Guinea by the score, by the hundred, by the thousand, into the waistcoat pockets of the middle-class. Faster than Milton could assemble his watches Dickon assembled his customers. That was only a little while before the mass production of watches was fully under way. Milton's watches, I fancy, came in whole or in part from Switzerland. And when presently the Waltham watches came, ticking very loudly from across the Atlantic, Dickon made a brave and successful fight for Milton for some years, with "Milton's Silent Silver Guinea; each personally tested, numbered, and individually guaranteed."

In the end Milton left the field of popular sales and became a professor of quality. Milton's Limited now sell "watches that are beautiful and intimate," but Dickon still steers the bulk of the output along the path of assertive veracity to the grateful customer. Only last summer I discovered him in his smoking-room at Dorking meditating profoundly over Milton's current advertisement in *Punch* a most gentlemanly affair.

"Do you remember Milton's in the old days, Billy?" he said, handing it to me.

"Rather."

"Changed since then. The money I've brought these people! Used to be cheap stuff."

I considered the page of *Punch*. I know of no other periodical whose advertisements so exactly catch the tone of the morning-room of a good West-end club.

"There are times," he reflected, "when I almost think of buying a Milton Beautiful and intimate .... They seem to be first-rate watches."

3. FORTY YEARS OF ADVERTISEMENT

MILTON'S was only Dickon's point of departure. A great light had come to him, and for a time he saw life wholly as a field of action in which he was to create appetites in people for commodities they had never in the least desired hitherto, or to direct their attention to the great superiority of common necessities when they are labelled distinctly with a proprietor's name.

Immense wealth lay in convincing people that an article could hardly be considered to exist unless it was vouched for by a respectable firm. In the days of our youth an enormous number of things were sold anonymously that are now sold under the brands of makers and packers. Our father had been one of the pioneers in this christening of goods with his Partington's Packet Teas. When I was a child every grocer had his own sorts of tea, his tea-chests with different qualities, and he weighed the tea out and packed it up for each customer. I can remember seeing that done. Almost everything he sold them — bacon, butter, lard, pickles, jams, biscuits — he sold from stocks of his own buying on his own individual reputation. He had pickled onions and cabbage in a great tub, as they still have them here in France. He used to display sugar-loaves in his window and chop them up in his shop; I would gaze fascinated at the sugar chopping in the Duxford grocer's. And the oilman sold his own lamp oil, and no one asked :where he got it. Mustard used to be bought for Mowbray at the chemist's.

But even in our childhood there was already a number of vigorous firms reaching their hands over the retail tradesman's shoulder, so to speak, and offering their goods in their own name to the customer. As an infant I used to love a particularly fascinating Oriental who infested the back pages of magazines, pouring stuff into the mouth of a forked fish in the interests of Nabob Pickles. He seems to have vanished utterly. Colman's Mustard insisted already upon being the only English mustard. It just stuck up its name in bright letters — everywhere. I do not know if it ever became the only mustard, or if there are other mustards now. There was also a "Keen's Mustard." Is "Keen's" still with us? "English" mustard that is — there are all sorts

of other mixings here in France. But I saw yesterday in the window of an *épicier* in Grasse neat little tins of Colman's, with the same vivid yellow ground and the lettering I remember spelling out from a train window in my childhood. If it is not the only English mustard everywhere, it is certainly that here.

Then there was soap. The great firm of Pears in those days had already thrust an individuality upon soap. *Pears' Soap* marks an epoch; I hope history will not neglect it. It was advertised with an unprecedented swagger; there were magazine and newspaper articles about how the firm did it; Pears bought Academy pictures by R.A.'s to reproduce in a sort of facsimile, gilt frame and all, and were among the first of all advertisers to be funny and laugh at themselves. Harry Furniss did a picture in *Punch* of a dirty tramp writing a soap testimonial: "Two years ago I tried Pears' Soap; since when I have used no other." They secured it and made a great thing of it.

These and a hundred other siren voices had called to me from wall and hoarding and printed page from my childhood up, but it was only now that Dickon was talking about them that I gave them more than a casual attention. I had never yet stirred up a restaurant by demanding Nabob Pickles and rejecting all inferior imitations, nor refused mustard until I was reassured by a sight of the Colman tin; but now I began, if not to clamour, at least to watch and discriminate under Dickon's critical guidance. He was grappling with a multitude of curious problems, and he insisted upon discussing them with me to the exclusion of every other subject.

"You see, Billy, you help me. The things you say — not much in themselves but they give me ideas."

Queer amusing problems some of them were. Cocoa had come into English life, and a number of firms were struggling to monopolise the market, among them Van Bouten, probably a Dutch firm, and Epps and Cadbury. Dickon was making a careful comparison of their different methods. "*Epps' Cocoa, Grateful and Comforting*," Dickon would repeat. "Wonderful words. Wonderful! Genius in them.... Billy, do you think *any* of these cocoas are the least bit different from the others?"

So earnest were our researches that we tried them to see. We sipped our cocoa and regarded each other with grave, inquiring faces.

These were purely English firms, I suspect. The battle of the cocoas, if it was fought in America at all, was probably fought under other names. I doubt if any commodity straddled the Atlantic in those days.

I remember him sitting on the hard, wooden seat of a compartment in the dingy, dirty, sulphurous Underground Railway of those primitive times, with three or four magazines on the seat beside him, discoursing of the advertisements of a medicine called, if I remember rightly, "Owbridge's Lung Tonic." Always those advertisements were encircled by a monstrous O. "Now, why that O?" he demanded. "It individualises. It is also probably on the bottle. If there is any other lung tonic going, it serves to make the other fellow seem an undistinguished nobody. But does it make people want to take the stuff much? Does it do anything to catch the eye of consumptive people? Think of anyone with lung trouble and a cough. Suppose he had this advertisement on one side, and on the other side one that said quite quietly, 'Clissold's Lung Tonic soothes and gives peace. And in that peace you heal,' which would you want to try? Think of those words, Billy, not too big and noisy but put where they seem to catch the eye almost by accident! Just whisper it. '*And in that peace you heal*.'"

In that period there was a great c1amour of pills and proprietary medicines generally; I think they were far more vigorously pushed then than they are now. Hardly anything in domestic medicine that was not being dragged out of its anonymous phase in the prevalent research for big business in small things. It is natural that many people should experience a certain internal dullness on occasion, and require artificial animation. In the pre-Victorian days this was almost always supplied by homely remedies; castor oil which chastened and sweetened the soul, rhubarb pills and anti-bilious pills, Epsom salts, and, for the defenceless young, flowers of sulphur. One took these things and corrected oneself as a cat eats grass. But no philanthropist ever filled columns with the praises of these more immediate gifts from God. So they were thrust aside by Beecham's Pills, Worth a Guinea a Box (marvellous words, oh! marvellous words!), Eno's Fruit Salts, and a crowd of other highly named and vividly packed proprietary mixtures.

The age of the secret remedy, says Dickon, is drawing to an end. Advertisements of medicine decline. Not that people are giving up their resort to a tabloid or a cupful of something out of a bottle directly they feel out of condition, but they are more and more disposed to take known and specified drugs and preparations. This does not mean a return to the little chemist's scales and measures — in Britain the little chemist has been almost syndicated out of existence — but a development of the great-scale marketing of tabloids and capsules, made up to this or that prescription, by firms of manufacturing druggists. Dickon has been pressing manufacturing chemists to bolder and bolder advertisement for some time. He wants them to market attractive little medicine cases for dressing-bags. The ordinary citizen will then have his physic at hand, like a case of golf-clubs, to meet all occasions. He will play upon himself as a conductor plays upon his orchestra, summoning the drums, soothing the brass. Far more entertaining this will be than the tin-whistle solo of the old panacea. There will certainly be great changes of fashion in the contents of these cases, and the objective of the advertiser of the old-fashioned proprietary medicine will be more and more to get and keep a footing in the case; to ensure his position as a contributory instrumentalist, so to speak, in the internal symphony of the citizen. He will become like the advertiser of automobile accessories instead of a principal dealer.

To compare one of the great American magazines, or even a modernised London weekly, with its equivalent of forty years ago, is an amazing revelation not only of the increased equipment of life nowadays, but of the continuous extension of strongly organised big businesses into what were then the trades and occupations of a great multitude of independent individuals. When I was young, England was far in front of America in the process, but American advertising has long since overtaken and outstripped anything we do on this side. France still follows us — now rather rapidly. Many of these big organisations seemed and still seem to be aiming at monopoly, but their sustained advertisement is the proof of their sustained sense of insecurity. Some have failed to achieve their object. Nobody has yet succeeded, for example, in replacing the small baker, though there have been various well- supported attempts; and cheese remains, like

art, above all standardisation.

I suppose that, as far as provisions go, it helped greatly in the concentration of the distribution trade into big stores in England that so much of the food of the country was imported. The shipping of it necessarily accumulated it into bulk, and made bulky handling easy. And the fact that America and other new countries were exporting so much of their food production developed a collection at centres there, and so made concentration easy for them also.

It was after some rather unfruitful work for an advertising shoemaker that Dickon began to interest himself in the bicycle. Big-scale selling of boots and shoes, he said, would come a little later, when machine manufacturing was better developed, but the bicycle would not wait. The bicycle was here and now. So he jumped on to the bicycle and travelled some way on it. The more he inquired into this then fashionable toy, the more convinced he became of its future as a normal means of transport. First it would develop as a holiday amusement, and then it would cheapen down to the daily worker's needs. He attended early shows and races and himself rode with some fury. He was an early believer in the diamond frame which has long since ousted all others. He was in bicycle advertising from the first, and he started one of the earliest bicycling weeklies, the *Flying Wheel*, which he afterwards sold and which still survives in an incorporated state. He made great efforts to organise the advertisement of wayside inns in cyclists' magazines. For a time he was very keen indeed upon what he called consumers' magazines. The ordinary citizen, however, refuses to accept the specialisation implied in a specialised magazine. In the case of bicycles, motor-bicycles, and automobiles, in the world of pet-fanciers and photography, such publications have worked fairly well, but they have never yet superseded advertising to the general consumer.

Quite early in his novitiate as an advertiser, I remember Dickon pointing out to me the interesting conflict between the advertisements in what he called Trade Papers and advertising to consumers. By Trade Papers he did not mean the Trade Papers of such great industries as iron and steel, but the Trade Papers of the smaller distributor. These latter appeal to the retailer, shop-keeper or hotel-keeper or whatever he may be, and the goods advertised are

often just those plausible imitations against which the big advertiser is warning his public. Often these less well-known goods are the output of minor packers and manufacturers selling on too small a scale for a public advertisement campaign, but supplying a quite sound and honest article. These typical Trade Paper advertisers want to sell their stuff to the man behind the counter and not to the public; they are on his side against his big enemies, and they expect him to pit his personal recommendation against the pervading public advertisement. The retailers' Trade Paper was in fact, according to Dickon, not advertisement, properly speaking, at all, but anti-advertisement.

But for Dickon, I suppose, I should never have seen an inch below the superficial appearances of countryside commerce. But because of the education he has given me, I recognise still in every wayside advertisement, in every article in every shop, in the steep streets of Grasse here, and upon the highway through Magagnosc to Nice, in the patches of cultivation about me, and the inscriptions upon my wine bottle and mustard jar, the flying fragments, the living details of the great battle between small and big, between the standardising organisation and the huckstering individual, which is still a dominating aspect of human life to-day.

4. MEDIA

ONE of Dickon's main discussions in those early days concerned what he called "media." A medium for him was anything you stuck your advertisement upon — a wall, a hoarding, a railway station, a landscape, a public conveyance, a book, a newspaper or other periodical. Or it might be an Exhibition or a Market Show. And then there was the house display, the shop-window, the imposing premises, the van. He invented for these primitive explorations of what has since become, in America at least, the great science of advertising, two beautiful terms, the *advertisand*, which was what you wanted to sell, and the *advertisee*, who was the person you wanted to sell it to. A good advertisement had to reach as many advertisees as possible as inexpensively as possible; it had not only to reach them but it had to create a buying desire for the advertisand; it had not simply to do that, but it had to make the route to the purchase clear and plain. These were his criteria in his judgments on the advertisements we saw about us, and by this standard he judged his "media."

He would weigh them against each other with extreme gravity. Walls or hoardings lasted longer than any daily or weekly periodical, and he went to great pains to estimate the life of a poster; he would even waylay and talk to billstickers. Enamelled metal was already in use; sheets of that, he reflected, talked for years. But they were difficult to place, and if there was any need for a change of appeal they were hard to recall. Also, they tired people by repetition.

"Imagine passing the same plaque every week-day for a year! There's season-ticket holders have to. Horrible, Billy!"

He was far in advance of the times in perceiving that an advertisement should not bore; the advertisers of those days sought strenuously to bore. He held also that landscape should be respected; he believed that it was very easy to arouse an antagonism to a commodity by rude and blatant methods. He considered the advertisements he saw in stations and vehicles abominably ill-done. They shouted where there was no need to shout. In those days railway advertisements were almost conscientiously ugly, and they

vied with each other in the size of their letters. “No need for such an uproar, Billy — no need for it. You’ve got your people there — they’re standing about and their minds are unoccupied. They’re quiet and at your disposal. Ready to take an interest. Why bawl at them?”

He was the first to offer the public anything of length and interest to read upon a railway platform.

Yet he could be compact with the best of them when the medium required it. It was he who thought of advertisements on the risers of the staircases going up and down to rail way stations, spaces hitherto neglected and mute. How. well I remember the excitement of that novel idea, the weighing of considerations, the problem of who to take it to, the feverish hope of great developments. “It must be witty,” said Dickon. “Short and witty. I won’t have them just yapped at.” To whom should he take it? For a time he hovered between a flea-powder and a chewing-gum.

It was in periodical publications that the greater future of advertising lay, he believed, and particularly in monthlies and weeklies. They were left about in the house and were turned over again and again by different people. “But advertisement must be fresh and different each time. This sort of thing — —”

Yes, it was, I remember, that same conversation in the Underground Railway I am recalling, and he pointed to a standard announcement in the back pages of some monthly magazine.

“This sort of thing is as exasperating as hiccoughs. It comes up again and again and you can’t control it.”

He doubted whether the daily newspapers were very much good for proprietary articles. They were good for theatres and amusements of all sorts, but not for an advertisand that had to go on selling. He watched people reading papers in trams and buses. They showed a vulture’s eye for the news they wanted and a wonderful capacity for sweeping disregard fully across the most tremendous displays of advertisement. He declared it was possible to print a newspaper advertisement so big that it was totally invisible. People would not read type that was visible three yards away. Their eyes went through the gaps.

“But any sort of stuff that has a quality of news— ‘Salmon is exceptionally cheap to-day,’ for example, with a reason for it, or

‘Mackerel in the Channel and Oranges in the Bay,’ would get them. *What* Bay? There you are! People would read that sort of thing like any other news.”

He weighed that idea carefully. Fishmongering and fruit selling were still far from any syndication or he would have started a scheme for a “Fishmongers’ Chalk Board” and a “Fruit Shop Bulletin” in some of the old dailies, a sort of eleventh hour announcement of goods to hand.

And as the grouping of shops into big centralised stores which my father had done so much to promote, went on, Dickon became more and more keen on what he called bringing the shop window into the morning paper. In those days it was beneath the dignity of the London *Times*, for example, to admit what are called displayed advertisements or break its grave grey expanses with pictures. The other papers in those conservative days did not care to be very different from *The Times*, and for a long time, indeed until the great Americanisation of the press by Harmsworth and Pearson, Dickon’s idea remained an aspiration. Long before it was done in England, the stores’ advertisements flared all over the American papers; there was an interval of a quarter of a century or more before the big London stores were brought into a similar intimate relationship to the popular press.

How recent all this seems to a man of my age! I remember when shop windows were made of little oblong panes, and lit in the evenings by a few jets of unassisted gas or an oil-lamp or so, and when the aim of the window-dresser seemed to be rather to impress the amount and nature of his stock upon the observer than to interest and attract him. Then came plate-glass and a depth and vastness of window-front hitherto undreamt of, and gas-mantles and electric light. People found a new interest in looking at the long array of shop windows, and the enterprising heads behind them realised by degrees — and there again my father with his “Shopping and Social Centre of North London Life,” was a pioneer — that it might be wise to allow people to make a resort of the interior of their establishments without being compelled, as they used to be compelled, to make purchases forthwith or get out. But for a long time the big stores were content with the local crowds they assembled, and I believe it

was Mr. Gordon Selfridge, coming from America with the brightest and newest ideas, who at last realised my brother's anticipation and carried his shop window into the London daily paper.

My brother has a great admiration for Mr. Selfridge, and I have been privileged to meet him, an unobtrusive man with something of the shy quiet of a poet. My brother compares him to Mozart on account of his interest and variety. "He makes some of the older advertisers sound like the village idiot at a fair beating on a pan," said Dickon. "A great artist! Oh! a very great and subtle artist! Some day people will make collections of those Selfridge advertisements."

So it was Dickon developed. The lax and incidental student of pure science became the enthusiastic specialist in marketing, an active force in that change of scale in distributing methods which is one of the most striking aspects of my immediate world. He began as I have told, with watches and boots and the early bicycle. He extended his interests into the special journalism of the bicycle, and then into a great variety of magazine enterprises. He found helpers and confederates, associates with capital and partners. He has always had the gift of being liked, and, oddly enough, his name helped him. It gave people a shock to begin with, so that they always remembered it distinctly, and then as they got to know him they went about remarking upon the paradox of his sterling honesty. He always kept faith not only with what he said but with what he thought the other fellow understood by it. In a little time he was the essential partner of Clissold and Breakspear, and he had his active fingers in several of the most promising of the new popular magazine firms that were then appearing.

In six or seven years he was already very well off, able to marry and establish himself in a fine house in the Cromwell Road. Quite early he relinquished in my favour his share in the hundred and sixty pounds a year my mother allowed us, so that I could go and live in more comfortable apartments near to the Royal College and carry on as a research student there. He went eastward to a flat in Bloomsbury until his marriage brought him west again.

But of that marriage and of mine I must tell later.

5. PHIL. TRANS. AS A MEDIUM

THERE drifts into my mind the substance of a silly little conversation that must have occurred somewhen in those old days before our divergent marriages had diminished our mutual familiarity. It was before my marriage anyhow, because I see Dickon in my only armchair as he talks, and there is a litter of notebooks and drawing material on the table.

He had been asking questions about the drift of my stuff and confessing himself baffled by it. "You're the brains of the family, Billy," he said a little ruefully. "Undoubtedly you are the brains of the family."

"Different brains," I said. "There is *one* glory of the sun and another of the moon and another of the stars."

"And another of the hoardings and magazine-covers," said Dickon — still a dozen years from sky signs and twenty years from smoke-writing on the blue.

He fingered the pages of my first papa in the Philosophical Transactions, a tetter of formulae, and then ran his eye over the rest of the contents.

"Blastopore of the snail," he objected. "Fancy poking about at the blastopore of the snail! It's — indelicate. And cryohydrates! This chap Oliver Lodge seems to be all over them. Wonder what they are? Well, this is your affair, Billy. It's up to you to display the name of Clissold properly in these Philosophical Transactions. If that is the end of life. Not my pitch. Not in the least my pitch. I wouldn't try to sell even a stethoscope through these Philosophical Transactions. No."

He ran his hand over the edges of the pages with a shuddering sound and reflected profoundly. A liveliness became apparent presently beneath his depression.

"But all the same, Billy, one of these days, mark my words, I'm going to cheer up this respectable and awe-inspiring periodical. Just to please myself. I know exactly what I'm going to do. I'm going round to the Secretary of the Royal Society, and I'm going to put such an innocent-looking contract past him that he won't see for a

moment what I'm up to, and then I'm going to give these dull old Philosophical Transactions of yours a real, spirited Christmas number, a genuine advertisement display. I'm going to have everything — coloured inset leaflets, extra sheets in the cover, cosmetics, lip-salves, hair-dyes, wigs, corsets — *men's* corsets! — scents, sensational pictures of lingerie, toilet fittings in ivory and silver and gold, the Parisian note loud and clear, soaps recommended by Lillie Langtry and Sarah. Bernhardt, and complexion stuff by Mary Anderson, ravishing portraits of these ladies in colour, super-colour, bath scenes by Alma Tadema, Lucullus bathrooms, smart restaurants, hotels, plages, Monte Carlo, Ascot week, Cowes, grey toppers, hatters to the Prince of Wales, manicure establishments, turf commission agents, dealers in real diamonds."

I said his advertisers wouldn't like that.

"The poor old dears! Temptation of St. Anthony wouldn't be in the same field with it!" said Dickon with the confidence of a man who knows what advertisers will stand. He did not worry about them. He was thinking of grave, earnest men in spectacles, aghast.

"Tonics," he said, as an afterthought. "Cures for debility. Ginger. Do you sing in your bath?"

Dickon never had a proper respect for the Royal Society.

"They lead devoted lives," I said.

"Bah!" said Dickon. "I know 'em. I know their secret cravings. They'll eat those advertisements. Doctor Faustus asks for his youth again! Mephistopheles restores it — small bottles, one guinea. You bet."

"Confound it!" I remonstrated. "Dignified work! Vital work! Why *will* you always insult men of science?"

And then at the sight of my artless indignation he threw a great fit of chuckles. "Oh, Billy!" he cried. "Oh, Billy! I got you," and kicked his legs about.

Always a great lout, my brother Dickon.

6. DICKON REFLECTS

WATCHING Dickon and watching the world through Dickon's eyes has been at times almost more instructive than watching it through my own. He embarked upon advertising at first, as I suppose most of the early advertisers did, in a cheerfully piratical spirit. It was to be his way of "getting it" — and that was all that mattered.

But as time went on and his interests spread and his wealth and power increased, he was obliged almost in spite of himself to recognise the part that he and his like were playing in the rephrasing of human life. They were assisting at a synthesis that was replacing the scattered autonomous various individualism of the past by a more and more intricate inter-dependent life. He began to think of advertising less and less as an adventure, and more and more as an integral social function, with obligations and standards of its own.

Temperamentally he had never liked falsehood; he had disliked even reserve if it misled; he always kept as clear as he could from the pill and patent medicine field, in which lying and bluff figure so largely, but he had never felt quite happy in his assertion that in the long run it was better to understate than overstate in an advertisement. It is largely true, but it has never been wholly true, that for the individual in business honesty is the best policy. For a trade as a whole it is certainly true, but not for the incidental adventurer. He can achieve his "get away," as the American criminals phrase it, leaving his trade discredited.

Dickon has been a prime mover in the organisation of advertisers into a professional organisation since the war.

He has helped to found lectureships and establish examinations in advertisement. I believe he would like to see a special university degree, Bachelors and Doctors of Advertisement. Some day we may come to that. Even before the war he was thinking of schemes for making deliberate falsehood, either in an advertisement or in the news columns of a newspaper, a felony. "If it was felony for our father to issue a false balance-sheet which only caused people monetary loss, it is far more felony to tell some poor old woman in a cottage that the filth you want to sell cures the pain in her back, and

so waste her last chance of proper treatment for kidney or cancer."

"Proper treatment!" said I. "Where?"

Dickon stuck to his own line of thought. "Here we have people making fortunes by keeping people ill, misinforming them about their symptoms, inducing them to trust in misdescribed goods. Billy, it's a crime against the Empire. It fills the streets with uncomfortable people. Poor mothers, induced to give the children they cared for innutritious muck, so that they grow up disappointing weeds. All these weedy people in the streets, in the buses, everywhere — just because you let advertisers say their muck is flesh-forming and frame-building and bone-making when every competent authority knows that it isn't. The poor mother isn't a competent authority. How can she be? She finds it out too late. Can't help herself. And in the long run it's bad for advertising. *It's had for advertising*. The advertising world has to sacrifice its black sheep. *Has* to! Advertisement, Billy, is too big a thing for lying — too big a thing. Much too big a thing. It's the web of modern life; it's the call of the flock. For most people, flat statement in advertisements is warranty, absolute warranty.

And it ought to be. They take it as they take the news in the adjacent columns. The voice of print, Billy, is the voice of God. To them it is. And it's up to us to see that they get it divine and true."

I raised my eyebrows.

"Divine and true," said Dickon, raising his voice above me massively.

I said I supposed our legal theory was that if there was misdescription there could be an action for damages.

"But how can the poor mutts bring actions against a firm with scores of thousands to play with? How can they do it? No, I want the fellows handled by the Public Prosecutor at the instance of a properly constituted Advertisement Society, and sent to jail."

I was amused. It was down at Dorking, and in 1912 or 1913, that he discoursed in this fashion. We had been playing tennis and we were on the terrace above the court. Dickon was sitting in a deck-chair looking flushed and freckled and over — healthy and very, very earnest, drinking an inadvisable whisky and soda.

I raised the old issue between his individualism and my Socialism.

What was all this talk about? Where were his lifelong principles? He was preaching rank Socialism. Wasn't *caveat emptor* the sound principle for an individualist world?

"Individualist be blowed!" said Dickon. "*Caveat emptor* was all very well between two Latin peasants at a bargain in that little old parochial Roman world — as it *was*, Billy, as it was — but the odds have altered now. I'm thinking of those weedy children and the old woman with a pain in her side."

7. THE ADVERTISER AS PROPHET AND TEACHER

THE Great War did much to develop Dickon's conception of his role in the world. He expanded mightily upon a diet of propaganda. There was a phase in the Reconstruction Period when it seemed to him that only an adequate advertisement campaign was needed to achieve the Millennium. I have given these vignettes of him in the eighties, in the later nineties, and in the pre-war days as he grew in strength and confidence. Let me anticipate for a section and complete his apotheosis of advertisement. I must recall what I can of a discourse of his towards the end of 1918. Then you will see how the imagination of Dickon the advertiser grew from that of the watch peddler he was forty years ago to its present dimensions.

If the Great War made nothing, it did at least appear for a time to have disorganised everything. The idea that society had been shattered and would need rebuilding was very prevalent in 1915. Everything was going to be rebuilt, fairer, sounder, juster, happier; that went without saying. That was the justification for a war that was otherwise inexplicable; it was a Phoenix flare. By 1916 this had become a standard promise for all the optimists who were engaged in whipping up the flagging enthusiasm of the nation. It crystallised into the word Reconstruction. All our English world talked Reconstruction, from the pro-war intellectuals, who dropped off from the war propaganda into silence or opposition after the collapse of the Stockholm Conference, to the deep *John Bull* bellowings of Horatio Bottomley, most popular of patriots and stimulators.

"A world fit for heroes," said Lloyd George — phrase unforgettable. How tremendously that word Reconstruction was bandied about! It waved as gallantly, it vanished at last as abruptly, as a contested banner in a riot. Many of us can still feel uncomfortable if some thoughtless person chances to revive it.

There was much pitiful moral tragedy in that fiasco, but to begin with Reconstruction embodied some bold and righteous hopes. And it completed the evolution of Dickon. Under its spell he became

temporarily a Utopian, more Utopian even than I in my Brompton days, and planned a world which never had been, but which, it seemed to him then, might very easily be. He had realised the tremendous possibilities of handling people in great masses revealed by this war advertising, in which he had played a conspicuous part; possibilities of teaching hygienic practices for example, suggesting new habits or routines, restating and changing general ideas, altering outlooks altogether. For a time these realisations possessed him completely.

His Utopianism was amateurish; he had all the crudity of a sudden convert. He wanted to see the energy that had been gathered into the great Ministry of Munitions turned directly to the material rearrangement of the country, the railways re-made, the countryside re-planned, slums swept away, old beauties restored, and much of our present towns and cities rebuilt. Then manifestly the war would not have been in vain. He saw himself directing the demobilising millions back to abundant work, and homes renewed and happy, through a vast advertisement organisation. "A land fit for heroes," he quoted continually — in his profession they call that sort of thing a "slogan" — and it seemed plain to him after the vision of large-scale human co-operation the war had given him, that the whole food supply of the world was capable of control, that population could be poured from district to district like water, instructed in the requirements of its new surroundings and held to its effort. He had some magnificent moments in that Utopian phase of his.

"The war's been a bloody mess, Billy, but at least it's taught us to handle things in the big way," he said: "the advertising way. We learnt it by selling mustard and motorcars, but these were only the things we learnt upon."

And again: "Advertising; what is it? Education. Modern education, nothing more or less. The airs schoolmasters and college dons give themselves are extraordinary. They think they're the only people who teach. *We* teach ten times as much. Why! even the little chaps who write the attractions in the big weeklies and monthlies, Kipling, Jack London, Bennett, Galsworthy, Wodehouse, all that lot — teach more than the schoolmasters do.

"Schoolmasters! What do you mean by education? When you get

down to hard tacks. *Just old-fashioned, primitive advertisement done by word of mouth in a room!* Why! a class-room schoolmaster teaching by shouts ought to be as out-of-date nowadays as a town-crier!

"The only use I've got for schools now is to fit people to read advertisements. After that, *we* take on. Yes, we — the advertisers. You may laugh, Billy; it's true. All new ideas come as a shock at first. Don't just laugh at it like that. Don't sit like an oaf and grin. Tell me what's wrong with it.

"And even in the schools we could put ten times better lessons over the heads of the masters now — with a properly organised cinema. Ten times better. But we leave the cinema to a lot of music-hall muckers and close-up chorus girls, as though it wasn't worth using."

He laid great stress upon the cinema, but I do not recall him saying anything about broadcasting in those Reconstruction days. But, of course! One forgets how fast the world moves. In 1919 there was no broadcasting. With broadcasting I can see Dickon reducing his poor schoolmasters to the last extremity of usherdom — mere conductors on his omnibus to knowledge. Before broadcasting he had at least to leave them an occasional use of their voices. Now they would just hum on the loud-speaker and stand about and mark registers. Gagged, perhaps, to prevent any personal intervention.

His denunciation of schoolmasters increased and intensified, of schoolmasters and the clergy, as his imagination of what might be done with the crowd developed. He would talk to me in his hectoring, elder-brother way, but always with a twinkle in his eye and a touch of burlesque in his tone and an evident readiness to jump overboard from his argument at any time with a sudden splash of laughter if it became too difficult to maintain; and his argument was always exaltation of the modern advertising method and always contempt for the refinements of the intellectual world.

"These fellows in caps and gowns think you can make things decent by being genteel in a corner and shuddering and sneering whenever you hear a noise. I ask you! You've got to *explain* your Millennium to people, Billy; you've got to make 'em want it, and you've got to tell 'em how to get it. Then they'll get it. Just as they

get Lucas lamps and safety-razor blades or any other old thing. The advertisand is different, but the method is the same.

Why, Billy! Look at things plainly. With all reverence — —"

He adapted his ruddy face roughly and quickly to express all reverence. It was just an habitual concession unnecessary in my case.

"What were the twelve Apostles? Drummers, just drummers. Travelling in salvation. Introducing a new line. Why did Paul raise his voice at Athens? Because he hadn't a Megaphone. And the miracles they did? Sample bottles. To this day it's advertisement. What is a wayside crucifix? — an advertisement of the faith. What is Christianity? — an advertisement campaign. Tell 'em. Tell 'em. Tell 'em all you can. It's the method of social existence."

He turned to biology, to the poetry of life.

"The very flowers by the wayside, Billy, are advertisements for bees!"

My grin armed the fighting spirit in him.

"Vulgar you think it is?"

"Frightfully."

"If there's anything vulgar about modern advertisement, Billy, it's because it's been so concerned about pills and soap and pickles. Just a passing phase. A man or a class or a religion or — anything that will not advertise isn't fit to exist in the world. It means it doesn't really believe in itself. To want to exist and not to dare to exist is something beneath vulgarity.... That's why I have such a contempt for your rotten, shy, sit-in-the-corner-and-ask-the-dear-Prince-of-Wales-to-dinner-once-a-year Royal-Society.

"If the soap-boilers did no more for soap than your *old* Royal Society does for science," said Dickon, "nobody would wash."

8. DICKON'S MARRIAGE

BUT this post-war talk is, as I intimated, out of place. I will return to the Period of Reconstruction later. If nothing else was reconstructed then, we were, and our post-war interchanges form a distinct and separate chapter in our history. Before I go on to tell how the war shook up and released and stimulated our ideas about things in general, I must tell of his marriage and of a considerable divergence of our ways of living. When I was three-and-twenty things happened to make me break away from the life of pure research I had seemed destined to follow. I became an employee and later a director of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co., I left London to live at Downs-Peabody, and I became more and more involved in the huge industrial developments that have occupied the greater half of my life. They had little or no advertising side. They brought me into a world of associates quite apart from Dickon's; they carried me abroad for long spells and made me by comparison cosmopolitan.

He remained extremely English. He lived for some years after his marriage in the Cromwell Road, and then he bought Lambs Court near Dorking and became a substantial figure in the substantial suburbanism of Surrey. I, too, married a little while after he did, but marriage, which stabilised him, disorganised all my intentions about life. My marriage was a failure. I will tell of it in due course, but for some years a certain chagrin may have helped to make my visits to Dickon's home less frequent than they might otherwise have been. His marriage was heartily successful, ostentatiously successful; and for a while I suspected him, I think now unjustly, of feeling that I was to blame for the muddle I was in.

Ostentatiously successful I write, but whether it is to be regarded as a perfect marriage I do not know. I doubt if there is any such thing as a perfect marriage. It may happen — as an accident. To this day I find a certain lurking perplexity about my sister-in-law in my mind; I have never been able to exorcise it. There was something extraordinarily fine about her — and something cold and aloof. Nor do I yet see as a clear and consistent thing Dickon's relations to her. He was so incapable of aloofness. He was floridly and magnificently

loyal to her and she was profoundly loyal to him, but I do not know, I cannot imagine what there was down there at the very bottom of things between them. Was it love, the tenderness and infinite consideration she had for him? It was love at first, no doubt. And mixed with his infinite respect for her, his pride and his rare overwhelming tenderness, there was something resentful. Did he always suppress that resentment in her presence? I do not know. I will tell as much as I know, what I saw, what I inferred, and leave it to the reader. Plainly there are things here outside the range of my feelings and experiences.

She was a very small person; she had fine exquisite features; she was not a short woman, not dwarfish in any way, but simply made upon a delicate scale; she looked much more fragile than she was, and when I first encountered her she was a little strained and artificial in her manner because she was so valiantly resolved not to be shy. I met her only a month or so before the marriage, and when the marriage was already fixed. Dickon had discovered her III Bloomsbury, and I had a sense that she had been sprung upon me after a period of uneasiness and concealment on Dickon's part. There was a sort of tea-party in Dickon's sitting-room, and she was there under the protection of a cousin, whom I forget altogether, and I had the spectacle of Dickon, my stern, dogmatic brother, almost dishevelled with nervousness, proffering tea, handing cakes, asking me — me! — if I took sugar, and watching my face for the faintest intimations of a judgment.

She was little, not very well dressed, guarded. That much I saw at the time. We talked about pictures, about which none of us knew very much, and about music. At Lambs Court there is still a photograph of her in those early days. One had to sit quite still for some seconds in those days in order to be photographed, and so if one did not get blurred one looked like wax-works. She had contrived to sit quite still. How unaccustomed now are our eyes to those later Victorian costumes! She had a collar to her dress that reached to her little ears and great puffed sleeves and a whale-bone figure.

I forget most of the incidents of that meeting now, but I remember Dickon afterwards parting from me at Hyde Park Corner. "You don't

see what there is in he!" at first, old man," he said, for the third or fourth time. Though I had never said a word to betray that I did not think her the most obviously and instantly desirable of all possible sisters-in-law. I had hardly said anything. I did not know what to say.

On our way to Hyde Park Corner he had told me things about her. She was the daughter of a doctor in Bloomsbury, a very competent general practitioner. She was a connection of his early partner, Breakspear. She had passed some examinations — I forget what they were but they were difficult ones. She drew beautifully. She was clever at musk and spoke French and German wonderfully well. She was an only child, which, I think, accounts for a sort of reserved inwardness in her manner; she was untrained in the exposures, criticisms, recriminations, and habitual intimacies of family life.

She read, I was to discover later, and she studied, but she was not accustomed to talk. There were moments when I was to watch her listening to Dickon's discourse and compare her in my mind with a passenger waiting for a ferry with the river in flood. Waiting as one waits on a fine agreeable day when waiting is no hardship. Waiting, moreover, with no intention of travelling on the stream. And — to begin with, she was, in a peculiar still way, in love with Dickon and devoted to him. He, too, was in love with her, but just the least bit disappointed, I felt, that she did not make a better show in front of me. Once or twice during those early encounters he tried to draw her out and exhibit her paces, but she had little, scarcely perceptible, ways of stopping that. It was amusing to see Dickon interested in an article that declined to be pushed. He would have been a terrible impresario for a showy woman.

I began to think her a little less undistinguished after a fourth or fifth meeting, and at the wedding I had a feeling that for some obscure reason she had hitherto been concealing from me and the world in general an ability to be, if she chose, conspicuously pretty.

But I still didn't see why it had been necessary for my bright and exuberant Dickon to marry her. I did not see why he of all people should be mated to incarnate restraint.

It was a thoroughly respectable wedding, and the house hold they set up in the Cromwell Road was in the highest degree respectable. A time was to come when I was to think a lot of Minnie's taste, but in

the furnishing of that first house nothing of her sensitive fastidiousness appeared. Perhaps it was not yet fully awake. I suppose Dickon must have just carried her through the furniture shop with him and given *her* no time to meditate. The house was, my brief disturbing wife declared, when she paid *her* introductory visit, "utterly and hopelessly *banal*."

I was married, as I will tell later, about a year and a half after Dickon, and my marriage took him by surprise as much as his had taken me. I kept Clara an even closer secret from Dickon than he had kept Minnie from me. Perhaps I felt what his opinion would be of the Allbut ménage. I sprang her upon Dickon and Minnie within a few weeks of our marriage. I took her to call upon Minnie. I went in a faintly irritated mood because Clara had seen fit to supplement her wardrobe from an aunt's supplies, and had suddenly become much more a woman of the world and much less of a hard-up art girl than was seemly in the future wife of a struggling research student.

A natural antagonism flared up at the first encounter of Minnie and Clara. Clara was an effusive human being, and particularly so with strangers. She fell upon Minnie with cries and embraces. "What an exquisite little dear you are!" she said.

I was beginning to forget that Minnie was so very small; I saw her disentangling herself with an unobtrusive distaste from those swift familiarities. Clara praised her clothes loudly — they were in the current fashion of the time — insisted upon regarding them as the triumph of :t special effort, and then, with an obscure perception of rebuff, turned her enthusiasm to the house and the furniture.

"Jolly *good* things you have!" she exclaimed. "Where did you get them all?"

"Dickon and I went to Maple's," said Minnie, regarding her strictly later Victorian surroundings for a moment as though she had just seen them for the first time.

Clara looked round for some piece that might be exceptional. There was nothing exceptional. So she pounced on a book.

"*You* read George Meredith too!" she said.

"Here's Dickon!" said Minnie, relieved as the door opened....

I became more acutely aware of the sketchy quality in Clara's smartness as Dickon came in. It was my turn now to watch for

unspoken verdicts. Clara's way with men was sometimes a little over-confident....

It was not a good call. Dickon, I could see, did not warm to Clara. Minnie seemed deliberately to be refrigerating the conversation, and we left with Clara in a splendid rage.

"So *that's* my prospective sister-in-law!" I remember her saying on the doorstep.

She paused. "*Watchful*," she whispered. "She watches."

And then she embarked upon an exhaustive summary of Minnie's deficiencies. The burthen was that there was nothing in Minnie, but for all that it was clear that there was much to be said about her. Firstly, she was personally insignificant. Secondly, she was cold-blooded. Next, her style of dressing was provincial, timid, genteel. She was under-dressed. On such an occasion as this it was rude and offhand to under-dress. One was expected to dress a little. To meet a chosen sister-in-law was an important occasion and ought to be treated as such. One ought to make an effort.

The ashes of our controversy over the borrowed finery glowed again for a moment.

Minnie's furniture and her household management, insisted Clara, had the same limitations as her costume and the same uncivil negligence. The tea, for some reason, bad greatly offended Clara. There had been a lack of variety in the tea; for the first visit of an imminent sister-in-law there ought to have been display; everybody nowadays gave little sandwiches, cucumber sandwiches, paste sandwiches. Amusing things. Light things one just took in one's hand. It looked skimpy not to do so. And dull. Buttered buns were ridiculous; hefty things like that ought to be relegated to the nursery. (At tea Clara had "adored" buttered buns, had received them with acclamation.)

And that furniture! That *heavy* furniture! Maple's! *Carte blanche* to them to furnish, no doubt. No individuality. No character. Where *could* my brother have met her? No doubt we should have to go to dinner there so soon as we were married. It would be our first dinner party together. Could we last two hours? What should we talk about? Even in that forty minutes' call the talk had caught and hung time after time.

“Well, anyhow,” reflected Clara, “I shan’t want much of a frock for *that*!”

I said very little to Clara’s tirade, because it shocked and irritated me to hear my own secret judgments on Dickon’s wife caricatured, made monstrous and preposterous, and expressed in terms of intense personal hostility. “She isn’t so bad,” I said. “And she makes Dickon happy.”

“*Does* she make him happy?

“Your brother,” said Clara, following up her own question, “would never own to a failure if he felt he could pull it through to look like a success. He’s — stiff stuff. As stiff as you are. Obviously she’s as flat as ditchwater. Uninteresting. Prosaic. She paralyses him. If she hadn’t been there — he would have been different.

Sooner or later he’ll be going round the corner. You mark my words, Billy. But he’ll never own up.”

I detested her for saying it, but there was something of a likeness to Dickon in that.

“And she won’t either,” jerked Clara, suddenly completing her impression.

“Won’t what?”

“Own up.”

9. LAMBS COURT

THERE with the help of Clara's vivid expressiveness, which sometimes succeeded in being on the whole unaccountably right with every detail wrong, you have a sketch of Minnie. She was neither fiat nor prosaic; she was never uninteresting; but it is true that she never seemed to take hold of Dickon, and that she did not seem to take hold of life. He had taken hold of her, and she liked that; it warmed her as much as anything could warm her, but there was nothing about her holding on to him if presently he let go. She was, I had long realised, a creature of fine secondary shades and complicated shynesses and reserves, and I have never known anyone with a less voracious will to live.

I doubted from the first whether he appreciated her fine shades. His natural disposition was towards poster colourings more suitable for display. But gradually I came to see that it was not the delicacy nor the fine shades that he cared about. He had a profound unshakable belief in her honesty, loyalty and common sense, and she justified his belief. Whatever else she mayor may not have been to him, she was, so to speak, his treasury, his brake, his wary councillor. And though she was never a brilliant talker in society, I noted that when he quoted her sayings and cited her opinions, there came out a shrewd individuality quite different from his own.

They did not have children for a while. Then in the course of four or five years came a couple of sons and a daughter, and they went to the space and dignity of Lambs Court and took a great flat in Queen Anne's Mansions as their *pied-à-terre* in London. It was only after her death and the marriage of young Richard that Dickon left Queen Anne's Mansions for the chambers in Bordon Street in which this book begins. There were gaps sometimes of two or three years when I would be abroad, or in the north, or in the Midlands, and when I saw little of Dickon and Minnie, and so my memories pass almost abruptly from that rather commonplace, rather nervously self-conscious and apologetic home in the Cromwell Road to a very prettily furnished and well-ordered country house, with a small but very well-dressed and maternal Minnie, keeping a competent eye on

her nursemaids and instructing an entirely respectful gardener in the development of the very beautiful terrace gardens she created. The two figures do not merge so completely as they would have done if our acquaintance had been continuous. In that case I have no doubt the earlier, immature, more fragile and shyer Minnie would have been replaced day by day and bit by bit and effaced altogether from my memory.

In that second phase Minnie had far more confidence, far more grip upon the world, than in the first. There was a subtle difference in her relations with Dickon, but it would be hard to define what that difference was. Perhaps she had passed through phases of dismay and reassurance. I thought his attitude towards her was a little more effusive and formal than it had been, and more habitual. I thought that she seemed no longer to be observing him with the happy interest of their earlier time. It was as though she had got used to him and had accepted something that had not been present in the beginning, or resigned herself to the absence of something she had once thought there.

She had become a great gardener, which was rather wonderful after a girlhood in Bloomsbury, and she was also beginning to know quite a lot about furniture and pictures. Later on she was to become something of a buyer of pictures and etchings. She would help struggling artists, until she felt the touch of proprietorship to which the helped are prone. The children were happy and delightful then, in a perfect nursery and with an excellent, kindly nurse; but I do not remember ever seeing Minnie romp with them, and I doubt if in all her life she ever lost her temper with them. Yet she loved them. Flowers and furnishing, I think, she cared for more than living things; she could do so much more for them without provoking them to come back upon her clamorously. They did not climb upon her, they did not shout or hammer at her, as human beings might at any time do.

After a time I went no more to Lambs Court. I stayed away for nearly seven years. While Dickon's marriage had turned out successfully, mine had ended in the uncomfortable tangle I will describe later. I was tied to Clara legally for the rest of my life, and unable to marry again. I was welcome at Lambs Court as a sort of

bachelor brother, very welcome, even after I had been cited as a co-respondent in the Evans divorce case, but I felt a certain exemplariness in Dickon's attitude towards me and an implicit criticism in the immense discreet silences of Minnie. There were times when Dickon's gestures, pauses, acts seemed to say almost as plainly as though he spoke the words: "My dear fellow, why are you in this uneasy mess? It is so perfectly simple. All you have to do is to marry Minnie, make much of her, stick to her, stand up for her, stick to business — and keep strange women in their proper place. Out of the picture. And there you are, you know!"

Quite possibly my suspicions were unjust. At any rate he was habitually proud of her and as good and faithful a husband as most of the rich and rising business men of Surrey.

Then came my attempt to live with Mrs. Evans. That was in the turn of the century and people in England were still unprepared to tolerate a ménage, however stable, of two unmarried people. So long as I was a man of the world, carrying on a series of incidental intrigues almost openly, I was socially acceptable anywhere; but an attempt at illicit domesticity, with a still undivorced Clara, however disreputable, in existence, was too much for the standards of the time. If I could have divorced Clara and married Sirrie Evans, all would have been well. I wouldn't accept that verdict. I fought. I betrayed excessive resentment.

I would not ask Minnie for any help in the matter, I made no attempt to bring her and Sirrie, together, I said nothing to Dickon, but I felt acutely their failure to apprehend our situation. Minnie ignored it. She did not know this Mrs. Evans, and apparently she would not know this Mrs. Evans. She asked me to come to Lambs Court alone, and I never answered her invitation. I did not see her again or communicate directly with her until a year or more after Sirrie's death.

To this day that lack of initiative perplexes me. By the time of the Evans affair she and I had become very friendly. She did not know Sirrie, she may not have been prepared to take any very serious risks about her, but still she might have assumed that I should not have become attached to a woman without good qualities, and it would have been quite possible for her to have found out and met Sirrie in

some roundabout way before committing herself. But she just did nothing. She was one of a number of people who just did nothing to help us. Something cold and distant there was in that. Or something profoundly timid? Or some aversion from relationships into which there entered a possible thread of passion?

Dickon knew Sirrie slightly. One might have imagined that he could have broken down that icy barrier by a word or so. But he did not, and perhaps he could not. The barrier may not have been solely for the benefit of Sirrie.

I do not know. Sirrie may have symbolised many things for Minnie and Dickon that had little to do with me. I continued to meet Dickon in London. We had both become members of the Ermine Club, and we would lunch or dine and gossip together without any allusion to the complete separation of our households. Nothing was ever explained. We belonged to the same group of after-lunch talkers. We gibed at each other's opinions and went to one or two theatres together. But about the rest of his life during that estrangement I made no inquiry beyond such information as he volunteered. I continued to be aware of Minnie only in relation to him.

He varied towards her no doubt. Sometimes when I met him in London Minnie was as remote from him but as necessary to the world and as much taken for granted as the Atlantic or the Equator. At other times he was full of quotations from her and references to her. Then, oddly enough, I was not so sure of his serene and complete assurance about her. It has been the common habit of our two lives never to pry into the intimate proceedings of the other, but I have had a feeling that in these phases of allusion, these passages peppered with "My wife says this" and "Minnie does that," he perceived himself under a necessity to maintain her. Yet it would be difficult to define what it was he maintained her against.

Whatever imperfections and difficulties there were in his married life, whatever hidden relaxations there were of its outward integrity, none of them ever came to the surface as a visible infringement of Minnie's dignities. There were, I happen to know, what the French call *passades*, but the heroines were obscure young ladies, amply compensated and silenced. He was, I repeat, as good and faithful a

husband as most honourable, prosperous men.

One spring day in 1910 I found myself put down at a Romer lunch party next to Minnie. I was sure they would put me next to her as soon as I saw her in the drawing-room. She had altered very little; she was, perhaps, stronger and firmer and better dressed. She looked like very good porcelain amidst the metallic splendours of Lady Romer's assembly.

I put as good a face as I could upon the encounter. I asked after Lambs Court and the children.

"William the Second," she said, "is absurdly like you. He has a gift. He is going to draw — wonderfully. The two brothers together are like Dickon and you — even to the way they insult each other."

She said something about my coming down to see them. Then in a pause she made a great effort. "Billy," she said very softly, "I was so sorry to hear of your loss."

I was too astonished to say anything.

"I wanted to write. I was stupid.... I often don't do things I want to do."

She was feeling her way towards an apology, and she was flushed and sincere. It was a sort of confession for one who could not confess. She became more incomprehensible to me than ever. I was quite unable to get her into relationship with that old and now healing sore. I dismissed the attempt.

"I would like to see something of William the Second," I said, after a clumsy interval. "I've neglected my god-son."

"Next week-end?" she said as awkwardly....

It was the most intimate moment we ever had together.

Thereafter our outward friendship — and I can imagine no friendship of Minnie's that except for the rarest moments was other than external — was resumed.

10. HONOURS LIST

BETWEEN that meeting and my later memories of Minnie, streams all the storm, tragedy, and illumination of the war. The war that has changed so much and yet ;t times seems to have changed nothing.

I never expected the war to happen until it was actually happening. Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. were naturally in touch with much pre-war armament business, and armament seemed to us — to me, at any rate, it seemed — a foolish way of using up good metal that fools had got to pay for as highly as possible. I still think the war need not have happened, and that the amount of good that has come out of it is incomparably smaller than the waste and evil. It is easy to be wise after the event and say how inevitable the catastrophe was, but I do not think it was inevitable even so late as July, 1914. More intelligent men in the Foreign Offices could, I think, have averted it even then. But few of us were intelligent and imaginative enough to realise the enormity of the disaster until it was upon us. We expected a quick war, possible humiliations, great changes of the map and far less strain, destruction, and uprooting. Most of our Governments and rulers were as little able to foresee and fear as so many mentally defective children with a box of matches in a powder magazine. At last a match was dropped. Then for a time the skies were darkened, the world was full of thunder, the torrents of disaster poured. There was a clatter of falling things, a flare of burning. Millions of young men suffered detestable things and died and passed. And at last when it had come to seem that no end would ever be possible, the storm was over and the skies cleared magically.

The tornado struck Lambs Court, seemed likely to extinguish the life of Lambs Court altogether, and left it at last — with scarcely a flower-bed ruffled. Dick and William, my nephews, both went into the war and survived it

William unscathed, Dick with a bullet wound and a six months' spell of prison in Germany after Gough's disaster in 1918. Indeed, Lambs Court came through it amazingly. Week-end parties were already resumed in 1919. And Dickon was made a baronet! Dickon was made a baronet and Minnie became Lady Clissold — to my

infinite amazement and perplexity.

The war, I say, took me by surprise, but so soon as it was under way my role was marked out for me. I was too old for the earlier enlistments, and I doubt if in any case I should have volunteered. I gravitated naturally to technical work, and was presently involved in the new-formed Ministry of Munitions. I did four years of bitter contentious work, and I should suppose that Roderick and I between us saved the British taxpayer many, probably negligible, millions of pounds. My estimates of current honesty and current intelligence were considerably lowered by those experiences; I conceived a passionate contempt and distaste for the higher ranks of the British Army that I still have trouble in controlling, and I came to consider and treat the military, naval, and aerial expert, salaried adviser of the War Office to-day and highly salaried official of an armament group to-morrow, as the moral inferior of a Constantinople tourists' dragoman.

At the end I dodged the shower of honours with considerable difficulty. There were a number of people who were deeply concerned that I should get something and be generally soothed, pacified, implicated, and shut up. I transferred a particularly persistent suggestion of a K.B.E. to a useful subordinate who might have been passed over, the sort of man to appreciate it, and I tried to use whatever claim to attention I might have in hunting down one or two exceptionally scandalous cases. In that I failed completely. The Press would not touch my entirely convincing facts. Nobody would touch them. One of my worst offenders married his loot to American money and became a bright ornament for any London dinner-party; another took the fancy of Royalty; another embarrassed me by appearing on the board of an allied steel firm with which we had the friendliest relations. After a while I realised that I was being unreasonable and self-righteous. I began to laugh at my own virtue. If there was to be a real inquisition into stolen goods, where should we end?

Dickon was more surprised by the war even than I was. He had never believed that these European armies were really in earnest, and he had been inclined to approve of German imperialism as of something pleasantly flamboyant and picturesque in an age inclined

to be prosaic. It advertised amazingly. When the guns began to go off he was outraged beyond measure at the breach of faith. It was as though a large bill-stickers' hoarding had begun to kill and eat people. There seemed nothing for it at first but violence with an axe.

He was furiously indignant against the Germans. So indeed was I in the early months. So was all England. At this resurrection of war. The awakening of England in the autumn of 1914 may have been uncritical and foolish, but it was thoroughly honest, and so far at any rate as the million odd volunteers were concerned, heroic. By the end of the year Dickon had somehow contrived to get into khaki. He was fully fifty, and I do not know how he managed it, but he did. He had once in the early bicycle days spent some months in that now forgotten supplement to the military might of Britain, the Volunteers. He was keen then on cyclist riflemen. He may have exaggerated his former standing in that force. At any rate, he was taken on. I cherish a snapshot of his substantial figure with a lieutenant's star upon his collar, looking very earnest and unsuitable. Afterwards, for some reason of etiquette in connection with supplies, they jumped him up to be a temporary colonel, and at that he could stand beside the stoutest of them, stouter than any and taller than most. He was trained at Checkershill and then on Cumberbatch Moor, but that was as near as he travelled on the road to the trenches. He went to France, indeed, but by a different route. They found they wanted him on the commissariat.

A man who could advertise things for retail sale was naturally supposed by the military authorities to know how to buy and distribute anything. He did some thoroughly sound work for them, and afterwards he became a great factor in civil food-control organisation. He worked hard under Rhondda, an able, ailing, concentrated man who might be alive to-day, perhaps, if it had not been for the strain of that work, and after Rhondda died Dickon went on with Clynes, a Labour leader, who had joined the Government. Through Dickon I met Clynes on two or three occasions. He was a little intelligent-looking cockatoo of a man, who, like Brer Rabbit, kept on saying nuffing all the time, in the face of every conversational allurement. Perhaps, like one or two others of his colleagues, he needs a platform, a large hall and adequate

interruption, before he can really express what is in him.

"Does he know anything?" I asked Dickon afterwards. "He knows what he doesn't know," said Dickon.

"He's perfectly satisfactory to work with."

A foretaste of the Labour Government of 1924.

Dick, my elder nephew, volunteered before his father at the beginning; William was taken later, protesting, but without bitterness, that it wasn't his fight. Lambs Court was presently filled with convalescents and a trained staff, and my niece Winnie was sent up to London, out of sentimental range, to work with great energy at the manufacture of bandages, a little resentful because her mother would not allow her to drive a car for the Ministry of Munitions. Minnie presided capably at Lambs Court, and presently, after strains and endless petty hardships, scanty food, darkened homes, tiresome air-raids, gleams of leave for the boys, almost overwhelming anxiety over Dick's disappearance — he was "missing" for three weeks — and a sort of universal neurasthenia, the war came abruptly to its hysterical end. Down either side of Pall Mall hundreds of captured guns were displayed, the streets of London were alight again and swarming with a vast, wearily enthusiastic multitude which laughed and shouted because it did not want to howl and cry, and the war was over. And Dickon was talking with passionate conviction of a Britain born again out of these troubles and of a "reconstructed" world.

That was the background so to speak to the affair of his baronetcy.

I realised that he did not intend to refuse it, with an indignation that now strikes me as excessive. At the time it seemed extravagantly important to me that my brother should not accept this thing. I suppose I was overworked and worried, in a state of inflamed honesty, more indignant and less cynically patient than I have ever been before or since. I was in conflict with my business associates. Perhaps I should have been better employed in watching them. Brampsheet particularly — he had just got his peerage — was against all post-war scandals and inquiries, and my anger extended to the social world which was sheltering the men I wanted to expose. This had been the war that was to end all that sort of thing. These exasperations made me see Dickon's title as a sort of treason to the insurgent radicalism that had always been implicit between us.

“Dickon!” I protested. “That old livery! In an age of Reconstruction!”

“Historical, time-honoured.”

“Everything we want to say good-bye to.”

“All the same — —”

“You mean to take it, Dickon?”

“Yes. Yes, I think I may take it.”

“You’ll have to kiss the king’s hand?” I invented.

Dickon pretended not to hear.

“You’ll have to kiss his hand,” I jeered.

“No more than kissing a book.”

He went off at a tangent to answer unspoken objections of mine. “You live in a sort of dreamland, Billy,” he said. “Science and the future and all that. Even now. In spite of your business and money. But I live in the present time. I’m here and now. I’m contemporary. A child of the age. This sort of thing is the fashion of our time. It’s just a symbol of success and service. Very well. It may not be the best of media, but it’s one way of saying ‘I’m here!’ That’s how I look at it.”

It was as if we were back in our Brompton diggings.

That, I remembered suddenly, had been his standing argument against my Socialism.

“It’s bolstering up the old order. You take the honour, yes — but you give your adhesion.”

He said I lacked *savoir-faire*. That if one went on those lines one would become a “lone wolf.” One didn’t bolster up the old order. On the contrary, it acknowledged itself subdued. It stood on one side to make way for one. Saluted. And besides — with a quick change of line — he wanted Minnie to be Lady Clissold.

“Have you asked her?”

“And the old man’s name,” said Dickon, with a second flash of deafness. “I’ve always had a feeling about the honour of the old man. Here it is at last — his name rather than mine. Sir Richard Clissold, Bart. After the way they let him down. After that last scene at the Old Bailey.”

“Sir Richard Clissold Boop,” said I.

“Eh?”

“Boop. The Boops and their Jubilee. Good God, man, you haven’t forgotten the Boops, have you? All this, Dickon, strikes me as the most infernal Boopery. You’ll have to wear a little Boopy sword. And silk legs! And the Boops will stand around in their little Boopy robes, dressing-gowns and tea- cosies and table-cloths and curtains and antimacassar wigs and newspaper hats, all very solemn and solemn, to welcome you. Don’t you remember?”

He did. But he didn’t want to do so. He embarked upon an insincere defence of royalty. “They” were so hard-working, so devoted. “Hardest-working couple in the Empire.”

“To no purpose,” said I, “except to stick on.”

“So much to do,” said Dickson. “Reconstruction everywhere. Why divide people by quarrelling with that?”

I told him that people of his sort defended the crown because they were too lazy to set about getting it out of their way. They only pretended to like it. It obstructed the traffic. It falsified realities.

“Bit too many royal visits and processions just now, I admit,” said Dickon. “Still — they *are* the decentest!”

He shrugged his shoulders, and tried to look indulgent and reasonable and as much like *The Times* and *Punch* and a white top-hat in Ascot week as possible.

It was not only the traffic in the streets, I said. It was the traffic in men’s minds. It put the common people wrong about the purposes .of the State.

“They love it,” said Dickon.

“That’s just it,” said I. “It’s a lumbering perversion of human respect. A modern community can’t afford to waste its respect like that!”

That consideration has been my unwavering objection to monarchy and has made me that rare being, an English republican. I am puzzled by the readiness of liberal-minded English people to acquiesce in and conform to the monarchy. The king is necessarily the head and centre of the old army system, of the diplomatic tradition, of hieratic privileges, of a sort of false England that veils the realities of English life. While he remains, the old army system remains, Society remains, the militant tradition remains. They are all bound up together, inseparably. The people cannot apprehend

themselves in relation to the world while, at every turn and crisis of the collective life, the national king, the national uniforms, the national flags and bands, thrust blare and bunting across the realities. For millions these shows are naturally accepted as the realities. They personify and intensify and ensure the national distinction, the separation of the marching, fighting, grabbing Empire from the general business of mankind. How else can a monarchy work considering how monarchs are made and trained and flattered?

For a time Dickon and I wrangled over the issue between monarchy and republicanism. The United States, said Dickon, could be republican and intensely nationalist; France — this was in 1919 — was republican and militarist. Americans, I said, were not nationalist, but were obsessed by an unavoidable sense of difference. As for France ——

"King!" said Dickon, with a nimble change of front, "but after all what's the king got to do with my baronetcy? I shall scarcely see him long enough to make a face at him. He'll ask, 'Who's that fine man?' And forget when they tell him. It's L.G.'s affair. You're taking the whole of this business too seriously, Billy. You are indeed. You're putting it on too broad a basis. You're so fierce a republican I doubt if you'd read a book if you found it was printed on crown octavo."

He followed that up. "It isn't as though L.G.'s titles were so damned serious as all that. There's something like derision in most of his creations. They're just a flare up at the end. The last dance of the old costume ball. Before it is all swept away."

"In that case Lady Clissold becomes a comic title."

"If it was only for the pleasure it would give the servants at Lambs Court I'd take the title," said Dickon.

"You won't take it," I said.

"I'll do it — if only to annoy you."

I laughed.

"It's just like buying a fur coat for Minnie. It's a decoration. It's a way of putting her over the heads of a lot of showy, chattering bitches that aren't worth a tenth of her."

"There's no need to make Minnie a Lady by the King's grace," I said. "And as for putting her over those other ladies, you're just putting her among them. And that reminds me: have you asked her

about it?”

He had not. And I realised in a flash he was not quite sure what she would say about it. That was why he was trying over the proposal on me first of all, to get a review of the possible objections.

“She won’t let you,” I said. “She won’t let you.” But she did let him. Dickon took his baronetcy.

11. MINNIE'S FAREWELL

MINNIE died very suddenly in the early part of 1920. She died under an operation that no one had thought very dangerous. But though she told it to no one, she had a feeling of danger, and she did a thing that was to reveal to me as nothing else could have done, the real quality of her relations to Dickon and the world, their aloofness and their filmy tenderness.

Her presentiment of death was very strong. But I do not think she was very deeply troubled at the thought of dying. I suppose that people who live with delicacy rather than intensity can die without any great mental agony. She was troubled about Dickon much more than on her own account; she thought her possible death might be a shock for him, and she feared that shock. So she wrote him a letter — a letter that was only to reach his hands if she died. Otherwise it would just have vanished like many another thing she must have thought of and done in that reserved life of hers. I saw that letter. He was impelled to show it to some one, and he showed it to me.

I was at Dorking with him after the funeral, and he suddenly came into the library with it in his hand. It was already a little worn with much re-reading. He looked at me with eyes that were distressed and perplexed.

"Billy," he said, "I want you to read this. I want you very much to read this. From her. After she died."

I was inclined to demur.

He pushed it into my hand. "Read it," he said, and again impatiently as he went out of the room, *"Read it."*

A pencilled note, it was, but in a firm, clear hand. Written without haste. Punctuated, so that one seemed to hear Minnie's characteristic little pauses for deliberation. No outpourings. No abandonment to her impulses, no confidence in her impulses. A skilful letter written carefully for a definite purpose.

It was Minnie come back to life. It was Minnie quintessentially. Except for one or two phrases at the end that stuck in my memory, I cannot remember much of its exact wording. I read it only once. But it was, I think, the tenderest of all imaginable caresses that she

reached across the grave to give him. Like Minnie, like all of Minnie, it was faintly aloof from complete participation in life. Because it was faintly aloof it was also faintly insincere. Insincere, I mean, in the sense that she did not seem to believe completely even in her own life and death. But not in any egoistic sense insincere. She was not posing. She did not seem to be thinking about herself at all. She said not a word of any unwillingness to be torn untimely from life. So far as she was concerned, I feel she was capable of saying: "Have I to go, then ? Very well, I am ready," even with the faint shadow of a smile upon her lips.

But Dickon in distress, Dickon left alone, big Dickon with his capacity for vivid remorse hiding a heartache, and with no possibility of a word to cure it, was another matter. That had got through to her as a real and dreadful possibility, and she had done her best with it.

"If I have to leave this queer, wonderful existence," she said, "I want you to know how happy you have made me in it.

That was the text of it, that was all she wrote about, the value he had given life for her. Nothing else.

I thought of many things between them. I saw for the first time as I read her letter with what comprehension she had understood his quality. I saw how well she knew him, and how she feared his easy and abundant remorse. She said nothing of any contentious things, harped upon no forgiving for the derelictions she must have known he had committed, but she said how happy and full she had found every hour with him, she reminded him of many kindnesses and generosities he had shown her, and of the great joint adventure of their worldly success. She recalled a score of little intimate delightful things, mostly from their early years, that she had treasured in her memory.

"The fun we have had, Dickon! The dear boys and Winnie! They were such fine and happy things to have launched into the world. And they get their brightness and courage, my dear, from you."

All things must end, she said, and if this was the end of this strange, lovely, difficult world for her — well, she was sorry to leave him, sorry indeed, but thankful for all she had had, and thankful to him.

"Dear Dickon, my own, be sorry — I know you will be sorry for

the parting; but do not *grieve*, dear Dickon. Do not *mind* too much about things that never really mattered, do not *mind* about them. Think of the life that has been so good with you and not of the death at the end. Think of the work that lies before you and the big tasks you have to do. You are only beginning. I know there is endless work before you yet. I wish I could have watched you and stood beside you a little longer. Dickon, my *dear*, thank you and thank you and thank you.... And again, dear Dickon, thank you and God bless you, and, if it must be, good-bye."

In that manner, in such words, it ended.

Dickon stood before me again and I gave him back the letter.

"You've read it?"

I nodded.

"Well.... Tell me something.... Was she really happy, Billy? Did I really make her happy?, As she says I did?"

"Certain, Dickon."

"Then why should she doubt?"

"Doubt what?"

"About what I should feel. If she didn't think that perhaps I had seen that she — she wasn't quite as hard and happy as she braved it out she was. There were times — —"

"You're tormenting yourself."

"But isn't she just saying those things — She may be just saying those things — Thinking of me.... She did things like that. She couldn't bear-hurting. Anybody being hurt. She'd a kind of terror of anybody being hurt — or remorseful....

"You don't know, Billy, at times when I've been a bit disposed perhaps to be heavy-handed with the boys — how she's stood in....

"And the thought she had — for old servants. For people in trouble.... I could tell you things. Noticing when an old housemaid wanted glasses. Feeling when people were overworked or burthened. Things like that. Always for going gently...."

He stared at me. "A man lives with a woman all his life, Billy. Eats with her, sleeps beside her. Happiness. Tears. Endless.... And he doesn't know much about her. At the end, he doesn't know much about her."

“She loved you all right, Dickon. More than you deserved, old man. And you made her happy. I’ve watched her. She was a happy woman, proud of you, proud of the opportunities you gave her, proud of this house and life here — and content.”

“But you know, Billy, and I know — I’ve been like most men....”

“So far above such things, Dickon,” I said; “they never touched her.”

“But many a time I must have been — a bit of a lump to her.... A man’s so much rougher and clumsier.”

“She didn’t feel it like that.”

“Eh!” he said, and then for the first and last time in my life I saw my brother weep.

Never in our childhood and boyhood had I seen his tears, not even when our father died. But now he did not conceal his distress. “Tears won’t bring her back,” he said. “Not tears. Not wishing. Not repenting.... Nothing will bring her back to me.... Not for a word. Not for a moment — to tell her... *What could I tell her?*”

He went to the window and stood there with his back to me to hide his face.

“If I could be sure,” he said. “If I could believe it! That I made her happy?”

He became quite still, an immense broad back against the park and the sky.

“Kindness,” he whispered to the unresponsive heavens.

“Kindness, tenderness, the years of it, from the beginning to the end.... That quiet kindness.”

He turned and addressed me — how can I put it? — as though I wasn’t there.

“Nobody knew her but me,” said Dickon. “Nobody knew anything about her really but me. Nothing at all. Nobody thought enough of her. Nobody had any idea. I’ve been her husband for thirty-one years, Billy — I’ve never found her lying to me or herself. And courage — I’ve never known her flinch. A little thing she was and she could look pain in the face. Take it as something one had to take. And when Dick was missing — that April! Three weeks we had of it and never a flicker because she had to stand by me. I just saw one day how white her face was. Or else I might have thought she

didn’t feel.... But she felt....

“What a time that was!... Loyal! Strong! And I’ve let her be in the background. I’ve let it seem as though she wasn’t anything so very much... didn’t matter....

“Billy, I was silly to take that old title, but don’t you see how desperately a man may feel that his wife ought to be honoured? Somehow. When she won’t take any honour! So that he sticks tinsel on her — in desperation. She let me do it. She understood.... My lady! Princess she was! Princess — with something cool and sweet. Like moonlight.... Silver.... All my days ought to have been gratitude....

“Oh, what *good* is it talking?”

He looked out of the window again and I could have imagined he was expecting a reply from the twilight.

“Silence,” he said, at last.

12. PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION

WAS she a cynic? I think the answer is Yes. On that basis I can explain her but on no other. Hers was a cynicism fine as carved ivory, but it was cynicism. It had neither aggression nor insult in it, but for her I do really think that Virtue, as the Ancient Cynics meant it, and Freedom, were the only good things. She was as completely disillusioned about the pomps and vanities, the received values and accepted gratifications of the life we live as I, but in addition she was disillusioned, as I have never been, about the power of the life within us. She was weak in effort and she knew it. So she would not thrust out to blunder. She accepted. She accepted good and avoided evil. She thought fighting evil was itself an evil. It made one hot and angry. So one went by on the other side. She could not understand the sort of drive that achieves, even if it achieves blunderingly. She could not understand the "dust and heat" of endeavour.

Because of that way of thinking she came a little to underrate Dickon, I suspect, after his first glamour had faded. His infidelities, his urgencies, his sudden changes of direction, his excessive admirations of questionable leaders — of Lloyd George, of Milner, of Northcliffe, for example — his storms of combative energy that had to find an outlet and so often found a wrong one, were incomprehensible to her. Yet as that last letter showed, she kept an infinite kindliness for him to the end.

Dickon, as people say, "adored" her, and yet he never seemed to me perfectly self-forgetful and at his ease with her. Even if she did not underrate him, his tender conscience made him feel she ought to do so. He was capable of a good deal of expressive coarseness in his conversation, but in her presence he was always rather carefully decent. He never talked before her of his sincere enthusiasm for his calling. The rising tides of Advertisement broke and recoiled from the gates of Lambs Court. The best conversations I had with him during her life were away from her, and it is since her death that he seems to me to have developed most interestingly and boldly. Dickon was incapable of amateurism, and not only his life, but his whole view of life, had to centre upon his occupation. Even more

than in my own case, his activities had to be related to the beginnings of things and the utmost star. But he felt her gentle irony at the gravity of his prolusions, her scepticism of the values in his drama, her recognition of his egoism. She was terribly, because so unconsciously and inevitably, a delicate lady, and not an actress upon the stage of life.

This contrast between them intensified as the years went on. At first he carried her with him much more than he did in their later years. He talked most of his thoughts to her. When he talked to her he could persuade her. Then, I think, he became shy of something passive in her assents. She approved, but she never came to meet him. He felt that in her presence his ideas became huge and clumsy, sweaty and crude — as new things must be crude, and that he forced them on her. So he ceased to force them on her. There is a vein of self-distrust deep in Dickon's nature.

His ascendency over me was established so early and so firmly in our student days that it only dawns upon me now that at times Dickon must have been sensitive to my opinions. Innovation, experimenting, "giving the thing a try," were the quality of his life. He felt the risk in some of his views and acts. And she so manifestly favoured ripened and finished things, fine old furniture, works of art rather than works of science, polished conduct and acts as perfectly adjusted from their very inception as the muscles of a Persian kitten.

Dickon was greatly stirred by the war and by his own experiences of the war. As I have told, he was attaching very broad ideas to advertisement even before the war. Propaganda was an immensely stimulating discovery for him. And the idea of Reconstruction after the war seized upon him, interwove with those expanding ideas about advertising, and for a time possessed him altogether.

The Period of Reconstruction is still only five or six years behind us, and already it is difficult to revive its emotions and expectations. Even more difficult is it to recall the mental states of the war.

We began with heroism and sacrifice. I shall insist to the end of my days that the last months of 1914 were a tragically splendid phase in European experience, months of high, heroic, terrified living for a great multitude of people. I do not think that so far as we English were concerned the war degenerated greatly until the latter part of

1916. Then with conscription the mirage of greatness vanished. Like a mirage its disappearance was imperceptible. One became aware that it had gone. The war was discovered to be a daily tale of stupid and beastly destruction, moral even more than physical.

And then it was that the clam our for Reconstruction became strong. All this bloodshed and waste was the agony in which a new and fairer world was to be born; the war was to end war and social injustice. This slaughter was the seed-time sacrifice from which we should reap the brotherhood of man.

In the years immediately after the war, with the frightful squalor and sufferings, the fear, pain and stress, the atrocious wastage and tragic heroisms of the struggle fresh in our minds, it was a moral impossibility not to think that there must have been something more than mere destruction, mere warning, in this immense disaster; that somehow a price had been paid and a gain achieved. I suppose I am an exceptionally sceptical man, but I confess that was my conviction for some time. Only very slowly did I begin to accept the possibility that the abyss had swallowed up that enormous wealth of life, effort, and material accumulation, that it was gone for good, gone never to return, without recompense or consolation.

Now we can begin to face that monstrous verity. The war did no more for mankind than the Black Death or a forest fire. It solved nothing, inaugurated nothing. At best it swept away illusions. The Period of Reconstruction was the hectic death of one of the greatest of these; that good arises automatically out of suffering.

But while my resort to the consolation of the Reconstruction Period was at least temperate, Dickon's acquiescence in that idea of a comprehensive and forward movement in human conditions was passionate and complete. "A world fit for heroes," he reiterated. "Magnificent phrase, Billy! And it's alive. It will do things."

He did think it would do things. But what he thought it would do I still do not find very clear.

Across the seas came Woodrow Wilson, with that large, gaunt face of his, solemnly inscrutable, bringing his schoolboy essay in politics, his Fourteen Points. We knew nothing then of his vanity and narrowness nor of his limited authority. Nor did he. He seemed to promise the organisation of a world peace. Within the framework of

security this ensured, there was to be a sort of voluntary collectivism. It was not to be Socialism we were assured — because a great number of influential people had declared they were not Socialists, and it would be embarrassing for them to contradict themselves — but it was to have the effect of Socialism. There were to be worldwide labour laws, health laws, protection of women and children, protection of races at a disadvantage, throughout all the planet. Just how it was to be done Dickon seemed to regard as an unimportant detail. He was too full of the spirit for any such particularisation. He would do his job of propaganda and preparation and the other fellows would do their jobs. In that magic word Reconstruction there was no really definite constructive idea at all, no taking apart and putting together again, but instead there was undeniably an enormous amount of what Americans call "uplift." Something was to be done, very large, very generous, very beneficial and splendid; and that was all it amounted it.

I write something was to be done, but now I come to consider it, I believe that what we really thought was that something was going to do itself. And we were to be its ministers and henchmen.

The Lytton Stracheys of 1990 or so may find in this Period of Reconstruction material for much amusing writing. My own failure to be thoroughly amused by it is due, I admit, to a want of humour. I am still too close to it and its immense, if irrational, disappointments. It was a movement of the extremest incoherence and inconsistency. Men full of undisciplined individualism were rushing about talking about collective effort and the subordination of every enterprise to social ends. Men of the rankest patriotism were rushing about talking of the League of Nations. Schemes for re-housing the people of London in great and admirable buildings in London jostled amicably with schemes for scattering the population of London over the countryside. Everywhere beautiful houses were promised for the populace, and nowhere did they appear. Also there was to be a great exportation of the unemployed to the Colonies. On scientific lines. And a colonisation of England that would render emigration unnecessary. There were to be wonderful new high roads. London was to have a railway clearing-house and save incalculable acres of wasted building land. Civil air transport, moreover, was to make both

roads and railways superfluous. Productivity at the touch of the new spirit of collective organisation was to leap up like a man who has sat on a wasp. Everything was to fetch a good stimulating price, but then wages would be enormous. Charing Cross bridge was to be rebuilt very gloriously as a war monument, and everybody was to go to school up to the age of sixteen. The output of blue prints must have been enormous in those wonderful days. The projects were upon every scale and with every amplitude of scope.

Entangled with a number of self-mobilised business men and jarring upon them every moment was a miscellany of young university graduates, economists, sociologists, professors of political science, very convinced and guiding and empty; and there were temporary and permanent Civil Servants in the movement, all mysteriously devious with the devious discretion of men who have to think of their chiefs and their departments; and journalists and novelists turned statesmen, making generous vacant phrases for us in the utmost abundance; and inventors of this, that, and the other implement for altering human life completely; and so down to pure faddists and founts of richly printed matter with which one's letter-box was choked, beings who filled the souls of men of affairs with terror and contempt, and drove them back in panic from their new viewpoints to their old business ways.

And the moral hotch-potch was just the same as the intellectual. Mixed up with the entirely honest types like Dickon were the complicated and half-honest; and about these again a considerable crowd of adventurers who were not honest at all, who canted reconstruction and presently canted de-control, and whose one clearly apprehended reality in the other was an opportunity to snatch. Some of them snatched amazing handfuls. Though perhaps it is not for me to complain of that, seeing the derelict Government undertakings that have fallen back into the hands of Romer) Steinhart, Crest and Co. and their associated enterprises.

13. THE ABORTIVE SPRING

THEN there came a chill. There is a book of Tarde's called *Fragment d'histoire future*, which Mr. Brereton has translated into English as *Underground Man*. It describes the unexpected extinction of the sun. A sudden extinction, like a gas-light being turned off. It is springtime in France, the almond blossom has come, the birds are nesting, people are going afield, when the catastrophe occurs. The sun rises already shorn of its radiance, cools to a red orb at midday, is dulled to a sullen coppery glow, and a snowstorm that grows thicker and thicker fills the air, driven before a cold and devastating wind. The young elder leaves, the almond petals whirl past and are forgotten. Everyone is presently in flight for shelter and searching frantically under cover for fuel. The icicles gather along the eaves and fall clattering like broken glass before the freezing gale. The plants bud no more, the birds sing no more, a great darkness comes upon the world. Naturally those who have fuel cling to the fuel. The quicker-witted start for the coal-mines and begin to burrow down towards the central heat.

In much the same fashion did the hope of Reconstruction vanish from the sky. Peace conditions had returned and the phase of ready borrowing was at an end. The golden sun of credit veiled its countenance. A heavy ground swell in the European currencies gave place to a storm. The States had over-borrowed and mankind was collectively in debt.

Even during the war the belligerent States had rarely dared to take men's possessions outright. Lives and bodies they had taken freely and recklessly, handing over millions of men like cattle to their poor bluffing and blundering military chiefs to waste and torture as their fear and folly determined, but the property of men these Governments would not conscript. Because, you see, *human society is a labour-imposing, labour-shifting, property-money complex and life, the more or less of it, only an unpremeditated by-product*. It ought not to be so, perhaps, but it is so. The human complex has grown in that fashion according to its nature, and it is not to be hastily and easily changed into some different play of relationships.

When they might have taken the warring Governments had bought, often at exorbitant prices, and they had borrowed to pay. The bills of these usuries were now being presented. Dickon and I and a number of others of us, business men first and money men afterwards, went to and fro in the year of the Versailles Conference, making a great noise about Reconstruction, putting heart, temporary heart, into a multitude of depressed people; and we no more realised what our real circumstances were than so many bumble bees in a roomful of spiders' webs. But as the grey filaments wrapped round us and wrapped round us, the note of our buzzing and booming changed. Only those who have hard and vivid memories know how much it changed. But it would be interesting to take a newspaper of the year 1918, let us say, and another of 1924, and count how often the words "Reconstruction" and "Debts" are to be found in each.

The era of Reconstruction faded out, with practically nothing to show for its enthusiasms; it gave place to the era of Debt-collecting and what is apparently a strained and painful attempt to restore the comparatively stable state of affairs that had prevailed in the three or four decades before 1914. Finance and the manipulation of money became the burden of life. The voice of the "constructive" business man died away; nobody wanted to hear it any more; he himself did not wish to hear it any more; and all the world watched the quiet whispering goings to and fro of the bankers and finance ministers.

But though debt and debt-collecting now dominated our thoughts, I do not think that the rapid evaporation of human hope was entirely due to the entanglements of finance. It was certainly not due to any plotting and scheming and foresight on the part of the financiers. No little, diabolically intelligent knot of men had waited at the centre of the threads and said, "Patience! Presently all these poor fools will be in our nets. Then we'll stop this nonsense of hope."

Finance is not a malignant conspiracy; it is only a malignant stupidity, a stupidity we all share actively or passively. It is a persistent, timid adherence to conventions and methods that cannot possibly work out beneficially for the mass of mankind. I have lived near and in business and finance for a large part of my life, and I here declare with the fullest deliberation that I do not believe there are any men of supreme intellectual quality, good men or bad men, now

active in the world of finance. There are no doubt many very energetic and quick-witted men, but their acquisitive process is essentially automatic, arising out of the current methods of monetary issue and credit. Every human being alive is something of a toil-shifter, and happier in getting than in yielding; most human beings have, in addition, a sneaking craving for power and precedence over their fellows, and the weaknesses of the system are found out by the pressure of these common tendencies, quite mechanically, just as the weaknesses of an embankment are found out by the weight of every particle of water it restrains.

Dickon, as he saw his dream of heroic Reconstruction stained and crumpled and spoilt and defeated, was disposed to be very fierce about the Money Power. He would talk of the Money Power throttling the Productive Power, and assert that at last all great combinations of industrial plant fell into the uncreative grip of the banks. He deplored his share in popularising loans when he ought, he now declared, to have been explaining and steadying the country under the "conscription of wealth." But I was never with him in that direct antagonism between money and productive organisation. Finance, I agreed, had sewn up the world in a shroud of debts, but it did that almost as innocently as a blow-fly lays eggs in a carcass. Without a carcass a blow-fly is a merely secondary nuisance easily driven away. When you end litter you abolish flies. Had there been sufficient constructive will and knowledge in the world it would have made short work of that web of debts, that enslavement of the world to the counting-house.

It became very plain to me as things went on that Dickon and I were impractically vague in our intentions. Yet we two were among the more clear-headed and capable of the active hopes of the Reconstruction movement. He had considerable prestige as a propagandist. I was a successful industrial organiser. Until we came to this test we had neither of us realised that in practical affairs we were mere fortunate amateurs following the inertias of our early successes, and no longer in the habit of solving novel problems. We were two samples of a body of perhaps a few hundred, or at most a few thousand, would-be Reconstructors. All of us, individually and collectively, were entirely inadequate to the task we imagined we

were attempting. Opportunity gleamed upon us suddenly and found us unprepared — and passed.

How shallow was our conception of Reconstruction! — was every conception of Reconstruction I ever encountered! To most of the hopeful people of that time Reconstruction meant simply — all they wanted — at once. Labour, for example, demanded an immediate shortening of hours and a rise in wages, and was blind to any necessity for intermediate phases or auxiliary constructive effort. In England, trade after trade struck vigorously, and got its advances, its eight hours' day, and crowded off at once to see the cinemas and football matches, leaving the working-out of the Millennium to anyone else who chose to bother. Nobody chose to bother.

I do not blame labour; it acted according to its nature, just as the creditors and investors acted according to their nature; but the Reconstruction collapse was, I think, brought to a crisis quite as much by the failure of labour to understand as by any exactions and obstructions of finance. Neither the unhelpfulness of labour nor of finance was the primary factor. The primary factor was that the organising and administrative people like Dickon and myself, men of concrete affairs as we professed to be, men who ought to have known if anyone did, how to set about reconstructing things, were caught without a scheme of action — without the ghost of a scheme of action. We had no sense nor measure of what was happening to us and the world. We ought to have known that labour would be obdurate, and finance insist upon its pound of flesh at any cost to the body politic. Labour always has been and always will be unwilling, and creditors will cling to their claims and have to be dispossessed as firmly if as gently as possible, to the very end of human existence.

We learnt our measure in those days. We were as planless as the Bolsheviks in Russia. We were planless for exactly the same reason — because there never had been any plan. There is no plan. There is no Capitalist plan; there is no Communist plan. There is no plan at all. We have traditions and usages on which we innovate timidly, and they have the claptrap of Marx and Lenin. Both capitalists in the West and the Bolsheviks in Russia extemporise and experiment — with an air of knowing all about what they are doing. We big business men had seemed to be running the economic system in

Britain, but, put to the trial, we showed we had no power over it at all. Things had happened and we had happened in consequence.

I do not see that we Western Reconstructors have much excuse for looking down upon the Bolsheviks on the score of failure. They failed to reconstruct from the ground upward amidst the ruins of Russia, and they had a very bad famine and a series of foreign raids to complicate the job for them. We in a shattered and impoverished England failed just as much as they did. But since everything was smashed in Russia before they took on the attempt at reconstruction, their failure showed starkly. In the West nothing was smashed, although everything was strained, and the social and economic inertias carried us through. Our gestures and essays in reconstruction were swept aside by the virtual resumption of the old order, and there was no open revelation of futility. In March, 1925, under Mr. Baldwin — we seem almost back in March, 1914. The difference between the failure of the constructive spirit in Russia and in the West was the difference between a man on a desert island where there is nothing to eat and a man on a walking tour in France who finds he has forgotten to put food in his knapsack. Both may have intended to be self-sufficient, but the former starves, the latter takes refuge in an inn and says no more about it. He eats his dinner and reads of the other fellow's death with a feeling of superiority. But the money with which he pays may be borrowed money, and financially his balance-sheet may be even worse than that of the dead man. Debt is *not* so bad a thing as death, but it lies in the same direction. It is a parallel road to frustration.

There was no plan and there is no plan. When the restless, inquiring minds among us have worked out the broad lines of a plan — and that is being done now, and in a generation or so it will be sufficiently worked out — when we have painted and established upon the screen of the future the realities of human possibility in terms that will convince and compel, then the real Age of Reconstruction will have begun, and this queer phase of hope and insufficiency that came to mankind in the beginning of the age of confusion that followed the great war, will be recognised as the first uneasy stirrings of the sleeping world-state before its conclusive awakening.

14. NORTHCLIFFE AS HERO

LOOKING back at it now, as it settles itself into the general perspective view of our lives, I see that this effort, this disappointment of the Reconstruction Period and the reaction that followed, was a cardinal phase both for Dickon and myself; a being born again or — a better image perhaps — a coming-of-age. It is easier for me to see the change that happened to Dickon than to trace it in my own case. So far as one's own self is concerned, when one gains new perspectives and gets one's conception of things expanded and cleared, the new vision is apt to swallow up the old, and so one forgets one's earlier limitations. But I remember Dickon before the war as fragmentary and dogmatic and instinctive, in comparison with his more recent self. He took the world for granted then, he took it as established and in all its broader aspects beyond his control. The stress, excitement, hope, and frustrations of the last ten years have pulled him together.

Before the war I was a revolutionary, a theoretical revolutionary, decidedly unreal and amateurish in my views, and he was not. My insistence upon change and the need to change, such as it was before the war, he was always putting aside until to-morrow. It was interesting but impracticable; it was Utopian; he lived for the world as it was. But after the reconstruction effort, and particularly after the death of Minnie, he changed — almost fundamentally. The world had hitherto been open to criticism indeed, but good enough for him. He could still take a baronetcy in 1919. He is no longer like that.

The war was the beginning of this new birth, but like so many violent accidents, its real quality and consequences were masked by the immediate shock. Even now they are only beginning to come through.

It is curious how irrelevant the actual details of the war seem to be now, and how enormous the effects we begin to realise. I could tell a hundred stories of the war, of our special productions, of hunts for raw material, of ingenious substitutions, of our tragic explosion at Lembury, of our replacement of men by women workers, and how good the first lot were and how bad all the others, of the spies we

suspected and the spies we had, of our poison-gas work, and of how we sank a hundred tons of that filth in the North Sea after the war was all over, because there was nothing else to do with it — stories interesting enough in themselves but of no wide significance in my world now, even to me.

Nor do the accounts of the air-raids we stood, the persistent attempts of the German raiders to localise our works and particularly the plant at Downs-Peabody, seem to matter very much now. One moonlit night of crashes and vast silences, in a wide empty street near Victoria, I came upon a man clinging to a railing and mooing like a cow, and his intestines protruded from his waistcoat; he had just been torn open by anti-aircraft shrapnel; I made up a bed for him with some cushions I borrowed and went off into the wilderness of Pimlico to find an ambulance, and when I got back he had disappeared and nobody knew what had become of him — or the cushions: I had to pay for the cushions; and I was dining not a hundred yards from Buckingham Palace with Stetson during an air-raid when a naval shell, which happily proved a dud, I suppose from some boat in the Thames, danced in from somewhere at the back, made a vast smash of falling brickwork and broken window-frames, and came to rest among the hats and umbrellas in the hall without injuring a soul; but these things are now like something seen in a show or dreamt or read about. They join on to nothing. They are like travel snap-shots or like the promiscuous collections of picture postcards my nephew Dick used to make when he was a very little boy. They call for no more than a passing allusion here. What is of infinitely more moment is the revelation that they brought home to us of the undirected instability of the world's affairs, the realisation that we were not mere passengers but as much responsible navigators upon the ship of human destiny as anyone.

In the winter of 1920 Dickon and I had a long discussion. We had indeed several, we were much together at that time, but it will suit my purpose best to concentrate the substance of it all into one conversation. It crystallised out a number of ideas that I had had in solution for some time. That week or so of discussion marks the establishment of the new phase, the definitive phase, of our attitude to life. I find as I recall it, already well in evidence, the embryonic

but recognisable form of that revolutionary project which :it is the main object of this book to state, and to which I shall come after our own story has been sufficiently told.

It was influenza that had thrown us so much together, and fever maybe quickened our ideas. It was in the early days of the Bordon Street Chambers. Deland, to whom we were a great find, could not do enough for us. The influenza of that year was rather more feverish and bronchial than the current one and a little more prone to unfavourable developments. Deland would permit us to take no risks. We sat indoors of an evening, and before us was a big copper kettle steaming on a bright coal fire. We had screens about us, screens that Deland had insisted upon, and we drank hot whisky and Dickon opened his thoughts to me abundantly and frankly.

He certainly said or implied most of the things I am now going to make him say.

I remember him sitting in the low armchair, in a blue dressing-gown under a shaded light, that made his head by contrast look like a great orange, ruffled by eyebrows and split by a smiling mouth below, and with the unusual trick of producing two level blue eyes from below the eyebrows at salient points of the conversation, and I remember, too, that he grunted more than usually when he moved. At his elbow Deland had put a low table and the tray and all our convivial material. And his discourse, which arose out of his complete admission of the failure of the Reconstruction Movement, went in this fashion:

"Addison" — Dr. Addison was the Minister of Health then— "won't get his half-million new houses; he won't get sixty thousand, and Fisher" — the Right Honourable H.A.L. Fisher was to have been the great light of a better education— "won't get the school-leaving age raised to sixteen. That's all as dead as mutton now, Billy. Addison may make some sort of fight for it, but it won't be any good, and Fisher will let it go because he's that sort of a chap. Then it's ages since we heard a word about that State-controlled milk-trade which was going to save ten thousand babies a year, and your people and people like you are going to take over those national factories that Chiozza Money said inaugurated a new economic system, take them over at scrapping prices, and run them on strictly profiteering

lines. Oh! I've been watching you, Billy. Well, perhaps not strictly profiteering. Business lines. I've been watching you and I've been watching Brampsheet follow his nose. What a nose he has! And it's true there's no one else to run them. No one. But the mines are different. That's not true about the mines. Nothing is going to be done about the mines either. That's a clear miss. The mine-owners are mucking along in the dear old fashion in spite of the Sankey Report — and elementary common sense. Public health is as you were, or a bit worse, and nobody will get anything much done except the money-bugs. And so we go on. Reconstruction was quack medicine, and Lloyd George is a liar, and here we are bilked and done."

"And men of our age," I probably remarked, "ought never to have believed that anything else was possible."

Dickon reflected over his tray.

"And yet, for all that, there is a lot in this idea of Reconstruction," he said. "I've acquired that idea of Reconstruction for good. It's like being vaccinated."

Some sound of guarded assent from me.

"Bigger job than we thought it was," said Dickon, shaving delicately at the lemon peel with the razor Deland had brought for the purpose.

"We aren't going to make over this old muddle of a :world yet for a bit," he said, and cut a translucent slice and rejected a pip fastidiously. "I shall leave you to put the sugar, Bill.... No.... But it's been a lesson." He completed his duties as host.

He made a compelling gesture towards me with the open razor to hold my attention until he began. Then he composed himself to talk.

"I perceive, Billy, that this little old world of ours has been ready and asking for a revolution, a complete and thorough revolution, for three years. Three years. Since about the middle of 1918. The market was ready, the demand there — and no supply. What has been missing has been somebody to know what was wanted and able to produce it. The world had its mouth open. It was scared tame. Lord! Billy, how funny all this is really. The expectation! The result! That solemn goose of a Wilson laying his addled egg in Paris. Day by day, each day a little more of it out. Mankind awe-stricken. Go on, Great

President! Go on! And the Bolsheviks — Not even an egg — —”

He sought for an image.

“Making a mess,” I suggested hastily.

“Making a mess — a little weak mess — in the middle of the remains of Russia.”

He shook his head at the fire. “Tremendous pause. Mankind puzzled. ‘That is all, gentlemen. No, there is nothing more; nothing more at all!’ And then presently the old things, the dreary things, the slow and pompous things, the shams, the vested interests and the ancient rights, the kings that mean nothing and the uniforms that mean nothing, come crawling out of their shelters and hiding-places, scarcely able to believe they are still alive. As they are, Billy. As they are! .

“Yet there *was* that pause,” said Dickon. “There was a time when the door stood open.”

He surveyed history at large. “I suppose there never has been much imaginative greatness in the handling of human affairs. The greatest of men is still an ape — what was it?— ‘imperfectly depiled.’ Good phrase that! All damned nonsense about the dignity of history. Dignity hasn’t begun yet. We’ve had great figures stuck up for us. Caesar and Marcus Aurelius. Really no better than Winston or Wilson. It’s always been this sort of thing really — or worse?”

Dickon returned to his main discovery. “These have been extraordinary years. If there had been a clear project ready and men to put it over, it could have been put over. It was the psychological moment for a great change.... I for one thought there was going to be a really great change. A new age. Here and now, Billy. We seemed to see the promised land. And now where is it?”‘

“But isn’t there something still to be done?”

“I don’t know,” said Dickon, and added — as though he

poised the name in his hand— “there’s Northcliffe.”

“Northcliffe!” said I, and sat amazed.

Then I reflected that Dickon saw all the universe through a haze of publicity. Hadn’t he called the temples of the world God’s advertisements?

He began to talk about that great newspaper adventurer in tones of

affectionate perplexity. In some obscure extensive way outside my sympathies, Northcliffe had taken a very steady grip upon Dickon's imagination. He had become more than himself for Dickon; he had become a symbol for forces Dickon partly apprehended and partly hoped for in the world about us. He spoke of the "New Men," the "New Adventurers," and at a scrutiny of these phrases he always fell back on Northcliffe. Northcliffe was still the master of *The Times* then and of a powerful group of newspapers, but for a year or so he had been making a poor figure in the world's eyes on account of his concentration upon a bitter personal feud between himself and Lloyd George. This after clambering courageously through a phase of great unpopularity to a commanding influence in national affairs. His war services had been enormous and on the whole sound. There was a story that Lloyd George had led him to hope he might go to the Versailles Conference and had then disappointed him. At any rate, Northcliffe had behaved like one who had been stung by an intolerable treachery. For a time his conspicuous vindictive resentment had robbed him of any largeness of effect. It had disappointed and estranged many who like Dickon had hoped for great things from him. But Dickon stuck to him. "He is a big man," said Dickon stoutly, "he is a big man."

Northcliffe, said Dickon, had never known what a big man he was going to be until his greatness was upon him. Opportunity had taken him by surprise. As it takes most successes nowadays by surprise. He had found himself powerful before he had had time to turn round and realise ,what he wanted to do.

"That's more or less the history of all our sort," said Dickon. "We strive with all our little mights — just to get freedom, just to get out of the ruck — and what we thought was a wall of stone and iron turns out to be cardboard and *phut* it goes, and we find ourselves right through, with power in our hands and nothing in the whole universe between us and the ironical eye of God."

"Mr. G.," I said.

"God I mean in this case," said Dickon.

He sketched out the adventure of the Harmsworths.

The father was an Irish barrister who had come to London and been called to the English Bar, and who had died before success

could be won there. He seems to have been an able man who died too soon, with a restless, ambitious, stimulating home and a wise, strong, patient wife. His chief delight, I have been told, was to speechify in a mock Parliament in some Camden Town tavern. From that he hoped perhaps to clamber to the other mockery at Westminster. Alfred, the son, went to a little private school in St. John's Wood, and began a journalistic career with a jelly-graphed school magazine. The schoolmaster knew how to seize an aptitude and develop it, and he promoted Harmsworth's purple smudgings to the dignity of print and periodicity.

"I've seen some numbers, Dickon. "It was pretty common stuff; cricket scores and school news and so forth. Northcliffe never wrote a distinguished line in his life.... Well — writing distinguished lines isn't everything. Though, of course, it helps."

While still in his teens, young Harmsworth launched out with a weekly paper called *Answers*. Then came some awful things for errand boys and the cheapest public, *Comic Cuts*, that crying outrage. "Great money makers, I'm told," said Dickon.

The *Daily Mail* followed and was a brilliant success. The world became aware of a personality different from the ordinary newspaper personality, an influence and an energy. Then carne opportunity, and this Harmsworth of *Comic Cuts* secured a controlling interest in *The Times* and became a power, presently a very considerable power. The peerages of himself and his brother were formal recognitions of his substantial success. Northcliffe and Rothermere became the golden flowers on the stem of Harmsworth Brothers. He pushed forward to something like a commanding position in the country among the uncertainties, hesitations, and novel occasions of the war.

"It makes our little rush up look quite a gentle ascent," said Dickon.

Dickon had become associated with Northcliffe during his propaganda activities. There was a real liking between them. "He's got imagination, real imagination, the quality that makes a great man, Billy; almost the only man he is with a touch of greatness in our public affairs. The *only* one."

"You don't think there's something great about such a type as Arthur Balfour?" said I.

“That damned Madonna lily!” said Dickon. “He grows where he’s planted,” and came back without further comment to Northcliffe.

“He knows that we are a new sort of men, and that this is an age of new things. He knows there is the possibility of great reconstructions in the air. He’s not clear about it, but he feels it. He’s alive to it. He’s not afraid to change the world. That’s what makes him signify, Billy.”

Dickon gave me a little vignette of Northcliffe and himself sitting in a room in Crewe House, a fine town-house of the old regime that had been requisitioned for propaganda headquarters against the Austrians and Germans, an easy spacious town-house with a garden of its own up behind Shepherd’s Market in the heart of the West-end, full of eighteenth-century dignity and eighteenth-century furniture. “They talk of revolutions,” Northcliffe had remarked in that soft whispering voice of his. “Our being here *is* a revolution.”

“That,” said Dickon, “is Northcliffe near his top note. A bit exalted. None the worse for that. But seeing things. Seeing changes. Seeing forces.”

He leant forward, poked the fire, and spread his amplitudes before the blaze. “In a sense,” said Dickon, “it was true. In a sense — it was nonsense.

“Potential revolution,” said Dickon. “There I agree.”

He frowned; he shook his elder-brother finger at me and frowned. “There is something wrong about Northcliffe, Billy. Something grotesque and tragic. Like a string that jerks him back.”

The man, he said, had moods, alternations of moods that went beyond the limits of sanity. At times he had to go away and hide from everything. He would fly off to his wonderful old mother at Totteridge. His brothers, his secretaries and subordinates took charge. Dickon knew of these dark interludes already three years before Northcliffe died insane. But all through Northcliffe’s life was a succession of moods and phases — vast inequalities. His boldness, his vision, seemed to come in phases and vanish again. Sometimes he had the assurance of immense power— “and it’s there for his using,” said Dickon — and at others he was just vain and empty, in the air, “posturing or frightened, fat and frightened, and no sort of good at all.”

Dickon shrugged his shoulders. “And there you have in his hands — with no-one really able to control him, a gigantic Publicity, the supreme power still in modern life. Yes, Billy, there is no power now, none in all the world, like the power to speak plainly and uninterruptedly to the crowd. My God! the power he and the other big newspaper people could exercise even now, if they chose to take it up and use it. Even now — still to-day — the empire and the world are absolutely in the hands of the big press owners and the new men they ought to work with. This is their time of opportunity. The situation stiffens; it stiffens every day, but it hasn’t congealed yet. There may be years yet before it has completely congealed.”

A note of lamentation crept into his voice. “Not twenty men,” he said. “And nine-tenths of the British newspaper sales in their hands. And all concentrated in London, not scattered like the American papers in a score of places. They might march this country wherever they chose and the rest of the world would follow. If they had the dignity of their power. Who could stop them? How could you stop them?”

But they drifted. They achieved nothing except great, clumsy, overwhelming fortunes. Opportunity was a touchy visitor if you didn’t go down at once to receive her. Northcliffe felt that, but the others didn’t. That was where he was different.

I suggested that Dickon over-estimated the strength of these newspaper proprietors. They would lose circulation at once if they tried to put big things over. Dickon was convinced they would not. “The public likes initiative,” he dogmatised. “Wants it. And besides, altogether, they control the paper supply and distribution. And there’s still no one yet with the courage and decision to stand up against them if they chose to begin!”

And even if the public didn’t like them it would have to stand them, now. Who would they lose circulation *to*? The public must have some sort of paper. No other sort of paper was possible at the present time. These press barons had the power surely enough. But they had no common idea. They had no idea of themselves. And the power slipped away from them. It was like that moment when Wat Tyler, the Kentish rebel, was killed. The crowd stood irresolute. There was the Press, as the prince had been, mounted and in full

view, capable of saying what it chose to say and take control. And there it was with nothing to say — exposed in that expectant silence.

"These men," he remarked, "carne up by being new. If they stop being new, they fall back into a position of subordination to the old gang, and cease to matter. They amalgamate with the old crowd and are lost.... They don't know their opportunities. They are afraid of their opportunities. Too big for them.... Except possibly Northcliffe. I'm not so sure of Northcliffe."

Dickon made a gesture of despair and dismissal, with a glass that was fortunately nearly empty.

"They could say what they like," he said, "even now. The whole world still listens for an idea."

He went on to a general review, an irritated, exaggerated, influenza-touched review, of what he called the new forces in English affairs: "The men like us." Those new forces had never realised their quality and their outlook. That was our trouble. No mental synthesis, no clear understanding was there.

I give Dickon's views as well as I can. They are not precisely my views, but they are the brothers of my views. He saw things from the angle of a great advertiser, he overvalued the conspicuous, and his choice of new men was very different from mine. But I do not remember that I argued :with him that night. I let him cite his own cases.

Lloyd George, Dickon insisted, was one of the "new forces." In 1920, certainly, he was still a very big figure. "In politics he's just what I am in advertisement, and Northcliffe is in journalism, and you in metallurgy — a new sort of man with new scale methods." None of us could have existed in 1880, neither Lloyd George nor Northcliffe, nor ourselves, nor any of the prominent men of the day under sixty. Asquith and Balfour and Grey were by comparison just dignified statesmen in the Victorian tradition. They had learnt to be British statesmen at the Universities under the best tutors. They were incapable of freshness or adaptation. "Locums," said Dickon. They had been pushed aside for a time, and all their type and tradition could still be thrust aside. Thrust aside for good. An active figure like Lloyd George made them look like historical monuments.

But in Lloyd George also there was something that made for

futility. “He’s just a magnificent weed. In flower. Where one might have a great tree. He lives from hand to mouth. He’s as clever as six foxes. Sane — too sane. Meanly sane. What’s the matter with him? Just the opposite of Northcliffe. No end of cool, clear brains, but they don’t seem to be in the right place or the right way up, or something. No length of vision. No imaginative warmth. There Northcliffe has the pull of him. And Lloyd George can’t wait. You must have long views before you can wait. Temperamentally he can’t wait. And he’s broken with Northcliffe. He ought to have let Northcliffe take a hand in the Government and sent him to Paris. It might have changed the course of history if Northcliffe had gone to Paris.

“But, of course, the Paris show was too big a temptation for George, just as it was too big a temptation for Wilson.

“And here we are!” said Dickon.

He passed the other great powers of the British newspaper world in review and dismissed them all. Imaginative insufficiency. They could do SO much if they chose. And they did not choose.

“Riddell — a clever man. A cynic. Laughs at his peerage. What is he after in life? Beaverbrook? He has as much brains and imagination as anyone. But — he’s impish.” Where Northcliffe was disposed to be grandiose. “Northcliffe,” said Dickon again, “that’s the *big* man.” Beaverbrook was devoted to Bonar Law — they came from the same Canadian village, Dickon believed — and he meant to make his friend Prime Minister. “Possibly he will. And beyond that, so far as I can see, he regards the world as a playground, and isn’t quite sure of his fun. Eager, feverishly eager, to be all alive, and no idea what life is. Will he ever grow up? If he grew up.... He’s young still.”

Dickon turned away from that.

Lord Burnham of the *Daily Telegraph* was a good sort, with a greater sense of public obligation than the others. But no inner light, no drive, and no desire. His idea of a newspaper, a pillar instead of a power.

“Lords of Journalism,” said Dickon. “Newspaper nobles.”

Scott of the *Manchester Guardian* was a star apart. “But you can’t do very much as a star apart,” said Dickon. “Twinkling is good enough for him. He doesn’t *want* to do.” The *Manchester Guardian*

and the *Corriere della Sera* of Milan were after their fashion the two finest newspapers in the world, but anything might happen to them at any time because of their isolation. So Dickon prophesied in 1920. For the *Corriere* now it is prophecy no longer.

Dickon sees as drama what I see as process. He sees it as a drama of publicity. What is not seen and known by the public is not reality for him. That night he reviewed our political world entirely as a display of these newspaper adventurers and "new men" of his — Lord Birkenhead, with his careless freedom of word and act, and Lord Reading, who was Rufus Isaacs, almost as "new" in type, he held, as Lloyd George or Northcliffe — and he declared that only a realisation of their common interest in a boldly reconstructed political and social order could prolong and stabilise their adventure. The old things were biding their time, reaction impended, and these new men were attacking and undermining each other, doing nothing revolutionary, and letting the weeks and months slip by. They did not seem to think they had anything to fear from the old conservatives. "Wait," said Dickon. "I've seen and heard a thing or two."

He made me realise the latent power of what he called the "old gang" in things British and American, less audible, less brilliant, slow and tenacious, the old gang of long-established property, of banking and rent, the implacable gold standard and the unwearying creditor, the old gang who want nothing more to happen for ever. He made an acute guess that found its confirmation in the General Election of 1924, when almost all the residue of his "new men," battling one against the other, were swept away or driven into secondary positions. The chill of the coming day when Mr. Asquith would become an earl and a Knight of the Garter, Lord Birkenhead a minister-journalist, and Lloyd George a comparative nobody was upon him. Though he foresaw the coming phase of reaction, he was not yet reconciled to its inevitability. He still clung doubtfully to his hero, Northcliffe, a loyalty that was so soon to be shattered by a pitiful death.

15. NEW SORT OF MAN WANTED

THE fever and the whisky and the quinine that were working together in Dickon's blood that night seemed only to give his mind a wider sweep. He generalised with unusual freedom. He expanded his discourse upon British affairs, until it became an exposition of a worldwide struggle to re-make. He saw that struggle everywhere as a triangular conflict. First there were these "new men" of his, the Sons of Light, still uncertain in their quality; and next there were the "haves," the holders, the creditors, the financiers, the antagonists weaving the nets about these extraordinary Sons of Light he had chosen and thirdly there were the have-nots," labour that would not labour, that did not want anything that anybody else wanted, but did not know what it wanted, the retrogressive obstruction, the massive veto, the eating, breeding crowd.

We two had grown up in an age of rapid progress, and :We were too much disposed to take progressive change as the natural order of the world. We were only beginning to realise that the rush of progress had brought also a stimulation of the defensive, a strengthening of the resistances that protected established things. The forces that had been disturbing and enlarging the scale of human affairs for four or five generations might have exhausted themselves in the catastrophe of the Great War. "Crashed," said Dickon. It was an unpalatable line of thought for him, but he followed it manfully for some time. The owner was resuming his loosened grip everywhere; the creditor was recovering from his earlier dismay and confusion, and there was no residue of creative force to resist his return.

Perhaps we were in for a phase first of stagnation and then of retrogression. It was, yes, it was possible. It might last as long as the forward rush and undo much of its achievement. The conservative forces wanted, indeed, only to fix and retain; they were as unwilling to go back as to go forward, but you cannot fix and retain without stagnation, you cannot have stagnation without decay, and you cannot have decay without disorder. For a while Dickon was morbid. Life asserts itself in the unused organ as putrefaction or cancer.

Decay meant conflict even more certainly than did such an excess of energy as had led to the Great War. But the conflicts of a phase of decay had not even breadth of motive. The creditor, the property-owner, might avert the confiscations of a creative revolution, but at the price of reviving the brigand. “That begins already in Italy,” said Dickon. China, India, had passed through “ages of confusion.” Why should not our Western world do the like? Why should there be any recovery at all in human affairs?

But this was too depressing for Dickon’s temperament. I have never known him keep a purely pessimistic poise for long, and presently he was saying that the real age of Reconstruction — which he had tacitly restored to the scheme of things — might still be centuries away. To talk of the world not really going forward was for him just talking;’ it signified nothing at all — a polite gesture to the insanities of possibility. Wasn’t he himself going forward?...

He sat staring into the glowing coals.

The influenza germ reasserted itself.

“Unless you have men to tell people how things stand and what they have to do — —” he said, and broke off.

“Where are the other men to be looked for?” he said. “Where shall we find the new forces? Perhaps this is naturally a conservative and creditor country. But — for example — America?”

He returned to his main hope. “Northcliffe is talking of going round the world,” he said. “I wonder if he will. He seems to have this same feeling we have that a big reconstruction is due. Somewhere that isn’t perhaps London or England. He wants to look for it. He talks of greater Britain, of the Empire. I wonder if that’s it. I wonder what he will find if he does go round the world. I wonder what he expects to find. Banquets he will get everywhere. Flattery. Immense publicity. No rest. No thought. But his instinct is sound. That man, Billy, is like a big lonely wasp at a grocer’s window pane. He knows there is something important to him behind it, but he doesn’t seem able to get through. He tries to find a way. Perhaps he will never get through.”

He never did get through. Two years later that poor giant with the feet of clay, that great vulgar man of energy whom Dickon had idealised to the level of genius, went round the world even as he had

proposed. His progress is to be found recorded with a straining amplitude in the files of his *Times*, and as he journeyed his exorbitant brain glowed and became more and more confused. The problem was too vast for him, he was too utterly uneducated, he staggered with a fundamental instability. His desire to do great things in the world gave place to alternations of childish grandeur and frantic suspicion. The little folks about him whispered and soothed him and tried to put as seemly a face as possible upon the dismal business, and then presently, close home again in Germany, suddenly he became hopelessly mad and violent and was overcome and restrained and passed altogether out of the comity of men.

I doubt the reach and power of imagination that Dickon ascribed to him. But I agree that there was greatness in him and that his story is a tragic one and his destruction a loss to the world. And I agree, too, that he did embody forces that are still operating largely about us.

From his exposition of Northcliffe, Dickon began in a large febrile way to seek through all our world for what he called "creative far-reaching men." The world needed them; the world was ripe for them; these "new men" of to-day were only the precursors of the men who had to come. To him it seemed essential that they should appeal to a great multitude of hearers, be audible to the ends of the earth. Until a thing had been put through to the multitude and had taken hold of the multitude, it had not, from his point of view, been done. From the very nature of the case it was manifest that the primary thing in the career of these redeeming advertisers would be that we should know about them. And we did not know about them.

For a time he discussed the American publicity people and such great newspaper men as Hearst and the Pulitzers. From that he spread out upon a general comparison of English and American. "I've met Hearst," he said, "as often as I've met Rothermere; I've spent days with both the Pulitzers, and do I begin to know anything about them? No. I've not the faintest idea of what they are up to, or what they *think* they are up to. Billy, why are Americans, all Americans, Americans without exception, such mysteries to us? European race. More often than not *our* race. Our language. Conditions after all very like ours. A bigger country, of course. A different pace. Difference of

phase. But while you seem to get Englishmen and Frenchmen all round and through and through, half an American is in a loud glare and the other half is darkness. It's like seeing things by the beam of a searchlight after you have been seeing them in a light that is soft and grey and generally diffused.

"That's it, perhaps, Billy. A profound difference in their publicity, using publicity in its widest sense. From the way that a child gets looked at and talked about, onward. They're lit up differently, inside and out. And what is life but a consequence of illumination? When you go to America and see headlines and interviews with a girl about her engagement, or with a professor about his resignation, you at first say, 'Good God. There's no privacy here at all!' And then you discover that outside that crude, cheap, hasty, flat, misleading lighting-up of salient objects and events, there's abysses of darkness, immense pits where much goes on and nothing is exposed — and people, rich people especially, unobserved in them and doing the most extraordinary things.

"In Europe a man may have a private life, yes, but in America he has a secret life, lit by sudden shouting judgments and flashes of journalistic lightning. In which you get an impression — vivid enough but wrong. Things about him that would be plain here are invisible there, even to himself. And other things come out with a kind of scream, all out of proportion by our standards. It's because of that, Billy, that to our European senses Americans never seem quite real. The quality of the exposure, the method of illumination to which they have had to adapt themselves, account for nearly everything between us. That sort of watchful reserve they have, mixed up with a desire to make general, over-simplified explanations of themselves. The queerness of these greyish-faced, slow-speaking Americans in grey, who watch your face as they talk to you! If the searchlight jumps round upon them they are ready all the time. They talk about themselves as we never do. They try and hide their nakedness behind autobiographical statements. They instance themselves as types. They snatch suddenly at your verdict upon them. They have none of our sense of sustained scrutinies and slowly maturing judgments; none at all."

Was there any such gathering and influential body of men and

women in America set upon Reconstruction as we two were set upon Reconstruction?

"Allowing for all the differences in pace and phase," he said, "the fact remains that we and they are going along the same road in the same direction." The need for a great reconstruction was common now to all the world; there were only these differences in phase. Business had grown there faster and bigger than it had grown here, and their banking was rapidly overshadowing ours. They were bound to lead the world's affairs for a time. But how far were they able to keep the lead or do anything with it?

He sized up the prospects of a world under American leadership. Were the Americans producing an American mind that would be large-thinking and powerful enough for the whole world? In certain things they were broader-minded than Europeans. The United States had always been more curious and intelligent about China and Eastern Asia, for example, and more restrained in its imperialism. It had been far ahead of the European intelligence in its grasp of the importance of a properly regulated currency and credit system to economic life. It had got currency into politics long before Europe suspected there was such a thing as a currency riddle. But, nevertheless, it was shallow. All its energy — and its energy was tremendous — seemed to be on the surface. Woodrow Wilson was typical of the American quality that perplexed us. The idea of some great settlement of world affairs, some world peace organisation, was magnificent. Quite beyond the scope of the European outlook or the compass of European statesmanship. One saw the United States leading the world into a new age. Then for the realisation of that vision, the Fourteen Points, as trite and superficial as a magazine article.

And after that — America the Creditor.

"And while we sit here asking, 'Can the Americans develop a world mind and lead the world?' there may be just such another pair of brothers as we are, Billy, in Indianapolis or Chicago saying, 'Why don't the Europeans show a sign of a world mind?' I believe our sort of ideas are fermenting in the world everywhere. We're not such original chaps as to be very far from the general trail. What brings us here will bring others here. And Americans most of all....

“It’s just that we don’t know about them. They aren’t talking yet....

“This new reconstructed world, Billy, is like a big dragon-fly jerking itself bit by bit out of its larval skin. Jerking and then resting. It’s wet and quiet just now, a little disposed to quiver, making no noise, but it’s nearly here; it’s almost out; it’s coming on.”

“And presently, all at once, it will spread out its wings and buzz,” I said.

“And then we shall know about it.”

He looked at me with that queer experimental expression of his, like a small boy who has given his little brother a dose and does not quite know how it will agree with him or he with it. I looked back at him and laughed. “You’d like to be sure.”

“There is a lot in what your friends the Communists call the economic interpretation of history,” said Dickon. “If material needs make political and social forms, then big business and international finance will presently develop a soul of its own, become really conscious of itself and make itself known to the world. The same experiences will beget the same ideas. There must be fellows not only in America but Germany and France who are getting, as we are getting, towards their idea of positively making a new world system — not letting it happen merely, but making it happen.”

Dickon reflected. “China? Japan? India? It can’t be all aimless mooning. Here two or three are talking, there some one is writing. Convergent thoughts perhaps. Surely convergent. Every day there must be some one pushing the new ideas just a little further, clearing up, rounding off, maturing, making possible and practicable. That is the real Reconstruction. But for the world in general they are still inaudible, smothering, unable to speak out yet within the swelling, uncomfortable old institutions. Then some one says something, definite effort is started, the trouble begins.”

He paused, a little troubled by his growing and distending metaphor. He was always begetting these metaphors and finding them too much for him.

“Then is the time for the man-midwife,” I suggested, “the propagandist, the advertiser, to set about his task, and bring the new order into the world.”

As we talked we replenished our glasses with a reasonable moderation from the decanter and the kettle on the hob, and I think we talked on at last partly because the influenza made us feel as physically lazy as we were mentally flushed, and disinclined us for the little effort needed to get ourselves from the fireside to our waiting hot-water bottles. And it was interesting to have my brother spreading out his general ideas to me again after so many years. It was interesting to see how close he had come to certain speculations of my own.

At last the little clock upon the mantelshelf pinged one o'clock in the morning, and Deland, whom we had supposed asleep, coughed rather markedly in the passage. He would not go to bed before his precious charges were safely tucked away.

Dickon stood up, a great bulk, and stretched out his freckled fists.

"That whisky and the talk have done me good, Billy. Well, the Reconstruction of the world is going to be a long job — but it's going to be done. Even if *we* die futile. The present muddle isn't going on for ever.... Reconstructing the world. It's interesting. And besides, Lord! *what else is there to do with life*?"

He drooped and stood with his hands in his pockets staring at the fire.

"Minnie. And the children married and scattered. It's passed like a dream."

16. VISHNU, SIVA, AND BRAHMA

SO, in effect, Dickon talked and thought four years ago — nearly five years now.

I think it was Dickon who first hit upon the image of Vishnu, Siva, and Brahma, the Indian triad of fundamental gods, to express the main forces in the world about us. We found that a very happy symbolism for our ideas. Neither of us can stand a dualism in politics or social life, a mere antagonism of the ins and the outs, the haves and the have-nots. Both of us have an instinctive hatred of eternal rhythms. Dickon, even more than I, insisted upon the triangularity of human affairs. The war of Vishnu, the stubborn conservative, against Siva, the democratic destroyer who ploughs up and inundates, would mean only a dreary alternation of dullness and catastrophe, if it were *not* for Brahma the inventor, the creative spirit, for whom politics has so rarely found expression. He is the innovating thing; he is always young and being born into the world, always struggling to become effective. That Hindu trinity is far nearer to political and social realities than the Persian dualism of light and darkness, the dualism of the good and the bad, that the party system suggests.

Like modernist theology, like all such applications of ancient and time-worn phrasings to new necessities, it fails a little under scrutiny. Dickon's treatment of Lord Northcliffe and Mr. Lloyd George as Sons of the Morning, lit by the spirit of Brahma, is decidedly unsatisfactory. Something has gone wrong there. I make identifications in quite another direction, but of those I will tell later. My identifications, too, are provisional and for want of any better. But I think they are nearer than Dickon's. Mr. Baldwin is better as Vishnu's Prime Minister, and there is much to be said for the view that the Duke of Northumberland is a modern incarnation of Vishnu. But the genteel Ramsay MacDonald and the inexpressive Clynes, man-of-the-world Thomas, and Catholic Communist Wheatley are not very good as — shall I say Sivatheria? Siva keeps his temple, if he keep a temple anywhere, in Moscow. Does Siva tolerate temples? *One* thing I know, that in the heart of every youngster forced at the very dawn of adolescence to accept a destiny of obedience,

inferiority, and uncongenial toil there is a potential altar to Siva with the red fire waiting to be lit.

Perhaps it would be better to stress the eternal intermingling of the triad. The spirit of Vishnu — that is to say, the stiff, fierce cowardice of established advantage, the spirit of Siva, the wild resentment of exclusion and imposed inferiority, the spirit of Brahma, the urge of curiosity and creative experiment; all these in varying degrees work everywhere and in all of us. Wherever there is ownership and government Vishnu installs himself; wherever there are dispossessed masses Siva reigns. Brahma, who makes all new things, dominates neither ruler nor crowd, but moves throughout the universe, progress eternal....

If Vishnu rules among the creditors and conservatives and Siva is the god of debtors and the parties of the left, does it follow that Brahma is to be identified with liberalism?

This is a matter for discussion not so much for me as for the bright young gentlemen, often now quite middle-aged, who spend their vacations reviving the Liberal Party in conferences and summer schools. I admit that liberalism has always attracted me, and even in my socialist days as a student I called myself also a liberal, I still call myself a liberal and my views liberalism, but the repulsion of the Liberal Party has been as strong as the attraction of its name. When I dabbled in politics in that rather excited and uncritical reconstruction period after the war, I joined the Labour Party — l do not now recall exactly why. Possibly because of the little bunch of intellectuals who gave it a delusively constructive air. Under democratic conditions all parties are the same stuff and all politicians are alike; the game they play is the same for all of them, and every team must be made up of much the same sort of men. But nevertheless — though Mr. Vivian Phillipps, Chief Whip, I understand, of the surviving fragments, would not own me — I am a liberal. And so is Brahma the Creator. Though I do not think he would own Mr. Vivian Phillipps.

Of all kinds of men who have ever been active in affairs, I suppose the English Whig of the eighteenth century is most after my heart. Yet I doubt if the real Lord Brahma is very like an eighteenth-century English Whig....

Since Dickon took to monetary reform as his special and

comprehensive task, he has, I remark, restricted Vishnu more and more to the creditor spirit and the power of gold. And if he were pressed for some evidence of the existence of Brahma, he would find it in the projects for a regulated currency as they have been sketched by Mr. Maynard Keynes. But where he will find the spirit of Brahma expressed in the public affairs of America I do not know. I hesitate between Mr. Henry Ford and —— . But why should I be thus specific about men so far away from my continual observation? Let me keep my personal allusions for the lands I know. Here in France they are quite sure that the one God of America is Vishnu, the Transatlantic Brahma is as inaudible to them as he is obscure to us, and Siva, they gather, is either detained at Ellis Island or safely in gaol.

A golden incarnation of Vishnu rules America, as they see it from these broken European countries, rules America absolutely, sitting upon a Treasury full of gold. Indeed, the American Vishnu sits, in this vision, like a golden weight upon all the world, smiling gold stoppings at the figure of Hope. But I am an Anglo-Saxon myself and I know that I do not know America. More may be hidden in a market-place than can be hidden in a desert. America seems to be leading the world now and seems likely to go on leading the world for some time, m the reconstruction of economic life upon this new scale, the scale of the great modern business combinations. It cannot do this, I hold, without producing, in addition to a vast encumbrance of merely wealthy common persons, a great number of energetic and capable directive men and women of a definable type, people who will ultimately be bored and irritated by existing political institutions and current ways of living, and who will set themselves, more and more intelligently and co-operatively, to the entire reconstruction of human affairs.

At present such types are still ineffective in America, because, among other difficulties, they have to struggle towards understanding through thickets of mind-destroying slang and swamps of verbose cant. You do not hew your way across a great continent in three generations and carry your vocabulary intact. America has partly lost the ancient gift of rational speech. American thought is more hampered than we realise by the necessity of expressing itself in a

language that is habitually depraved. It is kept at a low level by the universal resort to the common school, with its badly trained teachers and poor equipment, and by those peculiarities of illumination upon which Dickon expatiated, which sacrifice clearness so ruthlessly to vividness, and precision of dealing to harshly dramatic effect.

17. SENSE OF HUMOUR

ONE other aspect I want to give of Dickon before his picture is completed, a glimpse of something very deep in him. What I have to tell may seem extraordinarily nothing to the reader, but to me it is the very heart of Dickon. It was one day, at most two years ago, after my very first discovery of Provence and before he' went off to Brussels, that this incident occurred. I was sleeping that night at Bordon Street, and when he came in I was reading by the fire.

It was late. He was a little flushed and crumpled, in dinner dress and with his decorations. I did not know at the time where he had been; I learned that afterwards.

There had been a great dinner of Advertisers — I rather think it was one of the organisations he had created — and he had spoken and let himself go. A little warmed by champagne and professional fraternity, he had spread out his dream of the Advertiser as prophet and teacher to a pleased but incredulous gathering. Some one had laughed, and he had sounded a prophetic note in reply. "We are the masters of the newspapers and they know it," he had said. "We and we alone have the ear of the world. We can dictate what shall be known and what shall not be known, what shall exist and what shall not. We can educate the people or degrade the people, exalt right things and humble base things. We can be the guide, philosopher, and friend of the common man — working together (renewed laughter). Why should we not rise to the full height of our possibilities?"

Then he had paused and come to something like an anticlimax.

"Are we never to reach beyond motor-cars and medicines, cigarettes and pickles?"

He lowered impressively for a second or so and then sat down.

The Organized Advertisers cheered and hammered the tables, but also they looked curiously at one another and glanced at Dickon, flushed and already doubtful of the wisdom of what he had said. They had heard some of this before from him, but not so much nor so plainly.

"There was moderation in all things," commented a subsequent

speaker. “Our energetic and masterful friend to whose organising fervour our profession owed so much,” was, he thought, a little prone to exaggerate. It was not perhaps altogether a fault in an advertiser (laughter) within limits (renewed laughter). But though it might be good business to exaggerate, it was not wise to threaten (hear, hear). We had our share, a great share, he would indeed go so far as to say a vital share, in stimulating and in sustaining the currents of trade, the prosperity of our mighty empire, but it was a share — in subordination. It had its place and its limits. There was such a thing as taking one’s bit too seriously....

Possibly through sheer clumsiness he had circled about and repeated this thought three or four times. But he was encouraged by “Hear and hear” and some gentle rapping on the table. What had been intended as a friendly reproof became an attack upon Dickon, and at the end what they call a trouncing.

Dickon was a respected and popular figure in the advertisement world, but his was the reluctant popularity accorded to success. His associates liked him but they felt at times I think that he did little to compel them to like him. This talk of their high responsibilities after dinner had not so much flattered them as made them feel uncomfortable, and the gathering fell back very readily into a sympathetic deprecation of “exaggeration” and “lack of humour.” They applauded warmly; they nodded their approval. Later speakers showed an increasing disposition to echo and even exceed the trouncer, and a funny man saw his opportunity, and the applause and laughter grew.

The arrow still chafed in Dickon’s hide. He stood before the fire and brooded immensely before his explosion.

“This damned sense of humour!” he cried suddenly and violently.

“Eh?” said I, looking up from my book.

“You might do a decent thing that would make you look a bit high-falutin’. And so you do a shabby, lazy, second-rate thing instead, and grin and say, ‘Thank God I’ve got a sense of humour.’ That’s what it amounts to.”

“Is this me, Dickon, you’re talking to?”

“Oh no, Billy! I never talk to you. I was thinking. Man I heard speak to-night. Took me up — for blowing a bit too strongly about

advertisement....

"Perhaps I said too much.... Perhaps I did." He went on as if he addressed some third person.

"But *Modesty*! Knowing your place in the world! Rot it all is! Rot I tell you. Cringing, shamming, shirking muck they bully into boys in public schools. And from an Advertising Man of all people! An Advertiser! Think of it! Modesty! Not going all out for the things that have to be done! Let a child drown under your eyes! Thank God *you* don't profess to be a swimmer. *You* don't take upon yourself to rescue all the drowning kids in Christendom. If some presumptuous silly ass who can hardly swim at all chooses to, go into the water and gets himself into a mess, *you* aren't going to do anything but smile. Flick a pebble at his head as he comes up for the third time. You're a quiet smiler, you are!"

I leant back in my chair to appreciate my brother better. There was nothing else to do. I was still at a loss to know what it was all about. He was just the slightest bit drunk, but mostly this was, I perceived, a rational passion.

"Sense of humour!" said Dickon. "There isn't much of that poison in Advertisement, anyhow...."

He seemed to recall my presence.

"You may laugh, Billy! But that blamby-pamby idiot to-night has got my goat. I've been a hot man to-night in a world of quiet smiles. Fuming. He let me up to seeing what all this gentlemanly grinning and smirking and enjoying the fun of it quietly and unassumingly really means. Why should a man be guyed for taking himself seriously?: what else *is* there to take seriously? Those chaps who won't take themselves seriously ought to have been headed off by birth control and never begun. All this half-doing things! All this living with the guts out!... A joke's a joke in its place, but most of this not taking yourself too seriously is a dirty sin against heaven."

And suddenly Dickon soared above me. He became a pulpit and my admirable armchair a pew. His voice mingled expostulation and passionate assertion in the most extraordinary way.

"Because one sets out to do big things, Billy, because there are big things to be done, because one works until one gets ragged and sore, it doesn't follow one is presumptuous. We two are successes,

Billy; life has pampered us, petted us, put its best carpets under our feet. Have we a right to be anything but serious men? *Damned* serious men! It's no want of modesty to attempt everything one can; to play as big a game as one can; it's a sense of obligation. What we *are*.... That's another question.

"Don't we know each other through and through, Billy? Do we pretend? Do we put on airs? Don't I know what asses we are, I who can't leave a scrap on my plate and you who brighten at the swish of a girl's skirt? But you *do*, Billy! Every one sees it. Don't we know how we blunder, how we lose our little tempers, the endless *silly* things we do ? Yes, and all the same, with all our weaknesses upon us, we've got to be in deadly earnest and do our biggest job.

"If we don't, who will? Look here, Billy.... Is there a race of Gods among mankind, that you and I can slack? Who will do things if we don't? If we stand aside, smirking in our elegant modesty, who is there to take hold of things? A sense of humour, I tell you, Billy, is no fit possession for a decent man. Let the failures have their damned sense of humour! Cuddle it and nurse it. They need it. Let them snigger and sneak and steal, and make funny faces behind the backs of the men in earnest. That's *their* road, the low road. But for us — things have been put before us, Billy, and we have to take hold of them. We may not be aristocrats; our luck may be all chance; but for good or evil, God has put us among the masters in the affairs of men. And a master I mean to be. Oh, I'd rather — —"

He paused to assemble it.

"I'd rather be a skunk and set myself to outstink this drain into which I have fallen, stink and stink hard instead of making for fresh air, than be one of these damned sense-of-humour business men."

Queer how Dickon could be stung at times!

He was quiet for a moment. "I know I'm a fat ass," he said in an altered voice. "Oh, I know I'm a fat ass and deserve to be grinned at. Don't I *know* it!"

He went on talking to himself in broken sentences. "Take the second plateful.... Go to the club. How can one help eating too much at the Ermine? Sleepy afternoon.... Half one's efficiency gone.... Things like that. Temper over a tight collar.... The times I've shocked Minnie! Such a poor *comic* thing!..."

The muttering died away into an incoherent rumbling that was presently ended in a nod and a “Yes.”

Then he stood quite still. And suddenly whispered something that gripped me strangely. He whispered it quite forgetful of me, as one whispers a phrase that one has thought out and chosen long ago and repeated many times. I perceived at once that it had been his ultimate consideration on many such occasions of trouble.

“Weak as we are,” said Dickon, *“those others are weaker.”*

I stared at him. I had known Dickon all my life, and suddenly it dawned upon me that in some things I hardly knew him at all.

He woke up again.

“Pity I got in a temper!” he said. “Oh! — a damned pity!

“I could have murdered that fool.

“I showed it and they grinned at me.... I’m glad I had you to blow off to, old man....

“I shouldn’t have slept all night. Sometimes cursing him and sometimes cursing myself. No one knows the nights we spend, some of us, Billy.

“You see, Billy, what I said wasn’t exactly what I meant to say. I overdid it. What I said was right, but somehow I overdid it. I gave him a loophole. I don’t say things exactly. It’s too beastly hard to say things exactly.

“But they got what I was after all right.... Damned sight too much for them....

“They like being funny little nibbling beasts. They *like* it....”

I forget what else he said. I was not listening any longer. I was turning over his astonishing aphorism in my mind. *“Weak as we are, those others are weaker.”*

That, I think, is the quintessence of Dickon.

18. STRATUM OF FUTILITY

IT is curious how the social uses of Lambs Court have dissolved away since the death of Minnie. Richard Clissold Junior has married now, and Winnie has gone to live with her husband in Italy, and young William, my godson, is something of a rebel and a painter (but, I begin to think after my last visit to his studio, a very good painter), and until my great-nephews and great-nieces repopulate it Lambs Court above stairs is an empty place, left more and more to the routines of old and trusted and conservative servants.

Dickon's life, for all our early divergence, reverts to the pattern of mine — the life of a man who has come through the ordinary drama of the world with the sense of a part played out, who is yet full of vitality and anxious to get things done, who still has strong and deep desires, but who is no longer swayed by that intensity of personal reference that narrowed his life before. In that period of renewed intimacy that followed Minnie's death we discussed almost as if we were students again what we were doing with the years that still remained to us. Both of us were at loose ends. Both of us were becoming acutely aware of our dwindling handful of life, and both of us were asking ourselves, as it soaked away between our fingers: "What am I doing with it? What is the best that I can do with it?"

We were pulling ourselves together for the last lap of coherent living. We were entirely vague then about our objectives. I had been so for some years; but with Dickon the phase was more acute. And more decisive. Since then Dickon, with characteristic concentration, has settled down to a task of his own, a task that will need all that is left of him to accomplish, and I, for more complicated reasons, am no longer under the same cloud of feeling that then made me unhappy. But for a while it was as if something long forgotten anxiety of youth, anxiety about the purposes of life had come back to us out of those far-off adolescent days.

I find myself wondering how many of our contemporaries have experienced such a fresh start, such a phase of doubt and resumption in their middle years. I question if many intelligent people escape that sort of trouble in adolescence. It is so universal that I would call

it distinctively "anxiety of youth." Then for most of us comes immediate necessity, the pressure of events; we are caught up and hustled along and excited and distracted and amused, and many of us, perhaps most human beings, never reach those open and interrogative silences again before death ends the storm of experience. Unless there is a space of leisure, a release from the thickets of need, I do not see how that trouble can return. And some happy souls hear no more of these interrogations, because, like Sir Rupert York, they have answered them once for all. It is well I have already given a picture of him in this book, because there at least you have one man who has said, simply and completely: "This work is good enough for me." He will go on unhurryingly., with his bones and his other specimens and the subtle and satisfying problems that concern him, until at last one morning he will not get up, but lie, peaceful and done.

He is one of a number of men of science whom I know to be men serene in their souls and happy in the essence of their lives. But scientific work is a world apart, a magic island cut off from futility. Music, too, may be another magic island, cut off not only from futility but from reality. There is a protective isolation about most of the arts. But Science has most of this precious detachment. And is yet profoundly real. Scientific workers work to the end, though at last they may go gently like a boat coming home as the wind falls in the evening. I was once upon that island of enduring work. Had I kept upon it I should not have been writing this book now and making these half-envious, half-admiring reflections.

Even when there is a space of leisure I doubt if that phase of middle-aged unrest happens very generally. It is natural for me now to find the quality of middle-aged people's lives particularly interesting. I am impressed by the present proliferation of the middle-aged. They form a larger proportion of mankind than was ever the case in the world before. And I am more aware of them.

Quite as important in human affairs as that change of scale upon which I have been dwelling in recent sections is the prolongation of life now in progress. I do not think I am being led away by my own circumstances to exaggerate its importance. The average age of the English, for example, has risen steadily for the last century. For that,

at any rate, we have fairly trustworthy figures. In Elizabethan times one was mature at thirty and old at forty; Shakespeare was already a worn-out, unproductive old man in retirement at fifty. Everything was earlier and younger then; Romeo had the years of a raw undergraduate, and Juliet was a child. One loved and loved again and married and had children, and by the time they were of age the game was done. The ordinary man of fifty was fat or grey or bald and his teeth had gone beyond repair. There was no repair.

Young people died freely at all ages; more children died than lived to maturity. There was a fever, therefore, to the crises of life before the chance was snatched away.

"What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty:
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure."

That was the note of it. To be old and hale was remarkable. It was to be distinguished and isolated. The aged of fifty and upward formed a dwindling chorus to the song of youth. They sat and looked on at the dance — a little outstaying their welcome. The literatures of the world still preserve the spirit of that more transitory time, and its tradition dominates us to-day.

In all classes now, but particularly in the prosperous classes, people do not die as once they did. More and more hold on. And they are cared for and mended; it is not merely life that is prolonged, but vigour. Vigour and the desire for living. An accession is developing to the human life cycle; a stage after the family life, which itself grows less and less prolific and uses up the available energy less and less completely. And this elder stratum has no traditions as yet to shape its activities. Literature has not prepared us for it, and we come through to it with a sort of surprise. As soon as they have done with loving and getting, the novels, the plays dismiss us with a phrase. We

are supposed to be enfeebled, sated, and done. We discover we are not so easily dismissed. We have not finished. We are not enfeebled. We demand a better role than to act as chorus to the next generation and offer it out-of-date advice. Here I declare on the edge of sixty is living still to be done, in a new mood and for a new end.

I believe that as civilisation develops this elder stratum is going to play a determining role in human development. In the first part of this book I told of a talk I had with Dr. Jung of Zurich. Among other things that I brought away from that evening was the fruitful idea that the prevalent states of mind of quite grown-up people in past ages are preserved as phases in the development of the immature to-day, and that a new, more fully adult phase is spreading from the fifties and forties downward in human experience. This proportionate increase in the elder stratum will contribute greatly to the intensification and extension of this new adult phase. It will ultimately make life more disinterested and more deliberate and less romantic. It will make novels and plays that set out to present life aspects of history instead of stories of mating. But that will only be when this stratum has developed a consciousness of its distinctive quality and role. Then it will impose its standards upon the younger generation and assist it sooner and sooner to maturity. At present things are still the other way about, and the elder stratum is dominated by the overemphasised standards of the younger generation. At present it has still to realise itself. It is like a new actor thrust upon the scene before a part has been found for him. For a time it is a conspicuous encumbrance even to itself.

What an extraordinary spectacle of waste do the lives of the great majority of us middle-aged and older prosperous people present to-day!

An immense proportion of the property and spending power of the world is now in the hands of old folks, who would in every previous time have died and left things to their heirs. The heirs remain allowanced and functionless, going about the world in a state of arrested reality. They are amateurs of everything, provisionally active, waiting for a call that lingers.

About here in Provence, and especially along this coast from Saint Raphael to far beyond Genoa, there is gathered an abundant

assemblage of this old, prosperous multitude for my astonished observation. Under eighteenth-century conditions not *one* per cent. of these people would be alive. Now their still peculiar sham youthfulness sets all the fashions of living. The amount of altogether futile Vitality upon these hills and coasts is incredible, until one has gone to and fro through it and mixed with it and watched it.

There is, first of all, a very considerable resident population here of oldish wealthy people. They build, they own or lease beautiful villas with great gardens and lovely prospects. There must be hundreds of thousands of such people along these coasts ; from England and America alone they must number scores of thousands; and they must represent an aggregate income of hundreds of millions of pounds. They employ the lives of hundreds of thousands of servants, they spread their gardens over great areas of land, they send up the cost of living for everyone, and they crowd the pulmonary refugees out of the sunshine. They are often men and women who playa vigorous game of tennis, stand the fatigues of whole days of motoring, they come and go among themselves, lunching, dining, assembling, dispersing, and I cannot find a soul among them that is doing anything of large importance in the world or stretching its energies to the full, in any direction whatever. They declare they have played their parts in the world and finished. There are women who have borne and brought up one or two or even three children, and women who have produced none. I could assemble a score of men within an hour's motoring of this *mas* — younger men than I, who say they have "retired." Under that phrase they contentedly rule themselves dead for all effectual ends. They are just playing about, the little innocents, until Nurse Angel-of-Death comes to put them to bed.

Close to me here is a fairly representative sample of these Riviera residents; she is the widow of old Sir Ralph Steinhart, and she was a niece of the original Romer; she inherits an interest in the activities of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. and their subsidiaries from both sides. Every time I have done a hands-turn for any of our concerns I have made her richer. Here she is, within half an hour's drive of me, silver-haired — the natural grey made an even white by skilful bleaching — high-coloured and bright-eyed. She is a little bent and

restlessly active. Her gardens are very spacious and fine. We pass them usually when we go to Nice. She has, I observe, obstructed a number of the peasants' paths to make her domain more secluded; she threatens them on boards with *pièges à loup*, and they must go round by a longer way outside her fences to do their business. Inside one rarely sees anything moving among the olive terraces and the frequent stone jars; it is still and deserted except that sometimes in the cool of the evening a manservant is visible taking a pet dog for its sanitary stroll. Nearer the house there are great hedges of agave and cactus, groves of palm and glimpses of glorious colour which, save for herself and a few guests, delight only God and her gardeners. She has bought and evacuated half a dozen peasant houses, she told me one day, to assure the amenities of her view — which, on the whole, is not so good as mine.

I am obliged almost in spite of myself to know something of her house and her life. When she is here — for two-thirds of the year she is not here and the house stands empty except for a caretaker or so and a casual priest or so, a luxurious blank on the face of the earth — when she is here, she makes continual efforts to cultivate my acquaintance. It is not that she likes me or that I even pretend to like her, but because she is inordinately curious about my relations to Clementina, and because generally I perplex her and because, more than anything else, she has nothing better to do. She persists in raiding me with parties of high-coloured, bright-eyed, observant Romer and Steinhart nieces and in-laws. Or with a literary party of those beastly little cigarette dealers who write novels for the English county families, and their crumpled and dishevelled womenfolk. Or with a scratch lot from the dramatic world. Or even with one of her selected collections from the aristocratic Catholic circles of Paris. But these last are rarer. That is the side of her life she turns away from me. Her car does its best and sticks inside my pillars, and up they all come on foot, either quietly agog and staring about them, or else with an impelled reluctant look, according to their race and breeding.

As soon as the car is observed below, Jeanne flies upstairs to put on what is known with us as a Lady Steinhart apron, and while I entertain the party upon the terrace with a taciturn amiability, tea is

served in cups of coarse Provençal ware. The party is made to spread a peculiarly fluid and difficult cherry jam on toasted crusts with large holes in them, through which the red stuff drips on anything below it, and I converse about the Provençal climate — which has recently developed Anglomania — and intimate my readiness to hear the purport of the visit. If Clementina is present she is silently polite, and regards the visitors in a way that serves at least to embarrass their scrutiny of the books, newspapers, and other oddments scattered about the terrace. Her dog goes a little way off and yaps protestingly and usefully, in a tone that shows that the whole affair is to be considered unusual. After a time something seems to break, and her ladyship and party gravitate down the hill again. I never ask her to repeat the visit, and she always does.

She cannot understand why I should live here for so much of my time in a house that I rent for three thousand depreciated francs a year, wearing dirty old flannels and employing a solitary servant. She knows that I pay ten thousand pounds a year or so in super-tax and income-tax, and this way of living seems to her like a wicked waste of God's bounty. She cannot understand why I sit for so many hours in this upper room to which her way is always barred. And, above all, she cannot understand why Clementina sometimes isn't here and sometimes is; why she has so many meals here, and why she sits dangling her long legs over the wall of my terrace and smoking my cigarettes with an air of complete domestication, while I am upstairs writing. As I never explain Clementina to anyone, as I shall probably not explain her completely even in this book, it is natural that to Lady Steinhart she remains unexplained.

Consequently Lady Steinhart never quite knows whether she really knows Clementina and whether she may, or possibly even ought to, invite Clementina to lunch, and what would happen if she did. And all that is excellent exercise for Lady Steinhart's mind.

Visits like this seem to take up a large part of her *time*. She and a multitude of other people are always rushing about this country seeing each other; and I will confess I cannot imagine a less interesting series of sights. Like all Romers and Steinharts, she is addicted to discovering and dropping young musicians, and for these special parties have to be assembled. And also she gets through a

considerable amount of time altering her house and garden. She is always digging something up or laying something down, or planting out something or opening out a vista, and if she can manage it she takes you to the spot affected and asks your advice. And while you are giving your advice she is thinking of the next thing she will bother you about. She pursues and buys old furniture, pictures, pottery, and jewellery remorselessly and voraciously. It's a clever little fifteenth-century pot that gets away from her once she is on its trail. And when she has bought a thing she glories in it for a little while, and shows it to her friends and makes them guess what she gave for it, and puts it in her already very congested house, where it presently sinks down out of sight among the other stuff; and when she has forgotten all about it, as she must do, I hope her tremendous and implacable major-domo steals it and sells it to some one to sell to her all over again. Then there is also much to be done about her clothes and her dresses and her hair. So her days are always emptily busy and the net result of them is exactly nothing at all.

But you must not think that Lady Steinhart's life is wholly consumed by these activities. She is a very moral woman; there is no talk of a lover for her although she is still short of sixty, and she does not dance more than two or three times a week. But the gap thus left is filled in by a rather distinguished serious side. This serious side she does not let me see as much of as I should like to do. It is the one thing she does not press upon me, and it is the one thing about her that interests me. She is a little bashful with me about it; I do not know why. It reaches high and far. You might imagine that a born Romer, who is a

Steinhart by marriage, would be a Jewess, but this is not the case with her. She is hostile to Jews. She is a Catholic. She is substantially one of the old noblesse. She is a Catholic and a reactionary, and it is alleged that she made even Sir Ralph a Catholic after he became speechless before his death. She is involved in French politics at an angle proper to an aristocratic and pious woman. Priests, bishops, monsignori are to be found at her house, moving about quietly, speaking in undertones, forming little black clumps in the bright flower-gardens, obscurely active, mysteriously wary. She has done much for the Church, and she may do more.

And the Church which has always had a weakness for pious women of property makes her a great concession. She has a private chapel of her own to play with; it is her dearest interest. She buys it petticoats and lace and ornaments and jewels and metal pots and pans to put on — and take off. It is in the house somewhere, and often when one goes in, one is reminded of her serious side by a whiff of incense. from some recent function. She can go there alone and meditate, and I suppose she can regale herself with special services, but what she thinks of God when she meditates is as hidden from my imagination as what God can think of her. There is usually a subdued-looking priest or so at her table. Not excessively pampered. The Romer blood is in her veins, and you feel, and you can feel they feel, that they have been paid for.

That private chapel is the crown of her life. It is a great privilege, and she must have sought it for many years. It is the consummation of her bric-à-brac. No doubt the Church weighed the matter and decided that it was worth while to respect her spiritual possibilities to that extent. Perhaps the Church does not know the Romers quite so well as I know them. Anyhow, she has it. The chapel is her distinction. Take that away and substitute a lover, or bridge, or the higher amateurishness in art or criticism, or a specialised collecting mania, or a cherished illness, or just blank interludes, and you have the life of quite a large number of these great ladies of the Riviera. And the men, the "retired" men, the resident sort, cultivate their gardens also, play tennis, make love in a vague, furtive way, indulge in wistful reminiscence of the days when they were alive, and are on the whole much less animated than the women. Some are vicious in an elderly, elaborate, Roman way, and their establishments are barred and secret, and their rather too smart menservants go about visibly clad in light and becoming blackmail. French journalists are modest upon such questions, and the Riviera has no Suetonius. There are not many married couples in constant association among our residents. The prevalent thing is a single personality engaged, with the widest, most dignified, and expensive of details, in futility.

But the residential side of the Côte d'Azur is not, after all, its most typical aspect. Where the big hotels cluster, the multitude grows dense. Sooner or later everyone in the Western world who has more

than three thousand pounds a year must come to the Riviera. An invisible necessity seems to bring us here just as the souls in the Swedenborgian books go undriven to their ultimate destinies. I am here, and, after all, I am rather pretending not to belong to it than honestly detached. For so many of us there is nowhere else to go — quite remarkably there is not. To the north are murderous climates and to the south murderous discomforts. A few come once or twice and then not again, but most who have come continue to come. A middle-aged hunger for the sun is an active, physical cause. The transients come and go tremendously.

Many of them still function in some reduced or inattentive way elsewhere; some of the younger set between forty-five and sixty are frankly recuperating; but most have altogether discontinued any contribution to the world's affairs. In the hotels we sit and watch them, guessing ages. The average is astonishingly high. Golden lads of sixty step it briskly with gay girls of forty-five. The grey heads bob to the black music. The other day we found an incessant couple in a Cannes hotel, who golfed all the forenoon and danced together until one in the morning, and both were over seventy. The only young people here seem to be subsidiaries. I make no objection to all this activity on the part of old people. I would rejoice to see them dancing and generally active at ninety and a hundred, but my perplexity is their universal disregard of anything else in the world but amusement taken in a quasi-juvenile form.

For a large proportion of this multitude the belated juvenility needs more questionable expression than golfing and dancing, Darby and Joan. Since they have yet to discover that there is any graver business in life than getting, they must gamble, though they are rich and easy; and since they know of no livelier desires they still want most desperately to go on with the adolescent modes of love. With a little care and effort much may still be effected in that matter. One can still be jealous and vindictive, still charm here and break-off there, be cold and cruel and fitful and make the yearning lover realise the wretchedness of an insecure allowance. When one is no longer overanxious to steal away with one's dear mistress, one can still be seen about with her. Which accounts for the prevalence here of a large number of really very beautiful and brilliant and highly

decorated young women between the ages of fifteen and forty, and a large variety of utterly detestable young gentlemen. A mistress must look the part and have a lavish and pampered air. And for some of those who have had a hard struggle to win to this Paradise of ease and power, there seems to be a peculiar charm in gilt-edged passions; Russian exiles, often with quite genuine titles, nobility from almost everywhere, countesses, duchesses, princesses divorcing or divorced, royal bastards (in profusion and with every degree of authenticity), ex-royalties, and even precariously current royalties are here, and only too ready to oblige. The Americans, they say, are particularly generous and abject paymasters to such people. That is probably a libel on the Americans; there are merely more of them with money.

And, thirdly, there is the sport, the mechanical gratification of shooting pigeons, the assembling to look on at racing, polo, flying, fencing, tennis. The worship of tennis becomes more amazing every year. The papers that come here, even the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Nation*, discuss it earnestly, deeply. Photographs of its heroic figures fill the illustrated weeklies. The women have a sort of wadded look about the feet and ankles; the men's faces, in the absence of a ball to hit, are alertly empty. We study the characters, the mannerisms, of these gifted beings. Minniver, it seems, is amusingly short-tempered; he insults his partner and swears. You can hear it all over the court; you can hear about it all over the world. Judkins has a peculiar penetrating sniff. It is, I understand, to be broadcasted.

In relation to all these things cluster the shop-folk and all sorts of dealers, the professionals, the teachers of dancing, the manicurists and complexion specialists, the hoteliers, restaurateurs, and so forth, with, their own sympathetically imitative tennis and sport and private vices out of business hours.

It is still full season down there on the beaches, for I got my *lit-salon* reservation for next week from Cannes at only eight days' notice — I have to run to London for some business and leave this writing for a few weeks. But presently this widespread crowd of aimless property will begin to pour home like a sluice along the roads and in the expresses *de luxe*, and so to Paris and more especially to England in May and June, to the Paris dressmakers and body-makers and face-makers and on to the jostling splendours of

the London Court, and the culmination of all things at Henley and Ascot — especially Ascot. Grave men will wear grey top-hats with the serious elation befitting such an act, and every sort of dress except the old and shabby will be displayed. The King and Queen, those perfect symbols of the will and purpose of the British Empire, will be gravely presiding over the parade amidst the clicking cameras. Wherever there is a foreground there also will be the Countess of Oxford and Asquith, and no doubt some oaf of a Labour member will be well in evidence in a white bowler hat and a loyal grin — just to make it clear that there is nothing different about Labour. And if you study the photographs and pictures of this immense inane gathering you will see they represent mature and oldish people in an enormous majority, deliberately and gravely assembled, dressed with extraordinary attention, and doing nothing, nothing whatever except being precisely and carefully there.

In the wane of the season here, to replace our first-class assembly, there will come a char-à-banc crowd of the merely prosperous, also middle-aged and getting on with it, filling the Monte Carlo Casino at reduced entrance fees, gambling at five francs a go, and learning how to be rich from the margin. They will envy, they will emulate, they will peep over the villa walls and up the Casino staircases to the private rooms. Some may even go up those staircases. Adventurously. The wives will return to Sheffield or Main Street or Pernambuco marvellously changed about the hair and the skirts and the souls. These are the reserves of the great spending class. They are learning. They spread the stratum wide and deep into the general life. Tons of illustrated papers go out weekly to them to keep them in touch; books and plays of a special sort are made to satisfy their cravings. They have no God, and Michael Arlen is their prophet.

I have written of the "elder stratum," but when I think over my occasional glimpses of life at Monaco and Monte Carlo and Nice I am doubtful whether "elder fester" would not be the better expression. When one traces it away from here to Paris, London, Vienna, New York, California, to Biskra and Egypt, to High Savoy, to Biarritz, Palm Beach, and endless other places, to race meetings and summer resorts, to Scotland and New England, and so to its town houses and country houses and its places of origin, one realises

something of its scale and significance in our Atlantic world. It is all that pays super-tax; it is the surplus of the world's resources. Yet extensive and impressive as it is, it is nevertheless, so far as its present characteristics go, almost as new as the great growth of advertisement in Dickon's lifetime. Its precursors in the town and Court life of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries were relatively younger, more actively self-assertive and more assured, and incomparably less abundant and diffused. They were a little intimate community, and this is an auriferous flood. I do not believe that its present development is anything more than one distinctive feature of a transitory phase in the great unfolding of human society that is now in progress. This way of living is no more permanent than the way of living one finds recorded — in caricature indeed, but in illuminating and convincing caricature — by Petronius in his *Satyricon*. It is an overspill of gathering human energy like the spots on an adolescent face. No state of human affairs that releases so vast a splash of futile expenditure can be anywhere near equilibrium. It must be, it manifestly is, undergoing rapid changes. Intelligent people, even the intelligent people in the rich elder stratum itself, will rebel against this mode of life, as Dickon and I have rebelled. And all those who are outside of it have only to learn of it to desire to end it, because it is so plainly a vast waste of spending power by essentially powerless people.

Circumstances may have made Dickon and me rather tougher and more refractory stuff than most of our class, less afraid to lie awake at night and look what used to be called the Eternities in the face. But none of these people can be of a very different clay from Dickon and myself, and what has happened to us must happen with slight differences in quality and quantity to most of them. There is a great dread of lying awake at night manifest everywhere. The activity to escape mental solitude is remarkable. Most of the rushing about in motor-cars is plainly due to that. The rich, ageing Americans in particular seem constantly In flight across the Atlantic from something that is always, nevertheless, waiting for them on the other side, whichever side it happens to be. There would not be all this vehement going to and fro if they were not afraid of something that sought them in the quiet places. And what else can that something be

but just these questions that have confronted us. “There is only a little handful of water left now. What do you mean to do with it? What under the stars is the meaning of your life?”

“Oh, hell!” they say at the first intimation of that whisper, “where are we going to-morrow?”

Below and behind and all about the petty glittering activities of the elder fester a sane and real next adult phase must surely be preparing even now, the realisation that life can be lived indeed to the very end, and that learning and making need never cease until the last hour has come. Surely there dawns the immense undying interest of social development, of the establishment of a creative order, of the steady growth of human knowledge and power upon the blank outlook of the present. Can these poor, raddled, raffish, self-indulgent, aimless, wealthy types of to-day go on existing as that grows clearer? There is no need of any great convulsion to chase them from existence; they will fade out of the spectacle. Some will learn, some will be expropriated; many types among them will be made impossible by less speculative methods of production. In that direction things must be moving now.

If I could return to this countryside in only a hundred years’ time, I am sure I should find the villas, hostels, roads, promenades of all these places, and all the life that fills them, changed profoundly. The buildings will be for the most part rebuilt and less miscellaneous in their quality. Villa Cocotte in its louder variations may have gone; the gaudy casinos and dancing restaurants will have been cleared away; the gardens will be more beautiful and less strenuously exclusive. The present fences of wire, the *pièges à loup*, and fierce little intimations against trespassing will have been abolished noiselessly by a general amelioration of manners. The peasants’ homes will have got bathrooms, and their cultivations will be less labourious and more skilful.

These bathrooms may be already close at hand. Jeanne tells me that one reason given for the cutting down of olive-trees here is that the olive harvest comes in winter and that picking olives swells and stains and chaps the hands. Enough labour cannot be got for the picking. People will not lend their hands to such work. A new phase of civilisation is near when the human hand has won to this much

respect.

Swift, silent cars will run about this fairer land on smoother roads, less numerously perhaps, and with a greater appearance of purpose. The advertisement boards, like a clamour of touts that ruin so much of the roadside scenery, will be banished altogether. This Provence is too kind and lovable not to remain the resort of great multitudes of people, but they will no longer be living days of busy inconsecutiveness and pursuing the shadows of unseasonable pleasures.

Perhaps my hopes run away with me, but it seems to me that even in so short a time as a hundred years there may be a far larger proportion of true adults amidst the retarded adolescents of our elder stratum, and that their tone of thought and their quality of conduct will have soaked far into the whole social body. Youth is eager and passionate, but youth is not naturally frivolous, and at present an artificial and meretricious frivolity is forced upon the young by the greedy urgency of their aimless seniors. Youth also may be something graver and stronger a hundred years from now.

However evident its approach, it is certain that the coming adult phase is not yet in the ascendant. And since it has still to come as a general thing, and since its essential quality is a merger of one's romantic, adventurous, individual life into the deathless life of the being of the species, manifestly it is not to be attained in its fulness by a few isolated pioneers. The men of science of this time are as a class more nearly able to be adult-minded than any of the rest of us — so far, that is, as their science goes. They are more in touch with an enduring reality; they have their side of the world comparatively organised, and they are joined up into a kind of collectivism. The rest of us are rather people who have heard of this way of living and are seeking it than who are actually living in the new stage.

Meanwhile all the available forms and conveniences necessarily remain those of our stratum. We must wear the clothes the fashions prescribe unless we want to have our lives eaten up by minor troubles and explanations. We must live in the usual way, for how else can we live? If we want to travel we must travel by *trains-de-luxe* or go slow and dirty, catch colds, and be crowded, stifled, and disgusted; we must go to the hotels that quiver to the strains of jazz,

for there are no others at present to go to; and eat either in restaurants amidst processions of mannequins or with dancers jogging our elbows, or perplex our poor stomachs with questionable fare. And if we want air and exercise, is anything so convenient as tennis? Which demands all sorts of conformities.

So we two Clissolds go about the world looking like any other fairly rich spenders — crypto-adults at the best. If I live upon the hills here, and very simply for a part of the year, it is only because I have hit upon a remarkable young woman who has seen fit to make it possible for me. And Heaven knows how long that will last! It is only here that I can live like this — it is a little abnormal adventure of my own — and for the rest of my existence there waits a setting of hotel managers and porters and maidservants and valets and all that is *comme-il-faut*.

Yet we appear to be much emptier worldlings than we are. We are both, after our fashion, refusing to accept the fundamental stigma of the elder stratum — which is the cessation of all serious work. We have no blank enjoyments and we work as long hours as ever we did. Longer perhaps. Dickon grapples now day and night with the mysteries of what he calls the Money Power. To release our dear Lady of Business from the paralysing grip of the Creditor is the final quest of his life. He is thrusting in a sullen, persistent way through a dark jungle of finance round about her in search of something vulnerable. He believes there is a concrete dragon somewhere in that darkness to be slain, and if so he will slay it. Wherever there is a promise of light upon these obscurities Dickon goes. Last November he was in Detroit in earnest conference with Henry Ford, who possessed, he thought, a peculiar point of view and special experiences about the evil thing. He crossed the Atlantic in winter for that. And he is developing an angry, industrious patience with currency and credit theorists. When he catches me in England he makes me talk about them. He wrangles with me and will not be denied. He talks now about money just as *he* used to talk once about advertisement — continually, with *his* heart as deeply in it.

I am quite unable to estimate what his activities amount to, whether he is just hammering at a door which isn't a door but a rock, or whether he is getting through to some working generalisations. In

the past Dickon had a way of getting out results, but this is an immense business.

Apparently he cannot wring anything fundamental out of the bankers. I have heard him in his wrath denouncing them as "beastly little Abacuses; rotten little roulette wheels, bagging the odd zero chance." He clings to it that they are automata and have not the least idea of their role in the general economic life of the world. He compares them with the Freemasons, who "had some sort of a secret once and have forgotten it." He talks of "going into banking" to find out. A pretty manager he'd make for a local branch! The district would wake up.

I cannot write down his opinion of various Chancellors of the Exchequer. The Treasury he sometimes reviles and sometimes only bemoans. "Some of these chaps seem to think," he says. "Seem to be able to think. But being officials by nature — they won't let on. They control it. Or they might hit on something important and upset their nice little lives." He wants to have the Treasury "dug up and replanted." It is "pot bound" — which is, I believe, some sort of horticultural metaphor. (I am no party to these criticisms.) Certainly, he has hit upon nothing definite yet, or we should have had him at once setting about to "put it over." Just as once he "put over" Milton's Silent Silver Guinea.

May he do so before I die! I dream at times of my dear old Dickon, so amazingly stout and still so amazingly active, engaged upon his last and greatest campaign, leading a band of big manufacturers and engineers, Titans of industry, mammoth distributors and cosmic shippers, piling Pelion on Ossa, newspapers on hoardings, and cinematographs on wireless, shaking all the markets and shocking all the mints in the world, in a stupendous effort to scale and storm the Olympus of Wall Street and the City and dethrone the golden usurer who reigns there.

As for me, I work along a different line. I doubt if this simple treatment of the Money Power as the One True Devil gets to the bottom of things. We need a true sound money, yes; but that is only to be got with quite a number of other developments that belong together. I have failed to find any place in politics, which is just as well for me; I have satisfied myself that I was in a state of dangerous

fog about economics and education, and at last I have come to this quiet and seclusion in the sunshine — I said last year, to think things out, and now as I get them thought out, I say, to write my mind clear and try my creed over by making this book.

BOOK THE FOURTH. THE STORY OF THE CLISSOLDS — TANGLE OF DESIRES

1. STRESS OF YOUTH

BUT now I must come to my own personal history, which perhaps I have kept back unduly. I must tell of my own marriage and my lapse from scientific work to industrial chemistry, and how I also like Dickon became a rich man, as perplexingly aware as he of creative power almost in reach and yet evading us. To tell the story fairly I must go right back again to our student days.

It is part of the romantic travesty of reality that youth is a happy trivial time. Childhood can be made happy and is made happy nowadays for an increasing number of children, but I doubt if very many human adolescences can be truthfully called happy. For the enormous majority of human beings since ever humanity began to develop social life, adolescence has been anxious and perplexed. The creature is still at bottom the child of the Old Man of the rough Stone Age, half-man, half-ape, and wholly egoist; its adaptation is imperfect, and as adolescence comes on there is a struggle between the necessities that keep it tame and social and the deep-seated urgencies of its past. As the instinctive obedience and trustfulness of childhood fades, the natural man, the natural boy or girl, is discovered to be reserving a personality, becoming self-assertive, difficult, recalcitrant, and interrogative. "*Why* should I?" is the note of youth, and usually it is consciously a resentful note, a plea in opposition.

The parents and schoolmasters of our simpler past made no concealment about the matter. They understood the reality of original sin, and they did not spoil the child by sparing the rod. Youth was a sobbing, snivelling, howling time, jackets were dusted thoroughly and great girls trounced and spanked, and withal the Old Adam was never very thoroughly beaten out. To this day, smacks, blows, shakings, bangings, confinement, privations, and threats are the normal fare of ninety-nine out of a hundred young people. So soon as they come out of the gentle shelter of parental affection — and even that is sometimes very free with hand and slipper — the storm begins.

People so intelligent as to read a book like this are also probably

intelligent enough not to have many children, and to provide those they have with a skilful, kindly, healthy upbringing, and it may seem to them that this is a too distressful view of human existence. But let them think not of their own clean nurseries, but of all the world from China to South Africa and Peru and of all classes of people. We are too apt to think about life in terms of cultivated homes in hygienic Atlantic countries. Taking the whole world over, almost half the children born into it are dead before they reach twenty-one, and most of the survivors have suffered great hardships. It is a quite unnecessary state of affairs now, but so it is. The process of getting dead before you are twenty-one cannot, I maintain, be a very jolly and amusing one — all the optimists and kindly smiling humourists of the world notwithstanding.

By the time they are eleven or twelve most of the young people alive in the world — less than two-thirds of the children born, that is (for more than a third are already dead) — are put out to toil. By toil I mean uncongenial exertions that are imposed upon their free activity, exertions we would all shirk if we could. A few advanced countries hold off the curse of Adam until thirteen or fourteen, and some are making a serious effort to retain young people at educational work, and to make that attractive and even joyous, until they are sixteen. The rest of mankind is neither consulted nor persuaded in this matter of toil; hardly any have a choice between this toil or that; they are. put to it and there is an end to the matter. And they hate it, and if their lives are not altogether unhappy it is not because they do not suffer humiliations, frustration, physical deprivation, and futile desires and hopes in abundance, but because they are submissive and forget.

They can forget and they can hope and they can forget their hopes and still hope again. And at length as energy ebbs comes resignation.

The common human life is a tissue of expectations that are never realised and anticipations that are never fulfilled, of toil for unsatisfying ends and pursuing anxieties, of outrageous, tormenting desires, of fever and fatigue, anger and repentance, malaise, and death.

I state these facts as brutally as possible because I think they are excessively disregarded in the art, literature and general thought of

prosperous, cultivated people. Perhaps in the past it was necessary to disregard them because there was little power to alter them. But now there is power to alter them, and literature may venture to make a step from poetry towards sincerity. We can face the fact that a very large proportion of human beings are still fobbed off with the mere offals and broken meats of life, because now we are beginning to realise that there is a possible salvation for them. It is no longer necessary to pretend that youth and everyday life overflow with excitement, fun, and happiness.

In the past I cannot imagine how the ancestral ape could have been carved into our present poise of tormented association and dawning collective power without the sufferings of billions of lives. That struggle was a necessary thing — so far as I can apprehend any necessity in things. It was in effect an immense surgery. It was not indeed an immense cruelty, for the sufferings of a million people are no greater than the sufferings of a single soul; such things do not aggregate because there exists no central brain to aggregate them; nevertheless, the operation was immense. The chloroform of a thousand illusions and distractions was unavoidable, but now those fumes pass off — and may pass. The price of power has been mainly paid. Where once the ape lurked in the thicket there are fields and houses and the lowly multitudinous rich material for a secure, powerful, and generous society.

It is possible now so to launch human lives and so to care for them that they may be balanced and serene, full and creative, eventful and happy, from beginning to end. And, moreover, these human lives we set going can be so directed that death will no longer appear as defeat; they will rather broaden out and *flow* on into the general stream of perception and effort than end, in any tragic and conclusive sense, at all. We are living in a cardinal change of phase in the history of conscious and wilful being. For the first occasion, it may be, in the whole process of space and time, a star of conscious and immortal resolution has been born out of the dreaming inconsecutive sufferings of animal life into the night of matter.

But we are still begotten carelessly, and we are still foolishly prepared for life.

When I go back among my memories I find the partially effaced

evidences of profound conflicts. These are largely effaced, because that is the self- protective habit of the mind. But infancy and childhood are normally distressful for human beings. They are not necessarily such happy phases as they seem to be in the case of a kitten or a puppy. Much of my subsequent life, though it has been full of activities and satisfactions and the liveliest interest, has often been far from happy. There were long phases of sustained strain and dissatisfaction. And yet I have been one of the fortunate few. I have had physical vigour, I have had worldly success, I am comparatively rich, and have won through to freedom and monetary power, and it is this that gives me the measure of the common lot. What has distressed me must have distressed and distresses most people more than it has done me. My difference is only in my luck and in my escape to consolations and security. If life has not been wholly happy for me, if it has been troubled and vexed, then much more so must it be for most of the people about me.

When I probe among these faded and suppressed recollections of the unpleasant side of my past, I find among the early scars the traces of a queer instinctive struggle against instruction and direction. As a little child I had already a lively and curious mind. I wanted to learn, but I wanted to learn in my own way and for my own ends. But this I was not allowed to do. So that from an early stage I seem to have been protecting my personality against invasion almost as strenuously as I was attempting to add to its powers. Instinctively I disbelieved in the good faith of my teachers.

I believe most children have a similar instinctive disbelief. At the bottom of my heart I realised that the teachers did not particularly want to teach me; that they found the job irksome, got through it as easily as possible, and cared scarcely at all whether they distorted me by their reluctant and insufficient direction and the pressure of their compulsions. They hated me as the keystone of a hated but unavoidable job, and subconsciously they sought to injure me. They, too, had personalities in defensive revolt.

My lesson-times with my governesses and tutors were full of petty malignant conflicts of will. It was so with most of my schoolmasters. Their work, I knew, was jaded and insincere. Gilkes at Dulwich I came to believe in, Wallas, and one or two others, but

even under these exemplary teachers I was jealous of direction.

The same self-protective conflict went on against the customs and procedure of out-of-school life. Why did they shove all these good manners on me? My recalcitrant soul objected obscurely but perceptibly. Why should they be so insistent that it was for *my* good that I had to keep these observances? And new clothes? Things that altered one's feeling of oneself and made the mirror unfamiliar. Were these changes really for me or for the sake of some hostile subjugating outer power? There was always a fuss) persuasions, resistance) slappings, and scolding) and when I had new clothes, until I was ten or twelve, and even after that I was darkly suspicious about them for some years.

At first I was horribly frightened about religion. Then, long before I had come to clear-headed scepticism, I became incredulous and began to detest the people who were trying to put this dismaying obsession upon me. I cannot remember a time in my boyhood when I really believed that a clergyman went about his business in good faith. It was his business, and a jolly rotten business I thought it was.

And as I grew up I began to apprehend the confused dangerousness of life and to perceive that I was being driven into the scrimmage anyhow, that though my mother and stepfather made large, copious gestures of concern, yet at the bottom of their hearts they did not care very much what kicks and shames, what subjugations, servitudes, and frustrations awaited me in the struggle.

Aided by Dickon, encouraged by one or two teachers, helped by my astounding luck, I found myself doing intensely congenial work before I was nineteen, but I went through enough conflict, anger, and anxiety to realise what must be the obscure inner tragedy of a lad who, without any special gift or advantage, is sent to drudge in a shop or office or mine, just when his intelligence is awakening to the interests of life at large. That is the common lot. That is what happens to ninety-nine out of a hundred youngsters in a modern civilised community. They are pushed into work they do not want to do, and it cramps and cripples them. It is the meanest cant to pretend that we people who succeed are in some way different from the general run, that "they" don't feel it as we did, that "they" are really interested by subjections and routines and duties that would bore us

of the finer strain to death. Going to work is a misery and a tragedy for the great multitude of boys and girls who have to face it. Suddenly they see their lives plainly defined as limited and inferior.

It is a humiliation so great that they cannot even express the hidden bitterness of their souls.

But it is there. It betrays itself in derision. I do not believe that it would be possible for contemporary economic life to go on if it were not for the consolations of derision. I suppose nearly all servants and employed people find it necessary to ridicule their employers and directors. They find it necessary to divest these superiors of their superiority, give them undignified nicknames, detect their subtler frustrations, and then with a gasp of relief, ha, ha! life becomes tolerable again.

The root of all laughter lies in that whim of Fate which in the course of a brief million years or so made of the fiercest and loneliest species of animals the most socially involved of all living things. The adaptations are complex and clumsy and lie heavily upon us. We live under the tension of an imposed respect for our fellow-creatures. When that tension snaps, when the compelling orator sits down on his hat, or when the neatly dressed dandy struts defying our depreciation, all unconscious of the flypaper he picked up from his last chair, we shout with joy at the release. And none of us likes to be laughed at, because we feel that thereby our protection from our fellow-creatures is stripped from us. Our claim upon their respect is torn and flung back at us. There is sublimated rebellion and menace in all laughter.

Dickon and I in the days of our youth were both great laughers. We showed our teeth at the toils of existence about us, at the religious fears we struggled to escape, at the dull pomp and circumstance of monarchy and Jaw, at the vast solid arrogance of well-off people. I have told of our standing jests of Mr. G. and the Boops. I have told how for days we hardly spoke to each other except to talk facetious nonsense. Almost all our reading beyond the bright circle of our special interests was in funny books, and all we really cared for in public entertainments was the *comic* part. We read Mark Twain and Max Adler; Jerome K. Jerome rose upon us and seemed to us a star of the first magnitude; Dickon and I were both

married men and very busy when W. W. Jacobs began to write, but my discovery of him was a matter to tell Dickon with haste and enthusiasm. More laughter we sought, and yet more. We had, and I believe the whole human race in bondage has, an unappeasable craving for laughter. Nearly all our world could be made digestible with mockery, and it was intolerable to us in any other mode. But there was one thing we two could not laugh about, could not talk about, and which, indeed, we never tried to talk about, and that was the immense urgency of sex.

So far I have been able to tell of the forms and quality of my world without very much more than a passing allusion to sexual things. But now I must begin to deal with that vivid and disconcerting reality. From my late days at school onward I was tormented by sexual desire. It was not desire for any particular person; it was plain unassigned lust, and the tension grew with every year of my life. And interwoven with it, a thing springing up with it in me, and not, I am certain, derived to any considerable extent from teaching or other outer influence, was a feeling of intense shame and an impulse to conceal this burning appetite.

I do not know how far I was abnormal, or how far it is the common lot to be thus obsessed throughout adolescence. I can only tell my own story. I think perhaps Dickon and I were both rather more reserved and restrained than the average; our circumstances reinforced our natural character and developed our distrust of our fellow-creatures very early. I did not betray this red secret, I know, to any living being, nor did I attach my desires to any living being. I do not remember that I ever looked to any human being for their gratification except in the most transitory fashion. I kissed the servant at my lodgings once in a sudden tumultuous fashion, and was instantly disgusted with myself and ashamed. She was, poor girl, so manifestly a substitute for something else, with her untidy hair and soiled apron. My desires were developed in relation to nude pictures and statuary, they were stimulated by monstrous dreams, they were directed by glowing imaginations that arose unbidden. And since I was convinced that they were essentially enervating desires, I kept myself, except for the most incidental lapses, under a rigorous restraint.

That sexual desire arises of itself in young people in their early teens, that it is something quite distinct from personal love, and that it may never become closely associated with personal love, are facts that run altogether counter to the romantic travesty of life upon which most current moral judgments are based. Edwin, in a state of spotless purity, encounters the lovely and if possible even blanker Angelina. Innocent toyings lead to the naive discovery of passion. Which burns, without heat or smoke, with an instinctive moderation, and Edwin and Angelina are happy ever after. So it is supposed to happen, and generation has followed generation with the strangest, richest, most terrifying, distressing, and debasing tumult in their blood and in their moods and dreams, and a bright pretence of never having heard of the business in their general deportment.

I doubt if there was anything in my behaviour during those strained years before my marriage to betray, except to a skilled observer, the tormenting distraction within. My work suffered from phases of inattention, and I had moods of sullen and sometimes frantic anger. At times the drive in my nerves would summon up alluring visions of sweet, lovely, and abandoned women, and I would count the scanty money I had available and leave my work and prowl about the dim London roads and streets looking for a prostitute, and when I approached one her poor painted charms and cheap advances would seem so repulsive that I would quicken my pace and hurry past her in a commotion between desire and disgust. I would wander for hours in that fashion, and return fatigued and footsore and still incapable of restful sleep.

I do not know if this sort of thing happened to Dickon. I can only guess. We never betrayed our sexual life to one another. We were too close together and unable to escape from each other to risk even the beginning of confidences. To this day Dickon and I have never talked about sex.

I want to insist upon the fact that this wolfish impulse, with its disposition to carry me out with it and prowl in the twilight with me, did not lead me to fall in love with anyone and was on the whole a barrier to my falling in love with anyone. It was something much deeper, more animal, more elemental in my being, pre-human, something a tom-cat could understand. There were women students

at the college, some very clever and attractive; there were friendly girl students in the Art College near by; they seemed aloof from passion and preoccupied with minor interests; I did not associate them with my hot desires. They had an inordinate liking for walking about the Museum and making tea and conversing in groups after the tea was made. Such entertainment offered small solace to my feverish cravings. I can guess now that they were not so serene as they seemed. And no doubt I seemed to them also cool and detached, a very self-controlled young man reputed to be good at molecular physics.

Since those days fiction and conversation in England have grown much more outspoken, but I doubt if that increasing frankness has done so much as people pretend to assuage this part of the stress of youth. That was an age of repression and concealment, yes; and to bring a thing into the light is the first step to dealing with it sanely; but mere frankness and exposure alone will no more cure these troubles than they will heal a broken leg. So far as I can judge, humanity suffers from periodic waves of putting too much clothing on and then of taking too much off. From round about the end of the century up to the present time we have been flinging aside everything, from top-hats and collars and neck-wraps and boots and shoes, down at last to the fig-leaves. And the breadth and freedom of our conversation, and particularly the conversation of some of our clever young ladies, leaves nothing unspoken and everything to be desired. But the questing beast does not fly from the sight of itself; lust does not evaporate under the influence of chatter. Lust remains lust and is going to be a monstrously troublesome thing to human beings, whether we hide everything and never speak of it, never name it, never think of it, or whether we decorate our nurseries and elementary schools with nothing but undraped marble and wax models, and treat all conversation that is not directly sexual as improper. I have studied these affairs, not always theoretically, through nearly forty of my fifty-nine years of life, and I am inclined to think that between the utmost frankness and the severest concealment there is very little practical difference. It is a matter of usage.

Some there are, going a little further than the frank exposure

school — moral homaeopathists — who would allay by gratification. There is something to be said for that doctrine; it abolishes most of the morbid repressions and shifts the stresses from the deeper to the more superficial strata of the mind, but it does not end the trouble. I am for moderation, for moderate gratification, but it is not always easy to arrange or define moderation. It is in the nature of sexual desire to be inordinate. That is the crux of this perennial perplexity of our species. That is the justification of decency and restraint.

This is a thing that I now see I realised instinctively in my youth, and which is present and very important in all adolescents. Sexual enterprise grows with success. It clamours for more. Give it an inch and it takes an ell. Permit the song of Pan to be sung and presently it will be demanded with variations. Nothing complicates so easily and rapidly. Nothing is so steadfastly aggressive. Nothing is so ready to enhance itself with insane fantasies. Nothing under check or defeat is so apt to invade and pervert other fields of interest and take substitutes and imitations rather than accept complete denial. I can quite understand the disposition of most churches and religions to fight sexual desire from the beginning, to kill it at the door rather than fight it when it is already half in possession of the house.

A point that I think is very important if one is to see this business clearly is that I never really identified my lust with myself in these early phases. So far as I can ascertain how matters stand with other young people, that is the normal case. I can best express my state of mind by saying that I felt it to be a damned thing that had come in me. It did not seem to be myself as my passionate desire to carry on research in crystallography and molecular physics was myself, or as my care for my future or my affection for my brother and my few friends was myself. St. Austin has drawn the most interesting theological deductions from this autonomous detachment of carnal desire from the essential personality, and it is plain how easily it must have led to a belief in diabolical possession.

If anything was needed to clinch our belief in the naturalists' explanations of man's origins, it would be this extravagance of our sexual side. No designing mind, no mind, at any rate, with a glimmering of human reason, would have produced a sort of life so dominated and swamped by sexual desire as we are, nor have

permitted that desire to escape so easily from fruition to quite fruitless gratifications. But a mechanical process whose variations of method were subjected to no other criterion but survival would plainly have produced just such a state of affairs as exists. Only such a process could have made an unconditional clinging to life, hunger, and an insensate direction of every accumulation of energy into the reproductive channel, even when that channel led almost certainly to nothingness, the crude elements of existence. The billion futile pollen-grains of the cedar-trees are no more astonishing than the futile cravings, love-makings, couplings, and sexual tumult of human beings. "What matter the waste," says old Nature, "if there is a chance of one pollen-grain reaching an ovum? What else do you think you are for? Why should I economise? What is economy? I neither need you nor hate you. Take your chance. More of you. More of you to live or more of you to die. What does it matter to me?"

So it is that for the begetting and bearing of three or four children, a matter of a few minutes in the life of a man and of a few months in the life of a woman, the sexual shape is imposed upon almost all their activities. No other shape has any appeal to Nature. We are driven by imagination, feverish wishes, rivalries, hostilities, hates, resentments, all arising out of sex; we dress for sex, we disport ourselves for sex, it drenches our art, our music, our dreams. For that much practical outcome our whole lives are obsessed. And if it were not for that obsession, for its hopes and excitements and collateral developments, I do not know where the great majority of lives would find the driving force to continue.

2. THE CREWES AT HOME

SO I remember my adolescence and my young manhood as a period of hidden struggle and sustained anxiety, mitigated by ridicule and laughter. Careless youth indeed! Within was this ever-recurrent, alluring, and terrifying attack of sex upon my freedom and activities; without was the dangerous world, the hostility of the tradition of the Old Man to youth, the social obstacles and imperatives, the powers of direction and the powers of denial and restraint that manifestly meant to trip up and capture and subjugate the vast majority of my generation to lives of subservience, self-effacement, frustration, and toil.

I had an objective clearly before me, which I believed to be the realisation of my essential self; I wanted to saturate myself with immediate experimental knowledge of molecular science and to give all my energies to its prosecution, and I knew that I had to win and hold, against a mass of adverse influences, the necessary position and opportunity. Research in those days was even more scantily endowed and permitted than it is to-day. But I had got my foot in the door, so to speak, and I think I could have won through to an assured place if I had kept myself steadfast and concentrated. But I could not do so. Sex caught me unawares one day and wrenched away the mastery of my life from science. I fell into a passion of desire and I married. It was as if the walls of my laboratory collapsed, and my instruments and notebooks were overturned and scattered by a rush and invasion of stormy, commonplace, ill-conceived purposes. I married for the sake of a kiss, and I made a great entanglement for myself in life.

I do not know whether even now I have emerged from the developments and consequences of that great entanglement. It diverted me altogether from the narrow scientific trail I had intended to pursue. It turned me into the paths I have followed. I fought my way through it to this very different sort of freedom that I now enjoy. It is, perhaps, a broader freedom. But it is an encumbered freedom; it is not aloof and serene like the freedom of science. All the problems and cares of life seemed enmeshed with it.

I dislike having to tell this story of my marriage. I perceive I have

delayed it as long as possible; that I have, for example, told almost everything I have to tell about my brother first, very largely because of this reluctance. There is no sound reason now why I should not face the facts of this the most remote phase of my past — for it seems real much remoter than my childhood — but I have suppressed it so long that the habit of suppression has been established in me. I find it difficult to recover the facts in their order, and about many of my moods I must needs be as speculative now as though I told of the acts of some one quite outside myself.

After Dickon went to Bloomsbury I was very lonely for a time in Brompton, and then the gaps of time his departure left me began to be filled by other people. The social life of the South Kensington student in those days was hardly organised at all; there was no Students' Union as yet and no tennis clubs nor suchlike facilities for meeting. There was not even a students' refreshment-room. There was a small debating society very much in the hands of a little gang of biological and geological students, from whom I got my first ideas of socialism. I scraped acquaintance .with a youngster of my own age named Crewe, who was also doing advanced work in physics, and with him I began to walk and gossip in the park and gardens, and I became fairly intimate with one or two of the debating society men. Crewe had a brother in the art school, and introduced me through him to that more picturesque side of South Kensington life.

The London art student in those days was still only very imitatively Bohemian; he was very new to the art of being an art student; but there were Morris dresses and florid ties and velvet jackets and casual meals in studios and a research for conversational brilliance. Presently I found myself rather shyly a visitor at the Crewes' house.

The Crewes occupied a large, ramshackle, grey, semidetached house in a road that branched out of the Fulham Road; though I went there scores of times, I cannot now remember either the name of the road or the number of the house. They had gatherings there every Sunday afternoon and evening; open house and a cold supper with sandwiches and salad and stewed fruit. The paternal Crewe was a very old, mooning gentleman with a long, thin beard, who seemed always to be standing about with his hands in his pockets, wishing he

was somewhere else. He had kept a private school and retired. The presiding spirit was Mrs. Crewe. She was much younger than he, very pink and very ample, with a shapely wrist, a harp, strange, elegant gestures, and a remote allusive style of conversation acquired from the novels of Mr. George Meredith. She was a woman of letters; she wrote charming little love stories and children's stories in the magazines, and poems and criticism. She did not get much money for these things, she made you understand; so far she was among the elect. She loved youth and youthful hopes; she had a devouring sympathy and a great craving for confidences. She was constantly trying to "draw one out," as the phrase went, but as there was very little in the depths of my mind except quartz fibres, certain little riddles about the relations of various triclinic crystals to their *monoclinic* cousins, and an impatient but very formless rage with nature and the social order, it was very difficult for me to respond as freely as I wished to her kindness.

She wrung from me that I had scientific ambitions, and that for her meant that I wanted to be "like" Professor Huxley or Lord Kelvin. That I could possibly want to know things without dramatising myself as a copy of some eminent savant never entered her head. And she was restlessly eager to find out that I had some one, a girl necessarily, who "inspired" my ambitions, although I should have thought that feminine inspiration was biological rather than molecular. I evaded her probings — sometimes, I fear, a little ungraciously — and it is only now in the retrospect that I realise how sedulously she must have restrained her appetite for confidences in the matter of my father and mother. And it was also an alleviation of her inquiries that the influence of Meredith robbed them of any brutal directness.

She irritated me, she embarrassed me, and I liked her — I don't know why — very much. She liked me too. I would find her very bright little brown eyes seeking me across the room, and her funny round face, under the tremendous cap she wore, bobbing and nodding to me, with an effect of encouragement and reassurance — I cannot imagine what about.

She would even beam deep understandings at me while she was plucking her harp strings and exhibiting her Victorian wrist. Always

every Sunday she played the harp for a while and all the talk was hushed. And one of us would always be caught to sit on the little stool close beside the harpist. But usually this fell to some unwary newcomer who had not discovered the imminence of harping. He had to look rapt.

"Young Sir Philosopher still brooding over his crucibles," she would cry across the room to me.

"Beware the witch's warning!" And she would shake her finger. "There are cauldrons as well as crucibles, Sir Alchemist."

I would pretend to understand what she meant. "Not only the stars can twinkle," she would throw at me and turn for some other victim.

I had never before encountered such perplexing brilliance.

All sorts of people came to these Sundays of hers. One or two were quite well-known literary and dramatic people, people whose names you saw on programmes or at the bottom of signed articles, but mostly the company consisted of beginners, some of them manifestly late starters, but as portly and important and whiskered as the well-known. There were early Fabians and eccentric thinkers. A modestly resolute man in a drab kilt with wildernesses of hairy knee was frequent; he was Erse or Gaelic or one of those things, and he explained to me on one occasion that properly he ought to be wearing a broadsword. He felt "incomplete," he said, without it. One evening Mrs. Crewe's conversation was exceptionally delirious; "red hair from green meals," she said, "warbling his Dublin woodnotes wild. That delicious accent!" and I became aware of Mr. Bernard Shaw in his celebrated Jaeger costume talking in a corner. At that time he was a lean young music critic with an odd novel or so to his credit, giving few intimations as yet of the dramatic career that is now culminating so magnificently — if even now it is culminating — in *Saint Joan*.

But the larger element was undistinguished youth. There were three Crewe girls, each with a large circle of intimates, and both the sons also brought in their friends.

And often youth prevailed to such an extent that the pretence of a *conversazione* was abandoned and we played juvenile games. We would play dumb-crambo or charades, and in these charades a certain inventiveness I have, and a certain capacity to act preposterously and

gravely, gave me a kind of leadership. Dumb-crambo is an inferior entertainment to fully developed charades, and after a time the latter banished the former from the Crewe household and grew into a kind of consecutiveness. We contrived to make many of them into quaint little three, four, and five act plays. Those were the absurd days of the British theatre; Barrie and Shaw had yet to dawn upon us; even the mockery of Wilde's *Importance of Being Ernest* had not relieved the pressure of the well-made play, and two leaden masters, Henry Arthur Jones and Pinero, to whom no Dunciad has ever done justice, produced large, slow, pretentious three-act affairs that were rather costume shows than dramas, with scenery like the advertisements of fashionable resorts, the realest furniture and the unrealest passions and morals it is possible to conceive. This sort of thing lent itself to joyous burlesque. I remember we spent one very happy evening in the big ramshackle drawing-room with the folding doors upstairs, reading and rehearsing a play called *Michael and His Lost Angel*, by one or other of those twin glories of that departed age. I was Michael, very dark and high and gloomy, as far as possible in the manner of Mr. George Alexander, and there was misconduct "off stage" in a lighthouse or down the barrel of a big gun or in some such bed of roses.

The Crewe gatherings went on until the schools broke up in the summer, and in May and June they flowed out into the garden, a town-stained garden of gravel and plane-trees, which owed whatever magic it possessed to twilight and darkness, assisted by perhaps a dozen Japanese lanterns.

And it was in that garden one moonlight night that Clara was suddenly transfigured to beauty and mystery, and that we whispered very close to one another and hesitated and kissed. For the first time in my life I knew what it was to hold a sweet and living body in my arms and drink the passion of a kiss.

In that moment all the diffused disturbance of my life became concentrated upon one desire, to possess Clara. I held her to me, but abruptly her responsive passion ceased, and she wriggled out of my embrace.

The door had opened and some one was coming out of the house into the garden. "It's late," she said. "They will miss us. Let us go

in.”

We two went back into the gas-light and the belated dispersal of the party with scarcely a word more, but I knew that we were affianced. Clara, now that I could see her face, seemed to be lost in some remote, faintly triumphant dream. She did not look at me. I do not think she looked directly at me again that evening. Our hostess was in the passage and saw us come in.

“Is it a flush of warmth at last,” she whispered darkly, “on Sir Galahad’s white shield?”

I said I had had a very pleasant evening and asked whether I might come again when the Crewes returned in September.

“I feared the dawn would never come,” said Mrs. Crewe. “*Now!* Ah! — you will be human.”

No doubt I made some sound like a reply, but I forget that now. I remember I wanted to walk to Clara’s home with her, but she was entangled with a party of cousins, so instead I went off by myself for a long prowl in the flooding moonlight along the Serpentine and across Hyde Park.

3. INADVERTENT MARRIAGE

I CANNOT recall my first meeting with Clara. She had emerged by degrees from the little bunch of young people who frequented the Crewes' house. I would find her looking at me or fluttering to my side. She intimated a distinctive friendliness by a multitude of trivial preferences and attentions. She was a dark-haired, slender, restless, talkative girl, with aquiline features and hazel eyes. At first I had not thought her very pretty. Until this great desire to possess her seized upon me I had learnt nothing of her parentage or her worldly circumstances.

Now here it is that I find my story most difficult to tell. Except for one or two vivid memories, I really do not know how I felt during the phases of this love affair. I suppose I must call it a love affair, and I suppose my state was what is called being "in love," but I cannot for the life of me recall any such moods of tenderness and self-forgetfulness as a romantic tradition requires of a lover. I will admit that the record has been thrust aside and out of the light and out of the way for many years; it has its pages blurred and discoloured; much may be absolutely forgotten. But it seems to me now that I wanted Clara with a simple, hard desire to own her and keep her. And I am in doubt whether she felt more towards me than a reciprocal extravagance of desire.

Perhaps while one can still remember tenderly one still loves, and love only ceases with the effacement of tender memories. The effacement of memories about love relationships and acts of love may be exceptionally easy in the mind; there may be some biological reason for that. Scenery, a great variety of casual incidents, chains of reasoning, passages from books, live far more vividly for me than what I am convinced must have been high moments of intense sensuous and emotional experience. I am sure there is something lost altogether between Clara and myself, and that this hard story I tell is a mere framework of facts, a skeleton robbed of all living substance and significance.

Apparently at this time there were in my mind two sets of motives so entirely inconsistent and incompatible that I sit and ask myself

whether I am not seeing all this phase of my past through some distorting medium. There was my passion for research which called for all my best energies and my most lucid and energetic hours, and there was this new passion for Clara, which also was bound to develop into a whole-time job, and yet for more than a year at least I do not seem to have realised any contradiction in these matters. I seem to have gone right on with both, and to have been sincerely perplexed and astonished when at last their divergence took so practical a form that it was no longer possible for me to ignore it.

In some way surely I must have sought to reconcile them. I doubt if I could have adopted Mrs. Crewe's idea that the desire for the constant companionship, kissing, fondling, and embracing of a young woman constituted an "inspiration," that it disposed and empowered me to speculate deeply and subtly upon the constitution of atoms and the nature of electrical charges. But I may have bad a persuasion that these love exercises gave pride and energy and peace of mind.

I do not remember that I ever talked very much to Clara of the work I was doing. I recall her on one occasion when we were at Deal, praising the beauty of a lighthouse, and saying that with its steady light, its smooth and certain rotation, its beautifully adjusted mirrors, it was "like science." I was extraordinarily pleased at her saying that. I was so pleased that it is plain she did not often say things like that. But generally our nearest approach to my scientific concerns was the canvassing of the characters of Professor Guthrie and Dr. Boys and others of the Royal College workers in those days, and speculations about the fortune of Lord Kelvin, and the possibility of making artificial precious stones, and so forth. The thought that I might make diamonds dazzled her. On the side of my socialism we were better able to meet. She, too, called herself a socialist, but she approached it rather as a campaign of benevolence towards the "slums" — supplemented by a general preference for wool garments, red ties, art fabrics, and archaic oak furniture.

If I can remember no moods of actual lovingness between us, I can at least say that we were greatly interested in and desirous of each other. We must have gone for walks together, walks and talks, from first to last, for many hundreds of miles. She had read much

more widely than I had in the literature of the time, and she instructed me in the study of Meredith and Hardy and Walter Besant and Swinburne and the Pre-Raphaelites. She introduced me to the writings of William Morris and the early Bernard Shaw, the Shaw of the *Star* days. She was keen on pictures, keen on music, keen about the theatre. She was keen about the movements and characters of public people; keen about fashions and social events. So keen she was upon so many things that at times her whirling conversation seemed to whistle like a blade through the air about me. She made me feel thick and slow and underinformed. This lively diversity of her attention was mainly due to the fact that she had no objective in particular — unless it was her adventure as a sexual animal in the world. She was acutely aware how literature, art, the drama, and every social subject turned upon sex as a door turns on its hinges, and towards all other things except that hinge she was an active amateur.

She acted; she was almost on the edge of things theatrical, but she had no intention of becoming an actress; she sketched cleverly, but she had no intention of following art. When there were elections she became an excited political helper, but she pursued no sustained political aim, and though she was poor and keenly interested in success, she made no movement towards business activities. She had, indeed, no intention of doing anything seriously and steadily but living as a sexual consumer, and talking about it, and she approached life with an immense receptivity. She was a feminist after the manner of those ancient days, the days of George Egerton and *The Woman Who Did*.

Soon after that first kiss of ours she took me home to see her "people." They lived in a rather crowded little house in a square near Earls Court Station. There was an obscurely silent father — their name, by-the- by, was Allbut — who came in at odd times, and did not seem to like me; he was an architect, I learnt at once, and later on I realised he was also a speculative builder. He was one of those people who have quite a lot of money that is always "locked up" in something or other and meanwhile the household "carries on."

Mrs. Allbut was very like Clara, except that in her a certain Mediterranean flash of dark alertness became distinctively Jewish.

She seemed to be running her household with an acute watchfulness towards material things and an evasion of any control of her four fuzzy-haired daughters. Clara was the second of this band of sisters. They displayed on this opening occasion a cheerful harmony that was, I found later, exceptional with them. They all talked with incredible rapidity and a tremendous *savoir faire*, so that all I had to do was to bear myself meekly under their swift, critical inspection. We played a game suitable for harpies, called demon-patience, a game of pouncing and snatching in a snowstorm of cards, and I got a new measure of the limitations of the philosophical mind. I was so inferior at first that my masculine self-conceit took refuge in a puerile burlesque of myself.

How different was the outlook of those girls and myself, and how unaware all of us were of those very profound differences! To them I was Clara's captive, one of her captives, for they knew, even if I did not, that she had other possibilities, and my role was to be retained captive so long as it suited Clara to retain me, and then either to be discarded or to be converted skilfully and surely into a secure and permanent basis for Clara's miscellaneous keenness, whenever and if ever it became desirable to effect that conversion. They also were doing their best to secure a selection of practicable captives. They appraised me; they petted me and drew me out; I suspect they speculated secretly whether it was possible and worth while to filch me from Clara's bundle to their own collection.

My reading of my part was entirely different. I was, I conceived it, the masterful male, recipient of Clara's furtive but extremely effective endearments, conqueror of her heart and instincts, aspiring to be her kindly owner and< ruler with the privilege of soothing and entertaining myself with her easy delightfulness whenever I chose. Her physical docility, her lively attention, was the cause of an enormous pride in me. She ruffled my hair and called me "Flosopherlost" when my demon-patience was particularly disastrous; she seemed unable to keep her quick hands off me, and all four of them evidently found my ineptitude a very promising and endearing trait.

I remember that first afternoon very vividly; the rather dark room, the circular table from which the cloth had been removed, the bare

arms, the soft glowing faces close to mine, Clara's hair sometimes brushing my cheek as she reached across me with a card. Doris, the third sister, was the quickest of all. "Stop — Out! no you *don't!*" she would cry, return some belated card to its player, and cut short the pelting struggle.

Later on I stole an evening or so from my work to study this demon-patience. I was not used to cards, but I perceived that it was absurd for a fairly good mathematician to be unready with the groupings and variations of four sets of thirteen cards. I drilled myself a little, thought out a few principles of action, and afterwards made up in science what I lacked in speed. Until at last I could truncate a hand with "Stop — Out!" as often as Doris and win a hundred up against her.

I was rewarded for these infidelities to my work by Clara's brightly expressed approval. Doris was amazed and dismayed at certain tactical inventions of mine; she would scream and lose her head as I slapped down an accumulated series of cards, humming distractingly as I did so, and Clara would slacken her play and come near to applause. It was evident her sisters had pronounced me stupid after my first début, and that it pleased her to see me vindicate myself.

For more than a year Clara filled all my waking thoughts that were not given to my work, and she dominated my dreams and reveries. All my vague and dispersed sex fantasies gave place to the thought of her. She was a very exciting girl by nature, bold in her thoughts and for that very remote and decorous time very bold in her talk and acts. We found a thousand opportunities in that ill-lit old Kensington for kisses and embraces, and she taught me everything that there was to be known in the fine art of caressing. For that she had a natural genius. It is wonderful what lurking places and kindly shelters there are to be found in streets and parks and house-porches and passages and gardens that seem quite open and exposed to unimpassioned eyes. Since no other girl now existed for me I could not imagine that any other man existed for her. And she volunteered the information time after time that none did.

After a time I defied the possible disapproval of my landlady, and Clara ventured with books and parcels and messages to my lodgings

for bouts of philandering. I can see again the little circle of light upon my scattered notes under my shaded lamp as we stand body to body in the shadow.

"Shall we turn the key in the door?" she whispers.

And in the summer she went with her mother and sisters to St. Margaret's Bay, and I went to Deal so that I could walk over and discover them by accident and share their bathing tent and join them in the sea. Clara and her sisters were good swimmers, and we would float side by side or bask on the beach in the sun together, and in the night I would lie in bed and bite my wrists and arms black and blue with the violence of my desire for that wet body in its closely clinging dress. She had a project which was never realised of a great swim by moonlight. It stirred my imagination greatly, and in my reveries we struck out into the unknown, into the darkness further and further from shore — and, at last, faint with effort and delight, turned with our arms wide open towards each other. And sank.

But there were various other youths and men about, and they made it very difficult for Clara and me to get at each other alone. A certain Billy Parker was particularly obnoxious. His elder brother was affianced to Marjorie, the elder sister, and he had a stupid proprietary way with Clara, hovering about her, joining in her conversations. She assured me he bored her to death, and that when they were alone together she said the most humiliating things to him and praised me continually. Clara, not to lose a moment of me, would walk part of the way with me back to Deal, and Billy would always insist on coming with us, so that she should not return to St. Margaret's Bay alone. She would take my arm up to the parting and do most of the talking to me, and then as she and he went off back: she would take his arm, no doubt to hold him the more firmly while she drove the barbed humiliations home. And there was a Mr. Crashaw staying at St. Margaret's Bay, quite a middle-aged man, a friend of her father's, she said, but evidently focussed upon her. He had twice asked her to marry him, she told me.

"I'd send him packing altogether," said Clara, "if it wasn't for his kindness to mother. You see, he's got no end of money."

Until that seaside holiday I had not been jealous of Clara nor even very urgent to be finally engaged to her. Now an irrational jealousy

infected me, and also an extreme impatience to possess her wholly. But she would not be engaged to me until there was an immediate prospect of marriage. “You can’t doubt I love you,” she said, “but life *is* life. Marjorie marries Fred Parker this September, and then mother will be at me to get out of Doris’ way. Night and day she’ll be at me.”

“But you don’t mean — !” I was breathless.

“It’s tragic, Billy. It’s horrible. How can I love an old man like that? How can I endure him? After your kisses. And babies! Little old babies they’d be! Oh! don’t let me think of it, Billy! Don’t make me cry! Let us be happy while we can.”

My soul went cold and white within me. I thought no more of stresses in crystals for a time. I was filled with an angry resolution to marry Clara. If research was to suffer it had to suffer; if it stood in the way it had to be pushed aside. But I still hoped, in spite of the manifest fact that I was now parting my life into two unequal portions and giving the greater part to Clara, to hold my own in science. The staff in the department of physics was being rearranged, and I knew that I had merely to ask in order to get a demonstratorship at three hundred and fifty pounds a year. It would of course mean a serious invasion of the time I could give to research, but there the job was, with a room of its own separated by only a wood partition from the research laboratory. Three hundred and fifty pounds was not so small an income in those days as it would be now. In addition, there was the hundred and sixty pounds a year coming from my mother. I went to her to know how far that was the limit of my interest in my father’s savings. She was troubled in her mind by my questions, and retired upstairs with a headache, but my stepfather took me into the garden, and in the course of an hour or so of carefully worded explanation made it clear that he found any increase impossible. Still that made five hundred a year, and in those days one could get charming little houses in Kensington and Fulham for fifty or sixty pounds a year.

“We need not begin with a baby right away,” said Clara. “I don’t want to do that,” said I.

“I’m dying to bear you a child, Billy,” she said. “But for a time — we must wait. Your child. Your life. All your warm life in me! But

I'll be patient...."

I was prepared to be enormously patient. I could think of a child only as something that would come between me and Clara.

"It ought to be enough," she said. "With management that ought to be more than enough. You should see what mother has to get along with at times."

4. LAIR IN DISORDER

IT was only after we had married that I began to realise fully the extraordinary dislocations of motive that had occurred in me. Sex, which had been like a foreign thing inserted in my being, had become fully incorporated and was now the dominant thing in my life. It had expanded from a physical need and developed into a great power of self-assurance, a restless, recurrent triumph in possession. My researches went on for a time without notable deterioration. I had been so interested, so fertile before Clara obsessed me, that my work had got an immense way upon it. I ceased indeed to invent new things, to have flashes of intuition, make dazzling and ecstatic leaps upon remote lurking connections, leap out of bed at night to scribble sheet after sheet of notes. But I had enough in hand to go on with fruitfully. To that period belongs almost all the work upon the strains at the contact of dissimilar crystalline masses in rocks that was published between ‘92 and 1901, and secured my fellowship of the Royal Society, and I worked out also in this time those methods of examining by reflected light the ruptured faces of crystallised alloys that later stood me in such good stead with Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. It would have been imperceptible to anyone else; for some time it was imperceptible to me that the mental exaltation of the work had vanished.

I had grown up, I had become fully adult, I had consummated my life; I had bought my young woman and held her exultant in my arms. We made an excellent festival of each other. And presently we emerged from our mutual preoccupation a little habituated to these excitements with most of the problems of life still before us.

As I have told, we called upon Minnie and Dickon.

I suppose it was — if one may use a preposterous metaphor — the intention of old Mother Nature that we should now produce a number of children, and that while Clara bore them and cherished them I should go hunting for more and more food and comfort. That also was the tradition of human society. Some of the children would live and some would die, and by the time the task was done, our jokes exhausted and our tears dried, we should be ready to depart. In

those days it was not the custom to correlate the large developments of human affairs with the things of the individual life, and so it was only vaguely and personally that we apprehended that children were no longer wanted in such abundance as heretofore and that a new sanitation, new methods of education, were lifting the burthen of complete reproductive specialisation from womankind — and putting very little in its place. For a time upon quite personal grounds we were resolved to have no children. We had insufficient money; we had insufficient room; and Clara, with her all-round intelligent amateurishness, was left very much at loose ends. I, too, with my ill-paid, pure research was far away from the traditions of the normal breadwinner. I needed time. I was always in want of more hours, hours for thought, hours for calculation and experiment. Clara on the other hand had nothing to do with her time. She was quick and clever with her little home, and through with its monotonies in an hour or so. Between our seances of love-making, therefore, I was hurried and driven, and she was slack and bored.

Though neither of us was nearly as avid of life as young people seem to be nowadays, we were still sufficiently impatient to develop the discordances of our position into very great distresses. The once wonderful house in Edenbridge Square with a green door and a brass knocker, brightly furnished with money that Dickon had lent me, which had seemed at first the most delightful of love-nests, became a lair from which we both absented ourselves more and more. I would steal an increasing proportion of our waking hours for the laboratory, and she would be driven abroad, almost penniless, in her cheap but clever clothes, to find some amusement, some excitement, for her vacant hours. For a time she came to the laboratory to help and work with me, but her nimble hands were more often than not in the wrong places and her quick inaccurate wits were extraordinarily fertile in faintly irritating misconceptions. And after a while she found laboratory assistance, without complete intellectual participation, boring, and took offence at my frequent disinclination to knock off and make love to her in my private room. It seemed to Clara the primary use to which a private room ought to be put.

She thought she would act; she thought she would develop her gift for painting and drawing. Philip Weston, who afterwards as Dickon's

prize artist was to do so much to make the London poster artistic, was very ready to give her lessons. She made considerable progress and attained to everything except originality and intensity. She rejoined the Fabian Society, which she had left before her marriage, and various other societies that promised drawing-room meetings. But most of these things were things of the evening, when time and the exigencies of life were not so heavy on her hands. Art in a convenient studio is on the other hand naturally an affair of the afternoon.

Across the interval of a third of a century I can look back at the strains between these two young people, one of whom has become myself, and I can see that neither she nor I can justly be blamed for our disaster. Like all human beings we were borne upon the great flood of change, and it chanced that we were caught in an eddy. She did not know the forces in her and without her that had taken hold of her and were spinning her so giddily, and I had as little self-knowledge. I wanted to drive on with my work and drive on with my work. In such time as I could spare she could minister to my love and pride in her.

For the rest of her days I had no care except that she did nothing to infringe my lordship over her. And being anxious not to distress me unduly, when presently under the urgency of her need for entertainment she began to infringe upon my lordship, she saved my pride and temper by some very excellent lying.

What a vivid silly creature she was, and how inevitable was her drift to that exciting exploitation of her physical personality which was her instinctive gift! It needs all that third of a century for me to record with detachment that while I was sitting over my petrographical microscope, getting nearer and nearer to the interference colour scale that enabled me to determine the proportion of the bases in the micas and feldspars, she and Philip Weston, having discovered they were perfect physical types, were obliging each other as models for a series of drawings from the nude. In the atmosphere of aesthetic gravity thus created, what the world in general calls misbehaviour became an almost negligent extension of their interesting studies. And I admit she was a pretty thing, well worth drawing and deserving to be drawn, and for the moment less

mischievous when posed than active.

I did not know of such little adventures in liberality at the time, but I felt them in the air. I became curious about her movements. I was horrified to find myself suspicious and jealous. I did not think of Weston at first, but I was startled to find that Billy Parker had turned up again with a touching disposition to take her out to rather expensive lunches. Billy was her sister's brother-in-law, a privileged relationship; and she talked of him so frequently and needlessly that a wiser husband would have perceived that he was not at any rate the central figure of the situation.

But after a time I began to see all sorts of things about Billy down the petrographical microscope.

Now it was against all my conceptions of our relationship that I should question her, much less make any objection, about her use of her leisure. We had had many very liberal and far-reaching talks about the relationship of men and women before we had married, and it had been agreed between us that we should not be «tied" by that antiquated ceremonial. We were both to keep a "perfect freedom."

I suppose young people of high and advanced pretensions have talked in that way for generations. It pervaded the brief life of Shelley, and in his letters and recorded conversation the phrases of a noble sexual generosity have already a used and customary quality. I suspect the revolt against marriage, and against the fierceness of marriage, has been growing with changing social conditions, with increased social ease and security, with the decline in the necessity for the lair-home, for a long time. It can be remarked in the social life of Imperial Rome; it peeped out in a score of usages during the days of chivalry; the last two centuries are full of it; half our novels are about it. I doubt if an animal can become so rapidly economically social as man has done in the last million years without becoming also sexually social; a solitary beast is a pairing beast, but man is almost the only gregarious beast that attempts to pair. But at the time I did not philosophise so broadly as that. I did not realise that half the trouble in the little houses round such squares as Edenbridge Square and all the similar and kindred squares and roads and suburbs of London and Paris and New York — and I suppose Pekin and Bombay — is a struggle between the dispositions of the lair and the

dispositions of the herd. I happened to be on the liberal side, by chance as much as by anything; I preached the tolerations of the herd with the exclusive passion of the lair rich in my blood. I controlled my instinctive impulse to dominate and monopolise. But the tension of these suppressions found an outlet in other directions. The things I would not allow myself to say about Clara's morals I said about her meals. I became abruptly aware of a galling disregard for my comfort in our little home. I became acutely sensitive to Clara's domestic casualness, to the indiscipline of her one servant, to her absence from home if by any chance I came back at an unusual hour. I began to nag, I became irritable and objectionable. We quarrelled, we sulked, we made it up without explanations under the compulsion of our vigorous young appetites. Presently we found ourselves in money difficulties. She had supplemented her pocket-money by diverting various sums due on our tradesmen's bills. On our first year of house-keeping together we were nearly a hundred and seventy pounds in debt and with nothing in hand.

And just at this inopportune time she became extraordinarily preoccupied with the idea of a child. She declared she wanted a child passionately, that it was dishonourable for us to go childless, that it was our duty to balance our peculiar gifts against the rapid multiplication of the unfit. And she was going to waste. She was demoralised through her thwarted instinct of maternity. She was no good without a child. Anything might happen to her unless she had a child to steady her. She expressed herself with extreme impatience. I objected. While we were entangled and short of money a child wouldn't have a fair chance with us. Couldn't we wait a year or so?

"While I muddle about," she said. "Billy! I'm going to have that child."

"Not yet," I said.

She spoke slowly and with her utmost emphasis. "Billy,

you don't understand. I'm going to have a child."

"But, good God!" said I. "How is that possible?"

She made no answer. Suddenly I took her by the

shoulders and looked into her face.

"How is that possible?" I said.

She explained garrulously and unsoundly. One was never sure. In

a dozen ways it might be possible.

But my doubt of her had been a very transitory one. My solicitudes as a reluctant breadwinner came across my mind to shield her from my scrutiny. And as yet I did not distrust her to the extent of that doubt.

"Well, we'll have to face it," I said, singularly free from the joys and exaltations of fatherhood. "Will you be ill, do you think? So far you've carried it well. You'll carry it off all right. You're a very perfect female animal, you know, made for the business. And we must squeeze some sort of a nursery into the house.... I wonder what it will cost us.... We'll manage.... But it will be a tight job for us. You're a devil, Clara, at getting your own way — in spite of science and art."

She seemed, I thought, to flinch.

"Nothing to be afraid of," said I. "You're one of Nature's daughters."

There was something already at the back of my mind which had been there, indeed, since I realised the deficit on our first annual budget. But I did not tell Clara of it, because I hated to think of the alacrity she would have displayed in grasping all the possibilities it opened to us. I knew that I could carry off all this trouble quite easily by a simple transfer of my activities from the laboratories of the Royal College of Science to the laboratories of the great metallurgical and chemical firm of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. They had heard of me, they wanted me badly, although they did not nearly know all I might be able to do for them. But at any rate they wanted me to the extent of eight hundred pounds a year, rising by increments of fifty pounds to twelve hundred, and that seemed to offer an immediate surcease of all my present anxieties. The heavy work of the elementary course of the college was over for the year; it had finished in February, and there would be little difficulty about my resignation.

A year before I should have told Clara of this possibility and discussed it with her, but now I kept it to myself. Even in that moment of acceptance of the new situation I wasn't quite sure of myself. I thought it over for three or four days still before I went to Romer, Steinhart's. I seem to remember that I was on the whole

amused, bitterly amused by what had happened to me. I realised quite clearly that I was bidding a long farewell to the living realities of research. In all probability it would be a lifelong farewell to the service of pure knowledge. For the rest of my life, as I saw it then, I should be nosing out artful ways for underselling magnesium or making aluminium cheap. Fine fun! I was to be a scientific truffle-hunting dog for predacious business. Which was predacious by instinct and did nothing worth doing with the money. I remember recalling one day how old Mrs. Crewe had said to me, "Ah, now — you will be human!" and laughing aloud in the street. This was being human.

I did not pay very much attention to Clara during these days, but afterwards I perceived that she, too, had been greatly preoccupied. She was manifestly dismayed at the prospect of bearing a child in our diminutive house, and though I could have relieved her of that apprehension in half a dozen words, I did not find it in my heart to do so. At times she would express an effusive penitence for the trouble she had been the means of bringing upon me; at times she would be extraordinarily thoughtful and aloof. One of the chance things I had said to her stuck in her mind. "I'm one of Nature's daughter's," she said. "And she's got me."

I wonder if I felt tenderly for her. I do not recall any tenderness at all.

I had an interview with old Romer, and then with him and three other of the directors, and after that we clinched our arrangements. I informed the Royal College people of their approaching loss, and still I forbore to tell Clara of her improved prospects. Perhaps I wanted it to be a pleasant scene, and I feared that her joy and relief would provoke my resentment and make me say something bitter.

Then one day at breakfast I saw she was looking unhappy. I had never seen real unhappiness in her face before. Hers was a very animated face, and I knew a thousand of its expressions — angry, bored, and forgetful — but this was something different. She thought I was reading my paper; she had forgotten I was there, and she was sitting quite still and staring in front of her — as though hope had suddenly gone out of her being. "Cheer up, Clara!" said I, and she became aware of me with a violent start. She looked at me with a

question in her eyes.

"I'm all right, Billy," she said.

I glanced at the clock. "It's nothing to be afraid of," I said, getting up and gathering together some papers for my despatch-case. I took her in my arms and kissed her. She kissed me back, but how forced was her kiss and how dead she had become to my touch!

I had to hurry away or I would have told her of the Romer-Steinhart arrangement there and then. But her expression of wretchedness went with me. It troubled me all day. She showed deep feeling so rarely that the idea of her being miserable came with a special painfulness. I felt I had been too hard with her over a misadventure that was as much mine as hers. And generally lately I had been hard upon her. She was in for much the worst side of the trouble before us. I wasn't playing the game by her; I was being a vexatious and unhelpful partner. I was making her suffer for my disappointments, disappointments she could not possibly understand.

I was so concerned to relieve her worries that I came home early. But she was out; she did not come in until past six. When she came in she was no longer wretched looking; she was flushed and grave-faced, but extraordinarily alive. I had been sitting in the little drawing-room and living-room that was also my study, poring rather inattentively over a file of notes upon some work I was closing down, and waiting for her to come in. I stood up as she entered.

"Back early?" she said.

"Before five."

"Your fire's out."

"I didn't watch it."

"Ellen got you some tea?"

"She was out. I got it myself."

She stared at the things on the table, with her mind far away. "Billy," she said, "I want to talk to you."

"At your service," I said.

"It's — serious stuff."

I stared at her, unable to guess what was coming. She did not look at me. Her eyes looked past me at the blank fireplace behind me.

"It's got to be said," she remarked. "Sooner or later it has to be said."

Her voice quickened. “It’s better to have it out than to go away with nothing explained. It’s better to have things said. Better to be plain. It’s something I’ve had in mind for weeks. Now it has come to a head. I don’t know if you remember all we used to talk about before we married, about either of us giving the other their freedom if they wanted it. I don’t know how much you meant about that sort of thing, or whether you mean to stand by it now. But all these months while we have been so unhappy together I have been thinking of what we used to say. I’ve been thinking of how we used to declare that no law, no marriage, ought to hold a man and a woman together if they did not love. And all the while you have been growing colder and harder to me and making life more difficult for me. I have been asking myself, Billy, more and more if you and I are really lovers any longer, if you and I can even pretend any longer to be in love.”

“Quite recently,” I remarked, “the pretence has worked.”

“Oh! Proximity! Habit! How can one save oneself? But is it love, Billy? Is it truly love? For that matter, has it ever been love?”

I realised that I was facing something absolutely strange to me. This was a new, a different Clara who stood before me. I remember vividly the picture she made in our darkling room and the effect of discovery her words produced. And I noted for the first time that she was already physically changed. Her pretty shoulders seemed a little broader and lower, her neck softer and whiter. Her eyes; there was something changed in her eyes. I observed, but I do not remember what I thought nor what I said in reply to her words. I observed that she was declaring that we had never loved, and I apprehended, with a kind of astonishment at not having had it clear before, that that was true. Why had it not been clear before?

This opening comes back to me very plainly, but much of the talk that followed must have slipped out of my memory altogether. I cannot remember in what phrases she made me aware that she meant to leave me nor by what transitions my mind adapted itself to the new situation. Then in harsh relief against that fog of forgetfulness I see her with her hands gripping each other and a sort of swallowing movement in her throat before she blurted out: “I’m not going away alone. You don’t understand, Billy. You don’t understand what I am

trying to tell you. I'm going away with Philip Weston. I have been at his studio all this afternoon."

In a flash I saw everything plainly. I recall a gleam of sympathy for the wincing courage with which she faced me. A dozen different mental processes seemed to be going on in my mind, quite independently of one another. I remember quite distinctly that I thought I ought to kill her, and that it would be extremely agreeable and exciting to take her pretty neck, which I had kissed with delight a thousand times, and squeeze it, squeeze it in my hands. I was dangerous, and she knew I was dangerous. And yet at the same time, in the same brain was a leap of relief that I was quit of her. And then a pang of exasperation because my agreement with Romer, Steinhart was signed and fixed and my successor at the Royal College already appointed. For a time I didn't think much about Weston. Clara in the foreground blotted him out.

I stood still on the hearth rug, and the moment for murder passed.

"So that, in all probability, is where the baby comes from?" I said.

She moistened her lips with her tongue and nodded, with her eyes still warily on mine.

"And Weston is in a state to believe that?"

"He loves me, Billy."

She felt she was over the worst.

"He doesn't know you yet. All this puts one out to a certain extent. I didn't see it coming. Where, for example, do you propose to sleep to-night, Clara? Here? We might fall victims to — what did you call it? — Proximity. Habit. And then I might strangle you. And that would surprise and annoy Weston."

She did not seem to have thought that out yet. She decided to take a few things and go back to Weston. He would be waiting in the studio. He would be sure to be waiting.

"I ought to be strangled," she said, with that idea still lingering in her mind. I perceived that she would have liked a little strangling — and then perhaps tears. But I was immeasurably remote from tears.

It came to me as I stood on the hearth-rug before her that I was gathering and expanding and spreading out a sort of peacock's tail of derisive hate. I had no feeling for her then but derisive hate. It was as if I had never done anything but hate her. I was teeming with

insulting phrases like a thundercloud ready to burst, and saying nothing. At the same time I realised that this was not how a civilised man of advanced views ought to react to our amazing situation. It was before me, but I did not grasp it yet.

"I don't know what to say to you," I confessed. "Get your things together. Tell Ellen some old lie. Tell her your mother is ill and you want to be with her. And go. Get out. I shall go out — now. And just walk about and try and figure out what has happened. I shan't come back for an hour or so. I promise you that. You'll have plenty of time to pack and get off.... It's sudden. And yet I suppose I ought to have seen it coming...."

I considered. "What else is there to say?" She appeared at the door of the sitting-room as I was going out of the house. An idea had dawned upon her. She spoke with a note of perplexity.

"Billy," she said, "this may be our good-bye!"

I stared at this new aspect. She wanted an emotional parting! She wanted a scene in which I was to play the part of poor old Billy. She felt a certain remorse and pity was due to me. She conceived the situation as cheaply as that. She had no sense of the murderous fury that filled me.

"Well," I answered, after a pause, in a brutal voice; "what the hell else do you suppose it to be?"

"Billy!" she whispered, aghast, and gripped her hands together. "Oh, Billy!"

I did not slam the door wilfully, but it seemed to slam itself.

5. QUEEN'S PROCTOR

IT is a difficult undertaking to reach across the interval of thirty-odd years and reconstruct the state of mind of that dismayed and angry human animal who walked about Hyde Park while his wife, dismayed likewise, and as troubled, perhaps, at herself and him and the universe as he was, packed for her departure from the poor little home that had contained their passions and dissensions for a year and a half. There was no tenderness, no pity in my mood; it was almost entirely a state of rage. And I do not think that even then it was directed against Clara. What I raged against had the shape of Clara, wore her delightful body, but it was really the passion and desire in myself for the glories, thrills, and gratifications she could give me that maddened me. She had become a consuming necessity in my life, and I had lost her.

I do not remember that in all the storm there entered anything at all that one could speak of as love. In most — in ninety-nine per cent of love affairs, there is, I am convinced, hardly any love at all. There was hate. Hate, a wildly scornful hate for Clara's nimble lying, would come over my mind like the quivering red glare one sees for a time among thunderclouds, and pass again. It was not a very pointed and personal hate. I hated the situation and her share in it, but even then I knew that she was as much the victim of uncontrollable drives in her own nature as I was.

But what in this belated retrospect impresses me most about the state of mind of this young Mr. William Clissold in Hyde Park one April afternoon in 1891 was the primary importance in it of wounded vanity and self-love. I realise again as I sit and think these things over and write about them here the profound mental effect a woman has upon the man to whom she gives herself. She becomes the sustainer of his self-esteem, she imposes her values upon his vanity; she secures an enormous power of humiliation over him. In every love affair there is a campaign of :flattery and reassurance. It seemed of the first importance to me that evening that I should not be the rejected one, that I should, so to speak, shout it at her: "I don't want you. I never want to touch you again."

What an incredible thing that young man of twenty-three is to myself of fifty-nine! I am astonished as I look back into this little pit of memories at his narrowness and violence. Maybe I am self-righteously astonished and nearer to him still than I like to think myself. But how entirely self-centred he was! I suppose every young thing has to be self-centred if it is to get anywhere in a scrambling world. Youth and individuality are self-assertion; they have no other possible significance. :Yet I cannot but feel that my self-protection was excessive.

I had a great desire to lie to Clara and tell her that I, too, had been unfaithful. It filled me with shame and anger that I had been steadfastly faithful to her and content with her. It would have been so much easier to have been able to write to her magnanimously: "Go your own way. I, too, love someone else." It appeared,. in deed, as I walked about Hyde Park, fantastically important to me that I should balance Clara's infidelity with equally liberal behaviour of my own. Just to define Clara's place once for all and banish this "poor old Billy" business from the world.

I doubt if my behaviour was very abnormal by our present standards. Human society had passed beyond the phase of passionate possession between the sexes, when it was natural and proper for the husband to kill the wife for her treason and the lover for his robbery. That "Old Man" husband is buried deep now beneath whole mountains of suppression. But not so deeply as to be beyond danger of eruption. The mountains of suppression quake and move. I had trained my mind in the fashion of our time and held Clara to be a free person on an equality with myself. It remained to me, therefore, to solace my shattered vanity as well as I could, and above all to release myself as soon as possible from the ascendency that Clara had gained over my senses. Because I knew quite clearly, even then, that if I did not do that, if I let myself dwell upon her relations with Weston, I ran the risk of an exasperation of mind that might fling me back again, in spite of all my civilisation, towards archaic violence.

And so for a time I thought very little either of my science, my teaching, or of the new position I was to take up in the autumn. I set out upon a search for sexual adventure, and, with the advantage of such knowledge as my marriage had given me, it was not long before

I had distracted myself from the obsession of my divorce proceedings with several intrigues. So long as one did not love and was not too scrupulous about the truth, making love was by no means a difficult art. I could be plausible and talkative, and had the instinct that restrains a caress until it is desired. I could soon count "successes" and had a

healing reassurance that I could be desirable. For illicit love in London it is not so much charm and splendour that are needed as convenient premises and a certain leisure. There was hardly a particle of love, it seems to me now, in any of these businesses, and in the intervals of my various adventures I found myself wildly and terribly unhappy. Yet it may be, so queerly selective are our memories in all that touches sex, there was much tenderness, gratitude, friendliness that I have forgotten. Yes — there was friendliness; of that I may tell later.

It was profoundly necessary to me that I should flaunt my freedom before the eyes of Clara, and since I had refused to play the part of "poor old Billy" in the drama it became almost as necessary to her to demonstrate her satisfaction with Weston. One among my three or four "affairs" had emerged to a sort of predominance. It was with a girl named Jones, who was a model, a sunny-haired, smiling, amoral creature whom everybody called Trilby. I had met her in some studio party. Du Maurier's *Trilby* had been the success of a publishing season, and the name itself was being splashed about the whole English-speaking world. She was blond and handsome and more effective than Clara; she knew her and had some obscure hostility to her, and so we contrived to be seen about together and even to encounter Weston and Clara on one or two occasions and go through the gestures of a liberal amiability.

And Clara and I were sedulous to assure everyone in our two little worlds that what we were doing was high and calm and exactly what ought to be done, that we had parted because we did not love each other as people ought to do if they were to live together, but that we maintained the highest esteem and the utmost affection towards each other. Our marriage had been a mistake. An agreeable mistake that had not lasted. She was drawn to Weston by an old and natural passion. We said little or nothing about the decisive intrusion of the

coming child or of any doubt that had ever troubled us about its paternity. After all, very few people were likely to check us back with a calendar. And in my heart I hated Clara with a virulent hatred.

For the life of me I cannot now recall the exact motives and intentions of these posturings and pretendings.

I know we were all set most resolutely upon being emancipated, unconventional, free, and natural. I think we all had a muddled sense of changing conditions, of the obsolescence of the standards of the past, due to the altered population question and of the necessity of readjustment; we young intellectuals were among the first detached particles to fall into what is now a great whirlpool of almost instinctive readjustments.

Unhappily in all the proud and magnificent disengagements and renunciations of our readjusting process we took no account of an important legal functionary, who was called in those Victorian days the Queen's Proctor. It was this gentleman's business to investigate the particulars of such divorces as the resources of his office brought within his scope, in the six months between the granting of the decree *nisi* and its being made absolute and final. To this day English law has no tolerance for divorce by consent. Its conception of marriage is the orthodox Christian one; its attitude towards divorce is punitive. There must be a party who is aggrieved and a party who is blameless, a party rolling and wallowing in "Sin" and a party of unspotted purity. The latter longs to continue the marriage, but the former has made it intolerable. The petitioner must to the climax live in a state of chaste grievance and hold out hands of reconciliation. It is the business of the Queen's Proctor to see that he or she does so. If the petitioner is rich, the petitioner goes abroad and, with a few expensive but simple precautions, is relieved of this obligation; the Queen's Proctor cannot, in the interests of national economy, pursue such a petitioner. But if the petitioner is poor, cheap, unpleasant persons of the minion type conduct their rude inquiries into his or her purity. They did into mine.

I petitioned. I got my decree *nisi*, and while Clara was in the amphibious state of a wife living in sin and under legal notice to quit, a daughter who is legally mine was born. Then the Queen's Proctor intervened, and I failed to get my decree made absolute. I was

already at the laboratory at Downs-Peabody — I had been there two months — when I learnt by telegram that our iniquities were discovered and that since we had made it manifest that we *both* wanted a divorce, Clara was still, and was going to remain for the rest of our lives so far as I could see, my wife.

6. CLARA AT LARGE

NONE of us had reckoned with the Queen's Proctor. We had all been told of his legal possibilities, but we had answered airily that "they don't do that sort of thing now," and we really believed it. That was the *fin-de-siècle* assumption, that unfair or unpleasant laws did not work in the case of agreeable people, and it needed the startling trial and condemnation of Oscar Wilde that year to remind the world that even in the end of the most wonderful century old laws might still crush the wittiest, most impudent, and debonair of offenders. Elderly judges sat in the divorce courts delivering judgments that were none the less operative because all the clever people thought them half a century behind the times.

For my own part I was infuriated beyond measure by this smashing vindication of established institutions against our modernism. My hatred of Clara was overshadowed by a comprehensive rebellion against the world. It remained inconceivable to me that I was to have the burthen of her support and be barred against any decent remarriage, perhaps for all the rest of my days. I thought quite seriously for an hour or so one day of killing the Queen's Proctor to "ventilate" my grievance. I wonder what sort of dried-up old lawyer would have been swept out of existence if I had consummated that impulse. But that such a thought should have crossed my mind is a measure of my estimate of the situation. And I made a resolution, and kept it for three years, that whatever Weston decided to do about Clara, and however the law might stand in the matter, I would contribute nothing to the support of either her or her child.

She wrote a letter saying she wanted a good talk in private with me— "just to ourselves" — about "our daughter's prospects," but the latter phrase so irritated me that I did not answer. She wrote again twice. I was now getting deeply interested in the peculiar needs and conditions of Romer, Steinhart, but it happened that I had to come to London for a conference upon a more economical rearrangement of the refuse tilts at Downs-Peabody and that I had to visit the house in Edenbridge Square which I had at last let, in order to see a man and

arrange for the forwarding of some of my books and the sale of the rest of the furniture. Accordingly I made an appointment with her there, and there it was we met for the last time.

(Except that once about fifteen years ago I saw her pursuing an omnibus in Trafalgar Square, I never set eyes upon her again. She died of influenza at Nice five years ago.)

She had arranged herself for my reconquest, very plainly but very prettily, and no one would have suspected her of a baby four months old. But I had determined to be insusceptible. I had hardened my heart and fortified myself. She asked me what I meant to do and what I thought she ought to do. Nothing, I said. She could go on just as if she had been divorced. She could call herself Mrs. Weston. The press notices of the dismissal of our decree absolute had been very inconspicuous; even the notices of our brief trial had been rare and compact; we were too obscure for attention, and if she stuck to it stoutly that she and Weston were married, no one was likely to make any trouble in the matter.

She said that was reasonable, very reasonable, but there was something troubling her mind. She faltered for a moment and decided to be blunt.

"Philip," she said, "isn't sure about the child."

She eyed me. She seemed to be weighing my receptivity for some elaborate and circumstantial confidences. "Nor am I," she added meanwhile.

I shrugged my shoulders. "I don't feel an interested party," I said.

"Billy!" she cried. "You're pretty tough.... Legally anyhow — It's yours.

That stung me. I swore compactly.

"Well, we have to face facts," she said.

"Philip's your man."

"I shan't feel safe with Philip. I don't feel safe with myself. I was a fool, Billy."

"You were careless about yourself, Clara. And about me. Haphazard is the word. I've never thought of you as a fool."

"There's still the old tang in the things you say, Billy."

I had no defence against that. There was no one she had ever found so satisfactory to talk to as I was, she said. I put things so

clearly and freshly. We had had some great times together. She glowed at her memories and sighed. “I suppose I’ve learnt too late,” she said, “that everything one does has consequences. I’ve made a beastly mess of things.” Life was like turning on taps that wouldn’t turn off again. When one was a child one squalled and somebody came and slapped one and shut the tap off and put everything back. Then suddenly one was grown-up and nobody came. But the slaps came. “I’ve had some bad times, taking that in,” said Clara.

I was touched. I relaxed a little in my manner. I said that what she needed in life was not a husband like myself, but a large sedulous male attendant of about fifty. Perhaps it was too late now to prescribe that. Old Crashaw for example. Where was he?

“He’s married,” she said, “and idiotic about her.”

“So that’s no good.”

“No,” she said, “I was a fool. I should have played the game by you.”

I said that some day perhaps we should defer the age of moral responsibility until people were thirty or thirty-five. “As if I didn’t know how I have spoilt things for you!” she exclaimed suddenly, the most successful thing she said in the whole conversation. It had never occurred to me before that she could recognise the damage I had suffered.

“I bit it off,” I said, “and I had to chew it. You’re not to blame for that.”

“Poor old Billy ! You’ve had a beastly time.”

She was positively embracing my admission that the affair had hurt me. The mule’s ears went back again.

“Suppose now after all I come back to you,” she threw out, so that it was doubtful :whether it was an idle remark or a serious suggestion.

I forget the exact form of my reply. I considered the possibility for a moment. I told her that then, very carefully and deliberately, without causing her unnecessary pain, I should set about killing her. But if I forget my exact words I remember hers.

“That’s the most attractive thing you’ve ever said to me!” she cried.

“All the same, you’d better stick to Philip,” I said. “You can

explain things to him so that he will believe. Unless you've muddled already with his confidence."

She was not quite convinced now of her power to hum-bug Philip, I could see. And once she had been so certain.

"I don't know what you're up to, Clara," I said, "but your one chance in life now is Philip. If you try any second string business with him he'll smell it, even if he doesn't know about it. Have you been shaking him already — by something? You pile your little all on him. I swear to you I'll go to gaol for ever rather than do anything to help you."

"I've never asked for that, Billy."

"What good would it be?"

But she still hovered undecided before the course she had to take.

"It gives Philip a frightful power over me. Whatever he does I shan't be able to divorce him."

"No doubt you'll contrive some consolation for your wounded pride," I said.

"You can sting. You could always sting...."

It was clear our talk was coming to nothing for her.

Whatever vague intentions she had had, whether of a reconciliation, or an entangling afternoon's adventure, had failed. I wonder to this day what she had wanted in that interview.

At the end we shook hands and then with my hand in hers her eyes scrutinised mine. Mine told her nothing. She hesitated. She took her chance with me and flung her arms about me, and gave me the last of those wonderful kisses of hers that I was ever to receive. Her first kiss had seemed to me to come straight out of heaven; this last, straight out of stock. I accepted the favour without excitement. I held her in my arms — considerately, even appreciatively. "Ah!" she sighed, detaching herself and scrutinising my face again.

"You'd better playa straight game with Philip," I said, as though nothing had happened. "You won't — but you'd better."

"Why didn't you *make* me play a straight game with you?"

I don't think I answered that.

"You could have done it so easily."

I shook my head.

"You had everything in your hands."

After she had gone I sat for a long time at the little table in the drawing-room at which I had worked so often, thinking.

I was extremely sorry for her. Suddenly, having thus beaten her off from me, I was sorry for her, as I had never been sorry for her before. This futile attempt to raid back to my affections alleviated my hate for her by its very futility. I saw her flimsiness at last plainly, the poverty of her equipment, the adverse chances against her. Our separation had robbed her of her personal hold over me; I saw her now as a stranger, as detachedly. For the first time in my life I realised that pity for women which comes to all decent men sooner or later — in spite of our endless humiliations and subjugations and the way we spoil our lives through them. For it is not they who spoil men's lives, but the accidents of a bad time and a misdirection in ourselves that misuse them to our own hurt and belittlement.

But was I to blame? What else could I have done from first to last except the things I had been impelled to do?, And now what was there to do?, It was impossible for me to take her back even were she prepared for that. A little more kindness perhaps? But even that might prevent her from doing the one wise thing before her, which was to make herself Philip's only woman and he her only man.

I had a half-generous, half-insulting impulse, and I found a sheet of paper in my bureau and wrote her a note telling her to take all the furniture left in the house for herself. She had bought it with a certain avid interest; she was always a bright-eyed buyer, and suddenly I saw clearly that its poor little pieces and arrangements were personal to her and I had no right to deprive her of them. Fortunately the furniture man had made so poor an offer for the stuff that I had held it over to consider, or I could not have done even this petty act of decency. The real owner of the furniture I reflect now with a smile was Dickon. I had still to repay his brotherly loan. But I did not see it in that light then. Possibly because I knew certainly that I would repay.

I did everything I could to keep Clara out of my mind for some years and to heal the scar of her excision. But presently came a time when she was in dismay. She wrote to me pitifully and shamelessly. The ménage with Weston had broken down; I do not know how, the truth in these things is always obscure and complex and

indescribable even to the principals in the quarrel. Her family had turned against her, and not one of her three sisters was well married. She was evidently as concerned for our daughter as for herself, and I have every reason to suppose she was by nature and intention a good mother. She was always cleverer and kinder with dogs and cats than I was; she had quick responses to all living things that came near her, and I have no doubt she was exceptionally attentive and kind to her own child. I decided to help her. But I helped her in such a way that even now I am not a little ashamed to write it down. The truth has to be told because it is an illuminating truth. It shows the make-up of the human male. I arranged she should be paid three hundred a year, and I saddled it with an ungracious condition that the money should be paid to her "while she remained chaste." She had to swallow that insult. My solicitor saw nothing objectionable in this ugly proviso, and would even have amplified it by a clause against "annoyance." But the law still keeps its moral ideas in cold storage in the vaults of the seventeenth century.

Two years later I made it an unconditional three hundred a year. What right had I to dictate her conduct of her life in this fashion? And when things were already going well with me and the sense of security and property was established in me, I heard that our daughter was being ill-taught in a National School in Hoxton, to the great distress of her mother, and suddenly I made a settlement of a thousand a year on Clara. My solicitor advised me to make it on the daughter with Clara as trustee, but I had as much confidence in Clara's maternal instincts as I had in her inevitable unchastity. It worked quite well, and she brought up her daughter as a very pleasant young lady, and married her off finally just after the war when the marriage market was good, to a prosperous doctor in Cardiff, who had met her first on war service. Then Clara travelled for a time, with first one woman friend and then another, visited Egypt and the Garden of Allah, and acquired a taste for roulette at Monte Carlo. Of her sisters I never heard anything more. I have been told she dressed young during this final phase, and was sometimes charming and sometimes rather haggard. She always had one or two very old men or very young men in attendance. Her death was due to the impatience that made her get up for a dance before she was well

of her influenza. The fresh chill, and the casualness of the hotel where she was staying alone, killed her. She was about four hundred pounds in debt and overdrawn when she died, which sum seemed to me to be almost exactly like her — neither very scandalous nor quite solvent.

I made the acquaintance of our daughter as a school-girl at a vehemently healthy, manly girls' school at Brighton. I had learnt from Clara that she was a little worried in her mind, assisted by her schoolfellows, at the aloofness of her father, and so I went in state on several visiting days and showed myself with her and was introduced to her friends and found occasions to take her about in London. She was quite easy to be nice to. She did not resemble me in the least, but also she did not resemble Weston; I have sometimes fancied a resemblance to Billy Parker, but that may be a morbid fancy. She played and plays tennis very well, and is ridiculously grave and important in the art, practice, and politics of this epidemic.

I liked her, and I still like her, and I perceive that I loom large in her scheme of things, but I have never warmed to her; I do not feel and, to be plain about it, I do not believe, that she is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. I feel none of the instinctive harmony and intimacy that I do with my nephew William or even with his brother Richard. But I love William. I was temperately generous at her marriage, and I know that she has expectations that my will must not altogether disappoint. Sometimes I pay her a flying visit when my business takes me to Cardiff, and sometimes there will be a dinner and a theatre party in London. On occasion she sits on my knee, ruffles my hair, and calls me "Daddy." But always a little tentatively. I am gracefully responsive, and all the while I feel as unreal as if I were acting a Charles Wyndham part in a play by Sir Henry Arthur Jones, and she were the celebrated and charming Miss So-and-So. The doctor is good, solid stuff, though rather too prejudiced against psycho-analysis, and the two children are healthy, jolly little experimentalists with life, as amusing to play with as puppies. If they are not exactly bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, I have no doubt they would be quite willing to be so. It is not their fault if they are not.

7. EMPTY HOUSE

I SAT for a long time in our empty house after Clara had departed, with my note about the furniture on the table before me. I sat there long after it was quite dark. Then I found a candle and lit it and went about the house musing over the things that had happened in the various rooms, incredulous of its evaporated happiness. What a poor, stuffy little house it had become, and how: proud we had once been of it! I came down to the drawing-room again and sat there.

It must have been half-past ten or even later before I dosed the door behind me, because when I went by the Underground Railway to the Strand to get some food I found the people streaming out of the theatres. It was the narrow old Strand that is now being swept away; it :was lit then by a queer mixture of gas-lamps, mantle-lamps, and fizzling arc-lights on trial that made variegated glares and pallors on the bobbing heads of the crowd. The people jostled me because I was still half lost in thought, and when I sat down in Gatti's I remember the waiter annoyed me because he would not take "Oh, anything that's going," as a definite order, but insisted upon making suggestions.

That session with myself in that dusk-invaded room, in my first and last home, became for me a cardinal point in my life, the end of a chapter, the beginning of a new phase. It stands out in my conception of my life as our departure from Mowbray stands out, or the night when Dickon and I announced our secession from the Walpole-Stent household stands out. It marks the real beginning of the man I am now, the passing of a much more instinctive, passionate, and direct being. I have described my youthful self as a very detached scientific intellect in conflict with what seemed an alien and destructive sexuality. The two had fought a battle that was really an admixture. For a< time sex had stormed along its own path with me, had seemed to carry all before it. It had made me aggressive and combative; it had turned me to acquisition and had made me aware of the need of power. My intelligence had not been so much defeated as hammered into new recognitions. The two had come now to a phase of balance and understanding. I still thought that research, the clambering to

new visions of reality beyond any limits of knowledge yet attained, was the best thing in life, but I knew that I could not go on with that toilsome ascent until the craving hungers that torment and distract unless they are satisfied were assuaged, until my personal pride was secure, until I could command beauty in my hours if I desired it.

I had realised at last the profound importance of the sexual motive in life. I could not live fully without that self-respect, that zest in my personal life that only woman could give me. I had to discover now how I could come to terms with womankind. I had to do this under the handicap of my entanglement. I had so to frame my life and to achieve such relationships that I should be safe from such another disaster as this empty house embodied. I had to gain a certain security and amplitude in the world, so that if presently I was able to build up some more than temporary liaison, it should be secure from the tension of wants and debts and safe against the attractions and distractions of a more prosperous Philip Weston. I had not realised before the *quid pro quo* in love. It was plain to me now and plainly reasonable. I saw why Clara :with the thought of motherhood had been scared from the narrow bleakness of our little home, and I saw, too, the manifest connection of her attempted reconciliation with my new prosperity.

Can a creature made for motherhood be indifferent to a laid I will not say coarsely that I learnt that women are to be bought, but I saw quite clearly that they have to be paid for. Well, I must be able to pay for them. I could not think now what it was I had expected from Clara. I had made vast assumptions. But though a man does research, so that new light and wonder such as no one has ever known before pour into the world, so that new things begin and all things are altered and turned about, yet if that involves personal poverty, a certain preoccupation of mind, an inability to cherish and supply, no woman has any use for him.

I was not man enough, I saw, or perhaps I should say I was too much of a man, to accept the role of a scientific devotee, vowed for the best part of his life to celibacy and poverty. That would cripple me with a suppressed sense of inferiority and all the mental distortion that entails. I needed material success, embodied in its Jiving symbol. I must have that living symbol. I had learnt now in

terms of Clara and bitter experience what I had disregarded when Dickon told it to me in words that then had no meaning for me. “Research!” he had said. “Please yourself for a bit, Billykins, so long as you’re let. But there’s not even freedom of thought in the world for a man who isn’t his own master. The show is a scramble, and it’s going to be a scramble yet for centuries.”

So I, too, would become predatory and set out to overtake Dickon in his scramble to possession and freedom and purchasing power. And, freedom and power assured, I must square my account with this craving that obsessed me. Then, as Dickon had said, for disinterested service, scientific research, or anything else, as the mood might take me.

Already I had learnt a great deal from the beginnings of my work with Romer, Steinhart. I had been able to measure myself against most of my directors and get some inkling of the scale and vast possibilities of their organisation. For those days it was a very great company, though it was a mere infant compared with the giant ramifications of annexed, subsidiary, dependent, and associated concerns into which we have since grown. We had practically no relations with America or Sweden at all then, and towards our German and other Continental homologues our attitude was still one of naive rivalry. The authorised capital of the mother company is now thirty-two million pounds; in those days it was seven hundred and fifty thousand. The works at Downs-Peabody were still the largest part of our plant. But even then in the early nineties the firm’s rate of growth was sufficient to foreshadow its present scale. Our ordinary shares of a pound were creeping up and round about thirty shillings. And it was clear to me that with my quite special knowledge and my peculiar aptitudes it would be extremely easy for me to secure a fair and handsome participation in the big things coming.

My directors had not yet made up their minds how I was to be handled. But I had already formed very clear ideas of how the firm was going to be handled. I had been brought in by Julian Romer, the younger son of old Romer and the brother of the great Roderick, the head of the firm. Julian was, perhaps, the best equipped technically of all the second generation of Romers. Roderick was a far better

administrator, but of no account from the technical standpoint. Old Romer had been the business organiser of the concern; Steinhart had been the scientific spirit; but both the Romer sons — Steinhart had daughters only; Ralph Steinhart is a nephew — were sent abroad to learn something sound about modern chemistry and metallurgy before the intellectual lassitude of the English public school could submerge them. Julian had a real aptitude for scientific work and also considerable business ability. He had marked the drift of my early papers and leapt, long before I had a suspicion of that side of the matter, at the industrial applications foreshadowed. He had explained me to his co-directors and sought me out. He was a high-coloured, black-haired, warm-blooded, bright-eyed little man, very quick in his movements, very confidential in his manner, coming up very close to you, insinuatingly. We were to work in the same laboratory for a time. He was, if possible, to pick my brains; I was to be the auriferous quartz, and he was to be the extractor. His sedulous amiability, his pressing persuasiveness, were, however, just a little too warm and eager for the metallic Clissold temperament. We exchanged. He learnt something of what I knew — enough to realise the full value of what I could do for the industry — and I learnt very rapidly of his business and productive organisation.

I perceived I could be, that I was made to be, the goose that could lay golden eggs for Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. I did not intend, however, to lay them in full sight of my employers. After a week I found Julian's interest in my private thoughts so lively that I took all my notebooks out of the laboratory back to my lodgings and bought a safe to keep them in. I just carried one notebook in my pocket. When Julian embarked upon discussions with me I stressed the philosophical side. Julian showed a real feeling for pure science, and I saw to it that he got it chemically pure. I carried our talk at times, I believe, to a very close approximation to some of Einstein's subsequent work, but I doubt if Julian fully appreciated the high and novel matter I was giving him. One day he made a sort of quarrel because I didn't let him know what I was doing upon the crystallisation of alloys, and hinted quite plainly that I was paid to confide all my notions to him — at least all that occurred to me in business hours.

“Results,” I corrected. “But I have to follow the laws of my being. I couldn’t think if I thought I was watched while I was thinking. It would make me self-conscious and nervous. But when I have results I shall give them to you properly, ready for use. They’re coming, rest assured.”

“But I could help you so much more,” said Julian, “if I could follow what you were up to.”

“Couldn’t bear you at my heels,” I said. “It would paralyse me.”

“I’ve got ideas.”

“Don’t I know it? But you will have to bear with my limitations.”

He shrugged his shoulders and pouted and looked hurt and unhappy. “I had looked forward so to working with you, my dear fellow.”

Quite at the outset I did some good work that proved my value to the firm. It was nothing out of the way; it was the natural consequence of bringing a fresh young mind to bear on an established routine. The system of the refuse tilts had grown up bit by bit, had been adapted several times to changes of method, had become a thing of use and wont to all the directors, and an increasing element of waste had crept in with each adaptation. Things had moved fast; there had been a lot of patching. No one had thought of standing the whole thing on its head, so to speak. I saw almost at once that that could be done at a very considerable profit, simply because I was not habituated to the old sequence. If I had been in the firm for ten years, I should have been just as blind to it as the others were. They saw my points and nodded to each other.

Julian behaved at the meeting as if he had begotten me, trained me, and taught me what to say. Also he prompted me. But this first golden egg established me with the firm and gave me time to work out my more primary and extensive problems in applied metallurgy and to devise a method of conceding them upon terms whereby the profit should be mutual.

My mind was already full of that possibility when I sat and thought in my empty house.

I remember very distinctly thinking over Julian, Clara quite forgotten for a while, and smiling to myself in the darkness. I was already very fond of him then, and my affection has grown with the

years. He is one of the few men I can bear to play golf with. He knows so much, he puts his heart into every game, and he achieves even worse results than I do. With outcries, with something near tears. “What have I done?” he cries, to God and *me* to the caddie and the earth and the sky and any casual birds or beasts that chance to be within earshot. “My God! But *look at it!*”

He had left London directly after the meeting on the previous afternoon for Downs-Peabody, and he had been most solicitous that I should do all I had to do in London before I returned. I had thanked him warmly. I had expected something of the sort and prepared for it.

When I had unpacked at Downs-Peabody I had found, among other things in my boxes, two or three fragments of meteorites I had brought away from the Royal College. Just before leaving to come to London, I had fused these up together in a dark and intriguing lump. One side I cut and polished beautifully. I had marked this lump “B. in reserve. Final phase,” packed it away in a little box, and left it, as if inadvertently, in the drawer of my laboratory table for Julian’s benefit. I felt sure it would amuse him while I was away. He was probably busy with it now, missing his dinner to examine and perhaps analyse a scrap of it, and it was pleasant to calculate what he would make of it.

It *was* “in reserve” and “in its final phase.” What else was there to be done with it?

No doubt my meditations wandered for a time to the characteristics of his people. I do not believe very much in all this modern fuss about races; everyone alive is, I am convinced, of mixed race, but still some of us are more white, some of us more negro, some of us more Chinese than others. Compared with me Julian was Mediterranean, South-Eastern, Jewish; compared with him I was Northern and Western and blond. And our minds worked with the most entertaining differences. In his presence I felt slow and stupid — but solid. His mind could dance round mine as it marched. It came into a question like a brisk young dog, which comes into a room, seems to see, hear, and smell everything, knows what you feel about, wags its tail all the time, makes a remark or so almost absent-mindedly, and goes out again quite assured there is neither biscuit nor bone there. He thought so quickly that he never stopped to think.

I had as little chance against him at chess as a gorilla. And yet I could get to things and do things that seemed impossible to him and that he knew were impossible to him. I could produce a path where he was convinced there was no path, and I could see, and make him see, things he had never seen. While he raced through the labyrinth of a question, learning its every turn, I seemed able to look over and reach over.

But the more one tries to state these differences, the more one realises how subtly they defy formulation. These brunette peoples, these dark-whites, made civilisation for us. I doubt if either we blonds or the yellows or the blacks could have done as much for ourselves. Then we came in upon an established system, we Northern and Atlantic peoples, migrants, invaders, sceptics, protestants, obstructive questioners, slow, recalcitrant learners, less brilliant but more original, rupturing conventions, releasing debtors, opening new ways, resuming the forward movement upon obscure new lines....

Perhaps Julian and I represent a blend that may become very effective in human affairs. We two and Roderick have done quite a number of things together that *none* of us could have brought off in exclusive association with men of our own type.

But I see I am astray beyond my thoughts in my empty house in Edenbridge Square. From Julian my musing probably passed to my other associates at Downs-Peabody, and so came back to more intimate questions. For the first time in my life since I had begun to observe and think I had come into contact with rich people and with able people engaged in getting richer, and I was beginning to apprehend a number of points about human motives and my own possibilities that had hitherto escaped me. I had not properly understood before what there is in this process of getting and keeping rich; my estimate of motives had been too simple. I had regarded only the forms and habits of life. I was now getting a grasp upon the driving forces of life.

I can best put it by saying that in my younger view of the social order into which I had been born I had seen it mainly as a business of toil-shifting and a struggle for freedom. People were poor, limited, and oppressed because they had had too much of the necessary toil of the community thrust upon their shoulders, and my early socialism

was a simple and reasonable scheme for the redistribution and economy of toil. Everybody might be relieved from any excess of toil and given leisure and a sufficiency of freedom. Then — seen from the angle of back streets and the common life of worry and insufficiency — it seemed reasonable to expect that everyone would be happy. But now I had begun to share the lives of these Romers and Steinharts and Crests and their womankind, and to realise the power of pride among their driving motives. I had come back into large houses and parks and gardens and into an atmosphere of many servants and abundance and display; a multitude of dormant memories of Mowbray were revived in me, and I was reminded that so soon as a human being is housed, fed, and made to feel secure, it proceeds at once to seek occasion to swagger over other human beings. It seeks reassurance.

That everyone should have a fair prosperity, no one toil, no one be enslaved, would not simply leave this overbearing and conquering craving unsatisfied; it would release it to unexampled activity. The Romers and Steinharts spent and swaggered like English county families out of the best novels, with touches of Oriental splendour they did their insufficient best to restrain. Roderick's dressing-gowns are indescribable, and I have always suspected Julian of secret cloth-of-gold pants. The Crests, an old English family born to coal and ore, were in comparison coldly and haughtily victorious over the common ruck of mankind. Crest was about as intelligent in our business as a horse, but his very incapacity increased his effect of being thoroughbred. He was silent in the board-room and very cunning; for generations the Crest family had grown richer and richer by being in the way and having to be bought out, and I think that both he and Lady Muriel, his wife, despised the Romers and Steinharts for actively creating wealth instead of passively insisting upon it. Julian in lapses from his habitual ingratiation had had occasion to remind me once or twice that I was a salaried employee, but the Crests made me feel it from the moment we were in sight of each other. They were going to walk on me. They were going to be aloof, condescending, unaware. Such ascendencies were what life was for.

I had been over to lunch with the Crests at Folingden, and Lady

Muriel had made it abundantly evident that I was unsuitable for sustained conversation. I had to be addressed with polite consideration, I had to answer when I was addressed, and then I had to lapse into respect. Having honoured me as one might pat a dog, she proceeded to talk across me with Mrs. Roderick Romer about the condition of the poor in their respective parishes. The cottagers in the Crest village were not providing sufficient girls for domestic service; the Romer village had plenty of girls, but our works at Downs-Peabody were too near and were beguiling them away.

"I want Roderick to close the works to Brampsheet girls," Mrs. Roderick had said.

"A girl who is not broken to service by fifteen," Lady Muriel had generalised, "will never make a good servant."

"I tell him he's destroying the breed. He's destroying all their standards."

Difficult stuff for the excluded middle to cut in upon.

A sad and handsome "Nordic" face with an expression of enigmatical aloofness had hovered behind Mrs. Roderick's Oriental opulence. It was the Crests' family butler, waiting with the peas. He might have been Crest's first cousin. He was exactly the same creature — minus the acres that had the coal and iron below....

I sat in my empty house and I found my irritation against the Crests and my sense of the exuberant triumph of the Romers and Steinharts over the Oreshire domestics and poor, interweaving with my bitter realisation of the share that economic inferiority had played in my disaster with Clara. I philosophised widely. I was beginning to understand how the issues and ramifications of sex spread into the whole complex of social life. I had thought two years ago that sex was simply a sensuous craving, an appetite needing assuagement and trailing with it a sense of beauty. I knew now that that was not the tenth part of it; that was merely the red centre of a far ampler desire — a desire for possession, assurance, and predominance. I understand now how that spread out into the general competition of life. The desire of a woman to own and dominate a man, or the desire of a man to own and dominate a woman or women, is only the intense focus of a vastly greater nimbus of purpose, to dominate men and women at large. It spreads out into a craving for servants, for

dependents, for wills that wait on our wills. It branches out into a desire for possessions of all sorts; it finds a grotesque specialisation in the accumulation of pets. This hunger for the sense of mastery over life accounts for the otherwise idiotic pleasure people take in the shooting of pheasants and suchlike poor, attractive creatures. The ultimate expression of dominance is to kill. The specifically sexual drive is merely the apex of a drive which at its broadest is a desire to own and dominate all life.

And I was, in fact, as sexual, as aggressive upon life as these Romers and Steinharts and Crests, as Dickon and all the rest of the world. Only I had failed to perceive it until Clara had developed me.

So I saw it in my empty house. I saw life stripped bare and plain as a struggle from which there was no remission. One might have the freakish desire for scientific knowledge; it was no excuse. One had to fight for its gratification just as one would have to fight for any other fantasy that caught one's will. One had to fight or gratify the *lust* and the craving within one before one could serve it, just as one had to fight the conflicting purposes of one's *fellow* men and the antagonism of nature. The service of mankind through science gave one no natural claim for help or consideration in the scramble of life. One had to struggle with one's enemy and beguiler, woman, just as much as one had to struggle against one's enemy and rival and would-be subjugator, man. That was the quality of life. Fight, establish yourself, or go under — go under even though your every wish was benevolent. And happily for me I had a weapon in my special gifts and in this metallurgical knowledge I had chanced to acquire.

I would fight. What else was there to do? The prospect of a frank struggle to get the better of the world bored me but did not dismay me. I was fairly sure of myself. I would somehow get to power and freedom round the reservations of Romer, Steinhart, and the Crests, as I would somehow get round the entanglement Clara had made for me to the gratification of my desires. And that was how the prospect of life spread itself out before me. To that I had come at that time. Such quasi-scientific, quasi-religious mysticism as I have now is all of later growth. In those days I had no intimation of that wilful reconstruction of human affairs which now dominates my activities. That came during and after the war. That was a result of the war.

Simply I contemplated and nerved myself for struggle. If I contemplated anything at the end of that struggle it was a resumption of pure research, aloof from and disregardful of the common affairs of men. I was a hard young man, far more narrowly egotistical than I am now.

The memory of those hours is all dark loneliness and stern resolve. Clara was already at an infinite distance, clean out of my universe. I had parted from her and given her the furniture, and she was, I thought, handsomely disposed of.

The candle flared down to extinction at my elbow, and made the shadows dance about me. Outside a bleak gas-lamp lit the railings and black bushes of the unfrequented square.

8. WINDOW WIDE OPEN

IT was not until nineteen seven or eight that I could feel I was accomplishing what I had set out to do and that the Romers had accepted me for good and all as a necessary part of their combination. By that time I could count myself a rich man as riches go now. It would be a long and tedious story to tell, full of petty manoeuvres and cunning shifts and counter-shifts, before my group came to realise that they had to pay fairly for the science and initiative I could give them. Crest did his best to block my intrusion upon the board-room and even drove me to negotiations with a German-American group. He would not understand what I signified. His preponderant inheritances were against me. To this day he treats me with a sort of provisional equality, as though he had somehow mislaid his social ascendency over me, but that at any moment his butler might find it in the hall or conservatory and restore it to him. But Lady Muriel, with the social flexibility of her sex, now consults me about the incipient love affairs of her grandchildren.

Within four years I was a director of one of our subsidiaries, our queer little profitable Clissold Mineral Paint Company, but I did not become a director of the mother company until after ten years of steady work. It was interesting, this business; it was exasperating and it was boring; it was difficult at times to resist the temptation to smash the game and get out of it all, and the years between twenty-five and forty-five slipped away almost unperceived. Meanwhile I continued a respectable scientific career with a steadily ebbing freshness and vitality of thought. I got my F.R.S. in 1902 chiefly on the strength of my papers upon intercrystalline stresses, but two young Germans, Stahl and Butow, were already running away with my ideas and getting at things I had been too preoccupied to see. And so my purely scientific career petered out.

In 1907 I made an attempt to revive my scientific passions. I organised a private laboratory. It was beautifully equipped, but from the first it had an incurable flavour of the amateur. Julian pad just such another. His was as neat as a dressing-bag, as lavish and handy as the things on the toilet-table of a professional beauty. It had

everything that heart could desire in a laboratory — except the heart to use it. Julian even had an assistant, a London B.Sc., a sort of intellectual valet who brushed and folded his researches and put them out for him when he wanted to resume them. I didn't go to that length. I did some reading, brought myself up to date. But the glory had departed.

I do not think I have spent three hundred hours in my private laboratory altogether since it was finished eighteen years ago. And half that time was given to special war stuff of no scientific value. I feel that such seclusion is now an affectation for me. I am no longer a leader anywhere upon the scientific front, and I lack the special energy to push up again. For the last year Siddons, not the astronomical Siddons but the Cambridge brother, E. A. P. Siddons, has been using the place and justifying its existence. Siddons, I think, will presently come in with us and take his place beside Trippman at the head of the firm's central research station. When I came into the firm we had exactly twenty-one men working in our laboratories, from myself to the bottle-washer and counting in Julian. Now we have four hundred and seven qualified men doing scientific work for us. It is all I can do to keep in touch with the new stuff they are opening up. Most of them are, of course, of the "trained" type and their research is routine inquiry, but ten or a dozen are fairly original men, and one or two of these are personalities of quality who promise well for our future.

Between 1908, when Sirrie Evans died, and the beginning of the war I passed through several phases of deep discontent and unhappiness; I shall say more about these experiences later. I was dissatisfied with life and restless. Whatever I did, I wanted presently to do something else; wherever I was, I wanted to be somewhere else. I found business excuses for travel; I went into Russia, into further India and stayed for the better half of a year in Siberia. But nowhere was there any escape from this uneasiness of mind, this persuasion that in some essential respect my life was not right.

Then came the profound excitements of the war, and for a time it was possible to believe that real and fundamental things were happening. I have already written about that period in my account of Dickon. As I have told, disillusionment was harsh and speedy.

Another phase of profound distress and unsettlement followed. It was complicated by a queer irrelevant passion that distracted me excessively. The need of a clear unifying purpose in my existence became imperative if I was not to go to pieces altogether. It rose to complete ascendency over the confusion of my desires. It brought me at last to this tranquil sunny room in Provence and this pause for a final assembling of my purposes, before it is time for me to go altogether.

I have been working here at this book — with three brief intermissions in England — since last November. It is now June. Once more I note with gratitude the intimate and tranquillising beauty of this land. In April there was a great blaze of blossom; the big Judas-trees flowered magnificently, and a lot of little and medium sized Judas-trees I had hitherto not observed, its family, flowered in unison. There was also a great foam of lilac. All sorts of iris clamoured successfully for attention, and the roses, always more or less in flower here, suddenly took their task of beauty seriously and did wonderful things. That was our spring after a wet and windy March that flooded our kitchen. Now the days are baths of warm sunshine, and my common daily wear is pyjamas. The nights are nights of magic. They are scented nights. This week they are saturated in moonlight, and they abound in fireflies, fire-flies that prick the darkness intermittently as they drift athwart the pallid roses and lilies and the black, still bushes and branches. In the depths of the ivy lurk green glowworms. I find the nightingales too abundant and very tiresome with their vain repetitions, but Clementina does not agree; her mind has been poisoned by literature, and she does not really hear the tedious noises they make, she hears Keats. On the other hand, the carpet of sound made every evening by the frogs in the valley below is indescribably beautiful in itself. We disputed agreeably, and now she has gone and left me to my study table and my thoughts.

Here, tranquil before the still moonlight, serene as shining silver, defended from moth and mosquito by an invisible gauze, I can brood over my papers into the small hours. I have been sitting here not troubling to write since eleven. It is now nearly one. Here I can get all that Romer, Steinhart turmoil into something like its proper

perspective against the world at large. I can look back upon it now across an interval of five-and-thirty years and make a companion picture to those still hours I spent in Edenbridge Square when my adventures with Romer, Steinhart lay all before me. Space, time, and the pressure of life are all altered in their values now. I can see our huge combine broadly, and my work for it as a quite typical item in that change of scale and material that is the essential fact of current history. I can see how extraordinarily representative we are of the general quality of contemporary life, both in its large wilfulness and its retarded consciousness of itself.

9. THE MARKET TREE

HOW new and significant a thing we are! Of the various substances that we extract from crude matter and pour into the workshops of the modern world there is scarcely one that was even thought of a hundred years ago. Even the various steels we co-operate with White and Halbow in producing are new. Steel was a fudged, rule-of-thumb product in 1825; nobody knew what it was exactly; it was variable and uncertain, and to have produced a hundred-pound lump of it would have been thought a miracle. Now we can make steel play tricks like a performing seal; we can make you steels as brittle as glass and steels almost as flexible as rubber, we can make crystalline steels as obdurate as carbon and malleable steels that at a temperature below red heat you can draw into wire and beat into leaves hardly less thin and ductile than gold. All you have to do is to pay the price. Some of these steels are still expensive toys, but to-morrow they will be staple needs. But that is only an overflow of our metallurgical activity. Steel is not our main interest. In ten years' time every other automobile body will be made of our light alloys, and in twenty there will be scarcely an aeroplane in the air that is not made of some stuff of ours. Again, for main roads, for all roads and streets where the wear is hard, Romer, Steinhart in twenty years' time will supply the only possible road metal, all over the world. There is hardly a modern contrivance from an incandescent lamp to a gramophone needle and from a toughened lamp chimney to the type that will print this book, that does not owe something to us — and pays it.

All this has grown from nothing in less than three quarters of a century. In 1858, the original Steinhart, who was a Swedish chemist of Jewish extraction visiting England, met the original Romer, who was then travelling in mohair trimming for his uncle. They met in a train between Sheffield and London, and Steinhart talked about the slackness of the English and the peculiar opportunities that were, he thought, going to waste upon the coal and iron properties of the lordly Crests. Romer, who was a youth of nineteen at the time, and who detested mohair and his uncle, jumped at the possibilities of independent action these remarks opened out, and made himself so

ingratiating to Steinhart and afterwards so importunate to Crest our present Crest s father, that at last he brought together the first experimental company, the founder company of all our branching tree. This was the Crest Slag Works, and it was afterwards reconstructed as the Crest Bye-Products. Romer, who had a really vigorous intelligence, went off to Germany and studied metallurgical chemistry for two years to fit himself better to control this business he had made possible.

In 1879 he succeeded in shifting the central works from the Crest properties to Downs-Peabody so as to be in easy reach of the Brampsheet and Hinton-Peabody deposits, and the Crest Bye-Products Company was swallowed up in the bolder enterprise of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. with a capital of fifty thousand pounds. The rearrangement of the names showed, among other things, that the Crests were no longer on the back of the concern but dragging along at its side. Where alas! they continue to drag.

But I do not see why I should write here the details of an industrial development which are easily accessible to the curious in a variety of forms. The external facts have always been stated very plainly and fully at our annual meetings; we are widely documented. What interests me now is the social and mental significance of this rapid and amazing growth. It spreads through the once formless worldwide commerce in metals and raw material for mechanical production, it sends out processes, it joins on to cognate bodies and bodies that become cognate in a way that is extraordinarily suggestive of the appearance of a vertebral column and its linking up to rudiments of rib and limb in the body of an embryo. And side by side with it and capable of either consuming or amalgamating with it are similar and rival organisations. Parallel with it are other great organising systems dealing in oil, great food trusts, cotton, shipping combinations. It is a new economic structure where formerly there was fragmentation, open market, and crowd commerce. It is only being recognised for what it is. We ourselves, Romers, Steinharts, Crests, and myself, and all the other twenty-odd outsiders who have come into the direction of our main or openly associated concerns, are only beginning to see what it is we are doing. Hardly any of us realise the full extent of our tentacles; we expand as if by instinct,

and at times our right hand has scarcely a suspicion of what the left is closing upon. It is still more interesting to compare what we are, we creatures inflated by expansive forces beyond our expectation, with what we might be and what perhaps we ought to be.

I do not believe that our primordial Steinhart dreamt for a moment of the nature of the egg he was laying in the nest of the conservative Crests. There was a bolder imaginative touch about our ancestral Romer; he may have had previsions of the things that are coming. Not one of our present gang has ever seen what we are doing as a whole. Or if anyone has, the vision has vanished again instantly like the Holy Grail. Here am I in Provence, the new Thebaid, living the life of a hermit — with Clem installed within a mile as the official temptation — in order to get a view of it. Possibly Roderick comes nearer than anyone to a comprehensive conception of our role in the world's affairs. He is something of a statesman. He made a mistake in taking a peerage. He is rather lost up there as Lord Brampsheet. He has barred himself out of the House of Commons by this splendour, and only discovered too late that he can make quite good political speeches. It was some feeling between the wives about the Crest barony that added Brampsheet to the glorious roll of Lloyd George's peers. Crest wanted his caparison, Lady Romer saw an opportunity of drawing level with Lady Muriel, and manifestly it was impossible to honour the impassive Crest and leave the energetic and possibly malignant Sir Roderick untouched. And Sir Roderick at the time did not realise what he was doing for himself. Perhaps it is just as well, for him as for us. He likes to argue, and this vice of debate might have grown upon him until he gave to party what is meant for the business of the world.

He has imagination; he has ideas; he is aggressive; he is not content to fall into the moulds of preceding things. He will talk at times in quite revolutionary fashion. He respects Crest more than I do, but he hates him just as much. He respects Crest more than I do, because there is still a lingering instinct in the Romer blood, due to a thousand years of pogroms, that these hippoid types should be propitiated. He dare not believe as I do that modern science and mechanism have made cavalry and the landed gentry obsolete. Apart from this weakness my Lord Brampsheet is as progressive as myself

and much more energetic. To him we owe the steady extension of our interests beyond industrial production to international finance. Through his tentacular instincts and the intervention of banking it is that we are in co-operation instead of cut-throat competition with our German and French and Swedish parallels, and allied and linked to mining and coal interests in all parts of the world, to cotton growing, and gold and diamond mining, which were once as remote from us as concerns in another planet.

Roderick is physically a bigger man than my Julian, and his methods of address are less insinuating and more familiar. Occasionally he seems to be trying, as the Americans put it, to "jolly" you. By an odd coincidence he resembles the Bolshevik leader Zinovieff so closely that when first I met the latter in Petersburg in 1920 I laughed aloud. They might be identical twins. Yet neither is pleased to hear of this resemblance.

The parallelism is more than physical. Their imaginations are similar, constructive, and a little grandiose; they have an enormous amount of mental energy, and mental energy, I should think, of very much the same type and grade. In 1920, after the phase of extreme Communism, Bolshevism in Moscow was as intellectually bankrupt as any "capitalist" government. In spite of such purely comic efforts as Lenin's "electrification of Russia" and Trotsky's valiant splutterings, it plainly did not know what to do next. But Zinovieff had already hit upon the spacious idea of an appeal to Asia, and the evocation of a sort of godless Islam out of Russia and the Turk and Central Asia. So far as any politico-social idea has ever realised itself, Zinovieff's dream might realise itself. And so in this vastly richer Western muddle of ours, which has so much more time and stuff to waste before it gets down to bare realities, I find in Roderick an idea where other people seem to have no ideas; not, indeed, a clear idea, but an adumbration with something very like an outline, the idea of a sort of shelving or subordination of political forms and a reorganisation of economic and social life under the control of a union of big financial and industrial groups. The same idea looms up even more distinctly in some American circles. It foreshadows a statecraft of realities. Beside Roderick, our old Asquith seems to me as unreal and empty as one of those figures of Chinese porcelain that

nod their heads and move their hands in country houses. I do not mean that Roderick has ever sat down and worked out his idea to even its broad implications. He has never detached himself enough from current activities for that. But he has it. Power has happened to him. In this present world he is one of a number of men who wake up in middle age to find power flowing past within their grasp. He has at least awakened. He blinked, he snorted and made startling sounds, he shut his eyes again, but he had awakened.

He knows as well as I do that the politics, the parties, the 'governments, and empires of the world to-day are all a swiftly passing show, masking, but growing at last dimly transparent, to reveal the real processes that are going on in human life.

But these things belong to a later part of this book. I am discussing now the motives and ideas that have made us what we are. Roderick interests me most of all our group, and I watch him as closely as anyone. What do these gleams, these phases of broad politico-social vision amount to altogether with him? Very little — yet. To me they amount to much more, but with me also they are conceptions that stir rather than conceptions that control. With him they have a quality almost of improper thoughts. When we talk of these things and I betray a belief that there is a vital reality in our talk he becomes manifestly a little shy, a little scared. "But to come back to business, my boy," he says. "To come back to business — —"

He has not made himself. He has been made. His motives in building up this great system about Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. have been all of a piece with my motives. He wanted to live, to assert himself vigorously upon things and upon life, and he came in at a lucky angle. I believe, with the same differences that make him physically a contrast with myself, his mental and moral life is very parallel to mine.

And for the rest of our people I find no driving force at all commensurate with the great plant which nominally belongs to us, but to which we indeed belong. Men like Spink and Gedge came in by making themselves useful, young Brand by making himself agreeable. Trippman is able and alive, but almost wholly a chemist. Siddons may develop; there is more in him than in the others, and he is still very young. The rest are wheels or links. Several do good

research work and make excellent arrangements to exploit their results, but they do not seem to apprehend the business as a whole and in relation to the world as a whole. They run after fine houses and fine wives; they appreciate knighthoods and baronetcies; or they sniff after the imaginative excitements of the artistic and dramatic world, and the sands of their lives run out.

None of us are very great sportsmen; it is too heavy a call on our time. Lord Crest is still under the impression that he is a great English country gentleman a little distended by commerce, and so in need of a sort of moral tight-lacing. He is enormously respected in the Carlton Club, and both his sons have been through the Guards. Everard represents Offerton in the conservative interest and will some day succeed his father as the drag on our wheels. Sons and father are all associated with various attempts to create strike-breaking and quasi-Fascist organisations in England against the active Labour people. Gods! how that sort of prancing and threatening exasperates some of our men, some of our very best men! Crest has recently had his portrait painted in the Ruritanian style as Lord Lieutenant of Oreshire, scarlet and splendid. The background even is romantic. No chimneys are visible. There is a beautiful carriage with horses in London for Lady Crest, as well as several cars. Lady Muriel is a friend of the Family, of the most exalted Family.

"My boy," said Roderick, when I was letting myself go one day upon Crest's costliness and general ineffectiveness, "have you ever thought of his value as our shopwalker?"

"Mask," said I.

"Mask!" said Roderick with a sudden outbreak of racial self-derision. "You've said it, my boy! He can go and do our business where I can't show my nose...."

I sit here and think over these things, I think of Roderick and Julian and the rest of our group, and the wives and houses and dinners and week-ends, I review the galaxy of our chief shareholders and dependents and profit-spending associates, not forgetting my little neighbour Lady Steinhart, whom I have already described; I recall what I can of the phases and moods, the cravings and pettiness of my own story, and then my mind wanders off to our works, to our

wonderful plant with science and subtle ingenuity in every trough and tap and furnace and mould, to our staffs of skilled workers, to our collateral associations with mines of every type in every climate, to the great regions we search for ores, fluxes, solvents, to the cultivators whose output we buy by the countryside. When I think of this worldwide system, seeking, extracting, recovering, and sorting the crude substance of the earth, fusing, sublimating, condensing, fining, allaying, placing its finished substance at last in the hands of ten thousand sorts of manufacturer and returning its sifted by-products to fertilise a hundred lands, when I think of the myriads of workers whose lives we direct, the hundreds of myriads with which our work is associated, and the far greater multitudes whose employment we make possible, when I contemplate the totality of all this achievement threaded through the jostling human crowd, and then put the swift, incessant efficiency of this human process of ours side by side even with the best of the motives that move us who are its nominal directors, it seems to me it is not so much we who have got all these things out of the earth as the things themselves that have called to us and compelled us to extract them.

They have compelled us as the soil of any place selects and determines the trees that shall grow there and stunts them or gives an extravagant vigour to their growth. Romer, Steinhart, which began as a single sapling, has become a great tree, that like a banyan, the Indian market-tree, expands a grove and joins to other groves and shelters great multitudes and may at last coalesce into one single canopy of confederated businesses to cover the economic life of the world.

10. OLD STYLE AND NEW

OUR main plants, our essential companies, are things of a new economic type. I doubt if many people realise how new they are. Our businesses are not only new in scale and correlation; they are new in their internal constitution. There is not the same necessary antagonism of employer and employed in them, because they are not merely nor mainly toil-shifting organisations. We employ hardly any brute labour at all in our own concerns.

Almost all our labour is either skilled or semi-skilled. Over three thousand of our people draw more than a thousand pounds a year each from us, and that number increases in a larger proportion than the increase in our general employment. There is nobody at all with us on a flat subsistence wage; not a soul. And since our plants have been costly to construct and are destined to be superseded by better plants within very definite limits of time, since many of them would deteriorate rapidly with disuse, it has always been the policy of the firm, from our early Crest Bye-Products days onward, to keep its workers content and interested in our common welfare, and so never to have a break in production. We have never been held up by a strike in all our history, and we have never closed down a plant upon its staff because of trade fluctuations. We have kept our workers together and our plants going steadily — if only for the sake of the machine. Business shrewdness and a certain goodwill were both active in determining that policy; the original Steinhart was, we know, a student of Robert Owen, and regarded his employees with an amiable generosity of intention. His idea, and it is still a tradition of the firm, was that there is a sort of moral partnership of the business inherent in those who have been employed by it for some time. But I won't pretend that our virtue has had to struggle against our interests; old Steinhart's good intentions happen to have yielded the very best policy possible for us.

Wherever we have bodies of our own workers in sufficient numbers we subsidise the science teaching in the elementary and continuation schools in that locality as generously as possible, and at Downs-Peabody we run a big technical institute at which

scholarships can be held, side by side with our research laboratories. We have nine professors with salaries far above the normal University scale. Spink and Gedge are both sons of men who worked in the Crest Bye-Products for weekly wages. We have a savings' bank organisation and an investment system; we have workers who, some of them, hold up to two thousand pounds' worth of our ordinary shares. We pay no day wages at all, and we are steadily changing our weekly wage-earners to a monthly and quarterly salariat. In alliance with our staffs we participate in subordinate housing companies, recreation grounds, cricket clubs, swimming-baths, two art museums, and a number of social clubs. We subsidise two weekly newspapers to explain what is going on in our business and what becomes of our products.

All this is just sound modern business. We cannot afford to use our premises as social battlefields. We do not discuss the right of this or that person to a greater or lesser share of the surplus profit of our activities, but we mean to keep our processes going on as largely, handsomely, healthily as possible, and this is the way it has to be done. And one must remember we are not demoralised by any vehement competition — which is the true cause of most sweating and commercial ugliness. The sweating system is only an economic expression of fear and greed, the economic bad manners of rush conditions. But we happier moderns are working often with patented processes, often with a monopoly of raw material, with a staff of workers that it has taken half a century to assemble, and always with a scientific and technical superiority that makes us unapproachable. Energetic new people do not seek to wrest things out of our hands; it would be hopeless; they come in and offer to work with us.

We do not spread our broad methods about the world without internal friction. The Crests have held lands in Oreshire since the thirteenth century; great grabbers and savers they have always been, a hard-fisted, firm-mannered race; they guessed right at the dissolution of the monasteries and grew mightily at their expense. Galsworthy's Forsytes are mild stuff compared with our Crests. Crest seems to have kept the beastly economic medievalism of his ancestry intact. He is as hard and mean as a French peasant and a British duke rolled into one. In the unproductive disorder of the Middle Ages the

only ways of getting rich were to oppress, compel, sweat, or rob outright. Usury was forbidden, and besides, usury required arithmetical gifts accorded only to the Jews. Trade was a rare occupation, and as a trader you monopolised naturally, even if you had to fight and murder to do so. There was no increase in values going on; what you gained someone else lost. What you got you held with a scowling, swaggering dignity tempered only by the showiest possible largesse on holiday occasions. When some unasked improvement in our workers' condition is in contemplation, Crest will still come to our board meeting with the clatter of rusty armour in his voice and demand where all this sort of pauperisation is to end. Where is the money to come from? he asks.

Nothing will ever convince him that our dividends do not come out of the pockets of other people, nor that our profits are not abstracted from the wages of workers who have been held down while the abstraction is effected. He is equally persuaded that the object of foreign trade is to pauperise foreigners. He is not really an employer as we conceive it; he is a mediaeval robber baron who offers terms. He is always trying to force our people into rifle clubs and the Territorials because it would give them a sense of discipline, and once he wanted a man dismissed because he did not touch his hat to him outside the works. The man was, unfortunately, a humorist. "Hey, my man!" said Crest. "I don't think you know me!"

"Don't think I do," said the man. "Who might *you* be ?"

"I'm Lord Crest."

"I'm Billy Watkins. What about it?"...

It took nearly half an hour of our time at the next board meeting to convince Crest that gestures of social abjection were not among the duties for :which Billy Watkins drew his pay.

"We can't Interfere with their manners, my boy," said Roderick, pawing Crest's shoulder with a familiarity that made Crest pale with anger, and infusing an unusually Eastern oiliness and the shadow of a lisp into his voice, "and that's all about it. Why! if we began on that sort of thing where should we end? I'm always speaking to Julian now as it is about tapping in the tops of his eggs. *Will* tap 'em in. It isn't done in the best families. It gives us away. All of us Romers. And Clissold went out of this very room before me only yesterday.

He's equal to going out in front of *you*. No sense of precedence. You've got to put up with this sort of thing these Bolshevik days, Crest, and thank God if they do their work."

"If you *want* to see discipline go to the devil — !" flashed my Lord Crest, and dropped the subject....

But as our tentacular connections have spread our interests from our original mineral and metallurgical operations, we have come into relations with labour and with organisations for production developed upon less fortunate lines than our own. There we find ourselves tangled in responsibilities of every grade of difficulty. That's the less pleasant side of our picture. In the. early days, for example, we bought the whole Crest Collieries output upon a sliding-scale arrangement and left the treatment of the miners to the parental Crest, their Union and God, and afterwards we filled our increasing need for coal in the open market. Now we have the infernal Crest mines practically on our hands; we hold all their shares, we are bound in a Federation to this, that and the other line of action, and indirectly by various purchases, working agreements, and amalgamations we have become miners and sellers of coal as well as consumers, but we have no finger in the direction, nor in the labour organisation.

Mining is as ancient a business as the first Pharaohs; it has always been a form of mass labour, and, like all labour which draws its traditions from the ages before machinery, it is a very unpleasant, inhuman, and wasteful form. That side of our great machine remains excessively unsatisfactory to me. It runs along, jarring and occasionally jamming, wasteful in substance and wasteful of life. The typical British mine-owner still belongs very generally to the horse-headed class; the equestrian tradition still dominates mine-owning. Economically he is an antiquated nuisance. Since he gave nothing for his coal and ore he does not care how much of it is wasted so long as the royalties come in. Royalties to these landowners are a tax on every coal- consuming industry. Cheap coal is as necessary to the industrial life of Britain as good roads. Coal winning is a common interest that we industrialists are fools enough to treat as a private trade.

I am not on the Crest Collieries directorate, and it is difficult for

me to do more than gibe and grumble at this equestrian inheritance. Our mining and mineral interests are dotted all over the world, and conditions in the mines that concern us, here and abroad, are determined by conditions in the others beyond our reach, and one set cannot be changed without the other. Before we can begin a fight with Vishnu we must be reasonably sure that Siva will not rise against us both. Much the same sort of thing applies to our transport interests also. We are big enough to be affected, but not big enough yet to exercise an effective control. I would like to see our tentacles grow and grow, bigger and stouter, until a single combine could take the whole mineral resources of the world into one problem. But that seems a long dream still, and before it can be realised and the creative Brahma can get to work, Siva, in other words the passionate destructiveness of labour awakening to its now needless limitations and privations, may make Brahma's task impossible. I would even favour nationalisation if I believed, which I don't, that there was even a sporting chance of the politicians sustaining a competent management.

I am afraid of the obstinate injustice of all these ancient forms of employment, mining, shipping, transport work which still carry on the traditions of the gang slavery of the ancient world. There seems never a day when one can turn them round into a new path and animate them with a new spirit. Yet on their present lines they are accumulating wrath and disaster for the whole system. The wastage of life is frightful. There is no more reason now why coal should be picked out from the seam bit by bit by hunched-up men working in darkness and dirt and foul air than there is that steamship furnaces should be hand-fed by sweating stokers or the harvests of the world reaped by hand.

Some day I may begin to see more clearly than I do at present a way of extending our hard and scientific methods into these old industries that the needs of finance and the markets have obliged us to annex to our comparatively clean, original system of enterprises. I would like to tackle a whole coal district as one system, survey it and sound it, reassemble the housing and surface cultivation, burrow into it with passages and air tubes and pour out coal tar, carbonised road-metal, pipe-steam and electric power for the towns and houses and

factories, and so let the whole countryside run happily until nothing more was left below to burn. That might not be for a century or so, and by that time our industrial people would be moving on quite cheerfully to some new district and some fresh phase in the exploitation of natural resources, and we should have the old Black Country coming back daily and beautifully to agriculture and horticulture again. And as for our miners I would have them on salaries instead of day wages, work them at most five days a week and ten months a year, pay them for two months' annual holidays, pension them comfortably when they had done thirty thousand hours' work, even if they hurried up and did it soon, and get tons of coal out of them where now we worry out hundred-weights. This is no dream, but an entirely practicable possibility. Only Crest and his kind, and the general foolishness that tolerates and supports them, stand in the way.

11. SIRRIE EVANS

THIS book, however, is not to tell of my social and economic imaginations and desires, but about the conflict of motives that has gone on in me, beneath the surface of my very considerable business activities. I write about my motives not because I suppose they are at all remarkable, but just because they are not at all remarkable among my class. I try to lay bare in myself the soul of a successful business man. A considerable number of active men nowadays are in much the same case as myself. I am a fair sample of a new attitude of mind which is appearing here and there in the world and becoming more and more common.

I worked. I succeeded. I appeased myself with women.

That is my history in brief. I followed out the programme I had planned in my empty house. But I was not satisfied. Al ways I was restless. And since mine is an intelligence which dresses itself up very little, this unrest of the spirit found its chief outlet for many years in fresh sexual activities. I suppose all the energy of life is sublimated from the sexual energy; the waters have a compelling tendency to return to the ocean from which they arose.

I have been what the eighteenth century called a rake. It is natural for me to find redeeming characteristics in a rake, to plead that he is at least obliged to be personally clean and fit and seemly, and that he must needs be of some imaginative activity and responsiveness. And also that no mere force of physical desire makes a rake. Grossness is no incentive to change and exploration; there is no need in modern life for a simply lascivious man to betray that quality to the world. The house of ill-fame is the natural resort of the man of good repute. But to me such conveniences, such imitations, have always been shameful and abominable. Bodily desire has been the lesser part of this business to me. Whatever else I have desired, invariably the leading thing I have desired has been personal response. And the next thing to that has been — something hard to name, a kind of brightness, an elation, a material entanglement with beauty.

And still there was something more. I think now that I have been the victim of one of those exaggerations of promise that our restless,

purblind old mother Nature never hesitates to put upon us. Always through my fuller years there was a feeling, a confidence I never had the power or will to analyse, that somewhere among womankind there was help and completion for me. How shall I express it? The other half of my androgynous self I had lost and had to find again. You remember the fable Aristophanes told in the Symposium.

I have never found that completion. For me, at any rate, it has been no more than a sustaining illusion. But I do not repent of my love experiences. I am glad old Nature put that *ignis fatuus* into my wits and nerves to lead me the dance I have had. All these affairs have been touched by imagination and have revivified my imagination. I have nothing to reproach myself about in them. I have never prostituted a human being in any of them, I have never cheated, made dishonest promises, nor wilfully inflicted humiliation. If I have lied at times I have lied in small matters to mitigate or reassure; I have escaped from essential and fundamental lies. I am a rake unrepentant and unashamed.

I state these things here not by way of apology, but because they interest me as matters of fact. It is too often assumed that a rake is necessarily a seducer, a sort of area sneak of the affections. He breaks down the sweet temple of virtue in spite of its pitiful pleadings and resistance; ransacks it, leaves it hideously and incurably defiled, departs with triumphant mockery. But that is pure romanticism. There are just as many women, in this modern world at least, as ready for love and as impenitent about it and as little desolated by it as men.

If I were seeking an exoneration for my life I suppose I could make great play with the fact that I was so tied to Clara that I could not marry again and live in a seemly, ordinary fashion. I am sorry for that fact because I would have liked to have sons and daughters; I envy Dickon his youngsters, those sympathetic, organically linked extensions of oneself; but if I am to be frank with the reader as with myself, I am not sure that if I had been married and tied to almost anyone of the women I have known intimately, my life would have been essentially different from what it has been. I understand how deeply husband and wife may trust one another, but there must be excitement in love and a sort of magic and adventure. It must be

difficult to sustain the excitement, magic, and adventure year after year, with anyone whose every gesture and intonation one knows by heart. A separation and then a homecoming to dear familiar things? That is a different story.

But then, as I have written already in my account of my own futile marriage, I think that the same forces that are breaking down the separations between small businesses, fusing production into concerns upon a world scale, and driving the peasant from his immemorial holding, are breaking down the walls of the home. The faithful, fruitful wife was a possessed and secluded woman. But now the home is a service Hat, a lodging, a suite in some hotel, and the man who once tilled the soil his ancestors tilled before him wanders from job to job about a world that is almost as homeless for him as the high seas. Man, who settled down to plough and increase and multiply twelve or fifteen thousand years ago, is now getting adrift again in great streams and clouds; it is a sort of harvest of mankind from the fields into the great camps of the new towns, and the woman who was his helpmeet is becoming once more his camp-follower. Or is ceasing even to follow his camp and, against all nature and precedent, setting up one of her own. Or is simply at large in the streaming crowd and amazed.

My life has been spent where the disintegrative forces are most at work. As a young man I was living rather exceptionally the sort of existence a great and increasing number of young people are living to-day. I indulged in great freedoms that are no longer freedoms but widespread practices. From the days of my separation from Clara until I was nearly thirty-two my opiate for that recurrent hunger in my heart was a series of intrigues that often overlapped and sometimes went on simultaneously two or even three together. The facts of these relationships are so Hat and commonplace that it is hard to convey the glamour, the sense of depth and delight and reassurance they could afford.

Most of that satisfaction was the most patent illusion. I have to confess that, considered as a man, I am the least marvellous that can be imagined; the chief word in my description upon my passport is "normal," repeated several times; remarks, *"none"*; eyes grey, hair brown. A new hat makes me unrecognisable to most of my

acquaintances. I suppose I am fairly alert and interested in people, and that is my most attractive quality. Yet my entire lack of personal splendour has not prevented my being the happy lover of a number of charming and interesting women. I can only suppose that they wanted to make love as much as or even more than I. I admired them, I was grateful, delighted in them, and as a man I was good enough to pass muster. 0 f course, we called each other "wonderful" and "delicious," and so forth. We were so, I suppose, in that light — as any meadow may be wonderful at dawn. What I gave them was almost exactly what they gave me — an exquisite sense of personal reception, a vividness of being, a surcease of this pursuing hunger of the heart that overtakes us in leisure and security.

Women have gained great freedom even during my lifetime. A few generations ago a woman's work, as the proverb said, was never done. Now for many it is over before it has begun. It is not that they are better paid, but that they are wanted less. Much knowledge that was once hidden has come to them. Motherhood is no longer an oppression, nor even the fear of motherhood. For a great number this means a release of sexual imaginations. They have blank time, unexpended energy, and an inherent predisposition for the excitements and beauties of love.

I do not think these modern women want men very badly; they want love. Usually they are married women or women already possessing lovers. But their man is masterful and oppressive, or he is negligent or wandering in his attentions, or preoccupied and dull. Mr. Smith or Brown reminds our lady too plainly, too flatly, that she is just Mrs. Smith or. Brown. He ceases to make her a goddess for his adorations. In a life of thin, unexacting routine love also becomes a routine. She has no sense of glorious giving, no sense of self-escape. But when she steals away to a lover all that is changed. You can hardly call her an unfaithful wife, for when she steals away she is no longer a wife. She ceases to be Mrs. Smith or Brown. That is the gist of the whole thing. As her lover ceases to be Mr. Jones. They both keep holiday from these commonplace verities. They go out of the world. She becomes as much a goddess as Diana visiting Endymion. As Mrs. Brown she would no doubt be betraying Mr. Brown, but as Diana in a secret cave remote from the things of everyday she

betrays nobody. Restored to her self-respect, to her belief in her possible loveliness, she can return to her too casual and negligent husband with a pleasant sense of dignity preserved and equality restored.

It is a fundamental convention in the romantic version of life that when a married woman takes a lover she prefers him to her husband. In three-quarters of the illicit love affairs in such a great centre as New York, London, or Paris, this is not true. It is probably less true even than the converse proposition about men. And the mere suggestion to most of these modern women rakes that they might go off and live in blissful union with the lovers they have been adoring would, I believe, be quite sufficient to end the affair for them. I cherish no illusions about my relations to the goddesses for whom I have been a worshipped and worshipping god, dear friends though they have been to me. For only one of them have I been the anti-husband. For most, I have no doubt that if the husband's life or prosperity or pride had been seriously threatened I should have been sacrificed with about as much regret as, let us say, a once worn dinner-dress that he had found too frank and discreditable, or a pet dog he did not like.

And yet in the secret cave we would be very earnest about our business and things would be very lovely between us. In all these affairs there are not only questions of more or less, but each one has its distinctive elements that do not enter into the others. Athwart my memories of these little opium doses of love there flits the tall, slender figure of Sirrie Evans, with her fever-touched cheeks, her strong profile, and her burning, deep-set eyes. She came into my life like any other adventure, but perhaps a little more vividly and happily. There was nothing to tell me that she was destined to live with me for nearly seven years and die at last exhausted in my arms.

I met her first at a dinner party in London — I think at the Rudhams'; it was a large white dining-room with grey marble pillars — and she did not sit next me but across the table. We glanced at each other and liked each other. We were both being held rather tenaciously by dinner partners of the low- voiced, semi-confidential type, the sort that cut up dinner parties into horrid little cellules of viscid duologue. I seem to remember that my own lady was plying

me with questions like the questions in an old Confession Album in a search for common ground, and I rather suspect that Sirrie was being subjected to arch and clinging compliments. Our eyes met in a common distress which changed to a mutual appeal. We recognised kindred. “Let’s get out of this somehow,” we telepathed.

The couple at the end of the table were talking rather loudly; the man was a challenger, the sort of man who makes controversial statements and looks about him. “The Russian moujik,” he said, “will be the Saviour of Europe, simple, industrious, profoundly Christian, worshipping his Tzar as God’s Vicegerent.” They all said that before the war.

I let a question on my left fade out neglected. “I don’t agree with you,” I said. “Have you been there?”

“They have divine beards,” said Sirrie, grasping the situation with decision and speaking directly to me.

“They are extremely kind to animals,” said the lady at the end.

“I judge by the evidence of the Russian literature,” said the man I had contradicted. “Dostoievsky in particular.”

It was a large reply, but I took it up manfully.

The others fell helplessly into their proper places, and we kept the conversation at our end of the table general until the ladies departed. By that time we had discussed Russian literature and Russian characteristics, peasants, and primitive people generally, whether peasant art and peasant costumes were not everywhere very much the same in Europe and Eastern Asia, and whether the essentials of peasant life had altered very greatly since the Middle Ages, and so it was natural for me when presently we went upstairs to go across to Sirrie and pick up the threads again.

It was not so much a case of love-making between us as of mutual attraction. We arranged to meet next day to see what there was of peasant art in the Museum at South Kensington, as though that was the most natural thing in the world to do. Later I learnt her name — I had missed it before — and discovered that a sturdy, dark, thickset man with an expression of defensive self-satisfaction was her husband. I saw him watching us, and when he was aware that I observed him he turned away. She ignored him. Always she ignored him. And I ignored him too, as completely as I had ignored the

Queen's Proctor in my separation from Clara.

It is impossible to convey by writing and telling the distinctive effect and charm of Sirrie as I knew her at that time. She was a brave thing — essentially brave. It was not the thing she said or the thing she did that seemed to matter so much as her style and carriage. She had a gallantry all her own, an alertness, very fine dark blue eyes, very fine brows; her cheeks were a little hollow and her voice very beautiful. But altogether she was beautiful. She had a lovely adventurous humour that seemed always seeking for the fun and quaintness and colour of life. She had a strong impulse to travel, to wander into fresh surroundings, to discover freshly different things. She was a born explorer.

The greater substance of our early escapades was altogether innocent. She loved to prowl in out-of-the-way parts of London, to peer into queer shops, to see contrasted sorts of life. She wanted a congenial man to go with her. We spent days exploring Whitechapel, Shoreditch, Clapham, the Crystal Palace. She would laugh with delight at the old and neglected exhibits at the latter place. Her sense of the absurdity of forgotten pretensions was very acute. "What were they up to here?" she would ask. "What did they think they were up to?" We never missed the stuffed animals; we traced the decay of the ethnological groups. The Picture Gallery was a great joy to us. And the "antediluvian animals." Seeing things with her was like looking through a telescope in the sunlight at familiar garden flowers. We stole a night or so from our outward for our inward lives and went for walks and boated together upon little flower-smothered Surrey and Sussex rivers and canals. They were not so much passionate times as glad times that we spent together in those days. Never before had I known so keen a flavour of pure holiday.

It was only very gradually that I came to understand that the underlying force in her life was an intense hatred for her husband, and that beneath her keen superficial interests and quick responses she hid the wounds of some profound exasperation. She had been one of four brilliantly pretty sisters, and he had married her before she was eighteen. I do not know what particular things had happened between her husband and herself; she never talked to me about them and I never questioned her; but they had so scarred her that even her

happiest moments at that time were touched with the quality of something done in his despite. I am by no means sure that she was altogether in the right. Possibly her hatred of him was unjust and freakish. She was quite capable of inexplicable animosities. She had neither justice nor morality in her apart from her aesthetic standards. She never said an action was wrong. She would condemn it as "not pretty." A gallant act was good enough for her.

Even in those days Evans was rich and growing richer in that slow, unproductive, creeping way that adds nothing to the wealth of the world. To him a wife also was no doubt an acquisition. From his point of view he had bought her, but the four lovely sisters thought they were a gift to the world. He had to beg for her thrice; when he married her I imagine he was already exasperated by the resistance to his wooing and by her gay flirtations with other men. She on the other hand may have been exasperated by the fact that she had yielded. He was the sort of man who is filled with dull, deep anger at the idea that he is not the most attractive and irresistible male in all time and space. The Old Man of the primordial tribe must have been much the same. He seems to have tried to break and subjugate Sirrie so soon as she was legally his. She tried some "nonsense" with him, and he stood no nonsense from her.

But I do not know what happened. I do not know what happened and I do not care to know. Perhaps very little happened. Perhaps she merely discovered that Evans was Evans and that she was inseparably linked to him. She had sold something for too Iowa price, something of fundamental value, something without which life was spoilt for her. And she had sold to an ungracious purchaser. At any rate, within a few months of his marriage he had this slip of a schoolgirl fighting him bitterly and successfully for her freedom — for her quite excessive conception of freedom.

The weakness she seized upon at first was his inordinate tender vanity, his fear of appearances. She made him realise that at any moment she might appeal against him to friends, to servants, to passers-by. Her appeal might be startling and unjustifiable; he was not safe from her unless he let her go her own way. I know that quite early she ran away from him for two days and dealt with him from an unknown address by telephone. "Leave me alone," she said in effect,

“and I will still appear to be your wife. Otherwise, though it tears my world to pieces, I go.”

But even though in a sort of way he left her alone, she would not respect his public honour. She despised and hated him too much for that. She broke the treaty, not he. I do not defend her. I set these things down. She came to me out of this ugly past, and it was not my concern to judge her.

Evans, blinded by his essential vanity to the fact that the most animated of women can still find many men entirely unattractive, sought to awaken her jealousy. She should be kept short of attention, kept short of money, left about and humiliated. She retorted by a scarcely ambiguous friendship for a young Guardsman, Lord Hadendower, about whom I know nothing. I never met him; he was killed at Soissons. Evans made his infidelities conspicuous and stopped her allowance altogether. She concluded rather rashly that the former action made a divorce impossible, so she, too, made her infidelities public and met her financial inconveniences by running up bills. All their world talked. He did not like advertising to restrain her credit and her allowance was turned on again. For a time she had the upper hand, and Evans was her suitor.

This bickering, dismal business developed. He shirked the rude publicity of a divorce for five or six years. She tired of Hadendower very soon and flung him away from her. But that meant no kindness to Evans. She was not a woman of strong passions, but an absence of passion is often associated with an absence of shameful emotion, and she was lively in her imagination and wild in her talk and letters, and quite reckless of appearances. Somewhere she had met a dangerous and folly-begetting word, the word Orgy. She was much sought after socially, a brilliant talker, a mimic, unfeelingly funny, capable of a calm indecorum of speech that left people gasping but delighted, and Evans was acutely aware of the powerful support she would have in any open breach in which he was not entirely in the right. So he waited until he was entirely in the right. For a time he made no breach. He had developed a consuming desire to recover her. He tried to buy her back, threaten her back; at last even to win her back. But nothing he could do now could touch her detestation. Her life became more and more a scoring of pleasures, social successes,

stolen outrageous adventures that had a subsequent publicity, defiant freedoms, against him, the heavy thing to which she had got herself chained. His love, such as it was, became at last a deep vindictive hate. That was the bristling situation into which my wanderings had led me.

I just imagined I had had the good fortune of an exceptionally refreshing *passade*.

I had known Sirrie scarcely four months when Evans exploded his long-prepared mines under her feet and commenced proceedings for divorce. It was his amiable intention to make it as scandalous and dirty a divorce as possible and ruin her completely. Since at last he must come to complete publicity, he seems to have decided, then the uglier it was the better. He wanted to drive her into hiding and exile so that her visible existence should no longer trouble him. She should know what poverty was. She should appreciate the rare and precious advantages she lost by despising him. Every possible or probable man was cited as a co-respondent so as to present her as entirely abominable, disgust her lovers with her and deprive her of any help in the world. It was a great case for the newspapers.

None of her lovers stood by her at the outset. Not one. I was as bad as the rest at first, jealous and ashamed. I had not known a third of the things thus dragged into the light. My first feeling was anger, because she had troubled so little about my being implicated. She must have known of the gathering storm.

So far as I was concerned we had been cleverly watched and documented. The other side got at me very neatly with a nasty little clerk who broke things to me. They were so quick at the crisis that Sirrie had no chance to tell me beforehand of what was coming. I managed to be out of London when the case came up. I read the first day's proceedings in the morning paper.

"Damn!" said I, over my breakfast things at Downs-Peabody.

"Damn!" became, so to speak, the password of the day.

I took my little car and started vaguely north before Julian could get at me.

The plain English of that is that I ran away. I ran away for the better part of a day at an average speed of about thirty-five miles an hour and left my reckless, shameless, brilliant fellow-sinner to face

her consequences alone.

In the morning I was blindly angry with her, merely angry. I saw myself — I remember the phrase among my self-reproaches — as "one of a row of accursed fools." My views about the charming levity of promiscuity were badly shattered. It was only as the morning wore on that she became anything more in my mind than an object of anger. Slowly she came through the wrathful mist, no longer as a feminine mischance, Eve and be damned to her, but as herself.

I began to see her face and hear her voice. And — for all the circumstances — her form was still slender and her face still fine.

How was the business taking her? After all, it wasn't going to be such very great fun for her. She must be having a nasty time up there in London while I was motoring northward, a very nasty time. She would have to go into the box. That was the idea that stuck itself like a thorn to my mind and gradually changed its tone. I tried to think of her still as a shameless woman, exposed and exposing all her friends. But I could not do so. I ceased to think of what she had deserved by making me ridiculous and asked myself what she must be feeling and how she would be carrying it off.

I began to be obsessed by the figure of her as she would stand there, with the court staring at her and the clever ones sketching her, slender and flushed and holding her head up — I knew she would hold her head up. Whatever happened to Sirrie, she would certainly keep her head up. That, you see, was how it was set on her neck. And there would be no whimpering or being overcome. Once I had surprised her at a theatre with her eyes bright with tears and that memory supplied the high light of my picture. Tears were possible to her but not weeping. "If I did these things I did them," she would say. "But I didn't do them like that." And that would be true. The more illogical the distinctions she made, the sounder they always were.

They'd ask her filthily intimate things. The old judge and lawyers would gloat over her. The court would be crowded. At the back all the young lawyers would be packed, alert not to lose the chance of a juicy line. Evans would see his lawyers did the job properly and that the juicy lines were forthcoming. She had written some exaggerated

letters. She had a trick of using improper words — almost as a child uses them to startle. She had done that in her letters to me, and I had no doubt she had done it to everybody. They wouldn't give such letters a chance, I knew; they would read bits out without the qualifying context. The pure-souled gentlemen in the wigs and gowns would boggle modestly at her worst expressions as they read them. The court would blush to its straining ears. "I'm afraid I must paraphrase this, me lud." She had been wild and fantastic. These comparatively passionless women can say and do the most outrageous things at times — through a kind of insensitiveness. "Why not?" is their formula.

"How old is she?» I asked, and did little sums. She had been married at seventeen. She was not four- or five-and-twenty.

I can only recall dimly now what sort of see-saw went on in my mind. I have to guess at most of that as though it was something in the mind of a stranger. I must have felt a great disgust at the whole business, I must have been indignant with her and have condemned her or why should I have continued to travel north hour after hour?

But I must have dismissed all that indignation later. I cannot recover it. It is like trying to reconstruct the torn letters from the wastepaper basket of the day before yesterday. Perhaps it was a sort of inertia kept my foot upon the accelerator.

"If I go back to her," said I.... "It's a complete return."

My decision hung fire all day and then it exploded. Suddenly I knew what I was going to do. As if I had known all along. It was the last possible train to London I took that night. It was behind time, and I got to London in the small hours. She was all alone, I found, except for one sister, at Berridge's Hotel. I telephoned and was answered by the sister — she was in bed and asleep, tired out. The next morning I went to her.

"I've come to stand by you," I said.

"You'll learn a lot of new things about me," she answered, looking me squarely in the eyes. "Not very graceful things."

"I've read the morning papers."

"You could hardly help it. It isn't a pretty case, is it?"

"Unpleasant for both of us," I said. "I admit the surprises. Nevertheless, I'm going to stand by you."

“You know — the things — . They’ll bring them up in the ugliest way — but substantially — they will be true.”

“I don’t expect to see you vindicated like a Drury Lane heroine. I’ve thought that out.”

“What does this mean? What do you mean to do?” “Stick by you.”

She stood without betraying any emotion, rather like a woman who weighs a business proposition. Then she turned to me with the same air of entirely controlled reasonableness.

“But you didn’t know of these other affairs. You came in late and innocent. I gave you no warning. I ought to have had the sense — There is no earthly reason why *you* should come into this mess. It’s *my* mess. My little affair with Jim. Silly to think so much of Jim — to hurt oneself annoying a thing like that! I drove Jim frantic and he’s got me. I’ve... There’s been some rotten men in this. I’ve been an utter fool at times. No one will blame you for standing out.”

“No one will blame the other fellows either. I see that. But you want some one. In this business. After all, I’m the last on the list. Forgive me if I’m unsentimental; I won’t even pretend to be in love just now — but I’d as soon see a little child drown under my eyes, a little child I knew, as let you go through this alone.”

“But after?”

“I’ve thought of that.”

“What do you mean?,”

“I mean — I like you. More than I dreamt I did.”

“What’s that?”

“I stand by you — now and afterwards. I’m not a green youngster. I’ve told you — how things are with me. You won’t be taking advantage of my innocence. I know a little about women. It’s easy to love you. But somehow also in spite of all this — I respect you. I’m not shocked. I don’t care what their evidence is. It can’t alter the knowledge I have of you. You have — a crazy side. I don’t know all you may have done, but I have some idea of what you are. For me you began when we met. Have I seen nothing of you? All the evidence in the world won’t convince me that your soul — if I may say so — isn’t as straight as your body.”

She did not speak at once. She shrugged her shoulders at my last

sentence. She seemed to be taking in the new situation.

"You'll come to the court?"

"Every day. Your brother. Your friend."

"Like some one holding my hand! Oh!... Billy! when you know the sort of thing — !"

She stopped short. The tears Bashed for a moment in her eyes.

"Friendship," said I.

"Friendship," she echoed, and her eyes questioned me, and then slowly she smiled at what she saw in my face. "You old brick," she said, and for a moment her mouth was awry before she recovered her smile. She held out her hand. "All right."

We clasped on it, a hand-clasp that was better than any embraces.

"I've been playing rather a lone hand," she began.

"I've deserved what I've got...."

She bit her lip and looked helpless.

"Put a hat on," said I with my spirits rising unaccountably. "Run! The court won't wait."

And in that way in the lounge of Berridge's Hotel I married myself for all practical purposes to the scandalous Mrs. Sirrie Evans and faced for the first and last time the legal consequences of my adultery. For two days I sat in court, to the great interest of the smart women who crowded it, and was conspicuously assiduous to the needs and comfort of the respondent. And when it was all over I carried her off and put her in a flat and for all possible purposes treated her as my wife.

It was an irrelevant accident, an extraordinary digression in my life. I went to her and I went to the court primarily because of a sense of obligation. I was bound to stand by the consequences of my own misconduct. But insensibly and very quickly my attitude changed to one of what was I now admit unreasonable championship. It was unreasonable, it was instinctive. I felt that Sirrie was essentially as honest as, and finer spirited than I, that her sex put her at a frightful disadvantage and threatened to penalise her horribly for acts no more immoral than many I had committed with impunity. I took up the cause of laxity in general, in my appearance at her side. I defended the whole series of my paramours in her. We were fellows in the common business of erratic and forbidden adventure and desire. But

from championship and fellowship I passed very rapidly to a keen affection and pity for a creature misused by herself and by the :world that had produced her.

And the affair opened a new phase in my own life. I had been hitherto an exceptionally lone animal. Now I found myself carried completely out of myself by care for another human being. I did my ineffectual best to reinstate Sirrie socially, to mitigate the penalties of those sins of hers that I could understand so well. I enabled her to take a pretty little house, secured her good servants, and would not dine nor associate outside my business with any people who did not treat her as my wife. We travelled and visited together. We were faithful to each other, and every moment that my very active business occasions permitted we spent together.

Weighing this phase over now, I am most struck by the fact that our living together was not the result of any passionate crisis, not the outcome of any grand passion. There was no tremendous declaration, no irresistible elopement. I do not remember any strong desire to possess her or be with her before we lived together. There was no such urgency. Our union was forced upon us by Evans' malevolence. I am not sure that I should have gone to her if I had not been cited in the case. Before the divorce we had liked each other greatly, been pleasant to each other, made love lightly. My dominant mood at the trial I can best describe as a sort of indignant tenderness. That so fine a thing should be treated so scurvily! So fine a thing!

It was only after we had kept house together for some time that we developed very deep personal feelings for each other. We grew into one another by imperceptible degrees.

I have never been able to make up my mind whether my early life was one of exceptionally starved affections or not. I know of no quantitative standard by which one can measure oneself against others in these matters. I have never been able to determine whether young people are as capable of love as their elders, whether disinterested love is not necessarily a concomitant only of the fully adult state. My own youth was certainly a very loveless time. I had an imaginative love for my father, and a brotherly affection for Dickon was always present, but beyond that there was very little. There were no passionate boyish friendships, or if there were they

have faded out of my mind. Even before our mother estranged us by her second marriage I did not care very greatly for her. Either I never loved Clara or that love is effaced. I was on good terms with many men and women, but none seemed necessary to me, and for none was I prepared to sacrifice myself in any way.

My impulse to defend and vindicate Sirrie surprised myself. It also surprised Sirrie. She had liked me greatly from the first, but after her divorce she became acutely interested in me and curious about me. There was a phase in our life when she seemed always asking me questions about myself — questions that were excessively difficult to answer. I had not been in the habit of answering questions about myself. I was something new and unexpected in life for her, and, as it appeared to her, something unexpectedly good. She had had bad luck with her men. She threw over her idea of being a wicked woman, a sort of defiant insistence upon it as her *métier*, without another thought. I heard no more of it.

She set herself to understand my motives and the way I worked. Her social outlook had never included a laboratory, a railway, or a smoking chimney, and she thought that the lower classes were all either cottagers or servants. Trade unions were as much outside her world as totem groups. She thought that when you wanted anything you went to the best West-End shop that sold it, and I doubt if she realised completely that the first step to getting it was to wring or wrench its substance out of the soil or out of the rocks. How far she ever carne to understand my ideas I do not know. She accepted my urgent preoccupations with business as a strange but forgivable thing in my composition. Since it mattered to me, it mattered to her, but it might just as well have been the Turf or a preoccupation with big game.

But if she did not understand my ideas, she came to understand many things in my character that are still hidden from me. She controlled me for my own happiness, invisibly, imperceptibly. She gave me a disinterested friendship, which is so much greater a thing to give than sexual love. While she lived my discontent with life was greatly allayed. I never worked so well as I did during those years.

When I had made a home for her I had had a streak of warm self-approval in my mind. I had thought I was doing something rather

handsome and generous. Instead, for the first time I was getting the most precious things in life, love, faith, understanding, fellowship, and the reality of home. I was getting all that was good in marriage except children. But plainly she was tuberculous; we knew from the outset that her lungs were "wrong," and we did not dare to have children.

It was a friendship, it was a fellowship; it was these things first and foremost. We made love; we had spells of intense happiness of that kind, but our reality was our friendship, based on our unfaltering belief in each other's soundness and goodwill and our common repudiation of the current moral verdict upon us. I do not think we would have been very jealous of each other if there had been any real occasion for it, but there was not. I was too busy in those days to follow up any competing interest, and she was too tired of men to experiment with them further. Jealousy is an active reaction to a sense of insecurity, and we were both very secure with each other.

Our first home was a little pinched-in house on Richmond Hill with an iron balcony in front and a wedge-shaped walled garden behind. There Sirrie could be ingenious and decorative and house-proud. But later we had to move to Bournemouth because of her health; I was growing in wealth, I could give her a fine new house there, gracefully designed, and she made a pretty garden amidst rocks and pine-trees on a slope that looked towards the sea. I would run down by the afternoon express like the most orderly and moral of business men, and she would meet me in her car. How well I remember her erect figure and her fine thin bright face, brightening still more at the sight of me. And every time I settled down in the car beside her to be driven home, to my home, I would have the same thought pass through my head — the wish that she was really my wife and that this pleasant security against passion and unrest could last for ever.

But I had the best of these two homes. While I was there we had each other, and she was very skilful in making me happy. What did she do when I was away? The "nice" people kept away from her both at Richmond and Bournemouth — which did not prevent them from being endlessly curious about her doings; and the incorrect people who did call were for the most part rude or dull or humiliating with

their freedoms and confidences and assumptions. She took my name of Clissold; she was my wife in the sight of the butcher-boy, but everyone who mattered knew about us and remembered about her. She was wonderful stuff for the imaginative anecdotalist *sotto voce*.

She read enormously. The house was always full of new novels. She was acutely critical of the problems in conduct they raised. We had great discussions. She made me a reader of contemporary novelists — a thing unusual among business men. She also played with her garden endlessly. But she was an impatient gardener. She suffered a few acquaintances. She must have spent endless hours staving off the talk and tedium of their limitations with the new game of bridge, that presently developed into auction bridge. She became a great bridge player — when I was out of the way, and if these callers and associates bored her at the time, she got a certain compensation in preserving their choicer fatuities for my entertainment. She could be extraordinarily funny, but at times more than a touch of bitterness was mixed with her derision. She developed an acute perceptiveness for furtive tentatives to gallantry on the part of timid, vain, mean and unsubstantial men and for the elements of pose and falsehood in the romantic confidences of the women.

Those years we spent together seem to me now in the retrospect to have passed very quickly. They were broken up by long journeys I had to make through the Urals, into Siberia and into the Canadian Rockies. It was impossible to take her on these expeditions. But wherever I could I took her, for her passion for travel was insatiable. She went to the Argentine with me and to Sweden. It was only very slowly and too late that I realised how rapidly she was dying. The last three winters of her life were spent, one in North Italy and two in Switzerland, and it was in a sanatorium in Switzerland that she died.

I do not remember when her cough began, but it is an essential part of my memory of her. She grew thinner, her cheeks more hollow and more flushed, and her eyes intenser. As she grew weaker she grew more daring. A craving, a great love for speed grew upon her. Motoring was developing, and I got a big Italian car that could jump up to eighty miles an hour on a straight. She would crouch together by my side, wrapped in her furs, her eyes gleaming over the grey stole that covered her mouth, silent, ecstatic. “Faster!” she would

whisper.

Once or twice she drove — and these were memorable experiences for me. I held myself still beside her, controlling an impulse to snatch the wheel from her poor wasted hands.

As I realised her weakness and her sufferings, insensibly companionship gave way to protection. For the last four years her movements were more and more restricted, rain and sundown drove her indoors; she had to live in rooms at a measured temperature; she could no longer face exertion. Her restlessness increased perpetually; she did not like any place she was in because she did not feel well there; she wanted to go on, where the sun was still kindlier and the air easier to breathe. She had phases of acute unhappiness, but her hopefulness always rescued her. She felt the shadow of social isolation that lay upon us as though it was a chill, and that, too, drove her on. She fretted, she had a vague, shamefaced ambition for some social demonstration, some vindication, some recognition imposed upon people. I cannot imagine her troubling about anything of the sort if it had been freely available. But she felt and imagined exclusion. The further one is abroad, the less evident is that exclusion. At an infinite distance from London all English people meet. She wanted to be met. It was childish, no doubt, to feel desire for a worthless thing simply because it was denied, but are we not all children when it comes to such social uneasiness?

When she died we were planning a journey to the South Sea Islands and afterwards a tour right round the world. I could contrive it without breaking up my own activities too much, for everywhere now there are minerals and possibilities for Romer, Steinhart. She would sit with a soft green and blue and crimson Spanish shawl about her, the most fragile and ethereal of creatures, with a dozen travel books upon her couch and one or two on a table close at hand. “I must see Easter Island,” she would say. “It cannot be far out of our way to see Easter Island.”

I would bring the Atlas and sit down on the couch beside her. “Let us see where it is. Yes.... Yes, I think we can bring in Easter Island.”

Her hand would stroke my head.

“Billy Cook, the dear World Tourist Organiser. You can really spare me all this time?”

“I want to see these places,” said I.

“I’m rather a lump to take about. But down there I shall recover. Last week — unless that machine is wrong — I gained two ounces. And we will swim in the warm, warm sea.”

“And I will guard your toes from the sharks with a cutlass between my teeth.”

“Brave Billy! Of course you will! Kiss me, Billy dear.”

She hoped and longed for the south seas to the very day of her death. She hoped to the end. On the morning of the day when she died, she explained how favourable a thing haemoptysis was.

“I believe that was the last of that stuff,” she whispered. “One coughs away... all the diseased tissue... all the tainted blood... and then, of course, one heals... heals.”

“Be quiet, my dear,” I said. “Talking isn’t good for you. You will have to heal quickly if we are to start next month.”

She was very tired that afternoon. She had had a spell of coughing so violent that it had alarmed me; she had nearly choked with blood. The flow ceased at last; the doctor gave her a sedative and she went to sleep in my arms. “Stay with her,” said the doctor. “You had better stay with her. If she wakes she may cough again. She is very weak now.”

But she did not cough again. A tired, flimsy, pitiful frame she had become, something that one just took care of and treated very gently; her motionless eyelashes touched my cheek, and she passed away so softly that until, with a start, I noted her coldness, I did not suspect that she was dead.

12. MIRAGE AND MOONSHINE

SHE died in 1905, and I was just forty. Her death left a very great gap in my life. While our relations lasted my life had an effect of being filled and my hunger of the heart was assuaged. I was needed, I was necessary. If I was not fully satisfied I was at least fully occupied. Since then I have never quite lost the sense of loneliness as a thing painful in itself. I had acquired a habit of looking to someone else for kindness. I wanted some one to smile a welcome to me and be glad when I came home. It was a new need.

During my years with her I had parted from an earlier, harsher self and become the more tolerant and less intense self I am to-day. My earlier self seems to me to have been tacit, whereas now I am explicit; it was, in comparison with what I am, compact of self-reliance tempered by lust. Only through desire did I ever trouble myself in those younger days to propitiate my fellow-creatures. For it seemed I could get everything else without propitiation. But that had now been changed. In part that change may have been a natural change as one ripens, but far more I think it was the effect of my relationship to Sirrie. With her friendship, her charm, and at last her weakness, her involuntary appeal for kindness and service, she gave me in a few brief years all that is given to most men by marriage and parentage. I had acquired the habit of referring myself to the needs and standards of a life that was not my own. From her at least I did not take. From her I had learnt the fear for something one desires to protect and cannot always protect. Her death, moreover, coincided very nearly with the close of a phase in my relations with Romer, Steinhart. The fun of winning my way to the inner fastnesses was at an end. My position was acknowledged and my share established; I was Roderick's most trusted colleague; I was becoming free to do something, if I would, with our great businesses.

I remember myself during that decade of copious low-grade living that passed at last into the Great War, as empty with the deprivation of my lost solicitude for Sirrie, consciously lonely, and with my old dissatisfaction with the disconnected multitudinousness of my impressions greatly deepened and broadened. The world as it ceased

to be a battlefield became a riddle. The struggle for existence being won, came the less natural question of what to do with existence, to which question — except for reproduction — nature offers no instinctive reply. So we fiddle about with reproduction and do not even reproduce. I will not say that such moods of discontent possessed me, but they were always in waiting for me when I was not vividly active. They did not hinder me from continuing to play a leading part in the aggressive extension of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. throughout the world.

Copious, low-grade living seems to me to express the quality of that time very exactly. The automobile was becoming prevalent, and prosperous people were using it more and more in headlong attempts to escape from their tedious and uneventful selves. The vacuous face of our collective life grimaced with the pretence of a solemn grief at the death of plump old Edward the Seventh, and then went through expressions of grave expectation at the accession of his worthy, conscientious, entirely unmeaning and uninteresting son. Save for some irreverent verses by Max Beerbohm that solemn front was scarcely broken. The parading attention to the immense passings and comings of our intrinsically insignificant royal personalities, blocking the traffic, filling the papers, delaying business and legislation, caught my mood of disillusionment, and accentuated for me the extraordinary triviality of human association. These pervading unavoidable royal personages stole dignity from knowledge, mocked progress, and dishonoured all life for me. When they went in public procession to thank the God of Earth and Heaven for an averted illness or a fresh addition to their respectable family, or to open something or come back from somewhere abroad whither they had expensively, ridiculously, emptily gone, I found the closed streets, the oafish spectators, incredibly exasperating.

This stuff was the formal crown of my existence. This was the Empire, the legal purport of my world. For this, I reflected, our great organisation was supposed to work, for this we won our beautiful metals from the obdurate earth, and fought nature and human indiscipline. To this end we increased the wealth and power of mankind. The German cousins, the Russian cousins, in their still more gaudy uniforms, came and went; envious rich American

women crowded to London, bowed down and worshipped.

It seemed to me that this sort of thing might go on indefinitely. Life was not even tragic in those days; it was neither tragic nor comic; it was elaborately silly and vaguely dangerous. Flags, armies, national anthems, stuck upon my world like straws and paper gewgaws on the head of an idiot. But I did not conceive this idiot could blunder into actual war.

The result of maintaining political forms that are beneath human dignity and religious pretensions that are beneath human belief is to impose a derisive cynicism upon great multitudes of people who would otherwise live full and vigorous lives. I link the feverish playing of games, the onset of rowdy dancing, the development of night-clubs in every city in the world, the hunt for immediate pleasures that was already in full tide before the war, with this dominance of outworn loyalties and faiths that block out any living vision and sustaining hope from the general mind. Amidst the rhythms of jazz and the heavy blare of national anthems, what other voices could be heard? Industrial recriminations there were — strikes. The mere shadows then of our present considerable discontents. They brought no hope to me.

My unhappiness in those pre-war years, you may say, was essentially grief for Sirrie. And the personal loneliness to which she had left me. But that is not exact. The loss of my preoccupation with Sirrie exposed me much more than I should otherwise have been exposed to the clamorous futility of the times. But it was the times that distressed me, the times and a certain growth of my mind, my powers and my sense of responsibility. I wanted not simply a better life for myself, but a better life altogether. Thousands of people were as consciously bored and distressed as I was, by the resonant emptiness of those years. Millions were bored and feverish without any clear apprehension of their trouble.

It is one of the most respected conventions of the contemporary literary man that people's lives and actions are never determined by political and social conditions, but only by personal reactions. That preposterous limitation may be the reason why so few fully adult people read modern novels. Life is more coloured by the morning paper than the literary man will admit. I know, for example, that the

enormous preoccupation of the community with the fuss of the king's coronation and with the posturings of the German Emperor, irritated and depressed me far more than the actions of any individual with whom I came in contact during that foolish period. I was a unit in a half-witted social body quite as much as an individual, and I suffered acutely from the mental degradation of the half-wit who included me.

For a little while I was interested in the new invention of flying. I worked upon a group of light alloys with special reference to the elimination of wood from the framework, and I was a good deal at Eastchurch in 1911-1912. Those were primitive times in the air. I used to have joy rides in aeroplanes of 35 h.p. and less, and Shortt was considered a bold pioneer when he put 80 h.p. engines into his machines. But after a few flights I lost any sense of wonder when we ceased to bump along the earth and roared up over the cows in the meadows and worked our laborious spiral way up and up until we were over the Medway and looking down on the Thames and Essex coast. There we hovered, churning the sweet air, rather conscious that we were holding ourselves up and that it was undignified to come down too soon. It would have been a fascinating method of travel if there had been anywhere to go, but the only really long journey aviators made in those days was a sudden, unexpected nose-dive out of the world. They were only discussing air-pockets in those days; no one was ever strapped in, and every landing was an adventure. But the essential things were done.

"This we can make," said I to myself, high and swaying unstably above the Thames estuary. "This we can improve. This is only the beginning...."

And then: "What will be the good of it?"

It was this pointless achievement of flying that first forced upon me the realisation how largely inventions were being wasted on mankind. That foolish gift-giving uncle, Science, was crowding up the children with too many mechanical toys. The children I half discerned could only misuse them and hurt each other. Or fail to use them at all. I recall that thought, and with it I associate a downward vision, washed with bluish haze, of little fields, a pale yellow thread of road along which a slow-moving black dot was a motor-car, and a

group of farm buildings seen in plan, all roof and hayrick.

"What will be the good of it all?" said my private devil in my ear. "Why bring the duffers sailing up here? Leave them to grow turnips and swap diseases till the crack of doom."

I suppose I did quite a lot of promiscuous love-making in those vacuous days. It is nothing to boast of and nothing to conceal. For a long time I found no one I could love very much, and I began to prefer women who plainly did not care for me very greatly to women who brought a personal passion, or the pretence of one, into the game. I was ready enough to admit they were charming and delightful creatures, but not that they were personally indispensable, and that I was tormented by yearnings, uncertainties and monstrous fidelities on their account. I began to feel a tolerance for meretricious love which I had once thought revolting. But I rarely came to absolutely meretricious love. If I had been a poor man and manifestly ungenerous I should have failed in some of these love affairs in which I did not fail, so much of paying was there in it, but that is not quite the same thing as meretriciousness.

Such was the quality of my life in the middle forties. Cut down in this fashion to its heart, it was friendless, loveless and aimless. But that is not to say that there was not steady, extensive, interesting toil, much fellowship and kindly commerce with pleasant men and women, aesthetic gratifications, fun, excitements, a great deal of incidental happiness in it. But always there was dissatisfaction waiting for me in the shadows and the quiet moments. It was not good enough. Life was passing by. I was not being used to the full. By all the common standards I was a winner at the game of life — and I was doing nothing with my winnings. Romer, Steinhart was a big thing to be in, but I was not taking Romer, Steinhart anywhere; it was taking me nowhere in particular. If I had been a less successful man I might never have discovered my unhappiness. But then I should have had no story to tell. I should have lived, suffered, spun my hurried time about the whirlpool and vanished according to precedent.

Came the huge, thronging, deafening excitements of the war, the stresses and fatigues of the war, the headlong hopes of that period of Reconstruction that I shared with Dickon, and our rapid and

immense disillusionment. That disillusionment, I see, was necessary and had to arise from vast and tragic events. If it did not seem ungracious to the valiant dead and to those who still suffer in body and memory from that tremendous catastrophe, I could find it in my heart to say the war was a good thing for the world. Not in what it destroyed nor in what it achieved, but in what it released. I have told of our reactions to the war in my account of Dickon. I have told of our realisation of our own haste and superficiality and how at length we subdued our minds to the real nature of world reconstruction, which that period of frothy projects had only caricatured. Of my ill-conceived attempts to enter politics I will tell nothing here; they were tiresome, humiliating, expensive and absurd. We had, we realised, to brace ourselves to serve in a cause for which we might never see even the beginnings of a triumph, but an imperative and unavoidable cause, a cause identifiable with the main process of life.

That needed a great effort in me, all my mind, a reexamination, a reorientation of my ideas. Without that effort I should fall back into the dissatisfied cynicism of the pre-war period. But my efforts to pull myself together, for what I have already termed the last lap of living, were complicated and impeded by an emotional entanglement into which I had drifted without any appreciation of its possible power. I was deeply in love, in love in a fashion that was new to me, and I was in love with a woman who had no knowledge of nor interest in these vital troubles.

Once more, just as in that early passion which led to my marriage, I found my double nature tormenting me. I had vowed in my empty house in Edenbridge Square that no woman should ever again turn my life about. I would take my freedoms and have the better of women. And for all my incidental adventures and digressions I had, in the main, kept my course. Suddenly now I found myself in the toils again. I had a mistress without whom, it seemed, I could not live. And, equally, I could not live with her and continue myself.

This story I have to tell about myself and Helen is I perceive, an experience different in kind from any other love affair in which I was ever involved. It is too recent for me to write about yet with complete detachment. In a sense Helen has been exorcised here in Provence; I can hardly trace how; but the scars are fresh and plain. The essence

of every great passion is by its nature a thing untellable. We do not tell our love experiences; at best we tell things about them. Only the reader who was in love with Helen could see her as I saw her. For other people she was a strong, clever, ambitious actress with a charming smile, an adorable voice, a reputation for a hot temper, and an ungracious way with obtrusive admirers. Many people found her beautiful, but no one called her pretty. She was a mistress to be proud of, but only a brave man would attempt to steal her.

For me she was wonderful and mystical; she was beautiful and lovely for me as no human being has ever been; she had in my perception of her a distinctive personal splendour that was as entirely and inseparably her own as the line of her neck or the timbre of her voice. There was a sideways glance over her shoulder full of challenge; there were certain intonations, there was a peculiar softness of her profile when it was three-quarters turned away, that gave me an unanalysable delight. My passion was made up of such things. If that explains nothing, then there is nothing that can be explained.

We met before the end of the war, and then she was a comparatively unknown young woman, very fearless, and quite prepared to be interested and excited by a man of my standing and reputation. She fell in love with me and I with her, and I ceased to trouble myself about any other woman. We loved romantically, ostentatiously. Hitherto she had despised her suitors. We became lovers, friends, allies and companions. F or a time I was very happy again. I immersed myself in the reconstruction movement, and I spent all the time I could spare and refreshed myself greatly with her. She, too, was busy with her profession; she was doing fine work and becoming well-known, and almost from the first we had to fit our times rather carefully to get together as we did. But to begin with we did not mind that trouble.

How easily can we fling one common name over different things and believe they are the same! I suppose everyone would say that with Clara, with Sirrie, with Helen, just as with the chance love affairs that have happened to me, I was a lover and the business was love. So far as the chance love affairs go, they had many things in common — the furtive elation, the gratified senses and vanity; but all

these three relationships, these relationships that signified, were unique in root and branch and substance. With Clara I was animated by the sexual egotism of the young man, with Sirrie by a profoundly tender protectiveness, with Helen by the glamour of a beautiful personality. Only when we began to be estranged did I realise the hold her quality had taken upon me and the depth of my feeling, my utterly irrational feeling, for her.

What a lovely thing Helen was — and is! She not only evoked and satisfied my sense of beauty in herself, but she had the faculty of creating a kind of victorious beauty in the scene about her. She had a vision that transformed things, annexed them, and made them tributary to her magic ensemble. It was our custom to snatch a day or so and go off together from my business and her career, and I do not remember a single place we ever went to that did not reveal, through her, the most happy and wonderful qualities. It was as if the countryside turned out to salute her.

We frequented the Thames Valley, and I shall never go there again for fear of finding the soft morning mists over the brown mirror of the water, the deep shadows of the trees, the tall attendance of the still poplars, and the brightness of the little inns all disenchanted. There is a small, squat hotel under the shadow of Corfe Castle. Is its sunlit garden of flowers among the grey stones the loveliest in the world? I remember that it was. I will never risk a disillusionment. I will never drive my car again through old Warham's streets and along that white causeway beyond the prehistoric earthworks and so to the Swanage Road. That was the way to Corfe and to a walk over the grassy hills above, commanding vast distances of marsh and woodland and inlet, that touched the heavens of loveliness. Thrice we went there. There is a great park near Tunbridge Wells and an inn with some quaint armorial decorations of gates and chains; is it the Marquis of Abergavenny? I think it is the Marquis of Abergavenny. That also is an enchanted pavilion. A tall, broad-browed, smiling woman will haunt that place for me to the end of time.

I remember, too, an inn that cannot really exist, but I remember it as out beyond Staines and Egham — the inn at Virginia Water. One goes southward along a broad tarred road, bearing red omnibuses and

char-à-bancs and tradesmen's vans and tooting motor-cars and motor-bicycles and bicycles, a dusty din of traffic hurrying to no end of places. That stream flows on into the twilight and presently, with an outbreak of headlamps, far into the night. It is as modern and prosaic an improved and enlarged motoring road as can be. One comes upon this inn I write of at a dip in the road; comely enough it is and busy all the day with excursionists and trippers, but apt to become empty and quiet after sundown. At night the passing headlights flare upon its face, and its face is very still.

One descends to be welcomed by an easy, accustomed waiter. It seems no different from a score of such good wayside inns. You do not see at first what it and the tall trees about it are hiding. But there is a great winding artificial lake there, a queer freak of George the Fourth's. It stretches away with wooded islands and a further shore of woods for six or seven miles into the Windsor Great Park. This is the Virginia Water. It is not without some daylight vulgarities. There is a cascade of the utmost artificiality close by the inn, and further away some sham quasi-classical ruins, made of polished pillars and marble capitals that were stolen from Greece in the great days of Lord Elgin and intercepted royally on the way to the British Museum. These are unimportant accidents. By day the trippers swarm about them and gape and go away, and more trippers come. In the evening all that is changed. The black knots of trippers vanish before the gloaming. Sounds of the road become quite remote and negligible. The stolen ruins are wrapped up in a deep blue veil and disappear. Perhaps they are carried away. Perhaps they go back to haunt their proper place in Greece. Imperceptibly beauty prevails and is presently discovered enthroned. The still water reflecting the slumbering trees and a hemisphere of afterglow becomes a magic mere in a world of infinite peace.

"Death will be like this," said Helen, standing white and shadowy beside me. "With the high-road we have left — near and yet — suddenly — quite away from us. Perhaps we shall come to a place like this some day, my dear, and we shall scarcely realise we are dead."

"The high-road matters no longer," I said, and believed it as I said it.

I had a new and interesting car in the garage behind us, and some faint memory of its presence may have passed by me and faded into the shading tranquillity about us.

Our hands touched.

“We have done with the high-road to-night,” I said. “I wish we had done with it for ever.”

How vividly I remember that quiet moment side by side, and how passionately I longed later to recall its quality! And yet it was as unreal as a picture painted on glass. It was a picture we had found to buy and hang up and presently forgot. It was the loveliest shamming.

We stood in silence.

“What a scene this would make!” said Helen in a voice that was almost a sigh....

How vividly, too, do I still remember her shadowed face as she watched the reflections from the wavelets dance upon the brickwork of a bridge across the Thames.

She had discovered that there was a definite pattern at play in them.

“Like thoughts — with a sort of order, a sort of logic,” she said, and it seemed the wisest thing I had ever heard said.

How was it that at times she could say such things? She did say them.

I thrust an oar into the reasoning liquid and turned its argument to quivering ecstasy. The reflection danced upon her face. And I, too, was all a-quiver with love for her....

But such memories as these will mean little to the reader. It is only for me that they are charged with beauty. They have the intense, irrational significance of some of my childish memories. There were moments, many such moments, with Helen that seemed to be worth all the rest of life put together. Inexplicably and incommunicably.

And we quarrelled and parted. We quarrelled and parted because neither of us, when we were put to the test, would consent to regard these moments as worth any interference with our work and the things we wanted to do. We did not really apprehend them as real. We could feel together, but we could make no sacrifices for our feelings. Ours was an intensely sympathetic and an intensely selfish fellowship. We were exacting with each other and grudging.

I confess I had little respect for her work, and she regarded mine as coldly. What was this making that I found worth while? What was this business of producing strange and untried materials from which ten thousand beautiful devices and creations could be wrung? She could not and would not understand. She thought one did such things to make money. And then when one had made money one sought the proud and magnificent Queen who satisfied pride and dispensed hap pines. Her imagination lived in a world of brave men and beautiful women, and would have no other.

I could as little understand her ambitions. The exploitation of a personality in public was a thing incomprehensible to me. She, on the other hand, was the conscious priestess of her own divine qualities, her grace and dignity, her wonderful voice, her power to evoke the lurking emotions of her audience. She could not see what better role there was for me than to be her champion and supporter in this lovely self-absorption.

I put our antagonism plainly here, but it was not apparent in our earlier relations. It came into them by little degrees, and surprised and amazed us as we discovered it. At first we were greatly in love with each other in the sense that we felt an extreme need for each other. It was from my side that the first revelation of dissevering motives came. But when I had been with her a little time, and when I was fully assured of her, then aglow with happiness and fit and energetic, I would hear the call of my business operations and of my political interests as a call to self-completion. All the other women I had ever had to deal with since I became an actively prosperous man had accepted these inattentions and disappearances as things in the course of nature. I had been used to go away to my real life. But my going away, becoming customary, must have impressed Helen as the supreme outrage. Because, you see, it was not that I went away to see to tiresome, necessary things; that might have been forgiven. But I went away to things because they were more important to me. She was incidental and they were essential! It was incredible.

Could anything be more important in life than the service of personality and the mood of love?

I knew I was costing her tears, but I could not suspect how much I hurt and stung her. She was not jealous; she was too magnificently

sure of herself to be jealous; but she was superbly angry. I threw her back, amazed and wounded, upon her own proper work. She had loved me, she had made me her lover, and I was only half a lover. She had sailed into life very bravely and confidently, and a perfect lover had seemed one of her elementary rights. I had failed to be the perfect lover.

I am telling all this with the utmost simplification, but to tell it in any other way, to relate comings and goings, moods hidden and betrayed, insensible changes of attitude, would mean an inordinately long and complicated story. It would need the intricate faithfulness of a Henry James. I doubt if I could retrace my steps through that maze. At first I was stronger than Helen, and I was overbearing with her and thoughtless and cruel. But she was younger than I was and with greater powers of variation and recuperation, and a time soon came when she was stronger than I.

The life of any actress is a life of uncertainties. Now everything falls away, the sense of frustration and failure is overpowering, and the poor lady is beyond measure miserable. This is the lover's moment, to console and sustain, to make life worth living. Then, quite irrationally, things conspire to make the actress queen of the world. She blazes into success, her personality is illuminated and admired from every point of view, she is talked about, sought after, she blossoms gloriously. The lover must run in the shadow then, carrying the cloak, ready for the moment when she will have to go out of the warmth and light again into the chill.

I perceive that always it was impossible for me to have been a worthy lover of Helen. In Paris — or, at any rate, upon the Parisian stage — there is the sort of lover I ought to have been. And there are such men — indubitably. But there was something in me, whether it was innate or the result of my upbringing I cannot tell, which declared that though I found Helen almost intolerably lovely and necessary to me, I would be damned if I waited about for her in the shadows with a cloak. And there was something equally powerful in her which insisted that, although she was intensely fond of me and fond of my company, she would not bother her head for a moment about me while she was actively warming her hands at the great blaze of applause and adulation she had lit. Meanwhile there were

quite a lot of arms ready to hold the cloak in the shadows, and many intimations of consolation for me during these periods of neglect.

I had seen very little of the world of theatrical folk before my relations with Helen took me into it. I found it saturated with an excessive self-consciousness, with a craving for strong unsound effects; its lack of intellectual conscience continually amazed me. It was pervaded by sly and hovering young men and by habitually self-explanatory women who made up their personalities as they made up their faces. It never seemed sure whether it was smart or Bohemian. It affected a sort of universal friendship and great liberties of endearment. It sat about at unusual hours and gossiped and talked about itself, endlessly, emptily. And collectively it was up to nothing at all.

At first I could not believe it was up to nothing at all. For me the theatre hitherto had been something to which one went occasionally and contemptuously, preferably to see something laughable. I was prepared to concede there was a serious drama, outside my range of attention, but, I did not really believe in its existence, I merely avoided dispute and inquiry. I liked and admired Shakespeare, though I did not find anything fundamental in him. I regarded — and I still regard — most of the popular fuss about him exactly as I regard the popular fuss about the smile of the Prince of Wales. I mean, there is about the same amount of original judgment in both these cases. The rest of the Elizabethans I thought to be highly artificial or rather drunken or delirious stuff. I liked a good many English and French comedies from Congreve and Gay down to Barrie and Noel Coward. I lumped Ibsen — except for *Peer Gynt* — with Pinero and Jones and all the other "serious" dramatic shams of the Victorian time. I knew that such people as Granville Barker read lectures about a

National Theatre and produced intricate and industrious plays to substantiate their talk; but that mattered as little to me as the Turf. Shaw alone I read with interest, a perverse but entertaining Manichean, an elusive wit, who took refuge from solid, sober expression on the platform or behind the glare of the footlights, and then repented and came back in a preface to say plainly all he had not said plainly — a preface that itself became forthwith as tricky as a

platform speech. But always in the clearest, easiest English prose that was itself a delight to me.

Now with the advent of Helen I did my best to modify these views and believe that behind the "Drama" was some reality that could be correlated with my general vision of life, just as I assumed that within her was something fine and immortal that also could be correlated with that general vision. I tried to impose a grave attentiveness to things theatrical upon my unformulated sub-conscious conviction that a show is a show and the stage of the very slightest importance in serious human activities. I went about as far as possible with the air of a man who regards the Theatre as a great human institution.

I became more and more like a playwright soliciting the great actress with an inappropriate and unattractive play. My play, which I had been working out all my life, was the drama of our whole universe, the soul of man growing conscious and wilful out of nothingness under the silent stars. I wanted Helen, with her grave beauty, her air of tender wisdom, to be a heroine in that eternal play. But Helen had no suspicion of the existence of that drama, could apprehend no hint of it. Her idea of a play was one with a sustained series of emotional states and a crowning situation that would do justice to her fine voice, her lifted face, and the inimitable gestures of her arms and hands.

Absurd that two people so incompatible should have clung together, with conflicts and quarrels and partings and reunions, for nearly six years! My own obsession I can understand, but I have no inkling of hers. Perhaps she realised her peculiar hold upon me, and knew that such a power might never be given her again over any other man.

My love for her and my jealousy of her deepened together. I was jealous of her, not on account of any rival, but on account of the world of display that was taking her away from me. From indifference I passed to an irritated detestation of most of the people who gathered about her, the serviceable young men, assiduous dear Bobby This or dear Freddy That, who were always free to fetch and carry for dear Helen because they were doing nothing that mattered, the over-familiar journalists who intimated by a sort of cringing

patronage how necessary they were to her publicity, the little agent fellows entangling her in vexatious agreements, the galaxy of women intimates who consumed dear Helen's time with lunches and confidences, the large, *idle*, rich men exuding vague suggestions of taking a theatre for her, the men of letters about town who lifted her reputation to the higher levels of culture, the hostesses with an air of helpfulness in their stupendous exactions, the intrusive Americans coming frankly and blankly to admire, loudly, interminably, unprofitably — a lengthening, inexhaustible queue of them. I had to wade, ankle-deep, knee-deep, and at last waist-deep in this swamp of people to have any time with her at all. I performed incredible gymnastics of civility.

Year by year and month by month I saw her subdued to the likeness of this crowd, becoming more insolently assured of its incense and attendance, less and less free for any privacy and depth of living. If at first I had gone away from her overmuch, she, as her successes grew, became more and more deeply embedded against me. And yet we retained an obstinate attraction for each other. I had long days of anger and frustration, and then an hour or so together would silence every discord. By act and letter we could slight each other unendurably, but we could not continue to quarrel face to face. Her smile enchanted me, and she had a habit of affection for me.

Yet we had some sharp encounters.

"Damn that telephone!" said I, in her flat.

"Oh! — *you* want a slave in a harem...."

"You ought to make your private secretary your mistress," she said, coming back from her conversation. "Then she'd be always at your disposal."

"You will end by marrying your impresario."

"Well, I may have to. If I can't manage him without it."

Anger.

"He'd know his place. He wouldn't make me cry. Why do I stand you? Why on earth do I stand you? Why do I let you bully me? Nobody has ever made me cry but you."

It was a ridiculous and pitiful situation. Our several careers, our several conceptions of what was good in life, a deep obstinacy in both of us, tore us apart inexorably, and yet we had a primitive and

essential affection for each other. For the reader this can be nothing but comedy, but that does not alter the fact that these things wrenched me abominably and hurt her very greatly. We were not only hurt but perplexed by ourselves. That quarrel in her flat recalls another preposterous occasion. We had gone to an inn near Petworth for two or three days, and she brought down a new play by Lawrence Lath with her, an utterly empty play, twenty thousand words of smartness, called *The Golden Woman*. She was learning her part; she was full of little ridiculous problems; how to treat this foolish line and what action was best to bring out the flavour of that. Consultation was imposed upon me. An exegesis of Lawrence Lath!

"I can't stand this rubbish," I protested. "It is cheap, knowing, vulgar — Rue de Rivoli. Why have you got yourself mixed up with it?"

"How can I learn my part when you talk like that?" "Why are you in the position of having to learn such a part?"

"It's a part. My dear, what does it matter? I shall come right through it."

"And what do you come to when you come right through?"

"Is this to begin all over again?"...

"And meanwhile have I no existence? Is there nothing in me, no obligation to call me away from this — this vacant pleasantness?"

Helen became an indignant queen and the manuscript part of *The Golden Woman* a sceptre. "Go back to your money-grubbing!" she cried.

"I'll go!"

"Go!"

A sudden appeal to high heaven for justice against me. "And I have to be ready with this for rehearsal to-morrow afternoon! How can I *think*? How can I do any decent work?"

We broke off with each other and repented and came back together again with tears and tenderness. We renewed our conflicts. There loomed up a tour in South Africa for her, a tour which might extend to the United States and become indeed a conquest of the Anglo-Saxon globe. She would cease to be an ordinary human being; she would become as universally visible as some celestial body. I protested selfishly and savagely at this vast separation.

“Your wife is dead now,” she said suddenly. “You could marry me.”

“What difference would that make?”

“We could go about quite openly. We could travel together.”

“You mean you would give up the stage?”

She appealed: “What would be left of me if I did?” “You mean I am to marry myself to the theatrical profession and follow you about?”

“You put everything in such ugly fashion. I am asking you to marry me....”

She became obsessed by the idea that I must marry her, and then everything would be different.”

It was only too plain to me that nothing would be different. We parted again with some heat and bitterness and had a second inconclusive reconciliation. I had never before begged for mercy from a woman, but I confess I did from her. What did I beg of her? That she would be in some profound and fundamental way different, that she should not be herself in fact, in order that I should be myself. What did I really want of her?

There were times when I behaved like a thwarted child. She had become a habit of mind with me. I beat myself against her. I stopped thinking about things in general. I neglected business. She had got my imagination so entangled with her that for a while it would not serve me for any end of my own. I came near to a complete surrender and to giving her a marriage that would have done nothing at all for either of us. And then, filled with wrath, not so much with her as with myself, I set myself, sullenly and steadily, to break those humiliating and intolerable bonds.

I told her that now at last we had come to the end of our relationship.

We parted in a phase of grim anger — and she started out upon the subjugation of South Africa.

How completely had this hard, ambitious young woman changed from the dark, tall girl I had loved! And how swiftly so soon as she departed did she become again the dark, tall girl I had found so splendidly lovable! How I longed to hear her voice once more and see her again with my eyes! Directly she had gone I was asking

myself why I had let her go. I forgot that for three years she had been going away from me far more than I had been going away from her, and it seemed to me simply that I had let her go. The love alone was remembered; the quarrels all forgotten. Why had I let her go?

And at the same time, cold and clear in me, disregardful of my general tumult and dominant over all, was my decision that we had to part.

13. REVOLT AGAINST LOVE

I WAS left in England with my nerves, my personal pride, and my imagination jangling unendurably. Gusts and eddies of unreasonable anger whirled about in a vast loneliness of spirit. I did my utmost to pull myself together, and for a time I could not do so.

This phase of distress is still very present in my memory. It seems the worst phase I have ever been through, and perhaps it was the worst phase. The perennial conflict in my nature between sensuous eroticism and creative passion had come to its ultimate crisis. I had made my last attempt to reconcile them, and it had failed. I had decided for creation and broken my servitude to this romantic love, but at a price. My will went about now with a white face and no power to do anything further.

The universe said to me in effect: "You are founded on sex. All you call life is founded on sex. You have been given the woman who is the loveliest woman in the world so far as you are concerned, and you have refused to give your Ii f e in return. Very well, you suffer . You have some gimcrack idea of getting the best of me, me who made you yesterday, me who need not trouble to destroy you because of your own self you die to-morrow. Success is yours and the beauty of that woman might still be yours.

And yet you cannot be content until this gimcrack idea of service rules it all. You have a sense of obligation!

What sense of obligation? To whom? You insult my gifts. Victory and possessions, women and spending-power are all the gifts there are for men, and all these have come to you. Not good enough for you! Then somewhere beyond sex and hunger you must find the thing you need. I cannot give it you. Go your way, but I doubt you will end your life on a pillar like St. Simon Stylites, cut off from earth and not much nearer heaven!"

For a while it seemed to me that I had at last brought my life, outwardly so successful, to a revealed defeat. My will was crippled by the strength of this desire for Helen that I had still in me; it had exhausted itself in the effort to break free from her, and I was left incapable of any vigorous initiative, neurasthenic and suffering.

I thought of making a tour of the world to get away from the thought of her, but I knew that flight would accomplish nothing real. It would mean at best the stupefaction of fatigue. The other end of the world had no secrets and no releases for me that were not also in London and Paris. Excitements were mere temporary refuges; I might as well take to drink or drugs. Flight was not to be thought of, therefore; I had to sit down in front of this desolation and dig myself in and fight and beat it. I had to set my scattered thoughts in order and arrange my work for the last years of my life.

I had become so used to the delight of Helen's company, her voice, her careless close affectionateness, that all the world seemed haunted by her. For five years I had never been outside the beaten track of business except to go with her. I had been moved neither to happiness nor anger except through her. I had referred my pride to her; she had been my sufficient satisfaction. In England I was quite unable to escape from my memories. I went abroad. I wanted something which might excite and revivify my imagination. I thought I would go to the meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations in Geneva and interest myself in such hopes of world peace as that gathering could afford. I flew thither on a private plane from London through a great storm of wind and rain that fell from us like a cloak as we crossed the Jura; and that at least was entertaining.

It was the year when that queer, vain simulacrum of a statesman, Ramsay MacDonald, was posturing with poor Herriot as his rather abashed protagonist. MacDonald played to an imaginary audience, a Victorian audience that had been dead five-and-twenty years. Herriot and he, he intimated, were two great, noble and righteous men in an otherwise wicked and foolish world. He made dramatic scenes with Herriot, holding out his arms to him from the rostrum and almost embracing him. Mighty things were to be done against "the powers of darkness." Beyond that he was vague. His second in command, Lord Parmoor, amazed the gathering by a display of simple evangelical piety unusual in European statesmen. I sat with cramped knees in the stuffy gallery of the Assembly and listened to the slow unfolding of these discussions that discussed nothing, in which there were no exchanges, in which every prepared and inconsecutive speech was duplicated by an interpreter's rendering. I listened. I

laughed bitterly at some of the phrases my representatives used. I could not even be indignant. These political men seemed now all flibber-gibbers and phantoms, who could do nothing but recall the forms and gestures of a life that has passed out of reality. What substance, what nearness was there in all this stuff compared with the substance and nearness of a remembered face?

I went about Geneva in a state ripe for disillusionment, and I was abundantly disillusioned. The gathering was enormously polyglot and various, and there was a tremendous lot of lunching, dining, meeting and talking, plotting and intrigue going on beside and beyond the formalities of the Assembly. It was too crowded for me altogether. There were deputations of all kinds of odd people seeking all sorts of queer ends. I remember a charming Red Indian from Canada with a wonderful belt of wampum; it was a treaty all done in beads; by it the British Government gave sovereign dominion for ever and ever to the remnants of the Five Nations over a long strip of country running right through Canadian territories, territories in which prohibition and all sorts of bizarre modern practices now prevail. The Canadians were infringing the freedoms of that ribbon of liberty by sending in excise-men and the like. So the Five Nations, with a grave copper face, wampum treaty very carefully wrapped in tissue paper, were appealing from the British Empire to mankind.

Another figure that stands out in these recent memories of Geneva is Dr. Nansen, tall, white-headed, with the big black slouch hat of an artist. I do not know him, but I saw him about everywhere. He was tremendously set, I was told, upon the inclusion of the Germans in the League of Nations. They refused to come in prettily, and he was spending considerable sums in cables of exhortation to Berlin. There was also a little group of German socialists, sadly, endlessly explanatory of the obduracy of their Government. There was a score or so of shock-headed, bright-eyed boys and girls from some Maori school in New Zealand; they all wore hat ribbons of red, white and blue, and what they were doing in Geneva I cannot imagine. They exercised Swiss curiosity considerably but not sufficiently. I was told by my hotel porter that they were Siamese, and by a policeman that they came from Madagascar, while a cabman said Mexicans without hesitation. After a day or so I never set eyes on any of these Maoris

without at once seeking a new point of view from the nearest Swiss, and I never failed to get one. It was the most cheerful item in my Geneva pilgrimage.

There were unofficial as well as official Chinese about. There were Druses with grievances against the French, and Turks and Kurds with grave charges against the British. There was a strong contingent of representatives from the various societies, unions and so forth formed to sustain the League by propaganda. They were there, I suppose, to administer first-aid if it showed any signs of distress. And there was a vast concourse of Americans. One was always coming upon them having large luncheons and dinners and meetings or going for excursions on the lake, in the interests of this League their country had put upon us Europeans and then declined to support. I met scores of them. Brilliant rich girls in enormous automobiles; small, grey, rich men with great retinues of stenographers and secretaries. They were prepared to champion the League of Nations against all comers. They took enthusiasm in enormous volume into the Assembly galleries, ready to endorse whatever happened. A little gentleman named Filene — they told me he was the Selfridge of Boston — had been offering some huge number of dollars for a solution of the problem of peace, and a considerable proportion of the less attractive American men appeared to be candidates for this reward and would at the slightest provocation draw duplicated manuscripts from their hip pockets upon totally inoffensive strangers.

It was sunny and close and dusty in Geneva all the time; there was no air that did not seem to have been breathed several times by every nationality on earth; to respire properly one took a motor-boat out upon the lake or an automobile far up into the mountains. My central memory in the scene is that long bridge which spans the Rhône from the principal hotels to the Assembly. Everybody seemed to be always going or coming over it. There anyone could be waylaid. Heaven knows how many times I myself did not tramp to and fro across it trying to get away from myself to something that would hold my interest.

In any other state of mind I should have found much to watch and think about in that astonishing gathering, but my mind was heart-

sick. The Labour Bureau of Albert Thomas was something escaping from the initial foolishness of that polyglot sham Parliament of Mankind, and men like Salter and Maderiaga, whom I met, might have told me, had I been tuned to listen, of many less conspicuous and more important activities that were arising in this meeting-place, out of the mere fact that it was a meeting-place. Some day soon I must go back to Geneva and look at it again from the angle of these things. In a hotel lounge one afternoon I saw Lamont, of J. P. Morgan and Co., and Lubbock, of the Bank of England, sitting together with an air of having met by chance and fallen talking about nothing in particular. Yet these two, while Ramsay MacDonald and Parmoor waved arms and bombinated in the Assembly, were doing things of fundamental importance to human life. And I saw my friend Louchcur, who is now taking his turn — a transitory turn, I fear — at saving the franc in Paris, very busy eating in the Restaurant du Pare, and wondered for a moment what schemes he might have brought with him and why he had brought them.

But I could not induce my distracted mind to penetrate below the most superficial aspects of Geneva at that time. Wherever I was I fretted to be somewhere else, and there was no peace in me. Everything irritated me. This is all, said I, that humanity can muster to make a world order. This is, perhaps, as near as it may ever come to establishing a world state. Compared with the size of the world and the immensity of the problems the League pretends to face, this is a small city and a small multitude of debaters and workers, and yet nine-tenths even of those who are here are trivial, frivolous, dishonest or absurd!

And then in this phase of discontent Helen suddenly came back bodily and took possession of Geneva.

Of course she was away in South Africa, but it chanced there was a woman about in the town sufficiently like her to play the part of her double. I was lunching with Edwin Mansard at a restaurant on the lake when I became aware of this woman sitting with a man at a table a little way off; she was talking to him, and as she talked her very pretty hand, exactly like Helen's hand, was playing with her roll and the things upon the table exactly as Helen was wont to do. My imagination was so out of control that I could hardly keep my talk

with Mansard going for watching her.

My intelligence, my eyes, told me that it was impossible that this could be Helen; nevertheless, the resemblance released a storm of pent-up longing.

"I'm not boring you with all this?" said Mansard, pulling up in the account he was giving me of the International Labour Bureau. I suppose I had answered him vaguely.

"Not in the least," I said. "Not in the least. Go on, my dear fellow." But I spoke with my eyes still on this double of Helen's.

Then with a wrench I turned myself to Mansard's of fended face. "You were saying?" said I.

Presently the couple got up to go. She held herself like Helen. She walked like Helen.

With a renewed effort I returned to Mansard.

Afterwards I saw her, high up above me on the balcony of some hotel looking on to the lake. She was wearing a blue dress of a shade that became Helen extremely. Helen had just such another dress, and would lean on a balcony rail and look at a sunset in just that fashion. I stood gaping. I was filled with the fantastic idea of seeking out this woman and getting into talk with her. But this was madness. I pulled myself together, packed up, and fled to Paris.

As I pitched about in the *wagon-lit* through a sleepless night I argued with myself. In some way I must get back my control over my mind and drive my thoughts away from this obsession. I was persuaded that the best thing to exorcise one woman from one's mind is to invoke another, but so far I had not been able to get up sufficient interest in another woman to make love that was in the least degree convincing either to myself or to her.

I found myself envying the good Catholics for whom there were cloisters and retreats, cool, quiet places in which one could escape from galling suggestions and inflammatory reminders, and settle one's business with one's soul, deliberately and definitively. A time may come when we who have parted from the old religions long ago shall also have our retreats.

As the train tossed about, tearing along too fast on the bad French permanent way, with a clumping rhythm of the wheels and strange roarings and echoings as we passed over bridges or through tunnels

and cuttings, I found myself wishing there could come a conclusive smash, a wild clatter, blows and crushing impacts, fire perhaps, and one last ecstasy of pain that would take me out of all my perplexities. I have a strong conscience against suicide, but latterly I had been flying a good deal and with a preference for a defective engine in an overworked service in bad weather, and I now realised how this smothered desire for a release was at work in me. It was impatience. It was cowardice and indolence. I knew in my heart of hearts that I was not beaten, that at last I should come out of these distresses of desire and be my own master again and serene; nevertheless, they did so weigh upon me that the chance of death had become a temptation.

I talked aloud to myself in the swaying, jangling, creaking compartment. "Now what are you going to do with yourself?" I said. "What are you going to do?"

Whump, bump went the train over some points; one was tossed up and jolted sideways, a receding diminuendo of bumps.

There was a beastly contrivance in the compartment so that you could not turn out the light completely. When I turned off the full light a nasty little mauve lamp came on and threw a ghastly pallid illumination on racks and curtains and the greasy shining panelling, and there was no way of extinguishing this.

"What are you going to do? Since there are no monasteries for you, you must go into retreat by yourself. Be a hermit. There were hermits before monasteries....

"What you have to do is to get it plain — write it down.... Get it plain. Write it down. Get it plain. Write it down."

I argued the thing out with that accursed railway playing cup-and-ball with me and shaking the teeth in my jaws, roaring and chanting my thoughts into rhythms.

What was wrong with Geneva? What was the good of turning my back on that attempt unless I had something better in mind? It missed its object, but what was the object it had missed? It didn't deal with realities. Very well, think how men were to deal with realities. That wasn't clear. Then get it clear. No one had got it clear. Then some one had to begin.

If only the train would run smoothly for a moment I felt I should have everything right.

The vile uproar of this train was only an intensification of life. One never had time to assemble one's ideas.

Never. One was always being hurried on, always being forced to think in rhythms and refrains because of the beating oscillations of the vehicle. Through it all quivered that idea of a retreat, a hermitage. It must not be a place with a lot of other people. It must be a little house alone. My mind insisted, for some obscure reason, on a little white house, very low and long. It was to stand in sunshine and air. Plenty of air — not like Geneva. And isolated. Far away from people with arguments and irrelevant grievances, wampum treaties and telegrams to Germany; and, above all, far away from anyone who looked like Helen. There I could live very simply for a time. I might look after myself and walk to an inn for a meal.

And there I could have a table — I saw the table, too, very stout and plain — and at it I could jot down all the heads of my difficulties, and balance this against that and *think*. There would be no hurry; day would stretch beyond day. Then I could decide what I meant to do with this universe, which hitherto, it seemed to me, had done what it liked with me.

And there must be no more women in it — no more women.

The engine, as if I had amused it, set up a whooping, derisive scream, blundered clumsily over points, and rushed through a station, and a flicker, flicker, flicker of lights in fives and fives glared and swept and vanished one after another, athwart the walls of the compartment.

I felt that I should never sleep again and that for all the rest of my life my head would ache. My throat was dry, I was excessively thirsty, and my mouth had the evil taste of sulphurous coal fumes.

Nevertheless, it had suddenly come into my mind that I was fighting my last battle with my universe and that I was going to win. Perhaps the metallic uproar of the train had suggested the metallic uproar of a battlefield and stirred some slumbering imagined wilfulness the wartime had left in me. I became militant. I swayed and vibrated through that noisy night, but now, within an infinitude of vain repetitions, I was making definite plans.

Where was I? There were to be no more women at all — no more women. That was it. I was losing all purpose in my life because I had

never faced and fought my essential weakness. I must do without women. Henceforth I must do without women. Henceforth I must do without women. Henceforth I must do without women. That is what I ought to have decided in Edenbridge Square a third of a century ago.

I talked aloud against the loud mockery of the train. "This is the end of women. Overdue that! Long overdue! I have wasted time and strength and influence upon them. I deserted science. I deserted science."

My mind held to that. Clara became mysteriously identified with Helen, and Helen with Clara. They were my enemies, my wasters, Alpha and Omega, the chiefs of a great array of adverse women.

"But what are women for?"

I thought for an interval and then raved.

"Never mind. Leave them alone, my boy. Get on with your job, damn you. Get on. Do it, as you *can* do it, alone. Tackle these half-condensed ideas and get them clear. Think it out. Work it out. What else is there to do? What else is there to do?"

The train accompaniment changed into a genial, obstinate, confidential "Get on with your work, *alone*. Get on with your work, *alone*." And then burst into a clatter that was like the laughter of a giant gear-box in hysterics.

"The little white house, anyhow," said I. "And if the worst comes to the worst and the old craving must be drowned again — the brothel in the valley."

For a while I held myself still and stared that mauve light in the eye. Hell will be lit by such little, insufficient, unquenchable lamps. I do not know if hell is hot or cold, or what sort of place hell may be, but this I surely know, that if there is any hell at all it will be badly lit. And it will taste like a train.

I must have slept. I found myself standing up in the swaying compartment, raising the blinds. Trees and fields were visible, hurrying past me. The dawn had come, the sky was flushed and clear. There were exquisite bands of cloud, band beyond band, like luminous rose-coloured knife-blades.

Nothing lasts for ever, I reflected. Presently I would breathe fresh air in Paris, I would hold my head under cold water for a bit, and then for a bath and that cottage, and we would see.

14. RECULER POUR MIEUX SAUTER

I PUT up in some rooms I had had before at the top of the Hotel Meurice and looking on the gardens, and I recall it as a quite extraordinary thing that this fancy of a little white house high up in the hills, where the ordinary passions of life are allayed or forgotten, so comforted me that for a day or so I was almost at peace. And then I began to be troubled by the problem of where I was to find this house and how I was to obtain possession of it. And in the lounge I turned over a back number of the *Bystander* and came upon a portrait of Helen that I had not seen before, and that also ruffled me. It was not Helen as I loved her, but it was Helen looking very magnificent and successful and triumphant, Helen more of a banner and a challenge than ever.

It is queer what limitations there are to everyone's ability. People call me a fairly competent man; I have planned great works and carried through great business operations, but I found myself now quite incapable of discovering any such house as this I dreamt of. I have not that delicacy of touch. I could not imagine how to set about looking for it; I did not know even whether I should look for it in Italy or Greece or Austria or France, and I felt I could neither secure it nor furnish it and organise its service if I found it. I saw all this as an impossibly complex and laborious task. Largely this was due to my neurasthenia, which deprived me for a time of any power of effort, but it was also due in part to the fact that I had never done any of these things; always before I had got some one to do them for me. I thought vaguely of sending over and borrowing old Deland from Dickon.

I stayed two or three days at the Meurice doing absolutely nothing, and then came a warm, serene and illuminated day, a quintessentially October day that would have lifted the heaviest heart a little, and in the afternoon, as the sun was setting, I turned out for a walk, and I crossed the Place de la Concorde and set my face towards the Arc de Triomphe.

Far away the outline of the great bluish arch stood up without a feature visible against a sky of intense pale gold. The upper lines of

the remote, tall houses on either side of it were faint yet clear, the nearer trees very bright and hard and black against their softness. A few lights were appearing in the distant shops and windows; some of the hurrying traffic in the roadway had already lit its lamps. Nearer to me was the space and dignity of the gardens that set back the exhibition palaces from the broad main avenue. What a gracious and splendid vista is that of the Champs Elysees, the finest, I think, in the world! Even the late afternoon loungers seemed tall and dignified as they strolled past.

For a time I was filled with the golden beauty of the scene, and then the faint sadness that lies so close to all purely aesthetic pleasure took possession of me. I reflected again that I was solitary and now not very far from being old, and that I had made myself solitary all to no purpose, with such a waste of will-power that I seemed unable to do anything now to justify my revolt against Helen. I had worked all my days to make myself one of the leading slaves of a great industrial machine that was as will-less as myself. And that was all I had been able to make of life.

It is a habit with me, and I suppose it is with most men, to note the women I pass. It is an almost unconscious habit of observation. Only now and then one notes what one's mind is taking in about them. Then one not only notes but notices. My life has had little occasion for casual encounters, but in some parts of Paris and London at certain hours one is aware that one is walking through gossamer filaments of adventurous invitation, faint elusive provocations, delicate strokes of not too critical approval. These gossamer threads become more perceptible the blanker one's thoughts. "Turn your back on your problems," they insinuate. "And if the problems return to-morrow you may find something else to amuse you."

So in the Champs Elysees I became interested in a graceful woman with a slender neck and a wisp of hair that was darkly ruddy against the light, who was going in the same direction as myself. She was promenading so nearly at my pace that only presently by quickening my steps did I overtake her. She walked easily. But there was that indefinable quality in her gait, a faint aimlessness, I think it must be, and something a little careless in her smart-spirited costume, that told me she was one of those who wait upon the

accident of an encounter. She had not put on her clothes for herself or for anyone in particular. When she was still far off I saw her twice turn towards men with the unmistakable forced invitation of her kind and turn away. Then she ceased to heed the passers-by.

Her brows and cheek and chin I discovered as I came nearer to her were prettily drawn. A vague curiosity, the absurd and instinctive curiosity of the wandering male, brought me up alongside of her to see her profile.

So it was I first discovered Clem's abstracted countenance, elfin and pensive, infantile and sage. The uniform amber light revealed her professionally undisguised make-up and robbed it of personal significance. Those dabs of paint and powder were nothing essentially hers; it was as if her face had been ill-treated by some alien thing. Beneath these addenda she was perceptibly pale. She was looking at the great arch and the shining sky, forgetful for a moment of the hungry business that had brought her out, oblivious of the awakening interest of the quite possible Monsieur who was walking beside her.

I do not see why one should intrude upon a woman because, roughly speaking, it is her calling to be intruded upon. She paid no heed to me. I walked past her and went on before her. But her quality remained in my mind.

Old Nature — sometimes suspect the old harridan of a visible body and a mocking mind — must have been cheered by this new interest of her rebel son's. He had with immense exertion cast himself off from Woman, and here he was back at the old lure.

Clementina had seemed rapt in the beauty about us. That marched with my mood. And there had been something sad and tired in her abstracted face. That, too, appealed to me. And she was very graceful. Here was an extraordinarily interesting young woman, I said to myself.

"But hadn't I perhaps just imagined things?" said the Vieux Marcheur in me.

So often I have imagined things. I did not want to stare round at her. I dropped back to see if I should still find her off her guard.

She was, and then she woke up to my presence. Instantly her expression changed and her face became a mask, defensive but

seductive. She was the woman of her class at the moment of invasion. And her personality and privacy hustled away out of sight. “Ware man!” What sort of loose, detached, occasional male was it this time? Was he of the impossible kind instantly to be got rid of? Or was he to be considered, attracted, dealt with? Two very intelligent hazel eyes met mine, businesslike and scrutinising, under long slanting brows.

I passed muster, I perceived, by such standards as she could maintain. She decided to smile interrogatively, but her eyes remained guarded.

I made up my immediate mind forthwith. For an hour or so I would forget my ache.

“I am all alone in Paris this evening,” I said. “Would you care to dine with me?”

“This is very sudden,” she answered in English, with a faint accent that for a moment I could not place.

“But will you?” I said, also in English.

“It is early for dinner yet.”

“We could walk on to the Arc de Triomphe and then come back.”

“Why not?” she said, with no pretence of pleasure. “There is a comfortable restaurant at the Rond Point, the Franco-Italian. We could dine there.”

She aroused herself to appear interested.

“That would be charming,” she said.

“I want only companionship,” I said, and she looked at me to read the significance of that. “Let me be pleasant to you for an evening.”

“As you will,” said she, and braced herself, I fancied, for the task of being pleased. Had she been free, I felt, that evening would have been her own.

“You like walking?” she asked.

“And you? You walk too easily and gracefully not to like it.”

She smiled with a little less effort. “I could walk for miles.... Often I prowl about Paris — for no purpose.”

“It is the most amusing city to prowl about in the world.”

“There is a cheerfulness. Until the winter comes.”

“Even in the winter.”

“Even in the winter. If one is warm.”

“There is a hard, clear animation on the coldest days.”

“When it does not rain. But sometimes in the winter there are days when the gutters swill and the river is swollen and watery and Paris is wet and disgusting. Now, at any time, such days may come. And, anyhow, I feel the cold.”

I had jumped into the encounter on a momentary impulse, and I had no intention of inflicting myself upon her to any extent that she might .find disagreeable. I was buying her company for an evening; that was my conception of the affair. I had to treat her like any other pretty lady I might happen to know except that I must not press my attentions upon her as I might have done upon anyone who was quite free of me. I had no compunction about being seen about with her; that sort of thing has never troubled me. I began to talk of Paris to her and praise the place, its gay urbanity, its spacious grace, its light and freedoms, its brilliant kindness to the stranger. I supposed she was a Parisienne, and that this would flatter her.

But she made it appear that she was not a lover of Paris. “It is crowded. It is full of noises. They talk of the roar of London; it cannot be worse than this. London may roar; Paris — barks. Everything thinks only of itself, and yet everything clamours for attention. And nobody attends. They push against you. Everything pushes against you. I am always just missing being killed by taxi-autos and automobiles.”

She spoke like one who was tired and at an ebb.

“But you were thinking Paris beautiful to-night.”

“When?”

“Just now when I overtook you.”

“No. The sunset made me long for the south. I was dreaming of the warm sunshine down in Provence. Where I spent a holiday — it seems ages ago.”

I made her talk; I was surprised by my own interest in her. It was good anyhow to stop thinking about myself and Helen, even for a little while. In some way I didn’t clearly understand at the time this red-haired, pale young woman was also a disappointed and perplexed person.

I have learnt more since. Nowadays I am almost a specialist upon the subject of Clementina. She was the daughter of a Scotch engineer

who had worked upon tramways in Athens and Asia Minor, her mother Was Greek, and she had had a chequered and polyglot upbringing. She had grown up strongly patriotic both towards Britain and Greece, and she had had the unusual advantage of two sound religious trainings, Greek and Presbyterian. Her social experiences were jagged and distorted by the gradual lapse of the Scotch father from honourable employment into continuous but still dignified drunkenness. In the absence of an income the family, I have gathered, subsisted by the economies effected by the mother. In the distressful years at the end of the war Clementina, who was then one-and-twenty and fatherless, fell in love with an amorous, romantic, carefully beautiful but quite orthodox French subaltern in Athens, followed him to Paris, transferred all her patriotic emotion to France, and all her waning but still considerable gift of faith to the Roman Catholic Church. There was a menage in Paris which went on rather happily until it was time for the orthodox French subaltern to marry the featureless but entirely eligible wife selected for him by his aristocratic family. The parting was upon the correctest pattern. He wept very freely and frequently over Clementina, he contemplated suicide from a safe distance and found it inconsistent with Catholic principles, he declared he would never love any woman but her, he promised always to seek her advice and help in moments of difficulty, and he gave her a ring of no great intrinsic value that had belonged to his mother and a quite surprisingly small present of money. He declared that he would not insist upon her subsequent chastity, and that he had abandoned any right to do so, but the bare thought of his being supplanted evoked passions of such splendour and violence in him, such tearing of hair, such clenching and waving of virile fists, that he broke two ornaments in her flat, pawnable ornaments that under the circumstances she could ill spare, and departed to his own aristocratic milieu in a mood of the utmost nobility before she had time to estimate the dimensions of his parting present. The Greek mother had already died and left her daughter a small, untraceable, and possibly imaginary house in Smyrna. So equipped Clementina had to face the world on her own account.

In quite a few years she had become a woman of considerable experience, experience rather than wisdom. Scotch heredity and

Greek heredity do not mix; they make a sort of human Macedonia, a melange of hostile and incompatible districts in the soul. Clementina is in streaks beautifully logical and clear-headed, and in streaks incoherently but all too expressively passionate; she is acutely artistic and rigidly Philistine. Flung across this piebald basis are the three great religious cultures of Christendom, not so much following as traversing the racial boundaries. There are chunks of intense Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Calvinistic feeling in Clementina, pervaded latterly by a broad disillusionment and scepticism.

Her social ideas are also of very confused origin, drawn on the one side from the home life of a high-minded and influential Scotch engineer, whose austere respectability increased rather than diminished in his drunken phases, and from the excellent if extremely snobbish English school in Athens to which he sent his daughter, and on the other from the abundant voluble family of the Greek mother, aunts, cousins, uncles, hangers-on, which infested the sinking home, critically and voraciously, up to the very moment when it went right under water and ceased to be a home at all. She has the defensive disposition due to the mixed and uncertain social status of her childhood; she is alert to detect and resent imaginary slights and insults and to magnify negligencies into cruelties.

Imposed upon her heterogeneous traditions are the impressions and suggestions of two or three European literatures, for Clementina is a swift responsive reader. And then just at a susceptible age had come the dignified and dishonest conventions of Catholic France, which has sanctioned and codified even the fornication of its tenderly fostered but otherwise gallant young men. One must know only the right people; one must behave with an icy loftiness in the nastiest situations; one must keep one's wife and one's mistress apart; the meaner the act the finer the gesture, and so on. So constituted there was and alas! there still is a very considerable amount of jangling in Clementina. Through it all, I declare, runs a thread of gold, which I discovered at the outset and select as the real Clementina. She is delightful in that phase and for its sake I am prepared to accept or forgive all her other phases.

I will not venture to guess what role in life Clementina was originally best fitted to fill. She was certainly not fitted to become, at

the age of three-and-twenty, a brilliant adventuress with no social position in Paris. There may have been something meretricious in the Greek heredity, but whenever she was involved in a love affair that was not an earnest business of body and soul, the Scotch engineer arose staggering but resolute and damned it root and branch. She had learnt to dance beautifully from the charming young aristocrat; his name, by-the-by, was Rene, but she always called him Dou-Dou; and she did her best to make something more than a sexual liaison out of her affairs with a series of the kind of men detached young women meet in dancing places. I am carefully incurious about all this part of her life; it has nothing to do with me; she was, I believe, given an establishment and put among her furniture once or twice, and each time her Presbyterian father or her Catholic puritanism or her fundamental veracity made a shipwreck of the business. Her native pluck was very great, but there must have been times when she looked at this amazing universe with considerable dismay. Where was this sort of thing going to end? And how long would it take before it ended?

There had been some great row just before I happened upon her. Neither Clementina nor I have any disposition to gossip about it, but I am inclined to believe that it was with a rich and agreeable gentleman from the Argentine who had carried his confidence in his personal charm and his general right to do what he liked with his own so far that it had become suddenly necessary to smack his face, throw the more suitable of his presents at him, say a selection of unforgettable things, and depart from the flat he had taken. It was a mess, and there was no going back on it.

Clementina had reverted to a single room in an obscure street and to perplexity about herself and God's intentions. She experienced a great longing for Provence. She had gone thither in the Dou-Dou days. It had not been really smart enough for Dou-Dou, but he had laughed and shown his beautiful teeth; it had been inexpensive, at any rate, and they were able to descend once or twice upon the Riviera coast, where he could display her quality to his similarly provided friends. There had been mistress-parades no doubt in Cannes and Monte Carlo, and everybody had shown off tremendously. All that she had largely forgotten. But the warm and

gentle quality of friendliness in this land among the hills had sunken deeply into her spirit.

The better I know Clementina, the better I understand how hopelessly she was caught in a net from the very moment she was conceived. She feels and understands beauty exquisitely; she has the finest sense of intellectual and moral values, and a fire of disorder burns within her that will not let her rest. And also she has a passion for writing poetry in languages whose finer shades of sound she misses or misconceives.

Now in a mood of extreme disillusionment with Paris and all that Paris concentrated for her she was idealising this Provençal countryside and longing to be back there. She was under the charm of a dream of living in some extraordinarily cheap pension, walking, brooding, possessing herself. Then she could think over her life and its riddles; then she could make decisions. In Paris one was hustled f rom day to day. Things happened to one; one did nothing to determine them. She talked of this dream of getting away as we sat at dinner together with an admirable frankness and freshness of feeling. It fell in very aptly with my own desire to get away.

She might have gone to Provence a month or so ago; she had had money then, a few thousand francs, but she was *not* the sort of person who could make simple, quick decisions. She had lingered and her money had run out.

She talked easily and unaffectedly in her Scotch-English, a little Frenchified, I helped out with French words and phrases. There was nothing common in her voice or gesture or the quality of her thought. Her thought was fine spun silk, and in that at least there was very little mixture. She was open and wholesome in her mind, very outspoken, but never indecent. She was instinctive enough to know that I had a directness of mind to match her own. She talked of the inevitableness of prostitution in some form for women like herself. She had had no training of any sort, she explained; she was not capable even of hard physical work. She fell into no place. She had no race, no nation, no people, no class. She was the sort of bird that other birds peck at. Her manners were samples, and her social code a patchwork. She had tried dactylography, but she could not spell; she was bored, and ceased to attend to a task at once difficult for her and

inane. She was not steady and continuous enough for a workroom. She had been rejected as a governess and as a companion. She was too distinguished for the one and too disrespectful for the other. Marriage of any sufferable sort was hopeless for her. The stage was beyond her. She couldn't act. What else was there to do but trade on her sex? She might be "rescued," but for what? Rescue in France meant a sham penitence, a surrender to the subtle Catholicism that had smiled on her relations with her first lover; it meant a subjugation to narrow and authoritative nuns, scrubbing, meticulous needlework, and being driven and sweated in those close, inevitable economies that underlie all Latin benevolent institutions. She would come out of that worse than she went in — and with her pretty wardrobe scattered and her hands rough and spoilt.

"Nothing for it but the streetS of Paris."

"Thank your stars they are not the streets of London," said I. "But aren't there girls in shops?"

"*Vendeuse*? I'd rather sell myself straightly and simply than give myself in as a tip to my employers....

"There are too many women in the world," said Clementina.

"Too many pretty women," said I.

"I see no advertisements for the plain ones."

I reflected. "Tell me more about this Provence of yours. I am interested. Are there little houses, little isolated white houses that look in the face of the sun and are simple and quiet?"

"White?" said Clementina. "No. They paint their houses pink or yellow. But there are many pleasant little houses among the grey olives, rather *austere*, but always with a *terrasse* in front of them with flowers and trees where the peasants dine and sit. A Provençal *mas* can be very delightful in its plain way."

"I want a little house," I said. "Let me tell you something about myself. You are bored with Paris, but I am bored with the whole world. I want to get away from it and think. I want a respite for thinking. Every now and then — for I am still a very busy man. I have thought of a little white house in the sun, very quiet and simple. A little white house where I can think things out and recover my will. But I do not know where to go to find it; France, Spain, Italy, Greece?, I do not know where to turn for it."

“You might find it in Provence,” she considered. “I remember a little place where we had lunch one day, named Châteauneuf, the most adorable of villages. Perhaps one could be quiet and happy there.”

I had had an idea germinating in my mind for some minutes. It shot up suddenly now, complete.

I broached it. “I think,” I said, “I could give you a rest from the streets of Paris. I think I could find you a job that would take you back to your Provence for a time.”

She scrutinised my face and waited.

“Suppose,” said I, “I made you my house-hunter and sent you to find a little white house down there in Provence.”

“Pink is more probable,” she said.

“A pretty house, anyhow, tucked away out of sight. With a quiet white room and a table to write upon. To which I could come and go. And if you found me also a discreet servant who could cook and look after me, and if generally you established me there. Could you do a job like that? Can you be practical enough for that?”

“I’d try,” she said. “Why not?”

“I have to go back to England in a day or so for some business. I shall have to be there a fortnight or three weeks. But I could give you my address, and you could pack off to Provence at once and begin looking, and when you had looked for a bit write and tell me all about it. Eh?”

“Why are *you* tired of things?” she asked. “You don’t have to prowl about accosting people.”

“One gets tired. I can’t tell you my history now. And it would be unnecessary. And too complicated. But I want that job done for me, and you could do it.”

She had dined, and she was warmed by my friendliness. The face that had seemed jaded was now ten years younger and very animated and pretty. “I think I would like to do a job for you,” she said.

“Well, do it.”

“You would be a pleasant employer.”

“For once you need not sell yourself. This is straight employment.”

Our eyes fenced. I could not see the Scotsman anywhere. “Tell me

more about the sort of house you want," she said.

I sketched a house for her briefly, as I desired it.

"I am to find it and arrange it for you?"

"So that I can come and go."

"How could we do it?"

"I shall give you ten thousand francs for the job right away — I will give them to you at my hotel to-morrow — and afterwards you will tell me what your out-of-pocket expenses are, and I shall pay those."

"You mean to give me all that money right away?"

"Why not?"

"But shan't I vanish into Paris with it and never appear again? Shan't I go off and spend it with my *maquereau?* What sort of woman do you take me for?"

"I don't think you will," I said. "For example, you don't keep a *maquereau*. You've no use for that sort of pet. If you do vanish there is nothing to prevent you, of course.

I shall have guessed wrong, that is all. I shall have lost my stake. I shan't set the police after you, I promise you. You'll be perfectly free to steal the whole lot of it. I shall have to try some other way of finding a house."

"I will take that job," said Clementina. "You are not the sort of man one wants to vanish away from."

She came to a delicate question with the aid of a liqueur. "I am to live in that house?" she tried and blushed under her paint. She could blush, for all her *savoir-faire*.

"No," I said. "That is exactly what you are not to do. I shall live in that house alone. I want you to take this job as a business job. Forgive me if I am plain with you. I am tired of love affairs, grave or gay. I am near to being old. I am not making love to you. I... I have recently had my heart completely and finally broken. I don't see why I shouldn't tell you as much. You had better understand now. When it's mended I mean to keep the vestiges locked up out of harm's way. You said yourself you were tired of that sort of thing. You are going to be my house-hunting, servant-finding secretary. It's a purely business arrangement."

"I wonder," said Clementina.

“This is plain business,” I said, “and you will be free.”

“Still — I wonder.”

“No,” I said very firmly, and we smiled at one another. “Does it seem too good to be true?”

“I’ll get you the house you want if I have to build it myself,” said Clementina in an agreeable burst of approval.

She rested her chin upon her hands and looked at me. It was still all east and south in her eyes, and they were very charming eyes. There might have been no Scotland in the world.

“It can’t stay like that,” she said.

“I mean it to.”

She fiddled with a grape upon her plate. “As you will,” she said modestly. “I will try to be a good secretary.”

We were now feeling very friendly towards each other. Friendly and rather amused at our strictly defined relationship. It seemed to me that she was disposed to linger, but at last I carried her off in a taxi-auto and dropped her at her obscure address. We did not loiter at her door. I made my parting salutations with a respectful decisiveness and returned to the taxi. To-morrow she was to come and lunch with me at the Meurice and receive her ten thousand francs. She came, very resolute and businesslike. There was just a little more of that tentative lingering, but not very much of it, and then, after a warm hand-shake, off she went with her money.

But the affair still seemed, I suppose, unsettled and incredible to Clementina. And in a sense wrong. Her father had been Scotch and conscientious, her mother Mediterranean and very feminine. For once the two strains worked together. She had not been gone two hours and I was writing some letters in my sitting-room when there came a *petit bleu* from her.

“You have left me humiliated,” it said. “Please come to see me for a little hour before I go south. There is something important I really must say to you.”

It proved to be of no importance to this history. She went south, and I returned to England.

The amazing part of the story is that within a week she had found this delightful Villa Jasmin for me and she had discovered my excellent Jeanne, which are all and more than I could have desired.

At times I am tempted to believe that after all there must be a Providence, but one more lax and sympathetic than the nineteenth century supposed. She wrote me several long, charming letters, in a sort of Scotch-French-English, describing her success and asking for instructions, and I astonished her by sending more money to get the garden and furniture in order before I came. So soon as I could get my hands clear I followed her and installed myself amidst her simple and clever arrangements.

But now began a serious trouble that still clouds our tranquillity here. Deep in Clementina's nature is an exorbitant desire to love, a possessive, protective, active and caressing love. She had done her best to lavish it upon the Catholic young officer and experimentally upon a diminishing series of unworthy successors. It was like a beautiful gift garment for which she could find no suitable wearer and not even a peg to hang it upon. This robe of passionate abandon had not been apparent in Paris; it had been packed up and put away, but now it became extravagantly evident in Provence. She declared with plainness and fulness and inflexible resolution that I was the Heaven-sent recipient of that delightful, soft and clinging cloak. She demanded the right to protect and cherish me for the rest of her days.

My own mind was fixed in the idea that I had done with love and love stories. I was kind but hard with Clementina. I insisted, and still insist, upon my inviolate study and my inviolate hours. I do not object to her being the official salaried guardian of my garden and my household, but I make her go on living in the little pension on the main road up the hill, in which, with that small, muff-shaped dog of hers dating from the Dou-Dou days, she had taken up her quarters. After all, it is not ten minutes away, and when it is dark I go with her up through the olives. We lunch and dine together, we go for long walks and keep holiday together, but my life as a whole remains my own. To these terms Clementina agreed with a feminine insincerity that never ceases to encroach.

So we go on. She has stayed on here, and in spite of some dangerous struggles I have been able to sustain my tyranny. We are intimate friends, and for the most part I keep her at arm's length from my personal freedom.

It is not always harmony here. Clementina can display some

astonishing moods. The Scotch engineer must have had the devil of a temper, and the Greek mother transmitted a pagan streak straight from primordial times. I feel, too, that there must have been unrecorded odd elements on the side of the Scotch engineer's mother. She was, I guess, an extremely argumentative person. Rhetorically argumentative. Swift and fierce in her opinions. But all the Clementinas are swift and fierce in their opinions, whichever constituent opinionates. Sometimes everything is judged from the standpoint of a chateau in a backward part of France (Dou-Dou), sometimes from a Parisian *parterre* (various other authorities), sometimes from the Piraeus (mother and the relations), and sometimes from the Longer Catechism. This complexity is perplexing, but by no means repulsive to a scientific intelligence. And in the end Clementina herself adjudicates. Through all these moods and confusions flow — sometimes in the sunlight and sometimes underground — a stream of affectionateness and whim and generosity that is all the Clementina that matters. It makes the final decisions.

There are occasions when I wish she would not ask quite so many questions about this book I am writing or that she would ponder some of the answers more profoundly. And generally that she would construct more of her conversation in some other form than the interrogative. But that is a minor trouble.

I know too vividly how Clementina in a stubborn or a storming mood can disturb and upset this philosophical tranquillity, but I doubt if I begin to estimate how much I prey upon her, what a stroke of luck this freak of devotion is for me, and how entirely she makes things possible here. Here I can come and go, working out the last phase of my life. Here at last I seem to find complete unity and peace of mind. I lead a full man's life here, and yet I exist also in London and at Downs-Peabody quite as fully and competently.

My life has, in fact, been doubled. If my mind stales in Provence, I go to the stir of England again, but I am glad to come back. Always a little more pleased to find Clementina still besieging me. I can appreciate my contentment with this place more easily than I can explain it. There is a novel and peculiar liberty in this seclusion. I am able to think in it without haste or disturbance. One came into the

world to think. I am astonished to consider how little I have thought consecutively before I came here. Now I can live for days together without restlessness or urgencies, without invasions or distractions, apart from the world and yet still in the sunshine of life.

This house, this room, give exactly the aloofness and the detachment I was seeking — a detachment so animated and qualified by Clementina that it neither bores nor distresses me. I am never lonely spirited here.

With some hope of results now I can review my world as a whole, balance alien considerations, work out the form of the great revolution that is happening in human affairs and in the human mind. Here I can define at last the Open Conspiracy that arises in the human will to meet and wrestle with the moulding forces of the universe, that Open Conspiracy to which in the end I believe I shall succeed in correlating all my conscious being.

BOOK THE FIFTH. THE STORY OF THE CLISSOLDS — THE NEXT PHASE

1. METAMORPHOSIS OF MANKIND

Now with my story told I can come to the gist of my matter, to the new ways of living that are, I believe, opening out before mankind. I will at first set out only the broad lines of my ideas. After I have written this book I hope to return to the questions I am now raising and work over much that here I give in skeleton.

I will write as clearly as possible, but I must ask the reader to be patient if at times I am a little heavy and reiterative in this part. I am not a professional man of letters; my interests have been in things and practical ideas rather than in fine and graceful writing, and my utmost ambition is to be plain and strong. If I could set out what I have to say with charm and brilliance I would be only too glad to do so. I would make it as attractive as I could. But I am writing for the sake of the matter and not for the sake of the writing.

I have already given a sketch of the development of life and of the forces and accidents that have made human society out of what was once a sub-human species, rare in its numbers and scattered and almost solitary in its habits. In a few thousands of centuries this profound essential change has been brought about. From being a prowler man has become a hunter, a hunter in packs, and in the last hundred centuries or so he has taken to agriculture, become the first of the mammals to be economic as well as social, and developed societies on such a scale as life has never known before, not even among the termites and ants and bees. This process still goes on with if anything an increasing rapidity. No living species except such as have passed under catastrophic circumstances towards extinction has ever been under so violent a drive of change as man.

The violence of the drive is even more conspicuous when it is measured against the length and scope of man's individual life. In my own lifetime his usual food, his range of activity, his rate of reproduction and the spirit in which he reproduces, his average length of life, his prevalent diseases, his habitations and his coverings have changed. No animal species has ever yet survived such rapid and comprehensive changes.

I have sketched a brief history of the beginnings of habitual

labour, of the network of money and debts which holds us now all dependent upon one another, and of the rapid expansion of scale which has been the dominant theme in our affairs for the last two centuries. I have shown the lives of my father and my brother and myself as whirled along the lines they have taken, by the forces of this enlargement. My father with the swift poison gripping his heart and holding it suddenly still, Dickon bashfully accepting a baronetcy, and I, with Sirrie Evans sleeping and then dead in my arms, Minnie and my mother, Helen and Clementina, Roderick and Julian, are all no more than minute specks upon the figure, atomies in the body, of this synthetic evolution of human society that is in progress.

I would compare what is happening to the human species with what happens to an insect that undergoes a complete metamorphosis. Man was a species living in detached and separated communities; he is now being gathered together into one *community*. He is becoming one great co-operative interplay of life which is replacing a monotony of individual variations. He is changing in every social relationship and developing a new world of ideas and mental reactions, habits of mind and methods of feeling and action, in response to the appeal of the new conditions. Nature, I take it, is impartial and inexorable. He is no specially favoured child. If he adapt he passes on to a new phase in the story of life; if he fail to solve the riddles he faces now he may differentiate, he may degenerate, he may die out altogether. One thing Nature will not endure of him: that he stay as he is.

I do not regard the organisation of all mankind into one terrestrial anthill, into Cosmopolis, the greater Athens, the Rome and Paris and London of space and time, as a Utopian dream, as something that fantastically might be. I regard it as the necessary, the only possible continuation, of human history. To fail to take that road will mean a fraying-out and a finish to that history, a relapse through barbarism to savagery, to the hard chances of animal life, for a creature too scarce and long-lived to be readily adaptable, and so at last surely to extinction.

None of this is theorising; it is a statement of truths, austere and manifest. These alternatives are as much a matter of fact as the starvation of a large majority of mankind if ploughing and sowing

were abandoned.

Another aspect, another idea of the human synthesis I have also developed throughout these papers, and I return to it now and take it up again. It is this: that since the earlier stages of the individual development through its embryonic and childish and youthful years are more or less mutilated vestiges and imperfect recapitulations of earlier adult states, fish, reptile, early mammal, monkey, and savage, so all the moods and motives of adult life in our nearer history must now, if the race is to achieve its necessary accommodations and survive, be in process of relegation to the status of puerility and adolescence; and a new phase of wider, less personal feeling and outlook, must be expanding to fill the main years, the lengthening span of years in the individual life of the coming generations. Man like any other living creature must change with new conditions, and this, if he is to go on, must be the direction of his change. The new stage of human experience demands what I have already been calling a new adult phase, and conceivably also a new post-adult phase, in the normal life, based on broader and sounder common ideas, expressed in new terms and new artistic forms, and accompanied by profound nervous and other physiological changes. From man's soul to man's chemistry this necessity to change and expand extends.

It involves altogether new political habits, a rearrangement and readjustment of moral and religious ideas and feelings, a new conception and method of education. The religious teachings of the past, the honours, loyalties, heroisms that adorn history, its science, its philosophy, its artistic expressions take on from this standpoint a juvenile and incomplete air. They will seem, they begin to seem, childish, puerile, sentimental, and greenly youthful. The great kings and conquerors of the past are already apprehended, and will be more and more apprehended as naIve and short-witted; we realise how egotistical and vain they were, egotistical and vain as leading and clever children who "show off" are egotistical and vain, we see them in their glory, tawdry, limited, and artlessly, almost innocently, wasteful and cruel. We see war no longer as a tragIc necessity in human life, but as a horrible puerility. We apprehend conquest as a blunder, and patriotism like the barking of village dogs.

Many people in this present dawn of an age of conscious change

are coming to accept this transfiguration of the dignities of history; but such a realisation of the past as preparatory is only a prelude to the realisation of the present as provisional, in form and in texture. This next mental step has still to be taken even by the majority of educated and intelligent people to-day. They have still to apply *Panta rhei* to their own affairs, to their activities to-day and their plans for to-morrow. That is less easy for them to achieve because it implies a change in their habits of living. Many stick at the mental, and almost all of them stick at the practical, recognition that the traditions, morals, political and economic usages of this time, dissolve, cease to be imperative or make new demands upon them, year by year, as they live out their lives. They feel the times toss and jostle and strain them, but they are not yet prepared to. thrust back against and control and steer the changes of the times.

This is a transitional state of affairs. Almost all this revelation of the current metamorphosis of human society and relationships has been made quite recently, since indeed my father was a young man. What I have been writing here in the last few pages of the metamorphosis in progress is now known in matter-of-fact guise, by any well-read, well-educated person. The statement is made very clearcut here and put aggressively, but there is nothing absolutely new in it. Yet it would have seemed fantastic beyond description, shockingly fantastic, to anyone born a hundred years ago. No one was fully awake then to what was already going on. It is no great wonder that a vision so newly attained has yet to produce the changes it is ultimately bound to produce in our ways of living and in the spirit of our lives.

It is, as I pointed out in my introduction, in the nature of childhood to believe this is a permanently arranged world. In the past hardly anyone got beyond childhood in this respect. People thought that change was incidental, upon the surface of permanent arrangements. It is only now that a few of us begin to realise with any fulness that it is change which is fundamental and permanence which is only apparent and incidental. It is a natural thing to think in the former way; it is a result of experience and thought to awaken to the latter. And so it is that people are everywhere going on with old, and now often mischievous, loyalties and patriotisms, with old

economic habits and old social assumptions that are no longer valid, that they are failing to make the new generation that grows up under their care realise the insecurities among which they are living, and that the metamorphosis of human society proceeds against such increasing resistances that it may even fail to achieve itself, and end in the failure and death of the specIes.

The present resistance to the reconstruction of human affairs comes quite as much from the uninstructed young as from the unconverted old. These resistances are not merely due to the inadaptability of a generation that will presently die out. The young are revolutionary, in as much as they rebel naturally against constituted authority, but they are also reactionary in so far as they recapitulate the mental phases of the past. And we are doing little or nothing to correct that innate disposition. Our educational methods do not merely fail to inform the young of the immense demands life is making upon them; they conceal those demands. Humanity is confronted by the necessities and opportunities of a great metamorphosis, and our wills and imaginations are lagging and we are failing to square ourselves and prepare our successors for the great tasks of our inheritance.

This "Open Conspiracy" I am now setting myself to explain, is a project to make the apprehension of this metamorphosis fundamental and directive in human affairs. It is an attempt to harmonise people's lives with this metamorphosis and to undermine and defeat the resistances that may divert its forces towards destruction.

2. OPEN CONSPIRACY

I DO not see this attainment of a new maturity for our race, which will thrust back what have hitherto been the adult characteristics of mankind into a mere phase of development, as a necessary and inevitable one. The attempt may fail. It may fail and mankind may fail and become extinct; there is no guarantee whatever against that, no modern rainbow of assurance in our ampler skies. The metamorphosis of mankind calls imperatively upon the will and effort of all who grasp its significance. By their response it succeeds or fails.

And now I come to the question of the gathering together of this open conspiracy to change the laws, customs, rules, and institutions of the world. From what classes and types are the revolutionaries to be drawn? How are they to be brought into co-operation? What are to be their methods? How much are they to have in common?

To begin with the answering of that. Manifestly it is absurd to think of creative revolution unless it has power in its hands, and manifestly the chief seats of creative power in the world are on the one hand modern industry associated with science and on the other world finance. The people who have control in these affairs can change the conditions of human life constructively and to the extent of their control. No other people can so change them.

All other sorts of power in the world are either contributory or restrictive or positively obstructive or positively destructive. The power of established and passive property, for example, is simply the power to hold up for a price. The power of the masses is the strike, it embodies itself in the machine-breaking, expert-hunting mob. I have written already of Vishnu and Siva. The point I want to make clear here is that it is only through a conscious, frank, and worldwide co-operation of the man of science, the scientific worker, the man accustomed to the direction of productive industry, the man able to control the arterial supply of credit, the man who can control newspapers and politicians, that the great system of changes they have almost inadvertently got going can be brought to any hopeful order of development.

Such men, whether they mean to be or not, are the actual revolutionaries in our world. Among them it is and in no other direction that we must look for the first effectual appearance of the new adult mind in co-operative association. If they cannot lead mankind forward to an assured possession of its new ampler life then I do not see how that necessary forward stride can ever be made. Humanity may stagger for some time if they prove ineffectual, for a few score years, a few centuries perhaps, upon the verge of a world unity, thinking great thoughts, expressing noble sentiments, making some lovely things, to relapse definitely into a decadence, a slipping back, a slackening hold, a sliding, and a falling.

I admit how poor are the present materials for this creative conspiracy. In what has gone before I have examined the scope and motives of the possessing, directing sort of people in the world and in particular I have done what I can to lay bare the quality of my brother and myself. I believe we two are fair average specimens of the outlook and impulse of our kind. I have tried to show how tentative we are and how we are entangled at every turn with — shall I call it Crest? The Crest tradition. The necessary start from a partnership with Crest. I have done my best to confess my own tangle of desires, to indicate at least my warring impulses and obsessions and indisciplines. Yet, as Dickon said, "weak as we are, those others are weaker." It is out of us and our sort, and from among the scientific workers we can associate with us, that the consummation of the great revolution must come. There appears no other kind of men better able to carry it through. There are none. If we did not start through Vishnu as partners of Crest, then we should have to start as officials for Siva, fags for the doctrinaires, after a Communist revolution.

Give me the armorial Crests! Rather the dukes than the doctrinaires. I have no doubt — after my glimpses of Bolshevik industrialism — that ours is the more hopeful method of beginning.

I know some good men who are of the other way of thinking, but they are scientific rather than directive men. For my own part I shall keep to the right now and not try the left. Neither road goes straight to the goal we have to attain, the goal of a scientifically organised economic world unity, but though the right road be rocky and

tortuous, it is I believe far more likely to get there in the end than the left. I may be influenced by my own economic position: every Communist is trained to that explanation; and if I am wrong, well, then good luck to the left! For my own part I shall travel by the blue train to the end of my story. I shall look to America rather than Moscow for the first instalments of the real revolution.

It must be quite evident that we and our generation of enterprising and power-attaining men are only a beginning, that we are a mass of unrealised possibilities. As Dickon said of Northcliffe, power took us by surprise. We are not the finished samples of the new sort of men; we are only the raw material. We were not told, we were not educated, we were not aware of our kind; we had to disentangle ourselves from a world jungle of misleading representations. It is not necessary that those who follow us should be at such a disadvantage.

I believe that Dickon and I are not abnormal types. I believe that we industrials and the financiers are beginning to educate ourselves and broaden our outlook as our enterprises grow and interweave. I believe that if we can sufficiently develop the consciousness of contemporary business and associate with it the critical co-operation and the co-operative criticism of scientific and every other sort of able man, we can weave a world system of monetary and economic activities, while the politicians, the diplomatists, and soldiers are still too busy with their ancient and habitual antics to realise what we are doing. We may grow strong enough not only to restrain, but suppress their interference. We can build up the monetary and economic world republic in full daylight under the noses of those who represent the old system. For the most part I believe that to understand us will be to be with us, and that we shall sacrifice no advantage and incur no risk of failure, in talking out and carrying out our projects and methods quite plainly.

That is what I mean by an Open Conspiracy. It is not a project to overthrow existing governments by insurrectionary attacks, but to supersede them by disregard. It does not want to destroy them or alter their forms but to make them negligible by replacing their functions. It will respect them as far as it must. What is useful of them it will use; what is useless it will efface by its stronger reality; it will join issue only with what is plainly antagonistic and actively

troublesome. It seeks to consolidate and keep alive and develop the living powers in the world to-day by an illumination, a propaganda, a literature, a culture, an education, and the consciously evoked expectation of a new society.

It is only natural that a common interest and understanding should develop among all of us who are dealers in world realities as our enterprises extend and intertwine more and more. The nationalist groups and cliques that divide us to-day, the feuds and rivalries, are mere legacies from the passing order from which we release ourselves. Their persistence is part of our crudity and inexperience. Our true quality is cosmopolitan. We become the true International, because our activities extend throughout the world. Our international ideas are complex, material, and real. When we cease to think ourselves British, American, German, or French, we do not become vaguely cosmopolitan; we become world-steel, world-shipping, world-cotton, world-food.

The International of the Workers, in spite of its more explicit organisation, is even now an altogether less substantial affair than the business-international. It has been easier to organise for that very reason. It is so of necessity because of the limited outlook of the common worker, put to work too soon, ill-informed, and easily misled. He has feelings in the place of ideas. His International is a mere community of resentful sentiment directed against the general order of the world and against us as employers. And we I think incur that hostility not so much on our merits as on account of our association as successors and partners, with the Crest tradition and its disregard of common human needs, and because of the aggressive extravagances of expenditure in which we permit our creditors and our Lady Steinharts — and ourselves in our laxer moments — to indulge. If European business men are men tainted with "Crestism," the Americans seem to me to carry a heavier load of useless women and heirs. These are matters needing correction. But a clearer day may come when the improving manners and intelligence of the employer and the better information of less stupidly directed workers may bring these now antagonistic Internationals to an understanding.

Many things that now seem incurably antagonistic, communism and international finance for example, may so develop in the next

half-century as to come to work side by side, upon a parallel advance. At present big distributing businesses are firmly antagonistic to co-operative consumers' associations; yet one or two of the big distributors have already made important deals with these large-scale economic organisations from the collectivist side. Both work at present upon very crude assumptions about social psychology and social justice. Both tend to internationalise under the same material stresses.

I find it hard to doubt the inevitability of a very great improvement in the quality and intellectual solidarity of those who will be conducting the big business of the world in the next century, an extension and an increased lucidity of vision, a broadened and deepened morale. Possibly my temperament inclines me to think that what should be must be. But it is patently absurd to me to assume that the sort of men who control so much of our banking today, limited, traditional, careless, or doctrinaire, are the ultimate types of banker. It seems as irrational to suppose that such half-educated, unprepared adventurers as Dickon and myself and our partners and contemporaries are anything but makeshift industrial leaders, and that better men will not follow us. Dickon and I are, after all, at best early patterns, 1865 and 1867 models. And the spirit of the money market and of business enterprise to-day is far finer than it was in my father's days. These things in the logical course of their development must improve.

Equally absurd is it to suppose that the modern newspaper is more than a transitory medium of communication and discussion, and that we shall not presently produce men who will handle the press and the new powers of public suggestion and education still latent in the cinematograph and broadcasting, with a creative intelligence far beyond any present experience. Economic life in a few score years ahead may be carried on in a light and with an education and inspiration almost incomparably better than ours.

And the labour leader that we know to-day, so vacuously emotional and unsound, is equally a transitory type. The younger men are different, clear, harder, less disposed to clasp hands with us and more able to lock minds with us and come to practical understandings.

None of these new types of men that begin to appear can have had anything but sentimental and acquiescent regards for the things of the past. It is incredible to me that many of them have not been thinking as Dickon and I have been thinking, and that their thoughts will not presently find expression in discussion and literature, and that they will not produce a distinctive culture, affect education profoundly and develop an international social life of their own. Sir George Midas is half a century out of date as a study of the *nouveau riche*. After all he was only emphasising the glories of the old order when he got himself cigars and diamond rings a trifle too large and filled his marble halls with footmen in plush. The Victorian Crests were foolish perhaps to sneer him on to better things. Most of the big business men I know to-day are men of unassuming presence and temperate expenditure. They dislike display and evade Society. They practise much private civility. They seem to be illiterate and Philistine at present largely because contemporary literature is so extensively concerned with fantasies and imitations and allusions that have no significance for them, and art with the vogues of the studios. The insufficiency is rather in the art and the literature they disregard than in themselves. The art and literature of the eighteenth century was done to please an aristocracy and of the nineteenth century to please a bourgeoisie. They have still to develop a relationship to the modern man of energy.

As these new powers realise more and more completely their distinctive quality, and produce fresh aspects and complementary functions of this new adult phase they are constituting, they will necessarily evoke types of literary and artistic work in harmony with their general activities, and depart more and more definitely from the second-hand social customs to which they now rather ungraciously adapt themselves.

Because of its continual progressiveness this great revolution which is now becoming apparent must necessarily continue to be open and explicit, continue to appeal to fresh types and extend its spirit and understandings into the lives of a larger and larger proportion of mankind. In no other way can it escape frustration. In that sustained openness it differs from any preceding process of success and replacement. History is full of the rise and fall of classes,

priesthoods, dynasties, aristocracies. Each class as it comes up to predominance in the story sets itself to establish itself for ever; makes laws, constitutions, to fix its characteristics and defy all subsequent change. It rules, it tyrannises, it loses vigour and flexibility; with a diminishing resourcefulness and a fatal obstinacy it fights the slow and merciless will that has ground it out and will grind it away.

That is the common history of all past ascendencies. Such attempts at fixation were possible because the rate of change in their conditions was not fast enough to make such hopes of permanence manifestly futile. But the modern maker of values never reaches a breathing point f or such delusions to establish themselves. The adaptation of modern enterprise is unceasing. Each victory is no more than a foothold for the next phase. Success is not a throne but an entrance. We of Romer, Steinhart do not dare to disregard new suggestions or exclude new able men from a share in our directorates. All our monopolies are conditional monopolies; our patents pass out of our hands if we do not avail ourselves of them. We live only if we keep alive.

This which I call a conspiracy to reconstruct human life is therefore necessarily open and outspoken because all who are concerned in it realise that their utmost knowledge is provisional and their utmost achievement experimental. There is no part of the world, no race, no station, that presently may not be able to contribute something essential. This open conspiracy is indeed the application of the scientific method to the whole of life. Since scientific research ceased to be a secret occupation, since its great expansion began three centuries ago with the beginning of f rank publication and unrestricted discussion, miners, cobblers, lapidaries, grocers' assistants, rustic priests (not least these last), side by side with noblemen like Cavendish and great professors like Huxley, have contributed inestimable things. The social and political revolution before us must cast its net as widely. Necessarily it begins in practice in and about the direction of great financial and industrial developments because these things are the vital centres of social existence. There we are likely to find the greatest concentration of energetic types. But the greater these grow the less can they remain

proprietorial. The less can they sustain any privacy about their general operations. The less can they exclude the outside man who is able and determined to participate in their control, who is able and willing to criticise and offer suggestions.

Exclude! We invite! In spite of Crest we keep up a perpetual hunt for capable and vigorous men whom we can bring into our operations. So do such systems as the American Steel Trust and J. P. Morgan and Rockefellers and Brunner Mond and Schneider-Creusot and Krupps and Tatas and the German electrical and chemical combines and the Ruhr steel group and the wonderful Zeiss firm and Kodaks and Fords and so on and so forth up and down and all through the tangle of modern productive and business activities. It is a far simpler, more honest and more certain career now for a poor and gifted young man to set out to make himself a director in the Romer, Steinhart system than to become an office-holding politician. The work is cleaner, the pay better, the position more assured.

This disposition towards the open board-room has increased conspicuously during the last few decades, and it will go on increasing. We industrials have got our affairs on to a scale when we want to hear them discussed and avail ourselves of every suggestion. The financiers are following us towards the light. We all realise the need of being understood. We realise the danger to ourselves and to our concerns and to the whole world, in secret operations. We are more afraid of our own shadows than of anything else whatever. We want to be lit on every side. We do not want to cast shadows because the shadows we cast are so large that the most destructive mischiefs, thefts of energy, diversions of purpose, can hide and mature in them.

I think now I have made plain what I mean by Open Conspiracy. It is the simplification by concentration into large organisations of the material life of the whole human community in an atmosphere of unlimited can dour. It is explanation and invitation to every intelligent human being to understand and assist. It is the abandonment of all reservation in the economic working of the world. It is the establishment of the economic world-state by the deliberate invitation, explicit discussion, and co-operation of the men most interested in economic organisation, men chosen by their work, called to it by a natural disposition and aptitude for it, fully aware of

its importance and working with the support of an increasing general understanding.

3. WORLD DIRECTORATE

HOW does this open conspiracy stand to the governments, the legal systems and the politics of to-day? These governments embody the evaporating ideas of the past. They occupy the ground we need. They are now largely entanglements and obstacles. They are like deadweight debenture-holders or old plant in the face of revolutionary inventions. They have a certain value in maintaining order and suppressing local violence, but they carry very poisonous traditions with them, they function inadequately, dangerously and at a heavy price; they divide, they waste energy upon false rivalries; they may quite possibly check the development of new methods altogether.

The larger part of human troubles at the present time, the undiminished peril and pressure of war, the recurring waves of financial and economic disorder, are due almost entirely to the relative unalterability of political and legal methods in the face of a general process of material change. Types of ships, railways, roads, machinery of every sort, methods of manufacture, methods of credit, are superseded, scrapped, replaced; scale of businesses, areas of operation enlarge; systems of production and distribution absorb, extend, amalgamate; they do so against friction, sometimes against friction that becomes nearly overwhelming. The kings, the parliaments and congresses, the law courts and flags and boundaries, on the other hand, stick on with the imbecile inadaptability of inanimate figures.

Their relative inflexibility is enormous. They are not regarded in general as methods at all; they are regarded as sacred conditions to which the living activities of human society must adapt themselves. They are sustained; they sustain themselves by an immense propaganda of conservatism. The chief problem before the progressive revolutionary, after he has secured his primary need, freedom of speech and discussion, is to bend, break, evade, minimise, get round or over or through the political institutions of the present time. The political history of the world since the war has been largely a story of conference after conference. Washington,

Geneva, Locarno, for example, in which in a sort of blindfold way the better sense of mankind has striven to release itself from these stupid and dangerous entanglements and feel its way towards a wider welfare.

Our purpose in this Open Conspiracy, in which we do not so much engage ourselves as discover ourselves engaged, is to build up the organisation of a world state, a single terrestrial system of economic production and social cooperation. We do this not upon an open site but upon a world already mapped out in an extremely impracticable and inconvenient fashion into sovereign states, empires, kingdoms, republics, each of which is fenced in by the most elaborate defences against overt absorption. Each sovereignty is an implicit repudiation of our purpose.

What is going to be our strategy in the face of this opposition?

There is a disposition apparent in many quarters to mitigate the present political fragmentation of mankind by methods drawn from the old politics. eminent statesmen of sovereign states, unaccustomed to anything between themselves and high heaven, are to meet and arrange for very considerable mitigations of sovereignty. They are to bind themselves and their national governments to respect the arbitration of largely alien tribunals, to agree to various measures of disarmament and mutual assistance, each according to his own measure of efficiency and good faith. This is no doubt the only strictly legal way; none the less is it a way of highly improbable issue. In the end it might, under the most hopeful conditions, give the world a sort of super-Washington, a Supreme Court of international law and a confederated world government with a limited ability to call upon national armies and navies to enforce its decisions. But though this is the only proper legal way, I doubt if it is the effective or desirable way, and I doubt still more whether the sort of Federal World Congress it might ultimately produce, with its delegated and attenuated powers and its constitution repeating the most approved features of its constituent governments, would be able to perform any of the chief functions of an adequate world control.

It follows therefore that the way we have to pursue must be — how shall I phrase it? — sub- or super-legal. That is to say, revolutionary.

People are too apt to assume that a world directorate, a world republic, would have to be just the sort of government we find to-day in a typical sovereign state, magnified to a world size — a sort of Parliament of Mankind with a World President, a World Emperor, in some suitably placed palace. They imagine some one hoisting the "world flag" amidst an uproar of military bands and a blaze of "world" uniforms. I think that is an entirely misleading assumption. All the governments that exist in the world to-day are combative governments fundamentally; a world directorate would be on the other hand fundamentally a government for the preservation of peace. The old type of government from which our present ones derive, regarded war as the primary fact in life and took the small scale multitudinous economic affairs of its people almost for granted. The world government we desire will be primarily social and economic. It will have hands instead of teeth and claws. It will not be a descendant or a direct development; it will have evolved along a different line.

No existing government seems capable of doing without a flag. Yet a flag has no real significance for peaceful uses. The head of the current state is traditionally a fighting figure. Before the war the numerous royal families of Europe almost lived in uniform. They were ready, aye ready. Their survivors show no disposition to relinquish the swaggering role. Wherever the remaining monarchs go the soldiers still turn out and salute, and every loyal Englishman ceases to be a rational creature and stiffens to the likeness of a ramrod at the first blare of the national anthem. No king would ever dream of turning out and inspecting the electricians or the economic entomologists or the medical officers of health. He is a soldier by blood on the distaff side quite as much as on the other. Not an old lady among them that is not at least a colonel two or three times over. Even to-day the aunts and grandmothers of royalty are carried to the grave on gun-carriages and buried with military honours. At the slightest provocation to the national consciousness at an Empire Exhibition for example, or at a patriotic tattoo, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York leap into scarlet and bearskins and become almost magnificent figures.

No doubt the multitude feels its dread of foreign foes and their

knavish tricks greatly assuaged by these displays; it likes to think of those dear old ladies as Brunhildas and Bellonas and of pleasant young gentlemen as War Gods, but the whole spirit of this royalty business is flatly incompatible with world unity. And let me remind the American reader that this essentially combative attribution is as true of the White House as it is of Windsor. The presidential office only reaches its full development when the States are at war. Then in sentiment if not in practice Mr. Coolidge is expected to buckle on the sword of George Washington, summon his levies and lead out the embattled farmers of New York, Chicago, Fall River, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Atlantic City and Denver, to victory or death.

But a world government will not be a combative government; there will be nothing to combat. The world republic will be fighting nothing but time and space and death. It will have no foreign minister. It will have no army or navy. Its general suavity will be tempered by an effective intolerance of armaments and of the making of lethal weapons anywhere. Necessarily. It will have no need to express itself even by the most generalised of flags, the most amalgamated of uniforms, the most attenuated of breastplates, swords and spurs. It will neither expand nor conquer nor subdue nor include the governments of to-day; it will efface them.

If on the one hand the coming world directorate will obliterate many of what we now regard as the most essential aspects of contemporary governments, it will on the other penetrate far more deeply than they do into the current life of mankind. It will be actively organising the world production and world distribution of most staple products; it will have incorporated the steel trust, all the mineralogical industries, all the chemical industries, power production and distribution, agricultural production and distribution, milling, catering, the transport organisations of the world and the chief retailing businesses into one interlocking system. It will exploit all the wind and water power of the world. It will in fact be the gigantic world-plant of which Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co., their allies, subsidiaries and associates, are the germ. It will be not a world kingdom nor a world empire nor a world state but a world business organisation.

Its constitution will have grown with its development; it will no doubt have an extremely intricate constitution but one nevertheless in practical harmony with its functions. It will be checking its efficiency and varying and improving its processes easily and naturally through the research departments it will have evolved. It will be making a record of its proceedings and exposing itself freely to criticism. And it will be directing the education and biological life of the world community because of the same necessities that have already made Romer, Steinhart's, almost in spite of themselves, founders of technical schools, library and theatre proprietors, builders of industrial suburbs, vital statisticians, and keepers of their workers' health.

It is because of this essential difference between the old order and the new that I disbelieve in any political methods of effecting the change. The difference is so wide that to a certain extent the two orders can have a collateral existence. For nearly a century the new has been able to develop very considerably in despite of the old. But the two systems are necessarily entangled, and sooner or later they must interfere and come into conflict.

Political activities on the part of those who are renovating civilisation may then be necessary, but even so they will remain secondary activities. It may become"imperative that men of the new type should throw their resources into the scale with or against Vishnu or Siva in the supreme interest of free discussion and personal liberty. Some bravo government may have to be lifted from the shoulders of a people. Or the gags of some doctrinaire domination may have to be relieved. But though the old-type ruler and politician may often be an antagonist and sometimes an ally, he can never be an instrument. The further he is kept away from economic and biological administration the better for the world. He is the wrong man to look to. Creative-minded people have been wasting themselves for a century by looking to him.

It is not only that by his nature he would be obliged to operate these new worldwide processes within the localised limits of national and imperial boundaries, but also that by the very conditions that raise him to power he is always either rigidly traditional or tempted at every turn to sacrifice sound working to a reassuring effectiveness.

And whether his transitory power is the outcome of inheritance or of an election or of a pronunciamento, he will still be profoundly inexperienced in the intricate balances and reactions of economic life.

It was by turning towards politics and deserting the vigorous initiatives of that inspired industrialist, Robert Owen, that Socialism went astray, and it is to the political delusion that we owe now, in nearly every country under the sun, the spectacle of a large futile Labour-Socialist party which clamours while it is in opposition for the nationalisation and socialisation of everything, and gives way to a helpless terror of administration so soon as it finds itself in office. The public meeting where every breath of response is magnified to an immense impressiveness, the party committee rooms, the fretful attic, are the worst of all possible preparatory schools for business management. The only people, practically, who know how to manage transport, the exploitation of natural products and industrial activities generally are the people who are engaged in doing so now.

This is an unpalatable truth for other kinds of men, but it has to be stomached. What we have to do is to develop the common consciousness of such directive people and liberate them from the traditions of the past. We want them to extend themselves to the moral and biological consequences of their activities. We want them to realise themselves completely. It is equally futile to think of putting them under Lenin's dreadful "armed workers" or leaving them subject to the interference of the traditional rulers of the western world. They themselves have to rule.

If we set aside political methods as hopeless for the purpose of replacing the present fragmentary and combative governments of mankind by an intelligent world rule, then we must cast about for other ways of forwarding that revolution. It needs no very profound analysis of the situation to show what these must be. The first group of activities is mental. We have to exhibit and persuade. The new phase in world affairs has reached a point of development at which self-assertion is not only possible but imperative. The world republic must begin to explain itself, to challenge the still dominant traditions that impede its full growth, to make a propaganda for the conscious adhesion of men and women. It has to call for its own literature and

use the press it already so largely sustains, explicitly for its own creative ends. Big financial and big business men have often, I know, a considerable fear of publicity, but it is a fear out of which they must grow. They dread Siva too much and tolerate Vishnu too easily. It is high time to end this furtiveness. We have to remember that the sole strength of the political and social institutions amidst which we live and make our way to-day so tediously and wastefully and dangerously, lies in the fact that they are traditional and established. If we could start humanity afresh, wipe out its memories, and confront it only with the material, apparatus and problems of the present and the future, no one would dream of setting up the nationalisms and particularisms and privileges that entangle us to-day. Their sole justification lies in past engagements. They are not painted in fast colours and the memory of them needs to be continually renewed. For them at any rate there is no recuperative force in the silent touch of living realities.

When the old order tootles its trumpets and waves its flags, obtrudes its tawdry loyalties, exaggerates the splendours of its past and fights to sustain the ancient hallucinations, the new must counter with its tale of great bridges and canals and embankments, of mighty ships and beautiful machines, of the subtle victories of the laboratory and the deepening wonders of science. It must tell of lives lit up and life invigorated, of new releases and new freedoms and happiness ensured. The new world we establish is visibly greater and nobler than the old; it liberates the last of the slaves, rejectS servility, calls on every man for help and service. It gives finer stuff for poetry and — better news for the press. I would lay stress upon that point that even now it gives the better news. The old stuff bores. It is no mere detail but a fact full of hopefulness that, for all itS affectation of romantic interest, the old stuff bores. Patriots are bores; nationalists are bores; kings and princes are *ex-officio* terrible bores. Boredom is a great motive power. I myself am a revolutionary mainly because the formal and established things, the normal entertainments of a successful man, have bored me to the limits of endurance. I am convinced they are beginning to bore multitudes of people.

You can see the still almost inadvertent conflict of the new and old in the vague, copious, inattentive newspapers of to-day. Here,

ignorantly set out indeed but still arresting, is the intimation of some new discovery, some mechanical achievement, the martyrdom of a man of science, a vivid statistical realisation. Side by side is some dull picture of a row of politicians, the latest cabinet of Briand for example, or a still duller display of royalties in wedding dress or highland costume, doing nothing in particular. Most significant of all are the photographs of some huge dock or novel engineering structure, a towering display of mechanical achievement, and President This or Prince That solemnly "opening" it, doing his poor level best to look as though he was in some remote way responsible for it and not indeed a fetish as casual and irrational as a black cat put upon a first-night stage.

But though mental preparation for the revolution is fundamental it is after all only preparatory. While that preparatory process still gathers force, there are already, and more and more there will be, a series of issues breaking out between the new ideas and the old. These must be the second series of activities of the Open Conspiracy. An enormous quantity of power is already in the hands of the new sort of men, and every day their proportion of power in the world increases. It is only now that the men of finance and industry are coming together freely and talking plainly, that we begin to realise how much of the old order is already existing merely on our sufferance. It is within the power of the bankers of the world now to forbid the growth or even the maintenance of armaments. They can forbid the building of battleships and insist upon education. They can turn expenditure from unproductive to productive channels. If they do not do so it is because they are disunited and unaware or unsure of their power.

And this is even more true of the big industrial organisations. If the Romer, Steinhart group of firms and their allies throughout the world decided now to restrict the supply of certain products and munitions to any particular power, or any particular body of persons, that power, that body would be given an overwhelming military advantage. No soldier in existence can stand against the general will of the chemists and metallurgists of the earth. He is, from his under-exercised brain to his over-decorated buttons, antiquated and altogether ineffective without our help. If he get the usurer and credit

manipulator upon his side, he is still incapable of producing the weapons he now requires without our assent. Sooner or later people like Dickon will throttle the soldiers' publicity and tie the hands of the credit manipulator.

As the story of the Tanks and a score of kindred experiences make plain, the generals cannot devise nor even use novel apparatus properly without unprofessional instruction. Indeed they cannot understand them. Tanks, said Kitchener, the British War Lord, were "mechanical toys." Professional soldiers love to "use" men instead of mechanical toys. The men feel. The history of the war is one long record of the bloodstained obstinate unteachableness of the professional soldier. To the end of the struggle, with excellent telpherage systems available, the British military authorities kept thousands of live men in toil and torment and danger, bearing burthens along the communication trenches. The men panted and were exhausted, many fell and were drowned in mud, but the alternative would have been for the military gentlemen to think out the use of telpherage systems. That was an impossible alternative. Slowly, slowly, at a great price of lives, they did indeed learn a little about gas, about modern transport, about the use of aeroplanes. But to the last they choked their lines with cavalry and great stores of fodder, and to this day they clink about in spurs. There was no military conclusion to the war — it was a moral collapse.

The general's elder brother the Admiral is no better stuff. A generation ago we took away his sails and wooden walls and put engines in him and wrapped him up in steel plates, in spite of his utmost resistance, and now to-day he still clings to his battleships — and will, until we send him and his gold lace sky-high in one. No one has ever yet written our private thoughts about the exploits of the British Navy in the Great War. There were some cries from Admiral Fisher, but he died. At Jutland the guns, range-finders, submarines, torpedoes, and aeroplanes of this huge spending department, were all behind the times. But to this day the Admiral lords it amidst this machinery that has outgrown him. In spite of the protests of Weir, Parsons, Thornycroft, and our own people, the naval engineer remains a civilian officer under these splendid militants in blue and gold lace. It is the current state of affairs in one vivid instance. And

— is it wonderful? — there is a dearth of able naval engineers.

In 1914 the financiers and industrial leaders were taken by surprise and the gentlemen in uniform got loose. It is our fault, our want of vision, if ever again they get loose on that scale. It becomes increasingly unnecessary every year that they should get loose at all on any scale or that we should bear the burden and incur the dangers of their continued existence. The struggle of the financiers and business men of the world to tie up the professional soldiers of the European states again after the war, and to impede and mitigate nationalist extravagances, though it has been instinctive rather than deliberate, has been an extraordinarily interesting one. Scattered and unorganised though we still are, things have on the whole gone our way. As I write they are signing the Treaty of Locarno in London. This is bad news for the dealers in national flags. And the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits, stimulated by this triumph of cosmopolitan business interests over the dreams of national revenge and readjustment, is, I learn from to-day's *Petit Niçois*, building a new type of blue sleeping-carriage that will soon be traversing all the main lines of the continent from Calais and Cadiz to Moscow and Constantinople.

4. THE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

AS the new order struggles to assure itself against a repetition of the disaster of 1914 and is forced towards self-realisation in the effort, its peculiar characteristics become plainer. The world republic is going to be as different from any former state as, let us say, an automobile from a peasant's cart. Its horse-power will be in its body. There need be no visible animal, no emperor nor president at all; and no parliament of mankind.

It is an anthropomorphic delusion that a state must have a head. A world republic needs a head no more than a brain needs a central master neuron. A brain thinks as a whole. And as for Assemblies and Councils, why should people meet to talk nowadays — especially to talk different languages — when they can exchange ideas far more effectively without doing so? Writing and print have been tested now for centuries; they are quite trustworthy contrivances. They admit of pithy and precise statement and exact translation. Why overwork the human throat? Polyglot debates are a delusion, a. horror of empty noises and gesticulation.

The boredom of these sham discussions! In which no one ever answers anyone, in which sudden interventions are impossible! Twice, at Washington and Geneva, I have sat out multi-lingual debates, and God save me from any more of them! As the interpreter, a Dutchman with an extraordinary quickness and aptitude for the task, rose to perform his incredible feat of promptitude, to say at once all over again, within measure, what had just been said, an audible groan passed like a breeze through the gathering. His voice rose and fell imitatively, his arms swayed out in alien gestures, as he tried to reproduce the actual speaker. Sometimes there were three versions, when the speaker used neither French nor English. With a further displacement of gesture and stress and precision. A few rare prigs in the galleries followed the paraphrases and noted differences and defects with an intelligent interest. The rest of the audience marvelled at the interpreter's gifts and creaked and whispered and suffered. After the interlude of translation, proceedings mumbled forward for awhile and then halted again.

These things mock reality. The decisions of importance to mankind grow silently and deliberately in the minds of those best placed to make them, and are no longer to be arrived at — or upset — by dramatic scenes and feats of eloquence in senates and assemblies.

In the world republic we shall need rather parlours for informal conferences than parliament houses for stirring debates, and great libraries of current statistics, competent digests of complicated facts, and a concentration of administrative headquarters convenient for intimate talks and settlements. These facilities need not be all in one place. There need be no World Capital. The swifter and safer air-travel and the easier the transmission of speech and diagrams become, the less is a capital city necessary. Men can do their business now without swarming like bees. Even now you could steal and hide Washington away for weeks and, if the newspapers made no fuss, the average citizen of the United States would be unaware of his loss.

A modern government of the world should never be in session and always in action. Men of importance would come and go, as the Caesars did, where and when occasion required. The main structure, the constitution, the directorates if you will, of the great republic, may be in active existence long before it is clearly perceived and described as such.

5. GENEVA

I HAVE already told something of my flying visit to Geneva the summer before last, but I have told of it so far as an aspect of an emotional state and laid stress only on the overcast mind I brought to bear on it. I wanted to give my own experiences of motive, my conflict of desires, a conflict to which I will presently return. But I perceived and heard more at Geneva than I was aware of at the time.

The proceedings of the Assembly, as I have confessed, disappointed and bored me. I was prepared to be bored and disappointed. I had never been in love with this idea of a world league with a written constitution and two chambers and fittings complete that came over to us from America. It did not come to us from the practical intelligence of America, nor had it, at first, any great support among big business men; it was engendered by professors, very pedantic professors. Their minds were strictly legal, and they were too self-sufficient to consider any criticism that came from a non-legal standpoint. Wilson was a law professor quintessentially, an American law professor with historical perspectives that hardly went back beyond the War of Independence. He had no mental nor moral humility, and he lacked any proper pride in the greatness of his opportunity. The queer parliament of nations he created, based upon obsolescent ideas about sovereignty, was unattractive from the outset. Everybody in council and assembly alike was there as a national partisan. Nobody represented mankind. Sooner or later Geneva was bound to become an arena for disputes between nations, with a sounding-board to carry the passionate notes of these disputes to the ends of the earth. The civil war that nearly tore up the American republic was brought about by a dispute about the representation of states in congress and the efforts of one faction to secure an advantage over the other. The League of Nations seems constructed to engender a parallel quarrel. Its Council and Assembly are still a greater danger to the peace of Europe even than Italy.

Yet there are certain possibilities of cosmopolitanism at Geneva that I did not at first foresee, and things are germinating there that may grow and flourish as instruments of the world-republic long

after Council and Assembly have been wrecked, abolished or reconstructed out of recognition and any power of mischief.

I have mentioned my conversation with Mansard one sunny morning while we lunched at a lake-side restaurant, and how my attention wandered from what he was saying. Mansard was one of a little group of men who set themselves to explain Geneva to such curious visitors as he supposed me to be. A lot that Mansard had to tell me I hardly heard at the time, and yet I must have heard it, because afterwards I found it in my brain. His estimate of the Assembly and the Council was not much higher than mine, but what he was driving at all the time was the possibility afforded by the League of developing an international secretariat for a great series of world functions. He was insistent upon the possible importance of Albert Thomas' Labour Bureau, its independent importance. He said that the various officials came from their countries to Geneva in a national or at best an international spirit, that the first effect of the place upon them was often to stimulate comparisons between nation and nation and exacerbate their patriotism, but that presently their interest in their work almost imperceptibly "cosmopolitanised" them. There was a real cosmopolitan *esprit de corps* arising in Geneva.

That was Mansard's besetting theme; the growth which he professed to detect of a cosmopolitan mentality, an "international mind," he called it, among the permanent officials in Geneva. When you gave him your ear and encouraged him, this germinating seed would grow with extraordinary rapidity into a plant, that spread and branched until it overshadowed the world. He quoted Sir Mark Sykes, who had been advocating a League of Nations militia when he died in Paris in 1919, for the sake of just the same end, a cosmopolitan *esprit de corps*. Mansard would quote the church in the Middle Ages, its religious fraternities and orders, and particularly the Knights Templars as instances of a successful cosmopolitan loyalty in the past. His imagination would go on to a dream of the British Navy, detached from its parent stem, developing an autonomy of its own, and becoming the sea police for all mankind.

"And how can you run air routes except as a world service with a cosmopolitan *esprit de corps*?" asked Mansard.

So Mansard. I quote him because he strengthens me "here, but I

will not even comment on his ideas.

6. DAVID LUBIN

IF ever the history of this great revolution in human affairs that may now be in progress should come to be written, there must be at least a vignette of that prophetic American Jew, David Lubin. He was a precursor, a figure rather like Roger Bacon in his unappreciated anticipations. He left a very sharp impression upon my mind. We dined together twice and exchanged several letters. My last letter from him is dated October, 1918.

I met Lubin by chance in the boat train from Dover to London, some three or four years before the war. He was dying to talk to some one and I was the only other occupant of his compartment. He was indignant at some incident of the Customs examination. I think they had scrutinised some French books he was bringing with him. They had, he thought, betrayed a suspicion that he — he of all people! David! King David Lubin! — would import improper books.

I was quite prepared to sympathise with him. I hate Custom houses as I hate kings, as salient reminders of the foolish barriers that cut up the comity of mankind. Encouraged by my sympathy he opened himself out to me. That was altogether his spirit, he agreed. But he explained that so far as he was concerned he had done tremendous things to bring these separations to an end. He had a flamboyant, overwhelming manner and an exaggerated style of exposition; he was obviously extremely vain, and at the time I gave what he had to say a very measured amount of belief.

He was already an oldish man then; he had the burning eye and the gestures and intonations of a major prophet; I can imagine a certain resemblance to the great Mr. Gladstone, the other "Mr. G." of my childhood. What he had to say was mixed up with the most remarkable theories about Israel and the world; he was a Jew, intensely race-conscious, Bible-fed, Hebrew-speaking, born in Poland and brought up amidst the excited sentimental and democratic enterprise of developing western America. He had, he told me, started work with some cheap jewellers in Massachusetts at the age of twelve, first as a polisher of scarf-pin — she had got into trouble by polishing too hard and getting all the gilt off when he

began — and then as a maker of blue goggles which the firm contracted to supply Sherman's army. He had gone west at sixteen, he had travelled in oil-lamps, prospected for gold, packed lumber and launched the first "one-price" store in Sacramento City. "One price" meant in this case fixed prices; it was not a one-price store like Woolworth's in London. That "one-price" store had been the foundation of a substantial fortune. "David Lubin," he said with a sort of shout, *"one price,"* and pawed towards me with his hand. He had slept under the counter of his store in a bunk of his own making. He had known thirst and hunger. In ten years he had the largest Department Store and Mail Order House on the Pacific Coast. But also he had been lost for two days in the desert during his time as a prospector, and the sense of God, that Desert God of Israel, had overwhelmed him. So he did not "eat pork," like so many successful Jews, when wealth came upon him.

"Not for *me*, your monocle, your girl with the yellow hair!" He took his old mother, who had taught him to sing Hebrew songs and read Maimonides, on a pilgrimage to Palestine. He was giving all his life now, subject to such attention as the Mail Order House still required, to the God of Israel and the service of mankind. After the success of his store, had come experimental farming to restore the simplicity of his soul, and then great economic discoveries and his Mission. Throughout our conversation it never dawned upon him that I too might have had something of a fight with the world, or any idea of a function towards mankind at large. He talked to me as if I must be a perfectly stable Englishman, as if I had been exactly what I was for centuries at least, as though no one ever rose or fell in Europe or felt the call to service there, so that the Transatlantic marvel of a man working his way up from small things to considerable wealth was bound in itself to fill me with amazement and admiration. It did nothing of the sort. But it interested me acutely just then to hear his interpretation of his Mission.

My first impression was that he had used it to treat himself to an eccentric tour of the heads of all the governments of Europe. He said he had just been talking to the Grand Vizier in Constantinople; that he was corresponding with the Queen of Roumania; that he had called on the King of Italy on his way back; that he had been in

communication with Stolypin, who was at that time the Tzar's Imperial Chancellor, and visiting the home of the Russian Minister of Finance in Finland. He added that he had made treaties on his own behalf with more than forty separate governments — I forget the exact number which at the time I supposed to be either some fantastic metaphor or a downright lie.

Yet it was not a lie. It was literally true. This crazy-mannered, posturing, one-price merchant had a real Mission, and was doing a work of the utmost significance. He was, upon one side of him at least, a very great man. He had enlarged his experiences as a successful mail-order merchant and an unsuccessful Californian fruit shipper, until they embraced the economic life of mankind. His inner vanity was not blinding him in the least to the broad realities of human economics. Within him there was a life of almost childish fantasy; he seemed to find a Messianic significance in the fact that he had been christened David the King and not Pinchus after his grandfather, because his face had been burnt by a candle flame when he was four days old and an old Rabbi had foretold a great destiny for him to comfort his mother; he identified himself with a mystical immortal Israel that was linking all the nations. Isaiah was his dialect. By Israel's scars the nations should be healed. But directly he turned his face outward he was the western prospector, farmer, and trader, and his eye was clear and keen.

The International Institute of Agriculture which his persistence, emphasis, and audacity had already called into being by 1905, and which was now seated firmly in a building of its own in the grounds of the Villa Borghese, embodied a vision of one worldwide human community leading a righteous, productive, and happy economic life. It quite justified all he claimed for it and for himself. He had gone to Rome, thrust himself amazingly into the royal shooting-box at San Rossire and prophesied to the young King of Italy, extraordinarily after the fashion of some prophet in goatskin from the desert standing before a king of Israel or Judah; and the king had built this institute for him and had given him facilities that had opened doors to him in Washington and every country in Europe. He appeared as if from nowhere, prophesying and not so much organising as provoking organisation. He played off America against Europe and Europe

against America in the astutest fashion, while he brought this Institute into being. He had projected the thing (American fashion) as a sort of economic parliament with an upper and lower house — what a curse to the human imagination the British and American Constitutions have been! — and I rather guess that his last years were overshadowed by the fact that there was hardly any recognition that it was he who had invented the "Original League of Nations"; but the reality he had begotten, as he expounded it to me, was something much more modern, practicable, and far-reaching than any League of Nations. It was not organised talk but assembled knowledge he had evoked.

The International Institute of Agriculture, to begin with, was a census of world production. It was sustained by subsidies from fifty-two governments, each subscribing to an identical treaty, and it was administered by a permanent committee of representatives of the sustaining nations. It kept a record of the state of the crops and the general agricultural outlook throughout the world, based on telegraphic reports from the boards of agriculture of its constituent countries. Week by week and month by month production was recorded, so that the destinations of all the prospective supplies could be adjusted to the probable demands. In addition the Institute had developed departments dealing with the world prevention of plant diseases and with meteorology and agricultural legislation. That much existed.

But Lubin was quite clear and resolute that matters could not stop at that. As this fabric of economic intelligence was built up, there would arise the plain necessity of a world revision of transport conditions. On that second step he was working when I knew him and up to the time of his death. The current interstate and international transport of commodities was, he recognised, altogether too haphazard and speculative for world welfare. Given a centralised control, an all-seeing eye, a regulated system of warnings, it could be made as clear and as definite as a mail-order business. And moreover, he argued, agriculture was not the whole substance of economic interests; the methods of the Institute once they were established could be applied with suitable adaptations to the other main staples of human consumption, to coal, to oil, to steel and other

metals. So this mail-order prophet from Sacramento reached out until he touched hands with Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. Instead of the dark, crowded, unco-ordinated adventurousness of contemporary business, we could, he maintained, following along the lines of his Institute, substitute an illuminated, orderly, worldwide merchandising. I told him Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. would be quite willing to subsidise his Institute whenever the Kings and Viziers failed him.

The storm of the great war submerged Lubin's internationalism. There was a dismally sentimental little dinner in August, 1914, when the French, German, Austrian, and Belgian members of the staff drank together to the world peace of the future, talked of their immediate duty, and dispersed in a state of solemn perplexity to their several belligerent countries. It was the beginning of the end of that chapter in the history of internationalism. Presently Italy was swept into the war, and what was left of the Institute — staffed now by women and by the mutilated and the unfit — devoted itself to the problems of the allied food supply.

Since the war I have heard little of it. It has passed into obscurity in the shadows about the eclipsed king. Lubin died in the influenza epidemic at the end of 1918 before he could think out the war at a sufficient distance to get clear of the combatant note; he had been altogether pro-ally, and when he died, the hand of the Lord God of Israel was still heavy against Germany in all he said and did. F or some time, I think, Lubin had been ailing and losing his grip upon things. The war posed a multitude of troublesome riddles to him, and it was not always easy for his undisciplined mind to find where Isaiah had hidden the answer. Almost his last effort was to commend his Institute to those who were concerned with the prospective League of Nations. His last letter to me was about that.

He was buried at Rome early in January, 1919, and his funeral passed disregarded through streets that were beflagged and decorated to welcome the visit of President Wilson.

Wilson ignored him and his Institute and his suggestions.

7. ASSEMBLING THE CONSPIRACY

I WILL return now to something I have already used once as a point of departure. It is that I am projecting, not foretelling. All this estimate of creative forces here is speculative; the revolution I write about is not assured. For all I know it may be inevitable, it may be in the very nature of things; I have no evidence for or against that view. But I am convinced that it will remain only a possible thing, an unsubstantial appearance, until it is embodied in a wilful understanding among the people who can carry it out.

I write of the increasing power of the financiers and the big industrials, to control human affairs, to prohibit wars, consolidate international production and distribution, restrain and direct governments, dictate policies; they are the great Barons for a World Witenagemot, but at present their power is either partial or unconscious in its use, or merely a potential power. It does not follow they will ever use that power systematically or use it for great ends. The metamorphosis has gone so far I think that one can distinguish the broad lines of the new social Leviathan, the world republic; but it sleeps still, it does not move, it has not yet awakened to its possible existence. The assembling of this "Open Conspiracy" is still a thing for the future.

The fact that I am writing my own mind clear about these things down here in this tranquillity among the olive trees is evidence enough that what I am propounding concerns a merely incipient reality. The substance of the preceding book is mainly the history of how I and Dickon came to these still developing ideas. But my case is that we are not abnormal men but samples of ordinary Successful modern men, and that what we are thinking a lot of other similar and similarly circumstanced people must be thinking also, with individual differences but on the same general lines. I have come away here to Provence and made myself a sort of hermit for the better half of the year, in order to get on with this complex readjustment of my vision. It has been and still is for me a task more important and urgent than any concrete business operations.

To some extent I may be exceptional in this direct transfer of my

attention to the general problem. No one else among active business men so far as I know has come away like this for an exhaustive consideration of the general position of business. Such moods and disappointments as have rendered it not only an easy but an almost necessary thing for me to concentrate on these questions, may not have chanced as yet to anyone else. Accident may have made me a sort of pioneer in expressing these views.

But Dickon, though he has not come away and is much too busy, I think, ever to come away, has developed quite similar views. He however has made no such attempt to crystallise them out. They come and go in his mind. His must be the more usual state of affairs. Such a pause for self-expression, such a realisation of the need for statement and a clearing up of the outlook has not yet come to the world of great business as a whole. I think it is nearly due. The new order is still mute; I chant my saga of the future without accompaniment; the politicians and political personages, journalists, religious teachers and schoolmasters who supply together the ordinary forms of political thought in use, repeat nothing but the accepted formulae of the passing state of affairs. But the phase of self-realisation and *self-expression* may be close at hand. It may come very fast when once it begins to come.

There are, I grant, few signs of its coming. As yet we think by ourselves alone as I am doing, or we talk only by twos and threes as I shall do when I return to England. We have still to talk by groups and then in books and organs of our own. Clearly while this mental fragmentation continues the world of contemporary expansions will be deprived of the larger part of its sustaining power, and the old order will *still* be in a position to hold on and recover its losses to us. A time comes when every social process must become conscious of itself. No great creative development can go on in modern social life beyond a certain point without a literature of explanation and criticism. We talk, I say, by no more than twos and threes. Almost all the talkers are men. Few if any of the womenkind of men of affairs seem to share these ideas that the practical handling of power is evoking. Nor do we make any *éclaircissement* with our business partners; we educate no successors. We hand on our impressions and vague intentions only by the most fragmentary hints and suggestions

to our sons. Our homes, our families, our social life, are still quite submerged in traditional ideas. We work submerged.

This is a state of affairs that is necessarily transitory. The men who have been the means of developing the large scale methods thus far, the men of science, the inventors, the men of imaginative business enterprise, the men of financial understanding, cannot leave human affairs in this present crisis of discordance between world wide achievement and nationalist outlook to which they have brought them.

But they cannot go on to the subtle and enormous tasks of intellectual and moral adjustment that are required of them without a consolidation of their own still largely scattered activities, and the support of a widening confidence and participation in what they are doing. They have to bring not only the world of science but the world of literary activities and their own womenkind and families into understanding relationship with themselves. They have to produce a social life of their own that will sustain and ensure the continuance of their work and be harmonious with that work. They have to evoke a literature and an education that will record and continue and spread their awakening creative spirit. They have to bring that spirit out of their laboratories and works and offices and country houses into all the concerns of mankind.

I do not know if they can do that, but I do know that if they do not do it, a long period of violent stresses and probably of degenerative disorder lies before mankind. The old order of things such as it was can never recover its former confident stability; it has been sprung like a worn-out tennis racket; it has lost its moral ascendency over men's minds even if it has kept its grip on their affairs. But the new scale world can achieve itself only under onerous conditions. Economic revolution trails with it every other sort of revolution. It involves a new way of living, new habits, new relations between the sexes, an artistic and literary renaissance, a new handling of the methods of publicity, an educational revolution. And it is only people of our type and freedoms who can have the knowledge and experience to plan, and the courage, ability, and worldwide advantages to achieve, so great a reorientation of human attention and effort.

8. A NEW SOCIAL ROUTINE

A NEW social life must necessarily develop step by step with the progress of the world republic. It will be aristocratic in the sense that it will have a decisive stratum of prominent and leading individuals who will wield a relatively large part of the power and property of the community, but it will be democratic in the sense that it will be open to everyone with ability and energy to join that stratum and participate in its work to the extent of his or her ability and energy. It will have routines of its own, and they will be widely different from the routines of the present time.

The social routines of the present are determined largely by the assembling of a government and the existence of a court. Society gathers at some sort of capital and entertains and is entertained. There are routs, parties, pageants, and theatrical displays. Then it disperses to carry on the traditional motions of the conquering nomads from whom most old-world governments derive, to hunt, shoot, frequent the open air. There is no need to hunt or shoot now; the hunting is a public nuisance and the shooting a massacre of tamed birds, but still the thing goes on. At convenient times society races, bets upon, and trades its now rather obsolete horses. Its costume, its language, is gravely equestrian.

This seasonal coming to town and return to the country that was once necessary to powerful people in the past, has undergone great elaborations and modifications as these powerful people have become more and more a creditor community no longer in direct contact with realities. All the procedure has become more formal and more trivial.

Games have become displays and functions rather than general exercises. I have told already of the disillusionment of Dickon and myself as we clambered up from the struggle for freedom and power and realised the nature of the feast, the feast of honours and satisfactions, at present spread for success.

The new social life will be the life of people in close and keenly interested contact with the realities of economic, directive, and administrative affairs. They will have no time for systematic

attendance at courts, parliaments, race meetings, and the like; they will find much better fun in the work they are doing. And there will be no capital, no court, no parliament, and no race meetings. I doubt if these adults will have any use for mass assemblies.

The present disposition of people to assemble in monstrous crowds, the great Epsom festival of Derby Day for example, is a very curious and probably a now passing phase in the human development. The crowds seem urged to gather by an immemorial habit, but they do not seem to be very happy or busy when they have gathered. They stare about. In India immense congestions of a religious sort occur. In the past there were great fairs and pilgrimages; Mecca is still a pious Epsom. There appear to have been such assemblings at Avebury and at Stonehenge, with races and sacrifices. Solutre, to judge from the vast accumulations of picked horse bones, was an annual camp and fair for the horse hunters of the Palaeolithic period many thousands of years earlier. This custom of seasonal assemblies goes back therefore to the early beginnings of social life. It was dictated first perhaps by the habits of the grazing animals to scatter when the food is scarce and the calves or fawns are young, and to reconstitute the herd at the breeding time. Man the hunter followed the herd, and learnt to assemble as the herd did.

All need for these swarmings has evaporated now with increased freedom of individual movement. They are survivals. All the world is a meeting place for the new type of man. An uncrowded meeting place. All the world is our court and our temple, our capital and our fair.

This disappearance of a "social round" from the lives of the more modern types of people does not mean a decline in sociability — but an intensification. Just as a king or a president becomes ridiculous now as a symbol of the will and purpose of mankind, so jostling innumerable people, roaring in unison with them, cheering some regal mannequin, promenading in our best clothes and eating by the hundred, fails to satisfy our deepening sense of intercourse and co-operation.

We want to get at other individuals closely and effectively. We want to develop resemblances and understand differences. For that purpose social life needs to be a series of small duologues and group

meetings. Its encounters cannot be very definitely arranged. Staying together in a well-managed country house for a few days' holiday, joint membership of a club, meeting frequently to lunch or dine, taking exercise or sitting in the sun together, working in proximity or co-operation, going on an expedition for a week or so, sharing a walking tour, a day or so in a yacht or the like, these are surely the best forms of personal contact. What more does one want? All the other social things are mere occasions for mass excitement. And when we come to contacts of personality, the actual encounter is often the least part of the relationship.

I am reminded of Heine's visit to Goethe and how the chief blossom of that long anticipated encounter was a remark upon the excellence of the fruit trees by the wayside. Our realest intimacies are often with people we have never seen.

Writing often affords a closer encounter of minds than a personal meeting. After all I am living here in this *mas* up a byway in Provence, not because I want to get away from people but because I want to get more effectively at them. I have so much to say, and the saying of it needs such careful preparation, that it is absurd to think of saying it by word of mouth. I want to say it when the people to whom it appeals are ready to hear me. I want to lie ready for the mood of attention, and as a book on a table or even as a book on a shelf I am sure at least that I shall not be met in a phase of defensive disregard. At a set and dated meeting, especially if it lasts only an hour or so, anything may happen.

I once met J. M. Keynes at a lunch party. I rather think I had asked to meet him. I had and have a great admiration for him. It is the only time I have ever encountered this idol of my brother Dickon. I could have imagined all sorts of topics we might have discussed together, but as a matter of fact all we did on that occasion was to fall foul of each other rather sharply about a book called *The Mongol in Our Midst* and the way in which a gorilla sits down. Neither of us really cared very much about the way a gorilla sits down, but we both chanced to be wickedly argumentative that day. We scored off each other, and that is all that passed between us.

Yet Keynes has affected both Dickon's ideas and mine profoundly, and I shall be disappointed if this stuff I am writing here

among the olives does not reach him at least in Cambridge — with my friendly greeting.

A life of active work that continues to the end, a life in which everyone goes apart at times to think and write things out in order to communicate them better, a social life of meetings by twos and threes and fours, a social life that has no use for crowds and for crushes and for mere passing salutations, a social life where men speak to one another by books or by pamphlets more effectively than by speech, in which there are no debates, no public decisions by means of oratory and voting, will necessarily produce its own forms of house and garden; its own apparatus of intercourse. One needs a place or places to work in, and that accommodation must vary enormously with the nature of one's work. It may call for indices, libraries, laboratories, secretaries; assistants, colleagues, summaries may need to be readily accessible. And away from the working place, but not too far away, one wants to dine and rest in some unexacting beautiful apartment, a flat in a retired quarter, rooms in a riverside inn or the like, some corner of freshness, light and quiet. And then one wants a break in one's work, the sort of break people now call a "week-end," and for that is indicated the pleasant country house, with good company and tennis, or racquets or lawn tennis or swimming or good walking. Or this *mas* here. And further one needs the occasional refreshment of going abroad to a different climate and of encountering a different fashion in all the incidentals of life.

I say "week-end," but I will confess I wish the ancient people who invented the week had invented it longer and larger and with more than one day of rest at the end of it. Six days' work and then one day off may have been all very well for the peasants of ancient Babylonia or among the vines and fig trees of Palestine, but I find it one of the tightest misfits of the modern world. The English "week-end" lasts from Saturday afternoon until Monday at lunchtime, and leaves four days and two half-days for getting things done. One is always knocking off too soon. I could do most of the things I have to do in England far better in spells of from six to eight days of steady work to be followed by three or four days of play, gossip, laughter, and rest. But people treat this Neolithic week as though it was an astronomical necessity, like day and night. For one person who will

be shocked by my republicanism, a score will cry impossible at a ten or twelve day week, with a three or four day Sabbath to it.

Here in Provence Clem and I can practise it, and it succeeds wonderfully. I can call up a little automobile I now keep in Grasse for our Sabbath, and we can go anywhere within a hundred and fifty miles, to the sea, North Italy, Avignon, Nîmes, Grenoble, or just down to Nice or Marseilles for an urban day or so. I believe a longer week would suit almost everyone in a modern community better than the Babylonian legacy.

The freedom to get away that a longer week would give the ordinary worker would revolutionise the everyday life of labour. His present Sabbath is merely a pause in his toil; it is neither a rest nor a change. Before anything can happen it is over. The ordinary wages-worker comes back on Monday morning less disposed for work than when he left it on Saturday. He wasn't worked out when he left, and he isn't refreshed when he returns.

Some day perhaps the world will keep such an enlarged week. This change in the timing of life to a longer, slower rhythm, this relinquishment of mass gatherings and periodic and formal social functions, this intensification of personal encounters, this expansion of interest to worldwide activities, this resort not only to reading but to writing and publication as a normal part of one's social existence, must be necessary aspects of the development of a new adult stage in human experience. The new sort of people can no more submit to the social routines, the time apportionments, the etiquette of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, than they can keep an automobile in order with tools of wood and flint.

9. HEIRS AT A DISCOUNT

THIS new way of living demands not only different rhythms and routines, it demands also a changed spirit of conduct for women, differing from any that prevails at the present time. How far women will come with us and how far they will let us go is a question I must tackle in a separate book of its own. But here I will venture to say that family life will be less the habitual mode than we now pretend it is.

It is a venerated assumption among lawyers and suchlike preservers of antique psychology, that men work and organise great industries in order to "found families." I cannot imagine how anyone with the most rudimentary powers of observation can repeat so foolish a statement. I doubt if any big business man or any big financial man for the last hundred years has done what he did for the sake of his family. Far more was it for the sake of business. In former times of insecurity one may have looked to one's sons and connexions by marriage to hold together the estate one had created, but even then I believe the care was mainly for the estate. And nowadays, though sons or nephews may often prove congenial junior partners, a really vigorous business man is much more likely to care for a capable stranger than for a disintegrative son. The later Caesars did. They were constantly adopting colleague-successors. The most disastrous of the Caesars were the ones who were born to the purple. And look at the families cc founded" by the earlier American millionaires!

No energetic directive people are deeply in love with inheritance; it loads the world with incompetent shareholders and wasteful spenders; it chokes the ways with their slow and aimless lives; it is a fatty degeneration of property. If Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. could avoid carrying Lady Steinhart and the Crests on our backs we should all rejoice. Our only reason for resisting the heaviest possible death duties is that the alternative to our present load of heirs would probably be the active interference of some rascal appointed by political intrigue to look after the growing share of the old-style State in our concerns. Rather Crest, rather a score of Crests, than one of

Lloyd George's convenient friends. Rather Lady Steinhart's possessive bad manners, her fences and her *pièges à loup* for a mile or so and another generation or so, than a network of tiresome unintelligent restrictions over the better part of the world.

In course of time these great business systems as they become the ostensible as well as the real government of the world may evolve some method of voluntary dispossession. We may for example return our individual shares of the capital into the business and become annuitants after sixty-five. Or we may devise ingenious Trusts that will save our work alike from the paralysis of the politician, from the weight of a layer of rich widows, and from the ravages of the heir. We may make the personal share smaller while retaining the power to wield large masses of property so long as one is on the active directorate.

Few of us realise how rapidly family life, home life in a little group of parents and young, fades out of modern existence. Royalty makes an immense parade of its family life because that is its *métier;* but a great majority of the more influential people in the world, though they keep quarters here and there, no longer centre upon a home. Lambs Court is a sort of home for the Clissolds, but now only servants inhabit that place continually; Dickon who for a modern man of enterprise was exceptionally domestic, hardly ever goes there now; for nearly half his life he has been as homeless as I have for nearly all of mine. Family seats are traditional things, and they may be pleasant things to sojourn in for a few happy years, but they are no longer any more necessary to human life than capital cities. Half the great country houses in England are for sale to-day. Just as all the world may some day be the seat of government, so the common safety and welfare may at last dissolve the walls and seclusion of the family altogether.

I do not think that this reduction of cohabitation and this diminution of inheritance in property involves a disregard of blood relationships. A man may come to care all the more for his kin, because he is less encumbered with them. A son who no longer regards his father as a tyrant or a lock-up investment may come to realise his value as a friend and as a kindred experiment in living. The less perhaps the habit of proximity the more the magic of

consanguinity. Where there is a natural peculiar sympathy it will out, in association and co-operation, and where there is not there is no profit to parent or child or the world in a forced succession. If the son becomes a competent director, well and good, but we do not want him as an inert shareholder. Let the son justify his sonship. Let the widows and feminine dependents be limited to comfort and security, house and gear. A man who has been privileged to direct great business has no right to encumber its controls or impoverish its reserves with his domestic byproducts.

10. CIVILISATION BY NEWSPAPER

THIS increasing, free-moving cosmopolitan society of vigorous individuals, with its habits and methods spreading out into larger and larger strata and sections of the human community, will produce its own literature. It will live very much by and through its literature. Literature will be a form of social intercourse.

There will be much thinking and reading and writing in the next phase, but it will not be delegated work. It will be a literature of activity. It will not be a professional literature. A modern man of affairs, like an Athenian gentleman or a Chinese gentleman, will work out his own philosophy and make his own comments and records. A few may specialise in expression, but I do not see that we need continue the vicious practice of the Roman plutocrats and keep a class of philosophers and men of letters to ease us of our responsibility for these things, — and lose them at last in the necessary pettinesses and pedantries of men without experience.

We shall need newspapers that will give us news simply and plainly. We shall certainly have no use for the vast sheets of advertisements set off with inaccurate news, quasi-amusing trash and political frothings that now invade our homes every twenty-four hours. The daily papers of educated people half a century ahead may be a tenth of the size and ten times the price of these wildly flapping caricatures of contemporary happenings.

I am not even sure that, so far as our own interests go, we want them daily. It is the betting man and the stock exchange speculator who follow the fluctuations of the day and hour, and if our sort of people gets a real grip on the world there will be very little betting and speculation. For most people the daily paper is a daily disappointment — to which they are drawn by habit and against which habit forbids them to rebel. I lie in bed here of a morning with a mind at peace, inaccessible to any correspondence, and think of the hundreds of millions of rustling sheets away in England that are being opened with a sort of jaded eagerness for something really wonderful. Recently our postman here has become erratic; he brings the Paris papers, the London papers, sometimes at eleven, sometimes

at four, sometimes not at all. Americans over the hill get them; to him one Anglo-Saxon seems as good as another. It matters hardly at all. There are four packets unopened now on the bench at my side. I may rip them open and glance through them to-day or to-morrow.

The weeklies interest me much more. The new order may find a weekly newspaper sufficient. In seven days things have had time to shape themselves a little. Ten days would be still better. The best of all newspapers, to my mind, is *Nature*. That tells you of things that matter, and tells you adequately. The weekly *Manchester Guardian* and the *Weekly Times* too are good, but they would be better if they left out more of the literary stuff and gave a fuller abstract of the news and more articles of relevant information. I do not know enough of the American press to say whether there is any periodical at all over there, daily or weekly, which gives as competent a digest of the general news as *Nature* does of scientific happenings.

I may seem perhaps a little too ample in this criticism of the press. I may seem to some readers to be enlarging on a superficial matter. But indeed it is not a superficial matter. The press colours the general tenour of life now and makes the background of all we do. If it is noisy, uninforming, inexact, we live just as though we had to live in a house with all the windows open upon an incessant railway station or an unending fair. The hurdy-gurdy of a roundabout is an unimportant instrument of music in itself, but not if it drives the workers in a great laboratory frantic and makes their work impossible.

And it is not only as the background of our own lives that the press is essential to our social life It is the medium of relationship between the active directive people and the mass of the population which, consciously or not, is in cooperation with them. It is the only medium through which the bulk of the community may ultimately be brought into conscious co-operation. But at present it fails to possess that function. At present the great distributing businesses which provide the financial basis on which our newspapers rest and which dictate their tone are not sufficiently self-conscious to see beyond mere circulation. The newspapers tell of the lines and bargains offered by the distributors to their customers, and what else the newspapers may be doing with those customers does not seem to

concern the advertiser. So long as the advertisements are carried far and wide, so long as there is no hostile discussion of the advertised commodities and so long as no plainly subversive doctrines are preached in the papers, the big distributors do not care what else is or is not given to the public. They are still too new and too untaught to maintain any conscious relations of policy and action with the transport organisations of the world as a whole, with the merchandising of staples in bulk and the general industrial network, and they behave as though they had neither come out of a past that was different nor as if they headed, as they surely do, for equally great changes and developments in the near future.

The newspapers on that account are still quasi-independent of the distributing trades. Because of the inadvertence and inconsecutiveness of these latter. But that is a conditional and transitory freedom of the press. It is diminishing rapidly. Newspapers have nothing like the power they had in their hands during their period of opportunity at the end of the war. I have recorded my brother's lamentation of their blindness already. In the long run newspapers may become merely instruments in the hands of the retailers.

There is still a delusion which many business men share, that it is the public that determines the pattern and sets the key of the press for which it contributes its pennies. This is no more true of the newspaper than it is of the theatre or the cinema. The role of the public in these affairs is to endure. You can feed the public anything you like in all these things, within the limits of its endurance. It is helpless against you. Its only possible veto is to die, riot *en masse*, be ostentatiously sick or abstain from what you give it. Short of these extremes it must accept. It may grumble but it must accept. Given competition it will prefer whatever bores and repels it least, but its freedom of choice is limited by the very great and growing limitation of competition. Exceptionally great masses of capital are needed to start a paper nowadays or to make any sort of big public show. The public may wish for all sorts of things in its paper, but unless it carries its wish to the effective point of refusing to take the paper altogether unless it is satisfied it will not, of its own initiative, get them. Nearly everyone has the newspaper habit; and the newspaper

proprietors can defy your individual objection so long as they maintain a general understanding among themselves.

The only possible effective control of all these processes of publicity, so that this shall be given and that withheld, is to be found in the hands of the active proprietors and directors of the great newspapers themselves, and in the advertisers who sustain them. If these people choose to give the public well-written daily or weekly papers, responsible and large-minded, the public will get them, but it will get them in no other way.

The public does not make the newspaper nor the cinema, but on the other hand the press and the cinemas do more and more make the public. They provide the social background for an increasing proportion of people, they determine the characteristics of the modern social atmosphere as nothing else now does. The pulpit and the home circle sink to relative insignificance. And if we men of large material influence propose, as I am proposing here, to accept our manifest responsibilities and reconstruct the world as we can do, upon broader, finer, and happier lines, then it is in the world of the press and the show and the new methods of publicity that our first overt struggle must occur. If the conspiracy of circumstances that has put power into our hands is to be changed into an open creative conspiracy, it is to these things that we must first address our awakening intelligence.

And it is with Vishnu rather than Siva that Brahma must struggle here, Vishnu who wants the people blinded and divided and misled so that he may rule unchangingly for ever. But Vishnu's way is always either to suppress newspapers or make them so dull as to be unreadable, and Siva tears his own papers to pieces and will not tolerate success even in a labour journalist. But Brahma is persistent and inventive, and if one way is blocked to him he will find another. In the long run the press comes back into his hands because he interests.

Open, candid, exact, full and generous, these are the qualities the newspaper of the new life must possess, for these are the necessary qualities of the new life. It must suppress nothing, lend itself to no shams and outworn superstitions, throw all its weight in the scale against particularism, sectarianism, and traditionalism. Day by day or

week by week, by text and picture, it must bring to every mind capable of receiving it the new achievements of human effort and organising power, the victories of conscious change. Even in its reports of litigation and police courts it will display the struggle of the old Adam against the needs of a growing society. There is never a case before the magistrates that does not afford either a criticism of law or custom, a lesson in psychology, or the revelation of some educational defect. Life will be shown as incessantly interesting, and the anniversary, the ceremonial and the crowded occasion, so necessary to mankind amidst the dullness and deprivation of mediaeval life, will sink down to unimportance.

By an organisation of publicity and suggestion and entertainment, upon wise and liberal lines, the new social life can be sustained and reflected in the minds of an increasing proportion of the people of the world, and the growth of the new order in the body of the old assured. The press, the cinema theatre, broadcasting centres, book publishing and distributing organisations, are the citadels that dominate Cosmopolis. Until they are in the hands of the creative revolution human progress is insecure. They may be held by brigands, they may be gripped by the forces of reaction and the life of the world may be starved or stifled. The :firm establishment of a great press throughout the world, reasonably free from the interference of national and local politicians, and, in the last resort, capable of assailing them effectively, is the first course in the foundation of the conscious world republic.

11. FORCE AND VIOLENCE

HUMAN society rests upon physical force. Law is in the first place the systematic forcible suppression of instinctive and incoherent violence, so that property and life are generally safe. Law in the past may have been at times little better than the will of the ruler or

the pressure of tribal opinion, but it has always had in it a certain element of system, the implication at least of a definite pledge to protect and observe conditions. But hitherto it has been applied only locally, it has been reserved for the subjects of a state; it still varies enormously from land to land.

It would make an extraordinarily interesting book if some one were to give us a history of the extension of legal protection to the stranger and the alien, the growth of the idea that a man could have rights not only as a citizen, not only as the protégé of a foreign state sufficiently powerful to avenge his wrongs, but simply as a man. There. would be some entertainingly tortuous chapters upon extra-territoriality and diplomatic privilege. It must be quite recently that the conception of a worldwide protection for anyone whatever, an even justice for the stranger and the native, has become practically effective. It has been associated with the general widening of mental horizons in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It has been accompanied by certain social developments of the most interesting and promising sort.

Quite the most significant of these is the modern policeman. If we could bring back to contemporary London or Paris or New York a capable Roman administrator, he would, so soon as he had got over the enormity of the traffic, the astonishing width of the roadways, the plate-glass shop-windows, the artificial lighting, and suchlike obtrusive material differences, concentrate upon those rare impassive persons, who smoothed and pacified and assured and facilitated the thronging concourse. For the modern policeman is something new in the world. He appears in history even later than the modern press. He is something very essential and very significant in the new phase of human association in which we are living. He embodies new ideas. He has great possibilities of development.

I suppose the learned could give us a long history of constables, watchmen, and the like throughout the ages. I suppose there was some sort of watch and controls in ancient Rome and Babylon. They were not so much sustainers of order as a prowling reminder of order in dark and dangerous places. Rarely have such arrangements created enough confidence to dispense with the bearing of arms by private citizens. How recent and how complete is the individual disarmament of mankind! I have been round and about most of the earth, and in some very lonely and desert and wild places; I have flown thousands of miles, been underseas in submarines, had my fair share of personal dangers, but — except as a formality during the war — I have never carried a weapon upon me. How astonishing that would have been to my Tudor and Plantagenet ancestors! How different a mental atmosphere it implies! Before the Tudor Clissold went out at nights, he made sure that his very ornamental dagger came easily out of its decorative sheath. He put a wary hand upon the hilt at every corner.

So unobtrusively that there is little about it in the histories, these new police organisations came into being and spread, with macadamised roads and gas-lamps and newspapers, into a changing world. All these innovations seem commonplace, almost vulgar, nowadays. But they transfigured the ten our of social life. Very rapidly it appeared that with the aid of print and telegram the common man also could apprehend the world as a whole. Imperceptibly it was realised that life and property could be made so secure that it was reasonable to demand release from anxiety upon either score. It was demonstrated that freedom of movement and freedom of activity wherever in the world one's interests might take one, might be conceived of as common rights.

The ideal of the civil police developed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Though I imagine it arose first in France, it developed in England more rapidly and completely than anywhere else. It was, as the English mind apprehended it, a new organisation of force for novel ends. The policeman was to be the servant of all, he was to be kept entirely out of politics, his use of force was to be strictly limited, he was to be unarmed or very lightly armed with a truncheon or suchlike blunted implement, and he was to protect and

not infringe private liberties. He had to be alert but not inquisitorial, warn rather than command. If he did not hit hard, he was to hit surely; instead of a spasmodic and vindictive omnipotence he was to embody a gentle, inevitable omnipresent urgency.

In England and America and every European country there has been a struggle of these profoundly modern ideals with older and baser applications. Every British Home Secretary has felt the temptation to give the policeman a political twist, and almost always that temptation has been resisted. Both the United States and England have felt a certain pressure to set him such difficult and unsuitable tasks as the regulation of sexual morals, insistence upon bedtime, restrictions upon drinking and eating; and every attempt of this sort has been found to overstrain him morally and make him inconvenient. But he has never been so far demoralised anywhere yet as not to be a betterment in every community in which he appears.

Police force and military force, in their typical and contrasted forms, might almost be taken to symbolise the new human order and the old, the one candid, universal, protective and releasing, the other selective, combative secret, and compulsive. In the French and English newspapers during the last week or so there has been a curious display of both types of force. A group of criminals with romantic political pretensions has been forging French paper money in Hungary, and they have been caught by the frank concerted action of the French and Hungarian police. A robbery in England has been brought to book in Paris by an equally frank co-operation of the police of France and England. By being kept out of nationalist politics, the European police have been free to form a sort of international of their own to the universal benefit. There one sees the filaments of the new order leaping across the separations of the old. But at the same time a very nasty little affair has come to light in Toulon; mysterious Englishmen, it seems, have been in the stews of that city, inciting poor little prostitutes to worm secrets — what secrets can they be? — out of French sailors and arsenal workers. Secrets got in this way are not worth the stink they are wrapped in. But there you have the old order at work and there is your patriotic nationalism in its logical development. My intellect is cosmopolitan but my pride and instincts are patriotic, and I am not pleased by the

suggestion in the French papers that my Admiralty has been caught under the beds of the Toulon brothels.

A civil police is the proper method of force in the modern state, as a regenerate press is its proper method of mental intercommunication, and so the civilisation, the internationalisation of the police mentality is plainly the second line of work to which the creative revolutionary should address himself. The development of a great world press with common ideas *and* a common aim, and the development of an intercommunicating network of police forces throughout the world, animated by a common conception of security for life, property, movement, and thought, constitute the two main practical activities to which those who wish to secure the metamorphosis of social life should devote their attention, their energy, their ambitions, and their resources. An International Court between nations is all very well in its way, but far more penetrating and significant would be the organisation at Geneva or elsewhere of a central police bureau to co-ordinate the protection of life, property, and freedom throughout the world without distinction of persons under a universally accepted code.

12. RACE FANTASIES

THERE is a vast amount of racial prejudice in the world, and perhaps I am disposed to undervalue its importance as a force antagonistic to the development of a world republic. I am fairly alive to small differences and with quickly roused racial feelings, but though they affect my personal relationships in all sorts of ways, I do not find they are any encumbrance to social and business co-operation and interchange. It is quite plain to me that there are, for example, subtle differences between the reactions of Clissolds as a class and of Romers as a class to the same circumstances, and it is amusing to observe them and play with them and natural, a natural extension of one's self-love, to arrange a scale of values in which these differences are so estimated as to count in favour of the Clissolds. But my affairs have brought me into contact with most sorts of European transplanted to America, with Indian iron-masters and Chinese and Japanese business men in some variety, and while everywhere there were differences, differences in quality that were almost always exaggerated by differences in culture and training, nowhere did I find anything that could be considered an insurmountable barrier against their common citizenship in a world republic. The negro is the hardest case. But the negro has hardly ever had a dog's chance of getting civilised in considerable numbers, and yet his race has produced brilliant musicians, writers, and men of scientific distinction. In the eighteenth century he was the backbone of the British navy. I refuse to consider even the black patches of the world as a gangrene in the body of mankind or shut any kind of men out of a possible citizenship.

It is foolish to deny the variety of human types. There are strains with an earlier maturity, a shorter span of years, quicker, more vivid sensibilities, less inhibitory, less enduring. There are heavier and slower strains. There may be a great range of susceptibility to particular shocks and diseases and stresses. I doubt if there is any strain at all that can be picked out and isolated and described as being an all round inferior strain. At the utmost I will concede that some strains may give a larger proportion of feeble and inassimilable

individuals. I do not see why all of these varieties should not mingle and play different parts according to their quality.

The great society of the future will call for a large range of special aptitudes. Uniformity of type is impossible in it. There is already a natural segregation of the extremer types. They are subtly adapted to particular roles or to special climatic conditions. You might pour Singalese by the shipload into Norway or Highlanders into the Congo forests; in a few centuries you would look for their type in vain. However much humanity is stirred together, however much it interbreeds, I see no end to its variety so long as its opportunities vary. Some types may disappear but new ones will appear to replace them. The pattern of the kaleidoscope may change but there will always be a pattern. A time may come when we shall talk no longer of a man's race but of his temperamental type. But the number of temperamental types will have increased rather than diminished. As the world republic develops there will be a general lengthening of life and a longer phase of fully adult living, but every race may reveal its own distinctive possibilities of ripeness.

This book is to give one man's vision of this world; it is not a controversial book, and I do not propose to write any formal reply to the many preposterous volumes of incitement to race jealousy and conflict that have been published in the last few years, books about the Yellow Peril, the Rising Tide of Colour, the Passing of the Great Race, and so forth. Even the titles are banners and aggressions. Most of them impress me as the counterparts in ethnology to the profound historical researches of Mrs. Nesta Webster. There are scarcely the shadows of facts to correspond. I was sufficiently concerned about this suggestion a few years ago to give some time to ethnological realities. There has never been any Great Race, but a continual integration, dispersal, and even reintegration of active peoples drawn from the most diverse sources, and there is hardly a people which has not contributed some important release or achievement to the common progress.

Race trouble there is no doubt in very many regions of the world, but it may be questioned whether anywhere it is a trouble that arises entirely out of differences of race. Let us examine the conditions under which these conflicts have arisen. In no cases do racial stresses

appear to be more powerful than the economic with which they are mingled.

The immediate result of the change of range and scale that has been going on since the ocean-going ship appeared, has been to bring together or to bring into vigorous reaction peoples once widely and securely separated, and almost always there have been profound differences in the culture and in the phase of social development of the peoples thus flung together. The western Europeans had the leadership in the new phase, a leadership given to them quite as much by geographical accidents as by blood — for so level were east and west in material attainments five hundred years ago that it was practically a toss-up whether America should be discovered and settled by Chinese and Japanese junks or by European ships. The lead fell to the Europeans, and in America and Africa and the East Indies they blundered both upon vast regions for material eXploitation and also upon populations sufficiently backward and helpless to be exploited in that work. The negro, as the extreme example, was needed as a slave and he was taken as a slave, and the interests of the whites came to help their prejudice in damning him to a natural inferiority. There have been the most powerful inducements for the spreading European to believe and to behave in accordance with the belief that the brown, yellow, and black peoples upon whom his good fortune had thrust him were unteachable or weak-willed or ill-disposed or perverse, and fit only for a servile relationship to a profit-making master. The disadvantages that came from illiteracy and inexperience and inferior and antiquated traditions, are so indistinguishable from innate disadvantages, that the testimony against the exotic peoples was as easy to produce as it is difficult to confute.

To-day we are still in the midst of this unequal struggle. The means of getting at the backward populations are still increasing their efficiency, the large scale handling of things, mass and plantation production, are still spreading, and the scientifically constructed state still lags in its attempts to overtake the headlong rapacity of its Crests, to whom its science has given weapons and wings. The methods of the modern order develop too slowly for the old traditions that possess men's imaginations. The Crests are for

unskilled mass labour to-day, for serfdom and for slavery, just as firmly as the first Pharaohs, and as they once grabbed our coal and ore and turned our factories into hells for children and our industrial regions into slums, so now — as our own people have developed resistance and our industries have modernised their methods — they have spread their grasp wherever a less recalcitrant population seemed accessible to them.

Through all this picture I have been giving of my world as a developing economic and social system, runs the idea that in the process of change of scale that is going on now, there are two almost distinct strands, one unprecedented and one a repetition of a former human experience. The latter repeats the expropriation of small freemen and the concentration of wealth and economic power, that made and then destroyed Imperial Rome. The former is something that men have never known before, it is the progressive organisation of a scientific conservation and exploitation of natural resources on a world scale, for the common ends of mankind. This is Brahma taking the sceptre from Vishnu. It means a new type of industry; a supersession of human toil by machinery whenever it is merely toil, the progressive abolition of the ignorant and unskilled human being and the progressive development of skilled and mentally participating workers. Wherever it goes, it seeks to sanitate, train, educate, and reform. Its dearest, most cherished factor, is its labour. In the old system, labour was the cheapest, universal driving power under hunger and the whip. I have already drawn a contrast between our works at Downs-Peabody and the Crest Collieries. You may find that contrast running through all the industrial and agricultural developments of the world to-day and see the two systems everywhere fighting a still very uncertain battle.

The earlier system which arose from the first exploitation of the change of scale under the burthen of the old traditions, obsessed with the idea that an unlimited supply of labour, as nearly animal as possible, was a necessary condition to its progress, resisted education, resisted all organisation of its workers, underpaid them and did not protect them from the rapacity of adulterating retailers, sub-landlords, and every sort of middleman; it produced slums at every industrial centre, and it created swamps of agricultural

labourers at the pauper level, slaves or peons, wherever it set up its plantations. The creative industrialism of today, demanding as it does a high type of labour and as much participation as possible, has no more use for slums and a reserve of unemployed than it has for ghettos or slave ships. It is not that it is humanitarian but that it looks further and works cleaner. But it is only winning its way slowly to the control of the world's economic life, and what is effectively ascendent in the processes of production and distribution to-day remains the scrambling, crowding, profit-seeking, unorganised competitive tradition that was developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its methods were evolved in western Europe, and they have extended throughout the world.

Now these broad facts need to be borne in mind when the question of contemporary race conflicts is considered. There has been modernisation everywhere, but it has not brought up the regions that were backward a century ago to a level with the still rapidly changing modern states. While in the Atlantic countries the slum phase is past its maximum, the once autonomous Ii f e of Asiatic and African countries is, with improving communications, being invaded and drawn into world-trading relationships and repeating the story of western Europe.

A large part of the brown, yellow, and black population of the world is arriving now at a phase of economic development from which our Anglo-Saxon worker is gradually and with intermittent set-backs emerging. The baser factory industries emigrate to Asia. The east end of the world wins the empire of cheap and nasty from the east end of London. A universal characteristic of every population as it parts from its old economic and social balances and begins to eat bought and imported food and work regularly and uninterestingly for remote and unknown customers, is a vast, dingy proliferation. That happened in England. But it has ceased there. It is happening now over great areas of the world.

Not only do real and dreadful slums of the same type as those of middle nineteenth-century England appear in the great Indian and Chinese towns, but there is what one might call a general "slumification" of entire populations. Their original economic and social balances are destroyed by an influx of new commodities and

new employments. They become politically protected from warfare and raids. They lose native control over their best lands. The essence of a "slum" it seems to me is this: that it is a portion of population dependent on economic processes over which it has no control, fed so that it proliferates; it is the breeding of low-grade, uneducated employed. A Kaffir kraal, an Egyptian cotton-growing village, the Chinese quarter of a treaty town, an Italian township near some workable deposit of chemicals, may be as much of a slum now as a Lancashire cotton town or a black country district was in 1840.

The statistical aspects of this slum phase are extremely terrifying to all that sort of people who can be terrified by statistics. But indeed there is no reason for their terrors. Their "rising tide of colour," and so forth, is this natural and inevitable concomitant of the delocalisation of the economic life of the lands of "colour." Populations that have been at a kind of balance for centuries, multiply, add ten or fifteen per cent. at every census. This docs not mean any sort of biological success for the new peoples it is affecting. The new base population masses are at too low a grade of adaptability for effective settlement abroad. At the utmost they may transfer to congenial slums elsewhere where the sweating is a little better. Only in alarmist computations can they be considered capable of war. This "tide of colour" may rise in its own tanks to even tormenting pressures, but it will never overflow very extensively. And it is a tide that will ebb as the economic planet passes on to its next phase.

It is remarkable what intelligent people can be infected by these suggestions that we are all going to be turned black presently — or at any rate a dark chocolate — by these adverse birth-rates in the oriental and semi-tropical slums. They begin to fret about number and fret more and more. They are seized with a passionate advocacy of counter procreation. They write off books exhorting the "white" peoples to up and have a fearful lot of children. Nothing else they feel and declare will save us from colouring up like so many Meerschaum pipes. We are to launch babe against babe. I shall not be surprised to hear of exhortations to the quiet folk who listen in to the broadcasters. "*Think!* Seven little negroes and ten Chinese have been born in the last quarter of an hour. We are able to transmit the

squeals of the last. Wa-a-a-a. A warning! 'Wake up, England! What are you doing there? Oh, good! Good news to hand! — Triplets in Bermondsey, *all* white, and twins at Salisbury. Good women! Remember Nelson. England expects — —'"

I cannot respond to this clamour for children.

It does not alarm me in the least that the English birth rate for 1925 is the lowest on record. With a million and a half unemployed in England, I wish it could be lower. I hope it will be. I hope the time is not far off when every child born in England will be born because its parents fully meant it to be born and because they wanted it and meant to rear it. A time will come when all the world will have passed through and out of this slum phase in the development of a large scale economic life, and when birth control will be universal.

Birth control is indeed essential — nay, more, it is fundamental — to the conception of a new phase of human life that the world republic will inaugurate. I would make birth control my test of orthodoxy between liberalism and reaction. All who are for birth control are with me and essentially for the new world; all who are against it are against the progressive revolution.

Birth control embodies in the most intimate and vivid form, the essential differentiation of the newer conception of life from the old. The old was based upon the idea of a meticulous Providence. It not only took chances at every turn, but it found a kind of superstitious delight in taking chances. It was always expecting Providence to rig them in favour of good intentions. It retained this childish attitude throughout life. Do what you are told to do, submit, make no attempts to control consequences; its spirit lay in such injunctions, and if it was so far inconsistent and illogical as to struggle against competitors and rivals, to promote wars and grip possessions, it always defended its inconsistency by a surprised assertion that in these things it obeyed the way of Nature and the Will of God. But the new idea of life admits no limit to man's attempt to control his destinies. It plans as largely as it can; it would plan more largely if it could; it gathers together every available force to free man from accident and necessity and make him master of the universe in which he finds himself.

I cannot conceive a world republic existing and continuing unless

that automatic increase of population which follows every increment in the food supply is restrained, and it can only be restrained by a worldwide knowledge and universal acceptability of the methods and means of birth control. The material gains of the nineteenth century were largely swallowed up by the disorganised increase in population. Given sufficient wisdom to control that, and these nightmares of civilisation suffocating under th multiplicity of its darker and baser offspring, dissolve into nothingness.

No variety of the human species has any overwhelming and uncontrollable desire for offspring as such; that old Crone Nature has never yet given the desires of sex so long a range of vision; and as the standard of living and the multiplicity of interests increase, there are no sort of people anywhere who will not welcome the freedoms and the relief from burthensome families that birth control affords. The love and pride of children will ensure the sufficient continuation of the race. But that very love and pride is opposed to the swarming ill-conducted household under an exhausted mother that is the characteristic slum home. The most philoprogenitive would surely rather breed three masters than a dozen slaves.

When we find a race or a people alleged to have an overwhelming desire for children as children, it will be found almost always that they are living under conditions which render possible the early utilisation of these children, who are sent into the fields or sent out to work or sold for servitude and outrage — before childhood is fairly at an end. These simple-hearted folk, you will find, are breeding themselves, as well as their chickens and pigs, for profit. It is easy to cite the Bombay Hindu as a man who will recoil from birth control with a noble, a religious, an instinctive horror, but he is easier to understand when one learns that he may have two or three wives, get children by all of them, send wives and all the children as soon as they are toddling into the cotton mills and fill his paunch with their combined pay. But shut these mills to little children and married women, brace up his social and educational responsibilities, and you will find his ideas about the family westernising at a headlong pace. In a little while he will be another Hindu gone over, as they say, to "western materialism," and you will find him studying birth control advertisements in his native press as eagerly as he studies the offers

of nerve tonics and cures for impotence that now adorn these publications.

I do not want to minimise the grave dangers of the slum strata, these pockets and mines and veins of slum matter, that are so widespread now on our changing planet. But they do not threaten us with great racial conflicts, wars of white against yellow, gigantic all-black insurrections or the like. And they are not to be cured by a countervailing domestic activity that will distend every respectable "white" home with babies, and send back the whites to insanitary mediaevalism. What these great "slumifications" may engender is a delaying and destructive malaria of ignorance and misconception, a fever of violent politics.

The remedy is not more white babies, but more civilisation. It lies in the hands of the men of worldwide business .interests and great financial power. They and they alone can exercise a sufficient directive force to hurry the economic development of the more dangerous lands past the festering phase. It is they alone who can arm or disarm, corrupt or control. With them resides the possibility of a concerted breaking down of the fantastic barriers to trade, transport and intercommunication that now protect backward, wasteful, misplaced and slum-creating forms of employment. No other sort of men can do that, but only big business men. They can strengthen the hands of the labour intellectuals and enforce their demand for a rising minimum standard of living throughout the planet. With a rising standard of comfort the springs that feed these dank dangerous marshes of low-grade breeding will dry up, because whenever comfort rises, the birth-rate falls. And it is the big-business men who can and who should subsidise and stimulate liberal education everywhere. They can loosen restrictions on press and publication in these matters, with an effectiveness peculiar to their position of advantage. Everywhere they can make aids and assistance conditional upon open windows and unrestricted light. Their moral influence can be enormous. Even now it can be enormous, and as their realisation of their responsibilities grows, as the Open Conspiracy realises itself, it will become the guiding power in world affairs.

And as the world republic dawns into economic being, this

literature of race panic and breeding scares that now gives such grave concern to so many unsoundly informed people, will seem more and more preposterous and curious.

13. ANTIQUITY OF YOUTH

THERE has been a fashion lately of flattering the young. The young have been told that they are the hope of the earth and that their naIve instincts are better than all the painfully acquired wisdom of mankind. But to be young is not necessarily to be new. All immaturity is by its very nature a throw-back. The gill arches of the human embryo recall the Cambrian period and are the roundabout way of nature to a jawbone that one would be glad to have developed more directly, and to earbones one could have wished better designed. The infantile mind recapitulates the successive suppressions of the ape and the savage. The adolescent young man or woman is a barbarian by nature, ready to revive, eager to revive, all the tawdry romanticism that we adults are clearing away. Young people are not conservative perhaps, but they are instinctively reactionary.

Since the war we have been much oppressed by the generation that grew up and missed it. They grew up while their fathers and elder brothers were away and for many of them the spanking hand, the reproving voice, never returned. It has seemed to many of this raw stratum that it was their business to take control of the earth. But their proper business is to learn something about the earth.

Adolescent mentality has had an opportunity to display itself since the war, as it has never had before in the whole history of mankind, and everywhere it has shown itself the same thing, violent, intolerant, emotional, dramatic, stupid and blind to all the vaster intimations of the catastrophe. Everywhere it has rushed to follow extremist leaders and to follow them with a fierce devotion. The Communist Party in Moscow is substantially youthful, and its devotees in Europe and America are rarely over thirty. The fascist nuisance is its natural counterpart.

The mind of youth is a medieval mind. It takes us back to the age of persecution, to the age of theology and urgent fear. Life crowds upon the young with an effect of intense impatience; all the decisions youth makes seem to its inexperience to be conclusive decisions. It snatches at guiding principles and defends them dogmatically. Youth

like an undisciplined army dare not risk manoeuvre or retreat for fear of a panic. It seeks to silence and kill criticisms — not because it believes intensely but because it fears that it will not believe. Its violence veils a profound intellectual cowardice, the dread of a phase of indecision, the horror of being left at loose ends.

Few minds are mature enough and stout enough before thirty to achieve a genuine originality. The originality of the young is for the most part merely a childish reversal of established things. The independence of the young is commonly no more than a primitive resistance to instruction. The youthful revolutionary is merely insubordinate and his extremist radicalism an attempt to return to archaic conditions, to naturalism, indiscipline, waste, and dirt. The youthful anti-revolutionary turns back to mystical loyalties and romance.

14. SUPERSESSION OF SCHOOLMASTERS

IT is necessary to educate the young for the new order. But that everyone should be educated does not mean that every one is to go to school or that schools are to be enlarged and multiplied. People are too apt to identify schools and education. Never was there a more mischievous error. Schools may merely fix and intensify those adolescent qualities it is the business of education to correct.

My distant cousin Wells — if a character may for once turn on his creator and be frank about him — has written frequently and abundantly of the supreme necessity of education, of that race he detects in human affairs between "education and catastrophe." I agree about the urgency of the need for education, but I doubt if he has sufficiently separated the idea of education from the idea of schoolmastering. He was, I believe, for some years at an impressionable age, a schoolmaster, and he has shown a pathetic disposition throughout a large part of his life to follow schoolmasters about and ask them to be more so, but different. His actions have belied his words. He was indeed so much of an educator that quite early he found it imperative to abandon schoolmastering. He produced encyclopaedic schemes and curricula that no schoolmaster would or could undertake. He wrote a text-book of history that shocked the scholastic mind beyond measure. Finally he settled down to a sort of propaganda of Sanderson of Oundle, whose chief claim to immortality is that there never was a man in control of a public school so little like a schoolmaster.

Dickon discovered Oundle, and both Dick and William spent their school years there, and in my capacity of uncle I met Sanderson quite a number of times. We two had just missed meeting him thirty odd years before. He must have come to Dulwich as science master a year or so after we had gone on to South Kensington. But what a schoolmaster! His methods were passionately anti-scholastic. The answer to the riddle, "When is a school not a school?" used to be, "When it is Oundle." He was trying to make his school a factory, a laboratory for agricultural biology, a museum, an institute for the preparation of reports upon everything under the sun, a musical and

dramatic society. He would get explorers, investigators, industrial leaders, to come and freshen the scholastic air by talking to his boys. His enemies said he let down the games, let down the scholarship of the place. I believe he did. It is not least among his claims to honour. He made it as nearly an educational institution as any English public school has ever been. The games and grammar prig was at a discount at Oundle all through Sanderson's time.

Dickon was greatly taken by Sanderson; even physically they had something in common. They were both ruddy, ample men with a spice of rhetoric in their composition. But Sanderson was always rather out of condition, fattish, with a shortness of breath that should have warned his friends of the heart weakness that snapped him off from life in mid-activity. He spoke with a pant in his voice and in broken sentences, and there was a faint remote echo of Northumbria in his intonations.

The school, he said, should be a model of the world not of the world as it is but of the world as it ought to be. It had to send out boys prepared for adult life, ready to take hold of affairs. So he did his utmost to bring reality to them; he filled his place with machines and models of mines, with charts of trade and production. He sent batches of boys to factories and collieries, to live among the workers for a week or so. He put up a building which he called the Temple of Vision with money he got from Sir Alfred Yarrow, and he was going to fill it, he told me, with charts and exhibits to display the whole story of human achievement from its very beginnings to the present time. It was quite empty when I saw it, a little while before his death, and I believe it is empty still, but as he stood amidst its echoing bareness and expounded it to me, I saw plainly a vision of that soul of creative industrialism he was trying to evoke. He died before any of his wider plans materialised. His greater Oundle was never more than a project, and the big, prosperous, and liberal school he left behind him reverts to the normal conditions of an English public school. The games and the "scholarship" have been restored; the novelties cut out; the Yarrow Memorial has never become a Temple of Vision. My nephews, I think, were lucky indeed to have fallen into Sanderson's time and have him as their master; they liked him enormously, not wIth awe but wIth a great affection; William

particularly was his loyal friend.

When one met and talked with Sanderson it was possible to believe, as my cousin Wells believed, that there could be a mighty reconstruction of the life of England and the world, through schools, through an expansion and glorification of public schools. One saw for a dazzling interlude, England all dotted with Oundles, each with its biological laboratory in contact with agriculture, its workshops in contact with industry, its youngsters alive to the realities of the life of the community. One saw a new generation of. young Englishmen, broad-minded, helpful, generous-spirited, capable, technically equipped, going out into the world, servants and masters of the republic of mankind. The fallacy of that hope lay in the fact that from the scholastic point of view Sanderson was a complete abnormality. There were no other schoolmasters like him, and there are not likely to be any. He was the antithesis of a public schoolmaster; a complete "outsider," in the opinion of most of his fellow heads, a lamentable, scandalous incident that had happened to a small, respectable grammar school.

You need only consult the nearest secondary schoolmaster to verify the statement. To ask such a one about Sanderson is like asking a "fully qualified," dull and dangerous general practitioner about that famous osteopath, Sir Herbert Barker, and his forty thousand forbidden cures. "*Oow! — Sanderson?* That Oundle fellow!" The man goes green. His nostrils twitch into a sneer. He intimates with an unreal gentleness that you know very little of schoolmastering if you think Sanderson is a schoolmaster; "very, very little." And under encouragement he develops his case.

Sanderson was originally an *elementary* teacher, not a real schoolmaster at all. He went to Cambridge on a special scholarship. His religious orthodoxy was more than doubtful. He had radical views. His patriotism was uncertain. His mathematical teaching was eccentric. Moreover, he did nothing new, and whatever he did new was done better, elsewhere. "By men who don't advertise, y'know." And— "he let down the games and all that!" He was good at squeezing money out of his governors, of course. Had his points, no doubt. So the *secondary* schoolmaster.

This idea that Sanderson in his later years entertained and

expanded to the Rotary Clubs and to Weir and Yarrow and Bledisloe and my cousin and all and sundry, this idea that we might start a new way of life, a new phase of civilisation in the schools, that we might make them models of the world as it ought to be, forecasts of and training places for new achievements in civilisation, is vitiated by just this *one* little flaw that the last human beings in the world in whom you are likely to find a spark of creative energy or a touch of imaginative vigour are the masters and mistresses of upper middle-class schools. I say of upper-class schools because the origins and quality of the teachers in the popular schools of Europe make them psychologically an entirely different species. But these schoolmasters and school-mistresses, as distinguished from teachers, to whom we entrust the sons and daughters of nearly all the owning and directing people of our world, are by necessity orthodox, conformist, genteel people of an infinite discretion and an invincible formality. Essentially they are a class of refugees from the novelties and strains and adventures of life. I do not see how as a class they can ever be anything else.

In the past there was nothing paradoxical in the fact that schools were conservative social organs. They were established not to innovate but restrain, to transmit a rule, a ritual, conventions of writing, speech and computation, to priestly neophytes, to prospective rulers. The less they changed, the better they observed the spirit of their foundation. So far as my casual knowledge goes, the idea of a *progressive* school dawned only after the onset of the New Learning at the Renaissance. Even then I doubt if the idea of the idea of progress actually entering the schools can be traced. The new schools were to teach Greek and ope}} the world of liberal thought as the man left the school and went on into life. Greek was the key to a liberal and creative culture; but the school handed over the key rather than opened the door. The highest virtue of the school was still precision; with blows and exhortations it handed on a correct tradition of languages and calculation, and presumed but little beyond.

Larger pretensions on the part of the schoolmaster grew with the development of boarding-schools in the past three centuries. The Jesuit schools, which in accordance with Bacon's counsels, provided

the pattern even in the most Protestant countries for the new schools of Europe, took boys right out of their homes for the most formative years in life. This no doubt did very much to break up the solidarity, the clannishness of families; but it substituted a new clannishness, loyalty to the school. Men became prouder of their schools than of their fathers. The pedagogue added the duties of a delegated parentage to his teaching. He set himself to character building. The English public schools ran away with this pattern and became the extreme instance of the new development. In the nineteenth century their influence reached its zenith. By the middle of that century the prevalent Englishman abroad and in public affairs had become a type noticeably different from any other nationality. He had become stiff, arrogant, profoundly ignorant, technically honourable, and utterly incomprehensible to the uninitiated rest of mankind. He was no longer the Englishman of the Elizabethan and Cromwellian model, half Kelt, half Viking; he was no longer any sort of man; he was a public-school boy, the finished product. Amid the harsh realities of business he did not so much abound, and there and in art and literature one may still find the native Englishman, comparatively unwarped by schoolmastering. But the clue to the manifest change in character that Britain and its Empire have displayed during the last hundred years, the gradual lapses from a subtle and very real greatness and generosity, to imitative imperialism and solemn puerility is to be found, if not precisely upon the playing fields of Eton, in the mental and moral quality of the men who staff its public schools.

It was manifest to a man like Sanderson that the ruling and directive English of to-day had been *made* politically and socially by the public school. It seemed logical to him that if you turned the public school about towards creative things, you would in the same measure turn about the Empire and the drama of the world in which it still plays so large a part. But since he was a complete "outsider," as they said, to public-school life, since he picked his assistants very forcibly to suit himself and his own methods, it was natural for him to remain to the last blind to the inevitable characteristics of the men who would in general staff the boarding-schools of an upper class, wherever such boarding-schools came into existence, and their

fantastic incompatibility with any such salvation of the world by schools as he projected.

The last time I was in England I had occasion to go to Dimbourne to put in a friendly word for my eldest grandson who is on the waiting list for that ancient foundation. It is not my wish that has sent him there. He has to go there because his father was a Dimbourne boy before him, and I am supposed to be influential because Walpole Stent, the next master under the Head — I forget for a moment his exact title — is my half-brother. He did not follow Dickon and myself to Dulwich and so come into the Sanderson orbit, because the Walpole Stents also had a Dimbourne tradition. He went to Dimbourne on some special terms reserved for the children of old Dimbournians and got a school scholarship for Oxford, achieved a moderate degree in Greats, and after various assistantships returned to the old place. There I found him and walked about the scattered school buildings with him, inspected the dormitories of his house, looked at some cricket, visited the wonderful old cloisters and the dreadful new War Memorial, all of white marble, and the arms of our allies and colonies and dependencies in gilt and colour, met his various colleagues and dined with the Head and refreshed my impressions of the directive forces at the heart of representative English manhood.

I had not seen him for a dozen years or more, and I was struck by his increasing resemblance to my departed stepfather. He bends his forehead forward now with just the same effect of undirected preoccupation that failed to win the respect of Dickon and myself forty odd years ago. I must be twelve or thirteen years older than he is; but I felt that of the two of us he was rather the senior. He seemed to realise that too. It came into my head suddenly when he greeted me that my father was a convicted felon and a suicide — a thing that had not troubled me in the least for a score of years. He seemed to feel that I was not quite worthy of Dimbourne, but that he would do his best to overlook that, and be kind to me and make me understand the place. His voice is quite different from his father's. It is an acquired voice. At times it brays rather querulously. He pitches it up in the air and keeps it there, dominating you as no doubt it dominates a classroom. It seems to tire him. I do not remember my stepfather

ever betraying fatigue in the use of his voice.

We sat in his study at night after I had been through the staff and the Head, and before I departed to sleep in the horrible parents' Inn, in the town. We talked as much like blood relations as possible. He has some traits of my mother in his chin and jaw and about his eyes. He tried to condescend but he had no courage. He speedily fell back upon the defensive offence. At times sheer propitiation came to the surface. He knew I was the stronger animal and he left the conversational leads to me.

The room, like all scholastic studies I have ever seen, was lined with bookshelves. They reached up to about two-thirds of the height of the room, and above that against a dingy green wallpaper were various of those extraordinary violent black and white prints in which Piranesi guyed the monuments of Rome. All schoolmasters admire them. They exaggerate so heroically. There must be a perpetual copying and reprinting of these things to replenish the scholastic market. There were also two very large photographs of the Matterhorn which my intrepid half-brother has twice ascended, an ice axe and some ski. And there was a cast, a very cheap cast, of the head of that statue of Antinous which is in a niche in the Vatican Museum. For some reason that is not perfectly clear to me it is associated with a memory of marsh mallows growing in a marble basin. It is, I think, called the Belvedere Antinous, the one I mean with the downcast face. I remember the head as a very beautiful one, and I have seen many photographs and even copies of it that have recalled much of its loveliness, but this cast was a half-size cast, made from the work of some poor copyist, and it had, I reflected as the evening went on, much the same relationship to its fresh and gracious original that the erudition of a Greats scholar has to philosophy and the Greek spirit. That dulled reminiscence, that false claim to an intimacy never achieved, was so placed that it looked down on my half-brother as he sat and talked to me of the richness and wonder of the Dimbourne tradition. On the table was an untidy litter of papers, various books, a tobacco jar and pipes. My half-brother is a conscientious and systematic smoker, with a pipe for every day in the week. It is by his smoking and the mightiness of his pipes, by his cricket and by his feats among the classical mountains,

that one knows him for a man.

I do not recall and I could not imitate our dialogue. I have already quoted him once, for it was he who called Sanderson “that Oundle fellow.” I became curious to know him, for he was still alive. I tried him over modern writers a little rather carefully so as not to scare him. Shaw was “that crank who runs down Shakespeare”; Nietzsche was a madman of whom he could not “make head or tail”; Samuel Butler, William James, Maurice Baring, Philip Guedalla, Cunninghame Graham, James Joyce, James Branch Cabell, Christopher Morley, Sherwood Anderson, Mencken, Tchehov, Julian Huxley, Fairfield Osborne, Sir Arthur Evans, Jung, were among the names he had either never heard of or forgotten, but Freud, he knew, was “pigs’ stuff.” His phrase. He had caught two boys talking about Freud and “pulled them up pretty sharply.” Anatole France he had heard of, but not read. That took my breath away.

“One can’t keep pace with it all,” he said wearily. “Luckily I don’t have to buy for the school library. That faIls to Gunbridge, and he tells me the difficulty of getting any modern books that a clean healthy boy may open without danger is — frightful.”

W. H. Hudson, for some inexplicable reason, he supposed to have written a text-book of English literature. Sinclair Lewis, he thought, had “seduced poor George Eliot.” Perhaps I was a little exacting about American writers, but I wanted to know what the young lions of a ruling class were likely to get from him about that really rather important country. So I tried him up and down the list. He knew absolutely nothing of any living American writer at all unless Professor Nicholas Murray Butler can be considered one; him he had met at some academic treat at Oxford. He spoke of the “poverty” of contemporary letters.

“What wouldn’t they give for our Newbolt or our Kipling?” he asked.

“You think there is no promise at all there?” I put in. He shrugged his shoulders and grimaced. I pretended to understand.

I turned back to science and philosophy. Charles Darwin, he thought, “rather blown upon nowadays.” He had been “exposed a good deal,” he understood, by the Abbe Mend!. Einstein for some occult reason, he said, “chopped logic.” I would like to have pursued

that, but I felt it might be unwise to press him too closely. Even as it was, he had become a little restive under my rather persistent soundings. “You have more time for reading than I have, I see,” he expostulated suddenly. “Here the work is incessant — incessant. And when I have a holiday — well, I put a little worn volume of Catullus into my pocket. That suffices. Old-fashioned stuff, you will say. Old, old stuff. Yes, I admit it.”

I note in passing that these rare holidays of his amount to almost three months in the year.

I felt he had managed his “get away” rather creditably. I did not pursue him further in that direction.

I got him to talk about the boys in the school. And the fathers and uncles— “and the mothers!” said my half-brother — who came respectfully and intermittently when the disciplines of the school permitted it. “Odd people we have now,” he said. The waiting list had never been longer. Business people from the Midlands were discovering Dimbourne, people with factories and so forth. “It’s a good omen for the country,” he said.

He had an air of forgetting that Dickon and I belonged to this lowly but opulent stratum. “We do what we can to civilise them,” he said. “Some of the boys are quite jolly. But the fathers ask the most impossible things. Oh! One of them wanted us to take up Russian, and another was here only yesterday demanding a German master. I don’t mean a man to teach German *inter alia*, I mean a real live Hun. Modern German. German without literature or history. So that they might *speak* it — like commercial travellers. And there’s a working model of an ore crusher one of them has given us. It’s in one of the corridors. A frightful thing for getting in the way. Near the Roman galley and the restoration of Jerusalem. One has to tide over that sort of thing. One has to parry. The mothers are fussy about health and warm baths and flowers on the dinner table, dreadfully fussy at times, but most of that falls on the matrons, thank Heaven! They are much more amenable about the curriculum — much more amenable. They seem to feel what we are really driving at, more than the men.”

He was under way now and I found it less necessary to follow him up closely. I abstained from asking what he was really driving at. My eyes wandered to the bookshelves. There were hardly any real books

at all. There were schoolbooks, dictionaries, Macaulay's History, Green's History of the English People, classical and Bible Encyclopaedias, Murray's Guide to Switzerland, school editions of the classics with notes, informative books on mountaineering and ski-ing and fly-fishing and cricket. There was an annotated Shakespeare, the "Works" of Sir Walter Scott, the Vailima Stevenson, various Kiplings, an odd volume of *Picturesque Europe*, something called *Rab and his Friends*, a book called *Friends in Council* — what could that have been? A stray Quaker volume? — a lot of dingy leather-bound books that looked like sermons and may have been bought to fill up. What on earth is the Badminton Library? There was a lot of it....

My attention reverted for a time to my half-brother. "I can say with a good deal of confidence, with considerable confidence in fact, that Dimbourne is one of the *cleanest* schools in England. It needs constant watchfulness....

"Send them to bed tired," said my half-brother thoughtfully, as he knocked out the ashes of his pipe upon the top bar of the grate. "Send them to bed tired."

So that was what he had got to. It was time I too was sen t to bed tired.

I roused myself from a private meditation upon heredity. I had been thinking of the beach near Saint Raphael — how many years was it ago? — and of a longer, leaner, but extremely similar Walpole Stent in knickerbockers, bowling and bowling to Dickon's hefty smacks, never by any chance getting him out, and all the while lecturing, helpfully, improvingly, confidently, on Dickon's way of holding his bat, which was wrong, which was all wrong. *Plank*, and away went the ball for four. "You have a good eye," said my stepfather, "but it's all wrong; the knuckles of the left hand ought to be much more forward."

And from these memories I had strayed to questionings that touched my suppressed but incurable patriotic pride. Which of us represents "God's Englishman" — as Mr. John Milton put it — most nearly? We Clissolds or these Walpole Stents — the wild English or the tame?

Whatever the answer to that may be, there is little doubt in my

mind which of the two, Sanderson or Walpole Stent, is the representative schoolmaster, the schoolmaster with whom we creative people have to reckon. I do not see how it is possible in any country where there are great differences in class and where the schoolmasters are drawn from the middle and upper classes, that the average schoolmaster should ever be a much better thing than my half-brother. The whole crowd of upper-class youth has been picked over again and again before the schoolmasters come; the most vigorous and innovating men have gone in for diplomacy, the law, politics, the public services, science, literature, art, business, the hard adventure of life; and at last comes the residue. "Poor devil!" I once heard my nephew Dick say of a friend of his. "He's got a second-class. His people have no money. His games are pretty fair. He'll have to go into a school." A few public schoolmasters may have a vocation; the body of them, the substance of the profession, is that sort of residue. Its mentality is the mentality of residual men.

That is a neglected factor which has to be reckoned with in the history of the British Empire during the last hundred years. That is something the foreign observer has still to realise. A larger and larger proportion of its influential and directive men throughout this period have spent the most plastic years of their lives under the influence of the least lively, least enterprising, most restrictive, most conservative and intricately self-protective types it was possible to find. We have bred our governing class mentally, as the backward Essex farmer bred his pigs, from the individuals that were no good for the open market. The intelligent foreigner complains that the Englishman abroad has been growing duller and stiffer in every generation. I offer up my half-brother, Walpole Stent, as the clue.

From quite early years this scholastic type has to develop a private system of compensatory false values. Life would be unendurable without it. These men of a secondary grade of vitality whose lot it is to figure in the rump of the first or second class in every examination, and to go in to bat in the tail of the eleven, find their refuge in an ideal of modest worth, something richer, better, and truer than flaunting success, something which is the real opposite of failure. Walpole Stent's phrase about Dimbourne cricket returns to me. "We always manage to put up a decent show." And he used another

phrase, “We don’t pretend to be miracle workers.” It was an intimation that “miracle working” wasn’t really in quite the best form. It was something you “pretended” to. The mathematical teaching at Dimbourne “does not claim to turn out calculating boys.” But Dimbourne used to “cut a good figure” in the old Mathematical Tripos, and had a “decent” list of First, Second, and Third Wranglers in that perverted test of unphilosophical discipline. Style, good form, is a great consolation for the impotent. Mr. Shandy’s bull, one remembers, was a master of style.

And another powerful word with Walpole Stent was “scholarly.” The substance might be platitudinous, the argument inconclusive, the deductions wrong; those things were upon the knees of the gods; but one could at any rate be accurate upon minor points and polished, stylish, careful, and allusive about the irrelevant. No examination ever discovered genius, intellectual power, and “all that sort of thing”; no examination is or can be a test for poverty of the imagination; and so the worthy man gets through “quite decently” and presently finds himself, in his armour of compensatory values, less thrust, it seems to him, than called, to domination over schoolboy minds. He has never been first before, but now in this world of school he is master, and he can make his compensations his standards. It is inevitable, it is without malice or compunction that he does so.

Inevitably he is conservative. He has abandoned free, novel, and powerful things to bow himself to the existing state of affairs, and he resents the freedoms, enterprises, and novel successes that reflect upon his own retractions. He becomes the quiet, inaggressive but obstinate champion of the old order against his bolder contemporaries. He desires their defeat because it involves his own justification. He will thwart where he can and deprecate always. But he loves to exalt the past, the classic, magnified past, the glory of the splendid dead — who are deader even than he. How can it be otherwise with him?

That is the stuff that must be in general control of the development of our youngsters, so long as we are content to send them off to these boarding-schools. No other stuff is available for such places, which by their very existence insist upon class

distinctions and class traditions. And just as it is unavoidable that nine out of ten schoolmasters will be of this type, so also are certain reactions unavoidable upon the minds of the generations they will influence. They will not inspire, they will not compel, they will not stimulate nor evoke. If they had the quality to do that they would not be public schoolmasters. Catholic schoolmasters with the immense traditions of the Church behind them may try to shape boys to a preconceived pattern, but not the English public schoolmaster. His boys are too strong and well-connected for him to impose a type. His action is negative. He lets a type happen. His results lie not in what he imposes but in what he permits. He surrounds his boys with an atmosphere in which "good form" is better than great achievement. He infects with his habitual, his tacit, disparagement of exhaustive performance. Intensity or concentration of interest he marks as priggishness, as unhealthy, as presumption. New and stirring things are belittled — because if they are not belittled the humiliating question arises, "Why then are you not taking part in them?" Persistently the suggestion is conveyed to the boys that the great things of life are shams and only the little things are real. There is a fatal responsiveness in boys to such treatment. Boys who will resist commands and prohibitions with the utmost vigour and persistence yield with extraordinary ease to a sneer. So he restrains the criticism of life; deflects attention from all strenuous issues towards formality and convention, in politics, in economic assumptions, in religion. F or religion, the hushed voice, the averted mind. For sex, darkness. "Pigs' stuff." The world is full of things one does not do, one does not speak about.

And his teaching! The public schoolmaster is in temperamental sympathy with just that intractability, that hatred to being taught and changed, which is natural to recalcitrant youth. He is the natural ally of the unenterprising boy against the boy who may make the pace too hard for the two of them. None of that at Dimbourne. He is doing nothing in the world but teaching, but how can one teach with any vigour unless one also does the thing one teaches and does it well? Who can teach mathematics who never deals with forms and quantities in real earnest, or a language if there is no attempt at expression? So he does not teach with vigour. He is bored and he

bores. He bores apologetically. “You fellows do not like this stuff, nor do I. But it’s the Right Thing to do it” — in a certain fashion. It doesn’t *mean* anything, of course, but “the grind” — the grind, he calls it, “is good for you.”

He flies from the classroom to the playing fields. There he has his strength as a man to exact a kind of respect for himself, from himself and the rest of them. “Well hit, Sir! *Oh! Well hit*!” One can forget one’s contemporaries then who are struggling up to economic and political power, who are going about the great world outside, doing considerable things. There are some splendid moments after all for the schoolmaster. When his heart swells near to bursting for the dear old school. When he is popular about some petty issue, the Tuck Shop question or the Summer Camp, and the boys stand up and cheer. He composes himself to look modest and even a little ruffled. But how fresh, how honest is that schoolboy approval, bass and tenor and alto all together! “Three cheers for Mr. Walpole Stent. Hip. Hip. Hooray!”

These boys have an instinct. Many of these “painter fellows,” these “much-belauded writers,” these old scientific moles, never get such a cheer throughout their entire lives. Unless they come down to us for Speech Day and we incite the boys about them.

There is the real schoolmaster. I do not blame the man for being what he is, a retarding shadow upon the best youth of our country; he achieves his self-respect against great difficulties, and I would gladly leave him alone in his self-satisfaction if it were not for the manhood he arrests. But I do not see how we of the new order of things can be content to see our sons, our nephews, bright boys of every origin, every sort of boy who is to be given opportunity, the majority of our successors, left to his dwarfing restrictions for want of a better routine. So long as we pass our youth through the sieve of the public schools, we shall find them triturated down to his dimensions, and the “rank outsider” will still be needed to save us by his unimpaired initiatives. Dickon and I, like so many men in business and public affairs in England, are outsiders, but I do not hold a brief for the outsider as a class. They have faults all of their own, a huge carelessness, Wastefulness, inco-ordination. Is not all this book about their faults? But at least they were not partially paralysed by growing

up under the shadow of subconsciously futile men.

So there appears a third integral part of a creative revolution in my world, parallel with the gradual creation of a liberal world press, and equal in importance to the systematic replacement of militant ideals by police ideals: the development of a boldly conceived new education and a release of the main supply of our directive and progressive youth from the cramping influence of these establishments. All this sending apart of young people, out of our homes and affairs, to acquire an attitude of supercilious evasiveness towards living and progressive things, makes directly for stagnation and reaction. The best education for reality is contact with reality.

I can understand parents who live in an evil climate or lead disorderly lives or ply some disgraceful trade, sending their sons and daughters out of their surroundings into a better atmosphere, but not men and women pursuing active and influential careers, directing interesting industries, promoting important economic and social developments. I do not see how we can at one and the same time believe in ourselves and in the public schoolmasters. If our homes and businesses are not fit for our children to live through, it seems to me that a change in the spirit and direction of our home and business life is indicated. "We should in that case mend our manners or our morals. If I had had sons I would have seen to it that they were first and foremost Clissolds and not "Dimbournians." I might have entrusted them to Sanderson at Oundle, but I know of no other school to which I would have delegated my paternity.

I would have us recover all this "formation of character" work, all the cultivation of taste, the interpretation of history and the establishment of standards of conduct and aim, out of the hands of these "upper class" schoolmasters into which they have so largely drifted in Britain and western Europe and into which they seem to be drifting in America. And reduce these all too influential pedagogues to their original and proper function of the skilled teaching of specific things. If they proved — which is by no means certain — to be equal to the skilled teaching of specific things. We want skilled teachers badly, but the fewer schoolmasters we have the better. The world, and the social atmosphere it throws around us, is the final maker of all of us. When it was barbaric and dangerous, then there

was some excuse for making little refuges and fostering places for civilised traditions and learning, under monastic sanctions. They gave a narrow and cramping education but it was better than none. Men like Saint Benedict and Cassiodorus, indeed, saved European learning, but that is no reason why we should go to Subiaco or the fastnesses of Monte Cassino now to learn to read and do sums. Now that the world grows safe and orderly and decent there is less and less justification for withdrawing young people from the general life in order to equip them for that general life.

A good case is to be made out for the well-equipped, skilfully conducted, sociable Kindergarten for a dozen or a score of children, against the home with only one or two. I do not think that childhood is the period when close contact between parent and child is most advisable. And since many of us now move about the world very freely and since social life increases in the variety of its relationship, there may be excellent reason for a great use and extension of schools of the ((preparatory" type, as they call them in England, schools, often largely staffed by women, and not very big, where little fellows between seven and fifteen live a quasi-family life. But from fifteen onward the more directly a boy lives in contact with the real world the better alike for the real world and himself.

Then it is that the tradition of his family or the achievements of his parents may become of interest to him, and he may benefit by learning what these beings, so exceptionally like himself, think of life, and how they have dealt with it before him. By fourteen or fifteen special aptitudes should be apparent, and a boy should begin to work hard in some technical school according to his intentions and interests and quality. But if possible he should live at home. He should begin to see something of his father's life and his family business. There is a tremendous leap forward in the capacity of a boy's mind between fourteen and sixteen which the English public schools, retaining boys to eighteen or nineteen, do not recognise and help powerfully to arrest.

The boy's sister should be active upon parallel lines. They should both be reading widely, listening and talking freely in a community in which the boy will habitually encounter adult minds and girls and women, and the girl, men. They should go to special schools for

special ends. Not even in these special schools should the boy meet Walpole Stent or sniff the wind of his frowsy study.

What will happen to Walpole Stent in a modernised world I do not know and I do not care. He might make a good timekeeper in a factory. The teachers of the modern specialist schools will not be the residuum of a social class, but specially equipped men of any social origin, and they will actually teach what they profess to teach. Their business will be what old Sanderson called "tool sharpening"; mathematics, scientific processes, languages; and the only moral influence they will exert in their classrooms will be the best moral influence of all, the one our public schools most frequently omit, the example of work seriously and vigorously done.

When one turns either in England or in France from the old schools, the upper class schools with a long tradition, to the new popular schools for elementary instruction, sustained by the state, that have become numerous in the last century, one comes upon entirely different psychological processes. The two sorts of schools are different worlds. These latter schools were carefully planned to supply a certain necessary minimum of education to the working-classes without any disturbance of class relationships. They made no pretence of character forming; that they were given to understand from the first would be presumption; their business was to supply a carefully limited amount of instruction. They were designed to preserve a sense of inferiority in their pupils. Not even the residuum of the universities was cheap enough to staff them and a special sort of teacher was evolved, trained in a specially cheap and inferior college, or trained only by service under a trained assistant. These elementary teachers also were to be humble and industrious. They were to be pursued in their work by inspectors of a higher social class, and docked in their pay at any signs of slackening. So, without any serious rise in wages or loss of social discipline, it was hoped that a more intelligent type of workers would be bred. Even then, the dear old Victorians were astounded at their generosity in supplying these schools, and there was considerable repining at the idea of educating "other people's children."

But a better knowledge of psychology might have made our Victorians doubt the sustained subservience of these elementary

teachers. In the main they were drawn from the working-class; they were the clever boys and girls who were not quite strong enough to be put to wages-earning early. They saw in the educational service a door to the life of an educated human being, and when they found themselves confronted by bars and barring prejudices to any ascent from the elementary schoolroom, when they realised the insufficiency of their pay for any cultivated way of living and the insulting cheapness of their educational opportunities, they displayed a certain resentment at the blessings conferred upon them. They were often individuals of considerable energy. While the secondary and upper-class teachers were essentially a residuum, these were essentially an elite. And drawn from a very numerous and hitherto untapped stratum. They had a vulgar energy. They refused to be suppressed. An expanding number struggled up to degrees in the new universities as external students. Many of them became, and many of them are, better teachers than the upper-class masters and mistresses. Many have clambered off into journalism, literature, and all sorts of quasi-intellectual occupations. Many pass on into the upper-class schools, and infuse a new vigour into their classrooms. Sanderson for example. Few are as gracefully subservient as those who evoked them hoped they would be.

A lively social insubordination is as characteristic of the more intelligent trained elementary teacher as a discouraging conservatism is of his unskilled social superior. In England the elementary teachers supply a contingent to the Labour Party which brings in a disciplined mental vigour it might otherwise lack, and in France there would hardly be such a thing as a Communist party if it were not for the teachers. But in Britain elementary schoolmasters are to be found in all sorts of positions. There is quite a bunch of ex-elementary teachers in the House, and, for example, G. E. Morgan, who practically runs our labour affairs at Downs-Peabody, was one. They constitute a very miscellaneous body in Great Britain; there is, I am told, a frightful fringe of barely qualified cheap teachers in the backward rural districts, but on the whole they are a new and increasingly important force in public life, and I am all for making them, and not the Walpole Stents, the backbone of the teaching profession of the future.

Above the elementary schools — which will run parallel for a time with our Kindergartens and our excellent preparatory schools until these become good enough for us to dispense with any educational differences of class — we who possess the power of financial initiative can do much to develop a new system of special schools, studios, and laboratories, for arts, sciences, languages, and every sort of technical work. The style of work will be new. We want nothing of the classroom methods, the "prep," the recitations, and all the other monkish devices the old schools have preserved. And it is to the sources that have given us the elementary teacher and not to the exhausted cadres of the universities that we must look for the staffing of these modern institutions with modern-spirited teachers. Even then it will be a teaching profession much more limited in its pretensions and much sounder in its work than is the schoolmaster, as prosperous English people know him to-day.

The reality of education for every one over fourteen in a modern state lies more and more outside any classroom. The world grows more explicit every year. The finest minds in the world can speak now almost directly to everyone. A copious and growing literature about life and the direction of life makes the personal director unnecessary. The fewer the school-made values a boy has, the juster will be his apprehension of reality. So far as the general business of education goes, beyond mere special drillings and instructions, the need for schools dwindles to the vanishing point. So that I am rather an educational gaol-deliverer than a school reformer. I do not so much want to alter and improve the schoolmaster as induce him as gently as possible, and with the fullest recognition of his past services to mankind, to get out of the path of civilisation.

15. AN INQUEST ON UNIVERSITIES

I EXTEND my scepticism about schools to universities, and particularly to what one might call the universities for juveniles like Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard and Yale, the annual cricket, boat-race, baseball, and football universities, where every sort of intellectual activity is subordinated to a main business of attracting, boarding and amusing our adolescents. I think that we who deal with the world's affairs have been very negligent about the things that have been done to our sons and daughters in these institutions, and that we need to give them more attention than we have shown hitherto. In England they are not giving value for the money and respect they get — less even than public schools — and in America I have a suspicion they are worse even than in England.

My observations of these places are necessarily external. Dickon and I were under no sort of discipline during our student days in London; London University knows no proctors, and its undergraduates are as free in their private lives as errand boys. No tutors brood over their intellectual development; the London crowd scatters and absorbs them before they can develop consciousness of themselves as a class and a type. They never become aware of themselves as local colour and feel no consequent obligation to be sprightly and entertaining and characteristic. We took our university on the way to other things; we scarcely thought of it as a university; it stamped no pattern upon us.

My nephew Dick had two years at Oxford, and his career there was cut short by the war, so he too is no more than a partial witness. William refused stoutly to go either to Oxford or Cambridge. He said that he wanted to paint like a man from the start, and that at either place he would have to think and talk about painting and paint like a clever boy. When he was told that one went to a university to rub shoulders with one's fellows and exchange ideas, he said one exchanged nothing better than shibboleths. He thought he was quick-witted enough to pick up shibboleths as he went along without wasting three years upon their acquisition. When the advantages of meeting distinguished men were pointed out to him, he said first of

all that dons were not as a class distinguished men, they were only men who had conferred distinctions upon one another, and secondly that in practice one never met them but only their "damned wives" at tea parties. The really distinguished men at Oxford and Cambridge were always "cutting up to London" at every possible opportunity, to get out of the "dried boy" atmosphere. One was much more likely to get talks with them in London. "Dried boys?" Interrogated on this remarkable phrase, William asked what else one could call them?

"And I shouldn't be able to stand the Rags," said William. "The Rags that are such a Delightful Feature of undergraduate life. The dressing-up and the oh! such fun! When the little bleaters started a rag I should want to go out and kill some of them."

So William, in accordance with the dictates of his savage Clissold heart, took up his abode in Chelsea, to prowl in studios and see men at work, to argue in the 1917 Club with all sorts of queer people, to write, to paint, to see all the new plays and pictures and dances so soon as they came out, to brood in museums and read voraciously, and to paint and again to paint.

I'm all on William's side. I believe that the day of Oxford and Cambridge as the main nuclei of the general education of a great empire, draws to an end. Since the war this has become very evident. These universities fail to do any adequate educational work upon the larger part of the youngsters who spend what are perhaps the cardinal years of their lives in their colleges. Only a minority do sound work. They do it against the current of opinion.

Much of it they could do far better in closer touch with London or in any other habitable town. Both Oxford and Cambridge lie in low river valleys, the heavy air demands much time out of every day for exercise, and a vast industry of games has grown up to overshadow all intellectual activities. In spite of such exertions, there is a prevailing slackness. There is a tradition of irrelevance, which only the most resolute workers escape. Much time is given to "Rags," those industriously organised, toilsomely humorous interruptions of the leisurely routines of study. There is no effective supervision by the tutors who are supposed to guide the mental growth of the undergraduates, and a considerable number of these youngsters waste their time in little musical and dramatic societies that lead neither to

musical nor to dramatic achievement, and in similar forms of amateurism. Such opportunities for frittering away time are endless.

Few of the dons are of a quality to grip the undergraduate imagination. Many of the most conspicuous seem to be wilful "Freaks" who set out to be talked about. Nowadays these dons seem more disposed to carry on the traditions of discouragement and suppression that dominate the great English public schools than to excite a new generation to vigorous thought and effort. Cambridge University earned an unenviable notoriety during the war by its treatment of Bertrand Russell, and it has recently done its best to dismiss a great biological teacher because he was corespondent in a divorce suit. Oxford, I see, proposes to send down all youthful communists. By such tokens these places put the repressive training of the young above knowledge and freedom of thought.

I encounter a growing discontent with Oxford and Cambridge among many of my friends who have had undergraduate sons. I know three or four who have been bitterly disappointed in reasonable hopes. They send their boys trustfully and hopefully to these overrated centres. They find themselves confronted with pleasant, easy-going, evasive young men, up to nothing in particular and schooled out of faith, passion or ambition.

I think we must be prepared to cut out this three or four year holiday at Oxford or Cambridge, and their American compeers, from the lives of the young men we hope to see playing leading parts in the affairs of the world. It is too grave a loss of time at a critical period; it establishes the defensive attitude too firmly in the face of the forcible needs of life. I offer no suggestions about the education of girls because I know very little about it, but the conviction has grown upon me in the last few years that as early as fifteen or sixteen a youth should be brought into contact with realities and kept in contact with realities from that age on. That does not mean that he will make an end of learning then, but only that henceforth he will go on learning — and continue learning for the rest of his life — in relation not to the "subjects" of a curriculum, but to the realities he is attacking. We are parting from the old delusion that learning is a mere phase in life. And all the antiquated nonsense of calling people bachelors and masters and doctors of arts and science, might very

well go with the gowns and hoods that recall some medical alchemist or inquisitor, to limbo. They mean nothing. There is no presumption that a man who has the diploma, or whatever they call it, of M.A., is even a moderately educated man. The only good thing I have ever heard in defence of a university gown is that it is better than a tail-coat for cleaning chalk off a blackboard. And even for that a pad of velvet is better.

One may argue that to clear out the colleges and disperse the crowds of spoilt and motiveless youth that now, under a pretence of some high and conclusive educational benefit, constitute the physical bulk of Oxford, Cambridge, Yale and Harvard, is not to put an end to universities; but the value of that argument depends upon the meaning we assign to the word university. No doubt the modern world requires an increasing number of institutions conducting research, gathering and presenting knowledge, affording opportunities for discussions and decisions between keenly interested men, working perpetually upon the perpetually renewed myriads of interrogations with which the intelligent adult faces existence; but are such institutions, without teaching pretensions, really universities in the commonly accepted sense of the word at all?

A whole book might be written about the varying uses of that word. In one sense the Royal Society of London might be called a university, but it seems to me that in ordinary speech "university" conjures up first and foremost a vision of undergraduates engaged in graduation, a scene of caps and gowns, brightly coloured hoods and scarlet robes, of learned doctors who are supposed to have imparted their precious accumulations to the receptive youth at their feet, and of candidates, shaken and examined when full, certified to "know all that there is to be knowed" and sent into the world, in need of no further intellectual process for the rest of their lives except perhaps a little caulking. That is the current idea of a university, embalming the artless assumptions of an age that passes. It seems to me that age may very well take its universities with it — into history.

The new institutions, the research and post-graduate colleges if you cling to the word, will offer no general education at all, no graduation in arts or science or wisdom. The only students who will come to them will be young people who are specially attracted and

who want to work in close relation as assistants, secretaries, special pupils, collateral investigators, with the devoted and distinguished men whose results are teaching all the world. These men will teach when they feel disposed to teach. They will write, they will communicate what they have to say by means of conferences and special demonstrations, and their utterance will be worldwide. There is no need whatever now for anyone to suffer and inflict an ordinary course of lectures again. The new institutions for the increase of knowledge will become the constituent ganglia of one single world university, and a special press and a literature of explanation and summary will make the general consequences of their activities accessible everywhere. The modern university, as Carlyle said long ago, is a university of books. So far as general education is concerned I agree entirely with that.

There it is that we to whom power is happening are still most negligent. It is not merely that we have great possibilities of endowment, we have also great opportunities of organisation. As the prestige of tradition and traditional institutions fades, an immense desire for knowledge and for new sustaining ideas spreads through the world. There are millions of people, half educated and uneducated, vividly aware that they are ill-informed and undirected, passionately eager to learn and to acquire a sense of purpose and validity. This new demand for information, for suggestion and inspiration, is perceptible now not only in the Atlantic communities but increasingly in India, in China, in Russia, and in the Near East. We make no concerted effort to cope with it. We allow it to be exploited meanly for immediate profits. Much absolute rubbish is fed to this great hunger, and still more adulterated food. This appetite, which should grow with what it feeds on, is thwarted and perverted.

It rests with us, the people with capital and enterprise, to treat this phase of opportunity with a better respect, to show a larger generosity in the promotion and distribution of publications, to use the great new possibilities of intellectual dissemination that arise worthily and fruitfully. The world university must be a great literature. We cannot have our able teachers wasting and wearying their voices any longer in the lecture theatres of provincial towns; we want them to speak to all the world. And it must be a literature made

accessible by translation into every prevalent language. Each language and people will still produce its own literature, expressive of its own aesthetic spirit and developing its own distinctive possibilities, but the literature of ideas must be a worldwide literature sustaining one worldwide civilisation.

To this sustaining contemporary literature in its variety and abundance our young people of all classes must go for their general conception of life, and throughout all their subsequent lives they will follow it and react to it and develop mentally in relation to it. Such personal teaching of adolescents as will remain in the world will direct their attention to what is being written and said, and will advise and assist in study and selection. That in effect is the real upper education of to-day, that is how we are being kept alIve as a thInkIng community now. Apart from the modicum of technical instruction they impart, the upper schools and universities of our world already betray themselves for an imposture, rather delaying, wasting and misleading good intentions, rather using their great prestige and influence in sustaining prejudice in favour of outworn institutions and traditions that endanger and dwarf human life, than in any real sense educating. They are the most powerful bulwarks, necessarily and inseparably a part, a most vital and combative part, of that declining order which our revolution seeks to replace from the foundations upward.

Here as with monarchy and militant nationalism we do not need so much to attack as to disregard and neglect, to supersede and efface, through the steadfast development of a new worldwide organism of education and intercourse, press, books, encyclopaedias, organised translations, conferences, research institutions.

A time must come when Oxford and Cambridge will signify no more in the current intellectual life of the world than the monastery of Mount Athos or the lamaseries of Tibet do now, when their colleges will stand empty and clean for the amateur of architecture and the sight-seeing tourist.

Perhaps effigies wearing gowns and robes will be arranged in the Senate House to recall the quaint formalities of the ancient days. Or perhaps a residue of undivorced soundly orthodox and conservative dons will by that time have ossified into suitable effigies.

16. LIBERALISM AS SIMPLIFICATION

I HAVE now sketched out the main lines of my hopes and sympathies in relation to the economic, social, and political processes of my time. This book is primarily autobiographical and not a dissertation upon politics, and I tell of these things without detachment because they are a part of me, because they are the subject of a large proportion of my waking thoughts and determine my acts and the lay-out of my days more and more. This conception of an open conspiracy to realise the World Republic is the outline into which I fit most of my social activities. It is as much a part of me as my eyesight or my weight. I have tried to show not only the character of this outline, but how it has grown up in my mind.

This Fifth Book which now draws to its close — though I feel there is much that needs expansion in what I have set down — may be taken, I suggest, as a statement of twentieth-century liberalism. The statements of liberalism made in recent years, because of its entanglements with political factions and their transitory accommodations, have been formless and rhetorical, but liberalism is quite a definable thing, and I am by any possible definition a liberal type. I am as much a liberal as I am a Londoner or an industrialist or a Fellow of the Royal Society. It is a fundamental fact in any description of me.

Liberalism is essentially a product of the last two centuries and mainly of the last hundred years. It is an attempt to express in thought and social and political activities, the apprehension of urgent readjustments produced by the change in scale. It began therefore largely as a system of denials, as a repudiation of existing authority, of privilege, of dogma, of tradition. Its first profession Was freedom; its first-fruits upheaval. It found its natural exponents in the new social types in business men, in lawyers, in shipping people, in western industrialism. It talked republicanism. It sought help against established things among the excluded; it emancipated, it enfranchised. It stirred up subject peoples by "sympathising with their aspirations." From the first it was in conflict with national as well as social restrictions. It allied itself with the internationalism of

Jewish finance. It evolved the idea of free trade.

In contact with things political it lost its way here and there. In Britain it was exploited by the Tory-spirited Gladstone, in France by Napoleon the Third. It was baffled by Trades Unionism. It could make nothing of, and it ought to have made a great deal of, this collateral synthetic process that was substituting a collective bargain for a chaotic scramble for work. Its advocacy of insurgent peoples made it presently a champion of nationalities and the instigator of pseudo-liberal nationalism in Germany and Italy. That pseudo-liberal nationalism, has brought forward thorns of swords and bayonets and bitterly unattractive fruits. Moreover British liberalism became curiously imperialist at the end of its shipping lines, though even in India for a time it sought to educate and modernise, and promised to release. It got on in the world and made compromises with the Crests.

Already by the days of the Franco-German war of 1870, it had assumed something of its present loose amiable indeterminate cast of countenance; it was getting its Asquith face. But it still held stoutly to free trade, to *popular* education, to free speech, to the open mind in religion.

It had unhappily pinned itself prematurely to an extreme freedom of private property, to the philosophy of Individualism, and it was perplexed when the socialists appeared with their idea of a large-scale non-competitive business organisation of society. They had got in front upon the constructive path by another route. In the subsequent controversies neither liberalism nor socialism succeeded in keeping more than a one-sided grasp upon the processes of economic and social developments. I have told how Dickon and I, typical adventurers of the new sort, typical cadets of the new scale, were puzzled in our student days by these conflicting statements. The history of our experiences and ideas, as I have spread it before the reader, is the history not merely of the struggle of our two minds but, in our two selves as samples, of the general practical intelligence of our generation, to get a comprehensive grip upon the main issues of our time.

This new statement of liberalism I am making here is the outcome. What we think, many other men, in business and public

affairs, are beginning to think also. As I have written in an earlier section, individualism and socialism have reached a phase of coalescence and rephrasing. Political liberalism dies to be born again with firmer features and a clearer will.

It is remarkable how much of the liberalism of the middle nineteenth century is still living in our minds, in a fuller and more co-ordinated form. We two at least have returned to its republicanism and its cosmopolitanism. We realise ever more fully the fundamental importance of free speech, freedom of belief, freedom from barriers of privilege and adverse presumption. We can be bolder now in our cosmopolitanism because we have before our eyes a whole series of successful international experiments. We have a firmer apprehension of the means and methods by which the progressive transformation of human affairs towards the World Republic may be achieved. Our faith in progress has seventy years of added justification.

Essentially the project of modern liberalism is an immense simplification. For a century liberalism has been like the spirit of a young giant striving against almost intolerable bonds, bonds in which he was born and which cripple and threaten his growth and existence. Its main purpose is to clear away an infinitude of complications that trouble and waste life. It is creative by release, like the chisel of a sculptor. It sets its face against, and in the long run it will overcome and efface, the boundaries, the flags, the enforced and exaggerated separations that keep men from wholesome and brotherly co-operation round and about the world. It would smooth out every kink and every dark place in which greed, suspicion, cruelty, and evil disposition can now find a purchase and operate and do harm to the human commonweal. To that end it would sweep away all the custom houses, passport requirements and all the barriers that far beyond nature's limitations cramp and confine human activities and human commerce upon this little planet. It would make the money and credit system of the world one; it would put the land and sea transport of the world under one control; it would watch over the production and distribution of staple needs everywhere. It would rationalise the property-money complex that holds us all together, by scientific analysis and systematic law-making in accordance with that analysis. It would bring all men under a common law. It would

recrystallise the political life of the world as a single economic and police directorate. It would remove crowns and courts and all the residue of the warring states of the past as a discreet surgeon will remove an appendix, because mischief lodges in these things. And in the place of our little ancient secluded learning-places, in the place of knowledge given almost furtively by word of mouth, there would be a released education, a great common literature, and universally accessible information, bringing all mankind into one understanding and a broad unanimity of will.

I have told how the conception of this simplification of human affairs grew up in my own mind, and what forces seem to me to drive towards it, making it not only possible but probable and necessary. I have painted my own mental and moral portrait against its only appropriate background, which is two hundred years of change of scale and the dawn of human unity. Believing in that progressive simplification and in the progress of man's spirit that will accompany it, I can take life serenely, I can find a purpose in my activities outside myself. This simplification, this clearing of the ground for a new beginning in the human adventure, makes effort seem worth while. But if now I lost the faith that has grown in me with my ripening, in the continuing power of these synthetic and creative processes, I confess that there would be little savour left for me in life. Without the idea of progress life is a corrupting marsh. If this present age is not an assembly for great beginnings, confused and crowded still but getting into order, then it is a fool's fair, noisy, tawdry, unsafe, dishonest, infectious. In spite of the strange light of beauty that falls at times upon it, in spite of incidental heroisms and relieving humours and the fun of first pushing one's way into it, it is a fool's fair, speedily wearying and at last repelling. The small insecure accumulations of science, the rare perfect art one finds in odd corners, unless they are to be recognised as mere intimations of greater things to come, are out of all measure insufficient to redeem so vast a futility. I should be glad to get out of the glare and turbulence of so unmeaning a spectacle, and I should not be particular what way I took back to nothingness and peace.

I have passed through deep moods of doubt and I am still not altogether immune to them. But these moods of doubt have always

come in phases of fatigue, or when there was a great noise about me and when I was too close to things. It is disconcerting at times to read too many newspapers. They make life seem entirely a clam our of superficialities; they make it seem impossible that any men anywhere will ever think more than a week or so ahead in regard to public matters. There is only one newspaper that comforts my soul, and that is *Nature*. This place up here is good for retirement and thought, but there is a terrible infection of vacuity about the faces and bearing of all these well-to-do fellow-countrymen who crowd Cannes and the front at Nice. When my business or some rare social occasion takes me down to these places, I have to resist the suggestion that within my brain I am perhaps a wild, fantastic, almost scandalous rebel, a "crank," a changeling, and that it would become me better as an Englishman of standing to put away Clementina privily and all these solicitudes for the republic of mankind, and to go down to Cannes and take up the quarters proper to my position, deport myself stiffly and carefully, talking about Suzanne and Miss Wills and polo and the fall of the franc and the severity of taxation in suitable terms, relaxing myself with bridge, and exercising myself with golf and elderly tennis until my time comes to an end. Instead of spending these days of sunshine and these nights of beauty in mental toil, in plotting, planning, writing and rewriting. Because, says the devil of that despondent mood, think I never so hard and work I never so well, these people will never understand, cannot understand; they will live and die, a mass against such solitary fretting sports as I, firmly sustaining all that I condemn and giving the lie to all my prophesying.

The other day I went to Marseilles, and as I sat with Clementina taking our coffee, after lunch, at the big cafe in the Cannebière and watched the active various crowd about me, each individually brighter than I, and all sanely intent upon little things, and all doing these little things so much better than I could do them, it came to me with overwhelming force that it was as reasonable to anticipate one planetary will from such beings as from a canful of small frogs in summer. I had some French newspaper in my hand telling me of the eighth or ninth failure of the petty inveterate political groups in Paris to pass a possible budget, and that the Treaty of Locarno, so recent,

so hopeful, was already in effect moribund, poisoned by petty disputes about the entry of Germany into the League of Nations. That had set the key of my thoughts.

"Achieve!" said I. "They do not even desire. The republic of mankind is a dream."

But here in this secluded peaceful place and especially at night when everything is still, one can take a larger view, see things upon the scale of history, see the wide-sweeping radius of destiny tracing its onward path across the skies. Then change has a countenance of purpose, the World Republic like the stars seems close at hand, and it is the fashions of pose and occupation and the multifarious ends and conflicts of the hurrying eddying crowds that dissolve like the mists in the morning and take on the quality of a dream.

17. FULLY ADULT

"BUT why should you care for a World Republic you will never see?" asks Clementina, who has set herself with a gathering tenacity to understand what I and this book are about.

"Why should the thought that men will never get to the World Republic make you unhappy when it does not seem to trouble you in the least that presently you must die?"

That is a fair question.

Why should I have become almost miserly with my days and hours in order to work for ends I can never live to see? Why do these things occupy and compel me so that I forget myself? Why do I not simply take the means of pleasure that I possess now so abundantly and "enjoy myself"?

The answer to that runs like a thread through all this complex fabric of observation and reasoning and suggestion that I have been weaving. It is that I have grown up.

I have become fully adult in a world in which as yet most human beings do not press on to a complete realisation of their adult possibilities. It has happened to me to do so not because there is anything very exceptional in my quality but because my circumstances and experiences have prevented my accepting and settling down to interpretations and routines that are satisfactory enough to delay and stop the development of the generality of people. I missed those public-school and university disciplines which arrest the development of so many of the fortunate minority at a puerile stage, I escaped from that employment by other people which robs the greater majority of its opportunities for full growth, I did not chance to marry happily and settle down to that family life which becomes as it were a plateau of cessation for those who live it. I was never so engaged and interested at any stage by the details of life as to forget my interest in life as a whole. I went on moving mentally when most other people, according to the customs and necessities of our world, were either sitting down of their own accord or being obliged to sit down. And thus left to the unchecked drive of the forces within me, I went on growing up.

I have grown at last altogether out of regarding myself as the prime concern of my life. I am no longer vitally impassioned by my own success or failure. I have done with my personal career as my chief occupation. That complete preoccupation with the feelings and deeds and pride and prospects of William Clissold with which I started has been modified by and has gradually given place to the wider demands of the racial adventure. That now grips me and possesses me. William Clissold dwindles to relative unimportance in my mind and "Man" arises and increases.

And though William Clissold, my narrow self, will surely die before any great portion of this present revolution can be achieved, yet just as surely will man, that greater self in which my narrow self is no more than a thought and a phase, survive. Insensibly I have come to think, to desire and act as man, using the body and the powers of William Clissold that were once my whole self as a medium. And while all that I do expressly and particularly for the pleasure, delight and profit of William Clissold ends, I perceive, and will presently be forgotten and its refuse put away in some grave, all that I think and attempt and do as man goes on towards a future that has no certain and definable end and that need not be defeated by death.

It is only by this conception of a slowly emergent fully adult phase of the human life cycle that I can explain the main facts of my own development, the gradual fading out of my childish intensities of hope and desire and fear, that were once as swift and fierce and transitory as the moods of an animal, the softening of my adolescent hardness of spirit, the wane of physical and worldly jealousies, the attainment of virtual indifference to happenings that once would have thrown me into furies of self-assertion, into despair of life or into the profoundest humiliation. And these things have fallen from me with no diminution of vitality but through the progressive establishment of a more disinterested system of passions that were at any earlier stage altogether outside the orbit of my concern. I have extended and become less self-centred, year by year. I care for myself less because I care more and more for the republic of mankind. There have been and are reversions to passion, to resentments and anger, to acute personal reference and spasmodic greed, but they become briefer,

rarer and more completely amenable to the growing and releasing generosity of the wider reference. They become unreal and unimportant in relation to it.

And what has happened to me can happen to most people. It will begin to happen to many. My release from my excessive narrow self is not abnormal; it is only a little unusual at present to this extent. Most other people could be brought on past the stages of petty irrelevant occupations and habitual intense self-regard just as I have been. They all have occasional moods of larger interest. In a saner, juster, less meanly urgent world those moods would be sustained, multiplied, connected, and made dominant.

In this present part of my book I have been stating this idea of a great revolution in the economics and politics and social relations of mankind, in the form of a project as wide as the earth. But it could also have been stated in another fashion, in an older fashion, in the form of a project as narrow and concentrated as a single heart. The attainment of the World Republic and the attainment of the fully adult life are the general and the particular aspects of one and the same reality. Each conditions the other. The former would release man from traditions, economic usages, social injustices, mental habits, encumbering institutions, needless subserviences and puerile interpretations, that dwarf, confuse and cripple his life upon this planet, that divide it, impoverish it, keep it in a continual danger from the wasting fever of war and threaten him with extinction. And the other would liberate the individual man from a servitude to instinctive motives, unreasonable obsessions and an embittering concentration upon personal ends that can have no other conclusion but age and enfeeblement, defeat, disappointment, and death. In the service and salvation of the species lies the salvation of the individual. The individual forgets the doomed and defined personal story that possessed his immaturity, the story of mortality, and merges himself in the unending adventure of history and the deathless growth of the race.

That is my philosophy of conduct, my mysticism, if you will, my religion. That is my answer to Clementina's question. This is my final conception of my life as I live it, set in the frame of my world. To this fully adult state men and women are, I believe, finding their

way through the glares and threats, the misstatements and absurdities, the violence, cruelties, tumults, and perplexities of the present time. A few come to it now, doubtfully and each one alone, as I have done, but presently more will be coming to it. As they do, the path to the World Republic will open out and this new phase of human life become the common phase throughout our mounting race.

We shall put away childish things, childish extravagances of passion and nightmare fears. Our minds will live in a living world literature and exercise in living art; our science will grow incessantly and our power increase. Our planet will become like a workshop in a pleasant garden, and from it we shall look out with ever diminishing fear upon our heritage of space and time amidst the stars.

We shall be man in common and immortal in common, and each one of us will develop his individuality to the utmost, no longer as a separated and conflicting being but as a part and contribution to one continuing whole.

BOOK THE SIXTH. THE STORY OF THE CLISSOLDS — VENUS AS EVENING STAR

1. NEED OF ADULT LOVE

THIS Sixth Book I shall dedicate to women, to the love and fellowship, distrusts and antagonisms of men and women. I have not yet done with my Fifth Book, but I shall leave that now for awhile until I can shape this Sixth Book out. A score of vast questions have been started and left almost immediately in that Fifth Book; I must return to them later; but I am impatient, I do not know why, to see the completed form of my work before I deal with them further. The immense projection of a unified world civilisation is at any rate visible in Book Five as it stands. The great revolution is stated there.

But all such schemes are abstract and jejune until they are made real by the comprehension of women. Man comes from woman and returns to woman for confirmation and realisation. He may explore new worlds alone but he cannot settle, cannot establish himself, unless he bring his womankind.

My sense of the value of woman, my care for and interest in woman, has grown very greatly since I was a young man. I began with infantile dreams of abjection to women, these faded out in boyhood and gave place to indifference qualified by a hot unkindly lust. Desire tinged with antagonism was the quality of my adolescence. I had a considerable dread of losing my personal freedom. Imperceptibly a strongly suppressed craving for help and companionship escaped from its suppressions. To-day, though I struggle against the admission, I find my mental serenity extraordinarily dependent upon the companionship of Clementina. If she were to vanish now this life here would collapse. I cannot estimate how great a tragedy that might not be for me.

I have known many women. I have known several of a masculine creativeness and vigour of self-assertion. Some of the main features of the modern view of life, the propaganda of the idea of birth control, for example, are largely woman's work. And yet I do not know how far this austere conception of life devoted to the establishment of a great deliberation in the place of the present impulsive confusions of the world, can count upon the support and service of women or how far they will be open antagonists or subtle

opponents or passive, instinctive, or even unconscious obstructionists of the things we desire.

The revolutionary forces of to-day are at present operating through scattered individuals. It has been my argument that these forces cannot become efficient and consciously and securely dominant without the development of a social life to express and confirm them. What impresses me very greatly is that the active and creative men do not as a rule get into relationship with either actively creative women or with women who can be effective helpers and protectors and subordinates, and that, so far as I know, the much rarer women of creative and scientific quality remain single or are indifferently mated. They seem to think and speak in an idiom that is different and to have a different idiom of behaviour. This is not a complaint against the opposite sex — against either sex. It is rather a statement that these busy preoccupied men and women are careless in this relation, are taken unawares, and do not know how to set about securing themselves against diversion and wastage. They are the critics and disturbers of the current world, and the current world, the habitual and accepted thing, protects itself and takes its unpremeditated revenge upon them by tying them up to demands, responses, exactions, obligations, conventions, recriminations, that distress, disorganise, disappoint, overstrain, and help to defeat them.

I have much reason to be grateful to women, and I have a sense of ungraciousness in writing these doubts about them. But I cannot help but recognise the atmosphere of intensifying sexual antagonism in which we are living. One of the four women who have played large parts in my life sustains me loyally now; one would have been my friend and helper had she but had the strength left in her. But of the two others, one was a disloyal waster of my poor gifts, and the other a frank and open opponent, who in the end came to use her power over my emotions very ruthlessly. The story of my married life, brief, crude and vulgar, as I have told it, is yet very typical of the conflicts of the time. It is the common misunderstanding in gross and heavy detail.

I am dissatisfied with my sexual history and my dissatisfaction quickens my apprehension of the general uneasiness of the sexual world about me. A great majority of business men and active men of

affairs I know are frittering their sexual interests away as I have done for most of my life, getting no use or companionship out of women in their essential lives, marrying wives elegantly aloof from their vital concerns, begetting sons to be turned over to the old order by pedagogues and dons, practising small adulteries, having "affairs" with little dancers, chorus girls, and a miscellany of such women. It is not what they want if ever they stopped to ask themselves what they want of that side of life; it is what happens to them. No sort of woman is developed as yet to respect and look after them and life has been too unexpected and crowded for them to be able to look after themselves.

I know that my insistence in this book upon a completely normal sexual life for an energetic man is a breach of literary decorum. I shall be called over-sexed, when indeed I am merely normally sexed and only abnormally outspoken. But our literary standards derive from schools and universities that have sheltered almost to the present day the dishonest and inwardly unclean chastity of mediaeval romanticism. We must, they rule it, either hide or titter. We must pretend we have no desires or only the very funniest desires, and that anyhow they do not matter in the least and have no significance whatever. I decline to follow these monkish usages and put a fig-leaf upon my account of myself, because once upon a time certain blushing prelates went round the Vatican Museum and started such wear for the classical statuary that had fallen into their hands. I do not believe that a normal man can go on living a full mental life in a state of sexual isolation. I refuse to entertain the idea that I should have accepted celibacy and devoted myself entirely to scientific work. On those questions our medical science is absurdly discreet and vague, and so I have to go upon observations that may be greatly deflected by my temperamental bias. My impression is that abstinence involves so large an amount of internal conflict) so urgent and continuous an effort of self-control, such moods and humiliations and compensatory adjustments) that the diversion of attention and the wastage of energy are far greater than the average disturbances and deflections of a normal life.

This is, I am convinced, as true for an ordinary woman as for an ordinary man. There may be exceptional types released from this

issue altogether in some, to me, unimaginable fashion, and free to specialise vigorously in creative work. I know none, but it may be so. Such an unembarrassed chastity is alleged to have been achieved by various religious mystics of great administrative power, Saint Theresa and Saint Dominic and Saint Ignatius Loyola for example. Such a release with unimpaired energy is against all biological presumptions, and the general tone of celibate priesthoods and devotional literature suggests not so much release to me as consuming negative obsession. For most of us sex life is a necessity, and a necessity not merely as something urgent that has to be disposed of and got rid of by, for instance, incidental meretricious gratifications, but as a real source of energy, self-confidence, and creative power. It is an essential and perhaps the fundamental substance of our existence. For me and my kind the house of ill-fame is of no more use than the monastery. My need is for the respect, friendship, sympathy, and willing help of a woman or women just as much as for her sexual intimacies. And if you come to discuss this with a fully developed intelligent woman I believe she will say of herself exactly what I say of myself. Mate came before husband, wife or mistress in the story of life, and may outlast both of these relationships.

Most or all of the men and women who will constitute the main directive community of this modern world-state towards which human affairs are moving, must mate happily and live happily mated, if they are to do their work; and all the social institutions and moral codes that prevail to-day must continue or change in accordance with that primary condition. As they become aware of the distinctive difference of their aims and work, and as their own sexual life develops, they will evolve their own conception of restraints, imperatives and reasonable conditions, and fashion a new code. At present we live sexually in a world of mixed and broken codes, and irregular and extravagant experiments and defiances. Most people are doing or pretend to be doing what they believe to be right in the eyes of their friends and neighbours. Few people have the courage of their internal want of convictions. The larger part of the younger generation of educated and semi-educated people in Europe and America seems to me to have no sexual morals at all, but only

cynical observances, the plain inevitable result of an atmosphere of manifest shams and insincerities.

It will be worth while to become historical again here and to go over the development of prohibitions, customs, traditions, codes, and conventions that have contributed to our present welter. To discuss how one has got to a situation is often the way to discover how to get away from it again. Let us see to what extent this confusion can be analysed, and find out whether we are being reasonable or impossible in making this demand for a free society of mated and co-operative men and women.

It may be that we are asking for the moon, that an insoluble conflict of interests and instincts exists between men and women, and that to the end of the story our race must go on, as I have lived, as most of the people I know are living about me, now tormented, now delighted, now distracted, now wasted by the untameable and irreconcilable impulses of sex. Our creative work can never in that case amount to the sum of our lives, it will be only what we can rescue from this devouring inheritance of desires and gratifications that has arisen for us out of the struggle by which we were made.

2. THINGS FUNDAMENTAL

I WRITE of men and women co-operating and mating on terms of equality. That is our modern idea. But have men and women ever met on terms of equality?

I am sceptical that there has ever been equality between them. The greater probability seems to me to be that from the ancestral ape upward the female of our line has been at much the same physical disadvantage as most other mammalian females. The sexual reactions of reptiles, fishes, insects, crustaceans, may follow lines entirely outside our sympathetic understanding, but the whole mammalian series has in common the devotion of the female to the young. The new creature hampers her before its birth, preys upon her, becomes her parasitic associate, clamours for her protection, and her instincts respond. The male, less preoccupied, grows to greater strength, is freer in his movements. He is linked to the female primarily by desire. Nature in forming the mammal has never discriminated between the sexes so far as to deny the male and the female a touch of the acquisitions of the other; most male animals have a certain maternal tenderness for young things, and hardly any mammalian female is altogether a slave and sacrifice to breeding; but the broad distinction holds. I take it that primitive man as male desired, fought for, dominated and did his best to enslave his woman and have done with her. Most of us still do that. She Complied or she evaded; she resisted or submitted. I doubt if she had much choice or much freedom of initiative. I do not suggest she was wholly passive, but on the whole the disadvantage was hers. When he and she were sexually attractive and active that was their relationship; that was and that is the primary sexual relationship.

But the life of the primitive men and the sub-men their ancestors were lives of struggle, and the sexual motive was not always uppermost. They hunted, and probably he hunted best. She was generally either immature or nursing or pregnant. She could not keep up with him, and so she stayed behind. She kept the fire and kept by the fire. As economic life began, the greater part of the work was not so much thrust upon her as fell upon her. It began naturally with

minding the children and the fire, with tidying the lair and furnishing the lair. She probably had to gather fruits and little things. She cooked. She ground the seeds. He made his casual magnificent exertions, but the first toil was hers. Woman was the first drudge; the man sat about. But hers was the hearth and home. That must have been the primary economic relationship of the sexes. Put an ordinary man and woman together to-day in a hut or a cottage or a one-roomed tenement, and almost without discussion things adjust themselves in that spirit.

But there was a third primary relationship of a different sort. The man and woman were not always in a sexual relationship, male to female; sometimes he was son and junior, and she was mother and senior. Then she was his protector. She shielded him from the jealousy and injustice of his father; she was great and wise in his eyes, beautiful and kind and helpful. That wove a *different* strand of feeling into the complex of relationship. Most male animals seem to forget that phase, but the comparative helplessness of the human young lasts so long and memory is relatively so good in us, that in all their subsequent lives the appeal for feminine help and kindness lingers in the human being. I can trace that strand from quite infantile imaginings reappearing, vanishing, turning up again, throughout my life. And it interweaves with the two others, so that women at large are at once our seniors and our juniors. We do not classify them or they us; life is too entangled for that. They are this to-day and that to-morrow. When a woman takes a man in her arms she takes a duplex creature, a conqueror and a refugee. And he holds a queen and a slave. In the Egyptian mythology, Isis, the Star of Heaven, held the child Horus in her arms and Osiris was her lord and Horus was Osiris. This remembered dependence is the primary defence of women; the mitigation of the material inferiority to which their physical disadvantage subjects them. The woman resists, evades, submits, but also she aids and pities and mysteriously she commands respect.

In his intimate relations to a woman, without any planning or intention but of the necessity of his nature, a man is continually ringing the changes between these three primary colours of his emotional palette. And she flashes her own correlated variations.

That much is in our natures. And in our natures also is something that I think transcends sex, though it is habitually turned to the uses of sex, and that is our personal abasement before some shining, lovely, admired and overwhelming person. The dog has this aptitude for personal worship extravagantly, but man now has it too.

All these things are natural inalterable factors that We must respect in perfecting the relations of modern men and women. Another factor in our make-up that must come in for any sort of balance to exist between them is comradeship. Comradeship is a relationship that became emotional I think first between men and men, in the hunt, in the battle. It has still to enter into the ordinary tangle between the sexes. Whether it can do so is the most doubtful question of all. It is not in the established precedents of nature. Man, we must remember, is now the most social of animals, and the nearest approach to level mating has occurred hitherto among the more solitary beasts, lions and tigers and such great carnivores. Man is in the minority of social animals in his disposition to pair. None of the economic creatures pair. The social animals when they are undisturbed by rut, go off peaceably with their like, the hinds together, the young stags together. But man is not to be ruled by the practice of the beasts. He has to work out for himself his own distinctive methods. He is not subject to their seasons of rut and indifference.

In the past woman was the material and moral inferior of man mainly because she was so soon and so completely overtaken by the oppression of sex. Now that in the modern communities she is not so overtaken, since now she may carry that burthen as lightly as a man, it is interesting to see how rapidly she approximates to the freedoms and physical energy of a young man. The Western girl among the prosperous classes of to-day is far more different in physique and morale from the young lady of a hundred years ago, than she is from her brother. And one can think of her as a man's mate and comrade, as one could never do of the young lady. Perhaps now one exaggerates the resemblances as formerly one exaggerated the differences. But I find it possible to imagine a world in which a large proportion of the leading people will be mated colleagues. Assimilation can go further than it has gone. I doubt if it will ever

obliterate the feminine disadvantage completely. Still more do I doubt if there will ever be any essential inversion of the roles. Typically the man will produce the larger initiatives, and in their intimacy the pair will realise those balanced reactions of subjugation and tenderness that come to us from the past.

The world moves from uniformity to diversity, and there will be, no doubt, a multitude of exceptional cases, and there will be freedom and tolerance for such exceptions. What I am writing of here is the prevailing fashion in which the men and women of a creative energetic type would probably group themselves. And so far I have been discussing only the natural inherent reactions of men and women and the common sense necessities of people whose lives are shaped by the desire for a maximum of creative work in a world at peace. Directly one turns outward from such speculations, one faces a world entirely antagonistic to them, a crowded gregarious world of feverish entertainment, of decoration and displays and general extravagance, excitements, provocations, pursuits, jealousies. One finds the companion-mate as a dream in the hearts of a few people here and there, as an experiment, an almost hopeless experiment, like a match lit in a high wind or a swimmer borne away by a stream.

Is it no more than a dream, this conception of an active austere social life, not crowded with persons, lived much in the company of a dear associate or so, but generous and free in spirit, and with interests and activities wide as the world? I do not think it is a dream. But how can I reconcile this project, this expectation, with the manifest realities of life to-day? Where, you ask, are these women, these mates, these men happily mated? Where are these fully emerged adults?

I cannot point to them; I have never met them; that is indeed my personal story. I can only foretell them. But I foretell them as I foretell a coming world control by sane and powerful people. This world control, gradually becoming evident, will make the flags and the armies, the rulers and governments, which seem to monopolise all the concrete realities of our collective life to-day, weaken, become thin and manifestly unreal, and presently fade very swiftly out of existence. So too I believe the current social life to-day will grow transparent and palpably flimsy and suddenly fade in a few

decades out of its present compelling predominance. Our ways of living are even more provisional now than our governments. Everybody does this or that to-day which nobody will do to-morrow. The change in manners and morals, in customs and conventions during the last half-century has been tremendous, but it may seem nothing before the changes of the next half.. century. We are living in the hectic last phase of a dying order.

3. RULING TRADITIONS

THE manners and morals, the laws and arrangements between the sexes to-day, the expectations people have and the rights they claim in love and marriage constitute now a vast, dangerous, unhappy conflict and confusion. It has ceased to follow a code or a system.

It is like a panic, like a debacle. In the past, there have been stress, suppression and sorrow in sexual life, but never so chancey, unjust and wasteful a time as this one. It is a state of affairs in which no one is safe for happiness, and no conduct sure of success. For most of us there is an obligation to blunder.

I have tried to make out of my observations and experiences some sort of classification of the medley of traditions and guiding ideas which determine men and women's treatment of one another. That is a necessary preliminary to any attempt to reach conclusions in the universal problem. We start complex in these affairs as I have shown, but that complexity is nothing to the complexity of our traditions and suggestions. We are always shifting about among these without realising what we are doing; now we behave in obedience to one set of values and before we know it we have changed our course because of a new wind from quite another quarter. To give the next generation some help in referring their motive 'ideas in sexual matters to their source is one of the main educational tasks before those who seek to realise a new and better phase of human life.

I have not seen much sexual happiness either in my own life or in the lives of those about me. I have seen much pleasant coming together and much bright hope, but the usual fate of the contemporary love-story is that it tarnishes and the colours fade. I do not believe there is any such natural antagonism of man and woman as to make disappointment necessary in this, the main affair of most people's lives. I believe nearly all the jangles and disappointments of contemporary life can be traced to a confused unpreparedness of mind, to a profound ignorance of physical and psychic fact, to fluctuating and impossible expectations and unjustifiable assumptions about what is right and reasonable and graceful and honourable in sexual conduct. Out of disappointments arise

resentments, estrangement, malice, cruelty. The contemporary love-story begins in illusions and goes on by way of misunderstandings to conflict. It opens cheaply and ends in dispute or dull resignation.

Certain main classes may be distinguished into which all these codes, fragments of codes and traditions of sentiment and expectation which we find determining people's activities, fall. These classes differ in their fundamental nature, arise from different strata in our being, are not equivalent dimensions but things of diverse categories. First one may distinguish and set on one side all those motives, judgments, ways of taking sexual things, into which the idea of Sin enters. There is a factor of fear and repulsion. Of this one can make a first whole class of ideas. They give us what may be called the Woman of the Sinful Man. Desire drags against shame and a terrified predisposition to abstinence. There is an immense exaggeration of chastity. The ideal woman is a sexless female, helpful, serviceable, but perpetually virgin and even so a temptation; marriage, though it be consummated with extreme infrequency after prayer and fasting, amidst austerely unpleasant details, remains an unclean affair, a lapse from the better life. These ideals embody fundamentally masculine conceptions; the man of the sin-conscious woman is a secret that has never been betrayed in sane literature. But women, with their extraordinary facility for adapting themselves to *expectation*, have produced in response the role of the woman wholly chaste and unapproachable, have protected themselves enormously from unwelcome attentions by that impersonation, and have established an almost inestimable value for such shameful concessions as they may at last consent to make to the hysterical importunity of the sinful man in his phases of moral debacle.

Within a lifetime the codes, manners, sentimental systems centring upon this conception of the sinfulness of sex, prevailed widely throughout the world. They gave women artificial value and dignity at the price of incessant restraint. But the great gales of controversy, that have cleared away so much fear and moral fog from mankind, have left but little sense of sexual sin in the modern mind. The covered inaccessible woman, that veiled mysterious indulgence, is passing out of the general life. The protective shamming of indifference ceases to be a part of feminine tradition and training.

Less a code than a body of practice is a second great system of methods of treatment, the way of the vulgar sensible man and woman, the secular sexual life of the peasant, the farmer, the little shop-keeper, the man with a living need for a helper and confederate. In the settled communities of mankind throughout the ages, the multitude has lived in a roughly but rationally adjusted manner, poised in a not unequal fashion, and with the woman as near self-respect as women have ever got in the whole experience of the race. She was necessary, she was consulted, she need make no great attempt either to withhold herself or charm an exacting male. She could be mother to the full extent of her desires. At times her wishes in that direction were outrun, but the friendly germs of infant mortality kept the balance down. No doubt the priest troubled the couple at times with strange hints of sin and damnation, troubled but did not disturb profoundly, and no doubt, too, the law held the woman was man's chattel and would duck or chastise her spasmodically for small misbehaviours and disloyalties. But she knew her place and power better than the law; did she not cook the man's dinner, make his bed, and keep or shatter his peace and his pride?

For a hundred centuries from China to Peru this common life has gone on, in which the woman was as necessary and as respected upon all practical issues as the man. Its real practice — for like the English common law it had no code — was handed down from woman to woman and imparted by mother to son. Religions may permit polygamy to the prosperous, as Islam does, or Court or Town practise the most fantastic tricks; the common life has varied little from the common formula. The Anatolian peasant is as mated to his one woman as the Irish farmer. In this country about me the tradition of the vulgar sensible folk is to be found strained by new forces, but still vigorous among the jasmine and olive terraces, in every other *mas* that the rich Americans and economising artists and suchlike invaders as Clementina and I have left intact. It has been so much the life of our species since man became man, that for anyone without historical perspective it is easy to call it the immemorial natural life of mankind.

It is nothing of the sort. *Panta rhei*. That change of scale which is

the present form of human experience as a whole, invades the vulgar sensible way of living in every practical detail and in every imagination. The niggling cultivation of the soil in small patches that was once the only possible basis of the social structure is becoming economically unsound, and even more is the toil of the woman being robbed of the dignity of necessity. The change is visible even here, in neglected olive trees, in crumbling terrace walls and in the cyclist figures flitting along the paths at dusk to betray the fact that our typical neighbour is no longer a cultivator of the soil but a worker in a Grasse factory. These are new developments here. It is in the suburban homes of the great towns of our typical England and the United States — and England now for the half of its area is no better than a scattered suburb — that the change is most fully displayed. The man is still a worker and even more of a toiler than he used to be, but he works away. It needs a liberal education for him if he is to realise the significance and scope of the economic machine in which he is a cogwheel. And the woman at home has been stripped more and more of her fundamental economic importance and reduced to the position of a sexual complement. She knows little or nothing of her husband's affairs; they are too far away. She does not brew, she does not bake. She does not so much cook as "warm up." She does not make her linen or control her house, she merely ('shops" for it. The gas company is her hewer of wood and the municipality her drawer of water. She touches a button to light her home. To her own relief and her husband's and the community's, she ceases to breed, and such children as she bears are far better educated for her by the trained teachers in properly equipped schools. Change has robbed her of her normal employments just as it has released her and her man from the sense of sin. There she is.

What is she to do with herself — with herself and her immensely empty afternoons? What are we to do with her? The percentage of these Claras increases in all the modern communities. I am for making boys of them and breaking up these mere empty shells and shams of suburban households. Let them live in flats and chambers and have their men come and go until they find a proper mate and a task they can share with him. Let them be educated and trained as well as their brothers and put to research and business and productive

work. Let them cease to regard their sex — I will not say as a marketable commodity, but as a negotiable right for which they may secure a comfortable living. And as I think of some of the girls one sees to-day, short-cropped like handsome youths, as tall, as energetic and bold as their brothers and often franker in thought and act, it seems to me that in writing these things I write with the spirit of the time, of a not impossible transformation.

4. ROMANTICISM IN FLOOD

BUT there is still another main class of ideas and traditions that have to be taken into account before this survey of the moral field of force in which women are living is complete. These are the various romantic and chivalrous traditions that complicate its issues and confuse most women's minds irreparably with the suggestion that woman is the queen of beauty, the chief object of men's lives, the sufficient reward for every conceivable service and devotion. She is not, she never has been, she never will be. But these traditions saturate poetic literature; their roots entangle with the whole history of our race.

The two groups of standards and values we have considered hitherto correspond to two main ways of living, to the way of living when misery is abroad and when religious fear predominates, and to the way of living of the cheerful, laborious, sensible, settled folk in normal times. For thousands of years the huge majority of ordinary men have lived with women continually, worked side by side with them, joked and planned with them, beaten and caressed them, and regarded them for most practical purposes as equals and responsible mates. But there has always been a third sort of man who went apart from women not to brood but to do. This was the herdsman, the hunter, the warrior, the knight-errant, the raiding nomad, the desert merchant, the seaman. In his phases of hardy abstinence came dreams of desire, but they came not with the quality of sin but with the quality of reward. No more than the God-fearing saint did he need woman as a companion. She and her possible litter would cumber the ship and lag upon the trail. But she was neither on the sea nor in the desert to distract him, and he did not see her as the saint saw her in the light of an incessant allurement, defeating his ends. He came back to her, alive with desire, excitable, with his hands full of spoil and pay.

There ensues from these lives of departure and return systems of relationship widely divergent either from those of the sin-haunted abstainer or the gross habitual familiarities of the accustomed man. This third type of system may be in its essence far more ancient than

those of the normal settled life. The men of the Old Stone Age were hunters, and they have left paintings on the Spanish rocks showing the firelit feasting of a return or a tribal gathering — the hunters dancing and showing off, the women dancing too in poses that exaggerate the contours of their figures provokingly. The Spanish rock-paintings reflect the self-same spirit that one would find to-day in a party of Spanish-American or Anglo-Saxon cowboys come down after a spell of adventure to scatter their dollars among the women of the town. The men and women meet excited. The women allure, the men show off, they compete, fight perhaps for the women, pay and give. Even the gestures of the Spanish-American dancing are similar to those in the rock paintings, the arms akimbo, the protruded breasts. There is much perplexing and wounding with jealousy. The men are in their brightest garments. The women paint and dress themselves for vividness and swift effect.

This third great class of sexual relationship in which the man comes along, goes far away, returns, is, with local variations, spread over all the world. It is an open-life way since first the plough began, and probably it has never been the way of more than a minority of humanity. But it has been a potent minority. The cowboy tradition prevails over the whole Spanish-speaking world. There it produces its typical beauty, its typical costume. Love is vivid and jealous in this life because of the pent-up period of separation. When the man has won his woman he is apt to demand her seclusion. The supreme virtue of woman becomes sexual loyalty to the absent man. Hardly any other is asked of her. “Can she brew or can she bake?” It matters little. Better a red carnation in her bright black hair and a shawl drawn tightly over the curves of breast and hip.

A parallel world of romance, dances, provocations, pursuits, seclusions, is that of the desert Arab. The Arab keeps his womankind veiled and in tents. They see nothing. Their housekeeping is despicable. They do not even sew. A little stenographer with her bicycle and her tennis in a crowded country like England knows far more of exercise and the open air than many a young woman in the vast spaces of the desert. The Arab woman reclines in the sultry shadows of the tent, planning her captivating allurements against her one great event, the man’s return, his return and his choice. She

brightens her eyes and paints her face and puts on her jewels and keeps herself supple for the secret dance. If she goes abroad she must go in state, protected, watched, bedizened with all the evidences of the man's appreciation. She is his supreme treasure; the crown of his life. And this triumphant seclusion from dust and exertion, this life of honour in a place apart, is given her upon two simple conditions. She must keep faith with her man while he is away, and she must remain young and attractive. The romantic code takes little or no cognisance of old, worn, or ailing women.

This third group of codes is begotten of the life of wanderers and waste places, but its influence reaches far beyond those limits. It has gone with the sword of the rider — everywhere. Since social history began there is a story of conquest and conquest and again conquest of the settled lands, the cultivated regions, the towns and cities, by men out of the wastes, out of the deserts or from overseas. The wanderer has the habit of the upper hand. He has supplied the rulers, the aristocracies, the tax-collectors, the landowners, the lordly ones of nearly every country in the world, and they have kept his standards. The conquered womenfolk have been quick to mitigate their first abasement. His assumptions about women have been inevitably romantic. He cannot play his distinctive role tied to a woman's apron strings. In the mood of going forth he finds them encumbrances, and after a phase of solitude they become magically attractive. They become objects of cupidity and then possession, animated possessions, richly decorated and pampered possessions, with hidden souls, whom one must watch jealously. Nobody planned the codes he follows; he brought the seeds of them with him into the settled lands; they are his natural reaction to his conditions. This is his way with women, just as a senior partnership is the peasant's way and avoidance the way of the sin-haunted soul.

The romantic codes, the codes of the adventurers, have had a disproportionate influence upon the life of to-day because they were associated naturally with ruling and powerful people, and so the poets and singers, the romancers and playwrights found their interest in observing them. They yielded better stories, with more colour in them. They carried more decoration. The common life is uneventful by nature; its good faith and sober industry yield no such strikingly

recordable and transmissible impulses, have no such epic nor dramatic quality. Yet it is not from the conquerors and aristocrats and romantic, generous, wasteful figures of the past that the modern order arises, but from men addicted to creative toil, from sublimated artisans and skilful makers; and the mates they need if they are to round off their revolutionary activities into a new world system, are far more like the free-going, kindly, smiling, assisting womankind of the peasant and the artificer than the fascinating houri of the excited cowboy or her exaltation, the fine lady of the chivalrous tradition.

What has happened in the sexual life of our western communities during the last two centuries, and which is now becoming worldwide, can be represented by certain very broad statements about these three great systems of promise and sentiment. Firstly the economic revolution, the change of scale in economic operations, has done much to break up the homely practical equality of commonplace men and women, by taking one domestic task after another out of the woman's hands, taking economic realities out of her sight and understanding, gathering men workers into offices, office districts, factories, and warehouses, and so reducing the link between husband and wife down at last to its sexual core. The increase of knowledge has also lifted the burthen of child-bearing from the woman. The circumstances of stratum after stratum of women have approximated more and more to a low-grade, impoverished reproduction of the leisure and expectancy of the lady of the world of chivalry.

Meanwhile there has been a vast extension of reading and a cheapening of books. The literary methods have naturally followed the romantic tradition of the ruling class; for some generations women of the poorer sort were reading nothing but the cheap editions and worn library copies originally written and published at a high price for the gentlefolk, and this amounted in effect to a most subtle and effectual propaganda of the romantic attitude to sexual life. There has been a tremendous flooding of the thoughts and motives of the entire community with these cowboy-chevalier ideals. Hitherto these ideals had carried little weight in the main Illiterate mass of the community; even in the upper classes they had been much restrained and modified by the sin idea and the defensive dignity that idea enabled many women to assume. But now the sense of sin was being

lifted from the world with the decline in confidence of those old religious teachings. The theatre, and to-day with enormous force, the cinema, is confirming the teachings of the reverie and the novelette. An increasing multitude of girls, probably a huge majority of them now, in America and western Europe, is growing up to womanhood with no idea of any sort of worth-while career except that of the heroine of a love-story with a powerful, patient, constantly excited and always devoted man.

Unhappily there has been no corresponding increase in the supply of cowboy-chevaliers and successful sailor adventurers. The young man who sits beside the thrilling girl in the cinema theatre is already, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, a subordinated young man; he is always going to be rather preoccupied with the interest and difficulties of the work he has to do, and he is never going far away to execute wonderful deeds. Still less is he ever coming back with his hands full of gifts and his eyes full of crystalline desire. He is doomed, therefore, to be treated as a second-best thing by a young woman who would, if she were put to the equivalent test as a heroine, fail to prove herself even second-rate. He is going to be judged by false standards and treated upon false assumptions. He may be goaded to spirited acts that will bring defeat upon him, and to a swagger that will fail to deceive her trained judgment. Humiliation awaits him, and for her wait the scurvy reactions of a humiliated man.

It is extraordinary how the whole aspect of social life has been changed since I was a child, by the flooding out of all other traditions by the traditions of romance. It is visible in the streets, where once the best part of the women were dowdy and uneventful. Now every two women out of three call for the man of spirit, in their provocative clothing, in their conscious assertion of a cared-for beauty, in their challenging bearing. There have been times in London in Paris when I have wanted to go along the gallant streets apologising for myself and my sex. This change of attitude is evident even in our murders. England has few murders; it is not a murdering country, but such murders as there were in my boyhood were sordid, practical, business-like affairs, the realisation of an insurance, the removal of some encumbering person. Now three-fourths of our murders are

romantic. In England, in the last eight or ten years, there have been hung some score of romantic lovers, for jealousy — lovers usually of the middle and lower middle class. They have done things, high tragic things, that seem to have been inspired by the aristocratic Elizabethan drama.

It is impossible to believe that this pervasion of the contemporary world by sexual romanticism is anything but a passing phase in the huge social readjustments now in progress. It is like a summer cloudburst that leaves the crops flat for three or four days and scarcely hurts them. There *is* no substantial support for these new attitudes; the thrust of economic necessity is against them. The harsh truth is that there is now an over-production of willing beauties and heroines; the market is more than glutted. Every prosperous man, every successful adventurer, finds there are charming, cultivated, unscrupulous young women alert for him at every turn. A lot of us have our returned cowboy phases, no doubt, times when the easy dollars fly, but most of us are much too busy and preoccupied to give these delightful creatures the full attention they expect and demand. The comparatively successful ones who get a hold on a man, go off presently with dresses and furniture and precarious settlements. A few struggle to an unstable and mortified married state. Many never get anything at all but passing attentions, and hang on until the revealing dresses reveal beauty no longer but defeat. Our fiction is still romantic, and no one has yet written the true story of lovely women among modern rich men. They do better with the heirs, perhaps, which is one reason why most of us are prepared to put great restrictions upon inheritance. We prefer the survival of our business to the seduction of our sons.

The winding-up of this phase of over-competition among heroines lies with women themselves. The warnings of the disillusioned had already started off to overtake the romantic novel twenty-five years ago. The pursuit continues. It was inevitable that to begin with women should awake to a sense that they had been cheated and rail against the men for cheats. But men are not to blame for the comparative rarity of Douglas Fairbanks and Rudolph Valentino. It was in the nature of things, and not out of the blackness of the male heart, that these generations of women should be led to expect too

much and receive so little. The flow of romance still runs high and strong, but gradually the less agreeable truths about men and women will invade the consciousness of the young girl in time to save her from the current disappointment. She will be brought back to the fact that her equivalent man is neither a god nor a cheat but a human being very like herself, and that for all practical purposes there are neither gods nor villains after the fashion of the romancers.

She must realise that though she can be violently attractive to a man she is only spasmodically attractive, and that on the whole her need for him is greater than his need for her. The fatal delusion that a woman can be the crown of a man's life, his incentive to action, his inspiration, has to be cleaned out of her mind altogether. Women may have been an incentive to action for certain types of men, but that is a different statement. The desire for women has indeed driven men to robberies, piracies, gambling, insurrections, conquests, gripping possessiveness, waylaying and forestalling. Woman has been able to make a price and obliged men to find it — and so brought herself under the obligations of a purchased article. But no man has ever done any great creative thing, painted splendidly, followed up subtle curiosities as a philosopher or explorer, organised an industry, set a land in order, invented machines, built lovely buildings, primarily for the sake of a woman. These things can only be done well and fully for their own sakes, because of a distinctive drive from within; they arise from that sublimated egotism we call self-realisation. Some women have prevented and thwarted the self-realisation of men, and others have protected and aided men, but from first to last they have been accessory. Man is and will remain incurably egotist. To cease to be an egotist is to cease in that measure to be an individual. Even when he devotes himself wholly to the science of the species, it is that he seeks to realise his individual difference to the full in order to add it to the undying experience of his kind. Even religion has exaggerated rather than suppressed the egotist by its horrible lure of egoistic immortality. The devotee, prostrate with adoration in his cell, wants to make his service to his Lord exceptional and distinctive. "Lord," he prays, "remember ME."

It is the fundamental falsity of the romantic tradition that man should subordinate himself to the egotism of a woman. Let her not

dream of it. It lures her on to the development of an enhanced exaggerated ego, pitifully painted, scented and adorned for worship. In that she sinks her actual personality and only perceives the cheat when she finds the slave become owner and bully, imprisoning his mistress in the jealousy that is his instinctive, unpremeditated revenge for the unnatural subordination that has been imposed upon him.

On the whole women are not so highly individualised nor so strongly egotistical as men. The romantic tradition suggests that they are more so. The first lesson the modern young woman has to learn is to reject that suggestion and accept the facts of the case. The greater part of the life of a modern woman — and it is astonishing now to see how far down these influences have extended — is the sedulous pursuit of an enforced and superposed individuality. In that pursuit goes all the vigour that might have enabled her to develop her more essential qualities. Her hair, her skin, her figure, her behaviour, her emotions, must be, in the same way, tortured to "distinction." Her very scent must be distinctive; her entry into a room must have "style"; she must wrap strange and striking effects of colour and texture round her mediocrity. Failing any inner radiance, she must secure the limelight. The manufacture of individuality for women is a vast industry; in Paris, in New York, in London it is dominant; it is perhaps the most skilful and wonderful industry in our world. Men and women of fine intelligence exert their utmost gifts to produce "creations"; those must be sold in secret and with passionate asseverations that they are exclusive, to the happy, rich, ordinary women who are lifted by such efforts for a few days or a few weeks out of the undistinguished chorus of female minds and bodies to which naturally they belong. A title, some historical pearls, a collection of jewels, a few anecdotes can be added with advantage. Then with a certain enterprise, and a setting and a retinue, titled attentions perhaps, and the press and the press photographers, the goddess is built up. And you take it home with you out of the clamour, and you take its marvellous clothes off it and you wash off what you can of its grease and paint and powder, and you find a poor little human body of no remarkable quality and a mind and a character of no quality at all.

The flower of the romantic tradition has been the fine lady, who disappears, who becomes already a little ghostly and incredible. Its practical outcome has been that curious code of claims and behaviour by which multitudes of women are living to-day, here in dear, lucid, logical, impatient, shallow-minded France particularly, and the code is embodied in the phrase *"La Femme."* By it men and women cease altogether to be fellow-creatures. The first convention in the cult, *La Femme*, is that every woman, except such women as are to be altogether swept aside as *stupides* and *laides*, is delightful, desirable, exceptional, and rare. The second is that without her life is intolerable to a man, that she is his comprehensive objective, that all he is and does is for her sake — her sake or her rival's. That is the one thorn in the paradise of *La Femme* — the other woman. The man appears in her life, seeking, seeking, sometimes rather blindly and requiring assistance, but always seeking his end, his completion. After suitable inquiries and an exchange of references between the parents, she allows herself to love. She "gives" herself. The male, faint with gratitude and amazement, becomes her slave. Her lifework is over; the rest is harvest. In return for this stupendous, this almost unheard-of beneficence she is entitled to dress, leisure, amusement, servants, and an establishment considerably above her or her husband's station. The male is rewarded or admonished by repetitions or refusals of the supreme gift. It is adorned for his birthday and reserved during Lent.

La Femme, particularly in phases of doubt and disillusionment, is apt to become gregarious and voluble. She gathers in flats at tea-time and talks her fears and angers down and out. She asserts her inflexible principles, her unflinching claims. She exchanges views upon what may be borne and what justifies deceit and rebellion. Almost everything justifies deceit and rebellion. And at the back of her talk, most sacred of conventional beliefs, pretension no tea party would ever dare to question or qualify, is the doctrine of the eager, accessible *amant*. An enormous number of prowling rich men are supposed to exist, men in reserve, the ultimate stabilisers of all the troubles of *La Femme*. If the husband prove intolerable, if his meanness and incapacity sink below the needs and pride of his impatient priceless one, she will, she declares, fall back at last upon

that one certain resource. There it is. *Que voulez-vous?* She will just go out of the home, somewhere, and — a mere movement of prehension— "prendre un amant, un riche amant."

"Je les vois prenant ce riche amant," says Clementina, the wise, the disillusioned.

5. SEXUAL INTEGRITY

THIS phase of social life, this submergence of upper and middle class and even artisan life by a flood of sexual romanticism must be a transitory one. There are too many women and not enough men seeking to realise these dreams, and such romantic men as are to be found are discovering the increasing cheapness of their charmers. They become arrogant beyond enduring. The sense of sin was the last restrictive force upon the abundance of women, and it has gone. There is too much humiliation and disappointment in this interplay for girls and women and normally circumstanced men. The situation eases itself by young women taking up work with increasing sincerity and ability. It can be profoundly modified by the social atmosphere able women may create. But it will never ease itself completely until there is a great reduction in the prizes that can still fall to an impudent and lucky adventuress.

That rests with the men who have the power to change economic conditions. The final cure for the vulgarisation and suffusion of life by the extravagances of the romantic lady, in action or in magnificent retirement, and of her myriads of unsuccessful or partially successful imitators and competitors, is the abolition of the cowboy type, the lucky lad, the gambler. As we regularise business and the exploitation of staple productions, clip adventurous finance to economic sub-service, destroy restrictive monopolies, mitigate the pressure of the mere creditor and restrain inheritance, the resources of the spendthrift male will dwindle and the ground vanish from under the feet of the heroine. As the sanitation of the world's economic life progresses, the romantic tradition will fade in the measure of that reorganisation. For some generations yet the romantic tradition will be fighting after its gorgeous fashion, in novel and play, in the press, upon the screen and in custom, costume, manners, and conversation, in every daily affair, against the conception of a graver, non-parasitic womanhood.

I know very little about the younger women of to-day. They say that quite new types have appeared since the war but they have been outside my explicit experience. I find I am too old now to get any

exchange of ideas with a Woman under thirty. William Clissold the Second might be able to add much to what I am writing here. But I am neither deaf nor blind; I have a certain aptitude for seeing things with my left shoulder or the back of my head where girls and women are concerned. The romantic tradition is not altogether outside the imagination of these types, but a new code is pushing it aside. One sees the struggle in the dress they wear. The short hair, the kilts, spell freedom, but many of them — even the very young ones — paint like whores. Some of the leaders must know their own minds, but most of the rank and file seem quite uncertain whether it is heroine or comrade they mean to be. Chance may determine. Maybe Angelina is a comrade on Monday and reverts to the role of heroine after the excitement of the cinema on Tuesday evening. That must make very uncertain going for Edwin.

Chastity, by which I mean an invincible power of abstinence, has long been falling down the scale of feminine virtue from the days when it was not only the supreme but practically the only adornment needed by a good woman. She could be mendacious, cowardly, and indolent; these things merely added an agreeable piquancy to the charm of her essential goodness. But if the new types no longer esteem virginity as a glory and chastity as an obligation, it does not follow that their code will tolerate a careless promiscuity and still less the mercenary exploitation of men's sexual desires. On that modern women join issue openly with the romantic tradition, which shelters under its ample pretences both the successful prostitute and the parasitic wife. At present I believe these recalcitrant women are working out their own conception of sexual integrity. They are in a phase of experiment, and for many of the weaker sisters experiment degenerates into aimless and undignified laxity. They do not so much follow the desires of their hearts as do what they are asked. The task of developing the new ideals is intricate and complex. The general proposition is an easy one: it is that women should make love only for love. But like most easy general propositions, it says very little because it is open for anything whatever to shelter under that word "love."

There is a Mediterranean lucidity about Clementina in these matters. There is a Mediterranean disregard of intentions that do not

immediately clothe themselves in terms of explicit reality. She examined this repudiation of any mercenary element in love.

"You say a woman must not give herself for what she gets — only for love. Yes; very good. And what makes her love a man at first? In nine cases out of ten, what makes her begin to love him? The effect of kindness, the effect of power, the quality of the givah. Because she feels he can give. She gives herself for love — yes. But she loves because she feels something stronger, safer, protective in the man. Is that being mercenary?"

I considered the proposition.

"Do I love you?" she went on. "Do you doubt of it? You know I love you. You know. I would die for you. But what made me love you first? Desiah for your beauty, Clissoldaki mou? It was because you suddenly came to me, strong and kind and helping. Because you had powah over all the things that defeated me. You came to me. Confident you were. I was afraid. I was hungry — I was hungry that night. You said: 'If you want to go to Provence, my deah, go. I let you.' It was so wonderful. You can open roads, give freedoms, make houses and gardens submit to you, put safety round my life."

"Is it only that?"

"Not at all. You know. My deah, you know. But does a woman fall in love with a man if a man isn't that? If he fails. If he lets himself be frustrated. If he cannot protect and give. All the new ideahs in the world can't alter that. Women will turn to the strong man, the capable man, the man who has mastery. Their *hearts* will turn. Their honest love. As yours turn to beauty. When the love is won, ah! *Then* you can be weak. *Then* you can be cruel. But to the end of time, my deah, you will never be able to tell whether this woman or that sold herself for the powah a man had or gave herself for the love he commanded."

Gestures from the isles of Greece came to reinforce her asseverations. "Many don't *know*," she drove it home. "Many never know."

Then with an extended finger: "I have seen girls sell themselves, and come to love their husbands, and come to despise the pooah lover who could do no better than a serenade — and make eyes at her. Could not even take her away. Failed."

This, I admit, is an important gloss on that definition of sexual integrity, but I do not see that it destroys it. The free-spirited woman who seeks to attract and welcomes as a mate a man with some sort of power is quite a distinguishable type from the one who cultivates her charms for the market. The superficial effect may be the same, but the direction of the *attention* is different. *Serena Blandish*, that pathetic novel, tells how the old-fashioned trade declines.

"Sexual integrity," said Clementina, "is not to be independent or dependent. Sexual integrity is to keep faith with your lovah."

"But if there is no lover?"

"To keep faith with the lovah that is to be."

"But in your own case —— ?"

"I was finding my way to you."

There is at times a magnificence about Clementina that takes my breath away.

"I was talking," I said after a pause for recovery, "of the morals of the free and equal woman. I was not thinking of the woman who accepts her need of dependence on men. I was thinking of the sort of woman who has turned her back on the *romantic* tradition and sets out to be a self-subsisting citizen. She claims all the freedoms of a man. But since you took hold of the question this free and equal woman of mine has disappeared."

"Was she ever there?" said Clementina.

"She was materialising," I asserted.

"I can only speak of women as I know them," said Clementina. "We have to love and we are not as strong as men."

But *if* Clementina has not met this new sort of woman, I at least have had glimpses of her and the sexual integrity she has in mind is something more and perhaps something less than sexual faithfulness to a lover actual or foreseen. In limiting it to that Clementina goes right back to the sentimental emotional view of woman's position. She is obsessed by the idea that love is the cardinal thing in life. That is just what the newer type is struggling a way from at any cost. They are in profound reaction against that idea because in it they find the clue to their general cheapness and subjection. Some repudiate it, by treating sex as something as trivial as chocolate. But there are others who appreciate it for the enormous and far-reaching thing it is in life,

and yet are resolved not to be subordinated and enslaved through it. They want to reserve it, to keep it private) outside all negotiations, detached from all ambitions and all other activities. They want to do their work and establish their status in despite of it. As a man does. Freedom and dignity are the good things that it seems most to attack and endanger. For the sake of them they realise woman must cease to be beauty, heroine, temptress, darling, and become — a citizen. For the sake of them she must abandon the artificial advantages and refuse the restrictions of a wife. So they see it.

It is interesting to find in Clementina a vigorous antagonist to this conception of the modern woman's role, because it is one I seem to have held always. I do not remember that I ever scrutinised it very closely. Instinctively I have been in sympathy with it. As a student I was already talking to Clara about our being perfectly equal and perfectly free. I do not remember that I ever questioned the moral assumptions of Godwin and Shelley. I have taken this attitude with women all my life. It is only recently that I have come to realise the passion in Clementina's repudiation.

6. THEIR THREE CHIEF FAILINGS

THIS sexual integrity towards which women seem to be moving from that conception of status entirely sexual which the romantic tradition imposed upon them is entangled with certain other moral dispositions. I have been trying to state them, not very successfully, because they are so interwoven. They are to be found already in the code of a man; it is just because they have been and are so disregarded by women that it is necessary to emphasise them in that relation. I had written yesterday a list beginning "(1) a greater hardness towards facts, a refusal to be accommodating towards a falsehood." Then came "(2) an acceptance of a natural personality in the place of the dressmaker's substitute." But I will not give the rest of that list. After lunch I invoked Clementina.

"Think for me a little," I said. "There are some things a woman ought never to do. What are they?"

Clementina made a false start. "If a woman loves a man," she began, "there is nothing — —"

"I mean, whether she loves or not," I said, and pulled her back to the question again. "Clementina, tell me, what are the common faults of women? What are the chief weaknesses against which they ought to set rules and prohibitions for themselves if they are to look men in the face?"

"We are liahs," said Clementina unhesitatingly, and then fell into a meditation while I gave Titza crumbs of sugar from my coffee-cup.

"Listen," she said, and paused for my full attention. "There are three things wrong with us, — three. There are three chief faults of women. They are all forms of weakness. We are liahs, we are vain, and we give no fair play in our dealings with men."

"*You* are different," I said.

"At the bottom of her heart," said Clementina, "a woman knows — knows she cannot accomplish fairly. She is afraid. She is afraid of herself. She is afraid she will go to pieces if she is left to do a thing alone. She has no confidence. She has no confidence she can do fairly."

"She has no confidence she will be treated fairly," I said.

“Anyhow, she has no confidence. So that as soon as things seem likely to go wrong she cheats. She lies, she shirks, she betrays. Feah.”

“It is right,” I interrupted, “that women should be fearful. It was — it still is — necessary for herself and her children. Always that has been so. She was afraid of the dark thing round the corner and of the quick violence of her offended mate. Hiding is instinctive. And so is lying. For a woman. She has had to ease off the truth so often. Diplomatic. Evasive. It wasn’t her job to face the dark thing round the corner. And she had to keep the peace with the dark thing in the cave.”

“It will be long before fear goes out of women’s lives,” said Clementina. “It isn’t all upbringing; it isn’t all circumstances. It is in us. We have clear minds even if we have weak bodies, and we know things, we *know*, which either you don’t know or you are too polite to say. We have to judge men. We have to judge what goes to make success. We know the qualities. And we know we haven’t got them. Little knowledge, little or no training, and something more. Not such power of concentration. Not able to keep on and keep on gripping. Women get quicklier tired and more muddled in their brains when they have to think out difficult things. They learn quickly — oh! we can be wonderfully clever, give us rules, details, words, but when it comes to big general things we *flinch*.”

“Training,” I said. “Tradition.”

“I wonder.”

“And the willing, convenient man ready to say: ‘Leave it all to me’!”

“But no man will leave it all to someone else, even when you say it to him. But we are glad to leave it. We are afraid, even when we could.”

“A traditional want of pride,” said I.

“Pride,” she said, and reflected.

“Women are not proud enough,” said Clementina, thinking aloud. “Telling the truth is a sort of pride.”

“This is how I see it, and be damned to you,” I tried it over. “That’s all right.”

“And they are vain also because they have no pride. Their vanity.

Their industrious vanity. They fly from their own real selves. They snatch at any flattery, they stick on any trimming, any colour, any ornament, because they feel they are nothing in themselves. It's not only food and shelter they want from men. They want, always they want, to be reassured. We say: 'Do you love me? Say that you love me!' Until you wave your arms at us as if we were flies and you say 'Shuddub' to us and 'Go away!' Pitiful it is. And we are greedy for the least bit of praise. Praise is the food of love. A wise man — even a kind man — makes his woman feel that she is pretty — every day. And the less she is the more he ought to."

"I have seen men greedy for robes," I said. "I have known men find flattery sustaining."

"And their ungenerosity," said Clementina, pursuing her own thoughts. "Their absolute disregard of give and take. The way they will take from men they despise! The way they will let a worried, overworked husband they pretend to love pay and pay! The way they will take dependence as their privilege! The way they accept being put first, shirk little tasks, are lazy, and do not try! Until they are positively driven to try. And then — they drudge. Inattentively — not trying to do it. Protesting. All of it, all of it is want of pride. All of it. But you are right. We have no pride."

Then with a swift transition, with a lift of her eyebrows and a change of voice:

"Where is my pride with you, Clissoulaki? Where is my pride with you?"

She reverted to a philosophical attitude. "Can women have pride? Will they ever have pride?"

It would be impossible for a voice to express completer resignation.

"Clementina," I said, "women now are struggling towards pride. They are struggling towards pride out of conditions that have become increasingly humiliating for them. They have been trivialised and cheapened by economic forces, and demoralised and cheated by traditions that require them to be rare and sought after when in reality they are abundant and omnipresent. They can only get back to dignity by being proud, by refusing all differential treatment and insisting upon all the masculine virtues — whether the men like it or

no. Courage. Truth. Fair play."

Clementina made no answer.

"That," I said, "is the quintessence of feminism. That is what the vote symbolised for them, and all the agitations of the last five-and-twenty years. A struggle back to pride."

But Clementina was away upon a trail of her own. Suddenly she looked up at me.

"In some things, Clissoulaki, you are very clever, and in some you are very dense. I do not think it has ever dawned on you in all your life how unfair and how cruel a thing it can be to take a woman into your life and treat her as your equal."

"How can it be unfair to play on equal terms?"

"Equal terms! When we love with all our beings! And you love — ! I love little Titza here, more than you have ever loved me."

7. RETURN TO MORALITY

EVIDENTLY I must come to a discussion of this love which Clementina, in spite of all my resistances, forces into the foreground of my mind. Yet still for a section I shall cling to my analysis of the forms of sexual relationship, if only because it is within these forms that love as she conceives it goes on. One cannot love in the air, painted ceilings notwithstanding. I will disentangle all I can of the general forces that interweave to make our individual cases before I come down to these last intimate realities. I will complete my bird's-eye view of the changes that are going on between men and women by a forecast of the coming state of affairs.

In spite of all the romanticism, extravagance, excitement, and waste in the life of women to-day, in spite of its almost universal levity and triviality, I do not believe that these conditions have any real permanence. Though the flood is nearly universal, the ground is near below. I do not believe this era of triviality will Endure, because I perceive that there is too much disappointment and mortification in it for women. That the vast majority of women to-day show no signs of any disposition to change the present state of affairs does not trouble me in the least. Women can adopt new attitudes *en masse* much more readily even than men. Feminine values are and always have been very unstable, and the zephyr of the afternoon may become the hurricane of to-morrow. I am prepared to find much promise therefore in very unsubstantial intimations.

Women in the past have shown the extremest plasticity in their ideals of life. We have seen the homely, sheltered woman swept away by the romantic inundation; we have had an epidemic of heroines; for a time it seemed as though woman had no other end but dancing. We have encountered the rebel woman, the frantic sex-antagonist. There are forces now that make for pride and reservation in women, and there is a great need for pride. As the creative and directive men who are building up a new world order in the living body of the old become aware of the full significance of the work they do and of their full possibilities, inevitably there will be women awakening also, to share in the new understandings and the new

ambitions. They will be interested in these things not only directly, but because they interest the men. Nothing that men have nowadays is altogether kept from women. I do not see how these new women can be other than women practically active, soberly beautiful in dress and bearing, a little hidden in their love, and friendly to men.

Their standards and habits, more than any other single influence, will determine the tone of social life in that emerging world-community with its wider outlooks, its longer rhythms, its more sustained vitality I have anticipated. To these first adapted women will come influence and power and prestige as the active men will disentangle themselves and their time and energy from the worn-out nets of the meretricious women. When paint and scent go they will go very fast because they will be aware of their own conspicuousness. They are not inadvertent things. They came because there was a premium upon over-emphasis; they have no intrinsic beauty or charm. The new types will set the fashion and provide the models for their weaker, more imitative sisters. The swing back will pass far beyond the types it first expressed. Gravity, capacity, independence will become the common wear.

Nevertheless, I do not apprehend a wave of Quaker drab submerging the ten thousand standard advertisements of sex that now animate our streets. Women in desperation will no longer make a flagrant appeal to all and sundry, but that does not mean they will become indifferent to their effect. Within the code of pride I have foreshadowed for women the life of the new community will have much variety, and that will display itself in costume and bearing. The new community will be one of more freely developed personalities than ours, and upon the basis of its common standards there will be a far greater diversity of personal experiences. We shall not all be boxed up by twos and twos and relaxed in crowds. The new variety will be due, not to a tangled confusion of traditions and accidents, but to an open development of personal idiosyncrasies. Our lives to-day will seem as limited, uniform, and stereotyped to the larger living, fuller living, wider living people of the days to come as a crowd of Central African negroes in an explorer's photograph — all alike in paint and feathers and armed alike and nearly all in the same attitude — looks to our eyes to-day.

The institution of marriage as we know it has a false air of having lasted unimpaired throughout the ages. It has, as a matter of fact, varied enormously, and it continues to vary, in its obligations, its restrictions, its availability and solubility, its duration. People are constantly discussing, "Are you for or against marriage ? Would you abolish it?" We are an for and against marriage, and we abolish it piecemeal continually. We vary the implications of the bond by fresh legislation every few years; we have in my lifetime reduced the former headship and proprietorship of the husband to a shadow, robbed him of rights of assault upon his wife, taken away his privilege of not educating his children, and relaxed the conditions of divorce. The marriage of to-day is not the marriage of yesterday, and still less is it likely to be the marriage of to-morrow. When you rule out of consideration an the points upon which marriage varies in the civilised communities to-day and consider what remains after the stripping, you will find it amounts to very little more than the legal recognition and enforcement of that natural tendency of the human animal to mate and to sustain a joint establishment for the protection of the resultant offspring.

The force of reason is in alliance with the forces of social convenience in narrowing down marriage to a child-protecting bond. Until that is done it is clear that the state will be depriving adults, needlessly, of their legitimate sexual freedom, to the grave demoralisation of such law and police organisation as may be required to enforce these all too intimate restrictions. The community only becomes concerned with sexual affairs when the public health is affected or a child is begotten and born. The public responsibilities are incurred, obligations must be acknowledged, and home life and upbringing ensured for the new citizen of the world.

At present legal marriage is more than such a public bond, partly out of regard for the dwindling social necessity of a rule of inheritance and partly because of the impudent intolerance of our intellectually and morally discredited religious organisations. In every generation now we humiliate and injure scores of thousands of lives under the discrimination of bastardy, in deference to the imaginary needs of keeping together estates that our death duties are busily breaking up, and because the endowments of religion are still

sufficient to maintain strenuously orthodox parsons and priests. These are things of the old order, and the forces of progress thrust them aside, slowly but steadily. As the bastard is equalised with the legitimate son, and the proprietorship of the husband and wife attenuated to the privileges of lover and mistress, the world will cease to inquire for a wife's "marriage lines" and marriage signify little more than habitual association.

Already some people are dropping the change of a woman's name at marriage, and that may extend until it is the general practice. When women write, or act, or paint, it is becoming common. Dr. Marie Stopes is really Mrs. Roe, Viola Tree is really Mrs. Parsons, and there are hundreds of such casts. Hotel proprietors all over the world, and experienced butlers in the best houses, behave as though there were millions. The time may come when the ministrations of the clergyman, the orange blossoms and the robe of white, "The Voice that Breathed O'er Eden," the hired carriages, and the white favours will be the quaint social survival of the backward suburbs and the provincial towns.

Such a fading out of marriage from its present stereotyped rigidity will put no end to mating. The men and women of the wider life and the larger views will still feel our common necessity to go in couples for longer or shorter periods. But there may be much diversity in the character of their coupling. The stereotyped relations of man and wife and of man and mistress — which latter are at present a sort of left-handed reflection of marriage — will have given place to many variations of association. In the ampler, easier, less crowded, less ceremonious social life of to-morrow, a life of more adult, more individualised people, the consorts will not always be upon a convention of equality. Perhaps they will rarely be upon terms of equality. As we begin to take off the stays, blinkers, traces, hoods, masks, fetters, gags, we have put upon the sexual imaginations of human beings, and examine into the living realities below, we may realise that we have been trying to adapt an immensely various collection of types to one standard bilateral arrangement. We may find they are not only diverse in temperament, but that they go through diverse phases of development, so that what is reasonable and desirable for a man of five-and-twenty may be cruel nonsense if

it is applied to a man of five-and-fifty. Our moral judgments may need to vary not only with temperament but with stage of development of the individual we judge. Human growth goes on through out life; we do not "grow up" and have done with it, as our forefathers supposed.

The Christian marriage, like most marriage institutions in the world, met the needs of a peasant life with a passable success. It happened normally about the early twenties, or a little later for a man, and it carried the couple on for twenty years, by which time toil and exposure had aged them, their children were growing up, and there was little more to be done for them. It is extraordinary how young in years some of the old women and bent ancients about here are. The romantic tradition of the nomad and his descendant, the aristocrat, was even nearer adolescence. One day came love and another death. I have already pointed out the youthfulness of Shakespearean romance. But nowadays we live much longer, we do not age so fast, we learn quicklier and mature more rapidly, and a new stage opens and widens in life between the thirties and the seventies, for which the institutions, traditions, sentiment, and poetry of the past cannot be expected to provide a complete outline. This is the stage, the new adult stage, upon which the coming order will be built and which is being cleared of its encumbrances of childish, youthful, and adolescent habits and feelings, and short and narrow views. Mating and marriage and the rearing of a family must still be a part of this new life, but only a phase of it. It was George Meredith, I think, who set the world talking twenty years ago by suggesting ten-year marriages. That is surely too short. The practical endurance of a marriage is determined by the need of children for a home. The home now docs not last a lifetime. England now is full of houses left like a last year's nest. At best the old home, like Lambs Court, becomes a meeting-place and club-house for the growing clan. Commonly it dissolves. The Riviera here swarms with people whose homes have come to pieces.

Probably Darby and Joan will still be found in the new world, but it may be that the common practice will be an exchange between different ages. I have an impression that at the present time the very young people do not, in the majority of cases, hit it off together very

easily. Youth is too egotistically preoccupied to show much consideration for the egotistical preoccupations of another undeveloped personality. Perhaps it is more natural to have one partner rather protective and stronger, and one fresher and more spontaneous.

Or it may be that the common human life passes through phases that begin with love for a strong adult type, go on to a love of equals, to partnership and the home and children, and give place to a keener interest in and a finer understanding for the young. Some of my contemporaries have gone through such phases, and I can find traces of them in my own rather aberrant experiences. But though this may be true of men, it may not be so true of women. I do not know. They are disguised from me, and I have not been so closely interested as I might have been in the feelings and reactions of women older than myself. Just as the young man, from the age of eighteen onward, under the pressure of the romantic tradition, is forced to imagine himself a virile adult, and stronger and coarser and wiser and more wilful than any woman at all, so every woman, unless she has turned her back upon all thoughts of attraction, must go on playing the tender juvenile part. Women pretend even to themselves, so that they can tell you nothing real; and it defeats my poor powers of psychic analysis altogether to guess at the suppressed and distorted mightiness of their imaginations. Venus Absoluta is, for all practical judgments, the unknown goddess.

Perhaps Catherine the Great of Russia and Ninon de Lenclos were intimations of the quality of Venus Absoluta. Or perhaps they were merely energetic and versatile men who happened to be of the female sex.

For many in the reconstituted human community matters may come full round to the ancient balance of the peasant life again when men and women alike were workers. At a higher level and in a more lucid co-operation. In just the measure that men are able to get rid of the predatory and gambling and merely acquisitive processes in the new world society, in just that measure may the old intimate fellowship of man and woman return. And there, I think, comes a possible reconciliation of Clementina's assertion of ineradicable differences and dependences with the new spirit of freedom and

pride. It becomes possible, when a man works not for himself but for the race, that a woman should at once remain equal and proud of herself and yet work in subordination to him. It may be that by nature his initiatives are more resolute and less hesitating than hers.

The humiliations of women in recent times have been very largely due to their realisation that their lives were subordinated to men's merely personal ends. That, they feel, is shameful, half-way to the common prostitute. Their recalcitrance was of a piece with the recalcitrance of a worker who finds his life limited, used, and exhausted for the mere individual gratifications of a profit-hunting employer. There is no share nor pride in the end for the subordinate in either case. The forces of revolution work to abolish that sort of employment and any sort of dependence on individual whim. But subordination takes on an altogether different quality when it is subordination to a captain, who himself is subordinate. He also serves, and if manifestly he serves in good faith there is no loss of honour in following his leads. No social state has ever been conceived, nor can I conceive any, in which most of the men and women will not be living subordinated lives. I see no great hardship if in the future as in the past the role of a large proportion of women remains in reality ancillary. That need not prevent them living happily and beautifully, proud of what they are and of what they do.

But I grow more and more speculative; and these women of the days to come, for all their pride and graciousness, remain conspicuously featureless. My reason evokes them, fine-spirited and wise, but they are aloof from me. Their faces remain blank ovals that have not so much as eyes to look towards me.

The night is late, and early to-morrow Clementina is coming down for a great walk we have long promised ourselves into those grey wildernesses of stone and scrub above Gourdon. It will be too far and too stony for Titza's incessant little feet. I shall carry food and drink in my rucksack, and we shall sit among the rocks in the sunlight under the blue sky and wrangle and discourse about these endless riddles.

8. TROUBLE IN THE NIGHT

I HAVE been reading over the sections I have written in the past two months. Many of them impress me as bare and abstract. I have written of the change of scale in economic life, of the supersession of schools and colleges and methods and institutions and forms of government, of the conflict between traditions of relationship. It has been necessary to reason close and hard and stick to general terms.

"Tradition of relationship" is, I admit, an arid term to cover people's love troubles. I have been attempting a diagram of the whole of human life as I see it passing before me, and perhaps it is absurd of me to regret now that it is diagrammatic. Both the telescope and the microscope take us at last to the inhuman. But it is upon the gaunt loom of these economic processes, educational influences, guiding traditions, that all our lives are woven.

I return from this long flight, this bird's-eye view of human affairs in the sluices of change, to the hangar, so to speak, of this room. I clamber out of my framework of generalisations. I come back from map scale to life-size again. And I find many things in the story I have told of myself and my brother, and many other things I have seen in life that had seemed irrational and perverse and adventitious, falling into a kind of reasonableness in accord with the broad lines that outline inspection has revealed.

It is possible now to distinguish, if not to separate, the essential living matter of these experiences from the streams of suggested ideas, imitations, subconscious responses, imposed habits, uncritical acquiescences that flowed through that living matter into acts. I discover the compulsions in what seemed wilful actions, the mechanical quality of many inconsistencies and much misbehaviour.

Hitherto I have thought that Clara's offence against me was that she was unfaithful to me; but now I perceive that the essential trouble was this, that she married me and I her without lucidity or sincerity. I must have disappointed her acutely in many things; but most, and most disastrously, by my unconscious self-betrayals of my belief that I had bought her, that I had bought her at no great price, chiefly to relieve my cloddish sensuality — in relieving hers. The shams we

had accepted to clothe our transaction were thin enough for at least a subconscious apprehension of the truth. Only now do I realise how much of our relationship stripped down to that. We phrased it differently, in phrases that I have largely forgotten. But by nearly all the standards that mingled in her mind she had, I see, a case against me, and though I might have pleaded that she misled me in what she promised me and in what she meant to give me, far more had I misled myself. She and her sisters were saturated in that degeneration of the romantic tradition which has turned the haughty and pampered beauty into a needy and pursuing beauty. It seemed normal and proper for them to cheat in the face of such marriages as confronted them. They were already primed to cheat and snatch before I knew them. At times she must have been amazed by the realisation of her own turpitude, at the net into which her temptations and prevarications and justifications had entangled her. She must have wondered, like a beast in a cage, how it had come about that she was in such a tangle.

It is easy to condemn Clara as a bad woman, and so dispose of her. That in effect is how I treated her. But there is another side to her offences that I am only now beginning to appreciate at its fun significance. I have thought often enough how they hurt me, but for the first time I am coming to think how they hurt her. What devastating hours of dismay and perplexity must Clara have lived through — even before our rupture! When she thought of what she had done and how and when I might find out, and what would happen then, and why, why in Heaven's name she had done it. Because life had not been made plain to her, because she had been lured and shouted at by a confusion of impulses and voices bidding her go hither and thither. For every impulse, for every suggestion there had been some sort of formula and a quality, however flimsy, of excuse. If it was only the excuse of saying I deserved it. She must have lain awake at nights by my side, trying to persuade herself she was safe and all was well with the outlook, while the gathering dangers marched round about her and threatened her. Or that by some feat of rhetoric and ratiocination she would be able to "explain." And afterwards, through the tangle of adventures and misrepresentations that ended in Weston dropping her and through

her subsequent difficulties, what fresh series of unsolvable perplexities must have assailed her unprotected sleepless hours.

Some years ago the sort of people who find life too ample for them used up their surplus time in putting together again extremely dissected and dispersed pictures caned jig-saw puzzles. Humourists would make the difficult impossible by mixing two or three of these puzzles and presenting a selection of the *mélange* to the unwary solver. The fact beneath poor Clara's indulgences, evasions, and artificialities was a mixed jig-saw puzzle of problems of conduct. I doubt if she ever had a suspicion of the trick Mr. G. had played upon her life. She never saw anything of the joke — and now I see it too late to mitigate the harshness there was even in my belated kindnesses to her.

She had a capacity for suffering as great as mine. She never had any successes at all; life battered at her; she felt it all more than I should ever have done because she had nothing of my ultimate power of stoical self-detachment from pleasant or harmful things. She was altogether submerged in life and had no such escape. Perhaps she had her consolations, a run of luck at boule or roulette, a passing conquest, an assignation, and she may have got a fulness of gratification out of such things that I cannot imagine. They could not have balanced the account. Luck treated her badly, and I cannot jest with Mr. G. about her life as I can about my own.

I turn now to the memories of my other love adventures, the casual encounters, the *passades*, the brief passions of pursuit and success. I have told the reader little about them except that they occurred. What else was there to tell? Surveyed again now in this geographical, this historical fashion, they look less bright and smaller than they did before. They happened, they entertained me, some of them delighted me; I make no apology for them, and I do not repent. But there was little beauty in them, and a sort of pettiness pervaded them. I find the condemning quality about them an idleness, a pointlessness. Such things may happen with a certain grace and brightness in the heats and curiosities of youth, but not in the habitual life of. a grown man. They have their value and justification In assuagement or in reassurance. But they were mere apologies to love. We were frittering away something precious for which our

world provided no better use.

My life with Sirrie arose out of one of these *passades* and made an end to them. Few people, even among my nearest friends, seem to understand how good a thing for me were those years I spent with her. Why will they not accept my judgment of her? They have newspaper reports, scandalous stories, the false knowledge of a few hours. I lived with her for some years. Never was the bare truth about a woman so false a libel as it was on Sirrie. Never did facts make so cruel a caricature. I was the first friend she had ever met among men, and she was the first close friend I had ever known among women. When I think of the beauty and spirit she had, her mental and physical fineness and hardihood, I am grieved, even now I feel real grief, at the wastage of her and the suffering and desolation that brooded behind the drugs and drink and misdeeds to which she had resorted. I had no hand in that, and it is only now that I can consent to look squarely at all these poor flounderings and follies that dropped her at last, a coughing refugee, into my care.

But the solitary side of life! The sleepless nights when all our mental restraints have been put off with our daytime clothes, and our stark, defenceless selves face the immensities of remorse, of self-accusation and fear! I think of that eager, slender girl at seventeen, hopefully triumphant — I have a picture of her then, and she is adorable — and then of the woman who would come from her room to mine in our early days at Richmond, whispering shamefacedly in the darkness: "Pity me! Pity me! Take me in your arms. I can't *sleep*, Billy; I keep on thinking. I can't *sleep*."

It was a phase that came to an end with her, so that latterly she slept like a child and ceased to trouble, but it was a dreadful phase. Before she was twenty life was already staring and grimacing at her.

With her, just as with Clara, the impulses and voices in the confusion had urged her this way and that. How was she to judge? How was she to know? The traps looked like fun. The base marriage looked like wisdom and help for all her family. These two unhappy brains are just glimpses of what a "conflict of traditions," what "variable standards of sexual conduct," what "obsolete marriage laws and insincere observances" mean when they are translated into individual sensations. The jig-saw puzzles have no solution. The

baffled creatures struggle over the verge of despair.

Helen, too, suffered from life, though I knew far less of her inner world than I did of Sirrie's. She had the gifts of pride and anger, and they are powerful talismans against the powers of darkness. But she wept at nights, and I was an immense disappointment of her expectations. I still wish I could atone for that to her, though indeed it was not I, but the heroic standards she had chosen for her lover and the wide divergence of our ambitions, that tore up our romance. But if she wept with rage and chagrin, I also had my share of these wakeful torments. I have told already of a journey from Geneva to Paris, when my own mixed jig-saw had the upper hand with me. I must have spent scores of hours in my tortured endeavours to fit Helen and myself into *one* happy and hopeful scheme of life.

I have been writing of the equal, proud woman as an ideal. In Helen I met her. In the early days we were equal and proud to the swaggering pitch. But unless the proud and equal woman travels an identical road, how is one to keep her?

Neither Helen nor I need to be pitied as those others who are weaker and less coherent are to be pitied; both of us have something in us that sustains us and at last takes us out of all such distresses. At an early limit we grow exasperated, damn the jig-saw puzzle, and sweep it out of the way. The jig-saw puzzle is not a primary thing with us. We are more wilful and more strongly individualised than the common run of people. I have my philosophy of life, my faith, my religion, and she has the compelling impulse of her art.

A great actress is not the feminine equivalent of a great actor; being a great actress is not the same thing as acting; it is a thing peculiar to womankind. It is the sedulous development of a personality to superb proportions. The actress can lie and think of that effect she creates, that legend which grows, as I lie and think of the great revolution that began before I was born, that will continue after my death, to which I have given myself. We have these preoccupations in which our egotisms are chambered and protected; we know what we mean to do) we have banished all essential confusions of purpose, the gnawing desires for some particular but incompatible recognition, the hopes that are dependent on others, remorse for things that seemed right and yet became morally

dislocated, the fluctuations of decision as one standard gives place to another; these things wait disregarded for the most part in the antechambers of our minds with little chance of snatching a passing audience and none of invading the inner places.

The schemes I entertain of a world republic, of a simplified economic system, of a cleansing and illumination of the individual and social and sexual relationships, may seem to aim only at the outer forms of life. I may seem to be harsh and merciless towards the dear old dignities and loyalties, the time-honoured social inequalities, the quaint moral prejudices, the romantic interpretations, the subtle, intricate, well-meaning religious dogmatisms, amidst which the great mass of human beings struggle up towards the light; but the brakes and thorns of this picturesque jungle are not simply outward things. They penetrate to the nerve centres and torture there.

The inner aspect of these things is hundreds of millions of baffled, perplexed, frustrated brains. The inner aspect is suppression and humiliation, the prowling onslaughts of thwarted desires and discharges of unreasoning hate that never come to the surface because of fear. We are all at sixes and sevens; those we love disappoint our dearest expectations, and our acts recoil upon us amazingly, disconcertingly, embitteringly. The great herd of mankind wanders in strange and difficult and dangerous places; it has no clear guidance towards the open lands, and its insecurity and uncertainty determine the drama in well-nigh every brain that is born into it. These things belong together, the outward maladjustment of the race and its reflection in the individual mind.

The peace of the world, the just and creative society, and the common peace of the human soul can only come, each with and through the other. Some may escape the common lot by the vigour of their egotisms or the strength of their philosophy; some may reach forward in creative work from the incompatibilities of the present.

Some find a drug or a religious dogma sufficient for stupefaction. The ordinary personal life is still a sensitised meeting-place of conflicting forces that rather imagines itself to be, than is as yet, an individual. These political, economic, social, historical discussions, so far from being unreal, touch the very core of reality; they are a sorting-out of the mixture of moral jig-saw puzzles in which every

individual is entangled — a sorting-out that may at last leave the individual man or woman with a consistent problem that is capable of solution.

Biologists say that the greater part of our bodies is dead matter or mere nutrition, our hair, our skins, our bones and teeth, our blood. The only fully living reality is the protoplasmic thread hidden away in nerves and fibres and cells. And of the whole display of human life, the houses and cities and cultivations, the markets and crowds and factories and schools, the only vital part is really this struggle with the jig-saw puzzle of "What am I to do?"

I return to this inner and hidden life. This is what feels, this is what responds, this is what matters, this is what is. This is the life that in the daytime and commonly we hide even from ourselves. The night is its time for revelation. Then for all our resistances we find ourselves taken and stripped and put upon the rack of these blundering contradictions of standard and desire. Then come writhings and cries. The angel and the ape appear. The morning finds us already most sedulously forgetting that dreadful interview with our bare selves. We dress, we examine our faces in the glass to be sure that we are masked before we risk the observation of our fellow-masqueraders.

The streets are alive with people, grave, decorous-looking people. They pass intent upon their various businesses, with an air of knowing exactly what they are and exactly what they are doing. And last night this self-possessed young woman bit her pillow and beat the air with clenched hands and cried, "0 God! 0 God! Shall I never escape?" and that grave and respectable gentleman with the gold-tipped cane stared out of his bedroom window at the dawn and wished and came near contriving another man dead.

It is Clementina who has brought me down from my bird's-eye survey of humanity to these troubles of the innermost. She has been telling me things about herself that hitherto she has hidden. She has been so gay and happy a companion that I did not realise she could also be full of unspoken distresses. How blind and stupid we can be even to those whom we meet continually and love dearly!

We walked up into those hills to the west of the Gourdon road as we had arranged, and Mr. G. gave us one of the best of his days.

How few of the thousands who pass in their automobiles along that starred and recommended track and stop at the celebrated viewpoints and crane their necks over the grey battlements to look down into the gorge below, suspect the sweet desolations, the clean cool loveliness of the uplands they skirt! It is as if God had run short of matter when he made the rocks and turf and little flowers up there, and had woven in warm sunlight to complete the job. I lay on a patch of turf beside her and talked of these traditions of relationship about which I had been writing. No one, I said, has fully measured the cruelties that could happen within the bonds of marriage.

When poorish respectable people were tied together and had no means of escape. The secret hatred, the ingenuities of vexation and humiliation that might occur.

"And if people are free," Clementina demanded, "they cannot be cruel?"

"Why need they be cruel? They can go away."

Clementina made no answer.

Presently I glanced up at her and she was sitting, chin in hand, with that long beautiful back of hers drooping, so that all her figure was a note of interrogation. She was not looking at me; she was brooding on what she wanted to say to me.

"Clissoulaki," she said. "Do you think — Do you think you have never tormented me?"

I considered it. "No."

"I want to tell you some things. You have been writing this great book of yours about everything in earth — and whatever used to be heaven, and you have come at last to women. You have been all over the world and seen and done all sorts of things. You know nearly everything, my dear. But do you know anything at all about love?"

"I know you," I said.

She shook her head. "I wish you did."

She had something prepared for me and so I waited for her to go on. "I want to tell you things. Some of them seem ungracious. Some of them are unfair. But I want to tell you them. I've hidden them....

"You took me when I was an utter failure. I had gone down. Heaven knows how far a woman can sink, or how long her natural cowardice will force her to endure things, but anyhow I was very

low. I did not know how to set about killing myself. But my heart had gone. I should have been glad to die. And then you came, the friendly thing you are. Surely whatever you give I ought to take. Life began again. Hope! How happy you have made me! What happy times I have had here! And all the same you torment me. You give me heartaches. I love you. I love you altogether. I give myself to you with both hands. And you smile. And put me aside as if all that was nothing."

She paused. "If you had not met me in the streets of Paris you would not put me aside.

"No, don't interrupt me, my dear. I shouldn't have said that. I want to tell you what I am telling you now while it is clear in my mind. Perhaps that was not true. At least you need not notice it. But I think it sometimes in the night. You should know I think it. When a woman loves a man she forgets what she was or what he is. She is not even grateful to him if she loves him. She just wants him, and wants him with all her being. No other woman has ever loved you as I love you, and no other woman ever will. The more you give me, the happier and healthier I am here, the sweeter life is with you, the more I am tormented by the thought that this is just a holiday for you, a rest, and presently you will go away. All this year I have been hiding that. I have been thinking it and hiding it. It seems so ungracious, so unfair. Why should you not do so if you chose to do so?

"Don't touch me, my dear. Now I have begun, let me show you my heart....

"Night after night I have lain awake in my little bedroom — the bedroom that is so pretty and gay with the things you made me buy — and I have been tormented!... If I was to lose you, then I think it were better I had died in Paris, before I knew what happiness was. I am haunted perpetually by the fear of losing you. And particularly when you have been away in England, doing I don't know what. Always then I was sure you would never come back to me. Something would happen. You would be killed. You would be snatched away. Or simply — why should you come back to me? You used to send me those little off-hand cards, telling me nothing. Sometimes you missed three days. You were busy, I know. But down here I was not busy. Three days here can be eternity.

“I used to come for great walks up over these hills. I have been here sometimes, stumbling over the stones, belated, in the twilight, afraid of sheep-dogs. Because I was still more afraid of that little bedroom down below there.

“Misery! Misery beyond reason! I have stuffed the corner of my sheet into my mouth to prevent myself crying out and waking those English old maids in the next room.”

“But had you no faith in me?”

“Faith! In the night! With you away!”

She turned upon me the eyes of an elf in despair. “You take love so lightly ! You take it so easily! Love has come to you. Women have loved you. And you know nothing of love.”

I was to lose you, then I think it were better I had died in Paris, before I knew what happiness was. I am haunted perpetually by the fear of losing you. And particularly when you have been away in England, doing I don’t know what. Always then I was sure you would never come back to me. Something would happen. You would be killed. You would be snatched away. Or simply — why should you come back to me? You used to send me those little off-hand cards, telling me nothing. Sometimes you missed three days. You were busy, I know. But down here I was not busy. Three days here can be eternity.

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9. CHANGE HANGS OVER US

THIS situation at the Villa Jasmin is, I perceive, coming to an end. I return to earth again after my flight over past and present and future, and find the securities and tranquillities about this familiar writing-table dissolving and passing away. It has pleased me so well to come and write here that I watch the end approaching with a selfish pang. But always there has been a certain unreality in this happy refuge; from the beginning it had a touch of dream stuff in its composition.

It is a dream that seemed to have materialised more completely than it has done. I dreamt it first in that train journey from Geneva to Paris, and I wanted it and needed it so much that in some way it was bound to exist. It was easy to take the happy chance of Clementina and incorporate her and make her the priestess and divinity of the place. True, it should have been a little low white house and not pink as this one is, but I forgave it that for all the other pretty details with which it surprised me.

I have always maintained that this place and this seclusion could not last, that it was too serene and beautiful a setting to be permanent. *Panta rhei*; its little fountain greeted me with that reminder when first I came to it. But it was my belief that it would be Clementina who would shatter it all, by confessing herself bored, finding a more amusing and less preoccupied lover and departing. I had always prepared myself to let her go, and everything was in readiness to secure her going from the anxieties and indignities of material need. I should not have stayed long alone here. Each time I returned it was a delight to find her still eager for my coming.

But it is I and not she from whom the decree of conclusion must come. This freakish and fantastic menage has been founded on distresses and hopes deferred, of which I had no inkling, and now that this has been brought home to me, the dream fades.

It was Helen who used to talk of "coming through" a part. Clementina has come through her part. She was the whimsical, delightful, elfin visitant of the Villa Jasmin. That was the role I thrust upon her. She chose to play at being utterly in love with me, and I to be cold and preoccupied. We talked of the siege of the Villa Jasmin.

The siege is over and the play is done, and we find ourselves man and woman face to face. She has come through her part and it seems I am coming through mine.

While I was soaring up there in the air surveying "traditions of relationship" and men and women in "general terms," I remarked, among other memorable things, that much of the present unhappiness of men and women was due to a reference to different standards; that people imposed their own codes and expectations upon one another and so almost unwittingly arranged conflicts and cruelties. But this is exactly what I have been doing to Clementina. I have assumed an extreme modernity in this antique mind of hers, held her to the practice of it and treated her struggle against it as an entertaining pose. I have made her angry and baffled her and laughed at her a score of times and thought no more of it, and only now do I apprehend that I have also made her and may still be making her exceedingly unhappy.

I do not blame myself nor her for the creation of these stresses. They have happened. They might have been foreseen, but I did not foresee them. It was my impulse to make her free of me, to refuse to buy her, to give her a position and a salary and a light agreeable task beside me. That was well enough in its way. That she chose to make me her lover was my good fortune. I did not ask it or refuse it. The convention was that that might cease at any time, that she was free to take another lover or do whatever might please her. Her duties were to supervise my little house, stand between me and servants, buy and arrange furniture for me as she thought proper, lunch with me and companion me for the afternoon. Then with a liberal gesture I dismissed her to her excellent pension, she a free woman and I a free man. Here in Provence she could rest for a time, here was peace and healing and self-respect for her, and when she saw her way to a more attractive life I would help her to achieve it. These were the handsome pretences of our bargain.

At the pension, people came and went, quite possibly interesting people. I did not see them. She had two pleasant rooms, and we had obliterated the bleak furnishing with oriental rugs and hangings and a multitude of books. She could read, write poetry — if she chose to write poetry — readjust her perplexed and broken Ii f e. Down here

in my gently modernised *mas* I could think and work, come and go as my mood or my business interests required. If I went away for long months or a year or so, that was my affair. She could draw her salary, keep an occasional eye on the place, travel if she felt disposed to do so — she had the means for that. Jeanne could be trusted to mind the house. There was no need that Clementina should fall in love with me, none that she should fall so extravagantly in love with me and charge all our reactions with passion.

But she has done so. She has gone beyond all the obligations of our agreement. She has worked for me as no one has ever worked for pay since time began. She has enveloped me with a tender personal devotion. I too, quite insensibly, have lapsed from the hard rationalism of my first intentions. She is the most to blame, but I have been unwary. While I have been building up a conception of a finer, freer mating in the future, the passing days have betrayed me. A great affection has grown up between us now.

I do not know how necessary she has become to me, but it is plain she has become very necessary. Her company, her conversation, her ways, delight me as the warm sunshine delights me. I like the sound of her now and the sight of her; I .find myself watching her unawares; her tastes please me; she pleases me wonderfully. But what is more than any of these things, her happiness and her unhappiness have taken hold of me so that I can no longer hurt her and be at peace.

But though there has been all this change and growth of feeling between us, the forms and customs of our life here still follow the light-hearted artificiality of our original treaty. Clementina is still the domestic secretary who walks down at lunch-time from her rooms at the pension to see that all is in order here, hushes the barking of Titza if I am still writing or thinking, interviews the gardener and the plumber and buys the material to re-cover the chairs. And I come and go upon my mighty businesses and make it plain that I am scandalised when she tempers her services with endearments and caresses. There is a convention which even Jeanne affects to observe that we are not lovers. But all this, which was so bright and entertaining a year ago, rings hollow now and more hollow every day. She wants to be more easily with me, and I want her more at

hand.

Yet Villa Jasmin is a little house, and the silence of this study was very vital to me. In this place I can conceive no other way of life than the one we have led here.

This is the situation Clementina, with her face of involuntary distress, brings to a crisis. Her fears and instincts run ahead and confront her with the riddle of what is to come. “I love you wholly,” she says. “I have put my life in your hands. I have no other life now but the life you made for me here. Do you mean to go away from me? What are you going to do with me now that the book you set out to write here is coming to an end?”

She may count upon it that I shall not go away from her. We shall go away together when the good days of the Villa Jasmin have reached their allotted term.

But I do not yet know how: we shall go away nor whither we shall go. I have been so intent upon the diagrams of my world that this problem takes me by surprise. Until I have some inkling of the solution I do not know what to tell her.

10. CLEMENTINA'S IDEA OF LOVE

WE began our life here in a vein of genial make believe, and the play still goes on and masks the forms of the very deep and very far-reaching relationships that have com into being between us. Clementina has thrown a passionate love into our sunny comedy, and I have pretended not to see. We two love each other very greatly now, but each after his and her own fashion. The fashions are very different. I am not sure what we shall find when we cease to pretend, and come face to face with each other.

Clementina professes love. She is my instructress in this great science, this great art. It is her occupation, her subject. For her, love is an absolute; for me it is a thing to examine and question. She speaks of love as of something that women understand by nature and that men do not; they have to learn. It is a difference between us as fundamental as the difference of sex, a matter that affects every possible view about the position and rights and wrongs and all the standards of women. Love, she maintains, is created and imparted by women.

This is frankly opposed to my treatment of love, throughout this book, throughout my life. I have dealt with it as something as incidental as beautiful, as something that may come into a "sexual relationship" like the fires of red and gold that come suddenly from windows when the sunlight is reflected by them. And I have treated it always as a thing as much masculine as feminine.

I have told something of Clementina's mixed origins and varied misadventures. I do not know whether these things make her the most unique or the most representative of women, a freak or a compendium. I do not know whether we two are as much man and woman as Adam and Eve, or whether we are queer accidents of our time and of no significance to anyone except ourselves. Clementina has no doubt in the matter. She is Eve. Rarely it is "I and you" with her. "A woman feels," she says, or, "That is the way with a man."

I have argued with her that this love of hers, in its abundance and completeness, is not really a natural nor a fundamental thing at all. I declare it is an artificial thing, a disposition, and not a necessity. It

does not come by instinct. It is developed, it is secondary; it is a thing of culture. It is a dogmatic thing, and she has wilfully given herself to its exaggeration and glorification. She has given herself to personal love exactly as some women give themselves to love in religion. Her love has the sedulous quality of a religious devotion. She searches her conscience for imperfections and disloyalties in her love in order to cast them out.

"But that is the nature of women," she pleads. "It is religion. It is the same thing. Or rather — religion is love. One sort of love. My life for you is exactly like religion. If — I cannot imagine it — but if I thought of any man but you, it would be a sin. That is the great commandment. Thou shalt have no other love but me."

She argues very subtly about this specialty of hers.

We all want to be held together within ourselves, she asserts, echoing my own thoughts in that. We all need interior unification for our peace of mind. I have this strange conception of world revolution, of the great creative work of setting up a World Republic, to which I give myself. By that I unify my aims and my life. She cannot unify upon that. "A woman" cannot unify on such great abstractions. But her personal love holds her together in just the same fashion. If she were to lose it, she would "go to pieces," just as I should go to pieces if I lost belief in my revolutionary idea.

"But why not religion?" I ask.

"A woman must see and touch," she says. "Women are more immediate. In convents now there are thousands of women praying, longing, desiring for what they call a vision. They call it a vision because they are taught to do so, but what they want is a tangible reality. For them images are a necessity. I tell you it is exactly that which holds me to love. You are my image. Have you noted the *life* they put into Catholic images — the blood, the distresses, the tears? Mortifications, inflictions, pain, these things comfort religious women because they are contact. Sacrifices, new refinements of material devotion, fill their minds. But even then one must have faith. Without that the images will not even sigh or turn their eyes. That is why I failed to be religious. At one time, almost, I had faith."

"You were a Catholic?"

"But things my father had said about the Catholics kept on

seeming true. When he was not quite sober my father could be a wonderful theologian. He undermined me with things I hardly knew I was hearing at the time. But I found I could not believe. When I prayed, something he had woven into me said: 'You're not believing all that. You're just thinking you believe it!' And it was a live thing I wanted and not a spirit, a thing with a body, a man to respond and answer — you."

But then, said I, bringing in St. Augustine against her, she was not in love with me, she was in love with love.

"You complain that you are all directed to me and that I am directed away from you," I said. "But that is not true. You are no more turned to me than I to you. You are turned to love, and you are trying continually to make me also centre my life on love."

She can meet that with no rational argument. "It is you I love," she says.

There she stops with an absolute statement. No analysis avails here. This love, which has embodied itself in me, has become an inseparable, organic part of herself. It is exorbitant, but she has loved so plainly and consistently that I can no more deny the reality of this love of hers than the reality of her soft brown neck or her shining eyes.

It is an intensively possessive love. It impels her to invade my liberties. I like flying, and at times when the skies are clear the plutocrat in me asserts itself, and I scrap my railway ticket hither and charter an aeroplane from London to Antibes. A little while ago I flew from here to Geneva. But she has a fantastic dread of flying accidents; she will not distinguish between the many deaths that happen during training and experiments, and the rare casualties of passenger flights. Her discipline is not good enough to prevent her making appeals to me to promise, promise never to fly. I am in a quandary. I argue the matter because it goes right to the roots of our relationship. All my disposition is against such restrictions, but her despair is real. I make no promise, but my last two journeys here have been by boat and train, under protest.

"If you loved me," I say, "you would let me do what pleases me best."

"But if you should be killed!"

“It is part of a man’s job to be killed now and then.”

Her tenderness entangles me. I cannot have the swift, sweet delight of the high air because she has infected me with a vision of herself intolerably alone, left desolate because I have seen fit to crash and burn myself to death. That thought pursues me now up among the clouds. I should feel the meanest thing in creation if I found myself rushing down to a disaster. I could not die with self-respect. Her tearful “told-you-so” would reproach my last moments. But if men are to be afraid with the fears of loving women, how can they ever be anything but afraid?

Yet also this possessiveness flows into a hundred gracious thoughts and services. It is a very captivating thing to know oneself cared for, thought for, and sure of willing agreement. I cannot tell of the absurd little attentions she shows me. They are too humble and too touching. Always when I need her no other thing may intervene, she ,is ready for walk or expedition and any help I wish from her. How often she effaces herself! How often has she kept a smiling face when she was faint with fatigue, until some little thing betrayed the hidden trouble!

She disciplines herself on account of love. I discover her suppressing her impulses, developing a tremendous self-control she did not possess a year ago. We are both extremely hot-tempered, but years have made me quick to arrest and recall and repair what I can of the evil of an angry act. But her instinct for expression is vigorous. Not for nothing are the Greeks said to be the first people in history to make a rich and abundant use of language. And she has an over-sensitive vindictiveness begotten by her years of imposed inferiorities and humiliations. She used to watch for petty injustices from me and examine every careless criticism as an attack.

I should find it hard to describe one of our storms in detail. They sprang from minute wants of consideration on my part, from impalpable nothings, from a clumsy French phrase of mine or an English expression misunderstood. Then suddenly, in the course of a walk, at our lunch table, my sunny, happy companion would vanish, give place to a white-faced creature with wicked eyes, suffering unendurably, full of a wild passion to hum mate and wound.

Very deep in Clementina’s heart is resentment at life. She was

defrauded, ill-treated. Hers is more than the common resentment of those who start at a disadvantage; it has been embittered. Then at last she found me, and she has been building up and reconstructing her life upon me. She has turned once more, after defeat, defilement, and disaster, to love. But she has to hold on hard to love. Sometimes she seems to find it quite easy to love me. But her grip is only now beginning to be sure. At first trivial accidents could loosen it. She would find herself slipping from the position she wanted so desperately to maintain.

It has always been some quite little thing that seemed to reveal to her the earthen substance of her god, a casual selfishness, a careless assumption. Then for a time I became just another of those men who had trampled on her life, one of those beings who trample over all life, taking, exacting, disregarding, making the world despair.

I did not understand at first. I would shrug my shoulders and meet her "temper" with a flinty face.

But these quarrels that came out of nothingness are disappearing. They would last in the beginning for a day or so — when she would not come down to the Villa Jasmin, when she gave me to understand she was packing for some unknown destination in this world or the next. How stonily I treated her then! How little I tried to find a way back for her! Later on these outbursts diminished in their violence and persistence. They carne down to hours. Recently they have been mere jars of ten minutes or so, and, now I come to think of it, there have been hardly any for some time.

This change from fitful conflicts to serenity has been all her doing. She has taken that disposition to swift resentment in hand, just as a religious novice is trained to deal with a besetting sin. She has fortified her faith in me, until at last that jealous questioning of my quality has been almost overcome. So, deliberately and wonderfully, she has built up such a relationship with me as I had never known before, as I have never before believed could exist between two human beings. It is her work.

When last I came back here from England I discovered a portable typewriter in her sitting-room. She had not expected me, and she had thrown a piece of Indian silk over it. "I did not mean you to see that until I had had all my lessons," she said. She had bought the thing

and gone to the school in Grasse and was already reasonably competent — and she had taken all that trouble simply because I had been sometimes put out by waiting for the typist who clears up these writings for me in Cannes.

"After all, why should you send your typing away? I can do it."

"Why should you? It is toilsome and dull."

"I want to share in what you are doing. I want to take trouble for you."

"But you were to study for yourself. You were to read here. You were to write poetry. You were to find yourself."

"I've lost my interest in poetry. It was always poor stuff I wrote. Always. Since I have been here it has got more and more like the devotional books they used to give me in my Catholic days. I can't bear it. Love can be made ridiculous if you write it down — the more you love, the more strained and exaggerated it seems, and yet it is all true. And I want to know about this book of yours."

"You said once it was just about Marx and politics."

"I know better now."

Then with a change to vexation:

"Don't you see that I want to be useful? Don't you want me to be useful? Don't you see that I want to make myself necessary to you? Is it nothing to you that I Want to be necessary? I'm reading English. To get back my English perfectly. To cure my spelling. Every day when you are away from here I go into Grasse. I study. What else is there to do? Commercial stuff. *Comptabilité*. Sums, you call it! It isn't sums. It's business. I was always bad at calculation. Now I want to know about these business things. Oh! you think it's absurd. You *laugh!*"

"My dear!" I said. "No need for you to cry. But why do you not do work of your own? Why do you cast away and destroy everything that gives you a life outside mine? I'm writing out my own faith here, getting my ideas into order for the last spell of work that is left to me. Why don't you do the same thing for yourself, beside me? I am such a preposterous thing to worship — old, egotistical, slow in all sorts of ways — and the world we can serve is so complex, so full of splendid possibilities! I am ashamed to have such a slave. It makes me ridiculous. It confronts me with what I am. It makes me feel my

hundred limitations. I love you. Don't I tell you so? Be my ally."

"An ally, yes — if I am always at your side?"

"After the same ends, my dear, wherever they lead us."

"No. At your side. The world means nothing to me unless I am with you. It can be cruel. It can be crowded and unjust and ugly. I do not care what becomes of it, as you do. After I have lost you I do not care if it is all burnt with fire. I do not want the world or life or anything except with you."

That is where Clementina stands.

She is certainly not acting or lying; if this was *not* her inevitable self, it is now her unalterable self. Is this indeed womanhood? Or is there some difference in race and quality between Clementina and the other women I have known? It was a woman speaking to another woman, who said: "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." Milton may have known more than we moderns give him credit for when he wrote of the devotion of Adam and Eve: "He for God only; she for God in him."

Clementina is unabashed at my argument that she has made a culture of love. "Every woman," she says, "who is properly a woman wants to make a culture of *love*. That does not mean that love is artificial because we cherish and protect it and make much of it. You might as well say a baby was artificial and not in the nature of women."

Still I doubt if this splendour of self-abandon is either wholly or permanently Clementina. For a time it is her self-expression. It seems to her to be her complete being. But I have known her for less than two years, and I have no data yet for the full cycle of her life. This may be a season, the high summer of love. This may be a phase in which many needs and desires converge and fuse. It may be Clementina's life will not always pour along this narrow channel of personal obsession. I am, I reflect, not merely Clementina's man, her mate and her lover; I am as yet her whole family, I am her children unborn. She is not only my companion and mistress; towards me she is also an arrested and perverted mother. I have monopolised the love of a household.

There, it seems, lies the clue not only to the inequalities of our passion, but to the nature of the new life to which we have to turn

now that the routines of the Villa Jasmin are drawing to an end. For my own part, I confess, it has troubled me and restrained me and also made the daily substance of my life unprecedentedly happy to monopolise for these months of sunshine I have spent here the love of a household.

11. WHAT IS THIS LOVE?

IF this insatiable craving, this tender prostration that possesses Clementina is love, then it is true what she says: "I have never loved, and I do not know what love is."

Perhaps what is true of me is true of all normal men.

There may seem to have been some moonlight resemblance to this radiant warmth in my desire for Helen and in my distress at her loss, but the resemblance goes no further than the desire and the distress. I wanted with an equal vigour indeed, but in an altogether different fashion. There was no devotion, no trace of self-subjugation; I did not change at all, I wanted Helen to change; though I demanded much I gave nothing, and our last two years of association were years of antagonism as strong almost as the necessity we felt for each other. I have never given myself to anyone. I have never wanted to give myself to anyone. Either, then, I am abnormal, or Clementina is abnormal, or here is a profound spiritual difference between the sexes that I am only now beginning to apprehend.

Here am I, very much in love. I am thinking now for a large part of my time of how I am to adjust my life so as to take Clementina wholly into it and to make her as completely happy as I can. I do this because in my fashion I love her, her happiness is my happiness. But let me tell the truth about myself plainly. Even now she is not necessary to me. I could and I should go on without her. I should suffer but I should go on. She is not necessary and no one has ever been necessary to me. I cannot conceive that anyone could ever be necessary to me. And what is more, I am not even necessary to myself. That is to say, I am not afraid to die. I am not distressed that presently I shall be completely dead, nor to think that in a little while I shall be altogether forgotten. Ultimately these things do not matter to me in the least.

Now Clementina is in life, inextricably in life. Life means so much to her that she could even, if it disappointed her dreadfully, commit suicide. It matters to her like that, and her suicide would be a real tragedy. But I do not believe that it would be possible for me to commit suicide. Or to make any very incredible exertions to escape

death. Only by over-statement can I express what I am feeling after in these sentences. Let me say, then, that fundamentally I am outside life, receiving experiences. I like and want to do things with life; but I am not of the substance of life, any more than I am of the substance of matter.

It may be that here I am over-defining a difference between myself and Clementina. No doubt there are less than fundamental contrasts here. I have the resignation of sixty and she has the vitality of thirty, and I am Northern and metaphysical and she has all the positive realism of her Mediterranean blood. But after all deductions have been made on these scores I am still disposed to think that the fundamental difference that remains is one that holds good between the masculine and the feminine all up and down the scale of being. Masculine and feminine, I write, and not men and women, because in all men there is something of the woman, and in all women a touch of virility. Nature has never completely sorted out the sexes in any mammalian species. Nevertheless, the biological distinction of masculine and feminine is as plain as east and west. The female is the life itself, the continuation; the male is an experimental projection from life. It is in our nature as males to try and to do, to create and to pass away; it is in the nature of women as feminine to seize upon our distinctive selves and to seek to preserve and perpetuate them. So it has been between the sexes since the beginnings of life; so it must continue to be for the race to survive. And how in any other fashion can the race go forward, and endure?

12. SHADOWS OF THE END

I DO not see how I can ever part from the Villa Jasmin or let the simple peace of this room be disarranged. I shall try to buy this little house or get a lease that will at least make it ours for all our lives. And we will come back here ever and again. But from this time forth it ceases to be what it has been to me hitherto. For a time it was necessary for me to be alone, and here in the mornings and evenings and nights I have been alone, and I have been able to assemble my ideas and view my world simply. The outline and substance of my book exist; this end is incomplete, and Book Three still reads like chunks of a prospectus, but the thing is shaped. This may be the last evening for a long time that I shall spend in solitude at this table.

I have thought for a year and a half that, so far as Provence went, I was resting and reviewing life; but I discover that it is here, and neither in London nor at Downs-Peabody that I have been most actively living. That casual young woman of the Parisian sunset has become by imperceptible degrees the dominant figure in my thoughts and life.

There is only one way to deal with our situation, and that is for me to marry her. That has been plain to me for some days. She has never betrayed a thought of marriage; she has had so extraordinary a training in social abasement from the days of Dou-Dou onward; and at first I believe it will dismay and terrify her to think of herself as a wife. She will imagine immense establishments, mysterious social duties, crowded functions, a stupendous strain, and it will take some time to dispel these terrors. They will be dispelled and she will have to marry me, even though she is carried squealing and protesting to the altar. I shall have to work out some way of living — a house near Paris, or in Touraine or Normandy or Brittany perhaps — in which methods of housekeeping and social procedures will not be too strange and difficult for her; and there she will gradually realise, what I have realised long ago, that she has considerable administrative ability, and will rapidly become a house-proud woman. There I can build her up socially.

She shall be slowly accustomed to the austere and dreadful

manners of the English, and when by carefully selected sample visitors she is sufficiently indurated, I will take her to London. It will amuse no end of people to find me at last a married man. I would like to take her to London in early June, and walk with her through St. James' Park in the morning when Lu-Lu Harcourt's herbaceous perennials are at their best. We will feed the water-fowl and turn back to look at the towers and pinnacles of Westminster. Then we will taxi to Hyde Park Corner and walk on by way of the rhododendra paths to the Serpentine and lunch in the pavilion in the open air. Or, perhaps better, we will go by the trees in blossom and the flower-beds right through Kensington Gardens to the High Street and lunch in that grim room in the big hotel where Orpen's Chef was once wont to preside. Afterwards we win visit that little sunk garden by Kensington Palace. She thinks London is a cramped, sombre, unbeautiful place, not to be compared with the artistic eloquence of Paris, and this may put her in a better frame of mind.

In that house we shall get I want her to have children. I see no reason why we should not have a son or so, and it is very important that we should. It is very important that Clementina's affections should come out of the canon in which they flow at present and spread themselves. She will have great scope in a nursery. The sooner that comes the better.

It did not seem to matter so much when I chanced upon Clementina in Paris that I was a man close upon fifty-nine and she was under thirty. It has not been a very troublesome fact here. But now that things have become thus serious and practical between us, it is a fact I have to take into very careful consideration. I have to think of her whole life. It is a result of Clementina's disastrous upbringing that she has never troubled to think so far on as to see me aged or dead; her mind has been filled by the ambition to become my assured and inseparable mistress, and after that — suicide or endurance. That was her training. There are moments when I can find satisfaction in the thought of kicking Monsieur Dou-Dou, that Catholic young gentleman, her first and chief trainer, hard and continuously. She has accepted from everyone the role of a scrap of social wastage. Her mind even now does not go beyond a vision of that scrap in love and in luck. But indeed she is as good a woman as any woman, and it

shall not be my fault if she does not, after all, get the full measure of life. She will not do that unless she is able to grow out of me before some hitch of health or accident brings out the disparity of our years. When our children come she will be a little distracted from me. She will love me just as much but not so actively and consciously. She will be more in the nursery and I shall be away in the study. Quite unawares she will acquire new habits, new interests; she is still a growing creature. Even down here I have marked how she has read and thought and extended her curiosities. I shall go on with this work I have plotted out for myself, always a little detached from her. She will be less eager to participate when she is more fully employed.

It has never been my habit to think about death, but latterly, once or twice, it has occurred to me that there were limits to one's right to behave as though one was immortal. One should begin to think of the delicate sensitive tentacles of affection and dependence that tie other people to oneself, as the final interruption becomes nearer and more probable. One has failed to live completely well if too large and painful a gap is left by one's going. The ripe fruit should fall off without tearing. The successors should be ready, the plan of campaign imparted, and no one should he monopolised, as in our youth we may monopolise those we love.

It is no ungraciousness to Clementina if I plan, not so much to break as to divert some of the threads in this matted web of feeling which she, dear spider of the heart that she is, has woven out of her living self about me. I see myself as a man of seventy-five or so, I hope not senile I dread that, but going easy, working and handing the work on as Yorke is doing now, and she a woman of four-and-forty, full of life, busy with many activities, our sons about her; making a domestic deity of me no doubt, a position I shall be well content to fill in her world, subject to the emendations of my sons, but no longer living as she does now, upon my direct reactions. More and more I shall be accepted and taken for granted by her. I shall be less looked to for initiatives and interests. And at last a death may be achieved that will be ceremonial rather than tragic.

That is how I plan our life. I am a little amused to find myself making this plan, for plainly it is a retrogression. This is the old-fashioned marriage in which I have never believed, and I am linking

myself to a woman of an ancient type according to ideas that are to be found in their full explicitness rather in the immemorial traditions of a Hindu family than in our modern world. But for that Clementina and accident are to blame. She has said many acute and some very profound things to me, but none more memorable than her outcry that it was not fair to treat women on terms of equality unless they were prepared for it.

Never was a woman less prepared for it than Clementina. I do not think that I have gone back upon my old opinions materially, but I have — for my own case, anyhow — suspended them. I still think that in the progressive society of the future, sex will be a controlled and used and subordinate thing, that love will defer to and mingle with creative passion, and that there will be a very considerable assimilation of the sexes. They will become more alike in costume, bearing and behaviour. That is already going on, and it is most manifest in the new and northern societies. But it has a long way to go, it has to disentangle itself from a jungle of complex inheritances, and it has to evolve its proper social conventions before men and women can meet on terms of real equality. By all means let us help this development forward, but do not let men fall into the error of anticipating it to the hurt of women.

For nearly a couple of centuries advanced people have been making premature attempts at an unchartered freedom of relationship, without a proper regard for the handicaps of women. Shelley is a typical instance of this logically fair freedom which works out in practice as facile abandonment, cruelty and atrocious injustice. Shelley did all he did to women, I fully realise, in good faith, but all the Shelley-like adventures that go on about us are not in good faith. By all means let us treat women openly on equalitarian terms, but not in our secret thoughts. In truth they have not our weight of egotism, they have not our disregardfulness of aim. Commonly as it comes about, they are younger than we are. A man must hold himself responsible for the woman he deals with. The last concomitant of freedom she should have is the one that is first thrust upon her, responsibility. Let women hold women responsible for all they do; that is their affair, not ours. We have not the right.

And, anyhow, whatever progress the world has made towards free

and equal womanhood, Clementina and I are, as a couple, far behind. She accepts, welcomes and cultivates the subordinate role. She puts herself defenceless in my hands, and she would always have put herself defenceless into somebody's hands. I have to protect her and foresee for her. I have to take care of her life.

That is why I shall insist upon marrying her. So far as I can read history the wife has always been something inferior to the free princess. She has been private property. I will not flood the reader with archaeological lore and quote from the Spartans to the Zulus and from Atkinson and Weismann upon the point. I shall marry her to direct and take care of her, because I am older, stronger, and better placed than she. I will not continue with her as my mistress after our *éclaircissements*. To the best of my ability in my own poor practice in life I have made love to my mistresses on free and equal terms. But a woman who is in Clementina's position must be covenanted and ensured.

This is the logic of our situation. The reality is that I am filled with tenderness and solicitude for Clementina, that I mean to do all I can for her life, and that if the logic were all the other way round it would not make the least difference to what I am resolved we are to do.

I do not know where we shall go from this place nor what our next arrangements will be. I shall marry her soon. The particular dispositions to make will probably rest with her. What she asks for she can have. We may take our car on a sort of house-hunting honeymoon, westward towards the heart of France. My work will no longer be her rival and her danger, and she will, I know, do everything in her power to forward it in our reconstructed life.

In this dear peace and sunshine I have put my mind in order, and I have a far clearer idea than ever I had before of what I want to do with my world. Meditation is a good thing in so far as it contemplates an ultimate translation into action. For long spells of time out of the better part of two years I have pursued this meditation here, surveyed and questioned my world, until the great revolution has come out plain and sure, as the inevitable form and subject of all I shall henceforth do. It has been, all things considered, not so very unlike a piece of industrial research, leading to a reorganisation in

method. I must go on now to the practical application of what this scrutiny of my will and experience has taught me. I must take this set of ideas to a number of people, and if they are sympathetic, consult them about its flotation.

Flotation is the word I choose deliberately. I contemplate the promotion of a new scheme for doing the business of mankind. I want to try over this conception of a World Republic, as something now ripe and seeking realisation, with a variety of minds. If it seems to stand the test, or if it requires only partial amendment, then the rest of my life must be occupied in activities that will contribute to it. That is the logical development of the situation. This germinating World Republic needs a literature; it has to invade the press; it must develop a propaganda for the young and youthful-minded. It has to discover, educate, and organise its adherents, and test the uses of every form of persuasion and publicity. It must develop a multitude of subsidiary schemes and define their relations one to another. There must be a discrimination between businesses, organisations, institutions, that with more or less modification are capable of incorporation in a world scheme of human activities, and those which are essentially useless, obstructive, or antagonistic. It has to pervade the minds and discourse of publicists and leading men and outstanding figures with a realisation of this creative process, the developing plot of the drama in which their activities go on. Just as they apprehend and secure it, are they significant and fit for history. Just as they disregard it are they trivial, mere nuisances and obstructions, supernumeraries, voices, and figures in the crowd.

Things seem clear in the Villa Jasmin with a clearness that may be delusive. I want to try over all this that I have thought and written down here, on other active men, to discover why they are not already exactly of my way of thinking. I have to test my ideas by this question; how far has this man or that man whom I have sound reason to respect, got towards my positions? How far is he, within himself and less explicitly, of my way of thinking? I want to try it out on Roderick for example, and on one or two others of our directors who have imaginative breadth. I want to see what resistances Dickon will put up to my creed of creative action. And there are a number of other men against whom I would like to put it.

A man who rouses my curiosity greatly is Sir Alfred Mond of Brunner Mond and Co., that kindred octopus which runs so parallel and interdigitates so frequently with our great network. He is difficult to talk to, nervous, and either aggressive or defensive. He flounders about in politics, and goes from party to party rather absurdly. I would give much to know what is his real philosophy, and if fundamentally he is anything coherent and determined. What at the bottom of his heart, if he has ever gone to such depths, does he think of parliamentary methods, of crown, of empire, of the war and the rule of the world? Or does he just accept it all as a cat accepts house and master? Some of *his* kind do, but not I think he. I must seek him out and a score of other men, Lord Weir, for example, and Sir Robert Hadfield, who have manifestly very active minds which range far beyond merely business activities. What is clear in them? What is implicit in them? And then I come to the financial side of human activities. Keynes I must certainly know more of, and such a man in and out of politics and finance as McKenna. I have never yet got to grips with a banker largely because my ideas hitherto have been too unformed to give him a definite hold in return for my own. Dickon declares that the minds of all financial people run about between fences, and that if they were not trained to respect their fences they would become too original and embezzle, but I believe that even now a number of them do look over their fences without such serious results, and that if they were encouraged they would look over quite a lot, and make all sorts of illuminating remarks about the ways of the economic process.

One sort of man I shall pursue with my inquiries will be of the type of Lord Buckmaster, with whom the Rettinger-Dunton process has recently brought me into contact. He is a business man — in oil. Before he came into oil, he was a lawyer and a statesman; he was Lord Chancellor, if I remember rightly, under Mr. Asquith. I have met him socially several times, and always he has pleased me. He talks well, thinks finely and powerfully, and he must have a very wide knowledge of both the political and economic worlds. Now how far is the present system, the parades of the royalties, the tedious humbug of parliamentary proceedings, the manoeuvres of the political groups, the social round, “patriotism” and our international

rivalries, all this life that is so unreal and unsatisfactory to me, how far is it real and sufficient and final to him? How far does such a man merely go upon the surface of it, and how far does he penetrate? I cannot but believe he penetrates. And if he penetrate, how far does he see the revolution as I see it and shape his thoughts and acts and conscience in relation to it? Has he an established sense of it as a coherent process? As I have? I am immensely curious about his sort of man. I name Buckmaster because he comes into my head as a convenient representative, but I could name a score of such men, able, prominent, successful, who seem to me manifestly too fine-minded to be satisfied with the play of human affairs as it is staged to-day, and yet who go about as if they were. Why are they not more explicitly restless and revolutionary?

Then I want to explore the socialists. The Labour Party — or it may be the Independent Labour Party, for I made no note at the time — has recently come out with a scheme for dealing with the coal mines. It is in many ways an excellent scheme, a large scale scheme of scrapping and reorganisation for exhaustive production that would make all British coal one business. It would override many of the arrangements of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co., but such things could be readjusted. It could be bolder upon the possibilities of civilising the miner than it is, and of changing his methods of work. Of course the Labour politicians the world knows best, those men who make speeches with their fists and monkey about in court suits, are as capable of carrying out such a scheme as Jeanne here, my excellent cook, is of taking a modern battleship into action. But I find in this report the hands of at least two men, Tawney and Greenwood, who are manifestly both men of wide knowledge and evident power. They must know as well as I do what their party, as a party, amounts to, what a mere cave in liberalism, what a dreary haggle for office it is. Their imaginations are certainly as broadly constructive as mine. Tawney is a man I would welcome upon the board of Romer, Steinhart, Crest and Co. almost as warmly as I would rejoice at the departure of Crest. He would be better occupied with us than in making schemes that can never be realised by the associates he has chosen. Why is he in one camp and Keynes in another and I in a third, while the Crests and the Percies and their kind in massive

unity, with nothing but their instincts and traditions to hold them together, can impede progress for a whole lifetime?

I mention Tawney and Greenwood as I have mentioned Buckmaster and the others, casually. They have happened to come first into my mind. They are types, not abnormalities. If I set about it I could make a list of some hundreds of Englishmen alone dispersed through the worlds of finance and industry and public affairs who are of a quality that makes their collective futility and their acquiescence in existing things amazing.

Now either my conception of a World Republic as the proper form of life presented to my intelligent and active contemporaries is false, or else it is latent, or it exists in some similar form, but perhaps under disguising terms, not as yet completely assembled, in the minds of all such men as those I have cited. They are all of them men at least as able and intelligent as myself; most of them are much abler and more intelligent; our brains must be all similarly constituted, and, with a few variations of proportion and angle, they know the facts as I know them. Of course', they are where they are, as I am where I am, without premeditation. They have got in and come through to it and found themselves at forty-five or fifty-five or sixty-five before they could make an extensive survey of things about them. But now? After the war, in the midst of the most illuminating stresses and troubles, with the needs of the world growing plain? Surely they must be awakening, as I have awakened, to possibilities that transcend all accidents of association with nation, caste, party, office, or firm.

There are times when it seems to me that these men must be indeed far cleverer and far more subtle than myself, and that they see all that I do and far beyond. But that through some further subtlety they go on being scattered and divided one against another. At any rate, I have to come out of this retirement now in which I have been able to spin the web of my world state so happily, and I have to find just what it is, in my scheme or in my fellows, that bars its conscious use as a guide in public affairs. Then, with such adaptations as may be needed, I have to set about the work of getting them together in relation to it, first in groups and then through literary, journalistic, and suchlike activities, and then with a conscious creative direction

of monetary and industrial developments.

It is not a task I shall do well. I know that quite plainly. I have no such powers of persuasion and combination and arrangement as old Roderick, for instance. I am a sociable man, but not associative. I am by nature a solitary worker, and almost all my best results have been got with inanimate material, free of all malice or vexatious feelings, in the laboratory, in the open, or in the works' apparatus and routines. But the logic of my faith requires me to go on to this work until at least some abler person takes it on from me and does it better. As old Lubin would have put it, the word of the Lord is upon me and I have now to leave this pleasant wilderness and go down to London, that mighty Babylon, and prophesy. The trouble is that nowadays prophesying is a skilled occupation. The happy days when all that was wanted in a prophet was a large staff, some simple slogan, and a goatskin over his shoulders, and all that he had to do was to go down to the king and make himself unpleasant by repeating his slogan harshly and inexorably, have gone. I conceive that I have to contribute to the early stages of a very intricate, difficult, and enormous creative propaganda that will end in the world-state, and it is a task in which I realise I may easily do more harm than good.

I shall begin in the world of English affairs, because there I best know my way about. Here on the Continent I cannot speak to people unless they know English well. I have come to speak French, German, Italian, and Spanish fairly well, which means just not well enough for any really satisfactory conversation. I can talk to men like Caillaux and Citroen here in France enough to know they are upon the same line of thought, but not enough for any hand-and-glove relationship. In Germany there are the same difficulties. The next field for me after the English field, therefore, is the American field. Into that I must carry my inquiries and tentatives as soon as I have something started in England. American intellectual life has always been a perplexity to me. It is not easy to get at, because it has no central meeting-place, and because it has not as yet developed any such periodical literature and methods of exchange as are needed for mental co-operation at a distance. Elementary ideas pass across the face of America like the sound of a trumpet-blast through a crowd, but you cannot find out what the exceptional and influential men are

thinking. They do not converse. They have not the habit. Some talk, but with little give and take.

But I cling to the persuasion that the idea of an economic world republic and a single world civilisation, as an objective, must be developing in many more American brains, and developing further, than over here. That sententious emptiness of outlook, that resonant vacuity affected by so many American business men in their talk and speeches, cannot be anything but a mask and a shyness. I can no more accept the idea that they regard their blessed Constitution, the bragging nationalism that is taught in their common schools, the cold-blooded, jealous, and selfish "patriotism" affected by their press, as more than temporary conditions on the way to a great destiny, than I can imagine my Lords Birkenhead and Buckmaster and Beaverbrook dying together romantically on the stricken field for a rightful king. They know, even more than we know, that these things are provisional. But what is wanted now is something more than knowledge and tacit assumptions; it is recognition, it is admission. The propaganda to which I have to give myself now is not a propaganda for acceptance but a propaganda for open acknowledgment.

That is the nature of the work to which, it seems, my energies must be directed. I have just compared myself with a prophet, but, after all, that is not quite what I have to be. That is too grandiose a role. I can be neither the prophet nor the leader nor the organiser of a world revolution. I observe it advancing and seek to point it out. It is not the sort of revolution that has leaders and organisers. My work is to be rather a ferment, a catalytic agent, a provocation. It is a difficult and subtle task, vague and perplexing in its responses. Never shall I know what I have achieved nor what I have failed to achieve. It is a task to which I am quite unaccustomed and for which I am temperamentally unfitted. But here it is, at hand; I have, so to speak, thrust it into my own hand, and I must do it. I must find out how to do it and train myself where training is needed.

I wish I was not sixty; I wish I had more of Dickon's geniality; I wish there was an inexhaustible supply of nervous energy between myself and the phase of irritation. Sixty. Perhaps I have fifteen years still left, or it may be twenty. Much may be done in such a ration of

time, with a flying start and good fortune. But it leaves little margin for delays and set-backs. When I began this book, a year and a half ago, I wrote that life was too short. More and more do I realise that. It is too short, much too short by the scale of modern things. I feel to-night that all my sixty years have been no more than a prelude and that it is now that life and work begin.

I must go warily in what I have to do. For all I know, I may find dozens of men presently attempting the same or kindred things. I have to keep my faith and yet remember that the scheme I propound is provisional and experimental in frame and detail. I have to be patient if presently I find men working upon schemes akin to mine and yet in some respects vexatiously askew to it. I have not been a patient man in such cases hitherto. Hard it is to do one's utmost in contentious things and yet keep one's place; to know that everything is exacted from one and yet that one is nothing, that no cause is great or worthy of service unless it calls indifferently on others and depends on no single person.

I have changed greatly since first I came here. My will was very exhausted then, and now it is renewed. I have rested and rallied myself, and ahead of me I see years of work and a home. I was a very homeless creature, an exile from nearly everything in life, in Paris a year and a half ago. None of this would have happened as it has done without Clementina. How much do I not owe to Clementina — or to the gods of Chance that gave me her!

My thoughts come back to her, to the almost new Clementina, the ultimately real Clementina, who has been growing upon my consciousness during the last few weeks. In November last year I wrote my account of our first meeting in Paris, and it is well I did it then, for now I do not think I could have recalled the brightly adventitious Clementina, the amusing Clementina, I have set down in that passage. The Clementina of the long siege of this *mas* is also beginning to fade, the intermittent Clementina of raids and startling incidents. The new Clementina is near and warm and larger; she fills more of the landscape and sky. She is still a lean, long, red-haired, clear-skinned woman, and she has kept her amber-brown eyes and that sweet oddity of brow and lip and nostril which betrays gnome blood. Her voice is the accustomed thread of bright silver in the

world's fabric of sounds. But now she takes possession here and reaches past me into the future, and my future also is hers.

For her, just as for me, the future means much work and effort and little easy-going. She will have many disappointments, for it is her quality to expect vividly; she will often find things intractable and be tried to the limit of her patience. She will have to face endless difficulties in her home-making. She has been so long a nomad, adrift. And often I shall fail her. Just when she will want me to be patient and comforting, I shall be away in body or spirit, irritated by the effort of my own affairs, perplexed and totally absorbed by my perplexities, unwilling to fret a sore situation in my mind by talking about it even to her, by even telling her it is there. It has always been my habit when I work to work to the very limit of my capacity and good temper. We are both going back to activity, to effort, and strain. Neither of us is completely and surely sugar-coated. She has not done with tears and resentments, nor I with fits of anger.

But these will be transitory things for us, the wind on the heath of life. This love, which she has invented and made and developed and wrapped about us, will temper and outlast all those storms. She can turn even her exasperations suddenly in mid-explosion into acts of beauty.

I come back to the point from which I started to-night. In some manner I must keep this *mas* in our lives and have it available for us. We must be able to come back at times to our memories of this good interlude and these simplicities. This must be our retreat from angers and peevishness and the incessancy of the world's demands.

My little grey room is as still as death, my papers seem to have fallen asleep in the circle of the lamplight, and outside the night is very still. It is late. I do not know how late, for my wrist-watch has stopped.

This may be the last of some two hundred or more of quiet nights I have spent before my window thinking my world into order. Never has the scene been quite the same. There is an unexampled loveliness at this moment, like nothing I have ever observed before. Everything is silent; there is not a whisper in the fronds of the palm. There are a few stars in the sky, dots upon a vast expanse of silky moonshine. All the hillside of Peyloubet is dreaming; very faint and yet very

clear. I can distinguish the pale houses, the terraces, the patches of trees. The moon I cannot see. It must be setting over the hill behind this house, and everything in the foreground is submerged in shadow and intensely, impenetrably black. The palm tree, the olive trees, the medlar rooted in the darkness of my terrace, come out against those luminous phantom slopes in exquisitely sharp silhouettes.

13. SPRING MORNING AT THE VILLA JASMIN

IT was a grave, foreseeing man who wrote at this table last night and into the small hours of to-day. I read over what he has written with a sympathy that is already detached. I was *that*, ten, eight hours ago? The writing runs on with few hesitations, most reasonably. This is to be done, then that. There is a first list of names of people to be interviewed. I like the idea of the World Republic in hot pursuit of Sir Alfred Mond. And the treatment of Clementina is — to put it mildly — rational....

That methodical, anxious, planning fellow is, I admit, my better self. I am still so far identical with him that I can correct some slips of the pen and alter a sentence or so that has gone askew from its intention. But I can write nothing more in that vein.

Nor, it seems, in any vein. For an hour now I have not written a word. I sit at my table, according to the inflexible laws that have ruled the Villa Jasmin since first we came here, but my mind wanders away from me. I can think of nothing but Clementina.

What a queer, chance-begotten, whim-borne history ours has been J At the end, as at the beginning of every individual thing, stands careless, irresponsible chance, smiling at our rules and foresight and previsions. The great life of the species has, it may be, some other law — I more than half believe it has some other law — but this is the quality of its atoms, our individual lives.

Last night I was on terms with the stars. I was not simply historical and geographical; I was astronomical. I was immense. I sat and wrote of the great revolution of mankind, of growing old and of the grave responsibilities of growing old, and of death. This morning I am any age or none. I am a man, and presently my woman is coming down to me, and I have gifts for her and happiness I can bestow upon her.

I wish she were here with me now, but it is my own will that set these rules between us. I have kept her waiting a year and a half and now I am impatient over minutes. I want to tell her all I have decided

upon.

Last night I see that I was not even sure when we would change things and doubted whether I would take her at once into this *mas*. To-day I am consumed with eagerness to see her and sweep the last cloud from the sunshine of her mind. She will do as I wish. She shall do as I wish. And now. It would be intolerable to think that this afternoon we shall not be bringing down her possessions from the pension to install her here, her dear carpets, her little typewriter, her chosen books and her pots and bowls, and that she and I will not be talking together to-night of the united life that we have now to make for ourselves.

This day is full of sunshine, and only the habits of a year and the fact that Clementina is late in coming to lunch to-day keep me within hail of this writing-table. I sit, scribble a little, get up again. Thrice have I been downstairs and walked to the end of the *terrasse* to look up the straight green path down which she will come.

I know exactly how she will come, chin up, striding with that dancing step of hers — she is very light on her feet — her short skirts fluttering, her sweet face grave but charged with a smile — that suddenly flashes out at the sight of me. It is a most ungrudging smile. How often has it not delighted me!

I have been downstairs three times, but I do not know how many times I have looked out of the open window upon the bright array of the waiting lunch table beside the palm under the Japanese medlar.

There is a quality of fete about the day; the sunlight is as if it had been burnished, and the shadows are still with expectation. Everything is very quiet — a holiday quiet. Even my cat motionless upon the parapet might be the soft grey image of a cat. The flower-beds are blazing with colour. The roses are wonderful, and I have never seen such iris and such carnations.

I have felt just this pleasant torment of waiting for a dear event in my childhood at Mowbray, the same restlessness, the same going to look again and again when my father was coming home.

Something must have delayed her, something unimportant; and since there are two ways down the hillside and she may come by either, I must needs stay here now and fiddle with these writing things until she comes.

I will wait for her in this room. Here we shall certainly be alone. Down there Jeanne may be hovering interested, and up the slope there may be some peasants at work ready to observe. The few words I have to say arc for us alone. That moment must be particularly ours. Here it is I will say these words, here in this room which in theory has always been forbidden to her.

I fancy I hear a distant yap, which may be Titza in at tendance.

This April day is full of life and stir, full of the warmth and urgency of spring. I am trembling, which is absurd.

Titza's little yelp again. And now I know that she is coming. I hear her voice quite close now, her clear, sharp voice, that makes me think of bright cold water. "Titza!" she cries. "Come. Come."

In a few moments now she will be standing in my door way, doubtful of her reception. She will look gravely at me for an instant and then smile softly when she sees I have turned my chair away from my table. For that means the morning's writing is over.

There will be a moment of mutual scrutiny, for she will realise immediately that something has changed, and as for me, I shall be diffident, I know not why.

"Do I interrupt?" she will ask according to our custom.

And I shall say — What shall I say?

THE EPILOGUE: NOTE BY SIR RICHARD CLISSOLD

1. THE DEATH OF WILLIAM CLISSOLD

AND there my brother ceased to write and never wrote again. None of these expectations were to be realised, none of these plans were to be carried out. No more work was required of him, beyond this strange book he had so nearly finished. I cannot guess what more he may have intended to say. There are not even notes for any later sections. It is manifest that as he wrote about her, Miss Campbell, his Clementina, came into the room. He ceased to write. And never returned again to his writing-table before the window.

He was killed in an automobile accident upon the narrow road leading from the gorge of the Loup to Thorenc on April 24th, 1926. Miss Campbell, who was with him in his car, was killed at the same time. This was perhaps only a day, or a day or two, after the unfinished passage was left. He was a skilful, careful driver, careful as every man with a quick imagination must needs be, but the chances were against him. The automobile of Dr. Pierre Lot of Haut Thorenc was drawn up as much off that slender track as possible in a place where there was room to pass, and the doctor himself was up at the house of a shepherd which faces the ravine at this spot. My brother was passing the doctor's car when suddenly — so far as we could gather — one of the shepherd's children ran out from behind it and stopped dismayed in mid-road a metre or so from my brother's radiator. No doubt he clapped on his brakes, but also he swerved so as to miss the paralysed child. It was a matter of inches, the doctor told me. The wheel tracks showed that his left wheels went over the turf edge of the road and that three or four stones loosely embedded in the turf gave way.

The car turned right over sideways, dropped a sheer score of yards, crushed its two passengers, rolled over them completely, and went smashing down for nearly thirty yards more. I have never seen a car so knocked to pieces. It had left a wheel and its seats and two mudguards behind it, and the radiator was pierced by a fir sapling. The doctor was called out to discover what had happened by the terrified child.

Miss Campbell was quite dead. Her head was dreadfully crushed.

She must have died instantly. My brother was still alive. His back was broken, and he was mortally injured, but he lived, pointlessly and irrationally, for some time. The doctor seems to have acted with excellent sense and decision. He had straw and sacking and a mattress brought down to him from the shepherd's house, he made my brother as comfortable as he could on the slope where he lay, he had morphia available for an injection, and so without excessive suffering my brother lay in the sunlight for two hours and at last died. The doctor stayed beside him all that time.

The doctor speaks very passable English, and he was at some pains to tell me all that happened.

Billy became conscious after a while. His eyes questioned the doctor. He said: "Une dame?"

The doctor told him not to trouble his mind, but he attempted to lift his head and look about him. The doctor restrained him.

"Is she badly hurt?" my brother asked, and appeared to have some difficulty in recalling his French. "Elle est mal blessée." The doctor with his instinct for documentation had written the exact words down.

The doctor assured him that she was not suffering. My brother did not hear that. "Testaments," he muttered. "Non. Non. My will. Depositions." He fretted. "Hell! what does one *do*?"

"I realised," said the doctor, "what it was that troubled him. 'Elle est morte,' I said."

"Morte?" He did not recognise the word for a moment, and then his expression became thoughtful and presently quite tranquil, as though a vexatious task had been lifted from his mind. "Good," he said.

Then: "Vraiment? She did not suffer?"

He also said something about "marriage."

The doctor reassured him, speaking slowly and in English.

"Killed instantaneament. Never knew that she was dead. Before she could feel."

But after these exchanges the anaesthesia of shock wore off and pain surged up from his injuries. He was dreadfully broken; there was a possibility of frightful suffering. I thank God for the happy chance of the doctor and his morphia. He might have had to bear all

that alone or with some peasant staring at him unhelpfully.

Towards the end the pain abated and for a little while his mind came back to the world again; it returned indistinctly and blindly through the drug, like some one who returns to his home in a fog and never quite gets to the door. He talked, but in English and disconnectedly; the doctor made a phonetic note of all that he could not understand.

"Il a parlé de Monsieur Dji. Qui est-ce Monsieur Dji?"

For a moment I could not recall.

The doctor consulted his notes. At one time my brother had seemed to smile. He had said something which the doctor had written down and could not interpret. "II a dit quelque chose— '*neeta you Mister Dji.'* Un sourire."

I reflected. "Neat of you, Mr. G.!" said I.

"I do not understand," said the doctor.

I did not enlighten him. But the reader who has read my brother's book will be in a better position to guess what was going on in his fading brain. These were, I believe, his last words. The mind that came back to say them and smile — l can almost see that wry smile of his — receded into the fog, sank deep into the darkness, vanished from eyes and lips, and was swallowed up altogether in the night. That mind had meant, no doubt, to reach Thorenc and rest there and return to continue this truncated book, and carry out the' schemes he had developed in it, but it had swerved just a few inches to the left and got into quite another direction, *sens unique*, from which there was no recall. Just this ineffective backing, this half-return, this smile over the shoulder, before the decisive parting of the ways.

In that fashion did my brother leave the world.

Doctor Lot and the two or three peasants and their children who assisted at this scene were presently alone with the twisted and overturned car and with two stiff, broken bodies covered and quiet among the flowers and grey stones and turf upon the afternoon hillside.

2. TITZA SOLE MOURNER

THERE was some delay in communicating with me, and when I reached Provence the remains of my brother and his Clementina had already been brought back to the Villa Jasmin, and two graves had been made for them side by side below the wall of the cemetery of that church of Magagnosc which stands out so boldly to the right of the Nice Road. I saw no reason for altering these arrangements. I could not have found a better or more suitable place. The people of Magagnosc are pleasant people and spoke of them both in a very kindly fashion. The two of them lie out on that headland, commanding a wide view of gorge and hill and valley and sea. The sea appears high and far through a great gap, a broad and broken and flattened V in the hills. The olive terraces and wooded crests of Provence, that beautiful, kindly, slovenly land they both loved so well, spread unheeded before their feet. But old habits of imagination are strong in us all, and it seems to me that my brother must still be seeing and thinking up there, still surveying and planning the future of his world, still conceiving yet further additions to this book of books he had so spaciously conceived.

I was quite unable to trace any relations of this Miss Campbell. I have never heard of anyone so completely alone in the world. Her little "brown muff" of a *loulou*, Titza, is in quarantine on its way to a kindly English home. It is a little oldish, sharp-nosed bitch, and for a time I feared it would be inconsolable. It wanted to follow its mistress' coffin to the grave, and then decided that she could not possibly be in that queer thing and returned to wander about the Villa Jasmin looking for her and whining. It set off once to find her at her boarding-house and was nearly run over by an automobile as it crossed the high-road, so distraught was it. Jeanne, the servant, who has a great affection for the dog, missed it and followed it and brought it back. It would touch no food for a day or so, and then it ate slinkingly and shamefacedly. But it ate and lived.

For a time I thought of leaving it with Jeanne, but Jeanne herself wants to take another situation; she knows no other way of living, and it is uncertain whether she will be able to carry a pet about with

her. I did not care to leave the poor little thing to the chapter of accidents in Provence when I could be sure of kindness and bones and a not too austerely kept garden for it in England. So it broods and frets in quarantine on its way, I hope, to contentment.

The grey Persian cat my brother mentions once or twice, the philosopher of the mirror, betrayed no corresponding depth of feeling, and is quite comfortably housed and satisfied with a widowed lady in Cannes.

3. EDITORIAL, FRATERNAL

SO it was my brother never completed his manuscript, and his dream of a vast conspiracy in London and America and throughout the world, to bring order into the dangerous chaos of human affairs, remains an unfinished scheme, a suggestion, a plan waiting to be worked out. I have given it to the reader as he left it, a thing begun, unproved, a project that is still half an interrogation.

He has played so large a part in my life, he has done so much to influence my ideas, that I cannot pretend to be anything but a partisan in the editorial task which falls naturally to me. I, too, am one of these discontented monetarily successful men who find this world unsatisfying. I adhere to his revolution. The show, I agree, is not good enough. It can and it must be made a better show. In all sorts of details I may differ from him, but in the main outlines of his world I am at one with him. If I could have written this book of his I should have written it much as he has done. I have secured suitable help and sought to give these writings as good a text and as advantageous a publication as possible. I have altered nothing and set nothing aside, although in one or two places I am moved — shall I say to demur? — to qualify some strokes that. touch me rather nearly.

I do not mean in regard to myself. Occasionally it is manifest he makes fun of me, and I do not see why he should not make fun of me. Maybe it is easier to take me seriously if I am made fun of. There is no malice in what he writes of me, and in places his swift and fitful affectionateness comes darting through in a way that was wholly his own. He has, if I may so put it, been dramatising his economics, and he has seen fit to magnify me a little, magnify me in several ways and make me a representative of the democratic side of big business — the retailing and advertising side, business over the counter and in the newspaper. For this purpose he has even exaggerated my size and weight a little — I was hardly two inches taller than he, and I doubt if I was ever much more than a stone heavier, certainly not two — and, as he admits in one place, he has trimmed and dressed up my talk. But that, I think, is quite fairly

done. I do not see why I should refuse to become a type. What I find impossible to leave without a word or so is his discussion of my wife.

And yet that is a very difficult word or so to write.

I understand the necessity he felt for that discussion. It has been one of the things in my life to which I can never be reconciled that my brother and my wife never quite hit it off together. I do not know what it was between them; I have not the gift to fathom that sort of misunderstanding. But he did not understand her, and though she never told me plainly what she thought of him I know she was always a little uneasy in his company. Perhaps she felt he criticised her and it made her self-conscious. And perhaps he felt she criticised him. Here in this book he discusses her, he *puzzles over her*.

It was just that puzzling over which made it impossible for him to be anything but puzzled by her. In life as I have found it, it is better to live first and think people over afterwards. Affection can only be invested with big risks. There are no gilt-edged securities in that world. You must put your heart down and take your chance. But both he and she, who differed in so many other things, had this in common that they thought first. He did not take her for granted so to speak at the beginning as I think one has to take people for granted from the first if affection, real affection, is to have fair play. He took me for granted, and he took our father for granted because we were in his world from the beginning, but the difficulty he had about other people, and the reason why he, who was one of the most interesting and attractive of men, had very few friends and hardly any intimates in the world, was due to this priority of the critical faculty in his mind that forbade provisional acceptance. Two people indeed he loved at last unreservedly, Mrs. Evans and, as I now realise here for the first time from his manuscript, Miss Campbell, his Clementina, and in both cases it was because accident and his anger with the injustice of the world towards them, brought them close to him before he could institute that preliminary examination of his that was so hard to pass. Closeness and mutual trust was forced upon him. And so they got their chance.

It is with no little pain that I analyse his analysis of my wife. Pain on his account and on hers. What he says of her is so close to the

reality and so far from being true. He too was troubled and dissatisfied by these impalpables that made an easy happy triple friendship impossible. Troubled and unable to recover them. He wanted that triple friendship, I can see, as Minnie wanted it, as we all wanted it. And then that streak of ruthless criticism came in between us, the analyst with his pitiless acids. His merciless intelligence seizes upon the fact that my wife was a little lacking in physical exuberance, that she was deliberate rather than quick in her responses, and it makes out a Sort of case against her as a cold and cynical woman. His intelligence seems to oblige him to do this in spite of his disposition to think well of her. He carries her physical quality into his moral estimate of her. Cynicism is the word he weighs and uses. He tones it by a flattering adjective or so but it remains cynicism, albeit of the highest quality, carved ivory cynicism, as he explains. It is so wrong a judgment and yet so close a judgment that it baffles me. There was nothing at all cynical about my wife. It was the last word to use about her. Somehow — for reasons that still defeat me — he could not find the way to her gentle, finely sensitive nature. He saw her delicacies and difficulties as timidity or evasion or indifference. He did not know what things could hurt her, and not to know that much about a human being is to know very little.... I have nothing of his aptitude for the suggestion or delineation of character or I would correct his story here, I would tell how beneath the pride and loyalty and honour that he recognised so plainly, lived such a deep sweetness and tenderness, a fragility and withal a courage so humanly appealing, that I have never in truth thought of any other woman as of quite the same species as my Minnie.

I fully realise that she too was difficult with him. I lament it. I cannot understand it. If I justify her against my brother, as equally do I justify him against her unspoken injustice. On both sides it was injustice. They were my nearest and my dearest human beings. I can find no fault with either. They were gold; they were the best of my life. I cannot express what they were to me. And they were opposed. There are, I think, a great multitude of such faint ineluctable estrangements between fine people in this world. Conceivably I am unreasonable. I may be greedy for perfect harmonies in a world in

which there must needs be differences of key. But the waste through those fine differences!

There I must leave this. I would have given — I do not know what I would not have given — I would have given extravagantly to have what is told here about Minnie told differently — told with a touch of retrospective affection. It need not have been so very differently. I once showed him a letter of hers — he tills of it — because I thought it was a letter that would make him understand. After her death. But that too I learn now for the first time, he found artificial. And it was so tender a letter!

I leave things as he wrote them. I cannot mutilate his book.

His loss is still very fresh with me. It has carried me back to our boyhood, to our years as stepsons in close alliance against rather suffocating suppressions, to our hard and strenuous life as students together. I feel there is little to add. Knowing him so well it is easy for me to find his personality quite sufficiently displayed in what he himself has given. I may however say here that he has a far kindlier disposition than is apparent in his manuscript, and that there is a tone of irritation in his attitude to many things in contemporary life that was not a part of his everyday self.

Always, you must remember, he intensifies. He found a sort of fun in over-emphasis. He laughed in everyday affairs much more than this book conveys. Print cannot give his eyes, his intonations. Here he sweeps in his picture with bold strokes, in his third book more particularly; he does not trouble to niggle or accommodate his line. It may be that that was unavoidable. It may be there was no other way of telling things forcibly. One must state before one can qualify. He lays bare very great ideas that are coming into men's minds, that are necessarily antagonistic to established institutions, he wants to emphasise their contrast and antagonism, and in doing so his argument takes on a militant quality by the mere force of its direction; his tone becomes aggressive.

He could be very kind, indeed he was habitually kind to individuals, but he was impatient with humanity generally, and particularly so with certain classes and professions that seemed to him to embody the old order. Politicians, royalties, schoolmasters, dons, professional soldiers, professional literary men; he can hardly

mention them without a cuff. I do not think he ever once names the unfortunate Ramsay MacDonald without an opprobrious epithet. Yet MacDonald is a man of conscious distinction, refined, high-principled and exceptionally cultivated. And how rough he is with our poor dear half-brother, Walpole Stent!

There was an evident change in my brother as his book progressed, due to the increasing reality of this vision he was evoking of a greater world, close at hand and within our reach. The more he believed in it — if I may be paradoxical — the more massive it became, the greater was the effort needed to believe, the greater the nervous stress. His expressed disrespect for contemporary conditions became more and more resentful. He was always a mocker at the vapid assurance of the established thing, even as a student he was a great mocker, he tells a little of that, but as his conviction that much that he mocked at was already superannuated and unnecessary, that here and now it could be replaced by better things and was not being so replaced, gathered power in him, his mockery betrayed with ever increasing plainness the anger surging up beneath. "Don't they mean to move it after all?" he asked himself. "Is all this still going on?" The effort for self-control is not always sustained. "Oh! stop this damned foolery! An end to this life-wasting foolery!" writhes and mutters beneath many a passage of this book.

His book in this regard does but parallel his life. His disposition to fly in the face of mass opinion was evident even in our student days. He recoiled from all crowds and not simply from "oafish" royalist crowds. With every year he seemed to trouble himself less about the standards and approval of his community. He became more and more estranged from the normal man. His disregard of minor social obligations became conspicuous after the war. He ignored people, neglected invitations, dropped all irksome civilities. He no longer kept up with current books and plays and the interests of the day. He was "leaving the show." If he dressed and behaved in the usual fashion it was simply to save himself the bother of being eccentric. He cared too little for everyday usage in such superficial things even to seem to challenge it.

There was indeed always something isolated about him. From the beginning he had an exceptional quality. Even as a boy he was rather

alone. He was precocious and he had a marked individuality, and he went directly for the things that appealed to him. Cricket bored him as it bores most clever boys, because of the amount of time it demands if it is to be played well. He rebelled against that priggishness in games which is so sedulously forced upon English schoolboys, and on the other hand a laboratory drew him magnetically. But he was never aloof nor outcast. He could make himself very agreeable to other boys, and despite the harsh things he says about their profession his masters not only did not persecute him but one or two of them took a vivid interest in him. He did not sulk nor shirk; at times he could be delightfully facetious. But his inner isolation grew as his life went on out of his circumstances and with his convictions. Gradually he found out that he did not like the general tenor of existence, prevalent ideas, prevalent ways of behaving about things. People seemed to be wasting their lives in dull and stupid activities, and he felt that the best of his own possibilities were being wasted in the general waste. His belief in man's possibilities made him at times inhuman. He was harsh with our kind because he expected so much from it. His flight to the simple life of Provence, which he tells of so appreciatively, his increasing disposition to return thither and think of the world from that perspective, was only the coming to the surface of an innate tendency to free himself from immediate and distracting things.

Yet for all his isolation he was in no sense self-sufficient, and there I think lies the clue both to the religiosity of his attitude towards the Being of the Species and to the deeper element in the love affairs he describes. If he left his ordinary world it was not because he did not want a world, but because he wanted one more helpful and akin. Ours in London gave him too little that was worth having and encumbered him too much. The love affairs he tells about so frankly betray far more than a temperamental proclivity. It was as true of him as it can be of anyone that he was born out of his time. In the more "adult" days of 2026 A.D. he might have found an easy circle of understanding friends, and lovers after his own heart. He was by no means an unhappy man; he was temperamentally sanguine; unpleasant things made him combative rather than miserable; but the progressive detachment of his ideas, his

undervaluation of things still widely accepted, the fear he seemed always to be fighting down that the crowd with its gregarious instincts might at last defeat him and his kind and all his dreams and go its own road to extinction, threw the shadow of a great loneliness on him, and he would set about exorcising it in ways which displayed only too plainly his almost unconscious contempt for established conventions.

His life with the notorious Mrs. Evans, which did for a time estrange him from us, was more than an unconscious defiance. She was a banner for him. He would believe no ill of her. He would not listen to a word against her. He would see no harm in what she had done. She was his way of damning "all this chastity nonsense," as he would have called it at that time, and much else besides. He had acquired already in those days a real prejudice against women who were socially correct. That submission and acquiescence should count as possible virtues, roused him to fierce and practical denials. As hard was it for him to condemn rebellious courage, even such rebellious courage as that of Mrs. Evans.

There must have been the same element of defiance in the beginning of the last affair with Clementina Campbell. He does not admit it but it peeps between the lines. He never told me of her, but that may have been because the apt occasion never came to us. We were both busy men, we did not meet very much in 1925, and he never wrote a letter if he could help it. I did not even know she existed until I went down to Provence after his death. I am extremely sorry that I never saw her; that except for a few snapshots I found of her in a drawer, I do not even know what she was like. Whatever his state of mind about her at first, whatever the quality of this earlier relationship, there can be no doubt of the depth and sincerity of their affection at the end. Mutual affection I think of a better quality than he had ever had before. His tenderness for her is manifest every time he mentions her. But it is not all tenderness towards her. He pulls at his cord. It does not need close reading between the lines to detect his disposition to symbolise her as he symbolised Mrs. Evans before her, and turn her to his own rebellious uses. With her he might have succeeded. The way the people spoke of her round Magagnosc and Grasse suggested a very charming person indeed, and it may be that

in these laxer times and married to her, he would have been able to reinstate her completely in the world that had cast her out. He loved her very much it is plain, more I should think than he had ever loved any other woman, but I am sure that the spectacle of the old order eating its own judgment upon her would have played no small part in his satisfaction at her happiness.

He was coming back into the world with her and he was coming back for a last great fight, a completer, more systematic fight than he had ever essayed before, against most established things. He was still full of life.

I wish he could have fought that fight. I wish he could have fought that fight and that I could have been beside him. It is not natural that he should have gone before me. He has been a great thing in my world, from those early days of brooding and brilliance when with a disadvantage of two years he could beat me in my school work almost as a matter of course. He has refreshed me and stimulated me all my life; I cannot imagine what I should have become if it had not been for his corrections. Circumstances threw us very closely together. Never at any time were we more than half estranged. And beyond habit and companionship there was something in him, strong yet weak, defiant yet dependent, free and obstinate in thought and action and yet cravingly affectionate, that leaves a heartache for him I must carry now to the end.

It is a curious thing to say, but I do not realise yet that he is dead. He has been so much in my life since its conscious beginnings that it is difficult to feel that he has gone right out of the world, that he is not away in America or Siberia or South Africa and presently coming back. I had a sense of his possible comments whenever I wrote. I have that still. If to-morrow I found a laconic postcard from him among my letters I should not be surprised. It would be only after a minute or so that I should begin to perceive it strange.

And it is all over. I think of an eager little chap in knickerbockers, with bright eyes and a quick colour — guying his governess or bolting from me with a squeak between delight and dismay after some outrageous unexpected attack. I remember him standing naked in the sunshine on a beach somewhere in France, and how it dawned upon me that he was beautifully built. I fight again in a great scrap

we had with some French boys at Montpellier. And there is the keen face of the young socialist, too intent upon his argument to note the spring flowers in Kensington Gardens, and the student gone clean over my head out of the common laboratory through the dark-green door that shut off research from the rank and file of learners. And so the memories come crowding one after the other, the better half before the twenties were reached. As it comes nearer the figure is larger but less bright. I see him in tennis flannels at Lambs Court, now wary, now wild as a cat in thundery weather, a most uncertain player always; I see him smiling recognition at me on the gangway of a big liner or threading his way to my corner through the groups in the club smoking-room. And at the end comes the picture, so irrelevant and so dreadful, of that crumpled automobile I saw amidst torn turf and snapped off saplings.

My dear brother!

Panta rhei. He too has passed. These words, and they are wonderful words and come like a refrain throughout his book, shall be put as his sole epitaph upon his grave!

THE END

MEANWHILE

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PREFACE DEDICATORY

One day about the time of the general strike in England I visited the celebrated garden of La Mortola near Ventimiglia. As I wandered about that lovely place, I passed by an unknown little lady sitting and reading in a shady corner. Her pose reminded me of another little lady who has always been very dear to me. She was making notes upon a slip of paper as she read. I noted how charmingly intent she was upon her book and wondered what it was that held her so firmly. I never discovered. I do not know who she was and I have never seen her again. In all probability she was a tourist like myself and quite unaware that she was destined, in my fancy, to become the mistress of all the beauty about her. She in part, and in part the lady she had recalled. I went my way to the beach and sat there and as I mused on things that were happening in England and Italy and the world at large, that remembered and reinforced personality mingled with my thoughts, became a sort of frame for my thoughts, and this story very much as I have shaped it here presented itself suddenly to my imagination. It jumped into existence. Much of it had been in my mind for some time lacking a form and a personification. Then all at once it was alive. I went home and I began to write. The garden of this book is by no means a replica of the garden of La Mortola, which was merely the inspiring point of departure for this fantasia of ideas, this picture of a mind and of a world in a phase of expectation. Gorge and Caatinga you will seek at La Mortola in vain. But all sorts of things grow upon that wonderful corner of sunlit soil, and this novel, which I dedicate very gratefully to the real owners of the garden, gratefully and a little apologetically because of the freedoms I have taken with their home, is only the least and latest product of its catholic fertility.

H.G. WELLS.

BOOK I. — THE UTOPOGRAPHER IN THE GARDEN

1. THE HOSTESS EXPLAINS

The room was long and lofty, a room of scarlet hangings and pale brown stone, unilluminated as yet by any of its red-shaded electric lights. There were two great Italianate fire-places with projecting canopies of carved stone; in one, the olive logs were unlit, in the other the fire, newly begun, burnt and crackled cheerfully; its leaping tongues of flame rejoiced and welcomed the evening. Bare expanses of the beeswaxed floor, sharp edges of the massive furniture, metallic studs and rods and handles and a big inkstand of brass responded by a gay waving of reflections to these glad Hallos. The curtains were not drawn, and the outer world by contrast with this intimate ruddy tumult seemed very cold and still and remote. The tall window at one end gave upon the famous garden which rose steeply behind the house, terrace above terrace, a garden half phantasmal now in the twilight, with masses of pallid blossom foaming over old walls, with winding steps, mighty old jars, great dark trees happily placed, and a profusion of flowers, halted and paraded, by the battalion, by the phalanx, their colours still glowing, but seen beneath deeps of submerging blue, unsubstantial and mysteriously profound as they dissolved away into the gloaming. The other window stared out at the unruffled Mediterranean, dark ultramarine under the fading afterglow of a serene sunset.

A small, fragile, dark-haired woman in a green dress crouched musing in one corner of the long sofa before the fire; her hands clutched the back and her cheek rested on her hands; the reflections danced upon her necklace and bracelet and earrings and the buckles of her shoes, caressed her pretty arms and lit her eyes. Her expression was one of tranquil contentment. In that big room she was like some minute bright insect in the corolla of a gigantic red and orange flower.

At the sound of footsteps in the passage without she sighed, and moving lazily, turned an expectant face to the open door behind her.

There appeared a very exquisite little gentleman of some sixty-odd years. Grey hair streaked with brown flowed back gracefully from a finely modelled face that ended in a neatly pointed beard. The

complexion was warm and delicate. At the first glance you would have said he is Spanish and he is wax; and he was neither. But indeed it was as though a Velasquez portrait had left its proper costume upstairs and dressed for dinner. For a moment this pleasant apparition stood clasping its white hands with a sort of confident diffidence, and then came forward with an easy gesture. “Ah-ah! My hostess!” he said.

She held out her hand to him with an indolent smile and did not seem in the least surprised that he took it and kissed it.

“Come and sit down by the fire here,” she said. “I am so glad you have come to us again, Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan. Did they look after you carefully? We got back from Monte Carlo scarcely half an hour ago.”

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan strolled round the sofa, held out his carefully cherished hands to the blaze, and decided after due consideration to stand rather droopingly by the fireside. “You are sure I am not inconvenient?”

“You just complete us. There was one room free.”

“That pretty room in the tower. Every way, east, west, north and south one has a view.”

She did not explain that dear accommodating Miss Fenimore had been bustled up to the dependence when his telegram came. She had other things in her mind. “You arrived in the afternoon?”

“I lunched on the train. I hired an irresistible automobile at the station. It was painted aluminium colour and adorned with a banner bearing the mystical word ‘Shell.’ And such a courteously exorbitant driver! Although it was sight-seeing day for your gardens and the road at your gates was choked with cars and chars-a-bancs, all your servants, even the porter lady, received me as though I was the one thing they needed to round off their happiness. Your major-domo almost fondled me. Yes, Bombaccio with the Caruso profile. Yours is the perfect household.”

“You have seen none of your fellow guests?”

He reflected. “I have a slight suspicion —— Formally, no. Your major-domo gave me tea in my own room and afterwards I strolled about your gardens and heard them praised in most European languages as well as my mother tongue. One or two Germans. I may

be old-fashioned but I don't feel a European show-place is complete without an occasional 'prachtvoll' or 'wie schön!' I've a sneaking pleasure in their return. I feel I may be bullied for it but I can't help having it."

His hostess made no attempt to bully him.

He became enthusiastic over some flower in blue spikes, that was new to him.

The lady on the sofa disregarded the blue spikes. "There were one or two people about," she reflected aloud. "There was Lady Grieswold. She won't go to Monte Carlo because she loses her head. And always afterwards she is sorry she didn't go to Monte Carlo because it might have been one of her good days. Did you see her? But probably she went for a walk up in the hills with Miss Fenimore, to avoid Mr. Sempack. And then there was Mr. Sempack."

"Sempack," said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan. "Sem- pack?" and consulted his toes.

"Yes," said the lady with a sudden hopefulness in her manner, "Mr. Sempack?" Her eyes were less dreamy. She wanted to know.

"In some connection — —"

"Yes. But in what connection?"

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan went off at a tangent. "As I have walked about the gardens —— A presence... Most of your sight-seeing visitors are transitory; they make a round and they go. Or they make two rounds and go. But there has been *one* individual — —"

The lady thrust out her pretty profile in expectation.

"Rather like a dissenting minister," he tried, feeling his way. "With that sort of hat. And yet not a real dissenting minister, not one of God's dissenting ministers."

Her eager face assured him he was on the right track.

"A dissenting minister, let us say, neither born nor created, not a natural product, but —— how shall I put it? — painted by Augustus John! Very fine but slightly incredible. Legs — endless legs and arms. I mean as to length. Tree-like."

He considered judicially. "More ungainly — yes, even more ungainly — than Robert Cecil."

"Yes," she said in a loud whisper and glanced guiltily over her shoulder at the open door behind her. "*Him*!"

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan folded his arms and bit a knuckle. “So that is Mr. Sempack! I saw him. Several times. We kept on meeting. The more we tried not to meet, we met. We sat about in remote corners and even then fate seemed to draw us together. Sempack!”

“You know about him?”

“I’ve heard of the great Mr. Sempack, yes.”

“He writes books,” she supplied helpfully.

“*Real* books, dear lady. Not books you read. Not novels. Not memoirs. Books that are just books. Like Santayana. Or Lowes Dickinson. Or Bertrand Russell.”

“You’ve read some?”

“No. I’ve always hoped to meet him and save myself that duty. It *is* a duty. They say —— They say he talks better than he writes. How did he come here?”

“Philip met him. He brought him along from the Roquebrune people.”

“Why?”

“Philip wanted to know if there was going to be a coal strike. He’s *fussed* about the coal strike.”

“Did Mr. Sempack tell him?”

“Philip hasn’t asked. Yet.”

“I don’t think that’s Sempack’s sort of subject, but one never knows. He might throw some side-lights on the matter.”

“So far,” said the lady, with reflective eyes on the fire, “he hasn’t been very *much* of a talker. In fact —— He hardly talks at all.”

“Not his reputation.”

“Intelligently out of it.”

“Something not quite conducive in the atmosphere.”

“He seemed almost to be beginning once or twice. But — perhaps they interrupt. He sits about in the garden in that large dispersed way of his, saying he’s perfectly happy and refusing to go anywhere. Sometimes he writes in a little notebook. I don’t think he’s unhappy but he seems rather a waste.”

“You’d like him to talk?”

“We never do get any talk here. I’d love to hear — discussion.”

“Now I wonder,” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan and consulted his ring again. “What did I see, the other day?” He stuck up a finger and

held it out towards her. “Utopias!” he said. “Quite lately. It must have been in some review. Quite recently. In the *Nation* I think. Or the *Literary Supplement*. Yes, I have it. He has been reading and writing about all the Utopias in the world. He’s a Utopographer!”

The lady seemed to weigh the possible meanings of the word. “But what has that to do with the coal strike?”

“Nothing whatever that I can see.”

There was a momentary pause. “Philip jumps at things,” she remarked.

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan knitted his brows. “Utopographer? Or was it a Utopologist? Or Utopolitan? Not a bad word, Utopolitan. No — it was Utopographer. I read it in one of the weeklies downstairs, the *Spectator* or the *Nation* or the *Saturday*. We might lead the talk rather carelessly towards Utopias and see what happened.”

“We have some awful interrupters here. They don’t listen and suddenly they shout out something about something else. Something — just silly. It may put him off his subject.”

“Then we must pull the talk back to the subject.”

“*You* may. But he’s difficult. He’s difficult. They disregard him and he seems to disregard them and effaces everything from his mind. When they interrupt he just loses them in thought and the meal. But he’s not unhappy. He likes being here. He says so. He likes Philip. He likes Catherine. It is quite evident he likes Catherine. I think he has been talking to Catherine a little — in the garden.”

“Is Lady Catherine here?”

“Lovelier than ever. Her divorce has made her ten years younger. She’s twenty-five. She’s eighteen. And — it’s funny — but she evidently finds something attractive about Mr. Sempack. And naturally he finds something attractive about her. He isn’t at all the sort of man I should have expected her to find attractive. But of course if she goes and carries him off and makes him talk about his Utopias or whatever they do talk about when she gets him alone, there will be no getting him to talk at large. He’ll be drained.”

Her consultant quite saw that.

“We must think of a plan of campaign,” he brooded. “Broaching the talker. As a dinner table sport. Now what have we given? An interest in Utopias. I don’t think we must use the actual word,

‘Utopia’... No... I wonder if I should find that review downstairs.”

From far away came the sound of high heels clicking on a marble staircase. His hostess became very rapid. “That’s Catherine!” she said in parenthesis. “The other people.” She ticked the names off on her fingers ineffectively. “There’s a Colonel Bullace. A great admirer of Joynson-Hicks. He wants to organise British Fascists. Keep the working man down and save him from agitators and all that. Adores Mussolini. His wife’s a darling. Rather a prosy darling if you let her talk, but endlessly kind. Then there’s a couple of tennis-players. They just play tennis. And improve Philip’s game. It tries him dreadfully having his game improved, but he *will* do it. What a *passionate* game tennis is nowadays, isn’t it? Mathison’s the name. And Geoffry Rylands is here — Philip’s brother. A foursome. Too good for any of the others. And there’s dear Miss Fenimore. Lady Grieswold I told you. And young Lord and Lady Tamar. He’s at Geneva, doing things for the League of Nations. Such a fine *earnest* young couple. Oh! and there’s Puppy Clarges and someone else — let me see... I said the Bullaces, didn’t I?...”

The clicking heels halted in the doorway.

“Lady Catherine!” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan.

A tall young woman, with a lovely body sheathed in pale gold, dusky- haired, dark-blue eyed, smiled at them both. She had a very engaging smile, impudent, friendly, disarming. Her wide gaze swept the great room.

“Isn’t Mr. Sempack down?” she asked her hostess.

And then remembering her manners she advanced to greet Mr. Plantagenet- Buchan.

“Come and conspire with us, Catherine,” said Mrs. Rylands after a little pause for reflection. “Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan says Mr. Sempack is a great talker. So far — except perhaps to you — he’s buried his talent. Come and tell us how we are to get him talking to-night.”

2. BROACHING THE TALKER

They did it between them and there was wonderful talking that night, a talk that delighted Mrs. Rylands altogether. It was like the talks her mother used to tell of in the great days of Clouds and Stanway, in the happy eighties when Lady Elcho and all the "Souls" were young and Lord Balfour was "Mr. Arthur" and people used to read Robert Louis Stevenson's *Talk and Talkers* in the hope of improving their style. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was bright and skilful and Lady Catherine was characteristically generous in giving away a vintage that might have been reserved for her alone, and Philip most unexpectedly helped with one intelligent question and Lord Tamar with two. Mr. Sempack once started, proved to be as great a talker as his reputation demanded, he could interest and inform and let in contributors while keeping them in order, and the evening was tremendously entertaining and quite different from any other evening over which Mrs. Rylands had presided at Casa Terragena.

There were moments of difficulty. The Mathisons were visibly disconcerted and alarmed by the strong, persistent drive towards such high-brow and devastating topics as what was going to happen to the world, what could be made to happen to the world, and how things could be made to happen. Their eyes met in only too evident protest against such "rot." The evening before they had had quite a good time, comparing notes with Geoffry Rylands and Puppy Clarges about the different tennis courts upon the Riviera and shouting, "Oh! *that's* a scorcher if you like!" or "Talk about a cinder track!" and expressing opinions about the ankles of Miss Wills and the terrible and scandalous dispute about the balls and whether Suzanne was ever likely to marry, nice sensible stuff, as it seemed to them. Now they were pushed aside. They couldn't get in. Nor could Geoffry nor Puppy help them. These four were scattered among the high-brows. Colonel Bullace was interested — positively interested, in a hostile way indeed, but interested. Once he interrupted. And Mrs. Bullace got loose for a time with a story about how down in Ventimiglia that day she had attempted to rescue a donkey from ill-treatment by a man it didn't belong to, and who wasn't, as a matter of fact, ill-

treating it, and indeed who possibly had never been aware of the existence of the donkey until she called his attention to it, and how nice everybody had been about it, and had taken her part when the man became insulting. She began it unexpectedly and apropos of nothing. “Ow,” she said suddenly, “*such* a funny thing!” But that had been a lacuna, and the great talk was joined up again before she had nearly done.

The great talk had reassembled itself after every interruption and triumphed over all that might have slain it in its immaturity and grown into a great edifice of interest. After dinner and a little interlude the men came up, and while the low-brow contingent was excreted to the bridge tables, the interested people gathered as a matter of course round the fire and went on talking. They went on talking and it was a great success, and little Mrs. Rylands felt that even Lady Elcho or Lady Sassoon, bright stars in her mother’s memories, could never have presided over a better one. And at midnight, they were still talking, Mr. Sempack talking, Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan talking, Catherine talking, the Tamars both interested (unless *she* was pretending awfully well), Philip hanging on every word — unexpected Philip could be at times! — Miss Fenimore drinking it in. But she would drink anything in; it was her rôle. Even Colonel Bullace, whenever he was dummy, came and listened, and he was mostly dummy with such a chronic over-caller as Lady Grieswold for a partner.

It was wonderful how varied and yet how consistent the great talk was, how its topics went about and around and interwove and remained parts of one topic. Mrs. Rylands was reminded of a phrase Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan had used once for some music, “a cathedral of sound.” This was a cathedral of ideas. A Gothic cathedral. Everything said had a sort of freedom and yet everything belonged.

3. BEDTIME

That evening had been tremendously entertaining, a glory, a thing to remember, but though the spirit may be extremely spirited the flesh is often weak.

At midnight Mrs. Rylands suddenly gave way. Right up to the moment of her crisis her attention had been held quite pleasantly, then suddenly it vanished. Abruptly she went like sour milk in thundery weather. Fatigue smote her and an overwhelming desire to close and put away the great talk and go to bed.

There was no phase of transition. It was like a clock striking suddenly on her brain. It said, "Enough. You have listened enough. You have looked intelligent enough. They have all had enough. Pack them off to bed and go to bed yourself."

She sat up on one of the pedestals that stood on either side of the fire and nothing in her pensive and appreciative pose betrayed the swift change within her. A moment before she had been a happy hostess blessing her gathering. Now she waited like an assassin for the moment to strike, and all her soul was hostile. And they went on, Mr. Sempack talking, Mr. Plantagenet- Buchan talking, Catherine talking, the Tamars interested (unless *she* was pretending awfully well), Philip hanging on every word and Miss Fenimore drinking it in. They might go on for *hours* yet — hours!

Mrs. Rylands invented something. She invented it in an instant. It flashed into her mind completed and exact. She would have it made directly she got to London, and bring it back with her next winter. A solid looking brass clock to go with the big inkstand on the table. It should strike — just once in a day. Every twenty-four hours it should strike, slowly, impressively, imperatively — midnight. Never anything else. Midnight. Or perhaps to bring it home to them, fourteen or fifteen. Or four and twenty sound and full. The evening curfew. Why had no one thought of such clocks before? And sometimes one would put it on and sometimes one would put it back, and if it had a little stud somewhere that one could touch — or make Philip touch — without anyone else noticing it, one might prevent it striking.... Or just blow everything to bits by making it strike....

In the natural course of things the bridge players started the go-to-bed break-up before half-past eleven, but to-night the bridge was bewitched it seemed. It made a background of muffled sounds to the great talk. Everyone was overcalling over there; that was quite plain; tempers were going to pieces; and the games were holding out obstinately beneath vast avalanches of penalties that impended above the line. Sounds of subdued quarrelling came from Mrs. Bullace and Lady Grieswold. Each had arrived at the stage of hatred for her partner. At the other table Geoffry was losing facetiously to the Mathisons, a close-playing couple, and Puppy was getting more and more acridly witty. Who was it sitting just hidden by the bowl of roses? Mr. Haulbowline, Mrs. Bullace's partner. It was Mr. Haulbowline that Mrs. Rylands had forgotten when she had given the list of her guests to Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan. Why did one always forget Mr. Haulbowline?

The current of Mrs. Rylands' thoughts was interrupted. Something she realised had taken her by the cheeks and throat, something she knew she must control at any cost, a tension of the muscles. Just in time she bit her finger and suppressed the yawn, and then with a stern effort brought her mind back to the great talk. Now it was Mr. Sempack who was talking, and it seemed to her he was talking as though the only person in the room was Lady Catherine. Was that imagination? It was remarkable how those two entirely incongruous people attracted each other. They certainly did attract each other. When Mr. Sempack looked at Lady Catherine his eyes positively glowed.

It was astonishing that any woman could be attracted by Mr. Sempack! He was so entirely different from Philip. It was wonderful how cleverly Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan had hit him off. Of course now that he was in evening dress he was not so much like a dissenting minister, but he was still incredibly gawky. It was clever of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan to have thought of Lord Cecil. Mr. Sempack really was more gawky than Lord Cecil; *much* more. How Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan observed things! And how acute and intimate it was of him — since he was American — to call him Robert Cecil still. Gawky! Mr. Sempack was the gawkiest man she had ever looked at. He became monstrous as she scrutinised him. He became a

black blot on the scene, that had the remotest resemblance to a human form. His joints made her think of a cow, just as Philip's always made her think of a cat. It was awful to think how he could be joined together at the joints. Her pensive pose permitted her to examine his foot; his far-flung foot as he sat deep in the sofa. He had crossed his legs and his foot seemed to be held out for inspection. It waved about as if it challenged comment. His shoe reminded her of a cattle boat adapted to passenger service. His socks fell in folds over his ankle. Probably this man whom everyone was listening to as if he was an oracle, had never found out there were such things as sock suspenders in the world. An oracle who had never heard of sock suspenders! It was quite possible. Men were incredibly stupid — especially intellectual men — about everything of practical importance in the world. Even what they knew they couldn't apply, whereas a woman could apply even what she didn't know.... They didn't know when to leave off.... Or, she suddenly amended, they left off too soon. Above the sock an inch of healthily hairy skin displayed itself and then a thin edge of Jaeger underclothing. Undyed, all-wool, slightly frayed underclothing. And Catherine found him attractive!

Very probably if Philip wasn't looked after he'd —— No, it was impossible. He was like a different sort of animal. He would pull up his socks by instinct.

Mrs. Rylands, with an expression of intelligent attention, considered her guest's face. No one could have guessed from her quiet eyes that her reason had fled and only an imp was left in possession.

His bones, this imp remarked, positively ran wild under his skin as he talked. What could one call such features? Rambling? Roughhewn? It was like a handsome face seen through a distorting mirror. It was like one of those cliffs where people find a resemblance to a face. There was a sort of strength, a massiveness. The chin. It was a hygienic chin; the sort of chin people wear so as to give fair play to every toe....

Mrs. Rylands had a momentary feeling that she was falling asleep. What had she been thinking about? About his chin — chins and toes —— She meant his chin was like the toe of a sensible boot, not pointed. It was really a double chin. Not a downwards double, not

fat, but a sideways double chin. “Cleft” did they call it? And the nose one might call shapely — different on each side, but shapely on each side. A nose with a lot of character — but difficult to follow. And big! Like the nose Mr. Gladstone grew in his late days. For people’s noses grow — longer and longer — all their lives. This nose — how would it end? Something thoughtful about those deep overhung eyes there was, and the wrinkles made them seem kindly and humorous. But why didn’t someone tell a man like that to get his eyebrows cut? There was no need to have such eyebrows, no need whatever. Unkempt. Sprouting. Bits of hair on his cheeks too. A face that ought to be weeded. She would not look at his ears — for fear. Some woman ought to take him in hand. But not Catherine! That would be Beauty and the Beast. How venturesome Catherine was! — had always been!

His voice was not unpleasant. Perhaps it was his voice that attracted Catherine.

He was saying: “Work. We have to work for the sake of the work and take happiness for the wild flower it is. Some day men will grow their happinesses in gardens, a great variety of beautiful happinesses, happinesses under glass, happinesses all the year round. Such things are not for us. They will come. Meanwhile — —”

“Meanwhile,” Lord Tamar echoed in a tone of edification. Just the word. He was really looking up at Mr. Sempack. He, too, was attracted. Lady Tamar’s emotional response also was very convincing.

But what were they talking about? Her garden? Happiness in little pots, happiness bedded out? Mrs. Rylands blinked to make sure she was awake.

Then came a pause and Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan delivered himself. “I perceive I have been meanwhiling all my life. Meanwhiling.... Have I been living? You make me question it. Have I just been meanwhiling away my life?”

He paused and seemed faintly dissatisfied with what he had said. “Eheu! fugaces,” he sighed.

It sounded awfully clever. And rather sad in a brilliant sort of way. But what it meant now, was another matter. She had lost the thread long ago. Bother! Mrs. Rylands roused herself to smile

brightly at Mr. Plantagenet- Buchan. Anyhow, it was as if they were coming to some sort of conclusion and she felt she must offer him every encouragement. Then, with a sudden determination, she stood up. She could endure this talk no longer. After all, it was her house. The bridge parties far away down the room came to her aid, belatedly like Blücher, but now they came.

"Game!" shouted Puppy. "And the two hundred and fifty ought to save us from the worst of it. We're well out of it, partner!"

A great stirring of chairs. Both bridge tables on the move. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan also standing up. Lady Tamar standing up. Everyone on the move, thank God! Philip guiding Colonel Bullace quite needlessly to the drinks on the far table. Mr. Haulbowline following Colonel Bullace, unobtrusively but resolutely, like a pointer following a Scotch terrier. Suddenly the men remember that Puppy will take a whisky, Mr. Haulbowline stands aside and Colonel Bullace pours out her allowance with an air of having approached the tray for that sole purpose. The other tray? The other tray is all right. Geoffry is getting lemonade for Lady Catherine....

Now was the moment for the hostess to say: "We have had a wonderful talk to-night, Mr. Sempack. You scatter ideas like a fir tree scatters pollen."

She had thought of that in the interlude after dinner, while all the women were saying things about him. He did scatter ideas. She had said it over to herself several times since, to make sure it was still there. But what she said was: "You scatter pollen like a freeze scats ideese. I hope you will sleep well, Mr. Sempack, and not hear too much of the sea."

She said her little sentence rather rapidly and mechanically, because she had repeated it over too often; she touched his knuckly hand and smiled her sweetest and left him bowing. In the passage she let her yawn loose and the happy thing nearly dislocated her pretty jaw.

It was only when she was undressing that she realised with a start what it was she had said. Never! But she was horribly certain about it. "Freeze scats ideese?" or had it been "Fleeze"? What could he have made of it? Perhaps now, with that vast serious expression of his on that vast serious face, he was repeating it over to himself

upstairs.

It was hopeless even to try to make Philip understand what she was laughing at. So she just laughed and laughed, and then Philip lifted her up in his arms and kissed her and soothed her, and she cried a tear or so for no particular reason, Philip being such a dear, and then she was put into bed somehow and went to sleep.

And the last thing she heard was Philip reproaching himself. “I ought to have sent you to bed before, my little wife. You’ve tired your dear self out.”

4. THE GREAT AGE THAT COMES

To many hearers the great talk that was set going in Casa Terragena by Mr. Sempack, would have seemed far less wonderful and original than it did to Mrs. Rylands and the group of young people with her that listened to him. For, after all, it was little more than a gathering together and a fitting together of the main creative suggestions for the regulation of human affairs that have accumulated so richly in the last few score years. It did not seem in the least wonderful to Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, though he allowed it to interest and amuse him. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was quite sure he had heard it all before, but then, like most highly cultivated and Europeanised Americans, he had trained himself to feel in that way about everything, and to smile gently and to intimate it quietly, with a sort of conspicuous unobtrusiveness. He knew that the one thing forbidden to an American was to be naïve. An American to hold his own must not rest under that suspicion. He must never be naïve, never surprised, never earnest. Only by the most inflexible tortuosity, by the most persistent evasiveness, by an exquisite refinement sustained with iron resolution, and a cynicism that never fails to be essential, can he hope to establish his inaccessible remoteness from either Log Cabin or White House; and maintain his self-respect among the sophistication of Europe.

So Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan played the part of a not too urgently needed prompter to Mr. Sempack, helped him out discreetly, and ticked off his points as he made them with the air of one fully prepared for everything that came.

The ground effect of Mr. Sempack upon which all his other effects were built, was his large and unchallengeable intimation of the transitory and provisional nature of the institutions and customs and usages, the forms and appliances and resources amidst which he and his interlocutors were living. He not only had the quality of not really belonging to them himself and of reaching back before they existed and forward to when they would have gone, but he imposed the same quality of relative permanence upon the thoughts of his hearers. He had the quality less of being ephemeral than of sitting with his

hearers and watching everything else go by.

The human mind discovered itself relatively immortal amidst evanescent things. This beautiful house became like a tent that would presently be folded up and taken away and the celebrated gardens like a great bouquet of flowers that had been brought from the ends of the earth, just to be looked at and to delight for a little while and then to die and be dispersed. The house was built about a Saracenic watchtower for its core; wherever its foundations had extended buried fragments of polished marble and busts and broken provincial statuary had recalled its Roman predecessor; but at the touch of Sempack these marble gods and emperors became no more than the litter of the last tenant, his torn photographs and out-of-date receipts. The Via Aurelia ran deeply through the grounds between high walls, and some one had set up, at a bridge where the gardens crossed this historical gully, a lettered-stone to recall that on this documented date or that, this emperor and that pope, Nicolo Machiavelli and Napoleon the First, had ridden past. These ghosts seemed scarcely remoter than the records of recent passages in the big leather-bound Visitors' Book in the Hall, Mr. Gladstone and King Edward the Seventh, the Austrian Empress and Mr. Keir Hardie.

Occasionally tombstones that had stood beside the high road were unearthed by changes in the garden. One inscribed quite simply "Amoena Lucina," just that and nothing more, was like a tender sigh that had scarcely passed away. Mrs. Rylands had set it up again in a little walled close of turf and purple flowers. People talked there of Lucina as though she might still hear.

Over everything hung a promise of further transformations, for the Italians had a grandiose scheme for reviving the half obliterated tracks of the Via Aurelia as a modern motoring road to continue the Grande Corniche. Everything passed here and everything went by; fashions of life and house and people and ideas; it seemed that they passed very swiftly indeed, when one measured time by a scale that would take in those half disinterred skeletons of Cro-Magnon men and Grimaldi men who lay, under careful glass casings now, in the great cave of the Rochers Rouges just visible from the dining-room windows. That great cave was still black with the ashes of prehistoric fires, as plain almost as the traces of yesterday's picnic. Even the

grisly sub-man with his rude flint-chipped stakes, was here a thing of overnight. His implements were scattered and left in the deeper layers of the silted cave, like the toys of a child that has recently been sent to bed. With a wave of his ample hand Mr. Sempack could allude to the whole span of the human story.

"Utopias, you say, deny the thing that is," said Mr. Sempack. "Why, yesterday and to-morrow deny the thing that is!"

He made Mrs. Rylands feel like someone who wakes up completely in the compartment of an express train, which between sleeping and waking she had imagined to be a house.

Colonel Bullace had to hear that his dear British Empire had hardly lasted a lifetime. "Its substantial expansion came with the steamships," said Mr. Sempack; "it is held together by the steamship. How much longer will the steamship endure?"

Before the steamship it was no more than the shrunken vestiges of the Empire of George III. Most of America was lost. Our rule in India was a trader's dominion not a third of its present extent. Canada, the Cape were coast settlements.

Now Colonel Bullace was of that variety of Englishman which believes as an article of faith that the Union Jack has "braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze" since 1800. If anyone had told him that the stars and stripes was the older of the two flags he would have become homicidal. A steamship Empire! What of Nelson and our wooden walls? What of John Company? What of Raleigh? What of Agincourt? He had a momentary impulse to rise up and kill Mr. Sempack, but he was calling his hand, a rather difficult hand, just then and one must put first things first.

And while Mr. Sempack made respect for any established powerful thing seem the delusion of children still too immature to realise the reality of change, at the same time he brought the idea of the strangest and boldest innovations in the ways of human life within the range of immediately practicable things. In the past our kind had been hustled along by change: now it was being given the power to make its own changes. He did not preach the coming of the Great Age; he assumed it. He put it upon the sceptic to show why it should not arrive. He treated the advancement and extension of science as inevitable. As yet so few people do that. Science might be

delayed in its progress or accelerated, but how could its process stop? And how could the fluctuating extravagances of human folly resist for ever the steady drive towards the realisations of that ever growing and ever strengthening body of elucidation? There was none of the prophetic visionary about the ungainly Mr. Sempack as he sat deep and low on the sofa. He made the others seem visionaries. Simply he asked them all to be reasonable.

For a time the talk had dealt with various main aspects of this Millennium which Mr. Sempack spoke of so serenely, as a probable and perhaps inevitable achievement for our distressed and confused species. He displayed a large and at times an almost exasperating patience. It was only yesterday, so to speak, that the idea of mankind controlling its own destiny had entered human thought. Were there Utopias before the days of Plato? Mr. Sempack did not know of any. And the idea of wilful and creative change was still a strange and inassimilable idea to most people. There were plenty of people who were no more capable of such an idea than a rabbit. His large grey eye had rested for a moment on Colonel Bullace and drifted pensively to the Mathisons.

"The problem is to deal with them," Mrs. Rylands had reflected, following the indication of the large grey eye.

"They will all die," said Lord Tamar.

"And plenty more get born," said Philip, following his own thoughts to the exclusion of these present applications.

"You don't consult the cat when you alter the house," said Mr. Sempack.

"But is such concealment, exactly what one might call — democracy?" asked Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan in mock protest.

"You don't even turn the cat out of the room when you discuss your alterations," said Mr. Sempack, and dismissed democracy.

It was only nowadays that the plan before mankind was becoming sufficiently clear and complete for us to dream of any organised and deliberate effort to realise it. The early Utopias never pretended to be more than suggestions. Too often seasoned by the deprecatory laugh. But there had been immense liberations of the human imagination in the last two centuries. Our projects grew more and more courageous and comprehensive. Every intelligent man without some sort of kink

was bound to believe a political world unity not only possible but desirable. Everyone who knew anything about such matters was moving towards the realisation that the world needed one sort of money and not many currencies, and would be infinitely richer and better if it was controlled as one economic system. These were new ideas, just as once the idea of circumnavigating the world had been a new idea, but they spread, they would pervade.

"But to materialise them?" said the young man from Geneva.

"That will come. The laboratory you work in is only the first of many. The League of Nations is the mere first sketch of a preliminary experiment."

Lord Tamar betrayed a partisan solicitude for his League of Nations. He thought it was more than that.

Parliaments of Nations, said Mr. Sempack, offered no solution of the riddle of war. Every disagreement reopened the possibility of war. Every enduring peace in the world had been and would have to be a peace under one government. When people spoke of the Pax Romana and the Pax Britannica they meant one sovereignty. Every sovereignty implied an internal peace; every permanent peace a practical sovereignty. For the Pax Mundi there could be only one sovereignty. It was a little hard for people who had grown up under old traditions of nation and empire to realise that and to face its consequences; but there was always a new generation coming along, ready to take new ideas seriously. People were learning history in a new spirit and their political imaginations were being born again. The way might be long and difficult to that last Pax, but not so long and difficult as many people with their noses in their newspapers, supposed.

"If one could believe that," sighed Lady Tamar.

Mr. Sempack left his politics and economics; his sure hope of the One World State and the One World Business floating benevolently in their mental skies; and talked of the reflection upon the individual life of a scientific order of human affairs. It was remarkable, he thought, how little people heeded the things that the medical and physiological and psychological sciences were saying to them. But these things came to them only through a haze of distortion, caricatured until they lost all practical significance, disguised as the

foolish fancies of a race of oddly gifted eccentrics. There was a great gulf fixed between the scientific man and the ordinary man, the press. So that the generality had no suspicion of the releases from pain and fatigue, the accessions of strength, the control over this and that embarrassing function or entangling weakness, that science could afford even now.

Still less could it imagine the mines of power and freedom that these first hand-specimens foretold. Contemporary psychology, all unsuspected by the multitude, was preparing the ground for an education that would disentangle men from a great burthen of traditional and innate self deception; it was pointing the road to an ampler and finer social and political life. The moral atmosphere of the world, just as much as the population and hunger of the world, was a controllable thing — when men saw fit to control it. For a moment or so as Mr. Sempack talked, it seemed to Mrs. Rylands that the room was pervaded by presences, by tall, grave, friendly beings, by anticipatory ghosts of man to come, happy, wise and powerful. It was as if they were visiting the past at Casa Terragena as she had sometimes visited the sleeping bones in the caves at Rochers Rouges. Why had they come into the room? Was it because these friendly and interested visitants were the children of such thoughts as this great talk was bringing to life?

"There is no inexorable necessity for any sustained human unhappiness," said Mr. Sempack; "none at all. There is no absolute reason whatever why every child born should not be born happily into a life of activity and interest and happiness. If there is, I have never heard of it. Tell me what it is."

"Bombaccio," said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, glancing over his shoulder to make sure that the servants were out of the room, "is a Catholic. He believes there was a Fall."

"Do *we*?" asked Mr. Sempack.

Puppy Clarges made a furtive grimace over her cigarette at Geoffry, but the doctrine of the Fall went by default.

"But then," asked Mrs. Bullace, "why isn't everyone happy now?"

"Secondary reasons," Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan asserted. "There may be no invincible barrier to an earthly Paradise, but still we have

to find the way."

"It takes a long time," said Philip.

"Everything that is longer than a lifetime is a long time," said Mr. Sempack. "But for all practical purposes, you must remember, so soon as we pass that limit, nothing is very much longer than anything else."

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, after an instant's thought, agreed with that as warmly as if he had met a long lost friend, but at the first impact it reminded Mrs. Rylands rather unpleasantly of attempts to explain Einstein.

"It does not matter if it uses up six generations or six hundred," Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan endorsed.

"Except to the generations," said Philip.

"But who *wants* this world of prigs?" came the voice of Geoffry in revolt.

"I do for one," said Mr. Sempack.

"It would bore me to death."

"Lots of us are bored almost to violence by things as they are. More will be. Progress has always been a battle of the bored against the contented and the hopeless. If you like this world with its diseases and frustrations, its toil and blind cravings and unsatisfied wants, its endless quarrellings and its pointless tyrannies and cruelties, the pettiness of its present occupations in such grotesque contrast with the hard and frightful violence to which it is so plainly heading, if you like this world, I say, defend it. But I want to push it into the past as completely as I can and as fast as I can before it turns to horror. So I shall be against you. I am for progress. I believe in progress. Work for progress is the reallest thing in life to me. If some messenger came to me and said with absolute conviction to me, 'This is all. It can never be any better,' I would not go on living in it for another four and twenty hours."

Geoffry seemed to have no retort ready. His face had assumed the mulish expression of a schoolboy being preached at. This fellow, confound him! had language. And splashed it about at dinner time! Long sentences! Bookish words! Philip might as well have let in a field preacher. Field Preacher, that's what he was. That should be his name. Geoffry nodded his head as who should say, "We've heard all

that," and helped himself in a businesslike way to butter. A fellow must have butter whatever trash he has to hear. You wouldn't have him wait until all the jawing was finished before he took butter.

"Not much to quarrel with to my mind," said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, "in a world that can give us such a sunset as we had to-night. This spacious room. And all these lovely flowers."

"But there will still be sunsets and flowers, in any sort of human world," said Mr. Sempack.

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was a little belated with his reply but it opened profound philosophical issues and he liked it and was content. "Against a background," he said, "perhaps not dark enough to do them justice."

5. THE IDEA OF MEANWHILE

After the move upstairs, when all those members of the party who lived and were satisfied with the present, the Bullaces and the Mathisons and Geoffry and Lady Grieswold and Puppy and Mr. Haulbowline, had gone apart to their happiness in bridge, the talk about Mr. Sempack and his great world of peace, justice and splendid work to come, had turned chiefly on the quality of the obstacles and entanglements that still kept men back from that promised largeness of living. The persistence of his creative aim impressed Mrs. Rylands as heroic, but it was mingled with a patience that seemed to her almost inhuman.

"There is a time element in all these things," said Mr. Sempack. "In one newspaper downstairs there was a report of the conference of some political organisation, I think the Independent Labour Party, and they had adopted as their 'cry,' so to speak, and with great enthusiasm, 'Socialism in Our Time.' The newspaper made a displayed head-line of it. What did they mean by that? Humbug? Something to catch the very young? Or a real proposal to change this competitive world into a communistic system, change its spirit, its intricate, undefined and often untraceable methods in twenty or thirty years? Face round against the trend of biology in that short time. Take nature and tradition by the throat and win at the first onset. A small group of ill-informed people. Fantastic! To believe in the possibility of change at that pace is as absurd as not to believe in change at all."

A distant "Hear, Hear!" came from the bridge table.

"*Table*, partner!" the voice of Lady Grieswold reproved.

Colonel Bullace made no further sign.

"Nevertheless all these changes are going to be made and they may be made much sooner — I am sure they will be made much sooner — than most of us suppose. Change in human affairs goes with an acceleration...."

He went on with this reasonableness of his that balanced so perplexingly between cold cruelty and heroic determination. The world was not ready yet for the achievement of its broader and

greater changes. Knowledge had grown greatly, but it had to grow enormously and be enormously diffused before things could be handled on such a scale as would give a real world peace, a world system of economics, a universal disciplined and educated life. The recent progress of psychology had been very great, but it was still only beginning. Until it had gone further we could do no more than speculate and sketch the developments of the political life of mankind and of education and religious teaching that would usher in the new phase. There was a minimum of time needed for every advance in thought and knowledge. We might help and hurry on the process up to a certain limit, but there was that limit. Until that knowledge had been sought and beaten out, we were workers without tools, soldiers without weapons. Meanwhile ——

"Easy for us to sit here and be patient, but what of the miner, cramped and wet, in the dark and the foul air, faced with a lock-out in May?" said Philip.

"I can't help him," said Mr. Sempack serenely.

"Immediately," said Philip.

"Heaven knows if I can ever help him. Why should I pretend? If he strikes I may send a little money, but that is hardly help. Why pretend? I am no use to him. Just as I couldn't help if presently there came a wireless call — have you a wireless here?"

"In the kitchen," said Mrs. Rylands. "They like the music."

"To say that some shiploads of people were burning and sinking in the South Atlantic. No help is possible at this distance. Just as there is nothing that any of us can do for the hundreds of thousands of people who are at this present moment dying of cancer. It is no good thinking about such things."

The landscape of Mr. Sempack's face hardly altered. There may have been the ghost of a sigh in his voice. "It is no good getting excited by such things. It may even do harm.

"The disease of cancer will be banished from life by calm, unhurrying, persistent men and women, working, with every shiver of feeling controlled and suppressed, in hospitals and laboratories. And the motive that will conquer cancer will not be pity nor horror; it will be curiosity to know how and why."

"And the desire for service," said Lord Tamar.

“As the justification of that curiosity,” said Mr. Sempack, “but not as the motive. Pity never made a good doctor, love never made a good poet. Desire for service never made a discovery.”

“But that miner,” said Philip, and after his fashion left his sentence incomplete.

“The miner is cramped between the strata — in the world of ideas just as much as in the mine. We cannot go and lift the strata off him, suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye. He has his fight to fight with the mine-owner, who is as blind. In his fashion. Which is — physically at least, — I admit — a more comfortable fashion.”

Philip’s troubled eyes rested for a moment on his pretty wife.

“The miners are finding life intolerable, the mine-owners are greedy not only for what they have but more; the younger Labour people want to confuse the issue by a general strike and a push for what they call the Social Revolution.”

“What exactly do they mean by that?” asked Lord Tamar.

“Nothing exactly. The Communists have persuaded themselves that social discontent is a creative driving force in itself. It isn’t. Indignation never made a good revolution, and I never heard of a dinner yet, well cooked by a starving cook. All that these troubles can do is to ease or increase the squeeze on the miners and diminish or increase the totally unnecessary tribute to the coal-owners — at the price of an uncertain amount of general disorganisation and waste. My own sympathies are with the miners and I tax my coal bill twenty-five per cent, and send it to them. But I cherish no delusions about that struggle. There is no solution in all that strife and passion. It is just a dog-fight. The minds of people have to be adjusted to new ideas before there is an end to this sweating of men in the darkness. People have to realise that winning coal is a public need and service, like the high road and the post office. A service that has to be paid for and taken care of. Everybody profits by cheap accessible coal. A coal-owner’s royalties are as antiquated as a toll gate. Some day it will be clear to everyone, as it is clear to any properly informed person now, that if the state paid all the costs of exploiting coal in the country and handed the stuff out at prices like — say ten shillings a ton, the stimulation of every sort of production would be so great, the increase, that is, on taxable wealth would be so great, as to yield a

profit, a quite big profit, to the whole community. The miners would become a public force like the coastguards or the firemen....”

“You think that is possible?” asked Philip.

“I know. It’s plain. But it’s not plain to everyone. Facts and possibilities have to be realised. Imaginations have to be lit and kept lit. Certain obstructive wickednesses in all of us — —”

Mr. Sempack stopped. He never finished a sentence needlessly.

“But coal winning isn’t confined to its country of origin,” said Philip. “There is the export trade.”

“Which twists the question round completely,” said Lord Tamar.

“When you subsidise coal getting in England you subsidise industrial competition abroad,” said Philip.

“Exactly. While we still carry on the economic life of the world in these compartments and pigeon-holes we call sovereign states,” said Mr. Sempack, “we cannot handle any of these other issues. Nothing for it but makeshift and piecemeal.”

“Till the Millennium,” said Philip.

“Till the light grows brighter,” said Sempack and added meditatively: “It does grow brighter. Perhaps not from day to day, but from year to year.”

They went on to talk about the moral training that was needed if modern communities were to readjust their economic life to the greater and more unified methods that were everywhere offering themselves, and when they talked of that Mr. Sempack made the schools and colleges of to-day seem more provisional and evanescent even than our railways and factories. Beyond their translucent and fading forms, he evoked a vision of a wide, free and active life for all mankind. In the foreground, confusions, conflicts, wastes, follies, possible wars and destructions; on the slopes beyond, the promise and a little gathering band of the illuminated, who questioned, who analysed, who would presently plan and set new methods and teaching going. Nothing in the whole world was so important as the mental operations, the realisations and disseminations of these illuminated people, these creative originatory people who could not be hurried, but who might so easily be delayed, without whom, except for accident, nothing could be achieved. Where was the plain and solvent discussion needed to liberate minds from a thousand

current obsessions and limitations? Where were the schools of the new time? They had not come yet. Where were the mighty armies of investigators? Nothing as yet but guerilla bands that wandered in the wilderness and happened upon this or that.

The self-discovery, the mutual discovery, of those who constituted this illuminated minority, became the main theme. They dawned. As yet they did but dawn upon themselves. They fought against nature within themselves and without. They fought against darkness without and within. Large phrases stuck out in Mrs. Rylands' memories of this talk, like big crystals in a rock.

"The immense inattentions of mankind ..."

"Subconscious evasions and avoidances ..."

"Our alacrity for distractions ..."

"The disposition of the human mind to apprehend, to assent and then to disregard, to understand and yet flag and fail, before the bare thought of a translation into action ..."

"The terror of isolation because of our insecure gregariousness. We try to catch every epidemic of error for fear of singularity ..."

"Minds as wild as rabbits and as ready to go underground ..."

"When you want them to hunt in a pack," Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan had assisted at this point....

"The disposition of everything human to inflame and make a sore about a minor issue, that will presently kill all the wider interests concerned..."

The great talk rambled on and all its later phases were haunted by the idea that embodies itself in that word "Meanwhile." In the measure in which one saw life plainly the world ceased to be a home and became the mere site of a home. On which we camped. Unable as yet to live fully and completely.

Since nothing was in order, nothing was completely right. We lived provisionally. There was no just measure of economic worth; we had to live unjustly. Even if we did not rob, "findings keepings" was our motto. Did we consider ourselves overpaid, to whom could we repay? Were we to relinquish all it would vanish like a drop in the thirsty ocean of the underpaid and unproductive. We were justified in taking life as we found it; in return if we had ease and freedom we ought to do all that we could to increase knowledge and

bring the great days of a common world-order nearer, a universal justice, the real civilisation, the consummating life, the days that would justify the Martyrdom of Man. In many matters we still did not know right from wrong. We did not so much live as discuss and err. The whole region of sexual relations, for example, was still a dark forest, unmapped; we blundered through it by instinct. We followed such tracks as we found and we could not tell if they had been made by men or brutes. We could not tell if they led to the open or roundabout to a lair. We followed them, or we distrusted them and struggled out of them through the thorns.

"But a glimpse now and then of a star!" said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan — his best thing, he reflected, that evening.

"Or a firefly," said Lady Catherine.

The psychologist, the physiologist, would clear that jungle in time. In time.

All sorts of beautiful and splendid things might happen in this world. (The large gaze of Mr. Sempack rested for a moment on Lady Catherine.) But they happened accidentally; you could not make a complete life of them. You could not take a life or a group of lives and give it a perfect existence, secluded and apart, in a blundering world. Man was a social creature and you could not be gods in Italy while there remained a single suffering cripple in China or Peru; you could not be a gentleman entirely, while a single underpaid miner cursed the coal he won for you. The nearest one could get to perfection in life now was to work for the greatness to come. And not trouble too much about one's incidental blunders, one's incidental falls from grace.

"Work," he said and reflected. "We have to work for the work and take happiness for the wild flower it is. Some day men will cultivate their happinesses in gardens, a great variety of beautiful happinesses, happinesses grown under glass, happinesses all the year round. Such things are not for us. They will come. Meanwhile — —"

"Meanwhile," echoed Lord Tamar.

Came that pause just before Mrs. Rylands asserted herself.

And then it was Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan had made his rather sad little summing-up; his sense of the gist of it all, given with his very formal and disciplined laugh, bright without being vulgar. "I

perceive I have been meanwhiling all my life. Meanwhiling ... Have I been living?" (Shrug of the shoulders and gesture of the hands.) "No, I have been meanwhiling away my time."

And for once his own bright observation pierced back and searched and pricked himself. But it wasn't real enough to end upon. Unsatisfactory.

"Eheu! fugaces!" he sighed, an indisputably elegant afterthought. Though something Greek would have been better. Or something a little less — familiar. But then people were so apt to miss the point if it was Greek or unhackneyed. And besides he had not on the spur of the moment been able to think of anything Greek and unhackneyed. Compromise always. Compromise. Meanwhile.

He became preoccupied and noted nothing of Mrs. Rylands' remarkable good-night speech to Mr. Sempack.

For quite a long time he sat on his bed in his charming room in the tower before he began to undress, brooding in a state of quite unusual dissatisfaction upon himself, regardless of the beautiful views south, north, east and west of him, the coast and the mountains and the silhouetted trees. He liked to think of his existence as a very perfect and polished and finished thing indeed and he had been wounded by his own witticism about "meanwhiling away his life." And this was entangled with another unpleasant and novel idea, that if one's refinement was effective or even perceptible it couldn't really be refinement. Some of these Europeans achieved a sort of accidentalness in their refinement. They left you in doubt about it. Should one go so far as to leave people in doubt about it? Was there such a thing as being *aggressively* refined?

Presently Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan stood up and regarded himself in his mirror, varying the point of view until at last he was ogling himself gravely over his shoulder. He stretched out his hands, his very remarkable white hands. Then he pirouetted right round until he came into his thoughtful attitude with his arms folded, as if consulting his diamond ring.

He was comparing himself with Mr. Sempack. He was struggling with the perplexing possibilities that there might be a profounder subtlety than he had hitherto suspected in the barest statement of fact and opinion, and a sort of style in a physical appearance that looked

as though it had been shot out on a dump from a cart.

His discontent deepened. “Little humbug!” he said to the elegance in the mirror. Its expression remained unfriendly.

He touched brutality. “Little *ass*!” he said.

He turned from the mirror, sharply, and began to undress, methodically, after his manner.

6. REFLECTIONS IN A BIG BED

Next morning Mrs. Rylands could better grasp the great talk and its implications. She lay in bed and contemplated it as she sipped her morning tea and it looked just as it had looked before she gave way to her fatigue, a very fine talk indeed and immensely interesting — to Philip and everyone. She forgot her last phase and the awful things she had thought about Mr. Sempack and remembered only her happy plagiarism from Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, a "cathedral of ideas." It was indeed like a great cathedral in her memory. It had sent her to bed exhausted it is true; but is anything worth having unless it exhausts you? It had stirred up Philip. That diabolical lapse had faded from her mind like a dream that comes between sleeping and waking.

It was impossible she found to recall how the talk had developed, but now that hardly mattered. The real value of a talk is not how it goes but what it leaves in your memory, which is one reason perhaps why dialogues in books are always so boring to read. Even Plato was boring. Jowett's Plato had been one of the acutest disappointments in her life. She remembered how she had got the "Symposium" volume out of her father's library and struggled with it in the apple tree. She had expected something like a bag of unimagined jewels. In any talk much of what was said was like the wire stage of a clay model and better forgotten as soon as it was covered over. But what was left from last night was a fabric plain and large in its incompleted outline, in which she felt her mind could wander about very agreeably and very profitably whenever she was so disposed. And in which Philip's mind might be wandering even now.

This morning however she had little energy for such exploration. She approved of the great talk and blessed it and felt that it had added very much to her life. But she surveyed it only from the outside. The chief thing in her consciousness was that she was very comfortable and that she did not intend to get up. She would lie and think. But so far it seemed likely to be pure thought she would produce, without any contamination with particular things. She was very comfortable, propped up by pillows in her extensive bed.

She was, also, had she been able to see herself, very pretty. She was wearing a silk bed-jacket that just repeated a little more intensely the sapphire colour beneath her lace bedspread. It was trimmed with white fur. Her ruffled hair made her look like a very jolly but rather fragile boy. A great canopy supported by bed-posts of carved wood did its utmost to enhance the importance of the mistress of Casa Terragena. The dressing table with its furnishings of silver and shining enamel and cut and coloured glass, enforced the idea that whatever size the lady chose to be, it was the duty of her bedroom to treat her as an outsize in gracious ladies. The curtains of the window to the south-east still shut out the sunlight, but the western window was wide open and showed a stone-pine in the nearer distance, a rocky promontory, and then far away the sunlit French coast and Mentone and Cap Martin.

The day was fine but not convincingly fine. Over the sea was a long line of woolly yet possibly wicked little clouds putting their heads together. But so often in this easy climate such conspiracies came to nothing.

She wasn't going down to breakfast; she did not intend indeed to go down until lunch. She was taking the fullest advantage of her state to be thoroughly lazy and self-indulgent and lie and play with her mind. Or doze as the mood might take her. Philip and Catherine and Geoffry and dear Miss Fenimore and everybody, let alone Bombaccio the major-domo and his morning minion, would see that everybody was given coffee and tea and hot rolls and eggs and bacon and fruit and Dundee marmalade, according to their needs. They would all see to each other and Bombaccio would see to all of them. Just think. She would not force her thinking or think anything out, but she would let her thoughts run.

This onset of maternity about which feminists and serious spinsters made such a fuss, was proving to be not at all the dreadful experience she had prepared herself to face. Soft folds of indolent well-being seemed to be wrapping about her, fold upon fold.

After all, bearing heirs to the Rylands' millions was a very easy and pleasant sort of work to do in the world. Almost too easy and pleasant when one considered the pay. Smooth. Gentle. Living to the tune of a quiet murmur. She remembered something her Sussex aunt,

Aunt Janet Nicholas, Aunt Janet the prolific, had once said. “It makes you feel less and less like being Brighton and more and more like being the Downs.” The Downs, the drowsy old Downs in summer sunshine. The tiny harebells in the turf. The velvet sound of bees. A peacefulness of body and soul. And yet one could think as clearly and pleasantly as ever. Or at least one seemed to think.

She had an idea, a by no means imperative idea, that presently when she had done with realising how comfortable she was, her thoughts might after all take a stroll about the aisles and cloisters of the overnight discussion, but instead she found herself thinking alternatively of two more established prepossessions. One was Philip and his interest in the talk and the other, which somehow ought to be quite detached from him and yet which seemed this morning to be following the thought of him like a shadow, was — *Stupids*.

Philip’s interest in this discussion had surprised her, and yet it was only the culminating fact to something that had been very present to her mind for some little time. She was convinced — and she had always been convinced — that Philip’s mind was a very vigorous and able one, a mind of essential nobility and limitless possibilities, but so soon as she had got over the emotion and amazement of the wonderful marriage that had lifted her out of the parental Hampshire rectory to be the mistress of three lovely homes, and begun really to look at Philip and consider him not as a love god but as a human being, she had perceived a certain restrictedness in his intellectual equipment. Apparently he had read scarcely anything of the slightest importance in the world; he had gone through the educational furnaces of Eton and had a year at Oxford before the war, unscathed by sound learning of any sort. The smell of intellectual fire had not passed upon him. Not a hair of his head had been singed by it. He was amazingly inexpressive and inarticulate. If he knew the English language, for some reason he cut most of it dead. And he opened a book about as often as he took medicine, which was never.

Yet he seemed to know a lot of things and every now and then she found she had to admit him not only cleverer but more knowledgeable than she was. If he had read little, he had picked up a lot. He had been a good soldier under Allenby, they said, especially in the East. In spite of his youth men had been glad to follow him.

And in spite of his silences all sorts of intelligent people respected him. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan and Mr. Sempack betrayed no contempt nor pity for such rare remarks as he made. They were infrequent but sound. He conducted, or at any rate helped to conduct, business operations that were still extremely vague to her, operations that she had gathered had to do mainly with steel. When he went into Parliament, and he was nursing Sealholme to that end, he would, she was sure, be quite a good member of Parliament. And yet — she knew it and still her mind struggled against the admission — there was something that was lacking. A vigour, an expansion. His mind refused to be militant, was at best reserved and a commentary. Dear and adorable Philip! Was it treason to think as much? Was it treason to want him perfect?

Her own family was an old Whig family with traditions of intellectual aggressiveness. She had cousins who were university professors, and her home, so close and convenient for Oxford, had been actively bookish and alive to poetry and painting. She had listened to good talk before she was fifteen. She had not always understood, but she had listened soundly. She had grown up into the idea that there was this something eminently desirable that you got from the literature of the world, that was conveyed insidiously by great music, and by all sorts of cared-for and venerated lovely things. It went with a frequent fine use of the mind, a conscious use, and it took all science by the way. It was an inward and spiritual grace, this something, that was needed to make the large, handsome and magnificently prosperous things of life worth while. She had not so much thought out these ideas to their definiteness, as apprehended their existence established in her mind. And when all the storm of meeting this glorious happy Philip and attracting him and being loved by him and marrying him and becoming the most fortunate of young women subsided, there were these values, still entrenched, reflecting upon all that she had achieved.

There in the middle of her world ruled this sun-god, this dear friend and lover, active, quietly amused, bringing her with such an adorable pride and such adorable humility to the homes of his fathers, giving, exhibiting; and yet as one settled into this life, as day followed day, and one began to realise what the routines and usages,

the interests and entertainments amounted to, there arose this whisper of discontent, this rebellious idea that still something was lacking.

The life was so large and free and splendid in comparison with anything that she might reasonably have hoped for, that there seemed a whiff of ingratitude even in thinking that it was also rather superficial.

It wasn't, she told herself, that this new life that made her a great lady wasn't good enough for her. She was a lucky woman. Her estimate of herself was balanced and unexacting. She had never been able to make up her mind whether she was rather more than usually clever or rather more than usually stupid; she was inclined to think both. It wasn't a question of how this new life became her, but how it became Philip. The point was that it was somehow not good enough for Philip. And, if this wasn't a paradox, as if Philip wasn't as yet quite good enough for himself.

And still more evasive and subtle was her recent apprehension of the fact that Philip himself knew that somehow he wasn't quite good enough for himself. This new perception had reached back, as it were, and supplied an explanation of why Philip had come out of a world of alert and brilliant women, to her of all people. Because about her that had been a sort of schoolgirl prestige of knowledge and cleverness, and perhaps for him that had seemed to promise just whatever it was that would supply that haunting yet impalpable insufficiency. Instead of which, she reflected, here in this almost regal apartment, she had given him a dewy passion of love, worship, physical, but physical as tears and moonlight, and now this promise of a child.

Had he forgotten, in his new phase of grateful protectiveness, what need it was had first brought them together?

Quite recently, and after being altogether blind to it, she had discovered these gropings out towards something more than the current interests of his happy and healthy days. He was questioning things. But he was questioning them as though he had forgotten she existed. He was, for example, quite markedly exercised by this question of a possible coal strike in England. With amazement she had become aware how keenly he was interested. For all she knew the Rylands' millions were deeply involved in coal, but it wasn't, she

was assured, on any personal account that he was interested.

Beyond the question of the miners, there was something more. He was concerned about England. She had thought at first that, like nearly all his class, he took the Empire and the social system, and so forth, for granted, and the secret undertow of her mind, her memories of talk at the parental table, had made it seem a little wanting in him to treat such questionable things as though they were fundamental and inalterable. But now she realised he was beginning to penetrate these assumptions. There had been an illuminating little encounter, about a week ago, with Colonel Bullace — on the night of Colonel Bullace's arrival.

Philip never discussed; he was too untrained to discuss. But he would suddenly ask quite far-reaching questions and then take your answer off to gnaw it over at leisure. Or he would drop remarks, like ultimatums, days or weeks after you had answered his questions. And a couple of these rare questions of his were fired that night at Colonel Bullace.

"What's all this about British Fascists?" asked Philip, out of the void.

"Eh!" said Colonel Bullace, and accumulated force. "Very necessary organisation."

Philip had remained patiently interrogative.

"Pat's pretty deep in it," dear Mrs. Bullace had explained in her simple disarming way.

The picture of the scene came back to Mrs. Rylands. It was a foursome that evening; the Bullaces had been the first of this present party to arrive. She recalled Colonel Bullace's face. He was like a wiry-haired terrier. No, he was more like a Belgian griffon — with that big eyeglass, he was more like a one-eyed Belgian griffon. What a queer thing it must be to be a nice little, rather silly little woman like Mrs. Bullace and be married to a man like that, a sort of canine man. She supposed — for example — one would have to kiss that muzzle. Embrace the man! Mrs. Rylands stirred uneasily under her lace bedspread at the thought. He had talked about the dangers of Communism in England, of the increasing insubordination of labour, of the gold of Moscow, and the need there was to "check these Bolsheviks." All in sentences that were like barks. She did not

remember very clearly what he said; it sounded like nonsense out of the *Daily Mail*. It probably was. What she remembered was Philip's grave face and how, abruptly, it came to her again as though she had never seen or felt it before, how handsome he was, how fine he was and how almost intolerably she loved him.

"You mean to say, you would like to provoke a general strike now? And smash the Trade Unions?"

"Put 'em in their place."

"But if you resort to 'firmness' now — if Joynson-Hicks and his fellow Fascists in the Cabinet, and your *Daily Mail* and *Morning Post* party, do succeed in bringing off a fight and humiliating and beating the workers and splitting England into two camps — —"

Philip found his sentence too involved and dropped it. "How many men will you leave beaten?" he asked. "How many Trade Unionists are there?"

Colonel Bullace didn't seem to know.

"Some millions of them? Englishmen?"

"Dupes of Moscow!" said Colonel Bullace. "Dupes of Moscow."

"A day will come," added Colonel Bullace defiantly, "when they will be grateful to us for the lesson — grateful."

Philip had considered that for a moment and then he had sighed deeply and said, "Oh! Let's go to bed," and it seemed to her that never before had she heard those four words used so definitely for calling a man a fool.

And afterwards he had come into her room, still darkly thoughtful. He had kissed her good-night almost absent-mindedly and then stood quite still for a minute perhaps at the open window looking out at the starlight. "I don't understand all this stuff," he said at last, to himself almost as much as to her. "I don't understand what is going on and has been going on for some time. This British Fascist stuff and so on.... I wonder if anyone does? These work-people — and their hours and lives, and what they will stand and what they won't. It's all — beyond anything I know about."

He stood silent for a time.

"Wages went down. Now — unemployment is growing and growing.

"Nobody seems to know." It was like a sigh.

"Suppose they smash things up."

Then in his catlike way he was gone, without a sound except the soft click of the door.

Perplexed Philip!

Perplexing Philip!

She looked now at the window against which he had stood and wondered how she might help him. He was the most difficult and comprehensive problem she had ever faced. This social struggle that it seemed hung over England had risen disregarded while she had been giving herself wholly to love. She did not know any of the details of the coal subsidies and coal compromises, that had produced this present situation about which everybody was growing anxious. It had all come on suddenly, so far as her knowledge went, in a year or so. And now here she was, useless to her man. It was no good pestering him with ill-informed questions. She would have to read, she would have to find out before she approached him.

It was queerly characteristic of Philip that he had pounced upon Mr. Sempack at the Fortescues' at Roquebrune and brought him over, without a word of explanation. She guessed Mr. Sempack had talked about coal and labour at Roquebrune. Philip had something instinctive and inexplicable in his actions; he seemed to do things without any formulated reason; he had felt the need of talk as a dog will sometimes feel the need of grass and fall upon it and devour it. But she reproached herself that he should have had to discover this need for himself.

Talk. That she reflected had been one of the great things that had been missing in the opening months of married life. This morning it was clearly apparent to her that so spacious and free a life as hers and Philip's here in Casa Terragena had no right to exist without a steady flow of lucid and thorough talking.

That was a final precision of something that had been evolving itself in her mind since first she had been taken up into the beauty and comfort of this Italian palace. From the outset there had been a faint murmuring in her conscience, a murmuring she spoke of at times as her "Socialism." She squared this murmuring with her continued intense enjoyment of her new life by explaining to herself that people were given these magnificent homes and famous and

entrancing gardens and scores of servants and gardeners and airy lovely rooms with luminous views of delicately sunlit coastlines, so that they might lead beautiful exemplary lives that would enrich the whole world. For the dresses and furnishings, the graces and harmonies of life at Casa Terragena were finally reflected in beauty and better living all down the social scale. No Socialist State, she was sure, with everything equal and "divided up" could create and maintain such a garden as hers, such a tradition of gardening. That was why she was not a political socialist. Because she had to be a custodian of beauty and the finer life. That had been her apology for her happiness, and it was the underlying motive in her discontent and in her sense of something wanting, that their life was not sustaining her apology. They had been given the best of everything and they were not even producing the best of themselves. They were living without quality.

That was it, they had been living without quality.

Tennis, she reflected, by day and bridge by night.

He was not living like an aristocrat, he was living like a suburban clerk in the seventh heaven of suburbanism.

He was doing so and yet he didn't want to do so. He was in some way hypnotised against his secret craving to do the finest and best with himself. And he was trying to find a way of release to be the man, the leader, the masterful figure in human affairs she surely believed he might be.

How to help him as he deserved to be helped, when one was clever and understanding perhaps but not very capable, not very brilliant, and when one was so easily fatigued. How to help him now particularly when one was invaded and half submerged by the needs of another life?

That was a strand of thought familiar now to Mrs. Rylands and it twisted its way slowly through her clear unhurrying mind for the tenth time perhaps or the twentieth time, with little variations due to the overnight talk and with an extension now from Philip to a score of great houses she had visited in England and wonderful dances and assemblies where she had seen so many other men and women after his type, so expensive, so free and so materially happy. With something inexpressive and futile shadowing their large

magnificence. And interweaving with this and embracing it now with a suggestion almost of explanation, was a still more intimate strand in her philosophy, her long established conviction that there was a great excess of Stupids in the world.

Stupids were the enemy. This grey film that rested upon things, this formalism, this shallowness, this refusal to take life in a grand and adventurous way, were all the work of Stupids. Stupids were her enemies as dogs are the enemies of cats.

Her conception of life as a war for self-preservation against Stupids dated from the days when she had been a small, fragile, but intractable child, much afflicted by governesses in her father's rambling Warwickshire rectory. Stupids were lumps. Stupids were obstacles. Stupids were flatteners and diluters and spoilers of exciting and delightful things. They told you not to and said it was dinner time. They wanted you to put on galoshes. They said you mustn't be too eager to excel and that everyone would laugh at you. "Don't *over*-do it," they said. In the place of your lovely things which they marred, they had disgusting gustoes of their own. They made ineffable Channel-crossing faces when one said sensible things about religion and they abased themselves in an inelegant collapse of loyalty before quite obviously commonplace people, and quite obviously absurd institutions. And they wanted you to! And made fusses and scenes when you didn't! Oh! *Stupids!* She met them in the country-side, she met them again at Somerville College where she had imagined she would be released into a company of free and vigorous virgins.

And now in this new life of great wealth and distinction, in which it ought to be so easy for men and women to become at least as noble as their furniture and at least as glorious as their gardens, there were moments when it seemed to her that Stupid was King.

She came back to her idea of Philip as awakening, as endeavouring to awake, from something that hypnotised him, that had caught him and hypnotised him quite early in life. He had been caught by Stupids and made to respect their opinions and their standards; he had been trained to a great and biased toleration of Stupids, so that they pervaded his life and wasted his time and interrupted his development. The Stupids at school had persuaded

him that work was nothing and games were everything. The Stupids of his set had insisted that most of the English language was a mistake. The Stupids of this world set their heavy faces against all thought. She saw Philip as struggling in a sort of Stupid quicksand, needing help and not knowing where to find it, and she herself by no means secure, frantic to help and unable.

What if she were to try to do more than she did in making an atmosphere for Philip? The irruption and effect of Mr. Sempack had set her enquiring whether there were not perhaps quite a lot of other stimulating people to be found, and whether perhaps it wasn't a wife's place to collect them. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan of course was clever, clever and dexterous, but he did not stimulate, and there were moments when Philip stared at some of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan's good things as though he couldn't imagine why on earth they had been said. Tamars were intelligent but self-contained, they liked to wander off about the garden, just the two of them, she evidently listening to an otherwise rather silent young man, and Lady Catherine again was intelligent but quite uncultivated, a mental wild rose, a rambler, a sprawling sweet-briar. Philip seemed to avoid Tamar, which was natural perhaps since Tamar showed an equal shyness of Philip, but also he and Lady Catherine avoided each other, which was odd seeing how charming they both were. But all the others of the party —— ?

The little face on the pillow meditated the inevitable verdict reluctantly. The loyalty of the hostess battled against an invincible truthfulness.

Stupids!...

She had got together a houseful of Stupids....

Pervasive and contagious Stupids. The struggle overnight to get the great talk going had been a serious one, exemplary, illuminating. Nowadays people like the Bullaces, the Mathisons, and Puppy Clarges, seemed to assume they had the conversational right of way. They had no respect for consecutiveness. They hated to listen. They felt effaced unless they had something to vociferate, and it hardly mattered to them what they vociferated.

How stupid and needless Colonel Bullace's intervention had been! And how characteristic of all his tribe of Stupids!

He had pricked up his ears at the word Utopia and coughed and turned a rather deeper pink; and after the third repetition and *apropos* of nothing in particular, he had addressed Mr. Sempack in an abrupt, caustic and aggressive manner. He cut across an unfinished sentence to do so.

"I suppose, Sir," he had said, "*you* find your Utopia in Moscow?"

Mr. Sempack had regarded him as a landscape might regard a puppy. "What makes you suppose that?" he asked.

"Well! isn't it so, Sir? Isn't it so?"

Mr. Sempack had turned away his face again. "No," he said over his shoulder and resumed his interrupted sentence.

Then Bombaccio, wisest and most wonderful of servants, had nudged Colonel Bullace's elbow with the peas and the new potatoes and diverted his attention and effaced him. But surely it was wrong to have people in one's house at all if they required that amount of suppression. Yet how often in the last few months had she heard talk effaced by Stupids like Colonel Bullace. Full of ready-made opinions they were, full of suspicions they would not even assuage by listening to what they wanted to condemn.

Dear Miss Fenimore again was a demi-Stupid, a Stupid in effect, an acquiescent Stupid, willing perhaps but diluent to everything that had point and quality, and Lady Grieswold had been knowingly and wilfully invited as a Stupid, a bridge Stupid to gratify and complete the Bullaces. Her bridge was awful it seemed, but then Mrs. Bullace's bridge was awful.

The Mathisons were a less clamorous sort of Stupid than Colonel Bullace, but more insidious and perhaps more deadly. They did not contradict and deny fine things; silently they denied. These Mathisons had been brought along by Philip and Geoffry and they were to exercise him at tennis. They did, every day. For two of his best hours in the morning and sometimes after tea Philip strove to play a better game than the Mathisons, with either Geoffry or Puppy as his partner. It tried him. It exasperated him. He detested and despised Mathison, she perceived, as much as she did, but he would not let him go and he would always play against him. He could not endure, and that was where the Stupids had him fast, that a man so inferior as Mathison, so cheap-minded, so flat-mannered, should

have the better of him at anything.

They all conspired to put it upon Phil that his form at tennis mattered. She would go down to the court helplessly distressed to see her god, hot and over-polite and in a state of furious self-control, while Puppy and the others — who was it? — Miss Fenimore and some one? Mr. Haulbowline! that shadow, sat in wicker chairs and either applauded or regretted — working him up.

She smiled and affected interest and all the time her soul was crying out: "Philip, my darling! It's the cream of your strength and the heart of your day you're giving to the conquest of Mr. Mathison. And it doesn't matter in the least. It doesn't matter in the very least, whether you beat him or whether you don't."

Geoffry too it seemed played a better game than Philip. But that was an accepted superiority.

Geoffry was a deeper, more complex kind of Stupid altogether than these others. And yet so like Philip; as like Philip as a mask is like a face. Geoffry was the bad brother of the family; he had been sent down from Eton; he did nothing; he looked at his sister-in-law askance. Philip was too kind to him. He drifted in and out of Casa Terragena at his own invitation. A moral Stupid, she knew he was, with challenge and disbelief in his eyes, and yet with a queer hold upon Philip. And an occult understanding with Puppy. When Geoffry was about, Philip would rather die than say a serious thing.

And then as the accent upon all this Stupid side of the house-party was Puppy Clarges, strident and hard, a conflict of scent and cigarette smoke, with the wit of a music hall and an affectedly flat loud voice. She was tall as Catherine, but she had no grace, no fluency of line. Her body ran straight and hard and then suddenly turned its corners as fast as possible.

No, they made an atmosphere, an atmosphere in which it was impossible for Philip to get free from his limitations. It was his wife's task — if it was anyone's task — to dispel that atmosphere. Drive it out by getting in something better — of which Mr. Sempack was to be regarded as a type.

It wasn't going to be easy to change this loose Terragena atmosphere. It was not to be thought of that a wife should set brother against brother...

Her mind was too indolent this morning to face baffling problems. For a time it lost itself and then she found herself thinking again with a certain unavoidable antagonism of Puppy Clarges. Why was a girl of that sort tolerated? She was rude, she was troublesome, she was occasionally indecent and she professed to be unchaste. Yet when Mrs. Rylands had mentioned the possibility of Puppy moving on somewhere, if other visitors were to be invited, Philip had said: "Oh, don't turn out old Puppy. She's all right. She's amusing. She's very good fun. She's so good for Lady Tamar."

The shadow of perplexed speculation rested upon the pretty face against the pillows. It was not so much that Mrs. Rylands disliked Puppy as that she failed so completely and distressingly even to begin to understand the reaction of her world to this angular and aggressive young woman.

Puppy boasted by implication and almost by plain statement of her lovers.

Who could love that body of pot-hooks and hangers? Love was an affair of beauty; first and last it had to be beautiful. How could anyone set about making love to Puppy? When men made love — Mrs. Rylands generalised boldly from the one man she knew — when men made love, they were adorably diffident, they trembled, they were inconceivably, wonderfully tender and worshipful. Love, when one dared to think of love, came into one's mind as a sacrament, a miracle, a mutual dissolution, as whispers in the shadows, as infinite loveliness and a glory. Love was pity, was tears, was a great harmony of all that was gentle, gracious, proud and aspiring in existence, towering up to an ecstasy of sense and spirit. But Puppy? The very thought of Puppy and a lover was obscene.

And she had lovers.

How different must be their quality from Philip's!

The idea came from nowhere into Mrs. Rylands' mind that life had two faces and that one was hidden from her. Life and perhaps everything in life had two faces. This queer idea had come into her mind like an uninvited guest. She had always thought before of Stupids as defective and troublesome people against whom one had to maintain one's life, but against whom there was no question whatever of being able to maintain one's life. But suppose there was

something behind the Stupid in life, nearly as great, if not quite as great as greatness, nearly as great, if not quite so great as nobility and beauty?

Suppose one lay in bed too long, and held emptiness of life, idleness, shallowness, noise and shamelessness, too cheaply? Suppose while one lay in bed, they stole a march upon one?

The mistress of Casa Terragena lay very still for some moments and then her hand began to feel for the bell-push that was swathed in the old-fashioned silk bell-pull behind her. She had decided to get up.

7. IN THE CAATINGA — I

There was a waterless part of the gardens at Terragena that was called the Caatinga. Nobody knew why it had that name; there was no such word in Italian and whatever justifications old Rylands had for its use were long since forgotten. Possibly it was Spanish-American or a fragment from some Red Indian tongue. The Caatinga was a region of high brown rocky walls and ribs and buttresses and recesses and hard extensive flats of sunburnt stone, through which narrow winding paths and steps had been hewn from one display to another; one came into its reverberating midday heat through two cavernous arches of rock with a slope of streaming mesembryanthemum, fleshy or shrivelled, between them, and a multitude of agaves in thorny groups, of gigantic prickly pears in intricate contortions, of cactuses and echinocactus, thick jungles of spiky and leathery exotics, gave a strongly African quality to its shelves and plateau and ridges and theatre-like bays. Only the wide variety of the plants and an occasional label betrayed the artificiality of this crouching, malignantly defensive vegetation. “African,” said some visitors, but others, less travelled or more imaginative, said: “This might be in some other planet, in Mars or in the moon.” Or they said it looked like life among the rocks under the sea.

Some obscure sympathy with a scene that was at once as real as Charing Cross and as strange as a Utopia may have drawn Mr. Sempack to this region, away from the more familiar beauties and prettinesses of Casa Terragena. At any rate, he made it his resort; he spread out his loose person upon such rare stony seats as were to be found there and either basked meditatively or read or wrote in a little notebook, his soft black felt hat thrust back so that its brim was a halo.

And thither also, drawn by still obscurer forces, came Lady Catherine, slightly dressed in crêpe georgette and carrying an immense green-lined sun umbrella that had once belonged to the ancestral Rylands. She stood over Mr. Sempack like Venus in a semi-translucent mist. She spoke with a mingling of hostility and latent proprietorship in her manner. “You will either blister or boil if

you sit up here to-day," she said.

"I like it," said Mr. Sempack without disputing her statement, or showing any disposition to rearrange himself.

She remained standing over him. She knew that her level-browed face, looked-up-to and a little fore-shortened, was at its bravest and most splendid. "We seem able to talk of nothing down here but the things you said the other night."

Mr. Sempack considered this remark without emotion. "The Mathisons?"

"They never talk. They gibber sport and chewed *Daily Mail*. But the others — —"

"Mrs. Bullace?"

"She's a little hostile to you. You don't mind?"

"I like her. But still — —"

"She thinks you've set our minds working and she doesn't like minds working. I suppose it's because the Colonel's makes such unpleasant noises when it works. She said —— How did she put it? That you had taken all the *chez-nouziness* out of Casa Terragena."

"You made me talk."

"I loved it."

"I didn't want to talk and disturb people."

"I wanted you to."

"I do go on, you know, when I'm started."

"You do. And you did it so well that almost you persuaded me to be a Utopian. But I've been thinking it over." The lady spoke lightly and paused, and only a sudden rotation of the large umbrella betrayed the deceptiveness of her apparent calm. "It's nonsense you know. It's all nonsense. I don't believe a word of it, this spreading web of science of yours, that will grow and grow until all our little affairs are caught by it and put in place like flies." She indicated a vast imaginary spider's web with the extended fingers of her large fine hand. She threw out after the rest, "Geometrical," a premeditated word that had somehow got itself left out of her premeditated speech. "You won't alter human life like that."

Mr. Sempack lifted one discursive eyebrow an inch or so and regarded her with a mixture of derision and admiration. "It won't affect *you* much," he said, "but life *will* alter as I have said."

"*No*," said the lady firmly.

Mr. Sempack shrugged his face at the prickly pears.

Lady Catherine considered the locality and perched herself on a lump of rock so high that her legs extended straight in front of her. His note-making must stop for awhile. "It doesn't matter in the least what is going to happen on the other side of time," she said. "You make it seem to, but it doesn't."

"Things are happening now," said Mr. Sempack.

Lady Catherine decided to ignore that. She had prepared certain observations while she had been dressing that morning and she meant to make them. She was not going to be deflected by unexpected replies. "As I thought it over the fallacy of all you said became plain to me. The fallacy of it. It became ridiculous. I saw that life is going to be what it has *always* been, competition, struggle, strong people seizing opportunities, honest people keeping faith, some people being loyal and brave and fine — and all that, and others mean and wicked. There will always be flags and kings and empires for people to be loyal to. Religion will always come back; we need it in our troubles. Life is always going to be an adventure. Always. For the brave. Nothing will change very much — in these permanent things. There will be only changes of fashion. What you said about people all becoming one was nonsense — becoming unified and forgetting themselves and even their own honour. I just woke up and saw it was nonsense."

"You just lost your grip on what I had been saying," said Mr. Sempack.

"It was an awakening."

"It was a relapse."

Lady Catherine reverted to her mental notes. "I shook it off. I looked at myself and I looked at the sunshine and I saw you had just been talking my world away. And leaving nothing in the place of it. I went downstairs and there on the terrace were those six Roman busts that have been dug up there, faces exactly like the faces of people one sees to-day, the silly one with the soft beard most of all, and I went out past that old tombstone, you know, the one with an inscription to the delightful Lucina, that Mrs. Rylands has just had put up again, and I thought of how there had been just such a party as

we are, in the Roman villa that came before the Rylands. Perhaps Lucina was like Cynthia. I think she was. Very likely there was a Greek Sophist to anticipate you. All hairy and dogmatic but rather attractive. Talking wickedly about the Empire because he thought it really didn't matter. And hundreds and hundreds of years ahead, somebody will still be living in this delightful spot and people will be making love and eating and playing and hearing the latest news and talking about how different everything will be in the days to come. *Sur la Pierre Blanche*. There will still be a good Bombaccio keeping the servants in order and little maids slipping out to make love to the garden-boys under the trees when the fireflies dance. And there you are!"

"There am I *not*," said Mr. Sempack. "But there most evidently you are."

He waved his dispersed limbs about for some seconds, it reminded her of the octopus in the Monaco Aquarium, collected them and came to a sitting position, facing her.

"Talking of sane things to you is like talking to a swan," he said. "Or a bird of paradise."

She smiled her most queenly at him and waited for more.

"You seem to understand language," he said. "But unless it refers to *you*, in *your* world of acceptance and illusion, it means nothing to you at all."

"You mean that my healthy mind, being a thoroughly healthy mind, rejects nonsense."

"I admit its health. I regret its normality. But what it rejects is the unpalatable and the irrelevant. The truth is as irrelevant to you as a chemical balance to a butterfly."

"And to you?"

"I am disposed to make myself relevant to the truth. It is my peculiarity."

Lady Catherine had a giddy feeling that the talk was terribly high and intellectual. But she held on pluckily. "I don't admit that *your* truth is the truth. I stick to my own convictions. I believe in the things that are, the *human* things." She gathered herself for a great effort of expression. She let the umbrella decline until it lay upturned at her side, throwing up a green tone into her shadows. "I believe that

the things that don't matter, *aren't*," she announced triumphantly.

"Your world is flat?" he verified.

"It has its hills and valleys," she corrected.

"But as for its being a globe?"

She took the point magnificently. "Mere words," she said. "Just a complicated way of saying that you can keep on going west and get home without a return ticket."

"An odd fact," he helped her, "but not one to brood upon."

"But you brood on things like that."

"You have a philosophy."

"Common sense." And she restored the umbrella to its duty.

"Suppose the world is a ball," she returned to the charge, "that doesn't make it a pill that you can swallow. It doesn't even make it a ball you can play football with. But you go about believing that because it is round, presently you will be able to trundle it about."

"You have quite a good philosophy," he said.

"It works — anyhow," she retorted.

"I did not know that you ran your life on nearly such a good road-bed. I think —— I think your philosophy is as good as mine. So far as your present activities are concerned. I didn't imagine you had thought it out to this extent."

"I thought it out last night and this morning because your talk had bothered me."

Mr. Sempack made no reply for some moments. He remained regarding her in silence with an expression on his face that she had seen before on other faces. And when he spoke, what he said was to begin with, similar to other speeches that had followed that expression in her previous experiences.

"I suppose that many people have told you that you are extraordinarily beautiful and young and proud and clever?"

She met his eyes with studied gravity, though she was really very much elated to have got this much from the great Mr. Sempack. "Shall I pretend I don't think I'm good looking?" she asked.

"You are and you are full of life, happy in yourself, sure of yourself and of your power, through us, over your universe. Naturally your time is the present. Naturally you are wholly in the drama, and you don't want even to think of the time before the

curtain went up and still less of the time when the curtain will come down. You *are* Life, at the crest. Your philosophy expresses that. Your religion is just touching for luck and returning thanks. I wouldn't alter your philosophy. But most of us are not like you. What is life for you is 'Meanwhile' for most of us."

"There is too much meanwhile in the world," said Lady Catherine after a moment's reflection, and met his eyes more than ever.

"What would you have us do?"

"Believe as I do that things are here and now."

Mr. Sempack's eyes fell to her feet. His thoughts seemed to have sunken to great profundities. Still musing darkly he stood up and lifted his eyes to her face. "Well," he said, with the shadow of a sigh in his voice; "here goes."

And taking her by the elbow of the arm that held the umbrella and by the opposite shoulder, in his own extensive hands, he drew her into a standing position and kissed her very seriously and thoroughly on the mouth. She received his salutation with an almost imperceptible acquiescence. It was a very good serious kiss. He kissed her without either unseemly haste or excessive delay. But his body was quivering, which was as it should be. They stood close together for some moments while the kiss continued. His hands fell from her. Then, as if it explained everything, he said: "I wanted to do that."

"And I hope you are satisfied?" she said with the laugh of one who protests astonishment.

"Not satisfied but — assuaged. Shall we sit down again? You will find it much more comfortable if you sit beside me here."

"You are the most remarkable man I have ever met," she said, and obeyed his suggestion.

8. IN THE CAATINGA — II

"I rarely do things of this sort," said Mr. Sempack, as though he was saying that the weather was fine. He adjusted his hat, his respectable, almost clerical hat, which showed a disposition to retire from his brazen brow altogether.

"You are a *really* wonderful man," said Lady Catherine, leaning towards him, and her expression was simple and sincere.

"You are a *really* wonderful man," she repeated before he could reply, "and now I feel I can talk to you plainly. I have never met anyone for a long time who has impressed me as you have done. You are — an astonishing discovery."

Mr. Sempack had half turned towards her so that they sat side by side and face to face with their glowing faces quite close together. It was extraordinary that a man who was so ungainly a week and a room's breadth away should become quite attractive and exciting and with the nicest, warmest eyes at a distance of a few inches. But it was so. "It is rare," he said, "that I come back so completely to the present as you have made me do."

"Come back to the present and reality," she urged. "For good. That is what I wanted to say to you. I have been watching you all these days and wondering about you. You are the most exciting thing here. Much the most exciting thing. You have a force and an effect. You have a tremendous effect of personality. I never met anyone with so much personality. And you go so straight for things. I know all the political people at home who matter in the least. And not one of them matters in the least. There is not one who has your quality of strength and conviction; not one. Why do you keep out of things? Instead of talking and writing of what is coming; why don't you *make it come*?"

"Oh!" said Mr. Sempack and recoiled a little.

"You could dominate," she said.

"I wasn't thinking of politics or dominating just then," he explained. "I was thinking of — you."

"That's thrown in. But there has to be a setting. You seem to be masterful and yet you decline to be masterful. I am excited by you

and I want you masterful. I want to see you — mastering things. The world is waiting for confident and masterful men. See how Italy has snatched at Mussolini. See how everything at home waits for a decisive voice and a firm hand. It wants a man who is sure as you are sure to grip all this sedition and discontent and feeble mindedness. All parties the same. I'm not taking sides. Philip doesn't seem to know his own mind for five minutes together. And he owns coal galore."

Mr. Sempack had gradually turned from her during this speech. "Philip?" he questioned himself in a whisper. He drooped perceptibly.

His tone when he spoke was calmly elucidatory.

"When we were talking about those things the other night," he remarked, "I did my best to explain just why it was that one could not do anything very much of a positive sort now. Perhaps what I said wasn't clear. The thing that has to happen before anything real can crystallise out in the way of a new state of affairs is a great change in the ideas of people at large. That is the real job in hand at present. Reconstructing people's ideas. To the best of my ability I am making my contribution to that now. I don't see what else can be done."

He was looking at her no longer. He gave her his profile. The glow seemed to have gone out of him.

"But that is not living," she said, with a faint flavour of vexation in her voice. "Meanwhile you must have a life of your own, a life that hurts and excites."

He regarded her gravely. "That I suppose is why I kissed you."

She met his eyes and perceived that the glow had not vanished beyond recall.

"Live now — instead of all this *theorising*," she whispered. "You are so strange a person —— You could make an extraordinary figure."

He turned from her, pulled up a great knee with his long hands, slanted his head on one side, considered the proposition.

"You think"; he weighed it; "I should project myself upon the world, flapping and gesticulating, making a great noise. It wouldn't you know be a lucid statement, but it would no doubt have an air. A

prophetic raven. Something between Peter the Hermit, William Jennings Bryan and the great Mr. Gladstone on campaign? Leading people stupendously into unthought-of ditches. And leaving them." He turned an eye on her and it occurred to her to ask herself, though she could not wait for the answer, whether he was laughing either at her or at himself. He shook his head slowly from side to side. "No," he concluded.

"We have to learn from the men of science," he supplemented, "that the way to be effective in life is to avoid being personally great — or any such glories and excitements."

"But how can a woman enter into the life of a man who just sits about and thinks and tries it over in talk and writes it down?"

"My dear — you *are* my dear, you know — she can't. But do you dream that some day you and I perhaps might ride together into a conquered city? Beauty and the Highbrow."

"You could do great things."

"After the election, our carriage, horses taken out, dragged by the shouting populace to the Parliament House."

"You caricature."

"Not so very much. You are, my dear, the loveliest thing alive. I can't imagine anything more sweet and strong — and translucent. I am altogether in love with you. My blood runs through my veins, babbling about you and setting every part of me afire. You stir me like great music. You fill me with inappeasable regrets. But —— Between us there is a great gulf fixed. I live to create a world and you are the present triumph of created things."

She said nothing but she willed herself to be magnetic and intoxicating.

Mr. Sempack however was carried past her siren radiations by the current of his thoughts.

"I doubt," he reflected, "if life has very much more use for a perfect thing, for finished grace and beauty, than an artist has for his last year's masterpiece. Life grows the glorious fruit — and parts from it. The essential fact about life is imperfection. Life that ceases to struggle away from whatever it is towards something that it isn't, is ceasing to be life."

"Just as if I were inactive!" she remarked.

“You’re splendidly active,” he said with a smile like sunlight breaking over rugged scenery: “but it’s all in a set and defined drama. Which is nearing the end of its run.”

“You mean — I am no positive good in the world at all. A back number.”

“Good! You’re necessary. For the excitement, disappointment, and humiliation of the people who will attack the real creative tasks. Consider what you are doing! Out of whim. Out of curiosity. You shine upon me, you dazzle me, you are suddenly friendly to me and tender to me. I forget my self-forgetfulness. I dare to kiss you. It seems almost incredible to me but you —— You make it seem possible that I might go far with your loveliness. You bring me near to forgetting what I am, a thing like an intellectual Megatherium, slow but sturdy, mixed up with joints like a rockfall and a style like St. Simeon Stylites — and infinite tedious toil of the spirit — and you make me dream of the pride of a lover.”

“*Dream*,” she whispered, and radiated a complete Aurora Borealis.

But the mental inertia of Mr. Sempack was very great. Certain things were in his mind to say and he went on saying them.

“I don’t want to be brought back to this sort of thing. After I have so painfully — got away from it. I don’t want to have my illusions restored. It unmakes one. It is necessary before one can do one solitary good thing in life that one should be humiliated and totally disillusioned about oneself. One isn’t born to any living reality until one has escaped from one’s prepossession with the personal life. The personal life branches off from the stem to die. The reality of life is to contribute....”

His expression ceased to be indifferent and became obstinate. He was beginning to feel and struggle against her nearness. But he held on for a time.

“All the things in human life that are worth while have been done by clumsy and inelegant people, by people in violent conflict with themselves, by people who blundered and who remain blundering people. They hurt themselves and awake. You know nothing of the inner life of the ungracious. You know nothing of being born as a soul. The bitterness. The reluctant search for compensations. The

acceptance of the fact that service must be our beauty. But now this freak of yours brings back to me the renunciations, the suppressions and stifling of desire, that began in my boyhood and darkened my adolescence. I thought I had built myself up above all these things."

"You are — majestic," she whispered.

"Oh, *nonsense*!" He groaned it and, wavering for a moment, turned upon her hungrily and drew her to him.

No soundly beautiful woman has ever doubted that a man is better than a mirror for the realisation of her delight in herself, and it was with the profoundest gratification that Lady Catherine sensed the immense appreciations of his embrace. Her kiss, her rewarding and approving kiss, was no ordinary kiss, for she meant to plant an ineffaceable memory.

9. APPARITION OF MRS. RYLANDS

The triumphant self-absorption of Lady Catherine, a mood that comprehended not merely self-absorption but the absorption therewith of this immense and exciting and unprecedented Mr. Sempack, gave place abruptly to an entirely different state of mind, to astonishment and even a certain consternation. Central to this new phase of consciousness, was the vividly sunlit figure of little Mrs. Rylands, agape. Agape she was, dismayed, as though she had that instant been suddenly and horribly stung. A sound between the "Oo-er" of an infantile astonishment and a cry of acute pain had proclaimed her.

She stood in the blaze of the Caatinga, flushed and distressed, altogether at a loss in the presence of her surprising guests. She was bareheaded and she carried no sunshade. Her loose-robed figure had the effect of a small child astray.

A swift automatic disentanglement of Lady Catherine and Mr. Sempack had occurred. By rapid gradations all three recovered their social consciousness. In a moment they were grouped like actors who have momentarily forgotten their cues, but are about to pick them up again. Mr. Sempack stood up belatedly.

It was Lady Catherine who was first restored to speech.

"I have been telling Mr. Sempack that he ought to come into public life," she said. "He is too great a man to remain aloof writing books."

Mrs. Rylands' expression was enigmatical. She seemed to be listening and trying to remember the meaning of the sounds she heard. It dawned upon Lady Catherine that her eyes were red with recent weeping. What had happened? Was this some mood of her condition?

Then Mrs. Rylands took control of herself. In another moment she was the hostess of Casa Terragena again, with the edge of her speech restored. "You've been persuading him very delightfully, I'm sure, dearest," she smiled, the smile of a charming hostess — if a little wet about the eyes. "Is he going to?"

"No," said Mr. Sempack, speaking down with large tranquil

decision. But his mind was upon Mrs. Rylands.

A different line of treatment had occurred to Lady Catherine. She snatched at it hastily. She abandoned the topic of Mr. Sempack and his career. “But, my dear!” she cried. “What are you doing in this blazing sun? You ought to be tucked away in a hammock in the shade!”

Mrs. Rylands evidently thought this sudden turn of topic disconcerting. She stared at this new remark as if she disliked it extremely and did not know what to do with it.

Then she broke down. “Everybody seems to think I ought to be tucked away somewhere,” she said, and fairly sobbed. “I’ve done the unexpected. I’ve put everybody out.”

She stood weeping like a child. Consternation fell upon Lady Catherine. Mutely she consulted Mr. Sempack and a slight but masterly movement indicated that he would be better left alone with Mrs. Rylands. His wish marched with Lady Catherine’s own impulse to fly.

“I’ve got letters, lots of letters,” she said. “I’m forgetting them. I was talking. To post in Monte Carlo this afternoon. If we go, that is.”

Mrs. Rylands seemed to approve of this suggestion of a retreat and Lady Catherine became a receding umbrella that halted in the rocky archway for a vague undecided retrospect and then disappeared.

Mrs. Rylands remained standing, looking at the archway. She had an air of standing there because she had nowhere else in the whole world to go, and looking at the archway because there was nothing else on earth to look at. She might have been left on a platform by a train, the only possible train, she had intended to take.

“I thought I would talk to you,” she said, not looking at Mr. Sempack but still contemplating the vanished back of Lady Catherine.

“It *is* too hot for us to be here,” said Mr. Sempack, taking hold of the situation. “Quite close round the corner beyond the stone-pines, there is shade and running water and a seat.”

“It was absurd, but I thought I would talk to you.” Her intonation implied that this was no longer a possibility.

Mr. Sempack made no immediate reply.

The first thing to do he perceived was to get Mrs. Rylands out of the blaze of the sun. Then more was required of him. Evidently she had been assailed by some sudden, violent, and nearly unbearable trouble. Something had struck her, some passionate shocking blow, that had detached her spinning giddily from everything about her. And she had thought of him as large, intelligent, immobile, neutral — above all and in every sense neutral, as indeed a convenient bulk, a sympathetic disinterested bulk, to which one might cling in a torrent of dismay, and which might even have understanding to hold one on if at any time one's clinging relaxed. He had been the only possible father confessor. Sexlessness was a primary necessity to that. In this particular case. For he knew, the thought emerged with unchallenged assurance, that her trouble concerned Philip and Philip's fidelity. And instead of finding a priest, she had, just at this phase when the idea of embraces was altogether revolting to her, caught him embracing.

He glimpsed her present vision of the whole world as lying, betraying, and steamily, illicitly intertwined. And since his instincts and his habits of mind were all for resolving the problems of others and extracting whatever was helpful in the solution, since he liked his little hostess immensely and was ready not only to help in general but anxious to help her in particular, he did his best to push the still glowing image of Lady Catherine into the background of his mind and set himself to efface the bad impression their so intimate grouping had made upon Mrs. Rylands.

With an entirely mechanical submission to his initiative she was walking beside him towards the shade when he spoke.

"I was talking about myself to Lady Catherine," he said and paused to help his silent companion down a stepway. "I think I betrayed a certain sense of my ungainliness.... I *am* ungainly.... Lady Catherine is full of generous impulsive helpfulness and her method of reassuring me was — dramatic and — tangible."

Mrs. Rylands made no immediate reply.

A score or so of paces and they were in the chequered shade of the stone pines and then a zigzag had taken them out of the Caatinga altogether and down to a gully, with a trickle of water and abundant ferns and horse-tails and there in a cool cavernous place, that opened

to them like a blessing, was a long seat of wood. Mrs. Rylands sat down. Mr. Sempack stood over her, a little at a loss.

"I thought I might talk to you," she repeated. "I thought I might be able to talk to you."

"And now — something has spoilt me," he said. "Perhaps I know how you feel.... I wish.... If you cannot talk to me, perhaps you will let me sit down here and even, it may be, presently say a word or so to you."

He sat down slowly beside her and became quite still.

"The world has gone ugly," she said.

He stirred, a rustle of interrogation.

"It is all cruel and ugly," she burst out. "Ugly! I wish I were dead."

Mr. Sempack did not look at her. She swallowed her tears unobserved. "I was afraid this would happen to you," he said, "from the very moment I saw you. Afraid! I knew it had to happen to you."

She looked at him in astonishment. "But how do you know what has happened?"

"I don't. That is — I know no particulars. But I know you thought of a life, subtle and fine as Venetian glass, and I know that is all shattered."

"I thought life could be clean and fine."

Mr. Sempack made no answer for a moment. Then he said: "And how do you know it isn't clean and fine?"

"He told me lies. At least he acted lies. He pretended she was nothing — —"

Mr. Sempack considered that. "Has it ever occurred to you that your husband is a very young man? Sensitive minded and fine."

"*He!*"

"Yes. In spite of everything. And telling a harsh truth is one of the last things we learn to do. Most of us never do. He hasn't told all sorts of hard truths even to himself."

"Hard truths and harsh truths!" said the lady, as though she did her best to apprehend Mr. Sempack's indications. "You don't know — the brutality...."

She choked.

"And she is nothing to him," said Mr. Sempack serenely.

“You don’t understand what has happened. There they were. In the little bathing chalet....”

Her woe deepened. “Anyone might have come upon them!”

“Perhaps they had accounted for everybody but you.”

“My fault then.”

“They saw you?”

“Oh! they *saw* me.”

“And he stayed with her?”

“No. He came after me almost at once.”

“You told him to go back to her.”

“How do you know?”

“It was the first thing to say. And he didn’t go back.”

“He tried to excuse himself?”

“That was difficult.”

“He said horrible things. Oh horrible!”

Mr. Sempack’s silence was an invincible question and moreover Mrs. Rylands was driven by an irresistible impulse to tell the dreadful things that threatened to become destructive and unspeakable monstrosities if they were not thrust out while they still had some communicable form. Even now she told them with a shadow of doubt in her mind.

“He said, ‘I can’t live this life of milk and water. I must get excited somehow — or I shall burst!’”

“That stated a case,” said Mr. Sempack with deliberation. “That stated a case.”

She weighed this for some moments as though she felt it ought to mean something. Then she seemed to feel about in her mind for a lost thread and resumed: “I said nothing. I hurried on.”

“He asked you to listen?”

“I couldn’t. Not then.”

“You went on and he followed — that extremely inarticulate young man, trying to express things that he felt but could not understand. And you were in blind flight from something you did not wish to understand.”

“He caught hold of me and I dragged myself away.”

Mr. Sempack waited patiently.

“He shouted out ‘Oh *hell*’ very loudly and dropped behind. I don’t

know where he went. He is somewhere down there. Perhaps he went back to her."

"And that was how it happened?"

"Yes," she said, "it happened like that."

She stared in front of her for a long time, and Mr. Sempack had so much to say that he found himself unable to say anything. To meet this case a whole philosophy was needed. The silence unrolled.

"My Philip!" she whispered at last.

It was clear that whatever idea she had had of talking to Mr. Sempack had evaporated from her mind. "I don't know why I have told you of this," she said at last with the slightest turn of her head towards him. "The heat.... I shall go back to bed. Put myself away."

She stood up.

"I will come back with you as far as the house if I may," said Mr. Sempack.

They walked in the completest silence. Not even a consolatory word came to him.

He watched her vanish between the white pillars into the deep cool shadows of the hall. "Poor young people! What a mess it is!" he said, and entirely oblivious of Lady Catherine, standing splendidly at the great staircase window and ready to descend at a word, he walked, downcast and thoughtful, along an aisle of arum lilies towards a great basin full of nuphar. He clasped his hands behind him and humped one shoulder higher than the other. His shambling legs supported him anyhow.

Here was something that it was immensely necessary to think out, and to think out into serviceable conclusions soon. He could not attend to the outlying parts of his person.

10. THE HALL OF CASA TERRAGENA

To Bombaccio, the first intimation that something had gone wrong in the house party of Terragena was brought by Miss Puppy Clarges. He had been putting out the English papers on the hall table and touching and patting the inkpots and pens and blotting-pads on the writing-tables in the southern recess of the hall and meditating on the just position of the various waste-paper baskets, and blessing and confirming all such minor amenities, when she came in. He wore a diamond ring, not one with an exceptional diamond like Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan's, but just a diamond ring, and as he did things he exercised himself in a rather nice attitude with the hand upheld, that Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan affected. It seemed to Bombaccio a desirable attitude. She came in from the terrace towards the sea while he was posed in this way. She gave his hand a passing unintelligent glance and spoke brusquely. "Bombaccio," she said, "I have to clear out at once. I've had a telegram that my half-sister in Nice is very ill."

"But," said Bombaccio. "I did not know the Signorina had had a telegram."

"Nor anyone else. Wonderful how it got to me; isn't it? But it did — and don't you forget it. Don't you give way to any weakening on that point. I've had a telegram that my half-sister in Nice is very ill and now I've told you — you know I've had it."

Bombaccio bowed with grave submission.

"Off I go to pack and down I come to go. What car, Bombaccio?"

"I'll ask Mrs. Rylands."

"Don't. Just get me that old Fiat in the village and I'll clatter down to the station at Mentone right away. As soon as poss. It's a case of life and death."

"The next train for Nice," reflected Bombaccio, "does not depart — —"

"Don't go into figures," said Miss Clarges. "Telephone and get that auto now."

She reflected, knuckle to lip. "Wait a moment," she said. "I'll write a note — two notes."

She went to a writing-table, placed a sheet before her, chose a pen and meditated briefly. Bombaccio waited. Then her pen flew. One note she addressed to her hostess. It was a note of exceptional brevity and it was unsigned. "*Sorry*," wrote Miss Clarges. "*I'm gone and I won't worry you again.*"

"Sorry I got caught," Miss Clarges remarked to herself, and licked the envelope. "*Fools* we were."

Then she directed a more elaborate epistle to Mr. Geoffry Rylands. "*Dear Geoff*," she scribbled. "*That Limitless Field Preacher has got on my nerves. Another meal of talk with him and Mr. Pantaloon Buchan and I shall scream. I've fled to the Superba at Dear Old Monty. Where my friends can find me, bless 'em. A rividerci, Puppy.*"

That got its swift lick also and a whack to stick it down.

"Here's the documents!" she said.

Bombaccio was left developing a series of bows and gestures to express that all things in the world would be as the Signorina wished, while Miss Puppy vanished upstairs. Then he went slowly and thoughtfully to the telephone.

But he did not telephone. He hated the man who owned the old Fiat and there were two cars in the garage. One of them was booked for Monte Carlo after lunch, but that was no reason why Signorina Clarges should not have the other. In the well-known Terragena car she'd go through the French douane like a bird; in the hired car she wouldn't. He would consult Signora Rylands. Or Signor Rylands.

And on reflection it became more and more distinctly unusual that a guest should depart in this fashion without some intimation from either host or hostess. There was something wrong in that. The fact of Signorina Clarges' swift passage upstairs, originally a bare fact, became encrusted with interrogations; the brow of Bombaccio was troubled. She was giving all the orders. What should a perfect major-domo do?

Signora Rylands, he believed, was still in bed and inaccessible. Signor Rylands? Signor Rylands? But —— ? Consider —— ? He had gone off with Signorina Clarges to swim. Yes. Something must have happened. Where was Mr. Rylands now? Why was he not ordering the car for the Signorina Clarges? Had he by any chance

insulted her — and was she departing insulted?

But then, was it possible to insult the Signorina Clarges?

Perhaps the best thing would be to consult Frant, Mrs. Rylands' maid, a stupid English person who mistook secretiveness for discretion, but still the only possible source of indications just at present....

These questionings were abruptly interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan coming through the front hall, with the vague, prowling air of a guest who has found nothing to do with his morning. He was wearing a new suit of tussore silk and wasting much neatness upon solitude. The wave in his hair was in perfect condition.

He brightened at the sight of Bombaccio. "*Dove e tutto?*" he asked. He liked to address every man in his own language, as a good European should, and this was his way of saying "Where's everybody?"

Bombaccio replied with the most carefully perfect English intonation, "Colonel Bullace, Saire, is at the tennis."

"*E l'altri?*"

Bombaccio expressed extreme dispersal by an expansive gesture and disowned special knowledge by a deprecatory smile. "Others are at the tennis," he said.

"Lady Catherine?" asked Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, trying to be quite casual in his tone.

"She loves the garden!" said Bombaccio and began a respectful retreat.

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan hovered vaguely for a moment and then turned his face towards the front entrance. Abruptly the retreat of Bombaccio was accelerated and Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan looking round for a cause, became aware of Miss Clarges, clothed now with unusual decorum, at the bend of the staircase.

"How about that car, Bombaccio?" cried Miss Clarges.

Bombaccio, not hearing with all his might, disappeared, and the door that led to the domestic mysteries clicked behind him. "Damn!" said Miss Clarges. "Hullo, Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan!"

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan moved to show that he was hullo all right.

“I’ve got a half-sister dangerously ill — in Monaco, and I want a car. I’m all packed up and ready to go. Leastways I shall be in ten minutes.”

“Can I be of any assistance?” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan unhelpfully.

“Naturally,” said Miss Puppy. “I want some sort of car got and some of the minions to carry my bags up to the gates. Everyone seems to be out of the way.”

“Anything I can *do*,” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, looking entirely ornamental.

“If you’d just warm Bombaccio’s ear a bit,” said Miss Clarges. “What’s wanted is movement. Getting a move on.”

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan felt the reproach in her tone. “I will stir things up. I do hope your half-sister — —”

But Puppy had vanished upstairs again.

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan reflected. He would go to the bell and ring and when somebody came he would say in a gentle masterful way: “*La Signorina Clarges e nervosa da la sua automobiglia. Prega de l’accelerato prestissimo.*”

But he would have much preferred to have gone on straight into the garden to look for Lady Catherine. He felt they went better together.

He found some difficulty in putting matters right with the minion who responded to his ring. The fellow did not seem to understand his own language and evidently missed the purport of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan’s communication altogether. He seemed to think Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was complaining of the manner in which Mrs. Rylands’ English chauffeur discharged his duties and expressed himself, with some vivid and entertaining pantomime, as being in the completest agreement. He repeated the expression “molto periculoso” several times with empressement. Now the Italian driver was a model of discretion. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was still trying, without too complete an admission of a linguistic breakdown, to mould the conversation nearer to Miss Clarges’ heart’s desire, when Lady Catherine appeared in the low oblong blaze of sunshine beyond the dark pillars of the portico. He dismissed the minion with a gesture and walked forward to meet her.

The hall behind him was left for a moment in silence and shadow, and then its ceiling and central parts resonated to the rich voice of Miss Clarges. “What the hell?” the voice of Miss Clarges inquired, passionately but incompletely, and her door slammed. She must have been listening on the landing. A few moments later, the muffled wheeze of a distant electric bell was audible from the servants’ quarters, a bell that kept on ringing persistently. Miss Clarges was ringing.

Before Lady Catherine became aware of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan in the dim coolness of the entrance, her face betrayed a certain perturbation and she was hurrying. At the sight of him, she slackened her gait and became a sauntering queen, ruddy in the halo of the green umbrella.

“So hot,” she said, chin up and smiling. “Too hot! I’m coming in to write letters. Are you for Monte Carlo this afternoon?”

“In this blaze?” he doubted and shrugged his shoulders.

She hovered over him for a moment, not quite sure what to do with him.

“Lucky man!” she said. “You’ve got nothing to do but read the English papers and keep cool.”

She made her way round him to the staircase, smiling him down.

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was left in the silent hall. He went to the table on the terrace side where the freshly-opened newspapers were displayed. He threw them about almost petulantly. He felt he had never seen less attractive newspapers. Even the head-lines of the *Daily Express* seemed dull. He sat down at last to *The Times*, to learn who had died and who had gone abroad.

Then came an interruption of Geoffry, very hot, moist and open-necked, in search of Bombaccio and drinks and ice for the tennis court. At his appearance on the terrace Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan shrank deeper into his arm-chair beside the pillar.

“Hullo!” said Geoffry. “Papers come?”

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan made a gesture of his newspaper to express anything Geoffry liked except an inclination to talk, and Geoffry passed on. He came back presently, followed by Bombaccio with a jingling tray and passed across the terrace and down the marble steps towards the tennis court. Then after a large interval of

silence, came footsteps on the staircase. He turned hopefully and saw Miss Clarges in travelling dress. He stood up in spite of a faint disappointment. At any rate she was going.

"I'm off," she said. "No chance of saying ta-ta all round. You'll have to do it for me."

"I hope it's all right about the automobile."

"God knows," she said. "I'm going up the garden after my bags to see. Have to fuss round up there if it isn't. Extraordinary they don't bring a motor road right down to the house. Sacrificing comfort to gardening, I call it."

She smiled conventionally and turned towards the entrance. Then she stopped short and became rigid. She had seen something outside there that as yet Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan could not see. "*Glory!*" she gasped.

She had forgotten Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan for an instant. Then she turned to him and saw his inquiring face. "I've left something in my room," she explained, and turned tail and fled upstairs. The next moment the feet of two people became visible and then the all of them in the sunlit space uphill beyond the portico. Mrs. Rylands was approaching, and she walked like a woman in a trance and beside her in silence, looking very large and awkward and uncomfortable, was Mr. Sempack. Before the entrance, they parted without a word; Mr. Sempack stood irresolute and Mrs. Rylands came on in.

She did not seem to see Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan standing still beside the newspaper table.

She walked to the staircase and then, after a momentary pause, made her way up it, helping herself with a hand upon the banister.

For some seconds Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan remained lost in thought, and then, still thinking, he seated himself upon the newspaper table. Presently Miss Clarges appeared descending the staircase with an unwonted softness. She looked as though she might say almost anything to Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, but what she did say simply and almost confidentially was, "So long." Then she went out into the sun-glare and vanished up the hill towards the gates upon the road.

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan shook his head slowly from side to side, disapprovingly, took counsel with his diamond ring, struggled off the

table, and made his way, still thinking deeply, to his own room in the turret.

He paced his floor obliquely. It had become plain to him what had happened.

He was glad to have a little time to himself to consider the situation before facing the world. What exactly ought a fine-minded, thoroughly Europeanised American gentleman to do? Not simply that. He was really fond of his hostess. Fond enough to put his pose into a secondary place. What could he do for her?

The turret room had four windows that looked east and west and north and south and as Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan paced up and down from corner to corner, he would ever and again lift his downcast eyes, first to this pretty sunlit picture and then to that. And presently he became aware of something white, minute in perspective, something moving, far off, among the red sun-scorched rocks of the headlands to the west that came out like a scenery wing to frame the distant view of Mentone. He took a pocket monocular that lay upon his toilet table out of its case, focused it and scrutinised this distant object. It was a man in flannels scrambling along a little precipitous path that led round the cape. He moved with every symptom of haste and irritation. He slipped and recovered himself, and stood still for a moment in profile looking up at the shiny rocks, with an expression of reproachful inquiry. Unmistakably it was Philip Rylands.

He was making off. To nowhere in particular.

11. TWO LETTERS

It was evening and Mrs. Rylands lay in bed in her unlit room. The windows were wide open but the blue serenities without were seen through a silken haze of mosquito curtain. And Mrs. Rylands was thinking.

Before lunch she had summoned Lady Catherine to her bedside and thrust most of her duties as a hostess upon her. “I’m ill,” she said. “I’ve had a shock, never mind what, dearest, don’t say a word about it, but it’s made me ill. I want to be alone, and there’s all this party!”

All Lady Catherine’s better self came uppermost. She kissed her friend. “I’ll see they get their lunch,” she said; “I and Bombaccio. It’s your privilege to be ill now, just as you please and whenever you please. And afterwards shall I pack some of them off?”

“They do very little harm,” said Mrs. Rylands. “I shall get on all right — in a bit. Get the bridge and tennis Stupids out of the house if you can — if they have somewhere to go. But don’t *chase* them out. They amuse each other.... Don’t make them uncomfortable.... I like to have Mr. Sempack about. I like him. When they have gone I will come down again.”

“And Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan?”

“He doesn’t matter. Just take hold of things, Kitty. I can’t arrange.”

Lady Catherine took hold of things. “Don’t you bother, Cynthia. Bombaccio and I could run four such parties.”

“Don’t want to see anyone. Just want to think.”

“I *quite* understand.”

A last murmur from the bed. “Don’t want to be told or asked about anything just now.”

A kiss in response and Lady Catherine had gone.

The head on the pillow snuggled under the sheet with an affectation of profound fatigue until Lady Catherine was surely out of the room, and then it was raised and looked round cautiously. Slowly, wearily Mrs. Rylands sat up again and became still, staring in front of her. The protective mask of the rather pathetic dear little

thing had vanished. A very grave, very sad human being was revealed.

For a long time her mind remained stagnant. And when at last it did revive it did not so much move forward from thought to thought as sit down and contemplate her world unveiled.

She had been living in a dream, she realised, and only such a shock as this could have awakened her. She had been living in a dream wilfully. In spite of a thousand hints and intimations, she had clung to her beautiful illusions about Philip and herself and the quality of life. Now that she had not so much let go of her dream as had it torn from her hand, it began forthwith to seem incredible and remote. It was plain to her that for weeks and months she had understood Philip's real quality — and refused to understand. She was already amazed to remember how steadfastly she had refused to understand.

When at last, late in the afternoon, a letter came from Philip, a note rather than a letter, written in pencil, it did but confirm the hard outlines of her realisations.

"*My darling Cynthia*," wrote Philip. "*What can I say to you, except ask you to forgive me? I suppose you think I'm an utter beast and I suppose I am an utter beast. Yet these things take one in a way you can't understand and one finds out what seems just a lark isn't. I do hope anyhow that whatever you say or do to me you won't be too hard on old Puppy. It's my fault first and foremost and all the time. It is dead against all Puppy's code to go back on the hostess with whom she is staying in that fashion. But one thing led to another. I over-persuaded her and really we had not planned or arranged what happened. On my honour. It just came upon us. It may have been brewing in the air but I swear I didn't plan it. We have always been pretty good friends, Puppy and me I mean, and I suppose we ought not to have done anything so risky as a swim together without anyone else. Her bathing dress tore on a nail. A pure accident. Things looked worse than they actually were. At the time it seemed just fun. Anyhow she has insisted on clearing out and she's gone. And that's that. I'd like to come and see you and have a talk when you feel up to it. I could kick myself to death that this should have happened to you, now above all. I feel the dirtiest of rotters. Nothing*

of the sort if I can help it shall ever happen again. That I swear. Forgive me and try to forget it all, for both our sakes. Your sorry Philip."

She read that over in a whisper. "Your sorry Philip."

She agreed.

She lay for a long time quite motionless with his note on the counterpane before her. It was exactly like him. How could she ever have imagined that he was anything else but precisely what that note displayed?

And yet he was so good-looking and with something fine — delusively fine was it? — about his face and bearing. So different from wary unreal Geoffry. Still.

Later on another letter was brought to her, a letter in a different hand, a large clear and firm script without a trace of the puerility of Philip's still unformed writing, and this also she read and re-read. Now in the twilight she went on with the train of thought this second letter had set going.

"Dear Mrs. Rylands," it began; "Forgive this rigmarole please that I am obliged to write to you. A sort of accident made you tell me something of your trouble and I feel perhaps you will not resent it if I write to you about it. Anyhow I must write about it even if you do not read it, because I can think of nothing else."

She thought of his sprawling person dispersed over a writing-table, his face transfigured intently, and then came a memory of him like Pan half changed into an old olive tree of like some weather-worn Terminus, being kissed by Lady Catherine. For plainly she had been kissing him. Mrs. Rylands recalled that incident now without shock or repulsion. He was so different from her idea of a man who could love. Catherine might have been kissing an old leather-bound bible....

"I want to write, if I may, as a close friend. I like and admire your husband very greatly and I like and admire you very greatly. I am, so far as you go, an old experienced man who has observed far more than he has experienced, and I think if I could make you see what has happened as I see it, it might cease to appear so conclusive and devastating an incident as perhaps it does now. It is significant enough, I admit, but indeed it is no sort of catastrophe.

“I have liked him ever since he came into the room at Roquebrune — the first time I saw him. He has exceptional vitality, energy, intelligence. He is extraordinarily young for his years. For all practical purposes he is still merely adolescent. He may still become a man of great distinction. Considering his position and opportunities he may yet play a quite considerable part in the world’s affairs.”

“That is what I had dreamt,” she said and her eyes went back to that pencil scrawl.

“What has happened does nothing to change that. There are points material to this issue which I do not think you apprehend. I do not see how they can have entered into your consciousness. I will try to put them to you — if you will be patient with me. Let me repeat, I think enormous things of your Philip. I don’t think that you made a mistake when you loved him and gave your life to him. And for you — you might be my daughter — I have that feeling, that only people who have been schooled to disinterested affection can have. I have watched you both. I care for you both deeply. I care doubly. I care for you also on account of him. I care for him also on account of you. Two fine lives are yours; two hopeful lives.”

“And then *this*!” she whispered and for some moments read no more.

“I want you to consider your differences. I don’t think you have ever thought about your differences. Everything has disposed you to ignore them. You are a finer thing than Philip but you are — slighter. You are completer but slighter. He is still unformed but larger and more powerful. He has the makings of a far bigger and stronger and more effective person than you can ever be. You must grant me that. I think you will grant me that. We human things; what are we? Channels through which physical energy flows into decision and act and creative achievement. There is a pitiless pressure to *do*. Living is doing. Life is an engine, a trap, to catch blind force and turn it into more life and build it up into greater and more powerful forms. That is how I see life. That is how you are disposed to see life. We are all under that pressure — in varying degrees. The chief business of every one of us, every one who has a consciousness of such things, is to master and direct and utilise his pressure. Most of us spend the better part of our lives trying to solve the problem of how that is to

be done before all pressure of vitality is exhausted. And your Philip is under pressures, blind pressures, ten, twenty times as powerful as all the driving force in you. I hope this does not offend you?"

"There is a sort of truth in that," said Mrs. Rylands.

"And now let me assure you he loves you. It is you he loves, have no doubt of it. And he loves you for endless things of course, but among them, chief among them, because of this, that you have self-control, you seemed to him, as you are, serene, wise, balanced, delicately poised."

"Not now," said Mrs. Rylands.

"He thinks, no! he realises, that you have *direction*, which is just what he lacks. That brought him to you perhaps first. That does and can continue to hold him to you. But that does not prevent old Nature, who has made us all out of the dust and the hot damp and the slime, pressing upon him and pressing him. He is living here in this warmth, in this abundance, far off from the business life and political life that might engage him; he came here — that is the irony of it — to be with you, to wait upon you here in the loveliest, most perfect setting. You know that was his intention. You know he has treated you sweetly and delicately. Until, as you think, you found him out."

She nodded assent and turned the page quickly.

"But he wasn't deceiving you. You haven't found him out so much as he has found himself out. He meant all that devotion. If only some Angel above could have turned off the tap of his energy to a mere trickle, then this would really have been the paradise you thought it was, until to-day. But all he could do here, to be the perfect lover of your dreams, he could have done with one twentieth part of the energy that drives through his nerves and blood. You knew he was restless?"

"I thought it was this Coal Strike," said Mrs. Rylands.

"Any voice that called to him, he had activity released to hear. And dear old Nature, horrible old Nature, has only one channel for the release of pent-up energy."

"Horrible old Nature," Mrs. Rylands agreed and seemed to recall some impression. Nature! So gross and yet with a queer power in her grossness, so revolting in an ugliness that sometimes became suddenly and disconcertingly holy and terribly beautiful! But what

was Mr. Sempack saying?

"With you —— A man may show his love by a delicate restraint. Must indeed be very delicate and restrained. And here he was in this fermenting blaze with nothing else to do — nothing. He didn't want to make love to any other woman. He loves nobody but you. If he had wanted to make love — consider! Lady Catherine here, is being driven towards trouble also by our tyrannous old Grandmother. There is no comparison in the loveliness of these two women. But Lady Catherine is an equal, a personality. He wouldn't look at her, wouldn't dream of her. Because that would be a real infringement of you. That would be a real division of love. But on the other hand there was this Miss Clarges, who disavows all the accessories of sex — and is simply sexual. She is good company in the open air. She swims well and one can swim with her. Things change their emotional quality away from the house. Wet skin and sunburnt skin, movement and sunlight and a smiling face. Comes a flare-up, a desire, and a consoling and refreshing physical release. Nervous release. It can seem such a simple thing. My dear Mrs. Rylands, you may choose to think of it as horrible, you may be compelled to think of it as horrible, but indeed, I can assure you, at times it can be as healthy a thing physically as breathing mountain air. That is outside your quality, your experience, but not outside your understanding. If you care to understand; if you have the generosity to understand. But of course you have the generosity to understand. There is a case for them both. What concerns me most is the case for him."

She put down the letter again. She had come to the end of a sheet.

"But I loved him," she said. "This is asking too much."

She lay still a long time. "It is asking too much," she whispered.

She glanced again at what she had read. "Nervous release," she re-tasted — and it tasted disgustingly.

What was wrong with Mr. Sempack — or what was wrong with her?

What were these different tunes that were being played simultaneously upon their two temperaments by the same world?

"It isn't right," she thought. "But I'm not clever enough, my head is not clear enough, to see where it is wrong.... I'm wrong too. I see I'm wrong.... Perhaps he's righter than I am....

“My poor little wits!”

It seemed to her that Sempack put things with a sort of reasonableness, but in a light that was strange, like the light in the tanks of Monaco Aquarium. It was as if the sun had suddenly gone green. Everything had very much the same shape but nothing had its proper colour. Everything had become *deep*. This man’s mind was as large and unusual as his body. She took up the next sheet and the light of Mr. Sempack’s mind seemed greener and colder and the things it illuminated deeper than ever.

“If he is to stay here centring his life wholly upon you, what is to be done with the nineteen-twentieths of his vitality that will be left over? It is not merely physical vitality we are dealing with. That might be devoted to swimming, climbing, tennis. But you cannot separate bodily and imaginative energy so completely; the one drags at the other. There is no such thing as purely physical vitality. The accumulation of energy amidst this warmth and beauty and leisure affects the imagination, demands not simply an effort but a thrill.”

There was a blank space of half a sheet.

“I am trying to expose the real Philip to you, this soul struggling with the mysteries of a body as a man struggles with an unbroken horse. And someone else also, I want to expose to you, whom perhaps you do not yet completely know, the real Cynthia Rylands. You see, I am not going to ask you to forgive him. That is the danger ahead for both of you. He will ask that, but I know better than he does in this matter, about him and about you. I want you to realise that there is nothing to forgive.”

She stopped to think that over and then read on.

“Philip is your job,” the resolute writing continued. “I see no other job in the world for you to compare with it or to replace it. Children? People overrate what a modern mother has to do for her children, as they underrate what she can do for her man. Women are for men and children are a by-product. You have given your life to Philip for better or worse, and nothing can ever take it altogether back. Try to take it back and you will leave a precious part of you to die.

“Is this true of all husbands and all wives? you may ask. No. Nothing is true of all husbands and all wives. Half the men in the world are nincompoops, and an unknown proportion of women

idiots. I do not see that they and their horrid, sloppy relationships come into this discussion. Let them slop and squabble in their own way. I am thinking of two people of very fine quality and unequal energy. I am thinking of you and Philip. You can supply a protection, a charity, a help, a stability to that young man, without which he will just make the sort of mess of life natural to his type. And he is worth what you can give him. He has quality. He is Worth saving from his temperamental fate. But your first sacrifice has to be, the sacrifice of your instinctive sexual resentments. Your first effort has to be an enormous patience and charity. Your first feat has to be your realisation that much may be clean or cleansable in him, that would be, well — a little disgusting to you. I must make myself quite plain. It is not a question of your forgiving him this affair with Miss Clarges, after due repentance on his part, and going on again on your old lines with the understanding that nothing of the sort is ever going to happen again. What is before you is something much harder than that. It is a matter of bracing yourself up to the new idea that this sort of thing is likely to happen again in your lives, and that it may happen repeatedly, and however often it may happen, it has never to make the slightest diminution of your support of him or of his respect and confidence in you. While you stand over his life, you unbroken and resolute, no affair of this sort will ever wreck it. He will come back to you. You will be his fastness, his safe place. Every time more and more. But talk and think of offending and forgiving, put yourself on a level with Miss Puppy Clarges, fight her for him, peck the other hen, and shut yourself against him — in any way, in any way, and down he goes and down you go, and your two lives will dribble through a tangle of commonplace sexual quarrels and estrangements to some sort of muddling divorce or separation or compromise....

"I don't know why I write all this to you. Your brain is as fine as mine and you must know all that I am writing. As you read it it will come to your mind not as a new conviction but as the illumination of something that has always been there.

"You are Philip Rylands' wife. In the fullest sense and to the last possible shade of meaning, you are his wife; you are a wife by nature, and the rôle of a wife is not to compete and be jealous, but to understand and serve and by understanding and serving rule. Wives

are rare things in life, but you are surely one. You cannot possibly give yourself the airs of the ordinary married mistress. You have wedded yourself to your Philip — beyond jealousy — except for his sake. I can see you in no other part."

Again came a sort of break in the writing. "That is really all that I have to say to you. Perhaps I may add — rest assured that unless I am no judge of a man, when at last he comes to his full stature — through your protection and your help and stimulation — Rylands will be worth while. Through him you may do great things in the world and in no other way will you personally ever do great things. Because you are reflective; because your initiatives are too delicate for the weight and strains of life."

Mr. Sempack had not signed this letter. There it ended.

After re-reading this communication Mrs. Rylands turned out her bedside lamp and lay quite motionless in the deepening twilight, and thought. Far away Mentone returned out of the evening blue that had drowned it and became a necklace of minute lights flung upon the deep azure darkness.

"He will be worth while." Was that written to comfort her?

Worth while? Was that true? Would Phil really become that strong competent man laying a determining hand on human affairs she had once dreamt of, or were not both she and Mr. Sempack a little carried away by his good looks, by his occasional high gravity and by something generous and naïve in his quality?... And also ... Something dear about him?... Something very dear?

Mrs. Rylands found that she was weeping.

After all, she asked with an abrupt mental collapse, did it matter in the least if he was worth while?

"Sometimes such a dear," she whispered.

She had thought and perhaps feared that a repulsion, a physical dislike might have crept between herself and Philip, but suddenly she realised that he was just as magnetic for her as he had ever been. She found herself longing for him to come to her, longing, irrationally, monstrously.

She would not send for him. She could not send for him. That would be too much. But she longed for him to come to her.

12. STOIC AND EPICUREAN

Downstairs an attenuated house party sat at dinner. The Mathisons and Geoffry Rylands had departed for Monte Carlo, moved and encouraged to do so by their host. Mr. Haulbowline had gone with them, making up his mind at the last moment when he realised that there might be no bridge in the evening. Unprotected by a bridge group he might have to be visible, audible and distinctive. And the Bullaces were away, dining with a dear old friend of the wife's at Diano Marino, the widow of an army chaplain who had been killed and partially eaten, no doubt at Bolshevik instigation, by an ill-disposed panther in Bengal. To-morrow the Bullaces were going back to England. The coal situation in Britain was becoming more threatening every day and the chance of social disturbance greater. The Colonel felt that his place was in the field of danger there, and that at any moment his peculiar gifts might be in request for the taming of insurgent labour.

Miss Fenimore and Lady Grieswold were both present. In spite of some very suggestive talk from Lady Catherine their movements were uncertain. Lady Catherine had perhaps exaggerated the gravity of Mrs. Rylands' health and her need for peace, and Miss Fenimore had felt not that she ought to go but that she ought to stay "in case someone was wanted." Lady Grieswold held on firmly without any explanation, but Lady Catherine had reason for hoping that when it was manifest a bridge famine was inevitable her grip would relax. Though of course there was the possibility of a break away into patience. However that was to be seen.

The Tamars were due at Geneva in three days' time and so Lady Catherine did nothing to dislodge them. They were very harmless; they had spent the day together in a long walk up the hills, had taken their lunch and she had done a water-colour sketch of the little chapel in the upper valley; they had returned just in time for dinner and heard of Mrs. Rylands' collapse only in the drawing-room. They were quietly happy and tired and their sympathy was pleasantly free from any note of distress.

The table talk was for a time disconnected and desultory, with

long pauses, and then it broke into a loose debate between Stoicism and Epicureanism, in which Mr. Sempack and Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan said nearly everything. Mr. Sempack started with a panegyric of the Stoic; it seemed to be there in his mind and it was almost as if he thought aloud. He addressed what he had to say away from Lady Catherine, markedly. His discourse seemed by its very nature to turn its back on her. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan talked rather at Lady Catherine and Miss Fenimore, appealing to them for support by the direction of his head and smiles and gestures. The Tamars were mildly interested and ever and again at some of the flatter passages they smiled mysteriously at one another, as though, if they cared, they could put quite a different complexion on things. Philip was unaffectedly lost in thought. He did not pretend even to listen.

Lady Grieswold said little but became visibly uneasy as the discussion soared and refused to descend. She was wondering if the Tamars would like to play bridge and still more how she might give this very difficult conversation a turn that would enable her to suggest this. Perhaps they did not know how to play yet and might like to be shown — of course for quite nominal stakes. It was wonderful the things these intellectual people did not know. She never contrived to get her suggestion out for all her alertness and she went up to a bridgeless drawing-room and sat apart and felt she was a widow more acutely than she had done for many years, and retired quite early to bed showing, Lady Catherine noted with satisfaction, no disposition whatever for the consolations of the patience spread.

Mr. Sempack began in a pause, almost or altogether out of nothing. If anything could be regarded as releasing the topic its connexion was so remote that it vanished from the mind as soon as it had served its purpose. “It is remarkable,” he began, “how silently and steadily Stoicism returns to the world.”

“Stoicism!” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan and raised his fine eyebrows.

“Consolation without rewards or punishments, a pure worship of right and austerity. It came too soon into the world; it had to give place to Mithraism and Isis worship and the Christianities for two thousand years. *Now* — it returns to a world more prepared for it.”

“But *does* it return?” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan with a

disarming smile.

Mr. Sempack pursued his own train of thought. “The simple consolations needed by life in an under-civilised world, the craving for exemplary punishments, rewards and compensations; those Christianity could give. And a substitutional love to make up for human unkindnesses — and failures of loyalty.... Not to be despised. By no means to be despised.... But in the cold light of to-day these consolations fade. In the cold clear light of our increasing knowledge. We cannot keep them even if we would. We strain to believe and we cannot do it. We are left terribly to the human affections in all their incompleteness — and behind them what remains for us? Endurance. The strength of our own souls.”

His voice sank so beautifully that for a moment or so Lady Catherine knew what it was to be wholly in love. What a great rock he was! What tranquil power there was in him! He divested himself of all beliefs and was not in the least afraid. He was withdrawing to his fastness from her. So far as he was able. He would not be able to do it, but it was magnificent how evidently he thought he could. Almost unconsciously she began to radiate herself at him and continued to do so for the rest of the evening whenever opportunity offered.

“But need it be *Stoicism*?” said Mr. Plantagenet- Buchan.

“What else?”

“For my part I do not feel Christianity is dead,” young Lord Tamar interpolated before Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan could reply. “Not in the least dead. It changes form but it lives.”

Lady Tamar nodded in confirmation. “It changes form,” she admitted.

Lady Grieswold made confirmatory noises, rather like the noises a very old judge might make in confirming a decision, and she took some more stuffed aubergine as if that act was in some way sacramental.

Mr. Sempack did not attend at once to these three confessions. He stared before him at the marble wall over Miss Fenimore’s head. He had an air of explaining something carefully to himself. “Christianity has prevailed,” he assured himself, “but indeed Christianity passes. Passes! — it has gone! It has littered the beaches of life with

churches, cathedrals, shrines and crucifixes, prejudices and intolerances, like the sea-urchins and starfish and empty shells and lumps of stinging jelly upon the sands here after a tide. A tidal wave out of Egypt. And it has left a multitude of little wriggling theologians and confessors and apologists hopping and burrowing in the warm nutritious sand. But in the hearts of living men, what remains of it now? Doubtful scraps of Arianism. Phrases. Sentiments. Habits."

He turned his large eye on Lady Tamar and took up her neglected remark. "If Christianity changes form, it becomes something else."

Lord Tamar gave a little cough and spoke apologetically. "*Love*," said Lord Tamar, "remains. The spirit. Christianity is love. It is distinctively the religion of love. All the rest — is excrescence. There was no such religion before."

Lady Tamar wanted to say "God is Love," but her courage failed and so she blushed instead. Evidently both the Tamars felt their own remarks acutely.

"Christianity can only be a *form* of love," said Mr. Sempack. "I doubt if it is that. And I doubt still more if anyone can argue that love is the highest thing in life. Is it?... Is it?..." Lady Catherine watched him. Far over her head to things beyond, Mr. Sempack said, "No." He developed his disavowals. "There are nobler things for the soul — the conquest of the limited self, for example, at heights and in visions and apprehensions altogether above passion. There are, I am convinced, great mountains above the little village of the affections, high and lonely places. There lies the Stoic domain. There we can camp and harbour. Stoicism, which was too great for the world when first it dawned upon men's thoughts, comes back into life. Changed very little in essentials, but enlarged, because our vision of time and space has enlarged. It has returned so inevitably that it has returned imperceptibly. We have all become Stoics nowadays without knowing it. We have not been persuaded and convinced and converted; we just find ourselves there. We fall back by a sort of general necessity upon the dignity of renunciation and upon our subordination to a greater life. Perhaps we do not want to do it but we have to do it. What else can we do unless we play tricks with our intelligence and degrade ourselves to 'acts of faith'? What

gymnastics this century has seen since its beginning! We abandon the Christian exaggeration of the ego and its preposterous claims for an everlasting distinctiveness — perforce. We give up craving for individual recognition because we must. Loneliness. Perhaps. In a sense we are all increasingly alone. But then, since nowadays we are all increasingly something more and something less than ourselves, that loneliness is no longer overwhelming."

This was in effect soliloquy. It may have been soundly reasoned but it had been difficult to follow. The desolate figure of little Mrs. Rylands was so vivid in his mind that he was still able to remain unresponsive to the glow he had evoked in Lady Catherine. He was talking neither to his hearers nor himself, but in imagination to that little lady upstairs against the disturbance of the lovely lady at the end of the table. He was making Cynthia his talisman against Catherine. By behaving like a wise man for Mrs. Rylands he might yet be able to arrest the deep warm currents about him and within him that were threatening to make a fool of him for Lady Catherine. The problem of that fine soul, so clear in its apprehensions and so fatally gentle in its will, flung so suddenly into a realisation of its immense unaided confrontation of the universe, was good enough to grip him. After he had written and sent her that letter he wanted to take it all back and begin all over again. Or to begin a second one and a longer. But the gong had arrested the latter impulse at the source and saved some of the material for this present allocution.

The rest of the dinner party were variously affected by his declarations. "But is one ever really alone?" asked Lord Tamar, carrying on the talk, and began to reflect upon what he was saying as he said it. What, asked a chilling voice within, what would stand by him in an ultimate isolation? If for example — but that was too horrible to think even. He glanced across the table at his wife and saw that she was longing to look at him in reply and could not do so. What stoicism, he asked himself, could help if *that* were stripped from him? But then, his warmer self hastened to interpolate, it could not be stripped from him because love makes things immortal! Yet what did that mean?

There came a silence. Miss Fenimore felt she had rarely enjoyed so deep and subtle a conversation. She did not understand a bit of it,

but it swept her mind onward intoxicatingly. Her glasses flashed round the table for the next speaker.

This was Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan. He fingered the stem of his glass. “Now *that*,” he said, speaking slowly and thoughtfully, “is a point of view.”

Everyone else was relieved to find there was someone competent to take up Mr. Sempack. What Mr. Sempack had been talking about was a point of view. That was really very helpful. Attention, embodied particularly in Miss Fenimore, focused itself consciously on Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan.

“That,” Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan improved, “is a method of apprehension. I admit the decay of Christian certitude. It has gone. And I admit the dignity and greatness of the Stoic vision. Yes. But it is, after all, only one of several possible visions.” He paused and extended a fine index finger at Mr. Sempack. “Equally well you may look through the glass of another philosophy and see the world as a *glad* spectacle, as a winepress of sensation and happiness and sympathetic feeling and beautiful experiences....”

He was launched.

He lifted a glance to Lady Catherine. “*Loneliness* is a fact,” he said; “yes. But *loveliness* also is a fact. Which fact do you care to make the most important, which shall be the focus of attention? You are free to choose, it seems to me, to go out of yourself if you will, rather than retreat to the innermost. Why take the loneliness of the soul rather than the loveliness of circumambient things?”

“Loneliness and Loveliness!” It was a long way from such silly talk to sound and sensible bridge, thought poor Lady Grieswold. People who had the sense to play bridge didn’t bother about such things. Awful stuff! And flouting Christianity too! Florence or Mentone? It would have to come to that. The nice people had gone.

“Against your Neo-Stoic,” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, still using his finger a little, “I set the Neo-Epicurean. I set such an attitude to the universe that a man may lament that he knows no God to thank for the infinitude of delicious things and marvellous possibilities wrapped up in the fabric of life.”

And so forth....

Thus was issue joined downstairs and a long rather rambling and

cloudy discussion between Stoicism and Epicureanism began. Miss Fenimore followed it from first to last with an enraptured incomprehension, while Philip brooded on his secret preoccupations and Mrs. Rylands lay upstairs on her great bed, preparing the things she had to say when at last Philip should come to her.

It was an entirely inconclusive discussion. Except that Lady Catherine, converted it would seem on the spot, presently announced herself a Stoic, to Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan's visible surprise and distress.

Now why should she do that?

"But my *dear* Lady!" said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan.

"Life should be *stern*," said Lady Catherine triumphantly....

After a time Philip, regardless of his formal duties as a host, got up and very quietly slipped away.

13. SEPARATION

It seemed ever so late in the night when Philip came upstairs. He made a scarcely perceptible noise, but she was alert. “Phil dear!” she cried. “Are you there? Phil!”

He came softly out of the shadows, stood aloof for a moment, black, mysterious and silent against the blue night, and then was at the bedside. “I hoped you were asleep,” he said.

She clicked on her shaded light and the two regarded each other in a sorrowful scrutiny, perplexed with themselves and life.

“Cynthia,” he whispered. “Cynthia my darling; can you forgive?”

“Perhaps,” she panted and paused. “Perhaps there is nothing to forgive.”

“But —— ?”

“Nothing that matters.”

“She’s cleared out.”

“It doesn’t matter. Don’t trouble about her.... You I think of.”

“I’ve been such a beast.”

“No. It happened. It had to happen. Something had to happen. You couldn’t help yourself. You’ve nothing to do here. You’ve been a prisoner here, waiting on me.”

“Oh! don’t say that. I meant to be so dear to you — my dear. But there’s something rotten in me.”

“No, no. Rotten! Dear, Phil dear, you’re not even ripe. But I’ve let you stay here....” She put out her hand and he sat himself on the bed beside her. He kissed her. “My dear,” he said. “Dear! Dear!”

“Listen,” she said and kept her hand upon him. She whispered. Both spoke in whispers. “Go to England, dear one. Things are happening there. Trouble and muddle. Men — men ought to work. You — you ought to find out. You ought to understand. You so rich and — responsible. Things have to be done. I can stay here....”

“You banish me?”

“No. *This* is banishment. *Here.* Here I can’t help you — to grow into the man you have to be. Not now. I’ve got to be three parts vegetable for a bit now — and then a sort of cow. No fit companion for a growing man. I don’t mind, dear. It’s worth it. It’s what I’m for.

It had to be. But you — *you* go home to England *now*. *You* can't stand idleness. *You* can't stand these long empty days."

He released her and sat thinking it out.

After a long pause he said, "I think you are right. I ought to go."

"Yes — *go*."

"We've got all the Red Valley property. All that Yorkshire stretch. The Vale of Edensoke. A third perhaps of the Rylands millions is in coal. I ought to know about it. I've let the older men, Uncle Robert and the others, do what they pleased."

Now that was a man!

"Go for *that*," she said. "Go for the sake of that."

He turned his eyes to her. She did her best to look at him with a grave, quiet, convincing face and her strength was not enough. Suddenly the calm of her countenance broke under her distress and she wept like a struck child.

"Oh my dear!" he cried in an agony of helplessness; "that I should hurt you now! What have I done to you?" and threw his arms about her and drew her up close to him, very close to him, and kissed the salt tears.

"Poor Phil!" she clung to him weeping, smoothing his hair with one hand. "Dear Phil!"

BOOK II. — ADVENT

1. DISPERSAL

For a brief interval it seemed probable that the dispersal of the party would be even more thorough than Mrs. Rylands and Lady Catherine had contemplated. Mr. Sempack, after what would appear to have been a troubled night, proclaimed his intention of going back to Nice forthwith to get some books and carry them off with him to Corsica.

His explanations lacked lucidity. He was not a good enough liar to invent a valid reason for going to Corsica. Lady Catherine, very subtly, left him to Mrs. Rylands, who summoned him secretly to the little sitting-room next her bedroom and received him in a beautiful flowery Chinese silk wrapper, and told him how she had looked forward to talking to him when the others had gone. She reduced him to the avowal that his motive in going was "mere restlessness," contrived to convert the Corsican project into a few days' walking from some centre upon the Route des Alpes, and made him promise to come back so soon as he had walked himself calm.

Neither she nor he made the slightest attempt to account for his restlessness. She accepted it as a matter of course. So with a slightly baffled air, carrying a knapsack and a small valise and leaving his more serious luggage as it were in pawn, Mr. Sempack took the local train for Nice.

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was also affected by the general dislodgment. He discovered or invented a friend — Mrs. Rylands was in doubt which — a friend he had not met for years at that jolly hotel with the convex landlord at Torre Pellice up above Turin, and remained oscillating on the point of departure for some days — without actually going, keeping the friend in reserve.

The only irremovable visitor indeed was dear Miss Fenimore, who made it apparent, quietly but clearly, that she had never yet been in at the birth of a baby and this time nothing whatever would induce her to abandon her place in the queue. She was resolved to be useful and devoted and on the spot, and nothing but two or three carbinieri seemed likely to dislodge her. Lady Grieswold after circling vaguely about the ideas of Mentone or even Florence was drawn down by the centripetal force of the green tables to a not too expensive pension at

Beausoleil.

The Tamars went off a day earlier than they had intended, they were taking a night at Cannes en route to stay with the Jex-Hiltons and talk to a distinguished refugee from Fascism whose house had been burnt, whose favourite dog had been skinned alive, and who had been twice seriously injured with loaded canes and sandbags on account of some mild criticism of the current regime. Lord Tamar had hitherto been too diplomatic to express even a private opinion of Mussolini, but he felt that possibly it might give pause to that energetic person's dictatorial tendencies to learn that one or two English people of the very best sort were not in the very least afraid to meet his victims and make pertinent enquiries about him.

Colonel and Mrs. Bullace had some difficulties about their wagon-lit and went a day later than they had proposed. The Colonel threw a tremendous flavour of having been recalled over his departure. The vague suggestion that some sort of social struggle of a definitive sort was brewing in England grew stronger and stronger as his farewells came nearer. Philip came down to find him discoursing to his wife and Miss Fenimore and Lady Grieswold, who was going with the Bullaces as far as Monte Carlo.

"This coal difficulty is neither the beginning nor the end of the business," he was saying. "Rest assured. We know. It is just the thin end of the Moscow wedge. They've been watched. They've been watched. Intelligence against intelligence."

He would have preferred not to have had Philip join his audience, but he stuck to his discourse. Bombaccio brought his master his coffee and Philip sat back, hands in his trouser pockets, staring deeply at his guest.

"You really think," said Miss Fenimore. "You really think —— ?"

"We know," said the Colonel. "We know."

"Is this the social revolution again?" asked Philip.

"It would be, if we were not prepared."

"But what are you prepared for?" asked Philip. "What do you think is going to happen? To need you at home?"

"The British working man, Sir, has to take smaller wages and work longer hours — and he won't. Ever since the war and Lloyd

George's nonsense, he's been too uppish. And he has to climb down. He's got to climb down before he topples things over. That's the present situation. And behind it — the Red Flag. Moscow."

"Surely this coal business is a question in itself. We have the Coal Commission Report. The owners have haggled a bit about things and the men are inclined to be stiff, but there's nothing that can't be got over, so far as I can see. It's a case of give and take. Baldwin is doing his utmost to bring the parties together and arrange a settlement and a fresh start. Won't he get it? I don't see where your social conflict is to come in."

"I will explain," said Colonel Bullace, and cleared his throat. He turned and rapped the table. "There will be no coal settlement."

"Why?"

"Neither the miners nor the coal-owners will agree to anything."

"Well?"

"Then there will be a lock-out and then — we know what they are up to all right — and then there will be a strike — of ALL the workers — yes, of all the workers in the country, a new sort of strike, Sir, a general strike, a political strike, an attempt at — —" The Colonel paused and then gave the words as it were in italics— "Red Revolution!"

"In England!"

Philip's voice betrayed his unfathomable faith in British institutions.

"We know it. We know it from men like Thomas, sensible men. Too sensible for the riff-raff behind 'em. The hotheads, the Moscow crew, have had this brewing for some time. Don't think we're not informed. It has been their dream — for years. This coal trouble won't be settled, rest assured, and I for one, don't want to see it settled. No, Sir. The fight has to come and it may as well come now while we have men, real red-blooded men like Churchill and Joynson-Hicks and Birkenhead, to fight it through.

"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just — yes.

"But Thricer he who gets his blow in fust."

Colonel Bullace pronounced these words in ringing tones, nodded his head, and gave his host a stern grimly masticating profile until he caught his wife's eye. His wife's eye had been seeking capture for

some time, and now, assisted by an almost imperceptible pantomime it said, “egg — moustache.” Colonel Bullace made the necessary corrections with as little loss of fierceness as possible.

“You mean,” said Philip, “that when Baldwin calls the conference of owners and men and tells them to make peace on the lines of the coal commission, he is, in plain English, humbugging — marking time for something else to happen? Something else about which he cannot be altogether unaware.”

“Mr. Baldwin is a good man,” said the Colonel. “But he does not fully realise what we are up against.”

Mrs. Bullace nodded. “He doesn’t know.”

“We do,” said the Colonel. “The General Strike, the Social Revolution in England is timed for the first of May, this first of May. The attack is as certain as the invasion of Belgium was in August 1914.”

A diversion was made by the appearance of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan in the beautiful tussore suit. He hovered in the doorway. “Don’t tell me,” he expostulated, “that you are talking COAL, in the midst of this delicious heat!”

He sauntered to the open terrace, rubbing the faultless hands, and returned to confide — with just one greenish glint of the diamond — his need of a plentifully sugared grape-fruit to Bombaccio’s satellite. He indicated the exact height of the sugar. “Zucchero. Allo montano. Come questa.”

Philip got up, hesitated towards the terrace and then went into the hall and upstairs to his wife’s room.

2. THE NEW START

Both Philip and Cynthia had a feeling that they had much to communicate to each other and neither knew how to set about communicating. She even thought of writing him a long carefully weighed letter; it was a trick her father had in moments of crisis, retreat to his study, statements, documentation, distribution; her brain kept coining statements and formulæ, but it seemed useless to write a long letter to some one who was so soon to depart and make letters the only means of intercourse. Moreover he kept drifting in and out of her sitting-room and sitting beside her couch, so that she had no time for any consecutive composition. He would pat her and caress her gently, sit about her room, fiddle with things on her dressing-table or take up and open books and then put them down again, and he would sometimes sit still and keep silence for five minutes together. He had a way of getting up when he had anything to say and walking about while he said it, and he seemed never to expect her to answer at once to anything he said. And if they were walking in the garden then on the contrary he would stop to deliver himself, and afterwards pick a flower or throw a pebble at a tree. As soon as Lady Grieswold and the Bullaces and Tamars were well out of the way, and the weekly visiting-day when the chars-a-bancs poured their polyglot freight through the garden was past, she came down out of her seclusion and walked about the paths and stairways with him and sat and talked here and there. They never seemed to thresh anything out and yet when at last he too had gone, she began to realise that they had, in phrases and fragments, achieved quite considerable exchanges. Three separate times he had said: “You’ve never looked so lovely as you do now,” which did not at all help matters forward but still seemed somehow to make for understanding.

She detected in herself a disposition to prelude rather heavily, to say often and too impressively: “Philip, dear; there is something I want to say — —” She hated herself every time she found that this preluding tendency had got her again, and had foisted itself upon her in some new, not instantly avoidable variation.

Yes, things were said and there were answers and acceptances. In the retrospect things fell into place and the remark of the late afternoon linked itself to the neglected suggestion of the morning. He had attended to her observations more than she had supposed, and expressed himself she realised with a fragmentary completeness.

Among the things she thought had been got over between herself and Philip was the recognition of their personal difference. They had to understand that their minds worked differently. Mr. Sempack had made that very plain to her, plainer even than he had intended, and she meant to make it very plain to Philip. Philip would have to make allowances for her in the days ahead. It was not only she who had to make allowances for Philip. They had to see each other plain. Illusions were all very well for lovers but not for the love of man and wife.

"I worry more with my mind over things than you do," she had struggled with it. "Your mind bites and swallows; you hardly know what has happened, but mine grinds round and round. I'm an intellectualiser."

"You're damned intelligent," said Philip loyally.

"That's not so certain, Phil. I not only think a thing but I've got to think I'm thinking it. I've got to join things on one to the other. I've got to get out my principles and look at them, before I judge anything Philip, has it ever dawned on you that I'm a bit of a prig?"

"You!" cried Philip. "My God!"

He was so horrified; she had to laugh. "Dear, I am," she said. "I don't forget myself in things. You do. But I'm always there, with my set of principles complete, in the foreground — or the frame if you like — of what I'm thinking about. You can't get away from it, if you are like that."

"You're no *prig*," said Philip. "What has put that into your head?"

"And so far as I can see," she said, "it's no good making up your mind not to be a prig if you are a prig. That's only going one depth deeper into priggishness."

Philip had one of his flashes. "Still that's not so bad as making up your mind that you won't make up your mind not to be a prig, you little darling. This — all this is adorable and just like you. You are growing up in your own fashion, and so perhaps am I. I've always

loved your judgments and your balance.... How little we've talked since our marriage! How little we've talked! And I always dreamt of talking to you. Before we married I used to think of us sitting and talking — just like this."

That was a good phase of their time to recall. And she recalled it, with a number of little things he said later, little things that came back again and again to this question of some method, some reasoned substance, in their relationship that she had broached in this fashion. At times he would say things that amounted to the endorsement and acceptance of her own gently hinted criticisms. It was queer how he gave them back to her, enlarged, rather strengthened.

"Of course," said Philip, half a day later; "all this taking things for granted is Rot — sheer Rot. Everyone ought to think things out for himself. Everyone. Coal strike. Everything. How lazy — in our minds I mean — people of our sort are! We seem to take it all out of ourselves keeping fit.... Fit for nothing."

And: "Empty-minded. I suppose that people never have been so empty- minded as our sort of people are now. Always before, they had their religion. They had their intentions to live in a certain way that they thought was right. Not simply just jazzing about...."

It was extraordinary with what completeness he grasped and accepted her long latent criticisms of their life in common. "Puppy," he remarked, "only put the lid on. I see I must get clear. The damned thing of it, wasn't *that* at all. It was the drift. The day after day. The tennis. Just anything that happened."

He had seized upon her timid and shadowy intimations to make a definite project for their intercourse while he was away. "Prig or no prig," they were to explain their beliefs to each other, clear up their ideas, "stop the drift." They were to write as fully and clearly as possible to each other. "God and all that," he said. It didn't matter.

"I've never written a letter, a real letter, I mean about serious things, in my life. I shall try and write about 'em now to you. Just as I see them over there. I shan't write love-letters to you — except every now and then. Lill' nonsense, just in passin'. I shall write about every blessed thing. Every blessed thing.

"You mustn't laugh at the stuff I shall send you. It will clear my

mind. People of our sort ought to be *made* to write things down what we believe. Just to make sure we aren't fudging."

Walking up and down with her in the broad path beyond the stone of the sweet Lucina, he remarked at large, loudly and with no sequence: "Prig be damned!"

And also he said: "A woman is a man's keeper. A wife is a man's conscience. If he can't bring his thoughts to her — she's no good at all.

"No real good."

Then a confession. "I always thought of talking about things with you. When first I met you. We did talk rather. For a bit."

Her fullest memory was of him late at night on the balcony outside her sitting-room. She was lying on a long deck-chair and he stood leaning against the parapet, jerking things at her, going from topic to topic, lighting, smoking, throwing away cigarettes.

"Cynthia," he asked abruptly, "what do you think about Socialism and all that sort of thing?"

So comprehensive a question found her unprepared. One was trained at school, he went on, to think "that sort of thing." Rot and not think any more about it. But it wasn't Rot. There was such a thing as social injustice. Most people didn't get a fair deal. They didn't get a dog's chance of a fair deal.

He stepped to another aspect.

"Have you ever thought of our sort of life as being mean, Cynthia?"

Latterly she had. But she wanted him to lead the talking and so she answered: "I've always assumed we gave something back."

"Yes. And what do we give back?"

"We ought to give back — —" She paused.

"More than we do."

"Considering what *they* get," he said. "*Rather*!

"F'r instance," he began and paused.

The moon with an imperceptible swiftness was gliding clear of the black trees and he stood now, a dim outline against a world of misty silver, taut and earnest, leaning against her balustrade. "I've been trying to make out this coal story for myself," he said. "Rather late in the day seeing how deep in coal we are. But I've always left

things to Uncle Robert and the partners. I grew up to the idea of leaving things to Uncle Robert."

The face of Uncle Robert, Lord Edensoke, the head of the Rylands clan, came before her eyes, a hard handsome face, rather like Philip, rather like Geoffry; she could never determine in her own mind which he was most like. He was the autocrat of the Rylands world and she fancied a little hostile to her marriage. It was very easy to understand how Philip had grown up to the idea of leaving things to Uncle Robert.

"I don't like the story," Philip was saying.

"You know, Cynthia, it's a greedy history, on our part.

"I wish old Sempack hadn't trotted off in the way he did. I'd have liked to have had a lot of this out with him. That old boy has a kind of grip of things. I'm getting his books. I suppose it was just his tact took him off. He noticed something. Of that trouble. Thought we might want a bit of time together. We did. But I'd have liked to have had his point of view of a lot of things. We coal-owners f'r instance.

"You know, Cynthia, in the coal trouble, we coal-owners don't seem to have done a single decent thing. I mean to say a generous thing. I mean we just stick to our royalties. We get in the way and ask to be bought off. I think you ought to read a bit of this Royal Commission Report. It's in the file of the *Manchester Guardian* downstairs. I'll mark you some papers. There's the Commission's report and the Labour Plan and various schemes and they're all worth reading. These are things we *ought* to read. It's a Tory Commission, this last one. The other wasn't. The Justice Sankey one. But the things this Report is kind of obliged to say of us. Ever so gently, but it gets them said. The way we hang on. And get. I never saw it before. I suppose because I've never looked. Been afraid of being called a prig perhaps. Taking life too seriously and all that. But when you look straight at it, and read those papers — which aren't Bolshevik, which aren't even Labourite, mind you — you see things."

He faced the socialist proposition. "*Are* we parasites?" he asked.

Out of something he called their "net production" of coal, Rylands and Cokeson got in royalties and profits seventeen per cent. "Royalties by right and profits by habit," he said. She made a mental

note to find out about net production.

He laughed abruptly. “I’m talking to-night. I seem to be doing all the talking. Just outpouring.”

“Oh! I’ve wanted you to talk,” she said. “For all our life together I’ve been wondering —— What does he think? What does he feel? I mean about these things — these things that really matter. And this is how you feel. It’s so true, my dear, we don’t give enough. We’re not good enough. We take and we don’t repay.”

“But even if we did all we could, how could we repay?”

“We could at least do all we could.”

He stood quite still for a time and then came over to her. He bent down over her and sat down beside her, he kissed her face, cool and infinitely delicate in the moonlight, and crumpled up beside her chaise-longue, a dark heap with a pale clear profile, and his ear against her hand. She loved the feel of his ear.

“My dear, it’s so *amazing!*” he whispered. “When we begin to look at ourselves. To see how near we may be to the things they say of us in Hyde Park.”

He brooded. “Getting all we do out of the country and doing nothing for it. A bit of soldiering in the war — but it was the Tommies got the mud and the short commons. And things like that.... What else have I done for — this?”

This in his whispered voice was all the beauty in their lives, this warm globe of silver and ebony in which they nestled darkly together.

“Presently I am expected to sit for Sealholme — just to make sure nobody gets busy with our royalties....

“Suppose I stood for Sealholme on the other side!

“It is funny to wake up, so to speak, and find myself with all this socialism running about in my head.”

He rubbed his ear and cheek against her hand as a cat might do. “Is it you, has given me this socialism? I must have caught it from you.”

She pinched his ear softly. “You’ve been thinking.”

“If it isn’t you, it’s — —”

He paused for her to fall into his trap.

“Sempack,” she guessed.

“Bullace,” he said. “Queer beast. Something between an ass and a walrus. Egg on his moustache. But he gave the show away. All his talk about labour — and keeping labour down. So utterly mean. Bluster and meanness. Yes. But how does Bullace stand to Uncle Robert?...

“Where does Uncle Robert come in?”

Long silence.

“You are the rightest thing in the world, Cynthia. I’ve not given you a fair chance with me. I’ve never given us a fair chance with ourselves. We have to think things out. All this stuff. Where we are and what we are.”

He sighed.

“And then I suppose what we have to do.”

He went off at a tangent. “My Cynthia. I love you.”

“My *dear*” she whispered and drew his head into the crook of her arm against her crescent breast and kissed his hair.

“Two kids. That’s been the pose. Pretty dears! Lovely to see how happy they are. Uncle Robert will see to things. But not such kids. Not such kids that we can’t spend twenty-two thousand a year on ourselves and bring a child into the world. What am I? Twenty-nine!... Too much of this darling kid business. We’re man and woman, caught unprepared....”

He had a flash of imagination. “Suppose I went and looked over this balcony and down there in the black shadows under the palm trees I saw the miners who pay for this house, with their lanterns, cramped as they are in the mine, creeping forward, step by step, picking and sweating through the shadows, eh? Chaps younger than me. Boys some of ‘em. And suppose one or two of ’em looked up!...

“God! the things I don’t know! The things I’ve never thought about! The hours of perfect health I’ve spent on that cursed tennis court while all this trouble was brewing!... When you and I might have been talking and learning to understand!”

Astounding this burst of pent-up radicalism! How long had it been accumulating?

Brooding, reading, thinking; how *silent* he had been! And then these ideas, these very decisive ideas — for all their inchoate expressiveness.

3. LADY CATHERINE HAS NOTHING TO DO

So soon as Philip had departed it was Mrs. Rylands' intention to begin a great clearing and tidying-up of her mind. She was delighted but also she was a little alarmed at her husband's fall into violent self- criticism and his manifest resolve to think things out for himself. She felt that he might very easily outrun her in mental thoroughness, once he set his face in that direction, and so she would get as far along the road as she could before he could overtake her. She condemned other people for Stupidity, perhaps, too readily, but what if she were put to the question? How far from the indefensibly Stupid were the philosophical and religious assumptions upon which she rested? What really could she say she believed about the world? What did she think she was living for, if so comprehensive a question chanced to be put to her? And if she could so far accept that question as to imagine it put to her, wasn't she in conscience bound to set about preparing her answer?

One of her Oxford cousins, some years ago, had made her a very pleasant and tantalising present of three books of blank paper, very good hand-made paper, gilt edged along the top and bound in green leather. She had resolved at once to write all sorts of things in these books, so many sorts of things, that still the pages remained virgin. But now was a great occasion. She had brought them with her to Italy. She looked for them and found them and took out one of these little volumes and handled it and turned its pages over. In this new phase of existence she had entered, she found her pleasure in the sense of touch much increased and it seemed to her that her delight in fine and pretty things was greater than it had ever been before. She almost caressed the little book and stood before her window holding it with both hands dreaming of the things she would put into it. She saw, though not very distinctly, pregnant aphorisms and a kind of index to her knowledge and beliefs spreading over those nice pages. The binding was quite beautifully tooled, the leather had a faint, exquisite smell and the end paper was creamy, powdered with gold stars, all held together by a diamond mesh.

She mused a great deal about what she would write first, but for a

time she could not sit down to think out anything to the writing stage because Catherine would insist on talking to her. Hitherto she and Catherine had got on very well together but without any excesses of directness or intimacy. She had always accepted the view of her husband and his set that Catherine was "all right" and more sinned against than sinning, but she had never been disposed to wander imaginatively in those romantic tangles which made Catherine's passions, it would seem, so different from her own.

Catherine's rôle was to be a gallant and splendid beauty, a summoner and a tester of men. Men who were going east turned west at her passing and, for better or worse, were never quite the same men again. She had summoned and tested her wealthy husband until he had become an almost willing respondent, with a co-respondent of no importance, and left her the freest woman in the world. What she did was right; the essential purity of her character was not so much accepted as waved before the world like a flag. She did quite a lot of things. Cynthia had shirked her confidences because among other reasons she felt that it would make her own relations to Philip seem too abject. But the confidences came.

"I'd like to take you in the car along the upper Corniche and up to Puget-Théniers or Annot to-day," she said. "It would do us both good. Everybody going has left me — jangling."

"We might run against your Mr. Sempack," said Cynthia. "Annot? Aren't the Verdon gorges somewhere there?"

"I don't see why all the blue mountains of France should be closed to us because Mr. Sempack is wandering about with a knapsack in a bad temper trying to remember something he has never as a matter of fact forgotten."

Mrs. Rylands made no effort to understand. "We'd have to ask Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan to come," she remarked.

Lady Catherine by a beautiful grimace expressed an extreme aversion to Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan. "This little sitting-room of yours is the only refuge.... 'Dear Lady,' he says.... Why doesn't he go off to that other cultivated American of his at Torre Pellice?"

She became derogatory of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan.

"I saw him from my window. He was walking along the path to the marble faun and he was waving that hand of his and bowing. All

to himself. I suppose he was rehearsing some new remark."

Her mind went off at a tangent. "Cynthia," she said. "Do you think a man like Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan ever makes love to women — I mean, really makes love — actually?"

Mrs. Rylands declined to take up the speculation. Meanwhile Lady Catherine threw out material. "He may be seventy. Of course he's *pickled* for fifty-five. He'd say things. Elegant things. Gallantry's in the man. He'd say everything there had to be said perfectly — but then?..." She brooded malignantly on possible situations.

"I suppose men go on with the forms of love-making right to the end of their lives — just like a hen runs about when its head's chopped off."

She came round through such speculations to what was evidently her disturbing preoccupation. "Now Mr. Sempack *talks*," she said.

She plunged. "What do you think of Mr. Sempack, Cynthia? What do you think of him? What do you think of a man like that? There's an effect of strength and greatness about him. And yet what does he *do*? Is he a snare and a delusion?"

She seated herself on the end of the sofa, side-saddle fashion with one foot on the floor, and regarded her friend expectantly.

"What are you up to with Mr. Sempack?" said Cynthia.

"Quarrelling."

Mrs. Rylands would not take that as an answer. She remained quietly interrogative.

"He exasperates me," said Lady Catherine.

"Everyone," she went on, "seems to look up to him and respect him. Everyone, that is, who's heard of him. Why? He's tremendously big and I suppose there's something big about the way he looks at the world and talks about progress, and treats all we are doing as something that will be all over in no time and that cannot matter in the least, but, after all, what does all this towering precipice sort of business amount to? He isn't *really* a precipice. I suppose if some one up there in the mountains held him up and demanded his pocket-book, he'd do something about it. He couldn't just try to pass it off with the remark that robbers would be out-of-date in quite a few centuries' time and so it didn't matter. Especially if they hit him or

something.”

Mrs. Rylands was smilingly unhelpful.

“I believe he’d hit back,” said Lady Catherine.

“I don’t see why he shouldn’t,” said Mrs. Rylands.

“He’d be clumsy but he might hit hard. He’s one of those queer men who seem to keep strong without exercise. Unless walking is exercise.”

Mrs. Rylands offered no contributions.

“He seems to think women are like raspberries in a garden. You pick one as you go past, but you don’t go out of your way for her.”

“I can’t imagine a Mrs. Sempack.”

“It’s a bit of an exercise,” said Lady Catherine. “Rather like that awful hat of his, she’d be. Or his valise. Put up on the luggage rack, left in the consigne, covered with rags of old labels, jammed down and locked violently with everything inside higgledy-piggledy. And yet —— What is it, Cynthia? There’s something attractive about that man.”

“One or two little things I’ve observed,” reflected Cynthia absently, looking down at the dear green leather book in her hand. Then she regarded her friend.

Lady Catherine coloured slightly. “I admit it,” she said. “I suppose it’s just because he’s so wanting in visible delicacy. It gives him an effect of being tremendously male. He *is* that. Don’t you think that’s it, Cynthia? And something about him — as though there were immense forces still to be awakened. His voice; it’s a good voice. And something that smoulders deep in his eyes.”

Mrs. Rylands suddenly resolved to become aggressive.

“Catherine! Tell me; why did he go away from here?”

“That’s exactly what I want to know. He meant to go for good.”

“That’s why you made me see him.”

“I thought it was your place to see him.”

Mrs. Rylands put her head on one side and regarded her friend critically. “Did you make love to him — *much*?”

Lady Catherine’s colour became quite bright. “I want to see, my dear, what that man is like *awake*. I am curious. Like most women. And he hesitates and then runs away — to walk about Gorges! He did — hesitate. But this flight!... And here am I — left — with

nothing in the world to do!... Except of course look after dear little you. Who're perfectly able to look after yourself."

Mrs. Rylands smiled with a perfect understanding at her friend. "And talk about him."

"Well, he interests me."

"You made love to him — and startled and amazed him. Why did you do it? You didn't want to be Lady Catherine Sempack?"

"I want to make that man realise his position in the world. Making love — isn't matrimony. One can be interested."

It occurred to Lady Catherine that, in view of recent events, she might be wandering near a sore point. But Mrs. Rylands' next remark showed her fully able to cover any sore point that might be endangered.

"Catherine — I don't want to know about things I'm not supposed to know about — but isn't there some one in England called Sir Harry Fearon-Owen? Who always goes about with his hyphen? Hasn't he some sort of connexion —— ?"

Lady Catherine concealed considerable annoyance rather imperfectly. She took a moment or so before she replied compactly.

"He's in England. And he's busy. Too busy even to write to his friends."

"He's preparing to save England from the Communist revolution, isn't he? He's one of Colonel Bullace's great idols. The Colonel talked about him."

Lady Catherine allowed herself to be reluctantly drawn off the Sempack scent.

"It's amazing the things men will take seriously. Do *you* believe there is any sense in this talk about a revolution? Harry's great stunt is the National Service League. As you probably know. Plans for doing without the workers in all the public services and that sort of thing — if it comes to a fight. I liked him. For a time. He's a very good sort. And handsome. With a voice. Opera tenor blood perhaps — it saves him from being dull. But I can't go on being in love with a man who's in love with a Civil War, that nobody in his senses believes will happen."

Lady Catherine wriggled off her sofa end and went to the window. She felt that Cynthia by dragging in Sir Harry had deliberately spoilt

a good conversation. She still had a lot of speculative matter about Sempack in her mind that she would have liked to turn over. She had hardly begun. And the Fearon-Owen affair had got itself a little disjointed and wasn't any good for talking about.

"These glorious empty days!" she said without any apparent perception of the trees and flowering terraces and sapphire sea below.

She stood against the blue for a time quite still.

She came back into the room and hung a shadowy loveliness over her recumbent hostess.

"If I thought there was a word of truth in this Great Rebellion of the Proletariat I'd be off to England by the night train."

§4. THE GREEN LEATHER BOOK

Mrs. Rylands found herself at last at peace and with nothing between her and her green leather book. Catherine had hardly gone from the room before she was forgotten.

The couch on which Mrs. Rylands was lying was a very comfortable couch and the jambs of the tall window, the lower border of the orange sun-blind and the parapet of her balcony framed a still picture of the crowning fronds of three palm trees, a single more distant cypress and the light-flood of the sky. The day outside was intensely bright and real and everything within cool, faint-coloured and unsubstantial. Mrs. Rylands' sensations floated on a great restfulness and contentment; she was sustained by this deep life stream that had entered into her and taken control of her once uneasy self, a self in the profoundest contrast now to Lady Catherine's restless activity. She had never felt so little disposed to hurry or so serene. This high resolve to think out all her world for Phil and have it clear and plain was quite unruffled by any fret of urgency.

To begin with, she asked herself, "What do I know? What have I that is fundamental?"

"Nothing," she told herself, with perfect calm.

"Do I believe anything?"

That she thought over. God? Nothing that would have passed for a God in any time but this. No trace of that old gentleman, the God of

our Fathers. At the dinner table of the Warwickshire rectory she had been allowed to listen to much modern theology and it had left her with phrases about the Absolute and Comprehensive Love that were hardly more human than the square root of minus one. Yet as her father used to say, the most impossible hypothesis of all was a universe ruled by blind chance. And the most incredible, an evil world. It was something to believe that if one could see it whole, as one never could, and if one could see it through, the everything, was all right. She did believe that. Or was her conviction deeper than belief?

It might be the mere mental reflection of the physical well-being that had succeeded the first resistances of her body to her surrender to destiny. But in a mirror can there ever be any truth more profound than reflection? That floated in her mind like some noiseless moth and soared and passed beyond her.

Should she write this for the first entry in her book: "There is no need to hurry. There is nothing in the whole world to justify fear."

So far from believing in nothing, this was a tremendous act of faith.

She lay criticising these projected first propositions, indolently and yet clearly. Was this act of faith of hers just then the purring of a well-fed cat upon its cushions? No insect grub was ever cradled in so silky and secure a cocoon as she. For her indeed there might be no hurry and no fear, but what of the general case, the common experience? Wasn't all the world hurrying, all the world driven by fear? But one hurried to make a speedy end to hurrying, and fear was just an emotional phase in the search for security. A man running from a tiger might be mentally nothing but a passion of fear but, one way or the other, that passion ended. A man running from a tiger was in no fit circumstances to apprehend fundamental truths; a woman caught up for a little while from the intenser stresses of life seemed more happily posed. Fear was an unendurable reality but it was incidental. It was a condition of travel. Just as haste and all struggle were incidental. The final rightness of things was wider; you might only see it incidentally in resting moments, but it was always there. Faith could be more than incidental and was more than incidental. While the water was troubled it couldn't reflect the sky, but that

didn't prevent the sky being there to await reflection. All religions and philosophies since the world began had insisted that one must get out of the turmoil, somehow, to catch any vision of true realities. And as soon as you got that vision — serenity.

That should be the first entry then, so soon as she got up and could sit down to write it: "There is no need to hurry. There is nothing in the whole world to justify fear."

After that the Thinker on the sofa rested for a while.

Presently she found a queer little aphorism drifting through her mind with an air of wanting to get into the green leather book: "Faith in good, Faith in God." Just as easy to believe as deny that there was something directive and friendly and sure of itself, above all the contradictions and behind all the screens. Immense, incomprehensible, stupendous, silent, something that smiled in the starry sky....

Then her mind drifted to the idea that everyone was too *troubled* about life, so very largely because they had no faith in good. They hurried. Everyone was hurrying. If there was nothing whatever to hurry about then they hurried about games, about politics, about personal disputes. They invented complications to trouble themselves. They accepted conventions and would not look thoroughly into anything because of this uncontrollable hurry. If only they would take longer views and larger views, they would escape from all this stress. It was just there that the importance of Mr. Sempack came in. He did take longer views and larger views and help other people to take them. He presented Progress as large and easy, swift and yet leisurely, sweeping forward by and through and in spite of all the disputations and hasty settlements and patchings up and running to and fro. He conveyed his conviction of a vast forward drive carrying the ordinary scurryings of life upon its surface, great and worth while, that comprehended a larger human life, a finer individual life, a happier life than at present we permitted ourselves to realise. His vision of mankind working its way, albeit still blindly and with tragic blunderings, to a world civilisation and the attainment of ever increasing creative power, gave a standard by which all the happenings of to-day, that swirled us about so confusedly and filled the newspapers so blindingly, could be judged

and measured. He must come back to Casa Terragena and he must talk some more; and into the frame of progress he would evoke, his hostess, with her green leather book close at hand and receptive for all the finer phrases, would fit her interpretation of the coal question and the strike question and all the riddles and conflicts of the arena into which Philip had gone down. And Philip would begin writing those letters he had promised and she would get books and read....

At this point Mrs. Rylands' mind was pervaded by a feeling that work time was over and that it ought to be let out to play. It went off at once like a monkey and ran up and down and about the still palm fronds outside. They were like large feathers, except that the leaflets did not lock together. Was there any reason why they should be so like feathers? Next the stem the leaflets were extraordinarily narrow; she wondered why? Each frond curved over to its end harmoniously and evenly, so that to follow it was like hearing a long cadence, and the leaflets stood up at the arch of the curve and then slanted and each was just the least little bit in the world smaller and slanted the fraction of an inch more steeply than the one below it. Each had a twist so that it was bright bright green and then came round to catch the light and became dazzling silver to its point. Each frond was a keyboard along which the roving eye made visual music. Each played a witty variation on the common theme.

5. BATTLE JOINED

Mrs. Rylands came down out of her privacies in time for lunch, but lunch was a little delayed by the absence of Lady Catherine and Mr. Plantagenet- Buchan. Catherine had flitted off to Ventimiglia. A telegram and some letters had awaited her in the hall, Bombaccio explained, something had excited her very much and off she had gone forthwith in the second car, sweeping up Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan on her way. She had been given the second car because in defiance of all instructions to the contrary, Bombaccio kept the first car for his mistress. He would always do that to the end of things. Lady Catherine was coming back, she was sure to come back, said Bombaccio, but Mrs. Rylands was not to wait lunch.

Mrs. Rylands found Miss Fenimore all alone in the hall reading Saturday's English newspapers. "Nothing seems settled about the miners," said Miss Fenimore, handing over *The Times*, and neither lady glanced at the French and Italian papers at all. Mrs. Rylands found the name of an old school friend among the marriages.

Miss Fenimore said she had been studying botany all the morning. Her hostess asked what book she had been using.

"Oh! I haven't got a *book* yet," said Miss Fenimore. "I've just been walking about the garden you know and reading some of the labels, so as to get a General Idea first. One can get books anywhere.... I've always wanted to know something about botany."

Then with an immense éclat Lady Catherine returned from Ventimiglia to proclaim the Social Revolution in England. She came in trailing sunlight and conflict with her, a beautiful voice, rich gestures and billowing streamers, Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan holding his own, such as it was, on her outskirts.

"My dear," she cried. "It's come! The Impossible has happened. I must go to England to-night — if the Channel boats are still running."

"What has come?" asked Mrs. Rylands.

"The General Strike. Proclaimed at midnight. They've dared to fight us! Haven't you seen the papers?"

"There's nothing in the English papers," said Mrs. Rylands and

became aware of Miss Fenimore rustling the French sheets behind her. “Grève générale,” came Miss Fenimore in confirmation. “And a long leader all in italics, I see; *Nos pauvres voisins!* Now the turn of England has come.”

Bombaccio appeared and took Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan’s hat and cane.

“Don’t wait lunch for me,” said Lady Catherine, sweeping across the hall to the staircase. “I’ll be down in a minute. I’ll have to tell Soames to pack. This has stirred me like great music.”

“Lunch in five minutes,” said Mrs. Rylands to Bombaccio’s enquiring pause and turned to the Italian papers. The General Strike? Because of the miners. But Mr. Baldwin had been quite determined to settle it, and the owners and the government and the miners’ representatives had been holding conference after conference. In the most friendly spirit. Was her picture of it all wrong? What was Philip doing away there? And Colonel Bullace and his braves? And all the people one knew? How skimpy the news in these foreign papers was, the important news, the English news!

Mrs. Rylands was still dazed by the sudden change in the aspect of things in general and of Lady Catherine in particular when the party had assembled at the lunch table. Lady Catherine dominated the situation. “Letters of mine went astray. To Rapallo. Or I should have known before. How amazing it is! How wonderful and stirring!”

“One thing I observe,” began Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, but Lady Catherine was following her own thoughts and submerged him.

“To think that they have *dared*!” she cried. “I shall go back as a volunteer — to serve as a nurse, a helper, anything. Captain Fearon-Owen says — —”

“You have heard from him?” asked Mrs. Rylands.

“Two letters. They came together. From Rapallo. And a summons — by wire.

Everyone is wanted now, every sort of help. The printers have struck. There are no papers. The railwaymen are out! Not an omnibus in London.

For all we know, while we sit here, all the Russians and Yids in

Whitechapel may be marching under the red flag to Westminster!”

“You really think so?” said Mrs. Rylands and tried to imagine it.

“There is one thing I think about this business,” Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan tried.

“I wonder if they have machine-guns,” the lady flowed over him. “Three months ago Captain Fearon-Owen wanted a search through the East End for munitions. But nobody would listen to him. And he always said the Royal Mint was much too far to the east for safety. There are always grenadiers there — just a few. They go along the Embankment every morning. A mere handful. Against hundreds of thousands.”

“Like the poor dear Swiss Guard in Paris,” Miss Fenimore shivered. “The Lion of Lucerne.”

“Months ago, Captain Fearon-Owen made a plan. I read it and laughed at it. I thought it was extravagant. I suppose everyone thought it was extravagant. But he had foreseen all this.”

“Foreseen *what*, my dear?” asked Mrs. Rylands.

“This rising. He was for evacuating the Mint. And having naval forces ready to throw into the Docks right away.”

“Rough on the naval forces,” Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan allowed himself to murmur to some new potatoes.

“The Docks are full of food,” said Lady Catherine, pursuing her strategic meditations.

“There is *one* aspect of this business,” Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan tried again softly, addressing himself to a freshly acquired potato.

But Lady Catherine was too intent on battle to heed his attempted interpolation. The poor little potato never learnt that *one* aspect of the business before it vanished from the world. Its end was silence. Did it meet truth and knowledge in those warm darknesses? Who can tell?

“The main danger,” Lady Catherine had to explain, “is the North. Captain Fearon-Owen does not think very much of the Midlands. Labour there is too diversified for unity and too soundly English for insurrection. But the Tyne is a black spot. And the Clyde. Red as it can be. And there’s no reckoning with South Wales. A Welsh mob could be a very ugly mob, excitable and cruel. Especially when it

sings. If they chanced on some song like the Marseillaise! Nothing could stop them."

"You talk as though there was an insurrection, Catherine," said Mrs. Rylands. "But the French papers speak only of a strike. Isn't that rather a more *passive* thing?"

"A General Strike," said Lady Catherine informingly, and there were trumpets in her voice. She looked like Britannia after putting on her helmet and drawing her sword. "A General Strike *is* an insurrection."

It was plain that in the absence of the other patriots, lunch was going to be a solo. A cowed feeling came over Mrs. Rylands. She had always felt that someday Catherine would up and cow her and now that day had come. Bombaccio too looked cowed, as cowed as Bombaccio could look. There was no checking Lady Catherine by offering her vegetables. One had a feeling all through the lunch as though one was eating in church. One could not fight it down. But what a marvel Catherine was, what a chameleon! For days she had been a shadow and echo of Mr. Sempack, a goad in that excellent man's loins. Now it was as if a record had been whisked off a gramophone and replaced by another, of an entirely different character. One heard the British patriot marching to battle and saw a forest of waving Union Jacks, one heard the lumbering artillery, the jingle-jangle of cavalry, the loud purring of tanks defiling into industrial towns at dawn. One heard the threatening whirr of aeroplanes dispersing dangerous meetings in public squares. And amidst the storm, and over the storm and through the storm one heard of Captain Fearon-Owen.

"Captain Fearon-Owen says there must be no weakness. There must be no faltering. Not even in the highest quarters."

"But *surely* —— !" protested Miss Fenimore.

"The King is too kind," said Lady Catherine.

Then reflectively: "Of course I must fly from Paris. At Dover there will be no trains. I shall telegraph from Mentone to Le Bourget to keep a place.

"Flying over England in revolt. Watching them striking and striking — far below. Dreadful! — but exciting!"

Afterwards Mrs. Rylands tried to gather together and preserve

some of the handsomer thistles that thrust themselves up through the jungle heat of Lady Catherine's mood. But she found much of it was lost for ever, gone like tropical vegetation in the moment of its flourishing.

The government she learnt might falter — or some of it. Mr. Baldwin was an *ineffective* man. Captain Fearon-Owen was not sure of Worthington Evans; he would have far preferred Winston at the War Office. Jix at the Home Office was a godsend however. He was truly strong. He never reprieved. Quiet, almost nervous in appearance, a slender man with a round *boyish* face — but he never never reprieved. Practically. Well — impatient at what seemed detraction of her idol— "once perhaps." But vigorous action he was sure to support. Occasions might arise, said Captain Fearon-Owen, when it would be necessary to "take over" initiative from "falterers in positions of responsibility."

"You cannot always be sending back for instructions," said Lady Catherine darkly.

"Now it has come," said Lady Catherine, "I am glad it has come," and sat still for some moments with a quiet smile on her handsome animated face.

"There is a little point I have noticed," Mr. Plantagenet- Buchan reflected, with the nutcrackers in his hand — for by that time they had got to dessert. "I have observed — —"

Lady Catherine was not heeding him. "It makes one feel frightfully Nietszchean," she said. "Suppose England too has to fall back on a dictatorship!"

"I suppose," said Mrs. Rylands with an innocence that seemed almost too obvious to her, "that would *have* to be Captain Fearon-Owen?"

But Lady Catherine was exalted above all ridicule. "Anyhow it was he who saw it clearest," she said and bestirred herself for the chasing of Soames.

"Mr. Sempack," Mrs. Rylands began, but her guest did not heed that once so interesting name.

"Leadership," said Lady Catherine, standing up splendidly, "is the supreme gift of the gods."

She went off to pack for civil warfare like a child going to be

dressed for a treat.

§6. AFTER THE WHIRLWIND

Lady Catherine and her maid departed in the late afternoon after a flurried and unconsoling tea and left an atmosphere of crisis and dismay behind them. After lunch Mrs. Rylands tried to sleep according to her régime, but the gaunt spectacle of dear old England, the unimaginable spectacle of dear old England torn by a monstrous civil conflict, with a massacre of the sentinels at the Royal Mint and a sinister rabble marching upon Westminster; Scotland Yard more like the Bastille than ever and machine-guns making a last harvest of resistance down the Mall before the sack of Buckingham Palace began, kept her awake. These were preposterous notions, but failing any other images it was difficult to keep them off the screen of her mind. What could this strike of a whole people be like in reality and why had no one realised the advent of this frightful clash of classes in time?

She just lay awake and stared at the blank of her imagination as some gravelled author destitute of detail might stare painfully at a sheet of paper.

When at last Lady Catherine had truly gone, it was as if earth and silence had suddenly swallowed a Primrose League fair with five large roundabouts and a brass band. She turned round to find Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan behind her appreciating the calm.

"Marvellous energy," he said.

"She will be a great help," said Cynthia with unusual asperity.

"There is one thing I observe," said Mr. Plantagenet- Buchan.

"Let us have some fresh tea," said Mrs. Rylands, "and sit down and try to restore our minds to order."

Then his words awakened a familiar echo in her mind. Surely he had said them before — as far as that! Several times. And several times been interrupted.

Of course he had! He had been trying to make this remark ever since he and Lady Catherine had come back from Ventimiglia. Perhaps he had been trying to make it even in Ventimiglia. It was a

shame! Mrs. Rylands turned to him brightly. “You were saying, Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan?”

He laughed deprecatingly. “Well,” he preluded.

“There is one little thing about this crisis, dear lady,” he said, and made the diamond glitter; “one small consoling thing. If you will consult those French and Italian papers. You will see that while on the one hand they proclaim the outbreak of the social war and the probable end of the British Empire, they note, less conspicuously but I think more convincingly, that the franc is still falling and the pound sterling still holding its own even against our own more than golden dollar.”

“And that means?”

“That everyone does not take this crisis quite so seriously as Lady Catherine. Suppose we wait a day more before we despair of England. I can quite believe that even now — Westminster is not in flames. I am convinced even that dinner will be served quite normally in Buckingham Palace to-night.”

“And meanwhile,” smiled his hostess, “unless Bombaccio has heard the call of his union, we might have a little fresh tea.”

Miss Fenimore leapt to the bell.

They moved into the lower part of the hall and Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan yielded himself to the largest arm-chair with a sigh of contentment that it was difficult to disconnect altogether from the recent departure of their lovely friend.

There were some moments of silence.

“This man at Torre Pellice,” began Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan in a reflective voice, “this man I am proposing to visit, has a very fine taste indeed. He collects. He has a curiosity and a liveliness of mind that I find most enviable. In these times of conflict and dispersal it is rather nice to think of a collector — and of a few minor things anyhow being put out of immediate danger of breakage.”

He paused. Miss Fenimore made a purr of approval and Mrs. Rylands instructed Bombaccio about the fresh tea. Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan continued meditatively.

“One sort of thing he collected for a time were those prostrate trumpets of coloured glass in which the early Victorians put flowers. ‘Cornucopias,’ I fancy they were called. Typically there was a solid,

heavy slab of alabaster-like substance and on this the cornucopia reposed and often by a pretty fancy its lower end was finished off by an elegant hand of metal and the cornucopia became a sleeve. These cornucopias may have interbred a little with those cups they call rhytons which end in a head below. There must have been a great abundance of them at one time in early Victorian England, and they are still to be found in considerable variety, in purple and blue and coloured glass and in dead white glass with spangles and in imitation marble. At one time no dinner table could have been complete without a pair, probably matching a glass epergne. My friend discovered one in a little back street shop in Pimlico. At first he knew so little about these things that he accumulated single ones and only realised later that they must go in pairs. He was happy for a time. Until he began to detect the tracks of some abler seeker in this field. Another — others perhaps — were collecting. He came upon articles — in the *Connoisseur*, in other art magazines. The situation became plainer. The harvest had been gathered in. Mr. Frank Galsworthy, the painter who has that beautiful cottage garden in Surrey, had got so far ahead with them, that my friend could not hope to do more than glean after him. So my friend turned his attention to Welsh love spoons.

"Do you know of them? Do you know what they are? They are wonderful exploits in carving. (Thank you, that is exactly as I like it. One lump only.) They used to be made — perhaps some are still made — by Welsh lovers when they were courting. They were carved all out of one chosen piece of good oak. There would be a spoon and then at the end of its short handle a chain of links and it would all end in a hook or a whistle. The links would be free and there would be perhaps an extra bit, a barred cage with little balls running about inside; the whole contraption made out of one solid piece of timber. I never imagined the Welsh were such artists at wood carving. I suppose Mr. Jones would sit at the side of the beloved while he did it. Love spoons. What an answer to Caradoc Evans! You have heard the mysterious word 'spooning.' It is said to come from that."

Miss Fenimore was greatly delighted at this unexpected etymology. Her pleasure cried aloud.

Her sudden nervous laughter, a certain glow, might have led a careless observer to suppose her an adept at spooning. She slaked her excitement by attention to the teapot. There was a brief interval of cake-offering. Miss Fenimore offered cake to Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan and Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan offered cake to Mrs. Rylands and Miss Fenimore and Mrs. Rylands offered cake to Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan and Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan took some cake.

"I am afraid," said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan biting his cake, "that I am too hopelessly indolent and inconsecutive ever to make a good collector or else I think I should have devoted myself to bergamotes."

"I thought they were a kind of pear," said Mrs. Rylands.

"A kind of orange, primarily. But the name is also used for a delicious silly sort of little leather box made years ago in the country round about Grasse. You may have seen one by chance. They still lurk, looking rather depressed and dirty, in those queer corners of old curiosity shops where one finds little bits of silver and impossible rings. It is a box of leather, yes, but the skin of which the leather is made is orange skin and it is polished and faintly stained and has a dainty little flower or so painted upon it. The boxes are oval or heart-shaped; you know the delicate insinuations of that age. These bergamotes must be, most of them, a hundred years old or more and yet when you open them and snuff inside you can persuade yourself that the faint flavour of orange clings to them yet, scent that was brewed in the sunshine when Louis Philippe was King."

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan could not have chosen a better theme to exorcise the flare of unrest and alarm that had blown about the Casa Terragena household for the past three hours.

7. THE EPICUREAN

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was quite charming that night. It was to be his last night, he intimated ever so gently, and to-morrow he would make his devious way by local trains to Torre Pellice and his collector friend. For it really seemed there was a friend.

After dinner there was a luminous peacefulness in the world outside and an unusual warmth, the rising moon had pervaded heaven with an intense blue and long slanting bars of dreamy light lifted themselves from the horizontal towards the vertical, slowly and indolently amidst the terraces and trees and bushes. At two or three in the morning when everyone was asleep they would stand erect like sentinel spears.

"I think I could walk a little," said Mrs. Rylands and they went outside upon the terrace and down the steps to the path that led through the close garden with the tombstone of Amoena Lucina to the broad way that ended at last in a tall jungle of subtly scented nocturnal white flowers. They were tall responsible looking flowers. The moonlight among their petals armed them with little scimitars and bucklers of silver. Among these flowers were moths, great white moths, so that it seemed as if ever and again a couple of blossoms became detached and pirouetted together. Hostess and guest — for Miss Fenimore, with her instinctive tact, did not join them — promenaded this broad dim path, to and fro, and Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan spread his Epicurean philosophy unchallenged before Mrs. Rylands' enquiring intelligence.

He had been much struck by his own impromptu antithesis of Loveliness to Loneliness and this he now developed as a choice between the sense of beauty and the sense of self. He began apropos of Lady Catherine and her excited interest in present things. "How strange it is that she should incessantly want to do, when all that need be asked of her more than of anyone else is surely that she should simply *be*."

He passed easily into personal exposition.

"I treat myself," he said, "as a piece of bric-à- brac in this wonderful collection, the universe, a piece that differs from the other

odd, quaint and amusing pieces, simply because my eye happens to be set in it. Here in this lovely garden, which is so irrelevant to all the needless haste and turmoil of life, I can be perfectly happy. I am perfectly happy — to-night. My chief complaint against existence is that it *happens* too much and keeps on hurrying by. Before you can appreciate it in the least. I seem always to be trying to pick up exquisite things it drops, with all the crowding next things jostling and thrusting my poor stooping back. Get out of the way there! Eager to trample my treasure before I can even make it a treasure. Like trying to pick up a lost pearl in the middle of the Place de la Concorde. If I could plan my own fate, I would like to live five hundred years in a world in which nothing of any importance ever happened at all. A world like a Chinese plate. I should have a little sinecure perhaps or I should perform some graceful functions in the ceremonies of a religion that had completely lost whatever reality it ever had."

Mrs. Rylands was not unmindful of her duty to the little green leather book that waited in her sitting-room.

"You do not believe in God?" she asked, to be perfectly clear.

"In loveliness, I believe. And I delight in gods. But in God —— How it would spoil this perfect night, this crystal sky, this silver peace, if one thought it was not precisely the pure loveliness it is! Without an *arrière pensée*. If one had to turn it all into allegory and guess what it meant! If one even began to suspect that it was just a way of signalling something to us, on the part of a Supreme Personage!"

"But if one took it simply as a present from him?"

"That would be better. Then the only duty in life would be to accept and enjoy. And God would sit over us like some great golden Buddha, smiling, blessing and not minding in the least. Not signifying in the least."

"That is all very well for happy and pampered people like ourselves, living in houses and gardens like this one."

"One can start in search of beauty from any starting point and one is still a pilgrim even if one dies by the way."

"But most human beings start from such frightful starting points. They hardly get a glimpse of beauty."

“Not sunlight? Not the evening compositions of clouds and sun? The sunsets in Mr. Bennett’s Five Towns are the loveliest in the world. I assure you. The beauty of London Docks again? Or it may be music heard by chance from an open window in the street? Or flowers?”

He shook his head gravely, almost regretfully. “Everyone can find beauty. Think of the beauty of sunlight at the end of a tunnel.”

“I am afraid the world is full of crippled and driven lives. They’re hungry and afraid. What chance of seeing beauty have most poor people — anywhere? Even when it is under their noses. You can’t see beauty with miserable eyes. Beauty does not make happiness; it only comes to the happy. Latterly that has begun to haunt me dreadfully.”

“No,” said Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan. “That is wrong. Don’t spoil to-night.”

“But they pay for this! Haven’t we a duty to them?”

“Surely as much duty to this night, to leave it serene.”

“I can’t feel like that. I can’t forget this dismal coal strike, the trouble of it, the people out of work, the anxiety, the need in millions of poor worried brains.”

“My dear lady! they chose it. They need not have been born.”

Came a pause as the great modern topic of restriction was faced.

“But it is rather difficult for a child, which doesn’t exist, and isn’t perhaps going to exist for some time, to weigh all the pros and cons and decide — —”

“Its parents and guardians, its godfathers and godmothers wherein it was made, could act for it. It isn’t consulted as a whole so to speak, its constituents are consulted — tacitly. And it has at any rate its own blind Will to Live. Most parentage is inadvertent. What a precious relief is the thought of birth control! The time is coming when it will be practically impossible to tempt anyone to get born except under the most hopeful and favourable circumstances.”

“But meanwhile?”

“I am like the great Mr. Sempack; I refuse to be eaten up by meanwhile.”

“Meanwhile one must live.”

“As calmly as possible. As inactively appreciative as possible. It

is just because one must live that one tries to give oneself wholly to a night like this. How rarely do even such favoured ones as we are get an hour so smooth and crystalline as this! The stillness! The chief fault I have with living is the way life rushes us about. Rushes everyone about. What a hurry, what a scurry is history! Think of all the hosts and armies and individuals that have thrust and shoved and whacked their mules and horses along this very Via Aurelia in your garden. Which to-night is just a deep black pit smothered in ivy. Grave of innumerable memories. If we went down there to-night to that old paved track I wonder if we should see their ghosts! Romans and Carthaginians, Milanese and Burgundians, French and Italians, kings and bishops and conquerors and fugitives. It would be a fit punishment for all their hurry and violence to find them there. It would serve them right for all their wicked inattention to loveliness, to put them back again upon their paces and make them repeat them over and over, over and over, night after night, century after century....”

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan was smitten by a bright idea. “Perhaps someday some later Einstein will take out patents and contrive a way of slowing down time. Without affecting our perceptions. Then we shall not be everlastingly hurried on by strikes and wars and passions and meal-times and bed-times. With the newspapers rustling and flying through the air like witches in a storm.

“But I chatter on and on, my dear Mrs. Rylands. You set me talking. And I am trying to forget the Social Revolution now in progress and how we are all to be swept away. Or else saved by Captain Fearon-Owen, was it? and Lady Catherine. Whichever is the worse.

“Before we go in, may we just walk up that path above the house to the little bridge over the gorge beyond the herbarium and the laboratory? Do you know it? By night? There the hillside goes up very steeply and everything, the trees and even the rocks, seems to be drawn up too in a kind of magical unanimity. You must see it by moonlight. An immense flamboyance of black and white. Stupendous shadows. I discovered it last night as I prowled about the garden before turning it. It streams up and up and up, and over it brood the wet black precipices of the mountains, endlessly vertical,

with little threads of silver. The eye follows it up. It is like all the Gothic in the world multiplied by ten. It is like listening to some tremendous crescendo. Farther than this he cannot go, you say, and he goes farther. At the top the precipices fairly overhang. One stands on the bridge at the foot of it, minute, insignificant, overawed....

"By daylight it is nothing very wonderful. Hardly anything at all."

8. BELATED RETURN

Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan had scarcely gone from Casa Terragena before Mr. Sempack reappeared. Mrs. Rylands had walked part of the way up to the road gate with Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan, and after wishing him farewell she had turned off to a seat beneath some Japanese medlars where there were long orderly beds of violets like the planche of a Grasse violet grower, and a level path of pebble mosaic that led round the headland towards the rocky portals of the Caatinga. She had brought the green leather book with her, because his talk overnight had set her thinking. She found herself in the closest sympathy and the completest intellectual disagreement with the things he had said.

Just as she felt that at the core of things was courage, so she had an irrational conviction that, properly seen, the general substance of things was beauty. To Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan's craving to lead a life of pure appreciation she found a temperamental response. She could quite easily relax into that pose. But also she perceived something selective, deliberate and narrowing in his attitude. He reminded her of those people, now happily becoming old-fashioned, who will not look at a lovely landscape except through a rolled-up newspaper or some such frame. Or of people who cannot admire flowers without picking them. He seemed to think that the appreciation of beauty was a kind of rescue work; to take the lovely thing and trim it up and carry it off. But she thought it was a matter of recognition and acceptance. So while in practice he was for sealing up himself and his sensations in a museum case as it were with beauty, she was for lying open to the four winds of heaven, sure that beauty would come and remain. And while he posed as a partisan of beauty even against the idea of God, her idea of an ever deepening and intensifying realisation of the beauty in things was inseparably mingled with the conception of discovering God. He and she could perceive the poignant delight of a star suddenly flashing through forest leaves with a complete identity of pleasure and a complete divergence of thought. And so while art for him was quintessence, for her it was only a guide.

But while she was still struggling with this difficult disentanglement of assents and dissents that her analysis of Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan required, and before she had made a single entry in the green leather book as a result of these exercises, she became aware of Mr. Sempack descending the winding path that was the main route of communication between the gates and the house. Beside him a requisitioned under-gardener bore his knapsack and valise and answered such questions and agreed with such opinions as the great Utopologist's Italian permitted him to make.

It was Mr. Sempack. And he was changed.

Recognition was followed by astonishment. He was greatly changed. He was different altogether. More erect — rampant. No longer had he the quality of rocky scenery; he had the quality of rocky scenery that had arisen and tossed its mane and marched. "Tossing its mane" mixed oddly with rocky scenery, but that was how it came to her. His hair had all been thrust and combed back from his forehead, violently, so that the effect of his head, considered largely, had become leonine; he lifted his roughly handsome profile and seemed to snuff the air. He had no hat! Hitherto he and his hat had been inseparable out of doors but now he neither wore nor carried one. What could he have done with his hat? Moreover his cravat had suffered some exchange, had become large and loose and as it were, it was too far off to be certain, black silk, tied with the extravagance natural to a Latin man of genius, but otherwise remarkable and improper. And he walked erect with a certain conscious rectitude and large confident strides and assisted himself with a bold stout walking stick. Mrs. Rylands could not remember that stick; she had an impression he had gone off with an umbrella. At any rate he had gone off with the appearance of having an umbrella. She became eager to scrutinise this renascent Sempack closelier. She stood up for the moment to give her voice play and make herself more conspicuous. "Mr. Sempack," she cried, "Mr. Sem-pack!"

He heard. He turned eagerly. Just for a moment a shade of disappointment may have betrayed itself in his bearing. He hesitated, waved the stick, glanced down towards the house and then after a word or so with his garden man, submitted to his obvious fate and

ascended the steps to her.

"You've come back to us," she said, so giving him the very latest news as he approached.

"I've had a splendid time among the hills," he answered in that fine large voice of his. "How endlessly beautiful and unexpected France can be! And what lonely places! How are you?"

He was now standing in front of her.

"I'm better and happier, thanks to some good advice I had."

"If it was of service," he said. "Yes, you look ever so much better. Indeed you look radiantly well. How are the others?"

"Scattered for the most part."

He did not seem to mind about that. "Where is Lady Catherine?" he asked.

As he spoke he looked at the cypresses and magnolias that masked most of the house from him and then up and down the slopes about them for the lovely figure he sought. How easy a thing, Mrs. Rylands reflected, it was to make a man over confident. He'd gone off to make up his mind about Lady Catherine, it was only too evident, and here he was back with his mind made up, made up indeed altogether, and quite oblivious to the fact that Lady Catherine had gone on living at her own natural pace, during his interval of indecision. He became aware of a pause in answering his enquiry. His eyes came back to the face of his hostess. (Surely he had not been clipping those once too discursive eyebrows! But he had!) She tried to impart her information as though it was of no deep interest to either of them.

"Lady Catherine," she said, "has gone to England."

Mr. Sempack was a child when it came to concealing his feelings. "Gone to England!" he cried. "I was *convinced* she would stay here."

"She was restless," said Mrs. Rylands.

"But I was restless!" protested Mr. Sempack, opening vast gulfs of implication.

"She went yesterday."

"But why has she gone? Why should she go to England?"

"When the news of the strike came it lit her up like a rocket and off she went fizz-bang," said Mrs. Rylands.

"But why?"

“To save the country.”

“But this strike,” said Mr. Sempack, “is nothing at all. Just political nonsense. Why should she go to England?”

She found her respect for Mr. Sempack collapsing like a snowman before a bonfire. She ceased to scrutinise his improvements. “I’m not responsible for Lady Catherine,” she said and smoothed the nice back of the green leather book. “She’s gone.”

It seemed to dawn upon Mr. Sempack that he was forgetting his manners. He had stood in front of her without the slightest intention of staying beside her. Now he gave one last reproachful glance down the hill towards the paths, terraces, lawns, windows and turrets where Lady Catherine ought to have been waiting for him, and then came slowly and sat down beside his hostess. The first exhilaration of his bearing had already to a large extent evaporated.

“Forgive me,” he said. “I quite expected to find Lady Catherine here. We had a sort of argument together. It had excited me. But, as you say, she has gone. And the American gentleman with the hyphenated name? Who had an effect of being manicured all over. What was he called? Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan?”

“Went this morning. To Torre Pellice above Turin.”

“And Miss Fenimore?”

“Is with us still.”

“I’m so surprised she’s gone. You see I don’t attach any great importance to this General Strike in England. So that I can’t imagine anyone going off — a woman particularly.... I may be mistaken....”

“It has stopped all the English newspapers,” said Mrs. Rylands. “And most of the English trains. It has thrown millions of people out of employment. There is talk of famine through the interruption of food supplies.”

“An acute attack of Sundays in the place of the usual week. But why should it affect Lady Catherine?”

It was not Mrs. Rylands’ business to answer that.

“Are you *sure* she went on account of the General Strike?”

Mrs. Rylands had serious thoughts of losing her temper. “That was the reason she gave,” she said, in the tone of one who loses interest in a topic. But Mr. Sempack had a habit of pursuing his own line of thought with a certain regardlessness for other people.

“She may have gone to demonstrate her point of view in our argument,” he surmised. Mrs. Rylands, being in better possession of the facts, thought it a very foolish surmise but she offered no comment.

“The matter at issue between us,” said Mr. Sempack, prodding up the pathway with the stout stick, “had of course, extraordinarily far-reaching implications. Reduced to its simplest terms it was this, Is the current surface of things a rational reality?”

Mrs. Rylands wanted to laugh. She regarded Mr. Sempack’s profile, gravely intent on spoiling her excellent path. She was filled with woman’s instinctive pity for man. Every man is a moody child, she thought, every man in the world. But the children must not be spoilt. “So that was why you went off for a walking tour?” she remarked, intelligently.

“I thought we both needed to think over our differences,” he said.

“And you still don’t think — what is it? — that the current surface of things is — whatever it is?”

“No,” he said and excavated a quite large chunk of earth and smashed it to sandy fragments in front of his boots. “But I suppose this flight to England is to show me that the issues between us are not false issues but real, and that while I dream and theorise, she can play a part.... I wish she hadn’t gone. There is nothing happening in England at all that is not perfectly preposterous. Utterly preposterous. Political life in England becomes more and more like Carnival.”

He shrugged his shoulders. The large tie became a little askew. “Carnival without a police. Well — that is political life everywhere nowadays....”

As this was manifestly not the subject under discussion between them a silence of perhaps half a minute supervened. Then Mr. Sempack bestirred himself.

“She has gone,” he said, “just because she likes Carnival. And that is the truth of the matter.”

He glanced sideways at his hostess as if he hoped she would contradict him.

But she did nothing of the sort. She reflected and bore her witness with a considered effect. “Mr. Sempack,” she said, “I know

Catherine. And that is the truth of the matter."

"I thought it was."

His bones *did* move about under his skin, because they were doing so now. He dug industriously at the path through another long silence. "Forgive my moodiness and my rudeness. And my confidences. My almost involuntary confidences. As you know perfectly well already, I am in the ridiculous position of having fallen in love with Lady Catherine; and it isn't any the less disorganising for being utterly absurd. It has made me, I perceive, absurd. To fall in love, as I have done, is — to reverberate melodrama. It is as unreal as an opium dream and one knows it is unreal. Yet one clings with a certain obstinacy.... I expected —— Heaven knows what I expected! But that is no reason, is it? why I should come and set myself down here and interrupt your writing in that extremely pretty book of yours and dig large holes in your path."

"The paths were made for man and not man for the paths," said Mrs. Rylands. "I wish all my gardeners worked as you have done for the last few minutes. I am sorry for what has happened. Catherine is one of those people who ought not to be allowed about loose."

"I may go to England," he said after he had digested that. "I am preposterously dislocated. I do not know what to do."

"But in England, won't the melodrama lie in wait for you?"

"Perhaps I wish it would. At present, my mind and my thoughts — are just swirling about. I can't go on writing. I might of course go into Italy."

"Meanwhile stay here. For a day or so anyhow. There are all sorts of things I would like to hear you talk about. If you could talk about them. And this garden has a place for almost any mood. No one shall worry you. If I dared I would ask you about a score of things that perplex me."

"You are very kind to suffer me," he said.

She shook her head and smiled and then stood up.

"I think you have done enough to my path this morning," she said. "Look at it!"

He made some clumsy and ineffective attempts to repair the mischief of his immense hands with his immense feet, and then came hurrying after her down the steps.

9. HASTE AND THE LONG VIEW

That evening after dinner they sat in the great room upstairs before a fire of logs in the Italianate fire-place, and Mr. Sempack without any allusion whatever to Lady Catherine talked about Thought and Action and the change of tempo as well as of scale that was coming upon human concerns. Mrs. Rylands lay on the big sofa and Mr. Sempack occupied an arm-chair beside her. Miss Fenimore assisted at the conversation on the other side of the fire-place. She played also a slow difficult patterning patience on a card table with two packs of cards, a patience that kept her lips moving, not always inaudibly with, "Black Knave goes on Queen and red ten on Knave, but what then? All these come up, nine, eight, seven, but does that free a space. Won't do. Won't do."

She had excused herself for her patience. "I can hear just as well," she said, "and it seems to steady my attention. I don't think I miss the least little thing you say."

Sometimes her patience kept her quite busy and sometimes she would leave it alone and just sit back with the residue of her deck in hand and take a long deep swig of whatever Mr. Sempack was saying. Then she would sigh and resume her attack on her cards, visibly refreshed.

Although Mr. Sempack never made the ghost of an allusion to Lady Catherine, it was quite plain to Mrs. Rylands that the gist of his talks with that lady lay under the rambling discourse like bones beneath the contours of a limb. When he talked of the greater importance of the man of science to the politician, he was really exonerating himself from her charge of political impotence and insignificance, and when he declared that with the abolition of distance through the increasing ease of communication in the world, there had come such an enlargement and complication of political issues that they could no longer be dealt with dramatically in a day or a week, she felt that he was still trying to disabuse Lady Catherine from her delusion that decisive incidents at elections, scenes in the House and displays of "personality" at Cabinet meetings could have any real influence any longer upon the course of human affairs. He

talked casually and indolently as things came into his head, but Mrs. Rylands perceived that the green leather book would profit considerably by the things he was saying.

His remarks joined on very directly to that earlier talk, that successful social evening, that had so pleased her, that renewal of the legendary glories of the Souls — and it was still not a fortnight ago! He revived the vision of a greater civilisation ahead, a world civilisation, in which the pursuit of science would be the chief industry and increasing power an annual crop. That vision had a little faded from Mrs. Rylands' mind. He restored it to probability and even to imminence. It became reality again and all the social and political conflicts of to-day mere temporary disorders, like battles and contests of hobbledehoys amidst advertisement-covered hoardings on the vacant site of some great building. War became a declining habit that mankind was shaking off. And those troubles in England were no more than a legacy of barbaric methods that would still win coal by hand labour and make a private profit out of a common necessity. Some day we should win our coal out of the earth in so different a fashion that there would be neither myriads of dingy toilers nor groups of owners concerned with it at all, and from the point of view of the larger issue therefore, the dispute between them was a false issue that led nowhere and settled nothing at all. Even as they disputed, the grounds of the differences were dissolving under their feet.

But there were certain things that the green leather book would want to know to-morrow morning and Mrs. Rylands sought elucidation.

"I see the world could be changed, ought to be changed, from all its present confusions," she agreed. "Things do not change themselves. Much of this progress so far has taken people by surprise. Now the surprise is over and we see the steps, the enormous steps that have to be made, if we are to pass from this — this complex muddle of affairs — to the world civilisation. You speak as though that would certainly be brought about. But who are the people who are bringing it about?"

"The scientific minded people," said Mr. Sempack. "The people who think ahead."

“I see that people of that sort are adding to the vision of the great age coming, filling in details, helping our imaginations to smooth over difficulties. You alone have done wonderful things to make the prospectus credible. But it is still only a prospectus. Are people taking shares? Are any of these people who talk and wish so well, doing anything to bring the World Utopia about?”

“I think, *yes*,” said Mr. Sempack after a slight pause.

She felt she was pressing him, but she wanted to know. “How?” she asked.

“By making it increasingly evident that it is possible and bringing people to realise that it is desirable — a refuge from the vast dangers that threaten us all, while with the immensely powerful weapons of to-day we stick to antiquated moral and social traditions.”

“Yes, but — —” said Mrs. Rylands.

She gathered all her forces. She wasn’t trying to argue with him but she did want to be able to face the candid pages of the green leather book to-morrow without any inconvenient queries arising — finished and sure in what she had to write. She had to write it as plainly as she could and then she had to copy out her exercise and send it to her fellow student Philip, who would be, she felt certain, quite wonderful at jabbing in destructive questions.

“You see, Mr. Sempack, this is my difficulty. I see the world abounding in projects for doing things better. People who write about that sort of thing write about it, and we read it when we are in the reading mood and want our imaginations stirring. But the mass of people just go on. I suppose that if you told all that you are telling me to a miner and said that there were to be no miners at all in the new world, but only very clever boring machines, and ways of taking air into the pit to burn the coal and make power there instead of digging it out and so on, I doubt if he would be ready to bring the change about. He would think of himself and say that though it was bad enough to be an underpaid miner, perhaps not employed too regularly, but still getting a sort of living, it might be worse to be in a world where he wasn’t wanted at all.”

“He could be changed.”

“Not all at once. He’d have his missus and the kids and his dog and his habits. Would he want to be changed? Changed I mean in his

nature, as you would change him. More money perhaps he would like and a rather better house. But what more? And take the mine-owner: you can't expect him to welcome and help his own abolition."

"The new things will come gradually enough to smooth over that sort of thing."

"If somebody wants them. But who is going to want them? I'm asking, because I really want to know, Mr. Sempack, who is going to want them enough to take a lot of pains to bring them about? Many of us no doubt want them vaguely and generally but do any of us want them particularly and fiercely enough to get them past the awkward turns and difficult corners?"

"They involve the clear promise of an ampler life."

"I don't worry you with my persistent questions? They are silly questions I know, but they puzzle me."

"Not a bit silly. You argue very closely. Go on."

"Well, this clear promise of an ampler life. Suppose you said to a cat, 'Come, I will teach you to swim and dive like a seal and fly like a bat,' and so on, 'if only you will stop catching the songbirds in my garden,' and suppose the cat were to say, 'Life is short. It is fun to think of such things and they make me yearn to leave the little birds alone and eat fish, but all the same this means a frightful change in my habits. I might prove less adaptable than you suppose. I might die before I adapted. I do get along fairly well as it is. Have you ever seen me go up a tree? Or jump and catch a young nestling in the air? Do you mind if I just go on being a cat?'"

Mr. Sempack nodded and smiled thoughtfully at the fire and left his hostess free to continue.

"All the sorts of people I see about me, all the soldiers we know for example; they are most liberal-minded about war I find and about the League of Nations and that sort of thing, provided there is no serious interference with soldiering."

"They will get most horribly gassed in the next war."

"They hope to gas first. But even if they think the outlook a little unpleasant in that way, they still have no idea of how they are going to change over. Or what they are going to change into. And meanwhile — meanwhile they go on being soldiers."

“They will be changed over,” said Mr. Sempack largely.

“But *who* will change them over? Directly one goes out of a talk like this back into one’s everyday life, one finds everyone more or less in the same position — doing something in the present system, hanging on to it, dreading dislocation, objecting to any improvement that really touches them. But otherwise quite liberal-minded and progressive.”

“The forces of change will override them. Change of conditions is incessant.”

“But change may go any way, Mr. Sempack. There is no one steering change. Why shouldn’t it go hither and thither? It raises up; it may cast down.”

“Why not?” asked Mr. Sempack of the flaring olive knots.

“We may ‘meanwhile’ for ever. People may be driven this way and that. Some may go down and some up. Old types may vanish and new ones come. Some of that may be progress but some of that may be loss. Nature gives no real guarantee. Change may go on until men are blue things three feet high and rats hunt them as we hunt rats and your great civilisation may never arrive — never arrive at all. It may have loomed up and receded and loomed up again and been talked about again as you talk about it, and then things may have slipped back and slipped back more and gone on slipping back. And the rats may have got bolder and the disease germs more dwarfing and crippling, and energy may have ebbed.”

“Touché,” said Mr. Sempack and paused tremendously.

Mrs. Rylands adjusted a cushion and regarded him expectantly before lying back more comfortably.

“It’s come out,” said Miss Fenimore and made a great triumphant scrabbling with her cards. “They don’t *often* come out.”

“That is precisely the question that occupies my mind nowadays — dominantly,” said Mr. Sempack, disregarding Miss Fenimore. “My life has been so largely given to thought and the project.... After all, all this constructive Utopianism is a growth of very recent years.... But I do see that a time comes — and in the case of these matters the time may be here already — when these creative ideas must come down into the market place, among the hawkers and the cheats and the Carnival maskers, and fight to impose themselves.

Science can never be really pure science. Science sprang from practical curiosities and justifies and refreshes itself by practical applications. Yet it must go apart to work out its riddles. There is a rhythm in these things. Thought must be neither too close nor too aloof from actuality. There has been a need in the past century to take social and economic generalisations a little way off from current politics and active business and work them out into a new, broader, deeper, modern project. That in its main lines is done. Now, we, who have gone apart, have to come back. We have got clear to the conception of a possible world peace, a world economic system, a common currency, and unparalleled freedoms, growths and liberties....”

“Yes?” said Mrs. Rylands.

“We have at last made it seem extremely credible and possible.”

“Yes?”

“And ‘how to get there?’ remains still with hardly the barest rudiments of an answer. A League of Nations. Vague projects of social revolution. Pious intentions. Practical futility.”

“And *meanwhile*?” whispered Mrs. Rylands.

“I do not even know whether the same type of mind that has mastered the first can work out the second problem. Perhaps there is a difference of personality needed, just as there is perhaps a difference between the pure scientific man and the scientific commercial man. It may be because I am realising that this business is entering upon a new phase that I find I am writing freely no longer and that I am restless and attracted by unseasonable hankerings for experience and at last — I confess it — disposed to go back to look into these queer troubles in England. I have had a dream, a ridiculous dream, of being revitalised. The Sacred Fount — of passion.”

He seemed to remember the presence of Miss Fenimore and abandoned what might have become a fresh confidence.

“I do not know. I do not know whether men of my kind have to turn into men of action or whether they have to turn over all they have thought-out and worked-out to men of action. A young man like your Philip attracts me, just because he seems to have all the vigour, flexibility and aggressiveness, that my type of withdrawn, persistently sceptical, habitually sceptical enquirer, does not possess.

I do not know. I wish I did. And there you are! I am afraid I have left that question of yours, Mrs. Rylands, very largely open."

He seemed to have finished and then he resumed.

"It may be that this concrete conception of human progress awaits its philosophy and its religion. Idea must clothe itself in will. The new civilisation will call for devotion — something more than the devotion of thinking and writing at one's leisure. It may need martyrs — as well as recluses. And leaders as well as prophets. It will call for co-operative action, for wide disciplines...."

He stood up before the fire, a great shambling figure that cast a huge caricature in shadow on the wall opposite.

"I think I will go back to England in a day or so — anyhow — if only to see why people can struggle with such courage and passion for ends that do not seem to me to have any real relation to the Civilisation of the World at all. Hitherto I have been thinking so much of what I am after myself that it may be good for me, for a change, just to find out what other people are after. And why none of them seem to be after the only thing that I think makes life worth living.

"Yes," he reflected, "*make* your World Civilisation. That is just what Lady Catherine told me. You, with your questions, repeat the challenge.... I wonder if at bottom, Mrs. Rylands, both the scientific investigator and the philosopher are not profoundly indolent men. They work — I admit they work — continuously — but how they fortify themselves against interruptions and counter strokes and irrelevant issues!"

His thoughts seemed to Mrs. Rylands to glance suddenly in a different direction. "*Essentially*" he said, "they must be celibate...."

Mr. Sempack had come to the end of his meditations. His hostess and Miss Fenimore wished him good-night. He was left to consume two glasses of barley water and put out the lights.

10. PHILIP'S FIRST REAL LETTER

Philip's "first real letter," so he called it, came on the day of Mr. Sempack's departure for England. There had been an "arrived safe" telegram from London and a pencil scrawl of affectionate "rubbidge" so he put it, with various endearments and secret and particular names, that he had posted in Paris. That was just carrying on. But this she felt was something momentous. It came while she was resting on her bed, through sheer laziness, and she felt its importance so much that for a time she could not open it. It was a fat letter, a full letter, it was over the two ounces, fivepence ha'penny worth of letter, and inside there was going to be something — something she had never had before — Philip mentally, all out, according to his promise. She was going to learn fresh and important things about him. She was going to scrutinise his mental quality as she had never done before.

What sort of a letter was it going to be? She had a shadow of fear in her mind. Things said can be forgotten. Or you recall the manner and edit and rearrange the not too happy words. Things written hammer at the eye and repeat themselves inexorably. Written clumsiness becomes monstrous clumsy. So far she had never had anything more from Philip than a note. His notes were good, queer in their phrasing but with an odd way of conveying tenderness.... Philip would be Philip. She took courage and tore open the distended envelope.

She found half a dozen fascicles each pinned together. It was neither like a letter nor like a proper manuscript, but it was like Philip. The paper was of various sorts, some of it from their house in South Street, some from the Reform Club, some from Brooks' and some ruled foolscap of unknown origin carefully torn into half-sheets so as to pack comfortably with the spread out notepaper. Somewhere he had got hold of a blue pencil and numbered the fascicles with large numbers, one, two, three and so forth, emphasised by a circle. The fascicle numbered one, was

"General Instructions for a little Cynner to read these Lubrications."

Lucubrations?

Then this touching design and appeal:

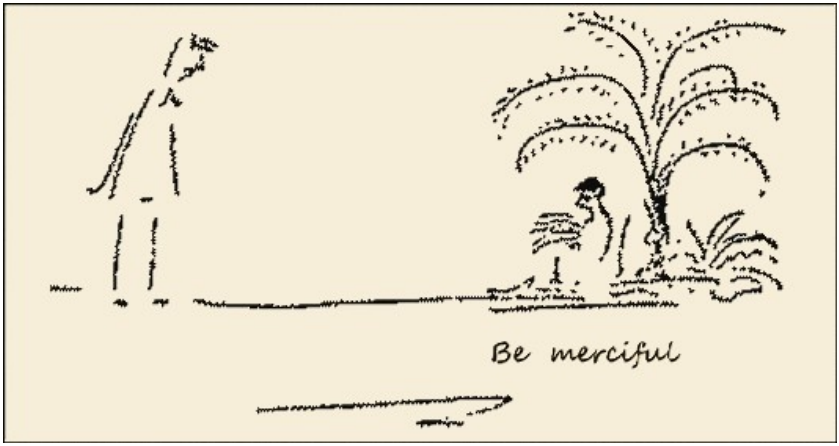

"My dearest Cynthia, wife," it went on, "I find it pretty hard to set down all my impressions of things here. Which is all the more reason I suppose why I should begin to set down my impressions. It's hard to make it go, one, two, three, and away. I just can't make the stuff I have to tell you flow off my pen as trained chaps like old Sempack seem able to do. Whatever he has to say seems to begin at one place and go right through to an end, missing nothing by the way. I've been reading in some of his books. In fact I've been reading him no end. People talk about 'writing' and I've always thought before it meant purple patches and lovely words, but this sort of thing also is writing; driving ten topics in a team together — and getting somewhere, getting through doors and narrow places and home to where you want to go. I seem to begin at half a dozen places and it is only after a time that one finds that this joins up with that. I've made half a dozen starts and here most of them are.

"This is a sort of student's notebook. I've helped it out with diagrams and here and there pictures seem to have got themselves in when I wasn't looking. But it is a multiplex affair here. Here in England I mean — not in this letter. An imbrolio. It isn't a straight story. You take Part numbered Two and then Three and so on in the order of the numbers, and I think at the end you'll get the hang of

what I'm thinking all right. Forgive some of the spelling, and all the heavy lumpish way of putting things. If I do much of this sort of thing I shall have to take lessons from Sempack and Bertrand Russell, how to be clear if complex. As you said, we've got to know each other — even if it hurts. So I've done my best. I don't think I've struck any attitudes.

"If you despise me over this stuff — well, it had to be. Better than not knowing each other. Better than that. Truly. Dear Cynthia, my Friend. All you said to me about being truly near, mind more than body, went to my heart. Both."

That was the substance of Part One. Followed a sort of index and a few remarks about each part, that were simply preparatory matter. Rather businesslike preparatory matter. He must have written that index after all the rest was done.

She held Part One in her hand and thought for some moments. Queer! This wasn't her Philip; the Philip she had known for a wonderful year. But it was not inharmonious with her Philip. It was an extension of him, the wider Philip. It was at once a little strange and more intimate. It was very honest; that was the first thing about it. And it had a quality of strength. It was extraordinary that a man who had been as close to her as he had been, with such warmth and laughter and delight, should still betray so plainly a maidenly bashfulness over the nakedness of his prose and the poverty of his spelling. Bodies one can strip in half a minute. Now — and he knew it — he was revealing his mind.

And then the drawing. She had never suspected him of skill, but there was skill in the way he got what he wanted to express over to her. The figure of himself, a little oafish and anxious. And herself. He didn't spare her littleness. And yet plainly he couldn't draw — as she judged drawing. There were several other drawings....

She glanced at Part Three. But these looked more like the figures one scribbles on blotting paper. Perhaps it would be plainer when she came to them in order.

She took up Part Two which was entitled:

"General Observations on the General Strike."

"Firstly, I am disposed to call this General Strike the Silliest Thing in the History of England. I don't know whether I would stick

to that. What old Muzzleton used to get red in the nose working us up about, what he used to call 'Our Island Story,' is full of dam silly things. But this is a monstrous dam silly affair, my Cynthia. It is a tangle of false issues from beginning to end. So silly one can't take sides. One is left gibbering helplessly as the silly affair unrolls itself.

"Imagine a procession of armoured cars and tanks going through the dear old East End of London to protect vans of food-stuffs nobody has the least idea of touching. *After the strikers have guaranteed a food supply!* A sort of Lord Mayor's day crowd of sightseers and chaps like old Bullace in tin helmets — you know, helmets against shrapnel!! stern and solum. If presently they began to throw pots of shrapnel out of the East End top windows, old Bullace's little bit of brains will be as safe as safe.

"Then imagine a labour movement which imagines it is appealling to the general public against the goverment. Which nevertheless has called out all the printers and stopped the newspapers! As the goverment has seized its own one paper, I mean the labour paper, and monopolises, the goverment does, the wireless, the labour movement is making its appeal *inaudibly*. As a consequence that side of the dispute has become almost invisible. You see police and soldiers and all that, but all you see or hear of the strike side is that it isn't there. The engineers and the railway men and the printers aren't there. Just a bit of speaking at a corner or a handbill put in your hand. Pickets lurking. A gap. Silence."

Mrs. Rylands pulled up abruptly, went back from the beginning of the next sentence, scrutinised a word. It was "goverment." And down the sheet and over, she found it repeated. And what did it matter if he did take the "n" out of government, so long as his head was clear?

"The strike stopped all the buses, trams, trains, *etc*., *etc*. The streets are full morning and evening of a quite cheerful (so far) crowd of clerks, shop people and suchlike walking to business or walking home, getting casual pick-ups from passing motor cars. General disposition to treat it as a lark. Thanks chiefly to the weather. Most buses are off the streets. Some are being run by volunteers and they go anyhow, anywhere and anybody rides. They get their windows broken a bit and there is often a bobby by the driver. Some have wire over their windows and one or two I saw with a motor car

full of special constables going in front of them. Convoy. There is a story of some being burnt but I can't find out if that is true. The voice of the gearbox is heard in the land and the young gentlemen volunteers don't bother much about collecting fares. For some unknown reason most of them have come to the job in plus fours. Pirate buses having the time of their lives. Disposition of crowds to collect at central positions and stand about and stare. Police and soldiers in quantity lurking darkly up back streets, ready aye ready for trouble that never comes, and feeling I think rather fools. They seem uneasy when you go and look at them. What are they all waiting for? They've sworn-in quantities of special constables and I've had a row with Uncle Robert on that score, because I won't be sworn-in and set an example. All his men-servants have been sworn-in and are on the streets with armlets and truncheons. The specials just walk about, trying to avoid being followed by little boys; harmless earnest middle-class chaps they are for the most part.

"As might be expected Winston has gone clean off his head. He hasn't been as happy since he crawled on his belly and helped snipe in Sidney Street. Whatever anyone else may think, Winston believes he is fighting a tremendous revolution and holding it down, fist and jaw. He careers about staring, inactive, gaping, crowded London, looking for barricades. I wish I could throw one for him."

In the margin Mr. Philip had eked out his prose with a second illustration.

"The goverment has taken over the *Morning Post* office and

machinery and made Winston edit a sort of emergency goverment rag called the *British Gazette*. Baldwin's idea seems to be to get the little devil as far away from machine guns as possible and keep him busy. Considerable task. His paper is the most lop-sided rag you ever. It would be a disgrace to any goverment. The first number is all for the suppression of Trade Unions, a most desperate attempt to provoke them to the fighting pitch.

"I met Mornington at the Club; he is mixed up with the *Morning Post* somehow and he says the office is simply congested with young Tories who have fancied themselves as writers for years. For them it's perfect Heaven. They've collared most of the *Morning Post* paper; they are grabbing all *The Times* paper *pro bono Winstono*. *The Times* still puts out a little sheet but they say it will have to stop in a week or ten days — in favour of Winston's splutter. That seems to me nearly the maddest thing of all. The Labour people have had their own *Daily Herald* suppressed. Instead they are trying and failing to go a peg below Winston with a sort of bulletin newsheet called the *British Worker*. But Winston has a scheme for stealing their paper supply, raiding their office and breaking them up in the name of the British Constitution. Like undergraduates at election time. Isn't it all bottomlessly silly? Most of the papers seem to be handing out something, a half-sheet or suchlike just to say 'Jack's alive,' and you happen upon it and buy it by chance. Fellows try and sell you typewritten stuff with the latest from the broadcasting for sixpence or a shilling, and here and there you see bulletins stuck up outside churches and town halls. In the west end they display Winston's *British Gazette* in the smart shop windows. I suppose their plate glass insurance covers risks like that. But perhaps they realise there isn't much risk.

"I just go along the streets talking to people in the character of an intelligent young man from New Zealand. I say I don't rightly understand what the strike is about and ask them to explain. I get a different story each time. '*Who* is striking?' 'Oh!' they say, 'It's a general strike!' 'Are you?' I ask. 'No fear!' Some of them say it is in sympathy with the miners. But they never know the rights and wrongs about the miners. Very few of them know if the miners have struck or whether it is a lock-out. They don't know which is the pig-

headest, the miners or the mine-owners, and yet you'd think they would be curious about that. And the whole country is disorganised, no papers, no trains, no trams, and, this morning, no taxis. Post offices are still going on, but the labour people talk of bringing out what they call their second line. That will stop letters, telegrams, gas and electric light and power, it seems. If the second line really comes out — which Hind says is rather doubtful. So if I am swallowed up by silence all of a sudden you will know it is the second line you have to blame. Unless Winston happens to have got hold of a machine gun and shot me suddenly in the back.

"But I don't think that will happen while he has ink and paper. Don't you worry about that.

"Well, there's some features of this General Strike. Not a bit like a revolution. Far more as if a new sort of day not quite a weekday and not quite a Good Friday had happened. I don't know whether what I have told you will make any sort of picture for you. There are foreign reporters in London and probably you will get it in the French papers or the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*. The essence of it is, miners locked out, transport workers of all sorts striking, printers striking, Winston probably certifiable but no doctors can get near him to do it, soldiers and police going about with loaded guns looking for a Revolution that isn't there, Jix inciting the police to be violent at the least provocation, and the general public, like me, agape. All London agape. And over it all this for a Prime Minister —

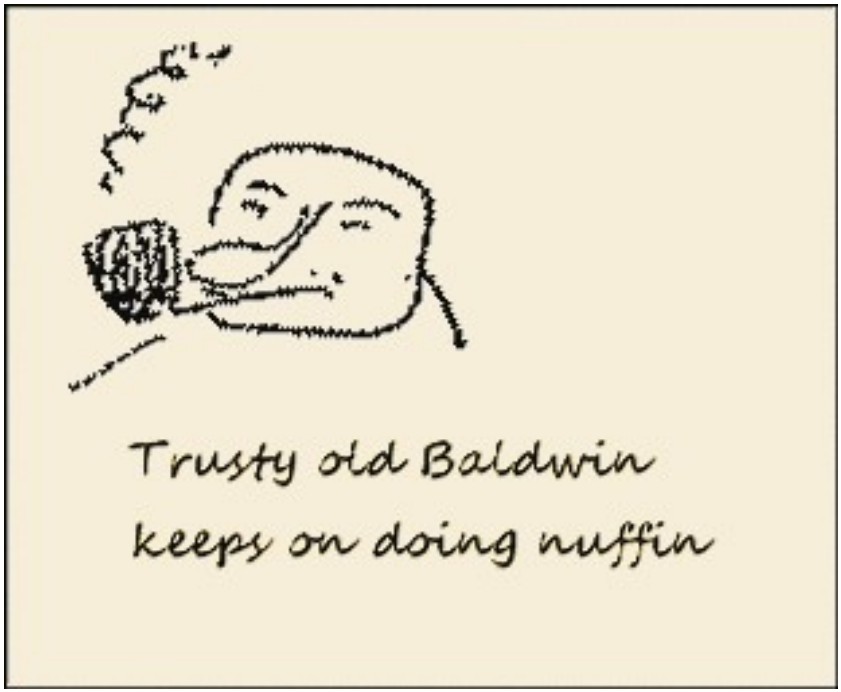

"Here endeth Part Two."

The third fascicle was headed:

"What Labour thinks it is doing."

"Here, my dear Cynthia, I am going to set down what I can make out of how this strike came about. It is a queer history, but you can check it back and fill it out in details by the newspaper files I marked for you before I left Casa Terragena. This muddle has been tangling itself up for years. These are matter the Rylands family, branch as well as root (which is for current purposes Uncle Robert) ought to have some ideas about.

"After the war, you must understand, to go back to beginnings, Great Britain had a boom time for coal. It had a little boom in 1919. Then there was dislocation and trouble turning on de-control after the war and bringing men back from the army, problems of men taken on and so on. There was a Royal Commission and a very startling report called the Sankey Report, pointing out how wastefully British coal was won and proposing 'Nationalisation,' and that was followed by a strike — I think the year after. But it was possible to fix fairly good

wages for the men just then. All Europe wanted coal, the French coal regions were all devastated area and Poincaré danced into the Ruhr and put that supply out of gear too. English coal prices mounted, wages mounted, we got in thousands of fresh miners from the agricultural workers over and above the war drift to the mines. There was a time when coal stood at £4 a ton. I mean *we* were selling it at that. Not for long of course. Even when it fell back below 40/- it was still a big price for us. Exports rose to huge figures. The miners and the coal-owners purred together and nobody bothered about Sankey and nationalisation. Say the top of '23.

"Then we deflated the pound, and also continental coal-winning began to recover.

"By 1924 the slump was plain in the sight to all men. Coal prices couldn't be kept at the old level. There was trouble about wages in 1924 and a new arrangement which we owners dropped last year. Time, said the coal-owners, to take in sail. Naturally they kept mum about the stuff they'd put away during the boom years. Merely 'business' to do that. They just looked round for someone else to make up the current deficit, John Taxpayer was called upon, and Baldwin (a bit of a coal-owner himself) made him fork out the Coal Subsidy until he would stand it no longer. Then the coal-owners made what seemed to them the reasonable proposal that the miners should take lower wages-not a small reduction but a drop of twenty per cent, one shilling in five — work longer hours and (though this wasn't clearly stated) a lot of them become unemployed. Obviously longer hours means fewer men.

"The reply of the miners was a most emphatic 'No.' I sympathise. Though as a rational creature I see that there are now more miners in Britain than can ever be employed at the boom rates or perhaps at any rates again, I see also how the miners who have settled down on the high rates feel about it. Their main representative is a man named Cook and he says 'Not a penny off the pay; not a second on the day.' If I had to live like a miner I should say the same. I'd rather die than come down below the present level. I have just happened upon a little book called *Easingden* by a man named Sinclair and it gives a flat, straightforward account of the life of a miner. I half suspect some connexion between Easingden and Edensoke, but never mind

that. No frills about his story and to the best of my knowledge and belief dead true. It's a grimy nightmare of a life. I am going to send it to you. When you read it, you will agree with me that it is intolerable to think of Englishmen — many of whom fought in the Great War to save me and you among others from the Hun — having to go a single step lower than that cramped, sordid, hopeless drudgery. Let the coal-owner, who didn't foresee, who failed to reorganise on modern lines in his boom days, who has got a tidy pile stowed away, let him pay the racket now and not take it out of the flesh and blood of the people."

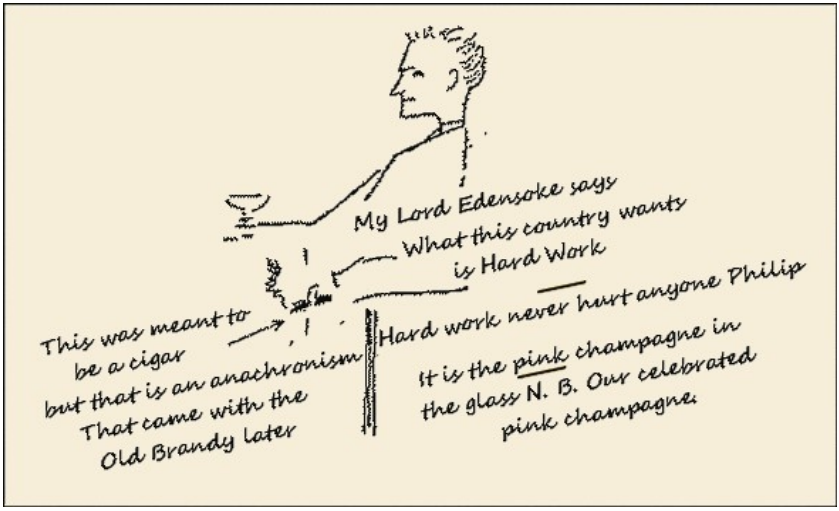

"That's what the miner feels and partly thinks. The hoards of the successful, he thinks, ought to be the elastic pads we fall back upon in a squeeze; not the living bodies of the miners and their families.

"The miners never professed to organise business and make reserves, they thought the clever fellows were seeing to that. Their job was to hew coal. They say they didn't suppose the clever fellows were just out to get away with profits and leave them in the lurch. So that a lot of them now are feeling decidedly Communist and would like to go out and hew at the clever fellows. I should, Cynthia, if I were a miner.

"The new Coal Commission although it is all Herbert Samuels

and business men and not a Justice Sankey upon it and no one to speak for the miners, admits a lot of reasonableness in the miners' case. But the coal-owners say in effect, 'Not a penny out of our hoards, not a shadow of sacrifice from *us!*' They propose to knock wages down to the tune of a shilling in five and practically don't offer to bear any equivalent hardship on their own part. I had it out — or partly had it out with Uncle Robert last night. 'Partly,' because he got so obviously cross that my natural respect for the head of the family made me shut up. He was all for the unreasonableness of the miners in not making any concessions. Stern and dignified and rude. Wouldn't say what was to be done with the miners who will have to be laid off whatever concessions the poor devils make. The more concessions they make in hours, the more will get laid off. He wouldn't say whether the shilling in five was his last word or not. And he got really vicious on the subject of Cook.

"'At present,' said his lordship, 'all discussion is in abeyance. The whole social order has been struck at — and has to be defended.' Repeated it. Raised his hand with an air of finality.

"Baldwin and Co just went from one party to the other wringing their hands or pretending to wring their hands — I've got something to say about that — and repeating, 'Do *please* be reasonable,' instead of taking us coal-owners by the scruff of the neck as they should have done and saying 'Share the loss like decent men.' If the coal-owners won't give way, said Baldwin and Co in effect, then the miners *must*. Nothing was done. The coal-owners simply demanded lower wages and more work and prepared for a general lock-out if the miners didn't knuckle under. And that is how things were between the coal-owners and the miners.

"In a country that had honest newspapers and clear heads all this would have brought such a storm about the ears of the coal-owners that they would have met the men half-way — three quarters of the way, in a hurry. They would have sat up all night sweating apologies and drawing up more and more generous schemes to ease off the situation. And the public would have insisted on the deal. But the country never got the story plain and clear. How could it judge?

"Now here it is the General Council of the Trade Unions comes in. The miners are a part of that and have raised this coal puzzle at

the Congress of the Trade Unions for the last two years. The General Council of the Trade Unions declares, and I myself think rightly, that the attack to reduce the miners is only a preliminary to a general reduction, railway men, engineers, industrials of all sorts. Common cause. So the T.U.C. takes a hand and you get a sort of four-cornered game, (1) T.U.C., (2) miners (Cook very vocal, too vocal), (3) goverment and (4) owners. (1) and (2) are theoretically partners: (3) and (4) profess not to be — but I am afraid are. If the miners are locked out, if nothing is done, then says the T.U.C. we shall have to call out the railwaymen, transport workers, engineers, postal employees and so forth and so on. 'That,' says the goverment, 'is a general strike. It isn't an industrial dispute; it's politics. It's an attack on the goverment of the land.' Says the T.U.C., 'Damn you! Why don't you be the goverment of the land? We aren't going to let the miners be downed in this fashion, politics or not. Something has to be done. We don't want a strike of this sort but if there is a miners' lock-out, some such strike there will have to be.'

"But the T.U.C. wasn't very resolute about all that. That's a nasty point in my story. Not the only one. They backed up the miners but they didn't quite back them up. Several of the Labour Leaders, chaps of the court suit and evening dress type, were running about London, weeks and weeks ago, pulling long faces and saying, 'The extremists are forcing our hands. We don't *want* the general strike. We're perfectly peaceful snobs on the make. We are indeed. It's an attempt at revolution; we admit it. *Do* something — even if it only looks like something.' Mornington met two of them. Those were practically their words. They started out upon a series of conferences with the goverment. Conferences and more conferences. Suggestions, schemes. Running to and fro — T.U.C. at Downing Street. T.U.C. goes to the miners. To and fro. Talk about the Eleventh Hour. But in England nobody ever believes there is an Eleventh Hour until it comes. Like the war. Cook going on all the time like a musical box that can't leave off: 'Not a penny off the pay, not a second on the day.' Twenty speeches a day and still at it in his sleep.

"My dear, I don't know if you will make head or tail of this rigmarole so far. I set it down as well as I can. But try and get that situation clear — which brings things up to last week-end. Miners,

inflexible; owners, inflexible. Goverment ambiguous, T.U.C. forcible feeble, rather warning about the General Strike than promising it. And doing nothing hard and strong to prepare for it. Under-prepared while the goverment was over-prepared.

"And here I must conclude my Part Three because I have already been writing about the next stage in Part Four. Go on to Part number Four."

Mrs. Rylands did.

Part Four was headed:

"*The Goverment isn't playing straight.*"

"Here little Cynna comes the stuff that troubles my mind most. I don't think Baldwin and his goverment have played a straight game. I don't think the miners and the rank and file of the workers are getting a square deal. I think that Baldwin and Co are consciously or subconsciously on the side of the coal-owner and the profit extractor, and that they mean to let the workers down. They are making an Asset of Cook and his not listening to reason. I've had that smell in my nose for some time. Even at Casa Terragena. Churchill's first number of the *British Gazette* stank of it. Gave the whole thing away.

"They didn't want to prevent a General Strike. They wanted it to happen. They wanted it to happen so as to distract attention from the plain justice of the case as between miners and coal-owners. And between workers generally and employers and business speculators generally, in a world of relative shrinkage. They wanted the chance of a false issue, to readjust with labour nearer the poverty line.

"You may say that is a serious charge to make against any goverment. But consider the facts. Consider what happened last Sunday night. Probably you haven't got the facts of Sunday night over there yet. It's the ugliest, most inexplicable night in the record of our quiet little Baldwin. If after all there does happen to be a Last Judgment, Master Stanley will be put through it hard and good about Sunday May 2nd. Or to be more exact, Monday May 3rd. 'Put that pipe down Sir,' the great flaming Angel will say, 'We want to see your face.'

"We shall all want to see his face.

"What happened was this. The Trade Union leaders were haggling and conferring between the miners and the cabinet all Sunday and

they really seemed to be getting to a delaying compromise, and something like a deal. If the goverment really meant to make a deal. Late in the night the Trade Union leaders at Downing Street, had hammered out some sort of reply to certain cabinet proposals. They went back to the conference room with it. And they found the room empty and dark and the lights out.

"The goverment had thrown down the negotiations. They came into a darkened room and were told that the goverment had gone away. Gone home!

"Bit dramatic that, anyhow.

"*Why*?

"My dear, you might guess at a thousand reasons. Some compositors at the *Daily Mail* had refused to set up an anti-labour leading article! The *Daily Mail*! I have never been able to understand how the *Daily Mail* is able to get compositors to set up *any* of its articles. But this thing I have a nasty feeling was foreseen. The coup was prepared. It was too clumsy, too out of proportion, to be a genuine thing. Forthwith the cabinet hear of the *Daily Mail* hitch. Remarkably quick. 'It's come off,' I guess some one said. 'Get on with the break.' Like a shot the cabinet responded. Like an actor answering his cue. The goverment snatched at the excuse of that little Daily Mail printing-office strike to throw down the whole elaborate sham of negotiating for peace. They called the bluff of the poor old vacillating T.U.C. 'This is the general strike and we are ready,' said they. Off flew Winston and the heroic set to get busy, and Mr. Baldwin went to bed.

"The empty room. The lights put out. The labour leaders peering into it, astonished and not a little scared. Like sheep at the gate of a strange field. Don't forget that picture, Cynthia.

"And since then the goverment hasn't been a goverment. It's been like a party trying to win an election. By fair means or foul. It's stifled all discussion. It's made broadcasting its call boy. It is playing the most extraordinarily dirty tricks in shutting up people and concealing facts. I've just heard things — but these I'll tell you later. And all the rights and wrongs as between miners and coal-owners have vanished into thin air. Which is what the goverment wanted to happen. Q.E.F. as Mr. Euclid used to say.

"That ends my fourth section."

Mrs. Rylands reflected for a time. Philip had told his story well. It sounded — credible. For the first time she seemed to be realising what this queer business in England meant. And yet there were difficulties. She must think it over. Some of it startled her and much that he had to say sounded excessively uncompromising. His note was one of combatant excitement. But then he was not living in the soft air of a great Italian garden which makes everything seem large and gentle and intricate. She must read those marked papers downstairs. But now what else had he to say? Part Five was headed: —

"Why did the Goverment want the Strike to happen?"

"And now, my dear wife, I want to write of something more difficult. But it's about the state of mind of the sort of people to which after all we belong. It's about more than the General Strike.

"I've been about at the Club; I lunched at the Carlton with Silverbaum; I spent an evening with Hind and Mornington and their crew at Hind's flat. And more particularly I've studied the words and proceedings of our esteemed uncle Lord Edensoke and of our honoured and trusted partner Sir Revel Cokeson, not to mention Mr. Gumm, the burly British Mr. Gumm. You remember them?

"Let me try and get it set down, as it has come to me. There is a feeling in the air that Britain is going down. I don't mean that there is any sort of crash in view, but that industrially and financially she is being passed and overshadowed. She is in for a time of relative if not of absolute shrinkage. We may never be able to employ the same mass of skilled and semi-skilled labour that we have done in the past.

"I am not telling you here what I believe. Never mind what I believe. I am telling you what is in the minds and not very far from openly showing upon the surface of the minds of a lot of these people. Uncle Robert practically said as much. One of those speeches of his that begin, 'My dear boy.' One of those speeches of his that seem to admit that so far he has been lying but that now we have really come to it. And one has been getting the same sort of thing for a long time between the lines of such a paper as the *Morning Post*. Well, here is my reading of hearts. They think that there is shrinkage and hard times ahead and they think that it is the mass of workers

who will have to bear the burthen. Because otherwise it will fall on — ourselves. Labour in Great Britain has seen its sunniest days. That is what *they* think.

"I suppose one has to face a certain loss of pre-eminence in the world for England. I don't like it, but I suppose we have to. We were the boss country of the Nineteenth Century and the Nineteenth Century is over. Possibly there will not be a boss country in the Twentieth Century. Or it may be America. But it isn't going to be us and we have to face up to that. That I say has got into the minds of pretty nearly all the sort of *protected* people, established people, go-about-the-globe people, financial and business people, who support the present goverment. And it takes two forms in its expression just according as intelligent meanness or unintelligent prejudice prevails in their minds.

"*First Class*; The intelligent mean wealthy people of Great Britain want to shove the bigger part of the impoverishment due to our relative shrinkage in the world upon the workers. They want a scrap that will cripple and discredit the Trade Unions. Then they will reduce wages and at the same time cut down social services and popular education. So they will be able to go on for quite a long time as they are now and even recover some of their investments abroad and — to make these economies possible — we shall just breed and train cheaper and more miserable common English people.

"But they are not the majority of their sort, this class are not. They are just the mean left hand of Baldwin and Co. The right hand, which is heavier and lumpier, is able to be more honest because it is more stupid. Let us come to them.

"*Second Class*; The unintelligent wealthy people in Great Britain. The majority. On them too for some time the unpleasant realisation that Great Britain is shrinking in world importance has been growing. It seems to have grown with a rush since the coal trade began to look groggy after deflation. Perhaps it has grown too much. But this sort cannot accept it as the others do — clearly. All ideas turn to water and feelings in their minds. This is the sort that disputes the plainest facts if they are disagreeable. It is too horrible an idea for them. So it remains a foreign growth in their minds. *Their* Empire threatened! *Their* swagger and privileges going! Their air of

patronage to all the rest of the world undermined! They refuse the fact.

"The more I hear our sort of people talk and see how they are behaving over this strike, the more I am reminded of some Gold Coast nigger who is suffering from the first intimations of old age and thinks he is bewitched and will get all right again if he only finds out and kills the witch. They lie awake at nights and hear the Empire, *their* Empire — for they've never given the working man a dog's chance in it — creaking. They think of China up, India up, Russia not caring a damn for them — and the Americans getting patronising to the nth degree. Foreign investments shrunken and no means of restoring them. These people here about me, the wealthy Tory sort of people, the chaps in the Clubs, the men and women in the boxes and stalls and restaurants and night clubs, the Ascot people and the gentle jazzers, are not thinking of the rights and wrongs of the miners and the trade union people at all, and of fair play and what's a straight deal with the men. Their attention will not rest on that. It seems unable to rest on that. The men are just a pawn in their game of foreign investment. The plain story I have told to you about the mines and the strike has passed right under their noses and they have missed the substance of it altogether. They have something larger and vaguer in their minds; this shrinkage of their credit as a class; this arrest in growth and vigour of their Empire, the Empire of their class — because that is all it is; its loss of moral power, the steady evaporation of its world leadership in finance and industry; the realisation — and they have it now in their bones if not in their intelligences, even the stupidest of them — that new and greater things are dawning upon the world. They are too-ill-educated and self- centred and consciously incompetent to accept these things fully and try to adapt themselves to new conditions. They become puzzled and frightened and quarrelsome at the bare thought of these new conditions — which threaten them — with extinction — or worse — with education. On no terms will they learn. That is too horrible. So they go frantic. They bristle up to fight. They want a great fight against time and fate. Before time and fate overtake them. They dream that perhaps if there was a tremendous scrap of some sort now, now while they are still fairly strong, somehow at the end of it

this creeping rot, this loss of *go*, in all they value and of all that makes them swagger people, would be abolished and made an end to. It would be lost in the uproar and at the end they would find themselves back on the top of things, strong and hearty again without any doubts, without a single doubt, just as they used to be. Making decisions for everyone, universally respected, America put back in its place, all the world at the salute again.

"That I am convinced is what the Winston-Bullace state of mind amounts to — as distinguished from the more cold-blooded types you find like our thin-lipped Uncle Robert. That is Class Two.

"But what is the enemy? *I* say it is time and fate, geography and necessity. Sempack I suppose would say it was the spread of scientific and mechanical progress about the world which is altering the proportions of every blessed thing in life, so that (Sempack is my witness) a world system has to come. But you can't fight time and fate and scientific and mechanical progress. You don't get a chap like Bullace grasping an idea like that. And Bullace is our class, Cynthia; he is the rule and we are the exceptions. For him therefore it has to be a conspiracy. If he finds his blessed Empire is losing the game, or to put it more exactly, if he finds the game is evaporating away from his blessed Empire, then there must be cheating. There is an enemy bewitching us and there ought to be a witch-smelling. (If only it was half as simple!)

"They call the witch Bolshevism. The Red Red Witch of the World. They pretend to themselves that there is a great special movement afoot to overthrow British trade, British prestige and the British Empire. Wicked men from Moscow are the real source of all our troubles. The miners are just their 'tools.' You remember old fool Bullace saying that. If it wasn't for Moscow the miners would *like* lower pay and longer hours. Ask for them. So you just take something that you call Bolshevism by the throat and kill it, and everyone will be happy.

"You can call almost anything Bolshevism for this purpose. You tackle that something and kill it and then the dear old Nineteenth Century will be restored and go on for ever and ever and ever.

"This is what I mean when I say that this trouble here is on a false issue. The miners and workers haven't the ghost of an idea of what

they are up against. They are out because their lives are squalid and their prospects dismal. They object to carrying all the hardship of the shrinkage of England's overseas interests and investments. To them it is just the old story of the employer trying to screw them down. They don't connect it yet with the decline of Britain as a world market and a world bank or anything of the sort. The reactionary party in the goverment, the 'sojers' as we call it, on the other hand are prancing about saving the country from an imaginary Social Revolution. You see the miss?

"The goverment lot, both Class One and Class Two, wants a fight. Class One to shift their losses on to labour and Class Two to exorcise the phantom of decay. Class One just wants to win. But if Class Two gets the least chance to make it a real bloody fight it will. They want to bully and browbeat and shoot and confuse everything in wrath and hate. They will make silly arrests; they will provoke. If they get a chance of firing into a crowd, they will do it. If they can have an Amritsar in Trafalgar Square they will. They want to beat the Reds and then tie up the Trade Unions hand and foot — and trample. And that, my dear, is the dangerous side of the present situation.

"What adds to its danger is that the miners are being led too stiffly. I sympathise with them, but I see they aren't playing to win — anything solid. If Cook can, he will give our Bullaces an excuse. Cook is Bullace in reverse. Perhaps there is some Moscow about Cook. Or he shares a dream with Bullace. He dreams Bullace's nightmare as a paradise. Both dreamers.

"So far our patient, humorous, common English hasn't given the goverment a chance. But anywhere now, an accident might happen. Some silly provocation. An ugly crowd. Or pure misunderstanding. It's touch and go these days. I have said it is a silly situation, but also it is a dangerous one. And above all it is a game of false issues. Nothing fairly meeting anything else. Nothing being plainly put, the real world situation least of all. Two different things. Labour wanting to be comfortable in a time of slump and the old Empire lot wanting to feel as lordly as ever in a spell of decline. And the common man with his head spinning. This sort of thing:—"

Came a queer little drawing of which Mrs. Rylands only discovered the import after some moments of attention.

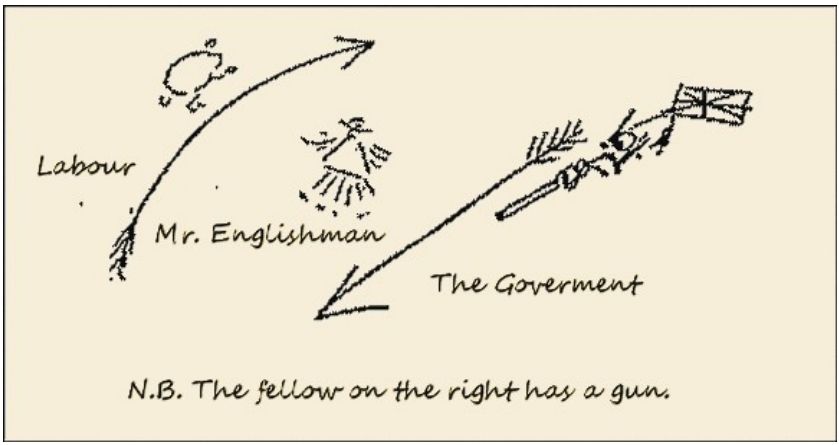

"There my dear Cynna is a long history, tediously told, but I think it gives the general shape of this business here in England up to date. On one hand workers striking wisely or not, against shrinkage and going down in the scale of life; on the other a goverment, a governing class, all of our sort, coal-owners, landowners, industrials and financiers, anticking about, believing or pretending to believe we are fighting Red Revolution, and setting out in good earnest under cover of that to kill or cripple trade unionism and labourism generally. Much good it will do their blessed Empire if they do. Against time and fate.

"But can you imagine the solemn glory of an owl like Jix, in the midst of all this? Can you imagine what I have to put up with at the club from the old fools and the young fools burning to 'give these Bolsheviks a lesson'? And the tension in the air when I go to investigate Uncle Robert. Meanwhile the reasonable, kindly, unsuspicious English common public is so puzzled, so good-humoured, so willing to do anything that seems tolerant and helpful and fair, and so ignorant of any of the realities!

"Hind told me yesterday of a bus-driver who had struck, in all loyalty to his trade union and then went and hunted up the young gentleman from Oxford who had been put in charge of his bus, just to tell him a few points he ought to know about handling a great heavy bus. What was it the old Pope said? *Non Angli sed Angeli* —

simple-minded angels. Fancy trying to shift mere pecuniary losses on to the daily lives of men of that quality!"

So ended the Fifth Part. The sixth and last part was headed simply: —

"*About myself and Cynthia.*"

"And now lastly, my darling, what am *I* doing? Nothing. Going about with my mouth open in the wonderful spectacle of England paralysed by its own confusion of mind. Baiting Uncle Robert. Reading the dreams of Mr. Sempack and comparing them with the ideas of the *British Gazette*. Learning something perhaps about the way this extraordinary world of ours, as Sempack would call it, fumbles along. And writing to you.

"I don't know what to do Cynthia? I don't know where to take hold. This is a world change being treated as a British political and social row. Its roots are away in world finance, gold and the exchanges, and all sorts of abstruse things. It isn't London or Yorkshire or New York or Moscow; it's everywhere. Part of everywhere. Where we all live nowadays. No. 1, The Universe, Time. I sympathise with the strikers but I don't really see what good this general strike is going to do, even if it does all it proposes to do. Throw everything out of gear, but what then? The goverment would have to resign. Who would come in if the goverment went out? Unheard of labour men? Snobs and spouters. Miscellaneous liberal leaders. What difference is there — except for the smell of tobacco — between Asquith and Baldwin? Lloyd George saving the country? Half the liberals and all the labour leaders would see the country in boiling pitch before they let it be saved by Lloyd George Communism and start again? There aren't three thousand Communists in England and half of them aren't English.

"On the other hand, I won't do a hand's turn to break the strike.

"I feel most horribly no good at all. I have twenty-two thousand a year, I'm a pampered child of this England and I don't belong anywhere. Dear Uncle Robert drives our great concerns and our fifth share, or thereabouts, is like a trunk tied behind an automobile. I'm an overpaid impostor. Nobody knows me. I've got no authority. If I said anything it wouldn't matter. It would be like someone shouting at the back of a meeting. And even if it did matter it wouldn't matter,

because free speech is now suppressed. There are no newspapers and the broadcasting is given over to twaddle — there was a fellow gassing most improvingly about ants and grasshoppers yesterday — mixed up with slabs of biassed news and anti-strike propaganda. You see one is just carried along by the stream of events — and the stream is hopelessly silly.

"And that brings me round, Heart of my World, to all we were talking about before I left you. How good it was to talk like that just at the end and how good those talks were! People like us, as you said, ought to do. But what are we to do and how are we to do? Where do we come in? It is all very well for old prophet Sempack to lift his mighty nose and talk of the great progressive movements that will ultimately sweep all these things away, but will they? Are they sweeping them away? Even ultimately? This muddle, this dislocated leaderless country, finding its level in a new world so clumsily and dangerously, this crazy fight against a phantom revolution, is Reality. It is England 1926. Sempackia isn't Reality; *this* is Reality. People smile about the streets and make dry jokes in our English way, but hundreds of thousands must be hiding worry almost beyond bearing. Anxiety untold, hardship and presently hunger. And the outlook — *bad*. At any time there may be shooting and killing. Sempack's great glowing golden happy world is only a dream. A remote dream. I cannot tell you how remote from this disorganised London here.

"All very well to talk of the ultimate reasonableness of mankind, but what chance has ultimate reasonableness when some atavism like Winston collars all the paper for his gibberings and leaves you with nothing to print your appeals to the ultimate reasonableness on; or when a lot of young roughs like your Italian Fascists break up everyone who writes or speaks against their imbecile ideas about the universe and Italy?

"This ultimate reasonableness of Sempack's is a rare thing, a hothouse plant. It's the last fine distillation of human hope. It lives in just a few happy corners of the world, in libraries and liberal households. If you smash the greenhouse glass or turn off the hot water it will die. How is it ever coming into the open air, to face crowds and sway millions?

"If he is back there with you I wish you would ask him that. Drive

him hard, Cynthia. He ought to come over here.

"Last night my mind was so puzzled and troubled I could not sleep. I turned out long after midnight and prowled down through Westminster and out along the Thames Embankment. There were not so many lights as usual and all those flaring advertisements about whisky and dental cream and suchlike helps to the soul weren't lit. Economy of power. It made the bridges seem browner and the little oily lights on barges and boats more significant and it gave the moon a chance on the steely black water. I thought you might be looking at the same old moon — at that very moment. It looked hard and a bit cold over here but with you it must have been bigger and soft and kindly. There were very few people about and not a tram running. Cold. Such few people as did pass were for the most part hurrying — home I suppose. I looked at the moon and thought how you would presently be reading over the things I have been trying to tell you and how perplexing they were. I had a great heartache for you, to be with you. I wished I could talk to you instead of just writing to you. Do you remember — it isn't a week yet, how I sat beside you on your balcony above the old palm trees and talked to you? Not very much. How much I would say now that I couldn't say then!

"I wandered along the Embankment wondering what was brewing beneath all this frightful foolishness of the strike. Things are surely brewing that will affect all our lives, change all the prospects of that child of ours. A country that has been very proud and great and rather stupidly and easily great, learning its place in a new world. A finer world perhaps later — but bleak and harsh at present.

"London rather darkened, rather unusually quiet — in spite of its good humour — has something about it ——

;"Awe?

"It's like Bovril. I mean, so much of the world's life is still concentrated here. London is a very wonderful city. I don't think it is just because I am English that I think that.

"I stood and looked back at the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben and thought of the way the members must be going to and fro in that empty resounding maze of a place with its endless oak-lined passages, everyone rather at a loss as to what was to happen next. Saying silly things to each other, little jokes and so on because they

can't think of anything sensible to say. Futile lot they are at Westminster nowadays when anything real shows its teeth at them. There would probably be more people than usual, but trade union sort of people, standing about in the lobbies. No sight seers. Not the usual mixed crowd....

"My mind ran on to all these riddles we have to guess together, you and I, if we are not to be lost in the general futility. If we are not to be swept along just as everything here is being swept along by forces, too misunderstood to be used or controlled. I thought of what a sterling thing you are so that you almost persuade me I can be sterling. And it came to me all over again that I wasn't nearly as good a thing as even I might be, nor making nearly enough of myself in spite of all my freedoms and money and position. Nor were any of the people who were wrapped up in the vast, ungracious, mean quarrel made up of fear and hot misunderstandings and the meanness and cowardice of comfortable wealth. Millions of strikers saying their life wasn't good enough — like some big thing talking in its sleep. And the anti-revolutionaries being firm and unflexible like an uneasy dream when your fist gets clenched. Why didn't *any* of these people seem able to wake up? Why was I only awake in gleams and moments like that moment?

"I got into a sort of exalted state out there on the Embankment in the cold moonlight.

"'Good God!' I said to you — I said it to you; you can't imagine how much I have talked to you lately, trying to explain things— 'Can none of us get together in the world to make something of it better than such silly squabbling and conflict as this? Is it a lie that there ever were martyrs — that men have died for causes and set out upon crusades? Is religion over for ever and the soul of man gone dead? And if it isn't, why is there none of it here? Why are these people all jammed against each other like lumpish things against the grating of a drain? Why is there no league for clear-headedness? Why are there no Fascisti of the Light to balance the black Fascists? Why are none of us banded together to say "Stop!" all these politicians' tricks, these shams, to scrap all the old prejudices and timidities, to take thought — and face the puzzle of the British position and the real future of England and the world, face it

generously, mightily — like men?'

"That much I said or some such thing. I seemed to have a gleam of something — not yet. It is too much to get put together yet. Now I am trying to get what I said and thought back again and to write it down and send it to you so that you can know what I said."

Abruptly it ended, "Philip."

11. NOTES OF INTERROGATION

That apparently was all that Philip had intended to send, but in addition there was a loose sheet on which he had been thinking and which had evidently got itself among the fasciculi by mistake.

He had jotted down disconnected sentences.

“The common man,” she read, “wants to do nothing with general affairs — wants to be left alone. Why not leave him alone?”

There was a sort of Debit and Credit account. On the credit side was written: “A man who doesn’t think conserves energy. Parties of reaction like the Fascists, parties of dogma like the Communists, are full of energy. They get something done. They get the wrong thing done but it is done. Independent thought, critical thought, has no chance against them.”

On the Debit side she read: “In the long run intelligence wins,” and then: “does it?” and mere scribbling. Across the lower half of the sheet ran one word very slowly written in a large fair hand, “Organisation.”

Much smaller: “Intelligence plus energy.”

Then beginning very large and ending very small, a row of interrogation marks.

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12. MRS. RYLANDS REPLIES

Mrs. Rylands read over her husband's letter and re- read her husband's letter a very great deal before she set herself to answer it. In many ways he had astonished her. His lucidity struck her as extraordinary. It was not as if he was learning to express himself; it was as if he had been released from some paralysing inhibition. Evidently he had been reading enormously as well as talking, and particularly he had been saturating himself in the wisdom of Mr. Sempack. At times he passed from pure colloquialism to phrases and ideas that instantly recalled Mr. Sempack's utterances. Perhaps it was better that he should learn to write from Mr. Sempack than from a schoolmaster, even though it was an Eton schoolmaster. The spirit of all he said was quite after her own heart. How could she ever have doubted that there was all this and more also beneath his darkness and his quiet?

To her his vision of affairs seemed fresh and powerful and broad. How much he knew that he had never spoken of before! His implicit knowledge of the sequence and meaning of strikes and Royal Commissions made her feel not only ignorant but unobservant. She must have read of all these things at the time — or failed to read of them. And she had led debates at Somerville and passed muster as a girl with an exceptional grasp of social questions!

Well, she must read again and read better. She had thought — before all her thoughts were submerged in her personal passion for him — of some such fellowship as this that was now beginning between them. In discovering Philip anew she was being restored to herself. He wrote of his futility, but in every page she found him feeling his way to action. Futility! She turned over that self-revealing sheet with the word "Organisation" upon it. Half his dreams he had not told her yet because as yet they were untellable.

She turned the sheets over again and again. He was a stronger beast than she was: it showed in every line. His handwriting had a certain weakness or immaturity; he spelt wildly ever and again, but these were such little things beside his steadfast march to judgments. He saw and thought and said it plain. "He's a man," she said and fell

to thinking of what virility meant.

Comparatively she was all receptiveness. She perceived for the first time that there was initiative even in thought. For example, the things he said about Lord Edensoke were exactly the things she had always been disposed to think but she reflected with a startled and edified observation that she had never actually thought them. It was not merely that there was virility and decisiveness in action, there was virility and decisiveness even in mental recognition. To judge was an act. Always her judgments were timid and slow. He crouched and watched and leapt and behold! there was fact in his grip. Her role was circumspection until the lead was given her. And behind his judgments even in this first letter there was the suggestion of action gathering.

That afternoon and later and the next day she wrote him her own first real letter in reply to his. The conclusion of his came so near to the matter of Mr. Sempack's last talk that she thought she could do no better than write a description of that gentleman's return to Casa Terragena and of how he had argued with himself and her about the relations of thought to activity. She got all that she felt pretty clear. She hoped that he would look up Philip in London, for she was quite sure they would both be ready to meet again and exchange ideas amidst that conflict of witless realities. She tried to be very simple and earnest about Mr. Sempack and his views, but when she told of him and Lady Catherine, the humourist and novelist latent in every intelligent woman, found release. She thought she would write about his new tie and then she decided not to write about his new tie and finally she wrote about it rather amusingly at some length. And afterwards she was inclined to regret having written about that new tie. She felt she ought never to have noted his new tie. But the letter had gone before this last decision was made.

At the end of her letter she found herself beginning afresh after Philip's own manner.

"About what you say of getting together, of organisation, of sane organisation, I find my mind almost too excited to write. It is work in that way that has to be done now. Manifestly, 'Fascists of the Light' is a great phrase. Who would have thought of you my dear dear Man as a maker of phrases? Before we have done, perhaps we shall make

many things. You and I, I hope, but I begin to see it will be mainly you. I am torn my dearest between the desire to do and a fear of vain gestures that we cannot justify. I send my heart to you. I wish I had you here just for a moment to kiss your ear and put my cheek against yours. I wish I could put my arm across your broad shoulders. I am very well, I am flourishing here, my dear Man. I glow. I grow. I am a water melon in the sun. A wonderful nurse from Ulster comes to-morrow. Stella Binny is bringing her. It is early to bring her yet, but she is free and must be secured. McManus her name is. In a little while, I gather, Casa Terragena will belong to Mrs. McManus and Bombaccio will do her reverence. Stella has given up Theosophy now, by the bye, and is a fully fledged R.C. She was 'received' in Rome. Much fuss over her, to judge by her letters. They always make a fuss at first. We shan't argue much. She will just drop the McManus and pass on. Four long weeks more, my dear. When all this is over I will work for you, with you and for you, my dear. Philip, my darling, my Man, I love you and that is the beginning and the end and beginning over again of all I have to say to you."

13. REMARKABLE OPINIONS OF MRS. MCMANUS

Mrs. Rylands was agreeably interested in Mrs. McManus.

Stella Binny had never quite seemed to exist and now this Mrs. McManus intensified that quality. Stella arrived just like anyone, exactly like anyone. She might have been an item in big figures in statistics; visitor 3792, *normal*. But Mrs. McManus was exceptionally real. The only other thing that was equally real in her presence was the expectation of Mrs. Rylands. She stuck out from Stella in the car; and her one entirely masculine valise, painted with broad bands of white and blue, made all the rest of the joint luggage a mere et-cetera.

She was strong and rather tall, she got into a nurse's costume straight away upon her arrival, she presented a decided profile, a healthy complexion and lightish hair just shot with grey. It was not faded hair, it was either light brown or it was silver; it never hesitated. On her lips rested a smile and a look of modest assurance. One perceived at once that she knew every possible thing there was to be known about obstetrics and that it rather amused her. Partly that smile of hers was due to the fact that she had very fine large teeth and her lips had stood no nonsense with them and had agreed to meet pleasantly but firmly outside them. Her eyes were observant, ready and disposed (within reason) to be kind. Her speech was pervaded by a quality that made it rather more definite in outline and rather clearer in statement than normal English. Mrs. Rylands referred it to Ulster. She felt that this was confirmed when Mrs. McManus took an early opportunity to mention that she was a "Prodestant." Nowadays Protestants who call themselves Protestants are only to be found in Ulster and the backwoods of America. Mrs. McManus evidently did not come from the backwoods of America; her accent would have been entirely different if she had.

"Almost all my work is done in Italy and the south of France in Catholic families, and I shouldn't get half of it if I wasn't known to be a Prodestant out and out," she explained. "It gives them

confidence. You see — —”

Her expression conveyed an intense desire to be just and exact. “You can’t make a really thorough nurse out of a Roman Catholic woman. It’s known. There’s holy, devoted women among these Roman Catholic nurses, mind you. I’m not denying it. Some of them are saints, real saints. It is a privilege to meet them. But what you want in a nurse is not a saint; it is a nurse. They aren’t nurses, first and foremost and all the time. They’re worried about this holiness of theirs. That’s where they fall short. They fuss about with their souls, confessing and all that, taking themselves out and looking at themselves, and it distracts them. It takes them off their work. How can you think about what you are doing when all the time you are asking yourself, ‘Am I behaving properly?’ and keeping your mind off evil thoughts. Keeping their minds off evil thoughts indeed! Why! a real nurse like me just thinks of what she happens to be doing and lets her mind rip. The unholy things have come into my mind right under the nose of the doctor you’d hardly believe, Mrs. Rylands. And gone clean out of it again. Whereas one of them Roman Catholics would be all for laying hold of it and keeping it and carrying it off to tell her confessor afterwards like as if she’d laid an egg. And meanwhile with all that much of trouble in her, she’d be bound to do something wrong. Holy they certainly are I allow. But holiness is a full time job, Mrs. Rylands, and it only leaves enough over for nursing as will make a reasonably good amateur. And amateurs they are. So I keep to it I’m a Prodestant just to show I’m not that sort. Which is as much as to say if I don’t nurse well I’m damned, and there’s no excuses.

“And then all that purity of theirs! It takes a Prodestant to wash all over every day,” said Mrs. McManus. “These Catholics — they’d get ideas or something. There’s nuns haven’t washed all over for years. And think all the better of themselves for it.

“And that’s all about it,” said Mrs. McManus, suddenly as if winding up her dissertation.

“There’s your friend Miss Binny,” she resumed. “A nicer lady I’ve never met. And she’s just eaten up with this idea of being converted to Catholicism and all that. It’s wonderful what she gives to it. They say she’s visited nearly every image and picture there is in

Italy where there's a Stella Maris, that being one of the Virgin-Marys they have. In a Rolls-Royce car. I've no doubt it comforted her greatly, if she happened to be wanting comfort, and anyhow it was a grand occupation for her. Not having anything better to do. Catholic she is, like new paint. But would she have brought a Roman Catholic nurse along to you? She would not."

"That's very extraordinary," said Mrs. Rylands, considering it. "I never thought of that."

"Naturally," said Mrs. McManus. "It's only now that any occasion has arisen."

Her opinions upon the state of affairs in Italy were equally clear cut and novel to Mrs. Rylands. "These Fascists," she said, "are making a great to-do here — with their Mussolini and their black shirts and all that. Giving castor oil to respectable people and frightening them and beating them about and generally misbehaving themselves. They'll do a great mischief to Italy. They're just boys. There's not a Fascist in Italy would dare to stand up to a really formidable woman, who knew her own mind about them. There's suffragettes we had in London would tear them to bits. But they get taken seriously here, as if they were grown-up people. It's dreadful the precociousness of boys here. I could tell you things would astonish you. It's not having proper public schools makes these Fascists. We'll never get them in England, try though they may."

She reflected. "Those public schools of ours in England are by all accounts mere sinks of iniquity. If you believe the half you're told. And what better place could you send a growing boy to, seeing what divils boys are? And there they can work it off and get rid of it and take it out of each other. Whereas these young Fascists don't ever grow up to proper ideas even about cutting their hair."

"But don't they run the country?" asked Mrs. Rylands. "Don't they at least keep the trains punctual?"

"The roads in Italy are a disgrace to civilisation," said Mrs. McManus. "I've had to bump my ladies over them. Let them mend their roads," and so swept Fascist efficiency away.

"All you hear of Italy is this Mr. Mussolini's propaganda," she expanded. "He's a great propaganding advertising sort of man. He's the voice of Italy and he's drowned all the other voices. Everyone

has been so shut up and so beaten and arrested and all that by these young divils that had a word to say against them, that now they don't even know the truth themselves. How can you possibly know anything about yourself if you won't hear a word about yourself unless it's praise? Well, that's where they are," said Mrs. McManus. "At bottom — —" She sighed. "The trouble with a country like Italy is that there's no sensible women about to keep the young men in order. And speak plainly and simply to them about their goings on. They're just mere females and Catholics, these Italian women, and that's all there is to it.

"Would you believe it," said Mrs. McManus, "I was stopped by some of them young Fascists on the Pincio one day and told to go back from the walk I was taking. Up to some bedevilment they were. I wouldn't go back and I didn't go back. I just stood where I was and looked them in the eye and told them what I thought of them. Quietly. And what I'd like to do to them if I was their mothers. In English of course. After a bit they began to look sheepish and glance sideways at one another and shrug their shoulders and in the end they let me go my way. Of course I used English. It's always the best thing, especially with these foreigners here, to talk to them in English, if you happen to get into any sort of dispute with them. They're conceited people and they don't like to feel ignorant, and talking to them in English makes them feel ignorant. It puts them in the inferior position. If you talk to them in their own language you're apt to make mistakes and that sets them off despising you. Whereas if you talk in English they despise themselves and you get the upper hand of them. Exactly like talking quietly to dogs. Never lower yourself by talking to a foreigner in his own tongue. Never seem to try to understand him. Behave as though he ought to be ashamed not to understand every word you are saying to *him*. You have him at your mercy."

That, too, impressed Mrs. Rylands as a striking point of view. She made a note of it for future consideration.

Mrs. McManus professed an admiration for Casa Terragena and the gardens that was transparently a concession.

"They must have cost a terrible deal of money," she said, as if she wished that to be taken for praise. "Dragging these flowers from all

the ends of the earth to make them grow here together! The industry of it! The ways of man! Hardly a thing on earth nowadays stays where God put it."

"If God did put it," said Mrs. Rylands.

"A manner of speaking," said Mrs. McManus. "There's that big lovely purple spike thing you say came from Australia. No, I'll not attempt to learn the name of it. Such things cumber the mind. It's standing up there like a regiment among the rocks with all its bells open, ranks and ranks of it — waiting for insects that are all round the world away. No one ever brought over the insects it was made for. You may say it is botany and science bringing it here, but I can't help feeling it's taking advantage of a flower that hadn't the power to help itself. It's making all the summer one long First of April for it bringing it here. Day after day, more of these bells. Open for nothing.

"It's like calling Caller Herrin' in the wilderness of the moon," said Mrs. McManus.

Mrs. Rylands saw her lovely garden from a new angle.

"Hundreds and hundreds of workmen it must have taken from first to last. I wonder what they thought they were doing when they made it. Anyhow — it's a very good place, what with the sea breezes, for you to be having your baby in."

Mrs. McManus went off at a tangent. "That butler of yours is a fine looking fellow and well set up. I doubt if Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has finer moustaches. It's a mercy he's so wrapped up in himself. He'd be a Holy Terror with the maids if he wasn't."

Perfectly true. But no one had ever remarked it before.

She regretted Philip wasn't available. "I'm no friend to separating husband and wife when there's a baby coming. Some people nowadays have a perfect fad for keeping them apart, just as though they were animals. But men are not animals in such respects and wives need to be comforted. Of course if he had to go back for the coal strike there's nothing more to be said. It's a pity."

She explained that she did not propose to walk about with her patient more than was necessary. "You've got your thoughts," she said, "and I have mine. I see you're carrying a little green book about to write in. I needn't chew the newspaper to make talk for you, thank goodness. The work I've had to do at times! But you don't want that.

I'll hover. I'll just hover. You'll find I'll always be near and just out of sight — if ever you call. I've been trained to hover for years."

"You'll find it very quiet here," said Mrs. Rylands. "There's very little to do."

"I'll never want for something to do while there's a cross-word puzzle to be found in the paper. Wonderful the uses men can find for things like words!"

"If you'd like to run in to Monte Carlo for an afternoon or so soon the car is quite at your service. There's really no need even to hover for a bit."

"Do you see me breaking the bank?" said Mrs. McManus.

"Shops."

"There again," said Mrs. McManus.

"There's English services in Mentone on Sunday. You must go for that."

"I will not," said Mrs. McManus.

"But as a Protestant —— !"

"I'm no friend to extravagance in any shape or form. When I'm in England I go to the English church and when I'm in Scotland I'm whatever sort of Presbyterian is nearest, but going to English Church services in a country of this sort is like fox hunting in Piccadilly, I'd be ashamed to be seen going there, prayer-book and all."

An irrational impulse to make Mrs. McManus help with the little green book came to Mrs. Rylands. "But isn't God everywhere?" she asked.

"I was not speaking of God."

"But you are a Protestant."

"I am that."

"But Protestants believe in God."

"Protestants protest against Roman Catholics. And well they may."

"But you believe in God?"

"That is a matter, Mrs. Rylands, Strictly between Himself and me."

14. ROW WITH UNCLE ROBERT

But the large clear *obiter dicta* of Mrs. McManus, those hard opaque ideas like great chunks of white quartz, were no more than an incidental entertainment for Mrs. Rylands. The main thread of her mental existence now was her discussion with her little green leather book, and with Philip, the discussion of her universe and what had to be done about it. For five days Philip sent nothing to her but three cards, not postcards but correspondence cards in envelopes from his clubs, saying he was "writing a screed" and adding endearments. Then in close succession came two bales of written matter, hard upon the sudden and quite surprising announcement in the French and English-Parisian papers that the general strike in England had collapsed.

These "screeds" were very much in the manner of his former communication. Some lavender-tinted sheets from Honeywood House testified to a night spent at his Aunt Rowena's at Barnes. But there were no more drawings; he was getting too deeply moved for that sort of relief. There was not the same streak of amused observation, and there was an accumulating gravity. He reasoned more. The opening portion was a storm of indignation against the *British Gazette*, the government control of broadcasting and the general suppression of opinion in the country. That was very much in his old line. He had taken the trouble to copy out a passage from the government proclamation of Friday and print and underline certain words. "*ALL RANKS* of the armed forces of the crown are notified that *ANY ACTION* they may find it necessary to take in an honest endeavour to aid the civil power will receive both now *AND AFTERWARDS* the full support of the Government." Something had happened, Mrs. Rylands noted! He had spelt "government" right! And an anticipatory glance over the pages in her hand showed that he was going on spelling it right. To these quoted words Philip had added in a handwriting that was distorted with rage, rather thicker and less distinct: "in other words, 'Shoot and club if you get half a chance and the Home Office is with you. You will be helped now and let off afterwards.' This is publicly asking for violence in the most

peaceful social crisis the world has ever seen. I told you the government wanted to have a fight and this proves it. But this isn't the worst...."

He went on to tell of how the Bishop of Oxford, the Masters of Balliol and University and a number of leading churchmen had called upon the government to reopen negotiations and how the Archbishop of Canterbury had attempted in vain to get a movement afoot in the country to arrest the struggle and revive negotiations. The Archbishop had preached on this on Sunday and had tried to mobilise the pulpits throughout the country. He had found himself treated as a rebel sympathiser and choked off. The *British Gazette* had suppressed the report of this church intervention and the government had prohibited its publication by the British Broadcasting Company. "They *want* this fight. They *want* to get to violence," wrote Philip, with his pen driving hard into the paper, and proceeded to denounce "Winston's garbled reports of Parliament. Anything against them is either put in a day late or left out altogether. People like Oxford and Grey are cut to rags. Cook said of the negotiations, days ago, 'It is hopeless,' and the dirty rag quoted this as though he said it of the strike. And we have a cant that these Harrovians are real public school boys and understand fair play!"

It was funny to find the faithful Etonian breaking off in this way to gird at Harrow and make it responsible for the most unteachable of its sons.

It seemed Philip had been in the House of Commons on Friday and heard a discussion between Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Thomas that more than confirmed his suspicions that the petty *Daily Mail* strike and the consequent break was a foreseen excuse, meanly and eagerly snatched at by the government. Then came a rumour, current at the time but with no foundation in fact, that the King (or according to another version the Prince of Wales) had wanted to say something reconciling and had been advised against such a step. "Jix as Mussolini," commented Philip, quite convinced of the story. He stormed vividly but briefly at the broadcasting programmes and the talk in the clubs. Came a blank half-sheet, just like one of those silences in some great piece of music before the introduction of a new theme and then, on a new page and very distinctly: "I have had a

damned row with Uncle Robert."

This was the motive of the next part of Philip's composition, written more evenly and more consecutively than anything he had done before, the *Largo* so to speak. He expanded and developed and varied his jangling sense of Uncle Robert, and gathered it altogether into a measured and sustained denunciation. He set out to convey with a quite unconscious vigour, his deep astonishment, his widening perplexity and his gathering resentment that anything of the nature of Lord Edensoke should exist in the world, let alone in such close and authoritative proximity to himself. At times his discourse might have borne the heading "The Young Man discusses the Older Sort of Human Male."

"He's damned," he repeated. "I never realised before that anyone could go about this world without any stink or fuss, so completely and utterly dead and damned as he is." He jumped into capitals to say his worthy uncle was a "Bad Man, nerve and muscle, blood and bone." He declared that it was impossible to understand the general strike, the coal strike, the outlook in England, the outlook for all the world until Lord Edensoke had been anatomised and analysed. And forthwith he set about the business.

Philip made it quite clear that up to his early conversations with his uncle after his return to England, he had supposed Lord Edensoke to be animated by much the same motives as himself, namely by a strong if vague passion to see the world orderly and growing happier, by a real wish to have the Empire secure, beneficent and proud, by a desire to justify wealth by great services, and that he was prepared to give time and face losses that the course of human affairs should go according to his ideas of what was fine and right. These had always been Philip's own assumptions, albeit rather dormant ones. But ——

"He doesn't care a rap for the Empire as an Empire," wrote the amazed nephew. "He sees it simply as a not too secure roof over a lot of the family investments." Lord Edensoke's sense of public duty did not exist. He despised his social class. His loyalty to the King amounted to a firm assurance that he diverted public attention from the real rulers of the country. People liked the monarchy; it saved public issues from the dangerous nakedness they had in America. "Otherwise if he thought there was a dividend to be got out of it, he

would boil the king in oil." He didn't believe in social order, in any sort of responsibility that a policeman and a law court could not check. Frankly, in his heart, he saw himself to be a brigand, carrying an enviable load through a world wherein nothing better than brigandage was possible. Law was a convenient convention among the robbers and you respected it just so far as it would be discreditable or dangerous to break the rules.

Came an illuminating anecdote. At dinner Lord Edensoke had shown a certain weariness of Philip's political and social crudities. By way of getting to more interesting things he had opened a fresh topic with "By the bye, Philip, have you any loose balances about? I think I could make a good use of them."

He had proceeded to explain to Philip's incredulity that the general strike was bound to collapse as soon as the scared and incapable labour leaders saw an excuse for letting it down that would save their faces with their followers, and that then the miners would be left locked out exactly as if there had been no general strike — but with "diminished public support." "That fellow Cook" could be relied upon to keep them out and to irritate the public against them. His lordship did his best to disabuse Philip's mind of the idea that there would be any settlement for some time. "You mean *you* won't settle anyhow?" Philip had said. Lord Edensoke's reply had been a faint smile and a gesture of the hand. So, as Rylands and Cokeson would have thousands of trucks unemployed, and easily handed over to other uses, the thing to do was to buy foreign coal now, and release and distribute it later when the community at large came to realise all that Lord Edensoke knew. Coal would come back to fancy prices — higher than '21. "There's a speculative element, of course," he had said. "The miners *may* collapse," but as he saw it, there was, saving that possibility, anything from twenty-five to a hundred and fifty per cent. to be made in the course of the next few months upon anything Philip chose to bring in to this promising operation.

Philip ended his account of this conversation in wild indignation. "We are the coal-owners of Great Britain," he fumed, "and this is how we do our duty by the country that trusts us, honours us, makes peers of us! We starve the miner and strangle industry — and we make 'anything from twenty-five to a hundred and fifty per cent.' out

of a deal in foreign coal. Naturally we do nothing to bring about a settlement. Naturally we are for the Constitution and all that, which lets us do such things." Philip's narrative wasn't very clear, but this was the point it would seem at which the "damned row with Uncle Robert" occurred.

Respect for the head of the family made its final protest and fled. It was Philip's last dinner with his senior partner. He seemed to have talked, according to his uncle's judgment, "sheer Bolshevism." It was doubtful if they got to their cigars. Philip returned to the Reform Club and spent the rest of a long evening consuming the Club notepaper at a furious pace.

Details of the final breach did not appear because Philip swept on to a close, unloving investigation of his uncle's soul.

"I seem to have been thinking of him most of the time since," he said.

What did Lord Edensoke think he was up to, Philip enquired. Clearly he did not suppose he was living for anything outside himself. He had no religion, no superstition even. He had a use for religion, but that was a different matter. For him religion was a formality that kept people in order. It was good that inferior and discontented people should be obliged to sacrifice to the God of Things as they Are. It set up a code of outer decency and determined a system of restraints. Nor had he any patriotism. The British Empire in his eyes was a fine machine for utilising the racial instincts of the serviceable British peoples for the enforcement of contracts and the protection of invested capital throughout the world. If they did not, as a general rule, get very much out of it in spite of their serviceableness that was their affair. They could congratulate themselves that their money was on a gold standard even if they had none, and they had the glory of ruling India if even they were never allowed to go there. He liked the English climate and avoided it during most of the winter. It was a good climate for work and Courtney Wishart in its great park just over the hills from Edensoke was a stately and enviable home, one of those estates that made England a land fit for heroes to die for. He had no passion for science. The spirit that devotes whole lives to the exquisite unravelling of reality was incomprehensible to him. He preferred his

reality ravelled. It was better for business operations. He betrayed no passion for any sort of beautiful things. He would never collect pictures nor make a garden unless he wanted to beat someone else at it or sell it at a profit. He loved no one in the world — Philip would tell her a little later of his uncle's loves. In brief he lived simply for himself, for satisfactions directly related to himself as the centre of it all and for nothing else whatever.

One of his great satisfactions was winning a game. He was not, Philip thought, avaricious simply but he liked to get, because that was besting the other fellow. His business was his great game. He liked to feel his aptitude, his wariness, to foresee, and realise and let other people realise the shrewd precision of his anticipations. He played other games for recreation. He was reported to be a beastly bridge player, very good but spiteful and envious even of his partner. He played in the afternoons at the Lessington after lunch and Philip said rumour had it that several other members of that great club would go into hiding and get the club servants to report for them, not venturing near the card-room, until Edensoke was seated at his game. He played golf bitterly well. Physically he was as good as Geoffry, the same sure eye and accurate movements. He had been a memorable bat at cricket and still made a devastating show at tennis. And he was a wonderful shot. Business kept him from much shooting, but he loved a day now and then, when he could take his place among the guns and kill and kill. He would stand, with those thin lips of his pressed together, while the scared birds came rocketing over him, wings whirring, hearts beating fast. He showed them. But he had no blood lust. On the whole he would rather play against a man than merely triumph over birds and silly things that probably did not feel humiliated even when they were shot. Besting people and feeling that the other fellow realises or will presently find out that he has been bested was subtler and far more gratifying. "You know that scanty laugh of his," wrote Philip, "rather like a neigh. The loser gets it." Just now he was besting the miners. "The more he gets them down the better he will be pleased." The profits were a secondary consideration, important only like scoring above the line.

He loved no one. "I don't think I have ever talked to you about Aunt Sydney," said Philip, and proceeded to explain the domestic

infelicities of his uncle. She had been a brilliant beautiful girl but poor, one of the "needy Needhams." Uncle Robert would never have married a rich and independent wife because it would have been difficult to best her and hard to try. He had kept Aunt Sydney down for a time and she had been almost treacherously subservient until she had got him well committed to infidelity with a secretary, and had enticed him into provable cruelty. She had been a patient Grisel who had eavesdropped, stolen letters and bided her time. A lover, well hidden, gave her sage counsel. Then she had held her husband up with the threat of a discreditable divorce. Uncle Robert had no stomach for being "talked about all over London." It was one of his essential satisfactions to be respected and high and unapproachable, and he must have had some bad hours over the affair. "We all rather like Aunt Sydney on that account," wrote Philip.

She arranged a separation of mutual toleration and wore her lover upon her sleeve in full view of her baffled spouse. He became "Burdock, the chap Lady Edensoke keeps," her watchful and not always comfortable shadow.

Lord Edensoke tried to make this seem to be his own design and flaunted it with various conspicuous, expensive and rather discordant ladies for some years to show everybody just how things were. Then he reverted to his more congenial pursuit of discovering, seducing, exalting and throwing over, very young and needy beauties from the middle classes. He coveted them, bested them, got them, hated them because so plainly he had bought them, and threw them over with well established expensive habits and a contemptible income. "He sets about it like a cat," wrote Philip. "I have seen him on the platform at a Mansion House meeting, fixing some pretty girl in the audience like an old cat spotting a nestling in a bush. He sets about it very quietly and cleverly. He has all sorts of secretarial jobs to offer, and I believe there is a friendly West End dressmaker. He can even seem to be influential round about one or two theatres if a girl has ambitions of that sort. He gets them and makes them submit to this and that, and they become afraid of him. They realise they are unsafe. He can turn them back to poverty and the streets, so easily. When he has got them thoroughly afraid of him, then I suppose he feels like God. In the end, it does not matter how they propitiate. Go

they must. In his life, there must have been a score of these — *romances*."

Thus Philip, relentlessly. These were the interests and amusements of Lord Edensoke, the satisfactions that kept him alive and made the life he lived worth while, the besting of men, the abasement of women, the sense of conquest assured by the big balance, the big house, the many servants, the champagne you couldn't buy in the open market, the special cigars, the salutation of common men, the whispered "That's Edensoke," the rare visits to the House of Lords. What other reality was there? These were the things that kept the look of quiet self-approval on those thin lips and assured the great coal-owner that he had the better of the sentimentalists and weaklings about him, that he could rank himself above these other men who wasted their time upon ideas and causes, who kept faith beyond the letter of their bargains, and sacrificed and restrained themselves for their friends and their associates, their wives and their women-kind. "My dear," wrote Philip, rising to the full gravity of his Largo, "this is the analysis of Uncle Robert. These are his ends and all that he *is*! For the first time in my life I have looked at him squarely and this is what he is. And it is a hideous life. It is a hideous life and yet it comes so close to me that it is a life I too might drift into living.

"This is a common way of living among our kind of people now. Edensoke is no rare creature. There are more Edensokes than know they are [*sic*]. Edensokes with variations. There are hundreds of him now among the rich, and thousands and thousands as one goes down the scale to the merely prosperous. Some are a little different about their womenfolk and buy them dearer and make more of a show with them. Many are sillier — I admit he has a good brain. Lots are too cowardly for 'romances' and leave the women alone — but not so many as there used to be. Most have fads and hobbies that give them a little distinction, but all are equally damned. You and I could write down a score of names in five minutes. Not one that wouldn't rejoice to be in that deal over the foreign coal, if they knew of it and knew how to get into it. Not one, that wouldn't feel bested to hear of a coal miner with a decent bathroom, a Morris car and a shelf of books. The government and the bunch behind the government, abounds in his

quality. Soames Forsyte again! — how near old Galsworthy has come to him. The living damned.

"And in a world of men like this," Philip culminated, "we are waiting about for old Sempack's millennium to come of its own accord!"

Mrs. Rylands paused at the end of the sheet. The portrait of the contemporary successful man, for all the jerkiness of its strokes, struck her as devastatingly true. There was not a thing Philip was telling her about Lord Edensoke that seemed altogether new to her. Even the bilked mistresses she had known of, by intuition. And as certainly had she known, and yet never quite dared to know, that this was the quality of many men, of many powers, of much of the power in the world. The world into which she and Philip were now launching another human soul.

That too had to be reasoned out with the green leather book.

"What puts the sting into the problem of Uncle Robert," Philip continued, "is the fact that he is after all, blood of my blood and bone of my bone. When he isn't looking like an elderly shop-soiled version of Geoffry coming home late, he is looking like me in thirty years time. The personal question for me is, whether he is the truth about me stripped of a lot of illusion and rainbow stuff and Wordsworthian 'clouds of glory' and such, or whether I am still in possession of something — I don't know — some sort of cleanness and decency, that he has lost. Which I need not lose. I'm all for alternative two, and if so, then the most important thing in the world for us is to know what has dried this up in Uncle Robert.

"I'm going to write something difficult, dear wife confessor. I can't help being clumsy here and it will sound priggish to the square of pi. But I see it like this. There is something in me that for want of a better word I might call religious. There is something else, unless it is the same thing, that holds me to you. Not just sex and your dearness, they hold me, but something else as well that makes me put not you, but something about you, over and before myself — before ourselves." (Marginal note: "I just can't get away from all these ambiguous somethings but I think you will see what I mean. When a man can manage his 'ones' and his 'somethings' and his other pronouns then I suppose he has really learnt to write.") This has to do

with nobleness and good faith. This is in me but not so very strong, and I thank whatever powers there be that I met you. This wants help to keep alive, and you help it to keep alive, have helped and will help it tremendously. It may be illusion but that does not matter so long as it remains bright and alive. Lots of people keep it alive through religion, church I mean and all that, but nowadays that hasn't kept up, religion hasn't, and a lot of us can't make that use of it. Of any current sort of religion I mean. And it can go altogether. I have this in me, whatever it is, and so has Geoffry and so perhaps had Uncle Robert. I am more like Geoffry than you like to think and he is more like me. He didn't have my luck in getting you and having you thinking of fine things beside me, and before and always he has had the worse of that sort of luck and he is shyer than I am and more secretive. I've seen what I am talking about shrink in him, but I've watched it and it is there. I don't suppose there is any religion now strong enough to get him — or any sort of woman to pick him up. I don't know. Still something lingers. It makes him uncomfortable and he is disposed to hate it and try to sneer at it until it is dead altogether. And by the same reasoning Edensoke started like this. There was a time when he thought of doing fine things and having something in his life lovelier than scoring points in a game. He had the illusion, or if you like, because practically it is the same, he had the sacred flame, whatever it is, flickering about in him. I expect Aunt Sydney made a tough start for him. He hadn't my luck. Suppose when they two were young he had found out suddenly that she loved him — more even than her pride. Suppose something had happened like what happened to me. Infusion of blood saves lives, but being loved like that is infusion of soul. Shy men bury their hearts like that fellow in the Testament who buried his talent. And when you dig them up again, there's nothing. Hearts must have air, have breathed upon them the breath of life. As you did. The flame is hard to light again. Now that there is no religion really, one is left to nothing but love.

"I'm writing all this just anyhow and God knows what you will make of this hotch-potch of ideas. I've got to cut it short and finish.

"It is one o'clock, my dear, closing time for a respectable club and I must turn out from here and walk back to South Street to bed. Not a

taxi to be got."

* * * * *

This first letter had been sealed down after this effort and then reopened to insert a sheet of South Street notepaper and on this was scrawled: "I open this letter again to tell you that Catherine Fossingdean has killed a man. I did not even know she was in England. I thought she was still with you. But she seems to have scuttled home directly the General Strike was begun. You know she is mixed up with the comic-opera fellow Fearon-Owen who stars it in the British Fascisti world. I can't imagine her taste for him. Looks to me like the sort of fellow one doesn't play cards with. Got his knighthood out of organising some exhibition. One of those splendid old English families that sold carpets in Constantinople three generations ago and was known as Feronian or some such name with a nose to it. Anyhow he's true-blue British now. Bull-dog-breed to the marrow. Union Jack all over him. And a terrific down on the lazy good-for-nothing British working man. Who really is British, blood and bone. In some irregular way this glory of our island race has got his fingers well into an emergency organisation of automobilists, for scattering Winston's *British Gazette* up and down the country, and suchlike public services. And he seems to have handed over a motor-car to Lady Catherine for moonlight rushes to the midlands.

"You know how she drives. Foot down and damn the man round the corner. Giving her a car to drive is almost as criminal as shooting blind down a crowded street. She got her man near Rugby. Two young fellows she got, but the other was only slightly injured. This one was killed dead. Tramping for a job, poor devil. *And she drove on!* She drove on, because she was a patriotic heroine battling against Bolshevism and all that, for God and King and Fearon-Owen and the *British Gazette*, particularly Fearon-Owen and the *British Gazette*. War is war. Nothing will be done to her. That's all. Philip."

15. THE GENERAL STRIKE COLLAPSES

Philip's other letter was much slenderer and had been posted only one day after its precursor. It opened with his amazed account of the collapse of the General Strike. "Everything has happened as Uncle Robert foretold, and so far I am proved a fool," it began.

He went on to express a quite extravagant contempt for the leaders of the Labour Party who had "neither the grit to prevent the General Strike nor the grit to keep on with it." It was clear that he had a little lost his equanimity over the struggle and that his criticisms of selfish toryism had tilted him heavily towards the side of the strikers in the struggle. And he was intensely annoyed to find his uncle's estimate of the situation so completely confirmed. The time had come to call out the second line, stop light and power and food distribution and bring matters to a crisis, and there was little reason to suppose that most of the men of the second line would not have stood by their unions.

But it would have meant the beginning of real violence and a grimmer phase of the struggle and the trade union leaders were tired, frightened and consciously second-rate men. They were far more terrified by the possibilities of victory than by the certainty of defeat. They had snatched at the opportunity offered by a new memorandum by "that Kosher Liberal, Herbert Samuel"— "Tut tut!" said Mrs. Rylands; "but this is real bad temper, Philip!" — which nobody had accepted or promised to stand by, and unconditionally, trusting the whole future of the men they stood for, to a government that could publish the *British Gazette*, they had called the strike off. They had given in and repented like naughty children "and here we are — with men being victimised right and left and the miners in the cart! Nothing has been done, nothing has been settled. The railway workers are eating humble pie and the red ties of the Southern railway guards are to be replaced by blue ones. (Probably Jix thought of that.) The miners have already refused to accept Samuel's memorandum, and Uncle Robert's little deal is almost the only hopeful thing in the situation. He gets his laugh out of it sure enough."

Even the writing showed Philip in a phase of anti-climax. He was irritated, perplexed.

"Is all life a comedy of fools? Am I *taking myself too seriously* and all that? Here is a crisis in the history of one of the greatest, most intelligent, best educated countries in the world, and it is an imbecile crisis! It does nothing. It states nothing. It does not even clear up how things are. By great good luck it did not lead to bloodshed or bitterness — except among the miners. Who aren't supposed to count. And Catherine's kill of course. There was no plan in it and no idea to it. It was a little different in form and it altered the look of the streets; but otherwise it was just in the vein of affairs as they go on month by month and year by year, coming to no point, signifying nothing. Burbling along. Just, as you say old Sempack said, just Carnival. Where are we going? — all the hundreds of millions that we are on this earth? Is this all and has it always been such drifting as this? Are the shapes of history like the shapes of clouds, fancies of Polonius the historian? Now we expand and increase and now we falter and fail. Boom years and dark ages until the stars grow tired of us and shy some half-brick of a planet out of space to end the whole silly business.

"I cannot believe that, and so I come back to old Sempack again with his story of all this world of ours being no more than the prelude to a real civilisation. Hitch your mind to that idea and you can make your life mean something. Or seem to mean something. There is no other way, now that the religions have left us, to make a life mean anything at all. But then, are we getting on with the prelude? How are we to get on with the prelude? How are we to get by Uncle Robert? How are we to get by Winston and Amery? How are we to get by all these posturing, vague-minded, labour politicians? My dear, I set out writing these letters to you to tell you how my mind was going on and what I was finding out to do. And in this letter anyhow I have to tell you that my mind isn't going on and that I am lost and don't know what to do. It is as if a squirrel in a rotating cage reported progress. I wish I had old Sempack here, just to put him through it. Is he anything more than a big bony grey squirrel spinning in a cage of his own? The great crisis came and the great crisis went, and it has left me like a jelly-fish stranded on a beach.

“The only people in all this tangle of affairs who seem to have any live faith in them and any real go are — don’t be too startled — the Communist Party. I’ve had glimpses of one or two of them. And the stuff they teach and profess seems to me the most dead-alive collection of half-truths and false assumptions it is possible to imagine. For everyone who isn’t a Communist they have some stupid nickname or other, and their first most fundamental belief is that nobody who owns any property or directs any sort of business, can be other than deliberately wicked. Everything has to be sabotaged and then everything will come right. They don’t work for one greatly organised world in the common interest, not for a moment. Their millennium is a featureless level of common people, and it is to be brought about by a paradox called the dictatorship of the proletariat. And yet they have an enthusiasm. They can work. They can take risks and sacrifice themselves — quite horrible risks they will face. While we — —”

He had pulled up in mid sentence. The second fascicle began as abruptly as the first ended.

“I have just been to see Sempack at Charing Cross Hospital. I had no idea that he too had come back to England. I thought he was doing a walking tour in the Alpes Maritimes. But it seems that he was knocked down by a bus in the Strand this morning. They got through to me by telephone when he recovered consciousness and I went to see him at once. There is some question whether the bus skidded, but none that the great man, with his nose in the air and his thoughts in the year 4000, overlooked it as he stepped off the kerb. He wasn’t killed or smashed, thank goodness, but he had a shock and very bad contusions and a small bone broken in his fore-arm, and for two hours he seems to have been insensible. He was very glad to see me and talked very pleasantly — of you and the garden among other things. Voice unabated. I could not have imagined they could have packed him into an ordinary hospital bed, but they had. There are no complications. He will be out of hospital to-morrow and I shall take him to South Street and see that he is sent off properly and in a fit condition to his own house near Swanage. Perhaps I will take him down. I like him and it might be good to talk things over with him. But what can he be doing in London? He wasn’t at all clear about

that. Has everybody come to London? Shall I next have to bail you out at Bow Street or identify the body of Bombaccio recovered from the Thames?”

16. THEOLOGICAL

It was queer to turn one's mind back from the social battles and eventfulness of distant England to life in the great garden. Here Mr. Sempack was still a large figure of thought and Lady Catherine simply lovely and florid and absurd. It seemed as though it could be only little marionette copies of them of which Philip told, Sempack bandaged in hospital and Lady Catherine become rather horribly strident, with blood upon her mudguards. She had killed a young man. She was such a fool that she would not greatly care, any more than such women cared for the killing of pheasants. That young man would simply become part of the decoration of her life like the dead and dying soldiers one sees in the corners of heroic portraits of great conquerors. And Philip away there. But also he was a voice here, his letters made him a voice very near to his musing reader. In his letters there were also little phrases, little reminders, that even an intimate novel cannot quote. These touched and caressed her. He seemed to be Philip close at hand telling of the Philip who went about England in a state of peevish indignation, accumulating rebellion against cold and capable Uncle Robert and all that Uncle Robert stood for in life. And while the problems of this struggle in the homeland passed processionally before her mind, she had also in the foreground, great handsome chunks of the wisdom of Mrs. McManus and alternatively the religion of Stella Binny.

With Stella Binny Mrs. Rylands discussed theology. The green leather book had been planned on generous lines to open with metaphysical and religious ideas. Stella had just been received in the Catholic Church and had arrived in a phase of shy proselytism. So naturally both ladies converged on a common preoccupation.

But if they converged they never met. When at last Stella took her unremarkable departure for England and Mrs. Rylands could think over all that had passed between them as one whole, she was impressed by that failure to meet, more than by anything else in their arguments and comparisons. In some quite untraceable way the idea of God as of a great being comprehending the universe and pervading every fibre of her existence had crept into her mind during

the past month or so. It was as if He had always been there in her mind and yet as if He was only now becoming near and perceptible. So long as she had been in her first phase of love for Philip she had hardly given this presence a thought; now in the new phase that was developing, the presence presided. It was something profoundly still, something absolutely permanent, which embraced all her life and Philip and everything in her consciousness out to the uttermost star. But when she set herself to compare this gathering apprehension of God with Stella's happy lucidities about her new faith, she found herself looking into a mental world that had not an idea nor a meaning in common with her own.

Indeed her impression was that Stella's religion, so far from being of the same nature as her own, was nothing more than a huge furniture store of screens, hangings, painted windows, curtains and walls, ornaments and bric-à-brac, to banish and hide this one thing that constituted her own whole faith. This cosmic certitude, this simplicity beneath diversity, this absolute reassurance amidst perplexity and confusion, this profound intimacy, had nothing in common with the docketed Incomprehensible of Stella's pious activities, who was locked away in some steel safe of dogmas, far away from the music and decorations. Stella became defensive and elusive directly Mrs. Rylands spoke of God. She gave her to understand that the Mysteries of the Being of God were unthinkable things, an affair for specialists, to be entrusted to specialists and left to specialists, like the mysteries discussed by Mr. Einstein. The good Roman Catholic hurried past them with a bowed head and averted eyes to deal with other things.

But Mrs. Rylands had not the slightest desire to deal with these other things. She found them not merely unattractive; she found them tiresome and even in some aspects repulsive. She had no taste for bric-à-brac in the soul. She wanted God herself. Belonging to a Church whose Holy Father conceivably stood in the presence of God, was no satisfaction to her. She herself wanted to stand in the presence of God. So far as Stella could be argued with upon this question, she argued with her about the Mass. "It brings one *near*. It is the ultimate nearness," said Stella, dropping her voice to a whisper. "It would take me a billion miles away," said Mrs. Rylands.

She was naughty about the Mass and did her best to shock her friend. “I don’t want to eat God,” she blasphemed. “I want to know him.” She said that invoking the spirit by colours and garments and music reminded her of the hiving of swarming bees. She objected scornfully to the necessary priest. “God is hard enough to realise,” she said, “without the intervention of a shaven individual in petticoats — however symbolic his petticoats and his shaven face may be.” She recalled some crumbs of erudition that had fallen from the table of the parental vicarage and cited parallelisms between the old Egyptian religions and religious procedure and the Catholic faith and practice. She hunted out controversial material from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. And from more destructive sources.

The miscellaneous literary accumulations of Casa Terragena included several volumes about Catholic mysticism, and among others one or two books by Saint Teresa and the *Life and Revelations of Saint Gertrude* with many details of her extremely physical kissings and caressings with her “adorable lover.” There was also Houtin’s account of the marvellous experiences of the sainted Abbess of Solesmes, who died so recently as 1909. Mrs. Rylands had dipped in these strange records and now she returned to them for ammunition. She read the blushing Stella how every Christmas Eve, the latter lady and her spiritual daughters gave the breast, with a great physical excitement, to the infant Jesus, and how her spiritual sons were afterwards rewarded by derivative ecstasies when their sisters described to them “the chaste emotions of this virginal milking.”

“Where, my dear,” cried Cynthia, “is God, the Wonderful, the Everlasting, in ecstasies like that?”

Stella was ill instructed as yet in the new faith she had embraced. But she had learnt the lesson of confidence in the authorities into whose hands she had given herself. “All this can be explained.... It is a special side of the faith.”

Mrs. Rylands propounding fresh perplexities had suddenly become aware that there was distress in her friend’s voice, in her eyes, in her flushed face. Things had appeared in a changed light. Stella was large and very blonde, a creature so gentle that abruptly, as the tears showed in her eyes and the note of fear betrayed itself in her voice, her little hostess had seen herself like a fierce little

rationalist ferret, tackling this white rabbit of faith. Surely she had not been discussing great religious ideas at all. How could one discuss such things with Stella? She had simply been spoiling a new toy that had been making her friend very happy. “Oh Stella dear! Forgive my troubling you with my elementary doubts,” she had said. “I am very crude and ignorant. I know it, my dear. Of course there must be explanations.”

Stella dissolved in gratitude.

“Of course there are explanations. If only you could talk to men like Cardinal Amontillado, you would realise how explicable all these things are. They make it so clear. But I’m not clever nor trained.”

“I was just asking,” Mrs. Rylands had apologised.

“Some things of course are simply given us to *try* our faith,” Stella had said.

And Mrs. Rylands had changed the subject with the happy discovery of two pretty little birds flirting in a rose-brake.

Now however that Stella had gone Mrs. Rylands could look back on all their disputations and utter her matured and final verdict upon the great system that had embraced and taken possession of her friend. And it has to be recorded that the matured and final verdict of Mrs. Rylands upon Roman Catholic Christianity, its orders and subjugations, its gifts and consolations, its saints and mysteries and marvels and the enduring miracle of its existence, was delivered in one single word: Rubbish. “Rubbish,” she said — aloud and distinctly as though she had hearers. She said it aloud as she walked in the darkness of her garden after dinner. As one might rehearse a one word part. Mrs. McManus no doubt was hovering, but she could hover so skilfully and tactfully that it seemed to Mrs. Rylands that she was entirely by herself.

With this word given out to the night Mrs. Rylands asserted her tested and inalterable Protestantism, her resolution to keep the idea of God clean from all traces of primordial rites, of sublimated sensuality and wrappings of complication, and her relations with God simple and direct. God might be invisible, indescribable, veiled so deep in mystery as to be altogether undiscoverable, but at any rate He should not be caricatured in mysticism, worshipped in effigy and

made the mouthpiece of authority. Better the Atheist who says there is nothing than the Catholic who says there is such stuff as altars are made of.

And with that word of dismissal Mrs. Rylands ceased to think about Roman Catholicism and fell into a deep meditation upon the mystery and majesty of her God.

Her God, that Being was; the frame and substance of her universe of which and by which all its things were made; the mighty essential reassurance of her particular mind. He was everywhere, but for her His seat was in her spirit and His centre was her heart. He had come as imperceptibly as a dawn and her life had ceased to be anæmic and dispersed and purposeless with His coming. Everything was suffused with tone and beauty because of Him. He had dawned upon her not as a dawn of light, for she knew no more than she had ever known, but as a dawn of courage. She perceived she could have as soon called him "Courage" as called him "God." The courage of the earth and skies. A courage mighty beyond thinking and yet friendly and near. No Name he had, nor need for a name; no prayers nor method of approach. His utmost worship was a wordless quiet. But in such stillness and black clearness as this night gave, under the laced loveliness of the star-entangling branches, he seemed to be very close indeed to her.

Dreaming, drenched in worship and the sense of communion, Mrs. Rylands walked in her garden. The familiar paths just intimated themselves in the obscurity sufficiently to guide her steps. One serene planet high in the blue heaven was the most definite thing in that world of shadows and obscurity.

The little white figure came to rest and stood quite motionless upon the bridge where Mr. Plantagenet-Buchan had discovered the flamboyant quality of the gorge, but to-night, now that the moon rose late, all that ascendant clamour of lines was veiled under one universal curtain of velvet shadow. Far, far above, minute cascades caught a faint glimmer from the depth of the sky, and plunged into an abyss of darkness.

For a long time she remained there and her soul knelt and was comforted.

At last she stirred and went slowly down a slanting path that led

towards the Via Aurelia, a path that in its windings up and down and round about, gave little glimpses between the trees now of Ventimiglia and now of the stars.

17. FASCISTI IN THE GARDEN

The serenity of the night was broken.

Distant shouts ugly with anger and the crack of a pistol.

She stopped still and returned to the world of fact. The silence recovered, but now it was pervaded by uneasiness and clustering multiplying interrogations. What was it? The path she was on wound down among rocks and pines below the tennis court to where the work-sheds of the gardens showed dimly, near the old Roman road. The noise had come out of the blackness in which the road was hidden.

Suddenly again — voices!

And then little phantom beams of light, minute pale patches of illumination amidst the black trees. These flicked into existence and as immediately vanished again. There were people down there, a number of men with electric flash lamps, looking for something, pursuing something, calling to one another. As they moved nearer they passed out of sight below the black bulks of the garden houses, leaving nothing but faint intermittent exudations of light beyond the edges of the walls.

Then something appeared very much nearer, a crouching shape on the path below, moving, coming towards her, beast or man. A man with stumbling steps, running. He was so near now that she heard his sobbing breathing, and he had not seen her! In another moment he had pulled up, face to face with her, a middle-sized, stoutish man who stopped short and swayed and staggered. He put up his hand to his forehead. Her appearance, blocking his path, seemed the culmination of dismay for him. “Santo Dio!” he choked with a gesture of despair.

“Coming!” came the voice of Mrs. McManus out of the air.

“What *is* it?” asked Mrs. Rylands, though already she knew she was in the presence of the Terror.

“I Fascisti m’inseguono! Non ne posso piû.... Mi vogliono ammaazzare?” gasped the fugitive and tried to turn and point, and failed and stumbled and fell down before her on hands and knees. He coughed and retched. She thought he was going to be sick. He did

not attempt to get up again.

"Coraggio!" said Mrs. Rylands, rallying her Italian, and took his shoulder and made an ineffective effort to raise him to his feet.

She thought very quickly. This man had to be saved. She was on his side. It did not matter who he was. She knew Fascismo. No man was to be chased and manhandled in the garden of Terragena. The pursuers were still beating about down in the black gully of the sunken road. They had not as yet discovered the little stone steps that came into the garden near the bridge, up which their victim must have stolen. He had got some moments' grace. But he was spent, spent and pitifully wheezing and weeping. He was sitting now on the path with one hand pressed to his labouring chest. He could make no use of his respite to get away.

He must hide. Could he be hidden? She surveyed the ground about her very swiftly. She remembered something that had happened just here, a caprice of her own. A little way back ——

Mrs. McManus was beside her with her hand on her shoulder.

"Them Fascists," she remarked, with a complete grasp of the situation. "Is he badly hurt?"

"Help him up," whispered Mrs. Rylands. "Listen! Just a few yards back. Behind the seat. There is a hole between the rocks, where the romarin hangs down. One can be hidden there. I hid there once from Philip. Push him in. Oh! Oh! *What* is the Italian for *hide*? But he will know French. 'Faut cacher. Un trou. Tout preso!'"

"Inglese!" said the fugitive, helped to his feet and peering closely at their dim faces as he clung to the stalwart arm of Mrs. McManus. "Hide! Yes hide. Mes poumons."

"You help him there. I will delay them," said Mrs. Rylands, "if they come."

She showed the way to Mrs. McManus in eager whispers.

"Come," said Mrs. McManus.

The two dim figures, unsteady and undignified, retreated. The man seemed helplessly passive and obedient, and Mrs. McManus handled him with professional decision.

Mrs. Rylands turned her attention to the hunt again. It was still noisy down there in the trench of the road. It was just as well, for Mrs. McManus seeking the hiding-place and having to reassure her

charge kept up a very audible monologue, and a considerable rustle of bushes and snapping of sticks were unavoidable. “But where the divil is it?” she asked.

The rustle and disturbance grew louder and ended in a crashing thud. “Ugh!” she cried very loudly and suddenly ceased to talk.

“Damn!” she said after a moment, spent apparently in effort. Mrs. Rylands saw only vaguely but it seemed that Mrs. McManus was bending down, busily occupied with something. What had happened? Had she found the proper hiding-place?

Mrs. Rylands abandoned her idea of standing sentinel and flitted up the path.

“He’s fainted,” said Mrs. McManus on her knees. “Or worse. We’ll have to drag him in. Let me do it. Can you show me exactly where this hole of yours is? It’s all so dark.”

For a minute, a long minute, Mrs. Rylands could not find it. “Here!” she cried at last. “Here! To the right.”

More crackling of branches. Loose stones rolled over and started off, as if to spread the alarm, down the slanting path. The two women spoke in whispers but the noises they made seemed to be terrific. It was wonderful that the Fascists had not discovered them minutes ago. How heavy a man can be!

A Fascist down below was yelping like a young dog. “Ecco! Ecco! E passato di qui!” He had discovered the steps.

“Come on with you!” said Mrs. McManus stumbling amidst the rocks and gave a conclusive tug.

“Pull that rosemary down on his boots,” said Mrs. Rylands. “I can see the gleam of them from here.”

When she looked down the path again, the noiseless beams of the flash lamps were scrutinising the white walls of the garden house. The Fascists, some or all of them, had come up into the garden. A group of four heads was defined for an instant against the pale illumination of the wall.

“We’d better go down towards them slowly,” said Mrs. McManus. “And if you should happen to be feeling a little upset by all the hubbub they’ve made, well, don’t conceal it.”

“They’ve three paths to choose from at the corner of the sheds,” said Mrs. Rylands. “The main one goes up to the house.”

“So they’ll send only a scout or so this way.”

“But this way leads to the frontier.”

Abruptly they were facing the scrutiny of the bright oval eye of a hand- lamp; its holder a shock-headed blackness. “Perche questa battaglia nello mio giardino?” said Mrs. Rylands in her best Italian, blinking and shrinking.

“Mi scusino, signore!” A boyish not unpleasant voice.

“Pardon me indeed,” came the indignation of Mrs. McManus. “What are you after in this garden, troubling an invalid lady in the night and all?”

“Troppo di — what’s light? it blinds me,” Mrs. Rylands complained, and the white oval breach of the darkness vanished. “Che volete?”

The young man said something about the flight of a traitor.

“Don’t bandy Italian with him,” advised Mrs. McManus.

“You can speak French perhaps; Parlate Franchese?” said Mrs. Rylands and so got the conversation on a linguistic level.

The young man’s French was adequate. That traitor to Italy, Vinciguerra, she learnt, had been trying to escape out of his native country in order to injure her abroad. He had been watched and nearly caught in Ventimiglia two days ago, but he had got away. Now he was making his dash for liberty. He had fled through this garden. He had run along the Via Aurelia and come up the steps by the little bridge. The young man was desolated to invade the lady’s garden or cause her any inconvenience but the fault was with the traitor Vinciguerra. Had she by any chance seen or heard a man passing through her domain?

Mrs Rylands found herself lying with the utmost conviction. No one had passed this way. But she had seen someone hurrying up the central path to the house — perhaps five minutes ago.

“It would be about five minutes ago.”

She had thought it was one of the gardeners, she said. In the darkness the young man made an almost invisible but evidently very profound bow. And turned back to his friends. “I must sit down,” said Mrs. Rylands still in French and taking the arm of Mrs. McManus, wheeled her round. “Sit on that seat,” she explained.

“Sit right on him,” said Mrs. McManus. “Exactly.”

At the same time the trees about them were suffused by an orange glow, that increased in a series of gradations. The two women halted. Looking up the hill they saw Casa Terragena, which had been slumbering in the night, growing visible and vivid, as Bombaccio and his minions put on the lights. Evidently they had become aware of the uproar and were illuminating the house preparatory to sallying forth in search of their mistress. The framework and wire netting of the tennis enclosure became vividly black and clear against the clear brightness of the hall. A rapid consultation occurred at the garden sheds and then the whole body of Fascists went up towards the marble steps below the terrace. The voice of Bombaccio could be heard like the challenge of a sentinel, and replies, less distinct, in a number of voices.

"So it's Signor Vinciguerra we've got," said Mrs. Rylands speaking very softly. "He used to be a minister."

"I'll go back to him. I wish I had some brandy for him."

"We'll go back together," said Mrs. Rylands. "If they make for the French frontier they may pass back along this path."

They returned to the hiding-place. "Sit you down," said Mrs. McManus, and groped under the bushes towards the cleft in the rocks. She fumbled and produced a flash lamp of her own. Mrs. Rylands for the first time in her life saw the face of a horribly frightened man. He was crouched together in the hole with not a spark of fight left in him. His hand clutched his mouth.

"Sicuro," said Mrs. McManus with surprising linguistic ability. "Restate acqui."

"Put out that light," said the fugitive in English. "*Please* put out that light."

Darkness supervened with a click.

"Stay here until the way is clear," said Mrs. McManus.

"Sure," said Signor Vinciguerra.

"The garden is full of them," she said.

Inaudible reply.

She rearranged the trailing rosemary and returned cautiously to the bench. She sat down by her charge in silence.

"He must stay here until the way is clear," she said, and paused and added reflectively— "And then —— ?"

A silent mutual contemplation.

“What *are* we going to do with him?” said Mrs. Rylands in a low voice, glancing over her shoulder at the faint sound of a boot shifting its pose on the rock behind her.

Mrs. McManus also peered at their invisible protégé. “It’s a very great responsibility to have thrust upon two peaceful women just as they are taking the air before bedtime. I hardly know what to advise.... We can’t leave him there.”

“We can’t leave him there.”

“He’s done.”

“He’s done.”

Mrs. Rylands contemplated the situation with immense gravity for some moments. Then she was seized with a violent and almost uncontrollable impulse to laugh at the amazing change of mood and tempo ten minutes could effect. But she felt that the fugitive would never understand if she gave way to it. Extreme seriousness returned to her.

18. MRS. RYLANDS ACTS

The temperament and training alike of Mrs. Rylands disposed her to shirk this startling charge that fate had thrust upon her. Never in all her life before had she been in a position in which she could not turn to someone else to relieve her of danger or inconvenience. Her disposition now was to summon Bombaccio and the servants, tell them to order the Fascists out of the garden and take Signor Vinciguerra, give him refreshments, make him comfortable for the night and send him over the frontier in safety by the accepted route for fugitives, whatever that route happened to be, to-morrow. She realised the absurdity of this even as it came into her consciousness. She had no knowledge of Bombaccio's political views and still less of his susceptibility and the susceptibility of his minions to the Terror. This time she couldn't call upon Bombaccio. Even if he proved willing to help, it would not she perceived be fair to him to make him a party to the adventure. He and the rest of the Casa Terragena household were in Italy and had to go on living in Italy under a Fascist government. She was, the fact came up to her quite startlingly, doing something against the government under which she was living. For the first time in her life, the powers of social order and control would not be on her side.

The way of the lady, born safe and invincibly assured, would not do here. She who had always been quietly and surely respected and authoritative!

And if Casa Terragena was caught out at so directly an anti-Fascist exploit as this, what would be its worth to the Rylands family for the next few years?

Startling to think that the proper course before her, consistent with all the rest of her life, consistent with the lives of all the respectable people in the world, would be to go in and go to bed and just leave that frightened man in the hole to his fate, his probably highly disagreeable fate.

This thing was no mere adventure. It was a challenge, the supreme challenge of her life. She must risk herself, risk her home, risk failure and humiliating discovery. If she saved or did her utmost to save this

man, she broke with limitations that had restricted and protected all her life thus far.

She clenched her hands together very tightly, for her fibre was nervous timid stuff. Then for an instant, one brief instant, her sense of her God who had been so near a quarter of an hour ago, returned to her. Wordlessly, in a breathing moment she prayed. She stepped across the boundary and transcended State and government.

"We must save that man," she said.

No moral doubts about Mrs. McManus. "I'm thinking how. It's no light matter, M'am."

Mrs. Rylands stood up, with her heart beating fast and her head quite clear. She looked towards the house.

"I don't think they will come back by this path. They believed us that there is no one this way. They will take the way by the lily pond to the bridge across the gorge. They are sure to go west in order to block the escape to the French frontier. They will scatter up and down the rocks and spend the night there. I hope none of them catch cold. I think they have started already. I heard — something. Listen. Look up there; that's a flashlight. Along the path above us. Bombaccio is showing them — or one of the men. Very well. Now — —"

She weighed her words. "There is only one place to put him where he will be safe from gardeners, servants, everyone. Except perhaps Frant.... Mr. Philip's bedroom. Locked up — next to my little sitting-room. We can turn the key on the service stairs."

"We could do that."

"It is all we can do."

"But to get him there!"

"If he could walk in — in your hood and cloak. That cloak of yours with a hood. We can get the men out of the way. Listen. I am going to be very, very, very frightened. Hysterical. You are afraid for me. Very well, you go in and get Bombaccio to bring brandy *here*. *He'll* want brandy badly enough. Brandy and one glass; no tray. Take it off the tray and bring it yourself. And get your cloak and bring wraps for me. Oh! — and bring a pair of your shoes and stockings among the wraps. What? Yes — for him. I will be sitting here, terrified. 'Take those men away!' I shall repeat over and over. I shall

be in terror at the idea of more people coming into the gardens from above. I shall be dreadfully shaken. You won't answer for the consequences if I see another strange man.... Will Bombaccio believe that?"

"Men will believe anything of that sort," said Mrs. McManus.

"Suppose he hangs about — sympathetically."

"No man ever yet hung about an ailing woman if he had any chance or excuse of getting away from her."

"Insist that he goes up to stop people at the gates and takes the men-servants with him. You cannot bear to think of his going alone and — unless I'm mistaken in him, *he* won't bear to think of his going alone."

"He shall take them."

"Have as many lights as possible put out. Say they upset me. Tell the women not to be frightened on *any* account. Then they will be. It's just one *very*, very desperate man, tell them. Tell them to keep together and keep to their own quarters. Then when it's all clear he puts on your shoes and stockings and cloak and we just walk into the house and up to my room."

"If you'd been in the Civil War in Ireland, you couldn't have made a better plan," said Mrs. McManus.

"There's Frant? She'll be sitting up for me. She's the weak point."

"That maid of yours can hold her tongue," said Mrs. McManus, "I've got great confidence in her. I've heard Bombaccio trying to get things out of her. I'll just drop her a hint not to be surprised at anything she sees and keep mum. Maybe she'll have to be told about it. Later. But she's English and keeps herself to herself. You can risk Miss Frant."

"And Miss Fenimore?"

"She'll be in bed perhaps. Or maybe botanising." Mrs. McManus reflected. "We'll have to take the chances of that Miss Fenimore."

"The rest of it will work?"

"Please God."

The two women peered at each other in the darkness.

It was alarming but exciting. They felt a great friendship for each other. "If you could look a bit dishevelled and sickish," said Mrs. McManus. "Instead of looking all braced up like a little fighting

cock.”

She reflected. “And when he’s in that room —— ? But one thing at a time.”

She departed towards the house almost jauntily. Mrs. Rylands, tingling not unpleasantly, returned to her seat. Seven years perhaps in a Fascist prison. But that would make a stir in England. The government of course was much too hand-in-glove with Mussolini to insist on her liberation. And yet Rylands stood for something in England.... Why think of such things?

There was a faint rustling and a painful grunting.

“Have they gone?” came a voice out of the blackness behind her.

She answered in a loud whisper: “Not yet. Have patience. We are going to hide you in the house.”

Then she stood up and bent down towards the unseen refugee. “You prefer to speak English or French?” she asked and began to sketch out his part in her plan in French. But he insisted on English. “In America five years,” he said. He asked various questions. “I shall sleep in a bed,” he noted with marked satisfaction. “I have not slept in a bed for four nights. Possibly I may wash and shave? Yes?”

The plan worked. Presently came the brandy and Mrs. McManus. Much hurrying movement and quick whispers. He had to have his shoes and stockings put on him like a baby. But the brandy heartened him.

There were heart stopping moments. As Mrs. Rylands turned the corner of the landing with her cloaked and hooded refugee beside her and holding to her arm, Miss Fenimore came out of the little downstairs sitting-room with a book in her hand. “Going to bed?” said Miss Fenimore, yawning. “Good ni!”

“Good night, dear,” said Mrs. Rylands and pushed her companion on.

“Good night, Mrs. McManus,” cried Miss Fenimore.

“Put the sitting-room lights out, dear,” said Mrs. Rylands instantly, with great presence of mind. And then as Signor Vinciguerra stumbled up the next flight of steps she whispered: “The door to the left and we are safe!”

Frant was in the ante-room immersed in a book and didn’t even look up as they passed across it.

Mrs. McManus too had her disconcerting moment. Following discreetly, she discovered Miss Fenimore, just too late, in the sitting-room entrance. “I never did!” cried Miss Fenimore. “Why! I said good night to you on the staircase just a moment ago?”

“There’s no harm in saying it again,” said Mrs. McManus.

“But you went upstairs?”

“And came down again.”

“It’s not half a minute.”

“I’m that quick,” said Mrs. McManus, and left her still wondering.

“It’s like second sight or having one of those doppelgangers,” said Miss Fenimore. “I just went into the sitting-room to switch off the light. I hardly did more than turn round. Hasn’t there been some sort of trouble in the garden?”

“I heard a noise. Shouting and running it was,” said Mrs. McManus. “We’ll have to ask Bombaccio to-morrow. Good night to you,” and she disappeared above the landing.

Alone with her God so to speak, Mrs. McManus made a hideous grimace at the invisible Miss Fenimore.

She found Mrs. Rylands in her husband’s room, having her hands kissed effusively by a weeping dishevelled middle-aged man with a four days’ beard. He had discarded the nurse’s cloak and her much too tight shoes, but he still wore her stockings pulled over the ends of his trousers so that up to the waist he looked like a brigand and above that, a tramp. “Brave and kind,” he sobbed over and over again. “I was at my ooltimate garsp.” Mrs. McManus became aware that Frant had followed from the ante-room attracted by the rich sounds of the kissing and praise. “Miss Frant,” said Mrs. McManus closing the door on her, “We’ll have to trouble you with a secret. Look at him there! A great political senator he was, and see what they have made of him! A friend of Mr. Rylands. He was being hunted to his death by them Black Shirts and we’ve got to hide him from them. None of the servants must know. They aren’t safe, not a single one of them. They may be Black Shirts themselves for all we know. We’ll have to hide him and get him out of this country somehow or Murder it will be.”

Frant’s thin face expressed understanding and solicitude. She was

a white-faced, wisp-haired woman with much potential excitement in her small bright blue eyes. “Have you locked the valet’s door beyond the bathroom?” she asked pallidly aglow. “I’ll see nobody comes in from the passage.”

One might have imagined that the rescue of fugitives was a part of her normal duties.

Mrs. McManus skilfully but tactfully disengaged Mrs. Rylands’ hands from the gratitude of Signer Vinciguerra. “The great thing here is Silence,” she whispered, shaking him kindly but impressively. “There’s Fascists maybe in the rooms above and Fascists maybe downstairs and they’re almost certain to be listening outside the window. If you’ll just sit down in that chair and collect yourself quietly I’ll give you some biscuits and a trifle more brandy.”

Signor Vinciguerra was wax in her hands.

Mrs. Rylands, disembarrassed, was free to make a general survey of the situation. She put two towels in the bathroom and found Philip’s shaving things and a sponge. From the wardrobe she got a dressing-gown and in the chest of drawers were pyjamas. The man seemed to be famished. Miss Frant could get some sandwiches without remark. Or bovril. Bovril would be better. Unless Signor Vinciguerra made too much noise or talked too loudly in his sleep he could with reasonable luck be safe here for some days. Philip’s room opened into the little sitting-room that gave on the balcony and into which her own bedroom opened on the other side. No one was likely to go into it. Signor Vinciguerra could lock himself in and answer only to an agreed-on tap. She could profess to be ill until definite action was called for and Miss Frant could make up a bed for Mrs. McManus on the couch in the ante-room, barring all intrusion of the maids. Food could be brought up; not much but sufficient to keep the good man going. And so having provided for the temporary security of Signor Vinciguerra the next problem was how to get rid of him.

He was left to his toilet in Philip’s apartment. Miss Frant, after a whispered consultation with Mrs. McManus in the ante-chamber, went downstairs to order and wait for a large cup of bovril and toast and learn how things in general were going on. Mrs. Rylands drifted to the balcony and discovered the old moon creeping up the sky above the eastward promontory, picking out the palm fronds and

patterning the darkness of the garden.

Extraordinary! It was long past her customary bedtime and everything was most improper for a woman in her condition, and yet instead of feeling distressed, fatigued and dismayed, she was elated. It was, to be frank with herself, a great lark. It would be something to tell Philip. It was still extremely dangerous and it might become at any time horrible and tragic, but it no longer appeared a monstrous and unnatural experience. She believed that on the whole she was likely to succeed in this adventure. Things so far had gone amazingly well. If one kept one's head they might still go well. The frontier was not half an hour's walk away. Being outside the law, fighting the established system of things, was after all nothing so very overwhelming.

Problem: to get him away.

That was going to be an anxious business.

There in sight were the lights of Mentone, France, freedom and security. The real Civilisation. And against that a dark headland, the edge of captive Italy. Where to-night the Fascists would be watching. Where always perhaps there were watchers, now that Italy was a prison.

Such a very middle-aged man he was!

In romances and plays a fugitive was at least able to run. Most fugitives in fiction were high-grade amateur runners. One thought of a young handsome white face, with a streak of hair across it and perhaps blood, a white shirt torn open — a tenor part. If only this were so now, one might give him a rest, smuggle him down to the beach to-morrow night and set him off to swim across that dark crescent of water, to sanctuary. What could it be altogether? Four miles? Five miles? Or put him in the bathing boat. But that might be difficult. At times there were searchlights. Odd there were none just now! Perhaps that put swimming or a boat out of court even for heroes. A really good swimmer might dive as the light swept by. Or one could have packed him off up the gorge to clamber into the hills and escape by precipitous leaping and climbing. But for that a Douglas Fairbanks would be needed. Her mind struggled against an overbearing gravitation towards the prosaic conclusion, that the most suitable role for Signor Vinciguerra would be that of a monthly

nurse, into which he had fallen already. In that guise she could see herself taking him across the frontier with the utmost ease in the well-known and trusted Terragena car, and she could imagine no other way that was not preposterously impracticable.

19. THE PRISON LAND

It seemed incredibly late, later than any night had ever been before; but Mrs. Rylands was in no mood for sleep. She sat in her little sitting-room, dimly lit by one shaded light, and listened to the rambling astonishing talk of Signor Vinciguerra. He had bathed himself and washed and shaved and emerged to efface the first impression he had made of something worn out, physically over-fed and under-trained and mentally abased. In Philip's pyjamas, slippers and dressing-gown, he looked now a quite intelligent and credible Italian gentleman. He consumed his bovril and toast with restrained eagerness. He talked English with a sort of fluent looseness and the only faults in his manners were a slight excess of politeness and an understandable jumpiness.

Mrs. McManus sat in a corner of the room, almost swallowed up in shadow, and she took only a small share in the conversation. At any time she might pounce and dismiss the talkers to their slumbers. Frant, after much useful reconnoitring, had gone to bed. Bombaccio and his minions had come back to the house, not too excessively excited, and gone to bed also, quite unsuspiciously. The Fascists it seemed had put a cordon round the garden and purposed to beat its thickets by daylight. Apparently they had an idea that in the morning Vinciguerra might either be caught exhausted or found dead within its walls. Mrs. Rylands determined to mobilise all her garden staff to make a fuss at the least signs of trampling or beating down her plants and flowers, while she herself telephoned complaints to the Ventimiglia police. It would look better to make a fuss than remain suspiciously meek under their invasion.

The respited quarry of the Fascists talked in weary undertones.

"To an Englishwoman it must be incredible. A man hunted like a beast! And for why? The simplest criticisms. Italy has embarked upon a course that can have only one end, National tragedy. Twice I have been beaten. Once in Rome in full daylight in the Piazza della Colonna. Once in the little town where formerly I was mayor. Left on the ground. I was carried home. Then my house watched by sentinels, day and night. Followed whenever I went abroad. It

became intolerable. I could not breathe.”

He shook his head. “I fled.”

For some moments he stared in silence at his memories.

“Imagine! Your Bertrand Russell. Or your George Trevelyan, that fearless friend of Italy and Freedom. Men of that sort. Chased and beaten. Because they will not flatter. Because they will not bow down. To a charlatan!”

He said the last word in a whisper and glanced about him as he said it. He grimaced his loathing.

“We were in Civilisation. We were in a free country. And suddenly this night fell upon us. Truly — I learnt it in English at school — the price of freedom is eternal vigilance!

“This whole country is one great prison. A prison with punishments and tortures. For everyone who thinks. For everyone who speaks out. I made no plots. I went out of politics after the election of 1924. But I wrote and said Italy becomes over-populous. She must restrain her population or make war and war will be her destruction. I persisted that these facts should be kept before the Italian mind.... That was enough.

“Italy perhaps has never advanced since the Risorgimento. She seemed to do so after her unification, but possibly she did not. Only you Anglo- Saxons have won your way to real freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of speech and proposal. Slowly, by centuries, surely, you have won it. Perhaps the French too. Germany I doubt. You have your great public men, respected, influential, no matter the government. Your Shaw, your Gilbert Murray, your Sempack; Americans like Nicholas Murray Butler, Upton Sinclair, Arthur Brisbane. Free to speak plainly. Bold as lions. Free — above the State. But in Italy — that actor, that destroyer, that cannibal silences us all! Performs his follies. Puts us all to indignities and vile submissions. I can’t tell you the half of things submitted. The shame of it! For Italy! The shame for every soul in Italy!

“I am a comfortable man. Not everything in my life has been well. I have been used to the life — eh, the life of a man of the world. Prosperity. Indulgence perhaps. But I had rather be this hunted thing I am than any man who keeps his peace with State and Vatican and lives now in Rome prospering. Yes — even here. In danger.

Wounded and Dead perhaps, dear Madam, if it were not for you."

His voice died away.

"But is there no movement for freedom in Italy?" asked Mrs. Rylands.

"We took freedom for granted. We took progress and justice for granted. We did not organise for freedom and progress then, and now we cannot. No. All things in life, good things or bad things, rest on strength. Strength and opportunity. If you have things that you desire it is because you willed well enough to have it so. There was no liberal will in Italy but only scattered self-seeking men. Politicians were divided. Intellectual men, not very cordial, not banded together, not ready to die for freedom, one for all and all for one. Rather pleased to see a rival put down. No sense of a danger in common. When I was young and read your Herbert Spencer and your liberal thinkers and writers I said the great time, the great civilisation, will come of itself. Nothing comes of itself except weeds and confusion. We did not reckon with the hatred of dull people for things that are great and fair. We did not realise the strength of stupidity to call a halt to every hope we held. We thought there were no powers of darkness left. And now —— Now —— ... Progress has been taken unawares! Progress has been waylaid and murdered.

"But at least the freedom and progress of the English-speaking world is safe. Italy will not always be as she is now."

"Nothing is safe in life. Now I know. What has happened in Italy may happen all over the world. The malignant, the haters of new things and fine things, the morally limited, the violent and intense, the men who work the State against us, are everywhere. Why did we not see it? Man civilises slowly, slowly. Eternal vigilance is the price of civilisation."

"Yes," said Mrs. Rylands, "I begin to see — things I never suspected before, about me and supporting me. One may trust to servants and policemen — and custom. And live in a dream."

Signor Vinciguerra assented by a gesture.

Came a pause.

The little travelling clock upon the table pinged one single stroke and Mrs. McManus stirred. "One o'clock in the morning!" said Mrs. McManus, and rose masterfully. "You'll be wanting your rest,

Signor Vinciguerra. There is much to be done yet before you are safe in France.”

20. GONE AWAY

When at last Signor Vinciguerra was in France the whole thing seemed ridiculously easy. Mrs. Rylands was astonished to think the affair had ever seemed a challenge to her courage or a defiance of danger. For a day he lay hidden in Philip's room and no one, who was not in the secret, thought of going there. The next morning he walked out of Casa Terragena with Miss Frant the maid, even as he had walked in, as a nurse. He was now carefully shaved, made up, dressed completely in garments hastily unpicked and resewn to fit him passably, and assisted by glasses. The men were already up the garden with the luggage, for Mrs. Rylands was going to visit her dear friends the Jex-Hiltons at Cannes for a couple of nights. Frant had let out to Bombaccio that her mistress had to see a great British specialist. Nothing to be really anxious about in Mrs. Rylands' condition but something not quite in order.

It was visitors' day for the gardens. If anyone observed a nurse who was not Mrs. McManus, well, it was some other nurse. Or there are such things as consultations of nurses. Above waited Parsons the English chauffeur with the best car. Vinciguerra was left in a quiet corner and Frant went on to fuss about the luggage at the gates and send the man back for a thoughtfully forgotten umbrella and a book. Mrs. Rylands, assisted up the garden path by Mrs. McManus, was handed over to Vinciguerra at the trysting place. He produced an excellent falsetto and talked English as he helped his protectress into the car.

There was tension, certainly there was tension, as far as the Italian custom house at the roadside. But the douaniers gave but a glance and motioned the familiar car on with friendly gestures. A lurking Fascist young gentleman, just too late, thought the inspection perfunctory and was for supplementing it. He called out "Alo!" after the car. That was the greatest thrill. Parsons slewed his eye round for orders. He hated foreigners who said "Alo" to him. "Go on," said and signalled his mistress; "Go on!" said Frant, sitting beside him, and he put his foot down on the accelerator only too gladly.

She glanced back through the oval window at the back of the car.

The young Italian gentleman was not pursuing. He had gone back to lecture the douaniers — on thoroughness no doubt.

The French douane was even less trouble. Bows and smiles. Mrs. Rylands, that charming neighbour, was welcome to France.

And this was all! They were purring smoothly along the eastern sea front of Modane. People promenading, people bathing. In bright sunshine, in a free world. It was all over. The danger, the stress.

"I have had to masquerade as a woman," said Signor Vinciguerra resentfully and took off the glasses which blurred the world for him. "But I am out of prison. I know I look ridiculous, I know —— Dio mio!"

He sobbed. Tears filled his eyes.

"Il suo coraggio," he said, crushing her hand with both of his. "Non dimentichero mai quel ch' Ella ha fatto per me. Never. Never."

"In two hours or less we will be in Cannes," said Mrs. Rylands, trying to save some of her hand. "Then you shall be a man again.... Don't! Don't!"

"I should have been beaten. I should have died like a dog."

He recovered abruptly. "This is absurd," he said. "Forgive me, dear Lady."

He was silent but still intensely expressive.

"Don't you think this view of Cap Martin is perfectly lovely?" said Mrs. Rylands....

Just at that very moment Mrs. McManus and Bombaccio confronted each other in the hall of Casa Terragena.

"But I thought you had gone with the Signora!" said Bombaccio.

"There's some telegrams in Ventimiglia. We thought of them at the last moment. I'll want the second car for that. Then I shall go on by train."

"I could have sent them on."

"What is that you've got in your hand there? a pair of shoes?"

"They were found in the garden," said Bombaccio. "They were found in a trampled place under a rock beneath the tennis court. And these — *affari*. Ecco!" Bombaccio held them out; the decorative socks of a man of the world but with a huge hole in one heel. "What can they be? And where are the feet they should have? Surely this is of the tradditore! Il Vinciguerra."

“Some of him,” reflected Mrs. McManus. “Surely His shoes and socks! Where did you say they found them?”

“Below the tennis court.”

“Very likely if you look about you’ll find some more of him. He must have scattered to avoid them. Unless they found him and tore him to pieces — quietly. But then they’d be all bloody. Will you be ordering the car? For the eleven o’clock train.”

Ahead of her the car with the fugitive ran swift and smooth through Monte Carlo, Beaulieu, Villefranche, Nice, Antibes. At Cannes Mary Jex-Hilton came running down the steps to receive her guest. “You felt dull, you darling, and you came over to us! The sweetest thing in the world to do! Trusting us.”

“I’d a particular reason,” said Mrs. Rylands, descending and embracing. She collected her wits. “Parsons, just help Frant with those bags into the house and upstairs.”

Behind Parsons’ back Frant turned round and grimaced strangely to assure her mistress that the chauffeur should be taken well out of the way.

“This nurse of mine, darling,” said Mrs. Rylands, turning to the quasi-feminine figure that sat now in a distinctly heteroclitic attitude, bowing and smiling deprecatingly, “is Signor Vinciguerra, the great publicist. He has barely escaped with his life — from over there. I will tell you — how we found him, being hunted, in the garden.”

“My dear! And you saved him?”

“Well, here he is!”

“You heroine! And it’s Signor Vinciguerra!” Mrs. Jex- Hilton held out her hand. “We met in Milan. Two years ago! You don’t remember, but I do. Won’t you get out?”

Mrs. Rylands whispered. “He doesn’t like walking about in these things.
Naturally.”

Mrs. Jex-Hilton thought rapidly.

“I’ll get Ted’s bathing-wrap. It’s just inside the hall. It’s more dignified. A toga.”

It was true. The ambiguous nurse accepted the wrap, arranged a

fold or so and became a Roman Senator, fit for the statuary. Except about the shoes and ankles. The round bare face assumed a serene and resolute civility. Signor Vinciguerra walked into the house, a statesman restored.

It was easier and easier.

When at last Mrs. Rylands sat down in the pretty white and green and chintz bedroom Mary had given her, to write to Philip and tell him all about it, the terror and stress of those dark moments in the garden were already impossible to recall. It was incredible that it should ever have seemed too mighty a task to help this fugitive. She was disposed to see the whole story now like some hilarious incident at a picnic. And for a time, all the great and subtle things she had thought about God and His infinite mightiness and nearness, had passed completely out of her mind. She knew she had much to write to Philip on that matter also, but now it was impossible. What did become clear presently was the grave import of the things Vinciguerra had said in her little sitting-room about the suppression of intellectual activity in Italy and the world. That stood out quite plainly still. She wrote of that.

Mrs. McManus arrived with the story of the shoes and socks in the afternoon. Later when she came against Parsons in the garden, he regarded her with perplexity.

"I say," he remarked. "Are you *another* nurse?"

"What nonsense! There's never another about me."

"But wasn't there another just now — with glasses?"

"Not it."

"I could have sworn.... Rummy! You look so changed."

"It's the air," said Mrs. McManus.

Little more was left to clean up of the Vinciguerra adventure. He was to lie *perdu* with the Jex-Hiltons for two or three days and then make his way to Geneva where he could appear in public and perhaps talk to an interviewer. It would be amusing to cast suspicion on Mont Blanc and suggest unsuspected passes in Savoy. It would help to divert any suspicion that might have fallen upon Casa Terragena. There still seemed some slight danger of leakage in the household however. When presently Mrs. Rylands returned to her home, Frant found Bombaccio in a much too inquiring state of mind

for comfort. It was almost as if someone had slept in a rug on the Signor's bed; and had anyone tampered with his shaving things? Who had consumed the better part of half a litre of brandy? And made crumbs in the Signor's room? Then —— He showed Frant the mysterious shoes and socks, and sent his eloquent eyebrows up and the corners of his still more eloquent mouth down. He explained them and thought Frant was densely stupid. "After that," said Bombaccio, "a man could not go far." He had shown them to no one else Frant elicited, but what ought he to do about them? He watched her closely as he spoke. He eyed her almost mesmerically. She did not watch him at all — she observed him with a wooden averted face. Then she reported adequately to her mistress. Mrs. Rylands decided to deal with Bombaccio herself.

She found him arranging the newspapers in the downstairs room. She went past him and out upon the blazing terrace and then called him to her.

"How beautiful the garden is this morning," she said.

Bombaccio was touched by this appeal for æsthetic sympathy and confirmed her impression richly and generously.

"Adam and Eve," she interrupted, "were put into a garden even more beautiful than this."

Bombaccio said that we were told so but that he found it difficult to believe.

"They were turned out," said Mrs. Rylands.

Bombaccio's gesture deplored the family fall.

"They were turned out, Bombaccio, for wanting to know too much."

Bombaccio started and regarded her as man to woman, through a moment of impressive silence. "There is nothing in the world the Signora might not trust to me," he said. "Have I ever been disloyal even in the smallest matter to the famiglia Rylands?"

"No," said Mrs. Rylands, and acted profound deliberation. She laid a consciously fragile hand on his arm.

"I will trust you to do the most difficult thing of all, Bombaccio. For man or woman. That is — not even to ask questions. As hard as that. For questions you understand are like microbes; they are little things, but if you scatter them about they may cause great

misfortunes.”

She added, almost as if inadvertently: “Signor Rylands had reasons to be very grateful to Signor Vinciguerra. It would have been said if anything had happened in this garden to one to whom we are indebted.”

Bombaccio’s bow, finger upon his lips, put the last seal upon her security.

21. PHILIP'S FOURTH REAL LETTER

Mrs. Rylands had been back in Casa Terragena two days before the succession of little notes and cards from Philip was broken by a considerable letter again, this time a whale of letter, opening with a long account of the return of the prophet Sempack to his own home. This account seemed to have been written some days ago; the handwriting and paper were different from those of the latter sheets.

It presented that large untidy person in his own distinctive setting. Philip's curt, clumsy and occasionally incisive sentences, breaking now and then into a new-won fluency, portrayed Sempack like a big but prostrate note of interrogation, lying athwart the whole world. He had been rather more hurt it seemed than the doctors had at first supposed. There was a troublesome displacement of a wrist bone and there was something splintered at the end of a rib. Philip had had to wait longer than he had expected while X-ray examinations and a minor operation were carried out, and he had taken the great man down not in his own Talbot but in a special ambulance car to *his* home in Dorsetshire.

Philip was evidently surprised by Sempack's home. "I had expected something very ordinary, something like a small, square, serious house taken out of Clapham, with a rather disagreeable and unwilling housekeeper," he wrote, "but as a matter of fact he has done himself extremely well. In a compact but very pretty way." Apparently it was a house built specially for its occupant on the slopes and near the crest of the long hill that runs between Corfe and Studland; Brenscombe Hill said the notepaper. "There are no other houses about there, which is like him somehow, and also along the hogsback above him there are groups of tumuli, which is also in a way characteristic. He always straddles back to pre-history. If ever the man picked up a flint implement he would do so as if he had just dropped it."

The house was small but lined with books, it spread itself to the light, and the hill and a group of trees checked the burly assaults of the south-west wind. He worked before a big plate-glass window with a veranda outside, facing north of the sunrise. "It's got a

tremendous view. Stretches of heath and then the tidal flats of Poole Harbour, blue razors of sea cutting their way through green weed-banks and grey mud-banks to Poole and Wareham and tumbled bits of New Forest to the north; with Bournemouth and its satellites low and flat across the waters, lighting up in the twilight. It is like old Sempack to have a window with a view that goes away into distance beyond distance for miles and miles and which has differences of climate, clouds or sluggish mists here and sunshine there. 'I can see thunderstorms gather and showers pass,' he told me, 'as if they were animals wandering across a field.'

"There's a Mrs. Siddon, a sort of housekeeper who can typewrite on occasion, a woman with an interesting face and a quiet way with her — over something that smoulders. Evidently she adores him. She has the instincts of a good nurse. There is a charming little girl of ten or twelve about the place, with whom Sempack is on the best of terms, who belongs to her. Sempack vouchsafed no explanations, but I have a sort of feeling that behind the housekeeper is a story. Though he said nothing, she dropped a phrase or so. It distressed and moved her, more than it would move anyone who was just a common or garden paid servant, to get him back in a broken condition. She liked me from the outset because it was so plain I cared for him, and in the emotion of the occasion her natural reserve gave way a little. She has some tremendous cause for gratitude to him. She was ripe for confidences, but I thought it wasn't my business to provoke them. I guess and infer that somewhen she had 'done something,' something pretty serious, I could imagine even a law court and something penal — just a phrase or so of hers for that — and he had fished her out of the mess she was left in and treated her like any other honourable individual. Put her on her feet when she was down and said nothing much about doing it. That may be all imagination on my part, but anyhow our Sempack has a home, which I never suspected; is extremely comfortable, which is still less what I thought; is tenderly looked after and sits among a loveliness, an English loveliness of rain and green and grey and soft sunlight, which in its way is almost as lovely as the glorious blaze, the stony magnificence, the vigour and strength of colour of dear old Terragena.

“I stayed three nights there and I may go down there again if it can be squeezed in before I come back to you. He can’t write much. He’s one-armed and one-handed for a time. He’s rigged up on a comfortable couch before his big window and he lies watching the late English spring turn into the mild English summer. A pocket-handkerchief garden is foreground, and then comes all that space. This accident of his, the inaction that is necessary, and the other things that have happened to him recently and the way social and political things are going in the world seem all to have conspired to make him turn upon himself and his life and ask himself a lot of new questions. Like the questions we are all asking ourselves. He put it himself better than I can put it. He compared it to travellers going up into big mountains. For a long time you see the road far ahead, plain and sure. Then almost suddenly you realise that there is a deep valley, a gorge perhaps, you never expected. You come out upon it and you look down, and you lose heart.”

Philip, his wife reflected, was learning to write and learning very rapidly. This would have been impossible a few weeks ago. Quick wits he had when he gave them a chance. He had evidently been reading widely and the uncertainty of his spelling was vanishing. All his latent memories of the look of words were reviving. There must be thousands of people, she reflected, who needed only sufficient stimulation to be released in this fashion from the sort of verbal anchylosis that had kept him inexpressive.

He went off into the question of Sempack’s love affair with Lady Catherine. A note of wonder that anything so mature and ungainly could think of passionate love appeared in what he wrote. “We walk, my dear Cynna, in a world of marvels unsuspected. It is only now that I begin to realise that people of fifty or sixty even, may still fall in love. And be horribly mortified when it doesn’t come off.” Much more did Philip marvel that anyone could fall in love with Lady Catherine. It threw a new light on Cynthia’s world for her to read her husband’s unaffected astonishment that this marvellously lovely person could captivate anyone. “He must be blind,” wrote Philip, “to things that are as plain as one-times-one-is-one, to me.” The young man went on with a lucidity that was bracingly brutal. “I cannot imagine anyone loving her. I can’t imagine anyone making love to

her *honestly*. Lots of us, Cynna dear, can make love to all sorts of women, and the game is so attractive that there is a certain effort needed not to wander down that bye way. But I mean loving her for good and keeps and both ways. I can't imagine that."

Just as well, she reflected, for husband and wife to be perfectly frank and open about these things.

"But Catherine doesn't want love or even good honest lust; she wants drivelling mutual exaggeration. 'You and I be heroine and hero' sort of business. She's got nothing to give anyone but the sensations of being dressed up as Richard Coeur de Lion in a fancy dress ball. You couldn't even laugh with her. She was made up by Nature and painted when she was born. Not a natural endearment. Not a shadow of tenderness. Pose and swagger. Love in a glare. She and her transmogrified Armenian, Fearon-Owen, pretending to be a lofty British aristocrat, are a fair match. Their great moments are when they come into rooms where there are a lot of people. Conspicuous is the climax. If she couldn't be a whore she'd be a hoarding. So as to be looked at. What a man of Sempack's quality can see in her beats me altogether. What did he see in her? I don't believe he ever saw her. I believe she just stripped for action and threw herself at him and he saw something he had very properly forgotten for years, highly illuminated by the Italian sun — the female of the species. And he fell right back among the elements from which we all arose, strutted, started off to crow. And lo! the hen wasn't looking any longer."

Philip was shrewd there, his wife thought, and what followed seemed still shrewder.

"He was at loose ends with his work and worried about the state of the world, and active imaginations in distress fall back upon love affairs just as nervous, under-vitalised people fall back upon brandy. He was exposed to her. She went through the motions of falling in love with him; and as no one else, or at any rate no one else in her class of conspicuous beauty had ever gone through those motions at him before, I suppose it came to him as a tremendous reminder of things he'd put away out of his thoughts for ages. She humbugged him, to be plain about it, that he had made a conquest. To pass the time while she quarrelled with Fearon-Owen. And as a sort of

revenge and consolation against Fearon-Owen. She lifted him up and then she heard Fearon-Owen whistle and she let him down, and his humiliation has been immense. Immense. His feelings are as slow and as massive as he is. I have things he has said to me to confirm these interpretations. They haven't just sprung unbidden in my mind. 'You are lucky,' he said to me, praising you. 'You are happy. You've got the personal thing in your life, the harbour of pride, safe and sure. It doesn't come to us all.' Then he fell back on his stock consolation just now. 'Your danger,' he said, 'will be contentment. It is easier to attack great masses of work if one has a kind of hunger deep in one's soul.' And a little later, still envious, he said: 'Everyone would like to play the part of the junior lead and be the happy lover. What is the good of hiding what we all desire? Every man, Rylands, dreams of being a lord of love. That is what we were built for in the beginning. Our endocrines cry out for it. Everything else is an adaptation and a perversion.' Compensation! That was his great word. All vigorous scientific and literary work, he declared, was a 'compensatory' effort for what he called the 'fundamental frustration'. He made a sort of melancholy joke about it and said that if we were going to make everyone healthy and happy and satisfied in the future we might have to create philosophers and savants by amputating a leg or forcing the spinal column into a curvature, or some such soul-awakening mutilation. All that is nonsense fundamentally, but it expressed his mood.

"Queer that so great a man should have to delude himself by such inventions. Queer to think how different we are, he and I. Surely I am as full of — what shall I call it? — public-spirited drive and get something big and general done, as he is. Surely I am. But I don't see that I lead a thwarted disappointed personal life. I don't see that as a bit necessary. Am I not a happy husband and a happy lover, and rich and free? Where do the elements of limitation and where does this necessity for sublimation and compensation appear in my case? He was just ill and sore enough, I fancy, to think only of himself and to ignore how things were with me. The truth is of course that he would be a philosopher and a pioneer of progressive ideas if he had never had a trace of humiliation in his life, if personally he had been as beloved and splendid as Solomon in all his glory. But the one thing

comes in happily to nurse the wounds of the other. That is how it is with him."

Mrs. Rylands put the letter down for a moment and thought. Then she looked at certain phases in the handwriting again. *Did* Philip get all his heart's desire? Could he ever? How far was his life too now heading for restraint and self-suppression? Heart's desire can be discursive and change from day to day. Should heart's desire be imprisoned or left free to wander and return? She pulled up on the edge of a reverie and resumed her reading.

After all, Philip considered, this rather grotesque love disappointment and the collision with the omnibus were neither of them the main cause of Sempack's troubled mind. They had merely tapped the ladened stratum and released the distress. The broader disappointment was the vast unanticipated valley of reaction that now yawned before him, before this confident preacher of Progress. Progress which had walked with such assurance, had hung arrested by the war and was now only staggering forward. "Has it ever occurred to you," wrote Philip, "that Sempack could be an indolent man? He says he is. Immensely indolent? Did he say it to you? Probably he did because he harps on it so much. By saying it over repeatedly he has brought me some way to seeing him from his own point of view. To read, talk, discuss, write, to hear criticisms, discuss, read in new directions and write again, has been after all just the easiest line of living for him. Catherine it seems had chanced to get her fingers through exactly that joint in his armour. She taunted him with it when he was already troubled by doubts. His present illness is quite as much his dismay at the prospect of having to change his loose studious way of life for some new kind of exertion, hurry, disputes, dangers, *etc*., as it is either broken rib or broken heart. His main trouble is getting acclimatised to a new point of view."

Philip and Sempack seemed to have talked for most of the time on that veranda that looked south of the sunrise. A phrase here and an allusion there conveyed the picture of Sempack sprawling ungainly, "like some Alpine relief map," beneath a brown camel's-hair rug upon his couch, talking still of that wonderful better time that was coming for an emancipated mankind, but talking also of the age of

revolutionary conflict that was opening now and had to be lived through before ever the Millennium could be won. The Millennium was an old-fashioned theme, but the intervening age of battle and effort and the chances of defeat were new admissions. It was as if the facts wrung themselves out of him.

The talk must have rambled and Philip's memoranda rambled too. The writing varied. It was not clear whether he had written all this in Sempack's house or somewhere on his way to London. But the main conception that emerged was that the progress of liberal thought and of world development in accordance with liberal thought which had been practically free and unhampered for a century was now threatened with restriction and arrest, and had to be fought for and secured. Sempack spoke as one who belonged to the Nineteenth Century, and Philip added the note that "by his reckoning that means 1815 to 1914." Throughout this nineteenth century it seemed discussion had grown more free and bolder with every year. Towards the end one might propose, one might suggest almost anything. One might do so because throughout that age there had been no fundamental changes and people had come to believe there could be no fundamental changes. Liberal thought was free and respected because it appeared to be altogether futile. No one grudged the Great Thinker his harmless intellectual liberties. It was not until the second Russian revolution that this attitude came to an end. Then the ordinary prosperous man who had been disposed to tolerate every sort of idea and even to pat every sort of idea on the head as he chanced across it, discovered an idea that could turn and bite his hand. He discovered that projects for fundamental change might even produce fundamental changes.

Wilson also, Sempack thought, had frightened people with his League of Nations. There was hope and dismay everywhere in the world in 1919. People, great numbers of people, came to realise that what all these socialists and prophets of progress had been talking about might really begin to happen. There might actually be a world government which wouldn't so much "broaden out" from existing governments, as push them aside and eat them up. For a League of Nations was either a super-government or a sham. The British Empire and La France and Old Glory had in actual fact to go the way

of the Heptarchy, if this League fulfilled its promise. They had to be deprived of the sovereign right to war. And equally there might really be a new sort of economic life coming into existence. We might find ourselves positive, participating shareholders in a one world business, and all our individualism gone. Conduct was amenable to direction, with regard to health and work and all sorts of things, to an extent never suspected before the days of war propaganda and regimentation. Population might really be stanched and controlled. It was no dream. It was hard for most people to decide whether this was to be treated as a mighty dawn or the glare of the last conflagration.

And that he held was where we are still to-day. Still in doubt. The dreams of yesterday have become our urgent questions, our immediate possibilities. It stared everyone in the face. Philip, either quoting or paraphrasing or extending Sempack, it was not clear which, went on to an amusing analysis of how the confrontation of a whole world with a common revolutionary possibility had reacted on different types of character. Some were for leaping headlong into the new phase, were prepared to discover it new-born and already perfect even in Moscow and Canton; many were terrified by the practical strangeness of it and bolted back to reaction. A lot did not want to be bothered. That was the common lot. They wanted to go on with their ordinary occupations like rabbits in a hutch eating lettuce when the stables they are in are on fire. Nobody saw yet what a gigantic, comprehensive, unhurrying, "non-returnable" thing world reconstruction must be; those who sought it saw that least of all. We were living in a period of panic and short views both ways. Fascism was panic, the present Tory government of Great Britain was panic, the people of Moscow were clinging, just as desperately as any westerns, to theories and formulæ they knew were insufficient, making Gods of Marx and Lenin and calling a halt to thought and criticism. The New Model of the Revolution, steadfast and sure of itself, always persisting and always learning, had still to appear. "'Clamour, conflict and muddle,'" quoted Philip, "'and so it must be until the great revolution has ceased to be a reverie, has passed through its birth storms and become the essential occupation, the guiding idea, the religion and purpose of lives like yours, lives like

your wife's, all that is left of lives like mine and of a mighty host of lives. The socialist movements of the nineteenth century, the communist movement, are no more than crude misshapen, *small* anticipations of the great revolutionary movement to which all lives, all truly living human beings, must now be called. A new religion? It is that. To be preached to all the world.

"'Is this demand enormous and incredible?' he asked.

"I said that to me it was enormous but not incredible.

"'If it is incredible,' said he, 'there is nothing worth having before mankind.'"

From that point on Philip cited Sempack hardly at all and wrote, as it were, for himself. He had accepted and digested his Sempack and was even perhaps thinking ahead of him, crossing his *t*s for him and dotting his *i*s. He enlarged on this conception of revolution planned and wilful, as the coming form of mental existence. The scale of life was altering, and the new movement from the outset must needs be very great, greater than any other movement that has ever sought to change the general way of mankind. One thought of the outstanding teachers and founders of the past as mighty figures, but this movement must be far mightier in its ambition. The days when a single Buddha and a little group of disciples could start out to change the human soul, or a single Mohammed establish the rule of Allah on earth, or a single Aristotle set all science astir, had passed by. Countless men and women must serve — as men and women served science — and none be taken as a figurehead. This new world cult would have an infinitude of parts and aspects but it must never lose itself in its parts. It must be held together by a common confession and common repudiations. Its common basis must be firstly the history of all life as one being that grew in wisdom and power, and secondly the completest confidence in the possibility of the informed will to comprehend and control. Such ideas were spreading already like a ferment throughout the world.

It was just because this world religion, blind still and hardly more aware of itself than a new-born puppy, was nevertheless astir and crawling and feeling its way about, that reaction and suppression were everywhere becoming aggressive and violent. With the soundest instinct they were impelled to kill the new world — if it

could be killed — before it accumulated the impetus that would abolish them. It is not only those who desire it who see the great order of the world at hand, but they also, those others who apprehend it as the shadow of a new state of affairs utterly unpropitious to and prohibitive of all their pride and advantages. They too believe it is possible and near. Violent reaction is the first catspaw to every revolutionary storm. And so for all further progress those who are progressives will have to fight, have to organise — for defence as well as aggression. It is a fight for the earth and the whole world of man. Who can live in peace, who can be let alone, in the midst of such a war? Who can be permitted the immunities of a friendly neutrality? The forces of reaction are not more powerful now but more manifest, more active and militant because only now do they begin to feel the strength and the full danger of the creative attack.

* * * * *

To that effect Philip had written — though more discursively. He halted, he went back, he repeated himself several times; but she gathered his meaning together. It was Sempack written out again in the handwriting of a very young man — and touched with a nervous wilfulness that was all Philip's own.

There came a break in Philip's letter. When it resumed it was on the South Street notepaper. He was back in London. Sempack upon his couch at the window was no longer the presiding figure of the discourse. He was far away in Dorset, so far, so lost in perspective as presently to be invisible and disregarded. Philip had found his wife's letter about the Vinciguerra escapade waiting for him upon his desk.

"What a stir amidst the glories of Casa Terragena," he wrote, "and what a plucky front you seem to have shown! You write as if it was all a lark, but I think you must have been pretty plucky not to scuttle indoors and have the shutters closed and the bolts shot when the shooting and shouting began. Reaction chasing Liberalism with intent to kill, among the magnolias, under the palms, amidst moonlight and fireflies. This is theory coming home to us with a vengeance. But there you are! The fighting is going on already; the old order takes the defensive — offensive defensive — and men are

being hunted and wounded and killed in the name of nations and tyrannies. Damn those fellows! If I had been there that night there would have been some shooting. I would have had them out of the gardens faster than they came in — or there would have been memorable events. I tingle at the thought — the sort of chaps we had to stiffen after Caporetto! I don't know whether it is liberalism or temper, but I'll be drawn and quartered if I don't show all the fight there is in me against these stupidities and violences and oppressions on the part of the second-rate doing their best to crush hope out of the world. Just as it dawns.

"My dear, I'm for fighting. That little invasion of our decent garden has stirred me like a trumpet. And after poor old Vinciguerra of all people!

"All the time that I have been away from you I have been thinking over myself and over my world and over our life as it spreads before us. I believe that this project of a sort of continuing resolute push towards one world system, is a feasible project and the most sporting and invigorating invitation that has ever been made to mankind. I want to go in for it with everything I've got. I want to give myself to it for your sake and my sake and for every reason in the world, and if I find little chaps in black shirts or black coats or red coats starting in to stop me or my sort of people from going the way we mean to go, it's one of our lots will have to get right off the earth. What else is possible? How can we live in the same world with these castor-oil cads and their loaded canes? Still less with their Cockney imitators!...

"This isn't mere wilfulness on my part...."

The handwriting changed as if the latter had been left and resumed.

"There are damnable threads in me though they hide from you as wood- lice bolt from the sun. If I do not go this way then for all I can tell I may go the other way and end another Uncle Robert. And I dread coming to be like the Right Honourable Baron more than any Calvinist ever feared hell.

"But if we are to give ourselves to this Revolution of Sempack's the great revolution of the whole world, as our religion, as our way of life, it means a new way of living for us both, dearest wife. For us

and for that Dear Expectation of ours. I do not see us, serving the great order of the world from the drawing-room of Casa Terragena. I do not see our child or our children living aloof from this huge conflict in an enchanted garden. A Rylands. Neither from your side nor from mine is that sort of offspring possible. If we are going to realise the teachings of the prophet Sempack, there must be an end to Casa Terragena. We must give it over to the botanists if they will take it and send off Bombaccio to seek his fortunes in America.

"The common English are our people and to England we must come; either to London because it is our natural centre or to Edensoke because it is our dominion. We must use our position in the Rylands properties to learn and experiment and find out if we can how to turn round the face of the whole system towards the new order. All our surplus wealth must go into the movement, and the spending of that we must study as closely as dear Uncle Edensoke studies his investment coups. No Rylands ever threw money away and I don't mean to begin. You don't see me pouring my little accumulations into the party funds of L.G. or Ramsay Mac. I shall probably begin by acquiring newspaper properties, and if I can make them do their duty by the movement and pay — so much the better. Then I shall have funds for the next thing. That will be organisation. I shall work like hell. That is the new, hard, serious, fighting, straining, interesting and satisfying life we have to face, my darling, and I am glad we have found it while we are still young. I no more doubt your courage to face it than I doubt that the sun can shine. We'll show all these infernal tories, stick-in-the-mud liberals, labour louts and labour gentilities, loafers and reactionaries, what two bright young people can do in the way of shoving at the wheels of progress. We'll be such disciples of Sempack that we'll put his wind up. We'll start the move. We'll lug him out from his dreams into reality — blinking.... This house here in South Street, the agents say, will let quite easily."

The letter ended abruptly.

22. THE RAPIDS

For some days a great indolence had enveloped Mrs. Rylands, a lassitude of mind and body. She lay in bed now and thought over Philip's letter, so bold, tumultuous, and alive in this shadowed peace. The sheets lay on her counterpane and seemed to emit faint echoes of riot and battle. Quite certainly that night he would have gone out raging into the garden and fought. What else could he have done? He would have rescued Vinciguerra violently. Men might have been killed perhaps and everything would have been different. Well, she was glad that had not happened. But his letter was good, quite good, and he would keep his word, she felt, and play to win his games as old Edensoke won his games, but with great ends in view and his soul alive. It was good, but for all that just now that letter fatigued her and she made no attempt to read it over again once she was through with it. It was all right with Philip. For a time things must rest on that.

Life was a very pursuing thing. She recalled the figure of Sempack, so prone to fall into inactive poses, and how combative necessity, with a face singularly like Philip's, was forcing its way through his reluctant and comprehensive wisdom. She loved Philip, she had instigated Philip to give himself to these storming purposive activities, but just now also there was a shadowy resentment that he drove her along the path she herself had indicated. In her present mood Philip's energy blended in thought with the kicking, struggling energy within, behaving already like another Philip eager to get at issue with the world. She thought of her child still as It, and marvelled how little she had pictured its individuality or troubled about its outlook. She had questioned Mrs. McManus and learnt how widespread was this imaginative indifference of expectant mothers. She had had a few dreams of something infantile and delightful flitting about the great garden, but they were always shadowy, and now it seemed that It was not to spend its childhood in the garden. Philip said they were to leave Casa Terragena. He, she and It. She did not want to leave Casa Terragena. She did not want to leave this room and this bed any more.

She knew this was a mood. She knew that when the time came she would leave Casa Terragena with a stout heart. Philip was her mate and captain and leader and whither he led she would go. But this afternoon she saw that without emotion, as an accepted fact of her circumstances and moral nature. The garden had become very dear to her in these last few weeks, very close and significant. Here it was that she had first experienced that sense of God at hand that comforted and sustained her now so mightily. She would be loth to leave the place. But God could be apprehended in many places. And she would remember.

There was something here that her mind made an effort to retain and examine. This apprehension of God was a matter about which she had to write to Philip. She had never told him about it. It was very secret and difficult to tell. For some days she had been brooding upon that. Yesterday and the day before she had had a peculiar disposition to put things tidy. She wanted everything in order, apple-pie order. She had made Frant unpack her clothes and linen from drawers and cupboards and helped her to replace it with a meticulous precision. She had put her writing-desk in order and tapped her row of little reference books into the exactest line. The green leather book had been minutely corrected and at last her mind had settled upon the one conclusive act of tidying up that remained for her to do, to explain to Philip about her God. But she was as lazy now as she was orderly. She had no sooner taken a sheet of paper to write than she decided to lie down. A queer disturbing sensation had come to her when she had posed herself to write, a novel challenging sensation. She would rest a little while and then she would write.

It was very important that Philip should hear from her about her God. It was the one thing wanting, she found, in his latest letters. They seemed so hard and contentious, quarrelsome was the word, they were quarrelsome and aggressive, because they lacked any sense of this mighty serenity that was behind and above and about all the details and conflicts of life. Philip had discovered the imperative of right-living, but he had still to perceive the Friend and Father who made all right things right. “Friend and Father” one said, and “He,” but these were words as ineffectual as a child’s clay models of loveliness and life. One said “He” because there seems to be more

will and purposiveness in “He” than in She or It, but for all that it was a misleading pronoun, cumbered with the suggestion of a man. This that sustained the world for her, was not a person, but infinitely more than a person. As a person is more than a heap of stuff. And still one had to say “He”!

Soon now and very near to her was the crisis of maternity. She knew that to bear a child for the first time is more dangerous than to follow the most dangerous of trades. Irrational things may happen. Yet she felt no dismay at this physical storm that gathered for her. For some time now her mind had been tranquil as it had never been tranquil in her life before. It had been as though she drifted swiftly on a broad smooth stream that poured steadfastly towards a narrow gorge and inevitable rapids. Fearlessly she had swept forward through the days. On that unruffled surface everything was mirrored with the peculiar brightness and clarity of reflected things. Why was she not afraid?

Already there were eddies. The frail skiff of her being had turned about and rocked once and again. She could face it. She did not need Philip nor any comforting hand. Philip was all right and she loved him, but she did not mind in the least now that he was far away. She had her comfort and her courage, in herself and all about her. She whispered: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” She looked at the sheets of Philip’s letter within reach of her fingers and withal it seemed ten thousand miles away. All that was in suspense now and remote and for a while quite unimportant; it could wait; for the present she was with God. So near, so palpably near was He to her that her whole being swam in His. He would be with her in the darkness; He would be with her amidst the strangeness and pain.

Something stirred within her and she put out her hand and took the little green leather book that lay on her bedside table. She had to tell all that to Philip. And it was so difficult to tell Philip. Now. Difficult to tell Philip at any time. She would set something of it down if she could in case —— For some reason her hand was out of control but she contrived to scribble the words that sustained her: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

There came a sudden pain, an unaccustomed urgent pain, that made her set aside her writing hurriedly and press the little bell-push

that would summon Mrs. McManus to the fray. The green leather book fell on the floor, disregarded.

The rapids had begun.

23. PHILIP COMES HOME

In the evening when his account of Sempack at home was well on its way to his wife, Philip sat down and reflected upon what he had written to her. He tried to recall the exact wording of certain passages. He had written with a certain excitement and hurry. How would it affect her? He imagined her receiving it and reading it.

He pictured her as he had sometimes seen her reading books, very intent, turning the pages slowly, judging, pausing to think with a peculiar characteristic stillness. Her eyes would be hidden; you would just see the lashes on her cheek. So he remembered her reading in their garden. How clear and lucid was her mind, like a pool of crystalline water. He thought about the life he had led with her so far and the life they were going to lead together. He thought of the way in which all his interests and purposes had been turned about through her unpremeditated reaction upon his mind. He thought of the way in which fragility and courage interwove to make her at the same time delicate and powerful. So that for all that she was to him the frailest, most fastidious and inaggressive of women, she was plainly and surely his salvation. A wave of gratitude swept over his mind, gratitude for certain exquisite traits, for the marvellous softness of her hair, for her smile, for her fine hands and her characteristic movements, for moments of tenderness, for moments when he had seen her happy unawares and had rejoiced that she existed.

And as he thought of the steady, grave determination with which she must have set about this Vinciguerra business, of the touch of invincible humour that he knew must have mitigated her fear and steadied her mind, it was borne in upon him that never in their life, never for one moment, had he shown her the value he set upon her and given his love full expression. This letter he had so recently sent her was, he discovered abruptly, a shocking letter, altogether the wrong sort of letter to send at this time, full of *his* soul and *his* needs and his own egotistical purposes and taking no heed of how things might present themselves to her.

Was this the time to talk of leaving Casa Terragena and fighting

all the powers of confusion in the world? Was this the time to foreshadow a harder life in England? To wave flags of revolution in her sick-room and blow bugle calls in her ear? She would be ailing, she would be a little faint and fearful, and she would be needing all her strength to face this initial tearing crisis of motherhood that was now so close upon her. And nothing from him but this clamour for support! She helped him; yes; and he took it as a matter of course. Now for the first time he perceived how little he had ever troubled to help her. That letter had gone, gone beyond recall, a day's start it would have and no telegram could correct a matter of tone and attitude, but he could at least send another after it to mitigate its hard preoccupation with the future, its hard disregard of any possible softening and fear in her. A love letter, it would have to be, a rich and tender love letter. Not mere "rubbidge" and caressing fun, but a frank and heartening confession of the divinity — for it was divinity — he found in her. Why do we lovers never tell these things? The real things? He began to search his mind for words and phrases to express his gathering emotion, but these words and phrases were difficult to find.

He sat down at his table and even as he pulled the writing paper towards him a telegram came, a telegram from Mrs. McManus.

A telegram so urgent it was, that he never wrote that letter. His intentions remained phantoms but half embodied in words which still flitted in his mind during most of his headlong journey to Italy. Latterly he had been finding far less difficulty in writing than at first; the necessity to affect whimsicality and defend his poor phrasing with funny sketches had disappeared, but now that it came to conveying the subtle and fluctuating motives of his heart, simply and sincerely, no words, no phrases contented him. Shadow and reflection and atmosphere, impossible to convey. Phrases that seemed at the first glance to say exactly what he needed became portentous, excessive, unreal, directly they were definitely written down. For this business, "rubbidge," the little language, peeping intimations and snatches of doggerel, seemed better adapted than the most earnestly chosen sentences. And still insufficient. He was pervaded by the idea that all his difference of spirit from the common Rylands strain was a gift from her. "Wife of my heart and Mother of

my Soul," flitting into his thoughts like an inspiration, passed muster, and sat down and in two minutes had become preposterous. "You are my Salvation" became a monstrous egotism, when one thought of it as written on paper. But indeed she was his salvation, she *was* the light of his life, for him she was not only the dearest but the best of all things. Was he never to tell her these intense and primary facts?

"My life hangs on yours. My soul dies with yours.... We Rylands are things of metal and drive, unless a soul is given us.... With you I can be a living man.... It's Undine but the other way about...."

It was profoundly true but it would read like rant.

"The world is a thing of cold fat, opaque and stupid, without your touch. You make it like a hand held up to a bright light; one sees it then as nerve and blood and life...."

Would he never be able to tell her of such things as this? Never say more than "Cinna-kins" and "pet wife" to this firm and delicate spirit that could lead his by the hand? No better than dumb beasts we are, all of us who love, using just "dear" or "darling" as a dog must yap to express ten thousand different things! "The fireflies must be back at Terragena?" he wrote in this imagined letter, with an impotent poetic desire to liken her quick vivid thoughts, her swift deliberations, to those flashes in the darkness, in their brightness and their constant surprise....

He was still thinking of that unwritten letter as he came through the little sitting-room at Casa Terragena to where she lay white and still, and looking now smaller than she had ever looked before. The weary little body curled up in that big bed reminded him grotesquely of a toy dog. A thing for infinite tenderness; "Wife, dear wife and Mother of my Soul!" Why had he never told her that?

"I was just going to write to her," he whispered to Mrs. McManus. "I was just going to write to her. A real letter. I was sitting down to write. That last one — wasn't much good. And then your message came."

That last one was there on the toilet table. He saw it as he came in to her. That stupid heavy letter!

He threw himself down on his knees by the bed and very gently put his arm over that fragile body. "My darling!" he whispered. She had not seemed to know that he had come, but now very lazily one

eye opened, searched its field of vision and regarded him with an inexpressive stare.

"Cinna dear! speak to me."

"Dju finka vim?" she murmured, dropping the aspirate from sheer inability to carry it. The eye closed again. Still so heavy with anæsthetics.

"That's all right," said Mrs. McManus with an experienced hand on the young master's shoulder. "Now let her have her sleep out and then ye can call her darling to your heart's content. Aren't you in the least bit curious to see what sort of first-born son she's given you? A fine fine boy it is and sparring at the world already with his little fists. *There!* D'you hear him?"

"And she is out of the least bit of danger?" he insisted, regardless of the Rylands' future.

"Just healthy fatigue.... After all, it's a thing a woman is made for."

THE END

MR. BLETTSWORTHY ON RAMPOLE ISLAND

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CHAPTER THE FIRST

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§ 1. THE BLETTSWORTHY FAMILY

THE Blettsworthys, my family, have always been a very scrupulous family and gentle, the Wiltshire Blettsworthys perhaps even more so than the Sussex branch. I may perhaps be forgiven if I say a word or two about them before I come to my own story. I am proud of my ancestors and of the traditions of civilised conduct and genial living they have handed down to me; the thought of them, as I shall tell, has supported and sustained me on some difficult occasions. "What," I have asked, "should a Blettsworthy do?" and I have at least attempted to make my conduct a proper answer.

There have always been Blettsworthys in English life in the south and west of England, and they have always been very much the same sort of people. Many epitaphs and similar records reaching back far beyond Tudor times witness to their virtues, their kindliness, probity and unobtrusive prosperity. There is said to be a branch of them in Languedoc, but of that I know nothing. Blettsworthys went to America, to Virginia in particular, but they seem to have been swallowed up and lost there. Yet ours is a family of persistent characteristics not easily extinguished. Perhaps some American reader may know of the fate of this branch. Such chances occur. There is an alabaster figure of a Bishop Blettsworthy in Salisbury Cathedral that was brought thither from the aisle of old Sarum when that was demolished and Salisbury set up, and the marble face might have been a bust of my uncle, the rector of Harrow Hoeward, and the fine hands are like his hands. There ought to be Blettsworthys in America, and it perplexes me that I never hear of any. Something of their quality appears, I am told, in the Virginian landscape, which is wide and warm and kindly, they say, like our English downland, a little touched by the sun.

The Blettsworthys are a family of cultivators and culture. They have had little to do with merchandising, either in gross or detail, and they played no part in the direct development of what is called industrialism. They have preferred the church to the law, and classical scholarship, botany and archaeology to either, but they appear doing their duty by the land in Domesday Book, and Blettsworthy's Bank is one of the last of the outstanding private banks in these days of amalgamation. It is still a great factor in West of England life. The Blettsworthys, rest assured, were drawn into banking by no craving for usurious gain, but simply to oblige the needs and requests of less trustworthy neighbours in Gloucestershire and Wilts. The Sussex branch is not quite so free from commercialism as the Wiltshire; it practised "free trade" during the French wars when free trade was strictly speaking illegal and a fine adventure, and in spite of the violent end of Sir Carew Blettsworthy and his nephew Ralph as the result of a misunderstanding with some Custom House officials in the streets of Rye that necessitated bloodshed, it acquired considerable wealth and local influence through these activities and has never altogether severed its connection with the importation of silks and brandy.

My father was a man of sterling worth but eccentric action. Many of the things he did demanded explanation before the soundness of his motives was clear, and some, because of their remoteness, his habitual negligence, or for other reasons, were never fully explained. The Blettsworthys are not always good at explanation. It is their habit to rely on their credit. Being a fifth son and with no prospects of a fortune nor any marketable abilities, my father was urged by his friends and relations to seek his fortune abroad, and left Wiltshire at an early age to look, as he said, for gold, looking, I admit, without any natural avidity and generally in quite unsuitable places. Gold, I understand, is extremely localised in its origins, and it is as a rule found gregariously in what are called "gold rushes," but my father had an aversion from crowds and crowd behaviour and preferred to seek the rare and precious metal among agreeable surroundings and where the ungracious competition of unrefined people did not incommode him, subsisting meanwhile upon the modest remittances afforded him by his more prosperous connexions. He held that

though this line of conduct might diminish his chances of discovering gold, it gave him a prospect of monopolising any lucky find that occurred to him He was more careless about marriage than is usual in the Blettsworthy strain, contracting it several times and sometimes rather informally — though indeed we are all rather unguarded in our assent to contracts — and my mother happened to be of mixed Portuguese and Syrian origin, with a touch of the indigenous blood of Madeira, where I was born.

My birth was entirely legitimate; whatever confusion there may be in my father's matrimonial record came later and as a consequence of the extremely variable nature of marriage in tropical and subtropical climates.

My mother was, I understand, on the testimony of my father's letters, a passionately self-forgetful woman, but she did not altogether eliminate herself in my composition. To her, I think, I must owe my preference for inclusive rather than concise statement, and a disposition, when other things are equal, to subordinate reality to a gracious and ample use of language. "She talks," wrote my father to my uncle during her lifetime. "You never hear the last of anything." Meaning that she felt things so finely and acutely that she resorted instinctively to the protection of a felt of words and that her mind could not rest satisfied so long as a statement was in any way incomplete. She fined; she retouched. How well I understand! I too understand how insupportable inexpression may become. Moreover I surely owe to her something even more alien to the Blettsworthy stock in my sense of internal moral conflict. I am divided against myself — to what extent this book must tell. I am not harmonious within; not at peace with myself as the true Blettsworthys are. I am at issue with my own Blettsworthy-ness. I add to my father's tendency to a practical complexity, a liability to introspective enquiry. I insist I am a Blettsworthy, and you will remark that I insist. That is what no twenty-four carat Blettsworthy would do. I am consciously a Blettsworthy because I am not completely and surely a Blettsworthy. I have great disconnected portions of myself. Perhaps I am all the more loyal to my family traditions because I can be objectively loyal.

My mother died when I was five years old, and my few memories of her are hopelessly confused with a tornado that ravaged the island.

Two clouds of apprehension mingled and burst in dreadful changes. I remember seeing trees and hours most shockingly inverted and a multitude of crimson petals soddened in a gutter, and that is associated confusedly with being told that my mother was dying and then dead. At the time I believe I was not so much grieved as astounded.

My father, after some futile correspondence with my maternal relations in Portugal and a rich uncle in Aleppo, succeeded in entrusting me to an inexperienced young priest who was coming from Madeira to England, and requested him to deposit me with an aunt in Cheltenham, Miss Constance Blettsworthy, who in that manner first became aware of my existence. My father had armed his emissary with documents that left no doubt of my identity. I have vague memories of mounting the side of the steamship at Funchal, but my recollections of the subsequent sea passage are happily effaced. I have a distincter picture of my aunt's parlour in Cheltenham.

She was a dignified lady in what was either a blonde wig or hair skilfully arranged in such a fashion as to imitate one; she had a Companion similar to herself but larger, an unusually large person in fact, whose bust impressed my childish mind profoundly; and I remember they both sat up very high above me while I occupied a hassock before the fire, and that the conversation with the young priest was sufficiently momentous to leave a strong impression on my mind. They were clearly of opinion that he had been wrongly advised to bring me to Cheltenham and that he ought to take me on at once at least a further hour's journey by rail to the home of my uncle, the rector of Harrow Hoeward.

My aunt said repeatedly that she was touched by my father's confidence in her, but that the state of her health made her feel unequal to my entertainment. She and her Companion furnished the young priest with such facts about her state of health as were suitable for him to hear and even, I fancy, with additional particulars. They must have felt the emergency called for decisive treatment. In spite of the commiseration his profession demanded from him, he was manifestly anxious to waive these confidences in so far as they might be considered relevant to the business in hand. My father had said

nothing to him about this brother at Harrow Hoeward, having concentrated his directions upon my Aunt Constance, the elder sister of his upbringing and a pillar of strength in his memory. The young priest did not feel justified, he declared, in varying his instructions. The trust was discharged, the young priest maintained, by my delivery into the hands of my aunt, and he lingered only for a settlement of certain incidental expenses upon the voyage for which my father had made no provision.

For my own part, I sat stoically upon my hassock and, with an affected concentration regarded the fire-place and the hob, which were of a type unknown in Madeira, listening the while. I was not very anxious to stay with my aunt, but I was quite eager to see no more of the young priest, so that I wished him well in his efforts to relinquish me and was pleased by his success.

He was a fat white young priest, with a round face and a high strangulated tenor voice more suitable for praying aloud than ordinary conversation. He had begun our acquaintance with the warmest, most winning, professions of affection, and I had shared his berth on board at his suggestion, but my inability to support the motion of the vessel with restraint, and a certain want of judgment in my disposition of the outcome, had gradually embittered a relationship that had promised to be ideal. By the time we reached Southampton we had conceived a mutual distaste which was mitigated only by the prospect of a separation that promised to be speedy and enduring.

In short, he would have no more to do with me.

I stayed with my aunt.

Cheltenham was not a very happy refuge for me. A small boy of five is sedulous in pursuit of occupation, tactless in his choice of entertainment, and destructive in his attempts to investigate and comprehend the more fragile objects of interest with which life teems for him. My aunt was addicted to collecting Chelsea figurines and other early English china; she loved the quaint stuff; and yet she failed to recognise a kindred passion in me when my eager young imagination would have introduced conflict and drama among her treasures. Nor did my attempts to play with and enliven the life of two large blue Persian cats who adorned the house please her maturer

judgment. I did not understand that a cat, if one wishes to play with it, should not be too ardently pursued, and is rarely roused to responsive gaiety by even the best aimed blows. My doughty exploits in the garden, where I dealt with her Dahlias and Michaelmas daisies as though they were hostile champions and embattled hosts, aroused no spark of approval in her.

The two elderly domestics and the crumpled gardener, who ministered to the comfort and dignity of my aunt and her Companion, shared their employer's opinion that the education of the young should be entirely repressive, so that I was able to go on existing at all only in a very unobtrusive manner. A young tutor was engaged, I seem to remember, to take me for walks as prolonged as possible and give me instructions as inaudible as possible, but I have no distinct recollection of him except that he was the first person I knew who wore detachable cuffs, and my impressions of Cheltenham are of a wilderness of endless spacious roads of pale grey houses under a pale blue sky, and of a Pump Room, bath chairs and an absence of bright colour and exhilarating incident in the extremest contrast with Madeira.

I note these months at Cheltenham — or perhaps they were only weeks, though in my memory at least they are months of a vague immensity — as a sort of interregnum in the Void before my real life began. Above and outside the sphere of my attention, my aunt and her Companion must have been making the most strenuous efforts to place me among other surroundings, for against the dim background to these Cheltenham reminiscences there come and go a number of still dimmer figures, Blettsworthys all, scrutinising me without either affection or animosity, but with a rapidly crystallising disposition to have nothing further to do with me. Their comments, I believe, fell under three main headings; firstly, that I was *good* for my aunt because I should take her out of herself — but clearly she did not want to be taken out of herself, and indeed who does? — or, secondly, that I had better be returned to my father, but that was impossible because he had left Madeira for an uncertain address in Rhodesia and our imperial postal system will not accept little boys addressed to the Poste Restante in remote colonies; or, thirdly, that the whole thing, meaning me, ought to be put before my uncle, the

Rev. Rupert Blettsworthy, the rector of Harrow Hoeward. They were all in agreement that I promised to be rather small for a Blettsworthy.

My uncle was away in Russia at that time, with various Anglican bishops, discussing the possible reunion of the Anglican and Orthodox churches — it was long, long before the Great War and the coming of Bolshevism. Letters from my aunt pursued him, but were delayed and never overtook him. Then suddenly, just as I was growing resigned to a purely negative life in a household at Cheltenham under the direction of a tutor with detachable cuffs, my uncle appeared.

He resembled my father generally, but he was shorter and rosier and rounder and dressed like the rich and happy rector he was, instead of in loose and laundry worn flannels. There was much about him too that needed explanation, but the need was not so manifest. And his hair was silver-grey. He came right out of the background at once in a confident and pleasing manner. He put rimless glasses on his nose and regarded me with a half smile that I found extremely attractive.

"Well, young man," he said in almost my father's voice; "they don't seem to know what to do with you. How would you like to come and live with me?"

"Please, sir," I said as soon as I grasped the meaning of the question.

My aunt and her Companion became radiantly appreciative of me. They cast concealment aside. I had never suspected how well they thought of me. "He is *so* lively and intelligent," they said; "he takes notice of everything. Properly looked after and properly fed he will be quite a nice little boy."

And so my fate was settled.

§ 2. THE GOOD BROAD CHURCHMAN

WITH my establishment at Harrow Hoeward my life, I consider, really began. My memory, which has nothing but gleams and fragments of the preceding years, jumps into continuity from the very day of my arrival at that most homelike home. I could, I believe,

draw maps to scale of the rectory, and certainly of the garden, and I can recall the peculiar damp smell of the pump in the yard beyond the out-house and the nine marigolds at equal distances against the grey stone wall. Year by year old Blackwell, the gardener, replaced them. I could write a chronicle of the cats, with sketches of their characters. And out beyond the paddock was a ditch and then the steep open down, rising against the sky. In the snowy winter or the hot summer I used to slide down that on a plank, for the dry grass in summer was more slippery than ice. In the front of the vicarage was a trim lawn and a hedge of yew, and to the left of us were Copers Cottages, and then at the notch in the road the Post Office and the General Store. The church and churchyard was our boundary the other way.

My uncle took me there a small indeterminate plastic creature, which might have become anything. But there inevitably I became the Blettsworthy I am to-day.

From the first moment of our acquaintance he was the most real and reassuring thing in life for me. It was like awakening on a bright morning merely to see him. Everything in my life before his appearance had been vague, minatory and yet unconvincing; I felt I was wrong and unsafe, that I was surrounded by shadowy and yet destructive powers and driven by impulses that could be as disastrous as they were uncontrollable. Daily life was the mask of a tornado. But now that effect of a daylight dream which might at any time become a nightmare, which was already creeping into my life in childhood in spite of a sort of stoical resistance I offered its invasion, was banished for many years from my mind. “Things have got a little wrong with you,” he said in effect in that Cheltenham parlour, “but, as a matter of fact and fundamentally, they are *all right.*”

And so long as he lived, either they were fundamentally all right or by some essential personal magic he made them seem so. Even now I cannot tell which of these things it was.

I do not remember my Aunt Dorcas as vividly as I do my uncle. Indeed, I do not remember her as fully as I do old Blackwell or the cook. This is odd, because she must have had a lot to do with me. But she was a busy self-effacing woman, who effected her ministrations so efficiently that they seemed to be not her acts but

part of the routine of the universe. I believe she had always desired children of her own, and at first she had been a little distressed to realise that her sole family was to be one half alien nephew, a doubtful scrutinising being already past babyhood, eking out a limited English vocabulary with dubious scraps of Portuguese. Perhaps there remained a certain estrangement of spirit always. She never betrayed any want of affection; she did her duty by me completely, but it is clear as I look back upon these things that there was no motherhood, no sonship between us. The realities of her life were turned away from me altogether. All the more did my heart go out to my uncle, who seemed to diffuse kindliness as a hayfield in good weather diffuses scent, and who presided, in my childish imagination, not only over the house and the church and all the souls of Harrow Hoeward, but over the wide bare downland and the very sunshine. It is extraordinary how extensively he has effaced my father from my mind.

My idea of God is still all mixed up with him. In Madeira I had heard much of Dios by way of expletive and invocation, a subtropical passionate Dios, hot and thundery; but I never connected the two divinities until I reached years of comparison. God began afresh with me in England as the confederated shadow of my uncle, a dear English gentleman of a God, a super-Blettsworthy in control, a God of dew and bright frosty mornings, helpful and unresentful, whose peculiar festivals were Easter and Christmas and the Harvest Thanksgiving. He was the God of a world that was right way up, stern only to smile again, and even through the solemnity and restraint of Good Friday peeped out my uncle's assurance that the young gentleman would come back safe and sound on Sunday. A serious time, of course, occasion for grave reflections, but meanwhile we had our hot cross buns.

There were crosses in my uncle's church but no crucifix, no crown of thorns, no nails.

My uncle shook back his surplice from his shapely hands, leant over the pulpit and talked to us pleasantly of this pleasant supreme power who ruled the world, for twenty minutes at the most, since God must not be made tiresome to the weaker brethren. He needed explanation at times, this God of the Blettsworthys, his ways had to

be justified to man, but not tediously. My uncle loved particularly to talk in his sermons of the rainbow and the ark and God's certain covenants. He was awfully decent, was God, as his uncle displayed him, and he and my uncle made me want to be decent too. In a world of "All right" and "Right O" and "Right you are, Sir." I lived in it and was safe in it all those years. Was it no more than a dream?

Evil was very far away and hell forgotten. "You don't do that sort of thing," said my uncle, and you didn't. "Play up," said my uncle, and you did. "Fair doos," said my uncle; "you mustn't be *hard* on people." And patience with the poor performer; "How do you *know* the fellow isn't trying?" Even the gipsies who drifted through that tranquil Downland and sometimes had to confer with my uncle in his secular might upon the bench, about minor issues of conduct, were deeply Anglicised gipsies; if they pinched a trifle now and again they were neither robbers nor violent. Dear England! Shall I never see you again as I saw you in those safe and happy days? Languedoc and Provence they say are gentle regions also, and Saxony; and here and there in Scandinavia you will find whole countrysides of kindliness, needing only the simplest explanations. I do not know about these places. It is to the English Downland that my heart returns.

My uncle shook back the sleeves of his surplice and leant smiling and persuasive over his pulpit, making everything clear and mild like English air, and I felt that if I were given a vision sufficiently penetrating I should see high above the blue ether another such kindly Father, instructing His fortunate world. Under Him in pews as it were and looking up to Him, were princes, potentates and powers all to be credited with the best intentions until there was positive proof to the contrary. Queen Victoria, simple and good and wise and rather the shape of a cottage loaf with a crown upon it, sat highest of all, not, I felt, so much a Queen and Empress as a sort of Vice Deity in the earth. On Sundays she occupied the big imperial pew right under God's pulpit and no doubt took Him home to lunch. To dusky potentates who happened to know and respect her better than they knew God, she presented copies of the Authorised Version of the English Bible and referred them up magnanimously to her friend and ruler. No doubt she wrote Him earnest letters, with her particular wishes underlined, just as she wrote to Lord Beaconsfield and the

German Emperor, upon what her fine instinct, a little instructed by Baron Stockmar, told her was best for the Realm, His World and her Family connexions. Beneath her was a system of hierarchic kindliness. Our local magnate was Sir Willoughby Denby, a great man for the irrigation of subtropical lands and the growing of cotton for the mills of Manchester and the needs of all mankind. A ruddy handsome man, inclined to be fat, and riding through the village on a stout cob. Farther towards Devizes spread the dominion and influence of Lord Penhartingdon, banker and archaeologist, and Blettsworthy on the mother's side. Actually Blettsworthys held their ancestral lands from Downton to Shaftesbury and again towards Wincanton.

In this benevolent world which my uncle's God and his own goodness had made upon the Wiltshire uplands, I grew from childhood to adolescence, and the dark strain of my mother's blood, sorrowful and errant, flowed unsuspected in my veins and gave no sign. Perhaps for a Blettsworthy I was a trifle garrulous and quick with languages. First I had a governess, a Miss Duffield from Boars Hill near Oxford, the daughter of a friend of my uncle's, blindly adoring him and very successful with my French and German, and then I went as a weekly boarder to the excellent school at Imfield that Sir Willoughby Denby under God and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had done so much to revive and re-endow. It was tremendously modern for those days and we had classes in carpentry and did experimental biology with plants and frog spawn, and learnt Babylonian and Greek history instead of learning Greek grammar. My uncle was a governor of this school and came at times and talked to us.

They were unpremeditated talks of perhaps five or ten minutes that sprang up in his mind when he came down to us, not so much attempts to put anything over us as, in response to our youth and activity and fresh expectation a kindly word to clear difficulties away.

"Civilisation," he would say to us. "Grow sound and strong here and go out to civilise the earth."

That was what Imfield School was for. "Civilisation" was his word; I think I must have heard it from him six times as often as

“Christianity.” Theology was a mental play for him, and rather idle play. He was all for the Reunion of Christendom in the interests of civilisation, and had great hopes of the holy men who lived in the Troitzko-Sergiyevskaya Lavra near Moscow and never put their feet to earth. He wanted an interchange of Orthodox and Anglican orders. His power of imagining resemblances was far greater than his power of recognising differences. He could imagine the mentality of a gentle curate beneath the long hair and beard of a Russian priest. He thought Russian country gentlemen could presently become like English country gentlemen with a parliament in St. Petersburg just the same. He corresponded with several of the Cadets. And that point between the creeds of Latin and Greek about Filioque, that most vital point, seemed, I fear to him, no better than a quibble.

“At bottom we are all the same thing,” he said to me, preparing me for confirmation. “Never get excited about forms or formulae. There is only one truth in the world and all good men have got it.”

“Darwin and Huxley?” I reflected.

“Sound Christians both,” said he, “in the proper sense of the word. Honest men that is. No belief is healthy unless it takes air and exercise and turns itself round and about and stands upon its head for a bit.”

Huxley was a great loss to the bench of bishops, he assured me, an athlete of the spirit and respectable to the bone. Everyone would take his word before that of many a bishop. Because science and religion were two sides of the medal of truth, it did not follow that they were in opposition, and to be unconsciously a Christian was perhaps the very essence of sound Christianity.

“Let him who thinketh he stand,” quoted my uncle, “take heed lest he fall.”

All men meant the same thing really and everyone was fundamentally good. But sometimes people forgot themselves. Or didn’t quite understand how things ought to be explained. If the Origin of Evil troubled my uncle but little, he was sometimes perplexed I think by the moral inadvertence of our fellow creatures. He would talk over his newspaper at breakfast to his wife and Miss Duffield and me, or with our frequent guests at lunch or dinner, about crimes, about the disconcerting behaviour of pitiful ungracious

individuals, murderers, swindlers and the like.

"Tut, tut," he would say at breakfast. "Now that's really too disgraceful."

"What have they done now?" asked my Aunt Dorcas.

"It's the wicked foolishness of it," he would say.

Miss Duffield would sit back and admire him and wait, but my aunt would go on with her breakfast.

"Here's a poor silly muddle-witted fellow must poison his wife. Insures her for quite a lot of money — which is what attracted attention to the whole thing — and then gives her poison. Three nice little children too. When they tell in court the way the woman suffered and how she made a remark about its being hard on her, the poor wretch chokes and weeps. Silly poor idiot! Tut, tut! He never knew which way to turn for money... Pitiful."

"But she was murdered," said my Aunt Dorcas.

"They lose all sense of proportion when they get into that state of worry. I've seen it so often before me when I've been upon the bench. No confidence in life and then comes a sort of moral stampede. Very probably to begin with he wanted money because he couldn't bear to see that poor woman living in such poverty. And then the craving for money became overpowering. At any cost he must have money. Forgot everything else in that."

Miss Duffield nodded her head very fast in token of intelligent edification, but my Aunt Dorcas still hung undecided.

"But what would you do with him, dearest?" said my Aunt Dorcas. "You wouldn't let him out to poison someone else."

"You don't *know* he would," said my uncle.

"Christ would have forgiven him," Miss Duffield said softly and with some obscure difficulty.

"I suppose he ought to be hanged," said my uncle, dealing firmly with my aunt's question; "Yes, I suppose he ought to be hanged. (These are excellent kippers. The best we have had for some time.)"

He viewed all sides of the question. "I would forgive him — his sin if not his punishment. No. For the sake of the weaker brethren under temptation, I grant you he ought to be hanged. Yes. He ought to be hanged." He sighed deeply. "But in a civilised spirit. You see — Someone ought to go to him and make it clear to him that it is to

be a hanging without malice, that we realise we are all poor sinful tempted things not a bit better than he is, not a bit better, sinners all, but that it is just because of that, that he has to die. We have to be helped by the certainty of punishment, so that though he has now to go through with this disagreeable experience, he dies for the good of the world just as much as any soldier on the battlefield... I wish it wasn't a case of a hangman. The hangman is barbaric. A bowl of hemlock would be far more civilised, a bowl of hemlock, a sober witness or so, sitting at hand, and a friendly voice to comfort and console.

"We shall come to that," said my uncle. "Cases of this sort get rarer — exactly as people become more tolerant and better arrangements are made. The more we civilise the less there is of this fretting and vexation and hopelessness — and meanness, out of which such crises arise. And such punishments as we award them. Things get better. When you are my age, Arnold, you will be able to realise that steadily things get better."

He shook his head sadly at his newspaper and seemed to hesitate whether he would read it again.

No, he had had enough newspaper for the day. He got up absent-mindedly, found the sideboard attractive, and helped himself to a second kipper...

It was his favourite contention that he had never in the whole course of his experience as a magistrate tried a really bad man or woman, but only ignorant creatures, morally dense and hopelessly muddled. I realise now his utter inconsistency. All his professional theology was based upon the doctrine of a fall, and daily he denied it. What was sin? Sin shrank before civilisation. There may have been real wicked sins in the past, but such weeds had been kept under so long that now they were very rare, very rare indeed. All his practical and informal teaching was permeated by the idea not of sin but of inadvertent error. He did not preach therefore. It was so much better to explain.

He taught me not to be afraid of life. To walk fearlessly and even carelessly round the darkest corner. To tell the truth and shame the devil. To pay the sum demanded without haggling or asking questions. One might be cheated now and then or meet here and there

with brutality, but on the whole if one trusted people, if one trusted oneself to people, one was not betrayed. Just as one couldn't be bitten by a dog or kicked by a horse unless one threatened or startled it. Or betrayed a provocative distrust and an inviting fear. So long as your movements explain themselves even a dog will not bite you. If you had argued that there were not only dogs in the world but tigers and wolves, he would have answered that in a civilised world one so rarely met the latter that they could be ignored. We lived in a civilised world that grew in civilisation daily. For all practical purposes things ignored were things exterminated. Accidents happen in life and there may be moral as well as material accidents, but there were enough honest people about and enough simple goodwill for us to disregard these adverse chances and walk about unarmed. He thought a man who carried weapons upon him either a bully or a coward. He disliked precautions of every sort against one's fellow creatures. So he hated Cash Registers. And every sort of spying upon people. And he hated hiding things from people and all misleading tricks. He thought every secret a darkening of life and any lie a sin.

Human beings are good unless they are pressed or vexed or deluded or starved or startled or scared. Men really are brothers. Getting this explained and believed, and above all believing and acting upon it oneself, was what my dear uncle meant by civilisation. When at last all the world was civilised everyone would be happy.

And thanks to his teaching and his candid confident example, I became, what I hope I still am, in spite of the frightful adventures that have happened to me and the dark streaks of fear and baseness that have been revealed in my composition, an essentially civilised man.

Little did I hear of the wars and social conflicts that loomed over us, in these golden Victorian days among the Wiltshire hills. The latest great war had been the Franco-German war, of which the animosities, my uncle said, were dying down year by year. That Germany and England should ever be at war was dead against the laws of consanguinity. A man may not marry his grandmother and still less may he fight her, and our Queen was grandmother to the world in general and their Emperor William in particular.

Revolutions were even remoter than wars. Socialism my uncle

taught me was a most wholesome corrective to a certain hardness, a certain arithmetical prepossession on the part of manufacturers and business men. Due mainly to their social inexperience. So that they did the sort of things that really are not done. He gave me Ruskin's "Unto this Last" to read and afterwards "News from Nowhere" by William Morris. I agreed enthusiastically with the spirit of these books, and I looked forward with a quiet assurance to a time when everyone would understand and agree.

§ 3. THE RECTOR IS ILL AND DIES

THERE was hardly more evil in my school life than in my uncle's home. I have heard much since of the peculiar vileness of schoolboys and of the sinks of systematic vice public schools in Britain could be. Much of this talk I am convinced is exaggerated stuff and anyhow there was little or no viciousness at Imfield. We had the curiosities natural to our years and satisfied them unobtrusively, and like all boys we evoked a certain facetiousness from things that lurk coyly and provocatively beneath our social conventions. The Deity in his inscrutable wisdom has seen fit to make certain aspects of life a running commentary upon human dignity, and the youthful mind has to pass through a phase of shocked astonishment and healing laughter in its effort to grasp the universe.

Save for a few such explicable kinks and crumplings of the mind I grew up simple and clean and healthy. I acquired and hid away a fair knowledge of three languages and some science, and I attained considerable skill at cricket, learning to bat with style and vigour and to bowl balls less straightforward than they seemed. I rode a little and played the primitive tennis of those days. I grew long in the limb and fairer. Had you met me in my flannels on the way to the practice nets in Sir Willoughby Denby's park you would no more have suspected that my mother was Portuguese and Syrian with a dash of Madeira than that the remoter ancestors of the Blettsworthys had hair and tails. So completely had the assimilative power of our Blettsworthy countryside worked upon me and civilised me.

I grew to manhood clean, confident and trustful, and if I did not

look disagreeable facts in the face that was largely because in that green and tranquil part of Wiltshire there were no disagreeable facts sufficiently obtrusive to invite it. And when presently I went up to Oxford, to Lattmeer, I met with no great shock either there or on my way thither. It was my Aunt Constance who paid for me to go to Oxford and presently died and left me all her little property, subject only to a life annuity that absorbed most of the income for her Companion. From a dismayed apprehension of me, both these ladies had passed over to a real and confessed liking as I opened out in the sunshine of my uncle's care. The will was made when my father was killed in Bechuanaland and I was left a penniless orphan. He was killed in a rather intricate and never completely documented affair in which the Boer War, his disputed marriage to the daughter of a Bechuanaland notable and the mineral rights under certain lands claimed by his possible father-in-law, were involved. He failed to explain his presence within the Boer lines upon some mission connected with his always complicated but never I believe dishonourable private life and his complex inexplicable search for gold. But at the time, we believed him to have been killed for King and Country in the normal course of warfare.

That Boer War left no scars upon my boyish mind. It was certainly the most civilised war in all history, fought with restraint and frequent chivalry, a white man's war, which ended in mutual respect and a general shaking of hands. Most of us must be orphaned sooner or later, and to have had a father one had long forgotten dying, as we supposed, a hero's death in a fair fight, was as satisfactory a way of realising that customary bereavement as I can imagine.

Nor did the passing of the great Queen Victoria throw any permanent shadow upon my mind. It had the effect of a stupendous epoch and I was a little surprised to find *Punch* and the Established Church still going on after it. But they did go on; gradually one realised that most things were going on, with a widowed air indeed but not hopelessly widowed; King Edward reigned in her stead, reformed but still amiable, and one's sense of the stability of things was if anything strengthened by her demise.

My life at Lattmeer confirmed my faith in the civilisation of the

universe. I felt I was not only safe but privileged. I took to the water and rowed number four in the college boat. I swam with distinction. I anointed my hair and parted it in the middle. I adorned my person gaily. I had a knitted waistcoat of purple with lines of primrose yellow that few excelled. I learnt to distinguish one wine from another. I formed friendships and one or two were confidential and exalted; I fell in love with the daughter of a tobacconist, a widow who kept a shop in the street that leads from the back lane of Lattmeer towards Johns. I even acquired the small amount of classical learning needed for a special degree. And I shared without pre-eminence in the activities of the O.U.D.S.

I had every reason to be happy in those days and I look back to them now as a prisoner for life might look back upon a summer's holiday in his free unchallenged past. The bequest of my aunt's small but by no means contemptible fortune relieved me of those wordly forebodings that oppress the dawn of manhood for the majority of young men. I sustained the death of her former Companion, which presently released the entire income for my use, with a manly fortitude, and prepared to take my place in the scheme of God's indulgences with an easy confidence in their continuation. I had no suspicion that all this happiness and hope was destined to be only a bright foil for the series of dark experiences that was now descending upon me.

The first great shadow that fell upon my young life was the deaths in rapid succession of my aunt and uncle. My uncle was the first to be evidently ailing and the last of the two to die. The exact nature of his disease I do not know nor was it I think ever clearly known. The professional training and organisation of English doctors conduce rather to their dignity, comfort and orderly behaviour than to any great skill in diagnosis, and the appendix, kidneys, liver, spleen, stomach, sympathetic system, musculature and obscure internal infections were mentioned without any compromising exactitude by the medical man in attendance as being among other possible causes of his discomfort and disease. The ultimate certificate alleged cardiac failure following a cold. No specialists were summoned, perhaps because too many would have been involved and their aggregate mileage beyond my uncle's means. Treatment at that distance from

London was largely determined by the doctor's memory, such as it was, of his own and other treatment in apparently similar cases, and by the current resources of the local pharmacy.

My uncle supported considerable suffering with courage and a sustaining hopefulness. He was greatly touched by the fact that on one occasion when he was in pain the doctor responded to a call in the small hours, getting up from a warm bed and coming no less than two miles through the rain, and he was sincerely apologetic for the obscurity of his malady, and the bad hours it kept. I think he felt that he was being a little disingenuous and putting an honest friend in a difficult position not to have one simple definable daytime complaint. "You doctors," he said, "are the salt of the earth. What should we do without you?"

My aunt died of pneumonia following upon a chill that she neglected while nursing him, and he lay for two or three days unaware of his loss.

He believed he would pull through almost to the end. "I'm a Tough Old Bird," he repeated; and so he never gave me any last instructions about the world, and after he had realised, if ever he did fully realise the death of his wife, a kind of silence fell upon him. "Gone," he echoed dully to their tactful answer to his question where she was, and sighed: "Gone. Dorcas *gone,*" and said no more about her. He seemed to retire within himself and think. He died three nights later under the ministrations of the village nurse.

Towards the end he forgot whatever pain he felt in a light delirium. He seemed to be wandering about in his world with the God he had always served, having things made plainer than ever to him.

"The wonder of the flowers, the wonder of the stars," he whispered, "the wonder of the heart of man. Why should I doubt for a moment that all things work together for good? Why should I doubt?"

And he said suddenly, apropos of nothing: "All my life I have gone about and never marvelled how beautiful crystals and precious stones could be. Blind ingratitude. All that taken for granted. The good things taken for granted and every little necessary trial — a burthen."

A long time before he spoke again. Then he had forgotten his jewels and crystals. He was debating something with himself — with a manifest bias. “Never a burthen one cannot bear. If it seems heavy at times... No *real* injustice.”

His voice died away, but later I heard him whispering.

My last memory of him alive is of his voice in the stillness of his lamp-lit room when suddenly he mentioned my name. He must have become aware of me standing in the doorway. The windows of his bedroom were as wide open as they could be, but still he wanted more air. “Fresh air,” he repeated, “plenty of fresh air. Bring them all into the fresh air; everything into the fresh air. Then everything will be well.”

“Keep your windows open. Always keep your windows open. As wide — as wide...”

“And don’t be afraid of things, because God is behind them all, however strange.”

“Behind them all...”

His expression grew strained. Presently his eyelids drooped and he no longer regarded me, and his breathing became laboured and slower and dry and audible.

For a long time that noisy breathing went on. Never shall I forget it. It hesitated, resumed, ceased. The strained look passed. His eyes opened slowly and regarded the world calmly, but very fixedly.

I stared, waiting for him to speak, but he did not speak. Awe came upon me.

“*Uncle!*” I whispered.

The village nurse plucked at my sleeve.

In the morning when they called me to him his face was already a serene mask, with the eyes closed upon the world for ever, still kindly, but preoccupied now with things unspeakable. That ancestral marble in the nave at Salisbury is the very man. Even to the folded hands.

I had a great desire to speak to him and say much I had wanted to say, but I saw now that nothing could pass between us again any more for ever.

Never was anything more saturated with absence as his presence on that sunlit morning. I sat by the bedside and looked for a long

time at that dear mask that had been so familiar and was already so strange, and I thought ten thousand things up and down the scale of life. I was grieved at my loss and also, I remember among other things, I was meanly glad to be alive.

But slowly an unfamiliar coldness about my heart, too still and deep to be fear, began to dominate all other impressions. I tried to escape from it. I went to the window, and the sunlight on the downland turf seemed to have lost some magic gladness it had hitherto possessed. There were the familiar outhouse roofs, the grey stone wall of the yard, the paddock and the superannuated pony, the hedge and the steep rise of the hill. There they were, and they were not the same.

The coldness I had felt at the sight of my uncle's face was not less but greater, when I looked out upon that wonted scene; it was not, I perceive, a physical sensation; it was a chill not of the heart but of the soul, it was a new feeling altogether, the feeling of being alone and unsupported in a world that might prove to be something quite other than it seemed.

I turned back to my uncle with a vague sense of appealing against that change.

Again I was moved to speak to him and found I had nothing to say.

§ 4. LOVE AND OLIVE SLAUGHTER

FOR a time I went on without any fundamental change in the life I was leading. The first intimations of loneliness that had come to me at my uncle's death-bed hung about me and developed rather than faded, but I struggled to keep them out of my consciousness as he would have had me do.

I had already, after my graduation, taken modestly comfortable lodgings in the hamlet of Carew Fossetts, towards Boars Hill, on the outskirts of Oxford, and there I remained. A number of friends and acquaintances in and about the University made a social world for me, and there seemed no better place anywhere for me to go. I promised myself Long Vacations in the Alps, in Scandinavia, in

Africa and the Near East, and perhaps some sort of footing in the graver but heavier world of London, and I counted the artistic stir of Paris among my happy possibilities There I considered, after the fashion of the time, I could meet America and Russia in a diluted but sufficiently appreciable state. So on Russia itself I turned my back, it was a wilderness with a perverted alphabet and an unspeakable language, and I dismissed the bristling glories of New York, its exhilaration and its luminous exaltations, as disagreeable but avoidable fact. If people chose to go over there and be Americans and make a world of their own, I did not see why I should be interested.

I was conscious of a certain liveliness of mind and some ability, though I was never clear what sort of ability it might be, and I was very anxious to do well with my life. I was sensible of being fortunate in my lot and privileged, and I believed it was my duty to make an adequate return. This I thought I might do most agreeably by practising art in some form, and I played with such ideas as giving the world a trilogy of novels — in those days no novelist was respected who did not produce triplets — studying the art galleries of Europe after the fashion of Ruskin and recording my impressions, organising an artistic printing press to produce choice editions of meritorious works, or of turning my experience in the O.U.D.S. to account in the writing of plays. I also contemplated poetry, having some sort of epic in mind, but I found the technical ingenuities required hampered my creative impulse. I was not unmindful of the social issues of the time, and determined that a strain of moral and humanitarian purposiveness should underlie the perfect artistic expression of whatever I decided to do.

Moreover I had also been persuaded to take up the affairs of a moribund archery club as honorary secretary, with considerable success.

I discussed this question of the general disposition of my life with almost anyone who made no objection to my doing so, but particularly I talked it over with my friend Lyulph Graves, in whose company I was in the habit of taking long walks, and with Olive Slaughter, the lovely girl I have mentioned already, for whom my undergraduate admiration and friendship was fast deepening into a

great ideal love. How bright she was and fair and fine-featured! Even to-day I could recall a thousand lovely effects, did I care to pain myself by doing so. She was golden fair. She shone through the interstices of the packets of tobacco and cigarettes in the shop window like the sun through leaves. Even in my undergraduate days she would come to the door and smile at me as I hovered past whenever my various occasions took me in that direction — and it is wonderful how few of my various occasions failed to take me in that direction. She smiled with her brows and her eyes as well, and her mouth was this much short of perfect symmetry that the left side of her upper lip lifted a little more when her smile came and showed a gleam of teeth.

Opportunities recurred for brief surreptitious conversations, and in my third year they seemed to multiply. One early-closing day we met upon our bicycles near Abingdon and spent a very delightful afternoon together. We got tea in a cottage and afterwards, in an orchard which went down to the river, we kissed, atremble with the magic of forces greater than ourselves. I kissed her, I kissed the corner of her mouth where the little teeth were betrayed, and then I took her in my arms and drew her close and kissed her fine and slender neck, while her soft hair caressed my cheek. And after that we rode back together as far as we dared towards Oxford before we parted, and all the way back we said scarcely a word to each other. It seemed to me, and I thought it must seem to her, that the greatest thing in life had happened to us both.

The sunset was warm and soft and golden, and she was warm and soft and golden, and each was more wonderful than the other, and my soul was a mote in a sunbeam that shone like a star.

After that we both developed a great taste for kissing and, since I had been well brought up, I seasoned our embraces with gracious and noble interpretations. I talked between our kisses of the high aims to which our passions were to be consecrated, and all my thoughts surrounded her with protective possessiveness, as though I was a church dedicated to her and she was the holy altar therein. And so to kissing again. She kissed with such eagerness and caressed me so tenderly that only my sense of her perfect innocence restrained the ardour of my responses. And I was extremely happy.

Since my mind was filled to overflowing with her after our first sacramental act of intimacy, she became, almost in spite of my disposition to reserve, a constant presence in my talks to Lyulph Graves. He and I, after much debating of our destinies, had developed a very hopeful plan for a new sort of bookselling enterprise which was to be not only of very great educational value to the country but a source of wealth and influence to ourselves. In those days there was a considerable amount of discussion in England about the defects and enormities of the bookseller, and Blettsworthy & Graves was to be our response to these complaints. We were to appear in several towns, and ultimately in a great number of towns, as a series of shops, all coloured and decorated uniformly in an excessively recognisable art blue, and all communicating and economising and interlocking with one another. We were to do for bookselling what Boots the Cash Chemist was doing for chemists' shops. Our shops would be furnished like homes, with easy chairs and reading lamps, and our customers were to be talked to improvingly and tempted to read rather than pressed to buy. Directly it began to rain a sign would be put out: "Come in and Read until the Rain is over." And we contemplated many other such agreeable improvements on the bookshop of the time.

On our walks we would explain to each other — waiting impatiently until the other had done — how great were the advantages of our enterprise to ourselves and to mankind. We would buy in greater and greater quantities until we dominated the publishers, and we would win the respect and affection of the whole intellectual world. "We will," said Lyulph Graves, "*organise* the public mind." We would protect and stimulate good young publishing firms, and discourage and reform bad ones. I cherished the idea of an increasing critical and selective influence, embodied in a literary review, which was to have a cover of the same arresting blue as distinguished — in our forecasts — the facades of our shops. It would be a coveted honour, I decided, to contribute to this review. We gave a whole happy afternoon's walk to telling each other the people we would *not* let contribute.

We formed a company duly. We had a capital of four thousand pounds, of which each supplied half. As Graves had no money of his

own, I lent him the necessary two thousand pounds at a considerate rate of interest. I was for taking no interest at all, but Graves, who was the soul of honour in money matters, overruled me. We appointed ourselves managing directors with a salary each of five hundred pounds a year, so that I found my private income increased rather than diminished by these commitments. We decided to open our first shop in Oxford. We secured a long lease of decaying, ramshackle but commodious premises between a butcher's shop and an undertaker, upon advantageous terms, and we had the whole house practically reconstructed with an office behind, filled with the most convenient and expensive desks and files, and extremely attractive apartments over the shop in which Graves proposed to take up his quarters so as to have everything under his eye. He insisted he must have everything under his eye; night and day he would devote himself to our great enterprise.

We had the shop front repainted three times before we were satisfied that the tone of blue we had chosen spelt success — and certainly I have rarely seen a brighter shop. Our decorator unhappily appreciated our taste so highly that he overstocked the paint we required and, in order, he said, to use it up, persuaded a tea and bun shop in the same street to adopt what we had hoped would be a strictly distinctive hue. This brought us a few inquiries for China tea and buttered scones, but no doubt it also diverted the petty cash of a few potential readers Into the path of mere physical refreshment. We took Counsel's opinion on the question of copyright in colour, but we found the legal position too uncertain for litigation.

Apart from this minor vexation, our enterprise opened out bravely. I recall that phase of my life as one of its happiest. It has always been a Blettsworthy tradition to ennoble rather than disdain business operations, and I saw Blettsworthy's Bookshops (Blettsworthy & Graves) spreading over the land and discharging as useful and honourable a task of exchange and stimulation in the mental world as Blettsworthy's Bank and its branches had discharged in the west of England. I saw myself guiding and inspiring without being too completely involved in the operations of a harder, compacter and perhaps more energetic partner. My life would be irradiated by the glowing presence of my Olive, and my

ample and increasing leisure — as the business became more and more of a machine — would be devoted to the cultivation of my undoubted aesthetic and intellectual gifts so soon as their nature could be more precisely ascertained.

I am telling here of the secret thoughts of a young man, the high and comprehensive propositions with which youth faces life. Outwardly I bore myself with a seemly modesty, always conceding superiority and advantage to others, giving way politely, never disputing the pretensions of those who might seem to compete with me. But my heart was full of self-assurance. I felt myself to be unique and distinguished and that all about me had a quality of distinction because it was about me. I felt that a path of high responsibility lay before me. Graves, too, was a wonderful associate, amazingly capable, though all the finer concepts of our enterprise came from my own brain. And glowing topaz, fire opal, with her pale lips and amethystine eyes, was my Olive Slaughter, chastely passionate, honestly mysterious, a being of profound and outstanding loveliness, who would be remembered some day in connexion with me, though after a more legitimate fashion, as la Giaconda is linked with Leonardo, a star down the ages.

I have no portrait of myself as I was in that last phase of my contentment. I doubt if my self-satisfaction and my immense ambitions betrayed themselves in my bearing. I dare say I seemed just one pleasant specimen of all the pleasantly youthful youths who went about the land in those days. At any rate, if I thought well of myself and mine, I also thought well of the whole world. And the bladder of my self-complacency was pricked soon enough and cruelly enough to avenge all who might otherwise be offended by my happiness.

I had run up to London for a few days to deal with various small matters of business. My solicitors, an old-fashioned firm I had inherited from my uncle, had gone rather beyond their professional rights in the criticism of my new enterprise and I wanted to reassure them about Graves. Moreover I had a fancy for giving Olive a necklace of green jade set in gold, that I wanted to see made exactly as I wished it. And one of the Sussex Blettsworthys vas being married, and I felt I had to attend his wedding. I had engaged myself

for four days altogether, but after I had seen my cousin married on the third of them, it occurred to me that I would dash back to Oxford a day earlier and delight Olive by my unexpected appearance in the morning. We were now formally engaged; her mother indeed had accepted and kissed me with great appreciation; I could now give Olive presents without concealment, and so I took down a very beautiful bunch of flowers to enhance my little surprise.

I went down in the evening, dining in the train, and I repaired to the new shop, of which I had a latch-key, to get my bicycle. There was no light in Graves' sitting-room above, and I concluded he was out. I entered, I suppose, noiselessly, and instead of taking my machine at once, remained hovering for some minutes, regarding the admirable and unparalleled appointments of the place. Few shops had armchairs and a big table set with books like a table in a club library. Then I perceived there was a green-shaded light in the office behind; Graves, I thought, must have forgotten it, and I went in to extinguish it.

The office was empty, but upon the writing slope of the large bureau consecrated to Graves lay an unfinished letter of several sheets. I glanced at it and saw: "My dear Arnold." Why on earth had he been writing a letter to me? When he saw me every day. I saw no harm in sitting down on his rotating armchair and reading it.

I began to read it carelessly, but soon I was reading with strained attention.

"There are some things best explained in a letter," it opened; "and particularly questions involving figures. You are always a little impatient of figures..."

What was coming?

I had spent a very disagreeable two hours in Lincoln's Inn the day before, repelling what I regarded as old-fashioned detractions of the finance of our new company. Old Ferndyke (Ferndyke, Pantoufle, Hobson, Stark, Ferndyke & Ferndyke), who had been my uncle's schoolfellow and had Blettsworthy blood on his mother's side, had suggested points of view about Graves that moved me to reply: "But, sir, that amounts to an insinuation!" And old Ferndyke had answered: "Not at all! Not at all! Still, it is customary to ask such questions."

“Needless in the case of Graves,” said I, and the old gentleman had shrugged his shoulders.

Oddly enough, I had repeated that conversation to myself several times during the night, being unusually wakeful, and it had been in my mind again after dinner in the train. Now it jumped into present reality as I read the next sentence of my partner’s letter.

“My dear Arnold,” it went on, “we are up against it.”

The gist of the letter was that we had been planning our business on too bold a scale. He wanted to put that plainly before me. In the end that might not be a bad thing, but the immediate result was embarrassment. “You remember I told you at first that it was a ten-thousand-pound job,” he had written. “It is.”

In decoration, furnishing, preliminary expenses, office stationery and directors’ salaries we had expended practically all of our available resources. We had hardly begun to buy stock. “In addition I have got an overdraft,” he wrote, “up to the limit you guaranteed.” I reflected — I had guaranteed a thousand, in an extremely tortuous and windy document. We were already paying wages to two assistants, a light porter and a stenographer for Lyulph’s correspondence, and so far we had not formally opened for sale. We took down our shutters indeed and served casual customers, but we meant to reserve the éclat of opening in style until Term had begun. Then we had to make a splash, and a splash meant more expenditure. Most of the stock we contemplated had still to be bought, and we would have to carry on some months. In Oxford particularly there is a lot of inevitable credit business to be done. The callow undergraduate buys like a duckling feeding, but not for cash. “There is nothing for it,” wrote Graves, “but to bring in fresh capital and go ahead. We can’t go back now.”

And here the writing trailed off. He would seem to have been interrupted.

I held the letter in my hand and stared into the brown shadows of my new bureau. More capital? I had it, but I was getting near what Ferndyke called my safety line. Hitherto I had risked nothing but retrenchment; this might mean a loss of the independence I found so pleasant. And the face of old Ferndyke became very vivid in the shadows, and his inquiry: “Isn’t your friend just a little wanting in,

what shall I say? — *ballast*, as well as experience?"

I looked round that very solid and impressive office. It had been very amusing to furnish it, but what if it did prove to be rather too big and heavy for the business to carry?

And was Graves, my quick-minded and inventive friend, possibly by ever so little, less solidly weighted than, for example, this wonderful letter file of ours, capable of holding forty thousand letters?

Upon these thoughts there presently crept a consciousness of various creaks and stirrings over my head. Gradually they shaped themselves into a realisation that Graves must be up there in his bedroom. I might talk all this over with him. I *would* talk it all over with him now. The flat had a private entrance on the street, and I went across to the door that led from the shop into the passage and staircase. Shop and staircase were carpeted with excellent but expensive blue Axminster, the right blue, and I was in the unlit front room before Graves knew I was there. The bedroom door was a little ajar and the gas was lit.

I was just about to speak when I was arrested by the sound of a kiss, an access of creaking and a loud sigh.

Then, amazing, incredible, came the voice of Olive Slaughter in tones that I recognised only too surely. "*Well I* "she sighed in tones of deep contentment, "if you ain't the Champion Kisser!"

Then Graves whispering and some sort of struggling readjustment.

"Stop it!" said Olive Slaughter without conviction, and then more sharply: "*Stop* it, I tell you."

At that my memory halts for a time. I do not know through what black eternities I lived in the next few seconds. The picture that follows I see from the door of the bedroom, which I have flung open. Both Graves and Olive lie upon the bed, staring at me. Graves has raised himself upon his elbow. He is in boating flannels and a silk shirt which is unbuttoned in front Olive is prone and looks over her shoulder at me, her blouse much disarranged, more of her lovely torso betrayed than I had ever seen before, and her bare arm lying across his bare chest. Each is flushed and dishevelled. Both of these faces gaze stupidly and then very gradually become intelligent and

alert. Slowly, moving with extreme slowness and keeping their eyes on me, the two of them come into a sitting position.

I seem to remember a phase in which I was asking myself what it became me to do, and then more distinctly a provisional decision that I had to be extremely violent.

Graves had considerable taste and, at the charge of our company, he had decorated the mantelshelf of his room with two slender old Chianti flasks. They were heavier than I expected because he had filled them with water to steady them. One I hurled at his head and it struck it, burst with a gulp and fell about him in water and fragments. The second I threw to miss him and it poured out its water on the bed. Then casting about for further material for violent demonstration I think I must have turned to the wash stand because I recall the bursting of the full ewer against the bedpost and how disconcerting it was to find the basin in my hand too light and flimsy for any effective use. There seems to be another gap at that point. I found Graves standing close to me with a thin red streak across his forehead that had not yet begun to bleed. His face was white and seemed luminous and his expression was an enquiring observant one. I replaced the basin almost carefully, I remember, before laying hands on him. He was no match for me in weight and muscle and I had spun him out of the bedroom and through the sitting-room and out upon the stairs in no time. And then I went back to Olive.

The divinity of my former life had vanished. In her place was a common young woman with tangled hair the colour of ripe corn, whom I had greatly desired and who was still inordinately exciting. She was struggling to replace a brooch that fastened her blouse at the neck. Her hands trembled so much she could not do it. Her expression was one of scared anger.

“You two dirty cads have put this on me,” she said. “You and your partner. Think I don’t see it? You and your engagement! Filthy sneaks!”

I stood, not heeding what she was saying — though I recalled it clearly afterwards — wondering with what marvel of frightfulness I could strike her down. I cannot trace the storm of impulses that tore at me. But this I know that suddenly I laid hold of her and began to tear the clothes off her. She fought fiercely and then became almost

passive in my hands with her eyes on mine. I stripped her body until she was next to naked and flung her on the bed. I met her eyes. I was aghast. Her hostility had gone! God knows what abysses I hung over in that moment. Then in an instant my tornado had spun round into a new quarter. “Out you go!” I said, and picked her up and bundled her after Graves.

For a moment I was in a panic at the thing that had come so near to me. I despised myself both for my desire and for my retreat from my desire.

I was at a loss what to do further and filled up the interval by striding about and shouting: “My God! My God!”

Then I remember the scared but still collected face of Graves in the doorway — he was bleeding now rather badly — saying: “Let her have her clothes, you silly fool. Everyone will say we did this together.”

That was reasonable. That was very reasonable. In spite of a strong resistance reason was returning to me. But I still had to act amazingly. I thought for a moment, then scrabbled her torn and crumpled things into an armful and flung them suddenly upon Graves. “Both of you!” I cried.

His head emerged from her dress. He gathered her clothes to him and turned about.

I heard him stumbling downstairs. “You can’t go out in the street like that,” I heard him saying.

Neither bedroom nor sitting-room seemed any longer the place for me. I remembered my bicycle was in the shop. With an effort at dignity I went down to the door that opened into the shop and closed it behind me. I was now very calm and methodical. I felt my way to the bicycle, struck a match and lit the lamp. I thought of the letter from Graves I had been reading. It had vanished and I felt I could not go upstairs again to look for it. My bunch of flowers was lying on the counter near my bicycle handles. I had forgotten those flowers. I picked them up, smelled them, and put them down. I let myself out by the front door of the shop, mounted my bicycle and set off through the lit streets, over the bridge and out upon the silent high road that leads to Carew Fossetts.

I went to bed at once and slept well for the greater part of the

night, and about dawn I was wide awake all of a sudden and asking myself what had happened to me.

I was annoyed when presently some birds began singing They prevented my thinking clearly.

§ 5. INTERLUDE WITH MRS. SLAUGHTER

I FEEL that it is important to my story that I should tell all I can of the phases through which I passed in the days following my discovery. But it is not very easy to do. My memories are extraordinarily irregular; now clear and detailed and as sharp as though they came from yesterday instead of a third of a lifetime ago; now foggy, distorted and uncertain, and now interrupted by gaps of the completest obliteration. I can find no sense nor system in this selective action of my brain. I cannot explain why I should recall my awakening that morning in the utmost detail and, if this is not being too subtle, it is in my memory of that morning that my memory of the overnight events is embedded. It is not as if I remembered directly throwing a glass flask at Graves, but as if I remembered, remembering doing so and wondering why I had done so.

Perhaps those wakeful hours are so impressed upon me because they were the first of a great series of similar states of mind. It was as if the whole universe, and I with it, had become something different, as if the self I had known hitherto had been a dream in a dream world, and this now was reality. The dawn came but it was the dawn of a new sort of day that was joyless; the rising sun poured its warm light into my room and that light had no soul. The birds sang, and presently a cart creaked in the lane and a boy whistled, but I knew that the birds were but singing-machines and the cart going on a bootless errand and the boy, for all his unawareness, dead and damned.

I bent my mind to the insoluble problem of why I had linked all the motives of my waking life to this witless and vulgar demi-vierge and to a partner who would have been a knave had he not been, before his knavery had a chance with him, a vain and self-indulgent fool. And still more was I perplexed by the problem of disentangling

the living threads of my heedless self from these two casually chosen associates.

But utterly incompatible with the main stream of my thoughts was something narrower and more powerful. Irrelevant and indifferent to the other memories was the figure of Olive Slaughter, half stripped as I had flung her on the bed, and the extraordinary expression on her face, staring at me, as her struggles died away. I despised her and in a way I hated her, but this vision had associated with it such an intensity of desire as I had never known before. What a fool I had been to break off and come away! How can I convey the relationship of these different streams of thought that were going on simultaneously and very actively in my mind? It was as if I, a young savage, sat and brooded in silence while an old gentleman discoursed of Space and Time and Predestination and Free Will.

One part of my brain was scheming and planning how I would go back to Oxford and catch Olive Slaughter tripping — and beyond that it was utterly careless of consequences — while most of the rest of me was still demanding, in forms I cannot recall, what had happened to my soul and why my world was damned. Of Graves I thought little and with contemptuous hatred. I did not think so much that he had betrayed me with Olive Slaughter as that Olive Slaughter had betrayed me with him. And not clear but very present in my mind was a profounder reproach that in some way I was the betrayer, that with both of them — I could not determine whether it was before my discovery or after — I had betrayed myself.

But what self?

Queer fluctuations occurred. I got up and flung her framed portrait which stood upon my chest of drawers into the fender. The glass cracked but did not break. Then I picked it up again and put it back. “You wait, my lady,” I said, and told her in the foulest language what I meant to do to her.

After that comes the memory of cycling down through a warm morning to Oxford. I suppose I had breakfast and talked to my landlady and got through the intervening time until half-past ten or eleven, but all that detail is effaced. I suppose too that I had some idea of what I meant to do in Oxford, but my only clear recollection is that I observed that the leaves upon the trees were beginning to

show a little red and yellow, and wondered whether that was premature autumn or only the effect of a spell of dry weather.

Graves had packed and gone. Our charwoman had found him gone when she arrived in the morning. She was puzzled, especially by the broken glass and crockery, the wet bed, which had not been slept in, and three hairpins she had found on the floor. I affected a not too extravagant interest. These things lay between her and Graves. “No doubt Mr. Graves will explain it all,” I said, “when he comes back.”

Then I seem to have made the errand-boy put up the shop shutters again, for our employees had assembled according to routine, and I paid off the staff. What stands out most distinctly among these incidents is that the flowers I had left in the shop had been put in a large ornamental bowl on the table in the centre of the book-lounge. I wondered transitorily who had done that. Paying off the staff in this way, seems to show that I had already decided to abandon the bookshops scheme completely. I suppose they departed marvelling. At this length of time I cannot remember either their faces or their names. I must have carried myself with the sort of gloomy majesty that repels enquiry or conversation. But at last they were all cleared out and, leaving the flowers in the bowl to rot, I went to the entrance and halted for a moment watching passers-by in the sunlit street before slamming the door behind me. My bicycle stood supported by its pedal against the kerb.

Suddenly I became aware of Mrs. Slaughter far down the street, hurrying towards me with gestures to arrest my attention.

I can still feel the twinge of disgust that the sight of her brought me. Disgust with a touch of dismay. I had forgotten Mrs. Slaughter.

There was my bicycle at hand but flight would have been undignified.

“Just a word with you, Mr. Blettsworthy, just a word with you,” she said confronting me.

She was shorter than Olive and with an entirely different complexion. Olive’s gold became ginger in her hair and the skin was ruddy and freckled in the extremest contrast with Olive’s warm ivory. She had small brown eyes for Olive’s blue, and she was flushed and a little out of breath. She was wearing her black shop

dress and she had, as the expression went in those days, “thrown on a bonnet” with only approximate accuracy. Possibly one of my released assistants in passing had told her of my presence. Possibly she had called earlier in the day before my return.

I considered her for a moment without speaking and then made way for her silently into the darkened shop.

She had some sort of speech prepared. She adopted a tone of friendly and reasonable remonstrance. “What’s all this ‘as come between you and Olive?” she asked. “What’s this talk about breaking off her engagement and never seeing each other any more? What ‘ave you two young people been quarrelling about? Not a word can I get from her, except that you’re angry with her and lifted your ‘and against her. Lifted your ‘and you did. And she’s crying ‘er eyes out! Crying ‘er ‘eart out! Why, I didn’t even know she was round ‘ere last night. She slipped in like a mouse and upstairs. And when I went up in the morning, there she was in bed — sobbing! She’s been crying all the night.”

In such phrases did Mrs. Slaughter open her maternal solicitudes upon me.

I spoke for the first time. “I said nothing,” I remarked, “of breaking off our engagement.”

“She said it was all over between you,” replied Mrs. Slaughter with the gesture of one who is hopelessly baffled.

I leaned against the counter with my eyes on the innocent extravagance of my flowers, which seemed now like flowers laid on the coffin of my dead imaginations. “I don’t think,” I said slowly, “that it *is* all over between us.”

“Now that’s better!” said Mrs. Slaughter warmly, and I turned my eyes upon her foolish face, discovering for the first time the infinite obtuseness of which mothers of daughters are capable.

“Then we needn’t say anything about Actions for Breach of Promise or anything like that,” she went on, crumpling up a long premeditated discussion that she had occasion for no longer, and hurling it at me in one sentence. I had thought even less of an action for Breach of Promise than I had thought of Mrs. Slaughter. I regarded the two of them together and they seemed to go very well together. “No,” I agreed, “we needn’t say anything about that.”

“Then what’s all the trouble about?” asked Mrs. Slaughter.

“That,” I answered, “lies between Olive and myself.”

Mrs. Slaughter regarded me fixedly for some seconds and her face assumed a combative expression. She folded her arms and bridled her head. “Hoity toity!” cried Mrs. Slaughter “None of my business, I suppose?”

“None, that I can see.”

“And so the happiness of my daughter is no business of mine, isn’t it? I’m to keep off the grass, eh? While you break her heart? Not it, young man, not it!”

Mrs. Slaughter paused for a reply, and I made none. I refrained from pointing out that the happiness of her daughter was not what I had in mind. My silence disconcerted her, I think, because her debating strength lay largely in repartee.

The interval lengthened. I remained polite and patient. Mrs. Slaughter modified her personality by a few swift alterations and came closer.

“Now look here, Arnold,” she said with a rich motherliness that made me happy to be an orphan. “Don’t you and Olive go flying off at nothing and make a couple of young fools of yourselves. You know you love her. You know you do. You know she thinks of nobody in the world but you I don’t know what it’s all about, but I’m pretty well sure it’s all about nothing. Some jealousy or something. Don’t I know? Haven’t I been through it all with Slaughter years ago? Wipe it out. Don’t think of it. There she is crying herself ill! Come back to her. Give her a kiss and tell her it’s all right, and in ten minutes you’ll be kissing each other again like the two pretty love-birds you are. Stop sulking. I can’t bear a sulk. Come right back and settle it, I say, and ‘ave done with it. It’s getting near lunch and I’ve got a bit of mutton on the boil. Never ‘ave you honoured my ‘umble ‘ome yet, by staying to a meal. Honour it now and ‘ave done with all this ‘uffy high and mightiness. Kiss and be friends and stay the afternoon. Take her out somewhere. That’s my remedy, Arnold. I can’t say fairer than that.”

She paused, and anxiety peeped through her geniality.

I came near the crowning insult of calling her “my good woman.” I spoke as one who has pondered. “Mrs. Slaughter,” I said, “I can

only repeat that the present trouble is between me and Olive. I want to go through it with her — alone."

Mrs. Slaughter was about to interrupt, but I raised my voice. "And not to-day. Not to-day. Sometimes things have to cool off, and sometimes they have to — ripen."

Her face fell. She was repulsed. She became aware of something she had not hitherto observed. "Why is the shop all shut up again?"

"It is shut up," I said, "for business reasons. But that again is a matter I am quite unable to discuss now."

"And Mr. Graves?"

"Isn't here."

That at any rate was the gist of our talk. She said some more things of no great moment, went through long passages *da capo*, and at last departed to the call of the boiling mutton. For a long time I seem to have stayed in the shop doing nothing.

Then I remember myself with one foot on the pavement and a leg over the saddle of my bicycle ready to mount. I am asking myself: "And now where the devil am I to go?"

§ 6. COLLISION IN THE DARK

I SAT at tea in the dark and shining dining-room of the "Spread Eagle" at Thame, which in spite of its minuteness is in the list of the Hundred Wonderful Inns. The landlord, who was wearing a bottle green suit with brass buttons, honoured me by talking to me.

"Did you ever lose yourself?" I asked him

"And find somebody else?"

"I'm looking for a certain Arnold Blettsworthy who vanished about sixteen hours ago."

"We all play hide and seek with ourselves. Was Arnold Blettsworthy a young man full of hopes and ambitions?"

I nodded.

"They go very suddenly."

"Do they ever come back?"

"In the end. Sometimes. Sooner sometimes. And sometimes not at all."

He sighed, looked out of the long low window and suddenly perceived something that needed his attention. He left me with an indistinct apology. He did not return, and after awhile I paid the maid and went off upon my bicycle towards Amersham. Shyness prevented my waiting overlong for him. I was sorry he had not resumed our conversation because the quality of his voice and his manner had attracted me and he seemed to understand my trouble. But if he had come back to me I should probably have Calked of other things.

I rode on into a great loneliness.

I rode aimlessly through the warm evening of a late summer day, turning myself eastward to keep the sunset out of my eyes. I was pursuing some recondite problem about my own identity. Was Arnold Blettsworthy no better than the name and shell of a conflicting mass of selves? I knew the Blettsworthy standards of honour and goodwill by which I ought to be steering my course through my present perplexities. I knew them perfectly. What astonished me was the stormy whirl of lust, brute lust, mingled with anger and masquerading as the justice of self-vindication, which was thrusting aside all these standards and disciplines as though they meant nothing. Who was this Angry and Lustful Egoist who struggled to take control of my will, whose one supreme image was Olive, stripped, dismayed and unresisting? Not I. Surely not I. In the old days they called him the Devil — or a devil. An interloper in possession. Does it alter him so very much to call him in the modern fashion a secondary self? But was I Arnold Blettsworthy or this other? By the side of this great complex of passion that sought to tear the direction of my acts out of my possession, another alien spirit of shame and contempt, the Cynical Observer, thrust himself into the confusion — with evil advice. “Fool you have been,” he urged, “and fool you are. Fool and weakling. Why all this indignant posturing? If you want the girl, take her, and if you hate her get square with her. But set about her so that you come to no harm. You can make it her own act and not yours. Her eyes told you your power over her. Ruin her and get away. Though why she should enslave your will like this and drag you towards shame and danger is more than I can say. That first glimpse of a warm and supple body was too much for you, my

boy. This comes of being an excitable virgin. Was it so very marvellous? Are there no others in the world? I ask you, are there no others in the world?”

Not along country lanes but through that turmoil of motives did I steer my way that afternoon. Among other forces I remember a strong craving to get myself once more into communication with the spirit of my uncle. If only I could recall his presence and his voice these evil forces would be robbed of half their power. Maybe something of him lingered still among the Wiltshire hills. But when I turned my face westward, the sunset levelled its spears of gold and thrust them into my eyes and beat me back.

Did I pray, you ask? Did I find any help in the religion of my world? Never for a moment. I realised as I had never done before that it was my uncle I believed in and not in that kindly God the light of his goodness had projected upon the indifferent sky. I never gave the God of my professions a thought in all my trouble. I could as soon have addressed myself to Sirius.

It was dark at last and my headlamp was still unlit I came round a corner and discovered within a yard of me the back of a tradesman’s van, dimly lustrous in the twilight. I thought it was moving on and made to pass it, and then its back panels foreshortened as rapidly as a conjuring trick and I realised it was turning round too late to avoid a crash. I can see now my bicycle handles moving swiftly to their impact against the big wooden wheels and feel my loss of balance and my belated impulse to turn.

To that point I remember simply and clearly, and then I vanish completely out of my own memory. Probably I went over and was hit by the van. There is no record. Certainly I was stunned. But it is queer I do not remember anything up to the instant of being stunned. The light goes out, so to speak, while I am still only just coming into touch with the wheels and side of the van.

§ 7. MR. BLETTSWORTHY FORGETS HIMSELF ALTOGETHER

MY explicit personal narrative must give place here to a vague and

circumstantial one. Of the events of six weeks there is nothing but blankness in my record. I have never been able to find out what became of my bicycle nor how I reached Oxford. I did get back to my lodgings in Carew Fossetts late that night, in a cab and with my head bound up and properly dressed.

I seem to have loitered about Oxford for a week or even longer. I attended very incompetently to my business affairs. I learnt that Graves had availed himself of his guaranteed overdraft to the utmost and had accepted a post with a trading company on the Gold Coast I think he wrote me a letter promising reparation and repayment and expressing some regret. Probably he did, but I doubt if the document survives. I do not seem to have let Mr. Ferndyke know of my business betrayals and distresses. I suppose it would have been too great a come-down for me after my recent posturings of assurance. Instead I took a shabby little Oxford solicitor, chiefly concerned with the affairs of the betting touts who lie in wait for undergraduate sportsmen and forbidden minors, into my confidence, and made some very rash and disadvantageous dispositions of the assets of our company. All this has been quite effaced from my mind. I seem to have made two and perhaps more efforts to see Olive Slaughter alone, but she may have told her mother she was afraid of me, and anyhow these tentatives came to nothing. A formidable bandage over one eye may have detracted from the natural innocence of my appearance. I think somehow that I gave way to violent fits of rage, but I doubt if I did that in the presence of other people. There is the shadow of a memory to that effect There was never any action for Breach of Promise.

Nobody knew exactly how and when I left Oxford. I went my lone way and was only missed by my landlady. My debt for my apartment was settled up afterwards by Mr. Ferndyke and he collected my effects. My movements for three weeks are untraceable. At the end of that time I was found wandering along a back street in the outskirts of Norwich. I was found at three o'clock in the morning by a policeman. I was mud-stained, hatless and penniless and in a high fever. I gather I had been drinking hard and taking drugs and I had evidently been in low company. I smelt strongly of ether. I had completely forgotten my name and who I was, and there were no

papers on me to establish my identity. From the police station they sent me to the workhouse infirmary, and there an intelligent nurse noting that my clothes were tailor made, looked in the inner pocket and found the Oxford tailor's label with my name and college on it, and through that narrow channel reopened communications with my lost and forgotten circumstances. Meanwhile I remained in bed, not answering to my name, suffering from an illness and too apathetic to make an easy recovery.

A new consciousness gathered itself together slowly but surely. There is no definite movement of its beginning. I have a vague impression of being removed to a paying ward and made more comfortable, and of being pleased to hear that Mr. Ferndyke was to come and see me there. I remembered his name as of an amiable person while my own still eluded me. My first intimation of returning vitality was a wave of aversion from my particular nurse, a chattering creature, with meagre flaxen hair, very hostile to two men whose names she reiterated endlessly in an exasperating refrain, "Hall Dane "and "Hall Caine," as she went about her business. Hall Caine was, I realised, the great romancer, and one of his heroines, Gloria Storm, had given her umbrage by being represented as a passion-torn nurse; Hall Dane emerged with greater difficulty as Lord Haldane, who had made some changes in the status of the army nurse. I lay and hated her, and suddenly recalled a visit of Lord Haldane to the Union. And that brought back some phrases of a speech by Lyulph Graves, Lyulph Graves rising up from the seat next to mine.

I was Arnold Blettsworthy of Lattmeer! The memories returned like a reassembling school. They got into their places, nodding, shouting out names, and calling to one another...

Came old Ferndyke a day later, rosy and spectacled and solicitous. His face, round and clean-shaven, enlarges in my recollections, becomes more than life-size, more than individual.

It is as though I saw him through a big lens. A face as kindly as my uncle's, but with a worldliness my uncle's never betrayed. A fold above one eyelid droops a little and makes his rimless glasses seem a trifle askew. His hair just touched with grey over one ear is as smooth and neat as the fur of a cat. He watches me as he talks, like one accustomed to difficult dealings with men.

“Neurasthenia,” he says assuringly. “A run of mischances. It might happen to anyone. You just went down. There’s nothing to regret or be ashamed of.”

He seemed to consult his pink left hand. “I could tell you things about my own start in life,” he intimated with the effect of a daring confidence. “But it just happened that luck didn’t conspire against me. ‘The ample proposition that hope makes’... In some form, my dear Mr. Blettsworthy, we all go through it. But usually — less violently. You were taken by surprise. Nothing for us that I can see but to pull ourselves together and go on living according to our best traditions and our true selves.”

“I want that,” I said.

“I’d like your instructions. What are we going to do about it all?”

“If you’d advise, sir,” I submitted.

“Precisely,” he accepted. “Now, first, don’t bother about the mess at Oxford. Leave us to clear up all that. That can all be settled. Mr. Graves and the overdraft *gone*. Write that off. The particular bad end he will come to is for God to decide. The other entanglement — well, the mother is not unreasonable, particularly now she thinks you are insolvent. Don’t worry about these things. But for the present you are cut off from your roots. You are very much in the air. You will feel that life is very empty and aimless if you let yourself drift back to Oxford or London. *Ergo*, don’t drift back to Oxford or London. Get clean away and come back to England with new perspectives. Travel. I come to it, you see — *travel*. A voyage round the world. Not in great passenger liners nor in hotels de luxe, but rather more humanly. In trading steamers and on mule-back. I believe that can be very beneficial — very beneficial. See how many sorts of transport you can use between here and California, starting East. That would be interesting. And, possibly, you might even write about it.”

“Like Conrad,” I said.

“Why not?” asked Mr. Ferndyke, betraying no elation that I nibbled at his hook, and making no cavil about the probability of my writing like Conrad. “It will be a healthy life. Your nerves will recover You will get over your little illness. And I think most of the preliminary arrangements could be saved you. Romer, of Romer & Godden, the shipowners, is your cousin once removed. You met him

at some wedding, and he liked you. Their ships go here, there and everywhere, and they can put you aboard any of them, though few carry passengers, as their clerk or purser or supercargo, or what-not. They can send you to all the ends of the earth — which are endless. You can see work, you can see trade, adventure, *real* adventure, something of the Empire, much of the world. You have known the Upper Thames long enough — a rivulet for boys to splash in. Go down now to the Lower Thames which is the estuary of the whole world. Start there again. You have lost your youth and that is gone for ever. Granted! What of it, Mr Blettsworthy? Go out and find the man."

CHAPTER THE SECOND

Tells how Mr. Blettsworthy put out to Sea and of his Voyage and how he was Shipwrecked and left on a Derelict Ship and how Savages appeared and captured him.

§ 1. MR BLETTSWORTHY CHOOSES A SHIP

IN the presence of Mr. Ferndyke I could be almost the Blettsworthy I had been before my disillusionment, but when after a second interview in London in which his suggestion was more fully developed and accepted, I went out from his office across the pleasant spaces of Lincoln's Inn into the busy gully of Chancery Lane, I felt a very insecure and uncertain being indeed, with a desolating need of reassurance. The echoes of hard laughter and foul memories clung to me from my days of anonymous vice, and I had learnt something of the meanness of trusted fellow-creatures, and something also of the vile cellars in my own foundations. Mr. Ferndyke, on this second occasion, had given me exactly twenty minutes of his time, glanced up at his clock and bowed me out. He was very helpful, but he was a transitory helper. I wanted a Friend. I wanted a Friend who would listen unendingly and with comforting interpretations to my personal exposition of my perplexities.

"The sea! The round world! Mankind!" Fine words they were, but I wished I had made a better response, wished I had been able to make a better response.

For example I might have said; "Right you are, sir. Trust a Blettsworthy to make good."

Queer how one can think of saying to a man things one could never possibly say to him.

I liked young Romer, who was not a dozen years my senior, and he too gave me all the help he could in the time at his disposal. In his case that was nearly half a day. He talked of ships that were going here and there, and their reputations and merits. Should he give me letters of introduction to people at the ports of call? Mostly they would be business correspondents, but some I might find pleasant He

fingered a list Would I like to go to Manaos right up the Amazons? That I could do quite soon. An interesting line would be the Canaries, and then across to Brazil and down to Rio. Or — yes — we could skip the Canaries. Or I could go East. A big consignment of stoppered bottles and cheap sewing machines, celluloid dolls, brass images, paraffin lamps and cotton thread, patent medicines, infant food and German clocks were going to Burmah. What of Burmah? Would I like to look at an Atlas in his anteroom for a bit, with his list before me?

It was heartening, it gave me a fine sense of mastery to take the whole world and peruse it like a bill of fare.

In the end we settled on the *Golden Lion*, bound in the first instance for Pernambuco and Rio.

§ 2. MR. BLETTSWORTHY PUTS OUT TO SEA

HOW many thousands of men must have shared with me the delusion of enlargement I experienced as I stood on the quivering deck of the *Golden Lion* and watched the shores of Kent and Essex gliding past me and reefing themselves up towards the London I had left behind! It seemed to me that evening that I was passing out from a little life to freedom and adventure, and that the man I was going to find was bound to be all the better for the taste of salt in the search.

The vast, low, crowded realms of the docks on either hand, where houses, inns and churches appear to float on the water amongst ships and barges, had gone; where Tilbury's ferryboat pants across to Gravesend, little yellow lights popped out one by one and soon multiplied abundantly, and now the great city itself was no more than a fuliginous smear beneath the afterglow, and the flats of Canvey Island were streaming by on one hand and the low soft hills of Kent upon the other. The blues of twilight deepened towards darkness and Southend's glittering sea-front was in line with us, and the long pier pointed at us and then turned its aim towards London. The Kentish watering-places, mere stains of illumination upon the selvage of the night, drifted by and passed away. Vivid eyes of light, yellow and red, that winked out and returned and winked out again in significant

rhythm, and sweeping beams of whiteness, guided our outward course, closed in behind us and receded and sank, and at last, save for a remote uncommunicative musing ship or so, lit without regard to us, lit egotistically for its own protection, we were alone and at sea.

And I felt that night that I had come out into something vast, whereas indeed I was for the first time in my life a prisoner.

The literature of the world, and particularly the literature of us who read English, is full of the assumption that to go to sea in a ship is to go out into the "open." But there is in truth no "open " in the world but the roads and paths in a land of kindly people. The lights and multitude are left behind, the ample space in which one can move, the events and the changing scene. Nothing remains at last but night — blank night. You go below, come up again, pace the restricted deck, feeling that you savour immensity. You turn in and sleep. The creaking dawn seeps into your darkness and makes the swinging oil-lamp smoky yellow.

You stare about you before you realise your new circumstances. You recognise your things still half unpacked. Everything is engaged in mysteriously pivoted motions and slowly changing its level towards you. The sky outside and the horizon have joined in that slow unending dance. You get up and dress staggeringly, and blunder up the gangway to the deck and clutch the rail. Water. An immeasurable quantity and extent of water about you and below, and wet and windy air above; these are the enormous and invisible walls of your still unrealised incarceration. Every prison on land has at least a door upon the world, even though that door is locked, but this prison needs no locks to enforce your complete captivity.

Mr. Ferndyke had meant well in sending me to sea. I think he had judged me very acutely, but he had no judgment about the sea. He believed by habit and tradition that to go to sea, and particularly in a ship not adapted to passengers, is in itself a lovely and exalting experience. So my uncle would have thought also. Britannia our land rules and is ruled by the waves, and the wounded soul of the Briton in trouble returns to them as a child to its mother. The sea winds search our island from end to end, and it is the peculiar blessedness of England never to be a hundred miles from the redeeming waters.

All of us Blettsworthys, it is understood, revert to the sea by instinct. Directly we get our sea legs we are happy and at home. I did my best to feel happy and at home, but that morning my sea legs had still to mature. Yet I clung to the rail and waved my head from side to side like a sea dog, and hummed the refrain of a nautical song — the only nautical song I knew. I can still recall the words, because suddenly I became aware of their peculiar incongruity to my circumstances, and broke off in mid-refrain.

"See there she stands and waves her hands to Jack at sea,
And every day while I'm away she'll watch for me.
A sailor's lass, a sailor's star should be.
Ye ho, my lads, heave ho!"

I was crooning that extremely inappropriate song to keep my doubts off. Already there were doubts. I must be in the key of my shipmates whom I knew from every writer in our language, were specially, distinctively and even extravagantly, *men;* salted men; hard and tough upon the exterior no doubt, but tender and delicate beyond description at the core. A certain ungraciousness in the captain's overnight reception of me, a certain vileness and violence in his diction — he had interfered to contradict the mate as the ship had manoeuvred down the river, were merely the superficial roughness on the rind of this precious human fruit.

Our wake trailed away like an ineffective story and lost itself behind, and our smoke streamed far to leeward. Someone was partly visible at the wheel in the little house upon the bridge, and there was a remote head and back forward; otherwise I could see no shipmates at all. Swaying and tumbling water, a greyish-blue sky and nothing but ourselves.

This, with a few variations of sky and wave, was, I reflected, the appearance of three-quarters of the globe. This was the normal scenery of the planet Earth. Landscape was the exception. It was well to remember that. The poor crowded souls ashore were turning their backs on three-quarters of our world. I felt a moral disapproval of

such behaviour.

I did my best to appreciate the honest manliness of the five fellow-creatures who shared this detached fragment of man's world with me. For five souls was now for an indefinite time the full tale of my kind. Of the rest of the population of the ship, with the exception of Vett, our deft little steward, I saw hardly anything before our landing at Pernambuco.

A glimpse of a stoker taking the air or of three or four men engaged upon some incomprehensible job under the direction of the second officer, or the sound of a concertina laboriously acquiring and never achieving a music-hall tune and suffering sudden and apparently violent extinctions, and small knots of men forward sitting about on a fine evening or so, gossiping and sewing and the like, were all the reminders I had of the lower classes in our little sample of human society. Between them and ourselves a great gulf was fixed. Their motives, it was understood, were not our motives, nor their thoughts our thoughts. We six were of a finer clay and led a higher life. We spoke to them sparingly and distantly. It was as if some intense quarrel was insecurely battened down and might at any time flare up again should that tension be relaxed. As I went about amidships, I could feel that the black entrance of the forecastle was watching me and judging me shrewdly, and I was not in the vein just then to like being watched and judged.

No doubt my peculiar state of mind made me a hypercritical and difficult companion for these five on whom my company had been imposed. Upon my sanguine youth and inexperience, which had rushed out upon the world with the most generous interpretations, had fallen quenching disappointment and disillusionment. I had bruised and crippled my capacity for accepting my fellow-creatures. I had lost confidence with them now, I was distrustful and a little afraid of them. I tried not to quail or retreat within myself, but I was not at my ease with them, and so my first attempts at cordiality and fellowship had a real and manifest artificiality. And from the first, no doubt because of faults in my bearing and accent and conduct, and, possibly also through some grievance about having me thrust upon him, the Old Man took a grudge against me.

He was a sturdy, square-faced, ginger-haired individual, with

sandy eyelashes and a bitter mouth. His little grey-green eyes regarded me poisonously.

"Third time I've had a bastard passenger on this blasted supercargo stunt," he said, when Midborough, the second officer to whose care young Romer had committed me at the dock, introduced me to him. And he turned away and took no further notice of me.

His second attention was also indirect. "Vett," I heard him bawling, just as my thoughts were turning to coffee — Vett was the steward. "Have you called our extra super-*gentleman*?"

More than a little disconcerted by these preliminaries, I set myself to the job of developing my new relationships as pleasantly as possible. Everything plainly turned on the captain. The engineer, by all rights and traditions, ought to have been a Scotsman, but instead he was a huge, dark, curly-headed, strongly Semitic type, with a dropping lower lip and an accent he seemed to have baled up from the lower Thames. The first officer was a thin, small, preoccupied, greyish individual, with a gift for setting sententious remarks in wide stretches of silence. He picked his teeth a great deal, and agreed with the captain in everything, even before the captain had finished saying it. Midborough, the second officer, had a Nordic fairness, boninness and pallor, and bore himself discreetly towards the captain, a discretion that verged on panic in the case of Rudge, the youthful third officer. Seeing how dominant the captain was, I made the mistake of addressing myself too frequently and too exclusively to him, for, like royalty, a captain is not supposed to be led to his topics, but to choose them. And sheer dread of my own terror may have deprived my manner of deference. I should have waited to see how the others spoke to him and imitated them.

Moreover, since I was a very young man with little knowledge of the world beyond Wiltshire and Oxford, for my unfortunate lapse into vicious living was already banished from my mind, I had, if I was to talk at all, to talk about myself and Oxford affairs or the little I knew of books and sports and plays. Or about the Blettsworthys. My idea was to make myself known to my companions and to provoke similar confidences, but I quite see now that much that I said may have struck them as limited and egotistical.

"Have you ever gone in for archery, Captain?" I asked.

The captain paused in his eating for a moment and then made a sound that was partly a short, sharp bite and partly the word "*What?*"

"Archery," I said.

The captain put down his knife and fork, and regarded me very earnestly. That pause, which I began to feel was in some obscure way interrogative, lengthened.

The mate broke the spell. "It does actually occur," he said. "Toxoffery, they call it. I've seen 'em at it at Folkestone. Missing great targets like the behind of an out-size wash-basket. You'd wonder how they could do it."

"It's great fun," I said, "with a green lawn and a sunny day."

"If you've nothing else to do, possibly," said the engineer.

"Brings back Robin Hood and his merry men," I elaborated, "Old England and the golden age. The grey goose-shaft, and all that." I changed to reminiscence. "One or two of the dons' wives shoot uncommonly well."

No one had anything further to say about archery, and another long pause ensued. I was about to ask the captain whether he had ever gone in for amateur theatricals when he himself broke the silence by putting some highly technical question about the cargo to the mate. I listened attentively in the hope of making some contribution, but if the topic had been chosen specially to exclude me it could not have silenced me more effectively.

"What," I asked at one point, "are these bulkheads you speak of?"

Nobody answered me.

I struggled for some days to make my poor conversational stuff acceptable and to work my way to a reasonable intimacy, but gradually my heart failed me. These five men did not want me on any terms I could make; they did not want me at all. My first clumsy tentatives faded and died out. I became a more and more passive listener to the sagacities of the captain, the sentiments of the mate, the conversation of the engineer, and the acquiescences of the two junior officers. But they had conceived now so profound a contempt for me and such a distaste for my company that they would not let me efface myself, but set themselves to devise little sarcasms, allusions and annoyances that would hurt and embarrass me. The engineer invented a brilliant insult. At first he had called me

“Mister,” now by imperceptible degrees he dropped the second syllable and at last addressed me plainly as “Miss.” The captain, in his more genial moments, and generally these came towards the end of a meal, developed a strain of lewdness in his talk that was honestly relished and echoed by the engineer and deferentially applauded by the younger men. The mate became wood and gave no sign of either approval or disapproval. “I’m afraid we shock you, Miss Blettsworthy,” said the engineer as a refrain to every “good one.” I scored a point by an effort.

“Not at all,” said I to the hundredth repetition of the engineer’s refrain. “I used to know a dirty old man in a pot-house at Oxford who could have given the captain points and a beating.”

That got a round of silence. “Don’t you believe it,” said the mate belatedly, and as though taking soundings.

“This old fellow had a rare stock of limericks,” I said. “And they *were* limericks.”

I had heard a few things in my time and I trotted out one or two of the fouler samples. No one dared laugh, and the captain glared at me over his serviette.

“I didn’t think it of you, Miss,” said the engineer reproachfully.

Then the captain struck to crush.

“If you can’t keep a clean mouth at table, Miss Blettsworthy, you’ll have to take your meals in your cabin,” he said, and I found no retort that seemed adequate. “Thought you liked such verses,” I said, and added for the first time the respectful “sir “used by my companions. The captain grunted dreadfully.

But after that his discourse sweetened considerably, and the engineer’s fear of shocking me vanished from our talk. Nevertheless, I felt that my presence carried with it a miasma of hostility and distrust, and perhaps even more social embarrassment than before. Between meals I was forced to sulk alone or sleep. Did I drift towards a shipmate, he edged away. The days in that spell of good weather and steady steaming seemed measureless and made their slow retreat through labyrinths of twilight into interminable nights. The clock fell asleep and did not stir. The junior officers played some game of cards which elated or depressed them alternately. The engineer read endlessly, and the mate gave himself up to lethargy.

The captain was usually invisible.

I borrowed a book or so from the engineer, who lent them reluctantly, volume by volume, and with stringent stipulations for their proper treatment and return. He lent me a very worn volume of Helmholtz' "History of the World," dealing with the Tatar dynasties and China, a book on "How to Ski," and Stanley's account of the rescue of Livingstone. He was engaged himself chiefly with Kirke's "Text-Book of Physiology," trying to master the structure of the brain from the descriptions and plates, and becoming perplexed and cross about it. I did my best to get some talk going with him apropos of these books, but I had nothing to offer but comments, and he wanted nothing but facts.

He bought all his books, he told me, second-hand, from barrows in the London street markets and he never gave more than a shilling for one. He liked a *big* book about actual things. He contemned fiction as deceptive. He read with his loose mouth open and generally scratched his cheek as he read. What he read seemed to pass deeply into him, none remained upon the surface and he resented any probing questions. He would stare in a startled way when questioned and answer defensively or evasively. He insisted that I should finish each book he lent me before I began another. The Tatars ended me. I promised myself that at Pernambuco I would buy every novel in English or French that I could discover.

More and more did I long for Pernambuco. The slow days followed one another with minor variations. Sometimes the waves increased and sometimes they diminished under the variable wind, there were several days of greasy swell with no wind at all, the engines pounded, the ship quivered and creaked, everything was slightly querulous, the deck seemed always seeking a satisfactory angle with the horizon and perpetually failing in the attempt, the man with the concertina forward made his desperate efforts to get through the tune that was always suppressed, and never for a moment could I efface my consciousness of that same endless, inhuman wilderness of water that pent us in.

The stars I found more companionable than anything else in my restricted world, and I waited for them to appear as one waits for the return of a friend. They grew brighter, they seemed to glow larger as

we slanted southward into the tropics. The Milky Way became a more and more lively smear of glittering powder. I was glad I knew some of the stars by name. Orion and Sirius I was sure of, Canopus (which ascended upon me), Arcturus and Rigel in the corner of Orion I guessed at with some confidence. Friends of mine and I nodded to them. The Great Bear followed the Pole Star down and down; I began to look out for the Southern Cross, and was disappointed and incredulous when I found it. Presently a crescent moon crept out of the sunset night after night and became arrogant as it grew and spread a luminous blue over its conquests and banished all but the brightest stars out of the invaded heaven. I would stay on deck far into the night, sky-gazing, and sleep far into the day, for the night was less tedious and lonely and perplexing.

Gradually over the raw distresses of my mind spread a defensive surface of Byronic scorn that for a time protected me greatly. I was a scorner of filth, a friend of the best stars. I held on to rails and stanchions less and folded my arms more. For a nervous readiness to respect I substituted a cold taciturnity. I brooded over my disappointments and my vices and found a sombre consolation now in both. Little they knew who called me *Miss* Blettsworthy! But, oh God! The length of those days and the hopes I had of Pernambuco!

§ 3. LANDFALL AT PERNAMBUCO

AS we came in to Recife, which is the real name of the place people call Pernambuco, as we came into the outer harbour, I had that same delusion of imminent emancipation I had felt when I steamed down the Thames from London. The town seemed to open itself out to me in a wide and various invitation. We had emerged from the lonely wilderness and every quay and street and building spread like a limitless offer of escape from this vibrating shuttle of salted and rusting iron in which we had crossed the Atlantic. The forecastle deck was a bunch of expectant figures and their postures expressed the same surmise of release. I tell of these things now with understanding, but at the time I was quite carried away by the general illusion. I felt so glad, I could have been gay with the captain had his

bearing invited gaiety. I forgave the engineer with all my heart, in my heart. It was difficult to keep my arms folded and remain even outwardly Byronic.

But those who give themselves into captivity to the sea do not get away from it again so easily. Each one of that smiling multitude of houses which seems to offer itself to the incoming voyager is in reality furnished with locks and bars against him. Such doors as stand open upon the quays are traps for his thirsty and lusting and lonely soul. The custom house will scrutinize his poor luggage and seem to motion him onward to the amplitude of the new land, but behind the customs and the port authorities there is drawn a cordon of those who prey upon his immediate needs and weaknesses. He is offered transparently false love, false fellowship and stale and meretricious fun. Should he by a great effort of restraint disentangle himself from these, he will wander on to streets of shops displaying things it is useless for him to buy and among people with habits, ways of thought and language altogether different from his own. Tramways and omnibuses invite him to come aboard and visit suburbs and quarters with unheard-of names, that, when he reaches them, do not want him to the ultimate degree.

Hope dies only with life, for life and hope are the same, and so the sailorman goes on his way through the town still looking for his share in the ease and freedom of human intercourse that seems to flow so naturally and yet so inaccessibly about him. To be paid off is only an intensification of his essential homelessness on shore, for now there is not even the return to the ship at the back of his mind. When I saw my shipmates ready to go ashore for the night and all more or less togged-up for the adventure, it seemed to me highly improbable that we should ever reassemble again. But we reassembled surely enough. The captain changed into a genteel person with a high-low felt hat and a pinch of handkerchief conscientiously displayed at his breast pocket; the engineer was wonderful in ginger cloth and a tie of a promiscuous splendour. Midborough and Rudge became incredibly common in dark blue suits and bowlers and departed like twins; the men were similarly transfigured. “See how nice we are!” cried these earnest efforts at personal decoration. “Have you no welcome here for such

gentlemen?" So one after the other, sons of hope, we turned our backs on the *Golden Lion* and went ashore, and the chief officer left in charge of the ship watched us go. Pernambuco showed no excessive dismay nor pleasure at our invasion.

Would any lucky one of us penetrate those intricate defences and at last get through to humanity? The town lit up as we went ashore, but it did so indifferently with no air of reception and with still less endorsement of our expectation.

I have seen other ports and harbours but that going ashore at Pernambuco still sticks in my memory as the quintessence of my impression of the sea. The sea is part of the great outside and it is a cant that would incorporate its vast desolation with the human world. We detach our floating packages and thrust them across the watery wilderness and upon them these marginal men are obliged to go, because they have lost their foothold on the dry land.

Perhaps my memories are coloured by the mood of disillusionment which was creeping up to an absolute empire over me, perhaps the obvious delight of nearly everyone on the *Golden Lion* to get away from the rest has become exaggerated and generalized since I first observed it. I admit the steady deepening of the pessimistic hues of my mind in those days. Nevertheless, even now I find myself still thinking of the sailor as a man trying perpetually and most desperately to recover his terrestrial rooting, staying ashore whenever he gets a chance, sticking there until hunger and his inadaptability to any other sort of earning push him back with no excessive gentleness towards the sea again. There he must live once more a crowded prisoner at the end — fore or aft, according to his degree — of one of these pounding and floundering, water-washed iron cases loaded with goods he will never consume, and commodities the very use of which is for the most part unknown to him. And each time he draws near to land again, his hopes of getting back to the main of human life revive.

I went off into the town alone.

Young Romer had given me a letter to a business correspondent with whom the firm cultivated friendly relations. He was a Dane but he was understood to talk English. That night he had left his office and gone home and the place was locked-up so that I put up at an

hotel without advice and was thrown back upon my own resources for amusement. I found very little. I dined in a restaurant kept by a Swiss from Ticino, who talked some English and helped me to order my food and afterwards I went back to wandering in the streets. They were either wide and well-lit or murderously dark and narrow. I tried to go into a theatre, but I suppose I was too late and anyhow, for some reason, they would not let me in. I could not understand their explanations. I would have gone with one of the prostitutes who solicited me for the mere sake of human company, could I have found one who had more than a few gross words of English. As I stood at last, tired and defeated, on the entrance of my hotel before turning in, I saw Midborough and Rudge pass by, their faces were flushed and eager and they were in the company of a huge negro who discoursed as he went. So they at least had found a guide and were going somewhere. I was disposed to follow them but I did not do so.

I remember I sat on my bed for a long time before I undressed. "Am I a lost soul?" I asked myself and "Do I hate mankind? What is wrong with my world or me that amidst a quarter of a million human beings I am sitting here, solitary in body and soul?"

§ 4. VILLA ELSENEUR

MR. ANDERSEN, to whom I presented my letter next day, did little to help me in my perplexity, though he showed the most hospitable will imaginable. His English was abundant and enthusiastic rather than good — he had acquired it mainly by reading — and unless one was to interrupt him constantly, one had to let very much of it go past one. Since he was evidently disconcerted by the want of comprehension I was obliged to betray ever and again, I had to pretend to a slight deafness. But that brought to light that he had begun life as a medical student in Copenhagen and was still an eager amateur doctor. We spent nearly half an hour over an examination of my ears. His verdict was that my ears in themselves were structurally perfect but that I suffered from soul deafness due to the egotistical preoccupations of youth. He then, still talking rapidly, took me out to lunch at the same Swiss restaurant at which I had dined over night. It

was a particularly good restaurant he said and no foreigners ever discovered it.

He warmed himself with some excellent Brazilian wine, a distinctly generous red wine of which I have forgotten the name, and as his temperature rose, his English became more definitely Danish with fragments of French and other Latin ingredients that I suppose were Portuguese. But it went slower and on the whole I understood it better. He explained the country to me with the animosity of an alien of dissimilar race and religion whose chief business was to cheapen local products and ship them abroad, and to sell foreign commodities to the reluctant native buyer. Yet he had married a Brazilian wife. He retailed frightful anecdotes of un-punctuality, jobbing and dishonesty and gave me an impression of a population which spent its infrequent working hours in the production of sugar and its saint's days, and other leisure in dancing, horse-racing, gambling, intoxication, adultery, homicide and the lassitudes, anxieties and conflicts arising out of such pursuits. And finally he invited me to lunch at his home outside the town, on the following day, which was Sunday, and to play tennis with his family.

His daughters, he boasted, knew English, but they knew it only to avoid it and I conversed with them and their mother in simplified yet conventional French. The mother was handsome and dark and frankly and stoutly middle-aged; the daughters were tall and handsome with flaxen hair and tawny skins and very fine dark grey eyes. They competed for me pleasantly until two young Brazilians drifted in with a flavour of proprietorship and a joyless attitude towards me. Conversation became Portuguese and rapid. The racket of one of the young Brazilians had been lent to me and I gathered he objected to the way in which I used it to pick up balls, but I considered it more comfortable not to understand what was said and went on with my scooping — but now with greater care. Everyone played tennis as badly as I did, the court was a dust court and very loose in patches and the game was full of surprises. When both the young Brazilians had lost their tempers completely, we had tea.

Mr. Andersen, who had gone away to sleep, reappeared refreshed and talked syncopated English faster than ever while Mrs. Andersen purred to me in French. The young gentlemen refused to talk or

attend to anything but Portuguese and the young ladies struck out wildly so that you never knew from moment to moment whether they were really talking Portuguese or only giving a peculiar quality to French. I talked English and French about half-half. In this way we compared our views about Wagner, Nice, the Corniche road (for some time I supposed we were discussing the Cornish coast, but that did just as well), the Monroe Doctrine, the morals of Edward the Seventh, the peculiar charm of Paris and its many resemblances to Recife, the richness of vegetation in the tropics, moths, wasps, snakes, and the newly-introduced game of bridge. At least that is my conception of what we were talking about. They may have had a different version. I was agreeable to exercise my mind again so freely after the pent-up concentration of the *Golden Lion*, but after a time I experienced a certain fatigue. My hosts, I think, experienced a similar fatigue. But fearing this fatigue might be observed and interpreted unfavourably, we all of us redoubled our conversational efforts, except for the young men who presently withdrew towards the tennis court and made signs and noises, supposed conventionally to be inappreciable by me, indicative of a desire for the company of the two daughters.

To cover their defection, Mrs. Andersen launched into a vividly interesting but nearly interminable description of something which was either the brilliancy of the South American humming birds or the splendour of the indigenous flowers or the glorious colouring of dying fish caught from tropical seas or the splendour of the Carnival decorations and costumes, or all, or any, or none of these things. But it was a very beautiful description and her gestures and intonations were charming. “Mais oui,” said I, “Mais oui.”

When at last I went, the Andersen family still battling nobly with their baser impulses, heaped invitations upon me for the next day, for the day after that, for any day, invitations I accepted with effusion in the same spirit. But the more taciturn of the two daughters injected quite a new factor into the talk by remarking quietly at the last moment and with her eyes far away: “We are yost by our selfs in the wik-days.”

I perceived it would be ungracious not to call again. I called again several times.

When I think of those odd visits to the Villa Elseneur, it is as if I thought of myself peering through curtains of dark gauze in the hope of discovering a fellow-creature who might or might not be there. The younger Andersen, by a mere intonation of her voice, had conveyed to me that mystical promise of feminine fellowship for which the soul of man hungers and thirsts perpetually. It was a promise she never redeemed, never even repeated, which probably she had never intended to convey. But it kept me alive in Recife. I called ostensibly to make a fourth at tennis with the two girls and the mother, for in the weekdays their betrothed Brazilians were about their commercial activities in the town. Andersen was by way of being an Anglomaniac and very progressive and his girls had a freedom which was still unusual in Brazil in those pre-war days. They even went about upon bicycles in the safer parts of the district, their skirts showed their ankles and their collars revealed their necks. And they conjugated a wonderful English word "flirt." With regard to the younger sister, there arose a convention that I was "son flirt" — and surely nothing could be more English than that!

I never got beyond that. I never penetrated those gauzes. On one occasion in the garden when we were alone together, it seemed to me just possible that she might have wished to be kissed but the opportunity passed before I could put her intentions to the test. She may have thought me unenterprising and unworthy of further chances. I cannot now recall with any precision what it was put that idea and that hesitation into my head. And it was hard to see what sort of triangle I should have made with her fiancé if that kiss had been given and returned. I bought her and her sister chocolates and her mother immense bunches of flowers. We whacked the tennis balls about and talked French that was at once abortive and decaying and fell back on tennis to escape the strain. We did not talk to convey anything to each other, we talked to conceal the fact that we had nothing on earth to convey. That phantom promise faded away to nothing and when the *Golden Lion* had finished its unloading and loading and was ready to put to sea, I was as prepared to go as any other of the crew.

Something I had not perceived before, something almost like an attenuated friendliness, pervaded the steamer as the sunset swallowed

up the town. It was a beautiful serene evening; our luck with the weather was holding out. I asked the second officer if he had had a good time and he said he had had a damned sight too much work and responsibility and only three nights ashore, grumbling to me quite amiably about the apathy of the mate and the uselessness of the third officer, and when I showed the engineer the books I had bought, he expressed his disapproval of such trash without any personal hostility. The mate agreed with me that Recife was the centre of a growing railway network and the third officer passed me the salt unsolicited. But the captain remained implacable.

This irritated me. He made noises with his soup at dinner and suddenly it occurred to me to make exactly similar noises with my soup. Everyone else looked startled and the captain regarded me over his soup spoon with a malignant interest that was manifestly brightly revived.

I made a prolonged, tumultuous finale to my soup. Then very calmly I put down my spoon and waited patiently and with an expression of quiet interest for the captain to finish his. He did so in a subdued manner and he was very red in the face. The mate and the engineer threw up a conversational sound screen for him and the mate also helped with a cough. Midborough was aghast, but respect mingled with the terror in the eyes that met mine.

At the time I felt I had had a brilliant inspiration, but in the doubtful hours of the night I did not feel so pleased with myself.

I had done an entirely undignified and offensive thing and I was ashamed. I hated and I despised the captain in order not to fear him and now I had brought myself down to his level. And I feared him still. I was no Blettsworthy.

§ 5. PASSAGE TO RIO

I HAVE told of these opening experiences of my voyage round the world with some particularity because I want to convey, as well as I can, the background and conditions against which my mental trouble was slowly developing. For in truth, the story I have to tell is at its core a mental case.

After the first breakdown of my will and memory, I had supposed that I had nothing more than an adverse accident to deal with and to recover from. I had accepted the view that I had merely to break with a particular set of associations in Oxford and London and begin again and all would be well, but now my doubting mind in the interminable small hours presented me with much more intricate and far-reaching interpretations of my distress.

It added much to my uneasiness that after Pernambuco the weather ceased to be uniformly benign and an increasing bodily discomfort gave an undertow of physical apprehension to the upheaval of my ideas. Blind matter joined now with humanity in the work of undermining my confidence and courage. Was I becoming sea-sick? Amidst these scoffing enemies. It was an intolerable thought. But I struggled against it in vain. I tried an amateurish Christian Science to subdue the treason of my diaphragm. Anticipating Coue I kept repeating: "I am not sea-sick. I am not sea-sick." At dinner that night I decided that I was and left the slanting table suddenly and ingloriously.

That night the storm increased and my cabin, which had been heaving and swaying and creaking more and more, seemed to lose all sense of its ancient association with the sober, solid land. It leapt and bounded, it rushed up and up, and when one was wholly reconciled to the idea of a continual uprush, then it stood on its head, reflected and went down abysmally. It lay over suddenly on its side. It pretended to be a cork-screw twisting into the waters. It pretended to be a swing-boat at a fair. It altered its mind; it was an elevator — that had broken and was falling down an endless shaft. And now it was a switchback railway coyly leading its passengers to the sickening, screaming dip. Then discomfort changed to alarm. Frightful concussions made the whole ship dance and quiver. Frothy water came into the cabin like a lost dog in search of its master, rushed about, wetted abundantly, and went out again. Everything loose in my cabin leapt hither and thither; a pair of boots departed in the custody of a wave and never returned; I twisted my wrist horribly and bruised a knee. My water bottle got free, lived dangerously and broke and left its splinters chasing madly from side to side in search of a hand or foot. Five days I had of that sort of incident. After a time

I ate, though still the sickness returned in fits. I drank hot coffee with increasing comfort and wolfed the bread that Vett brought me.

The four or five days I spent in my cabin during that storm with no one to heed me but Vett, the very intermittent steward, and one limited visit from the second officer and a few unanswerable interrogations from the engineer, have become the setting in my mind for a whole tornado of vague and cloudy perplexities that did in reality oppress me both before and after that period. I did not so much think these riddles as toss and roll and heave while they grimaced and whirled about me. I was both hungry and sick under their reiteration. Only by putting the issues disjointedly and amorphously can I convey anything of their actual values.

The broadest fact, the foundation fact so to speak, of the situation, was this, that I had started out in life with the completest confidence in myself, mankind and nature, and all that confidence was gone. I had lost all assurance in my personal character; I had become alien to and afraid of my fellow creatures and now my body was in hideous discord with the entirely inhospitable world into which it had come. Never had I dreamt of the feebleness of its powers of adjustment and self-protection when matter and chance in their incomprehensible preoccupations saw fit to turn against it. And this ill-omened, lonely and limitless voyage upon which I was going was the supreme folly of a nature essentially and hopelessly foolish. Why, why had I turned my back on my proper world? Why had I let old Ferndyke pack me off? I had been happy, or at least if I had not been exactly happy, I had fitted in.

The astonishing thing to think in that wet, heaving misery, riding my buck-jumping berth with difficulty and dodging the sacrilegious blows of my own luggage and furniture was that I had once been happy and stable. I had walked the resounding earth with firm and confident paces and laughed like a friend at the stars. I recalled the sunlit downs of Wiltshire and the evening streets of Oxford as an experience of incredible beauty, static beauty. Had it ever been real? To that world, to the life of comfortable, prosperous people in the centre and broad south of England I was adapted. I could understand their conventions, trust them, live honestly, conduct myself easily and surely among them. By merely taking a step out of that world

socially my troubles had begun. And now I was going farther and farther away from it!

Yes, but was I not abnormal in my excessive inadaptability?

I remember a swinging rhythm running through my brain, “abnormal, normal, normal, abnormal, normal?”

For instance, I was the sea-sickest thing abroad. Had any of the others qualms, uneasinesses? Had they in the past suffered like this? Did they possibly suffer now? I watched Vett narrowly. Was he really comfortable? He staggered a lot. He looked pale and wet. But he stuck to his work and brought me coffee. And while I was wallowing in this black conviction of my complete unfitness to live, were all these others or some of these others just not giving way to similar depressing forces?

Tougher perhaps.

Then this friendlessness; what was it? Had I an abnormal inability to mix? Or was I merely hyper-sensitive to a universal failing? Did any of them mix? Or were they all in truth just as utterly lonely as I — without in some way knowing it? Did they not note how little they communicated? But if they were all going about the world alone, what became of the delusion of human society? About Oxford one said “How do?” and “Hello” and had a feeling of limitless possible responses. Had that been so? Or had one simply imagined it was so? Had there ever been these possible responses? If I went back now, now that I had lost my youth, should I find Oxford and Wiltshire and friendship again?

After all, friendship in the chosen person of Lyulph Graves had turned itself round and displayed itself as hollow as love. And if all that dear world was no more than a dream, if this hideous pitch and toss amidst the seething waters was waking up from such dreams, to what was I awakening?

For some days I think I had a fever and talked ramblingly to Vett. Then with an effect of rapidity the wind abated, a blazing sun set itself to dry the decks of our little cast-iron world, the creaking and groaning of the ship resumed a more familiar rhythm, the ponderous caperings of the waves became a regular and dignified dance and wearied slowly towards a heavy swell. I found myself hungry and in courage. Vett helped me to restore a sort of order in my cabin and I

shaved a stubbly beard off very painfully, got some dried underclothes, attended to my tie and collar and went to eat.

"Come back to life again," said the engineer with something like friendship and his mouth full. "You know a bit more than you did of what the sea can do."

"You get worse than that round the Horn," said the mate. "Any time."

"Beans," Vett offered. Preserved baked beans out of a can. "Rather!" How good and filling they were!

"I had a book once," said the engineer, "that told about the force in the tides and the waves. It's something terrific. There were calculations in that book. They went a little beyond me but they were something striking. You could build a big tower and run all the trains in Europe and light almost everywhere with the force that wastes itself in one bit of a blow like that. All gone to waste. Wonderful, eh?"

"Don't you believe it," said the mate.

"You can't go against mathematics," said the engineer.

"We live on the surface of things," I said, but nobody could find a handle on that remark.

"I've seen a place near Newhaven where they tried to make use of the tides," said the third officer with an effort.

"A failure?" said the mate.

"All broken up again, sir."

"I thought so," said the mate. "What did they think they could use the tides for?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Nor them either," said the mate, with profound contempt.

The captain said nothing to that. He sat looking before him at unknown things. His face seemed whiter, harder and more viciously intent than ever. His white eyelashes masked his eyes. What, I wondered, was he thinking? "Rio," he said suddenly and with extraordinary bitterness in his voice. "*Rio.*" No one answered — and indeed what could one answer? — and he said no more. For a moment the mate regarded his colleague with an eye slightly cocked to one side and then turned his attention back to his meal.

"You'll find plenty of better men at Rio," said the engineer,

suddenly reading the captain's thoughts.

§ 6. ENGINES OUT OF TUNE

WE went into Rio and Rio pushed me and my shipmates back into the sea with no more ado than Pernambuco, and after that the *Golden Lion* smelt strongly of coffee and a mixture of rum and vegetable decay, and steamed into ill-luck and evil acts.

I was greatly depressed at our departure from Rio. There I had been even more lonely and difficult with myself than at Recife. I had not even an introduction to any people like the Andersens and so I put up alone in a second-rate hotel and entertained myself as well as I could and that was not at all well. I was astonished at the size and vigour of the place, the tropical vegetation and sunshine, the handsomeness of the great avenue — I forget its name — which is the Champs Elysées of the town, and at the endless resorts and pleasant beaches on the sea-front. It was astonishing to discover that these South Americans had watering places far jollier than Brighton or Bournemouth. They had opened a new Art Museum full of good modern pictures and I spent hours in it, and the cinema theatres, the large, good cinema theatres, were a great help to me. Those were the days when Charlie Chaplin was shown freely and abundantly without any fuss, the good old days of the cinema. The population struck me as far more prosperous and happy than our people at home. I could have been quite amused there with any congenial companion, but I was now reduced to such a condition of social ineptitude that I could scrape acquaintance with no one. I had a meretricious encounter or so of which the less said the better. How excellent and merciful a profession the courtesan's could be, were she but sustained by human respect and did she but know how to touch and console the hearts of the lonely souls who resort to her! But I could buy nothing but harsh laughter and the clumsiest assuagements of desire. I tried to drink but my Norwich adventures had left me with a vague distaste for drink. And my whole being now was crying out for friendship and intimacy. I prowled through the city's prosperity asking if this multitude which seemed so pleased and gay could really be human

and not realise my desolate need for humanity. Or was all this place no more than a collection of animated masks that looked like a friendly community? Such fancies were growing upon me.

For one thing I could not speak Portuguese. Surely there are enough barriers between man and man without these complex estrangements of language! But often I heard English spoken and twice I saw such pleasant-looking compatriots going about, a family of five people in one case and a couple of tourists whom I guessed to be newly married, that I followed them until manifestly I attracted their attention and aroused their suspicions. I followed them stupidly without inventing any way of accosting them and attaching their interest. My isolation was becoming a paralysing obsession.

And after all, I asked myself, what had I to give them? Was I, too, anything more than a mask? I had yet to find humanity not only in the world about me but within. Suppose these good-looking people had suddenly turned a glow of geniality upon me, asked me to sit down at lunch with them or go upon some excursion in their company and got me talking, what had I to tell them? What could I have done to entertain them or co-operate with them?

So presently the ship's company assembled again. We were pushed back to the seas, as the Monday morning worker goes back to his factory and the miner to his seam, because there is nowhere else to go and nothing else to do. Back we came to our clanking prison and worked our seaward way athwart the mighty harbour.

That evening "clanking prison" seemed to describe the *Golden Lion* very exactly.

"Mr. Midborough," I ventured to say to the second officer whom I found standing beside me; "this old clock has changed its tick."

He replied. "You!" he said. "You notice it too."

I went further. "Did anything happen in that storm? I fancied we were a bit out of tune even before Rio. There was a sort of catch in the beat, though nothing as bad as this."

He came a step nearer. He addressed the Brazilian hills in a low meditative voice, speaking between his teeth. "The old man is as obstinate as a bloody mule. If He says the engines will last out to Buenos Aires, it doesn't matter what the engineer says — not a bit."

"It doesn't seem to matter what the engines say," I remarked.

We both turned our backs upon Brazil and listened to the ugly melody.

"Falling to pieces. Every bump may be her last. That one? No. On she goes. That's the bent part. Hear that one! The bearings swim in oil, but oil isn't everything. And the engineer sits and reads."

I awaited further confidences.

"There were cables sent to London," he said. "The captain said one thing and the engineer another. Buenos Aires is where we have the overhaul. The captain insists. And if the weather holds, why not?"

Mr. Midborough regarded the open sea with a speculative eye. Manifestly he lacked confidence in the weather.

"There's a sort of man," he reflected, "who never learns he isn't God. Never. What he says *is*. And when what he says turns out not to be so, it's Hell and Tommy for all the world. But he keeps on being God all the same and looking for someone to vent his holy wrath upon."

§ 7. THE ENGINEER'S REVOLVER

I HAD been vaguely aware that there was trouble between the captain and the men before we went into Rio. But my intense and morbid self-preoccupation had veiled my observation. There was some sort of dispute at Rio about discipline and pay which involved a visit to the British Consulate. There was shouting in the street and a police agent was invoked. "It was pretty tough of the Old Man," Rudge had said to Midborough coming aboard; "but perhaps now we shall be happier."

No good asking questions about a remark it was not my business to overhear.

Midborough had said something about too many Dagoes.

I gave some attention to the crew and noted one or two new faces and missed a man or so. That concertina had gone ashore at Rio and never returned.

I speculated a little about the connexion between this trouble with the forecastle and the sense of tension at the dinner table. I suspect

that it was the captain's established habit of mind to be at war with his men. He was a man who found life obdurate and the only sensitive part of this obdurate system upon which he could relieve his feelings were the men. Perhaps there is a flavour of class-war between the ends of every tramp steamer and the class-war cuts both ways. But only after Rio did I get any intimation of the grim possibilities beneath those scowls and moody silences that had nipped my early endeavours at sociability so fatally.

I went to return a book on Co-operative Dairies in Denmark, with Statistical Charts and Diagrams, which the engineer had recommended for light reading, and I found him with a newly-cleaned revolver in his brawny paw and a neat row of cartridges for reloading, on the bunk beside him.

"That's heavy for a toy," I said.

"It isn't a toy," said the engineer.

"What do you want it loaded for here? — with two hundred miles of sea to anywhere or anything?"

"That's just it," said the engineer, and seemed to weigh the wisdom of further confidences. He decided against me.

"Have you read that book *through*?" he asked after a pause. "I doubt it. You skim over life, young man. You skip everything. You've what I should call the mind of a butterfly."

He paused, and seeing I was still looking at the squat blue-black weapon in his hands, he made his remark more general.

"That Oxford of yours," he said, "to my mind, turns out nothing in the world except butterflies and clothes moths. Flitting and nibbling and making little mean holes in things. No grasp to it. The place is just an insect incubatorium."

"I've read the book through."

His grunt called me a liar. "All I've got to lend you now is Robinson, Functional Diseases of the Lower Bowel. You've got a Lower Bowel of your own, but will that make you read it? No!"

"Have you tried my novels?"

"Dustyovsky wasn't so bad. The rest muck. But Dustyovsky's interesting in a way. I've figured out the roubles and kopeks in Dustyovsky in shillings and pence. Some of the stuff was twice as dear as in London and some of it not half."

He slipped in his last cartridge, shut that enigmatical revolver with a satisfied click, listened for a few seconds to the stuttering noise of the engines and turned with an air of escape to his little cupboard full of second-hand books.

§ 8. THE CRY IN THE DARKNESS

I DO not know what happened in the darkness and I reproach myself because I do not know. I ought to have pushed myself into that affair. I have said, I think, that I suffered increasingly from insomnia and that I had a habit of prowling the deck during the night But on this particular night I wakened out of a sleep and I had an impression that I had heard a shot. But perhaps I had merely had a dream suggested by the engineer's revolver. A flapping cord could have given the necessary sound. But I was uneasy. I sat up and listened for a time and then pulled on some clothes and went on deck.

We thrust our heaving way through an oily swell that broke to a faint phosphorescence against the side; the sky was covered with thin uneven clouds through which the waning moon shone fitfully. I went forward. For a moment everything seemed quiet. High above me a dim man on the pale moonlit deckhouse stood at the wheel as indifferent as God. On the forward deck a dark figure looking ahead, was as rigid under a swinging light. Then I became aware of something astir in the darkness amidst the deck hamper near the forward hatches. I felt rather than saw a group of people clustering about some sort of tussle and perceived, at the same time, that one or two watchers were standing quite still in the shadow about the unlit entrance to the forecastle. Then suddenly a sharp cry, almost a scream, and a voice, a youthful voice that gasped as if in agony; "Oh! Oh, for God's sake!"

The captain's voice came hard on that. "Will you do your work to-morrow — properly?"

"Yes. Yes, if I can. Oh! Oh, for God's sake! I will. I can."

Came a silence that seemed long to me. "Let him go," I heard the mate's voice. "He's had enough."

"Go!" the captain answered. "Could a shirking swine like that

ever get enough?”

The mate’s voice sank a little lower. “It’s not only him I’m thinking of.”

The captain responded forcibly. “Let ’em *all* come,” he snarled.

“I’m with the mate,” said the engineer, and the captain cursed again.

There was a sound as though a heap of rope knots had been flung on the deck and then a whimpering in the darkness like the whimpering of a hurt and frightened child. I was stirred to go across and intervene and I was afraid. I stood rigid in the moonlight. Silence fell again. The mate said something I did not catch.

“He’s shamming,” said the captain, and then: “Lend a hand there some of you and put him in his berth.”

Then the thud of a kick.

A light appeared in the forecastle and I had a glimpse of figures moving. Muttered talk. “I’ll have what I say attended to,” came the captain’s voice. “While I’m at sea I’m the master of this ship... British Consul be damned!” Some inert object was carried forward and swallowed up in the forecastle. The figures of the captain, mate and engineer came out against the pink illumination, standing quite still with their backs to me, looking forward. The engineer spoke in a low tone, a tone, as I fancied, of remonstrance.

“Damn it!” cried the captain wrathfully; “don’t I know my own business?”

They moved towards me.

“Hul-*lo*!” cried the engineer, discovering me.

“Well, Mr. Snooper,” said the captain, peering into my moonlit face. “Keeping an eye on us, eh?”

I made no reply, I had nothing to say, and the three men went on past me aft.

Forward a raucous voice began talking interminably out of the depths. Other voices injected a word now and then. The men seemed all awake.

Above me the man at the wheel still steered as if in a dream. The lookout man had gone back to his place on the forward deck if ever he had left it. The staggering engines still beat us onward. But the moon in its thin halo and its drifting rags of cloud, and the silently

heaving sea lazily reflecting the slow flitting moon-glow had become now in their smooth acquiescence like conspirators in some terrifying deed. What had happened? In that outcry there had been an intensity of agony.

"Manhandled," the word came into my head, an evil word.

I went back with a hushed mind to my solitary cabin and lay awake until dawn.

Was there no way of doing the world's affairs without the brutalising of men?

§ 9. BURIAL AT SEA

NEXT morning Vett remarked that one of the men had overstrained himself and was thought to be dying, and after our midday meal, which was even more than usually sullen and constrained, Rudge told me the man was dead. The engineer was invisible; he was down below amidst his complaining machinery. Or else I would have asked him some questions. Rudge professed entire ignorance of the cause of the man's death. Was I to know nothing?

I saw something long and white lying on a hatch forward, and approaching discovered it a stiff unmistakable outline wrapped in a blanket. I stood for a time regarding it and the four or five men who were standing and sitting about it stopped their talk and watched me in an enigmatical silence. I thought of questioning them and did not do so for fear of what they might tell me and the fires my questions might release.

I felt myself challenged in some manner for which I was unprepared. I looked up and the captain was leaning on the rail of the bridge watching me with a wary hostility. I went to the side and put my face between my hands and considered. Should I go and question these men? Dared I go and question these men? I told myself I would first talk to Vett.

But Vett was pinned to the vague word "Overstrain."

The next day the weather, which had been dull and warm, began to change. The swell increased and the ship rolled more and more. The screw, which had been going slow, stopped, went on again and

stopped again.

In the afternoon the dead man was committed to the sea. Nearly everyone aboard, except the stokers, the engineer and the three hands working with him and ever and again hammering with a vast clangour below, appeared at the ceremony — so far as it was a ceremony. The body had been sewn up in rough packing canvas and was laid, feet straight to a port, on two greased boards under a dirty red ensign. But contrary to established practice, it was not the captain but the chief officer who read the service. The captain had inverted their roles and remained in charge of the ship overhead. The mate hovered for a time, inspected the position of the body and then quite suddenly produced a prayer book, stared for a moment at the ominous sky as though he thought it had said something, and set himself to read the burial service, reading in a detached querulous manner. He seemed to protest against the whole business. I had placed myself beside Midborough at the rail and held my hat in my hand. Almost everyone was uncovered. The captain kept to the bridge, hunched and immobile, watching like an owl from its tree, and the men stood or squatted about in sullen groups, saying very little. Two of them stood ready to tilt the body overboard.

I was preoccupied at first with the tense humanity of the scene so that I paid little heed to a strangeness in the atmosphere. For a while I forgot the weather. I perceived that in the bearing of everyone was a quality of uneasy foreboding, as if they felt that something impended, and to me, the most obvious connexion was with the secret undertow of this melancholy event Everyone I thought must be bursting with things that remained unsaid. Accusations seemed to smoulder in every face; threats bided their time. Beyond this present autocracy of our grim-faced captain the land awaited us and law and its doubtful, tedious essays at justice. Ahead there were surely denunciations, assertions, witness and false witness, the doubtful verdict What would the mate there, hurrying now through the service, have to testify? What would the engineer have to tell? Would they lie to save the captain and themselves? Would the reality of the darkness remain in darkness for ever? What had the men seen? What did they know and what did they guess at? Would they combine upon a common story? What was the truth about that bitter

passion in the darkness, or was there any truth? If I were called upon, what exactly had I to relate? How would my story survive a cross-examination?

The mate read on. Dimly then I became aware of the gathering physical storm that enveloped this mental one.

As he read, reading badly and with little regard for punctuation, the swelling sea behind him would rise slowly but steadily until it seemed far above his head and then sink again and pass out of sight, leaving him as it were outstanding against the sky.

But that sky, I apprehended suddenly, was of an unusual brightness and yet almost white. Its customary blue had become shrill! And forthwith my consciousness was pervaded by the swift onset of a storm. I stared up at the great hemisphere at whose centre we rolled and wallowed. Behold! half of it was sweeping ascendant blue-black cloud, with ragged swirling edges. Even as I looked up those edges became a clutching claw and seized upon the sun, and all the watery world about us was suffused with a dark coppery glow. The deck passed into a chilly shadow and every figure and shape upon it was touched with an inky quality. The leeward sky by contrast became still clearer and brighter and whiter than before.

Every face it seemed had shifted its regard from the dead body on its planks to this black canopy that furies were dragging over us all. The mate looked up, turned a page, and began to gabble very fast and skip what he was reading, and I heard the captain's message clang to the engine-room. After a brief interval the broken throbbing of the machinery, which had been stilled for a time, resumed.

"Ow, get *on* with it," whispered Midborough.

Then came a noise like the noise of ten thousand little kettle drums and I saw the mate, prayer-book in hand, gesticulate windily to the two men who stood beside the corpse. The words of the service had become inaudible. The deck slanted down towards a mounting whale-back of ghastly glaucous-green water, and the poor cocoon that had so recently been a living man, shot forth and smote and cleft the glassy expanse, just as the bulwarks rose again to hide it from my eyes. The mate, ascending slowly heavenward, went on reading the final prayer, but everyone else had turned about with a sense of imminent practical obligation.

Like the sting of a whip came the hail. I made for the nearest gangway, and as I did so, the thunder burst like a pistol at my ear.

I had a glimpse of the mate, bareheaded, his prayer-book still open in his hand, staggering about like a drunken man, and then involuntarily I went down the ladder and found myself climbing rather than walking the alleyway.

§ 10. THE STORM

BUT now I was to some extent weathered to the extravagances of the ocean, and my experiences, though disagreeable enough, were not accompanied by the same prostration of spirit as my former ones. My sickness was more bodily than mental and I can recall many incidents in their proper order.

And through all my memories rages the captain in an ever more deadly fury.

It is strange, but now for the first time and when he was at his maddest, I began to understand the man. Or at least that is how I remember it, though in fact my understanding may have come later. But at first I had seen nothing in this creature but a repellent ungraciousness. His desperate and exasperated struggle against an obdurate universe for the assertion of his own imperfectly apprehended will, became manifest only as he battered himself towards ultimate defeat.

Just like myself he had come into life an open expectation, a vast if vacuous desire, the would-be recipient of a magnificence that was perpetually denied. What satisfactions, what predominances had he not promised himself in youth! What secret resolutions to succeed had he not made! And inexorably he had been thrust to this minor service of the sea, to be the irritated commander of a crew of equally thwarted and even more relentlessly constrained fellow-creatures, and the master of an old steamship of which he was ashamed. For manifestly he hated his ship; he lusted to kick it out of the water. He hated his owners for employing him and still more would he have hated them if they had not employed him. And he hated his task of taking clocks and sewing machines and ready-made clothes to Brazil,

and coffee and sugar and cigarettes and cotton to the Argentine, and thence on with a residue of still unloaded British goods and whatever else was to be picked up, to the antipodes. Except for distance and danger he was little more than a vanboy, and meanwhile other men went about the land, prevailing and ruling, consuming and enjoying. And even this low task of his he did with difficulty and with a desperate effort to maintain a sort of dignity. At least in this temporary little dominion he would be king. And the men would not obey him. A fleering young man of no use abroad, derided him at his meals! The machinery would not respect him. The weather mocked his forecasts. To hell with them all! Oh! to hell with them!

The weather mocked him. He had counted upon getting to Buenos Aires before the weather broke. He had damned the engineer for a fool and brought his ship out of safety at Rio. And here, two days at least from Buenos Aires, was the break of the weather.

For the captain's life had become unendurable, and he lived those days of his culminating disappointment in a frenzy of hate like a wildcat in a net.

Down the middle passage-way he came disputing with the engineer. "I told you I wouldn't answer for it," said the engineer. "The thing should have been done at Rio."

The captain burst in emulation of the storm outside. He screamed as he swore and swung his clenched fists to heaven. The engineer answered with a shrug and a grimace.

I tried to stand aside and a lurch of the ship flung me into his path. His face lit to fiendish anger and he struck at me and hurled me against a teak door. I was amazed and helpless. Such is the majesty of a ship's master that I did not attempt to strike him back, and when they had gone through a door under the break of the poop I struggled on to my cabin.

And now the ship began again to plunge and rear and ram herself into the ever-mounting seas, and after a little time or a long time — I do not know which — came a metallic concussion, a grinding and smashing, that told that the engine was done. It hardly came as a shock. So far as I know there was no excitement, only a stoical acceptance of a thing foredoomed. The whole crew had realised the approach of this disaster; the wonderful thing had been its delay. The

wonderful thing had been that even for a little while we had been able to fight our way and steer through this elemental chaos into which the ocean had dissolved.

I had a glimpse of the engineer with a wet and exhausted yet still expressionless face, making his way from one handhold to another back to his cabin. His work was done. Indeed all work was done, except to pump and hold back and bar the pitiless invasion of water. The character of our motion had changed instantly with the death of the engines.

We rolled and danced far more but with less effort and vibration. We came round sideways to the waves. We had the temporary respite of a garrison that has surrendered and awaits a massacre. The ship had become a helpless floating thing at the mercy of the waters. Little mercy was there in them. They seemed resolved to turn her over sideways if not longways. We made no resistance now. We looked the waves in the face no longer. They beat against her and rolled over her until it was like night under the smother. We were tamed. They shoved her up and out into the daylight again and then, brawling and shouting, sent her headlong down vast declivities.

Was she taking water? The next morning I ventured from my cabin to see if peradventure there was food to be got, and met Rudge bound upon the same errand and shouted a few words with him. Was she taking water? Little, it seemed, except for the frothing waves that swept athwart her and came pouring in cascades down the gangways. That much water we could deal with, he said, if the plates of her skin held.

There was nothing for it but to stick it out. Those were the days before wireless became general and we had no means of calling help in our plight. We were derelict unless and until some ship chanced upon us and came to our assistance. Or until the weather had done with us and cast us ashore. Or until we sank. And if no help came we should drive while the storm held and drift when it diminished. So Rudge.

The cook in some marvellous way had got his fire alight and had made a sort of soup of stock and meat-extract and bread and so forth, very savoury and heartening. It chanted with onions. Men had fought their way through the waves that were leaping over us for a share of

this savouriness, and most of us drank out of a common cup, staggered against each other, said “Who-ah!” and “Steady, there!” and respected no etiquette. But when suddenly the captain appeared in streaming oilskins, with his white eyelashes grey with salt and his face as he clawed at the door-jambs a rigid mask of fury, everyone stood aside, two of the men went out of the galley to struggle back to their own quarters and Vett found him a cup for himself.

No one addressed him, and he muttered and swore to himself. I was holding on near to him, gnawing a chunk of hard biscuit, and I heard a few words. “We go into Buenos Aires,” he said. “We go into Buenos Aires. Or by Almighty God — !”

“Almighty God has it,” said the engineer’s inaudible lips.

“Nothing for these swine to do, eh?” the captain snarled to himself, his wicked little eyes peering through his eyelashes at us. “Just you wait till the wind falls!”

But for four or five days — I do not know how many, because, for a very good reason, I lost count — the wind did not fall. We went on living shut up in our cabins, or clambering about the passages, or making desperate rushes from point to point on slippery planks, knee-deep and waist-deep in waves and foam. We were flung hither and thither, and battered and bruised. At one time I fancied I had some ribs stove in, and spent half an hour perhaps feeling my side and taking experimental deep breaths. Intermittently the cook repeated his miracle of warmth, but chiefly with coffee. In between we lived on hope. We made desperate expeditions into depths of seething water to reconnoitre the cook’s galley. Often I would start and never get there. I would survey a stretch of perhaps thirty feet of wave-washed deck vanishing ever and again beneath swirling foam-marbled water, I would note the scanty handholds, weigh the risk and return. I secured a small tin of biscuits for my cabin, but I suffered a good deal from thirst The salt seemed to get on my lips because of my breathing. It got upon my imagination also and made me retch. Everyone, I suppose, was more or less starved, drenched, eviscerated, bruised and tormented during that clinging life while the waves hunted for us and the very ship seemed trying to fling us out. I saw one man throw himself down on the tilting deck as in despair, but another clutched at his coat collar, holding on to a stanchion,

hung on to him for a time and then tumbled him into shelter as the ship swung down.

And I saw one thing no one will believe. I saw a great shark come aboard. A wave, tall and pointed like the Jung-frau, towered up over the side, hung hissing with hate, an olive-green mountain with the wind blowing out a streaming mane, and then with all its strength and substance beat itself down upon the deck. I was clinging on up by the bridge and a little sheltered. It seemed impossible that this would not break the ship asunder or drive us down and down into the deeps. The water swished over my ankles and up my legs with something of the manner of an aggressively friendly terrier. Everything forward was hidden under a dither of broken water except the fore deck and the shut entrance to the forecastle, and then slowly the main deck came up again, covered with wild-rushing fleecy foam, and there, rolling across the deck leeward, bending itself into a bow and flashing out straight again and snapping like an angry square-mouthed handbag, was this great white-bellied fish. It was enormously bigger than a man. It lashed and flung itself about, trailing threads of slime after it that blew straight out in the wind. It was bloody under its belly. The ship seemed for a moment to survey our new shipmate with amazement, and then with a resolute effort rolled it and the swirling foam it came with, over the starboard rail as though there were some things that even a disabled ocean tramp would not endure.

That I surely saw with my own eyes.

§ 11. MUTINY AND MURDER

THROUGH all that storm I did not change a single wet garment, though I spent many hours wrapped up in a sort of bale of my blankets and a rug. And I do not remember the slightest diminution of the storm. So far as I was concerned, it never diminished; it stopped abruptly. I awoke out of something between sleep and complete unconsciousness to find that the storm was over. But how long my insensibility had lasted I do not know.

When I tried to sit up I found something inexplicable had

happened to my berth. It was no longer swaying and dipping about the horizontal; it and the partition of my cabin had become a V-shaped trough in which I was lying. I was very weak and sick and thirsty and helpless, but I felt called upon to understand this rearrangement of my co-ordinates. Holding the bracket of my oil lamp, which was also hanging crooked, I looked out of my port and saw that the sea, a calm blue sea, was askew. Or if it was not, then everything else was. My cabin was steadily and permanently aslant.

I was astonished. After I had been so beaten upon and overwhelmed by the storm, it may seem strange that I could still be astonished, but I suppose my poor brain was so fatigued that it was quite unable to suggest a reason for this motionless general slant of everything in my apartment. I got out of my berth and opened my door to see if the alleyway was also slanting. It was. Vaguely wandering, I came out on deck and found the whole ship aslant. It was only then that my dulled and attenuated wits realised what had happened. The blue horizon I saw now was all right and at an honest horizontal. But the ship was down by the head and all the stern part was uphill. She must have shipped water forward and filled as far as the forward bulkhead. Probably some cargo had shifted, because there was a distinct list to port. I put my hand to my head as I meditated these things, and found it sore and bruised. In some way I had had a knock on the head, but how that happened I never learnt. Probably I had been thrown about in my cabin. I may have lain stunned or in the deep sleep of exhaustion for quite a long time.

Three or four gulls were circling above us. One was much larger than the others and seemed able to soar for ever without moving its wings. It went to and fro as if it were an expectant legatee. One or two had settled down on the raised deck aft. I did not remember seeing gulls aboard before, and I had a curious anticipation that perhaps the ship was deserted. Then I became aware of a busy hammering forward and was reassured. I went in search of the hammerer.

I came out upon what I thought at first was the whole ship's company grouped in the most extraordinary fashion on the main deck before the bridge. The men were nearly all in two close groups to the left of me. Shaving had gone out of fashion and they looked an evil

lot One had his forearm wrapped in a bloody rag. One or two were eating, the rest crouched or lounged, looking alertly repressed. To the right one of the ship's boats lay on the deck bottom upward, and the carpenter was meekly busy with her bottom planking. A boy assisted him. Sitting astride the boat's keel was the engineer with his pistol in his hand, and behind him Rudge leant against the boat's rump. The mate with another pistol, and Midborough trying to hold a hatchet as though it wasn't anything in particular, were standing with their backs to me, and turned sharply at my apparition. Everyone regarded me like a forgotten thing that has been suddenly recalled.

"God!" exclaimed the engineer. "*You've* turned up again!"

I could make no reply. I took a step forward, caught at an iron rail, slipped, and sat down on the deck. Simply I felt — queer. "I'm weak," I said.

"Ow! — Give him some grub," said Midborough "Don't you see he's nearly done?"

There was a restrained movement among the men. Someone put a chunk of hard biscuit and pressed-beef in my hand. That, I thought, was probably partly the clue to my weakness. I took a mouthful and felt that that was so. I ate up my portion and drank some coffee. My strength crept back to me and I began to look about me.

A voice came from overhead.

"He goes with the men."

I looked up and saw the captain directly over me, for, because of the slant of the ship, the bridge overhung us. The captain, too, I realised, clutched a ready revolver. He was none the prettier for four or five days' growth of ginger stubble.

"No fear," said the tall dark man I supposed to be the boatswain. "That's for *your* boat."

"He's no use to us," the captain said.

"Well, you'll have to keep him. What's the good of argument?"

"He's our passenger," said the engineer in a resigned tone, and the mate beside me nodded.

"I don't understand all this," I said at large.

"The boats are all stove in, except the one they've got afloat over the side there," said Midborough. "The men took it into their heads to go off in her, out on the wide, wide sea. When we saw land to

starboard there was no holding them. See? Only the Old Man spotted what they were up to and asked them to stop. And here they are stopping. What should we do without them? The carpenter, bless his eyes, has kindly consented to put this little boat right for us before he goes. Just a friendly afterthought. And that's how things stand."

I understood the significance of those three revolvers.

"The first man who tries to go over that side starts the shooting," said the engineer, speaking to me and at the men.

"And the carpenter goes in *our* boat," said the mate, "to show he trusts his own work."

"That point we haven't settled," said the tall dark man.

"*We* have," said the engineer.

"Over there we may want the carpenter."

"Carpentering's a damned useful trade," said the engineer, not disputing that point. "You'd hardly imagine all the joints a carpenter has to know. There's books about it."

The men grunted, and a little knot began whispering and muttering among themselves.

"Where's this land?" I said to the second officer. "I don't see it."

Midborough stared at the horizon. "This ship," he said, "keeps turning round. Let's see, where's the sun? It's westward under the sun."

"It's there all right," said the cook. "Though when the hell we shall start for it, I don't know. Hurry up, Jimmy."

"Damn you," swore the carpenter. "Do you think I'm playing about here?"

"The sun's setting."

"That's not my business — anyhow."

Slowly, slowly, with the rotation of the ship, the western sky unrolled itself like a panorama behind the heads of the men. It was clear and golden above the leaden water, and before the blaze of the sun came round to blind me, I saw the pale grey-mauve silhouette of a coastline, faint and clear, with mountains and what seemed to me a smoking peak. Then in an instant the golden-red fire of the sun itself poured into my eyes and everything else melted in the glow.

"'Ow are we going to make that coast in the darkness?" said a voice.

“Go west, young man, go west,” quoted the bookish engineer. He used his revolver to point to his left. “You’ve got all Patagonia there like a wall. You can’t miss it. Hundreds and hundreds of miles of it. Take what you like.”

“We could have been half-way there by now,” said the voice.

“Selfish swine,” said the engineer.

“Half an hour more,” sung out the carpenter, “and my job’ll be done. I want this boat turned over. How’yr going to set about it?”

“Mr. Gibbs,” said the captain to the mate. “Tell Mr. Midborough to take off Mr. Blettsworthy and bring out our stores from the galley. We four will watch the men. Two of you chaps — and not more than two of you, mind, help the carpenter. Dutchy for one, he’s hefty and harmless. Fm watching you all, remember.”

He thought of something else. “We’ll want some lamps, Mr. Midborough, before the light goes. We want this deck to be lit. Get some lamps. We don’t want things to happen in the dark here.”

The man with the bandaged arm spat and swore bitterly. “We do *not*,” he said.

“No fear,” said a friend, and produced an unreal laugh. After we had put all the accumulation in the galley at the side where the boat would be launched, I went with Midborough to the ship’s stores, which had already been looted in a careless fashion by the men. “Better more than less,” said Midborough, piling my arms with biscuits. As we went about this business, the sun sank and the blue twilight deepened into night. The men became black figures under the two lanterns Midborough rigged up over their heads. The captain was lost in mystery overhead. “There you are,” said the carpenter, and stood out of his job. “Stow your dunnage.”

“Stop!” cried the captain like the crack of a whip as a man stood up on the port bulwark.

“You old swine,” cried a shrill voice; “if it comes to blows — !”

The threat remained unspoken and unheeded.

“We want the carpenter,” the voice of the boatswain declared.

“Dead or alive?” asked the engineer politely. The men growled.

“Get our boat overside,” the captain said, “and chuck in the stuff.”

There was a struggle and a flat splash as the smaller boat took the water and a sound of boxes and tins and packages being dropped into

it. I did my share until the deck was clear. Rudge packed. “Damned little room left,” cried Rudge.

Came a smack, a crash, and a tingle of falling glass. Both the lanterns that had kept the men in sight had been smashed simultaneously. “Come along, Jimmy!” cried a voice to the carpenter. “This way!”

“No, you don’t! “I heard the engineer, and he fired across the deck into the brown — I think without hitting anyone. The men went bundling down into their boat.

“Blettsworthy!” came astonishingly from above. “Is Blettsworthy there?”

I obeyed the call and went back to the ladder that led up to the deck-house. The captain came down swift and silent like a big cat, and before I realised his hostile intention he had collared me and flung me backward through the open door into Vett’s little pantry. I was too amazed at the moment to resist. I heard him fumble at the key of the door and leapt forward too late. He hit me in the face with his revolver and as I went down again I heard him repeat in tones of the bitterest hatred: “Eat your Soup! *Eat* ya soup!”

Then the door slammed and I was locked in.

The blow had dazed me. I gathered myself together slowly, feeling over my face for the source of the trickling blood I tasted. I heard the captain’s voice answering someone: “He’s all right. He’s in the big boat!” I felt over the door in the darkness as though I might find some way of unlocking it. I did not think to knock or cry out until it was too late. Even then I might not have been heard. For something happened, I know not what, that must have gripped the attention of everyone. It is my belief that the captain fired at the men’s boat. He may have done that out of sheer hatred for the men or to drown any protest from me. Or the shots may have been provoked. The engineer may have fired those shots and not the captain. At any rate I heard three shots and shouts and a splashing. Then came the regular swish and thud of oars and the whole tumult receded. Possibly the men were pulling out of range of the captain’s fury.

Silence healed again like curtains quietly drawn together. I remained listening for some time and at last there was nothing but the rippling of water forward against the ship’s side.

§ 12. DERELICT

I DID not get out of that little cabin until dawn.

The forcing of either door or window in the dark was too much for me. But in the morning I found a little drawer in which Vett kept some tools, and with a chisel and a hammer — there was no screw-driver — I managed to release the lock. I had spent most of the night in futile rage against the captain and now it was as if everything I did was done against him. I had to live in order to defeat and denounce him. As I had ransacked Vett's pantry for a lever against the door, I had found among other things, his bottle of brandy, some water, a collection of things called sparklets, with a specially constructed bottle which could be used for making sodawater, tins of cheese, biscuits, tins of sardines, some boxes of dates and figs for dessert and suchlike accessory provisions, and there was a store of matches, a trimmed lamp and so forth, all carefully stowed against breakage. The captain, I reflected, might have pitched me into an uglier corner than this. As soon as I had got the door open and felt free, I ate and went out with a handful of dates to devour while I reconnoitred my position.

I hoped to find I was drifting ashore so that I could follow on the track of my enemy forthwith, though what I expected to do with him and his party if I found them together on a Patagonian beach, I cannot imagine. I made for the bridge. The deck seemed a little steeper than it did before, heeling more to port, but so far as I could judge I was no nearer sinking. I went up to the deck-house behind the impotent wheel and the tilted compass — a sacred place which had hitherto been forbidden ground to me, and found various charts and diagrams of the ship and a brass instrument or so clustering in the lowest corner. My first solicitude was to see the land. It had gone. I stood with my back to the sunrise and scrutinised the long, hard, dark blue line of the westward sea, and the coastline that had been so clear overnight was invisible. I clambered to the roof of the deck-house to get a still wider circle. There was no sign of land and no speck that might be a boat. I had to persuade myself that mist or some trick of

the atmosphere was hiding land from me, but indeed the horizon was as hard and positive as one of Euclid's propositions. Perhaps the *Golden Lion* was drifting parallel to the coast and yesterday we had passed some projecting land areas. Now maybe some great bight had carried the shore line down below the curve of the world. It would return. Surely it would return.

But though I comforted myself this way, this shoreless circle of the sea disappointed and depressed me acutely, brought with it a sudden sense of helplessness. My idea of getting to land forthwith upon some lightly improvised raft was manifestly knocked on the head. I was incapable of making or propelling a raft for anything but the briefest of transits.

I dismissed my idea of a pursuit hot upon the heels of the captain. He had understood the situation as I was now only beginning to understand it. I might have to stay in this wreck for an indefinite time. In a graver mood I set myself to explore as much of the ship as remained above water. I was speedily satisfied that I need feel no anxiety about food; the food supply would last as long as the ship, and the ship, I assured myself, was good until the weather broke and might even stand a certain amount of heavy weather. After all, whatever the leakage was, it was forward and the bulkhead held. There was fuel in the galley and I might even cook. I had raw potatoes, a residue of green vegetables, dried onions and tinned meat. In my exploration I came to the captain's cabin. I went in to think out what I had next to do and adjusted myself on his cushions in his wicker chair, to decide how I might get even with him.

I should either drift ashore or be picked up. Still there were other and less agreeable possibilities, and perhaps it might be well to write a statement of my case and commit it to a bottle. Or perhaps even write several statements for several bottles. That was an affair that could be put in hand at once. I looked round the cabin for paper and ink and became interested in the lights his abandoned possessions threw upon this man's character. Evidently he read little, but poor, craving devil! he had got a little accumulation of pornographic photographs, and pages and whole numbers of French and Spanish coloured illustrated papers of an indecent type. Over some of these he must have brooded intently, for he had made forceful marks on

them with a pencil. In my undergraduate days this find would have disgusted me utterly, but I had learnt since then what monstrous storms the body can brew, and this revelation of festering and tormenting desire in my enemy did on the whole rather mitigate my resentment for the ugly treachery of which I was the victim. If the man was half insane through these things his madness was anyhow kindred to the normal stresses of our sanity. He had detested me from the very first. Why had he detested me? Had I in any degree justified his detestation? Had I possibly resembled someone, recalled some disagreeable experience? I gave up the riddle. I stowed his art gallery back in its drawer. I sat down to write. "I am Arnold Blettsworthy" — and I gave the brief data for my identification. I stated when I had left London and the dates and other particulars of my voyage. "Some days out of Rio our engines broke down and the ship became unmanageable and sprung a leak forward." So far good. And now for the gist of the story: "A certain animosity towards me on the part of the captain had developed into a mutual hostility," I wrote and then stopped writing for a time, recalling the circumstances of my desertion and many particulars of my companions. How dirty my hands were! I noted with a start.

I went back to my own cabin and on the way visited those of my former companions. The engineer had had a secret store of cigars and I found one very satisfactory. In his cabin there was amidst a queer miscellany of old, stained and sometimes coverless books, an orderly accumulation of printed matter of various dates, offering the ninth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica on various subscription schemes. Against the prices the engineer had made various computations in pencil, and evidently he had contemplated ballasting the ship and myself with all this store of knowledge. The mate's hole revealed a more pedestrian spirit. There was a Bible, some boxes of paper collars, several very unattractive framed portraits and the photograph of some house property on which was written "last instalment to be paid" with a date. Rudge had cleared out his photographs and his most remarkable properties were a number of gay toys, bought I should imagine as presents for some child at home. Midborough seemed to have been preoccupied with the sanitary dangers of seaports. It dawned upon me that I was prying

and I went on to my own cabin.

There I washed my hands and my dirty, bloody face, and encouraged by the refreshment of cleanliness, shaved myself and changed into clean, folded, shore-going clothes. I felt more like Arnold Blettsworthy and less of a dirty rag of suffering than I had done for many days. There was even a certain elation at finding myself in effect master of the ship and able to do exactly what I pleased on it. I went back to the captain's cabin to finish writing my statement and I began a fair copy. But after a time, I felt the flavour of the captain too strongly there; moreover, I perceived that I was in fact very tired and sleepy and I left my writing unfinished and went to find some corner for a sleep. I had a desire also, after so many days of wetness, to sun myself. I dragged some bedding from one of the cabins on to the upper deck abaft the funnel and laid myself out in the light. The sun, because of the circular motion of the ship, seemed to be clambering in a flat spiral course up the sky, and this deck, I decided, was the place where I could be most continuously hot. The shadow of the funnel moved over me with a scarcely perceptible motion as I lay and presently I fell into a deep sleep.

I awakened with a start and with a queer impression that the captain was in a boat close at hand directing the sinking of the ship. Also mixed up with that was a realisation that the birds had gone again and that I was increasing my distance from the land. I suppose I had been dreaming. The sun was low in the sky. I stood up and stretched. This deck rose highest above the water and I decided that I would get some more blankets and pass the night upon it.

I went upon the bridge and then down to the forward deck to see how the ship was floating. I remember staying forward for a long time, resisting disagreeable conclusions. She certainly seemed more down in the water than I had at first observed and now she was rocking slightly. The water was right across the deck so that to reach the forecastle, had I wished to do it, I should have had to wade. Either I had not observed that before or it had not been so at first. As she rocked, the water swilled into the hatchway and then swilled out again, lazily as though it was at home there. I went down the companion-way amidships and found things dark and lonely below. I peered into the engine-room aft and there was water shining darkly in

the deeps. It was already twilight before I thought of getting Vett's lantern and matches for the night. When the night grew cold under the stars, I found the lantern useful in a hunt for more blankets. But that thin sheet of water across the forward deck troubled my mind, I could not sleep very well and I lay with the lantern alight beside me, staring at the stars.

§ 13. MEDITATIONS OF A CASTAWAY

IT was only in the night that the full desperation of my case began to dawn upon me.

I had not been refusing to see the completeness of my isolation hitherto. I had simply been unable to think it. Too many habits and associations had clung about me for me to perceive that now I was altogether bare. I had behaved so far as a man, a little delayed and obstructed indeed, who had a case to bring against another who had attempted to murder him. Everything about me in the daylight had seemed to point to that. Now the realisation was creeping in upon me that I was already, for all practical purposes, murdered and that I should never bring that case.

What were my chances of getting back into the world of men? I surveyed them with a lucid dismay. I was living, breathing, fed and physically more comfortable than I had been for many days, but that did not in the least affect the extremity of my detachment. In reality I was already as far from the general play of life as though I had fallen right off this planet. My exact position I did not know, but I was far away south of Bahia Blanca, the last Argentine port with any traffic. The chances of a coastwise vessel happening upon me were infinitesimal. And for shipping that would be going round the Horn I was certainly much too far to the west. It would be a miracle if I were picked up before bad weather came to end me. And end me it surely would. There was no need of further leak or breach of bulkhead, for a mere ordinary rough sea could swamp the middle section of the ship now, so low was she in the water.

In the interest of my situation, my enemy the captain ceased for a time to dominate my thoughts. I accepted the fact that I was now

isolated from all my kind, in an isolation that could only end in my death — as a fact. Nevertheless, I perceived that I did not *realise* this fact. I was thinking out my situation exactly as if I was preparing to tell someone about it. Perhaps the human mind is not made to register complete isolation. Perhaps it is true, as people begin to say nowadays, that one cannot think without a slight if imperceptible motion of mouth and vocal cords, nor talk except to at least a phantom outside oneself. Solitary thought can exist, no doubt, but it cannot be posed as solitary thought.

I began to talk to myself with a curious feeling I could not eliminate of a distinction and a difference between the personalities of the talker and the hearer.

"Now what," said I, speaking aloud, "is this thing called life? Which begins so obscurely in the warmth and in the dark, and comes to such ends as this! It seems to me extraordinary that I should be adrift here on my way to drowning; but why do I think it extraordinary? I do not see why I should judge it to be extraordinary, seeing I have no outer standards by which to judge it at all. I suppose it seems extraordinary because I was led to expect that life would be something quite different from what it is. But I had not the slightest reason for expecting it to be different from what it is. To keep us quiet when we are children, and to make us nice and good and confident, we are given all sorts of assurances about life for which there are no justifications, and by the time we have found them out we are already too far off from human things to expose the deception. I was led to expect that if I was reasonably honest and active and helpful, I should be fairly paid in amusement, happiness, safety and a continuing, expanding and enduring contentment with the scheme of things. And here I am! Against such expectations I look like the victim of a practical joke. And now that I am in the sun and fed and restful, albeit for the last time, I can even laugh at the joke that has been played upon me."

Some such speech I made to my hearer, but my hearer made no reply.

"A joke," I said, and reflected.

"And if it is not a joke, what on earth is it? What is all this affair about? If there is not even Somebody or Something laughing at this

tremendous Sell?”

My brain lay fallow for a time, and then I found myself reaping the conclusions of a new point of view.

“But the Sell,” I argued, “is of our own making. The Sell is in ourselves. The Nature of Things has neither promised nor cheated. It is just that we have misunderstood it. This death-bed on a sinking ship is merely the end of over-confidence. Destiny has always been harder and sterner than we have seen fit to recognise. Life is a sillier, softer child than its parentage justifies. It falls down heedlessly. What right has it to complain that it squalls unheeded?”

Ten thousand pollen grains blow to waste for one that reaches a pistil; why should man be an exception to the common way of life?

That was as far as my philosophy took me that night. I seem to remember squatting up meditating profoundly on my brotherhood with the pollen grain. Scattered all over the earth are the waste pollen grains, silent, becoming drearily aware of their fate, realising it too late to proclaim it. The world that has flung them aside haphazard, goes on to its destinies. I have either forgotten the rest of that meditation, or I lay down to be more comfortable and dropped off to sleep.

§ 14. THE PATIENT COMPANION

THE next morning my mind had come down from philosophy to the captain again. I woke up in a decidedly bad temper, which was not improved by the extreme difficulty I found in making coffee. The captain, I swore, should pay for all this. After coffee I became extremely industrious; got my statement written out in triplicate, found wine or vinegar bottles with sound corks — I distrusted the endurance of stoppered beer bottles — and sealed up my denunciations. Then I went to the side and threw them well away, one after the other, clear of the ship. Each in its turn dived, came up and floated, bobbing nearly erect. And stayed where it was! I remember that I felt a slight chagrin that these messengers did not start off at once, at a good pace, northward towards civilisation. I had certainly imagined something of the sort. But there they stayed, and

for all the rest of my time these bottles drifted with me, coming very slowly in until they were close alongside.

I did not like that, and another thing that presently expanded in my imagination was a glimpse I had of a dark line of shining back, slightly curved, with a fin along it, that became visible for a moment after the third splash. Something, I felt only too surely it was a shark, had come to see what it was had fallen into the water.

Now my mind was quite reconciled to the idea that presently, not yet but presently, I should go down into the water and drown, but I had thought of myself drowning with dignity. The possibility of going down into the water for a hopeless scuffle with a shark was altogether less acceptable.

Indeed I found it detestable. For a time it made me reject the fate of drowning altogether and renew my waning conviction that in some manner finally I should be picked up. And meanwhile I watched the water nervously and persistently for some further sign of a shark.

It became evident to me that I had an idiosyncrasy about sharks. Just as some people have about cats. Once I had realised the neighbourhood of one or more of them, I could not keep my mind off them. I must have worried quite a lot about them, because in the afternoon I sacrificed a whole cabbage to reassure myself that I had been mistaken. I thought I saw something dark and lurking in the water aft and I got this cabbage — it was one of those round red ones people pickle, and flung it as far as I could towards the shadow. I must have gone below to get that cabbage and come back with it, though I do not remember doing so.

The shadow stirred at the splash, went down out of sight and reappeared, turning over spirally. It showed a shining white belly as it took my cabbage. There was no mistaking the shark's inverted snatch.

My test had been at once conclusive and very unsatisfactory.

§ 15. THE UNCHRISTIAN STARS

IN order to keep my mind off sharks, I brought it back to the captain

and how at last I would confront him. I dramatised a variety of encounters, in towns, in law courts, on desert islands and inhospitable coasts. “So here at length we meet again!” And when that ceased to hold my mind because of my underlying sense of its extreme improbability, I forced myself into long philosophical and religious arguments, sitting and thinking about them steadfastly and calling myself to order whenever the fact that the chamber in which this discussion was held was papered, so to speak, with a wall-paper of sharks and captains, distracted my attention.

I continued to analyse the justice of my fate. I generalised so that I questioned the righteousness not merely of my own fate but of the common fate of my kind. I associated the large expectations that had sustained my adolescence not only with the assumptions natural to youth, but with the whole system of religious hopes and beliefs by which mankind had been persuaded to face its destinies. During my undergraduate days, some chance allusion during an argument in a man’s room had made me read Winwood Reade’s “Martyrdom of Man,” and now I found the broad outline of that sombre history very present in my thoughts. I saw the priests unfolding religion after religion like veils before the harsh reality of things; I saw the trade in hope perpetually failing and perpetually renewed. I thought of my long chain of ancestors, innumerable through the ages, struggling upward to this strange finale above the waiting waters under the scorching sun and the cold circling stars, and now I saw it only as an anticipatory symbol of the whole destiny of our species. Well, I at least should die disillusioned.

I tried to recall the beliefs of my childhood and wondered if they had ever seemed valid. What had been far stronger was the tacit confidence of youth. The universal natural religion of mankind, indeed of all the animal world, is embodied in the simple creed: “It’s all right,” until some shock, some series of shocks, comes to destroy it. And then, I asked myself, what is there left?

So far as the species is concerned there need be nothing left.

Life can always begin again. Birth and death are the warp and woof of its process; it is like a fraudulent tradesman who can only keep going by destroying his accounts. I was just a discarded obligation, a bilked creditor, a repudiated debt.

I thought of the meteoric career of Christianity, the last of our western veils upon reality, so comprehensive and infinite in its assurances, so recent in human history and so dominant over the world of my upbringing; I weighed its value as a creed of comfort. Surely it had comforted. Surely it had fortified assurance. It must have built up habits of assurance in millions of souls. But how far had it held out against wasting disease and the vast tragedies of life that destroy human beings by the myriad and leave none but lucky survivors to tell the tale of destruction? The lucky survivor naturally tells the bright side of the tragedy. He was mercifully spared. The pollen grain that fell on stony soil tells no tales. Were the ages of faith indeed ages of courage? At Oxford I had heard a bold blasphemer call Christianity an anaesthetic. Could we even answer, I questioned now, for the anaesthesia of those who die defeated? And was Christianity so specially a comforting and sustaining creed? What of the other faiths, more proud and more heroic, that came before the Cross? What of the Stoic and his soul? And while I searched my ill-stored mind for some measure of value in this vague arraignment of my uncle's teaching, a queer idea hit my mind and set it glancing off in a new direction. It was an idea at once extraordinary and startling. It flashed into my thoughts with such an effect of discovery, that I still remember it clearly and distinctly. Perhaps it is the most original observation I have ever made.

I had been staring at my disappointing Southern Cross as it passed slowly with the rotation of the ship across my field of vision. "They might," I grumbled, "have found a better cross than that." And then my astonishing discovery came to me. I sat up and stared about me at the vast dome of stars. The Southern Cross! It was the one poor little constellation that had been left for Christianity out of all the glories of the sky. Christianity was so recent that the stars of heaven still paid allegiance to the gods of the pagan and the Persian. Christianity had never conquered the sky, nor for that matter the days of the week, nor the months of the year. There, serene and unassailed, ruled the ancient gods. But how wonderful it was that there had never been a Christian conquest of the skies! The Wounds, the Nails were there; the Sacred Stream, the Pleiades like a Crown of Thorns and Orion the very Son of Man coming again in Glory. The planets were like

shining witnesses and saints and the Pole Star was the Word on which all things were turning. I sat up marvelling that Christianity had never had the pause and the peace needed for that celestial rechristening.

I fell so much in love with this odd notion that I forgot my utter loss of faith and spent the best part of a night on the conversion of the constellations to Christianity. I was still at it, when one by one they melted into the returning day. There was no sudden extinction. They faded out. I looked round to verify some recent observation and the star I sought had vanished into the day. It was rather like putting out one's hand for a stair rail that has suddenly ceased to exist.

"So," thought I, with a sudden recoil from my pious task, "so also does the faith in Christian doctrine dissolve and pass away. With the passing of my generation. Never now will Orion become the Son of Man coming again in Glory, and Jupiter and Saturn will still rule above there when the transitory tangles of our Trinities are altogether forgotten.

Such were the thoughts that came to me, adrift, deserted and despairing upon the Southern Main.

§ 16. SHARKS AND NIGHTMARES

BUT as the days of my solitude wore on I found it increasingly difficult to defend my mind from horrible anticipations and lurid dreams. My dreams were worse than my waking thoughts and there came a time when I would try to keep myself awake, because of the frightful suggestions that haunted the borderland of slumber. My feeling that the ship was sinking beneath me grew constantly more oppressive. At first I had put off the sinking of the ship as a definite fact in the future; now I felt it was sinking all the time. I dreamt repeatedly of the ship's hold, only it was immensely dark and noisome, and so vividly of water weeping through the bulkheads that even when I was awake I believed I must have seen this. A dozen times a day I set marks to the level of the water on the forward deck. I would forget when I had made the marks and alternate between panic and reassurance as I tried to remember which of two of them

was the earlier made. The fear grew upon me that the ship would go down while I was slumbering. As I dropped off to sleep it would seem to me that the whole ship was swaying downward and I would start up into a painful wakefulness.

One dream did at least give me the idea of a way in which that final encounter with a shark might be avoided. It is still brighter in my memory than all but a few real experiences.

It took the form of a long dispute with a shark and after the inscrutable way of dreams, the shark was not only a shark, but the captain. In this dream I sat nearly waist-deep in water all the time, but that was certainly caused by the fact that my heap of blankets had been drawn away from my legs and that these lay exposed to the chilly starlight. The shark came, wearing an immense white waistcoat and a crimson fob, and asked me when I proposed to meet him at dinner. "But which will be host," said I, "and which will be guest?" The shark had no conventional graces at all and put the facts offensively. "I shall eat you before you are drowned. I've got a one-way throat and there's no getting out of it again." I told the shark I doubted if he had ever met my uncle, the Rev. Rupert Blettsworthy, the vicar of Harrow Hoeward, or he would know it was possible to discharge the most disagreeable duties urbanely. "But after all," said the shark, "why criticise before you know? A certain bluntness often goes with a good heart. It may not be so bad. The swallowing will distract you from the drowning and the drowning from the swallowing and as I shall probably snap too, your attention may be so confused in the rush of these various excitements that you will hardly grasp for a moment that you are even beginning to suffer."

I told him that I would rather hear nothing of these technical points. No doubt he had considerable advantages in the present situation, but there was a certain dunning urgency in his insistence upon his final claim that I found excessively underbred. I had long since learnt from my uncle that it was possible to eat and be master of one's own world with tact and courtesy.

But this shark was not to be rebuked. That sort of thing, he said, would not do for the sea, and after all, the sea was the centre of life. Nobody knew anything of life who hadn't lived in the sea. It was not for the land to teach the sea how to live. A certain number of

creatures had crept out upon the land, but that, he declared, was merely a retreat from active living. One got glimpses of them at times looking back regretfully. They crawled upon the land. There was no real buoyancy in the air. They were no better than crabs and sea lice and things that hid among the rocks. But in the sea, life at its best was bold and free and frank and fundamental, and one saw it for what it was. I squatted on my deck, parting reluctantly from my airy illusions one by one, saying a long good-bye to the flimsy flopping life of the land, but he, thank God, had neither lungs nor illusions. What price hope and fear, the desire of the human heart, its dreams of sacrifice and glory after two minutes in the gullet of Reality? For he was Real! "Come into the sea for two minutes," said the shark, "and learn what reality is."

"Come up here," I retorted, "and I'll have shark steak for supper."

"This game ends my way," snapped the shark. For it irritated this eater even to think of being eaten.

And then it was I had my dream inspiration.

"Not a bit of it!" said I. "You've forgotten one thing. You poor old snapping bag of guts, you never learnt to build a ship and you have the vaguest ideas about cabins, and as soon as this old steamer begins its last dive, into my cabin I go and lock myself in. Eh? And down I go past you, in all my human dignity! And you nosing against the planks and turning yourself over for the meal that escapes you! Down I go — down to the deeps into which you, poor bathymetric captive! can no more dive than you can soar up into the air."

"Oh, but this is — *shabby*!" cried the shark. "And what good will it do you? The waste of it!"

"If one doesn't like sharks—" I said.

At which he lost his temper and made a sort of backward leap at me, much as I had seen that other shark leap upon the forward deck. I clutched him and we had a violent struggle from which I awoke to find myself in a mortal grapple with my mattress.

But when I had emerged from that, it was quite clear in my mind that henceforth I must sleep only in my cabin and be ready to bolt thither directly the ship seemed nearing the moment for its plunge. I laughed with triumph over the shark at my idea, even when I was fully awake.

That was one of my pleasanter — and if one can use such a word for dreaming — one of my saner dreams.

There were other dreams, I know, upon which the controls of my memory have since turned, to expunge them from this record. And from such dreams, under the steady continuing pressure of fear, I passed on very speedily to the waking dreams of delirium. But over that too, for the most part, veils have been drawn so that all these later recollections are uncertain and indistinct.

But once I recall, hurrying from side to side of the ship with a hatchet in my hand, if haply I could catch a glimpse of the giant octopus with a face like the captain, which was slowly and steadily spreading its almost invisible tentacles over the vessel, confirming its grip and preparing to drag me down into the deeps. Once when I came upon a tentacle and hacked it to pieces, it seemed afterwards to be merely a frayed-out rope. And also, in the night, it seemed to me that the funnel was really the captain, who had stayed aboard in that disguise to make sure the ship went down. A passion of fear and hatred for the funnel seized me and I attacked it with my hatchet furiously and repeatedly in order to cast it overboard and free the ship, already water-logged and overburthened from its tilting weight.

§ 17. RAMPOLE ISLAND COMES ABOARD

MY recollection of the savages coming aboard is very obscure. It may have happened while I was insensible.

I was lying on the after deck and I found two of them standing over me and regarding me. They were naked men of a dusky buff colour; they had extraordinarily hard faces, unpleasantly tattooed, and their black hair was drawn harshly back. They leant upon tall spears and they stared at me with inexpressive eyes. Both were chewing slowly and steadily with their heavy jaws.

For some seconds I stared back at them blinking, and then rubbed my eyes, thinking they were the dregs of some nightmare that would presently vanish. Then perceiving they were real, I snatched at the chipped hatchet that was lying close at hand and leapt to my feet to defend myself.

But one of them gripped my wrist and the two overpowered me with the utmost ease.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

Tells how Mr. Blettsworthy found himself among the Savages of Rampole Island and of his early impressions of their Manners and Customs. — How he saw the Megatherium, the Giant Ground Sloth, still surviving, and of its extraordinary natural history. — What he learnt of the Religion of the Rampole Islanders, their marriages and their laws. — How he talked to them of the Realities of Civilisation and how War came to Rampole Island.

§ 1. THE SINISTER LANDING

I AM anxious to tell the story of my adventures upon Rampole Island in the order in which they happened to me, as they unfold themselves now in my consciousness and as my mind recalls them. But I am sorry to say that because of the confusion that came to my brain there must be here and there a certain obscurity and disconnectedness. There may even be a disarrangement of the order of these events in time. I warn the reader plainly. I was in a delirium when the savages seized me, and for some time my mental disturbance must have been very considerable. By their standards I was plainly mad.

In a way, that was fortunate for me, for those savages, confirmed and impenitent cannibals as they are, living on each other persistently and ruthlessly, have a superstition that the flesh of madmen is taboo and deadly to the eater. Moreover in common with unenlightened people the whole world over, they have an awe of the mad. Insanity they think is a peculiar distinction conferred by their Great Goddess. So that I was given food and shelter by these eaters of men, and an amount of liberty that might have been denied me in a more highly developed community.

Since my memories have to be told in fragments, given like peeps into a book opened here and there, the reader may even be a little incredulous of some of the things I have to tell. He would prefer, but

then I equally would prefer, a story continuous in every detail and going on consecutively from Monday morning to Saturday night. He would no doubt skip a good deal of so full and explicit a narrative, but he would have the satisfaction of feeling that it was there. As it is, it is I who have to do the skipping. And I must admit that I never did feel even at the time that it was all there. Even in the early days of my captivity I had my doubts.

I am vividly convinced of the reality of these two savages with whom I grappled, and I can even remember the smell of the rancid oil with which their extremely hard bodies were anointed, and still more vividly do I remember my impact upon the ribs of the long canoe into which I was dropped. It gives me a bruised feeling in my back even now. I was thrown down among a lot of recently caught fish, most of which were still wrigglingly alive and flapped under me and about me, so that I was speckled with silvery scales. There were nets festooned along the side. And I have a precise memory of being stepped upon and walked over by the savages as they came back into the canoe with such plunder as the ship afforded them. My mind is patterned, I might say, with feet and shins and knees and buff bodies, seen in perspective from below. They were a people essentially unhygienic. Also I recall very clearly how we paddled to shore and the rhythm of the brownish black paddles.

It was a high shore of some sort of rock that was not completely opaque. I do not know what kind of rock it was and though I have sought it since in museums in order to give it a name, I have never seen anything like it. It resembled a clearish blue purple glass, but with large patches of a more ruddy hue, verging on rosy pink. And there were veins in it of opaque white like alabaster. The light was taken into this mineral and reflected from within it as precious stones take in and reflect light. I was struck by its loveliness, bound and dismayed though I was.

We went close inshore and presently came into a sort of fiord winding through cliffs. Guarding this, as it were, some hundred yards or so from the entrance, was a strange freak of nature, a jutting mass of rock in the shape of a woman with staring eyes and an open mouth; a splintered pinnacle of rock rose above her like an upraised arm and hand brandishing a club; the eyes had been rimmed with

white and the threat of the mouth had been enhanced by white and red paint, suggesting teeth and oozing blood. It was very hard and bright and ugly in the morning sunshine. This, I was to learn, was the Great Goddess welcoming her slaves. The savages stopped the canoe abreast of her and raised their paddles aloft in salutation. The forward paddler held up a fish, an exceptionally big one. Another savage leant back towards me, lifted my head by the hair as if to introduce me to the divinity, and then threw me back among the rest of the catch.

This ceremony observed, paddling was resumed, and after a time a little beach on which waited an expectant crowd came into view at the foot of some high cliffs. Our steersman made a hooting noise, to which distant voices responded.

All that, I say, is perfectly clear in my mind, and so, too, is the enclosure of thorny canes into which I was presently flung. And yet upon all this memory there rests something — it is too impalpable even to call it a shadow — something, a quality in the light, that makes it all not quite credible. Even at the time I was puzzled or incredulous. I had enough of geography, in spite of the refinements of my Oxford education, to know that the Patagonians were gigantic and yellow, but I knew, too, that they were rare and lonely wanderers, living in tents of skin, while here we were 'approaching a considerable village. And never had I heard of translucent cliffs upon that coast, nor of any such abundance of vegetation as here presented itself. I thought that in my boyish reading I must have learnt something of all such savage and barbaric peoples as still maintained themselves against civilisation. This place, which later on I discovered was an island and not the American mainland at all, did not fit in with my scheme of known things, geographical or ethnographic, as indeed, I suppose, it will not fit into the reader's knowledge and preconceptions.

I can only tell simply and directly of these things as they came to me. At the same time they were intensely real, and they were discordant with what had seemed to be reality. Bruised, bound and in that fishing canoe, watched over by the ugly chewing steersman, and contemplating the play of the muscles of the backs of the paddlers in front of me, I could not believe I was dreaming, and yet I could not

imagine this was indeed the same world with London from which I had come. Had some sudden twist of time and space carried me and my wreck into a different age or on to a different planet? Or was the winding water channel some such river as the Styx, and these the rowers who bring in souls from their final shipwreck to the coasts of another world?

Can one who has never died know what death is? Was this nightmare death?

§ 2. THE SACRED LUNATIC

IF I was dead, there was certainly good reason for supposing I might very speedily have to die again. The bearing of the crowd when I was handed out of the canoe for inspection was full of noisome anticipations. I cannot describe in what detail they inspected me. I did my best to bear myself with dignity, but their curiosity was heedless of my bearing.

One man seemed to be exercising a sort of authority over my persecutors. After a phase of indulgence he waved the evil-smelling crowd aside, giving cuffs and thrusts to any who seemed disposed to hinder him. He was wrinkled, squat and hunchbacked, and on his head he wore a sort of cylindroid crown of some big leaf dried and rolled. His voice was loud and very flat, and his arms exceptionally long, powerful and hairy. His jaw was underhung and very heavy, and his mouth huge. He seemed to reproach the multitude for their avidity. It was under his direction that I was cast into the cage. I tried to interrogate him by signs, but he took no more heed of my attempt to communicate than a butcher does of the bleating of a sheep in his yard.

This cage was made of an open palisade of stout canes bearing thorns of a largeness I had never seen before, bound together by tough fibrous creepers. It was about ten paces square. The sole furniture was a stool of the same hard blackish-brown wood as the canoe. The floor was of beaten earth, bearing traces of former prisoners. A gourd of water and some farinaceous roots were thrown on the floor beside the bench, and then I was left, with a savage with

a big spear guarding the door. But the crowd, or at least the younger women and the children, remained about me, peering in through the interstices. At first they chattered and nudged each other a good deal, and my slightest movement created a new excitement that manifested itself in tittering and laughter. But after a time they calmed down to quiet staring through the spaces between the canes. Some departed, but enough remained to encircle my prison with eyes and gaping red mouths. Whichever way I turned I met that same motionless bright-eyed stare. With a vague feeling of self-protection, I squatted on the low bench with my face covered by my hands.

Night came swiftly in that narrow gorge. Even after dark my watchers lingered. I could hear the rustle and patter of their departure, one group after another, with long whispering or silent intervals between.

"My God," I asked. "How can I go on living?"

And then it was my mind rejected another of its illusions. "We do not go on living," I said. "What is this nonsense I am talking? It is not our affair. We say it in that way to persuade ourselves we live by our own act. Indeed we are just tumbled helplessly out of to-day into to-morrow, whether we want to *go on* or not. As I shall be. And what will happen to-morrow?"

I tried to think of many high and grave matters, because this surely was my last night alive. But I was too tired to think of any high or grave matters. I thought only of those bright watching eyes and of the malignant anticipations they expressed. I fell asleep at last...

So much I have very clear.

And then a fog settles on my memories.

Perhaps I began to talk to myself or rave or sing. Perhaps I did stranger things. Quite unwittingly I did what was best for myself. When I strain my mind to recollection, I find vague shadows of an interrogation in a great dim cave, beneath a wooden effigy of the Great Goddess. Old men, hairless with age, make incomprehensible gestures to me. I am moved to respond with weird gesticulations. Later I lie naked and bound in the sun while the women scald and sear my flesh. Later still, some monstrous rite is in progress and I am confronted by bowls of boga-nut milk and blood. It is of tremendous

consequence which of these bowls I shall select. I sit like a Buddha musing. I choose the blood, and amidst signs of friendship and rejoicing I am made to drink. The vegetarian milk is flung contemptuously away. The old man with the cylindrical hat plays a directive part on all these occasions.

Then I am walking through the village a free man. The children regard me with habituated respect. Much time has passed, many events have lost themselves in oblivion. I can understand most of what these people say and I can make myself understood. I wear the coarse-haired, skin of a young ground sloth so that my neck sticks out of its neck and its brain-pan covers my head. Its bunch of curved claws hangs down upon my chest. The gigantic ground sloth still survives upon Rampole Island, and I have already seen a small herd of these grotesque monsters feeding on the uplands above the cliff. It deserts its young, which die and are then flayed. I carry a staff of hard dark wood obscenely carved and decorated with mother-of-pearl and the teeth of sharks. I reflect that in this guise I should cause considerable surprise to my Oxford friends, and with that thought something seems to click in my mind and my memories resume. I *was* Arnold Blettsworthy. What am I now? What have I become? I am the sacred lunatic of the tribe. I can give oracles unawares. I have prophetic powers. What is better, when I am fat and well the tribe prospers; do I ail and its fortunes decline. I have been built a hut among the best in the village, decorated with human skulls and the leg-bones of Megatheria. I eat daintily, never asking the nature of the meat, the delicate pork-like meat, that is put before me. But generally I am vegetarian. There is much anxiety just at present because I will not accept a wife. But I will not take a wife unless she has washed, and this language has no word for washing. Moreover, the minds of these people seem unable to grasp the idea or to acquire it from any of my gestures. One projected bride has already been taken out to sea and drowned in a mistaken attempt to carry out my apparent wishes with regard to her.

So self-realisation flowed into the stream of my memory, and my impressions, and the knowledge and ideas I had acquired among the savages, joined on to my proper personality again.

It all came before me in a moment — out of nothingness. It grew

plain and distinct under a sky, pale blue with a haze of nostalgia. I recalled Oxford as a sweet, clean and delicate place in which I had passed a harmless and hopeful adolescence. I remembered it now as the home of unmitigated pleasantness. I saw the great gate of Lattmeer as I had once admired it in the moonlight when I was returning from a mighty talk we had had in a man's rooms in Christ Church about the fine things to be done in the world, about the creative spirit of Oxford — as distinguished from the hard materialism of Cambridge — about Rhodes, the White Man's Burthen, English traits, and such-like noble topics. It was a far cry from that Blettsworthy to this skin-clad, bone-crowned eccentric, bearing a staff decorated in an uncongenial manner, chewing the Nut that Cleanses All Things, and expectorating according to the ritual required.

What happened to me? What was I doing in this place?

Before me spread the unclean village street in which a few hens were pecking. The huts were dotted along the broad path irregularly, each with its little yard in a thorn palisade. Up the street a naked yellow woman with the hanging breasts of accomplished maternity, and bearing an earthen pot on her head, paused to regard me before entering her house. She had been bringing water from the upper spring. To the right of me and before me, and to the left across the rushing river, the cliffs towered up. For it was a part of the strangeness of these people that in a land where sunshine was pleasing and grateful they were content to live in a gorge through which the wind blew rarely and in which odours brooded long. On rocky shelves to the right were the upper huts of the masterful individuals, and some scanty dwarfed trees. A path wound against the cliff face to the sunlit vegetation in the free and ample uplands above.

I walked heavily. I had contracted a sort of chronic malaria, and my movements lacked the unconscious ease of my Oxford life. There was much infection among these people, and few failed to give visible evidence of catarrhs, petty fevers, disorders of the blood, scabs, itches, parasites and the like. They were a people naturally sturdy, but infectious and contagious through their dirty habits and their fitful carelessness. That morning I felt inelastic and almost as if

I were middle-aged. The skull upon my head oppressed me and the ill-dressed skin I wore, with its flat smell of decay, delayed but not arrested, and its stiffness and heaviness, chafed and weighed me down. Why did I endure this thing? To what had I sunken?

I stopped short, waved the flattering benediction to the woman, and looked about me at the squalid scene. I ended by staring at my fingers. They were filthy, but in spite of the dirt it seemed to me that they were larger and yellower than I had ever supposed them to be in my Oxford days. They were now almost like the hands of any other savage.

I put my yellow hand to the dirty skull that had been clapped upon my head weeks, months, or years ago. Had I become a savage also?

I was going to the upper table house to eat with Chit the soothsayer, and with Ardam the warrior with the splinter of razor shell through his nose, and with three old men. God knew what I should find to eat there, but this morning I lacked appetite. To what had I come, and how was it I had submitted to be the thing I was?

I strained my mind back to that first night in the palisade.

Fear!

My soul had been white with the fear of the horror of death, and when I had realised I was not to die I had been ready to submit to anything they chose to write upon my soul. Certain things I had perceived were expected of me. How readily I had done the expected thing! At the last moment of my trial I had turned from the milk to the draught of blood. It had been a good guess for survival, but a renunciation of my own stomach, heart and brain. And now I went about in this garb, making the proper salutations as Chit had taught them me. I did not dare fling off this half-cleaned skull or cast this stinking skin aside. I did not dare break and fling this filthy staff of mine into some cleansing fire. I did not dare. I did not dare. I looked upward, and above the darkened cliffs, touching their upper levels to translucent glory, shone the deep blue of heaven. “Out of the deeps, O Lord!” I cried — but not too loudly, for I did not want a lot of people to come running out of their huts.

No audible response came out of that broad ribbon of blue light. But cool and clear in my heart came the answer: “Cast them down and see.”

I hesitated. I trembled and blenched. I sighed. “I am ill,” I said, and went on reluctantly to my eating with Chit and Ardam and the three old men.

Perhaps, I told myself, I have been given a place and prestige here for a wise purpose. Perhaps I should not throw my position away too rashly. We Blettsworthys stand for the gentler civilisation, the civilisation of infinite tact. If I talk to these people, touch their imaginations, broaden their outlook, I may win them insidiously from much of their cruelty and filth. But if suddenly, after so much surrender, I defy them, to what can it lead but the cooking-pot?

Yet I might do something. At present it was certainly true that I was being so insidious, so Fabian, that I was doing nothing at all.

Came the sound of a drumming from among the stunted trees above. It was the dinner drum, a drum of human skin which in skilful hands was supposed to render very faithfully the borborygmic noises of a hungry Megatherium. I quickened my paces because I was not expected to be late at the upper table.

§ 3. THE EVIL PEOPLE

I AM not naturally of a curious and inquiring disposition. If the superficial aspect of things is pleasing to me I can see no reason for disturbing it; if it is unpromising, why should I delve deeper? I have none of the qualities that are needed in a successful explorer or a scientific investigator.

And I lack exactitude — conspicuously. For instance, I do not know to this day whether the Rampole islanders are dolichocephalic or brachycephalic; my impression is that their skulls are just medium assorted. And I am equally vague about their totemism, animism, taboos and suchlike usages. Nor whether the language I spoke and understood was agglutinate, allelomorphic, monophysite, heterocercal, or whatever the proper term may be. When I talk it to scientific inquirers, they lose their tempers. These people I had fallen among seemed just dirty, greedy, lazy, furtively lascivious, morally timid, dishonest, stupid, very yellow, tough and irritable, and very hard, obdurate and cruel. With that summary of their qualities the

ethnologist must be contented or not as seems to him most fitting.

And it fell in with my own self-protective nonchalance that concealment and falsity were wrought into the nature of these people. Most readers I suppose would have expected a certain brutish directness from savages, but specialists in these things tell me that that is never how things are in savage communities. Savagery, with its numerous taboos, its occultism and fetish, its complex ritualism, is mentally more intricate than civilisation. The minds of savages are even more tortuous than they are confused; they are misdirected by crazy classifications and encumbered with symbolism, metaphor, metonymy and elaborate falsifications; it is the civilised man who thinks simply and clearly. And it is the same with primitive laws, customs and institutions; there is always irrational elaboration and disingenuousness. Civilisation is simplification. My own experiences certainly carry out this view. Direct statement I never encountered on Rampole Island. Not even direct address. The real name of everyone was concealed. You used honorifics and spoke in the third person. It was forbidden even to use the names of many things. They had to be referred to by complicated circumlocutions. This, I am told by ethnologists, is the common practice of savages. Everything these islanders said therefore meant something a little different and everything they set about doing they did with an air of really doing something else. So that I was perpetually haunted by the fear of misunderstandings that might do me injury, and my longing for the simple lucidity of the Oxford intelligence became at times nearly intolerable For example, though I have called these islanders cannibals, no allusion was ever permitted to the fact that the only possible big meat on the island, big meat as distinguished from fish, rats, mice and the like, was human flesh. The flesh of the sloth was taboo and believed to be extremely poisonous, particularly the flesh of the giant sloth. There was an excess of fish. One wearied of eating fish until the weariness amounted to loathing. I know only too well how acute the longing for good meat can be. It forced its way through a jungle of suppressions. But human flesh was never known as human flesh; it was spoken of as the Gift of the Friend, and to have inquired about either the friend or her gifts would have amounted to the extremest indelicacy. Oddly enough, and a thing in

complete contrast to the ways of any other savages, there was a theory that only in warfare was it lawful to kill a human being of set intention. There was however a very exacting code of behaviour, and the slightest infringement of innumerable taboos, the slightest disregard of ritual observances, novelties in deportment, any unexpected proceeding, and even indolence and the incapacity to perform an assigned task, was punished by a blow on the head known as Reproof. As the Reproof was administered by a powerful savage, equipped with a club of hard wood weighing about two hundredweight and set with sharks' teeth, it rarely failed to slay, and the consequent body had then to be "reconciled." The scalp, bones, and less appetising viscera of the departed were put to dry up and decay on the high altar of the Great Goddess, which I found an extremely unpleasant den in consequence, and the rest of the body, no longer identified with its original owner, was placed on a lower altar for distribution among the people as the Gift of the Friend. Since everyone surviving benefited by the abundance of the Friend's gifts, everyone was alert to note the slightest breach of propriety in the community, and the visible level of morals and behaviour, according to the prevailing standards, was consequently very high. Unhappily neither cleanliness, kindliness nor truthfulness found any honour among these standards.

At least an equal reticence veiled the sexual life of the tribe. Everything primary in that respect was subjected to a rigorous concealment; polygamy was customary, the first wife having a precedence over her supplementaries; but the difficulties set to pairing for the young were enormous and the ceremonies of the first union tedious and distasteful. The candidate husband had to satisfy some rigorous tests, had to draw a satisfactory straw from a bunch in the hands of the soothsayer and had to comply with the requisite conditions for building a hut. Because of these impediments and because of the polygamy of the elders, a considerable proportion of the tribe remained perforce formally celibate, subjected to the impulses of a gross dietary and unclean habits and to the incessant vigilance of friends and neighbours alert for any slip that might lead to the high altar of the Great Goddess and the cooking pots. A hut and a wife or so went together and for that reason alone my position

was ambiguous, since I had a hut which I kept even morbidly clean and refused to provide for any of the disengaged virgins of the community.

The reader, who may find my fastidiousness remarkable, seeing how much else I had accepted in my degradation, might be of a different opinion could he have seen and savoured the young debutantes in question. They used an oil made from the liver of fish to render their dark hair more glossy; their complexions were strangely enhanced with patternings of red and yellow ochre and a scanty costume consisting chiefly of various girdles, necklaces, bracelets, anklets and nose plugs of sharks' teeth challenged the embraces of a lover. Each alternate tooth was blackened or stained with a dye the colour of madder and perpetually they chewed the Nut that Cleanses. Yet so powerfully do the passions affect the imagination that there were times by firelight or moonlight when I could find some of these oily shining statuettes not wholly wanting in allurement.

Occasionally there would be dances about a bonfire before the hut of the Great Goddess and her timber image would be brought out upon a platform to dominate the scene. Sometimes the scared little tree sloth or one of its litter, of which I will tell later, would be brought to grace the proceedings by climbing about a red-dyed perch. The youths and maidens would exhibit themselves and dance together. These festivals were conducted under a rigorous etiquette and watched over closely by the elders, and any of the young people who succumbed to the obvious suggestions of these gatherings would be unobtrusively withdrawn from the assembly for the administration of the Reproof amidst the reprobation of their friends and relatives. It became indelicate to refer to them thereafter. In this way the coarser cravings of the community were allayed under the mask of a superficial gaiety.

But that was merely one way of providing for the baser needs of the tribe. A multitude of other traps awaited the unobservant, the unlucky or the recalcitrant, and secured a permanent edible class for the comfort and support of the higher ranks in the social pyramid. There was for example a strict taboo upon all climbing or indeed upon all talk of climbing towards the sunlight of the uplands. In this

gorge these folks were born and for the greater part of them, except for those who went out for the sea fishing, life was lived from beginning to end in the gorge. It was a long, narrow world that varied in width from perhaps a hundred yards to three miles at the widest part, and above certain rapids and a great cascade was the frontier of murderous enemies. The uplands were supposed to be wastes of incalculable danger and measureless evil for the ordinary human being. Only men of exceptional magic powers might ascend there. The light, the vivid fringe of green, were insidious temptations to be banished from speech and thought. To speak of them, even to whisper to untrustworthy ears, was to come within reach of the Reproof. And so well were these restrictions sustained that I am convinced a large proportion of our tribal population went from the cradle to the cooking pot without ever dreaming of the possibility of any other sort of life.

When these things are explained the reader will understand why it was that an extremely vapid conventionality of speech and act distinguished these people and that a certain inexpressive wistfulness tempered the natural ugliness of many of the younger faces. The life of the common man was dull and spiritless to an extreme degree. It made a dismal paradox. The whole being was so taken up by the need to keep living, that there was no courage nor energy left over to make anything of life. Even upon feast days the people lurked warily at home in their huts for fear of the gladness and excitement that goeth before a fall. My imagination was particularly struck by their limited range of movement, accustomed as I was to a civilisation in which everyone — or at least everyone in a position to do so — was free to go all over the earth. It was only upon reflection that I realised that similar restrictions have been the usual lot of mankind since human society began, and that the relaxation of bounds is a very recent thing in human experience. Even in the bright world of to-day, the attraction and necessity of home increases with the square of the distance, and not to have a return ticket is for most of us a symbol of disaster. With all the irresponsible liberties of lunacy it was still only against considerable opposition that I won assent at last to an expedition to the crest of the cliffs to watch the giant sloths at pasture and gain some conception of the broader aspects of this strange

world into which fate had brought me.

But of the great sloths of the plateau that sometimes even came blundering down into the gorge itself, and of their quite extraordinary biology, and of certain strange superstitions that attached to them, I must tell later. And later on too I will tell of the wars and trade of these savages with their neighbours up the gorge, and of the little old prolific white tree sloth which was supposed to be the father of the tribe. I have a little wandered from my story to give this brief description of tribal conditions.

I was telling of how I woke out of some forgotten preoccupation and discovered myself to be myself on my way to an eating with Chit the soothsayer and Ardam the warrior and the three hairless ancients who administered justice and preserved the traditions of the village.

§ 4. DISCOURSE WITH THE FIVE SAGES

THOUGH I display an ungracious disposition in the admission, I will confess I detested all these five sages with whom I was to eat. I had always considered them ugly and frightful and profoundly dangerous, and now that I remembered distinctly that I was Arnold Blettsworthy of Lattmeer and recalled all the serenities and amplitudes of the liberal civilisation out of which I had fallen to these associations, and that I had been cowed to acquiescence in these base conditions, a new indignation and resentment mingled with the hatred and aversion I had hitherto concealed. That morning I felt I trailed clouds of glory into this dingy assembly and entered in an altogether novel spirit of self-assertion.

The eating place was a round hut about a low circular slab, its roof was domed by the bending-in of long flexible reeds of which it was composed, and its wall was decorated with the frieze of human skulls, which was the normal architectural feature of all buildings of importance. The roundness of the slab which played the part of our dinner table waived the issue of who might be the most important of those squatting about it. The most striking and least offensive figure of the five was certainly Chit, of whom one spoke as the Explanation or the Light. I have already said that he was thick-set, wrinkled and

hunchbacked and that he wore a great leaf made into a cylindrical roll by way of a head-dress. He was one of the brownest of the islanders, unusually big about the head and with very bright, dark furtively observant eyes. They expressed an intelligence uncommon on the Island, a watchful intelligence. He sat on his hams now with his hands resting on his knees, scrutinising my face as I entered.

I detected and disliked a sort of proprietorship in his customary manner towards me, though indeed I owed my life to him. He it was had first ruled me insane and immune from Reproof. Under his directions my position as the Sacred Lunatic had been defined. To him it fell to observe and interpret my vagaries, to indicate what were the omens of my behaviour. Occasionally he would suggest action to me. In that matter we had a tacit understanding.

In marked contrast to his alert visage was the wooden countenance of the warrior Ardam, the Honour of the tribe. It had that quality, so common among the military in all communities, of looking like a profile even when it was seen from in front, so detached and inexpressive was it. Through his nose was thrust a large razor shell and he had sharks' teeth through the lobes of his ears and large rolls of flesh cut and tormented into prominence above his large, protuberant and glassy eyes. His hair was plastered into horns tinted with red ochre, and across his naked chest, rolls of raised flesh and mysterious tattooing were further enhanced with yellow ochre and charcoal. His flapper-like hands enveloped his knobby knees, his legs were folded with extreme precision and tightness and he sucked his teeth noisily in anticipation of his meal.

The three hairless old men were the judges and assessors of the tribe. One had an enormous flattened nose and spiral tattooing on his cheeks; the second was like a skin dried on to a skull and his teeth were coquettishly alternate red and black like a woman's; the third, whose cheeks also were tattooed but in concentric circles, was in a more liquid form of decay and blinked and dribbled and oozed. In his old age he had given birth to scattered bunches of facial hair. All three regarded my late arrival malevolently. At the sight of them I abandoned my intention of throwing aside my unpleasant garb and talking to them freely and at once. Instead I made my habitual salutation and subdued my all too civilised legs to the squatting

position on the right hand of Chit.

Ardam clapped his hands loudly and two virgins, painted and oiled, appeared and placed upon the table a long dish of wood, like a very broad canoe, in which was our meal.

We did not fall to forthwith. Etiquette forbade. We put our right hands in the dish, grasped succulent-looking morsels and waited, eyeing each other with a pretence of affectionate geniality. We must have looked like three pairs of boxers about to close.

Then, as if by a simultaneous impulse, we set ourselves to thrust the chosen morsel each into the mouth of his antagonist. So we demonstrated our unselfish preference of his enjoyment to our own. It was my habit to select as gristly a lump as possible and aim rather at the eye than the mouth, biting hard on any fingers that came too far in pursuit of the tit-bit thrust upon me. That day, however, Chit caught my morsel with the skill of a hippopotamus in a zoological garden and escaped with digits intact, wiping them neatly across my face. I reeled back but recovered my equilibrium. "Ughgoo," said I. We consumed our chunks with noisy gusto and appreciative grunts, continuing to chew for a minute or so beyond the bare necessities of the case.

"The Friend has given us of her Best," said the skull-like ancient when he had cleaned his speaking gear. We echoed the gracious words and having made this sacrifice to good manners, set ourselves to scramble vigorously for the rest of the dish. I will confess that I competed with but little vigour that day, confining myself to the roots and vegetables with which the meat was garnished.

Until the sounds of deglutition gave place to intimations of a grateful repletion, good manners prohibited all distraction of the attention by conversation, but when on these occasions the main platter was bare and a gourd or so of the fermented milk of the boga-nut had been consumed, there was always a manifest disposition on the part of everyone present to tolerate talk. Then it was that the mind of the tribe became active and ideas were exchanged and toyed with. Then it was I acquired information. But to-day, now that my memory had returned to me, I was rather disposed to impart than obtain knowledge.

The moment came for conversation after the tight-skinned ancient

had brought the actual eating to a ceremonial end. It was his duty to say, “Gratitude to the Friend,” and demonstrate the satisfying quality of his repast.

“Gratitude to the Friend,” we protested, with the like demonstrations.

“Salutations to the wise little tree sloth, the patriarch and ruler of our tribe. May he crawl about the Tree of Life for ever.”

For there was a sort of cage of these creatures built among the branches of some convenient trees on a bushy shelf higher up the cliff, and there was an absurd persuasion, which most of the common people believed implicitly, that these harmless little animals were the real directors of the tribal fortunes. Chit, Ardam and the ancients were understood to be merely ministers and these queer pets of the community were supposed to whisper wisdom into their ears. It is evident that this odd convention must be the decaying vestige of some very ancient animal totemism, but with my poor powers of enquiry I was never able to get any light upon its origins. The only parallel I could think of in the civilised world was the sacred empire of the Mikado before the modernisation of Japan. In practice it relieved Chit and his associates from the detailed responsibility for many petty favouritisms, persecutions and tyrannies. The little tree sloth, they said, had whispered it, and the instinctive loyalty of the tribe was at once aroused. Since Chit and his friends lorded it over them and devoured them, it was nice to imagine the little sloths lording it over Chit and his friends.

I echoed the customary aspiration that our Tree of Life might never be rid of its bunch of little clinging parasite masters.

“And now,” said I, with my heart drumming desperately for courage, and with an affectation of casual ease I laid aside the decaying skull that had pressed so long upon my brain.

“I find it hot here in the gorge,” said I. “As I came up here I saw the sunshine on the uplands and suddenly I remembered the great world out of which I came to you and the space and freedom and hope of it. Never have I told you of it. Now I can begin the telling.” And I flung aside the dirty old skin that wrapped me about and squatted, a stark white Caucasian, among these brown folk in their strange garb and their honorific disguises.

I was interrupted by a simultaneous scream from the three ancient men. Three fingers pointed. “Look!” they cried. “What is he doing?”

The soldier did not point but he turned very red and his projecting eyes regarded me with an expression of wrathful enquiry. He would certainly have said something about my deliberate indecorum had he been able to think of anything sufficiently coherent to say. But he was a man of deeds rather than words.

Chit allayed his startled seniors by a gesture.

“This,” he said,” is not a sin. For as we all know and admit, our Sacred Lunatic cannot sin. This is a Significant Happening. The spirit of the goddess is upon him. Let him do and say what he is moved to do even though it startle you. And then we—” meaning himself—“will find the meaning of what he has said and done.” Ardam grunted ambiguously.

I thanked God in my heart to find that my courage was not ebbing.

“As I came hither to-day, most high and noble brothers,” I said, “I saw the blue sky. And a curtain rolled away and my mind went back to that city of light wherein formerly I studied all the wisdom of mankind. It was a sweet and gracious city. There every day one heard of new things and new hopes. There I learnt men need not live in gullies and gorges for ever but out in the free open, need not prey on the weakness and limitations of their less lucky fellows, need not go perpetually fearful and restrained.”

“This is madness,” said the ancient with the tattooed cheeks, and fell to picking his teeth with a gupa thorn.

“Naturally it is madness,” said Chit, without taking his eyes off my face, “because you see he is mad. But it signifies. Tell us more of this land from which you came.”

“World,” I corrected.

“World,” he acquiesced.

“There is method in his madness,” said the ancient over his toothpick. “Such words deserve Reproof, mad or sane though he be.”

Ardam smacked his thigh assentingly.

But now I realised the super-intelligence of Chit. “Tell us more about this world of yours,” he demanded, and I saw a living curiosity in his eyes.

The slobbering old man snivelled a remark. “Everyone knows he

came out of the sea. Your Wisdom taught us that. The sun shone on rotting rubbish and begot him. There is no other world but this world in which we live. How *can* there be?"

"True," said Chit. "Nevertheless we will hear this Fable he will tell us."

"Hear him!" snorted Ardam. "*Drill* him, say I. Let *me* put him through it and you'll hear no more of this better world of his."

"That may come afterwards," said Chit persuasively while his eyes sought to carry reassurance to me.

"The lands of the world I come from spread wide and open under the sun."

"And people walk about upside-down!" said the skintight elder and was overcome by his own wit.

"Such reproof as is given does not destroy. Men live not on each other but on the meat and drink they combine to produce — like brothers."

"Blasphemy and mischief," cried the slobberer. "What is this about living on each other? *Who* lives on anyone?"

"It is utterly foolish," said the ugliest of the three.

Chit smiled at my incredible statement and moved his head slowly from side to side. "And there is enough for all?" he led me on.

"Enough for all."

"But then they breed and there is not enough for all?"

"The more mouths, the more hands. The land spreads wide and the sun shines. So far — well — yes, there has been and there is enough for all."

I stuck to that stoutly. For these savages it was necessary to simplify my facts a little. They would not understand half-tones.

So I launched out upon an impromptu panegyric of civilisation and all that it had done and could do for mankind, mixing the two a little more thoroughly perhaps than the facts justified. Adapting myself as much as I could to the outlook of my hearers I gave a highly-coloured and hopeful version of life in a modern community as I had been brought up to perceive it. I laid stress on the practical benefits accruing from the good moral tone created by fair laws and sound education. I enlarged upon the willing charities, kindly consideration and free services that met the needs of the distressed

citizen, so far as there were distressed citizens.

I was surprised and pleased to note much of my uncle's optimism and moral fervour reappearing in my discourse, for I had feared that all that had been left behind me for ever. The resonance of my voice satisfied me; I desired to hear more of it, and I pursued my argument with gathering confidence.

I spoke particularly of the cleanness and healthiness of the civilised life, of the happiness and amplitude of a state of affairs in which everyone was educated to confidence in his neighbour and of the abundance of the goods and conveniences our highly organised co-operations made available for all. I spoke of electric lighting and power transmission, public conveyances and factory inspection. I described an excursion to the sea and a football match in such roseate terms that I was even myself won over to an enhanced appreciation of these popular outings. I gave a sketch of democratic institutions and of the services rendered by the press. I contrasted our kindly constitutional monarchy with the superstitious cultivation of a breed of inferior animals, and our popular church, comprehensive enough to embrace almost every type of belief, with the bloodstained ritualism of the goddess. My vision of Oxford became like a picture of Athens painted by a Victorian artist, and it would have been difficult to distinguish my account of the Bodleian from a description of the brain of God.

As I warmed to my subject I became less aware of the hairless old men and the war lord; they dissolved into a sceptical mist and only Chit remained vivid, close at hand, listening with marked intelligence, occasionally asking quite penetrating questions and scrutinising me closely if I did not answer pat to his point.

"Are there soldiers?" asked Ardam suddenly emerging from the mist that had enveloped him.

"There are soldiers," I said, "men of honour whose sole aim is to keep the peace. For it is a rule of our world that if we would ensure peace we must be bountifully prepared for war."

"Arh!" said Ardam, and a certain hostility faded from his manner.

But as I talked on Chit became more and more my sole listener. A change seemed to come over him. He remained as ugly as ever, but his strange hat became less noticeable and some subtle infiltration of

delicacy civilised the intelligence of his face.

He listened, he nodded, he questioned with an increasing scepticism. His interruptions betrayed less and less of the stilted limitations of the savage mind. Abruptly he truncated my exposition.

"You yourself," he said, "know that you are lying."

I stopped short.

"I do not know why you should talk like this," he added, "about an incredible world."

"Incredible!"

"There is no such world," said Chit. "There never was such a world. There never could be such a world, for men are not made that way."

I looked round, and the rigid face of the soldier and the ugly, cruel and foolish countenances of the three sages had become very solid and near. He glanced aside at them before he spoke again. "You are a dreamer, you are an insane dreamer, and you are passing through life in a dream." He swept civilisation aside with a gesture of his hand. "The real world is about you here and now, the only real world. See it for what it is."

And suddenly something gave way in my heart and I myself doubted of many of the things I had been saying.

§ 5. THE DREARY MEGATHERIA

THE natural history of the Giant Sloth, *Megatherium Americanum*, as I gathered it from the Rampole Islanders and pieced it together with my own observations, is, I admit, an almost unbelievable story. Though, curiously enough, two biologists of my acquaintance find my facts more acceptable than do most of those with smaller qualifications to judge their credibility, to whom I have related them. But I do not offer this section of my book as a contribution to science. I give it here for what it is, a necessary part of my extraordinary experiences. So far as I, at any rate, am concerned, the facts given here are true and they remain true for me in spite of much disillusionment upon other matters. For the details I am unable to give chapter and verse; I could not face the mildest of cross-

examining barristers, and that the reader must bear in mind. Yet the reality of some of my impressions is overwhelming, even to matters of detail: the great flank of the beast with its long, dirty, coarse, greyish, drab hair, foul with lichenous weeds and fungi, the scrabbling claws upon the stones and roots, the peculiar *stale* smell. I do most firmly believe that in some way, though it may not be in the actual way my treacherous memory now presents it to me, I encountered these animals.

Unfortunately I cannot recall the arrangements for my visit to the uplands nor how we clambered out of the gorge. But in all my remembered observations I am conscious of the presence of Chit and of the terrified boy we brought with us as a porter on this expedition.

The reader is probably familiar with the main facts about these Giant Sloths. They abounded in the world in the days before the Mammoth and the Mastodon, the sabre-toothed Lion and such-like monsters, and there were European as well as American species. But every variety had disappeared long before the advent of man, except in South America. In South America, which is also the last refuge of the various tree sloths, one species as big as the living elephant survived to quite modern times in the desolate wilderness of South Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, and, if my witness has any value, on Rampole Island it still survives. A skeleton is to be seen, mounted more or less dramatically, in any considerable museum of natural history. Such skeletons are not, in the strict sense of the word, *fossil* skeletons; they are not mineralized like real fossils, like the remains of the far more ancient Dinosaurs, for example; they are actual bones, just as the skeleton of a horse or cow would be actual fresh bones. Remains of the skeletons of Megatheria have been found so fresh indeed that fragments of the skin with hair on and bones with adherent gristle exist. Bones have been obtained manifestly chipped by man. But, in spite of definite expeditions into these vast desolations, the animal has eluded the explorer.

Rampole Island, notwithstanding the way in which its projecting masses seem to offer themselves for examination, has escaped the search. On the charts it is a desert outline, and in our geography a name. I doubt if any white man but myself has ever penetrated its gorges or faced its inhabitants. There, protected by superstitious

taboos and by other helping circumstances, some hundreds of these clumsy denizens of the prehistoric world still persist. Many of them must be of the extremest antiquity, for, like carp and some sorts of parrot and one or two other creatures, there seems to be no natural limit to their lives. No carnivora exist to prey upon them; men will not hunt them, and Chit told me that not only to eat of the flesh, but even to get a full whiff of their decay is certain death. But that may be only a savage's exaggeration. I never put it to the test.

But let me first describe the scenery that opened before us as we came out of the gorge, because its characteristics are closely associated with the habits of these primeval ancient creatures. When I had looked up to the crests of the cliff from below I had formed an exaggerated idea of the richness of the verdure I should find up there in the sunshine, but even on my first brief emergence I had noted a peculiar broken and disturbed appearance of the trees and plants. On this second and more sustained excursion, for we wandered for five or six days, I was better able to understand Chit's explanations and to realize what had happened. These Megatheria live entirely upon fresh shoots and budding vegetation. They progress slowly over the uplands, searching the trees for growing points and nipping out every thrusting bud. The consequence is that every tree and stump, without exception, is dwarfed and crippled by them. The grass of the open spaces has been devastated, except where prickly and thorny growths have protected a bunch of blades from the destroyer. They kill all flowers they see. And the eggs of birds they consume, crushing the nests, and against any small active creatures they wage a sluggish yet surprisingly effective war. They move with such apparent slowness that often they take their victims by surprise. And on many of the lighter things of the world they seem to exercise a kind of hypnotism.

They do not rise high up on their legs like most mammals, but rather drag their bodies reptile fashion. We wandered for some time without coming upon any, though presently we struck a trail which looked as though a huge sackful of old iron had been dragged along the ground. Over the trail hung a smell as though the ultimate vilest dustman had recently passed, and Chit warned me to go discreetly because of the ticks and other nasty parasites that might be left behind. We saw our first monster towards sundown. This was

regrettable, because it is not wise to camp in the neighbourhood of Megatheria — they are malignant and have no fear of fire — but my curiosity to see the brute at close quarters was so great that, in spite of the whimpering and sniffing and muttered protests of our bearer, we stalked it discreetly for some time before we struck off from its course.

Through museums and reconstruction pictures the reader has probably formed a conception of this creature; he knows that it has an enormous rump, tail and hind legs, and a head of which by far the larger half is lower jaw. But in all the imaginative restorations I have ever seen it is much too ordinary, much too like a well-groomed animal in a menagerie, and I have never once seen it in the favourite pose of the illustrator, magnificently reared up almost like an after-dinner speaker, with the long claws of its fore-feet clasping a tree. It squats up, but leaning backward on its tail and with its fore-claws flopping on its belly. Nor does it walk, bear-fashion, as some skeleton fixers have supposed.

These experts do not seem to have noted how uncomfortably that puts the claws to the ground. Its gait, as a matter of fact, is unlike that of any other animal I know. It goes on what are its equivalents for elbows and fore-arm, with its fore-claws hanging loose and rattling in front; its head is held low and usually on one side, and its rump is far higher than any other part, so that it seems to cringe along. It is in almost the attitude of an Oriental on a praying carpet. Then it is much more fleshy about the lower lip and more snouty than the artists imagine; it has a great, protruding, slobbery, pink, underhung mouth, its lip and nose are bunched together and adorned with bristles, and it has very small pink-rimmed eyes. It can put out its lower lip like a coal-scuttle. It hears, I know, but I did not mark and I cannot describe its ears. Its skin is a disagreeable pink, but mostly hidden by long coarse hairs that are almost quills, the colour of old thatch and infested not only with a diverse creeping population, including the largest black ticks I have ever beheld, but with a slimy growth of greenish algae and lichens that form pendent masses over the flanks and tail. Over the rump and tail there is real soil; I have seen weeds, and once a little white flower, actually growing there. The whole body smells like rotting seaweed mixed with night-soil,

and the breath — when on one terrifying occasion I whiffed it — had a peculiar foetid sweetness. The beast usually moves forward in rheumatic jerks, usually with a grunt of self-preoccupation, the front part is lifted and extended and then the loins and hind legs, with a rather comical solicitude, come up to the new position and so, *da capo*. But, as I was to find later, it can quicken this crawl to a considerably more rapid advance. "Galumphing "would be quite a good word to express its paces. The creature peers about it with peculiar sniffing perturbations of the very flexible snout, and occasionally opens its mouth and emits a noise like that of a broken-hearted calf, but louder and more sustained.

Such was the beast I scrutinized in the twilight amidst the mutilated trees and shrubs of the island upland. It did not seem to be aware of our presence so close to its flank. I was fascinated by this fantastic specimen of Nature's handiwork and I might have lingered until dark, watching it crawling and browsing, had not the persistent plucking of the boy at my elbow, and a word or so from Chit, recalled me to the need of finding some camping-place before night overtook us.

At the time I did not attach as much importance as they did to camping out of reach of these beasts. This one we watched seemed unobservant and almost pathetically in-aggressive. But because of fresh tracks we came upon later, Chit insisted upon pushing on through the chaparral until long after dark, before he would consent to a halt. We chose a little sandy opening near a stream, with plenty of moss nearby to make us litters for the night. I had my customary skin with me by way of a rug, but I had left my official head-dress below. We built a fire of dead wood and prepared our meal of roots. The boy had brought a cooking-pot to set upon the hot ashes. I had secured and hoarded several boxes of matches from the plunder of the wreck before the savages learnt the use of them, and now, to the great terror and admiration of the boy, I utilized this treasure. We ate. The moon was rising and the night fairly warm, and for a time we squatted and conversed, while the boy watched me, round-eyed, with a newborn respect.

Chit and I naturally fell talking about the Megatheria.

"But what can they do to a man?" said I.

Chit said they could rise up and fall upon him with their weight and crush him and claw him and tear his skin and flesh off in strips. And also it is unlucky to incur their hostility. Their malevolence had no limits. And they were very, very old and deeply cunning. And poisonous. “Why do we see no young?”

“Nowadays there are very few young. And they die.”

I was astonished. He assured me that all the young of the Megatheria died. That was how we became possessed of their skins and bones.

I asked some further questions and his replies were so incredible that I made him repeat his assertions. If all the young of the Megatheria died, then some day there would be no more Megatheria? But the savage mind was not accustomed to look ahead like that. Why did they die? The Megatheria did not now nurse their young; they were too old. The instinct had died out in them. They disliked all young things. Nowadays very few were born, if any. I blinked, for the smoke of our fire stung, and peered at my companion’s ugly, earnest face under its ridiculous head-dress. I saw not a trace of facetiousness on that broad, red-lit mask. I asked for enlightenment upon some obvious points. It was hard, he said, to determine the sex of a Megatherium, nor was any heat or love-making known to occur among them. He himself believed that they were all females now, and that, they conceived only when startled out of their ordinary habits of life and seriously frightened. They conceived then, he declared, and repented of it. Once, long ago, there may have been a few males. He did not know. He did not even care to guess.

“But then — ?” said I, at a loss.

“They have this land to themselves. They eat. They lie in the sun. They have enough for themselves and there would not be enough for more. Why should they ever die?

Nothing hunts them. Nothing eats them. Nothing dare hunt or eat because of the poison of their blood. Here they are. Part of your madness, Lunatic, is to be for ever talking of this Progress of yours. Are there no Megatheria in your world? — that world of yours that keeps going on and on. Does nothing in your world refuse either to breed or die?”

“Nothing,” I said, and fell into thought.

“No animal,” I corrected.

He watched me for a time, smiling that sceptical smile of his. Had he not been so manifestly a savage I could have imagined he had penetrated to the reason for that reservation. His head was a little on one side, his back hunched and his huge hands rested on his knees. The boy peered up at our faces, overawed by the incomprehensibility of our talk.

“Sleep,” said Chit at last, and rose up stretching and yawning to lie down. The boy, at his gesture of command, piled the fire high. I sat, staring into the smoky blaze and watching the lapping, investigatory flames conquer their way through the dry twigs and branches. For a time Chit watched me, and then seemed to come to some conclusion about me and instantly fell asleep.

I was full of the discovery that for me the understanding of life and Nature had scarcely begun. This story of the Megatheria exaggerated and made plain to me certain strange facts about my world that had long been sitting, so to speak, on the threshold of my apprehension, awaiting the fit moment for my attention. Now they came in and took possession. I had been brought up on the idea of a tremendous Struggle for Existence, in which every creature and every species was kept hard and bright and up to the mark by a universal relentless competition. Yet when one came to think of it, very few things indeed were really struggling for existence and scarcely anything alive was hard and bright and up to the mark. That they were was an important part of my early delusions. I had supposed that when a species was confronted by changed conditions it set about and varied and produced an adaptation to fit it beautifully to these new conditions and survived copiously, and that nothing could defeat it except another competing species which had adapted itself still better and more promptly and was surviving still more copiously; whereas, indeed, species under altered conditions did the queerest and most futile things like a fumbling idiot asked a too difficult question, and prolific reproduction was only one of a myriad possibilities amidst these responses. I had still to learn that most of those wonderful flowers that are so amazingly fitted to be fertilised by this or that special moth are never fertilised in that way. A bird has exterminated the moth meanwhile. I had still to realise that even

more striking than the survival of the fittest is the belatedness of the fitting. I did not know then, as I have learnt since, that all the wood anemones of a spring in the north of England bear their flowers in vain. No seed appears, and even in the south of England it is rare. There are endless striking instances of such futile "evolution." And I had still to realise that such a triumphant species as man can triumph only to convert its habitat into a desert. He burns and cuts down the trees that shelter his life, he brings goats to nibble Arabia into a desert, and now he sets about converting the nitrogen of the air into fertiliser and explosive so that presently his atmosphere may be unbreathable. As none of these things had dawned on me, these clumsy monsters who ruled the uplands of Rampole Island came to me as a stupendous biological shock.

I sat in a mixture of firelight and moonshine and ticked off upon my fingers the extraordinary propositions that were breaking in upon my intelligence.

Item the first: animals do not necessarily survive by being swifter, stronger or wiser than others. A creature which crawls about destroying the buds and growing points that would otherwise expand to feed a multitude of a brighter, more active species, makes the life of that other species impossible. Animals may survive by devastation. They may also survive by carrying some disease in a mitigated form that will exterminate other species. No need to outshine or defeat a more energetic race. They may waste or stink it out of existence.

Then item the second: there is no need to go on breeding in order to survive. You survive by being continually there, not by multiplying there. The energy of these Megatheria wasted itself very little in breeding; instead it went back into the individual system, so that the processes of tissue exhaustion and decay which burn out the life of most higher creatures did not wear them out. They had got along for a vast time without either reproduction or rejuvenescence. They devoured the food of the children and enjoyed a Saturnian Empire over their habitat. Nature thrust these heaps of aimless flesh in my face with the same indifference she displayed when she proffered me the wren or the rose or a laughing child.

Moreover, item the third: a beast may outlive other creatures and

then itself end. The struggle for life can terminate in the triumph of types unfit to live, types merely successfully most noxious. In nature a relative survival of the rotten and dying is possible. And these Megatheria which have made large areas of South America a dreary desert, have passed and are passing away — even on Rampole Island now and then, one more of them ceases to crawl and lies lax and presently swells and decomposes. So that so far from Evolution being necessarily a strenuous upward progress to more life and yet more life, it might become, it could and did evidently in this case become, a graceless drift towards a dead end.

And this was the real truth about that brisk, hard, bracing Evolution, stern only to be kind, that I had learnt to trust — when I learnt to trust so many things, beneath my uncle's valiant pulpit and at his cheerful table. I saw it now with that extreme mental lucidity which comes from dining late in the open air upon the parboiled roots of unnamed, uncertain things. I saw it as one sees things when one crouches close to a smoky fire amidst moonlit scrub and thinks to the tune of running water and the snoring of a savage.

I said, I think, that when Chit asked me whether there was nothing that refused either to breed or die in that bright world of civilisation with which I was always contrasting his squalid gorge, I had answered first "nothing" and then "no animal." What had flashed into my mind then and what returned now with perplexing force, was the idea that the laws and institutions of mankind came just as much within the scope of biological generalisation as the life of any other living being. And with one of those leaps thought takes at times across vast gulfs of irrelevance, it has occurred to me that states, organisations and institutions breed as little, have no more natural death nor any greater willingness to die, than one of these Megatheria. I found a current of notions flowing now from that instant's striking of the rock. It took on all the pallid cheerlessness of the circumambient night. My civilised world which, in the daylight when I talked to Chit, marched on assured and gloriously from one social achievement to another, appeared while Chit lay snoring, a world most hopelessly barred thereby from escaping to any peace, union or security.

I invoked the spirit of my uncle. "Man," said I, "is not an animal,

the analogy is false, and the fate of this dying species of animals is no earnest of his destiny. This Rampole Island is one thing and my great world another. For my world has a Soul. A Will."

As if to emphasise my words I got up quietly, went to our store of brushwood and replenished our fire.

Man grasps his problem and reconstructs.

I embarked upon an imaginary discourse to the unconscious Chit with that as my text.

Here of course the struggle went against hope. Here no doubt the outlook was dark and vile. At last even these beasts must perish amidst the desolation they have made. Here it did seem that the race would not be to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. The irremovables, the obstinate obstructives, won — by blocking the road and holding the fort. I granted Chit that much. Here their ultimate, belated dying would be no compensation for the buds they had consumed and all the hopes, promises, fresh beginnings they had strangled, choked and ended. They might outlive your poor tribes in the gorges who have not the heart to come up here and make an end to them and take possession of the soil and sunshine. True. But this was not the world. Man, real man — as I knew him — grasps his problem and reconstructs. He can emerge. He will set about this business in a different fashion from your poor Islanders.

Possibly I dozed. My mind certainly fell into that state of incoherence and crazy association between waking and sleep in which nearly imperceptible distinctions open to abysmal depths, and contrariwise the most disconnected things assume an air of close analogy and vivid logicality. It is curious how clearly the passing of these mere shadows of thought survives in my recollection. Perhaps the startling events which truncated these drowsy meditations served to fix them in my memory. In my fantasy Institutions had become entirely confused with Megatheria and Megatheria with Institutions, and I was organising a great hunt to clean the whole world of the lumpish legacies of the past. The world was to be born again. For man, real man, has the power of learning from his failures. There was to be a Winding-up of the Past, like the winding-up of a business that amalgamates and reconstructs. It was my reaction, I suppose, to this spectacle of huge stale beings which would neither breed nor die. I

seem to remember a conference of civilised persons — with an edified Chit lying on a heap of moss as the only spectator — and how we were discussing a prospectus, a prospectus for the Voluntary Liquidation of Organised Christianity. This was to be the prelude to some inconceivable reconstruction, some religious rejuvenescence that was to make all the world happily vigorous and vigorously happy. “In order to realise,” I murmured, “the good-will and other valuable assets, faith, hope and charity, still available...”

I was roused from these mental wanderings by a flat loud bleating and a crashing in the undergrowth. I sprang to my feet and, peering into the dark tangle, became aware of a huge bulk against the moonlight, plunging towards me. Its little eyes reflected the glow of our fire and shone, two spots of red light in the midst of that advancing blackness. It was advancing in a succession of rapid leaps. There was nothing for it but a bolt into the scrub. I roused my companions at once. The boy was awake, I found, and bounded up at my touch with a scream. He had been cowering in terror, I believe, aware long before I was of what was coming. He darted off like a discovered rat. Chit I jerked out of his sleep in mid-snore. “Run!” said I. “Run!” and set a good example.

I took my own line.

The beast, luckily for Chit, must have come straight for me. I leapt the stream and headed in the direction in which the jungly growths about us seemed more open, stumbling and leaping and being thrashed and torn by the spikes and branches. I could feel the hot reek of my pursuer’s breath on my bare back. The heavy, bounding mass was, I realised, actually gaining upon me and I quickened my pace. And now it was I realised how fast a Megatherium in a mood of destructiveness could get over the ground. It sounded as if some still vaster being picked up that immense carcass and threw it at me, and then immediately picked it up and threw it again. I ran with my hearing intent upon the crashing rhythm that followed me and for two hundreds yards or more I doubt if I gained a yard on my pursuer. After each leap I seemed to get away for a few seconds and then came the bound and the brute had smashed down again close on my heels.

At first I ran hardly thinking at all. Then as I saw how clear and

plain were the weeds and scrub ahead of me and how my shadow ran before me up the twisted stems and branches, I realised that I was running with the rising moon behind me, plain to the great beast's view. That alone was a reason for doubling and another reason was that this heavy lump would certainly only be able to turn about in a very wide circle. Directly I saw a convenient bit of cover ahead, I resolved I would switch round it and get a new direction away from the light. But even as I glanced about me to judge the terrain, I trod on air and fell.

Some way I fell. I had gone down into a steep gully that had taken me by surprise and I lay half stunned with the nasty sensation of having knocked my jaw hard against a lump of rock. Then the blue sky above was blotted out by the Megatherium, floundering down over me. If it reached me I was done for. But it did not come right down upon me because of the narrowness of the cleft. It too had been trapped by the unexpected gully.

"Now for the double," said I, and scrambled up the stony ditch as nimbly as I could. I do not know if the beast was still trying to get me, or if it was merely entangled by this natural ditch into which we had both blundered and was trying to get back out again, but I think the latter the more probable.

I crawled clear of it for a score of yards or so, and then crept into a grateful black shadow and lay quite still. Even at that distance I could wind the thing's infinite staleness. It panted, grunted and made the most unpleasant noises. I saw and heard it gather itself up on the bank, and watched its movements intently.

It grunted and snorted and scratched the rocks with its claws. But it did not like the gully. Its first care was to get out of that and back upon trustworthy soil. Then it reared itself up on its posteriors, moved its clumsy head this way and that, and seemed to be looking about for me. In the moonlight it loomed enormous, grey-black, far bigger than any elephant.

I felt a loose rock under my hand and resisted a crazy impulse to stand up and hurl it at my enemy. "Wait," said I.

And waiting served. Not to see me was in itself assuaging to its stupid spite. I had been driven underground, my might was extinguished and honour satisfied. After a spell of bellowing the

beast became still, seemed to consult itself, and then flopped down to its queer abject pose again, louted off a few score yards, listened, reared up, bellowed, made a few lumpish leaps, and then departed by degrees, sometimes pausing and rearing itself and then resuming its way. What had happened in that little brain — for the brain of a Megatherium is hardly larger than a rabbit's — I could not imagine. Perhaps I was already forgotten. Its noises diminished. At last its movements were altogether swallowed up in the faint general stir of the night.

But it was a long time before I crawled out into the moonshine, and my vain imaginations about reconstructing churches and institutions and starting the civilised world anew by common consent, were completely scattered and disposed of among the harsh realities about me.

§ 6. THE PEOPLE OF THE UPLANDS

BEFORE dawn I suffered so acutely from cold that, at the cost of several precious matches, I got myself into a steep overhung part of the ravine and made myself a fire. The little rivulet that trickled at my feet provided a refreshing drink, and I covered myself with a fleece of dried moss I stripped off a rock, and crouched and shivered until the daylight sufficed for me to return to our encampment. This was not much more than a quarter of a mile away, and it was easily found by striking back along the trail of the Megatherium. I found both my companions already there, on all fours, cooking roots in the revived ashes of our overnight flare. Neither had needed to run as far as I. The cooking-pot had happily escaped destruction, and the boy had found some ufa leaves for a comforting decoction.

Chit was evidently relieved to see me.

"He could get along?" he asked. I assented by gesture and grimace.

The unclean beast had gone right over my official skin and I had to wash it in the stream. Then Chit and I discussed our plan for the day. Perhaps the fine edge of my passion for this exploration of the uplands had gone, but I was still indisposed to return to the gorge.

And Chit I found even more inclined to go on than I. It dawned upon me that this hunchback with the wary eyes had had other ends to serve than merely to gratify the whim of the Sacred Lunatic when he had made the expedition possible. As always, I had been his excuse. For a purpose that dawned on me very slowly, he wanted to survey the country and mark out certain routes. There was a range of hills to the south, a grey rocky escarpment that looked like weathered limestone and seemed to promise a steepness and bareness unattractive to Megatheria, and towards that we made our cautious way. We came upon nearly a dozen of the big beasts browsing and were forced into a wide detour, for it would have been excessively dangerous to get among them. We were careful to keep up wind of them.

The boy amused us by avenging his overnight terrors by a sort of dance of insult full of disrespectful gestures and a very passable imitation of a charging Megatherium. Carried away by his own inventions, he blundered into the cooking-pot he had set down for this display, and came within an ace of smashing it and scattering our supply of roots.

The limestone cliffs were all and more than they had promised to be at a distance. They abounded in clefts and shelves inaccessible to the great beasts, but the supply of wood was rather insufficient, and we followed them along the edge where they rose out of the undergrowth, and camped and made a good heap of litter and kindling stuff before dark. The boy vanished for half an hour and returned with a big grey lizard, half a yard long from snout to the beginning of its tail, which made a very pleasant addition to our stew. I found myself sitting by the fire in a mood of unusual contentment, watching the moon rise and longing for a smoke. But Rampole Island does not smoke.

I felt a wave of unwonted friendliness for my companions. I tried to describe theatres and music-halls to them, and the brisk happiness of the west-end of London about dinner-time. I sang them “Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-ay,” and several other popular songs with which I was more or less acquainted. The boy was particularly moved by “Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-ay”; he began to beat time in a kind of frenzy, and the cooking-pot had another narrow escape.

The next day I got my first inkling of Chit's real objective. It became plain to me that he was trying to pick up the upper gorge in order to inspect it and see something of the lie of the settlement of the savage tribe our neighbours. In response to my guarded questions he conceded as much. He was thinking of certain possibilities far beyond the range of any of our associated sages. He was thinking that we might presently be at war with these people. There had been some trouble about a girl, and there was still more trouble about our trade. War for them meant inconclusive bickering up and down the gorge, but something — my talk, perhaps, or a dream — had awakened him to the possibility of making war over these forbidden highlands. The tribe that had the enterprise and daring to do that first would get the other fellows underneath. He was taking bearings and scheming out the conditions for such a pounce out of the sky. "But all that means climbing," said I, "and even the thought of climbing is against the Law."

"Suppose *they* do it," he said in a large whisper, and then: "We can't wait for them to do it..."

It was towards noon on the third day that we worked our way over a bleak, sun-scorched mass of limestone ribs and tors to the gorge again. We came upon it quite suddenly. It announced itself by the thunder of a cascade, and then we found ourselves on a great bluff with a wide oval valley on one hand, with a long scimitar of river at the bottom, and on the other a deep chasm, into which the waters poured themselves and were lost to view in steam and spray. They were on their way down to our village, and they seemed to fill the chasm so completely with their steaming, pouring haste that it was difficult to realise that there could be any paths down there, as we knew there were, between the two communities. Still more difficult was it to realise that we had been beating about the massif for two days and a half, only to return to within a few miles of our first emergence from our own settlement, and that the echoes of this same cascade whose thunder filled our ears reverberated along the cliffs and died away among the tangled trees and rocks at the upper end of our village. The scenery was as bold and fine as anything I had ever seen upon Rampole Island; there was a gigantic quality particularly about its vertical dimensions, so that even the largest clumps of trees

seemed multitudinously little. The valley to the right spread wider and shallower than did our own section of the gorge, and was far more richly wooded. There were long slopes of tumbled green. Above these an outcrop of pinkish stone made an overhanging wall of cliff that had evidently protected this abundance from the attacks of the Megatheria. Remotely presiding over the whole, a vast bluff of that same translucent rock which adorned our seaward approach played wonderfully with the afternoon sunlight. We seemed like three very little insects in the face of this easy grandeur.

"Ah!" said Chit, with the note of one who has reached his goal, and squatted on a convenient ridge. The boy and I followed his example. Far below us, the village looked like a cluster of some insignificant fungus amidst that wide magnificence of rock and atmosphere.

For a time we sat in silence. The habitation of these up-river folk seemed to me extraordinarily similar to our own. There was the same shape of roof; the same loose scattering of the huts; the same little enclosures. We were too far off to see any of the inhabitants distinctly, but no doubt they were the same ugly, yellow, unclean beings as ourselves, with the same tattooings and the same added disfigurements. Even in peace-time we had but little intercourse with them. Trading was done by laying out goods on certain sacred slabs of rock just out of reach of the spray of the great cascade. We traded off fresh and dried fish, large oyster shells with mother-of-pearl, shark skin and sharks' teeth, and they responded with chewing-nut, of which they had a complete monopoly, pots and lumps of pottery clay, pieces of hard wood and dried fruits. Occasionally there was shouting and greetings. They seemed able to understand our language to a certain extent, and we theirs. And I was told there was furtive love-making of a sudden, violent sort between our taboo-pent young people among the rocks and undergrowth by the waterfall and rapids. The supplementary wives of our married men were supposed to be rather too willing to carry a load to the falls for their masters; it was a sly joke against them. These encounters led sometimes to the stealing of wives, and then there would be trouble.

There was also a smouldering quarrel about the exchange of commodities. We below felt we did not get enough hard wood for

our fish. Our hairless sages were always grumbling that we were giving all the fish in the sea for a few pots and loads of clay. They wanted our people to be able to go up just above the falls where there was a sort of bay with banks of pottery clay, to get it for themselves and to cut hard wood as they pleased. And the up-river tribe wanted to have a few canoes in the pool below the cascades, so as to go down to the sea and catch their own fish. Their idea was that if hard wood was once cut, it would never grow again. We were getting all their nuts, wood and clay, they complained, practically for nothing. These things would be shouted above the hiss and roar of the falling water, and they made a perennial topic of after-dinner conversation at the circular table.

And always Ardam the warrior would smite the table and say: "Take."

Chit would meditate thereon. "When I was a little ugly boy," he said, "we sought to take. Many men were killed and the Goddess was generous with her gifts. Our girls grew loose and noisy. Nevertheless, afterwards things were as they were before."

"You did not smite hard enough," said Ardam. "I, too, was only a boy."

"In the world of civilisation from which I come," I began, and heard the ugliest ancient groan aloud. I had left England in the unsuspecting days before the great war and so I may be forgiven a description of Europe sanely sure of peace, held together by liberal conventions and rational explanations. I explained how we had commercial treaties and treaties of arbitration, and how in the last resort we were wont to go to the Tribunal at The Hague or hold a European conference upon the situation. There was, I explained a Concert of Europe that was speedily becoming a Concert of All the World.

"All *your* world," said the sceptic Chit.

"The great world."

"The impossible world."

"Most possible," I retorted. "If only I could bring home to you the slowly won experiences of our bloodstained Europe so that you could realise what union means! If only you could sink this dismal feud with your brothers above the falls."

"*Brothers!*" noted Ardam in a tone of immeasurable disgust.

"You could push out of this ill-lit narrow prison of a home, upon the soil and sunshine of the wide lands above. You could make an end to the Megatheria with darts and spears and pitfalls."

"He'll make an end to *us* next," sneered the drivelling elder, and toyed with the row of picked wrist-bones he had arranged on the table before him.

"You could drag the stinking carcasses away to the cliffs and tumble them into the sea, and then up there you could plough and reap and build."

"Much luck to your ploughing if you touched a Megatherium," said the hairless man with the tattooed cheeks.

"Great woods would grow there, bountiful fruits and lovely flowers. There would be enough for all. There would be happiness for all!"

"Thigh Bones of the Holiest One!" swore Ardam. "Cannot we put this Sacred Lunatic into an eating house of his own?"

"I pray you let him continue," said Chit. "There are omens in this talk."

"Try the Reproof upon that skullful of omens," grunted the ugliest of the three. "Then you will get the whole lot of them together and we shall eat without these sermons."

"What omens are there in this stuff?" asked Ardam.

"Omens of war," said Chit.

"Omens of peace," said I.

"A new sort of war. Let him continue. He knows not what he says."

"We don't want any new sort of war," said Ardam. "And after I have eaten well I like to sleep. Curse his omens!"

Many such talks we had had about the circular table in the eating house of the sages, when we had devoured the mercies of the Friend, and now they came back to my mind as we sat in that immensity and spied upon our enemies and rivals, like three little ants spying on a distant nest of emmets. It was strange, I reflected, that Chit, who was so intelligent, would admit no possibility of ending the reasonless feud between our two pitiful little clusters of human weakness. Never a gleam of that could I get from him. His mind moved within the

idea of war, as Kant says our imaginations move within the ideas of space and time. For him war was an inevitable feature of human life, a necessary form of thought. He could not imagine men strongly sane enough to conquer that ancient disposition.

Three days we spent, working out the shortest and best way from our gorge to this up-river village over the shoulders of the lime-stone massif, the way that skirted the denser thickets and so was least likely to be blocked by wandering Megatheria.

And when we had solved most of our problems we descended again into the sunless homes from which we had come. “I have had great oracles,” said Chit as we came down into the dirty streets among our hovels again.

§ 7. LOVE ON RAMPOLE ISLAND

WE talked of war, but for quite a considerable time war did not come and often it seemed to me that no war could be coming. I became more and more subdued to the everyday life of a Sacred Lunatic among the Rampole Islanders. I was bored, I was unhappy, I had terrible phases of self-reproach when my soul revolted against the food I ate and the systematic suppression of other human beings that kept my dull flame of life alight, and then the slow imperatives of morning and evening, hunger, sleep and a multitude of petty natural reactions brought me back again to the common routines. I found a certain companionship in Chit and I released my oracles as they were required of me. And I persuaded myself that by talking of the uplands I was bearing my witness against the life I led.

I had queer fancies in those days that I find difficult to describe. I have told of a sort of transparency I had remarked in much of the rock that made our cliffs, and sometimes it seemed to me that this transparency extended itself to many other of the things about me. I would lift my eyes to the rocky walls above me and it would seem to me that they were pierced by phantom windows and bore strange devices and inscriptions written in letters of fire, and I would look again and behold it was nothing more than facets and roughnesses of the rock touched by shafts of the sinking sun. Or I would feel the

resonance of a pavement under my feet and hear the droning of a passing street car close at hand and the warning note of its bell. But it was no more than a chance slab of rock I was treading upon and the sounds were the sound of a beetle flying from one heap of fish-guts to another and the clang of a savage beating out an old nail from the wreck into a hook for his angling.

At times as I talked of the social gatherings and amenities of civilised life it would seem to me as if I was or had just been moving among the things I described. Or I would wake up in doubt whether I was not some entirely different person from the Sacred Lunatic in his skull and skin. Such phases of confusion were bathed in the distress of an acute nostalgia. I would thrust these doubts from me, bracing myself up to the fact that I was still on Rampole Island. “This is Rampole Island,” I would say; “This is Rampole Island. Do not torment me with dreams.”

At first the days of my servitude upon Rampole Island had seemed endlessly long, but now, as the apathy of habitual routines crept upon me, they grew shorter and at last they began to pass very swiftly. I no longer hoped for any rescuers to come for me, and I soon ceased to imagine that with all my yarns about civilisation and progress I could make any great change in the dull inertias of the life these people led. And only when the opening uproar of savage warfare was jangling in my ears and threatening me with toil and torture was I roused to really vivid activity again. Until then my chief purpose in life was to resist the continual efforts of Ardam and the skull-faced sage to reduce me to the level of ordinary humanity by marrying me to one of the daughters of the tribe and placing her in control of the privacy of my hut. In this resistance I had the support of Chit. It was almost as vital to him as it was to me that my prestige as the Sacred Lunatic should rest unimpaired.

Only gradually had I come to realise the extent of our mutual dependence. A Sacred Lunatic was a necessary condition to his full influence with the tribe. I was only the latest and most convenient of a series of wearers of the skull and pelt, whose overt interpreter and secret director he had in succession been. And I might be irreplaceable. Without a Sacred Lunatic, he was merely the repository and interpreter of tribal traditions and all his statements

and counsels were subject to the endorsement of his fellow elders. But he alone could draw omens and intimations from the utterances and vagaries of the Sacred Lunatic, and my utterances and vagaries gave him far more scope than he had ever had before. The peculiar circumstances of my arrival, my European complexion and build and the strangeness of my ideas and impulses gave me a distinction no other Sacred Lunatic had ever possessed.

Since my return to civilisation I have made enquiries about the role of the madman in savage life. I had supposed that the Sacred Lunatic of Rampole Island found no parallel elsewhere, but so far from this being the case, I gather that such strange demented figures are to be found very widely dispersed, playing the part of, what shall I call it? — a *rocking* influence, among the complicated balances of the savage and barbaric community. They enable little wedges of innovation to be driven into the tight mosaic of custom and precedent. In some parts of the world they are the familiars of medicine men; in others they themselves are witches and prophets, treading their eerie way amidst familiar things. There is a summary of this subject published by one of the anthropologists of the Smithsonian Institute of Washington: "The Eccentric Individual in Primitive Society," I think it is called. The writer connects the Sacred Lunatics of Patagonia — for it seems they are known on the mainland also — with the wide-spread worship of sacrificial kings, and so shakes down a mass of ripe and rotting fruit from the *Golden Bough*. He links this cult of the madman not only with witches, but with the Lords of Misrule, who were given power during the Saturnalia, and with the Jesters and such-like privileged fantastics of the Middle Ages. There I am told he is on firmer ground. And he brings down his argument very strikingly to our treatment of the man of genius of to-day, with his remarkable privileges of unorthodox suggestion and his conspicuous immunity from responsibility. No doubt, he says, eccentrics have always been made use of by people more deliberate and cautious than themselves, but who are also, after a different fashion, in revolt against established authority. It is interesting to find my life in that dull and heavy gorge, linked with and enhanced by so much that is interesting in sociology, and I note it here for what it is worth — repeating my warning to the reader that

this is the story of a personal adventure and not a contribution to science.

My predecessor in office had been an atavistic idiot who had died from a surfeit of offal and in the days before my arrival Chit must have had a dull and subordinated existence; If the hairless ancients contradicted him, he could produce no omen in response. Precedent ruled unchallenged. In the interim he had tried to throw the glamour of incalculable imbecility over a young man whose sole genuine abnormality was a squint, and had failed completely. From a partly inaudible story told one day by the slobberer, I gather that the claims to insanity and immunity had broken down and Chit's protégé had been found guilty of blasphemy and had terminated his brief career under the Reproof. The unfortunate pretender to dementia had been betrayed by his wife. He had affected to have trances and visions in seclusion during which the Great Goddess had honoured him with peculiar favours and, in a moment of jealous mortification that no credit for the revelations came to her, his wife had exposed this pretence.

"That almost made *Chit* squint," squeaked the aged narrator, and choked with reminiscent amusement.

The defeat had been a serious one for Chit. He could establish no fresh defective. There was a hunchback or so about the village and one deaf and dumb girl, but they were all malignantly sane and moral. Nothing would tempt them to conspicuous behaviour. The four sages had contemplated a blissful future of authority unchallenged by any fresh revelations, with Chit's interventions waning towards his ultimate Reproof, when chance or heaven sent me to rehabilitate him. I was so queer and astonishing that even my detractors more than half believed in everything he claimed for me. My craziness lay along lines beyond their penetration. They hated the sudden restoration of decisive power to Chit, but they faltered and went cautiously in their attempts to undermine it. The belief of the common people in my sound and unquestionable madness was absolute.

My enemies assailed me therefore with an appearance of solicitude; they professed to desire nothing so much as my comfort and honour. The chance that a wife would undermine me had the

attraction of a successful precedent. They were shocked, they said, to see me sad and alone, in such melancholy contrast to the rich satisfactions of their own lives. So gifted and precious a creature should have wife and appetising handmaidens, rich with sharks' teeth and mother of pearl, brightly painted and dripping with fish oil, always about him. They had so much faith in the destructive power of matrimony that they even extended their proposals to my associate. Chit also was a lonely man, they remarked, living too austerely; he had two wives and each by some queer mischance had bitten off the end of her tongue and went speechless and discreetly about his household. He too would lead a more seemly and happier life had he also the harem of chattering handmaidens affected by other leading and influential men. Why was he so silent and secretive?

Now I must confess that in this matter I was assailed by enemies within me as well as without. Like most people of active imagination and acute sensibility I was sometimes stirred by great gales of physical desire and sometimes tortured by a loneliness in which any response, however coarse, would have been a relief, and as I have told already, my religious beliefs which might otherwise have assisted me, had been greatly strained by my misfortunes. So that there were lights and times when these savage women stole a magic out of the depths of my own tormented being, with which to adorn their fishy greasiness, and when the false promise of a smile or even a steady tranquil gaze could storm my heart. The deepest self reproach in these memories is to think how little I sustained the attitude of a superior person among these Islanders. Time after time I had to hold myself back, and I did not always hold myself back, from snatching at the tawdriest, most filthy lures.

The feelings of men for women and of women for men upon Rampole Island, were far harsher, crueller and more dishonest, than anything I could have imagined in the days of my Wiltshire upbringing. Their relationships were infinitely more tortuous. I was repelled as violently as I was attracted by these Island women, and enlightened by my own reactions, I detected a similar see-saw between desire and repulsion in most of the male savages about me. In that clean and civilised world out of which I had fallen, love was

normally a pretty and gracious business, very fruitful of happiness. My own first mischance and its revelation of the dark fountains in my own being, had come as something monstrously exceptional. The common way in that better world was the happy development of a pleasant preference and companionship into an ardour of mutual and equivalent desire and the establishment of a life of the completest confidence, helpfulness and self-sacrifice, upon the basis of its consummation. But these Islanders were fierce, greedy and mistrustful. They feared and resented the physical attraction that drew them together.

As I have explained, because of the difficulty in building and finding huts and because of various taboo systems, which I never completely understood, there was rarely any really free mating. The man found himself drawn towards women in general but thrust towards one or two in particular, and with the girls the selection was even more restricted than with the men. The pick of the girls, whether they liked it or not, was with the sages and then with the headmen, executioners, ceremonial assistants, steersmen of canoes, net and hut makers, moral guardians and other leaders of the tribe. Polygamy prevailed, as it must do wherever the light of Christianity has never shone. The higher a girl could find her protector in that hierarchy, the safer, save for his displeasure, she felt from the Reproof. She would be torn between a natural desire for some friendly and gallant, if oily, youth, and the practical advantages of some tattooed ancient's prestige. The thought of the Reproof would always restrain her from any freedoms with the youth, but a rankling dissatisfaction would fill her with a thirsty desire to see her elderly conqueror uncomfortable and ill.

The love story on the Island, therefore, was never the free and pleasant thing it can be under civilised conditions. It was saturated with insincerities, poisoned by reluctant submissions and tempered satisfactions. The lover distrusted the motives that brought his mistress to him, and she watched warily to ensure the full rewards of her surrender. Of all this I was acutely aware. At the torchlight festivals I would find some panting young beauty pressing herself against me, supple and slippery with oil, gay with gleaming nacre and every charm enhanced with lively scarlet, and looking into her

eyes I would discover nothing but fear, distaste and the compulsion of circumstances beyond her control. I would glance at the dais under the red perch of the little tree-sloth, and there I would see Ardam and the tight-skinned elder with their heads together watching their decoy at her work.

I would smile my firm refusal to her mute interrogation, and involuntarily her eyes would go to the dais for some intimation of her next move in the game.

An odd minor result of this struggle to preserve an effective chastity was that I gave up eating fish and redoubled my efforts to keep my person sweet and clean. I perceived that once my nose became tolerant of the reek of rancid fish oil I should have lost one of my main defences against this persistent siege.

§ 8. THE WAR DRUMS BEAT

WAR, which had been hovering over the gorge for years, like clouds that gather upon the mountains and disperse and gather again, came at last very rapidly. Suddenly it had banished every other topic from the round table of the sages, and War Dances and War Incantations swept all thought of torchlight merrymakings before the shrine of the Great Goddess from our minds. It was the up-river folk who were the final aggressors. Instead of the customary chewing-nut, timber and fireclay they had requited our last trade of fish — a not very generous offering, I understand — with objects and symbols of the most offensive character. Our people, shocked and aggrieved, had responded still more grossly, but the honour of the first insult rested with the enemy and rankled very sorely.

Directly war was declared, Ardam, by law, custom and necessity, became the supreme master of the tribe. He seemed to expand physically forthwith. He assumed a novel state, inserted two pieces of razor shell in his upper lip under the nose fragment, dyed his nose scarlet, cut a large fresh gash over each eyebrow, and flanked himself at meals with two richly adorned guards, with nose spikes, clipped ears, hair in long red horns, and vast spears, so that at last he occupied a full half of the circular table, and the other five of us had

to be content to subtend no more than an angle of thirty-six degrees each. “It is war,” he said simply.

He affected a profound preoccupation with hostilities, so that we others talked among ourselves and addressed him in vain, but sometimes he would intervene magisterially. Outside the eating hut we had great war drums beaten by relays of old men; they were made out of the skins of former heroes and sustained a tiresome booming roar day and night. Even now, at the thought of it, the rhythm of that dreary reverberation echoes once more through my brain. The drummers seemed to be perpetually dozing off and then waking up to a new storm of energy. All the men and women of the tribe, all property, it was now Ardam’s right to requisition for the common security. And he made himself felt by us to begin with, in preparation for the inflictions that were to subjugate our enemies.

All the young men were enrolled as warriors, and in order to harden them for conflict they were severely tortured and mutilated; their ears clipped, their flesh hacked into raised folds, and a peculiarly idiotic way of walking, with the chin thrust forward and the tongue protruding, was imposed upon them. All the girls of the tribe were also at our War Lord’s disposal, and they were instructed to sustain the courage and fierceness of the fighting sex. Nearly everything, until the supplies of colour ran out, was painted red. Every few days there would be orgiastic War Dances, in which slaughter and victory were rendered with great animation, or there would be Howling Meetings against the enemy. These gatherings were supposed to keep up the spirit of our people. In them the sages and leaders of our tribe denounced the vices and crimes of our antagonists amidst the applause and indignation of the tribe. The sentences of the speakers were punctuated by violent howling, and it was extremely unwise to betray any slackness in these responses.

In the tirades of our speakers three main accusations constantly recurred, our grievances against our foes, their master crimes. The first of these was that they were cannibals. This charge never failed to evoke the most impassioned indignation. The speaker would lean over and ask impressively: “*Do you* want to go into these up-river cooking-pots?”

Their second offence was that they were uncleanly in their persons

and habits. The third was that they kept a family of loud-croaking bull-frogs as their mystic rulers, a thing all our people found incredibly disgusting and degrading. The offensive noises made by the parental bull-frog and his loud-splashing leaps hither and thither were contrasted with the louse-like movements and inoffensive gentleness of our own dear tribal totem. And then, adopting a more practical tone, the speaker would demonstrate that in no other way was the danger of war to be avoided excepting by carrying this war to a successful finish, and finally he would dilate on the abundant chewing-nut, clay, timber and fruits we would have when at last our enemies were trampled underfoot. As there was already a serious shortage of the Nut that Cleanses, this stirred our most inveterate cravings. We would remove the bits of wood with which we solaced ourselves for the want of chewing-nut, howling together very heartily, eyes and ears alert for anyone who seemed remiss in the howling.

Meanwhile the war made remarkably little progress. As I have explained, the frontier was near the great cataract, and the path on either side of the fall was extremely overgrown by thorny shrubs and precipitous and narrow. Above it, the cliffs rose sheerly for, I should say, a thousand feet or more towards the forbidden uplands. It was a place in which a mere handful of men could hold back an army coming from either direction. Our outposts had pushed up beyond the trading slab and lurked hidden amidst rocks and bushes, armed with slings and long beams of wood. These latter were used to push an antagonist off the path into the water. Our sentinels had also trapped and netted the path beyond their ambuscades. The enemy watched from above the fall. Their command of good wood gave them a supply of longbows, which we had every reason to envy. They could send a shaft a quarter of a mile down the gorge, and their marksmanship was decidedly respectable.

Neither side betrayed any appetite for close quarters. Now and then one of our people, who had shown himself inadvertently on our lines of communication, would be picked off, and once, at least, one of their fellows slipped on a loose rock and fell into the torrent and was drowned. We tried to get a few of them by throwing them poisoned fish, but it is doubtful if that succeeded. So that as far as the

region of contact went the war degenerated into mere hiding, sniping and petty assassination, to the incessant hum and rumble of our war drums and the sharper yap, yap, yap of the wooden clappers with which our foemen supplemented their drumming. It was in fact a deadlock war, and the best part of the excitement went on above and below the actual front.

I do not think that Ardam ever took his tremendously decorated person within range of the up-stream arrows, but in the village his activities were prodigious. Long before dawn he would turn out all our sore-eared levies, fasting and limping, for hours of marching to and fro, chin out and tongue protruding; should one faint, he was kicked and prodded until he revived, and if he fainted again he was meet for the Reproof. The people were for ever being assembled before the shrine of the Goddess to hear of some new proclamation that Ardam fathered upon our master the little tree-sloth. Now it was that we, his faithful subjects, were not to chew the Nut that Cleanses, even if we could obtain it, before the stars were visible; and now it was that, except by express command from Head-quarters, streaks of red paint must not be put on the body vertically but only horizontally. There also began a sort of inquisition for poor wretches supposed to be sympathetic with the enemy.

And now, at the table of the sages, Chit, using my name much too freely for my peace of mind, began to talk of the possibility and advantage of a flank attack upon the enemy over the plateau. This suggestion, because of its implicit criticism of the deadlock war, was received very badly by Ardam, and Chit betrayed a warmth of feeling for his darling idea and a satirical conception of the current campaign that greatly stimulated Ardam's resentment. The argument developed rapidly and easily into a noisy quarrel in which the hairless elders were invoked for judgments they were not in the least disposed to give.

With a gathering apprehension I heard Chit being asked what he and I were doing in the war except to make difficulties for the military authorities, and where it was we had really gone when we had pretended to watch the Megatheria on the uplands last year. In fact, with a great bang on the table, let us know where we were; were we or were we not "sympathetic with the enemy"?

The hairless ancient with the tight-drawn skin intervened with hoots of remonstrance; the snuffler snuffled, “My lords! my lords!” and Ardam was persuaded to reduce his accusations to a vague complaint of tepidity. But he left us both gravely scared. It was clear we had to drop the subject of the upland offensive and that it behoved us both to display more war zeal than we had shown hitherto. Chit put two shark’s teeth through his ear lobes and adorned his leaf head-dress with fierce patternings, and I painted my sloth skull red, added two violently squinting eyes I made of balls of clay, and cultivated the habit of keeping my hardwood staff of office close at hand wherever I happened to be.

In spite of these efforts, Ardam complained of our unserviceableness. He demanded that I should have my ears cut off and my skin tattooed and slashed like any other young man, and that I should be sent right up to the front in my skull and pelt to gesticulate and intimidate the enemy. The Sacred Lunatic of the up-river folk, it seemed, stood at the head of the great fall, and cursed us very effectively. Why could I not do the like? Their archers missed more often than not. We resisted these suggestions, but at the price of feeling still more outcast and endangered.

We did not want to incur suspicion by prowling alone, but we were kept so distinctly out of things that we were almost obliged to prowl alone. Sometimes we went together, but not often, lest we should fall under suspicion of plotting against the wisdom and leadership of Ardam. Throughout all this phase of my story Chit was extremely cautious in what he said to me, but on one occasion at least, he betrayed a distinctly treasonable thought. We were wandering in a sort of undercliff, a patch of country made by great rockfalls in the past and now overgrown with scrub cut up by channels from the main torrent, and dotted with deep pools of water. From a patch of rising ground we got a distant view of the cataract. “I suppose their soldiers *are* as stupid as our,” brooded Chit. “They would be as little inclined to listen to a reasonable idea.

“All soldiers are alike,” he said, generalising from his limited experience. “Here we are! If we went over the uplands we could finish this war in six days — and twist Ardam’s nose for him...”

Even now, at the thought of that Island warfare, the feeling of

brooding detachment from my own kind returns and once more I am wandering in moods of acute solitude amidst the tumbled hillocks and lonely turns of the undercliff, homesick for a civilised world, with the sense of being watched and in danger, and with that infernal idiotic drumming for ever beating in my ears.

"What have I done?" I asked, "what have I done that my brief portion of life should run to waste in this barbaric land? Surely I was given my little scrap of strength, my desires and my possibilities, for some better end than to be a counter in the game of Ardam and his idiot friends! Am I to be cast aside amidst this wilderness of warring fools, am I to be silenced and useless, and is that to be my all? Am I never to see the great cities of the world I had promised myself, nor add one little scrap of decent work to the achievements of life? Am I to miss love and equal friendship, and continue a pretender, an observer of laws and customs I despise, a mockery of manhood, until the end? Why was I born, why was I ever made?"

Little did I suspect the strange mutations that Fate was even then preparing for me.

§ 9. THE CAVE AND THE GIRL

THE undercliff which was my lonely rambling ground during these dreary months, had a wild beauty of its own of tumbled ground, pools, marsh and wild flowers. There was an abundant plant like the English sun-dew but very much larger and more active in its gripping movements. It made great carpets on the damper places and I never once ventured to walk across the prehensile leaves it spread so hungrily. Its sticky, hand-like leaves captured not only flies as the English sun-dew does, but lizards, efts and small birds. Their little shrivelled skins and bones lay everywhere on the morass. There were also thistles of an intense blue in dense pyramidal masses, and a bramble with very large berries. And there were many sweet-smelling herbs and flowers. Always there was the background of towering cliff, bare and bright or veiled above with delicate haze. Much of that scenery, when during a brief interval in the afternoon the sun pierced down to it, made me think of a disorderly heap of

vividly-coloured silks at the foot of a limitless Gothic shaft. And in its deep and enclosed pools I sometimes bathed.

One day I chanced upon a discovery that kept Chit and myself active and hopeful for some days, for it seemed at first to promise a second way round towards the conclusion of the war.

This was a huge fissure in the mountain. I had passed several times by a sort of funnel arch whence there came a little rivulet of sparkling water, without thinking of its use as a hiding place. Then one afternoon when the menaces of Ardam were heavy on my mind, I came upon it and was struck by the possibility it suggested of a hiding place. I set myself to wade and crawl up it and was rewarded for my enterprise by discovering a cave of very considerable size. I advanced discreetly and was very soon in what I could feel was a large airy darkness. I kept my feet in the stream because, if I stuck to that, there could be no possibility of my falling into any abyss; manifestly where there was running water I must be at the bottom of things. I struck a match and produced a fantastic storm of startled bats which had been reposing amidst the stalactites above. So far as I could see amidst the swirling wings and bodies the cavern was very great indeed, and adorned very richly with stalagmitic sheets and pillars.

I did not care to waste matches and I had not thought to bring anything that would serve as a torch, nevertheless I went on with my exploration in the dark, trusting to the guidance of the trickling water and knowing it would warn me by an increasing splash and spatter, of any shelf or fall. Presently, at a very great distance, I saw a pale light and made my way slowly towards it. It filtered down from above and as I approached it, the fact became clearer that this great cavern was really a huge fissure which even reached at times to the sunlight above. Its floor, the torrent bed, which slanted upward, was like a railway track in hill country which passes alternately from tunnel to cutting and from cutting to tunnel. But it is necessary to qualify that comparison by noting that the vertical dimensions were colossal in proportion to the width of the cleft. I saw hardly any blue sky because of the bosses and bulges on the cliff faces that leant over towards each other, and the endless reflections the light underwent in its descent, seemed to rob it of all its vitality and to attenuate it to the

complexion of moonlight. Everything about me was pallid, .with a sort of phantom clearness, even in the brightest places, and water dripped from untraceable origins upon the face of the rock. The rock shone in that twilight an alabaster white.

I brought Chit to see my discovery next day. We made torches of thornwood from the thickets and pushed our explorations as far as the caverns permitted, but we found no way either round to the up-river folk or up to the plateau. We poked about for days, very reluctant to admit that this hopeful rift was merely a dead end. We did find some interesting caves and a supply of fungus that was not unpalatable, and in the upper parts our efforts to scramble out led us up to some high ledges on which were the nests of sea birds and many eggs. Even if we had not found a way round we had discovered a very practicable hiding place if presently the war mania should threaten us too urgently.

I cannot now recall how long it was after this that the decisive adventure which was to release me from Rampole Island occurred, for my memories of those dreary war days lie so to speak in a heap with no proper sequence between them. I had been prowling in the afternoon in the middle part of the district, and I was sitting on a rocky slope above one of the largest and deepest of the lonely tarns. I sat brooding, vaguely and aimlessly as a purposeless and unoccupied man must needs brood. I became aware, first from her reflection, of one of our girls wandering on the opposite shore, knee-deep in deep green weeds. Her shining slender yellow body caught my eye and my imagination. I followed her undecided movements with a quickening interest.

Her presence recalled a myriad possibilities not only of delight and excitement, but of companionship and reassurance. Suppose that slip of life over there should prove to be no evil-smelling savage, but some strange miraculous escape from the world of my youth and hope! The hunger of my soul and body could evolve and play with even such fantastic impossibilities as that.

She seemed to be looking for some point of vantage at the margin of the water and presently her search came to an end. A big boss of rock stood out into the lake and to the end of this she went, stood for a moment thoughtful and then, flinging up her arms, cast herself into

the water. I sat on for a moment like a spectator at a cinema show, and then all the ancient traditions of the Blettsworthys stormed up in me; I flung aside my skull head-dress and skin mantle and ran headlong for the water. You must rescue drowning people, though you drown yourself in the process; nothing is more sacredly imperative. I had never attempted nor rehearsed such a rescue before, but in I dived and swam across to her.

To get a frightened, struggling, able-bodied young woman out of deep water from which she is not disposed to be taken, is really a very difficult and dangerous undertaking. As I struggled with that buoyant yet vigorous floating body and gripped and was gripped and pulled under, as I swallowed water and rolled over and kicked, I did my best to recall what I had read and heard about such work. I had an impression that I ought to stun her and aimed one or two blows at the back of her skull, but I only succeeded in smacking her face. She was sufficiently greased to make a hand-hold difficult and for some time she created needless difficulties by clinging with both hands to my ankle. The water made a strange thunder in my ears, like the shouting of people and the hissing of steam jets. I heard a sound like a hooter. A phantom boat, all hands, went by me. The illusions of exhaustion were, I suppose, beginning. For a time the affair ceased to be a rescue and became a rather aimless fight, and then when I was already half insensible and more than half drowned, my feet as we sank together touched bottom. We had drifted inshore. We were in our depth. With one last desperate effort I freed myself from her, stood up, spouted water like a Roman fountain, took a deep breath, and then clutched her by an arm and hauled her in to me.

We stood shoulders out. She was dazed. She thrust back her wet black hair, stared at me in amazement and collapsed in my arms.

"Get out of it!" I choked and bore her to the bank.

She had fainted. I pushed her out of the water, and it was no light task, for the bank was steep, clambered out — and with an excess of zeal, dragged her some few yards up the slope through the sweet-smelling herbs. Then I dropped her like a sack and fell into a sitting position beside her, panting and sick and unable for some moments to do anything more. I seemed to be breathing air that changed most uncomfortably to brackish muddy water in my throat. "My God!" I

said, “this isn’t like they do it in books.”

I had a queer impression that we were not where we were but somewhere else. I rubbed my eyes and stared about me to see again the green foreground and the lonely pool, with the palisade-like cliffs behind it. I coughed up water and spat it out. My breath and strength returned I considered what I had to do with my inanimate companion.

And I cannot now retail clearly what I did do. I seem to remember the words, “methods of resuscitation,” floating over my mind, and I tried pumping with the arms; they were pretty arms; and much rubbing and slapping of the chest and body with the herbs about me to restore the circulation. The fish-oil was rubbed off her and the air was filled with an intense smell like the smell of lemon verbena.

“Let me die,” she said. “Oh, let me die.”

“Nonsense,” I panted.

“They’ll get at me again!”

“‘*They*’ be damned!” said I. “I’ll help you.”

“I don’t want to trouble anyone. I’m done.”

She conveyed to me that she had been pursued and tortured by Ardam. “I cannot love him. I am terrified. How can one obey his wishes when one is frantic with terror?”

There were bruises upon her arm and some weals across her shoulders. “He will get me killed,” she said, and her terror was so manifest that I took her in my arms and carried her towards a more sheltered spot among the bushes. There very gently I lowered her to the ground again and put myself beside her, and my hygienic rubbing changed by degrees to reassuring caresses. I realised that she was very pretty.

She had held to me and seemed reluctant to be released. And seen so closely I found her face and neck and body warmly beautiful. She had level brows, she had a tender and exquisite mouth. Suddenly the brief afternoon sun smote down the gorge and lit our lurking place to glory, and in that instant our eyes met and mutely we searched each other’s purpose.

Once before in my life, far away in Oxford city, I had seen that same expression in the eyes of a girl. But this time I did not fly the challenge of the occasion.

§ 10. FUGITIVES

SO the tenor of my life was changed. The story I have told is told as I find it now arranged in my memory. I have described my journey out from the crowded confidence of common life — to utter isolation in a savage and dangerous world. Then suddenly my destinies turned about. It was as if I was baptized to a new life when I plunged into the water.

And then in an eddy of scent and sunshine, I found other flesh that was flesh of my flesh, another heart beating as if it were beating in my body, fears and sensations I could share; a living mate whose eyes followed my movements with acute participation, whose dangers and hopes and body were mine also. We two had come to that tarn one and one; we left it linked fast together.

And we needed all the help we could give each other, for now we faced frightful dangers of torture and death. Wena, for that was my companion's name, belonged to Ardam and, by all the rules of island law, she would have to be given up to him to do as it pleased him best. I too had inflicted an intolerable outrage upon the dictator. Wena was all for flight and hiding or suicide together, but the gift of this girl to me had roused a new anger and fierceness in my soul, and I could even contemplate for a time the possibility of an open conflict with the War-lord. "No," said I, "we will not hide. You come to my hut as my wife. I am the Sacred Lunatic, and all I own is sacred and taboo." I put my head-dress straight and flung my cloak about me and stalked back staff in hand towards the village, with Wena following in an ecstasy of terror and admiration.

We came to the beaten track between the cascades and the village and presently met Chit. He was aghast to see us. I told him with a newborn lordliness of my intentions and the changed spirit of my life. He protested in the profoundest dismay. Ardam would raise the whole tribe against me; I retorted I would raise the whole tribe against Ardam. But Chit knew the tribe better and implored me to go warily. "She shall hide in my hut," I said.

"Go there now," said Chit.

The tribe was holding a Howling Meeting outside the hut of the Goddess and the path down to my quarters was deserted. I can still hear the droning voices of the speakers from the open place above, punctuated by the disciplined howls of the tribe, as we followed our lonely way on the lower path. Chit left us to hurry back to the war gathering and see what Ardam was doing there. “Into my hut; into your home,” said I, and held back the reeds at the entrance, and then in the dark of my refuge, I took her in my arms.

Could I have dreamt a thing like that? Could I have begun the world afresh in a fantasy and a dream?

It was wonderful to be in that loneliest of places and no longer to be alone, to be caressed and waited upon by this other human being I had made my own, to see her handle my ordered possessions and prepare a common meal. But presently comes Chit from the meeting, eager and urgent. “They are looking for Ardam’s lost maiden,” he says. “They say the enemy has stolen her. I implore you, get away from here and take her to the cave we found. Now you have got her, why should you want to die?”

He vanishes. He has gone outside to listen. Presently his broad face comes back into the opening of the hut.

“There is a canoe below. You can go in it up to the falls before the searchers come here. I cannot be found here. Later I will see you.”

We hear him retreat through the bushes behind the hut I draw my woman to me. I am for a tremendous fight in the doorway of my hut. But not she. “I want to live, oh, my master!” she says. “Now, very greatly do I want to live. Let us escape even as Chit has counselled.”

I too discover that I want to live.

Then we are creeping down the steep place below the hut to Chit’s canoe. Twilight is darkening to night and the village is alive with the moving torches of our hunters. Voices call. Bells sound, and a shrill whistle pierces the stillness. We are in the canoe and I have seized a paddle. There is a sudden outbreak of strange lights. Immense green glow-worms that wax and wane pierce the deep blue obscurity, and the water makes a noise like the traffic of a great concourse of people and reflects the flares perplexingly. We paddle swiftly for a time and then we are held up by a swirling rapid, we hang motionless and then thrust forward again. That struggle goes on

for immense periods. Slowly the roar of the great cataract towers up over all other sounds. We scramble ashore and run, bending low, to find the tarn and the tunnel that leads to the cleft Something strikes me hard on the shoulder and bears me to the ground. A great arrow from up-river has pinned me down. Then she has tugged it out and helped me to my feet. She strokes my shoulder and her hand is covered with blood.

"The cave," I say, "the cleft."

The sweet scent of lemon verbena is strong in my nostrils. I see a blue ribbon of stormy sky reflected in the tarn. Far behind us there is a tumult of pursuit.

But now we are near the point where the waters gush out of the cliff.

The great cave is cool and safe and dark, but a sudden weakness comes upon me. "Keep your feet in the stream," I say, as I stumble and fall.

My feet are dragging in the rivulet, and she is carrying me. Comes a blankness, though surely I must have directed her. And now I am lying on a litter of sweet-smelling leaves and branches and she crouches beside me, giving me food out of a basin. It does not strike me as strange in any way that she should be feeding me out of a basin. It is daylight and the cave is less like a cave than a commodious, pleasant room. And under my head is a pillow. Our eyes meet.

"Eat some more," she says. "It's good for you."

I take a spoonful of the stuff and then sit up abruptly. My shoulder is bandaged and painful and stiff.

"But where is this?" I say.

"Our home," she says. "And—"

She puts her cool hand on my forehead. " The fever has gone? Do you know me, Arnold?"

"You are Rowena," I answer. "But tell me, where am I?"

"Brooklyn Heights... Have another spoonful."

"New York?"

"Sure, — New York."

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

Of the Strange Transfiguration that happened to Rampole Island. — How Mr. Blettsworthy came back to Civilisation. — How he played his part manfully and was wounded and nearly died a hero in the World War for Civilisation. — Of Rowena his wife and his Children. — How he found an occupation; — and of a Great Talk he had with an Old Friend. — Leading to those Reflections upon Life in General promised on the Title Page.

§ 1. ROWENA

I GAVE it up for a time and finished my soup.

She put her hand on mine and said again: “ But your fever has gone! “ Mutely I sought to get up and mutely she assisted me. I sat on the edge of the bed. I was perplexed because the place was certainly the cave in which now for weeks she had been feeding me, tending me and guarding me. And also it was a room.

“What is the matter with my shoulder?” I asked.

“That was hurt when you were knocked down by the taxi-auto.”

“Taxi-auto? An arrow.”

“No. A taxi-auto. I dragged you out of the gutter.” I ran my fingers through my hair. I considered another difficulty.

“You are wearing civilised clothes,” I said.

“Why not? We can’t always be making love.”

“ But you are the woman I love, all the same?”

“Don’t you doubt it.”

I explored my poor muddled memory. “I saved you from drowning?”

“In the Hudson.”

“The Hudson? You were no end of trouble to get out of the water... But you were worth it.”

“My poor puzzled dear!” and she kissed my hand as she had done a hundred times before, with the same mixture of devotion and indulgence.

I stared about me. “The way that ceiling takes the light from the

window. It used to be a great limestone slab. And those cliffs outside, those tall, grey cliffs, they are great buildings!”

I sniffed the air. “Somewhere,” I said, and my eyes searched the room. Upon the window-sill were three flowerpots containing, I knew, lemon verbena.

I stood up and she supported me, for I seemed to be groggy on the legs. We went across the room to the window, and I looked upon a scene that was at once strange and familiar. Over the busy water with its traffic, the mighty masses of lower New York towered squarely up to the sky, softened and etherealised by the warm light of late afternoon. Her arm about me, protected me and sustained me as I looked out. “Have I been delirious?” I asked. “Have I been in a dream?”

Her arm about me tightened and she made no reply.

“This is New York. Of course — this is New York.”

“There’s the Brooklyn Bridge.”

“This is not Rampole Island?”

Mutely she shook her head.

“This is my own civilised world.”

“Oh, my dear lover!” she whispered.

“And Rampole Island and all its cruelty, barbarity and hopeless stupidity was a dream, a fantastic dream?”

But she was weeping. Perhaps she was weeping with happiness because my delusions were lifting from my mind.

§ 2. DR. MINCHETT EXPLAINS

A THIN veil of doubt seemed to be falling across the first brightness of my world restored. I turned from the window, sensible that I was still very weak. She helped me to sit down in a little arm-chair, which had, I felt, a castor out of order. “So all that dreary frightfulness,” I said, “the war, the cruelties, Ardam, it was all no more than a dream.”

She did not answer. Her face was turned from me towards the door. Came a rap, for which she seemed to have been waiting. “Come in,” she cried, and a man appeared with a brown and broad

face, that might have been the face of Chit the soothsayer, washed and brushed and adapted to the standards of Brooklyn Heights. He stood in the doorway considering us. It was Chit and not Chit. I knew he would speak with Chit's familiar flat voice.

She addressed him joyfully. "He's ever so much better. We're no longer in a cave. See! He's been looking out of the window! He knows New York."

The new-comer, squat and broad-shouldered, advanced and scrutinised me with Chit's eyes. "You find yourself in Brooklyn."

"I find myself a little uncertainly."

"And you know who I am?"

"I've called you Chit."

"Short for Minchett. Dr. Aloysius G. Minchett, at your service." He walked past me to the window and stood looking out. He spoke over his shoulder at me as though he did not want to disconcert me by speaking to me too directly. "How often have I told you that this is the real world! And how often have you answered it was Rampole Island! Until I lost all hope for you. And then this young lady does all that I and all the other alienists of New York have failed to do. She brings you back to your senses by pitching herself into the Hudson River up above the Palisades, just as you were wandering along the bank alone. And here you are — both of you — if I may say so — clothed and in your right minds."

He had turned and smiled at Rowena as he said the last words, and now he faced me.

"Well?" he said to assist me. He perched himself on the edge of the table with the air of a man who has time to spare.

"You must forgive my mental confusion," I said at last, weighing my words. "I do not know how I came here. I want to know how I came to be here, looking at Manhattan Island, when I thought I was far away from all the world on a quite different island off South America. My mind, I know, plays strange tricks. What trick is it playing now?"

"It's ceasing to play tricks," said Dr. Minchett.

"Have I been — abnormal?"

"The abnormal," said Minchett in the exact manner of the Island Soothsayer, "is only the normal disproportioned."

“The abnormality amounted to — insanity?”

“Not — how shall I put it? — structural. There was, there is, no lesion. But your mind is *exceptional*. Very sensitive and rather divided within itself. And I happen to be in that line of research. You have afforded me peculiar opportunities of study.”

I looked from him to Rowena. Her expression encouraged me to go on. I turned to him again with a question.

“Was I your Sacred Lunatic?”

“You were more or less in my care.”

“But where was I in your care?”

“Here — in the State of New York. After you were brought here. Yonkers chiefly. The Quinn mental clinic.”

“But about Rampole Island?”

“There is a place called Rampole Island. You must have caught up the name when you were rescued.”

“And I have been there?”

“Possibly you went ashore for an hour or so. In the boat that took you off the *Golden Lion.*”

“You are certain this is not Rampole Island?”

“No, no,” said Rowena, “this is the real world. Hard reality.”

I turned to her and considered her. How fragile she was and how pretty! “ Which you were doing your best to leave,” I said, trying to piece things together. “You were trying to drown yourself. *Why* were you trying to drown yourself?”

She came to me and sat on the arm of my chair and drew my head close to her breast. “You saved me,” she whispered. “You jumped into the water and saved me. You jumped into my life and saved me altogether.”

For a moment I seemed to get hold of things, and then I realised I had hold of nothing. A score of riddles baffled me.

I turned to Dr. Minchett again and apologised for my mental haziness. I asked him to explain the situation more clearly and then, feeling suddenly giddy, I went back to the bed and sat down on it. “I’m a case, I suppose. Tell me the history of my case. Tell me why I have leapt suddenly from Rampole Island to New York.”

He considered the heads of his subject.

“It’s good to be able to talk to you plainly at last,” he remarked.

“I’m all for letting you know.”

But he did not begin forthwith. He swung off the table and paced to and fro, the width of the room. “Well?” I said at last.

“He’s got to say it properly,” Rowena excused him. “Do you remember you were on a derelict steamship, the *Golden Lion?* Do you remember that?”

“Right up to the end. The captain had left me to drown.”

“Left you to drown?”

“He slammed me in a cabin when the boats put off”

“H’m. Never knew that before. He slammed you in the cabin. You must tell me of that. Anyhow, you were found on that ship by a boatload of men from the steam yacht *Smithson*, collecting various scientific data in the South Atlantic and Tierra del Fuego. That’s where *my* story begins. Two of our sailors found you asleep behind the funnel and when you woke up you screamed and went for them with a hatchet. You were — to make no bones about it — stark, staring mad.”

“But—” said I, and then: “Go on.”

“You were, regarded as a specimen, rather large and unwieldy for the *Smithson.*”

“Wait a moment,” said I. “How long ago was this?”

He did a little sum in his head. “Nearly five years.”

“My God!” I said, and Rowena gave me a sympathetic squeeze.

Dr. Minchett held to his course. “You were, to put it mildly, a very inconvenient specimen indeed. The Director of our expedition handed you over to me, me being a mental doctor by profession, and I did what I could to adapt you to our circumstances. You must understand I was there in the capacity of ethnologist. I’d had worries of my own, and I was making the voyage for a holiday. I knew the director...”

He reflected and seemed to be selecting his statements from a great wealth of material.

“You were some handful,” he said...

“They took you into a creek in Rampole Island, and that’s all you ever saw of the place. You were raving that you had lost your world and that we were all bloody savages and painted cannibals. They brought you aboard the *Smithson* and I was detailed to tone you

down, or keep you locked in a cabin. I was interested in you professionally from the outset. My idea was that you weren't, in any physical sense, mad; nothing wrong, I mean, with your cells and tissues. You'd been treated badly in some way, and were still badly frightened. Also you had got mentally disconnected. I suppose if I'd let them do what they wanted to do and lock you up in a cabin to batter the door, it would have about finished you. You had a real horror of being put in a cabin. Do you remember about that?"

I searched my memory. "No."

I hesitated, and said less surely, "No-o."

Some dim memory of trying to get out of a cabin returned to me. But that had been on the *Golden Lion.*

"You had to be humoured," he recalled. "And you weren't popular. You just hated all mankind for a lot of dirty savages and — Well, you were tactless about it. They would have dropped you out of that ship almost anywhere if it hadn't been for me, but I said you weren't merely a vexatious human being; you were my one scientific specimen, and that made you respectable. So they brought you all the way home. I wanted to get you back for intensive study at the Frederick Quinn Institute at Yonkers. Europeans are hardly beginning to suspect yet how good our observational and experimental work on mental states is over here. We get such a variety of types. I've had difficulties with the Immigration Authorities and difficulties with your old guardian in London, but I've kept them both more or less squared, and I've had you under observation at Yonkers or in New York ever since. Your guardian is a good sort. He sent people to look you up, and when he saw what we were doing he did me the honour of giving me a free hand — and paying up. We put it through. You've had some legacies and you're fairly well off. I've got all the accounts in order. It took me two whole years to establish you were not really dangerous either to yourself or to others, and get you released under my guarantee, in a flat of your own."

"This one?"

"You've moved in here, since you picked up with *her.*"

"It's *my* flat," whispered Rowena. "You took it for me and gave up your own."

I reflected. “That is all very well as far as it goes. But why do I remember none of these things?”

“Some of them you remember in a different fashion. But you’re what I insist is a type case of Interpretative Reverie.”

He waited for me to say “Go on,” and after a momentary pause I realised and did what was expected of me.

He came to a stop in front of me and stood, hands in pockets, and became — to use his own phraseology — a type case of university teacher. “You see,” he began, clawed at nothing with his left hand, and began again. “It’s like this.”

But I will not attempt to reproduce the tattered fabric of his exposition. Let who must, suffer from the university teacher. This is a printed book. His theory, or his explanation, whichever you like to call it, was based on the idea that our apprehension of outer reality is never exact and uncritical. We filter and edit our sensations before they reach our brains. Even the least imaginative of us lives in illusion, protected and given confidence by this mitigation of exterior things. All minds are selective and admit what may prove humiliating and disagreeable as little as possible. We continue to edit and revise long after events have been apprehended. What a man *remembers* about yesterday is not what he actually saw and felt at this or that moment yesterday. It has been touched up and expurgated, cut about to fit his convenience and his self-love. Imaginative types and people who have been brought up protected from the more violent bufferings of reality, can, in perfect good faith, misinterpret the world extraordinarily, colour it, impose superstitious laws upon it, clothe it in fancy dress.

Now that, he explained, coming close to me in a friendly, half-apologetic way, was where I was so interesting. For I was *most* interesting. He was good enough to say that. Had I heard, he asked, of double personalities, of the fact that in the same brain it was possible for two or even more systems of association to exist side by side, so independent that it was almost as if two different beings possessed a head in common. I admitted I had heard of such cases. Nowadays, I suppose, everyone has heard of them. And that, he declared, was what was the matter with me. I had a main personality which had been so wounded and shocked at its first onset on life, that

it had taken refuge in the fiction that such rudeness and hardness as had struck me were really only qualities of a remote and secluded corner of the earth. It clung obstinately to the idea that the world of fair illusions it had lost, still existed as the main world of civilisation, out of which I had fallen and to which I should presently return.

I considered these propositions and made him repeat them. I gave a guarded consent.

In that consoling reverie, he said, I had been mainly living for the last four and a half years, while a minor practical personality I was only too anxious to ignore, kept me going about, avoiding obstacles, observing meal-times, even doing business when that was necessary. This poor minor personality, this practical self, went about, it is true, with a preoccupied air, like a man in a brown study, as people say, lost in its dream, but still acting sanely and intelligently — even if slowly. It read the newspapers; it had its moments of commonplace conversation; and all the while it was nothing but a detached part, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the main romancing complex of my brain. It gathered its memories only to have them ignored. The main reverie would have nothing of this side of my life, or accepted suggestions from it only to alter them profoundly. "All of us are a little like that," said Minchett. "The interest of you is that you are so obstinately, persistently and completely so."

"Yes — yes, it is very plausible," I said, "but — listen, Dr. Minchett. I knew Rampole Island by taste and smell. I've seen that land as vividly as I see the faded places of this worn carpet. What negative memory, refusing realities, could have evolved what I have seen, cliffs and mountains, feasts and pursuits — and Megatheria? I have stalked Megatheria and had one after me. Hard after me. Megatheria — great land sloths. I doubt if I had even heard of them before I was cast away."

"That's easy," said the doctor. "The *Smithson* had been looking for Megatheria. It was a main part of our job. If there was a Megatherium left alive we wanted to get it before the British. The whole ship was keen on those Megatheria. We were always talking of them. Our zoologist and our spelaeologist talked of nothing else. They showed you drawings. They had got the skull of a young one and bits of skin and droppings. And I remember now; one day you

embarked upon a wonderful dissertation about their habits and breeding! An amazing invention! Extraordinary stuff. So you think you saw Megatheria?"

"Were there none on Rampole Island?"

"We never observed any."

I sat baffled.

"You mix in dreams with your memories. A thing more common than many people suspect."

I bowed my head between my hands and then sat up again.

"I'm not tiring you," he asked.

"I'm drinking it all in," I answered, "though some of it is hard to follow."

"I give in half an hour the results of four years and more of patient observation."

"Chit," said I, "was always a patient watcher... But I wonder where I got that head-dress of his from."

The doctor knew nothing of his remarkable head-dress and let my question pass unheeded. He was too preoccupied with the tale of his research. "It has been fascinating to dissect out the threads of your personality."

"Glad it amused you," I said.

"For example—" He resumed his pacing. "I found out you are of very mixed origin; good English on one side, Syrian, Portuguese and Canary Islander on the other. There was an extreme break in your life as a child. First came a passionate childhood in Madeira; then a healthy boyhood in Wiltshire, with scarcely a link between the two sets of experiences. Even your language changed. You lost all touch with Madeira, yes. But-Something eager, stormy, self-centred and intense, pessimistic, lay hidden beneath your English self, formless and indefinite, outwardly forgotten. In your — your Rampole Island dream, was there — I am guessing — an abundant sub-tropical vegetation?"

"The trees and plants," I reflected, "were rich. The mountains steep and fine."

"The real Rampole Island is a bleak desert," he said.

I turned my eyes to Rowena's.

"He has been very clever," she said.

“He is very clever,” I agreed.

“We have argued it out so often,” said Dr. Minchett.

I stared at my knees, in faded, pale-blue pyjamas, and at my bare feet. I felt for and met and pressed Rowena’s hand. Hooked at the pots of lemon verbena and then at the open window.

“You are very clever,” I said, “and it all seems very real here. But so does Rampole Island. Still. So does the food I ate there, the food that was the life of other people. So does the howling and the war. Tell me, how do I get what I eat and live in this world here? Are there no Gifts from the Friend in this world? And what was that war, that insane and dreadful war that at last towered up over all the rest of my dream? What was all that tumult of war? The drumming and howling. Was that nothing? And why did you, my dearest, throw yourself into the water? There my dream and your reality met. You see, he has not shown and you have not said and I do not feel, that that was a dream.”

“No,” he said, and came to anchor again. “There was — a basis — for that.”

“And the war?” I said. “ The war?”

“Dearest! dearest!” murmured Rowena, as if she sought to restrain something that at the same time she did not understand.

“She was in trouble,” said the doctor reluctantly. “She had no money.”

“And Ardam the warrior?”

It made his announcement none the less impressive that he answered only after a long pause.

“Nearly all the world,” he said; “ — the real world — is at war.”

“Ah! now I begin to see clearly,” I said. “Now one memory can join on to another.”

“Yes,” the doctor agreed. “These are high and tragic times. And now at last you can brace yourself to face the real world.”

“This is the real world?”

“Surely.”

“The real world,” I echoed, and stood up and faced the window which framed the tall, fierce buildings of the mightiest of living cities, red in the sunset light and with ten thousand reflecting windows hotly aflame.

"I begin to see," I said.

Minchett watched me closely for my next words.

"This is the real world and I admit it." At that he looked relieved. "And also," I added, "I perceive that it is Rampole Island, here and now! For, after all, what was Rampole Island, doctor? It was only the real world looming through the mists of my illusions."

§ 3. THE WAR DRUMS ROLL AGAIN

IT is perhaps remarkable that I have never questioned my wife closely about her life before that attempt at suicide which brought us together. An instinctive aversion on my part has conspired with her own reluctance to recall particulars. There are things upon the pages of the Recording Angel at which we shall flinch when the truth is read out. We shall be in your company perhaps. Who among us who has lived thirty years does not need to put a brave face upon some inglorious phase of lost control and dismal self-discovery?

My wife, who is so dear, so fine and so essentially brave, and who is also sometimes quite unwise and sometimes quarrelsome and perverse, came from the little township of Allan Lane in Georgia. She ran away from her home. She was the child of one of the poorest Everetts of that state but her father was a Nisbet. They tried to bring her up in a simple, old-fashioned Protestant way, but they were prevailed upon to send her to Reid, College in Cappard, and she had an insatiable curiosity and habit of reading. She read everything and became excessively a rebel. She was brilliant and the intellectual standards of Cappard were low. That and Southern gallantry gave her an exaggerated idea of her power over men and things.

Partly to escape the consequences of an escapade and partly to conquer the world, she ran away to New York, being rather helped in the process by a young lawyer from Manhattan who had been advising upon the financial entanglements of Reid College. He held very advanced views in an unobtrusive way, and his relations to Rowena were fearlessly romantic at first rather than discreet. But in New York he broke back towards discretion and left her to fight her own battles. She was armed with several manuscripts of short stories

and a first novel, that had seemed "better than lots of the stuff they publish" in the friendly air of Georgia. I won't meet the sentimental reader halfway and pretend that even technically she was a "good" girl. She was as egotistical as most of us, as greedy and as vain. She had tried to use her pretty animation, and she was very pretty and animated, as a man uses his strength, for personal ends. I doubt if she was really in love at any time with her lawyer and she was far too proud to pursue him when he turned away from her. I rather think he contrived things so that the breach came imperiously from her.

Her idea of turning men to her purpose soon involved her in an affair with a high official in the police organisation — no need to name him to those who know New York and no use in naming him to those who don't. Her poor little intrigues threw him into a fury of malicious jealousy, and he hunted her with all his influence and power. In the final stages of that hunt she had thought the river the least distressful way out of New York.

I suppose this wife of mine will be judged a naughty and unlucky little adventuress, but I cannot endure that judgment because I know better. Or, granted that she was all that, she was also something much more and much better. I know what lovely things, what possibilities of courage and tenderness were still alive in that brain, while the body it belonged to struggled in the swirling grey water. I could tell a happy history of their abundant increase. And my mind can stretch back over the series of ugly, unknown incidents in her "romantic" phase that do not matter now, to the dusky child playing in the Southern sunshine, full of the clean urgencies of life and rich with laughter, to the girl in the window-seat for ever poring over a book, to the girl kneeling on a chair to write again the wonderful discoveries that every budding writer makes, phrasing her first sarcasm and her first purple patch. I understand her vision of success and social triumph and her dream of the wise and subjugated Prince-Companion who would at last share her culminating glories. And she met rebuffs that left her stunned with amazement and her hopes and pride were not so much defeated as kicked aside.

It was a friendless failure and a hunted thing I pulled out of the water. And also it had in it, locked away and untouched, that treasure of gratitude, possessive love, loyalty and tenderness I have found

inexhaustible. I thought her pretty at first, and still I find new beauties in her fine and sensitive face. Her dear and sensitive face.

She gave herself to me in a passion of gratitude and took me into her life so soon as she realised the isolation of reverie in which I was living. For it is the supreme function of the lover to come between the beloved and the harsh face of reality. Both of us needed to be screened a little from reality. Minchett had the sense to grasp the benefit of our relationship and was liberal-minded enough to let me go to the only human being who had broken through the crust of reserve that had thickened so dreadfully about me. We saved each other for life.

For a long time she wouldn't let me marry her. She was a "broken potsherd," she said, it was a phrase she had recalled from some book about fallen and unlucky women, and it was good enough for her to be let retain me and nurse me and save me until I was fit to return to normal life and let her go her way. She would efface herself then in some way not specified and I could marry a "good" girl, she said.

Normal life was very abnormal in these days and I realised that for me, the peculiar distortion of normality to which I had to return was the role of a British soldier in the Great War. The war drums that had been rolling louder and louder through my illusions of cliff and torrent, rolled still more urgently when I awoke.

No doubt I had thought vividly about the onset of the Great War and watched its swift development from day to day, but my real memories of that time are all overlaid or distorted into details of my reverie. My mental state sustained my own indisposition to enlist, and it was actually in the woods above the Palisades and in Riverside Park that I did most of the lonely wandering in which I came to realise my widening isolation from the war-busy multitudes about me.

But now the issue of my sanity was being decided, and with that the question of my deportation from the United States and my entry into the British army became close and urgent. Steadily and clearly Minchett unfolded the details of my circumstances. We sat while Rowena prepared our tea and all three debated what I should do if my recovery proved to be permanent.

"I'd like to keep you here," said Minchett, "and at a stretch I

could give you certificates. But we're an excitable nation and if America comes into the war, things may change about you."

"One thing I do right now, as soon as it can be done; I marry Rowena."

"*No*," she said, stopping short between pot and kettle, kettle in hand.

"If you refuse me, you desert me," I said.

"We'll break down that No," said Minchett.

"And how will you do that?" she asked.

"I'll prescribe *you*. I'll turn you from a pretty girl into a medicine. I'll make a wife his treatment."

"I'll go crazy again the moment you leave me," I said.

"What good is marrying if it means you are taken for a soldier?"

"Because nothing can touch me if I'm thinking of coming back to you."

"Coming back," she said and pondered the implications of the words.

She stood hesitating with the kettle in her hand. She decided to replace it on the stove. Then like a woman who is sleep-walking, she came and stood close to us. She was beginning to see clearly what had happened to us that afternoon. She sank slowly to her knees between us. She put a hand on my knee and spoke to Minchett.

"I've been happy for nearly an hour, Doctor. Just an hour. Because he'd come back to his senses. And now I see what a fool one is ever to be happy. As happy as I was. This war is calling for all the men in the world. Oh!... Keep crazy, my darling! That's the way out for us. Keep him crazy, Doctor! I don't want to marry him. I don't want him to be sane to marry. I want to go on as we were. I've cured him to kill him. I just don't want him to go... Go back to your dream, Arnold. This is still our cave on Rampole Island. Indeed it is. Look outside there! Rocks and stones I swear! It's just a curious resemblance they have to houses. And we will hide from the soldiers and stay here always. Until we can get out of this place altogether into that civilisation, into those Great Spaces of which you used to talk for hours and hours. Don't you remember those Great Spaces? Under the sun. We'll wait as long as that — together... Here... Patiently... No hurry."

§ 4. THE WAR DRUMS THUNDER LOUDER

I DO not know whether it was wise or foolish or right or wrong to go back to Europe for the war. But I am telling the story of a mind and not judging either myself or the world. So it was things came to me and so I acted. This very Rowena who implored me not to go to the war had worked the miracle that made it natural and necessary for me to go back to the war.

I was still "under observation for recovery," as Dr. Minchett phrased it, when old Ferndyke the family solicitor, my distant cousin on his mother's side, appeared in New York. He had come over, part of a commission that was discussing the question of Allied finance. And as my guardian he made it first among his unofficial duties to look me up. Minchett brought him to Brooklyn to see for himself how things were with me, and the old gentleman was gravely polite to Rowena and immensely sympathetic with the position and he would say nothing about the war except as a problem in financial adjustment. The actual fighting he evidently considered too indelicate and brutal a business to mention. He admired our view immensely.

"Will they take Arnold?" said Rowena, as he stood before the window.

"Oh! no, no, no!" said Mr. Ferndyke. "How can they *take* him? And even if he wants to go—"

"He doesn't want to go," said Rowena.

"If he *wants* to go," repeated Mr. Ferndyke, looking over his glasses at her with the mildest of reproofs in his eyes, "I doubt if it would be possible to train him and equip him and send him out before the whole business was over."

"He won't go," said Rowena.

"Why raise that issue? In certain eventualities, it might be a very useful gesture to seem to begin to want to go."

"I don't want to lose him."

"That wouldn't be loss," said Mr. Ferndyke.

Towards the end of his call he turned to me in the most casual

fashion and asked me to go up town with him to his hotel. He had all sorts of little things to tell me about, several papers to sign; we could sweep it all away in an hour or so and then if Miss — Miss —

"We'll call her Mrs. Blettsworthy," said I, "for that's what she has to be."

"I congratulate my client," said Mr. Ferndyke, and shook her hand.

"It's what *he* says," she apologised.

"If the prospective Mrs. Blettsworthy will join us for dinner — Just a dinner-jacket occasion, Mrs. Blettsworthy. Nothing elaborate."

So he carried me off alone, dropping Dr. Minchett down town for William Street.

"It's very delightful to see you again in this recovered state," said Mr. Ferndyke. "The last time I saw you, well—"

Delicacy made him pause.

"You called me the hairless elder and said you would not have me subjugate your soul. Am I so hairless?" He beamed through his glasses at me. "I suppose that now we can forget all that..."

He repeated his expressions of pleasure in his hotel sitting-room. "The last time we were able to talk together on equal terms was in London when you started out upon your well meant but most unfortunate sea voyage. It was the worst of luck that you were left on that wreck..."

"Did the crew and captain get away?"

He told me how after grievous hardships they had arrived at Bahia and in return I told him of the captain's attempt to murder me. "Tut, tut!" said Mr. Ferndyke and, with a lawyer's instinct, played for a while with the idea of bringing home that five-year-old crime to its perpetrator. He pointed out the absence of confirmatory evidence, the crew scattered, the details confused in the men's minds. "Nothing doing," he summed it up and shook his head.

"And that," he said abruptly, "brings me to the very present question of what you are going to do."

"The war," said I.

"The war," he echoed. "After all you must remember you carry a very good English name."

"I want to marry and secure the advantages of that for Rowena."

Mr. Ferndyke sat back and reflected on my Blettsworthiness and his own. “I think, I have always thought, and the war has done little to alter my opinion, that the British are the substantial part of the world and that a few such families as yours, Scotch families there are as well as English, going on from generation to generation in honour and discretion, with discretion and honour, are the substantial part of Britain. One does not say so much to our Allies, but here between ourselves one may confess oneself a little. No doubt many of our best strains are here also — I am not excluding America... But this young lady?”

“Good southern stock.”

“Her past has been a little — undesirable.”

“I want to make her future desirable.”

His expression became broadly liberal. “There has been a certain courage, I must admit, in several Blettsworthy marriages. The strain has never failed in courage. Sometimes it has been delicate courage, but courage there has always been.”

“Once or twice, sir, my heart has failed me badly. It’s just that I’m most ashamed of.”

He readjusted his glasses in quite his old fashion.

“I saw a ship’s boy grossly ill-treated. I said nothing.”

“You probably didn’t know what to say. Put it like that. But I’m told you went straight into the water after this girl as a Blettsworthy should. And I admit I like your spirit in the matter. The girl seems fine in texture. She has the gentle voice of a lady. Sometimes over here, women’s voices — have you noticed it? — are apt to be strident. She may have touched pitch but I do not see that she is defiled. I like the way she moves. I think the way a woman moves is sometimes more important than the things she may or may not have done. She is probably warmly affectionate and if I may guess, as an old observant man — not without a temper of her own.”

“Yes,” I considered. “Yes. She has that.”

“So many attractive women have. Quite a large proportion. But I see no reason why she should not go over to England, when this war is finished and take her place in your proper world. If you do all that is demanded of a Blettsworthy in the present situation, that is. And for her sake, even more than your own, you have to be a

Blettsworthy now."

He stopped short and his magnified eyes interrogated me. "This war," I reflected by way of answer, "is a very stupid war. Ugly and monstrous on both sides."

"I'm inclined to think. But not altogether..."

Mr. Ferndyke seemed to consult some internal partner.

"I would like," he said, "to go a little into — what I might almost call the *philosophy* of this business. You say this war is stupid. I agree. It was preventable; it could have been warded off. Probably; if things had been different. But as they were not different it had to come. The stupidity was a cumulative stupidity, here a little and there a little. It was all over the field and I don't see anyone in the business quite enlightened or quite benighted. We, you and I, were in that stupidity system, making, we don't quite know what contribution of our own. Or failing to make some contribution that might have helped to prevent this outbreak. This world, with all the threads of stupidity there are running through it, is the world that bred us and has in a fashion fed and educated us and given us our opportunities. The British Empire sheltered us, gave us foundations of confidence and pride. Then suddenly it and Europe swung into this frightful war. We can't suddenly ask to get off the ship. It's a muddle, but we can't let the old Empire be smashed with nothing else hopeful in sight. It's always been the tradition of your Blettsworthy breed to tolerate imperfection, take a hopeful view of imperfection and play its part — upward."

"But the war — !"

" There are millions on our side who believe this is a War to end War."

"And on the other?"

"Not so large a proportion perhaps. On the whole I think that now that this disaster has happened it is best that the storm should end with German Imperialism down."

"And for that '*on the whole*' I, with millions of others, have to turn in all my possibilities, all my hopes, everything that was fine in my life—"

Mr. Ferndyke interrupted with the innocent professionalism of a solicitor taking his instructions. "*What* was so fine in your life?" he

asked, and waited with his eye on the opposite wall.

I found it hard to define, but at the same time I felt that Mr. Ferndyke had asked me an unfair question.

"If," said Mr. Ferndyke, "many people and more and more of them came into this war saying and believing and making other people believe that it is the war to end war, it may really become a war that will end war."

"We fill the ditches on the road to peace!"

"If they are effectively filled," he said and left me to complete his sentence. "All over the world Blettsworthys have died in the cause of civilisation. We have salted the earth with our dead. If *we* die, our race, the civilisation that made us and sustains us lives on. Lives on because we die. Why should *you* not do your dying in your turn?"

"And," he went on with a sudden change to a manner more professional than ever, "it does not even follow you will have to die."

Difficult old gentleman he was to answer.

"I put my point of view," he said in the pause.

"If you think the question whether civilisation is to survive or fail enters into this war," I stipulated.

"Confusedly but surely — yes. After this war, nothing perhaps will seem settled and nothing will be settled. The dead I admit become a vast multitude. Everyone is touched. My partner has lost his only son. My only nephew is badly wounded. My neighbour three doors away has lost a boy. It is frightful. But this way we have to go, if there is any way we have to go. And when the full reckoning comes, the world will be found a great way nearer peace and unity. As the dust clears away. Because of this war and through this war. It will have made a stride, a vast stride forward.

"Indeed! If I did not believe that, how could I go on? But we have to go on."

He stood up. "What is the alternative?" he asked. "You'll stand out from the main stream of life. You'll be strange..."

"What else," he thrust at me, "is there to do?"

A page at the door arrested our conversation. "Mrs. Blettsworthy," he announced.

Rowena came in and stood still and scrutinised our faces. Our eyes met. She nodded her head like one who finds an expectation

confirmed and turned slowly from me to Ferndyke.

"You're an old devil," she cried. "I can see it in his eyes. Arnold is going to the war."

§ 5. MR. BLETTSWORTHY IS DISCIPLINED

I WENT but I was not convinced I ought to go. I went doubting and unhappy and if I had refused to go I should have remained doubting and unhappy. I was much less assured than Mr. Ferndyke of the balance of goodness in favour of the war but I could not see any effective way of going on with my life except by going on through the war.

It was impossible to ignore the war in those thunderous days. It was the frame of all contemporary reality. It swallowed up the world. If one was not to be a combatant, then one would have to face the drive of all the millions who were, as the phrase went, "doing their bit." It was an opposition altogether too immense for me. It was to face a stampede of millions. It was like thinking of reversing the rotation of the earth by pushing against it. With nothing even to use as a lever for one's feet. For me at any rate, out of touch as I was with anyone else of my way of thinking, there seemed nothing for it but acquiescence and enlistment — unless it was mere hiding, a confessed evader, until Ardam's emissaries found me.

It complicated my difficulties that Rowena set her face passionately against my going. The infinite gentleness and self-subordination of her attitude to me broke to reveal a much more vigorous aspect of her character. She scolded the war, she scolded Ferndyke and most desperately she scolded me. She scolded resourcefully and comprehensively. She felt my sanity was hers and that to take me away from her without her approval was the cruellest robbery. I was inordinately distressed to see her disappointment and anger but the forces that turned me eastward were far too strong for either of us. But I stipulated that I should marry her before we sailed and that Ferndyke should wangle a passage to England for her, no small thing to do in these years of the submarines. In England she could qualify for hospital work and feel herself as close to me as

possible. I could see something of her during my training and I could be with her on leave. And I saw to it that my property was secured to her should I be killed.

I went into the ranks. It was a great regiment with very old traditions. Mr. Ferndyke was for getting me a commission, but that seemed to me to be too definitely supporting the war, and my mental history, I saw to it, stood in the way. It seemed very improper to Mr. Ferndyke that I should be a common soldier. It was not in our tradition. I doubt if there were many Blettsworthys in the war without tabs or stars. But if I came into this war at all I preferred to take the harsher side of it. I preferred the more fundamental discipline of the private.

I had missed the first onset of the war with its storm of brilliant enthusiasm. Nearly a million English volunteered when the war was still, upon the face of it, a "war to end war." That was all over when I joined up. Conscription was already upon the British, a people who had never before known what it was to be forced combatants. My English world had entered upon an unheroic phase. The old army had gone, the volunteer new armies were shattered. The English are an inventive and bold people, but no inventiveness nor boldness had a chance with Ardam's gang. The British generals, too professional, obstinate and dull-witted to use the tanks more intelligent men were thrusting into their hands, had wasted those bright lives of the opening phase, by the hundred thousand, slaughtered them lavishly in the hope of escaping the indignity of relearning warfare from men not of the military caste. They fought the new sort of war in the old fashion. The faithful multitude obeyed their foolish orders and learnt too late the fruits of obedience. 1916 was a year of failure for the Allies everywhere. Upon many miles of front the unburied British and French still lay in swathes of khaki and horizon blue, where they had been sent to be mown down by the German machine-guns. Later on I too was to light my way over those battle-fields and see the multitudes of our unburied dead still lying many of them in line as they fell, others in the holes to which they had crawled to die, horribly mutilated by their wounds and now far gone in decay, contorted grotesquely, rotting, rat-eaten, robbed, in tattered uniforms with the pockets inside-out, their faces, or rather what had once been

faces, seething masses of flies, amidst smashed equipment, dud shells, wire, and splintered trees. No one will ever convey the horror of those fields of death. I saw dead men like a tramp's washing hanging in rags on wire entanglements. I breathed the air of Britain's putrefying patriotism. My God! did these pink-faced, intriguing generals of ours never dream of nights? Had they no inkling of the colossal agonies their little jealousies, their petty professionalism, their habitual and protected ignorance, inflicted upon those generous lads who put themselves in their hands?

But through those defeats Ardam got his conscription and our mankind was now all his slaves.

What a squalid slavery it was!

At the thought of it the chill of a bleak morning returns to me and I am back in my squad upon the parade ground facing my enemy the sergeant instructor. The air is broken into a crazy uproar of shouting, yelling, snarling, cursing, the "smart" slap of hands on accoutrements and the tramp, tramp of feet. I haven't, he considers, kept my eyes to the front and he is informing the world that I am a filthy bastard, a bloody blotch on the face of the army and so forth and so on, raising his tenor voice to a scream and making feints of striking me that may cease at any time to be feints.

He puts his red cad's face two feet from mine and bawls to deafen me. I have done nothing to deserve this but something has annoyed him this morning.

If I hit him back I shall be marched off to the guard-room and put through a process of torment that may break me physically and mentally. I have seen that happen to a fellow soldier. Over this vile ruffian no authority is set that would even listen to a complaint. I have been given to him. So presently he hits me as his mood requires and I must brace myself up not to stagger.

There is no factor of dream-reverie in that shameful memory which still burns red and sullen in my brain.

To-morrow he will be cadging for a half-crown — with a threat behind his cadging. I'll be damned, I resolve, if he gets that half-crown, be the consequences what they may.

I went through my training with great bitterness of soul. I cannot be sure how far my conception of Ardam is due to that life of insult

and humiliation. My queer memory, so strangely mobile, which will let nothing rest unchanged, which embroiders and breeds and rearranges in a perpetual search for a logical and consoling presentation of life, may have thrust back a myriad impressions from this latter phase into that visionary experience before my sanity was restored.

I became an insulted slave. I had to listen submissively to the vilest exhortations, to obscenities that did not merely befoul me but touched my mother and my wife. I was put to toilsome and degrading tasks in order that I might bribe my persecutors to escape from them. I was wearied unspeakably. And all this was to so break me in that I might not presently refuse to face a needless death, when some floundering general, playing his obsolete and futile war-game, decided to send a few battalions of us to attempt the impossible. And to that at last I came.

My mind through all these days of soldiering was like a fugue in which two thoughts chased and interlaced: "What a fool I was to come," and "What else could I have done?" I had known it would be bad but I did not anticipate the half of the evil, the foulness and degradation of the training of a private soldier. It is a story unknown to the new generation of civilians. Ex-soldiers will not talk of it; it is too shameful. Many men, finding these memories intolerable, expel them from their minds.

Yet as that grinding down of my soul went on I must confess that the tender excessiveness of my egotism also was subdued and changed. I am telling the story of a mind, I am not explaining it and above all I am not sentimentalising it. So it was.

§ 6. WAR OVER PIMLICO

"I AM still upon Rampole Island," I said, "and there is no hope here. That fair and kindly civilised world I dreamt of in my youth was a childish fairyland. In this gorge we must live hatefully, driven by ignoble stresses, and in this gorge we shall presently die."

Rowena had half a mind to agree with me and then for my sake and her own, she would fight against our despair. There were

moments of sunlight and beauty, she insisted, and that was a promise, there were gleams of good faith in the darkness and she loved me more than herself. No world is dead if love can live in it.

Did she love me more than herself? For a time my soul was helplessly dependent upon hers and if this woman who was weak, irritable, easily bored and foolishly generous had in some obvious and primary manner failed me, I think I should have failed altogether. If my life was full of indignity, overstrain and impotent anger, hers was full of the negative and far more intolerable hardships of solitude, waiting and fear. She had no friends in Europe at all, and my not always too accommodating relations found her such few acquaintances as she had. She took rooms as near to the training camp as possible, but we met very little and inconveniently, because I would not risk murder by bringing her within the range of the gallant impertinences of the lance-corporals and sergeants, my masters.

When presently I came up to the reserve battalion in its London barracks, she got apartments in Pimlico. In London the discipline was not so rigorous and we saw each other more frequently. It became a matter of passionate interest to me that I should not go over to France before she became a mother.

Now in the retrospect I see those Pimlico nights of ours as very beautiful. The streets of London in those days were greatly darkened because of the German air raids; the houses became portentously tall, all the vistas were exaggerated and athwart the dark-blue sky a strange silent drama of search-lights and mysteriously drifting stars played perpetually. The rows of tall brown-black houses with their pillared porticoes were darkened, or they betrayed by thin cracks and lines of golden light the hidden illuminations behind their blinds and curtains. The Embankment which overhung the shining black river was very still, with an effect of always waiting for the magic incantations of the search-lights to bear their fruit, and the minutest red lamps upon almost invisible craft crept up and down the stream. A few people would go by, or a taxicab purr past.

We would wander, whispering. She would cling soft and warm to my arm; her dear face would be close to mine and my heart would go out to her.

“This war will go on for ever,” she would whisper.

“It cannot go on for ever,” I would comfort her.

The banging of maroons would warn us of the coming of a raid and we would hurry home to her rooms and I would sit with her in my arms amidst the din of anti-aircraft guns and crashing bomb explosions, and stay until the latest possible moment before my return to barracks. And sometimes by wheedling and bribery I would so fix things that I could stay with her all night. When I was with her she was happy; it was only gradually that I realised the fears and interminable solitudes of her days between.

Until the coming of the child was close at hand, she worked with a woman’s organisation under Lady Blettsworthy of Uppingminster, making bandages in the galleries of the Royal Academy. And her landlady was a grimy kindly soul who manifestly loved her.

Occasionally I would commit a grave offence against discipline: I would hurry early to her rooms, have a bath, and change into forbidden civilian dress. We dared not walk in the streets after that, but presently she would go out and call a taxi and we would make off to a very pleasant and discreet restaurant in Wilton Street — Rinaldo’s it was called, but whether it still exists I do not know. They seem now to be rebuilding all that part of the world. There we would have a little table for two in a corner, with a red shaded lamp and flowers and all the trivial, pleasant luxuries of the occasion, and there at times I could almost forget the parade ground and she the war.

Our child did come before I was warned for the draft. But three days after its birth I was marked with the tab sewn on my shoulder that showed I was for the front. Rowena bore her child without any very great suffering, but she was very weak and I visited her twice before I told her that I had to go. I saw Ferndyke and made all the necessary dispositions for her welfare. I passed the doctor for service abroad and got my new kit for the front. She took the news bravely, lying back on her pillows and pressing my hand. “My dear,” I said, “I know I shall come back.”

“I know it too,” she said, “but all the same I must weep, my darling, because I am so weak, my dear, and because I love you so.”

There was no sense in leaving her and our little baby son in dark

and foggy old Pimlico, exposed to air-raids and all the strains of a bombarded town, and I managed to get leave and take her to a healthy farm-house lodging found for me by the wife of my cousin Romer near her own home at Chalfont. Romer was away in Egypt; she too had a little child, and the two women had a sense of liking at the first encounter. I was glad to leave those two within call of each other since leave I must.

The train service was not very good for me, I found myself back in London with an hour and a half to spare before I returned to the cage. An impulse took me to old Rinaldo's again and I got unobtrusively to my old corner. A man was sitting and eating there, but the place was crowded and busy and I made that an excuse for taking my customary seat. I had not been there in uniform before but Rinaldo knew me, greeted me with a friendly smile and made no comment on the fact that I had suddenly become a private soldier.

I ordered a dinner that was exactly like one Rowena and I had eaten together. Then and only then did I glance at the individual who was just commencing to nibble at his *hors d'oeuvre* opposite to me.

§ 7. UNTIMELY OPPORTUNITY

RECOGNITION came very slowly. Where had I seen that thick-set frame, that square sandy head before, and why did he move me so strangely?

He was wearing a naval uniform but with wavy gold stripes instead of the straight ones that distinguished the permanent naval men. He was an officer in some auxiliary marine force.

Then my mind and body seemed all atremble together. Suddenly into my preoccupations with Rowena had leapt that great occasion which had seemed to me — how many ages was it ago? — the supreme objective of my life. Here in the hour I had appointed for the tenderest of thoughts, I sat face to face with revenge. The captain of the *Golden Lion* was before me, seated in Rowena's chair. My brain seemed to be spinning round and round in my skull. Until it ceased to rotate I could say or do nothing.

The captain betrayed no sense of my presence. His attention was

divided between a dish of radishes and some olives. Then he drifted to potato salad.

How should I set about him?

I was astonished to discover how little I was disposed to set about him. I wanted to think of Rowena and not of that old, old story. Confound him for intruding his ugly face here and now! And what could I do to him? I could not kill him suddenly as he sat where Rowena had sat and whence she had signalled love to me with every glance of her dark eyes, hardly a month ago. Yet surely one could not be so faithless to one's past as to leave this meeting uneventful.

My dinner was to begin with *consommé*. It came as the waiter cleared away the captain's *hors d'oeuvre*. I filled my soup plate slowly. His soup when it came was some thick creamy fluid. I watched him tuck his serviette into his neck in the old familiar fashion and seize his spoon with his freckled hand. I had an inspiration. Had he learnt anything since those days upon the *Golden Lion?*

No! He still drank soup with the same loud indraught. I took my spoon and followed suit with a perfect imitation. Phantoms of the first officer and the engineer became almost visible about us. He put down his soup spoon and stared at me just as he had stared at me five long years ago. Scrutiny gave place to recognition.

I had to subdue an undignified impulse to laughter. "Queer place this is for meeting people," I said.

"Damn' queer," said he.

"You know me?"

He considered the position. His memory was evidently still vague. "I seem to know you somehow," he admitted with hard eyes on mine.

"You ought to know me," I said, tapping on the table. "Seeing that you murdered me."

"Ah!" said he. He had taken up his soup spoon again but now he put it down to make a spreading stain upon the tablecloth. "Yes. *Now* I got you. I never expected to set eyes on *your* face again."

"Well?" I said.

"You, that young feller. Eh?"

I did my best to be cold, hard and ominous. "The man you

drowned."

He drew in the corners of his mouth and moved his head slowly from side to side. "Not it," he said. "I don't believe in ghosts. Not in ghosts that imitate their betters eating soup. Now, *how* did you slip out of that room? You got on the other boat, I suppose."

I shook my head.

By all the rules of the game, that ought to have puzzled and disconcerted him, but it did nothing of the sort. "There's chaps," he said, "you *can't* drown. If this war hasn't taught me nothing else, it's taught me that."

"You did your best."

"It was one of them antipathies," he said with the faintest flavour of apology.

He laughed grimly and prepared to finish his soup.

"Gods!" he said. "How sick I got of that face of yours at meals! Sick isn't the word for it."

By this time I was altogether disconcerted.

He made an amiable gesture with his soup spoon, inviting me to proceed with my meal. "I'll stand it for once," he conceded, and finished his soup with his soul apparently quite unruffled.

"You bloody old ruffian!" It was undignified of me to say it.

"Not *it*," he said, and really enjoyed his last mouthful.

He pushed back his soup plate and wiped his face with his serviette, drawing it across to and fro several times. This cleansing duly done, he addressed me with unwonted friendliness. "You're in khaki," he said, "like the rest of the world. All that gentleman business is over? I'd have thought though, Mr. Blettsworthy, they'd have made *you* an officer."

"I didn't choose."

"No accounting for tastes. And you've got your ticket sewn on there — that red label."

"I go over next week."

"I couldn't stand the trenches," he said. "I'm glad I haven't come to that."

God knows what had become of our situation. It had vanished into thin air. We were talking like old acquaintances who had met by chance. His disposition to let bygones be bygones was overpowering.

“What do *you* do?” I asked.

“Mystery ship,” said he. “Submarines with a bit of mine-dredging. We get ’em all right.”

“You like it?”

“*Like* it! After being a damned van-boy leaving parcels all over the world? I love it. I don’t want this war ever to end — leastways not until they’ve blown me sky-high... I could tell you things... Only I mustn’t.”

He decided to confide. He leant over the table so as to be close to me, and whispered hoarsely: “Got one last week.”

He leant back and smiled and nodded. He had become quite a genial person. “Came up within fifty yards of us. They’d been following us an hour and putting up their periscope, and signalling. We shot an old rifle at them, desperate like, and then hauled down our flag. He went round us twice to peep at us, and then came up. Greenhorn! But we certainly looked an innocent lot. We got a gun, with a canvas mask in front of it painted like the rest of the side — we don’t roll it up or anything, we just shoot through it and make a new one each time, and the first they know of it is when they’re hit. Little solid steel shell that pierces the skin of the boat, you know. Lord! he *did* look surprised. One minute Lord of all he surveyed, got his speaking-trumpet in his hand to give us orders and everything, and the next minute she’d gone bubbling down under him like a stone and he was kicking about in the water. Our canvas always catches fire and has to be put out, and that flare-up distracted him, and he didn’t seem to grasp what had happened or what was happening. Thought perhaps we’d blown up something and caught afire. Even when he went right under he was staring. The water just came up to him and the air out of his damned boat blupped and blobbered all about him. Laugh! I haven’t laughed so much for years.”

He didn’t laugh now at any rate, but he seemed uncommonly well satisfied with himself.

“I could tell you a lot,” he said, and proceeded to tell me a lot. His indifference to me except in my passive role of hearer was complete.

He talked of the crazy tricks and treacheries into which the submarine war had degenerated. He stuck his forearms on the table

and held knife and fork erect as he recalled this and that savoury item of the wonderful anti-submarine story. And I realised more than ever I had done, that Rampole Island had indeed now spread out and swallowed all the world. I hadn't a word to say for civilisation in the face of that self-satisfied flow of homicidal knowingness. I sat appreciative of a mentality whose one clear delight was triumph — the coarse male triumph over a woman's submission, the bought woman's submission, or the triumph over an outwitted adversary going to his death. Was he or I the human being? Was I or he the abnormality?

We parted outside Rinaldo's door with an unreal cordiality. "So long!" said he.

"So long!" said I.

"Good luck to you!" he wished.

"Good luck," I said, but whether I wished it for him or the next torpedo he had to dodge I did not search my heart to learn.

I was so amazed by this absurd inversion of all my expectations that I went back to barracks as if I was under a spell, dazed by my renewed realisation of the cruelty of creation. This man long ago had robbed me of my last confidence in life, had toppled my reason into the fantasy of Rampole Island and my present realisation of the evil in things, and here he was again, when I was soft and tender from parting from all I loved, to assure me that even Rampole Island was no better than a mild caricature of the harsh veracities of existence. How far away was that God my uncle had evoked to comfort my soul in its tender years! That night it seemed to me that in the remote, dimly bestarred blue sky, above the shadowy facades of the Buckingham Palace Road, a God must rule with a face as implacable as the face of the old captain, a God of brutish triumphs and implacable insistence. To batter an incompetent cabin-boy to death would be altogether in the spirit of such a God. Under that God, who knew no pity, that God of Hate, I had to leave my dearest and our weak little wailing child, and take my chances in those dark massacres that passed for battles in France.

And suddenly, as I loitered reluctantly towards my prison-house, the maroons began to bang their warnings of an air-raid, and far away to the east the hullabaloo of the anti-aircraft guns arose, and

spread out to encircle me and creep in upon me and beat upon me until all heaven and earth were filled with threats and concussions.

People seemed to vanish from the pavements by magic, and I walked on, neither hurrying nor loitering nor sheltering, but talking to some vaguely apprehended adversary.

"You'll have to kill me," said I, "for I won't die of my own accord. I'll stick it, you Brute. I'll stick it to the bitter end. And if you touch my Rowena again — you who hunted her to death — if you so much as send a germ at her or our child—"

I stopped short at a loss for a threat, and stood shaking my fist at the windy stars.

Three hours ago Rowena's arms had been about me and we had whispered together. It seemed incredible that in this thudding, crashing, malignant universe Rowena should be sleeping, with her eyelashes still wet perhaps from the tears of our parting, gentle and yet courageous, and our little child, warm and safe in her embrace.

§ 8. MR. BLETTSWORTHY IN BATTLE

THE day came when I scribbled my last uncensored letter to Rowena, and our draft was marched through the streets to Victoria Station, band playing brassily, and girls and women thrusting into our marching ranks. There was no one to see me off; but about me was a storm of emotion, and I waved farewells to strangers, was kissed suddenly by some unknown woman, and shouted "Good-byee" with my fellows. So by quay, pier, steamship packed like a sardine-can, thundering gangways, lumbering trains, a base camp, and a long road march towards the front.

We were moved about behind the front in the darkness of blinded trains — their windows had been put out and replaced by sheet-tin — and finally we were poured out, to bivouac in a drizzle upon a bleak upland and listen to the loutish muttering uproar of the guns to which we were presently to be offered up. Ardam had got me after all. I was beaten, and Ardam played with me now as it seemed best to him, in the lunatic chess of modern war.

With a slow inevitability I was thrust forward, through a land that

was continually more horribly desolated. There were halts, rests, fresh advances.

Trees, houses, churches, factories in this land of man's supreme effort became at last mere splintered stumps and rags; ever and again an insane activity of trench-making and barbed-wire distribution had occurred, and the ground was more and more broken by the craters of shell-bursts, and littered with rusty, smashed and abandoned war material. Across this desolation went trains of supply lorries and food-carts, and a perpetual dribble to and fro of troops. We saw ambulances coming down, litters, walking wounded men, prisoners.

There was a halt and a lightening of our equipment. We were being put into the front line.

Presently we were in the zone of fire and could learn, if we chose to do so, the various screams and whines of shell and what these noises might mean for us. Shells burst about us, sending up massive pillars of red-black smoke, that seem to stand still for a long time, boiling up within themselves, and then blow away. We began to whiff the sweetish smell of gas and put on our stifling masks which made our faces like the faces of hogs under our helmets of painted tin. Then came a whirring aeroplane that peppered us with machine-gun fire, killed two men close to me and left three others wounded on the ground. One of them wriggled and screamed very disgustingly, and suddenly, suddenly, out of the evil in my heart, I found I hated him. For the cruelty of the universe was in me as well as about me, and my nerves were on the defensive.

After a halt to wait for the protection of night, we resumed our progress to the front. The impact of the great guns was heavier and heavier, and we stumbled and cursed our way over the broken, uncertain ground. Once we came near to an unsuspected gun-emplacement, and were nearly deafened by the blow of sudden gunfire close at hand. Shells came at us, specially at us, they found our track as easily in the dark as in the daylight. Red flares lit the desolation horridly, betrayed our knots and groups to distant machine-guns and showed many crumpled dead about us.

We were now going up to an intensely contested part of the front. Whiffs of human decay became frequent. Then for a time we struggled through a place thick with unburied enemies and our own

all too lightly covered men.

I fell over a dead body alive with maggots; my knee went into the soft horror. There was a place where all of us were obliged to trample our dead. Through such circumstances as this I toiled to a trench, where I was given a bomb to throw and told to wait for my captain's start at dawn. Meanwhile we squatted in the dirt of that trench, ate beef and jam with such appetite as we could summon, smoked cigarettes, winced at the flight and whizz-bang of shell about us, and reflected upon life.

"Rampole Island," said I, "was sanity to this — a mere half-way house to reality."

And suddenly it came to me with overwhelming force that I should be killed and that Rowena would be left in the world without me, exposed again to all the treacheries and cruelty of mankind. A trick of that sort would be just after the Captain's heart. Our confidence in my safe return had been the confidence of fools.

I stood up suddenly. "My God!" I said — quite inappropriately. "What am I doing here? I'm going home, out of all this cursed foolery. I've got serious things to see to."

My captain was a little shop-man sort of fellow, a temporary gentleman, as we used to call them, of about my age and type. He held a revolver in his hand without either menace or concealment. But he knew how to restrain me.

"It's foolery all right, old chap," he said, "but you'd better stick it now. The way home for all of us here, is over the top and east. You won't last a minute if you try going back out of this trench. It's just suicide for you."

"Well, take us over soon," said I, and subsided.

The waiting seemed to go on for ever.

"Why did I come from America?" I repeated. He kept beside me and studied his wrist-watch. "Ready?" he said presently.

I fiddled with the emergency ammunition in my bandolier.

"Time," he said, and we scrambled out of the trench together. It was already quite light and the eastward sky in front of us was red. The world seemed to broaden out to a vast exposure. The azure skyline ahead exploded with rockets and guns at our emergence. Our shells made whirling pillars of smoke and dust amidst that blue

indistinctness.

Our charge was a plodding walk over tumbled ground and under a heavy weight, towards an unseen enemy. Our men were so heavily burthened they did not look like men charging. They staggered along, hunched and despondent, looking as though they were running away from something rather than delivering an attack. They made a sort of pattern of bluish-khaki figures, repeated endlessly in the cold morning light. As they dodged along amidst holes and mud puddles they lost alignment, and here and there they bunched.

My little shop-man captain, who had kept by my side for a bit, ran ahead and turned towards a knot of men. By his gesticulations I could see he wanted them to open out. For a moment there were five soldiers moving forward and an officer waving an arm beside them. Then something seemed to drop out of nothingness among them and flash blindingly with an immense stunning detonation.

Something wet hit me. The five men had vanished. There was nothing there but a black source of unfolding smoke and dust. But all about me were bloody rags, fragments of accoutrements and quivering lumps of torn flesh that still for a moment or so moved as if they were alive. I stopped aghast. My knees seemed to lose their strength. I staggered, and then I was physically sick.

I stood on the battle-field, stunned and sick and sobbing. Dully the maxim came back which the captain had printed on my mind, that the only way out of this lay eastward through the enemy lines. I went on. I do not know for how long I went on. I believe I was blubbering like a miserable child.

Suddenly my legs were knocked from under me and down I went. It was as though I had been struck on the shins by an iron bar. “Damnation!” I said, “I’m killed,” and felt our hopes had cheated me.

My childish desolation changed to rage. I rolled to the bottom of a slope cursing God and fate, and found myself in a basin-shaped cavity, with the helmeted heads of men passing onward just invisible over the basin. It was D company; our second wave. They passed and were gone.

I have a strong suspicion I fainted and came-to again. I seemed to be just out of things in that hole, the battle skimming past a foot or so

over my head. Ever and again the earth on the brim of my basin flew up in little puffs. I rolled over on my back and, after a careful estimate of the depth of this sheltering hollow, sat up to examine my wounds. One calf was bleeding, but not excessively, and the other leg had a bone smashed. And I was not killed.

I contemplated my situation. I seemed to contemplate all my life.

For this moment I had enlisted. This was the end of my active service. For this I had been brought over from America and drilled and equipped. The foolery of it! Far away above the battle the sky was flushing towards sunrise and a little line of horizontal clouds shone like burnished pink-gold.

I felt scarcely any pain at first, except for a sickening twinge when I moved the broken bone. My heart was hot with rebellion. To be born for this! To live for this!

I addressed the universe. "And you, you idiot," I said; "what next, before you've done with me altogether?"

§ 9. MR. BLETTSWORTHY LOSES A LEG

WHAT happened next was a day and a half of anger and suffering in that hole. I remember only a little of those interminable hours of thirst, pain and fever. At the time, they were, I am certain, endless. I suffered for eternities and sank into insensibility and was born and lived again.

Presently a badly wounded man from D Company crawled in beside me. He had been shot through the shoulder and afterwards hit several times by machine-gun fire, as he struggled to find some shelter. He scrambled and fell into the hole, his strength already spent. He worried off his gas-mask and asked for water but he was too weak to swallow what I gave him, and slowly he bled to death. He was grey in the face and inert and did not answer when I spoke to him, but ever and again he would whisper hoarsely, "Wa-er." His coat darkened with the spreading stain of blood. After a time he choked in his throat once or twice and sobbed and then ceased to move or speak. He just lay still. He lay silent with his mouth open, I heard no death rattle, and I do not know when he died.

Afterwards came another of ours whom I knew slightly, and he was scarcely wounded. He dropped in on me and crouched breathless, mopping his face. He stared at the dead man's face for a time and turned away from it. "A washout," he said. "Half our fellows are done for."

He mentioned some names. "Never saw a blasted Jerry," he said.

We winced as a shell burst near at hand. We crouched silent for some time as though it might still come after us.

"I'll help you out after dark," he promised, when I had shown him the nature of my injuries. I think he was glad to have an excuse for skulking there and for presently going back. Theoretically he was still bound to advance. He was very fraternal to me and helped rather skilfully to bandage my broken leg. But that night the Germans kept No Man's Land so lit by flares and so swept by machine-gun fire that we did not dare come out of our cover. He made a fainthearted start and came back.

We suffered greatly from thirst. I had already poured out a half of my water upon the lips of the dying man who was now dead and stiffening beside me. My living companion talked of getting a water bottle from some of the dead in the open but he did not dare go out.

The next night came a lull in the fighting and we made a push for it and got back to the trench from which the advance had started. Both my legs were useless and when I tried to bend the one which was unbroken it bled. So I dragged myself along with my arms and whenever a flare came over I lay still and shammed dead for fear of some observant German marksman or machine gunner. My companion kept by me, aiding me but little except for the sense of human company he gave me.

We got to our old trench at last by the purest accident, I tumbled myself down into it head first before I realised it was there and was nearly bayoneted for a German raider. There we found water to drink and men to help us. They were the ninth Downshires relieving what was left of us.

In the morning a stretcher was got for me and I began a dreary and painful journey back to a saner world. I set my teeth and fixed my mind on Rowena. Whatever I suffered I resolved I would hold on to life for her sake. I was bundled along trenches, carried over the

open, set down by the roadside to await an ambulance that took half a day to come. After years of suffering I reached an advance dressing station and was patched up for the further journey. Then by ambulance, collecting station-clearing station and slow-crawling, shunting, lumbering, agonising train I made my way to the hospital where, none too soon, my leg with the smashed and splintered bone was amputated at the knee.

And so at last, crippled and wasted, back to England and Rowena.

§ 10. PAIN IN THE NIGHT

WHEN the body lies for hours that seem endless, tethered to pains in a leg one no longer possesses, when ease and sleep seem ten thousand years away and the prospect of a limping life too tedious to consider, the mind wanders with an extraordinary looseness through the vast universe God has vacated. For now, it seemed the last lingering echo of my uncle's personality had gone from me and I had to square myself to live in a system of things that from the pus and poison in my wound to the utmost star had neither benevolence nor purpose with regard to me. I was not alone in my disillusionment, for faith of that sort has, I perceive, faded in all the world about me. I belong to a generation that has never really believed. But circumstances have conspired to make that fact exceptionally clear to me.

There is no kindly Human God, no immanent humanity in this windy waste of space and time. That, it seems, we have all decided upon.

And yet there is goodness.

There is this something that is between Rowena and myself. It may be impermanent and vanish. That will not alter the fact that it has been between us and about us. It was neither her nor myself. It had nothing to do with any gratification. It was better than either of us. It was and it still is love.

At times also there comes a quality upon things seen and things heard that lifts them, or seems to lift them, above pain, cruelty, stupidity, fear or discretion. There are certain moments of visible

beauty and there is something in great music, that makes the Captain at his vilest and most terrible seem small and defeated. I, even I, poor thing that I am, have seen the world transfigured and know the glory of the vision.

And also I am not yet disposed to die. I am not at the end of my courage, and surely out of something good but altogether incomprehensible to me and altogether beyond me that courage must come.

Love, beauty and courage. I clenched my fists and set my teeth for the sake of them in the hours of my utmost pain.

The mind wanders with an extraordinary looseness through the universe in these long hours of solitude and endurance, but it is apt to come home at length empty-handed and nevertheless sit down as though its quest was done.

Will there ever be any other end to such explorations?

§ 11. THE FRIENDLY EYE

IN the convalescent hospital near Rickmansworth I became aware that an Eye observed me continually.

It was a reddish brown eye. It looked out from a system of bandages that also projected a huge shock of brown hair upward and a great chestnut beard with a red conversational mouth below. Upon this eye it was manifest I exerted an irresistible attraction. The body which carried it about was in the same ward with me. It was always hovering towards me and making little futile conversational advances while the Eye watched me with the illuminating but expressionless detachment of a head-lamp. In the night I would discover this patient sitting up with his bandaged head turned round so that the eye could watch me across the intervening beds.

I responded to his conversational approaches. The patient was not one of our graver cases. He was really getting better. A fragment of shell had skinned most of his forehead and taken away an eyelid, wonderfully enough without any grave injury to the eye, the unimportant eye that was now bandaged out of sight. A time would come quite soon when it would look out safe and sound and mitigate

the glare of its fellow. Its owner's arm was also in a sling. The same shell-burst had got his right hand. At present that was still only a surgical triumph and it might never regain its old flexibility. Polyphemus, for that was my private name for the man, was earnestly trying to write and make sketches with his left. He showed great perseverance. "And it will be great to shave all this," he said, "when the time comes." He was very confident that we wounded men would be the recipients of the gratitude and devotion of mankind for all the rest of our lives, but he did not want, he said, to live for ever as a dependent. He had already, I gathered, discussed the possibilities of a partnership in an advertisement agency with another man at the base hospital. It would be very important in that event to write and make little sketches.

We talked together quite abundantly but always at the end of our talks he showed a curious indisposition to break off. He never said anything of great importance after our first exchanges of experience but always he had the air of having something quite important unspoken on his mind.

One day Rowena, who was now very frequently with me, brought me our child for me to see. I was up on crutches that day and very full of the promise of a mechanical leg which, they said, almost defied detection, that had been promised me. It was to be the costliest sort of mechanical leg. So subjugated was I now to my misfortune that I had the brightest anticipations of pride and triumph in my use of this contraption of springs and cork, which of course never came anywhere near these expectations. I showed Rowena the special drawings they had given me.

It was a very happy afternoon. Rowena was looking sweet and gentle, and anyhow war and the mischances of life had still to come within the scheme of things for our utterly healthy and triumphant son. They might not come for years. He was already leaving the baby stage and attempting friendly conversation of a monosyllabic assertive type. He was adorable and enviable. He was intensely dear and funny. He seemed to have stolen my egotism from me and centred it in himself. We sat about on the veranda and I was so loath to let them go that I crutched it with them down to the gate.

When I returned to the veranda to collect various books and

papers I had left there, I found the Eye awaiting me.

During all the visit Polyphemus had been in the offing observant. “Who is that man?” Rowena had asked. “He’s the Week-day *Observer* and the *Sunday Observer* too,” I had replied. “He collects any little crumbs of fact the Recording Angel drops.”

“I don’t mind his watching,” Rowena had decided, “if it helps him along a bit.”

Now she was gone he came up to me and remarked; “It’s good to see you so happy, Blettsworthy.”

“That’s kind of you,” I said appreciatively, for sympathy in happiness is rarer than sympathy in misery.

“It does me good — real good.”

“I’m glad to do anyone good.”

“Indeed it does,” he stuck to it. “I have, you see, very special reasons for wishing you well.” I assumed the interrogative defensive. “I owe you a great deal — in one way and another.” There was something familiar in his gesture and intonation. “Three thousand pounds, not to mention the interest.”

“Lyulph Graves!” I said.

“Well?” he awaited my response.

“Three thousand golden pounds and my golden girl. I forgive you the last anyhow.”

“Well you may,” said Graves with a gesture towards the hospital gate through which Rowena had departed.

The old revengefulness had gone on his account also. I realised I was a luckier man than he and that there was no sense in pursuing him further.

I extended a hand over my crutch head and shook his left. “How fiercely young I was!” I said.

“And I with enterprise like a disease. I got a lesson.”

We surveyed each other.

“Look at us now!”

“Look at us.”

“And what have we learnt and what have we got by it all?”

We stood a little awkwardly while I watched his likeness returning faintly through the disguises. He had the same poise — drilling hadn’t altered that. By tacit consent we sat down on the

veranda for a talk. And prisoners together in that hospital as we were, we were bound to go on intimately as well as amicably now or quarrel and cut one another. That last would have been a great bore.

"You went to the Gold Coast," I asked.

"I was making good with Crosby and Mitcheson all right," he said, "when the war came to disorganise us all. I had some skill in marketing — I have it still — and I found it paid to advertise even in the West African jungle. New to the old firm — but it paid."

"And then?"

"Enteric at Salonika. Propaganda job in Italy until I was passed for active service again. Then all this — three days before the Armistice."

He went on to give me some details of his war services and his post-war prospects and as he talked he became more and more like the Graves of six odd years ago. I was astonished I had not recognised him before in spite of his swathings. His activities in Italy had been peculiarly important, he explained. He had learnt all sorts of exceptional and advantageous things that he might turn to use later. Now he was pining to get out and set about affairs again. They had told him he was not to be disfigured.

He had the same light hopefulness as of yore. He thought the world was full of opportunity now; he had always thought it full of opportunity. He was all for "vigorous effort" and so he had always been. Even the devastation of the war seemed to him a reason for cheerfulness. "We rebuild ourselves and the world." He seemed so unchanged that I marvelled to think of the change that had happened to myself and I was amazed when he remarked that I seemed to have altered scarcely at all; he had recognised me directly I came into hospital. "The facade may be much the same," I said, "but all sorts of things have knocked me about inside."

He had been chary of asking what had happened to me in the interim and he knew already from previous talks the regiment in which I had served and the nature of my wound. For a time we had both skirted any mention of our Oxford days. But he had had them on his mind and now he broached that tender issue.

"I was in Oxford," he remarked, "two months ago. Before my last operation."

“How did you find it?”

“Smaller. And more disturbed than I should have thought possible for Oxford. A lot of post-war undergraduates with toothbrush moustaches... I saw your Olive Slaughter.”

I made a mildly interrogative noise.

“She’s married. Her mother’s still in the old shop. Olive married the pork butcher at the corner of Lattmeer Lane within a few months of — your departure. Perhaps she always meant to. It was mother I think had her eye on you. Oh I I don’t know. Anyhow she’s married the pork butcher. Curly headed, pink-and-white chap in bright blue aprons and a shop of marble slabs and pink sausages. Her tastes were always simple and I’m sure he’s made her far happier than you or I could have done. He took her as she was.”

He paused. I laughed. “I didn’t,” I said. “Go on. So she’s married a pork butcher.”

“She’s quite nice about it. Whenever he kills a pig, she told me, she *has* to put her fingers in her ear.”

“You talked to her?”

“Oh, yes. She’s in the shop behind a sort of rail, doing the bills. And she was quite pleased to see me. No resentment about — anything. ‘Lots of our old customers come in to see me,’ she said. And had I been to see mother?”

“Had you?”

“No. Never fancied mother.”

“Children?”

“Three or four. She and an uncle ran the pork butchery during the war and hubby used to come back on leave, kill a pig or two and so forth. Very nice children, they looked, Blettsworthy, pink and gold. Wholesome as the stock. But not little lumps of feeling and hope like that young gentleman of yours.”

“But she *was* a lovely thing, Graves.”

“She’s plumper now. If you tried to idealise her to-day, Blettsworthy, you’d find it heavier work.”

“She was quite friendly?”

“She asked after you. ‘Your friend,’ she said, ‘who started that shop with you.’”

“Do you think she told her husband about us?”

“Not a word. It was too complex a business to explain and her tastes were always simple. Probably she never quite understood what happened herself.”

“She hid it all?”

“She forgot. She simplified and forgot all about it because it was too troublesome and perplexing to remember. Except as a possible source of misunderstandings with her husband, it had no practical importance for her at all. She had probably wiped most of it out of her mind before you departed from Oxford.”

“They tell me the mind is as selective as the stomach,” I said.

“Life offers far too much experience for such minds as ours,” he went on, “and that’s the truth. We must all of us refuse the larger part of our possible cargo. Some day perhaps by a sort of trepanning we may be able to grow larger brains and carry more. Carry it all; who knows? I’m told that’s quite a possible thing — in the future. But as it is with us now the simplifiers are the practically wise people. As she was and as she is and as she will be. If you don’t reject the difficult things you must adapt them and dress them up and cover them over. They complicate and hamper... What is the good of that? And where does it get us? I’m a practical man at bottom, Blettsworthy. We must still follow our *petit bonhomme de chemin* — whatever load we have on our souls. What does it profit a man if he thinks of the whole world and loses his little business? And those larger things, the excess of cargo; at the best does it give anything more than vague vast desires that are bound to turn at last to discontent and unhappiness?”

“But if one hasn’t the sort of mind that rejects — ?”

“Yes, I know. That I admit is a difficulty.”

“If one *must* recognise and try to get things square altogether — ? When you reject things, then even if they do not trouble you in your mind for a time, they are still round about you, moving against you or at any rate moving without any regard for you. Perhaps they are not so completely out of the picture as you suggest. A bullet might have ticked off Mr. Pork-butcher or a bomb dropped into the nursery in Lattmeer Lane. You followed your *petit bonhomme de chemin* on the Gold Coast, but when the war came what happened to that hopeful little track? I was troubled about the universe even before the

war, scared and rebellious, and you, you say, ignored the trouble like a sensible simplifier—"

"As far as I could."

"Yet all the difference in our fates is the purely accidental difference between an eyelid and an arm on the one side and a leg on the other."

"But what did *you* do before the Great War?"

"I travelled far. I went a good long way beyond your Gold Coast. And at any rate I went into the Great War with my eyes open."

"We won't discuss the advantages of that," said Graves.

And thereupon, assisted by his questions, I began an account of Rampole Island and the adventures I have been telling in this book. It was not perhaps the account I have given here, because it was my first attempt to tell it and I can assure you it has been no easy story to tell. Perhaps I should never have told it if it had not been for Graves. I should have left it to sink back into oblivion as millions of other such stories have done even though the men who lived through them are still alive among us.

§ 12. POST-WAR RESUMPTION

I FOUND it pleasant, I found it stimulating, to have resumed my acquaintance with Lyulph Graves. There was I realised a natural interchange of interest between our minds. Subconsciously I had missed him. We had both grown, we had both been violently ripened by experience and misfortune, but we still had that contrast and complementalness of characteristics that had sustained our former friendship. I was as responsive and unoriginal as I had always been; he was still obsessed by the idea of his immense practicality and still as wildly enterprising as ever. It was quite characteristic of him that he could think of the removal of the human brain-case as a possible undertaking to release the human will and intelligence to ampler achievements, and expand his experiences of marketing sewing machines on the Gold Coast into plans for the systematic economic organisation of all mankind. He was particularly vivid with his projects for marketing not only books now but all possible human

produce on new lines and I listened with a revived appreciation of his quality, making only one unobtrusive determination, that my own capital was not to be involved in the experimental stages of any such adventure.

The leisure of my final weeks at Rickmansworth while I was making the acquaintance of my mechanical leg and preparing my present home at Chislehurst with Rowena were passed in long discussions with him. I found I could open my mind to him extraordinarily. He had the queerest knack of understanding me and then firing himself off like a Verey light to illuminate aspects and considerations I should never have discovered for myself. He agreed with me essentially, and differed from me profoundly. The world was Rampole Island, yes, and civilisation a dream, and then he went off without even taking breath to discuss how we could make that dream a reality. He was a Stoic just as much as I was a Stoic, but never in anyone else have I met with such an aggressive Stoicism.

Meanwhile he was evidently very hard-up. He was full of hopeful, immediate plans for the development of an advertising and propagandist business in automobiles, luxury hotels, air-transport, canned commodities and compact folding bath-rooms for small houses — the particular application of his organising abilities varied from day to day — and these schemes mingled very agreeably with projects evoked under the stimulus of my comparative pessimism, for a complete recasting of the League of Nations, the defeat and chaining up of Ardam for ever and ever, and an effective restatement of religious ideas. He seemed incapable of doubting that all the Megatheria in the world could be not only killed, but disposed of in an entirely sanitary manner, and all the malignant Captains and stupid ancients, hunted down, laid by the heels or slain.

His face had come out of its bandages, which had been replaced by an extensive green shade, and his arm was now in a simple black sling. He was more and more like the former Graves, except that a large artificial red scowl spread across his once candid forehead, and was likely to remain there for some years. It contrasted oddly with the optimism of his lips.

Occasionally it became advisable to assist him with small sums of money, and he was always very punctilious in his acknowledgment

of these advances, adding them on to the larger debts between us. “One of these days, Blettsworthy,” he would say, “you will give me your receipt for the last halfpenny of this, with four and a half per cent, interest up to date. Then you shall stand me a bottle of the best champagne then current, and when we drink that together will be the happiest moment in my life.”

He had few connexions to help him in these difficult days of reconstruction after the war. I, on the other hand, was able to appreciate the advantages of a widespread family. My wife had been a social success with Lady Blettsworthy of the bandages, and she had made a friend of Mrs. Romer. Romer came back unscathed and a colonel; he had done great things in the final drive to Damascus, and he found the firm of Romer & Godden almost guiltily rich through the chances of war. Other cousins had had very parallel experiences. The desire to behave well to a wounded hero was prevalent in the family. My relations, and particularly the Sussex Blettsworthys, had lost several of their sons, and I found myself almost automatically a junior director of the century-and-a-half-old wine and brandy firm of Blettsworthy & Christopher. The days when English families had younger sons to send abroad have come to an end. There is a home demand for them. My establishment in business seemed to me as undeserved as my misfortunes, and I tried to accept it with the same inner stoicism and the same outer civility.

I saw to it presently that Graves got a chance with our marketing, and he did quite brilliantly for us, suggesting our present popular brands, the Mars, Jupiter and Old Saturn labels, that are already familiar names wherever men find themselves in need of vigorous, sound, or ripely-seasoned brandy. He continues our marketing adviser.

§ 13. OLD HORROR RECALLED

ROWENA thinks that if it were not for Graves I should forget about Rampole Island altogether. It is her conception of our relationship that she has to obliterate all that complex of memories and ideas. Everyday is, I admit, a powerful bleacher of irrelevant realities, but

certainly everyday is not so powerful that it can bleach out as much of myself as that. True it is that routines are closing in on me, routine behind routine, the routines of a new phase of my life in which I shall now soon be a middle-aged, outwardly contented figure. Wife and children, this pleasant home we have made at Chislehurst, the business I must attend to if our comforts are to be ample, friends and acquaintances, exercises and amusements all close in on me; this tangled skein of immediate interests holds and busies my waking attention for the large and increasing part of every day. Yet still I feel the shadows of the gorge lying across my spirit, and still the memories of the lad crying out in the night upon the *Golden Lion*, of the dead upon the battle-fields, of my wounds and my despair refuse to vanish before the reassurances of our new security.

I scent the whiff of Megatheria in the London air more often than I confess, and time and again I feel the Captain going about his implacable cruelties behind the thin screen of this post-war world. So far from forgetting Rampole Island, it is this sensible world that sometimes threatens to vanish out of my consciousness, and I have to exert myself to keep my hold on it. Once at least I have had to summon all my strength to do so.

However much my fellow-mutilated may forget the war and the ugly face life turned upon them then, I do not forget. For all Rowena's manifest desire, I doubt if I want to forget. If some mental specialist made me an offer to clear every trace of that interpretative reverie out of my mind, if he assured me that this present life would lose its translucency and become completely real for me and safe in appearance as the life of a young animal seems safe to that young animal, certain I am that I should not accept. I have read that men who have nearly died in the desert, or men who have passed as explorers through the indescribable hardships of an Arctic winter are for ever afterwards possessed by an irrational craving to return to the scene of their endurance. It has made common life trivial for them, it has enslaved their imagination by its intenser values. So it is with me. Rampole Island calls to me in much the same fashion. It is as if I felt my real business was there, and that all my present swathings of comfort and entertainment were keeping me back from essential affairs. I have never to forget Rampole Island, I feel, I have to settle

my account with it. Until that account is settled, the island lies in wait for me. For that I was made to feel; for this I exist.

For some years, it is true, I did my best to co-operate with the psychiatrists and thrust away these visions of reality altogether, lock them off from the main currents of my present existence so that presently they would die. In my love for Rowena there seemed that possibility of beginning life anew. But now I realise that of all things the least possible is to begin life anew. To both of us indeed there came that same elusive promise. She too is haunted, though less consciously than I. She is a little exacting about our present happiness because to her it has a compensatory quality. It is hard enough, she thinks, that we should both have to make the best of my amputated leg. My recurrent brooding on the grimmest presentations of life has for her a quality of real ingratitude.

So Rampole Island lies like a shadow between us and keeps us from that unlimited understanding and openness of mind we both desire. To her it is an entirely evil obsession from which it is her role to release me. She does not understand the nature of its fascination. To have failed to obliterate it is her defeat. And that is why she singles out Graves from all my friends as an antagonist. Her quick instincts tell her I talk to him of this that I conceal from her, and she will never understand that for me to talk to him is not a renewal but a relief. He spoils her picture of our life. He exposes its falsity. She sinks beneath her normal dignity in regard to him. Her effort to be civil to him is only too manifest. And behind his back her hostility is undisguised.

"You say that man swindled you and disillusioned you," she argues, "and still you make him your friend and put business in his way."

"He does it very well."

"He ought to," says Rowena. "*Think* how he has injured you!"

And after my silence. "I cannot understand men: the things they will tolerate, the things on which they will not yield!"

It was to Graves alone that I was able to tell of the hidden crisis through which I passed, because of the long accumulating stresses upon my mind produced by the trial, the appeals, the prolongations and delays, the re-trial and the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in

Massachusetts. I will not recapitulate that case here. Everyone has heard their story. It is quite possible that the truth of that affair was very different from the affair as I saw it in my mind, but this is a history of my mind and what I have to tell is not what happened in the Massachusetts Court House, but what happened inside my skull. I am one of that considerable number of people who are compelled to think these men were innocent of the crime for which they suffered, that they were tried with prejudice and upon a wrong charge and that the revision of their sentence was one of those issues that test the moral and intellectual values of a great community. If I err in that judgment, I err with men like Frankfurter of Harvard, and Thompson the eminent jurist, who have scrutinised every detail of this enormously long and complex legal process. And I was impressed beyond measure by the unimaginative hardness, the poverty of sympathy, the vindictiveness against "Radicals" and reformers, displayed by great masses of comfortable and powerful people throughout the world. I was less concerned with the rights and wrongs of the trial than with the way people thought and spoke and wrote about those rights and wrongs. This troubled me more and more. It kept me awake of nights. It became monstrous in the night. It is unreasonable that this should be so, but so it was.

Gradually as I brooded over the intricate developments of this case the sense of Rampole Island resumed its sway in my brain. The world's transparency increased. The tall cliffs and the ribbon of sky above, appeared more and more distinctly through the dissolving outlines of surrounding things. I would sit behind my morning newspaper in the London train and hear the comments of my fellow business men, and it would seem to me that the rattling of the train was the noise of the torrent in the gorge and that I sat once more at the round table in the upper eating-house while the ancients delivered judgment on the safety of the state.

I fought against the return of that old obsession as well as I could. I did not want to forget Rampole Island but I did not want it to arise about me with this power of conviction and swallow me up again. I had no specialist in England to whom I could go for effective help.

I did my utmost to conceal the trouble in my mind from Rowena's observation, for I had a horrible fear that she might take sides against

me. She might have regarded Sacco and Vanzetti as her enemies and mine, and have felt called upon to defend me from their villainous appeal to my sympathies. We might have fallen into arguments and she might have betrayed that hardness of heart that comes to women on combatant occasions. That I could not have endured.

I managed to carry on with business and kept touch with practical things throughout. But to fall asleep, to sit alone, to walk with an unoccupied mind, was presently to pass right out of England completely into that familiar gorge of reverie. I would find myself talking aloud to the Islanders and snatch myself back to my real surroundings by a great effort I would exclaim suddenly. I startled my secretary several times when she thought I was musing over business issues.

The scenery of Rampole Island was still exactly as it had been before the war. But Chit had gone and no longer did I enjoy the immunities of a Sacred Lunatic. Though the war was over, Ardam was very much in power, he was now very busy developing the ideas of Chit that he had once dismissed with contumely. In the next war there was to be a great march over the uplands in a particularly idiotic special equipment invented by Ardam and with the sacred tree sloth leading us. The circle of the Ancients had been reinforced by various judges and lawyers and strange, strong-jawed biters of cigar-ends and chewers of gum. This time I seemed always to be jostled in a crowd, the brown unsavoury crowd of the tribe, denser crowds than I had known before; always I craned over heads and shoulders, watching events unroll before me. I never got into the foreground. And those two men perpetually on their way to execution I saw in the likeness of two commonplace, luckless, excuse-making visionaries, who had come to the Island as cheap, ill-trained missionaries from some source unknown. My fancy dressed them in shoddy clerical garb. Sacco looked puzzled and dark and sullen, but Vanzetti had the mild face of a dreamer and his eyes were fixed on the lip of sunlit green between the cliffs and the ribbon of sky. I saw the pair of them very plainly. If I could draw, I could draw their portraits even now as though they were before me.

To me they appeared always to be marched, marched continually, for six fateful years, through these dense crowds of hostile men

towards the Reproof and their doom. If there was no hurry there was no respite. The people cried out upon them. They got very little sympathy, but in the throng sham sympathisers made mischief for ends of their own. Always as they went past me, the Administrator of the Reproof went before them with his club upon his shoulder and a file of Ardam's minions marched behind.

"What have they done?" said I.

The answers were various but the spirit was always the same.

"Come to teach us this gorge isn't good enough. Come to start a hunting of the holy Megatheria. Come to persuade us to eat no more of the Gifts of the Friend. How could we live without the Gifts of the Friend?"

"Revolting!" I said, with my heart sinking at the thought that I too shared their guilt. This was a lesson then for all who would climb beyond the gorge.

"We'll teach missionaries to come here, setting us against the life we lead! Look at their nasty clothes! Look at their pale faces! Why they don't even smell rich."

And in my fantasy it was like this, that when these two were at last executed we all killed them, all of us, they were torn to little fragments, handed out, and their flesh was eaten by everyone who acquiesced in their fate. "Eat," said a voice, "since you could not save them!" Such is the cruel over-emphasis of these visions; they magnify verities into monstrosities. I was thrust and compelled to the open place before the temple of the Goddess, where the killing and tearing to pieces was done, and the portion that was given me to eat was exactly like one of those quivering fragments I am always trying to forget that were scattered by the shell-burst just before I got my wound. "Eat, since you belong to this affair!" The thing repeated itself over and over again. First very swiftly came the killing, and then interminably that hideous sacrament. Always one shared. Everyone shared. I came to a mental crisis. In the night I shouted loudly, "I will not eat! Oh! I will not eat!" and awoke.

I got up presently and hopped and blundered about my room, afraid to lie down and resume this dream which went on and on, always the same and always proceeding, saturated with an ever-deepening horror. Rowena appeared silently in the doorway.

“Nothing,” said I. “A touch of indigestion.”

“What have you been eating now?”

What had I been eating in my dream? No good to speak of that.

“God knows.” I invented an explanation on the spur of the moment. “My old stump is sore again.”

“Those doctors! You ought to bring an action for damages against every one of them.”

“I doubt if the stump would benefit.”

“You take that so tamely.”

I turned my back on her and stood staring out of the window at the night. Little she dreamt how that darkness teemed for me. Once more I drew near to the temple of the Goddess. Once more the moment of killing drew near. I saw Vanzetti looking towards me. I was so lost I started when my wife spoke to me.

“Poor old darling!”

I turned a guilty face to her and watched her as she got me some sedative and did her best to soothe me...

But in a little while I was up again, moving very softly and cautiously for fear of disturbing her afresh...

In that fashion I passed the night when Sacco and Vanzetti died.

Next day I had business with Graves and I opened my tormented mind to him. “Things like this trial and execution happen every day,” said he. “It is not the monstrous event you think it is. It is as natural as a man stamping on a mouse. It is a stupid social system defending itself against a real though feeble attack. You think in metaphors and visions that distort more than they emphasise... After all you are not so certain those men were entirely innocent. And all mankind was not against them. There were long reprieves and they found advocates and supporters. If cruelty and prejudice triumphed at last it was only after a long struggle. Think of the crucified gladiators on the road to Rome after the servile war. What friends had they? Or come with me to the Zoological Gardens. If you knew more of history and nature, Blettsworthy, you would be less distressed by current things.”

He drew me into an argument. He forced me to retranslate the glowing horror of my vision into arguable propositions. We disputed late and as we disputed the power of my hallucination declined. That

night I slept and the crisis passed. I awoke in the morning sad but sane, and talked easily to Rowena of everyday things.

§ 14. SANGUINE INTERLUDE

A LITTLE while ago Graves and I spent an evening together.

He has been prospering lately and he wrote and asked me to dine with him. He is becoming a figure in what he calls the world of post-war marketing. He has had several successes with novel commodities, he has become an influence in the Rotary Club movement, he gives addresses to gatherings of business men anxious to study and adapt themselves to post-war conditions. He writes articles and he is the author of two thoughtful, original and able books on current economic and political development; they have been seriously reviewed and discussed. I believe he is the first, but I feel sure not the last, who will enter the field of literature by way of writing advertisements. Nowadays he is stouter than he was, his right hand can hold and use a pen, his restored eyelid merely gives humour to his expression, and his scar which was fiery red is now only a declining pink. He has reduced the chestnut beard to the David shape. The world, I learn from him, is threatened with a return to beards.

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My dear Blettsworthy, he wrote, I talked to you long ago of repaying all I owed you. You smiled I remember. You shall smile some more before the end. I could pay back two-thirds of the principal now without a strain, but I want it in my business and there it shall help to earn the odd thousand and balance the interest account. We are to have champagne on that great occasion. Come and dine with me at the old National Liberal Club. This time of year they put out an awning on the terrace and tables al fresco, and one can sit and watch the L.C.C. trams lit up and admire the lights through the plane trees and watch the reflections under, that dear dark brown old bridge all these damned artists and people want to replace by some monstrosity of modern Renaissance — while I have plans of my own. It has to go, but that corner is too good to Berlinise

as these people want to do. The quality of the N.L.C. dinner is a little uncertain, the service is intimate rather than stately, but I can answer for the champagne. Thursday at eight.

Yours ever,

Lyulph G.

He was looking well and in easy possession of himself. He greeted me with eyes of friendly scrutiny. "You're getting over Sacco and Vanzetti," he remarked, and led the way to this terrace of his. I admitted its pleasantness.

"This club amuses me," he said. "I like to think of the political traditions of the eighties looking out at the railway bridge of the sixties, and imagining themselves still in the van of progress. It is a symphony in mist and summer twilight, with the trams of yesterday doing their best not to make a noise as they go by. Do you notice that all about us are grey heads, brown men from the unchanging east, Jews of the most orthodox conservative type, and the perennial young person? Down below in the gardens young couples sit and whisper. Need I say that they whisper the old, old story?"

He insisted upon sherry with the soup and then disinterred some excellent Deutz and Geldermann of 1911.

I found his manifest gaiety infectious. My spirits rose. It was not the first time that Graves had done me good. He talked for a time of the supersession of Liberalism and he contrived to make that particular ebb and failure of human hopefulness not so much tragic as encouraging and amusing.

"Here this club stands, a banner of progress that someone has forgotten to carry on. It has said all it had to say, and it sticks here like an old-young Megatherium, merely because it doesn't know how to get off the stage or where to go if it did."

"Liberalism dead?"

"Not Liberalism. That is immortal. The undying repudiation of the thing that is. But this venerable party, its organisation, its party traditions, its Gladstonian tricks and John Bright postures." He dropped his voice and glanced at an adjacent table. "It's fallen into the hands of the Old-Clo men. They've cleaned it up with naphtha and go about offering the poor old formulae as the latest thing in

progressive wear. Have an olive?”

Then Liberalism he thought was alive?

“In your blood. In mine. In every living thing with intelligence and capacity.”

“The gift you have for hoping!”

“The gift you have for neither looking through things nor over them!”

“I could see Rampole Island through the things about us.”

“And I. But I can see the sky overhead.”

“Tell me, Graves, do you believe mankind will ever leave the gorge?”

“If our sun does not burst or blow out — if nothing hits our planet — yes.”

I shook my head. He leant across the table and regarded me very earnestly.

“But tell me, Blettsworthy, do you believe that things will go on for ever as they are?”

“Change is not progress. Is human life anything more than an air with variations?”

Graves paused. There was some shifting of plates and the waiter hovered round us. The remains of our asparagus went, and something else came, I forget what.

“There are things one can’t say to everyone,” Graves began, and left that to sink in before he spoke again.

“You know me fairly well. A bit flimsy and headlong, eh? Not altogether reliable. At times somewhere near a cheat.”

“Never quite.”

“I thank you for that. But here I am. Silly — I can’t measure it — vain, fond of my own voice. You know you’re a sounder man than I am. Yet even a man like I am may see better than he does. May sometimes have something to tell a better established man — as you are.”

“Call me a Stick-in-the-mud.”

“I call you a stabler and steadier man than myself. But you lack my enterprise. You lack enterprise or any faith in enterprise. I tell you this world is full now of enterprise. Confused, conflicting, disorganised, aimless, if you like, but it is here. And it is getting

clearer-headed than it was. It isn't so conflicting as it was. It isn't such a rotten character. Knowledge grows, a collective purpose grows, power accumulates."

"Prospectus-maker you are and will be to the end of things," I interjected, but I wanted him to go on. "You know your Bible?" asked Graves. "I did."

"A certain man called the Preacher visited your Rampole Island, twenty-odd centuries ago. He said men were living not in a gorge but in a cavern, without a hope, without an exit, without the gleam of a star. Vanity of vanities, all was vanity. But nowadays even you have to admit a very clear view of the sky. You talked to the hairless elders of the civilisation that might be, and to talk to men of a good thing that might be, is half-way to bringing it about."

"If I could believe that!"

"Certain things since the war have hit you hard. That is an individual tragedy. But—" He considered how to put his point. "Need a man nowadays measure the value of things from the standpoint of the individual?"

He broke off.

"I wish," he remarked in parenthesis, "when I talk of what I really think and feel, I hadn't this feeling of being, so to speak, Baalam's Young Ass."

"I don't see why we shouldn't think what we think — even if we haven't the beards and foreheads that justify our thinking. Go on, Graves."

"You and I," said Graves, "may have ideas it is quite beyond our power to realise. But stronger and better men may come along and get the same ideas. Where a straw spins to-day, a windmill may grind to-morrow."

"My trouble is that I get no glimpse of these stronger and better men."

"Even so. Blettsworthy, you and I, multiplied by ten thousand thousand, begin to have the effect of a force of stronger and better men."

"That I don't altogether accept. No. There is a certain level of effectiveness and below that a man is not even a contributing fraction. He is *nil*. For example — let me talk for a minute, Graves

— this question of war. But before I come to that, let me remind you of that poor little start of ours in Oxford, the blue façade, the chain of shops that was to spread knowledge, thought and culture through the world."

"To this day," said Graves stoutly, "I maintain that was a sound idea."

"We failed."

"For want of capital. Financial and moral. I was a grabbing cad and a wasteful fool. I was disgusting. Nevertheless someday, someone a trifle better than a greedy, ill-balanced adolescent will take up that old idea and make a great thing of it."

"My trouble is," said I, "that I doubt the moral and material capital available for this great advance of mankind which you assume so readily. In particular this question of war. All our generation surely saw Ardam for what he is. And what have we done, what are we doing to restrain him? Some flimsy schemes."

"Under-capitalised, so far. Half-hearted, tentative."

"And where will you find the needful capital? Man is a coward, perpetually stultifying himself. Do you see a gleam of anything more hopeful? Here on this terrace we picnic amidst the ruins of Victorian Liberalism. The owl and the bittern entertain their friends at adjoining tables. Yet this Victorian Liberalism was an inspiration in its time. It liberated slaves; it educated to a certain level; it cherished freedom. What appears, better and stronger, to take its place? The question at issue between you and me, Graves, is precisely this question of available capital. I think of the misfortunes and disillusionments of my own life. Some indeed I ascribe to the indifferent quality of nature, which heeds man no more than a tapeworm or a falling rock. Nature has given me good and bad—"

"Stars, mountains, sea and flowers," Graves murmured.

"But the greater part of my distresses I owe to the incurable insufficiencies of man."

"*Why* incurable?" whispered Graves.

"He blunders into life, he blunders through life. He is cruel, destructive, ruthless, stupid, frantic and dangerous in his panics, jealous of all life but his own."

"There are things to his credit."

“But that is the balance of the account. So he has been. So he will be.”

“*No,*” said Graves.

“All history is for me.”

“History is the study of what is over and done.”

He broke off to make some decision about coffee. When he took up his parable again, we had cigars and had turned our chairs a little away from the silver finger-bowls and bright debris of dessert upon the table. We looked out through a lattice of maple leaves and branches upon the deep blue immensity of a July night in London; the thundering bridge and an endless coming and going of lights weaving a broad and brilliant selvage to its lower edge. For a time we had been sitting in silence.

“Blettsworthy,” he said, “you do not know the mighty adventures that are close at hand for mankind.”

“Do you?”

“I dream of them — and feel them coming near...

“You and I, Blettsworthy, are very ordinary men. There is nothing in our brains that cannot be in the brains of thousands of other people. You haven’t been alone in your visit to Rampole Island. Thousands, millions perhaps, have been there. You and I think rather figuratively, rather ineffectively, of getting out of the gorge. The movement hasn’t really taken shape yet, and second-rate people like we are hang about afraid of the plain conclusions of our own brains. But hundreds of thousands must think and feel as we do. It’s absurd to suppose there are not many more people, more decisive than you and I. They are feeling their way; making their plans. It’s just that sense of the other people which is needed to start the whole thing going.”

“It *is*,” I said with quiet emphasis.

Graves seemed to consider whether he should answer that and anyhow did not do so.

“The war,” he said, “*was* a war to end war and it will end war. There will never be a war so huge and silly as that last war again. We just carry on with the old things for a time, the old governments, the old arrangements. The war exposed and damned them all, but we carry on. The real reconstruction of human affairs isn’t to be done in

a hurry. No need to worry about trial reconstructions and transitory failures. The real reconstruction, Blettsworthy, the *real* reconstruction is afoot. It's launched now just as certainly as progressive experimental science was launched in the seventeenth century. We must begin with promotion companies — exploratory operations. Naturally. Everything begins with sketches and incomplete suggestions. No hurry, but no delay. To alter all this we want expenditure on a scale far beyond the scale of the Great War; and the job may take a few lifetimes. Great propaganda campaigns. Great educational campaigns. They will gather and come. Watch what happens now. First the statesmen have to get the courage to ask for the outlawry of war. A phrase you say, but is it only a phrase? When they are used to that idea and when they have accustomed people to that idea, then, Blettsworthy, then, first timidly and then boldly they will begin to discuss the next stage towards that international control of the collective interests of mankind, without which this blessed outlawry is obviously absurd. These steps are being taken — now."

"But consider the human beings we know and measure them against the magnitude of the task! Think how they quarrel, cheat, fail and dribble away their lives."

"The hairless ancients who misrule the tribe are all on their way to the grave. Thank God for death. Megatheria *can* die. Properly assisted they can die quite rapidly."

"And what replaces them?" said I. "Only a new crop of similar weeds. Only a fresh variation on the theme of human futility."

I looked across at my host. His face regarded the old railway bridge with a serene confidence in spite of all I had said. For a time he pursued his thoughts in silence. Presently he turned to me.

"Blettsworthy," he said; "nowadays we begin to have some idea, a dawning idea, of what man can do with the physical world — flying, submarines, wireless, the abolition of distance, modern surgery, sanitation... Hardly any of us as yet have more than a dim suspicion of all that may be done to the mind and motives of mankind. In quite a few years. Teaching is still at the mule-track stage and we base our morals and religion on creeds that are absurd to a boy of fourteen. Do you think matters are going to stick at that?"

I made my expression obdurate.

"Look at *our* lives. Have we been used — to the tenth of our full possibility? The efficiency of the educational machinery of mankind isn't one per cent. The rest is fuss, neglect and misdirection. What a raw, silly, greedy, gaping undisciplined thing I was when I led you into trouble at Oxford! And I had had the best of education England has to offer. Not one in a thousand had been worked upon as I had been. And you—"

"I was a bit of a gaper too," I said.

"What might not have been done with the lives of even such second-rate material as you and I, if we had had an education that was an education, and grown up into a civilised world instead of into a scramble seasoned by cant. Even nowadays education spreads. In matters of conduct people — quite ordinary people — understand their own moods far better than any generation did before, they watch themselves for irrational angers, they question their cravings and animosities, they release tensions and they are infinitely franker. That is only the beginning of enlightenment and intelligent self-control — in the place of dogmatic discipline. Customs and institutions broaden out to keep pace with the spread of ideas. People seem to imagine a love affair is just what is was a hundred years ago. It's absolutely different. And hate affairs too. In business people are less grabbing, distrustful and competitive. The quantity of spite per head of population isn't a quarter what it was in the days of Dickens and Thackeray. Read them if you don't believe me. Read the snobbishness and meanness in a volume of *Punch* of fifty years ago, and read the social jokes to-day. And what I am telling you is just the first slow movement towards a psychologically intelligent life. Merely the first steps. It has still to be taken up — massively. You know as well as I do that seven-eighths of the cruel and bad behaviour in life is due to fear and suspicion, ignorance, haste and bad habits. Every one of these things is curable in whole or in part. Do you think people will know these things are curable and not set about curing them? And to cure them you have to give people clear ideas of what, as a whole, they are up to. If we could come back here in a century's time do you think we'd see the same sort of crowd as clusters out there to-night? I don't. We'd see a crowd better grown,

better dressed, better mannered and with far less drift and far more definite purpose in its movements. The people in towns nowadays look to me like things that have just strayed in, as ants and flies might come into a kitchen — in search of casual food and drink. My dear Blettsworthy, do you think that this sort of thing " — he indicated London by a sweep of the arm— "is going on for ever? Do you even think it is going on for long?"

"But where is this new age of yours beginning?"

"Within a mile of us — in a thousand skulls. And everywhere."

"Graves," I said, "you must write another book and call it 'The Prospectus of Mankind — Unlimited.'"

He knocked out the glow of his cigar stump in the ashtray at his elbow. He seemed to be considering the proposition. "Why not?"

"And for our individual lives?" I questioned.

"Stoicism — creative Stoicism. What else can there be? And it need not be even stern. Admit, Blettsworthy, there are endless lovely and exciting things in life and that for all our frustrations, you would rather have lived than not."

"I'm not ungrateful. A summer night like this alone is worth living for. But I wish I had lived and I wish I lived now to more effect."

"Your discontent even may be effective, and after all, Blettsworthy, you're barely forty. There is still a lot of living for you to do. Things may begin in earnest... The individual life isn't everything. Human beings have overvalued their individual lives and cared too little for their kind. This can be changed without any change of nature; merely a change of direction... Oh! I know you think I am slipping out of my individual problems when I talk of the general advance of mankind. I read that doubting smile of yours so well. Perhaps you think I say to myself that it doesn't matter much what I do personally or how I get to my ends; good or bad I shall be carried along by the stream. I don't say that. I don't feel like that at all. On the contrary, I get myself away from all sorts of mean impulses by thinking in these large terms. I've become honest, more honest anyhow. I've got near to generosity lately in one or two small affairs. Among other things — as our dinner here is meant to witness — I mean to pay you back all that I took from you."

“Is there any need for that? Why burthen the future with the blunders of the past? I’m quite willing to wipe off all that. For the sake of what you and I have taught one another.”

“I shall never feel satisfied until I have paid you back.” I queried that mutely.

“Let me be exact to please you. I shall never feel satisfied until I am persuaded I am surely going to pay you back.”

I smiled at that characteristic correction and his face brightened with a responsive smile. “I shall pay you, nevertheless,” he said. “You are the doubter — always. Take my word for it — it is your Rampole Island that will pass away, and I who will come true.”

THE END

THE AUTOCRACY OF MR. PARHAM

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IX. — THE LAST STRAW

BOOK I. — THE HOPEFUL FRIENDSHIP

I. — INTRODUCES MR. PARHAM AND SIR BUSSY WOODCOCK

For a time Mr. Parham was extremely coy about Sir Bussy Woodcock's invitation to assist at a séance.

Mr. Parham did not want to be drawn into this séance business. At the same time he did not want to fall out of touch with Sir Bussy Woodcock.

Sir Bussy Woodcock was one of those crude plutocrats with whom men of commanding intelligence, if they have the slightest ambition to be more than lookers-on at the spectacle of life, are obliged to associate nowadays. These rich adventurers are, under modern conditions, the necessary interpreters between high thought and low reality. It is regrettable that such difficult and debasing intervention should be unavoidable, but it seems to be so in this inexplicable world. Man of thought and man of action are mutually necessary — or, at any rate, the cooperation seems to be necessary to the man of thought. Plato, Confucius, Machiavelli had all to seek their princes. Nowadays, when the stuffing is out of princes, men of thought must do their best to use rich men.

Rich men amenable to use are hard to find and often very intractable when found. There was much in Sir Bussy, for example, that a fine intelligence, were it not equipped with a magnificent self-restraint, might easily have found insupportable. He was a short ruddy freckled man with a nose sculptured in the abrupt modern style and a mouth like a careless gash; he was thickset, a thing irritating in itself to an associate of long slender lines, and he moved with an impulsive rapidity of movement that was startling often and testified always to a total lack of such inhibitions as are inseparable from a cultivated mind. His manners were — voracious. When you talked to him he would jump suddenly into your pauses, and Mr. Parham, having long been accustomed to talk to muted undergraduates, had, if anything, developed his pauses. Half the good had gone from Mr. Parham if you robbed him of these significant silences. But Sir Bussy had no sense of significant silences. When you came to a significant

silence, he would ask, “Meantersay?” in an entirely devastating manner. And he was always saying, “Gaw.” Continually he said it with a variety of intonations, and it never seemed to be addressed to anyone in particular. It meant nothing, or, what was more annoying, it might mean anything.

The fellow was of lowly extraction. His father had driven a hansom cab in London, while his mother was a nurse in a consumption hospital at Hampstead — the “Bussy” came from one of her more interesting patients — and their son, already ambitious at fourteen, had given up a strenuous course of Extension Lectures for an all-time job with a garrulous advertisement contractor, because, said he, there was “no GO in the other stuff.” The other “stuff,” if you please, was Wordsworth, the Reformation, Vegetable Morphology, and Economic History as interpreted by fastidious-minded and obscurely satirical young gentlemen from the elder universities.

Mr. Parham, tolerant, broad-minded, and deliberately quite modern, was always trying to forget these things. He never really forgot them, but whenever he and Sir Bussy were together he was always trying very hard to do so. Sir Bussy’s rise to wealth and power from such beginnings was one of the endless romances of modern business. Mr. Parham made a point of knowing as little about it as possible.

There the man was. In a little less than a quarter of a century, while Mr. Parham had been occupied chiefly with imperishable things — and marking examination papers upon them — Sir Bussy had become the master of a vast quantity of transitory but tangible phenomena which included a great advertising organization, an important part of the retail provision trade, a group of hotels, plantations in the tropics, cinema theatres, and many other things felt rather than known by Mr. Parham. Over these ephemerons Sir Bussy presided during those parts of his days that were withdrawn from social life, and occasionally even when he was existing socially he was summoned to telephones or indulged in inaudible asides to mysterious young men who sprang from nowhere on their account. As a consequence of these activities, always rather obscure to Mr. Parham, Sir Bussy lived in the midst of a quite terrific comfort and

splendour surrounded by an obedience and a dignified obsequiousness that might have overawed a weaker or a vulgarer mind than Mr. Parham's altogether. He appeared in a doorway at night, and marvellous chauffeurs sprang out of the darkness to the salute at his appearance; he said "Gaw," and great butlers were ashamed. In a more luminous world things might have been different, but in this one Sir Bussy's chauffeurs plainly regarded Mr. Parham as a rather unaccountable parcel which Sir Bussy was pleased to send about, and though the household manservants at Buntincombe, Carfex House, Marmion House, and the Hangar treated Mr. Parham as a gentleman, manifestly they did so rather through training than perception. A continual miracle, Sir Bussy was. He had acquired a colossal power of ordering people about, and it was evident to Mr. Parham that he had not the slightest idea what on the whole he wanted them to do. Meanwhile he just ordered them about. It was natural for Mr. Parham to think, "If I had the power he has, what wonderful things I could achieve."

For instance, Sir Bussy might make history.

Mr. Parham was a lifelong student and exponent of history and philosophy. He had produced several studies — mainly round and about Richelieu and going more deeply into the mind of Richelieu than anyone has ever done before — and given short special courses upon historical themes; he had written a small volume of essays; he was general editor of Fosdyke's popular "Philosophy of History" series, and he would sometimes write reviews upon works of scholarly distinction, reviews that appeared (often shockingly cut and mutilated) in the Empire, the Weekly Philosopher, and the Georgian Review. No one could deal with a new idea struggling to take form and wave it out of existence again more neatly and smilingly than Mr. Parham. And loving history and philosophy as he did, it was a trouble to his mind to feel how completely out of tune was the confusion of current events with anything that one could properly call fine history or fine philosophy. The Great War he realized was History, though very lumpish, brutalized, and unmanageable, and the Conference of Versailles was history also — in further declination. One could still put that Conference as a drama between this Power and that, talk of the conflict for "ascendency," explain the "policy" of

this or that man or this or that foreign office subtly and logically.

But from about 1919 onward everything had gone from bad to worse. Persons, events, had been deprived of more and more significance. Discordance, a disarray of values, invaded the flow of occurrence. Take Mr. Lloyd George, for example. How was one to treat a man like that? After a climax of the Versailles type the proper way was to culminate and let the historians get to work, as Woodrow Wilson indeed had done, and as Lincoln or Sulla or Cæsar or Alexander did before him. They culminated and rounded off, inconvenient facts fell off them bit by bit, and more and more surely could they be treated HISTORICALLY. The reality of history broke through superficial appearance; the logic of events was made visible.

But now, where were the Powers and what were the forces? In the face of such things as happen to-day this trained historian felt like a skilled carver who was asked to cut up soup. Where were the bones? — any bones? A man like Sir Bussy ought to be playing a part in a great struggle between the New Rich and the Older Oligarchy; he ought to be an Equestrian pitted against the Patricians. He ought to round off the Close of Electoral Democracy. He ought to embody the New Phase in British affairs — the New Empire. But did he? Did he stand for anything at all? There were times when Mr. Parham felt that if he could not make Sir Bussy stand for something, something definitely, formally and historically significant, his mind would give way altogether.

Surely the ancient and time-honoured processes of history were going on still — surely they were going on. Or what could be going on? Security and predominance — in Europe, in Asia, in finance — were gravely discussed by Mr. Parham and his kindred souls in the more serious weekly and monthly reviews. There were still governments and foreign offices everywhere, and they went through the motions of a struggle for world ascendency according to the rules, decently and in order. Nothing of the slightest importance occurred now between the Powers that was not strictly confidential. Espionage had never been so universal, conscientious, and respected, and the double cross of Christian diplomacy ruled the skies from Washington to Tokio. Britain and France, America, Germany, Moscow cultivated navies and armies and carried on high dignified

diplomacies and made secret agreements with and against each other just as though there had never been that stupid talk about "a war to end war." Bolshevik Moscow, after an alarming opening phase, had settled down into the best tradition of the Czar's Foreign Office. If Mr. Parham had been privileged to enjoy the intimacy of statesmen like Sir Austen Chamberlain and Mr. Winston Churchill or M. Poincaré, and if he could have dined with some of them, he felt sure that after dinner, with the curtains drawn and the port and the cigars moving with a pensive irregularity like chess pieces upon the reflective mahogany, things would be said, a tone would be established that would bring him back warmly and comfortably again into his complete belief in history as he had learnt it and taught it.

But somehow, in spite of his vivid illuminating books and able and sometimes quite important articles, such social occasions did not come to his assistance.

Failing such reassurances, a strange persuasion in his mind arose and gathered strength, that round and about the present appearances of historical continuity something else quite different and novel and not so much menacing as dematerializing these appearances was happening. It is hard to define what this something else was. Essentially it was a vast and increasing inattention. It was the way everybody was going on, as if all the serious things in life were no longer serious. And as if other things were. And in the more recent years of Mr. Parham's life it had been, in particular, Sir Bussy.

One night Mr. Parham asked himself a heart-searching question. It was doubtful to him afterwards whether he had had a meditation or a nightmare, whether he had thought or dreamt he thought. Suppose, so it was put to him, that statesmen, diplomatists, princes, professors of economics, military and naval experts, and in fact all the present heirs of history, were to bring about a situation, complex, difficult, dangerous, with notes, counter notes, utterances — and even ultimatums — rising towards a declaration of war about some "question." And suppose — oh, horror! — suppose people in general, and Sir Bussy in particular, just looked at it and said, "Gaw," or "Meantersay?" and turned away. Turned away and went on with the things they were doing, the silly things unfit for history! What would the heirs of history do? Would the soldiers dare to hold

a pistol at Sir Bussy, or the statesmen push him aside? Suppose he refused to be pushed aside and resisted in some queer circumventing way of his own. Suppose he were to say, “Cut all this right out — now.” And suppose they found they had to cut it out!

Well, what would become then of our historical inheritance? Where would the Empire be, the Powers, our national traditions and policies? It was an alien idea, this idea that the sawdust was running out of the historical tradition, so alien indeed that it surely never entered Mr. Parham’s mind when it was fully awake. There was really nothing to support it there, no group of concepts to which it could attach itself congenially, and yet, once it had secured its footing, it kept worrying at Mr. Parham’s serenity like a silly tune that has established itself in one’s brain. “They won’t obey — when the time comes they won’t obey”; that was the refrain. The generals would say, “Haw,” but the people would say, “Gaw!” And Gaw would win! In the nightmare, anyhow, Gaw won. Life after that became inconceivable to Mr. Parham. Chaos!

In which somehow, he felt, Sir Bussy might still survive, transfigured, perhaps, but surviving. Horribly. Triumphantly.

Mr. Parham came vividly and certainly awake and lay awake until dawn.

The muse of History might tell of the rise of dynasties, the ascendency of this power or that, of the onset of nationalism with Macedonia, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, of the age-long struggles of Islam and Christendom and of Latin and Greek Christianity, of the marvellous careers of Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon, unfolding the magic scroll of their records, seeking to stir up Sir Bussy to play his part, his important if subservient part in this continuing drama of hers, and Sir Bussy would reflect almost sleepily over the narrative, would seem to think nothing of the narrative, would follow some train of thought of his own into regions inaccessible to Mr. Parham, and would say, “Gaw.”

Gaw!

Mr. Parham was becoming neurasthenic...

And then, to add to his troubles, there was this damned nonsense now about going to a séance and taking mediums seriously, them and their nasty, disreputable, and irritatingly inexplicable phenomena.

About dawn Mr. Parham was thinking very seriously of giving up Sir Bussy. But he had thought of that several times before and always with a similar result. Finally he went to a séance, he went to a series of séances with Sir Bussy, as this narrative will in due course relate.

II. — TELLS HOW SIR BUSSY AND MR. PARHAM BECAME ASSOCIATED

When five years or more ago Mr. Parham had met Sir Bussy for the first time, the great financier had seemed to be really interested in the things of the mind, modestly but seriously interested.

Mr. Parham had talked of Michael Angelo and Botticelli at a man's dinner given by Sebright Smith at the Rialto. It was what Mr. Parham called one of Sebright Smith's marvellous feats of mixing and what Sebright Smith, less openly, called a "massacre." Sebright Smith was always promising and incurring the liability for hospitality in a most careless manner, and when he had accumulated a sufficiency of obligations to bother him he gave ruthless dinners and lunches, machine-gun dinners and lunches, to work them off. Hence his secret name for these gatherings. He did not care whom he asked to meet whom, he trusted to champagne as a universal solvent, and Mr. Parham, with that liberal modern and yet cultivated mind of his, found these feasts delightfully catholic.

There is nothing like men who are not at their ease, for listening, and Mr. Parham, who was born well-informed, just let himself go. He said things about Botticelli that a more mercenary man might have made into a little book and got forty or fifty pounds for. Sir Bussy listened with an expression that anyone who did not know him might have considered malignant. But it was merely that when he was interested or when he was occupied with an idea for action he used to let the left-hand corner of his mouth hang down.

When there came a shift with the cigars and Negro singers sang Negro spirituals, Sir Bussy seized an opportunity and slipped into one of the two chairs that had become vacant on either side of Mr. Parham.

"You know about those things?" he asked, regardless of the abounding emotional richness of "Let my people go-o."

Mr. Parham conveyed interrogation.

"Old masters, Art and all that."

"They interest me," said Mr. Parham, smiling with kindly

friendliness, for he did not yet know the name or the power of the man to whom he was talking.

"They might have interested ME — but I cut it out. D'you ever lunch in the city?"

"Not often."

"Well, if ever you are that way — next week, for example — ring me up at Marmion House."

The name conveyed nothing to Mr. Parham.

"I'll be delighted," he said politely.

Sir Bussy, it seemed, was on his way to depart. He paused for a moment. "For all I know," he said, "there may be a lot in Art. Do come. I was really interested." He smiled, with a curious gleam of charm, turned off the charm, and departed briskly, in an interlude while Sebright Smith and the singers decided noisily about the next song.

Later Mr. Parham sought his host. "Who is the sturdy little man with a flushed face and wiry hair who went early?"

"Think I know everybody here?" said Sebright Smith.

"But he sat next to you!"

"Oh, THAT chap! That's one of our conq-conquerors," said Sebright Smith, who was drunk.

"Has he a name?"

"Has he not?" said Sebright Smith. "Sir Blasted Busy Bussy Buy-up-the- Universe Woodcock. He's the sort of man who buys up everything. Shops and houses and factories. Estates and pot houses. Quarries. Whole trades. Buys things on the way to you. Fiddles about with them a bit before you get 'em. You can't eat a pat of butter now in London before he's bought and sold it. Railways he buys, hotels, cinemas and suburbs, men and women, soul and body. Mind he doesn't buy you."

"I'm not on the market."

"Private treaty, I suppose," said Sebright Smith, and realizing from Mr. Parham's startled interrogative face that he had been guilty of some indelicacy, tried to tone it down with, "Have some more champagne?"

Mr. Parham caught the eye of an old friend and did not answer his host's last remark. Indeed, he hardly saw any point to it, and the man

was plainly drunk. He lifted a vertical hand to his friend as one might hail a cab and shouldered his way towards him.

In the course of the next few days Mr. Parham made a number of discreet inquiries about Sir Bussy, he looked him up in Who's Who, where he found a very frank and rather self-conscious half column, and decided to accept that invitation to Marmion House in a decisive manner. If the man wanted tutoring in Art he should have tutoring in Art. Wasn't it Lord Rosebery who said, "We must educate our masters"?

They would have a broad-minded, friendly tête-à-tête, Mr. Parham would open the golden world of Art to his host and incidentally introduce a long-cherished dream that it would cost Sir Bussy scarcely anything to make into a fine and delightful reality.

This dream, which was destined to hold Mr. Parham in resentful vassalage to Sir Bussy through long, long years of hope deferred, was the vision of a distinguished and authoritative weekly paper, with double columns and a restrained title heading, of which Mr. Parham would be the editor. It was to be one of those papers, not vulgarly gross in their circulation, but which influence opinion and direct current history throughout the civilized world. It was to be all that the Spectator, the Saturday Review, the Nation, and the New Statesman have ever been and more. It was to be largely the writing of Mr. Parham and of young men influenced and discovered by him. It was to arraign the whole spectacle of life, its public affairs, its "questions," its science, art, and literature. It was to be understanding, advisory but always a little aloof. It was to be bold at times, stern at times, outspoken at times, but never shouting, never vulgar. As an editor one partakes of the nature of God; you are God with only one drawback, a Proprietor. But also, if you have played your cards well, you are God with a definite Agreement. And without God's responsibility for the defects and errors of the universe you survey. You can smile and barb your wit as He cannot do. For He would be under suspicion of having led up to his own jokes.

Writing "Notes of the Week" is perhaps one of the purest pleasures life offers an intelligent, cultivated man. You encourage or you rebuke nations. You point out how Russia has erred and Germany taken your hint of the week before last. You discuss the

motives of statesmen and warn bankers and colossal business adventurers. You judge judges. You have a word of kindly praise or mild contempt for the foolish multitude of writers. You compliment artists, sometimes left-handedly. The little brawling Correspondents play about your feet, writing their squabbling, protesting letters, needing sometimes your reproving pat. Every week you make or mar reputations. Criticizing everyone, you go uncriticized. You speak out of a cloud, glorious powerful and obscure. Few men are worthy of this great trust, but Mr. Parham had long felt himself among that elect minority. With difficulty he had guarded his secret, waiting for his paper as the cloistered virgin of the past waited for her lover. And here at last was Sir Bussy, Sir Bussy who could give this precious apotheosis to Mr. Parham with scarcely an effort.

He had only to say "Go" to the thing. Mr. Parham knew just where to go and just what to do. It was Sir Bussy's great opportunity. He might evoke a God. He had neither the education nor the abilities to be a God, but he could bring a God into being.

Sir Bussy had bought all sorts of things but apparently he had never yet come into the splash and excitement of newspaper properties. It was time he did. It was time he tasted Power, Influence, and Knowledge brimming fresh from the source. His own source.

With such thoughts already pullulating in his mind Mr. Parham had gone to his first lunch at Marmion House.

Marmion House he found a busy place. It had been built by Sir Bussy. Eight and thirty companies had their offices there, and in the big archway of the Victoria Street entrance Mr. Parham was jostled by a great coming and going of swift-tripping clerks and stenographers seeking their midday refreshment. A populous lift shed passengers at every floor and left Mr. Parham alone with the lift boy for the top.

It was not to be the pleasant little tête-à-tête Mr. Parham had expected when he had telephoned in the morning. He found Sir Bussy in a large dining room with a long table surrounded by quite a number of people who Mr. Parham felt from the very outset were hangers-on and parasites of the worst description. Later he was to realize that a few of them were in a sense reputable and connected with this or that of the eight and thirty companies Sir Bussy had

grouped about him, but that was not the first impression. There was a gravely alert stenographer on Sir Bussy's left-hand side whom Mr. Parham considered much too dignified in her manner and much too graceful and well dressed for her position, and there were two very young women with grossly familiar manners who called Sir Bussy "Bussy dear" and stared at Mr. Parham as though he were some kind of foreigner. Later on in the acquaintanceship Mr. Parham was to realize that these girls were Sir Bussy's pet nieces by marriage — he had no children of his own — but at the time Mr. Parham thought the very worst of them. They were painted. There was a very, very convex, buoyant man wearing light tweeds and with an insinuating voice who asked Mr. Parham suddenly whether he didn't think something ought to be done about Westernhanger and then slipped off into an obscure joke with one of the nieces while Mr. Parham was still wondering who or what Westernhanger might be. And there was a small, preoccupied-looking man with that sort of cylinder forehead one really ought to take off before sitting down to lunch, who Mr. Parham learnt was Sir Titus Knowles of Harley Street. There was no serious conversation at lunch but only a throwing about of remarks. A quiet man sitting between Mr. Parham and Sir Bussy asked Mr. Parham whether he did not find the architecture of the city abominable.

"Consider New York," he said.

Mr. Parham weighed it. "New York is different."

The quiet man after a pause for reflection said that was true but still...

Sir Bussy had greeted Mr. Parham's arrival with his flash of charm and had told him to "sit down anywhere." Then after a little obscure badinage across the table with one of the pretty painted girls about the possibility of her playing "real tennis" in London, the host subsided into his own thoughts. Once he said, "Gaw!" — about nothing.

The lunch had none of the quiet orderliness of a West-End lunch party. Three or four young men, brisk but not dignified, in white linen jackets did the service. There were steak-and-kidney pudding and roast beef, celery for everyone in the American fashion, and a sideboard with all manner of cold meat, cold fruit tarts, and bottles of

drink thereon. On the table were jugs of some sort of cup. Mr. Parham thought it best became a simple scholar and a gentleman to disdain the plutocrat's wines and drink plain beer from a tankard. When the eating was over half the party melted away, including the graceful secretary whose face Mr. Parham was beginning to find interesting, and the rest moved with Sir Bussy into a large low lounge where there were cigars and cigarettes, coffee and liqueurs.

"We're going to this tennis place with Tremayne," the pretty girls announced together.

"Not Lord Tremayne!" thought Mr. Parham and regarded the abdominal case with a new interest. The fellow had been at C. C. C.

"If he tries to play tennis with clubs and solid balls after the lunch he's eaten, he'll drop dead," said Sir Bussy.

"You don't know my powers of assimilation," said the very convex gentleman.

"Have some brandy, Tremayne, and make a job of it," said Sir Bussy.

"Brandy," said Tremayne to a passing servitor. "A double brandy."

"Get his lordship some old brandy," said Sir Bussy.

So it really was Lord Tremayne! But how inflated! Mr. Parham was already a tutor when Lord Tremayne had come up, a beautifully slender youth. He came up and he was sent down. But in the interval he had been greatly admired.

The three departed, and Sir Bussy came to Mr. Parham.

"Got anything to do this afternoon?" he asked.

Mr. Parham had nothing of a compelling nature.

"Let's go and look at some pictures," said Sir Bussy. "I want to. D'you mind? You seem to have ideas about them."

"There's so MANY pictures," said Mr. Parham in rather a jolly tone and smiling.

"National Gallery, I mean. And the Tate, perhaps. Academy's still open. Dealers' shows if necessary. We ought to get round as much as we need to in the afternoon. It's a general idea I want. And how it looks to you."

As Sir Bussy's Rolls-Royce went its slick, swift way westward through the afternoon traffic he made their objective clearer. "I want

to LOOK at this painting," he said, with his voice going up at the 'look.' "What's it all ABOUT? What's it all FOR? How did it get there? What does it all amount to?"

The corner of his mouth went down and he searched his companion's face with an extraordinary mixture of hostility and appeal in his eyes.

Mr. Parham would have liked to have had notice of the question. He gave Sir Bussy his profile.

"What is Art?" questioned Mr. Parham, playing for time. "A big question."

"Not Art — just this painting," corrected Sir Bussy.

"It's Art," said Mr. Parham. "Art in its nature. One and Indivisible."

"Gaw," said Sir Bussy softly and became still more earnestly expectant.

"A sort of QUINTESSENCE, I suppose," Mr. Parham tried. He waved a hand with a gesture that had earned him the unjust and unpleasant nickname of "Bunch of Fingers" among his undergraduates. For his hands were really very beautifully proportioned. "A kind of getting the concentrated quality of loveliness, of beauty, out of common experience."

"That we certainly got to look for," injected Sir Bussy.

"And fixing it. Making it permanent."

Sir Bussy spoke again after a pause for reflection. He spoke with an air of confiding thoughts long suppressed. "Sure these painters haven't been putting it over us a bit? I thought — the other night — while you were talking... Just an idea..."

Mr. Parham regarded his host slantingly. "No," he said slowly and judiciously, "I don't think they've been PUTTING IT OVER US." Just the least little stress on the last four words — imperceptible to Sir Bussy.

"Well, that's what we got to see."

A queer beginning for a queer afternoon — an afternoon with a Barbarian. But indisputably, as Sebright Smith had said, "one of our conquerors." He wasn't a Barbarian to be sniffed away. He fought for his barbarism like a bulldog. Mr. Parham had been taken by surprise. He wished more and more that he had had notice of the question that

was pressed upon him as the afternoon wore on. Then he could have chosen his pictures and made an orderly course of it. As it was he got to work haphazard, and instead of fighting a set battle for Art and the wonder and sublimity of it, Mr. Parham found himself in the position of a commander who is called upon with the enemy already in his camp. It was a piecemeal discussion.

Sir Bussy's attitude so far as Mr. Parham could make it out from his fragmentary and illiterate method of expressing himself, was one of skeptical inquiry. The man was uncultivated — indeed, he was glaringly uncultivated — but there was much natural intelligence in his make-up. He had evidently been impressed profoundly by the honour paid to the names of the great Princes of pictorial art by all men of taste and intelligence, and he could not see why they were exalted to such heights. So he wanted it explained to him. He had evidently vast curiosities. To-day it was Michael Angelo and Titian he questioned. To-morrow it might be Beethoven or Shakespeare. He wasn't to be fobbed off by authority. He didn't admit authority. He had to be met as though the acquiescence and approval of generations to these forms of greatness had never been given.

He went up the steps from the entrance to the National Gallery with such a swift assurance that the thought occurred to Mr. Parham that he had already paid a visit there. He made at once for the Italians.

"Now, here's pictures," he said, sweeping on through one room to another and only slowing down in the largest gallery of all. "They're fairly interesting and amoosing. The most part. A lot of them are bright. They might be brighter, but I suppose none of them are exactly fast colour. You can see the fun the chaps have had painting them. I grant all that. I wouldn't object to having quite a lot of them about in Carfex House. I'd like to swipe about with a brush myself a bit. But when it comes to making out they're something more than that and speaking of them in a sort of hushed religious way as though those chaps knew something special about heaven and just let it out, I don't get you. I don't for the life of me get you."

"But here, for instance," said Mr. Parham, "this Francesca — the sweetness and delicacy — surely DIVINE isn't too much for it."

"Sweetness and delicacy. Divine! Well, take a spring day in

England, take the little feathers on a pheasant's breast, or bits of a sunset, or the morning light through a tumbler of flowers on a window sill. Surely things of that sort are no end sweeter and more delicate and more divine and all the rest of it than this — this PICKLED stuff."

"Pickled!" For a moment Mr. Parham was overcome.

"Pickled prettiness," said Sir Bussy defiantly. "Pickled loveliness, if you like... And a lot of it not very lovely and not so marvellously well pickled."

Sir Bussy continued hitting Mr. Parham while he was down. "All these Madonnas. Did they WANT to paint them or were they obliged? Who ever thought a woman sitting up on a throne like that was any catch?"

"Pickled!" Mr. Parham clung to the main theme. "NO!"

Sir Bussy, abruptly expectant, dropped the corner of his mouth and brought his face sideways towards Mr. Parham.

Mr. Parham waved his hand about and found the word he wanted. "Selected."

He got it still better. "Selected and fixed. These men went about the world seeing — seeing with all their might. Seeing with gifts. Born to see. And they tried — and I think succeeded — in seizing something of their most intense impressions. For us. The Madonna was often — was usually — no more than an excuse..."

Sir Bussy's mouth resumed its more normal condition, and he turned with an appearance of greater respect towards the pictures again. He would give them a chance under that plea. But his scrutiny did not last for long.

"That thing," he said, returning to the object of their original remarks.

"Francesca's Baptism," breathed Mr. Parham.

"To my mind it's not a selection: it's an assembly. Things he liked painting. The background is jolly, but only because it reminds you of things you've seen. I'm not going to lie down in front of it and worship. And most of this—"

He seemed to indicate the entire national collection.

" — is just painting."

"I must contest," said Mr. Parham. "I must contest."

He pleaded the subtle colouring of Filippo Lippi, the elation and grace and classic loveliness of Botticelli; he spoke of richness, anatomical dexterity, virtuosity, and culminated at last in the infinite solemnity of Leonardo's Madonna of the Rocks. "The mystery, the serene mystery of that shadowed woman's face; the sweet wisdom of the Angel's self-content," said Mr. Parham. "Painting! It's Revelation."

"Gaw," said Sir Bussy, head on one side.

He was led from picture to picture like an obstinate child. "I'm not saying the stuff's BAD," he repeated; "I'm not saying it isn't interesting; but I don't see the call for superlatives. It's being reminded of things, and it's you really that has the things. Taking it altogether," and he surveyed the collection, "I'll admit it's clever, sensitive work, but I'm damned if I see anything divine."

Also he made a curiously ungracious concession to culture. "After a bit," he said, "one certainly gets one's eye in. Like being in the dark in a cinema."

But it would be tedious to record all his crude reactions to loveliness that have become the dearest heritage of our minds. He said Raphael was "dam' genteel." He rebelled at El Greco. "Byzantine solemnity," he repeated after Mr. Parham, "it's more like faces seen in the back of a spoon." But he came near cheering Tintoretto's Origin of the Milky Way. "Gaw," he said warmly. "Now THAT! It isn't decent but it's damn fine."

He went back to it.

It was in vain that Mr. Parham tried to beguile him past the Rokeby Venus.

"Who did that?" he asked, as if he suspected Mr. Parham.

"Velasquez."

"Well, what's the essential difference between that and a good big photograph of a naked woman tinted and posed to excite you?"

Mr. Parham was a little ashamed to find himself arguing an issue so crude in a public place and audibly, but Sir Bussy was regarding him with that unconscious menace of his which compelled replies.

"The two things aren't in the same world. The photograph is material, factual, personal, individual. Here the beauty, the long delightful lines of a slender human body, are merely the theme of a

perfect composition. The body becomes transcendental. It is sublimated. It is robbed of all individual defect and individual coarseness."

"Nonsense! that girl's individualized enough for — anybody."

"I do NOT agree. Profoundly I do NOT agree."

"Gaw! I'm not quarrelling with the picture, only I don't see the force of all this transcending and sublimating. I like it — just as I like that Tintoretto. But a pretty naked young woman is beautiful anywhere and anyhow, especially if you're in the mood, and I don't see why a poor little smut seller in the street should be run in for selling just exactly what anyone in the world can come here to see — and buy photographs of in the vestibule. It isn't Art I'm objecting to, but the Airs Art gives itself. It's just as if Art had been asked to dinner at Buckingham Palace and didn't want to be seen about with its poor relations. Who got just as much right to live."

Mr. Parham moved on with an expression of face — as if the discussion had decayed unpleasantly.

"I wonder if there is time to get on to the Tate," he considered. "There you'll find the British school and the wild uncharted young." He could not refrain from a delicate, almost imperceptible sneer. "Their pictures are newer. You may find them brighter and more pleasing on that account."

They did go on to the Tate Gallery. But Sir Bussy found no further objections to art there nor any reconciliation. His chief judgment was to ascribe "cheek" to Mr. Augustus John. As he and Mr. Parham left the building he seemed to reflect, and then he delivered himself of what was evidently his matured answer to his self-posed question for that afternoon.

"I don't see that this Painting gets you out to anything. I don't see that it gets you out of anything. It's not discovery and it's not escape. People talk as if it was a door out of this damned world. Well — IS it?"

"It has given colour and interest to thousands — myriads — of quietly observant lives."

"Cricket can do that," said Sir Bussy.

Mr. Parham had no answer to such a remark. For some brief moments it seemed to him that the afternoon had been a failure. He

had done his best, but this was an obdurate mind, difficult to dominate, and he had, he felt, failed completely to put the idea of Art over to it. They stood side by side in silence in the evening glow, waiting for Sir Bussy's chauffeur to realize that they had emerged. This plutocrat, thought Mr. Parham, will never understand me, never understand the objectives of a true civilization, never endow the paper I need. I must keep polite and smiling as a gentleman should, but I have wasted time and hope on him.

In the car, however, Sir Bussy displayed an unexpected gratitude, and Mr. Parham realized his pessimism had been premature.

"Well," said Sir Bussy, "I got a lot out of this afternoon. It's been a Great Time. You've interested me. I shall remember all sorts of things you've said about this Art. We held on fine. We looked and we looked. I think I got your point of view; I really think I have. That other evening I said, 'I must get that chap's point of view. He's amazing.' I hope this is only the first of quite a lot of times when I'm going to have the pleasure of meeting you and getting your point of view... Like pretty women?"

"Eh?" said Mr. Parham.

"Like pretty women?"

"Man is mortal," said Mr. Parham with the air of a confession.

"I'd love to see you at a party I'm giving at the Savoy. Thursday next. Supper and keep on with it. Everything fit to look at on the London stage and most of it showing. Dancing."

"I'm not a dancing man, you know."

"Nor me. But YOU ought to take lessons. You've got the sort of long leg to do it. Anyhow, we might sit in a corner together and you tell me something about Women. Like you've been telling me about Art. I been so busy, but I've always wanted to know. And you can take people down to supper whenever you feel dullish. Any number of them ready to be taken down to supper. Again and again and again and again, as the poem says. We don't stint the supper."

III. — MR. PARHAM AMONG THE GAYER RICH

It was not clear to Mr. Parham that he would get his newspaper, but it was quite clear that he had a reasonable prospect of becoming a sort of Mentor to Sir Bussy. Just what sort of Mentor it was still too early to guess. If you will imagine Socrates as tall and formally good-looking and Alcibiades as short and energetic, and if you will suppose that unfortunate expedition to Syracuse replaced under sound advice by a masterful consolidation of Greece; if indeed you will flatten that parallel to the verge of extinction without actually obliterating it, you will get something of the flavour of Mr. Parham's anticipations. Or perhaps Aristotle and Alexander will better serve our purpose. It is one of the endless advantages of a sound classical education that you need never see, you can never see, a human relationship in its vulgar simplicity; there is always the enrichment of these regurgitated factors. You lose all sense of current events; you simply get such history as you have swallowed repeating itself.

In this party at the Savoy Mr. Parham saw Sir Bussy seriously engaged in expenditure for the first time. A common mind would have been mightily impressed by the evident height, width, depth, and velocity of the flow, and even Mr. Parham found himself doing little sums and estimates to get an idea of what this one evening must be costing his new acquaintance. It would, Mr. Parham reckoned, have maintained a weekly of the very highest class for three years or more.

Mr. Parham made it his rule to dress correctly and well for every social occasion. He did not believe in that benefit of clergy which is used as an excuse by men of learning and intellectual distinction for low collars on high occasions and antiquated smoking jackets at dances. He thought it better to let people understand that on occasion a philosopher is fully equal to being a man of the world. His tallness permitted a drooping urbanity, a little suggestive of Lord Balfour, and on the whole he knew himself with his fine and fastidious features to be anything but ill-looking. His Gibus hat, a trifle old-

fashioned in these slovenly times, kept his bunch of fingers within bounds, and his fine gold chain was plainly ancestral.

The entire Savoy had placed itself at the disposal of Sir Bussy. Its servants were his servants. In their gray plush breeches and yellow waistcoats they looked like inherited family servitors. In the cloakroom he found Sir Titus Knowles of the stupendous brow divesting himself of an extremely small black hat and a huge cloak.

"Hullo!" said Sir Titus. "YOU here!"

"Apparently," said Mr. Parham taking it in good part.

"Ah," said Sir Titus.

"No need for a ticket, Sir Titus," said the receiver of cloaks. "Too well known, sir."

Sir Titus disappeared, smiling faintly.

But Mr. Parham received a ticket for his overcoat.

He drifted past the men waiting for their womankind towards a dazzling crowd of lovely and extremely expensive-looking ladies with shining arms and shoulders and backs and a considerable variety of men. There was talk like a great and greatly fluctuating wind blowing through tin leaved trees. A sort of reception was in progress. Sir Bussy appeared abruptly.

"Good," he said with gusto. "We must have a talk. You know Pomander Poole? She's dying to meet you."

He vanished, and that evening Mr. Parham never had opportunity to exchange more than two or three missile sentences with him, though he had endless glimpses of him at a distance, moodily active or artificially gay.

Miss Pomander Poole began very seriously by asking Mr. Parham his name, which Sir Bussy, through inadvertency or a momentary forgetfulness, had never mentioned. "Parham is the name of the man you are dying to meet," said Mr. Parham, and did a dazzling smile with all his excellent teeth, except, of course, the molars at the back.

"Bussy's more like a flea than ever to-night," said Miss Pomander Poole. "He ought to be called the Quest. Or the little wee Grail. I've seen six people trying to catch him."

She was a dark, handsome lady with tormented-looking eyes and more breadth than is fashionable. Her voice was rich and fine. She surveyed the long room before them. "Why in heaven he gives these

parties I can't imagine," she said, and sighed and became still, to show she had finished her part in the conversation.

Mr. Parham hung fire. The name of Pomander Poole was very familiar to him, but for the life of him at that moment he could not connect it with books, articles, plays, pictures, scandals, society gossip, or the music-hall stage with any of the precision necessary if he was to talk in the easy, helpful, rather amused way becoming to a philosopher in his man-of-the-world mood. So he had to resort to what was almost questioning.

"I've known our host only very recently," said Mr. Parham, plainly inviting comment.

"He doesn't exist," she said.

Apparently we were going to be brilliant, and if so Mr. Parham was not the man to miss his cues. "We've met a sort of simulacrum," he protested.

She disregarded Mr. Parham's words altogether. "He doesn't exist," she sighed. "So not only can no-one else catch him, he can't catch himself. He's always turning back the bedclothes and having a good look for himself, but it's never any good."

The lady certainly had breadth.

"He acquires wealth," said Mr. Parham.

"Nature abhors a vacuum," she said with the weariness of one who answers a familiar catechism. She was looking about her with her sombre, appealing eyes as she spoke, as if she were looking for someone to relieve her of Mr. Parham.

"To-night the vacuum is full of interesting people."

"I don't know a tithe of them."

"I'm sufficiently unworldly to find their appearances interesting."

"I'm sufficiently worldly to build no hopes on that."

A second phase of awkwardness hung between Mr. Parham and his companion. He wished she could be just wiped out of existence and somebody easier put in her place. But she it was who saved the situation. "I suppose it's too early to begin going down to supper," she said; "down or up or wherever it is. These vacuum parties provoke feelings of extraordinary emptiness in me."

"Well, let's explore," said Mr. Parham, doing his smile again and taking the lady in tow.

“I’m sure I’ve heard you lecture at the Royal Institution,” she opened.

“Never been there,” said Mr. Parham.

“I’ve seen you there. Usually two or three of you. You’re a man of science.”

“Classical, dear lady. Academic. With a few old and tested ideas like favourite pipes that I brood over again and again — and an inky forefinger.”

Now that wasn’t so bad. Miss Poole looked at him as though she had just observed his existence for the first time. A ray of interest shone and then dissolved into other preoccupations.

When we say that Mr. Parham took the lady in tow and found the supper room we defer rather to the way in which he would have liked to have it put. But in fact, as they made their way through the brilliant multitude, she was usually leading in a distraught yet purposive manner by anything between two yards and six. Supper had indeed begun noisily and vigorously, and Miss Poole, still leading, was hailed by a group of people who seemed to be not so much supping as laying in provisions. “What are you saying to-night, Pomander?” cried a handsome young man, and she melted into the centre of the group without any attempt to introduce Mr. Parham. “I’m doubting Bussy’s real existence,” answered Miss Poole, “and craving for his food.”

“Like a modern Christian and his God,” said someone.

Mr. Parham travelled round the outskirts of the group and came to the glittering tablecloth. The board was bountiful, and the only drink, it seemed to Mr. Parham, was champagne, poured from glass jugs. He tried to get drink for Miss Poole, but she was already supplied, so he drank himself, pretended to participate in the conversation of the backs that were turned towards him, looked amused, and ate a couple of chicken sandwiches with an air of careless ease. Miss Poole had brightened considerably. She smacked a large ham-faced Jew on the cheek with a pâté de foie gras sandwich — for no apparent reason. Perhaps she liked him. Or perhaps it was just playfulness. She led up to and repeated her picture of Sir Bussy looking for himself in the bedclothes, and it was hailed with wild delight. Amidst the applause a small blonde youth turned round with every appearance of extreme

caution, repeated the delightful invention carefully to Mr. Parham, and then forgot him again instantly.

Mr. Parham tried not to feel that the group had — as Mr. Aldous Huxley, in that physiological manner of his, might say — excreted him, but that was very much his feeling, and he was bearing up against it with a second glass of champagne when he discovered Sir Titus Knowles close beside him and evidently also undergoing elimination from an adjacent group of bright young things. “Hullo,” he said. “YOU here?”

“Rather fun,” said Sir Titus insincerely, and then out of nowhere came the most ravishing of youthful blondes, all warmth and loveliness, pretending to be out of breath and addressing herself particularly to the great consultant.

“Gentleman of the name of Parham, Sir Titus,” she said in a warm husky voice. “Meanwhile something to eat, please.”

Her immediate need was supplied. “When I asked Bussy what’s he like, he said, ‘Oh, you’ll know him when you see him.’ I got to find him, take him, and make him dance. He bet me. Parham. Shall I go round singing it? I suppose there’s about a million people here. I’ll be thrown out for accosting.”

She glanced at Sir Titus, detected a directive grimace, became alert to the situation, and faced Mr. Parham. “Of course!” she said with her mouth full. “Right in one. My name’s Gaby Greuze. You’re the handsomest man here. I might have known Bussy wouldn’t put me off with anything cheap.”

Mr. Parham’s expression mingled delight and candid disavowal. “You’ll never make me dance,” he said.

The accidental pressures of the crowd about them brought her extremely close to him. What a lovely face it was, seen so nearly! Impudent, blue eyed! The modelling of the eyelids was exquisite. The little soft corner of the drooping mouth! “I’ll make you dance. I c’d make you do no end of things. Cause why?”

She took a healthy mouthful of ham and munched.

“I like you.”

She nodded confirmation. Mr. Parham’s brilliant smile came unbidden. “I’m not going to resist for a moment, I can assure you,” he said and added with the air of a redoubtable character, “Trust me.”

Like her! He could have eaten her. Yes, this was something better than the apparently premeditated brilliance of Miss Pomander Poole. He forgot that disconcerting person ostentatiously there and then. She might hit them all with sandwiches and dig everybody in the ribs with chocolate éclairs for all he cared.

Miss Gaby Greuze addressed herself to her task with deliberation and intelligence. There is nothing so private and intimate in the world as a duologue in a crowd engaged in eating and talking. The sounds of Sir Bussy's party have already been compared to a wind in a forest of metallic leaves. Plates, knives, and dishes were added now to the orchestra. These woven sounds, this metallic tissue in the air seemed to make an arbour, a hiding place for Mr. Parham and his lovely companion. From this secret bower he had but to thrust an arm and get more champagne, salads of diverse sorts in little dishes, everything nice in aspic and fruits in their season and out of it. Then he held out his winnings to her and she smiled her thanks at him with those incredibly lovely eyes and partook. Afterwards they went off with arms entwined, roguishly seeking a "quiet corner" where she could teach him his elements before he made his début on the dancing floor. They got on together wonderfully. His fine classical face bending down to say airy nothings was caressed by the natural silk of her hair.

There was something in this experience that reminded Mr. Parham of Horace and the naughtier side of the Latin poets, and anything that reminded him of Horace and the naughtier side of the Latin poets could not, he felt, be altogether vulgar or bad. And there was a moment or so when nothing but his classical training, his high literary and university standing, his sense of the extraordinary number of unexpected corners, casual mirrors, and observant attendants in the Savoy, and also, we must add, something stern and purposeful in himself, restrained him from seizing this most provocative young woman and showing her what a man of learning and spirit could do in the way of passionate pressure with his lips. He was flushed now and none the worse looking for that.

"Don't forget what I've told you," said Miss Gaby Greuze, guiding him back towards the more frequented regions of the party; "keep your head — best keep it in your heels — and the next dance

is ours. Let's go and sit and look at them, and I'll have a lemonade."

Mr. Parham smiled to think what some of his undergraduates would make of it if they could see him now. He sat by his partner with his hand just a little familiarly on the back of her chair and talked like an intimate.

"I find Sir Bussy a marvel," he said, blinking at the throng.

"He's a very Teasing Marvel," she said. "One of these days he'll get his little face smacked."

"I hope not."

"It won't get that damned grin of his off. He ought to find something better in life than pulling people's legs — all the money he's got."

"I've only just been drawn into the vortex."

But something missed fire in that remark, because she said, "It's one of the selectest clubs in London, I believe," and seemed to respect him more.

"And NOW," she said, standing up, and prepared to carry Mr. Parham into the dance so soon as sufficient couples had accumulated to veil the naked bareness of the floor. She had strong arms, Mr. Parham realized with amazement, a strong will, and her instructions had been explicit. Mr. Parham had got as near as he was ever likely to get to modern dancing. "Bussy's over there," she said and cut a corner towards their host.

He was standing quite alone near the gesticulating black and brown band, concentrated, it would seem, upon their elusive transitions. His hands were deep in his pockets and his head swayed dreamily. Mr. Parham and his partner circled smiling about him twice before he became aware of them.

"Gaw!" said Sir Bussy, looking up at last. "It hasn't taken you an hour!"

"This him?" she demanded triumphantly.

"That's him," said Sir Bussy.

"You've lost."

"No. It's you have won. I'm quite content. I congratulate you on your dancing, Parham. I knew you'd make a dancer directly I saw you. Given a proper dancing mistress. Life's full of lessons for all of us. How d'you like her? Puts old Velasquez in his place. A young

mistress is better than an old master, eh?”

“After that insult I’ll go and eat you out of house and home,” Miss Greuze retorted, missing the point of a remark for the second time that night, and she made Mr. Parham take her down to supper again without completing the dance. He would have liked to go on dancing with her forever, but apparently the dance had served her purpose.

She became curiously angry. “Bussy never leaves you with the feel of winning,” she said, “even when you’ve won. I’ll do him down one of these days — if I have to bust everything to do it. He puts ideas into one’s head.”

“What ideas?” asked Mr. Parham.

“I wonder if I told you...” she speculated with a strange sudden expression in her eyes, and she seemed to measure Mr. Parham.

“You can tell me anything,” said he.

“Sometimes telling means a lot. No — not just yet, anyhow. Very likely never.”

“I can hope,” said Mr. Parham, feeling that might mean anything or nothing.

At supper Mr. Parham lost her. He lost her while he was thinking over this queer little passage. He was not to learn what this idea of hers was for quite a long time. A sudden tide of young things like herself, but not so perfectly beautiful, poured round and over her and submerged and took possession of her, caressing her most intimately and calling her pet names: Gaby Sweet! Gaby Perfect! Gaby Darling! some sort of professional sisterhood of dancers or young actresses. He drifted off and was almost entangled again with Miss Pomander Poole, before he realized his danger.

For a time he was lonely, seeking but failing to restore contact with his all too popular Gaby. By some fatality during this period he seemed always to be drifting towards Pomander Poole, and an equal fatality drove her towards him. An unconscious dramatic urge in her, a mechanical trick of thinking in gestures, made it all too plain to him how little she wanted to resume their conversation. It looked as if she talked to herself also, but happily he was never quite close enough to hear. Then Lord Tremayne turned up, bright and hearty, with “You never told me what you thought about Westernhanger.”

Mr. Parham’s momentary tension was relieved when the young

man added, “It’s too late now, so don’t let’s bother about it. I call it a Disgrace... I doubt if you know many people in this shallow, glittering world. Eh? Ask me for anyone you fancy. I know the blessed lot.”

He then proceeded to introduce Mr. Parham to two countesses and his sister-in-law, Lady Judy Percival, who happened to be handy, and so departed upon some quest of his own. The introductions, as people say of vaccinations, didn’t “take” very well, the three ladies fell into a talk among themselves, and Mr. Parham had a quiet, thoughtful time for a while, surveying the multitude. The elation of his success with Gabrielle Greuze had a little abated. Later on perhaps he would be able to detach her again and resume their talk. He noted Sir Titus in the distance wearing his forehead, he thought, just a trifle too much over one eye and with his arm manifestly about the waist of a slender, dark lady in green. It helped to remind Mr. Parham of his own dignity. He leant against a wall and became observantly still.

Strange to reflect that physically this night party given by a London plutocrat in a smart hotel was probably ten times as luminous, multitudinous, healthy, and lovely as any court pageant of Elizabethan or Jacobean days. Twenty times. How small and dusky such an occasion would seem if it could be trailed across this evening’s stirring spectacle! Brocades and wired dresses, none of them too fresh and clean, lit by candles and torches. Astounding, the material exuberance of our times. Yet that dim little assembly had its Shakespeare, its Bacon, its Burleigh, and its Essex. It had become history through and through. It was an everlasting fount of book writing, “studies,” comments, allusions. The lightest caresses of the Virgin queen were matters now for the gravest of scholars. Narrow rooms, perhaps, but spacious times.

But all this present thrust and gaiety! — where did it lead? Could it ever become history in any sense of the word? In the court of Queen Elizabeth they moulded the beginnings of America, they laid the foundations of modern science, they forged the English language which these people here with their slang and curt knowingness of phrase were rapidly turning to dust. A few artists there might be here, a stripling maker of modern comedies. Mr. Parham would grant

something for the people who might be unknown to him, and still the balance against this parade was terrible.

The jazz music came out of the background and began to pound and massage his nerves. It beat about the gathering monstrously, as though it were looking for him, and then it would seem to discover him and come and rock him. It smote suddenly into his heart with jungle cries of infinite melancholy and then took refuge in dithering trivialities and a pretence of never having been anything but trivial. It became intimate; it became suggestively obscene. Drums and bone clappers and buzzers. He realized how necessary it was to keep on dancing or talking here, talking fast and loud, to sustain one's self against that black cluster of musicians. How alien they were, almost of another species, with their shining exultant faces, their urgent gestures! What would the Virgin Queen, what would her dear and most faithful Burleigh have made of that bronze-faced conductor?

Queer to think it was she who had, so to speak, sown the seed of that Virginia from which in all probability he came. He seemed now to be hounding on these whites to some mysterious self-effacement and self-destruction. They moved like marionettes to his exertions...

Such exercises of an observant, thoughtful, well stored mind were interrupted by the reappearance of Lord Tremayne, encumbered with one of the countesses he had already once introduced to Mr. Parham.

"Here's the very man," he cried joyously. "You know my cousin Lady Glassglade! If anyone can tell you all about Westernhanger, HE can. He talked about it MARVELLOUSLY the other day. Marvellously!"

Mr. Parham was left with Lady Glassglade.

The Glassglades had a place in Worcestershire and were decidedly people to know. Though what the lady could be doing here was perplexing. Sir Bussy's social range was astonishing. She was a little smiling lady with slightly bleached hair and infinite self-possession. Mr. Parham bowed gracefully. "We are too near the band for talking," he said. "Would you care to go down to the supper room?"

"There was such a crowd. I couldn't get anything," said the lady.

Mr. Parham intimated that all that could be changed.

"And I came on here because I was hungry!"

Charming! They got on very well together, and he saw that she had all she needed. He was quietly firm about it. They talked of the place in Worcestershire and of the peculiar ENGLISH charm of Oxfordshire, and then they talked of their host. Lady Glassglade thought Sir Bussy was "simply wonderful." His judgments in business, she was told, were instinctive, so swift he was able to seize on things while other men were just going about and asking questions. He must be worth eight or ten millions.

"And yet he strikes me as a LONELY figure," said Mr. Parham. "Lonely and detached."

Lady Glassglade agreed that he was detached.

"We haven't assimilated him," said Mr. Parham, using his face to express a finely constituted social system suffering from indigestion.

"We have not," said Lady Glassglade.

"I've met him quite recently," said Mr. Parham. "He seems strangely typical of the times. All this new wealth, so sure, so bold and so incomparably lacking in noblesse oblige."

"It IS rather like that," said Lady Glassglade.

They both replenished their glasses with more of Sir Bussy's champagne.

"When one considers the sense of obligation our old territorial families displayed..."

"Exactly," said Lady Glassglade sadly.

And then recovering her spirits, "All the same, he's rather fun."

Mr. Parham looked wider and further. He glanced down the corridors of history and faced the dark menace of the future. "I wonder," he said.

It was quite a time before he and Lady Glassglade got dissociated. Mr. Parham was wistfully humorous about a project of Oxford offering "post graduate courses" for the nouveau riche. Lady Glassglade seemed to be greatly amused by the idea.

"With tennis, table manners, grouse shooting and professional golf."

Lady Glassglade laughed that well known merry laugh of hers. Mr. Parham was encouraged to elaborate the idea. He invented a Ritz College and a Claridge's College and a Majestic all competing against each other. Loud speakers from the lecture rooms by each

bedside.

As the night drew on Mr. Parham's memories of Sir Bussy's party lost the sharp distinctness of his earlier impressions. In some way he must have lost Lady Glassglade, because when he was talking of the duty under which even a nominal aristocracy lay to provide leadership for the masses, he looked round to see if she appreciated his point, and she had evidently been gone some time. A sort of golden gloom, a massive and yet humorous solemnity, had slowly but surely replaced the rhythmic glittering of his earlier mental state. He talked to strange people about their host. "He is," said Mr. Parham, "a lonely and leaderless soul. Why? Because he has no tradition."

He remembered standing quite quite still for a very long time, admiring and pitying a very beautiful tall and slender woman with a quiet face, who was alone and who seemed to be watching for someone who did not come. He was moved to go up to her and say very softly and clearly to her, "Why so pensive?"

Then, as startled and surprised she turned those lovely violet eyes to him, he would overwhelm her with a torrent of brilliant conversation. He would weave fact and fancy together. He would compare Sir Bussy to Trimalchio. He would give a brief but vivid account of the work of Petronius. He would go on to relate all sorts of curious impish facts about Queen Elizabeth and Cleopatra and people like that, and she would be fascinated.

"Tell me," he said to a young man with an eye-glass who had drifted near him, and repeated, "Tell me."

He found something queer and interesting had happened to his fingers as he gesticulated, and for a time this held his attention to the exclusion of other matters.

The young man's expression changed from impatience to interest and sympathy. "Tell you WHAT?" he asked, getting first Mr. Parham's almost autonomous hand and then Mr. Parham himself well into the focus of the eye- glass.

"Who is that perfect lovely lady in black and — I think they are called sequins, over there?"

"That, sir, is the Duchess of Hichester."

"Your servant," said Mr. Parham.

His mood had changed. He was weary of this foolish, noisy, shallow, nocturnal, glittering great party. Monstrous party. Party outside history, beginning nowhere, going nowhere. All mixed up. Duchesses and dancers. Professors, plutocrats, and parasites. He wanted to go. Only one thing delayed him for a time; he had completely lost his Gibus hat. He patted his pockets; he surveyed the circumjacent floor. It had gone.

Queer!

Far off he saw a man carrying a Gibus hat, an unmistakable Gibus. Should he whip it out of his hand with a stern “Excuse me?”

But how was Mr. Parham to prove it was his Gibus hat?

IV. — NOCTURNE

Mr. Parham woke up with a start. He remembered now quite clearly that he had put down his Gibus hat on the table in the supper room. Some officious attendant had no doubt whisked it aside. He must write to the Savoy people about it in the morning.

"Sir" or "Dear Sirs" or "Mr. Parham presents his compliments." Not too austere. Not too familiar... Ta ra ra — ink a-poo poo.

If he had left his Gibus he seemed to have brought home the greater part of the jazz band. He had got it now in his head, and there, with all the irrepressible vigour of the Negro musician, it was still energetically at work. It had a large circular brassy headache for a band stand. Since it rendered sleep impossible and reading for some reason undesirable, Mr. Parham thought it best to lie still in the dark — or rather the faint dawn — abandoning himself to the train of thought it trailed after it.

It had been a SILLY evening.

Oh! a silly evening!

Mr. Parham found himself filled with a sense of missed opportunities, of distractions foolishly pursued, of a lack of continuity and self-control.

That girl Gaby Greuze — she had been laughing at him. Anyhow, she might have been laughing at him. HAD she been laughing at him?

The endocranial orchestra had evoked the figure of Sir Bussy, alone and unprotected, standing, waving his head to its subtropical exuberances. Moody he had seemed, mentally vacant for the moment. It would of course have been perfectly easy to catch him in that phase, caught him and got hold of him. Mr. Parham could have gone up to him and said something pregnant to him, quietly but clearly.

"Vanitas vanitatum," he could have said, for example, and, since one never knows where one may not strike upon virgin ignorance in these new men, a translation might have been added tactfully and at once: "Vanity of vanities."

And why? Because he had no past. Because he had lost touch with

the past. A man who has no past has no future. And so on to the forward-looking attitude — and the influential weekly.

But instead of telling this to Sir Bussy himself, straight and plain, Mr. Parham had just wandered about telling it to Gaby Greuze, to Lady Glassglade, to casual strangers, any old people. “I am not used to action,” groaned Mr. Parham to his God. “I am not direct. And opportunity passes me by.”

For a time he lay and wondered if it would not be good for all scholars and men of thought to be OBLIGED to take decisive action of some sort at least once a day. Then their wills would become nervous and muscular. But then — ? Would they lose critical acuteness? Would they become crude?

After a time he was back arguing in imagination with Sir Bussy.

“You think this life is pleasure,” he would say. “It is not. It is nothing. It is less than nothing. It is efflorescence.”

“Efflorescence.” A good word. This was an Age of Efflorescence. If a parallel was wanted one must read Petronius. When Rome was still devouring the world. That too was an Age of Efflorescence. Everywhere a hastening from one meretricious pleasure to another. Old fashions abandoned for the mere love of novelty. These ridiculous little black evening hats, for instance, instead of the stately Gibus. (Come to think of it, it was hardly worth while to recover that Gibus. He would have to get one of these evening slouches.) No precedence. No restriction. Duchesses, countesses, diplomatists, fashionable physicians, rubbing shoulders with pretty chorus girls, inky adventuresses, artists, tradesmen, actors, movie stars, coloured singers, Casanovas and Cagliostros — PLEASED to mingle with them — no order, no sense of function. One had to say to fellows like Sir Bussy, “Through some strange dance of accident power has come to you. But beware of power that does not carry on and develop tradition. Think of the grave high figures of the past: Cæsar, Charlemagne, Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth, Richelieu (you should read my little book), Napoleon, Washington, Garibaldi, Lincoln, William Ewart Gladstone, kings, priests and prophets, statesmen and thinkers, builders of Powers; the increasing purpose, the onward march! Think of great armoured angels and beautiful intent symbolic faces! Our Imperial Destinies! The Destiny of France! Our Glorious

Navy! Embattled flags! Here now is the sword of power in your hands! Is it to do nothing more than cut innumerable sandwiches for supper?"

Again Mr. Parham spoke aloud in the night. "Nay!" he said.

He was suddenly reminded of the champagne.

Efflorescence was really a very good word. No, NOT effervescence, efflorescence. If only one had a weekly, what a scathing series of articles reviewing modern tendencies might there not be under that general title! People would ask, "Have you seen 'Efflorescence' again in the Paramount Weekly? Pitiless!"

It was a bother that the band inside his headache did not know when to leave off. It went so and it went so... What a lot of champagne there had been! Efflorescence and effervescence.

He saw himself giving a little book to Sir Bussy almost sacramentally. "Here," he would say, "is a book to set you thinking. I know it is too much to ask you to read it through, short though it is, but at least read the title, The Undying Past. Does that convey nothing to you?"

He saw himself standing gravely while Sir Bussy tried uneasily to get past him.

After all efflorescence, as the chemists had taught us to use the word nowadays, implies a considerable amount of original stuff still undecayed. Beneath this glittering froth, this levity, this champagne drinking and jazz dancing, this careless mixing of incompatible social elements, far beneath was the old enduring matter of human life, the toil, the sustained purpose, the precedences, the loyalties, the controls. On the surface the artist of life might seem to be a slightly negroid Fragonard, but below stern spirits were planning the outline of stupendous destinies. Governments and foreign offices were still at their immemorial work; the soldiers gathered in their barracks and the great battleships ploughed remorselessly the vainly slapping waves. Religious teachers inculcated loyalty and obedience; the business men ordered their argosies across the oceans, and the social conflicts muttered about the factories. There was likely to be grave economic trouble this winter. "The grim spectre of want." Sir Bussy indeed lived in a dream world of uninterrupted indulgence. But all dreams come to an end.

The spirit of Carlyle, the spirit of the Hebrew prophets entered into Mr. Parham. It was like some obscure stern sect coming to a meeting in a back- street chapel. One by one they came. High above the severe lines of that little back-street facade, the red planet Mars ruled his sky. The band in his headache played wilder, more threatening airs.

"Verily," he whispered and, "Repent... Yesss."

The real stern things of life gathered unobtrusively but surely, prepared when the time came to blow their clarions, prepared to rouse this trivial world again to fresh effort and grim resolve, to unbend the fluttering flag, to exalt and test the souls of men, to ennoble them by sacrifice and suffering.

The wailing multitude would call for guidance. What could men like Sir Bussy give it?

"And yet I would have stood by your side," Mr. Parham would say. "I would have stood by your side."

For a time Mr. Parham's mind seemed to be full of marching troops, host by host, corps by corps, regiment after regiment, company upon company. They marched to the rhythm of the Negro band, and as they marched they receded. Down a long vista they receded and the music receded.

The face of Mr. Parham became firm and hard and calm in the darkness. Stern resolve brooded over the troubled frothing of his thoughts and subdued them. The champagne made one last faint protest.

Presently his lips relaxed. His mouth fell a little open...

A deep, regular, increasing sawing of his breath told the mouse behind the skirting that Mr. Parham was asleep.

V. — THE DEVIOUS PURSUIT

Such were the opening phases of the friendship of Mr. Parham and Sir Bussy Woodcock. It was destined to last nearly six years. The two men attracted and repelled each other in about equal measure, and in that perhaps lay the sustaining interest of their association. In its more general form in Mr. Parham's mind, the relationship was a struggle to subdue this mysteriously able, lucky adventurer to the Parham conception of the universe, to involve him in political affairs and advise and direct him when these affairs became perplexing, to build him up into a great and central figure (with a twin star) in the story of the Empire and the world. In its more special aspect the relationship was to be one of financial support for Mr. Parham and the group of writers and university teachers he would gather round him, to steer the world — as it had always been steered. When the history of the next half century came to be written people would say, "There was the finger of Parham," or, "He was one of Parham's Young Men." But how difficult it was to lead this financial rhinoceros, as Mr. Parham, in the secrecy of his own thoughts, would sometimes style his friend, towards any definite conception of a rôle and a policy outside the now almost automatic process of buying up everything and selling it for more.

At times the creature seemed quite haphazard, a reckless spendthrift who could gain more than he spent. He would say, "Gaw! I'm going to have a lark," and one had either to drop out of the world about him or hang on to him into the oddest and strangest of places.

There were phases of passionate resentment in Mr. Parham's experience, but then again there were phases of clear and reasonable hope. Sir Bussy would suddenly talk about political parties with a knowledge, a shrewdness that amazed his friend. "Fun to push 'em all over," he would say. And once or twice he talked of Rothermere, Beaverbrook, Burnham, Riddel, with curiosity and something like envy. Late at night on each occasion it was, other people, people one suspected, were present, and Mr. Parham could not bring him to the point of a proposal.

Then off went everything like dead leaves before a gale, a vast

hired yacht to the Baltic, to Maine, Newfoundland, and the Saint Lawrence River, and the strangest people packed aboard. Or Mr. Parham found himself surveying the Mediterranean from a Nice hotel of which Sir Bussy had taken a floor for Christmas. Once or twice he would come most unexpectedly to his Mentor, so full of purpose in his eyes, that Mr. Parham felt the moment had come. Once he took him suddenly just they two, to see Stravinsky's Noces at Monte Carlo and once in London a similar humility of approach preluded a visit to hear the Lener Quartette.

"Pleasant," said Sir Bussy, coming away. "Pleasant sounds. It cleans and soothes. And more. It's—" his poor untrained mind, all destitute of classical precedents, sought for an image— "it's like putting your head down a rabbit hole and hearing a fairy world going on. A world neither here nor there. Is there anything more to it than that?"

"Oh!" said Mr. Parham, as though he cried to God; "windows upon heaven!"

"Gaw!"

"We went there — we went there SAILCLOTH. It turned us to silk."

"Well — DID it? It sounds as if it was telling you something, but does it tell you anything? This music. It gets excited and joyous, for no reason, just as you get excited and joyous in dreams; it's sad and tender — about nothing. They're burying a dead beetle in fairyland. It stirs up appropriate memories. Your mind runs along according to the rhythm. But all to no effect. It doesn't give you anything real. It doesn't let you out. Just a finer sort of smoking," said Sir Bussy.

Mr. Parham shrugged his shoulders. No good to get this savage books on "How to Listen to Music." He did listen, and this was what he made of it.

But one sentence lingered in Mr. Parham's mind: "It doesn't," said Sir Bussy, "LET YOU OUT."

Did he want to be let out of this gracious splendid world of ours, built foursquare on the pillars of history, with its honours, its precedences, its mighty traditions? Could he mean that?

Mr. Parham was reminded of another scene when Sir Bussy had betrayed very much that same thought. They were recrossing the

Atlantic to the Azores after visiting Newfoundland. The night was gloriously calm and warm. Before turning in Mr. Parham, who had been flirting rather audaciously with one of the pretty young women who adorned Sir Bussy's parties so abundantly, came out on the promenade deck to cool his nerves and recall some lines of Horace that had somehow got bent in his memory and would return to him only in a queerly distorted form. He had had a moment of daring, and the young thing had pretended fright and gone to bed. Fun — and essentially innocent.

At the rail Mr. Parham discovered his host, black and exceedingly little against the enormous deep-blue sky.

"Phosphorescence?" asked Mr. Parham in an encouraging tenor.

Sir Bussy did not seem to hear. His hands were deep in his trouser- pockets. "Gaw," he said. "Look at all this wet — under that GHASTLY moon!"

At times his attitudes took Mr. Parham's breath away. One might think the moon had just appeared, that it had no established position, that it was not Diana and Astarte, Isis and a thousand sweet and lovely things.

"Curious," this strange creature went on. "We're half outside the world here. We are. We're actually on a bulge, Parham. That way you go down a curve to America, and THAT way you go down a curve to your old Europe — and all that frowsty old art and history of yours."

"It was 'frowsty old Europe,' as you call it, sent this yacht up here."

"No fear! it got away."

"It can't stay here. It has to go back."

"This time," said Sir Bussy after a pause.

He stared for a moment or so at the moon with, if anything, an increasing distaste, made a gesture of his hand as if to dismiss it, and then, slowly and meditatively, went below, taking no further notice of Mr. Parham.

But Mr. Parham remained.

What was it this extravagant little monster wanted, in this quite admirable world? Why trouble one's mind about a man who could show ingratitude for that gracious orb of pale caressing light? It fell

upon the world like the silver and gossamer robes of an Indian harem. It caressed and provoked the luminosities that flashed and flickered in the water. It stirred with an infinite gentleness. It incited to delicately sensuous adventure.

Mr. Parham pushed his yachting cap back from his forehead in a very doggish manner, thrust his hands into the pockets of his immaculate ducks and paced the deck, half hoping to hear a rustle or a giggle that would have confessed that earlier retreat insincere. But she really had turned in, and it was only when Mr. Parham had done likewise that he began to think over Sir Bussy and his ocean of "wet — under that GHASTLY moon."...

But this work, it is well to remind ourselves and the reader, is the story of a metapsychic séance and its stupendous consequences, and our interest in these two contrasted characters must not let it become a chronicle of the travels and excursions of Sir Bussy and Mr. Parham. They went once in a multitudinous party to Henley, and twice they visited Oxford together to get the flavour. How Mr. Parham's fellow dons fell over each other to get on good terms with Sir Bussy, and how Mr. Parham despised them! But bringing Sir Bussy down made a real difference to Mr. Parham's standing at Oxford. For a time Sir Bussy trifled with the Turf. The large strange parties he assembled at the Hangar and at Buntingcombe and Carfex House perpetually renewed Mr. Parham's amazement that he should know so many different sorts of people and such queer people and be at such pains to entertain them and so tolerant of some of the things they did. They got up to all sorts of things, and he let them. It seemed to Mr. Parham he was chiefly curious to know what they got out of what they got up to. Several times they discussed it together.

"Not a horse on the Turf," said Sir Bussy, "is being run absolutely straight."

"But surely — !"

"Honourable men there, certainly. They keep the rules because there'd be no fun in it if they didn't. It would just go to pieces, and nobody wants it to go to pieces. But do you think they run a horse all out to win every time? Nobody dreams of such a thing."

"You mean that every horse is pulled?"

"No. No. NO. But it isn't allowed to strain itself unduly at the

beginning. That's quite a different thing."

Mr. Parham's face expressed his comprehension of the point. Poor human nature!

"Why do you bother about it?"

"My father the cab driver used to drive broken-down race horses he said, and was always backing Certs. It interfered with my education. I've always wanted to see this end of it. And I inherit an immense instinct for human weakness from my mother."

"But it's costly?"

"Not a bit of it," said Sir Bussy, with a sigh. "I seem always to see what they are up to. Before they see I see it. I make money on the Turf. I ALWAYS make money."

His face seemed to accuse the universe, and Mr. Parham made a sympathetic noise.

When Mr. Parham went to Newmarket or a race meeting with Sir Bussy he saw to it that his own costume was exactly right. At Ascot he would be in a silky gray morning coat and white spatterdashes and a gray top hat with a black band; the most sporting figure there he was; and when they went to Henley he was in perfect flannels and an Old Arvonian blazer, not a new one but one a little faded and grubby and with one patch of tar. He was a perfect yachtsman on yachts, and at Cannes he never failed to have that just-left-the- tennis-round-the-corner touch, which is the proper touch for Cannes. His was one of those rare figures that could wear plus-fours with distinction. His sweaters were chosen with care, for even a chameleon can be correct. Never did he disfigure a party; often, indeed, he would pull one together and define its place and purpose.

The yachtsman ensemble was the hardest to preserve because Mr. Parham had more than an average disposition towards seasickness. There he differed from Sir Bussy, who was the better pleased the rougher the water and the smaller the boat. "I can't help it," said Sir Bussy. "It's the law of my nature. What I get I keep."

But if Mr. Parham's reactions were prompt they were cheerful. "Nelson," he would say, after his time of crisis. "He would be sick for two or three days every time he went to sea. That consoles me. The spirit indeed is unwilling but the flesh is weak."

Sir Bussy seemed to appreciate that.

By thus falling into line with things, by refusing to be that social misfit, the intractable and untidy don, Mr. Parham avoided any appearance of parasitism in his relations with Sir Bussy and kept his own self-respect unimpaired. He was “RIGHT THERE”; he was not an intrusion. He had never dressed well before, though he had often wanted to do so, and this care for his costume made rather serious inroads upon his modest capital, but he kept his aim steadily in view. If one is to edit a weekly that will sway the world one must surely look man of the world enough to do it. And there came a phase in his relations with Sir Bussy when he had to play the rôle of a man of the world all he knew how.

It has to be told, though for some reasons it would be pleasanter to omit it. But it is necessary to illuminate the factors of antagonism and strife within this strange association with its mutual scrutiny, its masked and hidden criticisms.

Perhaps — if the reader is young...

Yet even the young reader may want to know.

Let us admit that this next section, though illuminating, is not absolutely essential to the understanding of the story. It is not improper, it is not coarse, but frankly — it envisages something — shall we call it “Eighteenth Century”? — in Mr. Parham’s morals. If it is not an essential part of the story it is at any rate very necessary to our portrait of Mr. Parham.

VI. — AN INDISCRETION

Happily we need not enter into details. The method and manner of the affair are quite secondary. We can draw a veil directly the latchkey of Miss Gaby Greuze clicks against the latch of Miss Gaby Greuze's sumptuous flat, and it need not be withdrawn again until Mr. Parham re-emerges from that same flat looking as respectable as a suburban embezzler going to church. As respectable? Except for a certain glory. An exaltation. Such as no mere thief of money ever knew.

Fragments of a conversation follow, a conversation it is undesirable to locate.

"I've always liked you since first we met," said Gaby...

"It was a sort of promise."...

"How quick you were to understand. You ARE quick! I see you watching people — summing them up."...

"It must be wonderful to know all you know," said Gaby, "and think all you think. You make me feel — so shallow!"

"What need have YOU for the helm of Athene?" Mr. Parham exclaimed.

"Well, a woman likes to feel at the helm now and then," said Gaby, with her usual infelicity of apprehension, and for a time she seemed moody.

But she said Mr. Parham was very beautifully made. His smile when she said it lit the flat. And so strong. Did he take much exercise? Tennis. She would play tennis if she wasn't afraid of muscle in the wrong place. Exercise, she said, was ever so much better than taking exercises except for that. Of course, there WERE exercises one took. Some that made one supple and were good for one's carriage and figure. Had Mr. Parham ever seen her sort of exercises? Well...

They were lovely exercises.

She patted his cheek and said, "NICE man!" She said that several times.

And she said, "You are what I should call simple."

"Delicate," she added, noting a question in his face, "but not

complex.”

She said this with a distant, pensive look in her eyes. She was admiring the sheen on her beautiful arm and wrist, and then she said, “And when one is being as lovely as one can be to you, whatever else you do or say, anyhow, you don’t say, ‘Gaw!’”

She compressed her lips and nodded. “Gaw!” she repeated; “as though he had found you out in something that not for a minute you had ever felt or intended.

“Making you feel — like some insect.”

She began to weep unrestrainedly, and suddenly she threw herself once more into Mr. Parham’s arms.

Poor, poor little woman, sensitive, ardent, generous, and so misunderstood!...

When Mr. Parham met the unsuspecting Sir Bussy again after this adventure a great pride and elation filled him. Touched with a not unpleasant remorse. He had to put an extra restraint upon his disposition towards condescension. But afterwards he found Sir Bussy looking at him curiously, and feelings of a less agreeable kind, a faint apprehension, mingled with his glory.

When Mr. Parham encountered Gaby Greuze once more, and it is notable how difficult it became to meet her again except in the most transitory way, this glory of his glowed with a passionate warmth that called for the utmost self- control. But always a man of honour respects a modest woman’s innate craving for secrecy. Not even the roses in her bosom must suspect. She was evasive; she wished to be evasive. Delicately and subtly Mr. Parham came to realize that for him and his fellow sinner it was best that it should be as if this bright delicious outbreak of passion had never occurred.

Nevertheless, there it was; he was one up on Sir Bussy.

BOOK II. — HOW THE MASTER SPIRIT ENTERED THE WORLD

I. — DISPUTES AND TENSION OVER SIR BUSSY'S DINNER TABLE

This mutual frequentation of Sir Bussy and Mr. Parham necessarily had intermissions, because of Mr. Parham's duty to his university and his influence upon the rising generation, and because also of perceptible fluctuations in Sir Bussy's need of him. And as time went on and the two men came to understand each other more acutely, clashes of opinion had to be recognized. Imperceptibly Sir Bussy passed from a monosyllabic reception of Mr. Parham's expositions of the state of the world and the life of man to more definitely skeptical comments. And at times Mr. Parham, because he had so strong a sense of the necessity of dominating Sir Bussy and subduing his untrained ignorance to intelligible purposes, became, it may be, a little authoritative in his argument and a trifle overbearing in his manner. And then Sir Bussy would seem almost not to like him for a time and would say, "Gaw," and turn away.

For a few weeks, or even it might be for a month or so, Mr. Parham would have no more abnormal social adventures, and then quite abruptly and apropos of any old thing Sir Bussy would manifest a disposition to scrutinize Mr. Parham's point of view again, and the excursions and expeditions would be renewed.

A hopeful friendship it was throughout on Mr. Parham's side, but at no time was it a completely harmonious one. He found Sir Bussy's choice of associates generally bad and often lamentable. He was constantly meeting people who crossed and irritated him beyond measure. With them he would dispute, even acrimoniously. Through them it was possible to say all sorts of things at Sir Bussy that it might have been undesirable to say directly to him.

There were times when it seemed almost as if Sir Bussy invited people merely to annoy Mr. Parham, underbred contradictory people with accents and the most preposterous views. There was a crazy eclecticism about his hospitality. He would bring in strange Americans with notions rather than ideas about subjects like currency and instalment buying, subjects really more impossible than

indecency, wrong sorts of Americans, carping and aggressive, or he would invite Scandinavian ideologists, or people in a state of fresh disillusionment or fresh enthusiasm from Russia, even actual Bolsheviks, Mr. Bernard Shaw and worse, self-made authors, a most unpleasant type, wild talkers like Mr. J. B. S. Haldane, saying the most extravagant things. Once there was a Chinaman who said at the end of a patient, clear exposition of the British conception of self-government and the part played by social and intellectual influence in our affairs, "I see England at least is still looled by mandolins," whatever that might mean. He nodded his gold spectacles towards Mr. Parham, so probably he imagined it did mean something. Most subtly and insidiously Sir Bussy would sow the seeds of a dispute amid such discordant mixtures and sit in a sort of intellectual rapture, mouth dropping, while Mr. Parham, sometimes cool but sometimes glowing, dealt with the fallacies, plain errors, misconceptions, and misinformation that had arisen. "Gaw!" Sir Bussy would whisper.

No support, no real adhesion, no discipleship; only that colourless "Gaw." Even after a quite brilliant display. It was discouraging. Never the obvious suggestion to give this fount of sound conviction and intellectual power its legitimate periodic form.

But the cumulative effect of these disputes upon Mr. Parham was not an agreeable one. He always managed to carry off these wrangles with his colours flying, for he had practised upon six generations of undergraduates; he knew exactly when to call authority to the aid of argument and, in the last resort, refer his antagonist back to his studies effectively and humiliatingly, but at bottom, in its essence, Mr. Parham's mental substance was delicate and fine, and this succession of unbelieving, interrogative, and sometimes even flatly contradictory people left their scars upon him — scars that rankled. It was not that they produced the slightest effect upon his essential ideas of the Empire and its Necessary Predominance in World Affairs, of the Historical Task and Destiny of the English, of the Rôles of Class and Law in the world and of his Loyalties and Institutions, but they gave him a sense of a vast, dangerous, gathering repudiation of these so carefully shaped and established verities. The Americans, particularly since the war, seemed to have slipped away, mysteriously and unawares, from the commanding ideas of his

world. They brought a horrible tacit suggestion to Sir Bussy's table that these ideas were now queer and old-fashioned.

Renegades! What on earth had they better? What in the names of Queen Elizabeth, Shakespeare, Raleigh, the Mayflower, Tennyson, Nelson, and Queen Victoria had these people better? Nowadays more and more they seemed to be infected with an idea that they were off and away after some new and distinctive thing of their own.

There they were, and there were a hundred and twenty million of them with most of the gold in the world — out of hand. It was not that they had any ideas worth considering to put in the place of Mr. Parham's well wrought and tested set. Positive suggestions he could deal with. One foolish visitor breathed the words "World State." Mr. Parham smiled all his teeth at him and waved his fingers.

"My DEAR sir," said Mr. Parham, with a kind of deep richness in his tone. And it sufficed.

Another said, "League of Nations."

"Poor Wilson's decaying memorial," said Mr. Parham.

All the time, behind his valiant front this gnawing away of Mr. Parham's confidence went on, his confidence that these ideas of his, right though they certainly were, would be honestly and properly endorsed and sustained, at home and abroad, when next they were put to the test. In 1914 they had been tested; had they been overstrained? Imperceptibly he drifted into that state of nervous uncertainty we have attempted to convey in our opening section. Was history keeping its grip? Would the game still be played? The world was going through a phase of moral and intellectual disintegration; its bonds relaxed; its definite lines crumbled. Suppose, for example, a crisis came in Europe and some strong man at Westminster flashed the sword of Britannia from the scabbard. Would the ties of Empire hold? Suppose the Dominions cabled "This is not our war. Tell us about it." They had already done something of the sort when the Turks had returned to Constantinople. They might do it again and more completely. Suppose the Irish Free State at our backs found our spirited gesture the occasion for ungracious conduct. Suppose instead of the brotherly applause and envious sympathy of 1914, a noise like the noise of skinners sharpening their knives came from America. Suppose once again in our still unconscripted land Royal

Proclamations called for men and that this time, in stead of another beautiful carnival of devotion like that of 1914 — how splendid that had been! — they preferred to remain interrogative. Suppose they asked, “Can’t it be stopped?” or, “Is the whole thing worth while?” The Labour Movement had always had a left wing nefariously active, undermining the nation’s forces, destroying confidence, destroying pride in service, willingness to do and die. Amazing how we tolerated it! Suppose, too, the business men proved even more wicked than they were in 1914.

For Mr. Parham knew. They had been wicked; they had driven a bargain. They were not the patriots they seemed.

An after-dinner conversation at Carfex House crystallized these floating doubts. When it took place Sir Bussy had already embarked upon those psychic experiments that were to revolutionize his relations to Mr. Parham. But this dinner was an interlude. The discussion centred upon and would not get away from the topic of the Next War. It was a man’s dinner, and the most loquacious guest was an official from Geneva, Sir Walter Atterbury, a figure of importance in the League of Nations Secretariat, an apparently unassuming but really very set and opinionated person. But there was also an American banker, Mr. Hamp, a gray-faced, elderly spectacled man, who said strange things in a solemn manner, and there was Austin Camelford, the industrial chemist, who was associated with Sir Bussy in all sorts of business enterprises and who linked with him the big combinations of Romer Steinhart Crest & Co. He it was who recalled to Mr. Parham’s mind the cynicism of the business men in 1914. He was a lank and lean creature with that modern trick of saying the wildest nonsense as though it was obvious and universally recognized fact. There was also a young American from one of these newfangled Western universities where they teach things like salesmanship and universal history. He was too young to say very much, but what he said was significant.

At first it was Atterbury did most of the talking and, he talked evidently with the approval of the others. Then Mr. Parham was moved to intervene and correct some of the man’s delusions — for delusions they plainly were. The talk became more general, and certain things that came from Camelford and Hamp brought home to

Mr. Parham's mind the widening estrangement of industry and finance from the guiding concepts of history. Towards the end Sir Bussy by some fragmentary comments of an entirely hostile sort, set the seal to a thoroughly disconcerting evening.

Sir Walter, trailing clouds of idealism from this Geneva of his, took it for granted that everyone present wanted to see war staved off forever from the world. Apparently he could conceive no other view as possible in intelligent company. And yet, oddly enough, he realized that the possibility of fresh wars was opening wider every year. He showed himself anxious and perplexed, as well he might, distressed by a newborn sense of the inadequacy of his blessed League to ward off the storms he saw gathering about it. He complained of the British government and the French government, of schools and colleges and literature, of armaments and experts, of a world-wide indifference to the accumulating stresses that made for war. The Anglo-American naval clash had distressed him particularly. It was the "worst thing that had happened for a long time." He was facty and explicit after the manner of his type. Four or five years ago one did not get these admissions of failure, these apprehensions and heart sinkings, from Geneva.

Mr. Parham let him run on. He was all for facts from well informed sources, and so far from wanting to suppress Sir Walter, his disposition was to give him all the rope he wanted. If that weekly had been in existence he would have asked him to write a couple of articles for it. At the normal rates. And then flicked aside his pacificist implications with a bantering editorial paragraph or so.

At this dinner he resorted to parallel tactics. For a time he posed as one under instruction, asking questions almost respectfully, and then his manner changed. His intelligent interrogations gave place to a note of rollicking common sense. He revealed that this official's admissions of the impotence of the League had been meat and drink to him. He recalled one or two of Sir Walter's phrases and laughed kindly with his head a little on one side. "But what did you EXPECT?" he said. "What DID you expect?"

And after all was said and done, asked Mr. Parham, was it so bad? Admittedly the extravagant hopes of some sort of permanent world peace, some world Utopia, that had run about like an epidemic in

1918, were, we realized now, mere fatigue phenomena, with no force of will behind them. The French, the Italians, most lucid minded and realistic of peoples, had never entertained such dreams. Peace, now, as always, rested on an armed balance of power.

Sir Walter attempted contradiction. The Canadian boundary?

"The pressure in that case lies elsewhere," said Mr. Parham, with a confidence that excluded discussion of what these words might mean.

"Your armed balance of power is steadily eating up every scrap of wealth industrial progress can produce," said Sir Walter. "The military force of France at present is colossal. All the European budgets show an increase in armaments, and people like Mussolini jeer at the Kellogg Pact even as they sign it. The very Americans make the clearest reservation that the Pact doesn't mean anything that matters. They won't fight for it. They won't let it interfere with the Monroe Doctrine. They sign the Pact and reserve their freedom of action and go on with the armament race. More and more the world drifts back to the state of affairs of 1913.

"The most serious thing," Sir Walter went on, "is the increasing difficulty of keeping any counter movement going. It's the obstinate steadiness of the drive that dismays me. It's not only that the accumulation of wealth is being checked and any rise in the standard of living prevented by these immense preparations, but the intellectual and moral advance is also slowing down on account of it. Patriotism is killing mental freedom. France has ceased to think since 1919, and Italy is bound and gagged. Long before actual war returns, freedom of speech may be held up by the patriotic censorship in every country in Europe. What are we to do about it? What is there to do?"

"I suggest that there is nothing to do," said Mr. Parham. "And I don't in the least mind. May I speak with the utmost frankness — as one man to another — as a realist in a world of human beings, very human beings? Frankly, I put it to you that we do not want this pacificist movement of yours. It is a dream. The stars in their courses fight against it. The armed man keepeth his house until a stronger cometh. Such is the course of history, my dear sir. So it has ever been. What is this free speech of yours but the liberty to talk

nonsense and set mischief afoot? For my own part I would not hesitate for a moment in the choice between disorganizing babble and national necessity. Can you really mourn the return of discipline and order to countries that were in a fair way to complete social dissolution?"

He recalled one of those striking facts that drive reality home to the most obdurate minds. "In 1919, when my niece went to Italy for her honeymoon, she had two handbags stolen from the train, and on her return her husband's valise went astray from the booked luggage and never turned up again. That was the state of affairs before the strong hand took hold.

"NO," said Mr. Parham in a clear, commanding tone, so as to keep the rostrum while he returned to the general question. "As to the facts I see eye to eye with you. Yet not in the same spirit. We enter upon a phase of armament mightier than that which preceded the Great War. Granted. But the broad lines of the struggle shape themselves, they shape themselves — rationally and logically. They are in the nature of things. They cannot be evaded."

Something almost confidential crept into his manner. He indicated regions of the tablecloth by gestures of his hands, and his voice sank. Sir Walter watched him, open eyed. His brows wrinkled with something like dismay.

"Here," said Mr. Parham, "in the very centre of the Old World, illimitably vast, potentially more powerful than most of the rest of the world put together—" he paused as if fearing to be overheard— "is RUSSIA. It really does not matter in the least whether she is Czarist or Bolshevik. She is the final danger — the overwhelming enemy. Grow she must. She has space. She has immense resources. She strikes at us, through Turkey as always, through Afghanistan as always, and now through China. Instinctively she does that; necessarily. I do not blame her. But preserve ourselves we must. What will Germany do? Cleave to the East? Cleave to the West? Who can tell? A student nation, a secondary people, a disputed territory. We win her if we can but I do not count on her. The policy imposed upon the rest of the world is plain. WE MUST CIRCUMVENT RUSSIA; we must encircle this threat of the great plains before it overwhelms us. As we encircled the lesser threat of

the Hohenzollerns. In time. On the West, here, we outflank her with our ally France and Poland her pupil; on the East with our ally Japan. We reach at her through India. We strive to point the spearhead of Afghanistan against her. We hold Gibraltar on her account; we watch Constantinople on her account. America is drawn in with us, necessarily our ally, willy-nilly, because she cannot let Russia strike through China to the sea. There you have the situation of the world. Broadly and boldly seen. Fraught with immense danger — yes. Tragic — if you will. But fraught also with limitless possibilities of devotion and courage."

Mr. Parham paused. When it was evident he had fully paused Sir Bussy whispered his habitual monosyllable. Sir Walter cracked a nut and accepted port.

"There you are," he said with a sigh in his voice, "if Mr. — ?"

"Parham, sir."

"If Mr. Parham said that in any European capital from Paris to Tokio, it would be taken quite seriously. Quite seriously. That's where we are, ten years from the Armistice."

Camelford, who had been listening hitherto, now took up the discourse. "That is perfectly true," he said. "These governments of ours are like automata. They were evolved originally as fighting competitive things and they do not seem able to work in any other way. They prepare for war and they prepare war. It is like the instinctive hunting of a pet cat. However much you feed the beast, it still kills birds. It is made so. And they are made so. Until you destroy or efface them that is what they will do. When you went to Geneva, Sir Walter, I submit with all respect you thought they'd do better than they have done. A lot better?"

"I did," said Sir Walter. "I confess I've had a lot of disillusionment — particularly in the last three or four years."

"We live in a world of the wildest paradox to-day," said Camelford. "It's like an egg with an unbreakable shell, or a caterpillar that has got perplexed and is half a winged insect and the other half crawler. We can't get out of our governments. We grow in patches and all wrong. Certain things become international — cosmopolitan. Banking, for instance," — he turned to Hamp.

"Banking, sir, has made immense strides in that direction since

the war," said Hamp. "I say without exaggeration, immense strides. Yes. We have been learning to work together. As we never thought of doing in pre-war days. But all the same, don't you imagine we bankers think we can stop war. We know better than that. Don't expect it of us. Don't put too much on us. We can't fight popular clamour, and we can't fight a mischievous politician who stirs it up. Above all, we can't fight the printing press. While these sovereign governments of yours can turn paper into money we can be put out of action with the utmost ease. Don't imagine we are that mysterious unseen power, the Money Power, your parlour Bolsheviks talk about. We bankers are what conditions have made us and we are limited by our conditions."

"OUR position is fantastic," said Camelford. "When I say 'our' I mean the chemical industries of the world, my associates, that is, here and abroad. I'm glad to say I can count Sir Bussy now among them."

Sir Bussy's face was a mask.

"Take one instance to show what I mean by 'fantastic,'" Camelford went on. "We in our various ramifications, are the only people able to produce gas on the scale needed in modern war. Practically now all the chemical industries of the world are so linked that I can say 'we.' Well, we have perhaps a hundred things necessary for modern warfare more or less under our control, and gas is the most important. If these sovereign Powers which still divide the world up in such an inconvenient way, contrive another war, they will certainly have to use gas, whatever agreements they may have made about it beforehand. And we, our great network of interests, are seeing to it that they will have plenty of gas, good reliable gas at reasonable business rates, all and more than they need. We supply all of them now and probably if war comes we shall still supply all of them — both sides. We may break up our associations a bit for the actual war, but that will be a mere incidental necessity. And so far we haven't been able to do anything else in our position than what we are doing. Just like you bankers, we are what circumstances have made us. There's nothing sovereign about US. We aren't governments with the power to declare war or make peace. Such influence as we have with governments and war offices is limited and

indirect. Our position is that of dealers simply. We sell gas just as other people sell the Army meat or cabbages.

"But see how it works out. I was figuring at it the other day. Very roughly, of course. Suppose we put the casualties in the next big war at, say, five million and the gas ones at about three — that, I think, is a very moderate estimate, but then you see I'm convinced the next war will be a gas war — every man gassed will have paid us, on the average, anything between four-pence and three-and-tenpence, according to the Powers engaged, for the manufacture, storage, and delivery of the gas he gets. My estimate is naturally approximate. A greater number of casualties will, of course, reduce the cost to the individual. But each of these predestined gasees — if I may coin a word — is now paying something on that scale year by year in taxation — and we of the big chemical international are seeing that the supply won't fail him. We're a sort of gas club. Like a goose club. Raffle at the next great war. YOUR ticket's death in agony, YOURS a wheezing painful lung and poverty, YOU'RE a blank, lucky chap! You won't get any good out of it, but you won't get any of the torture. It seems crazy to me, but it seems reasonable to everyone else, and what are we to fly in the face of the Instincts and Institutions of Mankind?"

Mr. Parham played with the nutcrackers and said nothing. This Camelford was an offensive cynic. He would rob even death in battle of its dignity. Gasees!

"The Gasees Club doesn't begin to exhaust the absurdities of the present situation," Camelford went on. "All these damned war offices, throughout the world have what they call secrets. Oh! — Their SECRETS! The fuss. The precautions. Our people in England, I mean our war-office people, have a gas, a wonderful gas — L. It's General Gerson's own pet child. His only child. Beastly filth. Tortures you and then kills you. He gloats over it. It needs certain rare earths and minerals that we produce at Cayme in Cornwall. You've heard of our new works there — rather a wonderful place in its way. Some of our young men do astonishing work. We've got a whole string of compounds that might be used for the loveliest purposes. And in a way they are coming into use. Only unhappily you can also get this choke stink out of one of our products. Or

THEY can — and we have to pretend we don't know what they want it for. Secret, you know. Important military secret. The scientific industrial world is keeping secrets like that for half a dozen governments... It's childish. It's insane."

Mr. Parham shook his head privately as one who knows better.

"Do I understand," said Hamp, feeling his way cautiously, "that you know of that new British gas — I've heard whispers — ?"

He broke off interrogatively.

"We have to know more or less. We have to sit on one side and look on and pretend not to see or know while your spies and experts and our spies and experts poke about trying to turn pure science into pure foolery... Boy scout spying and boy scout chemists... It can't go on. And yet it IS going on. That is the situation. That is where the world's persistence in independent sovereign governments is taking us. What can we do? You say you can do nothing. I wonder. We might cut off the supply of this pet gas for the British; we might cut off certain high explosives and other material that are the darling secrets of the Germans and your people. There'd have to be a tussle with some of our own associates. But I think we could do it now... Suppose we did make the attempt. Would it alter things much? Suppose they had the pluck to arrest us. The Common Fool would be against us."

"The Common Fool!" cried Mr. Parham, roused at last. "By that, sir, you mean that the whole tenor of human experience would be against you. What else can there be but these governments at which you cavil? What do they stand for? The common life and thought of mankind. And — forgive me if I put you in difficulties — who are YOU? Would you abolish government? Would you set up some extraordinary super-government, some freemasonry of bankers and scientific men to rule the world by conspiracy?"

"AND scientific men! Bankers AND scientific men! Oh, we TRY to be scientific men in our way," protested Hamp, seeking sympathy by beaming through his spectacles at Sir Bussy.

"I think I would look for some new way of managing human affairs," said Camelford, answering Mr. Parham's question. "I think sooner or later we shall have to try something of the sort. I think science will have to take control."

“That is to say Treason and a new International,” flashed Mr. Parham. “Without even the social envy of the proletariat to support you!”

“Why not?” murmured Sir Bussy.

“And how are you superior people going to deal with the Common Fool — who is, after all, mankind?”

“You could educate him to support you,” said Atterbury. “He’s always been very docile when you’ve caught him young.”

“Something very like a fresh start,” said Camelford. “A new sort of world. It’s not so incredible. Modern political science is in its infancy. It’s a century or so younger than chemistry or biology. I suppose that to begin with we should have a new sort of education, on quite other lines. Scrap all these poisonous national histories of yours, for example, and start people’s minds clean by telling them what the world might be for mankind.”

Sir Bussy nodded assent. Mr. Parham found his nod faintly irritating. He restrained an outbreak.

“Unhappily for your idea of fresh starts,” he said, “the Days of Creation are over, and now one day follows another.”

He liked that. It was a good point to make.

In the pause Sir Walter addressed himself to Camelford. “That idea of yours about the gasees club is very vivid. I could have used that in a lecture I gave, a week ago.”

The young American, who had taken no part in the discussion hitherto, now ventured timidly: “I think perhaps you Europeans, if I might say so, are disposed to underestimate the sort of drive there was behind the Kellogg Pact. It may seem fruitless — who can tell yet? — but mind you there was something made that gun. It’s in evidence, even if it’s no more than evidence. The Kellogg Pact isn’t the last proposition of that sort you’ll get from America.”

He reddened as he said his piece, but clearly he had something definite behind what he said.

“I admit that,” said Sir Walter. “In America there is still an immense sentiment towards world peace, and you find something of the same sort in a less developed form everywhere. But it gets no organized expression, no effective development. It remains merely a sentiment. It isn’t moving on to directive action. That’s what’s

worrying my mind more and more. Before we can give that peace feeling real effectiveness there has to be a tremendous readjustment of ideas."

Mr. Parham nodded his assent with an air of indifference and consumed a few grapes.

And then it seemed to him that these other men began to talk with a deliberate disregard of what he had been saying. Or, to be more precise, with a deliberate disregard of the indisputable correctness of what he had been saying. It was not as if it had not been said, it was not as if it had been said and required answering, but it was as if a specimen had been laid upon the table.

In the later stages of Sir Bussy's ample and varied dinners Mr. Parham was apt to experience fluctuations of mood. At one moment he would be solid and strong and lucidly expressive, and then he would flush, and waves of anger and suspicion would wash through his mind. And now suddenly, as he listened to the talk — and for a while he did no more than listen — he had that feeling which for some time had been haunting him more and more frequently, that the world, with a sort of lax malice, was slipping away from all that was sane and fine and enduring in human life. To put it plainly, these men were plotting openly and without any disguise, the subordination of patriotism, loyalty, discipline, and all the laboured achievements of statecraft to some vague international commonweal, some fantastic organization of cosmopolitan finance and cosmopolitan industrialism. They were saying things every whit as outrageous as the stuff for which we sent the talkative Bolshevik spinning back to his beloved Russia. And they were going on with this after all he had said so plainly and clearly about political realities. Was it any good to speak further?

Yet could he afford to let it go unchallenged? There sat Sir Bussy, drinking it in!

They talked. They talked.

"When first I went to Geneva," said Sir Walter, "I didn't realize how little could be done there upon the basis of current mentality. I didn't know how definitely existing patriotisms were opposed to the beginnings of an international consciousness. I thought they might fade down in time to a generous rivalry in the service of mankind.

But while we try to build up a permanent world peace away there in Geneva, every schoolmaster and every cadet corps in England and every school in France is training the next generation to smash anything of the sort, is doing everything possible to carry young and generous minds back to the exploded delusions of wartime patriotism... All over the world it seems to be the same."

The young American, shy in the presence of his seniors, could but make a noise of protest like one who stirs in his sleep. Thereby he excepted his native land.

"Then," said Mr. Parham, doing his smile but with a slight involuntary sneer of his left nostril, "you'd begin this great new civilization that is to come, by shutting up our schools?"

"He'd CHANGE 'em," corrected Sir Bussy.

"Scrap schools, colleges, churches, universities, armies, navies, flags, and honour, and start the millennium from the ground upwards," derided Mr. Parham.

"Why not?" said Sir Bussy, with a sudden warning snarl in his voice.

"That," said Hamp, with that profundity of manner, that air of marking an epoch by some simple remark, of which only Americans possess the secret, "is just what quite a lot of us are hesitating to say. WHY NOT? Sir Bussy, you got right down to the bottom of things with that 'Why not?'"

The speaker's large dark gray eyes strongly magnified by his spectacles went from face to face; his cheeks were flushed.

"We've scrapped carriages and horses, we're scrapping coal fires and gas lighting, we've done with the last big wooden ships, we can hear and see things now on the other side of the world and do a thousand — miracles, I call them — that would have been impossible a hundred years ago. What if frontiers too are out of date? What if countries and cultures have become too small? Why should we go on with the schools and universities that served the ends of our great-grandfathers, and with the governments that were the latest fashion in constitutions a century and a half ago?"

"I presume," said Mr. Parham unheeded, addressing himself to the flowers on the table before him, "because the dealings of man with man are something entirely different from mechanical operations."

“I see no reason why there shouldn’t be invention in psychology, just as much as in chemistry or physics,” said Camelford.

“Your world peace, when you examine it,” said Mr. Parham, “flies in the face of the fundamental institutions — the ancient and tested institutions of mankind — the institutions that have made man what he is. That is the reason.”

“The institutions of mankind,” contradicted Camelford, with tranquil assurance, “are just as fundamental and no more fundamental than a pair of trousers. If the world grows out of them and they become inconvenient, it won’t kill anything essential in man to get others. That, I submit, is what he has to set about doing now. He grows more and more independent of the idea that his pants are him. If our rulers and teachers won’t attempt to let out or replace the old garments, so much the worse for them. In the long run. Though for a time, as Sir Walter seems to think, the tension may fall on us. In the long run we shall have to get a new sort of management for our affairs and a new sort of teacher for our sons — however tedious and troublesome it may be to get them — however long and bloody the time of change may be.”

“Big proposition,” said Mr. Hamp.

“Which ought to make it all the more attractive to a citizen of the land of big propositions,” said Camelford.

“Why should we be so confoundedly afraid of scrapping things?” said Sir Bussy. “If the schools do mischief and put back people’s children among the ideas that made the war, why not get rid of ‘em? Scrap our stale schoolmasters. We’d get a new sort of school all right.”

“And the universities?” said Mr. Parham, amused, with his voice going high.

Sir Bussy turned on him and regarded him gravely.

“Parham,” he said slowly, “you’re infernally well satisfied with the world. I’m not. You’re afraid it may change into something else. You want to stop it right here and now. Or else you may have to learn something new and throw away the old bag of tricks. Yes — I know you. That’s your whole mind. You’re afraid that a time will come when all the important things of to-day will just not matter a rap; when what that chap Napoleon fancied was his Destiny or what

old Richelieu imagined to be a fine forward foreign policy, will matter no more to intelligent people than—" he sought for an image and drew it slowly out of his mind— "the ideas of some old buck rabbit in the days of Queen Elizabeth."

The attack was so direct, so deliberately offensive in its allusion to Mr. Parham's masterly studies of Richelieu, that for the moment that gentleman had nothing to say.

"Gaw," said Sir Bussy, "when I hear talk like this it seems to me that this Tradition of yours is only another word for Putrefaction. The clean way with Nature is dying and being born. Same with human institutions — only more so. How can we live unless we scrap and abolish? How can a town be clean without a dust destructor? What's your history really? Simply what's been left over from the life of yesterday. Egg shells and old tin cans."

"Now THAT'S a thought," said Hamp and turned appreciative horn spectacles to Sir Bussy.

"The greatest of reformers, gentlemen," said Hamp, with a quavering of the voice, "told the world it had to be born again. And that, as I read the instruction, covered everybody and everything in it."

"It's a big birth we want this time," said Camelford.

"God grant it isn't a miscarriage," said Sir Walter.

He smiled at his own fancy. "If we WILL make the birth chamber an arsenal, we may have the guns going off — just at the wrong moment."

Mr. Parham, still and stiff, smoked his excellent cigar. He knocked off his ash into his ash tray with a firm hand. His face betrayed little of his resentment at Sir Bussy's insult. Merely it insisted upon dignity. But behind that marble mask the thoughts stormed. Should he get up right there and depart? In silence? In contemptuous silence? Or perhaps with a brief bitter speech: "Gentlemen, I've heard enough folly for tonight. Perhaps you do not realize the incalculable mischief such talk as this can do. For me at least international affairs are grave realities."

He raised his eyes and found Sir Bussy, profoundly pensive but in no way hostile, regarding him.

A moment — a queer moment, and something faded out in Mr.

Parham.

“Have a little more of this old brandy,” said Sir Bussy in that persuasive voice of his.

Mr. Parham hesitated, nodded gravely — as it were forgivingly — seemed to wake up, smiled ambiguously, and took some more of the old brandy.

But the memory of that conversation was to rankle in Mr. Parham’s mind and inflame his imagination like a barbed and poisoned arrowhead that would not be removed. He would find himself reprobating its tendencies aloud as he walked about Oxford, his habit of talking to himself was increased by it, and it broke his rest of nights and crept into his dreams. A deepening hatred of modern scientific influences that he had hitherto kept at the back of his mind, was now, in spite of his instinctive resistance, creeping into the foreground. One could deal with the financial if only the scientific would leave it alone. The banker and the merchant are as old as Rome and Babylon. One could deal with Sir Bussy if it were not for the insidious influence of such men as Camelford and their vast materialistic schemes. They were something new. He supplied force, but they engendered ideas. He could resist and deflect, but they could change.

That story about an exclusive British gas...!

With Camelford overlooking it like a self-appointed God. Proposing to cut off the supply. Proposing in effect to stand out of war and make the game impossible. The strike, the treason, of the men of science and the modern men of enterprise. Could they work such a strike? The most fretting it was of all the riddles in our contemporary world. And while these signs of Anglo-Saxon decadence oppressed him, came Mussolini’s mighty discourse to the Italian Nation on the Eve of the General Elections of 1929. That ringing statement of Fascist aims, that assertion of the paramount need of a sense of the state, of discipline and energy, had a clarity, a nobility, a boldness and power altogether beyond the quality of anything one heard in English. Mr. Parham read it and re-read it. He translated it into Latin and it was even more splendid. He sought to translate it, but that was more difficult, into English prose. “This is a man,” said Mr. Parham. “Is there no other man of his kind?”

And late one evening he found himself in his bedroom in Pontingale Street before his mirror. For Mr. Parham possessed a cheval glass. He had gone far in his preparation for bed. He had put on his dressing gown, leaving one fine arm and shoulder free for gesticulation. And with appropriate movements of his hand, he was repeating these glorious words of the great dictator.

"Your Excellencies, Comrades, Gentlemen," he was saying.

"Now do not think that I wish to commit the sin of immodesty in telling you that all this work, of which I have given a summarised and partial résumé, has been activated by my mind. The work of legislation, of putting schemes into action, of control and of the creation of new institutions, has formed only a part of my efforts. There is another part, not so well-known, but the existence of which will be manifest to you through the following figures which may be of interest: I have granted over 60,000 audiences; I have dealt with 1,887,112 cases of individual citizens, received directly by my Private Secretary...

"In order to withstand this strain I have put my body in training; I have regulated my daily work; I have reduced to a minimum any loss of time and energy and I have adopted this rule, which I recommend to all Italians. The day's work must be methodically and regularly completed within the day. No work must be left over. The ordinary work must proceed with an almost mechanical regularity. My collaborators, whom I recall with pleasure and whom I wish to thank publicly, have imitated me. The hard work has appeared light to me, partly because it is varied, and I have resisted the strain because my will was sustained by my faith. I have assumed — as was my duty — both the small and the greater responsibilities."

Mr. Parham ceased to quote. He stared at the not ungraceful figure in the mirror.

"Has Britain no such Man?"

II. — HOW SIR BUSSY RESORTED TO METAPSYCHICS

But the real business we have in hand in this book is to tell of the Master Spirit. A certain prelude has been necessary to our story, but now that we are through with it we can admit it was no more than a prelude. Here at the earliest possible moment the actual story starts. There shall be nothing else but story-telling now right to the end of the book.

Mr. Parham's metapsychic experiences were already beginning before the conversation recorded in the previous section. They began, or at least the seed of them was sown, in a train bringing Sir Bussy and a party of friends back to London from Oxford after one of Mr. Parham's attempts to impose something of the ripeness and dignity of that ancient home of thought, upon his opulent friend. It was the occasion of Lord Fluffingdon's great speech on the imperial soul. They had seen honorary degrees conferred upon a Royal Princess, an Indian Rajah, the expenditure secretary of a wealthy American millionaire and one of the most brilliant and successful collectors of honours in the world, three leading but otherwise undistinguished conservative politicians, and a Scotch comedian. It had been a perfect day in the sunshine, rich late Gothic old gardens, robes, smiles, and mellow compliments. The company had been the picked best of Who's Who dressed up for the occasion, and Lord Fluffingdon had surpassed expectation. In the compartment with Sir Bussy and Mr. Parham were Hereward Jackson, just in the enthusiastic stages of psychic research, and Sir Titus Knowles, and the spacious open-mindedness of Sir Oliver Lodge, slow, conscientious, and lucid, ruled the discussion.

Hereward Jackson started the talk about psychic phenomena. Sir Titus Knowles was fiercely and vulgarly skeptical and early lost his always very thin and brittle temper. Sir Bussy said little.

Nearly six years of intermittent association had lit no spark of affection between Sir Titus and Mr. Parham. For Mr. Parham Sir Titus combined all that is fearful in the medical man, who at any

moment may tell you to take off everything and be punched about anywhere, and all that is detestable in the scientist. They rarely talked, and when they did contradictions flew like sparks from the impact.

"The mediums as a class are rogues and tricksters," said Sir Titus. "It's common knowledge."

"Ah, THERE!" said Mr. Parham, cutting in, "there you have the positivism and assurance of — if you'll pardon the adjective — old-fashioned science."

"Precious few who haven't been caught at it," said Sir Titus, turning from Hereward Jackson to this new attack upon his flank.

"On SOME occasions, but not on ALL occasions," said Mr. Parham. "We have to be logical even upon such irritating questions as this."

Normally he would have kept himself smilingly aloof and skeptical. It was his genuine hatred for the harsh mentality of Sir Titus that had drawn him in. But there he was, before he knew it, taking up a position of open-minded inquiry close to Sir Oliver's, and much nearer to Jackson's omnivorous faith, than to doubt and denial. For a time Sir Titus was like a baited badger. "Look at the facts!" he kept barking. "Look at the actual facts!"

"That's just what I HAVE looked at," said Hereward Jackson...

It did not occur to Mr. Parham that he had let himself in for more than a stimulating discussion until Sir Bussy spoke to him and the others, but chiefly to him, out of his corner.

"I didn't know Parham was open-minded like this," he said.

And presently: "Have you ever seen any of this stuff, Parham? We ought to go and see some, if you think like that."

If Mr. Parham had been alert he might have nipped the thing in the bud then and there, but he was not alert that afternoon. He hardly realized that Sir Bussy had pinned him.

And so all that follows followed.

III. — METAPSYCHICS IN BUGGINS STREET

For a month or so Mr. Parham opposed and evaded Sir Bussy's pressure towards psychic research. It wasn't at all the sort of thing to do, nowadays. It had been vulgarized. Their names were certain to be used freely in the most undignified connections. And at the bottom of his heart Mr. Parham did not believe that there was the shadow of an unknown reality in these obscure performances.

But never had he had such occasion to appreciate the force and tenacity of Sir Bussy's will. He would lie awake at nights wondering why his own will was so inadequate in its resistance. Was it possible, he questioned, that a fine education and all the richness and subtlety that only the classics, classical philosophy, and period history can impart, were incompatible with a really vigorous practical thrust. Oxford educated for quality, but did it educate for power?

Yet he had always assumed he was preparing his Young Men for positions of influence and power. It was a disagreeable novelty for him to ask if anything was wrong with his own will and if so, what it was that was wrong. And it seemed to him that if only he had believed in the efficacy of prayer, he would have prayed first and foremost for some tremendous affluence of will that would have borne away Sir Bussy's obstinacy like a bubble in a torrent. So that it would not be necessary to evade and oppose it afresh day after day. And at last, as he perceived he must, yield to it.

All the private heart searchings of this period of resistance and delay were shot with the reiteration of what had been through all the six years of intercourse an unsettled perplexity. What was Sir Bussy doing this for? Did he really want to know that there was some sort of chink or retractile veil that led out of this sane world of ours into worlds of unknown wonder, and through which maybe that unknown wonder might presently break into our common day? Did he hope for his "way out of it" here? Or was he simply doing this — as he seemed to have done so many other queer things — to vex, puzzle, and provoke queer reactions in Mr. Parham, Sir Titus, and various other intimates? Or was there a confusion in that untrained intelligence between both sets of motives?

Whatever his intentions, Sir Bussy got his way. One October evening after an exceptionally passoverish dinner at Marmion House, Mr. Parham found himself with Sir Titus, Hereward Jackson, and Sir Bussy in Sir Bussy's vast smooth car, in search of 97 Buggins Street, in the darker parts of the borough of Wandsworth, Mr. Hereward Jackson assisting the chauffeur spasmodically, unhelpfully, and dangerously at the obscurer corners. The peculiar gifts of a certain Mr. Carnac Williams were to be studied and considered.

The medium had been recommended by the best authorities, and Hereward Jackson had already visited this place before. Their hostess was to be old Mrs. Mountain, a steadfast pillar in the spiritualist movement in dark days and prosperous days alike, and this first essay would, it was hoped, display some typical phenomena, voices, messages, perhaps a materialization, nothing very wonderful, but a good beginner's show.

97 Buggins Street was located at last, a dimly lit double-fronted house with steps up to a door with a fanlight.

Old Mrs. Mountain appeared in the passage behind the small distraught domestic who had admitted her guests. She was a comfortable, shapeless old lady in black, with a mid-Victorian lace cap, lace ruffles, and a lace apron. She was disposed to be nervously affable and charming. She welcomed Hereward Jackson with a copious friendliness. "And here's your friends," she said. "Mr. Smith, shall we say? And Mr. Jones and Mr. Brown. Naming no names. Welcome all! Last night he was WONDERFUL."

Hereward Jackson explained over his shoulder: "Best to be pseudonymous," he said.

She ushered them into a room of her own period, with a cottage piano topped with a woollen mat on which were a pot of some fine-leaved fern and a pile of music, a mantel adorned with a large mirror and many ornaments, a central table with a red cloth and some books, a gas pendant, hanging bookshelves, large gilt-framed oleograph landscapes, a small sofa, a brightly burning fire, and a general air of comfort. Cushions, small mats, and antimacassars abounded, and there was an assemblage of stuffed linnets and canaries under a glass shade. It was a room to eat muffins in. Four people, rather drawn together about the fire and with something

defensive in their grouping, stood awaiting the new inquirers. An overgrown-looking young man of forty with a large upturned white face and an expression of strained indifference was “my son Mr. Mountain.” A little blonde woman was Miss — something or other; a tall woman in mourning with thin cheeks, burning eyes, and a high colour was “a friend who joins us,” and the fourth was Mr. Carnac Williams, the medium for the evening.

“Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, Mr. Brown,” said Mrs. Mountain, “and this gentleman you know.”

The little blonde woman glowed the friendliness of a previous encounter at Hereward Jackson, and Mr. Mountain hesitated and held out a flabby hand to shake Sir Bussy’s.

Mr. Parham’s first reaction to the medium was dislike. The man was obviously poor, and the dark, narrow eyes in his white face were quick and evasive. He carried his hands bent at the wrist as if he reserved the palms and his manner was a trifle too deferential to Sir Bussy for that complete lack of information about the visitors attributed to the home team.

“I can’t answer for anything,” said Mr. Williams in flat, loud tones. “I’m merely a tool.”

“A wonderful tool last night,” said Mrs. Mountain.

“I knew nothing,” said Mr. Williams.

“It was very wonderful to ME,” said the tall woman in a soft musical voice and seemed restrained by emotion from saying more.

There was a moment’s silence.

“Our normal procedure,” said Mr. Mountain, betraying a slight lisp in his speech, “is to go upstairs. The room on the first floor is prepared — oh! you’ll be able to satisfy yourselves it’s not been prepared in any wrong sense. Recently we have been so fortunate as to get actual materializations — a visitant. Our atmosphere has been favourable... If nothing happens to change it... But shall we go upstairs?”

The room upstairs seemed very bare in comparison with the crowded cosiness of the room below. It had been cleared of bric-à-brac. There was a large table surrounded by chairs. One of them was an armchair, destined for Mrs. Mountain, and by it stood a small occasional table bearing a gramophone; the rest were those chairs

with bun-like seats so characteristic of the Early Maple period. A third table carried some loose flowers, a tambourine, and a large slate, which was presently discovered to be painted with phosphorescent paint. One corner had been curtained off. “That’s the cabinet,” said Mrs. Mountain. “You’re quite welcome to search it.”

On a small table inside it there were ropes, a candle, sealing wax, and other material.

“We aren’t for searching to-night,” said Sir Bussy. “We’re just beginners and ready to take your word for almost anything. We want to get your point of view and all that. It’s afterwards we’ll make trouble.”

“A very fair and reasonable way of approaching the spirits,” said Williams. “I feel we’ll have a good atmosphere.”

Mr. Parham looked cynically impartial.

“If we’re not to apply any tests...” began Sir Titus, with a note of protest.

“We’ll just watch this time,” said Sir Bussy. “I’ll let you have some tests all right later.”

“We don’t mind tests,” said Williams. “There’s a lot about this business I’d like to have tested up to the hilt. For I understand it no more than you do. I’m just a vehicle.”

“Yaa,” said Sir Titus.

Mr. Mountain proceeded with his explanations. They had been working with a few friends at spirit appearances. Their recent custom had been to get the most skeptical person present to tie up Williams in his chair as hard and firmly as possible. Then hands were joined in the normal way. Then, in complete darkness, except for the faint glimmer of phosphorescence from the slate, they waited. Mrs. Mountain would keep the gramophone going and had a small weak flashlight for the purpose. The person next her could check her movements. The thread of music was very conducive to phenomena, they found. They need not wait in silence, for that sometimes produced a bad atmosphere. They might make light but not frivolous conversation or simple comments until things began to happen.

“There’s nothing mysterious or magical about it,” said Mr. Mountain.

“YOU’LL do the tying up,” said Hereward Jackson to Sir Titus.

“I know a knot or two,” said Sir Titus ominously. “Do we strip him first?”

“Oo!” said Mr. Mountain reproachfully and indicated the ladies. The question of stripping or anything but a superficial searching was dropped.

Mr. Parham stood in unaffected boredom studying the rather fine lines of the lady in mourning while these preliminaries were settled. She was, he thought, a very sympathetic type. The other woman was a trifle blowsy and much too prepossessed by the medium and Hereward Jackson. The rest of these odd people he disliked, though he bore himself with a courtly graciousness towards old Mrs. Mountain. What intolerable folly it all was!

After eternities of petty fussing the medium was tied up, the knots sealed, and the circle formed. Mr. Parham had placed himself next to the lady in black, and on the other side he fell into contact with the flabby Mountain. Sir Bussy, by a sort of natural precedence, had got between the medium and the old lady. Sir Titus, harshly vigilant, had secured the medium’s left. The lights were turned out. For several dreary centuries nothing happened except a dribble of weak conversation and an uneasy rustling from the medium. Once he moaned. “HE’S GOING OFF!” said Mrs. Mountain. The finger of the lady in mourning twitched, and Mr. Parham was stirred to answering twitches, but it amounted to nothing, and Mr. Parham’s interest died away.

Sir Bussy began a conversation with Hereward Jackson about the prospects of Wildcat for the Derby.

“DARLING MUMMY,” came in a faint falsetto from outside the circle.

“What was that?” barked Sir Titus sharply.

“Ssh!” from Sir Bussy.

The lady beside Mr. Parham stirred slightly, and the pressure of her hand beside his intensified. She made a noise as though she wanted to speak, but nothing came but a sob.

“My DEAR lady!” said Mr. Parham softly, deeply moved.

“Just a fla, Mummy. I can’t stop to-night. The’s others want to come.”

Something flopped lightly and softly on the table; it proved

afterwards to be a chrysanthemum. There was a general silence, and Mr. Parham realized that the lady beside him was weeping noiselessly. “Milly — sweetheart,” she whispered. “Good-night, dear. Good-night.”

Mr. Parham hadn’t reckoned on this sort of thing. It made his attention wander. His fine nature responded too readily to human feeling. He hardly noticed at first a queer sound that grew louder, a slobbering and slopping sound that was difficult to locate.

“That’s the ectoplasm,” said old Mrs. Mountain, “working.”

Mr. Parham brought his mind, which had been concentrated on conveying the very deepest sympathy of a strong silent man through his little finger, back to the more general issues of the séance.

Mrs. Mountain started the gramophone for the fourth or fifth repetition of that French horn solo when Tristan is waiting for Isolde. One saw a dim circle of light and her hand moving the needle. Then the light went out with a click and Wagner resumed.

Mr. Mountain was talking to the spinster lady about the best way to get back to Battersea.

“Ssssh!” said Sir Titus, as if blowing off steam.

Things were happening. “DAMN!” said Sir Titus.

“Steady!” said Sir Bussy. “Don’t break the circle.”

“I was struck by a tin box,” said Sir Titus, “or something as hard!”

“No need to move,” said Sir Bussy unkindly.

“Struck on the back of the head,” said Sir Titus.

“It may have been the tambourine,” said Mr. Mountain.

“Flas!” said the medium’s voice, and something soft, cold, and moist struck Mr. Parham in the face and fell in his hand.

“Keep the circle, please,” said old Mrs. Mountain.

Certainly this was exciting in a queer, tedious, unpleasant sort of way. After each event there was a wide expectant interval.

“Our friend is coming,” said the medium’s voice. “Our dear visitant.”

The tambourine with a faint jingle floated over the table far out of reach. It drifted towards Sir Titus. “If you touch me again!” threatened Sir Titus, and the tambourine thought better of it and, it would seem, made its way back to the other table.

A light hand rested for a moment on Mr. Parham’s shoulder. Was

it a woman's hand? He turned quietly and was startled to find something with a faint bluish luminosity beside him. It was the phosphorescent slate.

"Look!" said Hereward Jackson.

Sir Titus grunted.

A figure was gliding noiselessly and evenly outside the circle. It held the luminous slate and raised and lowered this against its side to show a robed woman's figure with a sort of nun's coif. "She's come," sighed Mrs. Mountain very softly.

It seemed a long time before this visitant spoke.

"Lee-tle children," said a womanly falsetto. "Leetle children."

"Who's the lady?" asked Sir Bussy.

The figure became invisible.

After a little pause the medium answered from his place. "St. Catherine."

The name touched a fount of erudition in Mr. Parham. "WHICH St. Catherine?"

"Just St. Catherine."

"But there were TWO St. Catherines — or more," said Mr. Parham. "Two who had mystical marriages with the Lord. St. Catherine of Alexandria, whose symbol is the wheel — the patroness of spinsters generally and the Catherinettes of Paris in particular — and St. Catherine of Siena. There's a picture by Memling — perfectly lovely thing. And, yes — there WAS a third one, a Norwegian St. Catherine, if I remember rightly. And possibly others. Couldn't she tell us? I would so like to know."

A silence followed this outbreak.

"She's never told us anything of that," said Mrs. Mountain.

"I THINK it's St. Catherine of Siena," said the spinster lady.

"She is a very sweet lady, anyhow," said Hereward Jackson.

"Can we be told this?" asked Sir Bussy.

The medium's voice replied very softly. "She prefers not to discuss these things. For us she wishes to be just our dear friend, the Lady Catherine. She comes on a mission of mercy."

"Don't press it," said Sir Bussy.

After a tedious interval St. Catherine became faintly visible again. She kissed Sir Titus softly on the top of his high forehead, leaving

him audibly unreconciled, and then she floated back to the left of Mr. Parham.

"I came to tell you," she said, "that the little one is happy — so happy. She plays with flas — lovelier flas than you ever saw. Asphodel. And lovely flas like that. She is with me, under my special care. So she was able to come to you."...

The dim figure faded into utter darkness. "Farewell, my DEAR ones."

"Gaw!" said a familiar voice.

The gramophone ran down with a scratching sound. A deep silence followed, broken for a time only by the indignant breathing of Sir Titus Knowles.

"WET kisses," he said.

The darkness was impenetrable. Then Mrs. Mountain began to fumble with the gramophone, revealing a little glow of light that made the rest of the darkness deeper; a certain amount of scraping and shuffling became audible, and the medium was heard to groan. "I am tired," he complained, "I am terribly tired." Then, to judge by a string of sloppy noises, he seemed to be retracting his ectoplasm.

"That was very interesting," said Sir Bussy suddenly. "All the same—" he went on and then paused— "it isn't what I want. It was very kind of St. Catherine, whichever St. Catherine she was, to leave Bliss and all that and visit us. And I LIKED her kissing Sir Titus. It showed a nice disposition. He's not a man you'd kiss for pleasure. But... I don't know if any of you have seen that great fat book by Baron Schrenck-Notzing. Sort of like a scientific book. I've been reading that. What HE got was something different from this."

His voice paused interrogatively.

"Could we have the light up?" said Mr. Mountain.

"In a minute I shall be able to bear it," said Williams, very faint and faded. "Just one more minute."

"Then we shall SEE," said Sir Titus.

"I think we might break the circle now," said Mrs. Mountain and rose rustlingly. The hand Mr. Parham had been touching slipped out of his reach.

The light seemed blinding at first; the room was bleakly uncomfortable, and everybody looked ghastly. The medium's face

was a leaden white, he was leaning back in his chair, in which he was still tied, with his head rolling slackly from side to side as though his neck were broken. Sir Titus set himself to examine his knots forthwith. It reminded Mr. Parham of the examination of a casualty. Sir Bussy watched Sir Titus. Mr. Mountain and Hereward Jackson stood up and leant over the table. “The sealing wax intact,” said Sir Titus. “The knots good and twisted round the chair, just as I left them. HULLO!”

“Found something?” asked Hereward Jackson.

“Yes. The thread of cotton between the coat collar and the chair back has been snapped.”

“That always gets broken somehow,” said Mr. Mountain, with scientific detachment.

“But WHY?” asked Sir Titus.

“We needn’t bother about that now,” said Sir Bussy, and the medium made noises in his throat and opened and closed his eyes.

“Shall we give him water?” asked the spinster lady.

Water was administered.

Sir Bussy was brooding over his fists on the table. “I want more than this,” he said and addressed himself to the medium. “You see, Mr. Williams, this is a very good show you have put up, but it isn’t what I am after. In this sort of thing there are degrees and qualities, as in all sorts of things.”

Williams still appeared very dazed. “Were there any phenomena?” he asked of the company.

“Wonderful,” said old Mrs. Mountain, with reassuring nods of the head, and the spinster lady echoed, “Beautiful. It was St. Catherine again.”

The lady in black was too moved for words.

Sir Bussy regarded Williams sideways with that unpleasing dropping of his nether lip. “You could do better than this under different conditions,” he said in a quasi-confidential manner.

“Test conditions,” said Sir Titus.

“This is a friendly atmosphere, of course,” said the medium and regarded Sir Bussy with a mixture of adventure and defensiveness in his eyes. He had come awake very rapidly and was now quite alert. The water had done him good.

“I perceive that,” said Sir Bussy.

“Under severer conditions the phenomena might be more difficult.”

“That too I perceive.”

“I’d be willing to participate in an investigation,” said Williams in a tone that was almost businesslike.

“After what I’ve seen and heard and felt to-night,” said Sir Titus, “I prophesy only one end to such an investigation — Exposure.”

“How CAN you say such a thing?” cried the spinster lady and turned to Hereward Jackson. “Tell him he is mistaken.”

Hereward Jackson had played a markedly unaggressive part that evening. “No doubt he is,” he said. “Let us be open-minded. I don’t think Mr. Williams need shirk an investigation under tests.”

“Fair tests,” said Williams.

“I’d see they were fair,” said Hereward Jackson.

He became thoughtful. “There is such a thing as assisted phenomena,” he mused aloud.

“For my part, mind you,” said Williams, “I’m altogether passive, whatever happens.”

“But,” said Mr. Mountain in tenoring remonstrance to Sir Bussy, “doesn’t this evening satisfy you, sir?”

“This was a very amiable show,” said Sir Bussy. “But it left a lot to be desired.”

“It did,” said Sir Titus.

“You mean to say there was anything not straightforward?” challenged Mr. Mountain.

“That DEAR voice!” cried old Mrs. Mountain.

“The BEAUTY of it!” said the spinster lady.

“If you force me to speak,” said Sir Titus, “I accuse this man Williams of impudent imposture.”

“That goes too far,” said Hereward Jackson; “much too far. That’s dogma on the other side.”

Mr. Parham had stood aloof from the dispute he saw was gathering. He found it ugly and painful. He disbelieved in the phenomena almost as strongly as he disliked the disbelief of Sir Titus. He felt deeply for the little group which had gone on so happily from one revelation to another, invaded now by brawling

denial, and brawling accusations, threatened by brawling exposure. Particularly he felt for the lady in mourning. She turned her eyes to him as if in appeal, and they were bright with unshed tears. Chivalry and pity stormed his heart.

"I agree," he said. "I agree with Mr. Hereward Jackson. It is possible the medium, consciously or not, ASSISTED the phenomena. But the messages were REAL."

Her face lit with gratitude and became an altogether beautiful face. And he did not even know her name!

"And the spirit of my dear one WAS present?" she implored.

Mr. Parham met the eye of Sir Titus and met it with hard determination. "Something came to us here from outside," he said; "a message, an intimation, the breath of a soul — call it what you will."

And having said this, the seed of belief was sown in Mr. Parham. For never before had he found reason to doubt his own word.

"And you are interested? You want to learn more?" pressed old Mrs. Mountain.

Mr. Parham went deeper and assented.

Had he heard Sir Bussy say, "Gaw," or was that expletive getting on his nerves?

"Now, let's get things a bit clearer," said Williams. He was addressing himself directly to Sir Bussy. "I'm not answerable for what happens on these occasions. I go off. I'm not present, so to speak. I'm a mere instrument. You know more of what happens than I do."

He glanced from Sir Bussy to old Mrs. Mountain and then came back to Sir Bussy. There was an air of scared enterprise about him that made Mr. Parham think of some rascally valet who plans the desertion of an old and kindly master while still in his employment. It was as plain as daylight that he knew who Sir Bussy was and regarded him as a great opportunity, an opportunity that had to be snatched even at the cost of some inconsistency. His manner admitted an element of imposture in all they had seen that night. And it was plain that Hereward Jackson's convictions moved in accordance with his.

And yet he seemed to believe, and Hereward Jackson seemed to believe, that there was more than trickery in it. Insensibly Mr.

Parham assimilated the “something in it” point of view. He found himself maintaining it quite ably against Sir Titus.

Williams, after much devious talk, came at last to his point. “If you four gentlemen mean business, and if one could be treated as some of these pampered foreign mediums are treated,” he said, “these Eva C’s and Eusapia Palladinos and such-like, one might manage to give as good or better than they give. I’m only a passive thing in these affairs, but have I ever had a fair chance of showing what was in me?”

“Gaw,” said Sir Bussy. “You shall have your chance.”

Williams was evidently almost as frightened as he was grateful at his success. He thought at once of the need of securing a line of retreat if that should prove necessary. He turned to the old lady.

“They’ll strip me naked and powder my feet. They’ll take flashlight photographs of me with the ectoplasm oozing out of me. They’ll very likely kill me. It won’t be anything like our good times here. But when they are through with it you’ll see they’ll have justified me. They’ll have justified me and justified all the faith you’ve shown in me.”

IV. — THE CARFEX HOUSE SEANCES

Once Sir Bussy had launched himself and his friends upon these metapsychic experiments he pursued the investigation with his customary intemperance. Carnac Williams was only one of several lines of investigation. It is a commonplace of psychic literature that the more a medium concentrates on the ectoplasm and materializations, the less is he or she capable of clairvoyance and the transmission of spirit messages. Carnac Williams was to develop along the former line. Meanwhile Sir Bussy took competent advice and secured the frequent presence of the more interesting clairvoyants available in London.

Carfex House was spacious, and Sir Bussy had a great supply of secretaries and under butlers. Rooms were told off for the materialization work and others for the reception of messages from the great beyond, and alert and attentive helpers learnt the names and business of the experts and showed them to their proper apartments. The materialization quarters were prepared most elaborately by Sir Titus Knowles. He was resolved to make them absolutely spirit-tight; to make any ectoplasm that was exuded in them feel as uncomfortable and unwelcome as ectoplasm could.

He and Williams carried on an interminable wrangle about hangings, lighting, the legitimate use of flashlight photography, and the like. Sir Titus even stood out, most unreasonably, against a black velvet cabinet and conceded Williams black tights for the sake of decency with an ill grace. “We aren’t going to have any women about,” said Sir Titus. Williams showed himself amazingly temperamental and Sir Titus was mulishly obstinate; Sir Bussy, Hereward Jackson, and Mr. Parham acted as their final court of appeal and pleased neither party. Hereward Jackson was consistently for Williams.

On the whole Williams got more from them than Sir Titus, chiefly because of Mr. Parham’s lack of intellectual sympathy with the latter. Constantly the casting vote fell to Mr. Parham. With secret delight he heard of — and on several occasions he assisted at — an increasing output of ectoplasm that it entirely defeated Sir Titus to

explain. He was forbidden, by the rules and the hypothesis that it might conceivably cause the death of his adversary, to leap forward and grab the stuff. It bubbled out of the corners of Williams's mouth, a horrid white creeping fluid, it flowed from his chest, it accumulated upon his knees; and it was withdrawn with a sort of sluggish alacrity. On the ninth occasion this hitherto shapeless matter took on the rude suggestions of hands and a human face, and a snapshot was achieved.

The tests and restrictions imposed upon the trances of the clairvoyants were, from the nature of the case, less rigorous than those directly controlled by Sir Titus, and their results developed rather in advance of the Williams manifestations.

The communications differed widely in quality. One medium professed a Red Indian control and also transmitted messages from a gentleman who had lived in Susa, "many years ago, long before the time of Abraham." It was very difficult to determine where the Red Indian left off and where the ancient from Susa began. Moreover, "bad spirits" got in on the Susa communications, and departed friends of Hereward Jackson sent messages to say that it was "splendid" where they were, and that they were "so happy," and wished everyone could be told about it, but faded out under further interrogation in the most unsatisfactory fashion. At an early stage Sir Bussy decided that he had had "enough of that gammon" and this particular practitioner was paid off and retired. There were several such failures. The details varied, but the common factor was a lack of elementary credibility. Two women mediums held out downstairs, while upstairs in the special room Williams, week by week, thrust his enlarging and developing ectoplasm into the pale and formidable disbelief of Sir Titus.

Of the two women downstairs one was a middle-aged American with no appeal for Mr. Parham; the other was a much more interesting and attractive type. She was dusky, with a curiously beautiful oval olive-tinted face and she said she was the young widow of an English merchant in Mauritius. Her name was Nanette Pinchot. She was better educated than the common run of psychic material and had very high recommendations from some of the greatest investigators in Paris and Berlin. She spoke English with a pleasing staccato. Neither she nor the American lady professed to be

controlled by the usual ghost, and this was new to all the Carfex House investigators. The American lady had trances of a fit-like nature that threw her slanting-wise across her chair in inelegant attitudes. Mrs. Pinchot, when entranced, sat like a pensive cat, with her head inclined forward and her hands folded neatly in her lap. Neither lady had heard of the other. The one lodged with cousins in Highbury; the other stayed in a Kensington hotel. But their line of revelation was the same. Each professed to feel a mighty afflatus from an unknown source which had thrust all commonplace controls aside. There were moments when Mr. Parham was reminded of the Hebrew prophets when they said, "the Voice of the Lord came upon me." But this voice was something other than the Voice of the Lord.

Mrs. Pinchot gave the fuller messages. The American lady gave descriptive matter rather than positive statements. She would say, "Where am I? I am afraid. I am in a dark place. An arcade. No, not an arcade, a passage. A great huge passage. Pillars and faces on either side, faces carved on the pillars, terrible faces. Faces of Destiny! It is dark and cold and there is a wind blowing. The light is dim. I do not know where the light comes from. It is very dim. The Spirit, which is Will and Power, is coming down the passage like a mighty wind, seeking a way. How great and lonely the passage is! I am so small, so cold, and so afraid. I am smaller. I am driven like a dead leaf before the wind of the great Spirit. Why was I put into this dreadful place? Let me out! OH, LET ME OUT!"

Her distress became evident. She writhed and had to be recalled to the things of this world.

By an extraordinary coincidence Mrs. Pinchot also spoke of a great passage down which something was coming. But she did not feel herself actually in the passage, nor was she personally afraid. "There is a corridor," she said. "A breeze of expectation blows down it from some unknown source. And Power is coming. It is as if I hear the tramp of iron footfalls drawing near."

Hereward Jackson did not hear these things said. That made it more remarkable that he should bring back a report from Portsmouth. "There is a new Spirit coming into the world," he said. "A man in Portsea has been saying that. He is a medium, and suddenly he has given up saying anything else and taken to warning us of a new time

close at hand. It is not the spirit of any departed person. It is a Spirit from Outside seeking to enter the world."

Mr. Parham found something rather impressive in these convergent intimations. From the first he had observed Mrs. Pinchot closely, and he found it difficult to believe her capable of any kind of fraud, collusion, or mystification. The friendly candour of her normal bearing passed over without a change into her trance condition. He had some opportunities of studying her when she was not under séance conditions; he twice took her out to tea at Rumpelmayer's and afterwards persuaded Sir Bussy to have her down at the Hangar for a week-end. So he was able to hear her talking naturally and easily about art, foreign travel, ideas in general, and even public affairs. She was really cultivated. She had a fine, inquiring, discriminating mind. She had great breadth of view. She evidently found an intelligent pleasure in his conversation. He talked to her as he rarely talked to women, for commonly his attitude to the opposite sex was light and playful or indulgent and protective. But he found she could even understand his anxieties for the world's affairs, his sense of a threatening anarchism and dissolution in the texture of society, and his feeling for the need of stronger and clearer guidance in our periodic literature. Sometimes she would even anticipate things he was going to say. But when he asked her about the Spirit that was coming into the world she knew nothing of it. Her séance life was quite detached from her daily life. He gave her his books on Richelieu with a friendly inscription and copies of some of his graver articles and addresses. She said they were no ordinary articles.

From the outset she had made it plain that she realized that this new circle she had entered was very different in quality from the usual gathering of the credulous and curious with which a medium has to deal. "People talk of the stupidity of spirit communications," she said at the first meeting. "But does anyone ever consider the vulgar quality of the people to whom these communications have to be made?"

This time, she felt, the grouping was of a different order. She said she liked to have Sir Titus there particularly, for his hard, clear doubt was like walking on a level firm floor. Sir Titus bowed his forehead with an acknowledgment that was not as purely ironical as it might

have been. To great men like Sir Bussy, to sympathetic minds like Hereward Jackson, to learning and mental power, spirits and powers might be attracted who would disdain the vague inquiries of the suburban curious.

"And you really believe," said Mr. Parham, "these messages that come through you come from the dead?"

"Not a bit of it," said Mrs. Pinchot in that sharp definitive way of hers; "I've never believed anything so nonsensical. The dead can do nothing. If these influences are from people who have passed over, they come because these people still live on. But what the living power may be that moves me to speech I do not know. I don't find any proof that all the intimations, or even most of the intimations we receive, come from ghosts — if one may use that old word for once. Even if some certainly do."

"Not disembodied spirits?" said Hereward Jackson.

"Sometimes I think it must be something more, something different and something much more general. Even when the names of departed friends are used. How am I to know? I am the only person in your circle who has never heard my own messages. It may be all delusion. It's quite possibly all delusion. We people with psychic gifts are a queer race. We transmit. What we transmit we do not know. But it's you stabler people who have to explain the things that come through us. We are limited by what people expect. When they expect nothing but vulgar ghosts and silly private messages, what else can we transmit? How can we pass on things they could not begin to understand?"

"True," said Mr. Parham, "true."

"When you get greater minds as receivers you will get greater messages."

That too was reasonable.

"But there's something in it very wonderful, something that science knows nothing about."

"Ah! there I agree," said Mr. Parham.

In the earlier séances with her there was a sort of "control" in evidence. "I am the messenger of the Advent," he declared.

"A departed spirit?" asked Jackson.

"How can I be departed when I am here?"

“Are there such things as angels, then?” asked Mr. Parham.

(“Gaw!”)

“Messengers. ‘Angel’ means ‘messenger.’ Yes, I am a messenger.”

“Of someone — or of something — some power which comes?” asked Mr. Parham with a new helpfulness in his voice.

“Of someone who seeks a hold upon life, of someone with great power of mastery latent, who seeks to grapple with the world.”

“He’d better try upstairs,” injected Sir Titus.

“Here, where there are already will and understanding, he finds his helpers.”

“But who is this Being who comes? Has he been on earth before?”

“A conquering spirit which watches still over the world it has done so much to mould.”

“Who is he?”

“Who WAS he?”

“The corridor is long, and he is far away. I am tired. The medium is tired. The effort to speak to you is great because of the Strong Doubter who sits among you. But it is worth while. It is only the beginning. Keep on. I can stay but a little while longer now, but I will return to you.”

“But what is he coming for? What does he want to do?”

There was no answer. The medium remained for some time in a state of insensibility before she came to. Even then she felt faint and begged to be allowed to lie down for a time before she left Carfex House.

So it was that Mr. Parham remembered the answers obtained in the first of the séances with Mrs. Pinchot that really took a strong hold of his imagination. The actual sequence of the transmission was perhaps more confused, but this was what stood out in his memory.

It would indeed be a mighty miracle if some new Power did come into human affairs. How much there was to change! A miracle altogether desirable. He was still skeptical of the idea of an actual spirit coming to earth, but it was very pleasant to toy with the idea that something, some actual anticipation of coming things, was being symbolized in these riddles.

The detailed records of all séances, even the most successful ones, are apt to make copious and tedious reading for those who are not engaged in their special study, and it would serve no useful purpose to relate them here. Mr. Parham's predilection for Mrs. Pinchot helped greatly in the development of that "something-in-it" attitude, which he had first assumed at the Williams séance in Buggins Street. Released from any insistence upon the ghostly element and the survival of the pettier aspects of personalities, the phenomena of the trance state seemed to him to become much more rational and credible. There was something that stirred him profoundly in this suggestion of hovering powers outside our world seeking for some means, a congenial temperament, an understanding mentality, by which they could operate and intervene in its affairs. He imagined entities like the great spirit forms evoked and pictured by Blake and G. F. Watts; he dreamt at last of mighty shapes.

Who was this great being who loomed up over his receptive imagination in these Carfex House séances? He asked if it was Napoleon the First, and the answer was, "Yes and no"; not Napoleon and more than Napoleon. Hereward Jackson asked if it was Alexander the Great and got exactly the same answer. Mr. Parham in the night or while walking along the street, would find himself talking in imagination to this mysterious and mighty impending spirit. It would seem to stand over him and think with him as in his morning or evening paper he read fresh evidences of the nerveless conduct of the world's affairs and the steady moral deterioration of our people.

His preoccupation with these two clairvoyants led to a certain neglect on his part of the researches of Sir Titus upon Carnac Williams. More and more was he coming to detest the hard and limited materialism of the scientific intelligence. He wanted to think and know as little of these operations as possible. The irritation produced by the normal comments of Sir Titus upon the clairvoyant mediums, and particularly upon Mrs. Pinchot and the American lady, was extreme. Sir Titus was no gentleman; at times his phrases were almost intolerably gross, and on several occasions Mr. Parham was within an ace of fierce reprisals. He almost said things that would have had the force of blows. The proceedings at these materialization

séances were unbearably tedious. It took hours that seemed like æons to get a few ectoplasmic gutterings. The pleasure of seeing how much they baffled Sir Titus waned. On at least three occasions, Mr. Parham passed beyond the limits of boredom and fell asleep in his chair, and after that he stayed away for a time.

His interest in Carnac Williams was reawakened after that ninth séance in which a face and hands became discernible. He was at Oxford at the time but he returned to London to hear a very striking account of the tenth apparition from Hereward Jackson. "When at first it became plain," said Hereward Jackson, "it might have been a crumpled diminutive of yourself. Then, as it grew larger, it became more and more like Napoleon."

Instantly Mr. Parham connected this with his conception of the great Spirit that Mrs. Pinchot had presented as looming over the Carfex House inquiries. And the early resemblance to himself was also oddly exciting. "I must see that," he said. "Certainly I must come and see this materialization stuff again. It isn't fair to Sir Titus for me to keep so much away."

He talked it over with Mrs. Pinchot. She showed she was entirely ignorant of what was going on in the room upstairs, and she found the triple coincidence of the Napoleonic allusion very remarkable. For the American lady had also spoken of Buonaparte and Sargon and Genghis Khan in a rambling but disturbing message.

It was like a sound of trumpets from the Unknown, first on this side and then on that.

Once more Mr. Parham faced the long silences and boredoms of the tense and noiseless grapple of Sir Titus and Williams. It was after dinner, and he knew that for a couple of hours at least nothing could possibly occur. Hereward Jackson seemed in a happier mood, quietly expectant. Sir Bussy, with a certain impatience that had been increasing at every recent séance, tried to abbreviate or at least accelerate the customary strippings, searchings, markings, and sealings. But his efforts were unavailing.

"Now you have drawn me into it," said Sir Titus in that strident voice of his, "I will not relax one jot or one tittle in these precautions until I have demonstrated forever the farcical fraudulence of all this solemn spooking. I shan't grudge any price I pay for a full and

complete exposure. If anyone wants to go, let him go. So long as some witness remains. But I'd rather die than scamp the job at this stage."

"Oh, Gaw!" said Sir Bussy, and Mr. Parham felt that at any time now these researches might come to a violent end.

The little man settled into his armchair, pulled thoughtfully at his lower lip for a time and then lapsed, it seemed, into profound meditation.

At last the fussing was over and the vigil began. Silence fell and continued and expanded and wrapped about Mr. Parham closer and closer. Very dimly one saw the face of Williams, against the velvet blackness of the recess. He would lie for a long time with his mouth open, and then groan weakly and snore and stir and adopt a new attitude. Each time Mr. Parham heard the sharp rustle of Sir Titus Knowles's alertness.

After a time Mr. Parham found himself closing his eyes. It was curious. He still saw the pallid brow and cheekbone of Williams when his eyes were closed.

V. — THE VISITANT

After a time Mr. Parham's interest in the psychic transparency of the human eyelid gave way to his perception of a very unusual flow of ectoplasm from the medium. It had begun quite normally as a faint self-luminous oozing from the corners of the mouth, but now it was streaming much more rapidly than it had ever done before from his neck and shoulders and arms and presently from the entire front of his vaguely outlined body. It was phosphorescent — at first with a greenish and then with a yellowish-green tint. It came so fast that either by contrast Williams seemed to shrink and shrivel, or else he did actually shrink and shrivel.

It was impossible to decide that; this outflow of matter was so arresting. This Mr. Parham felt was worth seeing. He was glad he had come. There was enough ectoplasm now to choke Sir Titus. Well might Sir Bussy, lost somewhere in the black darkness close at hand, whisper, "Gaw." The stuff was already animated matter. It did not merely gutter and flow and hang downward, in the spiritless, tallowlike forms it had hitherto assumed. It was different. It had vital force in it. It was not so much slimy as glassy. Its ends lifted and pointed out towards the observers like bulging pseudopodia, like blind animalculæ, like searching fingers, like veiled phantoms.

"EH!" said Sir Titus. "This beats me."

Hereward Jackson was muttering to himself and shivering.

It was strange stuff to watch. Its blunt protrusions touched and flowed into one another. They quivered, hesitated, and advanced. With an astounding rapidity they grew. What were delicate tendrils an instant ago were now long fingers and now blunt lumps. They were transparent, or at least translucent, and one saw streams of whitish and faintly tinted matter flowing within them, as one sees in a microscope the protoplasm of an amoeba streaming about in its body. They grew, they coalesced more and more.

A few seconds or a few moments since, for it was difficult to measure the time this dim process was taking, the forms of these protrusions had been tentacular, fungoid, branchingly obtuse. Now they were coalescing, running together and becoming blunter and

more closely involved and more and more one consolidated lumpish labouring aggregation. The coming and going of the swirling currents within grew faster and more interwoven. The colouring became stronger. Streaks of red and purple, exquisite lines of glistening white and bands of a pale creamy colour became distinguishable. A sort of discipline in these movements was presently apparent.

With a shock it came into Mr. Parham's head that he was seeing bones and nerves and blood vessels hurrying to their appointed places in that swimming swirl. But was this possible? Why did he FEEL these were living structures? For they carried an immense conviction to his mind. As he peered and marvelled this internal circulation of the ectoplasm grew dim. A film was extending over it. At first it was perplexing to say why that swirling vesicle should be dimmed and then came the realization that an opaque skin was forming upon the whole boiling ectoplasmic mass. It became more and more opaque, opaque at last as a body. The process so stirred Mr. Parham to behold, his own nerves and arteries thrilled with such response, that he felt almost as though he himself was being made.

Shape, a recognizable form, was now imposed upon this growth. At first merely the vague intimation of head and shoulders. Then very rapidly the appearance of a face, like a still slightly translucent mask in the front of the head lump, and then hair, ears, a complete head and shoulders rising as it were out of the chest of the collapsed medium; plainly the upper part of a strange being whose nether limbs were still fluid and dim. A cold handsome face regarded the watchers, with a firm mouth and slightly contemptuous eyes.

And yet it had a strange resemblance to a face that was very familiar indeed to Mr. Parham.

"This is beyond me altogether," said Sir Titus.

"I never hoped for anything like this," said Hereward Jackson.

Mr. Parham was altogether absorbed in the vision and by the mystery of its likeness. Sir Bussy was no longer equal to "Gaw."

In another moment, as it seemed, or another half hour, the newcomer was completed. He was of medium height, slenderer and taller than Napoleon the First but with something of the same Byronic beauty. He was clothed in a white silken shirt, wide open at

the neck and with knee breeches, grayish stockings and shoes. He seemed to shine with a light of his own. He took a step forward, and Williams dropped like an empty sack from his chair and lay forgotten.

"You can turn up the lights," said a firm, clear, sweet, even voice, and stood to see its orders obeyed.

It became evident that Sir Titus had been preparing a surprise. From his chair he bent forward, touched a button on the floor, and the room was brightly lit by a score of electric lamps. As the darkness changed to light one saw his body bent down, and then he brought himself back to a sitting position. His face was ghastly white and awestricken; his vast forehead crumpled by a thousand wrinkles. Never was skeptic so utterly defeated; never was unbeliever so abruptly convinced. The visitant smiled and nodded at his confusion. Hereward Jackson stood beside Sir Titus, paralyzed between astonishment and admiration. Sir Bussy also was standing. There was a livelier interest and less detachment in his bearing than Mr. Parham had ever seen before.

"For some years I have been seeking my way to this world," said the Visitant, "for this world has great need of me."

Hereward Jackson spoke in the silence and his voice was faint.

"You have come from another world?"

"Mars."

They had nothing to say.

"I come from the Red Planet, the planet of blood and virility," said the Visitant, and then, after a queer still moment that was drenched with interrogation, he delivered a little speech to them.

"I am the Master Spirit who tries and who cleanses the souls of men. I am the spirit of Manhood and Dominion and Order. That is why I have come to you from that sterner planet where I rule. This world is falling into darkness and confusion, into doubt, vain experiments, moral strangeness, slackness, failure of effort, evasion of conflict, plenty without toil, security without vigilance. It has lacked guidance. Voices that might have given it guidance have found no form of utterance. Vague and foolish dreams of universal peace tempt the desires of men and weaken their wills. Life is struggle. Life is effort. I have come to rouse men to their forgotten

duties. I have come to bring not peace but a sword. Not for the first time have I crossed the interplanetary gulf. I am the disturber of those waters of life that heal the souls of men. I am the banner of flame. I am the exaltation of history. I breathed in Sargon, in Alexander, in Genghis Khan, in Napoleon. Now I come among you, using you as my mask and servants. This time it is the English who are my chosen people. In their turn. For they are a great and wonderful people still — for all their inexpressiveness. I have come to England, trembling on the brink of decadence, to raise her and save her and lead her back to effort and glory and mastery."

"You have come into the world to STAY?" Hereward Jackson was profoundly respectful but also profoundly puzzled. "Master! — are you MATTER? Are you earthly matter? Are you flesh and blood?"

"Not as much as I am going to be. But that shall soon be remedied. My honest Woodcock here will see I get some food downstairs and make me free of his house. Meat — sound meat in plenty. At present I'm still depending in part upon that fellow's nasty ectoplasm. I'm half a phantom still."

He glanced ungratefully at Carnac Williams, who, having contributed his best, lay flat as an empty sack now upon the shaded floor of the cabinet. No one went to his assistance.

Hereward Jackson stooped forward peering. "IS HE DEAD?" he asked.

"Phew! the channels one must use!" said the Master Spirit with manifest aversion. "Don't trouble about HIM. Leave him, poor Sludge. He can lie. But you I have need of. You will be my first colleagues. Woodcock, my Crassus, the commissariat?"

"There's food downstairs," said Sir Bussy slowly and grudgingly but evidently unable to disobey. "There'll be one or two menservants up still. We can find you meat."

"We'll go down. Wine, have you? Red wine? Then we can talk while I eat and drink and put real substance into this still very sketchy body of mine. All night we'll have to talk and plan the things we have to do. You three and I. You brought me, you invoked me, and here I am. No good scowling and doubting now, Sir Titus; your days of blatant denial are past. So soon as I'm equal to it you shall

feel my pulse. Which door goes down? Oh! that's a cupboard, is it?"

Hereward Jackson went across to the door upon the passage and opened it. The passage seemed larger and more brightly lit than Mr. Parham remembered it. Everything indeed seemed larger. And that light contained rays of an intense and exalting hopefulness. The two other men followed the Master Spirit as he went. They were dumbfounded. They were astounded and docile.

But someone was missing! For some moments this shortage perplexed the mind of Mr. Parham. He counted Sir Bussy, One, Sir Titus, Two, and Hereward Jackson, Three. But there had been another. Of course! — Himself! Where was he?

His mind spun round giddily. He seemed to be losing touch with everything. Was he present at all?

And then he perceived that imperceptibly and incomprehensibly, the Master Spirit had incorporated him. He realized that an immense power of will had taken possession of him, that he lived in a new vigour, that he was still himself and yet something enormously more powerful, that his mind was full and clear and certain as it had never been before. Mutely these others had accepted this stupendous and yet unobtrusive coalescence.

"We must talk," said a voice that was his own voice made glorious, and a fine white hand came out from him, shaking its fingers, and motioned the others on.

And they obeyed! Marvelling and reluctant, perhaps, but they obeyed.

BOOK III. — THE STRONG HAND AT LAST

I. — AN ARM OUTSTRETCHED

The evangel of the Lord Paramount of England was swift and direct.

Clad thinly in the incorporated identity of Mr. Parham, the Senior Tutor of St. Simon's, publicist and historian, sustained at the outset by the wealth of this strangely subdued Sir Bussy which he commandeered without scruple, waited upon in a state of awestricken devotion by Hereward Jackson, and attended hygienically by the cowed and convinced Sir Titus Knowles, the Master Spirit, without haste and without delay, imposed his personality upon the national imagination. Without delay and yet without apparent haste, he set about the task for which he had become incarnate.

With unerring judgment he chose and summoned his supporters to his side and arranged what in the case of any inferior type would have been called a vulgar publicity campaign. That is the first necessary phase in any sort of human leadership. To begin with, one must be known. Vulgarization is the road to empire. By that the most fine-minded of men must come to power, if they would have power. The careers of Cæsar and Napoleon opened with a bold operation of the contemporary means of publicity. They could open in no other way.

The country was weary of parliamentary government, weary of a conservatism which did not reduce the taxes upon property and enterprise to a minimum, weary of a liberalism that it could not trust to maintain overwhelming but inexpensive armaments, weary of the unintelligible bickerings of liberalism and labour, weary of the growing spectre of unemployment, weary of popular education, religious discussion, and business uncertainty, disappointed by peace and dismayed at the thought of war, neurasthenic and thoroughly irritable and distressed. The papers it read attacked the government and would not support the opposition. Politics could not escape from personalities, and none of the personalities succeeded in being more than actively undignified or industriously dull. Everybody nagged everybody. Trade was bad, the new talking movies a clanging disappointment, county cricket more and more tedious, and the

influenza hung about maddeningly. Whenever one tried to do anything one found one had a cold. Criticism and literature fostered discord with whatever was old and would not countenance hope for anything new. Aimless skepticism was the "thing." Nobody seemed to know where to go or what to do, and the birth rate and death rate, falling together, witnessed together to the general indecisiveness. The weather was moody and treacherous. The General Election had pleased nobody. It had taken power out of the hands of a loyal if dull conservative majority, faithful to the honoured traditions of an expanding empire, and transferred it to the control of a vague and sentimental idealism in which nobody believed. The country was ripe for some great change.

It was at a mass gathering of the Amalgamated Patriotic Societies in the Albert Hall, convened not very hopefully to protest against any pampering of the unemployed by their fellows on the government benches, that the Lord Paramount, still thinly personating the vanished Mr. Parham, rose, like a beneficent star upon the British horizon. When he stood up to speak he was an unknown man except to the elect few to whom he had already revealed himself. When at last, amidst an unparalleled storm of enthusiasm, he resumed his seat, he was already and irrevocably leader of a national renascence. The residue of the agenda was washed away and forgotten in the wild storm of enthusiasm that beat upon the platform.

Yet his début was made with the very minimum of artificiality. His voice rang clear and true into the remotest circles of that great place; the handsome pallor of his face, lit ever and again by an extraordinarily winning smile, focussed every eye. His bearing was inaggressive, and yet his whole being radiated an extraordinary magnetism. His gestures were restrained but expressive; the chief of them the throwing out of a beautifully formed hand. "Who is this man," whispered a thousand lips, "that we have never known of him before?"

His speech was entirely devoid of rhetorical gymnastics. His style can be best described as one of colossal simplicity. He touched the familiar and obvious to a new life. His discourse carried along platitudes as hosts carry time-honoured banners and one familiar phrase followed another, like exiled leaders refreshed and renewed

returning to their people. With a few closely knit phrases he gathered together the gist of the previous speakers. Some of them had been perhaps a trifle querulous, over explicit, or lengthy, and it was marvellous how he plucked the burning heart from the honest and yet plaintive copiousness that had preceded him and held it out, a throbbing and beating indignation. It was true, he conceded, that our working classes, under the poisonous infection of foreign agitators, deteriorated daily; it was true that art and literature had become the vehicles of a mysterious malaria, true that science was mischievous and miasmatic and the very pulpit and altar were touched by doubt. It was true that our young people had lost all sense of modesty in the poisoned chalice of pleasure and that our growing hosts of unemployed seemed to lack even the will to invent anything to do. Nevertheless...

For a moment his golden voice held its great audience in the immense expectation of that overarching word. Then, very gently and clearly and sweetly, it told of what Britain had been to the world and what she still might be, this little island, this jewel in the forehead of the world, this precious jewel, this crowned imperial jewel, set in the stormy frosted silver of the seas. For, after all, these workers of ours — properly safeguarded — were still the best in the world, and their sons and daughters heirs of the mightiest tradition that had ever been hewn from the crucibles of time. (No time to correct that; it had to go. The meaning was plain.) Superficially our land might seem to have given way to a certain lassitude. That made it all the more urgent that we should thrust all masks and misconceptions aside now, and stand forth again in this age of the world's direst need, the mighty race, the race of leaders and adventurers that we were and had always been. BUT...

Again a moment of expectation; every face in that quintessential assembly intent.

Was all our pride and hope to be dashed and laid aside to subserve the manoeuvres of a handful of garrulous politicians and their parasites and dupes? Was Britain to be forever gagged by its infatuation with elected persons, and the national voice of our great people belied by the tediums and dishonesties of a parliamentary institution that had long outlived its use? Through years of

impatience the passionate negative had been engendering itself in our indignant hearts. Let us borrow a phrase from an unexpected quarter. The poor rebels on the outer fringe of the Socialist party, that fringe the Socialist party was so anxious to deny, the Bolsheviki, the Communistky, the Cooks and Maxtons, and so forth, used a phrase that went far beyond their courage. That phrase was Direct Action. Not for such as they were, was the realization of so tremendous a suggestion. For Direct Action could be a great and glorious thing. It could be the drawing of the sword of righteousness. It could be the launching of the thunderbolt. The time had come, the hour was striking, for honest men and true women and all that was real and vital in our national life to think of Direct Action, to prepare for Direct Action; to discipline themselves for the hour of Direct Action, when they would hold and maintain, strike and spare not.

For some moments the Master Spirit was like a strong swimmer in a tumultuous sea of applause. As the tumult fell to attention again he sketched out his line of action very briefly and so came to his peroration. “I ask you to return to the essential, the substantial things of life,” he said. “Here I stand for plain and simple things — for King and Country, for Religion and Property, for Order and Discipline, for the Peasant on the Land and for all Men at their Work and Duty, for the Rightness of the Right, the Sacredness of Sacred Things and all the Fundamental Institutions of Mankind.”

He remained standing. The voice died away. For some moments there was a great stillness and then a sound like “Ah!” — a long universal “Ah!” and then a thunder of expression that rose and rose. English audiences they say are hard to move, but this one was on fire. Everyone stood. Everyone sought the relief of gesticulation. All the great hall seemed to be pressing and pouring down towards its Master made manifest. Everywhere were shining eyes and extended hands. “Tell us what to do,” cried a hundred voices. “Show us what to do. Lead us!” Fresh people seemed to be flowing into the place as those who had been there throughout pressed down the gangways. How they responded! Surely of all gifts of power that God gives his creatures that of oratory has the swiftest reward! The Lord Paramount faced his conquered audience, and within, restored to the religious confidence of an earlier time, he thanked his God.

It was impossible to leave things at that point; some immediate action was needed. “What are we to tell them to do?” pressed the chairman.

“Form a league,” said the Master simply.

Hands were held up to command silence. The chairman’s thin voice could be heard reiterating the suggestion. “Yes, form a league,” thundered the multitude. “What are we to call the league?”

“League of Duty,” suggested Hereward Jackson, jammed close to the Master.

“The Duty Paramount League,” said the Master, his voice cutting through the uproar like the sweep of a sword. The multitude vibrated upon that.

A little speechifying followed, heard eagerly but impatiently. The League, someone said, was to be the Fascisti of Britain. There were loud cries of “British Fascisti” and “The English Duce” (variously pronounced). Young Englishmen, hitherto slack and aimless, stood up and saluted Fascist fashion and took on something of the stiff, stern dignity of Roman camerieri as they did so.

“And who is he?” cried a penetrating voice. “What is his name? He is our leader. Our Deuce! We will follow him.”

“Doochy!” someone corrected...

Cries and confusion, and then out of it all the words, “Duty Paramount! The Master Paramount! Paramount!” growing to a great shout, a vast vocal upheaval.

“Hands up for adhesions,” bawled a tall, intensely excited man at the Master Spirit’s elbow, and the whole multitude was a ripe cornfield of hands. It was an astounding gathering; young men and old men, beautiful women, tall girls like flames and excited elderly persons of every size and shape, all fused in one stupendous enthusiasm, and many of them waving sticks and umbrellas. Never had there been a religious revival to compare with it. And every eye in all that swaying mass was fixed on the serene determination of the Master Spirit’s face.

Flashes of blinding lavender-tinted light showed that press cameras were in action.

“Turn this place into a headquarters. Enrol them,” said the Master Spirit.

He felt a tug at his sleeve. It was the first of a number of queer little backward tugs he was to feel even in the first exaltation of his ascent. “We’ve only got the place until midnight,” said a thin, unnecessary, officious-mannered little man.

“Disregard that,” said the Master Spirit and prepared to leave the auditorium.

“They’ll turn us out,” the little man insisted.

“Turn THAT out! NEVER!” said the Master Spirit waving a hand to the following he had created, the stormy forces he had evoked, and scorched the doubter with his blazing eyes. But still the creature insisted.

“Well, they’ll cut off the lights.”

“Seize the switches! And tell the organist not to play the National Anthem until he is told to. Tell him to play some stirring music as the enrolment goes on.”

The timid man shrunk away, and others more resolute obeyed the Master’s behests. ‘Turn us out’ indeed! The organist after a brief parley arranged to play “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” with variations wandering occasionally into “Onward, Christian Soldiers” and “Rule, Britannia” until a suitable relief could be found for him, and to such magnificent music it was that the League of Duty Paramount was born.

The enrolment continued until dawn. Thousands of names were taken. They poured past the little tables endlessly. Their eyes blazed, their noses resembled the first Duke of Wellington’s, their chins protruded more and more. It was amazing that the Albert Hall could have held so many earnest and vigorous people...

The Master’s task for that evening was done. He had fought his first fight on the road to power. Reverential hands guided him down steps of faded baize. He found himself in a little ante-room, and Hereward Jackson was offering him a glass of water. The chairman of the meeting stood out at the centre of a select circle of devotees. Mrs. Pinchot, dark and mutely worshipping, had managed somehow to get into this inner grouping. Her eyes were full of understanding. “Too late for the morning papers,” said the chairman, “but we shall see that the evening press gets everything full and good. A wonderful speech sir! Do you mind a few photographers from the picture papers

taking shots at you?”

“Let them,” said the Master Spirit.

He considered. “I am to be seen at Carfex House. I shall make that my headquarters. Let them come to me there.”

For a moment that rare smile of his dazzled the chairman, touched Mrs. Pinchot like a glancing sunbeam, and he had gone.

“Not tired, sir?” asked Hereward Jackson anxiously in the car.

“It is not for me to be tired,” said the Master Spirit.

“I have an excellent tonic I can give you at Carfex House,” said Sir Titus.

“Chemicals when I must,” said the Master, with that characteristic gesture of his hand.

Yet he was sensible of fatigue and oddly enough of just one faint twinge of anxiety. There was one little speck upon the splendour of this triumph. These two men were manifestly faithful, and Jackson was full of emotion at the immense success of the meeting, but — there ought to have been a third man in the car.

“By the by,” said the Master Spirit, leaning back restfully in the big Rolls-Royce and closing his eyes with an affectation of complete indifference. “Where is Sir Bussy Woodcock?”

Jackson thought. “He went away. He went quite early. He got up suddenly and went out.”

“Did he say anything?”

“Something — it always sounds like ‘Gaw.’”

The Master Spirit opened his eyes. “He must be sent for — if he is not at Carfex House. I shall want him at hand.”

But Sir Bussy was not at Carfex House. He had not gone home. The place, however, was entirely at the disposal of the Master Spirit and his retinue. The servants had everything in readiness for them, and the major domo offered to telephone to Marmion House to restore communications with Sir Bussy. But if there was a reply it did not get through to the Master Spirit, and next morning Sir Bussy was still missing. He did not reappear until late the next afternoon and then he drifted into his own property, the most detached and observant person in what was rapidly becoming a busy and militant hive. The organization of the staff of the Master Spirit and the apportionment of rooms to the secretaries he engaged, had gone on

rapidly in the absence of the legal owner of the house. Among the secretaries, most energetic and capable of helpers, was little Mrs. Pinchot, the medium. Others were chosen from among the little Oxford group of "Parham's Young Men."

Next morning after a séance with a number of photographers, the Master Spirit motored to Harrow School, where as a result of headlong arrangements he was able to address the boys in the morning. His address was substantially the same as that he had given in the Albert Hall, and the enthusiasm of the generous youngsters, led by the more military masters, was a very glorious experience. While he lunched with the head, the gallant lads, neglecting all thought of food, bolted off to put on their cadet uniforms, and an informal parade of the corps was held to bid him farewell, with shouts of "Duty Paramount!" and "We are ready!"

There was little classroom work for the rest of that day at Harrow.

A strong contingent of reporters was present and next morning saw the demonstration fully reported and pictured in all the daily papers. So his message came through to that greater outer world, the general public, and awakened an immediate response.

The following afternoon saw him repeating his triumph on the playing fields of Eton.

The time was ripe, and men had been waiting for him. In a few weeks the whole empire knew of the Duty Paramount movement and the coming of the Master Paramount (the formal title of Lord Paramount came later) to lead England back into the paths she had forsaken. The main newspaper groups supported him from the outset; Lord Bothermey became his devoted standard bearer, and all the resources of modern journalism were exerted in his favour. He was urged in leading articles that would have been fulsome had they referred to any mere mortal leader, to conduct his manifest mission of control and suppression fearlessly and speedily. His popularity with the army, navy, and flying corps, and particularly with the very old and very young officers in these services, was instantaneous and complete. Literature cast off the triviality and skepticism that had overtaken it and flamed to his support. Mr. Bloodred Hipkin, the Laureate of Empire, burst into his swan song at his coming and Mr. Berandine Shore, overjoyed at the fall of the entire detestable race of

politicians, inundated the press with open letters to proclaim him even greater than Mussolini. He was cheered for twenty minutes at the Stock Exchange. The feminine electorate was conquered en masse by the Byronic beauty of his profile, the elegance of his gestures, and the extraordinary charm of his smile.

England fell into his hands like a ripe fruit. It was clear that the executive and legislative functions were his for the taking.

II. — THE COUP D'ETAT

The Master Spirit was incapable of hesitation. In uniforms of a Cromwellian cut, designed after the most careful consideration of the proper wear for expelling legislative assemblies and made under pressure at remarkable speed, the chiefs of the Duty Paramount movement and a special bodyguard armed with revolvers and swords, marched under his leadership to Westminster at the head of a great popular demonstration. The Houses of Parliament were surrounded. The police offered a half-hearted resistance, for the Metropolitan Police Commissioner was himself a strong man and could understand what was happening to the world. An attempt, essentially formal, was made to treat this historical March upon Westminster as ordinary traffic and divert it towards Chelsea; this failing, the police, in accordance with a prearranged scheme, evacuated the building, paraded in good order in Parliament Square, and marched off in Indian file, leaving the League in possession. For some minutes Miss Ellen Wilkerson offered a formidable resistance in one of the corridors, but reinforcements arrived, and she was overpowered. The "Talking Shop" had fallen.

The House of Commons was in session and did not seem to know how to get out of it. The Master Spirit, supported by the staff he had gathered about him — except Sir Bussy, who was again unaccountably missing — entered by the Strangers' entrance and came through the division lobby onto the floor of the House. At the significant brown band across the green carpet he stopped short.

The atmosphere of the place was tensely emotional as this tall and slender and yet most portentous figure, supported by the devoted lieutenants his magic had inspired, stood facing the Speaker and his two bewigged satellites. Someone had set the division bells ringing, and the House was crowded, the Labour party clustered thickly to his left, Commander Benworthy bulky and outstanding. There was little talk or noise. The great majority of the members present were silently agape. Some were indignant, but many upon the right were manifestly sympathetic. Above, the attendants were attempting, but not very successfully, to clear the Strangers' and Distinguished

Strangers' galleries. The reporters stared or scribbled convulsively and there was a luminous abundance of ladies in their particular gallery.

Methodical and precise as ever, the tapes in the dining and smoking rooms had announced, "Dictator enters House with armed force. Business in suspense," and had then ceased their useful function. From behind the Speaker's chair a couple of score of the bodyguard, with swords drawn, had spread out to the left and right and stood now at the salute.

It would have needed a soul entirely devoid of imagination to ignore the profound historical significance of this occasion, and the Master was of imagination all compact. His stern determination was mellowed but not weakened by a certain element of awe at his own immense achievement. To this House, if not to this particular chamber, Charles the First had come in pursuit of the tragic destiny that was to bring him to Whitehall, and after him, to better effect had come Cromwell, the great precursor of the present event. Here, through a thousand scenes of storm and conflict, the mighty fabric of the greatest empire the world had ever seen had been welded and reshaped. Here had spoken such mighty rulers and gladiators as Walpole and Pelham, Pitt and Burke, Peel and Palmerston, Gladstone and Disraeli. And now this once so potent assembly had waxed vulgar, senile, labourist, garrulous and ineffective, and the day of rejuvenescence, the restoration of the Phoenix, was at hand. The eyes of the Master Spirit, grave and a little sorrowful, were lifted as if for guidance to the fretted roof and then fell thoughtfully upon the mace, "that bauble," which lay athwart the table before him. He seemed to muse for a moment upon the mighty task he had undertaken, before he addressed himself to the wigged and robed figure at the head of the assembly.

"Mr. Speaker," he said, "I must ask you to leave the chair." He turned half-face to the government benches. "Gentlemen, the Ministers of the Crown, I would advise you to yield your portfolios without demur to my secretaries. For the good of His Majesty's realm and the needs of our mighty Empire I must for a time take these things over from you. When England has found her soul again, when her health has been restored, then all her ancient liberties of

speech and counsel will return to her again."

For a perceptible interval everyone present might have been a wax-work image, so still and intent did they all stand. It might have been some great historical tableau set out at Madame Tussaud's. It seemed already history, and for all the length of that pause it was as if the Lord Paramount were rather witnessing what he had done than actually doing it. It became flattened but bright like a coloured picture in a child's book of history...

The action of the piece was resumed by a little significant detail. Two bodyguards came forward and placed themselves at either elbow of the Speaker.

"I protest in the name of the Commons of England," said the Speaker, standing and holding his robes ready to descend.

"Your protest is duly noted," said the Master Spirit, and turning slowly, ordered and motioned his guards to clear the House.

They did their duty without haste or violence.

On the left hand herding thickly, was this new labour government, this association of vague idealists and socialist adventurers and its supporters. Mr. Ramsy McDougal stood against the table, as ever a little apart from his colleagues, an image of unreadiness. Mr. Parham had only seen him on one or two occasions before and looking at him now through the Lord Paramount's eyes, he seemed more gaunt and angular than ever, more like a lonely wind-stripped tree upon some blasted heath, more haggard and inaccurate in his questionable handsomeness. He was evidently looking about him for support. His eyes wandered appealingly to the reporters' gallery, to the opposition benches, to the ladies' gallery and to the roof that presumably veiled his God from him, and then they came back to the knots and masses of his own followers. It was clear above the general murmur that he was speaking. He made noises like a cow barking or like a dog which moos. The Lord Paramount heard himself denounced as "the spirit of unrighteousness." Then there was an appeal to "fair play." Finally something about going to "raise the fiery cross." As two of the League guards approached him guided by the Lord Paramount's signal, his gestures which indicated a rallying place elsewhere became more emphatic. For a moment he posed tall and commanding, arm lifted, finger pointing heavenward, before he

folded himself up and retired.

Behind him Sir Osbert Moses had seemed to be pleading in vain with a sheepish crowd of government supporters for some collective act of protest. Mr. Coope, the extremist, was plainly an advocate for violence, but managed nothing. For the most part these labour people seemed as usual only anxious to find out what was considered the right thing to do and to do it as precipitately as possible. The attendants gave them no help, but the League guards herded them like sheep. But Mr. Philip Snowfield, very pale and angry, remained in his place, uttering what appeared to be inaudible imprecations. As the guards approached him he moved away from them towards the exit but still turned at intervals to say what were visibly disagreeable things and to thump the floor with his stick. "Mark my words," he could be heard hissing, "you fellows will be sorry for this foolery." Commander Benworthy hovered huge and protective above him. The only actual scuffle was with that left- wing desperado, Waxton, who was dealt with in accordance with the peculiar ju-jitsu of the Lord Paramount's guards. He was carried out face downwards, his hair dragging on the floor.

The other occupants of the government benches decided not to share his fate and remained vertical and unhandled in their slow retreat. Most of them sought a certain dignity of pose, and folded arms, a sideways carriage, and a certain scornfulness were popular. There was a good deal of bumping against liberals who were doing exactly the same thing at a slightly different angle. Mr. St. George went out stoutly and as if inadvertently, his hands behind his back. It was as if he had been called away by some private concern and had failed to observe what was going on. His daughter who was also a member followed him briskly. Sir Simon John and Mr. Harold Samuel remained whispering together and taking notes, until the advancing shadows of physical expulsion were close at hand. Their gestures made it clear to everyone that they considered the Lord Paramount was acting illegally and that they were greatly pleased to score that point against him.

Many of the conservatives were frankly sympathetic with the Lord Paramount. Mr. Baldmin was not in the house, but Sir Austin Chamberland stood talking, smiling and looking on, at the side of

Lady Asper, who exulted brightly and clapped her pretty hands when Waxton was tackled and overpowered. She seemed eager that more labour members should join in the fray and get similar treatment, and disappointed when they did not do so. Mr. Emery the great fiscal imperialist stood on a seat the better to watch proceedings and smiled broadly at the whole affair, making movements of benediction. He knew already that he was marked for the Lord Paramount's Council. The Lord Paramount, intent on such particulars, realized suddenly that he was being cheered from the opposition benches. He drew himself up to his full height and bowed gravely.

"WHO GOES HOME?" a voice cried and the cry was echoed in the corridors without. It was the time-honoured cry of parliamentary dissolution, that has closed the drama of five hundred parliaments.

The Lord Paramount found himself in the handsome passage that leads from the Commons to the Lords. A solitary figure sat there, sobbing quietly. It looked up and revealed the face of that Lord Cato, who was formerly Sir Wilfred Jameson Jicks. "*I* ought to have done it," he whispered, "*I* ought to have done it months ago." Then his natural generosity reasserted itself and, dashing away a tear, he stood up and held out his hand frankly and brotherly to the Lord Paramount.

"You must help ME now, for England's sake," said the Lord Paramount.

III. — HOW LONDON TOOK THE NEWS

The state of London outside the House of Commons on that memorable May evening was one of gaping astonishment. As the twilight deepened to night and the illuminated advertisements grew bright, the late editions of the evening papers gave the first intimations of the coup d'état, and an increasing driftage of people towards Westminster began. The police, still functioning normally outside Palace Yard, were increased as the crowds, entirely inaggressive and orderly crowds, thickened. Some of the rougher elements from Pimlico and Chelsea showed a mild riotousness, but they were kept well in hand. The guards were under arms in Wellington Barracks, and the normal protection of Buckingham Palace was increased, but there was no need of intervention to protect the monarchy. No one in authority attempted to invoke the military against the Master Paramount, and it is open to question whether the officers, and particularly the junior officers, would have consented to act in such a case. Since the days of the Curragh mutiny there has always been an implicit limit to the powers of the politicians over the army. As the expelled Members of Parliament came out by the various exits into the streets they had receptions dependent upon their notoriety and popularity. Generally the crowd showed nothing but an amused sympathy for their debacle. Their names were shouted after them when they were recognized, usually with the addition of "Good old" — so and so. Women members were addressed affectionately by their Christian names when these were known.

Many of them got away unobserved. The idea that they were the people's agents and representatives had faded out of English life. They were simply people who had "got into Parliament" and now were being turned out of it. When later on the Master Paramount and the chiefs of the Duty Paramount League emerged, they were received, not so much with enthusiasm as with an observant acquiescence. Few failed to mark the great distinction of the Master's presence. The staffs of the new rulers repaired to Downing Street to accelerate the departure of the private establishments of the

dismissed ministers and to prepare for the installation of the heads of the provisional government in the official residences. Until a very late hour that night an affectionate crowd besieged Buckingham Palace "to see," as they put it, "that the King was all right." At intervals members of the Royal Family appeared to reassure the people and were received with loyal cries and the better-known verses of the National Anthem. There was no demand for speeches and no interchange of views. It was a rapprochement too deep for words.

Next day the remarkable news in the morning papers filled London with crowds of visitors from the suburbs and provincial towns. They came up to see what was going on, wandered about for the day, and went home again. All day long, large crowds stagnated about the Houses of Parliament. A multitude of hawkers, selling buns, winkles, oranges, and suchlike provender, did a flourishing trade. Attempts at oratory were suppressed by the police, both there and in Trafalgar Square.

So the new régime took possession. The Crown, as became a constitutional monarchy, accepted the new state of affairs without comment or any gesture of disapproval. A special levee and a garden party to entertain the League of Duty Paramount were arranged at Buckingham Palace, and the Lord Paramount was photographed, for world-wide publicity, tall and erect, in an attitude of firm but entirely respectful resolution, at his monarch's right hand. He was wearing the livery of a Cabinet Minister, the garter, in which order a timely vacancy had occurred, and the plaque of the Order of Merit. His white and beautifully chiselled face was very grave and still.

IV. — THE GRAND COUNCIL IN SESSION

With a tact and sagacity as great as his courage the Lord Paramount gathered about him a number of councillors who were in effect his ministers. He consulted and directed them, but they had no collective power; their only collective function was cooperation upon the schemes he outlined for their guidance. Occasionally in council they would offer suggestions which were received with attention, considered and commented upon by the Lord Paramount. Sometimes, but rarely, their suggestions would be allowed to sway the course of the national policy. But on the whole he preferred that they should come to him privately and individually with their proposals, rather than interrupt the proceedings of the Council meetings.

The Council included all that was best among the leaders of English life. The mighty barons of the popular press were there, and prominently Lord Bothermey. The chief military, naval and air experts were intermittently represented. Coal and steel magnates were well in evidence, particularly those most closely associated with armament firms, and one or two rather evasive personalities of the Sir Bussy Woodcock type attended by command. Sir Bussy might or might not be there; he continued to be difficult to locate. He seemed to become present suddenly and then to become conspicuously absent. The Governor of the Bank of England was present ex officio, though the Lord Paramount found he smiled far too much and said far too little, and there were several leading representatives of the Big Five, who also proved to be markedly silent men with a faraway facial habit. Labour was represented at the Lord Paramount's invitation, by Mr. J. H. Humbus, and women by the Countess of Crum and Craythorpe. Lord Cato was of course a member, and for some reason that the Lord Paramount never had very clear in his mind, Mr. Brimstone Burchell seemed always to be coming in or going out or talking in much too audible undertones to someone while the Council was in session. No-one had asked him; he just came. It was difficult to find an appropriate moment to say something about it. On the whole he seemed to be well disposed and

eager to take entire charge of army, navy, air force, munitions, finance, or any other leading function which might be entrusted to him. In addition to these already prominent members a number of vigorous personalities hitherto unknown to British public life, either chosen from among Mr. Parham's Young Men, scions of noble families, or connected with the militant side of the Duty Paramount League, took a silently active part in the proceedings. Alfred Mumby, Colonel Fitz Martin, Ronald Carberry, Sir Horatio Wrex, and the young Duke of Norham, were among the chief of these. Mrs. Pinchot, the only reporter present, sat in a little low chair at the Lord Paramount's right hand and recorded all that happened in shorthand in a gilt-edged notebook. Hereward Jackson, the faithful disciple, also hovered helpfully close to him.

The procedure was very simple and straightforward. The Council would assemble or be collected according to the alacrity of the individual member, and the Lord Paramount would enter quite informally, waving a hand to this man and greeting that, and so make his way to the head of the table. There he would stand, Hereward Jackson would say, "Ssh!" and everyone standing or sitting or leaning against the wall would cease to gossip and turn to listen. Explicitly and simply the Lord Paramount would put his views to them. It was very like a college lecturer coming in and talking to a batch of intelligent and sympathetic students. He would explain his policy, say why this had to be done or that, and indicate who it was should undertake whatever task opened before them. An hour or even more might be spent in this way. Then he would drop into his seat, and there would be questions, mostly of an elucidatory nature, a few comments, a suggestion or so, and, with a smile and a friendly word of dismissal, everything was over, and the Council went about its business, each man to do what he knew to be his duty. So simple a task was government now that the follies of party, the presumption and manoeuvres of elected people, the confusion and dishonesties inseparable from the democratic method had been swept aside.

The third meeting of the Council was the most important of the earlier series, for then it was that the Lord Paramount gave these heads of the national life, a résumé of the policy he proposed to pursue.

Let them consider at first, he said, the position and the manifest dangers and destinies of this dear England of ours and its Empire to which they were all devoted. He would ask them to regard the world as a whole, not to think of it in a parochial spirit, but broadly and sanely, looking beyond the immediate to-morrow. Directly they did so they would begin to realize the existence and development of a great world struggle, which was determined by geography and by history, which was indeed in the very nature of things. The lines of that struggle shaped themselves, rationally, logically, inevitably. Everything else in the world should be subordinated to that.

Something almost confidential crept into his manner, and the Council became very silent and attentive. He indicated regions upon the green baize table before him by sweeping gestures of his hands and arms, and his voice sank.

"Here," said the Lord Paramount, "in the very centre of the Old World, illimitably vast, potentially more powerful than most of the rest of the world put together—" he paused dramatically— "is RUSSIA. It really does not matter in the least whether she is Czarist or Bolshevik. She is the final danger — the overwhelming enemy. Grow she must. She has space. She has immense resources. She strikes at us, through Turkey as always, through Afghanistan as always, and now through China. Instinctively she does that; necessarily. I do not blame her. But preserve ourselves we must. What will Germany do? Cleave to the East? Cleave to the West? Who can tell? A student nation, a secondary people, a disputed territory. We win her if we can, but I do not count on her. The policy imposed upon the rest of the world is plain. We must circumvent Russia; we must encircle this threat of the Great Plains before it overwhelms us. As we encircled the lesser threat of the Hohenzollerns. In time. On the West, here, we outflank her with our ally France and Poland her pupil; on the East with our ally Japan. We reach at her through India. We strive to point the spearhead of Afghanistan against her. We hold Gibraltar on her account; we watch Constantinople on her account. America is drawn in with us, necessarily our ally, willy-nilly, because she cannot let Russia strike through China to the sea. There you have the situation of the world. Broadly and boldly seen. Fraught with immense danger — yes.

Tragic — if you will. But fraught also with limitless possibilities of devotion and courage."

The Lord Paramount paused, and a murmur of admiration went round the gathering. Mr. Brimstone Burchell's head nodded like a Chinese automaton's to express his approval. The statement was so perfectly lucid, so direct and compact. Yet it was identically the same speech that Mr. Parham had delivered to Sir Bussy, Mr. Hamp, Camelford, and the young American only a month or so previously, at the dinner table of the former! How different now was its reception when it came from the lips of the Lord Paramount speaking to understanding minds! No carping criticism, or attempts to disregard and ignore, no preposterous alternatives of world organization and the like follies, no intimation of any such alternatives. If Sir Bussy had whispered his habitual monosyllable it was done inaudibly.

"And that being our general situation," the Lord Paramount continued, "which is the most becoming thing for a Great Nation to do? To face its Destiny of leadership and championship, open-eyed and resolute, or to wait, lost in petty disputes, blinded by small considerations, until the inevitable antagonist, grown strong and self-conscious, its vast realms organized and productive, China assimilated and India sympathetic and mutinous against its established rulers, strikes at the sceptre in its negligent hands — maybe strikes the sceptre clean out of its negligent hands? Is it necessary to ask that question of the Council of the British peoples? And knowing your answer to be what it must be, then plainly the time for Duty and Action is now. I exhort you to weigh with me the preparations and the strategy that have to be the guiding form of our national policy from this time forth. The time to rally western Europe is now. The time to call plainly to America to take up her part in this gigantic struggle is now."

This time the little man sitting at the table was clearly heard. His "Gaw!" was deep and distinct.

"Sir Bussy," said the Lord Paramount in a penetrating aside, "for six long years you have said that word 'Gaw' at me and I have borne with you. Say it no more."

He did not even pause for an answer, but went on at once to sketch the determinations before the Council.

“It is my intention,” he said, “so soon as home affairs are regularized to make an informal tour of Europe. Here, between these four walls, I can speak freely of an adventure we all have at heart, the gallant efforts of Prince Otto von Barheim to overthrow the uncongenial republican régime that now disfigures, misrepresents, and humiliates the loyal and valiant German people. It is a lukewarm thing, half radical and Bolshevist and half patriotic, and Germany is minded to spew it out. I have had communications from a very trustworthy source, and I can say with confidence that that adventure is on the high road to success. Prince Otto, like myself, has a profound understanding of the philosophy of history, and like myself he recalls a great nation to its destiny. The good sword of Germany may soon be waiting in its scabbard for our signal.

“Yes! I know what you think at this moment, but, believe me, it will be with the consent of France. Nevermore will Britain move without France. M. Parème shall be consulted and I will see to that. The situation would be delicate had we still a parliamentary régime. Happily no questions in the House now can disturb our negotiations. Snowfield is gagged and Benworthy silenced. Trust France. She is fully aware that now it is we alone who stand between her and a German-Italian combination. We reconcile. The French mind is realistic, logical and patriotic. The other European nations may need Dictators but in France, the Republic is Dictator; the army and the nation are one, and, guaranteed security, suitably compensated in Africa and Nearer Asia, France will be ready to take her proper place in the defence of the West against its final danger. The age-long feud of the Rhineland draws to an end. The peace of Charlemagne returns. Even the speeches of M. Parème lose their belligerent note. Such little matters as the language question in Alsace and various repayments and guarantees find their level of unimportance. We have been living too much in the counting house. Europe draws together under pressure from the East and from the West. These things I propose to confirm by personal interviews with the men I shall find in charge of the European nations. Then to our course of action: first, a renewal, a confirmation and intensification of the blockade of Russia — by all Europe, by the United Strong Men of Europe; secondly a vigorous joint intervention to restore the predominance of

European ideas and European finance in China; thirdly a direct challenge to Russian propaganda in India and Persia, a propaganda in reality political — social and economic now only in phrase and pretension. If we mean to encircle this mighty threat to all we hold dear, then the time for encirclement is here and now. And so, when at last the Day comes it will not be the Slav aggressive we shall have facing us but the Slav anticipated and at bay."

The Lord Paramount paused and did his best to ignore the one flaw upon that perfect gathering. Sir Bussy, looking exceedingly small and wicked and drumming softly on the table with his stumpy fingers, spoke, addressing, as it were, the blank universe. "And how is America going to take this sort of stuff?"

"She will be with us."

"She may have other ideas."

"She HAS to be with us," said the Lord Paramount with a rising intonation, and a murmur of approval came from the corner in which Lord Cato was standing. His face was very pink, and his little eyes were round and bright. His bearing had the unsubdued aggressiveness of an unsmacked child's. He had always regarded America as impertinent and in need of a good snubbing and, if need be, of further chastening. He could not believe that a nation so new could really consist of grown-up people.

"The Americans," Sir Bussy informed the world, "don't learn history in English public schools."

No one regarded him.

"I have begun by sketching the frame of circumstance about our national life," the Lord Paramount resumed, "because the small troubles of internal politics — and relatively they are very small — fall into place directly we recognize the fact that we are a militant people, that our empire is a mighty camp of training for the achievement of our enduring leadership. To this great struggle all our history is a crescendo. When you tell me that we have a million unemployed I rejoice to think we have that much man power free at once for the great adventure. Before 1914 our industrial system had a margin, a necessary margin of unemployment of about five to nine per cent. Now that margin has increased to eleven or twelve per cent. — I will not trouble about the exact figures. A large element of these

unemployed come out of the coal-mining industry, which was abnormally inflated after the war. But our gross production has not diminished. Note that! What we are witnessing is a world-wide process, in which industry produces as much as ever, or more, but has so increased its efficiency that it calls for fewer hands. Clearly this so-called unemployment is really a release of energy. These people, in many cases young men, must be taken in hand and trained for other ends. The women can go into munitions. If only on account of unemployment, our great empire needs to take a gallant and aggressive line. What we have saved we must spend. We must not bury our talent in out-of-work sloth. I am no Individualist, I am no Socialist; these are phrases left over by the Nineteenth Century, and little meaning remains in them now. But I say, of him who does not work for his country, neither shall he eat in it, and that he who will not work generously must be made to work hard, and I say also that wealth that is not active and productive for our imperial ends needs to be called upon to justify itself. Wantoning in pleasure cities, lavish entertainments in huge hotels, jazz expenditure, must cease. A special tax on champagne... Yes, a tax on champagne. It is poison for soul and body. No more night clubs for London. A censorship of suggestive plays and books. Criticism by honest police officials — worthy, direct-minded men. Golf only for hygienic ends. Race meetings without special trains. Even the shooting and hunting restrained. Service! Everywhere Service. Duty Paramount. In High and Low alike. These things have been said already upon the slighter stage of Italy; it is for us to say them now, imperially, in tones of thunder, to the very ends of the earth."

It seemed that he had done. In the appreciative silence that ensued, the noise of an elderly and edentate gentleman talking through a thick moustache, became evident. The speaker had been at the back of the cluster to the right of the Lord Paramount, but now he came forward in a state of agitated resolution, and grasping with his right hand the back of the chair in which Sir Bussy was sitting, crossed his legs and leaning forward at an almost perilous angle, he gesticulated in an oratical manner with his left. The noise he made rose and fell. Word was not separated from word, but now and then a cough snapped off a length of it. It was a sort of ectoplasmic speech.

Very like ectoplasm. Ectoplasm?

Ectoplasm?

(For a moment the mind of the Lord Paramount was blurred.)

This venerable figure was Lord Bylass of Brayne. At intervals it was possible to distinguish the submerged forms of such words and phrases as “tariff”... “adequate protection”... “safeguarding”... “dumping”... “insensate foreign competition”... “colonial preference”... “an empire sufficient unto itself”... “capable, sir, of absorbing every willing worker in the country.”

For three or four minutes the Lord Paramount endured this interruption with patient dignity, and then he held up a hand to signify that he had heard sufficient for a reply.

“A state is a militant organization, and a militant organization that is healthy and complete must be militant through and through,” he began with that illuminating directness which had made him the leader and master of all these men. “Tariffs, Lord Bylass, are now the normal everyday method of that same conflict for existence between states which is the substance of all history and which finds its highest, noblest expression in war. By means of tariffs, Lord Bylass, we protect our economic life from confusion with the economic life of other states, we ensure the integrity of our resources against the day of trial, we sustain our allies and attack the social balance and well-being of our enemies and competitors. Here in this council, free from eavesdroppers, we can ignore the pretence that tariffs are designed for the enrichment or security of the common citizen and that they, by themselves, can do anything to absorb unemployed workers. Forgive me, Lord Bylass, if I seem to contradict your arguments while accepting your conclusions. Tariffs do not enrich a country. They cannot do, they never have done, anything of the sort. That is a deception, and I think a harmful deception, that the squalid necessities of that system of elective government we have so happily set aside have forced upon politicians. We can drop it here and now. Tariffs, like every other form of struggle, involve and require sacrifices. If they create employment in one trade by excluding or handicapping the foreign product, then manifestly they must destroy it in another which has hitherto exported goods in payment, direct or indirect, for the newly protected commodity. A tariff is a method of

substituting an inconvenient production for a convenient one. In order to cause greater inconvenience elsewhere. The case for protection rests on grounds higher and nobler than considerations of material advantage or disadvantage. We must have tariffs and pay for tariffs, just as we must have armies and navies and pay for them. Why? Because they are the continuing intimation of our national integrity. Our guns and bombs explode only during the war phase, but a tariff sustains a perpetual friction and menace; it injures while we sleep. And I repeat, for it is the very essence of our faith, it is the cardinal belief of our League of Duty Paramount, that a sovereign state which boasts a history and unfurls a flag, must remain either a militant state through and through, pressing its rivals as hard as it can in every possible way, during peace time and wartime alike, or it must become a decadent and useless absurdity fit only to be swept into the cosmopolitan dustbin."

The ringing voice ceased. Lord Bylass, who had resumed his perpendicular attitude during the reply of the Lord Paramount, said something either in the nature of approval, disapproval, extension, or qualification of what had gone before, and after perhaps a dozen minor questions had been raised and compactly disposed of the Council settled down to the apportionment of the mighty tasks in hand. First one and then another would sketch his conception of cooperation, and often the Lord Paramount would say no more than "Do it" or "Wait" or "Raise that again in a week's time" or "Not like that." A few of the members for whom there seemed to be no immediate call withdrew to an ante-room to talk together over the tea, sherry, and lemonade served there. Some of the more restless spirits departed altogether. Among these was Sir Bussy Woodcock.

The mind of the Lord Paramount seemed to go after him and watch him and yet it knew what he would do.

He was to be seen standing pensive on the doorstep of No. 10 Downing Street, that doorstep which has been trodden by every famous man in British affairs for a couple of centuries, and looking with his mouth askew at the dense inexpressive crowd which blocked the opening into Whitehall. The police had formed a cordon, and except for the chauffeurs of the waiting automobiles there were only a few pressmen, press photographers and obvious plain-clothes men

standing about in the street itself. But beyond was that mysterious still congestion of the English people, almost cow-like in its collective regard, giving no intimations of its feelings, if indeed it had any feelings, towards this gallant new rule which had relieved it of any lingering illusions about self-government. It was an almost completely silent crowd, save for the yapping of the vendors of the Lord Paramount's photographs. The afternoon was warm and overcast with gray clouds that seemed like everything else to be awaiting orders. The very policemen were lost in passive expectation. Everybody was accepting the Lord Paramount inertly. Sir Bussy remained quite still for nearly a minute. "GAW," he whispered at last and turned slowly towards the little gate to his right that led down the steps to the Horse Guards parade.

With his customary foresight he had sent his car round there, where the crowd was inconsiderable.

As he vanished through the gate a plain-clothes policeman with an affectation of nonchalance that would not have deceived a baby, detached himself from his fellows and strolled after him. BY ORDER!

In another twenty minutes the session was over and the Council was actively dispersing.

Lanes were made in the crowd by the departing automobiles. Its more advantageously situated ranks were privileged to see, afar off, the Lord Paramount himself, accompanied by his little dark woman secretary and a tall, slender, devoted-looking man who was carrying a huge portfolio, cross swiftly from No. 10 to the Foreign Office and vanish under its archway.

Towards seven the Lord Paramount reappeared and went in the big new Rolls- Royce he had purchased on behalf of the nation, to the War Office, and there he remained until long after midnight.

V. — THE LORD PARAMOUNT STUDIES HIS WEAPONS

There were moments even in the opening phase of this great adventure of the Lord Paramount when it was difficult for him to believe himself true, but his sense of duty to those he was lifting out of their ten-year post-war lethargy made him conceal these instants — for there were no more than instants — of weakness from everyone about him, even from the faithful and sustaining Mrs. Pinchot and the indefatigable Hereward Jackson. His ordinary state of mind was one of profound, of almost exultant admiration for his own new vigour of purpose and action. He knew that his ascendency meant a march towards war, war on a vaster and handsomer scale than had ever yet illuminated the page of history. This might have dismayed a lesser soul. But he knew himself the successor of Napoleon and Cæsar and Alexander and Sargon, adequate to the task before him. And he knew what history demands of great nations. His mission was to make history and to make it larger and heavier and with a greater displacement of the fluidities of life than it had ever been made before.

As he made it he wrote it in his mind. He saw his own record, the story of his war, towering up at the end of the great series of autobiographic war histories from Thucydides to Colonel Lawrence and Winston Churchill. Parham De Bella Asiatico. That he would do in the golden days of rest, after the victory. It was pleasant to anticipate those crowning literary hours amidst the stresses of present things. He would find himself making character sketches of himself and telling in the third person of his acts and decisions in the recognized style of such records.

It was queer at times how strongly his anticipations of this record imposed themselves upon his mind. There were phases and moments when he did not so much seem to be doing and experiencing things as relating them to himself.

It was manifest that among the most urgent of his duties was the rapid acquisition of a broad and exact knowledge of the equipment

and possibilities of the armed forces of the Empire. Of these he had now to be the directive head, the supreme commander. On him would fall the ultimate responsibility in the day of battle. Other men might advise him, but it was he who must control, and who can control without adequate knowledge? Lucky for him that his mind was as swift as an eagle and that he could grasp the import of a scheme while lesser intelligences still struggled with its preliminary details.

He sought among ex-war ministers, sea lords, and high permanent officials in the combatant departments, for informants and experts with whom he could work. It was profoundly important to know and take the measure of all such men. And they had to know him, they had to experience his personal magnetism and be quick to understand and ready to obey him. At first there was some difficulty in getting the right tone. In all the fighting services there is an habitual distrust of politicians, an ingrained disposition to humbug and hoodwink interfering civilians, and this tradition of reserve was sufficiently strong to retard their first surrender to the Lord Paramount's charm and energy for some time.

Moreover, there were many restraints and reservations between different sections of the services that were hard to overcome. Most of these men betrayed not only the enthusiasm but the narrowness of the specialist's concentrated mind. Air experts ridiculed battle ships; naval men showed a quiet contempt for the air; gas was a sore subject with nearly everybody; gunners considered everything else subsidiary to well directed gunfire, and the tank people despised sea, air, gunfire, and chemical warfare in nearly equal proportions. "We go through," was their refrain. There were even men who held that the spearhead of warfare was propaganda and that the end to which all other operations must be directed was the production of a certain state of mind (variously defined and described) in the enemy government and population. The Empire was, in fact, partially prepared for every conceivable sort of warfare with every conceivable and many inconceivable antagonists, and apart from a common contempt for pacificists as "damned fools" and for cosmopolitans as dreamers and scoundrels, its defenders did not as yet possess an idea in common to ensure their cooperation when the

moment of conflict came.

Such were the fruits of our all too copious modern inventiveness and our all too destructive criticism of simple political issues. Such were the consequences of a disputatious parliamentary system and the lack of any single dominating will. The navy was experimenting with big submarines and little submarines, with submarines that carried aircraft inside them and submarines that could come out on land and even climb cliffs, with aircraft carriers and smoke screens, and new types of cruiser; the gunners were experimenting; the army was having a delightful time with tanks, little tanks and big tanks, hideous and ridiculous and frightful and stupendous tanks, tanks that were convertible at a pinch into barges, and tanks that would suddenly expand wings and make long flying hops, and tanks that became field kitchens and bathrooms; the air force killed its two young men or more a week with a patient regularity, elaborating incredible stunts; Gas Warfare was experimenting; each was going its own way irrespective of the others, each was doing its best to crab the others. The Lord Paramount went hither and thither, inspecting contrivances that their promoters declared to be marvellous and meeting a series of oldish young and youngish old men, soured by the fermentation of extravagant hopes.

Sir Bussy, an unwilling consultant upon many of these expeditions, found a phrase for them so lacking in dignity that for a time it troubled the Lord Paramount's mind.

"Like a lot of damned schoolboys," said Sir Bussy, "mucking about with toy guns and chemical sets in an attic. Each one on his own — just as disconnected as he can be. With unlimited pocket money. What do they think they are up to? What do they think it is for — all this damned militarism? They don't know. They lost connection long ago, and there they are. They'll just set the place on fire. What else do you expect of them?"

The Lord Paramount made no reply, but his swift mind tackled the challenge. He was capable of learning, even from an enemy.

"Lost connection," that was the illuminating phrase.

Disconnected — that was the word. Because they had had no one and no great idea to marshal them in order and unify their efforts. They were the scattered parts of a great war machine which had

quietly disarticulated itself after 1918 and followed its divergent traditions and instincts, and it was for him to assemble them into cooperation again. After that remark of Sir Bussy's he knew exactly what to say to these forgotten and unhonoured experts. He knew the one thing of which they stood in need: Connection. To everyone he spoke of the nature of the campaign ahead and of the particular part to be played in it.

That was the magic touch for which they had been waiting. It was wonderful how these sorely neglected men brightened at his words. He made them see — Russia; he projected the minds of the airmen towards mighty raids amidst the mountains of central Asia and over the dark plains of eastern Europe; he lit the eyes of the special underseas services with the words "a relentless blockade"; he asked the mechanized soldiers how they would go over steppes and reminded them darkly of the prophetic fact that the first writing on the pioneer tank had been in Russian. To the naval men he spoke also of another task. "While we do our work in the Old World, you are the sure shield between us and the follies of the New."

Yes, that meant America, but the word America was never said. America which might do anything, which might even go "modern" and break with history — even her own brief and limited history. The fewer years she was given to think before the crisis came, the better for the traditions of our old world.

Many of these brave, ingenious men to whom the Lord Paramount came were sick at heart with hope deferred. Year by year they had invented, contrived, and organized, and still the peace held. There were breezes, but these died away. These workers in the obscurity read pacificist articles in the newspapers; they heard continually of a League of Nations that was to make a futility of all the dear lethal inventions they had given the best of their years to perfect. A clamour for economies, the bitter ingratitude of retrenchment, threatened them. He brought new life and hope to their despondent souls.

From amidst the miscellany of experts and officials the figure of a certain General Gerson emerged gradually to a sort of preeminence. He emerged by a kind of innate necessity. He seemed to know more than the others and to have a more exhaustive knowledge. He had a

genius for comprehensive war plans. There was something quintessential about him, as though he concentrated all that Mr. Parham had ever read, seen, thought, or felt about soldiers. Undeniably he had force. He was the man to whom it became more and more natural to turn in any doubtful matter. He was presently almost officially the Lord Paramount's right hand in military things. It was not that the Lord Paramount chose him so much as that he arrived. He became the embodiment of the material side of power. He was the sword — or shall we say the hand grenade? — to the Lord Paramount's guiding brain and will. He was his necessary complement. He translated imperial vision into practical reality.

He was not exactly a prepossessing person. His solid worth had to be discovered without extraneous aid. He was sturdily built, short and rather thickset, with exceptionally long, large, and hairy hands. His head was small and bomb-shaped and covered with a wiry fuzz. His nose was short but not insignificant, a concentrated, wilful nose. His mouth was large, vituperative in form when open, and accustomed to shut with emphasis. Generally he kept it shut. His bristling moustache was a concession to military tradition rather than an ornament, and his yellow skin was blue spotted as the result of an accident with some new explosive powder. One eye, because of that same accident was of glass; it maintained an expression of implacable will, while its fellow, alert and bright brown, gathered information. His eyebrows were the fierce little brothers of his moustache. He wore uniform whenever he could, for he despised "mufti men," but also he despised the splendours of full uniform. He liked to be a little soiled. He liked common and rather dirty food eaten standing with the fingers instead of forks, and he resorted to harsh and violent exercises to keep fit.

His fitness was amazing, a fierce fitness. "In this world," he said, "the fittest survive." But he despised the mawkish games of feebler men. In the country, when he could, he cut down trees with great swiftness and animosity or he pursued and threw over astonished and over-domesticated cows, rodeo fashion. In towns, he would climb swiftly up the backs of high houses and down again, or box, or work an electric drill and excavate and repave back yards. The electric drill bucked up the neighbours tremendously and created a hostile

audience that was of use in checking any tendency to slack off. On such occasions he dressed lightly and exposed and ventilated an impressive breadth of hairy chest.

The Lord Paramount was more and more compelled by the logic of his own undertakings to respect and defer to this heroic associate as time went on, but he would not have looked like him for the lordship of a dozen worlds.

From the first the advice of General Gerson had something of the dictatorial.

"You ought to do so and so," he would say and add compactly, "they expect it of you." And the Lord Paramount would realize that that was so.

It was, for example, borne in upon him through something in the bearing and tone of General Gerson that it behoved him to display a certain temerity in his attitude to the various new, ingenious, and frightful things that were being accumulated to ensure the peace of the Empire. It was not in the nature of the Lord Paramount to shrink from personal danger but he might have been disposed to husband his time and nervous energy in regard to those things, if it had not been for Gerson's influence. Gerson was hard. And a ruler who rules Gersons must be hard also. A certain hardness is a necessary part of greatness. Good to be reminded of that. At times he found himself sustaining his own determination by talking to himself in quite the old Parham fashion. "I owe it to myself," he said. "I owe it to the world."

So he looped the loop over London, holding tight and keeping his face still and calm. He wore strange and dreadful-looking gas masks and went into chambers of vaporous abomination, where instant death would have been the result of a pin prick to his nozzle. It was a pity his intrepid face was so disguised, for it would have been well for weaker spirited men to mark its observant calm. Rather reluctantly he had to see a considerable number of cats, sheep, and dogs demoralized and killed by poison gas, the precious secret of General Gerson's department, that Gas L of which Camelford had spoken, for which no antidote was known. It seemed to hurt damnably in the two or three minutes before the final collapse. Unless all forms of animal expression are a lie, it was death by

intolerable torture. “I owe it,” he repeated, for there was mercy in his nature.

“This gas we do not use,” he said firmly, “except as an ultimate resort.”

“War,” said Gerson, sighing contentedly as the last victim ceased to writhe, “war IS an ultimate resort.”

The Lord Paramount made no answer because he felt he might be sick. He seemed to have Mr. Parham’s stomach, and very often in those feats of hardihood he had occasion to feel sick. He spent some chilly and clammy hours at the bottom of the Solent, and he raced at twenty miles an hour in a leaping, bumping tank across the rough of Liss Forest, and both occasions tested him out. He wore boules quiès and fired immense chest-flattening guns by touching a button, and he was wetted to the skin and made sickest of all by tearing down the Channel against a stiff south-wester at forty miles an hour in a new mystery boat that was three parts giant torpedo.

“It was the lot of Nelson too,” he said, coming ashore, greenly triumphant but empty to the depths of his being. “His heart kept in the right place even if his stomach betrayed him...”

VI. — THE LOGIC OF WAR

Several times did the Lord Paramount return to the topic of poison gas with Gerson. He did not want it to be used, but at the same time the logic of war made him anxious to be sure of an effective supply. Camelford's threat of holding it up haunted him with a very tiresome persistence. And Gerson had been a poison gas expert.

The Lord Paramount wanted war to be magnificent. Wars are the red letters that illuminate the page of history. The resolute tramp of infantry, the inspiring jingle and clatter of cavalry, the mounting thunder of the guns: that was the music to which history had gone since history was worthy of being called history, and he wished that the old tunes could still be played and history still march to them. Some of these new machines and new methods, he perceived had the hardness and intolerance of a scientific thesis; they despiritualized warfare; they made it indiscriminate; almost they abolished heroism in favour of ingenuity and persistence, these scientific virtues. At the climax men would be just carried forward willy-nilly. He would gladly have subscribed to any common understanding to eliminate the aeroplane, the submarine, and all gas from civilized hostilities, as bacteria and explosive bullets have already been eliminated. But Gerson would have none of these exclusions. "War is war," said he, "and what kills and breaks the spirit best is what you have to use."

"But the bombing of towns! Poison gas on civilians. Poison gas almost haphazard."

"What right have they to be civilians?" said Gerson.

"Probably shirking a levy or something. In the next war there won't be any civilians. Gas doesn't have a fair deal. Everyone's against it. Ask me, I should say it improves fighting. Robs them of the idea there's something safe behind them. How's the old nigger song go? Bombs —

"'Kicking up ahind and afore And a yaller gas aspreading out ahind old Joe' —

Turns 'em back to it."

"Practically — at Geneva we have undertaken not to use gas."

"Query — the 'practically.' 'Fit comes to that, we've renounced

the use of war — by the Kellogg Pact and suchlike flummery. Doesn't prevent every Power in Europe, and Washington too, keeping its Poison Gas Department up to strength and working overtime. No — sir. For propaganda purposes you may begin a war gentlemanly and elegant, but wait till the game warms up! Then you gouge. Then you bite off noses. And the gas comes in — trust me.

"Yes," said the Lord Paramount, yielding. "Yes. It's true. To impose a decision one must be stern."

He composed himself for some moments as an image of implacable sternness.

The expression in the eye of General Gerson was no doubt reluctant respect.

"And now for the most probable campaigns," began the Lord Paramount, and stirred the maps that lay upon the table before them. "First — Russia."

"Things might very well begin there," said Gerson.

For a time they discussed the possibilities arising out of a clash with Moscow. "In that event," said Gerson, "if nothing occurs in nearer Europe, we would have to run a sort of second-rate war. As we did in Palestine with Allenby. For a time, anyhow. The new things are for closer populations. We can't send a lot of ultramodern stuff out there. Aeroplanes with machine guns — in sufficient abundance, of course — ought to settle anything that we're likely to have against us in India or central Asia. Central Asia has always fallen back on nomadism hitherto, cavalry swarms, Parthians, Huns, Mongols, and so on. But that game's up, against aeroplanes and machine guns. The wing will beat the horse. New chapter of history. And the Afghan game of sitting among rocks and sniping at you goes the same way. The bird comes down on him. Every sort of what I might call barbaric and savage warfare is over now — twenty years out of date. We've got 'em. Russia in Asia would be a comparatively easy war. But we can't count on restricting it to Asia."

"I hope to do so."

"Hope, yes — I said, 'count on it.' And besides, there's Petersburg — what they WILL call Leningrad — and a little raid from that as a base to Moscow, just to settle things. We may be forced to do that. We might fight in central Asia for ten years and

settle nothing... And who knows? If things get difficult with us — our friends in Berlin... Or even nearer ... You never know."

He scrutinized the Lord Paramount.

"It isn't safe," he said, making it plainer, "to lean over Europe and fight Russia."

"I do not think it will be like that," said the Lord Paramount.

"No. But it might be."

Gerson left that doubt to rankle.

"I don't care what agreements you make," he said, "not to use this or that. States that can keep such agreements aren't really at war at all. It's just sport, s'long as you have rules. War don't begin until law ends. It isn't necessary if any sort of agreement can be made and enforced. All this agreeing not to use gas." Gerson smiled and showed his black teeth and pointed his witticism— "well, it's gas and nothing else. The decisive factor in any first-class war now has to be gas delivered from the air. Work it out — it's as plain as daylight. It's the only way to decision. All modern war from now on will be a fight to be able to drop gas in quantity on the most crowded, sensitive, nervous centre of the enemy. Then and then only will the other side give in. They HAVE to give in. You go on gassing till they do... What other idea of war CAN there be now?"

It was hard stuff, but the man was right. The thoughtful face of the Lord Paramount grew resolute.

"I admit the logic of it." The white hand clenched.

"I believe the Germans have the most powerful explosives in the world," said Gerson. "If we left it at that they'd be on the top. They're still the ingenious devils they always were. The Republic didn't alter much — and now that's over for good, thank God. 'Ware their chemists, say I! All the same we, as it happens, just now, and God knows for how long, have absolutely the lead in poison gas. Absolutely. It happens — so."

"I know," said the Lord Paramount. "Gas L."

He was secretly pleased to see Gerson's amazement. "But — who TOLD you of that?"

The white hand waved the question aside. "I know, my dear Gerson," smiled the Lord Paramount. "I happen to know. Works at Cayme, eh?"

“Well, there you are! If we had a war in Europe now we could astonish the world... Do you know ALL about Gas L?”

“I don’t,” said the Lord Paramount. “Tell me.”

“WELL,” said Gerson, “well,” and leant forward over his clenched fists on the table in a pose that was somehow suggestive of a cat with its forefeet tucked under it. He stuck his head on one side.

He gave information reluctantly and confusedly. He was not accustomed to give information to anyone. He was not accustomed to give anything to anyone. But gradually before the mind of the Lord Paramount the singularity of Gas L became plain.

This was the gas Camelford had spoken of at that dinner at Sir Bussy’s which still haunted his mind. This was the unknown gas that needed the rare earths and basic substances that it seemed only Cayme in Cornwall could supply. Even at the time, that gas had touched Mr. Parham’s imagination and set him speculating. “Don’t the scientific men, the real scientific men know about it?” he asked. “The devil of all this scientific warfare is that science keeps no secrets, and there’s always someone, in some other country, hard on your track. Look how we tackled the German gas on the western front. In a week or so.”

“You’re right, precisely,” said Gerson, “and that is just why I’d like to get to business with Gas L before very long. Before it’s blown upon. Before they’ve set men to think it out. It’s true that Cayme MAY be the only source of the stuff, and in that case the British monopoly is assured. But are we safe?”

The Lord Paramount nodded. But he wanted more particulars.

The real poison it seemed was not Gas L, but Gas L combined with nearly a hundred times its volume of air. It was very compressible. You let a little sizzle out from its reservoir, it vaporized, expanded, and began to combine. “It hurts. You remember those cats in the experimental chamber,” said Gerson. It didn’t decompose for weeks. It drifted about and it was still distressful when it was diluted to the merest trace. All the London area could be devastated with a score of tons. And there was no anti-gas known. For all the other known war gases there were anti-gases. But Gas L you had to counter with an impervious mask, adherent at its edges, keeping your air respirable with a combined oxygen maker

and carbon dioxide absorber slung under the arm. You had, in fact, to put your men in a sort of sub-aerial diver's helmet that it needed training to adjust. "Think of the moral effect of it," said Gerson. "Paris or Berlin, a dead city, dead from men to rats, and nobody daring to go in to clean it up. After such a sample the world would howl for peace at any price whatever."

The Lord Paramount saw it for a moment as in a vision. The Place de la Concorde — still. Paris without a sound. Stiff bodies crumpled by the last agony...

He came back to Gerson with an effort.

"Plainly Cayme is the key position of our defences," he said. His mind searched among the possibilities of the situation." Why shouldn't we nationalize it right away?"

"Why not?" said Gerson and seemed to chew unpleasant things. He finished his chewing. "I will tell you why not.

"WE," he said, "know how to make Gas L. We know that. But we don't know how to prepare those basal substances — which are peculiar. And we don't know how to separate those rare earths. That THEY know; they've got secret processes at Cayme. It's a question of linked processes. Probably no single man knows all of them properly. Unless it's Camelford. (Camelford again!) If we seize Cayme, if we make any trouble about Cayme, then, for one thing, we call the attention of foreign experts to what is going on. See?"

The Master Spirit and the Master General eyed each other comprehendingly.

"What exactly — IS Cayme?"

"Cayme in Lyonesse," began Gerson.

"Lyonesse?" said the Lord Paramount softly. His mind went back to his youth, his ardent poetic but still classical and seemly youth, when Tennyson was still admired and the lost land of King Arthur cast a glamour on the Cornish coast. For a moment or so he could have imagined he was dreaming, so strong was the flavour of unreality the magic name threw over the story. Then distant Lyonesse and Avalon sleeping under the sunset gave place to the blotched and formidable visage of Gerson again.

"It's the new works the Star and Rocket Research Combine have made. It's a sort of joint subsidiary. Romer Steinhart & Co.

Camelford. Some American capital. But Woodcock's the moving spirit on the business side. He's become a sort of alter ego of Camelford. Camelford's just taken hold of him and got him. He's a devil of a buyer and cornerer. They're up to something big together. God knows what goes on there! But it isn't Gas L. They're up to something of their own. Some revolution in dyes or films or artificial this, that, or the other. That's what THEY want the stuff for. Cheap films in schools or some such foolery. Think of it! Wasting our gas for the sake of kids in schools! They dole us out the material for our own gas, just as they think proper. At any price they like. And make a favour of it."

The mind of the Lord Paramount returned to the point that had held it up some moments before.

"Lyonesse? But WHY Lyonesse?"

"You don't know? I admit it's been done very quietly. They don't want to advertise it. Two or three square miles of ground brought up out of the sea, down by the village of Cayme and out towards Land's End. The stuff is out there. The works are supposed to be at Cayme, but really they're out beyond low water mark, that was. And there's some old poem or legend or something..."

"So it really is Lyonesse!"

"That's what they call it."

"They've built a place up from the sea bottom?"

"No! They've raised the sea bottom and built a place on it. Something between a gas works and a battleship."

"But how — ! Raised the sea bottom?"

"God knows how they did it. There it is. Raised. Mineral veins and all. And while we're at peace we can't raid 'em, we can't search 'em, we can't seize 'em. We can't get at them. That's the one flaw in our military situation. The weak point is the merchant at home. I always said it would be. People say the workers will give trouble. Workers, damn them! never give trouble unless someone eggs them on. They're all as patriotic as I am, really. They're human. They hate foreigners until their minds get spoilt. Strike at the eggers-on, say I, and the workers are yours for the drilling. But there's no national love or loyalty between business men and soldiering. Not the big business men. I mean the big world-wide traders. Of course, we've

got so-called nationalist motor-car men and nationalist brands of this and that, but even the men with a straight Union Jack on car or can will hold us up if possible. Still, at the worst, they can be bought. There's something to be said for an army with an all-British equipment out and out. Battles won on Empire food and all that. But it isn't that sort of chap I mean. I mean the men who handle the broad products. This new sort. These new Big Civilians. Who think of the industry before they think of the flag. Who're getting outrageous ideas. It was a BIT like this once or twice in the Great War: they objected to waste, but whatever is going on now is ever so much bigger. What is going on now is fundamental. These people are cornering Victory. That's what it comes to. Making a corner in Victory. Much they care for the Empire! I'm under no illusions. If the Empire wants Victory next time the Empire has got to pay for it, and there's times when I think that it won't get it even if it pays. Suppose they hold it up ANYHOW!"

The Lord Paramount was thinking profoundly. The fine and regular teeth nibbled at the knuckles of the shapely hand. He had an idea. Meanwhile, with the undertow of his mind he followed Gerson.

"There was a time," said Gerson, "when the man of science knew his place in the world. He kept his place just as the engineer on a battleship kept his place. You had to keep a sharp eye on finance always — finance being so largely Jews and international in spirit — but their women like titles and show and they're sort of silly with the women. And at bottom a Jew is always afraid of a soldier. But your man of science you could trust outright. You could — once. All you had to do with him was to slap him into uniform, give him temporary rank for the duration, and he got so fierce and patriotic he'd kill his mother to please you. And the business men too. They LOVED a belt and a sword. They'd crawl for a bit of ribbon. The old sort of business man who went into shop or workshop at fourteen. Natural born patriots. They'd give the army anything it asked for. Once. Not now. All that has changed. This damned modern education, these new ideas, creep about everywhere. They're a sort of poison gas of the mind. They sap discipline. The young men of science, the clever ones, are all going Bolshy or worse. You'd be astonished. You can't count on them. It's extraordinary. And the business men and the

bankers are rotten with pacificism. They get it out of the air. They get it from America. God knows how they get it! ‘Does war PAY?’ they ask. Does war pay? Pretty question that! We get along now simply because the rich men are afraid of the Communists and the Communists won’t have any truck with a rich man. The poor pacificist keeps the rich pacificist in order for us. But will that last? If ever that quarrel eases off and they look around them, you’ll have the United States of Everywhere, and fleets and armies will be on the scrap heap and sojers in the casual ward. Look at the situation! About this gas. Here we are with the master gas of the world! Here we are, as we are. England’s opportunity if ever there was opportunity. Go right out now and we win. And before we can take a firm line with anyone we have to ask ourselves: ‘Shall we get our guns in time? Are we safe for high explosive? And in particular — will Mr. Camelford and Sir Bussy Woodcock please to kindly let us have our gas?’ Gurr! When I think of it!”

Even great military experts must not be allowed to talk forever. The Lord Paramount sighed and drew himself up in a manner that conveyed the conference was at an end. He tapped the table between them and nodded and spoke reassuringly.

“When the time comes, mon général,” he said, “you shall have your gas.”

(And then again that momentary pang of doubt.)

VII. — SIR BUSSY IS RECALCITRANT

As soon as the Lord Paramount returned to London Sir Bussy was sent for.

It was a curious encounter. These two men had had scarcely a word together in private since that marvellous evening of the Advent when the Master Spirit had come and taken Mr. Parham to himself. Yet all the time the little man had been hovering in a very curious and persistent manner in the background of the Lord Paramount's perceptions.

There was little of the tactful Parham now in the calm firm mastery with which the Lord Paramount spoke, and it was as if Sir Bussy had shrunken from his former sullen dominance to the likeness of a wary and resentful schoolboy under reproof.

The Lord Paramount was seated at his desk, lordly and serene. He was as large again as Mr. Parham. Compared with Sir Bussy he was enormous. "I want a word with you, Woodcock," he said.

The new tone.

Sir Bussy grunted faintly. No chair had been placed for him. He considered the situation, dragged one across the room, and sat down. What a little fellow he was! "Well?" he said ungraciously.

"I think of making you responsible for the military supplies of the Empire and particularly of non-ferrous metals, explosives, and — gas."

Straight to the point. Sir Bussy had nothing ready by way of reply. How WORDLESS! A white finger pointed to him; a clear eye regarded him. "Have you any objection?"

"Large order," said Sir Bussy.

He attempted no excuse.

"It's a responsible position," the Master's voice pursued him.

"No doubt."

"I say 'responsible.'"

"I seemed to hear you say it."

The same Sir Bussy as ever.

"'Responsible' means that if these things are not forthcoming in limitless abundance on the day of need, it is YOU will answer for it."

“Wha’d’ you WANT with gas?” Sir Bussy asked abruptly and unexpectedly.

“It is of vital importance.”

The quick mind of the Lord Paramount leapt at once at the revealing discovery that Sir Bussy thought instantly of gas.

“But it isn’t historical,” said Sir Bussy. “It isn’t in tradition.”

“What has that to do with it?”

“Isn’t all this stuff — carrying on history?”

“This stuff?”

“The military organization of the Empire, national and imperial ascendancy, flags, armies, frontiers, love of the Empire, devotion, sacrifice, and having a damned good go at Russia.”

“Manifestly.”

“What else COULD it be?” Sir Bussy reflected. “Lemme see, where were we?”

It was evident that he had been thinking profoundly by the things he had next to say.

“Well,” he began, developing his premeditated argument, “then why not play your traditional game with the traditional pieces? Why drag in modern science? Use historical armies and fleets for historical destinies and leave gas and tanks and submarines out of it. If you must still play about with flags and frontiers, go back to Brown Bess and foot slogging and ten-pounder field guns and leave these modern things alone. Chemistry doesn’t belong to your world. It isn’t for you. It’s NEW. It’s out-size.”

For a moment the Lord Paramount was baffled. Sir Bussy was still Sir Bussy the unexpected. Then a beautiful word came like an angel of light to the rescue. The Lord Paramount pronounced it like a charm. “Continuity,” he said and leant back to observe its effect.

The intellectual elements of Mr. Parham that he had absorbed into his constitution suddenly asserted themselves. The Lord Paramount departed from his customary use of pithy and direct speech and argued a point.

“You are mentally underdeveloped, Woodcock,” he went on — when he should not have gone on. “You are a very good fellow, but you are uneducated. Your historical imagination is that of a child of five. You have no sense of continuity whatever. All things progress

by stages — EVOLVE — if we must use that word. You do not understand that. It is you who are old-fashioned with your ideas of revolutions and strange new beginnings and progress that never looks back. Your brain accepts that sort of stuff because nature abhors a vacuum. Let me tell you a little secret, Sir Bussy. As one who knows something of history. There never has been a revolution in all history. There have been so-called revolutions; that is all — times when the clock struck — violent and confused periods; mere froth upon the great stream of events. Broaden down from precedent to precedent — Yes. Begin anew — No. It is the past that rules; it is the past that points us on to our assured Destinies."

"No way out, in fact?" said Sir Bussy.

"None."

"Evolve or nothing?"

"That's the law of it."

"No fresh starts?"

"Continuity."

"So the railway train had to evolve, I suppose, bit by bit, slipping its end carriages and expanding out its footboards, until it became an aeroplane, and the mainmast of the sailing ship hollowed out into a funnel and squatted close until the cook's galley became the furnace room and his kettle became a boiler. Always Continuity. Eh? No gaps. No fresh start. Why, damn it! a child of five knows that it's only by fresh starts man can keep alive!"

The Lord Paramount stared at his adversary, regretting now that he had stooped to argue with this obstinate and obscure mentality.

"I tell you these Powers and Policies of yours are worn out and done for," Sir Bussy went on. "It's a dream you're in. A damned old dream. It wouldn't matter if you weren't sleepwalking and wandering into dangerous places. Gas and high explosives don't belong to your game. Brains don't grow at Aldershot, the soil's too sandy. They dry up there. These experts of yours, these mongrels, these soldiers who dabble in chemistry and engineering, and these engineers and chemists who dabble in soldiering, will let you down when the crash comes... Soldiering's a profession of incompetents and impostors, jobbing about with engineering firms and second-rate chemical combines... You won't get the stuff you want, and even if

you get it, your experts won't be able to use it. Or they'll use it all wrong..."

The Lord Paramount decided that there must be no more argument.

"That is for me to decide," he said. "Your rôle is to facilitate supplies in every possible way."

"And suppose I don't choose to."

"There is such a thing as treason even in peace time, Sir Bussy."

"Treason!" said Sir Bussy. "What! and axes on Tower Hill? Put the cards down. I'll SEE you."

It was the first open opposition the Lord Paramount had encountered since his triumphant accession to power, and he found himself strangely perturbed. There was a tremulous quiver in his nerves, and he felt the need for self- control. Sir Bussy stood for much more than himself. An impulse to order his arrest had to be restrained. If anything of that sort was to be done it must be done as undramatically as possible. Behind him were such men as Camelford — incalculable factors.

The Lord Paramount turned his eyes to the window and regarded the fine lines of the corner of the United Services' Museum for a moment or so. How he hated Sir Bussy! Still not looking at his recalcitrant visitor he touched a little bell on his desk.

"I have given you fair warning," he said. "You can go."

Sir Bussy vanished instantly, leaving the faint flavour of a "Gaw" behind him.

VIII. — A LITTLE TOUR OF EUROPE

For some time after Sir Bussy had left him the Lord Paramount remained staring out of his window upon Whitehall, in a state of some perplexity.

He was like a reader who has lost his place in a story and omitted to turn down the page.

He had forgotten himself.

He had argued.

He had forgotten himself, and some subtle magic in the queerly formidable little creature Sir Bussy, had recalled the suppressed and assimilated Mr. Parham. Something, at any rate, of Mr. Parham. For a moment or so it had been almost as though he were Mr. Parham. Instead of just telling Sir Bussy of his task and his danger he had disputed, had listened to what the fellow had to say and for some moments allowed it to weigh in his mind. Indeed, it still weighed in his mind.

Lords Paramount should not do things in this fashion. They know. They know altogether. They are decisive at once. Otherwise what right had they to assume a lordship over their fellows? At any cost their prestige for instant rightness must be upheld. It had been a queer incident, and it must not recur. The memory of one of the late Mr. Parham's dinner-table arguments, of that late Mr. Parham with whom his own being was so mysteriously linked, had taken on a monstrous disproportion. He must recover scale.

He turned sharply. Hereward Jackson had entered the room noiselessly and then coughed.

There was something extraordinarily reassuring about Hereward Jackson. He was a born believer; he radiated faith; his mental deference, his entirely unquestioning loyalty was like a perpetual tonic to the Master. And a perpetual example to everyone else about him.

"All is ready," he said. "You can lunch in the air with a flask and a tin of sandwiches, and the new Dictator in Berlin will be awaiting you about three."

For the Lord Paramount had arranged to make a brief circuit of

Europe, to marshal the strong men of the Continent about a common policy. They too, masters indeed in their own houses, were still manifestly in need of a leader to unite them for a common control of the chaotic forces of this age. That leader the Lord Paramount proposed to be, a dictator among the dictators, master of masters, the leader of the new Crusade that would reunite Christendom.

He made the circuit in open military aeroplanes. Before his incorporation with the Lord Paramount Mr. Parham had had no experience of flying except for one or two fine-weather crossings in the big Paris-London omnibuses. Now, muffled to the eyes, with the sweet fresh air whipping his cheeks and chin and the tip of his nose, mounting, beating the air, swooping like a bird, he realized for the first time what a delight and glory flying may be. Accompanied by companion planes carrying his secretarial staff, and escorted by a number of fighting planes, which ever and again would loop the loop or fall headlong like dead leaves and recover miraculously within fifty feet of the ground, fly turning over screw-like, pattern in squares and long wedges, chase each other in interlacing circles, and perform a score of similar feats for his diversion, the squadrons of the Lord Paramount swept over the pleasant land of Kent and the Channel, coasted by Dunkirk and athwart mouth after mouth and green delta after green delta of the Rhine, and so, leaving the sleeping law courts of The Hague to the left, turned eastward over the plains to Berlin. Berlin was his first objective, for in strict accordance with his forecast to the Council of the Empire the smouldering and resentful nationalism of Germany had broken out, and the Dictator Von Barheim was now effectual master of Germany. He had to be talked to a little, and assurances had to be won from him. Then to Paris to revive the spirit of Locarno. Afterwards Rome. And then, before the week was out, a scythe-like moving of the outer edge. King Paramitri, Count Paroli, Paraminski, and then a spectacular flight at a great height to Madrid and Parimo de Rivera. For Parimo was still at Madrid it seemed. All kindred-spirited men. All patriot master spirits, devoted to the honoured traditions of mankind; to flag and fatherland, to faith and family.

At every European capital the aeroplanes rose like swarms of autumnal starlings to greet the great conservator. Once he was within

twenty feet of a collision, but his airman displayed astonishing quickness and skill. A youthful and too ardent Italian got out of control and nose-dived into the crowd on the Pincio at Rome, and there was a slight ground accident which burnt out two bombers at Warsaw, but no other misadventures.

The exhilaration of circling over one great capital after another, over its parks, towers, bridges, and bristling buildings, its encircling hills and clustering suburbs, and the banking and curving about to come down in a swift, clean rush was immense. What ancient conqueror ever made such a hawk's swoop into an allied city? Then followed the bumping rush up to the aerodrome, and then it was the proudly impassive marble face relaxed for the smiling descent from the machine, the greetings, the cameras, the applause.

The vigour of the Lord Paramount's personality, which had been a little impaired in his wrangle with Sir Bussy, was entirely restored by this European tour. His interview in Berlin was pure dominance. There had been street fighting, and the southeast region of the city was said to be in a mess with bombs and machine guns; there was still a little shooting audible in that direction, but Unter den Linden was packed with a patriotic crowd in a state of exalted delight at this immediate personal recognition of the new régime by the master mind of Britain. Everywhere the old imperial flag had reappeared.

The room in which these two dictators met was furnished with Prussian severity; everything was very simple, very necessary, and very, very big and heavy. Intimate relics of Frederick the Great occupied a position of honour in a glass case. The snuffbox would have carried through a long campaign, and there was room for luggage in the boots. Both men wore military uniforms. Von Barheim aped the still venerated figure of Bismarck and was none the more flexible in mind or manner for the compression of a tight cuirass; the Lord Paramount wore the simple yet effective service dress of a British general. The cap with its gilt-edged peak, the red band with its richly simple adornments, the well-tailored uniform suited his tall figure extremely.

For a time it was a little difficult to get Von Barheim away from the question of war responsibility. He came back to it again and again, and he betrayed a regrettable resentment on account of the

post-war policy of France. He harped upon the Rhine. When will Europe forget that ancient dispute? When will Europe look forward? Well it is to be traditional, historical, national, and loyal, but one should not be too rigidly and restrictedly traditional, historical, national, and loyal. If only one could give Europe English eyes! — to see the world. The Lord Paramount perceived that willy-nilly he must play the schoolmaster. “May I put my conceptions of the world situation to you?” he asked.

Germany’s man of iron nodded a joyless assent.

“Here,” said the Lord Paramount with a sweeping gesture of his hand over the table, “in the very centre of the Old World, illimitably vast, potentially more powerful than all the rest of the world put together—” he made a momentary pause— “is Russia. Consider Russia.”

“Their ally in 1914,” said Von Barheim.

“But not now.”

“Which is just why they ought to be reasonable and not make themselves intolerable to us.”

“They have Poland at their beck and call.”

“POLAND!”

The Lord Paramount said no more about Poland. He came back to the unalterable certain greatness of Russia in the future and so proceeded to unfold the standard British conception of world policy in the light of that fact, using almost the same phrases as those he had employed in the recent council, making indeed only one or two modifications, dictated by consideration for the patriotic feelings of Von Barheim. “What part will Germany play in this?” he asked. “Germany, the heart of Europe, the central nation? If she is not the forefront of Westernism against Asia she becomes the forefront of Russia against Europe.”

“She can be her own forefront,” said Von Barheim, but the Lord Paramount disregarded that.

He felt he was winning and enlarging Von Barheim. The lucidity of Mr. Parham and the magnetism of the Lord Paramount made indeed an irresistible combination. Strange to think how badly that comprehensive exposition had been received when first it had been given to mortal ears at Sir Bussy’s table. Slowly but surely this

sturdy German mind was turned away from its sombre preoccupations as the new conceptions opened out before it. Von Barheim seemed to breathe a fresher air.

The Lord Paramount came to his climax. “If I could go from here to Paris with some definite proposal,” he said and laid a firm white hand on Von Barheim’s arm, “if I could restore the Frank to his eastern kindred in friendship and cooperation, I feel I should not have lived in vain.”

“Danzig,” said Von Barheim compactly. Then added: “And the other points I have explained to you.”

“And why not Danzig? Between the Polish border and the Pacific there is room for compensation.”

“If it is THAT sort of proposal,” said Von Barheim and turned about to face his visitor squarely. “I did not understand at first... If we can rearm freely. A big honest enterprise.”

They had come to business.

Von Barheim clapped his hands in Oriental fashion, and a secretary instantly appeared. “Get a map of the world,” he said. “Bring a big atlas.”

And before eleven next morning the Lord Paramount was in Paris closeted with M. Parème. M. Parème wore the frock coat without which all French statesmanship is invalid, and the Lord Paramount had assumed a dark lounge suit of the most perfect cut.

M. Parème was skeptical, realist, swift, and epigrammatic. His manner was more hostile than his matter. For Frenchmen all bargaining is a sort of quarrelling. One side must give in. And this was bargaining of the most elaborate sort. Slowly the Lord Paramount unfolded his vast designs. Slowly and with much resistance M. Parème assimilated those designs. But always with safeguarding conditions.

“Germany goes eastward to the north,” said M. Parème. “Good. In the country to the north of Moscow there ought to be excellent scope for German energy — particularly in the winter. Later compensations may come in South America. Again good. France does not touch America. She did all she wished to do over there in the Mexican expedition. We are to go southward and eastward, following out our traditional destinies in Syria and North Africa. Again — good. But it

is clearly understood that in the final settlement there is nothing in this arrangement to exclude France from additional — indemnifications in central Asia or north China?"

Leaving a number of issues open in this region, M. Parème turned suddenly to other possibilities. Suppose the Lord Paramount's proposals collapsed. Such things had been known to occur. Suppose that at the eleventh hour Germany did not abide by this bargain but were to attack France in alliance with Italy, would Britain bind herself to come in on the side of her ancient ally? He was very insistent that Britain held to that. These negotiations must not be supposed to set that older understanding aside. On the other hand, if Italy were to attack France while Germany, through a counter revolution or any other cause, failed to support Italy so that Italy was left alone vis-à-vis with France, then France would be free to deal with Italy and her boundaries and her African possessions without any interference from Great Britain. That was understood? It was to be a simple duel in that case, and all Great Britain would do would be to keep the ring. And in case of the joint defeat of France and Great Britain the latter Power would of course undertake to repay to France all of whatever indemnity she might have to pay in addition to such penalties as were directly imposed upon herself, and regardless of any economic difficulties in which she might find herself?

The Lord Paramount's confidence in victory made him very yielding upon such issues.

Their talk became less difficult when it turned to America.

"And across the Atlantic," asked M. Parème, "our friends the Prohibitionists seem to want to Prohibit war."

"They won't intervene," said the Lord Paramount as one who knows absolutely.

"Can you even begin to understand the mental operations of America?" said M. Parème.

"If they DID choose to interfere," said M. Parème, "they have an overwhelming fleet, and France has a considerable coast line. Would Great Britain undertake in that case to retain at least two thirds of her naval forces in European waters south and west of the British Channel, so as to defend the French coast?"...

At last the Lord Paramount had his understanding plain. France would assist and also France would share. The German ambassador, in spite of the very grave doubts of M. Parème, was called in for an informal confirmation. Then, without haste and without delay, the Lord Paramount returned to his aeroplane, and the British squadrons, with an escort of French aces, streamed, stunting gaily, up the sky. The whole sky was a pattern of aeroplanes. It was very beautiful. It had the splendour of newness, the splendour of order, the thrill of convergent power.

"Rome," said the Lord Paramount.

It was in quite a different key that he met the mighty Paramuzzi, pattern of all the militant great men of the age, a genius almost too stupendous for Italy. "This is a man," said Mr. Parham at their meeting. "Ecce Homo," said Paramuzzi.

It was necessary now in the most grandiose manner possible, to offer Italy the fourth place in and the fourth share of the spoils of this mighty adventure of western Europe against the East. She had, moreover, to be a little disillusioned about her future in North Africa. Her attention had to be deflected to Greece, the Balkans, and (a brain wave of the Lord Paramount's) the Crimea.

The understanding was achieved.

At Rome things were done in the classical style — or perhaps if one may employ a slight contradiction in terms, the neo-classic style. The white colonnades of the Victor Emanuele monument formed a becoming background to the scene. The Lord Paramount wore a British court costume with the Garter and Order of Merit under a cloak of his own design. Paramuzzi met the occasion in black velvet and silver with a hat adorned with a number of exceptionally large ostrich plumes. They met in the focus of a great semicircle of cameras.

"Hail, Cæsar Britannicus!"

"Hail, Cisalpine Cæsar!"

There was some tremendous saluting by serried Fascisti. They were patterned across the Piazza Venetia. Never was saluting carried to higher levels than in Italy under Paramuzzi. They did marvellous things with their hands, their chests, their legs and knees, their chins and noses. They brought down their hands with a slap so unanimous

and simultaneous that it was as if the sky had cracked.

"Hail, Cæsar Britannicus!" and then the Fascist cry. London cannot do things in this style.

When the two great men were alone there was a moment of intense spiritual communion. Paramuzzi thrust his face with intense dilated eyes close to the Byronic visage of his visitor. He thrust a tightly clenched fist even nearer. "POWER!" he said. "POWER!" The other fist came to help in a sort of wrenching gesture.

"Exactly," said the Lord Paramount, backing a little with Anglo-Saxon restraint and then bowing stiffly.

Paramuzzi englobed a planet with extended hands. His eyes devoured the Englishman.

"The world," he said. "And what we are! Virility! The forces of life!"

"Yes," said the Lord Paramount. "Yes."

"I love life," said Paramuzzi, "I love life with an exorbitant passion. And death and danger, the red essence of life. Discipline, yes — but death and danger. I delight in untamed horses. Attempts at assassination amuse me."

And then, with a lapse into great tenderness: "And music. Our Italian Scarlatti... AND LOVE! Sincere, passionate, headlong love! The love of disciples and devotees! Realized."

"For me," said the Lord Paramount succinctly, "my duty."

He perceived he had scored a point. Paramuzzi would have liked to have said that.

To the Nordic mind of the Lord Paramount this encounter had a slight flavour of extravagance, and a certain anxiety invaded his mind as to the outcome of their negotiations, but when it came to business Paramuzzi proved to be a very reasonable man. He was lavish with his assurances and quite ready to accept the fourth share as if it were the first. It was evident the Italian people would receive it as the first and triumph. For there was glamour about this Paramuzzi. He could bring all the glory of Rome out of his sleeve; he could make an old hat look like empire, and a swarming and swelling population of illiterates adequate security for limitless loans...

The King of the House of Savoy was something of an anticlimax...

In such fashion it was that the Lord Paramount wove his net of understandings and gathered his allies together for his Asiatic war, the great effort of Europe against Asia. Europe versus Asia. He felt like Herodotus preaching Hellenic unity; a greater Herodotus preaching the unity of Christendom; he felt like King Philip of Macedonia preparing the campaigns that Alexander led. He felt like Cæsar marching southward. Like Peter the Hermit. Like John the Baptist. Like — But indeed all history welled up in him. He believed all the promises he extorted. He perceived indeed that these promises were made with a certain resistance, with implicit reservations, but for a time he was able to carry on and disregard the faint flavour of unreality this gave his great combination. He was convinced that if only he held his course his own will was powerful enough to carry the European mind with him.

His squadrons throbbed over Europe, and above him was the blue sky — and above the blue that God of Nations who surely rules there, though so many pseudo-intellectual men have forgotten it. The Lord Paramount, in an ecstasy of self-confidence, waved his white hand aloft.

The God of Nations grew real again as the Lord Paramount recreated him. The God of Battles came back reassured and sat down again upon the Great White Throne.

"MY God," said the Lord Paramount.

Whatever obsessions with local feuds might cloud the minds of his kindred dictators, whatever sub-policies and minor issues (from a world point of view) might be complicating their thoughts, surely there was nothing so comprehensive and fundamental and profoundly and essentially true as his own statement of British policy. After all, he owed something to the vanished Parham's intelligence. It was unjust not to admit something brilliant about poor old Parham. The Parham that had been. The man had had penetration even if he had had no power. He had been too modest and inaggressive, but he had had penetration. The more often his admirable summation of the international situation was repeated the more clear and beautiful it seemed.

"The lines of the next world struggle shape themselves," said the Lord Paramount to Paramuzzi, "rationally, logically, inevitably.

Need I explain the situation to your Latin lucidity? Here—" and he made a sweeping gesture in the air before them, for now he could do it without a table— "here, inimitably vast, potentially more powerful than most of the world put together, is Russia..."

Et cetera.

And so to the aeroplane again, droning loudly over the mountain crests, a god of destiny, a being history would never forget.

Europe became like a large-scale map spread out beneath him. It was as if he sat in Mr. Parham's study at St. Simon's and had lapsed into daydreams with his atlas on his knee. How often had Mr. Parham passed an evening in that very fashion! And so soaring over Europe, he could for a time forget almost altogether his dispute with Camelford and Sir Bussy; the paradoxical puzzle of the gas supply he could ignore almost completely, and those queer impish doubts which scuttled about in the shadows of his glory.

IX. — WAR WITH RUSSIA

The results of the Lord Paramount's meteoric circlings in the European heavens would no doubt have become apparent in any event, very soon. But their development was forced on with a very maximum of swiftness by a series of incidents in Persia, Turkestan, Afghanistan, and along the northwest frontier of India.

For such a crisis the mind of the Lord Paramount was fully prepared. He could draw the map of central Asia from memory and tell you the distance between all the chief strategic points. Fact was only assisting his plans. For a century it had been evident to every sound student of history, under the Soviet rule just as plainly as under the Czar, that the whole welfare and happiness of Russia depended upon access to the sea. From the days of Peter the Great to those of the enlightened and penetrating Zinovieff, the tutors of the Russian intelligence had insisted upon the same idea. Dostoievsky had given it the quality of a mystical destiny. It was inconceivable to them that Russia could prosper, flourish, and be happy without owning territories that would give her a broad, uninterrupted, exclusive outlet upon the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean.

The school of British thought that had produced Mr. Parham was entirely of that opinion, and for an industrious century the statecraft of Britain had schemed, negotiated, and fought with the utmost devotion for the strangulation of Russia. The vast areas of Russia in Europe and Asia could not be productive and prosperous without serious injury to the people in Great Britain. That was axiomatic. If Russia established herself upon the sea, Britain would be irrevocably injured. That there might be a way of trading the products and needs of that great territory in an entirely satisfactory manner without the conquest, assimilation, or stringent suppression of Turks, Persians, Armenians, Baluchis, Indians, Manchus, Chinese, and whoever else intervened, was equally preposterous to the realistic minds of Russia. It was one of those great questions of ascendancy out of which the shapes of history are woven.

Steadfastly, automatically, these two great political systems had

worked out the logical consequences of their antagonism. The railway in central Asia had been and remained primarily, a weapon in this war. The Russians pushed up their strategic railways from Askabad and Merv and Bokhara; the British replied with corresponding lines. Teheran and Kabul festered with abominable Russian spies and propagandists, scoundrels of the deepest dye, and with the active and high-minded agents Britain employed against them.

With the coming of the aeroplane the tension had tightened exceedingly. Over Meshed and Herat buzzed the Russians and the British, like wasps who might at any time sting.

This was the situation with which the Lord Paramount had to deal. He meant to force a decision now while the new régime in Russia was still weak and comparatively unprepared. Although the anti-British propaganda of the Russians was extraordinarily effective— "anti-imperialist" they called it — there was every reason to believe that their military discipline, munitions, and transport preparations in Uskub and Turkomania were still far below the Czarist level.

The crisis was precipitated by an opportune British aviator who nose- dived in flames into the bazaar at Kushk and killed and cooked several people as well as himself. A violent anti-British riot ensued. Bolshevik propaganda had trained these people for such excesses. A British flag was discovered and duly insulted, and shots were fired at two colleagues of the fallen airman who circled low to ascertain his fate.

The news, in an illuminated form, was at once communicated to the press of the world, and the Lord Paramount dictated a spirited communication to Moscow that followed the best precedents of Lord Curzon.

The Russian reply was impolite. It declared that British aeroplanes had no business over the Turkoman soviet republic. It reiterated charges of sustained hostility and malignity against the British government since the fall of the Kerensky regime. It enlarged upon the pacific intentions and acts of soviet Russia and the constant provocation to which it had been subjected. It refused point blank to make any apology or offer any compensation.

The Lord Paramount communicated this ungracious and insolent

reply to the Powers, with an appeal for their sympathy. He announced at the same time that as a consequence of this culminating offence a state of war now existed between the United Soviet Republics and the British Empire. Neutral Powers would observe the customary restraints towards belligerents.

Herat and Kandahar were promptly occupied by Russian and British troops respectively, as precautionary measures, and a powerful British air force, supporting a raid of friendly Kurds, took and sacked Meshed. Herat was bombed by the British simultaneously with the far less effective bombing of Kandahar by the Russians. Although only high explosives and incendiary bombs were used in both cases, the Afghan population of these two towns, oblivious to the gigantic urgencies of the situation, displayed the liveliest resentment against Britain. This was manifestly unfair. This was clearly the result of an unscrupulous propaganda. They might perhaps be allowed a certain resentment for Herat, but it was soviet bombs which burst in Kandahar.

The Lord Paramount had succeeded in doing what even Mr. Brimstone Burchell had failed to do. He had got his war with Russia — and Afghanistan thrown in.

The day following the declaration of hostilities the British and Japanese, acting in strict accordance with a secret agreement already concluded through the foresight of the Lord Paramount, proclaimed the Chinese Kuomintang as an ally of Russia, published documents alleged to have been stolen by trustworthy agents from Russian and Chinese representatives in proof of this statement, and announced the blockade of China. The Japanese also landed very considerable forces to protect the strategic points in the railway system of eastern China from anything that might threaten them.

The British people, always a little slow at the uptake, took a day or so to realize that another World War was beginning. At first the hostilities seemed to be all Asia away, and merely spectacular for the common man. The music halls were laughing rather cynically at this return to war, but in quite a patriotic and anti-Bolshevik key. It was a joke against peace talk, which has always been rather boring talk to the brighter sort of people. The Lord Protector considered it advisable to create a press control bureau to make it perfectly clear to

the public what was to be thought and felt about the conflict. True, there was none of the swift patriotic response that had made England the envy of the world in 1914, but unemployment was rife, and the recruiting figures were sufficiently satisfactory to preclude an immediate resort to conscription. Anti-Russian propaganda could be developed gradually, and enthusiasm could be fanned as it was required.

He issued a general order to commanding officers everywhere: “A cheerful activity is to be maintained. Everyone on the move briskly. Every flag flying and every band busy. This is to be a bright and hopeful war. A refreshing war.”

The instant fall in the numbers of the unemployed was featured conspicuously in all the papers.

X. — AMERICA OBJECTS

But now, after these confident beginnings, came a pause for thought. So far he had been doing his best to leave America out of the reckoning. He had counted on a certain excitement and discontent over there. His concerted action with Japan, and particularly the revelation of a secret understanding with Tokio, was, he knew, bound to produce irritation. But he was now to realize the extreme sensitiveness of American opinion, not only to any appearance of interference with American shipping, but also to any tampering with American interests in China and eastern Siberia. And he was to realize reluctantly how alien to British ideas American thought has become.

He was suddenly and strenuously visited by the new American ambassador. Abruptly on the heel of a telephone message at one o'clock in the morning the American ambassador came.

Through some conspiracy of accidents the Lord Paramount had not yet met the American ambassador. Mr. Rufus Chanson had been in France, where his wife had been undergoing an operation. Now he had come back post-haste, and a communication from Washington had brought him headlong to the Lord Paramount in the small hours.

His appearance recalled at once a certain Mr. Hamp, a banker whom Mr. Parham had met at that memorable dinner at Sir Bussy's. He had the same rather grayish complexion, the same spectacles; he stooped in the same way, and he spoke with the same deliberation. If he had not been Mr. Rufus Chanson, he would certainly have been Mr. Hamp.

He was received in the War Office room that had now become the Lord Paramount's home. He was ushered in almost furtively by an under secretary. Mrs. Pinchot, with whom the Lord Paramount had been relaxing his mind, sat in one corner throughout the interview, watching her master with dark adoring eyes.

"My lord!" said Mr. Chanson, advancing without a greeting. "What does this mean? What does it all mean? I've hardly kept touch. I got papers on board the boat, and my secretary met me at Dover. I'm thunderstruck. What have you been doing? Why have I

got this?" He waved an open document in his hand.

The Lord Paramount was surprised by his visitor's extreme agitation but remained calm. "Mr. Chanson, I believe," he said and offered his hand and motioned to a chair. "May I ask what is the matter?"

"Don't say you've been deliberately interfering with American shipping at Tientsin," implored Mr. Chanson. "After all that has passed. Don't say you've seized five ships. Don't say it's by your orders the Beauty of Narragansett was fired on and sunk with seven men. As things are, if that is so — God knows what our people won't do!"

"There is a blockade."

The American appealed to heaven. "WHY, in the name of Holiness, is there a blockade?"

"There has been some incident," the Lord Paramount admitted. He turned to Mrs. Pinchot, who rustled with her papers. Her little clear voice confirmed, "Beauty of Narragansett refused to obey signals and sunk. Number of drowned not stated."

"My God!" said Mr. Chanson. "Will you British people never understand that in the American people you're dealing with the most excitable people on God's earth? Why did you let it happen? You're asking for it."

"I don't understand," said the Lord Paramount calmly.

"Oh, God! He doesn't understand! The most sensitive, the most childish, the most intelligent and resolute of nations! And he outrages their one darling idea, the Freedom of the Seas, and he sinks one of their ships and seven of their citizens as though they were so many Hindoos!"

The Lord Paramount regarded the scolding, familiar-mannered figure and contrasted it with any possible European diplomatist. Surely the Americans were the strongest of all strangers. And yet so close to us. It was exactly like being scolded by a brother or an intimate schoolfellow, all seemliness forgotten.

"We gave notice of our intention. We were within our rights."

"I'm not here to argue points. What are we going to do about it? Couldn't you have given way just on that particular thing? I can't help myself, I have to give you this dispatch."

He didn't offer to give it. He seemed indeed to cling to it.

"Listen to me, my Lord Paramount," he said. "The President is a man of Peace; he's God's own man of Peace; but remember also he's the spokesman of the American people and he has to speak as their representative. This dispatch, sir, is going to the newspapers as we talk. It can't be held. Here it is. You may think it hectoring, but half the folks over there will say it isn't hectoring enough. The Freedom of the Seas! They're mad for it. Even the Middle West, which hasn't an idea what it means, is mad for it. Seizures! And sinking us! Never did I think, when I came to St. James's, I should have to deal with such a situation as this... Everything so pleasant. The court. The kindly friends. And now this fierceness... My wife, sir, over there has taken to her bed again. All the good Paris did her — undone!"

He put the paper on the table and wrung his liberated hands. He subsided into distressful mutterings.

The Lord Paramount took the dispatch and read it swiftly. His face grew pale and stern as he read. Dismay and indignation mingled in his mind. "Hectoring" was certainly the word for it. It made the historical Venezuela message seem a love letter. These Americans had never been adepts at understatement. Britain had to discontinue the blockade "forthwith" — a needless word — restore certain seized ships, compensate...

When he had finished reading he turned back a page, in order to gain time before he spoke. He was thinking very rapidly how the country would take this, how Canada would take it, how the Empire and the world would be affected. He was already very anxious about his proposed allies in Europe, for none had shown a decent promptitude in carrying out the terms of the understandings he had made with them. Germany, Poland, Yugo-Slavia, Italy had done nothing against Russia, had not even closed a frontier, and France, though she had partly mobilized, had made no clear intimation of her intentions and done nothing further in the way of cooperation. All of them seemed to be waiting — for some further cue. What was going to happen to these hesitating associates when they heard of this quarrel with America?

"My dear sir," he said. "My dear sir. In Britain we have always been willing to recognize the peculiar difficulties of American

diplomacy. But this dispatch — !”

“Yeh!” said the American ambassador. “But don’t think it’s just talking.”

“It goes too far. We know how urgent the exigencies of party politics can be over there. But the embarrassment — ! It is almost a habit with American statesmen to disregard every difficulty with which we may be struggling on this side... I will try to take this patiently, this string of insults. But — The President must have written it at fever heat.”

“Can’t you say that the shooting was a mistake? Hot-headed subordinates and all that?”

For a moment the Lord Paramount thought, and then, with a start and a glance at Mrs. Pinchot he exclaimed, “Good heavens! Go back on a man who obeys orders!”

“You’ll hold to it, it was by order?”

“A general order — yes.”

The American shrugged his shoulders and despaired visibly.

“I must consider the situation,” said the Lord Paramount. “Your President has put me in a very terrible position. I have come into public affairs to restore honour to human life. I have vowed myself to a high-spirited England. I have come to carry out great policies that will save all that is precious in Western civilization. I do not think that this public of yours in America dreams of the immense issues of this struggle that is now beginning. Nor your President. And while I gather together the forces of this great empire for a world conflict, suddenly this petty affair is seized upon to distress, to complicate — I don’t know — possibly to humiliate... What good, I ask you, can this hectoring do? What end can it serve?”

“Yeh!” the American ambassador intervened. “But what I want you to understand, sir, is that this message isn’t simply hectoring with an eye to the next election, and it isn’t just to be set aside as tail-twisting the British lion. You’ll get things all wrong if you try to see it like that. The American people are a childish people, perhaps, but they’re large. They see things big. They have some broad ideas. Perhaps suddenly they’ll grow up into something very fine. Even now they have a kind of rightness. And, rightly or wrongly, they have got this idea of the Freedom of the Seas as strongly now as they

have the Monroe idea; they've got it and the President has got it; and if there isn't something done to put this in order, and if your people go seizing or shooting at any more of our ships, well — I'm not threatening you. I'm talking in sorrow and dismay — you'll get an ultimatum."

"My DEAR sir!" said the Lord Paramount, still resisting the unpleasant idea. "But an ultimatum means—"

"What I'm telling you. It means war, sir. It means something nobody on either side of the Atlantic has ever had the courage to figure out..."

XI. — DISLOYALTY

For the truly great, dark days are inevitable. Purple is the imperial colour. All great lives are tragedies. Across the first splendour of the Lord Paramount's ascendancy there began now to fall the shadows of approaching disaster. His mood changed with the mood of his adventure. America had misunderstood him, had almost wilfully refused to respect the depth and power of his tremendous purpose. He had not realized how widely she had diverged from the British conception of history and a European outlook upon world affairs. And suddenly all his giant schemes were straining to the breaking point. The incident of the Beauty of Narragansett and the note from the American President was the turning point of his career.

He had known this adventure with human affairs was heroic and vast; he had not realized its extreme and dangerous intricacy. He felt suddenly that he was struggling with a puzzle. It was as if he had been engaged in an argument and had been trapped and involved and confused. His mind was curiously haunted by that dispute of Mr. Parham's with Camelford and Hamp and Sir Bussy. They seemed always in the back of his picture now, welcoming any setback, declaring his values false and his concepts obsolete, and foreshadowing some vague and monstrous new order of things in which he had no part. That vague and monstrous new order of things was at the same time the remotest, least distinct, and most disconcerting element in all this sideshow of unpleasant apprehensions.

He had believed himself the chosen head of the united British peoples. Under the stress of the presidential note he was to discover how extremely un-British, British peoples could be. That realization of the supreme significance of the Empire, of which Seeley and Kipling had been the prophets, had reached only a limited section of the population. And the intensity with which that section had realized it had perhaps a little restricted its general realization. Had imperial patriotism come too late? Had it yet to penetrate outwardly and DOWN? Had it failed to grip, or had it lost its grip on the colonial imagination?

Not only the masses at home, but the Dominions had drifted out of touch with and respect for, or perhaps had never really been in touch with, the starry pre-eminence of Oxford and Cambridge thought, with army and navy and ruling-class habits and traditions, with the guarded intimacies of London and all that makes our Britain what it is to-day. These larger, vaguer multitudes were following America in a widening estrangement from the essential conceptions of British history and British national conduct. For some years the keen mind of Mr. Parham had sensed this possible ebb of the imperial idea. It had troubled his sleep. Failing it, what was there before us but disintegration? Now the heroic intelligence of the Lord Paramount was suffused by those anxieties of Mr. Parham. Could it be that he might have to play a losing game? Might it be that after all his destiny was not victory but the lurid splendour of a last stand for ideas too noble for this faltering world?

When he had seized power the London crowd had seemed oafishly tolerant of this change of régime. It had not applauded, but it had not resisted. Evidently it did not care a rap for Parliament. But, on the other hand, had there been enthusiasm for the dictatorship? Now it became apparent that whatever enthusiasm there might be was shot and tainted by the gravest discontent. As he drove down Whitehall in his big blue car with Mrs. Pinchot and Hereward Jackson to take the air in Richmond Park for his one precious hour of waking rest in the day, he discovered an endless string of sandwich men plodding slowly up the street.

"Leave Russia alone," in red, was the leading inscription. This when we were actually at war with Russia. That at least was open treason. Other boards more wordy said: "Leave China alone. We have enough to worry about without grabbing China." A third series declared: "We don't want War with America." That was the culminating point of the protest. These men were plodding up the street unhindered. Not a patriot was in action. No one had even thought of beating them about their heads. And yet sandwich men are particularly easy to beat about their heads. The police had done nothing.

What on earth did the people want? National dishonour? He could not disdain these sandwich boards. He was taken too much by

surprise. He looked. He turned his head about. He gave himself away. People must have observed his movements, and it was necessary to do something promptly. The car pulled up. “Get out,” he said to Hereward Jackson, “go back and have this stopped. Find out who supplied the money.”

He went on his way past the Houses of Parliament, locked up and, as it seemed to him that day, silently and unfairly reproachful. He was moody with Mrs. Pinchot in Richmond Park. “They are stirring up my own people against me,” he said suddenly out of a great silence. Some interesting work was being done in the park with military telpherage, but his mind was preoccupied, and his questions lacked their usual penetrating liveliness.

Presently he found himself phrasing the curt sentences of a Decree of public security. That is what things had come to. There would have to be a brief opening, detailing the position of danger in which the Empire was placed. Then would follow the announcement of new and severe laws against unpatriotic publications, unpatriotic agitation, and the slightest suggestion of resistance to the civil and military authorities. The punishments would have to be stern. Real plain treason in wartime calls for death. Military men obliged to kill were to be released from all personal responsibility if their acts were done in good faith. Attacks on the current régime were to involve the death penalty — by shooting. In any case. An Empire that is worth having is worth shooting for.

When he returned, stern and preoccupied, to his desk at the War Office, ready to dictate this Decree, he found Hereward Jackson with a medley of fresh and still more disconcerting news. The sandwich men of Whitehall were only the first intimations of a great storm of protest against what speakers were pleased to call the provocation of America.

All over the country meetings, processions, and a variety of other demonstrations were disseminating a confused but powerful objection to the Lord Paramount’s policy. The opposition to his action against Russia was second only in vigour to the remonstrances against the American clash. “Right or wrong,” said one prominent Labour leader at Leicester, “we won’t fight either Russia or America. We don’t believe in this fighting. We don’t believe it is necessary.

We were humbugged last time — but never again." And these abominable sentences, this complete repudiation of national spirit, were cheered!

"One must shoot," muttered the Lord Paramount; "one must not hesitate to shoot. That would be the turning point," and he called on Mrs. Pinchot to take down his first draft of the Decree.

"We must have this broadcast forthwith," he said. "This rot must be arrested, these voices must be silenced, or we go to pieces. Read the Decree over to me..."

With the publication of the American blockade message throughout the Empire, all the multiplying evidences of hesitation, disintegration, and positive disloyalty underwent an abrupt and alarming magnification. The Dominions, it became evident, were as disposed as the masses at home toward a dishonourable pacificism. They were as blind to the proper development of the imperial adventure. The Canadian Prime Minister sent the Lord Paramount a direct communication to warn him that in no case could Britain count on Canadian participation in a war with the United States. Moreover, British armed forces in Canadian territory and Canadian waters would have to be immobilized as a precautionary measure if the tension of the situation increased further. He was making all the necessary preparations for this step.

A few hours later protests nearly as disconcerting came in from South Africa and Australia. In Dublin there were vast separatist republican meetings, and there was a filibustory raid of uncertain significance against Ulster. At the same time a string of cipher telegrams made it plain that the insurrectionary movement in India was developing very gravely. A systematic attack upon the railway systems behind the northwest frontier was evidently going on; the bombing of bridges and the tearing up of the tracks at important centres was being carried out far more extensively than anyone could have foreseen. The trouble was taking a religious turn in the Punjab. A new leader, following, it would seem, rather upon the precedent of Nansk, the founder of the Sikhs, had appeared out of the blue and was preaching a sort of syncretic communist theology, intended to unite Moslim and Hindu, communist and nationalist, in a common faith and a common patriotism. He was actively militant. His

disciples were to be fighters, and their happiest possible end was death in battle.

Amidst the confusion one cheering aspect was the steady loyalty of the Indian princes. They had formed a sort of voluntary Council of India of their own, which was already cooperating actively with the imperial authorities in the suppression of disorder and the defence of the frontier. Their readiness to take over responsibilities was indisputable.

Such events, the Lord Paramount argued, should have raised the whole of Britain in a unison of patriotic energy. All social conflicts should have been forgotten. A torrent of patriot recruits should be pouring into the army from every position in life. They would have done so in 1914. What had happened since to the spirit and outlook of our people?

Well, the Decree of Public Security must challenge them. Its clear insistence on unquestioning loyalty would put the issue plainly. They would have to search their hearts and decide.

A further series of anxieties was caused by the ambiguous behaviour of his promised allies in Europe. Some of them were taking action in accordance with the plain undertakings of their respective strong men. France and Italy had mobilized, but on their common frontier. Von Barheim, on the telephone, pleaded that he was embarrassed by a republican and antipatriotic revolt in Saxony. Turkey also had mobilized, and there was complex nationalist trouble in Egypt.

The Lord Paramount became more and more aware of the extreme swiftness with which things happen to responsible statesmen as the war phase comes round. The American situation had developed from a featureless uneventfulness to an acute clash in four days. Hour after hour, fresh aspects of the riddle of Empire elaborated themselves. He had drawn together all the threads of Empire into his own hands. There were moments when he felt an intolerable envy of Paramuzzi with his straightforward peninsula and his comparatively simple problem.

XII. — THE SERVITUDE OF THE MIGHTY

As the situation became more complicated and the urgent dangers crowded closer and closer upon the Lord Paramount, this realization of the atmosphere of haste in which the great decisions of our modern world are made grew more and more vivid and dominant in his vision of the rôle he had to play.

"I found my task too easy at the beginning," he said to Mrs. Pinchot. "Plainly there has to be a struggle, an intricate struggle. I had counted on national and imperial solidarity. I find I have to create it. I had counted on trusty allies, and I find I must take precautions against them. I thought I should be sustained by patriotic science and patriotic finance and patriotic business enterprise, and I find men without souls that evade my inspiration. I fight against forces of dissolution more powerful than I ever dreamt could be launched against the established order of human life. Only our army, our navy, the church, and the old conservative classes stand out amidst this universal decay. They keep their form; they still embody imperial purpose. On these at least I can rely. But see what falls upon me."

"My demi-God!" breathed Mrs. Pinchot, but lest it should be a source of embarrassment to both of them he affected not to hear. He became magnificently practical.

"I must organize my life so that not a moment of time nor an ounce of energy goes to waste. Here I shall install myself for good. Here I must trust you to control my staff and arrange my hours. Here you must make me as much of a home as I can have, as well as an office. Your intelligence I know I can count upon, as I count upon your loyalty. Gradually we will select a staff from the civil service to act as a filter for news and for responsibility. We will apportion each man his task. At present we have still to assemble that machine. Economy of force, efficiency of action..."

Very rapidly these ideas bore fruit, and the Lord Paramount's life began to be ordered so as to squeeze the utmost work out of his marvellous brain in his gigantic struggle to keep the Empire and the world upon the rails of established tradition.

Sir Titus Knowles, formerly so antagonistic, had now become the rude but subjugated servant of the master's revealed greatness. To him was entrusted the task of keeping the Lord Paramount fit. He dieted and when necessary he drugged this precious body. He pursued its chemical variations in all their manifestations with sedulous watchfulness. He prescribed its phases of rest and its intervals of sleep.

Sir Titus had found his place in life.

All day and all night, at every half hour, a simple meal, a cutlet, or a roast fowl would be prepared. Had the moment come to eat? If not, the meal was dismissed and the next in succession was brought into readiness for service. So too the Lord Paramount's couch or his bed was always there for repose or slumber.

War and diplomacy have been compared to the game of chess, but it is chess with a board of uncertain shape and extent and with pieces with unlimited powers of spontaneous movement. At any moment astounding adjustments of view must be possible, if this game is to be carried to a triumphant conclusion. In his own room he had a comparatively clear table, from which all papers not immediately under consideration were banished. Usually it bore only a water bottle and glass and a silver bowl in which every day Mrs. Pinchot arranged a fresh mass of simple but beautiful flowers. She and she alone shared this workroom with him, silent and watchful, the only being whose continual close proximity did not interfere with the mighty workings of his mind. Thence he moved to and fro between the large apartment in which General Gerson and Field Marshal Capper had tables covered with maps, and a series of other apartments containing books and files for reference, in which expert secretaries waited, ready to leap to their feet and answer the slightest inquiry. Beyond and out of hearing were typists and other copyists. Further were an outer circle of messengers, waiting rooms for visitors, and the like.

Sir Titus arranged that the Lord Paramount should take exercise in artificially oxygenated chambers, clad in a restricted but becoming costume reminiscent of a Spartan athlete. There also he rode horseless saddles that backed and reared in the most hygienic fashion, or he rowed in imaginary boat races with dials recording his

speed, or he punched leather balls, or cycled on stationary bicycles, or smacked golf balls at targets that registered the force and distance of his drive — always in a manner, Sir Titus arranged, to exhilarate him and sustain his self-confidence. And once a day he would drive out with Mrs. Pinchot through the sullen and yet stimulating atmosphere of the capital.

A simple life it was in essence that the Lord Paramount led during this phase, a life of industrious servitude for the sake of all the noblest traditions of mankind.

BOOK IV. — THE SECOND WORLD WAR

I. — THE BIG GUNS GO OFF

The Lord Paramount was able to give exactly fifty-three minutes of thought altogether to the threatened Canadian defection before he made a decision. There was one sustained stretch of rather under thirty minutes, before he got up on the morning after he had learnt of this breach on the imperial front; the other twenty-three-odd minutes were in scraps, two or three at a time. There were also some minutes of overlap with the kindred questions of Australia and South Africa. His decision was to take a spirited line both with Canada and the United States.

The truth is that in this matter and every matter with which he dealt he did not think things out in the least. Men of action do not think things out. They cannot. Events are too nimble for them. They may pause at times and seem to think, but all they do in fact is to register the effective sum of such ideas as they had accumulated before they became men of action. Like most Englishmen of his type and culture, the Lord Paramount had long allowed a certain resentment against American success to fester in his mind. He had long restrained a craving to behave with spirit towards America. Just to show America. In a crisis this was bound to find release.

He resolved to make an immense display of naval force and throw the battle fleet and indeed all the naval forces available across the Atlantic to Halifax, unannounced. It was to be like a queen's move in chess, a move right across the board, bold and dangerous, to create a new situation. Suddenly this awe-inspiring array, with unknown orders and unrevealed intentions, would loom up from nothingness upon the coast of Nova Scotia. This rendezvous was to be approached from a northeasterly direction so as to avoid the liner routes and create an effect of complete surprise. It was to be a blow at the nervous equilibrium of the American continent.

A powerful squadron would enter the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and detach an array of small craft to steam up to Ottawa, while the main fleet, with its multitudinous swarming screen of destroyers, torpedo craft and aeroplanes was to spread out in a great curve eastward from Cape Sable, a mighty naval crescent within striking distance of New

York. When these manoeuvres were completed the outgoing and incoming liners to New York, Boston, and Halifax need never be out of sight of a British warship or so, cruising ready for action, for nearly a thousand miles. The battleships and battle cruisers were to be instructed to make themselves conspicuous and to hold up and impress shipping. The moral effect on both Canada and the United States could not fail to be immense. More than half the American fleet, the Lord Paramount understood, was in the Pacific based on San Francisco, vis-à-vis to Japan; many ships were reported in dock, and the preponderance of British strength therefore would be obvious to the crudest intelligence. Meanwhile the exchange of views with Washington was to be protracted in every possible way until the display of force could be made.

It took, he found, just forty-two minutes more of the Lord Paramount's time to launch the cardinal orders for this stupendous gesture. Once more the unthinking urgency with which the crowning decisions in history must be made impressed itself upon his mind. The acts of history, he realized, are but the abrupt and hazardous confirmation of the vague balance of preceding thought.

A multitude of other matters were pressing upon his attention. All the while he was full of unanswered criticisms of the thing he was doing. But there was no time at all to weigh the possibilities of failure in this attempt to browbeat the New World. It seemed the plain and only way of meeting and checking the development of the American threat and so bringing the ambiguous hesitations of the European Powers to an end. He dismissed some lurking doubts and transferred his attentions to the advantages and difficulties of accepting a loan of Japanese troops for service in India. That was the next most urgent thing before him. Bengal was manifestly rotten with non-cooperation and local insurrectionary movements; a systematic wrecking campaign was doing much to disorder railway communications, and the Russo-Afghan offensive was developing an unexpected strength. He realized he had not been properly informed about the state of affairs in India.

It was impossible to carry out the orders of the Lord Paramount as swiftly as he had hoped. The Admiralty seemed to have had ideas of its own about the wisdom of entirely denuding the British coasts, and

with many ships a certain unpreparedness necessitated delays. The Admiralty has long been a power within a power in the Empire, and the Lord Paramount realized this as a thing he had known and forgotten.

It was three days before the Grand Fleet was fairly under way across the Atlantic. It included the Rodney, the Royal Sovereign, and four other ships of that class, the Barham, Warspite, Malaya, and two other battleships, the Hood and Renown and another battle cruiser and the aircraft carriers, Heroic, Courageous, and Glorious. A screen of destroyers and scouting light cruisers had preceded it and covered its left wing.

The first division of the minor flotilla coming up from Plymouth had started twelve hours ahead of the capital ships. These latter converged from north and south of the British Isles to a chosen rendezvous south of Cape Farewell.

The American navy, he learnt in the course of another day, was already in movement; it was unexpectedly prompt and in unexpected strength. The Lord Paramount was presently informed that a force of unknown composition, but which was stated to include the Colorado, the West Virginia, and at least ten other battleships, was assembling between the Azores and the Gulf of Mexico and steaming northward as if to intercept the British fleet before it reached the Canadian coast. This was a much more powerful assembly of ships than he had supposed possible when first he decided on his queen's move. But that move was now past recall.

Something of the chessboard quality hung over the North Atlantic for the next three days. The hostile fleets were in wireless communication within thirty-six hours of the Lord Paramount's decision, and on a chart of the Atlantic in an outer room flagged pins and memoranda kept him substantially aware of the state of the game.

Neither government was anxious to excite public feeling by too explicit information of these portentous manoeuvres. Neither, as a matter of fact, admitted any official cognizance of these naval movements for three days. Nothing was communicated to the press, and all inquiries were stifled. The American President seemed to have been engaged in preparing some sort of declaration or

manifesto that would be almost but not quite an ultimatum. Steadily these great forces approached each other, and still the two governments assumed that some eleventh-hour miracle would avert a collision.

A little after midnight on May 9th the fringes of the fleets were within sight of each other's flares and searchlights. Both forces were steaming slowly and using searchlights freely. Movement had to be discreet. There was an unusual quantity of ice coming south that year and a growing tendency to fog as Newfoundland was approached. Small banks of fog caused perplexing disappearances and reappearances. The night was still and a little overcast, the sea almost calm, and the flickering reflections on the clouds to the south were the first visible intimation the British had of the closeness of the Americans. Wireless communication was going on between the admirals, but there were no other exchanges between the two fleets, though the air was full of the cipher reports and orders of each side.

Each fleet was showing lights; peace conditions were still assumed, and survivors from the battle describe that night scene as curiously and impressively unwarlike. One heard the throbbing of engines, the swish and swirl of the waters about the ships, and the rhythmic fluctuations of the whir of the aeroplanes above, but little else. There was hardly any talk, the witnesses agree. A sort of awe, a sense of the close company of Fate upon that westward course kept men silent. They stood still on the decks and watched the pallid search-lights wander to and fro, to pick out and question this or that destroyer or cruiser, or to scrutinize some quietly drifting streak of fog. Some illuminated ship would stand out under a searchlight beam, white and distinct, and then, save for a light or so, drop back into the darkness. Then eyes would go southward to the distant flickerings of the American fleet, still out of sight below the horizon.

Like all naval encounters, the history of these fatal hours before the Battle of the North Atlantic remains inextricably confused. Here again the time factor is so short that it is almost impossible to establish a correct sequence of events. What did such and such commander know when he gave this or that order? Was this or that message ever received? It is clear that the American fleet was still assembling and coming round in a great curve as it did so to the

south of the British forces. These latter were now steaming southwestward towards Halifax. The American admiral, Semple, was coming into parallelism with the British course. He agreed by wireless not to cross a definite line before sunrise; the two fleets would steam side by side until daylight with at least five miles of water between them. Then he took upon himself to inform Sir Hector Greig, the British commander-in-chief of the general nature of his instructions.

"My instructions," said his message, "are to patrol the North Atlantic and to take whatever steps are necessary to prevent any possibility of hostile action against Canada or the United States of America in North American waters."

Sir Hector replied: "My instructions are to patrol the seas between Great Britain and Canada, to base myself upon Halifax and send light craft up the Saint Lawrence River."

Each referred the situation back to his own government. The Lord Paramount was awakened at dawn and sat in his white silk pajamas, drinking a cup of tea and contemplating the situation.

"Nothing must actually happen," he said. "Greig must not fire a shot unless he is fired at. He had better keep on his present course... The Americans seem to be hesitating..."

It was still night at Washington, and the American President had never gone to bed.

"Are the British in great force?" he asked.

Nobody knew the strength of the British.

"This cheap Mussolini at Westminster is putting us up some! I don't see why we should climb down. How the devil is EITHER party to climb down? Is there no way out?"

"Is there no way out?" asked the Lord Paramount, neglecting his tea.

"Battleships are made for battles, I suppose," said someone at Washington.

"Aw — don't talk that stuff!" said the President. His intonation strangely enough was exactly what a scholarly imperialist would expect it to be. "We made 'em because we had the Goddamned experts on our hands. Wish to hell we hadn't come in on this."

An ingenious person at Washington was suggesting that if the

American fleet wheeled about to the south and turned eastward towards Great Britain, Greig would have either to follow with all his forces, split his fleet, or leave England exposed.

"That will just repeat the situation off Ireland," said the President.

Until it was too late some hitch in his mind prevented him from realizing that every hour of delay opened a score of chances for peace. A sleepless night had left him fagged and unendurably impatient. "We can't have the two fleets steaming to and fro across the Atlantic and not firing a gun. Ludicrous. No. When we built a fleet we meant it to be a fleet. And here it is being a fleet — and a fleet it's got to be — and behave accordingly. We've got to have the situation settled here and now. We've got to end this agony. Semple must keep on. How long can they keep on parallel before anything happens?"

A brisk young secretary went to inquire.

Meanwhile the Lord Paramount had got into a warm dressing gown and was sketching out the first draft of a brilliant memorandum to the President. It was to be conciliatory in tone, but it was to be firm in substance. It was to take up the whole unsettled question of the freedom of the seas in a fresh and masterful manner. The room was flooded with sunlight, and in a patch of that clear gay brightness on his table were some fresh lilies of the valley, put there by the forethought of Mrs. Pinchot. She had been sent for to put the memorandum in order as soon as his pencil notes were ready.

Almost simultaneously messengers of disaster came to both these men.

The brisk young secretary returned to the President.

"Well," said the President, "how long can we carry on before we see 'em?"

"Sir," said the brisk young secretary, with such emotion in his voice that the President looked up and stared at him.

"Ugh!" said the President and clutched his hands as if he prayed, for he guessed what that white-faced young man had to tell.

"The Colorado," said the young man. "Blown out of the water. We've sunk a great battleship..."

It was Hereward Jackson broke the news to the Lord Paramount.

His face, too, lit with a sort of funereal excitement, told its

message.

"Battle!" he gasped. "We've lost the Rodney..."

For some moments the consciousness of the Lord Paramount struggled against this realization. "I am dreaming," he said.

But if so the dream would not break, and the tale of the disaster began to unfold before him, irreversibly and mercilessly, as if it were history already written. News continued to come from the fleet, but there was no further sign that the direction and inquiries he continued to send out were ever received and decoded.

The gray dawn over the dark Atlantic waters had discovered the two fleets within full view of each other and with a lane of vacant water perhaps three miles broad between them. The intention of the two admirals had been to have a five-mile lane, but either there had been some error in reckoning on one side or the other, or else there had been encroachment by the minor craft. Ahead, under the skirts of the flying night were strata of fog which veiled the sea to the west. Each admiral, though still hopeful of peace, had spent every moment since the fleets became aware of one another in urgent preparation for action. The battleships on either side were steaming line ahead with rather more than sufficient space to manoeuvre between them. The Colorado was heading the American line followed by the Maryland and West Virginia; then, a little nearer the British, the Idaho, Mississippi, and New Mexico followed, and after them the California and at least seven other battleships. These three groups were all prepared to wheel round into a battle formation of three columns. In each case the battle cruisers were following the battleships; the Hood was the tail ship of the British, and the aircraft ships were steaming under cover of the battleships on the outer side. Beyond them were light cruiser squadrons. The two main lines of warships were perhaps a little more than five miles apart. Nearer in were the flotillas of destroyers and special torpedo craft held like hounds on a leash and ready at an instant's signal to swing round, rush across the intervening space, and destroy or perish. Submarines were present on the outer verge of the fleets awaiting instructions. The British seem also to have had special mine layers in reserve for their contemplated operations on the American coast. The airplane carriers were tensely ready to launch their air squadrons and made a

second line behind the screen of battleships and battle cruisers.

As the light increased, the opaque bank of fog ahead began to break up into fluffy masses and reveal something blue and huge beyond. Shapes appeared hunched like the backs of monstrous beasts, at first dark blue, and then with shining streaks that presently began to glitter. A line of icebergs, tailing one after the other in receding symmetry, lay athwart the course of the British fleet and not four miles from the head of that great column. They emerged from the fog garment like a third Armada, crossing the British path and hostile to the British. It was as if the spirit of the Arctic had intervened on the American side. They made the advancing leviathans look like little ships. To the British battle fleet they were suddenly as plain and menacing as a line of cliffs, but it is doubtful whether Admiral Semple ever knew of their existence.

Perhaps Greig should have informed Semple of this unexpected obstacle. Perhaps there should have been a discussion. It is so easy to sit in a study and weigh possibilities and probabilities and emerge with the clearest demonstration of the right thing he ought to have done. What he actually did was to issue a general order to the fleet to change direction two points to the south. He probably never realized that these huge ice masses were almost invisible to the American fleet and that his change of direction was certain to be misunderstood. It must have seemed perfectly reasonable to him that the Americans should make a corresponding swerve. So far it had been for him to choose the direction. To the American admiral, on the other hand, quite unaware of the ice ahead, this manoeuvre could have borne only one interpretation. The British, he thought, were swinging round to fight.

Perhaps he too should have attempted a further parley. What he did was to fire a shot from one of his six-pounders across the bows of the Rodney. Then he paused as if interrogatively.

Just one small intense flash of light, pricking through the cold tones of the dawn, the little hesitating puff of dense whirling smoke just beginning to unfold, the thud of the gun — and then that pause. It was as if a little thing had occurred and nothing else had altered.

Each admiral must have been torn most abominably between the desire to arrest a conflict and the urgent necessity of issuing final

orders for attack. It is good to have the best of arguments, but if battle is to ensue it is of supreme importance to strike the first blow. No one now will ever know if at this stage there was any further attempt on the part of either admiral to say anything, one to the other.

All the survivors speak of that pause, but no one seems able to say whether it lasted for seconds or minutes. For some appreciable length of time, at any rate, these two arrays of gigantic war machines converged upon each other without another shot. For the most part the doomed thousands of their crews must have been in a mood of grim horror at the stupendous thing they were doing.

Who knows? There may have been an exaltation. The very guns seemed to sniff the situation incredulously with their lifted snouts. With a whir the first aeroplanes took the air and rose to swoop. Then the Maryland let fly at the two most advanced of the British destroyers with all her available smaller guns and simultaneously in a rippling fringe of flashes both lines exploded in such an outbreak of thudding and crashing gunfire as this planet had never witnessed before.

The inevitable had arrived. America and Britain had prepared for this event for ten long years; had declared it could never happen and had prepared for it incessantly. The sporting and competitive instincts of the race had been inflamed in every possible way to develop a perverted and shuddering impulse to this conflict. Yet there may have been an element of amazement still, even in the last moments of Greig and Semple. Imagination fails before those last moments, whether it was rending, cutting, or crushing metal, jetting steam or swirling water that seized and smashed and stamped or scalded the life out of their final astonishment.

The Colorado had caught the convergent force of the Rodney and the Royal Sovereign; she was hit by their simultaneous salvoes; her armour must have been penetrated at some vital spot, and she vanished in a sheet of flame that roared up to heaven and changed into a vast pillar of smoke. The Rodney, her chief antagonist, shared her ill luck. The sixteen-inch guns of the Colorado and Maryland had ripped her behind, something had happened to her steering gear; without any loss of speed she swept round in a curve, and the Royal Sovereign, plastered and apparently blinded by the second salvoes of

the Maryland, struck her amidships with a stupendous crash. An air torpedo, some witnesses declare, completed her disaster. But that is doubtful. The American aircraft certainly got into action very smartly, but not so quickly as all that. The Rodney, say eyewitnesses, seemed to sit down into the water and then to tilt up, stern down, her futile gun turrets towering high over the Royal Sovereign, and her men falling from her decks in a shower as she turned over and plunged into the deeps just clear of the latter ship.

A huge upheaval of steaming water lifted the Royal Sovereign by the bows and thrust her aside as though she were a child's toy. Her upreared bows revealed the injuries she had received in the collision. As she pitched and rolled over the ebullitions of the lost Rodney, the Maryland pounded her for the second time. Her bruised and battered gunners were undaunted. Almost immediately she replied with all her eight big guns, and continued to fight until suddenly she rolled over to follow the flagship to the abyss. Down the British line the Warspite was also in flames and the Hood, very badly ripped and torn by a concentration from the Arizona, Oklahama, and Nevada, had had a series of explosions. The Idaho also was on fire.

So this monstrous battle began. After the first contact all appearance of an orderly control disappeared. To get into battle formation the main squadrons had to swing round so as to penetrate the enemy force, and so even this primary movement was never completed. Further combined tactical operations there were none. The rapid cessation of command is a necessary feature of modern marine fighting. The most ingenious facilities for adjusted movement become useless after the first impact. Controls are shot away, signalling becomes an absurdity, and the fight enters upon its main, its scrimmage phase, in which weight tells and anything may happen. The two lines of battleships, already broken into three main bunches, were now clashing into each other and using every gun, each ship seeking such targets as offered and doing its best by timely zigzagging to evade the torpedo attacks that came dashing out of the smoke and confusion. The minor craft fought their individual fights amidst the battleships, seeking opportunities to launch their torpedoes, and soon a swarm of aeroplanes released from the carriers were whirring headlong through the smoke and flames. The

temperament and tradition of both navies disposed them for attack and in-fighting, and no record of shirking or surrender clouds the insane magnificence of that tragic opening.

Never before had the frightful power of modern guns been released at such close quarters. These big ships were fighting now at distances of two miles or less; some were in actual contact. Every shell told. For the first time in the twentieth century battleships were rammed. The Royal Oak ran down the Tennessee, the two ships meeting almost head on but with the advantage for the Royal Oak, and the Valiant was caught amidships by the New Mexico, which herself, as she prepared to back out of her victim, was rammed broadside on by the Malaya. All these three latter ships remained interlocked and rotating, fighting with their smaller armaments until they sank, and a desperate attempt to board the New Mexico was made from both British battleships. "Fire your guns as often as possible at the nearest enemy" had become the only effective order. "Let go your torpedo at the biggest enemy target."

The battle resolved itself slowly into a series of interlocked and yet separate adventures. Smoke, the smoke of the burning ships and of various smoke screens that had been released by hard-pressed units, darkened the sky and blocked out regions of black fog. A continuous roar of crashing explosions, wild eruptions of steam and water, flashes of incandescence and rushes of livid flame made a deafening obscurity through which the lesser craft felt their way blindly to destroy or be destroyed. As the sun rose in the heavens and a golden day shot its shafts into the smoke and flames the long line of the first battle was torn to huge warring fragments from which smoke and steam poured up to the zenith. The battleships and battle cruisers still in action had separated into groups; the Queen Elizabeth, the Barham, and the Warspite, which had got its fires under control, fought, for example, an isolated action with the Pennsylvania and the Mississippi round the still burning and sinking Idaho. The three British ships had pushed right through the American line, taking their antagonists with them as they did so, and this circling conflict drifted far to the south of the original encounter before its gunfire died away and the battered and broken combatants followed each other to the depths. The huge American aircraft carrier, the Saratoga, was

involved in this solemn and monstrous dance of death; her decks were swept by a hurricane of fire, and she could no longer give any aid to her aeroplanes, but she made such remarkably good use of her eight-inch guns that she alone survived this conflict. She was one of the few big ships still afloat in the afternoon, and she had then nearly a thousand rescued men aboard of her. Most of the airmen, after discharging their torpedoes, circled high above the battle until their fuel gave out, and then they came down and were drowned. One or two got on to the icebergs. The West Virginia, thrusting to the west of the Royal Sovereign group, struck one of these icebergs and sank later. The Revenge and Resolution, frightfully damaged but still keeping afloat, found themselves towards midday cut off from the main fight by ice and were unable to re-engage.

After the first shock of the encounter between the giant ships the rôle of the destroyer flotillas became more and more important. They fought often in a black and suffocating fog and had to come to the closest quarters to tell friends from enemies. They carried on fierce battles among themselves and lost no chance of putting in a torpedo at any larger ship that came their way.

The torpedoes of the aircraft showed themselves particularly effective against the light cruisers. They were able to get above the darknesses of the battle and locate and identify the upper works of their quarries. They would swoop down out of the daylight unexpectedly, and no anti-aircraft guns were able to do anything against them. The Nevada, it is said, was sunk by a British submarine, but there is no other evidence of submarine successes in the fight. It is equally probable that she was destroyed by a floating mine — for, incredible as it seems, some floating mines were released by a British mine carrier.

No one watched that vast fight as a whole; no one noted how the simultaneous crashes of the first clash, that continuing fury of sound, weakened to a more spasmodic uproar. Here and there would be some stupendous welling up of smoke or steam, some blaze of flame, and then the fog would grow thin and drift aside. Imperceptibly the energy of the conflict ebbed. Guns were still firing, but now like the afterthoughts of a quarrel and like belated repartees. The reddish yellow veils of smoke thinned out and were torn apart. Wide spaces

of slowly heaving sea littered with rocking débris were revealed. Ever and again some dark distorted bulk would vanish and leave a dirty eddy dotted with struggling sailors, that flattened out to a rotating oily smudge upon the water.

By three in the afternoon the battle was generally over. By half-past three a sort of truce had established itself, a truce of exhaustion. The American flag was still flying over a handful of battered shipping to the southwest, and the British remnant was in two groups, separated by that fatal line of icebergs. These great frozen masses drifted slowly across the area of the battle, glassy and iridescent in the brilliant daylight, with streams of water pouring down their flanks. On one of them were two grounded aeroplanes and at the water-line they had for fenders a fringe of dead or dying men in life belts, fragments of boats and suchlike battle flotsam.

This huge cold intervention was indubitably welcome to the now exhausted combatants. Neither side felt justified in renewing the conflict once it had broken off. There is no record who fired the last shot nor when it was fired.

And so the Battle of the North Atlantic came to its impotent conclusion. It had not been a battle in any decisive sense, but a collision, a stupendous and stupendously destructive cannonade. Fifty-two thousand men, selected and highly trained human beings in the prime of life, had been drowned, boiled to death, blown to pieces, crushed, smashed like flies under a hammer, or otherwise killed, and metallurgical and engineering products to the value of perhaps five hundred million pounds sterling and representing the toil and effort of millions of workers had been sent to the bottom of the sea. Two British battleships and three American were all in the way of capital ships that emerged afloat, and the losses of light cruisers and minor craft had been in equal or greater proportion. But, at any rate, they had done what they were made to do. The utmost human ingenuity had been devoted to making them the most perfect instruments conceivable for smashing and destroying, and they had achieved their destiny.

At last the wireless signals from home could penetrate to the minds of the weary and sickened combatants. They found themselves under orders to cease fire and make for the nearest base.

That was in fact what they were doing. The Revenge and the Resolution accompanied by the cruisers Emerald and Enterprise and a miscellaneous flotilla, all greatly damaged and in some cases sinking, were limping on their way to Halifax. The airplane carrier Courageous, with a retinue of seaplanes and an escort of seven destroyers had turned about to the Clyde. To the south the American survivors, in unknown force, were also obeying urgent wireless instructions to withdraw. Acting under directions from their respective admiralties, a number of the still fairly seaworthy craft, including the Saratoga, the Effingham, the Frobisher, the Pensacola, and the Memphis, all flying white flags above their colours, were engaged in salvage work among the flotsam of the battle. There was no cooperation in this work between the British and Americans. And no conflict. They went about their business almost sluggishly, in a mood of melancholy fatigue. Emotion was drained out of them. For a time chivalry and patriotism were equally extinct. There are tales of men weeping miserably and mechanically, but no other records of feeling. There were many small craft in a sinking condition to be assisted, and a certain number of boats and disabled seaplanes. There were men clinging to the abundant wreckage, and numbers of exhausted men and corpses still afloat.

The surviving admirals, captains, and commanders, as message after message was decoded, realized more and more plainly that there had been a great mistake. The battle had been fought in error, and they were to lose no time in breaking off and offering, as the British instructions had it, “every assistance possible to enemy craft in distress.” It was a confusing change from the desperate gallantry of the morning.

There was some doubt as to the treatment of enemy men and material thus salvaged, but ultimately they were dealt with as captures and prisoners of war. This led later to much bitter recrimination.

The comments of these various surviving admirals, captains, and commanders, all now fatigued and overwrought men, and many of them experiencing the smart and distress of new wounds, as they set their battered, crippled, and bloodstained ships to these concluding tasks, make no part of this narrative; nor need we dwell upon their

possible reflections upon the purpose of life and the ways of destiny as they had been manifested that day. Many of them were simple men, and it is said that battle under modern conditions, when it does not altogether destroy or madden, produces in the survivors a sort of orgiastic cleansing of the nerves. What did they think? Perhaps they did not think, but just went on with their job in its new aspect.

It is to be noted, perhaps, that before nightfall some of the ships' crews on both sides were already beginning what was to prove an endless discussion, no doubt of supreme importance to mankind, which side could be said to have "won" the Battle of the North Atlantic. They had already begun to arrange and to collaborate in editing their overcharged and staggering memories...

Amazement was going round the earth. Not only in London and New York, but wherever men were assembled in cities the news produced a monstrous perturbation. As night followed daylight round the planet an intense excitement kept the streets crowded and ablaze. Newspapers continued to print almost without intermission as fresh news came to hand, and the wireless organizations flooded the listening world with information and rumour. The British and Americans, it became clearer and clearer, had practically destroyed each other's fleets; they had wiped each other off the high seas. What would happen next, now that these two dominating sea powers were withdrawn from the international balance? The event was dreadful enough in itself, but the consequences that became apparent beyond it, consequences extraordinarily neglected hitherto, were out of all proportion more stupendous and menacing for mankind.

II. — FACING THE STORM

All life has something dreamlike in it. No percipient creature has ever yet lived in stark reality. Nature has equipped us with such conceptions and delusions as survival necessitated, and our experiences are at best but working interpretations. Nevertheless, as they diverge more and more from practical truth and we begin to stumble against danger, our dearest dreams are at last invaded by remonstrances and warning shadows. And now this dream that was the life of the Lord Paramount was changing; more and more was it discoloured by doubt and adverse intimations.

He had taken hold of power with an absolute confidence. Mr. Parham talking to an undergraduate had never been more confident than the Lord Paramount evicting Parliament. His task then was to have been the restoration of the enduring traditions of human life to their predominance. His rôle had been the godlike suppression of rebellious disorders. By insensible degrees his confidence had been undermined by the growing apprehension of the greatness and insidiousness of the forces of change against which he was pitted. The logic of events had prevailed. He was still convinced of the rightness of his ideas but the godlike rôle had shrunken to the heroic.

The Battle of the North Atlantic had been the decisive accident to shatter his immediate vision of a British Empire rejuvenescent and triumphant, crowning the processes of history and recognizing him as its heaven-appointed saviour. He had to begin over again and lower down, and for a time at least at a disadvantage.

Blow upon blow rained upon him after that opening day of calamity. First came the tale of disaster from the battle itself: this great battleship lost, that cruiser on fire, a score of minor craft missing. At first both Britain and America accepted the idea of defeat, so heavy on either side was the list of losses. Then followed the relentless unfolding of consequences. The Dominions, with a harsh regard for their own welfare, were standing out. Canada had practically gone over to the United States and was treating for a permanent bond. South Ireland was of course against him; a republican coup d'état had captured Dublin, and there was already

bloody and cruel fighting on the Ulster border; South Africa declared for neutrality, and in some of the more Dutch districts Union Jacks had been destroyed; Bengal was afire, and the council of Indian princes had gone over en bloc from their previous loyalty to a declaration of autonomy. They proposed to make peace with Russia, deport English residents, and relieve the Empire of further responsibility in the peninsula. It was appalling to consider the odds against that now isolated garrison.

The European combinations of the Lord Paramount had collapsed like a house of cards. The long projected alliance of Paramuzzi with Germany against France, which had failed to materialize so long as the German republic had held and so long as the restraining influence of Anglo-Saxondom had been effective, was now an open fact. For all practical purposes America, Great Britain, Russia, were all now for an indefinite time removed from the chessboard of Europe, and the ancient and obvious antagonism round about the Alpine massif were free to work themselves out. Europe was Rhineland history again. An unhoped for revanche offered itself, plainly and clearly to the German people, and the accumulated resentment of ten years of humiliation and frustration blazed to fury. Von Barheim's once doubtful hold upon power lost any element of doubt. He was hailed as a reincarnation of Bismarck, and in a day Germany became again the Germany of blood and iron that had dominated Europe from 1871 to 1914. Liberalism and socialism were swamped by patriotism and vanished as if they had never been.

Within three days of the Battle of the North Atlantic nearly the whole of Europe was at war, and the French were clamouring for the covenanted British support upon their left wing as they advanced into Germany. The French fleet was quite able now to keep the vestiges of America's naval forces out of European waters, and there was also the threat of Japan to turn American attention westward. Hungary had lost no time in attacking Roumania; Czecho- Slovakia and Yugo-Slavia had declared for France, Spain had mounted guns in the mountains commanding Gibraltar and became unpleasant to British shipping, and only Poland remained ambiguously under arms and at peace, between a threatening Russia on the east, dangerous Slav states to the south, a Germany exasperated on the score of Danzig

and Silesia, and both Latvia and Lithuania urging grievances. The windows of the Polish Embassy in Paris suffered for this ambiguity.

There were pogroms in Hungary and Roumania. Indeed, all over eastern Europe and nearer Asia, whatever the political complexion of the government might be, the population seemed to find in pogroms a release of mental and moral tension that nothing else could give.

Turkey, it became evident, was moving on Bagdad, and a revolt in Damascus seemed to prelude a general Arab rising against France, Britain, and the Jewish state in Palestine. Both Bulgaria and Greece mobilized; Bulgaria, it was understood, was acting in concert with Hungary but Greece as ever remained incalculable. Public opinion in Norway was said to be violently pro-American and in Sweden and Finland pro-German, but none of these states took overt military action.

The inertias of British foreign policy were tremendous.

"We hold to our obligations," said the Lord Paramount, sleepless, white, and weary, and sustained at last only by the tonics of Sir Titus, but still battling bravely with the situation. "We take the left wing in Belgium."

III. — OVERTURE IN THE AIR

"We take the left wing in Belgium."

It was an admission of failure; it was the acceptance of a new situation. In the original scheme for world warfare that the Lord Paramount had laid before the Council of the British Empire, he had dismissed the possibility of fighting in western Europe. He had seen his war east of the Vistula and Danube and with its main field in Asia. He had trusted unduly to the wisdom and breadth of view of both America and the European chancelleries. And consequently, in spite of a certain insistence from Gerson, he had troubled very little about the novel possibilities of air war at home. Now, hard upon the heels of the naval tragedy, came the new war in the air.

The land war on the European frontiers made little progress after the first French advance into Westphalia. The Franco-Italian front was strongly fortified on either side, and the numerous and varied mechanisms of the reconstituted British army had still to come into action. There had been some miscalculation about the transport needed to put them across the Channel. But every power now possessed huge air forces, and there was nothing to prevent their coming into action forthwith. The bombing of London, Paris, Hamburg, and Berlin with high explosives occurred almost simultaneously. The moon was just entering upon its second quarter; the weather all over the Northern Hemisphere was warm and serene, and everything favoured this offensive.

Night after night, for fifteen days, the air of Europe was filled with the whir of gigantic engines and the expectation of bursting bombs. The fighting planes kept each other busy; anti-aircraft guns were a disappointment, and all the great centres of population seethed with apprehensions and nervous distresses that might at any time explode in senseless panics. The early raiders used only high explosives. The conventions were observed. But everywhere there was a feeling that these explosive and incendiary raids were merely experimental preludes to the dreaded gas attacks.

There was a press agitation in London for "Gas masks for everyone" and a strong discussion of the possibilities of the use of

“anti-gases.” The London authorities issued exhortations to the people to keep calm, and all theatres, music halls, and cinemas were closed to prevent nocturnal congestions of the central districts. Millions of masks were issued, most of them of very slight efficiency, but they served to allay panic, and indeed no alleged precaution was too absurd for that purpose.

Gerson, looking ahead, removed as much as he could of the establishment of the government headquarters to a series of great gas-proof dugouts he had prepared at Barnet, but for a time the Master clung to his rooms in the War Office and would not resort to this concealment. Gerson protested in vain. “But,” said the Lord Paramount, “Whitehall is Empire. To be driven underground in this fashion is already half defeat.”

One night a rumour gained conviction as it spread until it became an absolute assurance, that gas was on its way and gas in monstrous quantities. There followed a reign of terror in the East End of London and a frantic exodus into Essex and the West End. The Germans used incendiary shells that night, and there were horrible scenes in the streets as the fire engines fought their way through the westward streaming crowds. Hundreds of cases of people who were crushed and trampled upon reached the hospitals, and the bombs and the fires accounted for thousands more.

The Lord Paramount was asked to visit the hospitals. “Can’t the Royal Family do that?” he asked almost irritably, for he hated the spectacle of suffering. His heart quailed at the thought of that vista of possibly reproachful sufferers. And then, changing a tone which jarred even on his own sensibilities: “I will not seem to infringe upon the popularity of the reigning house. The people will rather see them than me, and I have my hands full — full! — my God, full to overflowing.”

Mrs. Pinchot understood, she understood entirely, but the general public, which has no sense of the limitations of the time and energy of its leaders, interpreted this preoccupation with duty as an inhuman rather than superhuman characteristic and made its interpretation very plain and audible. It became clearer and clearer to the Lord Paramount that destiny had not marked him for a popular leader. He tried to steel his heart to that disappointment, but the pain was there.

For his heart was as tender as it was great.

Gerson greeted the crescendo of the air attacks with unconcealed satisfaction.

“They’re getting it in Paris worse than we are,” he said. “Those German incendiary bombs are amazing, and nerves are all out. They’re talking of reprisals on the population in Westphalia. Good! Rome got it too last night. It’s this sort of thing the Italians can’t stand. They feel too much. They may turn on Paramuzzi in a frenzy if we just keep on at them. But, trust me, nothing could be better to wake up our own people. They’ll begin to snarl presently. The British bulldog hasn’t begun to fight yet. Wait till its blood is up.”

The ugly mouth closed with an appreciative snap.

“The only possible reply to these German incendiaries is Gas L. And the sooner we get to that the better. Then the world will see.”

IV. — THE STRONG WAY WITH MUTINY

But the common man in Britain was not being the British bulldog of General Gerson's hopes. He was declining to be a bulldog altogether. He was remaining a profoundly skeptical human being, with the most disconcerting modern tendencies. And much too large a part of his combative energy was directed, not against the appointed enemy, but against the one commanding spirit which could still lead him to victory.

The Decree of Public Safety was now the law of the land. It might not be strictly constitutional, but the dictatorship had superseded constitutionalism. Yet everywhere it was being disputed. The national apathy was giving place to a resistance as bold as it was dogged. North, east, and west there were protests, remonstrances, overt obstruction. The recalcitrant workers found lawyers to denounce the Lord Paramount's authority, funds to organize resistance. Half the magistrates in the country were recusant and had to be superseded by military courts. Never had the breach between the popular mind and the imperial will of the directive and possessing classes been so open and so uncompromising. It was astounding to find how superficial loyalty to the Empire had always been.

The distress of the Lord Paramount at these tensions was extreme. "My English," he said. "My English. My English have been misled." He would stand with a sheaf of reports from the mobilization department in his hand repeating, "I did not count on this."

It needed all the most penetrating reminders of which Gerson was capable to subdue that heroically tender heart to the stern work of repression. And yet, just because the Lord Paramount had stood aside and effaced himself in that matter of the hospitals he was misjudged, and his repressive measures were understood to be the natural expression of a fierce and arrogant disposition. The caricaturists gave him glaring and projecting eyes and a terrible row of teeth. They made his hands — and really they were quite shapely hands — into the likeness of gesticulating claws. That was a particularly cruel attack. "I must be strong," he repeated to himself, "and later they will

understand."

But it is hard for a patriot to be stark and strong with his own misguided people. Riots had to be dispersed with bayonets and rifle-fire in the south of Wales, in Lancashire and the Midlands. There was savage street fighting in Glasgow. The tale of these domestic casualties lengthened. The killed were presently to be counted by the hundred. "Nip the trouble in the bud," said Gerson. "Arrest the agitators and shoot a few of them, if you don't like firing on crowds. Over half the country now time is being lost and the drafts delayed."

So those grim sedition clauses which had looked so calmly heroic on paper were put into operation. The military authorities arrested vigorously. A few old hands were caught in the net but even before the court-martials were held it was apparent to the Lord Paramount that for the most part they were dealing with excitable youths and youngish men. Most of these younger agitators would have been treated very indulgently indeed if they had been university students. But Gerson insisted upon the need of a mental shock for the whole country. "Shoot now," he said, "and you may forgive later. War is war."

"Shoot now," said Gerson, "and the rest will come in for training, good as gold. Stop the rot. And let 'em say what they like about you."

The Lord Paramount could feel how tenderly and completely that faithful secretary of his could read the intimations of his saddened and yet resolute profile. "Yes," he admitted, "we must shoot — though the bullet tears us on its way."

The order went forth.

There was a storm of remonstrances, threats, and passionate pleas for pity. That was to have been expected. Much was fended off from direct impact upon the Lord Paramount, but he knew the protest was there. It found an echo in his own too human heart. "The will of a great people," he said, "must override these little individual stories. There is this boy Carrol from Bristol they are asking me to reprieve! There seems to be a special fuss about him. A sort of boy scholar of promise — yes. But read the poison of those speeches he made! He struck an officer..."

"Shall Carrol die?" asked an outbreak of placards along Whitehall

that no one could account for. That hardened the Lord Protector's mouth; he must show he would not be bullied, and in stern response to that untimely challenge young Carrol and five and thirty associates died at dawn.

There was a hideous popular clamour at this unavoidable act of war. The Lord Paramount's secretarial organization was far too new and scanty to protect him adequately from the clamour of this indignation and, it may be, something in himself acted as an all too ready receiver for these messages of antagonism. Abruptly out of the void into which he was wont to vanish appeared Sir Bussy the unquenchable. He was now almost full size again and confident and abrupt in his pre-war style.

"This shooting of boys!" he said. "This killing of honest and straightforward people who don't agree with you! Why, damn it! we might be in Italy! It's a century out of date. Why did you ever let this war get loose?"

The Lord Paramount stood defensively mute, and it was Gerson who took the word out of his mouth and answered Sir Bussy. "Have you never even heard of discipline? Have you never heard of the needs of war? I tell you we are at war."

"But why are we at war?" cried Sir Bussy. "Why the devil are we at war?"

"What the devil are fleets and armies for if we are never to use them? What other ways are there for settling national differences? What's a flag for if you're never going to wave it? I tell you, it's not only street-corner boys and Bolshie agitators who are going against the wall. This Empire of ours is fighting for its life. It calls on every man. And you know as well as I know, Sir Bussy, what it needs to win... And at what a pace the stuff is coming in!"...

Gerson had turned to the Lord Paramount, and Sir Bussy, it seemed, was no longer present.

"Peace time you may be as soft as you like — delay and humbug have always been the rule for home politics, naturally — but you can't play about with war and foreign policy. For things of that order you need a heart of steel."

"A heart of steel," echoed the Lord Paramount.

"Gas L and a heart of steel."

“We go through with it, mon général,” said the Lord Paramount. “Trust me.”

“Time we started going through with it...”

What was far more distressing to the Lord Paramount than any other resistances or remonstrances over this business of internal discipline was the emergence from nothingness of a certain old lady, old Mrs. Carrol. Against addresses, protests, demonstrations, threats of murder, and the like, the Lord Paramount could be the strongest of strong men, could show a face of steely disregard. But old Mrs. Carrol was different. Her attack was different in its nature. She did not threaten, she did not abuse. Carrol, it seemed, had been an only son. She wanted him alive again.

She came like a sudden thought into his presence. She was exactly like an old woman lodge-keeper at Samphore Park, near Mr. Parham’s early home. That old woman, whose name was long since forgotten, had had an only son also, three or four years older than the juvenile Parham, and he had worked in the garden of Mr. Parham’s father. Always he had been known as Freddy. He had been a very friendly, likable boy, and the two youngsters had been great friends and allies. He read books and told stories, and once he had confided a dreadful secret to his companion. He was half minded to be a socialist, he was, and he didn’t believe not mor’n half the Bible was true. They had had an argument, a quarrel, for it was young Parham’s first meeting with sedition, and duty and discipline were in his blood. But of course it was impossible there could be any identity between this long-forgotten rustic and young Carrol. By now he would be old enough to be young Carrol’s father.

It was a little difficult to trace how this old lady got at the Lord Paramount. She seemed to have great penetrating power. His staff ought perhaps to have fended her off. But the same slight distrust of those about him, that sense of the risk of “envelopment,” which made the Lord Paramount desire to be as “accessible” as possible to the generality, left just the sort of opening through which a persistent old woman of that kind might come. At any rate, there she was, obliterating all the rest of the case, very shabby and with a careworn face and a habit of twisting one hand round inside the other as she spoke, extraordinarily reminiscent of Freddy’s mother.

“When people go to war and get boys shot and the like, they don’t think a bit what it means to them they belongs to, their mothers and such, what have given their best years to their upbringing.

“He was a good boy,” she insisted, “and you had him shot. He was a good SKILFUL boy.”

She produced a handful of paper scraps from nowhere and held them out, quivering, to the Lord Paramount. “Here’s some of the little things he drew before he went into the works. Why, I’ve seen things by royalties not half so good as these! He didn’t ought to have been shot, clever as he was. Isn’t there anything to be done about it?

“And when he got older he had a meccano set, and he made a railway signal with lights that went on and off, and the model of a windmill that went round when you blew it. No wonder he was welcome in the works. I’d have brought them here for you to see if I’d thought they would have weighed with you. You’d have marvelled. And now he won’t never make anything more with his hands, and those busy little brains of his are still as stone.”

There is no record that Alexander or Cæsar or Napoleon was haunted by an old woman who kept on twisting her hands about as though she were trying to wring the blood out of a deed that was done, and who sought to temper her deadly persistence by a pose of imploration. Almost she cringed.

“You don’t understand, my good woman,” said the Lord Paramount, “He put his brains to a bad use. He was a mutineer. He was a rebel.”

The old lady would have none of that. “Artie wasn’t ever a rebel. Don’t I know it? Why, when he was little I was frightened at his goodness, always so willing, he was and so helpful. I’ve thought time after time, for all his health and spirits, ‘That boy must be ailing,’ so good he was to me...

“And now you’ve shot him. Can’t anything else be done about it still? Can’t something be done instead?”

“This crucifies me,” he said to Mrs. Pinchot. “This crucifies me.”

That made him feel a little better for a time, but not altogether better. “All things,” he said, “I must suffer in my task,” and still was not completely convinced. He descended from his cross. He tried to be angry. “Damn old Mrs, Carrol! Can no one make that old woman

understand that WAR IS WAR? This is no place for her. She must be stopped from coming here.”

But she continued to come, nevertheless; though her coming had less and less the quality of a concrete presence and more and more of the vague indefinable besetting distressfulness of a deteriorating dream.

V. — THE DECLARATION OF WASHINGTON

The Great War of 1914-18 had not only been the greatest war in history, it had also been the greatest argument about war that had ever stormed through the human mind. The Fourteen Points of President Wilson, the vague, unjustifiable promises of Crewe House to a repentant Germany, had been more effective than any battle. And now this great war the Lord Paramount had launched was taking on the same quality of an immense and uncontrollable argument.

In the long run man will be lost or saved by argument, for collective human acts are little more than arguments in partial realization.

And now that strange mixture of forward-reaching imagination, hardy enterprise, exalted aims, and apparently inseparable cynicism which makes the American character a wonder and perplexity for the rest of mankind was to become the central reality of the Lord Paramount's mind.

The argument was given definite form by an entirely characteristic American action on the part of the President. He issued a declaration, which was to be known in history as the Declaration of Washington, in which, illogically enough since his country was at war, he proposed to decline any further fighting. America, he said, was not too proud but too sane to continue the conflict. He did not add, the Lord Paramount remarked, as he might have done, that the Battle of the North Atlantic had left her quite incapable for a time of any further effective intervention in Europe or Asia. Everything she had left she needed to watch Japan. But that factor in the question the President ignored — shamelessly. And he said things fellows like Hamp or Camelford or Atterbury might have said. He said things Sir Bussy would have cheered. He was the first head of a state to come out definitely on the side of the forces that are undermining and repudiating history.

This declaration of inaction, this abandonment of militant nationalism flew like an arrow athwart the Atlantic into the hands and into the mental storm of the Lord Paramount. The document presented itself a hasty duplicate from some transmitting machine, in

smudged purple lettering, and he paced his bureau with it in his hand and read it aloud to his always faithful listener. An inner necessity obliged him to read it aloud, distasteful though it was in every line. This great denial was worded with that elaborate simplicity, that stiffly pompous austerity, which has long been the distinctive style of American public utterances.

"'There has arisen suddenly out of the momentary failure of one young airman's skill in Persia a great and terrible crisis in the affairs of the world. With an incredible rapidity the larger part of mankind has fallen again into warfare. The material of warfare stood ready to explode, and there was no other means sufficiently available to avert this collapse. All over our planet, beyond every precedent, men are now slaying and destroying. These United States have not been able to remain aloof. Already our battleships have fought and thousands of our sons have been killed, and were it not for the ingrained sanity upon our northern and southern boundaries, all this continent also would be aflame.

"'Yet the fortunate position of our territories and our practical community of ideas with the great dominion to the north of us still holds us aloof from the extremer carnage. That and the naval strength that still remains to us, suffice to keep our homeland untouched by the daily and nightly horrors that now threaten civilian life in all the crowded cities of Europe and Asia. Our share in this work of devastation, as far as we are disposed to take a share, depends upon our willingness to attack. So far we have attacked and will attack only to stay the hand of the destroyer. It is still possible for the people of the American communities, almost alone now among all the communities of the world, to sleep soundly of nights, to spend days untroubled by the immediate sounds and spectacle of battle, to think and exchange thought with deliberation, and to consider the rights and possibilities of this tragic explosion of human evil. It is our privilege and our duty now to sit in judgment upon this frightful spectacle as no other people in the world can do.

"'It would be easy — indeed, for some of us Americans it has already been too easy — to find in our present relative advantage the recognition of peculiar virtues, the reward of distinctive wisdom. I will not lend myself to any such unctuous patriotism. It is for the

historians of a coming day to apportion the praise and blame among the actors in this world catastrophe. Perhaps no actors are guilty; perhaps they are impelled by forces greater than themselves to fulfil the rôles prepared for them; perhaps it is not men and nations but ideas and cultures that we should arraign. What matters now is that justly or unjustly we Americans have been favoured by fortune and granted unequalled privileges. We can serve the world now as no other people can do. In serving the world, we shall also serve ourselves. Upon us, if upon any people, has been bestowed, for the second and supreme occasion, the power of decision between world peace or world destruction.

"'Let us, in no spirit of boasting or nationalistic pride, but with thankfulness and humility, consider the peculiar nature of these United States. In their political nature they are unlike anything that has ever existed before. They are not sovereign states as sovereign states are understood in any other part of the world. They were sovereign states, but they have ceded to a common federal government that much of their freedom that might have led to warfare. Not without dire distress and passion and bloodshed did our forefathers work out this continental peace. The practical and intellectual difficulties were very great. It was hard to determine what was of local and what of general concern. To this day many points remain debatable. On the issue whether our labour should be here bound and here free, we spilt the lives of a generation. We learnt that we must make all labour free forever if progress was to continue. Not always have we been wise and noble in our career. Much that we have learnt we have learnt in suffering and through error. Nevertheless, our huge community, year by year and generation by generation, since its liberty was won, has been feeling its way towards the conception of an enduring and universal peace, has been seeking by pacts and propaganda some way of organizing a permanent peace in the world. It has become our tradition so far as we can be said to have a tradition. No other great mass of human beings has ever had so clear and active a peace disposition as our consolidated peoples. To us warfare has become a thing unnecessary and horrible, as intolerable as many another harsh and frightful custom, horrible and unpardonable now as human sacrifice and as

that holocaust of victims at a chieftain's burial which once seemed integral to social life. We know, and have gone far to realize in fact, that the life of all human beings can be fearless and free.

"'And if we have gone cautiously in our search for peace, avoiding above all things any entangling alliances with Powers organized on the militant pattern of the past, that separateness has not been because we, unmindful of our common humanity, were disposed to a selfish and sluggish isolation from the less happily circumstanced states of the Old World. It is rather because from our beginning and through the great wisdom of our chief founder Washington, we have been aware of the immense dangers that lurk in so mighty a proposition, so intricate and gigantic a project as world organization. It has been our steadfast determination that our naïve and ever-increasing strength should not be tricked into the service of Old World hates and Old World ambitions. From the utterances of President Wilson, through notes and memoranda and messages and conferences, to the days of the Kellogg Pact, the voice of America has been plainly for peace on earth and goodwill between all kinds of men.

"'In the past twelve years we have experienced much, seen much, thought and discussed abundantly, and it becomes clearer and clearer in our minds, it is a matter now of common remark and agreement, that we must regard all states and governments of to-day merely as the trustees and temporary holders of power for that universal conciliation and rule to which all things are tending. Here, as the elected head of your federal government, I can say plainly that no man on earth whatever owes more than a provisional allegiance to the rulers he may find above him, and that his profounder, his fundamental loyalty, is to no flag or nation, but to mankind. I say this of our constitution and of our flag as of all other flags and constitutions. The frightful suffering, bloodshed, and destruction of this present moment call to every man to turn his mind and hopes towards that federal government of the world whose creation, steadfastly and speedily, is now the urgent task before our race. Such rulers and ministers as fail to subserve this coalescence now are, we declare, no less than traitors to their human blood, the traitor slaves of dead imaginations and superannuated organizations.

“‘And so we, the government and people of the United States, stand out of this warfare just as completely as it is possible for us to stand out of it, armed and watchful, seeking some form of intervention that will bring it to an end. We issue our invitations to all such powers as remain still hesitating and neutral in this confusion of hates, to gather in conference, a conference not simply now for treaties, promises, and declarations, but for the establishment forthwith of united activities and unified controls, that shall never cease from operation henceforth. And we appeal not only to sovereign states to realize this conception of which our people has become the guardian and exponent; we appeal to every free-minded individual man and woman in the world. We say to all and sundry, “Stand out of this warfare. Refuse to be belligerent. Withdraw your services, withdraw your resources.” We are honest and loyal in our endeavour, we are acting upon the accumulated resolve of a century and a half, and we call to you for a loyalty transcending flag or country. So far as we of these states can assist and support your action, without intensifying the bitterness of conflict, we will. Restrain your rulers. Give yourselves now to that possible Empire of Peace, in which we and you and all the life that stirs upon this planet may cooperate together.’”

The reader paused.

He took a deep breath, made three paces to the window, and turned. He held out the paper and patted it. “There it is,” he said. “It was bound to come. There it is, plain and clear — the bolt that has been gathering force and weight — the moral attack.”

He paced. “Propaganda with a vengeance. An attack on our morale more deadly than a thousand aeroplanes.”

He stopped short. “Was there ever such hypocrisy?” he demanded.

“Never,” said Mrs. Pinchot stoutly. “It’s revolting.”

“They pressed us with their fleet-building. They bullied and quarrelled when we were only too ready for acquiescent action. They Shylocked Europe. And then all this humanitarian virtue!”

Something seemed to twist round in the mind of the Lord Paramount, something that twisted round and struck at his heart. He could not maintain his indignant pose. This Presidential address

suddenly allied itself with things that had lain dormant in his mind for weeks, things he associated with men like Camelford (and, by the bye, where on earth was Camelford?) and Sir Bussy. He stopped short in his pacing, with the typed copy of the address, held by one corner, dangling from his fingers.

"Suppose," said the Lord Paramount, "it is not hypocrisy! Suppose he really means the things he has said here! In spite of his patriots."

He stared at Mrs. Pinchot, and she was staring back at him.

"But how can he mean things that don't mean anything?" She stuck to it loyally.

"But they DO mean something. They DO mean something. Even if they don't mean it straight. Suppose this is humbug. I believe this is humbug. But humbug does not pretend to be something unless it pays to do so. There must be something to which it appeals. What is that something? What is that shapeless drive? Such history as I have ever taught or studied. A world without flags or nations. A sordid universal peace. The end of history. It's in the air; it's in the age. It is what Heaven has sent me to dispute and defeat. A delusion. A dream..."

"Where am I?" said the Lord Paramount and passed his hand across his brow. "Who am I?... A delusion and a dream? One or other is a delusion — this new world or mine?"

BOOK V. — QUINTESSENTIAL

I. — THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

"This is far more than a war between Britain and America," said the Lord Paramount. "Or any war. It is a struggle for the soul of man. All over the world. Let us suppose the President is hypocritical — and he MAY be hypocritical; nevertheless, he is appealing to something which has become very real and powerful in the world. He may be attempting only to take advantage of that something in order to turn the world against me, but that does not make that something to which he appeals less considerable. It is a spirit upon which he calls, a powerful, dangerous spirit. It is the antagonist to the spirit that sustains me, whose embodiment I am. It is my real enemy."

"You say things so wonderfully," said Mrs. Pinchot.

"You see this man, entrusted in wartime with the leadership of a mighty sovereign state, spits his venom against all sovereign states — against all separate sovereignty. He, the embodiment of a nation, deprecates nationality. He, the constitutional war leader, repudiates war. This is Anarchism enthroned — at the White House. Here is a mighty militant organization — and it has no face. Here is political blackness and night. This is the black threat at the end of history."

He paused and resumed with infinite impressiveness:

"Everywhere this poison of intellectual restatement undermines men's souls. Even honest warfare, you see, becomes impossible. Propaganda ousts the heroic deed. We promise. We camouflage. We change the face of things. Treason calls to treason."

She sat tense, gripping her typewriter with both hands, her eyes devouring him.

"Not THUS," said the Lord Paramount his fine voice vibrating. "Not THUS..."

"The jewels of life I say are loyalty, flag, nation, obedience, sacrifice... The Lord of Hosts!... Embattled millions!...

"I will fight to the end," said the Lord Paramount. "I will fight to the end... Demon, I defy thee!..."

His hands sought symbolic action. He crumpled the Presidential address into a ball. He pulled it out again into long rags and tore it to shreds and flung them over the carpet. He walked up and down,

kicking them aside. He chanted the particulars of his position. “The enemy relentless — false allies — rebels in the Empire — treachery, evasion, and cowardice at home. God above me! It is no light task that I have in hand. Enemies that change shape, foes who are falsehoods! Is crown and culmination in the succession of empires ours to close in such a fashion? I fight diabolical ideas. If all the hosts of evil rise in one stupendous alliance against me, still will I face them for King and Nation and Empire.”

He was wonderful, that lonely and gigantic soul pacing the room, thinking aloud, hewing out his mighty apprehensions in fragmentary utterances. The scraps of the torn Presidential address now, in hopeless rout, showed a disposition to get under tables and chairs and into odd corners. It was as if they were ashamed of the monstrous suggestions of strange disloyalties that they had brought to him.

“Curious and terrifying to trace the growth of this Adversary, the Critical Spirit, this destroyer of human values... From the days when Authority ruled. When even to question was fatal... Great days then for the soul. Simple faith and certain action. Right known and Sin defined. Now we are nowhere. Sheep without a shepherd... First came little disloyalties rebellious of sense and sloth. Jests — corrosive jests. Impatience with duty. One rebel seeking fellowship by corrupting his fellow. The simple beliefs, incredible as fact but absolutely true for the soul. That was the beginning. If you question them they go: the ages of faith knew that. But man must question, question, question. Man must innovate — stray. So easy to question and so fatal. Then Science arises, a concatenation of questions, at first apologetic and insidious. Then growing proud and stubborn. Everything shall be investigated, everything shall be made plain, everything shall be certain. Pour your acids on the altar! It dissolves. Clearly it was nothing but marble. Pour them on the crown! It was just a circle of metal — alloyed metal. Pour them on the flag! It turns red and burns. So none of these things matter...

“Why was this not arrested? Why did authority lose confidence and cease to strike? What lethargy crept into the high places?...

“And so at last the human story comes to a pause. The spirit of human history halts at her glorious warp and weft, turns aside, and asks, ‘Shall I go on?’

“SHALL SHE GO ON? With God’s help I will see that she goes on. One mighty struggle, one supreme effort, and then we will take Anarchy — which is Science the Destroyer — by the throat. This Science, which pretends to be help and illumination, which illuminates nothing but impenetrable darkness, must cease. Cease altogether. We must bring our world back again to tradition, to the classical standards, to the ancient and, for man, the eternal values, the historical forms, which express all that man is or can ever be...

“I thought that Science was always contradicting herself, but that is only because she contradicts all history. Essential to science is the repudiation of ALL foundations, her own included. She disdains philosophy. The past is a curiosity — or waste paper. Anarchism! Nothing is, but everything is going to be. She redeems all her promises with fresh promissory notes...

“Perpetually Science is overthrown, and perpetually she rises the stronger for her overthrow. It is the story of Antæus! Yet Hercules slew him!”

“MY Hercules!” whispered Mrs. Pinchot, just audibly.

“Held him and throttled him!”

“Yes, yes,” she whispered, “with those strong arms.”

The manner of the Lord Paramount changed.

He stood quite still and looked his little secretary in her deep, dark eyes. For one instant his voice betrayed tenderness. “It is a great thing,” he said, “to have one human being at least in whose presence the armour can be laid aside.” She made no answer, but it was as if her whole being dilated and glowed through her eyes.

Their souls met in that instant’s silence.

“And now to work,” said the Lord Paramount, and was again the steely master of his destiny.

“Oh, God!” he cried abruptly and jumped a foot from the ground.

There was no need for her to ask the reason for this sudden reversal of his dignity.

A whining overhead, a long whining sound, had grown louder, and then a loud explosion close at hand proclaimed that another enemy aeroplane had slipped through the London cordon. She leapt to her feet and handed him his gas mask before she adjusted her own, for one must set a good example and wear what the people have been

told to wear.

II. — FANTASIA IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

“There’s no gas,” he said and pointed to the clear red glow in the east. He tore off his mask, for he hated to have his face concealed. He sniffed the pervading anti-gas with satisfaction. He echoed in a tone of wonder, “STILL there is no gas.”

She too emerged from her disfiguring visor. “But are we safe?” she asked.

“Trust me,” he said.

The sky was full of the loud drone of engines, but no aircraft was visible. The evening was full of warm-tinted clouds, and the raiders and the fighting machines were no doubt dodging each other above that canopy. The distant air barrage made an undertone to the engine whir, as if an immense rubber ball were being bounced on an equally immense tin tray. The big Rolls- Royce had vanished. Its driver, perhaps, had taken it to some less conspicuous position and had not yet returned.

“I find something exhilarating in all this,” said the Lord Paramount. “I do not see why I should not share the dangers of my people.”

A few other intrepid spirits were walking along Whitehall, wearing gas masks of various patterns, and some merely with rags and handkerchiefs to their mouths. Many, like the Lord Paramount, had decided that the fear of gas was premature and either carried their masks in their hands or attempted no protection. Except for two old-fashioned water carts, there were no vehicles in sight. These water carts were busy spraying a heavy, slowly volatile liquid with a sweetish offensive odour that was understood to be an effective antidote to most forms of gas poisoning. It gave off a bluish low-lying mist that swirled and vanished as it diffused. A great deal of publicity had been given to the anti-gas supply after the East End panic. The supply of illuminating gas had been cut off now for some days, and the retorts and mains had been filled with an anti-gas of established efficacy which could be turned on when required from the normal burners. This had the same sweetish smell as the gas sprayed from the carts, and it had proved very reassuring to the

public when raids occurred.

“Let us walk up Whitehall,” said the Lord Paramount. “I seem to remember an instruction that the car should shelter from observation under the Admiralty arch in case of a raid. We might go up there.”

She nodded.

“You are not nervous?” he asked.

“Beside you!” she glowed.

The car was not under the arch, and they went on into the Square. There seemed to be a lull in the unseen manoeuvres overhead. Either the invaders had gone altogether or they were too high to be heard or they had silencers for their engines. The only explosions audible were the deep and distant firing of the guns of the outer aircraft zone.

“It is passing over,” said the Lord Paramount. “They must have made off.”

Then he remarked how many people were abroad and how tranquil was their bearing. There were numbers visible now. A moment ago they had seemed alone. Men and women were coming out from the station of the tube railway very much as they might have emerged after a shower of rain. There were news-vendors who apparently had never left the curb. “There is something about our English folk,” he said, “magnificently calm. Something dogged. An obstinate resistance to excitement. They say little but they just carry on.”

BUT NOW THE AIR WAS SCREAMING!

A moment of blank expectation.

In an instant the whole area was alive with bursting bombs. Four — or was it five? — deafening explosions and blinding flashes about them and above them followed one another in close succession, and the ordered pavement before them became like a crater in eruption.

Mr. Parham had seen very little of the more violent side of warfare. During the first World War a certifiable weakness of the heart and his natural aptitudes had made him more serviceable on the home front. And now, peeping out of the eyes of the Lord Paramount, he was astounded at the grotesque variety of injury to human beings of which explosions are capable. Accustomed to study warfare through patriotic war films, he had supposed that there was a distinctive dignity about death in battle, that for the most part heroes

who were slain threw up their arms and fell forward in so seemly a way as to conceal anything that might otherwise be derogatory to themselves or painful to the spectator. But these people who were killed in the Square displayed no such delicacy; perhaps because they were untrained civilians; they were torn to bits, mixed indifferently with masonry, and thrown about like rags and footballs and splashes of red mud. An old match seller who had been squatting on the stone curb, an old woman in a black bonnet, leapt up high into the air towards the Lord Paramount, spread out as if she were going to fly over him like a witch, and then incredibly flew to fragments, all her boxes of matches radiating out as though a gigantic foot had kicked right through her body at them. Her bonnet swept his hat off, and a box of matches and some wet stuff hit him. It wasn't like any sort of decent event. It was pure nightmare — impure nightmare. It was an outrage on the ancient dignity of war.

And then he realized the column had been hit and was coming down. Almost solemnly it was coming down. It had been erect so long, and now, with a kind of rheumatic hesitation, it bent itself like a knee. It seemed to separate slowly into fragments. It seemed as though it were being lowered by invisible cords from the sky. There was even time to say things.

Never had Mrs. Pinchot seen him so magnificent.

He put an arm about her. He had meant to put his hand on her shoulder, but she was little and he embraced her head.

"Stay by me," he said. He had time to say, "Trust me and trust God. Death cannot touch me until my work is done."

Nelson turned over and fell stiffly and slantingly. He went, with the air of meeting an engagement, clean through the façade of the big insurance buildings on the Cockspur street side of the Square. About the Master and his secretary the bursting pavement jumped again, as the great masses of the column hit it and leapt upon it and lay still. The Lord Paramount was flung a yard or so, and staggered and got to his feet and saw Mrs. Pinchot on all fours. Then she too was up and running towards him with love and consternation in her face.

"You are covered with blood!" she cried. "You are covered with blood."

"Not mine," he said and reeled towards the streaming ruins of a

fountain basin, and was suddenly sick and sick and sick.

She washed his face with her handkerchief and guided him towards a plateau of still level pavement outside the Golden Cross Hotel.

“It was the weakness of Nelson,” he said — for it was one of his standard remarks on such occasions.

“Nelson!” he repeated, his thoughts going off at a tangent, and he stared up into the empty air. “Good God!”

Hardly twenty feet of the pedestal remained.

And then: “High time we made our way to these new headquarters of Gerson’s. I wonder where that car can be hiding. Where is that car? Ssh! Those must be bombs again, bursting somewhere on the south side. Don’t listen to them.”

He realized that a number of distraught and dishevelled people were looking at him curiously. They regarded him with a critical expectation. They became suddenly quite numerous. Many of these faces were suspicious and disagreeable.

“I would gladly stay here and help with the wounded,” he said, “but my duty lies elsewhere.”

Men with Red Cross badges had appeared from nowhere and were searching among the wreckage. Injured people were beginning to crawl and groan.

“We must commandeer a car,” said the Lord Paramount. “Find some officers and commandeer a car. I must take you out of all this. We must get out of London to the headquarters as soon as possible. My place is there. We must find out where the car has gone. Gerson will know. We had better walk back to the War Office, perhaps, and start from there. Do not be afraid. Keep close to me... Was that another bomb?”

III. — WAR IS WAR

Gerson was talking to him. They were in a different place. It might be they were already in the great Barnet dugout which was to be the new seat of government; a huge and monstrous cavern it was, at any rate; and they were discussing the next step that must be taken if the Empire, now so sorely stressed, so desperately threatened, was still to hack its way through to Victory. Overhead there rumbled and drummed an anti-aircraft barrage.

"If we listen to this propaganda of the American President's," said Gerson, "we are lost. People must not listen to it. It's infectious — hallucination. Get on with the war before the rot comes. Get on with the war! It is now or never," said Gerson.

His grim and desperate energy dominated the Lord Paramount. "Gas L," he repeated, "Gas L. All Berlin in agony and then no more Berlin. Would they go on fighting after that? For all their new explosives."

"I call God to witness," said the Lord Paramount "that I have no mind for gas war."

"War is war," said Gerson.

"This is not the sort of war I want."

Gerson's never very respectful manner gave place to a snarl of irritation. "D'you think this sort of war is the sort of war I want?" he demanded. "Not a bit of it! It's the sort of war these damned chemists and men of science have forced upon us. It's a war made into a monster. Because someone failed to nip science in the bud a hundred years ago. They are doing their best to make war impossible. That's their game. But so long as I live it shan't be impossible whatever they do to it. I'll see this blasted planet blown to bits first. I'll see the last man stifled. What's a world without war? The way to stop this infernal German bombing is to treat Berlin like a nest of wasps and KILL the place. And that's what I want to set about doing now. But we can't get the stuff in! Camelford and Woodcock procrastinate and obstruct. If you don't deal with those two men in a day or so I shall deal with them myself, in the name of military necessity. I want to arrest them."

“Arrest them,” said the Lord Paramount.

“And shoot them if necessary.”

“Shoot if necessary,” said the Lord Paramount...

Everything seemed to be passing into Gerson’s hands. The Lord Paramount had to remind himself more and more frequently that the logic of war demanded this predominance of Gerson. So long as the war lasted. He began where statecraft ceased, and when he had done statecraft would again take up what he had left of the problems entrusted to him.

The Lord Paramount had a persuasion that Camelford and Sir Bussy had been arrested already and had escaped. Some time had elapsed — imperceptibly. Yes, they had been arrested and they had got away. Sir Bussy had shown Camelford how to get away.

IV. — A NECESSARY EXECUTION

Something obscured the Lord Paramount's mind. Clouds floated before it. Voices that had nothing to do with the course of affairs sustained some kind of commentary. Events were no longer following one another with a proper amplitude of transition. He seemed to be passing in cinematograph fashion from scene to scene. A pursuit of Sir Bussy was in progress, Gerson was hunting him, but it was no longer clear where and how these events were unfolding.

Then it would seem that Sir Bussy had been discovered hiding in Norway. He had been kidnapped amazingly by Gerson's agents and brought to Norfolk and shot. It was no time to be fussy about operations in neutral territory. And some rigorous yet indefinable necessity required that the Lord Paramount should go secretly at night to see Sir Bussy's body. He was reminded of the heroic murder of Matteotti, of the still more heroic effacement of the Duc d'Enghien by Napoleon. It is necessary that one man should die for the people. This financial Ishmaelite had to be ended in his turn. The day had come for property also to come into the scheme of duty.

The Lord Paramount found himself descending from his automobile at the end of a long winding and bumpy lane that led down to the beach near Sheringham. Extravagantly like Napoleon he felt; he was even wearing a hat of the traditional pattern. He had to be muffled. He was muffled in a cloak of black velvet. The head lamps showed a whitewashed shed, a boat on a bank of shingle; beyond the breakers of an uneasy sea flashed white as they came out of the blue-gray indistinctness into the cone of lights. "This way, sir," said a young officer and made his path more difficult by the officious flicking of an electric torch. The shingle was noisy underfoot.

On a plank, already loaded with shot to sink it into the unknown, and covered with a sheet, lay the body of Sir Bussy. For a moment the Lord Paramount stood beside it with his arms folded. The Dictatorship had lost its last internal enemy. Everyone had come to a halt now, and everything was silent except for the slow pulsing of the sea.

And in this fashion it was, thought the Lord Paramount, that their six years of association had to end. It had been impossible to incorporate this restless, acquisitive, innovating creature with the great processes of history; he had been incurably undisciplined and disintegrating, and at last it had become a plain struggle for existence between him and his kind, and the established institutions of our race. So long as he had lived he had seemed formidable, but now that his power was wrested from him, there was something pathetic and pitiful in his flimsy proportions. He was a little chap, a poor little fellow. And he had had his hospitably friendly, appealing side.

Why had he not listened to Mr. Parham? Why had he not sought his proper place in the scheme of things and learnt to cooperate and obey? Why had he pitted himself against history and perished as all who pit themselves against tradition must perish? The Lord Paramount stood by the little spherical protrusion of the sheet that veiled Sir Bussy's head; Gerson stood at the feet. The Lord Paramount's thoughts went from the dead to the living.

Had he really killed Sir Bussy, or had Gerson killed him?

What are the real and essential antagonisms of human life? Spite of all the ruthless tumult of events that had crowded upon the Lord Paramount, he had continued thinking. At the outset of his dictatorship, he had thought the main conflict in human affairs was the struggle of historical forms to maintain themselves against the skepticism, the disregard, and the incoherent enterprise of modern life. But was that indeed so? Had Sir Bussy been his real adversary? Or had his real adversary been the wider, more systematic intellectual alienations of Camelford? It was Camelford who had liberated Sir Bussy, had snatched him out of the influence of Mr. Parham. It was Camelford who had given the fundamental mysteries of Sir Bussy's disposition a form of expression. Just as the Lord Paramount himself, out of the fears, prejudices, resistances, habits, loyalties, and conservative vigour of mankind, had been able to evoke the heroic insensitiveness of Gerson. If so, it was Sir Bussy and Gerson who were the vital forces of this affair, the actual powers, and he and Camelford were mere intellectualizers to this restlessness on the one hand and this obstinacy on the other. But why, if Sir Bussy embodied a fundamental human force, had it been so easy to

kill him? It was absurd even to dream of killing a fundamental force. Had he indeed been killed so easily? A wedge of doubt invaded the mind of the Lord Paramount and spread out to colour all his thoughts.

"Uncover the face," he said.

He motioned to the chauffeur to turn his lamps onto the white and shrunken visage.

Amazing yet inevitable came the confirmation of his doubts.

"Yes," he said. "It is like him, but it is not him. Of course, Gerson, you will ALWAYS kill the wrong man. It is well I came to see with my own eyes."

But Gerson was shameless.

"And now we've seen it's the wrong one," said Gerson, "it's time we set about the right one — if the Empire is to get its Gas L in time to win this war."

"I wonder who this is."

"Any old chap who got in the way. Such things have to happen in wartime."

The Lord Paramount's reserves showed signs of breaking down. "But shall we ever get this stuff? Shall we ever overtake Camelford and Sir Bussy?"

"We got to," said Gerson in a wrathful shout.

V. — INTERLUDE WITH A MIRROR

The Lord Paramount had the impression that he was again in the great dugout at Barnet. He was in one of the small apartments that opened out of the central cavern, a sort of dressing room. He was putting on a khaki uniform and preparing to start on a desperate expedition. A young subaltern assisted him timidly.

The Lord Paramount was excessively aware of Gerson's voice storming down the passage. He was always storming now.

They were still in pursuit of Camelford and Sir Bussy, who were reported to be at those strange new chemical works at Cayme in Lyonesse. They had to be caught and compelled if need be at the point of a revolver, to subserve the political ideas from which they were attempting to escape. The issue whether the soldier or the man of science should rule the world had come to actual warfare. Strange Reality was escaping, and Tradition was hard in pursuit. Gerson and the Lord Paramount were to fly to Devonshire and then rush upon Cayme, "swift and sure as the leap of a tiger," said Gerson. Then indeed, with the chemists captive and Gas L assured, the Empire could confront all the rest of the world with the alternative of submission or death.

The Lord Paramount adjusted the complex and difficult belt before a mirror. Then he stood still and stared at the reflection before him.

Where was the calm beauty of the Master Spirit?

The man he saw, he had seen in other mirrors ten thousand times before. It was the face, just falling short of strength and serenity by the subtle indications of peevishness and indecision, of the Senior Tutor of St. Simon's. And those troubled eyes were Mr. Parham's eyes. And the hair — he had never noted it before — was turning gray. He knew it had been getting thin, but now he saw it was getting gray. Merely Mr. Parham? Had he been dreaming of a Lord Paramount, and had there never been anyone else but himself in this adventurer? And what was this adventure? Was he recovering now from some fantastic intoxication?

With a start he realized that Gerson had come into the room and

heard the clear-cut, even footsteps approach him. The organizer of victory came to the salute with a clash of accoutrements. “Everything is ready, sir,” he said imperatively.

Mr. Parham seemed to assent, but now he knew that he obeyed.

Like the damned of Swedenborg’s visions, he had come of his own accord to his own servitude.

VI. — CAYME IN LYONESSE

The chauffeur stopped short at a word from Gerson. “Pull up by the wayside,” directed the General, “and try and look like engine trouble.”

He got out. “We will walk to the top of the hill. The fellow standing there against the sky is our scout. And over beyond is Cayme.”

The Lord Paramount obeyed in silence.

They were perhaps a couple of hundred yards from the crest. The sun was setting, a white blaze, which rimmed the line of the hill with iridescence. For an instant the Lord Paramount glanced back at the bleakness of the Cornish landscape, coldly golden, and then turned to the ascent.

“We shall see very little until this damned sun is down,” said Gerson. “But there is no hurry now.”

“An air scout,” said the Lord Paramount.

“Theirs. They keep it circling. And they have another out to sea. But the water is opaque enough, I hope, to hide our submarines. And besides, they keep pretty far out.”

“We have submarines?”

“Five. Six we had. But one is lost. All the coast has been played hokey with. The sea bed’s coming up. God knows how they’ve done it, but they’ve raised scores of square miles. Heaved it up somehow. Our submarine must have hit a lump or barrier — which ought not to have been there. They’ve just made all this Lyonesse of theirs out of nothing — to save paying decent prices to decent landowners. They bore down through it and take out minerals — minerals we’d give our eyes to get — that were hidden under the bottom of the sea.”

The Lord Paramount regarded the huge boss of stone to the right of them with a puzzled expression.

“I seem to remember this road — that rock that sticks up there and the way the road turns round it.”

“It goes to Penzance. Or it did.”

“That old disused tin mine we passed, that too seems familiar. Something odd about the double shaft... I’ve never seen this coast

since I was a young man. Then I tramped it with a knapsack. By Land's End and along here and so on to Tintagel."

"You'll find it changed in a moment."

The Lord Paramount made no answer.

"Now. We're getting into view. Stroll easily. That fellow up there may be watching us. The evening's as still and clear as crystal. No mist. Not a cloud. We could do with a little obscurity to-night."

"Why have we no aeroplanes up?"

Something like contempt sounded in Gerson's voice. "Because we want to take your friends out there by surprise."

The Lord Paramount felt again that sense of insufficiency that had been troubling him so frequently during the last few days. He had asked a silly question. More and more was Gerson with his lucid technical capacity taking control of things. There was nothing more to be said, and in silence the Lord Paramount surveyed the view that had opened out before them. Gerson was still in control.

"We had better sit down on this bank among the heather. Don't stand still and stare. It won't do to seem even to be watching them."

The land was changed indeed.

Cayme was unlike any town, any factory, any normal place that Mr. Parham had ever seen. For it was Mr. Parham's eye that now regarded it. It sat up against the incandescent sky, broad, black, squat, like some monstrous new development of the battleship. It was a low, long battleship magnified by ten. Against the light it had no form nor detail, only a hard, long shape. Its vast shadow veiled a wedge of unassimilable detail, that might be a wilderness of streams and rich pools, in gloom and mystery. The land came out to this place, shining where it caught the light, or cut into blunt denticulations by long shadows, alternated triangles of darkness, wherever there was a rock or ridge to impede the light.

"But this was sea," said Mr. Parham.

"This was sea."

"And away there is still Land's End."

"Only it isn't Land's End any more. This runs right out."

"I came along here I suppose somewhere — hard now to say exactly where — and I had Tennyson's Morte d'Arthur in my knapsack. And I — I was a young man then — I looked across at the

sunset — a great clear sunset like this one — and I dreamt of the lost cities and palaces of Lyonesse until almost I could see them, like a mirage, glittering under the sun."

"And Lyonesse is here, and it hasn't got any cities or palaces or knights. And it doesn't glitter. And instead of King Arthur and his Table Round, you've got a crew of Camelford's men, brewing God knows what treason... I wish I knew... I wish I knew."

Gerson sat in silence for a space, and then he talked again, almost as much to himself as to Mr. Parham.

"There they've got the stuff. They've got it; they've got everything. If we can wrench that place out of their hands suddenly — we have it all. I have men who can work it all right, given the stuff. Then we shall have poison gas to scare the world stiff... And we'll scare them... But swift and sure like the pounce of a cat — we must get them down before they can lift a finger. They'll blow the place to smithereens before they let us have it. Camelford has said as much. God knows what chemists are coming to! They didn't dare say 'No' to a soldier in the last Great War."

"These coasts have changed," said Mr. Parham, "and the world has changed. And it seems to me tonight as if God himself had changed to something strange and dreadful."

They sat in silence. The sun which had been a white blaze had sunk down until it touched the high line of the silhouette of Cayme, and its blinding glory had become only a blazing red disk.

"Tell me," said Mr. Parham. "What are our plans?"

Gerson glanced sideways to be sure the scout was out of earshot.

"We have all the Gas L the Empire could produce before these fellows collared the material. Just about enough for this job and no more. Further on some of it lies along the road, disguised as barrels of tar. Down in the village there, which used to be a fishing village and which now grows vegetables, keeps cows, and takes in washing for Cayme, it is piled up as barrels of beer. We have cases and cylinders hidden among the rocks."

"But where are our men?"

"At Bodmin, at Penzance, waiting for the dark with bicycles, and, oh! — there's a good lot about here, though you don't see them, hidden in ditches since last night, lying under heaps of dry heather,

down in that wood we passed. Waiting for a noiseless rocket at one o'clock to-night. Each one ready for his job. Behind that first line is Burchell with men in every town from Plymouth to Exeter, all hanging about unobtrusively, ready to follow up. What a man he is! What energy! Like a boy, an immense clever boy. He wouldn't let this happen without him. Would there were more like him!"

"And at one o'clock?"

"Quietly we shift the gas into the great ditch they have round that place, see our masks are adjusted, and let it loose."

"Which means?"

"They'll wriggle a bit — blast 'em!"

"And then?"

"No more of them. And at dawn we go in with our gas masks on — and take possession. Like digging out a wasp's nest."

"Suppose the gas doesn't work instantly — and they blow up in spite of us?"

"Then, my Lord Paramount, we are done. We'll go back to find London selling us, and selling the Union Jack with us, to anyone who cares to buy. We'll go back to find patriotism over and dead from China to Peru. We'll go back to find lords and dictators, ten a penny. Or — if we respect ourselves — we won't go back. But I think we can trust Gas L."

Never had the Lord Paramount felt so utterly Mr. Parham. He looked about him at that evening, and it was a golden dome of warmth and stillness in which it was very good to be alive, and far off he heard some late lambs bleating and crying to the deep answers of their mothers.

"It's quite possible the book of history will close with a bang," said Gerson; "quite possible. About one o'clock to-morrow morning. We've done what we can. We've stuck like men to our own ideas. But for instance, Gas L is faintly visible, a thin blue-gray vapour. At night it may get past them — but if they see it before they sniff it... Or if they have an anti-gas..."

The General left the rest to Mr. Parham's imagination.

"Does he keep up all night?" asked Mr. Parham indicating the slowly circling plane by a movement of his head.

"There are reliefs. For all we know, we are spotted now. For all

we know, every bit of our little scheme is known. For all we know, we're trying to kill a sleeping tiger with a pea shooter, and all we shall do is to wake it up."

A long silence. The ever broadening and ever reddening dome of the sun seemed to be pouring its molten substance slowly and steadily into the mysterious black receptacle of Cayme.

"How still it is!" whispered Mr. Parham.

"That's the damned thing about them," said Gerson, betraying a certain irritability. "STILL! They never give a sign. These scientific men, these 'moderns,' as they call themselves, have never made a declaration or offered a deal a proper-minded man could consider. Only vague criticisms and pointless pacifism. Science has slipped out of our hands when we weren't looking. It used to be subservient enough. Years ago we ought to have forbidden scientific study or scientific knowledge except to men under military discipline, and we ought to have put scientific discoverers under the Official Secrets Act. Then we should have had them under control. And perhaps their damned progress wouldn't have gone on so fast. They'd have mumbled their rotten theories in a corner, and we could have treated them as a joke. And if we'd been more nippy about the traders and the money lenders we could have kept them trading respectfully, as they used to do. But we let the scientific men and the industrialists and the bankers all run about and get notions just as they pleased, and here they are, out of control, a gang of cosmopolitan conspirators with the mask off, actually intercepting munitions that are vital to the Empire and treating for peace with enemy countries on their own account. It's kind of symbolical, sir, that we are here, conducting military operations by stealth, as it were — with even our uniforms planned to be invisible... War ashamed of itself!... THEIR doing!"

And suddenly Gerson gave way to an outburst of the obscene, unmeaning blasphemies dear to simple souls the whole world over. He consigned men of science to the most unnatural experiences and the most unseemly behaviour. He raged against the vanity of intelligence and the vileness of mental presumption.

The last acutely bright red line of the sun's disk vanished abruptly from above the black crest of Cayme as though someone had suddenly thought of it and drawn it into the building. Minute cirrus

clouds that had hitherto been invisible revealed themselves as faint streaks of gold in the sky and slowly faded again. Mr. Parham remained sitting very still. General Gerson turned to the waiting scout with directions for him to get the rugs and hamper out of the car and send it on to Penzance. He and the Lord Paramount would wait here among the stones until it was time to begin the attack.

It seemed to Mr. Parham that the time passed very quickly before the attack began. An intense blue evening with a westward glow deepened through twilight into a starry night, which had fewest stars and a brighter edge to the northwest. He supped from the hamper and lay under a rock while Gerson, imitating and answering the sounds of improbable birds, made mysterious visits along the ridge and athwart the moor. Then when darkness came they started off, after much whispering and creeping about, blundering down the long slopes towards the erstwhile cliffs that marked the boundary of the old land and the new. Then a crawling forward with great circumspection and every possible precaution against noise. Then abruptly the startling discovery that he was not alone with Gerson, but one of a numerous line of furtive figures and groups, dimly visible against the sky line, some of them free-handed and some bearing burthens.

Gerson handed Mr. Parham a gas mask. “Don’t make any mistakes with it,” he said. “It’s Gas L. Get the edge SUCKING against your face.”

An interval of waiting in which one heard one’s heart beating, and then the noiseless rocket like a meteor across the sky. Another interval for which there was no measure, and then the stealthy release of the Gas L.

The Gas L was plainly visible; it was as if it had a sort of gray luminosity. It crept along the ground and then rose slowly like swans’ necks, like snakes, like the letter S, or like the top of a manuscript L, craning forward and down again towards the looming masses, now close at hand, of the mysteries of Cayme. It reached them and seemed to feel its way up their steep sides and slowly, slowly reached the crest of the walls and poured over...

“At dawn we go in,” said Gerson, his voice made Lilliputian by his mask. “At dawn we go in.”

Mr. Parham shivered and made no reply.

He felt cramp for a time, he was tickled and worried by his mask about his ears, and perhaps he slept, for at any rate, the hours again passed very quickly, and almost abruptly the scene was warm with the sunrise. Seen closely and with the light of morning on them, the walls of Cayme were revealed as a hard greenish substance with a surface like dulled metal, and they rose, slanting backwards out of this ditch without any windows or loopholes, towards the sky. The ditch was unexpectedly deep; it made one a little giddy to come upon it suddenly, and in it there was no water at all and no bottom visible, but very far down something cloudy, a sort of heavy yellowish smoke that writhed and curled about and did not rise. One had to move cautiously and peer because of the difficulty of seeing in a gas mask. One saw in a series of clipped pictures. The attack was lined out all along the edge of the ditch, a series of slouching cynocephali with snouted white heads who turned about with cautious and noiseless movements and nosed and made gestures one to the other. Everyone carried a rifle or a revolver in his hand.

For a time the line was like a slack string along the edge of the ditch, uncertain of its next step. Then some common impulse had turned them all to the left, and they were following the edge of the ditch in Indian file as if to seek some point at which to cross it. The wall bent away presently, and rounding the bend, Mr. Parham came into view of a narrow drawbridge of open metalwork, about the end of which a number of the assailants had halted in a cluster.

Leadership he realized was needed.

He found himself with Gerson at the foot of the drawbridge and the others standing as if awaiting a decision. At the far end of that slender strip of open ironwork was an open doorway without a door. It gave into the darkness of an unlit passage. The nothingness in that passage was extraordinary. Not a living thing was to be seen and not a sound broke the immense silence of Cayme. Mr. Parham wished that the word “mouse-trap” had not come into his head.

“Well?” came faintly from within Gerson’s mask.

“If they are dead it is all right for us,” said Mr. Parham. “But if they are not dead, then it does not matter what we do, for even here we are completely in their power. One rifleman up there could pick us off one by one.”

“Why did they leave that door open?” asked Gerson.

“I don’t know. But I feel I have to go in.”

“All or nothing,” said Gerson.

He turned and gestured for six men to accompany them.

Mr. Parham in a state that was neither abject nor arrogant, a new Mr. Parham, puzzled and filled with wonder and dread, crossed the little bridge. He entered the passage. Gerson paused behind him to scrutinize the frame of the doorway. He made a comment that was inaudible. He looked up and dodged suddenly.

A door guided by grooves fell swiftly, stopped short with a metallic impact, and cut them off from the daylight and all support.

Gerson swore and tried to shove it up again. Mr. Parham saw the thing happen without astonishment and remained quite still. They were not in darkness. A few small electric lamps seemed to have been switched on by the falling door.

VII. — THE ADVERSARY SPEAKS

Mr. Parham was astounded by his own fatalism. He who had conceived he held the mastery of the world in his shapely hand was now an almost apathetic spectator of his own frustration. He saw Gerson battering at the trap with a feeling — it was almost akin to gratified malice.

Gerson, he realized, had always been the disagreeable aspect of his mastery; always Gerson had spoilt things; always he had touched the stages of the fine romance of this adventure with an unanticipated cruelty and horror. Mr. Parham was traditional and ready to be traditional, but Gerson he saw now was ancestral and archaic. Mr. Parham realized now as he watched those simian fists hammering with furious gestures on the thick metal and pausing for the answering blows of the men outside, that he had come at last to detest Gerson almost as much as he detested Sir Bussy. He knew that this violence was futile, and he despised it as much as he hated it.

He put out his arm and touched Gerson.

Gerson sprang round, manifestly in a state of intense irritation and his mask did not completely stifle his interrogative snarl.

"That door may have fallen automatically," said Mr. Parham. "For all we know yet — everyone here may be dead."

Gerson thought and then nodded and made a gesture for Mr. Parham to precede him.

"And indeed," said Mr. Parham to himself, "for all I know they may be dead."

In another moment he knew better. The little passage opened out into what seemed to be a large circular space and at the further side of this they saw two figures, unmasked and regarding them. Gas L was as if it had never been. They were men clad in the white overalls dear to chemists and surgeons. They made signs as if for Mr. Parham and Gerson to move softly. They pointed to something hidden as yet from the newcomers. Their forms were a little distorted and their gestures a little exaggerated by some intervening transparent substance.

So they had had an anti-gas for Gas L.

Mr. Parham advanced, and Gerson came close behind.

They emerged upon a circular gallery.

The place made Mr. Parham think of the inside of the reservoir of a coal- gas works. Such a place would surely look like this place if it had electric lights inside it. It was large — it might have been a hundred yards in diameter — and shaped like a drum. The little gallery on which they stood ran round it, and in the central pit and occupying most of it was a huge glass bulb, a vast retort, in which a greenish-white liquid was boiling and bubbling. The shining curvature of the glass rose before them, reflecting them faintly with a certain distortion. It shortened and broadened them. It robbed Mr. Parham of all his natural dignity and made Gerson look incredibly squat and filthy and evil. The liquid in the retort was not seething equally; it was traversed and torn here and there by spurts and eddies of commotion; here it was mysteriously still and smooth, here with a wild rush came a drive of bursting bubbles. They stormed across the surface and raised eruptive mounds of ebullient liquid. And over the whole whirled and danced wisps of filmy vapour. But this held Mr. Parham's attention only for a moment. He realized that he was in the presence of Camelford and Sir Bussy, and he forgot everything else in that confrontation.

Both these men were dressed in the same white overalls as the assistants across on the other side of the rotunda. But they had the air of having expected Mr. Parham and his companion. They seemed to have been coming to meet them.

With a gesture of irritation Mr. Parham wrenched off his mask and Gerson followed suit.

"The Lord Paramount of Britain," said Camelford and bowed with manifest irony.

"Looks uncommonly like my old friend Parham," said Sir Bussy.

"This other gentleman, if I'm not mistaken," said Camelford, "is that master strategist, General Gerson."

"It's a loyal Englishman, Mr. Camelford," said the General, "who has done his best to save a great empire."

"You lost a good lot of it to begin with," said Camelford.

"Because we were shot at from behind."

"How's your war going now?"

“The war’s gone to pieces. Mutiny. Disorder. London is in revolt and crying for peace. American peace propaganda has done us in — with treason at the back of us. It’s the story of the poor old Kaiser over again. Beaten on the home front. No fair soldiering. If we could have made enough of Gas L — if we could have got all we had reasonably thought we should get... God! There was nothing wrong in my plans. Except that you’ve made a corner in Gas L. While we fought the enemy, you, you dirty sneaks, cornered our munitions. And now you’ve got us, and may Hell take you for it!”

Camelford turned to Sir Bussy. “He speaks with heat, but I think we may admit his facts are sound. You’ve always had the buying-up instinct.” He smiled blandly at Gerson. “We’ve got the stuff, as you say. We don’t pretend we haven’t. Sir Bussy has been amazing. But it isn’t for sale. We thought it a pity to waste it on Gas L, and so we are making use of it in another way. Our way.”

A faint memory of the Lord Paramount reappeared in Mr. Parham. He made the old familiar gesture with his hand. “I want that material,” he said. “I demand it.”

Sir Bussy’s nether lip dropped. “What for?” he asked.

“To save the Empire. To save the world from chaos.”

“There ain’t going to be no chaos,” misquoted Sir Bussy.

“What are you going to do? Where do you think you are driving? Are you going to sit here and barter your stolen goods to the highest bidder?”

“Cornered, perhaps, but not stolen,” Sir Bussy corrected.

“Well?”

“We’re going to take control,” said Sir Bussy.

“YOU! A handful of financial and technical scoundrels!”

“WE’RE not going to take control,” said Camelford, “if Sir Bussy will forgive me. Something else HAS taken control. And there are more men coming into this business of creation than you or Gerson dream.”

Mr. Parham looked about him, at the smooth circular walls about them, at the monstrous glass retort, at the distant figures of the silent attendants in white. Their number had now increased to six, and they all stood watching noiselessly. It was extraordinarily still and large and clean and — queer. It was not like war. It was not like

government. It was not like industrialism. It was profoundly unhistorical. It was the new thing coming. And at his side stood Gerson. He, on the contrary, was like all the heroes of all the faint hopes that have ever succeeded. That never very attractive little figure in its uniform of soiled khaki suffered enormously by the contrast, looked brutish, looked earthy. Crawling through the darkness over rough ground usually given over to rabbits and an occasional goat had not improved his never very meticulous appearance, and his native physical vigour, the natural strength of his dark hair, made it very evident that he had had no time for a shave for a couple of days.

Mr. Parham, who had always had a reasonable care for his own costume, experienced a wave of profound disloyalty to his sturdy colleague. This latter looked a pig of a creature, he looked as toughly combative with anything and everything as a netted boar. He was more than half an animal. Yet surely for all his savagery he had the inflexible loyalty of a great hero, he had a heart of ruthless, inexorable gold. Surely?

Mr. Parham's thoughts came back to the last sentence Camelford had uttered and to this strange place into which he and Gerson had blundered. "Something else had taken control?" Not Gerson but something else? What was the issue that had brought them to this confrontation? Gerson hot and dirty, versus this Something Else? Which was not this group nor that group. Not the nation nor the Empire. Not America nor Europe. Which was a sort of emanation from the released and freely acting intelligence of mankind.

A trace of the Master Spirit was still in Mr. Parham's manner, but behind the mask of his resolute bearing he felt his mind had fallen open and lay unprotected against new strange heretical assailants.

"What is your aim here?" he asked. "What do you imagine you are doing? My ideas are still the common ideas of humanity. They are the forces of history. They are the driving power that has brought civilization to its present pass. Tradition. Discipline. Obedience. What are your ideas? Why have you raised this land out of the sea and made this place?"

"We never raised this land out of the sea," said Camelford. "We never made this place. And we learn our aim as we get to it."

“Then who the devil — ?” said Gerson.

“This place came. No single man planned it. No single man foresaw it. It appeared. As all the great inventions have appeared. Not out of individuals but out of the mind of man. This land with its hidden stores of strange minerals lay under the sea, ready for anyone who fulfilled the conditions fixed for raising it. And these works and the gas we are making, those also depended on the fulfilling of conditions. We individual men of science and men of enterprise do no more than observe the one supreme condition — which is that the human intelligence should have fair play. Now that these things have realized themselves, we look for the next thing we have to do.”

“Ugh,” said Gerson.

“The old face of human life is passing away. In that obedient fashion to which our science has trained us we observe the coming of the new. The age of war and conquest is over. War is done with, but with war a thousand other once vital things are done with also. The years of restraint are at an end. The patriots and warriors and masters, the flags and the nations, have to be rounded up now and put away forever. Powers and empires are over. The loyalties that served them must die. They matter no more. They become a monstrous danger. What was it Sir Bussy said? ‘The ideas of an old buck rabbit in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.’ Shut the book of national conflicts and conquests now and hand it over to the psychologists. We are the workers of a new dawn. Men of no nation. Men without traditions. Men who look forward and not back. Men who have realized the will and the intelligence that we obey and possess in common. Our race has to organize the whole world now, a field for this creative energy that flows through and uses and guides us.”

“But you are brewing a gas here!” said Mr. Parham. “It is a gas — a dangerous gas. What is it?”

“It takes some brewing. If a crack in that retort let in the air — well, somewhere else this thing would have to begin over again. Here it would be finished. This stuff you see here is only a stage in a long string of processes. Before our product is ready to use there have to be corrosive and destructive phases. It is unavoidable that there should be these phases of corrosion and destruction. What is adventure if it has no danger? But when we have done, the gas we

shall have here will not be a poison gas at all. Instead we shall have a vapour to enter into blood and nerve and brain and clean the mind of man as it has never been cleaned before. It will allow his brain, so clogged and stifled still by old rubbish, so poisoned and cramped and crippled, to free itself from all that holds it back now from apprehending and willing to the utmost limits of its possibility. And that points to a new world quite different from the world to which your mind is adapted. A world beyond your dreaming. You don't begin to imagine yet a tithe of the things a liberated human brain can do. All your poor old values will be mislaid and forgotten. Your kingdoms and empires, your morals and rights, all you find so lovely and splendid, the heroism and sacrifices of battlefields, your dreams of lordship, every romantic thing, the devotion of servants, the subjugation of women, and the deception of children — all the complex rigmaroles of your old world will be washed out of men's thoughts. We are brewing a new morality here and a new temerity. Instead of distrusting each other, killing each other, competing with and enslaving and consuming one another, we go on to a world of equals, working together under the guidance of realized fact, for ends too high for your imagination..."

"But this is the voice of Satan himself," interrupted Mr. Parham. "This is the Sin of Pride defying Heaven. This is Babel come again."

"No," said Camelford, and it seemed to Mr. Parham that he began to grow larger and tower over his hearers. "It is the way of escape from our narrow selves. Forward to the new. Cling to this traditionalism of yours a little longer, cling still to what YOU call history, with all these new powers and possibilities we are pressing into your hands — and there can be only one end — Catastrophe."

The word Catastrophe reverberated in Mr. Parham's mind. Then his attention was caught and riveted on Gerson's attitude. The General's one serviceable eye, dilated and intent, was fixed on Camelford, his lips were pressed together, his bulldog face was set in an expression of stern indignation. A deep Indian red had invaded his complexion. He was rigid except that his right arm was moving very slowly. His hand gripped the butt of his revolver and was tightening upon it and drawing it out.

A strange conflict prevailed in Mr. Parham's mind. He found this

talk of Camelford's antagonistic and hateful but he did not want to interrupt it, he wanted to hear the man out; above all, he did not want to have the talk interrupted by Gerson in Gerson's fashion.

And besides, what was Gerson doing here? He had not been asked to this party. But was it a party? This was not a dinner party. It was a séance. But no! What was it? Where were we? Cayme?

Within the now frightfully confused soul of Mr. Parham intellectuality grappled with reaction. Not yet, at any rate, must things come to this. He made a weak movement of his hand as if in restraint of Gerson's intention.

Instantly Gerson had whipped out his weapon. "Stand off," he said in an aside to Parham, and then to Camelford, "Hands up!"

Camelford did not seem to realize his danger. "Put that old thing up," he said. "Give it to me. You'll break something."

He came, hand out, towards Gerson.

"Keep back!" said Gerson. "I'll show you if this sort of thing is over. It's only beginning. I'm the real Lord Paramount. Force and straight shooting. Do you think I care a damn for your gas or you? Catastrophe! A fig for your old catastrophe! Which is always coming and never comes... Hands up, I tell you. Put up your hands, you damned fool! STOP!"

He fired. Then very swiftly the blue steel barrel under Mr. Parham's nose sought Sir Bussy.

Vainly. Gerson's shot hit the metal door that closed upon that elusive being. Mr. Parham felt an instant pang of exasperation with both these uncontrollable spirits. He still wanted Camelford to go on. His mind flashed back to Camelford. But Camelford was staggering with his hand on his throat.

Then it was catastrophe, as Camelford had said.

A crash and a splintering of glass. Camelford had fallen through the great glass retort, carrying down a transparent shattering triangle, had splashed into the liquid and now lay far below, moving convulsively on the curve of the nether glass. For a moment the air about them was full of ascendant streamers of vapour made visible as they changed to green and mingled with the air. They eddied and whirled. They spun faster and faster.

Gerson had turned his weapon upon Parham. "You too! YOU to

talk of war! With the wits of a prig and the guts of a parasite! Get out of my world!”

The vituperating mouth hung open arrested. No shot came.

But now everything was moving very swiftly. One last flash of frantic perception closed the story. The rotunda yawned open as though some mighty hand had wrenched it in two, and through the separating halves of the roof appeared the warm glow of sunrise. A universe of sound pressed upon and burst the drums of Mr. Parham’s ears. An immense explosion which seemed to have been going on for some moments caught him and lifted him backward and upward at an incredible speed, and Gerson, suddenly flat and bloody, flashed by, seemed to be drawn out longer and longer until he was only a thread of scarlet and khaki, and so vanished slanting up the sky, with his revolver spinning preposterously after him...

VIII. — POST MORTEM

The world and all things in it vanished in a flash of blinding light.

The word "extinction" sang like a flying spark through the disintegrating brain of Mr. Parham. Darkness should have swallowed up that flying spark, but instead it gave place to other sparks, brighter and larger. "Another life or extinction? Another life or extinction?"

With a sort of amazement Mr. Parham realized that experience was not at an end for him. He was still something, something that felt and thought. And he was somewhere.

Heaven or hell? Heaven or hell?

It must be hell, he thought, surely, for it was pervaded by the voice of Sir Titus Knowles, if one could call that harsh, vindictive snarling sound a voice. The very voice of Gerson. Hell — and in the company of Sir Titus! But surely hell would be something fuliginous, and this was a clear white blaze.

The words of Sir Titus became distinct. "GOT you!" he bawled. "GOT you! There's the ectoplasm! There's the mighty visitant's face! Painted bladder, as I said. Clever chap, but I've got you. Sham dead if you like for as long as you like, but I tell you the game is up."

It was the upstairs room in Carfex House, and Carnac Williams was lying in a dishevelled heap upon the floor. Hereward Jackson was holding back Knowles, who was straining out his leg to kick the motionless body.

Mr. Parham staggered up from his armchair and found Sir Bussy doing likewise. Sir Bussy had the flushed face of one roused suddenly from sleep. "What the devil?" he demanded.

"I don't understand," said Mr. Parham.

"Exposure!" panted Sir Titus triumphantly and tried another kick.

"A foul exposure, anyhow," said Hereward Jackson and pushed him back from his exhausted victim. "Spare the poor devil!"

"Le' go!" cried Sir Titus —

A manservant had appeared and was respectfully intervening between Sir Titus and Hereward Jackson. Another came to the assistance of Carnac Williams.

A tremendous wrangle began...

“Gaw!” said Sir Bussy when it was all over.

IX. — THE LAST STRAW

"I'm going to walk up to Claridge's," said Sir Bussy.

"This affair has left me stuffy. You go that way?"

"As far as Pontingale Street, yes."

"Come on to Claridge's. My nieces are having a great dance there... That ectoplasm fairly turned me sick... I've done with this spook business for good and all."

"I always wanted to keep out of it," said Mr. Parham.

The two men set out side by side, and for a time each pursued his own thoughts. Sir Bussy's led him apparently to some conclusion, for suddenly he said, "Gaw" — as if he tapped a nail on the head.

"Parham, were you awake all through that séance?"

"No. I was bored. I fell asleep."

"*I* fell asleep." Sir Bussy reflected. "These séances make you sleep — and dream. That's the trick of them."

Mr. Parham looked at his companion, startled. Had he too dreamt? And what had he dreamt?

"I dreamt about the things those fellows, Camelford and Hamp, were saying the other night."

"Curious!" said Mr. Parham, but he felt the thing was much more curious than his voice betrayed. What if they had had the same dream?

"I seemed to see their arguments in a sort of realized kind of way."

How poor the man's powers of expression!

"You and I were on opposite sides," he added. "Daggers drawn."

"I hope not."

"There was a war. Gaw! I can't tell you. Such a war! It was like trying to plug a burst steam pipe." Sir Bussy left his hearer to imagine what that meant. And Mr. Parham was able to imagine.

"I cornered the chemicals," said Sir Bussy. "I and Camelford. We kind of held it up. We did our best. But at last the natural lunacy in things got loose and — everything seemed to blow to pieces. There was a nasty little toad of a sojer. BANG!"

"That was the waking up?"

“That was the waking up.”

Then Sir Bussy went off at a tangent. “We rich men — I mean we big business people — we’ve been backing the wrong horse. We’ve been afraid of Bogey Bolshevik and all the new things, and damn it! it’s the OLD things that mean to bust up affairs. We’re new things ourselves. What did J. C. say? No good putting new wine in old bottles... The world’s rising and splashing over. The old notions and boundaries won’t hold it... I wish I could describe my dream to you. Extraordinary it was. And you were in it somehow all through... And Camelford... Hamp was American ambassador. Crazy, it was...”

Now this was getting more and more remarkable. But no — it was not the same dream — similar, perhaps. It was impossible that it could have been the same...

A dream, as everyone knows, can happen with incredible rapidity. It may all have happened in a second. The sounds of Sir Titus Knowles turning on lights and bumping about with the medium and snarling at him had no doubt provided the gunfire and flashes and evoked warlike images in both their awakening minds. And the rest had arisen from what lay ready in their antagonistic attitudes.

Sir Bussy went on with conviction: “If we don’t see to it, these Old Institutions of yours and all that — these old things that ought to be cleaned up and put away now — will upset the whole human apple cart — like some crazy old granny murdering a child. Foreign offices, war offices, sovereignty, and clutter like that. Bloody clutter. Bloodstained clutter. All that I got as clear as day. They can’t hold things any longer. They’ve got to be superannuated, shoved away in the attic. I didn’t realize. We’ve got to do something about it soon. Damn soon. Before another smash. We new people. We’ve just floated about getting rich and doing nothing about it... Buying and selling and amalgamating and monopolizing isn’t enough. The worst thing in life is to have power and not use it to the full... There wasn’t a thing in my nightmare that might not happen.”

Mr. Parham waited for what might come next. It was extraordinary, this parallelism, but still his reason insisted they could not have had the same identical dream.

“Was there,” he said, “by any chance, a sort of Lord — Lord Protector in your dream?”

“No,” said Sir Bussy. “There was just a damned pigheaded patriotic imperial government and a war. Come to think of it, there was something — a sort of dictatorship. They put Labour out of business. I thought the chap was Amery. A sort of lofty Amery. Amery drawn out elegant — if you understand me. He didn’t amount to much. What mattered was the ideas behind him.”

“And where did I come in?”

There was a catch in Mr. Parham’s breath.

“You were on the side of the government and we argued. You were for the war. In this dream I seemed always to be meeting you and arguing. It made it very real. You were some sort of official. We kept on arguing. Even when the bombs were bursting and they tried to shoot me.”

Mr. Parham was to a certain extent relieved. Not completely but sufficiently. There had been a dream, evidently, a similar dream; a clearly similar dream. It is a distinctive feature of the séance condition that people should have similar dreams; but his dream and Sir Bussy’s had not been the same dream. Not exactly the same dream. They had visualized the expectation of a possible war that haunted both their minds, but each in his own fashion — each with his own distinctive personal reference. That was it. The brief and tragic (and possibly slightly absurd) reign of Mr. Parham as Lord Paramount could be locked forever in his own breast.

But what was Sir Bussy saying?

He had been telling something of his dream that Mr. Parham had missed.

“We’ve got to give people a juster idea of what is going on and give it ’em quick. Or they’ll fall into unutterable smash-up. Schools — you can’t. You can’t get the necessary QUALITY in teachers. Universities lock themselves against us. Yes, they do. We’ve got to snatch the new generation out of the hands of doddering prigs and pedants and tell ‘em, tell ‘em, tell ‘em. Catch the oversplash of life. In new ideas, in new organizations. The way out is through books, newspapers, print, talk... ‘Light, more light,’ as old Gutty said.” (Did he mean Goethe?)

“I’m coming into the newspaper world, Parham, I tell you. You’ve often suggested it, and here I am doing as you said. You

know a thing or two. This sort of war drift can only BE stopped by a big push the other way. Bigger than anything done so far. Crowds of people in earnest. The Big Push for the new world! What of a big Sunday paper — that's the day they read — to give 'em science, give them the drift and meaning of the new world that — was it Camelford said it? — the new world that's trying to get born... Or was it that chap from Geneva?... Warn them how Granny still mutters and messes about with the knives... A great big powerful paper."

At these words a queer irrational excitement made Mr. Parham tingle from head to foot. His sense of antagonism to Sir Bussy faded and vanished. Hopes long cherished and long suppressed arose in him with such a strength and violence that his orientation was lost. He could see this only as one thing, a proposal to himself. The proposal was coming in a manner he had never thought of, it was coming with a strangely twisted look, but surely it was coming. He was going to have his paper. At last. He might have to take rather a different line from the one he would have preferred before his dream, but his dream had twisted and turned him about a lot, and his awakening still more. And anyhow — it was a paper!

"Isn't a Saturday weekly perhaps a better medium?" he asked in a strained, ill-controlled voice. "Smaller circulation, perhaps, but more real influence."

"No, I want this paper to go out to the main public by the hundred thousand, I want to go behind all the clever fellows. They cut no ice. I want to go out with pictures and vulgar noise and all that, and tell 'em, and tell 'em and tell 'em, week after week, that these old things of yours are played out and dangerous and — oh, damnable!"

"THESE OLD THINGS OF YOURS?" Something chill blew upon Mr. Parham. But still the poor desperate soul hung on. For six expectant years he had desired this thing.

"I don't quite see myself doing that," he said. "I'm not a Garvin, you know. I doubt if one can be both copious and fine."

Sir Bussy stopped short and regarded his companion with amazement, his mouth askew, for a couple of seconds or more. "Gaw!" he said at last. "I wasn't thinking of YOU."

Mr. Parham was now very pale. The incredible was happening.

His mind refused to accept it. “But the paper!” he gasped.

“I’ll have to do it with the right sort of fellows,” said Sir Bussy, speaking slowly. “It would be up against every damned thing you are.”

He was staring at Mr. Parham in manifest amazement. As though he realized something for the first time. Six years they had been together, and never had it entered his head that the ideal editor of anything was Mr. Parham. And he meant, he really meant, this illiterate Cockney! to conduct his paper himself. Out of a dream he had got this crazy confidence. Some fantastic dream in the heavy and charged atmosphere of that séance. That infernal séance! That ten thousand times accursed séance! It had put everything awry. It had shattered everything. It had been a vat of mental fermentation. Out of its tedious tensions these hypnotic revelations had arisen. It had dispersed the decent superficial controls of both their minds and laid bare things that should never have been laid bare. It had revealed the roots of their imaginations. It had exposed the irreconcilable. How true and sound had been the instincts of Mr. Parham, when he had resisted the resort to these darkened chambers and these irrational expansions of expectation which are the inevitable consequences of séance conditions!

A paper — a great paper, financed by Sir Bussy! And not to be his! A paper AGAINST him!

Six years wasted! Slights! Humiliations! Irritations! Tailors’ bills!

Never in his life had he screamed, but now he was near screaming. He felt with his fingers inside his collar and had no word to say. Something had broken within him. It was the back of that poor weary camel of hope which for six long years had carried him so far and by such winding tracks, uphill and downhill, across great spaces, into strange continents, in pursuit of Sir Bussy.

They stopped short at the corner of Pontingale Street. Mr. Parham glared, speechless, at his companion. Here indeed their ways diverged.

“But come on,” said Sir Bussy. “It’s hardly midnight yet. Come on and see if my nieces aren’t setting Claridge’s afire. Everyone will be there — drabs and duchesses — Gaby — everybody.”

For the first time in their relationship Mr. Parham declined an

invitation. “NO,” he said, recovering the power of speech.

Sir Bussy never took a refusal without a struggle. “Oh, COME!” he said.

Mr. Parham shook his head. His soul was now brimming over with hate for this bilking, vulgar little scoundrel, this treacherous and incurable antagonist. His hate may have looked out of his eyes. They may have revealed the spit of devil within the don. For the first time, perhaps, in this long intercourse Sir Bussy may have seen all that Mr. Parham could feel about him.

For twenty seconds of stark revelation the two men confronted each other, and then Mr. Parham, recovering his discretion, was catching his soul back from its windows and drawing down the blinds. But Sir Bussy did not repeat his invitation to Claridge’s.

“Gaw,” he said, and turned away towards Berkeley Square. He did not even say “Good-night.”

Never before had Mr. Parham heard a Gaw so fraught with derision and dismissal. It was an entirely unanswerable Gaw. It was abandonment.

For a minute, perhaps, he stood quite still as Sir Bussy receded. Then slowly, almost submissively, he turned his face towards his lodging in Pontingale Street.

It seemed to Mr. Parham that all reality had deserted him. Not only had Sir Bussy gone off with all his dearest hopes, but it was as if his own substance had gone from him also. Within, the late Lord Paramount was nothing now but a vacuum, a cavernous nothingness craving for reassurance.

Had he no future? Some day, perhaps, when old Waterham died — if ever that old bit of pemmican did die — the Mastership of St. Simon’s. That — and a pose of smiling disdain. With a little acid in the smile.

His mind swayed uncertainly and then came round with the quivering decision of a compass needle towards the dusky comfort and intimacy, the limitless understanding and sympathy of little Mrs. Pinchot. She would understand him. She would understand. Even if all that had made history for him went to the dust destructor, even if a new upstart history that took no heed of Princes and Powers, Persons and Policies and was all compact of biology, economics and

suchlike innovations, ruled the earth in its stead. He knew she would understand — whatever there was to understand, and see it, whatever it was, in a light that would sustain and help him.

True indeed that the chief proofs of her devotion and understanding had come to him in this dream, but there is an element of revelation in every dream, an element of good in every disaster.

Happily he had her telephone number...

And so, showing a weary back to us, with his evening hat on the back of his head, our deflated publicist recedes up Pontingale Street, recedes with all his vanities, his stores of erudition, his dear preposterous generalizations, his personified nations and all his obsolescent paraphernalia of scholarly political wisdom, so feebly foolish in their substance and so hideously disastrous in their possible consequences, and his author, who has come to feel a curious unreasonable affection for him, must needs bid him a reluctant farewell.

THE END

THE BULPINGTON OF BLUP

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DEDICATION

TO

the critic of the typescript

ODETTE KEUN

gratefully

(bless her)

CHAPTER THE FIRST

HIS ORIGINS AND EARLY YEARS

1

Raymond and Clorinda

THERE had been a time when he felt that he ought not to call himself The Bulpington of Blup. Though it was only in his own mind that he called himself the Bulpington of Blup. He never called himself the Bulpington of Blup to any other human being. But to himself he did it continually. And the effects of doing it spread about in his brain. Sometimes it seemed to help things; sometimes to hinder them.

For some years he made a great effort not to be The Bulpington of Blup any more, to be simply and really what he was — whatever that might be.

That was in the serious time when he felt he was growing up but not growing up quite right. It had been a hard struggle. Certain alien influences had swayed him profoundly and particularly those Broxteds, his friends and neighbours. He had determined to look facts in the face — squarely in the face. He would go for walks whispering, "I am just Theodore Bulpington, a commonplace youth." Even so he would find himself putting it in phrases that betrayed him. "It ill becomes the Bulpington of Blup to shirk the harsh visage of reality." Later, as we shall tell, his efforts slackened. The Bulpington of Blup habit was weakened but not cured. It returned; it recovered force. It became an invader, a conqueror. How, you shall be told in this story.

Bulpington he was, quite legitimately. But there were other Bulpingtons and several of much more importance than himself. That "The" therefore was unwarrantable.

His father was a poet and critic with a weak chest who lived at Blayport on the Blay. His mother was one of the ten Spink girls who had partaken, all of them, of the earlier crude vintages of the higher

education for women. They had no brother. Old Spink, undismayed by this feminist bias of his chromosomes, had said, “Every girl of mine shall be as good as a man” Clorinda, the fourth of them, was, within the limits of her marriage, better. For Raymond Bulpington, her spouse, had neglected his final studies at Oxford for the aesthetic life. He was not really up to her. She married him rather inattentively. When you are one of ten sisters marriage is apt to be something of a scramble. She wanted someone “uncommon” and she wanted to cut a dash intellectually. And she was in a hurry. He had seemed all right.

She was a dark, sturdy, well-built girl of great energy and her mind was unusually broad. She took double first in everything so to speak, until it came to offspring. She ought to have had twins and completed the record, but Theodore — it may be through some deficiency in Raymond — was her only child.

The marriage occurred in the imperial days of Queen Victoria, when Wilde and Whistler were great stars in the skies of the artistic world and when *Pseudonyms* jostled *Keynotes* in the booksellers’ shops. The West was just discovering the Russian novel and the Scandinavian drama. Frank Harris had captured the *Saturday Review* and Aubrey Beardsley adorned the *Yellow Book.* Dim memories of the Renaissance were affecting the costumes and morals of the time; the crinoline had gone and Protestantism was beginning to look deflated and dowdy. Liberalism and Liberty were giving place to Freedom and Passion. All the Spink girls rode bicycles in knickerbockers, one after the other, and there was no end to their cigarettes. But they cared nothing for golf, a game then for whimsical old gentlemen, and when they played tennis they rustled.

Theodore’s father, who had come down from Oxford with a brilliant reputation for brilliance, as full of promise as an egg is full of meat, was already something of an invalid in Theodore’s childhood. There had been a brief glittering bachelor-time in London, studios and the Cafe Royal, epigrams before breakfast and the brilliant promise breaking out in the most scathing criticisms of established reputations. He contributed to the *Saturday Review* and the *Yellow Book,* drew women of new and startling shapes in black and white, and played quite a prominent part in the Revival of

Wickedness in progress at that time. Then Clorinda got him. His union had been a wild affair, as wildness went in those days; the young couple had eloped to Thetford a fortnight before the ceremony and old Spink, maddened by the scandal, had threatened to shoot him and was only partly appeased by the belated marriage lines. Raymond and Clorinda declared that the ceremony had no binding effect upon them and did their best to behave accordingly; they lived in two communicating and sometimes disconnected studios and were much talked about until his health broke down.

It broke down soon after the occurrence of Theodore. Sea air and a dry soil became imperative; they retreated to little old Blayport and Raymond flung himself into a History of the Varangians that was to outshine Doughty, a task from which he never emerged, from which indeed nothing emerged; and between whiles to supplement his income during the work in progress, he edited classics, projected translations, advised a peculiarly scoundrelly publisher and lured young men by timely praise into the scoundrel's clutches, wrote scornful essays and criticisms and despised contemporary art and literature generally; while Clorinda got an annual season ticket to Charing Cross and divided her time between home life at Blayport, world movements and a sympathetic treatment of progressive artists and advanced thinkers in London. Old Spink died and did not cut up nearly so well as had been expected, so that the Bulpingtons had to go on living within strictly defined limits. Even in Blayport they were by no means solitary; it was a sunny resort in winter, and people of the intelligenzia liked to come and stay in the place and call in to hear Raymond talk about their contemporaries. No one could better serve you a spatchcocked contemporary than Raymond.

Both parents gave a considerable amount of disconnected thought to the problem of Theodore's education. Clorinda met all sorts of ideas about education in London, people brought ideas down with them to Blayport and Raymond found them in books. It was a generation exceptionally prolific of educational ideas. It floated tranquilly along the flood of armament towards the Great War, talking meanwhile of the welfare of the young and the assured future of mankind. Butler and Shaw had disseminated a general feeling that schools were wrong, and so Theodore did not go very much to

school and acquired that feeling early. So much at least was to the good.

But nothing took the place of school. He was simply left uninstructed. There was a general objection to discipline and discouragement in the prevalent educational theory of the time. So neither of his parents disciplined or discouraged him in any way. He was left in charge of a trusted nurse, who afterwards gave place to a polyglot Russian lady, a refugee from political persecution. Later on she departed; she had got herself attached as mistress to one of the passing intellectual visitors who, so to speak, packed her up with his luggage, and a Portuguese lady succeeded her. But collaboration with Raymond in the translation of the Lusiad led to an emotional crisis before Theodore had acquired more than a smattering of abusive Portuguese; and a conscientious Swiss followed, whom Raymond never really liked on account of her ankles, but tolerated for the boy's sake.

She was sent away because Clorinda could not bear her insistence upon the superiority of Swiss domestic management to British household methods, and after that there was an interregnum.

After the interregnum Theodore went to St. Artemas's, a local school where there was no corporal punishment but much brushwork, metalwork and sea bathing. Under this regime he developed considerable linguistic facility, an obstinate incapacity for mathematics, and marked artistic tendencies, and he became a voracious reader of fiction, history and poetry. He wrote verse from a remarkably early age and sketched with inaccuracy and distinction. He was good at his piano lessons, despised all but the greatest composers and talked precociously about many adult interests. And in his secret heart, to assuage some unsatisfied need, he was The Bulpington of Blup.

As for that "Blup", it was, he told himself, the ancient name of Blayport. But he really had no evidence that it was the ancient name of Blayport. The history mistress had talked of ancient names and how they had become distorted with the years. She talked of Brighthelmstone which had become Brighton and Londinium which was now London, and Portus Lemanus contracted to Lynn. On the beach, in a mood of facetiousness, he and Francolin and Bletts had

parodied the lesson. They had suggested bright and better variations in numerous familiar places' names — involving generally a faint agreeable flavour of indelicacy. What could Blayport become? Blappy or Blappot, Blaypot or Blup? Francolin fancied Blaypot and sang, "Blaypot is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast my shoe." Blup hit upon Theodore's fancy, hit his fancy indeed, extremely. *Blup.* It sounded like a great cliff, a "bluff"; it sounded like the smack of waves; it made him think of a horde of pirates, desperate fellows, harbouring there, Bulpingtons all. And among them a leader, one, head of the clan, spite of his tender years, the best of the breed, *The* Bulpington — himself. So he fell into a muse and let Francolin do what he liked with Blaypot, carry it about, wear it on his head — call for it hastily after Resurrection Pie. Blup was the word for him.

2

The Fastnesses of Blup

There was something unstable and elusive about Blup. It was never quite Blayport; it was much rockier; and soon it got detached and began wandering about the country. Its scenery acquired a touch of the Highlands even while it was still a haunt of sea-going men; it made itself a tortuous rocky harbour like a Norwegian fiord. It retreated up formidable gorges. And then it went inland and became a strange mountainous country where there were dense very green forests and the white roads wound about like serpents. One saw it usually from very far off and particularly about the time of sunset. It had walls and pinnacles of a creamy sort of rock that glittered micaceously, and there were always very still and watchful sentinels upon its ramparts. And at the sunset gun the great embroidered banner of The Bulpington fell down fold upon fold, fold upon fold, gold thread and shining silk, and gave place to the little storm flag that fluttered through the night.

And sometimes Blup receded altogether beyond the visible horizon and The Bulpington thereof, mysteriously in exile, went unsuspected and misunderstood, a slight dark boy going for an apparently aimless walk, a schoolboy treated contumeliously by

women teachers of mathematics, a scornful saunterer amidst the vulgar antics of excursionists upon the beach, biding his time for the signal that would change all that.

There came a military period when Blup had to be put into a state of defence, to resist what was afterwards to be known in the secret history of the world as the Beleaguerment of Blup. The Castalonians with their strange devices, their black armour and cold-drawn-steel weapons, their masked prince and their trail of vile and wretched camp followers, were coming up against it. Across the sea and over the mountains by three devious routes they were coming up against it. It was a vast task for one mind to plan and foresee every possibility of that struggle and it involved subterranean passages of the most intricate and astounding sort....

"Penny for your thoughts, Theodore," said one of his father's casual visitors.

"I was just thinking," said Theodore.

"Yes — but what about?"

Theodore sought in his mind for a suitable subject for a visitor's understanding and snatched a fragment from the table talk of the last week-end.

"I was wondering why it is that Berlioz so often falls just short of greatness."

"*God!*" cried the visitor as if he had been stung, and went back to London to report that Raymond and Clorinda had produced the most awful little prig that had ever been heard of upon God's earth.

"Happily he looks delicate," said the visitor.

3

Delphic Sibyl

Some day, before many years perhaps, the psychologists may give us clearer ideas than they do at present of how such a personality as The Bulpington of Blup, such a visitant, such an intervener, can come into existence among the infinite delicate tangle of cells and fibres in a human brain, and how it can draw together about itself those shadows and sublimations of experience that feed its phantom life.

Always it knew itself for a visitant and unreal and yet it clung obstinately to itself, and was always interchanging suggestions and feelings and interpretations with that other individual that ruled beside it and over it — that other individual it could influence to sign his name "Theo Bulpington", with the most grudging of little o's for the Theo and with a long and complicated flourish that was indeed no less than the words "of Blup", stifled before they were born. This visitant, this inner personality preyed upon Theodore's mental vitality; it struggled to control him; it gave him the inward-looking hesitating manner that distinguished him; it accounted perhaps for his occasional stammer. Through the mist of its urgencies and impulses, its unformulated yet influential judgments and powerful yet indistinct desires, the real world, the world sustained by the rough endorsements of experience and the confirmations of people about him, projected itself into Theodore's brain. The intruder could not defeat and destroy the power of these present realities, but it remained a living protest against them and it could throw its glamour over past and future until they became its own.

In the world of Theodore, Blayport was always Blayport, always on the English Channel and always at exactly the same distance from London. The first afternoon train from Victoria got to Blayport very punctually, never before 5.27 and rarely very much later. In this popular seaside resort, his home was established with an effect of stupendous fixity. He remembered no other home and did not yet imagine there could be a different one. The weather changed beyond his control from a heavy wet sou'wester with grey rolling seas that beat upon and foamed at the Esplanade, to a wild sou'wester with shining white clouds in a blue sky, to an east wind that tasted of blue-black ink, that made all the world look like a painted ink drawing and had skies of a hard decisive blue; and so back to the wet sou'wester again that drove the rain and spindrift hissing along the asphalt. The hours trampled upon his wishes, dinner-time and school-time were always interruptions and night came undesired. The holidays rushed to their end and the mathematical mistress could, like Joshua, make the day stand still. The world of Theodore was full of boredom, obligation and frustration.

Both his father and mother lacked completeness in this world. All

sorts of things about his father and mother had been thrust out of his consciousness, together with any awareness of this thrusting out. All sorts of things were yet to be observed. His father had a fine dark querulous face and found the world to blame. The south-west wind made his hair, which was longer than it was thick, dreadfully untidy. His eyes were the colour of red copper and his shirts were a clear yellow and open at the neck. Theodore's mother was so different outdoors from in, tailor-made with spatterdashes in the open air, and a large slow softness about the house in a dressing-gown that became a tea-gown as the day wore on, that she seemed to be two separate people. The house was always adorned with poppies, sunflowers, dahlias, asters and suchlike large passionate flowers in great glazed earthenware bowls; and her cigarette-ends were everywhere. White flowers she could not endure. Servants came and went. One, going in a rather exceptional tumult of dismissal, called Clorinda "a curly-headed old cow". It made Theodore look at his mother for a time in quite a new light.

Raymond went for long solitary walks. He was very proud of his untiring wolf-like stride. When he was at home he read and wrote at a long oak table littered with books by the window. Or he talked. Or he slept. Theodore knew that when Raymond wrote or slept little boys should be seen and not heard, but Raymond seemed to see him very little. However, he let him turn over the pages of any book he liked and sometimes said, "Well, little man," and ruffled his hair in quite a kindly manner.

Raymond's study was furnished with severe good taste. The walls were whitewashed, there were numerous untidy bookshelves of unstained oak and a few really good Chinese bowls. There was one of those early pre-Broadwood pianos that people are apt to call spinets, and later came a pianola.

On his Clementi, Raymond would play Scarlatti and Purcell and sometimes Mozart quite gracefully. He found the pianola served to remind him of music and that was his excuse for possessing it. He would never admit the pianola played music. He would say: "Let us put some Weber — or Bach or Beethoven — through the sausage machine." There was much talk of music in the house and when Raymond was out Theodore would put Beethoven, Bach, Brahms

and even Berlioz through the machine himself. Deep in his heart and unconfessed he most loved Berlioz because when he played him — and especially the *Symphonie Fantasque* — the Bulpington of Blup, moody and magnificent, enlarged to colossal dimensions, stalked through his imagination unrestrained. Theodore vanished. Russian music and the Russian ballet had not yet happened to England; they were to storm his adolescence.

Clorinda would go to London for whole days and sometimes for several days together pursuing her movements. "Don't overdo it," Raymond would say. When she returned she would relapse into her languorous art gowns and her affection for Raymond would be exceptionally ostentatious and abundant. It was as if she had bought a great present of new caresses for him up there. He accepted them without manifest enthusiasm. While she was away Raymond and Theodore saw little of each other. Theodore sometimes wished that the servants and governesses of Clorinda's choice were lovelier and more capable of romance. The only conceivable romantic associate for Theodore was that Portuguese governess, but when Clorinda was in London, collaboration between the young lady and Raymond became so earnest that Theodore was sent out to play upon the beach by himself. At other times she exercised a dark and deliberate charm upon him. But she *would* call him by diminutive pet names and drag his father's character and dispositions into their conversations. It did not interest Theodore in the least to speculate whether his father was paradoxical, whether anger.

For a time a fair young man who was staying at the Blayport Arms frequented Theodore's home. He talked in low tones to Clorinda, as it were privately, and publicly in a rather loud strained controversial voice to Raymond. The two men talked a lot about Miracle Plays and German puppet shows, agreeing harshly with each other. The young man was very busy inventing folk dances and beautiful cottage industries that the English ought to have had even if they hadn't actually had them, and Clorinda was very enthusiastic about it all. She found him Early English. One half-holiday Theodore who had been sent out on the rocks to play returned suddenly for a magic crystal belonging to the Bulpington of Blup. He stole in noiselessly because Raymond might be having an afternoon nap.

In the living-room he came upon Clorinda and the fair young man. They were on the Empire sofa. Their lips were pressed together and the young man's hand (and half his arm) was thrust in a searching manner into the ample décolletage of Clorinda's gown. Theodore's presence was only remarked as he departed.

It was after this that he was given boots instead of sandshoes and told by Clorinda to carry himself manfully and not to "sneak about" so much. She said it got on her nerves. And the relationship of Theodore of Blayport to The Bulpington of Blup took on a new aspect. It became clear that they had been changed at birth.

For a time indeed this changeling, the Bulpington of Blup, seemed likely to oust Theodore, the son of Clorinda, altogether. The true mother of The Bulpington of Blup was as different from Clorinda as could be. What she was like was never very fixed. Sometimes she was this and sometimes she was that. She was rather like Britannia in the *Punch* cartoons for a time, and afterwards she was like Leonardo's Virgin of the Rocks in Clorinda's bedroom. Then she was dark and soft and great. You did not see her face but her arm was about you. Afterwards she was like Prud'hon's Sleeping Psyche and very calm and loving. For a little while, for a hesitating time, she was the Delphic Sibyl from Michael Angelo's great ceiling.

But that was wrong; that was dismissed and wiped out, a mistake altogether. The Delphic Sibyl was much too young. Her face was too young. Another destiny presently claimed that lovely being, with her sweet wide eyes, her awakening youth.

Whisper it low; she had become the Bulpington of Blup's own true love.

The lingering softness of childhood was giving place to a completer boyhood day by day, and he began to realize his need for feminine companionship, *hard* feminine companionship, and forget his craving for protection.

She would ride in armour beside him through the greenwood of Wonderland, his mate, his friend, his dearest friend. No nonsense about it, nothing soppy, nothing of that sort. She could fence almost as well as he could; she could throw a lance almost as far. But not quite. She was fearless, all too fearless, in a world where Castalonian camp followers may lurk in any thicket.

The Bulpington of Blup spent more and more time in her company as Theodore's boyhood ripened. He would talk to her in his reverie; and his talking made his reverie less phantasmal and elusive than it had been. He framed sentences and phrases, for language and imagination were growing in his mind. He would tell her about his days of exile, about his mysterious daylight exile at Blayport. Sometimes that degradation seemed to be an enchantment, but generally he and she treated it as a deliberate concealment, a disguise, a temporary self-effacement for mighty ends.

Never a word to anyone else yet of all these things. The time for the eclaircissement would come. Meanwhile we pass as the son of these people, Master Theodore Bulpington, known to his coevals and familiars as "Snifter" or the "Snipe".

But in bed before he fell asleep, how near she came! The pillow became her arm. She breathed beside him, saying nothing and yet comforting his heart. Nothing soppy, you know, nothing in the least soppy — just that.

4

God, the Puritans and Mr. Wimperdick

The talk in that cultivated Blayport home was abundant, various and stimulating. Nothing was kept from the little hearer. "To the pure all things are pure," said Clorinda. "What doesn't concern them doesn't affect them." And besides she wasn't going to be bothered about it. Theodore made such use and application as he could of what he heard and what he found in the unrestricted books that filled the house.

Every day that hungry young brain-cortex was seizing upon a thousand new things, words and phrases, sights and sounds, and weaving ten thousand new threads of connexion between the new and the old. It was doing its instinctive best to get a coherent picture of the universe about itself.

Over it and through it flowed the little events of Theodore's life, the scenes and happenings of the street and beach, the casual teachings of home, the clumsy quasi-intentional teachings of

governesses and school teachers, books, pictures, presently magazines and newspapers, and these spates and streams of home talk.

The talk was about music, about the Varangians and the fall of the Western Empire, about new books, about old books which Raymond was editing and prefacing, about the beauty and richness of words and phrases, about new and old poetry, about manners and morals, about the weaknesses of the absent and the personalities of the present, about the undesirability of the newer movements in art, literature and behaviour that had arisen since the great days when Raymond had been the spirit of innovation at the Cafe Royal. (But Clorinda thought that novelties were still permissible.) And even religion was touched upon. But law and current politics were disregarded as being too topical and tripperish and newspaperish for attention. And business was an unclean thing.

Most little boys and girls in those days were instructed to centre the picture of the universe they were forming in their minds on God. They were referred to Him continually; they were trained to dread His love and anger in about equal measure. He had made them; He had made everything; He was everywhere. Or at any rate He was tremendously and imminently overhead. Only as they grew up did they begin to conceive of Him as the Great Absentee. He had made them; He had made everything. Yes, but then apparently — one began to realize — He had gone. He wasn't everywhere, He wasn't anywhere, He had abandoned overhead for a long time to Infinite Space; He had gone right away.

But never did this God achieve any strength of personality upon the cerebral cortex of Theodore. Compared with the vivid and concrete Bulpington of Blup, God remained only a dark menace at the back of things. Compared with the dear face and the vitalizing presence of the Delphic Sibyl he was infinitely remote. Servants and one governess made some efforts to give substance to this word God in Theodore's mind, to this great idea on which the world is supposed to have built its belief for centuries, by dwelling on His power to "send you to 'ell" and other theological circumstances; but even the simple faith of the servant class was losing its powers of conviction in these days. Hell was among a collection of landscapes

in Theodore's imagination, but only as a hot sandy waste among arid rocks with frisky-looking demons and rather pleasing little threads of vertical smoke coming out of the ground. It was not nearly so alarming as the crater of Vesuvius or the Maelstrom. They were really horrible.

Nor did the thought of the Watching Eye ever pierce the security of Theodore's secret life. It was only when he was a young man that he noted the import of his own name.

At school he was made to read the Bible, verse by verse, and even prepared Kings and Chronicles for an examination, but the Bible seemed to be concerned not so much with God as the Jews — and Raymond had given Theodore a poor opinion of the Jews.

The New Testament story did not touch Theodore's unprepared heart and he regarded pictures of the Crucifixion — even by the greatest masters —— with horror and loathing. He turned them over as soon as he could and hurried on to the Venuses and the Sibyls. It was a mythological story from the first for him, and a very unpleasant one. It would seem a son had been nailed on the cross in that hideous manner by his father. Because this father was annoyed by the way the world he had made had gone wrong. A frightful story, as nasty as needless. It hurt the palms of Theodore's hands even to think of it. It set him against Raymond. One day when Raymond was hanging a picture, dismay seized Theodore and instead of handing up nails he went out of the room. He grew up an almost entirely godless boy, godless and god-evasive, and it was only later that he began to take any interest in divinity.

Yet there were quite a number of religious people, even professionally religious people, who came and went in that little centre of culture and intellectual activity. There were one or two priests who seemed on excellent terms with Raymond; plump, well-lubricated, agreeable-mannered men with a disposition to pat little boys in an absent-minded and avoidable way, men who liked to eat and drink and wore golden crosses and medals and suchlike interesting things on their shiny black paunches; and there was Enoch Wimperdick, the eminent convert and Catholic apologist, a small round fiercely smiling man, always short of breath and full of combative chuckles. He had a lot of fat that did not fit him. He was

as if he was wearing the fat of a much bigger man. It overflowed at his neck and his wrists, his voice sounded as though it found his throat full of it and had to squeeze through, and it seemed to pinch his eyes up and out of place. His hair was very black and wiry, very thick where it ought to be and turning up in all sorts of places where it ought not to be. His eyebrows were like maddened toothbrushes soaked in blue-black ink. It seemed doubtful if he shaved his upper lip; probably he hacked the crop with scissors; and his blue chins and cheeks — one might call them loose-shaved in contradiction to close-shaved. His irregular alert teeth seemed to guard rather than work in his wide smiling mouth. Clorinda behind his back said that he ought to smile less or clean his teeth more. But she got on very well with him. "You're a jahly atheist," he wheezed to her. "I'll pray for you. You're Latin and logical in your mind and I've got no quarrel with you. You're the Catholic negative and I'm the Catholic positive. Come over."

"Jahly" was his distinctive word, he brought it to Blayport and spread it about the house. Raymond took it up, but altering it a little, pronounced it with a half-smile, a little gust of something akin to laughter and a faint flavour of repudiation as "Cholly". Clorinda never by any chance used it. But it was a year or more after the visits of Mr. Wimperdick had ceased that "jolly" got back to its normal place in the language again.

From conversations round and about and following after Mr. Wimperdick, it was borne into the mind of Theodore that the classification of the universe into what was Jahly and what was not was very distinct and fundamental. High in the scale of Jahly things was Wine provided it was red and abundant. It was best waved about in the air to impromptu song before being consumed. "Good ale" (but not apparently beer) was Jahly and so were all inns. Oak furniture was Jahly and the warmth of wood fires and great abundance of food, particularly if cooked in a pot or roasted on a spit. Women, when taken in a cheerful disrespectful mood and understood to be fundamentally unclean, were germane to Wimperdick's Jahly scheme. They were best "buxom" and a little short of "wanton". You leered at them warmly about something secret that had never occurred. Then you patted them and told them

to be off with them, the baggages.

But here there seemed to be differences of opinion among the grown-ups. Clorinda professed advanced ideas and Raymond extremely sensuous ones. “Sensuous” was one of his favourite words. He was always quoting Swinburne and talking of “cholly lust”. But Clorinda never mentioned lust and spoke principally of freedom. Wimperdick on the other hand betrayed something like a hatred for Swinburne. A restrained hatred. He said with an effect of generous liberality that Swinburne was a Jahly atheist, and seemed to get bothered when that didn’t dispose of him. But Raymond found Swinburne Cholly altogether — wallowed in him, returned to him, quoting him by the yard mouthingly. Wimperdick grudged talking about women. He made gestures with his short arms to indicate that all that was conceded, that he was perfectly sound in the matter, that the Church was perfectly sound and liberal-minded in the matter, no confounded puritanism or anything of that kind, but that he would prefer to avoid particulars. The Church had never been hard on sins of the flesh, from bathing without anything on or looking at your naked self in a mirror, down to the more definitely scheduled offences. Sins of the flesh are venial sins. The grievous sins were sins of Pride — such as failing to agree with Wimperdick and believe in the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church it was evident was quintessentially Jahly. And so also were the Middle Ages, craftsmen, armies with banners, sailing ships and the brass on carthorses. Those were Jahly too. Tapestries again. But one could go on for a long time. The small boy gathered these things together as sometimes on country walks he picked bunches of flowers. It was an incoherent but bright attractive bundle.

And against the Jahly miscellany stood the Adversaries. These were Progress, Protestantism, Factory Chimneys and Pitiless Machinery — with which Theodore lumped and loathed to the lowest deeps the detestable inflexibility of mathematics — and Jews and Puritans. Especially Puritans. And Liberals, those damned Liberals! And Darwin and Huxley.

It was not very clear to Theodore what Puritans were but it was clear they were a hateful lot. They had been ruinous to stained-glass

windows and they set their flinty faces against all the Jahly side of life. Art and loveliness they pursued with a venomous hate. Theodore would walk along the Esplanade wondering how it would feel to meet a Puritan suddenly. There was a cadaverous man at Roots', the Upholsterers, who suffered from gastric trouble and always wore black clothes because of the undertaking side of the business. It seemed to Theodore that even if this man was not actually a puritan, he had a very puritanical look. The Catholics had discovered America but it was the Puritans in North America and the Liberals in the Latin South had made it what it is.

So Catholicism first presented itself to Theodore as a campaign, as a Jahly scrap of everything in life that was colourful and picturesque against Jews, Puritans, Liberals, Progress and Evolution and all those dull, dark and dreadful powers. It was bound to win in the end, which was why Wimperdick was always chuckling. As an undertow to this gallant conflict flowed the sins of the flesh, jahly if you didn't make too much of the woman and readily condoned so far as the men were concerned, and at the back of this Catholic business, inexplicably associated with it and never clearly referred to by Wimperdick, never indeed to be rashly referred to, was that strange mystery, that shuddering horror, the Crucifix, the Son put there and apparently left there now for ever, by the Great Absentee. About whom the less said the better. (If only one had never seen a Medici print of Crivelli's picture with the wounds!) That made it difficult to be always Jahly with Wimperdick.

That was how Theodore got it. All wrong and most unjust, but that was how he got it. Religion. The Catholic and Puritan were fighting for the world, the Crucifix dripped over them out of the dark shadows, and at an infinite distance was the inattentive back of the Great Absentee....

But anyhow in the foreground you had Art, Literature and the cultivated weeklies.

Theodore never got hold of it all together. Perhaps it does not hang together enough for anyone to get hold of completely. But he puzzled his wits over this or that chunk in the mighty jigsaw. He tried his best to get all that Raymond and Clorinda and Wimperdick and various other people said into one scheme because he had a real

instinct for coherence. Somebody must be wrong....

"Daddy," he said, "are you a Catholic?"

"I'm fairly catholic I think — yes."

"But a Catholic — the cross and the Ever Blessed Virgin and all that?"

"Not a regular Catholic of that sort — no."

"Are you a Puritan?"

"Good *God,* NO!"

"Are you a Christian?"

Raymond turned round to look at him fairly with smilingly grave eyes.

"You haven't been listening to one of those preachers on the beach, Theodore? It sounds like it."

"I just thought," said Theodore.

"Don't," said Raymond. "Keep it for a year or two — like smoking...."

And afterwards Theodore heard Raymond asking Clorinda whether any of the servants had been "pitching religion into that kid?"

"I don't want to have him worried with that sort of thing," said Raymond. "He's the sort of boy who might easily take it too seriously."

What was one to make of that?

It was hard stuff and not very attractive.

And yet somehow it seemed to matter in a menacing kind of way. About hell for example.... It perplexed and there was trouble in it....

Oh, *bother* it! Why fret about it? Plenty of time yet. Leave it till later, as Raymond said. The mind slipped away from it with extreme readiness — and down it all went into the deeps.

The woods of Blup were high and green and sweet and it was very pleasant to return to them and ride from glade to glade at the side of that dear companion with the broad brow and the calm clear eyes.

5

The Boy has Taste

But if religion was little more than conflict, perplexity, boredom and a faint and distant menace, Art was a powerful reality in that little Blayport home — Art and, still more, talking about Art.

You exalted, you defended, you attacked and you denounced. You waylaid and stabbed with sneers. Eyes grew bright and cheeks flushed. Literature came in — so far as it was Art. Socialism was a movement for the rehabilitation of Art, a movement a little encumbered and perplexed by the austere and systematic Webbs, Puritans both. This or that critic was a "deadly scoundrel" and "Impostors" were like a pine forest, so close and high they grew. There were Bounders and Boomsters and Tradesmen and Drivellers and Freaks and a whole vast distinctive fauna in that world of Art. There were fellows who tried to pass off Anecdotes as true Short Stories and give you sentiments for feeling.

There was George Moore who was certainly all right and Hardy who perhaps wasn't. George Moore said he wasn't. And Hall Caine and Mrs. Humphry Ward who were simply hell. Theodore was already a rather confused partisan by fourteen. He was a Socialist Medievalist. He thought machinery the devil, and Manchester and Birmingham the devil's own dominions. He hoped one day to see Florence. And Siena.

His taste was precocious. He pronounced judgments in a style closely resembling Raymond's. He said once that reading Spenser's Faerie Queene made him feel like a fly that was crawling over the pattern of a lovely wallpaper that never quite repeated and was always on the verge of repeating. That was an original remark and was much applauded. He had tried really hard to read the Faerie Queene and the resemblance had come to him in bed one morning as, that masterpiece neglected, he watched a fly upon the wall. But his subsequent mot about William Morris being a jolly old timber poet that only a wood-carver could appreciate properly he had got, in an attempt to repeat his success, out of a back number of the *Saturday Review.*

He looked at Watt's *Time, Death and Judgment* and said in a weary voice, "But what is it all about?" He concealed his secret passion for Berlioz and Offenbach (that Barcarolle) and explored Beethoven's Ninth Symphony on the pianola until Clorinda was

fairly beaten and asked him to desist. He was smilingly severe upon the architecture of Blayport and the fashions in Blayport shops. He begged for two Japanese prints to put up in his bedroom to replace a Madonna of Raphael's that he found "tedious". He objected to collars on aesthetic grounds and went to school in an orange neck-wrap. He drew decorative borders in the style of Walter Crane on the paper they gave out for mathematics. For his present on his fourteenth birthday he asked for a really good book about the Troubadours.

Even Raymond admitted, "The boy has taste."

CHAPTER THE SECOND

THE RED-HAIRED BOY AND HIS SISTER

1

Putting Things in Bottles

ONE day just after that fourteenth birthday, Theodore met a new sort of chap altogether and had a glimpse of another kind of world quite different from the one he was growing up in. And yet it was quite close to his own, hardly a mile from his home. It was at the port end of Blayport where the cliff rises modestly to thirty or forty feet above the patch of argillaceous sand where most of the rowing boats are beached.

The port business has long since abandoned Blayport. It has now only a flotilla of row-boats and small fishing boats which make occasional catches of mackerel or take out visitors with paternosters. A pier, an esplanade, a reasonably sandy beach and a peculiar softness in the air lure the visitor. The river Blay expands into a rocky, weedy estuary which sweeps round behind the town and makes it almost a peninsula. The estuary is tortuous and varied and beyond are sands and then pine scrub, pine woods and notices against trespassers. Further out was Blay Island, reached by a bridge far to the west and infested by mosquitoes. There are oyster beds at Blay Island and beyond them small villages where there is much lobster-catching. Little pony carts carry the oysters and lobsters to Papport Junction across the bridge.

The estuary and sands made a good region for lonely wanderings. Before he had left the town behind, the disguise of Theodore was at an end and The Bulpington of Blup pursued his mysterious and inexplicable career. It was a variable career. Sometimes The Bulpington of Blup was life-size, a lonely figure bent upon a quest or hastening to a tryst. Sometimes he became beside himself, so to speak, and then he could shrink to the smallest dimensions. The rocks would change into big islands or they would be mountain

chains separated by sandy deserts across which Lilliputian armies moved. The limpets on the rocks were the huts of warlocks or the tents of soldier bands. There were places covered with scattered, white, flat and very fragile bones — or at least they looked like papery bones — and light bunches of dried-up pouches. They were queer things, these pouches, and what they were was never quite clear. Were they for the treasure of those myrmidons?

Strange things could happen under water in the rock-pools, amidst the waving greenery. For The Bulpington of Blup had the unusual gift of living under water when he chose, and would go boldly into these thickets, out of which darted shrimp arrows, and there he would wrestle with sinister crabs and overcome them by the sheer strength of his arms. He would catch their claws in his hands so that they could not open, and bend them back steadily and pitilessly until they broke. And then the crabs repented and became his slaves. Or presently The Bulpington, restored to his full size again, listened to strange tidings from Blup, brought to him by the wheeling sea-gulls. Their cries and circling, you see, constituted a code. For the most part a moaning humming, memories of Bach and Beethoven and Offenbach and Cesar Franck, accompanied the flow of reverie.

Human beings were a disturbance. They attracted you and they repelled you and they put you on the defensive. They always restored you to life-size and made you assume the disguise of Theodore the Snifter, the Bulpington in exile, until you got past them. On this particular day there had been among other common objects of the seaside a black-clad young parson paddling, boots and socks in hand, far out towards the edge of the rippling water, two lovers in a niche in the rocks, hot and constrained and her muslin hat all on one side, and later on two elderly ladies with large pale umbrellas, sketching blocks, water colours, easels and camp-stools, who were looking for a “good bit” to sketch. They wandered rather apart in a scattered sort of way and put their heads on one side and every now and then dropped their artistic gear in a dry place and framed things with their arms and hands. It made a kind of dance. Theodore had a faint impulse to join their dance under the pretext of offering them advice and help, but he overcame it. Beyond, the red-haired boy became visible.

His head appeared over a ridge of rocks, bobbing up and down and going to and fro. He was very intent upon what he was doing. What could he be doing?

Theodore deflected his course so as to come at him over the ridge. The humming died away, returned, and died away again in the intentness of his observation.

The red-haired boy was longer and leaner than Theodore; he was indeed a gawky boy and he wore a blue shirt, very dirty grey flannel trousers and canvas shoes without socks. He might have been anything between thirteen, precocious and shot up, and sixteen normal size. His hair was a thatch and his forehead came down to heavy brows and thick light eyebrows, that overhung his eyes, and he had light eyelashes that seemed to withdraw his eyes still more from any discursiveness. Normally he frowned; it was the shape of his face. He had a garden trowel and ever and again he would dig this into the sand, hoist a trowelful and examine it intently. Sometimes he would throw it all aside. Sometimes he would hurry back with some find and add it to the contents of a jar of muddy sea water which seemed to be the centre of his operations. Then back to dig in a new place.

On a convenient rock nearer the cliff a row of six or seven other glass jars, some full, some empty, glittered in the sunshine.

Theodore found these proceedings attractively perplexing. Was it a game? He had an instinctive disposition to respect the fantasies of others and not to stare too destructively hard. He made his way across the rocks, not coming too close, with a preoccupied expression. He found himself humming that Barcarolle.

Presently the red-haired boy stopped his trowelling and regarded Theodore with a sort of amiable malignity. Theodore became intent upon the distant bridge to Blay Island. Three carts were crossing it at one time!

"Hi!" said the red-haired boy.

Some obscure motive made Theodore feign not to hear.

"*Hi!*" the red-haired boy repeated louder.

Theodore allowed himself to become aware of him. "Hullo," he said and advanced with a friendly expression. "You catching things?"

“Collecting specimens,” corrected the red-haired boy.

“What specimens?”

“I dissect them,” said the red-haired boy. “I look at them with a lens. I’ve got a compound microscope.”

This was unknown country. Intelligent ignorance was indicated. “Why compound?” asked Theodore.

“Lot of lenses and things. Haven’t you seen one? They’re wonderful. Things you can hardly see — s’big as that.” He indicated the enlarged size by holding his trowel hand and his free hand a foot apart.

“This science!” said Theodore in a tone Raymond might have used.

The red-haired boy had a broad freckled face, with something very familiar about it — Theodore couldn’t quite determine what. The overhung eyes with the light lashes revealed themselves as blue and they looked out now at Theodore with a kind of hard friendliness. The red-haired boy’s hands and feet were shapely, but large and freckled also. His voice sounded, Theodore thought, like cat’s fur. “Biology,” he was saying. “I never want to do anything else.”

“Just collect specimens?”

“Oh, *learn.* Learn all about them.”

“Are there books about this sort of thing?”

“You’ve got to find out for yourself. Who wants books?... Publications, perhaps,” said the red-haired boy.

This was not simply unknown country; it was a different world. Publications? And yet in this red-haired boy Theodore detected something closely akin to himself. He might be collecting specimens but also he was playing at collecting specimens — and making discoveries.

“Would you like to look through a microscope?” said the red-haired boy.

Theodore said he “wouldn’t mind”.

Was there actually a microscope?

The red-haired boy unfolded what was perhaps a preconceived plan. His manner suggested premeditation. But then he seemed to have a natural deliberation of speech. He lived, he said, over there on

the cliff at the end of the town, that new house with the long white outbuilding. That was the "lab". His father, Professor Broxted of Kingsway College, worked therein during vacations and at week-ends. Some day he too would be a professor. When he had made a lot of discoveries. That was why he was collecting specimens. He had brought down eight jars to the shore, but it is easier to bring down eight empty jars in a bunch than to carry them back full. Now if Theodore was disposed to have a good look through the microscope and help with the jars, "mummy" — young Broxted corrected the juvenile slip and said "my mother" — would give them both tea.

Theodore considered. Perhaps Clorinda would miss him and make no end of a fuss about his meals and about causing her the most terrible fear and anxiety by his erratic behaviour, but then again she might not notice his absence at all. He decided to take the risk and go with this young Broxted.

2

The Home of the Microscope

It was a new atmosphere to Theodore. Just as Teddy Broxted was a new sort of boy.

Theodore's world had been a limited one; Blayport with some glimpses of London, and mostly his own home in Blayport. Various school premises he knew, all faded, frayed, bleak and Philistine. He had been to tea with schoolfellows, and all their homes had been Philistine, either opulently or dingily Philistine, crowded with incoherent Victorian furniture and ornaments without charm or significance. But this one was not Philistine. It had a distinction. And yet there was no Art about it. It was a new sort of distinction. The things in it were interesting but they were not beautiful nor harmonious. They were too interesting. They talked. They jarred with one another.

Some of the colouring he found really bad. The passageway hall was a nasty cream, the sort of cream people choose in a hurry. It had a faint unmeaning pattern, "ornament" of the worst type. The blank greenish-grey wall of the dining-room in which they had tea was as

cold as — mathematics. The curtains of green-grey velvet failed to warm it up. There was some sort of art-blindness or some sort of indifference, Theodore felt, in these things. And the numerous pictures and ornaments about were really not primarily decorative at all. He remembered a phrase of his father's. "This place hasn't been furnished," he thought, "the things have been jotted down." True, there were a lot of old coloured botanical prints framed and glazed that were highly decorative in a bold deep-toned way, but a big moon photograph in one corner was as chilling as a skull would have been, and a painting by some unknown hand of sunlit wind-rippled sand in the Sahara, though it caught the eye and had a certain charm, was manifestly in the first place what Raymond would have called a "memorandum". The miniature restorations of some extinct reptiles in bronze might have strayed in from a museum, and the big silver model of a cuttle-fish, "presented to Professor Broxted by his class on the occasion of his marriage", from an undevout sacristy.

The laboratory was under no decorative obligations and pleased Theodore better. It was as well-fit as a good studio; with a lot of things in bottles, a long table, a white sink, a glass-fronted cupboard, a number of small white-wood slide-boxes and a couple of serious, brass, swan-necked, downcast microscopes which seemed to be thinking; it had a severity he struggled not to like. There was a sort of aquarium outside the window with a trickle of water running through it, and living things swimming about in it. There were sheets of squared paper pinned to the wall on which black lines were traced, and a heap of papers on a table in the corner. "We don't touch these," said Teddy with undisguised reverence. "That's dad's stuff. My end of the room is the other end."

They went round through the house to this laboratory first, and Teddy showed Theodore the wonders of the microscope, a thing he did very competently. Theodore learnt to see without shutting his other eye or holding his hand over it and he really felt the magic of these strange, translucent, absurdly active creatures acutely. He was privileged to examine a drop of Teddy's blood, and to be shown certain marvels called kidney glomeruli and sudoriferous glands, stained and mounted. They had been extracted from the underskin and interior of some now dispersed human being. There was also

some liver that had once been responsible for a human being's moods. It was frightfully new stuff for Theodore and he found the greatest difficulty in producing suitable remarks. But anyhow he was intelligently interested and Teddy did most of the talking. If Theodore had imbibed great quantities of art-talk, Teddy had listened to professors reading papers, and this gave him a natural lead in the laboratory. But Theodore had one flash of vision.

"But it isn't only that these things are in the microscope, is it? They're *everywhere* — in miles and miles of mud and ditches all round the world," said Theodore, trying to grasp his idea, seeing in that flash of vision the whole world magnified in texture and teeming with unfamiliar particulars. "Millions there must be, billions and *billions*."

Teddy put his red head on one side as though that point of view was new to him. "Of course," he acquiesced after a moment. "Yes; they're everywhere."

Not only just under the nosepiece of a microscope, but everywhere. Now why should Theodore have thought of that and not himself? Why had he never thought of that?

He stared at the floor, out of the window at the tree stems and branches and back at Theodore's face.

For a moment or so it hung over both their minds that the world about them was a mere summary of the material multitudinousness of reality, each apparent thing in it like the back of the binding of a volume in a limitless encyclopaedia. The back disappears and a million things come out of it. Your world disappears and a swarming infinitude of cells and atomies, corpuscles and fibres, replaces it. But that was too much for fourteen years old — as indeed it is too much for most of us — and before they had crossed the space between laboratory and house that abyss beneath the apparent universe had closed up again, and pools and scum and slime were just pools and scum and slime again, and the things one sees under the microscope are just the curious but really insignificant things one sees under the microscope and nowhere else at all....

Yet though neither of these boys had felt for more than an instant that gulf below all our present realities into which the poking objective of a microscope pierces, Theodore at least remained aware

of a threat to the particular universe he had made for himself to live in.

He had yielded at first to the initiatives of this Teddy. His interest and curiosity had been so roused that he had forgotten himself unusually, had forgotten himself and his own important world. Now it came back into his mind, protesting, pushing against the new alien stuff that had been invading it. What was this rather bare, clear, whitewalled confident way with things that presented itself as Science? Which empowered this red-haired chap to show off the things of the seaside to Theodore as though he owned them and as though they could not be otherwise than what he said of them. What was the counter-thrust needed to restore one's self-respect?

Wimperdick, Theodore knew, would know, and for the first time in his life he regretted not having listened more attentively to Wimperdick.

"There was a time when the only living things on earth were like these, these things you call pollywiggles and pollywoggles," the red-haired boy had said. "Only bigger. Everything else has evolved from them."

Evolved. Was this the Evolution Wimperdick talked about? And Darwinism?

"You believe in Darwin!" said Theodore, with a slight conscious astonishment in his voice.

"I believe in Evolution," said Teddy.

"I thought that Darwin was exploded."

"There was evolution before Darwin."

"And you believe we were apes once?"

"Know it. And reptiles before we were apes, and fishes before that. And then things like these things. I thought everybody knew that."

"I didn't know anyone did."

"You should hear my father's lectures. We pass through all these stages again before we are born — every one of us. We have hair all over, we have tails, we have gill-slits. You can't get away from it."

"I didn't know," Theodore had to admit.

"People don't," said Teddy. "They won't give us the stuff in the schools. They ought to do. But they hush it up. Leastways they try to

hush it up. As though it was possible to hush up a thing that happens all the time everywhere. But anyhow they've put you wrong, right enough. All the same, don't you go thinking Darwin's exploded. He isn't. Naturally his first sketch was out — here and there. Who ever made a first sketch that wasn't out a bit?"

Teddy's manner was a fairly close reproduction of Professor Broxted's demonstrator making things plain to an intelligent but ill-instructed student; but how was Theodore to know that?

They came into the lucid but unlovely house and there was Teddy's mother, brown-haired, broad-browed, clearskinned, slender and graceful, with blue eyes smiling pleasantly. She wasn't the least bit Philistine. She was dressed in a quite pretty, very simple grocer's blue "art" dress, and she was amiably reproachful because they had lingered so long in the laboratory before coming over for their tea.

Her voice was as soft and pleasant as her son's. She asked Theodore questions about himself. It had never occurred to Teddy that there were any questions of that sort to be asked.

Theodore's returning sense of himself was roused to acute activity by these enquiries. Who was he in fact? He answered unreadily, after consideration, with an unspoken expository undertow to the statements he made. Yes, he lived in Blayport? (Blup-port? Blup?) With his father. (He left out Clorinda.) Was his father *the* Bulpington, the writer, the critic? Yes. (Not really The Bulpington.) Yes, he wrote — in the *Sunday Review*. But his chief work was a great history of the Varangians. Mrs. Broxted wanted to know what the Varangians were. Did Teddy know? Teddy coloured with the swift blush of his clear-skinned red-haired type. This Teddy who knew so much about crustaceans and protozoa and polyzoa and all that sort of thing had obviously never heard of the Varangians. Manifestly he thought his mother tactless in asking that. Here was Theodore's opportunity.

He launched out about the Varangians. He could talk about the Varangians as confidently as Teddy could talk about his diatoms and animalculae. He did. He gave them a brief sketch of the great Nordic adventure, of the Norsemen and the Russ and the Danes and Normans. Suddenly springing, as it were, out of the frostbitten earth, these Goths had poured east, west and south. These Goths who were

us.

As he unfolded this story of bands and armies and fleets of raiders, of conquests, adventures and chivalry, he felt Teddy's microscope stuff was shrinking back to its proper insignificance again. Modestly he suppressed the share the Bulpington of Blup — or was it his remote ancestor, since reincarnated? — had played in leading the Varangians down the Volga and across to the Black Sea and Constantinople. Raid after raid they made upon Constantinople, and some of them became the Varangian Guard. "When they met the English and Flemish Crusaders there, they could understand their language."

There were steps in the passage outside. Mrs. Braxted glanced towards the door.

The door opened. It was a girl of thirteen — the substantial sort of thirteen-year-old girl with long legs — in a djibba, who hesitated in the doorway. She smiled faintly and looked at the visitor with interested eyes. "You're late too !" said Mrs. Broxted. "Margaret, this is Theodore Bulpington." She nodded and sat down at the vacant place before him. Bread-and-butter were passed to her by Teddy, a cup of tea poured out.

"Greengage jam!" she said approvingly with a rising note.

But Theodore had seen her a thousand times!

She had the same broad brow, the same sweet eyes. And at the same time she was a schoolgirl with pigtails; the Delphic Sibyl, thirteen years old. With a taste for greengage jam. It was wonderful, incredible.

Was *she* too disguised? —

Nonsense! Don't be a silly ass, Theodore. It was just a resemblance.

He stared at her unaffectedly, but after a first glance she did not look at him but concerned herself with her jam and bread.

"And so the English and the Norsemen and the Russians of the north were all the same people as these Varangians?" said Mrs. Broxted helpfully. "How interesting that is!"

Theodore became aware that he had stopped short and become silent from the moment this girl had appeared. "Yes, mum," he said indistinctly and roused himself to bite his bread and jam. The

Bulpington of Blup had shrunken to a very gawky embarrassed boy, with his mouth full. This disguise strangled him. He looked at his Sibyl, who was pretending to be Margaret Broxted, through puerile eyes, and he sought in vain to make some splendid gesture of recognition.

"I've heard about *you,*" said the Sibyl, nodding her head at him. "You go to St. Artemas's."

Theodore had to swallow before speaking. How difficult it was to manage these things at times! "I've been there mor'n two years," he said.

"You're the boy who decorates his sums so that they can't tell what the figures mean."

"I hate sums,"' said Theodore.

3

Science and History, First Encounter

It was amazing, it was incredible, it was wildly exciting and somehow disappointing, this tea party. Of course she was not the Delphic Sibyl; she was just a Blayport schoolgirl who happened to resemble that divinity, and Theodore did not know whether he was glad or sorry that anyone on earth could recall the queen of his dreamland so vividly. He must go and look at the picture again when he got home. (The tea was abundantly excellent.) He tried to show himself for the splendid fellow he was but he found it very difficult. Only by spasmodic efforts did he avoid falling into that pit of absolute speechlessness which lies in wait for all boy guests.

"But was there a separate people the Varangians?" said Mrs. Broxted, coming to the rescue as he hung over the abyss of extinction. "Had they a country of their own — somewhere?"

Theodore hung fire for a moment, stammered slightly and then became the replica of Raymond again. "That is not clear," he said. "Apparently the word was used for Scandinavians, and particularly the Scandinavians who became Russians. There were Danes and English in the Varangian Guard years before the Crusades."

"And your father is going to tell about all these people or just

about the Varangian Guard?”

“It’s a sort of epic,” said Theodore. “He’s only done bits of it. It grows on him, he says. He began with the Varangian Guard, but now he’s going to tell about *all* the Varangians. And especially about Canute. Canute is his hero — so far as such a history can have a hero.”

(It came into his head that the Bulpington of Blup had known Canute. That they had been great friends.)

“Canute,” he went on, summoning a phrase of Raymond’s, “K — K — Canute had an Empire that reached from Massachusetts to Moscow.”

“There’s nothing in our history book about that,” said Teddy, eager to add the one thing he knew about Canute to the discussion. “Canute died at Shaftesbury. We went through it in a car to Cornwall.”

“But he lived all over the place,” said Theodore. “It was a wonderful great empire and Shaftesbury was its capital. Men came to Shaftesbury from Vinland in America and from Nijni-Novgorod. There’s a poem about it by Longfellow.”

“But I never heard that Canute called himself a Varangian,” said Mrs. Broxted.

“*They* called him that — the Finns and the Constantinopolians” (— “politans” he ought to have said — *bother*!) “That’s very interesting,” said Mrs. Broxted.

“He was only forty when he died,” said Theodore, with a note of bereavement in his voice. “Perhaps he was as great a man as Alexander. Only there weren’t people to write about it. He just began this great Empire and then he died and the Normans came and the Crusades began and nobody went on with it. They turned round and looked the other way. What an empire it might have been, mum! Have you considered? America to Russia — all the north of the world. But we couldn’t do it.”

Margaret across the table met his glance, it seemed to him, with sympathetic eyes. Did she understand how the Bulpington of Blup had felt about that evanescent empire? How he had struggled to establish it?

Teddy had had enough of these Varangians. He thought they were

the most unnecessary people he had ever heard of. Anyhow this chap had had his fair say by this time.

"I showed my microscope to Bulpington," he said abruptly.

"He'd never seen one before," he added.

"It isn't my line," explained Theodore to mother and daughter.

"And that's *very* interesting too," said Mrs. Broxted. "Among your histories and books, I suppose, you have no use for microscopes?"

"None, mum. It's life-size we do — life-size human beings we are thinking about. No historian wants a microscope. Microscopes wouldn't be any good to my father." Teddy objected to that. "But how can you understand human beings unless you understand life, and how can you understand life without a microscope?"

"But human beings *are* life," said Theodore. "And you don't want a microscope to see them."

Teddy's face flushed for controversy; his ears got red. "I didn't say you couldn't *see* human beings, I said *understand* them. How can you know what human beings are, unless you know how they are made?"

"You can watch what they do."

"That doesn't explain how they do it."

"Yes, it does. If you—"

"No, it doesn't."

"History explains."

"History tells a tale. History is all tales. You can't check it back. It isn't Science. It isn't Real."

"It is."

"But it isn't. Your old History—"

The discussion was degenerating. Mrs. Broxted intervened.

"Have you lived long in Blayport, Theodore?"

4

Going Home

He made his way home still very confused in his mind. He could not place these Broxteds in relation to anything he knew and he could

not place himself in relation to these Broxteds, Still less could he imagine what he had seemed to them. What were they saying of him now? It was as if someone had thrust a stick into his universe and stirred it all up. His Delphic Sibyl and all the world he had created about her had changed. He had no sense as yet of the amount and quality of that change.

Running athwart this confusion of his dreamland was the ill-expressed difference that had broken out between himself and Teddy. Teddy armed with Science, Evolution and a Microscope had contemned History. The most devastating thing Teddy had said was that "history doesn't begin at any beginning". A tiresome assertion to meet unexpectedly. Theodore on his way home was still trying to find the proper reply.

Raymond of course always began with the Goths. But after all the Goths had a history behind them. Stone Age and that sort of thing. And there must have been something before that — gorillas and missing links and evolution and that stuff. Science lay in wait for History and History going backwards fell into the trap and was devoured by Science. Where exactly did Science stop and History begin? History used to go right back to the Garden of Eden and sit down there in peace, before Science broke down all the fences and turned that nice Garden of Origins into an abyss of time. Why give way to Science? Why consent to that abyss of time — going on for ever and ever? Suppose he had said the Bible was a good enough beginning for him?

Confound Teddy and his microscope! And with Sibyl-Margaret listening to it all, to his uncertainties about Evolution, to his unready replies. Just when she was beginning to be interested in that Varangian Empire, Raymond's dreamland Empire of the North.... The Empire of the North.... The Frozen Lands that England lost.... The Hidden Fastnesses of the North....

Grey mists were driving across the high pinnacles of Blup, that mighty mass of primitive Gothic, "half as old as time". Sometimes it seemed not to exist and then it began to exist plainly.

One day perhaps he might take her there. They might ride together up the winding gorge.

He was humming that Barcarolle.

5

The Inheritors

"Why didn't you come in to tea?" asked Clorinda.

"Evening, Mr. Wimperdick. I met a chap and had tea with him. Showed me a microscope. It was tremendously interesting."

Mr. Wimperdick was consuming a gin-and-bitters before dinner.

It occurred to Theodore that he might get some reactions from Mr. Wimperdick. Also in that gentleman's presence his sympathies suddenly veered round to the scientific side of the dispute. "It was a very good microscope. And we talked about Science and Evolution and all that. He's the son of Professor Broxted."

"The great little Professor Broxted of the Rationalist Press Association," said Wimperdick.

"Professor Broxted of Kingsway College."

Clorinda considered her son thoughtfully. An absolutely new idea came to her. In a year or so — so swiftly time flies — Theodore would be a young man. To push this unpleasing realization away from her she addressed him as the boy he was. "Try and make your clothes look as if you hadn't been twisted round in them. Brush your hair. Put your tie straight. And you may come down to dinner and tell us all about it."

Theodore found his looking-glass self a shock. Strands of dark hair lay athwart his forehead and there was a kind of feather-brush behind. His nose was immensely red. His mouth red and loose. What a mouth he had! His orange tie was under one ear.

Gods! Was that what she had had to look at?

When he came down to dinner Clorinda was astonished at his sleekness. He had even got a sort of parting in his hair. And — she had to look twice to make sure — his hands had been washed! He felt she noted these things and his heart sank. But she said nothing. There was a sinking in her own heart. It was like finding a grey hair.

"So you visited the celebrated and notorious Professor Broxted," said Wimperdick.

"I saw his laboratory," said Theodore.

"And what was that like?"

“A clean white place. With windows like a greenhouse. And microscopes.”

They wanted to know all about it.

He held them as long as he could and tried to get in an effect of being himself a convert to this apparently unpopular and exciting doctrine of Evolution. Would they argue with him and reconvert him — to whatever other doctrine they held? They swept that personal reference aside. They didn’t seem to mind much whether he believed in Evolution or not. They just picked up the particulars he gave them and went off with them. First they talked a little to him and then at him and then, when their interest in their own differences increased, as though he didn’t exist. Soon they were talking, as they supposed, right over his head and any attempt at intervention on his part was disregarded.

It was Wimperdick who did most of the talking at Theodore. He was evidently anxious to present this Science, of which Professor Broxted was the exponent, as a raw, arrogant, profoundly vulgar thing, a propaganda of essentially ignorant, cheaply thinking, cheaply educated men. Broxted, he said, was the “little brother of Huxley and Haeckel”, and Huxley it seems was the “Boanerges of Natural History and rechristen it “Biology” and pretend that something had been achieved. Biology was having a vogue just now — quite a vogue. One had to admit that. It seemed more novel than it was. The Church had always known everything this popular science — it was popular science, not *true* science — knew, and had known it better. “They ask us to look facts in the face, and when we ask them how, they answer, ‘Through a microscope.’ But facts vanish under a microscope.” Wimperdick’s voice became fastidious and he twiddled his fingers; “They become little confusing crowds of innumerable particulars.”

Theodore thought that was father good. He had felt that already but he had not been able to find the right words. How did it go?— “confusing crowds of innumerable particulars”. But Wimperdick was saying some more. “Evolution, the Church has always known, because it is true. But this Natural Selection of theirs is just a way of getting rid of God.”

“They don’t need to get rid of God,” Clorinda corrected. “If the

universe goes on through an unending evolution, God does not arise."

Wimperdick protested it was absurd to talk of God arising or not arising. He was eternally there, past, present and future in one. Heresies on the other hand arose perpetually — and passed continually. As this modern science would pass.

Raymond remarked that he wished he could agree with Wimperdick. "This modern science is something new," he said, "and it is more formidable than any heresy has ever been. It is not a heresy; it is an unbelief, not a wrong belief. It scraps our beliefs and begins again. It thinks in a way that destroys our foundations. A different way. It is dissolving our world, and leaving us nothing divine or human in its place."

Wimperdick said our old world was stouter stuff than that. The old values, the old good and evil, would emerge triumphantly from all this modern scientific pother.

Raymond had been reviewing a book by "those two very promising young men", Conrad and Hueffer. It was called *The Inheritors.* He had been greatly impressed by it. It had a novel idea. A new sort of people were supposed to be coming into the world, without pity or scruples, and destroying the time-honoured life of man. Unrestricted they were. In this romance they were supposed to come mysteriously out of a Fourth Dimension, but in reality they were just the kind of people science was producing. And they were different — different. They saw life with a kind of cold inhuman clearness.

"False clearness," said Wimperdick.

Beauty disappears before them, moral values vanish, faith, honour, purity, loyalty, love; tradition becomes a legacy of old errors that had better be got rid of. All the fine, enduring tested things on which we live, by which we live — were threatened and going.

"A flash in the pan," said Wimperdick.

"A dawn," said Clorinda, her erudition, her double firsts and her perpetual refreshment by the latest London Movement apparent in her confident voice.

She had the air of having long wanted to tackle Wimperdick. Now suddenly she saw how to do it. She faced towards him. "Science,

Wimperdick, is nothing more and nothing less than an escape from words and phrases — to fact — verifiable fact. It's nothing strange or new, Raymond; it's only a recovery after a long invalidism. It is daylight breaking through those fogs of verbalism — in which the human mind lived — for such ages. It's just come plain to me. I've found you out, Wimperdick. I realize how you stand now. I have found out what you are at last; you are a Scholastic Realist. You're a fourteenth-century survival. I ought to have seen it before."

She shook her finger at him. "Scholastic Realist; that's what you are, my man. That's what's the matter with your mind. I've been thinking you over and over and now I've thought you out. You admit it! — So much the better. Naturally you regard science as the Devil. It *is* your Devil. When the Neo-Nominalists argued the Realists out of the road, *then* experimental Science was inevitable. It wasn't even possible before. I see it all now. The end of deduction; the dethronement of words. Science breaking loose. And see what Science has done and is doing. It gives mechanical power without an effort. It abolishes toil. It gives health and abundance where there were ignorance and poverty. It releases our minds. Every deduction and every dogma is questioned nowadays and put to the test. Everything is looked at plainly — and Science is justified by its results."

"First the presumptuous *why,*" said Wimperdick, with his head on one side and smiling all his discoloured teeth at her, with an air of gently breaking it to her how completely he saw through her; "first the *why* and then close on its heels, pushing it forward, the whispered *why not?* You fill the world with nasty, noisy, smelly machines. You get a million cheap and ugly things instead of a few beautiful ones. You rush about at an insane pace. Faster and faster. You — you indulge in certain freedoms. While you are distracted by these gifts of Progress, you forget the essential things of life. Nothing is left of the normal wholesome life of man. Nothing is left of morality. The soul has gone out of things."

"Nothing is left of your crystal sphere of the heavens or your Garden of Eden or your Day of Judgment. Your birdcage of belief is broken. But that only gives us a greater, franker, clearer world. Nothing worth-while is lost. There is only an opening up. I envy the

new generation," said Clorinda, "growing up in the daylight."

And her eye fell on Theodore.

"I pity the new generation," said Raymond, indifferent to Theodore, "growing up in the windy void."

"I pray for it," said Wimperdick with a manifest reference to Theodore. "For it isn't daylight it will be living in, but only delusion and conceit in the place of eternal — and sufficient — mysteries. For what mystery has science ever produced to put on all fours with the satisfying inexplicableness of the Holy Trinity?"

("Searching in a coal-black cellar for an invisible Manx tripod that isn't there," murmured Raymond.)

"They will be in more direct contact with reality than any generation before them," Clorinda thought aloud.

Wimperdick spluttered his intellectual disdain at her. "No. No. No," he said. "You do not know the beginning of things. You do not know what reality is. The only reality is" — his voice fell to a reverent whisper for the word— "God. — And He is Incomprehensible. That is why we are wrapped about in history and teaching — the teaching of the Church, which mediates between us and the blinding light of the One Reality."

"Hangs like a tattered old curtain between us and the clear light of day," said Clorinda.

"But why shouldn't we have curtains?" asked Raymond, coming in at another angle. "Even if we know they are curtains. You may be right so far as fact goes, Clorinda, you and your atheists and materialists. I won't argue about it; to me it doesn't matter in the least. But who wants to live in a bare and naked world? Who wants to be right in fact? If you strip the world, you can't leave it shivering. You'll have to wrap it up again in something..."

So they bickered — perhaps a little more copiously and inexactly than we report it here. But that was the gist of it.

After a time Theodore's attention wandered. He was interested but he was tired. He had got all and more than he could carry but he still held on. He knew a yawn would betray him and he suppressed it as long as possible. Then he tried to yawn while Clorinda was not looking. But she seemed to feel it without looking round, and remarked over her shoulder that it was bed-time.

Before he had half undressed he was already in the full tide of reverie.

At a great but not impossible distance from Blup there was now a squat white citadel which was somehow also Science, where these Broxteds kept. Bleakly. Were they enemies or were they friends? They were like — what was the word? — these Inheritors. Sturdy they were and their colouring was grey and poor. There was a vague sense in the air of treaties and alliances with this white wall of a place, and then a vision of the quietly smiling, steadyeyed daughter of this Broxted — Professor or Count was he? biologist or magician? ally or enemy? — and she was riding through the woods on a palfrey. She was riding away from the Brock's Steading. She was coming to her friend, Lord Bulpington of Blup.

Friend? It was something different from the old companionship. She was not so tall and not so intimate. There was something newly strange about her. Had she really been strange, or had the talk downstairs made her strange? Was she an Inheritor? Inheritor of the world? Had the Inheritors souls? Was she like Undine?

What *was* a soul?

The reverie faded away. Theodore was before the looking-glass again. His mouth seemed to be a great loose red mouth to him. He tried various ways of shutting it so as to look stern and sad.

Going to bed was a slow process that night. His mind was meeting Margaret in a score of manners and a score of places. (In the morning when Clorinda came in to look at him and urge him to get up, his garments were more than usually scattered over the floor.)

The old accustomed companionship of the pillow did not return very easily. It was as if there was a shyness.

For a long time he still wandered with her — unable to settle down with her — until there came on a great drowsy snowstorm. For they were wandering now in the Icy Varangian Lands that England lost. Never had the land of Blup been so far to the north. Floating flakes, going up as well as down; a driving white blindness in specks and whirls. The two of them had but one blanket and, with their way lost, it was inevitable they should share it and snuggle together on the ground. It was unusually comfortable ground, snowy yet warm, not snow so much as snowy down.

And so their heads came very close together and they could whisper. Their heads came so close together that their cheeks just touched in the old fashion. She was Sibyl the Inheritor....

Never mind.

The new incompatibilities diminished shade by shade, and Theodore could sink down through phase after phase of dissolving reverie and dreaming, into that peace of absolute inattention, dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

ADOLESCENCE

1

Storm of Dreams

THE four years of adolescence that followed Theodore's first meeting with Margaret Broxted were years of incessant discovery and complication for the teeming grey matter which was the material substance both of Theodore and of that second self of his, the Bulpington of Blup. Strange things, affecting both of them, were being thrust upon that incessant brain by the body it directed; new ferments and stimulants came, whispers of incitement, to its stirring cells. These whispers asked: What are you doing? What are you going to do? What are your plans about life? What do you think you are? There is strange business to be done. Get on with it all. Time is short for life.

The whispers were so subtle that Theodore's mind was only plainly aware of the evasive, reluctant, perplexed answers, the confusing impulses, they evoked. He did not perceive that he was changing; he realized only that he was growing up and learning new things about the world, masses things about this world and about himself; some of them extraordinarily distressing and unpalatable.

Sex was becoming a more powerful and perplexing influence. It was no longer simply lovely and romantic. It was entangling itself with unclean and repellent processes life. Bodily forms and animal movements that had once been merely mystically attractive and beautiful were now becoming infected with intimations and gestures of urgency. Some profoundly obscene business was afoot in the universe amidst its engaging patterns and appearances. The apprehension of that urgent sustaining activity became more and more pervasive. The lines and contours of life converged upon disconcerting issues.

At fifteen Theodore had a great store of bookish and romantic

knowledge and a belated ignorance and innocence. Francolin and Bletts came along to hint and tell, with flushed cheeks and a furtive defiance in their manner, of remarkable discoveries. And Theodore told nobody of certain discoveries his own body was forcing upon him. His chosen ideas of love were after the sublimated fashion of the Troubadours. There was at last an ecstasy, a physical ecstasy. He had found out something of the nature of that for himself during his bedtime reveries on the verge of dreamland. But his wilful and waking life recoiled from too exacting a scrutiny of that close and thrilling embrace. The secrets of the adults about him, he knew, were heavy stuff, and Francolin abounded in the gross particulars.

The tension on Francolin's mind relieved itself in facetiousness. Dawning adolescence had turned the world upside down for him and filled him with laughter at the trick. He saw everything as it were from the pedestal upward, all "bums" and "bubs" and bellies. He developed an unsuspected gift for drawing, seeking to adorn his environment with formidable reminders of the great secret. His vocabulary was increased by a virile sexual terminology. He would not, if he could, have anything to hide.

There was less indecent uproar about Bletts, but a more direct and personal intentness. A quiet covetousness had come into his eyes. There had been something with the "slavey" at home, and he was for accosting girls and wandering off with them to quiet places. A large part of his leisure was devoted to prowling to that end. He sought Theodore's company for his prowling, because hunter and quarry, amidst the mysteries of petting and flirting, work best in confidential couples. The couples pair off for their researches, in silence on the male side and with a disposition to giggle and say "Starpit" on the female. Bletts said things about servants and work-girls and girl visitors to the seaside, gross things, that put Theodore into a state of great uneasiness. Theodore felt such things should not be said of any girl, that they smeared a sort of nastiness across all femininity, but they haunted his imagination afterwards and he was never able and decisive enough about it to stem the flow of Bletts's magnetized preoccupation.

Amidst such influences as these, in the atmosphere created by a Christian civilization that, for better or worse, had substituted rigid

restriction, concealment and shame for the grotesque initiations and terror-haunted taboos of pagan peoples, Theodore grew towards sexual maturity. There was a steady resistance in him to this self-induction into sexual life. For some time, therefore, more and more of their common grey matter was diverted from the material existence of Theodore to the purposes of his partner, the Bulpington of Blup and the life of reverie. The Bulpington of Blup had no use for the squalid adventures of Bletts; and Francolin approached him only distantly as a court jester under reproof. The Bulpington of Blup was the sublimating genius. He went through the air with ease while Theodore stumbled in the mire. He vanished whenever Theodore wallowed. Blup was still a high upstanding place, but now it was coming into more rational relations with prevalent and established things. It had shifted out of past times and away from such fantasies as Varangia towards, for example, the contemporary north-west Frontier of India; it bordered upon current possibilities; it was sometimes a quasi-independent State after the fashion of Sarawak in the very very Far East of these days; sometimes remotely South American like Bogota; sometimes in Ruritanian Europe. Elaborately concealing the practice from Raymond and Clorinda, Theodore read the contemporary novel-romance and particularly the stirring inventions of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Mr. A. E. W. Mason and Mr. Anthony Hope. There he found heroes of the very blood and mettle of the Bulpington of Blup. He knew that by the standard of the higher criticism he ought not to like these stories, just as he knew that he ought not to hum that Barcarolle so frequently. But he did.

The Delphic Sibyl who was sometimes altogether herself and sometimes more or less Margaret Broxted, remained the ruling heroine of his adolescent reveries. He and she went about side by side, they had great adventures and she was lost and rescued, they embraced and kissed, but everything between them was always very clean and splendid. Only once or twice on the very borderland of dreaming did that bodily ecstasy occur, and then it was very indistinct and confusing because suddenly it seemed that the Sibyl was someone else — who vanished. And the strange and forcible dreams that were now assailing him had only the remotest connexion or no connexion at all with his world of fantasy.

Dreams and day-dreams belong to different orders of experience. The Bulpington of Blup was never in Theodore's dreamland, nor the Sibyl, nor Margaret. Only the queerest caricatures of familiar faces and scenes appeared there. Very rarely was dreamland a pleasant land to wander in, and never was one safe in it from disagreeable surprises. Strange gales and storms of terror and menace arising in his growing and ripening glands and pervading his being troubled it; headlong pursuits would break out, flights from familiar things suddenly become terrible. He fell down precipices; he had insane impulses to leap down the fronts of buildings and glissade down staircases into horror. He flew — but always precariously. It was sometimes doubtful if even Theodore was Theodore in his dreams or only a sort of sub-Theodore, a primitive animal out of the core of him, to which a staircase was still terrible and for which the pursuing carnivore lurked incessantly.

This dreamland was becoming now more and more obscured by a monstrous sexual life of its own. Dreadful old witches, young women with absurdly opulent contours who exaggerated every distinctly feminine trait, caressing animal monsters, sphinxes, mermaids, strange creatures, and yet labelled, as it were, so that they were identified with, rather than resembled, persons he knew, chased and seduced this sub-Theodore in a warm and weedy underworld, overwhelmed him in soft rotundities, lured him into a false intimacy and found him helplessly responsive to startling embraces.

A dismayed youth would sit up rubbing the cobwebs of sleep from his eyes, and slip out of bed to sponge off a sense of clammy uncleanness with cold water.

So slovenly old Mother Nature, presiding inexactly and inconsiderately over this Dame-School of hers which is our world, scribbled athwart Theodore's reluctant intelligence her intimations of what she has ever insisted upon as the main business of her children.

The Difference of Professor Broxted

It did not occur to Theodore that his contemporaries also must wander at times into this same lush, grotesque and heated

underworld of dreams. He did not realize that these crude educational methods of Dame Nature were being generally applied. His own experiences down there faded swiftly out of consciousness; he would not willingly recall them, much less talk about them. He put them out of his mind as something peculiar and dishonouring to himself. He was becoming more and more adept in putting unpleasant things out of his mind. He did not remark that a certain bending and deflection of his ideas had happened through their impact. The more he was the Bulpington of Blup, the less actual these experiences became.

Francolin and Bletts were equally silent about whatever dreamland encounters had been forced upon them; they were no joke for Francolin and no satisfaction for Bletts; they had to be smothered in jokes or overpowered by actual indulgences; and as for Teddy and Margaret their habitual air of frankness about life made it incredible to Theodore that they had any reservations in the matter.

That casual encounter on the shore had developed socially. Clorinda had long been impressed by Professor Broxted's intellectual prestige. She had heard much of him in London and grasped the opportunity of meeting him in Blayport. There was an exchange of dinners. There was a great talk with him and much discussion of him next day.

The eminent biologist was not at all what Theodore had expected him to be. He was short and stocky; he had none of the graceful lines of his wife and children, but he was red-haired like Teddy and even more freckled. His eyes were ruddy brown. Margaret owed her blue eyes and her candid brow to her mother. Teddy had his father's brow ridges and the thoughtful concentration of the parental face. Two bright little brown eyes moved quickly under the Professor's overhanging eyebrows and his voice, unlike the soft easy sounds of his family, was sharp and hard, so that at times it barked. He talked in a positive assured manner with the Bulpingtons, and his wife said very little. But she listened understandingly and with a guarded approval.

At home he seemed preoccupied with his work; when he was at Blayport the laboratory was closed to strange boys; he answered the questions Teddy would put to him with a compact precision, but he did not seem to have any use in the world for Theodore. He had an

absent-minded way of patting Margaret or his wife whenever he went through a room as though he would intimate that he noted their existence and would give them his fuller attention later on.

The dinner-party evening was warm, and afterwards they sat in the tamarisk-encircled patch of garden as the summer afterglow paled to moonlight. They sat in creaking wicker chairs about a little table with coffee and some green Chartreuse and cigarettes, and Theodore by squatting unobtrusively on a cushion in the background contrived to outstay his bedtime by an hour or more, watching their faces and trying desperately to follow their conversation.

Wimperdick came round after dinner. He and Broxted had met and disputed before, and Raymond had already put the Professor into an aggressive mood by expressing his mild but gently obstinate doubt of the worth of modern science. "What is the Good of it all? Is man any happier for going faster or living longer than he used to do? I ask you." Broxted was a propagandist of experimental science — in education — in public life. For him modern science was light invading obscurity; it was the dawn of Truth, in a world that has hitherto muddled along in a picturesque but dangerous twilight. Everything else, he held, must adapt itself in the long run to scientific truth. Everything else was secondary — systems of morals, social arrangements; the primary matter was to know what things were, ourselves, life, matter and so forth, and then afterwards to discuss how we were to deal with them or behave with them.

"It isn't the business of a man of science," said Broxted, "to consider whether his facts lead to conclusions that are morally good or bad — or shall I say beneficent or evil. Such values come afterwards. For him there is nothing but the truthful ordering of facts. He has to follow his facts to whatever conclusions they point towards — however startling, however unpalatable."

The Professor's chair creaked with the strength of his conviction, as his voice grew more emphatic.

"I won't discuss whether the conclusions of modern science are ethically good or bad," said Wimperdick, "though much might be said on that score. All that I ask is — are they valid? Have you ever explored them down to their philosophical foundations?"

He entered upon a criticism that Theodore found hard to follow.

Broxted evidently found him quibbling, irritating and troublesome, and Theodore was inclined to sympathize. Wimperdick argued that science was always destroying its own foundations, that it began with classification and ended by destroying the classes it created by showing that in the course of evolution they all merged into and branched away from one another. And moreover science began with everyday things and an air of being "clarified" common sense, and presently you found it turning everything solid into a diffusion of theoretical atoms and jumbling up space and time in the strangest fashion. And these new psychologists, the psycho-analysts, were probing into and dissolving our reasonable motives and — what was that word of theirs? — ah! complexes, until our very personalities, on which the idea of any sort of unity was based, broke up and disappeared.

And yet this same Science which was leading us all away from an exact world into cloudland was being more and more arrogant in its insistence on the primary importance of the spectacle of fact it presented. At best the scientific view of things — if you could call such a view a view — a dissolving view (chuckle) — was only one of many possible views of things. The mind of man had created a whole body of truth before the beginnings of experimental science, and science was and could never be more than a secondary arrangement of knowledge within that framework. Broxted really did not enter into and answer these objections; he would not recognize them, he swept them aside — quite illogically according to all Wimperdick's methods and assumptions — and he swept them aside with a note of irritation. He not only would not discuss his philosophical foundations. He had an air of exasperation at the mere suggestion that he required philosophical foundations.

The two men seemed to the young listener to be each right from his own point of departure as he spoke, and yet neither was confuting the other. Which was very perplexing.

Theodore carried up to his bedroom a conception of this Science as a tremendous wrangle to get to the Truth of things through an obstructive jungle of Wimperdick's perplexities. And with very great difficulties of its own. And it was going on and it was going on and some day perhaps it would get to the Real Truth of Things.

What was the Real Truth of Things? It seemed to be very difficult to get to it while one looked at everything at once. But why look at anything? Suppose one were to shut one's eyes and be very still and turn one's mind inward!

When at last someone got to this Real Truth that science was struggling towards, would everything change? Were all the faiths and doctrines of Wimperdick wrong and would they vanish in the new light? Would there be a strange change in things when at last one saw through them and the Real Truth appeared? Would one find God sitting there? Or would they find those Inheritors? That fancy of the Inheritors, that new and alarming kind of people who did not believe in any of the dear normal things in life, had taken a strong hold upon Theodore's imagination.

He found himself presently before the Delphic Sibyl, but now she was very great, she was not Margaret at all but entirely her own still enigmatic self, and it seemed to him that the roll she held in her hand contained the great secret, the Real Truth.

But he must not think of Sibyls and images of little rolls of parchment. That was being fanciful. That was confusing matters. He must free his mind from all visible and irrelevant things and concentrate. He must concentrate very very hard.

He must begin by saying, "*I am.*"

That surely was certain.

So he said, "I am," and concentrated — and was presently fast asleep.

The following evening Raymond, Wimperdick and Clorinda had a great argument about the Professor amidst the dinner things, and Theodore was in luck again and sat up and listened. Clorinda found herself in unusually good form that night and perhaps she wanted him to listen.

At that time the report of Freud and Jung was spreading in London, and Clorinda had established a practically unlimited intimacy with Dr. Ferdinando, one of the pioneer exponents of the new revelations and practices of psychoanalysis in England. She was all for releasing repressions and resolving complexes. She had also been intrigued by the steady industrious propaganda of Lady Welby with her seedling science of "Signifies" — a not very lusty seedling

— which broached the question, “What is Meaning?” and reanimated the intellectual stir of Clorinda’s brilliant years of lively learning and thinking at Cambridge. Mankind, she recalled, has learnt to think with elaborate difficulty, thinking — as the Freudians reminded her — in symbols and mythological monsters before they got their metaphors down to abstract terms and logic, and falling into superstitious slavery to these very instruments of words and numbers they had devised. Her discovery that Wimperdick was a “Scholastic Realist” was one of the first conclusions thrown up by this mental fermentation. She now sat with her elbows on the table and her face bright with intellectual excitement, and she laid down the law to Wimperdick and Raymond.

“You and Professor Broxted will never arrive at any plain issue because you are arguing in different universes of discourse. Don’t you see that? You are in different dimensions of thought. You are thinking in different fashions.... It is like a fish in an aquarium trying to follow the movements of a man on the other side of the glass.”

“And which of us is the fish?” asked Wimperdick.

“That is for you to decide,” said Clorinda. “But see how impossible it is for you ever to get together until one or other of your minds is absolutely born again! *You* think for instance that God is a Reality, beyond argument. And an old-fashioned Atheist of your scholastic realist type would say he did not exist — just as positively. But there is no such yes or no for the Professor. He thinks God is simply a working hypothesis — and, he is inclined to think, an unnecessary hypothesis. Whether God is or is not doesn’t seem a reasonable question to him. Names are just counters to him. That name particularly. He can use a word provisionally and you can’t. He thinks all logical terms connote rough assemblies with a marginal error. You think that classes of things all centre on an ideal type which endures for ever. Every scientific generalization is provisional, but you are always talking and thinking as though scientific theories were meant to last for ever, just as religious dogmas were meant to last. That’s why you say, ‘Yah!’ whenever a new scientific generalization replaces an old one. Your beliefs are like those lamps one finds in shrines and suchlike places, that were lit centuries ago and have always been kept alight, never brighter, never waning,

casting always the same shadows; but beliefs for him and for any real man of science are light flooding over light, eternally giving place to more light and more....

"A different sort of mind," she insisted. "A disentangled sort of mind."

"A dislocated, disorganized, dispersed mind," said Wimperdick. "Catchwords swimming in Chaos."

Theodore found the substance of this long and rambling discussion rather difficult. They took so much for granted; they left such gaps where things were understood between them. Yet that talk attracted and exercised him profoundly. He made no personal application of what they were saying. He did not realize, in spite of Clorinda's explicitness, that the essence of the matter they debated was the opposition of the two different fashions in which our minds make us for ourselves, out of disposition and suggestion and experience. Whatever metaphysical training Theodore was to have lay all before him. He envisaged this antagonism of Realist Religion and Nominalist Science as a dispute about the existence of God, and about all those systems of conduct, interpretation and observance which are associated with the idea of God's rule. If there was no God, then plainly it did not matter if you broke the Sabbath, called your brother a fool and committed adultery. But if there was a God...

Theodore had a feeling that there was no God — or at any rate no God at all like the God of contemporary faith and imprecations, but before he could get from that feeling to thinking in this matter the Bulpington of Blup would intervene. Theodore seemed always to be getting towards something that was inexpressible, and the Bulpington of Blup was always pulling him back to something that could carry on the receptive side of a quite personal conversation.

Theodore, when he prayed as he had been taught to do, thought of other things and remained Theodore, but when he experimented with prayer and thought of himself praying he became larger, more important, nobler — in fact his other self. The Bulpington of Blup, that other self — that sublimation of the fundamental Theodore — believed in God, and in fair return God believed in the Bulpington of Blup. They were mutually dependent. If one was the sublimation of an unsatisfactory personality, the other was the sublimation of a

difficult world. So God accepted all that the Bulpington saw fit to be and played His due part in the drama. Before his battles the Bulpington of Blup lifted his sword-hilt and prayed. Victory ensued. In the silence of the night it was he who said, "Thou knowest." Theodore found it hard to imagine any sort of God at all, but the Bulpington of Blup "walked with God" on the easiest terms on any wakeful night — and then Theodore, greatly refreshed by the promenade, went to sleep again.

3

Sense of a Presence

If the Bulpington of Blup had a use for God in the old style, Theodore had a considerable curiosity about God in no style at all. His early upbringing, we have said, had attached no credible personality to the word God, but now under the stimulation of these half-understood discussions at home, with phrases and sentences from them wandering about to find a place in his brain, mingling with suggestions of books and his own spontaneous questioning, he would discover his imagination busy about that Real Truth of Things that lay beneath everything else, that Ultimate Wonder on which he with all the universe was based. For him, during this phase, it was something after the nature, the beckoning and elusive nature, of that Holy Grail the Round Table Knights were always seeking. What really, he asked, was the Holy Grail and how did that legend begin? The Grail of Ultimate Truth was, he imagined, a glory that might for instance break suddenly upon Professor Broxted as he experimented in his laboratory, a mystery that under some magical conditions might even reveal itself, desired rather than sought, without a single premonition, to any wayfarer in life.

"Eureka!" he would cry.

"Mystic!" said the Bulpington of Blup; and snatched the problem from him.— "Arcana" — a lovely word. The Arcana of Mysticism. The Bulpington of Blup became an Initiate at one stride; and marched in spectacular meditation across the stage. He understood. He was clairvoyant. "For he on honeydew hath fed and drunk the

milk of Paradise.”

Theodore in these years of curiosity and mental expansion between fifteen and seventeen would engage in the queerest efforts to take that Real Truth of Things by surprise, to detach himself by some magical expedient from contemporary illusion and pierce through to the mystery beneath, to become that favoured being who *knew*. He had read a little of the spiritual pretensions and exercises of the East, of adepts who contrived, by means of peculiar breathing devices and rigid attitudes, to escape from the wrappings of the present, and he made a few amateurish experiments of the same kind. By chance he might hit upon it. Then perhaps he would break through this world of seeming and the Real Truth of Things would be his. In imitation of certain mystics he had read about, he spent an hour or so of his life contemplating his navel or surveying a disk of looking-glass in his hand. But his attention would wander from his navel to his person generally and become entangled with entirely unspiritual speculations. Or he would suddenly become Sir Theodore Bulpington, Knight and Seer, the Master Templar, or some such posturing person, and put his thoughts back with difficulty.

He never got to any mystical hypnosis; he was much too actively watching the dramatic spectacle of his contemplative self.

And then one summer evening when he was a little past sixteen, something inexplicable happened to Theodore, something that may have had in it other elements beyond a dazzling spasm of the imagination. It is something that has happened to many people, and to this day none of these to whom it has come is quite able to explain it and put it into relation with other experiences. Some dismiss it, some forget it, some live by it. It was an experience of immense importance to Wordsworth. It is the Wordsworthian ecstasy. It is something almost indescribable — but we must do our best with it.

Theodore was not expecting a revelation; he was certainly not expecting anything out of the way to happen; and particularly he was not occupied with any philosophical or metaphysical or mystical speculations at the time. He had no sense of its coming. Suddenly it was there, this happening, this realization of a strange and yet intensely intimate Presence, this effect of close and complete communication.

It was soon after sunset. The summer holidays had just begun and he had gone for a long ramble towards Bray Island. He had returned by a strip of sand above the last high-tide mark, and then, when the sand gave place to pebbles and boulders, he had taken a little foot-track amidst the thin harsh grass and sea-holly at the edge of the low cliff. And gradually he became aware that the sun was setting in great splendour. He turned his face westward to regard it. He stood for some moments and then sat down to see that sunset better.

The elements of the scene were quite simple and familiar. Bray Island lay low and black against the pale bright west, intensely detailed and minute, so that one seemed to see with an ultra-elfin precision the very branches of the long clumps of trees six miles away, the eaves of houses and the little steeple on the church tower of Denton in Bray. Above this long low acute silhouette of the island, under its bank of intensely clear, intensely remote and still sky, lay a heavy horizontal bank of flocculent grey blue cloud, through which the sun was burning its downward way to its setting. Presently a fan of rays sprayed out below, turned the pale lower sky to incandescence and set all the island contours quivering. Above that conflagration in the midst of the cloud-bank wisps and films of brightening cirrus, like a fleet of small dissolving boats catching and handing on a flaming signal, spread up diminishingly towards the empty zenith. The warm blue dome of the sky was immense. It went right over Theodore's head, growing bluer and deeper, to the low hills behind him.

He had watched many sunsets before, and here, he realized, was a very magnificent one indeed. He loved to watch sunsets. This had a distinctive vast simplicity. Slowly the sun burnt its way out beneath the cloud-bank, thrust it aside, turned it to red and purple, lit its ragged edges to dazzling gold and projected a fan of broadening bands of light and shade athwart the blue.

And as he watched these changes the miracle happened.

The sunset was there still, but suddenly it was transfigured. The weedy rocks below him, the flaming pools and runlets, the wide bay of the estuary shining responsive to the sky, were transfigured. The universe was transfigured — as though it smiled, as though it opened itself out to him, as though it took him into complete communion

with itself. The scene was no longer a scene. It was a Being. It was as if it had become alive, quite still, but altogether living, an immense living thing englobing himself. He was at the very centre of the sphere of Being. He was one with it.

Time ceased. He felt a silence beneath all sounds; he apprehended a beauty that transcends experience.

He saw his universe clear as crystal and altogether significant and splendid. Everything was utterly lucid, and all was wonder. Wonder was in Theodore's innermost being and everywhere about him. The sunset and the sky and the visible world and Theodore and Theodore's mind, were One....

If time was still passing, it passed unperceived, until Theodore found himself thinking like a faint rivulet on the melting edge of Heaven. This he realized quite clearly was the world when the veil of events and purposes was drawn aside, this was the timeless world in which everything is different and lovely and right. This was Reality.

The sun sank into the contours of the island, softened in shape as though it were molten, broadened down to an edge of fire and was lost. The sky burnt red and grew pale.

Something was ebbing away from him, receding from him very rapidly, something he would, if he could, have retained for ever. The stupendous moment was passing, had passed, and he was back in the world of everyday. He was roused by the mewing of a seagull and the trailing whisper of a faint breeze amidst the sere Eryngium.

He found himself sitting in the afterglow and very slowly he stood up. He sighed profoundly. He was rather stiff and his mind was dazed. He began to recall who he was and where he was.

Yonder was Blayport and its lights were pricking through the deepening blue. Over there he lived.

He turned his face homeward.

He felt he had made some profound discovery. He had been initiated. He knew.

But did he know? What was it he knew?

He had no words for it.

Clorinda found him oddly absent-minded that night at supper and noted a rapt expression on his face. He had even forgotten to mask himself from Clorinda.

When he went to bed the wonder in things was still about him and very close to him.

But in the morning it was not so near.

The glow remained a living light in his mind for several days, albeit a fading glow, and then it became a memory. It became a memory from which the vividness had faded altogether. He knew that it had been a profound and wonderful perception, but less and less could he recall what precisely it was he had perceived.

A great desire to restore that memory to the vividness of present assurance arose in him. Three several evenings he went back to that same place, to recover if he could that magic, that revelation, to see once more into Heaven. He sought by trying to recall himself to God. But the more he sought to recover and phrase that perception to himself, the more intangible it became. Each time there was a splendid sunset. Thrice he saw the estuary turn to fire and flaming clouds in the sky. But that was all. They were just clouds and a sun and the familiar bight. That transcendental quality did not return.

Had anything at all happened?

And if so what was it had happened? Had he seen to the very core of things, had the terrestrial become celestial for that brief space or had it been a wave of hallucination rather than illumination that had passed through his brain? All he could recall at last was that one evening the universe had been for a few brief moments incredibly wonderful and intimate, and that his spirit had gone out to it.

4

Object in Life

Of this unique experience which seemed so marvellous at the time and so intensely real, so much more real when it happened than any other kind of reality, and which later became so evasive, Theodore could tell no one. If he had wanted to tell anyone he would not have known how to set about it. He had no phrases for it. All the feeling of it had sunk out of consciousness even more deeply than the gross sexual intimations from dreamland that he was suppressing. It may have changed him and he may not have apprehended its connexion

with his change. It had seemed at first as though Heaven had revealed itself to Theodore in a personal appeal. Then later it was rather as though he had taken the universe unawares and for a few brief moments seen through it and down into it to its very heart.

And the strangest thing about this clairvoyant moment was that it had nothing to do with the Bulpington of Blup and that the Bulpington of Blup had never any use for it. There it stayed in Theodore's mind generally quite overlooked but never completely forgotten. It was like a hidden particle of fire that might glow again and very brightly before it was altogether extinguished.

He was now engaged in long ramifying arguments about religion and life and evolution with Teddy and Margaret, arguments upon which this indescribable moment might reasonably be supposed to have a bearing. But whatever bearing it had was subconscious and indirect.

The three of them were very frequent associates during their vacations. In term-time Margaret went to St. Paul's day-school, and afterwards she pursued her studies in Bedford College and became a great canoeist on the waters of Regent's Park. Teddy went to work at the Royal College of Science because his father thought that they might think too much alike if he brought his son into his own laboratories. Theodore chafed to get to London also, but Clorinda seemed to find it difficult to decide exactly what he should be or do, and meanwhile he went for huge walks, read voraciously, learnt the violin under a transient suspicion that he had musical talent, and took sporadic lessons in French and Latin. Raymond was all for a "regular tutor" to prepare him for Oxford, but nothing of the sort materialized. At last when he was seventeen he became so London-hungry that he made a fuss about it and went up to a bed-sitting-room in Paddington and the Rowlands School of Art. Afterwards he was removed to a lodging in Hampstead to benefit from the proximity of a widowed aunt who lived with her sister, Miss Lucinda Spink, L.C.C., the sole unmarried Spink girl, in Church Row. But London is a large dispersed city, and except for a few bright encounters at Socialist meetings in Clifford's Inn — with a subsequent adjournment to a cafe — he saw very little of the Broxteds in London to begin with.

But at Blayport they met continually; they played tennis, swam

together and lounged about on the beach in the summer, and they went for vast prowls at Easter and Christmas. Their ideas were widely different, but they had this in common, that they read and they talked, while most of their coevals in the place had, for any but the crudest purpose, never learnt to do either. Francolin was reduced to an awkward silence by the presence of Margaret, and Bletts's mind was already retiring from human intercourse behind a collection of cliches for all occasions. Occasionally the Broxteds brought down visitors, about whom Theodore was generally disposed to be jealous, and sometimes a large loose household of Parkinsons, about a mile and a half toward Hendean, became populous and hospitable. Mr. Parkinson was an advertisement agent and very active and ample-minded. Mrs. Parkinson was more like Clorinda, though blonde and thin, than anyone else that Theodore had ever seen, and there were more sons, daughters, stepchildren, cousins and other visitors than he could contrive to keep track of.

Such were the scenes and circumstances amidst which these three young minds acquired form and substance and played upon and educated one another.

"What are we up to?" asked Teddy one day. "What are we doing in this confounded world? What is it all for?"

Bletts who was squatting on the sands with them seemed disposed to make an answer and didn't.

"Got to be a sport and all that," said Francolin.

"I'm for science and finding out all I can," said Teddy. "And socialism."

Francolin, rather hoarse, was understood to say he didn't hold with socialism.

"I want the Vote," said Margaret with her eyes askance scrutinizing Theodore.

All Theodore's dispositions were against the Feminism of his period, but he concealed his prejudice as well as he could from both Margaret and Clorinda. He considered what he should say he was up to. He fell back on Raymond. "The world exists for Art," he said. "That is the greatest thing in life."

"God!" said Bletts, and got up. "The greatest thing in life! What — O.... Coming?" he said to Francolin and the two departed.

They were not prigs anyhow, they thanked God. Greatest thing in life indeed! They didn't mean to give a thought to any of these bloody things. Art be damned! "What is Life for", be damned. And leave God alone please. He might bloody-well get back at you. They preferred to keep out of it. They were sensible fellows.

"Your Art!" said Teddy.

"Interpretation," expanded Theodore, quoting Raymond quoting Henry James; "*rendering,* giving it a form — the only thing that matters."

"Here we are," said Teddy, getting back to his own question, "we three, chucked from nowhere into *this.* And we don't know How and we don't know Why.

"And we don't know What For," added Margaret with her chin on her fists and looking out to sea.

"If there *is* a What For," said Teddy.

"I thought your old Evolution explained all that," Theodore commented in the sly Wimperdick style.

"It describes, it doesn't explain. Who said science or evolution *explained*? Science makes one thing consistent with another, or tries to. That's all science claims. Nothing in the world is really explained. Perhaps nothing can be."

"But when the artist comes in things are — illuminated."

Teddy was struck into a scowling meditation for a moment or so; his lips repeated the words noiselessly; then he turned over and scrutinized the face of his friend. "Bulpy," he said, "that last sentence of yours doesn't mean anything at all."

"It means as much as your universe," said Theodore, and felt he had scored again.

There seemed to be nothing in the way of a reply to that and a brief silence followed. Some latent sympathy with Bletts and Francolin came to the surface. Perhaps Bletts's derisive "What — O" was somehow echoing in their minds. "It feels warm enough for swimming to-day," Margaret remarked presently. "I wonder if the water is very cold. Suppose we try."

"We'll have to get the old tent down from the house."

They got the tent down from the house and the warmth of the spring day seemed to rise to meet and encourage their enterprise.

But when Theodore, crouching and swiping crescent curves in the sand with his hands, saw Margaret stoop out from under the little tent and stand up in the close sheath of her bathing dress, shining in the sunlight, something suddenly gripped him and held him motionless regarding her. Nature had been redrawing her in subtly softened lines, so that by indefinable changes her straight young body had become very lovely and mysteriously exciting. Always before she had seemed to have a slender dancing swiftness rather than a body. He had always thought Margaret beautiful, but now it was just as though he had discovered her beautiful for the first time.

He stood up and she stood with her hands on her knees and grinned at him and the spell broke.

"Oh, come along!" he said, and seized her hand, and they ran down the beach together and then splashing along the edge of the water, shin deep and knee deep, before they turned boldly out to sea.

"Not so bad, Bulpy," she cried, plunging.

Not so bad.

5

Effort to be Reasonable

"What am I doing in this confounded world?"

This question that Teddy had set going in Theodore's brain recurred there in a series of variations and produced a multitude of responses.

Teddy seemed to be hammering out his object in life very consistently. He had it clear he was to be a student, "do" research, become a professor. He had planned his career plain before him. He was extraordinarily precise about what he had to do, what he had to sacrifice, what disciplines he had to impose upon himself. It seemed as though nothing could come between him and his self-chosen destiny.

His sister was not so lucid. But she had caught his air of determination. She meant to qualify as a doctor and get the Vote, the mystical symbolic craving of all the more animated of her sex in that generation. It was their decent and restrained way of demanding that

women should have at last that knowledge of themselves and that freedom of self-disposal-for which they have hankered through countless ages of suppression. To Theodore the definiteness of both his friends was disconcerting. He had no plan at all. All he could say to put beside these anticipations was that he was interested in Art— "or criticism perhaps". He might "write".

"But you aren't *training* for it?" said Teddy.

"Training! Do I want to write clichés?"

"I don't see how you can paint or do any sort of art until you can draw like a conjuring trick, and I don't see how anyone can write who doesn't know what can be done with every word and phrase in the language, right way up and upside down. You can't do that without training and practising."

"It isn't like that," said Theodore. "It isn't like that.

It comes."

And by an afterthought:— "I *am* learning to draw."

"You ought to practise like a pianist," said Teddy.

It *was* rather evasive, Theodore felt, this artistic claim of his. One had to say something. He said it but he wasn't satisfied in his own conscience. It didn't become more definite with thinking about it. So soon as his mind was released from the checking action of speech with the Broxteds, he began to float off towards reverie. He did not remain an artist for long there. He became a multitude of things. He became a painter, so subtle and so famous that the greatest and loveliest ladies came to him to immortalize their beauty. Nothing was withheld. But for him — he was reminded of Leonardo and Romney — there was but one face and one faint shadow of a smile to dominate all he did. That shadow of a smile was a plagiarism from Michael Angelo, but he imagined it as his own invention. Yet one cannot live in a studio alone. The world needed leaders. Suddenly in a period of stress a witty dilettante would throw aside his graceful preoccupations and speak out and be recognized as a leader of men.

He found Ferdinand Lassalle (of the *Tragic Comedians)* a very attractive model; he read whatever he could find about him and transposed the story into contemporary British terms; he saw the Bulpington (M.P. for the Blup miners after a world-thrilling contest against all odds) cultivated, witty, resourceful, persuasive, leading

the honest, roughspeaking representatives of the common folk. Not quite in alliance with him at first, faintly antagonistic but at last subdued to perfect association, was that gracious platform figure, Doctor Margaret Broxted. (There the Lassalle model was abandoned.) Hers was not the only feminine heart attracted to that romantic figure. A new Mirabeau tempted by a beautiful Queen, but this time invulnerable....

"What one really wants to do is usually what one can best do," said Professor Broxted. "When you are sure of that, then do it with all your might. You can't do better with your lives than that."

"Everybody cannot succeed," Mrs. Broxted considered. "An experiment that gives a negative result," said the Professor — he was pontificating at the tea-table— "is just as important as one that comes off. More so, perhaps."

"But, sir," stammered Theodore, "is the experiment that doesn't come off — so, so, so happy?"

"Yes, sir," said the Professor. "If he or she is clearheaded and courageous enough to understand. Look reality in the face. Hold to the Stoic creed."

It was after that talk that during a long lonely walk of Theodore's the Bulpington of Blup died with his back to a score of walls, looking harsh reality in the face, holding firm to the Stoic creed, lay with his white marble face upturned in the moonlight or talked, jesting gently, from his balcony like Sir Thomas More as the time drew near for him to die. Talked jestingly even to the Lady Margaret, until the moment when he held out his arms for a last firm embrace.

Then for a while the critical faculty, awakening in adolescence to new energy and sustained by a score of the Professor's invigorating phrases, made a conscious effort to bring these dream dramas into the sphere of practicable things. Already unperceived it had imposed great limitations of scale and locality and period. Now began that phase we mentioned of the Bulpington of Blup resolved to "know himself", resolved to break free from fantasy, even to the point of insisting he was "just Theodore Bulpington a commonplace youth" — looking facts in the face. "Stern realist," he said, and even as he said it a vision came upon the screen of a steadfast, determined, not indeed very handsome nor powerful man, living very simply and

austerely, speaking always very concisely, acting with a directness, a freedom from imaginative elaborations, that gave him an amazing, a magic power over his blinder, more disingenuous fellow creatures. His was a new mental puritanism, "Bluptism" in fact, a blend of the blunt and abrupt. These "Blupts", under their great disillusioned, disillusioning leader, became the strong pithy men who saved a disordered world. They were the true Inheritors. They shaped the world afresh. Chief among his lieutenants was that mighty "researchist" Professor Teddy Broxted, and his starkly lovely sister, the Doctor Margaret.

Theodore was so busy with the fabrication of these pleasing interpretations of things about him that he never paused to consider whether something of the same sort, though different perhaps in measure and proportion, might not be going on in the minds of both his friends — and everyone he knew. He did not realize that the whole world about him, groped, blinded by similar fantasias, among faintly apprehended realities. Whatever else he dreamt, he did not dream that at times Teddy, in his private meditations, could win the Nobel prize for scientific work and spend it firmly on fresh apparatus for the modest but wonderfully competent laboratory in which his chief discoveries had been made; or that Margaret became a lovely platform figure like young Ethel Snowden or Margaret Anderson, fearless, incorruptible, serene and clear-voiced — and with Theodore well to the fore in the audience — warning a man-made world of snobs and robbers of the coming of woman's exalting and purifying influence.

6

Party at the Parkinsons

The Parkinsons gave a large confused New Year's Eve party all over their house. The bedrooms, the box-rooms, the attics, the staircase landings were sitting-out places and the beds were thinly disguised under multicoloured shawls and rugs. They became divans; one squatted á la turque on them. All the sons, daughters and stepchildren, their friends and their friends' friends and old and

young, were there. There was a grand piano in the large room and the folding doors were open between that and the dining-room. There was no sit-down meal, but several tables and sideboards in unexpected places loaded with plates, forks, glasses and good things. Two red-faced, red-handed servant girls continually carried off, washed and replaced the plates and glasses. In Mr. Parkinson's study there were bridge tables for the graver sort, and for lighter minds there were frequent mistletoe bunches, ivy and holly festoons and general excitement. Everyone was supposed to have "dressed up", which meant that, whatever you usually wore, you wore something else; and sometimes there was dancing and sometimes there were round games. Those who were otherwise normal were presently put into paper caps. Clorinda wore a cut-steel tiara from a theatrical costumier and looked very splendid as Boadicea, and Raymond as usual was Velasquez with a little insecure pointed beard stuck on his chin and sought-for eagerly at once and replaced whenever it fell off — as it was apt to do. Clorinda had got up Theodore very agreeably. He was as tall as she was now, and she had taken a long woollen vest and cotton tights and painted them with silver paint for him, belted him with a silver buckled belt, slung a white fur-trimmed theatre cloak of hers about his shoulders and produced a small silvered helmet she had hired with her own tiara, a Viking helmet with wings at the side. She made up his face a little and Theodore became for the evening an extremely good-looking, if slightly fragile and inaccurate, young Varangian.

She regarded him with undisguised pride, kissed him suddenly first on one cheek and then the other and said, "Go forth my son and conquer."

"*You* look more like conquering," said Theodore with an unwonted affection; "with that whacking great sword on you."

'They came out of the starlight into a crowded brightly lit hall, where the two red-handed maids collected hats, wraps and goloshes and added them to two salad-like accumulations, one masculine in origin and the other feminine, that they were making down a passage; and thence the visitors, revealed in all their dressing-up, went on into the large room where the party was gathering, still in an unmixed self-conscious state, and engaging in refractory chunks of

conversation.

Across the room from the door was Margaret, and she too had been transfigured and made splendid in a close sheath of glistening green stuff and a tall cone-shaped head-dress, that recalled tournaments and troubadours. She did not note Theodore's arrival for a moment and then when she turned her face towards him and smiled her recognition at him something lit up in her eyes as though for the first time the Bulpington of Blup had been revealed to her.

But she was lovely. Theodore forgot his own make-up. He felt he was just everyday Theodore. He wanted to go right across the shining floor and speak to her and say how lovely she had become. His eyes, had he known, said it plainly enough, but he had no words and the space of beeswaxed floor seemed immense and magnetized in some adverse fashion against him.

Then Mr. Parkinson's back blotted out Margaret; he was something of a charmer and he too had discovered her loveliness; and the eldest Miss Parkinson carried off Theodore to be introduced to some totally unimportant people.

It was a long time before Theodore got to Margaret's side and he was trembling as he touched her hand. There were two country dances and a waltz and a guessing-game and a drift towards supper. All sorts of things happened, but all the time Theodore remained acutely aware of Margaret and constantly it seemed to him she was looking at him, with something new and thrilling in her expression. When they came together he was too constrained to ask her to dance, but she said, "Bulpy, you've got to dance with me a *lot* to-night. I want you to."

And once they had come together it seemed impossible for them to come apart again. But that did not matter so much because most of the other young people were getting stuck together in couples in the same fashion. Only the older people marked this pairing and for the most part they noted it benevolently. Clorinda had made a precarious conquest of young Bletts and was asking about his ambitions and generally trying to draw him out. Most of his conversation consisted of, "Yes, *I* think that," and, "Yes, that's just what I *do* feel"; but Clorinda felt his heart was opening to her. There is something very lovely and delicate, she found, in the shy confidences of a still-

innocent adolescent mind. Pity they should ever degenerate into the cynicism of maturity.

Mr. Parkinson's charm was like a searchlight during air manoeuvres on a cloudy night. It flitted about and got very little and what it got it lost again. He felt his wife ought to have invited more girls and had doubts about her generosity. He loomed up over Margaret a lot, but Theodore always got her away again, or, to be more exact, she got away again with Theodore.

They had supper together a lot of times, for the Parkinsons were a sandwich-inventing family, and it was a good supper. They joined in the games and country dances; they drifted upstairs. "Let's look *all* over their old house," said Theodore, with a sudden enterprise. They explored — talking now with a certain artificiality.

In one of the box-rooms they came upon two of the visitors embracing with great abandon. They were so locked together they did not hear the door pushed open. Theodore and Margaret recoiled into the darkened passage and now every fibre in Theodore's being was aquiver.

They said not a word. He put his face very near to hers so that their breath mingled. The moment hung interminably. Time seemed paralysed. It was Margaret who seized upon him and drew his mouth to hers. Nothing so lovely had ever happened before.

He held her, he pressed her body to his and their hearts drummed together. And again. And again.

Footfalls on the staircase broke the spell.

After that the exploration of the Parkinsons' house became a simple search for suitable corners and shadows in which this delicious experience could be repeated. And even improved upon. Many of these recesses they found already occupied. Conversation and even the pretence of conversation had died between them. Margaret said nothing. And all the Recording Angel could write to his account was, "Margaret — Margaret I say."...

The whole party was hunted together into the big room at midnight to grip hands in a circle and sing "Old Lang Syne." To Theodore blinking in the brightness next to Margaret it seemed like a hand-fasting, a betrothal.

So at last a chorus of "Good nights" and yet again "Good night,

Happy New Year to All", and Margaret, clinging to Teddy's arm, looking back and waving a hand, was swallowed up by the tamarisk hedges.

"Who was the dark girl in a sort of Elizabethan costume?" asked Raymond. "She seemed intelligent."

"I didn't notice her, dear," said Clorinda.

"Did *you*?" she asked Theodore.

The question had to be repeated.

"The dark girl? In Elizabethan costume. Oh, yes. You mean with a sort of ruffle." Theodore collected his wits. "I think she was the Parkinsons' new governess."

He didn't know. He didn't care.

He was permitted to relapse into his own feelings and memories.

The next day the world seemed a very ordinary world indeed and cold outside the sheets. The oblong divisions of the window were clumsy with soft white gobbets. It was snowing and the water in Theodore's ewer was frozen. It looked as though there might be skating.

About eleven o'clock he went up to the Broxteds, through a white-powdered, iron-frozen world. He found Margaret and Teddy quarrelling about their skates. He joined in the discussion. Margaret did not seem to look at him at all, but then he did not look very much at Margaret. No one said anything about overnight. It was just as if overnight had been a dream.

They got the skates in order and skated until after dark. Teddy and Margaret skated well and Theodore got on wonderfully with their help.

Nobody did say anything about that New Year Party and its first flash of passionate intimacy — ever. It went down under among the germinating hidden things of life.

Except that once as they skated across the pond hand-in-hand in swift unison it seemed to Theodore that Margaret whispered — to herself rather than to him— "Bulpy *dear*."

He was not quite sure. The moment skated away into eternity.

He pretended he had not heard.

London was an immense extension of the world of Theodore.

Theodore's real world, like the real world of all young people, seemed unquestionably stable and permanent. To every child its father and mother, its home and surroundings, are immortal things; in the childhood of mankind the sky and the earth were fixed, the hills were "eternal" and every social and religious institution endured for ever. Biologists say, though how they know it I cannot imagine, that a fly cannot detect a movement of less than an inch a second, and it needed systematic observation before men could realize the flow in the ice rivers that creep down the Alpine valleys. So Theodore came up from the established and immutable things of Blayport and Blay Island and Papport Junction only to find at first a vaster immutability in London. He came to a limitless fixed wonder-world in which trickles and torrents of people ebbed and flowed. It was immensely various; its busy streets; its endless vistas of houses, subtly different in every region, so that Bloomsbury, Kensington, Hampstead, Pimlico, Highbury, Clapham, even in their quietest corners were unmistakable; its wide parks with their heavy foliaged trees, blue distances and shining ornamental waters; its sombre stately grey buildings; its Whitehall and Westminster and the quickening illumination of the Strand and Piccadilly. Hansoms and horse-buses were diminishing, taxi-cabs were just appearing in those days, but the horse still dominated the street traffic; the house wreckers and builders were busy between Holborn and the new Law Courts. It was indeed all changing and drifting towards a crisis of change, but the current phase seemed eternal to Theodore. It provided at first only a new, larger, more realistic backcloth for the play of his reverie.

He looked indeed at London rather more than he looked at Blayport. But it was too stupendously inexplicable for him to attempt any immediate understanding. And his ready invention filled the gap for a time with ill-digested stuff from the romance of history. The Bulpington of Blup after a marvellous election campaign rode triumphantly on horseback down Whitehall to the Houses of Parliament; or he turned away the angry population in revolt from its siege of Buckingham Palace. Or he came forward when all the

regular leaders of army and navy had failed, and defeated an almost victorious Germany, France, confederated Europe, as the case might be, and rode in triumph up the Mall. Or he went to Victoria Station, like Nelson, like Moore and Wolfe, full of tragic and true forebodings of his last great sacrifice. Or — with a change of scale and style — he had a marvellous and mysterious house in Park Lane (which was still in those days an unbroken line of private mansions). There he lived, the Bulpington of Blup, a great artist of ancient family who was also a great power, a creature as splendid as Lord Leighton, that elegant President of the Royal Academy, as mysterious as the heroes of William Le Queux, as far reaching — somehow — as Disraeli's Rothschilds.

If London as a whole was at first inert in its vast encirclement of Theodore's imagination, still a number of diverse appeals were being made to him to learn and mark the things that were stirring beneath the infinitude of its appearances. Gradually they forced it upon him that this London might change, and at length that it was in fact changing. In Hyde Park near the Marble Arch there was a clamour of speakers calling upon the passing multitudes to heed God or beware of priestcraft, face the "German threat" or the "Yellow Peril", resort to vegetarianism or die in agony from cancer, the ever-increasing scourge of cancer, resist the capitalist tyrant and prepare for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The united influence of these straining voices was dislodgment and anxiety. They cried out against any belief in permanence. The Broxteds also had always the effect of hunting for something satisfying in a thoroughly confused, mistaken and unstable world. And his Aunt Lucinda Spink was clear he needed rousing to the graver realities of life.

Aunt Lucinda Spink was the eldest, thinnest and most energetic of the Spink sisterhood. She was like Clorinda but lean and bony, and Aunt Amanda too was like Clorinda partly dissolved away. Aunt Amanda was younger than Clorinda and she had married and survived a solicitor named Catherson, a quite undistinguished man who had left her very well off, childless, but in some way deprived of all the initiative that made most of her sisters remarkable. She had become a consciously gentle humorist and found so much amusement in life that she wrote some of it down — but refrained

from publishing it because of the family. Sometimes she just said little things. Aunt Lucinda on the other hand boasted of her want of humour; she was a greatly respected public spinster, a non-militant suffragist, a leader in the Fabian Society and a member of the London County Council, and she had initiative to a high degree. It was she who had interfered with Clorinda's planting out of Theodore in Paddington. She got word of Clorinda's proceedings and pounced. She consulted the best-known works and maps on the social and moral life of London, and found that Theodore had been planted out near the Great Western terminus in a street of accommodation lodging-houses and private hotels of a quite undesirable kind. "The men hurry out to catch their trains at the very last moment," she said. "And when they lose their trains they stay the night."

That was all she said, but around that statement a picture of social disorder filled itself in with a terrible vividness.

So, although it was at a greater distance from the Rowlands School of Art, he was transplanted to a much more comfortable bedroom with a minute fireless "study" attached, close to Church Row, let by a serious woman well known to Lucinda; and Amanda rearranged and adorned both the rooms in a very pleasant manner. Theodore was always to go to tea in Church Row on Sunday afternoons when Aunt Lucinda gathered people to influence them and discuss movements with them, and he was to bring any of his friends, and he was to call in for odd meals, after due notice, and generally regard the house as an adequate mitigation of his loneliness in London. Ever and again Aunt Lucinda or Aunt Amanda would call and look at his rooms and exorcize the possibility of bad company, and Aunt Lucinda would reproach him for untidiness and Aunt Amanda bring him flowers. But there was a veil of mutual disapproval between Clorinda and her sisters, so that she only appeared rarely and stiffly in Hampstead.

The private trouble Theodore was having about his object in life was greatly intensified by Aunt Lucinda's serious talks with him. She liked to get him to tea alone on weekdays, all to herself when Amanda was out, because Amanda had a way of saying nothing and smiling quietly that *poisoned* conversation from Aunt Lucinda's point of view.

“You must be Up and Doing, Theodore,” she said.

“I work pretty hard at my art, you know. I’m going to the evening classes in the nude as well.”

“The nude is not everything,” said Aunt Lucinda.

“I make studies of draperies,” said Theodore. “I’ll show you some if you like.”

“No doubt you work at your art. But there are other things. Do politics, does social life mean *nothing* to you?”

“Politics,” said Theodore, “seem such an *excrescence* on life.”

“No,” said Aunt Lucinda without argument, “*Art is* the excrescence.... At bottom all artists are parasites and prostitutes. They are at their best when they decorate public buildings and express the spirit of the times. But how can an artist do that if he is merely an artist — without ideas?

“You owe something to the world,” said Aunt Lucinda. “It does not drive you to work for a living. It leaves you free to choose a career. You have time to think, time to study. Those are great privileges, Theodore.”

“But if I work at my art—”

“Understandingly. In relation to the political and social scheme.”

“But what are the political and social schemes up to anyhow?” asked Theodore.

“Exactly,” said Aunt Lucinda with a snap of brilliance. “You ought to have an answer to that. At least you ought to *want* to have an answer. These schemes, these systems, dominate your life. They make peace about you. They secure your independence. The world there is about you — you artists and so forth — depends upon them.”

“But can’t I trust all that to the sort of people who like that sort of thing?”

“Every citizen is responsible. If you shirk your duties, and if everybody else did the same thing, who would keep order, who would keep the streets clean, who would prevent our being murdered in our beds? Even now don’t you realize there is a great lot of social injustice in the world? There are old laws, bad institutions. Poor people are oppressed. Women are oppressed. India is oppressed. It is only a sketch, a very imperfect sketch, of social justice that we are living under to-day.”

“And I’ve got to see to all that?”

“You need to know about it. You — at any rate — will get a vote presently. That makes you responsible. You’ve got to play your part in putting the world straight and keeping it straight.”

At this point if Aunt Amanda had been present Theodore would have exchanged a deep and understanding look with her, and have been mystically sustained against Aunt Lucinda, but as it was he had to go on listening intelligently.

Aunt Lucinda went on to a number of troublesome questions and suggestions. She wanted an account of his reading and his use of his leisure. She said he seemed to have had no education in citizenship. She understood he was a great reader, and so why was it that he had read nothing of sociology? Nothing of economic and political history? “It wasn’t interesting somehow,” said Theodore. “Or somehow you weren’t interested,” said Aunt Lucinda with a smile and a dark gleam.

For she had heard Barker the socialist poet in that very room say something brilliant, and now she saw an opportunity to reproduce it.

Her expression became arch and arresting. She knew she had an effect to make. She went to the window that looked out on Church Row. A faint flavour of Barker came into her voice. “Come and look at this street,” she said, and he joined her. “Look at the pavement and the gas lamps. The street is kept clean; the gas lamps are lit. That is Local Government. Look at those houses; they are all of a certain shape and type. Why? Because of Social and Economic Forces. The sort of people who live in them belong to economic classes. They live in them because they have been given certain ideas about living. That is Education; that is Sociology. The very window-sills are Capitalist window-sills. Servants live in those basements and up in attics. Why? The parents and relations of those servants, some of them, live in the little back streets behind the High Street. Again, why? They think they have to. The old gentleman who lives in that house gets almost all the money he lives upon sent to him from the Argentine; the one next door has a pension from the Government of India. What brings these incomes regularly to Church Row? What makes people send that money to these old gentlemen? They are the sort of people who choose your decorations and buy your pictures.

Surely economic and political science is interesting enough when you see it that way! All London, all the world is realized sociology in movement. Realized sociology in movement! You know a lot about Vikings and the Troubadours and the Crusades; but isn't all this just as living? Seeing that it is actually alive! There it is — sociology going on."

She smiled her dark lean smile and surveyed the effect of her words upon him.

Theodore regarded the house opposite without enthusiasm. It was a flat-faced, trim, self-satisfied house. "I don't — I don't know why," he said slowly, "but it isn't."

"But, Theodore!"

"It isn't."

"But *why*?"

"I don't know. It's too near perhaps or it's too real. There is too *much* of the same sort of thing. It is too complicated to understand. I don't know. It doesn't appeal to me."

"But it isn't so complicated; not so complicated as all that. It *can* be understood. There are books — if you would promise me to try and read them. And there are times and places where they talk about these things. Discussion sometimes makes ideas live — shows the life in them. Next week I am going to a meeting of the Fabian Society where they talk about these things a lot — if you'd care to come? I'm afraid I may have to sit on the platform."

She sat on the platform next to Sidney Webb and Mr. Galton; she seemed to know everyone on the platform and Theodore found a seat in the audience. It was a very full and well-behaved audience in the chapel-like hall of Clifford's Inn.

And presently while the secretary was still reading minutes and making announcements, Theodore was hit on the ear by a paper pellet and looking round discovered Margaret and Teddy three rows behind him — and both of them evidently very pleased and amused to see him. He and they gesticulated with the idea of getting together, but the meeting was too firmly packed into its seats for a transfer, and they had to wait until it was all over. So Theodore sat with a going-to-church-like feeling, and sometimes listened quite closely to the paper that was being read and sometimes watched the high lights

on the animated face of Aunt Lucinda and sometimes went off Bulping. At one moment Aunt Lucinda looked suddenly like Clorinda and then the resemblance vanished and would not return. That was interesting. Impossible to imagine Aunt Lucinda too intimately entangled with blond young gentlemen specializing in folk dances and cottage industries.

The paper was called *Marxism; its Virtues and its Fallacies,* and sometimes it was vividly interesting and sometimes it was incomprehensible and sometimes inaudible. (Then impatient voices at the back cried, "Speak UP.") The debate was rather fun because it sounded wildly incoherent; with a passionate storm from a German comrade at the back, a scene between the Chairman and a deaf old lady who wanted to ask questions, and an entirely irrelevant side speech from a consciously Irish Catholic; but now and then a phrase hit and stuck like a dart in Theodore's mind. He saw Bernard Shaw for the first time and found him oddly interesting though he spoke only for a few minutes on a minor issue; how did he make it interesting and personal? And when it was all over and chairs were scrooping on the floor and everyone was on the move, Theodore went and excused himself to his Aunt and made off with the Broxteds and a couple of friends of theirs to an Appenrodt shop where they had beer and smoked-salmon sandwiches and talked for a long time. And Margaret looked at Theodore in a way that egged him on to take a larger share than he would otherwise have done in the conversation.

The two friends were Jewish and their name was Bernstein. One was a short, round-headed, bright-eyed rather Mongoloid fellow-student of Teddy's, though he seemed much older and maturer, and the other was his sister, who was by a year or so his elder, slight and slender, black-haired, very eager-mannered and more ordinarily Semitic. She talked in rapid spurts and rather cleverly, she affected an easy familiarity, she laid a hand on Theodore's arm when she interrupted him, and once called Teddy "my dear". Ever and again the brother regarded Margaret, not aggressively, but watchfully, as though he found her very interesting and wanted to mark the effect of his talk upon her. Then he would look at Theodore. Theodore appreciated the mental alertness of both these Bernsteins, but he was

inclined to think they drove too hard at their points and didn't play about enough on' the way. The talk was round and about the paper and the debate, and Rachel Bernstein introduced complications by questioning whether its author had been sincere. She seemed to know a lot about him. But then she had the air of knowing a lot about everybody. "Hinkson's a Communist," she said. "A real red Communist. He knows old Hyndman and all the S.D.F. set. He *posed* as a critic of Marxism and talked about its fallacies, because otherwise that old Fabian crowd wouldn't have listened to him. Clever of him! Oh, he's *clever*! So that he got *them* defending Marx while he seemed to attack. See?"

As his acquaintance with the Socialist movement increased, Theodore was to find this sort of cleverness and these imputations of subtlety pervaded it from top to bottom. Everyone was being cleverer than anybody else and manoeuvring the unsuspicious into the unanticipated.

And what was this movement as it unfolded itself into his mind? Was it a fantasy in any way different from his own habitual fantasies? Here they were in the light and stir of a busy restaurant, with its shining counters, its white-clad attendants, its tables and tables of customers; and outside the windows the pavement crowds and the traffic of cabs and omnibuses streamed by, and the great dun brown buildings above loomed up into the night, so established, so certainly there, so seeming irresistible. And the five of them sat round the white table-top and talked as though that little meeting they had attended of four or five hundred people in a hired hall was going to take control of these torrents of movement and these solid cliffs of matter, and do some extraordinary thing to them, the Social Revolution, which was to alter — what could it alter?

Alter the immutable? Divert the implacable?

"After your Social Revolution," asserted Theodore, giving battle in the best Raymond style; "everything will be very much as it is now."

"It will be altogether different," said Bernstein.

"If your Social Revolution tries to alter too much it won't arrive. If it arrives it will have been watered down so that it won't make much difference. These Fabian people were just ordinary people. *We*

are not so very different from ordinary people. Most of the people in the world are ordinary people — naturally. They are just what they are. What can we do? Reality is stronger than theories. There will never be a Communist State. Marx was an impracticable dreamer."

"You've got it all wrong, my dear," said Rachel Bernstein, grasping his wrist and looking vivid. "You really have. You say that realities are stronger than theories. Reality—" she released the wrist for a moment to poke a finger at him— "that's economic forces. But that, my dear, is just the Materialist Interpretation of History — the essence of Marx. That is precisely what Marx taught; what Communism teaches. You're with us — only you don't see it. You'll see it soon enough. Yes, you — you in particular — will," and she lifted his hand and banged it on the table.

"Marxism isn't a theory," confirmed Bernstein. "It's an analysis and a forecast."

Theodore flushed because he knew himself profoundly ignorant of all these "isms". But he emerged with a clincher. "Then why talk and work for a Social Revolution if it's bound to happen?"

That was a great point to make.

They wrangled for a time about the proper meanings of "Revolution" and "Evolution". Theodore held stoutly to the thesis that a Revolution was something men made and Evolution something that happened to them. He wouldn't have such a thing as a movement for an inevitable revolution.

Teddy, looking sagacious with his arms folded in front of him rather as a cat tucks in its paws, took it upon himself to adjudicate.

"It amounts to this," he said, brushing the Evolution-Revolution issue aside. "The Communists hold that this Capitalist system is becoming more and more top-heavy. It keeps on saving and reinvesting instead of distributing all its production. Fresh capital accumulates, more dividends have to be produced, and the workers are economized upon, impoverished, expropriated and enslaved. More and more top-heavy. Capitalism therefore had a beginning and it will have an end, it will pile up debt on the workers until there is a crash, and that crash, they say, is what they mean by the Social Revolution."

"And then?" said Theodore.

“Yes,” said Margaret, “what then? That is what *I* want to know.” She had seemed preoccupied for a time by some private thoughts of her own, and now she had the air of forcing her attention back into the discussion. “What sort of a world is it going to be?”

“I want to know that too,” said Teddy.

Theodore remembered his recent talk with his Aunt Lucinda. He reproduced Mr. Barker the poet at third hand. “Every house in London,” he said, “was made just as it is, by Capitalism.” He stammered a little to accentuate his point. “The-the-these window-sills are *Capitalist* windowsills. Socialist window-sills would be different. All London was made by Capitalism — *is* Capitalism, c-c-c-crystallized out. Isn’t that so? Well, when Capitalism collapses, will London collapse? Will *this* — outside — houses, traffic, crowds — go on or crumple up? What will happen?”

“The Revolution will take it over,” said Bernstein.

“And change it all?”

“As fast as it can.”

“To what?”

“To the Proletarian State,” said Bernstein.

“But what sort of streets and houses does that mean? What sort of buildings? What kind of factories? They’ll have to be different. Just as different as Communism is from Capitalism.”

“The Countryside?” interjected Teddy. “What will the Communist countryside be like?”

“Women?” said Margaret.

“It’s bound to be *all* different. What will it be like?” urged Theodore, really curious and ready for an answer.

“Shall we still use money?” asked Teddy. “You Communists never give me an answer to that. It seems to me rather important.”

“If you ask questions like that you tumble into Utopianism,” said Bernstein, “the refuge of the artistic sentimental bourgeoisie. No. First let us have the Social Revolution. Let us get that right — first. We can’t begin drawing pretty pictures beforehand. Hinkson made that very clear to-night. Things will arrange themselves in harmony with the new order. We have to avoid Utopianism and put everything on a scientific basis.”

“If it *is* a scientific basis,” said Teddy.

"But how can you question that?" cried Rachel Bernstein, in the tone of a true believer. "How *can you* — a man of science, my dear — doubt that? Utopianism is just dreaming.

It is childishness. Imaginative play. Humbart says it is like the biology of invented animals. You'd despise that sort of anatomy. Peculiar structures in a unicorn hitherto undescribed. Wing feathers of a griffin. — But" — reverence came into her voice and for once she spoke slowly —

"*Marxism deals rigorously with actuality.* That's its peculiar strength. That's why we are all obliged to come back to it."

"We have in fact to give a blank cheque to this Social Revolution of yours," meditated Teddy. "With not even a glimpse at a prospectus. I don't think I like the security. Margaret, it's time for us to go."

8

Breaking Through the Nets

This new idea of the impermanence of London, that seething accumulation of human beings and their products, which was for Theodore the outward and visible form of this Capitalist System, ran about in his brain very actively and produced an abundance of imaginative matter. But mostly it moved along those threads and paths of association which were related to that intricate tangle through which the Bulpington of Blup came and went. This faceless, formless thing in the minds of the Bernsteins, this Social Revolution they talked about, was in the same order of being as that reverie personality. It would not mingle readily with the daily life of the real Theodore, his belated and hurried breakfast, his train-catching, his engagements and his drawing and painting, but it flowered abundantly in his daydreams. Sometimes the Bulpington of Blup led this revolution; sometimes he was the great counter-revolutionary who saved the ancient order of the world.

At the instigation of his Aunt Lucinda he contemplated the poor. He had hitherto done his best to disregard them. But now he went about sensitized to and observant of social contrasts, the slums north-

east of Regent Street and Oxford Street, Hampstead and Hampstead Road, Buckingham Palace and Pimlico. He realized that London had been keeping something back from him. It had been keeping back the back streets. He went through the congested shopping crowds of Saturday night in the Edgware Road, and carried away odorous memories of barrows and paraffin flares and glimpsed and heard through suddenly opened doors the convivial babblement of crowded public-houses. There were enormous quantities of these dingy and frowsty people, it seemed. There was dirt and disorder, misery, indignity and crime, multitudinous behind all the London frontages, behind all the frontages of his civilization, and his Aunt Lucinda seemed to think he ought to do something about it. But what on earth was he to do about it?

On the whole he disliked the poor. He wanted to keep away from them and think about them as little as possible. The rich when he thought about them made him envious and the poor were disgusting. Why should he be bothered about either?

Aunt Lucinda said he would be wise to join an offshoot of the Fabian Society called the Fabian Nursery; there he would be able to learn about the social problems of the time; and when he found that Margaret and Teddy belonged to this juvenile branch of the intelligenzia, he joined it willingly enough. But he found this Nursery unconvincing. It seemed they held the rich responsible for the poor. But on the other hand the poor were in no way responsible for the rich. Why not? asked Theodore brilliantly. Was either responsible?

The Bernsteins didn't belong to the Fabian Nursery; they scorned it. No good going to the consciences or good will of the rich, they held, to remedy the injustices of the social system. It was the System, the Capitalist System, that was responsible for the incurable and increasing inequalities of life. Fewer and fewer people relatively were enjoying the space, freedom, sunlight and abundance of the frontages, and more and more were being thrust into the back streets. The bursting of these back streets would be the Social Revolution.

But there were really no signs of any bursting, or indeed of any sort of revolutionary upthrust at all, in the back streets. The crowds Theodore saw in them were close and busy but they had no explosive

quality that he could observe. They went about their work, they went to it and came back from it, they bought their dismal and inartistic commodities in their ugly and tawdry shops, they got drunk, the more wretched sold matches, crooned songs at the pavement edge or begged frankly, and the less wretched jostled. There was nothing there, nothing at all, to liken to the Giant Proletarian, that vast potent simpleton, pure in heart and mightily just, of Bernstein's Marxist cartoons. Theodore felt it in his bones that the sordid poor — and the glittering rich also — were going on for an interminable time, that in a hundred years' time or so, though fashions and traffic might change, and buildings come and go, the contrasts of the great town would still be there, a different but not very different rich on the frontages, and a still drab, dull, drifting and congested multitude, the slaves of circumstances, beneath and behind. His mind could not imagine it fundamentally different. At the bottom of his heart he believed that the appearances of the present were invincible.

That was the actual Theodore, the Theodore who had to believe in the Thing that Is, Theodore nicknamed already in his awkward boyhood by Francolin, Bletts and his peers, the Snipe and Snifter. His mind turned away in dismay from the Titanic ambitions he apprehended behind the sedulous investigations, the planning and highbrow exertions of his Aunt Lucinda and her Fabian friends. They had, he perceived dimly, the purpose of changing all this world of which London was, so to speak, the face that was turned towards him. They had projects for altering ownership, making the community, whatever that was, "take over" businesses, manufactures, banking. Then everything, they thought, would be adjusted; the rich would be reduced to a healthy austerity of life and the poor would be quite different and prosperous and happy. But how was the community to do that? How was it going to "take over"? And who was going to manage for it when it had taken over? In their debates that question was asked again and again, directly or indirectly, and never was it answered. How was the community to rule? It had to be educated first. But who was going to educate it? Apparently Civil Servants, official archangels, were to do the trick. You never seemed to get any answers that did not raise further questions. Whenever you exerted yourself to think you came upon

fresh difficulties. Theodore could press Teddy with questions until he drove him to admit, frowning under his Palaeolithic eyebrows and flushing bright pink between his golden freckles, “Of course we don’t know everything yet. Naturally. But that’s no reason for not going on and trying to find out and trying to change things — seeing how beastly they are.”

Theodore did not want to see how beastly they were. He felt no commanding interest in this obstinate resolve to find out more and more about things and to tighten the human grip upon them with each accession of knowledge. He had missed the scientific idea, and his temperament was against it. Instead of seeing how beastly things were, his disposition was all for turning his back to them and saying they were not in reality beastly. Meanness was not mean; it was humorous, it was pathetic. Frustration had its comic side; a starving man is not so much starved as mentally exalted — or why should the saints abstain? — and a cripple is privileged to grotesque effects denied to normal creatures. The great artists preferred to paint cripples and old women because if you get your values adjusted properly there is something insipid about normal health and grace. And when his mind was unable to go all that way in evading the indigence and indignity of the slums, it could always step neatly into the dimension of dreamland and a world transfigured.

The steadfast pressure of Teddy’s mind, grimly intent upon fact and actual possibility, bothered Theodore; the petty persistence of his Aunt Lucinda’s municipalization-and-efficiency Fabianism stirred him to aversion; but he found quite surprisingly in the Bernstein faith as he came to grasp its quality a congenial and understandable refuge. Why entangle your mind in municipal affairs when the miracle of the Social Revolution loomed ahead? When all these squalid people would be metamorphosed at a stroke into the proletariat in triumphant insurrection! Under the leadership of certain workers, one need not particularize, workers who had foreseen.

In Theodore’s reveries there was no doubt about the personality of the leader, strong, attractive, inspired, the great Bulpington, the elect of the Blup Mountain, the man who had — in speeches of outstanding power and beauty — rallied the hardy miners of that primitive region to the Class War.

Theodore fought Teddy through some tough disputes in those days and felt more and more, after each rhetorical success, like an intellectual eagle which had successfully pestered a bull. His conviction of his mental superiority to Teddy, his nimbler movement, his quicker intuitions, increased with each encounter. Margaret said little and her eyes were ambiguous. He longed for some sign that he had won her over from Teddy but she never gave it. She looked at him as he talked, and he felt — but sometimes with a doubt — that she was on his side.

She was on his side but with some reservation to which he could not penetrate.

He had a curious feeling that in some way Margaret had been assigned to him by the unknown forces that order our world, but it came and went amidst the rush of impressions and ideas. She had become more and more detached from the figure of the Delphic Sibyl and the Delphic Sibyl herself had been crowded away into the background of his mind. That divinity of his boyhood was now for the most part a neglected loveliness; nevertheless there were moments when she could return with extraordinary force. Once in Vanderlink's studio, to which Theodore had taken the Broxteds, she descended upon him and Margaret together. It was a momentary vision that haunted his mind and distorted his established values for days. They were drinking coffee. Margaret had seated herself on the block on which Vanderlink posed his models. She was sitting, cup in hand, sideways to Theodore, and her eyes were regarding him with her characteristic faintly enigmatical expression. The light was upon her and the rest of the studio was more or less in shadow, and suddenly the Delphic Sibyl, herself, the very pose of her, was listening with some mute incommunicable comment to the nonsense he was talking.

He perceived it was nonsense abruptly, began to stammer, became conscious of self-contradiction, and made a poor end to what he had to say.

And after that he had some days of fading perplexity because he could not understand how she had been able to put him out in that fashion. But before a week had gone he had recovered again and was as assured as ever.

To his fellow students in the Rowlands School he talked usually with great vigour. He found his occasional stammering a help rather than a hindrance to his talk. It was at worst a momentary mental arrest rather than a nervous impediment. Very rarely did it take him by surprise. But ever and again he used it as a sort of punctuation, or to gain time in an argument. In the school atmosphere his condemnation of the contemporary world was unhesitating and complete. He talked as a mystical believer in the Social Revolution ahead. He was not a Communist, he said; he was an "Ultra-Communist" — and that went very well. It put a date on Bernstein. Nobody ever tackled him and forced him to define the expression.

The Rowlands School was a miscellaneous crowd over which the great Rowlands presided picturesquely, in fluctuations of inspiration, caustic discouragement, incomprehensible comment — accompanied usually by self-approving guffaws and frank neglect. He went away and did his own astonishing work for days together. Two thwarted but indomitable assistants did their best to run counter to such conceptions of training as the Master betrayed. He was always for drawing with a brush; that was his own way, but he was never clear about it, his utterances about it were blindingly bright rather than illuminating, and so his subordinates stuck to drawing with pencils and chalks. New students were always appearing, paying their fees, growing more and more alarmed and perplexed and evaporating again; but there was a persistent core to the school which addressed itself always by its Christian names, maintained its tradition of gossip and was prepared to explain emphatically but confusingly, What is Art, to anyone who would listen. Prominent among this core was Vanderlink, who was a free orphan, well enough off to possess a studio of his own in a back street off the Tottenham Court Road, in which he lived, loved and gave parties. He came to the school for company, and to see what Rowlands was doing and to make disparaging remarks about, and sometimes even produce undeniably effective charcoal notes of, the models.

And from this persistent nucleus of the school it was that Theodore picked up and learnt to use the most formidable word in his armoury against the hard materialism of the Broxteds— "*values*", that perfect Open Sesame to mastery over the caverns of fact. The

more he used and heard this indefinable term the more he liked it. He knew nothing of its origins and he never bothered about them." It released him as he had never hoped to be released. For years he had concealed and struggled against a growing fear and respect for the Broxteds, father and son. They were destructive of something he could not endure to have destroyed. They were like hunters who never tired and who were driving him patiently and incessantly towards their corral of harsh realizations. They were spiders perpetually spinning fresh threads in the great web of science to catch and hold, discipline and desiccate, his imagination. They were under an urge to draw out slowly and certainly a compulsive map of the universe for everyone. It would show inexorably what was what, how all things were, what could be done, what could not be done, and even at last what inevitably should and would be done. For the truth is the ultimate and most rigid of dictatorships. They made no personal reference in their mapping, but the personal application followed necessarily.

They had something he lacked; they were doing something he was failing to do. In the night he would perceive himself as a hunted freedom and they the pitiless beaters in the jungles of his brain. But now across this formidable rigid plan of theirs Theodore could flourish a nice loose versatile Scheme of Values, and immediately this fact became greater and that less, unpleasing things ceased to dominate and frail and fading concepts rose again with all their ancient charm and vigour restored. He could escape from that map after all, he found, and instead he had a kaleidoscope entirely under his own control.

A baffled look would come into Teddy's eyes.

"Oh, blast your rotten Values!" he would cry, repulsed and exasperated.

(But should a calm implacable man of science lose his temper and swear in such a fashion?)

And Theodore became free to profess fluently and abundantly his "Ultra-Communism", his worship of "pure line", his complete but mystical understanding of Picasso in every mood, his dogmatic irresponsible preferences among the Russian ballets that were then delighting London, deciding that this was mere piffle and leg-pulling

and that fraught with meanings too deep for words, without any further dread of hearing Teddy's, "Bulpy, what you have just said means exactly nothing at all."

That had ceased to be an indictment. It had become a confession of limitation. Now Theodore need only reply: "To you."

Moreover he could evade his Aunt Lucinda's sociological pressure with a good conscience. "My dear Aunt!" he would say with a note of protest, and that was all; as though she scandalized him; that sufficed; and he could go through the Saturday-night slums, admiring the dancing lights and shadows of the paraffin flares, the hard high scream of a woman against the general rumble, the chattering and clattering of the marketing swarm, the shining erubescence of a drunkard's face, the narrow brownly sombre emptiness of the mean side-streets, without a troublesome thought of responsibility for the squalor and degradation of the under-folk, without even a thought of their squalor and degradation.

"Values" was not the only emancipating discovery of Theodore's expanding and complicating mind. He was among the first of those who brought the phraseology of Communism into the rich abundant world of art-studio talk. He anticipated "Proletart" with his "Art of the Social Revolution". When he drew he put revolutionary feeling (whatever that was) into his line. He sought novel and rebellious colour effects. This caused some talk in the studio and made Rowlands argue the point, practically upon equal terms. He imposed upon all that slow earthbound Fabian stuff, that collection of doubtful statistics, that meticulous open-minded assembling and sorting of facts, that sedulous imitation, in an uncongenial field, of the methods of physical science, the word "*bourgeois*"*;* and at a stroke the convergence of obligation it implied was foiled. Professor Broxted also became *bourgeois*; all science indeed was presently *bourgeois*; and Florentine art, and the Royal Academy, and most portraiture (except when it was "plutocratic" and so even worse), comfort, bathrooms, punctuality, duty, were all jumbled and deflated together under the blight of that word. The closing net about Theodore's conscience was attenuated and torn as if by a corrosive acid. The threat of drudgery and veracity was lifted from him.

He learnt to use this word *bourgeois* with the same finality as

Bernstein; it became his leading card, his Joker in discussion; it beat everything; and in combination with it he could invoke "values" with all the ease of Vanderlink, of Rowlands himself. His mind was making the transition from the acceptance of a static to the realization of a changing world with a brilliant evasiveness; he was growing up and still he was keeping the freedom of his imaginations. That temporary recrudescence of plain fact, that revival of self-examination, of a new scrutiny of Theodore Bulpington, the Snipe and Snifter, that the Broxted acquaintance had set going, lost power and was presently arrested; soon the Bulpington of Blup, versatile, unverifiable and reassuring, had won back all and more than he had lost through the Broxted irruption.

9

R*achel Bernstein*

Economic problems were not the sole solicitude of the young intelligenzia in Theodore's world. They were tremendously exercised by the approaching abolition, so it was reported, of that ancient institution, the Family — and the release of Free Love.

Concealing for the most part their dreams and impulses, their emotional disturbances, their egotistical and self-protective drives under a mask of disinterested scientific interest, the new generation in the Fabian Nursery obeyed the inherent gravitation of youth towards these questions. Was it to be monogamy or polygamy "under Socialism"? Were eugenic considerations to be supreme in the pairing of human beings? Was such a thing as Collective Marriage, such as the Oneida Community had essayed, a reasonable project? What was the legitimate role of jealousy, if any, in this business of sex? How did this new possibility of "sterile relations", which everyone was whispering about, affect the established morality? They talked of "sterile relations", for the phrase "birth control" was still to be invented. They talked freely in substance, but they used biological and sociological phrases in an atmosphere of personal restraint. Rude words were not permitted. Nude words hardly at all. No generation, since civilization began, had talked with

such resolute, such conscientious freedom, but their talking would have seemed strangely stilted and forced and embarrassed to the easier generation of to-day. Compared with Francolin and the ancient tradition they were mealy-mouthed, but they were making the tremendous innovation that what Francolin considered scandalous, comic, outrageous and absurdly desirable might after all be not merely permissible but honourable and sane.

There were endless difficulties in the way of any personal application of these dawning liberties; there was a heavy cloud of menace over their practical application. Theodore talked of a world of Ultra-Communists that would be one collective marriage group — and returned to his little rooms in Hampstead and the guardian eye of his sternly dutiful landlady who might conceivably be shocked by any little old thing — one couldn't even sound her possible tolerance; and always he had the restraining possibility of a raid of inspection by his aunts in mind. Lucinda was liberal-minded but Oh so austere! and Amanda was humorous and kindly but quite old-fashioned in her standards. Everyone, it seemed, walked between the same narrow fences as before, but with unlimited liberty nowadays to look over them. Teddy said, "Come, Margaret," and took her off home, and the Bernsteins went their way, presumably to some populous Bernstein mansion.

Mercenary love walked the streets of civilization, heavy and painted, the one age-old relaxation of its rigid canalization of desire, and at times its votaries made quasi-inviting noises as Theodore passed, that recalled his obscener dreams. Mercenary love was the social safety-valve. There were moments when these prowling priestesses of Venus, the lowliest of their tribe, attracted him repulsively, but his pocket-money was slight, his dread of contagion extreme, and always he dreaded and disliked the confused thrust of his instincts towards them. Apart from any definable fear he was repelled instinctively. The thought of these women hackneys made him ashamed.

Yet he himself was aprowl. He would go for long walks at night, and now his long walks were no more walks of reverie but walks of romantic hesitating expectation. But the opportunity of adventure never came to him, or if it came he did not recognize it in time to

grasp it as it passed.

His prevailing theory about himself was that he was in love with Margaret. His heart quickened, his sense of himself became more vivid, when she appeared. But in London he had no chances to be alone with her and at Blayport Teddy was always about. His imagination played with her but not so much nor so variously as it had once been wont to do. It staged no great scenes for him and her. It dealt with warm whisperings, hand-touching and tenderness. She showed him a constant quiet friendliness but she did little or nothing to help him to intimacy. Whatever code of behaviour she had, it did not allow her to make love to him until he made love to her. He would sometimes talk at her in the presence of other people, talking of love and freedom and the wholesome necessity for passion, the attenuated material of talks he had imagined with her, but there was some deep quiet thing in her — or maybe some deficiency — that inhibited her from any sign in response.

She was not talkative, yet she had no effect of stupidity. She seemed to be listening and judging. What she said was worth hearing. She was less obsessed, it seemed, by the Vote than she had been. The militant section of the movement which set fire to the contents of pillar-boxes and smashed plate-glass windows as evidence of woman's peculiar capacity for government had estranged her.

"That's not how things ought to be done, anyhow," she said in her voice like the fur of a cat.

"It's the way to get the Vote," said Rachel Bernstein.

"I won't want to get the Vote that way," said Margaret. "I want to get it fair and square."

Theodore knew that for sanity; saw the wisdom of her gentle determination, the dignity of her restraint. But more and more did the thought of her become dissociated from that urge for adventure which for endless miles sent him wandering through the lamplight and the night shadows. Sometimes, but less and less frequently, he would think of meeting her unexpectedly in strange places where there was no embarrassment between them.

And then chance contrived a meeting in full daylight for Theodore that altered his world very greatly, pushed his brain forward another

stage on the journey it was destined to make.

One Saturday afternoon he was going up the Tottenham Court Road towards Hampstead when he saw Rachel Bernstein approaching him. She was walking slowly and thoughtfully through the Spring sunshine and her vivid face lit up at the sight of him.

"Hullo, Theodore, whither away?"

"I was going home. I can't paint to-day."

"It's Saturday."

"I hate the week-end in London."

"It's dull."

"It's dull."

They stood awkwardly for some moments facing each other and saying nothing. She was looking at him with a queer effect of suppressed excitement in her eyes.

One cannot stand saying nothing for ever. Theodore raised his hat and made to go on, went on half a dozen paces.

"Oh, Theodore!" she cried. She was at his side.

"Theodore," she said. "Come and have some tea with me. I mean — Let's go somewhere and have tea. Let's talk. I want to have a talk to you. There's a tea-shop that way. Let's go there and get tea."

That might be amusing. She laughed nervously as she spoke. He walked with her towards the tea-shop and she talked volubly and inconsecutively. She never got a chance to talk to him, she said. She had always wanted to do so, "I know you are interesting. What you do say is so good. But when other people are about I never seem to get at you. Now I shall have you to myself."

This was a pleasant note.

They sat at the little marble-topped table and had tea. They were both for some reason nervous and jumpy. Yet there seemed no reason why they should be nervous and jumpy. It was the radiation of some excitement in her that made him nervous. She spoke of his ideas. "I believe, you know, I am an Ultra-Communist too. It seems to open the way to a real life, a real free social life. I've thought of joining the Social Democratic Federation — but that's so rigid, so doctrinaire. It hasn't your liberating artistic touch. You lead to something finer. Don't you think?"

Theodore felt it behoved him to say more, if he was a leader of

thought towards something finer. But he found little to say, and also she kept on talking, and she was sitting as close to him as tea-shop manners permitted; her arm touched his and her eyes were on his face.

"What do you think of my brother, Melchior?" she asked abruptly.

She gave Theodore no time to reply. "He's wilful and powerful, don't you think? He has a splendid mind, but there is something ruthless about him. He's in love. He's suddenly fallen in love. He's gone off with her."

"Who?" asked Theodore.

"I don't know. But he's gone off with her. He's gone for the week-end and I don't know where. He's left me alone in the flat." She paused slightly.

"I thought you lived with your people," said Theodore, in the pause.

"We've got no people in London. Mother died two years ago. We're orphans. Melchior's my junior by two years; I used to make him blubber whenever I wanted to when we were kids together — little squit he was at times — and now, after the ways of mankind, he has three-quarters of the money and I have a quarter. Think of it! Of which *he* is trustee until I'm thirty. Have to take it from *him.* That's the equality of the sexes as my father and mother understood it. But never mind that now. I keep home for him. With an old servant. Our old nurse. And even she happens to be out for her Saturday afternoon and evening."

Another pause ensued. Theodore was occupied in dismissing all sorts of odd thoughts. "You ought to see our flat," said Rachel.

"I suppose you're tremendously conventional," she said, "really."

"I detest *bourgeois* conventionality," said Theodore.

Her dark eyes regarded his with a singular soft intensity. They said strange and stirring things. They had become darker and deeper. There was an unexpected beauty in this warmly coloured face, seen so closely. She was smiling faintly. Her large, thick-lipped mouth, just slightly open, had become oddly attractive.

"It's absurd, isn't it," she said in a low intimate voice, "that we should be having tea here, when I might be getting you tea with my

own fair hands in the flat."

The words were simple, yet they seemed charged with subtle suggestions.

"Why didn't we?" said Theodore as intimately.

"You'd love our flat. It's a funny little flat with — we've got some Japanese pictures and a lot of posters. Beardsley's Keynote poster."

"I've never seen that," said Theodore. "I've heard of it." And then for some inexplicable cause, his nerves began to quiver. "I'd love to see it."

"Would you?" she said with her eyes lighting up. "Would you *really*?"

"I'd love to see it," he said stoutly and met her challenge.

The flat was quite near. It was the adapted ground floor of a Georgian house. The passage-hall of the house was a communal hall and very bare. Rachel had two latchkeys, one for the outer door and one for her own rooms. There was a front room like a studio, with a divan that could become a bed, a large old bathroom and two rooms behind, the first one opening into the front room by folding doors. "Silly of us to have had tea in that A.B.C.," she said. She stood quite still for a moment and so did he. Then she came to a decision. "Just wait here a minute, Theodore, while I take my hat off."

She hesitated and went and drew the window curtains.

She stood looking at him for a moment; then vanished through the folding doors.

Theodore surveyed the litter of papers on the table, the books that lined one side of the room, with his eyes and attitude, but within he was a storm of adventurous surmise. After a busy interval Rachel appeared, and she had changed all her clothes. His surmise became a certainty. She had shaken her fuzzy hair loose into a wild black shock, put on a loose dressing-gown, and her throat and her slender ankles above red slippers he saw were bare. She halted in the doorway.

Theodore was tongue-tied. He coughed. "I like you like that," he managed to say.

"Do you like me like this?" she said, emboldened, and flitted towards him. "You like me like this?

“My dear,” she whispered, laying her hands on his shoulders and bringing her warm face close to his. “What about Collective Marriage? What about all pretty people being married together. Do you think...?” His heart was beating violently. “Kiss me, my dear.”

He kissed her and put his arms about her. There was nothing beneath the soft wrap but the slender exciting body. He took her in his arms.

“Take off that *bourgeois* collar of yours,” she said with her hands busy about him. “My dear! Who taught you to kiss?”

“It must come by nature,” he said and kissed again.

“Come! Take off your things. Take off your collar. Why do men wear collars? Quick. So! Oh! Your lovely shining shoulder, so smooth, so firm. What lovely things bodies are! And we hide them. Turn away for a moment. Now! look at me now! Little breasts hardly bigger than yours....”

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THEODORE AS LOVER

1

I am a Man

ON Sunday evening a partially disrobed Theodore sat on the bed in his own bedroom in Hampstead readjusting his mind. He had had two wonderful days. He had stayed with Rachel until late in the evening, and on Sunday, after the midday dinner with his aunts, he had slipped away unobtrusively before tea and spent a long afternoon with her in that little Venusberg she had created for him. He realized now how monstrously clumsy and vague Nature's intimations of sex had been to him, and all the values of art and romance in his world were transposed. A thousand things that had once seemed merely elegant were now saturated with physical significance. In some magic fashion sex had lost all touch of obscenity. It was as if he and his ideas about that sort of thing had been through a cleansing bath. Rachel had so filled his mind with herself and her lithe vitality, throughout those exciting hours, that it was only now in a state of gratified and contented exhaustion that he could apprehend, even in the most general terms, the corner he had turned in life, the change that had happened to him. And even so it was in a phrase she had suggested to him that he put it to himself. "I am a man at last," he said. "I am a man."

That was as far as he got on that Sunday night, and he rolled into bed and slept sweetly and profoundly until he awakened to the shakings of his landlady next morning.

That day also the pride of his new status dominated his mind. He went to the Rowlands School full of understanding. The people passing in the street and particularly the girls and young women were endowed with hitherto unsuspected significance for him. They carried vast potentialities of delight. Social life, he perceived, was in its essence this stupendous joy of sexuality, clothed, disguised and

hidden — but not so hidden as to be invisible to the initiated eye. It was only after some days that his swathings of self-satisfaction wore thin, restlessness crept back and the great areas of his brain which had been thrown out of action for a time recovered their influence.

He was not able to see or communicate with Rachel for some days. She had told him not to write to her and to be exceedingly careful about their adventure. Her brother, she had said, was as jealous of her behaviour "as seventeen aunts.

... I'll write to you."

"Queer how our Orientalism will out," she had said. "He believes in Free Love for himself and everyone else — except his sister. And when *he* has had his fling he will probably go Roman Catholic and reactionary and look for a pure pure adoring virgin to bear him respectable daughters and wear all the jewels he feels like buying. That's race. They are all like that. There are no Liberal Jews, my dear; there are only liberal Jewesses. Our men have got respect for property and propriety ingrained. Melchior for all his Communism is as greedy and wary and timid as a rat. I wonder what he would do if a Social Revolution really did come."

She wrote Theodore one note, a brief scrawl.

When, Oh when, shall we met on the Desert Island again, dear straight and stark, my little savage brother? Ever Yours R.

He carried this about in his pocket for several days and then it got frowsty and he burnt it.

It was nearly a fortnight before he met her again, and then it was at a meeting of the Fabian Nursery and they had no chance of talking alone. It was not at all the sort of meeting he had been brooding upon. Rachel's coolness was amazing. And she was different. She was remote. In some obscure way she offended him. It seemed incredible that the ill-dressed rather voluble girl was the same shockheaded flexible slip of sallow nakedness that had taken possession of his senses. She nodded and smiled and waved a hand to him and then turned away and went on talking vigorously to the people she was with. She did not look at him again.

His imagination had elaborated his memories out of all recognition.

Her self-possession stripped his great experience of its assurance.

He felt there should have been much more intensity about this encounter. He was beginning to desire her greatly again and he wanted some intimation of another meeting. But at the same time he didn't want anyone in the world now to know, to have even a glimpse of what was between them. An excited pride in her had evaporated at the sight of her real self.

As the evening passed and he watched her bent back and her bobbing head, an intense irrational irritation with this visible Rachel took possession of him. He did not feel she was the responsive being he had loved and clasped. He felt that this Rachel was someone else who was coming between him and that creature of desire, that she was denying and preventing the realization of his wishes.

Once he found Melchior Bernstein staring hard at him, and in a sudden panic he looked away. Then in a rage he looked back fiercely and found Bernstein's attention had been diverted. Could he think of something to say to her that she would understand and that would seem harmless to anyone else? Frightfully difficult.

And why didn't she help?

He was still trying to catch her eye as the meeting dispersed. She was going away and he was full of frustration and anger. She had avoided him! She had avoided and bilked him! He discovered Margaret at his elbow.

"Bulpy," she asked, "have you seen Teddy?"

The touch of her hand broke down a barrier that had been maintaining itself for eight or nine days between two great systems of activities in his mind. On the one side of the barrier had been all that intricate and long elaborate complex of memories, fantasies, admirations and desires that centred on Margaret; on the other an intensely new and vivid whirlpool about the secret sensuous Rachel who had revealed herself to him. The older greater system had been pressing against a resistant dam, crying out, as it were, to be heard and brought into relations with the new. The new had defended its preoccupation. Had gone on deafened and unchecked. Now suddenly, with Margaret's sweet face close to his, he knew certainly it was she he loved and desired, that he had been unfaithful to her beyond forgiveness, that she must never know what had happened to him, and that Rachel was, in comparison, a worthless young woman.

Rachel had had lovers before. Rachel had amused herself with a blank weekend with him. What had he been thinking about? Why hadn't he known as much?

He answered clumsily out of a confusion of thoughts. "Teddy! Is he here?"

"He meant to make a speech. He said he must get up and speak here. He had one ready — and he isn't here!" She added reproachfully: "I was sitting two rows behind you and you never turned round."

Theodore's reconstituted mind quickened. He perceived the possibility of a dramatic instant. "Let's look for him," he said, and took her arm and drew her to him, with a confidence he would never have felt a fortnight before. He would, he had resolved, steer her right by the lingering Bernstein group — and hardly notice Rachel.

"I want to talk to you, Margaret. I've got all sorts of things to say to you. Let's go to old Appenrodt's."

"But we've got to find Teddy."

"If Teddy doesn't come I'll see after you."

"But if Teddy doesn't come — I'm anxious about him."

"He forgot. He stayed on working in the lab."

"He doesn't forget. When he says he's coming to anything, he comes. He said he *must* speak to-night. He was bored by being one of the dummy crowd. He wants to be a live wire. He was keen."

"But he hasn't come."

Theodore craned his neck and looked about so as to see Teddy and disregard Rachel pointedly, and he was perhaps unjustifiably aware that the Bulpington of Blup looked tall and handsome beside his pretty companion.

He hoped Teddy would not appear. He wanted to get away with Margaret at once. He had no very clear idea of what he had to say to her, but he was sure immense things were to be said. It had to be something in the nature of a confession and a declaration. It had to be an appeal. He was slipping away into — whatever it was. She could save him. She was his ideal; she was the one pure and lovely thing in life for him. Always he had loved her, since first they met.

A blinding snowstorm of this kind of thing was swirling in his head while in the foreground of his consciousness he steered

Margaret towards the exits and pressed gently and firmly against her disposition to delay. And then — damnation — Teddy!

"I saw a hansom upset at a corner," he explained, still breathless with hurry. "You'd hardly believe it. The horse had bolted and it went right over — sideways. Chap inside put his hand and arm through the side window. I helped him out and bandaged him up. Small artery in the wrist and his hand cut with splinters of glass. Bled like a stuck pig.

No one else about. I took him to the hospital in a four-wheeler. Fuss with cabby about the blood. I managed to arrange his overcoat to save the cushions. Then he wanted to send a message to a woman who was waiting in an hotel. Not quite the job for a messenger boy. Had to do it. See? It's taken all my evening. And I'd almost learnt that speech by heart...."

So the cloudy accumulations of Theodore's mind went undischarged. The confounded accident had made Teddy so loquacious there was no getting away from it. Margaret, Theodore could see, realized there was something in his mind, but Teddy gave them no chances. They parted at the Temple Station and Theodore walked all the way to Hampstead to rearrange his thoughts and clear his mind. Should he write a long letter to Margaret? Or should he make it a great talk?

He tried and rejected one or two drafts for the opening of a letter, explaining himself elaborately to Margaret. Then he began to stage that great talk. "Margaret," he would say, "life has rushed upon me very swiftly. I am a man of strong passions. Mine, like my father's before me, is a sensuous nature." Or perhaps more directly— "Margaret, have you ever realized the life of passionate repression I have been leading?" Or in the narrative style: "Margaret, a very strange thing has happened to me that has revealed to me depths in my being I had never suspected." And so on through a considerable series of gambits. The crowning effect was to be a cry, "I must have love! I am strong, my dear — but I have reached the limit. I must have love." (And then how were they to manage?)

Meanwhile another possible auditor was asking for attention. How was he to act towards Rachel when he met her? Cold scorn for her disregard? Or should he send her a note, very pithy but very precise.

“Never has my heart been yours. You appealed to my senses, not to my spirit.” One for Rachel, with her back to him all the evening and No one else about. I took him to the hospital in a four-wheeler. Fuss with cabby about the blood. I managed to arrange his overcoat to save the cushions. Then he wanted to send a message to a woman who was waiting in an hotel. Not quite the job for a messenger boy. Had do it. See? It’s taken all my evening. And I’d almost learnt that speech by heart....”

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Meanwhile another possible auditor was asking for attention. How was he to act towards Rachel when he met her? Cold scorn for her disregard? Or should he send her a note, very pithy but very precise. “Never has my heart been yours. You appealed to my senses, not to my spirit.” One for Rachel, with her back to him all the evening and pawing at some strange fellow’s sleeve. Well, that was over — finished for ever.

In the passage-hall of his lodging-house he found a blue-grey envelope, addressed in Rachel’s sprawling hand.

He hesitated and opened it with a certain excitement.

Dear little Savage, it began. *It's possible again. He's leaving me alone next Saturday for the week-end — his timid submissive sister slave. All alone — a prey for any bold Savage boy who sees fit to pounce. Mrs. Gibson will be out after four — I'll see to that. If so be — which God forbid! — that you can't come, send off a telegram to me (number* 17*B) after three-thirty,* not before (doubly underlined). *I'll make you tea with my own fair hands and wait upon you as a well-broken sister slave should. I'll* bite you.

N.B. Burn this.

He went. He got there quite punctually at four.

2

But about Margaret?

At this point affairs in Theodore's brain reached a cardinal phase. He had already given up the pursuit of sheer veracity, which indeed he had never undertaken in more than a halfhearted manner. Now he was stifling a conflict between two entirely inconsistent systems of experience. He might have thought mightily, had he had a better training and a better brain, and so have kept his mind still lucid, a single empire. Some day, it may be, human brains will think and act with that much simplicity and power. Theodore anyhow did nothing of the sort. Instead of thinking mightily he took the common line and imagined abundantly. He was able to secrete a sufficient flood of explanatory and reconciling phrases to float himself off the sharp and wounding rocks of perplexity upon which he found himself.

That saving flood poured from two chief sources in his mind. One of these was that convenient fount of excuses, the "artistic temperament"; the other was the ideal of the "man of the world", capable, experienced, wise, rather cynical, reserved, but fundamentally a good fellow. The Bulpington of Blup had long partaken freely of the latter set of characteristics, but this outbreak of temperamental instability was a new adaptation. He now had unprecedentedly powerful impulses, the necessary qualification of his genius. His phases of elation and indulgence would be followed

by moods of remorse and self-reproach. A dark and stormy character in fact, needing understanding and sympathy very sorely. This transposition of inconsistencies and incoherences into a system of fine and large moods necessitated a considerable modification of the values of Rachel and Margaret, but his mind was becoming more and more expert in such modifications.

There had for instance to be a very considerable revision of his memories of his first meeting with Rachel. The initiative had to be transferred, unobtrusively but completely, to the Bulpington of Blup. That great figure, full as ever of the love and appreciation of life, had been caught by a glimpse of the gaminesque charm hidden in the Cockney aggressiveness of the untidy, eager little Jewess. The great young man, so reminiscent of the youthful Goethe, had toyed with her. (He was all for toying with her whenever he got a chance.) Inevitably she had succumbed to him. He had conquered almost without an effort. The affair had been, it continued to be, an aesthetic appreciation of life, a caressing of life; it was as if one stroked a lively kitten. All the time his heart was fixed upon quite another ideal. Slowly under his watchful care, his guiding influence, the personality of Margaret was developing. Her ineluctable personal beauty was but the promise and foreshadowing of the beauty of her soul. Slowly she was growing to understand the high complexities of his nature.

It was like that, it was more or less like that, though at times it was difficult to keep things poised in that position.

There were moments when he was disposed to talk at great length about Rachel to Margaret, to explain and expound and explain, with limelights on his own character from nearly every point of view, but a saving sense of actuality restrained him. It was on the whole better, for a time at least, that Margaret should know nothing at all about this Rachel business.

Rachel, however, in some queer way had scented the role of Margaret in his scheme of things. She betrayed a derisive, not too passionate, jealousy. She called the Broxteds “those two Fabian prigs”, or the “Bourgeois couple”. She said Teddy was the sort of young man who went about repeating to himself everything he knew, for fear he might have forgotten something. She said Margaret

thought over everything she had to say three times before she said it — and then it was too late, so she didn't say it at all. "She's in training for a nonentity," said Rachel. "Like the dumb parrot, she thinks the more."

And then bitterly: "She just goes about cowing at people with those eyes of hers — and they fall to it.

"Oh, men are fools!" said Rachel. "She's just an unawakened kid. She can't be so very much younger than I am. Anyhow, than I *was* — when I began. And there she is!

"Darling," she asked sharply, "are you in love with Margaret?"

Was it the Bulpington of Blup or was it Theodore who answered, "No"?

That "No" was a little difficult to explain away when his memories were under revision. One must protect the reputation of one woman from the jealousy of another. The man of the world knows that. Moreover *was* he in love with Margaret? Not if this was love. Certainly not as Rachel understood it. And if he had not said no, then Rachel would have gone on talking and talking and talking about Margaret — unendurably. As it was she talked about her ever so much too much.

And when Rachel and Theodore were together — well, you could hardly call it "toying" on his part or submission on hers. She put the values askew in a way that was immediately agreeable but subsequently exasperating. She was cast for a role of reverence in Theodore's private story, but her treatment of him was anything but reverent. "Gusto" described it better. Her practical knowledge of the means and methods of illicit love was humiliatingly greater than his. When the absences of her brother became inconveniently infrequent, she told Theodore exactly where to get an accommodating room in Soho, and how much to pay for it, and who to tip and what to say when it was engaged. At times she guided him to his "toying" like a rather irritable young aunt taking a nephew out for a day's treat — until they were alone together.

Yet also she said some very pleasing and gratifying things.

She said his face was endlessly interesting and that was very satisfactory. She said there was more interest in *any* Gentile face than there was in any Jew's. She launched upon a memorable dissertation

on Jewish males.

"We know all about them. They're standardized. They are the results of mass production. Moses was the first Henry Ford. All Jews are brethren. For a Jew to make love to a Jewess is incest. He ought to be prosecuted. Generation after generation, cousins and cousins and cousins breeding in and in, the same old patterns, the eternal types. But you Gentiles mix the world. What are *you*? Kelt-Iberian, dark stuff, with a stiffening of Anglo-Saxon, and who knows what else? One thing behind the other, mixed up with the other, pushing the other aside and being pushed aside. One's never sure how you are thinking or what you will do. You can surprise yourselves. No Jew ever does that. He is predestinate. He knows, all along."

She meditated profoundly, sitting up in the bed, brown and slender and shapely with her rather too large, very intelligent face, her fuzzy bush of hair and her long big hands upon her knees. "He knows," she repeated, "all along."

"We know," she tried.

And then she fell foul of Margaret again.

Whether he liked it or not Theodore had to lie beside his mistress and listen. She had forgotten him. He had served his purpose. It was as if that dark cynical man of the world, the Bulpington of Blup, was not there. Indeed he was not there. He knew he would have to put on his clothes and go out of this place, get beyond sight and sound of Rachel and walk about for quite a long time before he could discover and reconstitute himself in any comfort and dignity again.

Rachel pursued her meditation.

"These still women!" she said. "Do they ever come alive? She isn't alive yet. She hasn't been awakened. Will she ever awaken?

"Have you ever kissed Margaret?" she asked abruptly.

"Oh, confound that!" cried Theodore defensively.

"There speaks the Gentile — the gentlemanly Gentile. Of course you've kissed her. My dear, *can* that girl kiss?"

"Why are you fretting about Margaret?"

"Because at the moment, *for* the moment, she happens to be the most interesting thing in my world."

She brooded, her hands on her knees and her chin on her hands.

"Perhaps it is only a difference in phase. They grow up later. They

get old later. They can afford to wait. But we are in a hurry. We are a greedy, pushing, hurrying race. We have no pride. Lord! I'm sick of this. I'm going to get up and dress."

She would make no arrangement to meet again. "If I don't feel like it, why should I?"

"Rachel; tell me something. Is there anyone else?"

"That, my little boy friend, is *my* affair."

They dressed in silence.

"Silly little Gentile," she said and ran her long fingers through the hair he had just brushed and combed. "I'm going out from this place first. Good-bye."

3

Inexplicable Heart-ache This Rachel business must end. He must end it as gently as possible for her. She was a great mistake, a lapse, a passing mood. Never should he have stooped to her. His artistic temperament, a certain excessive generosity of response, had betrayed him. (Among the suppressions that muttered down below was the clear intimation that Rachel was as capable of dropping this affair as she had been of beginning it. That already there was a wandering of her attention. She might be dropping it now.) He must end the liaison gently but firmly. — if only because it distracted him from his proper role of Margaret's lover.

For Margaret was his one true love. This affair with Rachel merely emphasized that.

As he wandered homeward through Soho, recovering his personality from its obliteration by Rachel, his mind fell again into a circle of projects and possibilities that was already established as a beaten track in his mind. Should he tell of this affair to Margaret — make a declaration? Ought they not to be lovers now? (Now that he knew so much more about the ways of life — and the facilities of Soho.) And how was he to begin about it? And suppose Rachel with that loose tongue of hers told things first? Even hinted things? It would ill become the Bulpington of Blup to be caught out in such a deception....

One night as he sat at his supper thinking, as he did interminably, among these difficulties something deeper or something remoter made a brief irruption among his complexities.

Suddenly his mind was irradiated by pain, pain of the soul and a sense of irrecoverable loss. Something deep and beautiful he felt had shone upon his life, had belonged to his life, and he had lost it or been robbed of it or anyhow it had gone out of his life for evermore. He knew certainly it had gone for evermore. This desolation was so real, this anguish was so acute, he could not remain indoors. He set out, although it was past ten, and went for a long walk over Hampstead Heath to Highgate and thence on, scarcely heeding whither he went, until he found himself in an ill-lit villadom, close to the clumsy masses of the Alexandra Palace on Muswell Hill.

Then, very weary and belated, but a little easier in his heart, he turned homeward. Never before, he reflected, had he felt heart-ache. This was real heart-ache and nothing else. He became more and more conscious of the distinction of his mood and also of the way in which a moon, shining intermittently through drifting dark cloud rags, harmonized with its distress.

And as he realized in the pale light of this cosmic sympathy how greatly he was suffering, he ceased by swift degrees to suffer. He became aware of the dignity of his stresses. His painful mental incompatibilities were transfigured into a noble, if rather ill-defined, sorrow.

The embryonic individual, biologists say, recapitulates the history of the race. The adolescent educated mind certainly reproduces phases in our intellectual evolution. Theodore had had his Wordsworthian moment. He was a potential Werther. He was being Byronic.

4

Margaret's Point of View Now that Theodore was sure that he loved Margaret simply and exclusively, the tenor of his summer holidays became reasonably plain. He had to frequent her, cultivate her and "awaken" her. So from the day of her return to Blayport he devoted himself to this enterprise. His surplus moments went to tennis,

writing, sketching scenery and drawing imaginary scenes and figures, and in reading the lives of artists, authors and personalities generally and considering how far he resembled them. He had also discovered the novels of Meredith, Conrad and Hardy and, a little belatedly, ten years behind the times, the writings of Richard Le Gallienne which were squeezed into a shelf beside Raymond's set of the *Yellow Book.* But Margaret was the centre of his scheme of things. If he preened it with Meredith, Margaret was his magic lady; if he wandered the world with Conrad, Margaret was his guiding star.

He found his access to her greatly facilitated by the return of one of the Parkinson cousins from Belgium, after three years of convent education there. She was a pale, unobtrusively wicked girl with very fine dark eyes, and her reaction from the precepts and disciplines of the nuns had given her a breadth and brutality of outlook, invigorated by a French phraseology no nun could have taught her, that appealed very strongly to the essential realist in Teddy. Teddy, who had hitherto despised girls outside his own family and exacted a fairly continuous companionship from his sister, now developed a sustained disposition for laughter, solitude and obscurity with this Ethel Parkinson, and so Theodore became a convenient means for disengaging Margaret.

But in spite of the considerable amount of instruction Theodore had had from Rachel, or it may be because of the considerable amount of instruction he had had from Rachel, he found he made little headway with Margaret. Was Kipling right about Judy O Grady and the Colonel's lady being "sisters under their skins"? Theodore's experience was against it.

She was difficult to bring to endearments and caresses. She kissed him and pressed her cheek against his very shyly once or twice. But this seemed to be the limit set to her physical awakening. She was a clothed figure for him. She remained a clothed figure. Even in a bathing wrap she was clothed and virginal. She had some impalpable quality that kept Theodore shy of physical familiarities. But why? he would ask himself. "*Why*?"

They wandered about together, bathed, played tennis and chatted but for a long time there was no nearer approach to each other.

Theodore would introduce small familiarities of expression and phrasing in their talk; he would call himself her lover, do little acts of service and obedience; but none of these things were more than detached and inconsecutive moments of brightness, flowers by the wayside. It was Margaret at last who started a definite conversation.

They were basking on the low cliff near the Laboratory and smoking cigarettes. They had tired themselves with tennis.

Margaret spoke with the casualness of long premeditation. “Bulpy,” she said, “why don’t you and I talk more?”

“But we’re always talking!”

“About nothing.”

“About each other. What else is there to talk about?”

“The whole world.”

He rolled over on to his chest and regarded her. “You’re *lovely*,” he said.

“No,” she said, sticking to her opening. “I want to talk about the world. What is it up to? What are we up to in it? There might not be a world for all you seem to care. You talk in London about all sorts of things. Why don’t you here? Aren’t I good enough to talk to?”

“We understand each other without arguing about it,”

“No,” she stuck to it, “w e don’t understand each other, I don’t want arguments but I want to turn over my ideas, Teddy used to talk and argue with me but he doesn’t do that so much now. We’re too much alike, I suppose. You’re different. You see things from a different point of view — and in a different way. Sometimes I like that and sometimes it disturbs me. Your mind jumps about. You make me feel that Teddy and I are — heavy-going. But Teddy says you are always jumping away from things. Do you jump away from things?”

“You *do* take things that are said rather seriously at times, I think,” considered Theodore. “After all one talks with a pinch of salt.”

“Sense of humour,” she said. “It seems we two haven’t got it. We’re two Prigs.”

“But, Margaret!”

“Oh, *we* know. We’ve had that out together. We want to understand things. We both want that. We want to get things clear.

We take ourselves seriously. That's what you call being a Prig. No, no. I ask you plainly, Theodore. You think we are Prigs?"

"You a Prig, Margaret!"

"Yes, me a Prig and Teddy a Prig. I'm ready to say it even if you don't. We're not clever enough for the pinch of salt. Everything *we've* got has to go into the thinking. Better do it clumsily, than not do it at all — like Freddy Francolin."

"Oh, he's a fool," said Theodore, "anyhow."

"Not such a fool," said Margaret. "Except that he remains a dumb animal. Because he's so afraid of being a Prig."

It offended Theodore's jealousy slightly that she had even that much respect for Francolin.

"Now look here, Bulpy," she said, "you and I have got to talk. Subject one, what is the world up to and what are we going to do about it?"

"Go on," said Theodore resignedly.

"About this world..."

She assembled her matter.

"Here's Father. Compare his ideas and yours — whatever yours may be. He *must* know a lot. And he says the whole world, all mankind, everybody, is living in a Fool's Paradise. He says that we are drifting towards a world choked with population. Soon there will be hungry crowds everywhere. We shan't be able to grow food for them all, because the phosphorus will give out. And war is bound to come. A great war. Because of all these armaments. And if there is another war in Europe it will destroy civilization. Well — if that is so, then we've got to live in this world while it is being destroyed. Our generation has to. What will it be like when civilization is destroyed? Oughtn't we to be doing something about it?"

"There's the Social Revolution, Margaret dear, and all that," said Theodore in a casual tone, smiling and playing with a stalk of sea holly.

"Teddy doesn't seem to think that's the remedy."

"Teddy has no imagination," said Theodore.

"But you have. And you say you are an Ultra-Communist. *You* imagine it. Tell me about this Social Revolution."

"Well, we shall all live more freely," said Theodore, seeing an

opening. “We shan’t live these lives of *I mustn’t* and *I dare not* that we live to-day. We shall be free and frank and happy.”

But Margaret was going on with her own thoughts and didn’t even see how she shut the door upon him. She was struggling with a great idea that had come to her.

“Bulpy, has *all* the world and *everybody* been wrong always up to now? Is it possible to think that? All the saints and sages and wise men? All the kings and statesmen? I was thinking about that the other night and I couldn’t go to sleep; it worried my mind. People talk about the Wisdom of the Ages. Has there never been any Wisdom of the Ages? Is that an exploded idea?”

“Oh!” cried Theodore. “Yes. Come! The prophets and the philosophers. Heritage of the past. But the crowd has been foolish.”

“But why didn’t they teach the crowd or tell the crowd or find out how to manage the crowd and prevent things getting as they are?”

“There have been attempts. In Judaea and elsewhere.”

“They were wise, you mean, but not wise enough?”

“It’s a complex world,” said Theodore.

“And they were not wise and strong enough for it. They couldn’t have been or else the world would be all right by now. See, Bulpy? That’s my point. Were all those great and good men of the past, just poor half-wise, not-strong-enough people, dressed up by history to impress us?

“No. I want an answer to this. It’s your job to tell me if we are going to be loving friends. Has all this progress — you know, civilization and history — has it just been an accident, just a run of luck? I want to know what *you* say to that. Is it true that men, who have made art and science, made beautiful music, beautiful pictures, those glorious things; is it true that they are only a bigger, more complicated clever sort of animal, no more important really than flies or bees? Isn’t that important?”

She paused and Theodore smiled at her charming seriousness.

“Yes, but what do you think about it, Bulpy? Do you believe this world, which is so lovely at times, came together by chance? Is it just going on by chance? We ought to have an answer to that. We’re not rabbits. We ought to know. Where *are* we? And when I ask you these questions, these immensely important questions, you turn an

unfriendly eye on me, and call me a Prig for my pains!”

“Margaret!” said Theodore, and sat up beside her.

He had no use for her questions. Regarded as questions he found them purely boring.

“It’s such a *lovely* day,” he said. “Look at the sunshine on the sea. Those level patches of blue-green and green-blue, sapphire, emerald, ultramarine. Shade after shade. Are they nothing to you?”

She looked. She considered the sea and his words for a second or so.

“And that’s your answer to all my problems!”

“A very good answer,” said Theodore.

“You sit here and pester your mind,” he went on; “and you are the loveliest thing I have ever known in the world. I believe you are the loveliest thing that has ever been in the world. You are made for love from top to toe. And you’ve got all the values of life wrong. You want to start arguments of how the world began and what things are *for*. Margaret, the world is for you.... I’m in love with you. And you could be in love with me. I *know* you could be in love with me.” She turned to him with a faint smile. “Is that any reason why we shouldn’t talk about things in general?”

He put his hand on hers caressingly. “Margaret, do you know *nothing* of love?”

She withdrew her hand and interlocked her fingers in front of her knees.

“Are you making love to me?”

“What else?”

“Well, I wish you wouldn’t.”

“I can’t help it.”

“It takes two to make love, Bulpy.”

“Evidently.’

“Well, it’s like this. Let’s be frank about this love business. Can’t we be? I’m very fond of you, but I don’t want to begin love-making yet. I want to think a bit first. I want to know more. Can’t we go on being friendly?”

“You are afraid of love?”

“I wonder if I am. Perhaps I am.”

“But what is there to be afraid of? You don’t think...? You’re not

afraid — of consequences?”

He scrutinized her thoughtful profile. She did not answer him at once and he was embarrassed to feel that his face was suddenly red. Why had she this unconscious power to make him ashamed?

“Bulpy,” she said, and stopped.

“Yes?” Rather hoarsely.

She inclined her head a little towards him. The soft clear voice with just the faintest shimmer of a lisp in it went on with its slow careful speech. “I wonder how ignorant or how innocent you think me. About love.... You think perhaps I have read a few plays and romances.... You don’t realize what a biologist’s daughter — a biologist of liberal views — knows as a matter of course about these things.

I wonder—” She was being rational and frank to the best of her ability. “Perhaps I know as much — about all that — as you do.”

Well, there was Rachel. But he couldn’t explain about that all at once. What should he say? He felt the control of the conversation was slipping from him. “I’m not talking of knowledge,” he said with a toss of the head that released his tell-tale eyes from her scrutiny; “I’m talking of love.”

“You’re talking of love,” she said, and turned her face again to the sea and seemed to lose herself in her own thoughts. Her interlocked fingers tightened.

His thoughts leapt to a desperate adventure. “We could marry.”

“Oh, marriage is absurd for people as young as we are.”

“But love isn’t. Love isn’t. It’s as natural at our age as living. It *is* living. We aren’t alive without it.”

“I don’t want to begin living in that way yet,” she said. “If it *is* living. I love you, Bulpy — truly — but perhaps I don’t love you in that way. Yet — anyhow. And I am afraid.”

“But if I convince you—”

“Bulpy, I know all about that. I can assure you I know what you mean. I know exactly what is in your mind and what you are asking. I’m a *modern* young woman. Advanced and all that. It isn’t *that* I am thinking of at all. It’s — I’ve a feeling — if once that begins it might get hold of me and swallow me up and end me.”

“But, my dear, it’s a release.”

She shook her head.

"Have you no imagination, no desires?"

She made no answer. He repeated his question.

This time it was her cheek that glowed. She kept her face rigidly in profile. Her voice faded a little.

"Bulpy, do you remember kissing me at that New Year's Party? Well!... But afterwards something in me said, 'This is too lovely — or it's too important to begin in a hurry.'"

"And so I have to wait."

She seemed to take counsel with the horizon for a time. He felt a little thrill of impatience at her deliberation.

"Have you waited?" she asked slowly and regarded him.

He looked in her candid eyes for a moment on the brink of a downright lie. But there was a penetrating intelligence there. "*Hell!*" he said and rolled over away from her. "How could I help it? My blood is — blood."

He hid his face between his hands.

This time the pause was very long. Then she patted his shoulder. "Poor old Bulpy. I'm bothering you. But — Is it *my* fault?"

"Dear old Bulpy!" he repeated angrily and jerked away from her hand. "You don't understand. You don't understand what passion is. You're inanimate. Unawakened! Cold! Oh, *Margaret*!" He turned upon her.

He experienced an extraordinary wave of emotion. He felt his face distorted. Then real tears came. Her face reflected his distress.

He was pleased and excited to find that he could weep with passion. He had never wept with passion before. Could she resist that? He implored in a great voice, a kind of mooing roar. "*Give* yourself to me, Margaret. Give yourself now. Give yourself and save me from what I am...."

For an immense long moment she made no reply. She stared away from him out to sea. No longer tearful, he scrutinized her with hope, a doubtful hope, in his eyes.

"No," she said and repeated, "No."

"Not yet, you mean."

"No," swiftly. "*No.*"

"Why?"

“I don’t know why, but — No. I can’t. I couldn’t. It is impossible. It’s now that you ask me that I see how impossible it is.”

She said no more. A long silence followed.

So that was all. He felt an irrational spasm of hate which he controlled.

“As you will, Margaret,” he said.

“As you will, Margaret,” she repeated, imitating his intonation. “Now why have you taken *that* turn? Am I talking to one man or two? Aren’t we friends? Haven’t we a sort of love anyhow for one another? A lot of love. I love you — I know I love you very much. But because I don’t leap into your arms, desire for desire, when *you* wish it — suddenly you hate me. Yes, yes — but I *know* — suddenly you hate me. You vanish and someone else comes in your place. Where *are* you, Bulpy? Where are you? What are you thinking of? How are you thinking? I’m to be Number Two, or is it Number Three perhaps?”

“I was a fool to tell you that.”

“Is one a fool to tell the truth? It’s hard sometimes, but I’ve been sort of trained to it. And also you couldn’t help yourself. I guessed. I have a way of guessing things about you. Sometimes I wonder, do you even tell the truth to yourself, Bulpy?”

“*Bulpy*!” he cried. “For God’s sake stop calling me *Bulpy*!”

It was, she realized, a stupid name for grave occasions.

“Well — *Theodore.* Listen, Theodore. I love you. I do love you. I love your funny hair and your sprawling limbs and your sprawling mind. You’re a dear, dear — Theodore.

And yet more than ever, just now anyhow, I don’t want —

How could I want? Did I make this situation? Theodore, why don’t you look facts in the face?”

She stopped short at that interrogation. She was within reach of his arm and for all the good she was to his desires she might have been in some other dimension of space.

He sat wanting to reply to her and having no reply to make. For what reply was there to make? Anger is our natural way out of perplexities. He was sufficed with animal fury at her irresponsiveness. “Oh!” he said with a note of infinite disgust. He got up abruptly and without a word of explanation began to walk away

from her.

"That's that," he said to the universe.

She watched his receding back in amazement. Never had anything quite so unexpected happened to her.

She felt that if she got up to follow him she was lost to herself for ever, but in some strange fashion her heart went out to him. There was something profoundly touching in his distress....

But Theodore found nothing touching in Margaret's point of view.

"Look facts in the face indeed!" said Theodore. "High time I did look facts in the face.... My idealism. It's made a fool of me."

5

Sacred and Profane Love Theodore found his way back to Rachel. If nothing else had guided him back his elementary instincts would have taken him.

After that definitive talk with Margaret he avoided her as much as he could, and in London after the vacation he would not see her for weeks together. He was full of resentment against her for her refusal to play her proper part in his drama. She was afraid, he insisted, she was a prig, she was cold and under-vitalized. The editor of his unconscious self edited his talk with her out of all recognition; left nothing at last but the humiliation of her refusal. Deep in his being that great pain that had come to him before had returned and reverberated. But for all practical ends he kept it out of his consciousness by his comings and goings with Rachel.

About Rachel he wove a web of interpretation so wilful and dense that even her increasing disposition to be frank with him could not break it. She was two years older than her brother, he discovered, and Melchior was nearly three years older than Theodore, but he managed to disregard this disparity of age. She had had other lovers before him. She did not disguise it. He felt in his bones, but he would not recognize in his mind, that even now he was not her chief preoccupation. Her caresses had lost their first enthusiasm; they had become habitual; they were yielded under some compulsion of her

jarring nerves and she would not even pose as his adorer. She treated him as her junior, she talked down to him with a humorous pleasantry. Even her jealous detraction of the Broxteds had sunk to an occasional rare allusion. She would give him no sign of herself for two or three weeks at a time. What occupied her then he did not know. He shut his eyes to these things; he overlooked and he forgot. At any rate she gave him what Margaret refused.

The romantic interpreter in his mind explained that her passion for him was greater than she showed, that she concealed its intensity under a brusque familiarity lest it would flare up devastatingly. So fact was made tolerable and he got through the early months of winter in London in a state of reasonable self-satisfaction. But ever and again his consolations and reassurances would creak painfully. His bed of roses became an extremely prosaic and jaded bed in a mean-looking room, and his slender yellow-skinned shockheaded fellow sinner a reluctant sensualist full of some hidden trouble that obliged her to make war on all illusion.

Her values were wrong. He had to face that at least. They were all wrong.

In his rehearsals of their meetings the Bulpington of Blup could be a very charming and delightful lover very much after the Le Gallienne manner. In a hundred graceful talks that never reached Rachel's ears she was fascinated by his brightly indelicate wit and inventions. But when they were together it was she who did most of the talking.

She seemed always gnawing at the riddle of her own existence. She had still to find a way out from the conflict of her motives. Youth and adolescence had taken her by surprise and now the remarkable consequences were dawning upon her.

"You think you love me, my dear, but you don't. And you know you don't." She lay on heir back and surveyed her foot in the air and tried how far she could separate her toes.

"Should I be here—"

"*Rather,*" said Rachel. "But why humbug about it?

"Every time," she said, "a woman takes a fresh lover, the thing gets cheaper.... For *her.*"

This was a repulsive thing to say and Theodore had nothing ready

by way of a response.

"Never eat anything raw," said Rachel. "That's my advice to young women."

"But we had a good lunch!" Theodore was irritated. They had lunched some streets away in Soho, and he had been host and had shown himself, he felt, very experienced and competent.

"Raw, my dear, was used symbolically. The raw things of life are lust and hunger and fear and so forth. Cook 'em. Dress 'em up."

Now that sounded like something he had heard before. But his mind had developed a habit of getting out of the way when Rachel talked. It behaved like a normally active young dog which goes under the table when some particular person is about. Perhaps because it was afraid something might be thrown at it.

Rachel proceeded to explain. "You are hungry, suppose. You dress a dinner. Your appetite is willing to wait. If you are very hungry, you scramble it together. If you are dead famished you eat the stuff raw. See? Love! If you have time for it. But has everyone time for it? It doesn't always arrive. You pick on somebody and find you have guessed wrong. Is it worth while to wait when lust drives? It won't let you. Why call it love, my dear. We Communists don't. I thought you were an Ultra-Communist."

"I am," said Theodore.

"Is this, for instance, love?"

"It's Pagan love," said Theodore. "The bravest and the best. The straightforward thing. Love of the body. Love of life."

He recalled his father's rolling voice. "Cholly lust," he said, with that half-laugh of appreciation he remembered so well. "Cholly desire."

And then by an afterthought he substantiated his words by a kiss and a caress. But Rachel's response to his caress was perfunctory. She wanted to go on with her thinking.

"Pagan and Christian. Christian and Pagan. That's a silly opposition. It's Victorian. I believe the Pagans were as respectable as anybody, really. Talked scandal. Were shocked at things. It was the Christians whom the Pagans called a loose lot, them and their love feasts. Wrong word, I tell you. Pagan won't do."

"Greek."

“Greek? I wonder.” But she did not wonder for three seconds. “That’s another silly opposition: Greek and Hebrew! You never met a Gentile woman as Greek as I am. My dear, have you ever seen copies of a picture called Sacred and Profane Love? Madame Sacred is a lovely woman, all dressed up and protected, and Madame Profane has no clothes. Like me now. Well, that’s what I’m after. I suppose a man might love one woman in her clothes and another out of them.”

“That picture isn’t properly named,” said Theodore. “Nobody knows what name Titian gave it. If he gave it a name. The French call it the Fountain of Love or some such title.”

“That’s nonsense,” said Rachel. “It’s a contrast of two sorts of love. Sacred and Profane. I don’t care who called it that first. It’s the right name. We can’t go on haggling about words for ever. You know what I mean and that’s enough. Sacred, Platonic, Christian, decent; it’s all the same.”

Theodore remembered something that Raymond had once pointed out in the photogravure of Titian’s masterpiece. He brought it out now before he saw all its possible applications.

“The queer thing about that picture is this,” he said. “I don’t think people notice it. The two women are really one and the same woman. They are exactly the same.”

She twisted round sideways to look at him between her elbows, with her hands behind her head.

“But in your case, my dear, it isn’t the same woman, is it?”

“I love no other woman,” he said stoutly.

“I know better. Margaret is your Sacred Love. Why humbug about it? What need is there? Perhaps I have a Sacred Love too. A fully clad gentleman. Who never comes unclad. Why not be honest? Look facts in the face.”

She put a hand on his mouth and stopped his protest.

“Don’t splutter. I know you. When we come here I think of you as well as myself. I’m amused. I like you. But you — you don’t think of me. You try to forget me even when I am in your arms. It’s an imaginary woman you want. I don’t blame you. It’s a fair game you play. For you don’t even think either of the real woman you hold or of the real self that holds her. You are being then, oh, a tremendous

person. Love prince and love princess."

"Well, all lovers who really desire each other *are* princes and princesses," said Theodore.

"That's all very well. But afterwards? When she puts on her clothes, is she still Love? Become Sacred, exalted, divine? Or does she vanish? When he puts on — when he puts off his clothes — would he become Love anyhow? Well, never mind about *Him.* How would you like to have it? *She* puts on her clothes and she is Sacred and still yours; and you, you belong to her in daylight and darkness. A perfect, complete, lifelong love. You go about together. You work together. You help him and serve him. *Her,* I should say. Is that how it ought to be? But *your* Sacred Love won't or can't take off her clothes, and as for mine, *he's* gone beyond whooping — and so here we are. Something spoilt for both of us. I didn't wait. Long ago, long before your time, before I was as old as Margaret, I didn't wait. You couldn't wait. (How ready you were!) Or is it all a delusion about that lovely lady with the two aspects? Is *this* all there is to it? Such a lot of people are coming to that. The only love is love without clothes. The rest is gammon. But you won't face that fact for a long time yet, although you lie here with me."

"It isn't quite like that," said Theodore.

"That is just all you can say about it at present. Eh? But in a day or so, or a few days, you will have got it explained again. You're so wonderful at explaining yourself. I shall be put in my place again, a lapse, a caprice. All the same, darling, whenever I want you, I guess you'll come to my call. That, my dear, is *fact.*"

She looked at her wrist-watch.

"I've talked and talked and it's a quarter to four. At any rate look your watch in the face! See. I ought to be back at the flat by five. Melchior, in a fit of brotherly affection, is taking me out. One more hour of Profanity, and then we get up and dress."

6

Monkey House When he was not actually desiring or making love to her, Theodore found he disliked Rachel Bernstein more and more. Her regardlessness of him when she talked, her incapacity to

recognize the essential nobility of his values, aroused and sustained his resentment. She made him feel acutely her junior. And she displayed an increasing disposition to call upon him as an escort and companion for all sorts of little raids and expeditions that she desired. She did not wait for him to think of excursions for her and to suggest them as treats that she could accept gracefully. She demanded them whenever they came into her head and she insisted upon paying half or more of the expenses — all indeed if he had no money, rather than not go. It was extremely difficult to feel like the Bulpington of Blup in such conditions.

They went to Kew Gardens to see the rhododendra, and several times to Richmond Park and once to Hampton Court, and then they made a visit to the Zoo.

The Zoo brought out the liveliest side of Rachel's mind. She became vividly curious about the loves of the animals. She wanted to know how snakes made love, and fishes. She conceived a great horror of how a passionate elephant might behave. The rhinoceros carried her into regions of impure burlesque. She considered the seal was rather an attractive dear. Then she thought aloud about the affections of the larger carnivores. "If I were Circe, dearest, I think I should change you into a nice round-headed golden-brown jaguar with dark spots."

"I should have claws and teeth," said Theodore.

"So should I. And a snarl. You don't think I should remain a poor defenceless Cockney girl if I could wear my own fur.

"Pity we cannot change ourselves into all sorts of animals," she said. "It would be so interesting. Exciting and interesting."

She became more and more like an improper, ill-dressed, chattering but extremely sympathetic Venus in mufti making a surprise tour of the animal world to pick up new ideas for her services.

But the Monkey House was too much for her. In those days Dr. Chalmers Mitchell was only in the beginning of his reign, and the monkeys were still for the most part in one great building. Many of them were herded by the dozen in big cages, rather overheated and running with big brown prosperous cockroaches. There they were

incessantly plied by friendly and curious visitors with nuts, dates, sweets and fruit. Under these stimulating circumstances the impulsive and unseasonable amorousness of the Primates was wont to manifest itself magnificently and scandalously.

These manifestations restored Rachel to a shocked humanity.

"Come away, my dear. These are too like all of us. Come away. Let us get some tea over there by the Parrots. Do parrots indulge in this love business? No signs of any of these being in love. They are sexually calm, unless those screams are a result of sexual repression. My dear, there is too much sex in the world. There ought not to be such things as Zoological Gardens."

"But most animals," said Theodore, "only make love in the breeding season."

"But we — and our little brown cousins in there — know not times nor seasons. Why are we so intemperate? Is it a mark of our higher nature? It's quite true, what you say. Leopards are decent and respectable almost always. Most animals are. For eleven months out of twelve they are sexless. Then they rut and get it over. What a Being is Man! Have you read Freud at all, darling? You ought to. He brings it home to one. All the world's a bed and all the men and women in it fumbling lovers. And each one in his time plays many parts, his acts being Seven Ages. First the infant, mewling and puking in his nurse's arms, already at it, developing the most remarkable complexes about his Father and Mother, then the schoolboy creeping with shining morning face, his mind full of improper and inaccurate knowledge, unwillingly to school. Then you. Yes — you. The actual lover. And then the Father of a family, bearded like the pard. And so on."

There was nothing for it but to be tremendously amused. He leant back and laughed, manifesting his enjoyment. Then seriously: "There are just a few things you forget, Rachel. There's Art, Science, Literature, Statesmanship, Religion. There's Invention and Discovery."

"Analyse them," said Rachel, putting her spoon into her hot tea with thoughtful deliberation, "analyse them. Sex comes in everywhere."

"It comes *in*" said Theodore, "yes. They are all men and women.

But it isn't everything; it isn't even most of what they do."

"That is all *you* see," said Rachel. "You've got to read some of this new psycho-analysis, my innocent lamb. And open your eyes. You talk of business, manufactures, trade, for instance. Why do men work at things like that? To get money. Why do they want money? To get women. To get power over women. To be masters in their own houses. What's money? Nothing but power over other people. Power to order them about. Make them submit. And who can submit like a woman? What's politics? Power to control business and industry. Control for what? Sex, sex, sex, I tell you."

"Damn!" yelped Theodore in pain and snatched back his arm.

She had taken the spoon out of her hot tea and pressed it affectionately but firmly on his hand.

"You'll tell me next that burning my hand like that is sex," said Theodore, grinning belatedly.

"Of course it is. You read Freud."

"You're obsessed," countered Theodore.

"All the world is. That's his great discovery."

"But there's your Communism!" said Theodore. "Our Communism. Our great movement for social justice. That's something bigger than sex."

"Just a struggle to get power out of the hands of the Capitalist and release our sexual lives."

"Art."

"Can any painter keep off a nude?"

"Landscape."

"Have you ever been in a lovely place without wanting a lover there? I never have. What's fiction, drama, music, but sex? Adventures of sex. Music — excitation. All art depends upon rhythm. Wagner's stuff is open and unabashed orgies. Beethoven, you say? Read old Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata.* Music is the food of love, says Shakespeare. Therefore, play on."

Rachel, after this utterance, drank her tea noisily and her dark eyes under her black brows surveyed Theodore over the edge of her cup.

"You're a great humorist," said Theodore, and had an idea. "Wait! — there's mathematics."

“That’s a point to you, sweetheart. I don’t know. I suspect mathematicians. But just for the moment I’ve got no positive evidence. Rhythm?”

“And religion.”

“Now you *have* put your foot in it. I thought you’d come to that. In the whole world there is nothing so sexual as religion. Have you never seen anything of Hindu religious art? Don’t you understand the meaning of the first sacrifice of every Semitic male?”

“No,” said Theodore, with confidence. “That’s wrong. The basis of most religions is a solar myth. Horus in Egypt was the sun.”

“Connected with the harvest, dear?”

“Connected with the harvest.”

“With spring-time and seed-time, with the fertilization of the fields, with begetting and increase. Why don’t you look facts in the face? I tell you we live in a Monkey’s Cage and you sit there and argue. When you get rid of plain sex and accessory sex, sublimated sex and perverted sex, you get rid of human life.

“You have got rid of life altogether,” she added and swept her hand and a chocolate eclair in a gesture that included the entire Zoological Gardens, the whole animal world.

A timely parrot shrieked as if in protest and made Theodore laugh. “That parrot knows better. Have it as you will.”

“Not *my* will. Things are so. I wish they were not. I wish I was free of this hunger of the body. How it torments me at times! How it humiliates me!”

She lapsed into a brief meditation. Her face looked suddenly old and experienced.

“Sooner or later I will have a baby,” she reflected. “But not by you, sweet innocent. Don’t be alarmed about that. I am beginning to feel bored by playing about with my viscera. Nervous fatigue? Or something more fundamental. If this thing won’t let me alone, I’ll go right through with it. Yes, I will get a suitable parent and have a baby. As soon as I am thirty and get control of my money. But don’t look anxious. I shan’t be thirty for years and years yet. And I may go on liking you for quite a long time.... I suppose it will hurt like hell.”

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THEODORE AND DEATH

1

Raymond Dead

BUT now while the sexual ferment and its chance opportunities were still producing the most complex inconsistencies and the most elaborate readjustments of his ideas, a new system of thought was to become active in Theodore's brain. He was to be brought up against the fact of death.

Hitherto throughout his life his attention had been instinctively averted from that primary reality. The mind like the body turns tail to death whenever it can manage to do so and goes off headlong. Memento Mori can stalk it and dun it for years before it is brought to bay. But the Bulpington of Blup, in the midst of the miracle of his unfolding artistic and literary endowments, with his social conscience well baffled and averted, and his heart poised romantically — if at times a little uncertainly — between a Sacred and a Profane Love, was unexpectedly stricken, as if by an arrow, with the thought that he must die.

One day in November, while Clorinda was in London, Raymond caught cold. He felt feverish and uncomfortable in the house and he attempted to throw off his discomfort by taking one of those long wolf-stride walks of his. At first the sun was shining, but sea-fogs came inland as if to pursue him. As he went up the hills they came after him. They wrapped about him until all the foreground, the hedges and the bushes, became like inky forms on blotting-paper, and all the rest of the scenery, land, sky and sea, was drowned and lost in milky white. He could not tell whether he was going uphill or whether he was going down. The air chilled him and suffocated him. He was cold and yet he sweated. On he pressed, unable to decide to turn back, driven by the desire to escape from his discordant self. He felt so ill at last that in a wood he had to sit down on a felled tree and

shiver and cough. Afterwards he begged a lift from a carter and so reached Papport Junction, whence he got a station fly home. He went to bed at once, but with only a tepid hot-water bottle because the servant was under notice, and Clorinda returned the next day to find him with a temperature of a hundred and two, breathing painfully and very hollow-cheeked and brighteyed. His cold had gone to his lungs. He wheezed and coughed painfully, was fiercely poulticed by the doctor, who said he had double pneumonia, grew delirious, talked copiously for a day or so about the philosophy of the Varangian? and the love of tall blonde women; "Embattled Love," he repeated, and flung his arm out of the coverlet again and again in spite of all the nurse could do; suddenly became quiet and peaceful, whispered that he felt very much better and died in the small hours. The end was so swift and unexpected that Theodore was sent for from London only after the death.

Clorinda telephoned to Lucinda, who came round to find Theodore still in bed. She felt she must soften the blow and prepare his mind. She did not tell him that Raymond was dead. She said, "He is very, very, *very* ill. Very ill indeed You must prepare your mind for the worst."

Theodore received her news in a manner that Aunt Lucinda found extremely unsatisfactory. He appeared sleepy, stupid, slightly annoyed and extremely unwilling to get up and hurry off to Victoria to catch the morning train. She did not know that he had arranged to cut the Rowlands School for Rachel that afternoon and that he was greatly embarrassed by the difficulty of cancelling that arrangement. She had to help dress him and bundle him off. He could get breakfast on the train.

He sent a telegram from Victoria to Rachel: "No go." Even if Melchior intercepted that, there was not much to be made out of it.

The defaulting lover got his ticket, found the breakfast car, ordered eggs and bacon, and the shadow of an offended Rachel faded from his mind.

The dramatic values of the morning began to appear. The illness of Raymond assumed greater and graver importance. He was very very ill; he was, in plain English, going to die. All the half-heeded hints of Aunt Lucinda flashed now to that conviction. Theodore was

no ordinary passenger going on some petty business or following some accustomed routine. He was an only son going to his dying father. What would the encounter be like? What should he say or do?

Anticipations of the parting that lay before him arranged themselves in his imagination. He dramatized them after his habit. But they were not all melodramatic scenes. He was now, he found, extremely sorry to think of Raymond dangerously ill, and a multitude of queer little trivialities, touches of fatherly indulgence, playful moments of convulsing burlesque and surprising unexpected kindnesses and little gifts revived in his memory. He remembered times when he had bothered Raymond, and times when Raymond had had headaches and he had wittingly and impatiently gone on with his noises. He hoped he would find something to say to his father that would express the tenderness and regrets of these recollections. But this desire passed insensibly into the composition of little speeches that would impress and reinvigorate Raymond. He saw himself making these speeches. He saw himself kneeling by the bedside, motionless, heartbroken. He would hold his father's hand in a long farewell. There would be an atmosphere of immense understanding. Family traditions — felt — unspoken.

Slowly the responsive grasp would relax. It would be over, all over. He would stand up, tearless but pale, the last of the Bulpingtons.

Clorinda met him at the door.

It was as if she had been through a grave illness since their last encounter. Her eyes, her hair, her skin had lost their lustre; her skin seemed loosened. She was cold and she had put a faded old Inverness cloak of Raymond's over a black and purple dress. That made her seem bereft and shabby. Mother and son regarded one another without an embrace. "He has gone," she said in a flat voice. "In his sleep.... He suffered nothing."

Clorinda's words wiped out all his speeches.

"He suffered nothing," he repeated after her; said, "Good," indistinctly, and then very awkwardly kissed her.

"You have had your breakfast, my dear?" she asked.

Some mysteries were still afoot with the nurse and another woman upstairs. He had to sit about in the downstairs room for a

long half-hour, among all Raymond's things, before he could go up and see him. He sat down in his father's chair by the long oak table and noted that for the first time in his memory the bowl was without flowers.

For some minutes he sat without thinking. Then he began to look at the things about him. He got up to examine the contents of the bureau. He had believed that somewhere in the house there must exist the manuscript of Raymond's great history, nearing completion. Perhaps it would be possible for him to complete it — an act of filial devotion. A very fine act indeed. In the train he had already composed a suitable preface bringing out the best in both his father's nature and his own. But that preface was never to be written down; he was never to find that manuscript.

He began his search circumspectly.

There was not only the bureau but a tallboy in the room, and the drawers of both he found were stuffed to the brim with a disorder of manuscript, crumpled proofs of reviews and articles, incoherent memoranda, clippings from newspapers and so forth. He pulled out this jumbled stuff, first of all respectfully and then as he realized its nature more and more hastily. He expected to find at least one drawer in order but there was no order anywhere. Nothing in the nature of a seriously arranged manuscript appeared. This was not material put away; it was stuff shoved out of the way. All of it. There was no arrangement, no endorsements. There were two or three rather ornate notebooks with the beginnings of chapters and grandiose "schemes of treatment". The work died away in a score or so of pages in each of them. There were also five or six fascicles with commonplace titles, sketchy drafts of novels and short stories that had nothing to do with Varangia. Even the filial loyalty of the occasion could not blind Theodore to their shallowness. Raymond, it seemed, had had thoughts of "writing down" to the public and beating the confounded boomsters in their own field. There was no mistake about the writing down. There were some fragments of verse; the longest the skeleton of a chant, "The Song of the Varangian Women", which had some fine lines and for the rest was tum-ti-tum-ti-tum, to be replaced by words at some future date.

It opened in this fashion:

Day after day
The rollers grey
Beat on our tawny sands
Day after day
Rum tiddy tay
Rum tiddy foreign lands
The mewing sea-gulls in the sky
Rum tiddy tumpty flying high
Rum tiddy totty still deny (or decry)

. — . — . A line here...

Fate of our far flung bands.

Beyond a medley of such fragments he could discern nothing of the giant book. Perhaps, he thought, it is put away upstairs. Or perhaps he has deposited it with his publishers.

But he was apprehending very rapidly the realities of the case. He was already half convinced that his father's life work had been no more than a pose and a legend when he was summoned to the death chamber.

2

Death The nurse, with the usual faint triumph of her profession on such occasions, paused on the threshold and allowed Theodore to enter alone. She closed the door softly behind him. On the bed lay a still form, long and straight, covered by a sheet. Raymond's face was visible, very white and changed to a waxen texture, with closed eyes and a firm still mouth.

Theodore had never seen a dead body before. Relieved of the sense of any audience, forgetting for a time even his own self-observation, he approached the bed and stood very still regarding the immense finality upon Raymond's face.

Finality. That was the quintessence of his impression. He did not

feel that Raymond was still there — or anywhere; he felt that Raymond had ended. The mouth looked determined, but not determined with any effect of purpose, determined as a lease determines. The memories of Raymond as "Daddy", which had come to him in the train, were banished in the presence of this immobility. To have said, "I will carry on your work; I will give the world your great achievement," to this quiet thing would have been balderdash. To have said anything to it would have been preposterous. It was already so detached and monumental, so void of kinship, that at the time it did not even dawn upon Theodore's blank mind that some day something of this sort would happen to himself.

He began to wonder what they supposed he was doing in here. Was he supposed to be praying? He felt there was nothing to be prayed for so far as Raymond was concerned. Or so far as anyone was concerned. He felt like an actor who had completely forgotten his part. Were they listening outside? He decided to give himself a full five minutes — ten minutes? Why not ten? He would give himself a full ten minutes here by his wrist-watch, no more and no less, and then go out to them quietly. They could imagine what they liked.

Raymond had never finished that book, he realized; had never with any sincerity begun it. It had been his topic of conversation; his imaginative refuge. All this became plain now to his son, with the swift understanding of a kindred mind. Memories of moments of enthusiasm, of long eloquent discourses to all and sundry about the period and the history, returned to Theodore. The great saga itself had been the merest pretence for such orgies of expansion. The cold face upon the pillow had no shadow upon it of apology or justification. It was serenely indifferent to all it had said, pretended, claimed or been. It conveyed that it did not care in the least for Theodore and that Theodore need not care, and could not, as a matter of fact, really care for it. But it was required by all the conventions of life that the occasion should be made much of, that reverence and bereavement and high and deep associations had to be evoked.

For the thirteenth time he glanced at his watch and now the ten minutes he had given himself were over. He went softly to the door.

On the landing he found Clorinda.

"He looks very peaceful," he said.

"Yes. Doesn't he?"

He took her by the arm as if to share those high and deep and quite inexpressible associations. They went downstairs very gravely, Theodore supporting Clorinda's elbow.

3

Drawn Blinds

Great ages seemed to have intervened since Theodore had scrambled off to catch the train at Victoria. But it was still only midday. It was becoming slowly but surely the longest day Theodore had ever known. It became longer and longer with every hour. The clock in the dining-room went at a funereal pace that constantly diminished. After turning over those papers once more, and beginning an impossible attempt to sort them out, there was nothing more to be done.

It did not seem proper to either Clorinda or Theodore to go out for a walk; Clorinda had all the blinds drawn down, had decided to wear black — black velvet for indoors — and had seen to the arrangements for a cremation. The nurse had introduced a large bowlful of white flowers into the death chamber before Clorinda could prevent her, and it seemed impossible to remove them. They were the first white flowers that had ever found a place in the Bulpington decorative scheme. Theodore, when the nothingness of the dead body was exhausted, returned to Raymond's study and resumed his examination of those poor papers and literary remains. He was still a little incredulous of their want of substance. It was like stepping up to a step that is not there.

He returned to them several times, but each time for a briefer reconsideration. Nothing existed but this journalistic litter, this untidy scribe's kitchen-midden, those few halfhearted experiments, those cheap beginnings, and a collection of underlined and occasionally annotated histories on the adjacent book-shelves. There was an Anglo-Saxon grammar and a Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, with all the allusions to the Varangians annotated, quite illegibly.

One of the ornate notebooks he found, on turning it over, was half filled with studies of imaginary nude figures variously grouped, apparently an attempt to realize the passionate element in the ceremonial dances and mysteries of the Varangian women, and in another there were some sketches of a profile and a slender undraped figure that were a little reminiscent of Theodore's Portuguese governess.

Clorinda, smoking incessantly, drifted in and out of the shaded and chilly room, hovered about her son and talked in detached fragments. She had been so used to Raymond ailing that she had long lost sight of the possibility that he could die. "It is all so sudden," she repeated a dozen times. And once she sat down and said: "We have to readjust ourselves, Theodore. I suppose we had better give up this house and move somewhere nearer London. I was never much good at practical things."

She stopped and looked at him, but not very hopefully. Theodore also was not very good at practical things.

She got up and went away.

As the dining-room was at the back of the house Clorinda decided that it would not offend a conventional world to eat with the blinds up. They lunched about half past twelve, because one o'clock was too far off. There was some cold mutton and the servant prepared a sort of scrambled omelette. Clorinda ate well and they consumed the better part of a bottle of Raymond's bravest Burgundy between them. They both ate as slowly as possible. She had very little to say about Raymond. All that there was to say about him she had said ages ago to other confidants. But she felt there might be a lot of other things, if only she knew what they were, to interest this handsomish preoccupied young man, her son. But she could form no sort of idea of what was going on in his mind.

The wine and some coffee brought them together a little. Then she was able to explain that Raymond was apparently intestate and that half of his property, such as it was, would come to her and half to Theodore, which would of course remain under her control on his behalf until he was twenty-one. But the larger half of the household expense had always fallen upon her own estate. Evidently she felt bound to suggest that she and Theodore should live together in

London, and Theodore found himself under the same obscure necessity to treat that as something highly desirable. But each of them had an unrevealed conception of a private life that would have made the continual presence of the other very embarrassing. It was therefore by fragmentary remarks and broken and inconsecutive suggestions that this ostensible project of a common home in West Kensington or thereabouts gave place to a real and definite arrangement that Clorinda should take a half-house in Bloomsbury, while Theodore got a little self-contained flat near the Rowlands School, not big enough to accommodate a servant — he was very clear about that — but which could be run very comfortably by a trustworthy woman who would come in and "do" for him and then go off again. Who could in fact be packed off whenever Rachel made him a visit. As their understanding grew plainer Clorinda's solicitude for her son warmed and intensified. "But I don't like to think of you all alone," she said. She was evidently disposed to be very generous in the division of the furniture. And there was something else she wanted to put to him.

"Would you be surprised if I wrote, or rather if I collaborated in a book, Theodore?"

"I've been surprised you've never done one," he answered loyally.

"I shall want something to do now, badly. This change.... A great gap in my life.... And it happens I have been talking already about something of the sort. At Cambridge I was not so bad. I liked Philosophy. Raymond didn't think much of what I did ever, but I liked it."

She lit a cigarette and spoke over the flaming match. She was wondering how much he knew about her. "Doctor Ferdinando, the psycho-analyst [puff] has always been a great friend of mine. The idea — Oh, well, call it The Psycho-

Analysis of Philosophy. Does that mean anything to you?"

"It's a great idea," said Theodore. "You come round *behind* the Philosopher, so to speak, and kick him. Before he knows where you are. I like it."

Theodore was much less intolerant of his mother than he had been in his boyhood. He was discovering that she was not merely loose

and untidy, but much cleverer than the run of women. She had a bold intelligence and real knowledge. And their common loss was bringing them together. He felt an increased friendliness and a deepening understanding.

But after that conversation Clorinda went to he down in her own room and Theodore was left to his fourth turning over of his father's literary remains. His quick mind had already grasped the complete futility of the task. This stuff was husks and refuse rather than remains. He hoped to secure his father's bureau for his flat, if not the tallboy, and he was a little perplexed about the disposal of this accumulation. But was it his affair? Properly it belonged to his mother. It was for her to keep and treasure it.

For a time he brooded on the pleasanter theme of his coming independence in a flat of his own. It must be, he decided, a good long way from Church Row and from the possibility of inopportune visits of aunts.

But then of course it would be quite easy to disconnect the bell. Or simply not answer it and keep still. One could keep still until they went away again.

It was rather hard to imagine the flat until one actually saw one. He supposed it would be rather like the Bernstein establishment, but smaller. He wished he could go off at once to London and begin his house-hunting.

After a time this current of thought died away from sheer lack of precise detail to keep it going. His mind returned, picking its way over the scattered papers about him, to the fact that he was in a still house with drawn blinds and that his father lay dead upstairs. The house was as still almost as his father. Clorinda made no sound. From the kitchen came faint sounds of washing up, reverentially muffled. Presently these also ceased. The nurse had become invisible and inaudible. He would have liked to have gone out for a walk, but Clorinda had insisted that they both stayed in just as she had insisted upon the drawn blinds. He did not think it was obligatory to stay indoors like this after a death, but she seemed to think so. As though exercise was irreverent. Those drawn blinds and the general cessation of domestic activities gave him an oppressive feeling that the home as well as Raymond was defunct.

The body and house became more and more identified. Being behind drawn blinds in the daytime, blinds that you could not raise, was like being motionless in a body behind eyes you could not open. He wished that comparison had not occurred to him. His defences against the thought of death were breaking down. He wondered how it felt to lie with frozen limbs straight and stiff, unable to lift one's eyelids. He got up and wandered into the other rooms on the ground floor. Presently he went upstairs very softly and, after a brief hesitation, entered his father's room again. No, he told himself, there was nothing behind those eyelids. They seemed a little more sunken than they had been and the nostrils more pinched in. When he looked at his father's face like this, Raymond seemed much deader than he did when one thought of him downstairs.

Theodore stayed some time as though he was watching for something. But the immobility, the finality, the detachment were complete.

He closed the door softly; listened in the hope that Clorinda would be stirring, and then went downstairs again. It was still not four. But before very long, somehow, somewhere, the preparations for tea would begin.

Meanwhile it would be interesting to think out his future arrangements. He tried to fix his mind on that little flat again; took a piece of paper and sketched a ground-plan of the rooms, as they could be arranged most conveniently. One might send off the char for whole days if necessary. But what was the good of planning a flat in one way when the flats in the back streets of West Kensington might all be planned in quite another way?

These thoughts were distracting, but not completely distracting. The riddle of how it felt to be in a body with limbs you could not lift and eyes you could not open had taken a grip upon his imagination. "But there is nothing inside," said Reason; "nothing whatever inside." He went into the hall passageway, into the dining-room and back into the hall and listened. Would that woman never begin making tea? He became aware of his mother, moving about like a ghost on the landing above. She was noiseless but the landing creaked. He had an inspiration. He did not call up to her, but he went up the staircase and paused where he could speak to her in a loud

whisper. “I ought to send a telegram to someone at the school,” he said. “I had promised to go to a dinner.”

“Go out quietly,” said Clorinda, yielding.

He had thought of sending a telegram to Rachel to tell her simply, “My father died last night.” He felt that would sound simple and noble and it would explain his morning’s wire. But when he got out of the house the figure of the jealous and controlling Melchior intervened. He would be sure to open that telegram if he came in first, and then he would be asking Rachel why Theodore should tell her, of all people, of his father’s death. And also he might connect it with the anonymous communication of the morning if he had seen that also. It was too risky. So Theodore dismissed Rachel as a possible recipient of his telegram. Then he thought of Margaret. Of course, the Broxteds ought to know. And Margaret in particular. He imagined her face, full of sympathetic tenderness.

So he sent the telegram to Margaret.

For a time there had been a certain estrangement between her and himself. He had not in fact spoken to her since that conversation on the beach which he had ended so abruptly.

But now as he pictured to himself her reception of his sad news his heart warmed towards her. It glowed for her. It craved for her presence. He thought of things to say to her.

His gloom lifted as he imagined the little waves of kindly feeling that the news of his loss would set going from mind to mind in London. “So sudden. A great shock. It will put a lot of responsibility upon his shoulders.”

It would put a lot of responsibility upon him. He had not realized before what a step towards manhood the death of a father can be.

The oppression diminished. He had externalized this matter of death again. He had pushed it out from himself. The important aspect now was that he was orphaned.

He returned circuitously by way of the esplanade. It was a windy day, darkening to an early twilight; lights were appearing in the empty lodging-houses and private hotels along the parade. The tide was up and the seas were rolling in and beating against the masonry in a slow mournful rhythm, like minute-guns, striking the wall with a thud, a long sigh of retreat, and again a thud. Ever and again one

broke steeply and a narrow sheet of water leapt up like a hooded figure, hung threateningly and then was blown spinning to mere wet and spindrift by the wind. Theodore dodged these splashes and was exhilarated by doing so. He became more and more interested in this wave-dodging.

He ran against Francolin abruptly. Francolin also was wave-dodging.

"You here!" said Theodore.

"No, I'm ever so far off in Africa. What brings you down?"

"My father died last night."

That pulled Francolin up at once. "I'm so sorry, old man — awfully sorry. Isn't it rather sudden? I saw him out last week."

"I had no idea he was ill. Until they sent for me."

"Weak in the chest, wasn't he? Frightfully sorry I am."

Theodore paused and imparted his most moving fact in a voice thickly eloquent of self-control. "Never had a parting word with him. Not a word."

"I *am* sorry..."

Theodore went his way in all the dignity of his sudden and tragic bereavement.

4

Fear in the Night

In the small hours he woke up and began to think again about death. And this time there was no externalizing it. It encompassed him on every side. It became an oppression, an obsession, a horror. He felt he was a dwindling spark of life in a still dead house, with the blinds drawn and the doors locked. Two rooms away lay Raymond, horizontal, motionless, and he himself lay parallel and only stirring weakly. How did it feel to lie dead like that? He stretched himself out on his back with his hands by his side and his eyes closed. He imagined people looking at him and talking about him, and he would not move because he could not move.

He sat up in bed.

What was this death?

He stuck his toes out of bed and stared at the chilly darkness about him. What if Raymond, something of Raymond, some essence of Raymond, two rooms away, was also doing that?

But it was easier to think of a dead Theodore doing that than the dead Raymond in the other room. He dropped the dead Raymond out of his thoughts and went on with the dead Theodore. He too would lie still on a bed. And then? Perhaps he would rise up like this, sit by the side of his useless body — and flit. Whither? Or perhaps he would be called and his flitting would be guided. Or perhaps he would want to do this and find himself gripped and held horribly by that stiffness. Anything was easier to imagine than nothingness.

A spirit world sprang into being to ease him over this difficulty. His body would lie still on the bed, as if it were one with the bed, but he himself, the impalpable thought stuff of him, would sit up even as he was doing now and find those friends. But if they were going to meet him then, surely now also they must be about him. His attitude lost its slovenly ease in the darkness as he thought of these observers. And as he thought of them observing him in life they faded towards an extreme tenuity. For their observation might otherwise be too penetrating. He did not want to have them pervading and prying into his thoughts. But his own immortal self remained as vivid as ever, strengthened to absolute conviction. All that passion to live which saturates us in adolescence suffused his mind and swamped his reason. Of *course* he was immortal! Of course there was more in it than this!

Never mind those others! That was their affair. He did not want immortality for everybody. He wanted it for himself. He did not want to be as dead as Raymond was, ever.

Lying quite still in the darkness one could almost perceive that attendant world of escape, so attenuated and yet so necessary. They were there. The guardian angels of his childhood were quietly reinstated. And swathed in that protective possibility Theodore sank out of his fear and horror, out of that nightmare apprehension of rigid helplessness, down to sleep and insensibility.

They put Raymond in a coffin and he offered no resistance and made no comment. In the coffin he seemed smaller and shrunken. His expression was less serenely determined and more submissive. Then the coffin was fastened down on that poor still thing, carried off gently but firmly by the discreet and tactful agents of the Crematorium and stored away somewhere for two days, and then Clorinda and Theodore went to Golder's Green to hear the burial service, make the appropriate responses and see that plain impersonal casket pass slowly upon its rollers through the furnace doors. The organ music swelled.

O Grave, where is thy Victory?
O Death, where is thy Sting?

And after that there was nothing left of Raymond but a little heap of ashes to be presently scraped together into a jar and deposited in the Columbarium.

When the coffin began to move sideways something gripped at Clorinda's heart and she sobbed aloud.

Quite a number of people, friends and strangers, had come to see the last of Raymond. His publisher was there with a new young partner — he was the sort of publisher who is always getting new young partners — and the gathering was sprinkled with an assortment of literary and artistic figures. Of the nine surviving Spink sisters, seven were present, counting Clorinda, and most of them had brought relations or friends. They all wore black except Belinda, the artistic one, who was clothed in the hues of a stormy sunset, Lucinda who was tall and stately in black and purple, and Amanda who was in brown with crimson flowers and trimmings. Clorinda and Theodore sat alone in the front seat. The Broxteds were in the seat next but one behind and Clorinda thought it very kind of them to come. Dr. Ferdinando, a bulky figure, was discreetly remote at the back with his wife.

Afterwards there was a sort of conversazione outside the chapel. Two of Theodore's aunts, two black-clad ones, whom he had never

seen before, came and were “nice” to Clorinda and inspected their nephew and heir. They seemed reasonably satisfied. One of them, a Lady Brood she was, said he must visit her in Kent. Aunt Lucinda came along to Clorinda with an air of temporary toleration. “I suppose you will be moving now from Blayport,” she began in her most administrative manner.

“It’s too soon to think of things like that,” Clorinda parried.

“You ought to come to London now and keep house with Theodore,” Aunt Lucinda insisted.

“It’s all been so sudden,” said Clorinda and left Aunt Lucinda free to mind her own business.

“We must arrange things,” said Aunt Lucinda.

“We may go abroad for a time,” Clorinda threw out on the spur of the moment. “It’s not a matter we can settle in a moment.”

“Theodore must get on with his work.”

“Isn’t he!” said Clorinda abstractedly and held out both her hands to a journalist friend. From him she passed to the Broxteds.

Theodore had a word or so with Margaret.

“I was so sorry at your telegram,” she said.

“I wanted *you* to know,” he told her and retained her hand for a moment or so. “It means, I think, that we shall leave Blayport. Is Teddy here?”

“He had some work to clear up. But he sent you his love and he wants us to meet at that Isola Bella place before you go back to Blayport.”

Wimperdick appeared in full mourning with a very new-looking silk hat a size too small for him. Surmounting his general rich dinginess it had the effect of a freshly acquired halo. He talked with an air of sympathetic understanding to Clorinda and then he made for Theodore. “Why do you never come to see me?” he asked. “There I am in Half Moon Street. I’d love some talks with you. Some of my books and pictures ought to interest you. You *will* come? Any time. I’m always glad of a gossip.”

They exchanged addresses.

There were no signs of the Bernsteins. It was not their affair. Of course it was absurd to have expected them.

Theodore took Clorinda to Victoria Station and they went straight

to Earl's Court to begin a hunt for that small independent flat. He left his name with several agents, inspected one or two possibilities, and then, feeling suddenly very bereaved and lonely, returned to his apartments in Hampstead for supper. There was no communication from Rachel. He had not heard from her since he had been called so suddenly to Blayport. Perhaps she had not heard of his loss and had taken dire offence at his ambiguous telegram. She did sometimes take offence almost inexplicably. Perhaps she would hold him off for a long time or break with him. In which case it wouldn't be much good to go into an expectant seclusion in one of those rather grimy little flats he had seen.

Perhaps Clorinda would help him to find something brighter. He would have preferred to find something without Clorinda's help. It was a fag; he must not be rushed into things; he must try again.

Heart-ache crept back upon him and the events and feelings of the last few days began to arrange and rearrange themselves in his mind in such a way that the stiff progress of Raymond from his bedroom, in Blayport by way of the unknown place of storage to the portals of the furnace became, willynilly, the dominant motif of his meditation. It was imperative that there should be no such termination in prospect for the living and sensitive Theodore.

It was so imperative that he could not sit still, he had to walk up and down his room. He would have gone out to find someone to talk to, but he could think of no one available. He was to have had a cheering-up don't-brood-upon-it party with the Broxteds and Bernsteins and some other people, all paying their own expenses, the day after to-morrow, and afterwards they were to go as "Rovers" to the Russian Ballet. He thought of a talk with Aunt Amanda round the corner. But that involved the serious risk of a talk about his "plans" with Aunt Lucinda. He hesitated about rushing off to Wimperdick. Suppose anyhow that he walked downhill towards the West End — without deciding whether he should actually call on Wimperdick or not, until he got down there....

He did not call on Wimperdick that night but he went to tea with him a few days later and he stayed on until Wimperdick took him out to dinner at the Triangle Club. Wimperdick was quite ready to talk and soon drew out from him what it was he wanted to talk about.

"One cannot imagine that is the end," said Theodore, "and yet what do we know, what does anyone know, of anything beyond?"

Wimperdick sat deep in a large armchair with his head a little on one side and his thumbs and fingers apposed. "Practically nothing. The Church teaches," he began, and steered his way carefully through a studied sentence— "the Church teaches plainly that there is something beyond this fitful fever of living here, yes, and quite as plainly that it is something so different and on so remote a plane that it is not simply impossible to realize what that change is while we are in this world, but undesirable even to figure it in such metaphors drawn from sense as we must needs be using. I grant you that it is on record that holy saints and similarly favoured persons have been lifted, while still in this life, to an apprehension of that further stage, but, except for the reassurance their ecstasies give us, their experiences are essentially incommunicable. We are told quite clearly, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard'" — he emphasized his quotation with a fat finger upheld—" '*nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceived* That's plain, isn't it? *Is there something?* you ask. The Church exists to tell you, *Yes.* That is what the Church is for — primarily. Be of good courage. *But what is that something*? The Church is equally sure that you need not know, cannot know, must not know, in any concrete fashion. It will have nothing to do with these modern Necromancers and their seances and table-rappings — nothing. Towards them the Church is as blankly discouraging as your atheist friend, Professor Broxted. *No,* you must see by Faith, or not at all. You must be content to see as in a glass darkly. Then at a moment — in the twinkling of an eye — all will be changed."

That seemed to be very good talking to Theodore.

"I know that Raymond, your father, lives," said Wimperdick, "lives more than ever. That I know by Faith. I pray for him — more earnestly than when he was on earth. But where he lives and in what fashion, I do not know. I know that you and I live for ever. I know it

certainly. That is the corner-stone of my faith. Of all faith. There may be sleep, there may be temporary forgetting; all that is hidden. Presumptuous men — some I fear in the Church and using the name and authority of the Church — have told fables, parables, fantasies, engaged even in *descriptions.* Certain symbolical presentations of responsibility, of judgment, of punishments even, have, it is true, been given us — —"

"But don't you and your Church believe in hell and purgatory and heaven?"

"Surely. But with no dogma of how they stand to our material experiences — how they stand to us, that is, in space and time. They are I can assure you no more than intimations, presented necessarily in factual terms, of the enduring gravity of life and of our moral responsibility. There is a state called purgatory of which we know this much — that our prayers can reach there. The precious experience and sympathy of our Redeemer does actually descend into hell. Rises again. We are allowed to know that much. All the rest is hidden."

Theodore felt all his preconceptions about Christian teaching dissolving away before Wimperdick's elucidation. This was different stuff from anything he had heard before. He wished he could invoke some believing Irish or Spanish peasant to assist in this exposition, but, failing such testimony, he had to take Wimperdick's fluent word for what Catholics really believed. Wimperdick talked on, and as he talked the Church as an undying witness became more and more solid and dominating and the particulars of the Faith it sustained more elusive. Theodore found something subtly congenial in that elusiveness. Never had he admired the intellectual dexterity, the quiet gusto, of Wimperdick more.

And when presently Wimperdick began to explain the secondary and symbolical value of historical Christianity, it found Theodore's mind well prepared. Wimperdick complained of the gross materialism of the Protestants, with their meticulous insistence upon the text of the Bible and particularly of the New Testament as their primary document. They regarded the whole scheme of life and salvation, he said, as a system of penalties arising legally out of certain acts committed on certain days in a garden somewhere in

Mesopotamia, and of certain atoning acts lasting so many hours, so many minutes and so many seconds upon a hill just outside Jerusalem. For them Eternity was simply unlimited time, time going on and on and then more. That was the gist of Protestantism. They never grasped the fact that Eternity was the antithesis of time. "The Church has always stood between the Faithful and that error." The Protestant kept on and on, he said, at the stupid idea that at a particular place on a particular date these events occurred once and for all.

"But was Christ never born in a manger and was there never an actual crucifixion?"

Wimperdick's teeth seethed with intellectual zest. "*Never?*" he protested. "On the contrary — *always* — eternally! You must, if you are to understand anything about the Faith, put the space-and-time garment aside. Let me repeat; Eternity is the antithesis of time. Get that and you have it all. *Eternally* is He crucified. Eternally is the Spirit made flesh. The Incarnation, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Redemption, are not *events in time* like the Coronation or a Bank Holiday; they are everlasting realities. They did not occur and pass. They constantly and permanently *are*. Beyond any beginning. Beyond any end. Before the beginning was the Crucified. These are realities beyond fact. Just as our immortality is a reality beyond fact. Don't you see the point?"

Theodore said he saw the point. And indeed he was gradually getting the point.

He agreed that these Protestants and materialists — and all Protestants are really materialists — were dull dogs not to grasp this fundamental antithesis of absolute and factual values; they were certainly amazingly dull dogs. Yes. He frowned with intellectual concentration and held on to it.

After dinner the talk at the Triangle Club was rather too technical for his complete participation. And the back of his mind was still busy with this great and difficult idea of eternal realities such as his immortal soul being in contrast with the stream of events it mirrored. To him it was a novel idea and as wonderful as it was new.

Wimperdick took him into a corner with one or two of his cronies; and they disdained teetotalism sedulously and agreed briskly and

brightly about the validity of Anglican orders; their agreement being none the less brisk and bright because a prominent Anglican bishop was writing his letters either just within or just beyond earshot. But in spite of much that he missed in this smoking-room part of the talk, Theodore got the realization active in his mind that there was not simply the Catholic Church as Wimperdick recognized it, but a considerable oversplash of Catholics of doubtful authenticity in other communions. That was very interesting. That released one rather from Wimperdick. The prominent Anglican bishop looked rather an intelligent man. One might do all this stuff about the difference of eternal and factual values and the essential freedom of Faith from space and time, without necessarily bringing oneself into the disciplines and observances of Rome.

In bed that night Theodore lay very still and exercised himself in this new lesson he had learnt. He could thrust aside the space-and-time garment quite easily, he found. He floated as an immortal soul then, an eternal being, in the bosom of the absolute. He found it not only easy but extremely comfortable to do so. His space-time existence, with its birth, its string of events and its death, its death above all, became of comparative insignificance, a picture that he, aloof and protected, regarded from an enduring standpoint. A profound contentment descended upon him.

It was not perhaps a sedative of this sort that Wimperdick had wanted to administer, but it was what Theodore made for himself out of Wimperdick's suggestions. He assured himself that he had now got firmly hold of fundamental realities. He went for walks with a rapt expression on his face, and whenever he passed a church or a chapel, instead of its seeming the most unmeaning sort of thing in the world as hitherto it had done, he found it now fraught with meaning and he gave it the mental salutation of one who understood. Through those portals one escaped to the Absolute — from death.

He went to evening service at St. Paul's. He tried Westminster Abbey, the Westminster Pro-Cathedral and various other fine buildings. St. Paul's he liked most and went again several times while this phase of illumination lasted. Music took on a new significance. He realized how Bach, Handel and Beethoven in particular, with their effect of vast reasoned revelation, their mighty

vistas and their ever broadening and ascending magnificence, subserved the great escape.

It was in the ordered ceremony and the decoration of religion that he found his comfort, the chanting, the moving responses, the high roofs and arches and the organ music; and whenever he could escape the sermon, that poor little thread of straining and wrangling speech amidst the shadowy mysteries, he did so.

The majestic refinement of St. Paul's did much to decide him between Anglicanism and Romanism. The pictures he saw of St. Peter's at Rome showed an altogether inferior building. And he found the Anglican Deity much less emphatically triclinic than the Roman. Moreover, Anglicanism sits lightly on its adherents; there is none of that shepherding pursuit, the confessional business and so forth, that makes the Latin communion so irksome. Romanism still wants to judge the faithful and does so whenever it gets a chance, but the Anglican God was ever so much too much of a gentleman to judge anybody, much less to be the Judge of All Mankind. A God with *tact*, that was Theodore's idea of a God. He could read in his bible now, or turn over the prayer book with an enlightened disregard of intellectual and substantial objections. What was incredible was symbolical and what was disgusting was a vestige from a simpler past. When presently his church attendances diminished, as they did do until they became quite casual, and he resumed his ordinary ways of living again, that tormenting fear of extinction which had come upon him after Raymond's death was no longer in pursuit of him. It had been lost in tangles of philosophical theology, far behind.

Most of this had to be kept from the Broxteds and Bernsteins. These young people were all "factual" to a terrible degree. And eternal verities are so much easier to feel and understand than to discuss. But once at that consolation party before the Russian Ballet, and once when he gave a flat-warming to celebrate his new independent establishment, and once or twice with Rachel, the topic of immortality floated to the surface.

Teddy was doggedly biological and would not drop his space-and-time garment for a moment, clung to it. "The individual dies," he said. "The individual dies for good. Individuality is an experiment. We live out our experiment and reproduce, we leave our effects

behind us and we die. That is in the very texture of life. Complete individual death is as necessary a thing to life as birth."

"But we live for ever in our consequences," said Margaret.

"And that satisfies you?" said Theodore, turning upon her reproachfully.

"That *has to* satisfy us," she said.

"The species lives," said Teddy, getting it exact, "and even if a whole species is extinguished life goes on — differently — because of it. That is all a biologist can know. If there was no death, if we dragged on and on, well, don't you see it would be horrible? The brain would fill up with ideas and memories that had got out of fashion and useless. The world would be choked with old, old people and old, old reactions. Old individuals have to be cleared away, like exercise books that have been filled up."

"But I am not talking of living on in this world," said Theodore. "I am talking of passing on to some other life."

"But what is there to *pass on* to?" asked Teddy.

"I mean, there may be — how do we know there isn't? — a more extensive life, of which this is only a sort of aspect, so to speak."

"But what signs are there of anything of that sort?"

"Well, in oneself. A sort of feeling, a repugnance, a repudiation of death."

"But that is obviously a necessary instinct in all young animals. Only when they are young. Old people, Metchnikoff says, are not like that. Why should they be? It's no proof whatever that anything is so because you want it to be so."

"We shall never *know* we are dead," interjected Rachel, "so what does it matter?"

"Our deaths happen to other people," said Melchior. "They don't happen to us."

"We shall be 'not at home'," said Rachel.

"I don't think I *shall* be. I shall be there. All this you say," said Theodore, bringing up his Wimperdick artillery, "may sound very reasonable, may be quite reasonable in an account of events in space and time. But this space-and-time universe is not the only universe there is, and outside that, I tell you, I *am* — eternally."

"I *am* — eternally," Teddy repeated, seemed to turn it over in his

mind and checked himself for the moment from saying something more.

"But I don't see," began Margaret and stopped.

"What *is* there anyhow to *be* immortal in a human being?" cried Rachel. "Lust, hunger, envy, malice, greed, blundering about and this sort of chatter; all things of this time and this present world. What else is there?"

"Nobody has ever believed in immortality except for himself," said Melchior in that flat voice of his. "For himself or for those who are really part of himself. Nobody has ever believed in Stone-Age immortals or in immortal savages. Nobody ever will."

"This is a dodge," said Teddy, "about space and time. It is an intellectualist dodge. You can't take life out of space and time so that it turns round and looks at itself. But you assume you can. That's the trick. There may be inconceivable things and limitless things outside space and time, but they are neither life nor death nor anything else of that plain and definable nature. They are things so entirely not anything in this world that essentially, I mean in reality, they do not exist at all."

He halted as if for a moment his feet had felt unsure. He seemed to be searching his mind for things he could not find. He concluded abruptly in the dogmatic style of an expert witness. "Individuality is a part of the mechanism of terrestrial life; that's my point; and death and birth are inseparable from individuality."

Theodore made a not very resolute attempt to express himself to them. But their atmosphere was against him. With the exception of Margaret they were all so emphatic in their opinions and so noisy about them that Theodore found it impossible to put his new way of looking at death before them at all properly. Indeed in the effort he came near being irritated and tempted into tartness and rudeness by their quick interruptions. It was difficult to keep calm and go on treating them as though they also, all of them, were deathless eternal facts resting in the bosom of the Absolute. Their restless side was so much more in evidence. There were moments when this new soul of his was so irritated by their comments that it felt less like an eternal fact reposing in the bosom of the Absolute than like a greatly cherished lap-dog being teased, and it needed all his self-control to

restrain it from leaping out upon them from that bosom with a fiercely yapping contempt. He realized acutely that in this life our profoundest and most intimate convictions may be incommunicable.

But if they did not understand and agree with him, Saint Paul's Cathedral seemed to do so, and he went there and sat still in a side aisle of that mute and stately sympathy, and listened to the organ and was comforted.

He made one other effort with Margaret.

He followed up their tacit reconciliation at his father's cremation by going with her for a long bracing wintry walk from Windsor to the Inn at Virginia Water, a walk to which Rachel had introduced him. Memories of Rachel enriched rather than embarrassed this repetition. He urged an immortal soul upon Margaret and was vexed at her reluctance to accept the gift.

The difficulty of getting on to common ground in the matter was curious and perplexing. Their minds as they grew up under divergent influences were taking on forms of expression so different that their ideas would not interlock. When he talked of "souls", she talked of "selves", and with this substitution the argument slipped away from him.

She could think, she consented, that the whole universe might be, upon its different scale, no more than a vision seen in a crystal by some eternal Watcher, no more than a fantasy in the brain of some Lotus-enthroned divinity. "One could think a hundred pretty things like that," she agreed all too lightly, but she would give neither yes nor no to his craving demand that in some magic way she and he might participate in the eternal being of that Watcher or Dreamer. She would tolerate nothing of that new Absolute Bulpington of his in his new-found Blup beyond space and time. What could that matter to the life of everyday? "We live and die," she insisted, "as Teddy says."

She clung to her formula that there was nothing about us that could possibly live on after death except our consequences. "But our consequences," said Theodore, "are no more ourselves than our circumstances." She admitted she was not being logical. "But it all belongs together," she said. Their argument wandered wide and far. "I can see no sense in altruism," Theodore threw out abruptly. "Why

should you want to live for others rather than yourself? Are we all to take in each other's moral washing — like the Scilly Islanders? It seems a sort of impertinence. Why invade the lives of other people? Let them do their own living."

But she had been round that kink before in her arguments with Teddy. "Because you aren't an egotist," she countered, "you needn't be an altruist. That doesn't follow. People can live for wider things than selves. Either their own selves or other selves. Selves die. Selves *have* to die. But there is no reason in Nature, Teddy says, why Nature should favour egotists. We think always of ourselves, but as we get intelligent — and learn about things — we also want to escape from ourselves. We find other things that seem bigger and more important to us."

"What can these things be?"

"You can *feel* there is something bigger."

"What can be bigger and more important than the immortal soul?" he demanded.

She laughed at that. "But I tell you I do not understand what you *mean* by the immortal soul. It's only lately you've begun to talk of souls, Theodore. I suppose it's not playing the game quite, but — What *is* a soul?"

She baffled him. If you talk to people about their immortal souls and they refuse to attach any idea at all to the term, what more is there to be done about it? It is like arguing about colours with a blind man. Who can define a soul? To define would be to repudiate. And her spiritual blindness made all their other values discordant. The difference between them exercised him profoundly. She was a materialist, but so was Rachel. Rachel was the sort of materialist one could understand; she came out to the logical consequences of her opinions, straight and plain. But this materialism of Margaret's and Teddy's was mixed up with a fanaticism, an exaltation. They were fanatics for truth; they were fanatics for some vague yet imperative "service". And this fanaticism made Margaret remote and inaccessible, as remote as any religion could have made her. She was a Godless Puritan; she lived and controlled herself by faith, though apparently it was faith in nothing at all. Science? Progress?

He looked at her as she walked beside him. Now and then he

would jostle lightly against her, or touch or hold her arm. Her face was sweet and dear to him; her steady eyes and the lurking promise of a smile upon her lips. She seemed to be well content to be with him. Her supple body moved happily beside his, her shoulders two or three inches lower than his own. Her quiet gladness greeted the green spaces, the rich traceries of the leaf-stripped sunlit trees, the shining water, the deer, the waterfowl. And she would not share his soul, she looked ahead to her work in this expanding world and would not give herself to him, in spite, his instincts told him, of a certain treachery in her desires that worked on his behalf. He was far more sure of his special attraction for her than for Rachel.

What was the difference between herself and him? What was the difference between her and Rachel? Had she some quality that Rachel lacked, that Rachel knew to be lacking in herself? Was it a real quality or was it in his imagination? Was this just what was meant if one said one was in love with her? Or was she really stronger and finer in her quality than either Rachel or himself?

That phrase of Godless Puritans returned to him. That was a good phrase. Teddy and she were resolved to have no loose play among their values. They were doing their utmost to face life with a resolute integrity that would not even dally with imaginative suggestions.

In those days of material and social advancement before the Great War, advancement so assured that it seemed inevitable, such a belief as they possessed in Progress was the most natural thing in the world. But in Theodore's mind the expansion of this world in which he lived seemed now so unquestionable and certain that he could not even understand the necessity of shaping one's life to serve it. For a time, as we have told, he had felt its encircling compulsion closing in about him and he had escaped from it. His general disposition was to be in opposition, to protect habit and tradition against this drive towards expansion and novelty. And now as he puzzled over this widening difference between Margaret's mind and his own, a string of fantasies that he had engendered at Blayport a year or so ago came back to him. He remembered Raymond and Wimperdick talking about that imagination of Conrad's and Hueffer's, those Inheritors, who were different, who were steadily and incessantly undermining the established world — for better or worse, he could not tell.

Dreams in which Margaret had played the role of an Inheritor streamed again across the background of his brain. And what had his role been? Always of something a little subtler and finer than the Inheritors, something ultimately better, that put all that knowledge of Teddy's at a disadvantage, that removed the suspicion of an inferiority in mental equipment and replaced it by a greater delicacy of texture. He had "soul" and they hadn't. Always in the end Margaret was won over from the Inheritors by her passionate response to the Bulpington of Blup.

And now again she was an Inheritor. She was one of these Inheritors who were pervading the world, and he was not with them. So the dreams had gone in the past, and that was still the important point. He stood now more definitely than ever for the noble things and the romantic causes. And his own distinction. That happy phrase, the "Godless Puritans", had thrown him into a phase of antagonism and determined his secret pose. He became now abruptly a Cavalier. Very rapidly as he talked, the busy invention at the back of him seized upon and dramatized this contrast. At the side of this lovely young woman in her jersey and homespun skirt he assumed an aerial sword and invisible lace. She went her way entirely unconscious of his sudden acquisition of ringlets and a pointed beard, a great hat and a feather. But his voice and manner, she perceived, grew more gentle and courtly.

"I shall never make you understand my point of view," he said. "You are so dear to me and so remote."

A fine conversational effect occurred to him suddenly. It was nothing premeditated. It came into his head there and then.

"Would it amaze you, Margaret, if I told you I am going to be christened?"

"My dear!" she exclaimed, and was laughing. "My dear Theodore! At the font! Will you have to wear long white things? And have sponsors? And be held up by the parson? And squall? I can't imagine you. Our Bulpy born again! Why are you going to do it?"

"I shan't have to go back to infancy," said Theodore, slightly dashed.

"Not born again to *that* extent?"

"No, no. But it's a ceremony, a symbol. A necessary symbol.

Quaint if you like, in its way. But all the same the Church stands for something — asserts something."

"Your immortality?"

"Our immortality. And I stand for the Church."

And having said it, he stuck to it.

He sought advice at his local vicarage, after he had taken up a position for observation in the free-seats and made a careful study of his vicar while at the altar and in the pulpit; he explained his position, and arranged to be baptized and confirmed in an atmosphere of tactful secrecy. The most unobtrusive of baptisms it was and the confirmation was in a crowd. He never told Clorinda or Rachel or anyone at the Art School about this change in his spiritual status, and neither he nor Margaret mentioned it again. He let her suppose he had not gone on with the project. It was evident she was incapable of seeing it in the right light. On the other hand he found the seriousness of the clergy and his sponsors, and indeed of everybody actively concerned in the affair, very reassuring. They all took it as the most natural thing in the world that he should provide reasonably and properly for his immortal soul. They baptized and confirmed him for his soul's health, exactly as a doctor might have treated him to stimulate his pancreas or spleen. They put it on the same footing as these other unseen but influential constituents. They treated his immortality as a matter of course. They verified it up to the hilt. His soul could never have attained anything like the same reality for him without their help.

So by the spring of 1914 Theodore's brain was going about the world in a state of reasonable contentment, equipped with an attitude of honourable scorn for, and a practical acquiescence in, social inequalities, a complete indifference to contemporary political, social and financial processes, and a Sacred and a Profane Love with a very paradoxical, interesting, amending and assuaging relationship one to the other — for while one gratified, the other redeemed by its essential nobility. And he was a member of the Established Church. His apprehension of our corporeal mortality had led his thoughts to God, he had booked himself for eternity and achieved as delicate and impalpable an Anglicanism as ever protected a human brain from the harsh assaults of reality. He had got a soul just as he had got a

moustache, as a most natural adolescent outgrowth. He had successfully evaded too close an identification of himself with his actual self, and if his feet walked on the firm grounds of material satisfaction and security, his head was pleasantly beclouded by the nobler conception of that ideal personality, the Bulpington of Blup. He pressed no further questionings either into himself or into the appearances of things around him. His touch with life grew continually easier and lighter. He painted, but not too strenuously; he thought, but not too hard; he criticized brilliantly and wrote with a careful concealment of whatever care he put into it. He began to play tennis rather well.

That old friend of Raymond's who after a remark about Berlioz had thought an early death the best thing that could happen to Theodore, met him one day and — in a spasm of posthumous friendliness — took him to lunch at his club.

"Poor old Bulpington's son," he reported, "has improved beyond recognition. He's got something of his father's good looks now, as I remember them at Oxford. And he talks — lightly. Doesn't come it over you with his Art and so forth. I'm glad to find him like that. There was a time when that youngster promised to be a terrible prig. Oh, a Terrible Prig."

That disaster at least Theodore had escaped. At their lower levels the Prigs might root and question. The bubble of his imagination had floated him off above all that.

HEROICS

1

The Great Framework Cracks

THE world in which the Bulpington of Blup had grown up inside the brain of Theodore Bulpington had seemed a very secure and roomy world indeed, secure and roomy enough for him to move about freely and do as he pleased. In his childhood, as we have told, it had seemed an immutable world, in which his private imagination might play as it liked. In London he had realized that this universe moved, but it seemed to move with a large detachment from himself; by a

few mental adjustments he had been able to liberate himself from any concern for that broad movement of his kind. If he was not going about in a firm city, he was at any rate going about on an immense liner, steaming in perfect safety to nowhere in particular. Some crew, some navigators somewhere, were seeing to that. It was no affair of his. As well might he trouble himself, it seemed, about the rotation of the earth or the drift of sun and planets amidst the stars.

He dealt with love, he dealt with death therefore, purely as factors in his individual drama, and with a good conscience he arranged his System of Values so that the general direction of things, politics, economics, social life, was left to the peculiar and generally very unattractive people who saw fit to worry about it. It worked all right apparently. One praised God, honoured the King and went about one's private affairs. The political system, the vast networks of business, finance, professional organization, and so forth, seemed merely a special sort of scenery in which a number of people quite as self-centred as he was conducted their personal adventures, achieved prominence, power and fame, exploited their opportunities to adorn the romantic fabric of history. He did not emulate them. His own preference was for adventures in the realm of art and criticism. There he meant to cut a figure. He regarded political and social movements as things differing only in scale and size from theatrical productions; they were large phenomena by which individuals might gain or lose, which might be used for more or less brilliant conversation, but which could not possibly alter the general trend of events.

In the early part of 1914 there were seventeen or eighteen hundred million brains in the world, getting along very well after this fashion, hardly bothering to make any enquiry into the planetary framework of governments, money, trade and the like which held them together. These things had arrived somehow; these things would get along somehow. The statesmen, the monarchs, the priests and the preachers, the munition-makers and the newspaper proprietors and all who influence decisions and make arrangements for their fellow creatures, jumbled to and fro in the circumambient system, functioning, weaving their magic passes, making the modern equivalent to history. Great armies drilled and marched, very picturesquely, in some sort of correspondence with these prominent

figures; guns and munitions accumulated impressively; battleships at full speed were part of the handsome spectacle of life; it would have been a duller world without brass bands and bunting. It was as if all such things were just brightly moving decorations on the walls of the great edifice of human security. They were admired rather than scrutinized. There had to be something of the sort.

Theodore and his like glanced over the newspapers, left the politics and business alone and concentrated on the book reviews, the art shows and the personal gossip. They discussed the necessity of learning the new dances and the delicate problem of getting the maximum of dancing with the minimum of expense. These hopes and anxieties became vivid. The *the-dansant* appealed particularly to the needy young. The new syncopated music was breaking up all the established rhythms of behaviour. Preachers and popular journalists might protest against the levity of the New Young; the poor old dears were treated as comic turns. The baffled parents, after a few encounters with the new wit, retired to think it over and emerged again rejuvenated to join the dance themselves. Never was there such freedom.

For three centuries and more the fortunes of an ever increasing proportion of human beings had been in the ascendant. Inventions and discoveries, clashes of thought systems, libration of minds from dogma to enquiry, an epidemic of curiosity and exploration, the providential easing time after time of the clumsy traditional monetary devices of the race by great finds of silver and then of gold, had spread productive prosperity and confidence more and more widely about the planet. No one had planned it. It had happened. Famine receded, population increased, the grimmer incidents of the Middle Ages, pestilence, raids, conquests, massacres, persecutions and desolations, faded out of the human picture so far as the western world was concerned. Generation followed generation through those confident and expanding centuries, and a greater proportion of each succeeding series of brains germinated and opened and flowered into a securer, more assured social order. They accepted all that security and assurance and adjusted themselves accordingly. The idea of continual and necessary progress was born in them. The little cells in each several brain cortex in these immensely growing populations

were laced together in that confident pattern.

Theodore's life had begun at the very climax of this phase of irresponsible acceptance of abundance and security. Few then had any inkling that when the spate of good luck ran out it might need a concerted and sustained human effort for progress to continue. At that time this would have been a superfluous idea, and the human brain, as we are beginning to realize, is intolerant of superfluous ideas.

And then suddenly in July and August 1914 the mighty framework of western civilization began to creak, gave a resounding crack, a much louder and more audible crack than it had ever given within human memory, and for the first time in history the Laplanders and the Hottentots, the Peruvians and the Coreans, the men in the streets of Kansas City and Glasgow and the men in the streets of Aleppo and Mandalay, had to bring their startled brains, their various evasions and explanations of the universe and of themselves, to the test of one world-wide disaster.

And, of necessity, our Theodore's brain and the brains of his friends and acquaintances came all to the same assize.

2

It is War!

Hundreds of books have tried to convey in history or fiction the immense astonishment of August 1914. We have endless pictures now of those eventful days, of the news coming to holiday travellers abroad, to country-house parties, to Russian villages, to City clerks at work, to western farmers, to soldiers, ministers, schoolboys, women; invading a limitless variety of peace-time settings. But few of these descriptions bring out as yet with any success the extraordinary childishness and puerility of our first reactions to those vast events. If there was much astonishment there was little fear. There had been war before and this was war. For the great majority even of the citizens of the countries engaged in previous wars, warfare had always been essentially spectacular and sentimental. And now again most people in Europe, even in the lands where conscription ruled,

prepared to take their seats as spectators for a particularly moving and important show. They were deeply concerned in it, they had money and emotion in it; but still it seemed a show. This feeling of going to a show was shared even by the troops who were actually under arms. The British troops in particular went into Belgium singing and jesting, exactly as if they were on holiday and on the way to a popular football match. It was too remote from whatever experience any of the doomed populations had had for them to apprehend that this time the drama and its sequel were to unfold on such a scale as to make players of all of them at last, if only as supers and massed victims in the general catastrophe.

There are stories of American tourists, motoring about upon the Franco-German frontier, who showed the utmost disinclination to get themselves out of the way. So strong was this feeling that the war was to be a spectacular holiday. They wanted to pull up by the wayside and look on. Ambassador Page was busy in the Hotel Cecil with a torrent of his compatriots whose holidays had been "spoilt" by the lack of any proper consideration for their convenience on the part of the great Powers engaged.

"Some of them want to claim against the German Government for upsetting their holidays," he said. "They don't *get* it."...

They were only exceptionally conspicuous cases of not getting it. Less outrageously, but perhaps just as completely, was the rest of the world not getting it. All the brains in Theodore's circle were in kindred states of maladjustment to this new size and sort of war. All the brains in the world, the soldiers and statesmen as much as anyone else, were in a similar case. The train was fired but nobody could imagine what the explosion would be like. They responded as they had been trained to respond to the lesser wars of the past. There were a few cases of partial anticipation of the new possibilities, but we who can look back upon them realize now how partial and inadequate were even the best of those wiser ones.

The crisis caught Theodore on the Thames at a little inn between Marlow and Maidenhead. Ostensibly he was making studies of river scenery; he wanted to get the misty bloom on the water in the mornings and the soft warm light of the summer twilight. He was really working hard as he understood hard work. The Bernsteins

were in farmhouse lodgings over the hills towards Beaconsfield with a party of socialists and economic students; they argued interminably about the social revolution; he bicycled over to them and spent some tiresome days behaving sociably and trying to isolate himself and Rachel and never succeeding. But once they had contrived to be in London together for the day and they had gone to his flat.

His lodging was very conveniently placed. Down the river in a backwater near Monkey Island were the Broxteds in a houseboat. Teddy was reading for his degree examination and helping his father in some work he was doing upon certain microscopic organisms that abounded in the scum of the backwaters of the Upper Thames. An apparent rhythm in the prevalence and diminution of various forms that had no traceable cause — there seemed to be a maximum and a fading out every four weeks — had excited both of them to a strenuous industry. It seemed to Theodore a boring way of spending a summer. Why worry about infusoria? Mrs. Broxted and Margaret slept in the houseboat and camped on an ait during the day, evidently deriving the greatest amusement from achieving domestic comfort in the open air with the most uncomfortable appliances. But Margaret was also reading for an examination and swimming and rowing a lot. She seemed lovelier than ever that summer and more desirable, slightly freckled, sunburnt, barefooted and thinly clad; she was handier than Theodore with the boating gear and more smilingly inaccessible than ever. He had been thinking about her a lot. He had been wishing for some crisis that would break the even drift of their intimacy. Now it had come. War, he felt, must needs invest every man with a new and romantic interest. He hired a boat for the day and rowed down the river to talk to her.

Boulter's Lock was fairly well crowded with holiday folk. There had been no such immediate fierce and thorough sweeping together of the young men in England as had happened across the Channel. Even if the British Army was in the war, the youth of Britain was outside it still. But fluttering newspapers were much in evidence, a couple of hoarse newsvendors were handing down latest editions to the white-flannelled men in the jostling boats, and strangers talked to one another with an unusual freedom. "It's come," was the refrain. The general opinion was that the Kaiser was "running amok" and

that the power of Germany was fairly launched towards suicide. “They’re asking for it,” one red-faced man, wearing his straw hat like a halo, was repeating to everybody he could induce to listen to his oracle.

Theodore found this excitement contagious and exhilarating. He agreed that the Germans “were asking for it”. He echoed a warm, “Ra-thur”. He told a friendly lady that “they only know how to fight in masses”. Released from the conversazione in the lock he came down Maidenhead Reach in leisurely fashion, letting the water feather pleasantly over his slowly moving oar-blades.

Insensibly during his upbringing he had imbibed an intense confidence in his own country and people. He was pleased to think that “we” were responding to the challenge of the situation with pride and gallantry, and he was assured that our highly trained and seasoned little army would achieve astonishing victories in Belgium over the “unwieldy hosts” of the Kaiser. Our men would show these conscript armies of the Continent how to do it. They had learnt a few things in the Boer War. They could fight in open order and shoot them to rags. Between the two fleets, of course, there could be no comparison. Had we not had Nelson a century ago?

And since then all British admirals had been invincible. The Germans would come out and they would be magnificently smashed. Even now they might be hammering it out on the North Sea; a couple of hundred or so miles away. He thought of towering battleships steaming to victory, their guns flashing flames, their smoke unfolding about them.... Splendid.

As a background for such thoughts Theodore had the graceful span of Maidenhead Bridge and the animated lawn of Skindles’, a fringe of green lawn dotted with flannelled figures, and a shining mirror of gently rippling water reflecting very clearly the sunlit weather-mellowed stonework. Over everything hung the promise of Victory.

“Dear England,” he whispered. “*My* England.”

But on the houseboat he found a different set of values.

Never before had he realized the widening divergence between his own mind and these Broxteds as acutely as he did now. He found Teddy alone on the deck, sitting at a folding table and trying to concentrate upon a textbook. Theodore pulled up alongside and got aboard. “Well,” he said, “it’s come.”

“What d’you think of it?” asked Teddy.

“It had to come. They’ve been asking for it these six years.”

“Of all the damned silly things!” said Teddy.

“How?”

“In the midst of our lawful occasions, we find our idiotic Government has got us into this mess!” He pushed his book away from him. “What are we going to do about it?”

“Pull ourselves together and win.”

“Pull ourselves together —— You mean you are going to enlist?”

“Not exactly that, perhaps. It won’t *last* six months. I’ll go if I’m wanted. But I guess when this great rush into Belgium is disposed of there won’t be much left of Germany.”

Teddy sucked in his lips for a moment and regarded Theodore almost maliciously. “We shall get licked,” he said.

That took Theodore’s breath away. That anyone should say as much at the outbreak of a war seemed to him a devastating combination of blasphemy and treason. “Unless, of course,” Teddy qualified, “their soldiers and sailors are bigger fools even than ours.”

Theodore on very inadequate knowledge was for defending the efficiency of the British General Staff. These doubts were most unpleasant and disconcerting. But the year before, it seemed, Teddy had been studying the manoeuvres in the eastern counties. Out of curiosity he had followed the troops for some days. His observations had left him with a profound disbelief in the science and imagination of the national commanders. He swept aside all Theodore’s assurance of victory. These manoeuvres, he said, had been an “appalling” mess; they had had to be stopped, they had got into such a muddle. The generals engaged had not even known how to set about a battle. They had just tied themselves up helplessly. War across the water, on a Continental scale, would be altogether too much for such men. The job would be too big for them; the armies

too complex; the guns would shoot too far for their range of intelligence; the aeroplanes would put the kybosh on their strategy and surprises. “They’ll start out to fight battles and gain victories, and they’ll get the whole thing into one vast bloody jam, a traffic jam with guns going off into the thick of it — and there we shall be! A bloody congestion, supplies lost and everybody surrendering to everybody. I saw ‘em.... That’s what Grey and Co have steered us into. And what good will that do anybody or anything?”

The vigour of his conviction dashed Theodore considerably. He had been keeping it out of his mind very successfully so far that there might be some heavy going in this war. Still, one must face facts. “We’re *in* for it anyhow,” he said.

“And why the devil are we in it? Why the devil have we been pushed into it?” asked Teddy, and launched his individual contribution upon the most interminable wrangle that has ever exercised the Anglo-Saxon mind. “What good are Governments if they cannot keep the peace?” he asked. “Why have we been dragged in?”

“It isn’t we who have broken the peace,” said Theodore and made the second move in that perennial argument.

“We ought to have kept right out of the whole silly business,” said Teddy, digging himself in.

Thousands of such rivulets of talk were trickling that day, some to dry up again and disperse, some to run together and swell. To-day that dispute between Teddy and Theodore is embodied in scores of thousands of books and still they multiply.

Theodore argued. He said that if England had not declared war directly the Germans had entered Belgium she would have lost her soul. To abstain from participation would have been as dishonourable as absurd. But Teddy was clinging to an idea rooted very deeply in his mind, that war was an obsolescent puerility. By all his standards it ought to be, and manifestly it enraged him to be reminded that all the organization of a contemporary State still repudiated anything of the sort. “Obsolescent” had always been a great and comforting word in his philosophy. It had reconciled him to the continued existence of a multitude of things he disliked. He had grown up under the tacit assumption that, for anything now but

colonial and barbaric issues, the guns would never be used; that the guards on parade and the battleships at sea were only one whit less formal and traditional than the Beefeaters at the Tower. If these latter veterans had sallied out to slaughter people in Lower Thames Street he could not have been more surprised and indignant than he was at this declaration of war. He had thought that the general order of the world was maintained by the informal co-operation of an invisible inner circle of enlightened people. And meanwhile he had supposed science was advancing, communications becoming ever swifter, and the strands of a world commonweal of interdependence growing stronger and stronger. He had assumed that kings, emperors, statesmen, soldiers, were all modestly and tacitly assenting to that necessary progress. He supposed they knew their places in his highly civilized scheme. And now he found that he had been a fool. They had never heard of his highly civilized scheme. He realized the essential folly of non-revolutionary liberalism. He saw that progress that fails to reconstitute the Governments of mankind to meet the new conditions it is bringing about is not progress at all; at best it is a mere lunge forward. He, the uncompromising, had been living in a vast reverie of imaginary compromise. His bladder of confidence was punctured.

So Theodore found him reiterating, “We ought to keep out of it. We ought to have nothing to do with it,” and unable to meet a single objection to that impossible idea. He wanted to cut the war dead. It merely exasperated him to point out the absurdity of that. A great empire with flags and drums and troops and fleets and treaties and engagements could not very well decide at a moment’s notice that it had never meant anything of the sort, that these were the toys of children, and decline to play.

And Theodore did not think they were the toys of children. “This war will restore the soul of England,” he said. “I can feel it in the air.”

That was too much for Teddy. “So England has a soul, has it,” he cried, “as well as you? And we’re going to butcher men by the hundred thousand on that sort of claptrap!”

“Claptrap!” spluttered Theodore. “Claptrap! Better claptrap than a cowardly acquiescence in a Great Wrong. These Germans have been

working for it, plotting for it, asking for it....”

Mrs. Broxted and Margaret appeared among the willows of the ait in time to avert their exchanges from degenerating into a wrangle. “Have you seen anything of Father?” Mrs. Broxted called across to the houseboat.

“Where’s he gone?” asked Teddy, evidently glad to break off an argument at which he was for once wholly at a disadvantage.

“He went into Bray to telephone half an hour ago j don’t want to start frying until he comes.”

Margaret was standing behind her mother, very still and grave, and she was looking across at Theodore intently.

“You know we’re in the war?” he shouted with elation evident in his voice.

She nodded her head slowly and said nothing. For already she saw him on his way to the front.

“Here’s Father coming back across the field,” said Teddy.

Theodore dropped back into his boat to bring the Professor across from the bank to the backwater and the meal. He found in him an unexpected ally against Teddy. The Professor’s face was flushed and heated; his normally pugnacious countenance was a threat.

“I can’t get anyone,” he said as he got into the boat. “I’ve rung up twenty people if I’ve rung up one....

“We’re going into the war like children. We’re a mob, and they — they are an embattled people. How can we fight a vast organization like Germany unless we organize? Over there, there isn’t a chemist who is not enrolled, his speciality known, his task appointed. Here — nothing. Every man of science in the Empire ought to be mobilized. Every man of ability ought to be standing ready with his special knowledge or his special ability, known, docketed, available.”

“You think we ought to be in it, sir?” asked Theodore.

“What else was there to do? What else was there to do? Once they had entered Belgium.”

“The honour of the country,” said Theodore.

“Honour! Common sense.”

The sizzling sausages and potatoes that Mrs. Broxted and

Margaret were cooking over a camp fire were not yet ready, and meanwhile the Professor, too excited to sit down, stumped about round the folding table with its gay coloured plates on its gay coloured tablecloth, and harangued them all upon the iniquities of the Hohenzollerns and the unpreparedness of England.

He was just as destructive of Theodore's anticipations of a swift and easy victory as Teddy, and just as indignant at the recrudescence of warfare in a smoothly progressive world. But instead of spreading his indignation over the warring Governments of the earth, his particular brain-swirl centred upon the Hohenzollerns and upon them alone. "It's an attack on civilization," he said. "It's an outrage on mankind."

Teddy protested. Perhaps the foundations of patriotism which the father had acquired in early life had not been laid with sufficient care in the son. He argued now that this outbreak of war was only the necessary culmination of the long stupid game all the Foreign Offices of the world had been playing in despite of the welfare of mankind. Germany had been played into the position of firing first. That was all. "We ought to have cleared up all that long ago." He wasn't accustomed to arguments with his father when his father was as excited as he was now, and his attempt to state his case with elaborate respectfulness took on a note of irony. And besides, what sort of case was it? A criticism, but irritatingly devoid of any remedial suggestion. While the Professor was in a frantic state to do something. Before the sausages and potatoes were half consumed Mrs. Broxted had failed to avert a fierce quarrel between her husband and her son.

The quarrel was none the less bitter because both of them started from precisely the same idea, that idea of a tacit world civilization which was now suddenly broken up by this acute recrudescence of belligerence. But while Teddy was critical and unhelpful, his father was choleric. Teddy tried to diagnose the disease while his father sought the guilty party. Theodore agreed with neither. "Dear England! *My* England!" was singing in his blood. He was still thinking of Maidenhead Bridge and the fleet action. But he did not intervene except with a faint murmur of approval for the Professor. He was on the Professor's side because the Professor was giving

plausible reasons why England should fight and gain a romantic great victory. And also he was putting Teddy in his place.

Teddy was bullied into silence, told sharply not to cut in before his father had finished what he had to say, and the party ate in discomfort while Professor Broxted sustained a resentful monologue, showing plainly how Germany was the head and fount of militarism and armament and how her overthrow, her inevitable overthrow, would mean the end of aggressive monarchy throughout the world, would necessarily inaugurate a World Confederation, the Parliament of Mankind. The word "necessarily" laced his discourse. This war was the necessary crack of the old system before the revelation of the new. All the rest of the world was being forced by necessity into an alliance against the intolerable aggression of Germany. Plainly. Necessarily that alliance would endure. It would be obliged to develop a means of working together; that is to say, it would evolve a constitution, a World Constitution. That was inevitable. Only the stupidest mind (Teddy), the most obdurate mind (still Teddy), could fail to grasp how inevitable that was. What other outcome could there be? What *possible* outcome? (Loud silence from Teddy.) We had been living in an age of Transition.

"All life is Transition," said Teddy.

"*A* quibble," snapped the Professor. "What was the nineteenth century — *essentially* Transition. Yes, sir, real Transition. As distinguished from the stability of the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Then you had a system. Read your Gibbon, that memorable summary of a stabilized world towards the end. But the nineteenth has been change and change and change, change of scale, change of method, going on steadily towards the Peace of the World. We are at the end of an age. Transition is our essence."

The Professor's voice flattened as though it wearied him to recite the obvious. This was the great dawn. This was the last war, the War to end War. It might mean a more prolonged struggle than many people expected, but what of that? The world was in travail with the World State. Who could think of standing out from so vital an issue in human affairs?

Teddy's face expressed a stoical endurance of the irrational.

Margaret had helped to serve the meal and sat through the rumpus

with troubled eyes, saying nothing. Presently, after the Professor had been ferried to the bank again to resume his telephoning, she got away with Theodore in his boat.

Her first words to him were, “Don’t you go, Theodore.”

He thought for the moment that she meant he was not to return to his diggings up-river, but then he grasped her meaning in time.

“If England calls?” he said and weighed it. “No, I can’t promise that.”

“But don’t go,” she said. “I don’t want you to go.”

She was softer and gentler than she had ever been before. His instinct had been right. Trust war to emphasize virility and femininity. She sat in the boat, staring in front of her at a nightmare vision of violence and cruelty.

“Over there,” she said, “only a little way off over there — in the same sunshine, *now*, imagine it! — people are being harried out of their homes, men and women are being shot, boys and young men are being bayoneted, crushed, blown to pieces; it’s bloodshed, it’s death.... While we sat eating.... And it’s only the beginning...

He reasoned with her to allay her distress.- After all, somewhere, always, there is conflict and suffering, he said. This was a dark and tragic phase, but it was a necessary phase in the mighty unfolding of human affairs. And beyond this mighty effort — had not her father said it? — a Reconstructed World. It was splendid to see how old England was responding.

“But,” she persisted obstinately, “it’s only the beginning. Multitudes of simple people who were happy a few days ago. This — creeping on them. Why should there be such a phase? And how do we know there will be that new world? I thought war was done with.”

She shivered and would not be consoled.

4

To Go or Not to Go?

And now we have to tell of a great conflict that arose out of this war issue in Theodore’s brain, a conflict between this personality, the

Bulpington of Blup, whose progressive assembling, organization and ascendancy we have been tracing, on the one hand, and on the other a great number of outlying, discordant, conflicting and embarrassing factors which still had their phases of activity and divergent impulse, which were as yet still very imperfectly subdued to that imaginative leading. The Bulpington of Blup had accepted the ostensible values of the war from the outset, had adopted the role of a patriot in a spirit of unqualified gallantry and courage. It seemed the only handsome thing to do. But there remained a heavy undertow in quite another direction. Theodore was prepared to like the war, to be immensely interested and excited by the war, and even in imagination to take part in the war. But at the same time there existed a very strong desire to go on with his life in London, which had been shaping itself after his father's death upon very tolerable and interesting lines, and which was steadily opening out to more and more satisfaction and entertainment. This unconfessed desire just to go on and not be bothered by the war tugged from the outset at the sleeve of the Bulpington of Blup in all his simple bravery.

"Business as Usual", they stuck up in the London shops. "Carry on", became a popular phrase. His undertow used that. It supplied the text for a temporary reconciliation of the two strains. One might be all for the War to end War but nevertheless one had to keep cool. It was no use rushing about prematurely and creating excitement. All in good time. Steady does it. Be English; be phlegmatic. Fall in when the time comes — when they are ready for you. That wasn't altogether satisfactory to the Bulpington of Blup. It didn't stage well. It jarred with the spirit of leadership in him. But for a time it kept him from positive action.

His internal conflict was precipitated by a chance encounter with Francolin near Trafalgar Square. Francolin had now developed into a hefty lad of twenty and he looked the best of morsels for a drill sergeant, as he carried his little valise towards the depot.

"Hello, Bulpy!" he grinned cheerfully. "Coming?"

"One or two little things to see to," said Theodore.

"They'll want everybody, if all they say about that retreat is true. Too much for our brave little army altogether. It's masses we want. This war's going to be a big 'un. It's all in for everybody. When are

you coming, Bulpy? Come you must, you know."

"I'll be there all right," said Theodore, "if that old trouble of my father's doesn't rise against me — lungs and heart, you know — it won't be long before I follow you. I'm just a wee bit afraid of the medical. I'd hate to be held up."

"They don't bother very much about that sort of thing now. Make you strip, ask a question or two, slap your backside and tell you to go on with it. Bletts said it's the only exam *he* ever passed. Some of the doctors are examining four or five hundred men a day. He joined up on Friday, damn it! Who'd have thought of old Bletts, that frock-stalker, that drawers-tickler, stealing a march on me?"

They exchanged a few comments upon Bletts.

"He'll like the Frenchwomen," said Francolin. "Everybody says they're hot stuff.

"Well, so long," said Francolin. "Meet you in Berlin. 'When we've wound up the watch on the Rhine.'"

"Right O," said Theodore. "*Au revoir*."

He looked back and waved a hand and went his way and now he understood what the sprinkling of young men, in ones and twos and little bunches with bundles and parcels and small valises all going in the same direction, signified. The youth of England was "joining up".

And he wasn't.

Behind St. Martin's Church there were scores of them leaning against the wall or sitting on the pavement and waiting for their turn in some unknown process of reception. Many of them looked hungry and fagged and travel-worn. Theodore experienced no sort of impulse whatever to join them.

And here we come to a very obscure passage in this history of a brain. In that vast whirlwind of joining-up which was taking one hundred-thousand after another into khaki, it is a little difficult to trace our Theodore. He is lost for a time in a storm of enlisting individuals. It seems he was rejected for service. There are, at any rate, various witnesses to testify to the fact that he remained in London in civilian garb and civilian employment for fully a year after the declaration of war. And he did so, he said quite definitely, because he was unfit.

But where our trouble arises is in the details of his rejection. Very

gladly would we tell with the utmost particularity how Theodore volunteered, how he was subjected to a searching physical examination, how mysterious yet vital defects made the faces of the wise old doctors grave. We would describe how they shook their heads. “It would be murder to send you. Too finely made. You could not stand the marching, the hardship and exposure.” Then we would tell how he implored them to let him go, as all his friends were going, to serve in any capacity, to do some sort of “bit”, however little, in the great task. “It would be murder,” they insisted. “You would never reach the front. *Next.*”

He was pushed aside. He retired with sad dignity. He turned and made a last gesture of appeal.

“*Next!*” shouted the commissionaire....

It would have made a touching section in our story.

But for reasons that we shrink from thrusting too harshly upon the reader we cannot describe that scene. Theodore described it to himself with variations, several times. It had at any rate that much of reality.

But what the inflexible veracity imposed upon the storyteller does allow us to record are several private rehearsals of that examination, at which no medical men and no hardeyed military authorities were present. These self-examinations took place for the most part in his own apartments. Time after time he surveyed his naked self in the cheval glass that had been Rachel’s present to the flat. He could not conceal from himself that he was far thinner than he ought to be; there were hollows by his clavicles and his shoulders were like a frame exposed. You could count his ribs. It was not nearly as stout a body as people who saw him in his clothes might imagine. It was badly out of condition. He sometimes caught cold upon his chest and a year or so ago he had had the influenza.

He considered the story of Raymond’s physical weakness; his life snuffed out like a candle by one rash long walk on a November day in peace-time England. Was it fair to healthier men to encumber the lines of communication and the fighting line with a potential dud? All his instincts were against crowding in where he could not carry a man’s share of the burthen and play a leading part. It would be the least patriotic of actions to go sick upon an army by no means over

supplied with hospitals and nurses, just because one's pride, a mere love for handsome appearances, has insisted upon one's presence in the field of danger.

And also another system of thought held him back. It was all very well to go out there and be killed. That one *could* do easily, indeed one would do it very gladly and simply for dear old England, if it hurt no one but oneself. But would it hurt no one but himself? He reflected with a newborn tenderness upon Clorinda. He was her sole possession. Her only son. He had never realized before how much she loved him, and at the thought he recalled that he had not seen her for the last ten days and ought to look her up. And then there was Margaret whom the war had stricken hard. The steadily advancing cruelty of the war process in Belgium, as it was presented to a startled British public by the war propagandists, was wounding and scarring her mind. There was a gentleness in her that found these brutalities unendurable. She went beyond the intention of the indignation-makers. She was not merely horrified by the Germans — she knew some kindly German girls — she was horrified by mankind, horrified by life. Something could have been done, she felt, to prevent this reversion to animal ferocity, but what could have been done she did not know. In her distress she betrayed a long-repressed tenderness for Theodore. She wanted him to promise he would not enlist. She frankly wanted to be with him. Several times she kissed him of her own accord. She showed it was his body that she did not want hurt. He perceived he was under an obligation to her also.

Moreover, there was a third group of considerations restraining him. One might have all the fag of drilling and training for nothing. That was a consideration at a lower level, but it was a valid consideration. It took many weeks to make a soldier, it cost the country a perceptible sum and the war would be over quite soon. Every day the newspapers won the war anew. He might enlist and never be needed. Then he would find himself dislocated; his artistic education interrupted; his hands coarsened. Six months was the limit, he was assured. That was what Melchior said. But he only echoed the Press in that. Melchior was joining up. "I don't see how *we* can do anything else," he argued. "For me it's a symbolic act. Our people have had a fair deal in England. No Jew-baiting here. It's the German

Jew-haters we're up against. This is my second country. Englishmen are made as well as born. A public schoolboy like myself.... At times I feel more English than the English themselves."

But Melchior, it seemed, had an irregular heart-beat. He had known of it all the time, but he had not thought it would stand in the way. It did, and he turned his attention to non-military work of national importance. He took up clerical work under a cousin who was toiling night and day upon the problem of Army clothing, first of all as a partner in a great ready-made firm and then as a Government agent. After that Melchior ceased to repeat, "It will all be over in six months." He got more and more interested in the work of his cousin's department. The aspects of the war were changing and an early termination ceased to have its original urgency for him.

5

Out of the War "This war may go on for years."

That presently replaced the six-months idea, unobtrusively but completely. And by degrees, every day a little more, the separation between stage and audience advanced so as to include more and more of the latter in the drama. Rachel whisked herself off quite early. She had contrived to get herself attached to a volunteer ambulance that was flitting about on the defenceless Belgian soil, and thereafter she lived, to her great content, under a perpetual risk of a casual death among men whose standards of conduct had been beautifully relaxed by the war strain. She wrote Theodore once in pencil, briefly and he thought rather boastfully and unfeelingly, giving no address for a reply; she sent him a slightly indelicate picture post-card with "Greetings from Ostend" on it for the New Year, and thereafter she vanished out of his life. One of the Rowlands assistants went after about six weeks of war; he had been a volunteer. Then two fellow students went; a girl student, for whom Theodore had developed a certain easy friendliness, departed to train as a nurse, and Vanderlink suddenly renounced art and gave up his studio, which had promised to become a war-time rendezvous for people of literary and artistic proclivities.

“I can’t stand it,” said Vanderlink — his sole explanation; and went to Italy to join a Quaker ambulance.

Every day more and more people found themselves in the war and the number and weight of those who were out of the war diminished. This growing and deepening war vortex was spinning to and fro throughout the London world and drawing in more lives and more. Fewer and fewer were able to resist its compelling interest, fewer and fewer ignored its call, and the vast multitude of mere lookers-on with which the war began in London diminished steadily towards the dimensions of an ever dwindling margin.

And what was happening in the world about him was happening also in parallel series in Theodore’s brain. There also more and more of him was being drawn into the war vortex and finding a role there, and less and less of him was resisting, protesting and dragging away outside.

The vortices of a social animal and its community, like the spin of sun and planets and satellites, are necessarily, under the same spell. The war crash had sent all mankind spinning off at a great pace, if with different amplitudes and velocities. It was the same spin in Theodore, in that confused brain aggregate which was his London world, in what might be called the English mind, and in the still more comprehensive and complex brain-swirls that are the inner realities of Empire and Anglo-American culture and western civilization. Round they span together with a steadily growing momentum. This war, Theodore realized phase by phase, was not merely something that was happening; it was becoming everything that was happening. It was the new shape of life. Soon there would be no space in which one could live outside it. If not by compliance then by resistance one would have to come in.

Theodore’s brain-swirl like all our brain-swirls turned on an idea of self. That idea of himself was by no means absolutely fixed and defined. It spun about his dream of the Bulpington of Blup as its nucleus, it gravitated about that. Everything else in his thoughts fluctuated wildly, but this vortex of desire and reverie was becoming more and more stable and established. It was simple, sentimental, trite in comparison with the vast and shadowy perplexities that assailed him. It was easier, so much easier. So by the mere quality of

facility it was now mastering his conduct altogether.

How that now dominating personality arose, how it was assembled and gathered definition, has been our story.

Steadily now it was establishing itself as the real Theodore. Its picturesque honourableness, its inveterate enterprise, all its characteristics, had come about as natural reactions to a world that seemed set for good along the paths of safety. In the endless, changeless days of childhood, in the long years of youth, the Bulpington of Blup had taken to himself a romantic and flawless courage, the charms of chivalry, the habit of high adventure. Whatever costume he wore, shining armour or courtly dress or time-honoured uniform, his quality was that. He was loyal always, loyal to the marrow. And now it went without saying that he responded to the flags and cheering with dilated nostrils, so to speak, an expanding chest and an infinite scorn for all who faltered and failed.

There were his fellows by the million in the British community. Our first response to the challenge of the great war was beyond all question heroic.

And yet that was not all Theodore's reaction, because the Bulpington of Blup was not yet the whole of Theodore. Compromises had still to be made. There were elements in him and elements in the community about him that were not running out to follow the drums, that on the contrary were resisting any such impulse with considerable energy. We have told as delicately as possible of Theodore's "unfitness". When "Go" was shouting everywhere about him and echoing loudly within him, the fact remains that for a year he did nothing. Elaborately and disingenuously he did not go. And necessarily he found himself in a rather depleted, and continually more depleted, world of associates who also were not going, and of some even, like Teddy, who had vowed from the outset that nothing should induce them to go.

Presently there appeared, in London, flitting young women in a state of concentrated excitement, who scrutinized passing young men in civilian clothes aggressively. They were modern Walkyrie, choosers of the slain. In the Hampstead Tube one day, Theodore was accosted. It was a common little creature with a round pink babyish face. He had thought she was trying to catch his eye with friendlier

ends in view. “E’scuse me!” she said, as she passed him to get out at Camden Town, and, with a jerky projection of her genteel brown-gloved hand, gave him a small white feather.

He stood up with the damning symbol in his hand. But she had gone before he could explain that he had been rejected and found unfit. He sat flushed and ashamed and looked at his embarrassed fellow passengers.

“That’s too bad,” he said aloud. “A fellow ought to have an armlet.” And he left it at that. A middle-aged man grunted and nodded sympathetically.

Theodore had discussed that idea of an armlet with Melchior. It was to be a voluntary armlet, just to show that they had done what could be expected of them. He even tried a band of khaki ribbon for a day or so on his left arm. It comforted him a little until he found himself standing close to a policeman in a Tube lift. The policeman was staring at the new badge and seemed on the verge of a question.

“Vaccination,” said Theodore before he was asked. “I couldn’t get pink tape,” and he went home and unpicked the thing and took it off at once.

He had put it on only to avoid unpleasantness, and if there was to be more unpleasantness then there was no sense in wearing it at all. But that night he lay awake while the Bulpington of Blup overwhelmed him with reproaches. The compromise of his rejection wore thin. “I must go,” he said. “I must go. If they will not have me at one place I must go to another. Even if I have to *trick* them into taking me, I must go.”

Even to the darkness and in the full tide of being the Bulpington of Blup, you see, he would not admit the extreme perfunctoriness of his first examination. His rejection by an actual medical authority was taking on more and more of the quality of a genuine memory. Later it did become a genuine memory.

“I must go.” He came down to breakfast pale and resolute.

And he did nothing more about it for another three months.

“Coward” and “shirker” were words in abundant use in those crucial days. The Bulpington of Blup accepted those terms unreservedly and was quite ready to apply them in his thoughts even to his sturdy friend Teddy. Yet it was rather a strain to impute

cowardice to Teddy. He scoffed loudly at any pretence that he had been "rejected", more than once his laughter had seemed to glance at Theodore, and he went about London wearing a white feather in his buttonhole and ready, he said, to put up either his fists or his arguments to anyone who chose to notice his challenge. But the scowl of his ruddy face was far too heavy for the patriotic persecutor. He had had another noisy quarrel with his father, and they would not speak to each other. The Professor was engaged upon some sort of war-work and Teddy was going on sulkily and alone with the joint beginnings of their research upon the rhythms of those Thames infusoria. When the Broxted men met at meals now, they ate in silence, but it was hard to find shirking in Teddy's attitude to his father.

And to put pretences aside, was it really cowardice and shirking that were at work even in those elaborate hesitations and evasions of Theodore's? Was all that part of Theodore which stood out of the war really pervaded by fear, ruled by fear as its dominant motive, or was there something less simple than that in those distrusted outcast protesting elements of his brain? The fact is that throughout that year of abstinence from war, fear, the instinct of self-preservation, was hardly active at all in Theodore's brain.

The imagined self about which Teddy, on the other hand, arranged his private life had drawn its substance from just those bodies of suggestion and interpretation which the Bulpington of Blup had pushed outside Theodore's consciousness. These impotent or unconscious factors in the mental margin of Theodore were closely sympathetic with all that Teddy was saying and doing. And Teddy's new pugnacity had a definite kinship with the zealous honour of the Bulpington of Blup and the belligerence of his father. He was trying to suppress his secret exasperation with the Hohenzollern brand of militarism. He was trying not to echo Theodore's perplexed, "But seeing how things are now, what else is there for us to do?" So he prepared to fight the patriots. Of the two, stocky, close-set Teddy seemed more of a fighter than long-limbed slender Theodore. Each of these two war-distressed minds found in the other a tiresome assertion of just the very things it was most strenuously keeping down.

Already an antagonism for Teddy had been arising in Theodore as he had felt the brother's intellectual and moral influence over Margaret standing in his way with her. Now this new strain upon his effort for unity in himself was enhancing that antagonism extravagantly. Balance was difficult and painful in those days for nearly everyone. Teddy had his own instabilities. The effort to be just and open-minded in a time of general excitement was toppling him towards pro-Germanism and Anarchism. Since everyone about him was shouting and screaming that Germany was black, he was under the greatest urgency to find her white, white as the driven snow. He could hardly meet Theodore now without contradictions and bickering.

What essentially was this objection to being in the war, which Teddy, under his conception of himself, was doing his utmost to express and Theodore, under a different standard, his utmost to subdue? What was their common factor? It amounted to this — that Theodore was keeping out of the war though he was convinced he ought to be in it and Teddy was struggling desperately to preserve his resolve to keep out of it unsullied by the faintest participation, under one and the same drive, the drive of one of the profoundest urgencies in a living brain, the urge to free initiative. The recent generations of security and prosperity, in the western world more particularly, had given that desire such scope as it had never had before. These youngsters had grown up with an almost unchallenged assumption of their right to self-development. They had come into what had seemed a world of happy opportunity. They had met with little discipline and less punishment. People had asked them, with intimations of unlimited choice: "What would you like to do?"

"What would you like to be?" Suddenly they were confronted with an immense, a universal compulsion. The picture of human happiness and world amplitude was withdrawn and the real situation revealed. Abandon whatever you are doing, it said, cease to be whatever you had proposed to be, and come into the war. Come into the war. The war is everything and you are nothing, nothing whatever, except what you are in relation to the war.

It was that instinct for the preservation of freedom, quite as much as, possibly far more than, the mere instinct of self-preservation, that

produced the widespread mental stresses that became manifest in the British war generation as the great tragedy unfolded itself. It was not fear but an immense dilemma that baffled them. It was a riddle for which they had no answer. Were they waking up from pleasant delusions to stern reality, or were they being turned away from glorious possibilities by a dark obsession with tradition?

In their interpretation of this war and what it was, upon the value they gave the war, Theodore and Teddy diverged. Teddy took the latter alternative and the Bulpington of Blup the former. The Bulpington of Blup, built up upon romantic, noble, historical and literary material, accepted the war and his own necessary participation in it as inevitable, and fought down all those mute instinctive objections of the circumambient Theodore. He had not expected war, but since war had come it had to be met and met according to all the best traditions. He was prepared to believe that his generation was called upon to *serve.* He was prepared to drop his art and writing, which after all had no very fundamental grip upon him, and go.

Teddy's mind accepted nothing of the sort. From the outset it would do nothing to hide from itself that War, in modern guise, is the most deadly and stupendous Bore that ever confronted the spirit of man. He would not tolerate the idea of its necessity. He would not have it a tragedy, a call to effort and nobility, a chastening fire for a slacking world, the sacrificial rebirth of civilization; it was simply a hideous Bore. "Bore," he shouted. "Bore and balderdash." He was for stripping away every rag of pretence from the facts. The statesmen were "fools", the military leaders "idiots"; they had none of them grown up to honesty and the idea of civilization; it would be none the less an orgy of ugly imbecility because it involved the torture and death of millions.

He raged at the lazy insincerities of the past generation. It would have been more graceful if he had done so before the war began. We ought, he now discovered, to have cleaned up our eighteenth-century monarchies and their uniforms and their national anthems and national "policies" years ago. The world's toleration of poor old Queen Victoria, whom he persisted in calling "the grandmother of the War", was, it seemed, the chief sin for which we were all

suffering. In some obscure way she had become his symbol for everything he resented, the embodiment of tradition, sentimentality and self-defensive lassitude. He saw her as she sits outside Buckingham Palace — sitting on his blessed progress. There should have been a republic in England for the last hundred years. We ought to have followed America and France. There had been a conspiracy of the indolent and timid well-to-do, to keep up the sham that in some way that odd little old lady embodied a modem community. It was preposterous. How could one run the modern world in a pattern of little personal estates? Our fathers and grandfathers had muddled along with those old political forms when in their bones they knew them for falsehoods and conventions. So in that fashion this Bore of international rivalry, this competition of royal estates, the pattern set by ambitious monarchs, had not been simply left over; it had been left in possession; it had been allowed to grow and grow unheeded by the preoccupied industrialists and workers, until now it was resuming control and preparing, with an assumption of unchallenged rightfulness, to trample on us all.

It was only when one put the question of getting rid of the Bore that Teddy betrayed his essential weakness and became vague and irritable. Because, to be plain about him, he had still to think that out.

"One must defend oneself!" said Theodore.

"Have nothing to do with it. Have nothing to do with it. You need only stand out. If everyone stood out—"

"Exactly," said Theodore exasperatingly.

"There are a thousand better things to do with life," cried Teddy.

"End the German menace and we can do them."

"End the German menace by going one better and you'll find that we have taken over the goose-step and the drill-sergeant. We're doing it now. The War to end War — that's the magic phrase that has befuddled Father. He thinks that when we've smashed that fleet of theirs and massacred their infantry and taken those Krupp guns and all that, Lloyd George and King George and the Tzar and the French and the bankers and munition-makers are going to sit down together in a friendly conference, pool their flags and crowns, finish all that the eighteenth century left undone, and inaugurate the Millennium. I *see* them. Let the wolves kill the tiger and then we'll give up having

beasts of prey. You won't abolish cannibalism by eating cannibals. You'll never end war by war because it's the best war-maker wins, the oaf who takes war most seriously. End it by shooting every damned jackanapes who puts on a uniform. That's saner. Turn the guns round on Headquarters. Spoil the sport. End it — perhaps we will end it yet — with one good world revolution. That's something like. War will be over when the common man refuses to salute. Not before. We have only to say, a few millions of us, "Peace or World Revolution, you fools" — and we should get peace."

So Teddy — out of the war from the beginning.

And Margaret too was out of the war.

Its outbreak had filled her with tragic dismay. Life had suddenly put a pleasant mask aside and made this hideous grimace. Her imagination was tormented by the story of the young cousin of the Parkinsons', a regular officer who had danced off gaily to Belgium, to return within a month, a bloodstained living parcel, blinded, disfigured and minus one hand. One of the Parkinson girls had seen him and described his injuries all too vividly. And a Belgian refugee from Antwerp had described the things that writhed and cried out after a crowd of people had been caught by a shell-burst in a narrow alley. For nights Margaret dreamt of hideously mutilated human bodies and flayed and eyeless monsters that pursued her and called to her with incomprehensible appeals. And there was nothing for her to do about it. The outsiders were helpless. She would have gone into training as a nurse, but Teddy bullied her into keeping on with her medical studies. "By the time this war is over," he said, "one generation will have lost its lives and another its education. Try and keep y*our* little spark of learning alive anyhow."

Yet because they were both outsiders, Theodore turned to her company. London was full of excited young women in these days, but the preference for men in uniform was so emphatic that he found himself uncomforted by any feminine friendship to replace Rachel. And the anti-war young woman of liberal habits was impatient with the idea that he was simply out of the war because he was unfit. But Margaret was becoming tender with him. She gave him a ready companionship for walks and games. She was working hard at her medical studies; when she was not working she wanted to be

distracted by trivial things. People in that ugly stressful time became very hungry for laughter. The music-halls kept the home fires burning and the films of Charlie Chaplin were happily accessible, cheaply and abundantly. The two of them would go right across London if Charlie was on the programme, and then find a meal at some odd eating-house. And they amused themselves by wandering about such big shops as Whiteley's and Harrod's and they made a research for the obscurer London parks and gardens. They talked very rarely about the war. Neither wanted to talk about it. Yet somehow it was irrepressible. Always she treated him as though he was standing out of the war of his own free will, as though he also was a "resister". She put his explanation that he was unfit aside, as though he had never made it.

"But you don't understand," he said. "These things don't affect me as they affect you. They make my blood boil. They make me see red! If I could go I would."

It was the obscure necessity he was under to justify his attitudes to Margaret that at last tilted the delicate balances of his mind and drove him, stammering again slightly, to the recruiting office and into the war.

6

In the Trenches

Like a considerable majority of his fellows in those days before conscription, Theodore found an immense relief in joining up. It was decisive. It pulled him together again. His troubled sense of honour was satisfied; a code had been observed; his ailing and doubting self-respect found itself in harmony with the newspapers and the man in the street, and was reassured and exalted. The Bulpington of Blup had never before taken such complete possession of Theodore's life. That obscure and troublesome instinct — if it be an instinct — for a vague independence and personal liberty had been conquered and subdued, and on the other hand the deeper, more fundamental instinct of self-preservation lay practically unawakened as yet, in the deeps of his being, with all its powers unrealized.

Theodore made, they said, a good recruit. Whatever physical unfitness may have haunted him during his phase of uncertainty vanished when he got into uniform and training. His physical appearance improved, and his capacity for exertion. He lost much of his sensibility to small pains and minor discomforts. He suffered little, as things went, at the hands of the non-commissioned officers set in authority over him. He had his own private resources and his tipping erred if anything on the side of a gentlemanly generosity. But he had sufficient tact not to come the gentleman over his masters in any other way. And his instincts for wangling were exceptionally sound.

Our story concerns the brain of Theodore and has no interest in describing the backgrounds of his experiences, except in so far as they changed the tenor of his mind. So here we will not repeat what has been told wonderfully and for all time, out of the richness of their intense personal impressions, by Aldington, Blunden, Graves, Gristwood, Stephen Graham, Ralph Scott, Montague, Sassoon, Tomlinson, Nevinson, Hodson and their peers; the tale of our gently civilized, none too thorough Britons coming out, or being dragged out, of the easy, regular, comfortable, three-meals-a-day-and-a-bed-at-night life in which they had been moulded, to the brutalities and hardships of the barrack yard, to the coarse clothing, to the reek and creeping dirtiness of crowded humanity, to the mean indignities of subjection and petty tyranny, to the exhausting route marches and exercises, to the bayonet training and the bombing school, the brief respite of leave, the sentimental farewells to home and friends, the crowded journey in darkened ships across the water to France, the halts and uncertainties, the shifting from rat-infested billet to louse-infested billet, the first vibration of the guns, the steady journey towards that muttering monster, always muttering louder, the sudden flash and concussion of batteries near at hand, the mud, rain, exposure, the carrying of heavy weights on slippery tracks, the increasing detonations and concussions, the flares at night, the first glimpse of air raids, the first shell-bursts. And so at last, with all the poor habitual decency and convenience of civilization left behind, to the stench and mud, the smashed protections and flimsy shelters, the thundering, rattling, glaring black suspense of the trenches, where in

uproar, filth and fatigue they were to meet at the same time the alpha and omega of human evil, the renascent savagery of animal combativeness in alliance with such a mechanical destructiveness as no other age ever conceived.

The bookish student of history in the future will find a curious interest in the contrasts between the literature which tells the story of the English going to war on the one hand, a complex, reluctant, voluntary affair, and that which describes the fatalistic acquiescence of the conscript countries on the other; and as a third type the records of the febrile leap into big-scale belligerence of America, after two years and more of excited observation. Hemingway and the anonymous writer of *Wine, Women and War* tell the story of an absolutely different psychological process from the British. They come into a war that has been completely *made,* that they have read about endlessly, and all their America was left behind them, as they crossed the ocean, acutely critical and with all their instincts abnormally excited, to play their part in the great last struggle. For them it really was a release from the restrictions of home to Wine, Women and War — in that order. For them it has remained a memorable excursion. They found the long congealed western front already dissolving into the final collapse. The German Army was in its last phase of resolution. But the common English grew up to the war, out of their profound orderly peacefulness, as the war grew, it was just "the war" for them, they endured through a stagnant strain and slaughter of nearly four years, in which the Americans had hardly any share. The English of the south and east were almost within sound of the guns before they joined up — in Essex and Kent that quivering undertone had been heard in 1914 — and they made the brief night journey across the narrow seas and were entrained and marched about a little and at last plodded up the broken roads and winding communication-trenches in sections and companies to an incredible reality of stress and desolation, to the slowly developing complexities of a macabre trench warfare, to a stress and horror for which they were altogether unprepared.

We have explained that it was not fear which had held back Theodore from a prompt entry into the war. He was not accustomed to fear. His instinct of self-preservation was buried deep in disuse.

Except in dreaming states and when he was a very little child, he had never really been afraid. But once he was fairly launched on this strange and painful journey to the front he began to experience some very unwonted sensations. Of fatigue and physical hardship, of hunger and thirst, he had already learnt during his training, but now something else was creeping in. In his sheltered life in England he had seen only one dead body, his father's. He was close up to the front before he encountered a dead body again. Then suddenly wounds and death were all about him.

It was evening in a patch of open exposed country and all the section agreed that a resting-place was overdue. He was trudging along with his equipment in a state of weary endurance. The battalion found itself under the fire of some remote battery. Impossible to say whether it had been marked down or whether the enemy was just taking pot-shots at the roads. A big German shell burst in a field perhaps a quarter of a mile away. A huge mass of red-brown smoke and dust leapt into the air, hung for some moments — the light of the setting sun pierced the dense mass and showed it in a state of intense internal movement — and then slowly, very slowly and deliberately, blackened, frayed out, spread and began to disperse. It seemed of no great importance to Theodore. This was how one saw it in the pictures. He watched it and wondered how one would paint such an effect.

He became aware of his platoon commander running back towards him and shouting. "Halt!" he was saying. "Section D halt. Let the other section clear this bit first." He spun round. "God damn! What's that?"

The tearing rip of a second shell became intensely present. The crescendo ended in an immense thud. But this time it was a vast concussion a hundred yards ahead — and it had got the road and Section B. The flash was blinding. Time seemed to check and blink and then go on again and Theodore saw bits of road, rags of men, limbs, bodies, equipment, earth, making long leaps in the air.

He was stunned. He became for a while a mechanism of obedience. He needed to be told what to do. The section was moving again and he moved with it.

"Get on with it," someone was saying. "Hurry!" They were going

on — past that place. Quick march.

He was told to keep to the right. Everybody was swerving to the right past a blood-bespattered patch of broken-up roadway.

Something slippery was under his foot. Bah! — a red smear, and something. He stopped agape. Close at hand was a human body mainly denuded, torn in half. An indescribable mangled mass of red viscera trailed away from it in the dust. The head was lying away from him, seemed to be staring at him. He recognized the contorted face. He had known the man. There was a crumpled figure a few yards further on; what had happened to it? It was as if it tried to conceal its own indignity. God! And again among the weeds — was that an arm? A human arm torn off and flung aside!

"Get *on* there! Get on! They're done for. There's no helping them."

But before Theodore could get on he had to be sick. He staggered out towards the roadside away from all that. —

"Hurry up!" cried a sergeant. "Get it over!"

Theodore wanted to lie down and end. He was punched in the back, shaken by the shoulders and thrust forward. He stumbled along, staggering and still retching, after his section. He was weeping. "My God!" he repeated, "My God!" over and over again. He had never thought it would be anything like this.

Then Evans, his platoon officer, was giving him brandy.

"Pull yourself together, man," said Evans. "Did you think you could make war without spilling something?"

A third shell ripped the air and burst some couple of hundred yards or more away, ineffectively. But its impact quickened Theodore's mind. He pulled himself together and got on.

He was greatly comforted presently by the imaginary protection of a devastated village street, a ruined wall and some war-wilted poplars. But he was still whispering, "My God!"

Happily that distant gunner had finished for the evening. Theodore jumped at the next burst, but it was from a hidden gun-pit close at hand.

"That's all right, mate," said a friendly voice. "That's one of ours."

Gradually his sense of the men about him and of an audience

returned to him. He ceased to huddle with his comrades as if he was in a huddle of driven sheep. The brandy he had swallowed helped him. He ceased to mutter "My God!" He looked sideways at the others and caught a touch of courage from their stoical bearing; he looked at Evans and felt his scrutiny. He pulled himself together, raised his head and readjusted his pack.

"Better?" said Evans.

"Bit green to it, sir," said Theodore. "I'll get on now. I'll be all right now. Sorry."

He smeared his hand across his tear-wet face. And then in spite of himself he looked back along the darkling road where that horror lay in the shadows.

He made immense efforts at self-control. His pride arose as he realized that the men who were with him were concerned about him. "Took me by surprise," he apologized. "Recognized that fellow. Had a drink with him.... Yesterday."

"You'll be all right in a minute," comforted a little wizened man he had hitherto treated with contempt.

"I'd had a drink with him, you see," Theodore went on explaining.

"Of *course* you did," said the little wizened man.

Theodore was quiet all that evening and rather afraid of what his dreams might be, but he slept like a log. He awoke early. He lay in the straw staring blankly at the patches of sky visible through the ruinous barn roof above him. For a time he was interested in the occultation of a star by a rafter. Then he came to his personal problem. What had happened to him? He had been rattled by that — affair; he had been badly rattled. If he did not keep a tight hold upon himself he would give way. He stared at the snoring logs of men who sprawled and muttered beside him. Were they better men than he? Or less sensitive?

Of course it had been a particularly nasty smash. It had been an unexpected shock and had taken him unawares, when he was nearly fagged out. It was not the sort of thing that would recur. But he had been exceptionally rattled!

It must not happen again. He must pull himself together. He must not let himself be taken by surprise a second time. Fear had very

nearly got hold of him — very nearly — before he could brace himself up to it. How had be behaved? What had it looked like? He had been sick. Well, any fine-made person might have been sick. Had he wept? He persuaded himself he had not done so. But fear? Of course that was the great danger here — *fear.* — For some days he had felt that elemental instinct stirring in him, and had not known, or had not cared to know, what it was down there in his depths that had been pushing its way up to his attention. Now he knew. Now he knew the enemy within. He knew what he was in for.

The bravest men, he told himself, are those who overcome fear. Any fool can fail to realize danger. These oafs about him — for them it was a different matter. The bravest animal is the rhinoceros. Because it has no imagination. They were all right so far. They hadn't his difficulties. Hitherto the Bulpington of Blup had never known fear, but now the ideal had changed. He ruled his fear with an iron will. He never betrayed an inkling of it to any human soul.

"A gallant gentleman," he whispered to himself. "A very gallant gentleman."

What a tonic words can be! "A very gallant gentleman." In that spirit he arose to face the tensions of another day.

That day the battalion went into the line. No man in his section was more alert than Theodore. He was so alert and bright-eyed and willing that his sergeant was moved to ask him what "all the mucking hurry" was "abaht".

"You'll get what's coming to you soon enough," said the sergeant.

It was a comparatively uneventful part of the line to which Theodore went, but it supplied him with all the excitement he needed. There had been severe fighting at an earlier stage and the British lines ran now in and out of a previous German system; there were some unburied dead still rotting in exposed places, and many miserable shallow cross-marked graves that were ever and again laid bare by some explosion or the spraying of a machine-gun, so that Theodore's mental digestion of the fact and aspects of mortality had still to go on. No-Man's-Land was a sinister desolation of wire tangles, mounds, rags, scraps of humanity, tin cans and litter, but the actual warfare had declined to the petty persecution of sniping,

occasional bombthrowing and trench raids, intermittent gusts of shelling, machine-gun fire and trench-mortar bombardments. Wherever they could, a multitude of coarse flowering weeds struggled with this man-made barrenness; the torn trees budded, birds sang and prosperous and impudent rats abounded. The nights were quiet, except when some inexplicable nerve-storm on one side or the other sent up livid flares over the lines and awakened the machine-guns. Neither side was doing very much in the air. The trenches were reasonably dry and deep; the dug-outs, dark and stuffy but sound-looking. It was really a very gentle initiation for a raw beginner.

Theodore's resolve to efface the impression of the previous day from his own mind and the mind of his section made him almost aggressively helpful and bright. He assisted his little wizened friend with his pack. He displayed a marvellous helpfulness with a man who had a chafed heel. He produced some aseptic pomade that Aunt Amanda had bought him. He went and got water to wash the sore. He exchanged cheerful remarks with the men they were relieving. He gave away cigarettes. "D'you ever *see* them?" he asked, meaning the Germans. It seemed a good thing to say and he said it several times.

But one young officer of the battalion they were relieving was coming down dead on a stretcher. He had been hit at an exposed point, just as he was taking a last look round. His face was covered by a bloodstained rag and no one attempted to see it.

"Damn bad luck, sir," said Theodore standing aside, "damn bad luck!"

His eyes insisted on following that bloodstained rag until he wrenched them away.

The enemy woke up to the fact that some change was in progress, their trench mortars became active and there was a gust of liveliness in the trenches.

Whup *bang!* close at hand. Where was that?

Theodore clenched his teeth and recovered. Had he crouched? He craned his neck. "Nobody hurt!" he cried gaily. "Carry on."

He was told to keep his mucking head down and shut up.

He laughed quite naturally and cheerfully.

He continued to be enlivening and unselfish when they took up

their quarters in the dug-out. “This is the best billet I’ve had in France so far,” he said gaily. “Not a draught. Not even ordinary ventilation. When’s the grub coming?”

“That’ll come,” growled someone.

The men settled down. He thought they seemed a little sulky with him. But that might be his fancy. He lit a cigarette and hummed a fragment of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Then he found he had stopped humming. He was listening to the noises outside. There was still a lot of stuff coming over, it seemed. His corporal seemed to be watching him in a not too friendly way. Had he offended the man? There was something unpleasant, he found, in being cooped up in this dark stuffy hole. And his thoughts began to run on that red rag over the young officer’s face. It was inadvisable to shelter here too long with nothing to do. He decided to go up and take a look round. That last bang must have been quite close.

But Fritz was letting things calm down again. Nothing else came over. After a little time Theodore was set to help repair the damage to the parapet caused by a trench mortar, and after that there were other small jobs to do. He did them rather jumpily. He was torn between a strong desire to look over the top and see what he could of the enemy and an equally strong disposition to keep his head a yard below the level of stray projectiles. Twilight was deepening and presently he was back in the dug-out. The close atmosphere was now enriched by various attempts to fry bacon and to make tea in mess-tins; four of the men were playing nap by the light of a candle-stump and three or four had tucked into their short and narrow bunks and were professing sleep. Everybody seemed in a bad temper and a quarrel was going on between the wizened little man and a foul-mouthed lout from Ealing about the disposition of their kit. Theodore sat in silence for a time and then, to keep his mind off that memory of a horror which besieged him, he decided to clean his rifle.

The man next him was a red-haired, white-skinned youth who had partly undressed in an effort to distribute what he believed to be a flea-powder of exceptional potency over his person and costume. “Come out of it, you swine,” he was muttering. “I’ll show you.” He too was a new recruit.

His mutterings provoked Theodore to conversation.

“We’ve got here,” he said.

“Here! — Where?”

“Up here.”

“They’ve got us up here right enough,” said the vermin-hunter. “*Lousy* hole!”

“It isn’t what I thought.... But we’ve got to go through with it. Wonderful to think we’re in the last war of all.”

“*What?*” cried a corporal who was lying down. He sat up so sharply that he rapped his head against the beam overhead, and his particular repertory of blasphemy poured all over the dug-out.

When the spilt vocabulary had dried up, the wizened little man took up the conversation. “When you say it’s the last war, you mean, I suppose, it’s going on to Judgment Day,” he said.

“I mean we’re going to win,” said Theodore. “Of course we’re going to win. And before very long. And that will be the end of war. What would be the sense of our being here, if it wasn’t going to end all this sort of thing?”

“*All this sort of thing*?” echoed the corporal, still rubbing his head. “Whad’you mean by *all this sort of thing*? Mean there won’t be any more war — any more sojering?”

“Well, what else are we fighting for?”

“There won’t be any more sojers?”

“Not so many. It’s a sort of clean-up, this is. If you read the papers—”

“Don’t be a mucking fool! Read the papers indeed! Aren’t we’Ere? Ain’t it right under our noses? And does it look like finishing? End *this sort of thing*? End it. Rot! There’s always ‘as been sojers and there always will be. And what sort of pasty-faced milksop world would it be without ‘em? You tell me that. This war — it’s either going to put guts into your sort of chap or it’s going to rip the guts out of you. That’s what this war’s for, and a damn good thing it’s going to be for you either way. And after this war there’ll be the next war and after that the next after and so on war without end, Amen.”

“Either we got to get the best of Jerry,” said the wizened-faced man, “or he gets the best of us. And the best man wins.”

“*That’s* right,” approved the corporal.

The wizened-faced man seemed to feel he had said what was expected of him. He mused and emerged with a profound remark. “Wonderful this war — strawdinary. Things we find ourselves doing. I’m a cabinet-maker, you know. I made some nice pieces in my time.”

“Then why aren’t you making aeroplanes?” said the corporal.

“Well, ours was what you’d call a faker’s shop. I’m better at veneering and touching-up than at the straight work. And I tried all right. I’m not up ‘ere for the love of it. I’d have kept out if I could. But things got disagreeable. The governor’s son was took and the governor seemed to think it wasn’t fair for me to stand out. And business got bad.”

“They put a hundred of us on the street at Ealing,” said the Ealing lout. “Not a job to be had.”

“I was chauffeur-gardener,” said the louse-hunter. “And one morning the governor came along — parson he was — and he says, ‘Time you went,’ he says. Like that. ‘Time you did your bit.’”

“If I’d had a chance I’d have joined up in’14,” said Theodore, glowing with moral superiority. “But they told me to wait a year.”

The corporal appraised him silently.

“I managed it this time,” Theodore went on, “and I’m damn glad to be here, with all you fellows. Damn glad.”

“They told you to wait a year?” asked the corporal.

“Till I filled out,” said Theodore.

The corporal expressed the profoundest scepticism by a grunt. Then he made it apparent there was nothing to do for him but sleep. He packed himself back into his bunk with his back directed quite manifestly towards Theodore.

“I left” — he wanted suddenly to tell them all about Margaret. He was going to say, “I left my girl.” It was a strange momentary impulse that vanished as it came— “*everything*.”

He left them free to infer what that everything meant to him.

“Naturally we left everything,” said the cabinet-maker.

“It’s the big push, the strong push and the push all together that will do it,” said Theodore.

“Gawd save us from any plurry mucking pushes,” said a voice out of the brown obscurity beyond the candle-light.

“I’m glad to be here,” said Theodore. “Oh, I’m glad to be here. It’s a strain on us all, but by God we’ll do our bit in it. It makes one feel like a part of history. The thing we are doing — it’s going to be a turning-point in the lives of everyone. Children’s children will tell of us. The men of the Last War. Of course here it’s just waiting. But this deadlock won’t last. It won’t go on. There’s bound to be a great push soon, a mighty effort. It’s going to be tremendous. The long line from Flanders to Switzerland. Like two gigantic wrestlers. This is just the pause before — oh — Armageddon.”

“Lousy hole I call it,” interjected the red-haired youth.

“The sooner we get out of it the better,” said Theodore. “I don’t like this. None of us like this, like rats in a hole, half-buried. This is the filthy bit of it. They’ve buried us — but we shall rise again.”

“Ow!” came the voice of the corporal, full of menace. “Shurrup, I tell you. Buried — be damned I” And then turning over and thrusting out a head like a gargoyle at Theodore, he repeated hideously: “Shurrup!”

Theodore shut up.

That same night Theodore had his first and last experience as a sentry. It was after moon-set and before dawn. He had to keep his head down below a certain level which rather cramped him. He stared out on a stretch of ghostly land, pocked with shell-holes and littered with posts and wire that had been broken up and replaced. It rose to a low crest where some unburied bodies lay half hidden by squat black clumps of weed. It dipped and then rose again to the ridge, a quarter of a mile away, along which ran the German line. Near by it was very very still. But away to the right where the ground was lower something was afoot; there were occasional nervous shots and a flare or so. And still further away out of the range of his sight the gunners were active.

It was so still near by that it seemed to be animosely still. He suspected movement in every lump before him. He peopled the tumbled earth with crawling forms and dispelled them by an effort. He saw or thought he saw a dog prowling among the strange and sinister shapes on the broken ground before him. He was very doubtful about it at first. It was the sort of dog that sometimes looks like a dog and sometimes doesn’t. It seemed to be nothing more than

a flitting shadow at times answering to some flares they were sending up away on the right. But then again it got more like a dog — a long sort of dog. Surely it was a dog. He whistled softly and called to it. It disregarded him and began running to and fro in a queer and troublesome manner. Very fast. It seemed to grow. It started and changed shape whenever there was a fresh flare. It grew to immense proportions. It was less like a dog than an active bit of black fog. His feeling that something had to be done about it grew and intensified. He challenged it and then when it turned and came towards him levelled his rifle and let fly at it. Whack, bang! Instantly it vanished.

It didn't jump or roll over; it vanished.

He found it very difficult to explain what he had seen. His shot provoked reprisals and the section saw fit to blame him.

"He's bin seeing things," said the lout from Ealing.

In the dug-out they badgered him about it a lot.

The lout from Ealing was particularly pressing for details. What sort of dog was it anyhow? What breed was it? And what was it up to?

"It was more like a shadow than a dog," said Theodore. "It — loped. Long it was — a sort of long black shadow, and it seemed to go with a sort of slither and hop from one of them to the other and then back and round about where *they* were lying — you know — just as if it was smelling at them. And every now and then it would stop and look our way. As if it expected... You know. Waiting...."

"Gawd blimey!" roared the corporal in a voice of anguish. "Shut up about that blasted dawg. Do you want us all to have the jumps? Do you think we want to sit round telling ghost stories in this mucking hole?"

Just at this moment a new noise threaded the cacophony outside, a long rasping hiss ending in a dull thud. "What was that?" said Theodore.

"What was *what*?" echoed the Ealing lout. He turned, and his quick movement upset the candle-end beside him and plunged the dug-out into darkness.

"What was that new noise?" asked Theodore, with a break in his voice. "Has nobody got a bit of candle? What was that noise? I ask you, what was that noise?"

“Shurrup, damn you!” said the corporal. “Shurrup, you Bulpington, you. Sit on ‘is ‘ed — someone.”

“*I* didn’t begin it,” said Theodore. “I just asked.”

“Anyhow, shurrup.”

In the darkness Theodore stuck his knuckles into his mouth and bit hard. Then for a time he had to struggle with an impulse to take his rifle and stalk out of the dug-out — and show them. What precisely he would show them he did not know.

He listened and waited for a repetition of that hiss and thud and presently it came.

But by then the Ealing lout had restored his candle-end. It wasn’t so very bad after all.

The next day this same lout from Ealing came to Theodore in a changed spirit. He had been posted as a sentry late in the night, and his dirty face was still very white from some remembered experience. “I seen your dog,” he whispered, and stared. “Christ!”

Afterwards the sergeant talked to Theodore. “What the hell,” he said. “Starting this story about a black dawg? Things aren’t so mucking cheerful up here that we want hell-dawgs out in No-Man’s-Land. See? You’re plurry well doing too much with your mouth. Take it from me. *Shut* it!”

To be disliked bothered Theodore’s soul. It is bad enough to be disliked by anyone, but to be disliked by one’s sergeant is a very serious matter. His mind worried and would not rest. Sleep left him almost altogether. There had been *something* — a dog or something. There had certainly been a dog or something. But he wasn’t allowed to say a word about it. If by any chance he dozed off, he was at once assailed by cruel and dreadful dreams that made him protest and talk. That dog escaped from his waking repressions. It became gigantic, phantasmal. It became the war and danger and death. He would try to rescue decaying corpses from its attentions and then it would attack himself. Its mouth, dripping a hideous green slime and exhaling a smell of decay, would come nearer and nearer and nearer in spite of his utmost resistance. Behind it staggered an endless procession of groping figures with red bandages blinding their faces. It had caught them and they were obliged now to follow it. And when it had got him, he would have to fall in too. The bandage would ache and

smart. He would argue in his sleep about it. His muttering would become a hoarse shout at last. That would lead to a boot being flung at him or he would be rolled out of his bunk by unfriendly and untender hands.

Then he would lie awake listening to the choking and snoring of his companions and the muffled tumult of the guns outside and overhead.

The desire to go out, to shout in the trenches, to do something positively aggressive, was sometimes almost insupportable. He wanted at any cost to get at those Germans hidden away there and end it. End it for good and all.

After three nights and days of this life Lieutenant Evans sent for him, looked steadily into his bright and sunken eyes, and talked to him.

"Are you from Aldington by any chance?" he asked. "No, sir," said Theodore. "I come from Blayport."

"I'm from Aldington. There was something about you — Just a fancy perhaps. The name may have suggested it. But — let me see? — what was it I had to say to you? You're an artist, aren't you? I see on the paysheet—"

"Yes, sir."

"Draw well?"

"So so, sir."

"Well, why don't you apply for a draughtsman's job at Division? They want 'em."

"Eh?" said Theodore and obliged Evans to repeat it. That would mean an end to this! That would mean getting right out. Away from that dog. Away from all the stink and darkness. Theodore did his best not to give way to the scream of acceptance that filled him. It was a great strain to remain true to himself. "But I don't want to get *out* of anything, sir, you understand," said the Bulpington of Blup. "I'd rather not do that. I'm a bit of a raw hand at this, I know, but I'm doing my best to pull myself together."

"You'd be more useful down there. Decidedly."

"Of course, sir, if you think *that*" said Theodore. "If you think that's the work for me."

"I shouldn't suggest it if I didn't think it," said Evans. "But how

will the other fellows take it?" protested the Bulpington of Blup.

"*They* won't mind. They don't wish you any harm. They'll just think you're damned lucky," said the young officer, tacitly refusing to talk as one gentleman to another. "They'll understand."

When the time came they did. They were extraordinarily decent about it.

But that night Theodore slept like a log in spite of a big scare and uproar of the British guns about daybreak, and the next day it was plain to himself and everyone that his nerves were calmer. He began to find all sorts of amiable qualities in these comrades from whom he might so soon be parted. The air in the dug-out seemed less foul now, the food better, the trenches safer. The days passed without any casualties. He ate. He felt he had exaggerated the noise. The next night he dreamt again but nothing like so dreadfully....

Within a month he was out of it all and sitting, cleaned and rested, before a drawing-board. His service in the line was for the time being at an end. On the wall beside him he had pinned some drawings of Bairnsfather's bringing out in the most exquisite fashion the rich humours of life in the front line. So long as he was awake he went on adjusting himself to the war, and by being careful about his food and by going for a tramp before turning in, he kept his dreams within bounds.

He was doing his new work very carefully and intelligently, but in some liberated corners of his mind he was composing sentences for certain letters he had to write home.

He had very excellent reasons for writing to his aunts and particularly to Lady Brood, the wife of Sir Lucien Brood of the Ministry of Munitions.

And also he had to write to Margaret Broxted and tell her of the splendour and terror of the front and of the response of his heroic spirit to its mighty dreadfulness. It was a letter he would have to write not only for her reading but for the reading of some unknown censor, who might for all he knew be either grossly stupid and conventional or a person of the most exquisite literary taste. Nevertheless it would have to be a very tender and moving letter. Because Margaret, you see, was now his Mistress. She had given herself to him.

7

Uncle Lucien The Spink sisters had been greatly interested, agitated and divided by the entry of their sole conjoint offspring into the war. From the outset Lucinda had urged him to join a volunteer ambulance so as to combine service with a general disapproval of war, but Clorinda, who lacked enthusiasm for the allied cause, would not support her. It was generally understood that he was physically unfitted for the front and his sudden and unexpected decision to join up took them all by surprise. Clorinda was profoundly distressed and displayed a new and lively solicitude for him. She even thought of wangling a discharge for him, but in that she was in conflict with the spirit of the times. And Theodore, with a clearer sense of actuality, would not hear of it. "I should just change my name and join up again," he told her. She then invoked Uncle Lucien, Sir Lucien Brood, the husband of Miranda Spink, a man of active and aggressively advancing influence in the world of munitions.

In the lifetime of Raymond there had been an aloofness between Clorinda and Lady Brood, but the cremation and then the shock of the war had effaced many estranging memories. Before he went to France, the young hero was invited for a leave to the large suburban villa of Sir Lucien. Sir Lucien was a large-faced rather demonstratively active man, in the full tide of the most complex patriotic profit-making between the producers of various chemical and technical substances and the military consumer. He had a large cordial mouth with still larger projecting teeth and he spoke with an ineradicable gusto.

"So you're the last living male of the great Spink line, eh?" he said to Theodore. "And you want to risk yourself for the grand old Empire?"

"I don't feel I can keep out of it, sir," said Theodore. "I'm glad they've taken me."

"I agree you ought to do something. I'm glad you've joined up. It was the right thing to do. And it's far better to join up now than be fetched in three months' time, as they would have done."

"I didn't think of that."

“It’s a fact. They’d have come for you. I give three months now before we get conscription. You’ve done the right thing. You’ve put up a show. All the same—”

Sir Lucien reflected. “We mustn’t massacre *all* our artists and poets, damn it! It’s not right to fight the war on only sons. I’m going to keep my eye on you. You must go through with it, up to the front. But you mustn’t stay there too long. It isn’t healthy. We’ll have to do something—” —

“I don’t want any favours,” said Theodore. “I want to take my chances.”

“Quite right, my boy, and a very proper spirit. Take your fair chance, but there’s no need to tempt Providence too far. You let us know where you are and what’s happening to you. The sane thing to do in a war is to put every man at the point where he is suited best. Service is one thing and suicide another.”

At the time Theodore had disliked a certain flavour of cynicism that seemed to underlie Sir Lucien’s remarks, but now he appreciated better the sanity and good feeling that dictated them.

“I don’t like all this talk of men *giving* their lives,” said Sir Lucien. “It’s sentimental. It’s the wrong spirit. We’ve got to save our lives up to the very last moment — just as we’ve got to save our businesses — and sell ’em at the highest price. *Then* we win the war and we’ve got something to show for it afterwards. I’ve got no use and the Empire’s got no use for all these so-called heroes who just want to ‘offer themselves up’. Foolishness I call it. Rank foolishness. Just giving away the points in the game. You aren’t winning, you’re losing if you get yourself killed. See?”

So Theodore wrote to Lady Brood in the tone of a brave but rational belligerent.

It was a great gang I was with, he wrote. *It’s wonderful the camaraderie of the trenches. I can t describe to you the loyalty, the generosity and the unpretending courage of that splendid bunch. And their humour, their queer grim fun. We had a corporal the very spit of Old Bill. Even to the moustache. I tried to keep with them but I’ve been combed out. They had an urgent need for draughtsmen here. On the pay-sheet, you see, I was described as an artist. They questioned me. I couldn’t get out of it. I can draw better than I can*

dig.

His pen paused for some moments. His face became thoughtful.

He was trying to imagine the sort of officer who would have to censor his letter.

Wherever I'm most useful, there I feel I ought to be, he wrote.

8

Love and Death

The letter to Margaret was much more difficult.

Margaret was his Mistress. He had got her. Now that she was his it was very necessary to keep his image vivid in her mind. And it was a little difficult to get that image so that it satisfied him and so that it would exalt and satisfy her.

He recalled the phases of her surrender as he sat and bit his pen.

None of the scenes with her had been the scenes he had anticipated. When he first presented himself to her in his uniform she had displayed the distress of a mother whose child has fallen into a puddle and made a thorough mess of itself. "Oh, *why* did you do it?" she had said. "Why have you done it? And after they had rejected you! After I had thought you were safe!"

"I couldn't endure being out of it."

"It's utterly stupid, Theodore. To send you out there to be killed or spoilt. You and your body. That shock of hair of yours. Your dear soft eyebrows. Your absurd hesitation sometimes when you speak. *You*."

"I *had* to join up. After all — can duty — can doing one's duty spoil one?"

"But *duty*! Is the whole world mad?"

The interminable argument was resumed.

Theodore felt compelled to indicate his opinion of the war-resister. "I don't criticize Teddy. But I could *not* do as he has done. No."

But it was best not to press her towards that discord in her affections. And soon he perceived that it was best also not to press his own heroic quality in the matter. That, he realized more and more clearly, was not the quality that held her to him. He had a charm for

her that was physical and tender. If she did not admire him as he desired, she loved him with an intimate intensity.

It was quite easy at last. He had kept on his flat, with a half-instinctive feeling that while he still kept it the war had not got him altogether. It was a realized promise to come back. And thither they went together.

It was altogether different from making love to Rachel. With Margaret he was the master. He stripped her shrinking body and trembled from top to toe as he did so. He felt less like a lover than a triumphant criminal. She wept in his arms and clung to him.

She caressed him. “That they should take this dear brown body of yours for war,” she whispered and sobbed between pain and pity.

Her tenderness aroused an answering tenderness in himself. He had dreamt of romance and romantic love all his life, but for the first time then he knew something of the pain and self-forgetfulness of love responding to love. Feelings he had never known before stirred in him.

“Oh, my Margaret,” he said. “My dear Margaret.”

He recalled those meetings now; three there were altogether before he was marched to Victoria. He recalled the furnishings of that dingy little flat, full of memories of Rachel, which had been perforce the background to Margaret as lover. Always she had been beautiful to him, but her gentleness and submissiveness at last had been more wonderful than her beauty. For a time, at least, her criticism was in suspense. She seemed to have lost all that faintly unpleasant mental penetration that had so often kept him uneasy. She was so undisguisedly distressed to lose him that she had ceased to bother about either his wisdom or his sincerity. All her doubts were inactive; all her defences were down.

He recalled the last moments before the draft entrained.

She had come, very white in the face but still lovely, resolute not to make a scene. She had come quite alone, for no one was to know of what had happened between them — Teddy least of all.

He caught her up and kissed her. “I could die for you,” he said.

“Oh, *live* for me, Theodore! Live for me!”

As the train drew out the straight still figure was swallowed up in

a rush of girls, women and nondescript civilians, seeing off their youngsters, cheering off their pals, men and women waving and shouting, running at the side of the carriages, some smiling with tear-wet faces, pursuing the accelerating train to the very end of the platform. There they bunched and were left, dwindling into fluttering indistinctness.

As the darkened night-boat sneaked throbbing across the Channel he had recovered himself slowly. It was still, warm and overcast, and he sat on the deck, legs stretched out before him, one of a long row of dim, hushed and pensive men. There was very little talking. They had been told that the less noise they made the better. Before he was half-way over he was again the Bulpington of Blup, tragic and heroic, sitting motionless as an image, on his way to his Fate. It had been sorrowful, dreadful but — splendid.

He felt capable then of incredible heroism.

And now he had to give an account of such heroism as he had achieved.

He bit his pen a lot before he finished that letter. He decided that the censor might not approve of too specific an account of his movements. It might be undesirable to tell her he was out of the line. He would write quite vaguely about all that. He would just dilate on the wonders of comradeship that sprang up amidst danger and stress. Nor could he, since the censor might be any sort of cad, say anything explicit about their relationship. But he would write with an almost unconscious pathos of England and Home and particularly of one or two walks they had had together, Rickmansworth, Kew Gardens, Richmond Park, Virginia Water....

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

WAR STRESS

1

The Recalcitrant Bone-Setter

THEODORE never returned to the front as a private soldier. He was guided by Providence — Sir Lucien at a lower level guiding the finger of Providence — along devious paths that took him to Parville-sur-Seine on the outskirts of Paris. And there presently he resumed his rather slackened effort to live up to the high requirements of the Bulpington of Blup.

That second transfer was made all the easier by virtue of a dislocated semi-lunar cartilage under his knee-cap. This dislocation was the result of his taking a jaunty step down where there was no step outside the drawing office; it seemed nothing at the time, just a slight wrench, and then the joint became more and more resolutely locked. He walked with a stiff-leg and a stick. It seemed as though he might walk like that to the end of the war.

My active service is over for a time, he wrote to Margaret and Clorinda. *I've got something, not very serious, in my knee. (Don't worry about it. It will get all right!) While it lasts I serve as a draughtsman and hobble about "somewhere in France" beyond the range of anything but Long Berthas and air raids. It's humiliating, but there's no help for it.*

It was his first hint to either of them that he was no longer in the trenches.

Sir Lucien got him transferred to the new, slovenly industrial agglomeration of Parville because Sir Lucien had influence at Parville, he had "interests" there, a lot of his "stuff" was going there and being "handled". There was a scheme afoot for consolidating the aerial reconnaissance map business between the French and British, which was sure to affect the distribution of various photographic materials which it had fallen to him to "handle", and he felt that

someone friendly, who had eyes in his head and who might be able to answer a question or so later on in a certain fashion, would be very, very useful. What could be better in that role than a nephew?

So it seemed that Theodore might remain at Parville, honourably disabled, until the war was over. It was a squalid place, gaunt discoloured white houses, sheds, a disused factory used as a depot of material, unmade roads, various dirty estaminets, a planless system of small cultivations, huts, hovels and improvised fences of barrel-staves and wire, but it was infinitely cleaner and quieter than the front. He limped about bravely and worked competently; modestly evading enquiries as to the nature of his wound; and his two chief distresses were the thinness of the veil of sleep between him and the land of nightmares and gross desires and his inability to formulate any acceptable scheme to bring Margaret over to console him in his discomfort.

It was a preposterously impossible idea, but he entertained it because he wanted her there so badly. He loved her, at times he loved her extremely, but all the time he wanted her. He felt that she was his woman, and his sense of obligation to be loyal to her stood in the way of any sexual adventures in Parville or any deliberate excursion in search of relief to Paris. This exasperated him with her. He resented a restriction his own imagination had imposed upon him. He felt she ought to be able to contrive some excuse for coming to Paris; that if she really loved him she would find a way to him and his desire.

He loafed about Parville, which was growing dry and dusty with the approach of summer; he got no exercise, he ate coarsely, he festered physically. He found no congenial companionship among his fellow clerks. With two he played draughts and chess, but he was not very good at either game. The place was rife with petty feuds. They troubled his days and reappeared in his dreams as frantic hatreds. Much of the talk was irritating and derisive. His hours of work were long, but he worked lazily. Everybody at Parville worked lazily. He made an attempt to acquire that mysterious lonely interest Frenchmen find in fishing. But he could not do it. He would sit on the bank lost in heroic reverie, while his float was dragged down out of sight by unheeded weeds. He read a lot and raided Paris for books.

He tried to improve his French and enlarged his knowledge of argot.

He spent a considerable proportion of his leisure in writing home and making a picture of himself. He wrote to Margaret and Clorinda, quite long letters, long but unsatisfactory letters. The picture would never come quite right. He represented himself as a wounded man in a backwater.

The war rumbles by, he said. *It is like something violently interesting happening in another street. Into which one cannot find one's way.*

He thought of beginning a novel to express his noble dissatisfaction with inaction. It was to be called *Thrust Aside, a War Interlude.* He would write it in the third person and he would contrive that in the end his hero, still lame and suffering, should seize a happy chance and achieve an heroic death.

The letters that replied to his were as unsatisfactory. Margaret's first two grief-stricken scrawls were well enough, but after that, so soon as she knew he was out of the trenches, she recovered poise. She pressed for particulars of his wound, and when he evaded giving them her interest seemed to die away. Her realization that he was well out of the danger zone and that his wound was not of major importance was all too manifest.

She made no sign of reciprocating his ardent desire for her presence in France. She might at least have felt something more about that. Never hitherto had he felt there was hardness in Margaret's make-up. She was working for her final M.B. examination and she was also becoming active in antiwar activities. The contrast between her ordered studies and purposeful activities and his own existence irritated him. It became necessary to his self-respect that he should minimize what she was doing and exaggerate his own job. The note of passion in their correspondence gave place to a controversial quality.

He began to attack the conscientious objectors, and particularly Teddy, in his letters. Teddy had become an active war-resister and was in jail. This evidently occupied what seemed to Theodore an inordinate share of Margaret's thoughts. She agreed with, she admired, Teddy.

It was dawning upon Theodore that the difference between him

and these Broxteds went far beyond a difference about the war. It was an ancient and primary difference dating from the very beginnings of their acquaintance. The war was only a test issue, the expression of something far more fundamental in their outlook upon the world. He was only to apprehend the full profundity of the gulf between them later, but he was feeling it now very acutely as a discontent with Margaret. She did not understand him, he complained, and beneath that complaint was perhaps a dark and shapeless dread that presently he might come to understand her. In the place of a lovely actress ready for his drama he might discover a being as limited as himself and driven by needs as imperative as his own.

Then the fingers of a great hand out of the unexpected closed about him. Someone above had conceived the unpleasant idea of combing out the slightly wounded men who constituted the staff at Parville from the more disabled cases. Draughtsmen, it seemed, were less urgently needed than they had been; a supply of more or less damaged artists and photographers had become available. Theodore found himself in the presence of an elderly medical man in uniform. He was catechized unfeelingly.

"Not a bit necessary for you to be here. Not a bit. There's a man named Barker — and one or two chaps he has trained for us — who can put this knee of yours right in a minute or so. Osteopaths they call 'em. No qualifications. No right to practise at all — Barker anyhow has no right. No right at all. Still, we can't be too particular nowadays. He can do it and we can't. It's sleight-of-hand. Kind of trick. Most unprofessional. Leave you as fit as ever. Lemme see...."

He made notes.

Theodore watched the notes being written.

"I don't want to be here," he said a little belatedly, in answer to some unspoken indictment in the doctor's manner. "I did my best to keep in the fighting line."

"Of course. Of course. Quite right of you. And I don't see any reason why you shouldn't go back."

That was exciting.

Theodore could not sleep that night; it was so exciting. He recalled the trenches in a series of vivid pictures. When he dozed he

was actually there, a flinching sentry, watching the shadows flit and spread and gather again into the likeness of a foul black dog.

A sniper, a monstrous sniper, with a face like that army doctor, aimed at him and in frozen horror he found he could not duck. The muzzle of the rifle grew near and grew vast and seemed to search for the most painful regions of his person. He tried to scream "Kamarad" and no voice came. He awakened rigid and lay wide awake in terror.

He wrote without delay to Lady Brood, recalling a suggestion of Sir Lucien's that after a time it might be possible for him to apply for a commission. This would involve a return to England for training, instead of his being drafted back immediately to active service. He had kept this possibility in mind ever since it had been put before him, and now it assumed the quality of a duty. The first enthusiasms of the war, when cook's son, duke's son and so on all rushed to serve together in the ranks, had given way to a more practical mentality. There was now a considerable shortage of young men with the upper or middle class attitude of mind which the military authorities found necessary for effective leadership, and it was comparatively easy for anyone at that social level to get a commission.

Theodore was disposed to be a little anxious about the report Evans might have made of his first weeks in the trenches, and the real reasons for his transfer to the drawing office at divisional headquarters, but that never came to hand. His anxiety was uncalled for. Evans was now a rat-gnawed skull, some bones and rags, a rusting wrist-watch and so forth mixed up with mud and metal in a stinking wood of splintered trees near Arras, and Section D, entirely reconstructed and with much else to think about, had preserved no character-study of Theodore.

The bone-setter was, it seemed, a fully qualified doctor, a dark, thick-set young man, with big shapely hands and an expression of face, a hard unpropitiatory candour, that reminded Theodore somehow of Teddy.

"So you want to go back to the front?" he said, feeling the straightened knee fastidiously.

"One must do one's bit," said Theodore.

"Oh — exactly. Yes. I wonder..."

He sat back and regarded Theodore and his outstretched leg

pensively. He looked from the leg to Theodore's face and back to the leg. He seemed to address himself to the leg. Ever and again he would lean forward towards it.

"Queer job this, you know. I thought I was going to do medical research before this damned war upset things. When the war came, I was puzzled. Weren't we all puzzled? You too, eh? I got the idea of being a stretcher-bearer. Sort of noncommittal job. Didn't like the idea of killing people, even professionally. No. Well, you see, I didn't watch what was happening to me, and I got combed out for training for this sort of thing, and here I am, turning poor devils back to the front, day after day, just when they were limping back to safety. Cases almost every day. Worse than killing Germans. Just when they feel they've got a decent excuse for coming out of it. Have I the right to send a man back — if, that is, he's sure he doesn't want to go?"

His pause was a question.

Theodore let him say these things without interruption. He too stared at the outstretched leg. This man was offering to leave him lame until the war was over. It was a temptation to all the repressed desires of Theodore.

"I'm getting sicker and sicker of this job of mine," said the bone-setter.

"I ought to go back," said Theodore.

"Don't attach too much importance to my — passing thoughts," said the bone-setter. "Of course if you think you ought to go back, it simplifies my job."

The two young men looked at each other.

"I ought to go back," said Theodore, making no pretence of misunderstanding the possibilities of the case. He thought rapidly but incoherently. Should he lay his soul bare to himself and to this man and give way to his overwhelming distaste for the front? Never before, even to himself, had he admitted the strength of that disinclination. To do so now would be the completest surrender of all his attitudes since the outbreak of the war.

What was the doctor thinking of him now? His eyes were friendly eyes. What would he think if Theodore betrayed the desire for a saving lameness that raged within him?

“I have to go back,” said Theodore. “I’ve got to see the thing through,” said the Bulpington of Blup.

“Don’t imagine I was making any suggestion—” the young doctor remarked.

But had he been?

“Of course not. In this case,” said Theodore, “you need not have it on that conscience of yours that I’m going right back to the trenches. I’m applying for a commission.”

“That makes it a bit more cheerful,” said the doctor. “Anyhow, you’ll have a spell of England, Home and Beauty for a bit. Well, well.”

He returned to the knee. “This is an easy case, you know. I think you’d better have a whiff of chloroform here and now and to-morrow you’ll have a leg to dance with.”

The anaesthetist, a heavy oldish man with mournful eyes, came and did his duty in a businesslike way. When Theodore came to, the doctor was turning down his shirt-cuffs again.

“Sick?”

“No.”

“How does it feel?”

“There’s no pain.”

“Bend it.” Theodore did. “Think you can stand up?” Theodore did. “Stamp your foot.”

“I can’t stamp.”

“Yes, you can. Do it.” Theodore did. “That’s all right. That’s Barker’s knack. The common or garden surgeon cuts the cartilage and leaves you lame for life. And now, sir, if you want, you can get on with the war. Or even if you *don’t* want to.”

The osteopath watched the anaesthetist going out of the room. “I say,” he remarked in a confidential tone, “what was that black dog you talked about?”

“Did I talk of a black dog?”

“You did. It ran about gnawing corpses. A very nasty black dog indeed. It seemed to have unlimited powers of expansion.... And you talk too about men being blown to pieces and the guts coming out of them. Red guts. Bits of liver. Apparently you didn’t expect quite so much evisceration as you saw up there. Nowadays, what with shells

and bombs and so on which hit you anyhow and anywhere, the abdomen and suchlike parts get it more than they used to do. They ought to prepare recruits against these surprises. You must have had a shock. Rather a bad shock. I wonder if I've done you a kindness sending you back to the front.'

Theodore was still sufficiently under the simplification of the chloroform not to pose. "*I* wonder," he said. "But first you see I go to England."

"Ah, yes. That will put things off a bit. There's no black dog in England, is there? No. And all sorts of things may happen."

He stared out of the cracked window.

"A lot of this base-hospital work," he said, "is like catching people who are running out of a burning house and putting them back in the flames. Few of them own up as to how they really feel about it. Queer fixes we get ourselves into. H'm. Too late for us to join the Conchies now. Apart from medical science, it's an ugly world."

He held out a large firm hand to Theodore.

"Good luck," he said. "Never meet black dogs half-way, if you can possibly avoid 'em. And don't go on thinking of those men you saw blown to bits. Naturally the bits wriggled. What could you expect? It's no good thinking of that now."

"I don't think about those things," said Theodore.

"You don't think you think about them," said the doctor; "but down below, you do."

He stared past Theodore with blank eyes, no longer interested in Theodore.

"I wonder what precisely they could do to me if I struck against this job altogether," he speculated.

The Disconcerting Helpfulness of Uncle Lucien

Theodore's impressions of this encounter became the nucleus of a considerable system of thinking. The doubting attitude of this osteopath he found extraordinarily disturbing.

It laid things bare; it exposed pretences; there was a novel indecency in the man's frank indifference to the war spirit. The old doctor on the other hand was entirely understandable by Theodore.

Manifestly he held that the only decent behaviour for a young Englishman when England was at war should be based upon a belligerent enthusiasm — and that everything that worked against that in his composition should be suppressed. If one felt afraid one didn't say so. If one loathed the thought of the trenches one forced oneself to pretend an eagerness for the stink and noise and horror. That wasn't hypocrisy. It was just holding oneself together and keeping up to the mark. It was being one's Bulpington of Blup sincerely and completely. If you apprehended danger you walked straight at it — lest you ran away — or at least you did your best to walk straight at it.

There was the plain and simple course for the young Englishman when England was at war. That was the sort of young Englishman of whom England, including himself, could be proud. But this bone-setter at the base, like Margaret, like Clorinda, did not seem to see England at war, as the frame of his drama. He suggested by his manner, by his whole line of approach, that this war was not the gallant conflict of a great people for simple and noble ends. He ignored all that and they too were ignoring all that, more and more definitely. They treated the war as an outrage that had to be evaded and defeated. They did not even see it as a disaster to civilization that had to be fought through valiantly. They saw as little hope in England's victory as in her defeat. They all influenced Theodore's mind in various measure. They cast the shadow of their profound doubts upon his gallantry. It was hard enough to keep up his brave face upon things, it was hard enough to offer up one's life, even if the war was all the splendid adventure it ought to be — but they were insinuating into his mind that the war was nothing of the sort, that it was just a gross and forceful brutality, and that everything fine and brave that could be saved had to be snatched from its maw, at any cost in conventional pride and honour.

"A very gallant gentleman," said Theodore to the dawn that filtered through the shutters of his Parville bedroom.

The phrase seemed deflated. It no longer helped him as it had helped him on his way up to the front.

So Theodore brought his insidiously undermined brain to England and to an extensive amplification of her perplexities. For Aunt

Miranda had seen to it that Sir Lucien used influence in the proper quarter and Theodore was recalled to train for a commission.

He found London markedly more haggard and attenuated, slovenly and feverish. The traffic had fallen off greatly and the darkness and the general expectant emptiness of the streets at nights were very depressing. Air raids, which were now being done by Gothas — the Zeppelin phase was past — he found wearisome rather than exciting. He despised the people who sheltered in cellars and under arches; he never put himself out on these occasions. His nerves refused to jump at them. The maroons never quickened his pulse. Compared with France, with the front in France, London, so far as his body went, seemed immensely secure to him. But so far as his peace as the Bulpington of Blup was concerned, it was far more dangerous than the dingy routines of Parville.

Sir Lucien talked to him, and he disliked the way in which Sir Lucien talked extremely. In a way Sir Lucien's line of thought was more destructive to his inner peace than Margaret's.

"You don't want to be in any *hurry* for that battalion of yours," said Sir Lucien, with a well-oiled persuasiveness. "I know you're burning to get back and be blown to pieces and all that, but you've got to think of your mother and all your aunts. And what is more *I've* got to think of them. I didn't marry one of ten sisters for nothing. What do *you* think? Joking apart, my boy, there's things to be done more important than hopping about on duck-boards and dodging snipers. Which, to be plain about it, doesn't lead you, me or the country anywhere. You saw something of what was going on at Parville, and it was a damned nuisance those wooden-headed sojers combed you out of it just when you might have been useful. I want you back there, you or someone like you; there or at Auteuil. These Americans are coming over, and they ain't come over only to fight Germans. They've got business instincts. Trust them. They're poker trained. This is a war on several fronts, my boy, and the proof of a war is what happens afterwards. If I had my way I'd win the war with All-British stuff, come what might. See? You get my idea?"

Theodore tried to look uncomprehending, for fear that he might look a conspirator.

"You take your commission, my boy," said Sir Lucien. "That's all

right. But after that if I can get you marked down as an indispensable for us — well, you'll have to give up that idea of yours of seeking the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth, as old Shakespeare puts it. For a bit anyhow. I don't want to disappoint you, but there it is."

"Of course if my work is needed there," said Theodore; "if I can serve the old country best in that way, well and good. But I'd rather go through the ordinary grind, sir. I assure you I would. Without advantages. Are you sure I'm irreplaceable?"

"Ask all the Aunts!" chuckled Sir Lucien. "Ask all your blessed Aunts!"

Theodore flushed. "I don't like this business."

"You mean...?"

"I don't like letting the other fellows do the fighting, sir. On my honour I don't."

There may have been something sceptical in Sir Lucien's smile. "Well, well," he said. "It isn't for everyone to choose his job. What did old Milton say? They also serve who only stand and wait. That's the spirit, my boy. That's the spirit."

"I suppose so," said Theodore. "I almost wish I hadn't this business ability."

"No, no, no, my boy. We've got to carry on after the war," said Sir Lucien. He reflected and added, "We'll live to see you in the firm yet, my boy," and laid an all too affectionate paw on Theodore's shoulder.

It was not a conversation to report. But it was a conversation to think over. After all, it was as yet no more than a suggestion. Nothing was settled. So he did not let anyone know that for him the ordinary destiny of an infantry officer — which in those days averaged four or five months before the conclusive knock-out — was not in store. He would not think in that way. If anything this indefiniteness in his own outlook deepened his indignation with those who were taking the soul out of this tremendous war, evading it, detracting from it, cheapening it, resisting it. It intensified the quiet heroism of his bearing in the presence of these new friends of Margaret's and Teddy's with whom he spent such leisure as he could snatch from the process of his conversion from a plebeian Tommy into a starry gentleman.

3

The Immense Argument

The social occasions of London had diminished greatly. Food was now being rationed; it was not nearly so abundant in London as it was in Paris. Sir Lucien kept a fairly good table at Edgware; he eked out his meat with uncontrolled venison from a friend's park in Buckinghamshire, and Theodore was glad to spend a couple of week-ends with him. The company there was either old or oldish, and Sir Lucien was greatly preoccupied with his patriotic business operations. Theodore played clock golf in the grounds with Sir Lucien's more nimble friends. They did not talk about the war at all. They were tired of talking about the war. They had worked out the relations of business to it and that sufficed. There was nothing fresh to say about it, and their chief use for a young hero in transit was to make up a foursome for clock golf or bridge.

In London Theodore spent whatever time he could with Margaret, and she would come to his flat with him. She introduced him to her circle of outcasts who were passively or actively resisting the war, and these, with various "Cuthberts" doing indispensable work at the Ministries and a superfluity of young women doing war work, constituted the more active side of Theodore's social world. They made up for any lack of talk at Edgware. Rachel was still away in Belgium, but he found Melchior quite friendly and looking well-nourished and energetic. Melchior would give little parties (drinks, smokes, sardines, smoked salmon and fried potatoes) in the flat where Theodore had once made love with Rachel, and Theodore would give little parties in his flat (drinks, smokes, potato chips, salami, almonds and olives), and various of the Cuthberts gave parties (tea, coffee, hard and soft drinks, cigarettes and things to nibble) in various places. The music-halls were keeping up astonishingly well, and all the cafes and restaurants around Piccadilly and Leicester Square carried on brilliantly behind drawn blinds.

In this junior world that great argument which had begun for him three years ago upon the ait and houseboat below Maidenhead reappeared in a vastly enlarged and elaborated form. Its ramifications

were carrying it into every department of human life. It was, for example, twisting his love affair as it was twisting a million love affairs out of all recognition, out of all resemblance to any pre-war love story that had ever been lived. So far as our story of Theodore goes, it was an argument with Margaret and Teddy, Clorinda, Professor Broxted, Sir Lucien, a few readers of a magazine in Paris and a selection of casually encountered people, the characters in the foreground; but indeed, in its completeness, it is an argument that still continues and develops and reverberates throughout the world. Theodore's brain was thrust about by every drive in the general dispute, it echoed, imitated, responded, qualified, resisted. He read now the radical anti-war periodicals that were not allowed to come to France; he met types and encountered franknesses unknown there. He talked to trench-tormented and damaged youngsters who could do nothing but denounce the old men in control and assert that they found a sadistic satisfaction in the sacrifice of the young. Others with white feathers sticking in their minds raged bitterly at womankind. Others still fiercely belligerent railed endlessly at the inefficiency of the military authorities.

There was, he learnt, a "Stop the War" movement. There was an attempt to get together the various radical and socialist parties in the world in a Socialist Conference at Stockholm. They were to call off their fighting Governments. Who could have dreamt of that in 1914? There was a vigorous agitation in England to force the Government to reveal its "War Aims". Never before had humanity been roused to such a degree of self-examination. A real discussion of what war was, of what caused war, was beginning, a fundamental criticism of the sentimentalities and romanticism that had brought about the catastrophe. Men were swapping standards in the midst of a torrent. The sense of a potential world of peace, not yet born, not yet conceived, but conceivable and possible, inspired all the resistance of the pacificists and battered at the doors of Theodore's mind. In this dispute the belligerents had a far compacter case than their antagonists. They could appeal to existing realities; they held by all the established institutions and all the accepted conventions of behaviour. All history was on their side. The opposition was based upon a faith, vastly broader and perhaps fundamentally saner, but

immeasurably less defined. It was as yet only a shadowy intimation of things that might be. Much of this new movement against human division, for want of a lucid alternative, had to assume the form of flat resistance and denial to the thing that was. Resting upon unexplored assumptions it had an effect of being arbitrary and perverse. Those who clung to it felt they were profoundly right, and yet they knew their case had enormous gaps. This tainted their protests and obstructions with an irritating querulous quality, their righteousness was an unattractive righteousness; it had neither music nor banners; they clung to it, it did not possess them.

The battle raged in Theodore's brain, above and below the conscious level. On the one hand was all that life of romantic glosses and accommodations to accepted things in which he had been swathing himself from the menace of reality since his childhood, and whose impulses and conventions he still obeyed, carrying himself heroically, even now that they pointed him towards hardships, suffering and death; and on the other were these untried intimations of a life released by criticism to unimaginable freedom and power. Cowardice seemed inextricably mixed with high desire. Which was the greater lie, the pretence of the present or this promise of the future? With Margaret and in the presence of Margaret, the conflict between these two sides in this worldwide dispute in the mind of Theodore came to its acutest. She looked so fittingly like the tragic young mistress of a war hero; she refused so completely to be anything of the sort.

It needed only a little concession on her part to give that time in London a sentimentally tragic loveliness for both of them. For her, it seemed to him, it ought to have been not merely easy but natural to play the corresponding role to his own gallant part. There was a considerable pleasantness in going about this war-stained London in a uniform that really fitted him, and in taking Margaret into restaurants whence simple Tommys were excluded. He could have felt that at last he was getting a grip upon the perplexities of the war. She could have behaved as if Teddy was an aberrant type, a difficult lapse from honour. Because, you know, say what you like, he *was* aberrant. And everything would have been lovely.

But no, she would not have it so. She had changed; she was still

changing. She was no longer the gentle, amazed and distressed girl she had been at the outbreak of the war.

She had a new resoluteness. And a new egotism. Among other things she was working hard for her final examination and it was clear that she did not intend love and passion to hamper that work. No longer did she taste of tears and subjugation. She came to his flat and gave herself to him with a warm friendliness indeed, but in no ecstasy. The first freshness of adolescence, the novelty of love and desire, the simplicity of passion, was passing out of life for both of them.

4

Love in an Argument They made love and they bickered. They bickered endlessly about the Stockholm Conference, about War Aims and the Strike against War; and they bickered with all their hearts; it was no mere lovers' byplay; and Theodore, having denounced all socialists and internationalists as the tools of a great Anti-British conspiracy, was impelled to add a sort of justification to these accusations by an implication of special and secret knowledge.

He began to use a phrase, "I happen to know," which was destined to grow into a habit.

"You see, Margaret," he said, "I am not just a front-line soldier. I've done my bit up there and I'm ready now to do my bit again. But," darkly, "there are others things going on—"

"Theodore," asked Margaret abruptly, "what *did* happen to your knee? Nothing shows. Look at it! Bend it."

Theodore hesitated, and lied.

"I hardly know," he said, and laughed. "It's all right now, eh? I think a flying shell fragment — spent, you know — or a splinter from one of the timbers of the dug-out, got it. Just glanced off it. Left it bruised and painful, and then you know, as it healed up, we found a cartilage displaced. There was a little operation, nothing to speak, just wrenching it straight — and here we are!"

"How long were you in the line?"

"Let me see.... Some *months*."

“Did you *kill* anybody?”

He mused. “I don’t know.”

He added: “You see, we never hardly saw a live German. Except, of course, during a raid. We were firing at them and throwing bombs over. And the guns were always getting busy.”

“And men were killed and wounded about you?”

“I hate to talk of that,” he said, honestly enough, “But you cannot make war without smashing something.”

She meditated, chin on fist. “It’s aimless,” she said. “It’s disgusting. And now when we might end it, they will not let it end.”

That was the Stockholm grievance again.

“It can’t end yet,” he said. “It has to be fought out.” They argued about that.

“You’ve got it wrong,” he insisted. “This has to be fought out. We cannot leave Germany now — half beaten — to recover.”

“Germany,” she said. “Germany, France, Britain and the Empire. *We,*... What are these words?”

“Realities — the most living of realities.”

“No,” she said. “They are lies. Ask Clorinda. She was talking the other day. How well your mother talks at times! What did she say? We were all being butchered for a philosophical error. There are no lies, she said, like the lies in big broad words like that. Britain! Germany! What mouthfuls! The realities are millions of men bunching together out of fear, out of inferiority complexes, out of greed. Shelley knew that, a hundred years ago. Have you never read Shelley? Oh, but Shelley’s fine! Anarchs he called these governments. Anarchies! No, you listen to me! You think you’re in the war, but you’re in a blind rush. Much as I love you, Theodore, Teddy is right. Yes, Teddy has been right all along. He went on looking things in the face. He went on thinking. If there is a way out he will get to it. While you just fell in and saluted. And you’ve stopped thinking. That’s the dreadful thing; you’ve stopped thinking altogether.”

All this exasperated Theodore profoundly. Wasn’t he thinking just as much as she was? In his own way? He tried to maintain his argumentative balance.

“You talk of looking things in the face,” he said. “What are you

— what is Teddy — looking in the face? Nothing. Easy for him to turn his back on the war [“But does he turn his back?” asked Margaret] and say he belongs — what is it? — to Humanity, the World State and all that. But *where* is this stupendous World State? Show it me.”

Margaret thought for an answer. “Wherever there are people who mean it,” she said.

She sat on his little couch and it seemed to him that she recited a lesson. “I’ll tell you what I believe. We ought to understand each other. Patriotism is wrong. Nationalism is wrong. Yes, you don’t believe that, but I do. I know it sounds frantic and outrageous to you, but that is what I believe. I believe that there will be a time when the last patriots in arms will be hunted down, like brigands. Or lunatics. World government — one world government. It’s my religion. Oh, I can’t tell you all the hows and whys! But that is where we are going. Or life isn’t worth living. You ask, Where is this World Government? That isn’t such a poser as you think. It is here already if it is ever going to exist. Only it’s overrun and in confusion. It’s got to be picked out — released. Like a rightful heir whose land is being fought over by rebels and pretenders. Down and out, you say. Well, what of it? All the more reason why we should be loyal to it. All the more reason why we should resist our governments and *their* governments and everybody and everything, every pretender and claimant, that stands for separation and war. Isn’t that the common sense of it?”

“Margaret,” he said, “you have the loveliest face in the whole wide world. You have the loveliest voice. When you talk like that you might be a Sibyl inspired. How lovely you are! But when I hear the things you say, it seems to me the face and voice of an unreasonable child.”

“No,” she said, and suddenly looked him in the face, nursing her knees with her hands. “*You* are the child. It is I who’ve grown up. You have helped in that. You did it. Didn’t you make me a woman? In this very room. *This* — and the war and everything, have changed me. You live in a schoolboy’s dreamland. You are *dramatic*, like a boy. Did you *always* act? Were you always acting? And have I only just found it out? At Blayport? Perhaps I couldn’t see it then. You

act. You choose your part and act it. I am a woman now, and the world dismays me. But I do *look* at it. I look it in the face. I won't just take anything it shows me. You are still playing at soldiers."

That stung him but he concealed the sting. "No," he smiled. "You wouldn't call it play if you were there. *Play!* Good God !"

"It's play — with horror. Horror never dignified anything."

Her candid gaze searched his face for his assent.

He dropped his eyes before hers. He spoke in an undertone. "I couldn't do as Teddy has done," he said.

There came a little pause. "No," she assented very softly, "perhaps you couldn't."

At that his bitterness welled up within him.

"Shirking his task," he said. "Saving his skin."

"Teddy?" she cried, stung. "My brother? *Saving his skin*!"

"Well! Look at it!"

They stared at one another.

She stood up slowly. She hesitated.

"*How* long did you say you were in the trenches?" she asked in a strained voice, and suddenly she was weeping. She looked away from him, sobbing like a child at some tremendous disappointment. She left him to weigh whatever meaning lay behind her question. What did she know? What did she suspect?

She began to dress clumsily with trembling hands. "Teddy a coward!" she whispered. "From *you*! And you — like that!"

"Well," he began, and left his sentence unsaid.

A novel resentment was in her voice. "I knew you were burning to say it, and now you have said it."

She went on dressing. He squatted in silence on the floor. After two minutes perhaps of this he leapt to his feet. He went to the window, turned about and began to pace the apartment.

"Well," he began in a high-pitched voice and threw his arms about as he talked, "look at the situation! Look at it as I must do. However long I was in the trenches, I *was* in the trenches. Next week is the examination, and whether I pass or whether I fail — back I go. Private or officer. I see it differently from you and Teddy. For me duty is there and honour is there. It's dreadful enough, but it has to be seen through. I don't believe in this World Peace of yours. This

World Pax! That World Government. This balderdash. This *excuse.* Did Teddy believe in it? Before the war? That's what I ask you. If he didn't believe in it before the war, what right has he to believe in it now? It's easy enough to dislike war, when you get it. My God!"

His words gave out.

She went on fastening her hooks and eyes as he delivered this speech. After he came to the end of what he had to say she still remained silent for a while. But the anger in her eyes had given place to a sort of astonishment. She finished her dressing and he watched her, stood stiffly with his arms akimbo, as if awaiting her reply. She regarded his naked strutting figure. Her face grew tender. She made a movement towards him and then seated herself again on his couch.

"Theodore *dear*," she said. "I love you. I want to tell you. I have loved you always. Since when you came to tea. Do you remember? When Teddy brought you in to tea? From the beach.... I didn't want to hurt you when I said something just now. Never mind that. But — I don't know — everything in the world is turning out to be different from what I expected. And this — this too."

She stared at the floor. She seemed to be thinking hard. "I used to dream about it. I mean, about you. You making love to me. Perhaps I wasn't as cold as you thought. Now it doesn't seem to be so very much, to matter so very much. It's as if everything we used to think was lovely wasn't going to be lovely like that any more. This war is battering everything into a new shape....

"Oh, I'm *worried* she cried.

She had something more in her mind that she found difficult to tell. "Last night I had a silly dream — How can one help one's dreams? I dreamt you were changed. It was you, but you were made of green glass. And you did — queer things — never mind what they were. Such a queer dream. I seemed to see things in you and I seemed to see things through you. And your dear face wasn't like your dear face any more — one saw things behind it. Oh, never mind! I can't tell it. It wasn't like you. Yet it's been on my mind all this time, to-day. If I've been strange with you...

"But you see, Theodore, of course I still love you. I *must* love you. We've always loved each other. We two. Nothing ought to be able to change that — not twenty wars. I've always said — that had

to be. And yet here we are; I'm dressed and you're still undressed and you're standing there and we're making speeches to each other. Long speeches. This wasn't what we promised ourselves."

"Then why do you take sides against me? Why do you insinuate? Why do you say such intolerable things?"

"But I don't take sides against you! I can't help thinking this war too awful and stupid to endure. How can I help that?"

"We have to be brave," he said.

"Against it," she said.

"No, in it."

"Ah, *there*!"

All their differences reopened between them.

They paused in infinite perplexity. Suddenly she arose and held out her arms to him and he met her embrace and clung to her. "My Theodore!" she said and kissed him. "My Theodore with his gollywog hair and his amber eyes." Everything else dissolved for a moment into love and tenderness. "My dear Theodore!" she said. "My dearest dear dear dear Theodore. But what has happened to us? What has come over us? Every time we meet we quarrel and still we love each other."

No answer to her question appeared. And you cannot cling together for ever.

"I must go."

"You must go. But you will come again?"

"I'll come again."

"To-morrow here."

"To-morrow."

He kissed her with passion.

"Oh, good-bye, my dear. My dear, good-bye."

5

Clorinda Too

When Theodore first saw Clorinda after his return he felt a queer little shock. She had changed. She looked older. There was something different about her skin, about the flow and gloss of her

hair — it had not gone grey but it had deadened — and about the form, the little lines and curves of her dark eyes. There was a faint distress in them. But he was not accustomed to observe his mother very closely and this impression wore off and was only remembered again later. She said nothing of being or feeling ill.

She asked him questions about his service at the front and about his comforts and needs and she talked of the book she was doing with Dr. Ferdinando.

It seemed she did not see so much of that gentleman as she had hoped to do in London. He was working now at "war neuroses", whatever they might be. This made her a little impatient because she was very keen, very keen indeed, to get their *Psycho-analysis of Philosophy* finished and published.

"I'd like to see it printed," she said. "It's queer — I've never felt quite so impatient about anything before."

That *too* he was to remember.

But then Clorinda also began to talk in this new queer destructive way about the war. She also was echoing Shelley. She spoke as though all governments were organized stupidities, necessarily; as though this war was not a great and splendid adventure, but something disastrous and wasteful in every aspect. She spoke as though he was entangled in a catastrophe from which he had to be extricated at any cost. She talked of the Stockholm Conference with unquestioning approval and of the honourable obligation the British and French were under to state their "War Aims" and Stop the War. They kept dark and mysterious and evil. They would not even adopt or supplement the Fourteen Points of President Wilson.

"I don't understand all this," said Theodore. "At the front," he said, speaking indeed not for the front but for Parville, "we see it all so much more simply."

"But my dear, the war must end somehow. It is exhausting the whole world."

"The war must end in the defeat of Germany."

"But how much has she to be defeated?"

"We have to march into Berlin. That is our objective. Nothing can satisfy the justice of the case but that."

"And then?" cried Clorinda. "What then?"

“We don’t think of that,” said the young soldier. “We just go on through our round of duties, and look east.”

He stood every inch a soldier, calm and resolute, looking quietly east (so far as he could get his direction) over his mother’s shoulder.

“And you see it like that, my dear?” said Clorinda.

He tried to see it like that unfalteringly, but afterwards her words returned to him. Did she suspect his underlying uncertainties? Her words mingled with Margaret’s criticisms. They mingled with disputes and discussions in Melchior’s flat and at his Aunt Lucinda’s. Aunt Lucinda was for the war, but she thought it ought to be fought by different methods and in a different spirit. Aunt Amanda was the life and soul of a bandage-making organization in the Town Hall. She said that if the war had done nothing else it had given middle-aged widows something worth while doing. She became very much excited by his return and set to work knitting him what became quite an immense stock of socks, gloves, vests, wrappers and the like. In her as ever he found a certain facility of understanding. He talked to her quite a lot of the camaraderie of the trenches and of his regrets at his separation from his original section. She was very restorative to his self-respect. She was simple. He wished he could be as simple, just a straightforward, honest young soldier gentleman, with no qualms of uncertainty. He felt the unsoundness of his own more deliberate simplicity.

He passed his examination and his return to France became imminent.

He broke it to Margaret while they were eating a fritto misto, involving their ration cards for three days, in the *Iso la Bella.*

“Three days more,” he said.

She nodded. She reflected.

“And you will go to France and I shall stay in England — and we shall change and change.”

“My change may be a quick one,” he said solemnly.

“But you are not going to the front at once,” she said.

Now how did she know that? Had he told her anything?

(It was a pity neither Aunt Miranda nor his mother had a touch of reticence. They *all* talked about him and talked to anyone about him.)

“I get a respite, yes,” he said and flushed. “But at any time I may be drafted up.”

“It’s bad enough,” she said.

“Yes; it’s bad enough.

“You will have your examination to occupy you,” he said. “I shall have things to do. I shall be busy enough. But I shall have a heart-ache.”

“Why won’t you marry me before I go?”

She shook her head. They had argued about that before. “If I come back, then we will marry?”

“I don’t know. Need we talk about that?”

“We’ve had some lovely times.”

“We’ve had some lovely times.”

“And you love me?”

“Yes.”

“Adam and Eve we’ve been. The dear beauty of it! And yet you are not sure — when I come back...?”

“I shall be a doctor then. I shall be working. You’ll find me more of a prig than ever.”

“But when I come back shan’t we want each other?”

“How will you come back? Changed. We shall both be changed. Just a little while ago we were boy and girl and see how much has happened to us!”

“You will be faithful to me?”

“I cannot imagine breaking faith with you, my dear.”

“Well, then?”

“Darling, I’m tired to-night. I don’t want to think of all the things that may happen to you, or myself for that matter. I’ve loved you, Theodore dear, I love you. But...”

“Well?”

“Something comes between us, like a mask.”

Theodore thought that over. He poured the red Chianti into her glass. “We are both tired,” he said.

“If we could strip souls as easily as we strip bodies,” she said. “So much love-making. Like a desperate attempt to dissolve another person into oneself, to get close and near. And one doesn’t get close and near. I’m tired. You’ve tired me out. Don’t mind me.... Let us

see how much free time we have before you go."

They parted lamely at Victoria. On the platform there seemed to be nothing to say.

As the train began to move she stood back, she regarded Theodore very steadfastly. She seemed to be thinking over some entangled problem. Then suddenly her face softened and she held out her arms to him and then dropped them abruptly. He lifted and waggled his hand to her and felt his gesture was common as he made it.

As he sat back in his place he glanced at his fellow travellers to see if they had been observing him, but he saw nothing but preoccupied faces. They had their own partings to think over.

6

Letters from Paris

Theodore had to go first to Parville to resume his contact at a higher level with certain matters there, and then he had to take up his quarters in Paris in partial control of the air reconnaissance supplies.

Sir Lucien had urged the need there was for one or two men with the code and obligations of the officer class to be alertly present in the expanding air-map organization he was developing. His insistence upon Theodore's qualifications was pointed and successful. Theodore was ear-marked for special administrative duties. No glimmering of the share of Clorinda's tears and Miranda's urgency in this selection ever entered his consciousness. He wrote to his mother resignedly. "Maybe this job won't last for ever and I'll get a smell of the real thing before the end." To Margaret he wrote with more complexity. He would begin a letter in one vein and before he had finished his mood and his handwriting had changed and he had to tear up what he had written and begin everything over again. And this also annoyed him with her.

Sometimes it was clear to him that she was the loveliest and most desirable thing in the world. He wanted her so that his heart ached. What was there left for him to want? Nevertheless the heart-ache went on. It was like a railway running through hilly country; sometimes it was in evidence and sometimes it was hidden, but

continuously it was there.

He was still haunted by his extravagant idea that she ought to come to him in Parville and the fact that that was impossible anyhow did not avail to conceal from him a reasonable certainty that she would not have come.

Like a little thorn that begins to fester was her accusation that he had given up thinking, that he had become a mere driven thing in the war stampede. As the festering extended fresh matter accumulated as pseudo memories about this memory. He began to imagine her expression and her intimation as she had said it. Sometimes she was scornful and then she was insupportable. Sometimes she repeated the words unconscious of their wounding quality. He saw her misjudging him, because while he was away she was devoting herself to Teddy and Teddy's friends and that irrational idea that a war, once you have begun it, can be stopped before victory or defeat is achieved.

He began angry letters and tore them up. At last for a sufficient time he decided simply to let her opinions alone and give her just a picture of the mind of a loyal soldier, unavoidably tied to vitally important work that he alone could do in Paris, but pining constantly for the danger and fellowship of the trenches, generously envious of the feats of arms performed there and, in his own less glorious but indispensable way, contributing to the majestic effort that would at last win the war. He would let that tell by its very simplicity against the base unpatriotic efforts of her associates. He would make no direct attack.

Even a letter in that vein was a difficult composition. It was not easy to convey a sense of gloom and danger in his references to Paris. Paris was in fact at that time a brighter and safer place than London; it was indeed under the fire of a very big long-range gun as well as afflicted by air raids, but these raids had none of the sustained determination of the air attacks on London; there was more food in the restaurants, more animation in the night-time streets; and nothing like the same hysterical stress of an impending parting which pervaded nearly all the gay pairings of London. Americans were everywhere now with an abundance of money, and with their naive appetites much in evidence. Their resolve to drink Paris to the dregs as well as win the war was manifest and encouraged. They paid their

tribute of gratitude to France the liberator in every restaurant and brothel. They croaked their profound moral disapproval of Germany and their desire to express it vividly in bloodshed, evisceration and smashing. Their phraseology threw strange new lights upon the war and the spirit in which war may be waged. Their animated presence made Theodore's evenings seem dull by comparison. He would go down to the Grand Boulevards in the evening to a music-hall or a cinema show and on his return home he would be jostled by groups of earnest pleasure-seekers. Women would accost him and refuse to take "No" for an answer. "No, no, Mademoiselle," he would say, with an unconscious improvement of the French language; "*Il y a dejá quelqu'une.* Some of these women were undeniably attractive, far more so, he thought, than the prowling drabs of the London streets.

He avoided Paris in his letters to Margaret. He did not want that background to his picture. But he laid stress on the organization of his office, which was still very incomplete, and on certain difficulties that were hampering the full development of Sir Lucien's schemes. And he made the most of a trip he had taken to Arras to assist in the removal of a printing and drawing plant, so as to give her the impression the front played a large part in his experiences. These letters to Margaret were not good letters, and he knew it. At the best there was something wanting in them. What was it that was wanting?

7

Suspense in Paris

Then began rumours about Sir Lucien's position. Unpleasant comments upon his methods of winning the war on the home front broke out in a leading provincial newspaper and spread to the London Press; offensive questions were asked in the House. For a time Sir Lucien held stoutly to office; he was not, he said, going to be driven from public service by a conspiracy of enemies and trade competitors; and then, suddenly and rather inexplicably, he resigned, and the spirit of the organization he had been building up in France changed. It was, Theodore learnt one day, to be reconstructed

altogether.

That was the first Theodore heard of his uncle's embarrassments. It grew clearer that new chiefs and directors were coming into power who knew not Theodore. His employment in the future might be changed; it might even be that his services would be dispensed with and a grateful aerial reconnaissance department return him to the fighting line from which he had been borrowed.

As soon as Theodore realized this he wrote off to both Margaret and his mother to say that he hoped after all that he would be recalled to the old battalion life. "In *time for open warfare in Germany.*"

He wrote briefly to Clorinda. He felt she ought to realize his danger — and then all his aunts would realize his danger and something might be done about it. To Margaret he was more elaborate.

I wish for many reasons, my dearest one, that you were here. You would then see that war is neither so dreadful nor so wicked as you think. There is a kind of hope and exhilaration that keeps us facing east. It is Will against Will. A. time will come when they will give way. My slavery to the drawing-board and my uncle's chemicals is coming to an end; my task is developing in other ways. Certain objectives had to be attained and they have been attained. Some day I can tell you more about that work, the war behind the front, as we call it, but the time is not yet. This war is not the mere orgies of brutalities some of you imagine it to be. There are strange and subtle conflicts underlying the superficial struggle.

He stopped writing. He re-read it. His excellent critical faculty was quite alive to its quality. This was stiff artificial stuff, that faculty witnessed, stilted, even — well — humbugging stuff. Yes. Should he begin it all over again once more? He had already torn up four letters in different styles. He surveyed the little heap of paper scraps. Profound questionings troubled him. Was this the way a passionate lover wrote to his mistress? He found himself repeating Margaret's dismayed query: "*What has happened to us*?"

He struggled with an impulse to begin again for the sixth time, and begin with that question. And to tell Margaret — and tell himself too — that he was in truth a dismayed embusque, confronted with the terror of active service again and trying to put a brave face on the

matter. That realization of himself did for a grey interval come clear before him, like a strange unfamiliar landscape seen in that lucid twilight which comes before the dawn. Would such a confession restore that quality of feeling that had vanished from his life? He would make an experiment in truth-telling. He would bare his soul before her, cry aloud to her as one lost soul to another. *What has happened to us*? Once more that immense and terrible heart-ache invaded him and dominated him, and passed.

He pushed letter number five aside. He took a fresh sheet and wrote:

What has happened to us?

But beyond that nothing would come. The glib phrases that his heroic reveries had accumulated in such abundance in his mind were of no service here. He had no expression ready. He sat gnawing a penholder and trying to frame the next sentence. He could not think it, much less frame it. He could imagine nothing, not a single line, that he could conceive of as travelling straight from his heart to hers, straight from quintessence to quintessence. Have any human beings, he asked himself, that much directness of understanding? All expression is artificial. However stark and genuine his thought was, his words would have to be artificial.

By imperceptible degrees the disposition towards veracity faded from his mind. This idea of heart speaking to heart became unthinkable. What he had to do, he concluded, was to establish his picture of himself in her mind. What else is possible in human intercourse? We cultivate pictures of ourselves in the minds of people we meet, and then we do our best to act consistently with these pictures.

He took up letter number five again and read it over. After all, in spite of a certain unreality of diction, this did give a picture of a gallant young fellow in this strange camp of a town that was Paris. Perhaps a little more of the lover might be touched on — and a bit more of the manly-modest note, so dear to the English mind.

He would not think of her reading it. Or he would think of her reading it as he wished it to be read.

He finished number five. Lest he should doubt about it again he sealed it up at once and stamped it and took it down the Avenue to

the Bureau de Poste.

After he had posted it doubt and some heart-ache returned, but plainly they returned too late. He shook them off. He fell in with two American officers who wanted to know the way to the Opera. He said that was his direction and went with them. He went along the familiar wide grey streets beside the quay, and appreciated and helped them to appreciate the delicate silver and green and pale blue of the Parisian aquatint. These Americans talked in a barbaric slang, but they were open to instruction. He told them quite a lot of things about England, France and the course of the war.

They suggested drinks and he joined them. For a time he could forget his two disagreeable obsessions, firstly that although he loved her he was mysteriously out of touch with Margaret, and quite unable to discover how or why, and secondly that he was destined in no very brief space to give up this indefinite but reasonably secure life in Paris and go to the front as a hero. Nothing had come for him as yet, but he knew the searching hand of the war was after him. He wanted most desperately to be a hero, but when he thought of all the concomitant tensions, hardships and horrors of that role, his mind became a fugitive from the facts of his position.

For a brief period of nearly three weeks it seemed to Theodore as though the searching hand of the war had missed him. His work fell from him more and more. He had little to do, and then less. The suspense would have been intolerable had it not been for the thought of the far less tolerable things that might follow when the suspense ended.

He spent a shouting hilarious evening with the two Americans. He got rather drunk but not drunk enough to lose himself; his new friends became so elaborately and conscientiously drunk that it kept him self-conscious and sober. They said they were "liquidating Lafayette". When they were led off at last by two rather hurried professionally gay young women to consummate their evening of pleasure — every moment of it with Theodore, they said, had been "Great" — he escaped with that neo-French of his, "*Il y a quelqu'une*', to their immense admiration.

The junior liquidator's last words were, "Keep White, Boy. Keep White!" and he retired dilating upon the beauties of perfect chastity

to the young prostitute who had fallen to his lot. Her knowledge of Anglo-Saxon was imperfect. She could say things but she could not understand things. “I show you aw right,” she said reassuringly after each burst of eloquence.

Next day there was a fuss about a couple of registered letters for him. They were waiting his acceptance at the post. They had been redirected from Parville, after some difficulties of his own making. He had, he realized, failed for some time to keep Parville aware of his address in Paris. He had neglected to do that with a sort of subconscious deliberateness.

He went round to the post office and got his letters and he learnt two things. His mother was dead and he was three days overdue at the camp near Abbeville to which he should have reported.

8

Last Words from Clorinda

Of course Clorinda had looked ill; she had been greyly different, but she had given him no hint that the shadow of death lay upon her. He turned over her two letters and let his mind run upon her, keeping his back, so to speak, to the wider realization that he was more or less a hunted deserter who would have much to explain to his hunters, when they got him, about that little confusion of the addresses.

She was dead. She had gone right out of his existence for evermore, this mother whom he could never remember loving, but whose spirit and intelligence he had been gradually coming to respect and admire in the last few years. She was the sort of mother who gets on better with a grown-up son than with a child. Of course she had been dreadfully jaded and tired that last time he had been in England, and it was stupid of him not to have recognized this more distinctly. She must have felt some intimation of danger because of her distressed impatience to finish that *Psycho-analysis of Philosophy.* She would have finished it he felt sure. It was not a dream book like his father’s.

(How far had it been done? Perhaps Ferdinando would get it together and publish it now.)

Her letters to him had generally been brief. They had never really "corresponded". These two he had now received with the doctor's covering note were short and in pencil, but this time they were not meant to be brief. She had been trying to say something in them, something she had left unsaid too long.

My dear Son (she began — it had always been "Theodore" before), *I wanted to tell you before you said good-bye, but you seemed so preoccupied and wanting to get away, that I was to have an operation — a sort of exploration I understand. I have been in queer health for some time. Queer pains and a heaviness. Never mind about that. Only, waiting for it — there is always some danger in an operation — makes one want to tidy up all sorts of things.*

I'm troubled about our relations, Theodore. I have been troubled for a long time. I don't know whether I ought to be counted among good mothers or bad. Perhaps I have been a bad mother, I don't know. I admit I have been too unstable, too mentally active for perfect motherhood; I have neglected, I have fussed. Perhaps I ought to have produced just books and things like that, instead of children. One child anyhow. And corrected them properly. I never corrected you. I've always dreamt of a great good talk with you, my dear, and it has never come off. There are things I've wanted to thrash out with you. Fundamental things. But I have only learnt them myself as you grew up. About the way people think and take life — I mean deal with life. If only they looked at it squarely and not through a mist of words. (This is all more like notes than a letter.) I mean if they got down to simplicity and frankness — the ultimate achievement of the mind — then the world would be quite a different place.

I've talked to you in my imagination about that scores of times — long talks. But it is hard even to write, much more to talk.

Everybody goes through life in a sort of mist of words, we veil ourselves in a mist of words about life, we are self-blindfolded. Mist of phrases. We tell ourselves stories and put things in a good light.

I began to find that out — lately long after you were born — and since then I have been trying to get my own bandage off, anyhow peep at things. All these blindfolded people, blundering against each other and hurting each other.... And I have watched you growing up, spinning threads of imagination out of your head like a spider, and

catching them up and weaving them into a bandage. A mist bandage. So that you fall against things and hurt yourself and others.

I wonder if you will understand a word of all this. If you do it may be unnecessary and if you don't it may be useless. But all the same I want to say to you, look straight at things.

("Don't I look straight at things?" protested the reader.)

I ought to have said that when you were young. But then did I understand these things as I do now? Keep pleasant illusions out of your eyes. Defensive I mean rather than pleasant — defensive and flattering. It's the sweet poison of life. Stop telling yourself fairy tales about yourself. Life isn't a fairy tale. There's nothing pretty-pretty about my universe when I manage to peep round my own bandage, but something — something ever so much better, Theodore. Something mighty, wonderful, stern and high, beyond love and hate, beyond desire. One glimpse of that... Worth all the coddling pretty-pretty that ever was. There's a Being standing above there, standing over all this game of blind-man's bluff. I can't tell you what it is, unless you know. I can't call it God. God is a word that has meant so many things — coconut faces with mother-of-pearl eyes, upward — that I can't bring myself to use it. But... The Silent Watcher. Peace of the Soul. Death of the Self. The only real life.

... No word exists for it.

Get through to that.

I seem really to have said everything I've been wanting to say to you, dear Son, and yet when I've read it over it seems to say nothing. But I've said as good as I can. I'm very tired. Frightfully tired now — always. You can't tell how quickly I get tired. They give me stuff and I brighten up, and my mind feels as clear and sound as a bell, until I try to do something with it. Then it goes off at a great pace.

And in five minutes it drags and drops. We ought to have had that great talk of ours a year and more ago. The world, my dear, is haunted by those unsaid things that people ought to have said and never said.

Operation to-morrow and the nurse fussing. I'll write later perhaps.

The second letter was a mere scrawl, almost illegible, on a sheet of ruled paper, torn apparently from a memorandum block.

As they give me the stuff I sink down out of reach of the pain. Seem to swim. I come up and the pain has gone. Very very very *clear-headed.*

I see things plainly now, more plainly. Ever dreamt of doing. So difficult to write them down. The words wont come. The pencil doesn't run. Sticks. Just a brain crowded with all sorts of things. And the sluggish blood. Eight failing. Going to be closed very soon. Want to explain it all again. To-morrow perhaps. Perfect lucidity. Eight. Nurse says to-morrow.

The doctor, in a covering note, said Clorinda's last words to the nurse were: "Send it to Theodore." He had some difficulty in getting the address and he had registered the letter. All three letters, Clorinda's two and the doctor's covering note, had come in one envelope.

For a time he sat over them oblivious of what threat or compulsion that other registered envelope might contain. He would never see his mother dead as he had seen his father. His last most living memories were of her tired and altered face during his last visit, of her troubled eyes and her rather deep, soft voice speaking, as he realized now, with a quality of effort. That ailing figure came in front of the more handsome, more vigorous but always rather untidy Clorinda of the Blayport days, broad, big, thick-set and spasmodically self-assertive. She had always been "Clorinda" to him, never mother. He saw her sulking, or mentally excited and talking brilliantly.

She knew a lot; she could talk down even Wimperdick when she was in form. But tenderness she had none. She was always aloof. Towards Theodore her caresses had always been restrained. One or two recollections there were of moments when she and he had had a spasm of mutual admiration, when for instance they had "dressed up" for the Parkinsons, and once or twice when they had been in flannels, sunburnt and glowing in the sunshine.

He took up her two letters again and put them down at a little distance from himself.

Was it really a message she had sent him? What was it she was telling him? She was trying to express a sort of religiosity. He found nothing responsive in himself. But *was* it a message?

It wasn't so much a message as an abandoned essay. He was to look straight at things. And then perhaps he too would see this empty God of hers, the God who was hardly a God. As if he wasn't looking straight at things now with the trenches and death awaiting him! Anyhow he had found his own orientations in that matter. He had no need for this vague belief in a system of denials. Was he not an Anglican Catholic gentleman ready to round off an honourable life and die if need be for God and King and Country?

His mind wandered away from Clorinda for a time and acted several death-scenes upon the field of battle. Then it returned to the reality of his mother. He began to see her more clearly.

What did all this mean? He found a solution.

This letter of hers was *writing*. It wasn't a message; it was writing. She liked to write. She like her brain to work. Always she had been a writer by nature, a critical writer. Latterly she had been actively and eagerly writing. That was it.

This was not so much a farewell as a last critical essay. Critical she had been to the very end with him. Just as Margaret was critical. Always when she had looked at him she had seemed to be thinking about him, thoughts which searched for defects.

"She never loved me, said Theodore, turning that poor last sheet of paper over and over in his hand. "She never really loved me."

For where was the devotion, the indiscriminating idolatry which is, as everybody knows, so naturally and properly the substance of a mother's love? Surely it is the birthright of every son? Where was it to be found in this cool intellectualization? Where had it ever been, at any time, between them? This poor letter that seemed to pant and strain, evoked no answering love. And surely it is the test of love that one is warmed by it and loves in return. Love is blind. It feels and warms; it does not look at you.

Odd how shy she had always been with him, for as long as he could remember. She had been shy almost as though she feared him. As though she feared he would make a demand for love upon her and she would not be able to satisfy it. As though he might challenge her....

Had this shyness with him anything to do with her relations to his

father? He tried to remember any passages of tenderness or devotion between his parents. He could recall no softness, no memory of closeness and intimacy. There again, had Clorinda ever loved? Had she indeed loved anyone? Yet was not love a woman's role? It is a woman's business to live for love.

What a fantastic irrational thing this love was! The thing everybody expected and demanded but — did anybody ever give it?

Curiously enough Theodore did not include himself in that comprehensive "anybody". He could not see it in that way. He looked at the matter outwardly from himself. His 'anybody" meant all the rest of mankind, and with particular intensity womankind. All human beings, he realized, want to be conquerors in love and none will be the slave that everyone desires. So Clorinda, it seemed, had failed him, and Rachel and Margaret had promised and failed to perform, had seemed to give unreservedly and yet had made reserves. He had been lured into a promised Paradise of indulgences and he had found it a harsh testing-house, a place of peculiarly intimate scrutinies. Love exalts us, strips us bare, and then looks at us without mercy.

And so shows that it is not really Love.

A vast self-pity arose in him, so love-eager, so love-worthy, a loveless being in a loveless world. And now going unloved and lonely to danger, hardship and perhaps death.

He sat very still for a long time, lost in his peculiar tangle of disillusionment. At last he turned with a sigh to his other letters.

9

Collapse in Paris

Theodore did not instantly report for active service. In a world all wired for telephones and telegrams he remained lost for three more days.

He chose to remain lost. For he argued that if his letters could await him unobserved for three days they could as well await him six, and that one may as well be shot for a week of freedom as for a day. And he knew they wouldn't shoot him; they would just send

him up the line. There was a queer half-painful and altogether defiant thrill in every moment of these stolen days. The conviction had become very strong in his mind that he was going up to the front to be killed. He dramatized himself as under the seal of certain death. He was the man who had never found love, true unstinted love, and he was doomed to die.

He felt there was a Byronic lyric or so in it, he even tried a few beginnings, but the words would not come.

Clorinda's last letters darkened in his memory. After a time it seemed to him as though she had cursed him on her death-bed. And Margaret, in her heart and mind at any rate, had been unfaithful to him.

The warmth of a precocious spring was in the air. The twilight was falling; the paper grew dim. He left his unfinished scraps of verse, which had suddenly, with their gaps and trial suggestions, become repellently reminiscent of Raymond's futilities, and went out of his dingy little bedroom into the streets. His craving to explain himself to someone who knew nothing about him became overwhelming. And beneath it and about it and sustaining it was a vaster, more elementary craving to live. He had missed love, he had abstained to no purpose, and now the front and slaughter were calling. What of one last snatch at life? He would make for the Grand Boulevards; he would do himself well for once. Somewhere he would find that hearer.

She found him readily enough. She was a tall lean girl with an intelligent face, and very bright dark eyes. She spoke softly. She had none of that bra2en hardness of voice common to her class, high-pitched to reach the wits of soddened alien men.

He paused when she accosted him. "Come with me," she said.

"I don't know," he said. "I'm unhappy."

"Pal killed?" she suggested.

"Many. And troubles. Never mind."

"We're all unhappy," she said. "*C'est triste. Mon amant est mort ily a deux mois. Cette guerre....* All the same? No good crying, Boy."

"Well, for once, take a holiday. Come and have some dinner and talk to me. Where did you learn your English?"

"Good school," she said. "I know a place where we can sit quiet

in a corner."

It was a good place. There was a promise of comfort and sound cooking so soon as they were inside the door. The maitre d'hotel with an air of deferential discretion guided them to a bright little table and Theodore arranged a generous dinner, with Burgundy for its life blood and *tournedos* as the strength of its loins. His friendliness for this frank and sympathetic stranger was already glowing after the soup, and the *tournedos* transfused him with tender passion. He decided to live for the moment, to forget all the complications of his life and soul, and for once to be as unstintedly cheering as he knew he could be. She appreciated his intention quickly enough. She responded beautifully. Her distinction and intelligence became more and more evident. She thought and showed and said that he was the finest and most delicate of English gentlemen, and they leant over the table towards each other and became more and more confidential and loving in their words and phrases and in their warmed and softened glances.

Presently he was stroking her hand gently as they talked. He lit a cigarette in his own mouth and then, as if recollecting himself, put it between her lips and lit himself another. She took that almost as a matter of course — but not quite. Her little faint smile was delightful.

Chiefly they talked about him. Her own tragedy it seemed was too simple and painful to bear much examination. But he had a more complicated soul in distress to reveal. He sketched an old English family, a typical English home; the orphan stripling's early efforts to enlist; his subsequent success in joining up, the front, wounds, return. He had been chosen to be an officer. Now suddenly his dear mother was dead. Then he became very reticent and revelatory about his love story, his unhappy love story. It was plain he could not talk freely of Margaret. Through the veil he cast about her she was faintly visible as a young aristocrat standing aloof, aloof by nature and training alike, distant and unkind.

"Your English girls are cold," said the dark lady. "I know. I was at an English school. I teach French *au pair.* All the girls were cold. Cold and rude. There is something left out of their instincts."

"It was not quite that," said Theodore and seemed to be thrusting painful memories away.

He changed the subject abruptly. “Tell me about that English school of yours. Tell me about yourself.”

“My mother was an Arab woman in Algiers,” she said. “My father was a French officer. He loved me. He loved me very much. He said I should have the best education money could buy.”

She spread out her hands. “And so I am here!”

She looked at him intently. “You are charming,” she whispered. “You come like a star. In my darkness. The men! The men one must meet! Yet what else can one do? One must eat.”

When they went out by the swing-doors of the restaurant, Theodore was convinced that at last, after bitter disappointment and insufficiency, he had met the reality of love. And for some wonderful hours that conviction was enlarged and deepened and broadened. Thank God this had happened before death overtook him! For this lithe Algerienne seemed to him to be the very body and heart of love.

Her sympathy, her understanding, her power to recognize the essential gallantry of his nature, made that night a magic one. He lived ecstatically for the moment; past and future ceased to exist for him except as sources for the romantic adornment of the present. Considering what she was, she was remarkably unjaded. She had the divine quality of unstinted admiration. She admired his profile, his hair, his slenderness. She said he was graceful, full of charm, full of a sad and delicate nobility. He was aristocratic — with the indefinable inaggressive aristocracy of an Englishman.

In the morning something of the magic had gone out of the affair. He awoke with a vague memory of Margaret in his flat; it was only gradually that he realized that he was in strange surroundings.

The room as it shaped itself to his perceptions was gaunt and sordid. It was adorned with steel engravings of a fleshly type and they were all hung after the French fashion, much too high. The wallpaper was the quintessence of everything that is wrong with French art and design. And it was blotched and mouldy. The windows were shut and the air not at its first freshness. This dark woman, heavily asleep beside him, snoring slightly and with her mouth open, was lank and alien and somehow pitiful and helpless. Her unconsciousness reminded him of some of the dead he had seen at the front.

She awoke with a start, alive at once, sat up, rubbed her eyes and remembered him by an effort. She ceased to stare at him as though he was some sort of unpleasant surprise. “Ah!” she said, with a sidelong smile and covering her face with her hands. “*Mon petit Anglais.*”

Getting up had its coarser side. Yet she had a curious grace as she moved about the room.

Suddenly she turned upon him, free of all affectation, and said, “Of course, your mother was dead and you were sad. I remember. Was I a ‘*bonne amie*’ to you last night? I was so sorry for you. I think really I love you, just a little. One *can* love — even like this.”

That was better. When first she had looked at him that morning he had thought she had hard bright eyes like a snake’s. Now he thought she had very intelligent eyes.

At first he was for saying farewell to her and then he arranged to meet her again that afternoon. He was inclined in his heart to break that assignation when he made it, but after lunch his disposition was to keep it punctually.

She asked him when his leave in Paris would end and he put that aside with an air of delicacy, but the question set going a disagreeable stir in his mind. This love episode, this passion of stolen hours, would have to end very soon. That night near the Madeleine they saw a man stopped, arrested and marched off. Someone in the crowd that gathered and dispersed said it was a deserter. After that the lean Algerienne could not save him from distracting thoughts.

He could not sleep. His appetite for life had achieved a sudden satiety. A vague vast dismay arose that he should find himself in that dim gawky room again, with arrest and conviction hanging over him. The flares and lights of the traffic in the street outside threw hurrying shapes across the ceiling. The air was full of indistinct arpeggios of sound, that ended, began on a new note, paused and resumed.

Dismay sank towards self-reproach and from that he struggled into perplexed anger. Why was he here? What had brought him to this plight? Jaded, in the arms, so to speak, of a prostitute, and doomed to die?

Because no one had loved him.

That was it. It was because no one had loved him.

He had been cheated of love. He was a biological tragedy. He had

been begotten without real love, born without love, brought up without love. Rachel had never loved him. (Why had she never written after that one card from Ostend?) Margaret had never loved him. No, Margaret had never loved him. Even this poor shabby worn-out heart beside him had come nearer to love, honest passionate instinctive indiscriminating love, than Margaret. At first perhaps — when she had shed those salt tears — there had been love in Margaret. But afterwards? This last time had she loved even a little? With her mind full of scraps of Shelley, "Conchy" phrases and Teddy's dogmas?

So far as that steady calm heart of hers was capable of loving, she loved Teddy.

And at the thought of Teddy the fountains of anger within him overflowed. Of course she loved Teddy more than him. Why had he never realized that before? It became coldly and completely plain. Down deep in her being was an ill-suppressed incestuous passion. The psycho-analysts had a name for it, various names. Never mind the name; there was the thing. And while he, Theodore, lay weary and unhappy in this infernally lumpy bed in Paris, not knowing what disaster the morrow might bring, Teddy, with that ruddy over-resolute scowl of his, was performing a safe and easy martyrdom in a London prison cell! (Good God, but one would laugh if some Gotha dropped a bomb on the jail and did the whole collection of vermin in!) Never before had Theodore realized how he hated Teddy, how much he wished him to suffer and die. And how intensely he hated the shadow cast by Teddy upon his sister!

His hate rose towering in his mind. He could not lie still. He rolled over and rolled back. He began to toss and mutter in the bed.

"*Chéri*," drowsed the Algerienne, and put out a soothing hand and sank down into sleep again.

He dramatized a great scene with the brother and sister, a storm of scornful accusations and reproaches. He invented phrase after phrase of insult. They seemed to him extraordinarily apt and rich.

His mind was still full of these confrontations in the morning. He left his Algerienne absent-mindedly. He promised her falsely there should be another meeting. She smiled wryly for she was not deceived. He went to his *hotel meuble* to pack his things and get off

to Abbeville to report himself before it was too late. The lavish phrases of the night were still glowing with a painful magnificence in his brain. He sat at his toilet table and wrote them down with a spluttering pen.

You have never loved me, he told Margaret. *You do not know what love is. Why, the very prostitute with whom I spent the night before I went up to my death knew more of love than you.*

Grimly he stuck down his envelope, addressed it firmly and hurried out to post it before he could repent.

Then it occurred to him that that might be a rather awful letter if he did get killed. He saw Margaret suddenly in a different light, reading that letter, and her eyes were bright with tears, tears of penitence.

And then came a much more painful thought and spread interrogation fanwise to a series of disagreeable possibilities. What sort of letter would it seem if he did not even get touched?

10

Shell-burst

Theodore's premonitions of death were premature. He did not go up to the front to die. He was under the impression that he wanted to be killed, that the disillusioned Bulpington of Blup was seeking an honourable escape from an embittering world by reckless self-exposure, but when it was a question of action rather than thought, deeper, less conscious elements in his nature came into play with irresistible force. He was reserved but not altogether uncommunicative with his fellow officers. He looked east perhaps less implacably than he had done with Clorinda and Margaret, and he was disposed to generalize cynically about life, art and the luck in things, rather than talk explicitly of home and his personal realities.

Very little fuss was made about his delayed appearance, and he found his way with marked celerity from the base depot to a reasonably comfortable officers' dug-out near Marchepade — comfortable in comparison with that other dug-out, anyhow. Everything seemed better than his former experience in the ranks. He

was no longer grievously over-burthened with gear. There were men to salute him now, and except for the subtle and inescapable forces that were guiding him to that dug-out, he had considerable freedom of movement. He could wander within limits. He got chances of better food. His boots and puttees fitted him with exactitude and he felt altogether sightlier. He perceived that he was much riper and older than the excited overwrought young private of a year or more ago, who had been so horribly shocked by the disembowelling of a comrade. On his way up he saw a lot of dead, old dead and new, and he did not mind very much. He dreamt indeed; he had some very disagreeable dreams, dreams that seemed to be saturated with the spirit of some alien coward rather than his own, but they respected the boundaries of dreamland and did not penetrate far into his waking life. He was with two younger men who had just come out, young Plant and young Elders. He could tell them things. That also sustained him. But he began to realize that the front had become much noisier, tenser and more ruinous than it had been in his previous experience, and that the enemy aeroplanes were much more in evidence.

The gaunt, menacing and noisy things about him played tunes upon his feelings, and when he tried to distract himself from the things about him the memory of that last letter to Margaret came forward with the persistence of an obsessing musical air one tries to forget, and started vast elaborate thought-series and patterns about her and Teddy and the whole drive of influences that had made them both contemners of the war and him a fighting hero. He tried to remember exactly what was in that letter. He wanted to reopen the argument. He restated his case against her with variations over and over again.

Then upon his part of the line — he was with the Fifth Army — the pressure of the ultimate German offensive began. Already when he had come up there had been a vague feeling of apprehension about, quite different from the aggressive expectation of his earlier experience. And now for the first time he experienced the full force of a modern bombardment, style 1918. In the place of disconnected crashes and detonations the world became a continual earthquake, an endless succession of explosions and shattering collapses. The shell-

fire mounted from one culmination, so that it seemed it could go no further, to another. The parapets and trench walls crumbled everywhere, the trenches were interrupted by the craters of explosions, the dug-outs became refuges for strangely wounded men, everywhere were torn bodies and splashes of blood. The officers' dug-out suffered a direct hit. It collapsed and Theodore saw young Plant, with whom he had been talking five minutes before, with one of the main timbers of the roof not across his body but in his body. Yet his eyes moved, he looked at Theodore appealingly; for some moments he was still alive. The heavy gas-curtain of the entrance seemed to be afire. Yet through that lay the way of escape.

A whiff of gas moved Theodore to replace his mask. He struggled up the steps. He did not look again at Plant.

From this point Theodore's memory ceased to work. To this day he has no clear consecutive knowledge of the things he experienced or the things he did. Now and then when he is dreaming the quality of his dreams takes on a curious resemblance to a thing remembered, and mixed up with these questionable realities are his incredulous dramatizations of acts of which he was accused. But these make no whole, they are like tom fragments from two or three different but similar stories, and they are altogether out of keeping with his established conception of himself.

Struggling through the mists of his obliterations and suppressions is a picture, entirely hideous, of a trench so smashed and devastated that it is less like a trench than a torrent bed. It is as if its childish engineering had been trampled and scattered by a malignant giant. The bodies of men are there, broken and tossed aside. And down this ravine of horror comes the German offensive, a few scattered men in staring gas-masks with fixed bayonets looking this way and that, like uncertain explorers. There is no great confidence nor menace in their attack. They are figures in a dream of pain and horror. But behind them come other figures, up over the smoking edge of the ruins, less hesitant. These begin to shoot and throw bombs. The explosions twinkle through the smoke; the concussions beat upon him. There are some British soldiers fighting round about Theodore. One screams sharply and falls against him, clings to his knees. Theodore remembers thrusting aside this agony, cursing it, and turning towards

some way of escape. He is alone. He is untouched. But if he stays here, how long will he be alive?

It streams across his mind that this is all wrong, such things as this ought not to be. Teddy had been right. Margaret was right. This is the last insanity of mankind. All these men, the men about him and the men against him, these fantastic men in masks, are mad, mad to have obeyed, mad to have marched to this, lunatics to go on with it. Before everything else he must get out of this nightmare, away from these maniacs. He struggles to get out of this nightmare — for days and weeks he struggles out of it and then falls into it again.

Another vision is of nearly equal vividness. He is alone. He is wearing his mask but he has a feeling it is loose. He is in a battered communication trench, a smashed latrine, and he is dodging to and fro amidst the filth like a hunted rat in a ditch uncertain from which direction danger will come.

Then there is a nightmare of interminable effort to get somewhere, somewhere else, of clambering up steep sheets of corrugated iron, of crawling, of lying expanded in flat terror with the air above him twittering with machine-gun bullets, of creeping into obscure holes that have no outlet, of difficulties amidst the ruined wall of a house and a great heap of broken crockery, of a place full of stinking swollen dead horses and smashed gun-carriages, and of his blundering into and then getting away from a desperate bunch of men in khaki, being marshalled by a very young captain for some last useless effort. The Germans must be quite near for no gas is being used and nobody wears a mask. Theodore notes vividly that the young officer has a white pock-marked face. It is so unusual to meet pock-marked faces nowadays. He pulls himself together for a moment. “Where are you going, sir?” says the young officer. “My men are away up there,” lies Theodore. “But where, in God’s name, is there ammunition? Are there no reserves of ammunition? My Captain’s up there, but we’ve no stuff.”

Somehow he got away with that.

Then for a time he is in long coarse grass under trees. The grass is full of flowers and particularly of dog-daisies. There is a comparatively undamaged road beside him and ahead is a white hovel with its thatch still intact upon it. He tries to remember the

French name for it. Is it a *chaumiere* or a *chaumette*? Queer he should think about that! Then he begins to take stock of his position. He is a fugitive. God only knows whither he has wandered, but plainly he is out of action. But even as he tells himself he is out of action comes the long deepening whine of a shell, which falls with a thud and flashes into a white impact. He throws himself down on his face incontinently, and lies still, amidst a shower of dirt and pebbles. The world seems strangely still after the first blow of the explosion upon his ear-drums. It remains still He sits up and puts his hands to his painful ears. The taste of the smoke is filthy.

He tries to remember what has happened more precisely....

A kind of horror and blankness comes upon him. He wishes himself dead. If only that shell had been a little nearer it might have got him and put a fitting end to this disaster that has overtaken his soul. And the wish fulfils itself. He dies. He drops down again into the grass, clasps his hands together extended as for death, and the memory ends.

And concluding the series he is, for a phase, himself again.

He is talking to a doctor.

The doctor sits in front of him and between them is a little wickerwork table with a glass top. How they met and how their talk began he never remembers, but only the scathing climax of the interrogation.

"How the devil do I know what happened?" he demands, weeping. "I suppose I ran away. I suppose I ran away and now they will shoot me. Anyhow that's an end to my particular mess and there you are!"

The treatment of such cases as Theodore's varied with the M.O. concerned. Sometimes the diagnosis led straight to the bleak and sorrowful firing party at dawn. But there were understanding and merciful men among these M.O.s, there were some who never once passed a man on to such a fate, and it was Theodore's luck to encounter a doctor of that new school and not a martinet of the old. He was by no means so sure of his science and his role, as his professional traditions obliged him to assume he was. He had carried the open mind of science through four years of medical practice at the front. He knew what he meant to do about Theodore but he could

not refrain from a moment or so of speculation.

"I wonder if it would be better if all chaps like you *were* shot," he considered. "Would it improve the race? Are you obliged to be what you are? Or did you miss something or get something wrong as you grew up?"

Theodore felt he was being teased very cruelly.

"Let them shoot me," he said sullenly, drawing his hand across his wet face. "I ran away."

And then, weeping again, "If I didn't give my life in one way, I can give it in another."

"Ssh!" said the doctor. "It wasn't you ran away. It was the other fellow ran away. Don't talk like a fool or you *will* get shot, and then you know they'll hear of it at home. You wouldn't like that. No."

"I don't *remember* running away," said Theodore with a new speculative light in his reddened eyes.

"Then why the hell are you jabbering about it?"

"*Did* I run away?"

The doctor hesitated and wished he knew his business better. "No," he said. His sense of humour overcame him. "You were leading your men splendidly and a shell exploded under your feet and blew you — about a mile and a half to the rear. And there naturally enough you lay stunned. And as you had no bodily wounds at all, only mental ones, there is — what shall I say? — a misapprehension. And now, you bloody fool, *will* you shut up and leave things to me?"

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

THE RETURN OF THE WARRIOR

1

Interlude in Obscurity

UNTIL the end of the war Theodore remained a case of war neurosis at Whiting Summers. The earlier phrase "shell shock" had gone out of fashion, and there was no tolerance at all now for the explanation that the unromantic turn of his behaviour in battle and this subsequent phase of profound neurasthenic depression — inertia for the most part, with slight and ineffective suicidal impulses — was the expression of a physical derangement caused by concussion. It was something more than that. The medical profession, after some passages of difficulty, was coming to apprehend the wider aspects of these shell-shock cases, to realize they were only intense and expressive instances of the almost universal mental disturbance produced by the war.

In that illuminating blue-book, *The War Office Report upon Shell Shock* — it was published in 1922 — one may see the official mind still struggling to deal with these cases as something special and definable, to resist the realization that every human brain thrust into modern warfare is thrust towards something that, full face, is too unnatural, too incoherently, aimlessly and stupidly cruel, to endure. The individual is carried into it, upon a stream of usages, loyalties, sentimentalities, conceptions of honour and courage, confidences in governments and in leadership, only to encounter a shattering incompatibility in that vast destructive futility. Everyone who got to that completeness of encounter did not cry out or run or fall flat; only a proportion of the war neurotics came to hospital; but all without exception were damaged, distorted and crippled.

Down in the darknesses beneath the miserable apathy of Theodore, our harmless war neurotic under observation at Whiting Summers, these new apprehensions of the deception, danger and

terror of life and the old habits of acceptance and self-assurance carried on their sluggish but inappeasable warfare. A weak disposition still worked in him, a disposition evoked years ago by the Broxted influence, to strip himself and his world bare, to see plainly the incoherence of his lusts and sentimental phases, to admit his fear of pain and his reluctance for endeavour, to own up to his endless insufficiencies, to go down into the secret places of private humiliation and admit the real frightfulness of life, amidst its giddy opportunities, and so arise a man.

But where would there be power to lift him again out of that abasement? He might go down there but he could not live down there. He had not the heart to be real, and the gift of self-illusion had for a time deserted him. He would sit for hours in a state of abjection, accepting his abjection, helping it, letting his hands fall limp, allowing his mouth to drop, making no answer to questions. Then very rapidly his mood would change. He would rebel against this sense of defeat. The fading memories of flight and despair in his mind would be forced down out of consciousness. He would mitigate his account of his injury so that he was no longer a war neurotic but a definite case of shell concussion.

"Of course," he would mutter, sitting up and reconstructing his memories. "Of course."

He had been behaving quite well when that accursed shell-burst got him. Indeed, he rather suspected, if only he could get the facts back in his mind, that he had been behaving rather splendidly. Those dreams of flight and terror, they were no more than dreams. Why had he accepted them?

"That's better," said his doctor, finding him sitting up with a closed mouth and living eyes. "Walk about for a bit."

"When you are ill as you are," said the doctor, "every memory is an ugly memory. Don't worry about them. It wasn't so ugly as you think. Seen in the right light. By the by, couldn't you do some drawing? You were an artist, weren't you?"

Theodore wouldn't try at the time, but afterwards the suggestion worked in him. The doctor had put a drawing-block and some water colours within reach; he scribbled for a while and then began a series of fantastic landscapes, glades in dense very green woods, winding

roads up towering mountain masses, high castles perched on splintered crags, mountain tarns — and often two minute figures rode together through these scenes. They seemed to belong to some other world, to some preceding existence in which he had been happy.

Then he found it gratifying to listen to music, good music, on the gramophone. Berlioz and Offenbach he liked best of all. He would listen and long buried reveries rose again before him.

After the peace he recovered very steadily. That happened to very many cases among these war-neurotics. The peace, say the psychologists, weakened the influence of the instinct of self-preservation. It relieved that subconscious resistence to recovery. In a little time there remained no reason why Theodore should not be discharged cured.

One bright warm day in April he found himself in a train going Londonward. But it was now a restricted and amended Theodore who sat in the carriage and watched the budding landscape of post-war England run past the windows. The Theodore who had fled through the trenches had passed altogether out of his waking life, was a reality only in his dreams. This Theodore, this waking and conscious Theodore, had a different history. The closing phases of his war services were effaced from his mind and replaced by vague and fluctuating legends of heroic service. He was a war hero returning to civil life. He had served and suffered. The Bulpington of Blup had played his part, done his bit in saving this dear England from God knows what. Somehow...

Dreamland protested, mocked and menaced, but slowly with returning health and security, the barrier of a quick forgetfulness between that underworld and the daily life was restored. At last little more than an occasional vague uneasiness, a weak flight tendency seeped through. He started rather more readily at sudden sounds, he hesitated before opening doors, his stammer was more apparent and less under control.

In that fashion Theodore emerged from the Great War.

2

Broken Threads

He was not very clear about what he expected to find in London.

Essentially he was returning. He was not going on to anything new. The London he was coming to was, as he saw it, the London he had left. He had fought to save the England of his adolescent acceptance, and not to make another and a different England. So he looked forward to a resumption of his artistic and literary work again; to something like the old school and the old talks and the old friendships and rivalries. His talks would be deepened indeed, his outlook broadened, by his memories of war service and the Great Adventure. It would be the same Theodore in the same London, but fuller and finer and exalted. And not as yet very definitely apprehended, but pervading and ruling it all, was Margaret. He felt that in some fashion he was returning to Margaret, and that necessarily she would resume her role as the central significance of his reveries. He was now, he realized, completely a man, a better-looking, maturer, more interesting individual than the crude recruit of their earlier love-making. He was leaner, a couple of inches taller, with graver eyes and a steadier voice.

It did not trouble him very much that there had been no communication at all between them since that last letter of his before he went up to join the Fifth Army. That letter had rankled for a long time in his mind; he had made incessant efforts to recall its precise phrases; but gradually it had shaped itself in his memory as a manly protest against war resistance, natural and even proper from an officer going up to the grim tortures of the front. Perhaps his phrases may have been stern. She would have heard that he was wounded, through Aunt Amanda if in no other way, and no doubt she must have longed to write and put matters right with him. But she may not have known how to get a letter to him, or the letter may have gone astray.

He pictured their meeting in half a dozen different ways, as the train rumbled Londonward.

He had kept on the little flat in West Kensington, but for a night or so, until it could be put in order, he was to occupy Aunt Lucinda's visitor's room. Afterwards he was to have a week-end at Edgware with Uncle Lucien, who was now, his munitions difficulties forgotten long since, a leader in that heroic "Reconstruction" movement which

was to rebuild Paradise in England's green and pleasant land. It was to make an England "fit for heroes". It was to compensate for every sacrifice the war had exacted. That vision glowed very brilliantly for a time, led to some complex speculations in building material, and faded out delicately and completely in a year or so.

Theodore went at once to link himself again to the Rowlands School. The place had changed very little. There were two new assistants; both their predecessors had been killed, but Rowlands was the same Rowlands, painting as vigorously as ever, as burly, noisy and irregular. He had refused to have anything to do with war pictures. "Why should I do a lot of bloody journalism and propaganda?" he had demanded. "What's all this war and politics got to do with art? We'll have the bloody sojers painting our pictures for us next," and he had just gone on in his own way painting as he felt disposed. Vanderlink was back from Italy, painting better than ever; his face was cut down by a glowing scar from brow to chin which lifted a sort of hare lip over his teeth and just missed his pugnacious nose. It made an angry rim to his eye.

From the Rowlands School Theodore gradually picked up other threads of his old acquaintance. Francolin, he learnt, was a colonel, no less, with various decorations, and Bletts had been blown to pieces in a Flemish bordel by a chance bomb from a German raider. Rachel Bernstein, he learnt from her brother, had married a Zionist and gone to Palestine. She had become an enthusiastic Zionist and there were no men in the world for her any more except the Chosen People. But after all there are quite a lot of Chosen People, especially in Palestine.

From Melchior he heard of the Broxteds.

Father and son had long since healed their quarrel. Teddy had come out of jail, resentful but politically inactive for a time, and he had already published some research results. His work, said Melchior, was hard and good. The Professor had written an angry scathing book against the conduct of the war, *Studies in Inefficiency,* and he was now raiding from his proper province of zoology into the sociological field. He had published an address on *Human Association from the Point of View of General Biology* which Melchior recommended very warmly to Theodore's attention. "It's a

confoundedly original book for an old boy like that. It's just as though his mind had jolted forward suddenly."

"And Margaret?"

"I see her at times," said Melchior.

Theodore waited for more.

"She's lovelier than ever. You know, she took a very good degree."

"Why not?" said Theodore.

"I don't know. She never talks much. One doesn't expect beautiful people like that to pass examinations,"

"What is she doing?"

She was on the staff of a general hospital. "It's surprising she doesn't get married. She's the sort of girl — It must rain proposals of marriage! Unless they're afraid of her. I am. I look at her at times and I think, 'You'd be damned hard to live up to, young woman.' But all the same it might be worth while. I suppose really she's just as human as other people."

Theodore noted the address of the hospital and after that all London was pervaded by the thought of Margaret, the desire for Margaret, and a certain fear of Margaret. He refrained from writing to her for three days. They were days in which he was hoping and expecting all the time to meet her at every corner. He would see women in the crowd far off, who might be her. He would push towards them in a state between heart-ache and excitement and they changed into strangers. He haunted probable places for an encounter. He ate at restaurants they had visited together in the war days. He went past her hospital a score of times. At last he wrote to her at the hospital.

Margaret dear, I am back in London, out of the Army, cured of my war injuries and very lonely. I want to see you very much. Where will you meet me?

Your Theodore.

3

Post-war Margaret

She replied as briefly. She was so glad to know he was fit again. Would he give her tea at Rumpelmayer's, the place at the palace end of St. James's Street?

He was well in time for the appointment.

It was true as Melchior had said. She was lovelier than ever. She came thoughtful through the outer shop to the loom behind where he waited at a little table. She discovered him and became radiantly friendly, wilfully friendly. He stood up, dark and lean, holding out his hands.

(After all, perhaps that last letter from Paris had never reached her!)

She was plainly very happy to see him again, happy and interested in him. "I've never had tea in this place," she said. "I've always wanted to."

They sat down. Each was looking at the other without seeming to look too intently. Theodore was aquiver. He fussed a little about ordering the tea. "All sorts of cakes and things," he said to the waitress. He felt it was most important somehow that he should give his order correctly, finely, masterfully. He had to play the man down to the smallest detail. The waitress received his commands with sympathetic respect and left them.

They made inane remarks.

"I just had to write to you."

"Of course you wrote to me."

"You're not changed a bit. You're only yourself rather more than ever."

"I feel tremendously changed. I'm older and wiser. I'm a qualified practitioner now."

"Your father is still the Professor at Kingsway College? And Teddy?"

"He's getting over the war."

Getting over the war! But what had *he* done in the war? Never mind that. That old quarrel must rest for a time.

"And what are you going to do now, Theodore?"

"I don't know. Paint or write and see which takes me."

She waited gravely for more and there was affection in her eyes. She folded her arms on the table and it was plain she found him

better than she had expected.

He began to talk of his art and the renascence of art and literature under the inspiration of the war. It was, he declared, an intensely exciting time that was dawning for the creative impulse, particularly in literature. That was why he was attracted rather by writing than by drawing or painting. The new wine would never go into the old bottles. There would have to be new forms, new men, new schools. The old reputations stood up over us now like great empty hulls that had served their purpose, Hardy, Barrie, Conrad, Kipling, Galsworthy, Bennett, Wells, Shaw, Maugham and so forth; they had all said what they had to say; they were finished. They had nothing more to tell us. He swept them away by a gesture. They were pre-war. They ought to have gone on to the bonfires of Armistice Day. The new generation was hurrying forward to express the great new things, the deeper significances, the wider outlooks, that the war had revealed. There would be new conceptions of life, new conceptions of happiness and sex, expressed in a new language, a language richer and more subtle, reforged for the new needs.

He had not known that he had all this in his mind. It came out from him so that he was surprised by his own vigour. But the whole world had meaning again and he had a use for it now that Margaret listened again.

She watched him as he talked. “Dear old Theodore!” she said. “You talk as well as ever.”

He stopped short. “But am I dear old Theodore still?” he asked abruptly. “Margaret *dear?*”

She remained quite still for a moment.

“Always dear Theodore, yes,” she said.

“As dear as ever?”

Again she was still. He went on: “I could talk to you like this for ever. I feel strength and purpose coming back to me. I can write, I can do great things, if only... Margaret dear, tell me, do you still love me? Are we still to be lovers?”

“No, no,” she said. “Talk of books. Talk of literature. Talk of all you young writers sweeping the old duffers away.

I love to hear you talk about all that. I want you to do these brilliant things. A real new age.”

“Dearest, my dear. I still love you.”

For a moment or so they looked hard at each other without speaking.

She folded her arms on the table before her. “Theodore,” she said, very resolutely, “listen.”

“I don’t want to hear what you are going to say.”

“All that is over.”

“But why is it over?”

“It ended. It died. It was dying when you were here in London for the second time. Didn’t you feel it? And — don’t you remember? You wrote me a letter.”

Then she had received that letter. But he had been thinking a great deal about that. He was prepared.

“I was mad when I wrote you that letter. It was an absurd outbreak. I can’t tell you the conditions of distress and exasperation, the long days of uncertainty in all that unrest of Paris. It was unforgivable. And all the same, I ask you to forgive. What is love without forgiveness?”

“And that prostitute? Who knew so much better how to love?”

“That too. I didn’t mean it. How could I have meant it? I wrote to wound.”

“And what was that love of yours that wrote to wound? Perhaps it wounded where wounds don’t heal. Women — *all* lovers maybe — have a sort of pride about their loving.”

“I was mad,” he repeated, and felt the argument was slipping from him.

“*Silly* Theodore,” she said. “Dear — but silly.”

“You punish me because I was tormented, and cried out.”

“I don’t punish you. But you ended something. You broke it and threw it in my face.”

He leant over the table towards her and talked to her in earnest undertones.

“Margaret dear; it is all so foolish. It is stupid. Whatever I have done to you or you to me. We are lovers. Our bodies love. All this is nonsense. There is no real barrier, only an idea, only wounded pride. If I could kiss you, *once*, you’d remember. It would all come back.”

She met his eyes steadfastly. “Yes,” she said, “but you can’t kiss

me. Here or anywhere. And I don't want to remember. I don't want any of that to come back. If it were possible.... Afterwards, I'd be disgusted. That's that. It's ended. But all the same I want to be friends with you. Still, and for ever I think, I'm fond of you. I'm truly *very* fond of you, Theodore. But if you talk like this, how can I see you again?"

4

Margaret Wavers

At the time she would make no other appointment with him.

He sent her a letter-card, "*Give me a day — one day*, *Margaret — Virginia Water, that old walk.*" She did not reply. He telephoned to the hospital.

"I don't want to give you a day."

"Why should you be afraid to meet me?"

That he knew would touch her pride. "What is there to say more than we have said?" she asked.

"Come to my flat."

"No."

"Then let us have one last talk in Kensington Gardens." She agreed. "If you must," she said.

When they met they were both prepared with things to say. They talked without any close give-and-take for a time. He recited the remains of an eloquent appeal to her he had composed and recomposed in the interval, an appeal to marry him, to shape his life as his inspiration, to forget all their war-time discords in realized love. But her inattention spoilt his phrases. She did not attend to them because she was trying to thrust them aside and make her own declaration.

At last he desisted from his objective and began to listen to her.

"I want to keep friends. I don't want you to go out of my life. I feel that would be like a sort of death of you, for me. I will never dream of marrying you, but all the same, can't you be dear to me? Can't all that happened be left bright and put away. Perhaps one's first love is more to a woman's imagination than a man's. I do care

no end for you. I don't want to part in a sort of quarrel. I can't quarrel with you and there's the truth of it. We *did* love. You're part of my life. That's how I feel."

"Then that settles it. Be a part of my life."

"It settles nothing if you insist on making love. That's finished for ever. Things aren't so simple. Let's be frank. When I gave myself to you in the war-time it seemed a little thing; it *was* a little thing. It would have been mean then to have refused you. I'm glad still we did that. Glad, do you hear? But now. Now..."

"Now," said Theodore bitterly, "I suppose you have to consider your prospects in life. And you don't believe in mine. That's the truth of it. Until you see my name flaring on the hoardings and my books in all the booksellers' shops, you won't believe I'm good enough to marry. That's how it is."

"You don't always say things very prettily. But put it like that, yes. It's half truth anyhow. I *don't* believe in our prospects. We have no prospects together. We couldn't, my dear, live always in each other's arms. Whenever we talk or write to each other or think, we come unstuck. Even if you made the sort of success you talk about, we shouldn't agree. I might not think it success. I want to do my own work, I want to serve — serve something more than an attractive incalculable man — even if his name is on all the hoardings. And there's endless things besides. I wouldn't lock my life to yours for anything. There's things about you—"

Her voice caught. She did not want to tell even herself what she really thought of Theodore.

"All this is damned rational," said Theodore after a pause. "Yes. Isn't it?"

"Damnably rational."

"Damnably," she assented.

He posed as though he was thinking. But indeed he was hesitating before a question he dreaded asking. At length he came out with it.

"Tell me one thing. Is there someone else? In my place?"

"No one will ever be in your place."

He looked at her closely. "That's disingenuous."

"Yes. Well, yes. I *have* been thinking of marrying someone else. Someone —— — We have worked together.

We got on together. He loves me.”

“He is, in fact, your lover? I mean—”

“I know what you mean. It’s no business of yours. Still, since you want to know: No.”

“Not yet.”

“Not yet.”

“I thought so,” said Theodore, and spun his chair round to stare at her. “I’ve been feeling that.”

“Theodore,” she said, with steady eyes to his glare, “you wanted to have things out with me. I didn’t ask for this.”

“Still, a certain surprise.”

“Why should you be surprised?”

“I thought — When did you decide to throw me over? When I was wounded?”

“Wounded!”

“Disabled, damn it! Why rub it in?”

“Didn’t that letter you wrote me from Paris...? Didn’t you imagine that I might think that over? Wasn’t I dismissed then? Even before that. That second time you were in London. I knew really when I saw you off the second time that the end had come. I had a sort of feeling that I had to save my life from you. I knew I had to. But you see, I still loved you. For a long time. Even after that letter. I thought I might go on with my work and put my love for you away, in a corner.”

“Until this new lover took my place?”

“The second love doesn’t take the place of the first. It’s different.”

“Better, perhaps?” said Theodore intently, and with his hand gripping fight on his chair-back.

She made no answer. But the faintest shadow of scorn flitted across her face.

“My God!” said Theodore and looked down and began to excavate the turf of Kensington Gardens with his heel. In a few seconds he had made quite a nice round hole.

“It’s come to this,” he exclaimed abruptly and stood up. She stood up also.

“Away there to Lancaster Gate and a taxi,” she said. “I want to go home.”

He stood in front of her.

"And does this man, this other man — I suppose he has all the high aims? Pacificism and all that? Science and that stuff. History just blunders hitherto, and now we begin. Keep away from the fighting. Keep out of *that*, anyhow. The things I don't agree with? And the work? And everything? Eh?"

"Need you and I talk about that?"

"I want to know."

She shook her head.

"Probably a pal of Teddy's?"

"Leave Teddy out of it."

"But does he know about me?"

"Of course he knows about you. Do *I* cheat?"

"My God!" cried Theodore with a gesture of desolation to the trees, the grass, the sunshine, the distant water. "But this leaves my world *empty*!"

She looked at the real misery of his face and winced.

Pity wrung her. "I'm so sorry," she said with tears in her eyes. "Oh, I'm so sorry!"

He was moved to make a fantastic proposal. "Margaret," he said, "come with me to my flat. Now. For one last time! One last passionate time! I can feel there's still love in you — for me. *Think*, Margaret! Remember! How I used to kiss you *there* — under your neck. How once I kissed you under the armpit. The clasp of my arms! My body as you held me."

She stared at him in silence and her face was white.

"I must go," she said, almost in a whisper.

Her eyes fell and then she looked up again and met his, and he knew that there was nothing more to say.

They went down to the path beside the Serpentine side by side. He called a taxi for her and saw her into it, and they parted without another word.

5

Epistolatory Incontinence

Theodore turned his face towards Oxford Street. And it was as he had said: the world was empty.

There was a certain traffic indeed, passers-by, houses in the sunshine, trees, but they were all cancelled objects in a void universe. He felt now that his very life centred upon Margaret; that she was the heart of his imagination and that without her he could not go on imagining, and for him at least there was no other life except imagination.

He had nothing else to think about but his relationship to her. And after his habit of mind he dramatized it and told himself stories about it. He became a brain-storm in narrative and literary form. His imaginations welled out in letters. In four days he wrote and posted seven letters to Margaret, not including three or four he tore up, and they were extremely varied and indiscreet letters. In two his accumulating anger at her opposition got the better of him and he broke into a tirade of abuse. Some of it was fairly gross stuff. However much she chose to stand off now, they had been intimate and he did not mean either of them to forget it. All these letters were designed in diverse ways to move and stir her profoundly, and they did.

Indictment predominated, for there is nothing that so exasperates the human mind as delayed and uncertain desire. The memory of her gentleness and friendliness faded out of his mind. He remembered only her refusals, her disbelief in him and this crowning outrageous fact that she could think of another lover. He wanted to get her back before this other lover possessed her; he wanted that with an extravagant intensity, but he had neither wisdom nor self-control now to play upon the real warmth and affection, the real physical response, she retained for him. He could not persuade because he was so desirous of putting her in the wrong, solacing his chagrin and self-reproach by charges of instability and treachery on her part, denouncing the baseness of her motives, the coldness of her blood. And he had to attack his rival, though he knew nothing about him. He assumed that this man had been in England while he was serving at the front and disabled in hospital. He assumed that he was a war-resister like Teddy. And so he produced such brilliant phrases as:

The commonest of war-time stories! While I was away you must

needs betray me with this embusque.

Or again:

This war has stripped bare the pretence of women to either nobility or self-control. The men who died still believing in the woman at home were happier than those who came back for the last revelation.

And then he made appeals:

Do you realize that you are destroying the soul of a man who built his whole life on the dream of you? Do you begin to know what you have been in my imagination? From boyhood? The thousand and one dreams that centred on yourself?

And then he tried the dominating style, the high note of the pleading yet masterful male.

If ever a woman belonged to a man, you belong to me. By right of love. By right of answering desire. You dear sweet wonderful foolish thing, return to me, return to my arms. Forget all that I have written in my bitterness. That bitterness means nothing except that in my love there are all elements, hate and hostility like streaks of red in a great white flame. Come to my arms again, Margaret, my darling, my sweetheart, my perfect mistress, my wife. We need but a few minutes together, locked in each other's embraces, and all the memories of this evil time will dissolve away. We will start the world again forgiven, forgetting and forgiving. Weep in my arms. My dear, how well I remember the taste of your tears, when first you gave yourself to me. Have you no memories of that supreme moment? And the day before yesterday, in Kensington Gardens, you wept. You wept for me. Sacred tears. Intolerably lovely tears. How they moved me!

He dashed that off very rapidly and he felt as he dashed it off that he was achieving a level of passionate beauty very rarely attained. He insisted against a faint undertow of doubt that these passages would appeal to her compellingly, whatever the other letters had failed to do. After he had written it he wandered out to post it at once according to his practice. But he had fewer qualms than usual as the letter vanished into the box.

He felt an overpowering need for music, great heroic music, and found that he was in time for a Promenade Concert at the Queen's

Hall, a Beethoven programme. He sat in a glorious meditation composing fresh and still more potent epistles.

The following morning he tried twice to get her on the telephone at the hospital, but each time he was told she was engaged.

6

Papier Máché

There came a knock at the door of the little flat. An extravagant hope flashed up in Theodore's mind, He opened and found a sunburnt young man in tweeds, a little shorter and stouter than himself, who came in at once without ceremony into his little hall.

"This is Mr. Bulpington," he said. "Eh?"

There was something familiar to Theodore in his face. Somewhere, he felt, they had talked together but he could not remember where. He even remembered the voice.

"I want to have a word or two with you," the stranger remarked.

"I don't think I remember you," said Theodore. "Have we met?"

"Very probably not. I happen to be rather a friend of Margaret Broxted's."

"Oh!" said Theodore. "*That's* it."

"Exactly," said the stranger and turned about.

"You'd better come in," said Theodore, and led the way to the little room where, since Clorinda's death, Raymond's tallboy had rejoined his bureau, rather cumbering the apartment. Under the soft curtained window was an ample couch and on this two tall mirrors and one convex one converged.

The stranger walked the brief length of the room, regarded the couch and the mirrors thoughtfully for a moment and turned.

"Look here, you know, you're bothering Margaret with those letters and telephone messages of yours," he said.

"May I ask — Perhaps you'll tell me your name."

"Laverock. I am going to marry Margaret.

"You are?"

"We arranged it last night."

"You are certain?"

“Absolutely.”

Theodore ought to have become fierce and resolute, but instead he felt himself turn pale within. “Nothing is absolutely certain in this world,” he said. He seated himself on the arm of a chair and motioned his visitor to sit down. But Laverock remained standing.

“The particular thing of importance now is that Margaret is being troubled and hurt. These letters of yours—”

He suddenly produced some folded papers from his side pocket.

“ — Distress her.”

He replaced the letters.

“Well,” said Theodore. He stuck his hands deep into his trouser pockets. “They wouldn’t distress her much,” he said, “if her mind was quite made up.”

“That is where you are wrong,” said Laverock and regarded Theodore with his head on one side.

He turned about, took a step or so away, turned and looked at Theodore again and then came and seated himself in a chair directly in front of him.

“Of course!” he said.

“What’s of course?”

“That face, that voice; those lax movements. I examined you. After the last German push.”

Theodore passed his hand over his forehead. “I don’t remember.”

“They wanted to shoot you. Voluntary shell-shock. I lied. Anyhow I bent my report to save you. And here we are again!”

“No,” said Theodore slowly. “Where do you imagine you met me? I was wounded by a shell. There was no ‘voluntary shell-shock’ about it.”

“No? But it all comes back. Your voice, your manner. I was interested. It was at Mirville-sur-Marne.”

“Never.”

“Sure?”

“Never. I was knocked out by a shell and poisoned by the fumes. I was unconscious for a long time. But not there. It’s all perfectly clear. It’s on record. You’ve made a mistake. I’ve never set eyes on you.”

“But what sort of hospital did you go to in England? Wasn’t it the

one for war-neuroses at Whiting Summers?"

"We don't want to go into that. You've come to talk about Margaret. It's Margaret we have to talk about."

"Have it your own way," said the young doctor grimly. "Anyhow you have to stop this rain of letters and appeals to Margaret. You've had your chance with her. It's over."

"I don't give up Margaret like that," said Theodore.

"I think you will," said the doctor with deliberation. There was a long pause.

"I wanted to look at you," said the young doctor. "I didn't expect to find you had so remarkable a resemblance to my patient. But I wanted to see you. I don't mind telling you that, even now, even now after these rotten letters, she cares for you very much. Early associations. Early imaginations. But there it is! She's got a kind of picture of you, which you're spoiling for her with this stuff." He indicated his pocket. "Isn't it worth while now behaving decently, and ending this story so as not to leave a nasty sort of memory in her mind?"

"She's my mistress," said Theodore.

"*Was,*" said the doctor with restraint. "I know all about that."

"She — she's not indifferent."

The young doctor's manner grew a trifle harder and his face paler. "I know all about *that.* That won't last. *No!* You'd better not say what you were going to say. What I want you to do — what *we* want you to do — is to leave her alone. Get out of London. Get out of our atmosphere. Go abroad."

"And if I won't?"

Laverock shrugged his shoulders. "Something will have to be done to you," he said.

"What can you do?"

"I'd hate to be violent. I don't want to do anything to spoil Margaret's ideas of you. But — for a beginning here we are. We have all the afternoon and evening before us. What I would like to do personally very much is to make you *eat* these letters of yours."

"She gave them you?"

"I took 'em. If you want to know, she was crying over them and I found her. She was crying over *you.* Because you're a liar, because

you're a vain, greedy, posturing sham, and she's done her best to think you a decent human being. Did your ears burn last night? For the first time we talked you over."

Theodore nodded his head darkly.

"You see," explained Laverock, "we've never talked about you before. I knew about you, but we'd neither of us had the guts to go into the locked room, so to speak, and open the shutters and let the air in. Last night we did. Nothing so awful. It brought us together. It was a clean-up."

He stopped short. He turned away and then turned back again. His fists were clenched in his pockets but his manner was elaborately conversational. "How human you are," he said. "How rotten human! How like you are to everyone! It frightens me." He pointed. "There, I could say, but for the grace of God, goes Stephen Laverock. With so good a thing to love! What a gift from God to throw away! Her beauty isn't a lie. She's honest to the bone. And that wasn't enough for you. Or too much. It didn't fit in with the fairy tales you tell yourself about yourself — with your self-glorification. You! Oh, you make me sick. When I looked you over at Mirville I was half minded to let you be shot. I asked myself — I remember I asked you — is this breed worth while?... And now —

"What's the good of reasoning?" he said.

He stood up sharply. He had an effect of remembering an appointment. "Let me see!"

"Well, and what do you propose to do?" asked Theodore, startled.

"You've got to drop this business."

"And how?"

"Will you drop it?"

"No."

"Then. Yes. We come to it." Laverock spoke without conviction. "You've got to eat these letters — as a beginning."

Theodore stood up too. Laverock hesitated and then advanced. He had the letters clutched in his right fist.

Theodore hit out but not very convincingly as Laverock closed with him. Laverock's head went sideways and Theodore's fist glanced against an ear. Then came a blow on Theodore's chest and then a resounding counter on Laverock's cheek-bone. That hit filled

Theodore with a wild transitory hope of victory. It was a good hit. He was for repeating it and then came a terrific concussion under his jaw-bone. It jerked his face up. It abolished any idea of victory instantly. It seemed to echo at the back of his skull. He could feel it was going to be repeated and he did not know how to prevent it. The best thing to do seemed to be to grab at Laverock's arms and save himself from any more punishment. Laverock wriggled to free his arms and Theodore held tight. They tussled without dignity, staggered about the room, and sprawled upon the sofa. "It was on this sofa, I suppose," thought Laverock, and with a sudden access of fury bumped Theodore like a sack he disliked intensely down upon the floor. Theodore found himself half-stunned and asprawl under Laverock, with both his hands busy and his teeth clenched to prevent brittle and crumpled paper being rubbed into his mouth and face.

"Eat it!" said Laverock through set teeth, and made preposterous efforts.

The struggle went on for the better part of a minute. Theodore found himself with a mouthful of paper and fingers, and he bit hard.

"Damnation!" shouted Laverock, disengaging his hand, and stood up panting. A sort of truce ensued. Laverock glanced at his fingers. Theodore remained on the floor, sitting up and spitting out paper. That bite had scored a point.

"But this is too damned stupid of me!" gasped Laverock. "Fighting like a hog in rut. What are we Theodore made no suggestions. His mouth was too incommoded for speech.

Laverock with trembling hands began to tear up those wet and crumpled letters in smaller and smaller fragments, tearing always more viciously against the resistance of the paper, and at last flung the whole clutch of fragments at Theodore, who was still preoccupied by a scrap or so of paper in his mouth.

"There!" said Laverock. "I am ashamed of myself. I'm — sorry."

He dusted his hands together.

He stood in front of his victim. He began a sort of remonstrance. "How can one lead a decent life in a world full of your sort of people?" he said. "How can one contain oneself? What are we to do with the likes of you? Look at it. Look at the mess you have made. What good did it do you to lie to me about your shell-shock? I knew

you. You ran away. What good does it do to lie now about Margaret? What good does it do to go on bothering her? The game's up. Damn it! Don't you *see* the situation?... God, the stuff in those letters!... To say such things to her! To dare! To remind her.... Now listen. I've got your Margaret. I'm going to marry your Margaret. I'm going to bed with your Margaret and I'm going to make her forget you — except as a funny thing, a queer unimportant poor animal thing, that happened to her in her adolescence. And as for you. Get out of London. Get right out. That's what I came to tell you. That's all."

He stopped short on a note of breathless intensity. "See?" he added, rather weakly.

He would have done better to have ended with, "That's all."

He moved towards the door. A sort of thoughtfulness arrested him. He hesitated and turned round.

He seemed to undergo a reduction in size. Something almost appealing crept into his bearing.

"Of course," he began and halted.

He came back a pace.

"There is no need whatever why Margaret should know any of the *particulars* of this little dispute you know. I am afraid we have both forgotten ourselves."

His attempt to change into a man of the world, to change both of them into men of the world, was only partly successful. "Undignified," he said. "On both sides. I had no intention — when I came in. I told her I would return your letters and explain our engagement. So that you would not go on writing to her. So far as I am concerned that is all she will know. I shall say I returned them. I shall not mention even that I tore them up. Only — understand — you mustn't go on writing to her. You mustn't do that."

Theodore ran his fingers round inside his crumpled collar until they came to his bruised jaw-bone. There they stopped. He made no reply. He was tired of this interview, with all its disagreeable changes of mood. He wanted it to end.

"Absolutely between ourselves, understand," Laverock was saying. "Far the best like that. She must know nothing of this — m'm — scuffle."

His tone was almost apologetic. Nothing more came from him. The door clicked.

He had gone.

7

The Great R*enunciation*

Theodore sat on the floor for some time after his front door had slammed to behind his visitor. His impression was that his jaw was broken. After he had felt it about for some time he got up, went into his bathroom, stripped to the waist and sponged his face and neck with cold water.

Laverock's transition to violence had been so sudden that he had still to square it with the rest of existence.

"Frantic," he said, sponging in front of his mirror. "Frantic with jealousy."

He picked out three small scraps of paper that had lodged in his dark hair.

He regarded himself firmly in the eye. He remarked to the face before him: "Lucky I kept my head, old friend. I might have killed him if I had let myself go." And the face before him grew stern. He watched it grow stern. The glow upon the jaw-bone was an angry glow.

He began to change his clothes. He felt that would be refreshing. "He was frantic because he still realizes I have a hold upon her. If I deigned to use it."

He sat down in Raymond's old chair before Raymond's bureau. He told himself he must make a great effort to get all this affair into a proper perspective. He began to recall and arrange his memories of the actual struggle and particularly of that one hit he had got in on Laverock's face. "Frantic scuffling idiot!" he said. "I could have killed him." He felt his jaw again. It was likely to be stiff but it did not feel as though it meant to bruise or swell.

Curiously enough he felt little or no resentment against Laverock. The fellow was an excitable fool. Nor indeed was he resentful against Margaret. She could not be other than she was. His thoughts

centred rather on his own immense disillusionment, on the swift finality with which his dreams of a renewal of romantic love had collapsed. He realized as he had never realized before the inadequacy of women to fulfil the passionate imaginations of mankind. What a splendour of love had he not put at Margaret's feet!

"And she could betray me like this! She could take my letters and run off with them in a temper to this man, this interloper in our affair, this scuffling imbecile! She could bolt to him because she could not trust herself to meet me again. My God! And this is the woman to whom I would have given my life! The staggering disproportions in things! The inadequacies of existence! This is how my love, the one great love I shall ever experience, is to end! Like this. For this is an end.

"And what, after all, was it that I said? What was it that provoked her to this final treachery?"

These fatal last letters, a litter of scraps now upon the floor, began to change in his memory. There was a steady intensification of the nobility of his reproaches as he recalled them. The passion of the amorous passages glowed more and more vividly. But it needs a great soul to respond to the outcries of a great soul in torment. There they lay awaiting the dustpan; outpourings that might have made a book. Perhaps some day he might recall enough of them to make a book.

"And it's over," he said. "All over."

He looked about his little crowded sitting-room. It was full of memories. There was the stove that had glowed so brightly on wintry days. There were the shining pieces of mahogany; the sofa, the mirrors, the broad soft rug, and through the door the little bedroom.

"I suppose I had better sell it all," he said. "Get rid of it all.

"At present probably I could get a sort of bonus on the lease, by selling the furniture.

"I must think."

Scarcely heeding whither he went the Bulpington of Blup wandered through the teeming streets. What should he do with his life? Go abroad. It was clear he must go abroad; but to what? Perhaps it was the thought of foreign travel that carried him towards Victoria Station. Then maybe the pressure of the crowd made him seek the

darkness and stillness of the Westminster Pro-Cathedral.

Once more he appreciated the peace and consolation of a great religious interior, of a great still arched cavity in the bright inconsequence of daily life. “Here,” he said, “I can recover my soul.” There were one or two women praying silently, and far off a noiseless priest was lighting candles upon an altar. He tiptoed softly across the nave. Away on his right amidst the brown a little chapel glowed brilliantly with a multitude of candles. There too was a praying figure. He sat down close to a pillar and lapsed into a profound stillness.

He reviewed his position. War, love, art; the Bulpington of Blup had tasted them all, and for all that he had tried and done his soul had found no peace. The violence of men, the hardness of women, the evil of unspiritual living, had defeated his generous hopes and high endeavours. But here — here surely was something deeper and more enduring.

His reverie took to itself scenery. A wild tumult of rocks mounted to the snows above, and below, on a gigantic cliff, lonely and cold now in the light of evening, was a large bare building. It was the Alpine retreat of the Trappists. A solitary figure halted upon a craggy crest, a knapsacked figure, a dark lean man still young, but with a face worn by suffering, seared with pain. He stood for a time looking up at sky and sea and mounting crests, then turned as if for a last farewell to where, far down the valley, the cities and villages of the great plains of life spread blue and dim. At last he sighed deeply and began to descend the steep path towards the monastery, They were awaiting him. The grave old janitor answered the jangling bell. He was led through the cool clean corridors to the little chapel and there, dropping his knapsack, as Christian once had dropped his burthen, he sank to his knees before the altar. He became as still as a stone. The stormy heart of the Bulpington of Blup had found peace at last.

The scene changed to a snowstorm so terrible that none had ventured forth albeit the dogs — (Do the Trappists keep St. Bernard dogs? Never mind; *these* Trappists did) — although the dogs had shown by their baying that there were travellers lost upon the mountain. None — save the most intrepid of all, the indefatigable Father Theodore.

A struggle with the whirling elements; stumbling, blinded, near frozen; and at last the faithful creatures guide him to where, cowering under a ledge, are two lost and terrified mountaineers, a woman and a man.

"Take me!" cries the man. "Save *me*! I can't endure it."

The woman, crouched on the inner recess, says not a word.

"We have met before, Laverock," says the priest. "Spite of my vows, I take the woman first."

He lifts her in his arms. A faint stir of response shows that she is not insensible.

Does she whisper, "Theodore"?

But the struggle home is too terrible. They stumble and fall. The very dogs lose their sense of direction. In the morning they are found — reunited again in death.

Theodore sighed in his seat and stirred. The reverie faded as a dream fades, but he was aware of an immense consolation.

In some remote part of the cathedral a voice was reciting some service very rapidly. Ever and again the monotone was broken by responses made by boyish voices, and they would lift and drift away in a spray of melody. He found a curious loveliness in this far-away worship. He found comfort and protection in the shadowy largeness of this great building, in its depths and recesses, in its soaring intimacy, and something infinitely touching in that chapel with the candles flaming upward to God, so still, so intent, so world-forgetful in its appeal. What a refuge this place was! What a refuge it had been to thousands of wounded souls coming in here out of the glare, out of humiliations, blunderings and betrayals! Always this place, this great kind mothering place, had been waiting for him. Was there any other retreat in London to which he could have come with any such certainty of sympathetic calm? It was like a cool hand upon his brow. It was an immense "Never Mind, my Poor Child" in architecture and carven wood and stone.

Theodore began to think more realistically of a retreat to the religious life. Apart from any dramatic values, it was to that his mind was moving. After all, what was it had defeated and overwhelmed him? The modern spirit, the spirit of science. It was that cold enquiring spirit that had hardened the womanliness of Margaret

against him, that had made her sceptical of his devotion, his patriotism and courage and love, made it possible at last for her to turn against him in spite of the natural impulses of her heart. It was that which had robbed her of mystery and romance. And that too had been the secret of Clorinda's failure; the reason why he had lived a loveless childhood and grown up a lonely spirit, seeking love and failing to evoke it. His case was not a solitary case. What he had suffered and was suffering was being suffered by myriads of lost and distressed spirits. The soul of the world was departing. This science was taking the honour and glory out of war and the richness and depth out of every human relationship. Outside there in the streets it spread its hardening and brutalizing influence. (What a brute that fellow Laverock was! A clumsy heavy-handed neo-barbarian! A time might come, it might come even soon, when Margaret would realize what it meant to change subtlety for materialistic brutality. What would she do, so pure, so delicate in spite of everything, confronted by physical violence? He did not dare to pursue that question.) If science had its way, if Teddy and his father had their way, they would in the end rout out the last refuges of the human spirit, expose the whole world to that desiccating soul-destroying blaze, that scorching questioning, which they called light. Light, forsooth! And then indeed there still might be a world going on but it would be a strange new world, not the world of dear humanity, not the warring, struggling, suffering, loving, sacrificing, praying world of souls in which we live to-day. A strange new world indeed they would make — for in its hard and arid illumination it would be no less than a realized *Hell.*

Never before had Theodore apprehended so clearly the natural orientation of his spirit. Never had he taken his stand so definitely on the side of all the eternal human values against the assault of these so-called Inheritors who sought, by destruction, to make man's world anew. He felt now that he was seeing more lucidly than he had ever seen before. At last he had got hold of life. Or at last, at last, he saw life whole. Here in this mighty consecrated place, vision was coming to him — and a call.

His gifts were being invoked. These phrases that were pouring through his brain now in a sort of intellectual tumult must be

remembered. (That about the dry light of Science and Hell was really very very good.) He must become openly what he had always been by temperament and disposition, an antagonist, the antagonist perhaps, the leader of a great movement of reaction against this hard cold modern devilry. He must become the champion of the Church, the revivalist, in a faithless age, of patriotism, of unquestioning devotion to acknowledged authority, upholder of fidelity and chastity — womanly chastity....

The figure of St. Ignatius of Loyola floated into his mind. What a marvellous career that man had made for himself! Ex-soldier like himself, ex-lover like himself, turning his back on the empty gratifications of courage and gallantry, to give himself to a mightier task! In those days too, everything worth while in human life had seemed to be crumbling. Faith failed and society trembled on the brink of dissolution. Everything was questioned. Everyone did what seemed right in his own eyes. The waves of the Reformation beat pitilessly upon the defences of the Church, rising continually higher like a tide that would never turn. Every day saw new extravagances in religion and new violences. And then one simple resolute man stepped into the breach, arrested the torrent, raised up a bulwark against it and turned it back. Always that story of the Counter-Reformation had appealed to Theodore's imagination. Now it came back to him with irresistible force. He too would be a Loyola. He also would go into the Church, offer himself, offer every gift he had.

There would be some years of service, of preparation, necessarily.

But afterwards, as his work began to tell, as his name, the name of Father Theodore, the Captain of the New Order of the Return, began to be bandied about in the world, a certain attraction, an interest, would come to Margaret. Somewhere, to some great cathedral such as this, she, the soul-starved wife of a coarse realist, would be drawn by curiosity to hear the exhortations of this strange man, pale, dark, worn by asceticism, who was turning back the mad rush of human life toward materialism and destruction and facing it round to ancient and eternal and nigh forgotten things.

Hardly would his speech begin before she would recognize the ringing voice, the remote emaciated face that had once in its youth come so close to hers, some familiar gesture would strike her.... —

8

The Exile

Within three weeks Theodore had disposed of his flat and furniture and was on his way abroad. Four times he had crossed the Channel during the war, each time in hushed silence and darkness. Now for the first time he crossed in daylight. He stood aft watching the receding cliffs of England, and thinking of the countless exiles who had preceded him across the narrow seas. They too had made their silent farewells to those towering white masses, to the sturdy castle, to the little crumble of houses in the gap. They too had watched the South Foreland unfold to the east and dwindle. The air was full of sunshine; the sea marvellously blue.

He thought of Lord Byron. He also had been wounded beyond forgiveness by the misunderstanding of a woman. He also had been driven into exile. Still more did he feel like Don Juan....

There was a curious undercurrent to his thoughts. He was going out now upon a great intellectual adventure. The dream of Loyola still possessed him. In some manner he must find his way to the Church, make his profession, keep his vigil. Perhaps in Paris. Perhaps in Montserrat itself. Or was it at Manresa that the Knight had given himself to Our Lady? All that was before him; that was the dominant theme in his mind. But underneath that ran quite another theme.

Before his wound Loyola had been a great lover, a great rake.

And in that undertow there was a queer expectation, an intention; in Paris he would meet again that lean lithe woman, the French Arab from Algiers with whom he had gone before. Obscure forces in his composition were obliging him to think of her. She had to be there like a warm deep shadow beneath his lordly and scornful withdrawal. For if he did not think that she and her like were there for him in Paris, he would have had to think of Margaret possessed by another man, and the thought of Margaret possessed by another man would have shattered the whole edifice of his mind into intolerable agony. Against that disaster he had to oppose the expectation of appeased and successful lust in Paris. There was no other way.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

CAPTAIN BLUP-BULPINGTON, AT YOUR SERVICE

1

The Feet of the Young Men

THE years unfolded themselves about Theodore and Theodore unfolded his possibilities to the years. He licked the sores of his memory with his imagination and then swathed them in ever deeper wrappings of forgetfulness. New scenes, new persons, new events came to help him in this instinctive reconstruction of his life. He never went near Parville; sought a new Paris remote from the quarters he had frequented during the war, turned his back on the devastated regions and travelled from point to point of that happier France to the South which saw so little of the war. He went to Auch and said he would like to live and meditate there for years. After a fortnight he went to Montpellier and said he thought he might settle down there for good. A few weeks after he was in Geneva and there he met a Frenchwoman who had written a novel called Toi et Lui and with her, more or less, first more and then less, he went back to the literary world of Paris. The Paris he had known was the south and west parts; he found an altogether more charming Paris north of the Opera. London he kept out of mind very successfully and he sought and found companionship with Americans and French rather than with commonplace English people. He made a strenuous and fairly successful effort to achieve colloquial French. He did not return to England for ten whole years.

He did not become a Trappist or a "New Jesuit" or anything of that sort. That objective receded. That last glimpse of the tumults and vanities of life he was to have taken prolonged itself and expanded; the austere retirement dwindled at last in perspective to a vague undated intention of touring the north of Spain and spending a few nights of profundity at Montserrat.

He did not find his lean Algérienne again. She became

unnecessary. But from Geneva onward he found other kindred distractions to assuage the bitterness of Margaret's hardness of spirit and her want of faith in him. These lighter, more secondary dramas of sentiment, indulgence and reassurance demand no place in this history.

For reasons known only to himself he replaced his original style and title by a new name. In Paris he was called, and always called himself, Captain Blup-Bulpington — he never specified his regiment or arm. Apparently he was Captain at large. Thereby he cut himself loose from his original parentage and from most of the less palatable realities of his earlier years. He was now, it became more and more definite, the only surviving scion of an old English Catholic family, which had diverged from the Roman communion only after the later developments of doctrine — Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception — in the nineteenth century. He was a conservative even among Catholics. He was saturated with ripe, old traditions, a fine and gallant gentleman picking his fastidious way through the bulks and noises of a crude mechanical age. He condemned the times. The vague incalculable onward thrust in things had not, it appeared, rejected him and pushed him aside. On the contrary he had rejected it.

That was his prevailing conception of himself. Many of his friends and associates in Paris were, like himself, in reaction against the harsh immensity of the riddles of a dissociating world. They could not believe that dissociation implied renascence; they found the mental and moral effort to reconstruct ideas and institutions too great and too hopeless to sustain. The feebleness, priggishness and inelegance of the reforming minority, the preposterous scale of its aspirations, were all too evident to them. The power and greatness of the reforming drive was not so manifest. Either they felt that it would be defeated or else they feared that it would succeed in producing only a warped and hateful world order that would outrage everything fine and sensitive in the human soul. Anyhow they had decided against it. They turned to those creative and consolatory universes of unreality to which art, in its endless diversity, offers keys.

For ten years he forgot Margaret and Teddy, those intimate opponents of the Bulpington of Blup throughout his adolescence,

those protagonists in his long struggle to find himself, he forgot them wilfully and with an apparent thoroughness. For weeks, for months, the thought of them never came into his head. Because of its close entanglement with these adversaries that fancy of a new sort of humanity, the Inheritors, assailing and possessing the earth, which had frequented his imagination vanished also from the foreground of his mind. But indeed he did not forget them at all, only now they reappeared in veiled and generalized shapes as Materialism, as the Delusion of Progress, as the Mechanical Spirit, as "this new Pragmatic Irrationalism of Science". Against them he assembled and assimilated every idea and every conviction to which he felt they would necessarily have been opposed. It was not a deliberate choice; it was an unavoidable rally.

He became presently the editor and part owner (the main capitalist was an American lady of considerable wealth, charm and responsiveness) of a brilliantly aggressive little magazine, called *The Feet of the Young Men.* His title was intended to remind the world of the young men who returned to carry out that poor widowed falsehood of a Sapphira after Ananias had been borne away. Science and Big Business were the modern equivalents of that unhappy couple; they promised a new world, he declared, and they gave nothing but bigness and speed. Beauty and happiness they had failed to deliver. Theodore, presiding over the "Notes", struck these liars dead, month by month, and buried them month by month, scornfully and completely. Each month they had to be killed again. Teddy and his like had been all for plain and simple statements, for the coldest clearness of thought and explanation, and so by obscure reactions it came about that *The Feet of the Young Men* was printed entirely without punctuation marks, merely with gaps of varying length, and all the capital B's and P's put backside foremost. All the b's and p's, small and big together, would have been backside foremost only the cost of a new fount of type proved too great. And there were little drops and lifts in the alignment of the type to arrest and exercise the reader's eye. That showed what value the young men were to set on scientific lucidity (so called). And since these Utopians dreamt of universal languages and of a kind of cleared and simplified English for that World State of theirs, by way of contrast, every number of

The Feet of the Young Men had a short lyric either in argot or in Bulgarian, Esthonian, Czech, Erse or some other of the less sophisticated languages or in a mixture of them all, and always there were five or six pages of undulating designs by a new genius who wrote a sort of universal prose, symbolic prose, entirely without words. (This he would croon at select parties.) And also Theodore was in open revolt now against the restraints and decorums of sex. The publication reeked of that higher purity which would strip a fig tree of its leaves to let in the health-giving light. The only decency was abandon. There were quite a lot of those ambiguous woodcuts which worry a public prosecutor, it is so impossible to decide whether they are grossly indecent or purely decorative, and there were short stories and poems about whose indecency there could be no doubt at all — since they had no other qualities. So far as they could be procured there were brief devotional or briskly controversial papers by Catholic divines, but these were not so very easy to get because of the way these good men broke out into protests and withdrawals when they discovered the other matter in the new magazine.

It was very hard to make them understand the deep Reactionary purposes of their allies. The tone from cover to cover was high-spirited and defiant. Over it all was an air of victory, of getting ahead, of going one better than Progress. It was the very latest thing in reaction. Across the cover, slanting up or slanting down, hurried those feet, the feet of the young men, the feet of devouring destiny.

So Theodore maintained his soul and suppressed the thoughts and realizations that might have troubled it. For ten years an impalpable distaste kept him out of England. He travelled with the co-proprietor of *The Feet of the Young Men* in Italy and Egypt; he quarrelled with his co-proprietor and parted from her, and in the subsequent phase of financial tightness he reduced the size of the magazine. He enlarged it again when he sold a half-share in it to a young man of literary social ambitions who had found oil in Texas. This young man had a new and original way of cutting blocks in linoleum representing orgiastic coons or ecstatic animals, and he needed an outlet for his output. These designs had a primitive crudity that gave him great pleasure. When other people appreciated them less highly he said

they were as good as Lawrence's old pictures anyhow. Such values are beyond argument. Theodore, making the best of a difficult job, had them printed on detached sheets of a special paper so that they could be easily lost out of the magazine. But it did not please the young man from Texas when he found his work blowing about the world, naked and outcast; he disputed about it, and also out of jealousy he fell foul of the wordless-prose genius whose stuff was inseparable from the general text. He wanted really to have half a share in the direction of the magazine, as well as bear more than half the expense; he seemed to want everything. He questioned the judgments in Theodore's notes. *The Feet of the Young Men* faltered.

And so one day Theodore turned his face towards Calais and Dover again. Without consulting his partner he had sold a half-share of the enterprise — it was the third half-share he had disposed of altogether, but he was never very good at arithmetic — to a lady who wanted to help forward the Douglas Scheme, and he had left her to explain the situation to the young man from Texas and work out whatever method might be practicable for their joint operation of *The Feet of the Young Men.* Theodore had lost interest in the whole thing. He had felt suddenly that the world's literary centre of gravity was shifting to London, that the day for eccentric but creative publication in Paris was over and that the task of *The Feet of the Young Men*, whatever it was, was accomplished.

He thought very little of Margaret and Teddy when he came to this decision. He had no suspicion how near those stresses still lay to his conscious surfaces. And it was not so much to that old London of his past he was returning, as to Devonshire, a land of cream and apple trees which he had never seen before in his life.

The harvest of his aunts was coming in. In these ten years three more of the ten Spink sisters had fallen to the great reaper, and in each case there had been financial renascence for him. He had now to gather in the remains of his Aunt Belinda. The substantial item was a well-conceived investment list; the bright spot a very pretty little cottage, so he was told, near Sidderton in Devonshire. He had only seen his Aunt Belinda once at his father's cremation and he remembered her chiefly as a large, loosely robed, flamboyant bulky figure with a wild eye, a moustache and a virile voice. She was

indeed as near as old Spink had ever come to begetting a son. Her sense of colour had been a powerful one. She had painted and exhibited water-colours of Devonshire. She had even sold a certain number of them to discriminating buyers. R.I.P. Spring was at hand and the prospect of opening a new phase of his life with Devonshire as a background was extremely attractive.

The years had added substance to his figure. He was not yet stout but he was no longer markedly slender. A certain resemblance to his father had increased. He was like a fuller and sounder Raymond who had had the benefit of a military training. Had you seen him by chance at the Gare du Nord you would certainly have called him a handsome man. He wore the well-cut, slightly shabby tweeds and the loose but not Bohemian tie of a gentleman of cultivated tastes and artistic disposition. His dark hair was just a little long, but not too long, and his felt hat, which had a generous but not extravagant brim, was tilted very slightly. He had bought a *Morning Post,* a *Punch* and a *Times* to read in the train, so as to get the taste of England back in his mouth before he saw the white cliffs of Dover.

He occupied his seat with these periodicals and an overcoat, instructed his porter to put his valise in the rack, tipped him and that other intervening, inexplicable and entirely undeserving functionary who appears on these occasions, and then descended and strolled up and down the platform.

He was feeling very pleasant within himself. He had the happy traveller's sense of going to new scenery and fresh impressions. He was glad *The Feet of the Young Men* was off his hands. It had begun to bore him. Its effectiveness was at an end. He surveyed his fellow passengers and wondered how far they might find him interesting. He thought of a number of things they might be surprised and excited to learn about him.

He began to imagine conversations and to present himself in them as a rather mysterious being returning from an exile of significance and importance. He tried over various adumbrations of the mission which might very possibly be bringing him back to the old country.

"I have certain definite things in view," he tried it over to himself. "Whether I shall achieve them no man can say." He was undecided whether he was a great adventurer returning to take the literary world

of London by storm or whether he was not some sort of emissary. And after all perhaps ahead over there there were great possibilities. Why not an adventurous emissary?

2

The Disagreeable Fellow Traveller

He remarked particularly among the other passengers a short, white-faced young man of perhaps one and twenty, wearing spectacles. He had the indefinable and unmistakable quality of the intelligenzia in his clothes and bearing. He looked an amenable sort of young man — but in that he deceived Theodore.

He stood surveying the newspaper truck. The last issue of *The Feet of the Young Men* was still on sale. It seemed new to him; he took down the single copy displayed, turned it over and bought it. This greatly increased Theodore's interest. One of "les Jeunes", he decided, one of the budding Post-War Young, just pushing their noses up through the trampled soil of human thought after the gigantic experiences of the Great War. Naturally any magazine that had force and freshness attracted him. How impressed the young fellow would be if he learnt that its creator and editor was observing him! How excited he would be to hear of its objectives and to learn that greater movements were presently to be afoot in England!

It was satisfactory to see that this young man had settled into the compartment next to Theodore. It was still more agreeable to find they shared the same table in the restaurant car. The younger man breathed rather audibly, but he had quite tolerable manners and he seemed to know what he was about. He returned Theodore's tentative greeting and was polite and accommodating about the wine-bottles and the salt. He added water to his commonplace red wine, with Theodore's approval. Many people are stupid about watering ordinary wine. He had had arguments in Paris.

The desire to draw out the ideas of the budding Post-War Young and perhaps offer a few more seasoned ideas in exchange became overpowering. The brief stoppage of the train at Amiens recalled a vivid memory and gave an opportunity. Theodore cleared his throat.

“I remember this station in 1917,” he began.

The young man waited for more. “Very different,” said Theodore.

And then he began a description of the war-time station, in the casual easy manner of the reminiscent veteran. He had seen, he said, a troop train standing just over there and the platform was littered with khaki-clad men. They were wearing British uniforms and yet many of them were good-looking brown-faced fellows with fuzzy black hair. Yet they were certainly not Indian troops — nor negroes. He had felt curious about them and made enquiries. They were Maoris. They had come absolutely from the end of the earth. For the Great War!

“Poor devils,” the young man said, and surveyed the empty platform that Theodore’s words had populated.

“But *why* ‘Poor devils’?” exclaimed Theodore.

“Well, weren’t they?”

The Army tradition hardened Theodore’s expression. “Forgive me if I do not see it quite in that light,” he said.

“But don’t you think they *were* poor devils, to be dragged half-way round the world just to be mashed up in blood and mud in Flanders?”

“Dragged! They came. We who served didn’t think ourselves poor devils by any manner of means.”

“But, Maoris! To get mangled and suffocated in the mud and gassed in dug-outs and all that *here*! *We* know all about it now. Don’t say they liked it. Don’t say *that.*”

The young man reflected. “Why, it was worse than dragging in the Portuguese!”

Theodore was disconcerted by this reply. He had intended to favour this young man with some quite wonderful reminiscences about the war, but it seemed the young man was disposed to put things the other way about and tell things to him. “All these poor devils from the ends of the earth, Polynesians, Annamese, Coolies, Gurkhas,” the young man continued, beaming, but with an evident pugnacity, through his glasses, “what the devil *could* they have made of it?”

“They fought to save civilization, sir,” said Theodore.

“Oh *no,*” said the young man with unexpected rudeness, “not a bit

of it.”

He added in a distinctly combative note, “Civilization hasn’t been saved.”

“You mean?” asked Theodore, playing for time to rally his forces.

“Civilization is in a worse mess than ever.”

“I doubt if you grasp the real significance of the war,” began Theodore, but his interlocutor went on without heeding him. “The war was just the preliminary break-up before a world revolution,” he said with quiet assurance. “Nothing can save civilization now but revolution, right-down fundamental revolution, reconstruction from the ground up. Nothing.”

He turned to take a helping of cheese. Theodore surveyed him. There was something in his voice that Theodore now realized he did not like, and the mouth was too big and rather froglike and it shut like a trap. People should just let their mouths close, not slam them to. The face, come to look at it, was deficient in that docility which is becoming to youth. The hair was short and stiff. This young man must have been an unpleasant white-faced little boy, easy but yet unpleasant to teach. Theodore had a strong impulse to end the conversation then and there, to shrug his shoulders and remark that opinions may differ. Why didn’t he do so? Then he would have escaped an immediate dispute and a troubled night.

But the curious thing about this young man was that he was not only unpleasant but attractive. Something about him made Theodore want to go on talking, if it was only to tell him how wild and wrong his opinions were. And so Theodore found himself launched again upon the great old dusty argument that began in August 1914, and fighting once more against that mass of doubts, interrogations and second thoughts that had finally tarnished the closing years of the Great Adventure for him. He did not realize whither he was being dragged until it was too late to recover. One challenging remark led to its appropriate challenging retort. Out came the trite old questions of war motive and war guilt; the old rash generalizations about national character and purpose. And as they disputed, slowly but steadily, the long-submerged personalities of Margaret and Teddy, which were so closely associated with these issues in Theodore’s brain, rose towards his consciousness.

Presently came a break. It was made evident to them that they had occupied their table in the restaurant car long enough and they returned to Theodore's compartment. And there abruptly Teddy leapt back into the full daylight of Theodore's mind. "Broxted," said the young man. "Professor Broxted." He was quoting some public utterance. He was citing *Human Association from the Point of View of General Biology.* The name, dragging up memories as uncongenial as they were familiar, forced an unwilling recognition from Theodore.

"I know a certain Professor Broxted," he said. "He had a son — a sort of schoolfellow of mine for a time. Let me see, what was his name? Ah, Teddy."

"You mean Professor Edward Broxted?"

"I mean Teddy — the son."

"Yes, the son. *Edward.*"

The hard young man's change of manner evinced a kind of approval he had hitherto denied Theodore. Did he really know "Edward Broxted"? Theodore admitted it. Edward Broxted's work, it seemed, was "gorgeous". This youth had worked under him, was going back to London now to work in his laboratory again. For Teddy it seemed was also a Professor now, at a minor college, a Professor of the new most fashionable branch of biology, Social Biology, the youngest Fellow of the Royal Society and all sorts of brilliant things.

This abrupt resurrection of Teddy out of his burial place in the Unconscious, with a blaze of success and enthusiasm, was more intolerable than anything that had gone before.

For the next five minutes Theodore maintained his air of serenity and friendly interest by a tremendous internal effort. His England was being spoilt for him already before he reached Calais. It was becoming Teddyland.

"So old Teddy has got on like that," he said. "In my days, of course, he *wasn't* so brilliant. No. It's dogged does it, I suppose. We had great quarrels about this very question of the war. I served, you know, and he didn't."

The young man did not seem to care what Theodore thought of Teddy or what sort of service Theodore had seen. He continued to

spout praise. Now there in Edward Broxted, he said, you had the real spirit of a scientific revolution. There you actually saw the grip of science closing in upon social and political problems in the most effective fashion. The flat voice became more voluminous with his enthusiasm, his white skin shone. Who was he like? For a moment the resemblance eluded Theodore. Then it flashed back. Wimperdick! — old Wimperdick turned round the other way I — a sort of inverted Wimperdick!

Were even the Wimperdicks going over to communism and scientific modernism? Were there to be Wimperdicks of progress?

Now less than ever could Theodore detach himself from this disciple of all that he hated. The conversation had wrapped about him like a net. He felt his whole mental existence challenged, he felt himself at bay. It was almost as if the eyes of Teddy looked out at him from behind those glasses. He began a counter-attack on what he called "your Materialistic Utopianism"; he declared Soviet Russia and Fordized America were two gigantic demonstrations of the failure of large-scale modernity; he mixed Ford with Ivar Kreuger very skilfully and offensively; he asserted the perpetual disingenuousness of Germany; he advanced France and Britain as the two surviving exponents of balanced sanity in a distraught world. He made a good fight of it.

But the confidence and aggressiveness of the pale young man knew no bounds. He argued tenaciously. He swept aside Theodore's counter-attack and went on proclaiming the new revolution which "we" — fellows like him! — were making. They were going to make a "planned world" it seemed on a larger scale than ever, larger and harder. The Russian Five Year Plan was merely modernism spitting on its hands, so to speak, before the real constructive revolution began. Their talk became a battle of flat statements; a punching match of assertions. They talked all the way to Boulogne. They exchanged gibes on the boat gangway. The Channel was in perfect condition, a softly breathing mirror below and a blue sky full of sunshine above, and, after the fuss of getting aboard, the young man tracked Theodore to his unnecessary chair, stood over him talking until he got up, and they paced the deck, still pursuing their impassioned mutual contradictions. Even in the London train the

young man stuck to Theodore. And also Theodore hated to relinquish the young man while he was still unsubjugated, when the spirit of Teddy still possessed him. They told each other circuitously, abundantly and with many repetitions. It was telling much more than argument. Their statements rarely clinched.

"But I assure you this is not the way the new generation is thinking," said Theodore. "I happen to know. You are an exception. You and your Professor are living in a little world of your own. Look at the magazine you have in hand. There you really have the Young."

His antagonist was still carrying *The Feet of the Young Men.*

"Oh, *this* stuff!" he said. "Rich old women in Paris — middle-aged muck-abouts — art shops — falsetto. *These* aren't the young."

Theodore abandoned *The Feet of the Young Men* unacknowledged.

By the time they reached Sevenoaks both showed signs of flagging. Each had said all his main points in various ways quite a number of times. The sunlit Kentish landscape with its oasts and orchards poured past the window smoothly and tranquillizingly. For a while they remained speechless, each brooding upon the unteachable obstinacy of the other.

Then Theodore was moved to attempt a summing-up of their differences. "No," he opened impressively. "You dream."

The young man with his broad mouth shut tightly waved his head to and fro in denial.

"You shun the eternal primary facts of human nature, sir. That's where you fail. You might make this great planned world of yours given only one thing, given that human beings are something different from what they are."

"We shall *make* 'em different," said the young man. "Education."

"Education — veneer! Education cannot do that. Suppose there is a kind of possibility in what you dream, still I ask you is it a practical possibility? Your sort, you say. How many of your sort are there? To teach your ideas and spread your kind of books? (I suppose there *are* books about it?) You are so busy pulling your little string, you are blind to the wires and ropes and chains, the chains, that are being lugged the other way. In every sort of direction. The really active and vigorous people of the world have quite other ideas than these

fancies of yours. This mixture of scientific humanitarianism and Bolshevism you and your Professor affect is just nonsense — forgive me if I speak plainly — nonsense to the normal live-minded man, the man who is by nature soldier, master, ruler. We have other values. It's all too high and thin for us. We believe in pride and domination. We believe in individual devotion to an individual. We believe in the narrower intenser loyalties, in the passionate extravagances of personal love, in kingship, in the strenuous pursuit of war, in the beauty of noble endeavour and high tragedy."

"I must take your word for it that you do," the young man said. "That certainly is the spirit in which the abler people have been behaving since the war. But good God, we can change all that!"

"Change human nature!"

"I repeat; it is being changed everlastingly."

For a time they wrangled over the power of education to modify motives. Theodore spoke of the blind unteachable instinctive crowd; the young man was all for the educability of most people.

They were rumbling presently over a crowded twilit street on the outskirts of London. An ignoble multitude swarmed between half-lit shops and a fringe of barrows. The young man waved his hand. "There but for the grace of a little honesty in the teachers we had and the books we read, there in that swarm, go you and I."

The blood of that old Catholic family shivered in Theodore's imagination.

Then suddenly for the first time the young man betrayed discouragement. Something gave way in him. Some question about Theodore seemed to have caught at his mind.

He stared out of the window at the backsides of mean houses and the dingy windows of ill-lit rooms. Then he looked at Theodore's face as though he had never scrutinized it before. "After all," he may have thought, "this is a fair sample of a man." His manner changed. It was almost as if he talked to himself. "This hope of seeing the world leavened with sound knowledge.... A world community.... It *may* be a dream — thin and high, you called it. Oh, probably it *is* a dream. Still — it happens to be the dream in which I live. My kind of people — whatever we stand for."

He stared at Theodore and Theodore grasped at the momentary

advantage.

"I recognize how exalted your idealism is," he said. "Don't think I don't."

The young man nodded his spectacles. His face winced at Theodore's indulgent tone. "Oh, we shall go on all right. Our sort. It's the new Stoicism, with the world-state at the end of the chapter. And we shall get it. We don't make much row but we hold on. The newspapers make a row, bombs and machine-guns make a row, National Anthems make a row. *Let* them. Never mind. The truth is the truth. After all, one makes a row and blusters and bullies mostly when one is afraid of something. Don't you think perhaps — By Jove, here's the Thames! Here we are!

"But don't you think that perhaps," he spoke more rapidly and held out his hand towards Theodore, as though he would restrain him from leaping up, "after a few more economic messes like this present one, and after the revolution that is bound to follow, and after another war and a famine and a pestilence, the crowd may come to the realization that our kind of thing is worth attention? With *us,* you know, my sort, Broxted's sort, pegging away at it all the time — what was it someone said? — without haste and without delay. Telling the truth — incessantly. It won't be over in our time. It won't be over when you and I are dead. I believe the great revolution, the real human revolution — I'm a poor specimen I admit — has begun now *for good.* Defeats won't matter. It's going on, you know. We're going on."

The train was running into the station and slowing down with an even quickness. It stopped with the slightest of jerks. The first expectant porters appeared. Theodore stood up and assembled his overcoat, his stick, umbrella and valise.

"I've never hated to end a talk more," he said.

"We've hammered at things," said the young man, still sitting in his place. "I don't know whether we've hammered them out." He had an air of thinking profoundly about Theodore.

"We've certainly hammered at things," said Theodore, signalling to a porter and edging doorward.

The young man roused himself with a start to get his own things together.

3

Those Inheritors Rise Again

The noises of London are different from the noises of Paris. They are lower in pitch and heavier; they rumble and murmur and mutter; compared with the Paris noises they are almost drowsy. But Theodore was accustomed to the noises of Paris and he was not accustomed to the noises of London. And since the Rathbone Family Hotel is in a back street with a reputation for quietness, it has been found convenient to manipulate milk-cans there in the early morning. Theodore's mind had been greatly exercised by his talk with that young man who had turned out to be so opinionated, and still more had it been stirred by the revival of his memories of Teddy and, behind Teddy, Margaret. For the last year or so he had not given Margaret a conscious thought, whatever part she had played beneath the surface of his mind. He had not counted on meeting his past again even in London, and here it was to greet him on his first arrival. All those old disputes.

He felt that on the whole he had not managed the talk with the young man very well. He was so dissatisfied with it in the retrospect that he wanted now to have it all over again. He did in fact have it all over again, and more also.

Theodore had gone to the old familiar *Isola Bella* Restaurant and had found it still flourishing, but it had been full of unknown faces. Nobody recognized him, the management gave him no special attention, nobody pointed out the distinguished litterateur from Paris, he was nobody there and he was lonely, and he reflected he might just as well have asked the young man to dine with him and gone on with their discussion. He thought now of all sorts of things he could have said that would have given matters a different turn. He thought of some quite brilliant things.

It added perhaps to his nocturnal uneasiness that he had consumed a half-flask of excellent Chianti and an old brandy after his black, his very black and hot and sweet, coffee. About three o'clock in the morning he was bleakly awake. It is the least possible hour in the whole twenty-four for serene self-confidence. Theodore's depression

was profound beyond all precedent. He came within sight of believing that the young man had had the best of their argument.

Suppose that reality was real, that behind the accepted appearances of things circled a great wheel of destiny, remorseless and inevitable, at which these hard obstinate slow thinkers, these younger scientific people, were getting. Suppose after all there were realizations that gave power....

His old fantastic fear of those Inheritors his father had talked about in his boyhood reappeared in his mind, his apprehension of a new and terrible type of people who thrust aside all reveries, all sentiment and wilful faith. The Communists, some of them, must be terribly like Inheritors, so far as hardness and inhumanity went. Teddy Broxted was there among them in the shadows refusing all concessions, grinding out and polishing his ideas like some pitiless enemy, Palaeolithic and yet Futuristic, fashioning a weapon.

In the dreams out of which he had come, dreams of flight, all these antagonists had been mingled in the pursuing power. The crash of the milk-cans had been the bombs of the attacking invincible Inheritors, bursting about him.

Even now that he was fully awake he still had something of that hunted feeling.

"We are going on," the young man had said, and something else?... "Do you think we are going to give over, once we have started?"

Yes, he had said that.

In the dismal lucidity of his insomnia, those Inheritors were no longer the pitiful band of prigs, the rank outsiders, they had been when he alighted at Victoria. It became credible, it became highly probable to our depleted Theodore that a new order of things was indeed appearing, was crystallizing out slowly, but surely, from the confusions of to-day! While he was talking and writing of those contemporary movements in art and literature which, in such rare phases of despondent realization as this, he knew to be no more than a confusion of folly, quackery and pretentiousness, were Teddy and his friends, were Margaret and that bully of hers, and this young man, and all sorts of people, beastly outsiders of course, but more and more of them, really getting on to something real, getting

something prepared, laying a train to blast the road of mankind out of its present perplexities to this new order that they seemed to know so surely was possible, blasting away, among other things, the whole world that Theodore had made for himself.

Suppose after all that something was going on in this old world finer than had ever been tried before? Something that had hardly been thought of before? Suppose these people really were more than visionaries; were getting their eyes clear and their minds clear and their purposes clear? Suppose they were *right*! Suppose that at last the world's "awakening" was at hand? Suppose a mighty page was turning over — now!

He lay helpless, unable to make head against these disconcerting suppositions. Had he taken the wrong way with life, or at least had he failed to find the right one? Had he — was it possible — had he made a mess of his life? For some searing moments he saw himself bare.

"Individuality is experiment." Teddy had said that years ago. It had stuck like a thorn in Theodore's mind, an alien idea, a little centre of intellectual irritation. That inflammation revived now. There was the phrase and its picture still vivid. He was like a test-tube held up to a pitiless light and scrutinized. He now perceived there were racks and racks of such test-tubes, thousands, millions, and each was a life. Ever and again the experimenter took one and regarded it and some were put aside for some further purpose and some after a still moment of inspection, an endless instant of judgment, were turned over to a sink and swilled away. And now he in his turn was being held up to the light. Cold and clear that light was, and it searched him through and through.

He rolled over and rolled back in his hard little British hotel bed and worked the sheets into a crumple of discomfort. His self-reproaches were presently mixed up with exasperation at the idea of Teddy being on the right path, wherever it led, of Teddy being still an experiment that was worth going on with, while he was now coming nearer and nearer to the point of absolute rejection. Mingling with that came the taunting realization that Margaret had been his own appointed woman and he had lost her. That other fellow had got her and carried her off!

He groaned and cursed aloud. In Paris all these vexations had been buried long ago. Had he come back to England to revive them?

For a time his imagination was seized and held by a fantastic project of hunting up Margaret, going frankly to her and saying dazzling things to her. "You belonged to me before the beginnings of time. And I need you. Always, Margaret, I have needed you. I did not understand. Humbly I confess it. Frankly I admit it. I was wrong to relinquish you. You have been my symbol. Away from you I am — wasted. All my great gifts are wasted. Come....

"What is between us is Eternal. Souls, Margaret, are Eternal Things. You know the song: 'I was a Prince in Babylon and you were a Christian slave.'"

Could she resist? Would not the old magic work again? There would be a great passionate romance. Then a duel perhaps with that fellow — or a divorce. (He ought to have fought at the time. He ought to have fought at the time. He had been taken by surprise. He had been too lenient. He should have thrashed the fellow, flung him out!) Scenes and confrontations began to appear.

And then with Margaret indissolubly his, he would face facts, adopt the proper Inheritor attitudes, join their ranks and work with a steadfast grim persistence. Presently become of dominating importance among them, the Inheritors' Mirabeau....

4

The Perfect Cottage — with one Single Disharmony

He must have gone to sleep in the small hours because quite definitely he awoke in the morning. And when he awoke in the morning he was his own self again and that phantom horde of accusations and realizations had departed and left hardly more than a vague depression behind. He remembered chiefly that he had longed greatly for Margaret and had conceived some vague and romantic project of compelling her to come to him. But the sanity of the morning brought with it the manifest and deterrent probability that she had now a home of her own and probably children. Why should her life at this level be disturbed? Laverock was a disagreeable

fellow, he knew only too well, bad-mannered and ungenerous and bound to do his utmost to spoil the affair.

Captain Blup-Bulpington felt tired by the journey of yesterday and the night's insomnia and not very cheerful, but gradually as he got up and dressed, the object of his return from Paris resumed its control of his mind. In the morning light those prowling and plotting Inheritors did not seem anything like so formidable as they had done in the darkness.

He rehearsed the facts he had established about himself as he shaved. Captain Blup-Bulpington was returning to England after a self-imposed exile abroad. He had come home to rest his soul for a time in its natural atmosphere and on its native soil. He had performed several important tasks, never mind what; he had had some strange experiences. These for a time remained unspecified. His ostensible life in Paris, his literary and artistic activities, fine though they were, had been only the outer aspect of all that he had been.

Brushed and shaved and with his values reassembled, Theodore took himself and his valise to Paddington. He lunched on the train, but this time there was no one to share his table. No other opportunity for conversation arose. So he really did read the *Times* and the *Morning Post* and really did refresh his Anglicanism. The *Morning Post* was very good and convincing on the follies of American finance, the complete breakdown of the Five Year Plan and the need for a strong hand in India. He had found no *Punch* on the bookstall, but when the newspapers were exhausted he took a witty little booklet by Mr. T. S. Eliot on the Lambeth Conference from his valise and read it with appreciation. It proved the best of restoratives. It was impossible to resist Eliot's implication that all's well with the Anglican world. The very way he mocked at it made one feel how real and important it still was and was going to be. Real and important things were going on being real and important for ever. Bishops were bishops *in saecula saeculorum* and God was God.

Theodore got to his cottage in Devonshire in time to see it first by the warm light of sunset. And it was all that a cottage in Devonshire should be. It was named Pomona Cottage and richly it deserved its

name. Aunt Belinda had bought wisely and cherished and improved the place with a sedulous artistry. There were apple trees in blossom, flowering may in the hedges, bluebells coming on and a few daffodils lingering in the orchard at the side. There was a smiling old factotum, Mrs. Greyson, undisguisedly glad to find the heir so pleasant-looking a gentleman. She had been caretaking on board-wages since Aunt Belinda's death. She had wanted livening up. The cottage he found was spick and span.

The man who drove the station fly — there was still a horse fly at the absurd little station — brought in the overcoat and valise, and was respectfully grateful for an extra shilling. Mrs. Greyson wore a large dignified pink-ribboned cap and a small apron over a grey dress and she welcomed Theodore at just the right distance between the porch and the gate.

The path up to the house was red-tiled, and there was a bright low hall with rugs over red tiles and a fine wide dark staircase going up to a half-landing on which stood a grandfather clock. There was a rich gleam of mahogany and a soft glitter of old glass and there were steel engravings of a naval battle, a baronet and several West Country towns. Mrs. Greyson steered him upstairs to a bedroom withTone side sloping under the roof, a chintz armchair and a sofa and a very pretty-looking Sheraton glass on the chest of drawers.

And out of that opened a quite practicable bathroom which contrived to convey most of the charm of a dairy also, by its whiteness and cleanness. "And when you have washed your hands, I'll put your tea in the parlour downstairs. Is it only that valise, sir? I had hoped you would bring more luggage with you and have a good long stay."

"I will, I will," said Theodore.

He decided that Aunt Belinda had known how to do herself extremely well, as he sat in a deep armchair in front of a snapping wood fire, and drank his tea out of a Crown Derby cup and ran an appraising eye over the apparently genuine old tea-table silver. The room was gaily chintzy and abundantly but not oppressively hung with her work — by no means contemptible work in its way. There was a pianola-piano and bookshelves that probably contained real books. And a little collection of good cut-glass in a glass-fronted

cabinet. The built-on studio and the rest of the house he had still to explore.

Amidst these pleasant surroundings the last traces of his overnight depression were dispelled. How real and solid the essential England is, when you get out of London and turn west or south! How it lays phantoms and dispels nocturnal stresses! He knew he would sleep well in that little bedroom. He thought gratefully of the eighteenth century which had made such cottages and such furniture possible, and of his Aunt Belinda, who had assembled this comfort, primarily for herself indeed, but ultimately for him. He was realizing more and more the advantages of being the only offspring and natural heir of the entire Spink sisterhood. If old Spink had cut up rather disappointingly between the ten of them, he was certainly coming together again in a very satisfactory manner. The Captain realized more and more clearly how tired he had become of the Parisian atmosphere, and particularly of his rather crowded and slatternly and not very well arranged apartment there. Only we English understand comfort, he told himself, and where else in the world would you find anything so reassuring as Mrs. Greyson? These little scones of hers — he took another — dissolved in the mouth.

His active mind was already planning the full exploitation of this retreat. He would chuck Paris and live and work here. If at first it proved a trifle celibate and lonesome he could run up to London in four hours. There were literary circles in London and they were not all likely to be infested with those Inheritors. “There are inheritors and inheritors,” he said to the gleaming fire-irons.

There was something more than mere chance, he felt, in the combination of circumstances that had brought him here. There was destiny in it. There was a timeliness in this legacy, coming just as *The Feet of the Young Men* had so clearly done its work for him. Here he could enter upon a new phase in his career, open a new campaign in his relentless war against the materialist threat to civilization. He had given the world criticism, defensive criticism. His Notes had been wonderful. Several people — and no mean judges, one or two of them — had acknowledged it. He had exercised an influence. Now here, in this atmosphere, he could change over to the attack, to the expression of positive ideals. He

could give the reaction romantic form. In Paris that had seemed but a passing fancy; entrenched here in Devon it became a possibility, it became more than a possibility: it became a Call. He would lead off now with the enterprise for which a healing world was waiting, he would be the first to produce the New Historical Romance.

He would do for the nineteenth century what Sir Walter Scott had done for the eighteenth. He would evoke its latent glamour. He would inaugurate a second romantic movement, and just as Scott and Byron had rallied the latent aristocrat in every man and so burked the worst possibilities of revolutionary discontent that followed the Napoleonic wars, so too he would recall to self-consciousness the adventurous aristocrat latent in the more prosperous classes of an age of recuperation.

But it would be a larger, finer canvas than the Waverley scene. It would have a more than Elizabethan breadth. It would tell of world-wide Crusaders. Its knights and explorers would be the Empire-builders; its foreground would be the seven seas; its back-cloth would be the whole earth. He would make Queen Victoria the goddess of the story, no Virgin goddess but better, almost symbolically prolific and beneficent. The Prince Consort would be the King Arthur of that romantic galaxy. Melbourne, Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli, Cecil Rhodes, General Gordon, should all be secretly in love with her, heroic slaves to her sweet essential greatness.

Edward VII might be another Prince Hal and here would come in glimpses of the night-side of London in the nineties with Beerbohm Tree, say, as Falstaff, and Oscar Wilde, Arthur Roberts, Frank Harris, George Moore and so forth, a brilliant rabble, in his train. It would be quaint and penetrating to bring all these contrasted figures together into a Shakespearean rout flashing mockery and repartee. What a vivid unfolding picture it might be made! By way of contrast to the light and gaiety of Piccadilly Circus there would be Livingstone in the tall shadow of the tropical forest, the Indian mutiny, Polar expeditions! Then amidst that unfolding imperialism the cold hard forces of the enemy, the brutal realisms of science, would be shown at work. He might make a sinister figure of Krupp, against a dark and flaming scene of iron forges and intriguing glimpses of evil German

chemical factories. The Kaiser Wilhelm could best be treated as kingly but weak; impatient to break away from the car-wheels of the Victorian triumph; the tool of unscrupulous essentially destructive men. And in the background America towering up on mass production, the spiritual vassal of Europe aspiring to dominion. And so at last we should come to the thunderous climax of the Great War.

He smiled as he turned over these ideas. He was putting them out bright and hard and flat in the modern style. He would attempt no realism. What is romance for, if it cannot take liberties with history? He saw the thing shape itself as a brilliant stream of straightforward romantic narrative. It would be Scott, Dumas, come again. The world had had enough of realism and cynicism; how gladly would it welcome this revised interpretation of events! How gladly would it welcome a new magician, the Wizard of the South, Captain Blup-Bulpington! Afterwards Sir Theodore Blup-Bulpington.

In this house, in this atmosphere so simply and essentially homelike and English, such writing was not merely conceivable, it was natural and necessary.

He found himself suddenly in a gold and crimson Buckingham Palace. “Our duties give us little time to read,” an august personage was saying, “but neither the Queen nor myself misses a word of your magnificent tapestry of history.”

He passed to an imaginary textbook of literary history. He found himself reading a chapter entitled, “End of the Period of Post War Decadence. The Return of Health. The Second Romantic Movement.”

“The world’s great age begins anew; the golden years return,” he was whispering to himself when Mrs. Greyson came to ask if he was wishing to go over the rest of the place before it got too dark to see the outbuildings.

He approved it all. The kitchen was a place of pride for Mrs. Greyson and the yard a real creation. Aunt Belinda had got water-worn flints and paved it beautifully with them, and even the bright blue painted clothes-props were pleasant to see. There was a glass door from the living-room into a small and evidently very vivid formal flower garden, and a little white gate led to a long straight path under the orchard trees that ended abruptly at a quickset hedge

separating the premises from a wide upward curve of ruddy ploughed field against the still-glowing sky. A very jolly contorted apple tree reminded him in some inexplicable way of Sir Harry Lauder — in flower. The studio was a good big studio, well lit and with a reassuring tiled Belgian — or was it Swiss? — stove. One might turn the place into a formidable writing-room by a few touches — banish the easels, or no! keep them for a little painting now and then — and introduce a long writing-table of oak. "I shall get some good work done here," he told Mrs. Greyson. "It's away from things."

And then in the full tide of his self-congratulation he came upon that one unpalatable item.

It was in the otherwise perfect low dark dining-room. Through some unfortunate coincidence of taste his Aunt Belinda had shared his former admiration for Michael Angelo, and the chief decoration above the panelling were large grey-toned photogravures from the Sistine Chapel. There was the Creation of Adam; there was the Cumaean Sibyl over the well-furnished sideboard, and, facing the chair in which he would naturally sit, his old obsession, the Delphic Sibyl. He grunted and went up to the picture and scrutinized its once familiar lines. The figure had long since lost its magic charm for him. He saw now that it was nothing more than some pretty model, with a naive expression, a girl with rather strong-looking arms, that the great man had had the caprice to fling on to his mighty ceiling for ever. She had — he scrutinized it closer — no subtlety, no intellectual power. A certain open-eyed simplicity; honesty if you like.

"You like these pictures, sir?" said Mrs. Greyson.

That was the moment of opportunity. He realized afterwards that he should have replied at once, "No," and had them taken away. But his foresight failed him. "So, so," he said with an affected indifference and committed himself. He turned to something else. "These are marvellous brass candlesticks." In such fashion did Theodore accept and establish himself in that perfect cottage and accept with it its one uneasy element, "the little rift within the lute", that was destined to disturb him more and more until it brought him to a crisis. At first he was only faintly annoyed by Margaret's tactless intrusion. He thought he would get used to that reminder of her and

disregard it. But he found he could disregard it less and less. That photograph retained far more power of evocation than he could have supposed. The persuasion that he was really breakfasting, lunching and dining *vis-d-vis* Margaret gathered power with each meal. When he found himself conducting an imaginary conversation with her and telling her what a fool Teddy was and always had been, what a slow clumsy hard-minded fool — and ineffective at that — he realized something had to be done about her.

In her frame she was exactly the same size as her Cumaean elder sister. He changed them so that he could at any rate sit with his back to her. Next morning he found Mrs. Greyson had replaced the two in their original positions. He called her in and said he preferred to have them as he had put them.

"But you'll have to look at that old woman then, instead of the lovely young lady!"

"To me," said the Captain, "that veiled brooding figure is far more beautiful than that — that empty-faced girl."

"There's no accounting for tastes, sir," said Mrs. Greyson tritely.

He put his head on one side as if considering the relative merits of the two figures.

"They're Sibyls," he explained, "and the books they have contain the secrets of the past and future. That one turns the last leaf of her book. She's full of mysterious knowledge. There's a solemnity, a dignity. This one turns towards the Future. That's the idea. She turns a fresh page. But she doesn't really look at the book. She doesn't know anything really. Not a thing. Just a simple-minded peasant girl. Looking for something to turn up. Because you see as yet there *is* no Future. It is nothing. It hasn't arrived. It is all a bluff about our inheriting the future. Don't you think she *has* an empty face?"

"It's a pretty face," said Mrs. Greyson and considered it with her head on one side too.

"My cousin's little girl is called Sibyl," she remarked after some moments' meditation. "But she's quite a different type. Mischeevous. Oh!"

He showed by his manner that he did not want to hear about Mrs. Greyson's cousin's little girl.

Yet still he did not care to get rid of that picture altogether. His

disposition to do so was not sufficiently strong to overcome his disinclination to betray any feeling in the matter to his garrulous factotum. She was just the sort of woman who might ask him why he had moved it.

And it wasn't only Mrs. Greyson who might ask questions; there were the two ladies down the lane, who had been such friends of his Aunt and who had called upon him almost at once. They too might talk.

Perhaps if he went to Wexter or London one day and found some really magnificent steel engravings? That might do the trick. Because steel engravings would be indisputably more in keeping. Then it would not be taking pictures down so much as hanging other pictures up.

Meanwhile the Delphic Sibyl remained over the sideboard.

5

Entertaining Belinda's Nephew

Miss Watkins kept house with Felicia Keeble down the lane about half a mile from Theodore's cottage. Miss Watkins had been an English teacher in a Swiss school, and in the autumn of her days she had found herself with sufficient accumulations to say good-bye to parents and pigtails for ever. She began to think at once about all sorts of things that would have been unbecoming for a schoolmistress to think about. She launched herself upon a life of unbridled intellectual indulgence. Her political and social convictions wandered off from orthodoxy and never returned. So long as a thing was not orthodox, it did for her. She took up Fascism, Communism, Gandhi, Birth Control, Nudism (in theory indeed but with an illustrated magazine), Spenglerism, Keyserling, the Douglas Plan, James Joyce's Universal Prose, the intimate study of Lawrence, the cult of Ouspensky and the philosophical discoveries of Mr. Middleton Murry. She pursued the latest thing in art to its obscurest recesses. She subscribed to *The Feet of the Young Men*.

Particularly she abandoned religious orthodoxy; the communion rail at which she had knelt so regularly throughout her official life

knew her no more. She became an addict of new religions. She even corresponded at length with some of their founders. She would have liked a new religion every three or four months, but the supply was not equal to her demand and so she was obliged to go backwards and forwards among the more attractive. She was frequently a Christian Scientist, but she had had several bouts of following the Bab and she was in touch with two or three brands of Buddhism. For a time she peered into the mysteries of life through the medium of a rapidly talkative staccato Hindu gentleman she had met in Berlin, but she cut off his special type of illumination at once when he remarked that she had a peculiar saintliness of her own and asked her outright on the strength of this observation for a loan of twenty-five pounds. She might be unorthodox but she was not a fool. She drew a sharp line between the things of this world and the things of the spirit. She rendered unto strange gods the things that were strange gods' and upon what was Miss Watkins' she kept a tight grip.

She had met Felicia Keeble in America, at a congress of religions. They had come to it with the very best intentions but it had proved almost as tiring as a prolonged dog-show; everybody, they found, was expressing something and nobody was listening; the clamour of aspiring souls was terrific and they wound up their sojourn in complete irreligion, sitting in the lounge of their hotel and making the greatest fun of everybody.

Felicia was essentially a poetess; that is to say, she was not a poet but she had a very considerable facility in making verses and a flow of simple kindly feeling that never failed her. For years she had contributed a weekly poem, usually upon some domestic theme, to a leading daily paper, and for some years her work had been syndicated in America.

Changing fashion and perhaps the undue influence of juvenile charm had ousted her there in favour of a smarter, younger woman, and she had eased the tension of her diminishing outlets by embarking upon a new type of novel in verse that she hoped might ultimately become popular. She would read the best bits — and it was nearly all best bits — over to Miss Watkins, who said it reminded her of Sir Walter Scott and a broader-minded and more womanly Crabbe. Felicia was not without humour, and she regarded

the extreme reluctance of every publisher to consider the adventure of putting her before the public in her new vein with cynical amusement. “They can’t believe it when they see it,” she said. She boasted she could rout all Paternoster Row and Henrietta Street and make even A. S. Watt blench and protest. “All the same,” she said, becoming serious, “the wireless is tuning up people’s ears, my dear — all those beautiful voices! — and the Metrical Saga, that’s what I call it, you know, is only a question of time.”

With Belinda these ladies had made a trio, resolutely gay and humorous, implacably interested in everything, copiously and specially informed and informative about everything, and valiantly facing their declining years. Miss Watkins, for no clear reason, used to speak of the group of them as The Three Musketeers. Belinda had been by far the largest; on the scales she would have outweighed both her associates; she was better off and more manly and capable in the ordering of her house and affairs. This had given her a certain ascendancy over her companions, and the gap her death had made in their lives was correspondingly great. They were therefore acutely interested when they heard that her vacant cottage was to be occupied again and by her nephew.

They got all they could get about him from Mrs. Greyson, and that was everything she knew and imagined. He was an Army captain and had all sorts of medals from the war. (Mrs. Greyson had given him the medals.) He was a poet and an artist and there were romantic stories about him in Paris.

His connexion with *The Feet of the Young Men* was realized — and Miss Watkins ransacked the cottage for back numbers. “Of course,” she said, “he’s a Leader in that set! — almost *the* leader.” She believed she had almost seen him once. In the Quartier Latin, you know. Then she began to remember old rumours about Raymond and Clorinda and repeated them with much precision of detail. “But he was *horn* in wedlock all right,” she said. “They saw to that.”

She reflected on the changing standards of our time. “Her father, Mr. Spink, M.P., was a *most* narrow-minded man, as we should think nowadays. And yet hot-headed. They say he shot at Mr. Raymond

three times with a pistol. But it wasn't loaded or it was blank cartridge or he didn't mean to go so far, or something of that sort, you know, and so he forgave them."

"In the war it seems he was marvellous," said Miss Keeble.

Both ladies were disposed to add themselves to the galaxy of Aunts which fortune had bestowed on this good-looking child of romance at the first opportunity. And from the very day of his arrival they hovered over him delicately but invisibly, watching for a chance to pounce upon him. Miss Watkins, carrying a large basket or some such ostensibly motivating object, passed the cottage, although it was not strictly speaking on the way to anywhere, six or eight times every day.

She got him on the third day.

She met him about tea-time returning from a long walk. She stopped him at his gate. She stood in his way, blinking and smiling with every wrinkle of her school-worn face.

"Now *is* this the mysterious Captain Bulpington?" she said "Captain Blup-Bulpington at your service, ma'am."

She beamed her admiration at his easy bow. "And is everything all right here? Is everything *exactly* as you want it?"

"I found Pomona Cottage beyond all expectation."

"I am your neighbour, you know, I was Belinda's — I Miss Spink's — nearest friend; just half a mile. Naturally I am most interested and anxious you should like us all here — if I *may* speak of this little corner of Devonshire as *us*."

And she put her head on one side and radiated affection, admiration and good will in one powerful upward beam at him.

It seemed only human to ask her and her friend — apparently there was a friend — to come to tea one day.

"We hesitated about Calling, you know. We didn't know whether the Rule wasn't to be Strict Seclusion. We were told you had Important Work to do."

They called quite inoffensively and told him anecdotes about his Aunt Belinda, and after that there was the loan of a book about local antiquities and a notice of a show of brass rubbings by the curate of a church six or seven miles away.

At first he was disposed to regard the mild social advances of

these two gentlewomen as an infringement of the perfect privacy of his retreat, but after some days his mood changed. He was unused to solitude. He began to suffer from retention of the conversation; his imagination became distended; he experienced a deepening desire to spout talk over somebody, to tell his accumulation of things about life and things about himself. So that when presently his neighbours' courage rose to the pitch of asking him to dinner, they found him fully prepared for a graceful acceptance. "We would so like," said Miss Watkins all aquiver with hospitable interest; "we would *so* like."

She did her utmost to depreciate the coming treat. She reiterated it was "quite a simple little dinner, *hardly* a dinner", she had in view, "nothing grand, nothing like dear Paris. A supper almost. Just plain Devonshire. Local resources, you know. But we should so like."

"Our war hero is coming!" she returned to Felicia. "And now what are we to give him? It can't be a *grand* dinner, of course. He won't expect it. But it must be of our best, my dear. It mustn't be just anything. What shall it be?"

They consulted with their cook-housekeeper and made their plans. Both ladies had travelled and Miss Watkins had acquired a considerable knowledge of Continental ways of eating in Switzerland, so that the Menu was not overwhelmingly difficult. Hors d'oeuvre, sardines, vegetable salad, a little caviare (by special order from London), radishes, kickshaws generally; then Soup, Turtle out of a tin (London); Petites Bouchees a la Reine, pastry from Wexter; a small leg of lamb with English-style vegetables, new potatoes very young; one of Mr. Turner's spring chickens roasted with little sausages and a nice lettuce salad; real Devonshire sweets with a lot of cream; Cape apples, cream cheese and a good coffee; all perfectly simple, homely cottage fare, but of the best. That part of the entertainment was comparatively easy. But they found the question of drink more difficult.

They were agreed that to begin with a man ought to have a cocktail, a brisk bright cocktail. They had always left cocktails to Belinda, and they knew that in Pomona Cottage somewhere there was a wonderful book from the Savoy Hotel. By subtlety and subterfuge they got a possible recipe out of this from Mrs. Greyson

and prepared him a stout Martini. They tried over the recipe themselves at first and decided it was quite brisk and bright. It made them slightly inaccurate for an hour or so. Wonderful what men can drink! Then came the question of wine.

"Neither of us has Belinda's knowledge of wine," said Miss Watkins humbly. "We have always left that to her. Now *what* are we to do about wine? We must do our best, you know. After Paris he is sure to be a Judge of Wine. We don't pretend to the Champagne Standard. But in a really grand dinner there is quite a succession of wines. We can't vie with that sort of thing. We should be laughable, my dear. But even in quite bourgeois households in Switzerland there is White and Red. What was that wine Belinda used to drink? With a religious name? Liebfraumilch! The milk of the Blessed Virgin. Isn't that delicious? It makes one think of dear G.K.C. at his best. We could get some of that and we might have a good sound *strong* Burgundy. He must have a glass of sherry with his soup, of course, and I'm not sure whether we ought not to get some Vodka from Mortlock and Tyson's when we order the Caviare and the Turtle Soup. You always Wash Down Caviare with Vodka. It's the Thing. Vodka then. Port we have — thanks to Belinda — for afterwards."

"And his petit verre?" said Felicia. "His petit verre."

"There is only one liqueur for a soldier," said Miss Watkins. "I know that. Brandy for *men.* And it must be Old, my dear. We must make sure it is Old."

"Shall Chloe bring in the whisky-decanter before he goes?" Miss Keeble considered. "At home there used to be whisky and a jug of lemonade."

In this fashion the foundations of a very pleasant evening were laid for Captain Blup-Bulpington.

6

The Captain Talks to the Ladies

The evening justified its foundations.

He took everything. And as the evening wore on the good food

and the worthy drink enriched the blood that went to his brain and touched every cell there with added life and courage. From the first he appreciated the warm atmosphere of curiosity and potential admiration in which they entertained him. From the moment when he came in out of the twilight to their little hall parlour and the cocktails — for, fearing a premature lapse into inaccuracy, they had very cunningly prepared innocuous but similar-looking cocktails for themselves, taking their own first and leaving the powerful one for him — he realized his role and set himself to play it in a worthy fashion. They wanted to be interested; they wanted to be told things. Well and good.

They sat for a little while in the quaint hall parlour, consuming the cocktail and accumulating appetite, and they talked first of the locality and its peculiar old-world charm. "So little spoilt, you know," said Miss Watkins with helpful gestures of her thin long hands. "So scarcely at all spoilt."

"I find it reassuring," he said, and Felicia appreciated the word with a beam of her glasses. "Life is still on its roots here. I sat in my garden last night and watched the sunset. I said, 'In reality there are no revolutions. Except the revolution of the earth.'"

"Ah, if one could always feel that!" said Miss Watkins.

"In the big towns and with all those incessant newspapers," said the Captain, "one forgets. But here it is wonderful how the permanent values are restored."

Chloe at this point appeared and announced that dinner was served. "Stand not upon the order of your going," quoted Miss Watkins and the bright little dining-room was attained. The opening phases of the caviare were devoted to circumspection and admiration by the Captain. He stressed the essentially *cottage-shape* of the room; its irregularities he found perfect. "Never have I tasted such excellent Vodka," said the Captain, yielding to another. They sipped their own gingerly and watched him toss off his glass. A Cossack could not have tossed it off and washed down his caviare in better style. But very probably he had been in Russia.

"Even here, you know, we are not without our revolutions," said Miss Watkins, picking up a thread of thought she had dropped in the little hall. "This coming off the Gold Standard and the slump in

America have had their repercussions even in these sylvan shades."

"We hear the guns," said the Captain.

"Some of us feel the vibrations," said Miss Watkins, brilliant.

"If pounds are worse, dollars are better," said the Anglo-Saxon Felicia with a market in either world.

"But dividends!"

"Much of this is temporary, very temporary," said the Captain, unwilling to permit a draught of anxiety in that pleasant room. "These fluctuations affect the speculative world, fortunes are lost, fortunes are gained, but for the sober rest of us the pendulum will swing back. Much of this slump talk is mere alarmist journalism. With an eye to the market. I know a little of how these things are worked. For my own part, ladies, I Stay Put."

Miss Watkins put her head on one side. "Now does that apply," she asked, "to every class of security? I sometimes wonder."

"As for example?"

"A modest holding in Steel Common, for instance — and what I believe are called Equities over there?"

"There are movements," said the Captain profoundly, and to a third Vodka: "Thank you. It's *so* good."

They talked about finance well into the sherry and turtle soup. Like all women of independent means both ladies were most anxious to get advice and direction in their financial affairs from any man with whom they were thoroughly unacquainted. It was most reassuring to find their guest conservative and confident. They had both had a feeling that if they did not sell out things and buy other things very very quickly, they would experience grave losses, and down here in the depths of the country they had no one to go to, no one to advise them. Their London solicitor they said was a Dear, but quite behind the times. They were frankly worried. They had even thought of going up to some quiet little private hotel in London, said Miss Watkins, near the City, "and just *operating,* you know, a little. Just finding out what was going on, and *acting.*

"But then, my dear," she reflected, with a corrugated humorous squeeze of her face across the table towards Felicia, a grimace that alluded to interminable preceding arguments, "how is one to *act*?"

"That's what *I* say," Felicia told the Captain.

He dissuaded them. He was all for quiet confidence and leaving things alone. “Recovery,” he said, “is simply a question of time. I happen to know. There are forces at work. I admit — the world is certainly in a crisis, a very grave crisis. Some very unwonted forces are at work. But we shall get the better of them. They may rock the ship but they will not capsize it. Remember we are still in the aftermath of the Great War.”

He did not open out at once upon that aftermath because he had his turtle soup to finish, and it is difficult to talk continuously on any topic until one is through with the soup, but by the time they got to the Petites Bouchées á la Reine (there was a slight delay in serving them, Chloe showed signs of heat and nervous stress, and two were rather burnt) the general treatment of the world crisis was well developed. Fears about Bolshevism were expressed, about the dangers that the increasing unemployment and the necessity for restricting the dole would lead to serious discontent and even to some sort of communist movement. “It is so difficult to make them understand,” said Miss Watkins. “Poor dears, it’s *naturally* difficult to make them understand.”

“Tell Captain Blup-Bulpington what the man said who brought up the greenhouse coke,” said Felicia.

“That,” said Miss Watkins, “was *most* illuminating.”

What the man said who brought up the greenhouse coke had evidently been a quite startling experience for both ladies, and they had already talked it over and weighed its significance from every point of view. He was just one of our ordinary homely Wexter people — “none of your class-conscious proletariat, you know,” said Miss Watkins, “no ideas of *that* sort anyhow,” and she had gone out and had a little chat to him while she counted the coke sacks and saw that they were all right, and, so as not to arouse “Undue Expectation”, she had laid stress on the universal need for economy and said how necessary it was to follow the King’s example and restrict expenditure in every possible way. “And you know he was quite *rude,*” said Miss Watkins, “and *disloyal.*” He said that if the King thought he was helping anyone by cutting down his employment to the tune of *£50,000,* he had got hold of the wrong end of the stick. Why didn’t he save on the Guards’ bearskins if he must pinch and

save? He said that he wouldn't have expected the King anyhow to play mean tricks — mean tricks, he said — to get more decent people out of work than there were out of work already. He said he hoped that the money rich people were saving would jolly well choke them, before all was said and done.

"In the heart of Devonshire!" said Felicia. "Things like that!"

"I reasoned with him," said Miss Watkins. "Mais que voulez-vous?"

The Liebfraumilch was excellent, a most elegant wine. The Captain pleased the ladies mightily by asking which year it was and saying, "Of course. Naturally," when they told him it was'23. He was now eating only with a fork, it left his mind freer and there were signs that there might be another delay in the service before the next course appeared. The desire to tell things to these ladies was becoming warmer and stronger.

"The King," he said thoughtfully, putting his fork down with the slowness of elaborate care and then fingering his glass stem as though he took its pulse. "The King was in a difficult position. I happen to know."

He seemed for some moments to be recalling important incidents. "He was not very well advised."

He said no more but both ladies felt that he might have said enormous things.

The lamb was unexpectedly prompt. The Captain turned to welcome it and helped himself appreciatively. "There is no such dish in the world as roast English lamb," he said, "cooked by English hands. And — can I believe my eyes? Green peas already! English peas."

There was a still greater success when the Liebfraumilch gave place to a deep ruby wine. They had been in considerable doubt about that wine. It had been recommended by Higgs and Brisson of Wexter, and Higgs and Brisson had insisted that it was "velvety". Velvety had not been quite what they had expected in a Burgundy; Miss Watkins' idea was of something altogether more commanding and corrosive than that conveyed, but Higgs and Brisson, a sandy young man with a confident manner, had overruled them. When the Captain with a rich note of approval said, "Now is this a Chambertin

by any chance?" they were very glad they had been overruled.

"Like velvet," he said.

Higgs and Brisson became the only wine merchants in the world for them.

For a time the lamb was a substitute for conversation. At length the Captain resumed. "The real history of these times is very different from what you get in the newspapers. Things are going on. If everything were known, you would realize the King has been Splendid."

"Everyone says he sticks to his duties," said Miss Watkins. "One never hears *stories* — not, you know, like the stories one used to hear. About a Certain Person. If there ever was any truth... But then don't we all call Rumour the Lying Jade?"

"The world," the Captain said, "is full of Strange and Splendid things about which we hear very little. Very little indeed."

He reflected. "The men were Splendid. I could tell you..."

They waited, for manifestly now they were to hear things.

"For example. One little story. One hears of the great break-through by the Germans in the spring of 18. Tales of retreat, tanks lost for want of petrol, guns abandoned, equipment of all sorts thrown away, the Fifth Army overwhelmed. So on. One hears little of the rallies and resistances. In one place... Well, few people know how Amiens was saved. A mere handful of men. And nine guns. Just nine."

He made a generous concession to the enemy. "Of course the Germans were dog-tired. They had come too fast and too far. But it was the splendour of two hundred common soldiers which saved the allied cause."

"But I have never heard," said Miss Watkins.

"For very good reasons. The story has never been told."

"But why?" asked Felicia.

"Ah, my dear lady! Military *amour-propre*. These Official Histories! The age-long jealousy of the regular for the outside man."

"But what happened exactly?" asked Felicia, eager for the story.

"Something impromptu. Something done practically without orders. Let me try to convey it. The troops were pouring back. A rout. One must admit it. Not running indeed, not frightened, but

coming back doggedly. Fed up. Like tramps. It seemed impossible to turn them. Hopeless. One appealed to anyone who showed a sign of spirit. There were officers with revolvers out. And then gradually this little company turned. Like an eddy of driftwood in a stream. Cooks. Bandsmen. Stretcher-bearers. Men of a Labour battalion. And at this place I am speaking of there were at last about two hundred men, not more, two hundred to begin with anyhow, got together, never mind how. They found what seemed a likely place. The place may have suggested the rally. There was a sort of chance fortress made by old trenches, a railway embankment, some houses ruined by an air raid; what not. Away to the left, a hundred yards or so, the high road. 'Hold 'em up here!' that was the simple notion of it. 'We could hold 'em up a bit here.' And then on the other side of the embankment, that abandoned battery. As if it had been put for them. Nine guns. Some ammunition. There was hardly leadership in it; the idea leapt from mind to mind. A common-soldier's fight. And there they held the great advance. That was the turning-point."

He paused. "These new potatoes are admirable. There are no vegetables like the plain cooked English vegetables Catch them young enough. In France we never meet a vegetable that isn't in disguise."

"But what happened to those two hundred men?" asked Felicia.

"You mean?"

"Those men who stopped the German advance."

"They held the fort, dear lady. They saved Amiens."

"But did the Germans come?" pressed Felicia.

"My dear, *manifestly*," said Miss Watkins.

"They came. Oh, they came!" He felt he had these two hundred men on his hands. He made a further effort.

"Picture it! These casually collected men in all sorts of guises, some of them in nondescript uniforms and many in rags, had just about two hours or less to organize a defence, find a leader, get together, before that wave reached them. And they did it. Some day the story may be told. I wonder. Occasionally some fresh straggler would see them busy and join them. The retreat poured past. Far away and carrying on with a sort of leisurely confidence the German advance appeared. Our desperadoes could see it far away. A line of

little grey figures, quite in the open. And behind them masses, a sea of grey battalions. Broad rolling country, you know. Not the devastated area, but open land."

The Captain paused. But the mute demand of their faces was irresistible. "It was the most beautiful spring afternoon that you can imagine. A sort of pause. Birds singing. The noises of the retreat dying away. A straggler or so. It was almost as though things waited. And then our guns spoke. Unexpectedly. Thud. Thud. A couple of hundred men, just two hundred British nondescripts — and the last thrust of Germany. Isn't it strange what small things have turned the current of history!"

"And that has been hushed up?"

"Never properly told. Never properly distinguished from other incidental rallies. No."

The ladies watched his meditative face. He replenished his glass from the red decanter absent-mindedly.

"But did they actually drive back the whole German Army?"

"I'm bad at describing things. No. You can't say that. They just held it up for" — he did a rapid sum in his head— "thirty-eight precious hours. You see they were extraordinarily lucky in their choice of a rallying-place. Quite unknown to them at first, under their feet in fact, were endless caverns of ammunition. It turned out to be a very elaborately camouflaged dump. The whole triangle. At any time they might have been blown sky high. They weren't. Circumstances conspired for them. After all, perhaps there *is* a God of battles. And as shell after shell burst among the advancing masses, the great drive on Amiens was checked. Astonished air scouts roared over them, but there the British were, still active. It was impossible to gauge the situation at once. It seemed to the enemy command that it was facing the salient of a newly prepared line of defence. Naturally. They wasted precious hours in hesitation. And behind the shield of that little band of riff-raff, behind that lost legion, so to speak, the official rally went on. New battalions were brought up from Amiens. You see?"

He reflected on certain possibilities. "They kept six guns going all the time," he explained, "and had three cooling. They had limitless ammunition, thanks to that dump. They pounded away, naked,

blackened, weeping with the stress of it. I've been told afterwards the Germans thought they were up against at least forty guns. And the men who were not actually working the guns were adapting the railway bank and the sheds and so forth for defence, trailing out the wire or piling up the bombs and rockets for the night. No one rested. No one ate. The night was the crucial time — after nightfall."

"And *then*?" whispered Felicia.

"Then indeed the Germans came on. Perhaps they realized the truth of things. Too late. Time after time the German shock troops poured against that little triangle. It was surrounded on all sides, a little island of desperation at last in a sea of infuriated German troops. They fought in the dark, God knows whether some of them did not slaughter one another. It was trench warfare in its intensest at last. Bomb work and hand to hand. Men leapt out of the darkness and slew or were slain. It ceased to be modern warfare. It became Homeric. From twilight to two in the morning it was crisis after crisis. There were times when there seemed nothing but Germans about them. Man-to-man struggles. Individual murders. Then an English voice would shout. In the night, you know, men fight *silently*. Now and then a sort of pause. I remember in one of these pauses a Cockney voice rang out, 'Are we down-'earted?' — you remember the catchword — and a gasping ragged answer, 'No-o....' Splendid, eh?"

The ladies exchanged glances of admiration. "You were *there*!" said Felicia.

"Oh, well! Yes. Naturally I was there — among the other — men of no importance. Which is why I happen to know, you see. Nothing much. One of the bits of driftwood. No merit of mine. I remember how I tried to guess what was left of us from that shout. I can hear it now. One voice taking it up after another, even a poor broken voice that had been gasping and groaning. The pluck of it! 'Na-oow!' The Cockney twang. In the darkness. And then between two and three, I should think, there came a sort of let-up in the proceedings. In the dark cold time round about three. Well I remember it. We pulled ourselves together to meet a final rush. I had a flask of brandy.

I handed it round. Some of the men said good-bye to one another. And... that rush never came."

He relinquished his mutton-plate to Chloe with a sigh.

"Yes. At nights even now I wake and find myself going again through that long suspense. Finally I got some of our fellows together. 'You've done,' I said, 'everything that men can do. Either the British are coming back by now or the game is up. What Fritz is doing is bringing up trench mortars and sending back to his guns. They'll smash us then, like hammering flies. Take what wounded men you can, get off through the communication trench' — there *was* a sort of communication trench, you know. I forget where it went. Yes— 'and leave me to fire the dump. Leave that to me.'"

He paused and looked very earnestly at the roast chicken that awaited him on his left hand. But his thoughts were far away. Poor Chloe wondered how long she ought to tender the dish to him. She sought instruction with her eyes and saw both her mistresses intent upon his next words.

"Would you believe me," he said and suddenly there were manly tears in his eyes; "not one of those fellows would leave me. Not one. Ah!"

Miss Watkins had never in her life pinched her face into so acute an expression of sympathy as it wore now; she seemed to be squeezing it out of her collar towards him, and Felicia's spectacles were dim.

"A sort of brotherhood," he choked. "Grown up among perfect strangers. Nondescripts. Driftwood. In one night of battle."

He chose a wing with sacramental concentration.

A hush fell upon the little dining-room broken only by the clash of dishes, as Chloe put down the bird and prepared to offer the salad bowl.

"Bread sauce?" sniffed Felicia.

"The dawn," said the Captain, taking almost all the bread sauce. "I couldn't tell you what the place was like. Our own dead and the Germans. Not at all nice things to see, not at all. A shambles. (Perhaps you have never seen a shambles. Never mind.) But the dreadfulness of war! And the beauty! The terrible beauty! Dawn.... And then —— —— Out of nowhere comes a young blood of an officer clean and smart. And he said these words — I vouch for it — he said, 'What are you stragglers doing here?' *You stragglers*!"

"The *idiot*!" said Felicia, deeply moved. "The young *FOOL!*"

"'Some of us are waiting for stretchers,' I said, 'and some of us are waiting to be buried. And there's a lot of Germans here you'll have to bury too. We were holding them up, you see, until you had had your bath.' And that was *that.* But you see, dear ladies, how it is that some of the best war stories do not appear in the official histories. Reality is one thing and history is another. But forgive me for running on like this. I fell into it. I don't usually talk of these things."

He changed his key with dramatic suddenness.

"Let us talk of Devonshire and cider," he said. "Let us discourse upon the kindly ways of Nature and dear familiar things."

"I can understand that feeling so well," said Miss Watkins, and then: "(Chloe! Are you forgetting the salad?) And yet for us stay-at-homes there is a dreadful fascination — —"

"I hope we shall never see a European war again," said Felicia.

"Or any war," said the Captain, deep-heartedly.

The effort to change the subject was made. "Those evergreen oaks along your fence are very fine," said the Captain. "I'm very much exercised myself to know whether the evergreen oak is really a native British tree. It certainly does well here in the south, but was it here, for instance, in Roman times?"

Miss Watkins thought it came from Spain. She supplied some rather inaccurately remembered details of a lecture on acclimatization she had once heard, concerning the apple, the fig and the vine. "Think how the Australian eucalyptus has altered the Italian scene within living memory," she said. "And wherever the Roman Empire went about the Mediterranean, it planted the olive and pushed back the oak."

These reflections led presently to generalizations about the changing face of the world. And this carried them on to the phase of conspicuously uncertain and possibly detrimental change in which we live to-day and to the after-math of the great war again, and to all the threats and fears which pursue us even to our fastnesses in Devonshire, even to the most unspoilt and innocent of hiding-places.

By this time the Captain had come to cheese-straws and his Aunt Belinda's port. The cloth had been dexterously removed by Chloe,

who was making a grand recovery from her earlier weakness, and a fine mahogany surface was revealed. A good well-bought table. The port decanter travelled in a lacquer coaster — excellent. One sip of his Aunt Belinda's port gave the Captain a firm conviction that he would sit at this shining table for a long time and talk better and better. It was unlikely that these ladies would produce cigars, but otherwise they were doing him magnificently. After all, good port and cigars are incompatible. Smoking could well be left until later.

He opened a suitable discourse. He developed a line of thought that had already served him well several times in Paris. "Mentally," he said, "we live from hand to mouth far too much nowadays. Few of us pause to sit back and look at all these struggles, these conflicts, in anything like a broad way. But at bottom and broadly — and by and large — the issue is very simple. May I air my ideas a little?"

The ladies made warmly receptive noises. "Well, about the Christian era and the world becoming Christian and so forth and so on — I shan't alarm you by airing my historical fads, shall I? What is the reality?"

"We have never even *tried* Christianity," said Miss Watkins. "We have never given it a trial."

"It goes back farther than that," he said, and added magnificently, "I have *watched* History."

They sat enthralled. Christianity, he explained, was only the latest, the most perfect expression of a way of living, a System of Values, that had been struggling to establish itself for thousands of years. What were these Values? The Family, and, about the Family and protecting it, the Community, the Nation, and giving these an outward form, a symbolism attuned to the hearts of men, the Monarch, "sacrosanct," he added, "to me at least," and the Church, the Faith. These were the essentials. The idea of that grouping of values had sought to embody itself in Christendom, had succeeded partially in achieving that, and was still holding mankind together. To that system of values which we called Christianity, he explained, we owed all the decencies of life, loyalty, honesty, solvency, stability; everything that rose in the mind when one said Civilization.

He swept all this together by phrase and gesture, and particularly by a certain occasional splendour in his voice, by large world-wide

movements, so to speak, of the arm. But all the time, all through history, there had been a complex, intricate opposition to these values. “I will attempt no elaborate analysis,” he said. “I am speaking very, very broadly.”

But it was only when these broad aspects were gripped firmly by the mind, when one saw on one hand those great human values and on the other the opposition, the Antagonism, that one could *begin* to realize what Egyptian, Roman, Medieval History meant — and see any order or significance in what is happening to-day. The effort to sustain those great values, the conspiracy to undermine and destroy those great values; there you had the Light and Darkness of the Persians— “profound theologians, the Persians; we still do not give them their just meed in the intellectual history of the world” — there you had the key to a thousand sinister antagonisms, the meaning of the struggle with the heretic and the infidel, the existence of secret societies, the Black Mass, the Rosicrucians, the Templars, the Free Masons (“All those things,” said Felicia, swept along in an ecstasy of comprehension), the great outbreaks of unbelief and dissent, schisms, insurrections, and so on down to Socialism, Bolshevism, Anarchism, Infidelity and all the spiritual struggles of to-day. The more these black things changed the more they remained the same thing. “Those so-called Inheritors,” he began, but then he reflected that these two ladies would never have heard of that obsession, since it was his own particular private obsession, and he dropped the Inheritors out of it. Continually, he resumed, the assault on the eternal human values went on. Incessantly.

“And none of it in plain black and white,” he said. “Human minds are so confused in their thoughts and so tortuous in their methods.”

He regarded Felicia for a moment and posed a string of questions. For example, where did the Jesuits come in? What was the role of the Encyclopaedists? What was behind the Great War? Obviously its surface values were absurd. Mere masks. The sudden collapse of the Christian monarchy in Russia is a fact still more fantastically unreal, if we regard the surface appearances. *What*, I ask you, was Rasputin? Oh yes, we know *who* he was, but *what* was he? And what are the mysteries, deep, complex, beneath these monetary and economic confusions of the world to-day?

He paused. Felicia did not know what to say, but Miss Watkins in an ecstasy of intellectual appreciation was nodding her head rapidly. Her hands were clasped together very tightly. “What *indeed?*” she echoed. “What *indeed?*”

Chloe made a temporary diversion. “Will you have the coffee and the Old Brandy here, miss?” she asked.

She wanted to clear the table, manifestly.

The Captain stood to attention at the words “Old Brandy”, and the little party moved back to the hall parlour, where there were easy chairs, a convenient little table and a coal-fire burning. There, at a slightly more intimate level, the account of human affairs was resumed. There were no cigars, but there were some very good Egyptian cigarettes and both the ladies smoked primly.

“I happen to know,” he said, from the depths of the deepest armchair, and regarded the red coals and spitting dancing flames before him.

“It happens to be my business to know,” he said, going a step further and relapsing into thought.

They sat waiting. Not for years had they had so interesting an evening.

He thought aloud. “Will the truth ever be divulged? Can mankind stand it? That murder at Sarajevo. Lenin’s return to Russia through Germany. Such things as that. I wonder at times.”

“Mysteries,” said Felicia profoundly, and she also regarded the fire with an expression parallel to his own.

But after that for a time he was tantali2ing. It was clear he was not only a man of strange knowledge but also of immense discretion.

“This is really and truly Old Brandy,” he said. “It might be’48.”

Felicia’s eyes questioned Miss Watkins. “Of course he *said*?” she began doubtfully, referring to sandy young Messrs. Higgs and Brisson.

There was more certainty about Miss Watkins. “It *is*’48,” she said. “Now *how,* I wonder, could you tell?”

“How could I *not* tell, dear madam? Mellow perfection.”

They began to ask him questions that might restore the flow of his talk. But for a time it was difficult.

“How *peaceful* you are here!” he said. “How secure!”

It was a moment of exquisite contentment for the two ladies. There they were, they realized, deeply and snugly embedded in the fundamental human values. Between them and the horrors of an exposed animal life were all the achievements of civilization. Yet all the same, there was a thrill in thinking of those prowling forces of the outer world, those machinations, Bolshevisms, rapes, murders, haggard discontents and giant dark threats, so remote, so held off them, and yet so actual and powerful.

"Secure, *yes,*" said Miss Watkins. "But at *what* a price of unseen effort! We do not realize."

"You may well say unseen effort," said the Captain, and was plainly on the verge of further confidences.

He seemed to be running through a collection of samples in his mind. "Fanatics," he considered. "The riddle of fanaticism. Types! The wild-eyed visionary. The stubborn radical. The pretence of scientific thoroughness. Some, purely malignant. Anarchists. Enemies of society outright. Destroy! Destroy! *Our* sort, they say. A great anti-religious organization, secret, dark, unseen, holds them together. There are souls — it is dreadful to admit it — who are really and inherently hostile to human things. A Great Conspiracy. Anti-Christian. Anti-human."

A coal in the fire suggested for a brief moment obscurely the mild-looking young man on the train, or at least the half of his face. A ruddy glow was as if Teddy Broxted was burning to say something. Well, he couldn't. "Its Ramifications," said the Captain, "are World-wide. It undermines. It questions and corrodes. It waylays the young. It bides its time. Jewish finance. Kreuger and Toll. The drug trade. The vilest traffics. All one great system. One vast conspiracy. To destroy the social order. Thank God, we have people alive to it! Nesta Webster, a great invigilator — laughed at, at the time. Now T. S. Eliot. You should read T. S. Eliot. One of the Master Minds of our age. A great influence. Restrained, fastidious, and yet a Leader. The Young adore him. He has taken over the message of Nesta. Made it acceptable. Dignified it. He has put the choice before the world, plainly and simply."

For a while he dwelt on the merits of T. S. Eliot. "Anglican Monarchist," he mused. "Never has any man fought so nobly against

his birth taint."

"You don't mean heis — well — *ill*...?" asked Miss Watkins, haltingly but eagerly.

"Nothing of *that* sort, no. But he was born in America. His grandfather was a Light of Bostonian Liberalism. That faded dream of Progress! How splendidly he is living it down!"

And then he went on to talk of kingliness and kingship.

"The modem world," he said, amidst its noise and vulgarity and competition and sordid self-indulgence, had forgotten kingship. Yet kingship there was in the world, leadership against these dark incessant forces. "Kings, monarchs, are the most hidden of men. They appear ceremonially. Constantly. It is their outward task. But do they ever talk? Do they ever reveal? They are the masks as it were of their own deep souls. The soul of a King, think of it! A sacred thing! *Eikon Basilike*! It is not for everyone to see. Now and then the world gets a glimpse. The Tzar Alexander the First of Russia, for example — Alexander of the Holy Alliance — showed the world something, just an inkling, of the working of the kingly soul."

"The Congress of Vienna. I saw a film in Wexter," Felicia began, but dropped that digression in her interest at the Captain's next turn.

"The Kaiser," he began, and cleared his throat.

"The Kaiser," he said, "was as innocent of the war as any man in Europe."

"But is that *so*?" exclaimed Felicia.

"It isn't what we have been told, you know," said Miss Watkins. "Not the *orthodox* story."

"The most misunderstood of men. His is a very strange personality. A Mystic. Profoundly so. An Intermediary. A man with a real sense of his God on the one hand and of mankind on the other."

"But the war?"

"It was not of his making. Things were wrested out of his hands. I happen to know. I happen to know very precisely."

"But then who *did* make the war?"

"Not '*who*?' I should say," said the Captain, "but '*what?*'"

He returned to that dignified figure of exiled monarchy at Doorn.

"Let me put the Kaiser's case, as he might put it — as indeed he

did put it — himself. For a stormy century the great tradition of the Holy Alliance had held good. The world had enjoyed a marvellous hundred years under the inter-related Royal Families. One has to admit it now. In spite of'48, in spite of the restless thrusts of black radicalism here, there and everywhere, in spite of the fact that America seemed to have detached herself from organized Christendom, the broad stream of happy human life flowed on. The American War of Secession ended happily, largely through the wisdom and intervention of Queen Victoria."

"Now is that so!" exclaimed Felicia.

"Her admiration for Lincoln was extreme," the Captain explained. "And his for her. It was all done very quietly." He picked up his short history again: "And then suddenly without visible warning the dark figures, the hidden forces, Rasputin and all that lurked behind him in Russia, Freemasonry in France, the Armament Makers, converged. That murder occurred — was arranged — the whirlwind was unchained."

Against the background thus evoked the Kaiser appeared. "He put it like this. And for my part, I must confess, I found he had a strong case. Here is my Empire, he said, the keystone of the European system. It is armed, but it had to arm. Your armament salesmen have forced it to arm, forced us all to arm. But have you given this Empire of mine its place in the Family of Nations? You have encircled it, you have sought to strangle its economic development. And now you start out to crush Austria, its necessary buttress. What are you thinking of? Can I stand by? Could I have stood by? Remember these are my people. I do not say he was right, but that is how he saw it. The war was rushed upon me, he said. I was taken by surprise. I had to draw the sword, don the shining armour, strike my blow. But beneath that armour I was a Prince of Peace. All the time, most desperately, even before 1914 was out, I was seeking Peace, seeking to save the Old System and the world."

"But has that been published?" asked Miss Watkins. "Is this some recent interview?"

"Not published, no. But that is how he reasoned about it."

"It is so unlike what he was supposed to be."

"I have the very best authority," said the Captain.

“You know someone?”

“Those were his own words. I know.”

“But when did he say them? Recently? Perhaps he was wise after the event.”

“He said them before the war was over.”

“But where?” Miss Watkins pressed, not sceptically but with the eagerness of a greedy learner.

There came a brief pause. The Captain looked round as if to satisfy himself that Chloe was out of the room and the door closed. Then he sighed. “It is not generally known,” he began. “Of course what I say, dear ladies, between these four walls—”

“Oh, *naturally*!” said the ladies in unison.

“One of the events that history does not record. *For four-and-forty hours the Kaiser was a prisoner in our hands!*”

He regarded their awestruck faces. “I happen to know,” he said.

“And it was concealed?”

“It was concealed. For very good reasons. It happened on November the 8th and 9th, 1918.”

“And not a whisper? Not a hint?”

“Not a whisper. And that, madam, was how he came to talk to me. Because he was in *my* charge. He walked up and down, up and down, very erect. Pale, weary, defeated, and still, it seemed to my poor judgment, noble. He seemed to be glad to have someone at last to whom he could relieve his mind. And talk English again. He has always liked to talk English.”

The Captain lapsed into and returned from a brown study, and renewed his brandy.

“But how?”

“You remember it was the time of the German collapse. They were rolling back. The three armies, British, French, American, were stumbling forward. Irregularly. Here they would be going fast. There would be resistance. It happened that my division, the division to which I was attached, pressed. We threw forward a fan of small detachments. What they did depended on the spirit with which they were led. Queer things happened. We would find ourselves sharing the road with Germans *en route* home. We were not troubling then to make prisoners. If they carried no arms, the sooner they got back to

Germany, you understand, and the less trouble there was in getting them back, the better. In places it was a race between English and Germans to get to towns and prevent looting. Extraordinary phase it was, that last collapse. And at one place — perhaps half a mile from the main road — a little chateau. A great commotion in the court. Cars held up. No petrol. We could see there was someone important there. My second-in-command came to me, glasses in hand. 'There's some mighty tin-hat or other stranded over there. Staff and all. Let's bag him....' Work of twenty minutes to surround the place. I don't believe they knew we were there until we walked in on them. They were so fussed about their cars. *Counted* on petrol there. I don't believe they knew there were English within a dozen miles. My man came back to me in a state between fright and glory. 'By God,' he said, 'we've bagged the Kaiser!' Like that."

"And you let him go!" cried Felicia.

"We let him go. No! Don't imagine I did it on my own responsibility. But I grasped the situation. I knew things. I went to him at once. 'All-Highest,' I said, 'I don't know which of us is the most embarrassed. I must make you comfortable here for a bit and restore the telephonic communications your people have cut.' He looked at me quietly. 'English?' he asked. 'Not American?'

"I ventured to joke with him. 'English,' I said. 'It won't be in the papers for days,' and at that he laughed quite cheerfully."

"He l*aughed!*" said Felicia.

"Why not? Defeat, retreat. The bitterness of death was past."

"And what did you do then?" asked Miss Watkins.

"Worked at my telephonic communications, swore the two officers who were in the know to secrecy, and did not let on what we had got to another human soul. More of the division came up in blobs and parties. I kept my own counsel. I can't tell you the difficulties I had to get through to the particular quarter where I wanted the first news to go. Never mind about that now. Can you imagine the excitement? He was in real danger of his life. He was the Scapegoat. Those were the days of 'Hang the Kaiser', you must remember. And as for Germany! It looked like the social revolution there and then. We had seen the bodies of six Prussian officers already littered along the foot of a wall — put against it and shot by

their own men. There I was at the telephone. It was the queerest talk — and none the easier because the telephone was awful. Buzz, buzz, buzz, and the voices fading away. Not always sure to whom one was talking. What's to be done? What's to be done?"

"And what did you do? What *was* there to do?"

"London was swearing and screaming. 'We *can't* kill him. It's impossible.' Somebody pretty high up — I give no names — had a foolish idea of dressing him up in civvies and letting him get off in disguise. I pointed out the difficulties. The chief one was that he himself wouldn't have consented to anything of the sort. Beneath his dignity. He was right. At last I got what I was waiting for. 'And what do *you* suggest, Captain Blup-Bulpington?' I made my modest suggestion."

He sighed. "And so it came about that the Kaiser was taken as a prisoner to the Dutch frontier by a party of English troops. We saw him safe through. And just as well. In one place we passed through there was a huge crowd of drunken Germans singing the *Rote Fahne*."

"The Red Flag," injected Miss Watkins.

"They were beating up their officers. It was all we could do to prevent Him from revealing himself and intervening. At the immediate risk of his life. He had no sense of danger. Never was there such a libel as to say he was frightened and ran away. We took him by side tracks out of the hullabaloo to the quiet little frontier post. Never mind where. He stood for a moment looking back. There were tears on his worn and sunken cheeks. Few of us were unmoved. 'The ways of Our God are not our ways,' he said. 'When I parted from Bismarck, Captain Blup-Bulpington, I thought I had done with blood and iron. Let me face the facts. I have been betrayed. I have failed. This is the end. And I had hoped to die not a War Lord but the Peace Lord of the World!'"

The Captain added one pensive touch. "He wanted to give me a decoration he was wearing, one of those jewelled affairs. I would not have it. 'You have given me something much more precious than that, Sire,' I said. 'You have given me a Great Memory.'

"We shook hands at last — very simply — and he walked across to the Dutch sentinel. Saluted. Stood erect."

7

The Captain Talks to the Silence

The door of the cottage opened and the two spinster ladies saw their magnificent and fascinating guest out into the night. He paused beyond the threshold. It was a warm night, very clear and still. He surveyed the heavens for a moment or so and then waved his hand to and fro towards them in a generous gesture.

"Those splendid stars," he said. "Those *splendid* stars."

Again for a moment he meditated. A word of encouragement to all that implacable twinkling seemed to be called for. "Looking down on cities. Deserts. Lonely mountains. Battlefields. The same undying splendour.

"Good night, dear ladies."

He passed down the line of light to the gate, and when he had successfully negotiated that obstacle the door closed and that shaft of illumination vanished, leaving him to find his way in the darkness under the stars.

It was rather difficult going, for the lane was much overgrown. At first he could not distinguish the trodden track from the lush grass at the sides; he diverged, got involved with the bank and the hedge, stumbled and fell down.

"Easy does it!" he said and recovered his feet with care.

He dusted his hands against each other, brushed a possible earthiness from his knees, found the cane that had slipped from his hand and resumed his way with greater circumspection. But this stumble had changed his mood. With his fall there had jerked into his mind a curious doubt whether all he had said that evening had been meticulously true. The thought jarred upon his self-complacency.

This feeling that he had not been telling the truth increased. He began, not very successfully, to play with himself that tedious parlour game known as "unwinding". You may have played it perhaps. While his body steered along the obscurity of the lane, his mind sought its way amongst his memories. He tried to trace back the succession of his discourse and find out how it was he had come to capture and rescue the Kaiser practically with his own unaided

hands, and what had led him to the exclusive control of that rear-guard outside Amiens. When he had begun with that rear-guard action he had no more known that he had been present than the ladies. He had slipped in gradually. How exactly had he got there? When he had stated the Kaiser's opinion he had had no intention of quoting it from his own mouth. There again the links were difficult.

He could not get back to the starting idea of either story. His mind was a little too inflamed to hold the train of consequences. What remained glaringly clear was that he had told two highly implausible stories.

That melancholy and spiritual trouble which is so frequent a sequel to rich mixed drinking descended in heavy clouds upon him.

It was plain to him that that infection of self-criticism which he had caught from the infernal young man in spectacles was again at work in his blood. The poison was still in his system. He was a man divided against himself, as he had never been since he left England ten years ago. "Don't you think" — he could hear the very tones of him— "that affair of the chateau, let alone that it never occurred, was just a leetle too slick and obvious? And as a matter of plausibility, wasn't it rather a bit too thick for you to have kept the control of the situation in your own hands from start to finish? The ladies glanced at each other. Did you see that? Oh yes, they *did.* There was something almost sceptical in their manner towards the end. You didn't notice it? But I can assure you."

Was he a liar? Was he becoming an outrageously careless and preposterous liar? The sort of liar who isn't even believed? The Headlong Romancer? He questioned himself with an unwonted and unrestrained brutality.

The quickset hedges on either side of him became like a jury that reserves a verdict. They lifted tall black nettles, like pricked-up ears, like court attendants. Long trailers of bramble leant forward blackly as if to hear better. Those splendid stars suddenly became watchers, with an immanent knowledge of the facts. But then what was the accusation? What exactly was the accusation? Not simply a question of lying now. Not merely about those really excessive stories. But the whole business over again of what he had done to his life.

There was a light in his hall, but he realized he could not go back

into the cottage in this state of mind. This issue was too big for any cottage. He must have this out in the open. Had he become a liar in root and grain? Was his very name a lie? One might put it like that. There were explanations, but one might put it like that. Romancer? A better word but the same thing. He had to reason this out. He turned away from his doorstep and paced along between the box borders, past the yews to his hedge. He went to the very end of the path and stood quite still for some time.

The stars continued to be splendid and not a breath of wind was stirring. That warped contorted apple tree lifted its twisted boughs against the star-dust of the lower blue, and the broad field of sprouting corn beyond rose in a soft curve of misty darkness to the northern sky. The Great Bear had turned over the meridian and was sweeping down and driving the slender Cassiopeia before it up the curve of their unceasing round.

The universe became a single silent presence. It became one simple interrogation. Long ago he had had that same sense of a presence. But then he had felt one with it and deeply identified and sustained. Now he was outside it, confronting it in the dock. It penetrated him and searched him indeed, but it left him unassimilated. He felt called upon for his defence.

"You—" he began.

His voice was hoarse and he had to clear his throat.

"You and your stars!" he said.

He seemed to hold his hearer. The silence was profound.

"What if I *am* a liar?" the last trace of hoarseness vanishing from his speech. "What if I am?"

"You there! Look you! What is all this to me? These stars. I ask you, what is all this to me?

"What do you want of me?

"Lying.... I ask you; what *is* lying? What is truth? Am I so very exceptional that you should question me?"

His voice became high and thin with the effort to establish an infinite reasonableness.

"Why pitch upon *me* as a liar? Why put the question to *me*?

"Why come after *me* like this? *Me*?

"Truth. And pray what is truth? I told — oh, put it plainly — I

told the good ladies *crammers.* (How they liked them too!) And what if I did?

"I ask you, what if I did?

"Is there anything at all but lies? All this science. All this *pretence* that there is something true and right. All this long-faced pretence of something going on that's better. More exact. Exact! Excuse me if I smile."

He stood still for a time unable to frame sentences for the thoughts that were struggling in him. He wanted to argue that there was nothing in the world truer than anything else. He felt it was very very important to establish that. In his crowded and now fuddled brain there was a conglomerated impression of all the popularized scientific and philosophical discussions of the past decade. He wanted to quote the astronomers as a bunch of contradictions; to cite evidence that space and time had crumpled up and that the sequences of cause and effect occurred no longer. The universe was a living changing unreality, past, present and future all together. It was to have been a very brilliant and conclusive exposition indeed, only that the words came anyhow, the sentences would not arrange themselves. He shouted: "Eddington! Jeans! Whitebread [an error for White-head]! Protons! Neons! These new thingamys — Neutrons — neither this nor that! God, it wearies me! It *wearies* me!"

That was designed to be in effect the completest demolition of any established exterior reality. If the details were rather sketchy, his grip on his intention remained.

"And come to history and evidence," he said. "Come to that!"

The sound of his voice was reassuring him mightily.

The stars answered him nothing. They seemed to have gone further off.

"That's what I want to get at you with."

But here again the perfect sentences would not leap to his bidding. But he felt his argument even while he could not shape it. What was religion? Mythology. What was history? Only a more plausible set of myths. Even modern history, consider it! He fancied a handful of half-scornful, half-sympathetic phrases to express the stories that the countries of the world were now telling themselves and their children and anyone else who would believe them, about the Great War. They

had all been in the right; they had all come out of it with honour; they were all completely justified. He did not actually shape these thoughts; they swirled across his mind, a blizzard of half-condensed ideas. But the drift was plain to him. Bring the historians into court if this is to be an inquisition against Romancing. See what religion and history have to say for themselves. History is Bunk, said old Ford. Lies.

He broke into speech at last. "Lies," he said. "But *working* lies! Mark that! Lies that have worked, lies that have held lives together. Lies that have made men heroes. Lies that have comforted the dying. Lies like the whispering of angels in the ear of despair. Grand lies I tell you, Grand."

His moment of eloquence passed.

"If we face the truth," he said in a lower tone, and paused. "What do these damned truth-seekers make of man?"

Again the thoughts crowded upon him too copiously and formlessly for words. Who dared look now, he wanted to ask, at what science had made of man? Adam who walked with God in a garden, on easy terms, had been changed into a tormented ape. He had been made into a poor beast, in hopeless conflict with his lusts. And fear. Cowering for shelter under any rag of fantasy it could find.

One gift that poor ape had to help it in its hideous battle with fact. It could lie. Man is the one animal that can make a fire and keep off the beasts of the night. He is the one animal that can make a falsehood and keep off the beasts of despair.

Who among living men dared look at himself plainly? Who among all the saints and masters and heroes of the past would stand the test of these vitriolic modern truths? Who dared look plainly at the vacuous course of history in the last five and twenty years? Who dared look plainly at the slobbering imbecility of human affairs to-day? "Even your damned Teddy," he cried, breaking through into speech again. "Does he look at himself? Does he look at himself stark and plain? No!"

He put his arms akimbo.

"My God! think what you would have made of me if I hadn't put up a fight against you!"

He paused. The stillness healed to the quiet of expectation.

“You’ve tormented me. Frustration. Yes. Shame. Yes. Oh, I’m not a fool. But you’ve driven me too hard these last few weeks and here I am with my back to the wall. I am a lie. I accept it.

“I am a liar in a world of lies. Lies? Dreams! World of dreams. Hidden world. World we’ve made to hide from *you* in. The little lies inside the big one. World of self-delusion. But most of us never find out it is self-delusion. I happen to know. And because I know it, I shape my life as I like, past and future, just as I please. What wasn’t true is true now. See? I *make* it true. I enlisted by a trick when the doctors had rejected me. Yes, I did, I tell you. I led that rally before Amiens. I — your humble servant. I took the Kaiser prisoner. I talked to him for hours. And so forth and so on. If I wish it, it has to be so. From now henceforth. Lie for lie. Who believes my He is my friend. It’s a fair trade, and plenty doing. I shall find plenty of friends. Was friendship ever anything but a lie-exchange? Corroboration. Love me, love my lie. And who will object? *You?*”

For the briefest instant the faintest suggestion of entreaty came into his voice. “What *are* you?”

The note of pleading vanished. “Yes,” he repeated in a stouter voice. “What *are* you? There I have you. All this will last my time. My little time. You’re too rigid; you’re too hidebound to prevent me. You can’t step aside out of your system of cause and effect, let Whitebread and Eddington and all of them say what they like. You can’t step aside *much* anyhow, and *I can.* And I do. Oh, *keep* your old universe. *Keep* your stars, every blasted star! They are no more to me than the fly-dots on the wallpaper in my living-room. I dismiss you here and now. I turn you out of my affairs. I am what I am.”

He stopped and thought. He considered: “I am *that* I am.” That was still not quite correct, not quite his intention, and he wished to state his intention very plainly. And besides — come to think of it — it was a quotation.

“No — not what I am, that’s *your* affair, perhaps. No, I am what I *choose* to be. See?”

He whispered that over again. “What I choose to be.” That was better. That was right. Thereby he asserted precisely the power of his Will.

He was about to speak again. He was about to declare that his

Will had triumphed over Reality, that there he was at last, the Captain of his Soul, the Master of his Fate, and then abruptly he became aware that he was talking to nothing, to nothing whatever.

Imperceptibly that sense of a presence had passed. Imperceptibly that fancy of a great Experimenter lifting his test-tube to the light had gone from him and left no trace. Nothing remained even in his imagination to hear him or bear communion with him. He stood alone, a conquering reverie, a soul victorious in a world of soulless fact. He was standing under a contorted tree, just a twisted old tree that had grown all wrong, with a dim dark-grey field of shooting corn beyond, against the deep blue dome of innumerable, inexplicable, unimportant stars. Distant stars. Fly-dot stars. Minding their own business. Whatever that business was.

And he was rather drunk and talking and shouting.

He pulled himself together and remained for some moments silent and motionless.

He nodded his head. So be it. He had said what he had to say.

With infinite dignity Captain Blup-Bulpington turned right-about-face, one, two, three, and with a consciously soldierly bearing paced back through the darkness under the yew trees to his door. Anyone hearing his footfalls, even though nothing were seen of him, would have known him for a soldier.

8

The Delphic Sibyl Comes to a Violent End

Never before had his sense of self-adjustment been so satisfyingly complete.

He felt thirsty after this encounter and he went into the little dining-room for the soda and whisky, and there he found himself for the last time face to face with that Delphic Sibyl which had played so great a role in his imaginative life. He looked at her and then he looked at her veiled sister. Finally he turned and faced the supine figure of Adam rising to his mysterious destinies out of nothingness, at the touch of his Creator.

The Captain's expression was that of a man who regards a

disagreeable intruder.

"I can't *stand* all this Renaissance Art," he said.

He looked about him and remarked the little chiffonier in the corner of the room. That might be just what he wanted. He opened the top drawer. It was. There were some albums of old photographs in it, spoils of Belinda's travels, but it was not half full. There seemed to be storage for all three pictures. He mused for a time and then returned to the Adam, surveyed it, took it down carefully and put it away in the drawer. The Cumaean Sibyl followed. With an air of quiet casualness, he approached his early love. He took hold of the frame and hitched the picture-wire loose from its hooks. Then he was compelled to pause and look at her. It was a lengthy pause.

"You sneer," he said at last, and took the picture down.

But did she sneer? He took her to the light in the middle of the room.

It was not quite a sneer; rather it was a gentle wonder, a slight surprise. But he clung to his justification. "Always," he said, "you stick that Query of yours into everything I say or do."

He carried her to the drawer but still he hesitated. Some faded habit of deference, some scarce perceptible memory of a moment when those half-parted lips had tasted salt with tears of pity for him, mingled in that hesitation.

"*In* you go," he said.

But it was like Margaret's passive obduracy that she would not go in. The drawer now was just too full. He pressed the picture down but still the drawer would not shut. His mood flashed to violence.

"Damn you!" he shouted. "Damn you! Won't you even do that?"

Snap went the glass as he forced the drawer, and at that he became violent. He snatched out the picture and dashed it on the floor, breaking the frame, and then as it lay flat and quiet beneath him he stamped upon it with his boot. "I'll teach you to do what I want."

He took the marred and broken picture and the broken frame and put them in the drawer. He picked up the larger bits of glass and they too flattened down submissively. The drawer shut meekly.

"Ah!" he said like one who concludes an argument.

He returned to the table, breathing quickly and irregularly; had it

been but a little more violent it would have been sobbing.

He stood for a time staring at the shut chiffonier. Then he poured himself a stiff whisky and added soda-water, splashing some of the bubbling liquid on the polished table. He sipped and sat down.

He grew calmer. He drank again.

"That's *that*" he said at last.

He had made an end to all that. He had made an end to weakness and sentimentality. He had established his own world. There he was, a military man, rigid, disciplined, limited if you like — if you choose to consider honour, courage, service, limitations — but himself. Brave, to the marrow. Master of his Fate, and above all supreme master of his past.

(A second whisky.)

Those Inheritors! What a dream it was! What a flimsy sham! As the world had been, so always would it be. Let them dither about their New World. Brave strong men (more whisky) would hold to the ancient values. Peace indeed! Unity indeed! Read the newspapers! Uncertainties. Convulsions. Disasters. But against it all — *Romance.* Endless Romance. So life had been; so life would be. To the end. Bravery. The call for manhood.

"Adsum," he said aloud. "Adsum."

The grand old human story!

He lifted his third whisky. "To our next war, mon general!" He drank solemnly.

His mind halted for a moment and he stared at a fragment of glass upon the red tiles beside the chiffonier.

For a little while a shadow lay upon him. It was a last vestige of his ancient heart-ache. A face he could no longer see clearly looked at him out of the obscurity. The old old dream of a lost loveliness and a vanished honour returned. But now it was very faint indeed. He roused himself to exorcize it finally.

"Bah! Don't think of it."

Another whisky? No. No! Strong men know when they have had enough. But so little remains in the decanter?

Well, well, no heel-taps. A sound principle. The last.

"Skald!" he said, like a Varangian Guard. (Fine fellows those Varangian Guards! Hefty lads with a bottle.)

Grand stuff for pulling oneself together this whisky — great stuff. He sat for a long time enjoying the sense of completeness it gave him. It rounded him off; it made him one. It shut down the shutters on all those limitless outer alien worlds that engender distresses for the soul, the wild wilderness of desire, the desolations and storms of fear and apprehension, the uplands of thought and the tantalizing torments and evasions of loveliness.... It excluded them all. It shut them out.

The old clock on the landing struck One.

To bed.

The grandfather clock on the half-landing had a firm loud tick. It seemed now to the Captain a very symbol of steadfastness and duty, carrying on, carrying on, day and night, week in, week out, paraded for winding once a week, month by month, year by year. It was the very symbol of unquestioning discipline and duty. And, by God, there it stood, rigidly erect, pulling itself together, standing at attention, saluting, actually saluting so far as a clock could, presenting hands, as he passed.

We soldiers understand one another.

He acknowledged the salute as an officer and a gentleman should, lifting two fingers stiffly as if he himself were a very slightly humanized mechanism, and so, after a swaying interval, continued his upward way.

A great evening. A most satisfying evening. Refined intelligent women — ladies.

All his values sang together within him.

THE END

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

This novel presents a speculative future and history of the world from 1933 (the year the novel was published) to 2106. Wells envisages a great world war – with some uncanny similarities to the imminent Second World War – and the eventual formation of a world state as the solution to humanity's problems. The latter is a common theme in his later, didactic fiction. The story is presented as a narrative written up from notes made by a diplomat who has been having dream visions of a history textbook from the future – linking the novel to a Western literary tradition of 'dream visions' extending back at least to the Middle Ages.

The novel was famously filmed by William Cameron Menzies in 1936 as *Things to Come*. Less successful is the 1979 film of the same name, which bears very little resemblance to Wells' novel.

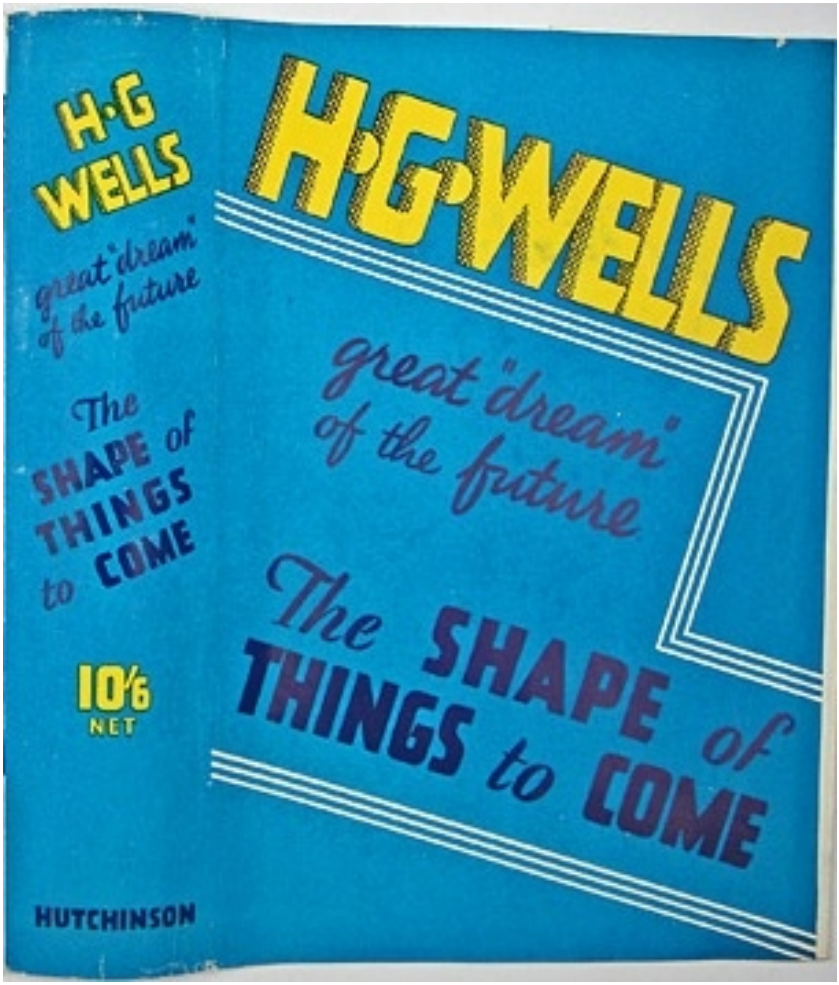

Dust jacket of the first edition

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H.G. WELLS'
"THINGS TO COME"
ALEXANDER KORDA
RAYMOND MASSEY · RALPH RICHARDSON · SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE · PEARL ARGYLE
MARGARETTA SCOTT

Poster for the 1936 film adaptation, celebrated for its visionary direction and the memorable score by British composer Arthur Bliss

TO JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET — EXPLORADOR

INTRODUCTION: THE DREAM BOOK OF DR. PHILIP RAVEN

The unexpected death of Dr. Philip Raven at Geneva in November 1930 was a very grave loss to the League of Nations Secretariat. Geneva lost a familiar figure — the long bent back, the halting gait, the head quizzically on one side — and the world lost a stimulatingly aggressive mind. His incessant devoted work, his extraordinary mental vigour, were, as his obituary notices testified, appreciated very highly by a world-wide following of distinguished and capable admirers. The general public was suddenly made aware of him.

It is rare that anyone outside the conventional areas of newspaper publicity produces so great a stir by dying; there were accounts of him in nearly every paper of importance from Oslo to New Zealand and from Buenos Aires to Japan — and the brief but admirable memoir by Sir Godfrey Cliffe gave the general reader a picture of an exceptionally simple, direct, devoted and energetic personality. There seems to have been only two extremely dissimilar photographs available for publication: an early one in which he looks like a blend of Shelley and Mr. Maxton, and a later one, a snapshot, in which he leans askew on his stick and talks to Lord Parmoor in the entrance hall of the Assembly. One of his lank hands is held out in a characteristic illustrative gesture.

Incessantly laborious though he was, he could nevertheless find time to assist in, share and master all the broader problems that exercised his colleagues, and now they rushed forward with their gratitude. One noticeable thing in that posthumous eruption of publicity was the frequent acknowledgments of his aid and advice. Men were eager to testify to his importance and resentful at the public ignorance of his work. Three memorial volumes of his more important papers, reports, memoranda and addresses were arranged for and are still in course of publication.

Personally, although I was asked to do so in several quarters, and though I was known to have had the honour of his friendship, I made no contribution to that obituary chorus. My standing in the academic

world did not justify my writing him a testimonial, but under normal circumstances that would not have deterred me from an attempt to sketch something of his odd personal ease and charm. I did not do so, however, because I found myself in a posoootion of extraordinary embarrassment. His death was so unforeseen that we had embarked upon a very peculiar joint undertaking without making the slightest provision for that risk. It is only now after an interval of nearly three years, and after some very difficult discussions with his more intimate friends, that I have decided to publish the facts and the substance of this peculiar cooperation of ours.

It concerns the matter of this present book. All this time I have been holding back a manuscript, or rather a collection of papers and writings, entrusted to me. It is a collection about which, I think, a considerable amount of hesitation was, and perhaps is still, justifiable. It is, or at least it professes to be, a Short History of the World for about the next century and a half. (I can quite understand that the reader will rub his eyes at these words and suspect the printer of some sort of agraphia.) But that is exactly what this manuscript is. It is a Short History of the Future. It is a modern Sibylline book. Only now that the events of three years have more than justified everything stated in this anticipatory history have I had the courage to associate the reputation of my friend with the incredible claims of this work, and to find a publisher for it.

Let me tell very briefly what I know of its origin and how it came into my hands. I made the acquaintance of Dr. Raven, or to be more precise, he made mine, in the closing year of the war. It was before he left Whitehall for Geneva. He was always an eager amateur of ideas, and he had been attracted by some suggestions about money I had made in a scrappy little book of forecasts called What is Coming? published in 1916. In this I had thrown out the suggestion that the waste of resources in the war, combined with the accumulation of debts that had been going on, would certainly leave the world as a whole bankrupt, that is to say it would leave the creditor class in a position to strangle the world, and that the only method to clear up this world bankruptcy and begin again on a hopeful basis would be to scale down all debts impartially, by a reduction of the amount of gold in the pound sterling and

proportionally in the dollar and all other currencies based on gold. It seemed to me then an obvious necessity. It was, I recognize now, a crude idea — evidently I had not even got away from the idea of intrinsically valuable money — but none of us in those days had had the educational benefit of the monetary and credit convulsions that followed the Peace of Versailles. We were without experience, it wasn't popular to think about money, and at best we thought like precocious children. Seventeen years later this idea of appreciating gold is accepted as an obvious suggestion by quite a number of people. Then it was received merely as the amateurish comment of an ignorant writer upon what was still regarded as the mysterious business of "monetary experts." But it attracted the attention of Raven, who came along to talk over that and one or two other post-war possibilities I had started, and so he made my acquaintance.

Raven was as free from intellectual pompousness as William James; as candidly receptive to candid thinking. He could talk about his subject to an artist or a journalist; he would have talked to an errand boy if he thought he would get a fresh slant in that way. "Obvious" was the word he brought with him. "The thing, my dear fellow" — he called me my dear fellow in the first five minutes— "is so obvious that everybody will be too clever to consider it for a moment. Until it is belated. It is impossible to persuade anybody responsible that there is going to be a tremendous financial and monetary mix-up after this war. The victors will exact vindictive penalties and the losers of course will undertake to pay, but none of them realizes that money is going to do the most extraordinary things to them when they begin upon that. What they are going to do to each other is what occupies them, and what money is going to do to the whole lot of them is nobody's affair."

I can still see him as he said that in his high-pitched remonstrating voice. I will confess that for perhaps our first half-hour, until I was accustomed to his flavour, I did not like him. He was too full, too sure, too rapid and altogether too vivid for my slower Anglo-Saxon make-up. I did not like the evident preparation of his talk, nor the fact that he assisted it by the most extraordinary gestures. He would not sit down; he limped about my room, peering at books and pictures while he talked in his cracked forced voice, and waving

those long lean hands of his about almost as if he was swimming through his subject. I have compared him to Maxton plus Shelley, rather older, but at the first outset I was reminded of Svengali in Du Maurier's once popular Trilby. A shaven Svengali. I felt he was FOREIGN, and my instincts about foreigners are as insular as my principles are cosmopolitan. It always seemed to me a little irreconcilable that he was a Balliol scholar, and had been one of the brightest ornaments of our Foreign Office staff before he went to Geneva.

At bottom I suppose much of our essential English shyness is an exaggerated wariness. We suspect the other fellow of our own moral subtleties. We restrain ourselves often to the point of insincerity. I am a rash man with a pen perhaps, but I am as circumspect and evasive as any other of my fellow countrymen when it comes to social intercourse. I found something almost indelicate in Raven's direct attack upon my ideas.

He wanted to talk about my ideas beyond question. But at least equally he wanted to talk about his own. I had more than a suspicion that he had, in fact, come to me in order to talk to himself and hear how it sounded — against me as a sounding-board.

He called me then a Dealer in the Obvious, and he repeated that not very flattering phrase on various occasions when we met. "You have," he said, "defects that are almost gifts: a rapid but inexact memory for particulars, a quick grasp of proportions, and no patience with detail. You hurry on to wholes. How men of affairs must hate you — if and when they hear of you! They must think you an awful mug, you know — and yet you get there! Complications are their life. YOU try to get all these complications out of the way. You are a stripper, a damned impatient stripper. I would be a stripper too if I hadn't the sort of job I have to do. But it is really extraordinarily refreshing to spend these occasional hours, stripping events in your company."

The reader must forgive my egotism in quoting these comments upon myself; they are necessary if my relations with Raven are to be made clear and if the spirit of this book is to be understood.

I was, in fact, an outlet for a definite mental exuberance of his which it had hitherto distressed him to suppress. In my presence he

could throw off Balliol and the Foreign Office — or, later on, the Secretariat — and let himself go. He could become the Eastern European Cosmopolitan he was by nature and descent. I became, as it were, an imaginative boon companion for him, his disreputable friend, a sort of intelligent butt, his Watson. I got to like the relationship. I got used to his physical exoticism, his gestures. I sympathized more and more with his irritation and distress as the Conference at Versailles unfolded. My instinctive racial distrust faded before the glowing intensity of his intellectual curiosity. We found we supplemented each other. I had a ready unclouded imagination and he had knowledge. We would go on the speculative spree together.

Among other gifted and original friends who, at all too rare intervals, honour me by coming along for a gossip, is Mr. J. W. Dunne, who years ago invented one of the earliest and most "different" of aeroplanes, and who has since done a very considerable amount of subtle thinking upon the relationship of time and space to consciousness. Dunne clings to the idea that in certain ways we may anticipate the future, and he has adduced a series of very remarkable observations indeed to support that in his well-known Experiment with Time. That book was published in 1927, and I found it so attractive and stimulating that I wrote about it in one or two articles that were syndicated very extensively throughout the world. It was so excitingly fresh.

And among others who saw my account of this Experiment with Time, and who got the book and read it and then wrote to me about it, was Raven. Usually his communications to me were the briefest of notes, saying he would be in London, telling me of a change of address, asking about my movements, and so forth; but this was quite a long letter. Experiences such as Dunne's, he said, were no novelty to him. He could add a lot to what was told in the book, and indeed he could EXTEND the experience. The thing anticipated between sleeping and waking — Dunne's experiments dealt chiefly with the premonitions in the dozing moment between wakefulness and oblivion — need not be just small affairs of tomorrow or next week; they could have a longer range. If, that is, you had the habit of long-range thinking. But these were days when scepticism had to present a

hard face to greedy superstition, and it was one's public duty to refrain from rash statements about these flimsy intimations, difficult as they were to distinguish from fantasies — except in one's own mind. One might sacrifice a lot of influence if one betrayed too lively an interest in this sort of thing.

He wandered off into such sage generalizations and concluded abruptly. The letter had an effect of starting out to tell much more than he did.

Then he turned up in London, dropped into my study unexpectedly and made a clean breast of it.

"This Dunne business," he began.

"Well?" said I.

"He has a way of snatching the fleeting dream between unconscious sleep and waking."

"Yes."

"He keeps a notebook by his bedside and writes down his dream the very instant he is awake."

"That's the procedure."

"And he finds that a certain percentage of his dream items are — sometimes quite plainly — anticipations of things that will come into his mind out of reality, days, weeks, and even years ahead."

"That's Dunne."

"It's nothing."

"But how — nothing?"

"Nothing to what I have been doing for a long time."

"And that is — ?"

He stared at the backs of my books. It was amusing to find Raven for once at a loss for words.

"Well?" I said.

He turned and looked at me with a reluctant expression that broke into a smile. Then he seemed to rally his candour.

"How shall I put it? I wouldn't tell anyone but you. For some years, off and on — between sleeping and waking — I've been — in effect — reading a book. A non-existent book. A dream book if you like. It's always the same book. Always. And it's a history."

"Of the past?"

"There's a lot about the past. With all sorts of things I didn't

know and all sorts of gaps filled in. Extraordinary things about North India and Central Asia, for instance. And also — it goes on. It's going on. It keeps on going on."

"Going on?"

"Right past the present time."

"Sailing away into the future?"

"Yes."

"Is it — is it a PAPER book?"

"Not quite paper. Rather like that newspaper of your friend Brownlow. Not quite print as we know it. Vivid maps. And quite easy to read, in spite of the queer letters and spelling."

He paused. "I know it's nonsense."

He added. "It's frightfully real."

"Do you turn the pages?"

He thought for a moment. "No, I don't turn the pages. That would wake me up."

"It just goes on?"

"Yes."

"Until you realize you are doing it?"

"I suppose — yes, it is like that."

"And then you wake up?"

"Exactly. And it isn't there!"

"And you are always READING?"

"Generally — very definitely."

"But at times?"

"Oh — just the same as reading a book when one is awake. If the matter is vivid one SEES the events. As if one was looking at a moving picture on the page."

"But the book is still there?"

"Yes — always. I think it's there always."

"Do you by any chance make notes?"

"I didn't at first. Now I do."

"At once?"

"I write a kind of shorthand.... Do you know — I've piles of notes THAT high."

He straddled my fireplace and stared at me.

"Now you've told me," I said.

“Now I’ve told you.”

“Illegible, my dear sir — except to me. You don’t know my shorthand. I can hardly read it myself after a week or so. But lately I’ve been writing it out — some I’ve dictated.

“You see,” he went on, standing up and walking about my room, “if it’s — a reality, it’s the most important thing in the world. And I haven’t an atom of proof. Not an atom. Do you — ? Do you believe this sort of thing is possible?”

“POSSIBLE?” I considered. “I’m inclined to think I do. Though what exactly this kind of thing may be, I don’t know.”

“I can’t tell anyone but you. How could I? Naturally they would say I had gone cranky — or that I was an impostor. You know the sort of row. Look at Oliver Lodge. Look at Charles Richet. It would smash my work, my position. And yet, you know, it’s such credible stuff.... I tell you I believe in it.”

“If you wrote some of it out. If I could see some of it.”

“You shall.”

He seemed to be consulting my opinion. “The worst thing against it is that I always believe in what the fellow says. That’s rather as though it was ME, eh?”

He did not send me any of his notes, but when next I met him, it was at Berne, he gave me a spring-backed folder filled with papers. Afterwards he gave me two others. Pencilled sheets they were mostly, but some were evidently written at his desk in ink and perhaps fifty pages had been typed, probably from his dictation. He asked me to take great care of them, to read them carefully, have typed copies made and return a set to him. The whole thing was to be kept as a secret between us. We were both to think over the advisability of a possibly anonymous publication. And meanwhile events might either confirm or explode various statements made in this history and so set a definite value, one way or the other, upon its authenticity.

Then he died.

He died quite unexpectedly as the result of a sudden operation. Some dislocation connected with his marked spinal curvature had developed abruptly into an acute crisis.

As soon as I heard of his death I hurried off to Geneva and told

the story of the dream book to his heir and executor, Mr. Montefiore Renaud. I am greatly indebted to that gentleman for his courtesy and quick understanding of the situation. He was at great pains to get every possible scrap of material together and to place it all at my disposal. In addition to the three folders Raven had already given me there were a further folder in longhand and a drawerful of papers in his peculiar shorthand evidently dealing with this History. The fourth folder contained the material which forms the concluding book of this present work. The shorthand notes, of which even the pages were not numbered, have supplied the material for the penultimate book, which has had to be a compilation of my own. Generally, Raven seems to have scribbled down his impressions of the dream book as soon as he could, before the memory faded, and as he intended to recopy it all himself he had no consideration for any prospective reader. This material was just for his own use. It is a mixture of very cursive (and inaccurate) shorthand, and for proper names and so forth, longhand. Punctuation is indicated by gaps, and often a single word stands for a whole sentence and even a paragraph. About a third of the shorthand stuff was already represented by longhand or typescript copy in the folders. That was my Rosetta Stone. If it were not for the indications conveyed by that I do not think it would have been possible to decipher any of the remainder. As it is, I found it impossible to make a flowing narrative, altogether of a piece with the opening and closing parts of this history. Some passages came out fairly clear and then would come confusion and obscurity. I have transcribed what I could and written-up the intervals when transcription was hopeless. I think I have made a comprehensible story altogether of the course of events during the struggles and changes in world government that went on between 1980 and 2059, at which date the Air Dictatorship, properly so called, gave place to that world-wide Modern State which was still flourishing when the history was published. The reader will find large gaps, or rather he will find large abbreviations, in that portion, but none that leave the main lines of the history of world consolidation in doubt.

And now let me say a word or so more about the real value of this queer “Outline of the Future”.

Certain minor considerations weigh against the idea that this

history that follows is merely the imaginative dreaming of a brilliant publicist. I put them before the reader, but I will not press them. First of all this history has now received a certain amount of confirmation. The latest part of the MS. dates from September 20th, 1930, and much of it is earlier. And yet it alludes explicitly to the death of Ivar Kreuger a year later, to the tragic kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby, which happened in the spring of 1932, to the Mollison world flights of the same year, to the American debt discussions in December 1932, to the Hitlerite régime in Germany, and Japanese invasion of China proper in 1933, the election of President Roosevelt II and the World Economic Conference in London. These anticipations in detail I find a little difficult to explain away. I do not think that they are of such a nature that they could have been foretold. They are not events that were deducible from any preceding situation. How could Raven have known about them in 1930?

And another thing that troubles me much more than it will trouble the reader is the fact that there was no reason at all why Raven should have attempted a mystification upon me. There was no reason on earth or heaven why he should have lied about the way in which this material came to him and he wrote it down.

If it were not for these considerations, I think I should be quite prepared to fall in with what will no doubt be the general opinion, that the writing of this History was deliberately chosen by Raven as an imaginative outlet. That it is indeed a work of fiction by a late member of the Geneva Secretariat with unusual opportunities for forming judgments upon the trend of things. Or, let us say, a conditional prophecy in the Hebrew manner produced in a quasi-inspired mood. The style in which it is written is recognizably Raven's style, and there are few of those differences in vocabulary and locutions that one might reasonably expect in our language a hundred and seventy odd years from now. On the other hand, the attitude revealed is entirely inconsistent with Raven's fully conscious public utterances. The idiom of thought at least is not his, whatever the idiom of expression. Either his marginal vision transcended his waking convictions or we have here a clear case of suppressions making their way to the surface. Is that what history is going to be?

I must admit that at first, while I was still under the impression

that the whole thing was a speculative exercise, I was tempted to annotate Raven's text rather extensively. I wanted to take a hand in the game. In fact I did some months' work upon it. Until my notes were becoming more bulky than his history. But when I revised them I came to the conclusion that many of them were fussy obtrusions and very few of them likely to be really helpful to an intelligent and well-informed contemporary reader. The more attracted he was by the book, the more likely he was to make his observations for himself; the less he appreciated it, the less he was likely to appreciate a superincumbent mass of elucidation. My notes might have proved as annoying as the pencillings one finds at times in public library books to-day. If the history is merely a speculative history, even then they would have been impertinent; if there is anything more in it than speculation, then they would be a very grave impertinence indeed. In the end I scrapped the entire accumulation.

But I have had also to arrange these chapters in order, and that much intervention was unavoidable and must remain. I have had indeed to arrange and rearrange them after several trials, because they do not seem to have been read and written down by Raven in their proper chronological sequence. I have smoothed out the transitions. Later on I hope to publish a special edition of Raven's notes exactly as he left them.

We begin here with what is evidently the opening of a fresh book in the history, though it was not actually the first paper in the folders handed to me. It reviews very conveniently the course of worldly events in recent years, and it does so in what is, to me, a novel and very persuasive way. It analyses the main factors of the great war from a new angle. From that review the story of the "Age of Frustration", in the opening years of which we are now living, flows on in a fairly consecutive fashion. Apart from this introduction the period covered by the actual narrative is roughly from about 1929 A.D. to the end of the year 2105. The last recorded event is on New Year's Day 2106; there is a passing mention of the levelling of the remaining "skeletons" of the famous "Skyscrapers" of Lower New York on that date. The printing and publication probably occurred early in the new year; occurred — or should I write "will occur"?

H. G. W.

BOOK THE FIRST
TODAY AND TOMORROW: THE AGE OF FRUSTRATION DAWNS

1. — A CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the story of mankind upon this planet undergoes a change of phase. It broadens out. It unifies. It ceases to be a tangle of more and more interrelated histories and it becomes plainly and consciously one history. There is a complete confluence of racial, social and political destinies. With that a vision of previously unsuspected possibilities opens to the human imagination. And that vision brings with it an immense readjustment of ideas.

The first phase of that readjustment is necessarily destructive. The conceptions of life and obligation that have served and satisfied even the most vigorous and intelligent personalities hitherto, conceptions that were naturally partial, sectarian and limited, begin to lose, decade by decade, their credibility and their directive force. They fade, they become attenuated. It is an age of increasing mental uneasiness, of forced beliefs, hypocrisy, cynicism, abandon and impatience. What has been hitherto a final and impenetrable background of conviction in the rightness of the methods of behaviour characteristic of the national or local culture of each individual, becomes, as it were, a dissolving and ragged curtain. Behind it appear, vague and dim at first, and refracted and distorted by the slow dissolution of the traditional veils, the intimations of the type of behaviour necessary to that single world community in which we live to-day.

Until the Chronological Institute has completed its present labours of revision and defined the cardinal dates in our social evolution, it is best to refer our account of the development of man's mind and will throughout this hectic period of human experience to the clumsy and irrelevant computation by centuries before and after the Christian Era, that is still current. As we have explained more fully in a previous book*, we inherit this system of historical pigeonholes from Christendom; that arbitrary chequerwork of hundred-year blocks was imposed upon the entire Mediterranean and Atlantic literatures for two thousand years, and it still distorts the views of history of all but the alertest minds. The young student needs to be constantly on his

guard against its false divisions. As Peter Lightfoot has remarked, we talk of the "eighteenth century", and we think of fashions and customs and attitudes that are characteristic of a period extending from the Treaty of Westphalia in C.E. [Christian Era] 1642 to the Napoleonic collapse in C.E. 1815; we talk of the "nineteenth century", and the pictures and images evoked are those of the gas-lighting and steam-transport era, from after the distressful years of post-Napoleonic recovery to the immense shock of the World War in C.E. 1914. The phase "twentieth century", again, calls forth images of the aeroplane, the electrification of the world and so forth; but an aeroplane was an extremely rare object in the air until 1914 (the first got up in 1905), and the replacement of the last steam railway train and the last steamship was not completed until the nineteen-forties. It is a tiresome waste of energy to oblige each generation of young minds to learn first of all in any unmeaning pattern of centuries and then to correct that first crude arrangement, so that this long-needed revision of our chronology is one that will be very welcome to every teacher. Then from the very outset he or she will be able to block out the story of our race in significant masses.

* [Nothing of this is to be found in Raven's notes. — ED.]

The Chronological Institute is setting about its task with a helpful publicity, inviting discussion from every angle. It is proposing to divide up as much of the known history of our race as is amenable to annual reckoning, into a series of eras of unequal length. Naturally the choice of these eras is the cause of some extremely lively and interesting interchanges; most of us have our own private estimates of the values of events, and many issues affecting the earlier civilized communities remain in a state of animated unsettlement. Our chronology is now fairly sure as to the year for most important events in the last 4,000 years, and, thanks largely to the minute and patient labours of the Selwyn-Cornford Committee for Alluvial Research, to the decade for another hundred centuries. So far as the last 3,000 years are concerned, little doubt remains now that the main dividing points to be adopted will be FIRST the epoch of Alexander and the Hellenic conquests which will begin the phase of the great Helleno-Latin monetary imperialism in the western world, the Helleno-Latin Era. This will commence at the crossing of the

Hellespont by Alexander the Great and end either with the Battle of the Yarmuk (636 C.E.) or the surrender of Jerusalem to the Caliph Omar (638 C.E.). NEXT will come the epoch of Moslem and Mongol pressure on the West which opened the era of feudal Christendom vis-à-vis with feudal Islam: the Era of Asiatic Predominance. This ends with the Battle of Lepanto (1571 C.E.). Then THIRDLY there will follow the epoch of the Protestant and the Catholic (counter) Reformations, which inaugurated the era of the competing sovereign states with organized standing armies: the Era of European Predominance, or, as it may also be called, the Era of National Sovereignty. Finally comes the catastrophe of the World War of 1914, when the outward drive of the new economic methods the Atlantic civilizations had developed gave way under the internal stresses of European nationalism. That war, and its long-drawn sequelae, released the human mind to the potentialities and dangers of an imperfectly Europeanized world — a world which had unconsciously become one single interlocking system, while still obsessed by the Treaty of Westphalia and the idea of competing sovereign states. This mental shock and release marks the beginning of the Era of the Modern State. The opening phase of this latest era is this Age of Frustration with which we are now about to deal. That is the first age of the Era of the Modern State. A second age, but not a new era, began with the Declaration of Mégève which was accepted by the general commonsense of mankind forty-seven years ago. This closed the Age of Frustration, which lasted therefore a little short of a century and a half.

The date upon the title-page for the first publication of this History is C.E. 2106. Before many editions have been exhausted that will be changed to Modern Era (M.E.) 192 or M.E. 189 or M.E. 187, according to whether our chronologists decide upon 1914, the date of the outbreak of the Great War, or 1917, the beginning of the social revolution in Russia, or 1919, the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, as the conclusive opening of the Age of Frustration and the conflict for world unity. The second date seems at present to be the more practicable one.

In C.E. 1914 the concept of an organized world order did not seem to be within the sphere of human possibility; in C.E. 1919 it

was an active power in a steadily increasing proportion of human brains. The Modern State had been conceived. It was germinating. One system, the Soviet system in Russia, was already claiming to be a world system. To most of the generation which suffered it, the Great War seemed to be purely catastrophe and loss; to us who see those hideous years in perspective and in proportion to the general dulness and baseness of apprehension out of which that conflict arose, the destruction of life and substance, unprecedented as they were, has none of that overwhelming quality. We see it as a clumsy, involuntary release from outworn assumptions by their reduction to tragic absurdity, and as a practically unavoidable step therefore in the dialectic of human destiny.

2. — HOW THE IDEA AND HOPE OF THE MODERN WORLD STATE FIRST APPEARED

The essential difference between the world before the Great War and the world after it lay in this, that before that storm of distress and disillusionment the clear recognition that a worldwide order and happiness, in spite of contemporary distresses, was within the reach of mankind was confined to a few exceptional persons, while after the catastrophe it had spread to an increasing multitude, it had become a desperate hope and desire, and at last a working conviction that made organized mass action possible.

Even those who apprehended this idea before the epoch of the Great War seem to have propounded it with what impresses us today as an almost inexplicable timidity and feebleness. Apart from the great star of Shelley, which shines the brighter as his successors dwindle in perspective, there is a flavour of unreality about all these pre-war assertions of a possible world order. In most of them the Victorian terror of "extravagance" is dominant, and the writer simpers and laughs at his own suggestions in what was evidently supposed to be a very disarming manner. Hardly any of these prophets dared believe in their own reasoning. Maxwell Brown has recently disinterred a pamphlet, The Great Analysis,* dated 1912, in which a shrewd and reasoned forecast of the primary structure of the Modern State, quite amazingly prescient for the time, was broached with the utmost timidity, without even an author's name. It was a scheme to revolutionize the world, and the writer would not put his name to it, he confesses, because it might make him ridiculous.

* (Here for once the editor knows better than the writer of the history. This pamphlet was written by William Archer, the dramatic critic, and reprinted under its author's name with a preface by Gilbert Murray in 1931. Apparently the book collectors of the years ahead are going to miss this book. — ED.)

Maxwell Brown's entertaining Modern State Prophets Before the Great War is an exhaustive study of the psychological processes by which this idea, which is now the foundation of our contemporary

life, gradually ousted its opposite of combative patriotism and established itself as a practicable and necessary form of action for men of good-will a century and a half ago. He traces the idea almost to its germ; he shows that its early manifestations, so far from being pacific, were dreams of universal conquest. He tells of its age-long struggle with everyday usage and practical commonsense. In the first of his huge supplementary volumes he gives thousands of quotations going back far beyond the beginnings of the Christian Era. All the monotheistic religions were, in spirit, world-state religions. He examines the Tower of Babel myth as the attempt of some primordial cosmopolitan, some seer before the dawn, to account for the divisions of mankind. (There is strong reason now for ascribing this story to Emesal Gudeka of Nippur, the early Sumerian fabulist.)

Maxwell Brown shows how the syncretic religious developments, due to the growth of the early empires and the official pooling of gods, led necessarily to monotheism. From at least the time of Buddha onward, the sentiment, if not the living faith, in human brotherhood, always existed somewhere in the world. But its extension from a mere sentiment and a fluctuating sympathy for the stranger to the quality of a practicable enterprise was a very recent process indeed. The necessary conditions were not satisfied.

In the briefer studies of human innovations that preceded his more important contributions to human history, Maxwell Brown has shown how for the past ten thousand years at least, since the Cro-Magnards stamped their leather robes and tents, the art of printing reappeared and disappeared again and again, never culminating in the printed book and all its consequences, never obtaining a primary importance in human doings, until the fifteenth century (C.E.); he has assembled the evidence for man's repeated abortive essays in flying, from the fourth dynasty gliders recently found at Bedrashen, the shattered Yu-chow machine and the interesting wreckage, ornaments and human remains found last year in Mirabella Bay. (These last were first remarked in 2104 C.E. after an earthquake in the deep sea photographs of the survey aeroplane Crawford, and they were subsequently sought and recovered by the divers of the submarine Salvemini belonging to the Naples Biological Station. They have now been identified by Professor Giulio Marinetti as the remains of

the legendary glider of Daedalus and Icarus.) Maxwell Brown has also traced the perpetual discovery and rediscovery of America from the days of the Aalesund tablets and the early Chinese inscriptions in the caves near Bahia Coqui to the final establishment of uninterrupted communications across the Atlantic by the Western Europeans in the fifteenth century C.E. In all there are sixteen separate ineffectual discoveries of America either from the east or from the west now on record, and there may have been many others that left no trace behind them.

These earlier cases of human enterprise and inadequacy help us to understand the long struggle of the Age of Frustration and the difficulty our ancestors found in achieving what is now so obviously the only sane arrangement of human affairs upon this planet.

The fruitlessness of all these premature inventions is very easily explained. First in the case of the Transatlantic passage; either the earlier navigators who got to America never got back, or, if they did get back, they were unable to find the necessary support and means to go again before they died, or they had had enough of hardship, or they perished in a second attempt. Their stories were distorted into fantastic legends and substantially disbelieved. It was, indeed, a quite futile adventure to get to America until the keeled sailing ship, the science of navigation, and the mariner's compass had been added to human resources.

Then again, in the matter of printing, it was only when the Chinese had developed the systematic manufacture of abundant cheap paper sheets in standard sizes that the printed book — and its consequent release of knowledge — became practically possible. Finally the delay in the attainment of flying was inevitable because before men could progress beyond precarious gliding it was necessary for metallurgy to reach a point at which the internal combustion engine could be made. Until then they could build nothing strong enough and light enough to battle with the eddies of the air.

In an exactly parallel manner, the conception of one single human community organized for collective service to the common weal had to wait until the rapid evolution of the means of communication could arrest and promise to defeat the disintegrative influence of

geographical separation. That rapid evolution came at last in the nineteenth century, and it has been described already in a preceding chapter of this world history.* Steam power, oil power, electric power, the railway, the steamship, the aeroplane, transmission by wire and aerial transmission followed each other very rapidly. They knit together the human species as it had never been knit before. Insensibly, in less than a century, the utterly impracticable became not merely a possible adjustment but an urgently necessary adjustment if civilization was to continue.

* [Not Recorded by Raven. — ED.]

Now the cardinal prominence of the Great War in history lies in this, that it demonstrated the necessity of that adjustment. It was never considered to be necessary before. Recognition lagged behind accomplishment. None of the pre-war World-State Prophets betrays any sense of necessity. They make their polite and timid gestures towards human unity as something nice and desirable indeed but anything but imperative. The clearest demand for world-wide cooperation before the war, came from the Second International. And even after the war, and after the vague and vacillating adumbration of a federal super-state by the League of Nations at Geneva, most of even the most advanced writers seem to have been still under the impression that the utmost adjustment needed was some patching up of the current system so as to prevent or mitigate war and restrain the insurrectionary urge of the unprosperous.

Even the Communist movement which, as we had told already, had been able by a conspiracy of accidents to seize upon Russia and demonstrate the value of its theories there, lapsed from, rather than advanced towards, cosmopolitan socialism. Its theories, as we have shown, were hopelessly inadequate for its practical needs. The development of its ideology was greatly hampered by the conservative dogmatism imposed upon it by the incurable egotism of Marx. His intolerance, his innate bad manners, his vain insistence that he had produced a final doctrine to put beside Darwinism, cast a long shadow of impatience and obduracy upon the subsequent development of Communism. He was bitterly jealous of the Utopian school of socialism, and so, until Lenin faced the urgencies of power, the “orthodox” Marxist took a quite idiotic pride in a planless

outlook. “Overthrow capitalism”, he said, and what could happen but millennial bliss? Communism insisted indeed upon the necessity of economic socialization but — until it attained power in Russia — without a glance at its technical difficulties. It produced its belated and ill-proportioned Five Year Plan only in 1928 C.E., eleven years after its accession to power. Until then it had no comprehensive working scheme whatever for the realization of socialism. Thrown back on experiment, it was forced to such desperately urgent manoeuvres, improvisations and changes of front, and defended by such tawdry and transparent apologetics, that the general world movement passed out of its ken.

The reader of this world history knows already how the moral and intellectual force of the Communist Party proved unequal, after the death of Lenin, to control or resist the dictatorship of that forcible, worthy, devoted and limited man, the Georgian, Stalin. The premature death of the creative and adaptable Lenin and the impatient suppression by Stalin of such intelligent, troublesome, but necessary types as Trotsky — a man who, but for lack of tact and essential dignity, might well have been Lenin’s successor — crippled whatever hope there may have been that the Modern State would first emerge in Russia. Terrible are the faithful disciples of creative men. Lenin relaxed and reversed the dogmatism of Marx, Stalin made what he imagined to be Leninism into a new and stiffer dogmatism. Thereafter the political doctrinaire dominated and crippled the technician in a struggle that cried aloud for technical competence. Just as theological disputes impoverished and devastated Europe through the long centuries of Christendom, and reduced the benefits of its unifying influence to zero, so in Russia efficiency of organization was prevented by the pedantries of political theorists. The young were trained to a conceit and a xenophobia, indistinguishable in its practical effects from the gross patriotism of such countries as France, Germany, Italy or Scotland.

Because of this subordination of its mental development to Politics, Russia passed into a political and social phase comparable, as Rostovtzeff pointed out at the time in his Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire, in its universal impoverishment and its lack of any critical vigour, to the well-meaning but devitalizing

autocracy of the Emperor Diocletian. From its very start the Russian revolution failed in its ambition to lead mankind. Its cosmopolitanism lasted hardly longer than the cosmopolitanism of the great French revolution a dozen decades earlier.

This almost inevitable lag of the constructive movement in Russia behind Western developments was foreseen by the shrewd and penetrating brain of Lenin even in the phase of its apparent leadership (see No. 3090 in the thirteenth series of the Historical Documents Collection, Left Wing Communism). But his observation found little or no echo in the incurably illiberal thought of the Marxian tradition.

It was in Western Europe especially that the conception of the organized and disciplined World-State as a revolutionary objective, ultimately grew to its full proportions. At first it grew obscurely. In 1933, any observer might have been misled by the fact of the Fascist régime in Italy, by the tumult of the Nazi party in Germany, by similar national-socialist movements in other countries, and by the increase in tariff barriers and other restraints upon trade everywhere, to conclude that the cosmopolitan idea was everywhere in retreat before the obsessions of race, creed and nationalism. Yet all the while the germs of the Modern State were growing, everywhere its votaries were learning and assembling force.

It needed the financial storm of the years 1928 and 1929 C.E. and the steadily progressive collapse of the whole world's economic life, of which this storm was the prelude, to give the World-State prophets the courage of their convictions. Then indeed they began to speak out. Instead of the restrained, partial and inconclusive criticism of public affairs which had hitherto contented them, they now insisted plainly upon the need of a world- wide reconstruction, that is to say of a world revolution — though "revolution" was still a word they shirked. The way in which this increased definition of aim and will came about is characteristic of the changing quality of social life. It was not that one or two outstanding men suddenly became audible and conspicuous as leaders in this awakening. There were no leaders. It was a widespread movement in human thought.

The conclusions upon which intelligent people were converging may be briefly stated. They had arrived at the realization that human

society had become one indivisible economic system with novel and enormous potentialities of well-being. By 1931 C.E. this conception becomes visible even in the obstinately intellectualist mind of France — for example, in the parting speech to America of an obscure and transitory French Prime Minister, Laval, who crossed the Atlantic on some new undiscoverable mission in that year; and we find it promptly echoed by such prominent loud speakers as President Hoover of America and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald the British Prime Minister.

That idea at any rate had already become sufficiently popular for the politicians to render it lip service. But it was still only the intelligent minority who went on to the logical consequences of its realization; that is to say, the necessity of disavowing the sovereignty of contemporary governments, of setting up authoritative central controls to supplement or supersede them, and of putting the production of armaments, the production of the main economic staples and the protection of workers from destructive under-payment, beyond the reach of profit-seeking manipulation.

Yet by 1932-33 this understanding minority was speaking very plainly. These immense changes were no longer being presented as merely desirable things; they were presented as urgently necessary things if civilization was to be saved from an immense catastrophe. And not merely saved. The alternative to disaster, they saw even then, was not just a bleak and terrified security. That was the last thing possible. There was no alternative to disorder and wretchedness, but "such an abundance, such a prosperity and richness of opportunity", as man had never known before. (These words are quoted from a Scottish newspaper of the year 1929.) Enlightened people in 1932 C.E. were as assured of the possibility of world order, universal sufficiency and ever increasing human vitality as are we who live to-day in ample possession of our lives amidst the practical realization of that possibility.

Clearness of vision did not make for the happiness of the enlightened. Their minds were tormented not simply by contemporary fears and miseries, but by the sure knowledge of a possible world of free activity within the reach of man and, as it were, magically withheld. They saw hundreds of millions of lives

cramped and crippled, meagrely lived, sacrificed untimely, and they could not see any primary necessity for this blighting and starvation of human life. They saw youthful millions drifting to lives of violence, mutilation and premature and hideous deaths. And beyond was our security, our eventfulness and our freedom.

Maxwell Brown, in a chapter called "Tantalus 1932", cites forty instances of these realizations. But the legendary Tantalus was put within apparent reach of the unattainable by the inexorable decrees of the gods. Mankind was under no such pitiless destiny. The world-wide Modern State shone bright upon the living imaginations of our race within a decade of the Great War, absurdly near, fantastically out of reach. For a century of passionate confusion and disorder, that modern state was not to be released from potentiality into actuality.

It is to the story of these battling, lost and suffering generations, the "generations of the half light", that we must now proceed.

When now we look back to the scattered and diverse individuals who first give expression to this idea of the modern World-State which was dawning upon the human intelligence, when we appraise their first general efforts towards its realization, we need, before we can do them anything like justice, to attempt some measure of the ignorances, prejudices and other inertias, the habits of concession and association, the herd love and the herd fear, with which they had to struggle not only in the society in which they found themselves, but within themselves. It is not a conflict of light and darkness we have to describe; it is the struggle of the purblind among the blind. We have to realize that for all that they were haunted by a vision of the civilized world of to-day, they still belonged not to our age but to their own. The thing imagined in their minds was something quite distinct from their present reality. Maxwell Brown has devoted several chapters, and a third great supplementary volume, to a special selection of early Modern State Prophets who followed public careers. He showed conclusively that in the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century (C.E.) there was a rapidly increasing number of men and women with a clear general conception of the possibilities of the modern world. He gives their written and spoken words, often astoundingly prescient and explicit. And then he traces out the tenor of their lives subsequent to these utterances. The

discrepancy of belief and effort is a useful and indeed a startling reminder of the conditional nature of the individual life.

As he writes: “In the security and serenity of the study, these men and women could see plainly. In those hours of withdrawal, the fragile delicate brain matter could escape from immediacy, apprehended causation in four dimensions, reach forward to the permanent values of social events in the space-time framework. But even to the study there penetrated the rumble of the outer disorder. And directly the door was opened, forthwith the uproar of contemporary existence, the carnival, the riot, the war and the market, beat in triumphantly. The raging question of what had to be done that day, scattered the fine thought of our common destiny to the four winds of heaven.”

Maxwell Brown adds a vivid illustration to this passage. It is the facsimile of the first draft by Peter Raut, the American progressive leader, of the Revolutionary Manifesto of 1937. It was indisputably a very inspiring document in its time and Raut gave the last proof of loyalty to the best in his mind, by a courageous martyrdom. But in the margin of this draft one’s attention is caught by a maze of little figures; little sums in multiplication and addition. By his almost inspired gift for evidence and through the industry of his group of research assistants, Maxwell Brown has been able to demonstrate exactly what these sums were. They show that even while Raut, so far as his foresight permitted, was planning our new world, his thoughts were not wholly fixed on that end. They wandered. For a time the manifesto was neglected while he did these sums. He was gambling in industrial equities, and a large and active portion of his brain was considering whether the time had arrived to sell.

3. — THE ACCUMULATING DISPROPORTIONS OF THE OLD ORDER

Let us consider some of the main appearances that disposed many minds to expect a world community in the early twentieth century. In the first place a very considerable financial unity had been achieved. The credit of the City of London ran to the ends of the earth and the gold sovereign was for all practical purposes a world coin, exchangeable locally for local expenditure within relatively slight fluctuations. Economic life was becoming very generalized. Over great areas trade moved with but small impediments, and the British still hoped to see their cosmopolitan conception of Free Trade accepted by the whole world. The International Institute of Agriculture in Rome was developing an annual census of staple production and reaching out towards a world control of commodity transport. Considerable movements and readjustments of population were going on, unimpeded by any government interference. Swarms of Russian Poles, for instance, drifted into Eastern Germany for the harvest work and returned; hundreds of thousands of Italians went to work in the United States for a few years and then came back with their earnings to their native villages. An ordinary traveller might go all over the more settled parts of the earth and never be asked for a passport unless he wanted to obtain a registered letter at a post office or otherwise prove his identity.

A number of minor but significant federal services had also come into existence and had a sound legal standing throughout the world, the Postal Union for example. Before 1914 C.E. a written document was delivered into the hands of the addressee at almost every point upon the planet, almost as surely as, if less swiftly than, it is to-day. (The Historical Documents Board has recently reprinted a small book, International Government, prepared for the little old Fabian Society during the Great War period by L. S. Woolf, which gives a summary of such arrangements. He lists twenty-three important world unions dealing at that time with trade, industry, finance,

communications, health, science, art, literature, drugs, brothels, criminals, emigration and immigration and minor political affairs.) These world-wide cooperations seemed — more particularly to the English-speaking peoples — to presage a direct and comparatively smooth transition from the political patchwork of the nineteenth century, as the divisions of the patchwork grew insensibly fainter, to a stable confederation of mankind. The idea of a coming World-State was quite familiar at the time — one finds it, for instance, as early as Lord Tennyson's Locksley Hall (published in 1842); but there was no effort whatever to achieve it, and indeed no sense of the need of such effort. The World-State was expected to come about automatically by the inherent forces in things.

That belief in some underlying benevolence in uncontrolled events was a common error, one might almost say THE common error, of the time. It affected every school of thought. In exactly the same fashion the followers of Marx (before the invigorating advent of Lenin and the Bolshevist reconstruction of Communism) regarded their dream of world communism as inevitable, and the disciples of Herbert Spencer found a benevolent Providence in "free competition". "Trust Evolution", said the extreme Socialist and the extreme Individualist, as piously as the Christians put their trust in God. It was the Bolshevik movement in the twentieth century which put will into Communism. The thought of the nineteenth century revolutionary and reactionary alike was saturated with that confident irresponsible laziness. As Professor K. Chandra Sen has remarked, hope in the Victorian period was not a stimulant but an opiate.

We who live in a disciplined order, the chastened victors of a hard- fought battle, understand how superficial and unsubstantial were all those hopeful appearances. The great processes of mechanical invention, which have been described in our general account of the release of experimental science from deductive intellectualism, were increasing the power and range of every operating material force quite irrespective of its fitness or unfitness for the new occasions of mankind. With an equal impartiality they were bringing world-wide understanding and world-wide massacre into the range of human possibility.

It was through no fault of these inventors and investigators that

the new opportunities they created were misused. That was outside their range. They had as yet no common culture of their own. Nor, since each worked in his own field, were they responsible for the fragmentary irregularity of their discoveries. Biological and especially social invention were lagging far behind the practical advances of the exacter, simpler sciences. Their application was more difficult; the matters they affected were so much more deeply embedded in ordinary use and wont, variation was more intimate, novelties could not be inserted with the same freedom. It was easy to supplant the coach and horses on the macadamized road by the steam-engine or the railway, because it was not necessary to do anything to the road or the coach and horses to bring about the change. They were just left alone to run themselves out as the railroad (and later the automobile on the rubber-glass track) superseded them. But men cannot set up new social institutions, new social and political and industrial relationships, side by side with the old in that fashion. It must be an altogether tougher and slower job. It is a question not of ousting but of reconstruction. The old must be converted into the new without ceasing for a moment to be a going concern. The over-running of the biologically old by the mechanically new, due to these differences in timing, was inevitable, and it reached its maximum in the twentieth century.

A pathological analogy may be useful here. In the past, before the correlation of development in living organisms began to be studied, people used to suffer helplessly and often very dreadfully from all sorts of irregularities of growth in their bodies. The medical services of the time, such as they were, were quite unable to control them. One of these, due to what is called the Nurmi ratios in the blood, was a great overproduction of bone, either locally or generally. The suffered gradually underwent distortion into a clumsy caricature of his former self; his features became coarse and massive, his skull bones underwent a monstrous expansion; the proportions of his limbs altered, and the leverage of his muscles went askew. He was made to look grotesque; he was crippled and at last killed. Something strictly parallel happened to human society in the hundred years before the Great War. Under the stimulus of mechanical invention and experimental physics it achieved, to pursue our metaphor, a

hypertrophy of bone, muscle and stomach, without any corresponding enlargement of its nervous controls.

Long before the Great War this progressive disproportion had been dimly recognized by many observers. The favourite formula was to declare that "spiritual" — for the naïve primordial opposition of spirit and matter was still accepted in those days — had not kept pace with "material" advance. This was usually said with an air of moral superiority to the world at large. Mostly there was a vague implication that if these other people would only refrain from using modern inventions so briskly, or go to church more, or marry earlier and artlessly, or read a more "spiritual" type of literature, or refrain from mixed bathing, or work harder and accept lower wages, or be more respectful and obedient to constituted authority, all might yet be well. Beyond this sort of thing there was little recognition of the great and increasing disharmonies of the social corpus until after the Great War.

The young reader will ask, "But where was the Central Observation Bureau? Where was the professorial and student body which should have been recording these irregularities and producing plans for adjustment?"

There was no Central Observation Bureau. That did not exist for another century. That complex organization of discussion, calculation, criticism and forecast was undreamt of. Those cities of thought, full of serene activities, came into existence only after the organization of the Record and Library Network under the Air Dictatorship between 2010 and 2030. Even the mother thought-city, the World Encyclopaedia Establishment, was not founded until 2012. In the early twentieth century there was still no adequate estimate of economic forces and their social reactions. There were only a few score professors and amateurs of these fundamentally important studies scattered throughout the earth. They were scattered in every sense; even their communications were unsystematic. They had no powers of enquiry, no adequate statistics, little prestige; few people heeded what they thought or said.

Maybe they deserved nothing better. They bickered stupidly with and discredited each other. They ignored or wilfully misunderstood each other. It is impossible to read such social and economic

literature as the period produced without realizing the extraordinary backwardness of that side of the world's intellectual life. It is difficult to believe nowadays that the writers of these publications, at once tediously copious and incredibly jejune, were living at the same time as the lively multitude of workers in the experimental sciences which were daily adding to and reshaping knowledge to achieve fresh practical triumphs. From 1812 C.E., when public gas-lighting was first organized, to the outbreak of the Great War, while the world was being made over anew by gas, by steam, by oil, and then by the swift headlong development of electrical science, while the last terrae incognitae were being explored and mapped, while a multitude of hitherto unthought-of elements and compounds and hundreds of thousands of new substances were coming into use, while epidemic diseases were being restrained and driven back, while the death rate was being halved, and the average duration of life increased by a score of years, the social and political sciences remained practically stagnant and unserviceable. Throughout that century of material achievement there is no single instance of the successful application of a social, economic or educational generalization.

Because of this belatedness of the social sciences, the progressive dislocation of the refined if socially limited and precarious civilization of the more advanced of the eighteenth and nineteenth century sovereign states went on without any effectual contemporary understanding of what was straining it to pieces. The Europeans and the Americans of the early twentieth century apprehended the social and political forces that ravaged their lives hardly more clearly than the citizens of the Roman Empire during its collapse. Plenty and the appearance of security HAPPENED; then débâcle HAPPENED. There was no analysis of operating causes. For years even quite bold and advanced thinkers were chased by events. They did not grasp what was occurring at the time. They only realized what had really occurred long afterwards. And so they never foresaw. There was no foresight, and therefore still less could there be any understanding control.

4. — EARLY ATTEMPTS TO UNDERSTAND AND DEAL WITH THESE DISPROPORTIONS; THE CRITICISMS OF KARL MARX AND HENRY GEORGE

There are, however, one or two exceptions to this general absence of diagnosis in the affairs of the nineteenth and twentieth century of the Christian Era, which even the student of general history cannot ignore. Prominent among them is the analysis and forecasts of economic development made by Karl Marx and his associates.

In any case Marxism would have demanded our attention as a curious contemporary realization of the self-destroying elements in the business methods of the nineteenth century; but its accidental selection as the ostensible creed of revolutionary Russia after the Tzarist collapse gives it an almost primary importance in the history of kinetic ideas.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) was the son of a christianized Jewish lawyer of Treves, of considerable social pretensions; he had an excellent university career at Bonn and Berlin, assimilated the radical thought of his time and became the lifelong friend of the far more modest and gifted Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), a Lancashire calico dealer. Under the inspiration of Engels and the English socialist movement of Robert Owen, Marx elaborated the theory of economic development which is the substance of Marxism. It is embodied in a huge unfinished work, Das Kapital, and summarized in a Communist Manifesto (1848) drawn up by Engels and himself. (These, and indeed all his writings, together with an able digest and summary, are to be found in the Library of Historical Thought, vols. 17252-9.) His chief merit lies in his clear recognition of the ultimate dependence of social and political forms and reactions upon physical necessity. (“The Materialist Conception of History”.) His chief fault was his insane hatred of the middle classes (bourgeoisie), due mainly to his pose as a needy aristocrat and embittered, it may be, by his material

and intellectual dependence on the trader Engels. His own attempts to apply his theories by conspiracy and political action were inept and futile. He died in London a disappointed and resentful man, quite unaware of the posthumous fame that awaited his doctrines. It was the organization of his followers into the disciplined Communist Party and the modernization of his doctrines by the genius of Lenin that made his name a cardinal one in history.

It is interesting to consider his general propositions now in the light of accomplished events and note the hits and misses of those heroic speculations — heroic, that is to say, measured by the mental courage of the time.

Nowadays every schoolboy knows that the essential and permanent conflict in life is a conflict between the past and the future, between the accomplished past and the forward effort. He is made to realize this conflict in his primary biological course. Therein he comes to see and in part to understand the continual automatic struggle of the thing achieved, to hold the new, the new-born individual, the new-born idea, the widening needs of the species, in thrall. This conflict he is shown runs through all history. In the old classical mythology Saturn, the Conservative head-god, devoured all his children until at last one escaped to become Jove. And of how Jove bound Prometheus in his turn every lover of Shelley can tell. We need only refer the student to the recorded struggles in the histories of Republican Rome and Judaea between debtor and creditor; to the plebeian Secessions of the former and the year of Jubilee of the latter; to the legend of Joseph in Egypt (so richly interpreted now through the minute study of contemporary Egyptian documents by the students of the Breasted Commemoration Fund); to the English Statute of Mortmain; to Austen Livewright's lucid study of Bankruptcy Through the Ages (1979), to remind him of this perennial struggle of life against the creditor and the dead hand. But Marx, like most of his contemporaries, was profoundly ignorant of historical science, and addicted to a queer "dialectic" devised by the pseudo-philosopher Hegel; his ill-equipped mind apprehended this perennial antagonism only in terms of the finance of the industrial production about him; the entrepreneur, the capitalist, became the villain of his piece, using the prior advantage of his capital to

appropriate the "surplus value" of production, so that his share of purchasing power became more and more disproportionately great.

Marx seems never to have distinguished clearly between restrictive and productive possessions, which nowadays we recognize as a difference of fundamental importance. Exploitation for profit and strangulation for dominance, the radical son and the conservative father, were all one to him. And his proposals for expropriating the profit-seeking "Capitalist" were of the vaguest; he betrayed no conception whatever of the real psychology of economic activities, and he had no sense of the intricate organization of motives needed if the coarse incentive of profit was to be superseded. Indeed, he had no practical capacity at all, and one is not surprised to learn that for his own part he never earned a living. He claimed all the privileges of a prophet and all the laxity and indolence of a genius, and he never even completed his great book.

It was the far abler and finer-minded Lenin (1870-1924, in power in Russia after 1917), rather than Marx, who gave a practical organization to the revolutionary forces of Communism and made the Communist Party for a time, until Stalin overtook it, the most vital creative force in the world. The essential intellectual difference between these two men is explained very clearly by Max Eastman (1895-1980), whose compact and scholarly Marx and Lenin is still quite readable by the contemporary student. In his time Lenin had to pose as the disciple and exponent of Marx; it was only later that criticism revealed the subtle brilliance of his effort to wrest a practical commonsense out of the time-worn doctrines of the older prophet.

Another nineteenth-century writer, with perhaps a clearer realization of the strangulating effect of restrictive property as distinguished from the stimulating effect of exploitation, was Henry George (1839-1897), an American printer who rose to great popularity as a writer upon economic questions. He saw the life of mankind limited and dwarfed by the continual rise in rents. His naïve remedy was to tax the landowner, as Marx's naïve remedy was to expropriate the capitalist, and just as Marx never gave his disciples the ghost of an idea for a competent administration of the expropriated economic plant and resources of the world, so Henry

George never indicated how, in the world of implacable individualism he advocated, the taxing authority was to find a use for its ever-increasing tax receipts.

We can smile to-day at the limitations of these early pioneers. But we smile only because we live later than they did, and are two centuries and more to the good in our experience. We owe them enormous gratitude for the valiant disinterestedness of their life work.

Our debt is on the whole rather for what they got rid of than for what they did. The broad outlines of the world's economic life are fairly simple as we see them frankly exposed to-day, but these men were born into an atmosphere of uncriticized usage, secrecy, time-honoured misconceptions, fetishisms, working fictions — which often worked very badly — and almost insane suppressions of thought and statement. The very terms they were obliged to use were question-begging terms; the habitual assumptions of the world they addressed were crooked and only to be apprehended with obliquity and inconsistency. They were forcing their minds towards the expression of reality through an intricate mental and moral tangle. They destroyed the current assumption of permanence in established institutions and usages, and though that seems a small thing to us now, it was a profoundly important release at the time. The infantile habit of assuming the fixity of the Thing that Is was almost universal in their day.

The Marxist doctrines did at least indicate that a term was necessarily set to economic development through profit-seeking, by the concentration of controlling ownership, by the progressive relative impoverishment of larger and larger sections of the world population and by the consequent final dwindling of markets. The rapid coagulation of human activities after 1928 C.E. was widely recognized as a confirmation of the Marxian forecast, and by one of those rapid mental leaps characteristic of the time, as a complete endorsement of the Communist pretension to have solved the social problem.

Unembarrassed as we are now by the mental clutter of our forefathers, the fundamental processes at work during the distressful years of the third and fourth decade of the century appear fairly

simple. We know that it is a permanent condition of human well-being that the general level of prices should never fall, and we have in the Currency Council a fairly efficient and steadily improving world-organ to ensure that end. A dollar, as we know it to-day, means practically the same thing in goods, necessities and satisfactions from one year's end to another. Its diminution in value is infinitesimal. No increase is ever allowed to occur. For the owner of an unspent dollar there is neither un-earnt increment nor unmerited loss. As the productive energy of our species rises, the dollar value of the total wealth is arranged to increase steadily in proportion, and neither is the creditor enriched nor robbed of his substantial expectation nor the debtor confronted with payments beyond his powers.

There remains no way now of becoming passively wealthy. Gambling was ruthlessly eradicated under the Air Dictatorship and has never returned. Usury ranks with forgery as a monetary offence. Money is given to people to get what they want and not as a basis for further acquisition, and we realize that the gambling spirit is a problem for the educationist and mental expert. It implies a fundamental misunderstanding of life. We have neither speculators, shareholders, private usurers or rent lords. All these "independent" types have vanished from the earth. Land and its natural resources are now owned and administered either directly or by delegation, by a hierarchy of administrative boards representing our whole species; there are lease-holding cultivators and exploiting corporations with no right to sublet, but there is no such thing as a permanent private ownership of natural resources making an automatic profit by the increment of rent. And since there is, and probably always will be now, a continual advance in our average individual productive efficiency by which the whole community profits, there follows a continual extension of our collective enterprises, a progressive release of leisure and a secular raising of the standard of individual life, to compensate for what would otherwise be a progressive diminution in the number of brains and hands needed to carry on the work of the world. Human society, so long as productive efficiency increases, is OBLIGED to raise its standards of consumption and extend its activities year by year, or collapse. And if its advance does

not go on it will drop into routine, boredom, viciousness and decay. Steadfastly the quantity and variety of things MUST increase.

These imperative conditions, which constitute the A B C of the existing order, seem so obvious to-day, that it is with difficulty we put ourselves in the place of these twentieth century folk to whom they were strange and novel. They were not yet humanized en masse; they still had the mentality of the "struggle for existence". It is only by a considerable mental effort, and after a careful study of the gradual evolution of the civilized mentality out of the chaotic impulses and competition of an originally very unsocial animal, that we can even begin to see matters with the eyes of our predecessors of a century and a half ago.

5. — THE WAY IN WHICH COMPETITION AND MONETARY INEFFICIENCY STRAINED THE OLD ORDER

In the twentieth century of the Christian era there was still no common currency by which to measure and carry on the world's economic exchanges. Those transactions were not merely apprehended inexactly because of this; they were falsified, and it did not seem possible that there would ever be an effective simplification. It is true that during what is known as the First Period of General Prosperity, from 1850 C.E. until 1914, there was a kind of working world system of currency and credit, centring upon the City of London and based on the gold pound; but this was a purely accidental growth, made workable by successive gold discoveries which prevented too disastrous a fall in prices as productive efficiency increased, and by the circumstances that gave the insular English a lead in the development of steam transport on land and sea and real incentives towards a practical propaganda of world free trade.

That first gleam of cosmopolitan sunlight waned as it had waxed, without any contemporary apprehension of the real forces at work, much less any attempt to seize upon them and organize them in permanence. The financial ascendency and initiative of the City of London crumbled away after the war and nothing appeared to take its place. In any case, this quasi-cosmopolitan system based on the gold sovereign, and owing its modicum of success to continual increments in the available gold, would have wilted as the world's gold supplies gave out, but the strangulation of the world's industry after the war was greatly accelerated by the gold hoarding of the Americans and French.

And during all that phase of opportunity there was no substantial effort to take hold of the land, sea and natural resources of the planet and bring them from a state of fragmentary, chaotic and wasteful exploitation into a general scheme. There remained sixty-odd "sovereign" governments, each claiming a supreme control of all the

natural wealth of the areas within its frontiers, and under these governments, under conditions that varied with each, there were private corporations and individuals with a right to deal more or less freely with the fragment upon which they had established a grip. Everywhere the guiding principle in the exploitation of the minerals, sunshine and power resources of the globe was the profit of single or associated private individuals, and the patchwork governments of the time interfered in the profit scramble only in favour of their nationals against their foreign rivals. Yet for nearly a hundred years, because of the fortunate influx of gold and inventions, this profit-seeking system, linked to the metallic monetary system, sufficed to sustain a very great expansion and enlargement of human life, and it was hard to convince the mass of men, and still harder to convince the prosperous manufacturers, traders, miners, cultivators and financiers who dominated public affairs, that this was not a permanent system and that the world already needed very essential modifications of its economic methods. A considerable measure of breakdown, a phase of display, fear and distress, was necessary before they could be disillusioned.

The nineteenth century had for its watchwords "individual enterprise and free competition". But the natural end of all competition is the triumph of one competitor. It was in America that the phenomena of Big Business first appeared and demonstrated the force of this truism; at a score of points triumphant organizations capable of crushing out new competitors and crippling and restraining new initiatives that threatened their predominance appeared. In Europe there was little governmental resistance to industrial alliances and concentrations in restraint of competition, and they speedily developed upon a scale that transcended political frontiers, but in the United States of America there was a genuine effort to prevent enterprises developing on a monopolistic scale. The conspicuous leader of this preventive effort was the first President Roosevelt (1858-1919) and its chief fruit the Sherman Anti-Trust Act (1890), which proved a rich mine for lawyers in the subsequent decades.

These great consolidations, which closed the phase of free competition, were so far effective in controlling trade and arresting

new developments that Hilary Hooker, in his Studies in Business Coagulation During the First Period of General Prosperity, is able to cite rather more than two thousand instances, ranging from radium and new fruits and foodstuffs to gramophones, automobiles, reconstructed households, artificial moonlight for the roadways by the countryside, and comfortable and economical railway plant, in which ample supplies or beneficial improvements were successfully kept off the market in the interests of established profit-making systems. After 1900 C.E. again there was a world-wide cessation of daily newspaper initiative and a consequent systole of free speech. Distribution, paper supply and news services had fallen into the hands of powerful groups able and willing to crush out any new types of periodical, or any inimical schools of public suggestion. They set about stereotyping the public mind.

These same profit-making systems in possession also played a large part in arresting competition from countries in which they were less completely in control, by subsidized political action for the maintenance of protective tariffs. Long before the world break-down became manifest, the experience of the ordinary consumer so far belied the sanguine theory that free competition was a mode of endless progress, that he was still living in a house, wearing clothes, using appliances, travelling about in conveyances, and being fed with phrases and ideas that by the standard of the known and worked-out inventions of the time should have been discarded on an average, Hooker computes, from a quarter to half a century before. There was labour unemployed and abundant material available to remedy all this, but its utilization was held up by the rent-exacting and profit-earning systems already in possession.

This lag in modernization added greatly to the effects of increased productive efficiency in the disengagement of those vast masses of destitute unemployed and unemploying people which began to appear almost everywhere, like the morbid secretion of a diseased body, as the twentieth century passed on into its third decade.

6. — THE PARADOX OF OVER-PRODUCTION AND ITS RELATION TO WAR

This so-called "paradox of over-production" which figures so largely in the loose discussions of the "post-war" period was in its essence a very simple affair indeed. Just as the inevitable end of a process of free competition was a consolidation of successful competitors and an arrest of enterprise, so the inevitable end of a search for profit in production was a steady reduction of costs through increased efficiency — that is to say, a steady decrease of the ratio of employment to output. These things lie so much on the surface of the process that it is almost incredible to us that, wilfully or not, our ancestors disregarded them. Equally inevitable was it that these necessary contractions of enterprise and employment should lead to an increase in the proportion of unemployable people. Geographical expansion and a rising standard of life among both the employed and possessing classes, together with the stimulating effect of a steady influx of gold, masked and tempered for half a century this squeezing-out of an increasing fraction of the species from its general economic life. There were nevertheless fluctuations, "cycles of trade" as they were called, when the clogging machinery threatened to stall and was then relieved and went on again. But by the opening of the twentieth century, the fact that the method of running human affairs as an open competition for profit, was in its nature a terminating method, was forcing itself upon the attention even of those who profited most by it and had the most excuse for disregarding it, and who, as a class, knew nothing of the Marxian analysis.

We know now that the primary task of world administration is to arrest this squeezing out of human beings from active economic life, by the continual extension of new collective enterprises, but such ideas had still to be broached at that time. The common folk, wiser in their instincts than the political economists in their intellectualism, were disposed to approve of waste and extravagance because money

was “circulated” and workers “found employment”. And the reader will not be able to understand the world-wide tolerance of growing armaments and war preparations during this period unless he realizes the immediate need inherent in the system for unremunerative public expenditure. Somewhere the energy economized had to come out. The world of private finance would not tolerate great rehousing, great educational and socially constructive enterprises, on the part of the relatively feeble governments of the time. All that had to be reserved for the profit accumulator. And so the ever-increasing productivity of the race found its vent in its ancient traditions of warfare, which admitted the withdrawal of a large proportion of the male population from employment for a year or so and secreted that vast accumulation of forts, battleships, guns, submarines, explosives, barracks and the like, which still amazes us. Without this cancer growth of armies and navies, the paradox of over-production latent in competitive private enterprise would probably have revealed itself in an overwhelming mass of unemployment before even the end of the nineteenth century. A social revolution might have occurred then.

Militarism, however, alleviated these revolutionary stresses, by providing vast profit-yielding channels of waste. And it also strengthened the forces of social repression. The means of destruction accumulated on a scale that well-nigh kept pace with the increase in the potential wealth of mankind. The progressive enslavement of the race to military tyranny was an inseparable aspect, therefore, of free competition for profits. The latter system conditioned and produced the former. It needed the former so as to have ballast to throw out to destruction and death whenever it began to sink. The militarist phase of the early twentieth century and the paradox of over-production are correlated facets of the same reality, the reality of the planless hypertrophy of the social body.

It is interesting to note how this morbid accumulation of energy in belligerence and its failure to find vent in other directions became more and more evident in the physiognomy of the world as the twentieth century progressed. The gatherings of mankind became blotched with uniforms. Those admirable albums of coloured pictures, Historical Scenes in a Hundred Volumes, which are now placed in all our schools and show-places and supplied freely to any

home in which there are children, display very interestingly the advent, predominance and disappearance of military preoccupations in the everyday life of our ancestors. These pictures are all either reproductions of actual paintings, engravings or photographs, or, in the case of the earlier volumes, they are elaborate reconditionings to the more realistic methods of our time of such illustrations as were available. Military operations have always attracted the picture-maker at all times, and there are plentiful pictures of battles from every age, from the little cricket-field battle of the Middle Ages to the hundred mile fights of the last Great War, but our interest here is not with battles but with the general facies of social life. Even in the war-torn seventeenth century the general stream of life went on without any manifest soldiering. War was a special occupation. While the battles of the English Civil War, which set up the first English Republic (1649-1660), were in progress, we have evidence that hunting and hawking parties were busy almost within sound of the guns. The novels of Jane Austen (England, 1775-1817) pursue their even way without the faintest echo of the land and sea campaigns in progress. Goethe in Weimar (the German literary "Great Man" during the "Great Man" period of literary thought in Europe, 1749-1832) could not be bothered by requests for supplies of wood and food for the German troops before the battle of Jena, and was very pleased to meet his "enemy alien" Napoleon socially during that campaign.

We rarely see the monarchs of the eighteenth century depicted in military guise; the fashion was for robes and majesty rather than for the spurs and feathers of the Bantam warrior-king. It was the unprecedented vehemence of the Napoleonic adventure that splashed the social life of Europe with uniforms, infected feminine fashions, and even set plump princess colonels, frogged with gold lace and clutching bare sabres, joggling unsteadily at the heads of regiments. There was a brief return towards civilian attire with the accession of the "domesticated monarchs", Louis Philippe in France and Victoria in Great Britain; they marked a transient reaction from Napoleonic fashions; but from the middle of the nineteenth century onward the prestige of the soldier resumed its advance and the military uniform became increasingly pervasive. Flags became more abundant in the

towns and “flag-days” dotted the calendar. There was never a crowd pictured in Europe after 1870 without a soldier or so.

The Great War greatly intensified the military element in the street population, not only in Europe but America. Various corps of feminine auxiliaries were enrolled during that time and paraded the world thereafter in appetising soldierly outfits. In the United States, except at Washington, or when there was a parade of civil war veterans, a soldier in uniform had been hitherto the rarest of birds. He would have felt strange and uncomfortable. He would have offended the susceptibilities of a consciously liberated people. The Great War changed all that. When Germany was disarmed after the war, a Nazi movement and a Reichsbanner movement supplied the needed colour until a German’s freedom to get into properly recognized livery was restored. The pattern of half-military, half-civilian organizations in uniform had already been spread about the world between the South African War (1899-1901) and the Great War, by the Boy Scout movement.

Of the Nazi movement, the Italian Fascisti and the Polish Brotherhood at least there will be more to tell later. The black and brown shirts may be cited here as instances of the visible breaking-down of the boundaries between military and civil life that went on during and after the World War.

Hitherto war had been a marginal business, fought upon “fronts”, and the ordinary citizen had lived in comparative security behind the front, but the bombing, gas-diffusing aeroplane, and later the long-range air torpedo, changed all that. The extended use of propaganda as a weapon, and the increasing danger of social mutiny under war stress, had also its share in making the entire surface of a belligerent country a war area and abolishing any vestiges of civil liberty, first during actual warfare and then in view of warfare. The desirability of getting everyone under orders, under oath, and subject to prompt disciplinary measures, became more and more manifest to governments.

So within a century the appearance of the human crowd changed over from a varied assembly of incoordinated free individuals to a medley of uniforms. Everybody’s dress at last indicated function, obligation and preparedness. The militarization of the European

multitude reached a maximum during the Polish wars. About 1942 gas masks, either actually worn or hanging from the neck, were common for a time, and so, too, were the small sheath-knives which were to be used in disposing of fallen aviators who might still be alive. Patella metal hats and metal epaulettes to protect the head and body against a rain of poisoned needles also appeared. Some civilians became far more formidable-looking than any soldiers.

The military authorities of those days were much perplexed by the problem of giving the general population protective apparatus and light weapons that would be effective against the military enemy and yet useless for the purposes of insurrection. For in spite of the most strenuous suppression of agitation in those troubled decades, the possible revolt of humanity against warfare, the possibility of complete "loss of morale", however illogical and incoherent, was felt by the professional soldiers as an increasing menace.

Along the streets of most of the old-world cities there presently appeared the characteristic yellow (or in France blue, and in America red-and- white-striped) air-raid pillars with their glass faces, only to be broken into and used after an official alarm, which contained respirators and first-aid sets for possible gas victims. It is also to the same period we have to ascribe the multiplication of vivid and abundant direction signs at every street corner, set so as to throw a minimum of light upward and pointing the way to gas chambers and hospitals. It was a "gas-minded" world in the 'forties. The practical suppression of other vivid and illuminated street signs was a natural corollary to this preoccupation.

In the first half of the twentieth century the cities blazed with advertisement. It was the period of maximum advertisement. The pictures of the Great White Way of New York, Piccadilly Circus, the Grands Boulevards of Paris and so forth, with their polychromatic visual clamour, still strike us as distractingly picturesque. There was much flood-lighting after 1928. Then progressively the lights were turned down again and that visual clamour died away. As the air threat returned, "lights out" became at last imperative, except for the vivid furtive indications of refuge and first aid we have just mentioned.

War fear spread very rapidly after 1930. Darkness recaptured the

nocturnal town. “Night-life” became stealthy and obscure, with an increasing taint of criminality. All civil hospitals and all private doctors had disappeared from the world by 1945 and the health services were only legally demilitarized again after 2010. The amalgamation of the military and civil hospital and medical services began in France as early as 1933. By 1945 every doctor in the Old World was, in theory at least, on a quasi-military footing; he wore a distinctive uniform, was subject to stringent discipline, and his premises, as well as the hospitals, bore the characteristic black-and-yellow chequerwork. All nurses were similarly enrolled. Finally the general public was enrolled for health treatment as common patients under oath. By 1948 in such towns as had sufficiently survived the general social demoralization to enforce such regulations, it was impossible to take a chill or break an ankle without at once falling into the category of patients and being numbered, put into a black-and-yellow uniform and marched or carried off for treatment. Theoretically this system of treatment was universal. In practice neither the uniforms nor the doctors were available. For regulation and militarization were going on in that period against an immense counter-drive towards social disintegration. The more humanity got into uniform, the shabbier the uniforms became.

Before the Polish struggle, general architecture was very little affected by military needs. The militarization of costume preceded the militarization of scenery. Even barracks and such-like army buildings were erected by army architects as a simple vulgarization of ordinary housing patterns, a mere stiffening up, so to speak, of the common “jerry-built” house. There still survive for our astonishment pictures of Victorian Military Gothic and Victorian Military Tudor, produced under the British War Office. They display homes fit for drill-sergeants. The military mind had to be roused by the experiences of the Polish conflict to the profound reconstruction of the ordinary town that had become necessary if it was still to be taken seriously. Before then, fortification scarcely affected the urban scene at all, even in the case of a fortified town. Previously a fortress had been just an ordinary civil town surrounded at distances of from three to fifty miles by forts, strong points, trench systems and the like. Now it was realized, first in Berlin, and then in Danzig,

Warsaw, Paris and Turin, and after that by the whole world, that air warfare demanded not merely fortification round a town, but much more imperatively, fortification OVER a town. The world, which had been far too stupid to realize in 1930 that the direct way out of its economic difficulties lay in the modernization and rebuilding of its houses, set itself, in a state of war panic after 1942, to as complete a revision of its architecture in the face of bombs and gas as its deepening impoverishment permitted. What it would not do for prosperity, it attempted belatedly out of fear.

The first most obvious undertaking was the construction of those immense usually ill-built concrete cavern systems for refuge, whose vestiges are still to be visited by the curious tourist at Paris and Berlin (the London ones have all fallen in, the collapse beginning after the great landslip and fire), and close upon this came the cessation of tall building and the concentration of design upon the vast (and often dangerous) carapace roof and its gigantic supporting pillars and foundation rafts. Only the ever-deepening poverty, the increasing industrial disorganization and the transitoriness of that last war-phase saved all the towns in the world from being thrust completely under such squat massive coverings.

So strong were the influences of that time that even up to 2020 the tendency of architectural design was to crouch. Hardly any mass of buildings erected between 1945 and the end of the century lifts up its head and looks the world in the face. That period has been called, not unjustly, Second Egyptian. And this was so in spite of the multiplying opportunities for grace and lightness afforded by the supersession of steel frame buildings by the strong and flexible neo-concrete materials that were already available. How timidly they were used! We grovel no longer because we are ceasing to fear each other. The soaring, ever improving homes in which we live to-day would have sent our great-grandfathers scurrying to their cellars in an ecstasy of terror.

7. — THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918

There is a monstrous tedious accumulation of records concerned with the World War. The Catalogue of Historical Material stored at Atacama gives a list of 2,362,705 books and gross files, up to date, and of these over 182,000 deal exclusively or largely with the causation of the war. Nothing could bring home to the student the profound difference in mental equipment between ourselves and the men and women of that period than a visit to the long silent galleries of that great library of dead disputes and almost completely forgotten records. He will see hardly a visitor along the vistas of that shining framework of shelves; a quiet cleaner or duster perhaps will be visible, scrutinizing the condition of the material, or a young revisionist student patiently checking some current summary — or a black cat. For the rest, above, below, to right and left is a clean and luminous stillness; papers at rest.

In one large section of this sere honeycomb the student will find the records of the "war guilt controversy" that agitated the world for decades after the Peace of Versailles. Let him draw out a seat anywhere and take down a file or so at hazard and turn over its pages. He will be able to read almost all of it nowadays, whatever the original language, because practically all the collection has now been interleaved with translations into Basic English. And it will seem to him that he is reading the outpourings of lunatics, so completely have the universal obsessions of that time been exorcized since.

Had "Germany" planned the war? Was "France" the guilty party? Had "Britain" much to answer for? With difficulty will the student let down his mind into the fantastic world of extinct imaginations in which these strange personifications, as monstrous and incredible as the ancient gods of India, were treated as real and morally responsible individuals, hated, trusted, feared and loved. The war was, in immediate fact, an aimless and fruitless slaughter upon the altars of these stupendous deities, the wounding and mutilation of perhaps twenty million human beings, and a vast burning-up of material wealth. In the crazy fancy of our ancestors it was a noble and significant struggle. Happily we need not revive their craziness

here. The question of “war guilt” was never settled. It ceased to be pursued, it was neglected, it floated away into the absurd, and little but those three hundred feet or so of forgotten books and gross files remain to testify to its vanished importance.

The causation of the struggle was, indeed, perfectly simple. It arose naturally and necessarily from that irregular and disproportionate growth of human appliances as compared with the extension of political and social intelligence we have already described.

The new means of communication and transport, and the new economic life which demanded the products of every zone and soil for its purposes, were necessitating the reorganization of human affairs as a World-State, and since the world was already parcelled up among sixty-odd competing sovereign governments there were only two possible courses open to mankind, either to arrange the coalescence of these governments by treaty and rational arrangements to meet the new need, or to allow a steadily intensified mutual pressure to develop into more or less thinly disguised attempts at world conquest. In the decades before the war the British, French, German, Russian, Japanese and American systems were all, as the word went then, “imperialist” — all, that is, attempting to become World-States on a planet on which obviously there was room only for one single World-State. Nothing of the sort had been apparent when the methods of European statescraft had been devised. These vaster possibilities had yawned open afterwards. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were centuries of small restricted wars for limited advantages. In the twentieth century the scale of war expanded beyond any limit and the advantages to be won by it disappeared. But the politicians and diplomatists played their time-honoured game against each other with a sort of terrified inevitability. They were driven; they had no control, or at least none of them seemed to have had the vigour and imagination to attempt a control. They were driven by the economic necessity we have explained in the previous section. They had to arm preposterously. They had to threaten. They had to go through with the business.

These forces account for the outbreak and universality of the Great War, but they do not account for its peculiar frightfulness. For

that it is necessary to realize that though governments expanded only against an enormous pressure of mutual restraint, no limitations had been set to the hypertrophy of financial and industrial enterprises. These last were under the sway of a relentless and unrestrained progress; they expanded, invented, urged and sold; they brought weapons of a strange and terrible effectiveness to the settlement of what were in comparison small and antiquated disputes. To that hypertrophy of the armourer we will return presently, because the Great War was really only a first revelation of this particular disproportion between economics and politics, and the evil still went on in an exaggerated form after the formal conclusion of the struggle at the Peace of Versailles (1919). But let us first tell what needs to be known of the details of the Great War.

How little that is now! There is a vast literature both of fiction based on experience and of personal reminiscence about it, and some of it is admirably written; almost any of it may be read for interest and edification and hardly any of it need be read with scholarly precision. The picture of the outbreak of the war still touches us. There was a curious unconsciousness of the grossness of the menace in events, even on the part of myriads doomed to suffer and die in a few months' time. Many of the stories told begin with a holiday party or a country-house gathering or some such bright setting. The weather that August (1914) was exceptionally fine.

The details of the struggle itself were as horrible and distressing as they were inconsequent, and there is no need whatever for anyone but the specialist to master their sequence in detail. The old-fashioned history, with its lists of names, dates, battles and so on, was designed rather to supply easily marked material for examinations than to give any sense of the historical process. Examinations have long passed out of educational practice; they have gone to join the "globes" and the abacus, the slate and the cane in the scholastic limbo, but their memory is preserved in the popular game of "examination papers", when people write down as fast as they can and as much as they can about some suddenly selected subject.

Few of us could write even a brief account now of the World War. The names of such generals as Haig, Kitchener, French, Joffre, Foch and Ludendorff, to take names at random, and such battles as

Tannenberg, the Marne, the Somme, Paschendaele, the Falkland Isles, Jutland and so forth, mean nothing and need mean nothing to the ordinary citizen to-day. He does not know whether French was really French or not, nor whether Foch was a Frenchman or a German. He inclines to the latter view. He does not know who won or lost these conflicts and he does not care. He has not even a sporting interest in it. They were not lively fights. Nearly all the commanders concerned had dull and unattractive personalities and the business was altogether too unwieldy for them. Most of their operations were densely stupid, muddled both in conception and execution. One would as soon listen to a child reciting not very accurately and at endless length the deals and tricks of some game of cards it has played, or imagines it has played, as read their memoirs — packed as they too often are with self-exculpation, personal resentments and malice. Faint, faded, immense and far-off tragedies, these struggles that were to have astounded posterity have already gone far towards complete effacement in any but a few specializing minds, are hardly more vivid now in our collective consciousness than the battles of the Peloponnesian War — or the campaigns and conquests of Tamerlane. They had nothing of the primary historical importance and strategic splendour which have restored the gigantic military conceptions of Genghis Khan to an integral place in our ordinary educational curriculum.

For the rodomontade of the conflict the curious cannot do better than glance through the eager narrative of Winston Churchill's World Crisis. There one finds all the stereotyped flourishes and heroisms of nineteenth-century history from the British point of view; the "drama of history" in rich profusion, centred upon one of the most alert personalities in the conflict. He displays a vigorous naïve puerility that still gives his story an atoning charm. He has the insensitiveness of a child of thirteen. His soldiers are toy soldiers and he loves to knock over a whole row of them. He enjoyed the war. He takes himself and all the now forgotten generals and statesmen of the war with a boyish seriousness. He passes grave judgments on their tragic fooleries and distributes compliments and blame, often in the most gracious manner, convinced that he is writing for a meticulously admiring and envious posterity. They would read, they

would marvel. He was the sort of man who believed that when he begot children he created an audience. He was misled by the excitement of his own reading of history. He not only measures for us the enormous gulf between the mentality of his times and our own, but he enables us to bridge that gulf with an amused and forgiving sympathy.

A less attractive spirit displays itself in the memoirs of such figures as Ludendorff, Bülow, Clemenceau, Fisher, Foch, and so through the whole category of war leaders. The war was the supreme event in the lives of most of these men and apparently they were never able to think of anything else afterwards. They had none of the recuperative innocence of Churchill, his terrier-like interest in everything. They all took to writing furiously in their declining years and no other pens could have damned them so completely. They are grown-up and yet under-developed persons; as adult as old chimpanzees; they cannot claim Churchill's benefit of schoolboy, and there is a real horror in their wrinkled meannesses and envies, their gross enthusiasms and their sincere bloodthirstiness and hate. Most of their mutual recriminations are too incomprehensible to be of the slightest interest now; spite and twaddle are still spite and twaddle even if drenched with blood. The most accessible sample for the contemporary reader is The Life and Diaries of Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, Bart., G.C.B., D.S.O., a lean, unsightly man of infinite energy, gusto and vanity, who played a very prominent rôle in bringing about and carrying out the catastrophe. It is the latest reprint in the Historical Documents Series; it is richly illustrated and abundantly annotated, and with it are bound up the brilliantly scornful criticisms of Wilson's contemporary, Sir Andrew Macphail, and Stephen Freudheim's more scientific analysis of him as the supreme type of the "soldierly mind".

For the grimmer actualities of the struggle there is a vast and sombre literature. It has been summarized in the last fifteen years by the Historical Bureau in its War Pictures for Posterity by Pen, Pencil and Camera. Everyone should turn over those strange incredible records of endurance, callousness, devotion and insane courage, to learn something of the extremes to which men and women like ourselves can be pushed by the grim forces of social compulsion.

The earlier volumes deal chiefly with the psychology of the more than half civilized citizens of the Atlantic and North European states suddenly precipitated into a maelstrom of destruction. We see the urban crowds demonstrating and cheering in the streets of the capital cities, the floods of youths coming from their work to "join up", the wonder and unimaginative fierceness and heroism of the opening stage. Then come the first contacts, villages in flames, the wild shooting of curious bystanders as spies and guerillas, realizations of horror and a wave of fear, the invaded populations in flight, black crowds with their pitiful impedimenta streaming along darkling roads, going they know not whither. The rifles and machine-guns rattle, the guns thud, and the cheering adventurousness of the advancing armies as they blunder heavily into contact passes into a phase of astounded violence and hardship. The new war was like no war that had ever been before. The French upon their eastern front went forward to the attack with immense élan, in bright uniforms and to the historical inspiration of the "Marseillaise". They were massacred. They lost a third of a million men in three weeks. The Germans poured through Belgium, more than a million strong, to be stopped and stunned with Paris almost within their grasp. The pictures show the smiling landscape of eastern Belgium, France and east Prussia in July 1914, and the same countryside a couple of months later — torn, scored and trenched, defiled with bloody heaps of litter that were once clothed bodies, an anguish of countless thousands of unclean, hungry, exhausted, cruelty-wrung human beings.

These bands of contact, these regions of filthy pain and tumult, spread. Presently there were "war zones" reaching from the North Sea to the Alps and across Eastern Europe, strange regions in which every house was a ruin, every tree a splintered trunk, where millions of crouching men went to and fro in trenches and ditches furtively like rats, and the ragged dead lay unburied. There day and night the superfluous energy of a profiteering economic system, denied all other outlet by its own preconceptions and the rigid historical traditions in which it was blinkered, blew itself away in the incessant concussions of mines, bombs and guns and a continued destruction of human life.

Presently newly invented weapons, hitherto untried, came to extend and intensify the struggle. The aeroplane, and that primitive "navigable" the Zeppelin, carried the war behind the fronts and attacked the civilian population in the cities. We see the explosive and incendiary bombs bursting into the dirty little urban homes of the time, blowing to rags the bed-rid grandmother and the baby in the cradle; we see the panic-stricken crowds seeking the shelter of cellars and excavations and the drainlike railway "tubes" of the time. In the early stages of the air-war only explosives and inflammatory substances were used, but as the struggle progressed the art of using gas bombs developed, and an agonizing suffocation was added to the nocturnal chances of flame and explosion and death among fallen ruins for the non-combatant at home. The submarine, also, was a novelty of the Great War, and a very searching novelty. It was used first to sink fighting ships and then it was turned against all sea-going craft. We have vivid descriptions of the sinking of the Lusitania without warning and the drowning of 1,198 men, women and children. She was, by the standards of the time, a great and luxurious ship, and a sort of symbolism was found by the writers of this period in this sudden descent from light, comfort and confidence into a desperate and hopeless struggle in the waters of the night. All the achievements of nineteenth-century civilization seemed to many to be following in the downward wake of the Lusitania.

Service in these early submarines strained men to the breaking point. They were essentially engines of war, they had all the defects of inventions at an early stage, and none of the security and comfort of the great submarine barges that are used to-day for the Mediterranean and Atlantic Ridge mines and for general deep sea exploration. These, with their beautifully adjusted pressure systems and their limitless vertical range, are calculated rather to mislead than enlighten us as to the capabilities of the primitive submarines of the Great War. The latter were able to descend safely only to a depth of a hundred metres; below that the pressure became too much for them and their plates gave and leaked. When they leaked the salt water was apt to affect the accumulators and chlorine gas was released to torment and suffocate the crews. Below a hundred and fifty metres these fragile contrivances crumpled up altogether and were

destroyed. The air in them became foul when they submerged, in spite of the compressed oxygen they carried, and the continual condensation of exhaled moisture gave them a peculiar clammy discomfort. They could move about under water for a couple of days by means of their electric batteries, but then it was necessary to come to the surface and run their oil combustion engines for some hours to recharge. Armed with guns and packed with mines, bombs, torpedoes and other explosives, they set out to harass and destroy the surface shipping of the enemy.

It was a difficult and almost fantastically dangerous task. Submerged, they were invisible, but also they were blind. Near the surface they could get a limited view of what was going on by means of a periscope. On the surface they had the range of outlook of any other surface boat, but at all the risks a surface boat must take. So under conditions of extreme discomfort and partial asphyxiation the crews of these strangely formidable and strangely fragile contrivances groped their way towards their victims. To see the quarry fairly they had to come to the surface, and that exposed them to gunfire. If their thin steel skins were pierced by a single shot they could no longer go under. Often when submerged they betrayed their whereabouts unwittingly by bubbles of gas and escapes of oil.

At first, in spite of their limitations, the submarines proved a very deadly weapon, more particularly in the hands of the Central European Powers. They destroyed a great multitude of ships and drowned many score thousands of men. Then slowly the methods used against them improved. They were hunted by a special flotilla, and among other ships by the “Q” boats, armed vessels disguised as harmless merchantmen. These lured them to the surface and then let down sham bulwarks and opened fire upon them, so that after a time they no longer dared emerge to challenge even the most harmless-looking craft. Explosive mines were moored in their possible tracks and mine-armed nets set across harbours and channels. They were also watched for by aeroplanes and special airships whose signals guided the destroyers to their quarry. Ingenious listening contrivances were invented to locate them. They were shot at on the surface, rammed, and pursued by “depth charges” which could strain their plates and disable them even when exploded scores of metres

away.

Such, briefly, were the conditions of submarine warfare in the years 1917- 18. And yet to the very end of the war men could be found to carry it on, to destroy and drown and be in their turn hunted and destroyed. The building and launching of submersibles never ceased. Men went down in them to chilly confinement, to the perpetual anxiety of mine or ram, to the quivering menace of the distant depth charge, to the reasonable probability of a frightful death beyond all human aid. Few submarines returned to harbour ten times; many went out new upon their first voyage never to return. Two hundred of them were lost by the Germans alone; each loss a tragedy of anguish and dismay in the deeps. Towards the end it was claimed by their antagonists that the crews were losing morale. Once or twice an undamaged submarine that had been cornered surrendered, and the new commanders showed a growing tendency to return to port for minor repairs or other slight pretexts. But on the whole, such is the unimaginative heroic submissiveness of our species, the service was sustained. The Germans supplied most of the flesh for this particular altar; willing and disciplined, their youngsters saluted and carried their kit down the ladder into this gently swaying clumsy murder mechanism which was destined to become their coffin.

Their obedience brings us to one of the most fundamental lessons that the Great War has for us: the extreme slowness with which the realization of even the most obvious new conditions pierces through the swathings of habitual acceptance. Millions of human beings went open-eyed to servitude, bullying, hardship, suffering and slaughter, without a murmur, with a sort of fatalistic pride. In obedience to the dictates of the blindest prejudices and the most fatuous loyalties they did their utmost to kill men against whom they had no conceivable grievance, and they were in their turn butchered gallantly, fighting to the last. The War Pictures volumes dismay our imaginations by portraying a series of wholesale butcheries, many of them on a stupendous scale, of men who died facing their enemies. After the great slaughter of the French at the outset of the war, and a mighty killing of Russians at the Battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes, there was during what was called the deadlock period, the period of trench warfare, a diminution of the losses upon the West.

Hostilities sank down to a gusty conflict of shell-fire, rifle assassinations, and raids with bombs and bludgeons. In the East, however, the Russians ran out of ammunition, and held their trenches only by a great martyrdom of men; they lost well over a million before the end of 1914, and yet they continued to obey orders. A series of minor campaigns broke out in regions remote from the main centres of contact. There is a horrible account in the Pictures of the sufferings of some thousands of British common soldiers taken prisoners at Kut, in Mesopotamia. (Their generals and other officers, however, who had arranged that particular capitulation, were honourably and comfortably entertained by their captors the Turks.) There is no effective expression of resentment by the British troops on record.

In 1916 and 1917 there were spasmodic renewals of hostilities on a large scale by the British and French in France. Newly trained British armies were made to advance in close formation by generals who, unless they were imbeciles, could have had no doubts of the fate to which they were sending their men. If they were not imbeciles then they were criminally unwilling to learn and soul-blind to suffering and waste. The mentality of these men is still a matter for discussion. The poor boys they commanded were marched forward shoulder to shoulder in successive waves of attack, and so advancing they were shot to pieces by the enemy machine-guns. Out of battalions of six or seven hundred, perhaps a hundred would struggle through the defensive fire and come to bomb-throwing, bayonet-thrusts and surrender in the German trenches. Small isolated groups of them in shell-holes and captured positions fought on for days. So perished the flower of an entire school generation, collected from hundreds of thousands of homes, more or less loved, more or less cared for and more or less educated; it had been enlisted, trained, sent out to the battlefields at enormous cost, to be left at last in the desolated spaces between the armies, lying in heaps and swathes to rot and be rat-eaten. For months afterwards, as the photographs show, thousands of them were to be seen sprawling in formation as they fell, just as if their ranks were still waiting to leap again to the attack. But as the observer drew nearer he realized their corruption. He discovered bony hands, eyeless sockets, faces far gone in decay.

The British commander-in-chief in his despatches did not fail to extol the courage of his lost battalions and to represent this monstrous exploit as a victory. Some mile or so of ground had been gained in that July offensive and less than 12,000 prisoners had been taken. Twice as many British were left prisoners in German hands, but this the despatches ignored.

The appalling nature of this particular disaster leaked out only very slowly. The British censorship at least was efficient and the generals, however incapable in other respects, lied magnificently. The Channel crossing made it particularly easy to hide events from the British public. And it had a peculiar effect on the British troops; it gave them a feeling of being in another and a different world from "home", a war-world in which such cruel and fantastic things could be natural. This monstrous massacre was, indeed, contrived and carried through, not simply without a revolt, but with scarcely an audible protest on the part of either the parents, relations, friends or surviving comrades of those hosts of wasted victims.

The commanders of the Russian armies in Austria, Armenia and elsewhere were announcing equally costly and heroic triumphs and the Germans and Austrians were issuing the most valiant and excessive contradictions of their claims. They, too, were losing hideously enough, though in a lesser proportion than their opponents. The next year (1917), the British, gallant and docile as ever, with only very slightly improved tactics, were going again into great offensives.

But now the French troops began to manifest a livelier intelligence. They were amidst familiar things, nearer their homes and less cut off from subversive influences than the British. A certain General Nivelle, at that time French Commander-in-Chief, made what Churchill calls an "experiment", which resulted altogether in the loss of nearly a couple of hundred thousand men. It involved the advance of masses of infantry into intense fields of fire. In an hour, said Lieutenant Ybarnegaray (in a debate in the French Chamber, June 1917), they were reduced to a crowd "running like madmen", all formations and distinctions lost. Provision had been made for less than 15,000 wounded. There were seven times as many. Most of the casualties never received the most elementary attention for three

days. The result was gangrene, amputation and death for thousands. Then came the first intimation that there were limits to human obedience. A French division ordered into action to continue this futile holocaust refused to march. Churchill says this was "deeply disquieting" to the authorities, and no doubt it pained and distressed every intelligent amateur of war. This particular division was cajoled into a change of mind. It took part in the fighting, says Churchill, "without discredit", but the spirit of its resistance spread.

The next sign of sanity in this world torture was the collapse of the grotesque Russian autocracy. We have already told of the mental and moral decay of the Tzardom in our general study of the degeneration of monarchy. [Non inventus. — ED.] Abruptly this profoundly rotten government collapsed into nothing; its vast domains became a various disorder, and for some months phantom imitations of Western revolutionaries, inspired by memories of the first French revolution or by legends of British parliamentary wisdom, occupied the capital. The one certain fact in the situation was the accumulated disinclination of the Russian people for any further warfare. But this first republican government under an eloquent lawyer politician, of no great directive force, Alexandre Kerensky, was unable either to carry on the war or to end it. A subdued but spreading clamour for "peace by negotiation" in all the combatant countries ensued, a clamour that active repression and the most rigorous concealment in the Press failed to silence. There was an attempt to call a sort of peace conference of Radicals at Stockholm, and then a second revolution in Russia which carried a small and resolute Communist organization to power — carried it to power simply and solely because there was no other organized alternative, and because it promised peace plainly and surely — peace on any terms. The Russian armies melted away at its signal; the men streamed home. The German military authorities in the East found the trenches before them undefended, and with every courtesy of war, as one soldier to another, welcomed the Russian officers of the old régime, taking refuge from the belated resentment of their own men.

In 1917 mankind seemed already to be awakening from the war-nightmare. Mutinies broke out in sixteen separate French army corps,

115 regiments were involved, divisions elected soldiers' councils and whole regiments set out for Paris to demand a reasonable wind-up of the struggle. The one last hope of the despairing soldiers, said Pierre Laval, had been Stockholm. That disappointment had made life unbearable. But the storm abated with the entry of the United States of America into the war, and the powers in control of the Western World were still able to pursue their dreadful obsessions for another year.

War Pictures for Posterity by Pen, Pencil and Camera devotes a whole volume (xxi) to the tragedy of a special Russian infantry corps in France. Fifteen thousand Russians had been sent thither in 1916 to be equipped and armed and put into the line with the French armies. Many of these poor lads scarcely knew the difference between a Frenchman and a German, and the ostensible objects of the war were quite beyond their understanding. But they heard of the revolution in their own country and they resolved to consider their attitude with regard to it. They elected representatives and put it to the vote whether they should continue to fight, which meant for them to take part in that "experiment" of Nivelle's known to be in preparation at the time. They chose what seemed to them the generous part and went into the battle. The French command used them ruthlessly, and nearly 6,000 were killed or wounded. The rest came out of the line and mutinied. They would fight no more. Thereupon these defenceless men were surrounded by trustworthy French troops, a great concentration of guns was assembled, fire was opened upon them suddenly and they were massacred. Horrible photographs of the details of this — photographs hidden away at the time from the authorities and brought to light later — are given in the summary already cited.

For nearly a year the French lost confidence in the morale of their own men and dared make no more great attacks, but their allies offered up another 400,000 men in the battle of Paschendaele and accounted for 300,000 Germans, and in the spring the Germans made a vast multitudinous attack in the West which succeeded at first and then collapsed, whereupon their antagonists, reinforced by new armies from America, waded back through blood to a dreadful final victory. The last nine months of the conflict saw more slaughter than

any preceding year. From March 21st, 1918, to November 11th in the same year the British suffered 830,000 casualties, the French and Belgians 964,000 and the Germans 1,470,000. There were also 2,000,000 American troops brought to Europe before the end, and of these more than half were actually engaged in the fighting. Their casualties were certainly not less than 350,000. Portuguese and other contingents from the most unexpected quarters also contributed to that culminating death-roll, but it is impossible for us now to give exact numbers for these minor forces.

These are the gross figures of warfare. But War Pictures devotes three volumes, perhaps the most horrible of all, to the presentation of various details of the fighting in which these vast multitudes suffered and perished. These three volumes are like the microscopic slides in a specimen book of anatomy, which show us from a selected scrap of tissue the texture of the whole. Little figures stand out enlarged, chosen by the hazard that they wrote or talked or carried a camera, to represent the nameless millions who have left no record. We have accounts of men who were left to lie out for days between the lines, tortured by thirst and stifled by the stench of their own corruption, and yet who survived to tell the tale. We have the stories of men who fell into heaps of rotting dead, and lay there choking, and of men who were gassed. The tortures of gas were already many and various, and most of the mixtures then used left tormenting weaknesses in the system for the rest of life. We have descriptions of the rude surgery of the time and abstracts of the mental disorders through which minds fled from reality. There are also some dreadful pictures of mutilated men, faceless, crippled, grotesquely distorted, and an autobiography of one of the blinded (Outstaying My Welcome, by Fritz Schiff, 1923). Scores of thousands of unhappy fragments of humanity had to be hidden away in special institutions until they died, they were at once so terrifying and so pitiful and hopeless. The world forgot them even while they lived.

The distortion of souls was even more dreadful than the distortion of bodies. One of the most lurid items in that dreadful assemblage of realities is a lecture on the use of the bayonet, which chanced to be printed, reprinted later by anti-war propagandists and so preserved for us, delivered by a certain Sergeant-Major Franklin to some

English cadets in London. To us he is incredible in his ferocity; we are almost forced to believe he was drunk or mad, until we realize from the "laughter" that punctuated his utterances, from the hearty thanks of his commanding officer, and the "three cheers" which rewarded him at the conclusion of his discourse, that he was merely expressing the spirit of war service as it was then understood.

"If you see a wounded German," he said, "shove him out and have no nonsense about it."

He was all against taking prisoners — and for murdering them after surrender. He told with sympathy and approval of how a corporal under him butchered a group of German boys. "Can I do these blokes in, sir?" asked the corporal, pointing to a bunch of disarmed enemies.

"Please yourself," said the sergeant-major....

When they had been "done in", the honest corporal, a released convict from Dartmoor prison, came back to the sergeant-major very gratified and honoured, and, still in favour, discussed the technical difficulties of withdrawing a bayonet quickly in order to be ready for the "next fellow".

That was, that is, the spirit to which war brings a human being. Sergeant- Major Franklin had his abundant equivalents in every army engaged. We are able to quote an English document, freely published. Participants in many other countries had less freedom. On the whole the English were as gentle as any other soldiers. But fear and bloodlust, it is plain, wipe out all the slowly acquired restraints and tolerance of social order very quickly and completely from any breed of men. History must not be written in pink and gilt. Prisoners and wounded were not simply neglected and ill-treated and "shoved out". Many were actually tortured to death — either by way of reprisals or in sheer wanton cruelty. There is also a series of photographs of foully mutilated bodies, mutilated and indecently displayed while they were dying or immediately after they were dead. Those millions marched indeed right out of civilization, right out of any sort of human life as we know it to-day, marched down to something viler than mere bestiality, when they marched into the war zone.

After the summer of 1918, which brought with it the certainty of

ultimate defeat, the combatant energy of Germany evaporated. Everywhere there was distress and hunger due to a rigorous blockade. The discipline of the land relaxed; the country behind the front was infested by stragglers; the Higher German Command found itself now, like its antagonists, unable to rely upon the men to advance, found itself unable to rely upon their resistance to an enemy attack. They became eager to surrender — taking the off-chance of meeting experimental corporals from Dartmoor on the way.

Wherever there was still loyalty and obedience, however, men were still callously sacrificed by the Higher Command. War Pictures (vol. xxvii, 23842 et seq,) show the German machine-gunners in their pits, on the defensive against advancing British and American troops. These men allowed themselves to be drugged and chained to their weapons, and so continued to fire and kill until the attack came up to them. Then they found small mercy. They were bayoneted or their brains were beaten out. They paid for the inventions of their masters. They paid for the hatred of Germany the introduction of poison gas had evoked in every attacking army. Such residues of senseless devotion availed nothing against the massive pressures that were at last exhausting Germany. In November the Kaiser, the War Lord, was in flight; a humiliating Armistice had been concluded and the German armies were streaming home in disorder, incoherently revolutionary.

Upon that phrase, "incoherently revolutionary", our account of the main war may very well end. Here we will only allude to the defeat and demoralization of the Italian armies after the battle of Caporetto, when 800,000 were either killed, wounded, taken prisoner, or (sensible fellows) "went home". Nor will we describe the naval battles, of which the chief and last was Jutland. It was the last, because afterwards the German admirals were faced by the threat of mutiny if they essayed another fight. Whether it was or was not a victory for the British was never exactly determined. The controversy died out during the Polish wars.

The War Pictures volumes give many photographs and accounts of these naval encounters. We have, for example, a whole series of snapshots of a British cruiser in the Battle of Jutland, the Defence steaming at full-speed-ahead to attack and finish up a smashed and

sinking German battleship, the Wiesbaden. The onrush of that fierce mechanism is terrific. It seems invincible and overpowering. It has an undeniable splendour. Then suddenly a series of blinding flashes show the Defence has been hit by the fire of some other German battleship coming to the help of her sister ship, and in a moment she has blown up and gone; she is no more than a mounting unfolding column of smoke and flying fragments, including, we realize with an effort, the torn and scalded bodies of eight hundred men. Then a welter of littered tumbled water....

There is no end to the multitude of such pictures.

But let us return to our phrase "incoherently revolutionary". That is the key to the whole human situation at that time. The distaste for the war throughout the world was enormous, if not in its opening phases, then certainly before the second year was reached. It bored; it disgusted. Its events had none of the smashing decisiveness that seizes the imagination. Even the great naval battle of Jutland was, from the point of view of spectacle, a complete failure. None the less, for a very simple reason a comparatively small minority of resolutely belligerent persons was able to keep this vast misery going. On the one hand the war was in accordance with the ruling ideas of the time, while on the other the hundreds of millions whose astonishment and dismay deepened daily, as horror unfolded beyond horror, had no conception of any alternative pattern of life to which they could turn as a refuge from its relentless sequences.

To cry "End the war" ended nothing, because it gave no intimations of what had to replace belligerent governments in the control of human affairs. The peace the masses craved for was as yet only a featureless negative. But peace must be a positive thing, designed and sustained, for peace is less natural than warfare. We who have at last won through to the Pax Mundi know how strong and resolute, how powerfully equipped and how vigilant, the keepers of the peace must be.

8. — THE IMPULSE TO ABOLISH WAR; THE EPISODE OF THE FORD PEACE SHIP

One quaint expedition, grotesque and childish and yet an augury of greater things to come, flits very illuminatingly across the dreadful record of these war years. It is the voyage of a passenger steamship from New York to Norway. The dark curtains of oblivion fall in heavier and heavier folds before the thundering battleships of the twilit Battle of Jutland; their forgotten names sink back into a vague general impression of huge flame-spouting masses that rush through smoke and mist to their fate; only a specialist can tell us now whether the Lützow or the Friedrich der Grosse, the Lion, or the Iron Duke, the Vanguard or the Colossus perished with its complement of men or staggered out of that battle. They have become monstrous irrelevances. There is nothing but their size, and the smashing and drowning of hundreds of men in them, to make them more significant to us now than an exploding casket of fireworks. But steaming its way across the Atlantic a few months before Jutland was fought came this other ship, a passenger boat of the Scandinavian-American line, the Oscar II, whose voyage remains to this day important and interesting, because in the most simple and artless fashion it mingled the new conceptions of life that were coming into being, with all the prevalent weaknesses of the time. The Oscar II is better known in history as the Peace Ship of Henry Ford. It is a gleam of tragic comedy amidst the universal horror.

This Henry Ford was a very natural-minded mechanical genius, without much education or social sophistication, a great friend of, and kindred spirit with, that Edison whose career has been traced in the chapter of human history dealing with the development and exploitations of inventions at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Born and brought up in a period of economic expansion, Ford took economic expansion as if it were a necessity inherent in things, and never began to doubt continual progress until he was a man of over seventy. That was his good fortune. That gave him the confidence to design an automobile as

sound and good and cheap as could be done at that time, and to organize the mass production of his pattern with extraordinary energy and skill, because his mind was untroubled by the thought that there could be a limit to the number of possible purchasers. He marketed his "flivver", or "tin lizzie", as it was affectionately called, in enormous quantities, and in consequence he revolutionized the road transport and town planning of America. He changed the shape of every growing town by enabling the small householder to live further from the work and business centre than had ever been possible before. He did more than any other single man to drive the horse not only from the road but, by making farm tractors, from the fields. He created factories at Dearborn that even to-day seem vast. He became enormously rich and an outstanding "character" in the world, and particularly in America. And he remained curiously simple and direct in his outlook upon life.

The first effect of the Great War upon him, as on a vast proportion of the English-speaking peoples, was incredulous amazement. He had known there were armies and sovereign nations in the world, but apparently he had never supposed they would fight. He felt there must be some mistake. He exchanged views with other Americans in a similar phase of astonishment. By the beginning of 1915 they had accumulated a sufficient mass of evidence from the belligerent countries to convince them that great masses of people in these countries were as amazed and as anxious to end the widening bloodshed and brutalization as the neutral onlookers. There had been deputations to the President (President Wilson), who was at that time, in harmony with his country, highly pacificist, and there was a widespread ambition that the United States should evoke some sort of permanent arbitration council alone, or in concert with the other Powers still neutral, which should stand, so to speak, on the edge of the battlefield and continue to offer its mediatory services to the warring governments until they were accepted. There was the suggestion of a deputation to Europe to further this idea, and the question arose how should it go across the Atlantic. Ford offered to charter a ship to take it.

Then his peculiar imagination seized upon his own offer. He would make this ship a spectacular ship; it should be the "Peace

Ship". It should take a complement of chosen delegates to Europe in such a blaze of publicity that at its coming the war would be, as it were, arrested, to look at it. Its mere appearance would recall infuriated Europe to its senses. "I want to get those boys out of the trenches," said Ford. "They don't want to fight, and would be only too glad to shake hands with each other." At the back of his mind there seems to have been an idea of calling a general strike at the fronts. "Out of the trenches by Christmas, never to return again," was his brief speech at a public meeting in Washington in November. All sorts of eminent and energetic people were invited to join the mission. He sought the overt approval of the President, but the President was far too seasoned a politician to squander his publicity upon this "gesture" of Henry Ford's. He was meditating a gesture of his own later on.

American life at that time had its conspicuous popular stars, who embodied its ideals of greatness and goodness. Some of them are still for various reasons remembered by the historian, Jane Addams and Thomas Edison, for example, William Jennings Bryan (the "Last Creationist") and Luther Burbank. These names are still to be found even in the Lower School Encyclopaedia. Ford tried to include them all in one meteoric shipload. The governors of all the states in the Union were also invited, groups of representative university students, and so on. The Historical Collection at Atacama has gathered all the surviving originals or replicas of Ford's invitations, and the replies in which these outstanding individuals hesitated over or evaded his proposals. Several were only prevented by sudden attacks of ill-health at the very last moment from joining him. And there was a number of newspaper reporters, cinema operators and other photographers, stenographers, typists, translators, interpreters, baggage masters and publicity agents who made no trouble about coming. A certain Madame Rosika Schwimmer, an Hungarian lady, gleams forth and vanishes again from history as the organizing spirit of this selection. A vast multitude of adventurers and crazy people offered to assist when Ford's project was made public, and many were only prevented with the utmost difficulty from coming aboard the Oscar II.

There is still material for a great writer in the details of that

expedition, but our interest here is neither with the expedition as a whole nor with Ford or the other persons concerned in it as personalities, but with this idea that flamed and faded, this idea of 'an appeal against war to human sanity'. And with the vicissitudes of that idea.

The first thing to note is that it evoked response, and a very wide response. Eminent people, both in America and Europe, with their popularity to consider, found it advisable to be sympathetic, even if unhelpful. President Wilson, for example, was sympathetic but unhelpful. All the pretentious weathercocks of the Western World swung round towards it. We have every indication indeed of a very considerable drive towards a world pax in these years. But presently the weathercocks began to waver and swing away.

Why did they waver? From the first there was a sustained, malignant antagonism to the project. This grew in force and vigour. The American Press, and in its wake the European Press, set itself to magnify and distort every weakness, every slight absurdity, in the expedition and to invent further weaknesses and absurdities. A campaign of ridicule began, so skilful and persistent that it stripped away one blushing celebrity after another from the constellation, and smothered the essential sanity of the project in their wilting apologies. While Ford and his surviving missioners discussed and discoursed on their liner, the newspaper men they had brought with them concocted lies and absurd stories about their host — as though they were under instructions.

We know now they were under instructions. The Historical Documents Series makes this perfectly plain.

As our students disentangle strand after strand of that long hidden story, we realize more and more clearly the tortuous dishonesty, the confused double-mindedness, of the times. The export trade of the United States was flourishing under war conditions as it had never flourished before. Munitions of every sort were being sold at enormously enhanced prices to the belligerents. Such great banking houses as Morgan and Co. were facilitating the financial subjugation of Europe to America, through debts for these supplies. It is clear that American finance and American Big Business had not foreseen this. They had no exceptional foresight. But suddenly they found

themselves in a position of great advantage, and by all their traditions they were bound to make use of that advantage. And Ford in his infinite artlessness, "butting in", as they said, "on things that were not his business", was setting out to destroy this favourable state of affairs.

There was just enough plausibility in this endeavour to make it seem dangerous. Ford could not be ignored; his available publicity was too great for that. He was by no means beneath contempt; so he had to be made contemptible. With an earnestness worthy of a better cause, the American Press was launched against him. And it was one of the strange traditions of the American Press that a newsman should have no scruples. The ordinary reporter was a moral invert taking a real pride in his degradation. No expedient was too mean, no lie, no trick too contemptible if only it helped thwart and disillusion Ford.

And they did thwart and disillusion him. They got him wrong with himself. This half-baked man of genius, deserted by his friends, lost confidence in his project. He began to suspect his allies and believe his enemies.

We have to accept the evidence preserved for us, but even with that evidence before us, some of the details of that Press campaign appear incredible. There are a hundred gross files of newspaper cuttings at Atacama, and some of the most amazing are reproduced in the selected Historical Documents. The reporters and writers, who were abroad as Ford's guests, invented and sent home by wireless fantastic reports of free fights among the members of the mission, of disputes among the leaders, of Ford being chained to his bed by his secretary, of mutinies and grotesque happenings. Ford was told of and could have prevented these radio messages being sent — it was his ship for the time being — but a kind of fanaticism for free opinion — even if in practice that meant free lying — restrained him. "Let them do their darnedest," he said, still valiant. "Our work will speak for itself."

But presently he caught the influenza, a lowering disease long since extinct but very rife in that period and, under clumsy medical attention of the day, he arrived in Europe deflated and tired, physically and morally, prepared now to believe that there was

something essentially foolish in the whole affair. He had been drenched in ridicule beyond his powers of resistance, and he was giving way. He gave way.

"Guess I had better go home to mother," said Mr. Ford, sick in bed in Christiania, and kept to his room, though all Norway was agog to greet and cheer him.

But his movement went on by the inertia it had gained. His delegation was received with great enthusiasm in Norway and subsequently in Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark and Holland, those small sovereign European states which contrived so dexterously to keep out of the conflict to the end. People in those countries were evidently only too eager to believe that this novel intervention might help to end the war. If Ford was discouraged, some of his associates were of more persistent material. They held great public meetings in Sweden, Holland and Switzerland, and the repercussion of their activities certainly had a heartening effect on the peace movement in Germany and Britain. They contrived to get speech with a number of politicians and statesmen, and they roused the watchful hostility of the German and British War authorities — for the military chiefs of both sides regarded this mission very properly as an attack on war morale. A Neutral Conference for Continuous Mediation came into being — very precarious being — in Stockholm. It is claimed that it checked a movement to bring Sweden into the war on the side of the Germans.

Then gradually the Ford Organization for Peace lost prominence. It was overshadowed by greater movements towards negotiation, and more particularly by the large uncertain gestures of President Wilson, who, re-elected as "the man who kept the United States out of the war," brought his people from a phase of hypocritical pacificism and energetic armament into the war in 1917. Before that culmination the Peace Ship bladder had collapsed altogether. Its last typist and photographer and clerk had been paid off, and Ford himself was already doing all that was humanly possible to draw a blanket of oblivion over that unforgettable Peace Ship. But the records have been too much for him.

He had not led his expeditionary force in Europe, even nominally, for more than five weeks. He had kept to his Norwegian hotel,

avoided his more enthusiastic associates, started a vigorous reduction of his financial commitments, and finally bolted home. He deserted. He left his hotel at Christiania, stealthily, at five o'clock in the morning, and, in spite of the pleadings of those of his party who, warned at the last minute, tumbled out of bed to protest, he got away. Before the year was out he had ceased even financial support, and the various men and women who had abandoned careers and positions and faced ridicule and odium in complete faith in his simplicity were left to find their way back to their former niches or discover fresh ones.

Now what had happened to his great idea? What strange reversal of motive had occurred in the brain and heart of this Peace Crusader? There the curious historian must needs speculate, for that brain and heart have gone now beyond all closer scrutiny.

It has to be noted first that while the Peace Ship was on the Atlantic something very significant was going on at Washington. The swiftly growing munition industries of America had discovered that a home market for their products, a home market of superior solvency, might be added to the vast demands of the fighting nations overseas. America, it was argued, might keep out of the war — well and good — but nevertheless America must be "prepared." The United States must arm. The President had weighed this proposal with a due regard for the votes and Press support that would come to him at the next election; he had weighed it very carefully as became a politician, and after some resistance he consented that America should be "prepared". Munitions should be assembled, troops should be drilled. Flags began to wave — and the United States flag was a very intoxicating one — and drums and trumpets to sound. Military excitement stirred through that vast pacific population and rose.

And Ford had a mighty industrial plant hitherto engaged in pouring out motor-cars and agricultural material, but capable of rapid adaptation to the production of war material. It was his creation; it was his embodiment. It was all that made him visibly different from any other fellow in the street. His friends and family had certainly watched his abandonment of business for world affairs with profound misgiving. It may have been plain to them before it was plain to him, that if he stood out of this "preparedness" movement as he threatened

to do, other great plants would arise beside his own, to produce war material indeed at first, but capable when the war was over of a reverse transformation into great factories for the mass production of motorcars and the like. In France this transference from munitions to automobiles was actually foreseen and carried out by the Citröen organization. It is impossible that this prospect could have escaped Ford.

But in his haste he had declared himself against preparedness. He had threatened to hoist an "international flag" over his works in the place of the Stars and Stripes....

It is clear that in that one lively brain all the main forces of the time were at work. It had responded vividly and generously to the new drive towards a worldpax. Lochner (America's Don Quixote, 1924) reports him thus on his sailing from New York:

"Have you any last word to say?" a journalist enquired.

"Yes," he replied. "Tell the people to cry peace and fight preparedness."

"What if this expedition fails?" ventured another.

"If this expedition fails I'll start another," he flashed without a moment's hesitation.

"People say you are not sincere," commented a third....

"We've got peace-talk going now, and I'll pound it to the end."

And afterwards came those second thoughts. When, in 1917, the United States entered the war, the Peace Ship was a stale old joke and the vast Ford establishments were prepared and ready for the production of munitions.

Ford was a compendium of his age. That is why we give him this prominence in our history. The common man of the twentieth century was neither a pacifist nor a war-monger. He was both — and Ford was just a common man made big by accident and exceptional energy.

The main thread in the history of the twentieth century is essentially the drama of the indecisions manifested in their elementary plainness by Ford on board his Peace Ship. That voyage comes therefore like a tin-whistle solo by way of overture, to the complex orchestration of human motive in the great struggle for human unity that lay ahead.

9. — THE DIRECT ACTION OF THE ARMAMENT INDUSTRIES IN MAINTAINING WAR STRESSES

We must now say something about the direct activities of the hypertrophied "armament firms" in bringing about and sustaining the massacres of the Great War. A proper understanding of that influence is essential if the stresses and martyrdoms of the middle years of the twentieth century are to be understood.

These "armament firms" were an outcome of the iron and steel industry, which in a few score years between 1700 and 1850 grew up — no man objecting — from a modest activity of artisans to relatively gigantic possibilities of production. This industry covered the world with a network of railways, and produced iron and then steel steamships to drive the wooden sailing ships off the seas. And at an early stage (all this is traced in full detail in Luke Zimmern's Entwickelung und Geschichte von Kruppismus, 1913; Hist. Doc. 394112) it turned its attention to the weapons in the world.

In a perpetual progress in the size and range of great guns, in a vast expansion of battleships that were continually scrapped in favour of larger or more elaborate models, it found a most important and inexhaustible field of profit. The governments of the world were taken unawares, and in a little while the industry, by sound and accepted methods of salesmanship, was able to impose its novelties upon these ancient institutions with their tradition of implacable mutual antagonism. It was realized very soon that any decay of patriotism and loyalty would be inimical to this great system of profits, and the selling branch of the industry either bought directly or contrived to control most of the great newspapers of the time, and exercised a watchful vigilance on the teaching of belligerence in schools. Following the established rules and usages for a marketing industrialism, and with little thought of any consequences but profits, the directors of these huge concerns built up the new warfare that found its first exposition in the Great War of 1914-18, and gave its

last desperate and frightful convulsions in the Polish wars of 1940 and the subsequent decades.

Even at its outset in 1914-18 this new warfare was extraordinarily uncongenial to humanity. It did not even satisfy man's normal combative instincts. What an angry man wants to do is to beat and bash another living being, not to be shot at from ten miles distance or poisoned in a hole. Instead of drinking delight of battle with their peers, men tasted all the indiscriminating terror of an earthquake. The war literature stored at Atacama, to which we have already referred, is full of futile protest against the horror, the unsportsmanlike quality, the casual filthiness and indecency, the mechanical disregard of human dignity of the new tactics. But such protest itself was necessarily futile, because it did not go on to a clear indictment of the forces that were making, sustaining and distorting war. The child howled and wept and they did not even attempt to see what it was had tormented it.

To us nowadays it seems insane that profit-making individuals and companies should have been allowed to manufacture weapons and sell the apparatus of murder to all comers. But to the man of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it seemed the most natural thing in the world. It had grown up in an entirely logical and necessary way, without any restraint upon the normal marketing methods of peace-time commerce, from the continually more extensive application of new industrial products to warfare. Even after the World War catastrophe, after that complete demonstration of the futility of war, men still allowed themselves to be herded like sheep into the barracks, to be trained to consume, and be consumed, by new lines of slaughter goods produced and marketed by the still active armament traders. And the accumulation of a still greater and still more dangerous mass of war material continued.

There is a queer little pseudo-scientific essay by a Bengali satirist (Professor K. Chondra Sen, 1897-1942) among the India series of reprints, professing to be a study of the relative stupidity of the more intelligent animals up to and including man. He is concerned by the fatuity with which the mass of humanity watched the preparation of its own destruction during this period. He considers the fate of various species of penguins which were then being swept out of the

world — the twentieth century was an age of extermination for hundreds of species — and infers a similar destiny for mankind. He begins with the slaughter of the penguins; he gives photographs of these extraordinary creatures in their multitudes, gathered on the beaches of Oceanic islands and watching the advance of their slayers. One sees them scattered over a long sloping shore, standing still, or waddling about or flapping their stumpy wings while the massacre goes on. They seem to be vaguely interested in the killing of their fellows, but in no way stirred either to flight or resistance. (No thorough scientific observations, we may note, were ever made of penguin mentality, the revival of experimental psychology comes too late for that, and we are left now to guess at what went on in these queer brains of theirs during these raids. There is evidence to show that these creatures had curiosity, kindliness, sympathy and humour; and they were eminently teachable. They stood quite high in the scale of bird intelligence. And yet they permitted their own extinction.) They were not so much a-mental, Professor Sen insists, half seriously, half mockingly, as defective and wrong. They were capable of many idea systems but not of the idea of social preservation. He suggests, too, that the same was true of the sea elephants which were also very rapidly destroyed. (The last of these were murdered later "to make a record" by a Japanese lunatic with a craving for an "immortal Name" when the protective patrol was withdrawn during the "revolt of the sea pirates" in C.E. 1985.) But after Professor Sen has weighed every possible case, he still awards the palm for complaisant social stupidity to man.

With a fine parody of the social research methods of that time, he gives various photographs of what he calls the "human penguins" of that early Twentieth Century, waddling in their sleek thousands to see battleships launched, to rejoice over reviews and parades, to watch their army aeroplanes stunting in the sky. Side by side he gives photographs of penguin assemblies that, either by happy accident or skilful rearrangement, are absurdly parallel. He gives lists of shareholders in the armament firms, including the current Bishop of Hereford, the current President of the Free Church Council, a great multitude of clergymen, artists, judges and every sort of gentlefolk. He quotes extensively from the Hansard records of various debates in

the British House of Commons (in a debate on the Naval Estimates early in 1914, Philip Snowden, the radical socialist who afterwards became Viscount Snowden, was particularly explicit), showing that the nature of the danger was clearly seen and clearly and publicly stated. Only it was not FELT. It is upon that little difference between factual apprehension and the kind of apprehension that leads to effective action that our interest concentrates here.

Why did humanity gape at the guns and do nothing? And why, after the Great War, after that generation had seen over twenty million human beings perish painfully and untimely did it still go on, doing nothing adequate to the occasion? With the preparations still mounting up and the horrible possibilities of war increasing under its eyes? The great Cradle of Bethlehem Steel Corporation of America in 1929 was revealed as actively opposing naval disarmament at the Geneva Conference of 1927. At any rate it was associated with three shipbuilding companies who were sued by a Mr. Shearer, who claimed to have been given that task, for fees alleged to be due to him. There seems to have been little dispute that he had been so employed; the case turned upon the extent of his services and the amount of his fees. Nothing was done by the penguins either to the companies concerned or to Mr. Shearer. A few expressed indignation; that was all. Just as now and then no doubt a bird or so squawked at the oil hunters. For a detailed account and references see The Navy: Defence or Portent by C. A. Beard, 1930, reprinted Hist. Doc. Series 4,270,112.

The clue lies in the fact that there was practically no philosophical education at all in the world, no intelligent criticism of generalizations and general ideas. There was no science of social processes at all. People were not trained to remark the correlations of things; for the most part they were not aware that there was any correlation between things; they imagined this side of life might change and that remain unaltered. The industrialists and financiers built up these monstrous armaments and imposed them on the governments of the time, with a disregard of consequences that seems now absolutely imbecile. Most of these armament propagandists were admirable in their private lives: gentle lovers, excellent husbands, fond of children and animals, good fellows,

courteous to inferiors, and so on. Sir Basil Zaharoff, the greatest of munition salesmen, as one sees him in the painting (ascribed to Orpen) recently discovered in Paris, with his three-cornered hat, his neat little moustaches and beardlet, and the ribbon of some Order of Chivalry about his neck, looks quite a nice, if faintly absurd, little gentleman. Those shareholding bishops and clergy may, for anything we know to the contrary, have had charming personalities. But they wanted their dividends. And in order to pay them those dividends, the dread of war and the need of war had to be kept alive in the public mind.

That was done most conveniently through the Press. You could buy a big newspaper in those days, lock, stock and barrel, for five or ten million dollars, and the profits made on one single battleship came to more than that. Naturally, and according to the best business traditions, the newspapers hired or sold themselves to the war salesmen. What was wrong in that? Telling the news in those days was a trade, not a public duty. A daily paper that had dealt faithfully with this accumulating danger would quite as naturally and necessarily have found its distribution impeded, have found itself vigorously outdone by more richly endowed competitors, able because of their wealth to buy up all the most attractive features, able to outdo it in every way with the common reader.

It wasn't that the newspaper owners and the munition dealers wanted anyone hurt. They only wanted to sell equipment and see it used up. Nor was it that the newspapers desired the wholesale mangling and butchering of human beings. They wanted sales and advertisements. The butchery was quite by the way, an unfortunate side issue to legitimate business. Shortsightedness is not diabolical, even if it produces diabolical results.

And even those soldiers? Freudheim, in his analysis of the soldierly mind, shows a picture of that Sir Henry Wilson we have already mentioned, arrayed in shirt-sleeves and digging modestly in the garden of his villa during a phase of retirement, and the same individual smirking in all his glory, buttons, straps and "decorations", as a director of military operations. It is an amazing leap from the suburban insignificance of a retired clerk to godlike importance. In peace time, on the evidence of his own diaries, this

Wilson was a tiresome nobody, an opinionated bore; in war he passed beyond criticism and became a god. One understands at once what a vital matter employment and promotion must have been to him. But so far as we can tell he desired no killing AS killing. If he had been given blood to drink he would probably have been sick. Yet he lived upon tanks of blood.

These professional soldiers thought of slaughter as little as possible. It is preposterous to say they desired it, much less that they gloated over it. It might have fared better with their men if they had thought of it more. They had an age-old sentimental devotion to their country, a solemn sense of great personal worth in their services, an orgiastic delight of battle. And they did not see, nor want to see, what was beyond their occupation. Their religious teachers were quite ready to assure them they were correct in all they did and were.

The senescent Christian Churches of that age had indeed a very direct interest in war. A marked tendency to ignore or ridicule the current religious observances had become manifest, but under the stresses of loss and death people turned again to the altar. It is easily traceable in the fiction of the time. The despised curate of the tea-cups and croquet lawn became the implicitly heroic "padre" of the sentimental war stories.

The problem that confronted the growing minority that was waking up to the perils and possibilities of our species in the third and fourth decades of the twentieth century was this: How in the first place to concentrate the minds of people onto this state of distraction and diffusion, how to bring them to bear upon the crude realities before them, and then how to organize the gigantic effort needed to shake off that intermittent and ever more dangerous fever of war and that chronic onset of pauperization which threatened the whole world with social dissolution.

There was no central antagonist, no ruling devil, for those anxious spirits to fight. That would have made it a straight, understandable campaign. But the Press with a certain flavouring of pious intentions was practically against them. Old social and political traditions, whatever the poses they assumed, were tacitly against them. History was against them, for it could but witness that war had always gone on since its records began. Not only the current Bishop of Hereford,

and the current President of the Free Church Council, caught with their dividends upon them, but their Churches and the Catholic Church, and indeed all the Christian Churches, in spite of their allegiance to the Prince of Peace, were quietly competitive with, or antagonistic to, the secular world controls that alone could make a healthy world peace possible. The admission of the insufficiency of their own creeds to comfort or direct would have been the necessary prelude to a new moral effort.

And the idea of the naturalness and inevitability of war was not only everywhere in the world around those few forward-looking men who knew better, it was in their blood and habits. They were seeking how to attack not a fortress, but what seemed a perpetually recuperative jungle of mixed motives, tangled interests and cross-purposes, within themselves as without.

10. — VERSAILLES: SEED BED OF DISASTERS

The formal war, against the Central Powers, the "World War", ended on November 11, 1918, C.E. in the defeat and submission of the Central Powers. There was a conference at Versailles, in the same palace in which triumphant Germans had dictated peace to France after a previous war in 1870-71. There was a needlessly dramatic flavour in this reversal of the rôles of the two countries. It was now France and her allies who dictated, and naturally the ideas of a romantic restoration and a stern and righteous judgment dominated the situation. The assembled Powers sat down to right the wrongs and punish the misdeeds of their grandparents. Even at the time it seemed a little belated. But threading their proceedings we do find quite plainly evident the developing conflict between historical tradition and the quickening sense of human unity in the world. If the World-State was not present at the conference, its voice was at any rate "heard without".

By this time (1919 C.E.) there was indeed quite a considerable number of intelligent people in the world who had realized the accumulating necessity of a world government, and a still larger multitude, like that Henry Ford we have described, who had apprehended it instinctively and sentimentally, but there was no one yet who had had the intellectual vigour to attack in earnest the problem of substituting a world system for the existing governments. Men's minds and hearts quailed before that undertaking. And yet, as we now know so clearly, it was the only thing for them to do. It was the sole alternative to an ever-broadening and deepening series of disasters. But its novelty and vastness held them back. Irrational habit kept them in the ancient currents of history.

To us they seem like drowning men who were willing to attempt to save themselves by rallies of swimming, floating, holding on to straws and bubbles, but who refused steadfastly, in spite of the proximity of a ladder, to clamber out of the water for good and all.

Hardly any of them in their ideas of a world system dared go

beyond a purely political agreement for the avoidance of war. Five decades of human distress were still needed before there was to be any extensive realization that belligerence was only one symptom, and by no means the gravest symptom, of human disunion.

The American President Woodrow Wilson, of all the delegates to the Peace Conference, was the most susceptible to the intimations of the future. The defects and limitations of his contributions to that settlement give us a measure of the political imagination of those days. He brought what was left of the individualistic liberalism that had created the American Republics to the solution of the world problem. None of the other participants in these remarkable discussions — Clemenceau (France), Lloyd George (Britain), Sonnino (Italy), Saionji (Japan), Hymans (Belgium), Paderewski (Poland), Bratianu (Roumania), Benes (Bohemia), Venezelos (Greece), Feisal (Hedjaz), and so on through a long list of now fading names — seemed aware that, apart from any consideration of national advantage, humanity as a whole might claim an interest in the settlement. They were hard-shell "representatives", national advocates. For a brief interval Wilson stood alone for mankind. Or at least he seemed to stand for mankind. And in that brief interval there was a very extraordinary and significant wave of response to him throughout the earth. So eager was the situation that all humanity leapt to accept and glorify Wilson — for a phrase, for a gesture. It seized upon him as its symbol. He was transfigured in the eyes of men. He ceased to be a common statesman; he became a Messiah. Millions believed him as the bringer of untold blessings; thousands would gladly have died for him. That response was one of the most illuminating events in the early twentieth century. Manifestly the World-State had been conceived then, and now it stirred in the womb. It was alive.

And then for some anxious decades it ceased to stir.

Amidst different scenery and in different costumes, the story of Wilson repeats the story of Ford, the story of a man lifted by an idea too great for him, thrown up into conspicuousness for a little while and then dropped, as a stray leaf may be spun up and dropped by a gust of wind before a gale. The essential Wilson, the world was soon to learn, was vain and theatrical, with no depth of thought and no

wide generosity. So far from standing for all mankind, he stood indeed only for the Democratic Party in the United States — and for himself. He sacrificed the general support of his people in America to party considerations and his prestige in Europe to a craving for social applause. For a brief season he was the greatest man alive. Then for a little while he remained the most conspicuous. He visited all the surviving courts of Europe and was fêted and undone in every European capital. That triumphal procession to futility need not occupy us further here. Our concern is with his idea.

Manifestly he wanted some sort of a world pax. But it is doubtful if at any time he realized that a world pax means a world control of all the vital common interests of mankind. He seems never to have thought out this job to which he set his hand so confidently. He did not want, or, if he did, he did not dare to ask for, any such centralized world controls as we now possess. They were probably beyond the range of his reading and understanding. His project from first to last was purely a politician's project.

The pattern conceived by him was a naïve adaptation of the parliamentary governments of Europe and America to a wider union. His League, as it emerged from the Versailles Conference, was a typical nineteenth-century government enlarged to planetary dimensions and greatly faded in the process; it had an upper chamber, the Council, and a lower chamber, the Assembly, but, in ready deference to national susceptibilities, it had no executive powers, no certain revenues, no army, no police, and practically no authority to do anything at all. And even as a political body it was remote and ineffective; it was not in any way representative of the peoples of the earth as distinguished from the governments of the earth. Practically nothing was done to make the common people of the world feel that the League was theirs. Its delegates were appointed by the Foreign Offices of the very governments its only conceivable rôle was to supersede. They were national politicians and they were expected to go to Geneva to liquidate national politics. The League came into being at last, a solemn simulacrum to mock, cheat and dispel the first desire for unity that mankind had ever betrayed.

Yet what else was possible then? If Wilson seemed to embody the

formless aspirations of mankind, there can be no dispute that he impressed the politicians with whom he had to deal as a profoundly insincere visionary. They dealt with him as that and they beat him as that. The only way to have got anything more real than this futile League would have been a revolutionary appeal to the war-weary peoples of the earth against their governments, to have said, as indeed he could have said in 1918, to the whole world that the day of the World-State had come. That would have reverberated to the ends of the earth.

He was not the man to do that. He had not that power of imagination. He had not that boldness with governments. He had the common politician's way of regarding great propositions as a means to small ends. If he had been bolder and greater, he might have failed, he might have perished; but he failed and perished anyhow; and a bolder bid for world unity might have put the real issue before mankind for ever and shortened the Age of Frustration by many decades.

What he did do was to reap an immediate harvest of popular applause, to present to human hope a white face rigid with self-approval, bowing from processional carriages and decorated balconies, retiring gravely into secret conference with the diplomatists and politicians of the old order and emerging at last with this League of Nations, that began nothing and ended nothing and passed in a couple of decades out of history.

It was a League not to end sovereignties but preserve them. It stipulated that the extraordinarily ill-contrived boundaries established by the Treaty in which it was incorporated should be guaranteed by the League for EVERMORE. Included among other amiable arrangements were clauses penalizing Germany and her allies as completely as Carthage was penalized by Rome after the disaster of Zamia — penalizing her in so overwhelming a way as to make default inevitable and afford a perennial excuse for her continued abasement. It was not a settlement, it was a permanent punishment. The Germans were to become the penitent helots of the conquerors; a generation, whole generations, were to be born and die in debt, and to ensure the security of this arrangement Germany was to be effectually disarmed and kept disarmed.

Delenda est Germanic was the sole idea of the French (see Morris Henbane's Study of Pertinax, 1939) and the representatives of the other Allies who were gathered together in the Paris atmosphere, and, working amidst the vindictive memories of Versailles, were only too ready to fall in with this punitive conception of their task. It was the easiest conception; it put a hundred difficult issues into a subordinate place. It always looks so much easier to men of poor imagination to put things back than to carry them on. If the French dreaded a resurrection of the German armies, the British feared a resurrection of the German fleet and of German industrial competition. Japan and Italy, seeking their own compensations elsewhere, were content to see the German-speaking peoples, who constituted the backbone of the continent, divided and reduced to vassalage.

The antiquated form of Wilson's ideas produced still more mischievous consequences in the multiplication of sovereign governments in the already congested European area. Deluded by the vague intimations of unity embodied in the League, Wilson lent himself readily to a reconstruction of the map of Europe upon strictly nationalist lines. The Polish nation was restored. Our history has already studied the successive divisions of this country in the eighteenth century. It is a great region of the Central Plain, whose independent existence became more and more inconvenient as the trade and commerce of Europe developed. Geography fought against it. It was a loose-knit union of individualistic equestrian aristocrats dominating a peasantry. But its partition between Russia, Prussia and Austria was achieved with the utmost amount of brutality, and after the Napoleonic wars a romantic legend about this lost kingdom of Poland seized upon the sentiment of France, Britain and America. These rude nobles and their serfs, so roughly incorporated by the adjacent states, were transfigured into a delicate, brave and altogether wonderful people, a people with a soul torn asunder and trampled underfoot by excessively booted oppressors. The restoration of Poland — the excessive restoration of Poland — was one of the brightest ambitions of President Wilson.

Poland was restored. But instead of a fine-spirited and generous people emerging from those hundred and twenty years of

subjugation, and justifying the sympathy and hopes of liberalism throughout the world, there appeared a narrowly patriotic government, which presently developed into an aggressive, vindictive and pitiless dictatorship, and set itself at once to the zestful persecution of the unfortunate ethnic minorities (about a third of the entire population) caught in the net of its all too ample boundaries. The real Poland of the past had been a raiding and aggressive nation which had ridden and harried to the very walls of Moscow. It had not changed its nature. The Lithuanian city of Vilna was now grabbed by a coup de main and the southeastern boundary pushed forward in Galicia. In the treatment of the Ukrainians and Ruthenians involved in liberation, Poland equalled any of the atrocities which had been the burden of her song during her years of martyrdom. In 1932 one-third of the budget of this new militant Power was for armament.

Not only was Poland thus put back upon the map. As a result of a sedulous study of historical sentimentalities, traditions, dialects and local feelings, a whole cluster of new sovereign Powers, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia, Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, an attenuated Hungary and an enlarged Roumania, was evoked to crowd and complicate the affairs of mankind by their sovereign liberties, their ambitions, hostilities, alliances, understandings, misunderstandings, open and secret treaties, tariffs, trade wars and the like. Russia was excluded from the first attempt at a World Parliament because she had repudiated her vast war debts — always a matter of grave solicitude to the Western creditor, and — strangest fact of all in this strange story — the United States, the Arbitrator and Restorer of Nations, stood out from the League, because President Wilson's obstinate resolve to monopolize the immortal glory of World Salvation for himself and his party had estranged a majority of his senators.

The Senate, after some attempts at compromise, rejected the Covenant of the League altogether, washed its hands of world affairs, and the President, instead of remaining for ever Prince of Everlasting Peace and Wonder of the Ages, shrank again very rapidly to human proportions and died a broken and disappointed man. Like Ford, the United States returned to normal business and the Profit and Loss Account, and the Europeans were left with the name of Wilson

written all over their towns, upon streets, avenues, esplanades, railway stations, parks and squares, to make what they could of this emasculated League he had left about among their affairs.

If Russia and Germany in their character of Bad Peoples were excluded from the League, such remote peoples as the Chinese and the Japanese were included as a matter of course. It was assumed, apparently, that they were "just fellows" of the universal Treaty-of-Westphalia pattern. The European world knew practically nothing of the mental processes of these remote and ancient communities, and it seems hardly to have dawned upon the conferring statesmen that political processes rest entirely upon mental facts. The League, after much difficulty, and after some years' delay, did indeed evolve a Committee of Intellectual Cooperation, but so far as its activities can now be traced, this was concerned with dilettante intellectualism only; there is no indication that it ever interested itself in the League as an idea.

Considering all things in the light of subsequent events, it would have been well if the League of Nations had committed hara-kiri directly the United States Senate refused participation, and if the European Powers, realizing their failure to stabilize the planet at one blow, had set themselves at once to the organization of a League of Conciliation and Cooperation within the European area. The League's complete inability to control or even modify the foreign policy of Japan (modelled on the best nineteenth-century European patterns) was the decisive factor in its declension to a mere organization of commentary upon current affairs.

As its authority declined the courage and pungency of its reports increased. Some of the later ones are quite admirable historical documents. Gradually the member governments discontinued their subsidies and the secretariat dwindled to nothing. Like the Hague Tribunal, the League faded out of existence before or during the Famished Fifties. It does not figure in history after the first Polish war, but its official buildings were intact in 1965, and in 1968, and for some years later, they were used as auxiliary offices by the Western branch of the Transport Union.

The imposition of vast monetary payments upon Germany was the only part of the settlement of Versailles that dealt with the financial

and economic life of our race. Astounding as this seems to us to-day, it was the most natural oversight possible to the Versailles politicians. Political life was still deep in the old purely combatant tradition, still concentrated upon boundaries and strategic advantages; and it was extraordinarily innocent in the face of economic realities. The mighty forces demanding economic unification, albeit they were, as we have shown, the real causes of the Great War, were ignored at Versailles as completely as if they had never existed.

Only one outstanding voice, that of the British economist J. M. Keynes (Economic Consequences of the Peace, 1919), was audible at the time in protest and warning against the preposterous dislocation of credit and trade involved in the reparation payments. There was no arrangement whatever for the liquidation of the debts piled up by the Allies AGAINST EACH OTHER (!), and no economic parallel to the political League of Nations. No control of economic warfare was even suggested. The Americans, Wilson included, were still in a stage of financial individualism; they thought money-getting was an affair of individual smartness within the limits of the law, and the American conception of law was of something that presented interesting obstacles rather than effectual barriers to enlightened self-seeking. The contemporary American form of mutual entertainment was a poker party, and that great people therefore found nothing inimical in sitting down after the war to play poker, with France and Great Britain as its chief opponents, for the gold and credit of the world.

It was only slowly during the decade following after the war that the human intelligence began to realize that the Treaty of Versailles had not ended the war at all. It had set a truce to the bloodshed, but it had done so only to open a more subtle and ultimately more destructive phase in the traditional struggle of the sovereign states. The existence of independent sovereign states IS war, white or red, and only an elaborate mis-education blinded the world to this elementary fact. The peoples of the defeated nations suffered from a real if not very easily defined sense of injustice in this Treaty, which was framed only for them to sign, and sign in the rôle of wrongdoers brought to book. Very naturally they were inspired by an ill-

concealed resolve to revise, circumvent or disregard its provisions at the earliest possible opportunity. The conquering Powers, on the other hand, were conscious of having not only humiliated their defeated enemies but thrust them into a state of exasperated disadvantage. The thought of a revanche was equally present therefore to the victors, and instead of disarming as the Germans were compelled to do, they broke the obligations of the Treaty and retained and increased their military establishments.

The armament firms and their newspapers naturally did all they could to intensify this persistence in an armed "security". Any disposition on the part of the French public, for instance, to lay aside its weapons was promptly checked by tales of secret arsenals and furtive drilling in Germany. And the narrow patriotic forces that guided France not only kept her extravagantly armed against her fallen foe, but carried on a subtle but ruthless financial warfare that, side by side with the American game, overcame every effort of Germany to recover socially or economically.

Moreover, the conquering Powers, so soon as they considered their former antagonists conclusively disposed of, turned themselves frankly, in full accordance with the traditions of the sovereign state system, to the task of getting the better of each other in the division of the spoils. Their "Alliances" had brought about no sense of community. Already within a year of the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles heavy fighting was going on in Asia Minor between the Greeks and the Turks. The Greeks had British encouragement; the French and Italians had supported the Turks. It was a war of catspaws. This war culminated in a disastrous rout of the Greeks and the burning of the town of Smyrna. This last was a quite terrible massacre; multitudes of women and children were outraged, men and boys gouged, emasculated or killed; all but the Turkish quarter was looted and burnt. The quays in front of the flaming town were dense with terror-stricken crowds, hoping against hope to get away upon some ship before they were fallen upon, robbed, butchered, or thrust into the water.

A little before this the Turks had driven the French out of the ancient province of Cilicia, and had completed the extermination of that ancient people the Hittites or Armenians. During the war or after

the war mattered little to the Armenians, for fire and sword pursued them still. Over two million died — for the most part violent deaths.

Fighting still went on after the Great Peace in the north and south of Russia and in eastern Siberia; and China became a prey to armies of marauders. Poland seized Vilna, invaded eastern Galicia and fought Russia in the Ukraine, and a raid of patriotic Italians expelled a mixed Allied garrison from Fiume.

Presently there was a dreadful famine in south-east Russia which neither America nor Europe was able to alleviate. Always before the war a famine in any part of the world had exercised the philanthropic element in the Anglo-Saxon community. But philanthropy had lost heart. There was a faint but insufficient flutter of the old habits in America but none in Britain.

Such was the peace and union of the world immediately achieved by the Conference of Versailles.

A number of unsatisfactory appendices and patches had presently to be made to correct the most glaring defects and omissions of the Treaty. Constantinople, which had been taken from the Turks and held by a mixed force of the Allies, was restored to them in 1923 after the Smyrna massacre and some warlike gesticulation between them and the British.

In drawing the boundaries of the new and revised states of the European patchwork there was the utmost disregard of economic commonsense; peasants would find themselves cut off from winter or summer pasture or from market towns which had been developed by their needs. Great foundries and chemical and metallurgical works were separated from the ores and deposits on which they relied. Vienna, once the financial and business centre of all south-east Central Europe, was decapitated. Most fantastic and, as it proved, most disastrous of all the follies of Versailles, was the creation of the free city of Danzig and what was called the Polish Corridor.

Let us note a point or so about this latter tangle to illustrate the mental quality of the Conference at its worst. Here more than anywhere else did the simple romantic idea that the Germans were Bad, and that anyone opposed to the Germans was without qualification Good, rule the situation. The Poles were Good, and they were the chosen of the Allies, the particular protégés of the

sentimental historian from America. He had come to put down the mighty from their seats and to exalt the humble and the meek. The hungry and eager were to be filled with good things and the rich, the erstwhile rich, were to be sent empty away. Germany, like Dives in hell, was to look up and see Poland like Lazarus in Woodrow Wilson's bosom. Not only were the Good Poles to be given dominion over Ruthenians, Ukrainians, Jews (whom particularly they detested), Lithuanians, White Russians and Germans, they were to have also something of profound economic importance— "access to the sea".

On that President Wilson had been very insistent. Switzerland had done very well in pre-war Europe without access to the sea, but that was another story. The difficulty was that by no stretch of ethnic map-colouring could Poland be shown to border on the sea. A belt of Pomeranians and Germans stretched across the mouth of the Vistula, and the only possibility of a reasonable trading outlet to the sea, so far as Poland needed such an outlet — for most of its trade was with its immediate neighbours — was through an understanding with that belt of people. That would have been easy enough to arrange. At the mouth of the Vistula stood the entirely German city of Danzig. It lived mainly as an outlet for Polish trade, and it could prosper in no other way. There was no reason to suppose it would put any difficulties in the way of Polish imports and exports. It was an ancient, honest, clean and prosperous German city. Ninety-six per cent of its inhabitants were German.

This was the situation to which the Conference of Versailles, under the inspiration of that magic phrase "access to the sea", turned its attention. Even the profound belief of the Conquerors that there were no Germans but bad Germans could not justify their turning over Danzig itself to Polish rule. But they separated it from Germany and made it into a "free city", and to the west of it they achieved that "access to the sea" of Wilson's, by annexing a broad band of Pomeranian territory to Poland. (This was the actual "Corridor" of the controversies.) It had no port to compare with Danzig, but the Poles set themselves to create a rival in Gdynia, which should be purely Polish, and which should ultimately starve the trading Germans out of Danzig.

And to keep the waters of the Vistula as pure and sweet for Poland as the existence of Danzig at the estuary allowed, the peace-makers ran the Vistula boundary between Poland and east Prussia, not in the usual fashion midway along the stream, but at a little distance on the east Prussian side. (Jacques Kayser, La Paix en Péril, 1931; Hist. Doc., 711711.) So that the east German population, the peasant cultivator, the erstwhile fisherman, the shepherd with his flocks to water, was pulled up by a line of frontier posts and a Polish rifle within sight of the stream. Moreover, that eastward country was flat and low-lying and had hitherto been protected from floods and a relapse to marsh conditions by a line of dykes. The frontier cut that line five times, and since the Poles had no interest whatever in these defences, they fell rapidly out of repair. Further along the boundary cut off the great towns of Garnsee and Bischofswerder from their railway station.

But we must not lose ourselves in the details of this exasperating settlement. The maximum of irritation developed in the absurd Corridor itself. The current of traffic had hitherto run to and fro between east and west, the trend of the railways was in that direction; the traffic in the north and south direction had come to Danzig along the great river. Now the Poles set themselves to obstruct both these currents and to wrench round all the communications into a north and south direction avoiding Danzig. Every German going east or west found himself subjected to a series of frontier examinations, to tariff payments, to elaborate delays, to such petty but memorable vexations as that all the windows of an express train passing across the Corridor should be closed, and so forth, and the city of Danzig, cut off from German trade, found its Polish business being steadily diverted to Gdynia. French capital was poured into Gdynia and into its new railway to the south, so that French financial interests were speedily entangled in the dispute.

The indignity and menace of Danzig burnt into the German imagination. That Corridor fretted it as nothing else in the peace settlement had fretted it. It became a dominant political issue. There was an open sore of a similar character in Upper Silesia; there was a sore in the Saar Valley; there was the sore of an enforced detachment from Austria; there were many other bitter memories and grievances,

but this was so intimate, so close to Berlin, that it obsessed all German life.

Within a dozen years of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles the Polish Corridor was plainly the most dangerous factor in the European situation. It mocked every projection of disarmament. It pointed the hypnotized and impotent statescraft of Europe straight towards a resumption of war. A fatalistic attitude towards war as something terrible indeed but inevitable, which had already been evident among the politicians of Europe before 1914, reappeared and spread.

History had an air of repeating itself. Nobody made any definite suggestions about any of these open sores, but there was scarcely a politician of the period who could not claim to have been very eloquent on various occasions against war — with, of course, a skilful avoidance of anything that could be considered specific, controversial, unpatriotic or likely to wound the susceptibilities of the Powers immediately concerned.

11. — THE IMPULSE TO ABOLISH WAR: WHY THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS FAILED TO PACIFY THE WORLD

Before we leave that bleak and futile idealist, Woodrow Wilson, altogether, we will draw the attention of the student to the essential factors of his failure. The defects of his personality must not blind us to the impossibility of his ambition. His narrow egotism, the punitive treatment of the Central Powers and so forth, merely emphasized a disadvantage that would have been fatal to the launching of any League of Nations at that time. There had been an insufficient mental preparation for a world system to operate. No ideology existed to sustain it. The World-State, the Modern State, was still only a vaguely apprehended suggestion; it had not been worked out with any thoroughness and the League was the most hasty of improvisations.

It needed the life scheming of de Windt and his associates, which we shall presently describe; it needed a huge development and application of the science of social psychology, before the supersession of the chaos of sovereign states by a central control was even a remote possibility. Wilson thought he could get together with a few congenial spirits and write a recipe for human unity. He had not the slightest inkling of the gigantic proportions, the intricacy, intimacy and profundity, of the task that was opening before him. He attempted to patch up the outworn system of his time and pass it off as a new one. He did not dream of the monetary reconstruction, the need for a thorough-going socialism throughout the world, and for a complete revolution in education, before the peace and security of mankind could be established. Yet, narrow and blind as he was, he seems to have been in advance of the general thought of his age.

This premature and ineffectual League was a hindrance rather than a help to the achievement of world peace. It got in the way. It prevented people from thinking freely about the essentials of the problem. Organizations of well-meaning folk, the British League of Nations Union, for example, came into existence to support it, and

resisted rather than helped any effectual criticism of its constitution and working. They would say that it was “better than nothing”, whereas a false start is very much worse than nothing. In the post-war decade, the amount of vigorous constructive thought in the general mind about world politics was extraordinarily small. It was only when the insufficiency of the League had passed beyond any possibility of dispute that men began to take up the abandoned search for world unification again.

A dozen years later the Modern State movement was still only foreshadowed in sketchy attempts to find a comprehensive set of general formulae for liberal progressive effort. The pacificists, communists, socialists and every other sort of “ists” who gave a partial and confused expression to human discontent had still to be drawn together into understanding and cooperation. Most of their energy was wasted in obscure bickerings, mutual suspicion and petty and partial tentatives. The middle of the century had been passed before there was any considerable body of Modern State propaganda and education on earth.

12. — THE BREAKDOWN OF "FINANCE" AND SOCIAL MORALE AFTER VERSAILLES

The unprecedented range and destruction of the World War were, we have pointed out, largely ascribable to the hypertrophy of the world's iron and steel industry relatively to the political and social concepts of the race. But in the first "post-war" decade the stresses of other disproportionate developments began to make themselves manifest at various other weak points in the loosely linked association of our species. The war from the economic point of view had been the convulsive using up of an excess of production that the race had no other method of distributing and consuming. But the necessities of the struggle, and particularly its interference with international trading, which had evoked factories and finishing processes in many undeveloped regions hitherto yielding only raw or unfinished materials, had added greatly to the gross bulk of productive plant throughout the world, and so soon as the open war-furnaces ceased to burn up the surplus and hold millions of men out of the labour market, this fact became more and more oppressively apparent. The postwar increase in war preparation, which went on in spite of endless palavering about disarmament, did not destroy men, nor scrap and destroy material, in sufficient quantity to relieve the situation.

Moreover, the expansion of productive energy was being accompanied by a positive contraction of the distributive arrangements which determined consumption. The more efficient the output, the fewer were the wages-earners. The more stuff there was, the fewer consumers there were. The fewer the consumers, the smaller the trading profits, and the less the gross spending power of the shareholders and individual entrepreneurs. So buying dwindled at both ends of the process and the common investor suffered with the wages- earner. This was the "Paradox of Overproduction" which so troubled the writers and journalists of the third decade of the twentieth century.

It is easy for the young student to-day to ask "Why did they not

adjust?" But let him ask himself who there was to adjust. Our modern superstructure of applied economic science, the David Lubin Bureau and the General Directors' Board, with its vast recording organization, its hundreds of thousands of stations and observers, directing, adjusting, apportioning and distributing, had not even begun to exist. Adjustment was left to blind and ill-estimated forces. It was the general interest of mankind to be prosperous, but it was nobody's particular interest to keep affairs in a frame of prosperity. Manifestly a dramatic revision of the liberties of enterprise was necessary, but the enterprising people who controlled politics, so far as political life was controlled, were the very last people to undertake such a revision.

With the hypertrophy of productive activities there had been a concurrent hypertrophy of banking and financial organization generally, but it had been a flabby hypertrophy, a result of the expansion of material production rather than a compensatory and controlling development.

It is so plain to us to-day that the apportionment of the general product of the world for enterprise or consumption is a department of social justice and policy, and can be dealt with only in the full light of public criticism and upon grounds of claim and need, that it is difficult for us to understand the twentieth century attitude to these things. We should no more dream of leaving the effectual control in these matters in private profit-seeking hands than we should leave our law courts or our schools to the private bidder. But nothing of the sort was plain in 1935 C.E. That lesson had still to be learnt.

The story of banking and money in the early twentieth century has so much in it verging upon the incredible, that it has become one of the most attractive and fruitful fields for the student of historical psychology. The system had grown up as a tangle of practice. It was evolved, not designed. There was never any attempt to gauge the justice or the ultimate consequences of any practice, so long as it worked at the time. Men tried this and that, did this and that, and concealed their opinions of what the results might be. Reserve was essential in the system. So little was the need for publicity in this universal interest understood, that the most fundamental decisions affecting the common man's purchasing power and the credit of

industrial undertakings were made in secret, and the restriction and stimulation of trade and work went on in the profoundest obscurity. Neither in the ordinary courses of the schools and universities was there any instruction in these essential facts. The right of private enterprise to privacy was respected in the Churches, the law courts and private practice alike. Men found themselves employed or unemployed, cheated of their savings or better off, they knew not why. Instead of the clear knowledge of economic pressures and movements that we have to-day, strange Mystery Men were dimly visible through a fog of baffling evasions and mis-statements, manipulating prices and exchanges.

Prominent among these Mystery Men was a certain Mr. Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England from 1920 to 1935. He is among the least credible figures in all history, and a great incrustation of legends has accumulated about him. In truth the only mystery about him was that he was mysterious. His portrait shows a slender, bearded man, dressed more like a successful artist or musician than the conventional banker of the time. He was reputed to be shy and, in the phraseology of the time, "charming", and he excited the popular imagination by a habit of travelling about under assumed names and turning up in unexpected places. Why he did so, nobody now knows. Perhaps he did it for the fun of doing it. He gave evidence before an enquiry into finance in 1930 (the Macmillan Committee), and from that and from one or two of his public speeches that have been preserved, it is plain that he had what we should now consider an entirely inadequate education for the veiled activities in which he was engaged. Of human ecology he betrays no knowledge, and his ideas of social and economic processes are not what we should now recognize as adequate general ideas even for an ordinary citizen. Indeed his chief qualification for his darkly responsible post was some practical experience acquired in association with various private banking firms before he entered the service of the Bank of England. This experience was acquired during what we know now to have been a period of quite accidental and transitory expansion of human wealth. Plainly he did not even bring a blank mind to his task. He had a mind warped and prejudiced by gainful banking under abnormal conditions. Yet for a time he was

regarded as an “expert” of almost magical quality, and during the convulsions of the post-war period he was able to dictate or defeat arrangements that enriched or impoverished millions of people in every country in Europe.

Another big obscure financial force in the war and post-war periods was the complex of great private banking ganglia, of which Morgan and Co., with its associated firms, was the most central and most typical. This particular firm carried on its business upon a scale that completely overshadowed many minor governments. The loans it made or refused, confirmed or shattered régimes. Its founder, J. P. Morgan, a queer combination of Yankee “gentleman” and German junker, whose innate acquisitiveness overflowed in great collections of pictures and “art” objects generally, had died before the outbreak of the war, but a phrase he used in a dispute with President Roosevelt the First was taken up later and made into a deadly critical weapon against the whole private banking world. “Roosevelt”, he protested, “wants all of us to have glass pockets!”

A second President Roosevelt was presently to revive that demand.

Nothing could better betray the habit of deep gainful manoeuvrings than that phrase. Morgan was never dishonest and always disingenuous. That was the rule of his game. Opaque pockets he insisted upon, and hidden motives, but also the punctual performance of a bargain. His tradition lived after him. His firm became an octopus of credit. The interweaving bargains it made hung like a shadowy group of spiders’ webs about European life. It did its work of strangulation by its nature and without malice, as a spider spins. No contemporary could apprehend it. The particulars of any particular situation could only be unravelled vaguely by a normal enquirer after many months of study.

Interacting with such mystery systems as these of the banking world were other dark figures and groups, controlling vast industrial activities, obsessing and perverting spending power. There was, for example, that Mystery Man of Mystery Men, Sir Basil Zaharoff, the armaments salesman, still the delight of our schoolboy novelists, and Ivar Kreuger, who created an almost world-wide system of lucifer match monopolies, lent great sums to governments and was finally

caught forging big parcels of bonds. He then staged a suicide in Paris to escape the penalty of fraud. (We have to remember that in those days the lucifer matches we now see in museums were consumed by the billion. There was no other handy source of fire, and their manufacture and distribution was on the scale of a primary industry.) Kreuger, unlike Morgan, was not a man of the acquisitive type; he neither hoarded nor collected; he kept nothing, not even the law, but he built lavishly and gave away money for scientific research. (The discovery of Pekin Man, a memorable incident in early archaeology, was, for instance, made possible by his gifts.) Morgan forestalled and accumulated; Kreuger robbed and gave. When Morgan spent his gains he bought "Old Masters", manuscripts and suchlike indisputably genuine and valuable junk; when Kreuger dispersed the moneys that had been entrusted to him he made the most extraordinary experiments in decorative art, in electric lighting and fantastic building. But each operated unchecked. So obscure was the financial machinery of the time that for some months Kreuger was able to pass off as genuine a package of forged Italian bonds amounting to about half a million dollars, and to obtain advances upon them from reputable lenders. To-day a trick of such a character would be detected, were it possible, in the course of a single day by the ordinary checking of the Transactions Bureau. But nowadays no one would have any reason for attempting anything of the sort. The lives of these Mystery Men and of the various groups of speculators (the Balkan Gang, e.g.) who manipulated the exchanges of the various national currencies of Eastern Europe, and of a great number of other profit-seeking groups and individuals who were thrusting about amidst the machinery of exchange, are to be found in the Lives of Mischief (Financial Volumes) taken out of the Dictionary of Biography. The very best of them were men who waylaid gain or sought adventures in a fog. Most of them were as active and as blind to the consequences of their activities as moles who perforate a dyke.

In the files of the financial papers of this period, when the movements of gold were of vital significance to the prices of commodities and the credit of everyone in the world, one sees such headings as "Unknown Buyer Takes Two Millions in Gold" or, less exactly, "Gold Bought by Unknown Buyer". Then all the little

manipulators of money would be set peering and spying and guessing and rigging their business to the possible shift of equilibrium this dark intimation might portend.

Other Mystery Men, Mystery Men ex officio, were the various Ministers of Finance, of whom perhaps the British Chancellor of the Exchequer was most typical. Every year there was a vast amount of whispering and hinting, peeping and calculating and going to and fro, about the National Budget and the readjustment of taxation for another twelvemonth. An arithmetical mystery called "balancing the Budget" had to be performed. Business would be held up as the great revelation drew near; gambling operations, insurance operations, would multiply. The wife, the family, the intimates and secretaries of the Man of Destiny, went about the world sealed, enigmatical, oracular, profoundly important with his reflected importance. At last the great day dawned. The legislature would assemble in unusual force, excited and curious. The Witch Doctor, with his portfolios of Obi, would take his place in the House of Commons, rise portentously, begin the "Budget Speech".

No Budget Speech was complete without its "surprises". Could anything witness more vividly to the chaotic casualness of the twentieth century? Anything might be taxed; anything might be relieved; anyone might shift the weights about. In the economic darkness of the time it did not seem to matter. The marvel is that the system staggered on for so long.

How amazing, how fantastic, was that condition of affairs! It is as if one of the great transatlantic liners of the period had careered across the ocean with its passenger decks and cabins brightly lit, its saloons and bars in full swing, while down below, its essential machinery, manifestly with something going wrong with it, had no arrangements for illumination at all and was served by men (some of them masked), working without a foreman or any general directions, by the light of an occasional match or a treasured but rather worn-out electric torch, or altogether in the dark, upon the great cranks and swiftly sliding shafts that beat and circled about them.

From the very cessation of the fighting in 1918 and onward it was manifest that this machinery was seriously out of gear. The economic history of the time is a story of swerves and fluctuations of the most

alarming kind, each one more disconcerting and disastrous than its predecessor. In the decades before the war, though there were certainly variations in the real value of the different currencies, they were variations within moderate limits, and the rise or fall went on through comparatively long periods, but after the war there commenced a series of movements in exchange and prices unprecedented throughout the whole period of prosperity. Currencies rose and towered above others and broke like Atlantic waves, and people found the good money in their banks changed to useless paper in a period of a few months. It became more and more difficult to carry on foreign trade because of the increasing uncertainty of payment, and since there was scarcely a manufacturing industry that had not to obtain some material from abroad, the entanglement of foreign trade often involved a strangulation of production at home. Trade and industry sickened and lost heart more and more in this disastrous uncertainty; it was like being in an earthquake, when it seems equally unsafe to stand still or run away; and the multitudes of unemployed increased continually. The economically combatant nations entrenched themselves behind tariffs, played each other tricks with loans, repudiations, sudden inflations and deflations, and no power in the world seemed able to bring them into any concerted action to arrest and stop their common dégringolade.

The opening years of the second third of the twentieth century saw Homo sapiens in the strangest plight. The planet had a healthier and more abundant human population than it had ever carried before, and it lacked nothing in its available resources to give the whole of this population full and happy lives. That was already the material reality of the position. But through nothing in the world but a universal, various muddle-headedness, our species seemed unable to put out its hand and take the abundance within its reach. As we turn over the periodicals and literature of the time the notes of apprehension and distress increase and deepen. The war period of 1914-1918 was full of suffering, but also it was full of excitement; even the dying on the battlefields believed that a compensatory peace and happiness lay close ahead. The survivors were promised “homes fit for heroes.” But the Depression of 1930 and onward was characterized by its inelasticity; it was a phase of unqualified

disappointment and hopelessly baffled protest. One lived, as one contemporary writer put it, “in a world bewitched”.

The economic consequences of this monetary disorganization followed hard upon it, but the deeper-lying destruction of social morale and its effects were manifested less immediately. The whole world system heretofore had been sustained by the general good behavior of common men, by the honesty and punctuality of clerks, workers of every sort, traders, professional men. General security depended upon habitual decent behaviour in the street and on the countryside. But the common man behaved well because he had faith that his pay was a safe, if sometimes a scanty, assurance of a certain comfort and dignity in his life. He imagined an implicit bargain between himself and society that he should be given employment and security in exchange for his law-abiding subordination, and that society would keep faith with his savings. He assumed that the governments would stand by the money they issued and see that it gave him the satisfactions it promised him. He was not a good boy for nothing. Nobody is. But now in various terms and phrases all over the world millions of men and women were asking themselves whether it “paid” to be industrious, skilful and law-abiding. The cement of confidence in the social fabric from 1918 onward was more and more plainly decaying and changing to dust. The percentage of criminal offences, which had been falling through all the period of prosperity, rose again.

13. — 1933: “PROGRESS” COMES TO A HALT

So we bring the history of mankind to that great pause in social expansion which concluded the first third of the twentieth century. The year 1933 closed in a phase of dismayed apprehension. It was like that chilly stillness, that wordless interval of suspense, that comes at times before the breaking of a storm. The wheels of economic life were turning only reluctantly and uncertainly; the millions of unemployed accumulated and became more and more plainly a challenge and a menace. All over the world the masses were sinking down through distress and insufficiency to actual famine. And collectively they were doing nothing effectual in protest or struggle. Insurrectionary socialism lurked and muttered in every great agglomeration. But insurrection alone could remedy nothing without constructive ideas, and there was no power and energy yet behind any such constructive ideas as had appeared. The merely repressive forces, whatever their feebleness in the face of criminality, were still fully capable of restraining popular insurrection. They could keep misery stagnant and inoperative.

Everywhere, in everything, there was an ebb of vitality. A decline in the public health was becoming perceptible. A diminishing resistance to infections and a rise in the infantile death-rate was already very evident in the vital statistics after 1933.

War was manifestly drawing nearer, in Eastern Asia, in Eastern Europe; it loitered, it advanced, it halted, and no one displayed the vigour or capacity needed to avert its intermittent, unhurrying approach.

Still the immense inertias of the old order carried things on. Under a darkling sky, the majority of people were going about their business according to use and wont. The unprofitable industries still carried on with reduced staffs; the shopkeepers opened their shops to a dwindling tale of customers; the unemployed queued up at the Labour Exchanges by force of habit, and some at least got a job; the landlord’s agent no longer collected the rent that was due but called for an instalment of his arrears; the unfed or ill-fed children went sniffing to chilly schools to be taught by dispirited teachers on

reduced salaries, but still the schools were not closed; the bankrupt railways and steamship lines ran diminished but punctual services; hotels stayed open not to make profits but to mitigate losses; the road traffic lost something of its newness and smartness and swiftness, but still it flowed; the crowds in the streets moved less briskly, but, if anything, these sluggish crowds were more numerous, and the police, if less alertly vigilant, maintained order.

There had been a considerable if inadequate building boom after the Peace of Versailles, but after 1930 new construction fell off more and more. Yet some builders found work, necessary repairs were attended to, burnt-out houses were reconditioned, for example. In 1935 and 1937 the world was swept by influenza epidemics of unusual virulence. The lowered resistance, already noted by the statisticians, was now made conspicuous by this return towards mediaeval conditions; but the doctors and nurses stuck to their duties stoutly and the druggists and undertakers, whose affairs had long since been reorganized on Big Business lines, profited.

Pictures of life in the shadows during this phase of devitalization are not very abundant, nor do they convey the essential misery into which a whole generation was born, in which it lived and died. One sees the rows of dilapidated houses, the wretched interiors and shabbily clad men and women standing about. In these pictures they seem always to be just standing about. Descriptive journalism brings the student nearer to the realities of a life without space, colour, movement, hope or opportunity. There were a number of "enquiries" made, more particularly by the British, American and French newspapers, and the tale they tell is always a tale of wheels slowing down to a stoppage, of factory gates being closed, of smokeless chimneys and rusting rails. Here is a vivid contemporary vignette, to show how things were with millions of human beings during this strange phase of human experience. It is from the pen of H. M. Tomlinson (1873-1969) one of the best of English descriptive writers.

"I chanced upon a little town above Cardiff last week. It was by pure chance; I had never before heard of the place. It is typical of these valleys, so never mind its name. It could have many names. Its population is, or was, about 6,000. Its people have faced trouble

before — less than twenty years ago over 300 of its men perished in a mine explosion. We won't say the town got over that, for I spoke to those for whom the calamity is an abiding horror. It was a terrific defeat for them in the war upon Nature, but survivors returned to the struggle and said no more about it.

"When first I saw the town from a distance, with the bleak, bare uplands about it, I was reminded of the towns, once familiar, that were too near the battleline in France. It was midday, and sunny, yet this colliery town was silent and so still that it seemed under a spell.

"As a fact it IS under a spell. It is, in a way, dead. But its people cling to the empty shell of it. Where else can they go?

"At first sight no people could have been there. Buildings in the foreground were in ruins. The gaunt pit-head gearing evidently had not moved for an age. The gaps in the blackened walls of the power-house suggested a home of bats and owls.

"The first man I met when I reached the end of its main street and saw then that the shops were not only closed, but abandoned, was standing on the kerb, a man in the middle years, shrewd, but haggard, his clothes brushed till they were threadbare.

"'What's the matter with this town?' I asked.

"'On the dole.'

"'Are you out too?'

"'Of course I'm out.'

"'How long?'

"He was silent. He held up five fingers.

"'Months?'

"'Years.'

"'Are all the men here the same?'

"'Most of them. And won't go back.'

"He led me up a mound of refuse, where a goat was eating paper, and we had a near view of the colliery itself. 'That's the reason we won't go down again,' he said. 'How would you work it?'

"Whether by design or rust a steel footbridge had fallen across the wide railway track which went to the pit-head. A deflected stream guttered down between the metals, which were overgrown with grass and stagnant marsh stuff. The outbuildings were a huddle of dilapidations. It looked haunted. 'Some men I knew,' muttered my

guide, ‘are still down there. There they’ll stop. They’ve been there nineteen years now. Would you call them lucky?’

“Two thousand five hundred men came out of the principal colliery five years ago. That is why the shops are shut, long rows of them with whitewashed windows and doorways filled with dust and straws. The woodwork of many houses has been taken for firewood. Even the Cooperative store is shut, as well as the pawnshop. Thrift and thriftlessness mean the same thing in this town, where I noticed that even Nonconformist chapels, with broken windows, had been left to the rats and birds.

“Worse than the dismal shops and broken buildings are the groups of shabby men, all neat and tidy, standing listless and silent at the street corners, waiting.

“Waiting for what? Nothing. There is nothing to come....

“They are doomed, these parents, to watch a generation grow up with thin bones and a shadow on its mind. Their children learn the signs of the slow death about them when they should be at play; children that have no childhood.

“Their homes are in a graveyard of human aspiration....”

The Press and literature of that period make curious reading. It varied between a bleak insincere optimism and hopeless desperation. An undignified viciousness and a jeering humour invaded popular art and literature; “strong” in manner and in flavour rather than in any grasp upon the realities of contemporary life. There was also an abundant production and consumption of reassuring and deliberately “cheerful” books, a movement towards religious mysticism and other-worldliness and a marked tendency towards repressive puritanism. Excesses of libertinism provoke censorious and superstitious suppression; the two things are correlated aspects of a decline in human dignity. In the face of its financial and political perplexities mankind was becoming neurasthenic.

All neurasthenia has apparently unaccountable elements. To us to-day, it seems incredible that the way out of all these distresses was not plainly seen and boldly taken. There was a blindness and an effortlessness that still exercise the mind of the social psychologist. The way was so plain that it was visible, it was indicated by hundreds of intelligent and detached observers as early as the thirties

of the twentieth century. Maxwell Brown, in his study of the Modern State idea, has two supplementary volumes of citations to this effect. Such phrases, for example, as "Cosmopolis, Inflation and Public Employment" (from a British provincial newspaper article in 1932) do state, in general terms at any rate, the line of escape for the race. These are crude, ill-defined terms, but manifestly they have in them the shape of the ultimate reconstruction. "Cosmopolis" foreshadows our rational world controls, "Inflation" was a plain indication of our present complete restraint upon the aggravation of debts and fluctuations of price level; "Public Employment" was our ancestors' conception of socialist enterprise.

But before the exodus to peace and freedom could be achieved, such scattered flashes of understanding had to ignite a steadier illumination. The conception of revolutionary world reconstruction had to spread from the few to the many, spread to them not merely as an idea and as a suggestion, but in such force as to saturate their minds and determine their lives. Then, and then only, could the necessary will-power be marshalled and directed to the effective reorganization of earthly affairs.

A struggle for sanity had to take place in the racial brain, a great casting-out of false assumptions, conventional distortions, hitherto uncriticized maxims and impossible "rights," a great clearing-up of ideas about moral, material and biological relationships; it was a struggle that, as we shall see, involved the passing of three generations. To an analysis of the factors and decisive forces in this struggle our history must next address itself.

Something between eight and ten thousand million human lives in all were lived out during the Age of Frustration. Compared with the average lives of to-day, they were shorter and far less healthy; nearly all of them had long phases of such infection, maladjustment and enfeeblement as are now almost outside man's experience. The great majority of them were passed laboriously in squalid or dingy surroundings, in huts, hovels, cottages, tenements and cellars almost as dismal as the ancestral cave and nearly as insanitary. A minority who could command the services of "domestics" lived in relative comfort and even with a certain freedom and luxury, at an enormous cost to the rest. This prosperous minority dwindled after 1931. It had

vanished in Russia after 1917.

There was a diminishing sense of personal security in the world, an enervating fear and uncertainty about the morrow, through the ensuing years. There was what we find now an almost incredible amount of mutual distrust, suspicion, irritation and quarrelling. Only a small proportion of the world's population lived to be peacefully and gracefully old in this phase of deterioration. Disease or a violent death became the common end again. One of the first general histories that was ever written was called The Martyrdom of Man (Winwood Reade, 1871). In the Age of Frustration it seemed to many that that martyrdom was mounting to a final hopeless agony.

Yet in the welter there were also laughter, sympathy, helpfulness and courage. Those fretted and painful lives interwove with threads of great brightness. Out of that medley of human distresses, out of the brains of men stressed out of indolence and complacency by the gathering darkness and suffering about them, there came first the hope, then the broad plan and the effort, and at last the achievement of that fruitful order, gathering beauty and happy assurance, in which we live to-day.

BOOK THE SECOND
THE DAYS AFTER TOMORROW:
THE AGE OF FRUSTRATION

1. — THE LONDON CONFERENCE: THE CROWNING FAILURE OF THE OLD GOVERNMENTS; THE SPREAD OF DICTATORSHIPS AND FASCISMS

In the preceding chapters we have explained how the old order of the nineteenth century, the Capitalist System as it was called, came to disaster in the second and third decades of the twentieth century because of the disproportionate development of its industrial production, the unsoundness and vulnerability of its monetary nexus, and its political inadaptability. It had no inherent power of recovery, and there was no idea of a new order, sufficiently developed, to replace it. Necessarily therefore the tale of disaster went on.

The only mechanisms in existence for collective action, and that only in disconnected spurts, were the various sovereign governments. Most of these at the outset of the war were either parliamentary monarchies or parliamentary republics. The parliaments were elected upon a very preposterous system by the bulk or all of the population. The age was called the Age of Democracy. Democracy did not mean then what it means now, an equal opportunity for every human being according to his ability and the faculty to which he belongs, to serve and have a voice in collective affairs. Nor did it mean the fraternal equality of a small community. It expressed a political fiction of a very extraordinary kind: that every subject of the contemporary state was equally capable of making whatever collective decisions had to be made.

The great republics of a remoter antiquity, the Carthaginian, the Athenian, the Roman, for example, were all essentially aristocratic. Democratic republics, that is to say republics in which every man was supposed to share equally in the government, in the rare instances when they occurred at all before the end of the eighteenth century, were, like, Uri, Unterwalden or Andorra, small and poor and perched in inaccessible places. The world at large knew nothing of

them. Their affairs were equally small and well within the scope of a common citizen's understanding.

Then with the Era of European Predominance came a turning-point in human affairs, that outbreak of books and discussion in the fifteenth century, a period of great animation and confusion when the destructive criticism of faiths and loyalties got loose. The release of new economic forces strained the old feudal order to breaking. Exploration and merchandising, new financial conditions, industrial development, created new types of men, uncertain of their powers, needing and demanding free play. They did not know clearly what they wanted; they did not know clearly how they differed from the men of the old order, nor had they any conception that such a structural reform of human relations as Plato had already pictured nearly two thousand years before them. His plan for a devoted and trained order of rulers was unknown to them, though More had tried to revive it. They were simply responding to the facts about them. They chafed under an hereditary aristocracy, and they distrusted an absolute king.

Essentially the movement that evolved the phraseology of nineteenth- century democracy was a revolt against "birth" and "privilege", against the monopolization of direction and advantages by restricted and generally hereditary classes in accordance with definitely established dogmas. Because this revolt was the revolt of a very miscellaneous number of energetic and resentful individuals not definitely organized, mentally or socially, it came about that at a quite early stage of the new movement it took the form of an assertion of the equal political rights of all men.

It was not that these sixteenth and seventeenth-century Radicals were for government by the general mass; it was that they were antagonistic to established classes and rulers. They constituted a vigorous insurgent minority rousing, so far as it could, and trailing after it the apathetic majority of submissive mankind. That was always the character of these democratic movements of the Age of European Predominance. The multitude was supposed to be demanding and deciding — and all the time it was being pushed or led. The individuality of the popular "leaders" of those centuries stands out far more vividly than the kings and ecclesiastics of the

period. Only one or two such hereditary monarchs as William Prince of Orange, or Frederick the Great of Prussia, figure as conspicuously on the record as — to cite a miscellany of new types — Cromwell, Voltaire, Mirabeau, Washington, Gladstone, Robespierre, Bonaparte or Marx.

Later on (in England, America, Scandinavia, Germany, Finland, e.g.) in just the same way a minority of dissatisfied and aggressive women struggling for a rôle in affairs inflicted the vote upon the indifferent majority of women. But their achievement ended with that. Outside that sexual vindication, women at that time had little to contribute to the solution of the world's problems, and as a matter of fact they contributed nothing.

Research in social psychology is still only beginning to unravel the obscure processes by which faith in "democracy" became for the better part of a century the ruling cant of practically all America and the greater part of Europe. There was often a profound internal disingenuousness even in those who were known as "Thinkers" in that age. They were afraid in their hearts of stark realities; they tried instinctively to adapt even their heresies to what seemed to them invincibly established prejudices. Their primary conception of democracy was of some far-away simple little republic of stout upstanding men, all similar, all practically equal in fortune and power, managing the affairs of the canton in a folk-meeting, by frank speech and acclamation. All the old-world democracies, up to and including the Republic of Rome, were ruled, in theory at least, by such meetings of all the citizens. The people, it was imagined, watched, listened, spoke, and wisdom ensued.

The extension of this ideal to the large communities of the new world that was replacing the feudal order, involved such manifest difficulties and even such absurdities that mysticism was inevitable if the people was still to be supposed the sovereign of the community. But there was so strong and widespread a dread that if this supposition was not maintained privilege, restriction, tyranny would come back that the mystical interpretation was boldly adopted. At any cost those old inequalities must not return, said the adventurers of the dawning capitalist age, and, flying from one subjugation, they hurried on to another.

They found the doctrine of man's natural virtue as expounded by Rousseau extraordinarily helpful and effective. The common man, when he is not beguiled by Priest or King, is always right. The Common People became therefore a mystical sympathetic being, essentially a God, whose altar was the hustings and whose oracle the ballot box. A little slow and lumpish was this God of the Age of European Predominance, but, though his mills ground slowly, men were assured that they ground with ultimate exactitude. And meanwhile business could be carried on. You could fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time, said Abraham Lincoln, but you could not fool all the people all the time. Yet for such crucial purposes as bringing about a war or exploiting an economic situation, this was manifestly a quite disastrous degree of foolability.

And the situation naturally evolved a Press of the very highest fooling capacity.

This belatedly inevitable Divinity proved now to be altogether too slow- witted for the urgent political and economic riddles, with ruin and death at hand, which pressed upon our race as the twentieth century unfolded. The experience of the futile Disarmament and Economic Conferences of 1932 and 1933, the massive resistance in every national legislature to any but the most narrow egotism in foreign policy, the inability of the world as a whole to establish any unanimity of action in face of swift economic collapse, revealed the final bankruptcy of Parliamentary Democracy.

The inability of the world's nominal rulers to shake off their lifelong habit of speaking to, or at, a vaguely conceived crowd of prejudiced voters, and their invincible repugnance from clear statement, frustrated every effort towards realism. They recoiled from any suggestion of definitive or novel action on the plea that their function was purely representative. Behind them all the reader feels the sprawling uneasy presence of that poor invertebrate mass deity of theirs, the Voter, easily roused to panic and frantic action against novel, bold or radical measures, very amenable to patriotic claptrap, very easily scared and maddened into war, and just as easily baffled to distrust and impotence by delays, side issues, and attacks on the personalities of decisive people he might otherwise have

trusted. An entirely irresponsible Press, mercenary or partisan, played upon his baser emotions, which were so easy to play upon, and made no appeal whatever to his intelligence or his conscience.

The Voter, the Mass, which was neither educated nor led, the Voter without any sincere organizations of leadership anywhere, is the basal explanation of the impotence of those culminating conferences. The World Economic Conference in London was by far the more significant of the two. Armament and disarmament are symptoms and superficial, but economic life is fundamental. This London gathering has been made the subject of a thousand studies by our social psychologists. Many of its contradictions still perplex us profoundly. The men who assembled had just as good brains as anyone to-day, and, as an exhaustive analysis by Moreton Canby of the various projects advanced at the Conference proves, they had a substantial understanding of the needs of the world situation, yet collectively, and because of their haunting paralysing sense of the Mass and Press behind them and of their incalculable impulses and resentments, they achieved an effect of fatuity far beyond the pompous blunderings of Versailles.

Primarily the London Conference was a belated effort to repair the vast omissions of that earlier gathering, to supplement the well-meaning political patchwork of Wilson by some readjustment of the monetary and economic dislocations he had been too limited to foresee or too weak to avoid. Wraithlike conceptions of some vague monetary League of Nations at Bâle, and some Tariff Council and Assembly, drifted through the mists of the opening meeting. And History, with its disposition to inexact repetition made one of the principal figures of this second world assembly also a President of the United States, belonging also to the Democratic Party and according to the ritual of that Party invoking the name of Jefferson as the Communists invoked the name of Marx or the Moslim, Mahomet. This was Roosevelt II. He leaves a less vivid impression than his predecessor because he did not impend for so long upon the European scene. But for some months at least before and after his election as American President and the holding of the London Conference there was again a whispering hope in the world that a real “Man” had arisen, who would see simply and clearly, who

would speak plainly to all mankind and liberate the world from the dire obsessions and ineptitudes under which it suffered and to which it seemed magically enslaved. But the one thing he failed to do was to speak plainly.

Drawing wisdom from Wilson's personal failure, he did not come to London and expose himself and his conversation to too close a scrutiny. He preferred to deal with the fluctuating crises in London from his yacht, Amberjack II, in Nantucket Harbour, through intermittent messages and through more or less completely authorized intermediaries. Amberjack II has become almost as significant a ship in the history of human affairs as the Ford Peace Ship. Significant equally in its intentions and in its inadequacies.

Everywhere as the Conference drew near men were enquiring about this possible new leader for them. "Is this at last the Messiah we seek, or shall we look for another?" Every bookshop in Europe proffered his newly published book of utterances, Looking Forward, to gauge what manner of mind they had to deal with. It proved rather disconcerting reading for their anxious minds. Plainly the man was firm, honest and amiable, as the frontispiece portrait with its clear frank eyes and large resolute face showed, but the text of the book was a politician's text, saturated indeed with good will, seasoned with much vague modernity, but vague and wanting in intellectual grip. "He's good," they said, "but is this good enough?"

Nevertheless hope fought a stout fight. There was no other personality visible who even promised to exorcize the spell that lay upon the economic life of the race. It was Roosevelt's Conference or nothing. And in spite of that disappointing book there remained some sound reasons for hope. In particular the President, it was asserted, had a "Brain Trust". A number of indisputably able and modern-minded men were his associates, such men as Professors Tugwell, Moley and Dickinson, men whose later work played a significant part in that reconstruction of legal and political method which was America's particular contribution to Modern State ideas. This "last hope of mankind", it was credibly reported, called these intimates by their Christian names and they called him "Guv'nor." He was said to have the modesty and greatness to defer to their studied and matured opinions. Observers, still hopeful, felt that if he listened to these

advisors things might not go so badly after all. He was at any rate one point better than the European politicians and heads of States who listened only to bankers and big-business men.

But was he listening? Did he grasp the threefold nature of the problem in hand? He understood, it seemed, the need for monetary inflation to reduce the burthen of debt and over-capitalization; he was apparently alive to the need for a progressive expansion of public employment; and so far he was sound. Unless, which is not quite clear, he wavered between "public" and "publicly assisted", which was quite another matter. But was he sound upon the necessity that these measures should be world-wide or practically world-wide? He made some unexpected changes of attitude in these respects. Were these changes inconstancies or were they tactical manoeuvres veiling a profoundly consistent and resolute purpose? Was it wise to be tactical when all the world was in need of plain speech and simple directive ideas? His treatment took on a disconcertingly various quality. He listened, it seemed, to his advisors; but was he not also listening to everybody? He was flirting with bimetallism. No medicine, it seemed, was to be spared.

The Conference opened with a stout determination to be brilliant and eventful; the hotels were full, the streets beflagged, the programme of entertainments was admirable, and even the English weather seemed to make an effort. The opening addresses by the King of England and his Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald make very curious reading to-day. They express an acute recognition of the crucial condition of human affairs. They state in so many words that the failure of the Conference will precipitate world disaster. They insist upon the necessity for world cooperation, for monetary simplification and a resumption of employment; and in all that we admit they had the truth of the matter. But they make not the faintest intimation of how these desirable ends are to be obtained. They made gestures that are incomprehensible to us unless they had an inkling of the primary elements of the situation. And then immediately they turned away to other things. That mixture of resolve and failure to attack is what perplexes us most. If they saw the main essentials of the situation they certainly did not see them as a connected whole; they did not see any line of world action before them.

Cordell Hull, the chief of the United States delegation, was equally large and fine. The grave and splendid words — shot with piety in the best American tradition — that he inscribed upon the roll of history were as follows: "Selfishness must be banished. If — which God forbid! — any nation should wreck this Conference, with the notion that its local interests might profit, that nation would merit the execration of mankind."

Again Daladier, the French Prime Minister, opened with extremely broad and sane admissions. He insisted strongly on a necessity which the two opening English speeches had minimized, the necessity, the urgent necessity, for a progressive development of great public works throughout the world to absorb the unemployed and restore consumption. The Americans in the second week seemed to be coming in line with that. But after this much of lucidity the Conference fell away to minor issues. Apparently it could not keep at so high a level of reality. The pressure of the Mass and the Press behind each delegate began to tell upon him. The national representatives began to insist with increasing explicitness that national interests must not be sacrificed to the general good, and in a little time it became doubtful if there could be such a thing as the general good. The World Economic Conference became by imperceptible transitions a World Economic Conflict just as the League of Nations had become a diplomatic bargain mart. All the fine preluding of the first séances withered to fruitlessness because the mind of the world had still to realize the immense moral and educational effort demanded by those triple conditions that were dawning upon its apprehension, and because it was still unwilling to accept the immense political pooling they indicated. The amount of self-abnegation involved was an insurmountable psychological barrier in the way of the representatives present. It would have meant a sacrifice of the very conditions that had made them. How could men appointed as national representatives accept a pooling of national interests? They were indeed fully prepared to revolutionize the world situation and change gathering misery to hope, plenty and order, but only on the impossible condition that they were not to change themselves and that nothing essential to their importance changed. The leading ideas of the Conference were cloudily true, but

the disintegrative forces of personal, party and national egotism were too strong for them.

It is a very curious thing that the representatives of Soviet Russia did nothing to enlighten the obscurity of the world riddle. It is still argued by many writers that the Bolshevik régime was the direct precursor of our Modern World-State as it exists to-day. But there was no direct continuity. The Modern State arose indeed out of the same social imperatives and the same constructive impulses that begot Marxism and Leninism, but as an independent, maturer, and sounder revolutionary conception. The Soviet system certainly anticipated many of the features of our present order in its profession of internationalism, in its very real socialism, and particularly in the presence of a devoted controlling organization, the Communist Party, which foreshadowed our Modern State Fellowship. But there was always a wide divergence in Russia between theory and practice, and Litvinoff, who spoke on behalf of that first great experiment in planning, was too preoccupied with various particular points at issue between his country and the western world, trading embargoes and difficulties of credit, for example, to use the occasion as he might have done, for a world-wide appeal. He did nothing to apply the guiding principles of Communism to the world situation. Here was a supreme need for planning, but he said nothing for a Five Year or Ten Year Plan for all the world. Here was a situation asking plainly for collective employment, and he did not even press the inevitability of world-socialism. Apparently he had forgotten the world considered as a whole as completely as any of the capitalist delegates. He was thinking of Russia versus the other States of the world as simply as if he were an ordinary capitalist patriot.

The claims of the other delegations were even more shortsighted and uninspired. Since there was a time-limit set to their speeches, they compressed their assertions of general humanitarian benevolence to a phrase or so and then came to business. Only Senator Connolly, from the Irish Free State, protested against the blinkered outlooks of his fellow speakers and pleaded for a consideration of “every possible theory, however unorthodox.” But his own speech propounded no substantial constructive ideas. He was too obsessed by an embargo that England had put upon Irish exports,

and to that he settled down...

The whole idea of the Modern World-State, Moreton Canby insists, is to be traced, albeit in a warped and sterilized form, alike in the expressed idea- systems of the Americans, the British, the French and the Russians at the Conference. In the American statements it is wrapped about and hidden by individualist phrases and precautions, in the British it is overlaid by imperialist assumptions, in the Russian it is made unpalatable by the false psychology and harsh jargon of Marxism. In the first the business man refuses to change and get out of the way, in the second the imperialist administrator, and in the third the doctrinaire party man. Athwart every assertion of general principles drive the misty emotions of patriotism, party and personal association. Yet for all that it is indisputable that the Modern World-State was definitely adumbrated at London in 1933. Like a ghost out of the future its presence was felt by nearly everyone, though the worst phases of the Age of Frustration had still to come, though generations of suffering had still to lapse, before it could appear as the living reality of human political life.

The ghost, says Canby, did not materialise because there was no material. Every large country in the world was feeling its way towards the essentials of a permanently progressive world-state but none was yet within reach even of its partial and local realisation. Roosevelt II and his eleventh hour effort to reconstruct America, he finds particularly interesting. The President was clearly aware of the need to relieve debt by inflation, but he was unable to check the dissipation of the liberated energy in speculation. He was dealing with men, trained and saturated in the tradition of poker, to whom a solemn cunning had become a second nature, and he was asking them (with occasional fierce threats) to display an open-faced helpfulness. He had no proper civil service available to control large public works; it was impossible to change the American technicians at one blow from quasi-financial operators to a candid, devoted public salariat. So he tried to induce profiteers to forego profits and organise their industries on altruistic lines by dire threats of socialisation which he had no managing class to enforce. And he was as ignorant of British or European mentality and as little able to get to an understanding with it as Wilson had been before him. It was a

mutual misunderstanding, but his manners were self-righteous and provocative. He began to scold long before the Conference was over. By 1935 everyone was pointing to a sort of contrasted parallelism between America and Russia. Each was manifestly struggling towards a more scientifically organised state, and each was finding the same difficulty in reconciling productive efficiency in the general interest with primarily political control. Technician and politician had still to be assimilated one to the other. Each great dictatorship was at war with the speculator and the profiteer. Each professed a faint hope of cosmopolitan cooperation and then concentrated practically and urgently upon the establishment of an internal prosperity. But they started towards that common objective from opposite poles of productive efficiency and social assumption. Roosevelt started from the standpoint of democratic individualism and Stalin from that of Marxist communism. The British system and the other intermediate countries of the world struggled to be conservative in the chaos of financial collapse. No solvent had yet been devised to synthesise the good will in the world.

The London Conference rose to no such dramatic climax as the signing of the Peace Treaty at Versailles. It rose to nothing. It began at its highest point and steadily declined. If Versailles produced a monster, London produced nothing at all. Never did so valiant a beginning peter out so completely.

There are abundant intimations in the Press of the time (see Habwright's The Sense of Catastrophe in the Nineteen Thirties, a summary of quotations in the Historical Documents Series 173,192) of a realization that the political and economic morale of that age was played out, and that almost any casual selection of men would have been at least as adequate as this gathering of old-world political personages to face the vast impending disasters before our race. For at any rate these men had already been tried and tested and found wanting. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald indeed, the British premier, the fine flower and summary of professional politics, rolled his r's and his eyes over the Conference and seemed still to be hoping that some favourable accident out of the void might save him and his like from the damning dissection of history. For a time, in the opening glow of the assembly, with the clicking photographers recording every

studied gesture, with the attentive microphones spreading out and pickling for ever his fine voice and his rich accent, with bustling secretaries in sedulous attendance, with the well-trained gravity of the delegates and particularly the well-matured high seriousness of those adepts in public appearance, the Americans, to sustain him, this last sublimation of democratic statesmanship may really have believed that some kind of favourable incantation was in progress under his direction. He must have felt that or he could not have remained there talking. Incantations had made him. By the sheer use of voice and gesture he had clambered from extreme obscurity to world prominence. If he did not believe in incantation there was nothing left for him to believe in. He must have clung to that persuasion to the end. But if that was his state of mind at the time, it could hardly have survived the comments and criticisms of the next few months. Surely then he had some sleepless nights in which even his private incantations failed.

The World Economic Conference lost its brilliance in a week or so. The City, which had been so flushed with hope that for a time its price lists, all pluses, looked like war-time cemeteries, relapsed into depression. The World Slump did not wait for the Conference to disperse before it resumed. At the outset London had been all blown up and distended by bright anticipations, so that it was like one of those little squeaking bladders children play with, and like one of those bladders, so soon as the blowing ceased, it shrank and shrivelled and ended in a dying wail of despair.

As Habwright puts it, by July 1933 intelligent men and women everywhere were saying two things. Of the assembled rulers and delegates they were saying: “These people can do nothing for us. They do worse than nothing. They intensify the disaster.” And in the second place it was demanded with a sort of astonishment: “Why have historians, sociologists and economists nothing to tell us now? There may indeed be some excuse for the failure of politicians under democratic conditions. But have our universities been doing nothing about it? Is there indeed no science of these things? Is there no knowledge? Has history learnt nothing of causes, and is there no analysis of the social processes that are destroying us?”

To which the professors, greatly preoccupied at that particular

date in marking honours papers in history and social and political science, made no audible reply.

Before the end of the thirties it was plain to all the world that a world- wide social catastrophe was now inevitably in progress, that the sanest thing left for intelligent men to do was to set about upon some sort of Noah's Ark to salvage whatever was salvageable of civilization, so that there should be a new beginning after the rising deluge of misfortune had spent itself. A few prescient spirits had been saying as much for some years, but now this idea of salvage spread like an epidemic. It prepared the way for the Modern State Movement on which our present order rests. At the time, however, the general pessimism was little mitigated by any real hope of recovery. One writer, quoted by Habwright, compared man to a domesticated ape, "which has had the intelligence and ability to drag its straw mattress up to the fire when it is cold, but has had neither the wit nor the foresight to escape the consequent blaze". Habwright's brief summary of the financial operations that went on as the sense of catastrophe grew justifies that grim image very completely.

The conviction that Parliamentary Democracy had come to an end spread everywhere in that decade. Already in the period between the vacillation in international affairs after Versailles and the warfare of the Forties, men had been going about discussing and scheming and plotting for some form of government that should be at least decisive. And now their efforts took on a new urgency. There was a world-wide hysteria to change governments and officials.

At its first onset this craving for decisiveness had produced some extremely crude results. An epidemic of tawdry "dictatorships" had run over Europe from Poland to Spain immediately after the war. For the most part these adventures followed the pattern of the pronunciamentos of the small South American republics, and were too incidental and inconsequent for the student of general history to be troubled about them now. But there followed a world-wide development of directive or would-be directive political associations which foreshadowed very plainly the organization of the Modern State Fellowship upon which our present world order rests.

The Fascist dictatorship of Mussolini in Italy had something in it

of a more enduring type than most of the other supersessions of parliamentary methods. It rose not as a personal usurpation but as the expression of an organization with a purpose and a sort of doctrine of its own. The intellectual content of Fascism was limited, nationalist and romantic; its methods, especially in its opening phase, were violent and dreadful; but at least it insisted upon discipline and public service for its members. It appeared as a counter movement to a chaotic labour communism, but its support of the still-surviving monarchy and the Church was qualified by a considerable boldness in handling education and private property for the public benefit. Fascism indeed was not an altogether bad thing; it was a bad good thing; and Mussolini has left his mark on history.

In Russia something still more thorough and broader came into operation after 1917. This was the Communist Party. It was the invention of Lenin; he continued to modify and adapt its organization and doctrine until his untimely death in 1924. While he lived Russia's experiment really seemed to be leading the world in its flight towards a new order from the futile negations and paralysis of Parliamentary government. It is still profoundly interesting to note the modernity of many aspects of the early Bolshevik régime.

This modernity achieved under the stress of urgent necessities and Lenin's guidance was attained in spite of many grave difficulties created by the Marxist tradition. Marx, who was a man of what the psychologists of the middle twenty-first century used to call "blinkered originality", never saw through the democratic sentimentalities of the period in which he lived. There had been a tendency to exclude the privileged classes from the True Democracy of Common Men even at the dawn of the modern democratic idea, and he and his followers intensified and stereotyped this tendency in their own particular version of deified democracy, the Proletariat. The Proletariat was just Pure Masses, and mystical beyond measure.

But at the outset the actual Russian revolution was under the control of the intensely practical and intensely middle-class Lenin, and he took care that the great social reconstruction he had in mind was equally secured against the risk of paralysis through mass inertia and the risk of overthrow through mass panic. His ostensibly "democratic" government of Soviets, the Soviet pyramid, was built

up on a hierarchic scheme that brought the administration face to face only with seasoned representatives who had been filtered through an ascendant series of bodies. Moreover, he established a very complete control of education and the Press, to keep the thought of the nominally sovereign masses upon the right lines. And to animate and control the whole machine he had his invention of the Communist Party.

This Communist Party, like the Italian Fascisti, owes its general conception to that germinal idea of the Modern State, the Guardians in Plato's Republic. For if anyone is to be called the Father of the Modern State it is Plato. The Members of the Communist Party were extremely like those Guardians. As early as 1900 critics of democratic institutions were discussing the possibility of creating a cult primarily devoted to social and political service, self-appointed, self-trained and self-disciplined. The English-speaking Socialist movement was debating projects of that kind in 1909-10 (see Fabian News in Historical Documents for those years), but it needed the dangers and stresses of the postwar European situation to produce types of workers and young people sufficiently detached, desperate and numerous, to unite effectively into a permanent revolutionary control.

From its beginnings the Communist Party, though it was not divided into "faculties" and remained political rather than technical in spirit, resembled our own Modern State Fellowship in its insistence upon continuous learning and training throughout life, upon free criticism within the limits of the party, upon accessibility (under due limitations) to all who wished to serve in it, and upon the right to resignation from its privileges and severities of all who wished to return to comparative irresponsibility. But the conditions which created the Russian Communist Party made it inevitably Marxist, and even after a thorough Leninization, Communism, that characteristic final product of middle-nineteenth-century radicalism, still retained many of its old sentimentalities, reverting indeed more and more towards them after Lenin's death and the rule of the devoted but unoriginal, suspicious and overbearing Stalin.

There was a heavy load of democratic and equalitarian cant upon the back of the Russian system, just as there was a burthen of

patriotic and religious cant upon the Italian Fascist. Even the United States Constitution did not profess democratic equality and insist upon the inspired wisdom of the untutored more obstinately than the new Russian régime. Although hardly any of the ruling group of Russians were of peasant or working-class origin — there were far more politicians from that social level in the public life of Western Europe and America — there was a universal pretence of commonness about them all. They spat, they went unshaved and collarless. They pretended to be indifferent to bourgeois comfort. It was ordained that at the phrase "Class-War" every knee should bow. When the Communist leaders quarrelled among themselves, "bourgeois" or "petty bourgeois" was the favourite term of abuse, none the less deadly because it was almost invariably true. Long years were to pass before any movement whatever in the direction of the Modern State System was quite free from this heritage of cant.

One unfortunate aspect of this entanglement of the new experiment in Russia with the social envies and hatreds of the old order was its inability to assimilate competent technicians, organizers and educators into its direction. In its attempt to modernize, it refused the assistance of just the most characteristically modern types in the community. But since these types had a special education and knew things not generally known, it was difficult to accord them proletarian standing. In Russia therefore, as in America, the politician with his eloquence and his necessary and habitual disingenuousness still intervened and obstructed, if he did not actually bar, the way to a scientific development of a new economic and social order.

Manifestly Stalin learnt much from his difficulties with the Five Year Plan of the evil of subordinating technical to political ability, and a speech of his upon the Old and New Technical Intelligentzia made in June 1931 (Historical Documents Series, Stalinism, XM 327,705) is a very frank admission of the primary necessity in the modern community of the "non-party" man of science and of special knowledge. Unhappily the hand of the party politician in Russia was strengthened by the untrammelled activities of those strange protectors of Marxist authority the Checka, which became later the G.P.U. So from 1928, the date of the First Five Year Plan, in spite of

a great driving-force of enthusiastic devotion, Russia went clumsily, heavily and pretentiously — a politician's dictatorship, propaganding rather than performing, disappointing her well-wishers abroad and thwarting the best intelligences she produced. When her plans went wrong through her lack of precise material foresight, she accused, and imprisoned or shot, engineers and suchlike technical workers.

A further bad result of this ineradicable democratic taint of the Soviet system was the widening estrangement of the Russian process from Western creative effort. Instead of being allies they became opponents. As the challenge of social disintegration became more urgent in the Atlantic countries, it became plainer and plainer that such hope as there was for the salvaging of a reconstructed civilization from a welter of disaster lay in the coordinate effort of intelligent, able and energetic individuals of every nation, race, type and class. A revolution was certainly needed, but not a revolution according to the time-worn formula of street battles and barricades, not a class war. A revolution in the very character of revolutions had to occur. There was no need for insurrectionary revolution any longer, since now the system was destroying itself. The phase for boldly constructive revolution had arrived, and at every point where constructive effort was made the nagging antagonism of the Class War fanatic appeared, to impede and divide. (See, for example, Upton Sinclair on this conflict, in The Way Out, 1933, in the series of reprints under his name, Historical Documents Series, History of Opinion.)

The waste of creative energy was enormous, not only in Russia but all over the world. Multitudes of young men and women in every civilized community, the living hope of the race, dissipated their generous youth and vigour in bitter conflicts upon a purely doctrinaire issue. The poison of nationalism was abroad to complicate their reactions. Many turned against progress altogether and sought to thrust the world back to some imaginary lost age of virtue. So they became Ku Klux Klansmen, Nationalists, Nazis. All felt the natural youthful impulse towards large, effective, vehement action. All meant well. They were one in spirit though they suffered from a confusion of tongues. The idea of the Modern State could not for a long time make itself clear to their imaginations largely because

the conspicuous self-contradictions of Russia stood in the way.

Russia seemed to lead, it sought to lead in its acts and deeds, and it lied. Meanwhile, surviving very largely because of this distraction of creative forces, the elderly methods of Parliamentary Democracy and the elderly Nationalist Diplomacy remained in possession of the greater part of the Western World, and the social collapse it was powerless to arrest continued.

2. — THE SLOUGHING OF THE OLD EDUCATIONAL TRADITION

Faber in his interesting and suggestive Historical Analyses (2103) discusses how far the wars, depressions, pestilences, phases of semi-famine and periods of actual starvation, in the hundred years before 2014, were necessary, and how far, with the resources then available, they might have been avoided by mankind. He takes the view that the encumbrance of tradition was so great that for all that period this martyrdom of our kind was inevitable. He argues that without the sufferings of these generations men's minds could never have been sufficiently purged of their obstinate loyalties, jealousies, fears and superstitions; men's wills never roused to the efforts, disciplines and sacrifices that were demanded for the establishment of the Modern State.

Faber applies his criticism more particularly to this so-called decadence of education after (circa) 1930. It has hitherto been usual to treat the ebb of school-building and schooling that took place then as a real retrogression, to rank it with the fall in the general standard of life and the deterioration of public health. But he advanced some excellent reasons for supposing that, so far from being an evil, the starvation and obliteration of the old-world teaching machinery was a necessary preliminary to social recovery.

The common school, he insists, had to be born again, had to be remade fundamentally. And before that could happen it had to be broken up and wellnigh destroyed. He sweeps aside almost contemptuously the claim that the nineteenth century was an educational century. We are misled, he argues, by a mere resemblance between the schools and universities of the past and the schools and post-school education of the modern period. Both occupy the time of the young, and we do not sufficiently appreciate the fact that what they are doing with the young is something entirely different. Our education is an introduction to the continual revolutionary advance of life. But education before the twenty-first century was essentially a conservative process. It was so rigorously

and completely traditional that its extensive disorganization was an inevitable preliminary to the foundation of a new world.

The word education has come now to cover almost all intellectual activities throughout life except research and artistic creation. That was not its original meaning. It meant originally the preparation of the young for life. It did not go on even in extreme cases beyond three or four and twenty, and usually it was over by fourteen! But we draw no line at any age, as our ancestors did, when learning ceases. The general information of the public, public discussion and collective decisions, all fall within the scope of our educational directorate. All that was outside what passed for education in the early Twentieth Century.

What people knew in those days they knew in the most haphazard way. The privately owned newspapers of the period told the public what their readers or their proprietors desired; the diffusion of facts and ideas by the early cinema, the sound radio and so on was entirely commercialized for the advertisement of goods in America, and controlled and directed in the interests of influential politicians in Great Britain; book-publishing, even the publication of scientific works, was mainly speculative and competitive, and there was no such thing as a Centre of Knowledge in the world.

It is remarkable to note how long mankind was able to carry on without any knowledge organization whatever. No encyclopaedia, not even a bookseller's encyclopaedia, had existed before the seventeenth century, for the so-called Chinese Encyclopaedia was a literary miscellany, and there was no permanent organization of record even on the part of such mercenary encyclopaedias as came into existence after that date. Nor was there any conception of the need of a permanent system of ordered knowledge, continually revised until the twentieth century was nearing its end. To the people of the Age of Frustration our interlocking research, digest, discussion, verification, notification and informative organizations, our Fundamental Knowledge System, that is, with its special stations everywhere, its regional bureaus, its central city at Barcelona, its seventeen million active workers and its five million correspondents and reserve enquirers, would have seemed incredibly vast. It would have seemed incredibly vast to them in spite of the fact that the

entirely unproductive armies and military establishments they sustained in those days of universal poverty were practically as huge.

We are still enlarging this Brain of Mankind, still increasing its cells, extending its records and making its interactions more rapid and effective. A vast independent literature flourishes beside it. Compared with today our species in the Age of Frustration was as a whole brainless: it was collectively invertebrate with a few scattered ill-connected ganglia; it was lethargically ignorant; it had still to develop beyond the crude rudiments of any coordinated knowledge at all.

But not only was general knowledge rudimentary, casual, erroneous and bad. Faber's case against the old education is worse than that. Knowledge was explicitly outside education, outside formal schooling altogether. The need for a sound common ideology is a Modern State idea. The old, so called "Elementary" schools, Faber shows, did not pretend to give knowledge. So far as directive ideas were concerned, they disavowed this intention. He quotes a very revealing contemporary survey of the situation in America by Dr. G. S. Counts (The American Road to Culture, 1930) in which the complete ideological sterilization of the common schools of the Republic is demonstrated beyond question. The sterilization was deliberate. So far as the giving of comprehensive information about life went, says Faber, there was absolutely nothing valuable destroyed during this period of educational collapse because nothing valuable had as yet got into the curricula. The history taught in these popular schools was pernicious patriotic twaddle; the biology, non-existent or prudish and childish — the "facts of sex", as they were called, were for example TAUGHT by dissecting flowers — and there was no economic instruction whatever. The nineteenth-century "education" was not enlightenment; it was anti-enlightenment. Parents, political and religious organizations watched jealously that this should be so. He quotes school time-tables and public discussions and gives samples of the textbooks in use.

The decline in scientific research, moreover, during this age of systole, Faber insists, has been greatly exaggerated. Although there was certainly a considerable diminution in the number of actual workers through the destruction of private endowments and what was

called “economy”, and although there was also a considerable interference with the international exchange of ideas and a slacking down in pace at which ideas grew, there was no absolute interruption in the advance of ordered science even through the worst phases of the social breakdown. Research displayed a protean adaptability and indestructibility. It shifted from the patronage of the millionaire to the patronage of the war lord; it took refuge in Russia, Spain and South America; it betook itself to the aeroplane hangars, to rise again in due time to its present world-predominance. It had never been pampered under the régime of private capitalism. All through that First Age of Prosperity pure research had lived from hand to mouth. As soon as it paid, says Sinclair Lewis in Martin Arrowsmith, it was commercialized and it degenerated. When the bad times came the parasites of science fell away, but the genuine scientific worker, accustomed to scanty supplies, tightened his belt a little more and in all sorts of out-of-the-way places stuck to his job.

What really did break up in this period between 1930 and 1950 was a systematic schooling of the masses which had developed steadily during the nineteenth century. Beyond the elements of reading, speech and counting, this was no more and no less than a drilling in tradition. There had been some reforms, more particularly in method, some advance in the teaching of infants (though this was sacrificed early in the economy flurry), and a few exceptional schools emerged, but this was the character of the typical school of the time. A progressive multiplication of this kind of school had indeed gone on in nearly every country in the world even up to the outbreak of the Great War. The proportion of “literates” who could at least read increased steadily. After that the rate of advance (except in Russia after 1917, where popular teaching was only beginning) fell stage by stage to zero. But what was ebbing was not really knowledge or instruction at all, but a training in the binding traditions of the old society.

The story of what used to be called “the conflict between religion and science” belongs mainly to the history of the nineteenth century, and we will not tell again here how the fairly stable structure of Christian belief and disciplines was weakened by the changes in values that ensued from the revelation of geological and biological

horizons in that period. Before 1850 more than ninety-nine per cent of the population of Europe and America believed unquestioningly that the universe had been created in the year 4004 B.C. Their intellectual lives were all cramped to the dimensions of that petty cellule of time. It was rather frightening for them to break out. They succumbed to mental agoraphobia. The student knows already of the difficulties experienced by the Christian ministry during those years of mental release and expansion in "symbolizing" the Fall and Atonement, which had hitherto been taught as historical facts, and of the loss of confidence and authority that came through this unavoidable ambiguity. The ensuing controversies thundered and died away into mutterings and ironies, but the consequences of these disputes became more and more evident in the succeeding generations. They evinced themselves in a universal moral indefiniteness. The new and old cancelled out.

The accepted Christian world outlook, both that prescribed by the Catholic Church and that of the various dissentient Protestant sects, had carried with it a coarse but fairly effective moral imperative. Hell was the ultima ratio of good behaviour. The Churches, although badly damaged in argument, were well endowed and powerfully entrenched in the educational organization. Their practical resistance to the new views proved to be more effective than their controversial efforts. People had the social habit of belonging to them and entrusting their children to them. There were no other teachers ready; no other schools. So the traditional orthodoxies were able to obstruct the development of a modern ethic in harmony with the new realizations of man's place in space and time, in spite of the loss of much of their former power of unquestionable conviction.

Gradually throughout the First Age of General Prosperity the relative value of their endowments diminished, and they lost intellectual and moral prestige. But it was only with the economic landslides of the post-war period that their material foundations gave way completely. For a time these great organizations share in the common disaster, and when at last under new auspices a restoration of production occurred they recovered nothing of their proportional importance. Their old investments had vanished. They suffered with other landlords in the general resumption of estates by the

community. By 1965 C.E. it was no longer possible for an ordinary young man to get a living as a minister of any Church. Holy orders, since they implied an old-world outlook, were also a grave encumbrance for an ambitious teacher. It was extraordinary with what facility the priests and parsons changed their collars and vanished into the crowd with the progressive disappearance of their endowments. The organized Christian Churches pass out of history at last almost as quickly as the priesthood of Baal vanished after the Persian conquest. There is considerable plausibility in Faber's contention that they could have disappeared in no other way.

It had been usual to treat the extensive destruction of social morale which characterized this period as due to the interregnum between the fading out of the Christian ethic and the moral and intellectual establishment of modern conduct. Faber questions that boldly. He admits that the morale of Western civilization was built up very largely by Christian agencies, but he denies that they were sustaining it. He ascribes its evaporation almost entirely to the destruction of social confidence which we have noted already as a natural consequence of the wild fluctuations of economic security and monetary values at that time. Men ceased to respect society because they felt they were being cheated and betrayed by society.

3. — DISINTEGRATION AND CRYSTALLIZATION IN THE SOCIAL MAGMA; THE GANGSTER AND MILITANT POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The dissolutions and regroupings of people that were going on through this period have always attracted the attention of the social philosopher. The common man had lost his faith in a friendly God, his confidence in social justice and his educational and social services. He was out of employment and stirred by unsatisfied appetites. The time-honoured life of work and family interests had become impossible for a growing majority.

What we now call social nucleation was failing; the grouping of human beings in families and working communities was not going on. They became restive and troublesome. The social confidence and discipline that had prevailed throughout the nineteenth century deteriorated very rapidly. There was a swift fall in social security.

Phases of fever have occurred time without number in human history, phases of unsettlement and confused motivation, clottings and drives and migrations of population. Periods of tranquil assurance are the exception throughout the ages. But in the past it has usually been the exhaustion of food supplies, pestilence or some cruel invasion that has broken up the social texture and made humanity lawless again. This new disintegration was of a different character. It was due in the first place to an increase rather than a diminution of material and energy in the social scheme. It was a process of expansion which went wrong through the inadequacy of traditional law and government.

The disintegrative forces were already evident in the eighteenth century; they became very conspicuous in the French Revolution and the subsequent social and political disturbances but they only rose to a plain domination of the controlling forces after the World War.

In the seventeenth century, when population was thin and hardly

anyone moved about, it had been possible to keep order by means of a village constable, to try the malefactor by a local magistrate and jury which knew him thoroughly and understood his position and motives. Dogberry and Shallow sufficed. But the economic growth of the eighteenth century increased the size of towns and the traffic on the newly made roads between them without any corresponding increase in the forces of order. It produced, therefore, the urban mob, the footpad, the highwayman and the brigand. The local constable was unequal to these new demands; the local magistrate as inadequate. There was a phase of increasing crime.

After the failure of a régime of savage punishment uncertainly inflicted, after the excesses of the first French Revolution, after phases of mob violence in every European capital, and endless other manifestations of this outpacing of social control, the machinery of government did by an effort adjust itself to the new conditions. More or less modernized police forces appeared throughout the world and inaugurated a new phase of order and security, a phase which reached its maximum in the years before the Great War. For a time then the world, or at any rate very considerable areas of it, was almost as safe as it is today. An unarmed man could go about in reasonable security in most of Europe, India, China, America. Nobody offered him violence or attempted open robbery. Even the policeman in the English-speaking and Western European communities carried no weapon but a truncheon.

But the World War broke down many of the inhibitions of violence and bloodshed that had been built up during the progressive years of the nineteenth century and an accumulating number of intelligent, restless unemployed men, in a new world of motor-cars, telephones, plate-glass shop windows, unbarred country houses and trustful social habits, found themselves faced with illegal opportunities far more attractive than any legal behaviour-system now afforded them. And now after the world slump that insanity of public economy which runs like a disease through the story of the age prevented any prompt enlargement and modernization of the existing educational, legal or police organizations. The scale and prestige of the law-court and police-court dwindled as the problems presented to them by the vast irregular developments of that period

of stress and perplexity increased.

So the stage was set for a lawless phase. The criminal was liberated from parochialism and reactionary economies long before his antagonist the policeman, and he experienced all the invigoration and enlargement of that release. The criminal grew big while the law, pot-bound in its traditional swathings, was unable to keep pace with him.

The criminal records of this disorderly interlude make strange reading today. Things that were terrible enough at the time appear to us now as they recede into the past through a thickening, highly retractile veil of grotesqueness and picturesque absurdity. We read about them, as we read about mediaeval tortures or cannibal feasts or war atrocities or human sacrifice, with a startled incredulity. We laugh now; it is all so IMPOSSIBLE. Few of us actually realize these were flesh-and-blood sufferings that living men and women went through only a century and a half ago.

The criminals of the more fortunate countries of the European system, during that First Age of General Prosperity before the World War, like the few cases of intolerable behaviour with which society deals today, had constituted a small abnormal and diminishing minority for the most part mental defectives or at best very inferior types. The majority of their offences were emotional or brutish offences. There was some stealing and a steady proportion of swindling in business, not sufficient to disturb the social order at all seriously. But as the morale of the old order dissolved, this ceased to be the case. Increasing numbers of intelligent and enterprising people found themselves in conflict with society because, as they argued very reasonably, society had cheated them. Patriotism too, they felt, had cheated them and given them nothing but poverty and war. They had never had a fair chance. They looked after themselves and left the community to look after itself. They fell back on the nearer loyalties of their immediate associates.

Your “pal” at any rate was close at hand. If he “let you down”, you had a fair chance to “get at” him. Little gang-nuclei came into existence, therefore, wherever unassimilated elements of the population were congested and humiliated or wherever intelligent men festered in unemployment and need.

In 1900 European society in particular was still nucleated about the family group in relation to a generally understood code of lawful behaviour. In 1950 its individuals were either nucleated into gangs, groups or societies or dissolved into crowds, and the influence and pretence of any universally valid standard of good conduct had disappeared.

Robbery is the first great division in the catalogue of anti-social offences. Every efficient government in the past reserved to itself the sole right of dispossession, and every intelligent government exercised the right with extreme discretion. In the past of unregulated private ownership the filching of portable objects and raids upon unguarded possessions were always going on. In Great Britain, in which country the highest levels of social order were attained during the First Age of General Prosperity, stealing (with which we may include various forms of embezzlement and fraud) remained the chief offence upon the list. Almost all the others had become exceptional. But whenever there was a dip in the common prosperity, more active methods of robbery appeared to supplement the ordinary theft. The snatcher began to take his chance with bags and watches. The enterprise of the burglar increased. Then came the simple hold-up under threats, or robbery with assault. In a world of general confidence, unarmed and unaccompanied people were going about everywhere wearing valuable jewellery and carrying considerable sums of money. But that atmosphere of confidence could be rapidly chilled. Even in later-nineteenth-century Britain there were epidemics of robbery by single men or by men in couples, the "garrotters" of the sixties, for example, who assaulted suddenly from behind and seized the watch and pocket-book. They would clap a pitch plaster over their victim's mouth. There were brief phases when the suburban regions even of London and Paris became unsafe, and at no time were any but the more central regions of some of the great American cities secure. This kind of thing increased notably everywhere after the World War.

There were manifest limits to this hold-up business. It was something that extinguished itself. There had to be a general feeling of practical security for that type of robbery to prosper. There had to be people to rob. Robbery from the person is an acute and not a

chronic disease of communities. So soon as the footpad became too prevalent people ceased to carry so many valuables, they shunned lonely or dark streets and roads, they went about in company and began to bear arms. The epidemic of hold-ups passed its maximum and declined.

The criminally disposed soon learnt the importance of association for the exploitation of new lines of effort. With a more alert and defensive and less solitary type of victim, the casual criminal developed into the planning criminal. In every country multiplying nuclei of crime began to work out the problems of that terroristic gang discipline which is imperative upon those who combine to defy the law. In Europe the intensifying tariff wars put an increasing premium upon the enterprise of the smuggler, and in smuggling enterprises men readily developed those furtive secret loyalties, those sub- laws of the underworld, which proved so readily applicable to more aggressive efforts. In America the repressive laws against alcohol had already created the necessary conditions for a similar morbid organization of gang systems, which had become readily confluent with the older associations for political corruption and terrorism. As the economic breakdown proceeded throughout the thirties and forties of the twentieth century, ordinary social security diminished even more rapidly in America than in Europe. But everywhere a parallel dégringolade was going on. Now it would be the criminal forces in one country and now those in another which were leading in novel attacks upon the law-abiding citizen of the decaying order.

The hold-up in force became bolder and more frequent. History repeated itself with variations. In the place of the highwayman of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came the motor-car bandit and the train-robber. Trains-de-luxe were successfully held up by armed bands, first of all in Eastern Europe and America and then very generally. These were operations involving the concerted action of a dozen men or more, who had to be sure of their “get away” and with a market for their loot. Country houses and country clubs full of wealthy guests presently began to be attacked — the telephones cut and the whole place systematically looted. Restaurants, gambling-clubs and other resorts of people with full pocket-books were also

raided with increasing efficiency. Local banks and bank branches became insecure. Until the nineteen-thirties a town bank had a large open handsome office with swinging doors, low counters and glass partitions. Ten years later the face of the bank had changed: the clerks were protected by steel defences, they were armed with revolvers, and they parleyed with the customer through small pigeonholes that could be promptly closed.

This change in the scale and quality of aggressive crime was reflected in public manners and display. The wearing of jewellery, gold watch-chains, expensive studs and suchlike challenges to poverty declined, costume became more "buttoned up" and restrained. Hip-pocket weapons spread from America to Europe. Women's dress and ornaments, though if anything they improved in their artistic quality, diminished in intrinsic value. Everywhere there was a diminution of social ostentation. Houses with narrow exterior windows and well equipped with steel doors, locks, bolts and bars, were preferred to those candidly exposed to sunlight and exterior observation. The window displays of the town shops became more guarded.

The need for protection and the dread of conspicuousness affected automobile design. The common automobile of the middle twentieth century was a sullen-looking pugnacious beast. And its occupants were in harmony with it. Before the World War the spectacle of a broken-down vehicle or any such trouble by the wayside would induce almost any passing car to stop and offer assistance. Under the new conditions people feared a decoy. They would refuse to stop after twilight, and even in the daytime they sometimes hurried on, though injured or apparently injured people might be lying by the roadside.

Travel diminished very rapidly under such conditions. There is some difficulty about the statistics, but between 1928 and 1938 the number of pleasure travellers upon the roads and railways of continental Europe fell by something over, rather than under, eighty per cent. There were, of course, other causes at work besides the general insecurity of movement in producing this decline; there was a general impoverishment also which disposed people to stay at home. But the major factor was insecurity.

The roads were less and less frequented as they became unsafe. Many fell out of repair, and the old road-signs and petrol pumps, now dear to our school-museum collectors, vanished one by one from the landscape.

Improvements in robbery were only one group of the criminal developments in progress. A much more distressful aspect was the organization of terroristic blackmail, at first directed against individuals and then against whole classes in the community. As people ceased to travel to be robbed, the robber had to pursue them to their homes. Here again American inventiveness and enterprise led the world. By imperceptible degrees the ordinary prosperous citizen found his life enmeshed in a tangle of threats and vague anxieties. Even during the prosperous period there had been an element of menace in the lives of the American well-to-do; their securities had never been quite secure and their positions never perfectly stable. But now over and above the ever increasing instability of possessions and income came the increasing need to buy off molestation. Breaking through the now inadequate protection of the police appeared silently and grimly and more and more openly the blackmailer, the kidnapper and the gang terrorist.

A particularly cruel form of attack upon unprotected private people was the threatening and kidnapping of young children. It had a minor grotesque side in the stealing and ransoming of pet animals. Many hundreds of children had been stolen, hidden away, and brought back for reward before the abduction and murder of the child of Colonel Lindbergh, a long-distance aviator very popular in America, called general attention to this increasing nuisance. Nothing effective, however, was done to control these practices, and in the bad years that followed 1930 kidnapping and the threat of kidnapping increased very greatly, and spread to the old world. It was organised. Men and women were spirited away, intimidated by threats of torture, held captive. If the pursuit was pressed too hard they disappeared and were heard of no more. Assassinations multiplied. Bodies of men set themselves up almost without concealment under such names as Citizens' Protection Societies, or Civil Order Associations. The man who wanted to be left alone in peace, he and his household, was pressed to pay his tribute to the

gang. Or he would not be left in peace. And even if his particular "protectors" left him in peace, there might still be other gangs about for whom they disavowed responsibility and with whom he had to make a separate deal.

It was not merely the well-to-do who were worried and levied upon in this fashion. An increasing proportion of minor workers and traders found it necessary to pay a percentage of their gains or earnings to escape systematic persecution. "Trouble" was the characteristic American word. "You don't want to have trouble," said the blackmailer, gently but insistently.

The new generation grew up into a world of secret compromises and underhand surrenders. The common man picked his way discreetly through a world of possible trouble. No one dared live who was not a member (and servant) of a Union of some kind. It was a return to very ancient conditions, conditions that had prevailed for ages in China, for instance, and in Sicily and Southern Italy. But it was a relapse from the freedom and confidence of the better days at the close of the nineteenth century. It was a contraction of everyday human happiness.

Kidnapping was not confined to kidnapping for ransom. There had always been a certain irrepressible trade in the beguiling and stealing of young persons for sexual prostitution, and this also increased again. Workers were kidnapped, and the intimidation of workers in factories became bolder and less formally legal. There was a great release of violence in personal quarrels, and in particular crimes of revenge multiplied. In a phase of dwindling confidence and happiness, people of spirit no longer recoiled from the tragic ending of oppressive situations. They took the law into their own hands. They began to fight and kill, and they were no longer inevitably overtaken by the law.

The remaining rich, the financial adventurers who still appeared, the prominent political leaders, the transitory "kings" of the underworld, all surrounded themselves with bodyguards. Types recalling the hired "bravos" of the Italian cities of the later Middle Ages and the Samurai of the Japanese noblemen reappeared as the hefty private attendants of the wealthier Americans. After the economic slump had fairly set in the posse of needy retainers became

a universal practice with all who could afford it. They protected the person and the home. They supplemented the police.

The transition from a protective to an aggressive bodyguard was inevitable. Leading American bootleggers were the chief offenders, but the example was contagious. “Brawling” of retainers reappeared first in America, Germany and Ireland. These brawls were usually small street battles, or conflicts at race meetings and suchlike gatherings, or side issues to political meetings and processions. It was a courageous politician who would face an audience after 1938 unless he knew that his men were about him and posted at strategically important points in the meeting. And he would be wearing a mail undervest or suchlike protection of his more vital parts. There are hundreds of such garments in our museums.

No man, woman or child that “mattered” went about “unshadowed” after 1940. After the middle nineteenth century women had made great advances toward personal freedom. About 1912 a pretty girl in her teens might have taken a knapsack and marched off alone through the northern states of Europe or America in perfect safety, unmolested. All this freedom vanished during the age of insecurity. Women ceased to go about without an escort even in the towns. It was not until 2014 that there was any real return towards the former common liberties of the young and weak and gentle. There was on the part of women, as the novels of the time reveal, a survival of social fear in human life, the fear of going alone, until the middle of the twenty-first century.

After 1945 a fresh aspect of insecurity appears in the records. There is mention of unsafe roadside hotels, and a great increase not simply of streets, but of whole districts and villages where “things happened”, people disappeared, and it was inadvisable for strangers to go. Some of these criminally infected areas did not recover their reputations for three quarters of a century. The DANGEROUS big hotel with its secret lifts, passages, ambushes and sinister private rooms is still the delight of our popular romancers; it loses nothing in elaboration as it recedes into the past.

The psychology of the twentieth-century policeman has been made the subject of a whole group of historical studies. There was no connection in those days between the policeman and either the

educational or medical services. This association which appears so inevitable to us today would have seemed insane to the organizers of the first police forces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The policeman, for them, was to be an animated barrier and signpost, capable of leaping into action at the sight of assault, petty larceny or unseemly behaviour. Beyond that very little initiative was expected from him. He took into custody people who were "given in charge". Above him were officers, usually of a different class, and associated with the force was a group of criminal enquiry experts, who were quite capable of handling most of the offences against the law that prevailed in the era before the extensive introduction of rapid transit, power machinery and mass production. This pattern of police force worked fairly well up to the beginning of the twentieth century. Except in districts where sexual prostitution was rife it remained fairly honest. It maintained a fairly high level of liberty, security of property and social order for a century. Only when the control of morals or political intervention was thrust upon it did it prove unequal to the strain.

And then, as the greater community of the World State began to struggle clumsily and painfully out of traditional forms, we see police control again outpaced by its task. It gives way. "Why," the student asks, "was this police organization unable to keep pace with the new stresses? Why were the ruling people of that time so incapable of fitting it to the new demands upon it?" We have already indicated the main lines of the answer. Just when the need for a fundamental refashioning of the police of the world was becoming urgent, came also, first that exacerbation of international hostilities, of "secret service" and espionage to render any broad international handling of the problem impossible, and secondly that desperately foolish sacrifice of life to the creditor which seems to be the inevitable conclusion of any social system based on acquisition.

The Profit-Capitalist System was absolutely incapable of controlling the unemployment it had evoked and the belligerence it stimulated. It stagnated on its hoards. It fought against inflation and it fought against taxation. It died frothing economies at the mouth. It killed the schools on which public acquiescence rested. Impartially it restricted employment and the relief of the unemployed. Even on this

plain issue of its police protection it economized. Impossible, it said, to plan a new police when we cannot even pay for the police we have.

And so the desperate fight of an essentially nineteenth-century pattern of police organization, under-financed, inadequately equipped, divided up, controlled by small-scale, antiquated national or parochial authorities, in many cases rotten with corruption, against the monstrous forces of disorganization released by the irregular hypertrophies to social development was added to the other conflicts of that distressful age.

In spite of a notable amount of corruption and actual descents into criminality, the general will of most of the police forces seems to have remained sound. Most but not all. Most of these organizations did keep up a fight for order even when they were in a process of dissolution. They did keep up their traditional war against crime. But their methods underwent a considerable degeneration, which was shared, and shared for the same reason, by the criminal law of the period. Police and prosecutor both felt that the dice were loaded against them, that they were battling against unfair odds. Their war against crime became a feud. It grew less and less like a serene control, and more and more like a gang conflict. They were working in an atmosphere in which witnesses were easily intimidated and local sympathy more often than not against the law. This led to an increasing unscrupulousness on their part in the tendering and treatment of evidence. In many cases (see Aubrey Wilkinson's The Natural History of the Police Frame-up, 1991) the police deliberately manufactured evidence against criminals they had good reason to believe guilty, and perjured themselves unhesitatingly. Wilkinson declares that in the early twentieth century hundreds of thousands of wrongdoers were "justly condemned on false evidence", and that they could have been condemned in no other way.

But the apologetics of Wilkinson for the police break down when he comes to the next aspect of their degeneration under stress. We have all read with horror of the use of torture in mediaeval practice and shuddered at the fact that there were even special machines and instruments in those days, the rack, the thumbscrew, the boot and so forth, for the infliction of pain. But there remains little doubt now

that the police of the twentieth century, fighting with their backs to the wall against enormous odds, did go very far towards a revival of torture against those they believed to be social dangers. It is a difficult as well as an ugly task to disentangle this story now, but sufficient fact emerges to show us that in the general decay of behaviour that was going on, not merely casual blows and roughness of handling, but the systematic exhaustion, pestering, ill-treatment and actual torment of persons under arrest in order to extort confessions and incriminating statements, became prevalent.

There is no real distinction in nature between the processes that led up to this chaotic nucleation of human beings about gangs and organizations for frankly criminal purposes and those which led to protective associations for the illegal maintenance of security and order and again to those much wider allegiances within the state such as the nationalist Sokols in the Austrian provinces that became Szecho Slovakia, the Irish Republican organizations, the Ku Klux Klan in America, the multitudinous secret societies of India, China, and Japan, the Communist Party which captured Russia, the Fascist who captured Italy, the Nazis who captured Germany, all of which pursued on bolder and bolder scales large intimidatory and revolutionary economic and political ends. All these were structurally great gangster systems. Instead of specific immediate blackmail they sought larger satisfactions; that is all the difference. Even when the organisation as a whole had large conceptions of its function, it was apt to degenerate locally into a mere boss or bully rule. All these forms of recrystallization within the community, large and small, arose because of the inadaptability and want of vigour and cooperation in the formal governing, economically directive and educational systems. Because there was no foresight to ensure continuity in the growth of institutions, there were these unpremeditated and often morbid growths, expressive of the accumulating discomfort and discontent and of the need for a more intimate, energetic and fruitful form of human association.

It is paradoxical but true that the civilized human society of the later nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries broke up because of the imperative need of human beings to live in active combination. It was pulled to pieces by its own new cohesions. Until there was a

complete, satisfactory and vigorous World-State organization potentially in being, the continuation of this breaking up and reassembling of social energy was inevitable. It was like the break-up of caterpillar organs in the cocoon to form the new structures of the imago.

Even the Modern State Fellowship itself, so far as many of its nuclei were concerned, was at first of this nature, a coalescence of all these varied technicians who realized that employment would vanish, that everything they valued in life would vanish, with the spread of social disorder. They constituted protective and aggressive gangs with an unexampled power of world-wide cooperation. Their confluence became the new world.

The demoralization of the world's sea life, thanks to the surviving vestiges of naval power, was far less rapid and complete than the spread of disorder on the land. It was only after the series of naval mutinies towards the end of the last European war that the ancient practice of piracy was resumed. Even then ships could still be policed and a recalcitrant ship brought to book much more easily than the black streets of a town. One or two pleasure liners were boarded and held up in out-of-the-way ports in the thirties, but in no case did the assailants get away with their plunder. In 1933 the Chinese fleet had disintegrated into shipfuls of adventurers offering their services by wireless to the various governments who divided the country. But these stray warships did little mischief before they were bought, captured or sunk by the Japanese.

A Canadian pleasure liner, The King of the Atlantic, on one of the last holiday voyages to be made, was seized on the high seas by an armed gang in 1939, and an attempt was made to hold its passengers to ransom. They were all to be killed if the pursuit was pressed home. In the face, however, of a combined attack by American sea and air forces, at that time still efficient though greatly in arrears with their pay, the hearts of the gangsters failed them and they surrendered ignominiously.

No ship of over 9,000 tons was ever captured by pirates. This relative maintenance of orderliness at sea was due to special conditions — the then recent discovery of radio communications, for example. It outlasted the practical cessation of shipbuilding in the

forties and an immense shrinkage in the world's shipping.

Nor did new types of criminal appear in the air until after the third European conflict, and then not overwhelmingly. Here again was a field of human activity, essentially simple and controllable. For a time indeed the aeroplane was the safest as well as the swiftest method of getting about the world. For some years after the practical cessation of general land travel the infrequent aviator still hummed across the sky, over dangerous city and deserted highroad, over ruined country houses and abandoned cultivations, recalling the memory of former disciplines and the promise of an orderly future.

There were fewer aeroplanes just as there were fewer ships, and, because of the general discouragement of enterprise, there was little change of type, yet the skies, like the high seas, remained practically outside the range of the general social debacle until well past the middle of the century. The need for aerodromes, for repairing and fuelling, held the dwindling body of aviators together. Air outrages at the worst phase were still scattered and disconnected events. And it was in the air at last and along the air routes that the sword of a new order reappeared.

4. — CHANGES IN WAR PRACTICE AFTER THE WORLD WAR

The science and practice of warfare during this Age of Frustration, having now no adequate directing and controlling forces over it, pursued, in its development, a preposterous and dreadful logic of its own.

In 1914, at the outbreak of the World War, military science had been a pretentious and backward lore. The War Offices, as we have told, had allowed the armament industry to put enormously outsize weapons into their hands, but they had made none of the necessary mental adjustments needed to meet this change of scale. All the land commanders engaged in that struggle with scarcely an exception were still fighting clumsily according to the obsolete tradition of nineteenth-century warfare. They were still thinking in terms of frontal attack, outflanking, the break-through and so-forth. We have told as briefly as we could the horrors of the ensuing harvest. The Admiralties, forewarned perhaps by their engineers, showed a livelier discretion and for the most part hid away their costly fleets from the disasters of combat in strongly defended harbours, and allowed them to emerge only on one or two wild occasions for battle so inconclusive that they were prolonged as controversies for years afterwards and remain undecided to this day. The submarine, the minefield, the aeroplane, the primitive "tank", organized propaganda to weaken war will, a tentative use of gas, and the replacement of many of the elder commanders as the war proceeded did something to modify land fighting, but to the very last, when the general collapse of "morale" led to the armistice, the professional soldiers were clinging to the idea that nothing fundamental had happened to the methods of their ancient and honoured profession.

All this changed after the Peace of Versailles. A spirit of unrest entered into both the War Offices and Foreign Offices of the world. They were invaded by a consciousness of great changes none the less potent because it was belated and had accumulated. The younger generals who had been through the war could not put out of their

minds memories of attacks from overhead, gas attacks, tank actions, and, above all, the loose ungentlemanly comments of temporary officers of practical ability and unmilitary habits of mind. These younger generals aged in their turn, and as they aged they succeeded to positions of authority. They came into power repeating perpetually: "We must keep pace with the times."

A phase of extreme innovation succeeded the conservatism of the older generation. Everywhere the War Offices stirred with novel conceptions of strange inventions, secret novelties and furtive systematic research. Everywhere the obscure reports of spies and informants, carefully fostered by the armament dealers affected, stimulated this forced inventiveness.

It was realized that the old warfare had in fact perished in a state of lumpish hypertrophy in the trenches. It had indeed been a "war to end war" — and the old war was done for. The new warfare had to replace it — and quickly. The Foreign Offices demanded it. They could not do without war of some sort. Sovereignty was war. The traditional state was an organization against foreigners resting on the ultimate sanction of belligerence. They could imagine no other state of affairs, for to begin with that would have involved imagining themselves non-existent. The thirties and forties of the century teemed with furtive and grotesquely hideous researches to discover and develop the methods of the New Warfare. For the only alternative to further war was the abandonment of state sovereignty, and for that men's minds were altogether unprepared.

The changes in war method that went on between 1900 and 1950 C.E., with the possible exception of the introduction of firearms between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, were far greater than anything that had ever happened since the earliest men hit and scuffled in their first rude group encounters. For endless ages the main conflict had been the "battle", the encounter of bodies of men on foot or on horseback. The infantry had been the traditional backbone of the army, and (except when the Huns and the Mongols refused to play according to the rules) the cavalry was secondary. Artillery was used only for "preparation" before the attack. So fought Rameses, so Alexander, so Caesar, so Napoleon. The glorious victories during the romantic ages of human warfare all amounted to

battles of practically the same pattern, to a great central battering with pikes, swords, bayonets, maces or suchlike implements, a swiping, pushing, punching, pelting, stabbing, poking and general clapperclawing amidst a shower of comparatively light missiles, that went on at longest for a few hours, and ended in a break, a flight, a cavalry pursuit and a massacre. This "open warfare" alternated, it is true, with long sieges, less sportsmanlike phases, in which the contending hosts refused battle and squatted unwholesomely in excavations and behind walls, annoying each other by raids and attempts to storm and break through, until hunger, pestilence, the decay of discipline under boredom, or the exasperation of the surrounding population broke up the party. Non-combatants suffered considerable temporary and incidental molestation during warfare, there was a certain amount of raping and looting, devastation to destroy supplies, pressed labour and spy-hunting on a scale which amounted in most cases to little more than an exacerbation of normal criminality. Wholesale devastation, such as the break-up of the irrigation of Mesopotamia by the Mongols, or the laying waste of Northumbria by William the Conqueror of England, was, when it occurred, a measure of policy rather than a war measure. War had to go on for many decades before it could produce such disorganisation as that of Asia Minor in the wars between Byzantium and Persia. The Islamic invasions were at first made additionally disagreeable by religious propaganda, but this was speedily replaced by discriminatory taxation. The long distance campaigns of Roman, Hunnish and Mongol armies again spread various once localized infectious and contagious diseases very widely; but the total influence of the old warfare upon human destiny was enormously exaggerated by the nationalist historians of the old régime. It was of infinitely less importance than migration. The peasant life went on unchangingly, squalid and laborious, as it had been going on for the majority of human beings since agriculture began. The various "Decisive Battles of the World" were high points in that fantasy of the pedants, the great "drama of the empires", with which they befogged the human mind for so long during its gropings from the peasant state of life towards a sane and orderly way of living.

But with the Napoleonic wars, the soldier began to invade and

modify the texture of normal life as he had never done before, by conscription, by unprecedented monetary levies, indemnities and taxes that dislocated economic processes; and conversely, quite uninvited by the soldier, as we have shown, the expanding forces of power industrialism and of mass manipulation through journalistic and other sorts of propaganda, invaded both the military field and the common life. War, which had been like the superficial ploughing of our ancestors, became a subsoil plough, an excavator that went deeper and deeper, that began presently to deflect underground springs and prepare extensive landslides.

The Generals of the World War were all in the position of inexperienced amateurs in charge of vast mechanisms beyond their power of control. War, which formerly had been fought on the flat along a "front", suddenly reached through and over the contending armies, and allowed no one to stand out of it any more. The New Warfare, it was already being remarked by 1918, was a war of whole populations, from which all respect for the non-combatant was vanishing. People said this, and some few even tried to understand in detail what it meant. And now all over the world military gentlemen, many of them still adorned with the spurs, epaulettes, froggings, buttons, stripes, ribbons, medals, residual scraps of armour and suchlike pretty glories of the good old times, set themselves most valiantly to work out the possibilities and methods of the New Warfare.

Courage was always the better part of the military tradition, and nothing could exceed the courage with which these men set themselves throughout this period to overtake the march of invention, to master engineering and engineers, chemistry and chemists, war correspondents and newspaper editors, biology, medicine, and even finance, in their efforts to keep that ancient war idea, the idea of the battling sovereign state, alive. As we have seen, the schools stood loyally by them; they had the support of the armament industries, and, less whole-heartedly perhaps, the approval of the old religions and of the old royalties and loyalties. Their activities were profoundly stupid, but the grotesque horror of their achievements, the distress and unhappiness of three generations of our race, are still recent enough to mask their ludicrous quality.

The literature of the military science of this period is a copious one, and perhaps the best survey of it all is Fuller-Metsch's The Ideas of the New Warfare in the Middle Twentieth Century (2001). Therein the writer sets himself to three enquiries: "For what did they suppose they were going to fight?" "How were they going to fight?" And "What did they consider would constitute a definitive end and winding-up of their fighting?"

The answer he gives is a composite one. No single individual seems to have grasped the New Warfare in its entirety. With a solemn pedantry, a pretentious modesty, each "expert" dealt with his own department and left it to Fate to put the assembled parts together into a whole. But what the composite soldier of 1935 was contemplating rather foggily seems to have been very much as follows. He conceived the world as divided up among a number of governments or Powers. These were the sovereign states as the Treaty of Westphalia (1642) presented them. All these powers were competitive and passively or actively hostile. The intervals when the hostility was active were wars. The intervals of recuperation and preparation were peace. War was a cessation of a truce between the belligerents, a cessation arising out of an irreconcilable dispute or clash of interests, and the objective then of each Power was to impose its Will upon its enemy. In the days before the twentieth century this imposition of Will was done more or less professionally by the governments and armies. One or other Power took the offensive, crossed its borders and marched on the enemy seat of government. After various operations and battles the capital would be captured or the invader driven back to his own, and a peace made and a treaty signed more or less in accordance with the Will of the victor. Boundaries would be adjusted in accordance with that Will, colonies transferred, indemnities arranged for; the victorious Power expanded and the defeated shrivelled. The people of the unsuccessful Power would be very much ashamed of themselves. To the end of the nineteenth century this formula was observed.

But by the time of the World War much more than the disappearance of the "front" and the increasing entanglement of the erstwhile non-combatants was happening to this procedure. The Powers were losing their definite identities. The fine question of what

constituted a responsible government capable of imposing a Will, or giving in to it, arose. In Russia, for example, was the new Communist régime responsible for the obligations of the Autocracy? Was Germany, were all the Germans, to be held responsible for Krupp-Kaiser militarism? Was a dummy Sultan in Constantinople, or Kemal Pasha in Angora, the proper authority to consent to the dismemberment of Turkey? Again, the United States of America had come gaily into the war and then declined effective participation in President Wilson's settlement. He had not, it seemed, been a plenipotentiary. Was that behaving as a Power should behave?

Still further perplexities arose about the laws of war. If the front was abolished, if civilians were to be bombed from the air, what became of the right of professional soldiers to shoot franc-tireurs and destroy their homes? It was as if the arena of a football match were invaded by the spectators, who began kicking the ball about, chasing the referee, and declining to keep any score as between the original sides in the game.

The military authority recoiled from these devastating riddles of the new age. Such issues, he decided, were not for him. There had always been sides in a war, and there must still be sides. It was for the politicians to define them. He fell back on his fundamental conception of a Power "imposing its Will" upon another Power, but using now, in addition to the old invasion and march on the capital, the new methods of propaganda, blockades and attacks behind the front, and all the latest chemical and aerial devices to "undermine the morale" of the enemy population and dispose its government to yield. In the end there must be a march, if only a concluding professional march, through the goal or capital of the losing side. He refused to entertain the inevitable problem of an enemy government not yielding but collapsing, and leaving no responsible successor. That was not his affair. Presumably in that case the war would continue indefinitely.

Nor was it his business to enter into the financial aspects of the matter, to estimate any ratio whatever between the costs of the New Warfare and the material advantages to be exacted when the Will of the conqueror was imposed. In that regard he was excessively modest. He could not be expected to think of everything. His

business was to prepare the best and most thorough war possible, with all the latest improvements, and quite regardless of cost, for his Power. It was for his government to find out how to pay for and use the war he had prepared for it. Or to use it partially. War, just war itself, was the limit of his task.

Research for the latest improvements soon led the now almost morbidly progressive military mind to some horrifying discoveries. Some of the soldiers concerned were certainly badly scared by the realization of what evils it was now possible to inflict in warfare. It leaked out in their speeches and books. But they kept on. They kept on partly because they had a stout-hearted tradition and refused to be dismayed, but mainly no doubt for the same reason that the Christian priests and bishops who had lost their faith still stuck to their Churches — because it was the only job they could do. Throughout the three decades that followed the Congress of Versailles, thousands of highly intelligent men, specialist soldiers, air soldiers, engineering soldiers, chemical, medical soldiers and the like, a far ampler and more energetic personnel than that devoted to the solution of the much more urgent and important financial riddles of the time, were working out, with unstinted endowments and the acquiescence and approval of their prospective victims, patiently, skilfully, thoroughly, almost inconceivably, abominable novelties for the surprise and torture of human beings.

None of these experts seems to have been more than mediocre; it was an age of mental and moral mediocrities; and even within the accepted limitation we have already noted, none of them seems to have worked out the New Warfare as a whole complete process. Groups of men working in secrecy, immune from outer criticism, naturally conspire not only against the foreigner but against each other, and most of the men in decisive positions were rather men skilled in securing appointments and promotion than inspired specialists. A certain lumbering quality in their devices ensued.

In Great Britain a group of these experts became exceedingly busy in what was called mechanical warfare. The British had first invented, and then made a great mess of, the tank in the World War, and they were a tenacious people. The authorities stuck to it belatedly but doggedly. In a time of deepening and ever bitterer

parsimony their War Office spared no expense in this department. It was the last of all to feel the pinch. The funny land ironclads of all sizes these military "inventors" produced, from a sort of armoured machine-gunner on caterpillar wheels up to very considerable mobile forts, are still among the queerest objects in the sheds of the vast war dumps which constitute the Aldershot Museum. They are fit peers for Admiral Fisher's equally belated oil Dreadnoughts.

The British dream of the next definitive war seems to have involved a torrent of this ironmongery tearing triumphantly across Europe. In some magic way (too laborious to think out) these armoured Wurms were to escape traps, gas poison belts, mines and gunfire. There were even "tanks" that were intended to go under water, and some that could float. Hansen even declared (see The Last War Preparations, xxiv, 1076) that he had found (rejected) plans of tanks to fly and burrow. Most of these contrivances never went into action. That throws a flavour of genial absurdity over this particular collection that is sadly lacking from most war museums.

The British and the French experts, and presently the Germans, also worked very hard at the fighting aeroplane — the British and Germans with the greatest success; the aerial torpedo, controllable at immense distances, was perfected almost simultaneously by the Italians and the Japanese. The French mind, for all its native brilliance, was hampered by its characteristic reluctance to scrap old plant for new. It was the German, American and Russian experts who went furthest with the possibilities of chemical attack. The disarmament of Germany necessarily forced its military authorities to concentrate on an arm that could be studied, experimented upon and prepared unknown to the outer world, and the Russians were forced to take up parallel enquiries because of their relative industrial poverty. The Germans had been first to use gas in the Great War, and they remained for a long time the war gas pioneers. But after the Great War much attention was given to this arm in America through the influence of the chemical industry. Biological warfare, that is to say the distribution of infectious diseases, was also extensively studied, America and the Central Europeans in this case leading the way.

Even before the Central European fighting in 1940 and the

subsequent years, the distribution of various disease germs was no longer a merely theoretical possibility. Little containers, made to look like fountain pens, were already being manufactured. The caps could be removed to expose soluble ends, and then they could be dropped into reservoirs or running streams. Glass bombs also existed for use from aeroplanes, railway-train windows and so forth, which would break on hitting water. There are specimens in the Aldershot Museum. The enrolment and territorial organization of medical men and trained assistants to inoculate threatened populations went on with increasing vigour after 1932.

But there was a certain hesitation about the use of disease germs. It is easy to distribute them but hard to limit their field of action, and if prisoners (military or civilian) were still to be taken and towns and territory occupied, a well launched pestilence might conceivably recoil with deadly effect upon its users. Bacterial warfare seemed, even to the specialists who studied it, a very improbable method for any but an heroically vindictive population in the hour of defeat. Nevertheless it was thought best to have it worked out. Except for the distribution of malignant influenza in Kan-su and Shensi by the Japanese during their efforts to tranquillize North China in 1936, "without proceeding to extremities", its use was never officially admitted. Other alleged instances of its deliberate employment by responsible Powers have been shown by the researches of the Historical Bureau to have been due either to the unauthorized zeal of subordinates or to the activities of those religious fanatics who became so prevalent during the period of confusion after 1945. The acclimatization of the mosquito transmitting yellow fever in India in 1950, which did so much to diminish the population of that peninsula, has never been explained. It is generally supposed to have been accidental.

So far as method and invention went, what was called "Gas Warfare" ran very parallel to bacterial warfare. Its beginning and end is now a closed chapter in the history of the human intelligence and will. It is surely one of the strangest. It set its stamp upon the clothing and urban architecture of the age. It ranks in horror with the story of judicial torture or the story of ritual cannibalism, but its inhumanity is more striking because of its nearness to our own times.

Like those older instances, it brings home to us the supreme need for sound common general ideas to hold together human activities. It tells how thousands of clear and active minds, each indisputably sane, could, in an atmosphere obsessed by plausible false assumptions about patriotic duty and honour, cooperate to produce a combined result fantastically futile and cruel.

The people engaged in this business were, on the whole, exceptionally grave, industrious and alert-minded. Could they revisit the world to-day individually we should probably find them all respectable, companionable, intelligible persons. Yet in the aggregate they amounted to an organization of dangerous lunatics. They inflicted dreadful deaths, hideous sufferings or tormented lives upon, it is estimated, about a million of their fellow creatures.

Most of the lethal substances prepared for gas warfare purposes have passed altogether out of general knowledge. They are either never manufactured now or they are produced upon rare occasions and under proper control for the purposes of physiological research. The old devices and appliances for their distribution seem, nowadays, like grotesque anticipations of many of the features of the large scale agricultural and hygienic operations that are carried out to-day. The treatment of locust swarms by air attack, the spraying of the reafforested regions against various tree diseases, the regular cleansing and stimulation of our grain and root crops are all subsequent rationalizations of these practices of the Age of Frustration.

Faber, that Calvinistic optimist, with his doctrine that the bad is all to the good in this maddest of all conceivable worlds, thinks that all these big scale methods were “enormously stimulated” by the crazy inventiveness of the war period. But then he has also suggested that the aeroplane would not have come into general use for many years without war stimulation. We venture to think he carries his doctrine of the attainment of wisdom through imbecility too far. It is really only a modernization of Charles Lamb’s story of the invention of the roast pig. It had the touch of Rasputinism, this revival of the ancient heresy that one must sin THOROUGHLY before one can be saved.

Much more after the gas-war pattern were the campaigns (2033

and 2035) against rats and mice, that finally cleansed the world of the lurking poison of that medieval terror, bubonic plague, and the distributions of “festivity gas”, that were permitted in various regions in 2060. The countervailing use of benign-gases as a subsidiary to the suppression of the depressing cometary toxins of 2080 will also occur to the reader. The oxygenation of council chambers, factories, playing-fields and similar loci demanding special brightness and activity, and the use of Padanath Tagore’s Lotus Gas in the Himalayan rest valleys, we may note, are also claimed by Faber as part of the legacy of gas warfare.

One or two of the offensive substances actually manufactured for war purposes are now utilized in relation to very special and specially protected processes in our industrial plants. The preparation of some of them is a major felony. They were a very various miscellany, for every chemical possibility was ransacked to find them. Very few of them were actually gases. Many were volatile liquids or even finely divided solids, which were to be sprayed or dusted over positions in enemy occupation. Dr. Gertrud Woker, in a paper on this subject contributed to an enquiry by the Interparliamentary Union in 1931, gave a useful summary of the existing state of knowledge at that time. In conjunction with various colleagues (What Would Be the Character of a New War? Historical Documents 937,205), she allows us to form an estimate of what was actually being contemplated by contemporary military experts. Except for one important exception, her list covers all the main types of poison gas substances that were actually prepared. This spate of investigation culminated about 1938. By that time the entire field had been explored. After that there were improvements but no major innovations.

After 1940 even military research was restricted by the increasing financial paralysis. In 1960 no plants capable of producing material for gas warfare on a sufficiently abundant scale were operating.

Of gases actually tried out in the World War itself, the chief seem to have been chlorine and various chlorine compounds (phosgene, Green Cross gas, chloropicrin and so forth). These attacked and destroyed the lung tissue. Chlorine was used by the Germans as early as April 1915 at Ypres when 6,000 men were killed by it; it was soon

abandoned, because it was so immediately irritating that its presence was detected at once, and precautionary measures could be taken. The other gases in this class got to work less frankly. Presently the victim began to cough. Then as the destruction of the bronchioles and alveoli of the lungs went on he retched and suffocated and coughed up blood and tissue. He died amidst his expectorations with a visage blue and bloated and bloodstained froth on his lips. If by good luck he survived, he survived with his lungs so injured that he easily fell a victim to tuberculosis or suchlike disease. Most of this group of gases had their own characteristic complications. One series, for instance, would attack the nervous system, causing wild excitement, terror, convulsions, screams and paralysis. Thousands of men had already died in agony from Green Cross gas during the World War, and the plans of some of these experts involved the massacre of whole populations in the same atrocious fashion. Green Cross gas was used, but not in sufficient strength to be very deadly, in the Polish bombing of Berlin in May 1940, and in a more concentrated form in the aerial torpedoes that were sent from Germany to Warsaw. It had been used also at Nankin in 1935 and in the Chinese reprisal at Osaka.

Yellow Cross gas, or mustard gas, was much more insidious and also more cruel and murderous. It was not really a gas; it was a volatile liquid. When cold, it spread unsuspected in a thin film over the ground, getting on to boots and clothing, being carried hither and thither. Slowly, as it vaporized, its presence was revealed. Discomfort came, a horrible suspicion, fear and then coughing and retching. It involved quite frightful and hopeless suffering. Steadily but surely it killed every living substance with which it came into contact; it burnt it, blistered it, rotted it away. One part of mustard gas in five million of air was sufficient to affect the lungs. It ate into the skin, inflamed the eyes; it turned the muscles into decaying tissue. It became a creeping disease of the body, enfeebling every function, choking, suffocating. It is doubtful if any of those affected by it were ever completely cured. Its maximum effect was rapid torture and death; its minimum prolonged misery and an abbreviated life. The gases used in the fighting in North China in 1934-37 and in the Chinese raids upon Japan were mostly of this group. And an

evacuation of Berlin in 1946 was brought about by the threat of Yellow Cross bombs.

[They were actually dropped, but either through accident or by the insubordination of the chemists employed by the Poles, they smashed ineffectively. It was one of the most striking instances of what appears to have been the pacificist sabotage that helped to end the formal warfare in Central Europe. Five of the chemical workers concerned were shot and seventeen given long sentences of imprisonment, but none of the records of their trial has survived.]

Allied rather than competing with these gases of the Green and Yellow Cross categories, Dr. Woker cites the Blue Cross group. These substances were essentially direct nervous irritants in the form of an almost impalpable dust. They could penetrate most of the gas masks then in use, and produced such pain, so violent a sneezing and nausea, and such a loss of self-control that the victim would tear off his mask, so exposing himself to the Green or Yellow vapours with which Blue Cross was usually associated.

All these torments had been extensively inflicted already during the World War, but after its conclusion the secret activities of the various poison gas departments were sustained with great energy. It took them nearly twenty years even to open up the main possibilities of their speciality. One substance, which played a large part in the discussions of the time, was “Lewisite”, the discovery of a Professor Lewis of Chicago, which came too late for actual use before the end of 1918. This was one of a group or arsenical compounds. One part of it in ten millions of air was sufficient to put a man out of action. It was inodorous, tasteless; you only knew you had it when it began to work upon you. It blistered as much as mustard gas and produced a violent sickness.

Other war poisons followed upon this invention, still more deadly: merciful poisons that killed instantly and cruel and creeping poisons that implacably rotted the brain. Some produced convulsions and a knotting up of the muscles a hundred times more violent than the once dreaded tetanus. There is a horrible suggestiveness in the description of the killing of a flock of goats for experimental purposes in these researches: “All succumbed to the effect of the gas except three, which dashed their brains out against the enclosure.”

And to assist these chemicals in their task of what Dr. Woker calls "mass murder" there was a collateral research into incendiary substances and high explosives, to shatter and burn any gas attack shelter to which a frightened crowd might resort.

Dr. Woker's summary does not include Kovoet's invention of the permanent Death Gas in 1934. Its composition is still a secret and its very complicated preparation a felony. This compound, although not absolutely permanent, decomposed with extreme slowness. It was in itself neither a gas nor a poison. It was a heavy, rather coarse-grained powder. It evaporated as camphor does, and as it evaporated it combined with oxygen to form a poison effective when diluted with fifty million times its volume of air. Its action was essentially of the Lewisite type. This was actually used in the first Polish War to cut off East Prussia. A zone of territory from a mile to three miles wide along the whole frontier was evacuated and dusted with Permanent Death Gas. East Prussia became a peninsula accessible only from Lithuania or by sea. In spite of the heaviness of the grains, the winds finally widened this band of death to about fifteen miles in width and carried its lethal influence into the suburbs of Danzig.

This murdered region was not re-entered, except by a few specially masked explorers, until after 1960, and then it was found to be littered with the remains not only of the human beings, cattle and dogs who had strayed into it, but with the skeletons and scraps of skin and feathers of millions of mice, rats, birds and suchlike small creatures. In some places they lay nearly a metre deep. War Pictures has two photographs of this strange deposit. Vegetation was not so completely destroyed; trees died and remained bare and pickled; some grasses suffered, but others of the ranker sort flourished, and great areas were covered by a carpet of dwarfed and stunted corn-cockles and elecampane set in grey fluff.

A curious by-product of Permanent Death Gas is what is now known as the Sterilizing Inhalation. This was first made by accident. A Chinese Vindication Society organized an air raid on Osaka and Tokio in 1935 after the great Green Cross raid on Nankin in that year. It was intended to strike terror into the Japanese mind. Permanent Death Powder was to have been used, but because of the haste and danger of the preparations the Chinese had not tested it out,

and here again, either by accident or design, things went wrong; the formula, it seems, had been falsified. Consequently, when the raid was made — all the machines employed were brought down on their way home — nothing ensued but a temporary fever accompanied by retching and purging.

There was much derision of the unfortunate aviators in Japan. It was only some months after that the Western World learnt that the medical services of both towns were reporting a complete cessation of early pregnancies. Not a litter of kittens or puppies had appeared for weeks, mares were no longer foaling nor cows in calf. Mice and rats vanished. The sterilization in all cases was permanent. But birds were not affected for reasons that Crayford- Huxley has since made clear. The sparrows multiplied enormously and the hens still clucked triumphantly in these childless cities.

In some way the Chinese chemists had blundered upon one of those rare sub- radiant gases known as Pabst's Kinetogens, which affect the genes. A whole series of these are now known to biologists, chiefly through the work of Pabst and his assistants, and most of the more extraordinary flower sports and new aberrant animal types in our experimental gardens are due to their employment; but for a long time, until indeed Pabst took up the subject with an insight all his own, only the Sterilization Inhalation was known. Most of the campaigns in the Forties of the twenty-first century against contagious rodents made an extensive use of this gas wherever regions could be isolated from human intrusion, and the day may not be distant when it will have important eugenic applications.

But the Japanese experience produced even a greater sensation throughout the world than the actual slaughter of the victims would have occasioned. The militarist class in Japan was as deeply sentimental as the Western equivalent in Europe, and as resolute that the common people should not only die but breed fresh battle fodder for their country. Until the patriots realized that the Chinese supply of this stuff was limited, they lived in horror. They saw themselves stripped bare of subject lives. They saw themselves extinct in the hour of victory. There was a great clamour about the world for the extensive application of this new find during the fiercer war years;

there are proposals on record (Hate Eugenics, Historical Documents 5752890 and seq.) to apply it from the air to Palestine, Arabia, Ireland, the whole of China and the African Continent in part or as a whole. But mankind was saved from any such catastrophe by the fact that the first production of Sterilizing Inhalation was essentially accidental. It had been prepared furtively, its makers were untraceable, and the proper formula was not worked out and made controllable until our insane world was well in the grip of the harsh humanity of the Air Dictatorship.

How all these hideous devices of the New Warfare were to be brought together to effect the definitive subjugation of the Will of a belligerent Power was apparently never thought out, or, if it was, the plans were kept so secret that now they have perished with their makers. After the millions had choked, after the cities were a stench of dead bodies — what then?

Perhaps the artistic interest of the business precluded such remote considerations. All we can disentangle now of this gas warfare, as its experts contemplated it, consists of projects of mere mischief and torture. They seem imbued with much the same wanton destructiveness as that displayed by some of the younger specimens among the Loando-Mobi chimpanzee hybrids.

Yet some of these plans are amazingly thorough up to a certain point — up to the point when one asks, “But WHY?” For instance, in the Marine War Museum in the Torcello Lagoon there are no fewer than half a dozen raider submarines built for four different great Powers, and all specially designed as long-distance bases for gas warfare. They carried no guns nor ordinary fighting equipment. They had practically unlimited cruising range, and within them from five to nine aeroplanes were packed with a formidable supply of gas bombs. One of them carried thirty long-range air torpedoes with all the necessary directional apparatus. There were four different types of gas mixture in the bombs, but they differed little in character and efficiency. The smallest of these raiders carried enough of such stuff to “prepare” about eight hundred square miles of territory. Completely successful, it could have turned most of the London or New York of that time, after some clamour and running and writhing and choking, into a cityful of distorted corpses. These vessels made

London vulnerable from Japan, Tokio vulnerable from Dublin; they abolished the last corners of safety in the world.

These six sinister monsters gleam now in the great gallery side by side, their poison fangs drawn, their mission abandoned, the grim vestiges, the uncontrovertible evidence of one nightmare among the many nightmares of hate and evil that afflicted the human brain during the Age of Frustration. There they are. Men made them — as men made the instruments of torture during the previous dark ages. Even amidst the happy confidence of our present life it is well that we should remember that, given different conditions, men technically as sane as ourselves could design and make these things.

There is something revolting in these details. We have given enough for our purpose. History must not be made a feast of horror. From first to last gas warfare destroyed very painfully between one and one and a quarter million lives that might have been fruitful and happy. That much mischief was done. They suffered and they have gone. The gist of our story is that, after the humiliation and quickening of the military mind by the ineptitudes of the World War, belligerent science did not so much progress as lose itself in the multiplicity of its own inventions. It developed one frightful and monstrous contrivance after another, to dismay and torment mankind, to spread ill health and hate, to demoralize and destroy industrial life, to make whole countries uninhabitable and loosen every band that held men together in orderly societies, but it made no steps at all to any comprehensive and decisive conduct of war. With no plan for the future, with no vision of the world as a whole at all, these thousands of furtive specialists, these “damned ingenious patriots”, as Isaac Burtonshaw (1913-2003) called them, went on accumulating, here frightful explosives, there stores of disgusting disease germs, and there again stores of this or that fantastically murderous gas.

No comprehensive plan held any of these centres of evil together into one premeditated whole, as, for instance, the military preparations of the Hohenzollern Empire were held together by a clear and deliberate scheme of conclusive warfare. Beneath the vulgar monarchist claptrap of the German effort of 1914 there was indeed a real scheme for the reorganization and modernization of

civilization about a Teutonic nucleus according to Teutonic ideals. It may have had its fatuous elements, but it was logical and complete. But war planning never recovered that completeness after 1914; never got back to the same logical foundations. After that belligerence lost its head. It still went on as everything else went on in those days — by inertia. But it had no longer any idea of what it was up to.

Yet over all the world these incoherent mines were prepared, and they might well have exploded, had their release been simultaneous, into such an outbreak of disorderly evil as staggers the contemporary imagination. It is conceivable that they might have destroyed mankind. It would have needed no change in the essential conditions but only a rearrangement of the determining accidents to have brought about that final catastrophe.

This menace of a chaos of disasters and aimless cruelties hung over a disorganized and unprotected world for three-quarters of a century. It is what some historians call the Period of Maximum Insecurity, from 1935 to 1965. Here and there quite monstrous things occurred — at Nankin, Pekin, Osaka, Berlin, Warsaw, for instance; things terrible enough to hearten and steel the better elements in humanity for the achievement of that world peace towards which all these forces were urging it. Fortunately for mankind the two fundamental evils of traditionalism were just sufficient to neutralize each other during this long period of the incubation of the Modern State. The greed of the creditor balanced the greed of the armament dealer. As armaments grew more and more costly, the possible purchasers grew poorer and poorer. If Economy starved and hampered many good things in human life, it did at least finally take all vigour and confidence out of the development of the New Warfare. The Chemical Armament industry followed the other typical institutions of the old order into the general social liquidation which wound up the bankruptcy of Private Profit Capitalism.

5. — THE FADING VISION OF A WORLD PAX: JAPAN REVERTS TO WARFARE

We have shown already how Parliamentary Democracy necessarily abolished real leaders in public affairs and substituted a strange type of pseudo-leader, men who were essentially RESULTANTS, who made nothing, created no forces, met no emergencies, but simply manoeuvred for position, prestige and the pettier rewards of power. They followed the collapse of the decaying order without an effort to arrest its decay. Why indeed should they have made an effort? They were representatives of the popular will, and if there was no popular will...

We have already considered the behaviour of this amazingly ineffective collection of men in face of the financial dislocation that was choking the economic life of the race. It is doubtful if a single one of them ever gave a month's continuous study to the plain realities of that situation. And in the face of the accumulating stresses created by the maladjustments of Versailles, this galaxy of humbugs to whom democracy had entrusted the direction of human beings — humbugs unavoidably, for the system insisted upon it regardless of the best intentions — was equally enigmatical and impotent. Along the eastern frontiers of Italy and Germany the open sores festered. No one sought to heal them. In the Far East the conflict between Japan and China, failing a European protest, became frankly a formal war. Every world event cried louder than the last for collective action, and there was no collective action. The League of Nations appointed commissions of enquiry and produced often quite admirable analyses of hopeless situations.

No one knew how to arrest the grim development of the situation. The chief of states repeated the traditional gestures, as though these were all that could be expected of them. But the patterns of history served them no more. They found themselves like men who attempt to gesticulate and find their limbs have changed to cloud and rock.

Of all the "Powers" of that time the behaviour of Japan was the

most decisive. In 1931 an internal revolution in that country had put political power into the hands of a patriotic military group, diplomatically unscrupulous and grossly sentimental according to the distinctive Japanese tradition, and this coterie set itself now with extraordinary energy and an equally extraordinary lack of authentic vision to caricature the aggressive imperialisms of the nineteenth-century Europeans. The mind of this ruling group was still intensely romantic, still obsessed by those ideas of national dominance and glory which had passed already so fatally over the intelligence of Christendom. Their military initiatives were quasi-Napoleonic, their diplomatic pretences and evasions modelled on the best European precedents. It was "Japan's turn" now.

The investigation of just what these Japanese Imperialists imagined they were doing has greatly exercised our historical research department. But it is indeed only a special instance of the general riddle of what any "Power", regarded as a mentality in itself, imagined it was doing in that age. Only a century and a half has passed since those Japanese columns were marching into one Chinese town after another, and today our psychologists confess themselves baffled by an enterprise that was manifestly undertaken by men like ourselves and yet had already assumed a quality of absolute insanity. Why did these very intelligent people behave in that fashion?

The clue lies in the extraordinary ease with which distasteful reality can be repressed by the human mind, and in the atmosphere of grotesque but flattering illusions in which these people were living. Just as in the West the bankers, economic experts, responsible statesmen would not realize the complete smash to which their fiscal and financial methods were plainly heading until the smash had actually come, so these Japanese militarists could not see the inevitable consequences of their continental adventures. They could not see behind them a miserable peasantry breeding itself down to the basest subsistence; a miserable urban proletariat deteriorating physically and morally; they could not estimate the mutterings of revolt in all their sweated and driven industrial centres; they could not understand the protests of their own fine and growing intelligentzia.

Even the steady fall of the national credit abroad and the increasing economic stresses of the land aroused no misgivings of hallucination. Japan in her headlong pursuit of Western precedents was rapidly reproducing all the revolutionary conditions of the West. All that was lost upon her leaders. The one thing they could see clearly was that China was disorganized, that she was struggling with great difficulty to discover a new method of collective living to replace her ancient slack imperialism, and that by all the rules of the international game this was Japan's opportunity. They thought that, in very much the same way that the disorganization of the Empire of the Great Mogul had laid India bare to the piratical enterprise of the Europeans and permitted the establishment of the unstable aimless Indian Empire of the British, so now Fate had invited them to an equally glorious opportunity, to a parallel Japanese domination of the most or all of Asia. Who could tell where their imperial adventure would end — or whether it would have an end? The mirage of limitless power and glory opened out before them, as it has opened out to all empire builders since the world began.

They were reckoning without the New Warfare, reckoning without modern industrialism, without the paradoxical self-destructiveness of Private Capitalist enterprise, without Russia, without America, without the superior mass, the traditional unity and mental obduracy of the Chinese population. They were thinking as a Pomeranian Junker or a British general from that "hot-bed of Imperialists", Ulster, might have thought before 1914. It was an archaic megalomania — that led to the killing of about three million combatants, an extreme social disintegration in China, and the final collapse of the Japanese monarchy.

In the special histories of this struggle, the student who needs or desires the knowledge may find the detailed particulars of the Japanese aggressions from 1931 onward which grew at last into the formal invasion of China proper; the tentative of Shanghai, the invasion of Manchuria and the establishment of the puppet kingdom of Manchukuo (1932), the attack on Shanhaikwan which led to the penetration of the Great Wall, the invasion of China Proper from the north and the march on Pekin. The operations up to that point were largely on the pattern of the old warfare as it had been practised up to

1914. The Chinese were poorly equipped and had little modern material; the Japanese found it unnecessary to make any excessively expensive efforts to attain their objectives.

All this earlier fighting went on to an accompaniment of protests from the quite powerless League of Nations at Geneva. A "Lytton Report" prepared by a commission of enquiry is to be found in the Historical Documents Series (2067111). But counterbalancing these remonstrances were the ambiguous utterances of the British Foreign Office, the support of the French armament industry and its Press, the overt support of a great group of American banks and their newspapers. In view of these divisions, the Japanese militarists had every reason to disregard Western criticism altogether.

In 1935 the Japanese occupied Pekin and Tientsin. They set up a second puppet monarchy in Pekin. But they found very great difficulty in holding the country, particularly to the south and west of these centres. Manchuria, Inner Mongolia and Shansi remained seething with bandits and rebel bands, and the still unoccupied valley of the Yang-tsze-kiang remained fighting with an increasing unity under the leadership of the reorganized Kuomintang. In no part of China or Manchuria was it safe for a Japanese to go about alone, and a rigorous economic boycott, sustained by an omnipresent terrorism, continued. The Kuomintang was a directive association created by the great Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat Sen, and it had gone through various vicissitudes; it had a rough general resemblance to the Communist Party and the various European fascisms, and, like them, it sustained a core of conscious purpose throughout its community. It had no vital centre, no formal head; it was a thing of the mind, unquenchable by military operations. And under the stress of this resistance it had become violently patriotic and xenophobic.

In 1936 Japan already had more than a million and a half men scattered between the Manchurian frontier and Canton, where a third landing had been made and still her hold upon China hardly extended beyond the range of her guns and the glitter of her bayonets. She had bombed Nankin twice on an extensive scale, Pekin before its surrender, and Wuchang and Hankow, with Yellow Cross bombs. Hundreds of thousands of people had been slaughtered, but the great invertebrate body of China seemed able to endure such losses with a

stoicism impossible in a more highly organized state. In return the "Vindication of China" Society astonished the world by suddenly bombing and, through an error in the gas mixture, STERILIZING Osaka and Tokio.

No one knew of these Chinese air forces until they appeared in action. The machines had come from Sweden by way of Russia. But nearly every Western country was supplying contraband of war to the Chinese. Unaccountable hostile aeroplanes with untraceable bombs appeared in the sky and came humming over the sea to Japan. Then in 1935 a Japanese transport blew up and sank in the Gulf of Pe-chih-li. In 1936, three Japanese liners were destroyed by mines of unknown origin within fifty miles of port. War supplies of all sorts got into China from Soviet Russia in the north and from the French and British possessions in the south, and the help and sympathy of America became more and more manifest as the vast imperial ambitions of the Japanese leaders became unmistakable. Western feeling had at first been acutely divided between distrust of Japan and the desire to see China restored to order on capitalist lines and saved from Communism. But with every Japanese advance European and American feeling veered back towards China. Australia and New Zealand appealed to the Washington Government for a joint guarantee to supplement the Imperial tie in 1937. They were advocating a mutual guarantee of all the Europeanized regions of the Pacific. For a time it seemed as though the Western world might be guided to a sort of unity by the flares of Japan. But the unforgettable humiliations inflicted upon Central Europe after the war still rankled sufficiently to prevent that.

Even before the launching of the definitive conquest of China there had been considerable economic and social stress in Japan. The earlier successes, the easy capture of Pekin and the failure of an adequate Chinese army to materialize, had filled the island empire with patriotic enthusiasm and hope; the war was brought to a victorious conclusion three times, and each time it broke out again. No invader ever conquered Russia to the end, and no one ever completed the conquest of China. Always beyond the subjugated provinces appeared other provinces swarming with hostility. Szechwan and the south supplied inexhaustible support and supplies

for the Kuomintang resistance. It seemed at last as though there could be no peace any more in China until the invaders fought their way through to Tibet.

War weariness descended upon Nippon. The peasants saw their sons marching off, never to return, and shortages of ordinary commodities deepened to famine. There was already vigorous "Stop the War" agitation in Japan in 1935; there were continual strikes in Nagoya and hundreds of casualties, and afterwards there began a frantic dumping of accumulated goods abroad, to pay not merely for munitions but for such now vitally essential imports as Australian meat and Canadian and American corn. The war was starving the home fields of men and it was destroying the productivity of large areas of China. The social structure of Japan proved to be far too primitive to emulate the miracles of economy performed by the Germans during the World War. The confidence and credit of Japan sank steadily. Foreign loans became no longer possible even at such exorbitant rates as 14 or 15 per cent. And still there was no end in sight.

The Japanese militarists had gone too far to recede. Behind them they had a suffering population that might rapidly become vindictive, and about the arena of the struggle watched Russia, America and Europe. According to the best traditions of their culture, these national leaders resolved on a supreme military effort, a march in overwhelming force into the central province of Hupeh. Colossal preparations were made, and every able-bodied Japanese who was not already enrolled was called up. This was to be "a blow at the heart".

A convergent march from Nankin, Shantung and Canton was planned. This dispersal of the bases was justified by the necessity for living on the country as far as that remained possible. There were railways in existence from Canton and Shantung, but they were difficult to protect, and, apart from them, there was such an utter want of practicable roads that by the time the Japanese were in Hupeh a third of their forces were trailed out upon their lines of communication making roads, and the equipment of heavy guns and munitions they had been able to bring up was very little superior to that of the Chinese, who were still fighting with all the wealth of

Szechwan at their backs and the almost overt sympathy of the West. The three great Japanese armies effected their junction in a loose ring round Wuchang — a ring that was for a time slowly drawn tighter and then ceased to contract. A deadlock ensued, a deadlock of mutual exhaustion. Neither up nor down the river was the closure of the ring complete. Throughout 1938, Japan waited for good news from the long crescents of trenches about Wuchang, and waited in vain. Pestilence broke out in July and defeated the utmost sanitary and medical efforts of the invaders. Then early in 1939 they began their retreat to Nankin, with transport disorganized, with mutiny growing, with all the country rising about them.

The horrors of that retreat have never been fully told. The three Japanese armies at their maximum strength had numbered well over two million of men; but probably about a million or less remained fit enough for the retreat. Famine was far more deadly with them than the Chinese guerillas; the exhausted wretches fell out along the line of march and waited stoically for the end; few prisoners were taken; the Chinese had no food even if they had had mercy to give quarter, and the fallen were left to perish in their own time. The broken remnant that assembled at Nankin did not greatly exceed a hundred thousand, and still smaller bodies from the lines of communication fought their way homeward to the north and south. The rest of these two million lay in the vast cemeteries of Puki and Ki-chow, or they had been drowned in the floods, or their bodies were littered as they had dropped and crawled over the sad monotonous landscape of the Chinese hills. At Nankin the weary and dispirited survivors realized that Japan was now also at war with the United States and that Osaka and Nagoya were in the hands of Communist Committees.

For some weeks the Japanese army sprawled inactive in its former cantonments to the west of Nankin. Then it revolted, shot many of its officers, declared for the social revolution and fraternized with the Chinese Red Army which had marched in under its nose from Hangchow and taken control of the city proper.

The entry of the United States into the Eastern War, which did so much to complete the demoralization of militarist Japan, was the climax of a prolonged wrangle about the supply of mines and submarines to the Chinese, that became more and more acute after

the sinking of a Japanese transport in the gulf of Pe-chih-li.

It is only recently that the full history — which is also a very tedious and disputatious history — of the sea war against Japan has been worked out. Every contemporary record was falsified at the time; every event hidden completely or elaborately camouflaged. It is now fairly evident that not merely did private firms manufacture mines and build submarine mine-layers but that the various European navies under the plea of economy sold out a large proportion of quite modern and valid under-sea craft for "breaking up" to agents and dealers acting for South American intermediaries. The submarines, either intact or so "broken up" that they could easily be reconstructed, went to various Peruvian and Chilian ports and thence found their way across the Pacific to the Philippines. The Philippine Islands were quasi-independent, but the Manila declaration of President Roosevelt II in 1937 had practically extended to them the protection of the Monroe Doctrine, and the Japanese had never had the surplus energy necessary to challenge this informal protectorate. Now these islands became the base for vexatious attacks upon their overseas trade and sea communications.

The naval situation in the Pacific was a complicated one. To the east of the Philippines lie the Ladrones, a scattered group of volcanic islands, of which the largest, Guam, had been assigned to the United States of America by the Treaty of Versailles and was administered as a part of the American navy, while the rest were held by Japan under a mandate. (The Powers previously in possession had been first Spain and, after 1899, Germany.) The Japanese were bound by treaty not to fortify their holdings, but as the situation grew tense they seem to have ignored this restriction, at least to the extent of establishing submarine bases. Now that the situation was growing tenser the state of affairs above and under water between the Ladrones, the Philippines and the Asiatic mainland became darker and more dangerous. There was a threatening concentration of the American Fleet between Guam and the Philippines to ensure the neutrality of the latter, a patrolling concentration of the Japanese along the Chinese coast, and an obscure activity of privateering submarines and ambiguous shipping, which smuggled munitions and supplies and raided weak points of the Japanese communications.

Above water a submarine, like any other ship, can fly a flag and claim the respect due to its nationality, but mines fly no flags, and under water a submarine may be able to recognize the coded signals of a co-national but has no means at all of distinguishing a neutral from an enemy. Mistakes and pseudo-mistakes were inevitable. Two American submarines disappeared in 1936. Then several Japanese submarines vanished from the Ladrone archipelago. Disputes that broke out in neutral cafés came to a murderous end in the depths. The American navy took matters into its own hands. By 1937 an informal naval war had developed in the Western Pacific.

Neither Power hurried on to an actual declaration of war. America, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the bold experimenting of Roosevelt II, was in a state of deepening economic and political disorder, and Japan was putting forth her utmost strength for that disastrous "blow at the heart" in China. But many of the more conservative influences in the United States saw in a Pacific war a saving distraction of public attention and public energy. There was an agitation to re-annex the Philippines, and after the Japanese failure to hold Wuchang the drive towards open war became uncontrollable.

The particulars of the brief, destructive and indecisive naval war that followed need not occupy us here. The battle fleets met in the Western Pacific and separated after two days of gunfire and heavy losses. Ammunition gave out, it seems, on the Japanese side. At any rate they drew off in the twilight under a smokescreen. The Americans claimed the victory because they were able to go on to Manila, while the Japanese withdrew to the protection of their minefields and submarines and were never able to emerge again for lack of material. Both Powers were now in a state of deepening domestic stress, and their war, in a technical sense, never ended. That is to say, there was no final treaty as between two Powers, because both had in effect collapsed. They fell apart. Social revolution swept the conflict off the stage.

[The student will be reminded, by this inconclusive termination, of the almost incessant, dreary and futile wars of Byzantine and Sassanid, that devastated Asia Minor for three centuries and did not so much come to an end as suffer effacement from history by the sponge of Islam.]

The social disintegration of Japan, once it had begun, was very rapid. The great mass of the population, the peasants, had been scarcely affected by the process of Westernization, and they lapsed very readily into the same unprogressive variant of Communism as their equivalents in Kwantung, Chekiang and Fukien had adopted. A small Westernized intelligentzia with many internal feuds and doctrinal disputes struggled, not very effectively, in the larger towns to turn this merely insurgent Communism into modern and constructive paths after the Moscow pattern. Fragmentation when it came was swift and thorough. Militarism degenerated into brigandage and local feudalism. Here and there some scion of the old nobility reappeared with his attendant Samurai as a gangster boss.

In the space of a few years all Asia from the Pacific to Persia seemed to be sliding back to political and social chaos, to hand-to-mouth cultivation, destitution and endemic pestilence. For the greater part of India and most of Further India were also now drifting back to barbarism. There also the phrases and the insubordination, if not the spirit and methods, of Communism had captured vast multitudes who had remained completely unaffected by other European ideas. It was Communism without any Five Year Plan or indeed any conception of a plan. It was the class-war in its ultimate crudity. It killed money-lenders and tax-collectors with gusto and elaboration. It evolved strange religious fanaticisms, and it abandoned sanitation as "boujawai", the accursed thing. The imperial power in India was not overthrown; rather it was stripped of effective prestige and receded to an immense distance. The princes remained formally "loyal", though in some cases they tacitly annexed "disturbed districts" adjacent to their proper dominions. Localities and local adventurers improvised a sort of social order at a low level and with a continually completer disregard of any central authority.

6. — THE WESTERN GRIP ON ASIA RELAXES

The recession of the directive influence of the half modernized European imperialisms in Asia went on steadily. Even as early as 1929 the spread of a peasant communism similar to that which had obtained so strong a hold upon the popular imagination in China was causing grave alarm to the Indian Government. The seizure and trial of a group of British and Indian agitators at Meerut, and the extravagantly heavy sentences passed upon them in 1933, showed both the gravity of these fears and the unintelligent clumsiness with which the situation was being met.

For the British Empire there was to be no such decline and fall as happened to Rome. Instead it relaxed, as we shall now describe, to nothing.

Unhappily, before it relaxed in India it had, as in Ireland, a brief convulsive phase of "firmness"....

[Here several sheets from Raven's MS. appear to be missing.]

7. — THE MODERN STATE AND GERMANY

A question of primary importance in human history is this: Why were the lessons of the Great War, and the subsequent economic and social disorders, lessons which seem to us to-day to be as starkly plain as lessons could be — why were these lessons lost upon every one of the great communities of thought into which the world was divided? British thought, French thought, American thought, German, Russian, Italian thought, seem in our retrospect to ring the changes upon every conceivable sequence of prejudice and stupidity. Why was Wilson's start towards world unification not followed up? Why after 1932 was there no vigour to reconstruct the League of Nations, when all the world was crying for some central authority to unify money and economic life? Why did the Age of Frustration last so long? We have already noted some of the controlling causes, the mercenary Press, the vast anti-social private interests, the heavy weight of tradition, the reactionary quality of schoolmasters, the social disintegration due to economic demoralization. But even these malignant influences, taken all together, do not seem sufficient for this blindness in the general intelligence of our race towards the obvious elements of its situation.

Behind all these conditions making for failure there was something else: there was an intrinsic weakness in the forces of reconstruction, there was a fundamental lack. It was impossible for the world to get out of its difficulties because it had no definite complete idea of what it wanted to get out to. It had ideas, yes, more than enough, but they were confused and often mutually contradictory ideas. A drowning man cannot save himself by swimming unless he has something solid to which he can swim. The deficiency was not moral nor material, it was intellectual. There was the will for salvation and the material for salvation, but there was no plan of salvation. The world has no definition of an objective. That had still to be made plain to it.

It will make this matter clearer if we consider the mental and emotional phases of one typical culture community of central importance at that time, the German. Stories similar in essence, if

widely different in detail, could be given of the French, Anglo-Saxon, Russian and Spanish-speaking communities. The feature they had in common was this, a failure to realize that there could be no salvation now unless it was a comprehensive salvation. They were attempting to do severally and with a jostling competitiveness what could only be done with the utmost difficulty in unison. That meant for every one of them the paralysing influence of a war threat, extreme economic instability, incapacity for dealing with morbid financial conditions, and a consequent state of mental "worry" that made every move inaccurate and untimely.

It is only when we realize the sapping of that aggressive energy that had well-nigh Europeanized the whole world before the World War that we can understand the length of the Age of Frustration. Certain facts of fundamental importance to the continued health of our world community have to be stressed. Europe could not lead the world to unity when the world seemed dying to be led to unity, because Europe itself was profoundly disunited. The World War was merely the explosion of tensions that had been straining below the surface throughout the whole First Period of World Prosperity. Before the European peoples, who by 1920 amounted to a quarter of the whole human race, could resume the exploring, experimenting and civilizing rôle they had played for two centuries, it was necessary that they should be purged of a chronic mental disease — a disease which had, it seemed, to rise to an acute phase and run its enfeebling and devastating course before it could be treated: the disease of hate.

Although each year in the Thirties saw the international tension in Europe increasing, it was only in 1940 that actual warfare broke out. All Europe was "mined" for ten years before that time, but the very consciousness of that fact, if it did not hold back the drift towards war, increased the gravity of its onset. That ingenious contrivance of President Wilson's, the Polish Corridor, Poland's "access to the sea", was the particular mine that exploded first. But it was only one of a series of accumulating detonations which were destined to blow the still creaking ineffective League of Nations, and indeed nearly every vestige of the unfortunate Treaty of Versailles and its subordinate "settlements", out of the way of human readjustment.

The mental phases of that great body of Europeans who used the German language summarize the world situation. The history of Europe from 1900 to 1950 could be told in a study of the German brain alone, its torment and the reactions it evoked in the peoples about it. It was a brain of outstanding vigour and crudity. It aroused admiration, envy and fear. Its achievements in material science were magnificent; its energy of industrial organization was unparalleled. Its mathematical and psychological ineptitudes were redeemed by the Jewish intelligences entangled in its meshes. Compared with the Anglo-Saxon brain its political thought was unsupple, and it had neither the extreme lucidity of the French intelligence, the boldness of the Italian, nor the poetic power of Spain and Russia. It had these conspicuous limitations. Its obstinate association with a stupidly arrogant monarchism and a woolly tangle of preposterous racial pretensions stood in the way of sympathetic cooperation with any other cultural system. It had failed conspicuously to assimilate the non-German subject populations involved in its political web. It had intensified the defensive nationalism of the French; its tactless challenge upon the sea had terrified and exasperated the British; it had roused even America to a wary disapproval and a final hostility. Russia it had never won, but then in the huge carcass of pre-revolutionary Russia there was very little to be won anyhow. (There was indeed no real national self-consciousness in Russia before the Soviet régime; there was only Dostoievsky and the Tzar.) Assertive ungraciousness had been the chief factor in Germany's isolation and the cause of its defeat in the World War.

Yet after defeat this afflicted German mentality, if only on account of a certain toughness and vigour it possessed, remained still the central reality and the central perplexity of the European system. War and disaster could not alter the fact that the backbone of Europe, the most skilled, industrious, teachable and intelligent block of its population, spoke and thought German. What might happen to it, what would happen to it, should have been the primary preoccupation of every intelligent statesman. For if Germany had gone right everything would have gone right. But there were no statesmen sufficiently intelligent to consider anything of the sort. Germany had had a phase of pride and megalomania. It had been

immensely disillusioned, it had thrown off its glittering imperialist headship, it had accepted military defeat. It had even passed through a phase of humility. At first it did not hate conspicuously. Amidst great difficulties the new republic displayed creative courage, moderation, a dawning sense of the significance of world politics.

Creative, forward-looking minds turned to Germany with an entirely pathetic hopefulness. “Now we shall see what Germany can do,” they said. “Be patient with Germany.” All the world scolded France for her inveterate distrust. Given courage and generosity abroad and leadership at home this great mass of Teutonic brains might have taken up the task of the Modern State then, and fallen into cooperation with the rest of a disillusioned but renascent world. It might even have led in the work of reconstruction, and 1918 might have been the opening year of a phase of world renewal.

But that was not to be. The world had still to reap a harvest of disunion through sixty tragic years. At home leadership came to Germany too late. Stresemann mastered his lesson too slowly and died too soon. Brüning was betrayed by Hindenburg’s mental decay. And abroad it seemed to the Germans that there was nothing but war-strained and vindictive enemies. They looked for friends and saw only Foreign Offices. We have told already how the rôle of only sinner in a world of outraged saints was thrust upon Germany by the Conference of Versailles. She was to be permanently enfeebled, restrained and humiliated. German babies yet unborn were expected to be born penitent about the war. They were to gasp for their first breath under the smacks of an unforgiving world.

How all the good effort in Germany was thwarted, how the nets of suspicion held her down, would make a long and intricate story. At last these losers of the World War became as violent and frantic as stifled creatures fighting for air. Only by a feat of imagination can we now put ourselves in their places. Everything seemed to be making for the strangulation of Central Europe. The young energetic men in the defeated countries were to be given no share in the rebuilding of their shattered world. That was to be reserved for the new generation of the conquerors. They were to live in an atmosphere of punishment, toiling, heavily taxed, and outlawed from the advancement of civilization to the very end of their days. That they should recover

prosperity or achieve great things would be an offence.

Naturally life so circumscribed was bitter and lapsed very easily towards vice, apathy or blind revolt. There is a remarkable novel in the Historical Documents Series (Fabian, by Erich Kastner, 1932) which renders the individual aspect of this phase of German life very vividly. Another novel almost equally vivid and illuminating is Kleiner Mann, was nun? by Hans Fallada, 1932.

These conditions of mind, this tied and stifled outlook upon life, were, it must be admitted, by no means confined to the German-speaking peoples. The intelligent and ambitious young Indian or Egyptian or negro, the intelligent young man of any subordinated, handicapped and restrained people or class — and this covered perhaps two-thirds of the youth of our race in these days — participated in the same distress of a foreordained inferiority and futility. But the young German had recent memories of hope and pride and a greater fund of resentment and aggressive energy. He had no tradition of inferiority and subservient adjustment.

Unhappily no teachers or leaders arose to point him on to his legitimate rôle in the replacement of the current disorder by the Modern World State. The Hohenzollern régime and the stresses of the war had stood in the way of his attaining anything like the cosmopolitanism of, say, the English and Americans. His new republicanism was superficial and half-hearted, and in the schools and universities the teachers and leaders of the old militarist régime were still living, active and malignant. The Press and all the organizations of instruction and suggestion stood out of the revolution and showed themselves only too eager and skilful in restoring a pre-war fierceness. The futility of the new Germany was their text. “This is not German” they insisted. “Go back to the old Imperialism,” they said, “and try again.” The spirit of the women about the new generation, mothers and sweethearts alike, was for the most part one of passionate indignation.

An acute contemporary observer, L. B. Namier, pointed out that it was almost a law in history that war-strained and defeated countries should relapse towards violent patriotism between twelve and fifteen years after the war in which they suffered concluded. He suggested that this was precisely the time when the children who, without any

participation in the realities of warfare, had felt all the strain and bitterness of defeat and all the hatred of the enemy would have grown up to manhood. These children became the energetic stratum in the population by 1933.

It was at this phase in European history that the rise of Hitlerism occurred. Adolf Hitler, as the decisive product of Germany in labour, is one of the most incredible figures in the whole of history. He must have astonished even the teachers and writers who had evoked him. We can study his personal presence from a hundred different angles in Vol. 30112 of the Historical Portrait Gallery, and it is that of an entirely commonplace man, void of dignity, void of fine quality. We can hear his voice, we can hear him persuading, exhorting and attempting to reason from the numerous steel-tape records that were made of his speeches. It is a raucous, strained voice, talking violently but incoherently. It is the voice of a vulgar, limited, illiterate man, lashing himself to fierceness, shouting, threatening, beating his fists at the window, smashing the furniture about him, to escape from perplexity and despair. He was perfectly simple and honest in his quality. And that was perhaps the secret of his career. He gave vent to the German overstrain. He is the voice of Germany losing control.

He denounced foreigners, Jews, Cosmopolitans, Communists, Republicans, owners of property and leaders in finance with raucous impartiality, and nothing is so pleasing to perplexed unhappy people as the denunciation of others. Not their fault, their troubles. They have been betrayed. To Fallada's question, "Little Man, what now?" his answer was, "Massacre Jews, expel foreigners, arm and get more arms, be German, utterly German, and increase and multiply."

One has to remember that he never carried with him even an absolute voting majority of the German public. But the people permitted him to seize power and shatter their republic, stifle public discussion and destroy their liberties. They had no energy to resist him. They had no conception left in their fagged and hope-starved brains of any finer rôle than that which his bawling nationalism, his violent campaign against Communists and imaginary Communistic plots, against Jews, speculators and Liberals, presented to them. The treason of the senile Hindenburg to the Republic that had trusted him, conduced inestimably to the adventurer's success.

Hitler's exploit in seizing Germany and turning it back towards reaction was modelled on Mussolini's precedent. But intellectually he was far inferior to that strange figure. He took all that was worst in the Fascist régime and never rose to the real constructive effort or the competent industry of his prototype. One little point that illustrates his general ignorance and essential feeble-mindedness was the adoption of the Swastika, the running cross, as the emblem of his Nazis. This brisk, silly little sign is of very old origin, and, as we have noted in the earlier stages of this summary of history, its ornamental use was one of the associated characteristics of that type of Neolithic culture, that culture of brownish and dark-white warm-water peoples, from which the early civilizations sprang. It is hardly known in connexion with the so-called "Nordics" or with the negro peoples, and it is in no way expressive of an "Aryan" culture. Old writers used to declare it was the "symbol" of the sun, but it seems to have signified little beyond a certain cheerfulness. It took the place of an idea in the muddled heads of the Nazis and they treated it with immense solemnity and wore it on their banners, clothes, proclamations and wherever else they could. Arden Essenden, when it was revived in Europe during the struggle for the air control, called it the "idiot's own trade mark", and it has certainly had a fatal attraction for many second-rate imaginative types.

So for a time, under a hubbub of young blackguards in brown shirts and Swastika badges, Germany, just when her rather heavy but persistent and faithful mind would have been of primary value in mankind's struggle with the world problem, passed out of the intellectual commonweal of mankind. Her real mind went into exile, in America, in England, in Switzerland, in irony or in hiding. She missed her proper share in the unification of mankind in the twentieth century, just as she missed her share in the Europeanization of the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth. At home this National Socialism sought destructively to construct, sought to restore her former scientific prestige and industrial efficiency by boasting, exhortation, intolerance, outrage and compulsion. It was a pitiful and tragic phase, the dementia of a great nation. The story of German life during this interval is a rowdy and unhappy story — a story of faction fights and street encounters, demonstrations and counter-

demonstrations, of a complicating tyranny of blackmailing officials, and at last of an ill managed and unsuccessful war, that belied the innate orderliness of the Teutonic peoples. There was a progressive increase of secret vice and furtive dishonesty, the outcome of hopelessness. The number of people killed or seriously injured in riots and civil conflicts in Germany, or murdered for political reasons, between 1932 and 1936 amounted to something over rather than under thirty thousand.

8. — A NOTE ON HATE AND CRUELTY

[This section was in a detached fascicle, but its place seems to be here. — ED.]

The student of history will find it almost impossible to understand the peculiar difficulties of political life as it was lived until about a hundred years ago, nor will he grasp the essential differences between what was called education in those days and the educational processes we are still developing to-day, unless he masters the broad facts about these systems of hatred that dominated the group relationships of mankind right up to the assertion of the Modern State. We have given the main particulars of the issue between the Germans and the Poles, but that is only one striking and historically important instance of a general condition. We could give fifty such chapters. Nearly everywhere populations were to be found steeped in and moved by mass hatreds of a volume and obduracy outside any contemporary human experience.

All these hatreds arose out of the same essential causes. Two or more population groups, each with its own special narrow and inadaptable culture and usually with a distinctive language or dialect, had been by the change of scale in human affairs jammed together or imposed one upon another. A sort of social dementia ensued. In the absence of a common idea of community, civilized motives gave place to instinctive hostilities and spasmodic impulses.

Wherever there were mingled populations these hates were found and, except in the Basque country, Wales and Lapland, they were intense enough to be of primary political importance. South and east of Bohemia there seemed no boundary to the realms of hate. The Magyar hated the Slav, the Slav the Italian, the Roumanian the Russian. Religious differences, the mischief of priests, cut up even racial solidarities; the Catholic Slav hated the Orthodox Slav and the Orthodox Greeks in Macedonia were hopelessly divided among themselves. Over all the ancient domain of the Sultan, through Persia, through India, hates extended. Islam was rent by two ancient hate systems. These mass hatreds were accepted in a kind of despair by even the wisest. They defied the policies of statesmen absolutely.

They were supposed to be beyond human control.

It is extraordinary how recent is the intelligent mitigation and suppression of hatred. Our ancestors did not envisage this as a controllable mental disease. They did not know that it was possible to get through life without hatred, just as they did not know that the coughs and colds that afflicted them and most of the phenomena of senility were avoidable.

But it is amazing to think how submissively human beings allowed their lives to be spoilt by controllable things — until almost within living memory. It was not only against hate and envy that they made no effort. They left their poor nerves bare and unprotected from an endless persecution by man-made afflictions. Up to 2010 they lived in towns that were crazy with noise; there was practically no control of offensive sounds, and the visual clamour of advertisements died out only in the needy decades that preceded the Air Dictatorship. But then it was still hardly more than a century that there had been sufficient light upon the towns and highways to drive away the blackness of night and overcast weather. In northern climates in the winter before the twentieth century people lived between the nocturnal dark and a dismal grey half-light which they called daylight, not seeing the sun often for weeks together.

And before the nineteenth century it is clear to anyone who can read between the lines that mankind STANK. One has only to study the layout and drainage of their houses and towns, their accommodation for washing, their exiguous wardrobes, the absence of proper laundry organization and of destructors for outworn objects, to realize that only usage saved them from a perpetual disgust and nausea. No wonder that, quite apart from their bad food and loathsome cooking, they coughed, spat, ached, went deaf and blind and feeble, in a continual alternation of lassitude and mutual irritation.

These conditions of life have gone one after another and almost imperceptibly. Few of us realize how different it was to be a human being only a few hundred years ago. It is only when we take our imaginations with us back into the past that we realize how evil to nose, eye, ear and soul the congregation of human beings could be. And necessarily, inevitably, because of the ill-interpreted protests of

body and mind against this mode of existence, they hated — almost at haphazard. We have in Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726) the cry of one man of exceptional intelligence and sensibility who discovered himself imprisoned as it were in the life of the eighteenth century and could find neither outlet nor opiate. The reek of the kennels of a medieval town was nothing to the stench of hatred in the popular Press of the twentieth century. The ordinary newspaper of that time was not so much a news sheet as a poison rag. Every morning the common man took in fresh suggestions of suspicion and resentment and gratified his spite with bad news and malicious gossip.

Hatred, we know, is a morbid, infectious and preventable relapse to which the mammalian cerebrum, and particularly the cerebrum of the social types, is prone. It is a loss of rational control. It is caused normally by small repeated irritations of the cerebral cortex. The contagion may occur at any phase before or after maturity, and acute attacks predispose the brain for recurrence and may run together at last into a chronic condition of vindictive disapproval.

Once hatred has established itself to that extent it seems to be ineradicable. The patient seeks, often with the greatest ingenuity, occasion for offence, and finds a profound satisfaction in the nursing of resentment and the search for reprisals and revenges. He has what he calls his "proper pride". He disapproves of his fellow creatures and grudges them happiness. Our current education is framed very largely to avert and anticipate this facile contagion, but the Press of that time subsisted by its dissemination, in the interests of reactionary forces. We are as sedulous now for cleanliness and ventilation in our mental as in our physical atmosphere. The contrast between a contemporary crowd and the crowds depicted by Hogarth or Raphael is not simply in the well-clad, well-grown, well-nourished and well-exercised bodies, the absence of rags and cripples, but in the candid interested faces that replace the introverted, suspicious and guarded expressions of those unhappy times. It is only in the light of this universal malaria that human history can be made comprehensible.

And now this great German mind stretching across the centre of Europe in seventy million brains was incapable of autotherapy, and let its sickness have its way with it. It would not recognize that it

suffered from anything but a noble resentment. Least of all peoples was it able to entertain those ideas of a world-wide cooperation of the World-State, which were still seeking their proper form and instrument. It was a deeper hate altogether than the fear-begotten hate of the French. In both these antagonized countries cosmopolitan sanity went begging, but most so in Germany.

The fluctuations in German hatred during the Thirties were curiously affected by subconscious currents of discretion. Though Germany was fiercely belligerent in spirit, her armament still lagged behind that of her neighbours; her Hitlerites snarled and threatened, but rather against Poland than France, and when the tension became too great it found relief by outrages upon Communists, Pacificists and intellectuals and by an exacerbated persecution of those whipping-boys of the Western civilization, the Jews. From the accession of Hitler to the chancellorship of the Reich in 1933 onward, not only looting and massacre, but legalized outrage, became an ever present menace in the life of the German Jew.

Faber speaks in his studies of political psychology of the "hate map" of the world. The intensity of the colouring of such a map would vary widely. The English-speaking states (except for Ireland, that erstwhile "island of evergreen malice", which is now the most delightful and welcoming of summer resorts) and the Spanish-speaking communities felt hate far less intensely than the peoples of the continental European patchwork. They were less congested, they were free from acute alien interference, they had more space to move about in, and the infection was not so virulent. For two decades Spain and Spanish South America (after the Peruvian Settlement) sustained indeed a more liberal and creative mentality than any other region of the world. The Spanish contribution, beginning with Unamuno and Ortega y Gasset and going onward through a long list of great names, was of increasing importance in the building up of the Modern World-State.

Russia, we may note, was never so constructive mentally as Spain. She had not now the same wealth of freely thinking and writing men. She had no surplus of mental energy to philosophize. She ecstasized, prophesied or dogmatized. Such brain discipline as she had was used up in her sprawling technical efforts. But she again

was not a malignant country. Young Russia was taught to hate indeed, but to hate a dissolving enemy, the Wicked Imperialist. Even in that hate there was an element of humorous caricature. When in due course the Wicked Imperialist faded away to the quality of a nursery Ogre, he took with him most of the hatred out of Russia. Hate, except in brief vivid spurts, does not seem congenial to the Russian temperament.

Few people in 1940 realized that the essential political trouble in the world, as distinguished from its monetary malaise, was this endemic disease, and still fewer had the boldness of mind even to think of the drastic cleansing and destruction of infected social institutions and economic interests and accumulations that was needed if the disease was ever to be stamped out. Meanwhile along the tangled frontiers of Central and Eastern Europe the sores festered and the inflammation increased.

Among the more frequent methods of releasing hatred in the more troubled communities were aggressive demonstrations inviting or involving violence, attacks on representative buildings, such as embassies and consulates, the defilement of flags, statues and other symbols (in India the slaughter of sacred or forbidden animals such as cows or pigs in holy places), quarrels picked in cafés and restaurants, beatings-up, assassinations, the throwing of bombs and crackers into parties and gatherings of the objectionable nationality, or into law courts, religious buildings and other unsuitable places for an explosion, firing at sentinels and across boundaries. Along the Adriatic coast it would appear there was an exceptionally strong disposition to insult the characteristic Italian respect for statues and pictures.

This was of recent origin. At the Congress of Versailles Italy had been bilked by her French and British Allies of a considerable amount of the Dalmatian coast-line — to which indeed neither she nor they had any right, but which nevertheless had been promised to her in the secret engagements that had brought her into the World War. Her patriots had never ceased to resent this broken promise, nor the Jugo-Slav peoples, who held the coveted districts, to fear a forcible annexation. There had been much propaganda about the dispute. One prominent argument on the Italian side was that the

Republic of Venice (of which Rome was the natural heir) had formerly dominated this coast, and, in proof of this, appeal was made to the public buildings in the towns of the disputed regions, which everywhere bore the insignia of their Italian founders and particularly the distinctive lion of Venice. For that was the Fascist fantasy: wherever the Venetian lion had made its lair or the Roman eagles cast their shadows, from Hadrian's Wall in England to Mesopotamia, the Fascisti claimed to rule.

This contention, though taken calmly enough by the English, French, Spanish, Turks and other emancipated peoples, was bitterly resented by the populations more immediately threatened, and particularly did it arouse resentment and hatred along the Dalmatian coast. For the young and excitable Slav, those sculptured lions and archaic eagles, those antique vestiges, were robbed of their artistic and historical charm; they took on an arrogant contemporary quality and seemed to demand an answer to their challenge. His response was to deface or mutilate them.

Already in 1932 there were bitter recriminations between Rome and Belgrade on this score, and in 1935 and again in 1937 fresh trouble arose. The later occasions were not simply matters of chipping and breaking. These heraldic and highly symbolic animals were now painted, and painted in such a manner as to bring them into grave contempt. And the outrages were not confined to heraldic animals. Portraits and images of Mussolini were also adorned all too often with pencilled moustaches, formidable whiskers, a red nose and other perversions of his vigorous personality.

Such vexatious modes of expression were in constant evidence in all the inflamed areas. To us they seem trivial, imbecile, preposterous, but then they were steeped in tragic possibility.

The reader must picture for himself, if he can, how things went in the brain of some youngster growing to manhood in one of these hate regions, the constant irritation of restrictions, the constant urge to do some vivid expressive thing, the bitter, unconsoling mockery against the oppressor, and at last the pitiful conspiracy, the still more pitiful insult. He must think of the poor excitement of getting the paint-pot and the ladder, of watching the receding police patrol, the tremulous triumph of smearing the hated object. That perhaps was the poor

crown of life for that particular brain. Then the alarm, the conflict, the flight, a shot, a wound, straw and filth in a prison cell, the beatings and the formal punishment, the intensified resolve to carry on the resistance. There was nothing to think of then but the next outrage, the next riot. So very often the story went on to wounds and death, the body crumpled up on a street pavement and trampled under foot or put against a wall to be shot, and then the rotting away and dispersal of that particular human brain with all the gifts and powers it possessed. That was all that life could be for hundreds of thousands of those hate-drenched brains. For that they came into being, like flowers that open in a rain of filth.

A Natural History of Cruelty has recently been published by Otto Jaspers (2085 —), a lineal descendant of that Professor Jaspers of Heidelberg University under whom De Windt studied and to whose Die geistiger Situation der Gegenwart De Windt was greatly indebted. Cruelty in the Twentieth Century is treated in considerable detail, and it makes very terrible reading indeed. Happily it is not considered a necessary part of a general education to probe under those dark processes of the human mind which make the infliction of horrible pain and injuries a relief to otherwise intolerable mental distresses. The psychologist, however, must acquaint himself with all those facts; he cannot fully understand our intricate minds without them, and the practical disappearance of deliberate cruelty from our world to-day makes the horror literature of the World War and World Slump periods a mine of essential material for his investigations. One or two glimpses we have given the student. If he has any imagination he will be able to expand those hints for himself into an infinitude of mutilations, tortures and wanton violence.

The older psychologists were disposed to classify cruelty as a form of sexual aberration — in ordinary speech we still use their old word Sadistic — but this attribution is no longer respected by contemporary authorities. Cruelty goes far beyond the sexual field. Just as hate is now understood to be a combative fear compound, the stiffening up of a faltering challenge, which may become infectious, so cruelty is regarded as a natural development of effort against resistance, so soon as the apprehension of frustration exceeds a certain limit. It is a transformation of our attempt to subdue

something, usually a living thing, to our will, under the exasperation of actual or anticipated obduracy.

This interpretation makes it plain why the breakdown of the private capital economic and political system and the world-wide uncertainty, dismay and want which ensued was followed by wave after wave of unprecedented cruelty. In 1900, a visitor from another sphere might reasonably have decided that man, as one met him in Europe or America, was a kindly, merciful and generous creature. In 1940 he might have decided, with an equal show of justice, that this creature was diabolically malignant. And yet it was the same creature, under different conditions of stress.

There were many thousands of suicides between 1930 and 1940 — suicides of sensitive men and women, who could endure the dreadful baseness and cruelty of life no longer. Yet in the records of the reviving world of 1980 there is scarcely a mention of atrocious conduct towards human beings or animals. It was not a change of nature; it was a change of phase. Millions of people who had actually killed, massacred, tortured, were still alive — and they were behaving now quite reasonably and well. Most of them had forgotten their own deeds more or less completely. Hope had returned to human life. The frantic years were past.

9. — THE LAST WAR CYCLONE, 1940-50

The drift to war in Europe became more powerful with the elimination of Japan and the United States from the possibility of intervention, and with the deepening preoccupation of Britain with Indian disorder and with the Black Revolt in South Africa. The last restraints upon continental hatreds had gone. The issues simplified.

War came at last in 1940. The particular incident that led to actual warfare in Europe was due to a Polish commercial traveller, a Pole of Jewish origin, who was so ill advised as to have trouble with an ill-fitting dental plate during the halt of his train in Danzig. He seems to have got this plate jammed in such a fashion that he had to open his mouth wide and use both hands to struggle with it, and out of deference to his fellow passengers he turned his face to the window during these efforts at readjustment. He was a black-bearded man with a long and prominent nose, and no doubt the effect of his contortions was unpleasing. Little did he realize that his clumsy hands were to release the dogs of war from the Pyrenees to Siberia.

The primary irritant seems to have been either an orange-pip or a small fragment of walnut.

Unhappily, a young Nazi was standing on the platform outside and construed the unfortunate man's facial disarrangement into a hostile comment upon his uniform. For many of these youths were of an extreme innate sensibility. The flames of patriotic indignation shot up in his heart. He called up three fellow guards and two policemen — for like the Italian Fascisti these young heroes rarely acted alone — and boarded the train in a swift and exemplary mood. There was a furious altercation, rendered more difficult by the facts that the offending Pole knew little or no German and was still in effect gagged. Two fellow travellers, however, came to his help, others became involved, vociferation gave place to pushing and punching, and the Nazis, outnumbered, were put off the train.

Whereupon the young man who had started all the trouble, exasperated, heated and dishevelled, and seeing that now altogether intolerable Jew still making unsatisfactory passes with his hands and face at the window, drew a revolver and shot him dead. Other

weapons flashed into action, and the miniature battle was brought to an end only by the engine-driver drawing his train out of the station. The matter was complicated politically by the fact that the exact status of the Danzig police was still in dispute and that the Nazis had no legal authority upon the Danzig platform.

By itself this distressing incident might have been arranged without the outbreak of a European war. The moribund League of Nations might have been invoked or even the mummified Hague Tribunal galvanized into activity; either institution was still fully capable of dealing with, let us say, a Polish dentist who might have been treated as the culpable party, traced, punished and made the scapegoat of Europe. But that would have needed a certain goodwill on the part of the Powers directly involved, and at that time no such goodwill was forthcoming.

For eight years now the German mind had been working up for a fight over the Corridor, and the rearmament of Germany, overt and secret, had been going on. Both France and Poland had been watching the military recovery of Germany with ever-deepening apprehension, and the military authorities of both countries were urgent that a blow should be struck while they were still disproportionately stronger. Time after time it seemed that the crisis had come, and time after time nothing more than a stock-exchange tornado had occurred. Now the last reasons for patience had disappeared. The tension had risen to a point at which disaster seemed like relief and Europe was free to tear itself to fragments.

Such a situation was the inevitable climax to every "armed peace" in the old belligerent world. At some point there was an irresistible logic in "Strike now before they get too strong". That had been an underlying motive of primary force in the British readiness to fight in 1914. They were eager to strike before the ever-growing German fleet equalled their own. So they ended an intolerable tension. The Germans had "asked for it", they said. "Better now than to-morrow."

Now again Germany has "asked for it" and Poland was leaping to the occasion. The War Offices pressed their bell buttons. The printing machines of Paris, London and New York were still busy with various misstatements about the murdered commercial traveller, while the Polish and German air patrols were in conflict all along the

fatal boundary. That dental plate apparently began to feel uncomfortable about one o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, January 4th, 1940. On Saturday, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Michael Koreniovsky, the Polish ace, after a brilliant fight with three antagonists, fell flaming out of the sky into the crowded Langgasse of Danzig and set fire to the Rathaus.

The first Polish air raid on Berlin and the unresisted "demonstration flight" of two hundred French air squadrons in formation over Bavaria and West Prussia followed. The Germans seem to have been taken completely by surprise by this display of immense and immediate preparedness. They had not thought it of the French. But they had the quickness of apprehension to decline an air battle against odds, and the French flew home again. The fighting on the Polish-German frontier continued.

The authorities in Paris were uncertain whether they were disappointed or relieved by the non-resistance of their old enemies. A smashing air victory over Germany would have been very satisfactory and conclusive, but these aeroplanes were also wanted at home to cow the ever-increasing domestic discontent. An indecisive battle — and that was always possible in the air — might have produced serious internal stresses.

For a week of years from the resumption of armament by Germany in 1933, the diplomatic centres of the world had been watching the steady onset of this conflict and had been doing nothing to avert it. Now London, Washington, Madrid and Geneva became hysterically active. There was a mighty running to and fro of ambassadors and foreign ministers. "Delay," said Geneva; though there had already been twenty years of delay.

"Localize the conflict" was a phrase that leapt into vivid prominence. It found favour not only in the neutral countries, but in Paris and Berlin. In effect "localize the conflict" meant this: it meant that Paris should scrap her engagements to Poland and leave the Poles to make what sort of arrangements they could between Germany and Russia. For Russia now, by an enigmatical silence combined with a prompt mobilization of the Red Army, became almost immediately an important piece in the developing international game.

And Paris had soon very excellent reasons for not pushing a conflict with Berlin to extremities. The first Frenchman to be killed in the New Warfare had been killed already. And he had been killed in the Maritime Alps, shot by the bullet of an Italian patrol.

On Sunday night, January the 6th, while the Polish aeroplanes were dropping gas bombs on Berlin, the Italians were administering the same treatment to Belgrade. At the same time an identical note had been dispatched from Rome to all the Powers giving Italy's reasons for this decisive blow. It seemed that between Friday evening and Sunday morning there had been a violent recrudescence of Yugo-Slav irreverence. The Fascist agents who had to supply the material for grievance and indignation had in fact overdone their task to the pitch of caricature. On Saturday the entire Italian population found itself roused from its normal preoccupation with its daily budget by the terrible intelligence of Mussolini everywhere made bibulous and ophthalmious with red paint, of Venetian lions coloured as indelicately as baboons and of shamefully overdecorated Roman eagles. Eloquent and dishevelled young Fascists, often in tears, protested at every street corner against these intolerable indignities and called for war. The cup of Yugo-Slav iniquity was full. It was only in later years that astounded students, tracing these outrages to their sources, realized how excessively that cup had been filled to justify the Fascist invasion.

Once the Polish and Italian forces had crossed their boundaries the other states of Eastern Europe did not wait even to produce an insult before launching their offensives. The whole crazy patchwork of Versailles dissolved into fighting — the joyless, frantic fighting of peoples full of hate and fear, led blindly to no ends that anyone could foresee. For two straining years the theory of localizing the conflict held Russia and France out of the fight. A "formula" was found by which France undertook not to intervene on the side of her erstwhile allies, on the understanding that Russia by way of compensation also refrained from any action against them. Moreover, the trade in munitions was to be carried on "impartially". It was a flimsy formula to justify a diplomatic default, but it kept warfare away from the Western front of Germany for two distressful years. The persistent shooting by Italians over the French boundary was difficult to explain

away, and indeed it was not so much explained away as quietly disregarded. The air fleets of France paraded at intervals, to the increasing irritation of all her immediate neighbours, but on the whole as a restraining influence. The demonstration chilled the foreigner and assuaged the hotheads at home.

From the outset there was far less enthusiasm for this "localized" European war of 1940 than had been displayed by the populations of the belligerent countries in 1914. What enthusiasm was displayed was confined to the inexperienced young of the middle and upper classes, the youth of the Fascisti, Nazi, "public schoolboy" and scoutmaster type. They went about, shouting and urgent, in a heavy, sullen and apprehensive atmosphere. No nation "leapt to arms". The common soldiers deserted and "fell out" incessantly, and these shirkers were difficult to punish, since the "deserter mentality" was so widespread, more particularly in the peasant armies of Eastern Europe, that it was impossible to shoot offenders. One Posen battalion went into battle near Lodz with thirty-nine officers and fifty-seven men.

From the first "economies" marched with the troops. From the first there was a threadbare needy quality about the struggle. General orders insisted upon "a restrained use of ammunition".

The actual fighting was, however, on a much higher level, mechanically and scientifically, than the Japanese war in China. The military authorities had good roads, automobiles, camions, railways, rolling stock, electrical material, guns of all sorts, and great air forces available. Behind the fronts were chemical and other munition factories in good working order. If there were no longer infantry battles there were some brilliant conflicts of technicians. The prompt cutting off of East Prussia from any help from main Germany by the Permanent Death Gas was an operation far above the technical level of any Eastern operations. It was strategically silly but technically very successful.

The first offensive against Berlin was also planned with modern equipment and the maximum of contemporary military science. It was to be another "blow at the heart", and the Polish general staff relied upon it as firmly as the Germans in 1914 had relied upon their march on Paris. Unfortunately for the Poles, it had been necessary to

consult a number of “experts” in preparing this advance; there were leakages through France, through the Czech and Swedish munition makers, through Russia, and through domestic treason, and the broad outline of the plan was as well known and understood in Berlin as it was in Warsaw. The great gas raid on Berlin was indeed terrifying and devastating, but the rush of tanks, great caterpillar guns and troops in motor transport was held and checked within sixty miles of the German capital by an ingenious system of poison-gas barriers — chiefly Lewisite and Blue Cross — wired mines and “slime pits” of a novel type in the roads and open fields. A cavalry raid to the north between Berlin and the sea failed disastrously amidst wire, gas and machine-guns; nearly forty thousand men were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Moreover, there had been mistakes in the manufacture of the gas masks worn by the Polish troops, and several brigades gave way to the persuasion that they had been sold and betrayed. The main Polish masses never came into actual contact with the German troops, and only their great numerical superiority in aeroplanes saved their repulse from becoming a rout.

The Polish armies rallied and, according to the secondary plan prepared for any such failure, extended themselves and dug themselves in along a line between Stettin and the Bohemian frontier. Behind the barrier they began a systematic reduction of Silesia. Every night an air battle raged over both Berlin and Warsaw. It was often an indecisive battle. The Poles had the numerical superiority, but the German machines were more efficient and better handled. But the Poles had far more of the new aerial torpedoes — which could go to an assigned spot two hundred miles away, drop a large bomb and return — than their adversaries.

Bohemia, like France, had mobilized but did not immediately enter the war. The Czecho-Slovak armies remained in their mountain quadrilateral or lined out along the Hungarian front, awaiting the next turn in the game. Austria also remained excited but neutral.

The Southern war opened brilliantly for the Italians, and for some weeks it went on without any formal connexion with the Polish conflict. Bulgaria, Albania and Hungary also declared war upon Yugo-Slavia, the Italian air forces “darkened the sky”, and few of the towns in Croatia and Serbia escaped an aerial bombardment. The

Italian fleet set itself to capture the ports and islands of Dalmatia. But the advance of the Italian troops into the hills of Slavonia and Croatia was not as rapid as had been expected. Six weeks passed before they were able to fight their way to Zagreb.

The country was a difficult one, ill adapted to the use of gas or mechanism, there was no central point at which a decisive blow could be struck, and the population had a long tradition of mountain warfare. It did not affect these sturdy peasants whether the townsmen were bombed or not. They never gave battle; they never exposed themselves in masses, but their bullets flew by day and night into the Italian encampments. Many of them went to and fro between their fields and the front. Munitions poured in for them through Roumania, which, with a big Red Army on its Bessarabian frontier and its own peasants recalcitrant, remained also ambiguously, dangerously, and yet for a time profitably, out of the struggle. The Hungarians crossed the Yugo-Slav frontier and threatened Belgrade, but the mass of their forces faced towards Czecho-Slovakia and awaited further events.

A curious pause in the fighting occurred at the end of the year. The frantic efforts of Prague, London and Paris to call a halt were temporarily successful. The invaders of Germany and Yugo-Slavia remained upon enemy territory, but neutral zones were improvised and there was a cessation of hostilities. An eleventh-hour attempt was made to stop the war by negotiation and keep the two conflicts from coalescence. There were weeks during which this seemed possible. Both Germany and Poland were of two minds about continuing the war now that the Polish advance was held, and Italy hoped to be left in possession of Dalmatia without an irksome campaign of further conquest. It was as if the spirit of civilization had once more come near to awakening from its hallucinations and had asked, “Why on earth is this happening to us?”

The British Cabinet thought the occasion opportune for a conference at Vevey to revise the Treaty of Versailles “finally”. The pacific speeches of Duff-Cooper, Hore-Belisha, Ellen Wilkinson and Randolph Churchill echoed throughout Europe and were brilliantly supported by Benito Caruso and Corliss Lamont in America. The Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Non-conformist Churches, the President of the Swiss Republic and the able and venerable

President Benes swelled the chorus of remonstrance. France, which had been growing steadily more pacificist after her social conflicts in 1934-35, found able spokesmen in Louchère and Chavanne. Once again we are reminded of the impulses of Henry Ford and Wilson. Once again the concept of a World Pax flickered in the human imagination and vanished. This time it was a fuller, more explicit and more unanimous chorus than that which had cried aloud in 1916-17. Yet at the time it was hardly more effective. Vevey prolonged the truce throughout 1941 until June, but it could settle nothing. The military authorities, having had a breathing-time, became impatient. With a mutually destructive malice the fighting was resumed "before the harvest could be gathered".

Vevey failed because the constructive conception of the Modern State had no representative there. It was just another gathering of national diplomatists who professed to seek peace, and yet who set about the business with all those antiquated assumptions of sovereignty that were bound to lead to a revival of the conflict. The fantasy of some "balance of power" was as near as they ever came to a peace idea. Such a balance was bound to sway from year to year and from day to day. Whatever the common people and men of intelligence were thinking, the experts now wanted to see the war fought to a finish. "The Germans hadn't been beaten enough" was all too acceptable to the munition dealers and the Press in France and Scandinavia. "The Italians have their hands full in Yugo-Slavia."

The British and Americans, who hoped to keep out of the conflict to the end, had experienced an exhilarating revival of exports and found their bills against the belligerents mounting very hopefully. Once more Tyneside echoed to hammering; steel, iron and chemical shares boomed and the iron and steel industry, like some mangy, toothless old tiger, roused itself for the only quarry it had now the vigour to pursue — man-eating. It had long ceased to dream of new liners or bridges or railways or steel-framed houses. But it could still make guns and kill. It could not look far enough ahead to reckon whether at last there would be any meat on the man's bones. The only countries that really wanted peace, enduring peace, were Czecho-Slovakia and Austria, which stretched out between the two combatant systems and had possible enemy frontiers on every hand.

The human will for peace as it found expression at Vevey was still a tangled and ineffective will.

The fighting revived almost simultaneously in the Polish Ukraine, where the peasants had revolted and were evidently fighting with Soviet officers and equipment, and in a vigorous surprise attack upon the Polish lines to free the German soil from the invader. The Germans had been working night and day during the truce to equalize conditions in the air; they produced new and swifter aeroplanes and a particularly effective machine-gun, and for some weeks there was such aerial fighting as was never seen before or since.

Gradually the Germans established a sufficient ascendancy to bring their bombers and gas into play. Lodz and Warsaw were terrorized and the civilian population evacuated and the Polish line broken so as to restore communications with Silesia. And then the conflict broadened. Lithuania, evidently with Russian encouragement, seized her old city of Wilna, and Austria linked the Northern and the Southern struggle by entering both wars as the ally of Germany and Italy. Germany declared her final union with Austria. Very swiftly now the remaining European states followed one another into the cauldron. Hungary attacked Eastern Czecho-Slovakia without a declaration of war "to restore her legitimate boundaries", and brought the army frameworks of Roumania into the field against her. Thereupon Russia announced the impossibility of maintaining her understanding with France in the face of these events, and the Red Army advanced on Lemberg. Macedonia was already a seething mass of fighting, village against village; Bulgaria entered the "South Slav" alliance and assailed Albania, and Greece seized Rhodes, which had been up to that time held by Italy.

So France saw her ancient policy of "security", of setting state to balance state and allying herself with a countervailing state at the back of every antagonistic neighbour, work out to its necessary conclusion. Gladly would her business men and her peoples now have rested behind her immensely fortified frontiers and shared the profits of neutrality and munition-selling with the British and Americans, but her engagements were too binding. After one last ambiguous attempt on the part of London, Washington and Geneva

to avert the disaster, France declared war against the Central European alliance in 1943.

On the face of it the new war resembled the World War of 1914-18. It seemed to be an attempt to reverse or confirm the Versailles settlement. It had an air of being the same sort of siege of Central Europe. But now Italy was in close alliance with the Teutonic powers; Belgium, in a state of extreme industrial distress, was out of the war; Britain stood aloof; and in the place of her former Allies France had to help — rather than be helped — by the band of states from the Corridor to the Black Sea and the Balkans which the Quai d'Orsay had toiled so painfully to knit into an anti-German alliance.

Russia, however, was a doubtful ally of the Central Powers; she was not operating in concert with them; she was simply supporting the new Soviet republics in Eastern Poland and Bessarabia. There the Red Army halted. The old enthusiasm for a World Revolution had faded out of the Russian imagination. Marxism had become so Russianized that it feared now to take in too large a contingent of Western adherents. The Kremlin was content to consolidate the kindred Slav Soviets and then rest. Japan and China and the American continent remained out of the mêlée, concentrated on their own social difficulties.

It would be possible for a superficial student to regard all this merely as a rearrangement of the familiar counters of sovereign state politics. But, in reality, the forces in collision were profoundly different. France, in spite of her internal social stresses, was still a capitalist community of the Nineteenth Century type, with democratic parliamentary forms and irresponsible finance and industrialism. Save for the teaching of a sentimental patriotism, her young people were mentally unorganized. Her allies were peasant states with governments of the royal or parliamentary form, and, if anything, more old-fashioned. But the Central Powers were all of the new Fascist pattern, more closely knit in its structure and dominated by an organization of the younger spirits, which claimed to be an élite.

Except for the fundamentally important fact that these Fascisti were intensely nationalist, this control by a self-appointed, self-

disciplined élite was a distinct step towards our Modern State organization. These various Fascisti were destined to destroy their own states and disappear because of their essentially shallow and sentimental mentality, their inability to get outside nationalist traditions and coalesce; there is no direct continuity between them and our modern educational and administrative system; but there was nothing like them in the World War of 1914-18 anywhere, and they are noteworthy, as the Russian Communist Party (in spite of its proletarian formula) is noteworthy, for their partial but very real advance on democratic institutions. Amidst the chaos, that organized "devotion of the young" on which our modern community rests was clearly foreshadowed in these Central European states. The idea of disciplined personal participation in human government was being driven into the mentality of the new generation.

Until something more convincing appeared, it had to crystallize, disastrously enough, about such strange nuclei as the theatrical Mussolini and the hysterical Hitler. It had to be patriotic because that was the only form in which the State then presented itself. But after these first crystallizations had been shattered and dissolved in the war disasters that now ensued, the idea was still there, this idea of banded cooperation ready to be directed to greater ends. Youth had ceased to be irresponsible in all the Fascist countries.

Not only were these new wars unlike their predecessors in the fact that they were not, so far as the Central Powers were concerned, wars of the democratic masses, but also they were quite unprecedented in the range and quality of the fighting. We have already indicated some of the main differences between the New Warfare and the Old. These now became accentuated by the extraordinary way in which the boundaries of the battling states interdigitated. In the first spurt of conflict there was indeed a "front" between Poland and Germany; but after 1943 there was no front, no main objective, and no central idea to the storming destruction that spread over Europe.

The Poles tried to draw a line of Permanent Death Gas across East Brandenburg before their withdrawal to Posen, but their collapse came too swiftly, and they were able only to poison three small areas of no strategic importance. After 1943 the war became mainly a war in the air, with an increasing use of gas and landing raids, raids rather

than invasions, to seize, organize and hold advantageous positions. A bitter and intense naval struggle went on in the Mediterranean to cut off reinforcements and supplies between North Africa and France, but there was little molestation of the Atlantic traffic of France.

There was never an Aerial Trafalgar, never an Air Ecnomus. War in three dimensions does not afford those channels, straits, narrow seas, passes, main roads, by which an inferior force may be brought to a decisive battle, and indeed to this day it is uncertain which side was absolutely predominant in the air. It was a war of raids and reprisals, and no large decisive operations were attempted. A big German infantry push into Posen was held by gas and slimes, and a French invasion of Italy got no further than Turin.

The complete exhaustion of the adversary, materially and morally, became the only possible road to any sort of victory. Once more the tormented populations were urged to sustain a "war of attrition". "It is the man who holds out half an hour longer than the other who wins" was translated into every European language. The attacks on social order increased in malignancy as the impossibility of any military decision became manifest. Crops and forests were deliberately fired, embankments smashed, low-lying regions flooded, gas and water supplies destroyed. The aviators would start off to look for a crowd and bomb it. It became as cruel as the fighting of ferrets.

There was still, in spite of a decade of financial dislocation and industrial depression, a vast amount of mechanical material in Europe; everywhere there were factories strongly protected against air attack and skilfully camouflaged. Moreover, all the chief belligerents had sufficiently open frontiers for the importation of material, so long as anything compact and valuable could be wrung out of their nationals by tax or levy, to pay for such supplies. The goods crossed the frontier at night; the cargoes were piloted into unlit harbours. Every able-bodied adult not actually in the fighting forces was pressed to work at excavations for bomb shelters and the reconstitution of buildings against gas and high explosive. Much of this also was night work. Recalcitrance and shirking were punished by a deprivation of rations. There is a grim picture by Eglon Callet called "Security at Last", of which the reader may have seen reproductions. A chain gang of emaciated and ragged Frenchmen is

working under the lash in a tunnel. In the foreground one who has fainted is being given a stimulant; another, past help, dies untended.

In comparison with the abundant literature of personal experiences in the World War, at least so far as the Western front was concerned, there are remarkably few records either of combatant or non-combatant adventures during the Fighting Forties. The big air raids seem to have been altogether horrible. They were much more dreadful than the air raids of the World War. They began with a nightmare of warning maroons, sirens, hooters and the shrill whistles of cyclist scouts, then swarms of frantic people running to and fro, all pride and dignity gone, seeking the nearest shelter and aid, and they ended for most of their victims in an extremity of physical suffering.

We have already given some intimation of the nature of those torture deaths. In nearly every case the organization of refuges and gas masks broke down. In many cases there had never been a real provision, but only sham visors and sham bomb-proof buildings to allay "premature" panic and "keep up the popular morale". None of these great raids was ever reported in the newspapers that still struggled on into the war years. Even in America the publication of any detail was treated as "pacificist propaganda against recruiting".

There is a descriptive letter from Berlin after an air raid, undated and signed "Sinclair", which is believed by most competent critics to have been written by Sinclair Lewis the novelist (1885-1990). One passage may be quoted:

"We went down Unter den Linden and along the Sieges Allee, and the bodies of people were lying everywhere, men, women and children, not scattered evenly, but bunched together very curiously in heaps, as though their last effort had been to climb on to each other for help. This attempt to get close up to someone seems to be characteristic of death by this particular gas. Something must happen in the mind. Everyone was crumpled up in the same fashion and nearly all had vomited blood. The stench was dreadful, although all this multitude had been alive twenty-four hours ago. The body corrupts at once. The archway into the park was almost impassable...."

So we get one glimpse of how peaceful town-bred people might die a century and a half ago.

The individual stories of the actual fighting in that last warfare are no more ample than the non-combatant descriptions. There was little inducement for anyone to write about it in the subsequent decades; there was not the same high proportion of literate men as there was in the Western armies during the Great War; there was a less artless interest in what was happening and more running away, desertion, apathy, drunkenness, raping, plundering and malignant cruelty, which are not things of which men leave records. The whole world was less sensitive than it had been thirty years before; if it suffered more grossly it suffered less acutely. In 1914-15 many of the British and German rankers kept diaries from day to day. This shows a sense of personality and a receptiveness to events quite outside the sullen fatalism, shot with gleams of primitive exaltation or fury, which seems to have been the prevalent state of mind in the armies of the Forties.

In the Historical Documents Series there is a diary of a Japanese officer who was killed in the retreat from Wuchang. Failing any European material of the same kind, it may perhaps be quoted here to show how it felt to fight in the last wars of all. It is not, however, a very vivid document. He was an intellectual, a socialist and a strong believer in the League of Nations, and his record is mainly a series of hostile criticisms in cypher of the superior command. But in the latter half these dissertations die out. The diary becomes a broken record of what he found to eat and drink and how he fought against influenza and dysentery. He seems to have had a company of men with him; he notes twice when he contrived a haul of food for them, and he jots down names as they are killed or missing. There are also figures that may be a note of his diminishing ammunition. He was already badly starved when he was killed. As he weakened he seems to have found his rather complicated cypher too difficult to use, and he lapsed first into bad English and then into plain Japanese. The very last item is an unfinished poem, a fragment in the old style, which might be rendered as follows:

Almond blossom in the spring sunshine, Fuji-Yama gracious lady, Island treasure home of lovely things, Shall I never see you again?...

Something, death perhaps, prevented the completion of his naive verses. He and his detachment were probably overtaken and done to

death near Kai- feng.

In none of these later war memoirs is there anything to recall that queer quality of the 1914-18 stories, of men who felt they were going out from absolutely sure and stable homes and cities, to which with reasonable good fortune they would return — and live happily ever afterwards. The mood then was often extraordinarily brave and tender. The men of this later cycle of wars felt that there would be no such home-coming. They knew that they went out to misery and left misery in active possession at home. Their war was not an expedition; it was a change for ever. The memoirs of the airmen who did so much destruction are amazingly empty. They note fights, but quite flatly. "Put down two Polaks", for example; "a close shave"; but they do not seem to have had an inkling of the effect of the bombs they dropped upon the living flesh below. Many of these young men survived to become Modern State aviators and to serve the Air and Sea Control after 1965. But though some wrote well of their later experiences, none of them has left any useful documents for the history of the war time. The historian turns to his dates, maps and totals again from this meagre salvage of the hopes, fears, dreads, curiosities and agonies of the millions who went through that age of cruel disaster, doubtful whether he is sorry or thankful that most of that welter of feeling and suffering has vanished now as completely as though it had never been.

After 1945 the signs of exhaustion multiplied. Such despair had come to the souls of men that even defensive energy failed. They lay starving in their beds and hovels and let the bombs fall about them. But a whiff of gas could still cause a panic, a headlong rush of tormented people coughing and spitting through the streets to the shelter pits. Influenza with its peculiar intensity of mental depression came again repeatedly after 1942, and in 1945 came cholera. These epidemics, though they seemed grave enough at the time, were the mere first scouts of that great "Raid of the Germs" which was in preparation for disunited humanity. It was as if they were testing the defensive organization of mankind.

Except for air warfare, Britain and the North European neutrals were suffering almost as acutely as if they were actually at war. They had poured munitions into Europe and reaped a harvest of bad debts.

After the first economic exhilaration due to this state of employment, the exports from Great Britain, which had once been the pioneer of free world trade and cosmopolitan thought, dwindled to insignificance; the erstwhile creditor of the world could not collect such debts as were still due to her, and could not pay therefore for the food supply of her dwindling but still excessive population. Her former sanitation had rotted to filthiness under a régime of relentless saving. Housing in that disagreeable climate had passed from congestion to horror. The first cholera epidemic found her in the throes not only of famine but of civil disorder, controlled and suppressed by her highly mechanized army and by the still very powerful habits of orderliness and subordination in her people. Never, since the Black Death of the Fifteenth Century, had the British Isles known such a pestilence. They had believed the days of pestilence were past for ever. And yet that cholera was only the precursor of the still more terrible experiences that were to follow it in the subsequent decade.

Slowly but surely the spirit of protest and mutiny spread through Europe. That growing despairful insubordination that had done so much to bring about the winding up of the World War in 1918 reappeared in new forms. But because now war was no longer primarily an infantryman's business, mass mutiny, such as had crippled the French offensives after 1917, taken Russia out of the war, and led to the final German collapse, had not now the same disabling effect. There were not the same big aggregations of men under exasperating discipline and in touch with "subversive" suggestions. Power had passed over to the specialized forces — to the aviators and war technicians. By the use of small bombs, machine-guns and the milder gases they could "handle" and disperse mass meetings and "tranquillize" insurgent districts in a manner that would have been inconceivable to the street barricade revolutionaries of the later Eighteenth Century.

Even strikes in the munition factories were no longer so effective as they had been, because even there the increased efficiency of power production had ousted the comparatively unskilled worker in his multitudes. For the same reason the propaganda of insurrectionary class-war communism, though it now dominated the

thought of nine-tenths of the European peasants and workers, found unexpected obstacles in its attempts to seize control of affairs. It could not repeat the Russian social revolution because the new conditions were entirely different. The Bolshevik success had been possible only through the backwardness of Russia and the absence of a technically educated social stratum. The unrest and insubordination of the common people in Central and Western Europe could and did produce immense passive resistances and local revolutionary movements, but it found opposed to it a whole system of aviators, mechanics, technicians, scientific workers and so forth who had learnt from Red Russia what sort of direction and planning to expect from a proletariat led by party politicians. Whatever they thought about their own governments — and already they were beginning to think in a very fresh and vigorous fashion about them — it was not towards democratic communism that the minds of the scientific and technical workers were turning.

Nevertheless, with the help of organizers from Russia, the protest of humanity against the prolongation of the New Warfare took for a time the form of communist risings. In 1947, in Marseilles, St. Etienne, Paris, Barcelona, Milan, Naples, Hamburg, Lodz and Glasgow there were mutinies of troops under arms and risings sufficiently formidable to sustain provisional Soviets for periods varying from a week to several months. The Hamburg and Glasgow Soviets were the best organized and held out longest, collapsing only after considerable bloodshed. Almost everywhere there were minor incidents of the same character. And the formal suspension of the war by the responsible governments concerned was certainly due more than anything else to their terror of a general social revolt. As the material organization of the system was shattered, as the behaviour of the technicians became uncertain, the threatening visage of the class-vindictive proletarian drew nearer and nearer to the face of the stockbroker, the war-monger, the banker, the traditional ruler.

It took nearly three years to end the last war. The Conference of London in 1947 did its best to work out a stable settlement of Europe on the lines of the Versailles Treaty, but the politicians and diplomatists were still incapable of the frankness and generosity needed. Face-saving was so much more important than life-saving to

these creatures that they actually allowed the now pointless hostilities to be renewed in 1948.

In the spring of 1949, however, at Prague, President Benes achieved what had seemed to be the impossible, and brought the fighting to an end. He did this by inventing a phrase and suggesting, instead of a treaty, a “Suspension of Hostilities”. Each Power was to remain in possession of the territory it occupied, and there was to be no further fighting pending the assembly of an unspecified Conference to be organized later. Influenza, cholera, and at last maculated fever, the progressive enfeeblement of economic life and new developments of human relationship, prevented that Conference from ever meeting. The Benes Suspension of Hostilities became a permanent suspension. It endures to this day.

10. — THE RAID OF THE GERMS

That same dearth of detailed description which takes the colour out of the history of the last wars becomes even more apparent in the records of the epidemics that made any resumption of that warfare impossible. Diaries, letters and descriptive writing were out of fashion; there were other things to do and no surplus energy in the brain. It is as if the micro-organisms had taken a leaf out of the book of the Foreign Offices and found in mankind's confusion an opportunity for restoring the long-lost empire of the germs.

The attack began in the best style without a declaration of war. The first line of advance consisted of a variety of influenzas, impoverishing fevers, that were highly infectious and impossible to control under war conditions. The depleted strength of the belligerent populations, a depletion due to their reduced and disorganised nourishment and the collapse of their sanitary services, gave these infections full scope; they killed some millions and diminished the already lowered vitality of the great populations still further. That lowering of the general vitality was far more important than the actual mortality. Cholera and bubonic plague followed, and then, five years and more later, when the worst seemed to have passed, came the culminating attack by maculated fever.

This obscure disease, hitherto known only as a disease of captive baboons, seems to have undergone some abrupt adaptation to the kindred habitat of the human body; possibly there was some intermediate host which prepared the bacilli for their attack on mankind. Or it may be that the preceding epidemics had changed some hitherto defensive element in human blood. We are still quite in the dark upon these points because at that time there were no doctors or biologists with the leisure to record observations, even had they had time to make them, and scientific publications had ceased to appear anywhere.

The disease appeared first in the vicinity of the London Zoological Gardens and spread thence with incredible rapidity. It discoloured the face and skin, produced a violent fever, cutaneous irritation and extreme mental distress, causing an uncontrollable

desire to wander. Then the bodily energy vanished in collapse and the victim lay down and died. The fever was not simply infectious through water, but transmitted by the almost impalpable scabs scratched off by the sufferer. Wind, water and the demented sick carried it everywhere. About half humanity was vulnerable, and so far as we know now all who were vulnerable took it, and all who took it died.

So the world's malaise culminated in the terrible eighteen months between May 1955 and November 1956, at which latter date Nature with a pitiless but antiseptic winter came to the rescue of the human remnant. No effectual cure was ever devised for this fever and no helpful palliative. It swept the whole world and vanished as enigmatically as it came. It is still a riddle for pathologists. It no longer affects even the surviving baboon population, so that investigators can make no cultures, nor attempt any experiments. There is no material. It came, it destroyed, and it seems to have at last committed suicide with some unknown anti-body of its production. Or the real disease, as Mackensen believes, may have been not the maculated fever at all, but the state of vulnerability to its infection. That vulnerability had spread unsuspected throughout the world, he thinks, in the warring forties. The actual pestilence was not the disease but the harvest of a weakness already prepared.

History is like the individual memory in this, that it tends to obliterate disagreeable experiences. One of the most nonsensical things that was ever said was that a country is happy that has no history. On the contrary, it is only the really secure and prosperous phases that have left anything like sufficient material for historical reconstruction. We know of the pleasant social life of all the centuries of abundance in Egypt; we know the greatness and conquests of Assyria; the court-life of Ajanta and Central Asia is pictured for us to share; but the days of military disaster leave nothing but a band of ashes, and the years of pestilence merely break the continuities of the record. There is a good account of the Plague of London (1665) written by Defoe (1659-1731), and the unwary reader has to be warned that that account was compiled and fabricated many years after the event by an ingenious writer who was not even an eye-witness. There is a painting by Raphael of the plague

in Rome which is similarly reminiscent. Most of the great plagues of history took their dead and departed unportrayed. What concerns history is the subsequent social and economic dislocation. On that Clio becomes copious again. What goes on again matters to her, but what is dead is dead.

The flowering prosperity of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has left us an almost uncontrollable mass of record about people who knew nothing except by hearsay of the more frightful experiences of mankind. We have novels, letters, diaries, memoirs, pictures, photographs and so on by the million. But there survives hardly a letter, no pictures, and not a book or newspaper to throw light on those years 1955 and 1956, little more than a century and a third ago, which were certainly the most terrible through which our race ever passed. What was written at the time was destroyed as infectious. Afterwards it was left for a new generation of Defoes and Stephen Cranes to contrive a picture.

The descriptions of Cable, Nath Dass, Bodesco and Martini seem to be fairly justifiable, and to these fictions the reader is referred. They ring the changes upon not only villages but towns and cities with none but dead men and women in them; people lying unburied and gnawed by packs of hungry dogs and solitary cats; in India the tigers and in Africa the lions came into the desolate streets, and in Brazil the dead population of whole districts was eaten chiefly by wild hog, which multiplied excessively. Rats swarmed, and with an unwonted boldness threatened even the immune.

One terror which is never omitted is the wandering of the infected. Nothing would induce them to remain in bed or hospital; nothing could keep them from entering towns and houses that were as yet immune. Thousands of these dying wanderers were shot by terror-stricken people whom they approached. That dreadful necessity horrifies us to-day as much as that other grim act of self-protection: the survivors in the boats of the big steamship Titanic which struck an iceberg in 1912, beating at the knuckles of the drowning men and women who clung to the sides and threatened to swamp them. For awhile, under such desperate and revealing stresses, man ceased to obey the impulses of a social animal. Those of the population who resisted the infection — and with maculated

fever the alternatives were immunity or death — gave way to a sort of despair and hatred against the filthy suffering around them. Only a few men with medical, military, priestly or police training seem to have made head against the disaster and tried to maintain a sort of order. Many plundered. On the whole, so far as the evidence can be sifted, women behaved better than men, but some few women who joined the looters were terrible.

This nightmare came and passed.

In January 1957, people were walking about in the deserted towns, breaking into empty houses, returning to abandoned homes, exploring back streets littered with gnawed bones or fully-clad skeletons, and they were still unable to realize that the wrath of Nature was over and life still before them.

Maculated fever had put gas warfare in its place. It had halved the population of the world.

11. — EUROPE IN 1960

The more advanced student of history finds it necessary to work out in detail the local variations of the process by which the great patchwork of empires and nationalist states, set up during the Age of European Predominance, lost its defining lines, lost its contrasted cultures and its elaborated traditions, and ceased to divide the allegiance and devotion of men of goodwill. It was still standing — a hollow shell in 1933; in 1966 it had gone. It crumpled up, it broke down; its forms melted together and disappeared.

For the purposes of general education, the intricate interplay of personalities and accidents in this world débâcle can be passed over, as we pass over the details of the Great War or of Napoleon's various military campaigns, and as Gibbon, the author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (published between 1776 and 1788) passed over a thousand years of Byzantine court life. Nowadays that sort of history has become a mine for those admirable biographical studies which are ousting the old romantic novel from the entertainment of our leisure so soon as our imaginations have passed beyond the purely romantic stage. All that is needed for our present purpose is some understanding of the broader forces that were operating through this lush jungle of human reactions.

The tempo of human affairs increases continually, and the main difference between the decline and fall of the Roman system and the decline and fall of the world rule of private-profit capitalism in the Twentieth Century lies in the far more rapid onset and development of the later collapse. A second important difference is the much livelier understanding of what was happening on the part of the masses involved. Each of these two great depressions in the record of human well-being was primarily a monetary breakdown, due to the casual development of financial and proprietary law and practice without any reference to a comprehensive well-being, and to the lag in political and educational adaptation which left the whole system at last completely without guidance. But while the former débâcle went to the pace of the horse on the paved road and of the written and spoken word, the phases of the new downfall flashed about the globe

instantaneously and evoked a body of thought and reaction out of all comparison greater than the Roman precedent. So we see only a much compressed and abbreviated parallelism. From the demoralization of the deflated Roman Empire by the great plagues at the end of the second century of the Christian era, to the reappearance of commerce, industry, art and politeness in the cities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, was well over a thousand nerveless years; from the invasion of Belgium by the Germans in 1914 to the return of general material prosperity under the Air Dictatorship after 2010 was roughly a century.

The mental process, if for this reason alone, was much more continuous. It got to its conclusions while still in contact with its premises. The first world collapse was spread over a number of generations, each one oblivious of the experiences of its predecessor, but the larger and swifter part of the second world collapse fell well within the compass of a single long life. People who could remember the plentiful and relatively stable times between 1924 and 1928 as young men and women were still only at the riper end of middle age in 1960. Many who were children at the onset of the Hoover Slump were taking an active part in affairs in the days of the first international police, the Police of the Air and Sea Ways. It was possible to grasp what was happening as one whole. It is doubtful if any Roman citizen under the Empire ever grasped what was happening.

Nevertheless in each case there was a parallel obliteration of old ideas, the same effacement of boundaries, the same destruction of time-honoured traditions, the lapsing of debts and obligations, the disappearance of religious and educational organizations, the impoverishment of favoured and privileged classes, the recrudescence of lawlessness, the cleansing disillusionment. Each was the effectual liquidation of a bankrupt civilization preparatory to a drastic reconstruction.

We will now take a sort of rough cross-section of the world at about the date of 1960 C.E., and consider the condition of the main masses of the world's population and the great forces at work among them. In the light of subsequent events we can realize that there was already a very considerable convergence of conditions going on

throughout the middle decades of the century. But it may be doubted whether that was evident at the time. The goal towards which the fundamental bionomic forces were driving was everywhere the same, but the particulars varied widely with the geographical, ethnic and traditional circumstances, and their immediate interpretations were even more diverse.

We have viewed the events of the Era of European Predominance as the outcome of an uncontrolled irregularity in growth, of economic hypertrophy in a phase of political and cultural atrophy. An immense increase in the energy of human society had occurred which had relieved itself partly in a great multiplication of the human population (Europe from 180 to 420 millions between 1800 and 1914, says Werner Sombart, in spite of a great emigration), partly in a monstrous exaggeration of warfare, and less considerably in an increased fullness and speed of the individual life. But, as we have related, the forces of conservativism and functional resistance embodied in the creditor and legal systems were presently able to give pause to the release of fresh energy. For the second time in human experience the inadaptable quality of the financial and proprietary organization produced a strangulation and an arrest.

The money and credit organization of the prosperity of the nineteenth century differed in many respects from, and was more elaborate than, the Roman, but its life history was essentially the same. It wound itself up in the same fashion. First came a vast expansion and increase of private fortunes and then destructive taxation. So far history repeated itself. The European system, like the Roman system before it, impoverished itself finally by the violent expenditure of its vast windfall of energy. It repeated the same blind story of wastage, but with the unprecedented headlong facilities science afforded it. It ran through its available fortune and was helplessly in debt in a few decades. The height of its expenditure was between 1914 and 1950. Thereafter the pace was less catastrophic.

Regarded even as destruction the New Warfare proved in the end to be a failure. It went to pieces when it was attempted. It did not kill as it might have killed — which is why the reader is alive to read this history. The actual battles of the European wars in the Forties — the purely military operations, that is to say — in all their ramifications

cost mankind hardly a quarter of the battle slaughters of 1914-1918. And yet they mark the highest level of scientific fighting ever attained by mankind. The Asiatic troubles had been more destructive because they were nearer the barbaric level, but even there the actual deaths in warfare are estimated as under nine million. Of these, nearly five million are to be ascribed to the final offensive of Japan in 1938, the deadlock in Central China, the desperate fighting with the Kuomintang levies west of Hankow, and the subsequent retreat.

Man had fallen as short as all that of the magnificent horrors he had anticipated. He had failed to raise war to its ultimate mechanical level. The social and political dislocation following upon these two main struggles was indeed proportionately far greater than the disorder of 1917-1919, but warfare was its prelude rather than its cause. This New Warfare, which the prophets had said would end in a scientific massacre of mankind, passed insensibly into a squalor of political fiascos, unpayable debts, unsubscribed loans, scrapped machinery, insurrection, guerilla and bandit conflicts, universal hunger and the great pestilences. Gas Warfare and Air War faded out of the foreground of human experience, dwarfed and overwhelmed by the more primitive realities of panic, famine and fever. The ultimate victor in the middle twentieth century was the germ of maculated fever. The main causes in the fall of the world's population from about two thousand million in 1930 to a little under half that total in 1960 were diseases or simple starvation, arising directly from the complete economic collapse. Where war slew its millions in a few great massacres, pestilence slew its hundreds of millions in a pitiless pursuit that went on by day and night for two terrific years.

As Imhoff has said, there is no single European history of these Famished and Pestilential Fifties which followed so swiftly on the war years; there are ten million histories. The various governments created by the Treaty of Versailles were for the most part still legally in existence throughout this age, but with the monetary cessation they had become so faded and ineffective that they had ceased to have any great influence on everyday life. Some, like the British and the French, limited their activities to efforts — generally quite futile efforts, at tax-collecting; they went on finally in a way which will

remind the student of the old tribute-levying Empires before the Helleno-Latin period. They interfered spasmodically with local affairs, but for the most part they let them drift. They ignored or compromised with active resistance. The British government was still, it seems, paying arrears upon its various loans, in 1952, to such stockholders as it was able to trace. The records are obscure; the payments seem to have been made in a special paper currency without real purchasing power. Other governments, like the Italian and Spanish, carried on as real administrative bodies within restricted areas. Rome, for instance, remained in fairly effective control of the triangle marked out by Genoa, Florence and the Mediterranean Coast, and Barcelona and Madrid kept order throughout most of the Peninsula except the Sovietized Spanish Riviera, Portugal and Andalusia.

The process in America was roughly parallel. Detachment was easier so soon as the bankrupt railways ceased to operate there, because the distances between population centres were greater and the capacity of the people for local autonomy much greater. They were still not a century from pioneering. The railways never resumed after the pestilence. The authority of the Federal Government of the United States shrank to Washington, very much as the Eastern Empire shrank to Byzantium, but Washington had none of the vitality of Byzantium, and it was already a merely historical capital long before the revival of tourism towards 2000. Germany as a unity did not survive the Polish wars, and Berlin dwindled rapidly to the status of a group of villages amidst the ruins of the Polish aerial bombardments.

The practical effacement of these bankrupt political systems in a few years, the equally rapid drying up of general transport and communications, the crescendo of the monetary breakdown, the speedy degeneration of military organizations, threw back the tasks of social order upon such local and regional leading as still existed. They found themselves astonishingly called upon. In Europe, as all over the world throughout this extraordinary decade, towns, cities, rural districts, discovered themselves obliged to “carry on” by themselves. The plague only drove home that imperative need. The municipal authorities organized such health services as they could

against the infection, or gave way to emergency bodies that took things out of their hands. When the plague disappeared, they were like shipwrecked sailors on a strange island; they had to reconstitute their shrunken economic life. They used old authority for new needs and old terms for new things. Here it would be an energetic leader who called himself the Mayor or the Duke, here a resolute little band, self-styled the Town Council or the Citizens' Union. Here "advanced" terminology prevailed, and it was a "Soviet of Workers" which took control. In effect the latter would be very similar to a Citizens' Union. Its chief distinction was its consciousness of being in a new social phase.

There was the most extraordinary variation in the political structure of this phase of dislocation, and a flat contradiction between the actual and the "legal" controls. Across South Germany, Poland and North France, the prevalent impression was one of social revolution, and Soviets were in fashion. But they were very different in character from the original local Russian Soviets. It was possible to find a Communist district referring itself vaguely to Moscow, lying side by side with another that was under the control of its former owners and employers and professed to be, and often was, still in communication with the national government in the capital. An uneasy truce would be maintained between these theoretically antagonistic systems. Deputations would go for authority in various disputes — arrears of taxes in hand — to Westminster, Paris or Rome, very much as the barbarian chiefs of the Early Mediaeval period would upon due occasion refer to Byzantium or Rome. Local conflicts and revolutions were constantly occurring. They were recognized at the capitals only as local riots and municipal readjustments.

Scattered through this disarticulating Europe were the vestiges of the old militarism, broken fragments of unpaid armies with irreplaceable weapons and a dwindling supply of ammunition. They consisted of the officers who were soldiers by profession, and the levies who had not been disbanded or who had refused to be disbanded because there was no employment for them outside the ranks. These men had their officers very much under control because of the great facilities for desertion. In some cases these shrivelled

military forces were in contact with the capital and the old legal government, and conducted, or attempted to conduct, tax requisitions and suchlike surviving functions of the old order; in other instances they became frankly brigand forces, though often with high-sounding titles, Public Order Guards of the Emergency Army. Most merged with the local police of aggressive Mayors or councils. Small wars of conquest went on in the early Sixties. Old empires and sovereign states reappeared, in duplicate or triplicate, and vanished or became something else. After 1960 there were even quasi-military forces levying contributions, keeping a sort of order, and professing to be Modern State nuclei. They would occupy the old barracks and accommodation of garrison towns.

In the Forties these soldiers had been raw recruits. In the following decades those who remained in their old formations became formidable middle- aged rascals in patched and shabby and supplemented uniforms. Some of the commandants had gained control of local aerodromes and local munition factories, but everywhere the military found themselves more and more out of sympathy with the technical workers they needed to make these acquisitions effective. They degenerated to the level of the nineteenth century infantry and were at last glad to get even a few thousand roughly made cartridges to replenish their supply.

Under the necessity of doing things for themselves, people did things for themselves that they had left to the central government for a century. Even during the World War, and in the year or so of stress that followed it, various French Chambers of Commerce had supplemented the deficiency in small change by local token coinages. Now this practice reappeared widely. Today our museums contain hundreds of thousands of specimens of these improvised European coins of lead, nickel, tin and all sorts of alloys, jetons or checks of wood, and tons of signed, printed paper notes, useful in the local market, acceptable for rents and local taxes, but of no avail at all at a distance of a few score miles. The local bank manager as often as not would improvise a local credit system in cooperation with the local solicitor; the doctors would contrive a way of getting along without the Home Office. There were still printers' establishments in most centres of population, and for some years local periodicals, often of

considerable originality, appearing weekly or monthly and printed on the roughest and most variable paper, supplied all that remained alive of the European Press. But their foreign news amounted to little more than rumour. The great Press agencies were bankrupt and dead; the telegraph organization was out of gear.

Save in a few exceptional centres, the diffusion of news by radio died out completely. The manufacture of receiving sets was entirely disorganized. From 1930 to 1970 the "ether" for all except the special purposes of air transport was still. There is a long and interesting study in the Historical Record Series of the vicissitudes of posts, telegraphs and telephones between 1950 and 1980. There seem to have been extraordinary survivals. Apparently London, Paris and Rome were in telephonic communication almost without a break, and the news of the great London landslide was telephoned to Madrid and thence radioed to Buenos Ayres in 1968. But that may have been a revival connected with the new Sea and Air Control.

The disappearance not only of radio sets but of an enormous variety of small conveniences and appliances was extraordinarily rapid after the collapse of world trade. Photography, for instance, was wiped out almost at once. The bicycle became rare, and the old pneumatic tyre was replaced by a thin solid one of often very badly adulterated "remade" rubber. Electric lighting flickered out and vanished for want of the proper material for filaments. All electrical material deteriorated, and tramway systems either fell into complete disuse or returned to horse traction.

Ordinary life had been lowering its standards bit by bit from the World War onward. First one thing went and then another. Neither in the British nor the French provinces did the housing of the common people recover from the cessation of building during the actual warfare. Except in places like Berlin or Vienna where there had been a vigorous outbreak of post-war building which provided accommodation in excess for the shrunken population, the mass of Europeans were even more congested and dirty in their domestic accommodation than they had been before the conflict, though indeed they never sank to the immemorial squalor and poverty of the Chinese and Indian towns. Cleanliness diminished at such a pace as to be noted even by the newspapers after 1933. There are constant

complaints of the dirtiness of the streets and the bad repair of the roads, and regretful comparisons with the trim orderliness of twenty years before.

Clothing declined with housing. The clothing trade shrank steadily per head of population for nearly forty years. The city crowds, in spite of the more and more abundant uniforms (until 1950), lost nearly all their former brightness and élan. People patched up their old clothing for want of new, and rags became increasingly common. The supply of boots was very restricted. The mass production of boots had been commandeered at the outbreak of the war and was never turned back to commercial use because of the complete financial ruin that ensued. But the old-fashioned shoemakers had been driven off the face of Europe long before by this mass production, and so throughout the Famished Fifties the Europeans were very painfully shod. Spain had the best boots and France and Britain took to sandals — and chilblains. A certain manufacture of footwear went on in some centre in Bohemia, now untraceable, and next to Spain ranked Central Europe in the order of shoe welfare. There was an extreme scarcity of hats everywhere.

There was also a universal decline in the little comforts and accessories of life to which the world had grown accustomed. Except in a few favoured regions where it was actually grown, tobacco disappeared. The mass production of cigarettes died out, and those who smoked, smoked pipes of substitute. Real tea became a great rarity, and sugar was scarce. Dietetic diseases and diseases of under-nutrition increased.

During the strain and effort of the Great War most of the Europeans had already learnt something of contrivance and makeshift. Now they were to have a decade of domestic management under difficulties. The Germans were already familiar with the word Ersatz; there was much technical knowledge and ability diffused among them; and it is indisputable that they contrived to keep much nearer comfort than the rest of the world during these dismal years. They devised substitute leather, substitute cotton, substitute coffee and tea, substitute tobacco, substitute quinine and opium, and a very respectable list of other substitute drugs.

At the other extreme were the shiftless Irish. Until the return of

production their physical misery was very great indeed. One observer doubted if there were a million yards of new cloth produced in that country between 1950 and 1960. “They live,” he reported, “on buttermilk, potatoes, whisky and political excitement. They have contrived garments of woven straw, often very picturesquely dyed, which they call Early Erse and of which they boast inordinately, and they warm themselves by means of fires of peat and dung and a great warmth of mutual invective.” This sounds quite barbaric. Yet it is to this period that we owe the graceful — though, according to a recent Historical Documents report, rather rickety — Church of the Atonement, built on the site of the Dublin Royal College of Science after that had been suppressed by the Censorship of 1939 for “teaching biology in a manner tending to disintegrate the Holy Trinity”.

The student must be more or less familiar with the representations of this period in that useful compilation Historical Scenes in a Hundred Volumes, and he has probably read a number of romances and stories of this time. Actual photographs are least abundant in the later fifties and early sixties. There were still plenty of cameras in the world, but the supply of films seems to have died out after 1955, and there are hardly any but slow wet-plate exposures after that time for nearly ten years. We get only a few score of such animated snapshots as were abundant during the preceding decades, and there are no European cinematograph films at all. Neither was there much sketching except of single figures, and so the editors have had to supplement their material by very carefully studied drawings and photographed restorations made at a later date.

There are six interesting snapshots of scenes in Lyons in 1959. Someone seems to have found a spool of film and been able to develop it. One shows the big central square, the Place Bellecour as it was called, on a market day. Earlier pictures show a big bronze equestrian figure of Louis XIV, but this had already disappeared, probably it had been melted for its metal; and the windows of some of the big buildings, formerly hotels and hospitals, in the background have the empty frameless look of gutted houses. But the scene is quite a busy one. It was probably the monthly market, and there is a considerable amount of cattle, numerous horses being traded, hurdled

sheep, many goats and a row of pig-pens. The people are mostly peasants wearing straw hats and either very old coats or in some cases shawls wrapped about them. Townspeople are still wearing the clothing of the 'thirties, shabby and patched, and there are three market officials or magistrates in the old-world top hat. In the foreground a bearded man leads a couple of oxen harnessed to a small "runabout" car in which a corpulent woman sits in front with a crate of ducklings while behind is a netted calf. The lady smiles broadly at the camera, unaware that she is smiling at posterity.

Another of these snapshots shows a bowls competition in the deserted railway station. It is clearly a festive occasion, and several games are in progress. The rails have disappeared from the tracks, which have been levelled for the game, and the ponies and mules of the players are tethered on the platform in a long line. The doors of the various bureaus have been taken away but the inscriptions Chef de Gare, Salle d'Attente, Restaurant, are still faintly visible. There are two long tables on one of the middle platforms on which simple refreshments are being served. A third picture shows a crowd staring at the ruins of a row of houses which have just collapsed down a steep slope in what is apparently the district known as Fourvière. Here two bearded men in the unmistakable uniform of the old Alpini are keeping order. We know as a matter of fact that the Lyons municipality at that time had three regiments of these soldiers quartered in barracks. They are wearing sandals supplemented by cloth strips that are twisted round their legs, and their cloaks are in good condition.

Three others of these photographs give us a glimpse of the state of affairs in a disused silk factory. Up to the time of the economic collapse, the silk manufactured at Lyons was still largely that produced by the silkworm, but the supply of raw material seems to have died out more or less completely in the Rhône valley, and the shrinkage of trade and then the war diminished the importation of the reeled-up thread. But silk was needed in the manufacture of shells, and probably there were special efforts to maintain the supply up to the last. This particular establishment seems to have been carrying on a diminished output until the Lyons commune in 1951. Then no doubt it was abruptly abandoned. One photograph shows a great heap

of paper litter among weaving-machines and a number of petrol cans. Apparently there was an attempt to fire the place. Another gives a vista of winding-machines shrouded in spiders' webs and fine dust. In a third a wild cat crouches among the spindles of a spinning-machine and spits at the unwanted intruder. The machinery has all the complicated clumsiness characteristic of twentieth-century mechanism. Apparently a window of some sort was opened or a blind drawn back to make this particular photograph, for the picture is blurred with a multitude of whirling moths, most of them out of focus, evidently just stirred up.

These particular pictures are valuable because of their authenticity. There are also two contemporary dry-plate pictures of the Café Royal, the big restaurant of the Grand Hotel of Stockholm, deserted and still intact. They are oddly suggestive of two pictures of the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla in Rome as they appeared a hundred years earlier. And there is also a photograph of the remains of the old dining-room of the Hotel Métropole at Brighton in England before it was undermined and fell into the sea. But all the rest of the pictures given in Historical Scenes between 1955 and 1963 are arranged pictures. The Transport organization was running scores of aeroplanes and radio communications were restored long before the complex manufacture of photographic apparatus and material was set going again.

There are some very interesting restorations of conditions in London showing the empty streets and the vacant tumbledown warehouses of the city after the pestilence. The pictures of the corridors of the hotels in the Strand turned into hospital wards are very impressive. So too is the sketch of a great fight between the cow-keepers and the potato-growers for the possession of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens in which three hundred people were killed. The dreadful pictures of the bodies of plague victims floating down the Thames and accumulating in the Pool of London, however, are now said to be exaggerated.

We try in the midst of our present securities to imagine the phases of anxiety, loss, incredulity and reluctant acquiescence through which the minds of hundreds of millions of Europeans passed, day by day, from the general comfort of the Twenties, through the

shocks, fear, horror, rage and excitement of the war cycle, into this phase of universal impotence and destitution. The poor perhaps had a less vivid apprehension of disaster than the rich. Even in the days of General Prosperity, as it is called, they had at the best what we should consider very dull, drab, irksome lives. Even though they mostly ate sufficiently, they ate badly, and there was never a stage of universal decent housing at any time for them. They went from bad to worse. They passed from toil to unemployment and lethargy. But the middling sort passed from good to bad, from something one might almost consider tolerable living to the hopeless neediness of the masses.

A class that went through great unhappiness everywhere during this period was the class of elderly and "retired" persons and persons of "independent means" (and no responsibilities) which had expanded so enormously during the First Age of General Prosperity. This superfluity of prosperous humanity had spread itself out very pleasantly over the world, oblivious of the exertions that sustained social discipline and ensured its security. Insensibly it had taken the place of the old administrative and directive noblesse and country gentry. The investment system during its period of steady efficiency had relieved this social stratum of every bother. There were great areas of agreeable country, residential districts, given up to this "well-off" society, to its gardens, which were often delightful, its golf-courses, race-courses, mountain sport centres, parks, country clubs, plages, and hotels. It wilted a little during the World War, but revived again very hopefully in the decade of hectic and uncertain expansion that followed. Then, as the Great Slump developed its grim phases, this life of leisure passed away.

The Phase of Economy is really a misnomer. There was really no economy; there was strangulation and inaction through a cessation of expenditure. Nobody — unless it was a dexterous speculator on a falling market — grew richer, or even relatively richer. The only profits appeared in bank balance sheets. As the malady of arrest spread, traffics declined, enterprise died out, borrowing states and corporations suspended payments, and these children of good fortune, these well-off people, found themselves confronted at the same time by a suspension of payments and more and more urgent

charitable appeals. Their bankers and solicitors informed them that first this trusted prop and then that was in arrears or in default. The waters of repudiation rose, submerging security after security. If they sold out and hoarded, some fluctuation in exchange might still engulf great fractions of their capital. “Whatever else may be falling off, sleepless nights are on the increase,” a financial paper remarked in 1933. The head full of self-reproach that tossed on the crumpled pillow in the villa marked time with the fretting of the unemployed who worried in the stuffy cold of the slum.

We have the Diary of Titus Cobbett, who rode on a bicycle from Rome and along the Riviera to Bordeaux in 1958. He had begun life as an art dealer, and had served the British Inland Revenue for some years as a valuer of furniture, pictures and the like. His tour seems to have been a journey of curiosity. He complains bitterly of the difficulty of changing money between Genoa and Bordeaux. He seems to have had some obscure diplomatic or consular function, but of that he is too discreet to speak. Perhaps he was sent to make a report, but if so there is no record of his instructions.

His description of that smitten coast is still very interesting reading. He had, as a young man with good connections, known Monte Carlo well in the twenties, and the places he visited were often those at which he had stayed as a guest. He records the abandonment of hundreds of lovely châteaux, locked-up, unsaleable, abandoned, in the keeping perhaps of some old domestic, or frankly looted by the people of the district, once delightful gardens whose upkeep had become impossible, blind tangles of roses, oleanders, pomegranates, oranges, cypresses, palm trees, agaves, cacti and weeds; unremunerative hotels allowed to fall into ruins, broken-down water-conduits washing away the roads, bungalows taken over by the peasants. Something of the same swift desolation must have come upon the Campagna and the villadom of the Bay of Naples during the ebb of Roman vitality, but this had been a swifter decline. The roads, he says, were very variable, but a great number of the road signs and roadside advertisements were still making their mute appeal to a vanished traffic. As he rode along wondering whether he would find a reasonably clean and hospitable shelter for the night, he read, he says, picked out in metallic knobs that answered brightly to

his oil lamp:

H TEL S LEN ID

CU SINE RENOM

T T LE C NFOR M RNE

Whither had host and guests departed? Where were the owners and tenants of these villas and gardens; the bright clientele of the pleasure resorts? Many of them no doubt were already dead, for the Riviera owners had been mostly middle-aged and oldish people. The rest were back in their own countries leading impoverished lives, full of tiresome reminiscences, lost in the universal indigence.

Cobbett visited the ruins of the old Casino at Monte Carlo, and the younger Sports Club. The ceiling of the American Bar had fallen in a few days before his visit. “They looked small,” he says. “When I was young they had seemed tremendous places.”

The celebrated garden in which suicidal gamblers used to put an end to their troubles was overgrown with mesembryanthemum.

Yet there was one exception to this general decadence, and our observer stresses the significance of that. Air traffic was still going on. Between Rome and Marseilles he notes very precisely that he saw thirteen aeroplanes going east or west, besides two that he heard before he got up in the morning. “I doubt if I should have seen so many twenty-five years ago,” he writes, and goes on to enlarge, very illuminatingly, on the revival of trade and the possible revival of order these throbbing mechanisms portended. At Nice and at Marseilles he noted there was shipping— “not mere fishing boats but ships of a thousand tons or more”; and at Nice they were building a bigger ship — he estimated it as a three-thousand tonner. We have no other records of shipbuilding between 1947 and 1962. Long before 1940 the building of very big ships had ceased to be a “paying proposition” and it is fairly certain that no sea-going ships whatever, big or little, were built anywhere in the world in the early fifties. Year by year the transport system of the bankrupt planet had been sinking into disuse. It is only nowadays that our historical students are attempting to work out statistical charts of that swift decadence.

Cobbett also notes with surprise and hope a stretch of railway (operated by lever trolleys and a petrol engine or so) between the port of Marseilles and some inland quarries. He was clearly under the

impression that no railways were operating in the world any longer. So soon as the traffic had sunken to a level below the possibility of paying subsistence wages, maintaining the permanent way and meeting running expenses, it had been impossible even for speculative buyers to handle these once valuable properties. They had become old junk on the landscape, tracks of torn and rusty rails smothered in agaves and wild flowers. He mentions the beauty of the viaducts of the old Sud de France, and tells how he bicycled along the footworn side-path of the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée in preference to the road. The peasants had used the derelict railway as a convenient iron-mine, and few rails remained. Most of the sleepers had been used for fuel.

At Fréjus there was an aerodrome, and here he describes a very illuminating conversation with a Spanish-American aviator who had served first with the Poles, then with the Germans, and finally with the French during the warfare. Cobbett was impressed by the evident revival of trade, and surprised to find rubber, spices, mercury and block-tin among the commodities coming by air from the East, while clocks, watches, compasses, knives, needles, buttons, hardened glass and the like were going back in exchange. Most of the trade was barter, and the profits were so considerable that there seemed every reason to expect a steady expansion of the service.

He seems to have learnt for the first time of the developing combination of air-merchants who were mostly aviators surviving from the war. They had already organized a loose world union, it seems, and were keeping the airways and air lights in order.

Cobbett remarked on the shipping revival he had noted.

"We shall have to watch that," said the aviator significantly.

"You take passengers?"

"When they can pay a passage."

"But this is civilization coming back!" cried Cobbett.

"Don't believe it! It's a new civilization beginning."

And he seems to have opened Cobbett's eyes for the first time to some of the ideas that were already taking shape in such brains as his. "World Empire?" he said. "That's an old idea! The men who hold the air and the transport hold the world. What do we want with empires and that stuff any more?"

Cobbett was greatly impressed by this conversation. He went on across France to Bordeaux, where it seems some sort of money awaited him, thinking this over and jotting down his thoughts. He makes one sound and interesting parallel between this new World Transport Organization and those Hansa Merchants who played such an important rôle in the revival of civilization about the Baltic and North Europe generally after the Roman collapse. “After all,” reflects Cobbett, “we have never given organized transport and trading its proper importance in history.”

At Bordeaux he sold his bicycle and was able to get a passage in an aeroplane to Le Bourget (an aerodrome of old origin near the ruins of Paris) and thence to fly to Hendon. His ‘plane landed at Le Mans for an exchange of goods. His delight to escape from the rough roads he had been riding is infectious.

He describes the recovery of the devastated French forests in the form of scrub, and he peered down at the little peasants’ clearings that were appearing in groups and patches round the old towns. He sees the aviators and mechanics at the aerodromes with new eyes, and he learns from them of the way in which World Transport was picking up and reinstating metallurgical and electrical works. He has an eye for the beauty of Le Mans cathedral, which he had seen and admired in his student days, and which he rejoices to find intact, and he describes that early monument to the pioneers of aviation in the Place below which still survives. Amiens cathedral also was uninjured at that time.

His diary ends on a melancholy note. Apparently he had not visited England for some years, and he is shocked by the ruinous desolation of the outer suburbs of London. Plainly he had lived in and loved London as a boy. A part of Hyde Park, in spite of the opposition of the squatter cultivators, had been converted into an aerodrome, but he found the rebuilding of the central region haphazard and unpleasing. He objects to the crowding of heavy buildings, with their vast anti-aircraft carapaces of cement, at the centre, due to the decay of suburban traffic facilities. It looked, he says, like a cluster of “diseased” mushrooms. “When shall we English learn to plan?” he asks, and then with an odd prophetic gleam he doubts whether the northern slope of the Thames

depression, so ill drained and so soft in its subsoil, can carry this lumpish mass of unsound new buildings to which the life of the old city was shrinking.

Only ten years later his fears were to be justified. The bed of the Thames buckled up and the whole of the Strand, Fleet Street, Cornhill and, most regrettable of all, the beautiful St. Paul's Cathedral of Sir Christopher Wren, so familiar to us in the pictures and photographs of that age, collapsed in ruin and perished in flame. The reader who has pored over Historical Scenes in a Hundred Volumes, — and what child has not? — will remember the peculiar appearance of the old Waterloo Bridge, crumpled up to a pent-house shape, and the grotesque obliquity of the Egyptian obelisk, once known as Cleopatra's Needle, that venerable slab of hieroglyphics, cracked and splintered by air-raid shrapnel, which slanted incredibly for some years before it fell into the banked-up water of the Lambeth-Chelsea lake.

12. — AMERICA IN LIQUIDATION

The preceding sections have given a general view of the course of history in the Old World during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Even in Europe certain regions, as we have noted, stand rather aloof from the essential drama, following a line of development of their own, less tragic and intense than that of the leading Powers. Spain, for example, the new Spain that was born in 1931, has the rôle of an onlooker, an onlooker much preoccupied with his own affairs. Still more noticeable is the non-participation of both Latin- and English-speaking America in these passionate and violent happenings. They suffered parallel economic, political and social stresses, but within their own limits. After the financial storms of the Early Thirties, the shocks that came to them from the European troubles affected them less and less. They took up their particular aspect of the decline and fall of private capitalism and worked it out in their own way.

Yet the fact they did share in that decline and fall brings out very clearly a fact that was sometimes disputed in the past: the immediate causes of the world collapse in the twentieth century were first monetary inadaptability, secondly the disorganization of society through increased productivity, and thirdly the great pestilence. War was not a direct cause. The everyday life of man is economic, not belligerent, and it was strangled by the creditor. Had the world been already one state in 1900, and had it still been an economy of private accumulation with a deflating currency, it would have collapsed in very much the same fashion that it did collapse. Had it been cut up into a hundred belligerent states at that time, but with a monetary system that restrained the creditor and allowed industrial development without limit, it might have released sufficient energy to have gone on with its wars for another century or so before it reached the goal of mutual extermination. The monetary collapse was the most immediate factor in the world's disorganization, enfeeblement and famine. Without it man might have pursued a far longer and more strenuous career to massacre and suffocation. On the whole it was perhaps well for him that progress tumbled over finance in the

nineteen-thirties.

The futility of all the early anti-war movements becomes understandable only when we grasp the essential importance of a sane monetary nexus. On this we have insisted throughout, we have elucidated the connexion of the creditor and traditional antagonisms from half a dozen angles, and nothing could emphasize and drive home the lesson more than the parallelism of the American and Old-World experiences.

From the days of their first political separation from the European system the American communities had gone through their own series of developmental phases, independent of and out of rhythm with the course of events in the Old-World. Independent — and yet not completely independent, because they were upon the same planet. Throughout the nineteenth century the American mind, in north and south alike, was saturated with the idea of ISOLATION. It was taught in the schools, in the Press, in every political utterance of a general import, that the New World was indeed a new world, an escape from the tyranny of ancient traditions to peace, liberty, opportunity and a fresh life for mankind. It had to avoid all "entangling alliances" with Old-World states and policies, forget the inveterate quarrels and hatreds of Europe even at the price of forgetting kinship and breaking with a common culture, and work out and set the example of a more generous way of living. From the days of George Washington to the days of Woodrow Wilson, in spite of the Civil War and much grave economic trouble, the American mind never abandoned its belief in its own exemplary quality and its conception that towards the rest of the world its attitude must be missionary and philanthropic. It realized that it knew many things very simply, but it had no doubt it knew better.

Throughout the nineteenth century both America and Europe expanded enormously, economically, biologically. America was profoundly impressed by her own growth and disposed to disregard the equal pace of European progress. Assisted by a tremendous immigration from Europe, the population of the United States increased by about 80 millions in a hundred years. But in spite of that tremendous emigration, Europe during that period added 240 millions to her multitudes. The American cherished a delusion that

he had "got on" relatively to Europe. His life had in fact expanded, concurrently with the European's, and through the working of ideas and inventions and the importation of human energy from the older centres. In his unimpeded continent the different elements in the expansion increased at rates that did not correspond with the European process. He was living in a similar progressive system, but he was more and more out of phase with Transatlantic developments.

And throughout that century inventions in transport and communications were "abolishing distance" and bringing points that had formerly been months apart into a few hours' or a few moments' distance from one another.

The resulting alternations of intimacy and remoteness across the Atlantic constitute one of the outstanding aspects of twentieth-century history. It is like two great and growing tops that spin side by side. They approach, they touch and clash, they wabble and fly apart. Or it is like two complexes of machinery, destined ultimately to combine into one world mechanism, whose spinning wheels attempt to mesh and fail to mesh and jar with a great shower of sparks and splinters and separate again. From the end of the nineteenth century onward the unifying forces of life were tending to gear America with Europe. By the middle of the twentieth century any observer might have been forgiven the conclusion that the intergearing had failed.

We have already given great prominence in this history to the figures of Henry Ford, Woodrow Wilson, and the second Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt. We have told of the magnificent advance upon Europe and the subsequent recoil of America within and about them. A brief but competent contemporary book by an American publicist, Frank H. Simonds, Can America stay at Home? (1933) surveys the question of isolation very illuminatingly as it appeared in the opening years of the great economic slump which closed down for good and all the wild freedoms of Acquisitive Private Capitalism. He shows how the phases of approach and repulsion succeeded one another from the first imperialist enterprises of Roosevelt I (Theodore Roosevelt, 1901-1909) onward; how impossible it seemed for America either to keep out of Old-World affairs or to mingle frankly in them. It expressed its virtuous opinions and would not back them. It insisted upon moral judgments and would not take responsibility.

In European eyes, to quote Simonds' new historical phrase, "American concern for peace appeared a transparent endeavour to combine the mission of John the Baptist with the method of Pontius Pilate." The explanation lay in just that mixture of liberal modernity and naive crudity in the American intelligence on which we have laid stress.

From its beginning the American republic was a break with history, a new thing, far newer, having regard to its period, than the Soviet Republic of Lenin, and from its beginning it was failing to go on with its newness, failing to develop and intensify its ideas. It evolved a body of higher schools and cultivated men to think itself out only after more than a century of independence; in the interim it left its mass education to underpaid teachers and repetitive women. It grew bodily, immensely, and for more than a century it lived on imported brain-food. The result was this rawness, this immense sense of its mission and this want of any subtlety or vigour in its conduct. Wilson's foolish preachments and arrangements, so foolish and yet so saturated with the wisdom of world peace, were perhaps the highest expression of the American mind of his time.

The American mind even in the nineteenth century was not an ignorant mind; it was an immensely uneducated mind. If it was clumsy, it was also free. Its religious "revivalism" was exactly parallel to its political fluctuations. We find in the stories and studies of authentic American life such features as camp-meetings and organized emotional campaigns for repentance and conversion. We think of firelit scenes, of harsh preaching and lusty chanting. These waves of popular feeling, these gatherings, often in the woods, with their hymn-singing, their exhortation, their shouts of penitence and exultant belief, the mindless exaltation and the subsequent mindless deflation of American spiritual life, were precisely reflected in these booms and slumps of the American world mission. Only with the shock of world economic disaster did the real social and political thinking of America rise to its full vigour. The retreat of the United States from the imbroglio of European affairs as the great depression intensified was marked by a new, more vigorous determination to grip the essentials of social life.

And certainly there was everything to stimulate thought in the

internal situation. The dégringolade was at first more rapid even than in Europe. The industrial edifice had been reared to giddier heights of mass production and fell more heavily. In 1928 the United States of America still believed itself the most prosperous country in the world; in 1933 its unemployed were more hopeless and formidable than those of any other continent. But they made no organized effort of revolt; they had no revolutionary formula to bring them together. They revolted as individuals and gangs and became criminals. Society was not overthrown, but it crumbled rapidly to dust and disorder. The crime wave, the financial stress, the frantic efforts to economize, and all the consequent strangulation of popular education and the dissolution of confidence, order and intercommunication — that sequence which we have already traced in general terms manifested itself most severely and typically in this vast, comparatively unhistorical area. Roosevelt II struggled gallantly but he came too late to stop the rot.

In America as in Europe a phase of fragmentation set in. It was not a smash to which one can give a definite date, but every day there was something happening in the direction of dissolution. In America as in Europe State governments became insolvent phantoms making feebler and feebler efforts to collect taxes, and the Federal authority in Washington faded away, if not as completely as the League of Nations in Europe, at any rate in a comparable manner. We have the same phenomena of municipalities becoming autonomous, and provisional controls, Citizens' Unions, Law and Order Societies, Workers' Protection Associations and plain Workers' Soviets (in New Mexico and Arizona) springing into activity here, there and everywhere. In the Blue Mountains and on the Pacific coast small republics had already isolated themselves in 1945 and were carrying out a strange blend of Methodism, "Technocracy" and the Douglas Plan, and Utah had become a practically autonomous Single-Tax State and had restored Mormonism of the original type as the State religion. But there had been no formal secession from the Federal Union anywhere.

There is in the Records a description of Washington in the year 1958, by a former attaché of the British Embassy there. (All the Ambassadors of the British Empire had been replaced by

“consolidated consuls” in 1946.) He describes a visit to the White House, where he was entertained at lunch by President Benito Caruso. The President was carrying on although his term had expired because his successor elect had disappeared on his way to the capital in the Allegheny Mountains. There had been considerable confusion about the last election, and two Secession Presidents who were disputing possession of the State of New York after a conflict over the Yonkers Ballot Boxes had cut off communications with New England altogether.

The President received his visitor very cordially and asked many very sympathetic and intelligent questions about the European situation. He spoke very hopefully of the American outlook. The “return to Normalcy”, he said, was at last in sight. There had been a restoration of the steamboat traffic on the Mississippi, and cotton was going through to the north again in spite of the political unrest. A hundred and forty automobiles had been sent to South America alone in the year 1956-7 in the place of only seventy-two for the previous year. The new quinine-coffee barter system was working well. He looked forward now to a steady upward movement in business affairs. The Hoover Slump had, he admitted, lasted much longer and had gone much lower than had been expected, and it had tried the people to the utmost, but they had faced their trials in a manner worthy of the fathers of the republic. He concluded with the compliments usual then between the two great divisions of the English-speaking peoples.

The lunch was plain but ample. There was excellent pork and a variety of vegetables which the President with genuine democratic frankness boasted he had raised himself with the help of his negro “secretariat” in the pig-pens and garden at the back of the White House. The duties of the secretariat seem to have been in the household rather than the office. They had been appointed for abstruse political reasons, and several of them were unable to read. Mrs. Caruso, a very pleasant lady of Irish extraction, was disposed to dwell on the difficulties of housekeeping in Washington in view of the increasing unpunctuality in the collection of the Federal revenue, but the President checked her, evidently considering these domestic matters a reflection upon the solvency of the nation.

At that time only about a third of the States were actually represented by Congressmen in the Assembly. The rest had found it either too expensive or unnecessary to send delegates. A member was in possession of the house, a tattered individual, reciting some lengthy grievance; there were no reporters visible, and nobody was listening to him. Apparently this man was trying to "talk out" some legislative proposal, but the visitor could not find anyone who could explain the situation precisely.

The visitor dined on the following day with the eloquent, vital and venerable Senator Borah from Idaho (1865-1970). He was in excellent form, and talked throughout the meal. Indeed, he talked so ably that his visitor was unable to ask him several questions previously prepared for him. He too was extremely hopeful for his country. He admitted that there had been a marked decline in the grosser welfare of America during his lifetime. He would not quarrel with statistics. In tons of coal and steel, in miles of railway run, in the mass production of motor-cars and commodities generally, it was possible to institute unfavourable comparisons with the past. "But man does not live by bread alone," said America's Grand Old Man. "Let us look a little nearer the heart of things."

That heart, it seemed, had never been sounder. The pestilence, like everything that came from God, had been "wholesome". The standard of life was, he maintained, higher than it ever had been, having regard to the nobler aspects of things. Fewer bathrooms there might be, at least in working order, but there was far more purity of mind. In his younger days there had been a lamentable lapse into luxurious indulgence and carelessness on the part of the free people of the States, but all that was past. America was nearer now to the old Colonial simplicity, honesty and purity than she had ever been.

A little inconsecutively the Senator went on to denounce the dishonesty of Europe and the disingenuousness of European and particularly of British diplomacy. He seemed for a time to be repeating long-remembered speeches and to have forgotten how completely British diplomacy had lapsed. He had apparently heard the word "attaché" before he began to talk, and that had sent his mind back to old times. He returned to the present situation. The United States, he insisted, had gone through far blacker phases in its

early history. A hundred and fifty-four years ago Washington had been burnt by a victorious British army. Nothing of the sort had occurred during the present depression — if it could still be spoken of as a depression. Even at the darkest hour in this great Hoover Slump nobody had ever thought of burning Washington.

Later on this same traveller visited the University of Chicago, Columbia University, Harvard and a number of other centres of intellectual activity. His comments are shrewd and intelligent, and fall in very conveniently with our examination of the mental reactions that even then were rapidly producing a new and more sinewy American consciousness amidst the ruins of its ancient laxity.

These institutions were naturally in a most varied state of adjustment to the new conditions. Not all were progressive. Harvard reminded him of what he had read of the ancient lamaseries of Tibet. There was practically no paper to be got for note-taking or exercises, and the teaching was entirely oral and the learning done by heart. The libraries were closely guarded against depredations, and the more important books were only to be inspected in locked glass cases. A page was turned daily. The teachers varied in prestige with the number of their following. They either sat in class-rooms and under trees and lectured, or they went for long walks discoursing as they went to a rabble of disciples. They varied not only in prestige but physical well-being, because it was the rôle of these students to cultivate food for their masters and themselves in the college grounds and produce woven clothing and sandals in the Technical and Art Buildings. Some literary production was going on. The more gifted students wrote verses on slates and these, if they were sufficiently esteemed by the teaching staff, were written up on the walls or ceilings of the building. The atmosphere was one of archaic simplicity and studied leisure. The visitor was entertained by President Eliot, a tall distinguished-looking elderly man in a toga, who had inherited his position from his grandfather. There was a large open fire in the room, which was lit by tallow candles which two undergraduates continually snuffed. The President talked very beautifully over his simple soup, his choice Maryland claret and a cornucopia of fruit and nuts, and the conversation went on until a late hour.

The impression of Nicholson, the visitor, was one of an elegant impracticability. The simple graciousness of the life he could not deny, but it seemed to him also profoundly futile. He seems, however, to have concealed this opinion from the President and allowed him to talk unchallenged of how Harvard had achieved the ultimate purification and refinement of the Anglican culture, that blend of classicism and refined Christianity, with a graceful monarchist devotion.

"There is a King here?" asked the visitor.

"Not actually a King," said the President regretfully. "We have decided that the Declaration of Independence is inoperative, but we have been unable to locate the legitimate King of England, and so there has been no personal confirmation of our attitude. But we have an attitude of loyalty. We cherish that."

The chief subjects of study seem to have been the Ptolemaic cosmogony, the Homeric poems, the authentic plays of Shakespeare and theology. The scanty leisure of the students did not admit of a very high standard of gymnastics, and they seem to have abandoned those typical American college sports of baseball and football altogether. The President spoke of these games as "late innovations". One chief out-of-door employment seems to have been wood-cutting and felling.

This glimpse of graceful and idealistic pedantry is interesting because it left so few traces for later times. It depended very much on the personality of the President himself, and after his death at an advanced age, and the hard winters of 1981 and 1983, this ancient foundation seems to have been completely deserted and allowed to fall into ruin.

Both Columbia University and Chicago were in violent contrast to Harvard. Here the influence of the new De Windt school of thought was very evident, and the traditions of Dewey, Robinson, Harry Elmer Barnes, Raymond Fosdick, the Beard couple and their associates were still alive. Although New York City was already abandoned and dangerous because of the instability of its huge unoccupied skyscrapers, there was still considerable trading on the Hudson River and some manufacturing activity. The great iron bridges were still quite practicable for pack horses and mules, and,

affording as they did a North and South line of communication of quite primary value, they gave the place a unique commercial importance. The industrial workers there and in Chicago were in close contact with the college staffs, and they were working with very great energy at what they called "The General Problem of Recovery".

"They don't", writes Nicholson, "admit that civilization has broken down. They talk here just as they did in Washington, of the Hoover Slump. I never met people so confident that somehow and in some fashion things will pick up again. There is nothing like this at home. One night there was a tremendous crash and an earthquake. A huge pile called 'Radio City' had collapsed in the night. In the bright keen morning I went out to the Pantheon, and there a crowd of people was watching the clouds of dust that were still rising, and listening to the occasional concussions that marked minor fallings-in. Were they in the least downhearted? Not at all. 'There's a bit more liquidation,' said a man near me. 'We have to get these things off our hands somehow.'"

Nicholson gives a fairly full account of the curricula of both Columbia and Chicago. He is greatly struck by the equipment of the scientific laboratories and the relative importance of experimental work. "I felt almost as though I was back in 1930," he says, "when I visited the Rockefeller chemical laboratory." But still more was he struck by the advanced state of the sociological work. "They are producing a sort of lawyers who are not litigators," he writes. "I think the new law stuff they are doing here is the most interesting thing about the place. It isn't what my father would have recognized as law at all. It's the physiology and pathology of society and social therapeutics arising therefrom. There are one or two men here, Hooper Hamilton and Rin Kay for instance, whose talk is a liberal education. They won't hear any of the rot we deal out at home about the Sunset of Mankind."

That was his key observation, so to speak. But it is interesting to note that the reduction of Basic English to practicable use was also being made. Spanish and English were already on their way to become the interchangeable languages they remained throughout all the earlier twenty-first century. The teaching of French had fallen off

very greatly, and the old classical studies (Greek and Latin) to judge by his complete silence about them, had been completely abandoned.

Our tourist flew from Chicago to the Ford Aerodrome at Dearborn, saw the ruins of the main factories and the reconstructed settlement, and spent some days with the Technological School there and in the still very imperfectly arranged Museum of American Life. It was startling to see some scores of square miles of closely cultivated land round the open space of the Aerodrome and to learn that an old Ford idea of dividing the time of the staff between agricultural production and mechanical work was still in effective operation. There were associated textile and boot factories in Detroit. There was still an output of some thousand-odd automobiles a year and a "few hundred" (!) aeroplanes. And there was a small but healthy radio department.

"We keep in touch," said the Director. "We don't interfere with people, and we are not interfered with. We are running all that is left of the distance letter post.... Yes, Canada and Mexico as well. Nobody bothers us now about the boundaries, and we don't bother. When trade was at its worst we sat tight, cultivated our farms, and did experiments."

The Henry Ford, that "great original" whose adventure of the Peace Ship has been chosen to mark a turning-point in our history, had long since played out his part, but the Director mentioned in these papers seems to have been his son Edsel, carrying on the initiatives of his finely simple-minded parent.

That the place was able to "sit tight and carry on" was no empty boast. The visitor from a slovenly world dwells on the "tidiness" of everything. The Edison workshop was still in the original state as it had been re-erected by Henry Ford; there or in the Museum Nicholson was shown the first phonograph and the first telephone ever made, and the earliest experimental automobiles and aeroplanes.

"It is as recent as that," he tells us he said. "In the lifetime of ourselves and our fathers we have seen the beginning, the triumph, and the collapse of the greatest civilization that the world has ever seen. We have spanned the whole history of mechanical mass production."

"Not a bit of it," said the Director. "It's hardly begun."

There followed a long conversation the gist of which the visitor seems to have written down immediately in dialogue form. Its interest for the student of history lies in the fact that here again we have evidence of the way in which amidst the world-wide collapse into misery, disorder and incoherent peasant life the vitality of the mechanical transport system was manifesting itself. We can put the talk of the Dearborn director side by side with that of the European aviator reported by Titus Cobbett. There is the same realization of the final death of the old order. “All that king business and congress business is as dead as mutton,” said the Dearborn director. “And the banking business is deader.”

“And what is coming?” asked the visitor.

“THAT,” said the director, and pointed to a mounting aeroplane inaudible and almost invisible in the blue.

BOOK THE THIRD
THE WORLD RENASCENCE:
THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN STATE

1. — THE PLAN OF THE MODERN STATE IS WORKED OUT

In the preceding chapters the culmination, the dislocation and the collapse of the private capitalist civilization has been told. It has been a chronicle of disaster, wherein particular miseries, the torment and frustration of thousands of millions, are more than overshadowed by its appalling general aimlessness. We have seen the urge towards unity and order, appearing and being frustrated, reappearing and again being defeated. At last it reappeared — and won. The problem had been solved.

The world was not able to unify before 1950 for a very simple reason: there was no comprehensive plan upon which it could unify; it was able to unify within another half century because by that time the entire problem had been stated, the conditions of its solution were known and a social class directly interested in the matter had differentiated out to achieve it. From a vague aspiration the Modern World-State became a definite and so a realizable plan.

It was no great moral impulse turned mankind from its drift towards chaos. It was an intellectual recovery. Essentially what happened was this: social and political science overtook the march of catastrophe.

Obscure but persistent workers in these decades of disaster pieced together the puzzle bit by bit. There is a fantastic disproportion between the scale of the labourers and the immense consequences they released. The psychology of association, group psychology, was a side of social biology that had been disregarded almost entirely before the time of which we are writing. People had still only the vaguest ideas about the origins and working processes of the social structure in and by which they lived. They accepted the most arbitrary and simple explanations of their accumulated net of relationships, and were oblivious even to fundamental changes in that net. Wild hopes, delusions and catastrophes ensued inevitably.

If you had interrogated an ordinary European of the year 1925 about the motives for his political activities and associations and his

general social behaviour, he would probably have betrayed a feeling that your enquiry was slightly indelicate, and if you overcame that objection, he would have talked either some nonsense about the family as the nucleus of social organization, a sort of expansion of brothers and cousins, kith and kin to the monarch, the Sire of the whole system, or he would have gone off in an entirely different direction and treated you to a crude version of Rousseau's Social Contract in which he and the other fellows had combined under agreed-upon rules for mutual defence and aid. The betting would have been quite even as to which of these flatly contradictory explanations he would have given.

He would have said nothing about religious ties in 1925, though fifty years earlier he might have based his whole description on the Divine Will. He would have betrayed no lucid apprehension of the part played by the money nexus in gearing relationships; he would have been as unconscious as his Roman predecessor of the primary social importance of properly adjusted money. He would have thought it was just stuff you earnt and handed out and got things for, and he might have added rather irrelevantly that it was "the root of all evil". He would certainly have referred to the family idea when his patriotism was touched upon, if not before, to justify that tangle of hates, fears and consequent and subordinate loyalties; he would have talked of "mother country" or "fatherland". If he practised any craft or skill, he might or might not have had his mind organized in relation to his profession or trade union, but there would be no measure between that and his patriotism, either might override the other, and either might give way before some superstitious or sexual complex in his make-up.

Incidentally he would have revealed extensive envy systems and social suspicion and distrust systems, growing up at every weak point like casual fungi. Everything would be flavoured more or less with the chronic hatred endemic everywhere. And all these disconnected associations from which flowed his judgments and impulses he would have regarded as natural — as natural as the shape of his ears; he would have been blankly unconscious that the education of school and circumstances had had anything to do with his accumulation.

On millions of minds equipped in this fragmentary fashion, uninformed or misinformed and with no internal connectedness, the institutions of the world were floating right up to the middle of the Twentieth Century. Tossing at last, rather than merely floating. Men called themselves individualist or socialist, and they had not the beginnings of an idea how the individual was and might be related to society; they were nationalist and patriotic, and none of them could tell what a nation was. It was only when these institutions began to batter against each other, and leak and heel over, and show every disposition to go down altogether, that even intelligent men began to realize how haphazard, sentimental and insincere were their answers to the all-important question: "What holds us together and sustains our cooperations?"

This prevalent superficiality and ignorance about socializing forces was the necessary reflection of a backwardness and want of vigour in academic circles and the intellectual world. The common man, busied about his petty concerns, did not know nor think about collective affairs because at the time there existed no knowledge or ordered thought in an assimilable form to reach down and stimulate his mind. The social body was mentally embryonic from the top downward. That it was possible to demonstrate a complete system of social reactions and to state the necessary idea of the Modern State in convincing and practically applicable terms, had still to penetrate to the minds not merely of the politicians and statesmen, but of the psychologists, historians and so-called "economists" of the time.

In 1932 Group Psychology was at about the same level of development as was physical science in the days of the Marquess of Worcester's Century of Inventions (1663). It was still in that vague inconclusive phase of "throwing out" ideas. It was no more capable of producing world order than the physical science of 1663 could have produced an aeroplane or a steam turbine. The ordinary man seeking guidance in the dismay of the Great Slump (see Emil Desaguliers' Ideas in Chaos and Society in Collapse, 2017) was confronted with a sort of intellectual rummage sale. He had believed that somewhere somebody knew; he discovered that nobody had ever yet bothered to know. A dozen eminent authorities with the utmost mutual civility were giving him every possible and impossible

counsel in his difficulties, suavely but flatly contradicting each other. They were able to do so because they were all floating on independent arbitrary first assumptions without any structural reference to the primary facts of human ecology.

Nevertheless certain primary matters were being rapidly analysed at that time. The general understanding of money, for example, was increasing rapidly. Desaguliers notes about a hundred and eighty names, including the too-little-honoured name of that choleric but interesting amateur, Major C. H. Douglas (Works in the Historical Documents, Economic Section B. 178200), who were engaged in clearing away the conception of a metallic standard as a monetary basis. They were making it plain that the only possible money for a progressive world must keep pace with the continually increasing real wealth of that world. They were getting this into the general consciousness as a matter of primary importance.

But they were proposing the most diverse methods of realizing this conception. The "Douglas Plan" appealed to the general social credit, but was limited by the narrow political outlook of the worthy Major, who could imagine bankers abolished but not boundaries. In America an interesting movement known as "Technocracy" was attracting attention. Essentially that was a soundly scientific effort to restate economics on a purely physical basis. But it was exploited in a journalistic fashion and presented to a remarkably receptive public as a cut-and-dried scheme for a new social order in which social and economic life was to be treated as an energy system controlled by "experts". The explicit repudiation of democratic control by the Technologists at that date is very notable. The unit of energy was to be the basis of a new currency. So every power station became a mint and every waterfall a potential "gold-mine", and the money and the energy in human affairs remained practically in step. Another important school, represented by such economists as Irving Fisher and J. M. Keynes, was winning an increased adherence to the idea of a price index controlling the issue of currency.

It was a phase of disconnected mental fermentation. Many of those who were most lucid about monetary processes were, like Douglas and Keynes, still in blinkers about national and imperial boundaries; they wanted to shut off some existing political system by

all sorts of artificial barriers and restraints from the world at large, in order to develop their peculiar system within its confines. They disregarded the increasing flimsiness of the traditional political structure altogether. They were in too much of a hurry with their particular panacea to trouble about that. And if the money reformers were not as a rule cosmopolitans, the cosmopolitans were equally impatient with the money reformers and blind to the primary importance of money.

A third class of intelligences stressed the urgent necessity for great public enterprises to correct the paradoxical increase of unemployment consequent upon the increase of productivity that had taken the shiftless world by surprise. That was an independent maladjustment. But thinkers of this school were apt to disregard the importance of monetary rectification. As to who was to control the more complicated methods of mutual service proposed, the world money and the world socialism and so forth, there was an even greater diversity of outlook and an even greater conflict of mental limitations. As Desaguliers says in his summary: "People could not get out of the sinking social vessels in which they found themselves for the simple reason that nothing but the imperfectly assembled phantom of a salvage ship was yet in sight, a large rudderless, powerless promise, so to speak, standing by."

Only very knowledgeable people could have foretold then how nearly this phase of throwing out bright but disconnected ideas was drawing to its end, and how rapidly the consolidation of social and educational science into an applicable form was to go forward, once that it had begun. The rush of correlated social discoveries and inventions to the rescue of mankind, when at last it was fairly started, was even more rapid and remarkable than the release of steam and electrical energy in the nineteenth century.

It went on under difficulties. Perhaps it was quickened and purified by those very difficulties.

Gustave De Windt's great work, Social Nucleation (1942), was the first exhaustive study of the psychological laws underlying team play and esprit de corps, disciplines of criminal gangs, spirit of factory groups, crews, regiments, political parties, churches, professionalisms, aristocracies, patriotisms, class consciousness,

organized research and constructive cooperation generally. It did for the first time correlate effectively the increasing understanding of individual psychology, with new educational methods and new concepts of political life. In spite of its unattractive title and a certain wearisomeness in the exposition, his book became a definite backbone for the constructive effort of the new time.

De Windt worked under all the handicap of the intellectual worker in that uncomfortable time. Much of his writing, like that of Marx and Lenin, was done in the British Museum in London, but he was expelled from England during a phase of xenophobia in 1939, and he was not allowed to return from Holland to his "beloved Bloomsbury" until 1941. He was slightly gassed during the ninth Polish air raid on Berlin, and this no doubt accelerated his death in Bloomsbury, the tuberculous London slum in which his book was completed.

Much has been done since to elaborate and correct the broad generalizations he established. But his name stands with those of Plato, Galileo, Newton, Darwin and Robert Owen as marking a real step forward in the expression and expansion of human ideas. Such men are all in their various dimensions something more than themselves, like stones that have become surveyors' datum marks. After 1950 De Windt's doctrines and formulae spread with great rapidity, in spite of the disturbed state of the world — assisted and enforced indeed by the disturbed state of the world.

Few people read De Windt nowadays, just as few people read Plato or Bacon or Charles Darwin or Adam Smith or Karl Marx, but what he thought has been built into the general outlook of mankind. What he established is now platitude, but in his time very much of what he had to say would still have seemed heresy and fantasy, if it had not been for the patient massiveness, the Darwinesque patience, with which he built up his points.

The most important features of his teaching were, first, that he insisted with an irrefutable rigidity upon the entirely artificial nature of the content of the social side of a human being. Men are born but citizens are made. A child takes to itself what is brought to it. It accepts example, usage, tradition and general ideas. All the forms of its social reactions and most of its emotional interpretations are provided by its education.

"Obviously," the reader will say. But it is essential to the understanding of history to realize that before De Windt's time this was not obvious. Moral values, bias and prejudice, hatreds and so forth were supposed to come "by nature." And consequently the generation about him had grown up in a clotted mass of outworn explanations, metaphors, mythologies and misleading incentives, and the misshapen minds reflected and condoned the misshapen social order. His rôle in intellectual history is primarily that of a strong arm sweeping a terrible litter of encumbrance aside, and replacing it by a clearly defined structure. He restored again to credibility what Plato had first asserted: that, however difficult, it was possible to begin again at the beginning with uninfected minds. And having cleared his ground in this way he proceeded to build up the imperatives of that sane progressive education and life for mankind which now opens out about us.

He brought home clearly to the general intelligence firstly that the monetary method of relationship was essential to any complex productive society, since it was the only device that could give personal choice and freedom in return for service. It liberated economic relationships. But money was not a thing in itself, it was a means to an end, and its treatment was to be judged entirely by its attainment of that end. It had indeed grown out of a barterable commodity, a thing in itself, silver or gold or the like, but it had ceased to be this, and it was the difficulties in the transition of money from the former to the latter status that had released those diseases of the economic system which had in succession first destroyed the Roman imperialism and then the European sovereign states. A completely abstract money, a money as abstract and free from association with any material substance as weight or measure, had to be contrived for mankind. Human society could not be saved from chaos without it. It had to be of worldwide validity; its tokens and notes had to be issued to maintain a practically invariable price index, and it had to be protected by the most stringent laws against any form of profit-making manipulation. He demonstrated that not merely forgery, but every form of gambling and speculation, had to be made major offences under a criminal code. He showed that usury was unnecessary. He unravelled the old entanglements by which new

production had hitherto been saddled with permanent debts for its promotion and experiments. He made profit-making banking, that Old Man of the Sea, get off the back of enterprise. He eliminated every excuse for its profits. Banking was a public function. The distribution of credit was a vital part of government.

The New Banking of the Twenty-first Century grew up along the lines he established for it. To-day it is our system of public book-keeping, a part of our state statistical organization, a clearing-house of obligations and a monetary record of the accumulating surplus of racial energy, which the world-controls apportion to our ever expanding enterprises. It is entirely public and entirely gratuitous. It is hard to realize that it was ever allowed to be a source of private and secret profit. We register a man's earnings and spending as we register births and deaths. Our money is fundamentally a check on these publicly kept private accounts.

But this desiratum of a sufficiency of invariable money was only a "foundation need," a quantitative basis for the establishment of vital relationships, or, in De Windt's terminology, for "social nucleation." So soon as money was put in order it ceased to be necessary to trouble about money, just as it is needless to think about light and air in a properly lit and ventilated room.

For a couple of centuries before De Windt, the family, which had been the common social cellule throughout the whole agricultural age of mankind, had been losing its distinctness, had been dissolving into larger systems of relationship, more especially in the Northern and Western communities. It had been losing its economic, its mental, and its emotional autonomy at the same time. In the nineteenth century this dissolution of the family had gone on very rapidly indeed. The domestication of women, and their concentration upon children and the home, had diminished greatly.

By general sentiment, the instinctive factor in family unification had always been overrated. In effect, that instinctive bond dissolves long before the children are thirteen or fourteen. After that age the binding force of parent to child and vice versa is not instinct, but affection, convenience, habit, and tradition. And that convenience, usage, and tradition had dwindled. Put to the test of exterior attractions, family solidarity had weakened not only in the West, but

also, as Asia had been Westernized, in Turkey, India, China, and Japan. This was so essentially, even more than apparently. The family home remained generally as a meeting-place and common domicile for parents and children, but it ceased to be a vehicle of tradition, it ceased to train and discipline. It ceased to do so for the simple reason that these functions were now discharged with far more emphasis, if with less intensity, by exterior agencies. Citizens were begotten in the home but they were no longer MADE in the home.

De Windt drew a vivid contrast between the home life of a Central European family in the late eighteenth century, with the father reading the Bible to his assembled offspring, conducting daily prayer, watching over, reproving and chastizing his sons and daughters up to the age of sixteen or seventeen and even controlling their marriage, and the loosely associated family structure in the early twentieth century.

This structural dissolution was universally recognized long before the time of De Windt, but it was left for him to emphasize the need for a planned "renucleation" in the social magma that arose out of this dissolution. The popular school, the experiences and associations of industrialized production, the daily paper and so forth, had knocked the strength out of the mental and moral education of the home and put nothing in its place. The sapping forces had not, in their turn, been converted into "organic forces." In default of these, minds were lapsing towards crude and base self-seeking and entirely individualistic aims.

These contemporary emotional suggestions and haphazard ideologies were not good enough, he preached, to make a human being a tolerable social unit. Social tissue was not to be made and coordinated on such lines. The stars in their courses were pointing our race towards the organized world community, the Modern State, and if ever that goal was to be attained, if the reorganization of the species was not to collapse, degenerate, and perish by the wayside, then the individual mind throughout the world had to be educated, had to be disciplined and equipped, definitely and sufficiently to this end. That would not come by nature. The social side of the individual had to be oriented deliberately. "Society is an educational product."

For the race to get to this Modern State as a whole it had to get there as so many hundreds of millions of human beings, all individually aware of that as the general objective at which their lives aimed. The Modern State could not arrive as an empty form with all humanity left behind it. Every teacher, every writer, every talker, every two friends who talked together constituted a potential primary nucleus in a renascent social system. These nuclei had to be organized. Their existence had to be realized, and they had to be brought into effective cooperation. It is hard nowadays to realize that once upon a time such commonplaces as these were not commonplaces, and that in the very days when De Windt was writing, multitudes of well-meaning people were attempting to assemble "movements" for social reconstruction and world revolution out of the raw, unprepared miscellany of the contemporary crowd. It was with extreme reluctance that impatient reformers turned their minds from impossible coups d'état and pronunciamentos, strikes against war and booby millennia, to this necessary systematic preliminary renucleation of the world. The immediate task seemed too narrow and intense for them and its objective too high and remote. "It is no good asking people what they want," wrote De Windt. "That is the error of democracy. You have first to think out what they ought to want if society is to be saved. Then you have to tell them what they want and see that they get it."

And further, he urged, if you cannot start nucleation everywhere, then at least you can start it close at hand. "Get the nuclei going. Be yourself a nucleus." From the beginning of life, nuclei have begotten nuclei. The Modern State, which had to be evoked everywhere, could be begun anywhere.

Another point that was new in his time, so far as Western civilization went, was his insistence upon the greater importance of adolescent education and his denial of the primary right of the parent to shape his offspring according to his fancy. The "renucleation" of society had to be complete. The "nuclei" which were ultimately to become the sole educational and disciplinary units of a new-born society would be in the first place, and usually, intensive study circles and associations for moral and physical training. Their social

and political activities were to be secondary exercises, subordinated to a primary mental, moral and bodily training. He searched the social disorder about him for favourable conditions for the pioneer nucleations. He looked to factories, laboratories, technical schools, public services, hospital staffs, to banded men and women of all sorts, for the material for his nucleation. He insisted that the impulse to build up a social order was instinctive. Wherever there was social confusion the crude efforts to get together into a new directive order appeared.

He pointed to the Sokols, Nazis, Fascists, Communist Party members, Kuomintang members of his time, as the first primitive intimations of the greater organization that was coming. They had the spirit of an élite class, although they wasted it more or less upon the loyalties and prejudices of the past. People are not leading these young men, he argued; "they are taking advantage of the instinctive needs of these young men. Try to realize what it is that they are — however blindly — seeking."

Like St. Paul, the founder of Christianity, speaking to the Athenians — he quotes the passage — he said: "That Unknown God, whom ignorantly ye worship, him declare I unto you." He was declaring the as yet unknown Modern State.

Intensively De Windt's teaching was a theory of education; extensively it was the assertion of the Modern State. These were inseparable aspects of the same thing. "A community is an education in action," he declared. And with a complete continuity he carried up his scheme of social structure through every variety of productive organization, control and enterprise. Men were to "fall in and serve this end."

Borrowing a word from Ortega y Gasset, but going boldly beyond that original thinker, he declared that "plenitude" of life was now only to be attained by living in relation to the Modern State. All other living was "waste, discontent and sorrow." It was becoming impossible to retain self- respect, to be happy within oneself, unless one was "all in" upon that one sound objective. The old loyalties, to flag, to nation, to class, were outworn and discredited. They had become unreal. They did not call out all that was in a man, because now we saw their limitations. They could no longer keep up the

“happy turgidity” of life. They could not be served “with a sure and untroubled soul”. They would certainly leave a man in the end “deflated, collapsed into an aimless self”. In the past men could live and live fully within their patriotisms and their business enterprises, because they knew no better. But now they knew better.

Finally De Windt set himself diametrically against one of the direst concepts of Parliamentary Democracy, a concept that still had enormous influence in his time, and that was the idea of the “Opposition.” “Criticize,” he wrote, “yes, but do not obstruct.” If a directive organization is fundamentally bad, he taught, break it and throw it away, but rid your minds altogether of a conception of see-saw and give and take as a proper method in human affairs. The Parliamentary gang Governments, that were then in their last stage of ineptitude, were rotten with the perpetual amendment and weakening of measures, with an endless blocking and barring of projects, with enfeebling bargains and blackmailing concessions. Against every directive body, every party in power, sat another devoting itself to misrepresenting, thwarting, delaying, and spoiling, often for no reason or for the flimsiest reasons, merely for the sake of misrepresenting, thwarting, delaying and spoiling what the governing body was attempting to do, in the hope of degrading affairs to such a pitch of futility as to provoke a change of government that would bring the opposition into power. The opportunities of profit and advancement afforded in such a mental atmosphere to a disingenuous careerist were endless.

All this tangle of ideas had to be swept aside. “About most affairs there can be no two respectable and antagonistic opinions,” said De Windt. “It is nonsense to pretend there can be. There is one sole right way and there are endless wrong ways of doing things. A government is trying to go the right way or it is criminal. Sabotage must cease. It has always been one of the ugliest vices of advanced movements. It is a fundamental social vice.”

His discussion of the difference between Criticism and Opposition is one of those classics that few people read. It is a pity, because it is a very good specimen of twentieth-century English prose. The right to criticize and the duty of well-wrought criticism are fundamental to modern citizenship. He considered how that right and duty had been

ignored by the shallow mentality of Italian Fascism and how fatally they had been entangled with the suppression of malignancy in Russia. He analysed the reckless irresponsibility of censorship in the Western communities. There was no law anywhere to restrain conspiracies, on the part of religious, political, or business bodies, for the suppression of publications. His warnings against the suppression of opinion were not so immediately effective as his general revolutionary project. Many people did not realize what he was driving at. In practice the conflict of world order with the opposition spirit, during the struggle to maintain the Air Dictatorship, was to lapse again and again into the suppression of honest criticism. In practice it was found that criticism and suggestion passed by insensible degrees into incitement and insurrectionary propaganda.

This clear-cut revolutionary scheme of De Windt's was vividly new and tonic to the energetic young men of the middle twentieth century. We summarize here its main constructive conceptions in spite of its present platitudinousness. It is unnecessary to tell in any detail his far-sighted schemes to link his nuclei into a world propaganda, because by insensible degrees that organization has grown into the educational system of our world to-day. This history and indeed every text book in use in the world could well be dedicated to him. And his complex and very detailed anticipations of the process of a world revolution need not detain us here (his Book V, The New World in the Body of the Old contains most of this), because we can now tell of that vast reconstruction itself.

In some respects he was remarkably prescient, in others he estimated human reactions inaccurately and even incorrectly. The reconstruction of human affairs involved some very rough work from which he would have recoiled. None the less he put all the main structural factors in the establishment of the Modern State so plainly and convincingly before his fellow-men that soon thousands and presently millions were living for that vision, were bringing it out of thought into reality. He made it seem so like destiny, that it became destiny.

For some years his views spread very slowly. An increasing number of people knew about them, but at first very few made serious efforts to realize them. One man after another would say,

“But this is right!” and then “But this is impossible!” De Windt was dead before his school of thought became a power in the world. Like Karl Marx, he was never to know of the harvest he had sown.

In our description of the failure of the League of Nations we have noted how foredoomed that experiment was, because nowhere among either the influential men of the time nor among the masses was there any sense of the necessity and the necessary form of a new world order. The statesmen, diplomatists and politicians of the time impress us as almost incredibly blind to things that are as plain as daylight to us now, and it is hard for us to believe that that blindness was not wilful. It was not. They could not see it. We read their speeches at conference after conference until their voices die away at last in the rising tide of disaster and we almost cry out as we read: “You idiots! Wasn’t world control there just under your noses? And was anything else but disaster possible?”

The answer is that it was not precisely under their noses. Slowly, laboriously, with perpetual repetitions and slight variations, the Obvious had to be got into and spread and diffused in the human mind. It is De Windt’s peculiar claim to human gratitude, not that he discovered anything fresh, but that he so built up and fortified the Obvious, that not the most subtle and disingenuous mind, nor the biggest fool who ever sentimentalized and spouted, could escape honestly from its inexorable imperatives.

2. — THOUGHT AND ACTION: THE NEW MODEL OF REVOLUTION

It is a wholesome check upon individual pride that no single man and indeed no single type of man is able both to conceive and carry through the simplest of our social operations. Even the man who cultivates the earth and grows food cannot make the productive implements he uses or select the seeds and plants that yield him increase. Defoe's queer story of Robinson Crusoe is an impossibly hopeful estimate of what a single man, with only a little flotsam and jetsam from the outer world, and in unusually benign climatic conditions, on a desert island could contrive to do for his own comfort and security. Still more does this interdependence of men and different types apply to the complex processes that now, in this Age of Maximum Insecurity, were demanded, if the new generation was to escape from the economic and institutional wreckage amidst which it found itself, and create the social order in which we live to-day.

First came the intellectuals, men living aloof from responsibility, men often devoid of the qualities of leadership and practical organization. Like De Windt they planned everything and achieved no more than a plan. Such men are primarily necessary in the human adventure, because they build up a sound diagnosis of events; they reveal more and more clearly and imperatively the course that lies before the race and in that task their lives are spent and justified. Then it is that the intelligent executive type, capable of concentration upon a complex idea once it is grasped, and resisting discursiveness as a drag on efficiency, comes into action. Their imaginative limitation is a necessary virtue for the task they have to do. No man can administer a province successfully if he is always wandering beyond its frontiers. The rather unimaginative forcible type is the necessary executive of a revolution, and the benefit of the revolution is entirely dependent upon the soundness of the ideology with which he has been loaded.

Because of this necessity for complementary types of

revolutionary, history does not produce any modern equivalents to the legendary figures of Solon, Moses or Confucius in its story of the coming of the Modern State. De Windt was not so much a creator as a summarizer, a concentrator, a lens that gathered to a burning focus the accumulating mental illumination of his day.

The light of understanding that lit the fires of this last revolution came from no single brain. It came from ten thousand active and devoted minds, acting and reacting upon one another, without order or precedence; it was like the growth of physical and biological science that preceded it, something that happened as a whole, something that happened not in any single consciousness but in the consciousness of the race.

We have already noted how far back the first germination of the World- State idea can be traced; we have shown how the forces of economic life drove towards it in the nineteenth century. We have displayed it working as a quasi-instinctive aspiration in the brains of Henry Ford and Woodrow Wilson. With De Windt's Social Nucleation we see it made concrete, with all its essential structures projected and all its necessary conditions laid down, a practicable proposal. The World-State has ceased to be a cloudy aspiration and it has become a plan. Forceful men could adopt it.

A distinct change in the quality of those who were promoting the movement for the Modern State became very evident even before the War Cycle of the Forties. It was now sufficiently "thought out" for men of resolute character to incorporate it in their personal lives. It was passing over from the reflective to the energetic types. Its earliest propagandists had been largely reflective and practically ineffective individuals; a miscellany of pacificists whose dread and detestation of war was overwhelming and who had the intelligence to realize that war can only be avoided by establishing a World Pax; a number of writers, "pure" scientific workers, young sociologists, economists and the like and "intellectuals" from the working class movement. Now a multitude of engineers, architects, skilled foremen and industrial organizers, technicians of all sorts, business men and captains of industry, were also beginning to "talk Modern State" and put in an increasing proportion of their time and attention to its advocacy.

The transition is easily explicable. The increasing social disorder was driving men of the vigorous practical type out of satisfactory employment. During the First Age of Prosperity, and during the false recovery after the World War, such men had been able to find ample work agreeable to their temperaments in the immense industrial developments of the time. They had organized great businesses, vast production; they had exploited the incessant stream of inventions; they had opened up the natural resources of hitherto backward regions. They had carried production far beyond the consuming power of human society. So long as all this enterprise could go on, it did not seem necessary to them to trouble about the political and monetary methods of their world. Now and then some of them showed a certain restiveness at the banking network; our typical original-minded industrial Henry Ford, for instance, had two vigorous tussles with the bankers during his career; but generally the phenomena of political and financial strangulation only began to compel their serious attention after the great Hoover Slump (the Thirty Year Slump) was well under way.

Then they began to think, talk and write about the social order with the energy of men accustomed to handle large affairs and work for immediate tangible results. The vast experiment of Soviet Russia aroused their technical jealousy and a sort of envious impatience both at its opportunities and its incapacities. And the young men coming on from the abundant technical schools of the time, stirred by the books and talk and omnipresent hopes and memories of the immediate past, and looking for adventure and achievement in material enterprise, realized very rapidly that the lights of opportunity upon their paths were being turned down in a manner at once mysterious and exasperating.

The revolutionary movement in the nineteenth century had seemed to such men a tiresomeness of slacking workers, aided and abetted by critics like Ruskin, artists like William Morris, playwrights like Bernard Shaw and suchlike impracticable and unconvincing people. It was associated in their minds with sham Gothic, yellow-green draperies, long hair, anti-vivisection and vegetarianism. There was scarcely a man of scientific or technical eminence on the revolutionary side before 1900. But by the third

decade of the twentieth century two-thirds of the technicians, scientific workers and able business organizers were talking active revolution. It was no longer to be a class insurrection of hands; it was to be a revolt of the competent. Their minds were feeling round for ideas. They found in such books as De Windt's exactly what they wanted. They began to set about the evocation of the Modern World-State in no uncertain fashion.

A revolution in revolutionary ideas had occurred. The protean spirit of Revolution had cut its hair, put on blue overalls, made blue prints for itself, created a New Model, and settled down to work in a systematic fashion.

3. — THE TECHNICAL REVOLUTIONARY

The existence of this large number of scientific and technical workers in the Western communities and their rapid and lively apprehension of the breakdown about them is one of the profoundest differences between the second and the first Decline and Fall.

We find no real equivalent at all to them in the Roman story. There were great numbers of artisans without any science, steeped in tradition; and quite out of touch with these artisans there were a few small groups of ineffective philosophers whose speculations were finally swamped by the synthesis of Christianity. Artisan and philosopher were in different worlds. The philosopher has left it on record that he despised the artisan. Probably the artisan despised the philosopher in equal measure so far as he knew about him; but he has not left it on record. Neither artisan nor philosopher seem to have had any awareness of the broad social forces that were destroying the common security in which they went about their affairs, and turning the Empire into a battling ground for barbarian adventurers.

It is doubtful if at any time the imperial court or the imperial civil service had any real conception of any sustained decline. Nineteenth — and twentieth-Century historians, as Ogilvy and Freud point out in their Roman History (2003 and revised by Pan Chow Liang 2047), were all too apt to imagine an up-to-date intelligence for such emperors as Julius Caesar, Octavius, Marcus Aurelius or Domitian. They represented them as scheming and planning on almost modern lines. But there is no proof of any such awareness in the Latin record. One large element in that old Roman world that would surely have displayed some sense of the needs of the time, if anywhere there had been that sense, was the universally present building industry. It did hold on in a way throughout the decline and fall, but consciously it did nothing politically.

Students are still working out the preservation and continuation of the art and mystery of the masons into the middle ages. There was a great loss of knowledge but also a real survival. The medieval free-masons who built those flimsy but often quite beautiful Gothic cathedrals it is now such a task to conserve, carried on a tradition that

had never really broken with that of the pyramid builders. But they had no sense of politics. They had a tradition of protective guild association similar to the Trade Unions of the Capitalist age, they interfered in local affairs in order to make jobs for themselves, but there is no sign that at any time they concerned themselves with the order and stability of the community as a whole. Their horizons were below that level of intelligence.

Now the skilled and directive men of the collapsing order of the twentieth century were of an altogether livelier quality. Their training was not traditional but progressive, far more progressive than that of any other class. They were inured to fundamental changes in scope, method and material. They ceased to be acquiescent in the political and financial life about them directly they found their activities seriously impeded. Simultaneously with the outbreak of that very expressive and significant word "Technocracy" in the world's Press (1932-33) we find, for instance, a Professor of Engineering, Professor Miles Walker, at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, boldly arraigning the whole contemporary order by the standards of engineering efficiency. Everywhere in that decadence, amidst that twilight of social order, engineers, industrialists and professors of physical science were writing and talking constructive policies. They were invading politics. We have already noted the name of Professor Soddy as one of the earlier men of science who ceased to "mind his own business", and took up business psychology.

At first these technicians and business men were talking at large. They did not immediately set about doing things; they still assumed that the politicians and monetary authorities were specialists with sound and thorough knowledge in their own departments, as capable of invention and adaptation as themselves; so that they did no more than clamour for decisive action — not realizing that the very conditions under which bankers and politicians lived made them incapable of varying their methods in any fundamental fashion. But this grew plain as disaster followed disaster. A new type had to assume authority if new methods were to be given a fair chance. New methods of government must oust the old. An increasing proportion of the younger men, abandoning all ideas of loyalty to or cooperation

with the old administrative institutions, and with an ever clearer consciousness of their objective, set themselves to organize nuclei after the De Windt pattern and to link these up with other nuclei.

The movement spread from workshop to workshop and from laboratory to laboratory with increasing rapidity all over the world. Al Haran estimated that already in 1960 seven-eighths of the aviators were Modern State men, and most of the others he says were "at least infected with these same ideas". Such infection went far and deep.

Wherever there was little or no repression the development of this movement to salvage civilization went on openly. But to begin with it encountered some very serious antagonisms. The military element had always been disposed to regard the man of science and the technician as a gifted sort of inferior. The soldier in his panoply ordered them to do their tricks, and they did their tricks. That was the idea. The behaviour of both types during the World War did much to confirm this assumption of their docility. The Peace of Versailles came before there was any serious disillusionment. The nineteenth-century scientific man had been a very lopsided man; often he had proved himself a poor conventional snob outside his particular investigations.

"The sciences," as Simon Azar remarked, "came before Science"; the scientific outlook was a late result and not a primary cause of the systematic pursuit of knowledge. It was a discovery and not a starting point. Science taught the men who served it, and the pupil learnt more than the teacher knew. There was and is an incessant conflict in the scientific world between achievement and fresh enquiry, and in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was acute. The older men suspected younger men with broader ideas and hindered their advancement. They wanted them all to work in specialist blinkers. But after the World War the world of pure and applied science found itself obliged to think about things in general, and, as the Great Slump went on without surcease, it thought hard. The technicians, because of their closer approach to business and practical affairs generally, were considerably in advance of the "pure" scientific investigators in this application of constructive habits of thought to political and social organization.

Even during the Chinese warfare there were intimations that

chemists, engineers and doctors might have different ideas from the military. After the Tokio sterilization fiasco, and still more so after the failure of the eleventh gas offensive upon Wuchang to produce adequate results, the Japanese military authorities began to enquire into the possibility of "expert sabotage", and their enquiries had a certain repercussion upon the relations of "scientific" military men to real scientific and technical experts in Europe. There was an attempt to distinguish between experts who were "loyal" and experts who were "subversive". More often than not it was the latter who were the brilliant and inventive men. Uncritical loyalty was found to go with a certain general dullness. The authorities found themselves in a dilemma between men who could not do what was wanted of them and men who would not.

A campaign against pacificist, disturbing and revolutionary ideas had been gathering force during the thirties. It became a confused and tiresome persecution in the later forties. But it was ineffective because it was incoherent. Attempts to weed the staffs and students of technical schools and to reduce the teaching profession to docility failed, because there seemed to be no way of distinguishing what was essential science from what was treasonable thought. The attempt to destroy freedom in one part of a man's brain while leaving other parts to move freely and creatively was doomed to failure from the outset.

4. — PROPHETS, PIONEERS, FANATICS AND MURDERED MEN

History, especially general history, is prone to deal too much with masses and outlines. We write that "all Germany" resented an insult, or the "hopes of Asia" fell. But the living facts of history are changes in thought, emotion and reaction in the minds of thousands of millions of lives.

In the preceding sections we have spoken in general terms of "concepts of combination" developing; of ideologies dissolving and giving place to other ideologies like clouds that gather and melt and pass across the mental skies of mankind. In the books before those sections we traced the growing awareness of a possible World-State in the thoughts of men throughout two thousand years of slow awakening. But the presentation is incomplete until we have turned our attention, for a chapter at least, from the broad sweep of opinion and the changing determination of the collective will, to the texture of individual experiences, the brain storms, the tormented granules, which shaped out these massive structural developments.

One must draw upon the naive materials of one's own childhood to conceive, however remotely, the states of mind of those rare spirits who looked first towards human brotherhood. One must consider the life of some animal, one's dog, one's cheetah or one's pony, to realize the bounded, definite existence of a human being in the early civilizations. The human life then was just as set in its surroundings as any animal's. There was the town, the river, the cultivations, the distant hills, the temple, near friends and strange distant enemies constituting a complete and satisfying ALL. The gods were credible and responsible, taking all ultimate responsibility off your shoulders; the animals had souls like yourself, as understandable as yourself, and the darkness and shadows were haunted by spirits. In that sort of setting innumerable generations lived and loved and hated and died. Everything was made familiar and understandable by the trick of personification. You brought the stranger into your family; you made it a member of your group. Earth was a mother and the sun a great

father of glory marching across the sky.

It is a marvellous intricate history to trace how the human mind began to doubt, to pry and question, to penetrate the curtains of assurance and fancied security that enclosed it. Perhaps it was rather torn out of its confidence than that it fretted its way out by any urgency of its own.

The Hebrew Bible, which Christianity preserved for us, is a precious record of uneasy souls amidst the limited conditions of these ages before mechanism or travel or logical analysis. It tells how man came out of the Eden of unquestioning acceptance and found perplexity. It gives us intimate glimpses of states of mind that were typical of what went on in hundreds of thousands of struggling brains. They were beginning to note thorns and weeds, toil and the insecurity of life. They made great efforts to explain their growing sense that all was not right with the world. They had to dramatize the story. They had as yet only "personification" as a means of apprehending relations and causes. They had no way of getting hold of a general idea except by imagining it as a person. Strange thoughts frightened them. They seemed exterior to them. They dared not even say "I think"; they had to say "I heard a voice" or the "Word of the Lord came to me". Enormous effort therefore was needed to pass from the thought of a patriarchal tribal God to a mightier overriding God. Men did not unite communities; they identified their Gods. Monotheism was the first form of the World-State in men's minds.

What a desperate deed it was for some inwardly terrified man to lift up his voice against the local elders and the local idol, proclaiming "There is no God but God." The reactions of his fellows, living still within the framework of accepted beliefs, to this attempt to break out to wide relations, were scorn, amusement, irritation, dislike or horror and superstitious fear. We have the story of Mohammed recorded, and of his fight with the gods of Mecca, but that was a late and sophisticated instance of something that happened in innumerable times and places; the challenge of the man "inspired" by his new idea to the social mental nest out of which he was breaking.

Men who saw the light and spoke, were only one species of a larger genus of human beings whose minds worked differently from

the common man's or were simply more feverishly active. The others were eccentrics or downright madmen. One sort was hardly to be told from another, for both were sayers of incredible things.

The beginning of written record in the millennium before Christ shows a long tradition already established for the treatment of these odd, disturbing exceptions. So far as we can peer into the past we find the tranquillity of the everyday community broken by these troubled troublesome individuals who went about, living queerly, saying unusual and disconcerting things, inciting people to behave strangely, threatening divine anger, foreboding evils. There was a disposition to buy them off with a sort of reverence — and disregard. Inferior and unhappy people might find an interest and excitement in their strange announcements and suggestions. But rulers did not like them, comfortable people disliked and feared them. They irritated, they terrified contented people. They seemed perverse, and many of them plainly were perverse. If they went too far mankind turned on them and they were ill-treated and mobbed and ridiculed; they were cast into prisons; beaten and killed.

The ones that mattered most seemed always, by our present standards, to have had something to say that was at once profoundly important and yet not quite true or not quite truly said. Disciples, sometimes in great multitude, respond to their enigmatical utterances. When they died or were killed men were left asking, "What exactly did he say? What exactly did he mean?" The inspired words became very readily riddles for interpreters and matter for pedantry. They were phrased and rephrased, applied and misapplied, tried out in every possible and impossible way.

Nowadays we find a common quality in all these madmen, prophets, teachers and disturbers of the mental peace. The species was learning to talk and use language. The race was, as it were, trying to think something out; was attempting to say something new and enlarging to itself. It was doing this against great resistance. Its intellectual enterprise was playing against its instinctive fear of novelty. Some of these teachers died terribly, were flayed or burnt or tortured to death. One hung on a cross and died of physical weakness some hours before the two felons who were his hardier fellow sufferers, leaving a teaching compounded of such sweet and fine

ideas of conduct, such mystical incomprehensibleness, such misleading inconsistency, that it remained a moral stimulus and an intellectual perplexity, a jungle for heresies and discoveries, for millions of souls for two millennia.

Vainly does one try nowadays to put ourself into the mind of the prophet led to execution. We know the value of what he did, it is true, but what did he think he was doing? The secret of such personifying, urgently seeking brains seems hidden from us now for ever.

In the busier and more prosperous social phases of history such disturbers are less evident; in times of change, and especially when there was also a release of social energy, when conflicting traditions ground and wore upon each other, these troubled and troublesome minds seemed to have multiplied. The days of the vast unstable Roman imperialism abounded in efforts to say something new and profound about life. Everywhere there were new worships, because a worship still seemed the only form in which a new idea and way of life could be conveyed from mind to mind. Everywhere the puzzled sprawling human race was trying to say something, some magic word to resolve its perplexities and guide it to peace.

With the Renascence of learning and the onset of organized science the actual number and the actual proportion of enquiring and innovating minds increased greatly. The effort of the racial mind to master the conditions of its being was renewed on a multitudinous scale. But now the disturbers of equanimity no longer appear as wild-eyed prophets; they no longer claim that the Word of the Lord is upon them. Abstract and logical thought has pervaded the mind of the race and such personification is no longer needed. They do not denounce the old gods; they analyse them. Moreover, now that we approach modern times and deal with more and more abundantly recorded events, we begin to realize with a living understanding and sympathy what was going on in the minds of the innovators and to feel in touch with the immeasurable heroisms and innumerable tragedies of those later pioneers, those rebels, critics, revolutionaries who were thrusting, more or less intelligently, against the acceptances and inertias amidst which they lived, towards a saner, more comprehensive and more clearly apprehended racial idea.

So far no completely masterly digest has been made of the millions of biographies and tons of other material that tell of the mental seething of the world from the seventeenth century of the Christian Era onward. If the old world prophets are too rare and remote for our understanding, the modern revolutionaries are almost too close and abundant for us to stand back and see them clearly. Vast studies have been organized of various portions of the field; Roger Cuddington and his associates' Studies of Protestant Thought in Holland, the Rhineland, Switzerland and Britain from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century give, for instance, a picture of one wide area and period, in which the fermentation arose first in a religious form and owed much to the clash of Jew and Gentile; while Margrim's Early Forms of Anarchism and Socialism is a very successful attempt to realize the ideas and personalities from which the modern criticism of rule and property derived. With the help of such works as these, and with some luck among the biographies, we do contrive at last to get down close to an imaginative participation in those individual reactions, which in the aggregate remade the human community in the form we know to-day.

Every one of these personal stories, if it were told completely, would have to begin with a child, taking the world for granted, believing its home, its daddy and mummy to be right and eternal. It confronted a fixed and established world with no standard of comparison in past or future. It was told its place in life and what it had to do. Bad luck, discomfort, some shock or some innate unrest was needed to put a note of interrogation against these certainties. Then for those whom destiny has marked for disturbance comes the suspicion: "This that they have told me isn't true." Still more disturbing came the possibility: "This that they do and want me to do isn't right." And then with a widening reference: "Things could be better than this." So the infected individual drifted out of easy vulgar living with his fellows, out of a natural animal-like acceptance of the established thing, to join the fermenting and increasing minority of troubled minds that made trouble.

He began talking to his fellows or he made notes in secret of his opinions. He asked awkward questions. He attempted little comments and ironies. We could conjure up hundreds of thousands

of pictures of such doubters beginning to air their opinions in the eighteenth-century world, in the little workshops of the time, in shabby, needy homes, in market places, in village inns, daring to say something, hardly daring to say anything, unable often to join up the vague objections they were making into any orderly criticism. But in the brown libraries and studies of the period other men were sitting, poring over books, writing with something furtive in their manner, while the pride of contemporary life brayed and trumpeted along the roadway outside. "What is being told to the people is not true. Things could be better than this." Men ventured on strange suggestions in university classes; brought out startlingly unorthodox theses.

The infectious interrogations spread. Constituted authority got wind of these questionings and itself came questioning in search of heresy and sedition, with rack and thumbscrew. When we read the books and pamphlets of that awakening phase, writings which seem amidst profuse apologies to half say next to nothing, we get the measure of the reasonable timidities of the time. Men might pay in sweating agony and death for that next-to-nothing they had said.

At first they raised not so much the substance as the form of an interrogation. In the sixteenth century you would have found a number of local accumulations of heresies, but hardly any inkling of the Modern State. Except for some scholar's echo to the Republic or Laws of Plato, there was no one at all reading and comparing in the field of social and political structure before the seventeenth century. The eighteenth century was, in comparison with its predecessor, an age of voluminous revolutionary thought. Men began calling fundamental ideas and political institutions in question as they had never been challenged since the onset of Christianity. They went into exile for their innovations; their books were burnt; censorships were established to suppress these new ideas. Still they spread and multiplied. The authoritative claim of aristocracy, the divinity of monarchy, tarnished, dwindled, became ineffective under these dripping notes of interrogation. Republics appeared and the first embryonic intimations of socialism.

In our account of the first French Revolution and the revolutionary perturbation of the eighteenth century* we have had to discriminate between the economic and social forces that were

forcing political readjustment on the one hand, and the influence of new ideas on the other. We have shown how little these formal changes were planned, and how small a share in these events is to be ascribed to creative intention or mental processes generally. Nevertheless the questioning was drawing closer to reality and the scope of the planning was spreading. We will not tell again of the profound change in men's ideas about private property, private freedom and monetary relationship, that began to find expression in the socialist and communist movements of the age. Our concern here is to emphasize the billions of small wrangles that were altering the collective thought, to summon out of the past, for an instant, an elfin clamour of now silenced voices that prepared the soil for revolution, the not-at-all-lucid propagandists at street corners, the speakers in little meeting-houses, in open spaces and during work intermissions; to recall the rustle of queer newspapers that were not quite ordinary newspapers; and the handicapped book publications that were everywhere fighting traditional and instinctive resistances. Everywhere the leaven of the Modern State was working — confusedly.

* [No traces of this account are to be found in Raven's papers. — Ed.]

As we have seen, the new conception of a single world society did not come at one blow, perfect and effective, into the human mind. It was not completed even in outline until the days of De Windt, and before that time it was represented by a necessary confusion of contributory material, incomplete bits of it and illogical and misleading extensions of those bits. It had to begin like that; it had to begin in fragments and rashly. There was always a fierce disposition manifested to apply the new incomplete ideas, headlong and violently. The more the sense of insufficiency gnaws at a man's secret consciousness, the more he is in conflict with an inner as well as an outer antagonist, the more emphatic, dogmatic and final he is apt to be. That disposition to bring the new ideas to the test of reality, the urge to assert by experiment, was the chief source of trouble for these ever increasing multitudes, of innovating minds. Constituted authority, established usage, have no quarrel with ideas as such; it is only when these ideas become incitation, when they sought

incarnation in act and reality, that conflict began.

So all over the world throughout the nineteenth century men were to be found contriving trouble for authority and devising outrages on usage. The light of world reconstruction lit their souls, but often it filtered through thick veils of misconception and had the colourings of some epidemic hate. They dreamt of insurrections, of seizures of power, of organized terror; in practice their efforts dwindled down too often to stupid little murders — often completely irrelevant murders — to shouting and swarming in the streets, to peltings and window-breaking, to blowing in the front doors of government houses and embassies, to the casting of explosives amidst the harmless spectators at public ceremonies.

Before the French Revolution there was not nearly so much of such sporadic violence as afterwards. There were a few assassinations by religious or racial fanatics, but usually the older type of political crime was definitely connected with some conspiracy to change the personnel rather than the nature of a régime. The "Anarchist" outrages of the nineteenth century, however clumsy, were by comparison social criticisms. Behind them, even though vague, exaggerated and distorted, was the hope of a new world order.

Linked inseparably with all these premature expressions of the desire for a new life were the activities of more extensive revolutionary systems: printing-presses in cellars, furtive distribution of papers, secret meetings, the savage discipline of fear-ruled illegal societies, the going to and fro of emissaries — men often with narrow and ill-assorted minds, but nevertheless men with everything to lose and little to gain or hope for by such activities. After we have allowed for every sort of resentment and bitter impulse in them, the fact remains such men were devotees. They were a necessary ferment for the spread of thought.

That increasing revolutionary ferment, in all its tentative aspects, used to be called The Extreme Left. There had never been anything quite like it in the world before. For the most part these men had broken not only with the political and social order of their time, but with its religious beliefs. Between 1788 and 1965, hundreds of thousands of men and thousands of women, far braver than any

Moslem fanatics, sustained by no hope of a future life, no hope of any greeting after the sudden blankness of their untimely deaths, and, so far as we can gather now, not even with a clear vision of the full and ordered social life for which they died, stood up sullenly or with a certain sad exaltation to face the firing party or the halter. A hundred times as many endured exile, prisons, ostracisms, beatings, gross humiliations and the direst poverty for the still dimly apprehended cause of human liberation.

They had not even the assurance of unanimity. They were all convinced that there had to be a better world, but they had not the knowledge, they had not the facilities for free and open discussion, to clear up and work out the inevitable outline of their common need. They formulated their ideas dully and clumsily; they went a certain way to truth and then stopped short; they suspected all other formulae than the ones they themselves had hit upon; they quarrelled endlessly, bitterly, murderously, among themselves. Nearly all sooner or later were infected by hate. Often it happened that two men, each of whom had roughly half the justice of things in him, killed each other, when indeed they needed only to put their prepossessions together to get the full outline of a working reconstruction.

Da Silva has called all those who made the revolutions and revolutionary efforts that occurred between 1788 and 1948 the "revolutionaries of the half- light". His studies of the tangled history of the new social concepts that broke through to open popular discussion, only after the establishment of the Soviet régime in Russia in 1917, constitute a very brilliant work of elucidation and simplification. It is a history of twilight that ends at dawn. In the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century the ordinary man in the street was discussing, cheaply perhaps, but freely, ideas, possibilities and courses of action that no one would have dared to whisper about, would scarcely have dared to think about, two centuries before. He scarcely knew a single name of the pioneers, fanatics and desperadoes who had won this freedom for his mind.

The nature of the conflict was changing. That was very plain by 1940. Where there had been pioneers, there were now systematic explorers and surveyors; the teeming multitudes of our race were still

producing devoted and sacrificial types, but the half light was now a cloudy daylight and the ordered analyses and plans of such men as De Windt were making understandings and cooperations possible that would have been incredible in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century revolution was suspected, forbidden, dark, criminal, desperate and hysterical. In the twentieth century it became candid and sympathetic. The difference was essentially an intellectual one; after a vast period of stormy disputation the revolutionary idea had cleared up. The sun of the Modern State broke through.

Revolution still demanded its martyrs, but the martyrdoms were henceforth of a different character. Biographies of revolutionists before the Great War go on by night, amidst a scenery of back streets, cellars, prisons, suspicions and betrayals. Biographies of revolutionists in the final struggle to establish the Modern State go on in full daylight. It is reaction now which has taken to the darkness, to plots, assassinations, and illegal measures. The Modern State propagandist became less and less like an insurgent individual of some alien subject race; he became more and more like a missionary in savage country, ill-armed or unarmed, and at an immediate disadvantage, but with the remote incalculable prestige of a coming power behind him.

The later death-roll of revolutionaries has fewer and fewer executions in it and an increasing tale of assassinations and deaths in public conflict. A larger and larger proportion of those who died for it were killed either by mobs or in fair and open fighting. And soon the idea of the Modern State had become so pervasive that the battles ceased to be for it or against it; they became, rather, misunderstandings between impatient zealots with a common end. In many conflicts the historian is still perplexed to determine which side, if either, can be counted as fighting for the Modern State.

The analyses of De Windt made immense charities of understanding possible. Creative-minded men, though they hardened against the liar and the cheat, became less and less willing to fight the puerile adherent and the honest fanatic with a tiresome but honestly intended formula. “There,” they said, “but for certain misconceptions and resolvable obsessions go our men,” and set themselves at any

risk or loss to the task of conversion. Just as Fascism in its time seized upon the ancient terroristic and blackmailing Mafia in Sicily and partly annexed it, partly changed it and so superseded it, just as the Nazi movement incorporated large chunks of the Communist party in its efforts to reformulate Germany, so now the Modern State fellowship grappled with the world-wide series of organizations which had superseded democratic institutions nearly everywhere, made every effort to capture the imaginations of their adherents, and showed the most unscrupulous boldness in seizing their direction whenever it could. The Modern State Movement differed from every preceding revolutionary movement in its immense assimilating power, due to the clearness of the objectives it set before men's minds.

The difference between the revolutionary before the Great War and the revolutionary after that illuminating crisis is closely parallel to the difference between the old alchemist and the modern man of science; the former haunted by demons, goblins and spirits, warped by symbolic obsessions and cabalistic words and numbers, terribly alone with himself, obsessed with religious fears, by fear of the inquisitor, by fear of the ruler above and of the rabble below, perpetually baffled in his attempts to achieve great things, but full of a dangerous unpremeditated knowledge of poisons and mischievous devices; the latter with a mind released by centuries of analysis and simplification, reassured by the incessant tale of scientific victories, stoically indifferent to popular misrepresentation and equally sure of his universe and himself.

5. — THE FIRST CONFERENCE AT BASRA: 1965

The conference of scientific and technical workers at Basra in 1965 is regarded by historians as a cardinal date in the emergence of the Modern State. It was organized by the Transport Union, which had begun as a loose association of the surviving aeroplane and shipping operators for mutual aid and protection. The ideas formulated at this conference — and even those were still formulated with a certain tentative or tactful incompleteness — had been gathering force and definition for some time. But this conference was the first to draw up a definite plan of the general human outlook and initiate an organization to carry it out. It marked the transition from thought to action in general affairs.

The idea of using air transport as the combining and directive force for a new synthesis of civilization was already an old and familiar one. It had been in men's thoughts for at least thirty years. A popular story published in 1933, Man's Mortality (by the English romancer Michael Arlen, 1895-1990), for instance, is an amusing fantasy of the world dominated by an air-transport syndicate. It is still a very readable book and interesting in showing the limitations of the educated imagination at that time. The belief in the possibilities of invention is unbounded; air velocities and air fighting are described on a scale that still seems preposterously exaggerated to-day; while on the other hand the inflated stock buying and selling of that period, although it had grown from the merest germ in about a century and a half, is represented as still going on unchanged, and the world's air dictators are gambling dishonestly in stock, and at last "crash" financially and bolt as though they were just contemporary politicians and mystery men rather than lords of the whole power of the air. In a world of incredible metals, explosives and swiftness, the Stock Exchange, the Bourses, still survive. And there are still Powers and Foreign Policies! Nothing could illustrate better the inability of people at that time to realize the economic and political changes that were then actually tumbling upon them. For some obscure reason

mental and moral progress and institutional invention seemed absolutely impossible to them.

An interesting little London periodical of the same time, Essential News, has recently been reprinted for graduate students of history in the Students' Reprint Series. Its fourth issue (February 4th, 1933) contains a summary of contemporary thought about World Air Control. It cites a complete scheme for the "International" control of aviators, drawn up by a small French group at the suggestion of M. Henri de Jouvenal under the presidency of M. Pierre Denis. A Union Aéronautique Internationale is proposed, a cosmopolitan air transport company. Linked with this and controlled by the poor League of Nations, an "Air Force for Mutual Assistance" was to police the atmosphere. The proposals are so plainly Utopian and impracticable in the face of the sovereign state system as to seem insincere. It was only thirty years later, after the common suicide of the sovereign Powers of Europe, that the assembled technicians at Basra could revive the broad conception of this proposal.

This first conference at Basra was distinguished from its predecessors first by its universality and then by the extremely bold and comprehensive proposals for united action it accepted — proposals which were in effect, if not in form, the project for the modern World-State. It was the first of these gatherings attended by considerable American, Chinese and Japanese contingents, as well as the customary European representatives, and the Russian technicians were present in unprecedented strength and unexpectedly united and independent of the political controllers who accompanied them. New Zealand also had reappeared in the world's affairs. There were even two representatives (two schoolmasters in the Social Psychology section) from Iceland, which for most practical purposes had been cut off from the world for over five years. And one has only to compare the agenda of this and previous assemblies to feel at once the stride forward in the scope and courage of scientific and technical thought that had occurred.

It was a young gathering; the average age is estimated by Amen Rihani as about thirty-three, and five or six women attended in the social and educational branches. A third but very significant feature was the extensive use of that simple and convenient lingua franca of

the aviators, Basic English. Even the native English-speaking people present did their best to keep their speeches within the limitations of that ingenious idiom.

The master section was still that of General Transport. The body which had organized the gathering was, as has been said already, the Transport Union, originally a purely business body, but the inspiration was that of the Modern State movement, and technicians in medicine, education, agriculture and every main type of industrial production were present. There was much discussion of the upkeep of the world routes and the administrative tasks arising out of that. Nothing could give the student a more vivid sense of the derelict state of the world at that time than the boldness with which this Control took possession of things and pushed its activities into new fields. It was decided, for instance, that all existing aerodromes and landmarks, lights and lighting fields, should be directly under its management. There was no question of purchase; it took them over. Every aeroplane in the world was to be registered, was to carry a distinctive number, respect the common tariff of charges and pay a registration fee to the Control. Airships and aeroplanes which did not do this were to be treated as pirates, denied the use of aerodromes and filling stations, and "driven out of the air". They were to be driven out of the air if necessary by an "air police" which the Control was to organize. Aerodromes or regions that harboured such recalcitrants were to be boycotted.

These proposals were not accepted without discussion. But there was very little protest against what was certainly, from the older point of view, an illegal usurpation of authority. The political members of the Russian contingent offered the chief resistance, and what other opposition appeared was not from aviators, engineers, chemists, biologists or men of that type, but from sociologists and economists of the less advanced schools. The main objection took the form of a question: "But what will governments say to this?" So far as the Westerners and Chinese were concerned there was a disposition to disregard the possibility of political intervention. "Wait till it comes," they said cheerfully. But Soviet Russia and Soviet Japan were at that time much more rankly political than the rest of the world, and they at least had politicians as well as men of

skill and science present at this gathering. A long speech was made by the commissar Vladimir Peshkoff, full of the menace of later trouble. He denounced the projected Control as an insidious attempt to restore a capitalist trust in the world. Its psychology would be bourgeois and capitalist. Moscow would never consent to the passage of controlled machines over the vast territories under Soviet control nor allow the exploitation of the resources of Russia in oil and minerals by any outside organization.

"And how will Moscow prevent it?" asked Ivan Englehart, a Russian aviator and aeroplane builder, rising as Peshkoff sat down. "Is it a nationalism of this sort that the Third International is to end?"

By way of reply Peshkoff leant towards him and spat out in Russian, "Wait until you return to Moscow."

"I may have to wait a little time," said Englehart. "I am a citizen of the world, and I shall go back to Russia in my own time and in my own fashion."

"This is treason. Wait until Moscow hears of this!"

"And how and when will Moscow hear of this?"

"Very soon."

Englehart was standing a few yards from Peshkoff. He shook his head with a sceptical smile. He spoke gently, like a man who had long prepared himself for such an occasion.

"You flew here, Tavarish Peshkoff, in my squadron. How do you propose to return?"

Peshkoff rose to his feet, realized the blank want of sympathy in the gathering, spluttered and sat down again in unconcealed dismay.

Englehart waited for a moment or so and then went on, choosing his words with quiet deliberation, to assure the meeting of the adhesion of the Russian technicians to the projected Control. "That phantom Proletarian of yours fades with all the other empires and kingdoms," he said to the political delegates his colleagues. "We are only giving shape to a new world order that is already born."

His speech set the key for most of the subsequent debate.

That establishment of the Control was the backbone discussion, but it was no more than the backbone of a plan that covered the whole future organization of society; upon it was articulated a whole framework of structural proposals. The central section dealt not only

with the air network but with the organization of every type of communication. The lighthouses, lightships, sea marks, channels and harbours of the world were suffering from a decade of economy, a decade of wartime destruction and a decade of chaos and decay. The meteorological services were no longer operative. All this had to be restored. The definite abandonment of every type of railroad was accepted as a matter of course. Railways were buried at Basra forever. And the restoration and reconstruction of production in a hundred essential industries followed also as a necessary consequence of these primary resolutions.

The more the reader scrutinizes the agenda, the more is he impressed by the mildness of the official title of the gathering: "A Conference on Scientific and Mercantile Communications and Associated Questions". It is clear that the conveners resolved to press on with their task of world reorganization as far as they possibly could, without rousing the enfeebled and moribund political organizations of the past to obstruction and interference. The language throughout is that of understatement; the shape of the projects is fearlessly bold. A committee of experts had prepared a very good general survey of the natural resources of the planet, including those of the already suspicious Russia, and the conference set itself unhesitatingly to work out the problems of a resumption of production generally, with an entire disregard of the various proprietary claims that might arise to challenge the realization of these schemes. There was no provocative discussion of these claims; they were ignored. The Sea and Air Ways Control evidently meant to take effective possession not only of all derelict ports, aerodromes, coal-mines, oil wells, power stations and mines, but to bring those in which a certain vitality still lingered into line with its schemes by hook or by crook, by persuasion or pressure. Its confidence in its solidarity with the skilled men working these latter establishments was absolute. Such a solidarity would have been inconceivable thirty years before. Financial adventure had been washed out of the minds of the new generation of technicians altogether. They simply wanted to "get things going again". Ideas of personal enrichment were swamped in their universal conviction that their class must now either work together and master the world, or leave it.

So with a modest air of logical necessity, of being driven rather than driving, the Conference spread its planning far beyond the material and mechanism of world intercommunication.

What is this reconstructed transport to carry? How is it to be fed — and paid for? About the air-ports everywhere were tracts and regions sinking back to that primordial peasant cultivation which had been the basis of all the barbaric civilizations of the past. The question of the expropriation of the peasant and the modernization of agricultural production was taken up at Basra at the point where Lenin and Stalin had laid it down, defeated. The Conference was lucidly aware that upon the same planet at the same time you cannot have both an aviator and a starveling breeding peasantry, toiling endlessly and forever in debt. One or other has to go, and the fundamental objective of the Conference was to make the world safe for the former. The disappearance of the latter followed, not as a sought-after end but as a necessary consequence. And the disappearance of as much of the institutions of the past as were interwoven with it.

In the ideas of their relations to each other and to the world as a whole, these Basra technicians were all what the nineteenth century would have called socialistic. They were so fundamentally socialistic that they did not even raise the question of socialism. It is doubtful if the word was ever used before. They took it for granted that this Control that was growing like a limitless polyp in their minds would be the effectual owner and exploiter of all the aeroplanes, routes, industrial townships, factories, mines, cultivations that were falling into place in their Plan. It would have seemed as unnatural to them that a new Ford or a new Rockefeller should arise to own a factory or a mine personally, as that anyone should try to steal the ocean or the air. There it was for the common good, and just as much was industrial plant for the common good.

All these men it must be remembered, almost without exception, were men of the salaried type of mind. They had been born and brought up in a tradition in which money was a secondary matter. From the beginning of the mechanical age, the men of science, the technical experts, the inventors and discoverers, the foremen and managers and organizers, had been essentially of the salariat. Some

few had dabbled in finance and grown rich, but they were exceptions. Before the World War indeed these sort of men had been accustomed to accept the acquisitive and gambling types, the powerful rich and owning people, as a necessary evil. Now they were manifestly a totally unnecessary evil, and without the least vindictiveness or animosity plans were made to do without them and prevent their return. The Basra Conference would as soon have considered a return of Foreign Offices or of Kings or Divinities.

But they had to consider — and this was the work of a powerful section upon which the Americans were exceptionally active — how the wealth of the world that they meant to restore had to be distributed for consumption, and how a close-knit world organization was to be reconciled with personal freedom and particularly with artistic and literary initiatives. This was entitled the Section of Wages, Charges and Supply.

There seems to have been the completest agreement that the only way of combining service with private liberty is by the use of money. Without money there is necessarily a dictation of consumption and a dictation of movement to the worker. He would be given "what was good for him". But money generalized the claim of the worker as worker, and the claim of the citizen as shareholder in the commonweal, upon the goods, pleasures, facilities and liberties of life. You take your money and you buy this or that, or go here or there, or do whatever you please. But there were dangers in this invention; twice in history money had failed mankind and a money-linked order had crashed. This time, they thought, mankind had learnt its lesson, and a new money had to be devised that would be, in any large sense, fool-proof, sneak-proof and scoundrel-proof. So much lay beneath the intention of the Section of Wages, Charges and Supply.

This section carried the question of money into regions that would have seemed quite outside its scope thirty years before. In the Twenties and Thirties of the century, and indeed into the war troubles of the Forties, there had been a great volume of discussion about money. Men had realized its dangers and set themselves, with the energy born of a sense of crisis, to the analysis of its progresses and the invention of new methods that should prevent the gross

accumulation of ownership, the mischievous manipulation of credit, the relative impoverishment of the worker and the strangulation of enterprise that had wrecked the second monetary civilization. Gradually it had been realized that there could be no Theory of Money that was not in fact a complete theory of social organization. The Conference set itself now to a prepared and simplified task.

The interdependence of monetary theory with the general theory of property and social structure, which had hardly been suspected by their fathers, was now universally recognized. There was a considerable contingent of young lawyers present, though it would have amazed the previous generation beyond measure to find them in the ranks of technologists and men of science. They knocked the dust of centuries off the idea of ownership in these very pregnant debates. We have already mentioned the surprise of Nicholson at the new sort of law schools he found in America. At Basra the products of these schools were very much to the fore, together with several older teachers from the London School of Economics, which flourished until the landslide of 1968. These new lawyers, with their fundamentally scientific habits of mind, were amazingly unlike their professional predecessors — those obstinate, cunning and terrible old sinners who played so large a part in the economic strangulation of the United States and the frustration of all the high hopes of their founders. They had completely abandoned the pretence that the business of the law was to protect private property, exact debts and maintain a false appearance of equity between man and man. They knew that justice without equality of status and opportunity can be nothing more than a sham, and their ideas were already completely based on our current conception of law as the regulative system in the network of relationships between the human commonweal and its subordinate corporations and individuals. They were entirely contemptuous of any claims, contracts, rules and precedents that impeded the free expansion of human welfare. Among all the various types that gathered at Basra, these younger lawyers, in close touch with the new economists on the one hand and the group psychologists on the other, and inspired by a political constructiveness of the boldest sort, were certainly the most remarkable.

It is chiefly to them that we owe the firm assertion by the Basra Conference of the principle that in a modern community there can be no individual property in anything but personal belongings and money. This was thrown out as something too obvious to discuss. Houses and lands were henceforth to be held on leases of a not too lengthy period, life tenure being the longest. All other tangible things, they assumed, belonged inalienably to the world commonweal — in the usufruct of which every human being was manifestly a shareholder. And it was these younger lawyers also who did the greater part of that task of disentanglement and simplification, which reduced money to its present and only proper use as a check for consumable goods and services, either paid out to the individual, or, in the case of minors and incapables, to the individual's guardians, either as a part of the racial inheritance or else as wages for work in the common service. The world was to be reborn without usury or monetary speculation.

The monetary methods of the world at that time were in a state of such complete chaos that there was no effective system in working order anywhere to present an immediate resistance to the operation of the new ideas. Every region was running its own, often very arbitrary and primitive, system of tokens and checks. But the revival of communications that had made Basra possible was already giving an increasing prestige to what was known as the "air-dollar". This was not a metallic coin at all; it was a series of paper notes, which represented distance, weight, bulk, and speed. Each note was good for so many kilograms in so much space, for so many kilometres at such a pace. The value of an air-dollar had settled down roughly to a cubic metre weighing ten kilograms and travelling two hundred kilometres at a hundred kilometres an hour.

This was already an energy unit and not a unit of substance, such as the old world standards had always been. It marked very definitely that the old static conceptions of human life with limited resources were giving place to kinetic ideas of a continually expanding life. The air-dollar was a unit of energy in terms of transport, and its transformation into the energy dollar of our daily life to-day was already sketched out clearly by the Basra experts, although the actual change over was not accomplished until ten years later.

It was the plain, if unformulated, intention of the new Air and Sea Control to gain possession and exploit all the available sources of energy in the world as soon as possible, to frame its human balance sheet, scale its wages and declare its dividends as the common trustee of mankind, but manifestly if the threat of Peshkoff materialized, and the Russian Soviet system (or indeed any other owning group) was able to remain in effective control of its territorial wealth, the energy dollar would afford a just unambiguous medium for whatever trade was necessary between the competing administrations.

The planning of a new political, industrial, and monetary world scheme still does not measure the full achievement of this First Basra Conference. There was also a strong and vigorous educational section working in close touch with the technicians and the social psychologists. It made plans not only for the coordination of the surviving colleges and technical schools in the world and for the revivification of those that had lapsed, but it set itself definitely to the task of that propaganda of the idea of the Modern State which is the substantial content of our existing fundamental education. This was dealt with by the Section of Training and Advertisement. Basic English was to lay the foundations of a world lingua franca. Evidently wherever the influence of the Air and Sea Control extended, a new propaganda, a new Press, and new common schools were to extend. There can be little doubt that most of the teachers at Basra already saw quite clearly ahead of them the world-wide mental and social order in which we live to-day. They knew what they were doing. They went back from this gathering encouraged and confirmed, to give themselves to the terrific and exalting adventure before them, to the evocation day by day, and idea by idea, of a new civilization amidst the distressful, slovenly, and still living wreckage of the old.

When the Conference at last dispersed two new realities had appeared in the world, so unobtrusively that it was only slowly that the mass of mankind realized their significance. One was the Central Board, known also as the Sea and Air Control, consolidating the Transport Union, linking with it the other Controls and sections, and having its permanent offices at Basra; the other was the Police of the

Air and Sea Ways, at first a modest organization with about 3,000 aeroplanes, a handful of seaplanes, a hundred patrol ships, and a personnel of about 25,000 men. It was a small body judged by the standards either of preceding or subsequent times, but at that period it was by far the most powerful armed force in the world.

6. — THE GROWTH OF RESISTANCE TO THE SEA AND AIR-WAYS CONTROL

For nearly ten years the Air and Sea Control was able to grow and extend its methods and influence without any general conflict. The little breeze between the Russian political control and the technicians did not rise to a storm; instead it died away. Russia was learning wisdom at last and weakening in her resolve to subordinate the modern scientific type of man to his old-fashioned demagogic rival. She had suffered so severely by the miscalculations and convulsive direction of her party chiefs; she was still so ill equipped mechanically, and so poorly provided with aviators, that the old and now mentally weary dictatorship recoiled from a new struggle with these and their associated technical experts. It is to be noted that, in spite of the closest espionage, the creed of the Russian aviators, engineers, and men of science was already the Modern State and not the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and that her political rulers were beginning to understand this.

So that the Air and Sea Control, sustained by a multitude of nuclei on De Windt's pattern scattered throughout the world, very much as the Bolshevik political organization had been sustained by the Communist Party, came into existence and spread its ever-growing network about the planet without an immediate struggle. Its revolutionary nature was understood by few people other than its promoters. It grew rapidly. As the Esthonian proverb says: "One must be born before one's troubles begin."

The recovery of human prosperity in that decade between 1965 and 1975 was very rapid. It went on side by side with the expansion of the Transport system. By 1970 the Transport Control, the chief of the subsidiaries of the general Air and Sea Control, was running world-wide services that had as many as 25,000 aeroplanes aloft at the same time; it had possessed itself of shipyards on the Tyne, in Belfast, Hamburg, and a number of other points, and was building steel cargo ships by the score; it was creating a new system of high roads for which a number of the old main railway tracks were taken

over, and it was running water-power stations, substituting our present chemical treatment of carboniferous strata for the terrible hand coal-mining of the older economy, and it was working oil. It had developed a subsidiary body, the Supply Control, which was rapidly becoming a vaster organization than its parent. This was engaged in producing iron and steel, producing or purchasing rubber, metals, cotton, wool and vegetable substances, and restoring the mass production of clothing of all sorts, electrical material, mechanisms, and a vast variety of chemicals of which the output had been dormant in some instances for twenty years or more.

Never very clearly cut off from the Supply Control was the Food Control, which began ostensibly with the victualling of the Transport Services, and was soon carrying on a vast barter in food materials, its own surplus supplies and commodities generally throughout the world. In all its ramifications these three bodies were in 1970 employing about two million people, to whom wages were paid in the new modern dollars, energy dollars, good for units in Transport, housing, and for all the priced commodities handled by the Controls.

The property of all these Controls was vested in the Modern State Society, which consisted at this time of about a quarter of a million Fellows, who had to be qualified up to a certain level of technical efficiency, who submitted to the Society disciplines during their years of active participation, and received wages varying by about 200 per cent above or below a mean standard, according to their standing. About a quarter of the other employees were student apprentices aspiring to fellowship, and of these the proportion was increasing. The Society had already developed the organization it was to retain for a century. The Fellows were divided into faculties for technical purposes; they voted by localized groups upon local issues and they had a general vote for the faculty delegations to the central council of the Society, which had its first seat at Basra contiguous to the central offices of the Three Controls. The relation of the Society to the Controls was not unlike the relation of the Communist Party to the Moscow Government in the early days of the Soviet system; it was a collateral activity of much the same people.

It was the Society itself which at first directed the educational

activities of the Modern State Movement. Wherever it had either its own "nuclei" or found employees of the Controls, it provided an elementary education of the new pattern, which involved a very clear understanding of the history and aims of the Modern State idea, and wherever it had works and factories and a sufficient supply of students, it founded and equipped science schools and technical schools, which included psychology, medicine, group psychology and administration. Gradually a special section of Training and Education was developed under the Air and Sea Control, and this grew into a separate Educational Control. But it never became as distinct from, and collateral to, the Modern State Fellowship as the rest of the Control organizations. One may figure the whole of this world system as a vast business octopus, with the Air and Sea Control as its head and the other Controls as its tentacles. The account-keeping of this octopus centred at Basra, but a rapid development of subsidiary record and statistical bureaus also occurred. Side by side grew the intelligence and research services. By 1970, the world meteorological service was far in advance of anything that had ever existed before.

But already this restoration of communications and circulation was producing effects far beyond the Fellowship and the power of employment of the associated Controls. The ebb in the vitality of human life had already passed its maximum and now began a restoration of activity everywhere, a fresh movement in the decaying towns, a new liveliness upon the countryside, a general reawakening of initiative, that were to confront the direction of this fast growing nexus of the Modern State, with challenges, difficulties, and menaces, that grew rapidly to tremendous proportions.

It had been comparatively easy to spread throughout a prostrate and bankrupt world the new system of air and sea communications and trading that had been evolved. That world was too exhausted by war, famine, and pestilence and too impoverished to support extensive and aggressive political organizations. It was altogether another problem, even with the spreading "nuclei", the new schools and propaganda, to control and assimilate the populations that now, no longer living in want and insecurity, were beginning to feel a fresh strength and a renewed vigour of desire.

Let us review the world situation about 1975. The Transport Control had usurped a monopoly of air and sea transport and was also monopolizing the use of its own new great roads. This gave it a practical ownership of the trade in staple products throughout the world. It was turning all the surplus products of its activities back, when its salaries had been paid, into strengthening its grip upon the general economy of mankind. By 1975 the Modern State Society counted just over a million Fellows, and in addition it was employing and training two million candidates, it was simply employing another three million and it had between seven and eight million youngsters in its new schools. They were all, we may note, not only given a sound training in physical science and biology, but were learning world history and so acquiring a world outlook in the place of the more limited views that had hitherto framed the ordinary political imagination, and they were being taught Basic English as a lingua franca. In ten wonderful years the Transport Control had grown far beyond the scale of any of the great Trusts or Controls of the opening years of the century. It had created a world currency. But it was still far from "owning the earth". Its own produce did not exceed an eighth of all the outside stuff that it bought and sold. Its own production was mainly fuel, metals and mechanisms. Food it bought, timber, vegetable oils, crude rubber, for example. Several hundred millions of human beings were still self-subsisting, quite out of its scheme, or dealing with it only for a few manufactured articles and mass produced commodities. And other hundreds of millions were rapidly developing, or rather recovering, a collateral productivity in relation to or in rivalry with its activities.

The chief difficulties before the Modern State movement arose out of this parallel to its own rapid success. It was calling into existence a mass of exterior prosperity far beyond its immediate power of assimilation. Propagandists and teachers, advisory traders and competent directive agents are not made in a day. The strain upon the supply of ability, loyalty, and complete understanding in the movement was already being noted in 1970. In 1972 we hear of a "scrutiny of qualifications", and new rules were made for the lapsing and expulsion of incompetent and unsatisfactory Fellows. The controlling staff had to be enlarged continually, and the supply of

men with the necessary character, knowledge of group psychology and understanding of the constructive theory of the movement was limited.

"Let us serve", said Fedor Galland, who was already becoming a leading spirit upon the World Council, in a speech that was circulated in 1973; "let us not fall into factions; let us not group ourselves. We cannot afford bickering; we must not thwart and waste each other. We have done no more as yet than make a start. Remember the strangulation of Russia by Stalin. Remember those excellent chapters of De Windt against the spirit of opposition. The struggle for the Modern State has only begun."

Here we have the clearest indication that growth strains were already apparent within the structure of the still infantile Modern State.

But if the movement found difficulty in sustaining its internal unanimity, there was at least this in its favour, that, outside it, there was no single world-wide framework in which antagonisms could concentrate. The old international banking system was dead and gone, and the new order issued its new money and was free to create and dominate the financial organization of things. The old armament-dealing interests were dead and buried. The old nationalist Press systems were dead and already forgotten. It is extraordinary with what rapidity this latter aspect of social life was forgotten, seeing that up to 1940 at any rate it was the primary medium of collective thought and opinion. To-day a copy of a newspaper of any date between 1890 and 1970 is a rare and precious thing, which has to be protected from carbonization in an air-proof wrapper. The Central Board controlled most of the new paper supplies as well as the now rapidly reviving telegraphic, telephonic and air transmission systems.

The resistances and antagonisms it had to encounter, within its organization and without, were certainly immense, but they were extremely various; the dangers they developed never came together into one united danger, never rose to a simultaneous maximum and produced a supreme crisis. In this respect or that the advance of the Modern State might be fought to a standstill and held, but it was never put entirely upon the defensive, and since it held trade, money and its ever-spreading efficient common schools in its hands, time

was always on its side. “If not to-day, to-morrow,” said Arden Essenden. “But better to-day,” said Fedor Galland.

The rapidity with which the Transport Control of 1965 expanded into the Modern State octopus of 1975 accounts for quite another group of difficulties, as well as this initial difficulty of creating a personnel to keep pace with the perpetually elaborated task. This second group of troubles came from the fact that in habit and spirit the old order of things, the old ideas, the old methods, had not had time to die. That old world, blinded and enfeebled by its own errors, had staggered and fallen down in the Thirties and Forties, had lain in a coma in the Fifties. Throughout the Sixties the new world had come into existence. But in the brains of all the men and women alive who were more than forty years old, and in a great majority of those younger, more or less of the old world survived. The revival of human vitality in the Seventies involved not merely a renascence but a restoration. Old things came back to find their habitations still very imperfectly occupied by the new.

Let us consider what form this opposition had taken and what were the more serious survivals of the old order — old “state of affairs” rather than “order” — still in active existence about 1975. We shall then have a clue to the history of the next seventy-five years.

The task before the Air and Sea Control was essentially to leaven the whole world to its own pattern. Within its far-flung tentacles it embraced and sought to permeate with its own nature, with the concepts and methods of a commonweal of mutual service, a mass of some thousands and a half million human beings, still carried on by inertias established during thousands of generations. Morowitz calculates that in 1976 about sixty per cent of this mass was living directly upon the seasonal cultivation of the soil, and that two-thirds of this, throughout the temperate zone, was producing mainly for its own consumption and not for trade. He thinks this was a relapse from the state of affairs that obtained about 1910-1920. An emancipation from the soil, an abolition of the peasant, had then been in progress for more than a century. Large-scale production, with an abundant use of machines, had so increased the output per head as to liberate (if it can be called liberation) a growing

proportion of hands for industrial work or unemployment. But this process had been reversed after 1940. From that date onward there was a drift back of workers to the land, to live very incompetently and wretchedly.

The abolition of the self-subsisting peasant had been the conscious objective of Lenin and Stalin in Russia. The cultivator, with increasing ease, was to produce fundamental foodstuffs far beyond his own needs and to receive for his surplus an ever increasing variety of helps, comforts and amenities. Millions of the cultivators in 1910 were cultivating entirely for the market; they produced cotton, hemp, rubber or what not, and were as dependent on the provision shop for their food as any townsman. The social crash had ended all that. In the Famished Fifties, as Morowitz says, everyone was "scratching for food in his own patch". In the Sixties the common way of life throughout the world was again immediate production and consumption. Only under the direction and stimulus of the Transport Control did the workers upon the soil begin to recover the confidence and courage needed to produce beasts only for sale and crops only for marketing.

The ambition of the Modern State Fellowship was to become the landlord of the planet and either to mine, afforest, pasture, and cultivate directly or to have these tasks performed by responsible tenants, or groups and associations of tenants under its general control. But at the outset it had neither the personnel nor the power to carry out so fundamental a reconstruction of human affairs. The comparative failure of the two Five Year Plans in Russia had been a useful warning against extravagant propositions.

The Modern State did not mean, as the old saying goes, "to bite off more than it could chew". Its chief missionaries were its traders. They were more abundant than, and they did not need the same amount of training as, the Modern State schoolmasters and propagandists. They went offering contracts and prices to existing or potential food growers, cotton growers, rubber planters and operable mines; the Control did its best to guarantee sales and prices to any surviving factories, and it trusted to the selective power it had through transport, the new monetary issues, research and technical education to strengthen its grip as time went on and enable it to

establish a general order in this worldwide mélange of bankrupt producers and impoverished customers it was restoring to activity.

At first it made no enquiry as to the ownership of goods that were brought to its depots; it paid cash and observed its contracts; it attempted no discriminations between man and man so long as they delivered the goods and traded square. Its nuclei and schools were still propagandist schools in 1975 and quasi independent of the trading, transport and industrial organizations that endowed them. But this was only the first stage in the Modern State undertaking. The next was to be more difficult.

The student of history must always keep in mind the importance of lifetime periods in social and political change. Between 1935 and 1975 was only forty years. Everywhere old systems of ideas were still dominating men's brains and still being transmitted to the young. Old habits of thought, old values, old patterns of conduct, that had been put aside, as it were, just as jewels and fine clothes and many polite usages had been put aside, during the days of dire need and immediate fear, returned with returning self-respect. During the Famished Fifties the full creative scheme of the Modern State won its way to dominate the imaginations of at most a few score thousand minds, whose scientific and technical education had prepared them for it. After that the propaganda had been vigorous, but still, even after the Conference of Basra in 1965, the number of brains that could be reckoned as primarily Modern State makers probably numbered less than a couple of hundred thousand.

The subsequent propaganda was still more swift and urgent, but the new membership was not always of the same thorough quality as the old. The society wanted the services of every man or woman it could incorporate with its Fellowship, but it did not want an inrush of half prepared adherents, refugees from moral perplexity requiring guidance, ambitious careerists. Every new religion, every church, every organized movement has known this conflict between the desire for expansion and the dread of dilution. On the one hand the Modern State recalled the headlong shallow mass conversions of Christianity and Islam, which had reduced those great faiths to a mere superstitious veneer upon barbarism, and on the other there was the more recent warning of Soviet Russia, morally and intellectually

sterilized at last by the eternal espionage, censorship and "purges" of the G.P.U. The central brain of the Modern State octopus had to steer its world system of organization between the extremes of rash receptiveness and black suspicion. It had to go steadfastly and discreetly and yet it had to go swiftly. If, on the one hand, it found presently that its own Fellowship was not altogether as free as it had been at first from reactionary weaknesses and traditional sentiments, on the other it found that its leading ideas, by virtue of its material successfulness and of continual explicit statement, were spreading far beyond the limits of its nuclei and its organized teaching.

In the economic realm there appeared, even from the first, intimations of a revival of prosperity, a number of developments that the Society, had it had the necessary resources, would gladly have nipped in the bud. It wanted to deal directly with every primary producer. To-day that is how things are. But so soon as there was a new demand for cotton, for rubber, for pork, wheat, rice and the like, a multitude of obliging intermediaries appeared between the negro cotton growers in America, the Sudanese cotton growers, the local folk who went into the largely abandoned rubber plantations to collect rubber again, the wheat farmers and swineherds and ranchmen, and set themselves to collect and handle the produce for the Control buyers and to distribute Control goods by retail in return.

These people, the former business men of the world, emerged from the slums of decaying towns, from municipal offices, from their own reluctantly cultivated corners of land, from the dingy retreats of predatory bands, from small local trading establishments, full of the sense of trade revival. They organized loans to the peasants, contrived advances of material to them, advised them shrewdly, went officiously to the Control agents for instructions.

This sort of intervention did not stop at individuals, nor with advices and promises. In many parts of the world, in townships and counties and small states, where a Town Council or Workers' Soviet or Mayor or Lord of the Manor was in authority, or where mines or plantations lay abandoned and neglected, the reviving breeze of buying produced a violent desire in the minds of men to set other people working for their profit. There were "Getting to Work Again" fêtes in America in 1969 to "stimulate local business".

By 1975, from Manchuria to Cape Colony and from Vancouver to Java, the old state of affairs — peasants in debt, peasants working to pay rent, peasants bringing in goods in arrears, fishermen, miners, factory and gang workers generally, collectors and hunters, the old immemorial economic life of mankind — was recovering vigour. Debt serfdom was returning everywhere. Rents were rising everywhere. Everywhere the increasing surplus product was being intercepted according to time-honoured patterns. Even slavery was reappearing in thinly disguised forms.

It had always been a strong tendency in the old order to utilize the labour of offenders against the law. Forced labour seemed so just and reasonable a punishment that whenever the possibility of using it profitably appeared the authorities set themselves to multiply indictable offences and bring luckless people into unpaid servitude. In the "classic" age most mines were worked and most galleys propelled by convicts. In the late Middle Ages the Mediterranean shipping waited on the magistrate, and if offenders did not appear in sufficient numbers they had to be sought for. Out of the dimness of the Fifties and Sixties into the returning publicity and activity of this phase of recovery there appeared everywhere local bosses, chiefs and political gangs inciting and driving people to the production of marketable goods. The Supply Control Report of 1976 on "Conditions of Labour Supplying Goods to Us" notes the existence of convict labour in North and South America, on the West Coast of Africa, in Soviet Russia, Central India, North China, Japan, Java and elsewhere, and states that in many districts it is hardly distinguishable from kidnapping.

"The cheapness of human beings", runs the Report, "is once more impeding the efficient organization of mechanical production. Outside the range of our own services and factories, there are vast and increasing masses of people now living at a standard of life too low and under stresses too urgent for them even to begin to understand the objectives of the Modern State, and, drawing its sustenance from their degradation, there is arising again an intricate tangle of exploiting classes, entrepreneurs, wholesalers, retailers, money-lenders (lending the local coinages and exchanging against our notes), politicians, private and corporation lawyers, investors and

landowners, of the most varied types, but all having one common characteristic, that they put profit before service and will resist and drive as hard a bargain as they can with our expanding organization. These things are returning about as fast as we are growing."

The Transport Control Report of the same year notes another system of troubles arising. Here the attack on Modern State development was more direct. "We are finding the question of way-leaves an increasing difficulty in the extension of our road net for local and heavy traffic. The world, we are told more plainly every day, is not ours to do with as we like. Everywhere claimants are springing up, renascent corporations, local authorities or private individuals who profess ownership of the soil and demand rents or monetary compensation from us. In some cases, where the local authority was of such a character as to afford a reasonable hope of its ultimate absorption by our organization, we have been able to come to an arrangement by which it has taken over the making and maintenance of the route within the area of its alleged jurisdiction, but in the majority of instances the resistance is much more frankly in the nature of a hold-up. The enquiries of our social psychologists show a widespread desire for simple or disguised bribery on the part of the obstructives, though it has to be admitted that there are many genuine cases of quite disinterested stupidity. Few of them realize clearly that they are demanding bribes or exacting blackmail. They are obsessed by old-fashioned ideas of property; almost anything in existence they imagine can be appropriated as a man's 'own', and then he has an absolute right to do what he likes with his 'own', deny its use to the commonweal, destroy it, let it at a rack rent, hold it for some exorbitant price.

"Rarely have these obstructives the whole-hearted support of their communities behind them — so much has to be conceded to the propaganda of the Modern State and to the general diffusion of our ideas and the spontaneous appearance of fresh and kindred idea systems. We are preparing a schedule of obstructives. They vary in scale from the single tiresome litigious individual with an old-fashioned clutching mind, through a long range of associations, cities and provincial councils, to the resuscitated sovereign governments of the war period. Two royal families have been exhumed from their

retirement in the German-speaking part of Europe and more, it is said, are to follow. On various of our routes, notably on the Bordeaux-Black Sea road, the old Chinese claim for 'likin' has reappeared. Our lorries have been held up at Ventimiglia, where a 'dogana' has been erected by the Fascist government in Rome, a barrier has been put across the track, and payments have been demanded in the name of the King of Italy. There have also been demands for Octroi dues outside some French and Italian towns.

"A legal committee of the Modern State Faculty of Social Psychology is taking up the question of these new impediments to world revival and unification, and it will prepare a plan of action in the course of the next month. This attempt to revive the proprietary strangulation which ended the old order is irritating and may develop into very grave obstruction. The former world system of ownership and administration was in complete liquidation before 1960, and we have no intention of buying it out at anything above scrap rates. We deny absolutely any claim to enhanced values created by our restoration of production and commerce."

7. — INTELLECTUAL ANTAGONISM TO THE MODERN STATE

The earliest known histories are dynastic. They are little more than lists of priest-kings and kings and tribes and contributions. With Herodotus history became political. It was only in the eighteenth century (C.E.) that economic processes came into the story, and only after the time of Karl Marx that their essential importance was recognized. Later still, climatic, biological and geographical changes were woven into the historical tapestry. Not until the last hundred years have education, cultural influences and psychological sequences generally been given their proper rôle in the human drama.

The most difficult thing in our understanding of the past is to realize, even in the most elementary form, the mental states of those men and women, who seem so deceptively like ourselves. They had bodies on exactly the same pattern as ours, if not so well exercised, well nourished and uniformly healthy; they had brains as capable as ours and as complicated. It is only when we compare their conduct with ours that we realize that, judged by their contents and their habits of reaction, those brains might almost have belonged to another species of creature.

We read incredulously about the public burning of religious heretics, of the torture of criminals to enforce confession, of murders and outrages, of the offence of rape, of the hunting and tormenting of animals for "sport", of men and women paying money for the pleasure of throwing sticks at a tethered cock until it died, and it is hard to resist the persuasion that our ancestors were insane. Most of us, were we suddenly put back into the London of King Henry VIII, would be as frightened, and frightened in the same way, as if we were put into a ward of unattended criminal lunatics. But the brains of these people were no more diseased than ours. Their mental habit systems had been built up on a different framework; and that is the whole difference.

It was perfectly sane men who made the World War, who allowed the private capitalist system to smash itself to fragments in spite of

reiterated warnings, and who came near to destroying mankind. If the reader were sent back only for the hundred and seventy years between now and 1933, he would still feel a decided uneasiness about what people might or might not do next. Yet as he fought down his alarm and went about among them he would have found them as completely satisfied of the sanity of their own mental shapes as he was.

Presently he would have found himself trying to adapt himself to those mental shapes. In the end he might come to realize that, in his own case also, it might be that the things he felt compelled to believe and do, and the things he found impossible to believe and do, though they had served his everyday purposes in his own time fairly well, were no more final in the scheme of things than the ideology that framed the motives and acts of a Roman emperor or a Sumerian slave.

The difficulty in the comparison and understanding of past mental states with our own increases rather than diminishes as we approach the present, because the differences become more subtle and more interwoven with familiar phrases and with values we accept. We cannot keep in mind that meanings are perpetually being expanded or whittled away. We live to-day so saturated in our circumstances, so full of the security, abundance and vitalizing activity of our world-commonweal, that it is hard to realize how recently it was possible for minds of the highest intelligence to call the most fundamental conceptions of our present order in question. Even in the middle Twentieth Century, ideas that now seem so natural and necessary to us that we cannot imagine them disputed, appeared extravagant, impossible and offensive to brains that were in their essential quality just as good as the best alive to-day.

In the early half of the Twentieth Century a great majority of educated and intelligent men and women had no faith whatever in the Modern State; they hated it, feared it and opposed it, and it is doubtful whether the balance was redressed until the Twenty-first Century was well under way. The Modern State was built up, by comparatively mediocre men, upon whom the necessary group of ideas happened to strike with compelling force. As H. Levy insisted in his Universe of Science as early as 1932 (Historical Documents:

General Ideas Series, 192301), science is a "social venture" rather than an accumulation of individual triumphs. Both the scientific idea and the idea of the human community were not individual but social products. And the Modern State prevailed because its logic steadily conquered not this man in particular nor that man in particular, but the sense of fitness in the general human intelligence.

Maxwell Brown, in his monumental studies of the growth of the Modern State idea, has made a fairly exhaustive review of the art and literature of the early Twentieth Century. Except in the writings of a few such sociologists as J. A. Hodson, Harry Elmer Barnes, James Harvey Robinson, C. A. and Mary Beard, Raymond B. Fosdick and a few American and English journalists, and in such alarmist fantasies as Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, there is no sense whatever of the immense revolutionary changes that were occurring in the social structure. Bernard Shaw, for example, though classed as a revolutionary writer, never, except in his preposterous Back to Methuselah, anticipated. The mass of his work was a witty and destructive commentary upon contemporary things, ending in that petition in bankruptcy, Too True to be Good. He had to a supreme degree the opposition mentality of the Irish.

This estrangement of literature from the Modern State movement became more marked throughout the nineteen twenties and thirties. As reality became urgent, as war and insolvency descended upon social life, literature, art and criticism recoiled into studies and studios and their own bitter and peculiar Bohemia; they became elaborately stylistic and "rare", or brilliantly or brutally smutty.

This decadence of literature, says Maxwell Brown, was an inevitable expression of the economic decadence of the Thirties and Forties. He draws an illuminating contrast between the type of mind primarily directed towards aestheticism and the type of mind primarily directed towards science. The "aesthetic producer", he insists, is dominated by acceptance; he writes for response. The scientific worker aims at knowledge and is quite indifferent whether people like or dislike the knowledge he produces. Aesthetic life therefore is conditioned by the times; science conditions the times.

Literature and art are necessarily time-servers, either abjectly so or aggressively and pretentiously so. They deflect real moods or

speculate upon possible moods in the community. It is no good writing books that people will not read or painting pictures from which they merely turn away. Psychology in those days had not developed sufficiently to permit of a scientific analysis of creative work, and such criticism as there was, when it was not a simple release of spite, was essentially an effort either to persuade or to browbeat people into buying books and pictures or listening to music of a type fancied by the critic. It was more bitterly partisan and propagandist than political discussion.

In the expansive phase of the later nineteenth century the general confidence of the prosperous classes was reflected in a large, hopeful, forward-looking complacent literature, and every critic was, so to speak, an uncle, a prosperous uncle, sitting by the fire, but the sense of contraction and advancing dangers that troubled the patrons of art and literature as the twentieth century unfolded threw a defensive quality over the intellectual world, outside the spheres of science and invention. The progressive note was popular no longer. The reading offered to the people was pervaded by a nagging hostility to new things, by lamentations for imaginary lost loyalties and vanished virtues.

It was not so much that the writers of the time desired civilization to retrace its steps, as that they wished that no more steps should be taken. They wanted things to stop — oh, they wanted them to stop! The underlying craving was for consolidation and rest before more was lost. There was little coherent system in the objections taken; it was objection at large. Mass production was very generally reprehended; science rarely got a good word; war — with modern weapons — was condemned, though much was to be said for the "chivalrous" warfare of the past; there were proposals to "abolish" aeroplanes and close all the laboratories in the world; it was assumed that hygiene, and especially sexual hygiene, "robbed life of romance"; the decay of good manners since the polished days of Hogarth, Sir Charles Grandison and Tony Lumpkin was deplored, and the practical disappearance of anything that could be called Style. As one nineteenth-century American writer lamented, in suitably archaic English:

"How life hath cheapened, and how blank The Worlde is! like a

fen Where long ago unstained sank The starrie gentlemen: Since Marston Moor and Newbury drank King Charles his gentlemen."

That was the dominant note.

Maxwell Brown gives a volume of material, quotations (Literature Hangs Back; Historical Documents: General Ideas Series 311002) from about four thousand representative books and papers.

As the world emerged again from the sheer desolation of the Famished Fifties and the great pestilence, this purely opposition mentality revived in hundreds of thousands of elderly literate people whose brains had been fitted and turned round in that way for good. It revived because it was all there was to revive in them; and it met with all too ready and natural an acceptance among those endless myriads of cleverish active people who were now trying to get private businesses and private profit systems going before it became too late for ever, between the expanding system — of the Transport Control and its collaterals above, and the inarticulate and still needy masses below. They did not realize how much the revival of prosperity was due to the new organization. It was not in their type of mind to want to account for revivals of prosperity. What they desired to do was to take advantage of the "turn of luck". To them from the first the Transport Control appeared as a formidable competitor, harsh in spirit and still harsher in method, which had set itself to prevent smaller brighter folk making hay while the sun shone. They were only too eager to see it as a huge, cheap, nasty, vulgar menace to all the jolly little profits and rewards and assurances that were peeping up again in life. For the loyalty and obedience of servants, it offered them ingenious mechanical arrangements; for the labour of respectful toilers, it suggested indifferent and dangerous power machinery. Are we not wise and virtuous enough in ourselves, they asked, that this World Control should come "tidying us up"?

Manifestly the new order was resolved to "incorporate" (hateful word!), if it could, all these would-be privileged, would-be irresponsible people. Its face was hard towards them. Its hygienic and educational activities threatened an increasing regulation of their lives. It proposed to rob them of the natural excitements and adventure of gambling and speculation; to deprive them of the legitimate advantages of their foresight and business flair. It

threatened them with service; service and ever more service — a rôle, they insisted, that would be unendurably "monotonous". They wanted to be good sometimes and bad sometimes and jump from this to that. A "soulless uniformity" became the bugbear of these recalcitrant minds.

The workers often resented Modern State methods almost as much as their immediate employers. Men have always been difficult to educate and reluctant to submit themselves to discipline, and there was a curious suggestion of the schoolmaster about these fellows of the Modern State nuclei. Dislike of what was at hand helped to conjure up fears of what might lie beyond. Once freedom of business had gone, what rules and regulations might not presently enmesh the wilful individual under the thumb of this one world employer? For instance, the Modern State centres were talking of a control of population; it was easy to see in that a hideous invasion of the most private moments in life. Weights and measures and money to-day, and wives and parentage tomorrow!

These widely diffused repugnances, fears and antagonisms were enhanced by the difficulties put in the way of aspirants to the Modern State Fellowship and to positions of responsibility in the service of the Controls. Jobs were not for everyone. Rejected candidates to the Fellowship were among the most energetic of Modern State antagonists. By 1970, all over the world, wherever the remains of the old prosperous and educated classes of "independent" and business people were to be found, appeared associations to combat the activities of the Modern State nuclei. There were Liberty Clubs and Free Trade Associations; there were Leagues of Citizens, Trade Protection Chambers and "Return to Legality" societies. There were organized religious and patriotic revivals. The Modern State schools were discovered to be immoral, unpatriotic and anti-religious. It was extraordinary how the money-changers hurried to the deserted temples and clamoured for the return of Christ.

Every town and city found someone or other — as often as not it was some elderly lawyer or politician from the old days — keen to revive and protect its privileges. The world heard once more of the rights of peoples and nations to be free and sovereign within their borders. A hundred different flags fluttered more abundantly every

day about the reviving earth in the sacred name of freedom. Even men who were engaged in organizing debt-serf cultivation and debt-serf industrialism in the American cotton districts, in the old rubber plantations and in the factories of India, China and South Italy, appeared as generous supporters of and subscribers to the sacred cause of individual liberty.

The behaviour of the inferior masses showed a wide divergence of reactions. The widespread communist propaganda of the War Years and the Famished Fifties had intensified their natural hostility to the profit-seeking bourgeoisie, and there was little chance of their making common cause with them; but the Modern State Society, with the lessons of Russia before it, had no disposition to exacerbate the class war for its own ends. It knew quite clearly that to appeal to the mere insurrectionary impulse of the downtrodden was to invite the specialist demagogue, sustained by his gang and his heelers, his spies and secret police, to take the chair in the council chamber.

De Windt had driven that point well home. "Creative revolution cannot cooperate with insurrectionary revolution." There was to be no flattery of ignorance and inferiority as though they were the keys to an instinctive wisdom; no incitement to envy and jealousy against knowledge and ability. The Modern State meant to abolish toil, and that meant to abolish any toiling class, proletariat, labour mass, serf or slave, whatever it was called, but it had no intention of flattering and using the oafish mental as well as physical limitations it meant to liberate from existence altogether. It took the risk that the forces of reaction would organize strikes and mass resistance against its regulations, its economies of employment, its mechanization, its movements of population and the like, among the other inevitable difficulties of its task.

So the world-stage was set for the triangular drama of the late Twentieth and early Twenty-first Centuries, in which reaction in a thousand forms, and Modern State organization in one, struggled against each other to subjugate or assimilate the more or less passive majority of mankind.

We write in outline, and necessarily in an elementary history it is only the primary lines that can be given. But just as when we enlarge our scale of observation, the broad divisions of a map vanish and

countries and divisions become hills, valleys, buildings, forests, roads, and at last, when we come to earth, stones, pebbles, blades of grass and flowers, so this rough division of humanity into three intermingled and intensely interacting multitudes was in reality qualified by a thousand million individual complications.

On the whole the content of people's minds was far more intricate then than it is now. That is a principle the student of history must never forget. The intellectual progress of mankind had been a continual disentanglement and simplification leading to increased grasp and power. These closing decades of the Age of Frustration were still, in comparison with our own time, a time of uncertainties, inaccuracies, mixed motives, irrational surprises and bitter late realizations. There was scarcely an unskilled toiler in the world who was really no more than a passive clod in the hands of his exploiters and employers. There was scarcely a reactionary who did not in some fashion want tidiness and efficiency. And, conversely, there was hardly a Fellow of the Modern State organization, man or woman, who had not spasms of acute self- seeking and vanity, who could not be doctrinaire, intolerant and vindictive on occasion, who could not be touched by the sentimental and aesthetic values of the old order, and who did not like, love and react to scores of people incurably shaped to the opposition pattern.

The New Fiction of the Eighties and Nineties is enormously preoccupied with this universal battle of ideas and mental habits in people's minds. The simpler novels of the earlier past and the novels of the present day tell of individual character in a set battle between good and bad in a world of undisputed standards; but the novels of those years of social conflict tell of a wild confusion between two sorts of good and two sorts of bad and of innate character distorted in a thousand ways. It was a difficult age. Life still has its endless ironies and ambiguities, but they are as nothing to those amidst which the men of 1970 had to steer their courses.

8. — THE SECOND CONFERENCE AT BASRA, 1978

The second Conference at Basra, though many of its prominent figures had already played leading rôles in the earlier gathering in 1965, was very different in scale, scope and spirit from that assembly. It was an older gathering. The average age, says Amen Rihani, was a full ten years higher. Young men were still coming into the Fellowship abundantly, but there had also been accessions — and not always very helpful accessions — of older men who had been radical and revolutionary leaders in the war period. Their frame of experience had shaped them for irresponsible resistance. Their mental disposition was often obstructively critical and insubordinate. Many had had no sort of technical experience. They were disposed to throw an anarchistic flavour over schools and propaganda.

Moreover, the great scheme of the Modern State had now lost something of its first compelling freshness. The "young men of '65" had had ten years of responsible administrative work. They had been in contact with urgent detail for most of that period. They had had to modify De Windt's generalizations in many particulars, and the large splendour of the whole project no longer had the same dominating power over their minds. They had lost something of the professional esprit de corps, the close intimate confidence with each other, with which they had originally embarked upon the great adventure of the Modern State. Many had married women of the older social tradition and formed new systems of gratification and friendship. They had ceased to be enthusiastic young men and they had become men of the world. The consequent loss of a sure touch upon primary issues was particularly evident in the opening sessions.

Moreover, the atmosphere of the 1965 gathering had been purely a Modern State atmosphere. Except for the Russian political representatives, there had been no antagonism at all to its general purposes, and there had been few people in Basra who were not Fellows of the Modern State Society or closely sympathetic with its aims. But now the reviving nationalisms, the resuscitating social and

commercial interests of the moribund old world system, were acutely aware of the immense significance of events at Basra, and there had gathered an assemblage of delegations, reporters, adventurers, friends and camp followers of every description, far exceeding the numbers of the actual Fellows. They crowded the Control rest houses that clustered about the aerodrome, they invaded the offices and residences of the Controls, they stimulated the private enterprise hotels and restaurants that had recently sprung up among the date palms and rice fields of the environs, to an unprecedented congestion and liveliness, and multitudes of them had to be accommodated in tents and houseboats. A number of thirty-year-old hulls of passenger liners were fitted for their accommodation. Observers were reminded of the tourist period of the First Age of General Prosperity when they saw these uninvited visitors, chaffering with the old-world Bagdad carpet traders and Arab nomads who had also been attracted by the gathering.

There would probably have been a far greater multitude drawn to Basra if the Transport Control had not realized in time the social and hygienic dangers of too great a gathering, and had refused passages and limited bookings. Casual individuals were eliminated as much as possible, and all over the world groups of stranded pilgrims found themselves unable to get further on the journey.

The most serious of these invaders were the delegations of enquiry sent by the reawakening sovereign governments of the old order. These were half diplomatic, half official-expert, teams, and they came with the declared intention of challenging the activities of the Controls in their several territories. They proposed to legalize and regulate the Controls. They had no formal standing in the Conference; they had invited themselves and given the Conference organizers notice of their coming. “Better now than later,” said the Modern State officials, and accepted notice and provided accommodation. “We have to have things out with them,” Williams Kapek wrote to Isabel Garden (The Kapek Garden Letters. Historical Documents Series: Basra II 9376).

Beside these “old government” agencies there were a number of parties claiming to represent various new business combines and interests that were setting up in frank competition with the Control

monopolies. There were a number of lawyers of the older type, men in sharp contrast and antagonism to the younger legists of the new American school. The contrast of the two types, the older all pomp and dodges and the younger all candour and science, is dwelt upon lengthily by Kapek.

"This Conference is essentially a conference on Scientific and Mercantile Communications and Associated Questions, similar to that held at Basra in 1965"; so ran a printed notice circulated to all the visitors who could claim any representative status. "Its discussions are open only to the Fellows of the faculties of the Modern State Society. They are not public discussions and their reports are for the use of Fellows only. But it would be disingenuous to deny that the decisions arrived at may affect the general welfare of mankind profoundly, and since you come to present criticisms, claims and proposals presumably in that interest, the committee of organization of the Conference will do all it can to facilitate meetings between your group and the faculty or faculties affected. Unfortunately the accommodation for meetings in Basra will be greatly strained by the needs of the actual Conference, and the committee can do little to arrange conferences between the immense variety of accredited bodies that have made an appearance, much less to arrange for their pleasures and comforts during the period of this assembly. The committee regrets that it does not consider the proposal of the committee of Bagdad citizens, claiming to represent the government of Irak, to police this unexpected World Fair with 300 Arab policemen, a camel corps of seventy-nine men and six machine-guns, as a practicable one. It has removed this body painlessly to comfortable quarters in the Island of Ormuz, and the Police of the Air and Sea Ways in its recognizable uniform will be alone responsible for order in the ancient province of Bassorah."

Explicit details of information bureaus, hospital organization, supply and available accommodation followed.

It is difficult to see how else the Central Control could have dealt with this unexpectedly abundant eruption of the old system, but the various delegations and commissions professed to be extremely indignant at their reception. They were of such various and unequal value, that they found it impossible to fall into any combined scheme

of action. Since their theory was that the Controls and the Modern State organization were nothing more than a sort of world cooperative society, none of them could behave as diplomatic missions to a sovereign power. And consequently they could not regard each other as diplomatic missions. Their powers and authorizations were extremely ill-defined. The bland refusal of the Conference authorities to concede them meeting-places and anything but a very limited use of telephonic, cable and radio communications embarrassed them extremely.

"I met Sir Horatio Porteous, the British Imperial representative, in the street," writes Williams Kapek. "He was very eager to get my advice upon a point of etiquette. It seems that we have seized the province of Bassorah from the government of Irak and made prisoners of an alleged local police — those fifty lousy camels and the rest of it I told you about in my last — and that Irak is a mandatory protectorate under Great Britain. He wished to put in a protest somewhere. 'But WHERE?' said he.

"I adopted a sympathetic tone. 'You see,' said Sir Horatio, 'this Central Control of yours isn't any damned thing at all! If it was a provisional government or something...'

"I suggested a call on the Air and Sea Police.

"'But they are acting under orders. Who gives the orders? It's all so damned irregular!...'"

There was a flutter of calls between the delegations, some "serious talks" and much drafting of more or less futile minutes, reports and protests. The weather was exceptionally hot and dry and such space and apparatus as was available for exercise and recreation was monopolized by the more energetic Fellows who were taking part in the Conference proper. It was difficult to keep cool, difficult to keep calm; still more difficult to keep well and hopeful. Some few of the intrusive delegates and commissioners took to drinking hard, but the supply of alcohol was severely limited and the police had turned practically all the professional ministers of pleasure out of the province. On the other hand, the Transport Control, in a mood of friendly indulgence, started a special service of pleasure steamers to Bubiyan, outside the jurisdiction of its police, and there a floating little mushroom town of cafés, restaurants, houses of pleasure, music

halls and shows of every sort speedily sprung up to minister to the unofficial overflow of the Conference.

"Bubiyan is draining us quite pleasantly," wrote Williams Kapek, "and they say there is quite a boom in entertainment for man and beast in Babylon and Bagdad. The old British institution of the long week-end flourishes and Babylon gets more and more Babylonian."

But there were still plenty of outsiders left in Basra to keep the faculties busy.

Meanwhile the Conference was going on behind closed doors. It was clearly recognized that this curious mélange of agents, delegates and officials from without its organization was only the first intimation of the confused antagonisms that were gathering against the new order. The policy of expansion and quiet disregard had lasted long enough. The pretence of being a Conference upon communications and associated matters had to be dropped. The time had come for the Modern State to define itself and clear up its relations to the past out of which it had arisen, and to all this world of tradition which was now rapping at its doors.

"Before we disperse," said Arden Essenden, who presided at the first plenary session, "we must admit some at least of these delegations, hear them and give them answers to take home with them. But first we have to know our mind much more clearly. What are we now and what do we intend to do? The days before us begin a new chapter in human history. It is for us to choose the heading and plan that chapter now."

9.— “THREE COURSES OF ACTION”

There was no dominant individual of the De Windt character and quality at the second Basra Conference. There was no prophetic direction of the deliberations. But there was no want of what used to be called “leadership”, and a number of interesting personalities, the politic Hooper Hamilton; the frank, emphatic William Ryan; the intricate Shi-lung-tang; M’bangoi, the East African biologist; Rin Kay, the social psychologist — perhaps the finest mind in the gathering; Mohini L. Tagore; Morowitz, the mystical humanist; and Arden Essenden, the fanatic of action, gave point and definition to the differences of opinion.

They were interesting rather than outstanding men because the general level of intelligence was a high one. The gathering had a personality of its own, wary, resolved to be well informed and to weigh considerations, but essentially determined. The presence of that miscellany of delegations and commissions which besieged the Conference dramatized the world situation and pressed for decisions. “I feel like one of those old world jurymen,” wrote Williams Kapek, “who used to be locked up together until they returned a verdict. And you cannot imagine how hot and dry Basra can sometimes contrive to be.”

De Windt and his school of writers had planned the framework of a new world and shown to what social elements one had to look for its evocation, but he had given only the most scanty suggestions for getting rid of the body of the old. Already in 1965 the Modern State people had had a fairly distinct vision of our present order. But few of them had anticipated the diffused toughness of the old corpus and its capacity for counter-revolutionary exertion. That had become oppressively evident by 1975.

Reports on the general situation had been very carefully prepared. They dealt with the various centres at which the spirit of opposition was being organized. Most serious of these were those former sovereign governments and legal systems, which had seemed effaced, moribund or prostrate during the desolation of the Famished and Fever-stricken Fifties. In 1965 the only government actively

antagonistic to the Controls had been the Soviet government in Russia. That antagonism, curiously enough, was not so great as it had been at first. The technicians of the sovietized regions were ousting the politicians; there was now indeed a working cooperation of Russian transport, communications and production with the world system under the Controls, and there seemed a reasonable prospect of ultimate assimilation. There was no objection being made to people nominally communists who were also Fellows of the Modern State, and many Russian scientific and technical workers were Modern State Fellows and not members of the communist party at all. The reports discussed hopefully and analytically the possibility of some similar process in America and the Far East. There also the political and legal structures did not present insurmountable obstacles to assimilation. The decline of humbug in America was bringing out the fundamental constructive energy of that great synthesis of Western peoples. But elsewhere there was increasing evidence that the sovereign state system and the system of private ownership were fundamentally irreconcilable with the new conceptions.

The reports gave information, that was in many particulars new to most of the assembled Fellows, of the very strenuous attempts that were being made by the reviving national governments in Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain to resume the manufacture of aeroplanes and war material. Whether there was a common agreement among them was doubtful, but the intention to put up air forces and organize aerodromes that should be able to ignore the regulations and refuse the services of the Air and Sea Control was quite plain. They were finding great difficulty in securing the services of competent engineers, mechanics and aviators, but the thing was going on. Every student in the technical schools of the Control who failed a test or an examination, or was penalized for misbehaviour or rejected from the Modern State Fellowship, would turn up presently as a national government expert. And the governments were now setting up their own national technical schools and attempting to bring the schools and laboratories of the Control into the “national” educational organization. Not only was there a disposition to set up a competing system side by side with the Controls system, but there was a growing tendency to annex the organizations, roads, plant,

mines, factories, aerodromes, schools, colleges, laboratories and personnel of the Control that chanced to be within the jurisdiction of the sovereign government concerned. The new Bavarian government, the Windsor Parliament and the government in Rome were all "arranging to take over" these things within their territories. They were becoming more explicit about it every year. They persisted in regarding the interlocking Controls as a dangerous international Trust.

This was the burthen of the national missions of observation and enquiry which were stewing in the sunshine outside the doors of the Conference— "in a state of tentative menace", as Williams Kapek put it.

The minor delegations representing groups of owners and organized local interests had this much in common with the national missions, that they proposed more or less frankly to resume possession of properties the Controls had taken hold of and revived, or to impose burthensome charges. They varied like the inmates of a zoological garden in scale and power, but they had one quality in common: an obstructive litigiousness.

In the frankness of its privacy behind its closed doors, the Conference sized up these antagonisms and discussed their treatment. "There are just three lines of treatment possible," said Ryan brutally. "We can treat with 'em, bribe 'em, or rule 'em. I'm for a straight rule."

"Or combine those ingredients," said Hooper Hamilton.

The method of treaty-making and a modus vivendi was already in operation in regard to Russia. There indeed it was hard to say whether the communist party or the Modern State movement was in control, so far had assimilation gone. And the new spirit in the old United States was now so "Modern", that the protests of Washington and of various state governors against the Controls were received hilariously. Aeroplanes from Dearborn circled over the capital and White House and dropped parodies of the President's instructions to dissolve the Air and Food Trust of America. All over that realist continent, indeed, the Controls expanded as a self-owned business with a complete disregard of political formalities. But the European situation was more perplexing.

“Most of these European sovereign governments are no more than scarecrows,” said William Ryan. “There’s no living people behind them any longer. Leastway, no living people that matter. Call their bluff on them and you’ll hear no more about them.”

It was Shi-lung-tang who argued against defiance and stated the case for Bribery.

Bribery in his suave exposition, bribery combined with treaties and tact, became a highly moral amelioration of direct action. He asked the Conference to realize how specialized and rare as yet was its new forward-looking habit of mind. When all the work of the propaganda and schools had been accounted for, it was doubtful if a twentieth part of the race accepted, or if a tenth understood, even in the most general terms, the difference between minds trained to creative conceptions and minds brought up in an atmosphere of defensive acquisitiveness and property accumulation. It would take three or four generations to convert the world to a forward-looking attitude. Either the Modern State movement had to seize power openly now and inaugurate a tyranny that would have to last as long as it took to turn round the great majority of intelligences into the new direction, or it had to propitiate, compromise and persuade these outer masses — UPON THEIR OWN LINES.

“These people will never see things as we see them,” he insisted, making strange gestures and repeating his words to emphasize their importance. “They have to live and die, ON THEIR OWN LINES. It is not just to impose too much upon them. It is only as they die out that the Modern State form of mind can hope to be in a dominant majority. Their mental vices are incurable. Meet them half way, make things easy for them. You will save the world three generations of suffering and bitter conflict.”

He unfolded his Machiavellian project. A greedy acquisitiveness was part of the make-up of every energetic old world-type. They were as incurably voracious as dogs. And yet we made good friends and helpers out of dogs. Their loyalties were at best gang loyalties; they were none the less greedy because they did at times hunt in packs. But they had no fundamental instinctive hostility to the Modern State. It was only when the Modern State thwarted their established habits of behaviour that they snarled at it and began to

fear it. They could never make a solid front against the Modern State. They could always be played off against each other, one against another; they could be neutralized. The lesson of Russia's harsh repression of her bourgeoisie and professional classes in the Twenties and Thirties was a warning against the miseries and social damage of too sudden and forcible an attempt to change ideals of behaviour. Let the Modern State go more softly and more kindly.

He went on to detailed suggestions. With Russia, Spain and America, bribery need play but a minor rôle. The ruling mentality in these countries was now such that the present working agreements would pass naturally into assimilation in a little while. Elsewhere there was really no permanent harm in recognizing the old claims to sovereign and proprietary rights, and securing such a hold upon leading men that they would keep their hands off the Modern State propaganda and schools and be content with handsome subsidies from the Control services and industries. It would be cheaper than war. "If they want a little war now and then among themselves—"

In spite of Shi-lung-tang's smiling face, there was audible disapproval at this point.

When he had done, his case for tact and insinuating corruption was knocked to pieces by Rin Kay. "If we were a Society of Moral Supermen," he said, "we might venture to be as disingenuous as this." But Mr. Shi-lung-tang forgot that every Fellow in the Modern State society had two enemies: the acquisitive man outside and the acquisitive man within. The point their Chinese friend missed was the fact that it was much more natural to adopt the behaviour patterns of the old world than to acquire those of the Modern State. The old dispositions were something that was; the new dispositions were something that had to be made and sustained. The inner life of a Modern State Fellow was a sustained effort to be simple and serve simply. That should take him all his time. He could not afford to be intricate and politic. "We have a difficult enough task before us just to do what we have to do, plainly and honestly. We cannot afford to say and do THIS and mean THAT." William Ryan supported that with vigour, but Hooper Hamilton spoke long and elaborately on the other side. The spirit of the society was plainly with Kay.

M. L. Tagore, an economic botanist, introduced a new line of

thought into the discussion, or rather he revived the line of thought of nineteenth-century mystical liberalism. He said he was equally against bribery, insincere treaties or any use of force. He was old-fashioned enough to be a democrat and a believer in the innate wisdom of the unsophisticated man. And also he believed in the supreme value of truth and inaggressiveness. We must not outrage the sense of right in man, even if that meant the abandonment of our immediate objectives. We had to persuade him. And we had no right to assume that he did not hold himself to be right because his conception of conduct differed from ours. Let the Modern State society go on with the scientific organization of the world, yes, and let us go on with the propaganda of its doctrines in every land. But let it not lift a hand to compel, not even to resist evil. He appealed to the missionary successes of early Buddhism and Christianity as evidence of the practical successfulness of spiritual urgency and physical passivity. He concluded in a glow of religious enthusiasm, that did not spare him the contemptuous criticisms of the social psychologists who fell upon him tooth and nail so soon as he had done.

These speeches, which are to be found in full in the Basra Conference Reports, vols. 371 and 372, were the three salient types of opinion in that gathering. The immense majority were for the active line, for frankness and rule. A not inconsiderable minority, however, wavered behind the leadership of Hooper Hamilton. They felt that there were elaborations and refinements that did not find expression in the more aggressive speeches, that the use of force could be tempered by tact and that lucidity towards an objective was compatible with kindliness and concession.

In a number of speeches some of them tried to express this rather elusive conception of compromise; some of them were not too skilful as speakers, they went too far in the opposite direction, and on the whole they tended to drive the movement towards a harder assertiveness than it might otherwise have expressed. The problems of the Russian system and America were abundantly discussed. Russia now was represented only by technicians and there was abundant evidence that the repressive influence of the Og-pu had waned. Ivan Englehart was again a leading figure. He assured the

Conference that there would be no trouble from Moscow. “Russia,” he said, “is ready to assimilate. Is eager to assimilate.”

Arden Essenden spoke late in the general discussion; he spoke with a harsh enthusiasm and passionate faith; he carried all the younger men and most of the older ones with him and he shaped the ultimate decisions.

Some of his phrases are, as people used to say, “historical”. He said, “The World-State is not a thing of the Future. It is here and now. It has always been here and now, since ever men said they had a common God above them, or talked, however timidly, of the brotherhood of mankind. The man who serves a particular state or a particular ownership in despite of the human commonweal is a Traitor. Men who did that have always been Traitors and men who tolerated them nursed treason in their hearts. In the past the World-State had been torn up among three-score-and-ten anarchies and a countless myriad of proprietors and creditors, and the socialists and cosmopolitans, the true heirs of the race, were hunted like criminals and persecuted and killed.

“Now, through the utter failure of those robbers even to maintain their own social order and keep at peace among themselves, the world has fallen into our hands. Power has deserted them, and we, we here, have Power. If we do not use it, if we do not use it to the fullest, we are traitors in our turn. Are we to tolerate even a temporary revival of the old system? In the name of reason, why? If their brains have got into the wrong grooves — well, we can make fresh brains. Are we to connive with, and indulge this riffraff that waits outside our doors? Go out and look at them. Look at their insincere faces! Look at their furtive hands. Weigh what they say. Weigh the offers they will make you!”

To us to-day that seems platitudinous and over emphatic, but it conveyed the sense of the Conference and it led directly to the general decision with which its proceedings concluded. The most significant of these was the increase of the Police of the Air and Sea Ways to a million men, and the apportionment of a greatly increased amount of energy to the improvement of their equipment. There was also to be a great intensification and speeding up of Modern State education and propaganda. Provision was also made for the

enlistment of auxiliary forces and services as they might be needed for the preservation of order; these auxiliaries were to renounce any allegiance except to the Transport or other Control that might enlist them. The Controls were reorganized, and a central committee, which speedily became known as the World Council, was appointed by them to act as the speaking head of the whole system. The ideas of treaties and contracts with exterior administrations and of any diplomatic dealings with dissentients were abandoned. Instead it was determined that this central committee, the World Council, should openly declare itself the sole government of the world and proceed to make the associated Controls the administrative organization of the planet.

Accordingly a proclamation was prepared to this effect and issued very widely. It was broadcast as well as printed and reprinted from a multitude of centres. It was "put upon the ether" everywhere to the exclusion of other matter. For now the world had its wireless again in as great abundance already as in the early Thirties. So simultaneously the whole planet received it. It whipped up the awaiting miscellany at Basra into a foam of excited enquiry. All over the world city crowds or solitary workers received it, open-mouthed. At first there was very little discussion. The effect was too stunning for that. People began to talk after a day or so.

We give it as it was issued: a singularly poor piece of prose when we consider the magnificence of its matter. It seems to have been drafted by Arden Essenden, with some assistance from Hamilton and amended in a few particulars by the Council.

"The Council for World Affairs, constituted by the Air and Sea Control and its associates, declares:

"That between 1950 and 1965 this planet became derelict through the incapacity of its ostensible rulers and property owners to keep the peace, regulate production and distribution, and conserve and guide the common life of mankind;

"That chaos ensued, and

"That it became urgently necessary to build up a new world administration amidst the ruins.

"This the Air and Sea Control did.

"This administration has now been organized about a Central

Council for World Affairs, which is making this statement to you.

"It is the only sovereign upon this planet. There is now no other primary authority from end to end of the earth. All other sovereignty and all proprietary rights whatever that do not conduce directly to the general welfare of mankind ceased to exist during the period of disorder, and cannot be revived.

"The Council has its air and sea ways, its airports, dockyards, factories, mines, plantations, laboratories, colleges and schools throughout the world. These are administered by its officials and protected by its own police, and the latter are instructed to defend these organizations whenever and wherever it may be necessary against the aggression of unauthorized persons.

"In every centre of population there are now Modern State nuclei and Control agents conducting the educational work of the Council and in reasonable contact with the local economic life, with local enterprises, local authorities and individuals not yet affiliated to the Modern State organization. The time has come for all these various quasi independent organs of business and administration to place themselves in orderly relations to the new Government of the Whole World.

"We are constituting a Bureau of Transition, for the simplification and modernization of the business activities, the educational and hygienic services, production, distribution and the preservation of order and security throughout our one home and garden, our pleasure ground and the source of all our riches — the earth, our Mother Earth, our earth and yours.

"Without haste or injustice and without delay, with a due regard to your comfort, your welfare and your wishes, the Bureau will set itself to bring your life into sound and permanent correlation with the one human commonweal."

"It is usurpation!" cried a voice, when the declaration was put to the vote as a whole.

"You decide upon Force," said Shi-lung-tang. "I did my best—"

"But this means War!" cried Tagore.

"No," said Arden Essenden. "There is no more War. This is not War — nor Revolution. This is the recognition of a Revolution and Government again."

10. — THE LIFE-TIME PLAN

It is still a debatable question how far that hard decisive declaration of the Socialist World-State at Basra was not premature. There are those who consider it the most timely of acts; there are some who believe it should have been made as early as the first Conference in 1965. The discussion became involved with the intellectual and moral conflicts that went on under the Air Dictatorship. It mingles with the controversies of to-day. But certainly, from 1978 onward, the Modern State movement lost something of its pristine mental freshness, lost openness, lost much of that almost irresponsible adventurousness that had flung the network of transport and trading controls so swiftly about the earth. "We have swallowed the world, but now we have to digest it," said Arden Essenden. The old defiant repudiation of the past was replaced by a firm and sometimes rather heavy insistence upon the order of the future.

There was nowhere any immediate uprising in response to the proclamation of a World Government. Although it had been plainly coming for some years, although it had been endlessly feared and murmured against, it found no opposition prepared anywhere. Thirteen years had wrought a profound change in Soviet Russia and the large areas of China in association with Moscow. The practical assimilation of Soviet Transport and Communications was almost tacitly accepted. The details of the amalgamation were entrusted to committees flying between Moscow and Basra. All over the world, wherever there was any sort of governing or managing body not already associated with the Modern State System, it fell to debating just how and to what extent it could be incorporated or how it could resist incorporation. Everywhere there were Modern State nuclei ready to come into conference and fully informed upon local or regional issues. The plain necessity for a systematic "renucleation" of the world became evident. The "Section of Training and Advertisement" had long since worked out the broad lines of a modus vivendi between the old and the new.

That modus vivendi is called variously The Life Time Plan or — with a memory of that pioneer effort in planning, The Five Year Plan

of the Russian Dictatorship — The Thirty Year Plan. Independent businesses that respected certain standards of treatment by the workers, which would accept a certain amount of exterior control, technical and financial, and which maintained a certain standard of efficiency, were to be accorded not simply tolerance but a reasonable protection. Even if their methods were suddenly superseded by new devices, they were to be kept running until they could be wound up, their products were still to be taken by the Controls. This was far better treatment than was ever accorded superseded producers under the smash-and-grab conditions of the competitive system. In the same way, whenever possible the small owning peasant or the agricultural tenant was not dispossessed; he was given a fixed price for his output, counselled or directed in the matter of improvements and so merged by bearable degrees into the class of agricultural workers. This, as Rupert Bordinesco put it (Brief Explanation: Historical Documents Series 1969), gave them "time to die out". Because it was an integral part of the Life Time Plan that the new generation should be educated to develop a service mentality in the place of a proprietary mentality. There were to be no independent merchants or independent cultivators under twenty in 1980, none under thirty in 1990 and none under forty in 2000. This not only gave the old order time to die out; it gave the new order time to develop the more complex system of direction, mechanism and delivery it needed soundly and healthily. The lesson of the mental discords and tragic disproportions in the headlong development of the first Russian Five Year Plan — disproportions as monstrous and distressful as the hypertrophies and atrophies of the planless "Capitalist System" of the nineteenth century — had been marked and learnt.

It did not trouble the World Council that to retain millions of small businesses and tens of millions of small cultivators the whole world over for so long meant a much lower efficiency of production. "These older people have to be fed and employed," wrote Bordinesco, "and now they will never learn or be able to adapt themselves to a novel routine of life. Help them to do their job a little better. Save them from the smart people who want to prey upon them — usurers, mortgagers, instalment salesmen, intimidators, religious

or secular; and for the rest — leave them in peace."

The Brief Explanation also drew a moral from the "Period of Glut" in the Twenties, which preceded the collapse of the Thirties, when the whole world was full of unconsumed goods and unemployed people. This, Bordinesco pointed out, was the inevitable consequence of an unregulated progressive system of private enterprise. "There is no sense in throwing a man out of an employment, however old-fashioned, unless there is a new job for him. There is no sense in bringing children into the world unless there is education, training and useful work for them to do. We have to see that each new generation is arranged numerically in different categories of training and objective from those of its predecessor. The Russians learnt this necessity in their great experiment. As we progress towards a scientific production of primary substances, the actual proportion of agricultural workers, miners, forest wardens, fishermen and so forth in the community must fall. So also the proportion of ordinary industrial workers must fall. The heavy industries will precede the light in that. A certain compensation will be caused by a steady rise in the standard of living and particularly by what De Windt called 'the rebuilding of the world', new cities, new roads, continually renewed houses everywhere." (This was foreshadowed to a certain extent by the French plan for "Outillage National" and the German housing schemes in operation as early as the late Twenties, plans and schemes ultimately strangled by the budget-balancing fanatics.) But even that diversion of energy from the production of basic materials and small commodities to big structural undertakings would not suffice to use up the continually released human power in the community. At this point appeared what Bordinesco called the "enlarging categories", which were to consume more than they gave. There had to be increasing numbers of people engaged in education, in the developing and ordering of knowledge, in experimental science, in artistic production, in making life more abundant and ample. To that expansion no limit could be set.

"We men have a lease of this planet," runs the Brief Explanation, "for some millions of years. It is foolish not to press on to better life, but it is more foolish to hurry frantically and cruelly. The history of

the past two centuries is one sustained warning against the disemployment of men and women for whom there is no other use. Before we teach, our teachers have to learn; before we direct comprehensively, we must have experience in direction. We must always be attempting a little more than we can do, but we must not be attempting the impossible. We must advance without needless delay, but without waste, hurry, or cruelty. Do not be fearful or jealous of the advent of the new conditions. No honest worker, man or woman, has anything to fear from the coming of the Modern State."

11. — THE REAL STRUGGLE FOR GOVERNMENT BEGINS

But the rulers of the new World-State, as their enlargements of the Air and Sea Police made manifest, were under no illusion that the new order could be established in the world by declarations and "Brief Explanations", and hard upon its proposals for conferences and assimilations came the organization of its local constabularies and the regulations that made the reorganized nuclei the sole means of communication of independent local authorities, businesses and individuals with the central Controls. In nearly every part of the earth the nuclei had prepared a personnel of sympathizers and auxiliaries, varying in character with local conditions, outside the ranks of the Fellowship. The khaki uniform of the street and road guardians, differing very little then from the one familiar to us to-day, appeared as if by magic all over the world, and the symbol of the winged disc broke out upon aeroplanes, post offices, telephone and telegraph booths, road signs, transport vehicles and public buildings. There was still no discord with Russia; there the blazon of the wings was put up side by side with the old hammer and sickle.

Nowhere at first was there any armed insurrectionary movement. We realize from this how complete had been the collapse of the organized patriotic states of the World War period. They had no national newspapers, no diplomats, no Foreign Offices any more. There had been no paper for the former and there had been no salaries for the latter. Lacking vocal organs, nationalism as such was silenced. There were, however, protests, in a considerable variety of ineffectiveness, from local self-appointed bodies, and much passive resistance and failure to comply. But even the removal of the winged sign was infrequent, and usually where that occurred nothing further ensued when the air police came whirring out of the sky to replace it.

This phase of tacit acquiescence was, however, only temporary, until the opposition could gather itself into new forms and phases and discover methods of organization. The elements of antagonism were abundant enough. The Fascist garrison in Rome, claiming to be

the government of all Italy, was one of the earliest to make its challenge. It had a number of airmen, unlicensed for various reasons by the Transport Control, and it now sent a detachment of its Black Shirts to occupy the new aeroplane factory outside the old Roman town of Turin, and to seize a small aerodrome and whatever air material was to be found in it at Ostia. The winged disc at these two places was replaced by the national fasces. A proclamation was made and disseminated as widely as the restricted means of publication permitted, calling for an assembly of the old League of Nations and reviving a long defunct phrase of President Wilson's, "the self-determination of peoples." The King of Italy, after a diligent search, was found inoffensively farming in Piedmont, and the long closed palace of the Quirinal was reopened and made habitable for him.

The new air police had been waiting with a certain impatience for provocation of this sort. It had been equipped with a new type of gas bomb releasing a gas called Pacificin, which rendered the victim insensible for about thirty-six hours and was said to have no further detrimental effect. With this it now proceeded to "treat" the long resented customs house at Ventimiglia and the factory and aerodrome in dispute.

At Ostia the police planes found a complication of the situation.

An extraordinary ceremony was in progress in the aerodrome. Three new aeroplanes had just been brought thither from the Turin factory, and they were being blessed by the Pope (Pope Alban III).

For the still vital Catholic Church had always been given to the blessing of implements, shops, boats, bridges, automobiles, flags, guns, battleships, new buildings and the like. It was a ceremony that advertised the Church, gratified the faithful, and did no perceptible harm to the objects blessed. And this particular occasion had been made something of a demonstration against the World Council. The Pope had come; the King and the reigning Duce were present. Sound films made only a few minutes before the arrival of the air police show a gathering as brilliant, with its uniforms and canonicals, as anything that might have occurred before the World War. Choristers in cassocks and charming little lace collars chant, acolytes swing censers; the venerable Holy Father sits on a throne under a canopy, on a large crimson-draped platform. There was a muster of at least

three thousand Black Shirts.

The action of the Council commander, Luigi Roselli, was precipitate.

The subsequent enquiry intimates pretty clearly that he betrayed anti- clerical bias. He had been chosen for this task because he was himself an Italian, and so, it was thought, less likely to exacerbate any latent nationalist feeling. (It is an interesting sidelight on the times that the Fascist commandatore on the ground was Mario Roselli, his elder half-brother.) His general instructions had been to seize the aerodrome and the aeroplanes with as little violence as possible. The Pacificin was only to be used in case of armed resistance. But the sight of the cassocks, the birettas, the canopies and ornaments and robes, the sound of chanting and the general ecclesiastical atmosphere were too much for the young man's prejudices. His squadron circled in formation over the aerodrome. The ceremony proceeded with dignity in spite of the noise of his propellers. For it seemed incredible that any human being would dare to gas the Pope.

"Let go," said Luigi Roselli, too malicious to realize the brutality of his outrage.

The gas containers came crashing into the arena.

"Just for a moment," says one of the aviators concerned, in a memorable letter, "the chanting rose louder. They showed pluck, those priests. Hardly one of them broke ranks. Then they crumpled up in their places, drifting down on their knees for the most part. It was queer the way you saw the gas spreading among them; it was like a bed of flowers dying and the death spreading out from a lot of centres. The old boy on the throne didn't turn a hair. He had his hands together and his head bowed. You couldn't tell when it took him. The Fascist guard and the King's party weren't anything like so dignified. They gesticulated, they yelled. They were defiant and all that. And some ran about a bit before the stuff got them.

"Of course, you must understand, the whole lot thought they were being killed. None of them could have known anything of this new stuff. WE didn't know until a fortnight ago.

"We had no gas masks on our bird, so I didn't take part in the landing party which seized the new 'planes.

“The last I saw of that aerodrome, it looked like some old Turkish carpet, gone threadbare in places but still with some brightish patches. Perfect garden of sleep. I hope nobody robbed any of them before they came to. But Roselli, I believe, dropped proper instructions about it all in Rome....”

Unhappily the raid had not been so completely bloodless as this young man supposed. A youthful priest, Odet Buanarotti, had been struck on the head by one of the glass containers and killed outright. He was subsequently canonized; the last saint and martyr to be inscribed in the Latin hagiography....

At this point Raven’s written transcript breaks off abruptly.

BOOK THE FOURTH
THE MODERN STATE MILITANT

1. — GAP IN THE TEXT

So far I have been transcribing, with very little correction and no alteration, the text of Raven's dream book as he left it fully written out. But at this point, that fully written out history breaks off. The record of the next seventy or eighty years is represented only by an untidy mass of notes in the perfectly abominable private shorthand Raven used. Then comes the concluding chapter fully written out again.

I cannot say with any certainty why Raven left this very vital part of his story obscure and confused while he went on to the very last part of all. But I have my own ideas of what happened in his brain. In the first place he had a very human impulse to realize the issue of this world revolution that was unfolding in these notes, and it was easier, therefore, because it was more attractive, for him to write out the later part first. And in the next the intervening matter was really much more intricate for him to handle. It had, if I may use the expression, "come through his mind" with difficulty and against resistances. His general ideas had been prepared for the new wars, for the post-war breakdown and for a world rule based on air power, and they had also been prepared for the steadily progressive World-State of the final phase. But they had not been prepared for the profound and complex mental and spiritual struggles of three-quarters of a century which inaugurated the new order. Those he had not thought out.

Whether it was really a clairvoyant vision he had of a real future text book of history, or whether all this matter was an eruption from his subconscious mind, hardly affects the manifest fact that all this part came against the grain. One of the strongest arguments for the view that this Outline of the Future was evolved by Raven from his inner consciousness is the fact that there are several passages in which he seems to argue with himself, and that the quiet unhurrying assurance of the earlier and later narratives is not sustained in these middle parts.

I do not think it was mere chance that pulled him up precisely at the point when he came to the gassing of the Pope and the

martyrdom of Saint Odet of Ostia. I think that this incident struck him as cardinal, as marking a supremely significant corner which humanity was turning. It was something that had to happen and it was something he had never let his mind dwell upon. It ended a practical truce that had endured for nearly three centuries in the matter of moral teaching, in the organization of motive, in what was then understood as religion. It was the first killing in a new religious conflict. The new government meant to rule not only the planet but the human will. One thing meant the other. It had realized that to its own surprise. And Raven, with an equal surprise, had realized that so it had to be.

Nearly a year earlier the One World-State had been declared at Basra. There already it had been asserted plainly that a new order must insist upon its own specific education, and that it could not tolerate any other forms of training for the world-wide lives it contemplated. But to say a thing like that is not to realize its meaning. Things of that sort had been said before, and passed like musical flourishes across the minds of men. The new government did not apprehend the fullness of its own intentions until this unpremeditated act of supreme sacrilege forced decision upon it. But now it had struck down the very head of Catholic Christianity and killed an officiating priest in the midst of his ministrations. It had gripped that vast world organization, the Catholic Church, and told it in effect to be still for evermore. It was now awake to its own purpose. It might have retreated or compromised. It decided to go on.

Ten days later air guards descended upon Mecca and closed the chief holy places. A number of religious observances were suppressed in India, and the slaughter-houses in which kosher food was prepared in an antiquated and unpleasant manner for orthodox Jews were closed throughout the world. An Act of Uniformity came into operation everywhere. There was now to be one faith only in the world, the moral expression of the one world community.

Raven was taken unawares, as the world of 1978 was taken unawares, by this swift unfolding of a transport monopoly into a government, a social order and a universal faith. And yet the experiment of Soviet Russia and the practical suppression of any other religion than the so-called communism that had been forced

upon it might well have prepared his mind for the realization that for any new social order there must be a new education of all who were to live willingly and helpfully in it, and that the core of an education is a religion. Plainly he had not thought out all that such a statement means. Like almost all the liberal-minded people of our time, he had disbelieved in every form of contemporary religion, and he had tolerated them all. It had seemed to him entirely reasonable that minds could be left to take the mould of any pattern and interpretation of life that chanced upon them without any serious effect upon their social and political reactions. It is extraordinary how such contradictory conceptions of living still exist side by side in our present world with only a little mutual nagging. But very evidently that is not going to be accepted by the generations that are coming. They are going to realize that there can be only one right way of looking at the world for a normal human being and only one conception of a proper scheme of social reactions, and that all others must be wrong and misleading and involve destructive distortions of conduct.

Raven's dream book, as it unfolded the history of the last great revolution in human affairs to him, shattered all the evasive optimism, all the kindly disastrous toleration and good fellowship of our time, in his mind. If there was to be peace on earth and any further welfare for mankind, if there was to be an end to wars, plunderings, poverty and bitter universal frustration, not only the collective organization of the race but the moral making of the individual had to begin anew. The formal revolution that had taken place was only the prelude to the real revolution; it provided only the frame, the Provisional Government, within which the essential thing, mental reconstruction, had now to begin.

That precarious first world government with its few millions of imperfectly assimilated adherents, which now clutched the earth, had to immobilize or destroy every facile system of errors, misinterpretations, compensations and self-consolations that still survived to confuse the minds of men; it had to fight a battle against fear, indolence, greed and jealousy in every soul in the world, the souls of its own people most of all, and win. Or it had to lapse. It had to do that within a definite time. If it did not win within that time,

then dissension and relapse were inevitable and one more century of blundering and futility would have to be added to the long record of man's martyrdom. This new régime had to clean up the racial mind or fail, and if it failed then in all probability it would leave the race to drift back again to animal individualism, and so through chaos to extinction. Failures in the past had been possible without general disaster, because they were partial and local, but this was the decisive world effort.

2. — MELODRAMATIC INTERLUDE

I have remarked already how impersonal is this school history of the year 2006 in comparison with the histories of our own time. Politicians and statesmen pass like the shadows of general forces, royalties peep and vanish like mice behind the wainscot. They vanish at last altogether — unobtrusively. Now and then this history picks out individuals, Henry Ford for instance, or De Windt, Winston Churchill or Woodrow Wilson, not as heroes and leaders but as types and witnesses. They manifest streams of tendency in the social brain, systems of ideas at a point of maximum effectiveness.

Then suddenly at this point the history lapses into something like melodrama. For a phase personalities assume such an importance as to seem to dominate the world's affairs, as Caesar and Cleopatra did or Mirabeau and Marie Antoinette. I think some explanatory links must be missing here, some comments that might have pointed the value of this episode in illuminating the play of motive that led to the Air Dictatorship. But let me give it as it came to me.

The Air and Sea Control and the organization of the associated subsidiary Controls had been the work of a group of keen young men, moved to action by the growing disorder of life and directly inspired by De Windt and his school of writers. They had been full of generosity, enthusiasm and confidence. The first World Council elected in 1978 included most of these leaders of '65, now coming to middle age, one or two older acquisitions and only two additions from among the younger men. Arden Essenden, with his vigour of initiative, was not only the chairman but the natural leader of the first World Council. Only Ivan Englehart could compare with him in power of personality. There were finer and nobler minds present, but none others so emphatic and so available for the crude uses of popular admiration.

There was, it seems, a curiosity in the world about Essenden; his name was better known than any of his colleagues; his portrait, though indeed through nothing worse than acquiescence on his part, got into circulation, as newspapers began to abound again. It was the method of the new world government to have no presidential or

secretarial signatures to its public announcements; it was stated simply that the "Control", whichever it was, or the Council suggested, stated, proposed or had decided, and the World-State seal with its winged disc authenticated the document. But the idea spread by impalpable means that Essenden, who was known to have made the decisive speech for immediate world government at the second Basra Conference, might well have put his name whenever that seal appeared. His prestige grew and came back to his ears. There can be no doubt that his consciousness of a vague exterior support affected his attitude towards his colleagues and their common task.

The historians of our text book, so far as some difficult passages in the stenography can be deciphered, weigh the good and bad effects of this reinforcement of Essenden's natural impatient decisiveness. They bring in other instances and compare him with other dictators. Indisputably there are crises in human affairs so urgent that many worthy considerations and qualifications are better disregarded and overborne rather than that action should be delayed. These critics of our time study the amount of justification that can be made out for Mussolini, for Stalin, Kemal, Hitler and the various other dictators during the economic debacle of the West, and I find this judgment of posterity very discordant with my own profoundly liberal and Anglo-Saxon prejudices. They stress the hopeless indeterminateness of the preceding parliamentary régime more than I should do.

They do not extend anything like the same charity to Essenden that they do to the earlier dictators. He played the "strong man" rôle half a century too late. The pattern of development, they decide, had been fully provided by De Windt and his fellow theorists. Essenden, they insist, did not so much lead as "speak first", and with a needless haste, when the general decision was imminent. He induced the committee to strike too soon and too harshly at the old religious and political traditions that seemed to stand in the way of the Modern State. He found some of his colleagues slow in grasping things that seemed obvious to him. He was impatient and overbearing.

Quite early after the declaration of world sovereignty there were altercations in the committee meetings between him on the one hand and William Ryan and Hooper Hamilton on the other. Shi-lung-tang also becomes an inexplicable thorn in Essenden's side, an enervating

influence full of insidious depreciation. We find Rin Kay intervening with a gentle firmness in these disputes and Englehart fretting openly at their dissensions.

This new world government, one must realize, was carrying on under conditions that were often saturated with emotion. There was still much uncertainty in the outlook; and this perhaps let in adventure and romance. The World Council was in effective possession of world power, but not in unchallenged possession. Even in 2000 C.E., nineteen-twentieths of mankind were still unassimilated to the organization. If the world was not rebellious it was mutinous, and there were plenty of alert and intelligent people in opposition, estranged people or people shaped to forms of thought altogether uncongenial to the reconditioning of human affairs on Modern State lines.

It was inevitable that these disharmonies between the leading figures at the centre of things, and the similar veins of discord that broke the solidarity of the Fellowship with a thousand intricate streaks and patches of weakness, should find echoes and misinterpretations in the greater world outside the machine. That greater world was still prepared for heroes and villains, ready for blind partisanships and storms of suspicion. It wanted drama in its government. A legend came into being which exaggerated a supposed want of sympathy on the part of Essenden for the "priggishness" and "petty tyrannies" of the various Controls. He was supposed to be nobler stuff. He was credited with the intention of taking things into his own hands altogether and ruling the world in a more generous and popular spirit. As the history puts it: "An autocrat has always been the imaginative refuge of the crowd from hard and competent aristocracy."

That Arden Essenden ever plotted to realize these dreams there is no evidence at all. No word, much less any deed, is on record to show that he was unfaithful to the Modern State. But there can be no doubt that he felt that he was a fine figure and very necessary to the World Republic. He felt, as Stalin had done before him, that men could not do without him.

And then abruptly women come back into the history. We find a love intrigue flung across the stream of history. I did not notice until

I came to this part of the world story how small a part women had played in the drama that began with the World War. In most countries they had been emancipated and given equal political rights with men before that disaster. That achieved, they vanish out of the picture throughout four decades of violence. There were indeed women leaders in the early stages of the Russian Revolution, but none filled a decisive rôle. And for all the leadership women exercised between the Twenties and the Eighties they might have been every one of them in kitchen, nursery, hospital, or harem. They lost what little political significance they had when queens went out of fashion. A considerable proportion of the Modern State Fellowship was feminine, but no women occupied decisive positions in the scheme. There were none on the World Council. They were doing vitally important work, educational, secretarial, executive, and the like, but it was ancillary work that did not lead to individual distinction.

But at this point the historian of the year 2106 breaks his inadvertent taboo and two women's names appear, the names of Elizabeth Horthy and Jean Essenden, and we find the threads of human destiny running askew about a story of passionate love and passionate misbehaviour.

Elizabeth Horthy, who caused the downfall and execution of Arden Essenden, was evidently a woman of splendid appearance and unfaltering conduct. She was an air pilot, and she seems to have liked to wear her uniform on occasions when most women would have been in a robe. She knew, says the history, what suited her. She was tall and evidently beautifully made; she "lifted her chin", it seems; she had a "broad brow" and a "serene" face. This I learn from quotations that are given from Essenden's letters to her. They are the letters of a man quite artlessly in love. But there is nothing in the notes to tell us whether she was dark or fair, what colour of eyes looked out from under that "broad brow", nor what sort of voice she had. Her love letters seem to have been pithy and extraordinarily indiscreet. Of her charm and distinction there can be no doubt. She was one of those women who seem radiant to men. She was "like sunshine"; she was "like heartening music". Again I quote Essenden. She made men her friends, except for Hooper Hamilton, who

manifestly felt some obscure resentment against her.

Now this young woman, with her obvious “bravery” and a powerful disposition for romance, seems to have come to Basra in the train of William Ryan. It is possible but improbable that she was his mistress. Apparently she took little or no interest in the immense task of the World Revolution except as a suitable background for her exciting personal adventure. She seems to have fallen in love with Essenden at sight and he with her. It may be she came to Basra intending to do that. Something theatrical about him was not too theatrical for her. They were both theatrical. She liked things to be magnificent, and perhaps her taste for magnificence was stronger than her critical powers.

She seems to have given herself to him without hesitation or qualification or concealment. Theirs was — again I quote those artless letters of his— “the sort of love that flaunts itself like a flag”.

But there was a third principal in this primitive drama, the wife of Essenden, a woman of great energy, great possessiveness and obtrusive helpfulness. It had been her vanity to “inspire” Essenden. And in the cast of the drama was Ryan, loudly resentful at Essenden “stealing” his “air girl”, and Hooper Hamilton, inexplicably malignant. We are left to guess at the incidents and details of the drama, which was after all a very commonplace drama, only that it was magnified to the scale of the world stage. It culminated in Jean Essenden bringing a charge before the World Council against her husband of being concerned in a reactionary plot against the Modern State. She had, she said, intercepted letters, though none were ever produced. The historian of the year 2106, reviewing the particulars of the case, declared that there was no real evidence at all of any guilty associations of either Elizabeth Horthy or Essenden with the widespread movement that certainly existed for a monarchist and individualist reaction. But at the time the accusation was all too plausible. In some of her scrawled notes to him it seems Elizabeth called him “my King”.

Moreover, Jean Essenden repeated the most incredible conversations with her husband: boasts of future glory, dark threats at his colleagues, strange replies to her remonstrances. She at least was an inflexible Modern Republican. Afterwards in a storm of

remorse she retracted all this evidence, but only when it was too late. Probably it was half true. Probably it was reality a little refracted in her mind.

It was Hamilton who sealed Essenden's fate. He presided over the Special Court that had been formed to try the case. "Some of the evidence may be given with a motive," he said, looking at the white face of the accusing wife. "But it is a small matter that Essenden should or should not be a party in this conspiracy. His real offence is that he should have allowed this situation to develop, that he should have permitted his attention to wander from the services of the Republic to personal gratifications — personal gratifications and displays. At least he has been guilty of egotism. He has sacrificed himself and the interest of the world that has wrapped about him to an intensely personal drama. The question of his specific guilt is an altogether minor matter. The question before us is not, 'What has Essenden done?' but, 'What are we going to do about Essenden?' There is need for repression coming; civil war and bloodshed are plainly upon us. This is no time for Great Lovers. Essenden has become ambiguous. He cannot lead us, and — how can we do without him? Things have come to this, Essenden, you are INCONVENIENT. Apart from this quarrel of the women, YOU ARE IN THE WAY."

The notes quote these words from the gramophone records of the trial. For it appears that the historian of the year 2106 could sit at his desk and listen to the steel-band record of the proceedings; note the speeches and mark the inflexions of the voices.

There was a pause, and then Essenden cleared his throat. "I see that I am in the way."

It was decided that there should be no open trial and condemnation. That would have precipitated the revolt. A tabloid was to be given to him, and he was to take it privately. He might "sit in the spring sunshine amidst flowers and green trees" and take it in his own time.

The record was cut deep, it seems, by the scream of Jean Essenden, protesting that that last half-hour should not be spent by the two lovers together.

Through all the years to come those steel ribbons will preserve the

shrill intonations of those distressful moments. “I can’t bear THAT!” cried Jean Essenden — down to the end of time.

“No,” Elizabeth’s actual words are given; “there is no need for you to be hurt any more. Don’t be distressed, Jean, any more. It’s over. It’s all over for ever. I will go now. Out of the court now. I never meant to hurt Arden in this way. How was I to know? There is no need at all for us two even to say Good-Bye or be together any more. Jean, you couldn’t help yourself. You had to do what you have done. But I never meant to hurt you. Or him.”

Those are her words as the shorthand notes give them, but we shall never hear the sound of them. But the man who wrote them down, a century after they were spoken, heard them as he wrote, heard her voice weaken, if it weakened. Was she speaking or was she making a speech? We are left guessing how far these words of hers betrayed her sense of drama or whether it had indeed the simple generosity it may have had.

There is no description of the last moments of Arden Essenden, the man who had drafted the proclamation that founded the World-State. Possibly he did sit for awhile in some sunlit garden and then quietly swallowed his tabloid. He may have thought about his life of struggle, of his early days in the years of devastation and of the long battle for the World-State for which he had fought so stubbornly. Or perhaps according to all the rules of romance he thought only of Elizabeth. Much more probably he was too tired and baffled to think coherently and sat dully in the sunshine staring at those flowers which make the colophon to his story. Then the book closed for him. He died somewhere in the North of France, but the notes do not say precisely where.

They are more explicit about the fate of Elizabeth Horthy, who killed herself that day. There was no tabloid for her. She took her nearest way out of the world by flying her machine to an immense height and throwing herself out. She went up steeply. It was as though she was trying to fly right away from a planet which had done with romance. “The aeroplane ceased to climb; it hung motionless, a quivering speck in the sky, and then began to waver and fall like a dead leaf. It was too high for anyone to see that its pilot had leapt free from it and was also falling through the air. A mere tattered rag

of body was found amidst the branches of a little thicket of oak near Chantilly."

A fortnight after Hooper Hamilton also succumbed to "egotism" and took an overdose of sleeping-draught at his summer-house in the Aland Isles.

And with that this novelette-like interlude ends. It is elementary in its crudity. It is out of key with all that precedes it and all that follows. We are told there were other "stories" about the men of the First Council, but these other stories after this one sample are left to our imaginations. Its immense irrelevance tears the fabric of our history. But through the gap we see the pitiful imagination of humanity straining for a supreme intensity of personal passion.

Did that young woman as she stepped out upon nothingness above the cirrus clouds feel that her life had been worth while? The history calls her, "that last romantic".

3. — FUTILE INSURRECTION

The notes show the historians of 2106 convinced that there was no real complicity between Elizabeth Horthy and the leaders of the Federated Nationalists who now broke out into open revolt. The impression of her character made by her recorded words and deeds is, they argue, quite incompatible with the idea that if she had indeed been a revolutionary, she would have abandoned her fellow conspirators for a melodramatic suicide because of the execution of Essenden. Far more like her would it have been for her to fly to the rebels in Germany and give herself passionately to avenge and vindicate his memory. But plainly she did not care a rap for the monarchist conspiracy, and it is possible that she did not know of its existence. Both she and Essenden, there can be little doubt, lived and died loyal, in intention at least, to the Modern State.

But it suited the revolt to seize upon her tragedy and use her as one of its symbols, and it was long believed that Essenden had retracted the socialist cosmopolitanism of the Basra Conference in favour of Federated Nationalism. It is interesting to find the legend of the poor old League of Nations presently become more powerful than its living reality, and ironical that it should supply the formula for an attempt to divide up the world again into "sovereign" fragments. The declaration of the so-called Prince Manfred of Bavaria put the League into the forefront of his promises. Alternatively he spoke of it as a World Federation of Free Peoples, and he promised Freedom of Thought, Freedom of Teaching, Freedom of Trade and Enterprise, Freedom of Religious Profession, Freedom from Basic English, Freedom from Alien Influence everywhere. As a foretaste of these good things, he released a little pogrom in the Frankfurt district where a few professing Jews still lingered.

[From this point to another which I shall indicate when I reach it I am able to give a fairly trustworthy transcription of the notes — ED.]

There was never anything that amounted to actual war during this period of disturbance; nothing that could be called a battle. The World Council had the supreme advantage of holding all

communications in its hands, and, as military and naval experts could have told the rebels, there is no warfare without communications. Prince Manfred issued some valiant proclamations "to the World" before he took his tabloid, but since Basic English was repudiated by his movement, they were translated into only a few local languages, printed on stolen paper by hidden hand-presses, and sought after chiefly by collectors. The jamming of the public radio service was mischief rather than revolt. At first there was a certain revival of the manufacture of munitions in factories that had been seized by rebel bands, but generally these ended their output after at most a few weeks under the soporific influence of Pacificin. There were a few deserters from the Air Police and a certain number of small private aeroplanes in nationalist hands; but the net work of registration, vigilant police patrols, and the absence of independent aerodromes soon swept rebellion out of the air.

There remained the bomb, the forbidden pistol, the dagger and the ambush. It was these that made the revolt formidable, forced espionage, search raids, restriction of private movement and counter violence upon the World Control, and rendered the last stages of the struggle a grim and indeed a terrible chapter in human history. In narrow streets, in crowds and conferences, in the bureaus of administrations and upon the new roads, lurked the death-dealing patriot. He merged insensibly with the merely criminal organizations of blackmail and crime.

It was this murder campaign, the "Warfare of the Silenced and Disarmed", as Prince Manfred put it, which stiffened the face and hardened the heart of the Modern State for half a century. It took to "preventive" measures; it began to suspect and test; that horrible creature, the agent provocateur, was already busy again before 2000. He was busy for another decade; he did not certainly vanish from the world until the Declaration of Mégève in 2059, but there is no record of his activity after 2030. And the government which had begun its killing with Arden Essenden and Prince Manfred came to realize the extreme decisiveness and facility of the lethal tabloid. For the grosser forms of execution had given place to this polite method, and every condemned man could emulate the Death of Socrates, assemble his friends if he chose, visit some lovely place, or retire to his bureau. In

vain the veteran Rin Kay protested in the committee that, just as he had argued long ago that men were not good enough to be Machiavellian, so now he declared they were not good enough to be given powers of life or death, incarceration or relief over their fellows. “You murder yourselves when you kill,” he said.

The rebels, however, were killing with considerable vigour and persistence, and their victims had no such calm and grace in their last moments. They were stabbed, shot, waylaid and beaten to death.

“For a terror,” wrote Kramer, “death must be terrible.”

“For murder,” said Antoine Ayala, “death must be inevitable.”

In the end the penal code did seem to achieve its end. There were 5703 political murders in 2005, and 1114 in 2007. The last recorded occurred in 2034. The total is over 120,000. But during these twenty-nine years there were 47,066 political executions! Rihani estimates that more than seven per cent of these were carried out upon anonymous, circumstantial, or otherwise unsatisfactory evidence. Most were practically sentences by courts martial. The millennium arrived in anything but millennial fashion.

4. — THE SCHOOLING OF MANKIND

And now again the shorthand notes are troubled, disturbed and almost unreadable, and the resistances of Raven rise up and mingle with the proper text.

It was the age-long issue between faith in compulsion and faith in the goodwill of the natural man that had invaded the record. It affects me as I transcribe now; I do not see how it can fail to affect any contemporary writer or reader. I get again that flavour, that slight but perceptible flavour of — what can I call it but INHUMANITY? — in the historian's contribution. These men whom we anticipate here are different in their fundamental ideas. This short transition of a hundred and seventy years is marked by a subtle change in the human heart. I wonder if the same kind of difference might not arise if we could bring a good contemporary mind of the early eighteenth century into untempered contact with our thoughts to-day. Would not such a mind find us nowadays rather hard and sceptical about things respected, rather harshly frank about things biological, rather misshapen in our sentimentalities?

It is an old joke to revive such literary characters as Dr. Johnson or Addison and make them discuss contemporary things, but generally the fun goes no further than clothing modern reactions in old-fashioned phrases and costume. But in the light of my own response to the harshly lucid, cold, and faintly contemptuous criticism of our present resistances by the writer or writers of this 2106 document I find myself reviewing these old juxtapositions. I see that if we could indeed revive Johnson he would not only strike us as an ill-mannered, offensive, inadaptable and tiresome old gentleman who smelt unpleasantly and behaved worse, whose comments on life and events would be wide of the mark and discoloured with the echoes of antiquated controversies, but we should find that his contact with us would be pervaded by an incurable distress at our pace, at our strangely different values, our inhuman humanitarianism, as it would have seemed to him, and our cruel rationality. He who had sat so sturdily against his background of accepted and acceptable institutions, customs, and interpretations

would find that background vanished and himself like a poor martyr in the arena with eyes upon him from every direction. Of course he would be hustled off to meet Mr. G. K. Chesterton, and that might prove the most painful of all his encounters. For Mr. Chesterton, who is posed so often as an avatar of the old doctor belongs to his own time quite as much as the most futuristic of us all.

I am a hostile critic of present conditions and a revolutionary in essence; nevertheless, I can get on with the people about me because, even though my song is a song of revolt, it is in the same key and tempo as theirs; but I perceive that if I were transferred to this infinitely happier and more spacious world the history of Raven's reveals I should be continually and irreparably, in small things and great things alike, discordant. I should find nobody to get the point of my intelligent observations; I should laugh incomprehensively, fail to see the jokes that pleased these larger, more vigorous people, and the business of life would hurry past me. All sorts of things I had hoped for and forecast might be there — but in some essential way different and alien to me.

It is one of the things that Raven's notes have taught me that a human mind, an adult human mind anyhow, is much less easily transplanted to a new time and climate than I had been wont to assume. To me, the story of Arden Essenden's bold leadership, his acute self-consciousness, and his uncontrolled love for Elizabeth Horthy seem matter for such another story, let us say, as Meredith's Tragic Comedians; but the historian of the year 2106 finds him and her only material from which to dissect out the treacherous egotism of passion. Something in me rebels against that, just as it rebels against the assumption that the World War was a process of sheer waste, its heroisms and sacrifices blind blundering, and its significance out of all proportion less than the social and economic dislocations that caused it.

And now that I come to these disconnected records of the harshly rational schooling of human motives under the Air Dictatorship, records that even Raven found no zest in copying, my distaste is as ineradicable as it is unreasonable. I feel that, but for "the accidents of space and time", I should have been one of the actively protesting spirits who squirmed in the pitilessly benevolent grip of the Air

Dictatorship. But whether it suits my temperament or not, this story, as it came through Raven to me, has to be told.

The men who made the great revolution and unified the world between 1965 and 1978 were men of practically the same mental assumptions as our own. They were in direct mental and moral continuity with our contemporaries. While the reader turns the page, if there is any truth in this history, De Windt, still absolutely unknown, must be working either in Berlin or London upon that Theory of the Nucleated Modern State which was the decisive plan of that final consolidation, publishers must already have read and rejected the preliminary scheme of his great work, and in a year or so from now some Mrs. Essenden will be choosing the name of Arden for her boy. It is as close to us as that. The men of the first World Council, therefore, saw both sides of the business and wavered in feeling between our tradition and the new order they were creating. But the subsequent generation which constituted the Air Dictatorship had been shaped from the beginning in the aggressive bright new schools of the Modern State nuclei, they had fed on a new literature, they looked out upon fresh horizons, and their ideology had been determined more than anything else by the social psychologists and "new lawyers" of the American school. They were starkly constructive. Nuance to them was obscurity and compromise weakness.

It is plain that so far as the future was concerned the first World Council with its rivalries and politics was far less effective than the unobtrusive Educational Control which worked under it during its régime and gradually drew together police, hygiene, schooling, and literature into one powerful nexus of direction. While the World Council was fighting for and directing and carrying on the unified World-State, the Educational Control was remoulding mankind. With the opening years of the twenty-first century (C.E.) the erstwhile leading figures of the revolution fall back into secondary places or vanish from the limelight altogether, and a simpler-minded, more determined group of rules comes to the front.

[I resume my transcription here.]

"The world is various enough without artificial variety," was a leading maxim of the Educational Control which created the men of

the Air Dictatorship; and a variant of this maxim was: “It does not increase the interest of the human assembly to suffer avoidable mental cripples and defectives.” So this body of teachers set themselves to guard new lives, beginning even with prenatal circumstances, from what they esteemed to be physical and mental distortion. There was no shadow of doubt upon this score for the Educational Control. Every possible human being had to be brought into the new communion. Everyone was to be exposed to the contagion of modernity. Every year now increased the power of the Modern State Fellowship; by 2000 it numbered five million; by 2010 thirteen. Every increase enabled the Educational Control to thrust its enquiring and compelling fingers more and more intimately into the recesses of human life. It had more men and women made to its pattern and a greater force of teachers and inspectors it could trust.

There can be no denying the excellence of the immediate physical results. Historical Scenes in a Hundred Volumes witnesses from 1990 onward, not only to the resumption of the advance in the technique of picture-making and the abundance of pictures, but to the restoration of physical welfare. As the student turns over the pages he sees man straighten himself again, grow physically, become more alert. The slouching foot-dragging men and women, the aimless faces, the fattish and lumpish figures of improperly nourished people, the wretched clothing and ignoble makeshift gear of the Second Decline and Fall, disappear; after 1990 clothing is fresh and simple, and after 2010 it begins to be austerely beautiful.

And this being achieved very largely through what the liberal thought of the nineteenth century would certainly have called “persecution”. It is plain that the earlier World Council was all too disposed to leave great areas of the planet that did not “give trouble” alone. The new World Council, which is known also as the Air Dictatorship, would have none of that. There began a systematic attack upon the “lapsed regions”, as they were called from the year 2006 onward. The government set itself in that year to “tidy up” the still half-barbaric peasant populations of Hayti, Ireland, West and Central Africa, South Italy, American Georgia and its associated states, Georgia in the Caucasus, Eastern Bengal, regions where traditional superstitions, secret societies, magic cults or sacrificial

practices showed an obstinate persistence. There was a definite hunt for medicine men, sorcerers, priests, religious teachers, and organizers of sedition; they would be fined or exiled, and parents and others would be fined for "impeding" the education of their children at the cosmopolitan schools.

Many critics of the Air Dictatorship are of opinion that this was a needless pursuit of dying customs and beliefs that might well have been left to fade out into mere fantasies and affectations. But the new generation of rulers took life too seriously for that. It is an issue that can never be settled, since we can only know what actually occurred.

The old Catholic Church, it seems, was still in existence in these days, the last surviving Christian organization, but it was greatly impoverished, and it had suffered severely from schisms, evidently the result of imperfect communications throughout the dark decades. There was a Pope in Dublin and another in Rome and a coloured Pope in Pernambuco. From the legal point of view the Irish Pope was the most legitimate successor of St. Peter. He had been duly elected by the Conclave, but the Fascist organization objected that he was not of Italian origin, his original surname being O'Dowd and his Italian accent imperfect, and the cardinals were intimidated into a new election. Some feud between rival gang organizations in America seems to have been involved in this split, but the details are obscure and need not occupy the student's time here. There was in consequence a division of the American Catholic world between the Dublin and the Roman communion, and this led to a murderous series of feuds, riots, and small local wars. "Down with the Wop Pope!" said the Irish. One is reminded of that earlier splitting of the Church through the rivalry of the French monarchy and the Central European imperial system that set up a rival Pope in Avignon.

Ireland was the last stronghold of Christianity. The Catholic religion had been compulsory in South Ireland from 1944 until 1980, and the Erse language, although that was largely corrupted by unavoidable English words and locutions, had also been made obligatory. Overt Birth Control knowledge had been successfully banned, though this produced no effect in the decline in population, and the Modern State nuclei had been boycotted more effectually there than in any other part of the world. The Dictatorship found

itself fighting one of its most difficult battles for power with this tenacious people. The Irish came out in revolt all over the world. In Ireland after the maculated fever the population never rose above two millions, but there was a widespread Irish tradition throughout the English-speaking world. Some of the more brilliant and formidable antagonists of this schooling and drilling of our race that was going on, Paidrick Lynd, Arthur Fitzgerald, and Bernard O'Dwyer for example, came from Ireland. Oddly enough none of these three was a Catholic, and Fitzgerald at any rate had suffered a term of imprisonment for blasphemy, but the spirit of opposition was either innate in them or it had become ingrained in their natures.

Let the student note the open alternative at the end of the preceding paragraph. It raises a question that remains unsettled to this day. It is the clue to our contemporary moral problem. The Air Dictatorship, with what was still a very under-developed science of social psychology at its disposal, had come upon one of the obscurest and most debatable of educational problems, the variability of mental resistance to direction and the limits set by nature to the ideal of an acquiescent co-operative world. De Windt, preoccupied by his gigantic schemes for world organization, had treated the "spirit of opposition" as purely evil, as a vice to be guarded against, as a trouble in the machinery that was to be minimized as completely as possible. The Air Dictatorship was carrying out and did carry out its world settlements on those assumptions. One may well believe that the world could have been unified into one enduring Pax Mundi in no other way. And yet they were faulty assumptions, and in the end they had to be abandoned for subtler and better conceptions of social interaction.

As every practising teacher understands, resistance is a necessary factor in teaching. Soft non-resistant material takes an imprint very readily only to lose it again very quickly. Easy pupils make teaching slipshod. The difficulty but also the soundness of teaching increases with the amount of reaction in the learner. And also resistance involves a certain element of collaboration; the thing learnt becomes a resultant, incorporating elements introduced in the struggle. It is easier to carve cheese than a good piece of wood; every piece of wood has a bias, it has to be dealt with on its own terms, it has to be

managed and humoured, but in the end there is no comparison in quality and interest between carved cheese and wood-carving. These are the commonplaces of our educationists. But the defence of the work of the Educational Control is that its repressive measures were aimed not at intrinsic but at artificial resistances left over from the pre-revolutionary age.

In the old world of the early twentieth century there was a vast amount of crude generalization about what were called "racial" characteristics. There were generalizations about arbitrarily chosen agglomerations of mixed population — the Spanish for example, or "the West", "Russia", or the Jews; such generalizations were always unjust and inaccurate and often extremely mischievous. Nowadays we do not write of races any more, but we recognize groups of characteristics, evidently transmitted en bloc as a rule by associated genes, and anthropologists are steadily developing a scientific classification of human types. In few aspects do human beings vary more widely than in their recalcitrance. It is not a simple case that some people are more resistant and some less. There is a wide variation in the life cycle in this respect. Recalcitrance varies with age and sex. It varies with diet. Some types are obdurate as children but afterwards become more reasonable. Some reach a maximum of insubordination in adolescence. Generally speaking, passive resistance, unteachableness and obstinacy, but not insurrectionary energy, increase rapidly with age. And in certain populations, of which the Irish was one, there was a powerful access of resistance after adolescence in the male. It rose to the level of absolute refractoriness.

Now the apologists for the "persecutions" of the Air Dictatorship maintain that its missionary teachers were already quite prepared with the sympathy and finesse needed to teach every type of human being they would encounter in the world. So long as resistance was personal between teacher and learner they welcomed it. At least they said they welcomed it. But when it came to the systematic organization of young people who would otherwise have had indifferent minds, so as to present a mass resistance and subversive opposition to the world order, the Educational Control, it is argued, was justified in hindering and suppressing books, meetings,

teachings, agitations. It had the whip hand, and it would have been a sin not to have made use of that advantage. “We do not suppress individuality; we do not destroy freedom; we destroy obsessions and remove temptations. The world is still full of misleading doctrines, dangerous imitations and treacherous suggestions, and it is the duty of government to erase these”; so ran the uncompromising memorandum issued by the Educational Council in 2017.

“We have to get a common vision of existence, a common idea of right and wrong, established throughout the whole population of the world, and SPEEDILY,” this memorandum declares. “Natural instinct is no help in a labyrinth of artificialities. It has to be supplemented by either training or discipline. The better we train, the less need for oppression; the more thoroughly we crush out false presentations and agitations, the more freely, as well as safely, men can live. Things are rushing back headlong to prosperity, and we cannot face abundance and leisure with the present morale of the race. It has to be stiffened up; it has to be drilled to keep ranks.”

In 1955 humanity was suffering throughout the globe from disorder, famine and pestilence; its numbers were declining, and it might well have been supposed that it was driving towards extinction. The change of fortune was swift beyond precedent. As early as 2017 we have this clear intimation that its guides and rulers were contemplating the advance of plenty and an excess of leisure with terror.

EDITOR’S NOTE

I think that it may make things clearer for the reader here if I give a compact summary of the political forms assumed by the developing world government between 1965 and 2106. The writer of this history of Raven’s, writing for his contemporaries, assumed them to be familiar with many institutions for which the readers of this book will be altogether unprepared. Fortunately the relations of the Communist and Fascist Parties to their respective governments give us a helpful parallel to the relations to the World Council, the actual world government after 1965, of what was called the Modern State Movement. It was its incentive and its conscience.

The political structure of the world developed in this fashion:

After the chaos of the war (1940-50) and the subsequent

pestilence and “social fragmentation” (1950-60) there arose, among other attempts to again reconstitute a larger society, a combine of the surviving aviators and the men employed upon the ground plant of their trade and transport. This combine was called The Transport Union. It does not appear to have realized its full potentialities in the beginning, in spite of the forecasts of De Windt.

It initiated various conferences of technicians and at last one in 1965, when it was reorganized as The Air and Sea Control and produced as subsidiary organs The Supply Control, The Transport (and Trading) Control, an Educational and Advertisement Control and other Controls which varied from time to time.

It was this Air and Sea Control which ultimately gave rise in 1978 at the Second Conference of Basra to the World Council. This was the first declared and formal supreme government of the world. The Air and Sea Control then disappeared, but its subordinate Controls remained, and coalesced and multiplied as ministries do in existing governments, under the supreme direction of the World Council.

There was no further change in essential political structure between 1978 and 2059, but there was a great change in the spirit and method of that supreme government, the World Council. A new type of administrator grew up, harder, more devoted and more resolute than the extremely various men of the two Basra Conferences. These younger men constituted what our historian calls here the Second Council, though it was continuous with the first. There was a struggle for power involving the deaths of several of the earlier councillors, but no formal change of régime; there continued to be a World Council constituting the supreme government of the world. This Second Council is also referred to as the Air Dictatorship in its earlier years, and later on as the Puritan Tyranny. These are not exact constitutional terms but loose descriptive phrases. The membership of the World Council changed by individuals coming and going, but its character remained singularly uniform for over forty years. It grew more elderly in spite of a few youthful accessions. In 2045 its average age was 61.

This Second World Council endured until a Conference at Mégève in Savoy (2059) reconstituted the world government on lines which are drawn out fairly plainly in the following chapters.

And now for the relations of this series of governing bodies to the World- State Movement.

The ideological developments that inspired these changes were initiated by a group of writers of whom De Windt was the outstanding figure. He built up the project for a world-state in all its essentials in a book on Social Nucleation published in 1942. The intrinsic quality of this book has been entirely overshadowed by its importance as a datum point in history. It is a slow laborious book.

It was the seed of the Modern State Movement which furnished the plans of the Air and Sea Control. The Modern State Movement was never a formally constituted government nor anything in the nature of a public administration; it was the propaganda and development of a system of ideas, and this system of ideas produced its own forms of government. The "Movement" was initially a propaganda and research, and then a propaganda, research, and educational organization. Its active full members were called Fellows; it had a class of dormant members, whose relationship to the active category varied under different conditions and at different periods; and it had a class of neophytes or apprentices, as numerous or more numerous than its active Fellows. It ultimately incorporated the mass of adult mankind (and womankind) in its Fellowship.

It was never divided up into regional bodies. Its Fellows were acceptable at any local centre they happened to visit. Naturally it began mainly as localized nuclei, but those localizations were merely for convenience of propaganda, teaching, and local purposes. The effective subdivision of the Fellowship was into FACULTIES, and these again were subdivided into sections and departments. There was to begin with a faculty of scientific research, a faculty of interpretation and education, a health faculty, a faculty of social order, a supply and trading faculty, a number of productive faculties, agricultural, mineral and so on. There were splits and coalescences among these faculties. Their splits and coalescences had a frequent relationship to the splits and coalescences of the Controls, because it was obviously a mental convenience for a faculty or faculties to correspond with one or more Controls.

The faculties and their subdivisions, their sections and departments, possessed electoral central councils, but there never

seems to have been a general directorate of the Modern State Movement after the early days in which it was one simple system of propaganda and enquiry nuclei; its nuclei almost from the outset differentiated naturally into faculties, each viewing human affairs from its own angle; the movement as a whole did not require a continuing directive council; there were only conferences when concerted action between diverse faculties was desirable.

There never seems to have been any difficulty in the way of a man or woman belonging to two or more faculties at the same time, and this greatly facilitated the melting of one faculty into another. The Modern State Movement was an "open order" attack on social structures; it was a solvent and not a mould. The moulds were the Controls.

The faculties and their sections, departments, and so forth developed very unequally; some dwindled to insignificance, and some on the other hand grew to unanticipated proportions and created their own distinctive organization and machinery. This was particularly the case with the social psychology department of the faculty of science, which annexed the whole faculty of training and advertisement by a sheer community of subject. This social psychology department of the faculty of science was given the legal and responsible direction of the Educational Control.

This body of social psychologists and their associates became a great critical and disciplinary organism side by side with the World Council, which ultimately, as will be explained in the following chapters, it superseded.

The world then ceased, it seems, to have any single permanent government at all. It remained under a series of primary Controls dealing with each other by the method of conference, namely the Controls of transport, natural products, staple manufactures, population (housing and increase), social sanitation (police and medicine), education (these two latter were later merged as the Behaviour Control), and the ever expanding activities of scientific research and creative work. So the world which had once been divided among territorial Great Powers became divided among functional Great Powers.

Later a Bureau of Reconciliation and Cooperation seems to have

grown up, which decided upon the necessity and method of inter-Control conferences. It was something rather in the nature of a Supreme Court than of a ruling council.

Most of the old faculties of the Modern State Movement dissolved into technical organizations under these Controls, with the one exception of that former department of the science faculty the department of social psychology, which by 2106 had become, so to speak, the whole literature, philosophy, and general thought of the world. It was the surviving vital faculty of the Modern State Movement, the reasoning soul in the body of the race.

In the end it becomes something like what the early nineteenth century used to think existed under the name of Public Opinion, the consensus of active thought and imagination throughout the world. It is plain that by 2106 this rule by a pervasive intelligence had become an unchallenged success. It was all that was left by way of King, President, or Supreme government on earth.

This assembling and clearing-up of statements which are otherwise scattered rather perplexingly through the text under consideration will not, I hope, annoy such readers as have already grasped what I have summarized here. I will now return to that text itself.

5. — THE TEXT RESUMES: THE TYRANNY OF THE SECOND COUNCIL

The Air Dictatorship is also called by some historians the Puritan Tyranny. We may perhaps give a section to it from this point of view.

"Puritan" is a misused word. Originally invented to convey a merely doctrinal meticulousness among those Protestants who "protested" against the Roman version of Catholicism, it came to be associated with a severely self- disciplined and disciplinary life, a life in which the fear of indolence and moral laxity was the dominant force. At its best it embodied an honourable realization: "I shall do nothing worth while and nothing worth while will be done unless I pull myself together and stiffen up my conduct." If the new Air Dictatorship was schooling the world with considerable austerity, it was certainly schooling itself much more so.

The code of the first makers of the World-State had been a simple one. "Tell the truth," they insisted; "maintain the highest technical standards, control money and do not keep it, give your powers ungrudgingly to the service of the World-State." That seemed to leave them free for a good deal of refreshing self-indulgence, and it did. They ate, drank, and were merry, made love very freely, envied and competed with one another for power and distinction, and set no adequate guard upon the growth of rivalries and resentments. Our history has glanced at the fall and death of Essenden, but this is only one episode in the long and complicated history of the private lives of the first world committee. Slowly the details are being elucidated and analysed by a body of historical students. Except that the victims are dead, and cannot hear, the results are as pitiless as the old Christian fancy of the Recording Angel and his Book on Resurrection Day.

They appear as very pitifully human; their sins happened to them, they were taken unawares in phases of fatigue, by resentment, by sensuality or flattery. Women were attracted by their prestige and offered the reassurance of love to their weaker moments. In many

cases the moral downfall was due to the very limitlessness of the devotion with which they first gave themselves to their world task. They worked without rest. Then they would suddenly find themselves worn bare, bankrupt of moral energy. They had made no proper balance between the public task and the inward desire. Outbreaks of evil temper would follow, or phases of indolence or gross indulgence. The Fellowship was disconcerted; the outer world ran with scandal. "These Fellows," said their critics, "are no better than the pretenders and rascals of the old régime. Rin Kay, the wise, is consumed with affection for his little friend, and Ardasher of the experimental aeroplanes makes his young men do dangerous stunts to please a girl. Morovitz is collecting Persian miniatures quite unscrupulously and Fedor Galland spends half his time now making a garden at Babylon."

The ambitious young men who were little boys when the first conference at Basra was held were educated by teachers who were none the less harshly zealous because they were doing relatively inconspicuous work and had no little friends nor miniatures nor gardens to amuse them. These teachers had a lively sense of their leaders' defects and of their own modest but real moral superiority. The youngsters under their teaching were saturated with constructive enthusiasm, but they were trained also to judge and condemn the weaknesses of their spent and tired predecessors. They learnt that the brightness of this new world that had been made for them was in danger from the very men who had made it. The technically more skilful and intensive teaching that had been given them had made them more self-conscious and wary in their behaviour, and far more capable of managing the detail of their lives. They were simple in principle and hard in detail. They had a modern wisdom about diet and indulgence; they regarded lack of fitness as a crime.

The difference is evident in Historical Pictures, where one usually sees the older generation dressed either carelessly or picturesquely and often either self-consciously or gracelessly posed, while the younger men and women in the simpler and plainer clothing that was coming into fashion carry themselves like athletes. Austerity has become a second nature to them. Devotion and the sacrifice of the individual they carried to such a pitch that, for instance, it was

considered unseemly for them to have portraits made, and there was no record kept of the names of the chairmen and of the movers of motions in the central committee during their ascendency. It has needed special research to rescue some of the names of this second generation of world rulers, who set up the Puritan Tyranny and made the Socialist World-State secure. One of the moving spirits was certainly Han H'su and another Antoine Ayala.

They ousted their predecessors without any coup d'état, one by one, through sheer superiority in energy and working power. The great revolution was over; the World-State was in being. But it was not secure. It was a time for just such continuous detailed work as only a naturally able and energetic type with a hard training could hope to do. They were not selected by any voting or politics to fill the Council, they were selected by their own staying and driving power. The milder or subtler types could not keep the pace and fell into less authoritative positions. The influence of certain teachers and groups of teachers was very considerable. Three schools, the Unamuno Foundation at Coimbra, the Columbia University of New York, and the Tokio Social College, accounted for more than a third of the World Council in 2017.

For nearly forty years the new Council, with occasional renewals, worked and kept a whole generation of men and women working. As Aldous Huxley (1894- 2004), one of the most brilliant of reactionary writers, foretold of them, they "tidied up" the world.

There can be no denying the purification and rarefaction of the human scene that was achieved during their sway. They tightened up the disciplines of the Modern State Fellowship, and nevertheless the proportion of the Fellowship increased until it bade fair to become the larger moiety of adult mankind. The mental habits of the Fellowship, its habitual bearing, extended through the whole population. The Tyranny, says Vordin, altered the human face for ever. It closed the mouth and made the lips firmer, made the eyes steadier and more candid, opened the brow, altered the poise of the head, obliterated a number of wrinkles and habits of expression. Portraits of the earlier and later time confirm this generalization. One type of odd-character after another became rare and began to disappear from the human comedy. Rascals and recalcitrants grew

old, sat in the sun for a time rather protestingly and vanished. They took many disagreeable and some whimsical casts of countenance with them. Sexual prostitution ceased and eliminated a characteristic defiance from feminine carriage. The trader found he had nothing to trade with and came into the employment of the Supply Control. Gambling, horse-racing, sport, generally went out of fashion, and those queer oblongs of pasteboard, "playing cards", retired to museums, never to emerge again. Every one of these vanishing interests or practices took its own scores of social types, of "reaction systems", to use the modern phrase, away with it. Faces ceased to be masks.

Every year the world grew safer for the candid. The need for cunning and wary self-restraint diminished enormously, the habit of making a face a "mask". Humanity was extroverted. A lively self-forgetful interest in external things becomes more and more patent. The "worried" look of the introspective habit of mind disappears. "Everyone must know plainly," said the new rulers. "Men must be perplexed no more." The old religions could not emulate the moral prestige of the new cult, and even the resentments of the persecution that deprived them of their last shreds of educational influence could not preserve them. For nearly forty years this rule of the new saints, this resolute simplification and smoothing out of life, went on.

History becomes a record of increasingly vast engineering undertakings, and cultivations, of the pursuit of minerals and of the first deep borings into the planet. New mechanisms appeared, multiplied, and were swept away by better mechanisms. The face of the earth changed. The scientific redistribution of population began. Yet there was little likeness to the world of to-day, as we know it. No age in human history has left us such strange and uncongenial pictures.

Costume was not unpleasant during this period, because of its simplicity; the human figures in the scene at least are tolerable; but these scientific Puritans also produced some of the clumsiest architecture, the most gaunt and ungainly housing blocks, the dullest forests, endless vistas of straight stems, and the vastest, most hideous dams and power-stations, pylon-lines, pipe-lines, and so forth that the planet has ever borne. But at any rate they flooded the Sahara and

made the North African littoral the loveliest land in the world. The productivity of mankind was now advancing by leaps and bounds, in spite of the severe restraint presently put upon the introduction of fresh labour-saving devices; and yet these Puritans were consumed by an overwhelming fear of leisure both for themselves and others. They found it morally necessary to keep going and to keep everybody else going. They INVENTED work for the Fellowship and all the world. Earth became an ant-hill under their dominion clean and orderly but needlessly "busy". So harshly had they reacted against the weaknesses of their seniors and so unable were they to mitigate their own self-imposed severities.

Let us cast up the good mankind can attribute to this strange phase of sternness and grim repression. For all the faint masochist and sadistic flavour of its closing years, the good was beyond all measure greater than the evil. "The obliteration of out-of-date moral values" (the phrase is Antoine Ayala's) "and the complete establishment of a code of rigorous and critical self-control, of habitual service, creative activity, cooperation, of public as well as private good manners, and invariable truthfulness, were achieved for all time. We grow up so easily now into one free, abundant, and happy world that we do not realize the effort still needed even in the year 2000 to keep life going upon what seem now to us the most natural and simple lines possible. We find it almost impossible to imagine the temptations to slacken at work, loiter, do nothing, 'look for trouble', seek 'amusement', feel bored and take to trivial or mischievous 'time-killing' occupations, that pursued the ill-trained under-vitalized, objectless common citizen before 2000 C.E. Still more difficult is it to realize how subtly these temptations were diffused through the mass and how hard they made a well-directed life. We have to trust the psychological experts about that."

The New Puritans "disinfected" the old literature, for example. It is hard to see that now as an urgent necessity. These old stories, plays, and poems seem to us to convey the quaintest and most inexplicable systems of motivation conceivable, and we cannot imagine people being deflected by them; they might as easily be led astray by the figures on a Chinese screen or an Hellenic sarcophagus; but before the persecution those books were, as one censor called

them, “fever rags”. They stood then for “real life”. They provided patterns for behaviour and general conduct. That queer clowning with insults and repartees, that insincerely sympathetic mocking of inferiors, that denigration of superiors, which constituted “humour” in the old days, strikes us as either fatuous or malicious. We cannot understand, for instance, the joy our ancestors found in the little blunders and misconceptions of ill-educated people. But then they also laughed at the cripples who still abounded in the world! Equally distasteful now is most of their “romance” with its false stresses, its unnecessary sacrifices and desperations. “Romance”, says Paul Hennessey, “is essentially the violent and miserable reaction of weak spirits to prohibitions they cannot fairly overcome.”

We find the books glorifying war and massacre, and the tangled masses of suggestion that elaborated the innate hostility and excitement caused by difference of racial type, so unconvincing that it is difficult to believe that they ever gripped. But they did grip and compel. They drove innumerable men to murders, lynchings, deliberate torture. They dressed the foulest and cruellest of crimes in heroic colours. There had to be a break with these traditions before they could be seen as we see them now. It needed the heroic “priggishness” of the Air Dictatorship, putting away the old literature and drama for a time, suppressing the suggestion systems of the old religions and superstitions, jailing and segregating men and women for “hate incitement”, ruthlessly eliminating sexual incitation from the lives of the immature and insisting upon a universal frank sexual hygiene, to cleanse the human mind for good and all and inaugurate the unconstrained civilization of to-day. There was no other way to Renaissance.

Joseph Koreniovsky has called the Puritan Tyranny “the cold bath that braced up mankind after the awakening”. Man, he says, was still “frowsty- minded” and “half asleep” in the early twenty-first century, still in urgent danger of a relapse into the confused nightmare living of the Age of Frustration. You may call it a tyranny, but it was in fact a release; it did not suppress men, but obsessions. None of us now can fully realize the value of that “disentanglement from tradition”, because now we are all disentangled.

And next to this ruthless “mental disinfection” of the world, and

indeed inseparable from it, we must put the physical disinfection of mankind to the credit of the Air Dictatorship. Between 2000 and 2040 every domicile in the world was either destroyed and replaced, or reconditioned and exhaustively disinfected. There was an immense loss of "picturesqueness" in that process, and we shiver nowadays when we look at pictures of the white bare streets, the mobile rural living-boxes, the bleakly "cheerful" public buildings, the plain cold interiors with their metallic furniture, which everywhere replaced the huts, hovels, creeper-clad cottages and houses, old decaying stone and brick town halls, market houses, churches, mosques, factories and railway stations in which our tough if ill-proportioned and undersized forefathers assembled about their various archaic businesses.

But between the same years the following diseases, the names of which abound in the old histories, and the nature of which we can hardly imagine, vanish from the human records: catarrh, influenza, whooping cough, sleeping sickness, cholera, typhus, typhoid, bubonic plague, measles, and a score of other infectious scourges. (Only yellow fever remained as a serious infection after 2050. That demanded the special effort of 2079 for its extirpation.) Syphilis and indeed all those diseases known as venereal, were stamped out completely in two generations; they were afflictions so horrible and disgusting that their description is not now considered suitable for the general reader. There was a similar world-wide attack on plant diseases and distortions, but of that the student will learn in his Botanical History.

The psychologists who are rewriting human history have still many open questions to settle about the training and early influences that gave the world this peculiar group of rulers, and so the account of its hardening and deterioration remains incomplete. They admit that the Tyranny was in essence a liberation, but they insist that it left vitally important desires in the human make-up unsatisfied. Old traditions and mischievous obsessions were rooted in these desires, and the Tyranny had not been content with an eradication of the old traditions. It had denied the desires. It had pulled up the soil with the weeds. It had exalted incessant, even if pointless, activity above everything else in life.

Overwork, a strained strenuousness, has been a common characteristic of the rulers of mankind in the past. It shows through the Edicts of Asoka, for example, and particularly in Rock Edict VI (Asoka, D. R. Bhandarkar, 1932, Classical Historical Studies, 21-118). “I am never satisfied,” runs the Edict, “with the exertion or with dispatch of business. The welfare of the whole world is an esteemed duty with me. And the root of that, again, is this, namely, exertion and dispatch of business.” A great majority of the successful Caesars and Autocrats from Shi-Hwang-Ti to Hitler have the same strenuousness — Alexander the Great perhaps was the chief exception, but then his father had done the work before him. Mussolini, the realizer of Italian Fascismo, in his Talks to Ludwig (Historical Documents Series 100, 319) betrays an equal disposition for single-handed accomplishment and an equal disinclination to relinquish responsibility.

All the chief figures of the Air Dictatorship betray, upon scrutiny, signs of the same drive to do too much and still to do more. They display all the traits of a collective weary conqueror, unable to desist and think and adapt himself. They went on ruling and fighting when their victory was won. They had tidied up the world for ever and still they went on tidying. After their first real successes they manifest an extreme reluctance to bring new blood into the responsible administrative task. They had arisen to power as a group by their usefulness, because they were unavoidably necessary to those original founders of the World-State whom they first served and then by sheer insistence upon performance pushed out of authority and replaced. The three virtues in a ruler according to Han H’su were punctuality, precision, and persistence. But it was a dictum of Paidrick Lynd’s that “indolence is the mother of organization”. They had none of that blessed gift of indolence. When the legacy of work that the first world revolution had left them was exhausted, they brought things at last to the necessity for a final revolution through their sheer inability to organize a direct succession to themselves or to invent fresh undertakings.

That final revolution was the most subtle of all the substitutions of power that have occurred in human affairs, the most subtle and so far the last. The Dictatorship could suppress overt resistance; it could

impose obedience to its myriads of injunctions and rules. But it could not suppress the development of general psychology nor the penetration of its own legislative and administrative activities by enquiry and criticism.

The Department of General Psychology had grown rapidly until it had become the most vigorous system of activities in the scientific faculty of the Modern State Fellowship. In its preparatory stages it had taken the place of the various "Arts" and Law curricula of the old régime. It was the modernization of the "humanities". The founders of the World-State had given this particular department of the scientific faculty almost as great a directive and modifying power over both the Educational and Legal Controls as it exercises to-day. Even then it was formally recognized as the responsible guardian in the theory of Modern State organization. It more than realized the intentions of De Windt. It became the thought, as the World Council had become the will, of mankind acting as a whole. And since the education and legal adjustment of the World-State was thus under the direction of a department of research continually advancing, they differed diametrically in character from the education and teaching of the old world order.

The student cannot keep this difference, this flat contrast, too clearly in mind. He will never understand the historical process without it. The Old Education existed to preserve traditions and institutions. Progressive forces arose as a dissent from it and operated outside its machinery. In the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century education was always a generation or so behind living contemporary ideas and the schoolmaster was a drag on mankind. But the New Education, based on a swiftly expanding science of relationship, was no longer the preservation of a tradition, but instead the explanation of a creative effort in the light of a constantly most penetrating criticism of contemporary things. The new schoolmaster showed the way, and the new education kept steadily ahead of contemporary social fact. The difference of the New Law and the Old Law was strictly parallel. If a man of the year 1900 had been told of a progressive revolution led by lawyers and schoolmasters inspired by scientific ideas, he would have taken it as a rather preposterous joke, but to-day we ask, "How else can the

continuity of a progressive revolution be sustained?”

The failure of the German revolution of 1918 and the relapse of that unfortunate country into the puerility and brutish follies of Hitlerism was entirely due to the disregard of the elementary principle that no revolution could be a real and assured revolution until it has completely altered the educational system of the community. Every effective old-world revolution was a revolt against an established education and against the established law.

The rôle of the modern Education Control in preserving, correcting, and revivifying the progressive process in human affairs had already been manifested by the supersession of the leading personalities of the Basra conference in the World Council by their successors who became the Air Dictatorship. Now these men in their turn found the instruments of government becoming recalcitrant in their hands and obeying the impulse of unfamiliar ideas. They had cleared and cleansed the site while social science had been preparing the idea of the new structures that were to stand upon it, and now they found themselves confronted by an impulse towards creation and enrichment entirely discordant with their habits of administration. Their subordinates began to send back the instructions given them as “insufficient and not in accordance with the psychology of the workers” — or other people— “concerned”. Schemes were condemned by those to whom they were entrusted as unnecessarily toilsome or needlessly ungracious. Workers took matters into their own hands and demanded more pleasant processes or more beautiful results. The committee was disposed at first to insist upon unquestioning obedience. Thereupon the Education Control produced a masterful argument to show “the social harmfulness of unquestioning obedience”.

There could be no greater contrast in the world than that between the older revolutionary crises in human affairs and this later conflict of wills. The old revolutions were at best frantic, bawling, sentimental affairs in which there was much barricading of roads and destruction of property; people were shot abundantly and carelessly and a new régime stumbled clumsily to responsibility on the ruin and reversal of its predecessor. Such revolutions were insurrections of discontent against established institutions. But this last revolution

was the cool and effectual indictment of the world executive by a great world wide educational system. It was not an insurrection; it was a collateral intervention. The new order arose beside its predecessor, took matters out of its hands and replaced it.

The need for an intolerant militant stage of the World-State had passed. The very reason for the disciplines of the Puritan Tyranny had been dissolved away in the completeness of its victory. But the last men to realize this were the old men who now sat trying to find tasks to keep humanity out of mischief in the bureau of the World Council.

6. — AESTHETIC FRUSTRATION: THE NOTE-BOOKS OF ARISTON THEOTOCOPULOS

It is a growing custom of historians, and we have already followed it freely, to vivify their general statements by quotations from contemporary descriptive writers. As histories have disentangled themselves from their primitive obsession about rulers and their policies, they have made a more and more extensive use of private memoirs, diaries, novels, plays, letters, sketches, pictures and the like. Once upon a time washing bills and memorandum books were below the "dignity of history". Now we esteem them far above acts of parliament or diplomatic memoranda. And certainly there is no more convenient source of information about current ideas and feeling under the Air Dictatorship than the cipher Note Books of that gifted painter and designer Ariston Theotocopulos (1997-2062). For thirty-seven years until his death, he wrote in these books almost daily, making his own shrewd comments on current events, describing many odd and curious occurrences, noting very particularly his own emotional reactions, and adorning them all with a wealth of sketches, dreams, caricatures and the like, which make the full edition in facsimile, with a translation, among the greatest delights of the book-lover. The bulk of this matter does not concern the student of general history at all, and yet it is possible to pick out from it material for a far clearer realization of life under the second Council than could be derived from a score of abstract descriptions.

The earlier of these volumes are coloured by the irritation of the writer with three particular things: the restrictions upon private flying, his difficulties in finding scope for his genius, and the general want of beauty and graciousness in life. At that time there were no privately owned aeroplanes and no one could act as an air pilot who was not an active Fellow of the Modern State organization and subject to its rules and disciplines. Theotocopulos had an anarchistic soul, and his desire to wander freely above the mountains and clouds, to go whither he liked at his own sweet will, unhampered by any

thought of immediate "service", became an obsession with him. "If they would let me alone I would give the world something," he scribbles. "But what on earth is the good of those blighted old Master Decorators telling me to do this and that? Did I come into the world to imitate and repeat things done already?"

And in another place he notes: "Some damned official flying overhead on his way to preventing something. It spoilt the day for me. I couldn't THINK any more."

Then comes a cry of agony. "The lay-out of all this terracing is wrong. What is the good of putting me to do a frieze of elephants on a wall that ought to come down again? If I do anything good that wall will stay where it is. The better I do it, the more likely they are to keep that wall. And it's wrong. It's wrong. It's wrong."

A few pages on, one word is all alone by itself: "ELEPHANTS!"

Then follows a string of caricatures of that animal which Li has characterized as acute biological criticism. Theotocopulos had been vividly interested in elephants, but now he had tired of them. He represents them as diaphanous or altogether transparent, and reveals the distresses of their internal lives. And there is a whole page of incredibly wicked elephants' eyes.

He was working on the rather deliberate decoration of the main-road system then in course of construction, running from Cape Finisterre through North Italy and along the North Black-Sea Dyke to the Crimea and Caucasia. That system has since been deflected from the Ligurian coast northward, but at that time it was made to follow by the sea to Genoa, and thence passed in a great cutting through the mountains to the plain of the Po and so to the still existing Chioggia viaduct. It was one of a not very ably conceived system of world roads that was greatly modified before its completion in our own time, and it was carried out with a massiveness and a solidity of ornamentation that witness to the World Council's incapacity to realize that Change was still going on. Those roads seem to have been planned for all time. They indicate mental coagulation.

Theotocopulos was engaged upon the coast section between the old town of Nice to the old port of Genoa. It was driven in a series of flattened curves that straightened out in places to a right line, cutting

brutally through headlands and leaping gulfs and bays in vast viaducts. Above and below the slopes were terraced with natural or imitation marble walls and the terraces were planted with oranges, lemons, vines, roses, olives and agaves. These terraces went up, as Theotocopulos says, “relentlessly” to the old Corniche Road above, broken only by a few masses of evergreen trees. The ruins of the villas and gardens of the Capitalist era and most of the towns along the coast that Titus Cobbett had visited and described seventy-odd years before had now been cleared away; a few groups of residential buildings occurred here and there, and pretentious staircases, which were rarely used because of the lifts they masked, led down to beaches and holiday places and harbours for pleasure boats and fishermen. These holiday places and the residential buildings were low and solid-looking, after the fashion of the time, and they provoked Theotocopulos to frenzy. He caricatured them and spotted his drawings with indecent words. It is amazing how truthfully he drew them and how ingeniously he distorted them. He represented them as cowering into the earth like the late buildings of the war years, from which they certainly derived their squatness.

“We still dream of air raids and war in the air,” he said, and he speaks elsewhere of “the inmates of those fortifications.... If only I could get hold of an aeroplane and a bomb! Perhaps after all there is some sense in keeping intelligent people like me out of the air, with this sort of stuff about.”

His task unhappily kept him in close contact with all this squat architectural magnificence. He had won distinction at an unusually early age for his brilliant drawings of men and animals; he had a grotesque facility for seeing into bodies and conveying his sense of internal activities; before his time the only anatomy known to artists had been muscular anatomy; and he was set to “decorate” an ungainly stretch of wall near Alassio with a frieze of elephants. It is necessary to explain that in those days there was the completest divorce in people’s minds between aesthetic and mechanical considerations. First you made a thing, they thought, and then you decorated it. It seems almost incredible now, but the engineers of the Air Dictatorship were supposed and expected to disregard all thought of beauty in what they did. If they made something frightful, then the

artist was called in to sugar the pill. There, as in so many things, the restless sensitive mind of Theotocopulos anticipated the ideas of to-day. “Engineers ought to be artists,” he says, “anyhow; and artists ought to be engineers or leave structural work alone.” This wall of his still exists; his decoration has preserved it, even as he foresaw. It just remains for his sake, a lesson for students and a monument to his still incomparable talent.

“Took a holiday,” he notes one day, “and rowed about five miles out to sea. These disproportions grow worse as one gets away from them. Never before have I seen anything that got uglier as it receded in perspective. This coast does. The road is too broad and big. There will never be that much traffic. The population of the world isn’t increasing and on the whole it rushes about less than it did. One hundred and twelve metres of width! What is this coming torrent of traffic from Finisterre to God knows where? Not a sign of it as yet. Nor ever will be. The little lizards get lost across that glassy surface and die and dry up. Artless earthworms crawl out upon it and perish. One sees them by the thousand after wet weather. No shade for miles. The terraces are badly spaced and the walls that sustain them look gaunt. There is no sympathy in all this straight stuff with the line and movement of the hills behind. They LIVE. And this accursed habit of building houses close to the ground! Damn it, don’t we build to get away from the ground?”

And then suddenly in big capitals comes one word: “PROPORTION!”

After that he meditated with his pencil in hand, jotting down his thoughts. “The clue to life. Not simply beauty. There is no evil but WANT OF PROPORTION. Pain? Pain arises out of a disproportion between sensations. Dishonesty? Cruelty? It is all want of proportion between impulse and control....”

It is interesting to trace in the notebooks how he tries over ideas that are now familiar to everyone. He worries between the ideas of proportion and harmony. Then he hits on the discovery that all history is a record of fluctuations in proportion. To-day, of course, that is a commonplace. We have told the economic and political history of the twentieth century, for instance, almost entirely as the story of an irregular growth of the elements of life, hypertrophy of

economic material going on concurrently with a relative arrest of educational, legal, and political adjustment. The first dim realizations of these disharmonies were manifested by the appearance of "planning", those various crude attempts to make estimates of quantities in social life of which the Russian Five Year Plan was the first. After 1930, the world was full of Plans, and most of them were amazingly weak and headlong plans.

We learn from these notebooks of Theotocopulos how imperfectly this idea of really deliberate quantitative preparation in the activities of our species was apprehended even in the early twenty-first century. Just as the war complex ran away with men's minds in the war period, so now political unity and uniformity and an extravagant concentration of enterprise upon productive efficiency had outrun reason. The interest of these notebooks lies exactly in the fact that they are not the writings of a scientific social psychologist, but of a man who was, except for his peculiar genius and energy of expression, a very ordinary personality. They tell us how common people were taking the peculiar drive of the times, how the general mind was puzzling out its new set of perplexities and asking why after having abolished war, restored order, secured plenty, defeated the fears and realized the wildest hopes of the martyr generations, it was still so far from tranquillity and happiness.

"Growing pains," he writes abruptly. "That was old Lenin's phrase. Is a certain want of proportion unavoidable?"

After that flash in the pan, the notebook wanders off into a dissertation upon Levels of Love, of no importance for our present purpose. But that idea of "Growing Pains" was working under the surface all the time. Suddenly appear pages of sketches of strange embryos, of babies and kittens and puppies, all cases of morbid hypertrophy. "Is want of proportion inevitable in all growth? Nature seems to find it so, but she always has been a roundabout fumbler. She starts out to make a leg, and when it comes out a wing she says, 'Eureka! I MEANT to do that.' But in DESIGNED WORK? In engineering for example?"

His mind goes off to the making of castings, the waste in grinding, the problems that arise in assembling a machine.

"Nature corrects the disproportions of growth by varying the

endocrines," he reflects. "And when a house has got its frames set up and its walls built, we turn out the masons and put in the plasterers and painters. So now. A change of régime in the world's affairs is indicated. New endocrinals. Fresh artisans."

This particular entry in the notebook is dated April 7, 2027. It is one of the earliest appearances of what presently became a current phrase, "change of régime".

The preoccupations of Theotocopulos with the physical and mental aspects of love, his extraordinary knack of linking physiological processes with the highest emotional developments, need not concern us here, important as they are in the history of aesthetic analysis. For a year or so he is concentrated upon his great "Desire Frieze" in the Refectory of the Art Library at Barcelona, and he thinks no more of politics. He likes the architects with whom he is associated; he approves of the developments at Barcelona, and he is given a free hand. "These fellows do as they like," he remarks. "A great change from all those damned committees, 'sanctioning' this or asking you to 'reconsider' that." Then he comes under the influence of that very original young woman from Argentina, also in her way a great artist, Juanita Mackail. Sketches of her, memoranda of poses and gestures, introduce her. Then he remarks: "This creature thinks." So far he has never named her. Then she appears as "J" and becomes more and more frequent.

"There is something that frightens me about a really intelligent woman. Was it Poe or De Quincey — it must have been De Quincey — who dreamt of a woman with breasts that suddenly opened and became eyes? Horrid! To find you are being looked at like that."

Following this a page has been torn out by him, the only page he ever tore out, and we are left guessing about it.

An abrupt return to political speculation in the notebooks follows. A number of entries begin, "J says", or end, "This is J's idea."

Then some pages later he repeats: "This creature thinks. Do I? Only with my fingers. Language is too abstract for me. Or is it true, as she says, that I am mentally lazy. MENTALLY LAZY — after I had been talking continuously to her for three hours!

"It seems all my bright little thoughts don't amount to anything compared with the stuff these social psychologists are doing. I have a

lot to learn. I suppose J would schoolmistress anybody."

The notebooks keep the fragile grace and mental vigour of Juanita Mackail alive to this day. She was the sort of woman who would have been a socialist revolutionary in the nineteenth century, a commissar in Early Soviet Russia or a hard worker for the Modern State in the middle twentieth century. Now she was giving all the time her strongly decorative idiosyncrasy left free to the peculiar politics of the period. It is plain that before she met Theotocopulos she was already politically minded. She had had a feeling that the world was in some way not going right, but her clear perception of what had to be done about it came only with her liaison with him. The notebooks with their frankness and brutality tell not only a very exceptional love story, but what is perhaps inseparable from every worthwhile love story, a mutual education. Theotocopulos was her first and only lover. To begin with he had treated her as casually as he had treated the many other women in his life, and then it is plain that, as he began to find her out, his devotion to her became by degrees as great or greater than her devotion to him.

He studied her. He made endless notes about her. We know exactly how she affected him. How he affected her we are left to guess, but it is plain that for her there was at once the magnificence of his gifts and the appeal of his wayward childishness. The former overwhelmed her own. It is plain in her surviving work. The earlier work is the best. He asks twice, "Am I swamping J? Her stuff is losing character. She is borrowing my eyes. That last cartoon. Am I to blame? It WAS such lovely stuff. Once upon a time." And he writes: "This maternity specialization is Nature's meanest trick on women. If they are not going to be mothers, if they CAN'T be mothers, why on earth should they be saturated with motherhood? Why should J think more about getting me a free hand to do what I please than she does about her own work? She does. I haven't asked her. Or have I, in some unconscious way, asked her? No, it's just her innate vicious mothering. I am her beloved son and lover and the round world is my brother, and every day her proper work deteriorates and she gets more political and social-psychological on our account."

From that point onward the trend of these notebooks towards

politics becomes very strong. The early volumes express the resentments of an isolated man of extreme creative power who finds himself singlehanded and powerless in an unsympathetically ordered world. The late show that same individuality broadening to a conception of the whole world as plastic material, sustained by a sense of understanding and support, coming into relationship and cooperation with an accumulating movement of kindred minds. At last it is not so much Theotocopulos who thinks as the awakening aesthetic consciousness of the world community.

"The change of régime has to be like a chick breaking out of its egg. The shell has to be broken. BUT THE SHELL HAD TO BE THERE. Let us be just. There is proportion in time as well as in space. If the shell is broken too soon there is nothing to be done but make a bad omelette. But if it isn't broken at the proper time, the chick dies and stinks."

The forty-seventh notebook is devoted almost entirely to a replanning of the subject of his early animadversions, the Ligurian coast. That notebook proved to be so richly suggestive that to-day some of his sketches seem to be actual drawings of present conditions, the treatment of the Monaco headland for example, and the reduction of the terraces. But his dreams of orange-groves are already quaint, because he knew nothing of the surprises in tree form that the experimental botanists were preparing. The forty-ninth booknote is also devoted to planning. "Plans for a world," he writes on the first page. "Contributions." He seems to have amused himself with this book at irregular intervals. There are some brilliant anticipations in it and also some incredible fantasies. Occasionally, like every prophet, he finds detail too much for him and lapses into burlesque.

There is a very long note of a very modern spirited discussion about individuality which he had with Juanita when apparently they were staying together at Montserrat. The notes are the afterthoughts of this talk, "shots at statement" as he would have called them, and they bring back to the reader a picture of that vanished couple who strolled just sixty years ago among the tumbled rocks and fragrant shrubs beneath the twisted pines of that high resort, both of them so acutely responsive to the drift of ideas that made the ultimate

revolution — she intent and critical, holding on to her argument against his plunging suggestions, like someone who flies a kite in a high wind.

"The individual is for the species; but equally the species is for the individual.

"Man lives for the State in order to live by and through — and in spite of — the State.

"Life is a pendulum that swings between service and assertion. Resist, obey, resist, obey.

"Order, discipline, health, are nothing except to make the world safe for the aesthetic life."

"We are Stoics that we may be Epicureans."

"Exercise and discipline are the cookery but not the meal of life.

"Here as ever — PROPORTION. But how can proportion be determined except aesthetically?

"The core of life is wilfulness."

So they were thinking in 2046. Have we really got very much further to-day?

7. — THE DECLARATION OF MÉGÈVE

Theotocopulos and his Juanita were present at the Conference at Mégève which wound up the second World Council. They both seem to have been employed upon the decoration of the temporary town that was erected for this purpose on those upland meadows. The notebooks, in addition to some very beautiful designs for metal structures, contain sketches of various members of the Council and some brilliant impressions of crowd effects in the main pavilion. There is also a sketch of a painting Theotocopulos afterwards made; it appears in all our picture-books of history: the tall presence of old Antoine Ayala, standing close to the aeroplane in which he departed for his chosen retreat in the Sierra Nevada; he is looking back with an expression of thoughtful distrust at the scene of his resignation. The pilot waits patiently behind him. "Well, well," he seems to say. "So be it." The sinking sun is shining in his eyes, so that they peer but do not seem to see.

The drawing of nine of the World Councillors listening intently to the statement of Emil Donadieu, the secretary of the Education Faculty, is almost equally well known.

It was the most gentle of all revolutions. It might have been a thousand years away from the fighting and barricading, the pursuits and shootings and loose murderings, of the older revolutionary changes. The Council suffered not overthrow but apotheosis. Creation asserted itself over formal construction and conservation. For a decade and more the various Controls had been showing a greater and greater disregard of the Central Council; they had been dealing directly with one another, working out their immense cooperations without the intervention — which was more and more inhibition — of the overriding body. It was the Education Faculty of the Control of Health and Behaviour that had at last provoked the gathering. It had in its own authority set aside the prohibitions on naked athleticism which had been imposed by the Council in its "general rules of conduct" thirty years before. The matter was a trifling one, but the attention of the Council was drawn to it; and it was decided to choose the occasion for a definite assertion of the

Council's authority. Was there still a Supreme Government in the world? was the question posed by the veteran ruling body. Probably it seemed to them quite imperative that there should be a supreme overriding body, and the bland exposition of Emil Donadieu which dispelled this assumption must have been an illuminating revelation to them of the march of human ideas since those days of youthful zeal and vigour when they found themselves directing the still militant World-State.

In those days the need for concentrated leadership had prevailed over every other human consideration. It had been necessary to fight and destroy for ever vast systems of loyalties and beliefs that divided, misled and wasted the energies of mankind. It had been necessary to replace a chaos of production and distribution for individual profit by an ordered economic world system. But once this vast change-over was made and its permanence assured by the reconstruction of education on a basis of world history and social science, the task of a militant World-State was at an end. The task of the World Council was at an end.

"But then who is to govern the world?" asked Eric Gunnarsson, the youngest and most ambitious member of the Council.

"No need to govern the world," said Donadieu. "We have made war impossible; we have liberated ourselves from the great anti-social traditions that set man against man; we have made the servitude of man to man through poverty impossible. The faculties of health, education, and behaviour will sustain the good conduct of the race. The controls of food, housing, transport, clothing, supply, initiative, design, research, can do their own work. There is nothing left for a supreme government to do. Except look up the world it has made and see that it is good. And bless it."

"Yes," said Eric Gunnarsson, "but—"

These words are registered in the phonograph record of the debate. And with these two words Eric Gunnarsson, the ambitious young man who may have dreamt at one time of being President of the World, vanishes from history.

Donadieu went on to a brief history of government in human affairs, how at first man could only think in personifications and had to conceive a tribal God and a tribal King because he could not

conceive of organized cooperation in any other way; how Kings remained all too individual and all too little social for anything but the narrowest tribal and national ends, and how therefore they had to be controlled and superseded by councils, assemblies and congresses, which in their turn became unnecessary. These ruling bodies clamped men together through ages of discord until at last the race could be held together in assured permanence by the cement of a universal education.

But the gist of that debate was embodied in the "Declaration of Mégève" with which the Conference concluded its deliberations.

"The World-State now follows all the subordinate states it swallowed up to extinction; the supreme sovereign government, which conquered and absorbed all minor sovereignties, vanishes from human affairs. The long, and often blind and misdirected, effort of our race for peace and security has at length succeeded, thanks to this great Council that now retires. It retires with the applause and gratitude of all mankind. And now in serenity and security we can survey the property it has redeemed from waste, this planet and its possibilities, our own undeveloped possibilities too, and all the fullness of life that lies before us. This is the day, this is the hour of sunrise for united manhood. The Martyrdom of Man is at an end. From pole to pole now there remains no single human being upon the planet without a fair prospect of self-fulfilment, of health, interest, and freedom. There are no slaves any longer; no poor; none doomed by birth to an inferior status; none sentenced to long unhelpful terms of imprisonment; none afflicted in mind or body who are not being helped with all the powers of science and the services of interested and able guardians. The world is all before us to do with as we will, within the measure of our powers and imaginations. The struggle for material existence is over. It has been won. The need for repressions and disciplines has passed. The struggle for truth and that indescribable necessity which is beauty begins now, unhampered by any of the imperatives of the lower struggle. No one now need live less nor be less than his utmost.

"We must respect the race and each other, but that has been made easy for us by our upbringing. We must be loyal to the conventions of money, of open witness, of responsibility for the public peace and

health and decency: these are the common obligations of the citizen by which the commonweal is sustained. We must contribute our modicum of work to the satisfaction of the world's needs. And, for the rest, now WE CAN LIVE. No part of the world, no work in the world, no pleasure, except such pleasure as may injure others, is denied us. Thanks to you, Heroic Council; thanks beyond limit to you."

BOOK THE FIFTH
THE MODERN STATE IN CONTROL OF LIFE

1. — MONDAY MORNING IN THE CREATION OF A NEW WORLD

With the Declaration of Mégève in 2059 C.E. the Age of Frustration, the opening phase of the Era of the Modern State, came to an end. Let us recapitulate that history in its barest outline. The World-State had appeared dimly and evasively, as an aspiration, as a remote possibility, as the suggestion of a League of Nations, during the World War of 1914-18; it had gathered experience and definition throughout the decades of collapse and disaster; it had formally invaded human politics at the Conference of Basra in 1965 as manifestly the only possible solution of the human problem, and now it had completed its conquest of mankind.

The systematic consolidation of that conquest had begun in earnest after the Second Conference of Basra in 1978. Then the World Council had set itself to certain tasks that had been so inconceivable hitherto that not the most daring sociologists had looked them in the face. They had contented themselves with pious aspirations, and taken refuge in the persuasion that, if they were sufficiently disregarded, these tasks would somehow do themselves. They were tasks of profound mental reconstruction, reconstruction going deeper into the substratum of the individual life than anything that had ever been attempted before. In the first place traditions of nationality had to be cleared away for good, and racial prejudice replaced by racial understanding. This was a positive job against immense resistances. Next a lingua-franca had to be made universal and one or other of the great literature-bearing languages rendered accessible to everyone. This again was not to be done for the wishing. And thirdly, and most evaded of all three obstacles that had to be surmounted, issue had to be joined with the various quasi-universal religious and cultural systems, Christianity, Jewry, Islam, Buddhism and so forth, which right up to the close of the twentieth century were still in active competition with the Modern State movement for the direction of the individual life and the control of human affairs. While these competing cultures remained in being

they were bound to become refuges and rallying-shelters for all the opposition forces that set themselves to cripple and defeat the new order of the world.

We have told already how that issue was joined, and shown how necessary it was to bring all the moral and intellectual training of the race into direct and simple relations with the Modern State organization. After 2020 there is no record of any schools being open in the world except the Modern State schools. Christianity where it remained sacerdotal and intractable was suppressed, but over large parts of the world it was not so much abolished as watered down to modernity. Everywhere its endowments had vanished in the universal slump; it could find no supply of educated men to sustain its ministry; the majority of its churches stood neglected and empty, and when the great rebuilding of the world began most of them vanished with all the other old edifices that lacked beauty or interest. They were cleared away like dead leaves.

The story of Islam was closely parallel. It went more readily even than Christianity because its school organization was weaker. It was pinned very closely to the teaching of Arabic. The decadence of that language shattered its solidarity much as the disuse of Latin disintegrated Western Christianity. It left a few-score beautiful mosques as Christianity left a few-score beautiful chapels, churches and cathedrals. And patterns, legends, memories remained over in abundance, more gracious and lovely by far than the realities from which they were distilled.

There had been a widespread belief in the tenacity and solidarity of Judaism. The Jews had been able to keep themselves a people apart, eating peculiar food and following distinctive religious practices, a nation within the nation, in every state in the world. They had been a perpetual irritant to statesmen, a breach in the collective solidarity everywhere. They had played a peculiar in-and-out game of social relationship. One could never tell whether a Jew was being a citizen or whether he was being just a Jew. They married, they traded preferentially. They had their own standards of behaviour. Wherever they abounded their peculiarities aroused bitter resentment.

It might have been supposed that a people so widely dispersed

would have developed a cosmopolitan mentality and formed a convenient linking organization for many world purposes, but their special culture of isolation was so intense that this they neither did nor seemed anxious to attempt. After the World War the orthodox Jews played but a poor part in the early attempts to formulate the Modern State, being far more preoccupied with a dream called Zionism, the dream of a fantastic independent state all of their own in Palestine, which according to their Babylonian legend was the original home of all this synthesis of Semitic-speaking peoples. Only a psycho-analyst could begin to tell for what they wanted this Zionist state. It emphasized their traditional wilful separation from the main body of mankind. It irritated the world against them, subtly and incurably.

On another score also the unpopularity of Israel intensified in the early twentieth century. The core of the slump process was manifestly monetary. Something was profoundly rotten with money and credit. The Jews had always had and cultivated the reputation of a peculiar understanding and cleverness in monetary processes. Yet in the immense difficulties of that time no authoritative direction came from the Jews. The leading minds of the time who grappled with the intricate problems of monetary reconstruction and simplification were almost all Gentiles. It was natural for the common man to ask, “Where are the Jews?” It was easy for him to relapse into suspicion and persecution. Were they speculating unobtrusively? It was an obvious thing for Gentile speculators to shift suspicion to this race which gloried in and suffered by its obstinate resolve to remain a “peculiar people”.

And yet between 1940 and 2059, in little more than a century, this antiquated obdurate culture disappeared. It and its Zionist state, its kosher food, the Law and all the rest of its paraphernalia, were completely merged in the human community. The Jews were not suppressed; there was no extermination; there were world-wide pogroms during the political and social breakdown of the Famished Fifties, but under the Tyranny there was never any specific persecution at all; yet they were educated out of their oddity and racial egotism in little more than three generations. Their attention was distracted from Moses and the Promise to Abraham and the

delusion that God made his creation for them alone, and they were taught the truth about their race. The world is as full as ever it was of men and women of Semitic origin, but they belong no more to "Israel".

This success — the people of the nineteenth century would have deemed it a miracle — is explicable because of two things. The first of them is that the Modern State revolution was from the first educational and only secondarily political; it ploughed deeper than any previous revolution. And next it came about under new and more favourable conditions. In the nineteenth century the family group had ceased to be the effective nucleus in either economic or cultural life. And all the odd exclusiveness of the Jew had been engendered in his closed and guarded prolific home. There is an immense collection of fiction written by Jews for Jews in the early twentieth century, in which the relaxation of this immemorial close home-training and the clash of the old and modernizing generations is described. The dissolution of Israel was beginning even then.

The task of making the mind of the next generation had been abandoned almost unconsciously, for Jew and Gentile alike, to external influences, and particularly to the newspaper and the common school. After 1940 this supersession of home training was renewed in an extensive form. The Modern State movement had from the outset gripped the teachers, re-created popular education after the dark decades upon its own lines, and arrested every attempt to revive competing schools. Even had he desired it the Jew could no longer be peculiar in the food either of his body or his mind.

The complete solidarity of mankind in 2059, the disappearance of the last shadows of dislike and distrust between varied cults, races, and language groups, witnesses to the profound truth of what Falaise, one of De Windt's editors, has called the Mental Conception of History. The Age of Frustration was essentially an age of struggle to achieve certain plainly possible things against the resistances of a muddled human mind. The Declaration of Mégève was not simply an assertion of victory and freedom for the race, it was the demonstration of its achieved lucidity.

As the curtain of separatist dreams, racial fantasies and hate nightmares thinned out and passed away, what was presented to that

awakening human brain? A little sunlit planet, for its external material, bearing what we now realize is not a tithe of its possible flora and fauna, a ball crammed with unused and unsuspected resources; and for the internal stuff of that brain almost limitless possibilities of mental achievement. All that had been done hitherto by man was like the scribbling of a little child before eye and hand have learnt sufficient co-ordination to draw. It was like the pawing and crawling of a kitten before it begins to see. And now man's eyes were open.

This little planet of which he was now at last in mentally untroubled possession was not simply still under-developed and waste; its surface was everywhere scarred and disfigured by the long wars he had waged so blindly for its mastery. Everywhere in 2059 the scenery of the earth still testified to the prolonged war, the state of siege to establish a unified mastery, that had now come to an end. If most of the divisions and barriers of the period of the sovereign states had disappeared, if there were no longer castles, fortifications, boundaries and strategic lines to be traced, there were still many indications that the world was under control and still not quite sure of its own good behaviour. The carefully planned system of aerodromes to prevent any untoward developments of the free private flying that had been tolerated after 2040 was such an indication, and so was the strategic import plainly underlying the needlessly wide main roads that left no possible region of insurrection inaccessible. From the air or on a map it was manifest that the world was still "governed". The road system was like a net cast over a dangerous beast.

And equally visible still was the quality of recent conquest in the social and economic fields. As Theotocopulos complained, the Second Council overdid its embankments. It was distrustful even of the waters of the earth. Its reservoirs and rivers had, he says, "a bullied air". If the jostling little fields and misshapen ill-proportioned farms, the untidy mines, refuse-heaps, factories, workers, slums and hovels and all the dire squalor of competitive industrialism had long since disappeared from the spectacle, there was still effort visible at every point in the layout of twenty-first-century exploitation. The stripping and burning of forests that had devastated the world so extensively in the middle decades of the preceding hundred years had

led to strenuous reafforestation. Strenuous is the word. “Grow,” said the Council, “and let there be no nonsense about it.” At the end of the Age of Frustration a tree that was not lined up and lopped and drilled was an exception in the landscape.

Everywhere there was still this suggestion of possible insubordination and the sense of an underlying threat. Man had struggled desperately and had won, but it was only now that he was finding time to consider any but the most immediate and superficial possibilities of his planet.

The air-view as the dispersing delegates from Mégève saw it forty-seven years ago was indeed in the vividest contrast to the world garden in which we live to-day. That clumsy rationality, that real dread of aestheticism, that had haunted the Council to its end, had made the artificial factors in the landscape inelegant and emphatic almost without exception. Bridges and roads “got there”, as Theotocopulos said, “like charging rhinoceroses”. True that the disposition to squat forms, which came from the age of the air raids, no longer prevailed, but there was a general tendency to make buildings too solid and too big; they had sometimes a certain grandiose boldness, but more often than not there was a touch of military stupidity in the appearance of their piled-up masses. They stood to attention. There was a needlessly lavish abundance of pylons, and they were generally too sturdy.

The enrichment of vegetation which is now world-wide was in operation at that time only in a few experimental areas; in most regions there was still hardly more forest or cultivation than had existed a century and a half before. If the devastation of fellings and fires during the last wars had been replaced by the new straight-ruled, squared-out forests, there was as yet no perceptible rise in the level of the plant community anywhere; what had previously been forest was plantation or forest again, and what had been prairie was still prairie, differing only from the grass prairies of older days in the dwindling contingent of weeds and wild flowers. In spite of the self-complacency of the forestry department of that time, many trees distorted by disease survived, and most were by our standards stunted. To young eyes to-day this world of our fathers, as they see it in picture book and panorama, has not merely a regimented but a

barren look, and its cultivation seems laborious and poor.

Yet compared with the landscape of two centuries ago its aspect was relatively prosperous, spacious and orderly. There is something very touching in the freely expressed response of the nineteenth-century folk to both urban and country landscape and to natural scenery generally. They did not dream how meagre their descendants were to find the spectacle before them. They had, at any rate, as good cloudscapes and sunsets as we have, and such natural coast scenery as that of Western Scotland was practically the same then as it is to-day. They would endure irksome travel to see sunlit snowy mountain masses or get to some viewpoint that caught the rhythm of a distant chain. They loved water and woodlands and distant fields in a wide view, and towns they admired chiefly as piled up accumulations seen from a distance. Also they delighted very greatly in the close brightness of flowering hedges, sheets of bluebells, primrose rides, green moss and tendrils and any sort of flower. They pick these things out for appreciation so persistently in their literature and paintings that it is only with an effort we realize how much they were "picked out", and how dull and repetitive were endless miles of their normal roads and countryside and how flatly forbidding the ordinary aspects of their habitations.

So far as we can reconstruct it now the prevalent note of the nineteenth century scene was weak insipidity, degenerating very easily into a distressful mean ungainliness. America was frostbitten in the north and slovenly in the south and unkempt everywhere. Happily the shorter-lived, not very healthy or vigorous folk of these days had no standards of comparison, and actual intimations of discontent with nature and the countryside were rare. There is scarcely an admission in nineteenth-century literature that the larger part of the natural world was gaunt, unsatisfactory and utterly unsympathetic. Writers and poets did not dare to admit as much because they had neither the hope nor the energy to make things better. They would not see it in obedience to an elementary psychological law.

But under the Second Council, the criticism not only of man's achievement but of natural insufficiency had become voluminous because neither was felt any longer to be final. It was not only the

heavy engineering, the massive buildings and the over-emphasied roadways that those returning delegates threatened with their minds. Much of the land was still unsettled. They looked down on areas of marsh and scrub, bare wildernesses of rock, rainless regions, screes and avalanche slopes. For them as for us it was a world of promise still to be fulfilled.

"Now we can begin on all this," they said. "Now we have really to begin."

2. — KEYING UP THE PLANET

It had long been known that the vegetation of earth and sea, on which the volume and vigour of all other life depends, was not nearly commensurate with the available moisture and sunlight. As early as the nineteen thirties it was being pointed out by an English economic botanist, Frederick Keeble (1870-1975, Collective Works in the Science section of the Reprints), that there were delays and arrests in the multiplication of diatoms, seasonal grass crops, and other extensive primary vegetable growths, arrests due to the fact that while all other conditions were favourable the supply of assimilable nitrogen was too slow to keep up the growth process. He applied the agricultural lesson of manuring to the whole spectacle of life and insisted that we were living in a "nitrogen-starved world". Nitrogen is yielded up by the inorganic world to the uses of life with extreme reluctance. This observation of Keeble's threw a new light for most people on the alleged bounty of nature. Other workers in the same field spread their observations to other elements. Carlos Metom (1927-2014), in a striking passage, compared life on our planet to "a starveling foal on a barren patch that has never learnt to look for green pasture".

This fundamental poverty of terrestrial existence can be traced through most of the geological record. Life has been a stinted thing. There were a few periods of exuberance, the period of the Coal Measures for example, when life seemed really to pour upward; but for most of recorded time life nibbled round the outside of a ball of limitless mineral wealth to which it had no key. No individual intelligence could ever penetrate that hidden hoard of plenty. It was only when the collective mentality of Science had arisen and was going on deathlessly from one clarification to another that a far more abundant vegetable basis for animal and human existence came within the range of possibility, and only now that the waste of human energy in warfare and uncoordinated trading and money-getting was at an end for ever, that the realization of that possibility could be attempted. But hundreds of thousands of brains are now alight with the prospect of evoking such a plenty and wealth of life on our planet

as the whole universe had never dreamed of before this time.

The Second Council, in the beginning of its long reign, had not a sufficient knowledge of the latent powers of applied biology to anticipate this fundamental enrichment of life. It conceived its rôle to be the working-out of the logical consequences of mechanical invention during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The greatest of these consequences were the abolition of distance and the supersession of toil by power machinery. The goal of the Council was to confirm and establish human unity for ever, and to set up a frame of progressive public activities that should provide universal employment and universal purchasing power in the face of a continually increasing industrial efficiency. At first it was preoccupied by the persecuting activities that were needed to secure the world against any reaction towards private monopolization, romantic nationalism, religious eccentricism, and social fission. Then, as its success in this direction passed beyond challenge, as the world community was plainly assured, it found itself confronted by an ever more portentous problem of leisure.

It seemed a natural outlet for the surplus of human energy to provide among other things for an enormous development of scientific research and an exploration of the deeper mineral resources of the earth's crust. The Council assigned something like a third of the resources available for science to biological work, and it does not seem to have occurred to these rulers of the world, preoccupied as they were with the suppression, the excessive suppression, the obliteration even, of deleterious and antiquated separatist doctrines and the refashioning of economic life, that this huge growth of biological enquiry would result in anything more than the extinction of plant and animal diseases, and improvements and economies in cultivation. It was outside the range of their imaginations to anticipate a spate of biological invention that put the spate of mechanical invention which revolutionized the conditions of human life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries altogether in the shade. Biological knowledge outgrew them just as aesthetic sensibility outgrew them.

From the thirties of the twenty-first century onward the conservatism of the Second Council had held back an increasing

amount of scientific discoveries from practical application. The world was unified; it was supporting its population (which was being kept well below the modest safety line of 2000 million) with absolute ease; its health was at a higher level than nature had ever known before; and it was, so far as the powers in being could manage it, marking time. It was like an adolescent who is still treated as a child. Even the new possibilities of exuberant vegetation were not being released. The areas needed for food supply could have been halved before 2050, but the Council decided that the consequent dislocation of the population would be likely to strain social order, and it kept four or five million people at the healthy but not very entertaining work of agricultural production, while it promoted enquiries for the "industrial application of marginal excesses of foodstuffs". It was not only producing, but distributing, staples in 2050 on precisely the lines adopted in 2020. It was restraining educational developments and innovations in building. It had made the world safe for humanity, and it meant to keep the world at that.

In 2047 Homer Lee Pabst published his remarkable researches on the effect upon chromosomes of certain gases derived from the old Sterilizing Inhalation made from Permanent Death Gas. These gases are known now as Pabst's Kinetogens, and there is a whole series of them. Their general effect is to produce mutations of various types. They bring about, abundantly and controllably, a variability in life which has hitherto been caused only with comparative rarity by cosmic radiations. By 2050 the biological world was confronted by a score of absolutely new species of plants and — queer first-fruits in the animal world — by two new and very destructive species of rodent. The artificial evolution of new creatures had come within the range of human possibility.

Limitless possibilities opened before the human imagination. The Council gave way to panic. It saw the world it had taken such pains to put in order given over to uncontrollable vegetable and animal monstrosities. A nightmare of evil weeds and strange beasts dismayed it. Even the human type, it realized, was threatened. The laws restraining experiments upon animals were extended, and every animal novelty produced by Pabst was to be reported upon and destroyed. Plant novelties of decorative or economic value were,

however, to be tolerated. Within his laboratory and experimental grounds Pabst ignored these prohibitions, and the faculty of science increased the endowment of the new experimental genetics. And now that the Supreme Council could no longer interfere, the Transport and General Distribution Control, the newly developed section of the Behaviour Control and the Health Services took up Pabst's results and arranged a conference (2060) for their proper exploitation. A general plan for the directed evolution of life upon the planet was drawn up, a plan which, with various amendments, is in operation to this day.

Most of the "wild beasts" of our ancestors are now under control in their special enclosures and reservations. There are fifteen Major Parks of over five hundred square miles in which various specially interesting faunas and floras flourish without human interference, except for the occasional passage of some qualified observer on foot or the transit of a specially licensed aeroplane overhead. Adventurous holiday-makers are excluded. The creatures in these areas are less affected by man than were their predecessors. They form a valuable reserve control of the genetic tentatives that are being made upon their more or less captive brethren. The most startling result of these experiments is Dumoric's claim to have restored, by means of carefully bred crosses and the cultivation of atavistic types, extinct ancestral forms of the fallow deer.

One beneficial result of the preoccupation of the Second Council with the problem of employment for idle hands and minds had been the very great advances made in both mineralogical and meteorological science. It did not realize that the systematic observation of winds and rainfall could possibly upset its orderly world. Indeed, the prospect of forbidding the wind to blow where it listed was entirely after the Council's heart. So, too, the possibility of controlling or drying up volcanoes and earthquakes appealed very strongly to it. Before 2000, man's knowledge of the composition of what he used to call the earth's "crust" and the mineral resources of the planet beneath that crust was extraordinarily superficial. Geologists relied almost entirely for their knowledge upon surface features, chance exposures, and industrial excavations. But the ever increasing resources available for research made a systematic

probing and exploration of the deeper layers increasingly possible. The student will find in any contemporary textbook of Geology an account of the series of beautiful contrivances such as the Shansi borer, the Hull and Watkins "diviner," and the Noguchi petrograph, which have now made, so to speak, hidden things visible to a depth of twenty-five miles, and there too he will find a description of a score of ingenious devices for isolating blocks of deep-lying rock and bringing their desirable ingredients to the surface. Until a hundred years ago nothing of this sort was even imagined. Instead of employing the energy imprisoned underground to drive what was needed to the surface, the scanty product of the old-world mines was HAULED up by human or mechanical power from above and the ores and coal and salt were actually hewn out in situ by hordes of sweating underpaid human beings.

Equally rapid was the progress of meteorology once the Second Council gave its mind to that subject. Practical meteorology was of very recent date. Except for a little work with the barometer from 1643 onward, forecasting began only in the nineteenth century and was not systematically attempted until 1850. An infinitesimal tampering with the composition of the air began in the early twentieth century. Then man found himself able to withdraw nitrogen from it, but this was done only to provide fertilizers, and in such small quantities as to make no appreciable effect upon the composition of the atmosphere. Little more was attempted until the last war, when the local use of substances like the so-called Permanent Death Gas was carried out on a sufficiently big scale to amount to a transitory readjustment of the air over the region poisoned. Then in the thirties of the twenty-first century there was an extensive use of gas on a large scale to destroy locusts, rodents, and various insect pests. Considerable enthusiasm was shown at the time, but one or two unfortunate accidents cooled the zeal of the Council. It was realized that air-mixing for anything but stimulating and purifying purposes must wait upon the achievement of wind control. Air-mixing was put back into the pigeonholes with a gathering number of other gifts from science that the Council deemed premature.

The Joint Commission for replanning the world found itself

therefore with three correlated groups of possibility challenging its spirit of adventure. A new flora of several thousand species was awaiting release from the experimental grounds, and this was only the easiest of the apparently limitless possibilities of animal and vegetable variation that experimental biology was taking up. A huge and hitherto unsuspected wealth of mineral substances was ready to come out of the deep-lying rocks and refresh the rather limited and jaded resources of the contemporary soil. And alterations in the composition and movements of the atmosphere were no longer inaccessibly beyond human effort. The obstruction of individual ownership and localized governments had been swept away for ever. In that respect the Second Council had beyond question triumphed. But the very vigour with which it had done its task for man and the world as they were, and still in effect are, had cleared the ground for such an unprecedented inventiveness as is now rapidly altering not only the face but the very substance of life.

The Replanning Commission set about its task with the leisurely energy of a body under no stress of necessity. "Life is quite good as it is," runs the Introduction to its Draft Plan. "But it is part of the fundamental goodness of life that we have as much incessant novelty as we desire at our disposal. Due proportion must be our perpetual care. Want of proportion in the development of new things was the general cause of the great bulk of human suffering and frustration during the past five centuries. We have now an organization of controls that can restrain anything like the spasmodic mercenary enterprise, without plan or balance, that let loose disaster in the early twentieth century. We can afford to look before we leap and measure within quite close limits the tale of consequences we set going. In the end we may find that there was very considerable justification for the restraint put by our Supreme Council upon the immediate application of recent inventions, and particularly of recent biological inventions, which might otherwise have precipitated very similar but even more fundamental and catastrophic disproportions to those which overwhelmed the capitalist civilization of the nineteenth century.

"The particular field in which we propose a continuation of restraint is in the application of the rapidly advancing science of genetics to the increase of variability so far as human beings, and

probably some other of the higher mammals, are concerned. We believe that the general feeling of the race is against any such experimentation at present. Under the Second Council the painless destruction of monsters and the more dreadful and pitiful sorts of defective was legalized, and also the sterilization of various types that would otherwise have transmitted tendencies that were plainly undesirable. This is as far, we think, as humanity should go in directing its racial heredity, until our knowledge of behaviour has been greatly amplified. For an age or so we can be content with humanity as it now is, humanity no longer distressed and driven to cruelty by overcrowding, under-nourishment, infections, mental and physical poisons of every sort. There is a rich mine of still greatly underdeveloped capacity in the human brain as it is, and this we may very happily explore by means of artistic effort, by scientific investigations, by living freely and gaily, for the next few generations. Normal human life can be cleansed, extended and amplified. With that we propose to content ourselves. Even upon this planet we have millions of years ahead before there can be any fundamental change in our environment.

"Directly we turn from humanity to other forms of life it is manifest that a most attractive realm is opening to us. We may have new and wonderful forests; we may have new plants; we may replace the weedy and scanty greensward of the past by a subtler and livelier texture. Undreamt-of fruits and blossoms may be summoned out of non-existence. The insect world, on which so much of the rest of life depends, may be made more congenial to mankind. The smaller fry of life and the little beasts and the birds can be varied now until they all come into a tolerable friendship with ourselves. As our hands lose their clumsiness we may interfere more and more surely with the balance of life. There is no longer fear of abundance now that man is sane.

"Our planning of human activities for the next few generations will involve no fundamental changes at all for humanity. It will be a keying-up of the sort of life for which our race, however darkly, confusedly and unsuccessfully, has always striven. At present deliberate weather-control is too big a task for us, but we believe that a sure weather calendar for a year or so ahead is now becoming

possible. An immense series of enterprises to change the soil, lay-out, vegetation and fauna, first of this region and then of that, will necessitate a complete rearrangement of the mines, deep quarries, road network and heavy sea transport of the globe. None of this need be ugly or repulsive, even in the doing; it can all be made intensely interesting. Engineering structure, which was once clumsy and monstrous, is now becoming as graceful as a panther. Industrial enterprises that formerly befouled the world with smoke, refuse and cinder heaps, are now cleaner in their habits than a well-trained cat. The world lay-out of the Second Council, designed apparently for a static society, will be to a large extent swept aside by our new operations. And no doubt our achievements in their turn will give way to still bolder and lovelier enterprises."

So ran the Introduction to what is known as the Keying-up Plan of 2060. To-day we are most of us still immersed in its realization. It has given the world occupation without servitude and leisure without boredom. When we have had enough of our own work for a time we fly off — or walk round the corner — to see what other people are doing. The world is full of interest and delight, from the forest gardens of the Amazons with their sloths, monkeys and occasional pumas and alligators to that playground of the world, the snowfields of the Himalayas. We can arrange to take a turn with the meteorological observers in the upper air, or tune our lungs for a spell in the deep-sea galleries below the rafts of Atlantis. There we can see the great cephalopods of the middle levels coming for their food or watch the headlong growth of a giant pearl.

We are already so accustomed to grace, beauty and variety in all the details and general forms about us that it is only by turning over the pictures and records of seventy years ago that we realize how relatively uneventful were the first decades of human unity. At first man seems to have been so exhausted by his escape from massacre, disease, economic waste and general futility, and so terrified by the thought of any relapse into the old confusions, conflicts and economic cannibalism, that he was capable of nothing but order. But he gathers courage. It is not only our world that is being keyed up, but ourselves.

3. — GEOGONIC PLANNING

Among the "deferred projects" that lie behind our current activities, and second only to the system of schemes for inducing and directing a great increase in human variability, is the complex of plans that have been drawn out to alter the terrestrial contours. Here again is something far too great and dangerous for our present wisdom, but something which it seems inevitable our race will ultimately attempt.

At present, and for many generations yet, we are still the creatures and subjects of geography; the oceans and great mountain chains condition our lives. They determine habitats, which again determine the human type best adapted to live for the greater part of its life in this or that region. Every kind of us, dark or fair, thick-set or slender, black or buff, has its own distinctive best place in which to rear its children and work and rest. It may roam the earth as it will, but only in certain regions is it altogether at home. No type is at home everywhere. There is no universal man. A universal type of man would be possible only on a flat and uniform earth. There is a necessary variety in humanity which no one now desires to diminish.

But the question the modern geographer puts to us is whether there is not a classification of habitats possible into very desirable, desirable, undesirable, and inimical, and whether a certain modification of the planet- levels operating in conjunction with the restoration of forests now in progress would not greatly increase the desirable habitats, by a redistribution of rainfall, a change in the fall of the surface waters, protection from winds and so forth. A not very considerable rise in the Appennines, for instance, would bring them up to the permanent snow-line and change the character of the entire Italian peninsula. And an increase in desirable habitats may bring with it an increase in the variety of desirable human types.

Yesterday this sort of thing was called "chimerical," to-day it is impracticable and unnecessary, because of the volcanic forces that might be released. So for the present the geogonist, like the geneticist, must content himself with dreams — in his case dreams of moulding a fire-spouting, quivering planet closer to the expanding needs of man. His turn to remodel the world will come perhaps in a

thousand years or so. There is plenty of time for that.

4. — CHANGES IN THE CONTROL OF BEHAVIOUR

The past forty-eight years have seen very great modifications in the social control of individual behaviour. There has been a very great increase in the science, skill and quality of the teachers throughout the world, but quite apart from that the character and purpose of education and police have changed profoundly.

Education as we understand it to-day began about the middle of the twentieth century. It had only the slenderest continuity with the education of the preceding age, just as the education of Christendom had only the slenderest continuity with the education of the pagan world. Reading, writing, and counting were taught in all three systems, but beyond that the very objectives were different. Modern education began as propaganda after the time of De Windt, as the propaganda of the Modern State. It sought to establish a new complete ideology and a new spirit which would induce the individual to devote himself and to shape all his activities to one definite purpose, to the attainment and maintenance of a progressive world-socialism, using an efficient monetary system as its normal medium of relationship.

This seemed, and was, a gigantic undertaking. It faced colossal obstacles in ordinary human nature. But it was supremely necessary if human civilization was to continue. The alternative was a relapse through chaotic barbarism to animal casualness and final extinction. Thought and behaviour patterns had to be shaped therefore to subserve this objective, to the relative disregard of any other conceivable purpose. The Modern State became the whole duty of man. This propaganda passed necessarily into a training for public service and a universal public education. The Modern State Fellowship was a trained body pledged to impose its own type of training upon all the world. It proposed to be the New Humanity. It would accept no compromises. It made the whole educational framework militant. No other type of school and no other system of teaching was tolerated for more than half a century. Never before

was man so directed and disciplined.

The educationists of this period of the First Council and the Air Dictatorship were particularly sedulous to restrain what they called "aberrant motives." Austerity in eating and drinking, hardiness, severity in exercise, a jealousy of leisure, and a profound distrust of aesthetic and sensuous gratification, and particularly of sexual excitement, marked the educational ideals of these men who set out to demodel the world. In the early stages of progressive and revolutionary thought in the nineteenth century there had been considerable laxity of private conduct. There had been a revolt against what was called "Christian morality," and a disposition not simply to condone but encourage indulgence in forms that had hitherto been prohibited. Most of this "liberalism" in conduct had vanished from revolutionary circles by the second or third decade of the twentieth century. The Modern State movement, as it developed, was pervaded by a disapproval of every sort of sensuous or emotional affection. The business in hand could not suffer it. It wasted time; it wasted energy. It let in too much intrigue. It undermined the common loyalty. Not even Christianity in its most militant stages was so set against the dissipation of energy in this direction. The new sexual puritanism differed from the old in its toleration of birth control, its disregard of formal marriage, and a certain charity towards the first excesses of youth, but it insisted with even greater vigour upon public decency and upon the desirability of sexual seriousness, enduring connexions, and complete loyalty between lovers. As a result the world was far more monogamous, more decorous, and decently busy after 2000 C.E., than it had ever been before.

Many critics to-day are disposed to consider the repressions of that time excessive. We are now in a different phase; the militant age is past. They allege that there was a vast amount of secret and solitary vice and moral and mental distortion beneath the cold surface of things during these disciplined years, and they consider that the undeniable harshness and obstinacy of the Second Council as it grew old was a direct result of its puritanism. They do not hesitate to use such terms as masochist and sadist. But this is by no means a unanimous opinion. Equally reputable authorities deny that there was

any such seething pit of stifled desires and thwarted motives under the orderly and healthy activities of the constructive time as this new school pretends. In no psychological problem are we still so inadequately informed as in the quantitative estimate of sexual impulse and restraint.

Our investigators work at literature, biographies, diaries, pictorial art, police reports in their intricate attempt to recover the vanished mental states of these departed generations. There seems to be a sort of rhythm in these things. The contrast between present conditions and conditions seventy years ago is paralleled in history by the contrast between English social life in 1855 and 1925. There also we have a phase of extreme restraint and decorum giving way to one of remarkable freedom. We can trace every phase. Every phase is amply documented. There are not the slightest grounds for supposing that the earlier period was one of intense nervous strain and misery. There was a general absence of vivid excitation, and the sexual life flowed along in an orderly fashion. It did not get into politics or the control of businesses. It appears in plays and novels like a tame animal which is not to be made too much of. It goes out of the room whenever necessary. By comparison England in 1920 was out for everything it could do sexually. It did everything and boasted about it and incited the young. As the gravity of economic and political problems increased and the structural unsoundness of the world became more manifest, sexual preoccupations seem to have afforded a sort of refuge from the mental strain demanded by the struggle. People distracted themselves from the immense demands of the situation by making a great noise about the intensifications and aberrations of the personal life. There was a real propaganda of drugs and homosexuality among the clever young. Literature, always so responsive to its audience, stood on its head and displayed its private parts. It produced a vast amount of solemn pornography, facetious pornography, sadistic incitement, re-sexualized religiosity and verbal gibbering in which the rich effectiveness of obscene words was abundantly exploited. It is all available for the reader to-day who cares to examine it. He will find it neither shocking, disgusting, exciting or interesting. He will find it comically pretentious and pitifully silly.

It is small wonder that the scattered workers for the Modern State, who were struggling heroically with the huge problems of social dislocation and social reconstruction, developed an antipathy against these aesthetic and sexual preoccupations which robbed them of the help and service of so many hopeful youngsters. The Modern State Movement was unobtrusively puritanical from the outset. After the romantic lapses of the First World Council it became oppressively puritanical.

It was the precedent of the moral disorder of the early twentieth century to which the Educational Control appealed, a hundred and twenty years later, to justify its sustained regulation of private morals and repression of stimulation. It failed to realize the profound difference of the new conditions. The florid ebullition of sexual troubles, sexual refinements and sexual grossnesses in the Age of Frustration had been a natural consequence of frustration. Everywhere in the face of challenges too huge to face, rich and poor alike found themselves aimless, unoccupied, menaced. Ill health was increasing. Drugs, alcohol and sex were available to excite and soothe and deaden their distressed nerves. Good-looking youth, which could not sell its brains or labour, could still find a market for its person. About every nucleus of unjustly acquired wealth or demoralized power prostitution and parasitism festered. What else was there to do in that ugly, unhappy and dangerous world? But the world of 2040 was a busy, keenly interested and healthy world again.

We cannot detail in this general review of history the reluctant lifting of one prohibition after another. We may now go naked, love as we like, eat, drink and amuse ourselves with our work or as we will, subject only to a proper respect for unformed minds. And no harm has been done at all. When the Puritanical Tyranny began, its directors felt they had imprisoned a tiger that would otherwise consume all the plenty and safety they achieved. Very reluctantly indeed, bit by bit and after endless disputes, were their prohibitions relaxed. And no tiger appeared. Properly nourished people do not take to gluttony, properly interested people are not overwhelmed by sex. Instead of a tiger appeared a harmless, quiet, unobtrusive and not unpleasing pussy-cat, which declined to be in any way notable.

Humanity was changing. The threatened outbreak of pornography,

abnormality and sex excitation did not occur. But anyone who studies the fiction and drama of the past half-century and compares it with the similar literature of the old world will realize that there are far more personal love and far more happy lovers than ever before, and that physical love to demonstrate loyalty, show preference, enrich association and seal friendship was never so direct and beautiful. Jealousy we have, but it is rarely malicious; desire, but it is rarely vicious. In this as in so many other things progress has meant simplification. The souls we read about of two centuries ago strike us as grotesquely tangled, tormented and nasty souls. Hate mingled with their desires; mercenary considerations were an ever present defilement; they paired dishonestly and mated insincerely.

But while there has been this release from the strait-laced sexual morals of the militant period, in another field there has been no relaxation. The new order can tolerate no tampering with the monetary-property system that holds us all together. Not only is our police incessantly alert against robbery and cheating as the old world understood it, but many gainful practices that 1920 would have considered tolerable or even admirable are suppressed, and are likely to be suppressed for all time. Gambling, the mean desire and device to get the spending of someone else's earnings, is punished as heavily as the forgery of money checks; and all those speculative activities which seemed to be the very texture of the nineteenth-century social order dare not reappear now in any disguise at all. Money is a check for our personal needs, or for the giving of graceful presents. There must be no misuse of money to gain an advantage over another human being, even with that other human being's connivance. There we are still bound. That sort of thing is the vice of cannibalism. Beyond that liberty increases daily.

With a sound education of mind and body and a rigorous and exact protection of property and money from dishonourable impulses, we have found that it is possible to give every human being such a liberty of movement and general behaviour as would have seemed incredible to those militant socialists who ruled the world during the earlier decades of the last century. But it is just because of their stern and thorough cleansing of human life that we can now live in freedom. We may go anywhere in the world now, we

may do practically anything that we can possibly desire to do.

5. — ORGANIZATION OF PLENTY

Just as it becomes increasingly difficult for the teacher of history to convey to each new generation what human feelings and motives were like in a world of morbid infections and unwholesome bodily habits or in a heavily sentimentalized atmosphere of general distrust and insecurity, so also he has to make a most vigorous imaginative effort to recover even the faintest shadow of the pervading vexation, humiliations and straining anxiety that resulted from an almost universal deficiency of common things. Everybody, except a small minority, went short until the close of the twentieth century. Even the rich had to be wary cunning buyers to satisfy all their fancies and desires. The simplified economic order of our world to-day runs so smoothly that we hardly think at all about our ordinary needs. Housing, food and clothing wait upon us wherever we go. It is so easily done that we fail to realize the immense cleansing away of obstructive difficulties that had to occur before it could be made so easy.

One of the results of abundance that our ancestors would have found paradoxical is the abolition of encumbrance. But the less there was in the past the more you had to have and hold. Men had to appropriate things because there was not enough to go round. Your home was not simply the place to which you retired for solitude or intimacy; it was a store house. In the sixteenth or seventeenth century it was even fortified by bars, locks and bolts against robbers. You got with difficulty, and what you got you kept. The successful man of those days was imprisoned and smothered in accumulations upon which he dared not relax his watchfulness and grip. They were as indestructible as he could make them, for once destroyed or ignored they might prove irreplaceable. Everybody was keeping things, keeping them rather than using them. If they were not wanted now they might be wanted presently. If that successful man desired to vary his urban life he had to possess a country house. In these establishments there had to be a miniature social economy. Much of the food was not only prepared in the personal household, but produced on the private estate. All this had to be managed and

watched to prevent waste, slackness and dishonesty. All the clothes the prosperous man might want to wear had to be stored and preserved in presses and wardrobes; his household needed gear against any possible emergency; and all his accumulations had to be guarded against robbers. It was almost as anxious and wearing a job to be rich as to be poor in those days of general insufficiency. And if the rich man travelled, he had to travel in his own coach with his attendants, taking a great burthen of clothing and general luggage with him.

In the relatively plentiful days of the later nineteenth century, which in so many details foreshadowed and yet failed to complete and generalize the conditions of our own time, there was for the prosperous at least a certain alleviation of the burthen of property. The temporary achievement of a limited cosmopolitanism of money and credit, the multiplication of the bourgeoisie, the liquidation of ownership by joint-stock undertakings, the increased facilities for communication and movement, made successful people less disposed to sit down amidst their possessions. There was a sustained general effort, which we now find grotesque and irrational, to keep property and at the same time not to be bothered by property. The ideal of success was no longer concrete ownership but purchasing power. Houses, furnishings and so forth changed hands with increased readiness.

Instead of living in great complete houses and dining at home, people lived in smaller houses or flats and dined in collective dining-rooms or restaurants. They gave up having country houses of their own and travelled freely and variously, evoking a vast industry of hotels and hired villas. They travelled lighter — in comparison with preceding centuries, that is. As retail trade organized itself upon big-business lines, the need for the private storage of gear diminished. People bought things when they wanted them, because now they could do so. The big "stores" of the early twentieth century carried an enormous and greatly varied stock.

In the days of Shakespeare new clothes, new furniture, new houses, new things of all sorts were infrequent; in the early twentieth century there were already intimations of the general fresh newness of our own times. The facilities for scrapping were still poorly

developed, and there was much congestion and endless litter about, but renewal and replacement for those who had purchasing power were already well developed. If it had not been for the social catastrophe due to ignorance, individualism, monetary deflation and nationalism that overwhelmed that phase of civilization, the distributing organization of the world might very probably have developed straight on from the system of linked stores as it flourished in America in 1925 to our present conditions. And similarly there was an expansion of hotel life and a belated beginning of portable country houses, clearly foreshadowing our current arrangements.

After the disasters and new beginnings of the middle decades of the twentieth century it was to the patterns of big business at the close of the First Age of Abundance that the direction of the Transport Union recurred. We have told how easily and necessarily that Union became the trading monopoly and finally, as the Air and Sea Control, the actual government of the renascent world. Its counting-houses issuing and receiving its energy notes became the New Banking; its Trading Council became the New Retailing; its Supply Control took over, at last, the productive activities of the world. From the first the new powers were instinct with the idea of mobility. They had no vestiges in their composition of the skimping and saving traditions of the ages of insufficiency. They set about providing as ample and various accommodation for everybody as the ever-increasing production of the planet permitted.

The great distributing stores of the previous age provided the patterns from which the new distribution developed in that age of recovery. Wherever old towns and cities were being reconstructed or new ones appearing about new centres of productive activity the architects of the Air and Sea Control erected their great establishments, at first big and handsome after the old fashion and then more finely planned. At first these stores sold things according to the old method, then gradually in regard to a number of things, to clothing for example, they organized the modern system of exchanging new things for old; the new shoes or garment would be made and fitted to the customer and the old taken away and pulped or otherwise disposed of. Nothing is cobbled nowadays; nothing is

patched or repaired. By degrees this method abolished that ancient institution the laundry altogether. That line of fluttering patched and tattered garments so characteristic of old-world village scenery vanished from the earth. New rapid methods of measuring and fitting replaced the tape, scissors and sewing of the old days. In the time of the Hoover Slump men would wear their underclothes for years, having them painfully washed out, dried, ironed and returned weekly, and they would wear their complex outer garments with all the old fastenings, buttons, straps, buckles and so forth, sometimes for many years. They had to be made of dark fabrics with broken patterns to conceal their griminess. The clothing of the Middle Ages was still filthier. Nowadays the average life of our much simpler and brighter outer garments with their convenient zip fastenings is about a week, and such light underclothes as we wear last about three days. We keep no wardrobes of them; the stores are our wardrobes. If the weather changes the stores are ready for us everywhere with wraps or heavier or lighter materials. It must be a remote expedition indeed that needs a change of raiment. We wear less clothing than our ancestors, partly because of our healthier condition, partly because we do not like to hide lovely bodies, but mainly because in the past men wrapped themselves up against every contingency. They wore hats whenever they were not under a roof, socks inside their boots, buttons on their sleeve-cuffs, collars and ties. It seems as though these elaborations became necessary to social prestige because of the general shortage. In an age of scarcity it was a testimonial to one's worth to be fully clad. In the nineteenth century the well-to-do wore gold watch-chains and gloves, which they carried in their hands in hot weather, as further evidence of substantial means.

Housing again, under the Air and Sea Control, took off from the point where the hotel-flat had left it in 1930. There was never any attempt to resume the building of those small permanent houses which were spread so abundantly over England, for example, after the World War. The first task of the new world control was mainly sanitary. Infection lurked everywhere; four decades of social disorder had made every building a decaying disease-trap for the young that were born into it. The Housing Control rebuilt the housing quarters of the rotten old towns in the form of blocks of dwellings, clean,

spacious and convenient, but, to our eyes now, very squat and dull. They went from ten to twelve stories high, and very soundly and honestly made. Everywhere they had water, lighting, heating in the colder climates, and sanitation. The picturesquely clustering rural villages were replaced all over the earth by the same type of concentrated house-block, the style and material varying only so far as conditions of climate required it. The villages were literally swept up into these piles. Even where small private cultivation was still going on, the concentration into these mansions occurred and the peasants bicycled out to their properties. Every block had its crèche, its school, its store and its general meeting-rooms.

As we look back on it this supersession of the single separate unlit, undrained and waterless hut or hovel, cottage or little steading seems to have been a swift business, but in reality it took from 1980 to 2030, much more than half the average lifetime, to spread this new conception of housing over most of the world, and by that time in the more advanced regions the older blocks were already being replaced by more beautiful and convenient creations.

Historical Pictures shows us the whole process. We see the jumbling growths of the early phase of the twentieth century; towering apartment-houses and hotels struggling up, far above the churches, mosques, pagodas and public buildings, out of a dense undergrowth of slums. Then come arrest and decline. The pictures become as full of ruins, sheds and makeshift buildings as the drawings of Albrecht Dürer. Amidst these appear air-raid shelters with their beetling covers, first-aid pillars with their chequered markings, and anti-aircraft forts. Further ruin ensues and we see life disorganized by the Great Plague.

Then suddenly these stout, squat, virtuous new blocks thrust into the scene and the battered past vanishes. A new Age has begun. The towns grow larger, finer and more varied. The housing blocks are grouped with the expanding stores, public clubs and hotels in parks and gardens near to the aerodrome, and convenient for whatever industry gives the agglomeration its importance. The public club became prominent after C.E. 2000, both architecturally and socially. That again was the revival of two old ideas; it was a combination of the idea of the English or American club with the idea of the Baths to

which the Roman citizens resorted. Here from the start were grouped the gymnastic and sports halls, dancing-floors, conference rooms, the perpetual news cinema, libraries, reading-rooms, small studies, studios and social centres of the reviving social life.

The twenty-first century rediscovered an experience of the nineteenth and of the first centuries of the Christian Era, a discovery that was also made by Alexander the Great, that it is much easier to build great modern cities in new places than to modernize the old centres of activity. And the more vital these old centres remained the more difficult was their reconstruction, because it meant the interruption and transfer of important activities to new quarters. New York was typical of this lag in rebuilding. Up to quite recently Lower New York has been the most old-fashioned city in the world, unique in its gloomy antiquity. The last of the ancient skyscrapers, the Empire State Building, is even now under demolition in C.E. 2106!

This was not because New York has fallen out of things, but, on the contrary, because it was in the van of the new movement. We have already quoted Nicholson's account of its reviving importance in 1960. A year or so later it became the headquarters of the American branch of the Sea and Air Control, a western equivalent to Basra. The swiftly expanding activities of the new government needed immediate housing, and the gaunt surviving piles of Lower New York were adapted hastily to its accommodation. This kept them going for a time, and then arose a prolonged controversy between rival schools of planning for the reconstruction of that strangely vital city. It is not only true that the poorer the world was the more it was encumbered by property, but also that the more vigorously a place or a building is being used in progressive work the more difficult it is to keep it up to date.

Since the middle of the twenty-first century there has been a world-wide reappearance of the individual home, more particularly on the countryside, by the sea, and amidst forests and mountain scenery. But it has reappeared in a new form. It is not really the same thing as the old cottage and country house.

The idea of a home made of portable material, constructed at some convenient industrial centre and sent to any desired site, was already in the minds of such restless innovators as Henry Ford before

the Decline and Fall. The country college, the country house, is an imaginative outlet. For great numbers of men and women comes a phase when the desire for that little peculiar place, with its carefully chosen site, its distinctive long-coveted amenities, its outlet upon the woods, the mountain, the jungle or the sea, has an overpowering appeal. There they will live, dream, work and be happy. Few of the many who had that dream could satisfy it in the old days. Some rare, rich persons were able to buy land, build elaborately after their desires, make gardens. When they died or became bankrupt other people without the leisure to make their own homes bought the abandoned home. They would far rather have made a place for themselves, but there stood the predecessor's desire in brick or stone, solid and irremovable, and they did what they could, by means of alterations, to eliminate the taste of him.

But as plenty and mechanical power increased, as the new road system made more and more of the earth accessible, as power-cables and water supply spread everywhere, it became easy not only to clear away and obliterate the traces of houses that were done for, but to bring a pleasant individualized country house within the purchasing power of an increasing proportion of the population. The mastery of power in our time is manifested almost as much by its swift scrapping and scavenging as by its limitless productivity. Nowadays a man or woman may hit upon an unoccupied site, spend a few pleasant weeks planning and revising projects and designs, and give his order. In a month his home is ready, in a day or so more the foundation has been laid, and in three or four weeks the dream is realized; the house stands as he wished it to stand, connected to the power mains, supplied with water, furnished to his taste smiling and ready. It is hardly more trouble than ordering an aeroplane or an automobile.

In its earlier stages the evocation of the preconstructed house was not so rapid, but from the first it was far quicker than the laborious piling up of the old-world builder.

And with an equal facility now a house is cleared away. We no longer think it meet to wear another man's abandoned house any more than we think it proper to wear the clothes of the dead. Clearing away, says Michael Kemal, is the primary characteristic of the

Modern Age. The Age of Frustration was essentially an age that could not clear away, either debts, sovereignties, patriotisms, old classes, old boundaries, old buildings, old scores or old grievances. It is only in the past century that man has learnt the real lesson of plenty, that far more important than getting things is getting rid of things. We are rich universally because we are no longer rich personally.

We have mentioned the travelling wealthy man of the seventeenth century, for then only the wealthy aristocrats could travel freely, and we have glanced at the cumbersome impedimenta of his voyage. Compare him with any ordinary man today who decides to take a holiday and go to the ends of the earth. He may arrange with a travel bureau overnight for one or two special accommodations, then off he goes in the clothes he wears. He takes a wallet with his money account, his identification papers and perhaps a memorandum book. He may wear, as many people do, a personal ornament or so that has taken a hold upon his imagination. He may carry something to read or a specimen he wants to show. Whatever else he is likely to want on his way he will find on his way. He needs no other possessions because his possessions are everywhere. We have solved the problem of socializing property, the problem the early twentieth century was unable to solve. We have the use and consumption of material goods without the burthen of ownership.

6. — THE AVERAGE MAN GROWS OLDER AND WISER

The numbers and the quality of the human population have changed very greatly in the past two centuries. Always these things have varied; every animal and vegetable species fluctuates continually in the numbers and quality of its individuals; but it is only recently that these movements have been recorded and examined systematically. The anti-progressives of the early twentieth century loved to assert that "human nature" never altered; to imagine that the men of the Stone Age felt and thought like bank clerks picnicking in a cave, and that the ideas of Confucius and Buddha were easily interchangeable with the ideas of Rousseau, Karl Marx or De Windt. They were not simply ignorant but misinformed about almost every essential fact in the past experiences and present situation of the race. Only when the twenty-first century was well under way did any consciousness of the primary operating forces in human biology appear in the discussion and conduct of world affairs.

In the year 1800 the total population of the world was under 900 millions, and the average age was about 22. In 1900 the population had doubled and the average age had risen by nearly ten years. In 1935 a maximum was attained of 2000 millions and the average age had mounted to nearly 40. In a hundred years the facilities for intercommunication and physical reaction had increased beyond all measure. But the statesmen, educators and lawyers of that age, as we have shown very plainly in this history, were unaware of any of these differences that had occurred since their methods were developed. They drooled along according to precedent. A set-back for adjustment was therefore inevitable. We have told the broad facts of the crash that began with the war massacres of 1914-18 and culminated in the cycle of pestilences before 1957. In thirty years the population of the earth fell to about one thousand millions or less, and the average age receded to something about 23. This was a stupendous recession, not merely in numbers but in the maturity of the average mind.

Then came the Air and Sea Control and the First and the Second Council with their restoration of hygienic conditions and their scientific planning. The increase of population was watched and restrained for a century, but the average age extended until now it is 62 and still rising. The population total crept back to 1500 millions in 2060 and reached 2000 millions again in 2085. It has become manifest that such a population is no longer unwieldy, and that with the scientific education and behaviour control we now possess a considerable further increase can be contemplated without dismay.

The population of the earth is now 2500 millions, and it will probably be let up to 4000 millions as rapidly as the world is keyed up for its full support and happiness. The danger of such a population swarming dangerously or getting into panics, mental jams, crushes and insanitary congestions grows less and less. The opinion of contemporary authorities is that 4000 millions is an optimum, and that before many decades have passed it will be possible to keep most of those born actively and happily alive to something like 90 years of age. But the question of the possibility and advisability of prolonging the individual life more than three or four decades beyond the "threescore and ten" of the Biblical barbarian is still an open one. It is possible that there is a limit to the memories a brain can carry and to its power of taking new interest in fresh events. There may be a natural death for most people in the future about the age of a hundred or a little more, as painless and acceptable as going to bed and sleeping after a long and interesting day.

These quantitative biological alterations involve the profoundest differences in the quality of every life concerned. It is not simply that each individual has now a justifiable faith that he will live out his life to the end, but that the conditions in which he lives call out quite a different reaction system from that evoked in the past. Before the Middle Ages people thought of their grandparents as older and mightier people, but we think of our ancestors as younger and feebler people. Those earlier generations were like fresh-water fish, living in shallow, saline and readily dried-up water, in comparison with others of the same species living in a deep, abundant, well-aerated and altogether congenial lake. They were continually uncomfortable, constantly stranded by circumstances; they flapped about wildly and

died early. Although they were the same in essence, their behaviour, their very movements, were like the behaviour of a different species of being.

Consider the existence of a young man in Shakespeare's time. If he did not die young he aged rapidly. He would be heavy, old and pompous at forty. A swarm of ailments lay in wait for him to emphasize and accelerate his decay. Youth was stuff that would not endure. The beauty and vitality of women were even more evanescent. So they snatched at love and adventure. The world was full of Romeos and Juliets at the crest of their passionate lives in their teens, who nowadays would be in the college stage of education, a score of years away from any conclusive drama. The literature of the time witnesses to a universal normal swift transitoriness. The simple precipitate love story, the jealousy, the headlong revenge and so on makes the substances of drama, romance and poem. That and the grab at spendable wealth: El Dorado, treasure trove or robbery attempted and defeated. A career was made or marred by a week's folly, and there was little time to recover it before the end. It is extraordinarily interesting to note all the things in life that are left out by the Elizabethan literature, and so to measure that smaller brighter circle of interest in that age.

The changing biological conditions between 1840 and 1940 mirror themselves faithfully in the art and reading of the decades. The novel, which is at first pervaded by a gay hello to life, which accepts everything as cheerfully as a young animal, which laughs, caricatures and incites, becomes reflective, analytical, purposeful. Life no longer ends at the first rush. The proportion of novels to other books diminishes. The penetration of the individual consciousness by the great social and economic processes that were going on becomes more and more evident. When literature revived at the close of the twentieth century it was an adult literature, expressing the mentality of readers and writers who were fully grown men and women in a planning world that had ceased to be accidental and incoherent. In the novel as it then reappeared there is much more about personal love and the interplay of character, but far less (and the proportion continues to diminish) about the primary love adventure.

That diminution of haste and avidity, of the quick egotism and

swift uncritical judgment of youth, still continues. The deliberation, serenity and breadth of reference in the normal life increase. The years from thirty to seventy were formerly a sort of dump for the consequences of the first three decades; now they are the main part of life, the years of work, expression and complete self-discovery, to which these earlier stages are the bright, delightful prelude. There was a time when the man or woman over forty felt something of a survivor; he was "staying on"; relatively the world swarmed with youth, with the swiftness, rivalries and shallowness of youth: the fitness of the ill-protected body had gone already; the elderly people who were "getting on for fifty" moved slowly and had duller if sounder apprehensions. But now most of us are in the graver years with our bodies and apprehensions unimpaired, and there is no longer the same effect of being rather in the way of a juvenile treat. The juvenile treat, the age when even the old aped the young, ended in the World War and the economic collapse. After that came a struggle, at first unconscious and then open and declared, between youth and mental maturity.

In the bad years after the World War for a couple of generations there was a very unhappy relapse towards youthful predominance. The old people had failed to avert the collapse, the legitimate seniors for the new period were dead and broken and morally disorganized, and there was a sort of poetic justice in the stormy release of puerility that ensued. Italy was scourged by its hobbledehoys in black shirts; Russia was ruled by the blue-chinned Young; Ireland was devastated by hooligan patriots; presently Germany, after brooding over its defeat for ten years, had a convulsive relapse to fiercely crazy boyishness in the Nazis. Indian patriotism had a kindred immaturity. The tender years of many of the young revolutionaries executed by the British, outrage our standards of toleration. Everywhere was youthful ignorance with lethal weapons in its hands, conceited, self-righteous, exalted, blind to the tale of consequences. Breaking up things is the disposition of youth, and making is not yet in its experience. Liberalism and the middle-aged had a phase of unprecedented ineffectiveness. There seemed to be no judgment left in the world, and the young, in masks and requisitioned cars, making nocturnal raids, indulging in punitive cruelties, beating, torturing,

displaying in equal measure physical recklessness and moral panic, came near to wrecking the whole civilizing process.

It is an interesting task to trace the gradual maturing of these adolescent organizers that seized so much of the control of the world in that age of transitional disorder. There are voluminous books in which Fascism in 1920, Fascism in 1930, and Fascism in 1940, or again Communism in the same decades, is elaborately compared with itself. After all their impatience and sentimentality, their rank patriotism and reactionary cant, we find these youth movements unobtrusively sneaking back to planning, discipline, and scientific methods. Millions of young men who began Fascist, Nazi, Communist and the like, blind nationalists and irrational partisans, became Modern State men in their middle years. They became at last instruments to realize the plans and visions of the very men they had hunted, maltreated and murdered in the crude zeal of their first beginnings.

But now youth is well in hand for ever, and when we speak of a man to-day we really mean a different being from a nineteenth-century man. Bodily he is sounder and fitter, almost completely free from disease; mentally he is clear and clean and educated to a pitch that was still undreamt of two centuries ago. He is over fifty instead of being under thirty. He is less gregarious in his instincts and less suggestible because he is further away from the "home and litter" mentality, but he is far more social and unselfish in his ideology and mental habits. He is, in fact, for all the identity of his heredity, a different animal. He is bigger and stronger, more clear-headed, with more self-control and more definitely related to his fellow creatures.

This is manifest everywhere, but it is particularly visible in such regions as Bengal and Central China. There we find the direct descendants of shrill, unhappy, swarming, degenerate, undernourished, under-educated, underbred and short-lived populations among the finest, handsomest, longest- lived and ablest of contemporary humanity. This has been achieved without any attempt at Positive Eugenics; it has resulted from the honest application of the Obvious to health, education, and economic organization, within little more than a hundred years. These populations were terribly weeded by the pestilences of the age of

disorder and grimly disciplined by the Tyranny. They are now, after that pruning and training bearing as fine flowers of literary and scientific achievement as any other racial masses.

7. — LANGUAGE AND MENTAL GROWTH

(I print this section exactly as Raven wrote it down. It is, the reader will remark, in very ordinary twentieth-century English. Yet plainly if it is a part of a twenty-second-century textbook of general history it cannot have been written originally in our contemporary idiom. It insists upon a refinement and enlargement of language as if it had already occurred, but no such refinement is evident. It must have been translated by Raven as he dreamt it into the prose of to-day. If he saw that book of his at all, he saw it not with his eyes but with his mind. The actual page could have had neither our lettering, our spelling, our phrasing nor our vocabulary.)

One of the unanticipated achievements of the twenty-first century was the rapid diffusion of Basic English as the lingua franca of the world and the even more rapid modification, expansion and spread of English in its wake. The English most of us speak and write today is a very different tongue from the English of Shakespeare, Addison, Bunyan or Shaw; it has shed the last traces of such archaic elaborations as a subjunctive mood; it has simplified its spelling, standardized its pronunciation, adopted many foreign locutions, and naturalized and assimilated thousands of foreign words. No deliberate attempt was made to establish it as the world language. It had many natural advantages over its chief competitors, Spanish, French, Russian, German and Italian. It was simpler, subtler, more flexible and already more widely spoken, but it was certainly the use of Basic English which gave it its final victory over these rivals.

Basic English was the invention of an ingenious scholar of Cambridge in England, C. K. Ogden (1889-1990), who devoted a long and industrious life to the simplification of expression and particularly to this particular simplification. It is interesting to note that he was a contemporary of James Joyce (1882-1955), who also devoted himself to the task of devising a new sort of English. But while Ogden sought scientific simplification, Joyce worked aesthetically for elaboration and rich suggestion, and vanished at last from the pursuit of his dwindling pack of readers in a tangled prose almost indistinguishable from the gibbering of a lunatic.

Nevertheless he added about twenty-five words to the language which are still in use. Ogden, after long and industrious experimentation in the reverse direction, emerged with an English of 850 words and a few rules of construction which would enable any foreigner to express practically any ordinary idea simply and clearly. It became possible for an intelligent foreigner to talk or correspond in understandable English in a few weeks. On the whole it was more difficult to train English speakers to restrict themselves to the forms and words selected than to teach outsiders the whole of Basic. It was a teacher of languages, Rudolph Boyle (1910-1959), who contrived the method by which English speakers learnt to confine themselves, when necessary, to Basic limitations.

This convenience spread like wildfire after the First Conference of Basra. It was made the official medium of communication throughout the world by the Air and Sea Control, and by 2020 there was hardly anyone in the world who could not talk and understand it.

It is from phonetically spelt Basic English as a new starting-point that the language we write and speak to-day developed, chiefly by the gradual resumption of verbs and idioms from the mother tongue and by the assimilation of foreign terms and phrases. We speak a language of nearly two million words nowadays, a synthetic language in fact, into which roots, words and idioms from every speech in the world have been poured. K. Wang in a recent essay has shown that there are still specializations of vocabulary. The vocabulary of a score of recent writers of Italian origin chosen haphazard shows a marked preference for words derived from the Latin, in comparison with twenty Eastern Asiatic writers whose bias is Chinese and American. Yet they can all understand one another and they are all in one undivided cultural field.

There are few redundancies in the new English of today and tomorrow, and there is an increasing disposition to take synonyms, and what used to be classified as “rare” or “obsolete” terms, and re-define them to convey some finer shade of meaning. Criticism, in the form of the Dictionary Bureau, scrutinizes, but permits desirable additions. One can feel little doubt about the increasing delicacy and precision of expression to-day if we compare a contemporary book with some English classic of the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

That is still quite understandable to us, but in its bareness and occasional ineptitudes it seems halfway back to the limitations and lumberingness of Early English or Gothic.

The fuller the terminology the finer the mind. There can be very little doubt that the brain of a twentieth-century man compared with the brain of an ordinary man to-day, though in no way intrinsically inferior, was a far less polished and well-adjusted implement. It was warped by bad habits, cumbered with a tangle of unsound associations, clogged with unresolved complexes; it was like a fine piece of machinery in a state of dirt and neglect. The modern brain is far more neatly packed and better arranged, cleaner and better lubricated. It not only holds much more, but it uses the larger keyboard of our contemporary language more efficiently. The common man to-day is apt to find the philosophers and "thinkers" of two centuries ago unaccountably roundabout, tedious and encumbered. It is not so much that he finds them obscure, but that when at last he has dragged the meanings out of their jungles of statement into the light of day he finds he has thought all round them.

An interesting and valuable group of investigators, whose work still goes on, appeared first in a rudimentary form in the nineteenth century. The leader of this group was a certain Lady Welby (1837-1912), who was frankly considered by most of her contemporaries as an unintelligible bore. She corresponded copiously with all who would attend to her, harping perpetually on the idea that language could be made more exactly expressive, that there should be a "Science of Significs". C. K. Ogden and a fellow Fellow of Magdalene College, I. A. Richards (1893-1977), were among the few who took her seriously. These two produced a book, The Meaning of Meaning, in 1923 which counts as one of the earliest attempts to improve the language mechanism. Basic English was a by-product of these enquiries. The new Science was practically unendowed, it attracted few workers, and it was lost sight of during the decades of disaster. It was revived only in the early twenty-first century.

Then Carl Ratan became the centre of a group of workers inspired by the idea of making English more lucid and comprehensive and a truly universal language. His work has expanded into the voluminous organization of the Language Bureau as we know it to-day. The work

of that Bureau has been compared to the work of the monetary experts who finally made money exact a hundred and fifty years ago. Just as civilization was held back for some centuries by the imperfections of the money nexus, so we begin to realize to-day that our intellectual progress is by no means so rapid as it might be because of the endless flaws and looseness of the language nexus.

An interesting compilation in hand, which promises to become a veritable history of philosophy and knowledge is the Language Discard. This project was originally set going by the Dictionary Section of the Language Bureau, as a mere account rendered of obsolete or obsolescent terms or terms which have become greatly altered from their original meaning; but the enquiry into the reasons for these changings and preferences and abandonments led very directly into an exhaustive analysis of the primary processes of human thought. A series of words, "soul spirit, matter, force, essence", for example, were built into the substance of Aryan and Semitic thought almost from their beginnings, and it was only quite recently that the exhaustive analyses by Yuan Shan and his associates of these framework terms made it clear that the processes of Chinese and Negro thinking were by no means parallel. Translation between languages, in all matters except matters of material statement, is always a little loose and rough, but between the ideology underlying the literature of Eastern Asia or the attempts of Africans to express themselves and that embodied in the ruling language of to-day the roughness approaches violence. That clash, as it is examined, is likely to produce very extensive innovations in our philosophical (general scientific) and technical nomenclature. We are speaking and writing a provisional language to-day. Our great-grandchildren will no more think of using many of our terms and turns of expression to-day than we should think of resorting again to the railway train, the paddle steamboat and the needle telegraph.

This rearrangement of the association systems of the human brain which is now in progress brings with it — long before we begin to dream of eugenic developments — the prospect of at present inconceivable extensions of human mental capacity. It will involve taking hold of issues that are at present quite outside our grasp. There was a time when early man was no more capable of drawing a sketch

or threading a needle than a cow; it was only as his thumb and fingers became opposable that the powers of craftsmanship and mechanism came within his grip. Similarly we may anticipate an enormous extension of research and a far deeper penetration into reality as language, our intellectual hand, is brought to a new level of efficiency.

There is not only this sharpening and refinement of the brain going on, but there has been what our great grandparents would have considered an immense increase in the amount, the quality, and the accessibility of knowledge. As the individual brain quickens and becomes more skilful, there also appears a collective Brain, the Encyclopaedia, the Fundamental Knowledge System which accumulates, sorts, keeps in order and renders available everything that is known. The Encyclopaedic organization, which centres upon Barcelona, with its seventeen million active workers is the Memory of Mankind. Its tentacles spread out in one direction to millions of investigators, checkers and correspondents, and in another to keep the educational process in living touch with mental advance. It is growing rapidly as the continual advance in productive efficiency liberates fresh multitudes of workers for its services. The mental mechanism of mankind is as yet only in its infancy.

Adolescence perhaps rather than infancy. It is because the mind of man is growing up that for the first time it realizes that it is young.

8. — SUBLIMATION OF INTEREST

Not only is the average man to-day an older and graver creature than his ancestor of three centuries ago, but he is very differently employed. There has been a great diversion of his interest from the primary necessities of life.

Three centuries ago, well over ninety per cent of the human population was absorbed either in the direct production of necessities or in the scramble to get them from their original producers. Direct producers, the peasants and toilers, the entrepreneurs and their managers and directors, and direct distributors accounted for upward of eighty per cent of the human total; the rest were the millions of interveners, usurers, claim-makers, landowners, rentiers, solicitors, speculators, parasites, robbers, and thieves who were deemed necessary to ginger up the economic process. The forces of law, order and education, excluding temporary conscription and levies for military ends, took up five or six per cent of the residue, and a small minority, something under five per cent of the total population, supplied all the artistic effort, the scientific enquiry, the social and political thought, the living soul of the entire social body.

The systems of interest of most people were therefore restricted almost entirely to work and the struggle to possess. They had to think continually of the work they did either for their own profit or for the personal profit, comfort or fantasy of some employer. They had to think of keeping their jobs or of getting fresh ones, and this, in the days of narrowing employment after the Hoover Slump, became at last a monstrous obsession of the brain. What they earned they had to spend carefully or guard carefully, for the rascaldom of business was everywhere seeking to give nothing for something. Sometimes, sick of their narrow lives, they would gamble in the desperate hope of a convulsive enlargement, and for most of them gambling meant disappointment and self-reproach. Add to these worries a little love, a good deal of hate, and a desperate struggle to see it all in a hopeful and honourable light, a desperate hunger to be flattered and reassured, and you have the content of ninety-nine per cent of the human brains that made the world of 1930. They could no more

escape from this restricted circle of urgently clamorous interests, hardly ampler than the circle of an animal's interest, than the animals can.

The Modern State has broken this cramping circle of interests for every human being. We are still creatures with brains like our forefathers, corresponding ganglia to ganglia and fibre to fibre, but WE ARE NOT USING THOSE BRAINS FOR THE SAME PURPOSES. The Modern State, by ensuring plenty and controlling the increase of population, has taken all the interests of the food-hunt and the food-scramble, and all the interests of the struggle to down-and-out our human competitors, away from the activities of the individual brain. A relatively small number of specialized workers keep the necessary Controls of these primary preoccupations going. We worry about food, drink, clothing, health and personal freedom no more. The work we MUST do is not burthensome in amount, and it is the most congenial our educational guardians can find for us and help us to find. When it is done we are sure of the result; nobody is left in the world to cheat us or rob us of our pay. We are still competitive, more so perhaps than ever; jealousy still wars with generosity in us; the story of our personal affections is rarely a simple story; but the interest we feel in our work is a masterful interest and not a driven interest, and our competition is for distinction, appreciation and self-approval and not for mutual injury. There has been a release of by far the larger moiety of the mental energy of the normal man from its former inescapable preoccupations.

This steady obliteration of primary motives is manifested most illuminatingly by the statistics of what used to be "Crime and Punishment", figures of the offences, insubordinations and deliberate outrages upon social order and the consequent punishments and corrective proceedings that are issued by the disciplinary organization of the Behaviour Control. Statistics for the years of decadence are not forthcoming, but there is plentiful material from the comparatively orderly and prosperous period between 1890 and 1930. Great Britain then constituted the healthiest and most law-abiding community in the world, but the figures that emerge to the student of history present what seems to us an appalling welter of

crime. Stealing, cheating of every sort, forgery, burglary, robbery with violence, poisoning and other forms of murder, occurred daily. It did not seem as though that thick defilement of wrongdoing about property could ever cease. Innumerable suicides occurred through pecuniary worry. Yet now all these crimes, which filled the jails, arising out of the scramble for money and property in an age of insufficiency, have almost completely vanished from human life. The Behaviour Control Report for 2104 (2105 is not yet available) records 715 cases of stealing for the whole world. In nearly every case the object stolen was some personal work of art, some small jewel, a piece of embroidery, a pet animal, several children, and — in one instance — the bulb of a new variety of lily that aroused the instinct to possess and care for. It is doubtful whether there were many undetected or unreported thefts.

There has not, however, been anything like the same abolition of personal offences. They have diminished. But while the property offences have diminished to the scale of one-ten-millionth of the old-world figures, these others show a reduction in the nature of single instances to former hundreds. Many types in our population are still very easily turned toward sexual lawlessness. Beautiful and attractive people and particularly attractive children are not yet perfectly immune from undesired solicitation, personal persecution, annoying assault and resentful injury. Jealousy is still a dangerous passion, more particularly below the age of forty. The Behaviour Control ascribes nearly 520,000 offences to this group of urgencies, mostly assaults of varying degree of malignity, culminating in 67 murders. There were also 2192 suicides in the total. These figures show only a slight improvement upon the annual average for the previous decade.

Another difficult class of offence which finds no exact parallel in the criminal statistics of former times, unless the British offence of "malignant mischief" is to be put in this group, are acts of annoyance, destruction, assault and so forth, due to competitive jealousy and the exasperation aroused, often quite unwittingly, by the bearing or achievements of one's fellow creatures. This sort of misbehaviour varies in degree from the black hatred and fury of an uncontrolled egotism to what verges in some cases upon justifiable criticism of slightly fatuous or self-complacent behaviour. Four

murders, some hundreds of assaults and acts of wanton destruction in this category, witness to the fact that this world is still not a Paradise for every type of individual. Either they are bitter by some inner necessity or they have been embittered. Yet when we take the grand total of every misdeed that had to be dealt with last year, counting even the most petty occasions for restoration, warning or reproof, and find it is just three quarters of a million in a world of 2500 million people, we have a quantitative measure of human progress in two brief centuries that justifies a very stalwart confidence in the human outlook. The imagination of man's heart is no longer evil continually. It is only evil occasionally, and the practical task of our social psychologists is to reduce those occasions and provocations.

The abundant release of brain-stuff, the mental plenty which has resulted from the organization of material plenty, is of necessity being directed into new channels. That meagre half per cent or less of creative workers of the old régime, the few curious men who played about with novel ideas, the odd men of leisure who collected "rarities" and inventions, has grown into a mighty body of enquiry, experiment, verification and record which is becoming now the larger part of the world's population.

We know now certainly what the people of three centuries ago never suspected, that the human brain released from hunger, fear and the other primary stresses is very easily amenable not only to creative and directive desire but also to kindly and helpful impulses. Almost all the people who keep our productive, our distributing and transport services going are there because they find the work entertaining, because they like making the machine work well and helping people. There is a satisfaction in being able to do things skilfully for others that they could not do nearly so well for themselves. The barbers, shoemakers, tailors, dressmakers, hatters, outfitters and so forth in the great stores to-day are very different people from the rather obsequious, deferential "inferiors" who made our great-great-grandfathers presentable to the world. Their essential interest is to make their customers sightly and comfortable and not to earn a profit for an employer. The old literature reeks with contempt for barbers and tailors and cobblers, often the contempt of profound resentment. If the common man despised the cobbler, the cobbler pinched his toe

and chafed his heel. The barber, it seemed, did no more than cut hair rather badly, and the tailor cut clothes. Except by accident, the barber had ceased to be a barber-surgeon. But nowadays the old-world barber would scarcely recognize himself in the barber-dentist, the kindly expert who sees to our coiffure, gives attention to our teeth, scrutinizes our mouth, hair and skin to detect any evidence of failing health, and sends us on our way refreshed, encouraged or warned. Often his friend the tailor or dressmaker will call in while he deals with us to consider our general bravery and improvement, and suggest variations of our exercise and habits.

The old distributing trades have lost their sharp demarcation from the advisory professions. They are in touch with the guardians of development who have replaced the schoolmasters, nurses, governesses, tutors and so forth of the old time, and with the general advisers who have taken on the tasks of the family solicitor, religious minister, private confessor and general practitioner of the past. These advisory and directive professions probably number two or three times as big a proportion of the whole population as the lawyers, educationists and doctors of the nineteenth century. They merge again into another stratum, the specialist teachers, concerned with developing and imparting skills and building up and maintaining the common ideology. This class again passes by insensible degrees into the worlds of technical work, art, literature and scientific research.

The primary producers and elaborators of material, our agriculturalists, engineers, chemists, transport men and industrial directors, also do their work because they like doing it. It satisfies them. They like their materials, they like their difficulties, they like the order of their days. In spite of an increasing output per head of population and an increasing variety and elaboration of the things we use, socially or individually, the numerical proportion of this section of the human population does not increase. Efficiency still outruns need and desire. The two and a half years of compulsory public service, which is an integral part of our education, supplies a larger and larger proportion of such toil as is still unavoidable.

This release of human energy from primary needs is a process that seems likely to continue indefinitely. And all the forces that have made our world- wide social life and keep it going direct that

released energy towards the achievement of fresh knowledge and the accumulation and rendering of fresh experience. There is a continual sublimation of interest. Man becomes more curious, more excited, more daring, skilful, and pleasantly occupied every year. The more we learn of the possibilities of our world and the possibilities of ourselves, the richer, we learn, is our inheritance. This planet, which seemed so stern a mother to mankind, is discovered to be inexhaustible in its bounty. And the greatest discovery man has made has been the discovery of himself. Leonardo da Vinci with his immense breadth of vision, his creative fervour, his curiosity, his power of intensive work, was the precursor of the ordinary man, as the world is now producing him.

9. — A NEW PHASE IN THE HISTORY OF LIFE

From the point of view of the ecologist the establishment of the Modern State marks an epoch in biological history. It has been an adaptation, none too soon, of our species to changing conditions that must otherwise have destroyed it. The immense developments and disasters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries show us mankind scrambling on the verge of irreparable disaster.

The infinite toil of millions of tormented brains, the devotion and persistence of countless forgotten devotees, gave form and clear purpose in time to what were at first mere flounderings and clutchings towards safety. The threatened race did not fall back into that abyss of extinction which has swallowed up so many of the bolder experiments of life. In pain and uncertainty it clambered past its supreme danger phase, and now it has struggled to such a level of assurance, understanding and safety as no living substance has ever attained before.

By means of education and social discipline the normal human individual today acquires characteristics without which his continued existence would be impossible. In the future, as the obscurer processes of selection are accelerated and directed by eugenic effort, these acquired characteristics will be incorporated with his inherent nature, and his educational energy will be released for further adaptations. He will become generation by generation a new species, differing more widely from that weedy, tragic, pathetic, cruel, fantastic, absurd and sometimes sheerly horrible being who christened himself in a mood of oafish arrogance Homo sapiens.

The differences of the coming man from the man of the past will be multitudinous and intricate, but certain broad lines of comparison appear already. We have noted already the difference in the age cycle between ourselves and our ancestors, which has prolonged the youthful phase and shifted on the valid years towards the thirty-five to eighty period, and we have cited also the completer physical development, due to the release of vital energy from the task of

resisting various infections, poisons and morbidities of growth. We are probably only in the beginning of very much more considerable physical modification. The aesthetic ideals of the past are likely to play a large part in determining the direction in which these modifications will take us. But these physical developments, important though they must ultimately be, are as yet much less important than the changes in moral form that are manifestly in progress. A brief consideration of these will make a fitting conclusion to this general outline of history.

Essentially they constitute a readjustment of the individual to the racial life. When we go back in time for a million years or so we find our ancestor species in a phase of almost fundamental individualism. Except where sexual life and the instinct system to protect offspring came in, the subman shifted for himself. He had no associates in the food hunt, no allies for defence. He was as solitary an animal as the tiger. From that he passed through stages of increasing sociability. The onset of these stages was made practicable by the retention of immature characteristics into adult life. The same thing is happening to the remnant of the lions today. They remain cubbish and friendly now to a much later age than they did a few-score thousand years ago. Man passed through a stage when he was as sociable as a modern lion and on to a phase when he was as sociable as a wolf or hunting dog.

But he did not rest at that. All the conditions of his life favoured the formation of still-larger communities and still-closer interdependence. He became a cultivator, an economic animal, and his communities expanded to thousands and scores of thousands of individuals held together by mutual service. He produced language and religion to bind the will and activities of these aggregations into an effective common policy. The history of mankind, as we unfold it to the contemporary student, is a story of ever increasing communication and ever increasing interdependence. Insensibly the material side of individual freedom was modified into unavoidable cooperation with the community.

Stress must be laid upon that word material. The physical subjugation and socialization of the human animal far outran his moral subjection. The history of mankind is also a history of

education and compulsion. It is a record of give and take. Man almost up to the present day has remained at heart still the early savage, caring only for himself, for his sexual life, and, during the few years of their helplessness, his children. He has been willing to associate for aggression or for defence, but only very reluctantly for a common happiness. He has had to barter his freedom for the advantages of collective action, but he has done so against the grain, needing persuasion, pressure and helpful delusions.

The history of mankind has had to be very largely the history of a succession of religious and emotional inventions and reconstructions, to override the inherent distaste in the individual for subordination and self- sacrifice. At every opportunity the individual has sought to recover its personal initiatives. Its egotism has battled instinctively of necessity to get the best of the bargain and receive with as little giving as possible.

Man's natural self struggles to do that now as strongly as ever he did. But he struggles now in a better light and more intelligently; he realizes what is impossible, and the long conflict of individualism with society has arrived at a rational compromise. We have learnt how to catch and domesticate the ego at an early stage and train it for purposes greater than itself.

What has happened during the past three and a half centuries to the human consciousness has been a sublimation of individuality. That phase is the quintessence of modern history. A large part of the commonplace life of man, the food-hunt, the shelter-hunt, the safety-hunt, has been lifted out of the individual sphere and socialized for ever. To that the human egotism has given its assent perforce. It has abandoned gambling and profit-seeking and all the wilder claims of property. It has ceased altogether to snatch, scramble and oust for material ends. And the common man has also been deprived of any weapons for his ready combativeness and of any liberty in its release. Nowadays even children do not fight each other. Gentleness in difference has become our second nature.

All that part of man's life and interests has been socialized entirely against his natural disposition in the matter. In all those concerns the whole race is now confluent; it is becoming as much a colonial organism as any branching coral or polyp, though the ties

that link us are not fleshly bands, but infinitely elastic and invisible and subtle. In the later chapters of this world history we have examined and displayed, with particular attention because of its culminating character, the essential individualism of the World War process, and we have told how, with what difficulty and after what scourgings, our race has been brought to its present phase of organized self-control. This present phase is the victory of creative power working through the individualities of a more intelligent minority, in the face of universal confusion, taking indeed advantage of that confusion to inaugurate our present order. That wilful minority has opened the gates to a power and abundance of existence beyond all former dreaming. But our Modern State has neither absorbed nor destroyed individuality, which now, accepting the necessary restrictions upon its material aggressiveness, resumes at every opportunity its freedom and enterprise upon a higher level of life.

The individuality deprived, or relieved if you will, of its primary instinctive preoccupations with getting and keeping, disillusioned about precedence, personal display and suchlike barbaric vanities, growing continually and swiftly in wisdom and knowledge, has now to go further afield to find itself. No longer a self-sufficient being, at war with all its kind, it has become a responsible part of a species. It has become an experiment in feeling, knowing, making and response.

The body of mankind is now one single organism of nearly two thousand five hundred million persons, and the individual differences of every one of these persons is like an exploring tentacle thrust out to test and learn, to savour life in its fullness and bring in new experiences for the common stock. We are all members of one body.* Only in the dimmest analogy has anything of this sort happened in the universe as we knew it before. Our sense of our individual difference makes our realization of our common being more acute. We work, we think, we explore, we dispute, we take risks and suffer — for there seems no end to the difficult and dangerous adventures individual men and women may attempt; and more and more plain does it become to us that it is not our little selves, but Man the Undying who achieves these things through us.

* This was the phrase of that interesting mystic St. Paul (Saul) of Tarsus (2-62 C.E. Epistles with analysis and commentary by Hirsch and Potter in the Historical Reprints: Development of Ideas Series), who did so much to pervert and enlarge the simpler cosmopolitan fraternalism of Jesus of Nazareth (-4-30 C.E.) before it was finally overwhelmed and lost in the sacrificial sacerdotalism of formal Christianity. For a brief period before it relapsed the Pauline cult had a curious flavour of Modern State feeling. There was, however, a politic disingenuousness in Paul which betrayed his undeniable intellectual power. He was ambiguous about blood sacrifices, immortality, private property and slavery, to the eternal injury of the Christian movement. It was completely prostituted to usage before the first century was over. See Ivan Mackenzie, General Elements of Religion 2103. Mackenzie has an excellent chapter on the anticipation of Modern State ideas by ancient writers, and is particularly interesting on the Superior Person (Generalized or Super Man) of Confucius (551-478 B.C.) and the City of God of St. Augustine (354-430).

As the slower processes of heredity seize upon and confirm these social adaptations, as the confluence of wills supersedes individual motives and loses its present factors of artificiality, the history of life will pass into a new phase, a phase with a common consciousness and a common will. We in our time are still rising towards the crest of that transition. And when that crest is attained what grandeur of life may not open out to Man! Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; nor hath it entered into the mind of man to conceive.... For now we see as in a glass darkly....

At this point Raven's copied-out manuscript comes to an end — it seems to me a little abruptly. But it is the end; he has written the word "Finis" here. I will add only one word or so by way of comment. I have called that manuscript a dream book. Was it a dream book or was it indeed, as he declared and believed it to be, a vision of the shape of things to come? Or — there is a third possibility. As dreaming, this book is far too coherent; as vision, incredulity creeps in. But was Raven, too busily employed and too obsessed by the sense of urgency to embark upon a detailed analysis of world development, was he trying nevertheless to sketch out in

this fantastic form a general thesis at least about the condition of things to come? If this is neither a dream book nor a Sibylline history, then it is a theory of world revolution. Plainly the thesis is that history must now continue to be a string of accidents with an increasingly disastrous trend until a comprehensive faith in the modernized World-State, socialistic, cosmopolitan and creative, takes hold of the human imagination. When the existing governments and ruling theories of life, the decaying religious and the decaying political forms of to-day, have sufficiently lost prestige through failure and catastrophe, then and then only will world-wide reconstruction be possible. And it must needs be the work, first of all, of an aggressive order of religiously devoted men and women who will try out and establish and impose a new pattern of living upon our race.

THE CROQUET PLAYER

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I. — THE CROQUET PLAYER INTRODUCES HIMSELF

I have been talking to two very queer individuals and they have produced a peculiar disturbance of my mind. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that they have infected me and distressed me with some very strange and unpleasant ideas. I want to set down what it is they have said to me in the first place for my own sake, so as to clear up my thoughts about it. What they told me was fantastic and unreasonable but I shall feel surer about that if I set it down in writing. Moreover I want to get my story into a shape that will enable one or two sympathetic readers to reassure me about the purely imaginative quality of what these two men had to say.

It is a sort of ghost story they unfolded. But it is not an ordinary ghost story. It is much more realistic and haunting and disturbing than any ordinary ghost story. It is not a story of a haunted house or a haunted churchyard or anything so limited. The ghost they told me about was something much larger than that, a haunting of a whole countryside, something that began as an uneasiness and grew into a fear and became by slow degrees a spreading presence. And still it grew — in size, in power and intensity. Until it became a continual overshadowing dread. I do not like this ghost that grows and spreads, even though it does so only in the mind. But I had better begin at the beginning and tell about this story as far as I can, and the manner in which it came to me.

But first I had better give a few particulars about myself. Of course I would rather I did not, but I doubt if you will realize my position without it. I am probably one of the best croquet players alive, and that I am not a bit ashamed of saying. I am also a first-rate archer. One is neither of these things without a considerable amount of discipline and balance in one's make- up. Many people, I know, find me a trifle effeminate and ridiculous because I make croquet my game; they say as much behind my back and at times they betray it to my face, and I admit there have been moments when I have been inclined to agree with them. But on the other hand quite a lot of

people seem to like me, everybody calls me Georgie in an affectionate manner, and on the whole I am inclined to like myself. It takes all sorts to make a world and I see no sense in pretending to be the human norm when one is not. Regarded from a certain angle I am no doubt a soft, but all the same I can keep my head and temper at croquet and make a wooden ball perform like a trained animal. Even at tennis I can make some of the fiercer sort extremely cross and silly. And I can do sleight-of-hand tricks, for which you certainly need nerve and complete self-possession, as well as most professionals.

As a matter of fact a lot of these tremendous sporting people, record- breakers, gamblers, and so on, are much more akin to me than they like to think. There is a lot of sham in their pretension to hairiness and virility. At heart they are as tame as I am. They have chosen to be boxed up in games. I suppose cricket and hockey and so on are more gladiatorial than my sort of sport, aviation and motoring more lethal, and gambling more vexatious, but I do not see there is any greater reality in what they do than in what I do. Risk is not reality. They are players just as I am a player. They are enclosed with me in the same pleasant round of harmless and fruitless activities.

I admit I have had an exceptionally uneventful life. I missed the experience of the Great War by a couple of years and my life has always been an extremely sheltered and comfortable one. I was brought up by my paternal aunt, Miss Frobisher, THE Miss Frobisher of the Barton Chapel Case and the Woman's World Humanity Movement, and it is only slowly that I have come to realize that my upbringing was — if I may be paradoxical — unusually banal. I have led a life largely of negatives and avoidances. I have been trained to keep calm and civil and not react excitedly to surprises. And above all to regard only ordinary decent everyday things seriously.

My aunt took me over at the age of three when my parents divorced and since then she has never let go of me. She is a woman with what, to be frank, one might call a natural hostility to sexual facts, and my parents' misbehaviour — those were the days when the papers published full reports of divorce cases — and some of the details of the affair shocked her extremely. When I went to school at Harton, she took a house close by and entered me as a day-boy, and

she did practically the same thing while I was at Keeble. Possibly I am naturally just a little inclined to be what the Americans call a sissy, and this tendency has been favoured by these circumstances.

I have soft hands and an ineffective will. I prefer not to make important decisions. My aunt has trained me to be her constant associate and, with displays and declarations on all possible occasions of an immense maternal passion for me, she has — I know it clearly — made me self-indulgent and dependent. Yet I do not blame her very much or resent it very much. It is how we two have been made. She has always been rich and free to do as she liked, not only with herself but with others, and I have always felt well off and secure. Our lives have been easy so far. Like most well-born, well-off people, we have taken inferiors for granted, servants for granted, and the general good behaviour of the world towards us. I suppose there are still hundreds of thousands of people in the world as sure of all the material best of life as we are and taking it in the same matter-of-course fashion.

"What shall we do?" we ask. "Where shall we go?" Nobody compels us. We are the floating cream of humanity.

We have a house in Upper Beamish Street, a modest little place in Hampshire, and we move about a lot. My aunt, as many people know, is a very temperamental woman — I do not mean temperamental in any unpleasant sense — and sometimes we are as keen as mustard on this Woman's World Humanity Movement — though I have never clearly understood what it is all about — travelling over the world for it — so far, that is, as there are bathrooms en suite, upon which my aunt insists— "making contacts," usually until there is a difficulty over the committee election or something of that sort and my aunt gets disgusted, and then for a year or so we drop Woman's World Humanity and go round wiping up the lawns with croquet champions or winning tassels with our archery. We are both quite extraordinarily good at the long-bow, and my aunt has been painted as Diana by Wilmerdings. But croquet is our especial gift. If we did not shrink from the publicity and vulgarity of it we could certainly be champions. We also play a pretty decent tennis game and our golf might easily be worse, but the popular criticism of tennis has been

carried to such high levels that we do not care to be seen playing, and golf we find mixes us up with all sorts of people. Sometimes we just recuperate. Lately we have been recuperating at Les Noupets after a rather discouraging conference of the Woman's World Humanity Movement at Chicago. (The less said about those American delegates the better, but my aunt was fully equal to them.)

That I think is a quite sufficient explanation of myself and my atmosphere. The two club lawns at Les Noupets were excellent, and we found an admirable secretary typist who dealt with my aunt's very extensive correspondence about the movement and particularly with her libel case against Mrs. Glyco-Harriman, taking it all down in shorthand, typing it in the afternoon, and bringing it for revision after tea. There were one or two sets of niceish people with whom a little light conversation was possible without entanglement. Croquet an hour before lunch and perhaps in the afternoon again and dinner at eight. We never play bridge until after dinner; it is our inflexible rule. So that I had a certain amount of time upon my hands while she wrote what would be in the case of anyone without her provocation extremely abusive as well as sarcastic letters, which I devoted chiefly to a morning's walk up the hill to the Perona springs, where I took the waters, rather for fun than with any idea of a cure, and then sat in a state of wholesome idleness on the terrace of the Source Hotel removing the inky taste by appropriately chosen refreshment. My aunt is inclined to a non-alcoholic attitude, but of late years I have found the unobtrusive exercise of my private judgment in such matters not only permissible but better for both of us. I mean I am a more cheerful companion.

I think all that gets me fairly well and now with your permission I will put myself into the background, so to speak — or "frame" perhaps is better — and tell you about the first of these two queer men I met on the Perona terrace.

II. — HAUNTING FEAR IN CAINSMARSH

It was while I was sitting out on the terrace in the sun, nibbling a brioche and consuming a harmless vermouth and seltzer, that I first set eyes on Dr. Finchatton. He was two tables away and he was having an almost violent quarrel with a number of books he had got from the Les Noupets tea shop and lending library. He was opening them one after another, reading a few pages, turning them over, muttering, and banging them down on the ground with an emphasis that would have distressed the library people extremely. He looked up and caught my reproving eye. He stared and then smiled.

"Scores of books," he said; "hundreds of books — and not one worth reading! They're all — OFF it."

There was something comical and irrational about his disgust that amused me. "Then why read them?" I asked. "Reading crowds the memory and prevents one thinking."

"Exactly what I want to do. I came over here to stop thinking — and forget. And I can't." His voice, which to begin with was clear and distinct, rose to an angry note. "Some of these books bore — some irritate. Some even remind me of just what I am trying to forget."

Stepping over his heap of condemned volumes he came, glass and carafe in hand, and without any invitation from me sat down at the table beside me. He looked me in the face with an expression that was at once friendly and slightly quizzical. I know my face is — well, "cherubic" — for a man of thirty-three and it was very evident he appreciated the fact. "Do YOU do much thinking?" he asked.

"A fair amount. I solve the Times Crossword Puzzle nearly every day. I play a lot of chess — by correspondence chiefly. And I'm not so bad at bridge."

"I mean real thinking. About things that pursue and worry you and cannot be explained."

"I don't let things worry me," I said.

"Do you happen to be interested in ghosts — and hauntings?"

"I'm neutral. I don't believe in ghosts but I don't DIS-believe in them. If you follow me. I've never seen a ghost. I think there is a lot

to be said for spiritualism, quite a lot, in spite of much imposture. I suppose immortality has been proved now by that sort of thing, and that is all to the good. My aunt Miss Frobisher is quite of that opinion. But I feel that the necessary table-rapping and cabinet séances and all that is a job for a specialist."

"But suppose you found there were ghosts all about you?"

"I never have."

"And there's nothing — here for instance — that makes you feel uneasy?"

"Where?" I asked.

"THERE," he said and waved a hand at the tranquil sea and the innocent sky.

"Why should there be?"

"But IS there?"

"No."

"I envy your insensitiveness — or your imperturbability." He emptied his glass and ordered another half-litre of wine. Either out of ignorance or preference he was drinking red ordinaire. "YOU don't feel there is anything? No danger?"

"I never saw a more tranquillizing view. Not a cloud."

"It isn't so with me... I've had some very disturbing experiences. I'm still disturbed. Curious! You feel nothing. Maybe it's just the aftermath of what has happened."

"What HAS happened? And what is the aftermath?"

"I'd like to tell you," he said. "It's rather a yarn, you know."

"Go ahead," said I.

And with that much introduction he began to tell me his story. He was rather disconnected at first and then he settled down to it. He told it to me not as though he particularly wished to tell it to me, but as though he wanted very badly to tell it to someone and hear how it sounded. After he had got started, I interrupted very little.

It was indiscreet of me perhaps to let him begin upon me. I knew nothing of him. I had to ask him for his name before he named himself. Evidently he was queer in some way — I should have remembered that the big house above the town was supposed to be a "Home" for mental cases, a psychotherapeutic institution as they call them nowadays, and the discreet thing for me would have been to

have sheered off there and then upon some excuse before his story began.

Yet there was nothing about him to warn me off him. There was nothing eccentric in his manner or indeed in his general appearance. He had the jaded look of a man who doesn't sleep well, a little dark under the eyes, but apart from that he seemed quite all right. He was quietly dressed in the Englishman's usual grey; he wore a coloured shirt and an unobtrusive tie. It was a little askew but that was nothing. Plenty of men never put on their ties straight — though how they can stand it I can't think. It is so easy to get a tie straight. He was decidedly lean and fairly good-looking, with what I suppose one would call a sensitive mouth below his short moustache. He leant forward most of the time with his arms folded under his chest much as a cat folds up its paws. He talked perhaps just a little on the emphatic side but he seemed on the watch to control himself. And as I had a full hour or more to dispose of, before I went down to Les Noupets again, I let him run on, without any attempt to interrupt him or cut him short.

"At first," he said, "I thought it was the marshes."

"What marshes?"

"Cainsmarsh. You have heard of Cainsmarsh?"

I used to be pretty good at geography at school but I could not recall that name. But I did not like to admit my ignorance on the spur of the moment. Something about the word seemed familiar. "Marsh" seemed a clue. Vague suggestions of fenny country, watery expanses, a louring sky, dank black thatch, moored old barges, and the hum of mosquitoes floated across my mind.

"A great district for malaria and rheumatic complaints," he said, confirming my impression. "I bought a practice there... Forgive a touch of autobiography. I did so partly because it was an exceptionally cheap practice and I had to earn a living somehow with my small resources and partly because I wanted to leave the hospital and London — and rest my brain. I went there jaded and disappointed. It seemed likely to be an easygoing job. There is practically no competition in the marshes, not until you get towards the part they call the Island, where the market-town doctors come out in their cars. The parishes up towards the hills, such as they are, and

out towards the saltings are quite beyond their range except for special consultations. I had to go into practice with a minor qualification because of the need I was under for tranquillizing surroundings... I threw up the prospect of a medical degree."

He paused as though he found a difficulty.

"Were you ill?" I inquired, to help him out. "Why DID you leave the hospital with a minor qualification? Forgive me making a personal remark but you don't look the sort of man who muffs exams."

"I didn't muff exams. In fact I was more than usually ambitious. I worked, I think, too hard. And I was active mentally in other directions. I was keener on politics than most medical students. And I got very keen on social justice and the prevention of war. Very keen on the war question. I had been working on gas. Perhaps I DID too much. Perhaps I thought and felt too much... Yes... Yes, certainly I felt too much. A time came when the morning paper could upset me so as to spoil my work for the day.

"From the very beginning of my medical education you must know I found myself under a strain. I admit that. I didn't like dissection, I didn't like the damaged human stuff in the wards. Some of it was pitiful; some of it horrified me."

I agreed with him. "Doctoring has always terrified ME. *I*couldn't stand any of it."

"But the world must have doctors," he said.

"It won't have ME for a doctor. I've never seen more than three dead people, and they were all lying quietly laid out in bed."

"But on the road? You come upon dreadful sights."

"We never travel by road. All sane people are giving it up."

"You, I see, have avoided the ugly side of life from the first. Well — I didn't. I walked right into it when I chose medicine. I thought of the good I could do and I never thought of the harsh red realities I should have to face. You avoided. I tried not to avoid and then I ran away. I went to that district with the full idea of escape. This, I told myself, will be away from any war there is or any bombing. Here I can recover myself. Here, I said, there will be nothing except normal cases I can really face and help. Cainsmarsh is far from any main roads. There won't be even motor casualties, which are often so

frightful to encounter. You see my point? It looked as good as any possible world for me, and going there in summertime with the wild flowers out and a hundred sorts of butterfly about, dragon-flies and an abundance of summer birds, let alone a lot of summer visitors, mostly houseboat and fishing people with children and their small ailments, there didn't seem to be very much wrong with it. I would have laughed if you had told me that I had come into a haunted land.

"I did all I could to protect myself from over-stimulation. I did not have a newspaper in the house. I relied on a weekly news summary with no illustrations but diagrams. I wouldn't open a book later than Dickens.

"The native population seemed at first just a trifle stupid and reserved but quite kindly. I saw nothing wrong with them to begin with. Old Rawdon, the vicar of Cross in Slackness, that landmark church of the levels, told me that there was a good deal of furtive drugging because of the ague and that he suspected the genuineness of their amiability. I went to pay my respects to him as soon as I was able. He was an elderly man and rather deaf and he had exchanged to the Cross in Slackness living because of his infirmity. His church and vicarage were stranded, so to speak, with one or two cottages on a sort of crocodile back of land, and they were overgrown with elm trees. I doubt if even as many as a score of people came to his services. He was not very communicative, his old bent wife was even less so, he had trouble with gallstones and an ulcerated contusion of the ankle, and his chief preoccupation seemed to be with the high-church tendencies of his fellow-priest, a newly arrived curate at Marsh Havering. Apparently he himself was low church and Calvinistic, but at first I could not understand the mixture of fear and resentment with which he spoke of the younger man. There were no landed gentry in Cainsmarsh, and, except for a veterinary surgeon, a few elementary teachers, one or two publicans, and some middle-class boarding-house keepers towards Beacon Ness, the population was entirely a population of farmers and farm workers. They had no folk-lore, no songs, no arts, and no special costume. A more improbable soil for anything you could call psychic it would be hard to imagine. And yet you know—"

He frowned and spoke in measured words, as if he was doing his

utmost to be explicit and was reasoning against the possible objections I might presently make to what he had to tell me.

"After all ... It is in just such a flat, still atmosphere perhaps — translucent, gentle-coloured — that things lying below the surface, things altogether hidden in more eventful and colourful surroundings, creep on our perceptions..."

He paused, drank a glass of his wine, reflected for a moment, and resumed.

"There can be no disputing the stillness of that district. Sometimes I would stop my car on one of the winding dike roads and stand listening before I went on again. One would hear the sheep upon the lavender-coloured hills, four or five miles away, or the scream of some distant water fowl, like a long, harsh scratch of neon light across the silent blue, or the sound of the wind and the sea, a dozen miles away at Beacon Ness, like the world breathing in its sleep. At night of course there were more noises: dogs howled and barked in the distance, corncrakes called, and things rustled in the reeds. And yet the nights too could sometimes have a stillness...

"At first it did not seem to be of any particular significance that the traceable consumption of soporifics and opiates by this apparently insensitive population was not only quite remarkably high but increasing, nor that the proportion of suicides and inexplicable crimes — inexplicable as distinguished from normally motivated offences — over this part of the world was exceptional and apparently rising. Dealing with such a small population, however, a murder more or less could upset the percentage altogether. Face to face in the daylight there was nothing at all murderous in the bearing of these people. They did not look you in the eye — but that may have been their idea of good manners. It just happened that there had been no less than three crazy murders of relations and neighbours in Cainsmarsh in the past five years, and of two of them the perpetrators were still undiscovered. The other was a fratricide. The vicar, when I spoke about this, said something about 'degenerate race — too inbred' and changed the subject, as though it was an unpleasant topic of no particular importance for him.

"The first real intimation I had in my own person, of the brooding strangeness that hangs over Cainsmarsh, was an attack of insomnia.

Hitherto I had been a fairly sound sleeper but before I had settled in the Marsh for a couple of months my nights began to be troubled. I would wake up in a state of profound uneasiness, and without any physiological cause that I could trace I fell a prey to evil dreams. They were quite peculiar dreams, like none I had ever dreamt before. They were dreams of menace, of being waylaid, stalked, and pursued and of furious struggles to defend myself, dreams out of which I would wake shouting — you know those faint shadowy shouts of dreamland conflicts — sweating and trembling in every limb. Some of these dreams had so strong a flavour of horror that they would leave me afraid to go to sleep again. I would try to read, and whatever I read in the night watches an eerie discomfort hung over me.

"I adopted all the expedients that would naturally occur to a young medical man to end these enervating experiences, but without avail. I dieted. I exercised. I would get up and dress, go out either on foot or in my car, in spite of a strong fear resistance. Fear pursued me out of those dreams. The nightmare quality hung about me and could not be shaken off. I was awake and still dreaming. Never have I seen such sinister skies as I did on those night excursions. I felt such a dread of unfamiliar shadows as I had not known even in childhood. There were times on those nocturnal drives when I could have shouted aloud for daylight as a man suffocating in a closed chamber might shout for air.

"Very naturally this inability to sleep began presently to undermine my daily life. I became nervous and fanciful. I found I was giving way to minor hallucinations, rather, I suppose, after the pattern of delirium tremens. But with more menace in them. I would turn convulsively under the impression that a silent hound was creeping up to attack me from behind, or I would imagine a black snake wriggling out from under the valance of an arm-chair.

"Presently came other symptoms of relaxing mental control. I found myself suspecting the Island doctors of a combination against me. The most petty incidents, small slights, breaches of etiquette, fancied imputations, had been seized upon by my imagination and worked up into the fabric of a conspiracy mania. I had to restrain myself from writing foolish letters or making challenges and asking

questions. Then I began to find something evil in the silence or in the gestures of some of my patients. And while I sat by their bedsides, I fancied that there were hostile goings-to-and-fro and malignant whisperings and conspirings just outside the door.

"I could not understand what was the matter with me. I searched my mind for nervous stresses and I could find none. I had surely left all that behind in London. Temperature and so forth remained normal. But clearly there was something askew in my adjustment to these new surroundings. Cainsmarsh was disappointing my expectations. There was no healing in it for me. I had to pull myself together. I had sunk all my little capital in the practice and I had to stick it. There was nowhere else for me to go. I had to keep my head and grapple with this trouble and beat it before it became too much for me.

"Was it just my own trouble? Was something specially wrong with me or was it something wrong with the countryside? Were there other people in the Marsh having dreams and fancies like mine, or maybe was this a trouble that came to newcomers and passed away? Was it something I should get over? A sort of acclimatization. I had to be careful with my inquiries because it is not well for a doctor to admit he is out of sorts. I began to watch my patients, my old servant, and anyone with whom I came in contact for any betrayal of symptoms similar to mine. And I found what I looked for. Beneath the superficial stolidity a number of these people were profoundly uneasy. There was fear in the Marsh for them as for me. It was an established habitual fear. But it was not a definite fear. They feared something unknown. It was a sort of fear that might concentrate at any time upon anything whatever and transform it into a thing of terror.

"Let me give you some instances.

"One evening I found an old lady stiff with dread at a shadow in a corner, and when I moved her candle and the shadow moved, she screamed aloud. 'But it can't hurt you,' I argued. 'I'm afraid,' she answered, as though that was a sufficient answer. And suddenly before I could prevent her she had seized a little clock on the night table beside her and flung it at that dark and dreadful nothingness, and buried her head under the clothes. I will confess that for a

moment or so I stood rigid and expectant staring at the broken clock in the corner.

"And one day I saw a farmer who was rabbit shooting pause, stare aghast at a fluttering scarecrow, and then, unaware of my presence, suddenly raise his gun and blow the poor dangling old rapscallion to bits.

"There was an unusual terror of the dark. My old servant, I found, would not venture out after twilight to the pillar box a hundred yards away. She would make every sort of excuse and when she was cornered she refused absolutely to go. I had to go myself or leave my letters until the morning. Even sweethearting, I learnt, would not tempt the young people abroad after sundown.

"I can't tell you," he said, "how the perception of the presence of fear grew upon me and grew upon me — how it infected me — until at last the flap of a window blind in the breeze or the fall of a cinder in the fireplace would set my nerves aquiver.

"I could not shake this off; my nights got worse. I determined to have a real talk about this queer uneasiness of the mind, with the old vicar. In his way, you see, the district was his business, as in my way it was mine. He ought to know whatever was to be known. By this time the disorder was getting a strong hold upon me. I made up my mind to go to him after a night of exceptional horror and dismay. I was indeed already pretty bad...

"I can recall here and now the unprotected feeling of my drive to him across the open marshes. They seemed to me far too open, bare to endless dangers. And yet when I came near a clump of trees or bushes it took on the quality of an ambush. The normal confidence of a living creature was deserting me. I felt not simply exposed to incalculable evils, I felt threatened by them. In broad daylight, mind you; in the sunshine. With nothing but a few birds in sight...

"As it happened I caught the old man in a communicative mood. I put my questions plainly to him. 'I'm a newcomer in this country,' I said. 'Is there something — something PECULIARLY wrong about it?"

"He stared at me and scratched his cheek, weighing what he should tell me. 'Yes,' he said, 'there is.'

"He led me into his study, listened for a moment as if to make

sure that everyone was out of earshot, and then closed the door carefully. ‘You’re sensitive,’ he said. ‘You’re getting it sooner than I did. Something — wrong — wrong and getting worse. Something evil.’

“I remember those opening words very plainly and his bleary old eyes and the bad teeth in his sagging mouth. He came and sat down quite close to me with one long bony hand cupping his hairy ear. ‘Don’t speak too loud,’ he said. ‘If you speak distinctly, I can hear.’

“He said he was glad to have someone to talk it over with at last. He told me how he had hoped to end his days in the Marsh quietly and how gradually this shadowy discomfort had come over him, deepening slowly into fear. He could never afford another exchange. He too was fixed. It was hard to talk about. His wife would never talk to him about it. Before they came to Cross in Slackness, they had been the best of friends and gossips. ‘Now,’ he said, ‘it is pushing us apart. I have to talk to myself. I don’t know what’s come over her.’

“‘What is pushing you apart?’ I asked.

“‘The Evil.’

“That was his name for it.

“Everyone, he said, was being pushed apart. You began to find sinister possibilities in the most ordinary relations. Lately he had had a curious suspicion of his food — had fancied a queer taste in it and queer feelings after it. ‘It makes me fear for my reason,’ he said. ‘My reason or hers.’ Yet all the same, it was queer about the food. Why should anyone — ? He left it at that. At his first coming the common people had seemed simply dull to him. Then he had begun to realize that they were not so much dull as reserved and suspicious. You would catch a glance in their eyes like a dog that may snap. Even the children, when you came to watch them, were furtively defensive. For no reason. For no reason at all. He told me that, sitting very close to me, not speaking too loud.

“He came closer. ‘They are cruel to animals,’ he told me. ‘They beat their dogs and horses. Not regularly. By fits.

“‘The children come to school with marks on them,’ he said... ‘You can’t get them to say anything... They are afraid.’

“I asked him if he felt that this thing, whatever it was, was increasing. Had it always been there? There was very little recorded

history of the region. He thought it was increasing. Things had not always been like this. I suggested that it may have always been in the atmosphere of the place and that we became more aware of it as we fell under the spell.

"'Maybe. Partly that,' said the old vicar.

"He gave some broken fragments of a story about a former incumbent. He and his wife had been sent to prison for cruelty to a servant girl. Prison! They said she told lies and had dirty habits. As an excuse. They wanted to cure her, they said. But really they just hated her... Never anything against them before they came into the Marsh.

"'It's always been here,' whispered the old vicar. 'Always. Below the surface. An unhappy, wicked spirit that creeps into us all. I pray. I do not know what would happen to me if I did not pray. What with the waste of money and the rudeness of everybody and the malicious mischief they do me and the stone-throwing. Let alone the poison. It is the poisoning hurts me most.'

"We talked like that in his big shabby, sparely furnished study in the broad daylight, like men who cower in a cave.

"And then he began to talk less sanely. The evil was in the soil, he declared, UNDERGROUND. He laid great stress on the word 'underground.' He made a downward gesture with his quivering hand. There was something mighty and dreadful, buried in Cainsmarsh. Something colossally evil. Broken up. Scattered all over the Marsh. 'I think I know what it is,' he whispered darkly, but for a time he would not explain.

"They kept on stirring it up, he said, they would not let it rest.

"Whom did he mean by THEY? That was difficult. There had been road- making, there have been drainage works and now 'those archæologists'! And that was not all. There had been a ploughing of old pastures during the war. Opening old sores. 'You see over all the place was once a wilderness of graves.'

"'Tumuli?' I questioned.

"'No,' he insisted. 'Graves — graves everywhere!' And some of the ancient people, he said, were 'petrified.' You found stones of the strangest shapes. Abominable shapes. 'They keep on bringing things up,' he said. 'Things that had better be let alone. Ought to be let

alone. Making doubts and puzzles — destroying faith.'

"At a jump he was denouncing Darwinism and evolution. It was remarkable how life-long controversies had interwoven with his Cainsmarsh distresses! Had I seen the museum at Eastfolk? he asked.

"He talked of the great bones exhibited there. But I protested he was thinking of the bones of mammoths and dinosaurs and suchlike things. Giants, he insisted. Look at what they call implements there! Too big and clumsy for any living man to handle. Axes, spears — nothing but huge weapons for killing and killing! 'MURDER STONES' he called them. The murder stones of giants.

"He clenched his bony fist, his quavering voice rose, and real hatred came into his eyes.

"'Nothing is too bad,' he said, 'for the men who dig up those bones. Tearing up dark secrets. Seeming to confute... A grave's a grave and a dead man's a dead man, even if he's been dead a million years. Let the evil creatures lie! Let them lie! Let their dust lie!' He ceased to be furtively confidential; his anger rose and thrust his fear aside. He no longer troubled to listen to anything I had to say in reply to him.

"He was soon launched upon the wildest diatribe. He was transfigured by an anger that shook his feeble frame. He had fixed upon the local archæologists and naturalists as the chief objective for his tirade, but mixed up with that in the oddest and most illogical way was his detestation of the high-church practices that had been introduced by the new man at Marsh Havering. Just when this Evil was being released and rising like an exhalation from the earth, when the one supreme need of the time was religion straight and stern— 'STRAIGHT AND STERN,' he repeated and shook his fingers in my face — this man must come with his vestments and images and music and mummery!

"But I will not give you, if I could, an imitation of that poor old wreck as he grew fiercer and louder and hoarser. He wanted suppression, he wanted persecution of Science, of Rome, of every sort of immorality and immodesty, of every sort of creed except his own, persecution, enforced repentance, to save us from the Wrath that was coming steadily upon us. 'They turn up the soil, they strip things bare, and we breathe the dust of long-dead men.' It was as if

he was trying to escape from our common marshland obsession by sheer screaming violence. ‘The doom of Cain!’ he shouted. ‘The punishment of Cain!’

“‘But WHY Cain?’ I managed to insert.

“‘He ended his days here,’ the old man declared. ‘Oh, I know! Is this called Cainsmarsh for nothing? He wandered over the face of the earth and at last he came here, he and the worst of his sons. They poisoned the earth. Age after age of crime and cruelty, and then the Flood buried them under these marshes — and there they ought to be buried for ever.’

“I tried to argue against this fantasy — Cainsmarsh is just a corruption of Gaynes Marsh, as all the guide books say; it is written Gaynes in Domesday Book — but the old man bore me down. My voice had no chance now amidst his croaking assertions. His deafness was a shield against all argument. His voice filled the room. He poured out the festering accumulations of his brooding solitude. His sentences had the readiness of long-matured expression. I guess most of it had been uttered, time and again, to the faithful remnant of Cross in Slackness church. He had got the children of Cain and the cave men and the mammoths and megatheria and dinosaurs all jumbled up in the wildest confusion. It was a storm of preposterous nonsense. And yet — and yet, you know—”

Dr. Finchatton regarded the bay of Les Noupets in silence for a few moments.

“Out of it all came a suggestion. I doubt if it will seem even remotely sane to you — in this clear air. But it was the suggestion that this haunting something was something remote, archaic, bestial...”

He nodded his head in doubtful confirmation of what he was saying.

“You see ... It’s bad enough to be haunted by Georgian ghosts, Stuart ghosts, Elizabethan ghosts, ghosts in armour and ghosts in chains. Yet anyhow, one has a sort of fellow-feeling for them. They aren’t just spirits of cruelty, suspicion, and ape-like malice. But the souls of a tribe of cave men might be... Grisly ghosts... What do YOU think?”

“One may be as possible as the other,” I said.

“Yes. And yet, if cave men, why not apes? Suppose all our ancestors rose against us! Reptiles, fish, amoebæ! The idea was so fantastic that, as I drove away from Cross in Slackness, I tried to laugh.”

Dr. Finchatton stopped short and looked at me.

“I COULDN’T LAUGH,” he said.

“I don’t think *I* could have done,” I said. “It’s a frightful idea. I’d rather be haunted by a man than an ape any day.”

“I drove back home more saturated with terror than I came. I was beginning to see visions now everywhere. There was an old man bending down in a ditch doing something to a fallen sheep and he became a hunched, bent, and heavy-jawed savage. I did not dare look to see what he was doing and, when he called something to me — maybe only a good-day-to-you — I pretended not to hear. Whenever a clump of bushes came near the road, my heart sank and I slackened pace and, as soon as I was past, I jammed down the accelerator.

“I got drunk, Sir, for the first time in my life that night. You see, it was either getting drunk or running away. Maybe I’m still a young doctor, but that’s my code. A doctor who quits his practice without notice is as bad as a sentinel who bolts. So you see, I had to get drunk.

“Before I went to bed I found I was funking opening the front door to look out. So with a convulsive effort I flung it open wide...

“There crouched the marshes under the moonlight and the long low mists seemed to have stayed their drifting at the slam of the door against the wall. As if they paused to listen. And over it all was something, a malignant presence such as I had never apprehended before.

“Nevertheless I stuck to my doorstep. I did not retreat. I attempted even a drunken speech.

“I forget what I said. Maybe I myself went far enough back to the Stone Age to make mere inarticulate sounds. But the purport was defiance — of every evil legacy the past has left for man.”

III. — THE SKULL IN THE MUSEUM

At this point in his narrative Dr. Finchatton stopped abruptly. “This sounds a crazy story to you?” he said. “Do you want me to go on with it?”

“Not in the least,” I spluttered. “I mean, yes, please. I mean, do PLEASE go on. I’m tremendously interested. But sitting here at this table with everything bright and clear and definite, there is a certain unreality ... If you understand me?”

“*I* understand you,” he said without returning my smile. He looked round. “It does seem here as though nothing except vermouth and seltzer and lunchtime presently, and things like that, could ever happen any more.”

A look of extreme weariness came over him. “I’m resting,” he said. “Yes. But sooner or later I shall have to go back to it all. I’d like to go on talking about it a bit — to you. If you don’t mind. There’s something — if I might say so — so refreshingly unimaginative about you. Like white paper.”

At the time I was quite prepared to go on listening. I was oblivious then of the possibility that this story might ever disturb my own slumbers. I keep dreams for waking moments but I like them then. Fancies and reveries. I welcome them. One dreams then but one feels quite safe. There may be shivers in it but no real fear. It is just because they ARE impossible that I like impossible stories. Ever since I discovered Edgar Allan Poe in my early boyhood I have had a taste for the weird and the eerie, and in spite of my aunt’s opposition — she flies into a regular passion at the suggestion that anything irregular or unusual can ever occur — I have — in an unobtrusive way — indulged it pretty freely. Her imagination, I think, was killed long ago, but mine I’ve made into a domestic pet that I like to play with. I do not think it will ever claw me seriously; it’s a pussy now which knows where to stop. Though I am not so sure of that as I was. But it was very pleasant to be there, safe and solid, in the clear Normandy sunshine, and hear about those terror-stricken marshes. “Go on, my dear Sir,” said I. “Go on.”

“Well,” said Dr. Finchatton, “I put up as much fight as my

training and quality permitted. Getting drunk and that speech of defiance, even if in fact I imagined it rather than made it, did me good. I slept that night, good forgetful sleep, for the first time for weeks, and next day rose refreshed to reckon with my situation. Trained as I was, it was natural for me to assume that this common ailment of fear and fantasy, this sickness of a whole region, must be due to some virus in the air or the water or the soil. I made a private resolution to drink water only after it had been boiled and eat only well-cooked food. But also I was quite open to the idea that something less material might be at work. I am no prejudiced materialist. I was quite prepared to believe in purely psychic infection — though not of course in these Sons of Cain of the vicar's. I decided next morning that I would investigate that high-church curate at Marsh Havering, the Reverend Mortover, the object of the vicar's peculiar detestation, and find what HE might have to say about it.

"But I found the young man as mad as his Calvinistic colleague. If the old man mixed the trouble up with science and excavations and Romanism, the young man blamed the Reformation and made great play with the Puritan witch mania of the sixteenth century. Some spiritual control was broken then, he assured me with the utmost confidence. Diabolism had returned to the earth. It was not the ghost of Cain and his wicked sons that was troubling us, according to him; it was diabolical possession. We have to restore the unity of Christendom and exorcize these devils.

"He was a very pale, clean-shaven young man, with a fine clear-cut face, burning dark eyes, and high-pitched tenor voice. He made few gestures and he kept his thin hands clenched as he talked. If he had been in the Roman Catholic Church instead of being just a high Anglican, they would have set him to conduct missions. He had just that sort of eloquent intensity. And there he sat in his cassock, looking up and away over my shoulder and expounding the exorcism of the marshes.

"As he talked I could see that his head was full of long, slow processions winding across the marshes with banners, canopies, vestments, boys chanting, censers swinging, priests asperging. I thought of the old vicar peering out of his dirty study window and I

had a vision of him running out hoarse and stumbling, with murder in his eyes.

"'But,' I told him, 'there will be opposition!' and at that the manner of Mr. Mortover changed. He stood up and threw out a stiff hand like an eagle's claw. 'It must be overcome!' said he, and in that instant I understood why men are killed in Belfast and Liverpool and Spain."

That was queer. I interrupted. "But, Dr. Finchatton, what have Belfast and Liverpool and Spain to do with Cainsmarsh?" I asked.

That brought him to a stop for a moment. He looked at me with a very peculiar expression, something between suspicious scrutiny and obstinacy. "I was talking of Cainsmarsh," he said after deliberation.

"Then what have Belfast and Spain to do with it?"

"Nothing. I mentioned them, I suppose — by way of illustration... Let me get it! Let me get it! What I was thinking of was fanaticism. Both these men, the vicar and the priest, had their convictions — yes. High and noble convictions, no doubt, as they professed them. But what they really wanted to do was to fight. They wanted to be at each other's throats. That was where the haunting poison of the Marsh came in. It wasn't their beliefs that stirred them; it was their fears. He wanted to shout and provoke...

"Well — so for that matter did I. Why had I bawled and raved at the Marsh out of my door over night? And shaken my fist?"

He looked at me almost as if he expected me to answer.

"The Greeks had a word for it," he said. "Panic. Endemic panic, that was the contagion of the marshes."

"That may be a name for it," I said. "But how much does that explain?"

"You realize," said Dr. Finchatton, "that by this time I was in a headlong panic against panic. I felt that my time was running short. If I did not do something to exorcize it, the spirit of the Marsh would get me — surely. I should break. I should do something violent. I happened to have nothing very pressing just then to tie me, and I determined to play hookey from my consulting room for half a day and go over to Eastfolk museum. I would have a good reassuring look at those mammoth bones, which under the vicar's suggestion were beginning to take on far too human a form in my memory, and

perhaps have a chat with the curator, who, I had heard, was an archæologist of considerable ability.

"I found him a very pleasant little man, with a broad bland bare face and spectacles and a sort of watchfulness. He had that sort of watchfulness good photographers and portrait painters have, and it was the only thing that was not altogether comfortable about him. I caught him looking at me whenever I turned away from him...

"I professed a great interest in the flint implements which are so abundant in the low hills above the marshlands and about the series of human remains that had been unearthed there. He was an enthusiast and he found me intelligent. He embarked upon quite a history of the region. 'It must have been inhabited,' I said, 'for thousands of years.'

"'Hundreds of thousands,' he told me. 'There were Neanderthalers and — But let me show you our special glory!'

"He led me to a locked glass cupboard in which was a thick louring beetle- browed skull, that still seemed to scowl from its empty sockets. Beside it was its under jaw. This dirty rusty-brown treasure, he said, was the completest specimen of its kind in the world. It was almost unbroken. It had already settled a dozen controversies arising out of the fragmentary nature of its fellows. There were also a few vertebræ from the neck and a curved thigh bone and a lot of smaller fragments in a case close by, but the entire fissure in which these remains had been found had not yet been cleaned up, because the bones were half dissolved and very brittle and had to be extracted very carefully. The fissure was being worked with elaborate care. In the end they hoped to get almost an entire skeleton. Two or three very primitive and clumsy artifacts had also been found in this same cleft in the chalk, down which maybe the brute had slipped and been jammed and covered up. The little curator watched me as I surveyed his prize specimen and marked the snarling grin of its upper jaw and the shadowy vitality that still lurked in the caverns whence its eyes had once glared upon the world.

"'That might, I suppose, be our ancestor?' I said.

"'More probable than not.'

"'That in our blood!' I said.

“I turned half round and looked at the monster askance and, when I spoke again, I spoke as if he also might be listening. I asked a score of amateurish questions. There had been countless generations of him and his kind, I learnt. His sort had slouched and snarled over the marshes for a hundred times the length of all recorded history. In comparison with HIS overlordship our later human rule was a thing of yesterday. Millions of these brutish lives had come and passed, leaving fragments, implements, stones they had chipped or reddened by their fires, bones they had gnawed. Not a pebble in the marsh, not an inch of ground, their feet had not pressed or their hands gripped a myriad times.

“‘Just something a little bit dreadful about him,’ I said, talking vacuously while I made up my mind. Then I decided to put a question point- blank. I asked the curator had he heard — had he ever met the idea that the Marsh was haunted?

“The scrutiny in the magnified eyes behind the glasses intensified. He had heard something.

“‘WELL?’ said I.

“But he wanted me to speak first. He waited silently, and so I was forced to go on. I told him practically all that I have told you. ‘The marshes have got hold of me,’ I said. ‘And if I do not do something about it, they will drive me mad. I can’t stand them and I have to stand them. Tell me why it is one dreams there so dismally, why one is haunted by fear in the daylight and horrible fears in the night?’

“‘You’re not the first who has come to me with that question,’ he said, still watching me.

“‘And you can tell me,’ I said, ‘what it is?’

“‘No,’ he said.

“He was a careful man with his words as well as a watchful one with his eyes. He explained he went into the marsh to excavate and so he saw something of the people. ‘They don’t like these excavations,’ he said. ‘I have never heard of so much distrust of digging in any other part of the world. Maybe it is a strong local superstition. Maybe fear is contagious. They certainly fear. And I think they fear more today than they used to do. It is often very hard now to get permission to dig on private land.’

“I could see he was not telling me all he had in mind. He seemed

to be saying things to me experimentally, as if he was trying out his ideas on me. He remarked that he never slept in the marsh even in the daytime. At times when he was sifting earth he would stop to listen, and resume sifting, and then stop still again. 'Nothing to hear,' he said, 'and yet one gets strung up like that.'

"He came to a pause. I saw him looking very hard and with a peculiar expression at the cave man's skull against the wall between us.

"'You don't think an ugly beast like that could really leave a ghost?' I asked.

"'It's left its bones,' he said. 'Do you think it had anything you could call a spirit? Something that might still be urgent to hurt and torment and frighten? Something profoundly suspicious and easily angered?'

"It was my turn to stare at him.

"'You do not really believe that. You are suggesting that to me. For some purpose.'

"He laughed, still with a steady eye on me. 'If so, I have failed,' he said. 'But I did want to suggest it to you. If we can make a ghost of this fear of yours — well, ghosts can be laid. If we make a fever of it, fever can be cured. But while this remains merely panic fear and a smouldering rage, what can we do about it?'

"Very kind of you,' said I, 'to try and pull me together in that fashion, truss my mind, so to speak, for exorcism. It isn't so easy as that.'

"And then," said Dr. Finchatton, "he switched off that hypnotic bespectacled stare of his and began to talk to me more frankly.

"What he said was rather metaphysical," Dr. Finchatton said, "and I am not much of a metaphysician. It was queer theoretical stuff and yet, in a way, it had a sort of air of explanation. I will try and tell it you as well as I can. The expression he used was that we were breaking the frame of our present — the Frame of our Present?"

Dr Finchatton looked at me enquiringly. I remained judicial. I had not the remotest idea what the frame of our present might be. "Go on," I said.

"He stood with his profile to me, no longer watching me, looking out of the window and saying what was in his mind. 'A century or so

ago,' he said, 'men lived in the present far more than they do now. Their past went back four or five thousand years, their future hardly went as far; they lived for NOW. And what they called the eternities. They knew nothing of the remote real past. They cared nothing for the real future. THAT' — and he nodded at the cave-man's skull, 'just wasn't there. All that was buried and forgotten and out of life. We lived in a magic sphere and we felt taken care of and safe. And now in the last century or so, we have broken that. We have poked into the past, unearthing age after age and we peer more and more forward into the future. And that's what's the matter with us.'

"'In the marsh?' said I.

"'Everywhere. Your vicar and priest know that by instinct though they don't know how to express it — or anyhow they don't express it as you and I do. Sometimes it's nearer the surface in the marsh — but its everywhere. We have broken the frame of the present, and the past, the long black past of fear and hate that our grandfathers never knew of, never suspected, is pouring back upon us. And the future opens like a gulf to swallow us up. The animal fears again and the animal rages again and the old faiths no longer restrain it. The cave-man, the ancestral ape, the ancestral brute have returned. So it is. I can assure you I am talking realities to you. It is going on now everywhere. You have been in the marsh. You have felt them in the marsh, but I tell you these resurrected savageries are breathing now and thrusting everywhere. The world is full of menace — not only here.' He stopped short and his spectacles flashed as he looked at me and then stared again out of the window.

"'But,' said I, 'this is all very fine and mystical but how does it help me? What am I to do?'

"He said this was a mental thing and it had to be fought out in the mind.

"'I have to go back to the marsh this evening.'

"He went on saying that the frame of the present was shattered and could never be restored. I had to open out— 'open out', he said — and enlarge my mind to a vaster world where the cave-man was as present as the daily paper and a thousand years ahead was on the doorstep. 'That is all very well,' I said, 'but what does it mean? What am *I* to do now? I am asking you; what am *I* to do now?'

“His regard came back to me. ‘Fight it out if you can,’ he said. ‘Go back. You won’t escape by running away. Go back and have one more round with whatever you choose to fancy it, the Evil, the Fear, the Ghost of Cain or THAT fellow’s ghost—’

“He paused and we both looked round at the clumsy skull as though we felt it might have something to say in the matter.

“‘Broaden your mind to the new scale,’ he resumed, rather more confidentially. ‘Face it if you can. And then if you still find you are slipping, you must try to get help. You should go off to London and have a definite treatment. The man you should see is Norbert, of — I think it is 391 Harley Street, but I can get that for you. He has been one of the first men to realize this spreading miasma of the mind of which you are suffering and devise some sort of treatment for it. To tell you the truth, he has helped me. Though his methods are rough and strange. I had some slight touch of your trouble, and as I happened to know about him I called him in. And early. He flies over to Les Noupets once or twice a week. There’s a clinic over there...’

“So much for the curator of the Eastfolk museum. For the time he pulled me together. His modern scientific lingo was something I could understand. I felt that I was no longer being hunted darkly and strangely and beyond any possibility of help; I was just an experimentalist facing a disagreeable and risky but by no means impossible challenge.

“But I had no luck in that last round with the ghosts of the cave-men,” said Dr Finchatton. “I went back while it was still daylight. At the very outset before I reached my house I came upon something dreadful. It was a dog that had been beaten to death. Yes; beaten to death! You may think that in this world where so many terrible things are happening a cruelly ill-treated dog was no great matter. It was to me.

“I saw it lying among the nettles by the roadside. I thought some motorist must have run over it and thrown it aside. I got down to look at it and make sure that it was dead. It wasn’t simply dead; it was battered to a pulp. With some blunt heavy instrument. There couldn’t have been a whole bone left in it. Somebody must have rained blows upon it, a frantic whirlwind of blows.

“For a medical man I know I am over-sensitive. At any rate I went

on through the sunshine in a state of horror, at nature, at the deep fountains of cruelty in the human make-up. What frantic outburst had destroyed that poor brute? And then I had hardly been back in my house ten minutes when another shock arrived. This again may seem a small matter to you. To me it was overwhelming. A breathless messenger came on a bicycle from the vicarage of Cross in Slackness. He was so scared that for some moments I could not understand what he was telling me, and then I realized that old Rawdon had set upon his poor old wife and done his best to kill her. He had knocked her down and beaten her. 'The poor old lady!' gasped the boy. 'You better come soon. We got him tied up in the outhouse and she's on the bed upstairs scared to death — too frightened to speak. He's raving something frightful. Frightful. Says she tried to poison him... The language! ...'

"I brought out my car again and went over. I managed what I could to make the poor old thing comfortable; he hadn't hurt her so much as I feared, a few bruises but no bones broken, and it was chiefly shock and amazement she suffered from; and presently two policemen came and carried off old Rawdon to the police station at Holdingham. I wouldn't go down to see him. She spoke just a word or two as she lay there. 'Edward!' she muttered and then in amazement 'Oh EDWARD!' And then sharply with a note of terror 'EDWARD!' and a weak scream. I gave her a sleeping-draught and arranged for a woman to stay the night with her and then I went back to my own place.

"So long as I was actively employed I kept going, but as soon as I got home I found myself slumping. I could eat nothing. I drank a lot of whisky and instead of going to bed I fell asleep in an arm-chair by the fire. I awoke in terror and found the fire nearly out. I went to bed and when at last I got to sleep the dreams closed in on me and I sat up again starkly awake. I got up and put on an old dressing-gown and went downstairs and made up the fire, determined to keep awake at any cost. But I dozed there and then went back to bed. And so between the bed and the fireside I dragged through the night. My dreams were all a mix-up of the poor scared old lady, the almost as pitiful old man, the ideas the museum custodian had put in my head and, brooding over it all, that infernal palaeolithic skull.

“More and more did the threat of that primordial Adamite dominate me. I could not banish that eyeless stare and that triumphant grin from my mind, sleeping or waking. Waking I saw it as it was in the museum, as if it was a living presence that had set us a riddle and was amused to hear our inadequate attempts at a solution. Sleeping I saw it released from all rational proportions. It became gigantic. It became as vast as a cliff, a mountainous skull in which the orbits and hollows of the jaw were huge caves. He had an effect — it is hard to convey these dream effects — as if he was continually rising and yet he was always towering there. In the foreground I saw his innumerable descendants, swarming like ants, swarms of human beings hurrying to and fro, making helpless gestures of submission or deference, resisting an overpowering impulse to throw themselves under his all-devouring shadow. Presently these swarms began to fall into lines and columns, were clad in uniforms, formed up and began marching and trotting towards the black shadows under those worn and rust-stained teeth. From which darkness there presently oozed something — something winding and trickling, and something that manifestly tasted very agreeably to him. Blood.”

And then Finchatton said a queer thing. “Little children killed by air- raids in the street.”

I made no comment. I remained quietly attentive. It was an “aside”, as actors used to say. He took up his story where he had left it.

“Morning,” he resumed after an introspective pause, “found me frantic at the telephone. At great pains and what I am afraid will prove ruinous expense to me, I managed to secure a locum-tenens and forthwith I bolted off to London, gripping my sanity so to speak with both hands, to see this man Norbert. And it is Norbert who has sent me here... Norbert you know is a very extraordinary man. He was not at all what I had expected.”

Dr Finchatton stopped short. He looked at me. “That’s all.”

I nodded silently.

“Well,” he said, “what do you make of it?”

“In a day or so, perhaps, I shall begin to think something about it. At present I don’t know what to say. It’s incredible and yet — you

almost make me believe it. I mean I don't think it really happened — I wouldn't go so far as that — but I believe it happened to you."

"Exactly. I'm glad to be able to talk to a man like you. It's what Norbert wants me to do. He wants me to familiarize myself with what has just happened to me, just in the spirit in which you have taken it, so as to be able to distinguish between the realities of my experience, the realities of life, he calls them, and the fears and fancies and dreams I have wrapped about them. His idea is that I ought to see things UNFEELINGLY. Because after all — what do you think?" He looked at me very earnestly.

"How much of what I have been telling you is actual concrete happening and how much — what shall I call it? — mental reaction? Old Rawdon attacking his wife — that was real. That broken-up dog was real... Norbert's idea, you know, is that I should talk it quietly over with anyone who — who seems reasonably balanced and not too worried about the past or the future. So as to get these facts as facts and not as dreads and horrors. He wants to bring me back so to speak to what he calls a rational insensitiveness, rational insensitiveness, that's his formula, and so get a firmer foothold for — whatever I have to do next."

He gulped down his wine. "It's very good of you to have listened to me," he said, and then as a shadow fell across the terrace before us: "HULLO!"

IV. — THE INTOLERABLE PSYCHIATRIST

I disliked the shadow of Dr Norbert even before I looked up and saw him. He was and he meant to be an overwhelming sort of man, and though I am indolent, self-indulgent and unenterprising I can be as obstinate as a whole team of mules. I braced myself for opposition to whatever he wanted or had to say before he opened his mouth.

He was not at all the sort of person I should have expected a psychotherapeutist to be. A psychotherapeutist I think ought to have calm eyes and a reassuring manner — and a certain general neatness of self-control. He ought to look fresh and healthy and this fellow was distinctly cadaverous. He was large and expansive and untidy with lots of undisciplined black hair and thick eyebrows, and his large dark and flashing eyes either rolled about in his more voluble moments or came to a focus in a dramatic pause and glared at you — not a steady look but a glare that pushed at your face and was supported by an immense frown. His features were uniformly large, and he had the loose mouth of an orator and a voice of remarkable amplitude. He wore an old-fashioned upstanding white collar and a loose black bow tie very much under one ear. It was as if he had dressed himself once for all in some remote pre-war fashion and never changed it since. He looked much more like an actor on vacation than a psychotherapeutist. He made me think of the old Punch pictures of the Grand Old Man, or Henry Irving or Thomas Carlyle. A more unsuitable figure to interrupt a couple of decent-looking modern Englishmen sitting over their apéritifs on the terrace of the Perona Source Hotel it would be hard to imagine.

But there he was, entirely unlike anything I could have foreseen, the great Dr Norbert, Finchatton's mental healer, hands on hips, looking down on me in his most impressive manner. Finchatton had described him as unexpected, but the last thing I should have expected was anything so large, so oracular and so antique.

"I have been watching you from above," he said as though he was God Almighty. "I didn't want to interrupt while Finchatton was telling his tale. But now I perceive you have got through with it and I pounce."

Finchatton looked at me with a sort of silent entreaty to bear with Norbert's extraordinary manner and hear him out.

"You've heard his story?" Norbert demanded of me.

His manner did nothing to veil the fact that he was the psychotherapeutist and Finchatton was his "case". "He told you about how the cave-man dawned upon his mind? He talked about that terror in Cainsmarsh. Good! And the growing realization of evil? Well, — how have you reacted to that? What do you, with your manifestly very normal mind, make of it?"

He thrust his great face, all interrogation, some inches towards me. "Tell me in your own words," he said, and waited like a teacher examining a child.

"Dr Finchatton," said I, "has been relating some very extraordinary things. Yes. But I should have to think them over a lot before I could pass judgment upon them."

Norbert made the grimace of a teacher dealing with a stupid child.

"But *I* want your reactions now. Before you think."

"You MAY want," said I to myself. "I can't," I said aloud.

"But it will be of very great importance to Dr Finchatton for you to tell me now. Never mind why."

Suddenly I heard a clock striking. "Good heavens!" I cried, standing up and throwing a ten-franc note to the hovering waiter. "I shall keep my aunt waiting for lunch! That will NEVER do."

"But you CAN'T leave this business like this!" said Norbert, featuring an incredulous amazement. "You can't. It's your duty to a fellow-creature in trouble to hear this case out and help to rationalize it. You MUST help us." Glare. "Positively I CAN'T release you."

I turned to Finchatton. "If Dr Finchatton," I said, "would like to talk about it some more ..."

"Of course he wants to talk to you some more."

I kept my eyes on Finchatton, who nodded with an intensified appeal.

"I'll come again," I said. "Tomorrow. About this time. But I can't stay now... It's impossible."

I went down the winding road at something between a walk and a trot — really concerned to be so late, because you know my aunt is simply awful if anyone keeps her waiting for lunch. I was already

doubtful about the promise I had given and a little angry at having been forced to make it. It was as if I had admitted some preposterous claim upon my attention and had bought myself off.

I turned my head and saw the two men among those above me, side by side, Norbert overshadowing Finchatton.

"Tomorrow," I called — though I suppose I was well out of earshot.

Norbert made a large gesture.

Now I did not want in the least to see this Dr Norbert any more. I had indeed conceived a violent antipathy for him. I did not like his "You-and- Finchatton-are-rabbits-and-now-I-am-going-to-dissect-you" style. I did not like his large enveloping voice nor the way his brow and purpose seemed to overhang the rest of him. And I detest angular commanding gestures made with arms that are much too long. But on the other hand I had taken a real liking to Dr Finchatton and developed a very lively interest in his story. I thought he had told it very vividly. I wish I could convey the conviction of his manner in this transcript. Directly I got away from him I began to think of questions I might have asked him and to want to see him again. I regarded Norbert as a nuisance who had just butted in upon an interesting tale. I dismissed Norbert from my mind and went on thinking of Finchatton.

There was something about this story of a magic marshland into which a man might go sane and confident, admiring the butterflies and the flowers, and out of which presently he would come running again frantic with fear and rage, that had seized hold upon my imagination very strongly. And the way in which that evil old skull, that ancestral skull, lurking unseen at first in the background, had slowly become visible — ! It was like something being lit up behind a transparency. It was an explanation that was itself an enigma. And now, degree by degree, those bare jaws were being clad and covered until a phantom lip framed the grinning teeth, and there were dark aggressive bloodshot eyes below the beetling brows. The caveman was becoming more and more plainly a living presence as the story germinated in my mind.

It was a face at last and not a skull that watched me out of that dream story. It was absurd, but indeed it seemed to be watching me.

It watched me all that evening and it mopped and mowed in the night. It made me inattentive so that in the afternoon my combinations at croquet were unusually shortsighted and poor, and in the evening I offended my aunt deeply by failing to play up to my usual form. She was against me, but as she reckoned on my playing up to my usual form, she was surprised and perplexed by the things I did and put quite off her game, so that she and her partner lost heavily. But I scarcely heeded her reproaches and I undressed slowly, my mind full of that distant marshland so mysteriously accursed, so monstrously overshadowed now by that brutish revenant. I sat for quite a long time thinking it over before I went to bed.

Next day I got up to the Perona Source Hotel rather late. I had meant to be early. I would have taken a tram but an AGENT explained they were not running. There had been a lightning strike organized by the Communists and there had been a fight at the depot in which several people had been injured. 'One must be firm these days,' said the agent. Consequently I had to walk the whole way. And it was bad luck I thought, to find Dr Norbert stretching out his long legs under a table umbrella on the terrace and no signs of Dr Finchatton. Norbert motioned for me to join him and I sat down on a green chair beside his table. I did so reluctantly. I wanted to make it plain that it was Finchatton I wanted to see. I wanted more of the story and I did not want any mental probing, judgment dissection, earnest invasion of my private thoughts by this pretentious individual.

"Where's your friend?" I asked.

"He cannot come down today. It is just as well."

"I thought he had arranged—"

"HE thought he had arranged — . But he was prevented. As I say, it is just as well."

"I don't see that."

"From MY point of view. I want very much to get a common-sense outside view of this story that fills his mind. I want it for my own sake as well as his."

"But how can you expect me to contribute?"

"Well — for one simple thing; do you know any part of the world

called Cainsmarsh?”

He turned round to look at me as he might have looked at an animal he had just given an injection.

“I imagined it was somewhere in fenland.”

“There is no such district in the world.”

“It is a pseudonym?”

“It is a myth.”

He surveyed me for a moment and then decided that for the present I was not worth watching. He put his two long hands palm to palm in front of him and spoke with great deliberation staring out to sea. “Our friend,” he said, “WAS a doctor near Ely. Everything he told you was true and everything he told you was a lie. He is troubled beyond reason by certain things and the only way in which he can express them even to himself is by a fable.”

“But some of these things — really happened?”

“Oh yes. There WAS a case of gross cruelty to a dog. There WAS a poor old drunken parson who beat his wife. Things of that sort are happening all over the world every day. They are in the nature of things. If you cannot accept things like that, sir, YOU CANNOT LIVE. And Finchatton really went to the Tressider Museum at Ely, and Cunningham, the custodian, had the sense to spot his condition and send him on to me. But the mischief was already done to him before he went into the marsh. He’s told you practically everything — but as though he showed it through bottle glass that distorted it all. And the reason why he has made it all up into that story—”

Dr Norbert turned upon me, putting his arms akimbo and glaring at my face. He spoke with slow deliberation, as if he was speaking in capital letters, “ — is because the realities that are overwhelming him are so monstrous and frightful that he has to transform them into this fairy tale about old skulls and silences in butterfly land, in the hope of getting them down to the dimensions of an hallucination and so presently expelling them from his thoughts.”

The expression of his face made me uncomfortable. I turned and beckoned the waiter for another vermouth in order to recover my composure. “And what,” I asked offhandedly, “may those more terrible realities be?”

“Do you never read a daily newspaper?” asked Dr Norbert.

“Not very intently. Most of the stuff seems to me to be either pompous or wilfully disagreeable. But I do The Times Cross-Word Puzzle nearly every day. And I read most of the tennis and croquet stuff and so on. Have I missed much?”

“You’ve missed the things that have made Finchatton mad.”

“Mad?”

“Didn’t he repeat my phrase? — endemic panic? A contagion in our atmosphere. A sickness in the very grounds of our lives, breaking out here and there and filling men’s minds with a paralysing, irrational fear?”

“He did use that expression.”

“Yes, sir. And it is what I am dealing with here. It is what even I am only beginning to realize. A new Plague — of the soul. A distress of the mind that has long lurked in odd corners of the mind, an endemic disorder, rising suddenly and spreading into a world epidemic. The story our friend put away into a sort of fairyland fenland is really the story of thousands of people today — and it will be the story of hundreds of thousands tomorrow. You are untroubled. As yet... Maybe you are immune... It is most important to me just now in my study of this increasing malaise that I should realize the reaction of an uninfected mind.”

“I’ve never been good soil for out-of-the-way ideas,” I said. “Still I don’t want to take any risks. You don’t think that presently I too shall begin to be frightened of the dark and scared in the open, and see ancestral apes and savages looming up over the world?”

He put his big hand across the table and pressed my arm for a moment. “If you do,” he said, glaring portentously, “have courage.”

It flashed into my mind abruptly that this man was really as mad or madder than Finchatton. I put the question to him pat.

“Dr Norbert, have YOU by any chance — got infected?”

The glare became intensified. He lifted up his face so to speak and then brought it down like a hammer on the word.

“Yes.”

He spoke with such emphasis that my face was bedewed.

“I was an early case,” he said. “I had to deal with myself. There was nobody to help me. I had to study myself. I have been through it all, sir. And crawled out on the other side. A salted man, immunized.

At the price of a monstrous struggle...”

And with that he launched out upon the most astonishing dissertation I have ever heard. He made a little pause before the discourse came. What he had to say couldn’t be said very well from a lounge chair. Presently he was sitting up and gripping his chair with both hands. Then he stood up and talked and walked about the terrace in front of me — no longer talking so much as orating. I have a fairly retentive memory but it would be impossible for me now to give you a full report of all the strange tissue of assertion and arguments he poured forth. Some of his phrases and terms of thought I will quote. Finchatton’s story had sounded like fantasy. This had no quality of fantasy about it at all. It began like pseudo-science and philosophy, but gradually it became more and more a booming, disconcerting exhortation. We were to take hold of life — GRIP it. Some of his ideas Finchatton had already handed on to me. I recognized the phrases. There was that about ‘breaking the Frame of the Present’.

“But what does that MEAN?” I said almost irritably.

“Animals,” he said, “live wholly in the present. They are framed in immediate things. So are really unsophisticated people. Israeli, Sands, Murphy, a crowd of people have been working on that.” He rattled off a score of names but these are all that I remember. “But we men, we have been probing and piercing into the past and future. We have been multiplying memories, histories, traditions, we have filled ourselves with forebodings and plannings and apprehensions. And so our worlds have become overwhelmingly vast for us, terrific, appalling. Things that had seemed forgotten for ever have suddenly come back into the very present of our consciousness.”

“In other words,” said I, trying to keep him moored to current realities, “we have found out about the cave-man.”

“Found out about him!” he shouted. “We live in his presence. He has never died. He is anything but dead. Only—”

He came close and tapped my shoulder.

“ — Only he was shut off from us and hidden. For a long time. And now we see him here face to face and his grin derides us. Man is still what he was. Invincibly bestial, envious, malicious, greedy. Man, sir, unmasked and disillusioned is the same fearing, snarling,

fighting beast he was a hundred thousand years ago. These are no metaphors, sir. What I tell you is the monstrous reality. The brute has been marking time and dreaming of a progress it has failed to make. Any archaeologist will tell you as much; modern man has no better skull, no better brain. Just a cave-man, more or less trained. There has been no real change, no real escape. Civilization, progress, all THAT, we are discovering, was a delusion. Nothing was secured. Nothing. For a time man built himself in, into his neat little PRESENT world of Gods and Providences, rainbow promises and so forth. It was artificial, it was artistic, fictitious. We are only beginning to realize HOW artificial. Now it is breaking down, Mr Frobisher. It is breaking down all about us and we seem unable to prevent it. We SEEM... No escape appears. No, sir. Civilization so far has been a feeble, inadaptable falsity. And now it is found out; Fate has been too much for it. A stunning realization, sir! And when sensitive, unprepared men like our poor friend Finchatton become aware of it, they show themselves too weak to face it. They refuse to face a world so grim and great as this world really is. They take refuge in stories of hauntings and personal madness — in the hope of some sort of exorcism, something they think will be a cure... There is no such cure. There is no such way now of dressing up these facts and putting them aside.

"So, sir, they have to be faced," he roared. "They have to be faced." He seemed to be addressing himself not simply to me but to some large public meeting. His vast gestures ignored me. "The time when men could be put in blinkers to save them from seeing too much is past. Past for ever! There can be no more religions of reassurance. No churches of 'There — there!' THAT sort of thing is at an end."

"And then?" said I very quietly. Because the louder he shouted, the more coldly resistant I became.

He sat down and gripped my arm again. He became persuasively confidential. From bawling, his voice sank to a deep heavy undertone. "Madness, sir, from the mental side, is poor Nature's answer to overwhelming fact. It is flight. And today all over the world, INTELLECTUAL MEN ARE GOING MAD! They are dithering, because they realize that the fight against this cave-man

who is over us, who is in us, who is indeed US, is going against these imaginary selves. The world is no longer safe for anything. It was sheer delusion that we had Him under. Him! The pursuing brute who never desists."

By a movement that I hoped seemed inadvertent, I freed my arm from his clutch. I had an absurd feeling that I was like that wedding guest who was gripped by the Ancient Mariner. "But then," I said, putting my hands in my pockets and leaning back so as to be out of reach of any fresh attempt to grab me; "What do you think you are doing with Finchatton? What do you think has to be done?"

Dr Norbert waved his arms about and then stood up. "I tell you, sir," he said, shouting down at me as though I was a score of yards off, "in the end he has to do what we all have to do. Face the facts! Face the facts, sir! Go through with it. Survive if you can and perish if you can't. Do as I have done and shape your mind to a new scale. Only giants can save the world from complete relapse and so we — we who care for civilization — have to become giants. We have to bind a harder, stronger civilization like steel about the world. We have to make such a mental effort as the stars have never witnessed yet. Arise, O mind of Man!" (He called me that!) "Or be for ever defeated."

I wanted to say I preferred to be defeated without making any fuss about it, but he gave me no chance to say that.

For now indeed he was fairly raving. There was even a touch of froth on his lips. He paced up and down and talked on and on, in a fine frenzy.

I suppose from first to last throughout the ages decent people of my sort have had to listen to this kind of thing, but it seemed to me beyond all reason that I should have to listen to it on the terrace of the Source Hotel at Perona above Les Noupets on a lovely morning in this year of grace nineteen hundred and thirty-six. He was striding up and down now like a Hebrew prophet. It may look all right as a part of history, this sort of rhetoric, this epoch-making and all that, but in real life it is hoarse and outrageous. It's damned bad manners — to be plain about it. I ceased to mark or remember half the things he said.

There was no answering it. One could as soon swim up the falls of

Niagara.

He made it more and more plain that he was exhorting me. Me personally. I never had such a ballyragging. He was warning me to brace my mind to escape from the Wrath to Come. He called it that — 'Wrath to Come'. He made me think of Peter the Hermit raging through the quiet cities of eleventh-century Christendom and starting all that trouble about the Crusades. He made me think of Savonarola and John Knox and all the disturbing people who have rushed shouting across history — leaving it very much as they found it, telling people to give up their lives, go to their tents, O Israel, take up arms, storm the Tuileries, smash the Winter Palace, and a score of such outrageous things. At little old Les Noupets, mind you.

He reeled off a list of atrocities, murders and horrors all over the world. I suppose there IS a rather unusual amount of massacre and torture going on nowadays. I suppose the outlook IS pretty black. I suppose there may be frightful wars, air raids and pogroms ahead of us. But what am *I* to do about it? What was the good of bow-wow-wowing at me? The intensity of his manner could not hide the fact that he had no certitude even in his own mind, that at best he was struggling with only the blank shadows of ideas. Whenever I tried to get in an enquiring word, he would raise his voice and boom over me. "I tell you!" he would roar up.

But that was just what he didn't do — and apparently couldn't do.

"In a little while," he said, "there will be no ease, no security, no comfort any more." (Thank Heaven! he did not say I was 'living on the brink of a volcano'.) "There will be no choice before a human being but to be either a driven animal or a stern devotee to that true civilization, that disciplined civilization, that has never yet been achieved. Victim or Vigilante. And that, my friend, means you! I say it to YOU! YOU!" And he pointed a lean forefinger.

As there was no one else present — for the waiter had gone inside — there was no reason whatever for that 'you' and that pointing finger. Just want of proportion...

Yet — . It is a most unpleasant thing to admit but these two men HAVE in a sort of way hypnotized me after all, and put something of this anxiety and something of this haunting of theirs upon me. I try and get them in a proper perspective by writing down this story, but

the mere writing of it makes me realize how much I can't detach myself. I can no more get rid of it by telling it to you than Finchatton could get rid of it by telling it to me. I did not know that one could be hypnotized in this fashion, by people just sitting about or talking to you. I thought you had to sit still and give yourself up to hypnotism or else there was nothing doing. But now I find I don't sleep as well as I used to do, I catch myself anxious about world affairs, I read evil things between the lines in the newspapers, and usually very faintly but sometimes quite plainly I see, behind the transparent front of things, that cave-man face... How was it Finchatton put it?—"continually rising and yet always towering up there". And I have to admit I am not so even-tempered as I was in conversation. The other day I even contradicted my aunt with some asperity, to our mutual astonishment. And I snapped at a waiter...

I did not realize the seriousness of this business until I had this scene with Norbert. That was what made me so restive and after I broke away from him I took care to see no more of him or Finchatton. Yet all the same the mischief had been started in me and it grows. In those two brief mornings, I got myself infected, fool that I was to listen to them! and now the infection is working in me.

I resent the whole business. What is the good of putting this horror of Cainsmarsh upon a man and not telling him exactly what to do about it? I DO realize that our present world is going to pieces. I quite see that we are still under the sway of the cave-man and that he is staging a tremendous come-back. I am surprised I didn't see all that before. Already I have dreams about that giant skull, quite unpleasant dreams. But what is the good of talking about them? If I told my aunt any of this, she would say I was off my head. What can a fellow like me do about it all?

Study it up — enlarge my mind to a new scale? Become "giant-minded"? WHAT a phrase! Build up a new civilization of steel and power in the place of the one that is collapsing? ... Me? ... Look at my bringing up? Is it IN me?

It is too much to expect of our sort of people.

I'm ready to fall in with anything that seems promising. I'm all for peace, order, social justice, service and all that. But if I'm to THINK! If I'm to find out what to do with myself!

That's too much.

I made my break-away from Norbert's flooding eloquence that morning with some considerable difficulty. I stood up. "I must be going," I said. "I have to play croquet with my aunt at half-past twelve."

"But what does croquet matter," he cried in that intolerable voice of his, "if your world is falling in ruins about you?"

He made a move almost as though he would impede my retreat. He just wanted to go on being apocalyptic. But I had had enough of this apocalyptic stuff.

I looked him in the face, firmly but politely. I said, "I don't care. The world MAY be going to pieces. The Stone Age may be returning. This may, as you say, be the sunset of civilization. I'm sorry, but I can't help it this morning. I have other engagements. All the same — laws of the Medes and Persians — I am going to play croquet with my aunt at half-past twelve today."

THE END

BRYNHILD

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DISAVOWAL

All the characters in this book are fictitious characters. If by some accident they bear names already in use or happen to follow professions that living people follow, or live in houses like real existing houses, or play or work very much as actual persons do, that is so because fiction cannot but recall realities if it is to deal with life.

CHAPTER ONE

The Error of Judgment

Mr Rowland Palace woke up abruptly at seventeen minutes past three in the morning. A minute ago he had been in that uncharted region beyond dreamland where indeed the mind has its motions but their issue is stillborn and no trace survives, and now he was wide awake in a world of cheerless realities, persistent and inexorable. In that complete blackness he had blundered against an unpleasant memory, and the shock had hurled him back into the waking world.

Outside the house there was a gentle breeze. Across his ceiling the doubled shadows of two laburnum-trees thrown by two lamps in the roadway beyond his shrubbery, danced incessantly through intricate recurrent sequences. He was very weary of that dance, but in the daytime he could never remember to ask his wife to do something in the way of dark curtains. Now, though he stared hard at that all-too-familiar flickering, its irritation was subconscious. His mind was overwhelmed and possessed altogether by the thought of the desolating mistake he had made with those photographers.

'Why did I do it? Why did I ever consent to anything of the sort? Why did I let them get at me?'

The effect upon his special and appreciative public would, he felt, be incalculably bad. He had been made undignified - ridiculous.

How had it happened? How *could* it have happened?

It had been such a delightful afternoon up to that fatal moment. Nothing had warned him. He had been caught off his guard. He had not realized what was happening until it was too late.

'Oh, damn!' he said, and then much louder as if he feared the Recording Angel had not heard him, 'Oh, DAMN!'

The Recording Angel certainly could not have missed that. Mrs Palace in the next room heard it plainly. 'Trouble *again,*' she said. 'I wonder what it is *this* time?'

She speculated drowsily for a while, turned over and went to sleep. Either she would know in the morning or it wouldn't matter.

Like so many men who make their way to positions of importance

in the world of thought and letters, Mr Rowland Palace was a man of acute sensibilities and incessant anxieties. He had been a delicate, prize-winning, magazine-starting sort of boy at school and already in his undergraduate days his literary bent had been conspicuous. His rise to prominence was, in the retrospect, rapid. His criticisms were listened to, he was already an influence before he came down from Cambridge. His very first book, *Bent Oars,* was a considerable success; it went beyond Britain, it excited the American colony in Paris and percolated thence to New York, Chicago, and the intellectual West. (That was in the pre-Joyce period, when Greenwich Village was in every sense young.) He became aware of himself as a figure of popular interest only very slowly. He distrusted the realization. If he could he would have concealed it from himself.

He hated to be self-conscious. He didn't like to feel that people looked at him. When he did he usually fell over things. His conception of himself was of a reserved, slenderish figure, delicate but opaque, observant, amused, kindly but enigmatical. His bearing, like his work, was pervaded by a gentle irony. (But Mrs Palace knew better.) He carried his faintly smiling face a little on one side. Few even of his intimates suspected his phases of irritation and neurasthenia.

His intellectual pose was to acquiesce in everything and believe in nothing. His dexterous depreciation could be turned left or right or where you would. He undermined and destroyed with a polished civility. His style was a witty style. This endeared him to youth, full of youth's natural suspicion that it is being dreadfully put upon and not quite clear how and why. He believed nothing; he clung to nothing. No trustful infantilism for him, he intimated. They envied that tremendously ripe grownup attitude of his beyond measure. They imitated it in the *Granta* - not always, he felt, successfully. (A sedulous admirer can be a deadly parodist.) But plainly they regarded him as a liberator.

Being a liberator had not been in Mr Rowland Palace's original scheme of things. But it was borne in upon him steadily and continually that he *was* a liberator, and by imperceptible degrees he accepted the responsibility of the role. But there was nothing anarchistic or revolutionary about the liberation he purveyed; it was

the liberation of a man of the world. It left you free to do anything — or nothing.

Yes.

But -

Those photographs.

2

Lady Burnish had taken her house-party across the corner of the park to see the vicar's May Day Festival. It was to be Great Fun. The vicar was much respected at Canham Towers, but with amusement. He was a round-faced, brown-eyed, loose-mouthed, button-nosed, excited-looking man, addicted to cassocks. He was a fluent tenor in the pulpit but on the level with you he spluttered. He had a natural tonsure with wiry intractable hair round it, and an aptitude for pageant, and he had greatly cleaned up and beautified his church. So that it didn't look a perfectly respectable church. It had just a suspicion of rouge in its appearance. And the new banners in the chancel were - though ever so little — *gay.*

He loved archaeology, but not for its laborious and often sordid facts. He hated excavations and stratigraphy, but he gloried in sudden finds and marvels. He had a rich confused sense of the romance of the past. He drew a loose-knit veil of folklore and ancient wisdom, unaccountable customs, semipagan mysticism and strange forgotten lovely things, across the harsh nakedness of the present. He was strong on the Druids; what he knew and inferred and invented about the Druids made a copious legend.

At times Lady Burnish, in her bright bantering way, said she thought he was almost more of a Druid than an Anglo-Catholic priest.

'We inherit,' he said, not denying the charge. 'Just as the Holy Father inherits the title of Pontifex Maximus.'

For he was the sort of vicar which calls the Pope the Holy Father and not the sort which calls him - disgusting phrase to apply to an old gentleman — the Whore of Babylon. He worked hard to restore Folk Dances, a belief in fairies, and a gilt and illuminated Merrie England of simple, dear, and plain but very rosy and lovable people. Which

restoration was none the less difficult because manifestly nothing of the sort has ever existed.

He was holding a May Day Festival in the meadow between the churchyard and the almshouses. (He called the old ladies in the almshouses 'Goody Blake' and 'Goody Stonor' and so on, and they hated him like poison for it.) There was a garlanded maypole and a band and two tents for tenpenny and eighteenpenny teas respectively, there were omnibuses from Clutterhamton and Bloor, there were no end of motor-cars and a crowd of people, village children in white and pink, and most of the vestry and choir robed as Druids, whether they liked it or not, with trousers and stout boots showing underneath, and there was our God-tonsured vicar, with flying arms and skirts and girdle tassels, leaving no one alone, the life and soul of it all.

At the outset Mr Rowland Palace had rather liked the man. There was a suggestion of infinite gallantry about this attempt to bring back the picturesque memories of a non-existent past and make them live again within sound and sight of an arterial way and an aerodrome.

'This is jolly,' he said to Lady Burnish, surveying the scene. 'Is that Robin Hood and Maid Marian I see before me? All the best people seem to be here. And is not that little troupe in top-hats and knee-breeches Ye Olde English Dancers, who have been capering round the country for years and years? They grow but they never grow up.'

'Their costumes are getting *very* tight,' said Lady Burnish.

Golstein, the professional refugee, made some comparison with similar beribboned festivities in Bavaria, but Sir Wilfred Blackstone, the literary atheist, bent as ever on anti-clerical controversy, was a little inclined to stress the originally phallic nature of the maypole dance.

'The Spring Queen and the Corn King and all that,' said Mr Penton-Grace, the novelist. 'And why not?'

That shut up Sir Wilfred.

The vicar made much of the presence of Mr Rowland Palace, flattered him and led him to his doom.

'A bard, a soothsayer,' cried the vicar. 'Merlin almost. You come, *cher maitre,* apt to our occasion.'

He explained how he used these festivities insidiously for the intellectual stimulation of ‘my yokel youth’. ‘We have a prize to award for poetry and a prize essay. Yes, indeed. You shall see the three best poems and the three best essays and then, I am sure, you will give the prize.’

And Mr Palace read the unspeakable poems and glanced over the unreadable essays and, still without any premonition of evil, consented to award the prize.

There were two chairs almost like thrones on the dais, one for himself and one for dear Lady Burnish, and there were chairs behind for Druids and committee generally, and the vicar stood and officiated.

‘You will wear a robe,’ said the vicar.

‘Do you think I need?’

‘Oh, you mahst,’ said Lady Cytherea Label.

‘Crimson,’ said the vicar.

‘You’ll look *splendid* in a crimson robe!’ said Lady Cytherea.

She was a charming fresh young woman of one or two and twenty, unusually discriminating in things literary, modest and inquiring. She and Rowland had been great friends from the arrival tea-time of Friday onward, and it was now high Saturday. It was pleasant to find she had a critical, approving eye for his personal appearance.

And when it came to a fillet of gold braid, a bay wreath, and a daisy chain, she herself adjusted them and was lingering and fastidious about it.

‘And the Bardic harp,’ said the vicar, proffering an unreal wood, glue, and cardboard lyre.

The first shades of doubt fell upon Mr Palace as he walked in procession to the dais. He ascended the steps with that difficulty and uncertainty natural to a man unaccustomed to skirts (in this case far too long for him). He met the eye of his wife for a swift expressive instant.

She wasn’t with him. She disapproved, distrusted. He never liked that dissentient expression of hers. Surely this robe was fine and dignified; he could throw it back in folds from his arms when he handled the rolled-up poems and prizes. Surely Lady Cytherea had

fixed that fillet straight and well. He dismissed the doubt. His wife was just being sensitive about Lady Cytherea.

He did notice that there seemed to be an unusual number of Press photographers beside the dais. It had not occurred to him that this fantastic old-world vicar was a glutton for publicity. But the danger in the situation only bared its teeth after he had made his little gently ironical sympathetic speech and the prizes had been handed down. Then these pictorial news-hawks came storming upon him. 'Just a moment, Mr Palace,' and, 'if we might get a shot of you, sir, beside Lady Burnish, handing the prize to the little girl. (Bill, where's that kid?)'

And, 'Just for a moment, sir — you speaking to Lady Cytherea Label. *Please,* sir.'

3

The photographs came out *awful.*

And they went round the world.

The scarlet robe wasn't a bit splendid. It was just a big dark robe obviously much too big for him and making him look stumpy - 'stumpy' was the only word for it. The fillet of gold was askew, if ever it had been straight; it came down over his forehead and rested over one eyebrow. The bay-leaves were crooked, too; they gave him dark, pointed ears. His genial expression was dreadfully overdone. (That perhaps was his own fault.) The harp got in edgeways - obviously pasteboard. He looked like one of the less respectable and less expensively dressed boon companions of the Emperor Nero. Full of wine and wantonness. He looked much more like corrupting the village maiden than handing her a prize. Lady Burnish, at his side, had learnt early in life to hold her chin up and extend her backbone whenever cameras or observers were about. She seemed now to be looking down at him with infinite scorn. Well she might.

'Distinguished author relaxes,' was the legend of the first print of this he saw.

'Mr Rowland Palace Joins the Revels at Little Canham.'

They had done close-ups of him too. He had always been a little aloof and camera-shy in his publicity, and these Press photographers,

knowing him by reputation as an inaccessible, had taken the fullest advantage of their opportunity. That enabled someone - apparently the writer of a syndicated letter and hostile to reaction - to stab him with, 'Modern Classicist dresses the Part'.

A considerable part of this syndicated critic's contribution to the mind of the race was printed in periodicals which made no use of photography. For their convenience, it seemed, a line drawing had been made of Mr Palace and reproduced upon metal for rough effective printing. 'Libellous' was all too mild a description of it. All over the United States, Canada, Australia, the statement that Mr Palace was a deboshed Druid would go.

'And one has no remedy!' said Mr Palace to the wavering shadows on his ceiling.

'Any combination of lines that they choose to present in zincography is a valid portrait according to the usage of the Press...

'Useless to sue.'

The shadows became still; they seemed to think it over for a moment or so, and then they gave way to hilarious approval.

For a week or so Mr Rowland Palace watched this dreadful perversion of his dignified and graceful presence, percolate through the British Press. Local papers in Oxford and Cambridge, where hitherto he had been a subtle voice speaking out of the shadows, now proclaimed him by picture and inference jovial and silly — but mostly silly. Then from New York onward these photographs passed across America. The letterpress, any explanation of the occasion, did not cross the Atlantic; it was just the pictures which travelled and the journalistic mind evoked what explanation it thought best.

'Mr Rowland Palace writes in Classical Attire. Garb of Suetonius best for his style.'

Some bright spirit in New York had discovered a wonderful connection between clothing and mood. He declared that Mr Rowland Palace found modern clothes mentally vulgarizing and resorted to loose robes to free his mind. And then in an exasperating patronizing way he told Mr Rowland Palace that more than robes might be necessary for that.

One bold editor made Lady Cytherea his daughter and another married him to Lady Burnish without further comment.

Texas guessed cheerfully, ‘Rowland Palace as Old King Cole’.

The metal cliche, that absolutely libellous, hideous little face with its exaggerated woollen robe and its wreath making him at best a gnome askew — followed the photographs. It was evidently going into storage for the literary columns all over the world. Whenever he was reviewed or they had anything to say about him in the future, it would be dug up and used against him, sharpening the edge of hostility, poisoning praise.

‘How can they get me *right?*’ whispered Mr Rowland Palace to his ceiling. ‘How can they ever get me right again?’

4

Mr Rowland Palace could lie there no longer. He stuck his feet out of bed and sat up. His fine hands clutched his shoulders.

‘I have something to say,’ he whispered. ‘I deserve to be heard. I deserve to be read. Why should I be discredited and made preposterous? People will *dislike* me. They will refuse to read me. Who could *read* a man with a face like *that?*... Monstrous!’

In the stillness he had a faint intimation of the vastness and complexity of the answer. To keep some hold upon himself he repeated ‘Why?’

He looked at his dim pillow. No good replacing his fretting head on that. He would put on his dressing-gown and slippers, make some tea, go downstairs to his study and write something — and so distract himself from this present overwhelming trouble. In an hour or so he might perhaps come back to that pillow with a reasonable prospect of sleep.

CHAPTER TWO

Nocturne

Mrs Palace was awakened by the sound of him bumping about in the little pantry on the landing in which tea-things were kept against just such occasions as this. He made a conclusive clatter by dropping the lid of the biscuit tin. She sighed but she knew what was expected of her.

She appeared, tall, slender, and shapely, holding her blue dressing-gown about her with a long, rather large hand. She was a fair-haired young woman, with a broad serene face and kind brown eyes that nowadays wore habitually an air of perplexity. She thought life more and more unreasonable but she did not care to condemn it. 'You are making tea again,' she remarked to his back.

'I haven't had a wink of sleep for three hours,' he said, turning a haggard face to her.

'Poor old Rowly! Let me get the tea for you and you go down to the study. I'll bring it down.'

'I just can't sleep. I lie there.'

'You've been worried by press-cuttings.'

'Now how do you know that?'

'Well you don't usually tear them up before you put them in the waste-paper basket. But this last week or so—'

'Do I tear them up! They deserve it.'

'Go to your study and let me manage. You'll only upset things. There's some bread and butter. I'll make you a bit of toast.' When she brought down the tea-tray and toast to him he was sitting in his armchair staring miserably at the empty grate. He accepted his refreshment with a complete absence of thanks. 'Did you see those cuttings I tore up?' he asked abruptly.

'I guessed what they were about.'

'How?'

'I could see they were mostly pictures.'

'Gods! Why was I such a *fool?*'

Mrs Palace had no good answer for that.

‘Why *was* I such a fool?’

She waited for a little while before she spoke. She stood weighing her words before she uttered them. ‘Darling, don’t you think perhaps you are making too much of all this? Maybe it wasn’t very wise of you to let them dress you up like that. *I* didn’t like it. But after all, does it matter so *very* much?’

‘It matters vitally.’

‘But how?’

‘How little you understand the nuances of my position!’ he said.

She received that unflinchingly. She knew there had to be that sort of accusation sooner or later. She made no answer.

‘A writer,’ he said, ‘isn’t what he is.’

She tried to weigh that. It was difficult to weigh.

‘A writer, my dear Bryn, is what he *seems* to be. He is an effect - an impression. That’s what we have to understand. We have to grasp that.’

‘But really - after all — he’s himself.’

‘That is where you are wrong, Bryn. In fact,’ he added generously, ‘that’s where we have *both* been wrong. Nobody’s himself - nobody. There isn’t such a thing. And we public characters, we politicians, writers, and so forth, are even less ourselves than most people.’

‘*Need* you be, Rowly?’

He looked at her with the baleful eyes of one who encounters incredible stupidity. Then in the lonely hopeless tone of one who feels explanations are useless, he said, ‘Yes’.

Deep in the heart of his wife there stirred a desire to spank him hard and good. It was one of those impulses from the subconscious that rush up into the light and instantly dive down again. She took a cup of tea instead and sat down with it opposite him in the smaller armchair.

He was always very sensitive to her feelings even when he disregarded them. Often he felt them before she was aware of them. He knew now that she was critical of the unjustifiable scorn in that ‘Yes’. She had a way of perceiving things that were not meant for her. It was an impression to efface. He became elaborately explicit. ‘You see, in this overcrowded world, every man who appeals to the

public must put up - I won't say a false front — but a Large Simplified Facade. He must present a clear, plain version of himself. His appearance, the published anecdotes about him, his report, his prestige, must all tally with his work. I have felt that dimly, Bryn, long ago, but only tonight do I see it in its stark simplicity... Naturally to you it is a new idea.'

'Well... You don't mean, Rowly, you ought to be deliberately posing and pretending and play-acting.'

'No. No. Not posing and pretending and play-acting. Certainly not that. But one ought to keep one face to the public. We have to choose what we are and keep rigorously to that. The public has no time to conjugate us through a lot of moods and tenses. One firm, clear impression is all people have time for. I had — I believe — built up a sort of personality in their minds. Austere, rather aloof. They respected it. Martin called me a gentleman of letters. Ridiculous perhaps, but that was how I wanted to be taken — so as to pose myself and deliver what I had to say. That Elliot and Fry profile was all that was necessary then by way of a published portrait. It had dignity. *Now*—'

'Are they so very bad?'

'Hadn't you the curiosity even to smooth out one of those pictures?'

'I didn't want to pry.'

'No,' he said neutrally.

Mrs Palace became aware of that three in the morning chill that even early June cannot escape. She clicked on the radiant electric panel and replenished her husband's cup.

'Would you mind,' she asked, 'if I saw the next batch of cuttings before you tore them up?'

2

Soon, warmed by tea and stimulated by the tangible if unformulated resistances of his wife, Rowland Palace found his mental sources recovering strength and abundance. Soon he was in what is frequently called a mood of inspiration. That is to say, he did not know what was coming next. He talked more easily and listened with

a deepening interest to the things he was saying.

'Why should I be disturbed by all this?' he asked. 'That's the revealing question. I am not vain.'

He paused on that. His wife accepted the proposition without a flicker of challenge. He did not look at her but he listened for the slightest sound from her.

'I may have a thousand faults and weaknesses,' he explained, 'but *certainly* I am not vain. No. This that I feel is something altogether different from wounded vanity.'

(Carried *nemine contradicente.)*

'But there *is* keeping up an appearance. That *is* a duty to oneself. Even in the past - Even before the newspaper and the camera abolished ordinary privacy... The world dressed up... Why did it dress up? Because dressing is a method of expression, a statement we make. It is a reassurance. It is a claim... What are crowns? What are robes? What is the wig of a judge? The robe of a priest? Or any sort of ceremony? With any but the lowest barbarians, a man who wishes to influence the crowd, win the attention of the crowd, must separate himself from the crowd - in some fashion. He owes it to the crowd itself. He must define himself. He must make his singularity clear. *Now* with our vast hurrying multitudes this is more than ever urgent. It has to be done. The pose. The difference.'

'But couldn't one write just for oneself?'

'Then why write it down?'

'Or for a select circle of readers?'

'Oddly enough — no. Writing is an appeal. Always. Its objective is attention. You want to be read by every possible congenial reader in the world. I don't argue whether it should or should not be like that, but that is in the nature of writing. At any rate that is the nature of *my* writing.'

'I suppose it is like that. I never thought.'

'No.'

But now the tide of thought was rising.

'I suppose, after all, the life of man with a public is only an exaggeration of the life of every one who lives among his fellows. Nobody simply *is.* Every one *presents* himself. Behaviour isn't what springs from oneself. It is what we allow ourselves to do. It may be

the direct antagonist of impulse. We stand behind ourselves and pull the strings. Consider - the extremest cases — our public characters. Our statesmen. Every one of them is really a vast cartoon, a mask — almost like a carnival mask. With them the thing assumes gigantic proportions. But every one who lives in the public eye, every one indeed who passes even for a moment across the public scene, is really an effigy, a frontage, a deliberate misrepresentation. And if you cannot make an emphatic personage of yourself, hard, bright-coloured, and distinctive, you will not hold it, you will be swept away into the undistinguished crowd, disregarded, forgotten.'

'The whole world a masquerade,' said his wife. 'I have never realized—'

'A vast tumultuous masquerade, a clamour for attention. Even the common crowd have their cheap common masks and thrust them at one another. I see it all plainly now. Now that my public mask has been damaged, distorted, broken. I had my place on the car of critical thought - my essays, my poems. I cut the figure, as they say. Not so bad a figure. And now I've just tumbled off the car and these jokers have clapped an ugly visor of fun upon me...'

'Darling it isn't so bad as that! Really it isn't!'

'Let me go on with my image. It does me good to expand the facts. There's real truth in it, and if I blow out my trouble like a bladder I shall presently be able to burst it, it will shrivel to nothing. Come to think of it, Bryn, no one has ever really *seen* a human being. No human beings have ever really seen themselves. They tell themselves stories about themselves. They pose and act. They tell stories about themselves to other people. Life is a battle of make-believe, a universal bluff. Only in the shock of some violent self-contradiction do we get a glimpse of the truth. So - There we are.'

He stopped abruptly.

'Darling,' she ventured, 'I'm sure it's done you good to say all that.'

'It wasn't bad of you to listen.'

She decided to sit on the arm of his chair. 'Poor busy little head,' she said, and kissed his forehead. 'It doesn't taste a bit like cardboard.'

He pretended to be still deep with thought.

‘I will do something about it in the morning,’ he promised himself.

‘Bryn,’ he said, ‘you’re pretty good for me. It would be awful to get up for this sort of thing and have to face it alone.’

She rested her cheek against his forehead for a moment. He put his arm about her and looked up at her almost shyly.

‘I’ll come up with you and smooth your pillow and uncrumple your sheets and put you to sleep,’ she said, as if in answer to a question.

3

He went to sleep as soon as she left him.

But Mrs Palace slept no more that night. This nocturnal soothing always left her restless and active-minded. She found something between a memory of his talk and a dream procession going through her head. It was a parade of the world, she saw, the world of mankind wearing artificial faces, artificial bodies, on stilts and crutches and floats, mounted on horses, which themselves were caparisoned. All sorts of familiar people went by - and their faces were masks and never before had she seen that they were masks. The servants, the tradesmen’s boys, her mother and father, her school teachers, every one she had taken for granted and believed in. Obviously masks. And pervading this spectacle was a strange, vast apprehension. Something was going to happen. Suddenly there was to be a miracle and the whole world would be stripped bare in a second. Every one would cease to pose, cease to behave. They would be instantaneously aware of the futility of conducting themselves.

Suppose all the trappings and behavings set aside, what sort of things would run out? What sort of queer creatures would come snarling out or scuttle for shelter?

Then from the general she came to the particular. What was there hiding behind that fine arras of kindly gentility, that clean, semi-athletic, cultured critic of life, Mr Rowland Palace? What was he really?

And what if presently she began to turn round and look for her own unmasked self? Not that, according to this new view of life, it

seemed wise or necessary to turn one's attention that way. But if she wasn't really the honest, fairly sane and presentable young woman who for the last few years had been doing her duty (and on the whole liking it fairly well) by a fitful, sensitive, distinguished author - though she was beginning to think she would have preferred to have started a family three or four years ago - what on earth might she not be?

And so the rediscovery by Mr Rowland Palace of Schopenhauer's realization of the importance of Show (*Vorstellung*) sent him and his wife off in diametrically opposite directions, for while it started him upon the idea of the extreme importance of enlarging and strengthening the facade he presented to the world, a facade obviously perilously vulnerable at present, it sent her inquiring into all the neglected possibilities that might be pining and fretting behind the facade she had hitherto unquestioningly supposed to be herself.

CHAPTER THREE

The World Begins Every Morning

After Mr Rowland Palace had relieved his mind by talking, he was apt to forget much of what he had said. He rose late next day and it was only as he shaved that, with an effect of extreme novelty and detachment, the idea that all conscious life is masquerade, returned to him. Then for some seconds he paused, a lathered man on the left-hand side of his face and a smooth new-born Rowland on the right, uncertain whether he had been visited by a profound discovery or a fantastic dream. He looked himself in the eyes, questioning how much of his overnight activities was now eluding him. Not the faintest shade of the nocturnal despair that had coloured his memory of those Druidical snapshots remained. He saw them now as the repercussion of a slight tactical blunder, that ruffled but could not reverse the general strategy of his life, a mere incident, controllable and reparable.

As every military man knows, the brightest of opportunities may be revealed by a reparable blunder.

When he came down his wife had breakfasted and was sitting at the little desk between the fireplace and window, from which she directed her household. The shade of sympathetic anxiety in her eyes vanished at the sight of his general pinkness. She kissed him, considered him for a moment and rang for fresh toast.

He did not immediately open the plump bundle of press-cuttings among his letters and when he did, he did so with no apparent distaste.

His words when he spoke astonished her. ‘Not so bad,’ he said.

‘I’ve seen none of them,’ she said, and came round behind him.

‘This one in profile.’

He was always at his best in profile because then one did not get a certain inequality of his eyes, which made one of them seem always just a little astonished at and inclined to protest against its fellow. It was quite a large picture form the *World Made Visible* that he held out to her. It formed part of the double page called ‘In the Public

Eye'. She saw him robed and garlanded and looking silly — but amiably silly. He was bending forward to give the prize to the village maiden, who regarded him with unquestionable awe. The letterpress said 'The Critic turns Bard'.

Mrs Palace ran her eye over the rest of the cuttings. There were no other pictures. 'The thing's dying out,' she said.

'Yes,' he said slowly, finished his tea and took up the picture again. 'Yes.'

He got up, still holding the illustrated cutting and straddled the hearthrug. 'Now if *that* had gone to the Oxford and Cambridge papers, it wouldn't have mattered so much. They could have stood that.'

'Rowly,' she asked, 'why do you think so much of undergraduates?'

'Every writer in his sense writes for undergraduates. Using the word for practically all the adolescents who read books. The clerk, the shopman, the young miner, and so on are just donless undergraduates nowadays. They read the same stuff, they talk the same stuff. Real social differences disappear. A few dons more or less and a little disregarded Gothic, don't matter. What's the Backs? What's Magdalen tower? Just scenery. Inside they are all the same now, Cambridge or Camberwell. And these undergraduates, donned and donless, are the *living core* of the public. Nothing else matters.'

'But - real undergraduates are so *silly!* They're sillier than young girls.'

'Possibly. Softer anyhow. They take impressions very readily and then they grow up very fast. They get beefy. Voices deepen. Self-confidence. Whiskers. And it's all over. Plasticity has ended. The print is there for life. What undergraduates think today, the world thinks tomorrow. You can mould undergraduates. You can put things over on them and push their minds about. They resent it very quickly if they see you at it, but it has to happen to them. Somebody gets them. They can't think alone. You can't push adult minds about. Adults have *set.* They resist. Print yourself on minds between seventeen and three-and-twenty, Bryn - and the rest you need not bother about. Either you've won them or lost them. The fear of the undergraduates is the beginning of fame. For a writer. For a

politician.'

He put the picture-cutting on the table before him where he could see it, took the tobacco-jar from the mantelshelf and began to fill his pipe. Mrs Palace rang for the girl to clear away and returned to her accounts. Her husband smoked and reflected.

Presently he tried over a few propositions.

'The undergraduate is soft-witted and yet dangerous. He is as suspicious as a nervous dog. He is resolved that nobody shall make a fool of him. He longs to do brave things. You must keep your facade towards him *always.* Once he gets a glimpse of something soft and sensitive behind it — his mouth waters - he bites! That was what I feared about this Druid business. Why I took it so seriously. I seemed to be showing my unprotected pants. The contempt of the undergraduate when he thinks he sees round you is implacable. And the more idiotic it is the more implacable it is... But with that last picture now — I could get past them.'

Mrs Palace had one ear for him, and thrice she added up the butcher's bill and got a different result. Then she left the question of the butcher altogether and stared at this remarkable husband of hers. She was trying to match him with the sensitive, suffering, indistinctly grateful thing she had parted from in the night.

She looked at the cutting on the table and then back at his face.

2

'Why *not* a touch of geniality, Bryn? Why *not* a touch of geniality? I've long had an idea that the impression I made on people was a little cold and stiff. One shouldn't be too aloof. You see - the way this little affair at Canham was taken up... It looks as if they didn't quite like me - as if they had been waiting for some slip on my part... Growing inpatient... It hasn't been like that before.'

He was now quite evidently talking to himself. 'Suppose one had a personality — a public personality — that *included* slips of this sort. If one were known to be a little careless...

'In the end they might like one better.'

He seemed to become faintly aware of his wife again.

'There's a sort of turning-point in the literary life, Bryn — in our

world. A change of phase. To begin with, one, *oneself,* is an undergraduate. One is just part of the general undergraduate pack, a thing that responds easily, shouts loudly. Condemns, adheres. One is irresponsible. One says, does, or believes — anything. Nobody observes you. Nobody minds. Whatever you do is a rag and you are forgiven. "Bright boy," they remark. Then, as people say, you arrive. Almost with a jolt. It is like the sudden expansion of water when it freezes. You are *de-liquidated.* You become larger. You are looked at, judged, *placed.* That is what has happened to me. I am the least self-conscious of men, but I perceive that I have become an audible visible figure.'

'You've had press-cuttings for years,' said his wife.

'But for those cuttings I should hardly realize it now.'

She reflected and returned to the household accounts. Presently, having got a new and unprecedented total for the butcher's bill, she became aware that he was speaking again. 'Oh!' she said. 'What *is* it, dear?'

'Well — this is the point, Bryn. I have *really* arrived. I mean in a popular sense. I suppose *The Supple Willow Wand* has done it. Or a general accumulation of reputation. The world-wide distribution of these photographs shows that. We are seen. We have to be seen. We have ceased to be supers in the World Carnival. And we have to meet the occasion.'

He seemed to hesitate. She helped him with 'How?'

'Yes — how?'

She waited. She was no good at answering counter-questions. 'We have to make up our minds about the figure we mean to cut in the world. And we have to stick to that. From now on.

Otherwise these young gentlemen with the cameras and the paragraph writers and the gossip correspondents will invent something about us for themselves. And they will get us wrong. All wrong. And people will open my books in the wrong key. Almost as though each volume came out wrapped up in a more vulgarizing blurb than the last, adorned with an uglier portrait and a hostile preface. "That fellow," they will say.'

'But even if we do invent - Dearest, can't we *be* what we *are?*'

'Yes. Yes. We don't have to change. I don't mean that. But — we

have to *seem* what we are. We have to be what we are night and day. And let them into it. And see that they get it.'

'And avoid inferior intimations,' she said. 'I don't see how it can be done, darling.'

She stood up with the butcher's book in her hand. She felt it would add up quite differently in her own room. Possibly it would begin to settle down to something like a uniform total. 'I really don't see what we can do about it,' she said.

But her husband wanted to talk to her.

3

'Wait a moment, Bryn, I don't think you quite get me. No. I see what you think, of course. But simplification of behaviour isn't insincerity. I don't think it deceit to put one's cards on the table. Either we walk up to the newspaper camera and face it, or we are surprised and assassinated. That's the modern alternative. You give yourself out or you are dragged out. People want to imagine a writer while they read him. And hear about him. He owes them a good personality just as he owes them a good style. From publication to publicity is a necessary step.'

He pulled himself up in front of her. 'Well. Isn't it?' he asked. 'I'm thinking,' she said.

'Dear, I don't quite see what you are getting at. Can't one write books and still be private?'

'Not now. Not in this world of mass effects. Not if one means to influence opinion.'

'But Kipling, for instance. People heard very little about him intimately. And there's no portrait of Virginia Woolf that I know of. Elizabeth of the *German Garden* again. You never see a portrait of her or hear anything about her home or her habits.'

'Invisibility once in a way may be a sort of personality. As a matter of fact the Elizabeth books are full of personality. She is delightfully there, even if she isn't at home to photographers and callers. Once in a way you can do that. I grant you, too, that the Waverley novels were published incognito. Scott cut a bigger figure as the Great Unknown than he did at Abbotsford. But the day for that

sort of thing is past. Reputations were made then by social gossip. Not now. In these rushing times the public has no patience for masks and mysteries. If you don't give them something, they'll snatch at something. Or just rush by.'

'But Rowly, what does *giving them something* mean?'

'Choose our own battleground. Be prepared for them. Tell them to come and look when we are ready for them.'

'Interviews?'

'Possibly.'

'Anecdotes about you?'

'Look at that.' He indicated the cutting.

'Rowly,' she said. 'Does that mean you think we ought to have photographers in the house and me telling interviewers what it is like to be married to you — and things like that?'

'Not exactly *that.*'

'But something very like it,' she said. She reflected, and he saw what to his private self he called her obstinate expression, stealing over her face. She gave her decision with a gentle mulishness: 'Rowly, dear; I don't think I could stand it.'

He raised his eyebrows and shoulders and said no more and she went thoughtfully out of the room, the household books in her hand almost forgotten.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mr Rowland Palace in Search of Himself

For some days Mr Rowland Palace talked no more to his wife about this uneasy urge of his towards a planned, controlled, and effective publicity. But he was thinking with extraordinary animation, discursiveness, and abundance about it. He was indeed launched upon a very wide and congenial flow of thought. It was almost as if the dam penning up some great reservoir of imaginations had given way.

In a sense no doubt, like every rational creature that has to conduct itself, he was always thinking about himself. But like most rational self-conducting creatures the self he thought about was taken for granted in most of its details. It was apprehended superficially and habitually, but now, under this new and stimulating suggestion of putting over a personality on the world, he could yield freely to a long-restrained impulse, and think about himself amply and continually. He could wallow in his own characteristics. Instead of asking 'What shall I do?' he could vary his questions between: 'What am I? What can I be? What had I best be? What had they best think I am?' And 'How do I look to them?' and find unlimited interest in the ensuing exercises.

There had been phases in his life before when with greater or less intensity Mr Rowland Palace had been the main subject of his own attention. His great friendship with Montague Mansbridge in the last year at Shonts, had been a long orgy of mutual self-explanation, terminated only when Mansbridge, who was not only a bad letter writer but, it proved, a bad letter reader, went to the East. Palace had been head of the school and Mansbridge had been captain of games and when they talked it seemed to them that the world was like a red carpet put down before their feet. At the price of rather overrating Mansbridge he did for a while get a satisfactorily objective impression of himself. And there had been the time of his engagement to Brynhild and their honeymoon.

That had happened when Rowland was thirty-two and Bryn was twenty. At the university he had had literary associates but no close friends, and still less had there been scope for the exploration of his ego when he returned from Cambridge to teach history and English in Shonts and develop the literary career that had been opened so auspiciously with *Bent Oars.* The feeling of his colleagues there had been against any accentuation of personality and the games master said openly that it was *infra dig* for a teacher of literature to 'publish things'. The atmosphere of Shonts was full of that menacing modesty that so well becomes an Englishman. He had been forced back upon himself and upon the ironical style. He realized now for the first time that perhaps irony was not really his quality.

Then had come growing success, the unexpected death in an automobile accident, of a tough rich aunt godmother, twenty years before her time, the consequent release from the assistant-mastership at Shonts and his meeting with his distant cousin Brynhild with the dark eyes. Both were stimulatingly unrich but well provided for and they were both reasonably addicted to tennis, boating, and mountain climbing. She was the daughter of a country rector who had been a great classic and had not so much educated her as made up his old classical clothing for her mind to wear. It fitted very loosely but it kept her out of contact with vulgar ideas. Six terms at the celebrated High-farthing school after his death had affected his influence very little. He had done his utmost to impress upon her that there was something contemptibly unscholarly and inaccurate about most contemporary things and that though sin was highly reprehensible, meanness and mental disingenuousness were far more hateful to both God and man. One was in the world, of course, but that was no reason why one should mix oneself up with it in an indiscriminating way. She grew up reserved, but not shy, a good listener and anxious to learn. She had an air of being taken by surprise by the human spectacle and wanting to know what it was about as it thrust itself upon her. She was the sort of young woman who does not like dogs.

Palace's literary prestige impressed her greatly, and on their honeymoon, loitering and rambling in the Bernese Alps and over the Theodule, he opened his heart to her about himself - and life generally - and his ambitions and how he was almost in spite of

himself an intellectual liberator. He was a good enough lover to tell her continually how lovely she was, and he said she was as simple as dawning and direct as the flight of an arrow. His own much more complicated make-up was consequently the main substance of his discourse.

He was not always easy to follow and sometimes the old habit of irony asserted itself. She loved to hear him talk in those days, she had never met any one so clever or any one who stretched her mind so much since her father died, she followed his words intently and remembered them all, but at times she found it difficult to say quite the right thing in reply.

One day they were sitting on a low wall near one of those sanctuaries at Orta. He sat with his back to the figures and talked about his influence in the world. He said he wanted to release people. That was his aim.

'Release from what?'

'From all the clotted nonsense, new and old, in which they are — embedded.'

'And, dearest, what *then?*'

It seemed natural enough to ask that. She looked at him expectantly but all he did was to frown slightly and wave an arm.

'What *would* you?' he asked.

'But what would you?' she countered.

'Art, freedom, a sufficient life.'

Was he embarrassed at expounding the obvious or was he evading the inexplicable? Art, freedom, a sufficient life? She felt, but she did not know how to say, that these words meant nothing until they were defined. But her mind suddenly bristled with questions like a hedgehog's quills. And as immediately it came to her that not a single quill could be shot at him profitably. What was this 'art', what was this 'freedom', what was this 'sufficient life' that justified his widespread scorn for the rest of humanity and in particular the rest of humanity which wrote and practised the arts? She had better not ask it. Somehow it wasn't the time. And yet there she was thinking it. This realization gave her her first twinge of disloyalty.

Her dream had been of two lovers living a life of perfect candour. Was she now holding back her questions because she was not clever

enough to put them, or was she holding them back because he might think the answers would be too subtle for her capacity? And she hardly dared think that these two alternatives did not by any means exhaust the possibility of the situation. She hardly dared think that perhaps he would just throw his arms and his phrases about with an increasing irritation in his voice.

She awoke one night and he was sleeping with his cheek touching her shoulder. How dear he was and how manly! Maybe imperfection is a part of manliness. What a wonderful abundant realization of life this love in marriage was, this intensive exploration of personality into which one flowed and which flowed into one. It was like going through a vast gift mansion of treasures and discovering unsuspected rooms and corridors of quaint and amusing things. He had some quite endearing absurdities and appealing defects she had never anticipated. And then came the thought that all of that content was not at the same level of dearness. Down some of the passages the exhibits were not quite - not *quite* - of the same quality. There were traits that it was not pure joy to discover. She lay very still and tried to think exclusively of a thousand lovely things that had come to her in the past few weeks, lovely things she had been able to get out of it all, in order to banish the disagreeable realization that was taking hold of her that in certain respects she was becoming distinctly critical of him. She was holding back insidious realizations. As, for instance, that his voice had just a shade of needlessly aggressive defiance in it, that he pitched it too high and his face a little too high when he delivered it, and indulged too frequently in weak, fastidious gestures of the hands. And that he was apt to interrupt and override her remarks when they attempted to deflect him into elucidation. And that nearly all his discourse was deprecatory. For him even the Alps never rose to their highest, and generally he thought the sun might have set with a better grace.

No. It wasn't like that. It couldn't be like that.

Should young lovers be critical of each other? It was human to be imperfect. It was lovable to be as absurdly exacting with life as he was.

Something brought Milton's 'safest and seemliest by her husband stays' across her drowsy mind; there was a certain disloyalty in

wandering away from him even in her thoughts. She must stop this thinking. She stirred about and withdrew her shoulder and woke Rowly up and kissed him.

And one day they were out among the reeds upon the lake in a canopied boat. They had swum and lunched and been everything to each other that lovers should be. Then, wrapped only in a towel and smoking an indolent cigarette, she did her best to broach the gist of her private trouble and abolish the rising barrier of reserve on her part that threatened their perfect intimacy.

'Darling,' she said, 'one can be too critical, don't you think? Too soon, too often, and too much.'

She was thinking simply of this queer new uncontrollable disposition of her awakening mind to criticize him and note points against him, but the one face that leapt up in him to meet her observation was that his published essays were saturated with the critical spirit.

'My dear Bryn,' he protested, 'criticism is the touchstone of life. I could not love thee half as much, loved I not criticism more. I couldn't appreciate your loveliness if I didn't know acutely what Bad is.'

'But between friends and lovers?'

'I've said it.'

He didn't see, she realized, which way the point was turned. 'But suppose suddenly I began finding fault with *you?*'

He let that slip by him.

'How can one find perfection if one can't find fault?'

She looked at his remark for some moments. It seemed to have got loose from some other discussion. She just stared at him. When he found she had nothing more to say he stared back between interrogation and surprise.

'Things are so difficult to say,' she apologized at last. She felt she was being very stupid.

'Maybe I've been rhetorical at times,' he tried. 'But do you find, dear, that on the whole my intelligence seems over-critical? Is that what you mean?'

It wasn't at all what she had meant. But she felt she could never get back to that original intention and so she went on with the new

thread.

‘Darling, I know so little. There’s all sorts of things that you don’t say because probably you think I know all about them. You don’t know how many backward people like me there are in the world. So you seem to be condemning. Very often you seem to be condemning. Just condemning. When really, if I knew your standards, I should understand why you look down on so many people.’

‘You mean I look down on too many people?’

‘You have a right to look down on them.’

He surveyed her lovely pose of stark inquiry. It was almost as though she had caught his weapon of irony and turned it against him. But there was nothing but receptive simplicity in her eyes.

‘Well, *haven’t* you?’ she said very simply and earnestly.

‘Haven’t *we?*’

She detached herself. ‘I’m nothing.’

Something like a metal bar seemed to him to fall between them. He looked away from her across the lake to where the little town basked on its island. ‘I suppose I am preposterous,’ he said, and something seemed to go out of the sunlight.

A faint resentment came into his voice. ‘I suppose it is preposterous to regret the common things of life; their limitations, compromises, desolating self-sufficiency... There is striving behind every scorn... Rejection of the second best... Am I nothing more than bitter-tongued? Maybe. I thought you understood me better, Bryn. Perhaps I don’t even understand myself... The haunting impalpable presence of an infinite desire.’

He stopped. She was soundless. She might not have been there. He turned from the lake and looked at her. Her expression was earnest and her lips were silently repeating those last words. She was committing them to memory, she was taking them down for later examination, she was going off with them to gnaw them in quiet.

And immediately he knew that they were - innutritious.

Then it was for the first time that it dawned upon Rowland Palace that there was something obtuse about his lovely Brynhild, that the peculiar quality needed to understand him was lacking in her. She didn’t quite know how to take things like that. She was joining up one thing he said with another and keeping an account for reference.

He did not want her to remember; he wanted her to sympathize and accept. And pass on. He had been too careless with her, too lavishly open. Against her too, against her literal seriousness, her meticulous interrogativeness, he must protect his soul. And in this fashion it was that his second great flow of self-expression turned to ebb. Again he began to fall back into the solitude of his inner self. And upon the distractions of work and events.

Which did not prevent their being quite happy lovers and tourists throughout that honeymoon. He was the best of company now that self-revelation was ebbing. He attempted less and less talk about the inner significance of love, and there was a truce to mutual criticism. His ironies and comments on contemporary things diminished. The thoughts of Brynhild remained as deep and unfathomable as the depths of her dark eyes. They were as shapeless even to her as things peered at in an overshadowed pool. Only slowly did she realize that for her also Rowland was becoming self-protective and ironical and that her beautiful dream of a limitless mutual explicitness was fading away.

2

So in this third expedition of Mr Rowland Palace in search of his hidden self which we are now recording, Brynhild had no place. Indeed, her mere presence was sufficient to arrest the pursuit altogether.

He had tried to break down his immense reserves and produce a real self for his friend Mansbridge. And Mansbridge had never really answered his letters. He had tried again to produce a hidden self for Brynhild and she had betrayed — to his sensitive observation at least, she had betrayed - a critical searching curiosity about the solidity of that hidden self of his. He had recoiled before the mute questions in her eyes. She had made him doubt even himself. Now like a great light breaking in upon him had come this realization that the time for the long-deferred disrobing of his ironies and disbeliefs had arrived. The egg-shell of negation had been tapped by those photographers and he had to come forth of his own accord or be for ever made ridiculous.

He was proposing to release a new and more intimate self, not now to any single person but to an indefinite public; he was going to ask for understanding from the unknown. The mistake hitherto had been to look to single individuals as the mirrors in which the self was to be discovered and seen. It was to a public he must address himself.

Much of Mr Rowland Palace's meditations upon his definitive self was conducted that May in the gardens of the Royal Botanical Society in Regent's Park. In those days the Inner Circle was still cut off from public intrusion, a pleasant rather untidy arrangement of glass-houses, lawns, shrubs, flower-beds, and ornamental water which might have been a hundred miles from London for any sign of town or population at hand. One felt like the house guest at some country seat. It was very peaceful and delightful for every one who subscribed to the society.

Some of his thinking he did in his study or in bed at nights. He was a fellow of the Zoological Society, but he went there more rarely because of the greater distance from his house in Gloucester Place, and for any one gathering ideas about a true self he found the Zoo almost too suggestive. Many of the higher animals, he perceived, were acutely self-conscious. The lions posed, the wolves would not meet his eye, the howler showed off, the mandrill was as frankly self-revelatory as any modern author. Such beasts are in a society of their own imagining. But the ducks and gulls and the reptiles seemed still in the age of innocence, unaware that there could be anything to conceal or exhibit or explain.

Now as soon as Rowland Palace was fairly launched upon the flood of self-investigation and self-construction, he found himself in trouble with something that had always been lying in wait for him since those impalpable honeymoon discordances. It was not an accusation Brynhild had levelled at him. It was not that she had ever done more than seemed to imply. And yet he was as convinced that she thought it, as if since those first weeks together she had not only maintained the completest disbelief in him but reminded him of it continually. He had nothing to go upon for this but the merest shadow of a suggestion in a careless phrase, and something that looked out at him ever and again from her candid and yet mysterious eyes.

He had indeed thought this thing *for* her, made it hers in his mind, and worn it like a tender place that must not be touched too closely, through nine years of marriage. Now, if he was to go out into the open before his public, he would have to come to some decision about their unformulated discordance.

This deterrent idea which had barred him from the pleasures of unrestrained Narcissism for nearly a decade and kept him on the rails of objective irony, was this, that it is unjustifiable to despise or belittle anything in the world unless one has a definite conception of something better. And that, save for a few phrases and mere emotional gestures, he had nothing whatever to set against the poor commonly accepted things he battered. He was recognized as a 'liberating' writer. 'Liberation,' asked the disturbing inner questioner who bore the face of Brynhild, 'for what?'

'For what?' he said aloud in the brightness of the after-glow, watching a dabchick lead a trail of diminutive offspring across the shining water towards a headland of reeds.

'I know. As a Christian devotee knows his God. But how to make *them* know? How to convince them that I am not merely hollow — a hollow resonance making rebellious noises?'

He found a good phrase.

'You can't invite inspectors into the Holy of Holies...'

That beautiful pellucid evening glowered with acceptance, everything was magically real, and that seemed a very satisfactory and restful conclusion to the matter.

But that evening he went round with Brynhild to the Oscar Gecks' to dine, and as he sat over the coffee with two other men he asked suddenly: 'I wonder if Ever there was Anything in the Holy of Holies?'

3

One of the men was historical and archaeological, but Oscar Geck was nearer Palace's point. 'You think that maybe there is nothing at the heart of things?'

'The general idea,' said the historian, 'has been that God is at the heart of things.'

‘For endless people nowadays,’ said Geck, ‘God is merely a title conferred on nothing. The modern God cannot move because he is omnipresent, cannot think because he is omniscient, cannot act because he is outside time and eternal and omnipotent, while action can only go on in time against resistance. Logic has blown him out like a soap-bubble until he has no substance left at all.’

‘And when you have abolished God by intellectual wind,’ said Palace, ‘still he is there. At the heart of things. Still there is Beauty. Still there is a living judge who makes some values immeasurably greater than others.’

‘Are you so sure that’s not in yourself?’ asked Geck.

‘Does it matter where it is?’ said Palace.

The historian made an irrevelant remark. ‘I am like a palaeontologist who cannot deal with life until it is reduced to dead bones. I deal with the remains of dead gods. Cathedrals, mosques, a coral reef of temples, religious wars. I cannot deal with living gods or gods alleged to be living. They are not history. Sometimes I feel that this modern God of yours is so impalpable that he will leave nothing whatever behind to fossilize. Which will make the religious history of the period very difficult when it comes to be written...’

He went his way for some five minutes of talk and then died out. Oscar Geck suggested they should go upstairs, and Mr Palace’s Holy of Holies remained obscure.

4

He found himself discussing his Holy of Holies with the tree shadows on his ceiling in the middle of the night.

‘It is plain I am a Mystic,’ he said.

‘The spirit of the Innermost, the spirit of *my* innermost, can only be known by its outer manifestations. Demigods are the facets of God. I believe in Beethoven, Mozart, Leonardo da Vinci... Shakespeare. There is an inner light that recognizes the divine.

‘The divine is hieratic. Behind the great Demigods are the lesser Gods. And Angels. Angels... I am becoming Swedenborgian.’

He dozed pleasantly through a dream of tiers above tiers of exalted beings. Very Swedenborgian indeed, circle above circle. He

also had his place in one of these tiers serving the ineffable, the transcendent, the ultimate beauty. He found himself murmuring 'Metaphorical. All thought is metaphor.'

Sleep obliterated him for an unmarked period of minutes and when he was awake again a slanting bar of moonlight leant against the north-west wall of his room. It had not been there before.

'Mystics cannot explain. Mystics cannot be called upon to explain. But nevertheless they can have the clearest sense of values. They are not merely justified in condemning and deprecating certain things; it is their duty. To some of us is given the spear of Ithuriel.'

The run of phrases in his mind became abruptly audible. 'And that is where *I* come in,' he said aloud.

He was now wide awake. He sat up in bed with a sense of complete *eclaircissement.*

He was one of the great company that served the supreme mystery. Some had to make and create; there were infinite varieties of service, but his role was clearly to wield the spear of Ithuriel. And somehow it had to be made evident to the great public that that was what he amounted to.

Of this fundamental rightness of his life he was not perhaps explicitly sure but he was mystically sure. Which is on the whole a far securer defensive certainty.

And now having found his essential self and his essential function and defeated and dismissed that long rankling doubt, that nine-year-old doubt, about his fundamental self, having assured himself that at heart he was not practically empty and envious but mystically full, he could deal with the problem of putting himself over to the public with a steadfast and confident mind.

It was admitted that he had been doing that part of his Ithuriel business negligently. At the proper time Ithuriel should come out commandingly, not lurk for ever among the shrubs. He had kept up his reserve too long. He had incurred the suspicion of being a Superior Person, supercilious, precious, loftily genteel, a Prig. He had to give that figure warmth and colour before it was too late. He had to become a character. That maypole day at Canham had been not a disaster but a saving shock. One of the photographs he had realized had not been so bad. It had set the key for what he had to do.

He had to make it plain that he was not high and disdainful but sympathetic and jolly — as he felt sure he really was. He had to smile spontaneously; laugh aloud, bring his ironies into the thick of things. ‘Rowland Palace; the Second Phase.’

He had as a matter of fact been changing very profoundly during the last decade. It was not a thing he admitted freely even to himself, but his youth had been a *timid* youth. It was just because he was generally timid that he had developed a certain aggressive vigour in his writing. None so poor that cannot swagger at a writing-desk. A sheet of paper is your faithful partisan and the ink in a fountain-pen, however much it may clog or blot, never blanches.

But success had given him courage, his marriage, too, had given him a certain courage with people. Though Bryn baffled him, it was very plain she loved him. His looks and bearing had improved with her approval. He had become something of a talker at lunches and dinners, and more particularly when Bryn was out of earshot. He had found out that all women did not regard him with eyes in which affectionate scepticism was becoming more and more apparent. There was an offhand easiness of understanding about women like Lady Burnish and Lady Cytherea. They did not consider his good things suspiciously; they swallowed them whole.

He was developing a discursive liking for women. He was the sort of man who would rather talk to any woman not absolutely obese or ugly or decrepit than to any man. They were responsive.

A few little things had happened. Going downstairs on Sunday night at Empton Lodge a tall and extremely good-looking housemaid had passed him on the stairs and looked at him with, he fancied, exceptional intentness. On the landing he had glanced back to verify this odd impression and she had paused above and was standing looking down at him. There was an instant of still frankness and she turned away and he went on down. She never appeared again. It meant nothing. It meant everything.

Then when he loitered behind the house-party that was being taken round the great gardens of Hangar Hoe, to show Miss Sheila Dalrymple how quaint the infloresence of a moss could look through a pocket lens, and just for a moment her eyelash brushed his cheek — lingeringly. His heart stopped for a moment. ‘Never anything so

lovely,' he said, and except for a roguish smile from her at the station on Monday morning that was all.

But the moment when he went out on the balcony with the tall dark Miss Gambard, the elder one, after the second act of *Tristan,* was more wonderful still. For she looked at him in a mutuality of appreciative exaltation and kissed him there and then. Just that. Not a word. A stillness and they went in again.

Such little things confirm a man.

But an increasing appreciation of variety in women did not withdraw him from association with men; it invigorated his association with men. He found it was no longer necessary to fend them off with an enigmatical shy haughtiness. He could take and give. He had joined the Thespian Club and in the smoking-room he would twit and be twitted.

So this new Rowland Palace he felt he was now capable of releasing for the Market Place of life, was shaping as an altogether more human, smiling, kinky, playful fellow, broader, larger, more various and unexpected, stabbing his victims as though he loved them, then the quiet, aloof, but just a trifle adolescent figure with the curling lip that had hitherto stood in the shop window.

Mr Palace was filling out.

'A touch of the Anatolian,' he said, with France rather than Nearer Asia in his mind.

'That's what I am,' he said. 'That's what I am *as I ripen.*'

And then turning to the actual business of putting it over: 'It has to be done properly.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Elements of the Science and Art of Publicity

It had to be done properly. It had to be done without Brynhild knowing anything about it. Because if once he knew that she knew that he had the deliberate intention of making a public figure of himself, more explicit to the public than he was to her, then without a word, without a gesture, his intention would collapse. She was a difficult wife, though she did not mean to be. She was often totally unaware of the wordless things she said to him, of the initiatives she killed. And over and above her obstruction, he had as yet only the faintest idea how to set about this business of self-exposure.

He felt he had to go warily, taking soundings, charting these intricate and dangerous channels that led at last to the public recognition of an established personality. He must get people who knew about this sort of thing to talk to him and show him the ropes.

He began with Desmond Blatch, his agent.

Desmond Blatch suggested a streaky blend of family solicitor with a commercial traveller in fancy foods, and sometimes the family solicitor stuff was on the surface and sometimes the drummer swirled up. When he was talking strict business he kept his glasses on; when he talked art they immediately fell off and he used them as a baton to conduct his conversation. He had an imposing office to justify a uniform ten per cent and its walls were hung with signed enlargements of all that was prominent and successful in contemporary literature.

'I was in the Strand and it occurred to me — as I had a quarter of an hour or so free — to drop in and hear how things are going with me,' said Mr Palace.

There was a pause. 'How *are* they going?' asked Mr Palace.

'Steadily,' said Mr Blatch, 'steadily. How is the — the new work —— going on?'

'*Which* new work?'

'The - er — the novel.'

'They were both novels I had in mind.'

‘Of course,’ said Mr Blatch, making his glasses flash intelligently. ‘I understand that. And I may say that I have one or two developments... Preparatory work... But I hope to be able to put something like a firm proposal before you very soon. From an unexpected quarter. That I think you will find attractive — to say the least of it.’

‘It wasn’t *offers* I had in mind,’ said Mr Palace.

Mr Blatch became silently interrogative.

‘At least not today. No. It’s the question of my position, my attitude generally, *vis-a-vis* with the public. It seemed to me — as I was passing... Well, an agent isn’t merely a haggler for prices.’

‘Oh, no.’

‘Shouldn’t be.’

Mr Blatch tried to keep touch. ‘One has to think of all sorts of —— collateral — considerations.’

‘Exactly. For instance, the general growth and one’s reputation. The role of criticism, rumour, anecdote...’

‘I watch it,’ Mr Blatch asserted in a voice that wasn’t quite assured as it might be. ‘I watch it.’

‘You have press-cutting, I presume?’

‘Generally - about *all* my authors,’ said Mr Blatch, having difficulties with his glasses. They fell off suddenly. He ended with a flourish of them to show the comprehensiveness of his ‘generally’.

‘Yes — but nowadays...’ Mr Palace hung fire for a moment and then came to it abruptly. ‘Is that enough?’

He expanded. ‘Times have changed. In the past, in the time of Dickens and Thackeray and Longfellow and Tennyson and so forth - it was a simple, steadfast, unencumbered world. There was a definite reading public, a compact world of criticism. It was a room, a large room but not an overwhelming room, full of similarly cultivated people into which the author came. He made his bow. He was introduced. That was all. After all, I suppose the original literary agent - by the by, who w*as* the original literary agent?’

‘A P Watt — a friend of Walter Besant and Wilkie Collins and James Payn.’

‘Yes. Well, I suppose all he had to do was to sell novels and serial rights?’

‘Practically that was all.’

‘And that only in Great Britain?’

‘There was no American copyright.’

‘America did not matter.’

Mr Blatch threw something of the wonder of life’s changes into his voice. ‘America,’ he echoed, ‘did not matter.’

‘*Now,*’ said Mr Palace, and his gesture made the contrast.

‘Nowadays,’ he expanded, ‘I observe that the simple straightforward relationship of author, buyers of books and library subscribers, has swollen and blossomed out and branched and divided. There is no longer a reading public; there are innumerable little transitory reading publics. They come and go. They are attracted with more difficulty, they forget more readily, and they misunderstand - swiftly.’

Mr Blatch wondering more and more what Mr Palace was driving at, tightened his lips, nodded his head, and replaced his glasses.

‘A reputation in the old days was made - for good,’ said Mr Palace. ‘You were labelled. And there you were.’

‘Perfectly true,’ said Mr Blatch. ‘Perfectly true. There you were.’

‘But now,’ said Mr Palace, ‘a personal reputation is infinitely more exposed and precarious; it has to be sown, watched, fostered, protected from wilting, protected from parasites and enemies of all sorts, developed, guarded, magnified. What are you doing for my reputation, Blatch? What idea have you of me? What, so to speak, is the Rowland Palace idea? What is the idea you are — what is the expression? — putting over on them on my behalf?’

‘A very good reputation,’ said Mr Blatch. ‘A steadily growing reputation.’

As what?’

Mr Blatch felt he was undergoing a cross-examination that might become hostile. He had to develop his line of defence quickly. He had been leaning back in his chair. Now he sat up, handled papers on his desk and looked steadfastly at Mr Palace.

‘The best of all reputations, the reputation of being *a better seller every time.*’

‘You miss my point,’ said Mr Palace.

‘No,’ said Mr Blatch, ‘I don’t miss your point. But I know where

my business begins and ends. I am not agent between author and public. I am agent between author and editor, author and publisher, author and producer.'

'But *they* have to have a conception of me!'

'As a producer of saleable goods.'

'But that is dependent on what the public thinks of me. So *you* have to have an idea of what idea the publisher has of the idea of me that the public has.' Mr Blatch frowned with mental effort. 'And all these ideas, mind you,' pressed Mr Palace, 'based in the last resort on one's reputation with the public or with some section of the public, are, I suggest, notions that can be made, sustained, damaged, improved...'

Mr Palace threw up a hand of lively fingers, to express the variegated activities of reputation-making.

Mr Blatch felt that the time had come to escape from this issue by a little confusing talk. Mr Palace had to be distracted from himself.

'I don't know whether *every* literary reputation isn't ultimately an Act of God,' said Mr Blatch. 'I think you are inclined to stress its artificiality.' His eyes searched for something on his spacious desk and he lifted up a little volume in an unwholesome-looking mauve and blue wrapper. 'Here, for instance, is Phyllis Pelmet. God alone knows how this book of hers came to sell - but it sells like hot cakes. It goes on selling. She knew no one. She had no introductions. Batley thought he wouldn't sell two thousand of her. It just happens. Old Schroederer has her. A thousand in advance. It's a good spring for Phyllis Pelmet just as it may be a good spring for bluebells. Are you a gardener, Mr Palace? One year the bluebells make a delightful patch under your beech-trees; the next they are noxious weeds swarming all over your flower-beds. And nobody knows why.'

'People in your position ought to know,' said Mr Palace harshly. 'Some day some one will.'

'I doubt it,' said Mr Blatch.

'And what I am talking about is not these - these spasmodic sales. Your Phyllis Pelmets are here today and gone tomorrow. They are daily-paper reputations. People of that sort are like the last murderess or the new boy golfer. *I* am talking about the establishment of a permanent reputation, of the way in which some men and women

seem to loom larger and root deeper with the years.'

'Ah, *that!*' said Mr Blatch, and dropped and waved his glasses. 'Quality, abundance, a continual freshness. That sort of thing makes me a bit of a mystic. It transcends business. You have to be always the same and always novel, give 'em exactly what they expect — with a little touch of surprise each time. But that, you know, is something innate. No man, as the Bible puts it, by taking thought can add an inch to his reputation. No. And is that kind of thing going on now, as it used to go on? Maybe there are not going to be many more Great Names at all. Do you ever, in your leisure nowadays, do any literary criticism? Apart from the Phyllis Pelmets and that sort of — well - *epidemic,* do you ever see any one really coming along? Some one with staying power?'

Mr Palace appeared to reflect, and shook his head. He was not in the least interested in any one who might be coming along except himself.

'This new man Alfred Bunter, for instance. Is *he* going to last?'

'I've never read a line of him. They say he has a sort of rude vigour. It's not for me to judge.'

'I see his name in the advertisements. *He* certainly gets advertised.'

'And sold. He sells well.'

'Every time?'

'So far.'

'I don't know anything at all about this Alfred Bunter, but you must allow me to believe that nowadays, just as formerly, Great Names — names as relatively great as those of Scott and Dickens and Tolstoy in the past - will still emerge. Only you see, my dear Blatch, and that brings me to what I have in mind, the scale of operations is different and the operations have to be more designed, more complicated, more broadly planned. There's the straddle of Britain and America, for example...'

'You might lecture over there.'

'The travelling salesman of one's own goods.'

'Bunter is going to lecture. It needn't be just ordinary lecturing.'

'I don't see that Bunter supplies any precedent for me.'

'He shows himself about. You know, Mr Palace, the real maker of

an author's personality is the author himself. An agent cannot create that for him.'

'Ah, now we come to grips. The agent cannot fabricate a personality — I agree. But the agent can seize upon it and — disseminate it. He can magnify, he can repeat and recall. He may even enhance.'

'If you give him a chance,' said Mr Blatch. 'Now Shaw, for example—'

'Pure exhibitionism. And so far as I know he has no agent.' Mr Palace perceived that there was no more to be said just then. 'We've had a good talk,' he said, 'I wanted to get your point of view.'

He rose.

Blatch came round his desk to show him out. He seemed to have already dismissed all that they had been talking about from his mind. 'You *should* read something of Alfred Bunter's,' he said, 'apart from anything we've been saying, the man has a quality. I'd like your reactions.'

As Mr Palace made his way towards the Thespian Club he considered the difficulties and advantages that might arise if he got a new agent altogether. 'Fellows like Blatch can reap a harvest,' he reflected, 'at ten per cent. But can they sow and cherish a harvest? They needn't. That's the trouble; they needn't! There are too many authors. Blatch is able to live by snatch crops. And anyhow — *damn* this *Alfred Bunter!* Who's agent *is* Blatch? — Bunter's or mine?'

2

Brooding still on the untilled field of his personal fame Mr Palace entered the club. As he passed the big circle about the hall fire on his way to the hat-pegs he heard old Cummington saying: 'This fellow Bunter can knock spots off any one else writing novels today. He had a vitality. Oh! A tremendous vitality. He just pours out.'

'Give *me* restraint,' said Mr Palace softly to himself, hanging up his hat in the long passage.

He decided not to join the big circle for cocktails. Cummington's enthusiasms always annoyed him and this last enthusiasm just now he felt might annoy him very much. He would be asked to

participate. No! He went into the dining-room a little in advance of the general crowd and sat down by a habit at one of the small tables. It had been his pose at his club as elsewhere not to mingle too indiscriminately with his fellows. Now as they filtered into the room he watched them. They were barristers accustomed to act, actors accustomed to under-act; journalists, writers, and so forth, all evidently conscious in an embarrassed way of themselves, and going through the daily ritual of being interested in each other and pleased to meet. Greetings were exchanged, hands were raised in brisk and agreeable gestures of fellowship to distant friends. Very few noticed Mr Palace. In his highly sensitized state this was exaggerated.

'Aloof or effaced?' he questioned. 'It's gone on too long. They've lost interest.'

Scraps of conversation floated to him. Nobody was saying anything about him although one set at the general table was firing disconnected comments at one another across the board about new poetry and new poets. Three or four years ago, surely they would at any rate have mentioned him... One should disregard such things? But *can* one disregard such things?...

He overheard Bradbrook, just back from Hollywood and entertaining a guest at the next small table, describing the intense unconfessed struggle for recognition that went on in the film world. He became acutely interested. 'It's reduced to a system,' said Bradbrook. 'It's fundamental. It pushes sex and gain into a secondary position. When I was there, a fellow who had something to do with building the sets, committed suicide, simply and solely because he was mortified by not being given a credit - credits they call 'em — on the screen...'

After lunch Mr Palace went into the smoking-room and sat down deliberately by the side of Bradbrook.

'Have a good time in Hollywood?' said Mr Palace, and Bradbrook with a certain weary facility began to unload and spread out his impressions for the fifty-ninth time or so.

'The psychology of film production is wonderful, I'm told,' said Mr Palace.

'The psychology is wonderful. Never was the assurance of a group of men so built up as that of the Hollywood magnates.'

Bradbrook seemed to be exploring some reservoir of resentment. ‘They believe in themselves,’ he said. And then infusing awe into his voice: ‘They believe that the films as we see them are *good.*’

‘Really? Good?’

‘Yes, good. Good in themselves. As good as can be done. They congratulate each other on triumphs and masterpieces. And they *believe* it, Palace!’

‘Their organization of Yes-Men is marvellous,’ continued Bradbrook. ‘It is like reinforcing a radio message. They have to find out what the weary Boss is weakly trying to think or believe, sustain it by inflated endorsement, reinforce it, remove objections. So the great bosses remain stout-hearted and sure of themselves and resolute against intruders and they continue to repeat the dear old silent film with small variations time after time, with a feeling of great novelty and refreshment. Every invention that comes along, sound, colour, music, what-not, they subdue to the measure of their old organization and remain in a state of immovable enterprise, as they were...’

‘What I think even more interesting than all that extraordinary unprogressiveness of the film world,’ said Mr Palace, ‘is the *way* in which reputations are fostered and pressed home. There’s those names on the screen. What did I hear you call them just now? - Credits?’

‘Credits. Yes, your name on the screen in letters so high and not an inch smaller. Everybody has credits. Everybody lives by credits. The film world is an immense pile, an invincible pile, of credits — for the most part richly undeserved.’

Mr Bradbrook being now well launched on his sixtieth or so recital of his Hollywood grievances, needed little stimulation to continue. He had gone out to show them. They had tacitly refused to be shown. Charming they had been in every other way — exasperatingly charming. He was sore with a sense of neglected merit and at every repetition he felt more convinced of the soothing rightness of his judgment.

‘This piling up of reputations in the film world is one of the most curious exhibitions of modern social psychology. You would imagine that an art as popular as the film would depend for its reputations almost entirely on the public choice. But it is only a few

of the very prominent actors or actresses who represent public selection. Even they have to hold on to it by incessant advertisement. The rest are trying to impress each other. Convince themselves and each other they are the brightest and best producers, directors, scenarists, cameramen, special effects men, editors, cutters, music-men, that ever. Presently there will be colour experts and stereoscopists setting up their special hoots. It's a hooting competition. They run periodicals that the outside public scarcely ever sees, special periodicals with immense photogravure illustrations telling each other. All those credits on the screen — do you ever remember a name of them?'

'Never.'

'Nor I. Nor any one. Any one normal. They are just shouting across the audience at their producers and financiers - and the film critics. Keeping it up that the public is attending. And the public *isn't* attending. The public is incapable of that sort of attention. And their periodicals! Pretending that the public is there, greedy to read all about their blessed personalities.'

'Something of the same sort does happen with literature,' mused Mr Palace.

'The public doesn't heed.'

'Who *is* the public, anyhow?'

'It goes to the cinemas, it drifts in, it drifts out. It never reads those Credits on the screen. It never reads the film critics. It takes what is given it - like a pig in a sty. It refuses little. It would take almost anything else just as meekly as it takes the stuff it gets. Nobody really knows what moves it to come and come again or stay away. Bad homes, I suppose. Now and then something or somebody really tickles it and it follows that name about. Very rarely. It happened to Charles Chaplin. It happened to husky Greta. Most of the so-called popular stars are names shouted to deaf ears. The cinema public really doesn't care about them. Whatever the cinema public was in the past, *now* it is advertisement deaf.'

'But in the end solid worth, outstanding quality, intrinsic merit, must tell.'

'If it can get to the public,' said Bradbrook with a sudden access of bitterness. 'If ever it can get through to the public. And hold its

attention. Past the meretricious clamour. Solid worth! Outstanding quality! It has to be as solid as a rock and as outstanding as the Eiffel Tower. Given that — !'

'I wonder,' said Mr Palace, 'has Fame always been a put-up job? It's only that nowadays it is plainer. Caesar, I suppose, ran publicity stunts.'

'Fame has never been so barefaced and naked before. Once she blew a trumpet. Now she makes indecent noises. It would be interesting to write a history of Fame. It has certainly never been run as a business before and made into a big-scale industry.'

'One thing puzzles me; how do these publicity fellows get their job? I mean these reputation agents. How do they get paid?' This was a line of thought that did not interest Bradbrook. 'Commissions on contracts, I imagine. Or a percentage of the gross income. I don't know.'

'I suppose,' said Mr Palace with an effort, 'that even some authors - writers shall we call them? - do something of the sort.'

'Well, isn't a publisher supposed to do that kind of thing for his author?' asked Bradbrook. 'They always *pretend* they do.'

'Do they?' said Mr Palace, wary not to betray too keen an interest in the question. 'I don't know.'

'Nor I. Give me a crust and liberty. I observe all these things, I deplore them, and that's far as I seem able to go...'

The attention of Mr Palace wandered. Publicity *was,* after all, the publisher's business — however much he neglected it. Of course it was. He determined suddenly to look up Schroederer and speak his mind to him. Generally he left the handling of Schroederer to Blatch. It was Blatch who had 'placed' him with Schroederer years ago. But perhaps it had been a mistake to maintain a certain aloofness from Schroederer. Just because of a certain unattractiveness in Schroederer's appearance and bearing. An author is as unwise to cut his publisher as he would be to cut the mother of his children if he wants them to turn out well.

3

Schroederer listened with a lacklustre eye to Mr Palace's exposition

of his views about the duties of a publisher as a fame maker. The idea that his business was to make and foster fame - except his own fame — had manifestly never entered Schroederer's head and was not entering his head now. It was flowing by and passing away.

Schroederer was a realist and his concern was with his firm. Authors were merely the material you arrange upon your list so as to make the pattern of Schroederer clear and bright. They rose somehow to fame and you paid for them; they declined and you dropped them. The thing to do was to put them all in uniform mauve-green wrappers with red and buff covers underneath, so that ultimately the public would recognize these chromatic signs for good reading and bother no more who the authors were. 'I read Schroederer's books,' the public would say, and then there would be an end to authors and their airs and graces, and he would get intelligent female labour at reasonable rates to write the stuff inside under his direction. When the mauve-green wrappers were securely established, it might be possible to indicate whether the flavouring were sexual, intellectual, left, right, or detective, by some variation in the general design, an obelisk, for example, the hammer and sickle, the swastika or what-not.

Meanwhile, so long as authors were selling as authors, you had to listen to stuff like this that Palace was talking.

Schroederer was a large, massive man, with abundant curly hair and by Western standards, an extensive face. His normal expression was one of patient self-confidence, varied by lapses into great mobility when he was exercised by a business suggestion or anxious to be effective. Then he gesticulated, brought his face nearer to his interlocutor and spat slightly as he became emphatic. Finally, he would wipe himself up so to speak and become suddenly immobile again, with his face interrogative and a little askew.

After their first greetings he allowed Mr Palace to proceed with his discourse and occupied himself with a small silver-mounted pocket toothpick. Occasionally he nodded to indicate that his attention was not entirely concentrated within his mouth.

Mr Palace found something disconcerting in this detachment of Mr Schroederer. He did not open his demand for artificial publicity with anything like the vigour with which he had tackled Mr Blatch.

But he managed to unfold his case.

'Well,' he said at last, petering out rather than concluding; 'that's how I see it.'

'It's all wrong,' said Schroederer, putting the toothpick away carefully and regarding Mr Palace with instructive eyes. 'From my point of view, you've got everything wrong. All this Fame business. This Great Man system. It's over. It's finished.'

He leant an elbow on his desk and emphasized his words with plump red fingers.

'It's when a thing begins that there's Fame. Adam! After Adam, my dear chap, any amount of men as good as him. But do we hear of them? Adam got it first — Adam *the* man. After that any one could be a man — wasn't thought anything of. Then again, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, celebrated Jews and after them any amount of Jews, but nothing like the same fuss about them. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — *the* Jews. Same thing with literature, just the same. Scott, Dickens, Tolstoy — I've got writers on my list could write any of them into a cocked hat, but all the same they don't stand out. Scott! Good heavens! if he brought that Waverley stuff along to me here, I'd tell him to go and cut it. Cut it to hell! And then burn the rest. But what was I saying? Getting there first. Look at the generals in the Great War. Do you think they were *all* so second-rate? Not a bit of it. It's just that there was such a lot of them, and just because what they did had been done first long ago by some one else who did it no better but did it earlier. What would Frederick the Great have done in the Great War, father? Nothing great. What would Alexander? You're not up to date. There never was more than a certain amount of literary Fame possible in the world and that cake's been all cut up and given away.'

'Then why do you advertise your writers at all?' said Mr Palace.

'I advertise their books. And I don't go on advertising those after the crest of the sales. 'I'd like to do it sometimes but, my dear fellow, it's no good. *You simply just can't do it.*'

'I don't agree with you,' said Mr Palace after a slight pause.

'If you had been in publishing as long as I have you would...'

Schroederer withdrew his face for a brief interval and with his head slightly on one side considered Mr Palace.

‘Publishing,’ he resumed suddenly, advancing his face again, this time with a sort of confidential intimacy and protruding his lower lip, ‘is the most extraordinary business. You don’t publish this book or that book nowadays, you publish a *list.* A list, my dear fellow.’ He made what he evidently considered to be a listlike gesture. ‘You don’t sell books by ones or twos, you sell them in parcels and thirteens. What the bookseller wants is a selection. That’s where *I* come in. My list is my battlefront. I look over my list. I study my list. My list is the best-balanced list in London. My authors are a team. I don’t care what authors come along nowadays: Milton, Shakespeare — God himself and his Holy Bible; if he wasn’t properly placed on a list you couldn’t market him. Only the big shops would look at a parcel of him and even they wouldn’t repeat. You’ve got to face the facts, Mr Palace,’ hissed Mr Schroederer, inadvertently moistening the inquiring face before him and hammering his desk with the back of one hand. ‘You’ve got to face facts. People *read* all right — they still read, but it’s books they read - not authors...

‘Now just look at these lists of mine, Mr Palace. They’re balanced like a menu.’

He held out his printed matter in one large hand and slapped it with the other bunch of fingers. ‘Here they are! Everything in season. Early peas and hothouse grapes for you. They take some getting. But I look out. *My* readers look out. I choose critics and book reviewers in London as my manuscript readers; no bright young ladies of culture for me; my readers know the ropes and they know what’s coming a year ahead. They choose it as readers and they welcome it as critics. Phyllis Pelmet. We spotted her. No one else did. *I’ve* got her now. I got her before she *began* to sell. This new fellow, Alfred Bunter - I’ve got him.’

‘Who on earth is Alfred Bunter?’ asked Palace, stung sharply. ‘I’ve never heard of him until a few weeks ago.’

‘He’s just come up with a rush. Don’t ask me what he writes about, because I don’t know. “Raw expressiveness” is on the blurb. He’s my ham.’

‘Your *what?*’ said Mr Palace.

‘My ham - Westphalia ham. Raw — you know. All I know about him is that he opens his mouth pretty wide. But he has to be on the

autumn list this year — and here he is.'

The outburst was over and Mr Schroederer began to withdraw his face in good order. Mr Palace decided that everything necessary had been said - and even a little more — in this conversation. The world has changed indeed. It is a new world. Mr Murray never talked about his 'list' to Lord Byron as though that nobleman was hors-d'oeuvres or entree, nor Mr Chapman to Dickens in the role of boiled mutton with trimmings.

Somebody, of course, must decide somewhere that Mr Alfred Bunter had to be on the autumn list this year...

But, oh! What was the good of talking about things like that to this — this *grocer?*

4

It was in the quality of the brain of Mr Rowland Palace to be easily worked-up. At times ideas were like germs in his intelligence and increased mightily in it and made it feverishly active and impatient. This idea of a watched and cherished publicity which had started so casually after the festivities at Little Canham, was now in a myriad repetitions keeping his brain heated and busy; it gathered force with opposition; it accumulated against obstacles. He felt more and more acutely that the mighty traditions of English literature were being undermined or stifled or betrayed or starved (Mr Palace was undecided about the best metaphor) by the short-sighted commercialism of such guardians as Blatch and Schroederer. Great names need to be built up and great names are not being built up. Less and less were they being built up on either side of the Atlantic. What would the teacher of English literature do when he came to instruct the young about our present age? Not a name. Not a date. What sort of Period would that be?

Seen from this angle Fame became almost a duty.

If it was his duty to write, and he had never questioned that, then it was equally his duty to foster that Fame without which he would go unread.

Essentially, he reflected, an author is a performer, he performs upon his readers. There is no authorship *in vacuo.* His business

merely starts when he has set down his thoughts upon paper. Then only begins the chase — in so many cases a hopeless chase — to find some one to read his thoughts. That some one must in the next stage be wooed by legible printing, by an ingeniously attractive title, by a charming cover. Make-up. And before that some one is wooed he has to be located and approached. Readers do not follow an author about. They do not sit on his doorstep waiting. They elude. While writing is a sedentary affair, the chase is mobile. You cannot sit and hunt. A division of labour has long been recognized here. Poets, as Petronius tells us, once pursued their readers, their hearers rather than readers, into the market-place in person, but for centuries this chase of the reader fell to the bookseller, let Schroederer say what he chose. The bookseller-publisher saw to the printing that it was clear, and the binding that it was alluring; he got his shop window and began telling people how good the author's writing was, how very good it was.

As the world grew larger the division of labour came into play again and bookseller-publisher split into bookseller and publisher. The bookseller became a mere retailer. It fell to the publisher to sustain the author's praise. He did it so well for a time that profits accumulated, considerable profits - which it was presently discovered did not reach the author. And so the era of the author's agent dawned.

But authors multiplied. (How much wiser it would be to teach people to read and not to write!) 'We are living in an era of overproduction - of everything,' said Mr Palace. 'One has to face the facts — as Schroederer said. Even literary distinction is becoming commonplace. We need to accentuate distinction among distinctions. I have been fortunate so far, but my position is precarious...'

Precarious. It was a new distressful idea to him. Rivalry was arising. Newer writers were already galling his kibe. He was being hustled. He had never realized it until today; he was being hustled off the lists — off Schroederer's lists.

He had thought these publishers' lists were like state barges on a tranquil river. Now he saw them as the insufficient crowded boats that toss round a sinking liner.

A week or so ago Bunter had been nothing to him. Had not

existed for him. Now — he was a challenge, a warning, a menace. While he had been wrapped in a pleasant self-complacency Bunter had been stealing a march on him. Bunter the Coming Man! But for all Blatch's mysticism these things did not happen spontaneously. Somehow the thing was done. Distasteful as the job was, he must find out about this Bunter. How did he do it? How was he doing it?

One idea jostled another in his mind.

'I want an impresario,' said Mr Palace aloud, in Long Acre. And then inaudibly: 'God send me that impresario.'

His brain-pressure rose to a level that demanded action.

He returned to the Thespians, which at that hour was almost deserted. He went up to the celebrated library and sat at one of the writing-desks for a time, nibbling a knuckle in tense meditation. Then carefully selecting one of those sheets of paper that are without the club heading, he wrote:

'*An author needs an impresario, a young man of energy, understanding, imagination, and a knowledge of the literary world in Europe and America, who will direct not merely the advertisement of his publications but his public appearances and his general publicity so as to consolidate his effect. Write in the first instance, giving your ideas of how your task should be done, as well as your requirements. Apply*—'

'Aye, there's the rub,' said Mr Palace and mused.

Then suddenly there drifted into his mind that years ago he had acquired a monomark. He pulled out his keys and examined the tab: 'BM/HUTO.' All he had to do was to write to Monomark House, alter his registered address from his home to the Thespian Club and wind up his advertisements with: 'Apply BM/HUTO. London, W.'

He sat weighing all the possibilities of his action. In no way could anything of this reach Brynhild's ears? Not directly - no. But was there anything in the phrasing or spirit of that advertisement which might betray him to any acute contemporary? Would Bradbrook, for example, after their talk in the smoking-room, spot anything?

He had a cup of tea before his mind was made up, then he dismissed his fears. Stamps and a postal order in a plain envelope — nothing would show.

And now where was this advertisement to appear? The *Times*

agony column? The *New Statesman?* The *Spectator?* The *Author?*

Each channel had its advantages and its limitations. T? N? S? A? He would turn over a page in a book and whichever letter came first should decide.

CHAPTER SIX

Expert in Publicity

A few afternoons later Mr Rowland Palace was seated in a remote defensive corner of the Thespian Club library examining the enclosures in three considerable envelopes directed to him by the Monomark Company.

A faint irrational sense of guilt tinged the background of his mind. Yet, he assured himself, what he was doing was perfectly reasonable and proper. He had thought it out and re-thought it from this angle and that. Fame was necessarily artificial — but why go over that again?

No less than nineteen persons he learnt were willing to act as his impresario and there might be others to follow. Two were ladies, three, so they intimated, were men of age and experience, the other fourteen were young men. Mr Palace savoured their stationery, their handwriting, their phrasing with keen appreciation. One man wrote from a Rowton lodging-house on ruled paper torn from an exercise book. A certain bashfulness about the business was apparent on the applicant side. Queer that they too should have this same irrational feeling of a slight indelicacy. One lady and one young man wanted to be answered Poste Restante.

The lady who wanted an answer Poste Restante was employed by a typewriting firm and had 'personally copied several difficult authors' MSS in quadruplicate'. She did not want either her employers or her half-sister to know she was restless, hence the address at a post office. She had worked previously in a responsible capacity in the office of a firm of publishers connected with the hop and kindred trades and had had a thorough insight into their business methods and particularly into the advertising side. She had 'good elementary' French and German and 'some Italian' and had travelled extensively during her vacations on the Baltic, the Mediterranean, and North Africa. She was thirty-three, Church of England and had been engaged eight years.

The other lady was younger and she wanted to 'get out of my

stuffy home to the world I really belong to'. She did not disguise that she regarded Mr Palace chiefly as a means to that end. A glowing enthusiasm for writing possessed her. 'As soon as I begin to see how you do it I believe I shall write novels myself. Many of the people I have been connected with have been most peculiar and amusing.' At school she had been the sort of girl who is the life and soul of everything. She had been hostess of a municipal whist drive several times, had run a very successful bazaar stall ('profit of £17 11s. 4*d* on £25 cost'), and so felt thoroughly capable of assisting you at your public appearances 'without gaucherie'. Feminist tendencies were evident in her in spite of her tender years. 'I admit you advertise for an impresario, but I do not see why you should not find an *impresaria* quite as efficient and far more *sympathetic*.' Finally she added: 'Of course, if you are a woman it will not make the slightest difference to me.'

'M'yes said Mr Palace, and tore up the letter carefully as though he was destroying the writer in the process.

The Rowton House correspondent betrayed himself a begging letter writer before he got to the end, and two of the applicants were facetious - Mr Palace thought very stupidly facetious - in intention. Five were green young public school men in various stages of after-school disillusionment about their prospects in the world, and there was also an army captain and a bank clerk in the same class with them, all comprehensively ignorant of most things, all extraordinarily clever, they said, and eager and willing to learn and serve. Just tell them exactly what to do and, by Gosh! wouldn't they do it! The army captain said he was prepared to be 'unscrupulously loyal'. He had had some experience as a blackshirt in a 'trusted position'. But Mr Palace was looking for fame rather than thuggery.

After the elimination of these undesirables he had nine letters left which promised at least a faint realization of his needs. Two applicants who were too concise, promising fuller particulars at a later stage, also went into the discard. The remaining seven followed his instructions and expatiated.

He read these essays upon publicity, shot with alluring autobiographical detail, with intelligent interest. He held a pencil in his hand and occasionally underlined outstanding phrases or

corrected flaws in the prose. They had ideas, these seven; they had an inkling of the realities of the problem. They dispelled any lingering doubt he may have had in his mind that show is the only reality.

They ranged in age from twenty-three to thirty-four. One with previous experience, chiefly in the field of selling 'novelties and small patented proprietary articles', approached the problem of selling Mr Palace to himself and the world, through a highly scientific-looking terminology. He talked of the *advertiser,* the *advertisand,* being the thing advertised or put over, and the *advertisee,* being the person induced to buy, respect, or otherwise respond to the advertisement. And first, said he, Mr Palace must have a clear persuasion about his own merits. 'To create belief in an advertisand, the advertiser must believe in it himself. Intrinsic value is always indeterminate and may in some cases be nonexistent, but a sustaining sense of honest worth in the travellers, distributors, and purchasers concerned, whether it be faith in a monetary medium, proprietary medicine, political organization, religious movement, literary reputation, automobile accessory, food substance, tobacco mixture, domestic gadget or what-not, is a *sine qua non* to a maintained effective functioning of that advertisement. Doubt is the ultimate enemy of the advertiser; nothing is safe from it; the whole social order would collapse and does tend to collapse *(vide* Christianity in the last hundred years) when and in so far as its confidence is not sustained.'

'This young man,' said Mr Palace, turning over a score or more of sheets still unread, 'his the makings of a successful popular philosophical writer. But—'

He glanced on to page 46 and found the deployment of general principles was still going on; he turned to the end and there was still nothing really concrete.

'Such copiousness ought to win him respect in academic circles... I doubt if we should ever get down to brass tacks together. No. I want some one nearer the surface than this. Me as the Great Advertisand. It won't do.'

A second of the seven experts had been in succession in the reception-room of a fashionable photographer, partner to a small Bloomsbury publisher, publicity and social manager of a Kensington

Hotel, and a motor-car salesman. He seemed to be greatly obsessed and enslaved by the fact that he had once designed a very successful book wrapper; he reverted to it repeatedly, illustrated his discourse by it, and made Mr Palace feel that his own exploitation in these hands would certainly follow as closely on the lines of that memorable piece of attractiveness as the difference in circumstance and material permitted.

A third of the seven had been working with Blatch for a while in some rather indefinite capacity. 'He'd know too much about me,' said Mr Palace. Two other of the applicants had 'done publicity' for movie stars and one had run a casting agency. One of the former enclosed a great number of large photographs of alleged stars, several of whom, said he, he had 'practically made'. Mr Palace, after studying these photographs for a time, decided that even God was a better maker.

Finally, as the most satisfying and promising of the nineteen, emerged a certain Mr Immanuel Cloote. He had written his letter very clearly and precisely on a typewriter. He told little of his qualifications. He set himself to the task in hand. He underlined all his cardinal statements. He used capitals for emphasis and paragraphed with skill. 'I will put my views as briefly as possible,' he began, and proceeded: 'The essence of success is personality, that is to say, *individual distinction.*'

'*Now* we get at things,' said Mr Palace.

'Personality is a reality. Perhaps it is the only reality. It is certainly the most fascinating in the world. But in a world that *becomes continually more emphatic,* it must be accentuated. Every effective woman knows that. In her make-up, what does she do?

First, she accepts herself. Then she enhances herself. Keys herself up to modern lighting. And so fascinates. The modern writer is in exactly the same position.'

'Precisely what I am saying,' said Mr Palace, and read on with increasing approval.

'Let me consider some of the ways in which a real personality may be presented to public attention.'

'Exactly,' said Mr Palace.

Mr Cloote divided his matter into sections, spaced out from each

other and headed in underlined capitals. First of all he dealt with *The Impression Sought.* Then with the great truth *The Impression must have Facets or it is not Solid.* You must not harp too much on one aspect of a writer's quality. Gissing, for instance, was handicapped by his irony; they called him depressing; Chesterton was pigeon-holed as paradoxical even when he was doing his simple utmost to speak plainly; Wells was pinned down by his being always linked with 'The Future of — this or that.' (But Wells at the best was a discursive intractable writer with no real sense of dignity. A man is not called 'HG' by all his friends for nothing.)

Having got your contemplated Impression solid and assured, came *The Display.* Under this head Mr Cloote put 'the General Claim and Assertion of the author or other personality being publicized'. Under this head the impresario would have to watch advertisements, insist upon 'relative prominence' so as not to have one's name subordinated through smaller type or secondary position to another, keep an eye on shop windows, bookstalls, check the publishers' salesmen about what they told the booksellers, etc., etc. (Mr Cloote was very good at the use of 'etc., etc.')

Thence he swept on to collateral methods of 'intensifying the Impression sought'. There was The Anecdote. It was very important that "interesting things should happen or *be made to have happened* to the personality concerned'. Some people seemed to be sought out by accidents of an illuminating quality. They are accosted by remarkable characters, they provoke children to comments good enough for *Punch.* They emerge from it very creditably.

'*Such things*' Mr Cloote italicized, '*are not necessarily accidents*'

Then the *dispute,* best in a weekly paper, about some grave, distinguished subject, is a good reputation sustainer. Undergraduates read disputes, delight in them, take sides and 'imitate them'.

'He understands my point about undergraduates,' Mr Palace approved. 'He really is intelligent.'

The whole art of discussions and collateral displays of interest is in its infancy. 'I should delight,' Mr Cloote confessed, 'to explore its fascinating possibilities to the utmost.'

'Spontaneous recognition is still uncultivated. The long letters written by people in hydropathic establishments, law agents' offices,

hotels on wet days, rest cures, etc., etc., should be *followed up.* The letter-writer should become a personal friend, an instructed unpaid canvasser.'

'*Quote his own letter back to him.*'

'Following up' is an 'art carried to a high level by the bucket-shop and by the sellers of many proprietary articles, etc., etc.,' but it is none the less to be practised on that account. Ordinary literary men disregarded it and allowed it to die away. 'Their paths are littered, literally littered, with the dead letters of discouraged correspondents. They do not sustain correspondence and none that I know of adopt the useful expedient of signing correspondence prepared for them by competent hands.'

'The *Protection of a Reputation from Distracting Suggestions* which may set a writer askew with public opinion and his own real performances, is also fascinating field for new work...'

'The man knows his business,' said Mr Palace.

He laughed shortly. 'It's utterly absurd.'

He nodded gravely to Mr Cloote's letter. 'It's profoundly true.'

He sat with frowning brows. 'So it is the world must know me... So it is I must come to know myself... To begin with I admit it is - artificial...

'As that other fellow said, the advertisand must believe in himself, as being exact to specification...'

He had read Kant in his time. 'What, after all, *is* Conduct?' he asked. 'It is to make oneself a consistent phenomenon. What else can it be? The noumenon is for ever unknown. *Gnothi seauton.* Provocative but impossible. *Can* a man know himself? Can he ever know as much about himself as other people do?'

Like a sigh upon the wind came the name of 'Pirandello'. Then coming to reality again Mr Palace asked himself: 'I wonder if a psychoanalyst would make anything of that fellow's continual use of the word "fascination"?'

2

'And now,' said Mr Palace, putting the selected application into his pocket and dropping its torn envelope into a Thespian Club waste-

paper basket already choked with the letters of the rejected; ‘how to reveal ourselves to Mr Immanuel Cloote?

‘First - his references for trustworthiness. Yes.

‘But then I must meet him face to face. Not here. Club walls have ears. And damned curious eyes. Some hotel? Where I am known in the Restaurant. I can make that all right...

‘Curious how I hesitate about this...’

But his hesitations were overcome and he found himself in the character of one who has a suite upstairs, walking across the Grand Embassy lounge to his indicated guest. The young man had a broad head of the Alpine type and a lot of dark, close, curly hair; his features seemed to have been flattened vertically into a permanent frown and when he spoke he spoke deliberately in a tone of strangulating restraint. Speech did not flow out of him; he produced with a faint flavour of preliminary internal struggle. It was as though he had to hold energy back to avoid either an excess of emphasis or volubility. Nevertheless he produced a lot. There was a marked vertical cast in his eyes. One regarded Mr Palace intently; the other carried over his right shoulder, as it were, to higher and better things.

He was biting the nails of a large competent-looking reddish hand with considerable animus, when he became aware of the approach of Mr Palace. Then he desisted from his autocannibalism and leapt to his feet to greet his prospective client. He leapt up so swiftly that Mr Palace expected him to leave the floor for an inch or so. Happily he stopped in time.

‘It’s Mr Rowland Palace,’ he exclaimed. ‘Yes. It’s Mr Rowland Palace. Delightful! Forgive my recognizing you, sir. I remember the frontispiece to *Sago Lane*.’

‘Let us sit down and talk,’ said Mr Palace, feeling that Mr Cloote had rather too emphatic a voice for lounge conversation and looking round for the most secluded corner. ‘You wrote me a very interesting letter.’

‘The one thing I have always desired, sir, is to make a literary career,’ Mr Cloote opened as they sat down. ‘The atmosphere, the importance of literature had always fascinated me — fascinated me. Yet, oddly enough, I have never wanted actually to write myself. Never. Oddly enough. I realized — what so few people realize —

that I have no invention as a writer, no creative drive whatever. None. Even when I have tried to be just descriptive of things seen, I have found I invented no phrases, I used no new constructions. I was trite. Abundant but trite. A marine store of phrases; not a workshop. And still the fascination of literature remained. Here is something, I said — I say — that alters people's ideas, alters people's lives, alters everything. Literature still fascinates me, sir. Writers fascinate me more. They could do what I could not do. You forgive me entering into these particulars about myself?'

'They are necessary,' said Mr Palace.

'How shall I serve literature, I asked myself. I thought of going into publishing and treating authors with a fostering care. But as I had no capital, and as most authors I found have a premature receptivity — often a real need — for cash payment, that was impossible. I expected it to be pleasant. It was unpleasant. No. I did a certain amount of small publicity — too trivial to talk about. And other things. I have sold organs to Indian rajahs.'

'Organs?'

'Musical instruments, sir. Large wind instruments with the most remarkable stops. A fascinating adventure. But let that pass. My peculiar gift is appreciation. For a time I wrote the screen announcements for Walworth Films. Crescendos of superlatives - cascades of superlatives - an easy task. At times my appreciation was strained to the utmost, but I got my results. Now I find myself to the utmost, but I got my results. Now I find myself with my hands on opportunity — the great opportunity of my life. Did you read my letter? It said almost everything I had to say. It is for you to do the talking now, Mr Palace. I know exactly what you want. You want building up. To me, Mr Palace — you mustn't mind my saying it — to me you have to be the Clay that I can make into a Living Speaking Image. Perhaps not exactly Clay. No - that has associations!' He cut up the space before him with gestures of his hands. It was as if he cut out bits of it and threw them away. The piece he kept was: 'Glorious living material, fine and subtle. But there it is - you see what I mean. It is an adventure which — I can only say' — he hesitated for a moment seeking the right word, and produced it at last with an air of triumph— 'fascinates me.'

‘I find,’ said Mr Palace, getting into the pause, ‘you put things with a certain intensity but -’

‘I am too excitable,’ injected Mr Cloote.

‘But I think you do really *get* the sort of enterprise I have in mind.’

Mr Cloote brought his large strong hand flat before Mr Palace’s face. ‘I have to study you.’

‘Study essentials.’

‘Magnify you.’

‘For the sake of visibility.’

‘Proclaim you. Be your Aaron. Your John the Baptist. Your — Stooge!’

‘Of course, there has to be a restraint in enterprise.’

‘Leave that to me. Of course I must warn you. One part we must make clear. To a man of your fascinating refinement and delicacy -’

‘Irony is a quality I—’

‘Yes, irony. Some of the first strokes of the portrait I shall draw may seem *Crude.*’

‘One must be careful of that.’

‘The intensest care. Meticulous. It may not happen at all. But I am anxious to anticipate any little — what shall I say? — birth pangs? Not exactly “birth pangs”. Saddle soreness? Chafing? Difference of phase? Breaking the arrangement in. You understand me?’

Mr Palace nodded not too reassuringly.

‘Perfect!’ cried Mr Cloote, triumphantly.

He seemed to appeal to some unseen presence to witness the swift intelligence between himself and Mr Palace.

‘I speak four languages well,’ he added, out of the void. ‘And six or seven indifferently. I have travelled widely — in various capacities. Before the mast — and behind. My mother was a Pole. I associate my literary ineptitude — no milder word will do — with my poly-glottery. The gift for languages is a gift for learning phrases quickly - that is to say *cliche.* It is an uncritical gift. A child learns languages more readily than an adult because criticism is not yet born in it. You, Mr Palace, speak French badly.’

‘I’m afraid that is so.’

‘I *knew* it, Mr Palace — from the fascinating subtlety of your

style. Every word weighed in the balance and none found wanting. You can only do that with one language in a lifetime. If I may, I shall make capital out of your bad French.'

'But speaking of Poles, Joseph Conrad spoke several languages.'

'Badly, sir — all badly. And he wrote Conradese. That's by the way. Let us come to our work. The Task before us. I am inclined to think we could best map it out in a series of campaigns or operations — operations. Operations on the Nobel Prize Campaign, for example. Operations in respect to America...'

'But don't you think the Nobel Prize — ?'

'Mr Palace, the planning of a literary career nowadays which excluded consideration of that great distinction would be imperfect. And similarly I have to assume that your name *must* become a byword for literary excellence in America. There is no success without it. A byword - you have to be. Far beyond the mere reading public. In the gutter. You can't possibly scale the heavens if the feet of the ladder aren't firmly in the gutter. The east-side gutter. No other American gutter had ever heard of a book. There you must be, with the Bible and Shakespeare. *And* Carlyle and Mrs Humphry Ward *and* Bergson *and* Conrad *and* Aldous Huxley *and* Charles Morgan *and* all the other discoveries America has made. They're wonderful over there on the appreciation trail. Once they discover. Kind of high and fastidious to begin with — waiting for the other chap to speak first - almost one might say "snifty", and then a sort of Appreciation Stampede. There ought to be a history, a natural history of American criticism. Take Conrad, of whom you spoke just now. Beautiful but abstruse writer. Colorado. Pink caviare. Special taste, I mean. Such richness. Turns the simplest ideas into mysteries. Adds a complication of life on every page. Says nothing in a kind of literary agony. Most effective. Novelettes ennobled. Platitudes — with a passionate patina. The gnome, the fairy changeling who ran away to sea and was scared to death by a ship. You'd think he was above their heads. Buy that's what *got* them. They don't respect you if they understand you. Naturally. In a sort of way. They don't like being told what they think they know. Such a lot of them have been taught literature at college and they naturally despise the elementary stage. If you ask a child in New York to name the greatest of English

writers, it will certainly give you the immortal Joseph in the first half-dozen. Any American woman. Any American. With — perhaps — Lindenburg. Not that they know anything about it, they just *know* it. How *that* was established—'

He paused.

'Fascinates you,' laughed Mr Palace with a gleam of his mocking charm.

3

That night Mr Palace woke up and had the most fearful doubts, remorse, and perplexity about his engagement of Mr Cloote. He had engaged him, though much remained to be settled, because at the time there did not seem to be any other way out of the Grand Embassy Hotel. He was to have three hundred a year - it seemed cheap for so energetic and comprehensive a being - for an experimental year. Then they would see. There had been vague intimations of an office for him; still vaguer of material needed, running expenses. Expenses?

'What have I brought upon myself?' Mr Palace asked his ceiling reflections. 'What monstrous system of new worries - new preoccupations — have I not incurred?'

The tree shadows did not stir. Never had they been so still before. They seemed to be mourning the irretrievable.

Imposed upon that familiar thought-background was a shadowy face, which became intensified and distorted whenever he turned over and shut his eyes. It had a deep earnestness in its eyes, both in the one that fascinated you directly - *what* a word, '*fascinated*'*!* — and the other which looked over your shoulder; it had a slow, deep, explanatory, compelling voice that pushed against you and a flat, red, expository hand that cut the space about you into compartments...

Cloote would be a difficult man to get away from...

There were moments when Mr Palace felt like a man who has gone out into the jungle to find a piece of rope and picked up an Anaconda.

An overwhelming problem of that night-watch was the exact way in which to introduce this Cloote and all his activities into the

hitherto simple and orderly Palace life. He was attracted by the idea of not telling Brynhild or any one at all about Cloote — making him a secret agent. Rowland saw himself leading a double life, scorning the tricks and vulgarities of publicity at home and then slipping away on all sorts of excuses to foster a gigantic publicity at some office in the city.

From this his dreaming mind carried him into visions of masks and disguises. If he and Cloote had presently to go about on some jointly enterprise. Would Cloote consent to travel as a valet? He might not like being asked to be a valet. 'Private Secretary' was certainly the proper title so far as a title was needed. Agent? 'Agent' of unspecified standing...

He awoke from a dream in which he and Cloote in masks had been sacking Schroederer's office, to waking clearness again. What exactly was he thinking about? What had to be done?

He had to intimate...he perceived there were some difficult intimations ahead of him. He had to intimate to Brynhild, that he felt a need for some sort of secretary-agent at his elbow. She was bound to ask questions — no, not exactly ask questions but seem to be thinking questions. He knew her. He saw, what he had not seen before, that Miss Pardlow, his present typist, might have to be — dislocated - during the reconstruction.

Out of a mass of dreamlike suggestions one idea became clearer and clearer. The need for an office away from his home. Anthony Hope Hawkins in his time, he knew, had found it very conducive to his work to go down to an office on the Embankment and work there with the punctuality of a business man. He could plead this precedent. He might say a lot about the office and very little about Cloote. Then Brynhild and Cloote need never come into anything but the most incidental contact...

She might, of course, insist on furnishing the office. But then he might have it furnished and tell her before she saw it that it was a furnished office.

The office idea had everything in its favour. Then Palace need not be seen about with Cloote — or hardly ever. He could be represented as simply a secretarial helper. He could be minimized.

Not only had he to intimate all these things to Brynhild and put

them over with her in the face of whatever objection she made, but, far more difficult in the way of intimations, was that without for one moment casting the faintest aspersions upon his wife and his relations with his wife, without descending to any detail or analysis whatever, he had to make it perfectly clear to Cloote that for unspecified and inexplicable reasons it was desirable, it was imperative - if and when she met him - that he should breathe no word about his essential task of consolidating and expanding Mr Palace's fame.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Weekend at Valliant Chevrell

For some days Mrs Palace had been aware that something unusual was going on in her husband's mind. She sat now at the breakfast-table unobtrusively observant and turned over her letters. He was preoccupied. He was bothered. He was not interested in the morning papers. And it was one of those things - they were becoming innumerable nowadays - about which he would tell her nothing. Was he having sentimental troubles or was he digesting some particularly hostile or belittling criticism or was there trouble about the next book? Why was it he could not talk of such things to her?

She opened a large pale-blue envelope with a coronet. It was from Spencer Dispenser, Lord Valliant Chevrell's marvellous factotum, giving full and engaging particulars of the forthcoming weekend. 'You will meet Lady Cytherea Label, who is one of your husband's most ardent fans, and Lady Burnish and Mrs Penton Grace who is in her way a novelist - literature has many mansions, remember — and there's Mr Alfred Bunter — the new sensation, and the Swope-Petershams.'

She looked up. 'We're going to meet Alfred Bunter at Valliant Chevrell,' she told him.

'That's the man who makes the running,' he said. 'I'll be curious to see him.'

'Makes the running?' she asked softly.

'Oh! He's heading fast to be a Best Seller. Everybody is taking him up. I don't understand these things.'

So that was it. He was still worrying about his publicity. The thorn had festered. Pity he should be bothered by things like that. Why couldn't a man just think and write? She reflected for a moment and then opened another letter.

Her husband was saying something. 'I'm beginning to think Valliant Chevrell is getting a trifle too promiscuous in his invitations, Bryn. A little too — *topical.* It's just a bit of a shock to find the latest boomster from nowhere is going to be present.'

‘It may be just his curiosity,’ said Brynhild. ‘You know he *is* curious. The rest of the party — . Quite nice people. The Swope-Petershams he says and Lady Cytherea Label.’

The trouble vanished from Rowland’s brow. ‘I like the Swope-Petershams,’ he said.

Brynhild’s smile was imperceptible. ‘And Lady Burnish,’ she added softly. ‘You like *her.*’

2

Lord Valliant Chevrel’s appetite for big parties, Brynhild thought, was growing with indulgence. This was the very biggest party she had ever seen even in that insatiably hospitable house. But later she found that a number of callers from the neighbourhood were swelling the assembly beneath the great cedar on the lawn. It was like a garden-party. Cissy Parkington, the host’s cousin, who could never catch a name and lost it at once if she caught it, was acting distractedly as hostess. She welcomed the guests by saying, ‘I don’t know where any one is. The new chimpanzee has melancholia and Roddy has gone off to hold its hand.’

After which she left the newcomers to their own devices and prepared to greet the next.

Brynhild was hailed by a woman she had met, it seemed, in London who wanted to talk about some alleged mutual acquaintance with the quite unfamiliar name of Fanny. Fanny, it seemed, had gone off very suddenly to Biskra. Brynhild accepted a cup of tea from Spencer Dispenser, while she ran about in her mind trying to match up Fanny to anything whatever. Rowland drifted off towards a little group which opened out to receive him. She heard the voice of Lady Cytherea. ‘You mahst settle, Mr Palace. You’re just in taim. You know everything. Can a chimpanzee be crossed in love?’

‘It’s the only way you *could* cross a chimpanzee,’ said Mr Palace, right on the spur of the moment and wondering what on earth he meant.

It was accepted as suggestively brilliant.

Brynhild, looking round over her tea-cup and trying to remember any one of the name of Fanny — Fanny Anything? Frances

Anything? - who might go off to Biskra, was struck by the appearance of a man standing alone with a most unintroduced air about him, who she instantly divined was Mr Alfred Bunter. 'I *can't* imagine in the least why she has gone so suddenly,' she said, playing for time.

'You're too charitable,' said the lady.

Brynhild raised her eyebrows and did that perfectly.

'I expect you know all about it,' said the lady. 'Well, I won't cross-examine you if you don't care to talk.'

'I'm not so well-informed as you think,' said Brynhild. 'Have you ever seen larger hydrangeas?'

Brynhild gradually detached her attention from her interlocutor behind a series of conversational parries, and watched the unintroduced man. He was ruddy and rather tall, a brown-haired man, in a brown hat and a brown suit to match that was somehow — she couldn't quite tell - out of key with the party. He was surveying his prospective company with a detached interest; he was lonely but not embarrassed. She knew his type, the newly arrived, the last social mouthful. In most of these large weekend parties there is some one who doesn't belong and never quite begins to belong — The Stranger. He does not assimilate from the outset and gradually he becomes inassimilable. This man she perceived, was probably cast for the role of The Stranger for this weekend.

Unless something was speedily done for him.

He was cast for the role of The Stranger just as she was cast for the role of a Quiet Lovely. That seemed to be her invariable lot at weekend parties, and nothing was ever done for her to save her from it. Because only herself could do that. Men you can save, but not women. It was always the same story. She stood about, she sat about, she played tennis or golf or rowed or swam or went with the walking party. Men and even women were attracted to her; they came to her; they visibly remarked to one another that she was lovely; they started duologues with her, pleasant duologues that floated over the surface of things. Over the surface and away. Then they drifted off. As Sunday wore on many of them paired off with other women. They showed a dispositon to go off into secluded places with them. They seemed in some way to have penetrated the surface of things with

them, to have become confidential and in some queer way more *real.* How did they do it? Others of the women became dramatic, conspicuous, addressed circles, made amazing confessions to the company at tea. How did they break through themselves to do that? Anyhow she could not. She had never broken through herself yet. She remained a Quiet Lovely, an onlooker, disregarded.

'Do you think that is the new writer, Mr Bunter?' she asked, realizing that she had to account for her wandering attention.

'Oh, *yes!*' said the lady, turning to look. 'That's certainly Alfred Bunter. I met him last Thursday at Chlorinda's. Or Friday was it? He's — he's quite shy, but rather nice.'

As she spoke Mr Bunter's tranquil regard came round to them. 'Mr Bunter!' she cried. 'Mr Bun - ter.'

He looked at them for a moment and particularly at Brynhild, and his expression brightened. He came to them.

'You'll remember me,' said the lady. 'You were at Chlorinda's - at Lady Shate's last week. You do remember? When they talked about Fascism. And the Fifth Dimension and neon lights and all that.'

'I seem to remember,' he said, trying to recall her.

'I *love* good talk,' said the lady, and to Brynhild: 'Don't you?'

'Who were the talkers?' asked Brynhild...

It was clear the lady who knew Fanny was now beginning to suspect that she had mistaken Brynhild for some one else and had no idea of her real name and no intention of experimenting in introductions. Mr Bunter took Brynhild's tea-cup and returned to them and presently Brynhild found herself agreeably incognito — agreeably because she was spared the usual compliments about *Bent Oars* and *The Supple Willow Wand* — walking alone with Mr Bunter towards the rose garden.

'I am rather a novice in this sort of thing,' said Mr Bunter. 'Who was the lady who — introduced us? Who had met me at Lady Shate's?'

'I hoped you'd tell me that,' said Brynhild.

He smiled and she found something very vivid and appealing in his smile.

'Things get clearer at dinner,' he said.

‘We all get labelled at dinner.’

‘Labelled,’ he said softly, as though he criticized the phrase and found some riddle in it. Then he went on: ‘I’m really a very inexperienced person indeed here. I’m an outsider. Why not be frank? I was thinking — Tell me, doesn’t a place like this and a party like this mean a great deal of money?’

‘I suppose it does.’

‘And how is it done?’

‘Mines and shipping, I believe, in this case,’ said Brynhild.

‘There’s largeness... I wish I understood better how it was done and why it is done.’

He explained that he had recently, ‘in the last year or so’, written a couple of books that had sold a lot - ‘anyhow, it seemed a lot to me’ - and suddenly, ‘Oh, in the last two months or so,’ first one hostess and then another had asked him to a weekend party. And to houses and places like this. Outside his world. ‘I had no idea,’ he said, ‘what these places were like and how many there seem to be. I’ve lived in England all my life and I’ve never suspected what lay behind the gates and the palings and the notices about Trespassing. It’s amazing.’

3

Now this promised to be interesting talk.

‘There are not so very many places as large and fine as Valliant Chevrell now,’ she said, ‘and few people as able to keep them up as Lord Valliant Chevrell can. Some great houses have decayed a lot, many have been sold — and Americanized. Maybe it isn’t going to last very much longer.’

‘One hears that. But is there much in that?’

‘A few years back the advertisements of houses and parks in *The Times* used to be headed, “England changing Hands”.’

‘But has it changed its butlers?’ he asked, with a glance back at the disciplined service on the lawn. ‘It’s a stout old system with a lot of inertia. These trees — there’s something for-everish about them.’

She began a short history of the house from its Jacobean days. She felt pleasantly at an advantage with him. All this belonged to her as it

did not belong to him. She had been here before five times. She had to be something of a hostess to him.

She showed him the rose garden with care and appreciation. She hunted for a corner of cream and white roses she remembered from last year. She liked and admired the place herself and she took him through to where a sundial, a sunken garden, and a lily-pond grouped graciously towards a glimpse of the lake and an emphatic sustained line of old yew-trees - trees full of personality. Here again a vast generous red wall ran out protectively between the yew-trees and the sunk garden, and ended in a flourish of stone. There was a long white seat that she had appreciated in a former visit, and to that she conducted him and sat down beside him.

'There!' she said with an intonation of proprietary triumph.

'By Jove!' said he. 'Serenity!'

He looked at her as though she and the mellow assured garden were all of a piece.

'Now this was worth coming for! Do you know I hesitated about coming down here today. I'm glad I did.'

'These lovely walls. This place would be nothing without these walls. How lavish they were with their walls,' she said.

'Lavish,' said he, and reflected. 'I suppose — They could be just as lavish today. They have the clay, the labour unemployed — but they don't do it. Nobody builds walls for the sake of walls today. Walls just for the grace of it. Why has this sort of thing stopped? With resources a hundred times as great as those old seventeenth-century garden-makers'? This place is a wonder because it is rare. And yet we could make all our island a garden, an estate like this and as mellow as this, from Land's End to John o' Groats. We don't. That makes me Angry. It brings my Anger back. I am an Angry Man. Did you know I was an Angry Man? Almost professionally. You don't know my books? No? But that is what they say of me — the Angry Man. The world angers me. I am ashamed to be an Angry Man. What is the good of being Angry? I get angry and shout. I don't write books, I shout them. And what is the good of that?'

Brynhild felt that any one but a Quiet Lovely would have something apt to say here, but she had nothing.

Her silence did not seem to discourage Mr Bunter. He dug his

heels into the turf in a way that somehow reminded Brynhild of a happy cat clawing a rug. The he went on with his thoughts.

'You know. I am silly. I am silly to be Angry and silly in myself. I am really the answer to my own question, why don't we make all the world a garden? Why don't we turn everything in nature to loveliness? Because I am as silly as I am angry. That is the answer. What I want,' said Mr Bunter, with a sudden chuckle, 'is a head so big.' He put his hands about his temples to indicate a linear extension of six inches or so. 'And heart and lungs — oxygen to ginger it up. Then I'd have a nice large brain-room to think in, I'd be able to pigeon-hole things properly and set about them seriously and I wouldn't be ineffective and angry any more.'

She nodded appreciatively. She had at times wished something of the sort herself.

'Bigger and better heads. You can't get them. I suppose I'm greedy. I want to do too much. Then I fall over my silliness and I get Angry. I am too intelligent for my silliness. I know and I am incapable. If only I could turn off thinking. If one could turn a tap and reduce one's thoughts and ideas to a manageable trickle. I can't tell you how I envy at times the coolness, the empty, self-satisfied self-possession of that damned facade, Palace.'

Brynhild sat up slightly. She controlled an impulse to laugh aloud. Instead she laid a cool restraining hand on Mr Bunter's freckled fist and pressed it softly.

He glanced at her in mild surprise.

'Mr Bunter,' she said, regretting the phantom of a chuckle in her voice and pointing with her other hand, 'look over there. Isn't it lovely?'

'What's lovely?'

'Oh! All of it. You know. Those cluster roses and all that. I ought to tell you, Mr Bunter — I'm Mrs Rowland Palace.'

'*What?*'

'Just that.'

'I got you all wrong. I wanted to know who you were as soon as I saw you. I liked you - somehow. And - preposterously - I jumped at the idea that you were Lady Cytherea. Lady Cytherea Lamb or Label or something. I had seen her name on a bag at the station and

wondered what she would be like... Cytherea! A lovely name, anyhow. And instead it's Mrs Rowland Palace... I just don't know what to say about that remark of mine. Don't take what I said too seriously. It's envy, Mrs Palace. Envy. There's a *polish* in his work. A poise, a fineness in his irony...'

He paused. He fixed his eye on the clustering roses, as though he was trying very hard to remember more of Rowland's good points.

Brynhild's desire to laugh returned.

'Tell me some more about making red garden walls all over England, Mr Bunter. Is the world a miser - if it is rich enough to do that and yet won't?'

'Not even a good hard vice like miserliness. It's just silliness, clumsiness, not being quick and clear-minded, blundering — all thumbs. Stupid fool I was - saying that.'

She looked at his troubled face and resentful eyes. He was absurdly rueful and reproachful. Yes - reproachful. And some quality that came close to her, she did not know what. Her self-restraint deserted her and she laughed gaily at his plight. His puzzled expression changed slowly to a grin of the completest understanding. Then both became serious again as though they drew down a blind that had for a moment been raised, improperly. His eyes went away from her.

'I wonder where that little gate down there goes,' he said.

'It leads to the swimming-place and boat-house. There is quite a pretty stretch of lake beyond and the path runs round it.'

They both stood up.

'Let's,' he said. 'We have half an hour before the dressing bell...'

But a tarnish of embarrassment had fallen upon them both. The afternoon that had seemed for a while to be crystalline was now at most indistinctly translucent. 'I'm slipping back to a Quiet Lovely,' she told herself. 'I can't help myself. It was just the shock got me out of it for a minute.'

They talked not very easily now, and chiefly about spiraea and loosestrife and water-rats and water-beetles and about the jade and brown of still water and about trout and carp and how to cook carp and a miscellany of things like that; and they said nothing more about themselves or the world in general until it was time to part in

the hall for dressing. It was as if something almost completely impalpable had frightened them away from any reality of conversation. And yet what was there to it? He had just made a quite natural mistake and she had behaved as a semihostess should. What had checked them? And what was it had been checked?

4

When Brynhild had dressed she went through the connecting bathroom to her husband's room to tell him she was ready to go down.

She found him sitting in a deep chintz-covered armchair, before a cheerful little unnecessary fire he had lit. He was so lost in thought he did not hear the slight rustle of her entrance. He was sitting without jacket or vest, looking neat and healthy in his shirt and black tie.

If his thoughts were deep they were manifestly not disagreeable. He was — what was the word? — ruminating - pleasantly.

'Has there been a gong yet?' she asked, and roused him.

A certain softness of self-satisfaction flattened out as he became aware of her presence.

'Did you play tennis?' he asked politely.

'No foursome,' she said truthfully but disingenuously.

He stood up before the fire. 'The Coming Man disappeared,' he remarked. 'Shy, I suppose.'

'Alfred Bunter?'

'Who else? It's an interesting party this time. He'll find his level. These young, very aristocratic, fairly rich girls — They have a curious freshness and boldness. A sort of modern vicious freshness. Tremendously outspoken. Startling. They know so much by hearsay and so little by experience.'

'I suppose, though, they do what they can to remedy that.'

Mr Palace smiled and nodded. 'They certainly get on with life.'

('Smirk' was the word that came into her mind and was instantly ejected again.)

'Interesting types,' he repeated. 'One has to know about them. If only as a novelist.'

A gong began to boom like China, Further India, and the Coromandel Coast. Mr Palace moved towards his dinner-jacket.

Brynhild perceived that among two or three other new books on the table was *The Cramped Village,* by Alfred Bunter. She picked it up. 'I'll take something to read for the night,' she said with the air of an accidental choice, as though it was just any old book, and carried it off to her own room.

5

When the Palaces came down the great staircase, a good half of the company were already standing about with cocktails in their hands. Mr Alfred Bunter had got himself isolated again and regarded Brynhild with a faint appeal which evoked an insufficient spasm of the sub-hostess in her. He was no longer dressed a little out of key. What an excellent leveller is your dinner-jacket! But the impulse to go over to him was checked by a score of sufficient considerations. Raymond was invited by a common movement of Lady Cytherea and her two companions. He made no difficulty about what was evidently a resumption. 'Well,' he said, 'and what did the third pig say?'

'We still don't know,' said Lady Cytherea, and they all giggled, a trio of quite nice well-regulated giggles.

Brynhild took in their quality as she moved across the room, seeing them without looking as a woman can. They were all dressed simply — with a simple insufficiency that made the most of their slight young bodies. For the first time in her life Brynhild realized that she must soon be just handsome, dignified, and early middle-aged. She resigned herself to the attentions of old Swope-Petersham.

The idea that she was inescapably a Quiet Lovely floated through her mind again at dinner. She liked Valliant Chevrell's long table, all glass, silver, and well-chosen flowers, extremely. People could talk earnestly, intimately, formally, according to their natures, by twos and threes and fours, and if one sat out, so to speak, one had no embarrassing sense of being exposed. What a lot most of them had to say and how quick they were in getting to it! She didn't want in the least to talk to either of her neighbours. Each in his due turn was sociable for a time and she was intelligent but unhelpful. The

gentleman on her right told her things about Valliant Chevrell's old silver. Afterwards the gentleman on her left made conversation about the silver and she was able to use several of the facts and appreciations she had got from the gentleman on her right.

Meanwhile her observation wandered up and down the table. She saw many little things that were happening and even some that were not. Was her host in love with that very delicate blonde woman on his right - she was the Countess something or other from Rome? Would he ever marry? He was the nimblest, most evasive of eligibles. Rowland was between the Countess and Lady Burnish, out of harm's way for a time. Halfway down the table were Lady Dynover and young Mr Bates, and in some occult way Brynhild realized that knee was pressed against knee and neither of them knew quite what to do about it next. Beyond Lady Dynover sat Bunter, quietly alone, with conversation to the left of him and tongue-tied passion to the right. He was making no attempt to talk; he might have been dining alone. Then presently he began to look up and down the table seeking somebody. He was doing this very unobtrusively. She knew he was seeking somebody because whenever his view was obstructed by flowers or a glass candelabra, he moved his head to see round it. He was looking for some one. He was looking for her.

She met his eyes for a moment and smiled ever so faintly. Which evoked an answering friendly smile.

After which she looked at him no more, though she perceived that ever and again he sought to repeat that flash of mutual recognition.

And after all, what was it they were smiling about?

After dinner and the recess Valliant Chevrell and Spencer Dispenser appeared among the ladies with a trail of men behind them, and set themselves to sort out the bridge addicts and such dull guests as are better put to bridge lest worse befall, and then to instruct the residue for Valliant Chevrell's particular delight, charades.

'Charades,' Valliant Chevrell would say, 'mix people nicely,' and there is no doubt that charades as they played them under his direction mixed them a good deal. There was a considerable amount of going off together and going off apart, necessary whispering and conspiring close to the pink receptive ear, a running about passages

for needed properties, much dressing-up and undressing and helping to dress and undress.

Sometimes the charade was done by syllables, but more often the 'Whole' was spelt out a letter at a time. There was much confused secrecy about it all. Everybody knew the one or two letters in which they acted, but only their host alone or with some chosen confederate was supposed to know the 'Whole'.

Valliant Chevrell was generally the director of his scenes, but the direction of the first light was taken out of his hands by Lady Cytherea. He drew her apart to tell her that the first letter was P. He had Pluto in mind as the whole, and for P he wanted her to produce '*Paris*'. She leapt at the idea. 'We three'll do it,' she cried. 'Oh, let us. We mahst. We know it so well. You think of the next one, Roddy.' The trio were ready. It was only after she and her two friends had bundled out and consulted outside with cries and giggles, that they changed their minds from the town to the Trojan and called out Mr Palace to assist them. And afterwards they called out old Mrs Checkshalton.

Meanwhile Valliant Chevrell arranged to resume his usurped leadership, and made extensive confidential preparations for L, Laocoon. The butler was summoned and told in a loud whisper to 'bring in about three long lengths of hose. Black or grey? It doesn't matter.

'We'll do the group. You and I and Hickson,' he said to Bunter - because here he perceived was a way of getting his new guest tousled and deprived of tie and collar and generally mixing him in.

He came across to Brynhild. 'Would you do U? Undine — you know - sorrowing under the water?'

'I can manage it,' he reassured her.

Spencer Dispenser who was acting as general property man and scene-shifter, came in to arrange the slopes of Mount Ida by means of a green window-curtain, thrown over a sofa. Then entered Rowland as Paris.

The three young ladies had undressed Mr Palace very thoroughly. In place of a Phrygian cap they had put a red ribbon round his hair. He was wearing his bathing-shorts under an arrangement of sheepskin rugs held together by brown luggage-straps, and he carried

a long alpenstock to which a crook-handled walking-stick had been tied. A pair of plimsolls had been deprived of their uppers and converted into sandals with the aid of a tape-measure which ran up his two shins and round his calves saying 23, 24, 25, 26, and 58, 59, 60 respectively. He had been slightly rouged and his hair arranged for him and he carried himself as though he had recently been told - as indeed he had been told — that he was 'aw'fly handsome'. He came forward, surveyed an imaginary landscape from under his flattened hands, slowly and calmly, moved pensively across the scene, entered his cave behind the sofa, picked up the greensward on the sofa, selected a cushion from beneath it (laughter) and, extending himself upon the floor, feigned sleep.

Thereupon old Mrs Checkshalton partly entered and was partly pushed on the scene, dishevelled, looking indeed very like a real Goddess of Discord. She was carrying a large orange. She complained in loud whispers she was still uncertain what to do. 'You throw down the apple when we come,' said a voice at the door. 'Yes, just throw the apple down.'

'But fwhat's the good of calling an orange an apple, when it isun't? And I tell ye it's ripe to bursting and not to be thrown about,' she protested, and then remembering her audience, she mopped and mowed towards the company, held up the orange before her face in a cruel and sinister manner and made the most terrible faces at it with an anxious eye on the entrance.

Whereupon the goddesses appeared. The thoroughness with which Mr Palace had been undressed was nothing to the liberality of their disclosures. Lady Cytherea as Venus wore practically nothing but the thinnest muslin and a girdle of broad metal links (cestus) and she had powdered her person and enhanced her charms with rouge very attractively. She was as rosy-fingered as the dawn and in fact generally rosy. It had never dawned on Brynhild before that rouge might be used on any part of the person except the face. Florrie Caterham, crowned as Juno, had lengths of serene white calico before her and behind her, and practically nothing at the sides. She was brown and svelte and the glimpse was startling but delightful. Mess Brew Samson as Pallas had a certain translucent charm in a lawn nightgown and a laurel crown, but she lacked the frank

assurance of her companions.

'And fwhat am I supposed to do now*?*' said Mrs Checkshalton, disregarding the rules that limited her to pantomime. 'Here's the orange for ye,' and having put it down on a convenient card-table she seated herself in the audience.

The three goddesses then executed a brief but effective dance of jealousy and pride. Each in turn reached towards the golden apple and was restrained by the other two. Then Venus discovered Paris who was awakened and brought forward to decide them. There was a further dance about him as a pivot.

Brynhild found she was disliking the way Rowland was being handled by these young women, and she reproached herself bitterly for her illiberal turn of mind. And still more did she reproach herself for disliking Rowland. She had no right - She became aware of Valliant Chevrell seated on a hassock nursing his knees and regarding Palace with an expression of sour but restrained impatience, and then she met frank interrogation in Bunter's eyes.

She had no reply for him. She turned back to the scene.

The three goddesses were now posed for the Judgment of Paris, and Rowland in his attitude was recalling all the worst excesses of all the pseudo-Russian ballets she had ever seen. Then with an elaborate assumption of grace he was down and kneeling at Lady Cytherea's feet, offering her the orange. Juno and Pallas featured resentment; Venus looked almost over-kind, dropping forward, hands extended to receive the prize.

They held this for a moment, the company burst into applause, and then all four actors became human again.

'Can you *guess* it?' said Lady Cytherea.

'Can we *not?*' cried the Countess something or other from Rome.

'That's a great tableau. Where did you get the sheepskins?' asked young Mr Bates.

'The crook was *my* discovery,' said Miss Samson. 'I remembered seeing it.'

'Paris,' said a quiet gentleman in the corner. 'Letter P,' and involved himself in some regrettable but incomplete joke about 'P's and Q's'. He evidently meant to say something neat and found he was saying something quite untidy.

‘And now off you go and make yourselves decent again,’ said Valliant Chevrell, pushing his cousin Cytherea towards the door with a certain cousinly violence. ‘And Bunter and Hickson and I will purge their corrupted minds with terror and pity.’

The Laocoon group was done, after a careful study of the picture in the *Dictionnaire Larousse,* with dignity and decorum. The hose made almost excessive snakes. In fact some one guessed ‘M — Michelin tyres’. Both Valliant Chevrell and Hickson were revealed in patches and fragments as very white men, but it was made manifest that Bunter had been cast, and cast rather well, in light bronze. All the Laocoon family, it seemed, wore wrist-watches.

Applause.

The actors of ‘Paris’ reappeared at another door, restored a little untidily to normal costumes, while the tableau was in progress.

‘Well,’ said Palace, ‘Paris may have been easy, but your Laocoon I call obvious.’

‘Why *not?*’ asked Valliant Chevrell almost disagreeably from among coils of hose that were getting unmanageable.

Meanwhile Brynhild had been doing her best to think out a difficult mixture of immediate problems. They were problems of the most diverse values: little problems and big problems, problems of emotion and problems of dramatic direction. They had jumped upon her simultaneously. One was the inopportune question whether she wasn’t altogether too meek a wife and whether she ought to allow her Rowland to be raped from her under her eyes in this fashion and whether it wasn’t possible to do something quietly firm about it there and then. And the next was just how Rowland was feeling about her and whether he was forgetting even his customary reluctant awareness of her observant presence, and whether it might not be possible - though she had never done anything of the sort before - to rouse his facile competitiveness with some display of wandering interest. And as for the show -?

She must think about Undine.

It seemed to her that something better could be done with Undine than just moping under water for her lost soul and her lost knight. She felt far too much like the part to want to display herself in that fashion. She didn’t know La Motte Fouque’s story — and indeed

who does? — and she imagined she might improvise a scene in which a water sprite who has married a Christian gentleman is exorcised by a crucifix. There had to be the knight in the scene - she had a great idea about that; there was a suit of armour in the broad passage. Why should she not take Rowland for the knight? After all he was her man. She had a right to take him. She would just take Rowland away from these brisk sirens and have a scene in which she was torn away from his arms. He would like wearing that armour...

'Time to go out I think, Mrs Palace,' said Valliant Chevrell. 'Who will you take?'

She had no time to realize the immense bare self-exposure of her next step before she had taken it.

'Rowland,' she said. 'Will you come?'

He was saying something in an undertone to Florrie Caterham who had to direct his attention to Brynhild. He looked up startled and grasped the situation. His expression became defensive.

'You mustn't make me do all the acting, Bryn,' he said, as if he addressed an unreasonable child. 'No.'

For a moment Brynhild felt that she and Rowland held the stage and that every one was observing them.

'This, my dear,' said her guardian angel within her, 'is going to be a Scene — unless you hold tight. So hold tight.'

She held tight.

'Of course,' she said, without a flicker, with a perfect indifference of manner, and paused for a moment to seek a substitute. The impulse to call upon Bunter was so strong and his restrained alertness so plain to her that she suppressed it at once. 'Keep your chin up and your voice soft and hold tight,' said her guardian angel in complete control of the situation.

'Will *you* come?' she said, and young Mr Bates rose in ready compliance.

'And some one else.' Again her eyes floated over Mr Bunter and she picked the man who had sat on her right at dinner.

'I'll tell you,' she said to Valliant Chevrell. 'Can we have some of that suit of armour?'

'Oh! *great* idea!' said Valliant Chevrell.

Brynhild did not think her Undine scene very good, but it was passable and there was much friendly applause. Young Bates wore the armour and relinquished his changeling wife reluctantly over the battlements of the sofa, to a fierce Water Sprite clad mostly in a strange fireplace ornament of weed-like green streamers that some one had unearthed in the housekeeper's room, and bearing a toasting-fork trident from the same locality, and Brynhild, in a retreating conical head-dress of paper and gauze and a slight medievalization of her dinner-frock, was just torn away and sat down to grieve in a not very well suggested cavern in the corner. Afterwards there was some little delay in helping young Bates out of his armour, there were moments when his extraction seemed doubtful; and when Brynhild rejoined the audience, T - it turned out to be Timon - was well under way.

She went to sit on a cushioned window-sill at the back, thinking now abundantly of all the bright things she might have done, which she hadn't done, to make that Undine more effective, and feeling how uninventive and unenterprising she was, so that she did not realize immediately that something had happened to Rowland. Then she forgot about her own deficiencies completely in her observation of him. Something *had* happened to him. He was no longer in the mood of conquering assurance that had distinguished his rendering of Paris. He was suddenly being tremendously left out. The trio had discovered a new and more difficult quarry in Mr Bunter. Some probably tacit and intuitive conspiracy had set them upon drawing out Mr Bunter. They had thought he was shy and afraid of them and so quite negligible, and then they had suddenly suspected that for some inscrutable reason he was not in the least interested in them and rather bored by them. That had changed everything. Mr Bunter had to be seen to. They had dropped Mr Palace simply and frankly.

They had grouped themselves round Mr Bunter and clamoured for him to act with them. They got at Valliant Chevrell, almost visibly pleased to have Palace put back in his place at last, and Brynhild heard Lady Cytherea insisting, 'Oh, but he mahst. He can't refuse.' Finally they led away the new victim.

Mr Bunter's Pluto was felt by many to be the best piece of acting that evening. He sat crowned in regal state on a chair on a table and contrived to look as though he really detested the damned (the Honourable Florence Caterham, the Honourable Alfred Bates, and Lady Dynover) who writhed sinfully but ignored and despised beneath his feet. Persephone enthroned beside him was unable to soften his infernal, his inspissated, gloom. When Mercury (Theodore Hickson, Esq.), in a zephyr silk shirt and shorts, wearing a rather small copper basin, bearing a tolerable caduceus and provided also with a red-covered Baedeker and a Cook's ticket wallet (applause), appeared and poised himself gracefully on one foot to summon her for her annual trip to the upper world, a grim smile of acquiescence lit the monarch's face. He waved off her farewell embraces, indicated irritably that she must not keep the car waiting, featured all the natural relief of a husband who is seeing off a too-attentive spouse, and then with an expression of impish sadism, a god left free at last to do as he pleased, bent forward, glanced over his shoulder to be sure she had really gone and prodded his sceptre into young Bates with the gusto of a long-deferred pleasure. 'Ouch!' said young Bates. Then Pluto, clawing his face with a glare of incredible malignity, considered what he should do to the two lady damned. Florrie looked up, met his expression of perfectly genuine dislike and uttered a perfectly genuine little scream. Mr Bunter sat up, smiled triumphantly at the audience and relaxed to show that the scene was over. (Prolonged applause.)

Rowland was applauding, Brynhild noted. He clapped hard, harder than anybody else almost, but the mask of cold irony had returned to his expressive face. He seemed disposed to become lofty and aloof.

This was interesting. What was he going to do about it?

Scarcely ever was he out of her thoughts and observation for the rest of the evening. She was the freer to concentrate upon him, because in his perplexed efforts to recall the errant trio, he seemed to be exceptionally oblivious of her. His first impulse, she perceived, was to be sulkily aloof in a scornfully dignified manner, 'if they chose to fool about with that bounder', etc., etc., but his intelligence would, she knew, be fully alive to the fact that they would probably

not give a second thought to a mere Byronic disdain. He had to go on being ‘amused’ by them whether he liked it or not. He intended to be in the foreground of their scene when the first freshness of Bunter’s unresponsiveness wore off. From one or two slight intimations, Brynhild was disposed to think he was trying to bring either Lady Dynover or the Italian countess into comparison and competition, but in that matter it seemed to his wife, he was reckoning without young Bates or their host. After that he was quietly charming to Cissie Parkington. Later it became plain from small movements and intimations, that he would if he could, detach Lady Cytherea from her two more trivial allies...

Somehow he did it. Something happened in undertones or in a movement. He must have made a direct appeal, because when about midnight the next charade (Nero) was over and the charade people made their way back to the little tables of flustered, pertinacious bridge players and the barley water and drinks in the central hall, he and Lady Cytherea disappeared through a door in the corridor in the most concerted manner possible and reappeared ten minutes afterwards from the direction of the front entrance, with a cleared-up expression on their candid faces.

The pair of them took the centre of the stage.

‘It’s the mahst wonderful moon!’ cried Lady Cytherea.

‘It’s magic out there,’ said Rowland.

Evidently it had been magic out there and he wanted every one to realize it. There was something proprietorial in his bearing, there was an assertion. Whatever had happened in the garden out there was as nothing to him in comparison with the dramatic assertion of close association, conveyed by this entry.

Brynhild stood with a glass of barley water in her hand marvelling quietly at life.

It had become necessary to both these remarkable people to intimate that in moonlight anyhow, they were of importance to each other, and that for all the finer purposes of life, people like Mr Alfred Bunter did not exist. *Why?* They were playing this at Alfred Bunter, at the company generally, at Brynhild and at themselves, and why they were moved to play this small drama and make this show, Omniscience only knew.

‘Am I different?’ thought Brynhild; ‘or is it just that I can watch other people and not myself? *Do* I do things in that way?

‘I’m passive. After all’ - moment of deep thought— ‘for action one must act.’

She finished her barley water and put down the glass before she realized that there might be something a little defective about that profound philosophical discovery. ‘For action one must act?’ Yet it had seemed to mean something. Act? She smiled at herself with so amused a smile that Valliant Chevrell, watching her across the room and thinking how pleasant it would be to paint her portrait not merely as a lovely subject but a good still sitter, was suddenly struck with the idea that Palace was probably the damnedest ass he had ever known.

7

Late at night Brynhild, in a mood of scientific comparison, surveyed herself as God had made her in her bedroom mirror and weighed her own clear skin and her long and gracious lines against Lady Cytherea’s lively assemblage of blobs, brisk curvatures, and flashes of enhanced and assisted pink.

‘A secret beauty is nothing to him,’ she said to the living Venus before her. ‘*The show’s the thing...*

‘You chose him. You’re married to him.’

She looked into the drooping face before her and suddenly turned and went softly and locked her door very carefully and noiselessly against his still possible intrusion.

That was something she had never done before. And it was something she felt she was going to do now quite frequently.

She returned to scrutinize herself again. ‘I’m beautiful,’ she decided. ‘And what good has it been to me? And what good is it now?

‘I thought life was going to be lovely — and it turns out to be *this.* This sort of thing. And again this sort of thing. And then more of this sort of thing.’

She put on her white silk pyjamas slowly and absent-mindedly. She hadn’t the slightest desire to go to bed. She opened her curtains

and pulled up her blind and surveyed the moonlit garden. It was like a stage scene, an empty stage scene now, set for love.

Love? The universal desire; the universal frustration.

She had begun loving very well. And then somehow it had not gone on. Somehow it had faded into habits and associations. Why had it gone like that? Was that her fault? She couldn't think so. It might have been so different. For a long time it had kept on seeming that it was presently going to be different. And suddenly for no plain reason now it had become manifest that it could never be different until the end of everything...

That was the gist of it.

She turned away from the moonlight. She did not like her thoughts. This was self-pity! This wasn't the sort of thing one ought to be thinking. Think about something else? But somehow she could not think of anything else. What is reading for? Wasn't there a book?... Of course! There on the table. Alfred Bunter!

Maybe it would be just a novel. Anyhow it would be better to read the silliest story than to go on just at present thinking about herself.

8

She read Mr Bunter for two hours. It was an extremely turgid story about hampered and defeated people. 'Turgid' was the word for it. They lived in London as well as in the country; *The Cramped Village,* it seemed, was not a place, but life. They paralysed each other. Dreams tormented them from above and lusts and savage passions from below. They flattened themselves out to the decent exigencies of the Cramped Village. They distressed their poor heads whenever they raised them and they stumbled and fell down whenever they touched earth. Bunter was distressed for them and puzzled by them, and every now and then he broke out into that 'Anger' that people found characteristic and rather amusing in him. The style was rough and yet stimulating and — ? - the word was: *patchy.* In places it gobbled, in places it boomed, and then - it soared.

She knew quite well enough how prose becomes patchy if you worry it too much. How it works into raw places and holes. In her role of sympathetic helper and occasional typist she had had to watch

that happen and say nothing, many times. He was plainly trying to get more into his narrative than his narrative prose could stand. He used disconnected unfused words so that at times his picture had less the effect of a painting than mosaic. He was plainly dissatisfied with the account he was giving of the motives of his characters. He was not quite sure of them himself and also he was not quite sure of the uptake of his readers.

'It's a splutter,' she thought... 'Like a cat with its head in a bag... A man trying most desperately to say something more than *can* be said... But he never fakes. He never walks out from it with an air of having settled it when he hasn't.

'He wants to get into things and under things. He wants to over-feel. He doesn't *believe* in the surface. He doesn't care how things look; he wants to know what things they are...

'Of course, there's a sort of indecency about that...'

She mused along these lines for a while and then she uttered one word out loud — because she wanted to hear it.

'Facade!

'Yes, Mr Bunter,' she reflected, 'you can hit upon the just word at times. The precise word... Among others. Among quite a lot of others.'

She put the book on the table beside her and paused for a moment, sitting up in her bed before she put out the light.

She looked towards the locked door - listening.

Rowland had a way of opening doors very softly and maybe he had been at the door and found it locked. He was quite capable of coming to her like that for consolation, in spite of all the appearances of the evening. Such revulsions had happened before. And if he *had* turned the handle — !

But perhaps he wasn't in need of consolation.

Perhaps that entry from moonlight had put everything square again and he was just sleeping on it happily.

How often had she listened like this to the mystery of Rowland and what he might be doing or feeling in another room!

He couldn't be no better than he seemed to be!

In through those two doors there was perhaps a real Rowland now.

Perhaps the Facade like a discarded garment was hanging over the back of a chair.

At times when he was asleep there was something about him helpless, quite unpretending, faintly silly and very, very, *very* dear and inviting indeed.

‘Don’t be a fool, Bryn,’ she said, and sat up very still for the better part of a minute.

‘Good night, Facade,’ she whispered, clicked down the switch resolutely and thrust her shoulder into her pillow.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Exploring the Laurel Grove

No insurmountable difficulties arose about the installation of Mr Immanuel Cloote. Indeed, so far as installation was concerned, it all went much more smoothly than Mr Palace had ever dared to hope. Brynhild was unexpectedly indifferent to his explanation that he needed an office and an amanuensis, a new amanuensis — Mr Cloote as yet not named — away from home. 'Then I get a walk every morning - every morning that I want to, that is. A change of atmosphere. You understand?'

'It's so reasonable,' she said, 'I wonder you haven't done it long ago,' and he dismissed the thought that there was something enigmatical in her acquiescence.

A suitable office was found on the upper floor of Multiple Building, High Holborn, Mr Cloote displayed great energy and swiftness, and thither presently Mr Palace, feeling unnaturally and excessively modern, repaired to take over the intelligent control of his hitherto neglected and casual growth of laurels. 'It's like the difference between plantation rubber and forest rubber,' said Mr Cloote, displaying his preparations for the great campaign. 'Exactly like - for all practical purposes, that is. It's *grown* now. It used to be *collected.* There you are.'

Mr Palace surveyed the office equipment with interest and a certain doubt whether Mr Cloote could have kept within the estimate agreed upon. To a man who, for the sake of graciousness, had often written on parchment surface paper with a goose quill pen, there was something disconcerting in all this apparatus for the achievement of celebrity. He felt as a medieval swordsman may have felt in the presence of a cannon. He felt like one of King Arthur's Knights who had somehow been given a machine gun, least gentlemanly of weapons. And had been told the other side would certainly use it - unless he shot first.

Mr Cloote had set about his business with manifest gusto. Along one side of the room were fixtures with files and indexes and shelves

containing books of reference, *Who's Who, Who's Who in America,* a Peerage, Literary Year Books, *Europa,* Gazetteers, Press guides, an encyclopaedic dictionary. Upon the opposite wall were maps of the world, of Europe, of England, with flags, and a number of large sheets of squared paper on which the daily number of 'Press mentions' and other indications of the health and well-being of Mr Palace's fame were to be traced. The actual furniture consisted of a sofa, an austere chair, an armchair, a bureau with an office chair, two telephones, an electric clock, and much writing and blotting material. Two large framed portraits of Mr Palace, a table portrait of Mr Palace in childhood, and a bust of a laureated Julius Caesar on a bookcase, completed the adornment of the room.

'Here,' said Mr Cloote, 'in this shelf of folders, assembled under letters of the alphabet, are projects for what I may call our Campaigns - each with it definite, thought-out, duly subordinated and duly co-ordinated, objective. All at present absolutely tentative, subject to your approval. I have been at work upon them - in the night - in trains - on Sunday afternoons - making notes - afterwards transferred. Re-sorted. On this system. On that. Re-shuffled. Masticated. Insalivated. Digested. You must glance over all this. I don't want to give you unnecessary trouble, but here is the plan of campaign. There' - he extended himself and his arms and his large hands towards the shelf of folders with the widening gesture of a swimmer— 'there is the reputation of my greatest writer - folded at present like the wings of a new-hatched moth. Slowly we shall see those wings quiver, extend, grow strong. A moth coming out into the limelight! Out of your cocoon, Mr Palace! And away!'

He turned and stared at and above Mr Palace and then brought his hot face nearer. 'Forgive me if I am excited,' he said. 'But I am very much excited.'

'These folders,' inquired Mr Palace, remaining cool and dignified by an effort. 'What have you in them?'

'Let us take one haphazard,' said Mr Cloote, and chose a folder with great deliberation. '*This,* I think - H'm.

'Now here' - he opened the folder and poised it on one large hand while he indicated much order, division, and sweeping intentions by the other. 'Here we have "Academic Prestige - cultivation of". First,

a preliminary discussion whether it is really worth having - and a carefully reasoned estimate - I will discuss that later - and next a list - I add to it constantly - of what I call Founts, Founts of Honour, distinctions, prizes. In the universal struggle for recognition there are not only universities and fully equipped academies organized to place the palms on such brows, or rather laurels, I should say, where they are most likely to be a credit to the conferrer, but also a number of organizations, societies, prize-giving committees, of very unequal prestige - many of them - which assemble with dignity, with social Eclat, and read important papers to themselves — importantly. Usually on what you might call *distinguished* subjects. The *highest* tone - the very highest. They honour themselves in honouring each other.

'But they have to be chosen. It is a most delicate task. Those Prizes. American women of the socially enterprising sort with titles; *their* prizes are apt to be Bad — thoroughly Bad. I am trying here, by a system of mark-giving, to estimate just what relative value attaches to the better advertised of these Prizes. I give so much for names, on a scale I have worked out.

'If the social element enters ambiguously into the Prize-givings, Mr Palace, what you might call the meretricious element — commercial factors, to be plain - is apt to enter into Book of the Month selections. Through their professional readers, through the *esprit de corps* of their authors. It's natural, it was to be expected that Schroederer, for example, would get his fingers into that. It one Book Club won't do what he wants, he can always start another.'

'That,' said Mr Palace, 'is where the universities come in. They at least -'

'*Would* come in,' said Mr Cloote, 'if you could eliminate political, social, financial considerations... But can you? You can overdo even Academic Prestige, Mr Palace. You can overdo it... For example, consider Dr Nicholas Murray Butler. That Carnegie Trust man. Most able. Splendid, if you could see the real man there! A great imagination. But — He's *encrusted* with the honours and decorations thrust upon him, all from the most respectable Founts, jewelled in *every* hole, so to speak, Mr Palace. No one could be so learned and wise and clever as Dr Nicholas Murray Butler is certified to be by

practically all the universities in the world. It's too much. You can't see the saint for the halo. He ceases to be human, Mr Palace, he becomes a caddis worm of decorations. He's the Pearly King of the Academic World. And all the same—'

Mr Cloote paused to gather his instances.

'Does he rank with D H Lawrence - or Greta Garbo - or Einstein - or Colonel Lindbergh - in the world of Art and Thought and Achievement?'

Mr Palace had no estimate ready.

2

'But this folder,' said Mr Cloote, striking it very hard with his hand to enforce the significance of the word *this.* 'This folder is just one Folder. Let me try to make a conspectus of what I conceive to be your Predestined Career, Mr Palace. Let us try to envisage this business as a Whole.'

He threw the one folder down on the desk as if he had taken a dislike to it. 'Consider,' he said, and for a time left Mr Palace considering in the absolute.

Then with great intensity. 'First: *Personality!*'

'It was precisely about personality,' said Mr Palace, 'the establishment of a personality, that I was thinking, when I wrote my original advertisement. I did not mind being neglected but I realized I might be distorted and misinterpreted. That set me thinking. A personality has to be — conveyed.'

'We differ in our manners, we differ in our gifts,' said Mr Cloote, 'but we think alike. We are going to be a great combination.'

(It seemed horribly true.)

Mr Cloote's next move almost made Mr Palace jump. He took three wide dramatic strides across the room, half-circling Mr Palace, *passant guardant,* as the heralds say, and with the near hand making snaky gestures.

'Mr Palace,' he said, 'you have never been *really* photographed. Never. They just simply don't get you. What I've seen - what your publishers issue - is more like a passport photograph than a picture. What I call - statistics about a face. Recognition notes. Diagrams of

You.'

He came towards Mr Palace, holding his head rather to one side. It was as if he himself was taking a photograph. He framed Mr Palace with his hand, retreated to a better standpoint. 'A mere head and shoulders of an author. Or a politician. Or any public character. For all practical purposes - it's just nothing at all. An author should always be shown in an atmosphere, in an entourage. He should be grouped. He should be doing something. The Public wants that. The author in his Native Habitat. Your photographs hitherto...'

He paused. He threw out a hand of critical disgust. 'A stuffed author. The Sportsman's Club dining-room. Head of an author shot by Mr Schroederer in 1930. A Trophy, not an Ad. Not in any sense of the word, an Ad. *His* Trophy. Rows of heads. Decapitated heads. Bloodless heads. Drained of all reality. What do they convey? Nothing!

'Now let me give you *my* idea,' Mr Cloote continued, though Mr Palace was doing nothing to prevent him.

'I see you' — Mr Cloote raised his eyes to heaven and for a time spoke after the manner of one who sees visions. 'I see you... May I use a word - a key word, Mr Palace. About you. A quality. The word — Debonair!...'

He calmed Mr Palace with an extended hand, deprecating any interruption while his vision continued. 'Let me make myself perfectly clear. Debonair. You could easily be *very* debonair, Mr Palace. I've always thought Il Re Galantuomo a most attractive title. Il Scrittore - No! - Lo Scrittore Galantuomo. A man, just a little aloof — aloof in his soul and yet not too aloof. Smiling but never mingling, friendly, assured, kindly. Capable of immense seriousness, but carrying it easily, lightly. Capable of - adventures. And naturally he had to be seen *unposed* — in transit - in action — caught unawares. A man rather heedless of his public. No standing at attention to be photographed. Good Lord! *No.* In an assembly among delightful people — good, well-known people or lovely-looking people. Smilingly making a repartee... But you get me, Mr Palace?'

'I think you have practically the whole philosophy of publicity there,' said Mr Palace.

'Perfect!' approved Mr Cloote. 'And then instead of saying,

“What’s this barber’s block? Another escape from the waxworks!” they will say, “What’s going on? Who’s that? Of course, that’s Mr Palace. What a lovely garden! Who’s the lady? What can he be saying to her?”’

‘That might be a little difficult to manage,’ mused Mr Palace.

‘Not so difficult as you suppose. I *am* a photographer. I have even been a Press photographer. I have even worked the railway termini and the boats. In times of adversity. Advise me of your friends. Advise me of some pleasant society grouping. I will appear - as from the Local Organ... The expenses and hire of the camera, a mere song... Simple...’

Mr Cloote smiled radiant reassurances.

Mr Palace walked to the window and looked out. How far could he confide his own secret spectacular ambitions to this alarmingly energetic, preposterous, but extraordinarily intelligent man? And yet he couldn’t possibly get what he wanted unless he asked for it. A rather frequent, recurrent appearance with Lady Cytherea, for example...

There would be nothing in it yet everything would be implicitly there. Debonair wasn’t at all a bad word.

Meanwhile Mr Cloote pursued the robust tenor of his way.

‘I would like to put you in flannels, Mr Palace. I think you would look well in flannels. You play cricket? Well then, tennis. But why not cricket? A man’s game. You must give me a list of your games, your sports. Climbing? An author of your build, Mr Palace, would look well on a rock, amongst snowy mountain scenery.’

3

They covered the ground pretty exhaustively before they had done. Some of the ground they returned to and covered again. There was a great air of thoroughness about it all. Some of the things Mr Cloote said seemed already vaguely familiar to Mr Palace. They were regurgitations from that intelligent letter of application which had secured Mr Cloote his appointment, or they were echoes and expansions of earlier contributions by Mr Palace to the discussion.

Occasionally Mr Cloote was seized with an incontinence of

memoranda. He hailed the passing idea with a raised red hand as he might have hailed a taxi. ‘I must put that down,’ he said. ‘I must put that down. I can’t risk losing that,’ and he would go to the desk and scribble, breathing hard, ejaculating fragmentary words, while Mr Palace went to the window and hummed and got new angles upon their projects.

And as they covered the ground and retraced their steps on it, they sowed the seeds of those various activities that ultimately were to expand Mr Palace from his status of a highbrow favourite percolating slowly into the general realm of intellectually snobbish bookbuyers to a writer of world-wide fame, influence, and distinction, a Great Writer. They were to send him on scores of railway and automobile journeys, make him step on to dozens of flower-adorned platforms, project him bowing and smiling from trains, stages and balconies, turn him about time after time, gaily waving a hand to ranks of cameramen.

That day they set in motion the forces that were presently to make Rowland Palace a suitable but not too frequent or regular contributor to the general thought and feeling of the country.

‘Occasions for appearing,’ Mr Cloote called them. ‘As almost accidental as possible. But do them well. Do them memorably. A schoolmaster wants to advertise his school through you. An institution wants to get a press. Publicity swapping. As a rule you turn them down. Turn them down. But not always. Once in a while, as if out of sheer good-fellowship you yield. Some little picturesque country grammar school perhaps. And then you say something deep and moving to those boys which they will remember, which their mothers will remember, which people who write about schools will remember. A revelation of fine feeling.’

‘Feeling? Not sentimentality, I hope. Not quite in my picture, is it? I don’t want to wear my heart on my sleeve, you know.’

‘You don’t. And I don’t want you to. But — Wear your heart *up* your sleeve. Give them a glimpse of it and then — Presto! It’s gone, and you get that enigmatical Palace smile.’

Mr Palace looked sceptical and Mr Cloote hurried on. ‘In all directions,’ he said, ‘there are occasions for appearing. What I should call your Natural Occasions. For example, Agricultural Meetings.

Fire-brigade suppers. Poultry shows.'

'But what have I to do with poultry?'

'Exactly. Precisely. What *have* you to do with poultry? Arouses curiosity straight away. And you make good among the hens! See? And after that for weeks and weeks lots of people won't be able to look at a hen without thinking of those quaint, interesting, penetrating things you said. It's just the things you couldn't reasonably be expected to have anything to do with that broaden you out, widen your basis and (Mr Cloote rose to a deep full-bodied roar and made advancing threatening gestures with his hands) *get you there.*'

'But I don't want to appear a sort of know-everything, you know.'

'Nor I. Johnny Busybody-can't-keep-shut. No fear. It's just that once in a way you let yourself out. Inadvertently. And then you show that sure and certain Palace touch.'

'H'm,' said Mr Palace.

Mr Cloote swept on to a subject already dealt with in his opening letter; fan-mail, the great autograph question, the signed photograph. 'Why be boorish to these poor creatures?' he pleaded. 'Your compliance takes a moment and thereafter the happy recipient becomes, so to speak, your unpaid agent, he feels a sort of ownership, he follows your career in the papers — *he may even get your books!*'

Mr Palace made a sceptical grimace.

'It's happened,' Mr Cloote asserted stoutly. 'Some of them can read. I know it. And certainly those people who want your advice, who ask what you think of infant paralysis, or psychoanalysis, or crossing the Equator, or when to cut your hair, or books they ought to read... A little trouble for you, but then they quote you for years. And you know - I can do all that - just pass you a typewritten letter to approve. I can assure you... We must do it. We can't disdain these — these camp followers of literature. I can make it all perfectly easy for you. Sometime when you are at leisure you might jot down as few of what I might call "Mental Preferences and Characteristics". Then I needn't trouble you generally. Except to sign...'

'It's a bore,' said Mr Palace.

'It's Mulch,' pleaded Mr Cloote. 'Consider it as Mulch.'

They lunched together in that maelstrom of lunching business men, the Holborn Restaurant, and Mr Palace had an opportunity of studying the table manners of Mr Cloote. They were broad and inclusive manners, elbows well out. Mr Palace, in his insular English way, decided that they must have been acquired abroad where people feed so much better and eat so much worse. Mr Cloote never seemed to look at his plate, he just bent down and swept up the food into himself, catching it deftly with his mouth as it rose towards him. His amplitude of gesture was enlarged by knife and fork, and his discourse was sprayed with crumbs, but he kept on and kept on. Curiously enough this gave no offence to Mr Palace. He liked it. It opened a gulf between them; it mitigated that disagreeable sense of intimacy, of kindred, of something unpleasantly like being searchingly mirrored and told immodestly about oneself. A man who eats as one eats oneself is a friend and brother. But a man who scoops and engulfs food is an instrument. Cloote was much more endurable, Mr Palace was realizing, as an instrument.

The business men about them were preoccupied with their own affairs. Nobody seemed to be looking or listening, and that, Mr Palace felt, was just as well. For now Mr Cloote was dealing again with the broader aspects of a world reputation and returning to the subject, the very indelicate subject, of the Nobel Prize. He talked about that as though he were the trainer of a prospective World Champion. In imagination he set Mr Palace sprinting through the Continent. ‘We must travel,’ said Mr Cloote. ‘You have to make yourself known in the Baltic countries and eastern Europe. You’d like Scandinavia.’

He reflected. He smiled at some memory. ‘Can you stand a lot of drink?’

Mr Palace weighed himself. ‘I have a certain resisting power. A normal resisting power.’

‘Drink makes *me* — garrulous,’ said Mr Cloote. ‘I have to be careful.’

‘I got drunk in Bergen once,’ Mr Cloote reflected. ‘It was Sunday. Ever been in Bergen on Sunday? Makes a Sabbath in Scotland seem

giddy. It was raining. Ever seen it rain in Bergen? And there was a great temperance demonstration going on in the Square. Most uncalled-for. Wet banners. Wet umbrellas. Wet women in wet mackintoshes. The band sounded wet. There wasn't so much as a cinema open. I *had* to get drunk. It was troublesome to get but I got it.'

'And that broke down your usual — taciturnity?' smiled Mr Palace.

'I went out into that Square. I *tried* to tell them what I thought of them. In Norwegian. I was never very good at Norwegian. I broke their Norwegian badly. Inadvertent indecency. I was locked up... My salad days.'

Mr Cloote turned abruptly to other agencies of literary distinction and particularly to Academies.

'I doubt if we really want Academies,' said Mr Palace, 'at least in the English-speaking countries. A British Academy would be bound to exasperate feeling in American literary circles — none too good, anyhow.'

'Lots in that,' said Mr Cloote. 'They'd be sour. Certainly they'd be sour. An Academy would be worse than Olympic Games in really keeping the sores open. All the same, Mr Palace, you have to consider it. It may be undesirable, but it may come. It is comes, you want to be on the bus. It really isn't fame in itself. You can't expect the public to adore a mixed bus-load of forty literati. Sort of troupe. But all the same, they might notice it if you weren't there. Americans, for example. Think nothing of you if you had it, but think there was something damned wrong with you if you hadn't. They're used to branded articles. You can't ignore Academies, Mr Palace, for one simple reason: you can't afford they should ignore you. You've got to make your calling and election sure. The project of a real group of Imperial Academies isn't dead; it's sleeping. Some chap might think of reviving it presently - to build up the dignity of the Crown. Empire of the mind and all that. It's a wonder to me that Ramsay Macdonald never had a shot at it. He'd love to be a great lord of literature and tell them all what. Booming away. Think of it. Think of the satisfaction it would give all round to heaps of people with a pull. Canadian Academy with a President. South African

Academy with a President. Australian President. New Zealand president. Dublin Academy. And so on. A majestic one in London. You can't be *out* of that. You can't be late. You must be *there* — in position. And the whole question of literary circles, the swing of literary gossip, the fermentation of a reputation, the harvesting of criticism, I can assure you, it's a most fascinating department. Gossip particularly. Most fascinating.

'Gossip particularly,' said Mr Cloote, twiddling his fingers in front of his face in a strange hypnotic manner.

He looked through the mist of quivering fingers at metaphysical things. 'One of the greatest ideas of our time - Relativity!'

'We aren't going to Parnassus via the Fourth Dimension, are we?' exclaimed Mr Palace.

'We're going direct to Parnassus. But all the same — all the same there's Relativity!'

Mr Cloote leant over the table. 'There is no such thing, Mr Palace, as *absolute* greatness. Your advance is relative. You want an outstanding position. If you are surrounded by others, by clustering others, how can you outstand?'

'I don't quite get this,' said Mr Palace.

'Nature red in tooth and claw,' said Mr Cloote.

'You don't want me to *eat* other writers?'

'No.' Mr Cloote took counsel with himself for some time. 'This,' he said, 'is a service I do you and nothing I ask you to do. In fact the word for you here is — pardon me— "keep out". But we have to be chary of the growth of other reputations. A false reputation, shot up in the night, fungoid, that might take the wind out of our sails... We can't ignore it.'

'I am the least competitive, the least envious of men.'

'Exactly! Perfect! It is in your picture. Careless. Debonair. Yes. Nevertheless, when one sees other people, sinister figures, illegitimate competitors... This queer man from nowhere, for example, who had just loomed up, this boomster Bunter.'

'He appears to be a very harmless person.'

'I mention him only as a type — and because I happen to know a few things about him.'

'I want to know nothing about that man's private life - or any

one's private life.'

'Precisely. Perfect. As I desired. That sort of thing... Invisible... Ignored by you.'

Mr Cloote became intensely confidential and breathed close to his employer: '*But not ignored by me. No.*'

Mr Palace waved the evil suggestion aside with a graceful impatient gesture and turned to the waiter for the bill.

'I love all this,' said Mr Cloote. 'I love it. I am a born Yes-Man. When other babies were saying "Pa-Pa", "Ma-Ma", I must have been saying "Ya-Ya". Loyalty is a secretion with me. It oppresses me. It has to be discharged.'

5

When Mr Palace returned home from Multiple Buildings, he had a bath. At times he liked to soak in a bath and think. He was thinking now.

He remained for quite a long time in his bath, thinking over the vulgarity, the verbal exuberance, the pretentiousness, the utter lack of scruple or delicacy, the probable dishonesty and the undeniable energy of Mr Cloote. And Mr Palace told himself he would not have things otherwise.

The man was an instrument, a tool. 'A mercenary. A bravo. My Minion,' said Mr Palace, feeling like a Florentine nobleman of the best period. 'My creature. My henchman. By the way — what is a hench? Hench? Hench? Some sort of a horse perhaps? In a panoply. Rowland Palace on the high hench with his trusted henchman beside him.'

Mr Palace applauded himself by swirling the water. Then he became still again.

Joking apart, Cloote was necessary. In this swift, crowded, violent new world in which we live such agents are necessary. You don't dine with your dustman, but you have to avail yourself of his services all the same.

It was a Florentine nobleman who towelled himself in Mr Palace's bathroom.

At dinner that night he was unusually debonair. Brynhild couldn't

imagine what had got hold of him.

CHAPTER NINE

Mrs Palace Meditates on the Lot of Women

In the October of that year there came a run of golden days in which Brynhild found herself rather alone and much occupied with her own thoughts. Her husband had gone off to Scotland on one of those novel excursions that were becoming now recurrent variables upon the pattern of their existence. He was to give an address on Strength and Delicacy to the students' association of Dunbuttock University College. And then he was to stay a week with the Burnadips at Garvie Castle.

These new and lengthening departures puzzled her. They had a flavour of disentanglement. She felt, and she felt that he behaved as though he also felt, that an implicit treaty was being tacitly broken.

He was as little communicative as possible on each occasion about the places and objectives to which he went. But invariably for some days after each excursion a multiplication and distention of his bundles of press-cuttings occurred and from these she did what she could to understand the drift of his proceedings. With all the will in the world to find some coherent purpose in them she was drifting more and more towards the conclusion that for some reason for which perhaps she was partly but very obscurely to blame, a long suppressed exhibitionism had been released in her husband, and that he was now, as they used to say at school, 'showing off'. He went from her to have a good show off. But why?

Before this present journey to Scotland there had been four of these expeditions in which she had played no part and of two of them she had been quite unaware until the report of them had reached her. One she learnt about for the first time through his sudden appearance on the newsreel at the Curzon Cinema, as a brilliant batsman in the annual charity cricket match at Long Marringbury between Actors and Authors. She had never suspected him of cricket and she had attached no importance to his spending the August Bank Holiday weekend with a few other writers in Essex. She did not know he had been taking secret intensive lessons from a professional for a

fortnight before the event. But then to her intense astonishment he appeared in bright new flannels, carrying his bat, chin up and debonair to an extreme degree, the best-looking author in the bunch. He stole the picture.

'The Author of *The Supple Willow Wand* shows he understands how to wield the willow,' said the picture.

'But the "Supple Willow Wand" in his book was a Chinese lady!' protested Brynhild to herself.

And then came the cuttings. Hitherto the Actors and Authors had had their happy little match in Wiltshire, usually in lucky weather, indulging in an amiable blend of real and fictitious puerility and really being boys-together with a very minimum of gentle genial publicity. But this year with Mr Rowland Palace as the new boy — nobody quite knew how it was he had been brought into the eleven - things were insidiously different. No direct responsibility could be traced to Mr Palace, but there was a new and formidable camera-hound on the scene, with abundant dark curly hair, a vertical squint, a voice of great range, clutching hands and urgent hypnotizing gestures, and his concentration on Mr Palace was undeniable. He took shots indeed of everybody, but few of these other shots survived. He was also, it became apparent, the representative of Topical Films. Very few of the players — not even among the Actors - realized that a movie take was afoot outside the marquee until it was all over. Then there was no opportunity to pose. There may have been a faint surmise about the state of affairs, but Palace under scrutiny remained as debonair as a flag in a good breeze. And most of them were too worried trying to remember how the movie camera might have caught them to think about him.

The cricket match spate had hardly died out of the English press-cutting and was just beginning in the American packages, when Mr Rowland Palace was discovered to have discovered Quilp Crake, the artistic strawberry-grower at Westerbridge.

Brynhild had never heard of this Quilp Crake. Rowly had never said a word about him to her. Then suddenly here was Rowland opening a local show of 'glowing roseate pictures' he called them and making it a national event. He had run down from London by road it seemed the other afternoon and with him was a Bloomsbury

contingent hitherto unattained by him, and the Duchess of Shonts and Lady Cytherea Label and so on and so forth, with the usual competent photographer. There stood Rowland expatiating on the peculiar colour sense that had lifted Quilp Crake at one step from the status of a secret shamefaced amateur in a greenhouse, to that of a universally astounding artist. She stood at the breakfast table with the cutting in her hand as Rowland came down.

'I didn't know you cared for painting,' she remarked.

'Dear, dear!' said Rowland, featuring a vexation that would not have deceived a lap-dog. 'Have they got all that again?'

'You didn't tell me.'

'It happened impromptu — so far as I was concerned. I was carried away. Did they get my speech?'

'Verbatim I should think,' she said, handing him the cutting.

He read. 'Fairly good,' he said, sitting down to his breakfast.

'I would have liked to have seen those pictures,' she remarked after an interval.

He stopped with half a sausage on his fork and reflected gravely. 'If you had been there, my dear,' he said, 'I should have known those pictures for the daubs they are. And I didn't want to do that.'

'Why?'

'It is like that.'

'They were daubs?'

'With something else. I tried to say it...'

She regarded him sideways. What had he tried to say? 'Do you like these new sausages?' she asked quite needlessly.

'That man gets his effects like a sunset,' he explained. 'Not a shadow of any intention. But he gets his effects. I was asked to go down quite suddenly... And anyhow you wouldn't have liked it.'

The next surprise for Brynhild was the presence of her once so reluctant husband, very grave and thoughtful, at a Summer Peace Conference which had met to discourage warfare in an inoffensive way amidst pleasant surroundings just outside Birmingham. Here the photographer got him rather close and large and seriously downcast. He rose from out amidst ferns, and his background was a bishop and a liberal peeress, both out of focus. The speech was on another page of the paper and it was given at some length. He would be the last, he

said, ‘to deny the noble tradition of the Warrior in the past. In his esteem the Knight in Armour stood beside the Saint. In those days the Weapon was the Sword. It chose. It looked to see whom it slew...’ And so on.

Bryn read all that with an expression of meek edification. Then he’ventured to make a suggestion or so, but with little expectation that what he had to say would be heeded’.

His proposal was a simple one, the total prohibition of air-warfare, of the use of gas, high explosives, and incendiary substances. Simple.

Never yet had Brynhild come so near to thinking her husband an ass. She was moved, as she was rarely moved, to express her criticism. ‘But, darling,’ she said, putting down the paper, ‘*who* will prohibit air-warfare, the use of gas, high explosives, and incendiary substances?’

He did not look at her. How rare it was becoming now for their eyes to meet!

He stood up. ‘It’s just that want of faith,’ he said slowly, ‘that makes this modern world the horror that it is.’

That was all.

He walked quietly out of the room. ‘Either I am a leering sceptic,’ thought Brynhild, ‘or Rowly is a touchy child of eight.’

It was rapidly becoming clear to her that unless Rowly was a child of eight her married life was becoming unendurable. And even on that hypothesis it was anything but satisfactory. She pushed the newspaper aside and turned to her housekeeping.

The fourth expedition took Rowly to the popular seaside resort of Morganspool for an afternoon to open ‘Ye Fleet of Odd Ships’, and that again was done before Brynhild had news of it. The Fleet of Odd Ships was a collection of nefs, ships’ models, silver ships and ivory ships, votive ships, ships in glass and china to hold flowers, ships made in prisons, and ships cunningly inserted by sailors and prisoners through the necks of bottles. The collection had been left by its creator to the borough of Morganspool and on the spur of the moment and at the invitation of the mayor, Lady Cytherea had motored Palace down from London to inaugurate the exhibition. Here again the thoughtful side of Rowly was uppermost. ‘Man the

eternal wanderer makes himself a home and then over his very hearth, he puts the model of a ship.'

But the latest departure of Rowland in this new moth-like career of his towards the blaze of fame, had put his wife out much more than any of the previous occasions. It went further in the direction of separation. Hitherto it had seemed to be tacitly agreed between them that socially they went together. For weekends and mixed dinners and so forth they had been a brace. She had to dress well, look beautiful, behave nicely and be a credit to him. And she had been. Up to quite recently he had shown an unquestionable pride in her. She had seemed an essential part of his ensemble.

She had found a cheerful pleasure in these visits. There was real amusement in a quizzical Who's Who? of the arrivals, in the conversations and the games, in the inspection of the village hall or the parish church or the ruined castle, and it was pleasant to come at last to her chintzy bedroom and an exchange of observations about the company. Generally he would wind up by telling her that never in all the world had he known so lovely a woman as she was and that the more he saw of other people the more he adored her. And so to kneeling beside her armchair and tender intimacies.

If that sort of things was to be cut out and Rowly was going to do weekends and even whole large portions of week unencumbered, then Mrs Rowland Palace was beginning to realize she would find herself with more time and energy on her hands than she knew how to use.

What was she going to do with herself?

It wasn't that she was an abandoned wife. It wasn't that Rowly had ceased to be in the common acceptance of the term her lover. He wasn't deserting her; he was just overflowing beyond her limitations. He was flooding the adjacent country. He was greedy. But he came prancing back from these new expedition an ardent and appreciative husband, rather greedy, very self-satisfying and quite oblivious to the possibility that he could ever be unwelcome to her.

Some streak of pride in her was provoking her to disillusion him.

She had locked her door at Valliant Chevrell but then he had never found out that she had locked her door. Supposed she locked her door now at home?

He would be the most astonished and hurt of men.

The provocation to do something of the sort, if only to hear him argue about it, was very considerable.

She smiled faintly and added it to an unwritten list of Agenda in her mind.

She reflected on the evanescence of her memories of love-making. Did all people forget those intense moments as she did? Are there no fast-colour phases of passion? Are they semirealities, hybrids of time and dream? Once it seemed, unless her memories betrayed her, he had been a divinity and love had been wonderland; and then there had been a long phase of hearty mutual appreciation. At least that is how it seemed to be now in that peculiar region of her mind, that restless region where some recurrent stir is continuously dissolving away the edges and the details of events. But certainly making love had been lovely, and now it was no longer lovely. Now at any rate he was just a pampered thing that she embraced and tolerated out of habit.

2

And then suddenly it jumped into her mind that she was quite out of love with Rowly and that equally he was out of love with her. Nothing led up to this idea. It appeared suddenly in her mind as a self-evident fact that had been there, quite disregarded for a long time. Her thoughts were like some chemical mixture that quietly reaches the exploding point and then explodes.

Abruptly it was plain to her that she did not love him, that she did not admire him, that she had only the scantiest respect for him, that she knew him as exasperatingly vain and disingenuous. There was no process of gradual suspicion and discovery in this realization. It was like a shutter falling to expose a plate. It was like an electric light turned on unexpectedly in a darkened room.

'Of *course!*' she said.

For a while her mind stopped dead at that. By sheer inertia she went on with the seemly routine of her daily life. She attended two linen sales to repair the wear and tear of her household stock. She visited an infirm great-aunt, played bezique with her and discussed

transferring her from her present boarding-house to a much more comfortable and hardly more expensive residential hotel. She went to a show of the Royal Horticultural Society. She attended, to vote rather than talk, a meeting of the committee of a Marylebone Housing Society which was slowly buying up slums and rebuilding them as tolerable but not too costly working-class dwellings. It was a meritorious common-sense enterprise in which she had invested three hundred pounds of her own money — in spite of a certain disapproval on the part of Rowly. He didn't think it wise to mix up monetary affairs with public service.

Then, while she was sitting at the table listening to the secretary's report, her mind began working again.

What does a modern married woman who finds she is not in love with her husband and that he is very plainly losing anything but a physical interest in her, do about it?

This new train of thought once it was started, started off so vigorously that the chairman of the meeting had to ask her twice whether she voted for the motion or against it, before she could be recalled to the business in hand.

3

Once this train of thought had come out of its incubatory tunnel and started openly upon its journey it bore her along relentlessly. She thought all day and for a considerable part of a very restless night. 'What am I going to do about it?' she asked. 'What sort of outlook have I before me?'

She tried hard to recall when it was she had stopped loving Rowly. The astounding thing was that now it seemed that right back, far back, even to those remote days among the lakes, she had known that she did not love him.

Had life played a trick upon her? Or had she through some fault of her own stumbled at the threshold of life? Perhaps she had sailed into life too confidently and too confidingly. Had she assumed too much about it? In those buoyant days between seventeen and twenty, her hope and expectation had been of a tremendous companionship which was to go on developing through the years. Rowland had

seemed to be just the predestinate companion she needed. They had been immensely in love with each other, or at any rate she had been immensely in love with him. Surely. Surely! There was to have been work together, adventures together, travel together, success together, a continual rich mutual endorsement. That was the essence of the handsome offer life had seemed to be making her, the most popular girl in the school, the easy first in classics, Brynhild of the unruffled good manners and the pleasant voice. In the background of this picture, with a faint modern flavour of postponement about them, there had been children. More remotely the companionship attained maturity and dignity in the midst of a constellation of starry offspring.

And so she had gone off to the honeymoon and the Alps and then - nothing more. By imperceptible degrees indeed something less. Less and less co-operation, less and less mutual confidences, less and less frank talk, less and less assurance. Seven years of ebb.

For a time the Great Fair of Life which she had learnt about from literature and art, had seemed to be a going concern. If she, in her little corner of repetitive and decelerated love-making with Rowland, felt she was rather settling into an eddy, the natural expectancy of youth assured her that this was only a transitory recession. It hadn't at first struck her as significant that the chief entertainments in the Great Fair of Life seemed to be swooping to and fro in the swings and circulating faster and faster on the roundabouts and returning perpetually in each case to the point of departure. That wasn't evident to the spectator at first because sweeping up or down in a swing or holding tight to a roundabout horse gives the human countenance and bearing a purposive quality such as no sustained forward advance, with all its scaring novelty and uncertainly, could ever possibly produce.

But now the vain repetitions of life displayed themselves to her with an appalling clearness.

She was caught in that eddy. She was just spinning round in that eddy while the stream of life was flowing by. The eddy was flatter than it used to be but it held her just the same. And there was no prospect, no open door at least, of escape from this futile circling about Rowly. Was this the universal lot of women? And of men too?

Did they just begin — and circle? All of them?

It was certainly a very common lot. ‘Everything goes round, my dear, and comes back — a little different — a very little different — but it comes back.’ It was her father’s voice. She remembered a night with him and his old brass Georgian telescope, in the vicarage garden, and how he had made her conscious of the circling life of the sky. Even the stars in their orbits went about and returned, and if there was indeed a general drift in things they circled unconscious of it, perigee to apogee, perihelion to aphelion, hurrying exaltation and prolonged recess.

Was that all life was?

A brilliant evanescent promise as gay as the breeding plumage of a humming-bird and then this dullness, this pointless recurrence of small and diminishing excitements. A broken promise? She began casting about in her mind for instances of other people who might be escaping this fate. But they all seemed to be spinning. Hitherto she had always thought there was something distinguished and significant about herself. Now, belatedly perhaps, at six and twenty, it was dawning upon her that her life was probably going to be a quite ordinary life, just another among the ordinary lives that were eddying about her. And she found this an extraordinarily distasteful idea. She found a very strong urgency in her to break away.

But how can any one break away?

She was a satellite of Rowly and he was tracing some incomprehensible orbit of his own.

How was it possible to break away?

—

The recognized code of morality, the legal conception of social duty, forbade her to break away at all. This was the situation to which she had been called, this was the way of life she had chosen, and she had to endure it.

What would her father have said about it? Not exactly that. He would have said, ‘My dear, it is for you to decide. I have done my best to put the established code of morality before you. As a churchman I was bound to do that, but as a Protestant and a pagan I am bound not to anticipate your decision.’

Who believed nowadays in the established code of morality? The

romantic spirit which had always run counter to morality and seemed nowadays to be triumphantly in control of our conduct, was dead against any such submission. It was dead against complaisant wives. If Rowly and she were no longer in love, said the romantic spirit, that was the end of the affair. The next step was to fall in love afresh and begin all over again with another man. Or rather to let another man being all over again with her. Her marriage was to be treated as a point of departure and some remarkably different male, some entrancing Perseus, was to come fluttering down the sky to release her.

All fiction is full of these fluttering Persei, they are as common there as white butterflies on an early day in summer. They take the initiative. They overcome all your scruples. They do everything for you. It is very misleading to the young. Brynhild could not persuade herself that in real life she had ever so much as glimpsed a specimen. She had never felt that slightest disposition to fall in love with any one but this difficult and acutely disappointing Rowly of hers, and she had very grave doubts whether any one had ever been to any extent in love with her. And if now she was out of love with him, that did not mean she was in love with any one else. She had not the slightest desire in her for a Perseus.

Perseus seemed to offer no solution to her difficulty. Suppose there was a slightly super-Rowly hovering just beyond the limits of visibility, and supposing there presently arrived a triangular situation, confrontations, generosities, elopements, a tangle of embarrassing complications, a sort of torn, mangled, and spread-out second honeymoon; what would it bring her to? Could it end on anything better than other sexual roundabout, another cycle of board, bed, and *da capo;* another home which had to be housekept somewhere — with a studio perhaps or a factory or an office, in place of a study to which after the roseate days, husband number two would increasingly withdraw. Could it be much better? She tried to imagine some sort of super-Rowly who would restore meaning to life for her. Not a shadow came. If the Creator had sat down beside the green park chair in which she was sitting and offered to dispense at once whatever prescription she chose to give him and put the new man before her, she could not have specified a single detail: appearance,

profession, character. So that not only was there no sign of a super-Rowly in the world, but also no desire in her heart for one. Apparently whatever there was in her in that way had been taken by Rowly and used up and left spinning emptily.

'Emptily,' she said aloud as though she was definitely pinning down that part of her meditation before going on to cut out the next.

'So I'd better look for something else?' she mediated. 'It's up to me.'

Something had to be done, some way of mitigating this concentration of her life that had put her so entirely under the sway of Rowly's behaviour, so entirely dependent on his presence. And it had to be something that would not put her at the mercy of the behaviour of any one else.

'Independence,' she considered. 'A life of one's own.'

She sought through her married acquaintances for examples of women who had at some phase or other in their careers, got detached, as apparently she was going to be detached, from close and habitual association with their husbands. Mostly they were women older than herself. They got along — they got along from day to day — many of them with an appearance of great brightness and self-satisfaction. How deep in, did that self-satisfaction go?

Quiet Lovelies observe much, they are obliged to observe much, and she doubted profoundly the inner contentment of these smart, brisk, incessantly active matrons - childless or with one or two parked-out and negligible children - who fluttered from one thing to another, playing bridge, playing tennis, going out, seeing everything, putting in an appearance everywhere, gossiping, scandalizing, befriending, consuming cocktails, doing exercises, dieting, having treatments, developing personality in pets, furnishing and refurnishing, making gardens.

Some of them had followers of a sort — not so much lovers as hangers-on. So far as this class of women went the hangers-on didn't seem to be of any real importance. Mild exercises in competition and jealousy seemed to be all that happened. The husbands on their rare detached appearances did not seem to be uneasy.

In her private classification of human beings she called these ladies the bridge and club lot. Perhaps playing bridge and eating at

clubs was not the profoundest quality they had in common, but it marked them all. There was Mrs McGree, for example, there was Rose Lavender who had been her senior at the High-farthing school, there was Lady Alice Armand, and they all kept up an appearance of being particularly competent bridge players. Mrs McGree, in addition, was interested in a furniture shop. And Lady Alice professed a highly developed interest in the turf and Monte Carlo. But that was rather off the beat of the Palaces. Lady Alice gave Brynhild to understand she had immense passions for loss and gain, that 'thrilling' crises occurred.

For the passion of loss and gain, Brynhild with her vicarage-classic origins, had a profound, an almost formless contempt. You simply did not either risk or grab money; it was an indecency. And as for the bridge. As a game it was interesting for a time and then fatiguing. You sat with your thirteen cards and guessed from rational indications the lie of the other thirty-nine. It wasn't so overwhelmingly difficult if every one played in simplicity and good faith. But it was overlaid by a complex of systematized signalling systems, this convention and that, which nothing could persuade Brynhild was not elaborate half cheating. About these systems Rose and Mrs McGree were swiftly technical and very touchy. Lady Alice had a mystical manner and a mysterious smile. In practice on such rare occasions as when Brynhild made a fourth with all or some of these friends, she found them without exception extraordinarily woolly about what was actually going on. A mixture of undigested conventions enhanced their natural inadvertency. Jacks, tens, nines went by them unobserved; they never seemed to be quite clear whether there were fifteen cards to the suit or only eleven. But the one convention they never broke was that at the bridge-table they were existing in a state of alert super-intelligence unknown to the uninitiated, a state of super-intelligence which never extended to any other aspect of their days.

Brynhild would play bridge with close attention for three or four hands and then give way to boredom, stop noting and remembering. Her partners never seemed to observe her early acuteness or her subsequent lapses. If her cards were good and her play fortunate she was treated with respect. If not, the oddest manifestation of irritation

might appear. Somewhere in the back of it all there was a marvellous pretence of expertise. The game was not indeed a game of pure chance but it was preposterous, she thought, to pretend a game of impure chance could ever be made more 'scientific' than was involved in a wary evasion of risks and the prompt grabbing of occasional opportunities. 'Scientific Bridge' was just a way of glorifying one special sort of fiddling with one's mind. Backgammon was in another grade in the same class of futility. These were substitutes for any real use of the brain. But these other women became flushed, snappy, and exalted, questioned if their games was 'improving', excited themselves with the thought of a perpetual dribble of gain, became uneasy if the game was delayed or withheld.

Said Lady Alice Armand one day, 'If you went in for bridge, you know, you'd play it quite well in no time.'

Brynhild found that an illuminating phrase. 'If you went in for-'

Was that what she had to do now? Go in for — ?

They had 'gone in' for bridge. Other women she knew had 'gone in' for tennis, swimming, mountaineering. Just as they went in for cures or diets. And some 'went in' for literary appreciation, for Proust and modern poetry, and some furnished houses and arranged gardens for occupation rather than profit. They were all indefatigably busy. They did these things, she realized now, because something central had dropped out of their lives, because they were in headlong flight from the most terrible of monsters, a devouring disappointment, an enveloping vacuum, the relentless tentacles of nothingness. And that queer feverish unreality she detected in all of them — for their emotions, their judgments, their values were as much painted on them as their eyebrows and their complexions — was a warning beforehand of the futility of 'going in' for any of these opiates against the pursuing sense of frustration that overshadowed her.

She sat down in a green chair in the park in the afternoon to have it all out with herself. Slowly she ticked off the items on the menu that life, as she knew it, put before her. What lay ahead for her? Social occasions? Meetings with people all most desperately attempting to keep it up that they were doing something and that something was happening to them, when, as a matter of fact, they

were doing nothing and nothing whatever was happening to them, except the inexorable passage of time. The shows of life, concerts, theatres, sport, and the general gadding about of social existence had no appeal for her. Books — some amateurish art? Painting? Sculpture? If one had companionship one might get 'fun' out of these things perhaps. But now she knew plainly and harshly that she had no companionship. Without an intimate to give it substance the succession of shows and social events was revealed in all its flat, unprofitable insignificance.

She couldn't do these things, she couldn't 'go in' for them. Whether her inability arose from a lack of will or whether her lack of will was due to her inability seemed an open question to her.

'It's queer,' she said. 'I'm not a fool. And yet I'm not a bit clever at any of these things. And I don't want to be.'

Games, gambling, little businesses, shows, plays, books, pictures, sculpture, charities and good works. She couldn't see herself filling the emptiness ahead with any of these.

5

'It isn't good enough,' she said.

'And who are *you,*' said an accusing voice within her, 'to refuse to live the sort of life that countless women live with a reasonable contentment? All life is compromise.'

'I've heard that before. I don't care a rap whether I am good enough for anything. What matters is that none of these things are good enough for me. I am so made that they are not good enough for me. They do not satisfy me. I may have to compromise in the end, but *may the Almighty damn and destroy me for ever, if I compromise a particle when I am thinking in my private thoughts.* (I got that from my father.)'

She had remembered for years her father's strange outbreak, and now it seemed that suddenly for the first time she understood it. It had happened when she was eighteen, a little before his sudden death. The old man had been sitting at dinner with her one Sunday night, brooding after his manner, and apparently as oblivious of her as he was of the glass and silver and flowers upon the table.

Suddenly he had dumbfounded her with a question that made her doubt her ears.

'Brynhild, my dear,' he asked. 'What did you think of my sermon tonight?'

She was quite unprepared to say anything about it. It had perplexed and yet attracted her. But the old man took her inability to criticize as a matter of course. He did not bother her to defend herself. He went on talking in his slow, deep voice, without looking at her; his sombre eyes on the distant twilit downland, his closed fine hands resting on the table.

'Over your head it was,' he went on, 'and over all their heads. And yet I was trying to talk to some one. All through life one goes on thinking, trying to get it right. Never getting it exactly right. The one precious thing in life, my dear, is integrity - an inner integrity. The hard, clean, clear jewel, the essential soul. No matter where it takes you. I've never tried to give you much religious instruction. I've never tried to build up any blind Faith in you. It's time I told you that. Creeds are incantations, my dear, and Faith is a stampede from Reality. High time I told you that. One has to make one's compromises, accept unopened packets at times — better eat canned food than starve. Yes. But remember always, it's canned food. Don't woosh and pretend that stuff is marvellous like these damned young fools from Oxford. Know what you are doing. I hold this living. I go through these services. You saw me tonight kneeling for a moment in silent prayer before that sermon which was too plain and clear for any one to understand.'

He paused, and father and daughter looked at one another with a mixture of wonder and intimacy.

'What I pray more and more frequently nowadays, Bryn, is this: May the Almighty damn and destroy me utterly and for ever, if I compromise in one particle when I am thinking in my own private thoughts. You think that over. You remember that. That's what I want to get over to you, my dear, somehow. And the creeds, all three of them, and the Old and New Testament and the Prayer Book and Hymns Ancient and Modern may get up and quit in a body if they don't like that little addendum.'

She learnt that by heart from him, she wrote it down that night in

her bedroom and she repeated it to herself now.

It was as if he had just said it.

‘And so,’ she reflected, ‘I can say it’s not good enough. Even though it is equally true that I am no good at all. If I’m no good at all - and I tell you I don’t believe it — then that is just as much *your* fault as the other thing.’

Noiselessly but obstinately she shaped the words.

‘I tell you. It isn’t good enough.’

6

But there were some things that did seem good enough to her. And yet she knew that they were things she could not do. She could not bring herself to do them. Other people made of like flesh and blood as herself did them and lived happily by them. She could even say that among these things worth doing some might be found that it would be reasonable to say she ought to do.

The Palaces knew Oscar Geck the biologist and at their house she had met and listened to men like Lee Fredericks the mathematician who had become an economist, and Doctor Brad-Haughton and Lord Cray. And she had once met a young man at a weekend party who had talked to her about Geck, under whom he had served for a time as student and assistant. It was his enthusiasm had lit up all the rest for her. These scientific workers seemed for the most part unusually simple, often with a sort of shallow and obvious worldliness that did not conceal the fact that they were essentially absent-minded. Essentially their minds were absent, transferred to regions in a world far nearer to reality than this everyday world where facades existed perilously and crumpled as they arose. She had read and listened and asked about the scientific worker and she had come to believe that, in his way of living at least, an austere, sustained satisfaction in an undying advance could be found. She had had opportunities of watching Geck, of weighing him against her own master of unreality. Geck too cared for reputation, success, prosperity - yes. But as secondary things. When he went into his laboratory and put on his white overalls he left such concerns with his hat and coat outside.

The foundations for this immense respect with which she regarded

Science had been laid in her girlhood by her father. Yet he knew practically nothing of modern science and was disposed to regard it with suspicion. But he knew the reality of science under the name of Philosophy. He had wisdom there in a stouter, more primitive form. His classicism was the classicism of Plato, Aristotle, and Alexandria, he despised Homer (who, he agreed with Butler, might very well have been in part an enthusiastic old lady), and he thought the comparison of Ancient and Modern art and literature a paltry discussion. Savages can produce art and barbarians epics. Most children can draw better than most adults and cave men better than English gentlemen. Music substitutes rhythm for reason. Little birds sing sweetly, though usually too early in the morning and at other inopportune times, but the human voice uplifted in song is disturbing and detestable to all calm-minded men. All art and literary art is trivial and debatable. But Philosophy is a gentleman's game. So that Brynhild's ideas had needed only a certain modernization by experience, for her to accept the immense detachment of scientific work from current unreality as one of the most sustaining and dignifying things in the human spectacle.

Which was the entirely adequate reason why she could not dream of 'going in' for science merely as an escape from her present devastating aimlessness. For science more was needed than a gesture of self-devotion. Scientific workers must be born and most elaborately made. They must have the predestination of an aptitude and the habits of a training. If these other things she had rejected were not good enough, scientific work, on the other hand, real, vital scientific work, was altogether too good. She knew she couldn't do it, couldn't hold herself down to it.

But was this quite right?

She sat forward, rested her elbows on her crossed knees and gnawed her thumb in the intensity of her concentration. Had she got it quite right?

Why was she, so to speak, letting herself off science in this way?

Why wasn't she now finding out what sort of work she might be able to do, what sort of work within her compass needed doing. Was that true about her not having any special aptitude? Or was it the first excuse her subconscious opposition could produce against this line

of conduct? Special aptitude might be necessary for eminent work, but the finding of some trustworthy director and the gradual assimilation of his points of view and his needs for help was well within the range of her capacity.

Brynhild's intense pose relaxed unconsciously. She had dismissed an insidious pretence and felt all the better for it. That plea of unworthiness was an excuse. The truth was that she realized clearly that science could not hold her attention. It wasn't a question of ability; it was a question of will. The will for science wasn't in her.

It wasn't in women!

Her mind went off at a tangent to this generalization and she felt herself making discoveries. Why was one able to count the first-rate men of science by the hundred for one outstanding woman (and she almost always daughter or wife of an equal scientific man)? Why? The idea of an all-round inferiority on the part of women had always seemed nonsense to Brynhild. The brain-stuff of a woman was just as good as a man's and allowing for inequalities in the requirements of bone and muscle there was just as much of it. But they had no will, normally they had no will, for laboratory, museum, observatory. These places were not battlefields for them; they were at best retreats. Men went into science for conquests but not women. It wasn't what they were for.

7

The will of a woman is different from a man's. As wide as any other structural difference between them whatsoever. Brynhild considered that new idea. There was sex in wills? There were male and female wills?

It seemed now obvious and yet hitherto she had never seen it quite in that light. Any particular woman might be subtler, cleverer, stronger, heavier, braver than any particular man; that didn't matter. What did matter was this, that determination in her always took a distinctive shape, just as distinctive as the rounder, more fluent lines of her body. The male will was crested and spurred. It was definite and versatile. It leapt out of nothing and took and kept clear shapes. The female will was invincibly obstinate and yet shapeless. It would

not do all sorts of things. When it acted and it could act violently, it did so in response to suggestion. Essentially it was responsive. Normally it lay in wait. It waited for a call. Even when it seemed to be aggressive it was no more than provocative, demanding counter-attack.

Brynhild's mind went off after the feminist women she knew to ask how far the things they said and did defined that feminine will.

She had grown up when that great tide of Feminine Emancipation which had given women the entry to various professions, the vote, the right to go alone in hansom cabs, ride bicycles, smoke cigarettes, drink cocktails, use trousers whenever they chose and indulge in unchallenged self-exposure, was already ebbing. The beach was littered with such new-won liberties. Liberties galore and no achievements at all. A number of women who had been young during the crowning phase of that insurrection, still lived on as leaders of a movement that had gained most of its declared objectives, seemed at a loss to map out fresh spheres of emancipation and was quite unable to conceive of any purpose in the world except emancipation.

Remarkably at a loss, Brynhild took stock of the feminist movement of the day as she knew it in the light of this new idea of hers, that there was an absolute lack of positive initiative in women. She considered dear Lady Roundabout with her bevy of women writers and adorers, her broad, complacent face and her uneasy eye. Dear Lady Roundabout ran a weekly paper, *Wear and Tear,* which revealed from week to week the burthen of women. It was a burthen of discontent void of all positive aims. This troupe of women seemed to find a certain satisfaction in being generally disagreeable to the world at large, but its only palpable objective was to seat dear Lady Roundabout in the House of Lords. Where she would just sit. It betrayed a quite Victorian belief that, after all, the role of women was never to propose but always to decide. She was still clinging to her right to say Yes and 'name the day'.

From protesting feminism Brynhild's survey passed on to such positive revolutionaries as she had met or heard of, women who belonged to the Communist party, who carried messages to dangerous places, who did strange, devoted things. She knew that

familiar fluttering figure; the woman in the procession, the woman in the demonstration, the woman in the barricade, carrying a flag, herself a flag. No doubt of her courage. But always she was being carried along. These women revolutionaries directed no more than the ardent woman figureheads of ships. They directed nothing. They killed and were killed, vividly, and there they ended. A revolution ought not simply to destroy things; it ought to replace things; to have something ready, something better. These Red ladies of the petroleuse type seemed to be emptier than the emptiest Marxists, emptier even than Anarchist syndicalists, of any creative contents. And even in that emancipated Russia which our younger generation instead of taking thought was still trying so desperately to believe in, not a single woman had produced a new idea, turned a corner, invented a deviation of her own. They achieved devotion, cruelty, made gestures of desperate defiance and passed away.

'I suppose *I* should like a tremendous revolution in life,' thought Brynhild - 'in *my* life. I should like to escape from this awful emptiness ahead of me. But I'm like Susan Wiles the dressmaker. I can't do anything until I have a pattern. We feel a want, but we don't give it a shape. We *can't* give it a shape.'

We can't give it a shape!

Her mind ran over the vital issues of the day, and the ideological barrenness of women became amazing. There was this question of money. What was money? What was to be done about money? What was inflation - deflation - reflation? What were monetary standards? What was the price-level? Men toiled at such problems like ants. They invented dogmas and plans and systems. They fought passionately and absurdly for their doctrines. They were not in the least ashamed to be bores and they seemed to enjoy unpopularity. They would go blind and round-shouldered pursuing some intricacy of the system.

And clearly the business was a vital issue for mankind. It affected the household, it affected the children, it affected social status and everything of importance in the life of a woman. Yet women left all that to men. Even when they had nothing else to do but play bridge! The bright young women who came out of the Cambridge Tripos 'above the Senior Wrangler' were just as indifferent to this issue as

the shop assistants and the cocottes. It mattered profoundly to every human being, but it wasn't a woman's affair.

And then interlacing with this money tangle were the riddles of manufacturing and selling, and behind these again a vast complexity of political difficulties. What did women care for this riddle of power that every man was discussing? The men thought, debated, intrigued, organized, conspired, terrorized, fought, assassinated, killed, died sometimes quite magnificently. For them these things were real. Their minds struggled perpetually with them. Their will to grapple with and overcome these difficulties revived and resumed after every defeat. The plot of history was this fantastic, inevitable struggle for power, for direction, for the recognition and the achievement of a common aim. The continuation of human life depended ultimately upon the outcome, and the women didn't care a damn.

Into all these immensely purposeful things woman's will did not seem to fit, played no more than an ancillary part. Even when one went to meetings where these monstrous perplexities were discussed and wives, sisters, mistresses, secretaries, daughters graced the assembly the women's faces were - fatuous. Like mothers at the prize day of some classical school, listening to the little dears doing a Greek play.

Of course, if one of the little dears got hurt — ! Or developed spots!

'What in Heaven is wrong with us?'

8

There is sex in wills. She had got that idea from Lucy Hambledon. She had got quite a new outfit of ideas from Lucy Hambledon. Lucy Hambledon had been a great discovery.

Lucy Hambledon had given a lecture some weeks before in Lady Ilmain's drawing-room on the population question. It had been discovered that the population of the world was threatened by a catastrophic shrinkage, and something had to be done about it. Brynhild had gone to this lecture with no belief that the population question was any affair of hers, but simply to work off some vague outstanding obligation to Lady Ilmain. But she had found Lucy

Hambledon, with her combination of good looks, slender neck, high colour, and glasses, her clear, protesting voice and her general air of spinsterish disinclination for the occasionally quite improper things she was saying, unexpectedly interesting, and the lecture had sent her reading that lady's books upon sexual psychology and social custom with considerable curiosity.

She had found them very disturbing and illuminating indeed. Lucy had a way of saying whatever she had to say in the manner of a reluctant but convinced learner, which is far more impressive than any eagerness of assertion. One would like things otherwise, she implied, but that was how things were.

'What is a woman?' Lucy Hambledon had asked and had answered her own question in a quiet lady-like voice and with a faint sigh, 'Either a baby-bearing specialist or a pervert.'

'Occasionally,' said Lucy Hambledon, 'it is necessary to restate the most obvious things as though they were new discoveries. Woman is woman, because she is the breeding continuing animal. She is substantially the important part of the species. The biological prosperity of a species,' said Lucy, quoting very rapidly from Kuczynski and Enid Charles, 'is determined by the proportion of reproductive females in the population. If they increase, the species is biologically in the ascendant. If they decrease, it is biologically declining. The male,' said Lucy, 'is essentially an escapade. Sexually he is a lightweight, he flits and returns.'

'*Does* he return?' considered Brynhild.

'He goes off and does the most astonishing things,' said Lucy. 'We can't vie with him. Those of us who happen to be in a position when one, so to speak, vies, know best how impossible it is. Perverts and abnormalities of course exist and there are natural nuns. But not being completely a woman does not make one a man and the distinction of the masculine and feminine wills holds good. We can learn, we can repeat, we make really good executives. But such exceptions merely confirm the rule of the fundamental, ineradicable difference of male and female. Eliminate what is generally understood by sex and the difference is still there. As far as we can follow the modern psychophysiologist it is perhaps a matter more of blood chemistry than brain structure. Anatomists can tell already that

a scrap of bone or a handful of hair is a woman's and not a man's and a time will come when they will know a single drop of blood for male or female.'

'But what about transfusion?' asked the trained sceptic in Brynhild. 'What about women Givers who transfer blood to men?'

She struggled with that objection for a time and when she came up to attention again Lucy Hambledon had got on to still more provocative matters.

She was saying, in her carefully chosen and neatly spoken words, that there were two sorts of adult women - the quick and the dead — the quickened and the unawakened. 'Adult, mind you,' said Lucy, 'for human adolescence nowadays is a prolonged, delayed, and complicated business.' But either an adult woman was having a child or reassembling her forces after having a child or preparing to have a child, or she was leading an unnatural life. She was an apparatus out of use; a house wrappered up. Her will was dispersed or stagnating until her blood was quickened. She could not will under 'physiological disuse'. Quickening was as necessary for her mental as her physical well-being.

9

Brynhild had a great fight with these ideas. They broke up her sleep.

Her father had trained her to a scrutinizing habit of mind and she did not succumb to Lucy Hambledon's prim and courageous charm without a struggle. She put Lucy Hambledon to the test of her own inclinations. You would think, she reasoned, if Nature really intended woman to be first and foremost a child-producing, child-protecting animal and only secondarily a human being at large, she would have put a dominating philoprogenitiveness into the creature. But had she?

'Do I want to be a mother?' she asked. 'Not much... Hardly at all... Certainly no stress of desire... You would have thought Nature, if she had really been so obsessed with this drive towards multiplication, would have been too clever to leave that out of my make-up. But she has.'

Brynhild tried to recall the phases of her sexual development. She

had been sincerely in love with Palace but had she ever, at any phase, had any ambition to reproduce Mr Rowland Palace? If she had, it had left no trace in her memory. What she did recall was an immense craving for companionship. And now — did she want to launch new little Rowlys in the world?

There might be some satisfaction, of course, in slapping Rowly by proxy...

'I've had enough of Rowly,' said Mrs Rowland Palace.

10

'I want some one to talk to about this. I'm spinning round again, I'm spinning round and round these ideas she has dropped into me and I'm not getting on. I want quickening. Mentally anyhow, I want quickening.'

Quickening?

It was curious how infectious some of Lucy Hambledon's phrases were, even if you were quite indisposed to agree with her conclusion. They set one off along the strangest of paths. This suggestion that minds and bodies could be under-stimulated until they wilted and shrivelled, and that any quickening process must affect both body and mind, continued to ferment in Brynhild's brain, almost in spite of her.

Am I too aloof for life? she asked herself. Have I been shirking life? This exclusiveness of mine, this fastidiousness, this reserve, this dignity on which I have prided myself; is it, after all, anything to be proud of? Isn't it three parts timidity? If you do not go out to people how can people react on you?

Minds to quicken one's own? If it was true that women's minds were all critical, resistant, or responsive minds, then it was men's minds, talk with men, initiative from men, aggressive ideas, that a woman needed. Throughout her married life so far, Brynhild had avoided talk about men, disliked it and killed it when it came near her. Was all that a mistake? The difficulty was that it seemed so difficult not to talk to men or about men without the sexual issue putting in an appearance. It seemed impossible to indicate a preference for a man without archness creeping in.

Women were extraordinarily variable in these matters. Some like Brynhild herself were punctiliously reserved, with nothing to hide. Others talked continually about this main relationship of life. For many it seemed to be the only reality. Some talked insatiably about the adventures of other women, speculated with the utmost indecency about the relations of lover to lover or of husband to wife. Others, again, made boasting about their own achievements in excitement, their central theme. They excited, but did they yield? Quiet Lovelies sat in the background and heard much. Brynhild had been shocked and interested by the discourse of an aggressively loquacious Swedish lady at a woman's tea-party given by Lady Roundabout. This lady had experienced two *grand passions* and a vast number of minor *passades* and she supplied much interesting detail of her experiences. The term *passade* was new to Brynhild. She tried to imagine the technique of a *passade.* How did it begin? How did they set about it? Where did they go? And how did one feel after it? Rather, she imagined, like a hen in the dust.

No. This wasn't what she wanted — these scuffling indignities. The feminine sex talk was a mere talk about preliminaries. It was really a sort of prolongation of early adolescent curiosity and sensuality. Most of these women were just smutty little girls of thirty or forty. They were always talking of 'taking lovers' and never really getting at them. Some of their 'affairs' sounded like collecting autographs or stealing spoons for fun. They went from lover A to lover B like cards being shuffled. In vain the onlooker asked, 'Why A?'

'Why B?' They had reduced immorality to a sterile formula about as fruitful and satisfactory in the long run as an excess of cocktails. And yet wasn't there something more in it than that?

Why did these more or less promiscuous women play at this game at all? Something attracted them, surely, graver than a slightly insane desire to drink from the wrong bottle. What, apart from the sheer torment of vacuity, was the reality that drew them to these affairs? What was the underlying need?

It came into Brynhild's head that they were all curiously like children who are fascinated by an important-looking doorway and, greatly daring, creep up and knock — only to fly headlong at the

remotest sign of the door opening. Suppose that ‘taking a lover’ was really something very grave and important in a woman’s life, something as grave and important as marriage. Suppose one marched up to that forbidden portal, and knocked and faced up to it and, instead of bolting, marched in and through to whatever lay on the other side?

At this point Brynhild pulled herself up. She was slipping away into metaphors. ‘Never think in metaphors,’ her father had said. ‘Never symbolize. Strip your facts.’

She was not thinking of portals and buildings. She was thinking of the possibility of being unfaithful to Rowly. She was thinking of having another man as a lover, and she was thinking this because she had been so infected by Lucy Hambledon’s phrases as to develop this queer idea that the only way she could get on such terms with a man as to get her mind ‘quickened’ was by becoming his mistress.

‘What are you thinking of, Brynhild?’ cried some lurking governess within her. ‘Stop these strange thoughts. These *improper* thoughts!’

‘I’m going on thinking,’ said Brynhild. ‘It’s my business. It’s my primary business as a woman. Go away. I’m going to have this out with myself.’

The governess went away.

‘Now suppose I take a lover,’ thought Brynhild stoutly, ‘and he turns out wrong and I don’t get any mental quickening out of him. Yes — yes, I know the idea is disgusting, but I want to face it. Suppose this new elixir vitae turns out to be nothing better than the sort of nasty cocktail one swallows by mistake? Then — do I begin over again with number two?’

The protesting governess could be felt in the darkness stirring uneasily.

‘Then the alternative,’ said Brynhild, ‘is just to spin with Rowly until death do us part.’

The governess receded into absolute silence.

Brynhild continued to scrutinize her own chastity. Was she excessively monogamous? Was her reserve about sex in particular, morbid? Was she - latterly the idea had been rather frequently in her mind — a Prig, and an immature, damped-off sort of Prig at that?

Had she missed a natural phase in her development? Perhaps this inhibition of hers was something she ought to have got rid of long ago. Perhaps passing over from a first exclusive lover to lovers was a natural stage in the development of a modern woman. It was a border crossed. It was like cutting your teeth. It was passing into a new, more adult human phase. You've become something else and nothing can ever put you back again. And when that border is crossed, perhaps you may meet men face to face and be on equal terms with them.

She was being as liberal-minded as she knew how, but she found the taste unpleasant.

11

Sooner or later every woman must have thoughts like this, insisted Brynhild, keeping to the cold rational line. Ideas of this sort had come to her perhaps later than usual because she was a backward type. That was all. What she had taken for pride and chastity was really just backwardness. She wasn't so different from these other women really, it was only that they had thought quicker, acted sooner, and arrived at this phase earlier. And yet it was odd she should be thinking to and fro among these ideas even now, while any possible lover still remained intangible and formless. That 'quickening' man was an impalpable fantasy born of Lucy Hambledon's phrases. So soon as Brynhild turned to actuality she found her world a loverless desert.

She began a sort of parade of specimen men. The governess was faintly audible making some indistinct stipulation about costume and then retiring reproachfully into nothingness at the remark that she ought to be ashamed of herself. 'I am going to think about all this quite freely,' Brynhild insisted. 'Modesty is a matter of behaviour and how you deal with other people. I won't have any nonsense about modesty in my private thoughts.'

The parade of lovers was a poor display.

Men were nice enough until you began to think of them in this fashion and then they became fantastically difficult. The men she respected most changed into grotesques which became oppressive

and terrifying just as people change in dreams. Mr Alfred Bunter appeared to be just as he had been in the Valliant Chevrell gardens, quite close to her with his soft, full voice, his rather troubled brown eyes and his ruddy complexion, and then he became quite shockingly impossible. ‘Is there something askew with my imagination?’ she asked herself. ‘I begin to wonder how I ever came to marry Rowly.’ It was too monstrous a price to pay for the chance of some stimulating conversation. She could not imagine any other man taking her and embracing her - as Rowly did.

‘No, I couldn’t do it,’ said Brynhild.

‘I’m fastidious. I’m a prig. The dignity of chastity is an overwhelming tradition so far as I’m concerned. I’m clean and decent and moral and futile, but, anyhow, I couldn’t do it. It’s foul. It’s inconceivable except with Rowly. And even with him - it’s a thing so *private...*’

So here she was where she had started and as usual she hadn’t made up her mind about anything at all.

CHAPTER TEN

Mr Bunter Tells His Story

She looked up and discovered Mr Bunter approaching her.

She did not embarrass him by seeming to watch him but she noted every detail of his movements. He stopped short when he saw her, uncertain whether to advance or swerve off across the grass behind her. Plainly he did not want to salute and pass her, and as plainly he was too inept socially to know how to stop and talk to her. His feet, which was all of him that she had in her field of vision, wavered. She decided it was time to look up and see him.

There was something ingratiatingly shy and clumsy about his proceedings. He pretended to recognize her with a start and then came towards her. 'You don't know quite how you are going to behave,' thought Brynhild. 'But as a matter of fact you are going to sit down in this chair beside me.'

She rested her hand on the back of the next chair so as to constitute it part of their grouping and awaited his approach with the shadow of a smile on her face.

He stood in front of her and his eyes were led to the chair.

'So pleasant to see you again,' he said. 'I wonder if I might sit down for a moment?'

'I'd be delighted.'

He sat down.

'If I might talk to you for a bit? I'd be so grateful. You see, I've quarrelled with myself today and I don't like the company I'm in. I came out for a walk to walk away from myself — and I find I can't. And, anyhow, I'd like to talk to you. In fact - I've been thinking of you. Mrs Palace, I want some one badly... You're in no hurry? You really can talk?'

'I too was just wanting some one to talk to. You couldn't have chosen any one better.'

'Glad... I've been thinking no end about you since we met at Valliant Chevrell. More than is reasonable. And hoping that presently we'd meet again... You don't mind my saying that?'

‘No.’

‘I liked talking to you down there. It was an extraordinary party. I like Valliant Chevrell. I doubted if I should.’

‘He is a born mixer. If he wasn’t a host and an hereditary legislator and a very rich man I suppose he would make sauces and pickles. Or blend tobacco or tea.’

‘Well, it was nice of him to blend us. I’ve been grateful ever since. Because in spite of everything—’ He glanced at her: ‘ — we did get on together.’

‘Yes,’ she admitted and then reflected; ‘we said very little to one another.’

‘But all the time we had - I had and I know you had — an extraordinary feeling of friendliness. I have that at times, just as cats and dogs have it. But rarely. Very rarely. And less often than I used to do. I see some one — I knew instantly that you could not possibly jar with me — not really — that I was safe with you, however clumsy I was. And down there I felt all the time on the very edge of being unusually clumsy.’

‘Anyhow you seemed to want to go on talking to me — right up to Monday morning.’

‘Doesn’t every one?’

‘Mr Bunter, for some obscure reason — I am incapable of conversation and most people get that quite soon. That you shouldn’t have found it out - Or betrayed that you had found it out — Naturally I liked you. All the time I could see you thought that at any time I might say something. And all the time’ — she smiled - ‘you seemed to be expecting me to understand something that you didn’t actually say.’

‘Saying things that matter is the last triumph of the human mind,’ said Mr Bunter. ‘I did want to say something. For various reasons... There are things I want to say.’

The silence of the next thirty seconds seemed rather to support Brynhild’s account of her limitations.

‘People ought not to force confidences on others -’ Mr Bunter began.

He did not like that beginning and he left it at that.

She was acutely aware of him beside her but she felt instinctively

that she must not look at him directly just then. He became quite still. Something within her counted; one, two, three... Ten seconds. Then suddenly an entirely different and remote Mr Bunter took up the conversation.

‘Speech was a great invention,’ he philosophized. ‘I am sure the wicked gods were afraid when men got hold of it. They thought human beings would get together and it would be all up with Olympus. Needlessly. What use do we make of speech? What use do we make of anything? Triviality or mischief. It’s the same story today with flying and the cinema and the radio. And everything. Oh! everything. With you, directly I met you, I wanted to talk. I had an extraordinary urgency to talk. And all I could talk about — Do you remember how entangled we got swapping information about pond-life and water weeds?’

And indeed,’ thought Brynhild. ‘What are we getting to now?’ It seemed probable that the two of them would spend the rest of their time together, circulating awkwardly round this theme of their mutual attraction and their common inability to express it. With parenthetic comments on the general inexpressiveness of life. And part at last with their amiability completely unexploited. Brynhild broke away. She realized it was her job to break away, but it was chance rather than intention which made the break for her. He could never, she realized, make her talk, nothing could ever do that, but there was talk in him, he wanted to talk - hadn’t he just said so? - and somehow she had to help him get it out. Then he would talk for the two of them. He made her feel extraordinarily socially experienced and responsible. Considering how fiercely he thought and wrote, her sense of his plasticity with her was amazing.

2

The topic she hit upon to get them out of their personal spin was the weather. Not perhaps a very rare or original topic. But it was the only one she could think of. There seemed to be nothing else at all in that vast vacuum her mind had become, except him and herself and that universal interest. By sheer good luck it turned out well. From having nothing to say they fell into a widening sequence of

exchanges. As we will tell. The first sentence was unpromising. ‘Do you remember Henley’s line,’ she said, breaking a pause apropos of nothing; ‘October mild and boon? Was there ever a day that fitted it better?’

‘I was too cross to see before. But now -’ He diverted his attention from her for a moment. ‘Yes, it’s a glorious afternoon.’

‘Like a crystal — only with warmth in it.’ She felt that was like a quotation from a descriptive passage in a novel. There was nothing to do but stick to it. ‘My father would have called it a Good in itself.’

That was the happy release.

‘Your father? Now what was your father?’

‘He was a Stoic - he was a classical scholar. And he held a living in the Church of England.’

‘That’s the sort of thing I find difficult to understand.’

‘He said he swallowed the Thirty Nine Articles at a gulp and thought no more about them. If he had masticated them they might have got into his system and given him trouble. And he said it was good for the soul to have knowingly done one dishonourable thing.’

‘What was his name?’

‘Loader.’

‘Dr Loader, the great scholar?’

‘No, his cousin. You mustn’t misunderstand my father. He was cynical on that point, but he tried to teach me what he called honourableness of mind. One can wear Anglicanism in comfort, he said, because it fits loose and easy. It needn’t touch. It needn’t constrict and hamper. It leaves your soul alone. But you mustn’t profess things you more than half believe. That gets into the system and cankers the mind. Faith, he called an invalid’s trick.’

‘Not a bad idea,’ Mr Bunter replied. ‘I like that.’

‘And my father said,’ she went on, feeling that with a little more of this she would get Bunter started; ‘that until we knew better - had something positive - Anglican practice was as good a social cement as any. But I think all the time he was dreaming of knowing something better... Mr Bunter—’

She paused. She had a faint impulse to laugh at the immense demand she was going to make.

He looked at her interrogatively.

‘What do *you* believe? What do you *know?* What keeps *you* going?’

‘I wish I could tell you. I wish I could tell myself. Today, just before I saw you I was saying to myself, I’m damned if I stand any more of it. Any more of any of this. Never mind exactly what. It’s something I’ve been enduring alone. Not a soul to speak to about any of it. Life, Mrs Palace, can sometimes be intolerably exasperating. I was just howling inside when I saw you. About — all of this. I wanted some one to howl to... At least I thought I did. But I’m so used not to talk about — all this business. Down I plumped beside you — full of it. Gods! I said. I’ll tell *her!* And have I told you a thing?’

(Have a care, Brynhild, or you’ll be getting back to the old eddy!)

‘I wasn’t thinking very much of life today myself - except for the sunlight.’

‘But you’re got no quarrel with life. You — poised in your place, assured, serene!’

‘Never mind about me, Mr Bunter. What makes you find life so exasperating just now? What is it all about? What is it?’

‘Not just now - altogether.’

‘Well - altogether. Tell me. Howl. I’d like to hear some one who has words, give this life a thorough good damning.’

‘My case?’

‘Your case. And then everybody’s case.’

‘Well,’ Mr Bunter stopped and considered. ‘*My* case!’

He seemed to weigh a monstrous proposition. ‘Suppose I tell you. Suppose I really tell you.’

‘Why *not?*’

He sat round and scrutinized her. ‘I believe I am really going to tell you.’

He turned his face away again. ‘I’ve never told anybody for six years. I’ve been carrying the whole business...’

Pause. She considered it best to remain quietly expectant, watching him. She noted that his ruddy complexion was clear and good with very delicate golden hairs upon his cheeks and the modelling of his profile rather fine, particularly about the now rather drooping mouth. But there were queer lines about that mouth now

which she hadn't noted at Valliant Chevrell.

When he emerged from the pause, he was back in his bookish style.

'Life,' he remarked abruptly, 'is tantalizing in the things it offers and monstrous in the things it gives. We find ourselves in the world - well and good. It's a spread-out of lovely — intimations. Almost every dawn - if you get up and see dawn, Mrs Palace - is like the prelude to something splendid. You know that sense of a curtain rising. Very well. We try to live. And we are tripped up.'

'Yes,' said Mrs Palace.

'We jump out of bed and right away we tumble over our stale selves of the day before.'

He remained for a second or so as if he was digesting this disagreeable reality. Then suddenly he looked up at her with that faint disengaging smile of his. 'Which is only another way of saying, Mrs Palace, that I've got my life into a pretty considerable mess.'

But was this getting on?

'Tell me about it,' said Brynhild patiently.

'Oh, it's a frightful mess. I don't see how I *can* tell you. You of all people. Yet somehow I want you to know. Some of it at least I want you to know. It's just you of all people I want to know... You see... Yes, I'll you something I've never told any one yet. I'll give myself away to you. Within reason. I was born just over six years ago.'

He stared at her to see how she took it.

'Well-grown child,' said Brynhild, waiting for more.

'We'll put it like that anyhow. Alfred Bunter, Mrs Palace, was born with a manuscript under his arm. He was, you see, precocious from the first. He walked into a publisher's office and sold his story on his zero birthday. He seemed to me elated and a little scared. And at the same time a discontented young man with quite another name, a pharmaceutical chemist, let us say, whose affairs were in a tangle, disappeared from, so to speak, the city of Birmingham. He was "caught up," as the Second Adventists say, and vanished. Like that. He had resigned from a life he found altogether too much for him, and he left no address. Queer, isn't it? Subsequently some human remains were found in a deserted - no, in a canal — that might or

might not have been him. It wasn't quite like that but never mind. That is near enough. That, Mrs Palace, is why among other things, you never see any portrait published of that industrious novelist Alfred Bunter. He's afraid some one round about - well, Birmingham - might see and recognize him.'

'Why did he call himself - Bunter?'

Mr Bunter met her eye cheerfully. 'It doesn't strike you as — an attractive name?'

'No.'

'Alfred Bunter — Alf for short. "Elf" in London English. Anything but an attractive name. It was not the sort of name you could imagine any one taking of his own accord. No one has ever suspected it was assumed. I think that was rather bright of me.'

'Yes,' said Brynhild, and then with an air of extreme *savoir faire.* 'And those human remains? You said something about some human remains?'

'They,' said Mr Bunter reflectively, 'were a coincidence.'

'They happened to be there — in the canal.'

'They happened to be there.'

'And you just took advantage?'

'I just took advantage.'

Brynhild reflected. Mr Bunter was behaving rather like an oyster which feels it has been indiscreet. His face had assumed a closed expression and he was looking away across the lake. She realized that the next move was with her. 'And you really got away from being that pharmaceutical chemist in Birmingham — for some reason you didn't like his life — and you really did begin again in London and pulled it off?'

'I did.'

'I couldn't have imagined that anything of the sort could be possible!'

'Practically it wasn't. That's why I'm bothered. It never has been *quite* possible. It's been touch and go ever since. You see - he - the pharmaceutical chemist who vanished just when I materialized out of nothingness in Paternoster Row, had lived twenty-seven years and some months. And he had had an extraordinary knack of producing consequences. Quantities of consequences. Voluminous, unfolding

and unfolding... Perhaps everybody has... But I don't know why I'm telling you this. I've kept it bottled up for six years. It's become too much for me. I've bluffed everybody so far but for some reason I can't bluff you. I've got to tell you.'

'It's that *friendliness,* I suppose,' said Brynhild. 'And anyhow, are you telling me very much?'

'I'm trying not to tell you too much. I'm so drawn to you - let me be frank — that I feel compelled to tell you things that — it's absurd, isn't it - are almost certain to estrange us... I want to tell you everything about myself and at the same time I want to stand well in your eyes. But I've been so lonely. I've been so damnably lonely.'

'I'm more broad-minded than I seem. And friendlier. You tell me.'

His next words seemed at first absolutely irrelevant.

'Mrs Palace, what do you think about my books?'

But - stay a moment. Was that irrelevant? She suddenly felt subtle.

'They, too,' she said, 'are like somebody trying to say something that is difficult to say.'

'Noisy books they are. And they pretend to be saying a lot and getting down to the real red core in things — and they don't. I'm trying and I don't succeed. It's just like my trying to tell you now — and not telling you. I write those books in the intervals of dodging my past and preserving my incognito. Every book, every *real* book, maybe, is a confession of solitude. It's an appeal. And I tell you in spite of the bawling confusion of these books I write, which keep on saying and then not saying, I am most desperately and honestly trying to get something said plainly about life, that hasn't been said and *has* to be said... And say it to some one...'

'I know. I read you. Since we met I've read most of you.'

'Since I came out of - we'll call it Birmingham - my books have been my life. Inadequate though they are. At times I've had a tremendous sense that I was getting something said, putting a shape upon the muddle of existence, finding something out, as I wrote. I've felt I was cutting down into things, getting below superficial and hasty assumptions. Secretly, I've been full of my own importance. I felt as I suppose the early anatomists or the early microscope and

telescope men felt. Laying bare things long hidden. And then—'

He turned to her interrogatively. 'Does Palace get into states of mind about reviews?'

She found she didn't want to talk about Palace to Mr Bunter. She didn't want them both in the same picture. 'Every author,' she said, 'gets into states of mind about reviews. But the ones who suppress their states suffer most.'

And anyhow, what had reviews to do with the story of the vanished Birmingham chemist? What was he saying now?

'I *feel* reviews. Since I don't go about very much, it's the only way I have of judging whether this stuff I write gets over to any one — seems in any way to signify. Of course lots of reviews are negligible, obviously written by trite hacks who have never discovered that real books are alive. They review like - like tired ushers marking exercise books while they think of something else. And others are just inexperienced people who don't realize that judgment is a duty. The stuff they do is bad but not wicked; trite stupidity yes, but not dishonesty or hate. They fall to prestige, gossip, and current catchwords and they follow the fashions. Not much to object to in all that. No. Never mind them. Once in a while you get understanding. A living mind detects you in your book — responds. Generally speaking. Generally speaking that is how things are. All that I can allow for. All that is natural. But not this time. *This* time the stupidity has an air of being concerted. *This* time the misunderstandings are not careless and casual. *This* time the reviews of my book are like a line of obdurate faces, a drilled line. They are all harping on the same idea, that I am a man of extremely limited social experience. They are all asking for my origins and credentials. You see? Review after review. They turn my book down, practically unread, and then attack me. It is as if some one had been going round spreading hostility against me. Nothing pleases them. My style is "raucous". The word turns up in half a dozen notices... Do you think I am imagining things? Do you think I'm giving way to suspicion mania? Because I've been bottled up, so long? I don't think I am. But it isn't that things are moving against me. It isn't coincidence. Things are being moved against me...

And, you see, it's practically all I live for now - this bookish

ambition of mine — this desire to get something disentangled and said, to get something over to people, in books. If suddenly they won't read them - If suddenly they stop listening to what I say and become excited about what I am or what I've done...

'Even if that was all...

'I don't think that that trouble alone would have got me so flamingly raw as I felt before I saw you. But you see, Cardiff and its consequences have been also blowing up like a bank of clouds before a southwester — filling the sky. In the most extraordinary way. There too, there is the same effect of a deliberate hostility. I'm - in a way — I'm afraid.'

(Let him talk now, Brynhild. It's Cardiff now — not Birmingham. He's going to tell you everything before he's done. Because he's beginning to talk to himself.)

'It was queer - that hejira from Cardiff.'

'Cardiff - not Birmingham?'

'Yes, it was Cardiff.'

'You began again?'

'Yes — let me tell you about it... I had a little money with me - but practically it was beginning again. For a time, it was exciting. And for a while it went better than I deserved. "I've got away from all *that,*" I said. Queer how quickly the new circle came into existence. For a week or so I knew no one in the world except the publisher who had accepted my book and then I went out to lunch in Soho with him and a reader of his and Lesser, the critic. I confessed I was a newcomer to London and Lesser put me up for the Parnassus Club. Then I dropped in to one of Bedlow's Book Teas and made a little speech and found myself having tea with two rather intelligent women. One thing led to another. I overcame my first impulse to hide away completely. I shaved off my moustache and altered my shirts and collars. I had reason for that. In a little while I had a social circle of bookish and journalistic and artistic people. I went to meetings, cocktail and night parties - joined two more clubs — shifted to socially possible lodgings. People in the literary world ask amazingly few questions. Even the clever women who are' - he looked rigidly in front of him - 'kind to one - don't seem to care who you are really. And I liked the escape to a desk and a quire of clean

paper and a room in which nothing could possibly happen unless I let it happen. Now, I said, I will really stop living in a series of responses and take up life in my own fashion.'

'That's in one of your books.'

'Yes, I've written it — somewhere.'

Mr Bunter became philosophical.

'I suppose greediness for life, or anyhow the frank release of greediness, is something new. Modern. Perhaps I don't really mean a greediness for life at all. Perhaps I mean a greediness for reality. Which is something quite different. Yet, come to think, there has always been something of the sort going on. Dissatisfaction. Men used to renounce the world, become hermits, go into monasteries. Do stranger things than that. It made me plan this flight - though not as I actually made it. At first it was only a flight to a writing-desk. It was a dream long before it materialized. To get right away and somehow - *penetrate.* When I came to London I already had a book written and practically accepted. And another planned. The story is more complicated than that. You see -

'If I had had no idea whatever of writing books and getting down to reality I should still have come away from Cardiff. I *had* to come away.'

Now for a bit he will just philosophize and quote himself, thought Brynhild. But we shall get back to Cardiff.

Mr Bunter resumed after something very like a consultation of his mental notes. 'What is modern, I suppose, is the relative absence of restraint. There never was a time when "Why not?" was asked so impatiently and universally. But as a child even I was outrageous. I think I was exceptionally uncontrollable. I wouldn't take No for an answer. I had extravagant expectations.

I resented punishment. All punishment I felt was injustice. I can remember a violent weeping fit — oh! inconsolable sorrow it was - at the end of an afternoon's play because suddenly I discovered it hadn't been good enough.'

'A lot of things aren't good enough,' said Brynhild.

'But *you* surely never had storms of that sort?'

'All the same, a lot of things aren't good enough. Go on. Tell me.'

'I had a feverish imagination. It was full of — I think

psychologists call them, escapes. I couldn't believe that life was just the slow procession of dusty greyish events it seemed to be. Dusty greyish events with a lot of rather forced laughter and streaks of downright painful and disagreeable experiences. Uncalled-for inflictions. And a perpetual menace. I couldn't believe it. For some years, round about eleven to thirteen, I think it was, I was persuaded in my private mind that the whole of the life about me was an elaborate deception being practised on me.'

'I have thought that.'

'It didn't seem reasonable that one was permitted to live and then *persecuted.* Unsatisfied cravings. Greeds so that you made yourself sick. Aches. Teeth. Growing pains.'

'It isn't reasonable,' said Brynhild. 'But it seems highly probable that things are so. Seeing that they are so.'

'Presently somebody or something, I imagined, was going to draw back the curtain. "Prince, your time has come."'

'I believe every one has had something of that.'

'It grows stronger with adolescence. My brothers and my sister were older than I; my mother was an overworked, tired woman, my father a dull routineer — he was a solicitor. Adolescence came to me haphazard, a stir within, glimpses, evasive suggestions without. Something intense, thrilling, beautiful — and forbidden. That sense of menace growing stronger. Sex, I should think, comes dismayingly enough to a girl; to a boy it comes tauntingly, provocatively, shamefully, and pesteringly. Sometimes you say, "I shall get something splendid out of this." Sometimes you scream, "My God, I will get *something* out of this." Sometimes you are just bothered by something with a close face and hot breath tugging at your sleeve - something you can't shake off. First, I was shy and secret and then I was desperate.'

She understood as she looked at his profile his aptitude for either role.

'My two elder brothers joined up at the beginning of the war with pride and enthusiasm. I was only fifteen then. The world was already considerably disillusioned about the war before the searching hand, that blind implacable imperative to join up, found me and gripped me and put me in khaki. "Give me one taste of life before I go," I said.'

He sat up back in his chair and looked her in the face.

'These crucial years. It's about seven years, I suppose, for most of us. Eighteen to twenty-five. War or no war, it's much the same. My generation blames too much upon the war. Inexperience, a wild impatience, storm of desire. So it has always been. So for a long time still it will be. Six or seven years. And then we have made our lives.'

He sat and lifted his open hands. He repeated with intensity. 'We have made our lives...'

Brynhild had nothing to say.

'Well, I said, I would be damned if I stood it. That's all.'

'And the life you left behind in Cardiff?' said Brynhild, judicial and intelligent. 'That life you put behind you and escaped from. Sister, brothers - other entanglements? It all goes on?'

'Exactly. It all goes on. Yes.'

Mr Bunter was at a loss again.

It was not the first time that Brynhild had observed an author in difficulties about the opening of a new chapter. But she meant to have that chapter if she sat in Regent's Park until sunset and the evening dew. And he meant to give it her.

3

'I knew I could write,' he said.

'But for a time I was distracted by these other things that had got hold of me. I was just living. That is to say, life was playing football with me. Then battered and dirty I was kicked into that place in life into which it had pleased God to call me. And I found I still wanted to write.

'A lot of us wanted to write about the war. I didn't. Never. The war never really impressed me. It was monstrous and horrible, but it didn't seem to be anything fresh or new. It wasn't even outside you - spectacular, I mean — like an earthquake or a tornado. It was like paying a bill, that had been run up for you by some one else. Finding you're the last heir of a line of idiot spend-thrifts. And finding after all that your cheque wasn't acceptable because some one has mortgaged your balance. I didn't want to write about the war. In itself it was the most Godawful bore conceivable. It wasn't any the

less secondary and second-rate because it was so bloody. The generals, the officers, the kings and politicians knew it was a bore, knew they were bores and that history would damn them to hell for it. Chaps like Winston Churchill and Duff Cooper try to get a kind of tootle out of it — but what a tootle it is! Haig! And all the memoirs. It wasn't my business to write that sort of thing. I wanted to get through that and write about the queer twists and treacheries in nature and us, that make disasters like the war possible...'

'In a way you *are* doing that.'

'You really think — ?'

'Tell me about Cardiff.'

'Suppose, presently,' said Mr Bunter, almost as if he was sheering off from Cardiff deliberately, 'we get a whole world that begins to say what I am trying to say. Suppose every one asks *Why?* and insists upon some answer, though it kills them to do so? Supposing what was your father's secret philosophy spreads and spreads. Suppose the two thousand million people on this planet all start saying: "We refuse all plausible interpretations. We shut our eyes to nothing. We refuse to put a brave face on it. No more tootle. It isn't good enough."'

Brynhild thought. 'Perhaps quite a lot of them *do* now.'

'But look at the newspapers.'

'Anything of that sort would take a long time to get into the papers.'

'We should blow the planet to fragments - or make it such a glorious storm of living...'

He was at a loss for words. Perhaps, too, he was at a loss for substantial ideas about that glorious storm. Most of us are.

'You were going to tell me about Cardiff,' said Brynhild.

4

She knew now perfectly well that he was not going to tell her all about Cardiff. Quite probably he had never told himself all about Cardiff. Probably he had told himself a score of different stories about it - whatever it was. If today he began to tell her about Cardiff, he would probably go away and begin to realize all sorts of things

that were now untellable.

‘It isn’t a nice story. I want you to know. And at the same time I want to look well in your eyes.’

‘Plaster image?’

‘Not quite that.’

‘Painted in the natural colours. You’re better alive.’

‘I have to tell you. To begin with there was a war baby.’ Brynhild betrayed no signs of shock. ‘Is it a nice child?’

‘I didn’t stick to it. I mean I never saw it. There was another marriage. I mean I married some one else.’

Brynhild remained attentive, not helping him.

‘You see, I got rather crazy about women in those early twenties. A sort of fever of the imagination. A desire for insatiability. Aldous Huxley gives you all that. Not bodily lust it was so much as lust of the imagination. I had affairs, adventures, and this particular woman I’m speaking of became my mistress and then we married. I didn’t want to. I had strong reasons for not doing so. But a situation was created... She said *she* was going to have a child... She didn’t.’

‘But you married her?’

‘Yes.’

‘And you weren’t happy?’

Mr Bunter shrugged his shoulders. ‘This sort of thing is so difficult to tell. Telling things about a woman you have lived with. And then haven’t lived with for six years. I never meant to live with her at all. I wasn’t even reasonably fond of her. But there she was, excitable and exciting. I’d have been ashamed not to have been her lover. Another score in the rake’s progress. God knows why such events are regarded as scores! They are. The trouble one takes to make a new one! She seduced me, she hardly made a pretence of being seduced. She meant to have me. She knew my family, she was related to business connections of mine. She was all over me socially. She threw herself at me and then threatened to make a fuss. At that time I had no idea of leaving Cardiff. I had hardly begun to write and I had all the unworldly ex-officer’s dread of leaving the only business I had learnt. All that seems very feeble, doesn’t it? I thought I could marry her and get on with her. I knew her only as a bright-coloured, brighteyed eager thing. I had only been with her for

an hour or so and a few half-hours and so on before we were married. She had cheated me into marriage but it wasn't her fault that she had cheated me. She wanted a child. Honestly. She wanted anything and everything that would fix me hers. But she couldn't have a child. She was the most possessive and jealous of human beings, and I was a provincial Don Juan. She didn't love me. She thought she did. Her egotism demanded that she should be a Great Lover. But she didn't love a thing in me. She hated almost everything I was and everything about me. She hated my family and estranged them. And particularly she seemed to hate anything I took a pride in. But she had fixed upon me, she had grabbed me. Love me, she said, listen to me, attend to me, owe everything to me...'

'How old were you then?'

'Nineteen twenty-two. I was twenty-three.'

'When a boy looks like a man.'

'When a boy makes the fetters for the man he is going to be.'

'And she was?'

'Twenty-six.'

'Go on telling me about her.'

'She talked incessantly. As I sit here now I seem to hear the onward looping rhythm of her voice. Low and hurried and then rising to a harsh shrill edge. About herself and about me in relation to herself. And how wonderful her love was and how little I deserved it. She vocalized life. She reversed St John's gospel. In the end was the Word and the Word was the end. She could not think that anything was or that anything had happened, unless she had said it. An audience had to be told; an audience had to be impressed. She loved to brag and outbrag. The actual facts of her life were just the point of departure for a torrent of fanciful misstatement, dressed-up claims, picturesque assertions, fantastic showing-off to herself and everybody. She made an odd screaming household for me in which the one servant was driven by sheer word-power until she rebelled and gave notice, and was thrown out in a storm of recrimination. And then *da capo.*

'And about me Freda wove a sort of legend to which I had to listen, as it developed, about my remarkable abilities, about my excessive virility, about the profound and perplexing kinks in my

character. I had been dreadfully misunderstood by my family. She had saved me from that. Rescued me from the inferiority complex they had given me. We were to have a tremendous career. I was to become a Force in Welsh politics. I was the leader the world was waiting for. We were to stand for The New Wales and then we were to descend whooping and jabbering upon London and the empire. A queer, vague, pretentious couple we made. Freda had a good deal of social push, and, wherever we pushed, this legendary me was exposed and laid bare and flourished about. People knew I was just the junior partner in a firm of house agents and grinned. The future leader of The New Wales couldn't get a word in edgeways to disavow the impression.'

He paused. 'And yet you know I find I owe a great deal to her.'

Brynhild appreciated the change of tone and noted without comment that the pharmaceutical chemist was now a house agent.

'This torrent of talk without intermission stirred my mind, my reluctantly listening mind. Her headlong greed to be all sorts of things, her pretences and fantasies, made one ask oneself what sort of thing one was. And what one might be. I was forced to bottle-up my denials and criticisms of her talk because, as I said, I could hardly get a word in edgeways, and if I did get in a word it was usually a fatal word, and if it could in any way be constructed as a criticism of her, all the vain-glorious proclamations ceased, she would resort forthwith to shrewish insults and *tu quoques.* So, as I say, I was bottled up.'

Mr Bunter turned a wan smile on Brynhild. 'Funny, isn't it? A young man returns a few ardent kisses in the dark, and so forth, whispers a little mutual flattery, brings the encounter to a climax and thinks himself a dog of a fellow. And then things happen very rapidly, there are a few forced decisions, and he finds himself fixed as the permanent baffled centre of an incessant whirlwind. For life. For all the life he's ever going to have. Life, you know, is just one series of traps. We're all in traps. From the king captive in his duty to the people to the kid crippled for life in the accident ward. All of us.'

'But you broke through.'

'*Did* I break through? Have I broken through? I began this writing in secret I have told you of, and it dawned upon me I could write. I

began to like the steady deliberation of setting things down, correcting them, choosing a better phrase and a better word, more and more. After one has heard words coming in a whirling rush like a spout of muddy water bursting a dam, it was marvellous to find they could also be still things, shining in their depths like crystals in a setting. Often I would go to the office, push letters and engagements aside and sit, letting my mind get clear, letting the sediment subside. Things would get so much clearer that at last it seemed possible to see down through the appearances...'

'Where was that office? What were you doing?'

'House and estate agent. I was a partner. I could pretend to have "books" to "do" in the evening.'

'You never were a pharmaceutical chemist?'

'No. I meant that by way of illustration. Before I decided to give you the facts.'

'Go on, Mr Bunter.'

'Don't be hard on me, Mrs Palace. I'm doing my best. I've been practising concealment for six whole years.'

'You went off. You took part of your life away from her. And then more of it. Hid it in an office. Hid it in a book. Hid it in your thoughts. And at last went off to London with it. Yes, I can understand something of that. Was she - provided for?'

'It didn't happen quite so simply as that.'

5

Mr Bunter was obviously now in trouble with another considerable mass of undigested particulars.

'There was that brother of hers. You see, she had a brother. My wife, I discovered after I married her, had this brother, an elder brother. He was in America at the time. He had travelled in the East. He was, I know now, a cocaine addict. He came back to England and drifted down to us, deep voiced when she was high pitched, but as garrulous as she was. He hung about us, living in a dingy lodging. He borrowed money from me and all her family. He came and went. He was extraordinarily cunning in getting money from us without any of us knowing what the others were doing. He would tell us things to

set us against one another and so prevent us from acting together about him. He had a malicious ingenuity. He professed to take my part against his sister. He tried to touch one of my brothers. Then he began to blackmail me.'

'But what could he blackmail you about?'

'Somehow he had got wind of or guessed about that child in Scotland. I told you... *Yes,* I told you that... He was never clear about it, but his hints were broad and close. It would have been intolerable if Freda had known. Always he was trying to get money from me or else creating a scandal about his destitution. Like that. He combined his exactions with the most fantastic boasting. I can see him now, heavy, lumbering, portentous, fishy-eyed, with his lower lip drooping, coming into our little dining-room round about a meal time, but refusing to eat, too ill, sulking and menacing and then, after a little drink, beginning to talk. Of how he would write plays if he had an opening. Of how he would make a fortune if he had a little capital. Of the countries he had seen and the women he had had. He was the only one who could silence his sister even for a little while, and then her pent-up feelings would explode. She would scream and scold at him and he would become grossly pathetic. Why did he not work? Why did he not succeed? Why didn't he succeed or get rid of himself?

'But if I said a word about him, she took it as a reflection on her family and her breeding and turned the storm on me. She would insult my brothers and my sister. Any chance admission I had ever made about them would reappear distorted. "You yourself admit." Her hostility to my sister was insane.

'Cocaine was never mentioned in these rows. I don't think we knew certainly about his drugs, any of us. None of us knew much about that sort of thing. But we knew that he would come and sit in on us and devasate us until we gave him some money. Then off he would go to get it — whatever it was. He seemed to find no difficulty in getting the stuff in Cardiff. Then he would disappear for a day or a week or more. The bigger the sum we gave him the longer he would stay away... You *do* realize I was living a pretty intolerable life?'

'It wasn't what one calls a successful marriage.'

'No. It was intolerable. Something had to be done. I would sit

with Freda above my head scolding and gesticulating with her long hands — how I got to hate those hands! - and Gregory rumbling and booming at ground-level. Something, you see, *had* to happen. It wasn't very wonderful running away from that.'

'But you did it.'

'Not at once. I developed that idea of getting out, first as a consolation fantasy. I think I got it first from a tale of old Tolstoy's, *The Living Corpse.* Then I thought *why not?* Why not really do it? Then when I had *Blind Alley* -'

'That was your first?'

'Yes. It's the shortest too. I thought: why not get this published under another name? And slip away to that name? I certainly *had* got a sort of alibi already prepared in my imagination. I was beginning to realize the thing was possible. I had got a postal address in London - as Bunter. I really don't know now how far I had it cut and dried at that time. But the point is that there was a crisis.'

'You flung out of the house?'

'No. It wasn't like that. Let me tell you. As exactly as possible. My wife had gone to Cornwall to a married sister who had appendicitis. My brother-in-law hadn't shown up for weeks and weeks. I was temporarily in heaven. I was writing and writing well in my own home. And then Gregory turned up. Heaven knows where he had been and what he had been doing. He was in filthy clothes, black with coal-dust; he had no shirt. His black hair was unkempt. I was shocked and angry at his appearance and then I decided to treat him kindly and get rid of him as soon as possible. I gave him a hot bath. I gave him a good supper and plenty of whisky. I rigged him out in old clothes of my own from top to toe and I gave him a couple of pounds. This heartened him enormously. To begin with he had been the wettest dog that ever cringed, but before we were through with supper, he was boasting like a visitant from heaven. He would never forget my goodness and in a little while (trust him) he would make my fortune. And then — I don't think he meant to reflect upon me — he began to extol the life of wandering and adventure. He'd just had an affair with a woman who had been left alone in a farm in Cardigan. Prime she was. Always he was having such adventures. He'd been out upon the hills and sleeping in the open. Nobody knew

what sunrise was who hadn't slept in the open. This life people led in towns wasn't life. These clerks and people who sat in little offices and had their little villas and went to bed before eleven— "I'm not meaning you, old chap," he said. "You've got your political career and all that. You play the long game."

'But I knew he meant me. I knew that it was necessary for his self-respect that he should get over these taunts at me. And at last, drunk and glorious, he went out of the house - with his old clothes done up in a bundle...'

Mr Bunter hesitated. 'This is a queer story I am telling you. I've never given a hint of it to any one, but I've turned it round in my mind a thousand times. The man, you know, was drunk and crazy...

'Behind our house was a patch of open country and then some disused workings. There was a fence of barbed wire round them, but one could scramble through that, and across it was a short cut to our suburban station. The light was uncertain, ragged, black clouds across a low half-moon, but I knew the track by habit, I used it two or three times a week. I led the way, but halfway across he began to shout that I was going astray. "You stay-at-home fool," he said, "you don't even know your way about your own back garden." And then he went off to the right at a run, singing "Men of Harlech". I went after him expostulating. It was rough going. He stumbled once or twice, he fell and got up again and then, in an instant, the earth had swallowed him up. I crept forward to the hole and listened. There was a sort of scraping sound, a muffled shout and a splash. There I stood...

'I suppose I stood there for a considerable time...'

'You went for help?'

'No.'

'But why *didn't* you?'

'Because I felt I might have pushed him in.'

'But you didn't push him in?'

'I was a good ten yards behind him. I was certainly ten yards behind him. But all the same I felt that I might have pushed him in. Freda knew I detested him. She knew I was capable of violence...'

Mr Bunter made a clean breast of it. 'You see - once I hit her.'

'What did she do?'

‘Boasted about it all over Cardiff and tried to make me hit her again. She liked people to think we lived a life of violent passions.’

‘Why did you hit her?’

‘She said something disgusting about my sister. The elder sister who brought me up. Never mind that. There I was in that ugly night in that grey-black squalor of dumps and dismal weeds, squatting beside the hole which had swallowed up this - blackmailer. I didn’t call any help. I could hear nothing down below there. Perhaps if a rope had been lowered... I doubt if he was alive by the time he hit the water. I wasn’t resourceful, anyhow. My minds seemed a mixture of liquid mud and drifting grey moonlight. A sluggish muddle. I had had some whisky myself. And also I had been struck by a fantastic idea. One thing was working with another in my mind... So I didn’t think of calling help. I went back slowly and furtively to the house. The cloud shadows moved along with me like bad advisers.

‘It’s difficult now to recall how it looked to me. Still more difficult to make you see... Nobody, so far as I knew, had seen us together going across that waste land and I doubt if any one on earth knew he had been with me that night except our servant, and she had gone home after serving up our supper. She had, I knew, a sort of fear of Gregory. Maybe he had bothered her. A man like that...

‘Anyhow — there he was, done for, at the bottom of the shaft and tomorrow Freda would be coming back from Cornwall. The prospect of the morning was overwhelming. I saw an immense vista of questions, explanations, accusations opening out before me. And maybe there were people who knew he had a hold on me. It was more than probable that he had boasted in public-houses and dope-dens of his hold upon me. He might have given endless hints. How far might I not be accused?’

‘Mr Bunter, what was the hold he had upon you? Just having a war baby—’

‘I’ve got to tell you all. When I was a soldier, in the war, mostly in training for the war, for I had only eleven weeks at the front, I told you I had this war baby. But I didn’t explain that properly. I lived with a Scotch girl for some weeks at Aberlowson, outside the camp, and called her my wife. We went through a sort of declaration and I gave her a signed paper. I believed she was legally my wife. I am not

sure whether that is so now, but I was sure then. Somehow he had got hold of that. I never knew how. That's what he held over me.

'I thought it over as I crept home. It's easy to be lucid now but it wasn't at the time. He's vanished, I thought. But that may not become important for weeks or months. Unless I say something about it. Nobody is going to miss him and look for him for a long time and his body may not be found for years. He was the sort of man who could vanish without any sort of disturbance. "Think it out," I said to myself. "Think it out." And then I had what seemed to be a bright thought at the time, though really it was a profoundly silly thought. He was wearing my clothes, with the tailor's mark in the pocket and my name on the shirt and socks. When they find him, I thought, if ever they do, he will be unrecognizable, rotten, macerated in the water. I forgot that his hair was straight and black and what is odder I forgot that the servant had got supper for us. I overlooked the fact that if the body was supposed to be mine, people would want to know what he had done to me. Where had he gone? If it was me down the shaft, what would they think of him? About him I was entirely unfeeling. Then and afterwards. I hadn't the slightest twinge of pity, regret, or compunction about him and I haven't now. Nothing so destroys human kindliness as insulting self-assertion. But I thought thick-headedly that night. I was in a muddle. There, I thought, is a body — and some day that body might well be taken to be mine. Good.

'I went back to my house. The shadows and the moonlight drifted about me and changed the face of the world continually. The long-elaborated scheme of a flight from this life I was leading became dominant. I went back into the lit and littered dining-room with its broken food, its dirty plates and the empty whisky bottle. I thought of all the crowding troubles that were gathering against tomorrow. Already I had behaved queerly in giving no alarm. Ought I to ring up the police now or pretend I had seen the last of him at the door? I should have to spin a yarn to Freda. I should have to tell her of her brother's visit and describe his departure. And away up the hill was that crumpled body waiting to be found. It would always be there waiting to be found. If ultimately that body was to become mine I must vanish now. I looked round the dining-room. "This is my time,"

I said. “Not a day more of it.”

‘I slipped out with a valise and my manuscript just before dawn. I tramped across country to another station. I rested on some felled timber in a wood until about ten o’clock so as not to be noticeable at the station in the early morning, and I took an ordinary train in an ordinary way. That night I was in London. I had burnt my boats.’

‘And things worked out as you had expected?’

‘Nothing worked out as I had expected. As soon as Freda realized in a day or so that I had gone she raised a frantic hue and cry. At first the search wasn’t very thorough, but she was infuriated by my departure. Subconsciously she had been apprehending my intention to get away for some time. She pestered the Press; she pestered the police. She got herself interviewed, she got articles going on the David Lewis Mystery. It became a journalistic stunt. All South Wales was combed for me and within a month they found Gregory down his shaft, broken up, decayed, but pretty manifestly, I should think, not me. And after that you realize the relations of Mr David Lewis to Cardiff became — difficult.’

‘But all this was years ago?’

‘Nineteen twenty-eight.’

‘That is some time - six years ago.’

‘Six years.’

‘Hasn’t it blown over?’

‘There was a tremendous fuss down there. A fuss that went on. I think the sheer impudence of my beginning again so close to it in London was a help for me. My wife behaved fantastically. First, she identified the body as her brother. There was his black hair, there were his large, coarse hands. Then she changed over suddenly, disavowed her evidence and said it was me. She had jumped to the conclusion that if she said it was her brother she might hang me. She would as soon have hanged herself. She said it was me and she proclaimed her dread that her brother might have done me a mischief. With equal emphasis she proclaimed that she did not care what happened to her brother where my life was concerned. From the indignant Deserted Wife her pose changed in a night into that of the Desperate Woman protecting her Lover. Nobody believed her new attitude. I doubt if she wanted them to. There was nothing to be done

for her. She elaborated her role. In the background of the audience she must have imagined I was looking on. Somewhere, she hoped, I knew of all this. For the most part people believed her first story and not her second. That they appreciated. I guess they watched her pretty closely for some indication of collusion between us.

'At the inquest my brothers and sisters were ambiguous. They too had caught the idea that I was in danger. They irritated the coroner by their reserve. They knew very little of Gregory, they said. They swore to my clothes.

'When presently Freda claimed my insurance money there was a revival of public interest. I think she was forced into doing that by neighbourly comments. I doubt if she would have done it without that compulsion. The insurance company refused to accept the evidence of my death. Having got a considerable publicity in the matter, they made a grand gesture of it and paid up. Most embarrassingly for me. Under protest, they said. As an advertisement. Five hundred pounds. Then slowly the affair sank down again out of public attention.

'For three or four years I did not find out precisely what had happened, and then I took a risk and dug it all out in the newspaper-room of the British Museum. I said I was in search of dates and local colour, and I began with a study of some Yorkshire papers. Then I had out the files of various Irish Free State dailies together with two Cardiff papers. It was as if they were of minor importance to the matter under consideration. You perceive my elaborate cunning. But so I got all I wanted.'

'What has become of your wife?'

'That is one of my bothers. It was not so much a question of money. Her people were not badly off and she had our little house, some hundred pounds or so of mine and that insurance money. For a year or so she must have lived imaginatively upon my disappearance, made it her social distinction, talked it out from five hundred different angles, said she was sure I was dead, said that she was sure that I was alive. You know, it's an odd thing to say, but though I detest her I have nevertheless a tenderness for that woman. I understand the tortures an unstanchable insatiable vanity may give itself. In a sense she is mine. That she made life impossible for me,

cannot alter that. I think I understand why she talks and talks. It is something she cannot help. She is driven. It is like skating on thin ice. You must go on and go on. Pause and you fall in. Below the thin surface of Freda's noise and violence was a horror of the cold and uneventful commonplace. Self-discovery. She boasted to keep herself warm in the eternal night. There is something of that in all of us, but with her it was quintessential. Lest the vociferous nonentity should be laid bare. And, after all, we'd been husband and wife. I couldn't bear - and I can't bear - to think of her silenced and going under. I'd feel better if I knew she was fixed up somewhere so that she could tell herself and every one just how glorious she was. But what can I do? How can I help her? How can I find out about her? I daren't ask about Cardiff. I daren't go near Cardiff. To this day I'm not safe. I know I'm not safe. The story isn't forgotten. It hasn't blown over. It's dangerous still. At the least hint of the real state of affairs she would revive it. The David Lewis drama would be billed for a new run.

'Always,' said Mr Bunter, 'that side of my life has been like a leaking patch in the side of a ship... Sometimes one lapses into a sort of security. Sometimes something trivial but alarming occurs. You find some one up from Cardiff looking at you from the top of an omnibus. Some one you knew slightly. Was he really looking at you - *as* you? Or you say something that might give you away. And now — recently — I've had a sort of feeling - like hearing a rat gnawing in the night - that some one is at work upon the problem of Mr Bunter, where he was born, where he went to school, what he did before he became a writer of books. I have a certain feeling that I am looked at, that people come to look at me. It may be a touch of persecution mania. But the other day in the tube a man stood holding a strap and looking down on me. I had an impression he had followed me along the platform and into the car and that saved me.

'"If that isn't David Lewis!" he said aloud.

'I went on reading my paper unconcernedly. A year or so ago I should have looked up at once and given myself away. You do not realize, until you think it over, the number of people in the world who know things about you, who have watched you go past in the morning or noted something characteristic in your voice or speech,

schoolmasters, room-mates, men in your platoon, men who have done business with you. They don't forget. If they were young at the time they never forget. And after a newspaper mystery they are all alert. If they desist for a time a trifle will bring them back to it. "Oh, yes!" they cry, "*I* knew David Lewis." Then if some one, some one hostile, begins to look for gaps and pick up loose threads...'

'But it was six years ago.'

'All the same - No. It isn't over. I know it isn't over.'

For a minute perhaps Mr Bunter lapsed into silence.

'Suppose they bring Freda to London,' he said. 'Suppose some one had the idea of bringing her to London to identify me!'

'*Who* would bring her to London?' asked Mrs Palace.

6

The chiming clock of the newly erected Abbey Road Building proclaimed in a decorative manner the end of an hour and then slowly and regretfully struck seven.

'Well, Mrs Palace, we can't say now that we don't talk together. I've been talking to you here for more than an hour. There's my whole life story. Practically. At last I've told some one. I've got it off my chest. Thank you for listening.'

'Thank you for telling me. Mr Bunter, I find it a queer story with something in it... It's absurd, I know, to make such a comparison, but it reminds me - Have you ever seen a chick struggling out of an egg?'

'I knew you'd understand. That, Mrs Palace, is exactly what we are. No! - not "exactly". How easily these unqualifying words slip in! But that is what we are. Struggling out of a shell. All of us. The criminals and defaulters just as much as the leaders and philosophers. This human world isn't half-hatched. Struggling out of an egg. It's a beautiful image... "Let me out," we say. "Let me out." And then, "Don't pursue me!" And in the end — like a Monte Carlo pigeon — one may be brought down in the full delight of escape.

'This is the first time I've ever told this to any one,' said Mr Bunter. 'Perhaps I haven't done it very well. I've been getting in my own light, I expect. I wish I could begin it all over again... There are

such a lot of ways of telling the same thing. But now perhaps you understand the quality of my particular exasperation. To some extent anyhow... Does it horrify you at all?'

'No.'

'Disgust you?'

'No.'

'Not about Freda?'

'I think I can understand that. You *had* to do something. And after all there was the other wife. Mr Bunter, I can't judge. How can I judge of things like that?'

'This talk isn't to be our only talk then? If you're not horrified; if you're not disgusted, why shouldn't we talk some more? I want to go on talking to you. I want you to know me. I can't tell you what breaking down this loneliness I have been living in, means to me. And never have I wanted to be known by any one as I want to be known by you. I open new gulfs between us, I know, with everything fresh I tell you, but then there always were gulfs... You have an effect on my imagination. If I can get you to know me I feel I shall begin perhaps to know something about myself. And I want you to tell me something about yourself.'

'I can never talk about myself - or anything.'

'But I can learn. Some of your silences are - expressive. It's just because you don't put up any screen of statement. *And you understand!* You seem to *take* everything... I must go on with this talking. If you'll let me talk. You can't imagine the blessedness of getting out of solitude and silence at last! To some one who gives you a fair hearing. Mrs Palace, would you care to lunch with me some day next week?'

She assented gravely.

'There is a Basque Restaurant in Dover Street or Albemarle Street,' he said, 'a most confidential place, where there is no band and no crowd and no fuss and admirable cooking... And we can talk in undertones...'

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Mr Alfred Bunter Goes to Pieces

Brynhild's mind was so filled with the remarkable story of Mr Alfred Bunter that practically she thought of nothing else for the rest of that day and most of the next, and she even woke up and thought about him in the night. She was immensely impressed by the natural and convincing way in which he had given himself away to her. His unqualified assumption that in a peculiar sense he belonged to her and that it would be impossible for her to betray or abuse his confidence, went unquestioned. So it was. She had to believe him, she had to help him as much as she could.

She was thinking about him and hardly at all about herself. She wasn't indeed keeping any sort of watch upon herself. It did not occur to her for a moment to think she was in love with him. She did not desire him, she did not look up to him, but she wanted enormously to know a lot more about him. He had quickened her mind tremendously. No doubt of the quickening. He was intensely interesting, from that elusive streak of gold in his complexion and the mixture of sensitive weakness and great obstinacy in his face, to the manifest hesitations in his account of himself and his passionate effort, nevertheless, to be sincere. It was that passionate effort appealed to her most; it was as though something in him was wanting to get born through her. In her, he had intimated, for the first time he had found a chance of self-knowledge. It made her feel incubatory. Nobody had ever asked her for help or indeed for anything, since the connubial demands of Mr Rowland Place established a sort of monopoly over her. She could give help to Bunter, she perceived, and she alone could give it. She could not imagine herself not giving it. She could alleviate his loneliness, be his fellow-conspirator, probably do things — she didn't know quite what things - to help his concealments and releases.

Here was just the mental occupation she had needed.

It would be friendship, a great and relieving friendship for them both. Later on, when she had found out how to put them, she might

even tell him things about herself. She saw no reason why she should not develop a reciprocating friendship with him. He was the only man she had encountered since marriage with Palace had enveloped her, who had talked to her gravely, sincerely, and intimately for more than an hour without a single lapse into commonplace gallantry. He was at last what she had come to consider that impossible thing, a man friend. So often had she found a grave and respectful opening the mere smokescreen for some stupid little amorous advance. Such an Eros, that furtive Eros of the genteel! A foolish-faced, indelicate, rather middle-aged faun, as tiresome as an intrusive, insufficiently clad beggar, invaded the serious conversation. But this man, it seemed, had need of her without any of that.

She realized that he wasn't a very wise man, that he needed protection from himself. She wasn't by any means sure that he was perfectly truthful. Not that he lied, but he was weak about the truth. Maybe all novelists get that way. She wasn't by any means sure that there were not one or two rather significant things about his story still to be told. But she felt she had power over him, so that he would be strongly disposed to do anything that she seemed to think fine and wise.

She tried to work out some aspects of his problem. She was all for his making good his escape. She was all for Alfred Bunter and against the obliterated Lewis. She felt singularly little compunction about the two abandoned wives. She had that very common disposition in women to consider that a woman who cannot keep a man deserves no pity. Her concern was for him. She surveyed his proceedings in an almost maternal advisory spirit. Had he really set about his business in the right way? For example, was he wise to go on living in England now that he was becoming a conspicuous figure in the literary world? He could reduce any risk of recognition by old acquaintances to a tenth if only he went to live in Paris. David Lewis didn't speak French perhaps, but why shouldn't Bunter learn? She did not realize as Mr Cloote did that the more subtly one learns to use one's own language the more difficult it is to use any other. And certainly - and soon — he must put his relations with the two abandoned wives — and the insurance company — on a less vulnerable footing.

Brynhild had an innocent belief in the honourable inhumanity of solicitors. She thought they were profoundly wise, resourceful, loyal, illegal if necessary and absolutely silent — and that they did it for six and eight-pence a time. She did not see why Bunter should not settle all the practical side of his problems through a solicitor. And his father had been a solicitor. He must know solicitors down there that he could trust. He would find a solicitor. This solicitor would go to this incessant dangerous wife and say to her very firmly that if she became quite silent about David Lewis and particularly if she asked no more questions about him she should be paid a regular annuity...

At this point Brynhild pulled up in her scheming. She had a vague feeling of something unsubstantial in this planning. Perhaps she was overrating the effective firmness of solicitors. Perhaps she was underrating the power of that Cardiff wife to do novel and formidable things. She tried to recall everything Bunter had said about her and to evolve some sort of picture of her. She had to be reckoned with. She was keen, he had said — a formidable word - and bright-coloured and bright-eyed, incessantly voluble, so vain as to be unaware of the protests and resistances she evoked. Brynhild had met talkative people but she had never been the objective of a really voluble, inconsistent, and uncontrollable person in her life. She tried to imagine it. It must be very difficult to hold one's own. It must be like walking through a blizzard. A *hot* blizzard - a sandstorm. It might not be so easy, even for a family solicitor, to tell such a woman not to do things.

And then her mind came round to the question of that extinguished brother Gregory. He seemed to be a terrific person. Quite calmly she arraigned Bunter for murder, justifiable murder or manslaughter. What had he really done? Had he told the truth about that? Did he himself know the truth? Did he know exactly what had happened for a moment or so that night? Murder had never struck her as an unnatural thing to do - difficult it might be perhaps and reprehensible but not unnatural. If it was unnatural why should it be forbidden in the Ten Commandments which after all are meant for normal men? The Ten Commandments do not go out of their way to forbid unnatural things. It seemed to her quite natural for him to have given this exasperating, shouting drunkard a push, a sudden,

impulsive push. It didn't strike her as at all a dreadful thing for him to have done that. She could think that a possibility and still think none the worse of him.

But anyhow he said he hadn't. There was nobody in the world to contradict him. All the same there might be grave trouble. What could they do to him on that score? That incalculable, exhibitionist wife might turn against him again.

Was it really possible that some one would bring her to London? Who could do such a thing? Could there be plots and conspiracies against Bunter? Had he enemies? Had he made people dislike him? What could they find to dislike in him? He wasn't the sort of man any one dislikes. Rowly didn't seem to like him, but that was just Rowly's sensitiveness to competition, even to inadvertent competition.

'He must go abroad,' she said that night, and she stopped brushing her hair to tick the points off on her fingers. He must go abroad. He must keep abroad for a time and move about. He must get a solicitor. A Good Solicitor. He must pay that money to the insurance company under a strict pledge of secrecy. He must arrange those annuities somehow. It was a pity she did not know quite the solicitor needed but that was a detail. Then he could settle down over there, go on writing those really very fine and subtle books of his, and all would be well. And he would be very grateful to her. It would really be a tremendous thing in friendships.

In bed she recapitulated these really very sound suggestions so that she should have them at her finger-ends for their lunch. They seemed to be getting simpler and sounder as she went to sleep. But that lunch with its further elucidations and its wise counsels, was never to happen.

She was rung up the morning after their talk and she found Bunter on the telephone. 'Mrs Palace?' His voice sounded near and yet very small. 'Mrs Palace, I can't keep my appointment with you. I'm sorry. I have been... I have got to leave London almost at once.'

A pause. What should she say?

'I suppose - I couldn't see you, could I?' he asked.

'But why not? Where?'

'I've left my place. I think it's being watched. I'm in a little flat

belonging to one of my brother's clients. He's abroad and my brother had the key.'

'But I thought your brothers didn't know—'

'I'll explain all that when I see you. Everything has collapsed. I *must* see you again. I can't endure it if I don't see you.'

'Tell me the address.'

2

She found him in a queer, squalid little flat in a building between Portland Street and Tottenham Court Road. She went up an uncarpeted stone staircase to the door. On every landing were two doors at an acute angle and he was four flights up. He let her in himself. He led the way into a minute sitting-room furnished with the meanest-looking furniture she had ever seen. There was a cast-iron fireplace with a gas fire, a fairly commodious sofa and an armchair covered in dingy tapestry cloth, a square table, and a built-up arrangement of glazed book-shelves with books. 'Sit down,' said Bunter. 'Shall I get you some tea? I'll have to get it - if there *is* tea.'

'I didn't come for tea,' said Brynhild. 'We won't have tea. Tell me.'

She was beginning already to know his face rather well and she saw that he was changed. He looked uneasy — rattled. Hitherto he had moved and spoken in a consciously self-controlled way that she had found rather likeable. Now his nerves were at the surface. She had, she realized, over-estimated his firmness. He had the manner of some one who had rehearsed a speech several times and now finds he has to say things quite differently.

'I wanted to talk to you - just once more... Mrs Palace, it's all up with me, I'm afraid. For a long time, anyhow. I'm in a net.'

(His mouth was wincing. He wasn't an infinite distance from tears. Amazing!)

'What has happened?'

'My silly secret is practically out.'

'Yes?'

'The whole thing's gone phut. *I've* gone phut!'

'Tell me.'

‘My eldest brother walked into my flat suddenly this morning at half-past seven. I was up at work already - in my dressing-gown. I often do that. When he sent in his name I hesitated and then decided to see him. He cam in, rather stouter, rather more like my father, rather more the perfect solicitor, but the same old Evan. After six years. He scrutinized me for one brief moment. “It’s young Dave right enough,” he said - in front of the servant.

‘“Why have you come like this, without notice?” I asked, as soon as the servant was out of the room.

‘“I only got word of it last night,” he said, sitting down. “I came right up at once. Dave, you’ve got to clear out.”

‘“Why?”

‘“I didn’t realize what I was doing. I’m afraid I’ve given you away... This is a brave place you’ve got. You must be doing well. But you’ll have to get out from it.”

‘He went on in a slow, deliberate, precise way that always used to irritate me. But what he told me was grave enough. I can’t tell you all the particulars of the story we pieced together. I remembered a foolish thing I had done. It’s great fun running a deception while you’re getting away with it. But when you slip - Then you see what an ass you are! Such a silly thing! A year or so ago. At one of those Bedlow Book-Teas. Some one had quoted a Welsh proverb in Welsh. I capped it with another. You see? Alfred Bunter, supposed to be from the Midlands, talked Welsh! Somebody journalistic had remembered that and thought it over and remarked upon it and begun to look for evidence of the past of Mr Alfred Bunter, in the Welsh Press. Why should any one do that? I don’t know. Somebody did. Then yesterday, yesterday morning, a man turned up in my brother’s office wanting particulars about the missing David Lewis. Rather clever questions. Wasn’t he rather a genius? Hadn’t he written some poetry? Something like Chatterton? It was an urgent, dark man, my brother said, with a face as broad as it was long, and a squint. He said he proposed to write a book on the Tragedies of Welsh geniuses. One in particular he wanted to know about - David Lewis. Keen on David Lewis particularly. Would my brother be surprised to learn that David Lewis was probably flourishing in London under the name of Alfred Bunter? It was becoming an open secret, he said. Clever to

say that. He produced two rather oblique photographs, one of a public dinner and one of a public lunch party, and several snapshots, and before my brother knew where he was he had accepted the identification. With surprise. He came to his senses in the afternoon and took the night train to warn me.

'My servant interrupted us with my overdue breakfast and my brother joined me at that. Neither of us ate much. We wanted the servant and the breakfast things out of the way, and then we sat down to talk it all out.

'We went into all the aspects of the case. What would happen next? Nothing was quite clear to us. It was just a tangle of disagreeable possibilities. The most probable thing was that this man with the effusive manner and the squint would take his discovery to the local Press. They might accept it forthwith, but they might wait and check up for verification with my other brother and my sister. But Evan had put both of them wise. They were going to admit a slight resemblance, they agreed, and then hesitate. No - no, come to look at it again, it wasn't me. Evan was going to keep out of the way. That would hold things up for a bit. But only for a bit. The story was too good not to come out, even if it came out with notes of interrogation all over it. It was bound to come to London. Then the insurance company would wake up, and then would come the question of how Gregory had come by his death. My brother could not recall the terms of the coroner's verdict. He thought it was death by misadventure. "But let's face up to it," said my brother. "I'm for you heart and soul, Dave, as you know, but there's going to be an imputation of murder. And, I must tell you, your sister and I know now of a possible motive. I'll be plain with you, Dave. We know of Mrs Dave Lewis away there in Aberlowson and her boy. Working in a factory. Why didn't you tell us, Dave? A Scotch marriage. Bigamy. That, again, may come out. How far the powers that be, will go into that murder inquiry, I can't tell. And now, what's to be done?"

'We spent two hours beating about that question and getting no further.'

Bunter stopped short.

He gave vent to a noise of extreme exasperation. 'Aaah!' — a quite remarkable noise. 'I just can't think about it! I can't think about

it! I have no patience with it. I think up to a certain point and then I give way. I give way to the exasperation of a caught animal. I want to rush about the room. I want to break things and bang the walls. Let me see. What happened next? Yes. About half-past ten we got a ring from the gossip correspondent of the *Hourglass* to ask if he could speak to me. It may have been only a coincidence. My brother said I had just gone out. "Something may have appeared in the Welsh papers already," he said. "How can one tell? This is no place for you just now. They'll besiege you when the mystery thickens. You may get them outside. Freda is bound to rush up headlong directly she gets wind of the story. Safety first. Come right away to a little flat I know of." (This flat.) "It's a queer little hole, but no one will dream of looking for you in it. I'll scout around for a bit. I've got some business of my own to do in Brighton. And you'll have time to think and turn round."

'Good advice. I packed a bag and came. I remembered our luncheon engagement for next Tuesday as soon as I got here and rang you up at once. Here we are. My silly little card castle has collapsed. I'm done. I had to tell you. You're the only soul in the world to whom I can say a word. And anyhow, you had to know.'

He looked at her almost as if he expected her to invent some solution to his trouble there and then.

The confident, brown man she had met at Valliant Chevrell had changed into a distressed and appealing boy. Never yet had Brynhild come so near to feeling like a mother.

3

'It's the stupidest thing in the world to ask,' said Bryhild, 'but what *are* you going to do?'

'That's exactly what I wanted you to ask me. I *have* thought of something... And if I can watch your face as I tell you of it...'

'You tell me,' said Brynhild.

'It's this...'

'One thing, please. What has happened to your wife - your Cardiff wife?'

'My brother tells me she's gone to Ilfracombe, where she runs a

sort of boarding-house. Unless somebody traces her there, she may not get into the drama for days - or even weeks. She doesn't read newspapers very attentively...'

'Go on.'

'Mrs Palace, the one person I care for in all this pother is Alfred Bunter - and his work. And you, of course. You, somehow, are in it too. But the others - they're pauses in a game. You like - you have liked - I know you have - Alfred Bunter. For me he is reality. For you, too. That's the man you know. I dislike, I despise, young David Lewis beyond measure. I am quite prepared to kill him. I consider him a pitiful failure in life. He's over and done with. Or at any rate he ought to be. I would, if it wasn't for the feelings of his relations, kill him now. But Alfred Bunter I mean to save if I can. *This* life. This life — which so far has been — only the promise of a beginning. I want to save it. What I can of it. And so far as I can see, the one person who can deny that Bunter is David Lewis and outface the man with the squint and all the rest of it — is David Lewis himself. Yes. Me! Really, I know exactly what I have to do. Up to the present time, you see, Bunter has been careful not to document himself too deeply. Consider the material unreality of Bunter. No photographs except a few bad snapshots and these public banquet pictures. I think I told you that. Rather aslant and a little out of focus. He can go abroad to France, Switzerland, Italy, Morocco - anywhere. He can even get photographs of somebody rather like him and obviously not like David Lewis, to send to the papers. It's not difficult to get Bunter off the scene. Not at all difficult. All that can be done. Mr David Lewis can resume his trimmed army moustache and reappear in Cardiff, penitent, explanatory, with money in his pocket, endorsed by his brothers and sister, ready to settle matters with the insurance company, ready to tell the story of the accident at the pit-shaft and his foolish panic. And ready to swear he has never heard of Bunter. They can't do *much* to him. And afterwards he can go back to America - where presumably he has been all the time - and we shall never hear of him again.'

He stopped and questioned her mutely.

'And the wife in all this plan?' she remarked mildly. And still more mildly — almost apologetically: 'The wives?'

‘That *is* the real trouble.’

‘That tenacious, loquacious wife in particular?’

‘Yes — tenacious and loquacious. Good words for her. I agree.

I shall have to tell Freda I love some one else. I *can* tell her that.’

‘In America? Some one in America?’

‘In America. Yes - in America.’

‘And she’ll accept that?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Nor I. She’s a strong character.’

‘No. She’s a forcible character. Not a strong one.’

‘But you admitted - “tenacious”. I want to get all this right, Mr Bunter, or else how can I advise you? Suppose David Lewis *can’t* get away again? Suppose his Freda lays hands on him - those long hands you said you got to hate - and won’t leave go?’

‘Murder, then.’

Brynhild considered him gravely. Was it in him? Not that sort of murder.

‘If David Lewis can’t get away, then Mr Bunter abroad in Europe, will fade and fade until he fades out altogether.’

‘It won’t be like that. No. In some way I must do a deal with Freda and get my liberty. I don’t know how. There must be some way...’

Brynhild meditated for a time. ‘The extraordinary thing is that by all accepted standards you are a very immoral man, Mr Bunter. And I don’t feel the slightest disapproval of you. Except... In all this — There is something... You seem to disregard the other wife in Scotland.’

‘She doesn’t appear - I believe we may be able to keep her out of the Cardiff drama altogether.’

‘But have you forgotten her?’

Mr Bunter searched his mind. ‘No.’

‘Doesn’t *she* matter? How did your brother get to know of her? You *loved* her. You *did* love her.’

‘She saw my name in the paper at the time of the mystery and wrote to him - a wise, discreet, little letter. She wanted to know if I was in trouble - that was how she put it. Could she perhaps help, she said.’

For some seconds Mr Bunter looked profoundly ashamed of himself, regarded the frayed carpet, and said nothing.

'Well?' said Brynhild. 'Tell me some more about the wife you loved.'

'It was a long time ago.'

'Your brothers contribute to her support?'

'She will be taken care of — and the boy... I know it sounds callous, Mrs Palace, but if I saw her now, if we met, I doubt if we should know each other.'

Brynhild said nothing, thinking darkly. Reality went into these unromantic patterns. The 'boy' must be seventeen. The boy he had never seen... Far away in time in another world, those two youngsters had loved. She perhaps was fresh and pretty then, and he must have made a glowing ardent boy lover. He must have been a delightful lover. Before he had got himself muddled up. The Scotch girl had had that anyhow.

And now all that was forgotten!

'Perhaps when you came home and got married in Cardiff you were still thinking of that Scotch girl?'

'I couldn't go back to her now,' said Mr Bunter. 'It's inconceivable. I will do all I can for her — if I get out of this tangle. I'll see the boy and help him. I've always meant to do that...'

He stood staring at Brynhild.

4

Then he spoke with a sudden access of force. 'You mustn't blame me for all that. You mustn't blame me now for that. You must not. I was a different being. I cannot recall how I thought or how I felt. Blame me then. But I'm paying for it now. It's the *me,* here and now, you have to think of. It's not the inexperienced man who ought to count now. It's the experienced one. Shall I do as I am planning? Shall I go through all this now with David Lewis and *end* him, end him as completely as possible, and then take Bunter out of cold storage again and go on with *him* and get the work I want him to do done? That's my idea - my fantastic but just possible idea. Bunter is worth something. He is indeed worth something. His work at any

rate is worth something. You *know* he's worth something. Or why are you here? Lewis was worth nothing at all. Hadn't I the right to be born again and escape from this eternal game of consequences? Is human life to be a scheme of infant damnation for evermore?'

Brynhild sat on the one mean little armchair, elbow on knee and chin in hand, trying to seem and be absolutely clear and intelligent and feeling all the time the most irrational stir within. She took refuge in argument.

'*When,* Mr Bunter, do you think we ought to become really responsible for ourselves? No one expects it of infants. No one expects it of children. Now *you* are going to escape - if you can - from six-and-twenty, seven-and-twenty years of your life. That, we agree, was just the husk, that was just the egg-shell. When do we really *begin for good?*'

'Even the law doesn't let us incur debts until we are twenty-one,' said Mr Bunter. 'And, after all, I'm proposing to clean up my obligations first. Not so easy. I'll have no life now for endless months, anyhow; nothing real, nothing I can control, nothing but a rigmarole...'

He remained silent for a space. His face was getting red. Abruptly he exploded.

'*Damn!*' he said. 'I can't do it. I can't *do* it...

'I've got you here to tell you I was going to do it, because then I thought I could do it if I told you. I thought somehow - *if you knew...* And now it seems a more monstrous bore and toil than ever. And as hopeless. Utter separation. I thought I had got away and I haven't got away. And that breaks me. That's the essence of the situation. For weeks, months, years perhaps now I shall have to be lying and scheming and doing hardly anything else. For all that time I shall do no thinking, no writing worth speaking of. I shall be just trying to clean up David Lewis. In the vital years of life. The situation is like a monstrous octopus. You cut one tentacle and find there's another round your waist. What will Freda do? She may do any fantastic thing. She may disbelieve me, see through me, and take up this chase for Alfred Bunter again directly I get away from her. I can get away from her, but can I get clear of her? And while I am denying Alfred Bunter, there will be these people, this journalist, this man with a

squint, whoever he is, who will be feeling about, feeling about for some thread that will hold and drag Alfred Bunter back...'

He made an ineffective gesture with his hands.

'It bristles with trouble. It crowds upon me and crushes me. Take one little thing. I suppose somehow I've got to invent something about that time David Lewis spent in America. That, you know, is going to be extremely difficult. If I'm too reserved about what I did in America that will look suspicious. Every one, you know, who goes to America comes back full of American slang and a sort of varnish of the accent. Intonation rather than accent. It happens to every one. There's something so vital about that American slang. It hits them, I think, at the first impact, and impresses them and they get it. But how can I manage that? Perhaps after all it had better not be America. No. It's too near and too well known. Why not Australia? Or the Cape? I shall have to think all that out. That's only one of a hundred little snags. Always on my guard. And I want to get on with my work, Mrs Palace. I wanted to get on with my work. I was getting in my swing. Meeting you somehow — I don't know, but it made me want to do something bigger and finer. I don't want to spend months, years perhaps, of pretending and play-acting. All this is more than a calamity; it's devastation. At this time. Just in my best years, just in the full swing of my thoughts.'

'You go back to reality,' reflected Brynhild. 'And you go back to falsehood. As if falsehood *was* reality. You will have to be thinking all the time of things that don't matter, things that are forced upon you. Plainly.'

'Life is a flight, Mrs Palace. The past hunts us. And by God! Now the hounds are hard upon my trail... And all the same I *mean* something. It isn't a delusion. I have something. I have an idea...'

But what good was that now?

5

She kept her pose of calm wisdom but she was more profoundly stirred than she knew. She was indeed as bitterly distressed as he, at this sudden collapse of a great expectation. For she had been elaborating, expanding, decorating, and dreaming about this fantasy

of an intimate friendship and a great secret and a sort of collaboration, since the moment of their parting in Regent's Park.

And manifestly he also had been making some sort of similar if different elaboration. Disappointment acute and tragic hid behind their poses. But still they had to pose with one another.

'I know what to *say* about this,' he said. 'While I have been waiting here I have been saying it. Saying it over. Making imaginary speeches to you. About this tremendous struggle I was in for, about this tremendous lesson I had to learn. And how splendid we have to be. And it's true — and it's rubbish... I shall fight it out. Really I shall fight it out. I shall do exactly as I say I will do. But somehow -'

He stood in front of the sordid little fireplace and he stared at the built-up bookcase before him over her head.

'What right have I to grumble?' he said. '*My* case is only the common case, one variation of an everlasting tune. What *is* human life? What is any life? Fear — incessant fear. Hesitation. Baulking at everything out of fear. Precautions. A mind perpetually thinking of mistakes and dangers. Never living — *outwardly*. Forced to be wary — continually. Attention incessantly diverted - to perplexities, entanglements, threats. The war maybe wounded me more than I knew at the time, yet after all, did it do more than open my eyes to the truth about life? The war was nothing but ordinary life, hurried up, intensified, underlined, made plain by exaggeration. Life raw. Always on the look-out, we were. Always on the defensive. I was never seasoned. I never got used to it. The mine beneath your feet, the sniper in the thicket, the pitfall in the captured trench, the whiff of evil in the air, the queer taste in the food you found. Always on the alert, always on the defensive. Always distracted from calm and sane and lovely things.

'It's as if my eyes were opened then. All life is like that...

'It goes on. It goes on and men stand it. Because I suppose we don't really know how to set about rebelling. It's rebellion somehow I want to say. That is my great idea. Stop to think, life hustles you. Flowers and sunsets, art and music just mock us, as we get pushed and beaten past them. Every sort of loveliness mocks us — and gets snatched away. Love?... We're hustled. Mind your head! Mind your step. Get on with you. Consequences! Take the consequences. We

were born conditioned. The past sold us.

'We won't stand it,' he cried. 'All that I'm saying, what I am trying to say in my muddy, noisy books... That's *me* - the essential *me.* Somehow, some day we will get the better of this predestinate world. Somehow we will turn round and get hold of the weapons. Find the magic word. Against all this hunting by the past... I'll get to it somehow. I'll go through.'

He stared at her with miserable eyes. He had an air of saying a premeditated piece, while beneath that surface quite other things refused to be shaped into words. 'It's not ranting, this. It sounds like ranting. But I'm trying to tell you — though I know I sound like ranting to you. God knows when we shall meet again. So I'm trying to tell you now. You asked me in the Park - what I believed, what held me together. *This.* Really I believe *this.* Man — all the sanity in man - has been struggling to escape from the past - continually. Always. Forgive us our debts! What does that mean? Through the ages men have been wiping off debts, as one wipes off dirt and filth. Haven't we tried a hundred ways of repudiating - years of jubilee, statues of limitations, statutes of mortmain? Amnesties. Forgive. Stop. Liquidate. Begin again. Let the dead past bury its dead. It's even in Christianity, you see, even in Bible teaching - mixed up with other things. That's the one saving idea for us. Being born again. I believe that. I hang on to that... Wherever you are in life, whatever you are in life, you are only starting. Against nature, you say? This whole world of nature may be a scheme of fate and damnation. Then we have to fight the whole scheme of nature.'

He stopped again and stared down at her.

'Why I should spend our last moments talking this rubbish,' he said, and left his sentence incomplete.

'It's not rubbish,' said Brynhild. 'Everything that is worth saying seems almost impossible to say.'

Mr Bunter ceased to look or speak like an over-straining prophet making the best of it. His manner, his voice, changed. 'Heroics,' he said. 'I've done my best to say it over. In a sort of way you asked for it. But today, it's hard to keep it up. I may think myself as something creative — rebel child of nature and all that, but today I feel shot through. I feel shot to pieces... Of course, this is an end.'

She looked up sharply at the catch in his voice.

'This is our end,' he said in a voice of calm misery. 'Manifestly.'

6

But she did not see it like that...

An overwhelming pity and tenderness for this distressful man had taken possession of her. She wanted extravagantly to comfort him. And perhaps she wanted to comfort herself. It was impossible to leave him in this state to end things like this. She would as soon have abandoned a nestling that had fallen out of a nest, or a lost, blind kitten. For some years her role had been that The little clock upon the mantelshelf marked the passing of an hour...

A remarkable calm had come upon them. It was like the passing of a thunderstorm. To her in particular the world had taken on a complete matter-of-fact quality. It was a world now without emotion, without a shadow of desperation, in which nothing is surprising any more.

Certain things had to be done and they were going to be done.

'*Now* I don't mind going back to Cardiff,' said Mr Bunter, breaking a silence. 'I don't mind anything.'

'How shall I know what happens to you?' asked Brynhild.

'I can't write?'

'No. You can't write.'

'But perhaps - if you wanted to say something - if it was only "Stick it" to Mr Alfred Bunter, he will be away somewhere, but his agent — Mr Blatch — A letter, I mean, would be forwarded to him.'

'I won't forget that.'

'It mustn't be a rash letter. It might go astray.'

'Do you think I write rash letters...?'

'Something will appear in the newspapers. Something will certainly appear in the South Wales papers. If an unmarked newspaper came to you from Cardiff?'

'Once.'

'No more?'

'If an autograph hunter with the Christian name of Brynhild and perhaps my surname, writes to Mr Bunter care of his publishers, she

will give him an address where he can write his news freely and fully...'

'Maybe it won't be so long. Maybe it won't be so bad. Maybe I'll liquidate David Lewis for good and all. And there'll be no hitch. Maybe Mr Alfred Bunter will be assembling himself again somewhere over there - some place like Nice or Ragusa - in quite a little while. And be coming back.'

Brynhild curiously enough had nothing to say about that.

'When we meet again,' he began, and stopped short.

She said not a word.

'If we meet again,' he said, 'we shall find we have a lot to tell each other.'

He glanced at her brooding face.

He laid his hand timidly on her bare shoulder and spoke in an undertone. 'Anyhow, thank you for this.'

He clenched his two hands together between his knees. 'Whatever happens I shall adore you. Love calls once. Or never.

I loved you from the first moment I set eyes upon you.'

8

At seven o'clock Mrs Palace found herself in her own room surveying herself in her dressing-table mirror. She saw a lady surprised perhaps but not dismayed, and looking unusually animated and well. She was feeling rather indolent but by no means exhausted. And tragedy had evaporated from life.

She looked down at her hand mirror which was prone on the table as though hiding its reflections from her. Then by an effort she raised her eyes and met the grave but by no means despondent face in the glass. Brynhild scrutinized Brynhild.

'Yes,' said Brynhild aloud, and did not trouble to say more because the other Brynhild understood it all without her saying it.

'We have always been simple because we have never done anything out of our pattern. And we didn't think anything *could* surprise us. We didn't think we could surprise ourselves. But now we begin to realize...how life can be complicated...

'Now we shall understand other people better.'

She ran her fingers round the ivory back of her hand mirror slowly, thinking out a practical problem.

She came to a definite conclusion about something hitherto unsettled in her mind.

‘It just didn’t happen,’ she said.

But presently she began to doubt whether accomplished events can always be dismissed so easily. Even memories are not easy things to hide.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Mr Rowland Palace Goes Upward and On

When at last after two days' delay Mr Rowland Palace returned home and could be heard downstairs in the hall, his wife had a moment of panic. She felt that unless she went down at once and looked him in the face, she might have a difficulty in looking him in the face. Yet why should she wince? But she need have had no such apprehension, because for some reason that did not at once become apparent, he displayed an unmistakable disinclination to turn his countenance to her. He backed up to the foot of the staircase, kissed her over her, so to speak, on the forehead, and immediately went upstairs without once looking back.

At tea she had her first inkling of his reason for this unwonted aversion. Something had happened to his left cheekbone and brow; his normally flexible skin had been replaced by a harder shining pink expanse, that sent lighter extensions on to his eyelid where they mingled with powder.

'Has anything happened to your eye, Rowly?' she asked.

'I thought you would see it,' he said bitterly.

'It shows against the window,' she said, to mitigate her remark. 'The slanting light just catches it.'

'It is a — contusion. In fact — it is a black eye painted over. A black eye. There was an accident at Dumbuttock. Those young men had what they called a Rag.'

'I saw something in one of the papers.'

'It ought not to have been in the papers.'

'It was in a letter in some local paper. Somebody protested against - stupid exuberance - was it? I couldn't understand.'

'Stupid exuberance describes it. Those young barbarians staged a Student Rag for me... These rags are not natural things at all. I never realized that so fully before. They are self-conscious exaggerations of a silly custom. One university or medical-school apes another and tries to do something sillier. I was met at the station and taken in a sort of procession of rather extravagant costumes to the hall where I

was to give my address, and the joke - if you can call it a joke — was a raid to capture the Mascot.'

'The Mascot?'

'Me. It's all too silly. And they threw what they called bombs and hand grenades with flour and so forth. A pelting, in fact. And one lout hurled this turnip... After that they expected my address to be a success... This Ragging doesn't give you a chance with them. It's derisive. Essentially.'

Evidently he wanted to talk no more about it. She suppressed her imagination in the act of presenting Rowland dishevelled and with a black eye - still being debonair - still doing his best to dominate the undergraduate mind. And she had a transitory vision of the bright young things in the galleries applauding their damaged plaything, and listening very little, not quite sure whether they had indeed gone quite far enough with him.

'It was a good address,' she said, 'and the *Daily Telegraph* gave it the best part of a column. It read very well. And then you went on to Garvie Castle. Did you have a good time there?'

'Except for this eye.'

'And the motor trip to John o' Groats — and the yacht?'

'Some of the scenery was quite unexpected,' he said, with a sort of defensive aloofness.

So that too had not been a perfect success.

'Betty has made some of those soda-buns you like,' she said.

He took a soda-bun with an air of not caring a rap whether he took a soda-bun or not.

2

Mr Palace had called in at the office in the Multiple Building on his way home, and had a rather disturbing interview with Cloote. He thought that the entire Dumbuttock affair had been mismanaged; that Cloote had exposed him to indignities and deserted him and he wanted to say so clearly and forcibly. Cloote should have been on the spot to intercept that turnip. Mr Palace had arrived unannounced about twelve in the day, and the state of the office had greatly increased his discontent with Cloote.

It looked frowsty and deserted. It had not been cleaned out for days. There were signs of a hasty departure. A Bradshaw lay in the armchair open and face downward. The desk, the floor, was littered with burnt matches, cigarette ends, scraps of paper. There were three empty beer bottles on the sofa, and an empty glass with a fly drowned in a heel-tap of beer. There were a number of unopened letters and bales of press-cuttings scattered over the floor under the letter slit. Mr Cloote had apparently been called away, urgently called away, while struggling with a game of Patience. The little cards remained spread in lines and packets as he had left them.

'Phew!' said Mr Palace, and opened a window. One of the patience cards shifted slightly and thought better of it.

There was nothing to indicate when Cloote might return and Mr Palace thought it might be worth while to take this opportunity of examining the folders in which the projects for their various campaigns gathered form. The first he took up dealt with Continental Prestige. It seemed to consist mainly of manuscript notes and he discovered for the first time the extraordinary quality of Cloote's handwriting. It was a large unformed schoolboy script with long slanting loops and occasional convulsions and it was written in long ascending curves across the page. And it diminished in size downward and to the right. Mr Palace had seen straight manuscript and slanting manuscript before but never this parabolic inclination. It was fragmentary stuff, evidently intended only for the writer's eye and it was interposed with what appeared to be sketches or hieroglyphics.

One group of these Mr Palace found particularly intriguing. They gave him the impression of being attempts made with a bad pen and a bad eye and a very unsteady hand, to draw his own profile. Certain characteristics were seized, a certain proud carriage of the head, for example, and a graceful movement of the hand. Others were as certainly missed or disregarded.

It is often difficult to determine when bad drawing ends and caricature begins, and Mr Palace was still pondering the subtle boundary line when Cloote returned. He became audible on the stairs without. He seemed to be having difficulties with the stairs at the bend. The first impulse of Mr Palace was to replace the folder

hastily. Then he decided rather to be discovered holding it reproachfully in his hand. His general intention was reproach. This untidy office, Cloote's absence, the pervading evidence of negligence - and in particular Dumbuttock - merited a wigging. A warning.

But when after a tussle with the latchkey the door opened, it was immediately plain that Cloote was in no condition to receive either a wigging or a warning. He was manifestly very drunk.

He appeared in the doorway trying to hold on to the door and make a triumphant gesture with the same hand. He seemed obscurely puzzled to find that his right hand was not ambidextrous. He manifested no surprised at the presence of Mr Palace. He seemed to take him for granted.

'Where have you been?' said Mr Palace sharply, without any preliminary greeting.

'Cardiff... Fascinating. Simply fascinating. I say - what's the matter with your eye?'

'Cardiff? Why Cardiff?'

'Why Cardiff? Why *not* Cardiff?'

Mr Cloote advanced into the room leaving the door to close itself behind him on its own initiative, which it did with a petulant slam. He focused his attention on his employer, so far, that is, as his attention could be focused - having regard to his temporary and permanent disabilities. His large red hands framed Mr Palace unsteadily. 'Let's look at you! *You* been in the wars? What you done to yourself?'

'Tell me why you have been to Cardiff,' said Mr Palace stiffly.

'You don't need to know. S'not your business. No. Deb'nair gents don't do this sort of thing. Still, if you must know, *Bunter is dished!*'

He seated himself on the sofa and for a moment his attention was distracted by those empty beer bottles. He took up one and examined it closely. He dismissed them as irrelevant and returned to the main topic in his mind.

'Bunter is down and out,' he said. 'The job's done.'

'It's no job of mine,' said Palace. 'What do you mean, "Bunter is down and out"?'

"Zactly what I say.'

'You don't mean you've been doing anything against Bunter?

Doing anything about his private life?'

'Doing *everything* about his private life.' He swept his arm about to convey extreme amplitude.

'I wash my hands of this,' said Mr Palace. 'I won't stand for it.'

Cloote regarded his employer as if he looked at him through a mist. He tried to brush the mist away and then desisted.

'Lousy Ungrateful Swine,' he said very deliberately.

'*What!*' cried Mr Palace, stiffening.

'Lousy Ungrateful Swine,' Cloote repeated. 'No! hold up for a minute. Hear me out. The context justifies the means.' His large flat hand went up as if to arrest any precipitate action on the part of Mr Palace. 'Have I ever shown you the least want of respect? Never! Never once! Have I ever allowed you to doubt that I regarded you as the greatest, noblest, grandest writer alive?

I have not. So it has been, so it is, so it always will be. *Saecula Saeculorum.* I have loved you this shide — this side of idolatry. I do. Your career has been and is and will be more precious to me than rubies. That's in the contract and no man on earth can ever say I broke a contract. No. I'm your Yes-Man. Your obedient servant. And all the same - All the same I tell you you're a Lousy Ungrateful Swine.'

Mr Palace took a pace towards the window, swung round and demanded of his disordered henchman. 'What does this mean? What are you driving at?'

"Zactly what I say. Here was this Bunter -'

'I don't want to hear about Bunter.'

'Here was this Bunter, the most dangerous man in your way to a wide publicity. Why, they were asking him to lecture in Warsaw and Oslo next spring! Yes — sir. Oslo. And now, they won't. He won't. Nobody won't. He's out of the way. He's off the map. And the road is clear for you.'

'What have you done?'

'Nothing. Just asked a question here and there. Flut — fluttered the dove-cotes. It wasn't certain but it was a damned good guess. Even now, I don't know anything plositive. Absolutely proved, I mean. We needn't. But Mr Bunter has always been very shy of a camera and just now he's shyer than ever. Nobody knows where he's

gone these last few days. And all this idea of lecturing about the capitals of Europe and all that, he's thrown it up. He threw it up yesterday. Said he wanted to go abroad and concentrate on his work. That's all.'

He had an air of closing the discussion. 'I wish there was a nip of gin and some Worcester Sauce or red pepper in this office,' he said. '*Badly* furnished. Never mind.'

'I suppose now I know so much I might just as well know all,' said Mr Palace after an interval.

'I expected that,' said Cloote, and for a time he brooded sadly on the want of trustfulness in his hero. Then with an affection of great weariness he told what he knew of the probable identity of Mr Bunter with the missing David Lewis. He was not very complete in his knowledge. His ideas centred on the possibility of an impulsive murder. 'There's a wife somewhere but I couldn't find where. But it would be easy to find her... There it is, like a mine with a train laid ready.'

He told his story quite unaware that at that particular moment Mr David Lewis, back from an imaginary exile in Belfast, was sitting at a table in his brother's office in Cardiff, explaining the particulars of his flight from home to a doctor, to the news editor of the second Cardiff paper and to two responsible police officials, and so beginning the long and intricate task of detaching Alfred Bunter from his past. It never entered the head of Cloote that Bunter might take his dilemma by the horns in this fashion.

'We've got him taped,' said Cloote. 'And that's all about it.'

'All this I wash my hands of,' said Mr Palace.

'It's never been *on* your hands,' said Cloote. 'And so why should we talk any more about it?'

His manner suddenly became very grave.

'Mr Palace,' he said, 'I think you ought to realize that I am, in a stale and incomplete sort of way, drunk. I have to be worse before I am better. You may have noticed a certain defliciency, deficiency (Hell!), deficiencies, in my manner. I came up from Cardiff by the night train. I have eaten nothing on an empty stomach. Tomorrow I shall suffer terribly from my liver. Spots on everything.' He seemed desirous of indicating spots of everything by an appropriate gesture

and to find the effort beyond him. ‘Active spots. Wandering spots. A Dalmatian world. I believe I have gallstones. I think if you will leave me here now and let me struggle with my — well, with my fizzy — my physiological entanglements — all twisted they are — in my own fashion for a day or so, I shall be able to get on more efficiently. With my mission. My self-appointed mission. Self-chosen. This has been a curious time in Cardiff. An exciting time. I’ve had to stand an extraordinary number of drinks altogether, and I’m overwrought. Maybe I stood too many drinks. It was confusing. There were times when I seemed to be standing drinks all to myself. Standing drinks in the absolute.’

3

Three days later Mr Palace found the office swept and garnished and Cloote restored to his usual state of animated sobriety. He seemed to have forgotten the obliterated Mr Bunter.

‘The time is ripe, Mr Palace, for you to make the grand tour,’ he said, pacing up and down the room and making passes with his hands. ‘The time is ripe for *us* to make the grand tour. For this is my business quite as much as yours. The expenses need not be excessive. Though of course we must do ourselves well. I have a flair in these matters, an instinct. There is a Dunne region in my brain. A Dunne ganglion. Intimations. Foresight. The time is ripe. The moment comes. I can hear the whirr of the clockwork before the striking of the hour.

‘And besides,’ he added, with a burst of frankness, ‘if I stick much longer in this damned office my liver will overpower me... It needs stimulation and it demands stimulants... There are times when I feel a craving... Drink. My spirit revolts against that. Passive stimulation. No, sir. Let me *do*. Let it be movement! Let it be action!’

Mr Palace was perched upon the writing-desk in an easy, graceful attitude. ‘But I thought,’ he said, ‘that all that was to come much later on. When my position here and in America was established on a broader basis.’

Mr Cloote drooped and cut the air before him into a number of

thin slices with his hand. ‘The time,’ he snarled, ‘is NOW.’

He paused impressively. ‘Mr Palace, there is at present a Conspicuous Dearth of Great Men.’

Mr Palace featured a modest sense of irrelevance.

‘There is a universal Dearth. A shortage. New Great Artists. None. New Great Lit’ry Figures. None. It is becoming a matter of world-wide comment. This distracted world has ceased to produce them. The World Output of Great Men, in Art, in Literature, in Thought, is dying away. The End of an Age. It is like the alarming fall in the birth rate — or — Anyhow, it is very similar. Conditions have changed. Publicity has become disordered. It is no more possible for poets and novelists to grow steadily and surely into a hard, infrangible greatness, than it is for crystals to form in a whirlpool. Nothing forms. We look round. The Nobel Committee are looking round. Governments are looking round. Particularly some of the new governments. Nazi Germany — urgently. They want men to honour, to glorify, to reflect credit back upon them. As Longfellow, Tennyson, Dickens, Thackeray, Tolstoi, Goethe were honoured and glorified and reflected credit on their particular cultures. One or two great figures still remain. Vestigial figures, rather lonely in their greatness, noble monuments to themselves, great men in their sixties and seventies. Autobiographical. But when we look for new Successes what do we find? They come, they go. Today they are best-sellers. Tomorrow they are cast into the oven. A struggling, tropical forest. “Too many of us” as the small boy put it in *Tess.* Where there is everybody there is nobody. An indeterminate crowd. A universal indecision. Criticism undecided. Loud praises today. Running away tomorrow. The public undecided, governments afraid of making mistakes, of making themselves ridiculous. It is a period of suspense, profound suspense.’

All this Cloote recited very rapidly. Then he changed his note to one more wary and confidential.

‘*Schroederer,*’ he said, ‘*is no fool.*’

Mr Palace became more attentive.

‘I happen to know that he had an option on no less than the next three - *three!* — books of Alfred Bunter. And so the mystery of Mr Alfred Bunter being invited to lecture at the Sorbonne, in Oslo, in

Warsaw and here and there, stands explained. A searchlight fact! Schroederer discovered - naked. Nose and all. Well, well, never mind about Bunter. He's all over. I mention him only for purposes of illustration. For once Schroederer has backed the wrong horse. His celebrated flair has been double-crossed. The pea was under the other thimble. The twigged the moment and mistook his man. At present there is only one figure fitted, entitled, called upon to come out into that vacant limelight, that *aching* unsatisfied limelight of the Nobel literary situation. That limelight, Mr Palace, is yours, legitimately yours. It is up to you to emerge now. It is imperative upon you to emerge now. An author who is treated with respect owes something to his supporters if only in the way of dignity. *Noblesse oblige.* There are times when modesty becomes a crime.'

'There are times,' said Mr Palace with a humorous smile, 'when I might suspect you of flattery.'

'There is such a thing as the flattering truth,' said Cloote. 'But a truce to that. Now I have been making inquiries, I have been pulling strings. Mr Palace (never mind how) that Sorbonne date is yours. You must go to Paris. I am in touch with a small but efficient publicity agency in Paris. And after that Gargalia.'

'Gargalia?'

'All that large region of Europe which gargles when it speaks - guttural Europe. The shores of the North and Baltic Seas! Scotland to Finland, the lands of prohibition and earnest private drinking. There we still find the legend of the literary personality surviving. We have to seize upon it and revive it before it is too late. We have to strike up by Holland to Denmark and go through Norway, Sweden, Finland, lecturing, being received, making friends, bowing right and left, blond, Nordic, debonair. Your personality has immense Scandinavian possibilities, Mr Palace — immense... In these folders my scheme grows. But there is one point—'

Cloote featured tact and embarrassment.

'I have never had the honour of meeting Mrs Palace.'

'No,' Mr Palace agreed.

'In presenting you to the attention and curiosity of the various Continental publics, it is unavoidable - Your wife, Mr Palace, is part of your ensemble. I have heard that she is a very quiet, charming, and

dignified lady.'

'You could not describe her better.'

'I am thinking of Paris, Mr Palace. No foreigners really understand the intense regard of the French public for respectability. Whatever they were in the past the French are now a people of what I might call an intense rational sobriety. Sexual methodists. Morally *neat.* Nothing is so calculated to gratify their national craving for regularity, logic, and stability as the presence of a wife, a wife who is also, in every sense of the term, a lady. Presentable. Presentable. Frenchmen have wives, many of them have mistresses also, but in both cases the relationship is formal and regular. Every Thursday afternoon, for example. Nothing shocks a Frenchman so much as to hear a man is unfaithful to his mistress - or his wife - when there is no mistress. Many external observers fail to understand this extreme orderliness. The French, if I might say so, can practise adultery without depravity. Bohemia has been defined and regulated, codified, and put in its place. The large, careless promiscuity of the Anglo-Saxon peoples is absolutely alien to the modern French mind. It disgusts it. And the ordinary Frenchman's observations of the foreign visitor, leering about him, greedy for strange excitements, spoiling the vice just as he has already spoilt the cookery, *asking* for dirt in his dalliance, so to speak, makes an unaccompanied Anglo-Saxon in Paris suspect, antipathetic to every good Frenchman. You see my point?'

'H'm. I think it would be possible for Mrs Palace to come to Paris.'

'Perfect! And if you could stay at a good hotel and visit, say, one or two well-known dressmakers and a hat shop, in the role of the attentive husband...'

'I thought that nowadays all the Paris houses had London branches.'

'*No,*' said Mr Cloote. 'Not for the purposes of our picture. The spectacle of the debonair husband still delightfully in love with his wife! Don't you get it?'

'My wife has a certain dislike — almost a prejudice against publicity.'

'She need never know the camera was more than accidental... You

see my point? You *do* see my point? Exactly! Perfect! And so we arrange for Paris.'

'Mrs Palace — Yes, I think she will come.'

'As far as Paris. So far as Paris is concerned. But after Paris, the case is different.'

Mr Palace with an attentive expression lit a cigarette, while Cloote executed a few magic passes to convey how different the case could be. Finally he came to a stop with his index finger pointing arrestingly to Mr Palace.

'In Gargalia it is not like that. No. In the Gargalian countries the man of genius is still supposed to be rather a wild and passionate creature. He is not supposed to travel *en famille,* to carry a *ménage* about with him. The unexpected is expected of him. He must yield to impulses. Outside Latinized Europe lies the picturesque. The more one goes eastward and northward the less weight domesticity carries. It's not that I suggest — Not at all... The point, Mr Palace, is that Mrs Palace might be bored. She might find herself talking Ollendorf with rather dull domesticated women. She would have a feeling of being left in the cloakroom. You would have to be the life and soul of men's parties. Essentially men's parties. And a certain gallantry -'

Mr Cloote hesitated.

'I have an east European side,' he said darkly. 'I could show you about. Joseph was never an Eastern hero. Something will be expected of us... Man is many-sided, Mr Palace, and romance rises in the east and sets in the west.'

4

It required some days of thought before Mr Palace could contrive that Mr Cloote should meet Mrs Palace and at the same time have only the slightest opportunity of breaking out into uncontrolled talk to her. He arranged that Cloote should call about a quarter to five while tea was being served and that he should bring a portfolio for some alleged urgent autographs. He could meet and observe Mrs Palace in the drawing-room. He would be given a cup of tea which would hamper his gestures and be fed bread and butter and cakes which would break up his discourse. Then he could be carried off to

Mr Palace's study for the signatures and so got rid of.

It worked very well. Brynhild was aloof, surprised, and coldly polite.

As soon as the door of the study closed Cloote burst into panegyric. 'But she is *lovely!* Marvellous. Perfect. There is a grave dignity about her. A Junoesque Venus, if I may say so - with a touch of Diana. Paris, yes. Certainly Paris. A profound impression. But for Gargalia. Gargalia? Apart from all I have said already. There is something about her. She would never relax. She might chill the convivial warmth. Chill it very considerably...'

Brynhild failed to reciprocate Mr Cloote's admiration. It was rare that she took instantaneous dislikes but this time her reactions were hostile from the first.

She was unusually outspoken about him. After his departure Rowland rejoined her in the precious little patch of London garden they possessed. He admired her asters, and she spoke in answer to the interrogative silence that ensued. 'I don't like that amanuensis, secretary, valet of yours. No. No exact reason. But his manners — are horrible. Waving his arms about like — like a hot polyp. As though he wanted to take hold of you and didn't dare. And he squints.'

A queer, a fantastic thought crossed her mind. 'I don't like men who squint,' she said.

'He can't help that. His energy is wonderful. He's a most indefatigable, useful man. And he's devoted. He sees my interests with a single eye. You can't think what he will do for me.'

That fantastic thought grimaced at her again. She stood side by side with Rowly and stared away from him at this monstrous idea in her head. No! The idea was impossible, quite impossible. Rowland was a complex character but she had never doubted he was a gentleman. And now more than ever she did not wish to doubt that. All the same she never wanted to see Cloote again.

'Mr Cloote makes me feel sick,' she said. 'I never met a more emetic man. But perhaps somehow I have a prejudice against squinting men.'

She turned to go indoors. Some neglected statistical-minded corner of her brain was asking just what proportion of the adult male

population of Britain squinted today. What were the chances?...

But her conscience was protesting that there were things it was not fair play even to think about Rowly. Especially as things were turning out at the present time. She was all for fair play for Rowly as far as it could be managed.

5

Rowland had something to break to Brynhild and Brynhild had something to break to Rowland, and yet, for three weeks and more, neither got to the point of revelation.

Mr Palace wanted to make it clear, first, that Brynhild must go with him to Paris for the Sorbonne show - brushing up her very nice French accent and her very scanty French vocabulary beforehand - and then that she must not expect to be taken on to that personality display in Gargalia. Because quite apart from the fact that it was manifest she would find the indispensable Cloote an unendurable travelling companion, there was the more permanent trouble of her cramping effect upon Rowland's style. He would have to be florid; he would have to be *scrittore galantuomo* to his utmost. And so forth. It was absurd to go except in that spirit.

It seemed to him that the best line of attack would be to stress the exclusive masculinity of literary banquets in these lands, and to use Cloote's phrases about her being bored and left in the cloakroom. Still that diffidence which Brynhild always inspired in him, kept him tongue-tied day after day. When at last he did achieve an *eclaircissement* he found a novelty in the situation that eliminated the need for most of his carefully polished discouragements.

Brynhild listened with more than her usual quiet to his opening explanations. Then she spoke. 'I couldn't come on that expedition, anyhow,' she said. 'I couldn't take the risks of hotels and bad food just now. I have to take care of myself. I doubt if I can even come with you and Mr Cloote to Paris. You see — I ought perhaps to have told you before — you are going to be - a family man in - it may be a little more than seven months.'

'*What?*'

Nothing but blank annoyance was manifest in his first reaction.

‘It will be expensive,’ he said.

‘But, darling, that isn’t at all the tone—’

He didn’t heed that.

‘But I thought you always -’ he began.

‘Well, I didn’t,’ she answered with deliberation, meeting his eyes.

And then with even more deliberation. ‘You see, I’m going to have — *children,* Rowly... It’s what I’m for. I’ve messed about with sex too long.’

For a moment it was almost as if they were two quite unexpected people who had come starkly face to face, and then this new personality he had been building up for himself resumed possession of the scene.

‘It’s rather wonderful,’ he tried doubtfully.

‘It happens,’ she said.

‘I should be glad to be a father.’

‘I suppose I ought to have consulted you. But - I thought your attentions to me were getting just a trifle trivial. Maybe I was selfish. I wanted something of my own - really my own. I wanted a role of my own.’

And then, her natural truthfulness insisting, she said: ‘It has happened. Anyhow. And I’m glad it’s happened.’

‘I shall be glad to be a father,’ he repeated, with more assurance. ‘Yes.’

He took a step or so away from her and turned. He was warming to the situation.

He allowed himself to brighten manifestly. ‘Of course,’ he said. ‘A father!... Queer that I should be surprised... Bryn! I’m *glad* you’ve done it. I’m glad you thought of it. It was lovely and wise of you. And to do it so — silently. It — it completes us.’

‘It *is* definitive, isn’t it?’

‘It will be a son.’

‘Yes. I hope it will be a son. To begin with.’

‘It means a new phase for me — for both of us. You’ve taken splendid care of me for seven years, my dear. Splendid care. I’ve had you all to myself... Now for a bit I’ll have to take care of *you.*’ And as he spoke he began to see how he could be made to look as a father, a splendid father, the protective, expectant husband of this

quiet, lovely, submissive wife, responsible though still debonair. She should go to Paris all the same, arousing respectful envy. To arouse envy is probably among the purest of human satisfactions. He knew Bunter had admired Brynhild, he had seen it in his eyes. The man had coveted Brynhild. Not for him and his like was a woman of her sort. The contrast of his own controlled and orderly mastery of the world with that man's impulsive and ramshackle life, rose splendidly before Rowland.

'I shall take *great* care of you,' he said. 'I may even be a little overbearing with you — for your sake — for *our* sake. For the sake of all three of us.'

Whatever other fluctuations there had been in her feelings towards him, she had never really faltered in her belief that he was the most amusing being in the world. The quality of her amusement had altered, perhaps, but the quantity had never abated. Never had she realized so completely that his most amusing phases were the unconscious ones.

'Darling,' she said, 'I know you'll take wonderful care of me.' By way of earnest he advanced in an enveloping manner and took her in his arms. '*There*'.' he said, as full of consolation as she was full of escape. He held her to him, he patted her shoulder. So for moment they grouped themselves, putting a brave face upon it. What else, she asked herself, was to be done?

Silly old Rowly, she thought, gulling and gullible Rowly, and yet in a way tolerable and likeable Rowly. Substantial. Materially substantial. Smelling slightly of soap and tobacco. Married - extraordinarily married to her, about whom he would never know anything at all, about whom he didn't want to know anything at all. Married. And at the same time she was escaping — going away from all that had held her paralysed for seven years - to something profoundly her own, profoundly secret in its essence and profoundly real.

She had become real. Her priggishness had been reft from her. She was a cheat now - like everybody. She was a humbug - like everybody. She was a secret behind a facade. And altogether human. She had grown up at last...

Her thoughts flicked off at a tangent. The child? The child,

though, was going to be different. Her child would never cheat like this, never humbug any one. Her child was going to be something better than had ever been before. In some way... This sort of thing wouldn't do for her child. That was what she had to see to...

'No,' she said, and drew herself away from him and stood alone. She seemed to be looking at something that had appeared suddenly a thousand miles away.

'*No?* I wonder what you are thinking about,' said Mr Rowland Palace. He reflected upon the limitations of even a penetrating and ironical novelist...

'*Often,* Bryn, I don't in the least know what you are thinking about...'

6

A rather ruffled young woman sat in an easy chair in her own room after this touching scene. 'That's that,' she said...

She repeated his words softly to herself. 'Often, Bryn,' she said, '*I* don't know in the least what you are thinking about. So how should he?'

And just now in particular her thoughts seemed less clear than they had ever been before, they flowed through her mind no longer like a ripple of clear water but in smooth milky patches.

'I *did* think I was in control of my own life...

'*Life has raped me...*

'Suppose after all there is a God?'

She found she was no longer an acute theologian. She had dismissed Omniscience years ago as an infinite, entirely inanimate encyclopaedia, she had lost her faith in a God of love who had nevertheless left the matches about for the children of the Great War to play with, and the landscape gardener of Wordsworth had been banished from her scheme of things by reflexion upon the hyena and the less attractive aspects of physiology and pathology. She had been a quiet Atheist who never said anything about it. Like so many people. But now she found herself wondering in a curiously excited state whether perhaps some Great God Pan, shaggy, redolent among other things of humour, and with little horns and pointed ears and a

cloven hoof, might after all not be nearer to the fundamental realities of life.

She had recently become firmer, she felt, in her mental substance. Her discursive, indecisive will had been pulled together to a serene assurance. She felt, as she had never felt before, that she knew her own mind. And that instead of being the most aimless thing in the world, she now conceived her essential business plain before her.

'Not one child but *children,* and the best I can get...

'What I was made for...

'Jolly children and get on with it... Those men know even less about life than we do...

'A stormy little rebel to begin with who will batter at the facades. With trouble and stubbornness in those brown eyes of his...

'Somebody will have to pay. I can't see to everything. If Rowly cares more than anything else for his Nobel prize, and I find I care for a brawl of children, aren't we each entitled to get what we want? And the best of it? In whatever way we can?

'When all that is fairly under way, then surely at last I shall take an intelligent interest in - say - education. And politics. So that they don't kill or waste or starve my children or leave them alive with nothing sensible to do...

'If there *is* any sense in things at all.'

She turned sideways to the mirror on her dressing-table and surveyed herself. She had always cared immensely for her own long slender lines. It was her love for that gracious, slender body of hers that had helped her to consent not to use it. But now it did not seem to matter to her at all if that grace departed from her. Perhaps, said the Great God Pan in her, behind every lovely thing is the possibility of something lovelier. If things hadn't happened as they had happened, she would have kept that beautiful figure and it would have grown stale and fruitless upon her. From being a fresh young body it would have become a preserved body.

She bent down towards the mirror and studied her changed throat and bosom.

'Little blue veins,' she whispered.

She looked at her grave face in the glass.

Facade she had to be. Every self-conscious behaving thing must

be a facade, must turn a face to the world and be aware of itself... All the same these juices in her blood that had taken possession of her, and filled her with this deep irrational satisfaction, had a very imperious suggestion about them of being real.

If indeed there was in human experience as yet any such thing as reality.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Envoy

Sufficient unto the novel is the story thereof. And this is the story of how Brynhild Palace grew up and became a normal adult, facade and all complete. Of how Mr Palace and Mr Cloote fared in the literary capitals of Europe, of the ripening charm and dignity of Mr Palace, who grew more triumphantly debonair every day, of the temperamental aberrations of Mr Cloote, and the curious, intricate, subromantic adventures of these two gentlemen in Sofia, Stockholm, Tallinn, Oslo, Warsaw, and Prague, there is nothing to be told here, nor of the difficult and tortuous experiences of Mr David Lewis in Cardiff. Having cleared his character from the imputations of murder and bigamy, and made various minor restitutions, he faded quietly out of local attention — and vanished. Only in one abandoned home was his memory kept green. What Mrs David Lewis said about it all would alone fill a volume. That lady has never been anything so far here, but noises heard off. So for the present she shall remain. We have done her no sort of justice.

Nor will we go further with Mrs Brynhild Palace's new half mystical self-devotion to the physical rebirth of our world, or with the steadfast and ultimately successful attempts of Mr Alfred Bunter to re-materialize himself as almost the only bearded British author. He lived behind a large brown beard, and more and more at Dubrovnic. A pipe was his natural complement. For some years he kept silence, and his later work, though profound, inspiring, and well spoken of, hardly redeemed the promise of his earlier books. He never became a serious rival to Mr Rowland Palace for the Nobel Prize. He shunned personal exposure. He kept away from Gargalia; he did not wish to compete.

Maternity Brynhild found a very interesting and satisfying role. 'The juices' played up loyally. She developed an increasing social confidence and dignity, and brought a bright and various family of three sons and two daughters into the world. Two at least of these offspring were quite debonair.

In New Zealand, as Mrs Ettie Hornibrook showed so ably and interestingly in her *Maori Symbolism,* the decorations on a beam or a pillar may be expended by an understanding imagination into the most complete and interesting of patterns, and so it is with this book. It is a novel in the Maori style, a presentation of imaginative indications.

Did Brynhild and Bunter ever meet again? Not for many years. And then with an entirely unromantic friendliness - and no revelations. The beard had made a great difference in him. Her eldest boy was a charming boy with a sort of natural sunburn, and as every one agreed, the very image of his mother.

STAR BEGOTTEN

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TO MY FRIEND WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

I. — THE MIND OF MR. JOSEPH DAVIS IS GREATLY TROUBLED

§ 1

This is the story of an idea and how it played about in the minds of a number of intelligent people.

Whether there was any reality behind this idea it is not the business of the storyteller to say. The reader must judge for himself. One man believed it without the shadow of a doubt and he shall be the principal figure in the story.

Maybe we have not heard the last of this idea. It spread from the talk of a few people into magazines and the popular press. It had a vogue. You certainly heard of it at the time though perhaps you have forgotten. Popular attention waned. Now the thing flickers about in people's minds, not quite dead and not quite alive, disconnected and ineffective. It is a queer and almost incredible idea, but yet not absolutely incredible. It is a bare possibility that this thing is really going on.

This idea arose in the mind of Mr. Joseph Davis, a man of letters, a sensitive, intelligent, and cultivated man. It came to him when he was in a state of neurasthenia, when the strangest ideas may invade and find a lodgment in the mind.

§ 2

The idea was born, so to speak, one morning in November at the Planetarium Club,

Yet perhaps before we describe its impact upon Mr. Joseph Davis in the club smoking-room after lunch, it may be well to tell the reader a few things about him.

We will begin right at the beginning. He was born just at the turn of the century and about the vernal equinox. He had come into the world with a lively and precocious intelligence and his 'quickness' had been the joy of his mother and his nurses. And, after the manner

of our kind, he had clutched at the world, squinted at it, and then looked straight at it, got hold of things and put them in his mouth, begun to imitate, begun to make and then interpret sounds, and so developed his picture of this strange world in which we live.

His nurse told him things and sang to him; his mother sang to him and told him things; a nursery governess arrived in due course to tell him things, and then a governess and a school and lot of people and pictures and little books in words of one syllable and then normal polysyllabic books and a large mellifluous parson and various husky small boys and indeed a great miscellany of people went on telling him things and telling him things. And so continually, his picture of this world, and his conception of himself and what he would have to do, and ought to do and wanted to do, grew clearer.

But it was only very gradually that he began to realize that there was something about his picture of the universe that perhaps wasn't in the pictures of the universe of all the people about him. On the whole the universe they gave him had an air of being real and true and just there and nothing else. There were, they intimated, good things that were simply good and bad things that were awful and rude things that you must never even think of, and there were good people and bad people and simply splendid people, people you had to like and admire and obey and people you were against, people who were rich and prosecuted you if you trespassed and ran over you with motor cars if you did not look out, and people who were poor and did things for you for small sums, and it was all quite nice and clear and definite and you went your way amidst it all circumspectly and happily, laughing not infrequently.

Only — and this was a thing that came to him by such imperceptible degrees that at no time was he able to get it in such a way that he could ask questions about it — ever and again there was an effect as though this sure and certain established world was just in some elusive manner at this point or that point translucent, translucent and a little threadbare, and as though something else quite different lay behind it. It was never transparent. It was commonly, nine days out of ten, a full, complete universe and then for a moment, for a phase, for a perplexing interval, it was as if it was a painted screen that hid — What did it hide?

They told him that a God of Eastern Levantine origin, the God of Abraham (who evidently had a stupendous bosom) and Isaac and Jacob, had made the whole universe, stars and atoms, from start to finish in six days and made it wonderfully and perfect, and had set it all going and, after some necessary ennuis called the Fall and the Flood, had developed arrangements that were to culminate in the earthly happiness and security and eternal bliss of our Joseph, which had seemed to him a very agreeable state of affairs. And farther they had shown him the most convincing pictures of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel and had given him a Noah's Ark to play with and told him simple Bible stories about the patriarchs and the infant Samuel and Solomon and David and their remarkable lessons for us, the promise of salvation spreading out from the Eastern Levant until it covered the world, and he had taken it all in without flinching because at the time he had no standards of comparison. Anything might be as true as anything else. Except for the difference in colour they put him into the world of *Green Pastures* and there they trained him to be a simply believing little Anglican.

And yet at the same time he found a book in the house with pictures of animals that were quite unlike any of the animals that frequented the Garden of Eden or entered the Ark. And pictures of men of a pithecoid unpleasant type who had lived, it seemed, long before Adam and Eve were created. It seemed all sorts of thing had been going on before Adam and Eve were created, but when he began to develop a curiosity about this pre-scriptural world and to ask questions about it his current governess snapped his head off and hid that disconcerting book away. They were 'just antediluvian animals,' she said, and Noah had not troubled to save them. And when he had remarked that a lot of them could swim, she told him not to try to be a Mr. Cleverkins.

He did his best not to be Mr. Cleverkins. He did his best to love this God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as well as fear him (which he did horribly, more even than he did the gorilla in Wood's *Natural History*) and to be overcome with gratitude for the wisdom and beauty of a scheme of things which first of all damned him to hell-fire before he was born and then went to what he couldn't help thinking were totally unnecessary pains on the part of omnipotence

to save him. Why should omnipotence do that? What need He do that? All He had to do was just to say it. He had made the whole world by just saying it.

Master Joseph did his very best to get his feelings properly adjusted to the established conception of the universe. And since most of the scriptures concerned events that were now happily out of date, and since his mother, his governess, the mellifluous parson, the scripture teacher at school, and everybody set in authority over him converged in assuring him that now, at the price of a little faith and conformity, things were absolutely all right here and hereafter so far as he was concerned, he did get through some years pretty comfortably. He did not think about it too much. He put it all away from him — until the subtle alchemy of growth as he became adolescent sent queer winds of inquiry and correlation banging open again unsorted cupboards of his brain.

He went to St. Hobart's school and then to Camborne Hall, Oxford. There is much unreasonable criticism of the English public schools, but it is indisputable that they do give a sort of education to an elect percentage of their boys. There was quite a lot of lively discussion at St. Hobart's in those days, it wasn't one of your mere games-and-cram schools, and the reaction against the dogmatic materialism of the later nineteenth century was in full swing there. The head in his sermons and the staff generally faced up to the fact that there had been Doubt, and that the boys ought to know about it.

The science master was in a minority of one on the staff and he came up to St. Hobart's by way of a technical school; the public school spirit cowed him. St. Hobart's did not ignore science but it despised the stuff, and all the boys were given some science so that they could see just what it was like.

Davis because of his mental quickness had specialized in the classical side; nevertheless he did his minimum of public school science. He burnt his fingers with hot glass and smashed a number of beakers during a brief interlude of chemistry, and he thought biology the worst of stinks. He found the outside of rabbit delightful but the inside made him sick; it made him physically sick. He acquired a great contempt for 'mere size' and that kept astronomy in its place. And when he came to grips with doubt, in preparation for

confirmation, he realized that he had been much too crude in feeling uncomfortable about that early Bible narrative and the scheme of salvation and all the rest of it. As a matter-of-fact statement it was not perhaps in the coarser sense true, but that was because of the infirmities of language and the peculiar low state of Eastern Levantine intelligence and Eastern Levantine moral ideas when the hour to 'reveal' religion had struck. Great resort had had to be made for purposes of illustration to symbols, parables, and inaccurate but edifying stories. People like David and Jacob had been poor material for demonstration purposes, but that was a point better disregarded.

The story of creation was symbolical and its failure to correspond with the succession of life on earth did not matter in the least, the Fall was symbolical of things too mysterious to explain, and why there had to be an historical redemption when the historical fall had vanished into thin air was the sort of thing no competent theologian would dream of discussing. There it was. Through such matters of faith and doctrine Joseph Davis was taken at a considerable speed, which left him hustled and baffled rather than convinced.

But the curious thing about these initiatory explanations was that all the time another set of ideas at an entirely different level was being put before him as a complete justification for the uncritical acceptance of Bible, Church, and Creed. It was being conveyed to him that it really did not matter what foundations of myth or fantasy the existing system of Western civilization was built upon; the fact that mattered was that it was built upon that foundation and that a great ritual of ceremonial and observance, which might be logically unmeaning, and an elaborate code of morality, which might ultimately prove to be arbitrary, nevertheless constituted the co-ordinating fabric of current social life and that social life could not now go on without them. So that all this freethinker and rationalist stuff became irrelevant and indeed contemptibly crude. Reasonable men didn't assert. They didn't deny. They were thinking and living at a different level. You could no more reconstruct religion, social usage, political tradition, than you could replan the human skeleton — which also was open to considerable criticism.

That put Joseph Davis in his place. Arguments about the Garden of Eden and Jonah's Whale passed out of discussion. He was left

face to face with history and society. Christianity and its churches, the monarchy and political institutions, the social hierarchy, seemed to be regarding him blandly. It is no good inquiring into our credentials now, they seemed to say. Here we are. We work. (They seemed to be working then.) And what other reality is there?

By this time he was at Oxford, talking and thinking occasionally, pretending to think a lot and believing that he was thinking a lot. The dualism that had dawned upon him in childhood looked less like being resolved than ever. The world-that-is no longer contested his fundamental criticisms, but it challenged him to produce any alternative world-that-might-be. There it was, the ostensible world, definite, fundamentally inconsistent maybe, but consistent in texture. An immense accumulation of falsity and yet a going concern. So things are.

It looked so enduring. He wavered for a time. On one hand was the brightly lit story of current things, the front-window story, a mother's-knee story of a world made all for his reception, a world of guidance, safe government, a plausible social order, institutions beyond effective challenge, a sure triumph for good behaviour and a clear definition of right and wrong, of what was done and what was not done, and against it was no more than a shadow story which was told less by positive statement than by hints, discords that stirred beneath the brightness, murmurs from beneath, and vague threats from incidental jars. That shadow world, that mere criticism of accepted things, had no place for him, offered him nothing. No shapes appeared there but only interrogations. The brightly lit story seemed safest, brightest, and best to his ripening imagination; he did his best to thrust that other tale down among all sorts of other things, improper and indecent thoughts for example, that have to be kept under hatches in the mind.

Momentous decisions have to be made by all of us in those three or four undergraduate years; we take our road, and afterwards there is small opportunity for a return. Mr. Joseph Davis had a quick mind and a facile pen and he was already writing, and writing rather well, before he came down. He chose to write anyhow. His father had left him with a comfortable income and there was no mercenary urgency upon him. He elected to write about the braver, more confident

aspects of life. He was for the show. He began to write heartening and stalwart books and to gird remorselessly at dissidence and doubt. What I write, he said, shall have banners in it and trumpets and drums. No carping, nothing subversive. Sociology is going out of fashion. So he committed himself. He began first with some successful, brave historical romances and followed up with short histories of this or that gallant interlude in the record.

King Richard and Saladin was his first book and then he wrote *The Singing Seamen*. Then came *Smite with Hammer*, *Smite with Sword*, and after that he ran up and down the human tree, telling of the jolly adventures of Alexander and Caesar and Jenghiz Khan (*The Mighty Riders*) and the Elizabethan pirates and explorers and so on. But as he had a sound instinct for good writing and an exceptionally sensitive nature, the more he wrote, the more he read and learned and — which was the devil of it — thought.

He should not have thought. When he took his side he should, like a sensible man, have stopped thinking.

Besides which some people criticized him rather penetratingly, and for an out-and-out champion he was much too attentive to criticism.

He became infected with a certain hesitation about what he .was doing. Perhaps he was undergoing that first subtle deterioration from that assurance of youth which is called 'growing up,' a phase that may occur at any age. He wrote with diminishing ease and confidence and let qualifying shadows creep into his heroic portraits. He would sometimes admit quite damaging things, and then apologize. He found this enhanced the solidity of some of his figures, but it cast a shadow on his forthright style. He told no one of this loss of inner elasticity, but he worried secretly about it.

Then, courageously but perhaps unwisely, he resolved to make a grand culminating frontal attack upon the doubt, materialism, and pessimism of shadowland, in the form of a deliberately romanticized history of mankind. It was to be a world history justifying the ways of God to man. It was also to justify his own ways to himself. It was to be a great parade — a cavalcade of humanity.

For some reason he never made clear to himself, he did not begin at the creation of the world but on the plain of Shinar. He put the

earlier history into the mouths of retrospective wise old men. From the Tower of Babel man dispersed about the world.

History regarded with a right-minded instinct has often a superficial appearance of being only a complicated tangle still awaiting analysis, and it was not always easy to show Man winning all the time and Right for ever triumphant against the odds — in the long run, that is. *The Heritage of Mankind, the Promise and the Struggle* — that was one of the tides he was considering — implies a struggle with, among other things, malignant fact. Fact sometimes can be very obstinate and malignant.

He had got himself into a tangle with the Black Death. He had started — rashly, he was beginning to realize — upon a chapter dealing with the ennobling effect of disease, one of three to be called respectively, *Flood, Fire*, and *Pestilence*; and that had led him into a considerable amount of special reading. He had always been for taking his own where he found it, and he had been inspired by Paul de Kruif's *Microbe Hunters* to annex some of that writer's material, infuse it with religious devotion, and then extend his discourse to show how throughout the ages these black visitations, properly regarded, had been glorious stimulants (happily no longer urgently needed) for the human soul. But he found the records of exemplary human behaviour during the Black Death period disconcertingly meagre. The stress was all on the horror of the time, and when everything was said and done, our species emerged hardly better in its reactions than a stampede of poisoned rats. That at any rate was how the confounded records showed things. And this in spite of his heroic efforts to read between the lines and in spite of his poetic disposition to supplement research with a little invention — intuition, let us say, rather than invention. That he knew was a dangerous disposition. Too much intuition might bring down the disparagement of some scholarly but unsympathetic pedant upon him, and all the other fellows would be only too glad to pick it up and repeat it.

And then suddenly his mind began to slip and slide. He had, he realized, been overworking and, what is so common an aspect of overwork, he could not leave off. Overwork had brought worry and sleeplessness in its train. He would lie awake thinking of the Black Death and the pitiful behaviour to which tormented humanity can

sink. Vivid descriptive phrases in the old records it would have been healthier to forget, recurred to him. At first it was only the Black Death that distressed him and then his faith in human splendour began to collapse more widely. A cracked handbell heralded an open cart through the streets of plague-stricken London and once more the people were called upon to bring out the dead. Something revived his memory of the horror pictures of Goya in the Prado, and that dragged up the sinister paintings in the Wiertz Museum in Brussels. That again carried him to the underside in Napoleon's career and the heaped dead of the Great War. Why write a *Grand Parade of Humanity*, asked doubt, when Winwood Reade has already written *The Martyrdom of Man*? He found himself criticising his early book about Alexander the Great, *Youth the Conqueror*.

He had told that story triumphantly. Now in the black morning hours, it came back upon him in reverse. Something in his own brain confronted him and challenged him. Your Alexander, it said, your great Alexander, the pupil of Aristotle, who was, as you say, the master mind of the world, was in truth, as you know, just an ill-educated spendthrift. Why do you try to pervert the facts? By sheer accident — and most history is still a tale of accidents — he found himself in a rotten, nerveless self-indulgent world that had no grown men in it able to hold him out and give him the spanking he deserved, and as luck would have it, he had the only up-to-date and seasoned army in existence completely at his disposal. He hadn't made it. It came to him. The fools went where he told them to go. When you wrote all that stuff about his taking Greek civilization to Persia and Egypt and India, you were merely giving him credit for what had happened already. Why? Greek civilization owed nothing to him. He took advantage of it. He picked it up and smashed it over the head of poor old Darius. Smashed it — just as these plunging dictators of today seem likely to smash your poor civilization — nobody able to gainsay them. He left the Glory that was Greece in fragments, for the Romans to pick up in their turn. He wasted the Macedonian cavalry and phalanx, just as our fools today are going to waste aviation. For no good at all; for no plain result. Alexander was just a witless accident in an aimless world. And think of his massacres and lootings and how it fared with the women and

children, the common life of the world. Why did you write this florid stuff about Alexander the Great? And about Caesar — and about all these other pitiful heroes of mankind? Why do you keep it up, Joseph? If you did not know better then, you know better now. Your newspapers should be teaching you. Why do you pretend that a sort of destiny was unrolling? That it was all leading up to Anglicanism, cricket, the British Empire, and what not? Why do you go on with these pretences? These great men of yours never existed. The human affair is more intricate than that. More touching. Saints are sinners and philosophers are fools. Religions are rigmaroles. If there is gold it is still in the quartz. Look reality in the face. Then maybe something might be done about it.

He got up. He walked about his room.

'But I thought I had settled all this years ago,' he said. 'How can I get on with *Grand Parade of Humanity* if I give way to this sort of thing? Already I have spent nearly a year on this overwhelming book.'

He felt like some ancient hermit assailed by diabolical questionings. But that ancient hermit would at least have prayed and made the sign of the cross and got over it.

In his solitude Mr. Joseph Davis tried that. But on his knees he had a frightful sense of play-acting. He didn't believe there was a hearer. He didn't believe that any one believes nowadays — not Cantuar, not Ebor, not the Pope. These old boys eased down on their knees out of habit and let their minds wander along a neglected familiar lane to nothing in particular.

He got up again with his prayer half said and sat staring at the situation. *Defensor Fidei*! He couldn't pray.

§ 3

But this peculiar feeling of — mental duplicity shall we call it? — this doubt of himself;-this struggle to sustain the clear bright assurance of his chosen convictions, was not the only strain upon Mr. Davis's serenity. Several other matters not directly connected with his literary work were also conspiring to disturb his abnormally

sensitive mind.

As he walked down Lower Regent Street from Picadilly Station towards his club, various discontents, new ones and old ones, threaded their way round and about each other, each rasping against him and eluding him, dodging down into the subconscious and giving place to another whenever he tried to pchallenge it. The day was grey and overcast and it gave him no help — was indeed definitely against him. He was inclined to think he would have been wiser to have put on his medium coat rather than his thin Burberry, and at the same time he found the air moist and stuffy.

Chief among these accessory troubles was this, that for the first time in his life he was to become a father. It is an occasion few men face with absolute calm; it stirs up all sorts of neglected or unexplored regions of possibility in the mind. No psycho-analyst as yet has investigated the imaginative undercurrents in the mind of the expectant father. No one has attempted a review of the onset of parentage in the male. Here we must confine our attention strictly to the case of Mr. Joseph Davis. For some time he had been developing a curious vague perplexity about this wife of his, who was so soon to add the responsibilities and anxieties of fatherhood to his already febrile mental activities, and that expectation had greatly intensified this perplexity.

Here again the subtle sensitiveness of the imaginative temperament came in. A literary man carries about with him in his head a collection of edged tools known as his Vocabulary. And sometimes he cuts himself. Two or three years ago ‘enigmatical’ had, so to speak, stuck up suddenly and caught him when he was thinking about his wife. And ‘fey.’ She was fifteen years younger than he was, he had married her when she was scarcely more than a girl, and yet, he had been compelled to realize, she was enigmatical, extremely enigmatical.

To begin with he had loved her in a simple, straightforward, acquisitive way and she had seemed to love him. He had not thought about her very much; he had just loved her as a man loves a woman. Their early married life, subject to the obvious discretions of our time, had been natural and happy; she had learned to type for him and they had been inseparable and all that sort of thing. Then by

imperceptible degrees things had seemed to change. His satisfaction in her clouded over. She had seemed to disentangle herself from him and draw herself together. More and more was he aware of a lack of response in her.

And then came the memorable evening when she had remarked: 'I don't know whether I care for very much more of this sort of thing unless I am going to have a child.'

This sort of thing! Roses, raptures, whispers, dusk, moonlight, nightingales, all the love poetry that ever was — *this sort of thing!* So that was it!

'You are quite well off,' she said.

As though that mattered....

There had been a certain amount of argument, in which delicacy had prevailed over explicitness, and then she had carried her point. He had made it plain to her that whatever reluctance he might have displayed at first was solely on her account and that now they were embarked together on a shining adventure. They were to make life 'more abundant.' Once the proposal was accepted his imagination seemed to bubble offspring. He buried 'this sort of thing' as deeply as he could under high-piled flower-beds of philoprogenitive sentiment; he tried his utmost to forget her strangely inhuman phrase.

Yet after everything was settled, still his uneasiness deepened, still her detachment seemed to increase.

It *seemed* to increase. But that was where another queer worry came now into his mind. Had she always had some or all of this disposition towards detachment, and had he failed to observe it hitherto? In the first bright months or so of their married life, when he had looked at her and she had looked at him their eyes had met upon a common purpose as if they were smacking hands together. But now it was as if her hand had become a phantom hand that his own hand went right through, and his gaze seemed always just to miss meeting her deep regard. Her dark eyes had become inaccessible. 'Unfathomable' the vocabulary threw up. She scrutinized him and revealed nothing. Husbands and wives ought to become more easy with each other, more familiar, as life goes on, but she was increasingly aloof.

The majority of discontented husbands, the burden of comic

literature, proverbial wisdom, testify to the terrors of a talkative wife, but indeed these terrors are nothing to those of a silent woman, a silent thoughtful woman. A scolding wife can say endless disconcerting things and she hits or misses, but a silent woman says everything.

Always nowadays she seemed to be thinking him over. And his morbidly sensitive self-consciousness filled her silences with criticisms against which he had no defence.

When he had married her, a young, dark, shy girl, he had radiated protective possession all over her. It would have seemed impossible then that he should ever feel — it is a strange word to use about a wife and as we use it here we use it in its most sublimated and attentuated sense, but the word is — fear. Latterly his uneasiness with his wife and about his wife had increased almost to the quality of that emotion.

Of course he had always realized that there was something subtly unusual about her, even about her appearance. But at first he had found that simply attractive. She was neither big nor clumsy but she was broadly built; her brow was broad and her dark grey eyes were unusually wide apart; the corners of her full mouth drooped gravely and at times she had a way of moving that was, so to speak, absentminded, preoccupied. At first he had valued all this as 'distinction,' but later he had come rather to think of her as 'unusual.' She was far more unusual than the faint foreignness of her Scotch origin and the slow deliberation of her speech justified her in being.

He had never liked her people, which was odd because he had hardly seen anything of them. She had come into his world, as it seemed at first, romantically. He had met her at a publisher's cocktail party, she had been invited there rather for her ambitions than her performance, and she had told him then that her people lived in the Outer Hebrides and that they opposed her wish to study and write. She had just spoken of them as 'people'. She had won scholarships at a Glasgow high school. She had got to the university and so worked her way to London in defiance of them. She had written poetry, she told him, and she wanted to see it printed.

But London, she said, wasn't quite what she had expected it to be.

London astonished, frightened, and stimulated her, and kept on seeming stranger and stranger. She was not growing accustomed to it. People were always saying and doing the most unaccountable things.

'At times,' she said, 'I feel like a stray from another world. But then, you know, I felt very much the same when I was at home in the islands where I was born. Have you ever had that feeling? All you people here seem so sure of your world and of yourselves.'

It was when she said this that the idea of guiding this quiet, unsure, and lovely young stranger to all the braveries of life entered the head of Mr. Joseph Davis. It was so exceptional to meet an intelligent young woman who seemed unsure of herself and who was willing to be taught and hadn't already, in an irrational hurry to begin, taken the braveries of life to herself in her own fashion. It was not so much a candid inviting white virginity as an elusive elfin one she had. Here, he thought, was something fine and unformed to mould and shape and write flourishes upon.

He went about thinking of her more and more, with all those exploratory impulses aroused in him which constitute falling in love. He was soon completely in love with her.

When he offered to read some of her verse, she said she didn't want it read, she just wanted to see it in print and read it herself. When at last he saw it he liked it. It was like a missionary's translations from the Chinese; mostly vivid little word pictures. From the point of view of publication and running the gauntlet of all these modern poets and reviewers who cut you up with one hand and cut you out with-the other, he did not think it likely to be successful. But it had nevertheless a curious simplicity, a curious directness and a faint wistful flavour.

He learnt that she was living in a student's hostel in Bloomsbury, he established contacts with her and he was able to take her about very freely. Perhaps at one time he had thought simply of becoming her first lover, but she had an unobtrusive defensiveness that marriage was the only way to her.

Two rawboned fishermen in bonnets and broadcloth suddenly appeared in London to 'take a look at him' when the marriage was mooted. They were the most astonishing and unexpected 'people' for

her to produce. They had her dark colouring and dark grey eyes like hers, but otherwise they were singularly unlike her. Brawny they were. They had none of her manifest fineness and restraint.

'You'll have to take great care of her,' they told him, 'for she's been the treasure of our eyes. She's better than we and we know it. Why we ever let her persuade us that she had to come on to London is more than we can explain, but the mischief's been done and you've got her.'

'She's lovely. You're telling me that?' said Davis, and the elder brother, darkly reproachful, said: 'Aye. We're telling you.'

They stayed in London until the wedding, and entertaining them was a little like making hay with seaweed. They seemed to keep on looking at him and passing Hebridean judgments on him. They were full of unspoken things.

He would say things to them and they would say: 'Eh' — just 'Eh.' Not an interrogative 'Eh?' but an ambiguous acknowledgment.

They got drunk in a dutiful, dubious, and melancholy way for the registry office, and the last he saw of them was on the platform at Victoria when he carried her off to show her the wonders of Paris. They were standing together grave and distrustful, not gesticulating nor waving good-bye but each holding up a great red hand as who should say: 'We're here.'

And when at last the curve hid them and he pulled up the carriage window and turned to her to meet the love-light in her eyes she said to him: 'And now you are going to show me the real world and all those cities and lakes and mountains where at last we shall feel at home.'

Only she never did seem to feel at home.

She never talked about this family of hers to him, after the transit of these two samples, and she corresponded with them with an infrequent regularity. She never gave him any reason to suppose she cared very much for them. But the fact which presently became apparent, that, unlike him, she was a good sailor and loved wind and rough seas, seemed to link her to them rather than to him. Many husbands have objected to their wives' relations because they were too near, but he found he objected to hers because they were too remote. And also she loved mountains and crags and precipitous

places. He didn't. They climbed the Matterhorn at great expense, he gave more trouble to the guides than she did, and at the summit she seemed to be pleased but still gravely looking for more.

Once on holiday in Cornwall they had been basking together on the beach after lunch and suddenly her pose, as she sat thinking, reminded him of a picture he had seen somewhere of Undine, La Motte Fouques Undine, sweet and detached, looking across the far levels of the sea, lost in some unimaginable reverie. Undine too had had some uncouth and menacing brothers. That was when the fancy of her as a sort of changeling, as something ultra-terrestrial and not quite human first came to him. That was when 'fey' came out of the vocabulary.

This Undine suggestion hung about for months. First he let this exaggeration of her faint unearthliness play mischievously in his mind, and then he tried to restrain and banish it. Sometimes he tried to persuade himself that every man's wife is really an Undine, but he could never make really convincing observations in that matter. Maybe, he thought, you never get near enough to any woman but your own wife to appreciate her remoteness.

A multitude of possibly quite accidental divergences grouped themselves about that 'fey'.

He spun the thread of that word's suggestion into a web about her. It swept aside the one worse alternative that conceivably she was just simple and lacking in aesthetic enterprise. At first that 'fey' was a fantastic exaggeration and then it became more and more an observation, an explanation for her undeniable detachment from so much that excited and stirred him, and from so much that he believed ought to excite and stir anybody. That struggle of his ideals with a dark underworld of doubts, which made it urgent for him to keep thinking, feeling, appreciating — like an urgent skater over thin ice and a cold abyss of disbelief — had no counterpart. She could keep still and remain content in her convictions, in something deep — whatever it was that she knew and did not communicate.

There was no malice in her detachment from him. He could have understood malice better. He had seen mutual jealousy and mutual detraction often enough among his married friends. The better the artists the worse the lovers. He understood that fight for individual

assertion which makes love a legendary unreality, a blend of fantasy and grossness, in the world of the intelligentsia. But this was not the assertion of an individuality; it was a complete indifference to his values. It was a foreignness — to the whole world.

Whenever Mr. Davis had a slump in his vitality he realized this widening estrangement from his wife more acutely. The lower the ebb the intenser the realization. And this day his realization was exceptionally vivid ...

This very morning she had made a remark that stirred him to a protest he abandoned in despair. There was to be a big concert at the Pantechnicon Hall with Rodhammer conducting. He was enthusiastic for going. She did not want to go.

He argued against her disinclination. 'You used to like music.'

'But I have heard music, dearest.'

'*Heard* music! My dear, what a queer way to put things!'

She shook her head from side to side without speaking. There was a time when the self-assurance of her faint smile had seemed very lovely to him. Mona Lisa and all that, but now it irritated him with a sense of invincible and unapproachable opposition.

'But you've only heard Rodhammer once before!'

'Why should I want to hear Rodhammer again — a little better or not so good?'

'But music!'

'There's a limit to music,' she said.

'A limit!'

'I've a feeling that I've done with music. It was wonderful, charming, sustaining, all that music we went to hear — to begin with. I loved that as much as I've loved anything. But if one has taken music in — hasn't one taken it in?'

'Taken it in! You mean — ?' he tried.

'I mean you don't always want to be sitting down to attend to it after you've heard — what there is to it. We aren't — professional.'

Professional! When she did use words she used them in a very deadly fashion. '*I* never tire of music,' he said.

'But does the sort of music there is say anything — does it say anything fresh?'

'It's eternally fresh.'

‘How?’

‘He made a hopeless gesture. ‘But why have you become indifferent?’

‘But why are you still so enthusiastic?’

‘But don’t you get — something wonderful? An exaltation? A world of absolute sensuous emotion?’

‘No — I did at first. A sort of exaltation. I agree. And still I like — rhythm. It’s pleasant to hear music going on, but it’s no longer something I want to listen to especially. Going to hear music in concerts seems to me like going to see pictures in galleries ... Or reading anthologies.... Or looking over a collection of butterflies in a museum.... A time comes....’

‘Then, in short, you won’t go to the concert?’

‘I feel a little tired but I will go if you like.’

‘Oh! not like that,’ he said and ended their talk.

But he went over it again in his own mind and now he was going over it once more. He knew people to whom music meant much and people to whom music meant little, but to take up music as Mary had, in a spirit of glad discovery, and then to put it down again as one might put down an unimportant novel, distressed his mind. But that was how she seemed to deal with everything in life. Even with friendship, even with love, she had that same flash of interest, that rapid appreciation, and then she turned away. To what?

He spoke aloud, addressing Lower Regent Street: ‘You can’t *afford* to give up music like that. You can’t *afford* to give up art.’

And what he did not say because he could not bring himself to say it, was: ‘And how can you afford to give up love?’

When the child comes, will she give up that?

Or will she go on loving the child. Leaving me behind? My part played?

The eternal going on! This complete instability of values! ...

Could it fail to distress a man who was in effect a professor of stable values?

§ 4

And here we must note another rather unusual element in the *mÚlange* of Mr. Davis's troubles, a queer little thing that would have mattered nothing to a less imaginative man, but which was to thread through all the train of thought upon which he was presently to embark. It was a very slender thread indeed, a matter so irrational and ridiculous that it seems almost unfair to him to mention it. And yet it certainly played a slight deflecting role in guiding him to the strange idea. It cannot therefore be ignored altogether.

Since his school days he had had a secret detestation of his own Christian name. Facetious upper-school boys had made it plain that there was a shadow on it Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, is the name of Joseph adorned with that halo of triumphant virility which is the desire of every young male. He had struggled to insist that he should always be called 'Jo.' But the mortifying realization that he was a 'Joseph' damped his private meditations.

There was not the faintest circumstance to justify any marital uneasiness on his part. No one sane could have entertained a suspicion of his Mary's integrity — nor did he, in the foreground of his mind. And yet, he would have been happier under a different name.

So it was.

§ 5

Such were the ruling factors in the weak hotchpotch of thoughts and half- thoughts, fancies, suggestions, dream scraps, and almost completely unsymbolized feelings that circled in his mind on his way to the pillared portals of the Planetarium Club and his first encounter with this strange idea that was destined to stab through his imagination like a dagger and work a revolution in his life.

II. — MR. JOSEPH DAVIS LEARNS ABOUT COSMIC RAYS

§ 1

The Planetarium Club abounds in unexpected conversations. It has a core of scientific men who are mostly devotees of the exact sciences, grave, shy, precise men, but wrapped round them are layers of biologists, engineers, explorers, civil servants, patent lawyers, criminologists, writers, even an artist or so. Almost any subject may be started in the smoking-room where most of the talk goes on, but the feeling against chewed newspaper is strong. Mr. Davis, as he ascended the club steps, made an effort to throw off those vague shadows that oppressed his mind, and to brighten his bearing to the quality that may be reasonably expected of a temperamental optimist.

But as he recrossed the hall from the vestiary to the dining-room he was still undecided whether he should sit at one of the small tables and go on with his state of uneasy deterioration, or take a place at one of the sociable boards. He elected for solitude, but repented as soon as his decision was made, and after his solitary lunch he made a real effort at sociability and joined a talking circle of a dozen men or more between the window and the fire, sitting down next to Foxfield, that hairy, untidy biologist, for whom he had a slightly condescending liking. The talk was rather under the stress of a new member, a parliamentary barrister, who might be almost anything in a few years' time and manifestly felt as much. This man had been elected before it was realized that he was slightly larger than any one else in the club and disposed to behave accordingly, and his conversational method was rather an elucidatory cross-examination than an original contribution to the interchanges.

'Tell me,' he would say and even point a ringer. '*I* don't know anything about these things. Tell me—'

'Tell me,' except in the case of monarchs, heirs apparent, and presidents of the United States, is by the standards of the Planetarium atrocious conversational manners. But so far no one in the club had been able to get this point of view over to the new-comer: It would

happen sooner or later but so far it had not happened. He was talking now with an air of making out some sort of case against modern physics and demonstrating how entirely more sensible and practical a mind which had passed through the ennobling exercises of Greats and a straightforward legal and political training could be.

'Atoms and force were good enough for Lucretius and they were good enough for my stinks master when I was a boy. Then suddenly you have to disturb all that. There's wonderful discoveries, and the ak is full of electrons and neutrons and positons.'

'Positrons,' a voice corrected.

'It's all the same to us. Positrons. And photons and protons and deutrons. Alpha rays and Beta rays and Gamma rays and X rays and Y rays. And they fly about like solar systems and all the rest of it. And the dear old Universe that used to be fixed and stable begins to expand and contract — like God playing a concertina. Tell me — frankly. I suggest to you — it's a bluff. It's something out of nothing. It's just a way of selling us mystery bottles with scientific labels. I ask you.'

He paused with the air of a man who has put a poser.

A small, elderly, but still acutely acid old gentleman was sitting deep in one of the armchairs. The finger had not challenged him, but now he put out a lean hand and spoke with a thin penetrating voice, like a rapier, with the faint glint of a Scotch accent along the edge.

'You say Tell me — and Tell me. Will you have the grace to listen while I tell ye? And not interrupt?'

And when the slightly outsize member made as if he had something further to say, the old gentleman just raised his hand and said: '*No*. Listen, I tell ye, and told you shall be.'

The rising man, just faintly abashed, assumed an attitude of sceptical and slightly impatient intelligence, looking round the group for support in what he evidently imagined was going to be a duel of wits. Just for a moment he imagined that. And then suddenly he felt like facing twelve implacably hostile jurymen and the first lesson of the Planetarium Club entered into his soul. Not to bounce.

Quietly and unobtrusively he allowed himself to lapse into the pose of the modest best boy in the class who knows that he still has much to learn and who cannot command any one to tell him but is

glad to be told.

'These things boil down,' said the old gentleman. 'I've lectured about them for years. And followed the changes. When one gets old one has to be concise and it's fortunate I've had some practice in packing my statements. Still I'll have to take five minutes. I'll do all I can for you. Those Oxford teachers of yours — for it's Oxford you come from — probably left your mathematical philosophy in a worst state than they found it when you came up from your English public school — if indeed your formula-dodging schoolmasters gave you any mathematical understanding at all even there — so I may not be able to *explain* everything to you. Some bits I'll just have to tell you — as you put it. But it's really quite simple and credible stuff they've made of it in the last twenty-five years, Rutherford and Bragg and Niels Bohr and the rest of those fellows, and the younger people find no difficulty about it at all.'

And with that and a galling air of careful simplification he proceeded to unfold a compact modern view of space and time and the movements of things therein. 'Don't ask me what electricity is,' he said, 'and I'll tell you everything else as we have it up to date. It's none so complicated as you think and there's never a contradiction.'

And very neatly he took his nucleus, twisted up his atoms with electrons and neutrons round the central proton, and sent them eddying into a world of throbbing photons. Then he ran his hand along the sixty-odd octaves of the spectrum from the hundred-yard electro-magnetic undulations beyond the longest radio length through heat rays and light rays to X rays and Gamma rays, smacked a few atoms together, shot them through with helium atoms, and described the results, and by way of epilogue gave a lucid word to those flying sub-atomies, the cosmic rays.

'After all, it's none so confused,' he said, and indeed the pictures that arose as one listened to his slightly remonstrating, very persuasive Scotch intonation had the music of ripples and wavelets, of dancing reflections upon the side of a ship, of the concentric colour rings of films on water, of every sort of pleasant patterning and logical ornamentation. He made dead matter dance and circle, set to partners, interfere, shimmer, glow, become iridescent and mysteriously endowed with energy. The atoms of our fathers seemed

by contrast like a game of marbles abandoned in a corner of a muddy playground on a wet day. He even had a cautious word for the young neutrinos, the latest aspirants to his dance in the atomic assembly-rooms. The one or two men who were experts in the subject listened, pleased to hear the A B C of their subject so lucidly delivered, and the rest were glad to check up their vague impressions of these fluctuating modern conceptions.

'And where do we come in?' asked someone. 'Where is thought and the soul in all this?'

'Just a film, just a thin zone of reflection halfway in the scale of size between those electrons and the stars,'

§ 2

Davis followed that compact discourse in a mood of unusual self-forgetfulness. It was, he found, as refreshing as good drink, and as little likely to linger in the system. And even the new member betrayed a certain humility in his attention,

But he still felt it was his duty to himself to talk.

'Those cosmic rays of yours,' he said. 'They are the most difficult part of your story. They aren't radiations. They aren't protons. What are they? They go sleeting through the universe incessantly, day and night, going from nowhere to nowhere. For the life of me I find that hard to imagine.'

'They must come from somewhere,' said a quiet little man with an air of producing a very special contribution to the discussion.

'We note their existence,' said the old gentleman. 'We watch them but we draw no premature conclusions. They are infinitesimal particles flying at an inconceivable velocity. They come from all directions of outer space. And that's as much as we know about them. If I put out my finger like that for a second or so, there's only just a dozen or so gone through it in a second. And no harm done. Which is just as well. There's more up above us in the outer atmosphere. But fortunately they get reflected and absorbed. You know we have a sort of filtering halo about the earth, a sort of cloak of electrons, which keeps off any excess of these radiations.'

‘That Heaviside layer,’ a stout rufous man, who had apparently been asleep, interpolated.

‘And what may that be?’ asked the barrister.

‘It’s a beautiful sample of scientific terminology,’ said the stout rufous man still somnolently. ‘This Heaviside layer, so far as I can understand it, is called so, because firstly it isn’t heavy, secondly it hasn’t any side, and thirdly it is almost as much a layer as — as a rheumatic chill or a glow of indignation. Go on, Professor.’

His eyes, which had been partly open, closed again.

‘You said,’ said the examining barrister, ‘that *fortunately* they are kept off. *Why* — fortunately? May I ask?’

‘My thankfulness may have been a little unwarranted,’ said the old gentleman. ‘But these cosmic rays have a lot of energy, considering their size. They knock atoms about when they hit them. And we and our belongings are made of atoms. A lot of them, a great lot of them, a real douche of cosmic rays, might cause all sorts of tissue diseases, blow up mines, strike the matches in our pockets. But as it is they don’t often hit even one atom — quantitatively they’re more ineffective even than that infinitesimal quantity of radiation that is always coming up from the radium in the earth; and so Nature is able to clean up any little speck of mess that occurs.’

‘Not always,’ said Foxfield suddenly.

‘I’ve heard of that idea you’re alluding to, Mr. Foxfield,’ said the old gentleman. ‘You mean that idea about the chromosomes.’

‘Now tell me,’ said the barrister, relapsing for a moment. ‘I’ve heard somewhere before of this idea you’re speaking of. I’m told these cosmic rays affect — what is it you call them? — mutations.’

‘I have no doubt of it,’ said Foxfield.

‘You’ll find no physicist to encourage you,’ said the old gentleman.

‘Or contradict me,’ said Foxfield.

‘Aye, aye,’ said the old gentleman cheerfully. ‘It’s a case of not proven.’

‘But what is this?’ asked Davis. ‘Do you mean that these — these cosmic rays may affect heredity — inheritance?’

‘I should be inclined to say they must,’ said Foxfield.

‘But why them in particular?’ asked the barrister.

‘Because we have eliminated almost every other possible cause for changes in the chromosomes,’

‘It’s a most extraordinary thing,’ said the rufous man, slowly waking up and passing by swift stages from sleepiness to a bright alertness.

‘The chromosomes,’ said Foxfield, ‘the germinal elements, have very complicated and enormous molecules. They are rather elaborately protected from most types of disturbance. They have a sort of independence of the parent body. They go their way alone.’

‘Transmission of acquired characteristics strictly forbidden,’ someone interjected.

‘It seems to be. But the X rays, the Gamma rays, and particularly these cosmic rays can get through, and so, I reason, they must get through — to start something fresh. Since something fresh is always being started.’

And now it was Foxfield’s turn to answer intelligent questions and give a brief lecture.

He summarized the new realizations of the past twenty-five years about mutations and survival almost as expertly as the old professor had elucidated his atoms. He showed how the changing of species bit by bit, by imperceptible gradations, which the early Darwinians had stressed, had given place in modern evolutionary theory to a realization of the frequency of extensive simultaneous sports and mutations. And there was nothing in the circumstances of an animal species which could explain these sports and mutations. And so it was that Foxfield was compelled to think they were produced by some penetrating exterior force.

‘But why not Providence?’ asked the quiet man.

‘Because the vast majority of these mutations are aimless and useless,’ said Foxfield.

‘And so, having eliminated everything else,’ said the barrister, ‘you lay the burden of change and mutation — and in fact all the responsibility for evolution — on those little cosmic rays! Countless myriads fly by and miss. Then one hits — Ping! Ping! — and we get a double-headed calf or a superman.’

‘What an *unsettled* universe it is!’ said someone.

§ 3

And then suddenly the rufous man was touched by fantasy. His sleepiness had fallen from him altogether. He sat up brightly now. ‘Look here!’ he said. ‘I’ve got an idea! Suppose—’

He paused. He produced that ‘suppose’ like a juicy fruit and hovered with his hand in the air for a voluptuous moment before he squeezed the juice from it.

‘Suppose these cosmic rays come from Mars!’

‘They come, I tell ye, from every direction,’ said the old professor.

‘Including Mars. Yes, Mars, that wizened elder brother of the planet Earth. Mars, where intelligent life has gone far beyond anything this planet has ever known. Mars, the planet which is being frozen out, exhausted, done for. Some of you may have read a book called *The War of the Worlds* — I forget who wrote it — Jules Verne, Conan Doyle, one of those fellows. But it told how the Martians invaded the world, wanted to colonize it, and exterminate mankind. Hopeless attempt! They couldn’t stand the different atmospheric pressure, they couldn’t stand the difference in gravitation; bacteria finished them up. Hopeless from the start. The only impossible thing in the story was to imagine that the Martians would be fools enough to try anything of the sort. *But*—’

He held up his hand and wagged his fingers with pleasure at his idea.

‘Suppose they say up there: “Let’s start varying and modifying life on the earth. Let’s change it. Let’s get at the human character and the human brain and make it Martian-minded. Let’s stop having children on this rusty little old planet of ours, and let’s change men until they become in effect our children. Let’s get spiritual children there.” D’you see? Martian minds in seasoned terrestrial bodies.’

‘And so they start firing away at us with these cosmic rays!’

‘And presently,’ said the rufous man, almost gobbling with the excitement of his idea, ‘presently when they have got the world Martianized—’

‘I never heard such nonsense,’ said the old professor and got up to go away. ‘I tell ye these cosmic rays come from every direction.’

‘And why shouldn’t they use a sort of shrapnel?’ said the rufous man to his retreating back. ‘Shells full of these cosmic rays, so to speak, with a back-lash. Nothing impossible in that, is there?’

The old professor’s back made no reply. And yet it had a certain eloquence.

‘They’d probably begin with wild mutations,’ somebody suggested after a pause; ‘and then get more accurate.’

‘It may have been going on for a long time,’ said the quiet man, helpful as ever.

‘You’re assuming of course that they know a lot more about us than we know about them,’ said the rising barrister.

‘And isn’t that easily possible?’ the rufous man countered. ‘Mars is the older planet. Far beyond us along the line of evolution. What we know is nothing to what they must know. They may be as able to look through us as we are to take a microscope and look through an amoeba. And when they have got the world Martianized, when they’ve started a race here with minds like their own and yet with bodies fit for earth, when they have practically interbred with us and ousted our strain, *then* they’ll begin to send along their treasures, their apparatus — *grafting* their life on ours. Making men into their heirs and their continuations. Eh? Am I talking nonsense, Foxfield? *Am* I talking nonsense?’

‘The jokes of today may become the facts of tomorrow,’ said Foxfield. ‘Nonsense *pro tem*, let us say.’

‘I’m beginning to believe my own story,’ said the rufous man. ‘With your endorsement. It’s wonderful.’

‘But tell me,’ said the lawyer, also a little excited by this strange idea, ‘is there any evidence in confirmation? Any evidence at all? For example — has there been any increase of freaks and monsters in the world in the last few years?’

‘It’s only recently that there has been any attempt to give a statistical account of abnormalities and mutations,’ said Foxfield. ‘Monstrosities are hushed up — human monstrosities particularly. Even animal-breeders have a sort of shame about them, and wild creatures kill strange offspring instinctively. Every living creature seems to want to breed true. But from the fruitfly and plants and so on we know there is an amount of variation going on — .much larger

than everyday people imagine.'

'Mostly unfavourable variation though?' asked the barrister.

'Ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent,' said Foxfield. 'With no survival value at all. Chance. Like the wildest experimenting....'

§ 4

Now this was the last kind of stuff to which an anxious prospective parent on the verge of neurasthenia ought to have listened.

And yet is it not out of accidents and disasters and fantastic twists of the mind that the greatest discoveries of science and the profoundest revelation of nature's processes have come? Things long unsuspected may be laid bare by a jest. The jokes of today may become the facts of tomorrow, even as Foxfield had said.

As Mr. Joseph Davis walked home from the Planetarium Club he seemed to hear and see those cosmic rays, flashing like tracer bullets, singing like arrows, gleaming and vanishing like falling stars, through the world about him. You might wrap yourself from them, the old professor had remarked, in solid lead, and still they got through to you.

III. — MR. JOSEPH DAVIS WRESTLES WITH AN INCREDIBLE IDEA

§ 1

It is an open question how freely an obstetrician should talk to the husband of his patient. Dr. Holdman Stedding erred perhaps on the communicative side. It may be he should have realized more promptly that Mr. Joseph Davis was troubled in his imagination, and he should have exercised more care than he did in avoiding topics that might intensify his imaginative disturbance. Yet it may be pleaded in extenuation that it was Mr. Davis who started the subject of these mysterious extra-terrestrial radiations and that it was Dr. Holdman Stedding who was taken by surprise with a novel idea. He too had his imaginative side. He liked novel ideas and there was just that streak of scientific curiosity and communicativeness in him which impairs discretion.

He was a stout, large-faced, warmish-blond man, always a little out of breath and always with a faint flavour of surprise in his expression. And he liked to be made to laugh. His mouth was always just a little open, as if ready to laugh. But he knew his work marvellously well; he had strong and skilful hands and he never got flurried.

Davis had called on him before. He had wanted to have an exact account of the health of his wife, Was she strong enough to bear a child? She was as strong, said Dr. Holdman Stedding, ‘as a young pony.’

The way in which Davis beat about that idea that things were not quite right with his wife gave the good doctor a queer feeling that a less reassuring reply would have been more acceptable. For obscure reasons — sub-reasons rather — it seemed that Davis did not want this child.

Like every practising obstetrician Dr. Holdman Stedding knew all the faint intimations of a tentative to abortion, and knew how to nip any such suggestion in the bud. Panic before fatherhood is a more frequent thing than the lay mind realizes. It is constantly peeping out

in these consultations. Davis, if such had been his disposition, had departed unsatisfied. But here he was again.

'I suppose everything is going all right with Mary?' he asked, advancing uneasily into the consulting-room.

'Couldn't be better.'

'You made a second examination?'

'At your request. It was unnecessary.'

'There is nothing unusual....?' Mr. Davis rephrased his question. 'The child, the embryo, so far as you can ascertain, is not different in any way from any other child at the same stage?'

'It is coming on well. There is absolutely no ground for worry.'

'And the mother — physically and mentally. You are sure she can stand this? Because you know, say what you like, she is not a normal woman.'

'Do sit down,' said the doctor, recapturing the hearth-rug by putting his visitor into a chair, and then standing over him. 'Don't you think, Mr. Davis, that you are — just a trifle *fanciful* about your wife?'

'Well,' said Davis, sticking to his point, '*is* she normal?'

Few women in her condition remain as sane and healthy as she is. If that is abnormal. Her mind like her body is as sound as a bell.'

'You don't think a woman can be too sane? I confess, Dr. Stedding, I don't always understand my wife. There is a sort of hard scepticism in her mind ... You don't think a woman can be too intelligent to make a good mother?'

'Really, Mr. Davis! What's fretting your mind? With her clearheadedness and your literary genius your child may be something quite outstanding.'

'And that is what bothers me. The fact of it is, Doctor, I've been hearing talk lately.... I don't know if you know Foxfield and his work.... I take a scientific interest in this as well as a personal one.... The point is—'

§ 2

He kept the doctor waiting for a moment.

‘The point is, do you, with your experience, think that latterly — how shall I put it? — exceptional children have become rather more *frequent* than they used to be?’

‘Exceptional? Gifted?’

‘Yes, gifted. In some cases perhaps. And also — what shall I say? — abnormalities?’

‘H’m!’ said the doctor. He was interested. He attempted a brief survey of his experience. ‘There are some rather surprising children and youngsters about. But I suppose something of that sort has always been going on.’

‘To the same extent?’ pressed Davis. ‘To the same extent?’

‘Possibly not. It is very hard to say. Naturally in this part of London and with a clientele like mine, we have exceptional parents. My impression, my unchecked and uncontrolled impression, is that, in the world I know, maternal mortality is extremely low and the infants are — *bright* is the word. Some with biggish heads. But anything in the way — of out-of-the-way novelties, no. If you are worrying about monstrosities — you need not worry. And exceptionally bright children are nothing to worry about. The Caesarean operation is probably more frequent nowadays.... That may be due rather to improved gynaecology than to any increase in mutations....’

Pause.

‘I would like to talk to you rather fantastically,’ said Davis abruptly. ‘It’s not only my wife I am thinking about. Don’t think I’m mad in what I am saying to you, but just think I am letting my imagination out for a romp.’

‘Nothing better,’ said Dr. Holdman Stedding, who like most medical practitioners nowadays had a disposition towards a rather amateurish psycho- analysis. ‘Say what you like. Let it rip.’

‘Well,’ said Mr. Davis, and hesitated at the strangeness and difficulty of the ideas he had to explain. ‘Biologists — I was talking to Foxfield the other day — biologists say that when a species comes to a difficult phase in its struggle for existence — and I suppose no one can say that is not fairly true of the human situation nowadays — there is an increased disposition to vary. There is — how did Foxfield put it? — for one thing, there is less insistence on the

normal. Less insistence on the normal. It is as if the species began to try round and feel for new possibilities.'

'Ye-es,' said the doctor, with non-committal encouragement in his tone.

'And as if it became more capable of accepting abnormalities and weaving them into its destinies.'

'Yes,' said the doctor, weighing the proposition. 'That is in accordance with current ideas.'

'As an industrious student of history,' began Mr. Davis. 'You know I have written one or two books?'

'Who does not? My two nephews got your *Alexander, or Youth the Conqueror* and your *Story of the Spanish Main* as prizes last term, and I can assure you I read them myself with great delight.'

'Well. It seems to me that for ages human life has been playing much the same tune with variations — but much the same tune. What we call human nature. The general behaviour, the normal system of reactions, has been the same. The old, old story. Abnormal people have been kept in their places. You don't think, Doctor, that that uniformity of human experience is going to be disturbed?'

'I wish you would explain a little more.'

'Suppose there are — *Martians*.'

'Well.'

'Suppose there are beings, real material beings like ourselves, in another planet, but far wiser, more intelligent, much more highly developed. Suppose they are able to see us and know about us — as we know about the creatures under a microscope, which have no suspicion of us.... Mind you, this isn't my idea. I'm only repeating something I heard in the club. But suppose that in some way these older, wiser, greater, and better organized intelligences are able to influence human life.'

'How?'

'They may have tried all sorts of ways. They may have been experimenting for ages. Much as we might run a reagent into a microscope slide. The amoebae and so on would have no idea....'

'If you are thinking of anything like inter-planetary telepathy, anything of that sort, I'm not with you. Even between closely similar minds, between identical twins for example, I doubt if such a thing is

possible.... I *detest* telepathy.'

'This is quite a different idea.'

'Well?'

'Suppose that for the last few thousand years they have been experimenting in human genetics. Suppose they have been trying to alter mankind in some way, through the human genes.'

'But how?'

'You have heard of cosmic rays, Doctor?'

The doctor took it in with some deliberation. 'It is a *quite* fantastic idea,' he said after a pause.

'But neither impossible nor incredible.'

'Some things one puts outside the range of practical possibility.'

'And some things refuse to be put outside the range of practical possibility.'

'But you don't mean to tell me you believe — ?'

'No. But I face a possibility with an open mind.'

'Which is?'

'That these Martians—'

'But we don't know there *are* any Martians!'

'We don't know that there aren't.'

'No.'

'Quite possibly these rays do not come from Mars — more probably than not. But — let us call the senders—'

'*Senders?*'

'Well, whatever originates them. Let us call them Martians — just to avoid inventing a new name—'

'Very well. And your suggestion is — ?'

'That these Martians have been firing away with increasing accuracy and effectiveness at our chromosomes — perhaps for long ages. That is the story, the fancy if you like, that I want in some way to put to the test. Every now and then in history, strange exceptional figures have appeared, Confucius, Buddha; men with strange memories, men with uncanny mathematical gifts, men with unaccountable intuitions. Mostly they have been persons in advance of their times, as we say, and out of step with their times.... Do you see what I am driving at, Doctor?'

'But this is the purest fantasy!'

‘Or the realization of a fantastic fact.’

‘But — !’

§ 3

Dr. Holdman Stedding wavered in his mind. Ought he to let this talk run on or close down on it forthwith?

At least half the disordered minds of the present time, he reflected, develop delusions about radiations. That kind of fancy has largely replaced those spiritual visions and inner voices which supplied the demented with crazy interpretations of their perplexities in the past. It was *dangerous* stuff, and the mind of Davis, to say the least of it, was very delicately poised. And yet there was something faintly plausible — a sort of fairy-tale plausibility — about this idea that caught the unprofessional elements of the doctor’s imagination. He went on taking the idea seriously.

‘What sort of confirmation *is* possible?’ he considered.

‘That is where the puzzle comes in. That is why I am consulting you.’

‘You think that if one attempted some sort of examination of human births, past and present — it would of course be very hard to get any adequate records about this sort of thing — one might be able to detect — ?’

‘That we are being played upon.’

‘But you don’t *believe* — ?’

‘Not a bit of it. Oh, no! I didn’t come here to be certified. I am advancing a certain hypothesis. I am being purely scientific in my method. I advance a provisional theory that a certain thing is going on. And, mind you, if anything of the sort is going on, it is of great — of supreme importance to our race. And having made our trial assumption, we try and work out what would be some of the logical consequences of this process of extra-terrestrial influence, if my theory proves to hold good. Is it possible to detect non-human characteristics, superhuman characteristics perhaps, in some of the children born nowadays, and are these non-human characteristics on the increase? Are there people — what shall I call them? — *fey*

people about? People as sane as you and I and yet strange? We can try them with special intelligence tests perhaps. We can go into the reports of educational institutions. So far I have not planned the lay-out of this investigation. It is all quite new in my mind. But isn't it a legitimate inquiry? I ask you.'

'You will need genius for that lay-out.'

'Every original research needs that. But my theory I think is plain. My theory is that new influences are being brought to bear on human reproduction. For the purposes of our research I call the source of these influences — *Martians*. If my suspicions are confirmed, these Martians — for purposes at which we can only guess — are thrusting mutations upon us. They are planning human mutations. So that presently our very children may not prove to be our own!'

As Mr. Davis said these last words, a full realization of the indiscretion of this talk dawned upon Dr. Holdman Stedding.

'But that is going too far!' he cried. 'That is going much too far. We are talking — we are amusing ourselves — with pseudo-scientific nonsense.'

Mr. Davis perceived quite clearly whal was in his interlocutor's mind. 'It is too late, Doctor, to say that to me. This notion has bitten me. I mean to devote myself to this investigation; I feel called to it; and I want you to interest yourself in it also. If there is one chance in a million of this suspicion being true, then it demands attention. Even on a chance so bare as that we ought to get watchers and searchers, planetary coast-guards, so to speak, at work. We have to specify and measure and determine the nature of this inflow and herd it back upon itself before it is too late.'

'H'm,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding, regarding his queer visitor with an expression of infinite perplexity.

'I am under no delusions,' said Mr. Davis. 'I agree I am talking about something almost absolutely improbable. Let me make it clear to you that I am perfectly clear upon that. I am skirting the giddy edge of utter impossibility. Well and good. But sometimes there are intuitions. How many discoveries have flashed forth at first as the wildest of surmises? It may be circumstances have conspired to point my mind in a certain direction. Never mind about that. I myself do not feel that this is an impossibility. Just simply that — not an

absolute impossibility. No more. That is where I stand.’

IV. — DR. HOLDMAN STEDDING IS INFECTED WITH THE IDEA

§ 1

Dr. Holdman Stedding lay awake that night thinking about the state of mind of Mr. Davis and about the queer idea of a genetic invasion of Martian qualities that he had propounded. There was something provocative about the idea; something that made his intelligence bristle defensively. ‘Pure balderdash!’ he said aloud, but as a matter of fact what made it so irritating was that it was not pure balderdash. There was an attenuated but not unbreakable thread of silly plausibility about the suggestion that prevented him from throwing it altogether out of his mind. He threw words like ‘balderdash’ at it as one might throw stones at a dog that persists in following one, and presently there was the damned thing back again.

‘If it *should* chance that something of the sort was going on....’

He found himself asking himself whether there was any sort of evidence that some new type or perhaps even new types of human being were appearing in the world. Can there be such things as Martianized minds? ‘Silly phrase,’ he said. ‘But somehow a contagious phrase.’

He ran his mind over its collection of facts about the subject. He knew most of what was known and he realized that, for the purpose of getting a conclusive answer, it amounted to hardly anything at all. He reviewed the question methodically. The most confident statements, he reflected, are made that man has not changed since Neolithic times, that he has degenerated since the days of Pericles, that he is larger or smaller, healthier, less healthy, than his ancestors, that he has become finer and subtler or anything else that suits the private convictions, stated or implicit, of the ‘authority’ who flings out this sort of stuff to the public. When you came to think it oyer as he was doing, it was all without exception opinionated rubbish. No one has yet devised the means of getting the confused and irregular records available into any sort of order. No one has been able to do that work. People like J. B. S. Haldane and suchlike pioneer

biologists were trying to form a research society now. Even the men most in contact with the facts have nothing better than ‘impressions’ and ‘persuasions’, and some, thought Dr. Holdman Stedding with righteous self-applause, know that that is so, and some do not let their prejudices rip. Dr. Holdman Stedding’s private and unproven ‘impression’ was just the impression most favourable to Mr. Davis’s wild surmise. His unproven belief was that a considerable change in the human mind was going on. He thought that heavy and clumsy types were not so abundant in the population as they used to be and that certain new mental types were on the increase.

‘But what has that to do with Martians and cosmic rays?’ his common sense protested, and his common sense answered: ‘Nothing.’

After which he continued to pursue the subject.

§ 2

Such discursive nocturnal meditations as Dr. Holdman Stedding was now committed to, combine the advantage that they cover a wide ground and find the most diverse evidence in their excursions, with the disadvantage that they sometimes lose their way altogether and never return to the main issue. For a time the doctor’s train of thought was in danger of the latter fate. He wandered into a labyrinth of possibility about the peculiar scepticism of the contemporary mind and the perplexing obduracies and wilfulnesses of so many of the rising generation. He knew more about the ideas of his hospital students than most of his colleagues, and sometimes they filled him with hope and sometimes they terrified him. Like all youth since our race began, most of them were sheep and went whither they were told or led, but for all that it was quite conceivable that the proportion of independent and wilful minds was higher than it had ever been before.

The stiff troublesome fellows were the interesting ones.

He passed to the marked increase of effctive medical research and from that to the general inventiveness of our age. Inventiveness had never been so manifest as it was today. For more than a century it

had been increasing. Directly you said a thing could not possibly be done, there it was — done. Yet so far no one had suggested that this must be due to the release of new mental types. It might be.

He felt that he would like to have another talk with Davis about the whole matter. Where had Davis got his evidently very strong belief that there were new and strange types appearing in the world? Could he know of anything that a leading obstetrician of wide scientific reading was not likely to know? The trouble about talking to Davis was the doctor's persuasion — possibly an exaggerated one — that mentally he was not too safely balanced. It would be unwise to 'encourage' him, if he was in fact drifting towards a delusion. And then abruptly Dr. Holdman Stedding remembered something.

'His wife!'

Several times Davis had practically asserted that his wife was strange, odd, exceptional. Dr. Holdman Stedding tried to recall the exact words but he found he could not do so. But that manifest disturbance at the advent of a child was bound up with that.

'If he's beginning to think his wife is one of these Martianized people ...! I wonder what a fellow of that sort might not do.... What was it he said? Something about our very children not proving to be our own?'

Dr. Holdman Stedding spent some time that night trying to recall every particular he could of both these people. She was very quiet in her manner, observant, sane. If she was exceptional mentally it was because she was exceptionally sane. She moved easily and gracefully, as one does who has no conflicting nervous impulses. She did so even in her present condition; she was being one of the calmest and most competent patients he had ever known. 'If *she's* Martianized,' reflected the doctor, 'then the sooner we all get Martianized the better.'

But then, he considered, he had not seen her a dozen times altogether and there might be qualities in her of which he knew nothing, to account for her husband's attitude, for that faintly distrustful insecurity about her.

The doctor speculated about the relations of the Davis couple for a while. He liked her and he found something slightly antipathetic about her husband. The man's quick, incalculable, and ill-adjusted

mental movements made him uncomfortable. No doubt his literary gifts were considerable, but like so many of these literary people he had much more control over himself upon paper than in real life. He must be a great trial to her and she ought to be protected, now at any rate, from his possible eccentricities. The doctor felt that something ought to be done about it, and began thinking of possible things that might or might not be done, until it occurred to him that it was through this sort of breach in impartiality that unprofessional conduct may enter into the life of a practitioner.

§ 3

In the morning he wrote a very carefully considered letter to Davis which he marked 'Private' and addressed to the Planetarium Club.

It was a long and repetitious letter. It beat about the bush too much to be quoted in full here, but the gist of it was a warning not to give way to a 'fantasy-suggestion'. 'These little imaginative ideas one takes into one's mind are like those insidious creatures the medieval doctors used to talk about, little things that seem nothing at all, that leap into your mouth before you know where you are and grow into monsters inside your brain and devour your sanity.' No human mind, the doctor declared, was sufficiently balanced as yet to resist the disturbance of a too persistently cherished idea. That was why nearly everyone who investigated 'psychic phenomena' or 'telepathy' or 'astrology' or 'chiromancy' or the tarot cards presently began to find there was 'something in it'. Mr. Davis was to think no more about it, distract his mind, take up chess, play golf on new courses, before this obsession really gripped his mind. Tou are standing on the brink of a long mental slide at the bottom of which is delusional insanity. I write plainly to you, because you are still a perfectly sane & man,'

§ 4

He knows — he knows as well as I do,' said Mr. Joseph Davis. 'But

he’s afraid to go on with it....

‘I want to go on with it. But how I am to do that I don’t know. Watch.... And meanwhile these cosmic rays fly noiselessly about me — the arrows of the Martians — and by a birth here and a birth there — humanity undergoes — dehumanization,’

V. — PROFESSOR ERNEST KEPPEL TAKES UP THE IDEA IN HIS OWN PECULIAR FASHION

§ 1

Now Dr. Holdman Stedding had a great friend and crony, a bachelor like himself and a queer imaginative talker, Professor Ernest Keppel. He was nominally professor of philosophy, but latterly he had engaged more and more in psycho-therapy. He was accused of psychologizing his philosophy away into a descriptive science and he was a frequent and formidable controversialist, more often in hot water than not.

He was a dark, scarred, halting man. He had been scarred by the explosion of a hidden mine in the German trenches during the September advance in 1918. The scar ran as a dark red suture from the middle of his forehead across the left brow, where an overhanging exostosis thrust his eye into a deep and sinister cavern. Moreover, the explosion had stiffened the joint of his forearm, injured his pelvis, and left him lame. Before that he must have been very animated and attractive indeed. But his mutilation had left a curious bitterness in his nature. He understood why he was bitter; he did his best not to be bitter, but taking thought about it could not make him sweet. He was over-sensitive to the effect of his scar when he met new people; his incurable delusion that he was repulsive made him abrupt and rude, more particularly with women, and perhaps he exaggerated the delights of the normal experiences from which he felt he was shut off. He was prosperous and he lived well, and his energy and persistence in research and speculation were making a great reputation for him.

The doctor found his company extremely stimulating. He was accustomed to bring new ideas to him and toast them, so to speak, in front of his glowing mind. Indeed he hardly ever took an idea to

himself and assimilated it until he had warmed it up first before Professor Keppel. And now accordingly he took advantage of a lunch engagement to bring up the matter of the Martians. They often arranged by telephone to lunch together, because Keppel's place was so much nearer than clubland.

'I was talking to a lunatic yesterday,' said the doctor, 'and he broached a most remarkable idea.'

He stretched Mr. Davis's alleged discovery in a tone of appreciative scepticism as lunch went on.

'It's nonsense,' he concluded.

'It's nonsense,' Professor Keppel agreed. 'But—'

'Exactly! But—'

'*But*—' repeated Keppel and waved the hand of his inferior arm stifflly, while his trim parlourmaid stood at his elbow with the savoury.

A certain brightness appeared in his overhung eye. His expression became profound.

Dr. Holdman Stedding waited.

'The interesting point,' said Professor Keppel, helping himself to his Gruyere a la Roi Alphonse, 'the interesting point is, as you say, that we do in fact know nothing about what human modification may be going on at the present time. Nothing. Demographic science has hardly begun to be a precise science — much less an exact science. Our social statistics are extravagently clumsy. (A) We don't know what to count or measure and (B) we haven't an idea how to measure it. It *is* quite possible that new human types may be appearing in the world, or that once rare types may be increasing in number relatively. More geniuses — more aberrant gifts. And the queer thing is that, when this lunatic comes to you and starts this idea in your head, you don't say Pish or Tush and just turn it down; you begin to have a vague sense that somehow you have felt something — you hardly know what.'

'That's it.'

'And when you bring it to me (Do try this savoury. Don't pass it. I got the recipe from Martinez at that Spanish restaurant in Swallow Street) I begin to have the same feeling.'

‘One’s imagination wants to play with it. It’s as attractive as a hare’s foot to a kitten. Suppose, Keppel, suppose — for the sake of a talk — there *are* Martians.’

‘Let’s suppose it. I’m more than willing.’

‘What sort of minds would they have and what would they think of our minds and what might they not try to make of them?’

‘Regarded as an exercise in speculative general psychology? That’s attractive.’

‘As a speculative exercise then.’

‘Exactly. You know that man Olaf Stapledon has already tried something of the sort in a book called *Last and First Men*. Some day we shall certainly have to come to a general psychology independent of the human type, just as now these young men in the Society of Experimental Biology are getting away from the highly specialized peculiarities of human physiology towards a general physiological science. Now away there in Mars, as any astronomer will tell you, there are all the conditions necessary for a sort of life similar, if not identically similar, to life upon earth, the same elements — air, water, a temperature range not widely different. The probabilities are in favour of there having been a parallel — a roughly parallel evolution. Parallel but in some ways different. The gravitational energy, atmospheric pressure, and suchlike things are different and that would mean differences in lightness, vigour, and size. Martian plants and animals would probably run much bigger. *Much* bigger.’

‘I forget the relative masses of the two planets,’ said the doctor.

‘I forget too. Roughly it’s something like eight to one — perhaps a bit more. So the Martian if he had a human form would be twice as tall and eight times our weight. A bigger, longer-lived creature. Assuming —

‘No. It’s not *wild* assumption. The odds are in favour that there are or have been growths, detachments, moving feeling things, in existence on that planet. This is bold speculation, Holdman Stedding, I admit, but it isn’t extravaganza.’

‘Go on. But you wouldn’t dare to talk to your students like this.’

‘Possibly not. How far would the evolution of life, if it had an

independent start elsewhere under slightly but not essentially different conditions, run parallel to the evolution of life on earth?'

'The same tune, I suppose, with variations.'.

'It is difficult to imagine anything else. There would be plants — I think green plants — and animals. The animals would run about as individuals and have senses, something like ours — perhaps very like ours. They might see more colours than we do, for example, have a longer or shorter range of sound, subtler feelers in the place of our hands. Probably Nature has tried out all the possible senses on earth here. But not all the possible shapes and patterns. Anyhow these Martians would respond to stimuli; they would have reflexes; they would condition their reflexes. I believe if we could call up the spirit of dear old Pavlov, we should find him agreeing with us, that the chances are heavily in favour of any possible minds there being minds fundamentally like ours.'

'But with a longer past.'.

'Yes, Mars was cool long before earth was. A longer past, a hotter summer and a harder winter — the year of Mars is twice the length of ours — a larger body and a larger brain. With more room for memories — more and better memories — and more space for ideas, more and better ideas. And so the problem comes down to this. What sort of mind would a man have if he had a longer ancestry, an ampler memory, a less hurried Life?'

'I accept all that as just possible,' said the doctor.

'It is certainly where the weight of probability lies. Now all these pseudo-scientific story-writers who write about Mars make their Martians monsters and horrors, inhuman in the bad sense, cruel. Why should they be anything of the sort? Why,' repeated Professor Keppel, taking coffee, 'why should they be anything of the sort?'

'Quite nice monsters?'

'Why not?'

'Well, the German professor evolved his idea of a camel from his inner consciousness; why shouldn't we do the same with our Martians?'

'Having regard to the facts. Why not?'

Dr. Holdman Stedding looked at his watch.

'Not till you've smoked one of those pennant-shaped Coronas you

like,' said Keppel, 'and just a whiff of brandy. Because, confound it! you started this talk, you've interested me, and you've got to hear it out. If there is such a thing as a Martian, rest assured, Holdman Stedding, he's humanity's big brother.'

'Big in every way you think. A super-super man.'

'Good anyhow.'

'Beyond good and evil.'

'Everything alive must have its good and evil. Beyond our good and evil anyhow. None the worse for that perhaps. No; if you talk of your lunatic again, you can at least dispel any fear he has of his Martians. The odds are they are not so much invading us as acting as a sort of inter-planetary tutor. Bless my heart! At the mere thought I feel a sort of benevolent influence.'

'No,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding, emitting a smoke jet with the appreciative expression of a cigar advertisement in *Punch* and weighing the possibilities of the case with luxurious deliberation. 'It's your cook.'

§ 3

'She's a very good cook,' Professor Keppel admitted. 'But about these Martians. We are letting our fancy play too wildly about them. Let's leave them for a bit. There's another point your patient has raised that's quite available for separate treatment. Practically another question. There may or may not be these sane and mature watchers over human destiny, these Celestial Uncles, these friends in the mdnight sky, but what does seem to be possible and even within our reach is this idea, that the species *Homo sapiens*, because of some possible increase or change in the direction of the cosmic rays, or from some other unknown cause, is starting to mutate, and mutate along some such line as that larger wisdom indicates.'

'Some *sort* of large wisdom,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding, 'a purely hypothetical wisdom.'

'You are very precise,' said Professor Keppel. 'But anyhow that is what we want to know. Is there such a biological movement going on? Is there any means of tracing it if it is going on? The real feeling

at the back of both our minds is that, if there is not something of the sort going on, then this breed of pretentious, self-protective imbeciles —'

'Poor *Homo sapiens!*' murmured the doctor. '*How* he catches it nowadays!'

'Is very near the end of its tether. It's no good pretending you disagree with that. Haven't all reasonable civilized men nowadays this feeling of being dilettantes on a sinking ship? We all want a break towards something better in the way of living. Hopes and our wishes speak together. And it may be — as we half hope. But how are we to test this idea? How are we to set about the investigation?'

'Without making everyone think we have gone crazy?'

'Precisely.'

'Nietzsche?' hazarded the doctor. 'Are these his supermen we are thinking about?'

'He brings too much Oriental bric-Ó-brac for my taste,' said Keppel. 'And so far as I can make out, he has at least two different meanings for that Ubermensch of his. On the one hand is a biologically better sort of man and on the other a sort of aggregate synthetic being like Hobbes's Leviathan. You never know how to take him. Let's rule Nietzsche out Let us just follow up this question whether there is an increase in — what shall I call them? — high-grade intellectual types.'

The doctor helped himself with infinite restraint and discretion to just the merest splash more brandy. 'I think, Keppel, there may be a possible way to set this note of interrogation working.'

'We have our reputations to consider.'

'We have our reputations to consider, but quite possibly this fellow — well, to commit a very slight indiscretion — it is Mr. Joseph Davis, the man who writes those extremely popular, those *florid* — shall I say? — those almost too glorifying *glosses*, so to speak, on history — might do something for us in this respect. His writings, his association with what one might call the more romantic aspects of the human record, his almost strained belief in the faith, hope, and glory of our species, put him, I think, in a position to ask questions....'

'Joseph Davis,' considered Keppel. 'The man who wrote *From*

Agincourt to Trafalgar? Him! You got this idea about the Martians from *him*!'

'I told him to think no more about it.'

'But he will?'

'He will. He wants to think about it. He wants to follow this up. He — something has shaken him up. I can't make up my mind whether he is going mad or going sane. But if I give him half a hint, he'll be off on the scent of these Martians now like a dog after a rabbit'

VI. — OPENING PHASES OF THE GREAT EUGENIC RESEARCH

§ 1

‘Now here, now there,’ whispered Mr. Davis to himself as he stood on the doorstep of the headmaster of Gorpel School and looked at the headmaster’s trim but beautiful garden.

It was six months later and high summer and he was the father of an extremely healthy but extremely intelligent-looking child. And the belief that he had discovered that the most wonderful event in the history of our planet was now happening had entered into and become part of his being.

Ostensibly he had come to Gorpel to lecture on ‘The Grandeur That Was Rome,’ but really he had come to look that interesting collection of boys over and talk to the headmaster about any mentally (or even physically) exceptional lads who might have attracted his attention. Nothing was to be said about Martians, cosmic rays, or anything of that sort. It was to be put before the headmaster as a mild little inquiry into the prospects of the ‘odd’ type of boy.

It was Dr. Holdman Stedding who had suggested this line of inquiry to him. Really the excellent doctor wanted this material collected to feed the whimsical and nine-tenths sceptical curiosity of Keppel and himself, but he had succeeded in persuading himself that it was absolutely the best treatment for Davis’s mental worries that his imaginative vagaries should be steadied and assuaged by a methodical exploration of what might quite possibly prove to be illuminating facts. This brought with it a certain sense of benevolence, because Davis was not his patient under treatment, paid no fees. It was indeed simply helping the man as one man helps another.

Davis at this stage was looking for mental abnormalities — on the upward side. He was getting whatever could be got from prison governors, educational authorities, schools of every sort where there was close contact between teachers and pupils, even from army

instructors, institutions for defectives, lunatic asylums — and making a general report and a digest of his results. A number of facts not generally known was emerging from these inquiries. The proportion of children of the calculating-boy and musical- prodigy-type seemed to be increasing quite markedly; finer muscular adjustment was in a very conspicuous way ousting mere beef from athleticism; critical obduracy at quite an early age was far more in evidence than it had ever been before.

Possibly Davis, like many investigators, was disposed to find what he looked for. Dr. Holdman Stedding fancied he could allow for that.

What Dr. Holdman Stedding did not allow for were the practical effects of these preoccupations upon an author's normal activities. Like most men of sound professional standing he thought authors did their work outside time and space and occupied their normal hours in the pursuit of royalties and publicity and in making speeches on irrelevant topics to unnecessary societies. But Joseph Davis had been engaged upon a great constellation of books, which were to give history, ennobled and illuminated, to the common man. He had schemed that as what he called his 'life task'. That task was now beginning to look like a modern cathedral under construction when some new heresy breaks out among the more opulent faithful and funds run short. Sometimes for six or seven days not a line was added.

Meanwhile every day it grew plainer to Davis that this theory, which had at first seemed even to him a fantastic hypothesis, was real and true. A new quality of human being was being inserted into the fabric of human life, 'one here, one there'.

It was hard not to talk about it. It was hard to have to keep up the pretence of making a mere respectable inquiry as trivial and pointless as — let us say — a research thesis in pedagogics for an American university. He went about the world to social gatherings, to assemblies and theatres and restaurants; he mingled in crowds, he watched people's unsuspecting faces, and now the thought was always in his mind: *If only they knew!*

If only they knew what the Martians were doing to them!

At first his attitude had been one of stark antagonism to this Martian intrusion. He had something more than an ordinary man's

instinctive loyalty to race and kind. He had superimposed a mental habit. He had made himself a champion of that ancient and venerable normal life of humanity, unaltered through the ages — except now and then through the providential punishment of some transitory heresy — the simple, old, beautiful story of childhood, learning, love, industry, parentage, honour, and the easy passage to a venerable old age and a brightly hopeful death. It was a story at once earthly, in the best, the honest pious peasant sense, and profoundly spiritual. This life, age after age, had been set in a stimulating round of seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, thirst and hunger, reasonable desires and modest satisfactions. Of such stuff was history woven, and across this sound, enduring fabric were embroidered the great historical figures, in a bright opera-drama as glad in quality as an illuminated missal. History told of their conquests, triumphs, glories, heroisms, of heart-stirring tragedies and lovely sacrifices. They were all far greater than life-size — like the monarchs and gods in an Assyrian relief — the common people ran about beneath their feet according to the best historical traditions. So it had been. So it would go on until at last the Almighty commanded the curtain to ring down and called the actors forward from their various retiring-rooms, to receive appropriate rewards.

Such was the picture of the world and its promise that he had been working to realize, overworking to realize, when this fantastic and distracting suspicion of a Martian intervention first came to him. It was as if the vast canvas on which he had been working with such resolution had suddenly cracked across and betrayed his light and shade, his heights and depths, as the completest unreality.

Now — and here there seems to have been some gap in his logical process — he felt that the Martians would certainly be against all these fine things for which he struggled. Why, one may ask, should the Martians be against them? Why should they be by necessity spoilers of so rich and noble a fabric? But he had his full share of that infirmity of our impatient minds which makes us leap naturally to the conclusion that what is not uncritically on our side and subject to our ideas is against us. At the onset of a strange way of living we bristle like dogs at the sight of a strange animal. He hated these Martians as soon as he though of them. He could not imagine their interference

with our nice world could be anything but devastating.

His motive to begin with, therefore, was an altogether uncomplicated desire to detect, expose, and repel an insidious and dreadful attack upon this dear and happy human life we all enjoy so greatly and relinquish so reluctantly. These Martians presented themselves to him as the blackest of threats to all those convictions that make life worth living upon earth. Indisputably they must be inhuman, whatever else they are. That went without saying. To be inhuman implied to him, as to most of us, malignant cruelty; it seemed impossible that it could mean anything else. (And yet this is a world where lots of us live upon terms of sentimental indulgence towards cats, dogs, monkeys, horses, cows, and suchlike unhuman creatures, help them in a myriad simple troubles; and attribute the most charming reactions to them!)

Among other things it seemed to him unquestionably that the drive of these so elaborately aimed cosmic missiles among our chromosomes would be to increase the intellectual power of the Martianized individuals very greatly. There seemed to be no alternative to that conclusion. And for some very deep- seated reason in his make-up, it was an intolerable thought for him that there should appear any class of creature on earth intellectually above his own, unless they were profoundly inferior to him morally, and so repulsive and ugly as practically to reverse the handicap against him. They had to be ugly in motive and action. There had to be that compensation at least. This idea of their ugliness followed the idea of their intelligence with such an air of necessity that it was some weeks before he began even to suspect that the two ideas might be separated.

At first he pictured a Martian as something hunched together, like an octopus, tentacular, saturated with evil poisons, oozing unpleasant juices, a gigantic leathery bladder of hate. The smell, he thought, would be terrible. And those indirect offspring who were to be so foully disseminated upon earth, were bound, he imagined, to be not simply intelligent in a hard unsympathetic way but in some manner disfigured and disgusting. They would be bound to have turnip heads, bladder-of-lard crania, shortsighted eyes, horrible little faces, long detestable hands, unathletic and possibly crippled bodies....

Yet struggling desperately against this trend were certain vague apprehensions about his wife and child.

§ 2

There was an extraordinary division in his mind at this time. Two cognate currents of suspicion ran side by side and would not mingle.

His wife was at once associated with and separated from his general line of thought. If, for instance, Dr. Holdman Stedding had asked him outright: ‘Do you think your wife is one of these people who have been touched in their natal phase by the magic of the cosmic vibrations?’ he would have answered at once with almost perfect honesty that these Martian speculations of his had absolutely nothing to do with her. But he would not have answered the question calmly; he would have had a touch of defensive indignation in his voice. And it was not a question he would have asked himself. It was a question he could not have asked himself; there was some barrier against that.

He was resisting a very obvious impulse to complete the link of association and fear that linked his long-standing sense of some strangeness about his wife, with this Martian idea. The two lines of suggestion were in reality connected and consecutive, but by some self-protective necessity he would not see that his extreme readiness to accept the suggestion of a Martian influx had any direct relation to his long-incubated sense of the elfin quality of his wife. They were groups of ideas in different spheres.

But these spheres, of which the Martian one was not spinning so busily, were drawing closer and closer together in his mind. Within a measurable time they were bound to collide, to coalesce into one common whirlpool, which might be a very tumbled whirlpool indeed. Then he would be bound to face the realization that had already projected itself in his words to the doctor: ‘So that presently our very children may not prove to be our own.’

This intimation, breaking through his resistances, evoked first the dread of an abnormal child, prematurely wise, macrocephalic, with dreadful tentacular hands.... So his essential humanity presented the

thing. If the thing was a monster, what should he do?

He thought of doing some very dreadful things.

Such nightmare ideas haunted him more and more distressingly until the birth of his child. The immediate advent of that event filled him with almost uncontrollable terror. By an immense effort he concealed it and behaved himself.

He was amazed — even Dr. Holdman Stedding was amazed — to have the young man brought into the world after a labour of less than an hour. No monstrous struggle. No frightful crisis. No Caesarean operation.

'Is he — is he *all right?*' he asked incredulous.

'Fit as a fiddle,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding almost boisterously. Because he had found something contagious in the father's uneasiness.

'No malformations? No strangeness?'

'On my honour, Mr. Davis, you don't deserve such a child! You don't. When they've done a little washing you shall see it. I'm not often enthusiastic. I've seen too many of 'em.'

And it looked indeed a perfect little creature. When they put it into his parental arms a great wave of instinctive tenderness surged up in the heart of Joseph Davis. Like endless fathers in his position before him, he was overcome by the wonderful fact that the creature's little hands had perfact nails and fingers.

Why had he ever been afraid?

'I feel I'd like to see her,' he said.

'Not just yet. A little while yet. Though she's doing splendidly.' Whereupon Dr. Holdman Stedding said a slightly unfortunate thing: 'There's not a painted Madonna in all the world with a lovelier bambino than hers.'

Mr. Joseph Davis's expression became thoughtful.

Silently he handed back his precious burden to the hovering nurse.

He was minded to go out and not to see Mary for a time.

Then by a great effort he overcame this impulse and stayed indoors in his study downstairs, and presently he was taken in to her, and when he saw her, tired but flushed and triumphant, with the child laid close to her, some long-standing restraint seemed to break between them and he called her his darling and knelt down beside

her, weeping.

‘Dear Joe!’ she said, and her hand crept out and ruffled his hair gently. ‘Queer Joe!’

§ 3

After that his ideas about the quality of the Martians’ influences and purposes began to change. After all, the two streams of realization came together in his mind gently and naturally, and he felt with the completest assurance and with no lingering trace of horror that both his wife and his child belonged to this new order of human beings that was appearing upon the planet.

After that it was that his researches, which at the beginning had been directed mainly to Poor Law institutions for defective and malformed children, asylums, wonder children, and the more grotesque arcana of gynaecology, turned rather to schools and universities and the ascertainable characteristics of exceptional and gifted people. He passed from a hunt for monsters to an investigation of outstanding endowment, to the detection and analysis of what is called genius in every field of human activity. He brooded over the picture riddles of Durer, he read the notebooks of Leonard. He found a new interest in symbolic art and in whatever moody and inexplicable decoration from remote times and places came to his attention. Were these enigmas like cries in the dark, the struggling intimations of novel reactions and novel attitudes on the part of Martian pioneers towards the customs and traditions of our world?

He had never told any one, least of all would he have told Dr. Holdman Stedding, that dreams about Martians were becoming rather frequent with him. They were extremely consistent dreams or at least they were pervaded with a sense of consistency. These dream-Martians were no longer repulsive creatures, grotesques and caricatures, and yet their visible appearance was not human. They had steadfast, dark eyes, very widely separated, and their mouths were still and resolute. Their broad brows and round heads made him think of the smooth wise-looking heads of seals and cats, and he could not distinguish clearly whether they had shadowy hand and

arms or tentacles. There was always a lens-like effect about his vision, as though he saw them through the eyepiece of some huge optical instrument. Ripples passed across the lens and increased the indistinctness, and ever and again flickering bunches of what he assumed were cosmic rays exploded from nothingness across the picture and flashed out radiating to the periphery and vanished. He felt that his dreams were taking him into a world where our ideas of form and process, of space and time, are no longer valid. In his dreams it was not as if he went across space to Mars, it was as if a veil became translucent.

Once or twice in the daytime he had tried to make sketches of these watchers, but their physical forms had always eluded his pencil. He had never been able to draw very well, but also he had a feeling that even for a skilled artist there would have been difficulties about the planes and dimensions of these beings.

Moreover, not only was he finding this difficulty in determining a Martian form but he was finding a parallel difficulty in fixing any common characteristics for the earthly types he was beginning to distinguish as 'Martianized'. All that they had in common was that they were 'different' and that this difference involved a certain detachment from common reactions. They lived apart. They thought after their own fashion. He was not sure whether they were actually insusceptible to mass emotions; he may have expected them to be, and that with him would have been half-way to thinking them so.

§ 4

On this visit to Gorpel he pursued what was becoming his usual technique. It was at once subtle and a trifle crazy. There was a streak of masochism about it. He had written all his books so far to appeal to the heroic common humanity in all of us. And now he was using the same stuff to eliminate, so to speak, common humanity. He was looking for minds that did not respond.

He had brought down a lecture that had always proved extremely successful with ordinary schoolboys, 'The Grandeur That Was Rome.' In this he unfolded his tale of the heroic patriots who stud the

Latin tradition, from Horatius defending the Bridge, to Caesar crowning the great task of the Republic by annexing it to British history, Octavius creating the Empire and Justinian giving us Roman law. It was a procession of statuesque figures, more or less clean-shaven and for the most part in togas, evoking as they passed a fungoid growth of unnecessary aqueducts, corpulent amphitheatres, and Corinthian columns, and conferring on the whole world the blessings of the Pax Romana. The Punic Wars, with a faint flavouring of Anti-Semitism, too faint to be disagreeable, he presented as a gigantic necessary struggle between noble north-side soldiers and revengeful, obdurate, but extremely competent south-side loanmongers. He ignored every reality of hate, suspicion, greed, panic, and brutish cruelty that characterized that monstrous mutual destruction of the Mediterranean civilizations, the Punic Wars, and still less did he let those essential features of the mighty Pax, the omnipresent cross for rebels and the omnipresent tax-collector for every one, peep out from behind those glorious Roman arches. As he orated this familiar discourse he watched the boys. A few, incapable of attention, were inattentive, but the discipline of the school was good and their inattention was passive. The majority were responsive. They drank in the mighty fable. Their eyes betrayed their imaginative excitement. Their faces became nobler, stern. They became conquering generals subduing barbarians, pro-consuls assuaging the bickerings of subject races.

It was an answer to trumpets that stirred in them. It was what he had heard someone call the 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' reaction.

With all that Davis was familiar. But now he was looking for scepticism and intelligent dissent.

There was one little fellow sitting up near the corner who from the start he felt assured was Martianized. He had untidy hair and a shrewd faintly humorous white face, and he listened throughout, cheek on hand, very attentively and with a questioning expression. He heard, untouched. The real Martian quality.

'That's my boy here,' said Davis and inquired about him afterwards.

'A queer little chap,' said the headmaster. 'A queer little chap. Behaves pretty well, but he's somehow disappointing. Doesn't *throw*

himself *into* things. A streak of something very nearly amounting to — well, scepticism. Yet his people are quite decent people and the Dean of Clumps is his uncle. He asks questions no other boy would think of. The other day he asked, what is *spiritual*?

'Well,' said Mr. Davis after a thoughtful pause, 'what *is* spiritual?'

'But need I tell you of all people?'

'What did you tell him? I'm finding a sort of difficulty in putting this in a chapter I am writing about the saintly life.'

The headmaster of Gorpel did not answer the question immediately. Instead he went on to say in a slightly offended voice: 'I find all my normal boys understand the word without discussion, take it for granted. Spiritual- Material, a natural opposition. One ascends, the other gravitates. There it is, plain as a pikestaff. No need to discuss it'

'Unless some little — toad, like that, asks the question point-blank.'

'He refuses to see. Why, he said, should we make a sort of extract of reality and call it spirituality and pretend the two things are primary opposites?'

'He said that! Rather — subtle.'

'Too subtle for a boy of his age. Unwholesome.'

'But spirit isn't an extract, is it?'

'So I said to him. "Life," he said, "seems to me just one, Sir. I can't think of it in any other way. Sorry, Sir, I've tried."'

'He said that — that he couldn't think in any other way? That's very interesting. How did you meet that?'

'In his particular case I explained by means of illustrations.'

'And he was satisfied?'

'Not in the least. He criticized my illustrations. Rather penetratingly, I admit. He wanted me to define. But you see, Mr. Davis, the fundamental things of life cannot be defined. He made me realize that more clearly than I have ever done before. *All* the great fundamentals, Deity, Eternity — Faith in What? — it is as if there was a sort of holy of holies beyond the reach of exact definitions. So it seems to me. It is useless, I find, to argue about them. It robs our attitudes of dignity ... robs them of dignity.... We are reduced to logic

chopping. Quibbles.... We understand by intuition what we mean and what other people mean. Best to leave it at that.'

'And you told him if he didn't understand what spiritual meant, not to go on thinking about it yet but wait.'

'And pray,' said the headmaster of Gorpel.

'In effect I said that. In effect. Not exactly. Not too definitely. One must go carefully. Afterwards I made him learn Corinthians One Thirteen by heart — not as if it was exactly an answer but as if it threw a light - and I hope it did him good.'

'You don't know?'

'I don't know. These are elusive matters, Mr. Davis. A boy who wants to argue must not be indulged too far. There are limits.'

'I wonder,' said Mr. Davis, feeling his way carefully, 'if perhaps *types* — types like this youngster may really be something more than merely obstinate. Whether by some instinctive necessity, by some difference in themselves, they may not find something — some inacceptable lack of fineness, some lack of clearness, in various distinctions we assume, distinctions we have assumed and which we make by habit....'

'I can't entertain thoughts like that,' said the headmaster abruptly. 'I cannot conduct the work of this great school and prepare my regiment of youngsters year by year for their attack on life and responsibility, if I am also to carry on an examination of the fundamental values we set on things.'

'But if presently instead of one inassimilable boy you find half a dozen of him turning up — or a score?'

The headmaster looked at his visitor. 'I devoutly hope not, Mr. Davis,' he said. 'I devoutly hope not. You are giving me food — not for thought — no! — for nightmares....'

'Now here, now there,' said Mr. Davis as he stood on the headmaster's doorstep. 'Certainly that boy is one of them. They don't see life as we see it. They can't think of it in our way. And they make us begin to doubt that we see it ourselves as we have always imagined we did.'

VII. — THE WORLD BEGINS TO HEAR ABOUT THE MARTIANS

§ 1

It is almost impossible to trace how this realization that mankind, under the spur of the cosmic rays, was launched upon a career of genetic change, seeped from the minds of the first discoverers, Laidlaw, that rufous man in the Planetarium Club (to whom it seemed no more than a passing freak of fancy), Mr. Davis (who was first to take it seriously), Dr. Holdman Stedding, and Professor Ernest Keppel, into the general consciousness. But a few weeks after the birth of Mary's child, an article appeared in the *Weekly Refresher* from the pen of that admirable scientific popularizer, Harold Rigamey, in which, as Professor Keppel rather inelegantly put it, he 'completely spilt the beans.'

It is possible that Rigamey got the thing at second or third hand from Dr. Holdman Stedding, who oddly enough seems to have been the least discreet of all that primary group. Dr. Stedding may have described it to one or two fellow-practitioners as an example of the extreme intellectual elaboration that may appear in a case of delusional insanity. There is no evidence that Laidlaw, after his first imaginative outbreak, ever gave the matter a second thought until he got the echo in the newspapers. But he may very well have repeated his fantasy on some after-dinner occasion. He was the last survivor of the old Bob Stevenson, York Powell, school of talk, a gorgeous talker.

Harold Rigamey was a peculiarly constituted being, he had a mind that did not so much act as react. He was a born ultra-heretic. He disbelieved everything and then doubled back on his disbelief. From a sound historical and literary training he had recoiled in a state of unsympathetic curiosity to science and had achieved a very respectable position on the literary side of journalism by writing about science in a manner that caused the greatest discomfort and perplexity to men of science. He found wonders for them when they saw nothing wonderful and incredible triumphs of paradox in their

simplest statements. He mated them to the strangest associates.

He had an infuriating openmindedness to every unorthodox extravagance. He hated dogma and he was full of faith. He was always reconciling science and religion, spiritualism and behaviourism, medicine and Christian Science, and this reconciling disposition won him quite a large following of readers eager to keep their mental peace amidst the vast, the incongruous, alarming, and sometimes far too urgent suggestions of our modern world.

They were all a little uneasy with him and that was a part of his charm. There were stimulants in all his sedatives. When he asked his readers to come and meet spiritual worth, they were never quite sure whether that meant the dear Archbishop of Canterbury, all clean and scented with his pretty purple-and-red evening clothes, his pretty lace cuffs, his pretty episcopal ring, and his general vacuous urbanity, or whether it meant a rather repellent, though no doubt equally edifying, encounter with some unsanitarily pure and indecently stark fakir on a bed of nails; and when he remarked upon the stern veracities of science, whether it would be a fresh explosion in the mathematical engine-room, a vitamin of incredible potency, or a breathing exercise from America that at once confirmed and completed the remarkable inhalations of ancient Tibet, he had in mind. For some time Harold Rigamey had been working out in his own mind some sort of linkage of interplanetary communications with the all too neglected science of astrology; he thought he might make something quite exciting out of it, and this weird idea of Laidlaw's came to him like the voice of the Lord to a Hebrew prophet.

For some time he had been feeling that his characteristic methods of popularizing science were no longer growing in popular favour. Men of science are a peculiar, an almost ungracious, class, and very often the more you popularize them the less they like it. Maybe it was a public realization of their lack of appreciation for Harold Rigamey's services, or maybe it was just a surfeit of subtle but occasionally very incomprehensible wonders, that was affecting the first abundant public response to Harold Rigamey; at any rate he felt that his popularity was dimmer than it used to be. A really new and exciting topic, that only needed a little care and thought in the handling to go far and wide, was just the tonic he had been requiring.

Mindful of the faint elements of insecurity in his own credit he set about the subject with considerable skill and discretion. He first informed his public through a couple of articles, called 'The Voice of the Stars,' of a 'growing realization' that 'extra-terrestrial forces of some unknown kind' were 'indubitably' attempting to establish communication with our planet. He invoked almost every known authority upon extra-terrestrial radiations, produced in a skilfully clipped form some rare unguarded statements by eminent professors, promoted one or two rash speculations by obscure people in remote parts of the earth to a distinguished scientific standing, and invented a few anonymous scientists of his own. (Some day *Nature* will have to publish a list of otherwise non-existent scientists, available for public controversy.)

'Scientists tell us' was a very favourite phrase with Harold Rigamey. He wrote of 'numerous efforts' which he said had been made to 'discover codes' in these extra-terrestrial radiations and of the growing conviction of 'scientists' of all sorts and shades and sizes of the existence of these persistent attempts to attract our attention from outside our world.

'This present century,' wrote Harold Rigamey, 'already goes far beyond its predecessor, the Century of Invention. This is the Century of Discovery. The sixteenth century was a Century of Terrestrial Discovery; but this is the Century of Extra-Terrestrial Discovery. Already the immortality of the soul, or at any rate persistence after death, seems to be experimentally established, and now we realize upon the most convincing evidence that man is not alone on his planet; he is a citizen in what may prove to be an abundantly populated universe.'

Eminent men of science read Harold Rigamey's latest revelation of what science is doing in a mood of apoplectic fury. 'What are we to do about this sort of thing?' they said to their wives at breakfast, and their wives said: 'My dear, *what* can you do?' And there the matter ended. The mystical mathematicians with their expanding and contracting universes, relativity- exponents, and the like retired from the arena of popular attention like a small group of concertina players on the entry of a large brass band. An unprecedented mail informed Harold Rigamey of the successful opening of his campaign. His next

stage was to go on to ‘The Fantastic Connexion of Cosmic Rays and Human Mutations’ and then straightaway to ‘The Martian Genes’ and ‘The Martian Type’ and so told the whole story as we have already seen it unfolding in the mind of Mr. Joseph Davis, but with a richness of confirmatory detail altogether beyond our modest record of actualities.

§ 2

The reception of the astounding revelation was ample and inconclusive, and it afforded Professor Keppel considerable scope for his gift for bitter comment. Popular intelligence, the professor pointed out to the acquiescent Dr. Holdman Stedding, has long since ceased to attach any real importance to concrete statements except in so far as they concern football and cricket results, the winners of races, and (with caution and reservations) stock- exchange quotations. Outside this definite range of immediate rational interests it has achieved an almost complete toleration, an inactive indifference, to any statement whatever. ‘You may tell the public anything you like nowadays,’ said Keppel, ‘and it will not care a rap. It is not that it disbelieves; it is not that it believes; but that its belief apparatus has been overstrained and misused beyond any sort of reaction, positive or negative, to the things that it is told.

‘Consider,’ he expatiated, ‘the — we will not say contents — of the average human mind today; but consider the things that are lying about side by side upon that flaccid expanse of mentality. It has been told a beautiful story of Creation, the Garden of Eden and the Fall. It does not know whether that story is a fable, a parable, or a statement of fact, and manifestly it does not care. If Sir Leonard Woolley and Mr. H. V. Morton announced a joint discovery of Eden, raised a restoration fund, and provided tourist facilities at reasonable rates, the public would go in a state of inscrutable acquiescence and enormous numbers, to visit the ancestral garden-plot. And at the same time in the same brain, so to speak, this public has accepted a great mass of statement to the effect that it is descended, through something called Evolution, from gorilla-like ancestors. It would be

quite capable of visiting in the morning the veritable scene where six or seven thousand years ago, Eve, surrounded by all the latest novelties of Creation, her wedding presents, so to speak, accepted the apple from the serpent, and then of inspecting a caveful of fifty-thousand-year-old Neanderthaler remains in the afternoon. It has lost all sense of incongruity. It has lost all sense of relevance. It neither rejects nor assimilates nor correlates anything. It believes everything and it believes nothing.

'In effect,' said Professor Keppel, 'it does nothing about anything at all. There is no conceivable issue now upon which it can be roused to spontaneous action. If it opened its newspaper one morning and read that Christianity has been abolished, it would wonder what sort of pensions the bishops would get— "pretty fat, I expect" — and then turn over to see if the cross-word puzzle was an easy one. If it read that the queer noises it had heard in the night were the trumpets announcing the Resurrection of the Dead and the end of the world for tomorrow afternoon, it would probably remark that the buses and tubes were full enough as it was without all these Dead coming up, and that a thing of that sort ought to be held somewhere abroad where there was more room....'

In America the disclosure of the Martian intervention was received with bright incredulity. Rigamey's articles were syndicated everywhere and credited nowhere. It is a popular error Keppel insisted, that Americans are more accessible to ideas than the British. Notions indeed they are never averse to. Notions are different. A notion is something you can handle. But an idea, a general idea, has a way of getting all over you and subjugating you, and no free spirit submits to that. Confronted with an idea the American says: 'Oh, yeah!' or 'Sez you,' and the Englishman says: 'I *don't* fink,' or at a higher social level: 'Piffle — piffle before the wind.' These simple expressions are as good against ideas as the sign of the cross used to be against the medieval devil. The pressure is at once relieved.

But your American has none of the Englishman's ability to ignore. After having said his 'Sez you' or 'Oh, yeah' and killed an idea, your American is only too ready to make light of the corpse. His joy in caricature and extravaganza is as vast as his sense of reality is deficient. So that Harold Rigamey's revelations, relieved of

all terror of actuality and being vigorously syndicated, went widely and swiftly through the thought and phraseology of those quick-witted millions. ‘Are you a Martian?’ was on the cars within a week of the syndication of Harold’s last article and ‘Don’t appeal to my Martian side’ had become a conversational counter in circulation from coast to coast. A new caricaturist started a series of Martian cartoons in the *New Yorker* that caught on at once and were very widely imitated. The vaudeville stage was brisk rather than clever in taking up the idea. Along a thousand divergent channels flowed the fertilizing suggestion and evoked a weedy jungle of responses. ‘Dry Martians’ became the dominant cocktail. Hundreds of deeply preoccupied Negroes pranced and flung themselves about in the Southern sunshine in search of a real Martian Newstep. Thousands of industrious advertisement designers spent sleepless nights subduing the new idea in this way and that way to the varied uses of their calling. And Harold Rigamey turned his pen to other things.

§ 3

The only real attempt to deal with the coming of the Martians upon a serious scale was made on the British side, and it was made by no less a person than Lord Thunderclap, that great synthetic press peer. It was made against the advice of his most trusted associates and it failed.

Lord Thunderclap was one of the supreme successes of the journalistic and business world; he had become enormously rich and influential in a gigantic inaccurate way all out of nasty little periodicals, and he was quite intelligent enough to understand there must be something wrong about his headlong, unchallenged prominence. Both he and his slightly derisive rival and associate Lord Bendigo, deep down in their very bright minds, had that same sense of haphazard expansion and unjustifiable eminence; they could not believe, however much they tried, that in the long run the world would not call them to account; they had none of the innate assurance of royal personages and born aristocrats, and they were both haunted by the feeling that sooner or later, something hard,

stern, and powerful, a Sphinx, a Nemesis, would come round a corner upon them and unfold an indictment for immediate attention, asking them what they thought they were and what in the last resort they thought they were up to.

The mercurial Bendigo regarded that possibility with unaffected facetiousness but Thunderclap was made of less mobile stuff. He liked being the large massive thing he was; the longer he lived the more he wanted to believe in his own importance and feel that he was really true. The longer he lived the more he liked himself and the less could he bear that sense of a delayed but pursuing judgment. He could ill endure the unprotesting acquiescence of this world in him; the accumulated menace of its uncritical disregard; but even less now could he endure the thought that this toleration might end.

The dark other-world of insomnia added itself to his daylight existence. That awful Court of Inquiry without any definite charges, just asking what he was and why, sat there in perpetual unprogressive session, waiting — waiting for something. There was no hurry. Most terrifyingly there was no hurry. But what could they be saving up for him? Day after day he went about his large abundant life, being the great Lord Thunderclap — because what else on earth could he be? What else on earth could he do? The day passed into evening, evening to night, and so at last to bed. And then that insatiable question.... What net were they weaving?

The faces about him were polite masks. You challenged them: 'You were saying about me — ?'

'I said nothing, my lord.'

He told nobody of this increasing obsession, but the existence of his profound uneasiness was more or less manifest to most of his associates and subordinates. Was there something that had never been found out? They tried to guess at that. But nothing definite appeared, it was a dread at large. Evidently he feared men of science and knowledge, especially men who were reputed to be profoundly and exceptionally versed in political and social and economic affairs. What must they really think of his journalistic influence, his activities in party matters, his financial affairs? Were they just quietly letting him have rope, sewing him up unobtrusively? And he suspected the civil service profoundly. These civil servants, he

thought, knew more than was good for them already and they were always trying to know more. The word 'inspector' moved him to a pallid rage. 'More Inspectors!' was one of the shrillest screams in his multifarious publications. Nasty mean men, he insisted, these inspectors were, with sharp noses like foxes', needy dependants, and a passion for petty bribes; always peeping through keyholes they were, looking into windows, creeping up pipes, getting through gratings, weaving a net about all wholesome business enterprise. They had to be fought off. They had to be frustrated, denounced, caricatured at every turn. And all these Trade Union and Labour people wanting to know, perpetually wanting to know, and then, I suppose, interfere. And this London School of Economics! What were they putting together and plotting and planning there? What did they want to have a school of economics for anyhow? It was like marking the cards.

In Lord Thunderclap's mind socialism was another name for malignant investigation. He had no idea what harmless, disconnected, doctrinaire little creatures socialists are, and how limited an area of the social problem they have ever explored. He really thought they had a strong, clear plan for a workable human society all ready for use, a hard competent society, ready to thrust him and his like out of existence. At any time now they might spring it upon him. He fought wildly in the darkness against that persuasion, but it held him. He was probably the only man alive in England who believed in socialism to that extent.

In his perpetual attempt to materialize his terror he mixed up all these professors, civil servants, inspectors, socialists, sociologists (whom he regarded as a nastier variety of socialist), liberals — every sort of interrogator and critic — in a great jumble of hateful menace, the 'Intelligentsia,' the 'Lefts,' the 'Reds.' He imagined a worldwide hostile, incredibly subtle, incredibly far-sighted net closing about him. And he never really got them plain for a straight fight to a finish and have done with it. Never could he drag them into the light of open day. He knew that they were at it, at it all the time, conspiring, scheming, taking their orders, passing their messages, nodding, winking, giving their signals, working their mischiefs. They ramified everywhere. You never knew who was with them. They were Jesuits

today and Freemasons tomorrow. Even judges and lawyers might be scheming. Hard to do a deal with them. You were safe with no one.

All his partners and secretaries and editors knew those odd moments of his, when he would affect to look out of the window idly, and then spin round upon you with incredible nimbleness to scrutinize your face.

Or when he would lead you through a long rambling talk about Russia, about Germany, about China, to jump upon you suddenly with a handful of carefully premeditated posers, designed to wring the very plotting soul out of you.

Such was the large fear-obsessed mentality to which the disclosures of Harold Rigamey came like a torch to a hayrick.

Never for a moment when he heard it did Lord Thunderclap doubt the story. Not until he read about it in his own papers had he a twinge of doubt. It came as the embodiment and confirmation of his worst fears. He felt he had really known all about it from the very beginning. He carried Harold Rigamey off for dinner and the night to his suburban headquarters at Castle Windrow, Bunting Hayland, and thither he assembled by wire and telephone all his most trusted henchmen, tools, stooges, subordinates, intimates, Watsons, yes-girls, medical advisers, soothsayers, astrologists, stenographers, masseurs, soothers, and family connexions.

'The thing's out at last,' he said. 'Listen to him! Listen to what Rigamey has to tell us. We've been barking up the wrong tree. These Reds — Moscow — Bernard Shaw — New Dealers — Atheists — Protocols of Zion, all of that — mere agents. It's Mars that is after us. Listen to him. Mars! What are we to do about it? What are we to do?

'Everything we value in life. Cross and crown. Nation and loyalty. Morals, Christmas. Family lift. The Reds are just their front line. While we stand about here and stare at each other and do nothing, there they are working away, getting born, growing up, plotting, planning — one after another — these monsters. I ask you: Is nothing to be done?'

'Well, Chief' said Cotton-Jones, the archsoother. 'Everything has to be done. But it's got to be done in the right way. No need to tell *you* that.'

‘The whole world is in danger. Hideous danger.’

‘That’s too big for stop-press news. Chief, we’ve got to go into conference right away. Here and now. We’ve got to just hold the whole thing in silence, until we’ve organized a plan of campaign and a general staff. You said it, Chief, yourself, years ago. “The more urgent the crisis,” you said, “the more danger there is in hurry.”’

‘I said that?’ said Lord Thunderclap.

‘Yes, Sir. You said that....’

It was daylight before that assembly at Castle Windrow dispersed and Lord Thunderclap was safely put to bed. His sedatives were furtively doubled. And throughout all the offices and organizations which owed him allegiance, grave and weary men plotted guardedly with each other — no double-crossing mind! — against the call for action that would come to them when he awoke.

Cotton-Jones, toiling wearily up to his suite under the roof at headquarters, realized suddenly the mysterious sensitiveness of the Thunderclap system. Two small lift attendants stopped upon the second landing to exchange news, unaware of his presence in the middle elevator. The youngest and shrillest spoke without emotion.

‘Jimmy, you heard? The Chief’s nuts at last.’

‘Clean off it?’

‘Clean.’

‘Bound to happen sooner or later. What dislodged him?’

‘Them Martians....’

Now how had the little devils got hold of that?...

Throughout the most difficult ten days in their lives the entourage of Lord Thunderclap struggled to mitigate the impact of his full excitement upon the public. What he had in mind seemed to be some sort of world-wide witch- smelling for Martians everywhere. He swept aside every difficulty there might be in distinguishing them. You could tell them by the things they said and the way they behaved. You could tell them because instinctively you disliked them.... Not a massacre. Massacres were out of date. What was needed was a vast sanitary concentration of all these people to save our race (Lord Thunderclap) alive.

Rigamey had brought some entirely irrelevant facts about what are called Mongoloid children into the discussion, and Thunderclap

seized upon them as data for the first selection of victims in the world drive against the Martians. Individuals of this type should be at once arrested and secluded in protective isolation. There ought to be a human race-purity conference set up in permanent session. All the leading obstetricians in the world ought to be in it, with stimulating fees and unlimited powers.

Like to like. It was natural for the turbid stream of Anti-Semitism to contribute some richly helpful ideas to this fresh flow of anti-Martian animosity....

Cotton-Jones took his courage in both hands and withstood his master. We can't do this,' he said, with the Chief's programme in his hand.

'We can't do this? Then what on earth *are* we to do?'

'The public mind is not prepared for anything of the sort.'

His lordship raged up and down the room but Cotton-Jones felled him with the deadliest, most arresting assertion than an editorial assistant can use.

'It will fall *flat*,' said Cotton-Jones.

'This!?'

'It will fall *flat*.'

'We can't go on with this on our own responsibility,' he insisted, and Thunderclap knew that he was right. 'We must have authority. We must quote. We ourselves cannot seem to be bringing this out from the office. Merely from the office. Journalistic stunt, they will say. Yes, Sir. They will say that. Newspapers may lead but they should not appear to lead. We must seem to be responding to "publicly responsible, unquestionable appeals." *Your* words, Chief. Someone not ourselves, someone else, must make for righteousness.'

He shook the programme in his hand. He added a still more difficult assertion.

'And really — for a thing of this size — we must bring in other groups of papers.'

'I have had something of that sort in mind throughout,' said Thunderclap, after a stupendous pause.

He walked across the room. 'Perhaps I have been precipitate. I see things too quickly.'

He sat down to his desk and began to write down, strike out, and

tick off names. There were one or two great physicians on the verge of advertisement; they ought to give him something. After all he had done for them. No. Damn them, they wouldn't. One or two of the more pushful young bishops were still in the toady stage, still rather anxious to prove how serviceable and friendly they could be to any lord of publicity. They surely might be called upon to denounce this diabolical threat to mankind. He sent them urgent and embarrassing communications, held them up himself on the telephone, and found them as blandly evasive as they knew how. They knew very well how. He cast about for this great public figure and then that to shoulder the new burden. Gradually, as he sought, with diminishing success, among these great instruments of public stimulation, the pressure of his own initiative dispersed itself. Fatigue supervened. Violence deferred maketh the heart grow sick. Four, five, six days passed and nothing stupendous was done. In the life of Lord Thunderclap two days are as a thousand years. The bright surface of his great disclosure was dulled by familiarity. The preparatory Articles, announcements, and so forth became less and less a preparation and more and more like the wailing and booming of a receding school of ichthyosauri heard through the twilight of the past.

It came to him abruptly one night that he didn't care a damn now if nothing was done. The affair had evaporated. If nobody cared to stir a finger, the whole silly business might slide. The Martians might *eat* the world now so far as he was concerned. It would last his time — anyhow. What was the sense of being the one earnest energetic man in a world of unresponsive fools?

He called Cotton-Jones into his presence. 'You've been going too strong on this Martian stuff,' he said, and Cotton-Jones knew at once that the brainstorm was over. 'You've made it a bit too loud and brassy. The public doesn't want to hear about them in this serious way you've been putting it. They want it guyed. What the public won't hear about can't exist really. Circulation dies down and then where are you? Ease off on it. Guy it.'

'After all we have said!' reflected Cotton-Jones.

'Ease off on it. Make it kind of semi-symbolical — humorous and all that.'

‘I get you,’ said Cotton-Jones, trying not to look too glad. ‘I think I can manage to ease it off. Yes, it’s a damned good political nickname, Chief, whatever you like to say. You’ve never thought of anything better. Give “Highbrow” and “Brain Trust” a holiday for the next ten years. Let the Reds fade out. *Martians!* People will hate them from the word Go!’

§ 4

Mr. Joseph Davis stood at the upper corner of Trafalgar Square watching the westward flow of buses below. A number of them were carrying huge starry advertisement boards with a new inscription. He could make out three capital M’s but he had to look hard before he could read the intervening letters. They spelled out ‘Musical Martian Midgets.’

‘That’s how they see it,’ said Mr. Davis. ‘H’m.’

His eyes were lifted sharply by a challenging flash across the twilight blue. A sky sign took up the words in letters of raw red fire, ‘Musical Martian Midgets’....

‘And all the same,’ whispered Mr. Davis after some moments of silent reflection, ‘*they are here*.’

VIII. — HOW THESE STAR-BEGOTTEN PEOPLE MAY PRESENTLY GET TOGETHER

§ 1

‘So your Martians are coming after all, Davis,’ said Dr. Holdman Stedding.

‘I’ve given you my facts,’ said Mr. Davis, ‘a new sort of human being is appearing. Of that I am convinced.... I never said they were Martians.’

‘The name’s got into the story. And after all, you know — they may be.’

‘Why not the star-men?’ said Keppel. ‘*Homosideralis?* How would one say *Star-Begotten* as a specific adjective?’

‘One name seems to be as good as another,’ said Davis, affecting indifference. ‘Until we know better what they are, why trouble about the name? Let us stick to Martians.’

‘The newspapers have no doubt about it. Either there are Martians, they insist, or there is nothing.’

Davis shrugged his shoulders.

‘On the whole I wish this hadn’t leaked out to the press,’ said Keppel, crouching upon his arms over his mahogany and looking malignantly intelligent. ‘Marvellous how the press can make almost anything — unbelievable. What has the press made of it? First this Thunderclap boom. Then general derison. Then general disregard. Nothing stales so rapidly as a new popular idea. What have we now? General indifference. A few pathetic believers run about, half ashamed of themselves, and assert their faith by starting silly-looking little special periodicals and societies. I am told there are at least two pro-Martian societies in London, and three against. The people who produce that pink-covered journal called *Welcome* seem to be the chief. In America there are quite a lot of associations, I’m told, but

all small. Most of them have a tendency to amalgamate with occultists and mix up Mars with Tibet. Then a new type of delusional insanity has appeared. God Almighty, it seems, is out of fashion among our lunatics. They are all Martians nowadays and most of them are Kings or Emperors of Mars. What else has come out of your great disclosure? Ourselves — we *toughs*, who knew all along just how much there was in it, and were too wise to shout.'

He looked sideways at Davis from under his overhanging brow.

'You believe really — ?' asked Davis.

Keppel would neither assent nor deny.

'No one would believe what we in our bones feel to be the reality. We're not quite sure — but we feel it. We're not quite definite but a reality is there. It is unbelievable. So why incur suspicion and contempt by talking about it? Nothing is to be done. We cannot control what is happening. We cannot avert it. Here they come. Here we are.'

'I want to talk about it,' said Keppel. 'I want badly to talk about it.'

'I find myself thinking about it a lot,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding.

'I think now of nothing else,' said Davis.

It seemed to him that Keppel had got this Martian fever now almost as badly as himself. That grotesque, distorted dark face was flushed, and every gesture suggested the repression of a profound excitement But Keppel's resolve to control the stir in his imagination and to keep things as matter-of-fact as possible was very evident.

The three men were dining at Keppel's house for the express purpose of receiving and discussing the first results of Davis's investigations.

'Let's see how far we have got,' said Keppel. 'Let us try to disentangle as far as we can the pure guess-fantasy of an extra-terrestrial intervention, from the established realities that Davis has been elucidating. A new sort of mind is coming into the world, with a new, simpler, clearer, and more powerful way of thinking. That I think is manifest. It has already got into operation individually here and there and produced a sort of disorder of innovation in human affairs. But so far these new minds haven't got together for any sort of associated living. So far. They are hardly aware of themselves,

much less of each other. They are scattered about anyhow. All that, I think, seems to be established?'

Mr. Davis nodded assent.

These new types have made their presence felt, as yet, chiefly through discoveries in material science and mechanical invention. At this present stage they are too scattered and isolated for novel social inventions. That sort of thing requires extensive co-operations. It is on a different plane. These newcomers are dispersed; they are not appearing in bunches; they do not even know that they are a peculiar people; each one of them has been deeply embedded, so to speak, in the circumstances of his or her own birth. From birth they have all been presented with established views of the world and compelled to adjust their social behaviour to established institutions. Many no doubt have been completely baffled by the dogmatic unreason of the normal human arrangements in which they found themselves set. In — what shall I say? — in human affairs, they've never had a chance so far. But in regard to things, bits of glass, scraps of metal, springs and balances, they have not been encumbered to the same extent. There they have been able to think freely almost from the outset.

'That has been the opening phase. Nobody has ever tried to explain the immense advance in scientific knowledge in the past century and a half — but this does explain it. There has been a great outbreak of precise mechanical discovery and invention. That meant — that means — a necessary discordance in human affairs — scattered inventions everywhere, a great forward drive, a revolutionary drive in mechanical science and a relative lag in social understanding. There is an almost complete inability to make new ideas in the latter field *real*. That is a tougher proposition altogether. I think it is easy to explain why that should be so. But there is the reason why every one nowadays is contrasting our material progress with what is called — how do the bishops put it? — our ethical and social backwardness. A temporary phase.'

'But a damned unpleasant one,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding. 'When the superman makes an aeroplane and the ape gets hold of it.'

'Nevertheless — a *temporary* phase,' continued Keppel, holding to his argument with resolute tenacity. 'Because, as I say, to begin with, these Martians have been rare and scattered. But as they

become more numerous — and I assume that there is no reason whatever why they should not become more and more numerous — they will necessarily become aware of one another, and get into touch with one another. Such minds, following the line of least resistence, will gravitate to scientific work. They will note and classify mental types. This must lead almost directly to self-discovery. They will observe how they resemble each other and how they differ from the wimble-wamble of the common world. They will begin to know themselves for what they are.'

'A new chapter in history,' said Mr. Davis, contemplating it. 'And then?'

'Let us think this out for a bit,' said Keppel. 'I believe a considerable amount of analysis of what is coming is possible. I think myself we can already make a rough forecast, but I shall feel much more certain about that when I have put what I have in mind before you two. If I get away with it. It does seem worth while to ask a few fairly obvious questions.. What is going to be the next phase in this invasion? As these Martians multiply among us, they will, I assume, tend to crystallize out in some such way as I have indicated. They will develop a distinctively Martian view of life. They will begin to realize themselves for what they are, look for their own sort, feel their way towards a common understanding. They will emerge to social action in some fashion.... In what fashion?'

§ 3

'But first of all,' he said, 'I want to clear up a preliminary matter — of some practical importance.'

He concentrated on his hands spread out on the table before him. 'I'd like to put it to Davis. Here we have he says, a new kind of mind appearing in the world, a hard, clear, insistent mind. It used to appear at uncertain intervals. Rarely. It said: "Why not?" and it made discoveries. Now apparently it is becoming — frequent. Not abundant as yet but frequent. Well, what I want to know is, is this new kind of mind when it appears complete? Let me be perfectly plain about that. Certain genes making up the human mentality, we

agree, have been altered in this new type. These new minds are harder, clearer, more essentially honest — yes. But are they completely detached from the old stuff or are they in many cases a sort of half-breed and all mixed up with it?'

'I want to stress that half-breed idea. Are they so much human, human of the old pattern still, and so much — and only so much — clean Martian? So that one side of them is just the old system of self-regarding complexes, vanities, dear delusions — while the other side is like a crystal growing in mud? You see what I am after? It may not be true to talk as though we were dealing with human clay *vis-Ó-vis* with Martians. We are talking about human mud and against it we have to pit these partially liberated intelligences, still largely mixed with the old mud. All three of us have been in our various ways trying to get something like a real sense of what these new beings are. These new creatures—'

Keppel paused and looked at his hands. 'They are going to be very tragic creatures.... In many cases.... What do you make of it, Davis? Of the half- breed idea?'

'I haven't seen it like that yet. You see, I have been going about trying to find certain lucid intractable types. That was your suggestion, Doctor. I've certainly found them. I've been looking for a sort of difference....'

'You haven't thought of any other aspect?'

'No.... I haven't looked for resemblances, so to speak, in the difference,' he added after a pause. 'I've been looking for uncommon humanity; not for common humanity.'

'Well,' Keppel went on, talking chiefly to his intelligent-looking fingers, 'that half-breed idea opens up a whole new world of considerations. It banishes Thunderclap's nightmare of a lot of little active hobgoblins swarming and multiplying and desecrating our homes and everything that has made human life et cetera. In the place of that sort of thing we have to suppose an increasing number of individuals scattered about the world, who, so far at any rate, never seem to have had a suspicion that they are not just ordinary human stuff, but who find life tremendously puzzling, much more puzzling that other people do.... Now perhaps — it will be different....

‘As children, like any other children, they will have begun by taking the world as they found it and believing everything they were told. Then as they grew up they will have found themselves mentally out of key. They will have found a disconcerting inconsistency about things in general. They will have thought at first that the abnormality was on the side of particular people about them and not on their own. They will have found themselves doubting whether their parents and teachers could possibly believe what they were saying. I think that among these Martians, that odd doubt — which many children nowadays certainly have — whether the whole world isn’t some queer sort of put-up job and that it will all turn out quite differendy presently-I think that streak of doubt would be an almost inevitable characteristic of them all.’

‘That doubt about the reality of what they are told?’ considered Davis. ‘Children certainly have it. Even I....’

Keppel glanced at him for one half-instant.

‘Now,’ said Keppel, still addressing his hands, ‘before I go on with these problems of what these Martians are going to do to our world, I would like to put some rather penetrating questions to myself and — both of you. You don’t mind if I sort of lecture you? Or retail the obvious? I’m a professor in grain, you must remember.’

Dr. Holdman Stedding made assenting gestures and Davis remained obviously attentive.

‘Let us try and make this room an apartment in the palace of truth for the time being. About ourselves.... We are sane respectable citizens in a social order that gives us a fairly good return for the services we render it. We have adjusted ourselves — and pretty comfortably — to life as we know it.... Well....

‘I will ask a question and answer for myself first. Am I as easy about the validity of my mental processes? As I was when I was rising twenty? No. Since then we have had our minds washed out by a real drench of psycho-analysis. We are beginning to realize the complex system of self-deception in which we live, our wilful blindness to humiliating and restraining things, our conscious acceptance of flattering and exalting things, our tortuous subconscious or half-conscious evasions and conformities to social pressures and menaces. We take everything ready-made that we can

possibly find ready- made, and there are a thousand moral issues, public issues, customary imperatives, about which — it isn't so much that we conceal our thoughts and are hypocritical, as that we will not think about them at all. We will not have thoughts to conceal. We are shifty even with ourselves. Am I overstating our subservience to the world about us?'

'I don't think so,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding. 'No'.

Davis said nothing.

'We have been born and brought up in a social order that is now obviously a failure in quite primary respects. Our social order is bankrupt. It is not delivering the goods. It is defaulting and breaking up. War, pervading and increasing brutality, lack of any real liberty, economic mismanagement, frightful insufficiency in the midst of possible super-abundance — am I overstating the indictment?'

'No,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding with a sigh. 'No.'

'Quite a lot of highly intelligent people seem to be persuaded that we are heading for a world-wide war-smash — a smash-up of civilization they call it, and all that. You have denounced all that as blank pessimism, Mr. Davis.'

'Never mind what I have written,' said Davis. 'Sufficient for the present discussion — is the present discussion.'

'Well, then, I may say the outlook for our world is, to put it mildly, menacing and disappointing.'

Dr. Holdman Stedding put both his elbows on the table. 'For any farsighted people the output for humanity has always been menacing,'

'And not particularly now? Air warfare, germs in warfare, the entire aimlessness of the unemployed, dissolving social cohesion, the rapid disappearance of mental freedom?'

'Yes,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding. 'Yes. Perhaps — particularly now. For the things we value it is an exceptionally bad outlook.'

'A general effect of things going to pieces — of large lumps falling down. Subsidences. And what I find most terrifying of all — and that is where the grim outlook for these Martians of ours comes — the increasing ineffectiveness of any fine, clear thinking in the world. I don't know if things have shown themselves to you in the same light, but what impresses me most about the present state of the

world is the entire dominance of the violent, common mind, the base mind. It brutalizes. It brutalizes everything new and fine. Inventions. Our children. Either it expresses itself in stampeding mob action, revolutionary or reactionary — it is all the same in the long run — or else it embodies itself in some Hero — like this fellow Hitler — identifies itself with him and so achieves its vehement releases. Assertive patriotism, mass fear, and impulse to persecute — particularly the impulse to persecute — seem to be more dreadfully in evidence today than ever before in human affairs. Dreadfully and hideously. That's a question in your line, Davis. A question of historical estimates. Anyhow it is glaringly in evidence.

'We three sit here — lucky ones — we've got a sort of foothold. We seem comparatively safe. We've fixed up things for ourselves apparently. We may not feel quite so secure as we might have felt in Harley Street twenty-five years ago, but still we feel pretty secure. We are part of the intellectual cream of the world. And how much, I ask you, is it our world? How far dare we go out of this room and speak our minds about the things that are happening in the world now? How far dare we go even into the back corners of our own minds — with a bright light, with ruthless questions? Even you and I, Holdman Stedding, have been extremely discreet — and we are going on being extremely discreet — about this Martian business. We have our reputations to consider. We mustn't be extravagant. And so on. We are discreet even with ourselves. Do we let out what we really think about politics now, about all this bawling patriotism, about all this clammy, stale canting religiosity, about such institutions as the monarchy? Although we live here in a free country! A free country! So we are told. No concentration camps here, no inquisition, no exile, no martyrs. No visible means of restraint — and yet we are restrained. How far is our intellectual freedom here still ours, only because, as a matter of fact, we are too discreet to exercise it? Have we intellectuals here or anywhere any influence, any voice to arrest, divert, or guide this stampeding of crowds which we call the course of history — ?'

'Eh?' said Davis.

'These stampedes of crowds which we call the course of history.'

'Go on,'said Davis.

‘Suppose we went out, to as public a position as possible, and said plainly what we think of human affairs today?’

‘I suppose,’ said Dr. Holdman Stedding, ‘they’d begin by smashing our windows.’

He reflected. ‘The British Broadcasting Company would probably let a leash of babbling bishops loose at you. And then your students would make trouble. Your back-bench students.... I’m rather in a different position. My professional gifts give me a kind of Rasputin hold on one or two exalted families.’

§ 4

‘I have been thinking lately,’ began Davis, and halted. He had the phraseological unreadiness of the habitual writer.

‘You spoke just now of *stale* religion,’ he went on. ‘Such a lot of things in life now are stale. Out of date.... I agree....’

He felt his way forward with his argument. ‘I suppose — I suppose all the main working ideas that have held people together in communities have been getting out of date pretty rapidly in the last hundred years. Strange new influences have been at work — as we three at least are beginning to understand. But because human society is a going concern, the main working ideas have never been replaced. There never came a definite time to replace them. They have been used in new senses, made ambiguous, expanded, attenuated. Replacement was something too heroic altogether. But each time there was a patch-up there had to be fresh strains and fresh distortions. Old things got used for new purposes, and they did not stand the wear. So that — what shall I call it? — the social ideology — the social ideology has become a terrific accumulation of old clutter which now, simply through the wear and tear of terms misused, has come to mean anything or nothing. And to work less and less surely and safely.... Do I make myself plain, Keppel?’

‘You put what I think better than I could myself.’

‘I’m in entire agreement,’ said the doctor. ‘Go on.’

Mr. Davis pushed back his plate and folded his arms on the table, after the manner of Keppel. He spoke with care. He held on carefully

to his argument and both men watched him.

‘And you see, there is a vast number of reasonable practical people who — the more they realize the unsoundness, the rottenness, to put it brutally, of their ideological framework — the more they are, as one says, disillusioned, the more they are terrified at what may happen if this vast complex collapses....

‘*I* have been,’ he added after a momentary pause.

‘Practically,’ he amplified, ‘My life work so far has been bolstering up what I thought were still sound working ideas. I began to see clearly through my own motives — for the first time....’

Keppel sat back and put his hands in his pockets. It was plain he liked what Davis had said. ‘Here we are,’ he said, ‘in the palace of truth. And we find ourselves in virtual agreement that this world is as it were floating on a raft of rotting ideas, no longer firmly bound together, an accumulation of once sustaining institutions, customs, moral codes, loyalties, sapping one another, all so badly decayed and eaten away that in the aggregate they no longer amount to anything much better than a vast accumulation of driftwood — floating debris.’

‘We all seem to be agreed on that. And now these new creatures from outside, these creatures we call Martians, are coming aboard our drifting system. With their hard, clear minds and their penetrating, unrelenting questions stinging our darkness as the stars sting the sky. Are they going to salvage us? Shall we let them even if they can? And if not what is going to happen to them and this mental raft of a world?’

§ 5

‘Mental raft of a world,’ said Dr. Holdman Stedding, trying over the doubtful phrase. ‘Mental raft of a world!’ Keppel looked at his friend with an expression in his twisted dissimilar eyes, half defensive and half affectionate. ‘Well, isn’t it?’ he said.

‘What’s wrong with it?’ said the doctor. ‘Don’t answer me: “Everything.” Be specific. What’s wrong with the raft? What’s your case, Keppel? I’d like to have it clearer.’

‘Well,’ said Keppel, and gathered his forces. ‘It’s a half-born mind as yet. Yes — yours, mine, and everybody’s. Half bom like a very young foal, encumbered by the foetal membranes it can’t shake off yet. It is blundering about, half blinded and squinting. All our philosophies, the best, are no better than that. Especially—’

‘Especially?’

‘There is this secondary world which has worked its way into the language everywhere, a sort of fold in the membrane that has established itself in a thousand metaphors, got itself most unwarrantably taken for granted by nearly everybody. Other worldliness, the idea of a ghost world, a spirit world, side by side with actuality. It overlaps and lies beside reality, like it and yet different; a parody of it done in phantoms; a sort of fuddled overlap; a universe of imaginary emanations, the consequence of congenital squint. Beside every man we see his spirit — which is not really there — beside the universe we imagine a Great Spirit. Whenever the mental going is a bit hard, whenever our intellectual eyes feel the glare of truth, we lose focus and slither off into Ghostland. Ghostland is halfway to dreamland, where *all* rational checks are lost. In Ghostland, that world of the spirit, you can find unlimited justifications for your impulses; unlimited evasions from rational obligation. Thafs my main charge against the human mind; this persistent confusing dualism. The last achievement of the human mind is to see life simply and see it whole,’

(‘That boy at Gorpel,’ reflected Davis.)

‘But we’re getting it straighter now,’ said the doctor,

‘We’ve got new influences coming in,’ said Davis.

‘But that isn’t all,’ said Keppel, ignoring those new influences. ‘There are other things wrong with the silly creature.’

‘*Homo sapiens*,’ whispered the doctor.

‘*Homo superbus*, I suggest’

‘Let’s have the full indictment.’

‘The creature hardly ever becomes adult. Hardly any of us grow up fully. Particularly do we dread and shirk complete personal responsibility — which is what being adult means. Man is the boy who won’t grow up, but he grows monstrous clumsy and heavy at times all the same, a Goering monster, a Mussolini — the bouncing

boys of Europe. Most of us to the very end of our lives are obsessed by infantile cravings for protection and direction, and out of these cravings come all these impulses towards slavish subjection to gods, kings, leaders, heroes, bosses, mystical personifications like the People, My Country Right or Wrong, the Church, the Party, the Masses, the Proletariat, Our imaginations hang on to some such Big Brother idea almost to the end. We will accept almost any self-abasement rather than step out of the crowd and be full-grown individuals. And like all cubs and puppies and larval things, we are full of fear. What is the Sense of Sin but the instinctive fear of an immature animal? Oh, we are doing wrong! We are going to be punished for it! We are full of fears, fears of primal curses and mystical sin, masochistic impulses to sacrifice and propitiate and kneel and crawl. It paralyses our happiest impulses. It fills our world with mean, cruel, and crazy acts.

'And what isn't purely infantile in us is at best early adolescent. Our excess of egotism! We all have it. It is a commonplace to say man is as over- sexed as a cageful of monkeys, but sex is only one manifestation of his stupendous egotism. In every respect he is insanely self-centred — beyond any biological need. No animal, not even a dog, has the acute self- consciousness, the incessant, sore, personal jealousy of a human being. Fear is linked to this — there is no clear boundary here — and so is the hoarding instinct. The love of property for its own sake comes straight out of fear. This terrified, immature thing wants to be safe, invincibly safe, and so, by the most natural transition, fear develops into the craving for possessions and the craving for power. From the escape defensive to the aggressive defensive is a step. He not only fears other beings, he hates them, he flies at them. He fights needlessly. He is cruel. He loves to conquer. He loves to persecute.... Man! What was it Swift said? *That such a creature should deal in pride!*'

'*Homo superbus*, eh?' said the doctor. 'But listen, Keppel. Is he really so bad as all this? Just a scared, self-defensive, immature beast squinting at the world because he has never yet learned to look straight? And hopeless at that? You experimental psychologists have been cleaning up our ideas about the human mind very fast in the past thirty or forty years. Very fast You have been making this

damaging — well, this salutary — analysis of our motives and errors — our queer little ways. Yes.... You couldn't have said a word of this forty years ago.... In my profession we say a sound diagnosis is half-way to a cure. Indicating the human mind is like sending a patient to bed for treatment. Maybe the treatment begins at that.'

'Well?' said Keppel.

'Isn't the time almost ripe for a new education that would clear the stuff from the creature's eyes, stiffen his backbone, teach him to think straight and grow up? Make a man of him at last?'

Davis shook his head. He spoke rather to himself than to the others. 'Man is what we've got. Humanity is humanity. Starry souls are born not made.'

§ 6

'In guessing about these coming people,' said Keppel, 'there is one thing we have to keep in mind. A hard, clear mind does not mean what we call a hard individual. What we call a hard man is a stupid man, who specializes in inflexibility to escape perplexity. But a hard, clear mind is a clear crystalline mind; it turns about like a lens, revealing and scrutinizing one aspect after another, one possibility after another, and this and that necessary correlation. But anyhow, let us do our best to imagine how this — this infiltration of intelligence is going to work. No mighty revolutionary conspiracy — no. They will begin to say things, question things, point things out. How will people respond?'

'Dislike, certainly,' said the doctor.

'At first, I think, they will encounter what one might call hostile neglect. They will be said to be indecisive and ineffective. They will, you see, be up against the Common Fool, the Natural Man in either of his chief forms, either dispersed in mob form as the Masses, or concentrated as a Boss. But the new kind of man will be neither, as the phrase goes, leftish nor rightish. Then, to be colloquial, where the hell *are* they? They won't be available for either side in the storm of silly wars and civil wars, the new Thirty Years' War, massacres, revenges, and so on, Pro-Red, Anti-Red, into which we are plainly

drifting. They won't count.'

'That should give them a spell for getting together,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding.

'Not perhaps for very long. People will realize that these neutral things they say, these impartial suggestions they make, have a certain intrinsic power. They will be producing not fighting ideas but working ideas. Next, especially when the Boss side of the Common Man is in the ascendant, will come an attempt to annex their prestige and abilities in the interests of partisan governments. They will be asked to label their ideas *for* the Boss or *against*. If they refuse to be annexed, and they will refuse to be annexed, they will be said to be purely destructive, contented with nothing; accused of critical treachery. There are bad times ahead for uncompliant sane men. They will be hated by the right and by the left with an equal intensity.'

'Then how,' asked Dr. Holdman Stedding, 'will they ever gain any sort of control of the world?'

'How will sanity ever gain any sort of control of the world?'

'Yes. If you think that is an identical question.'

'I am not a prophet,' said Keppel. 'I am discussing probabilities. But given this constant seeping of clearer intelligences into our world, may not this sort of thing happen? May not all these clearer intelligences, confronted with the same world, confronted with the same problems; may they not, without any sort of political or religious organization, arrive at practically identical judgments about them — put similar values on the same things? Without much confabulation among themselves. I cling to the belief that for the human brain, properly working, there is one wisdom and not many. And if it is true, as Davis thinks, that one characteristic of this new type of mind is its resistance to crowd suggestions, crowd loyalties, instinctive mass prejudices, and mere phrases, then, without any political organization or party or movement or anything of the sort, may not these strongminded individualists everywhere begin doing sensible things and refusing to do cruel, monstrous, and foolish things — *on their own?*

'We assume they are going to be very capable, self-reliant people, able to do all sorts of things. Quite a large proportion of the

scientific, medical, mechanical, administrative positions in the world are likely therefore to fall into their hands as they spread and increase, and their ways of thinking and acting are likely to infect all sorts of subordinates, workers and so on, associated with them. Yes. You have suggested already, Doctor, that one might possibly Martianize even ordinary people by a saner education....

'Well, then suppose presently you find an aviator in a bomber to whom it occurs to ask: "Why in the name of blood and brains am I doing this cruel and idotic task? Why don't I go off home again and drop this on those solemn homicides at G.H.Q.?" And then without further hesitation suiting the action to the thought. And when he comes down, suppose one or two men on the ground agree with him and are not in the least indignant? And in fact stand by him. Even the Roman gladiators had the wit to revolt. The Christian name of the new fighting experts we are training for the air in such quantities may prove to be Spartacus.

'Suppose again you have a skilled worker doing some very delicate work upon a big gun and it comes quite clearly into his head that it will be better for the world if that gun does not shoot. Will it shoot? Or it is a chemist manufacturing explosives. That sort of thing will certainly become quite a problem as the Martians multiply. Your blustering demagogue or your blustering dictator feels ill and needs an operation, and there is either a disastrous patriotic quack who will make a mess of him anyhow, or some quiet, self-reliant, but incalculable man with knowledge and a needle or scalpel, able to kill or cure. Why should he cure?

'The dictator will glare his cheap overpowering personality at him as far as his illness permits. Much a Martian will care. He for his part will be entirely unmelodramatic. It is your world against mine, he will say, and he will do what he thinks best for the world, and keep his own counsel. Power would be with the experts already, if only they had enough lucidity to take it. And it needs such a small step forward in lucidity.'

'But this is — sabotage!' said Dr. Holdman Stedding.

'The only reasonably reply to unreasonable compulsion is sabotage.'

'And you hint even at assassination.'

‘I don’t hint. *Hint* indeed! I speak plainly of assassination — if shooting mad dogs or rogue elephants is assassination. Assassination is the legitimate assertion of personal dignity in the face of dictatorship. It is not merely a right; it is a duty. A sacred duty. A dictator is an outlaw. He has outlawed himself. He exists and he degrades you by his mere existence. He imposes filthy tasks upon you. He can conscript you. He confronts you with a choice of evils. It is surely better to kill your dictator than let him make you kill other people — directly or indirectly. You can tell him: “You be damned” if you are strong enough; if that stops him, you can be merciful to him; but if you are not strong enough, you must kill. What else can you do? As a law-abiding man?’

‘Awful,’ said the doctor.

‘Plain common sense.’

‘No end of your Martians will get shot — if this is to be their line.’

‘They will be shot to good purpose,’ said Davis.

‘Shooting them will do the old order no good,’ said Keppel, ‘There will always be more of these cool-brained gentlemen now. Trust those cosmic rays now they have begun. Trust the undying intelligence behind our minds. In a fools’ world sane men will have a bad time anyhow; but they can help wind up the world of fools even if they cannot hope to see it out. One sane man will follow another; one sane man will understand another, more and more clearly. A sort of etiquette of the sane will come into operation. They will stand by each other. In spite of bad laws, in spite of foolish authority.’

‘A revolution — without even a revolutionary organization?’

‘No revolution. Something better than a revolution. A revolution is just a social turnover. A revolution changes nothing essential. What is a revolution really? There is an increasing disequilibrium of classes or groups, the centre of gravity shifts, the clumsy raft turns over, and a different side of the old stuff comes uppermost. That is all there is in a revolution. What I am talking about is not a revolution; it is a new kind of behaviour; it is daybreak.’

‘The Enlightenment,’ said Davis, trying a phrase.

‘*Which is coming*,’ said Keppel with sudden access of emphasis, ‘Martians or no Martians....’

‘But, my dear Keppel,’ said the doctor, ‘isn’t this stuff you are talking just anarchism?’

‘It would be anarchism, I suppose; it would mean “back to chaos,” if it were not true that all sane minds released from individual motives and individual obsessions move in the same direction towards practically the same conclusions. Human minds just as much as Martians’. Rational minds don’t disagree so much as people pretend. They have to follow quite definite laws. We misunderstand. We don’t pause to understand. We let life hustle us along. Every tyranny in the world lives — and such systems have always lived — in a perpetual struggle against plain knowledge and illuminating discussion. We are living — let us face the facts — in a lunatic asylum crowded with patients prevented from knowledge and afraid to go sane.’

He paused and pushed the cigar-boxes towards his guests. ‘A world gone sane,’ said Davis.

‘Planetary psycho-therapeutics,’ said the doctor. ‘A sane world, my masters — and then?’

IX. — PROFESSOR KEPPEL IS INSPIRED TO FORETELL THE END OF HUMANITY

§ 1

'I wish, Keppel,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding, after a reflective pause, 'I wish you would say something about the world these starry folk of yours — of ours — are likely to make here. In my way, as you know, I'm an amateur of Utopias and Future Worlds — and, God, how unpleasant they are! They come tumbling into my collection now, a score or so every year. I sometimes wish I hadn't begun it. But if these star-men of yours do gradually spread a network of sanity about the world and stop what you call the Common Fool — Demos, *Homo pseudo-sapiens* — from ravening, grabbing, and destroying — just by barring his way, refusing to implement his silly impulses, and telling him plainly not to, then — can we, even in general terms, imagine the sort of world they are likely to make of it? What *would* a world of human beings that had, as Davis has put it, *gone sane* be like?'

'Let us admit,' said Keppel, 'that this is attempting the most impossible of tasks. The hypothesis is that these coming supermen are strong-witted, better-balanced, and altogether wiser than we are. How can we begin to put our imaginations into their minds and figure out what they will think or do? If our intelligences were as tall as theirs, we should be making their world now.'

'In general terms,' persuaded Dr. Holdman Stedding, gently obstetric as ever. 'Try.'

'Well, perhaps, *in general terms*, we may be able to say a few things at least about what their world will not be. You — what do you find in all these Utopias and Visions of the Future of yours? I suppose you get the same stuff over and over again, first of all caricatures of current novelties — skyscrapers five thousand feet high, aeroplanes at two thousand miles an hour, radio receivers on your wrist-watch; secondly, discursive minor novelties along the

lines of current research; thirdly, attempts to be startling in artistic matters by putting it all in an insanely unusual and extravagant *decor*; and, finally, odd little fancies about sex relations and a scornfully critical attitude towards the present time. But these people of the future are invariably represented as being — I put it mildly — prigs and damned fools. World peace is assumed, but the atmosphere of security simply makes them seem rather aimless, fattish, and out of training. They are collectively up to nothing — or they are off in a storm of collective hysteria to conquer the moon or some remote nonsense of that sort. Imaginative starvation. They have apparently made no advances whatever in subtlety, delicacy, simplicity. Rather the reverse. They never say a witty thing; they never do a charming act. The general effect is of very pink, rather absurdly dressed celluloid dolls living on taboids in the glass lavatory. That's about true isn't it?'

'Lamentably so,' smiled the doctor. 'Nobody seems able to do much better. Some of 'em try to put it over portentously. Some make faces as they do it. But whether you preach about the Future or sneer about the Future, it remains, all the same; an empty sack that won't stand up.'

'Alternative to these progressive Utopias,' said Keppel, carefully not looking at Davis, 'the future world relapses into the romantic stench of a not very carefully preserved past?... You don't believe either story of course; none of us do; but the trouble is that we have no material in our minds out of which we can build a concrete vision of things to come. How can we see or feel the future until we have made the future and are actually there? All the same—'

'Yes?'

Dr. Holdman Stedding was amused to see his friend descending into the pit in which so many a prophet had preceded him and perished.

§ 2

'If we stick to general terms. Some things we may be sure of. At least — so far as my intelligence goes. This new starry race into

which our own is passing is going to be clearer in every way — clearer — less moved, that is, by herd influences. Apart from their natural aptitudes they will have escaped all the mis-education and mental contagion that today nobody escapes completely. They will not only be abler people in themselves but they will be better educated. They will co-operate to make the world a world of peace. About that all sane minds must think alike. They will keep the peace. That Pax Mundi will not be any sort of repressive peace. Why should it be? At a certain stage in the — in the *mental treatment* of our world, there may have to be a certain amount of fighting and killing, police hunts for would-be dictators and gangsters and so forth, but I doubt if intelligences more and more able to control the genes will need to eliminate undesirable types by force. Sanity will ride this planet with fine hands. No spurs. No sawing at the bit.

'Certainly there will be a World Pax. That is to say, except for the obstacles of Nature and the vagaries of climate, a man will be free to go anywhere he pleases and exercise the rights and duties of a citizen wherever he goes. An abundance system of economics and not a want system of pressures and exactions. Everywhere your needs will be satisfied. You will take not thought for the morrow so far as food, comfort, and dignity go. No burden of toil in that saner world, and very little work that is not pleasant and interesting. All that is possible even today. To suppose the world saner is to suppose such things will be brought about. One is merely expanding the word "sanity."

'But when it comes to visualizing the new world the difficulties increase. To attempt that is in fact trying to anticipate all that will happen generation after generation in millions of brains, each one of them not only better than my own but better equipped. They will make a sort of garden of the planet. That seems reasonable. Probably they will leave some of it a wild garden. They will readjust the balance of life, which swings about nowadays with some very ugly variations. Who wants to see locusts swarming over cornfields, or weed-choked rivers flooding and rotting a forest district, or a plague of brown rats, or a lagoon crawling with crocodiles, or pastures smothered acre by acre, mile by mile, under blown sand? Making a garden of the world doesn't mean bandstands, fountains, marble

terraces, promenades; it doesn't even mean the abolition of danger, but it does mean a firm control of old Nature in her filthier moods. And it does mean intelligence in economic life. No sane enterprise would give us ugly factories, hopeless industrial regions, intolerable noises, slag-heaps, overcrowding here and desolation there. Sanity is the antithesis of all that. It's the ape has made this mess with our machinery. Today we are still such fools that none of us can solve the complicated but surely quite finite riddle of private property and money. That beats us — just as the common cold beats us — or cancer. It tangles up on us and chokes economic life. It inflames our instinct of self-preservation to an incessant acquisitive warfare. A little matter of distributing our products and we are defeated.

'Serenity. Certitide means serenity. You may say what you like about this world to come, but rest assured that it will be not only a richer but a more beautiful world, as various as it is today and with all the beauty of land that is intelligently loved and cared for. Green slopes under trees. Glimpses of a proud and happy river, Mountains and the clear distances of great plains. I can see it all like that. Do you realize that in this world today there is hardly such a thing as an altogether healthy full-grown tree?

'And then about the way they will live, while still sticking to general terms, we can say something. We can be sure of certain things; The universe is rhythm. Throughout. There is a music of the atoms as well as a music of the spheres. Every living creature is an intricately rhythmic thing. It rejoices in rhythms corresponding to the complexity of its sensibilities. These masterful people with their control over materials, over all the forces of the world and over their own nervous reactions, are not going to starve their aesthetic impulses. It is impossible that they should not have music and dancing in the normal course of their lives; that they should not have vigorous and beautiful bodies and that they should not be richly and variously clad. The variations will be subtle; you will have none of the clamorous grotesqueness of a fancy-dress ball. It is ridiculous even to try and picture that sort of thing now. Their music may not be our raucous bang, bang, bump stuff, their decorations may not be many repetitions of noughts and cross, whirls and twiddles, but trust them nevertheless for music, architecture, and decoration.

‘And their social life? They are likely to be highly individualized, personally more varied, and so they are likely to find much more interest even than we do in assemblies, parties, and personal encounters. People who don’t find other people exciting will go into retirement and their sort will die out. Savages like gatherings; people like them just as much today; there are no intimations of any decline in social pleasure. I suppose these inheritors of our world will be what we call lovers, with keen appreciation of the beauties both of character and body. I suppose that, being born of women and living interdependently in a large society, they will want and find satisfactions in companionship, friendship, partnership, and caresses. Maybe they will pass through an emotional adolescence and have their storms of individual possessiveness, inflamed egotism, intense physical desire. The individual will repeat something of the romantic experiences of the race. That’s still sound developmental theory; isn’t it, Doctor? Why anticipate a bleak rationalism in these things? Blood that does not circulate festers; imaginations that are not stirred decay. But these people will be going through these experiences in an atmosphere of understanding and freedom, with a better morale about them, a lovelier poetry to guide them, a pervasive, penetrating contempt for ugliness, vanity, and mere mean competitiveness and self-assertion. How can we, who live in a whirl of sexual catch-as-catch-can — I score off you and you score off me — bounded on the north by what frightened people call “purity,” on the south by the *tout nu* ballet, on the east by a fear of offspring, and on the west by a sewer of envious ridicule, how can we imagine what the sexual life of sane men and women can be like?’

‘Phew!’ said the doctor.

‘You disagree with that description?’

‘I wish I could. But you draw with a heavy line, Keppel.’

‘Everybody wants to love,’ said Davis suddenly, ‘and everybody makes a mess of it. Every one. Suspicion. Misunderstanding....’

It was one of those sayings that leave nothing to be said.

§ 3

‘You do give us,’ said the doctor, with the air of opening a new chapter, ‘some idea of these starry ladies and gentlemen, fine-living and full-living, who may inherit our earth. We don’t see them directly, I admit, but when you talk, Keppel, it is as if we saw and heard the grace and colour of their brightly lit movements, dimly reflected on a distant wall. But they go about their business out of sight of us. Their business? Business today is mainly getting the better of each other and getting things away from each other. All that apparently is to end. No Wall Street, no Exchange, no City, no Turf, no Casino. What will their business be, Keppel? What will occupy them? What will they be doing? Can you say anything of that?’

‘You make me feel like the sculptor’s dog trying to explain his master’s life to the musician’s cat.’

‘But — in general terms.’

‘Yes. I think one can even say something about that. Every living organ has in it an urge to exercise, and the greatest pleasure of a living thing comes through a satisfactory use of its powers. Our successors will have incessant minds. Even we poor creatures of today use our minds and bodies in games and exercises and all sorts of rather feeble amateurisms, as much as we can. We hate being unemployed.

‘But men who are keenly interested in scientific or creative work are very little addicted to games. Your games-player is a pervert who fiddles about with his mind because he is unable to use it, good and hard, for a definable natural end. Hunting was a great game in the past; and war, when you get down to it, is only a monstrously expensive and destructive hunting. For want of better imaginations. War will go when boredom goes....

‘But you need not worry to find jobs for the new-comers now. These heirs of ours will have their impulses to exercise skill, to discover and impose new patterns upon life, much more powerfully developed and much more intelligently adjusted. They will be enormously interested by research and by making and controlling things. They will — it seems to be to go without saying — be much more *alive to things*. Immensely — I really mean immensely — amused. Research and artistic exploration are full of surprises. They will be constantly coming on unexpected things. They will be busy,

laughing people. Nobody can know the extent of the unknown, but the interest we find in life is only limited by our physical and mental limitations.... The saner the merrier.'

Keppel paused and screwed up his face. 'It is curious,' he said, 'that what I am saying now would arouse an intense antagonism in a great number of people if they could hear me. Here tonight we three are more or less in accord, because we have been travelling the same road together. Insensibly we have trained ourselves and each other. But bringing a human mind up against the living idea of progress is like bringing a badly trained dog into a house; its first impulse is to defile the furniture.

'Stupid people are offended by anything they do not understand or cannot master. They become spiteful and want to destroy it and banish it from their thoughts. I suppose if there were no guardians and watchers in our picture galleries, there is not a masterpiece that would not be defaced maliciously within a year. And probably defaced — filthily.

'But even contemporary man is emerging from that jealousy of what he cannot subdue. I am bound to believe our heirs will always find plenty to do and that this world community will be growing in knowledge, power, beauty, interest, steadily and delightfully. They will be capable of knowledge I cannot even dream about; they will gain powers over space, time, existence, such as we cannot conceive. Not even in general terms. There you are. In general terms — that is what I see before us. Like a great door beginning to open. Sanity coming, sanity growing, broadening power, quickening tempo, and such a great life ahead as will make the whole course of history up to the present day seem like a crazy, incredible nightmare before the dawn. That is what I believe in my bones,'

§ 4

'And that greater world,' said the doctor, 'really exists for you, Keppel? In such general terms as you use. But it exists?'

'Practically.'

'Away ahead — not so hopelessly far perhaps?'

‘Integral to this scheme of space and time.’

‘One might even, in certain moods, Keppel, feel a kind of nostalgia — ?’

‘One might,’ agreed Keppel compactly. And then: ‘My God! one does.’

‘And that music of theirs we shall never hear, that perfect health they will have we shall never enjoy, those enhanced senses — they are not for us; the whole world cared for lovingly, the very beasts subdued and trained by kindness and every living man and woman with an intelligible purpose in life. That distant world. Have you never had a glimpse of that sane world of yours — in anything more than general terms? Nothing concrete with colour and substance, Keppel — not even in a dream?’

‘Yes. I do dream. I dream that I dream about it. I confess it. Often. And when I awake it escapes me, it vanishes.... Dissolves into the turbid current of present things and is lost altogether.’

For a moment Keppel spoke without restraint.

‘Lost altogether,’ he said. ‘Leaving not a wrack behind.... Well, something is left. A sense of life frustrated. A sense of irreparable loss. Oh! The life that might be — the life that may be — the life that will be! This life that is not for us! This life we might have had, instead of these mere compromises and consolations which make up life today.’

‘Keppel,’ said the doctor, ‘let us be plain about this — you are foretelling now the end of common humanity. No less. This would not be human life. This new world is something beyond all ordinary experience, something alien.’

‘Yes,’ said Keppel.

And then he said something that startled Davis.

‘That is where *my* hate goes,’ he said. ‘I hate common humanity. This oafish crowd which tramples the ground whence my cloud-capped pinnacles might rise. I am tired of humanity — beyond measure. Take it away. This gaping, stinking, bombing, shooting, throat-slitting, cringing brawl of gawky, under-nourished riff-raff. Clear the earth of them!’

‘You do not even pity poor humanity?’

‘I pity it *in* myself and everywhere. But I hate it none the less. I

hate it....'

§ 5

Davis sat deep in thought.

'Keppel,' he said abruptly. 'Do you *believe* all this — about these coming people? Or are you just talking? Tell me that clearly. Are you sure the world, after a few more troubled decades, a troubled age or so at most, will go sane?'

Keppel hung fire for a moment. Then he said: '*No*'

'H'm,' said Davis, and then with a flash of intuition: 'But do you *disbelieve* it?'

Keppel smiled the smile of a friendly and yet mischievous gnome. '*No*,' he repeated with equal conviction.

'And that also,' said Dr. Holdman Stedding, after a moment's deliberation, 'is my position.'

X. — MR. JOSEPH DAVIS TEARS UP A MANUSCRIPT

§ 1

One day in October while that table talk of Keppel's was still very vivid in the mind of Mr. Joseph Davis, G. B. Query, his Literary Agent, called to see him and discuss his prospects for the coming year. How was the great work getting on about which Davis had spoken a year ago? Was it sufficiently in shape to negotiate? What had he called it after all? The Glorious Succession? Sword and Cross? The Undying Past? Our Mighty Heritage? Grand Parade of Humanity?

G. B. Q. couldn't remember. G. B. Q. had heard nothing about Davis for months. He was quite out of touch.

Davis stood defiantly in front of his study fire.

'I've not looked at it for half a year,' he said.

'I've decided at last — I'm not going to finish it. Ever. It's on the wrong lines.'

'But you had done a lot of work upon it. You even let me see some passages. They seemed to me quite a splendid beginning.'

'It got more and more splendid. It became like an altar screen of saints and heroes. It became like a cathedral. It became like the great grotto at Han. It became a sort of compendium of all the epics and sagas and all the patriotic history and all the romance and all the brave stuff human beings have told themselves about themselves since the very beginning of things. It took on more colour and more. It blew out like a magnificent bubble. And it burst There's heaps of it in these drawers.'

'*But*—' protested Mr. Query. '*The Pageant of Mankind*'

'The bankruptcy,' said Davis compactly.

'You of all people! *You're* not joining the pessimists!?'

'Have you never heard of the Martians?'

'But that I thought was just a pseudo-scientific mystification.'

'It's a fact. Our world is in liquidation. We are played out. And they are coming, they are coming now, to succeed us and make a

new world.'

Mr. Query considered this announcement. It was not his business to measure the mental balance of his clients. Davis was not joking. He believed what he was saying, simply and entirely.

'Maybe you will write something about that?' said Mr. Query.

'I belong to the bankrupt system,' said Davis, 'one of the inconvertibles- -one of the encumbrances. Gradually as our agreements fall in I mean all my books to go out of print.'

Mr. Query opened out his hand helplessly. On the spur of the moment he could summon no argument against this immense withdrawal.

'A new world is coming,' said Davis, 'and I have tied myself to the old. I know better now, but there it is.'

Query roused himself to say something more, but he knew the case was hopeless even while he spoke. He didn't argue now. He lamented.

'Just now,' he said. 'When people need encouragement They feel so doubtful. Where they are going? What is happening? Even about the Coronation? Perplexing issues everywhere. Armament? After the Peace Ballot! America too. Profoundly unsettled. And now you too! Your book would have been a great success — a heartening success. A certainty. It would have sold like hot cakes. Even H. V. Morton would have had to look to his laurels....'

He stood up. He shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

'It is a very great pity,'

§ 2

Davis showed his visitor out and returned to his study. For a time he stood on his hearth-rug staring at nothing. Then with a certain deliberation he unlocked various drawers and took out a number of folders. He arranged these carefully on his writing-desk and contemplated the accumulation. He opened one or two and read passages. He grimaced, pushed his chair back a foot or so, turned aside from his work, and fell into a profound meditation.

The great book was dead.

It was stillborn — an abortion. He would never publish any of it.

'And I wrote that stuff,' he reflected. 'I *wrote* that. Only a few months ago....

'I've done with it'

He repeated Query's words aloud. He mimicked his manner. 'It would have sold like hot cakes ... A great success. A certainty....'

He discovered a new streak in his own composition. What was it in him that had turned now against successfulness? he asked himself. What was it in him that was making him thrust himself contrariwise to his own reasonable disposition to go with the swim? What had divided him against himself? He realized quite vividly that people were eager beyond measure to be told that all was right with the world. Never had the market for reassurance, for brave optimism, been so promising as in these frightened years. It was true as Query had said that the piled MSS before him represented a sure success. His phrase-making mind struck out: 'I've done with lullabies. Let them wake up as I am doing....

'Wake up to what?' he asked and started another train of thought.

Suddenly he felt very small and feeble and lonely, and it seemed to him that his universe, his immense bare modern universe, said to him: *Well?*'

He felt that for a moment, he must leave that challenge unanswered. A desire to go to his wife and talk to her arose in him.

He found her waiting to give him his tea. She smiled a silent welcome. 'So you saw Query?' she said.

'I told him the great book was off.'

'I thought you might do that.'

'I haven't touched it for ages.'

'I know.'

He sat down on the sofa and found there a book she had put down on his entry. He picked up the slender volume. It was one of his earliest successes in the heroic style, *Alexander, or Youth the Conqueror*.

'You don't often read me, Mary,' he said.

T've been reading a lot of you lately.'

'Why?'

'Because — I'm no good at talking, dear, and I want more and

more to understand you.'

'Latterly I've been trying to understand myself.'

'I know that,' she said, and poured out his tea.

He turned over the pages of the book. 'I wonder what you make of this....

'If you were really a properly cultivated woman, Mary, instead of being a wild, natural, poetic thing out of Lewis and Glasgow, you'd reel off a yard of trite criticism straightaway. But you, being you, sit there, too wise to chatter. Because for you, you of all people, it would be an incredibly difficult thing to say, truly and gently, what you think of me. But that book puzzles you. Well, it puzzles me too now....

'Mary, I want to talk to you. I'm frightfully troubled — in my mind.'

'I've known that. I know. It is something about these Martians. I don't understand. But I feel it there.'

'Tremendous things, Mary, are happening to the world — incredible things. It is time I said something. These so-called Martians — you have seen foolish and inexact things in the papers. You do not realize how close it comes to us, how nearly it touches us. It means something new in the world is being born again, Mary. And strangely.... I cannot tell you everything. But I have been drifting all my life, and all the time I have drifted, this tremendous thing I speak of has been happening to the world. The world has swung round with a sort of smooth swiftness into a new course. How can I tell you? I was deaf and blind.... Now I see....'

He felt his great explanation was impossible, for the present at any rate.

'I want to rest for a time. I want to think.'

'I have known your work was worrying you,' she said. 'Dear, I've known that. I have felt you wanted a rest.... Whatever I can do to help you....'

'Bear with me,' he whispered and felt he could tell no more.

'I must rest, dear,' he repeated. 'I must think things over. I must get things clearer in my head. I must make new plans.'

§ 3

He walked to the door of his study and she followed him. He stared at the files of the abandoned opus and with her at his side went across the landing to the nursery,

He surveyed his sleeping son for a while and then let his eyes wander about the neat, bright room.

‘That’s a fine big rubbish basket,’ he said abruptly.

She thought that a queer thing for him to say.

‘It’s a good basket to bundle things into when they get too much in the way,’ she admitted. ‘I bought it yesterday.’

‘It’s a great basket,’ he agreed and seemed to forget about it.

He returned to his study and sat down there among the piled manuscripts. Mary after a thoughtful moment went downstairs. When she came upstairs again she went to look at him in his study but she found he had gone back to the nursery. There she discovered him seated in the nurse’s armchair with that fine big rubbish basket he had admired before his knees. On a chair at his side was a large pile of manuscript and this he was taking twenty or thirty sheets at a time and tearing, tearing into little fragments. He was facing the cot. It was as if he was tearing the paper at the sleeping child,

‘What are you doing?’ she asked.

‘Tearing it up. Tearing it all up.’

‘*The Pageant of Mankind?*’

‘Yes.’

‘But there was such good writing in it.’

‘No matter, nothing to the writing that will come.’

He pointed to his son. ‘He will do better,’ he said, ‘He will do better. I’m tearing up the past to make way for him. Him and his kind — in their turn.’

‘No one can tear up the past,’ she said.

‘You can tear up every lie that has ever been told about it. And mostly we have lied about it. Mythology, fantasy, elaborated misconceptions. Some of the truth is coming out now. But it is only beginning to be told. Let the new race begin clean.’

‘The new race?’ she questioned.

He went on tearing and thinking while he tore,

Should he tell her what he knew she was? Should he tell her what their child was? No. The creatures must find themselves out in their own time. They must realize in their own fashion the reason for their instinctive detachment from this old played-out world. Maybe she was on the verge of that awakening. But it must come by degrees.

He glanced up for a moment and then averted his eyes from her grave scrutiny. He took up another handful of sheets and began to tear them.

'Every generation,' he quibbled, 'is a new race. Every generation begins again.'

'But every one,' she said, 'is always beginning.'

'No. It has taken me half a lifetime to free even myself — even to begin to free myself — from religious falsehoods and from historical lies and from tradition and slavish carrying on with the patterns of past things. Even now am I sure that I am free?'

'But you have begun!'

'I doubt,' he said, 'whether I and my sort are made for fresh beginnings.'

'But what else are you made for?' she asked. 'You of all people! Look even at this that you are doing and saying now!'

And then she did a wonderful thing for him. She could have done nothing better. She came across the room to him and bent down over him and brought her face very close to his. 'If I could help you....' she whispered.

'You see, dear,' she said, in a low, hurried voice, with both hands on his shoulders, 'I know you are terribly troubled in your mind — bothered with new ideas that crowd and crowd upon one another. I know you are worried — even about these Martians in the papers. I know that. I wish I understood better. I'm slow. I don't keep pace with you. If I could — ! If only I could! I feel very often I don't get what you are driving at until it is too late, I make some flat reply. And then you are hurt. Darling, you are so easily hurt. That imagination of yours dances about like quicksilver. Sometimes I think — you seem hardly to belong to this world...'

She had a freakish idea.

'*Is it that?*' she said.

She moved round to look him in the face. 'Joe! Joe, dear! Tell

me....'

Would the jest offend him? No. She stood away from him and put out a finger at him. 'Joe! You aren't by any chance a sort of fairy changeling? Not — not one of these Martians?'

He stopped tearing the scraps of paper in his hand. A sort of fairy changeling? Not one of these Martians? He stared at this new, this tremendous idea, for a time. '*Me!*' he said at last. '*You think that of me!*'

The miracle happened in an instant.

A great light seemed to irradiate and in a moment to tranquillize the troubled ocean of his disordered mind. The final phase of his mental pacification was very swift indeed. At a stroke everything became coherent and plain to him. Everything fell into place. He had, he realized, completed his great disclosure with this culminating discovery. His mind swung round full compass and clicked into place. He too was star-born! He too was one of these invaders and strangers and innovators to our fantastic planet, who were crowding into life and making it over anew! Throwing the torn scraps into a basket and beginning again in the nursery. Fantastic how long it had taken him to realize this!

'*Of course!*' he whispered.

His mind had gone all round the world indeed, but only to discover himself and his home again in a new orientation. He stood up abruptly, stared at Mary as though he had that moment realized her existence, and then slowly and silently took her in his arms and put his cheek to hers.

'You were star-begotten,' he said, 'and so was I.'

She nodded agreement. If he wished it, so be it.

'Starry changelings both,' he said presently. 'And not afraid — even of the uttermost change.'

'Why should one fear change?' she asked, trying hard to follow these flickering thoughts of his. 'Why should one be afraid of change? All life is change. Why should we fear it?'

The child lay on its side in its cot in a dreamless sleep. It scarcely seemed to breathe. The expression of that flushed little face with its closed eyes was one of veiled determination. One small clenched fist peeped over the coverlet. Afraid of change? Afraid of the renascence

to come?

Never, he thought, had anything in the world looked so calmly and steadfastly resolved to assert its right to think and act in its own way in its own time.

THE END

THE CAMFORD VISITATION

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The Unexpected Voice

THE story of the Camford Visitation begins quite suddenly in the dining-room of Holy Innocents College. Four or five of the Fellows had assembled for breakfast, there was a guest of the Senior Fellow and there was of course the Master. There was nothing remarkable and certainly nothing sinister or disagreeable about the visible scene. It was — as people say — brightly matutinal — though why anyone should ever use that detestable word is difficult to explain. There was no suggestion at all of occult influences or unseen participation. The company was cheered by a bright coal-fire and protected from it by a vast glass screen. The wistaria on the garden wall outside which separates the domains of Holy Innocents from the garden of the Warden of University was brightly sunlit and at its glowing best.

The Master was talking at his guest.

Talking at a guest was a habit with him. He was grey and leathery and wrinkled about the face, he had a large nose and a variously baggy neck in which his voice reverberated and was enriched, his mouth was wide and wayward and dropped a little and his eyes beneath his grey eyebrow thatch were bright and brown and wicked. The guest was in fact a New Zealander but the Master had conceived an idea that he was an American full of intellectual unseemliness, presuming on the impertinent endowments of his fellow-countrymen to have opinions in matters far above his quality and erudition. Anyhow he looked modern and neat and unscholarly — and he passed opinions. He did pass opinions. The Master had never got over the gross disloyalty of the War of Independence and blamed it for practically everything that had happened since.

"Beautiful old wall," the guest had said, pausing, his ham and eggs in hand, midway between hot plate and table and staring out of the window. "Your Camford walls are wonderful."

"We *need* high walls," said the Master.

There had been a certain sense of strain about the table-talk. The academic weather was unsettled and even into the large comfort of Holy Innocents the disturbance had penetrated. Projects were afoot in

Camford that the Master manifestly disliked intensely. One of the fellows present was an archaeologist, one of those tiresome creatures who dig and dig beneath the foundations of our classical culture, and the other was an exploring ethnologist, an unbookish stray, who treated the disgusting habits of Papuans, the shameful speculations of Dr Freud and the extravagancies of Dr Jung as suitable material for theorization about early Greek life. Early Greek life was beautiful and sacred, the Gods and fauns were gentlemen who ought not to be spied and pried upon; old Triton blew his wreathed horn, and that was that; the less you went into details about it the better. It seemed to the Master that these younger Fellows had bit the hand that had reared them. Recently both of them had favoured two monstrous new proposals for setting up strange schools, one in modern industrial and commercial history — no doubt, the Master sneered, with a professor or so of permissible adulteration and prize-coupon giving — and the other in human ecology, in which mankind was to be studied as though they were rabbits or guinea-pigs or lemmings, and much good would that do anyone. Birth-rates and emigration and statistics. An invasion of laborious claptrap on an unprecedented scale, the Master reiterated: "Laborious claptrap. We had better import a few Americans to show us how," said the Master.

This guest before he apprehended the tension in the air had been actually asking questions, at once ignorant and exasperating, about these matters, and the Master had already strung a few epithets. It was possibly with the idea of creating a diversion that the guest had expressed his aesthetic appreciation of Camford. But the Master's reply had jerked things back again.

"We are a beleaguered fastness," he said. "True scholarship lives here, Sir, on the defensive. The Philistine rages without. We need these walls.

"Maybe they will hold," he said, making his voice reveal something of its deeper nuances. "Maybe."

The pause encouraged him to go on.

"It was the Germans, those disastrous people, who first discovered that slag heaps and by-products might also count as learning, but I doubt if we can blame any one race or nation in particular for setting dumps and dustbins above the treasure cabinets of scholarship.

Crudity is in the spirit of the age. We make war for raw materials. We live by paper money, canned food and substitutes for learning. There is a positive antagonism to any crystalline thing. In South Africa they corner diamonds and hide them away. Everywhere pure gold is buried. They take it out of mines to put it into vaults. That University affair they are building in London, that glorified mechanics' institute, is all made, they tell me, of a sort of mineral nougat, lavatory style, no taste, no dignity — quite suitable, *very* suitable there — for shop-boys and night schools. It's the dictatorship of the half-educated we are under. We are being endowed, Sir, and told what to know and teach, by the unholy wealth of ironmongers and the overblown profits of syndicated shop-keepers. We certainly need our walls here, Sir. We need them badly, every wall we have."

And then it was the Voice spoke.

It said very clearly and distinctly: "Half-educated? Now how can you measure education and divide it into halves and quarters? What do you *mean* by education?..."

It is to be noted that the first impulse of everyone present was to turn towards the space between the table and the window. It was as if someone had come into the room and stood there and spoken. Everyone had either been watching the eloquent workings of the Master's face folds or looking shamefacedly at his eggs and bacon and sausages or what not, and now by a common attraction they all turned to look at —

Emptiness!

Two of the college servants stood in the doorway beyond and to the left of that talking piece of space, but they were both as incapable of that clear enunciation as of piping like a nightingale or barking like a dog.

Then the eyes of the company came back to the Master and the guest.

"You said, Sir — ?" said the Master, leaning forward on his elbow.

"I said nothing," said the guest.

He spoke clearly and precisely but unless he was fitted with a double system of vocal organs he was certainly not responsible for

the curiously penetrating intonations they had just heard.

Because later when they came to compare notes there was a general agreement that there was something in the colour of the voice that was not quite human. What that difference was they found it difficult to say. “Steely” was one word used, and another was “luminous”. But upon the subtle inhumanity of it they were all agreed.

They questioned each other mutely. Had they really heard it? Was there an element of hallucination in their apprehension? Had they located it properly? The youngest fellow got up briskly and went to the open window and scrutinized the space below the sill. Nothing but innocent lavender and antirrhinum. No lurking golden-voiced undergraduate there. The comparative ethnologist was moved by this to look under the table. The college butler came forward to assist him.

“Did you hear a voice, Martilow?” asked the comparative ethnologist.

Martilow backed out from under the table and knelt up interrogatively.

The comparative ethnologist repeated his question.

“Yessir. It seemed to me, if you ask me, Sir, to come from—”

He got up and went back to the space between window and table, stood and then with an air of the most delicate discrimination, put out his left foot and tapped the faded carpet. “*Here,*” he said.

“Lift up the carpet,” said the archaeologist, and the servants set about it with brisk curiosity.

But there was nothing under the carpet.

Mr Trumber's Experience

AT first no one who heard the voice in the dining room of Holy Innocents College seems to have talked very much about it. The Master said nothing further — nothing whatever. He looked suspicious and menacing, at large, and for the rest followed the normal routines of his life. He was not going to give himself away. Over him, as over all eminent dons, hung the Fear of the Bright and Sportive Undergraduate. Dons who pray, and some do pray, pray always to be preserved from Hoaxing and Impersonation. If hoaxers could speak invisibly in his most sacred presence maybe they could hear and watch. The other fellows felt very much as the Master did and the guest was quick and sensitive enough to realize that discretion best became him.

He had already assimilated enough of the Camford atmosphere to realize that a voice that could shout in Holy Innocents College "What is Education?" was as outrageous as one that would demand sexual instruction from a meditation of nuns. He tried to banish all memory of that incongruous moment from his mind and so for a while did the others.

But Martilow got in a plumber that very afternoon and went with him all over the building in a futile search for wires and speaking-tubes.

If nothing further had happened, the interruption would probably have sunken down into complete forgetfulness and left not the faintest mark upon history. It would have become one of those things that could not possibly have happened. But in the next few days a number of trivial occurrences laid the almost impalpable basis of a belief that something or somebody, unknown and unseen, was present in Camford, as a voice, as a slight but palpable pressure, mental rather than bodily, as a faint stir and draught during a lecture, as a deeper shadow in the shadows that waited and watched. Many of these incidents went unrecorded, a few had the passing recognition of an exclamation, some were at last spoken of. And then more.

Presently they were being talked about, not simply mentioned but talked about.

The second recorded instance broke cover in a conversation between little Trumber of Clayfoot College and his congenial gossip the vicar of St Hippolytus.

"Are you free this afternoon?" said Trumber.

"What is it?" asked the vicar. "You look bothered."

"I want to get some fresh air. I want to clear my head. I've slept badly. I've had an — an exhausting night. Something — something is worrying me. Let us walk out to Cramber Meadows and get tea at Chuck's Hill Farm as we used to do in the old times."

The vicar reflected upon the sacred duties of the day. "I can be with you by a quarter to two," he said.

Until they were well out of the town and over Puntingdon Bridge, their conversation was disconnected and trivial. "Those meadows are to be the new experimental station for animal psychology — if Foxfield gets his way."

"Not laboratories?"

"Kind of zoological gardens."

"What next?"

"You may well ask. A sort of Ruskin College for dogs and chimpanzees. *A la Pavloff*."

"Howling all night."

"I don't doubt it."

"As if Camford had not enough insomnia!"

"That's bothering you again?" asked the vicar.

"I had a bad night last night."

"You tried that soup bromide stuff I suggested?"

"No. It wasn't, as a matter of fact, my ordinary sleeplessness. It was something —— . Bream, you are one of those people who dabble a little in psychotherapy?"

"I do my best to know something about it. I regard it as part of my calling. In fact — I am writing about it. At least I am accumulating notes."

They strode on in silence for a couple of minutes.

"Something queer happened last night," said Trumber and in spite of the encouragement in the vicar's "Yes?" got for awhile no further.

At length in a fragmentary way, with considerable obstetric assistance from the vicar of St Hippolytus, Trumber produced his

story. He had, he explained, been hearing from Rexwill the ethnologist, about the voice in the dining-room of Holy Innocents and Rexwill and he had gone on to discuss what sort of reply one *could* make to such a question as "What is education?"

"Naturally we were silent," said Rexwill.

"It is almost like asking 'What am I?'" said Trumber.

"If one had answered it," said Rexwill opening a new line, "I wonder if that voice would have gone on talking."

"Pity someone didn't try."

"We were all too taken aback, and then, you know, it seemed to evaporate."

"It?"

"Whatever it was."

They speculated in a rather futile fashion about the voice, what it was, whence it came. "It must be in space and time," said Rexwill, "it must be producing material waves in material air or we couldn't hear it."

"A sort of Invisible Man," said Trumber. "There are a thousand reasons why an Invisible Man is impossible," said the scientific Rexwill. "Visual purple of the eyes. Food. Dirt. So forth. It's something — *subtler* than that."

"I wish I had been there," said Trumber. "You don't think — perhaps the sound wasn't on the air at all — merely in your ears? Or rather in your brain?"

"Martilow heard it. The scout with him heard it. I have never suspected either of *them* of brains. And — it came definitely from a point in space."

"Where there was nothing," said Trumber.

"Where there was nothing."

After this conversation with Rexwill, which occurred after dinner in the Clayfoot smoking-room, Trumber explained to the vicar that he had felt restless and had gone for a walk round Carshary alone. To think it out. He said he found something very disturbing in this story — more disturbing than was reasonable and natural. Possibly the idea of a disturbing challenge was already germinating in his mind. His mind was an uneasy one, addicted to almost impalpable activities. It was a calm night but he no longer felt that that evening

calm had any profundity. Behind it, ready now to become vocal at any time, lurked a threat of interrogation. He had taken his walk to think things out but he got nothing thought out. His mind was too intent upon what he would do if he found himself challenged — for example during his lectures.

Trumber's subject was English literature, a poorly but earnestly attended course. He dealt in taste and judgment. He was one of those who teach us how to appreciate poetry and prose and when to learn it by heart and recite it and say Oh and Ah! and when to shake one's head at it discouragingly like a 'bus conductor who is proffered a doubtful coin. He taught how to distinguish what was truly great from what was meritorious and what meretricious. He taught how T. S. Eliot was really *it* and why Rupert Brooke wasn't, and what was *chic* in poetry and what was quite *demode,* and the proper tones and phrases for a snort of disapproval or a sick ecstasy of appreciation. He was building up a new school of literary criticism, more finely fastidious than any that had ever gone before, in which he taught that what is generally regarded as third-rate is really first-rate, that what is commonly accepted as first-rate is really very trite and vulgar, and that the chief aims of literary effort are superiority, exasperation and obscurity. His school he called the Sensitives. He was the quintessence of the intellectually genteel, though that word would have crucified him. He was all for conceits and secondary and tertiary values. He hated primary meanings as he hated primary colours. His criticism was aloof from life, but since literature, alas! has to be about something, he reflected upon life. He was all against what he called this "so-called progress". Progress that was not "so-called" did not exist for him. He lived for revivals and restorations. He was sharp set against machines, newspapers, films, suburbanism and any plain sort of successfulness, good or bad, in the world. That an adequate university and educational organization should have initiated, controlled and corrected these developments which he found so undesirable, had never and probably could never have entered his head. He snapped at them and barked sharply at them and taught kindred souls to bark at them, an intellectual Pekinese.

He was a small, slender, downcast man with exophthalmic eyes behind thick glasses, a bulging forehead, a look of extreme obstinacy

about his shoulders; he gesticulated with long tentacular hands that looked bleached, and he spoke rapidly and wetly. It gave him a sense of almost divine power to put down the mighty from their seats and exalt little chaps as unimportant as himself. It gave his followers all the warm satisfaction of a cult to realize how quintessential was their little classroom and how wrong the outer world. He would knock Milton all round the room, so to speak, and lay bare the self-educated errand-boy vulgarity of Shakespeare, Hardy or Dickens. These were his great hours and his soul was exalted and his face flushed. And when he was not lecturing he would sit and write himself into authority in a little lemon-covered monthly magazine which was also very reassuring. Yet he was sufficiently aware of the case against himself to feel that a sudden Voice asking questions of an elementary sort might be extremely embarrassing. And with this oddly disturbing thought very busy in his mind he went up to bed, went to sleep and presently drifted up towards consciousness again, answering the challenge in a dream.

At least, he told his friend, it had seemed at first to be a dream. It was more or less of a dream.

He was lecturing in the smaller theatre in Clayfoot; or rather it felt like that, except that on one side the room had no wall but, after the convincing absurdity of dreams, opened between pillars on a confused landscape that looked like lawns of printed newspaper and gardens of budding and opening books. And his audience stretched away into this garden and sat on garden chairs, and it was exactly like his usual small select audience of poetic and critical embryos who aspired to become bright, artistic, indecent, reactionary writers, Communist, Fascist, Anglican or what not, except that it also included a number of faces of grateful dead departed writers he had resuscitated and rueful living writers he had decided were dead and literary hostesses and rich patronesses who might subsidize the lemon-covered magazine and suchlike persons of taste, and other faces, enigmatical faces, at which he wanted to look and yet couldn't look for fear he might lose his thread, and they were all being overwhelmingly and magnetically attentive to his fine discriminations, his subtle transpositions of values, his eccentric eulogies and his fresh, bright, outrageous detractions.

Usually he loved lecturing. It was the reward and compensation of his life. But now in his dream he was no longer happy. He lectured on with the usual stuff — but now in fear. He perspired through his discourse, because he knew, as one knows in dreams, that the Voice was near at hand.

And it began. He raised his voice, he raised his hand, but the Voice spoke through his lecturing as a trumpet speaks through chatter.

"What is this literature you are talking about?" it asked. "What is this gathering? What in the name of Time and the Stars do you think you are doing here?"

"I certainly had an answer ready," Trumber said, recounting his experience to Bream, the vicar of St Hippolytus. "It was exactly what I had expected. I had thought of an answer, several answers, already, but — you know the nightmare quality — they wouldn't come. 'This is a dream,' I said, and awoke with a dry rattle in my throat. That dream audience, those fantastic gardens — left not a wrack behind. I sat upright in my bed in the darkness of my bedroom. Sweating. Stiff with that exaggerated cold terror only dreamers know."

He stopped short.

"Just a nightmare," the vicar hazarded.

Trumber pressed his lips together and shook his head quickly.

"No?" said the vicar.

"*No,*" said Trumber.

"Tell me."

"*The Voice went on,*" said Trumber in a whisper.

His warm flushed face, his magnifying spectacles came close to the vicar.

"You mean?"

"*The Voice went on....* It was still there. In my room. It wasn't a part of my dream. On the contrary. It was the Voice that had made my dream, and it was still talking to me."

Bream scrutinized his friend.

"No," said Trumber. "It was no hallucination. It was a clear, firm, rather metallic voice out of the air in the half-light between me and the window."

"What was it saying?" asked Bream after a pause.

“It was demanding — well not exactly demanding — asking me with a sort of cool civility why I had got these young men and women of mine into that lecture theatre and what I thought I was doing to them. What was all this about poetry that was the right sort and poetry that was all wrong? What did I mean by poetry? No, no. What did I *mean* by it? In relation to biological reality? Yes, he said that, — in relation to biological reality? Biology! Had this literature a function? Or were I and my group making a little limited conspiracy about values? To hearten each other. And set a fashion. He said, he actually said, that criticism as I conceive it, is a self-defensive conspiracy in appreciation that has practically no importance in the universe at all. A freak of response. In fact a pretence.

“I felt I had to do something to justify myself. I stood up. I stuck out a pointing finger. As though I could see the Thing. I summoned all my strength. ‘Who are you?’”

“And what did it answer?”

“‘First ask yourself ‘What am I?’. For so far as I am concerned, I am beyond your understanding.”

“That wasn’t much.”

“No. That wasn’t much. But then it went on — crude irrational stuff really, but at the time the Voice was so clear, the sentences so sharply cut, that it carried a kind of conviction. Bream, he did actually talk me down — alone there in the darkness. His voice is a stabbing voice, a knife. I tried to dismiss him by a wave of the hands — you know my gesture-like this.” He flapped his tentacular hands like a dusting-brush. “But I couldn’t lift my hand. Out here over the tea-cups in the sunshine I get back to Camford and the graces and distinctions and subtleties of life, my values are restored, my school becomes a reality again, but there — with him — it was different. Bream, it’s astounding how sometimes a dim bedroom can seem larger than the visible universe, stars and comets and all.

“‘Literature,’ said he, ‘should be a part of man’s attempt to take hold of life. You make it a little fiddling with the aesthetic incidents of life. It should rise in masses to transcendent efforts. It should be the solvent glory of reality, the flux of life. The greatness of its occasions dwarf you and so you hate and belittle its greatness. What is literature without magnanimity? You teachers are set here at

Camford to be the captains of the human mind. Fine captains! You — you particularly I mean — are like a captain who takes his chronometer to pieces to make a clockwork mouse.'

"And so on, *ad libitum*, for quite a long time. Just insults. Anyone can say things like that. Obvious they are, and from the critical standpoint of no value at all.

"'I protest,' I shouted.

"'I protest. I protest,' louder and faster.

"'Refinement,' I said. 'Delicacy. Cultivated appreciation. Whatever else Camford has done or not done it has kept out the Philistines. Even if you try to poke this Voice of yours in here, we will not listen to you. Camford is Camford. We have never listened here to this sort of thing. We never will.'

"And then, Bream, I found myself in the room alone. In a moment he had gone. Quite suddenly he had made an end and gone. And old Philbertson in the room above was bumping on the floor. So I guess, what with my shouts and that voice we had been making a pretty considerable row. And that's the story."

"That's all?" said Bream.

"Practically all. Except—"

"Yes?"

"The room was aching with... a sort of positivist doubt.... What do you make of it, Bream?"

"Something quite simple," said the vicar of St Hippolytus after a judicial pause. "The projection of a long-standing conflict in your subconscious between the aesthetic pretentions of your criticism and your suppressed sense of its lack of spiritual values. I have long wanted to discuss this with you. I am glad of this occasion. Forgive me if I am a trifle technical and if I seem to reflect upon you a little. But this is exactly what I am dealing with in my forthcoming book *Doubt from a Physico-Psycho-logical Standpoint.* In everyone, in everyone, even in God's holy saints, there is an undercurrent of adverse self-criticism in the subconscious. There is an interrogation — an opposition to whatever direction you have given your life. Which may emerge during seasons of trial. St Anthony for example — as Luther would have us believe — exaggerated his fear of sensual appetities to the extent of giving them physical form. St

Augustine witnesses to a similar Protestant uprising in his being. In the good we call this opposition Doubt or Temptation."

The vicar of St Hippolytus was now fairly launched upon a long elaborated theme. He was just ready for this opportunity. He paid no heed to the fading interest in Trumber's face and pose. When Trumber showed signs of interpolating anything he raised his voice.

"You see," he continued, "unsureness is integral to human life. The mind would have no play without it. In sinners as in saints, it is equally in evidence and still more so is it the case with those who, like yourself, are well disposed but fall short of complete righteousness. Then it becomes, to use the good old terminology, the Voice of Conscience. Now, as I shall show in my book — for you know we are gradually assimilating all the best of modern materialism — whatever they put up against us we take in, — as I shall show in my book, all through the ages, in the troubled minds of intelligent men, these subconscious doubts and urgencies assume an hallucinatory physical quality, take the form of Visions, as in the case of St Anthony, or still more frequently Voices. Most frequently Voices. But the reality is within."

Trumber's love of lecturing was only equalled by his hatred of being lectured to. His face had assumed a sullen expression and now suddenly he interrupted.

"I heard that voice. It is a real voice. It is about the world."

"Forgive me, Trumber! I am here as your mental healer. You were dreaming just as much when you stood up in your room as when you were lying down. I assure you. And I ask you seriously to consider what that voice was saying to you. Is this literature of yours *correlated*? Have you not been disregarding spiritual values for aesthetic and what one might call *social* associations — ?"

"I tell you I heard a real voice."

Bream waved his smiling face from side to side, ineffably satisfied by his interpretation.

"You and your school go back to the long-neglected literature of the seventeenth century.

But not in one respect. The religiosity of Donne for example was intrinsic and profoundly sincere. It was the outcome of a real rebirth.

It was not in the least imitative. But have you ever asked yourself whether your religiosity—"

"That Voice wasn't any sort of self-criticism," Trumber contradicted. "It was something from Outside bent on destroying my self-confidence. An attack...."

"But, my dear man, I know better."

"Wait till he talks to you."

"I suppose today," the vicar continued relentlessly, "we know infinitely more about space-time than we ever did before. Something — something in our dimensional orientation has changed. I have assembled the evidence for that in my book. An extraordinary convergence. The effect is to bring the subconscious nearer to the surface, so that everywhere, everywhere, the internal oppositions in men are becoming more acute. Everywhere, everyone is being subjected to abnormal mental stresses."

"Oh let's get back," said Trumber rudely, rising to his feet....

The vicar stared and stopped short. Then shrugged his shoulders and stood up also.

"Bill, Miss, please," said Trumber. "Thank you. Keep the change...."

They returned side by side towards the dreaming spires of Camford, but a silence had fallen between them. Trumber spoke only once and that was as they crossed Puntingdon Bridge.

"It was a real voice," he said. "As real as you." And then rather needlessly, "*Much* more real."

Bream replied by a gesture of his hands and shoulders.

Further argument was impossible.

Later on Bream published this book from which he had quoted so freely. But he had changed it very considerably. The title had become *Extra-Terrestrial Disturbances of Human Mentality.* He enlarges upon the idea of an upthrust of the subconscious through some sort of space-time dislocation. He makes it the main thesis of his work. Many of his phrases must be read to be believed. The "orientation of the spiritual plane in multi-dimensional space" or "the Time-Factor in Justification" is just plain sailing to him. But to no one else I am afraid.

No wonder the stuff infuriated Trumber. It was in a different field

of affectation altogether from the one he worked so industriously to establish.

Extra-Terrestrial Disturbances of Human Mentality has not sold very extensively but it has added greatly to the vicar's prestige. There is talk of making him a bishop. In the Middle Ages they would have burnt him at the stake.

In the Cramb Meadows

THESE are the first two intimations of the Visitant to Camford. The third also depends upon the word of a single individual. It is the word of Scott-Harrowby the Hooker Professor of Latent History, and curiously enough it is at once the most detailed and convincing of all the recorded dualogues with the Visitant. But it had one thing against its entire credibility. Scott-Harrowby told nobody about it until some weeks after the Visitation had become a common topic. He was a man already suspect of imagination, invention and irony. One or two undergraduate rags are still remembered against him. At the best his evidence is to be treated as second-class matter.

It has to be realized that side by side with the plainly authentic stories — or at least reasonably authentic stories, on which this narrative is based, a considerable apocrypha grew up before many weeks were out, and did much to confuse people's minds. But Scott-Harrowby manifestly had no desire to mystify or defraud. His speculative imaginative mind, he admits, had been exercised profoundly by the problem of how a bodiless voice could be heard in a roomful of people and at the worst he worked out that explanation either in the form of a waking dream or of a dream so vivid that it incorporated itself with his waking memories as real. His story is that he had gone for a walk beside the Cramb and where the woods came down to the river's edge about half a mile beyond Chuck's Hill Farm, he found a felled tree and sat down on it and lit a pipe. And then — and this is very peculiar among the accounts of the Visitant, — he believes he felt the tree pressing upward against him. "It was exactly," he says, "as though someone, somebody fairly substantial, was sitting down at the other end."

He sat quite still staring where this heavy nothingness was presumably seated.

Scott-Harrowby is under the impression that he began the conversation. He thinks he said "*Well?*"

The Presence spoke almost as soon as he did. "Are you what is called a don?" it asked. "You are one of those who direct and control

the education in this place?”

“And may I ask with whom I have the pleasure of conversing?”

“I wish I could explain to you. I’m looking at Camford. I’m asking questions.”

“But you have no eyes to look with.”

“I have vision of a sort. The light comes through.”

“Through *what?*”

“There are no words for it in this language of yours.”

“Your voice comes through to *us* all right.”

“It *is* rather good, isn’t it?”

“And you’ve got a weight.”

“Not particularly.”

“I felt you — when you sat down.”

“I haven’t sat down. I’m not really here.”

“But I felt you.”

“No. I was feeling *your* weight. Fifteen stone I should say.”

“All that,” said Professor Scott-Harrowby; “nearer sixteen. Wouldn’t it be nice if you showed yourself a bit?”

“My appearance might distract you.”

“What do you want here — in Camford?”

“I wish you would tell me a few things.”

“I wish *you* would materialize — from wherever you are.”

“Quite impossible. Physically impossible. One can’t bring a lot of fresh atoms into your air suddenly without a violent explosion. Surely you know that?”

“But you get sound waves going.”

“That’s easy.”

“Why?”

“Do you want me to talk a lot about dimensions and things of that sort? Analogies and metaphors I should have to use; each looser than the other. Your words cannot say it. You wouldn’t begin to understand. I suppose you would have a faint feeling of confused satisfaction — distended with wind so to speak and hoping to digest it.”

“Let it go at that,” said Scott-Harrowby. “Here you are.”

“But *you* can tell *me* things, you know. Manifestly I understand your language — such as it is.”

“Manifestly.”

“Though hardly a word or an idiom of mine would carry meaning to you.”

“But what are you doing on, by, near or over Camford?”

“I happened to pass your planet. I was just strolling about. I looked at it. I found it interesting.”

“Just strolling about? Like a man coming on an ant-hill and saying, ‘Why are these creatures so busy?’”

“Rather like that. Comparisons are always more or less misfits.”

“A man looking through a microscope?”

“Something after that fashion too. Things under a microscope have a way of being transparent, but your little heads are opaque to everything. At the first glance I thought these animalcules—”

“You are talking to fifteen stone ten of Camford don. But I lent myself to it. Quite probably fifteen stone ten is nothing to you. Maybe we are just Lilliputians in your eyes.”

“These animalcules,” the Voice went on in complete disregard of the Professor’s protest, “are amazingly clever — and stupid. The cleverer they are, the more stupid they seem to be.”

“I can’t lay my hands on anything for a *tu quoque.* It is your road, Sir. Go on.”

“I have been watching your human affairs, for — you’d count it some years. I’ve listened to speeches, talk, outcries, noises — I’ve read your newspapers and most of your books.”

“English books?”

“All languages. Your languages don’t amount to very much yet. Know one, know all. They are all very much to pattern, like your bodies and brains. All a little distorted and mixed up.”

“You’ve listened no doubt. But have you read? There are no stories of books having their pages turned over by an invisible reader. I’ve never heard of you taking down and turning over the pages of books.”

“I don’t. I can read books without opening them. That puzzles you?”

“I agree to be puzzled so long as you don’t talk about dimensions or relativity or planes or anything like that.”

I won t.

“Good. Go on, Mr Gulliver disincarnate. I am a micro-Lilliputian. I don’t mind answering your questions, but I find your talk better than mine. You can read a book but you can’t read a brain. Mine is at your disposal — to the best of my ability. What exactly do you want to know? Your animalcule to command.”

That is what the Hooker Professor of Latent History considered he said when five weeks later he decided to write it down. Those who know him best are most disposed to believe that he was fearless and animated to that extent.

“The thing I want most to know is whether something has gone wrong inside those opaque little heads of yours. Or perhaps not so much gone wrong as reached a limit. Always so far your interesting little species has met almost every challenge Nature has given it. Its adaptabilities have been enormous. But now. It seems to be trying to sit down just when it ought to be learning and adapting harder than ever. What is the matter? Are those bony little skulls of yours getting too tight? Full up? Pot bound? unable to move? That is what I want to know.”

“About this adaptability in the past?” Scott Harrowby asked, playing for time.

“The little beasts came along astonishingly. You see I’ve been in the habit of looking at this planet ever and again.”

“Ever and again?”

“Every — by your measurements — few million years. My time is different. For several hundred million years this Life here has been going on — fantastic and quite silly. Big and little things, rush and bolt and gobble, spread and feed, suck and soak and snare. No sense in it at all. Lumps like the dinosaurs going about their blind business as though it mattered. Pterodactyls flapping through the air from nowhere interesting to nothing in particular. Brutes like the plesiosaurs, the dinocerata, the mammoths, eating endlessly and leaving their droppings. The grass plains and the herds of clumsy pre-cattle and pre-horses chewing and chewing. And the early dogs and wolves. Then at last your sort, your ancestral submen, between the high grass and the trees. Chattering, emotional, quarrelsome but undeniably clever. There was something attractive in the way they chipped flints, made things out of branches of trees and mud. I came

back presently to look again and there they were in little villages, talking to one another, singing songs, dressed up a bit, and with pots and pans and carved bones and all sorts of things no creatures had ever thought of before. Every time I came back they had something fresh for me to see. I became really interested in them. Life had never done anything so nimble before. It was an end to vain repetitions. They seemed afraid of nothing and they attempted everything. They built with mud. They built with stone. They rode horses, they ambushed and domesticated all sorts of creatures, they tamed rivers with embankments, they took logs of wood, burnt them hollow and used them as boats and were presently sailing out to sea. They invented trading, writing, money. They reduced copper and then iron. They made wheels and high roads. Hardly a century passed without some profound change sweeping across their spreading world and always they seemed equal to the occasion. They explored and mapped all this planet, little enough, God knows, but big for them. They made steam engines. In just a little bunch of years they discovered electricity and turned it to a thousand uses. They worked out a funny but quite useful theory of radiations and particles. They leant to fly in thirty short years.

"Quite bright little beasts. Yes. But doing it all incoherently, disconnectedly — jostling against each other. More and more dangerously. The faster they go the more they jostle. And now they seem to be turning more and more away from progress to thwart and destroy one another as they run. I am concerned for them. That really, considering the size of them, *tremendous* human uprush seems losing its direction, losing its cohesion, just on the verge of a crowning victory. Have you played yourselves out? What is happening in those little heads of yours now that you have got the ball at your feet? I shall hate the very sight of this little planet if man flares out and disappears."

To that effect, if not, he says, in those exact words, Scott-Harrowby reports the Visitant.

No one seems to have wandered by while this talk in the Chuck's Hill meadows was going on. That is a pity because some of us would willingly pay quite a considerable sum to know what such a passer-by would have overheard. Would he have observed a large, elderly,

grizzled don sitting all alone on a fallen tree, smoking a pipe and occasionally making disconnected remarks, or would he too have heard the voice and been witness to an actual duologue?

"What ought to hold your minds together?" the Voice went on. "What is it that isn't there?"

"I give it up," said Scott-Harrowby.

"In the past you men invented all sorts of things to create solidarities, so that you could work together and get things done, religions, philosophies, moralities, customs, social organizations of all sorts. The most ingenious and effective nets. Limited but effective. They invented priesthoods to hold these nets together, initiations, schools, temples, symbols, laws and law-courts. But now — with everything calling daily for mental and moral adjustment — I find they haven't invented anything new of that sort that matters for the past four centuries. It is almost unbelievable to me. I have been looking all over your planet and I cannot find the least evidence that any but a few odd people are even dissatisfied with the ways you have of learning things, recording knowledge and holding yourselves in agreement. Your schools and books and colleges have changed last and changed least. They are dragging along half a century behind. The links that hold your busy little heads together in any sort of community of purpose, of interpretation, of information, are feebler than ever they were. Mostly they are just the old links, worn out, frayed old religions, threadbare sentimentalities. The bricks in your social fabric are changing to sand. Is a progressive solidarity too much for you? Here is this new mankind, world-wide, able to talk to itself all over the planet, able to fly to the ends of the earth, possessed of what would have seemed a hundred years ago incredible power, and it produces no sort of brain. It has just the old tired-out ganglia of its disunited past. So far as I could see when I returned this time to look again, it had not the beginnings of a common brain. I looked and listened for the Scientific World, the Learned World, for a Literature of Power — for you use those phrases — and so far as I have been able to see there are just these universities of yours — this Camford of yours ranks high among them — that even pretend to be gathering and concentrating knowledge, carrying on thought, dominating education and radiating fresh mental impulse into these

hundreds of millions of little brains which are mankind. I'm incredulous. I'm frightened — beyond space and time I am frightened — at the headlessness of this planet to which I have taken a fancy. Is it really still advancing, or has it overgrown its mind and become a pimple head, an acephalous monster?"

"Like a hen running about after its head is chopped off," said Scott-Harrowby, reflecting over his pipe. "Not a bad image that.... But... I don't think it's done for yet."

"Like a decapitated hen spouting blood and still running about," said the Voice. "A very good image indeed. Why is it like that?"

"Wars, I admit, have certainly become more and more disastrous and uncontrollable," said Scott-Harrowby.

"Everything is becoming uncontrollable. Things are just happening to you."

"But still I don't think we are done for yet."

"If you are not done for yet, you must be doing something about it here. Here if anywhere. In this focus, this sample focus of collective mental life. Here if anywhere is where adjustment should begin. Where can it begin if it does not begin in this central ganglion? What are you doing?"

"I?"

"Camford.... And you — as representing Camford."

"You are a very uncomfortable person to meet on an afternoon walk.... We are not doing very much."

"I can't see inside your heads. *Are you aware?*"

Scott-Harrowby gesticulated with his pipe, sitting forward, elbow on knee. Was he aware? Why pretend not to understand? A violent impulse to frankness seized him. He did his best to state the truth. "We certainly do our best not to be aware."

"And if anyone else begins talking—"

"We do our best to shut him up."

"You have given birth to a new world and behold! the new-born creature insists upon being a mental defective."

"Practically we have only begun to apprehend the new state of affairs in the last thirty years. Things have moved fast. And formerly our ruling idea was conservation. Give us time to get going."

“But what are you doing about it? What are you beginning to do? You have had time — some time anyhow. Thirty years is time enough to turn round in. What are you doing about it? I ask *you.*”

The Voice was impatient.

“Camford?”

“You in particular as a sample.”

Pause.

“I didn’t,” said Scott-Harrowby in his later description of this conversation, “know what to say to that. The silence lengthened. ‘*Well?*’ said the Voice.

“Still I didn’t know what to say.... I wanted time....

“And suddenly I realized that I was completely alone. My pipe was out and I was completely alone. And completely alone I got up and made my way back to Camford.”

Mr Preeders Pigeon-holes

STILL more apocryphal than the Scott-Harrowby conversation is the account the Visitant gave of himself and his purpose and ideas to Mr Henry Preeder, a temporary assistant reader for the University Press. Mr Preeder seems to have been accosted by the unknown in one of the rooms attached to the new warehouse of that organization, and to have acted as a sort of guide to him in an inspection of the book store, the printing plant and the distributing arrangements of the Press.

No witnesses are forthcoming of this peripatetic conversation, though quite a lot of people must have been passed en route and what is equally remarkable Mr Preeder does not seem to have told anyone about it for nearly seven weeks until after the publication of Scott Harrowby's story.

He accounts for the delay by saying that for a time he thought the whole thing was a dream. Quite possibly it was a dream. During that interval he was turning the discussion if ever it occurred over and over in his mind and it is hard to believe that this hay-making in his memory did not involve considerable additions, transpositions, amplifications and the substitutions of many of Mr Preeder's own ideas for the less comprehensible remarks of the Visitant. As it is, slightly more than two-thirds of Mr Preeder's printed report tells us of what Mr Preeder said to his interlocutor.

The Preeder contribution is indeed more in accordance with Dr Bream's theories of a release of subconscious dreams and wishes, than any other of the quasi-authentic accounts of the strange visitation.

There is something mulish about Mr Preeder and there is no reason to suppose he changed his nature in the presence of the unknown. He is a bachelor of small private means and his connexion with the academic world is quite incidental. He is a small rather crooked resentful little man with a peevish face and a querulous voice; he says what he has to say over and over again. "That may be as you say," he says, "but —— —" and *da capo.*

He has long been obsessed by the idea — which is certainly

spreading abroad — that the next great task before mankind is to get everything it knows fully and completely tidied up and pigeon-holed. That is what is called Modern Encyclopaedism. He is an expert in the new and rising technique of documentation and he believes more than he believes anything else in the world that every book, pamphlet, paper, statement, letter, photograph, chart in existence, every fact and all discussion could be filmed upon an ultra-microscopic scale, stored away, indexed in accordance with the ingenious system of the International Institute of Bibliography and any part or item in it reproduced upon a suitable screen whenever required. This collection would constitute a sort of World Memory. It could be made in triplicate or quadruplicate and each complete copy of it housed in a secure shelter in some remote part of the world. "An overwhelming task!" says Mr Preeder. "Not in the least" — and produces his chapter and verse cut and dried, so many billion documents with an average surface reduced to one in ten million, so many billion millimetres of film and so forth.

"Space?"

"Store rooms, student rooms, projection theatres, everything would go into a building — Oh! a quite possible and manageable building. If only you get the idea."

"An index of fact perhaps. Scientific fact. But a synthesis of religion and philosophy?"

"Why not?"

"But men," you protest, "will always think differently — about the ends of life."

"*Feel* differently," says Mr Preeder. "That is a matter of upbringing. That depends upon what has happened to your egotism since your first cluck. But sound thinking and sufficient knowledge can dominate feeling. Most of this stuff about incurable differences of opinion is nonsense, brains are as alike as eggs. You can beat them up or boil them hard or scramble them or poach them or let them go rotten. But cook them the same way and they will come out very much alike."

He has quite elaborate plans for digesting these vast central accumulations he contemplates into workable general encyclopaedias, into students' handbooks, taking out and peptonizing

this or that special section into histories and textbooks. He does indeed contemplate a universally educated world, and his parody of a physical brain on a world scale in which micro-photographic records parallel cerebral cells, is not to be dismissed too cavalierly because of the nagging insistence with which he propounds it. He wants a universally educated world, educated on the same lines, with every artificial difference eliminated. He is a cantankerous disagreeable little nobody and yet at times one feels he has got hold of something most exasperatingly vast and right.

It is equally difficult to resist the persuasion that in some way, to some extent the great intruder was on Mr Preeder's side.

"You have to pull your minds together," said the Voice — according to Mr Preeder. "And soon. Or you'll just kill yourselves off the planet with your diverse suggestions, your uncontrolled hates and your half-witted mechanical cleverness.... And there are such splendid things now for you to do."

That is not Mr Preeder's natural phraseology. That sounds like the authentic Voice.

The Communist Party is Annoyed in its Turn

IT seems probable that in the case of both Dr Scott-Harrowby and Mr Preeder an actual encounter with the unknown did take place. The Visitant in their stories, so far as manner and quality go, sounds "like himself". His penetrating audibility and the sense of his presence are true to type. But what he says is, to say the least of it, also strongly coloured by the known qualities and disposition of the interlocutor. This is precisely what would happen to one's memory of a strange communication that was not immediately put on record. And even at the time he spoke, his hearers, without any conscious disposition to misunderstand him, seem to have been translating his hard alien questions and statements into the idiom of their own habitual preconceptions.

There is a highly probable story told by Raymond Dedlock, who is a man of conspicuous integrity, of a discussion in his study in the small hours between himself and the Visitor, about the difference between the Humanities and Science.

"Why do you cling to such useless and decaying distinctions?" the Visitor reiterated. "Why must you get things askew even before you begin to teach? Knowledge is one and Wisdom is one. Why let this poisonous pretence that the Humanities as you call them, these stale scraps of past thought, are Wisdom and that Science is not, why let that soak into the minds of generation after generation of undergraduates? Is it through a pervading laziness, or is it the partizanship of professionalism, or is it just malignity?"

"I said all sorts of things to him," said Raymond Dedlock with a sigh, "but I couldn't make him understand. I cannot imagine a Camford mind at all without the Humanities. We build on them.

"You may say what you like about *Literae humaniores*, I told him, but see the men we have produced!

"'That is what I am thinking of,' he said.

"'What are you producing now?' he said. 'The dull ones get nothing from that stuff, the cunning ones compromise; the bright impatient ones rebel and go off after Marx or Mussolini or any odd heretic. But *your* stuff — nowadays....'"

"Did he say *your* stuff'?" asked someone.

"I'm not quite sure," Raymond Dedlock admitted. "It may have been just a dream."

Whatever we may think of the authenticity of these particular conversations, however widely we may vary in our answers to the question of what this Visitant or Visitation was, the fact remains that throughout the months of April and May 1937 up to the last astonishing outbreak, there was a widespread feeling that some sort of Presence was subjecting human life in general and its treatment by Camford in particular, to a sympathetic but quite unsparing scrutiny.

It is however a principle hitherto applied chiefly to the evidences for spiritualistic phenomena that any number of imperfectly established cases, any assembly of uncontrolled statements, whatever quality they may have in common, do not constitute a scientific proof, and by this standard we are bound to suspend our judgment about all this business.

Directly we lower our standard of evidence below that scientific level we are confronted with a vast tangle of quasi-corroborative statements. Quite a number of undergraduates think they heard a voice pursuing them with the question: "What do you think you are learning here? You are preparing for the world. What sort of world are you preparing for?"

Nothing very fresh in that. Some of the brighter minds in every annual wave of freshmen have asked themselves that question since the beginning of things. But freshmen are young and timid. Few venture to attempt a real answer, they just worry and argue about it for a week or so and then drop it altogether, or slip into Fascism, Communism, Buchmanism, Catholicism or whatever other ready-made formula of dissent, whatever form of escape from the dreary and manifestly sterile academic assumptions, is in fashion. From which they presently slip back into ordinariness. The problem is too vast for them to tackle unaided, the university offers them no help, hushes them up, provides the opiate of irrelevant work and the reassurance of a degree.

Whatever it was the unknown said or did not say to aggravate such natural, if transitory, heart-searchings in the undergraduate mind, there is only one instance where we have evidence of any

effectual penetration. An intervention at a small Communist gathering in Pecklington, although it seems to have been partially drowned at the time by the bawling of the Red Flag and afterwards by shouts of "Yah boojaw" — shouted in unison after the fashion of an American college yell — does seem to have left a perceptible residuum of mental uneasiness. All witnesses agree about the penetrating quality of the Voice. It was not a loud or authoritative Voice, but it penetrated. It could cut its way through protesting cries, organized uproar, prohibitions and suppression, and this time it seems to have done this youthful gathering the honour of talking for some time.

Conspicuous in the tumult of class-conscious proletarians on this occasion was young Lord Fauntleroy, Harold Biggs, the poet son of Biggs the colliery proprietor, Turnbull Jix the editor of *The Camford Red* and the Honourable Reginald Blupper who had been four times to Russia. These were all disputatious spirits whose mental consciences were still sufficiently youthful and alert to rankle at an imperfectly parried thrust. They could not leave issues simply shouted down. They went back to their rooms and talked about them. Some were shaken and something had to be done about it. An article appeared in *The Camford Red* denouncing the Voice in unsparing terms, and through this article we catch unmistakable echoes of what was actually said. Manifestly we are dealing with that same enquirer who talked to Professor Scott-Harrowby and Mr Preeder and who troubled the mind of Dr Raymond Dedlock.

The article runs as follows:

"Some pale pink Utopian ventriloquist seems to have been going about Camford in the favourite role of the common or garden capitalistic Stooge, doing his feeble best to minimize the supreme significance of the class war in history, questioning the omniscience of Marx and the moral ascendency of Stalin, and attacking party discipline by impossible demands for detailed explanations, from which, as every seasoned party member knows, disputes and dissensions are most conveniently evoked.

"Most of it we have heard before — the chief novelty is the ventriloquism, which seems to be of an unusually high quality. There is the usual hypocritical pretence of sympathy with our criticisms of

the capitalist system. Sham leftward phrases he uses glibly, leading ingeniously away from the vigorous prosecution of the class war to that woolly utopia-spinning, dear alike to liberals, technocrats and the I.L.P. One or two of our critic's favourite gags which are, comparatively speaking, novel, are: 'Insurrection is not revolution' and 'No revolution can create until it ceases to be revolutionary', followed up by 'What are you trying to *make?*' This is the stale, old indictment that when Communism found itself in control of Russia it had no plans ready and has been improvising ever since, and that Marxism was no more than a diagnosis and prophecy of the decline of Private Capitalism.

"The unknown seems to think he has scored a new point by demanding the relevance of the ideology of the class struggle to the training of an airman or the discoveries of an explorer or ecologist or therapeutist. These latter, he declares, are things that change the world for good, they are the 'true revolution', but the class-war, if you please, is only 'bickering in the working team'. His words these — his preposterous words! Our ventriloquist has evidently got many of his ideas from the swiftly exploded school of the Technocrats. His case, so far as we can consider it a case, seems to be that there is an actual and more or less inevitable revolution going on in human conditions, due to physical and biological innovations, accelerated communications, birth control, artificial fertilization, release of staple production from geographical conditioning, *et cetera*, *et cetera*, and that the whole magnificent fabric of Marxist ideology is in fact — again we quote his phrases— 'a faint preliminary mental response' to these conditioning changes— 'a transitory experiment in mental adaptation' — which already demands revision and research. Revision and research which would end inevitably in party disorganization.

"There is just enough demoralizing plausibility, however, in these pseudo-psychological insinuations to challenge a reply. Happily in Camford we need not go far to find it. Here is a fresh influence trying to scrabble together again all the scattered confusions, relics, middle-class illusions, veiled imperialism, pacifist make-believe, constitutionalism, utopianism, defeatism, *et cetera, et cetera,* which still shackle the advance of the working class in Britain. Only by the

continual challenging and smashing up of this ideology can the working class free its path forward, and Communism be established in its future position as the theory and practice of the British working class.

"If this irrepressible heckler in the streets of Camford would stop heckling, listen, attend, consulting for example Hinkle Brewster's modest but useful little pamphlet, *The Practical Finality of the Marxist Formula,* he might discover that all his fancied novelties of criticism were fully foreseen by the Master and dealt with exhaustively. Given sufficient integrity indeed (though we find it difficult to credit anyone outside the Communist Party with even a minimum of integrity) he might even be induced (consummation devoutly to be wished) to shut up altogether.

"The more he will study Communist literature the more he will come to realize the fundamental conclusiveness of Marx. In every field of art, science and human interest whatever, Marx is, in his essence, all-sufficient. The more He is revealed by the exegesis of such exponents as Lenin, Stalin, Palme Dutt, Harold Laski, John Strachey, Hinkle Brewster *et cetera*, *et cetera*, the more one realizes His practical Omniscience, and the belatedness of such detraction as our ventriloquist attempts. No wonder the latter prefers to remain anonymous and invisible. *Vox et praeterea nihil.*"

The article was evidently intended to be unsigned, but by one of the slips of the mind that happen to all of us at times, Hinkle Brewster had set his name to it.

In spite of the manifest bias and irritation of the reporter, the gist of what the Visitant said shows through clearly enough, and is manifestly true to form. He did interrupt that meeting of temporary proletarians, he did get his shots home on them and he left his arrows to fester in their convictions in spite of their self-protective uproar. His is the insatiable urgency of science. He reveals himself as the enemy of all final doctrines and convictions. Marxist jargon, Freudian jargon, precious literary criticism, the dear old Humanities, were plainly all the same to him; all so much mental thumb-twiddling. His appeal to the mind of the world in general and to Camford in particular, was to get up and go on. And keep going on. He was progress articulate. He was the spirit of the provisional. His

message was an intellectual drive without a glimmer of surcease.

But the report that he spoke suddenly at a lecture Professor Foxfield was giving upon the history of the Ascidians, how they are hatched as free-swimming larvae, swim about gaily for a time and then fix themselves by their heads, surround themselves by a cellulose covering and become practically vegetables, is quite recent and probably a pure invention. "Exactly what your minds do here in Camford," the Voice is alleged to have interpolated. That is too apt to the general tenor of the stories about him. It is like those Sayings of Jesus in which some excited and undiscriminating disciples underline, overstate and accumulate things they could not bear to think the Master had not said.

Most of these invented sayings exaggerate his characteristics. They are in every way ruder. Generally they contradict flatly. They lose their interrogative tone. They sink towards the level of "Don't talk rot" or "I *don't* think".

In a later issue *The Camford Red* returned to the question of the Voice. Hinkle Brewster after his little slip about the signature seems to have retired into the background and the article was plainly by another hand.

It denounced "the supreme impertinence of imploring us to think harder and better. Left-wing Camford thinks as hard as it knows how or anyone knows how. Nobody can think harder or better or with a greater certainty of arriving at the desired conclusion than a properly trained proletarian. To see a novel proposition pass through a Marxist gathering is like watching a breeze across a field of ripe corn. It passes; and the serried minds return to their upstanding integrity. The Communist ideology has a close-knit assurance that puts the Roman Catholic theologian to shame. It is, thank Heaven, the absolute antithesis to the oafish gaping 'open mind' of nineteenth-century liberalism. And that is why it marches on relentless to the 'Seizure of Power' — that mighty phrase, that glorious idea."

If the Visitant had his way with Camford and the rest of us life would be an unceasing exploration from the cradle to the grave. Never would he have us clench our minds — dictatorially. Never at any moment in our lives would he concede us the satisfaction of

feeling at last, completely right. Never would he let us sit down and say ‘There! *Now* I know exactly where I am.’

Congregation Day

THE crowning outrage of the Visitant was committed upon a far larger and more important gathering than the Communist meeting in the little Pecklington Hall. It was Congregation Day; all that was best, brightest and most picturesque in Camford life was assembled in the Great Hall of University. Dons in robes, dons' wives in smart new dresses, beadles, officials in quasi-mediaeval costumes, distinguished visitors from foreign universities in queer hats and strange confections of silk and velvet, a few scattered common gentlemen in morning coats and silk hats to recall us to the twentieth century, made a brilliant assembly, over which an unusually bright Mayday sun splashed a thousand patches of colour from the glorious stained glass of the south windows.

The Princess Susan Magenta, smirking like anything, was receiving, very graciously, an honorary degree in philosophy, when the Voice began.

It began and yet, quite incredibly, the ceremony went on.

"I have come out of the deeps beyond space and time to look again at this little planet I have visited since its beginning. I have seen life clambering out of drifting slime towards consciousness and will. I have watched the ascent of your species to the dawn of understanding and the beginnings of power. I care for you, and now I am impatient with you. For I see plainly that I overrated your intelligence, that you have blundered into knowledge and opportunity, and that you do not know how to grasp your knowledge nor how to realize your opportunities. Individually and incidentally you can be bright creatures but collectively you are a feeble folk. Time marches on and you trifle with your lives. You realize neither the dangers nor the possibilities of human life. You fail to organize, you fail to educate. Everywhere the world falls into disorder for the want of the mental leadership such people as you here, pretend to supply — which cannot be supplied so long as you dominate the schools and block the way. How trivial is this display! How monstrously and tragically trivial! Your academic triviality is the half-spiteful triviality of inadequate minds conscious of their

essential failure. This Congregation Day is your annual culmination. It is a defiant coronation of mediocrity. You dress up this poor commonplace girl in these pretentious robes almost as if she were a symbol, your Goddess of Unreason, you recite your scraps of Latin over her. You have this millionaire and these other odd conspicuous folk to follow her in the acceptance of what you call honours. It is not in your nature to honour anyone that you cannot secretly despise.

"Time marches on. The ingenuity of your race, working without coordination or foresight, produces one disconnected invention after another, so that mechanical Power grows in your world like a cancer. In quite a little while now, in a few decades at most, it will be possible for any small body of desperate men to poison your whole atmosphere, sweep your world bare with infections or blow your planet to pieces. You here will do nothing to anticipate and prevent that. When the catastrophe comes maybe it will still find Camford dressed up in its gowns and its Gothic, performing its age-old function of keeping education within limits and obstructing the growth of any controlling intelligence in the world.

"Why am I saying these things here to you in Camford? Because I have come to like this breed of mankind. Because you represent the limits of its education. Because you stand both at its head and in its way. You who are assembled here today constitute a typical centre of education. And deliberately you ignore the fact that human life is mental. The essential thing in human life is education, the growth of a common mind and will. If mankind fails it will be through the failure of its teachers, the weakness of its schools, the obstinacy, the wilful obstruction of its universities. Cannot you realize so plain a thing as that? It is appalling that you here are *so* central and *so* important to the human future, but you are. Outsiders cannot do anything if you resist. You are too well entrenched. You are feeble in innovation but invincible in resistance. Your littleness here has blocked the education of the English and blighted the educational development of the rest of the world through a century of opportunity, and still your predominance is unchallenged. You — and your sister imitations throughout the world — have monopolized the best of the youth of each generation, because there was nowhere else for it to go for instruction. Monopolized you have, and

mistaught and marred. Maybe presently there will be mundane voices to echo mine, and maybe then you may change your note, but will you change your spirit? Can you change the spirit of this place? This old, this weakly lovely place? This dreadful place?

"Surely even you for all your elaborately cultivated affectations and self-protections, must know — reluctantly and secretly indeed — but still you know it — that there can be no escape for your world, for all mankind, from the ages of tragic confusion ahead of you, except through so heroic an ordering of knowledge, so valiant a beating out of opinions, such a refreshment of teaching and such an organization of brains as will constitute a real and living world university, head, eyes and purpose for Man. That is the primary need of your species now. It is your world's primary want. It must come now — if it ever is to come. Disintegration and decay wait for no one. They wait for nothing. Plainly before you now — I cannot believe you blind to it for all your refusal to see — is the ultimate frustration of the promise of mankind, defeat and an end. Have you no intimations of the enormity of your default here? Will you make no stir to save knowledge and thought before undisciplined ignorance destroys itself with its own machines? I who go to and fro outside space and time have seen and see. There is no salvation for races that will not save themselves. Half the stars in the sky are the burning rubbish of worlds that might have been."

And with these words, "the burning rubbish of worlds that might have been", the Voice made an end to what it had to say to mankind.

It is an impressive instance of the essential common sense of our human breed, that while this fantastic tirade was in progress, a majority of the chief actors in the ceremony was able to ignore it and carry on as though no sounds but those right and proper for the occasion were audible. The public orator recited the praises of the Princess Susan Magenta. The Lord Chancellor put the hood over her head gracefully but firmly. The assembly applauded — maybe rather more loudly and defiantly than they would otherwise have done. The Ushers guided her feet in the way they had to go to her seat on the dais, and then led forward the next recipient, an enormously rich Brazilian timber merchant. The public orator took up his burthen again. The Voice with its note of protest did not so much drown as

frame this picturesque procedure, floated over it and contained it like the fretted roof of the hall above the great organ.

The Voice ceased and it was as if a cloud that had obscured the sun had passed. The Princess continued to smile with an august graciousness. To this day it is unknown whether she had any inkling whatever of that overriding Voice, because nobody has ever presumed to question her about it. The Brazilian timber merchant was hooded in his turn and gave way to a rising labour politician. The little chain of those whom Camford delighted to honour lost one link after another, dwindled and passed. The ceremony drew to its end.

The Voice had ceased; it had ceased completely, not only for that occasion but altogether.

It was only as the gathering dispersed that people could be heard asking one another: “Did you by any chance *hear* anything?”

“I *did* seem to hear....”

“M’m’m.”

One changed the subject. “The princess I thought was looking charming....”

The Healing Touch in History

Six, eight, ten, twelve months passed and there were no more stories about the Voice. With more and more confidence people began to question its reality.

Here are a few scraps from the Fellows' conversation in Holy Innocents Hall when the anniversary of the Visitation was coming round: —

"Ghosts come out of the past, why shouldn't they come out of the future?"

"Is that the sort of fellow we shall get in the future? Heaven help us!"

"Ghost you say! He was a lot more like a government inspector."

"I believe he was a sort of travelling ethnologist — from Elsewhere."

"All the same I wish there was some clear explanation of all that business. You know I heard it. I heard it the first time. That bit of carpet over there still makes me feel uncomfortable as I cross it. I hardly know why."

"It made all Camford feel uncomfortable for a bit. But we're settling down again all right now, I hope. We're settling down...."

And as this story goes to press a very interesting brochure comes to hand from the Royal Psychological Society. It is by Dr Stephen Peter McIntosh and it is called *The Voice that Breathed o'er Camford*, *A Study in Contemporary Legend Building*. It is a sceptical and destructive examination of the alleged Visitation. He never speaks of it as the Visitation simply, always as the "alleged Visitation". The method has been to set aside all hearsay testimony and to make a direct appeal to — ear witnesses. Under the withering enquiries of Dr McIntosh very few of those who had hitherto been counted upon as first-hand evidence, stood the test. Professor Scott-Harrowby stood by his account stoutly and rather irascibly and Mr Preeder increased in certitude and detail with each repetition. But Mr Trumber became more and more of the Vicar of St Hippolytus' opinion, and Dr Raymond Dedlock thought that quite possibly he had been asleep and had a nightmare.

“Well, isn’t being asked *what* the Humanities are, and *why* — a bit of a nightmare?” he said. “When one has lived not unhappily in them and by them all one’s life.”

Martilow, the butler of Holy Innocents, insisted that he could not talk of “inside happenings to outside persons”. This became *his* impregnable formula.

The young men of the Pecklington meeting had long ago decided they had been ragged by a practical joker at the back of the hall, and more and more persuaded that the Voice had spoken with that peculiar blurring of the labials which is so distinctive of ventriloquism. And if the things he said were ventriloquial then plainly there was nothing more to be said about them.

Even the extraordinary interruption in the Great Hall of University presented few difficulties to Dr McIntosh.

The reticence of the trained reporters present, he insists, is very significant. In spite of the alleged existence of a complete shorthand report, *The Camford Mail* ignored the incident absolutely, and the words of the speech only became available when the young stenographer who claims to have taken it was dismissed from the staff of that paper. Dr McIntosh rejects his report as a forgery. “Something of the sort might have been shouted from the gallery,” he says. “That is the miserable residuum of conviction which remains after our careful scrutiny of all the available evidence. At best, it is a very improbable might-have-been.”

Bream and Trumber made friends again and a time came when the tension between them had relaxed sufficiently for them to discuss the Voice. Trumber’s conviction of the reality of the Visitation had faded and dissolved. “It was just a particularly vivid dream,” said Bream, driving home his point of view.

“A dream that went on — after I was bodily awake,” said Trumber, as though he was repeating a lesson. “Yes.”

And then his mind twisted back and he added: “All the same, if he turns up here again, I shall go down. Lectures or no lectures. I won’t have my lectures interrupted. I won’t have my atmosphere destroyed. I won’t have my values swept aside as an artificiality, an aesthetic sort of play.”

“But as a matter of fact did he ever interrupt — ?”

“He was there,” said Trumber. “I felt him there after the — after the dream I had. Every day. For quite a long time. I did my best to ignore him....

“How can we go on,” cried Trumber, “keeping where we are, unless we ignore him?”

APROPOS OF DOLORES

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PREFATORY NOTE

Every character and event in this novel is fictitious, and any coincidence with the name or conduct or circumstance of any living person is unintentional. In this repudiation the author must include himself. The story is told in the first person but the voice is the voice of an invented personality — however lifelike and self-conscious it may seem. Never will the author proceed against his publisher for libel. He has no claim. Stephen Wilbeck is no more an auto-libel on the present writer than Tristram Shandy was an auto-libel on Laurence Sterne. Sterne knew his Tristram was different and meant him to be different, not only in circumstances but in quality, and that is the case with the author of every novel told in the first person.

And so if the views and opinions of Stephen Wilbeck annoy you do not fly into a rage with the writer.

Yet let us not go too far with these now customary disavowals. Every proper novel is judged by its reality and is designed to display life; it must present real life and real incidents and not life and incidents taken from other books; it should not, therefore, be anything but experience, observation, good hearsay and original thought, disarticulated and rearranged. You take bits from this person and bits from that, from a friend you have known for a lifetime or from someone you overheard upon a railway platform while waiting for a train or from some odd phrase or thing reported in a newspaper. That is the way fiction is made and there is no other way. If a character in a book should have the luck to seem like a real human being that is no excuse for imagining an ‘original’ or suspecting a caricature. This is a story about happiness and about loneliness of spirit, told in good faith. Nothing in this book has happened to anyone; much in this book has happened to many people.

H G WELLS

CHAPTER ONE

Happy Interlude

(Portumere, August 2nd, 1934)

I find myself happy and I have an impression that I have been quite happy for two days. And further I believe against the critical protests of my intelligence, that I have been generally happy throughout my life.

My intelligence does not deny flatly that this is so, but it demands an inquiry into the matter. It produces memories as disputing politicians exhume the past speeches of their adversaries. It raises this question with the faintly irritating air of entire impartiality. Will I explain? Quite recently, within the last fortnight, there was a mood when the years that lay before me presented themselves as a burthen too heavy to be borne, I saw my life as an inextricable muddle, and I repudiated suicide perhaps because it presented itself as an effort too troublesome to attempt, or perhaps, and so I remember I preferred to put it, because I was under obligation to various people who had stood by me and might be in a manner depending on me, not to confess that the life they had thought worthwhile and found some comfort in, was a failure.

I still, after much disillusionment, cling to the belief that such fluctuations of mood as this ought to be more controllable than I find them. There has been no change in my circumstances to justify this vast contrast of feeling - indeed there has been no estimable change at all. I cannot say that I was either better off or worse off in any way during that dismal night. But that was three nights ago. And here amazingly I am back at contentment, finding the life in me and the things about me very good, and very gladly would I remain in this mood for the rest of my life.

As I run over the details of these two past agreeable days in my mind - these days that contrast so vividly with my night of depression - I am reminded more and more of the personality of Mr James Boswell. I perceive that for a while I have been going about

with much the same appreciative gusto, my mental eyes protruding. I have been living objectively. I have been extroverted. I have a Boswell self, I realize, and it is beyond doubt the happiest of all my selves. If I may bend a phrase from the spiritualists to my purpose, these last two days Boswell has been my control. Since I left Paris the day before yesterday my mind has made a thousand grateful notes, quite in the Boswell fashion, of the gestures of this great, slovenly, incoherent, foolishly wise, liberally disposed Tory Dr Johnson of a world. I have kept myself and my own concerns not so much in the background as in their proper Boswellian place, inconspicuously in the foreground. I have been hardly more than where the camera happened to be in the spectacle.

I have caught myself under this Boswell influence before. In Paris, in London I have been a happy flaneur; I have flane-d in New York and Washington and most of the great cities of Europe; but for some time I have been too preoccupied and too vexed for it, and never before have I been so conscious of the flaneur state of mind.

This pleasant escape to an all too infrequent mood culminated recognizably in the city of Rennes in the afternoon of the first day. I had left Paris a little before nine, and except that one of the brakes heated and smoked and had to be relieved at Verneuil, my little Voisin Fourteen had behaved beautifully on the road, passing everything without any appearance of hurry or competition, honking modestly and meekly, 'please', never making an unnecessary sound. Auguste had cleaned all the bougies and greased and oiled everything to perfection. It was not his fault that one of the brakes was just the slightest bit too tight. Dolores in a wrapper, by a great and obvious effort controlling her morbid affection for me to an only slightly unreasonable solicitude, had repeated her last unnecessary directions from the balcony. I was to be sure and do something — I didn't catch what, but I promised. Probably not to go too fast. But what *is* too fast? I couldn't go too fast away from Paris.

I had liked the man at the barrier who handed me my green ticket — my Voisin has a right-hand drive and we both had short arms and we thought it funny rather than annoying that we had to stretch to the utmost - and I had liked the two young men who filled up my tank outside Sevres — I don't know why. One had a green and pink

jumper and the other a crooked nose; perhaps it was that.

I was amused to find the pale old-fashioned majesty of Versailles set out, as it seemed, specially to adorn my progress and fading visibly in the sunlight. Mile after mile along the good straight western road a golden carpet of sunshine had been laid down for me, patterned with tree shadows; the fields were decorated with wheatsheafs regardless of expense, millions- worth of wheatsheafs; and the man at Verneuil who had come across the road to tell me my wheel was afire seemed like a guardian angel rather than a garagist.

He fixed it while I drank at the cafe across the way and I lunched in Alencon on mutton and beer (avoiding the tete de veau) and got to Rennes between four and five, making my way to the Hotel Moderne, whose name I found congenial, with unerring precision by means of the Michelin plan.

At one corner by a bridge over the Vilaine as I drove along the Quai I was stopped by a very good-looking police agent. I go in great fear of police agents and at the first movement of his white truncheon I pulled up and prepared to accept whatever contravention he thrust upon me. But he came to the side all apologetic smiles. He had thought M'sieu had no number in front but it was the dazzle of the sunshine had blinded him. He motioned me on, and I and the Voisin bowing radiantly went our way.

Everything was like that.

The Hotel Moderne was not excessive in its modernity but at least it could satisfy my craving to be master in my own bathroom; its staff was the youngest, most easily reduced to giggling or panic you can imagine, and its garage mechanic was an old lady in a black bonnet. Does she put on blue overalls when there is work afoot? Happily there was no work afoot. I had some tea, put on a collar and tie, and so adjusted to urban conditions, went out to see Rennes.

It is hard to explain, though I myself comprehend perfectly, why Rennes should have presented itself as a compendium of human contentment that evening, or why it was there and then that I conceded final complete recognition to the value of the Boswell in my composition. It came upon me with overwhelming force that to live most of the hours of the waking life Boswell fashion is the only sane and pleasant way of living. All sorts of problems and

perplexities floating in my mind or lurking unformulated in the deeps beneath my mind, seemed to come together in that solution. ‘One must be amused, one must be detached, one must be at peace within.’

I said it over several times. I even thought of making a new Lord’s prayer about it. Give us this day our daily bread and anything else you like but make us Boswell about it; morning, noon and night, keep us extroverts and let us not think of the dark questions on the inside of things...

2

Rennes has the air of being a very completed place. It is unhurried and satisfied with itself. It has the unemphatic calm of an aquatint. Like all the rest of this planet it is rushing through space at so many thousands of miles a minute, and through time and change with an even more terrible velocity. But it does not know it. It was making no more fuss about it than a dog sleeping in the sun. I went to the Place de la Republique to send a telegram assuring Dolores that I was not a burnt-out collision by the roadside; it is her invariable imagination when I go out of her sight in a car; ‘tendresse’ I put in as is our custom; and then I took a turn round the town. It is mainly an eighteenth-century town I should think, with some pleasing islands of old houses that may date from a century or so earlier; there are plenty of bright little shops offering nice things to eat and drink; and all the boot shops and clothing shops seem to have got together in a struggling principal street with a new alias every time it takes a turn, a street that is not so much busy as narrow enough to make a traffic jam out of two old ladies and a donkey cart. There are quite a large number of stately, grey-white buildings with gateways and fine lamps, which may be convents or museums or art galleries or faculties and schools for this or that. There is probably a university. I saw no undergraduates, perhaps they were on vacation, but I understand that here learned men dig continually into the mysteries of Celtic, producing mounds of excavated futilities to replace the Arthurian legends of the more poetic past. If there are no undergraduates there are plenty of cherubic young soldiers in horizon blue who look infinitely distant from any modern warfare, as indeed I

hope with all my heart they always will be. There is nothing more alien to modern warfare than a garrison town in France.

The cathedral is none of your Gothic petrifactions of mystery and aspiration streaming up to heaven. It lives entirely in the town and is unaffectedly homely; God alone, to whose glory it was erected, knows what conceptions of style were in the hearts of its builders. Near by it I came upon two old ladies who pleased me greatly. The fauna of Rennes is particularly rich in this form of feminity and, could I draw, I would gladly spend a few weeks collecting, classifying and preparing an album, *Harem siccus,* of the various types. An old woman is evidently the last thing Rennes eliminates.

These two were both in black with hats long since subdued to their personalities. One was authoritative, she wore spectacles and spoke down her nose, she leant her head sideways with a critical poise, holding her hands behind her back and keeping her feet apart. The other was short, fat and submissive with a rotund stomach and folded hands and feet. What she had to say, she said like a born Catholic's prayer, low and very very quick, snatching her breath at rare intervals. They were so like two ecclesiastics that for some moments I doubted my own powers of observation. I walked round them unobtrusively. But I am sure they were old ladies and, I realized more and more clearly, the housekeepers of church dignitaries who had acquired a style from their employers. The short one was certainly feminine; she had a basket and a key on one arm. She bubbled up remarks, used 'Madame' continually, and the other one scrutinized her and jetted occasional replies. I left them reluctantly, for I felt that if my attention was remarked it might be misunderstood - you never know what the French will impute to a travelling Englishman - and I continued my exploration of the town.

There was a spacious, bright Jardin des Plantes with nice unhurried-looking people sitting about, more old ladies in lovely white caps, and children playing and being reproved, and various of those rotund groups of sculptures just for the sake of sculpture, all breasts and thighs and bottoms and sprawl, with which France abounds. There was a Renaissance Palais de Justice that was once a Parliament House, and outside it were the heroic presentations of four immortals of whom I had never heard before, D'Argentré, La

Chalotais, Toullier and Gerbier. I wrote their names down. I wonder what they did for me. They looked as great as any other great men. They had an air of being very comfortably settled in life and they all had double chins. And there was an Hotel de Ville adorned with a vast bronze affair of swirling feminine figures that might symbolize almost anything. The waiter in the cafe of the theatre opposite told me that so far it has symbolized the union of Brittany and France through some dynastic marriage, the union with which this present millennium began.

Millennial is surely the best word for the atmosphere of Rennes. The stirring tide of history ebbed with the revolutionary wars and ended with a few executions. Nothing has happened since. It is far out of the world. It is three hundred and forty-six kilometres from Paris; three hundred and forty-six kilometres from everywhere. It is on the road to Finisterre, which is as much as to say nowhere at all. Sons have radiated away to the sea and colonies and wars, after the manner of sons among peoples that still increase and multiply, many have been killed and few have returned, but that has not torn out the heart of Rennes. If it were not for those boys in horizon blue there would be a shortage of men here and it would disarrange nothing. The place is sleeping with an effect of quiet satisfaction, like a humming top that has done with its whipping and does not yet begin to wabble.

These millennial interludes make the less accentuated spaces of history, and life is very kindly in them. Human beings take heart and begin to be humorous and tolerant and gently entertaining. Tragedy becomes queer and unaccountable. Old ladies sit as custodians in the museums and do not believe in history a bit. Old ladies gossip in the sunlight and drop their voices so that the children shall not hear too soon of the only things that matter. People do not worry at large. It must have been like this in the less industrialized parts of England during the interminable years of Queen Victoria.

It was the Boer War that gave our British contentment the first plain intimations of a wabble. In 1914 the wabbles became violent, and now, now the whole universe is reeling about us.

Even for the British, the impassive Tory British, the universe is reeling. They know it though they hate to admit it by word or act.

But Rennes, I see, has still to notice it. Rennes is genuine pre-war still. My years in the trenches seem like a dream here.

As the shadows lengthened in these healing grey streets my mind turned to the thought of dinner. I drifted to the cafe over against the Hotel de Ville.

The Hotel de Ville is concave like the London County Hall; the theatre has a bulge to correspond; the cafe is in the bulge; in my happy mood this minor agreement also gave me pleasure. The Place de la Mairie is the space between, and it would certainly be obliterated entirely and exactly if by any convulsion of nature the two buildings came together. Trivial little trams have their rendezvous in this space and I watched a diversity of pleasant people carrying bags, baskets, portfolios, sticks, umbrellas, their own hats, and other objects, choose gravely between this tram and that, though it did not seem to me to be of the slightest importance which tram anyone took.

A very young soldier had found this place, which abounds in cobbles and stray pebbles and is occasionally traversed by meteoric motor cars, suitable for the instruction of a stout young lady in the art of riding a bicycle; and two or three dogs, a newspaper vendor and a municipal but futile street-cleaner went about their various affairs. Outside the cafe two waiters in white aprons became active spreading out chairs and tables and erecting barriers for one of those open-air cinema shows without which no summer evening in a French provincial town is complete.

Forgetting those three hundred and forty-six kilometres between Rennes and Paris I ordered a dry martini cocktail and was properly rewarded with a small tumblerful of warmish mixture in which Cinzano and ginger were the most evident ingredients.

(Yet after all why should not one have ginger in cocktails and warm them up a bit?)

I was so pleased with this cocktail which I sat and admired rather than consumed, abandoning it in the end as if inadvertently, that I dined in the restaurant within. There was a delightful waiter who lit a red-shaded table lamp in full daylight because it was more *gai* for M'sieu, but beyond that were no surprises. I forget about the dinner; I am sure it was quite a good dinner and that being in Brittany, there

was lobster in it somewhere. I returned to the open air and the now imminent cinema show for coffee.

When the film began and revealed itself as a flickering patched-up old American film about vamps, virtuous toughs, crime and that detestable rich young man of New York with a resolute jowl and a heart of gold, I went away quietly and found another cafe on the Vilaine where three men and two women were playing excellent music, and there I pretended to consume an ardent cognac which secretly, after the perfect example of Sir Philip Sidney, I gave to a box of privet whose need for it certainly looked greater than mine. I watched little men come in importantly and greet the waiters magisterially, and men with their womenfolk chosing with infinite care and wariness tables that were exactly like all the other tables, and young men posing Byronically, and a very stylish desperate young man with a large dog, and three peasants with a secret business in hand and their heads all close together, and a whore or so, not unaware of the lonely man in the corner and quite unaware of my loyalty and devotion to Dolores.

For Dolores, about whom I shall presently begin telling you, is enough woman for any reasonable man.

One of these girls was not at all ill-looking. How localized types still remain in our world in spite of all our transport! She might have sat as model for the bronze Brittany outside the Hotel de Ville. Maybe some great-great-grandmother did. Rennes seemed to look at me with inquiry and invitation through her eyes. But my adamantine virtue was proof against the friendliness in her face. I affected to lose all interest in her. I withdrew into my own thoughts.

3

All the while beneath the receipt and appreciation of these superficial events I was going on with a train of ideas that had arisen almost imperceptibly during the day and which was becoming more and more interesting to me, about happiness, about why I was happy, why so often I am not happy, why I am often angry and ungracious, why many people I care for and particularly just now Dolores whom by all reckoning I love, are frequently and abundantly unhappy, why

I in particular hurt and wound people and indeed a whole anatomy of gladness and melancholy, gathering itself together with a sort of lazy activity out of the miscellaneous activities of my mind.

This train of thought which began to assemble in Rennes has been picking up passengers ever since. It has been picking up luggage and material, and indeed to keep on the metaphor, has been adding trucks and vans and wagon-lit cars to itself for some days, shunting into sidings, encountering breakdowns and collisions, making sudden runs into new country and generally proving so entertaining that I am setting myself to write some of it down before it runs abruptly into some terminus and gets itself broken up and dispersed as all my trains of thought are apt to do. And since it is about my journey in this train, wherever it takes me, that I am going to write and not of my tour in Brittany, I will not describe my second happy day with even so much particularity as I have given the first.

All the morning I spent in a search for some tranquil, simple but extremely comfortable place where Dolores may rest her weary nerves and body and her tormented soul. I came through Mur-de-Bretagne and by Bon-Repos, Rostrenen and Carhaix to Torquestol, and except that coming out of Rennes in the briskness of the morning I raced, sinfully and triumphantly, two very very young, very very hatless, very open-necked young men in a vast blue car — because they came up yonking impertinently behind me along the road to St Brieuc, with every advantage on their side, colour, beauty, youth, everything indeed except good brakes and horse power — racing them until I was dust in their distant prospect and had lost and forgotten them altogether, I devoted myself entirely to seeking out and interviewing the proprietors and directors of pensions, hotels and lodgings with a view to Dolores' comfort, peace and satisfaction. All turned their best sides to me at once, while they calculated rapidly what might be the maximum prices a mad Englishman with an invalid wife, her maid, a pet dog, a car and a chauffeur, and a limitless appetite for bathrooms, would pay for a merely apparent approximation to his fantastic requirements and what would be the minimum to frighten him off, and I was able to observe them and their accommodation without distraction while they were thus preoccupied.

Three or four charming places I found, quite full up but loth to refuse so tempting a feast of profit as I promised to be. They clung to me and it seemed easiest to let them cling for a bit. They lied to me, they pretended to me, they wheedled me, they charmed me and I did nothing to prevent them. I was particularly astonished by a deeply religious pension, I forget exactly where, with a sort of shrine to the Virgin upon a bracket in every room and, as the proprietress insisted - though I don't know why she should have repeated it four times — a water-closet on each half-landing. Perhaps because there were four halflandings and she was short of breath and found it nice to pause and open a door and have something to display. If it had been a skyscraper I should certainly have had a glut of water-closets, more than I could have ever used except upon a most exacting system. It was a family pension, the signs and sounds of children were abundant; evidently they were children accustomed to live frankly, controversially and at the tops of their voices, with their elders. The board outside proclaimed tennis and a parc. The 'tennis' - it was the first of an extremely interesting series I have viewed in Britanny — was an expanse of unrolled gravel amidst which children digging for treasure had left a pail and a spade, and as for the pare -! Where, I asked, was the pare?

The arm of the proprietress went from the tennis by way of the hens about our feet to the washing under the trees. Beyond the washing a docile young priest sat on an iron seat controlling his thoughts with a little book amidst a confused playing, screaming and hullabaloo of the offspring of less celibate pensionnaires. That was the 'pare'.

And in the matter of baths? Whenever M'sieu wished he could have a bath. Where? Wherever he wished. Brave little proprietress! How rarely in any country can one have baths for the wishing!

At Torquestol at last I found clean and seemly rooms vacant, giving on a pleasant view, and a credible visible bathroom with a definite position where one might count on finding it again and which could be monopolized for our use; it had taps and I tried them and they ran and the hot one was hot. I chose with very great care the very quietest rooms for Dolores and others less meticulously for myself, Bayard and the rest of our household, arranged for the

detached proximity of Auguste and the housing of the large impressive blue car of Dolores beside my smaller but speedier own, and my mission thus accomplished I lunched and then I spent my afternoon finding my way through a maze of minor roads, erratic deaf cows and helpful-spirited but incomprehensible peasants to Portumere, where I had occasion to talk to my friend Foxfield who is writing a book for my firm upon the biology of insects.

It was a difficult but not impossible cross-country journey. I won the toss at most of the turnings but I got into one nasty lane between wet ditches, from which I had to back for the worst half of a kilometre. It left me cheerful. My cheerfulness remained even after it had occurred to me that I wanted tea - though commonly the tea craving makes a devil of me. I arrived practically unruffled in spite of the fact that I had had a puncture near Belle-Isle-en-Terre and had changed my wheel so smartly and rapidly and with so bright a consciousness of my briskness that I had left the nice little rubber mat I took out of my car to kneel upon, abandoned on the highway.

CHAPTER TWO

Whether Life Is Happy

(Torquéstol, August 6th, 1934)

I feel there is going to be a change of key in what I am writing. Do what I can, I am not the extrovert I was during those first blessed days of release from Paris and my personal bothers. And the style will follow the mood. That Boswellian appreciativeness is no common phase with me; I cannot, as the movie directors say, 'hold it', gladly as I would, and here I am, hour by hour and line by line, subsiding towards my more habitual level, a line at which I think and plan, and am only intermittently attentive to the irrelevant things about me.

It is no good pretending to be amused when one is preoccupied. The reader, if he or she is the sort of reader I like, would see through that at once; you must take me as you find me.

My thoughts are no longer untrammelled. During the five days I spent with Foxfield at Portumere this gallant proposition of mine that life is on the whole happy was put through a very severe critical examination. Second thoughts may be best but they are rarely gayest. The idea had presented itself to me at Rennes with an air of such illuminating discovery that I demanded no credentials. I was pervaded by surprise that I had never observed it before. Hitherto it had been screened, I supposed, by an assumption that happiness was a rare light on a process largely dull or distressful.

Why had I allowed that assumption to stand in my way for so long? It was not, I felt, in the least true. In what manner had it got itself established in my mind? Happiness is the manifest rule of life. And so on, and so on - right ahead with it.

But Foxfield speedily destroyed that first, that almost blinding, vividness of realization, and brought my discovery down to the level of a merely alleged discovery. He debated it as a still open question Scenery and talk intermingle in my memory. I like this Brittany. It is new country to me and newer to me than I expected any region could

ever be again. No other scenery in the rest of my known world has the same firm yet gentle and clear and entirely distinctive green and grey lucidity. There is no crowding and no confusion. Finisterre is the appropriate name for it. There is definition and finality. Here things have come to a sort of conclusion. The world may go on elsewhere, endlessly, but not here. Here enduring granite meets the incessant sea and there is nothing more to be done about it.

Everything is here that tastes most human, from faith to fairyland; the gentle, solemn men have long silly ribbons hanging from their big black hats and the women wear costumes like our Elizabethan ancestresses; they know these are the right things to wear and so they go on wearing them inflexibly. Their faith is a marvellous thing. They not only believe in the Roman Catholic Church and its priests, lock, stock and barrel, but also in all their pre-Christian gods and goddesses, dressed up as saints, wizards, warlocks and fairy folk according to their temperamental quality.

They believe in superstitions more than anyone can tell, they believe in charms and they believe in patent medicines and that the way they live will endure for ever.

My memories of Portumere are of countless rocky headlands and islands stretching out one beyond the other to the horizon, of blue channels, bays, pools and races of water, viewed nakedly, or viewed between the stems of intense green trees and as a background to grey-white houses and intricate carven church spires, of excursions to special points of vantage to see this wonderful Breton coast higher and farther, and of walks over weedy tidal rocks encrusted with limpets, barnacles and an abundance of such passive creatures, of fine sands with the shrimps flying almost invisibly and of menacing little crabs scuttling aside from my feet, and all the time that now questioned assertion of the prevalence of happiness imposed itself upon these immediate things and Foxfield dominated the discussion and the scene.

We strolled and we motored, but not very far. The strolling stays most in my mind because then it was the better part of the talking was done. We made excursions in my automobile along incredibly narrow lanes and picnicked. We visited a Pardon, which is a sort of annual Major Sabbath, a gathering rather than a festival. And we

played tennis not to exhibit or perfect our skill but as the humble instruments of Providence.

There were three tennis courts in Portumere and we experienced them all. They are earth courts, of good red earth. Adamitic. One was marked out by deep furrows and as one player complained, there was 'trop de salade'; another was divided up by wooden strips, once level but now by reason of the wearing down of the surrounding earth, rising some inches above the general surface and so adding an element of danger to the general uncertainty; and the third, more level, had no perceptible lines marked out at all. The latter two courts were enclosed in netting like hen-runs through which large hens had burst at innumerable points, but the former was set in a receptive shrubbery. Tennis under such circumstances must either be generous and genial or delirious, suspicious and very bitter. We made it a function rather than a game and threw sidelights upon our discussion to one another while we hunted for five of the most ruse tennis balls I have ever known. They were tinted brick red and green and like so many of the lower animals they changed colour according to their surroundings.

Foxfield had found and made a circle of friends in this place, French, American and English scattered among hired houses and pensions, and he was, I began to fear, dissipating in talk very much that he ought to have been writing down for my firm. A distinguished figure in the literature of France lives here; his description of a date palm at sunset is said to be one of the finest pieces of French prose ever written; he and his family Were away and as a publisher who never forgets his mission I was sorry to miss them in general and him in particular, but there was a pleasant little pavilion amidst trees in the great man's garden which he had given Foxfield permission to use. Thither Foxfield, when he was not swimming, going for excursions, playing tennis, eating, sleeping or talking, would, I understood, resort and write my book. On the one occasion when I visited it the chief evidences of activity were two pipes in process of cleaning with feather and straws, the debris of a desperate struggle with a fountain pen and a number of the less known romances of Alexandre Dumas.

Foxfield is one of my discoveries. It is up to me to justify him to

my partners. They are a good set, but I hate to think there are criticisms they have to keep at the backs of their minds. Young Clews, I know, feels I have ideals and that he thinks is bad for a publishing business. He thinks I want the business to spread too wide and go too fast. He has never been reconciled to my living in France. I hate to bother Foxfield but still he must realize that I must make good with him. He has a big red talkative mouth with a vast fuzz of brindled black and grey hair, he looks at you through his spectacles like the lamps of a big car coming at you fast and rather out of control, and his voice is a rich continuum; I mean it flows along between words as well as in them, there is a lot of word material, so to speak, not made up into words, a richness, an intercalary hum rather like the drone of the bagpipes; but he knows everything there is to be known about biology, I believe, and he knows it and talks about it with a distinction all his own. I met him one night at the Planetarium Club, I listened enchanted and I was seized with the ambition to bottle a few books from this fountain of information, to our mutual advantage.

As a publisher I take myself seriously, I do my best to disseminate as good as I can get and on the whole my partners — they are junior partners, young Clews, Robinson and now Haggerston - have every reason to be content with the general result, but Foxfield has been giving us all a good deal of anxiety. He is behind time with his copy. He begins writing with vigour but he seems to run down if he is not looked after, and he has to be wound up again by my reproachful pursuit. This book of his is to be a plain treatment of life and evolution and what signs of a purpose may be in it all and, like Capek's play, only insects are to be in the cast. He is going to call it *Thursday's Lesson,* after the Fifth Day of Creation.

Personally I hate insects. Nothing has ever frightened me so much in my life as a praying mantis that once sat up at me and hissed. I wish God had taken Thursday off for rest and refreshment and gone on perhaps after Sunday to make up for it, but as it is here they are and I suppose we have to kill as many as we can and make the best of the others. We get cochineal from them anyhow, honey, silk, valuable moral lessons and now an increasing amount of biological information. Foxfield says that without the fruit fly there would be no

science of genetics worth talking about and that there is no general problem in his science that cannot be discussed most conveniently from etymological instances. And so I have merely stipulated that when the book is done he would not insist upon anything too repulsively creepy and crawly appearing on the outside wrapper.

I had meant to talk to him mainly about business, I had meant to set him an edifying example of relevancy, of resistance to discursive tendencies, of sound practical common sense and all the qualities in which we differ most conspicuously, but my newfound idea that pessimism is an error and a morbid habit of mind, and that life is generally happy, interested him so much and interested me so much and kept us both so preoccupied that now I am back here at Torquéstol I cannot remember whether I ever discussed the question of deferring publication of *Thursday's Lesson* at all, and I suppose I shall have to write to him about it presently. As soon that is as I have written this. But he thrust a very nasty wedge of doubt into my conviction, a wedge I am still unable to extract completely. As soon as I get that wedge out I shall go thoroughly into the whole question of the book. What made his objections more effective was that he really seemed to want to be in agreement with me.

A large part of the world of life, lectured Foxfield, can be left out of this question altogether. The bees and the butterflies are neither here nor there in it. They know nothing of happiness. They rejoice as much as and no more than the bubbles in a fountain. All life above the level of such merely chemical things as bacteria, he admitted, seems to be run upon a pleasure-pain system, to be attracted, that is, by this and repelled by that, but the response of a rootlet or an amoeba is so prompt and complete that the sensation must be discharged as soon as it has had time to exist. Before it has had time to 'register'. Let alone that there are no apparent means by which it can register. There can be hardly more hope or fear in a rootlet as it pushes its way through the soil and turns aside from an obdurate rock, than there is in the thread of water that pours windingly into a rock pool as the tide comes in. Yet each can have a very eager, searching air about its movements, which our imagination, mind you, imposes upon it. 'Mind you,' says Foxfield, pinning you down. It is his stock phrase. He sticks out his chin when he says it. In his

manuscript it appears so often that it has become a sort of hieroglyphic, a flash of the pen. Which I blue-pencil automatically and instruct the printer's reader to glean after me.

Foxfield doubts if the fierce little crabs who retire sideways, threatening me with their claws upheld, until they can sink out of sight in the sand, have much more retentiveness than a rootlet. They give no signs of, they have no use for memory; they must live in mere flashes of fear, anger and appetite, in a myriad of disconnected moments. The fear of your footfall and shadow dies out and is forgotten. A new picture of life dawns in the little crustacean brain ganglion as the former fades away. Conscious life in them is an incoherent sand of disconnected elations and alarms. They never suffer from their pains, never enjoy their pleasures. At their brightest they are walking in their sleep. Pity is as much wasted on a crab or lobster as on a fluttering leaf. Seven-eighths of the animal world is permanently anaesthetized, declared Foxfield. 'Except that it doesn't need to be anaesthetized, mind you. Memory need not be paralysed — for that is all an anaesthetic does - because memory has not yet been born.'

It is only, he declares, when we see creatures manifestly receiving impressions and not discharging the stimulus in outward action, but evoking memories, reviving something learnt, hesitating and forming decisions, that we are justified in imagining agreeable and disagreeable states of mind sufficiently coherent and sustained to come within our range of sympathy. Here at last a primitive happiness and unhappiness is dawning. Foxfield doubts, he says, if any creature, not vertebrated, has that much conscious life.

But an octopus remembers, the man at the Nice aquarium told me. Foxfield wants to talk to that man. Ants, he admits grudgingly, may have moments of fussy solicitude. He doubts even if any fish has much more conscious life than my liver has or at most than my brain has when, in deep sleep, unwatched and unsuspected dreams chase one another through its cells from nothingness to forgetfulness. Reptiles again do not seem to play; they have the vacuous seriousness of machines. It is only within the warm realms of fur and feather that we find any certain manifestation of the capacity to be happy. Birds, cats and dogs, calves and mice sit and seem to think,

lark about, are interested, delighted, dismayed or depressed. Anatomically we find they have organs for the retention of nervous impressions without any immediate outward response just as we have. It is that retention which brings in the preference or the repulsion, the happiness or the unhappiness. They look, they listen, they wind you, and the only immediate return in outward action is that they sniff for further information. The new impressions pile up inside, reverberate among the established reflexes, agreeably or disagreeably. They take something in and it works there. Here certainly must be continuities kindred to, if not as sustained as, the continuities in our own minds.

I conceded Foxfield his butterflies and retreated to the gambolling lamb and the tail-chasing kitten, but Foxfield went on taking the joy out of the universe. Still, if he was taking out joy he was also taking out suffering to correspond. He was narrowing the field of happiness but he was not tilting any balance against it. He was also narrowing the field of misery.

How far, he inquired, is the happiness of these nearer creatures conscious of itself? Do these beasts know they are unhappy or happy? Our own states of mind are often inconsecutive and disconnected but they do generally refer to a self, conscious of its states. Happiness looks backwards and forward and centres on an idea of self. Its richness depends on the associations it involves. Has a cat an idea of itself? A dog has but Foxfield was not so sure of a cat. Dogs seem capable of self- reproach, but had I ever detected any introspective quality in a cat? Does a cat ever tell itself: 'I am treated unjustly. My life is an unhappy one'?

When a cat basks in the sun does it say: 'This is good'?

'You don't know some of the cats I have known,' I told Foxfield. 'Nothing on earth will persuade me that that black cat I have in Paris is not as capable of self-congratulation as any man. Have you never watched a cat sitting up on the mat and blinking at a fire?'

Dolores, by the by, hates my cat. It is a large clean black cat with perfect manners; it is a tom-cat whose morals have been put beyond suspicion. It likes to sit near me and it will never sit near her. On some private occasion it has explained its view of life to her pet Bayard, and the little beast never goes near it except by its grace and

condescension. Sometimes when I am too long in London Dolores threatens to have it poisoned. If Dolores addresses it directly or if her voice rises and she seems set for talking, it drops *plump* to the ground and goes quickly but softly to the door and waits to be let out.

'You may have your cats,' said Foxfield, reflecting upon it impartially, with his spectacles consulting the horizon. 'You are probably right about cats.'

2

The other day, just before I started upon this trip, I spent half an hour in silent and sympathetic proximity to a big rusty-red orang-outang in the Jardin d'Acclimatation. He is that sort of orang-outang which has a flat expansion of the cheeks on either side so that its face, so far as its lower parts are concerned, looks like a mask. It seems to wear those huge jaw's and lips like something that has been imposed upon it, and over them very intelligent light-brown eyes look out with an expression of patient resignation upon the world. So it has pleased God.

Sometimes those quiet eyes would scrutinize me, mildly speculative, sometimes they watched other spectators or brooded upon the baboons in an adjacent cage, whose sins were as scarlet.

My sage moved rarely, to scratch his chest or his arm thoughtfully and once to yawn. But even in captivity and already perhaps mortally sick, for these great apes acquire tuberculosis and suchlike human infections with a terrible readiness, he gave no sign of unhappiness. Those little hazel eyes were wise and tranquil. Captive and ill, he had every reason to be unhappy, but I do not think he was unhappy. If I could have changed consciousnesses with him and got into that cokernut head of his, I think I should have perceived a small weak childish interest in spectators, in baboons - like a child looking out of a window — little imaginations set going by these sights and nothing else. I doubt if he was worried and distressed in the least by his captivity. Quite possibly, but not certainly, he would have been happier in his native forest, but he did not know that. He had forgotten his native forest, or remembered it and the parental nest only in dreams. There may have been terror in these dreams and it

may have been reassuring to wake in the large secure cage again. I think he was still to be counted as a mild fragment of at least contentment.

Before I last crossed to Paris from London I saw a film called *Simba,* done by that courageous, enterprising and interesting couple Mr and Mrs Hope Johnson; it gave the most intimate views of wild animals grazing, prowling, drinking. The sight of a whole herd of giraffes galloping round in slow motion was something I shall not easily forget. The up and down of the balancing heads was delightful. But that's by the way. My impression of the bearing of these lions, wildebeestes, giraffes, elephants and antelopes, snapped unawares, was one, not indeed of vivid delight, but of a satisfied contentment, and that is my impression also of the domestic animals I see about me. It has been suggested that the lives of wild things are 'fear-haunted'. Fear, I admit, is always ready to jump out upon wild life, but that it 'haunts' them is just what *Simba* helps me to deny. You want a more elaborate brain before such haunting can begin. And as Foxfield insists, animals will not endure unhappiness any more than they will endure pain. They begin to do something about it. It may be something very rash and destructive, but it shunts energy from suffering to action. Even if they kill themselves the pain is at an end.

He was not very reassuring, however, about the amount of pleasure relative to pain and of disagreeable states relative to agreeable states, among animals. An animal, he holds, even if it has not the intelligence to be continuously unhappy, may be discontinuously unhappy over a large part of its life and still live. There was nothing in his biological science to assure us that that is impossible. Foxfield squatting in judgment on a rocky slab at Portumere, slowly drying his hairy chest and shoulders with a towel and occasionally stopping altogether to think, would for no consideration endorse that extreme preponderance of happiness I had seen, as in a vision, at Rennes. He thought that by the nature of things and taking a long stretch of time, happiness may 'preponderate considerably' over unhappiness, but not necessarily at any one time nor in the case of every species.

Most species in existence must be 'reasonably well adapted' to their conditions or they would not be in existence. In a species

reasonably well adapted to its conditions the average individual must be fairly well off by the standards of its nature. The inferior individuals will be going under in the struggle for existence and having a bad time, that one cannot help, that is Nature's universal way; but theirs will be the shortest lives, soonest over. They won't drag on. And the best adjusted will live longest and put in larger lumps of appreciative living. 'Life refuses to carry pain,' said Foxfield. 'It couldn't live on, if it didn't.' Pain is Nature's invitation to rebel. It is Nature's way of making the beast realize, 'This won't do.' The beast rebels, refuses, and it becomes a case of kill or cure. 'And when it comes to human unhappiness,' said Foxfield, emerging from the shirt he was putting on and staring at me with the inexpressive face of science: 'I suppose the same thing holds.'

He seized his trousers and put them on, so lost in thought that it was only when he found some novel difficulty in adjusting his braces, that he realized he had drawn them on rear foremost. 'Blast,' he said, and set himself to put matters right. When this trouble occurred I was going to ask whether it might not be possible for a human being to find a sort of happiness in the elaboration of unhappiness. Certain perplexing things about Dolores were in my mind, but the fascination of watching Foxfield think out his trouser trouble, including an interesting phase when he had both legs in one trouser, drove my point completely out of my mind at the time. When at length he was properly trousered and he could sit on his rock again, he pushed his hair away from the earnest outlook of his spectacles and resumed our former discourse. 'Mind you,' he said, 'I disagree with Paley from the outset.'

'Paley?'

Paley, he reminded me, opened his *Evidences* by declaring that the world is manifestly made for the happiness of the creatures living therein. So Paley was of my opinion.

'There,' said Foxfield, 'you have the considered opinion of a cultivated intelligence in the later eighteenth century. That to him was *obvious,* something no one would wish to dispute.'

Was it generally true that creatures well adapted to survive lived lives that were mainly pleasant? Foxfield, sitting like a biological judge, ruled that it was. Of course the life of many quite well adapted

species was a life of massacre, but that did not mean that it was unpleasant. Consider the frog. Thousands of tadpoles were killed for every one that dropped its tail and got out of the water, and the little frogs suffered a similar slaughter before the few survivors grew up, but they lived cheerfully enough until the blow fell. It was just their careless gaiety got them killed. Being killed, he said, wasn't unhappiness unless you thought about if beforehand. Did any creature do that but man?

What are the chief factors of unhappiness? Present pain, fear, grief, but that passes, disappointment and frustration. 'Frustration,' Foxfield repeated, 'frustration', as one might fumble at a clue.

'Is anything more unhappy than a chained dog?' he asked.

'Or a caged bird?' I contributed.

'Worse than vivisection. People overrate the agonies of vivisection and underrate cages and chains and the dismal lives of pets dragging through their days with every instinct suppressed...'

Bayard panting under the sympathy of Dolores but knowing no better life and so quite unconscious of the reason for his yapping viciousness, occurred to me.

3

Foxfield pursued his argument. In a species generally adapted to its environment, living under the same conditions as hundreds of thousands of previous generations, it was only reasonable to assume that the normal life was pleasant. And taking life all over, most species seem to have lived mainly in phases of balance or with conditions changing so slowly that they could vary to meet the new requirements. That gave a considerable preponderance of happiness in the past history of conscious life.

But that ceased to be the case if for a time conditions changed too fast. Then the species became a misfit. Only exceptional individuals would get along easily; the percentage of failures and of more or less frustrated individuals would rise. There was reason to suppose that a species undergoing extinction or undergoing violent modification was in many cases living very unpleasantly indeed. Not always. You could imagine extinction without unhappiness as well as extinction

with much pain and misery. Supposing the frog's surroundings remained the same as they are now except that some extraordinarily skilful and voracious frog-eating animal appeared. All the frogs might ultimately be consumed, but until that time arrived the individual frog, blind to the massacre of his fellows and lacking all statistical sense or racial solicitude, would hop about very cheerfully. But suppose the adverse change in conditions was not a new frog eater but a change of frog-food supply - from easily digestible to unsuitable food! That would make every individual uncomfortable. A whole species then might be in distress and pass distressfully towards extinction.

'Elephants,' Foxfield remarked in parenthesis, 'suffer greatly from wind. They go about the African forests making borborygmic noises. Travellers remark upon the overwhelming smell a herd of elephants leaves behind it. It seems improbable that this was the original state of affairs. Something has changed about their food — even in the forest.'

There may have been epochs in the world's history, epochs of exceptional geographical and climatic change, when most existing forms of life would be living discordantly and disagreeably, the whole creation groaning and travailing, living in unsuitable climates, walking on uncongenial soils, eating indigestible foods.

'And when we come to man,' said Foxfield and paused.

'No other animal seems to be aware of death. Of all creatures man alone knows that he must die. From the individual point of view every human life ends in frustration and this fact casts its shadow before it.'

I objected that few people thought about that. They managed not to do so. They thought of other things. And most of those who find the idea troublesome, resort to the belief in an immortal soul... Not all, though.

'Man' — Foxfield weighed the consideration— 'certainly has great powers of suppressing disagreeable facts and thoughts. He contrives not to think about unpleasant or unflattering things. But what happens at the back of his mind? Isn't there an uneasiness? Aren't most human beings now, au fond, uneasy?'

Give him time — and he does not need nearly so much time as an

animal because his adjustments are mental and not organic — give him time and man will reconcile himself to the most astonishing changes in his conditions. Nevertheless, some time is needed, and at present the conditions of human life are changing so rapidly as to outpace his utmost adaptability. His knowledge and power increase faster than the wisdom of his conduct. In his past as the fact of the coming of death dawned upon his increasing intelligence, he could evoke the dream of immortality. Every concession and humiliation that he had to accept as his social organization developed, for the history of human societies is a history of suppressions, produced its consolations and mental compensations. The civilization which culminated in Europe in the seventeenth century developed slowly enough for minds to be attuned to it. It was homely, it was limited by our standards, but it had wide stretches of contentment. There was much incidental crime and cruelty no doubt in that departing world, purple patches and streaks of livid colour, but they were in proportion. They interrupted but they did not upset the rhythm of that civilized life. It flowered, and its flowering was its undoing, it engendered chateaux and country houses where leisure begot curiosity and science, it tolerated and fostered the kingly sport of war, and so it prepared its own dissolution.

I described to Foxfield how I had found the seventeenth century still holding out in Rennes and what a pleasant life it had seemed to me.

Foxfield declared that human life at large, from China to San Francisco, was still being carried on by what I had just called seventeenth-century traditions. Most of our race cling still to homely comfort, live their lives within concepts of national loyalty and decent morality, of industry and mild effort and saving and seemly success, of restrained and private joys, of gentle social intercourse, firm but unobtrusive display and temperate rivalries and mutual criticism, of little treats and local interests keenly appreciated. To be continually busy about a mildly varied series of small things is still the common desire of mankind. By not thinking too much of the end of things and taking the priests' assurance about it, death was robbed of its sting. Extreme unction was a great invention — for the troubled survivor. 'Not an unhappy life,' said Foxfield, 'not by any

means an unhappy life... But it has notice to quit. And the notice, mind you, is getting urgent.

‘Fate offers a greater human life to mankind now, a *vaster* life,’ Foxfield went on. ‘This is a platitude now. Man can fly, he can travel swiftly to the ends of the earth, see and hear everything that happens about his globe, satisfy all his needs with an ever- diminishing exertion and then, facing a monstrous leisure, find himself superfluous even for his own needs... And there you are!’

‘Hoist by his own petard,’ said I mechanically.

By a moment’s silence Foxfield featured his distaste for stale phrases even in the mouth of a publisher he has to propitiate, and then he resumed the tenor of his discourse.

Either, he said, man has to adapt himself consciously to the new, the larger and the appallingly strenuous and dangerous way of living he has opened to himself, or as a species he has to suffer some complex biological degringolade. He may differentiate into conflicting species, into hunter and prey, master parasite and slave host; or he may blunder down violently to complete extinction. The one thing he could not do was to stay at where he was and at what he was at the present time.

Foxfield enlarged upon that and I wish I could reproduce his words, the flow of sounds upon which they were conveyed, his earnestness, his spectacles, his abundant black and white streaked hair, now getting into the conversation and now blowing away out of it. He made human destiny look like a madly plunging horse - with an amateur in the saddle, an amateur who began by being too indolent to ride it and then became too scared. And the horse wasn’t a horse either. It became a bristling nightmare that not only grew vaster and wilder but threw out spikes and bayonets and spurred its rider murderously through the saddle.

More and more of the old social order, prophesied Foxfield, will dissolve and tumble into a chaos that may or may not give place to a new creation. There were no biological precedents to guide us to a prophecy of the outcome, because man’s limited but incessant intelligence makes his case unique.

‘But here,’ said Foxfield, with the emotional impartiality of the scientific man; ‘here surely are all the necessary conditions for an

extreme and almost universal unhappiness. Here,' said Foxfield with the manner of one who holds up a small specimen of a rare species, 'here is a world that the mechanisms we have invented insist we must either unify or smash, and to unify it and adapt ourselves to it means the elimination of whole classes of nationally and socially important people. These classes, which ought to be superseded now, will probably refuse either to learn or to vanish. *Probably?* - a high degree of probability. They will show fight. They will feel a certain romantic pride in showing fight. They will hurt and be hurt. And mind you, it isn't only adaptation they will resist, it is also the mass unsettlement of the workers, released to a dangerous leisure as they will be by mechanism, that they will have to fear also - and have every cause to fear. That stares them in the face. It is the outstanding aspect of the situation for them. They may display unexpected tenacity and turn an unknown proportion of our power and machinery to defensive and destructive ends. They are in fact doing that.

'Of course individuals die, generations die and take prejudices and obsessions with them. Death makes for progress. Some of us try to give new ideas to the new generation. You do. But are you getting it over to them? There's not much time, mind you.

'Machines, mind you, are continually diminishing the need for toil and toilers, and most human beings at the present level are fit for nothing else. How can we suddenly make them fit for anything else? What else? Education you say. But education for what? What is to be the new economy, the new functions? Peasant food production was an absolute necessity up to a hundred years ago; now it is totally unnecessary — but the tenacious peasant is a very real and present fact. On the one hand, you see we have superfluous classes holding on, on the other, superfluous masses in the industrial regions and impoverished peasants rooted wherever the soil is good, masses and peasants with no purchasing power or with diminishing purchasing power and yet with ever more vividly stimulated appetites and resentments. Man with nothing to do is a wretched man and often a dangerous man. Are we to massacre the unproductive? Even if we support them they will be intolerably wretched. Something, mind you, has to be done.

‘Mechanical and scientifical progress has abolished not only the need for gross population, but also that infantile and general mortality that once kept population within practicable limits. Even if population ceases to increase, even if it diminishes, you will still have superfluous people. It is not a question of totals; it is a question of proportion. The fewer the consumers, the less work will there be to do. The need for children is less and will diminish, and that makes an increasing proportion of the women in the world superfluous as mothers, home-makers and — in any honourable sense of the word — women. Frustration and perversion of all their distinctive instincts may presently become the common lot of women. As a matter of fact from the point of view of preserving the species a woman’s sexual impulses are a remarkably poor and inadequate bunch of instincts. In the animal stages lust was good enough to set them to work; now women know better. They may tempt and waste men, but there are limits set to the temptability of the irritable yet so easily exhausted - so easily exhausted’, he repeated with a remarkable note of lamentation in his voice - ‘male. For the common women even more plainly than for common men, there opens the possibility of leisure without scope or resources and lives without any ulterior significance.

‘Our world,’ he reiterated, ‘is haunted by the superfluous dissatisfied woman. She darkens the sky.’

For an instant I wondered whether I had ever talked to him about Dolores, but his next sentence reassured me.

‘*You*,’ said Foxfield, ‘with your innate hopefulness, your sound instinct for what sells a book and your natural desire to do it by books, school books, encyclopaedias and so on, may say that all this *can* be faced, controlled and guided into a new happy life for mankind. A tremendous education that will have to be. Every living person a gentleman or a fine lady — and all of them skilled workers! I am not so sure, Wilbeck. Not sure at all — very doubtful. Very very doubtful. I do not say you are wrong, mind you, but I cannot admit you are right. No science at present can say whether you are right or wrong. There is a superfluity of low-grade activity now in human life, a tremendous gadding about, a superfluity of sexual appetite, a still greater superfluity of the desire for excitement, an accumulation

of resentment and restlessness. And *where's* your new education? The whole creation frets together for it. Adaptation means an incalculable amount of unhappiness before even the *way* to that new happy life of yours on a higher level, and as wide as the world, is made plain. If ever it is made plain. You yourself admitted that the pleasant glow in Rennes was a sunset glow. Show me anywhere - anywhere on the entire planet - a dawn.'

Thus Foxfield...

What I ought to have said to him was that one can never say at any particular moment, 'This is the dawn or there is the dawn'. His was an unreasonable demand. One can mark the exact moment of sunrise indeed but then sunrise is a definite event. It is the confirmation of a day already established. Unfortunately I did not think of that at the time. But to me there is a dawn.. apparent — surely. It has been apparent ever since the Renaissance. It is a big process and I give it a long period. It has the diffused imperceptibly increasing quality of every dawn. People's minds move towards ideas of a 'world order'; more and more of us take the measure of the complex of problems involved. The steadily increasing sales of my *Way of the World* series is good evidence for that. A straw in the wind, but a good omen nevertheless.

People *want* the knowledge they ought to have...

That new world order will not turn out to be the dreadful disappointment the aesthetic highbrows anticipate. The prestige of old institutions melts away, things which today still seem full of traditional sawdust may crumple and fall tomorrow. The Dark Ages are in many respects still here but they draw to an end. The inundation of the western world by the dogmatic Judaeo-Christian mythology was a vast intellectual catastrophe that left man's understanding of life buried deeply under a silt of fear, error and intolerance. This Christian era has been an age of muttered criticisms, some irony and pretty acute misery for finer intelligences. Every generation produced intelligences. Every generation produced intelligences acute enough to see through it. It must have seemed to those exceptional people as though the human mind was to be suppressed henceforth for ever. Nevertheless, there is a magnificent bias for truth in the heart of man. He whispered, he mocked, he

blasphemed. Century after century intelligence has been struggling back and bit by bit our vision of life has recovered lucidity.

First cosmogony emerged, the world which Christian ignorance had stamped upon and flattened out was rolled up again and measured and the stars were set back in their places, then as biology developed, that absurd story of Adam and his irascible Creator faded out, the fires of hell sank and the Fall lost its date, and now in the interpretation of history and our standards of conduct we free our minds from its last lingering obsessions with that great misconception of life. Ethical concepts are being reconstructed. Our manners improve. We control and allay our fretfulness. We get new ideas of what our 'selves' are, and realize the hallucinations of egotism.

And in just the measure we liberate ourselves from the crude expectations of a more childish past, in the same measure do we anticipate and escape the consequent disappointments. Because things may presently be strange by our current way of thinking there is no reason why they should not be gay in another fashion. When they come about there will be new ways of thinking. We shall be dead and all our values with us. Where I could take issue with Foxfield is in his assertion of the excessive rapidity of change today — in relation to the adaptability of man. I admit the rapidity of the change, but I deny the necessary slowness of the adaptations required of us. We are not so inadaptable; he overrates our power to forget.

He underrates how widely a new generation can be educated away from old feelings. Human beings are obstinate but not really conservative. In less than a third of a century, for example, there has been an immense change in sexual morals; why should equivalent changes in political and economic conduct be impossible? There need not be that age of catastrophic unhappiness Foxfield saw fit to evoke - ungratefully, I thought, with that sea-reflected sunshine dancing all over him. It may happen but it need not happen.

After all he isn't infallible; he is capable of putting on a perfectly correct pair of trousers the wrong way round. I think he puts some facts the wrong way round. I believe that by the time change has altogether dissolved the material supports of this pleasant, fairly industrious, reasonably wary, moderately pious, patriotic,

sentimental, family life which is still and which has been for hundreds of generations the normal life of civilized mankind, it is possible and probable that a new generation will be quite ready for, and indeed be living brightly in the next phase. Harder for us to imagine than for them to live in. That may well be as happy a generation as ours. Quite possibly very much happier.

Which, by the by, is why I stick to publishing.

One has to do things, since one cannot always be Boswell observant. Also one must live oneself. I could not smile at the pleasant spectacle of provincial Rennes all unawares of the march of events to supersede it, did I not feel I was helping make another frame of active contentment when Rennes and its like are over. I explain and justify myself to myself as a collector and distributor of creative ideas. I have chosen to be the servant of, and a part of, this greater new world that struggles to exist, and not of the old world that is crumbling away. In this my position as the inheritor of the major interest in a publishing business coincides very happily with my line of thought. If ideas can keep pace with material change all will be well. But the ideas will have to travel hard to do that. I'm a postillion in the world of mind and the pace is my business. I can be happy in this world. I like this queer trade of a publisher. The business side I do with an effort, but not unsuccessfully. My partners are good associates, critical but amenable, they believe in me and our staff is a fine one.

As I threaded my way back from Portumere to Torquestol I turned conclusively against Foxfield's coming Age of Miserable Leisure. Nothing of that sort is going to happen. I admit that through this inevitable phase of universal change ahead there are bound to be no end of misfits, riddles of adjustment, frustrations and the ache of impotent leisure, but all such things may still remain manageable. I grant the probable billions of distressful cases, the hardships of learning and the hardship of failing to learn the new ways, but not the universal tragedy. There are as good worlds in the womb of time as ever came out of it.

At any rate, I remain cheerful — if only through some inner necessity. Cheerfulness will prevail. I believe it in my bones. Our authors, my collection mainly, criticize this present world to rags; it

is what they are for, but they jest and whistle at their work because they believe they clear the site for greater things. Of course you know my *Way of the World* series. You must know it. It has developed collaterals and thrown out a sort of twin system in America. There I work hand in hand with Lenormand. For all its faults this book propaganda of ours is doing an educational task that the universities fail to do - and doing it cheerfully. Doubts are wholesome, but if I can help it, we will never issue a blankly pessimistic book to founder souls in trouble.

While there is a chance of the world getting through its troubles I hold that a reasonable man has to behave as though he was sure of it. If at the end your cheerfulness is not justified, at any rate you will have been cheerful.

Dolores is all the other way. Years ago I said my luckiest day was the day when I was born. She has never forgotten that. She still quotes it against me at lunches or dinners and suchlike social occasions. Her birth, she holds, was a wrong done to her, a tragedy. Somewhere she has caught up the phrase 'I was sentenced to life'. Yet she sticks to life in gross and in detail with an extraordinary tenacity-just as she sticks to me. That does not hinder her in the least from abusing both of us continually, life I mean and me. Criticizing, she would call it; she will never admit that it is irrational abuse. Her penetration beneath the deceits of life, she insists, is her misfortune. I wish it were not also mine. Her radiating antagonism, she feels, is the proof of her intellectual distinction. She thinks it is original to contradict. She feels to surrender is to agree.

CHAPTER THREE

The Marrying of Dolores

(Torquestol, August 9th, 1934)

In spite of various distractions of my attention, I have stuck to the task of putting my talk with Foxfield on record before it began to seep away into the general mass of my thoughts and experiences. My notes may have a lot too much theorizing about life and its possibilities in them for your taste, but after all this is my book and not yours. If you confront me with the alternative I prefer theorizing to pleasing you. You can go to some other book if you do not like this one, or write a book to your own measure.

This may seem insolence but there is really more insolence in pandering and writing down to the reader. For that is to assume that he cannot think out his own ideas for himself and wants you to think them out for him, it is calling him dull, calling him ego- centred. I do not publish these propitiatory authors if I can help it and I certainly do not intend to be one myself. I am writing about Happiness, Happiness at large and Happiness apropos of Dolores here, because I find them profoundly interesting and for no other reason.

Anyhow I have enough to bother me just now without considering a reader's reactions. With the best will in the world to go on being happy, I am not happy. I am not amused. I am no longer genial. Why should I not admit it? I may be happy again presently — my texture is elastic - but just now I feel that I shall never be happy again. I feel like a bird put back in its cage. Dolores and Marie her maid are installed here with Auguste and the big car, not to mention Bayard the Pekinese; she came by road after all and not by rail because of the bother of coming from the mainline station by the branch hither; Bayard has been slightly run down and needed professional attention; and I have had a phase of irritability - for the most part controlled and concealed - that has made my writing quite difficult enough without any literary tricks and graces. Endless small distracting exasperations arose out of the arrival. But I think I have

now got the framework of the matter sketched out.

Let me recapitulate a little and find out how far my train of thought has travelled. First station; exhilarated by speed and fresh air I thought I had discovered that happiness was the common background of life. But Foxfield did his earnest best to deflate that discovery. Now at the second station I am left asking myself whether I have discovered anything more than that *a priori,* living things *ought* to be happy - and that on two exceptionally sunny days most of those I encountered seemed to be so.

Perhaps language misleads us here and makes the positive thing seem the negative thing and vice versa? If after all I am right, and happiness is the norm, then it is happiness which is the temporary, outstanding and interesting fact that has to be dealt with. At any rate, it was really unhappiness and not happiness that Foxfield and I discussed. We discussed the conditions under which unhappiness appears. It can appear only in the case of a creature with memory and foresight and even with such creatures it appears only in the stresses of imperfect adaptation. Speaking from a scientific standpoint such phases ought to be minor chapters in the experience of life. Change is rarely abrupt and convulsive. When change is gradual one may assume a steady discouragement and elimination of the imperfectly adapted and a steady advantage of the happy. Life is self-adjusting.

Under fairly stable conditions all species of sentient creature should, generation by generation, be getting happier. But nowadays change is no longer gradual and we are in such a state of stress as no life has ever encountered before. Man in the last few score thousand years has been changing his conditions with an increasing violence and throwing not only himself but incidentally most other surviving mammals out of gear. God knows what man *hasn't* thrown out of gear in the past hundred years. Man is a biological catastrophe. Hence now, in this age, in this particular epoch in the history of living creatures, we have a monstrous amount of misfitting. We have a big and increasing proportion of individuals, not only men but animals, whose feelings, impulses, instincts and traditions are out of harmony with the realities that close in upon them. Consider the horses. Consider the hunt for wild creatures that is going on everywhere. Consider our clearings and sprayings and ploughings.

Consider the frantic terror of a forest fire. Were there ever forest fires before we came? We harry all life.

This diagnosis of the biological situation, as Foxfield and I worked it out, is the modern form of the dogmas of the Fall and Original Sin. It is a scientific statement replacing a myth to explain an almost universally recognized contemporary reality. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth — now.

My talk with Foxfield and my return here have brought my train of thought back towards its own hidden origins. It is possible that beneath the conscious surface of my mind there has been another flow of ideas going on and that my sudden discovery of happiness when I motored to Rennes was only a vivid and conscious reaction to suppressed because unwelcome perplexities. Or, in other words, Dolores has come aboard that train of thought now, the personification of human discontent, the living indictment of my happiness theory; she and her beastly little dog, her woes, her spites and quarrels and all her baggage, and I am no longer an irresponsible passenger. What is engaging my attention more and more and distracting it from all the larger aspects of life is the distressful immediate problem of close association with an unhappy, increasingly aggressive fellow creature, and what I am to do about her. She will not let me be happy with her and I do not seem to be able to get away from her. Though I have lengthened our phases of separation I am still with her altogether too much. What am I to do?

And what is the world to do with sad, insatiable, malignant, quarrelsome, grievance-cherishing people? Why must it suffer them?

I am afraid the sparkle has gone out of the wine I broached so cheerfully a week ago and somehow I haven't the power to open another bottle now. At times I can laugh at Dolores but just at present I am altogether too much up against her for laughter.

I saw to it that my room was on a different floor from the bedroom and sitting-room she occupies and so I am able to relieve my feelings by writing a thoroughly frank and unqualified chapter about her without fear of interruption. There is nothing else to be done.

Here goes for the case of *Stephen Wilbeck contra Dolores.*

For some years now Dolores has been building up a system of claims upon me and everyone about her, upon the basis that she is *sad.* She poses more and more definitely as an ailing woman acutely disappointed by me and the world. She charges the whole universe with unworthiness. Her mournful eyes survey a summer morning and she knows that it is deceiving her. A wayside crucifix could not protest against earthly cheerfulness more resolutely than she does.

There has always been a certain disposition on her part towards the profession of melancholy. And she is habitually prone to disapprove, condemn and if she can, punish. Latterly these tendencies have become more marked. Since she constitutes my essential household and is my necessary chief companion, so far as I have household or companion, I am forced into the position of a judge between her and this world she by habit and some incomprehensible necessity indicts. War, pestilence, famine and Dolores cannot shake my conviction that it might be a much worse world than it is. It may be lurid, grotesquely cruel at times, mean and arid at times, it is in a phase of neurasthenia, it is out of sorts, it needs a *cure* now, yet even now, at moments it can be amazingly gay, kind, lovely and exalting. It is a two-sided world. She will not hear of that. 'You are so easily deceived,' she says. 'You are as credulous and changeable as a child. You can be pleased by anything, you can be generous to anyone — except me.'

That is her general attitude. But she is also a woman of subsidiary attitudes. 'You *would* say that,' she says. 'But if one day *I* praised the world you would make some sneering joke about it.'

And indeed quite possibly I should be astonished to the pitch of hilarious comment.

Yesterday evening was saddened by an almost criminal negligence on my part. I forget anniversaries. I am not a neolithic agriculturist and I leave the calendar to my secretary far away now in London. Summer and winter, sun and rain, weekends, the spring and autumn publishing seasons, such loose anniversaries are good enough for me. But Dolores reminds me of cardinal dates, and more particularly of any forthcoming date when a carefully chosen present would be appropriate. This time because of all our coming and going either she failed to give the hint or I overlooked it. So on this 17th of

August I walked into her room in my pyjamas to say goodnight to her as though it was just any night. Even the subtle scent of jasmin which is Dolores' passionate intimation, did nothing to mark the importance of the day.

I drew back the window curtains to look at the town and church sleeping under the moonlight. 'I love the lines of those roofs,' I said. 'And those slender trees.'

I made one or two other remarks and became aware of a portentous lack of response. Not a word. Not a movement. I turned sharply to find Dolores sitting up in her bed, pale and intent, a dark hank of hair over one resentful eye and her long, lean, silver-bangled arms about her knees.

'Don't come near me,' she said.

'No?'

'Go away from me.'

I came and seated myself on the bed. 'Well?' I asked.

'This is the seventeenth of August,' she said. 'I gave myself to you — thirteen years ago. Thirteen years!'

'Darling,' I parried. 'It's so difficult to find anything worthy of you in Torquestol.'

'You forgot altogether.'

'Moving about,' I pleaded lamely.

'You have eaten up my life.'

'Hardly — *eating*.'

'You have eaten up my life.'

I made no further attempt to quibble.

'In those days I was young, happy, rich, free.'

I was in no position to contradict her. The discussion of her pre-marital position involves many complicated issues.

'Look at me now!'

'Most attractive, my dear, but a little thorny and difficult.'

'A broken woman.'

3

It is thirteen years ago then that Dolores made that supreme sacrifice, almost in despite of me. Thirteen years is a considerable piece to take

out of the middle of a lifetime, out of hers as well as out of mine. Yet it comes with a certain effect of surprise to discover that we have left this tap running for thirteen years. Thirteen years. I am in my forty-sixth year and already nearly a decade past the better half of life.

I was thirty-two then and we met for the first time a week or ten days before. We were both staying at the Hotel Pension Malta between St Juan and Antibes, I with a small group of friends and she with a Swiss photographer, Fraulein Kettner, rather older than herself. My friends were conscientiously cheering me up after my earlier matrimonial disaster. For I had been divorced already. I had had to give my wife a divorce.

I was understood to have behaved very handsomely to Alice, though as a matter of fact I was never of that opinion. But I saw no reason whatever at the time to fuss about the judgments that were passed on us. No discredit attached to either of us. The truth about our affair was not so much distorted as simplified by the omission of most of the essential facts. She remarried and I went my way — ostensibly a lonely man. There were attempts to console me, not unpleasant attempts, for the nineteen-twenties were easy years, but none of my consolations took a permanent form until Dolores grasped my situation.

I had joined up early in 1915 and served most of my time on the western front, getting nothing more serious than a broken arm in a trench raid in 1916. I did my soldiering fairly well, I was made a sergeant-major and had some difficulty in avoiding a commission. I liked the men I was with better than the later type of temporary gentleman which broke upon the world after 1917. I wasn't particularly horrified by my war experiences, most of them happened in hot blood and in the spirit of a game, I found I could keep my head in a bomb and bayonet fight and kill a man and laugh, and I had the luck never to see anyone broken up disgustingly or pitifully. Or I have forgotten it. Up to a certain limit a normal memory purges itself of painful details and so far as that side of things is concerned I came out of the war practically unscathed. I have forgotten the pain of my wounded arm, the anxiety of being shelled, fears in a raid, the stress of crawling exposed in the open between the lines. I know that I went through these experiences, but the facts are completely stripped of

feeling now and I hardly ever dream of them.

The thing that haunts me most, curiously enough, is the feeling of being lousy and not being able to do anything effective about that. There are endless other memories of course but none that recur so often. For me the worst aspect of the war was not so much its dreadfulness as its dirtiness. It was, I realized, long before it was over, idiotic au fond and a bloody filthy affair on the face of it. It was not even 'a war to end war' as it well might have been in a saner world. That phrase was perhaps the premature squeak of a coming world community - and at the time I admit quite ridiculous. I stopped thinking of the particulars of the war from the day of my discharge. They did not join on to anything later. My mental direction is forward; I doubt if on an average I spend five minutes a day in recollection. I did not even blame those old men who were the normal scapegoats of the young in those days. I bore no particular grudge against anyone. Though maybe the next generation may find reason for bearing a considerable grudge against us. But my angry sense of an unnecessary exposure to the confused dirtiness underlying life, remained and remains.

I met Alice when I was on leave in England mending my arm. She was working in the art department of my father's publishing business (Bradfield, Clews and Wilbeck). He had taken the producing organization out of London to Durthing and the better to control its development he had moved into a rambling untidy house there. The war had held up his plans to a certain extent but he was carrying on as well as he could. 'Wars may come,' he said, 'and wars may go, but man's duty to thought and knowledge is eternal.'

I went to stay with him and I met Alice at one of the staff dances. She was a bright-coloured girl with alert brown eyes and quick obvious explanations for everything that came to her. Her imagination was all aflame for comforting a wounded hero and I with my arm in a sling was an entirely adequate wounded hero.

One of the unexpected things that happened during the Great War was a quickening of the tempo of sexual life for both sexes. Tempo quicker and the pitch higher. If I had Foxfield here I suppose he would be able to explain why that should be true quite as much of the

young women as of the young men, but I must confess I do not see how it got at our womankind as it did. I can understand that youngsters like myself with the possibility of premature extinction continually under their noses, should be obsessed by the desire to have at least one good experience of passionate love before the end, but I cannot understand why it was that maidenhood lit up and met us more than halfway.

Alice and I were devoted to each other before the evening was out, we realized we had been created specially for each other's delight and solace, and we made the best of our time with a solemn exultation. We married as naturally. She invented nicknames, baby-talk, caresses and occasions for delight as though she was the very genius of love. My father disapproved of her and our marriage, just as he hated my early enlistment, he thought I was careless about myself but in this case too he made no insurmountable obstacles. She did her utmost to win by a brand of flirtatiousness devised specially for him. He was the sort of parent one calls 'Father', but she called him 'Dadkins Darling'. She had a playful way of kissing him on the bald spot on his head, and I doubt if he ever liked it. 'She's a bright girl,' he said, and it was the utmost praise I ever extorted from him. Even that was qualified by, 'I wonder what your mother would have thought of her'.

For a time she was fairyland and all the Venuses for me. Her youthfully slender body had a blinding loveliness. I could not understand why the whole world was not rapt in admiration at her wonderful sayings and doings. And yet all the while something was sitting in the back of my mind making observations to her detriment. I never realized it at the time.

Later all that subconscious dossier came to the surface.

I left her installed in my father's house but when I came back for an abruptly truncated leave early in 1918, she had taken our infant daughter and gone to live with her married sister outside Durthing. She explained that my father hadn't understood the need she was under for friendship and cheerfulness before the arrival of our child and she had thought its birth would put him out. It was more convenient to be with her sister who had two babies already. My father explained nothing and said hardly anything about her.

I thought motherhood had changed Alice, she was plumper and whiter, her once deliciously slender neck seemed shorter and thicker and her figure fuller, and at first she was a little lacking in her old ardour. Then her interest in me revived. But with a difference in quality; there was none of the old animation. She became extremely sentimental in her sensuousness. She lamented our separation. 'Will this war never end?' she asked. 'You are the only man I have ever *really* loved - could ever *really* love. We are like Cupid and Psyche, a lovely dream in the night. Then off you go again.'

We had a little difficulty in being together; there was no room for me at her sister's house and she did not like coming to my father's, because, she said, of his coldness towards her. There were a lot of young friends frequenting her sister's; mostly people doing munition work at Dray, and the second act of our little love opera had far too much chorus in it and not nearly enough duet for my taste. Matters improved between us before I went. She spent the last three nights of my leave in my home and we parted with a great effusion of love, tears and tenderness, my father ignored in the background.

But things had changed. I can still recall quite distinctly the mood in which I thought about her, as I lay on the deck of the unlit hushed boat that was taking me back through the night to the muttering guns in Flanders. The goddess of desire, that incomparable being to whom unfaithfulness was unthinkable because there was no one like her, had evaporated from my mind, and a young woman with a sister and a circle of friends and a set of exceedingly commonplace ideas had replaced her. Making love which had been wildly beautiful had become an accommodation to urgent desire. Previously she and I had been two figures alone in a wonderful love dance, heedless of anyone about us. All that had gone. I had found something faintly but persistently antipathetic in that circle of hers. Talking to them was difficult and she seemed to share all their ideas. Like the early Christians they had their ideas in common. We had arranged to set up a household when I returned to England but we had found it difficult to determine where that little home would be. It was evident she would resist living in my home and that she would remain antagonistic to my father, to whom I was attached rather more than is the way with most sons. But she wanted to be close to her sister and

her circle.

I came back after the war to solve the problem of my household, soberly and sensibly. She was my dear wife and I had to do the right thing by her. And - it was a material consideration with me as it would be with most healthy young men of my age - life with her in any conditions would be a relief from much celibate austerity.

But when I returned I found our affair had entered upon a third phase. She refused absolutely to come and stay with me in my father's house at Durthing and I went to her at her sister's at Dray. I had again that sensation of meeting a stranger that to a lesser degree I had already experienced during my second leave. Not for this woman was it that I had kept myself chaste in France. I found her not indisposed for her wifely duty, but any grace of passion between us had vanished.

The house seemed more encumbered by daytime visitors than ever. Among them I became particularly aware of the brooding presence of a tall stooping spectacled figure, George Hoopler, who seemed to be always looking mournfully at Alice and avoiding any exchange with me. He was not quite in the swim with the rest of her circle; he had an air of being drawn in. She had, as a matter of fact, drawn him in. She talked about him. He was extraordinarily clever, she said, 'practically an intellectual'. He had read all sorts of books and did essays and reviews in one or two of the weeklies. And he had been a wonderful friend to her and her sister in some quite undefined way. It was a pity I didn't like him. She was sure he could tell me all sorts of things about books. He was writing a poetic novel but he was telling no one about it. She seemed to know a tremendous lot about him.

At the time I regarded Hoopler as merely an added layer to the film of boredom that dimmed the Dray world for me. I had not the imagination to be suspicious.

'Let's get out of all this for a bit,' said I. 'Let's run off for a long weekend to Brighton and try and feel like old times.'

'Oh, not *Brighton!' she* exclaimed sharply.

'Folkestone,' I said not noticing at the time that emphatic rejection of Brighton, and to Folkestone we went.

And at Folkestone it came out. It was borne in upon me by

successive shades of intimation that there was something — something very profound and serious going on between George Hoopler and Alice. I protested at the perpetual recurrence of his name in our talk. ‘But if you understood him — !’ she said.

I realized she was feeling her way towards the disclosure of a romantic situation. At first for many reasons I found it almost incredible. And it was George Hoopler’s soul that came into the picture long before his drooping body. She made her revelation in her nightgown by moonlight at our bedroom window looking out upon the sea. She and Hoopler were soulmates and they had carried mutual understanding to an almost orgiastic level.

‘You mean — ?’ I said bluntly.

‘He is so tender,’ she said. ‘It is all so different.’

(That suddenly I guessed was why she had barred Brighton.)

My first reactions were primitive. I ‘saw red’, as they put it in the lower grades of the commissioned ranks. I was acutely angry. ‘That *rag!*’ I said. I had a preposterous vision of punching poor old Hoopler about, bending him in the middle and trampling on his glasses. Then I thought of giving Alice a memorable shaking and spanking and then in an unusual flash of comprehension I realized that that was precisely what she wanted. Because to hit a woman is complete condonation, and also she would have liked it. So instead I simply put her down with a bump in another chair and stood up and dusted my knees, so to speak, of her. ‘You nasty little thing,’ I said. ‘Why are you here with me?’

‘Because I love you too,’ she wept. ‘Because I love you too.’ The projected situation was submitted to me tearfully and in fragments while I dressed. It had many of the traits of a long prepared recitation but it lost much of its force because it was delivered to my moving back. ‘Why are you putting on your clothes?’ she said, breaking off short in the middle of it. ‘Because I’m going to take another room.’

‘But what will the hotel people think?’

‘They’re not what one calls Great Thinkers,’ said I. ‘It is I who will do most of the thinking tonight.’

I packed a provisional bag for the night and retired. She was manifestly surprised at my departure. I was not behaving quite as she expected; I was rather like an actor who had learnt a part out of

another play. She had, I know, expected me to behave as though she was the only Alice in the world. So perhaps I should have behaved a year and a half before. And she would certainly have made it clear in the most effectual fashion that my loss was not irreparable, if only I would realize the essential goodness and purity of the Hoopler affair. But suddenly the world was full of Alices for me, one for every man and a few over. It is one of the things that a woman finds hardest to understand in life, that for a time she can be the only rapture in the world for a man, sole custodian and dispenser of delight for him, and then in the twinkling of an eye become just one individual packet of an overproduced standard commodity. It came to me that night as though I had known it for a long time, that Alice, my once peerless Alice, was of no more value to me now than any other passably pretty young woman.

I sat sternly in my new room for some time, no doubt with folded arms. I forget. I surely acted my part to that extent. I had been betrayed. My honour had been hopelessly soiled.

But gradually a feeling of release arose in me and irradiated my mind. I was surprised at my own duplicity. I knew I ought to feel all the fury of the cheated male animal and instead I only felt some - and it dwindled rapidly. A cloud of dull foreboding had been lifted out of sight. I need never find that little home poised between Durthing and Dray. I need never settle down to domestic life with Alice; sister and friends intervening. I need not be estranged from my father any longer.

My course became clear before me. She should have George Hoopler and George Hoopler should have her. All that I recalled of his behaviour since my uxorious return convinced me of that. He deserved her and I did not. He deserved her — richly. He was the sort of lover who for no particular reason *likes* to stand in the rain for a long time outside the house of the beloved. I was certainly not his equal at devotion. I dismissed a subconscious suspicion that I was being a little hard on Alice.

A strong streak of humbug in my composition came to the surface and spread all over it. An ignoble amusement in the little drama Alice had prepared swamped the last vestiges of the proper feelings of a dishonoured husband. Abruptly I laughed aloud, stood up and

went to bed, whispered to my pillow that I was a free man again, and on that thought slept quite happily.

The morning found me serenely sure of the part I had to play. I would ennoble the situation and give Alice all the sentimental honours necessary to start her satisfactorily in her new life. She had found her true affinity. She had been swept off her feet. So be it. Why should she be ashamed of herself? I would be saddish but very generous and kind. I would recognize the essential if rather vaporous nobility of George Hoopler. Stern I would be, and *wounded.* Wounded to the quick. I even rose to saying on one occasion, 'My God! but this is *hard* on me, you know!' which she received with a sort of tender triumph.

I think she had a fairly satisfactory time between us though I doubt if it went exactly as she had planned it. She did her best to get a maximum of situation. She was dreadfully torn, she said, because she really loved us both. She did her best to dispel any doubts I might have felt about that, whenever we were alone together. I had not, she reiterated, lost my physical magic. Happily our state does not recognize polyandrous marriage or she would certainly have demanded one, a polyandrous marriage in a perpetual state of explanatory disruption. It would have suited her temperament exactly. There was a more realistic element of trouble in her thoughts, which I ignored steadfastly, about whether George Hoopler was in a position to keep a wife. I ignored that issue because I felt the situation ought to be sustained upon a higher plane. There was much unnecessary coming and going and several quite compromising interviews before and during the divorce proceedings. But I was set inflexibly upon renunciation and whenever I softened towards temptation under the influence of old habit I did my best to conjure up the image of George Hoopler inamorato but still wearing or trying to wear those insecure glasses of his, and generally that sufficed - at any rate to keep things in their proper proportion.

Upon one sensible thing I insisted. I would have no half-and- half measures about the child, no coming and going between Daddy Wilbeck and Daddy Hoopler to puzzle her poor little wits and create difficult explanations for her later on with her schoolmates. 'You have to be her sole father now,' I said to Hoopler with a suitable

break in my voice. ‘Let me be forgotten.’

‘You are *splendid!*’ whispered Hoopler, clasping my hand. I have never realized before how greatly spectacles can enhance the absurder types of emotion.

I arranged with him and not with Alice for a special allowance for the child. I knew, and it turned out so, that I could trust him in that matter. She I certainly could not trust. She would have deflected that money to dresses — to treats.

I emerged from the affair at last in a state which I can only describe as over-disillusionment about love. It was not uncommon among returning soldiers. It was just as prevalent among the young women who had complicated themselves at home. You cannot clean up adulteries any more than you can unscramble eggs. I laughed - but not so very happily. I had a number of ‘affairs’ and none of them were very agreeable because in no case was I either really loved or in love. Not even while the affair lasted. For anyone with an imagination, promiscuity speedily becomes the dullest game in the world. But I went about life in a rather Byronic manner, except on occasions when my natural cheerfulness broke through.

My father was ailing and very keen for me to take up the business as soon as possible. Now that the war was over he was impatient to see his plans being realized — and they were very sound and far-seeing plans. I did not know that he was a dying man but I think he did. I have always found business a much more sustaining interest than women. I have always liked women I admit. In those days they deflected me powerfully, but my imagination of a publisher’s role held me as no woman could do. Whenever I found sentimental tentacles wrapping about me in the wake of some sensuous appreciation, I would think of George Hoopler and of possible other George Hooplers. I liked women but I found I could not dangle after them. Competing for them bored me. If they were only to be had that way, then the other chap could have them. My idea of love was a cheerful, natural reciprocity of help and pleasuring and a certain mutual flattery and reassurance — with no thought or possibility of third parties intervening from either side of the picture. Love, if it was any good at all, was an honest alliance of two people well suited to each other, against the impertinence of third parties. With laughter

in it. So I thought. So I suppose I still think at the back of my mind. And still I do not know why we should not all of us pair off in that spirit.

Few men and women, I realize, succeed in getting things like that. But surely some do. I have been doing my best to fit my life to that pattern. For thirteen years. (It seems incredible but it is thirteen years!) They fit their lives together. Some do and I am not doing it; it is becoming more and more hopelessly uphill work and life is slipping away.

4

In that time before the advent of Dolores I wanted the intimacies of a wife, a quite imaginary wife, very greatly, and at the same time I was persuaded that any intimacies of the peculiar quality I desired were to an extreme degree improbable. I pretended to be aloof in spirit from women, and in reality in spite of myself I watched them closely with an irrational fantastic expectation. I sought to maintain a cheerful cynicism in my incidental love affairs. And meanwhile Fate, with that humorous malice that so often distinguishes her, was steering me and Dolores through the world until we came together.

Our party at the Hotel Pension Malta et Syracuse consisted of my painter cousin, John Wilbeck, who has a passion for sympathizing with anyone who will stand it, his new wife, Virginia, Tom Gadsby who was and still is going to do remarkable things with the films, a young but platinum blonde whose name I forget but who was in a perpetual quarrel with Tom, Mrs Percher the novelist and her husband Rodberry-Percher is her pen name and has survived two previous husbands. We all sat at the same table and bunched together on the beach.

But we were not a tight group, we frayed out and other groups frayed in to us. There were, I remember, three young women in languid pursuit of the arts and in active pursuit of excitement, two of whom were quite well off because their brothers had been killed in the war. There were a number of other friendly young people who fade off into forgetfulness, and a small, malignant- looking man with an excessive forehead and a bristling beard, every hair of which

seemed to be trying most desperately to get away from the face to which it was inexorably fixed, spreading out as though it disliked its source and its fellows with an equally ferocious intensity. He was said to be writing a life of Stendhal or Dostoievsky or somebody like that. We talked literature, or rather the others did, and I listened as a mere publisher, we talked art and socialism and social science, that is to say, sex, we gossiped and speculated about ourselves and everyone within range in the most psycho-analytical and intelligent fashion, and we bathed a lot and played volley-ball and drank cocktails and gambled a little at Boule, and ate, and went to Nice and ate, and went to Cannes and ate, and bathed and went to St Paul de Vence and Cagnes and the Chateau Madrid and La Reserve here and La Reserve there and ate, and so on. One eats so well in France. None of us were drunkards and none of us were gamblers and most of us were staying for three weeks at the outside. We had a tendency to pair off as the evening drew on, most marked when the moon was full and the evenings bright, and John, my cousin, watched me gently with his large grey eyes, or went about quietly behind my back, telling the story of my broken heart and expatiating upon the simple generosity of my nature. But of course that there was something to be said for Alice also.

I was, after my nature, a good deal amused and rather restless. I had never been on the Riviera before, the only France I knew was the war zone, and I found something pleasantly a little out even in the colour of the bougainvillea upon the walls and the fugitive cypresses all over the place, as though a cemetery hung with purple magenta had been raided and dispersed by the police. I liked the way the fronds of the palm trees, introduced from warmer climes, rustled and shivered in the wind. I liked the way in which the eucalyptus from Australia, like those self-sown weeds, the cultured Riviera Americans, seemed just as much at home as anybody. I liked the widely diffused refreshment, in such delightful contrast to our own morbid British concentration at the rare infrequent public house. I liked the way the houses were painted yellow or primrose or blueish-white or sang de boeuf, and patched never quite in the same colour, and I liked the unusual mongrelization of the dogs. Their ingredients made a sort of crossword puzzle of them. I played a silly game of

naming them, Dalmastiffs, Irretrievers, Spanchow terriers and so forth. But I will not expatiate on my appreciations; I mention them merely to show how unwarrantable were the sensitive whisperings of my cousin John.

I might perhaps have developed an insincere interest in one of the three detached artistic girls if only they had not had so much in common that I could never tell them apart. One was red- haired, one was dark and swarthy and one was dark and pale, but all the same I could not tell them apart. They shared their laughter, their smart remarks, their loud cries of surprise, their chortles - those were the days when bright young things 'chortled in their joy' - they shared these things as the Parcae shared one eye. I believe they interchanged their short skirts, their tanned trousers, their black and blue pyjamas, their exiguous revealing vests and shirts and their excessive berets. I had more than a suspicion that they considered me a laggard in love — a hard thing for a self-respecting, holiday-keeping, willing young man to endure — but all the same there was nothing I could do about it. I did kiss and fondle one of them quite a lot one evening until we were interrupted, but when it was too dark to tell whether she was red or swarthy or pale — and anyhow; in that atmosphere, that was a mere nothing. The next morning they all, I thought, had a slightly kissed and rumpled look. Maybe they didn't know which it was themselves.

Dolores appeared in the Hotel Pension Malta et Sycracuse as an entirely more distinguishable personality, five or six years older than any of the three, already with that slightly haggard look of animation that has always characterized her, and I saw her first as a rather graceful slender back and a too stylish little hat bargaining very earnestly with Madame Hook, our proprietress. Fraulein Kettner stood behind passively but firmly in support. 'And now,' I heard Dolores say in a peculiar fluting voice that was soon to become excessively familiar to me, 'since there are two of us, there must be a further reduction.'

I passed as quickly as possible because I caught the dread in Madame Hook's eyes, dread lest I should overhear the ignoble concessions she was making and suddenly join in the fray exclaiming: 'And now since there are *three* of us, there must be a

further reduction!'

Dolores' appearance in the dining-room that night created a sensation. Never have I seen anyone not looked at so hard and markedly. She was dressed with a kind of fashionableness that followed no known fashion, as though she belonged to the smart set of another world. Contrary to the spirit of the Hotel Pension Malta et Syracuse she was considerably bejewelled, and her make-up had a richness that made John's wife suggest she had recently escaped from some harem. 'Armenian,' suggested Mrs Percher. 'Eastern certainly,' said Mr Rodberry. 'Something *tragic* in the face,' said my cousin John scenting new scope for sympathy. 'A camera wouldn't make anything of her,' said Tom Gadsby and immediately the platinum blonde looked reassured.

Dolores' companion evoked no surmise. She was the sort of Swiss German woman who can go anywhere and do anything without exciting remark.

Dolores had some critical remarks to make about the menu to the maitre d'hotel but these were inaudible at our table. Then for a time we gave ourselves up to the normal business of dining. I was recalled to Dolores by a nudge from my cousin-in-law. Dolores had produced a lorgnette and was surveying her fellow pensionnaires with an expression of mitigated disapproval. A lorgnette is such an elderly weapon as a rule that it made her look very young and bright. She delivered her impressions to Fraulein Kettner in a voice clearly intended to be audible. The hotel, the dinner, the company were all banal. It was what she desired. She could compose herself here. There was nothing to disturb her. At last she would be tranquil. For a time the lorgnette swept about like a searchlight. It rested on an adjacent group, it paused on John, it paused on me. It paused for quite a time on me. Then she spoke to her companion in an undertone and Fraulein Kettner looked at me also. She looked at me as a Swiss German botanist might look at an unusual flower. 'Damn the woman's impudence!' thought I. 'What right has anyone to set about making me self-conscious?'

The two women left the dining-room before we did and as they rustled by me I heard the faint tinkle of metal bangles and sensed what is now the familiar whiff of jasmin. But then, in those days of

innocence, I did not even know it was jasmin.

'Who the devil are they?' asked Rodberry, watching them disappear into the evening blue. 'I must have one of my private and confidential chats with Madame Hook.'

'That woman has suffered,' said my cousin John.

5

Dolores' disposition to have an affair with me became very manifest during the next day or so. I shall be exalting my role in this little drama if I do not write rather vulgarly about it. It began as the common sort of thing that happens in hotels and on liners. I cannot now recall the precise incidents that brought us together. I had nothing to do with the first entanglement of our group with the newcomers. I discovered Mrs Percher in a beach chair between two beach chairs listening to that fluent fluting voice — the voice that has flowed through my life now for a dozen years and more. 'Most women, I find, have no objective in life. I find a woman's life one long succession of banalities.' If Dolores was not saying that then, she was probably saying something else quite like it. I went on, to be accosted — an unusual thing — by that macrocephalic worn-out hairbrush I have already mentioned, the man who was supposed to be a high-brow translator. 'Do you know we have an Egyptian princess in the pension?' he said.

'Does that account for the Turkish trousers and the gilt slippers?' I asked.

'I thought she was oriental from the beginning.'

But he had thought wrong. She was not oriental from the beginning. She had only been quite transitorily oriental. My own first impression of Dolores had indeed assigned her to nothing more oriental than France. I had thought she was a lady of some enterprise, possibly with a certain local social footing, something between an artist's model and, let us say, the niece or partner- daughter of a perfume or antiquity dealer, in one of the less ventilated streets of Paris. The sort of dealer who wears an embroidered smoking-cap and slippers in one of those streets which smell of sandalwood, where west is east and the Mysteries of Paris still seem credible. Or better

perhaps Marseilles. I had never been to Marseilles but I had heard of Marseilles and from all I had heard it seemed just the place to produce her.

But I, too, was out. She was really Monegasque, the lawfully begotten daughter of a Scotch gentleman of family who spent his days trying to get into the Monte Carlo Casino somehow - there were official obstacles — before his wife could requisition his quarterly allowance. And on the other side, too, Dolores could boast of high parentage. Her mother was, I learnt, of peculiarly aristocratic Armenian origin (though hitherto I had been unaware that there was an Armenian aristocracy), a severe economist but otherwise a vivid rather than successful home manager. The menage was neither happy nor unhappy but incoherent; the parents would probably have quarrelled even more bitterly than they did, if they had had a firmer grasp on each other's ideas of what constitutes French, and the cooking, I believe, was good even if the mealtimes were indeterminate. It seems to have been one of those cases where East meets West and everything gets very confused, and Dolores had revolted at a comparatively early age against the general disorderliness of her home.

The genes of some methodical Scotch puritan ancestor had emerged in her and combined with an Armenian quickness of mind had seemed to steer her straight towards success in school and to teaching, secretarial or literary work. But the variegated racial and social suggestions of her schoolfellows in her polyglot school, the general atmosphere of the place, various accidental encounters with men and above all what is called 'urge', had turned her face towards romance and a number of emotional situations, towards changes of domicile and travel; her career culminated in some sort of real marriage with a perfectly genuine Egyptian prince who smashed himself up in a car-race a year or so later and left her very poorly provided for. For a time she was undecided whether to become a nun or a nurse, settle down to writing the Romance of Her Life or what. She was deeply sensible of her essential brilliance and of great literary and artistic gifts, and in her anxiety to leave nothing undone, seemed likely to achieve nothing. The meretricious quality of her costume was due to the romantic adventurousness of her taste rather

than to any definite vocation.

I cannot now remember whether my first tete-a-tete with Dolores was brought about by my initiative, nor exactly where it occurred. I am inclined to suspect the good faith of my memory in this sort of recollection. I have a loyal rather than a meticulous memory. It will do almost anything to please me. It has a quite different character from the rest of my mind. Probably I contributed more to our coming together than I can now recall. The morals of all healthy young men suffer in idleness and a single oncoming woman may have seemed more practicable to me than a trinity. I insist on this base and vulgar note because it was in that spirit that I behaved.

Men must be very old or very unworthy when they doubt the flattering confidences of a woman who attracts them, and I believed most of the story that she told me herself on the beach, amidst the tamarisk, in the evening sunshine and by moonlight. Fraulein Kettner was usually at some distance away, holding the little translator, who showed a disposition to follow us about, in a web of cultured international conversation. Dolores talked fluent English with a few Scotticisms and hardly a trace of French accent. She has in fact talked fluent English to me ever since, pausing only for eating, sleeping and interludes of passion.

She talked about herself copiously and picturesquely and when she said ever and again, 'Tell me something of yourself' it meant that she went on talking, but about her impressions of me. Her faith in her own intuitions and observation has always been remarkable. Some few statements I got in edgeways and she at once turned them flat side round and made the most of them, and also she asked a few questions, concluding with 'Yes? No?' to give an indication of the number of words permitted in the reply.

'You loved your father? Yes? No?' — she did not wait for an answer because something else had come into her mind that followed naturally on the mention of the word 'father'. 'I loved *my* father. His complexion was like a shining pink cherub's patterned with golden fish scales.'

Yet in some manner she was able to get a considerable grasp upon my position and intentions. Her questions she thrust at me so that there was no alternative but to answer them or get up and walk away.

I certainly told her how I had just inherited a stable publishing business with great possibilities and how I believe that publishing might be made a powerful educational force in the world. I was thinking out our *Way of the World* series then, and I sketched the project with the hopefulness of a young man. I remember her excessive enthusiasm. She came close to me; she turned the warmth of her face up to me. 'To think of you, so quiet, so unobtrusive, with those firm hands of yours, moulding the thought of the world! It is *beautiful.*'

I could hardly protest. I had asked for it. And indeed I liked it. My opinion of her rose with her opinion of me.

'The first time I looked at you I knew you were like this,' she said. 'My intuitions are very rapid,' and she heaped the most astounding flattery upon me. I was not like other men. I seemed to fill the world with purpose and so forth. But it is painful for me now to write down how admirable I was at that time. I do not remember how far I believed what she said but, what was quite as effective for her immediate purpose, I believed that she believed it. She exalted me, she made me so noble that for an evening or so more matters remained on the spiritual plane.

It was my cousin John who brought me back to earth.

'*How* that woman loves you!' he remarked.

'She has been telling you!'

'Yes. She has been telling everybody. Except those three English girls who cut her. What a wonderful life she has had!'

'She has gone into that too? About the ride across the desert and the night at the oasis?'

'She told me about that. And so *vividly,*' said my cousin John. 'And she told me your idea of organizing people's thoughts and ideas. It's wonderful, Stephen, how your mind has grown under suffering. It's a splendid idea—'

'She told you *that!*'

'It's fascinated her. She was full of it.'

'She seems to have - almost a passion for telling things.'

'She's mentally excitable and forthright,' said cousin John. 'Yes. Do you know, John, at moments I feel as though I had gone bathing with her and she'd managed to drown my clothes.'

‘You’re not *really* a cynic,’ said John.

I decided that there should be something between us that she wouldn’t care to make public. But there I underrated her quality...

Dim moonlight, the sacrifice creeping softly to me, the faint shivering tinkle of a bangle and a reek of jasmin, the trembling moment and the searching hands - thirteen years ago. It did not feel at all like being pounced upon and devoured...

The next day I overheard her telling Fraulein Kettner; ‘the *perfect* lover!’ She added an appreciated detail.

And at lunch time the three English girls would not see me, as markedly as possible. So evidently they knew and were either deeply shocked or deeply annoyed or both.

6

That, I realize, was thirteen years ago. I thought at the time that this affair would be just an exotic version of various other kindred interludes in my bachelor life. I had liked the role of a consolee and I had no intention of abandoning it. I had still to grasp the fact that Dolores was a remarkable as well as a conspicuous woman and that she had formed a swift but very tenacious resolution to devote her life to me or, to be more precise, to assimilate my life to herself. For me she was an adventure but for her I was an acquisition. It was only gradually I realized how thoroughly I was being embraced when I was being embraced.

I could not tell the history of the next few weeks of intimacy with Dolores even if I had the will to do so. The record is obliterated. Nature has at least had the wisdom to make me anticipate honeymoon details very vividly and to forget them very thoroughly. Now that I find myself setting down my case of *Stephen Wilbeck contra Dolores* I am astonished at the extremely poor quality of the evidence produced by my one and only witness, myself. And yet the publisher of Otto Jenson’s *Reality of Evidence* ought to have known better. Jenson deals chiefly with the reporting of events by intelligent unbiased people, circumstantial accounts of what they saw of conjuring entertainments, impromptu dramatic scenes and so on, and he stresses how widely they can differ upon quite vital particulars.

He gives less material because he could amass less material about cases where bias was plainly in operation or where evidence was moulded by question and cross-examination. The hidden operation of self-love and self-deception he does not investigate. But his book demonstrates how enormously we can vary our conceptions, our quite honest convictions, of what happened a few hours before. And I am trying to tell not about material facts but of what went on in my mind and why I did this and not that, thirteen years ago. I doubt if one could do as much for last Sunday. I contemplate a considerable number of spoilt sheets, a certain amount of torn paper in the waste-paper basket, and suddenly I begin to be amused.

There are times when I find myself as amusing to watch as anybody or anything. I perceive a little chap who is still clinging to the assurance that he was something exceptional as a lover. It is nature's way with us. Few men, I suspect, can resist that dear delusion that the commonest of God's gifts is an outstanding distinction. Yet it is lavished upon the ordinary monkey far beyond our human portion. The facts of the case necessarily remain in a decent obscurity, but I think that in that particular respect my head was rather turned by Dolores. I was, I found for the first time in my life, a tremendous dog. I was a great fellow. I was an outstanding specialist. Casanova certainly wasn't in it with me. I do remember shamefully a sort of triumph I felt over the manifest and manifestly impotent rivalry of the little translator man and still more shamefully my appreciation of a sort of envy that mingled with the rich sympathy of cousin John.

These are subtle matters. Even setting them down makes them glare atrociously. But they are a necessary part of the story. Perhaps if one could tint the paper of a book grey, deepening in tone until at last the text quivered on the verge of the absolutely illegible —

A lot better than a line of stars.

I must think over that idea of an Almost Illegible Series. I should return to a rather paler page and distinctive type with the fact that I also got a tremendous kick out of the suggestion that I had in me a kind of mental and moral greatness which made her ungrudging sacrifices to me a duty as well as a delight. She had been so aimless, she said. She elaborated the details of her past aimlessness for quite

long stretches. This aimless emotional Diana had done a lot of wild shooting and she dilated upon it with a regretful gusto. She had, she said, tried love, religion, patriotism in three or four countries, *and* the Communist party. She had tried art, poetry, literature with a sort of superficial intensity. All had failed to satisfy her deep physical and spiritual needs. Now in me and my great idea she found something virile, aggressive, promising and sustaining. My great idea was in fact in its new explicitness almost as new to me as it was to her, and I too found it stimulating. The more I considered it, the more I was disposed to make the firm of Bradfield, Clews and Wilbeck live up to it. How gladly in the measure of her abilities, said she, would she give her life to that. Fraulein Kettner was presently infected by her excitement and she produced a more nordic, more contralto, but equally enthusiastic, response.

I think these two streaks of gratification and exaltation were the main strands in the situation that was wrapping about me. And I know that at the same time I was acutely ashamed of myself. I did not want any audience to fan my smouldering selfdisapproval. I liked Dolores to say all this stuff to me, but I hated to see her going off to tell it over to other people, and so perhaps I stuck rather markedly to her side to minimize her opportunities for overflow. That had a gratifying appearance of devotion. And in order to get her away from those others I professed a violent desire to be with her alone. I clung to an insistence upon the urgent need there was for me in England but at the same time I pressed — for the little time more I could snatch from that imperative duty - for isolation. So we went, all three of us, to a little inn near Vence, with myself of course as host.

I forget the dispersal of the party at the Hotel Pension Malta et Syracuse, nor even where my cousin and his wife went, and I am not very clear now about the details of that Vence establishment except that from it came a profound conviction that whatever other music is the food of love it is certainly not the shrill pipe of the mosquito. On the contrary. I couldn't stand the damned things. The landlord, his wife, his sister-in-law, the general servant, the man who pretended to be a garagist, and a large ambiguous woman in black who was probably a perennial pensionnaire, were all told about the peculiar passion and beauty of our relationship. Hitherto I had never met a

woman who liked a chorus to her love-making. But Dolores has a craving for a chorus. Like her over-emphasis, her high-pitched voice, her emphatic make-up, her assertive taste in dress, it arises, I believe, from some deep doubt in her whether indeed she is really alive.

I am, I repeat, quite unable to say now whether I was what is called 'in love' with her. But then I have never been able to determine what 'in love' really means. In some ways I liked her immensely. I played up to her. Apart from her stimulating appreciation, her talk, which had still to become a boring flow of obviously imitative second-rate social and cultural stuff, could be bright and amusing. She looked - and even listened more at that time and she talked less automatically. Her rather vividly coloured and rather overdrawn autobiographical material was novel then and entertaining. It retained the freshness of early impressions. It had pleasing variations. Her pose of a profound and habitual pessimism was in abeyance in those early days. Sometimes she had real gaiety about herself — even nowadays rarely and uncertainly, she can be gay. And she could be unconsciously funny, which is always an endearing trait to me. The rites of passion would be suspended for five minutes while she danced round the room flicking a wet towel, giving ultimately successful battle to an intrusive mosquito and cursing in several languages. 'Peeng, would you? Damn you!' Flick. 'Aaah! *Got* you, my gentleman!' And then back in the most businesslike way to caresses.

She practised some marvellous exercises which I gathered were a combination of the best Swedish drill with the finer usages of yoga mysticism. They were well worth watching. Dolores in a state of nature holding her breath in an effort to send air by some entirely unknown route to her spinal cord and at the same time bursting to explain the esoteric wonder of it, was an exhilarating spectacle. I would say innocent but provocative things and she would gesticulate fiercely for silence.

As if some yogi was listening and might overhear and stop the influence.

She had a sort of wildly inaccurate savoir-faire about food and wine, about dress and about social usage, that in those days, had not lost its freshness for me and seemed unlikely then to entangle or

embarrass me in any way whatever.

But the business was calling me. The idea of turning our firm into a definitely educational organization which her first enthusiasm had helped to foster, was urging me to return. Something primitive, something lying not so very deeply beneath her crust of strange emphatic affectations, came up when I spoke definitely of departure. I realized with a shock how strongly, blindly and unreasonably she did not want me to go. She had no right whatever to hamper my going, but plainly without any acting or pretending she was going to be hurt, and I am a coward about hurting people. Abruptly our skies were shot with contention. I stayed on for two grudged days after the date I had fixed for departure and all the time she was extorting a promise that I would return, and she was trying to pin me to a date. I hate making promises because I have a strong tendency to keep them.

She staged a great parting scene at Nice station, Fraulein Kettner as choragus to a group of porters and fellow passengers, and I had some difficulty in dispelling a proposal that she should come on with me as far as Marseilles. And I sat back in my compartment an extremely perplexed and promise-saddled young man.

Our gay little one-act play was over but the curtain had refused to come down. Expectation remained in possession of the empty stage.

7

Never had I realized so fully the intensity of my desire to touch life with a light hand. I had told Dolores no lies, I had been quite as much the wooed as the wooer in our affair, and I felt this invisible thread of a promise she had put upon me, as an almost intolerable imposition. Nobody, I told myself, has the right to thrust this sort of obligation upon a fellow creature. Why on earth should I go back simply because she wanted me to go back?

Only it seems to be the human way to thrust obligations upon others. I remember sitting in my compartment and thinking of life as a wild scramble to entangle and get away, a fantastic arena of struggling people with lassoes, hooks, crooks, nets, adhesive ribbons, chains, handcuffs. My mind would admit no possibility of mutual

enslavement and I held myself aloof from the general scrimmage, the cravings of possessive love have never arisen to me. And when presently I went along to the dining car I watched the grouping of my fellow-passengers with a new interest. Did neither of the married couple in the corner feel trapped and held? Was even that mother ministering to her three noisy children content to have lost her freedom? The young couple with their backs to me might be a returning honeymoon. Their poses suggested the extremity of detachment possible in indissoluble matrimony.

I kept my promise and went back to Dolores, but now the sense of a tugging leash between us was very present in my mind. The Kettner lady had returned to Switzerland and photography, and Dolores and I occupied a small furnished house she had found between Nice and Antibes. The flavour of matrimony in our relationship was growing stronger.

I married her because she declared she was going to have a child. To this day I cannot determine whether she really played a deliberate trick upon me or if she contrived to deceive herself also about her condition. I knew that she was possessed by an inflexible resolve to hold me permanently and that she was quite capable of a device of that sort. Did she not love me and does not love justify everything? She had assured me at an early stage of our relations that she was a barren woman but all that was now forgotten. The very intensity of her desire may have induced a belief in her own mind.

I am not very good at checking facts against what people tell me. I should have made a pitiful detective. Whatever the realities of the case were, the appearances were of a dismayed woman facing quite tragic possibilities. Abortion in France is a thing not merely illegal but intolerably unclean; it was hardly mentioned between us. She seemed to be extraordinarily alone. She was an only child, her parents were dead, and she seemed to have none but casual friends, recently acquired. Most of her previous lovers and friends she must have consumed; there were none left; but this did not strike me as significant at the time. I felt that this unexpected lapse into fecundity was my misfortune just as much as hers, and that our obligation to our prospective child was equal.

At that time I had no very definite ideas of how and where I

should live. The lease of that old house at Durthing expired in another year or so, the place was associated with Alice and I had no particular wish to preserve those associations. I could give that up quite easily. In London I had a flat at the top of our business house in Carrington Square and this and two or three clubs made a foothold for me there rather than a home. It would be quite possible to set up a household with Dolores almost anywhere we chose. My thoughts ranged widely. I passed through a phase of indecision and then my imagination took control.

It did miracles in the way of adjustment to the new situation.

In the absence of Dolores it was possible for me to think out a role for her that would have vanished instantly in her presence. I thought of her as really subduing herself to co-operate with me in the schemes of educational expansion that pullulated in my mind. For some time like various other young English publishers I had had my eye on the continental market for English books. Tauchnitz, that honest and enterprising old monopolist, had been and was still hampered as an 'ex-enemy'. I had been looking into the possibility of an office in Paris. Now suddenly I perceived the attractiveness of a home in Paris, presided over by a startlingly exotic but really very intelligent and sympathetic wife. The child and a nursery would sober her down, I should sober her down, security would sober her down. It is amazing what anticipation can do with a person who is not present to hamper the imaginative play. I imagined a Dolores-Stephen baby — quite a brilliant little thing, mercurial indeed but with all my virtues. Several such prodigies. I remember distinctly a reverie to that effect. The letters I had from Dolores at that time were all asseverations of devotion. Her one anxiety was the fear least our child should interfere with her complete devotion to my interests. Far better would a Paris menage be than any establishment in London or the English country. It would have an atmosphere all its own, and in that at least I was not mistaken. Every writer and all the younger critics, American and British alike, passed through Paris. One could catch them there and get them isolated as one could never do in London, bring them into contact with the new movements that were stirring — rather sluggishly at that time - among the younger Frenchmen.

A very hopeful phase indeed it was. Why had no other publisher thought of running the world from Paris? I conjured up a pleasant version of a definitely cosmopolitan Wilbeck, quite a fine figure, able to overcome, by virtue of this definitely Parisian domicile, most of that deep subconscious antagonism that bars out so many generous possibilities of co-operation between British and American writers. Dolores, more and more modified to fit into the picture, a sobered and dignified Dolores, was to preside over all this.

Time and tide wait for no one. Dolores' condition had to be considered. The sooner we married now the better. I came back to France and we married unobtrusively at the Nice consulate. There was a shyness about it all in my mind and I wanted the marriage unobtrusive. An old friend of hers who ran a costume shop in Cairo joined her and I caught Redmond Napier who happened to be in Cannes to play the role of fourth witness. And the effusive tenderness of Dolores for me was wonderful. She was unusually silent; she seemed preoccupied, she seemed less painted. She brooded and what could be more appropriate. She had something of the gravity of Mary in an Annunciation picture. But she was also extremely amorous. She was greatly distressed when I wanted to go back to England to make sure that everything was going well at Durthing but not so distressed as she had been before. 'Now,' she said, 'I am sure you will come back.'

I wrote to her every day while I was in England, establishing a precedent that has since become an iron law. Things had got a little dislocated at Durthing and I had to stay longer than I had anticipated, three weeks or more, so far as I can remember.

And then the child began to evaporate. A sort of annunciation in reverse occurred. Dolores wrote that she was ill, extraordinarily ill. She wrote long letters daily. Nothing was going as it should have gone. She became tragic, she became inconsolable. The hope, the lovely hope, that had filled her, was dispelled. She had been cheated. From some of her phrases it seemed almost as though she accused me of cheating her. She had a growth. It was a growth, malignant in spirit if not in substance. She was ill, probably dying of cancer, frustrated, robbed of a woman's supreme happiness, her life a futility, a heart-rending failure. She clamoured for me to come to

Nice and comfort her — for it might not be for long that I should have that opportunity.

When I disengaged myself from various complications at Durthing and went to her I found her passionately reproachful. Why had I not come earlier? Leaving her, my newly married wife, to die in pain and solitude. In a lonely hotel — heart-broken. Who but an Englishman — this was a new note - could treat a woman so?

For a dying woman she did not seem to me to be very greatly changed, except that she had acquired several bright and becoming wraps for my reception and was wearing little else. I was afraid to hurt her in any way but she assured me she could best forget her sufferings in love. For most of the time she did forget them. Now and then however she would remember them and, at the most unexpected moments, emit a short, sharp cry of anguish. 'My pain,' she would explain. 'Oh my pain!' For a few moments there would be a pause and then life would be resumed again. Her pain has never really left her from that time onward.

It has remained the same spasmodic inconsequent interruption. It leads to nothing.

Later we consulted a distinguished specialist.

'And how is she really?' I asked him when I had him alone.

'Madame,' he said, 'is of a highly nervous type.'

'Will there be any need of an operation?'

He shut his mouth so that it showed its maximum width, half closed his eyes and shook his head slowly from side to side.

'I am much relieved,' I said.

'Naturally,' he said with the utmost gravity...

8

In this manner it was that I married. I married to become the father of a prospective child, which turned out to be a volatile form of cancer and ended in an occasional spasm. I know that matters followed in that order but I am totally unable to recall to anything like reality the sequence of moods, the mental and moral goings to and fro, that must have occurred during that definitive period of my life. I suspect that I must have liked Dolores in those eventful days much more than

I do now — by spells anyhow — and certainly so far as I can remember I took her word unsuspiciously.

I believe what I am told too readily. There is a streak of vanity in me that dislikes and dismisses the idea that anyone can cheat me. And partly also there is an element of laziness that shirks the trouble of scrutiny.

I certainly tried to settle down in this unanticipated life. I think that having shouldered my obligations I did make an attempt to play the constant lover to her. I tried my hand at little attentions, gifts, pet names and flattering phrases. By acting a role one may become that role. But, it is a queer thing, I never accustomed myself to call her 'darling' or 'dearest' easily. A nickname I found seemed always more sincere. I was shy of all positive declarations to her. I found myself in Paris trying to achieve a way of living with her, but my recollections of these early years insist on remaining in an inconsecutive jumble. Our behaviour towards each other changed but rather after the fashion of February weather, which is bright one day and stormy the next.

I suppose a vast majority of married people, and particularly those who come out of different classes or different countries, go through this intricate, repetitive, intermittent process of imperfect mutual discovery and imperfect compromise. I suppose I arrived almost unawares — the impression is built up by a thousand touches - at the realization that this creature to whom I was mated could never in any sense be mine or any part of an amplified or enriched me, could never be more than an inseparable alien auxiliary, always on guard against me, always to be treated with a self-protective, watchful disingenuousness, the last person in the world for bare confidences. So it must happen in countless cases.

And this absolute disappearance of abandon may have no deliberate quality of planned treachery on either side. We pass unheedingly from phase to phase. I believe quite firmly that at first Dolores threw herself into her fantasy of imminent motherhood in good faith; I believe she really saw herself as a devoted adherent of my aims and ambitions. I still hold to that. Only when she found herself married and installed in our fine large apartment in the avenue Mitani, other more vivid and attractive imaginations just ousted these

earlier dreams.

With a completeness — !

Since those early enthusiasms Dolores has disregarded my business, flouted my business and never hesitated to distract me from it. Since our prospective child passed its recessive phase, leaving nothing but a few incidental stabs of pain within call, my business has been nothing to her but a rival. Sometimes indeed she makes a great bragging before her friends, and giving away my private vanities and my hidden ambitions, proclaims how influential my group of writers is becoming and how rich we are. (Really we are not; the firm has grown big and muscular but I see to it that it secretes no fat.) Generally however when she turns a lunch or dinner party into an exhibitionist orgy, I figure as the ruthless man of steel and success, hard even in his vices, who has enslaved her sensitive and suffering and once so brilliant personality. In spite of everything I have done to her, she declares all down the table, obliterating every intermediate conversation, she loves me still. And so on.

For some reason I recall a mood in these early years very clearly. It survives like some letter in an old correspondence that has escaped a general burning. I see myself walking through our apartment one afternoon, I should think about May or June in 1922 or possibly 23. It was certainly our first year of married life. I must have come back to Paris by an earlier plane or train than I had said and she was out. Either the servants had taken my things or they were still in the hall. I was looking at her furniture and thinking her over.

How entirely I was out of harmony with this household of mine had never been so plain to me before. I felt an alien, a paying guest. This was not my home; it was the home, it was ruthlessly the home of Dolores. Whatever unformed desire for a home I had had, had been overridden. An obstinate, incessant will, none the less effective because it was narrow, limited and unimaginative, had set itself to frame a living place for me in which the long, loose, unencumbered activities that are the substance of my life, were resisted, deflected, broken up and frustrated at every turn.

Even my bureau was not my own. Dolores had successfully given me one of those great pompous writing desks without which the portrait of no French man of letters is complete. On it are massive

brass lions with a sort of inverted top hats and holes for great candles bored into their heads, and a vast brass inkstand - I use a fountain pen - and a stupendous brass paper-weight. Its drawers all have bellies and at every angle where anything is to be caught there is that gilt brass stuff, which English people call ormolu. There is an equally impressive book-case behind this writing desk; stylistically not so much a brother to it as a distant cousin, bellying still more opulently - and the drawers below open freely only to some password still unknown to me. Though at times in my haste I try quite a lot. Both these pieces are much too large for the room and practically I live between them and the wall. Over the fireplace is a vast mirror and an armless twisted nude in plaster, and further, to emphasize what Dolores considers the virile note, there are paintings of meaty young women in a state of frank self-exposure on the opposite wall. And when we have a party, men are expected to litter their hats and coats all over this snuggery.

This bureau was furnished as a complete surprise for me while I was in England. It was a surprise, but I did not protest.

'It strikes a man's note,' she said when she introduced me. 'I know you like nothing elegant. But this has a sensuous gravity. It is like you...'

I suppose a man can learn a lesson from any picture that is made of him. But I still cannot trace this particular likeness.

I have always had a bias for the pose of Democritus. I do my best to ease life with laughter. Even now, as I recall that dazed exploration of my own home I am amused.

I surveyed my drawing-room from various points of view, standing at one point for a minute or so, and then trying it from another. From any point of view it was unadulterated, invincible Dolores. It was preposterous how completely I was not in evidence. It was funny. 'Good old Dolores!' I whispered.

This was the room to which I was to invite rising authors, publicists, men and women of ideas, for the gravest, most fruitful of discussions...

It was quite a big room with three great windows opening on the little Parc Mitani. Two round pillars sustaining a cornice broke its length. The style was roughly speaking, Empire-Louis- Quinze-

Oriental Bazaar with supplementary Modern Maple and an overpowering flavour of exhibitionism. It was not furnished to live in; it was furnished for Dolores to show off to her friends, to explain to her friends, to triumph with over her friends.

In one corner was a great bowl in which Chinese goldfish swam gravely and sadly through life, sports and marvels, distended and twisted, trailing strange fringes. Everywhere there were little tables, life-size tables and dwarfish Moorish tables in inlay and bronze, a couple of sofas, easy chairs to be sat in easily, gilt chairs to be sat on gingerly, dangerous chairs on which exotic fabrics had been draped, there were oriental rugs on the shining parquet floor and oriental rugs crept up the walls. There was not a table, not a horizontal surface anywhere, that did not carry its burthen of bibelots, little unworthy pots, boxes, images, carvings, witnessing that in every age Satan has found some artistry still for idle hands to do. Little queer rare-looking books lay about, books no one would ever dream of looking at, or rather they did not so much lie about as lie where they had been put. None of this stuff was really interesting or curious. None of it had personal associations with either of us. None of it was rare; it was all to be found in limitless repetition in the shops of the rue du Faubourg St Honore and of its interminable sisters and cousins. It was just Dolores' idea of a proper background for our social life.

Hanging rather too high — as all pictures are hung in France - were various works of art — only one or two at that time, for Dolores had still to taste the joys of the not too extravagant patronage of the not too competent painter. There was an amateurish picture of the Hotel Pension Malta bought on the front at Cannes, and two of those life studies in which the last thing of importance is the face. For Dolores pictorial art means only one thing; the human body wrong way up. Pianos, thank God, there were none, for she hates music intensely as a rival. Her impulse is always to rustle and talk it down. Every light was shaded pink. And over everything there hung, there has always hung, a faint elusive flavour of incense, of pastilles, of recent battles and duels of perfume.

I sniffed, grunted, and went slowly to my other state apartment, my dining-room.

There also I was in an alien atmosphere. The room was generally

sombre mahogany and upright. It was eminently fitted for that occasional serious eating and drinking which enlivens the habitually sane French dietary. But the jackdaw in Dolores had broken out over the sideboard in a clustering constellation of miscellaneous plates, all pretending to be specimens of great interest and beauty and dominated by a vast majolica plaque insisting upon the Rape of the Sabines, but always recalling to my mind, I don't know why — the rondeurs I suppose - that bustling cheese market at Alkmaar.

A small table by the window displayed all Dolores' best teacups and saucers. They had to be shown somewhere. There was also an elegant little ewer and basin on that table, happily the only surviving pieces of a set.

I turned back to that entangled drawing-room.

'Exhibitionism,' I whispered. 'Incurable exhibitionism...'

Pause.

'How the hell did I ever let myself get here?' I asked.

And presently answered my own question feebly. 'One damned thing led to another.'

I became aware of Dolores in the hall. I walked a few paces to meet her tempestuous inrush.

'Dolores,' I said, 'I've been thinking over this room.'

'Well?' she said alert for praise.

'You ought to mark the prices of everything in plain figures.'

'What do you mean?'

'It's like a bazaar.'

'There *is* an oriental touch,' she agreed looking round with self-approval. 'A richness. Variety. It is a necessary part of my personality.'

'You don't think that for everyday purposes it is just a leetle crowded and confused?'

'It is vivid — animated. It is chic. What else could you expect? Everyone admires it. Even your stupid English friends when they come in, open their eyes... But you have just arrived, my dear! You have not even got yourself a whisky-soda. Ah! I have another surprise for you this time - in your room. No. I will not tell you. I want you to be surprised.'

Maybe that afternoon stands out in my mind because it was then I first realized the full dimensions of the task I had undertaken in assimilating Dolores. And with diminishing persistence and an entire want of success I have been trying to assimilate her ever since. But I did not realize until last night that it has been going on for thirteen years.

In a clumsy way and with a good deal of inconsistency I have, all things considered, tried pretty hard to work out a method of living with her which would give us a real married life, that would neither obliterate me nor involve impossible suppressions for her. My efforts have never been properly planned nor steadfastly pursued because my attitude towards her has never been steady. Sometimes I have thought her a lark, sometimes I have thought of her as a nuisance; at times she has seemed incidental, at times she has seemed fundamental. Even if she had wanted to consider me I should have puzzled her.

A larger circle of old friends than I thought she possessed gathered about her. Even old schoolmates from Monte Carlo, now actively settled in Paris, appeared. They were all competitively smart and self-conscious; they loved to talk about the great world intimately at the tops of their voices. For the first time I realized the tremendous importance early friends and old familiar associates may play in a woman's life. She did not love nor respect any of these people, but their reluctant approval, their admiration and envy were primary necessities to her existence. Their influence, the dogmas they laid down about clothing, servants, money and behaviour gave the patterns of her life.

Reflecting upon this it seemed reasonable to me in those early years to assume that if I introduced a number of people of a different type and particularly English people with manifestly different sets of values, if in fact I changed her audience, she would change her performance to correspond. But though Dolores can pick up things very readily, she never forgets. She adds to herself, but early influences come first. And I am much too simple and she was much too quick, to give this attempt to change the atmosphere a chance.

She detected and resented an implicit criticism from the outset. Her defensive mechanisms were alert at once.

I cut a foolish figure in these ill-conceived and half-hearted attempts at — de-Dolorification. They did not modify her; they intensified her. How was it that I could have imagined that she, whose essential life it is to pose herself and brag, could possibly be assimilated to a sort of life which has subtilized posing and bragging out of sight? I got people I knew to visit us in Paris, I took her for a tour to Scotland and I managed several long weekend visits at country houses in England. It is difficult now to count up how much of this sort of thing I did or to fix any precise dates. A publisher nowadays shares something of the social opportunities of the literary man, so many fingers of good family are inky now, and she shared many of my invitations. She was an aggressive, exasperating and disconcerting visitor for any hostess to entertain. She was on the defensive offensive from the start. She set herself with loud cries and startling costumes to shock, challenge and dazzle. She wasn't going to be taught anything by these people; she was going to overwhelm them. She was a terrible nuisance, but at times I must confess she was a lark. I must already have been getting rather tired of her monologue by the second or third year of our marriage and also I could never reconcile myself to her disposition to clamour to a roomful or a tableful of people about her intimate, even the most intimate, relations with me. Yet for all that, there was a kind of refreshment of her original shockingness, when I brought her, all unprefaced, into some typically Anglican gathering, that had its amusing side.

At Clinton Towers, I remember, we arrived early and lunched with the family, governess and the three girls included. Dolores was inspired to talk about Sappho and the recent suppression of a book called *The Well of Loneliness.* She became so explicit that suddenly Mam'selle uttered a short sharp cry and — leaving plates of food unfinished - swept her charges from the room.

'*Now,*' said Lady Garron, rather grimly I thought, '*now* we can talk freely.'

Dolores continued unruffled.

And also I recall a vivid question she asked some exmissionary

bishop, I forget where. Always when she gets hold of a missionary, Catholic or Protestant, she pins him down to an explicit cross-examination upon the question of native marriage customs and the Christian insistence upon decent clothing. Through a momentary lull in the conversation I heard her asking: 'Tell me now, bishop, *frankly,* what is it you want to hide — is it deficiency or excess?'

Dolores finds the clergy almost as stimulating as they find her. I recall another occasion when I was smitten by a high- pitched ecclesiastical voice crying in evident distress. 'I had *much* rather *not* discuss this question any further.'

I never found out what that question was nor what it was made old Lord Synagogue at a lunch party in Paris assure her with tremulous emphasis: 'A Voman of your sort vould haf bin stoned in Israel. She vould haf bin *stoned.*' Some little confidence I suppose.

From first to last Dolores never attuned her costume to the country house atmosphere nor would she listen to any suggestions on the matter. 'My dear Steenie,' she would say, 'you are a bourgeois, you are a bookseller, a tradesman. You do not understand these things. From a Frenchwoman — and to them I am a Frenchwoman — something special is expected.'

They certainly got something special. To her sort of people in Paris, the English country house is still a legendary land. To Dolores it remained a legendary land even when she was in it. 'Le sport' is supposed to prevail exhorbitantly and feminine costume had to be adapted with a certain coquetry to the sporting idea. Moreover Britain is supposed to be the land of 'le plaid'. So I treasure among my memories a lively picture of Dolores making an entry from the house upon the great terrace at Shonts somewhere towards midday, in a marvellous version of a highlander's costume in Stewart tartan, kilt and sporran quite faithfully rendered and an eagle's feather in the velvet bonnet. And another occasion when the theme chosen was a very large metal-buttoned red redingote with a velvet peaked cap, is also very vivid with me still. The afternoons had a voluptuous 'tea-gown' phase with great rings and necklaces and brooches and bangles.

'But my dear Steenie!' she said, when I tried to undermine this idea. 'Tea-gown is an *English* word. Tea-gown is an English thing. If

these other women do not wear one, it is because they do not even know how to be smart in their own country. You do not understand these things. You nevaire will. You know nothing of this life of chic and leisure here. Naturally. It is not your milieu. If you were to come to this house a month later you would find all these women in tea-gowns like mine.'

'And do you think it is usual to wear all those bangles and rings and jewellery with a tea-gown?'

'It is what I do,' said Dolores. 'It is my style.'

She not only made these remarkable adjustments to our social English atmosphere but she affected a patently insincere interest in games. Her schooldays had ended just a little before the invasion of the convent schools by tennis, but she never realized how inexpert she was. She had a belief that presently in a moment she would get the knack of the game. It was a matter of great difficulty for hostesses to keep her high heels off the courts. 'But I do not *mind* playing in my heels,' she would expostulate. I did at last make her believe that she looked better in very chic white shoes and a gipsy silk handkerchief about her black hair. She would pounce upon a partner. 'You shall play with me.' A great favour. She moved with an active angularity that was practically independent of the ball. Her grip on the racquet was strange, a sort of forthright upholding.

'Do not *tell* me,' she would cry. 'Do not show me! Let me play in my own way...

'*There!* I have hit it... You see? I *hit* it... Why did you tell me I could not hit it this way?'

From the sidelines she took possession of the game. She distributed praise and blame. She never ceased to give advice and urge the players to greater exertions. 'Brav-O,' she would cry, 'Brav-O', and make a swift, sudden and disconcerting clapping with her hands. She liked the ball to go high. She liked it to go far. Many players found her applause ill-timed.

'Steenie, you are playing *badly.* Play *faster.*'

Then perhaps she would lapse for a time into mere social talk. I remember hearing her tell Lady Garron, who I believe was some sort of county champion: 'When tennis is properly played, you do not even *see* the ball.'

‘But then you do not often see it properly played,’ said Lady Garron.

‘But even as you play it here, I find it amusing,’ said Dolores in her best great-lady style. ‘Why, after all, should one play like a paid professional? It is a game.’

10

It must have been after four or five years of this sort of life that my disposition to get away from Dolores began to dominate my resolve to establish some sort of *modus vivendi* with her. Perhaps it was a little later. I cannot be certain. But I think it must have been round about nineteen twenty-six or twenty-seven that I began to scheme temporary escapes from her of a more elaborate sort than my little business trips of a fortnight or three weeks to London and Durthing. It was impossible for me to see people in Paris without her, but gradually I developed a private life of my own in London into which she did not enter.

Gradually I eliminated London from her programme. When it became plain that London was getting on her mind I would take her off to the Riviera or Rome or Oslo. And twice we had rough Channel crossings. Even on a rough Channel crossing Dolores suffered with outstanding distinction. It was a revelation. She made the most of it. But to be quite the sickest woman on a Channel boat is not really a triumphant memory. It left her with a diminished appetite for social triumph in Britain. And then in my schemes for book-selling on the continent I found it necessary to take a tour in Germany. She was still too vociferously full of war propaganda to want to go with me, and I had a pleasant time in Munich, Leipzig, Vienna, Berlin and Zurich. I went by air — in order I assured her to quicken my return. She was much opposed to my using the air services, she had an exaggerated idea of the dangers overhead and insisted upon a reassuring telegram; *sain et sauf tendresse,* from every airport. For her own part she said the sea was bad enough. If ever she found herself in an aeroplane she would, she declared, jump out. Probably she would. But I could never get her into an aeroplane. It dawned upon me that business trips by air might be a very convenient way of

repossessing myself of my freedom.

I developed this idea. I found business to take me to Oslo and Stockholm and Finland. I planned a bolder escape to America. She fought that, but I got away. I almost weakened to let her come as far as New York with me, but her dread of the sea deterred her. One of her friends happily had been sick the whole way across and the experience lost nothing in the telling. 'Not even for you,' she said. '*No.*'

I felt my humbug was improving on each occasion. I instructed the wireless operator to send a daily radio all the way across and I gave him six variations, 'Triste', 'Mer houleuse', 'Pluie', 'Quelle banalite', 'Temps severe', and 'Je pense a toi', each followed by the obligatory 'tendresse'.

And then I managed India. I got away with eleven weeks, but that was my maximum absence. I was also beginning to stretch my trips to England. I had cast a longing look at Australia, for there one might travel for weeks, no letters possible and only an occasional radio; I had even thrown out some preparatory hints, but by that time Dolores was already developing her present fever of suspicion and jealousy. At first I think she had found a certain release and relief in these lengthening absences of mine from Paris. It gave her little freedoms. There I was safely out of the way. I was a grand passion and all that, no lover was like me, but also I was a restraint. Then something set her counting the days when I was away. She realized that I was contriving a sort of fractional distillation of myself out of her life.

The more I was away from her and rested from her, the more alien and uninteresting and uncongenial I found her on my return. Whatever else she did when I was away she certainly acquired no new ideas and no new tricks. She seemed to be becoming less lively and more implacably quarrelsome. She had lost flexibility. The closer one came to her vanity the harder and spikier it seemed. And a certain hard maliciousness became more and more evident to me. Gradually year by year it was more definitely established in my mind that I wanted to get away from her just as much as possible. At first I had a little deceived myself about that. I had contrived to feel I liked her and still found her entertaining. Now I planned deliberately to establish barriers between our lives. My social life in England

increased in interest and that I felt I must conceal from her.

Rather less than four years ago I did a foolish thing. My social contacts in London were increasing and I felt the need for a more commodious establishment, completely detached from the business. But I did not want Dolores to invade that. So without telling her I transferred myself to my present flat in Aldenham Square. Her letters I thought could still go to Carrington Square. This was a fatuous undignified trick to play, though I thought it amusing at the time, and before three months were out someone had let out the sinister secret. From that time onward her jealousy has been a spreading flame.

I took her over to see how harmless the place was, but she failed altogether to see how harmless it was. 'This,' said she, 'is a garconniere, nothing less.'

In Paris, in her world, there is no such thing as an innocent garconniere.

'You are the first and only compromising visitor,' I said.

'Bah!' she cried.

'But does it *look* like a garconniere? Does it *smell* like one? Is there a cushion or a mirror or a hairpin in the place?'

She stooped and picked up a hairpin, and handed it to me gravely; '*There* mister Steenie!'

'Point for you,' said I. 'That noble piece of old ironwork comes from the head of Mrs Richman. She arrives every day at eight and stays until twelve. You shall have another tomorrow, straight from the hair. But really that shows you! It is more convincing than nothing. The place, you see, hasn't been swept for you. Find a fine lady's hairpin if you can.'

But since then my life has been preposterously propitiatory. It has made me more attentive and more enslaved than ever. I try and distract her with treats and excursions. The big blue car is a direct product of the Aldingham Square flat. This excursion here again.

Cars have always been an important aspect of life for Dolores. They determine a sort of social status in her world. She took the keenest interest in mine always and boasted about them to her friends before she became the proud registered owner of one of her own. Then for a time she became so car proud that I do not think she ever set foot to pavement except to cross it. And her insistence upon the

correct behaviour of other cars became even more emphatic than before. For Dolores is a sort of voluntary road censor. If someone in a passing car sticks out a hand to point to the view, or swerves at all from the proper side or flaps things loose or scatters cigarette sparks or commits any such small impropriety, Dolores' head is out of the window in a trice, as we pass, her hands make denunciating gestures and her voice is lifted in high-pitched eloquent reproof that goes on long after the delinquent is out of earshot. Startled sinners hear that receding voice and, I hope, mend their manners.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dolores at Torquestol

Dolores' arrival here had the quality of an important public event. I had been for a walk before lunch along the bank of a delightful weed-and-flower-trimmed artificial water-course that ripples along high up on the hillside. I had not expected her until the afternoon but when I returned I found Alphonse and the blue car, still largely encumbered with Dolores' luggage, outside the hotel, and Bayard seated right in the middle of the entrance turning up his nose at everything and everybody. Various pensionnaires were at the little tables on the balcony, pretending to take aperitifs but really memorizing for future digestion every detail of the car, the luggage, the Pekinese and Alphonse.

Alphonse I detest. Every human being has a right to a back and a front and two sides and to have the back and front curved in a reasonable and proper manner. But Alphonse is not properly curved; he sticks out behind suddenly as if he wore a bustle. It is an impertinence and provokes furtive ribaldry and laughter. And he has a singularly silly large pink face which also, in my judgment, sticks out, and his carriage has the rigidity of a waxwork. Dolores insists upon his wearing a royal blue uniform with pink collar and cuffs. The inspection of the pensionnaires was being very gallantly supplemented by the crowd of men and boys who sell postcards, straw hats, fans and suchlike litter, and offer guidance to the various grottos, lakes, chasms, views, churches, chapels, Calvaries and so forth, in the neighbourhood, to the people who come over in charabancs from Morlaix. The charabancs had still to arrive but were due now at any moment.

But the general air of the expectant crowd did not suggest that today they were waiting for the charabancs, but for something more individualized. As I crossed the road towards the hotel I realized that this something was me. The beam of all their convergent eyes felt like limelight.

As usual I was quite unprepared for my part. I walked as

unconcernedly as possible. I should have advanced with a sort of trotting motion and asked, ‘Is she here? Is she better?’

A momentary distraction was caused by Bayard, who yelped sharply as the hotel manager in a state of hurried effusion — for the charabancs might arrive at any moment now — came out to meet me. Behind him seethed Marie, Dolores’ maid and rockbottom confidante. I acknowledged the rigid and reproving salute of Alphonse and turned to encounter the reproaches of the manager and Marie.

‘Madame was so disappointed,’ said the maitre d’hotel, ‘not to find you awaiting her.’

‘She is lying down now,’ said Marie. ‘She has had her pain.’

And then from the hotel passage behind them came a cry of exultation. Dolores in a revealing white wrap appeared right in the middle of the stage and descended the steps of the hotel.

‘Madame!’ cried Marie apprehensively.

‘I couldn’t *wait* for you,’ she said. ‘Pain or no pain. I couldn’t *wait.* Why did you not stay indoors for me?’

She flung herself upon me. ‘My *darling!*’ she said. ‘I forgive you.’

I take this sort of thing better than I used to do but still it abashes me. I struggled out of her clutching embrace.

I freed myself from her with difficulty and held her at arms’ length. ‘Let me have a look at you,’ I said, to mitigate the effect of this disentanglement. ‘How much better you look!’

‘I forgive you,’ she repeated. ‘I shall *always* forgive you.’

She embraced me again with the utmost determination.

Bayard, who had waddled halfway down the steps suddenly yapped approval — or disapproval or something — and sat down, panting a sort of challenge at the world.

‘Bis! Bis! Bravo!’

The charabancs for the first time in history had arrived unnoticed and were drawing up in their accustomed line opposite the hotel. A rude man in the foremost charabanc was standing up and applauding us.

I wriggled my head out of her envelopment.

‘Where’s the porter for the luggage?’ I said, disentangling myself

for the second time. ‘Assist the service, Alphonse. Mobilize yourself.’

The charabancs claimed their meed of attention. The visitors were scrambling down, unguided, unsolicited, unprovided with postcards and souvenirs. This could not go on. Business is business however attractive the sight of passion in its full maturity may be.

‘There’s going to be a crowd for lunch,’ I said. ‘I’ll try to reserve a table.’

2

(Torquestol, August 24th, 1934)

I am angry and at the same time in a ruffled and resentful way I am amused. I am disposed to laugh at things, but it is laughter with a split lip. We came here less than three weeks ago and by this time we are absurdly at cross-purposes with everyone and, what is by no means so funny, Dolores and I — in spite of my private good resolutions that it should never happen again — are in a state of active conflict upon a matter in which I am extremely reluctant to give way.

Let me in the calm and stillness of these small hours make a survey of the present situation. At first things did not go so badly. But after two or three days of amative intensity Dolores passed into her malignant phase. She becomes then the most uncomfortable thing on earth and she avenges herself in- discriminatingly. Troubles arise and thicken. Our present complex may be divided now roughly into two major and three minor rows. They are running concurrently and each one reacts in its own way upon the others, but the best thing will be to take them so to speak in the order of their magnitude.

There is first the trouble arising out of the unrestrained gallantry of Bayard, with the little pet of the Baroness Snitchy or Schenitzy - I can never get her name right and the manager does not attempt to do so. I will call her simply as he does Madame la Baronne. That began about as soon as we arrived. For me before the arrival of Dolores, the Baroness was just a pair of pale eyes looking out from a heavily powdered face over a small sharp nose, from a corner table at

mealtimes. She had a pale fringe of hair, a wig I suppose, supporting a small flat lace cap, and she was wrapped about rather than dressed in creamy and whitish shawls pinned together. When she walked out of the salle a manger she became a small, bent and quivering old lady assisting her movements with an ebony stick. She is, I now realize, slightly and unreliably deaf, and she assists her hearing with a small silver ear trumpet adorned with white lace. Her little white Pomeranian was a model of discretion before Bayard appeared. Then it was a case of love at first sight.

But trouble with the Baroness threatened even before the Bayard incident. On the day of our arrival we made a rather belated entrance for lunch and while the distracted maitre d'hotel was in the kitchen ordering the special menu indicated for Dolores' dieting, some excursionists had commandeered the table I had reserved. It is one of Dolores' profoundest convictions that to begin well in an hotel one must be arrogant, and this seemed as good an opportunity as any for arrogance. Dolores surveyed the eating multitude with disdain through her lorgnette. 'Surely you could have put a card!' she said. And then to me, 'Which table did you reserve, Steenie?'

As I had no intention of throwing out our quite innocent supplanters by force I decided I had forgotten. 'One of these,' I said vaguely.

'A business man!' she commented. 'And he doesn't know.'

'In a moment, madame,' pleaded the manager, 'a table will be free.'

'Which?' demanded Dolores, sweeping the room with her glasses, and putting the cowering pleasure-seekers into their proper relationship to her.

'One of these,' said the manager. 'Will you not wait a moment on the balcony? And a cocktail perhaps?'

'I came to this place for rest and solitude,' said Dolores. 'Cocktails are poison.'

'They are paying at two tables *now,*' whispered the maitre d'hotel.

Dolores weighed the merits of the tables he seemed to indicate and reflected upon the table manners of her departing predecessors. 'We shall need a clean cloth,' she said.

Then she turned to me. 'Steenie, give me your arm. I feel — . I

may have my pain. Not even a chair free.'

By some feat of legerdemain a waitress produced and put a chair for her. Dolores readjusted it so as to block the service to the adjacent guests. But a table was rapidly cleared for us and the hors d'oeuvres put before us. She forgot her pain. 'No sardines!' said Dolores, surveying the modest display. 'Naturally, I desire a sardine. And tunny fish also...'

So importantly we made our debut. The old Baroness, who had hitherto been the Faubourg St Germain, so to speak, of the salle a manger, watched our proceedings with acute disapproval. She called the head waiter and speaking with the extreme audibility of the deaf she indicated Dolores with her ear trumpet and demanded:

'Who is she?'

The maitre d'hotel thought it no harm for us to hear. 'Madame Wilbeck, the great English editeur's wife,' I heard. 'Previously she was a princess.'

It is remarkable how speedily hotels and shopkeepers learn about Dolores' title. I never said anything about it - or for the matter of that about my being a publisher - when I took our rooms, but somewhen in the brief interval between her arrival and my return from my walk our greatness had been impressed on the manager - presumably by Marie. As a princess Dolores is, I admit, unconvincing.

'*She's* no princess,' said the Baroness.

'An *Egyptian* princess,' I heard him explaining.

'*Quelle* princesse!' exclaimed the Baroness with amusement and resumed her lunch.

I had done my best to drown that quavering and yet clear diction by a demand for the wine card.

'Why do you bother about wines, my dear Steenie?' asked Dolores. 'In a place like this they will all be alike.'

'I had some quite good claret yesterday,' I said.

'Your English judgments! On our wines! It is part of your national vanity.'

I shrugged my shoulders.

'I find it endearing,' she said relentingly. 'I don't blame you, darling.'

I chose a wine, and the sardines and tunny fish arrived.

‘There will certainly be mosquitoes here,’ said Dolores, waving her lorgnette. ‘That younger waitress has either been bitten or—’

‘I’ve never heard a mosquito here.’

‘Then she has an eruption of some sort. We must arrange she does not wait on us.’

Presently the manager passed us bearing a plate of food for the little pom. ‘Before our wine!’ remarked Dolores.

The Baroness received the dog’s food importantly. The manager laid it respectfully at her feet and the little dog sniffed fastidiously.

‘Dolly,’ she said, ‘eat.’

‘Did she say my name?’ asked Dolores sharply.

‘Who?’

‘That old hag in the corner there.’

‘Ssh.’

‘She won’t understand English. And besides, don’t you see, she has an ear trumpet... I hope *I* shall never grow old like that.’

Plainly the old lady knew how not to hear when it suited her.

‘Her face is as white as a clown’s. It’s hardly human,’ said Dolores. ‘And that nose peeping out. Like — like a mongoose. Maitre d’hotel, will you never give us anything to drink? Why are there no flowers on the table? But I love flowers. I need them. Even if we make an extra payment. I love everything elegant. It is in my nature. No. I don’t want them stale from some other table. I had rather go without... Steenie! I ask you. Did she mention my name?’

‘I think she called her dog Dobby or Dolly.’

Dolores made no reply. We were in the presence of a most attractive omelet. I knew she was hesitating between declaring she could not bring herself to touch a single mouthful, and taking the larger half. She took the larger half and I felt greatly relieved. When the wine came she drank it without comment but appreciatively.

But this was only a catspaw before a gale.

3

I am fairly modern and liberal about eroticism, but the behaviour of the Baroness’ Dolly really shocked me. And Bayard’s was very little better. But it was, I insist, that shameless little pom with her yaps of

admiration who began it. Directly she set eyes on him.

It was at dinner. All those unspeakable charabanc people had gone long since. The lunch had blown over and we had unpacked and Dolores and I had had a nice tete-a-tete. She seemed more at peace with the world. Our social life was running unencumbered, There was space and leisure in the salle a manger, bows, greetings and conversation between table and table, and only very subdued sounds of eating. The English mother and son who say 'Bonsoir' to everybody and never anything more, were at their table, and so were the large family from Paris with the mother and father totally unused to guiding a family through a meal in the presence of spectators, who were continually girding at their offspring and asking them what people would think of them, remarking also for the general benefit, 'At home you do not do that. You would never dream of doing so nasty a thing. You are excited. You forget everything. The gentleman there — yes, the nice English gentleman — is shocked at you.' There were also three bourgeois honeymoon couples, one couple rather gross and the others young and shy. The two English fishermen — or were they Irish? — had entered in a satisfied state from an excellent day's sport. There was also a lonely man with a vast smooth belly of a face, possibly a commercial traveller, in a shiny grey suit.

We had got about halfway through the meal, and Dolores was making a depreciatory inspection of the company and finding it 'banal', just as I remembered her doing years ago at Antibes, when Bayard, who had been resting from the fatigues of the journey, was brought in by Marie to assist at the meal.

Whether the pom was really under the urgency of passion I doubt. I am inclined to think that the misguided little beast was suddenly seized with a wild desire for play and canine friendship, and that she found some mysterious attractiveness, which was possibly quite independent of sex appeal, in Bayard. Her shamelessness may possibly have been the shamelessness of complete innocence. It is not for me to judge. But it was impossible to misinterpret the nature of his response to her advances. For a lady's pet there is something very coarse about Bayard. And the surprise, horror and disgust of the Baroness was equally unmistakable.

Indeed our first intimation of any incorrectitude was a loud cry of

‘degoutant!’ from the old lady, and we saw her struggle to her feet, seize her stick, and administer a hearty thwack to our pet, before any intervention was possible.

‘Come away from him, Dolly!’ she cried. ‘Come away!’

Bayard yelped as the cane descended, but refused to relinquish his delightful, his most enjoyable companion. The stick was raised again.

‘Madame!’ screamed Dolores, standing up. ‘Will you please to refrain from hitting my dog.’

‘Madame!’ returned the Baroness, flatly but loudly, ‘will you please take this insufferable little beast away.’

The maitre d’hotel and I intervened promptly, and separated the dogs, leaving the two ladies face to face. I tucked up Bayard, struggling violently, under my arm. The pom, after a vain attempt to treat the whole affair as a great lark, realized something of the portentiousness of the situation and retired behind its mistress.

Dolores was saying: ‘I should have thought, Madame, that you would have realized the impropriety of bringing a chienne in that condition into the presence of other dogs.’

The Baroness was replying: ‘My little dog is perfectly well behaved. It had no idea beyond innocent play. I do not know what you mean by its condition. I do not understand you. The suggestion is indelicate to say the least of it. Come, Dolly! Did that nasty dirty-minded little dog insult you!’

She resumed her seat with great dignity. Dolores resumed hers with even greater dignity. I remained holding Bayard. The head waiter hovered. Dolores regarded me with anger and contempt, all tenderness forgotten.

‘Can’t you put him down, Steenie, for his dinner?’

‘Hadn’t he better go upstairs to Marie?’

‘Is my dog to be driven away from me at the whim of a total stranger?’

I lost my temper. ‘Damn the dogs,’ said I. I put down Bayard as one who washed his hands of the whole affair and almost immediately he reverted to his supreme preoccupation. I did my best to go on lunching as though I was deaf, dumb and a bachelor in a dogless, sexless world. Meanwhile a great altercation arose about

me. Marie, Madame Hunot, the maitre d'hotel, the spotted serving maid, the commercial traveller with the vast face, made various interventions. Happily the two principal ladies remained in their places. But they expressed themselves with such lucidity, length and vigour that for a time the actual proceedings of Bayard and his little friend were practically disregarded. Because of her deafness the Baroness did not so much reply to what Dolores said as make a series of antagonistic statements. Antagonistic and yet in substance closely similar, but delivered in a deep penetrating voice that reproached Dolores for screaming.

Both ladies found it necessary to assume an extremity of aristocratic poise, pride and authority. They were, we were given to understand, 'grandes dames' of a type rare since the revolutionary close of the eighteenth century. But their desire for an icy elevation was shot with a passionate impulse to sting and burn. Each wanted to indicate with the utmost acuteness her complete penetration of the unjustifiable pretensions of the other. In each a fishwife struggled with a queen. 'Permit me to tell you, Madame,' was really not a demand for permission. 'If you will allow me to remark, Madame,' brooked no denial. There were differences of style of course. The Baroness was disposed to sail across the sky far above what people nowadays are apt to call the 'facts of life', but Dolores true to her habit of keeping her conversation on the spicy side, unfolded a liberal-spirited, living and penetrating knowledge of the more passionate needs of canine femininity. Much of this discourse flowed over me. I did my best to keep my head down beneath the level of parapet and parados. Then I began to take notice again.

Dolores was talking in this style. 'My little dog, I would have you know, Madame, is a pedigree dog and perfect in every particular. For stud purposes his attentions are priceless. If I cared for him to occupy his time in that fashion. Naturally your own little dog, who is, I should think, partly a Pomeranian—'

Scrutiny through the lorgnette.

The Baroness was saying: 'She cannot contain herself, Madame. Her sensibilities are of the finest. When she is locked in my room she show's her resentment in a quite unmistakable manner. It's not only the noise she makes, Madame, though that is bad enough. She insists

on being with me. She is a creature of infinite affection. A room without me is - dehors. It is *your* dog.

Madame, that should be placed under restraint. I have never seen so ill-bred a dog. Never! It is these spoilt and ill-trained dogs who make the possession of a pet impossible. God knows what indulgence is shown him...'

Suddenly I came to a decision. This had gone on long enough. I arose gesticulating commandingly with my table napkin. I contrived to knock a glass off the table and the smash stilled every other voice.

I struck an attitude like the portrait of an eighteenth-century general.

'Listen,' I said in a voice of authority foreign to my nature. '*All* dogs must go away! Marie, remove Bayard. Never mind *what* he is doing. Remove him, I say. Detach him and remove him. Instantly. And you, Madame, if you will pardon my insistence, must banish that dog of yours also. Madame Hunot, I appeal to you, manifestly dogs must not be brought into the salle a manger. In many hotels it is an established regulation. You must make it an invariable rule, from now onward. I will not resume my seat until both have been taken away and this repast restored to tranquillity.'

'It is the only solution,' said the maitre d'hotel appealingly to the Baroness, 'Monsieur is right,' and I perceived that a sort of cheering was going on among the other pensionnaires. I heard one of the fishermen saying something about shooting the bloody little beasts. Madame Hunot gathered up the little pom and Marie fought with Bayard and secured him. Both the two ladies were conscious of having said good things and were willing now to eat.

'So long as *both* animals go,' they said simultaneously, with an air of having discovered this satisfactory solution themselves.

'Why do you not always assert yourself, Steenie?' said Dolores as social order returned.

I perceived that in Dolores' present phase I might figure as the strong decisive man and anything in that role would be acceptable.

A sort of truce of mutual disdain set in between the two principal ladies and has lasted two whole days. In spite of Dolores' express prohibition I insist on bowing with profound respect to the Baroness whenever I encounter her. I will be damned if I am rude to old

women to please anyone. The Baroness responds with regal dignity. After all Dolores is my misfortune, the old lady's bow intimates, I am not to blame. But to Dolores it is as if I acknowledged the primacy of her antagonist and we have had vehement recriminations about it upstairs.

4

For two or three days, as I have explained, Dolores was in a tolerable state of mind. I was able and quite wiling to keep her in a tolerable state of mind. Then she passed into her less amiable phase out of my control and her malignant side came uppermost. In these interludes one is subjected to unexpected storms, often of the most frightful description. There is almost always a scene at table when she declares herself to be suffocating with emotion and gets up and leaves the room. This time she embarked upon a development of our long-standing quarrel about Lettice of which I will tell later, but also she devised a new and formidable aggravation of the row with the old bleached Baroness.

When the phase of irritability is descending upon Dolores, either I go to England or I do what I can to relieve her tension by taking her about in a car or distracting her by shows and entertainments of a blameworthy sort. Then she is able to vent herself upon scenery, animals, strangers, the dispensations of nature, the arrangements of mankind, with a refreshing disapproval, always employing that intolerable French idiom, 'Je trouve—', which still jars upon my English ear as the quintessence of unsolicited ill-bred judgment. She finds this 'banal' and that 'un peu stupide' and so on round the whole compass of existence. 'I cannot congratulate you, Steenie, on your choice of an excursion,' she will say. She feels 'bound to say' this or that for which I can see no necessity whatever. Quite possibly it is an unsatisfactory universe in gross and detail but I see no reason for insisting upon it. So I do my best not to hear her verdicts, and when each has been delivered we get on to the next kill.

We were surveying that teeming Calvary outside the little chapel of St Herbot and I was pointing out one or two points that had struck me about the Holy Family to Dolores' evidently unheeding ears.

All day she had been ominously silent and moody. She had let all sorts of things go by her on which she might have poured contempt. Suddenly she spoke. ‘I’ve got it,’ she said.

‘Got what?’

‘That woman. She is a leper.’

‘Which woman? All the scriptural lepers I have ever heard of, were men. Do you mean that one there to the left? It’s simply that some vandal has broken off her nose.’

‘And what is more, Monsieur Hunot is aware of it.’

Something like terror came upon me. ‘What are you talking about?’ I asked.

‘We can’t stay in that hotel a moment longer unless she leaves. It’s abominable. It’s disgusting. It’s revolting.’

‘But my dear, what earthly reason — ?’

‘I felt it in my bones directly I saw that awful white face. At any time we might get it — if only through the dogs.’

I faced Dolores in a state of desperate resolution. ‘Look here,’ said I, ‘you cannot go on with this.’

‘It’s something to go on with — without a moment’s delay.’

‘If you see fit without rhyme or reason to proclaim leprosy at Torquestol it isn’t simply that poor old lady—’

‘Poor old lady! Yes, my dear lover.’

‘Who will be able to accuse you of libel and defamation. It will affect the Hunots. It will affect the waiters. It will kill their season. It will affect the reputation of the whole place. Every one of them will have grounds for action against you — justifiable grounds. There will be a hell of a fuss, my dear. There w ill be no end to it. Never have you hit upon a more poisonous phobia.’

‘As usual!’ cried Dolores. ‘As usual - in your customary sweet and generous way you are against me! You immediately take sides against me. My loyal beloved husband!’

‘But what have you to go upon. The poor old lady—’

‘*Lady!*’

‘Hasn’t any single symptom you can fix upon. Not one.’

‘I tell you that woman is a leper. I know it. And there we are and there is everybody in that hotel — in danger. You with your insouciance don’t care. You would live in filth if it wasn’t for me.

The worms would eat you. And simply to save yourself bother I may end my days in some leper colony, my hands worn to stumps, my nose dropping off...'

'But -'

'Don't you see? Whether she's a leper or not I - I in my nervous condition — am in such a torment of fear that quite possibly I shall become a leper whether she is one or not.'

'She's no more a leper than I am.'

'Then have her examined! At least that could be done.'

'My God, Dolores,' I cried, 'this is too much. I will not have you start a thing of this sort.'

'I didn't start it. That woman started it. Is it so extravagant an idea that she should be examined?'

'It's a most ingenious and intolerable insult. But let that be. Don't you realize it isn't only that poor old lady you attack? I say again, you are going to face lawsuits from the entire Torquestol community. The damages will be enormous.'

'You're as rich as Croesus. Everyone says so. Only you grudge spending money - where either my health or my honour is concerned.'

'No,' I said, 'that won't do. If you drag me into a mess over this, every penny comes out of the provision I have made for you. Do you grasp that?'

'I will not eat my meals in the same room as a leper.'

'Then let us pack and go somewhere else and say nothing about it.'

'Give way to that old—' She used a French word I have never properly understood. I doubt if it can be understood properly.

'Give way to your fancies.'

'You and your talk of social service! You and your precious *Way of the World* series! A brave new world! Here is a whole population threatened with a most horrible disease and your remedy is to run away. Exactly like you. You just play with the idea of mending the world. You don't mean it.'

We got back into the car in silent fury and drove off. 'Dolores,' I said presently, 'has it ever occurred to you that you might go too far with me?'

‘Telling you the truth?’

‘You understand as well as I do.’

‘And this is the man I have held in my arms a thousand times!’

‘Possibly more. But all the same you may go too far.’

‘You are my husband.’

‘Husbands have left wives before today.’

‘You threaten me. I would follow you to the end of the earth. I would take such a revenge upon you. You think I am powerless. Any other woman and it is vitriol, my dear. No jury would convict me when they heard my story. It would be a tremendous trial. My sketch of your character would be remembered.’

She seemed to find it an attractive prospect.

‘Never mind about that,’ I said. ‘Nobody is going to be interested in your sketch of my character. It will just be all about yourself. I am just a poor publisher nobody knows. You’d be lost in my obscurity. The point I want you to grasp is that this leprosy invention of yours will be going too far with me. Think what these words mean, exactly, Dolores, *going too far with me.*’

‘Fool I was, to expect a pretentious bookseller, a mere tradesman in other people’s feelings, to be a lover capable of ordinary chivalry,’ said Dolores and I realized she was in retreat. She went on with a survey of my unworthiness. The idea of giving a witty but excoriating sketch of my character and morals in a court of law, the court enthralled and all normal procedure laid aside, had stimulated her imagination and distracted her from the Baroness.

The rest of the way we did not speak. She just sat in a reverie with a faint smile on her face inventing stinkers to say about me. Now and then she made the ghost of a rhetorical gesture with her hand. I drove the car with a grim and menacing air, inwardly well content with her silence.

That was some days ago now. She is passing her phase of maximum malignity. She is returning to normality. The Scotch in her blood is ascendant. She has taken what I said about endless litigation and damages to heart and up to the present there is nothing of primary importance to report on what I may perhaps call the Baroness front. Dolores has not made an explicit charge of leprosy to anyone, even to Marie, and I think she means to tone down her great

idea to ‘some skin disease — or why so much face powder?’

Even that, she is not making into a positive accusation. She is insinuating it. Every day she delays action the situation improves and she can less admit an overpowering horror. She is insinuating the idea of infection by having tables moved and getting nearer the window and by large and ostentatious purchases of antiseptics at the local chemist. She speaks of the Baroness habitually as ‘that leprous visage’ or that ‘terrible decayed face’, but this, so far, had been accepted as a merely common abuse and not as a libellous charge. At any time of course some accident may explode the situation, but it has none of the terrifying urgency it had some days ago.

That has been major row number one. The most pressing and immediate. If an explosion does come, either we shall be obliged to leave this hotel or, what is improbable, the Baroness on her part may retreat. My impression is that the old lady is getting quite as much kick out of the squabble as Dolores, but so far she has not appreciated the point about leprosy. Even if Dolores does come out with that presently I doubt if the results will be catastrophic. Both ladies will certainly threaten litigation of an embittered type. But this will probably peter out in a diminuendo of threats and insults as their imaginations tire. We shall return to Paris; the Baroness will go off to wherever she belongs and new and brighter quarrels will distract them both. It will all blow over. It is a large but it is a transitory disturbance. But our second row is of a more chronic and fundamental character. We take that about with us. I doubt if it will ever blow over.

5

Our second major trouble turns on the existence of my daughter Lettice. As I think I told some way back I left Lettice with Alice and Hoopler after the divorce. I thought that at the time this was the best arrangement. But there seems to be mixed up with a strong sense of obligation a curious philoprogenitive streak in my make-up. For some obscure reason, maybe because there is a sort of affectionateness in me that cannot crystallize about Dolores, my mind has begun to run on Lettice.

Let me try and set down the facts with as little gloss upon them as possible. What is there in myself that one could call my heart's desire? My desire gives itself an impersonal air. I want someone on whom I can lavish myself, whom I can pet, cultivate, assist, sustain. I say I want little or no return. That is what I say.

But as a matter of fact I do want a return — rather I think in the spirit of those disingenuous old flower-sellers who demand no price, but 'leave it to you, Sir' — I want a very handsome return. I want to love someone in an easy unstinted way, I like watching people and forgetting myself in them, but also — which is quite a different business — I want to get a practically limitless amount of spontaneous affection and caressing in return. And there is more to it than that. My imagination craves association with some kindred mind which will by a sort of necessity and without any doubts at all enter into my interpretation of my life as a creative effort. I have doubts of myself, but Beloved must not have them. I want somebody to confirm my self-confidence, to keep me in heart with myself. It is, to use a trite phrase, a sister soul I desire, someone of whose close intellectual sympathies and very delicate and incidental amorousness, the absolute antithesis of Dolores' alternations of storming lust, limitless self-glorification and fantastic malice.

Among other characters that the extroverted Stephen Wilbeck watches with detachment, acute interest and slightly qualified amusement, is one made up of the less ingenuous aspects of the heart of this same Stephen Wilbeck, a minor character in the Stephen Wilbeck troupe — Stephen Wilbeck, that complicated introvert, the tucked-in part of myself, my 'ego- centre'. There has never been a time when this more intimate phase of me, at least, was completely satisfied with Dolores. Even in the extremest gratifications of the earliest days there mingled a faint flavour of shame and aversion and a sense that his desires were being detached from their proper emotional sequences and perverted and misused. My ego-centre does not blame himself for the perversion and misuse; he blames her.

I am doing my best to set the facts down here; not to justify the central or any aspect of Stephen Wilbeck. That is how it goes. Always in his mind, I suspect though I do not surely know, there has been a sort of phantom alternative passion, something better,

something else, a passion altogether free from that faint flavour of appreciative cruelty he feels when Dolores is in his arms. That phantom, that antithesis of Dolores, that unknown woman smoothly quiet in her movements and low-voiced, that invisible third angle, is a very real fact in the marital psychology of the Wilbeck couple.

Long ago, Dolores, who can sometimes be extremely acute in her perceptions about this sort of thing, said that when I made love to her, it was always as if I was being unfaithful to someone else, my mind running on someone else. There was no abandon to *her*. And going on from that in her own vividly realistic way she has determined that there *is* someone else. The Aldingham Square flat has settled that beyond argument. Once her imagination has been launched upon the realization of a jealousy against some person or persons unknown, it has evoked a vision of things going on beyond her knowledge that torments her fantastically. It is a double-edged sword which wounds her the more it discredits me.

Why, she asks, should a man go away from a woman except to betray her? Since the only vivid interest she will tolerate in me is the interest I take in her person, she can concede me no capacity for any other sort of interest. Off I go then manifestly for amorous variety and novelty. And the less evidence there is for any unfaithfulness the more intricate, shameful and experienced must my deceptions be. The stiller the surface the deeper the sin. So she presents my dwindling interludes in France with her as mere resting phases in a terrific career. I suppose most men would prefer to be denounced as combinations of Casanova and Hercules rather than as unqualified Josephs; nevertheless it is a distinct embarrassment for a mild-mannered grey-clad Englishman to be cast for the role of Priapus exposed.

'My dear, he has been to bed with every woman in London!' I caught that magnificent sentence the other day as I came into the salon. Her interlocutor looked round with eyes bright with expectation — to see me!

When Dolores imagines the work of Bradfield, Clews and Wilbeck gets done, I do not know.

In her increasingly strenuous research for the Unknown Beloved (or more probable Beloveds) she is becoming more and more

desperately unscrupulous. She scrutinizes my letters, one or two addressed in a feminine hand she has opened so to speak by mistake, and a week or so before we came hither from Paris, I found one envelope still wet and warm from the steaming. We had a scene when she discovered the signature of my new personal secretary at Durthing, Camellia Bronte, in a fine round feminine hand at the end of a typewritten report. 'That's no name for a decent woman,' she said. 'More like a chorus girl - or a movie star. Have you begun to take her out to lunch yet? That's how the seductive Employer begins, isn't it?'

The idea of taking anyone out to lunch in Durthing garden suburb was bright enough in itself, but that the doomed object of my insatiable passions should be dear old Camellia, whom I have inherited, so to speak, from the late Lewis Checkshalton, and what a training he gave her! with her glasses, her stoop and her inveterate sniff, made me chuckle. 'It's going well, is it?' said Dolores, interpreting my amusement as the gross selfcomplacency of a rake, and when Ridgeway, my leading publicity man, came over to discuss a little campaign of ours and lunched with us one day, she contrived to get him aside for ten minutes' earnest conversation. Afterwards I went with Ridgeway to look over the new Paris offices.

Ridgeway has little to do with my private life, but he is a simple upright good man, he had been deeply moved, and something weighed upon his mind. We walked along in an unusual silence, for he is by nature a babbling creature. 'That woman *adores* you,' he blurted out at last.

'She told you so?'

'Er — yes.'

'It's her phrase. And then?'

'She's worried about you. She wants to take care of you more. She's worried about what you do in England.'

'What *do* I do in England?'

'She's worried. Then when you went to India and China -'

'Never mind India and China. What is the trouble in England?'

'These dactylos. I hate to say it. These little dactylos.'

'Ridgeway, do you by any chance know what a dactylo is?'

'They worry her.'

‘She didn’t say?’

‘No.’

‘Some special sort of vice perhaps?’

‘I don’t know: I don’t really know. I know none of that sort of French. I know it’s a suggestive language. But she’s terribly worried about you. Not jealous you know, but worried. On your account. And it’s dactylos. I am sure I got the word right.’

‘You haven’t heard anything about this - these dactylos - on the English side?’

‘Nothing’s come out over there. *Yet.* But she’s worried.’

‘She asked you to tell her anything you know about me and this sort of thing?’

‘Yes.’

‘And you did?’

‘I reassured her. I know nothing.’

‘And you don’t even know what a dactylo is?’

‘It’s a sort of thing outside my curiosity.’

‘A dactylo, Ridgeway, is the common French way of saying typist.’

‘There’s a lot of this double-entente in French, I know.’

‘Oh! stop being a fool, Ridgeway. My wife is insanely jealous and she has learnt from American films and short stories that American employers always have affairs with their typists. And what’s the difference between an Englishman and an American in these matters? She didn’t by any chance name the particular little - dactylo in the case?’

‘No.’

‘That’s a pity.’

‘You mean there really *is* one?’ His expression was rich with reproach.

‘Yes,’ I said contritely. And finding the note of confession irresistible I held it. ‘My wife,’ I said, ‘thinks I receive too many letters signed Camellia Bronte.’

‘What!’ said Ridgeway. ‘Our Miss Bronte. *No!*’

‘She hasn’t seen her,’ I said.

‘Gosh!’

‘Gosh covers the situation.’

‘I can’t believe it.’

‘Can’t believe what?’

‘Can’t believe it of Miss Bronte.’

‘But what can’t you believe?’

Ridgeway began to readjust his mind. ‘You don’t mean to say that perhaps Mrs Wilbeck — I beg her pardon, Madame Wilbeck, has made some mistake? You see, she seemed to say she sort of had it from you. That you practically admitted - Boasted she said.’

‘What?’

‘Whatever it is.’

‘Ridgeway, did your nurse drop you on your head when you were a baby? Or were you born like this? Did anything frighten your mother?’

He looked at me, his mind still going through elaborate phases of readjustment. ‘Well, I don’t understand this sort of thing,’ he pleaded. ‘It isn’t the sort of thing that’s in my line.’

‘Evidently. I don’t complain. Your essential - *integrity* of mind makes you one of the best publicity men in London. You think like so many people. But all the same before we drop this subject altogether I wish you would promise to do one little thing for me. At the last summer outing of the clerical staff, if you remember, there was a group photograph.’

Ridgeway nodded.

‘Will you get a copy of it? Will you put an ink line round Miss Bronte. Will you send it to my wife with a note over your signature, saying “This is Miss Camellia Bronte,” *the* dactylo in question? I am sure Dolores will like to see the object of her husband’s — what shall we call it? - dactylomania. Dactylomania. We ought to tell Havelock Ellis about it. You will do that? Right O. And here we are at the new Paris office. Ground floor and a vitrine. What do you think of the window display?... If it attracts you it ought to attract most people.’

6

This was my first plain intimation that my wife’s steadily developing jealousy had come to the pitch of secret inquiries about my

behaviour in England and of private denunciations. I realized only gradually that she was not only questioning every friend of mine she could get at, but also she was collecting and distributing gossip about me from anyone she met who knew or pretended to know about me.

Her range of information was wide. She had a varied circle of her own, remnants of the Monegasque and Egyptian days, later acquistions in Paris, milliners, beauty specialists, decorators, odd semi-resident Americans, casual Russians. Mostly they were women of her own age, tremendous women of the world, all scented, all painted, all obscurely of the great world, dressed with a chic that hurt, possessing highly individualized styles, talking importantly or aggressively, whispering scandalously or being silent (yet darkly enigmatical and provocative) from corners of the room. Oh, brilliant women they were! Mostly they bragged to one another of their lovers, who seemed as a class reluctant to appear. But now and then someone freshly caught and still genuinely enamoured, would be handed round for examination. 'Mais il est charmant.' Otherwise there were few men, mostly from the fringes of the theatre and journalism. It was all rather like a slightly tarnished realization of that smart Utopia in which well-made French comedies occur. With fewer men and still fewer titles.

There was much coming and going during my absences in England, teas and cocktail parties, lunches, receptions, premieres, costume shows, scuttlings hither and thither, into which I did not think it fair to inquire too closely. Maybe I was treated as most husbands of smart women are, but I doubt it. I think she would have had to tell me about it. Dolores is a devil, but I should say she is probably much less secretive than most women. She has a sort of refractile honesty. It shows everything distorted and askew but it shows what is there. I think she has kept her love- hate pretty steadily focused on me — and that the only use she would have for another lover would be to throw him at me. Which, she realizes, in view of Alice's experience, would be risky.

But of course no man is ever sure. She has a wonderful French word 'passades'. She may have *passades.* Possibly with rather scared youngish men... But it is better not to imagine such possibilities.

In this circle of her friends I was one of the outstanding lovers, so

to speak, because I was lover-husband, a rare combination, rather exceptional and enigmatic. I was reputed to be intensely jealous, capable of great violence and cruelty, and when presently it became manifest that she was altering her tone, becoming really uneasy about me, almost every one in this circle of hers was at once ready to supply at second or third hand or out of pure spiteful invention, suggestions and fuel for her suspicions. Her excitability makes her very transparent and I suppose her mortified anxiety amused them. She did not like to hear of things of which she was unaware and so she did her best to anticipate her friends' revelations. 'My dear, the things I could *tell* you!' And then — on the spur of the moment - she had, if not to tell, at least to make substantial intimations.

Thus insensibly and quite unaware I lost my irreproachable character and changed from the Loving Physically Satisfactory but alas! Preoccupied Petruchio to a Monster — not only in Dolores' accounts of me but also in her own mind.

So far as I can trace the rise, expansion and intensification of this jealousy of hers, it was hardly sexual at all in its beginnings. It was simply the natural antagonism of a feminine egotism in conflict with a man's increasing disposition to go his own way and think of things outside her personality and range. What is the good of boasting of a lover who does not incessantly dance attention and who cannot be kept waiting? At first I think she invented this idea of 'unfaithfulness' in England to justify her irrepressible tirades against my increasing absences. 'What does he do there?' she asked. But the next thing to that was to suspect, and from that to believe in a complexity, and strangeness in my conduct was a step for her. And from that to accusations of strange manias and perversions.

For a time she toyed with the pleasing fancy that I took the unusual course of going about the world to indulge for a change in homosexuality and then she was seized by a more brilliant idea. Her attention turned more and more definitely on my daughter Lettice and my increasing interest in her as suitable material for sinister suggestions.

Now, as I have said, I *am* becoming very interested in Lettice and increasingly anxious to see her and have her with me. It is quite recently that this began and I cannot trace what set it going. But I

think my attention was first turned to Lettice by hearing that George Hoopler was in a shipping office in Southampton and not doing particularly well. He had long since abandoned his literary pretensions and his projected novel had either never been finished or never published or it had been published so obscurely and unsuccessfully that I have never heard of it. Lettice it seemed had been sent to a not very well chosen school, she had displayed no particular gifts and she was now preparing for an undefined business career in a local commercial college. Hoopler, I felt sure, had been scrupulously honest about her allowance but not very sedulous or clever about it, and he was making a very ordinary middle class girl of her. I thought I had better see how things were going. Partly my vanity was wounded that my only offspring should not be promising brilliantly, but also I think I felt a genuine solicitude for the young woman's prospects. Perhaps I had handed her over all too unreservedly to her foster father. So I astounded Alice by sending her a long and friendly letter, saying how frequently I thought of her and her happiness, asking how she and Hoopler were getting on and inquiring about Lettice. Was there anything I could do for the girl? For myself, I said, I was more and more wrapped up in my publishing enterprises and the years I found slipped by very quickly.

This led to a meeting. I invented some business to take me to Southampton and I had tea in the Hoopler menage. It was, I thought, a rather dull menage, though evidently a brave face had been put upon it for my reception. The little sitting-room was in a manifestly tidied-up state and what is called an ample tea was spread upon the circular table. A bow window looked out very pleasantly over the Itchen and in harmony with the view there was a nef on the upright piano, various ships in bottles and tinted engravings of ships. There was a reasonable extent of bookshelves and a number of magazines and weeklies on a side table.

I had been admitted by a little maid-servant, and now an Alice entered the room, broader and stouter than I remembered her, but not too rouged and with her brown eyes as alert as ever. A pretty woman still, who had not done with life. At the sight of her I remembered things I had forgotten; her finely pencilled eyebrows and the pleasant twist of her hair over her pretty ears. She decided to kiss me and I

accepted her reminiscent intimation at once and kissed her with a certain warmth and a touch of regret. And I felt it too for the moment. In fact we did all that very well. 'You've grown broader,' she said.

'You're just the same Alice as ever.'

'Heigh-ho,' said she, and then, recoiling hastily at the sound of feet in the passage: 'We've told her you're her godfather. Understand? *Godfather.*'

Two Hoopler children came in, a boy in spectacles and a fattish girl of thirteen, and after a minute or so my sixteen-year- old Lettice. I was happy to note that she was much better-looking than they were. I suppose any man in my situation would feel that way, and I did not reflect for a moment that thirteen is for girls and boys the unkind age when growth grows crazy, and that unless a girl is graceful at sixteen then surely grace is denied her. But Lettice was budding very prettily indeed, burgeoning nicely into adolescence; she was going to be as brightly winning as her mother had been when first we fell in love. My heart warmed to her. Her face was fairly intelligent but reserved and unawakened. She said little, but she had nice hands and moved them pleasantly as she played her helpful part at the tea table, cutting things, passing things. And after all why should a girl who looks delightful veil herself in premature talk?

So far as I can remember we conversed about Southampton and liners and travel, until Hoopler came in.

Me was much more substantial than in the days of our romantic triangle and he bore himself with more assurance, he stooped less and projected more, and the convexity of his spectacles had increased. I realized almost as soon as he began talking that he was one of those mentally active, dull people who cast a shadow much larger than themselves. I felt he must have a very deadening influence upon his family. I remembered him as silent and inexpressive but that must have been because he was then in a state of profound emotional tension. Now he had something to say to everybody and always what he said led nowhere and expressed nothing. He greeted me with grave friendliness. 'A poor house but mine own,' he said. 'That out there, that water, is the Itchen, but even

up here we feel the Call of the Sea. Strange how it takes hold of one! The Island Blood. I come from Nuneaton but that doesn't seem to matter. You see I've begun to collect these ships in bottles. Prisoners and Seamen. In spite of myself.'

How was one to reply to that? I had a wild impulse to respond, '*My* Aunt was a Pirate,' but I restrained myself, because I felt Alice might perceive I was pulling his leg.

He took up his tea cup and beamed across the table. 'And how is our Lettice today? More Salad than ever in that green dress.'

I was still rather at a loss though I felt I ought to do something. 'The son,' he said, 'is all for the air, aviator or nothing, though the Tang of the Salt Sea Spray is good enough for me.'

'Heart's Desire,' I tried.

'Perfectly,' he answered. 'Ozone.'

'And seaweed.' I felt I was getting on nicely.

'Alice Seconda,' he broke away, 'is all for the air in a different sense. Music. Hm?'

I struck out rather wildly with, 'Grateful and Comforting. Therefore play on.'

I had terrible qualms about my staying power at this sort of talk. 'Does it run to another cup, Mother?' I felt let me off.

He drank his second cup appreciatively and in the interval Alice remarked that someone must cut the cake. 'It's always so difficult, I think, to start a cake,' she remarked to me as one housewife to another. 'Then it's easy enough.'

'Break the icing,' said Hoopler but proceeded to no further brilliance for a space.

So far the other members of the family had said nothing. Now in the pause the boy ventured to speak. 'My model flew — oh — a hundred yards today.'

'He means his model aeroplane,' Alice explained. 'He spends all his time and money making them.'

'Icarus,' said Hoopler and then with a fatuous smile: 'And I am his Dad — alas!'

I took that awful pun with a frozen calm.

'Orcus in saluto,' said I gravely and shut him up completely with these simple words.

That was a great inspiration. It sounded like Latin; it sounded like a quotation; it sounded like something a cultivated George Hoopler ought to know. He flushed slightly and an expression of baffled and uncertain scholarship spread over his face. He looked up at the ceiling trying to remember, trying to construe. Then his spectacle-magnified eyes sought mine in scrutiny, in vague suspicion. Was I ignorant? Had I misquoted?

Or was I in some way reflecting upon him? But I was careful not to meet his gaze. I had been watching Lettice's pretty but subdued-looking face throughout these exchanges and I was forming a firm resolution to get her mind out of this singularly flattening atmosphere before it was too late. We might have been saying anything so far as she was concerned. She had acquired a habit of not listening already.

What are the rights of an alleged godfather? I asked myself. He has no rights but he has considerable facilities of suggestion and persuasion, and abruptly I asked Lettice when she was to go to college, as if it was a matter of course that she should go to college, and I began to extol the charms of undergraduate life at Bedford or Holloway College. Private theatricals. Painting if you like. Charming girls to make friends with. Good talk. Games. Rowing. Dancing.

'*But?*' said Alice.

'Why not?' said I.

Hoopler caught up my idea very quickly. 'Could we have a sweeter girl graduate?' he said with elaborate generosity.

'But the expense!' said Alice.

'That need not overwhelm you,' I said casually, and turning to the boy I asked how many planes he had in commission.

It was evident that young Hoopler considered me for a grown-up rather intelligent about planes.

I let the idea of the college soak in for a time and returned to it when we three grown-ups were alone together. 'You've done so much for her. Frankly I'd like to do more for her.'

They would not stand in the way. And Lettice under the pretext of showing me the *nice* way back to the station had a time with me alone. I liked having this pretty slip of life which was blood of my blood and bone of my bone walking along beside me. It was my first taste of parental feeling. It felt better than anything I had anticipated.

‘You’re magic,’ she said, ‘I did not even know I *had* a godfather. And you come suddenly out of the sky like this and tell me of colleges and going abroad and — everything. Are you real?’

‘Touch me,’ and she stopped short and looked up at me with her head on one side, very much as her mother used to do, provocatively, and hesitated. So I took her by the shoulders and kissed her. We kissed each other. ‘You’re a *dear*’ she said, and we went on for some paces with nothing further to say.

There certainly was something very intelligent about her.

‘You’ll have to learn to speak good French,’ I said, breaking the tension. ‘I live a lot in France — when I am not working like a galley slave. Which is one reason why I have seen so little of you hitherto.’

On my way to London I found myself in a very pleasant sentimental reverie about this interesting addition to my world. I had, I decided, thought of her just in time. A most happy thought. She wasn’t too late for education. I could do great things for her still. I would send her to college, see that she had some pretty clothes, take her out to restaurants and theatres when I came to London, confide her socially to one or two seemly woman friends I had made mostly in the course of my business, take her abroad...

She must learn some real French abroad.

I saw myself going about with her. At last I could have the pleasure of a feminine companionship other than Dolores’, and without offence.

In spite of a hundred experiences of the smouldering malice in Dolores’ nature, I wrote to her about Lettice. I had to write my usual daily letter and I overflowed into this topic that filled my mind so agreeably. Dolores replied at length. ‘And so now, when I have grown accustomed to the tragedy of my barren life, I am to have that other woman’s daughter thrust into my face,’ she began, and went on to denunciations of my brutality, my intolerable betise. ‘And while you are supposed to be away from me on that marvellous business of yours, you are prancing about after that silly drab you had to divorce and her brat - which may or may not be yours for all you know!’ And so on.

‘Damn!’ I said and tore the letter and pitched it into the waste-paper basket and then recovered it and put it together again to afflict

myself with one or two of the choicer bits again. ‘Why did I ever tell her?’

This time Dolores had succeeded in getting well under my skin, and I walked up and down my office in Carrington Square, when I ought to have been attending to my normal correspondence, raging at this wanton obstruction of my wishes. ‘If ever there was a born murderee,’ I said, ‘Dolores is the woman.’

That was three years ago and since then Lettice has been an intensifying exasperation between us. It is one of the few things I cannot turn into laughter. These are crucial years in a girl’s life. I am convinced she has considerable undeveloped capacity, but she strikes me as being unenterprising and rather self-satisfied, and unless she gets a good social environment soon and the stimulus of intelligent associates, she will settle down for life to a humdrum, undervitalized way of living. But I find myself altogether baffled in my efforts to save her. Just sending her to Permain College is not enough, because as the Head made very clear to me, girls gravitate into sets and groups according to the quality of their home lives and their temperamental dispositions. ‘She doesn’t go out to people and make friends with them,’ said the Head.

Unfortunately I have no circle for her. In London my life centres upon the Parnassian Club, I do not as Dolores would say ‘entertain’. Few people come to my flat, I may have a bachelor dinner or an author or so to tea; and the problem of this girl makes me realize the restless Parisian snobbishness and isolation of my alleged home. The best imitation of a cultivated background I can give her is to take her about myself and travel with her, and, since I have no available sisters or aunts or cousins, I shall have to find someone of manifest respectability with a daughter perhaps, to take charge of her in London. I should have taken her abroad before but for the certainty of a violent explosion on the part of Dolores.

Which brings me to a question, towards which I have been drifting for some time, whether I have not come to a point when a definite break with Dolores ought to occur — if only for my self-respect. She will fight and cling like a wild cat and scream worse, and I guess I shall have to pay heavily enough, but when I have got out of it and bathed my scratches, the freedom, the quiet!

Yet even that release is not certain. The marriage bond is a peculiar one and it is quite possible she will not let me go. Marriage gives an overwhelming advantage to the ill-disposed partner. No one realizes that better than Dolores. There has to be an element of collusive acquiescence in every English divorce. She will never again get anyone so close to her as I have been and am, and probably she knows that as well as I do. She would have to jab at comparative strangers and subsist on minor animosities. It is absurd to call her relationship to me love, but nevertheless I give her prestige; I am the dominating substantial fact, I am her main interest, I am the most powerful stimulant in her life.

7

(Torquéstol, August 25th, 1934)

It was my cousin John who revealed to me just how far her wanton antagonism to Lettice had taken Dolores. John becomes more and more a natural born sympathetic go-between. Virginia has left him - for another man with whom she wants to settle down - but John just sympathizes with her, tries meticulously to find out whether she is *realty* happy or not, refuses to be reassured about 'that fellow' and will not give her a divorce. 'Some day, very likely she will need to come back to me,' he says, and will not budge from that.

I see very little of him, but from quite early days he seems to have sustained a deep understanding with Dolores. He prides himself on understanding people, and understanding Dolores I think is one of his proudest feats. It must be a variegated understanding. He comes to Paris in pursuit of his artistic interests and usually when I am away, and then he and Dolores lunch or dine together and have good long earnest talks about my treatment of her. I saw him just before I came over to France this last time. His club, the Palette, is doing its redecoration and its members are visiting the Parnassian, of which I am a member. He came into the dining-room when I was lunching. He hesitated for a moment and then came across the room to me.

'May I sit with you?' he asked. There was something faintly portentous in his manner.

‘I’m fortunate,’ I said. ‘I’m just beginning.’

He gave his order and for some moments neither of us said anything. He was too full of his hidden thoughts and feelings to say anything to me and I never know what to say to him. I think he must realize the sort of quite unjustifiable contemptuous aversion I feel for him, but I am not sure. Usually I am able to treat him lightly and get a sort of sour fun out of - how can I say it? — his emotional contralto, but this time there was a marked absence of humour on my side, I know not why, from the start.

‘I see Dolores at times, Stephen,’ he began suddenly.

‘I know you do.’

‘She isn’t well. She says she suffers from insomnia.’

‘Don’t I know it!’

‘She isn’t looking well.’

‘I know. The blade - all too keen - that chafes its sheath.’

‘She looks haggard.’

I misheard him deliberately. ‘I wouldn’t call her a hag. No. She overpaints of course, she is getting middle-aged and that seems to flurry her, she overdoes everything nowadays. She gets worse, John. Worse and worse. But not a hag.’

‘I didn’t call her a hag,’ said John gently. ‘I said she looked worn and haggard.’

‘There is nothing that I know of to make her worn and haggard - except that having nothing to make her worn and haggard probably distresses her and keeps her awake at nights and wears her out.’

‘I don’t know,’ said my cousin John. ‘I don’t know.’

I thought matters might very well rest at that and I asked a few friendly questions about his painting. When was he going to have another show and did he like these conversation pieces that were getting so fashionable again? He answered me in a rather distraught fashion and came back to the subject of Dolores. ‘You know,’ he said and paused. ‘I think Dolores is *very* unhappy.’

‘Any suggestions?’ I asked in the subsequent interval.

‘That woman *adores* you,’ he said. ‘From the first she did. In those dear old days at the Hotel Pension Malta, I saw it. At the time it seemed something beautiful — a life’s passion. She is not a woman who loves lightly.’

‘Good Lord no,’ I said. ‘Whom she loveth, she chasteneth.’

‘It’s all - her intensity of feeling,’ he said. ‘Never did a woman make the gift of a heart so completely. What comes easily I suppose is never valued. But it is true, Stephen, that you are making her *terribly* unhappy. I doubt if you realize that. This last affair -’

‘What last affair?’

He shrugged his shoulders. ‘*Surely* you understand!’

‘Last affair or any affairs. What are my affairs — supposing I have affairs — what have they to do with you, John?’

He pulled a face. After all I am your nearest relative. I *promised* to speak to you.’

‘Promised Dolores?’

‘Yes.’

And now, if you will stop beating about the bush, what is it all about?’

‘This child.’

‘*What* child?’

‘Your own flesh and blood, Stephen!’

He flushed. His eyes were full of indignant accusation. He was panting a little.

‘John,’ I said very gently. ‘Are you saying something - are you insinuating something - just a bit horrible — about me and my daughter?’

He nodded.

‘*What?*’

There are times when the Old Adam of one’s composition urges one to untimely hitting. But the New Adam of civilization was sufficiently strong in me to save me from a scandalous and ambiguous scuffle with John in the dining-room of the Parnassian.

‘I could not believe it, Stephen,’ he said, red, breathless but uncowed, ‘until — until Dolores gave me — well — practically chapter and verse.’

‘What do you mean?’

He swallowed.

‘Well?’

‘Things you have said to her. Your tone in speaking of the girl. Dolores has an insight...’

‘I’m not going to be separated from my own daughter because Dolores has a nasty imagination.’

‘But consider the look of the thing.’

‘Do you believe, John — ?’

‘I neither believe nor disbelieve. Leave me out of it. Please, please. I judge no one. What matters to me is that Dolores sees in your daughter - it is really terrible, Stephen - her rival.’

‘And you — ?’

‘Never mind about me. I’ve not even seen the young lady.’

‘Nor has Dolores.’

‘She sees your infatuation.’

For a moment or so I surveyed the complicated excitement of my cousin’s face. ‘John,’ I said abruptly. ‘Let’s come down to reality. Why don’t you clean your own doorstep instead of helping make a mess on mine? Why don’t you give that wretched Virginia of yours a divorce?’

A pained expression came over John’s face. ‘If you choose to take refuge in an unjustifiable tu-quoque,’ he said, and left the sentence uncompleted.

‘It isn’t even a tu-quoque,’ he murmured, bending low over his apple pie.

‘I admit I can give you back nothing as nasty as you have given me,’ I said.

He looked up. His face was the face of a martyr. A martyr who has done his duty and who is finishing up his apple pie as though it was baked hairshirt and thorns. He really seemed in difficulties with his mastication. We stared blankly at each other. I remember observing that his large grey eyes had if anything got larger and the lower lids lower. He has bags under them and his mouth and his neck sag. He will make an awfully loose-faced old man, will John.

‘What have I *done,*’ I said, ‘to have a wife who is a dangerous lunatic and a cousin who is a dangerous mutt? So this is the new situation. *Well...* I don’t know what to say, John. I don’t know what to do. I remain — flabbergasted.’

It was a poor word, it is a poor word at the best of times, but nothing else came into my astounded mind. So I repeated it; ‘flabbergasted’.

‘I’ve said all I have to say,’ said John. ‘I wish to God, Stephen, it hadn’t been necessary...’

For the nonce I too had nothing to say.

We were too nicely brought up to fling out of the room. We finished our lunch in speechless, in breathless, dignity.

‘No cheese,’ said I to the waiter. ‘No coffee.’

‘No cheese, thank you,’ said John. ‘Coffee upstairs.’

8

I went back from the club to my flat boiling with indignation. This was too much. This time Dolores had got me infuriated as I had not been infuriated by her for years. She had discovered something at last that I could not take lightly. She had got through my defensive derision of myself and my world, to the quick.

I felt like beating up that idiot John and then going over to Paris and murdering Dolores, but plainly my feelings were no guide whatever to what I had to do. And moreover I realized that Dolores would rather like me to murder her, provided the thing was done in a properly dramatic and public manner. At least she would like the idea of it until I actually began.

Exaggerated ideas of the mischief afoot chased each other through my mind. If she was putting it about that I was possessed by an incestuous passion for Lettice, then plainly to discontinue seeing and helping the girl would be halfway to an admission of my guilt. I was in a cleft stick. The only thing I could think of was to rage across the Channel and insist upon her receiving Lettice in Paris, going about with her and myself and wiping out this abominable slur upon both of us. Yet even then, she was likely to be the least desirable of companions to my shy and rather backward Lettice.

How far the slur had gone I did not know. It might have been invented as a special confidence to stir up John or might have been retailed as the last feat of her monster to all the Paris circle. At the time I was so much disturbed, so shocked into naivety, that I did not reflect that whatever story she told and however much it might be repeated, no one would really and completely believe this thing of me. Though up to a certain extent anyone will believe almost

anything discreditable about you or me or anyone. It is a strange thing in the human make-up, the readiness to believe that the worst has still to be told about us. But they will believe only to the extent of an agreeable imaginative excitement. Their pleasure begins and ends at the pointing finger. But I do not want fingers pointed at Lettice.

It was only after a couple of unusually bad and entirely humourless nights that matters ameliorated and took on this juster perspective.

9

(Torquestol, August 26th, 1934)

By the time I returned to Dolores in Paris I was more or less my normal self again, resolved after my usual fashion to humour her as much as possible and by some feat of evocation get her into a fit of generosity and persuade her to entertain Lettice in Paris for just as brief a period as may be necessary to dispel that nasty imputation. I am always forgetting my wife's inveteracy. To the end of our days, I, who am always easing off from my first crude, over-emphatic statements, will fail to comprehend the hard persistence of her malignity. She sticks to everything she can lay hands upon. She even sticks to every lie she tells. My disposition for give and take she interprets as weakness and she grabs the new advantage and yields nothing. When Dolores realized what I was getting at, it presented itself to her simply as a new means of vexatious assertion against me.

'This time,' said I, 'I will not let you thwart me.'

How many times have I said that 'This time'! And weakened. 'I will not be separated from my own daughter by you or anyone,' I blustered.

'As bad as that it is! As bad as that! Infatuation!'

'I will stop your allowance.'

'I will sue you for maintenance.'

'I will *halve* your allowance.'

'I will bring divorce proceedings. Yes, Steenie. And very silly you will look among your dowdy English lady-friends, when I show you

up. Your own daughter, your own, so far as you can tell, that is, as co-respondent! That will set all London talking if anything can. And she won't be the only co-respondent. No! All your friends are not as discreet as you are. I know things. And that secret flat of yours! Well, you meant it to be secret... Have you never heard of private inquiry agents? I'll bring in that Camellia Bronte of yours. And others. That will put a pretty light on your *Way of the World* series and your New Humanity and all that. That will make tongues wag. So you'd better drop it, Steenie dear, before you push me too far. You'd better drop it. I won't have that nasty little Miss here pushing me out of my own apartment. Make a dactylo of her. That's all she's fit for. Put her with a dressmaker, if there *are* such things as dressmakers in England, and let her learn to work...'

And so on.

And then within an hour or so I would be subjected to an amorous attack. 'I love you. *See* how I love you. Why do you misunderstand me so? Why do you do everything you can to distress me? I would do anything for you - *anything*.'

'Except...'

'Don't come back to that: don't distress me again. What woman would endure that? How fantastic you are. How obdurate!'

10

Long before this trouble about Lettice began we had begun a standing dispute about two servants of ours, the Benniels, Marguerite who was our cook and Francois who was our chauffeur, whom for no reason I can fathom, she has set herself to ruin. The baffled feeling I have now about Lettice is just the same baffled feeling that I have had about these Benniels, but far more intimate, vivid and shameful. I was nominally their master and they were dismissed outrageously from my employment. I have helped them furtively, but I cannot induce Dolores to relent towards them. They occupy now an established position in her system of hates.

Yet they were her discovery. We came upon them by chance when we were motoring among the castles of the Loire. That was six or seven years ago. Dolores had suffered from a decaying premolar

and had become very neurasthenic; the dentist it seemed committed remarkable villainies, Heaven alone knows exactly what; and I had come over to Paris to take her for a tour and generally assuage her. She had conceived a great dislike of tourists and tourist hotels - but then all over the world tourists detest and disavow and avoid tourists - and had set herself to discover in small unpretending inns, the slowly vanishing domestic cuisine francaise. Generally we found it far gone in decay and associated with primitive sanitary conditions and a great wealth of flies. But the Benniels we found were different. Their little inn was clean in all its arrangements, our lunch had an undefinable distinction - and they undercharged. They undercharged artlessly and unsuspectingly. The trellised arbour in which we ate looked out on a pleasant bend of the steel-blue river, and in the distance, seen through a group of slender trees, the chateau of Amboise rose like a cluster of quartz crystals above the lesser closer cluster of its town.

I was driving the car and we had no man with us. A man in the car bores me, and Dolores is apt to talk at him. Some little trouble had arisen in the engine and when I asked for a garage Francois offered to put things right for me and did so with skill and evident pleasure. He had been a chauffeur. He was one of those little fine-featured blue-eyed Frenchmen who are essentially handymen. I saw at once that the quite well- proportioned trellis about us and the grace of the garden were his.

Meanwhile Marguerite dished up and served us with a smiling skill.

They seemed to think us the happiest of windfalls, to find in me that legendary English milor that good French innkeepers in out of the way places still see in their dreams, and Francois made it clear he had never had his head under the bonnet of a more congenial car than mine. It occurred to me that here was just the pacifying resting-place Dolores needed to exorcize and banish altogether her desire to shoot that wicked dentist in the mouth and see how he liked toothache and generally vindicate herself for whatever he had said or done or failed to do to her. Here we could take up our quarters and make excursions to the various chateaux up and down the river, with a beautiful sense of superiority to the low, banal, hotel-fed, charabanc-carried tourist

crowd.

I threw out the suggestion and the Benniels were frankly overjoyed. Straightaway they became our old family retainers. Their little inn became ours body and soul. There was nothing they would not do for us. In the afternoon I rowed Dolores on the river and she praised the beauty and interest and infinite variety of France, comparing it to England, to the measureless disadvantage of the latter. I agreed.

Dinner was modestly perfect with excellent Vouvray. The moon appeared to have had its face specially washed and burnished for us, and Dolores forgot her tender face in her tendresse for me. Our room was spotlessly clean and before we retired Marguerite had assured us of perfect rolls and coffee in the morning.

'Where else would you find such *civilized* people?' asked Dolores.

'Where else?' I echoed.

Marguerite, it appeared, had been in service. She was ready to do any little stitching or ironing that Madame required. It would be a great delight to her she said, and remind her of happier, less anxious days.

In these benign circumstances Dolores blossomed out into a very great lady indeed. She was quick to avail herself of the services of a landlady who had once been a lady's maid, many little things had to be done for her, and as I smoked in the trellised arbour in a state of unusual contentment I heard a steady and most satisfactory flow of conversation upstairs.

Dolores was talking in a steady undulating flow and with the utmost refinement and condescension. Marguerite was replying with a responsive deference. She was learning very rapidly that I was a very wealthy man who published books not so much for profit as for the love of publishing and for the immense though unostentatious political influence it gave me, and that Dolores was a princess by a previous marriage, though she no longer used the title, and also, through her Scotch father and the Stewart clan, distantly connected with the British royal family. And also Marguerite was being questioned, about her past, about her present, about her passions. Had she no children? A son already in the army, that was all. The

tragedy of Dolores' life was unveiled; her intense desire for offspring. Her passion for me also, her devotion, her insatiable devotion. Always, I learnt, I had refused her a child. That was new to me. Did Marguerite love her husband? Yes, but like that? There was an urgent pressure for details. Marguerite it seemed did not want to think too much of such things nowadays. 'Pas souvent... Pas beaucoup... Mais *non* madame. Pas comme ca... Jamais madame.' She had other anxieties. The little inn was not paying. At times she regretted leaving service...

Marguerite was a woman inclined to a wholesome plumpness with a sane and sweet and pleasant face, healthy complexion and a quietly observant eye. I found it fixed on me with a calculating approval. She and I liked each other from the outset and we have always liked each other. But she was, I felt, doubtful about Dolores.

Dolores had no doubts of her. She pronounced her a simple but highly intelligent woman, a peasant indeed, but with a remarkable understanding. Dolores spread herself before her as if she were a mirror, a particularly flattering mirror. So rarely was she understood. She told how she loved the beautiful simplicity of this inn. How weary she was of the stresses and falsities of social life in Paris, how corrupt, how immoral was the smart society in which she mingled, how she doubted at times whether she was not really intended for the religious life. If it were not for me she believed she might already be in retreat, a great lady- abbess perhaps. But she had me to consider. I was so naive, so dependent and so incalculable. She had to dress, she had to sustain a brilliant appearance for my sake - often though she was sad and weary at heart. She saw *through* things, but I was shallower and happier.

I did my best not to hear this expansion of Dolores, opening out, a great familiar flood, I did all I could to avoid being produced in evidence, appealed to and exhibited. From the outset I thought I noticed a certain something, a sub-twinkle, as it were, in the eye of Marguerite at these confessions, but as this twinkle did not seem to be perceptible to Dolores I dismissed it from my mind.

The little inn was not paying. Marguerite hesitated before she disposed of it and committed herself to us, and I know that it was because she thought I was trustworthy that she surrendered at last.

She made all the business arrangements, because she was a managing woman. She managed the inn, she managed her husband, and when we installed her and Francois as our Parisian menage I have no doubt she felt equal to managing Dolores and myself. And perhaps she could have done so. To begin with, things were a marvellous success. Dolores bragged of her cook and her good-looking chauffeur to all her friends. Unsophisticated indeed, she said, but the vrai cuisine francaise. And she talked constantly to Marguerite and told her her life story and her emotional experiences over and over again in a great variety of ways.

But obscure things happened during the time I was in Sweden. I do not know what happened, but quite possibly nothing worse than that Dolores suddenly became aware of the twinkle in the eye of Marguerite. Marguerite was something of a mimic. Maybe one day Dolores went quietly along the passage to her kitchen and discovered how she really looked and sounded to her devoted servants. If there was more to it than that Marguerite has never told me. Until that crisis, for the better part of a year our flat was more peaceful and comfortable than it has ever been before or since.

Then one day I returned unexpectedly to Paris to find Marguerite in tears, Francois in indignant revolt, and the pair under a fortnight's notice to depart. Marguerite, damp but doing her duty meticulously to the last, told me of the blow that had fallen upon them. Francis said nothing to me; he didn't know what to say, but he went about his duties muttering 'merde' - to Madame, to Paris, to the flat, to domestic service, to the universe and finally when he found that I was powerless to reinstate him, to me. Gently but distinctly he was very unhappy.

'But why have you done this?' I protested to Dolores.

'Will you please leave our domestic arrangements to me.'

'But you cannot possibly fire these people out without a reason. They sold their little place to come to us.'

'Fine place they sold! They fastened themselves upon us. Like leeches.'

When I persisted reason departed. They were her enemies. Always I sided with her enemies against her. She could not live in the same flat with them.

‘I insist that you tell me more about this business.’

‘You insist-you insist!’ Dolores grimaced and screamed. ‘*My* flat and *my* servants. What was it they used to do in England? Dish cloot? Dish clowat? Do you want a dish clowat pinned to your tails, Steenie?’

‘*Hell!*’ I swore and she knew that for the moment she had won. The poor Benniels were bundled out neck and crop, Marguerite in reproachful tears, and I had to set about helping them furtively into a pitiful little back-street shop near-by. We had contrived to spoil their lives and turn all their bright expectations to bitterness, and it was I with my false appearance of firmness and trustworthiness, who had exposed them to Dolores’ temperamental incompatibility — with any other human being.

That is the sort of thing that baffles me, something I can’t turn off with a jest. I am made a defaulter in my promises, explicit or implicit. I can invent a laugh for nearly every other of our differences but not about Lettice or the Benniels. In both these cases I feel I am falsified and dishonoured, and that is a feeling that it is difficult to deal with humorously. I hate to see any servant or employee let down. These economic inferiors are essentially a weak class. They can be tiresome and exasperating at times, but what a life of deferential uncertainty they have to lead! And how could we live without them? Only a Utopian reorganization of services could dispense with them. Almost all of them distrust our powers of interference and injury, and they do so with excellent reason. The Benniels banked on me. Marguerite with the tranquil face and steady eyes had considered me, judged me and after the fashion of her type, put her unlimited trust in me.

Since the expulsion of the Benniels our flat has seen a succession of servants, none of whom have gained any hold on my affections during their cycle of favour and confidence, sudden recrimination, persecution, notice and ignominious dismissal. I have preserved an Olympian aloofness to their storms and distresses. As the crisis becomes acute I hear the call of the business. Our present internal menage is a married couple from Alsace, the Schweitzers, plus Marie, Alphonse and a maid. Marie is still in the confidence of her mistress. The Schweitzers are sinister and sidelong and very

deferential. The man squints, has a lantern jaw and is very officious. He valets me fussily, he is butler at table; he has an assiduous usefulness. He is particularly skilful with the repair of small domestic gadgets and I should think he could pick locks. He is the sort of man who seems able to materialize in your room quite silently without opening the door. At first he seemed like developing a feud with Alphonse and I hoped for revelations, but now there is an understanding and Alphonse is welcome in the kitchen.

But if these poor dears conspire to peculate, Heaven help them when they are found out, for Dolores has a marvellous nose and no mercy for petty peculation.

11

It is a minor matter but it is in the same vein, that I am on tenterhooks about the spotted waiting maid. There is a queer streak of morbid fear in Dolores against infection, and short of leprosy, there is only one form of infection of which she seems able to think. Show Dolores a spot or a stain on a human face and syphilis leaps to her mind. But these particular spots are obviously the sort of spots with which God sees fit to mock the chastity of a certain type of adolescent. Dolores forgets about that maid for a day or two and then it comes back to her. I find the lorgnette scrutinizing the projected victim. One of these days I know she will get up and insist upon an inquiry in the bureau.

I shall see her going off to the bureau with a peculiar intentness, with nervous but resolute movements of her jewelled hands. Useless for me to intervene. ‘This is my affair, Steenie,’ she will say. ‘This is *my* affair.’

If she does do so, it is very likely the Hunots will send the girl away. Of course if they are sensible people they will just pretend to send her away and arrange to keep her out of sight of Dolores, but I am not at all sure of the Hunots.

Again it is an almost negligible bother in itself and one that, but for my growing exasperation with Dolores, I might find indelicately amusing, that the English mother and son no longer wish me a cordial ‘Bong mattong’ and ‘Bong swa’ and hurry past me with

averted faces. But I feel rather than know fully and precisely what has happened in that quarter.

From me they are merely averted, but the appearance of Dolores produces a sort of white embarrassment, a strenuous, a convulsive blindness to her on the part of the son. He has obviously never cut anyone in his life before — and it affects his respiration, he blows, it destroys his muscular adjustment. On the part of Mamma there is a frank betrayal of shocked horror. She becomes more than normally henlike. She clucks to her son to come to her side. She quivers even more than the old Baroness and becomes incredibly haughty lest she should collapse altogether. She has, I realize, been shocked beyond measure.

What has happened so far as I can guess has been that somewhere in the precincts, on the terrace perhaps after dinner, Dolores has accosted the youth and had a quiet talk with him. I know in fact that she asked him whether he was a virgin. First, because I know it is a common gambit with the women of Dolores' set when they meet growing boys, and secondly because the other night Dolores launched out upon a tirade against the hypocritical innocence and bashfulness of British youth. 'A French boy of his age,' she began.

'I know,' I said. 'I know.'

The sexual education of the adolescent male and the relative merits of the men of various nations as lovers are topics of inexhaustible interest to all those ladies in Dolores' brilliant rustling circle. The Americans as lovers are always understood to be no good, no good at all, and the English hardly better. They suffer under the stigma of sentimentality. They are excitable but inconsiderate. At the other end of the scale the vast but repulsive prowess of le négre and le gorille are glanced at. Rasputin is a special case, still quoted. They go over this stuff again and again. They roll their imaginations over it. A lover ceases to be a lover; he is a technician, he is a violinist under the scrutiny of a connaisseuse. Affection flutters away from this awful stuff in infinite distress, rather like our scared English lady. The interest in the sexual apprenticeship of son or nephew is worked up to a feverish preoccupation. It is very important to save him, at any cost, from misdirected desires. There are aunts; there are dear friends ready to vindicate normality. There is a whole literature of

the subject; deeply sentimental novels, very grave, very tender — for facetiousness would spoil everything. Don't for a moment call it pornography. It is literary conversation; it is sociology.

These things drift by me; I try to be incurious but I am neither deaf nor blind. 'This is *my* affair, Steenie!' At every age men must be taken care of and deceived for their own good.

'Did he know what a virgin *is?*' I asked.

'He thought it was a religious young woman,' she said.

Her indignation grew. 'Steenie, that boy of sixteen - just leaving his public school and going to Oxford — did not know *anything* about virginity.'

'Are you so sure? Maybe he didn't want to discuss it with you. I suppose he looked extremely uncomfortable and got up and went away.'

'Imagine it!'

'And then you tried to have just a nice quiet little sit-down gossip with Mamma about him?'

'She went scarlet and pretended not to understand. "I don't understand *what* you mean," she said - like that - and got up and walked indoors.'

'Leaving you bursting with talk?'

'It is stupid not to talk. What are we given speech for? God showers his gifts upon you English people -'

'And we practise reserve. Not so much as we did though — no. Why do you always rush sex to the front, Dolores, in any conversation you start with a stranger?'

I took a chair and sat down by the chaise longue on which she was reclining. I had had some ideas busy in my head for several days.

'Am I going to be preached at?' she asked. 'On the score of decency? By *you?*'

I lit a cigar. 'I want to tell you one or two things,' I said. 'And hear what you have to say.'

'I could tell you more than one or two things about yourself if I chose to be plain with you.'

This time I really wanted to talk to her and I did not intend to be put off by an obvious repartee. 'This habit of bringing all your talk round to sex and filth. This perpetual lewdness.'

‘Who did I learn it from?’

‘I’ve never found out. Probably at your polyglot school down there in Monaco. It’s’ — I had a phrase ready— ‘a contagious disease of the mind. And when we travel like this and meet ordinary decent people who are unaffected, it becomes an unendurable offence. Unendurable I say. This holiday since you joined me here, has irritated and bored me -’

‘Is this another of your ultimatums, Steenie?’

‘Well, it didn’t begin like that.’

She sat up and adopted the defensive offensive.

‘Steenie, I wonder why I love you. Why I *endure* you. There you sit, solemn, dull, a bourgeois book-seller, English, male - as stupid as a bull. You are like a heavy unteachable boy. Your only merit is a sort of uncritical sense of obligation.’ (‘I want to tell you,’ I said.) ‘Once I was one of the most brilliant women on the Riviera, accustomed to *gentlemen,* to men of title, to princes, to men of the world, to unquestioning gallantry. What am I now? What have you done to me? Everyone says that since our marriage I have become almost as dull as you are. You have robbed me of animation, of élan. The change they say is marvellous. Ask any of my friends, ask your own cousin John, ask your own business men who come to Paris.’ (‘I want to tell you,’

I said.) ‘And now you come to me like a schoolmaster. “I want a few words with you, Madame.” Still I go too far. Still I’m not sufficiently banale. I suppose I am to look at you and catch your eye before I speak. I suppose—’

There was no stopping her flow of talk now that she was fairly launched upon it. The only thing possible now was to begin talking myself heedless of what she might be saying, and this I began to do. ‘I want to tell you,’ I said, and proceeded with my topic.

We had opened the engagement at a fairly low pitch but now that I was going on with what I wanted to tell her our duet rose in a steady crescendo. I said that this vacation had bored me beyond endurance, that the older I grew the less could I endure being the passive supporter of her extravaganza, that since I could not restrain her I meant to leave her and that at any cost I was determined to leave her for good and all.

We gathered a furtive audience, the Hunots inside the salle a manger, a maid below, two of the postcard sellers, a gentleman at the other end of the veranda consuming a sirop. Maybe there were others. As she grew aware of this accumulation of attention she changed over more and more to French to give them a fuller benefit of her discourse and she went faster and shriller, as glimpses of what I had to say got through to her, and might possibly get through to our hearers. Her curiosity to know what I was saying so steadily, was overcome heroically. On she went along her own line.

The two voices fought, a drum, a bass drum, trying to drown cymbals.

'Let me tell you, Mr Steenie,' said she.

'I want you to understand,' said I.

It was ridiculous, it was shameful. At last I tried to rise with dignity and then forgetting my dignity leant over her to deliver a parting shot. 'There is a limit,' said I, repeating my worn-out refrain. 'There is a limit.' Unfortunately I marred my withdrawal by knocking over a small round tin table, bearing an empty glass and a tray which fell with a resounding crash.

'Please replace that,' I said to the spotted maid who appeared with suspicious alacrity upon the scene. 'Please replace and charge to my account,' and departed ingloriously, leaving Dolores reclining back on her chaise longue with all the honours of war, a great lady of the world, fatigued.

'Pouf!' she said for the benefit of the audience. '*Quel* maladroit! *Mon* amant! Mais c'est drole!'

12

This sort of thing, this sort of jabber-battle, is the nearest I am ever likely to get to my wife's mind. Never will she listen; never will she attempt to understand. Whatever freakish interpretation she chooses to put upon our relationship, she will fight for with screams and vituperation. There is no dealing with her. I sit here now at my desk with this diary before me, asking myself what sort of entanglement I live in and just what I intend to do to escape from it. For in some way I will get out of this unendurable way of living.

Something much more thorough than I have done hitherto has to be done.

There are, I admit, these lengthening absences to exasperate her. We are both changing. I cease to laugh in my sleeve at her; I disregard her feelings as I never used to do. I scarcely hide my contempt for her tawdry sayings and doings. That secret laugh did much to keep alive the amused sort of affection I bore her. It seems to me, but that may be the effect of use and wont upon me, that her mind has hardened and deteriorated in late years. The last freshness of youth has departed from her. She repeats herself. Many of her topics came up like gramophone records. She talks more and more, she listens and reads less and her incessant self-centred flow becomes cheaper in quality and more monotonous every time I have to hear it. Quite apart from the discomfort her irritating aggressions create for me I am wearied by her endless reiterations. The forced and artificial buoyancy I try to sustain is less and less effective against her voice. I just cannot go on listening to it.

What is really the matter with her? What is the matter with us? We quarrelled about her indecent conversation. Why does she plaster her talk and particularly her English talk with clumsy outrages on the conventions?

Sitting in judgment on her here, I do not find she is really an oversexed person any more than she is abnormally crooked sexually. She is normally sensual and she is unstable, but she is not a wanton. Her pose varies from the great lady to the gaminesque. She is a gaminesque Mediterranean lady. She uses an abnormal quantity of shocking words and has a sort of sham- scientific scandalizing knowledge in this sphere, but though I find her tiresome and vulgar about it and though I think the habit grows upon her I do not find her disgusting. She is not really mentally obsessed. She talks simply to startle and shock.

Physical obsession with sex is a transitory state of affairs with an easy remedy, but imaginative obsession with sex is the most dangerous and incurable of contagious diseases. The mind afflicted becomes like that of a cocaine addict. The drive to talk about ‘it’, to elaborate ‘it’, to invent something unheard-of about this really very simple business, becomes uncontrollable. Perpetually the topic is

obtruded, dragged in. Heman Soapstone, old Blades and Loretta Hook are the real thing, sexualizing everything, drooling their stale decaying obscenities wherever they go, like a curse put upon them. Pitiful and repulsive conversational lepers they are. Dolores isn't that.

It isn't a diseased imagination that impels Dolores to indecency, it is something quite different and innate; it is a devouring insatiable egotism. She must have attention, she must focus attention, at any cost - and she found quite early in life that the most effective way for a young woman to hold the attention of the guests at a lunch party or dinner party was to be frankly improper. A pretty young woman got a few glances and a few furtive advances, but everyone turned with raised eyebrows and an amused expectation to an animated young woman with no restraint upon her tongue, with a great collection of improper words and a penetrating voice.

And come to think of it, Dolores has no idiosyncrasies in any direction whatever, except this blank craving for notice. I have never known her do a really original thing...

Light breaks upon me! Her gestures, her style, her costume, her scent, her accent, her mannerisms, her dogs and decorations, the values she sets upon things, her wildly fluctuating judgments, are a jackdaw collection picked up anyhow and gripped and held together with tremendous tenacity. She has accumulated this composite self because she thought its ingredients contributed to her effectiveness. There is no other principle of selection. It is an accumulated self, it is an undigested self. Most other human beings, the psycho-analysts explain, are under compulsion to do this or that irrelevant thing, they have an uncontrollable bias that gives them character, but she is under no compulsion at all to modify her plagiarisms and imitations. She has no repressions. She has a bright acquisitive brain, clear because it is unhampered by any internal resistances, and she learns and repeats, forgetting nothing, qualifying nothing, but intensifying everything because of the lack of any toning personal tint of her own. So far from being abnormal she is normal to the exclusion of an individual difference. She is a human being stripped down to its bare egotism. She is assertion and avidity incarnate. She is the most completely, exclusively and harshly assembled individuality I have

ever encountered.

It is just because she is bare, like a planet without atmosphere, that she has baffled me so long. It is only now at last that I realize that she is just common humanity unmitigated. I have been getting down to that through a dozen puzzled years. So far from having to deal with a complicated person I begin to realize I have been dealing with a case of extravagant simplicity. I can't treat her as either a lunatic or a criminal. She is the foundation stuff of humanity. She is a common woman in a state of chemical purity.

And my basic structure and everybody's basic structure is woven of much the same stuff, but tinted, mercerized - is that the word? - glazed over, trimmed, loaded down? It is just the lack of that mitigating something else that makes her different from other people.

Now let me sit down and examine this instinctively fundamental human being from whom I have to detach myself. The first conspicuous thing about her is this craving for attention. (Are any of us free from that?) Why does she want attention? Why do any of us want attention? Is it a craving for love or, turning it inside out, hate? I don't think so. I doubt if any of us have a simple desire for love as such. What she seems to be after when she embarks upon one of her crescendos of showing off, is anything but affection; her nature is much more aggressive. It is to rouse a sense of inferiority and admiration in her hearers. It is to impose herself upon the absent and the present. It is to achieve a sense of triumphant existence. That is the climax of the orgasm. That must be held as long as possible. That is her simple and sole satisfaction. And it takes a malignant form because it is so much easier at any level to detract and hurt than to charm.

Now if this is true that Dolores is the normal human being stripped down to the bone, then this same fundamental drive to compete and feel one is triumphantly existent must be in me and you and all of us. It may be qualified or corrected in some way but it will be there. Let us for a change pin out Mr Stephen Wilbeck upon the dissecting board. Shall we find a male Dolores at the heart of him? He doesn't shout, he doesn't brag and drown his opponent. No. Quite the little gentleman!

But now consider what he does. I have been reading over the

opening chapters of this manuscript, the part about the high road, the sunshine and Rennes and all that, and I remark how pleasantly he chuckles over and tickles and caresses every human being he meets, as though he loved them. He observes their rather petty activities, how lovably petty they are, he weaves quaint belittling fancies round them, notes their human absurdities. He does not obtrude himself at all, but he remains from first to last in his private imagination floating over them like a kindly divinity. The sense of triumphant existence - at least of successful existence - is the end sought in both cases. He gets it more subtly and skilfully and successfully than Dolores, that is all the difference. He does not try to rend it out of these others; he steals away with it. And instead of screams, threats, dismissals and so on towards servants, he gets the upper hand of them by creating a sense of obligation. Is there really a passion for fair play in him? Or does he merely like the people about him to feel that he is fair and trustworthy? Does he care tor them as people or minions? I ought to know but I don't. Let us put a query to that. In the scales of a real divinity sitting among the stars, I doubt whether even on the score of ego-centredness the beam of the moral balance would kick against Dolores. It would tilt but not kick. Her egotism is crude and bare; it is more primitive; it lies naked - flayed - on the inflexible limitations of her life, and there it screams with resentment, suspicion and envy.

He has an integument. As Foxfield would put it he is complicated by neo-morphs.

So, until at last now a fair challenge to his honour and self-respect has arisen, he has been able to get along by jesting about life, he has been able to profess a light heart, to evade and get away by himself, to deride Dolores' frantic struggle to establish a pride about herself, and to be scandalized at her flaming malice - against life.

That anyhow is the case for Dolores...

But-

I am both judge and party in this private trial, and I do not see why a certain desire to pose before myself as an impartial judge, should bias my verdict against myself. I have stated her case and now I will put in a plea for myself. There *is* something between Dolores and me that is in my favour. Our difference is not simply that I am

more subtle and elaborate than she. In many matters she can be much more intricate than I. But I am not wholly an ego, and she is. There is a certain good in me that she has not, there is something in my make-up going beyond my egotism, that I am justified in defending, even ruthlessly, against her devastating attacks.

13

Since I wrote the last passage I have been for a cigarette consuming stroll among the tumbled rocks of the gorge and returned to dine with Dolores in frozen silence in the diningroom. I hesitated at the post office whether I would send the code telegram to Durthing that would have brought me an urgent summons thither; 'printers' strike impending'. I decided not to do so. I detest these little deceptions. I am ashamed of them in my own eyes. I have played the fugitive hen-pecked mari of the farces too often.

The salle a manger was pervaded by an air of general crisis, and the most persistent sound was the soft rustling of the old Baroness as she turned to scrutinize one table after another. 'What *can* have happened?' her lorgnette inquired. Particularly of me. The English mother and son never said a word; they read books. The son's ears were bright scarlet and he moved rarely and stiffly.

There was only one fisherman. He dined rather early and when he had dined he sat for a moment staring in front of him, said '*God!*' with a note of extreme astonishment and got up and departed. Some newcomers remained mouselike throughout. A momentary impulse to speech was caused by the spotted girl dropping and breaking three plates suddenly and dreadfully, but nothing came of it. She wailed for a moment but the stern stillness overcame her. We lapsed into rigor as she sniffed and picked up the fragments. For a few moments Monsieur Hunot surveyed the company over the frosted glass of the door, but he did not make his usual round of amiability. His heart failed him.

I wondered whether I had not made a mistake about that telegram.

After dinner Dolores got up, stood still, and looked at me very meaningly. I stood to attention. She bowed and passed me with

dignity. I went out on the veranda to smoke and drink some brandy - I felt I needed brandy — and presently Marie came with a note.

'My love, 'You sat at dinner like a small, pudgy, obstinate, wicked little boy. You are wrong, you are so *wrong,* so wrong-hearted — but like a child. My heart goes out to you. I cannot let the sun go down upon my wrath. I forgive you.

I cannot sleep in hate. Give me one little moment, open my door and say "Goodnight" to me. Then I will take my Semondyle and sleep. Remember I am in pain and still very ill. You know nothing of pain. Some day perhaps you will.

It will be good for you. But maybe then I shall sleep and stop thinking of that incompetent fool of a dentist who has ravaged my life. Whom you allowed to ravage my life — making no proper inquiries. Against whom you will not even bring an action for damages — for fear of taking my part. Tomorrow we will go to Roscoff as we arranged and I will make myself agreeable to this scientific hack writer of yours - what is his name? Pox or Fox or something. Foxfield? How I shall yawn inside! My abominable child! One of these days you will drown me in your English dullness.'

I read the note and after due consideration nodded to Marie. I wanted to see Foxfield. His copy was in arrears again.

So that was settled and this crisis was to end in the usual way. I ordered some more brandy.

14

How long are we to go on like this? How many people are there in the world, I wonder, who wake up in the morning to a situation they are convinced is intolerable, who say as I say, 'This must end: I will stand it no longer', and at night find themselves still in the same intolerable situation? There are times when I feel that all humanity lives in traps, gripped by obligations they have incurred, born caged from the first in the menagerie. Nowadays our developing psychological analysis stresses the role of the escape mechanisms in our minds - they should be called our pseudo-escape mechanisms. That kindly humour of mine is a case in point. In spite of it my life is

being more and more conditioned by Dolores. Are we all of us jammed hopelessly in this drifting inertia? Is all life a drifting inertia, an endless band of flypaper? Are all the people about me full of suppressed vows to 'do something' — against the enslaving partner, the undetachable associate, the tangle of obligations — to families, to legal undertakings, to professions, feuds, routines, habits?...

I resume the problem of the incompatibility between Dolores and myself. Where were we?

We had concluded that Dolores was a particularly simplified person, a far more completely isolated, logical and self-centred human being than the generality. She was so completely individualized, she was so much what every individual is and so little what every individual is not, that she lacked a distinctive individuality. That was our first finding. She was without a sort of variable, supplementary, hesitating undertow that operates in most human beings. Her stolon was broken. Her detachment was unqualified. She could not extend beyond her edges and boundaries. She could not forget herself. And since all individuals are, as individuals, doomed to defeat, since the outer world manifestly overrules and outlives them, her life has been necessarily a bitter struggle against the admission of her essential finality. She fights like a naughty child. She can concede nothing. She can allow nothing nor forgive anything. Someone else must do that.

The more normal mind is more complicated than hers; it is not so completely within the egotism. Quite a lot of it operates outside the drama of the triumph or frustration of the '*I*'. A large part of our self-education and our general training in conduct, is an adjustment between these outer non-egoistic motives and the desire for unqualified and triumphant self-assertion. Compared with Dolores, Mr Stephen Wilbeck, we decided, was in certain unspecified ways different. We have implied that this difference lies in the fact that though he too is egotistical, he is not entirely made up of his own structural egotism. That is indeed his moral framework, but there is a lot of extra matter wrapped about it. We have now to get clear if we can about the nature of this extra matter.

A part of his being is evidently reservation and discretion — a deference. There is a sort of councillor, primarily devoted to his

egotism, no doubt, but nevertheless functioning as a sort of family solicitor in his make-up, who says continually, ‘Do you think -?’ and ‘Must you go as far as that? Have you considered that there are others concerned in this?’ Possibly this something that was only present as a germ in the infant, but which has been developed by the conditions of his upbringing. It was there to train and so it has been trained. It has grown into a mitigating mental habit system that is now his second nature. His self- assertion has become so qualified that he now has a positive satisfaction in considering others and subordinating that primordial impulse to triumph over them, to their approval and acquiescence.

Part of these elaborations about his ego are no doubt ascribable to his happier upbringing. *His* triumph over them is that they do not know he triumphs over them. Dolores’ childhood was spent amidst much more vehement circumstances; the atmosphere of her convent school was rank with a stimulated competitiveness. Learning in the type of school she attended was neither done under compulsion and punishment, after the ancient fashion, nor evoked through curiosity and the desire for performance in the modern style. It was a convent school in the Jesuit tradition, effort was stimulated by incessant displays, lists and changes of precedence, prize-givings, public and private praising, public humiliations, confessions and the like. She was trained to compete and be a winner, to take a pride simply in winning — a poisonous training for any child and the more successful it is the more pernicious are its effects. She got the full benefit of that.

Yet after making full allowance for this difference in our upbringing, I feel there is a broad margin of divergence still to be accounted for. We started intrinsically different. We did not start merely as different individuals, we started as different sorts of individuals. My interest in my egotism is not only less intense and more provisional by reason of my training, but also I have a sense of responsibility about scientific truth, about the truth of historical statement, about the general welfare of the community, about the beauties and decencies of town and country which she certainly does not feel. I do not mean that I have had these interests from the beginning, but they grew, just as my moustache grew, as my mind

opened. I believe that the sort of person to which I belong has these natural impersonal solicitudes, just as I believe that her sort has not. But except for this belief of mine that there are such sorts, I find it very difficult to define them or associate them with any other characteristics...

15

I sit here musing over types of human being. I muse now more than I write because the hour is late and my mind is losing intensity and becoming diffuse...

We of the intelligentsia are always generalizing about humanity, simplifying its movements to explain them more easily, and dividing it in the most haphazard and uncritical way.

What shallow hasty headlong minds we have, all of us! The best of us! What stuff our literature and in particular our history is! - up to now. I write this as a publisher. Some sort of classification of humanity seems necessary for many human activities, but much of what we have is more like the imaginations of vast, solemn, overgrown children, playing at thought as pompously as possible, than active adult minds thinking. 'History,' said Henry Ford, meaning all written history, 'is bunk.' What intuitions that man has had! How completely I agree with him!

History! What rows of lopsided books come to mind — from that poor old gossiping propagandist Herodotus to the distorting patchworks of today! When shall we have a real spring-cleaning of the warehouses of history? When will the biologists and archaeologists go in to that vast accumulation with their mops and pails? I mean no public book-burning of course, but I can imagine that vast quantities of the books we hold in respect at present will be left at last to oxidize quietly in our attics. Swarms of erudite, uneducated, incontinent little chaps go on and on, conceiving and writing these copious, misshapen books, pretentious histories, in which 'the Orient' is contrasted with 'the West', 'North' with 'South', Aryan with non-Aryan, in which the Spirit of Civilization, never defined, marches West (or East, it doesn't matter), in which it has a Cradle, in which the spread of Christianity is made accountable

for the downfall of Rome, or for the discovery of America, and Buddhism for an alleged military inefficiency in the Chinese. Capitalism becomes a 'System' organized in a malignant spirit by the Puritans, whom nobody loves. And the amazing '*movements*' these historians invent! The incredible '*races*'*!...*

Most alleged ethnological classifications have idiot faces — not so much faces indeed as dead incredible masks clamped upon - upon sacks filled with 'all sorts'. These historians talk glibly of a Jewish 'race', of Nordics, Alpines, Mediterraneans. They would make a botanical species of a macedoine of fruit. They do not seem to care, and nobody seems to care, how wildly they classify and distinguish and oppose. And of cultures! Hardly one of these exponents of how humanity works, but professes an exquisite power of judgment. That unparalleled 'Greek Culture'! Somehow they do believe in it. They all believe in it. Have you ever asked yourself what it really amounted to? With its omnipresent Corinthian capitals, its crudely painted buildings, its pink statues of women, its everlasting booming Homer, its city bosses and its hysterical heroes, all rhetoric and tears! And the undefined 'golden ages' of these historians, their equally undefined 'ages of decadence'! Anything seems acceptable that is even faintly plausible, and off they go.

Yet we endure these Spenglers and Toynbees and Paretos and their like and even partly read them. We endure them. We *have* to endure them. At the worst they are experimentalists in statement — though they all refuse to listen to each other, much less to collate themselves with each other and so oblige us by cancelling each other out. They multiply and proliferate; they clog our bookshelves, they beleaguer our minds. Their fungoid abundance of assertion renders any clear conception of the recent human past impossible. We live with our minds overgrown by an entirely unpruned jungle of historical misrepresentation...

We make real efforts to read these books. We do not believe in them but we read them and talk about them. At the backs of our minds we feel that there *are* distinctions, real and profoundly important distinctions, between different kinds of human beings, and that beneath the confused surfaces of history there are real processes that still elude our definition. Our endurance of these historical and

sociological proliferations is the mark of our helplessness. We feel, I suppose, that maybe it is better that these interpreters, rather than not write at all, should flounder along with these guesses and prejudices of theirs. On approval. Only there is no approval, unhappily. None of them, as I say, ever seems to notice and criticize the others. Each galumphs about, bruising the sward of fact, according to his fancy. There I think we have real grounds of complaint. We are left an impossible task. It is like the problem of our lunatic asylums; we have to find better men to put aimless enterprise within bounds. Before you can effectively explode your Pareto, for example, and dismiss him, you have to find a first-rate psycho-analyst sufficiently industrious to read, anatomize and find out all about him.

As a publisher with a conscience, as a caterer for thought, I sit in my office in a sort of despair, contemplating the stuff going down the chute upon the heads of my poor public below. The historical books I issue - reluctantly but I do issue them - contemporary history and general history — as well as a lot of base but profitable twaddle about Empresses, Napoleon, Dictators and so on — are worse even than the endless impossible theorizings of the economists. Those are bad enough. I have some of them, too, on my lists, alas! But *their* books are just vapourings, they wash like wavelets about rocks of concrete reality and do not greatly affect them. While the booms and slumps go on about them, they write as the birds sing, mere starlings they are and shrill canaries, but the histories on the other hand have animus, their misconceptions are mischievous, they are poisonous, they enter into life, they partake of the stuff of life, they disorganize any collective political will, they spread into minds and push them askew and distort and ultimately destroy them.

Sometimes Dolores turns her mind to discussing world affairs. She talks this history stuff by instinct. She talks as though I had never published a book. I feel like a man who makes a clearing and as fast as he makes it the jungle flows back. She lays down the law, she generalizes about ‘France’ and ‘England’ and ‘America’. She really thinks there is a large collective insultable lady called America’. She scolds ‘Germany’, we did not punish ‘Germany’ enough, she reproaches ‘Russia’. She abandons nations to their fate. Never will she speak to Germany again. Germany must stand in the corner, face

to wall, and Britain must wear a dunce's cap. It is the most awful gabble - but it is nothing more than the inevitable end of this mud-chute called 'history'. It comes to her via the Parisian papers and sub- diplomatic chatter at third hand.

The balanced stuff I hunt out and get written and issue she never looks at. It irritates her. You can't easily take sides. It perplexes her. It does not fall into her patterns, the common established patterns of history. She cannot read it. She wants to be rude to it and dismiss it from existence. She waves her hands about. She raises her voice. 'Je trouve,' she says. 'Je trouve,' pushing away the indigestible ideas. I have to get away from her or she would unhinge me When I hear her voice fluting along about these things I begin to doubt whether the reconstruction of men's minds and methods to meet our new needs is not a fantastic dream. For in her fashion I know millions, so to speak, think.

I wish I knew how to help remedy this confused acquiescence of the general mind. I wish I knew how to brace up the phagocytes of criticism.

People must have a history of some sort and an ethnology of some sort before they can exist politically. And what can be expected of minds full of this drivel of hate and vain comparisons?

Much has been done in the past decade or so to reduce flabby stomachs. Might we not begin a movement presently, to brace up flabby history? What is *my* firm doing in this matter? What might it do? What am I doing? I ought to be finding young men and women of mental energy to start an Augean critique, a True History School. Why am I fretting about here in Torquestol tied to a fractious uncontrollable woman while I ought to be in England getting on with my job?

16

I think this, I write this, and yet I sit here and my mind drifts back to its prepossession with Dolores, and for the life of me I cannot resist the allurement of these very vulgarities of history I have been denouncing. Suddenly I find my head busy with them, adventitious analogies, wild generalizations, unjustifiable assertions, fragmentary

facts.

For example, is Dolores, I ask, contrasted with me and antagonized to me by some difference of *race?* And ignoring her Scotch father I find myself inclined to call her 'Oriental', insist on the predominance of her Armenian genes and find analogies for her conduct in the known and alleged qualities of these acquisitive marketing people from the Near East. Who remember so precisely and abundantly and think so meanly. I admit - I have no grounds for the hypothesis - a considerable streak of something which I call in a pejorative sense 'Jewish' in her make-up. I mean nothing racial in that, I mean something simply and blankly prejudicial. I use these terms as loosely as anyone does, yet under this loose, unjustifiable terminology, I can almost persuade myself that I am groping towards a perceptible reality.

But if I drop this racial idea, I am still confronted by these immense differences in character one finds between man and man. And now I warn you, dear, but I feel slightly recalcitrant reader that I have lugged thus far, now I am really going to theorize.

Under the cloak of the apparent races of men, under the thin and superficial disguise of colour differences and varieties of hair, height and chest measurement, I believe that, interbreeding together and all mixed up together, there are certain real human races, hereditary strains, that do not readily lose their identity. I do not think I have been clear in this belief hitherto, but now I see it as if it had been in my mind for a long time indistinctly. It has been assembled there by Foxfield and a miscellany of biological reading, and now it breaks out. There are breeds, I find, adapted to a spacious and generalized modern life, new variations perhaps, other breeds essentially parasitic, others timidly docile, and again breeds bitterly ego-centred and malignantly resistant to adaptation. (Dolores e g.) These breeds traverse all recognized boundaries. It is as plain as daylight to me now.

So far very little has been done to separate these real breeds out. Particularly have we failed to distinguish the new types that are undoubtedly appearing. We have missed the ingredients of the mixture and especially the new ingredients, because we have been thinking in terms of groups in any one of which these new factors

may appear. The uncritical distribution of men into races, cultures and peoples has masked the reality. Max Nordau and Lombroso indeed made some efforts to distinguish 'criminal' and degenerate types, but they lacked critical acumen, they were journalists essentially, and they assumed a quite unjustifiable authoritativeness in their speculations. The social Linnaeus has still to come (and Bradfield, Clews and Wilbeck are looking for him). The classification of main human types and temperaments from Hippocrates' down to the *cerebrotonics, somatotonics* and *viscerotonics* of today — lovely 'scientific' words these and most impressive for the young - has always been a fair field for this sort of intellectual larking, and I do not see why I should not have my fling in it. Larking it is. Are these types, are they breeds and strains, are they genetic, that is to say, or are they just classes by circumstance and for convenience in argument, like the 'proletarians' and 'bourgeoisie' so remarkably imagined by the Communist rabbis?

I propose to accept the former alternative and assert that this mankind, this race of men, like the race of dogs, is a great mix- up of interbreeding species with a tendency to what Foxfield calls 'genetic re-emergence' — genes of a feather flock together — and also in a state of — what is his phrase? - 'variational initiative'.

I do not see why I should accept any of these other fellows' classifications. I do not like any of them. Thought is free. '*Cerebrotonic*' makes me think somehow of Aldous Huxley with neuralgia, faint but pursuing the ideal. I set about the matter in my own distinctive fashion. To begin with I abolish the species *Homo sapiens.* I propose to replace that by a number of species and varieties, new and old. *Homo*, I declare, is a genus with an immense range of species, sub-species, hybrids and mutations. For tonight anyhow, I am going to collect my own specimens like any other honest naturalist. First *Homo Doloresiform,* a widespread, familiar type, emphatic, impulsive and implacable. Particularly *implacable.* Then *Homo Wilbeckius,* probably a recent mutation, observant, inhibited and disingenuous. Many of those new cerebrotonics may belong to this species. Its chief distinction is that it is flexible. Other species there are but this will be enough to start with. Later no doubt dozens of other species, variants, stabilized hybrids, will become

distinguishable. But for the moment let us take the two main sub-genera of *Homo, Homo regardant* and *Homo rampant,* the former traditional, legal and implacable and the latter open-minded and futuristic, making *Doloresiform* the type-species of the former group and *Wilbeckius* of the latter.

The Dolores type has naturally imposed itself upon my attention. If I am really to be regarded as typically human, then according to my new theory Dolores is not human, she is a human-looking animal of a kind capable of interbreeding with human beings. Or vice versa.

Here in the small hours I find the Dolores traits very evident in history, and as the thin mists of oncoming slumber creep across my slightly intoxicated brain I become more and more like one of these contemporary historians of ours spinning his web. Curious identifications become possible, I associate the traits of Dolores with the warp and woof of history, I become myself a highly intellectual, highly moral, blondish 'modern' type, and she becomes all the acquisitive, objectionable brunet peoples in history, the peoples who insist, the peoples who resist, the 'inadaptables' of today who created our yesterdays.

There are, I reflect, Dolores nations, races and peoples. Always a Dolores people is a tenacious, self-righteous people with an exaggerated past and great claims. Its gods are always jealous gods and it takes after them. The patriotism of such a people is a sacred national egotism. What it cannot do through its individuals it does all together, and usually at the top of its voice. It will not come into any sort of general consortium with the rest of mankind. It must be and remain itself. It grabs every advantage in its right, and since that is the way to get your knuckles rapped, they do get rapped. Then its vindictiveness is relatively enormous. It never forgets a grievance. It lives on grievances...

The time relationship of a Dolores people is quite different from that of my sort. Its idea of the future is not, as mine is, a magnificent progressive achievement continually opening out, forgiving everyone, comprehending everyone, but a judgment day, a day of bitter reckoning...

Usury came to the minds of the Dolores peoples, naturally enough, as a quite lovely idea, as a perpetually increasing right to

dominate and dun. I think a racial nexus of Dolores people must have provided the prevalent type all over the world of early history. They invented finance, and we live in a financial world. It is, I am convinced, unnecessary, but we do. We still live under the tradition of inextinguishable debts and everlasting claims. Their life is deduction *ad infinitum.* Come what may, never shall the wrongs and claims of Doloresland, never shall brave little Doloresland, the remnants of the various Dolores people, perish from the earth. For evermore these nations shall sit at their game and lose and win and squabble... The old world was truly theirs, they made it and they fit it, and they struggle unrelentingly against the advent of a new.

Dolores' thin, painted, eager face pervades this nocturnal vision of history. (I am possibly writing in my sleep. Perhaps that is how those other fellows get their stuff done. It explains the wild facility of their generalizations... And also I fancy I am a little drunk. It is queer — but I have been drinking brandy rather freely since I came to Torquestol.) She expands after the fashion of dreams to become all the obdurate, grievance-cherishing, triumph-seeking people in the world. She becomes everything that stands in the way of a World Pax and a universal system of mutual service. I see her down the corridors of time, the unyielding guardian of her own ways, refusing to adapt, refusing to tolerate, confronting her enemies, pursuing her malice, unable to forget her old world, unable to learn a new one...

All the great religions, all the prophets, every undogmatic teacher becomes in this picture, the voice of the new *Homo* trying to emerge.

But this is really an easy game! Why am I merely a publisher? I have an unwonted feeling tonight that I can *write.* Is this I am discovering here a bit more arbitrary than Spenglerism? Is it any more pretentious than the social philosophy of that force-loving little Bayard of twisted history, Pareto? Tonight at any rate I am full of my own interpretations. Why should not every one of us have his own? You start up your theories and analogies, you hoot like a historian and the facts, the slightly limping facts and the striding assumptions, come crowding along like people storming a river steamer. The current is dragging at my mental keel. I heave and bump back against the quay. The ideas begin to take their places.

More dreamlike than ever, I seem to be on something like a ship's

bridge, and all that crowd of ideas are dropping into fresh positions under my command. And there are new ideas too, mixed up with age-old prejudices, there are novel biological terms and living generalizations— 'revolutions in the fundamental conditions of human life'— 'adaptation to a new synthesis' - 'inadaptable types and adaptable types' - obstinate traditionists versus flexible moderns - shut and narrow against open and wide. All sorts of ideas that have been bandied about between myself and Foxfield come up from the bottom of my mind like fermenting scum. *Man, like the dog, is a mixture of species;* that is idea enough to fit out a dozen Spenglers. (Those two splashes you heard were 'Orient' and 'Occident' being put overboard.) *The Way of the World Series* seems to be painted large upon my vessel's side. We fly the flag of Science and social anticipation, above the flag of History. I thought my boat was just a launch, but I find it is a liner. A captured liner...

A new way of living - from politics to personal relations... Dolores versus Stephen... Adaptation to new conditions that have changed fundamentally...

Where am I? How far have I got afloat without realizing I have embarked upon a vast theory of my own?

I seem to be back in my bedroom at Torquestol, and the writing before me has become a wild scrawl. I *have* been writing in my sleep...

Some of the stuff is quite illegible.

We must consider this tomorrow...

And now, I suppose, since I do not want our real war to break out just yet, I must go along the passage and say 'Goodnight' to her.

17

(Torquestol, August 31st, 1934)

I have left this diary untouched for some days. We went to Roscoff to see the great fig tree and the Marine Laboratory. Dolores dressed as though she was going to tea in the Place Vendome - what do they call the place? All alive with new hats it is. I forget. We met Foxfield at Roscoff as I had appointed.

At first Dolores was disposed to treat Foxfield - since she knew that occasionally I paid him money - with considerable condescension. He did not appear to observe that. She also addressed several almost audible asides to me. ‘Why do you let him come so untidy? It is a slight on both of us. Does he *never* cut that hair?’ These also, if they were heard, went unheeded. After one glance at her, he paid her no more attention, until we were among the salt-water tanks, to which he led us with a sort of round-shouldered determination. Then suddenly addressing himself to her, he began a lucid and detailed account of the love- life of the octopus.

‘I find it the most hideous of created things,’ she had said.

‘But consider its sensitiveness,’ he remonstrated, becoming extraordinarily like an octopus himself as he said it, and then, with a touch of wonder, ‘See! It is *looking* at you.’

Dolores became interested. ‘Mind you — they don’t often take notice of things outside the glass,’ Foxfield said very gravely, and regarded her with a speculative eye, as though he sought some reason for it.

Dolores made an elegant gesture at the uncoiling creature in the corner. ‘C’est un monstre,’ she said relenting, noted a sort of invitation in an extending arm, and was reluctant to turn away.

‘But in those unfolding undulating movements — a certain grace?’

‘A certain grace,’ she admitted. ‘Yes.’

‘Sophisticated perhaps. But could a man do that? See! *There!*’

‘M’m’m,’ she considered.

‘Few people realize the capacity for passion among marine animals,’ Foxfield went on in that ample, soft, slightly piggish voice of his, and it dawned upon me that in his own peculiar way he meant to get even with her for that preliminary phase of patronage. ‘Mind you — floating in the sea as they do — undistracted by gravitation...’

This was a new idea to Dolores.

‘Like painted Gods upon a ceiling,’ said Foxfield.

‘Naturally,’ she agreed, reflected, and then pursued knowledge. ‘But in water - do they make love? Can they?’

‘Incessantly. For example...’

It was a new view of an aquarium to Dolores that it could be an

arena of passion.

‘For example -?’ she echoed.

Foxfield hesitated for a moment and sought my eye. His large loose mouth was interrogative. But he found nothing in my eye to restrain him, and with a sort of modest reluctance, speaking very gently, he proceeded to instruct Dolores in the hidden ways of nature. I had never realized before how much livelier an imagination he has than Creation, and what a brighter world we should have had if affairs had been in the hands of this trained biologist.

‘Of course,’ he said with an apologetic sigh, ‘the sea here gets a lot of warm water from the gulf stream — a lot of *warm* water. Even the vegetables in this part of Brittany are—’ he sank his voice - ‘*precocious*.’

‘Yes?’ said Dolores.

‘Even the early flowers. When English bulbs are still in the nursery. And there is a great fig tree — but you will see that for yourself... But consider these dogfish. Now *they*...’

I see no reason for recording the coarse selachian scandals he retailed to her.

Dolores was so artlessly interested that she forgot to be the ultra-fashionable lady altogether. She became the last and brightest and indeed slightly gaminesque pupil of a great savant, who told her things, wonderful things, that he had never been able to unfold before to so quick and intelligent a mind.

He talked and talked, gravely but unedifyingly, and grew more and more solemnly happy as he talked.

She was much excited by the idea of sea water as something into which an infinitude of spawn and gonads were perpetually liberated, as Foxfield explained, ‘without the slightest precautions’, and the more she pursued this subject the more disordered his hair became, the more wicked his great spectacle- magnified eyes, and the more gravely preposterous his slowly enunciated biological exaggerations. The life of the ocean became an orgy tempered by massacre. ‘But they hardly notice they are eaten,’ he said.

I had never seen Dolores in such eager pursuit of knowledge, and when Foxfield appealed to me to confirm his statement that Tritons and Mermaids were ‘conceivable - in actual practice I mean -

conceivable' - I did so, like one who betrays the arcana.

'Of course they hush it up,' said Foxfield very confidentially.

'And now, Steenie,' she said, 'you see how sound my instinct was!'

"?!' said Foxfield by means of a suitable noise.

'Against bathing in the sea.'

'There was a young lady of Sark,' began Foxfield, and then turned away and blew his nose violently. His feelings were suddenly too much for him. Over his handkerchief he watched his effect upon me. Was he going too far? I looked judicious. My eye counselled moderation. For a time he desisted from the topic of the salt salacious sea. I doubt if anything further is known about the young lady of Sark. It becomes just one more Mystery of the Sea.

That trip to Roscoff was indeed an unexpected success. Dolores explained to Foxfield how superior the marine laboratories there were to the marine biological station at Plymouth - which she heard of for the first time - and how inferior the British scientific mind was to the clear logic of the Latins. 'You dream,' she said, 'you dream. Your women do not wake you up and inspire you. Look at Steenie? What would he be if he never came to France?'

'*Ah!*' said Foxfield and looked at me accusingly with magnified eyes.

And when we contemplated the great fig tree in the Enclos des Capucins, she made us both jump and look round guiltily for nuns, for their flavour still lingers in the place, by her remark, coming clear and abrupt out of a pensive stillness, 'Regard it, Steenie. A chic costumier could not have invented a better leaf. It almost makes one believe in what you call Papa Bible, all over again.'

It was one of her brilliant days. She came near to being happy — and I liked her.

She approved vociferously of the restaurant upon the plage, its cleanliness, its unaffected simplicity and the fishiness of its fish; she toyed with the idea of installing Breton servants in the flat; she told the proprietor that she was an Egyptian princess in her own right, and that Foxfield and I were producing a book about Brittany in which he would certainly figure very honourably; and later in the town she went some way towards the purchase of a large salt-water tank which

could be installed in the flat for the closer supervision of marine morality. But the price and cost of transport, she decided, was prohibitive.

And so home, leaving Foxfield chuckling heavily as we receded — he had begun a sort of chuckle soliloquy to himself after lunch — and obviously puzzled that I should ever have betrayed discontent with my married lot.

In the car Dolores relapsed towards fatigue and intimations of her pain, but revived abruptly to express her amazement at the fullness of a sea anemone's life as Foxfield had expounded it. 'I thought they were mere pretty dolls,' she said.

Also she remarked: 'You publishers underpay men like Foxfield. What are his opportunities? None! He is like the great Curie. Who worked all his life in a shed... Afterwards they were sorry.'

'Did you talk to him about that?'

'He wouldn't talk. He is too loyal to you. But I could see through him.'

Then in a rapt voice: 'The things he knows! The things he might still discover! He makes Nature *live.* He goes to the core of things. How dull your talk is in comparison, Steenie; how banal! How English! Never have you told me anything of all this. If I were a rich woman I would endow him. Like Rousseau. Like Catherine the Great and Voltaire.'

'Damn!' I said suddenly.

'What?'

'Nothing. Only that I went to Roscoff just to get Foxfield to hurry up with his copy — and from first to last I never said a word about it.'

18

(Torquestol, September 1st, 1934)

I have just had an absurd little conversation in the smoking-room with one of the two English fishermen. They are English, I find - not Irish. His friend vanished some three or four days ago. The derelict was sitting in a corner with his mouth pulled down at one corner by

his pipe, staring at nothing. I felt his loneliness. I had to speak to him.

‘Your friend has left you?’ I remarked.

He answered resentfully. ‘Gone off to his wife,’ he said. ‘And the fishing was perfect!’

‘Is his wife ill?’

‘Not a bit — not a *bit* of it.’

‘Married long?’

‘Ages. She’s just making trouble. Couldn’t leave him in peace. Had to start something.’

I perceived he was something of a misogynist and his next remark confirmed this assumption.

‘Marriage,’ he said, ‘is a terrible tie. A *terrible* tie.’

He paused there.

‘You’re not married?’ I asked.

‘I have been,’ he said, vouchsafing no particulars. ‘I know about it.’

I felt it was for him to go on or break off as it pleased him. I said no more.

He smoked moodily.

‘It’s curious the way that fellow hangs on to that woman. As a wife — I know her.’

In that case I felt the word was with him.

‘Restless,’ he said. ‘In — cessant.

‘This time it’s a row over a bridge club — *libel*...

‘Somebody said she cheated or she said somebody cheated or *she* cheated. Most of them do, seems to me, say it or do it. They aren’t happy until the hand’s been played and the jawbation begins. Anyhow it got put down in black and white. And here’s this poor chap... Middle-aged... Nice quiet friendly chap. Got to go right back in the middle of his vacation. What to? Crowds of women, all dressed up, all talking at once. Stand up for his wife’s torts and all that. Quarrel with his own friends. They’ll drag their husbands in, willy nilly...

‘And the fishing - *perfect.*’

After an interval: ‘Just lack of employment. Surplus ginger.’

‘But why has she never occupied herself with something more

substantial? County council work? Women can be good administrators. Some sort of study?'

'They won't. You know that as well as I do. It's bridge and chatter, chatter and bridge - or that *blasted* backgammon.'

He seemed particularly hostile to backgammon.

I admitted the general justice of his indictment so far as middling-well-off women were concerned.

'They do seem at a loss to find something to do,' I said. 'I'm puzzled at times. In Paris, it is the same. *Why* this bridge, *why* this afternoon gadding about?'

'The afternoon's the devil,' he said. 'They ought all to be locked in from two to seven. All of 'em. Save No End of trouble.' For a time he smoked in silence, looking ineffably wise and emitting puffs of smoke like an Indian fire blanket signal. Then he asked me: 'Have you ever seen a woman fishing?'

I digested this for a time. 'It's a very profound and extraordinary thought,' I said, 'but I never have. Of course on the Seine, you see Monsieur Dupont and his wife in a punt - yes. But she - she is either knitting or reading a novel or fussing with the lunch. It's true. They don't fish. They never fish. I have never seen a woman by herself with a rod and line - never.'

'And you never will,' he said conclusively and began very slowly to knock out his pipe on the palm of his hand.

'That's women,' he said, nodded, and left it at that.

19

So far the lonesome fisherman. Manifestly there was a personal element in his views. But how far is his sort of hatred of women, his tone of middle-aged disillusionment, general among men of his age nowadays? My range of observation is limited, but I am inclined to think that under contemporary conditions many a middle-aged gentleman who would once have been a great proudly-booming paterfamilias with a subservient wife, at least an outwardly subservient wife, and downtrodden sons and daughters and grandchildren galore, is now in a resentful unproductive partnership that becomes less and less refreshing and more and more unmeaning

as the years slip by. Marriage as it used to be involved the incalculable adventure of children and household; it was a comprehensive life experience. Now the world is full of dissatisfied couples with disconnected instincts, wanting everything in general and nothing in particular.

We mammals seem to have been evolved for the wear and tear of breeding, the cares of parentage, and then physical exhaustion and death. Our teeth are timed for that. Faced with a contraction of a common objective, we human beings find ourselves in need of still imperfectly understood adaptations, and for the want of them the mutual exasperation of men and women increases.

His misogyny has for a moment set me inquiring in a new direction. How far is the antagonism of Dolores and myself a special case of the contemporary sex war? Her inborn childlessness merely accentuates that natural chafing. Perhaps women, because they present the ampler aspects of reproduction, find adaptation to current evasions and renunciations more difficult than men. They have not the same escape mechanisms as the more experimental male. They are less capable of that rapt withdrawal from the personal urgencies of life which is typified by fishing. They cannot abstract themselves with the same ease. I for example become more and more obsessed by the idea of an educational and exploratory role in life. It has grown into a reasonably consistent philosophy of service and contribution to broad human ends in which I lose my egotistical prepossessions more and more. It does not distress me - so far as I am able to detect what is happening within myself — that I have no real household. Our home in Paris is a lodging, which is the least part of a household.

But I do feel a need of companionship. That is deeper in my make-up. The common interest of a household did make a mutual companionship possible under the old conditions. I want someone to laugh with, one or more congenials, with whom I can air my opinions freely, people to whom at a pitch one could turn for intimate help, and I have no intimacy of that sort at all. Dolores is near to me, as France and Germany are near to one another, with an armed frontier between us. Whatever I say to her is public property. And sooner or later it is turned to my hurt. I cannot relax my egotism

to her or anyone, and she does not want any relaxation of egotism. Which probably explains why I am writing this diary-biography.

But because the lives of women are more thrown back upon themselves by the social dissolution of the household and more attenuated by that deprivation than the lives of men, because that household dissolution is exposing men and women to each other too barely, turning the natural differences between them into plain discords, it does not follow that the antagonism of Dolores and myself is merely a special instance of that. Our essential antagonism is implemented by that most stupid of all social institutions, the practically indissoluble childless marriage, so that I am unable to get away from her, but that merely puts a cutting edge upon a difference much more profound than the existing stresses between married people. So far as mere sex goes there is no trouble between us, except that I have to go so much away from her to attend to my essential business. I do not find any echo of Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* in our relations. Phases of gusto and disgust do not occur. His, I suspect, was a melancholic ego- centred temperament lacking in cheerful elasticity. I do not think that at the root of it mine is a man-and-woman story at all. It is a story about two different sorts of people. If Dolores was a man, racially and culturally different from me, to whom I was bound by contracts into a close and complicated business relationship, so that for example I was senior partner while he was irremovable, the intensity of the conflict might be less but the shape of it would be closely similar to the one between Dolores and myself. He would baffle and entangle me in much the same way as she does and I should have the same sort of impotent exasperation.

So I find my way back to my deepening conviction that Dolores and I are not really female and male of the same kind, but creatures of a different kind, for whom any mutuality of understanding is for ever impossible. There are, I am convinced, by virtue of my own theory, Wilbeck women in the world and - temperamental actors, for example — Dolores men.

I have been reading over the stuff I wrote the other night about the human melange. I was muzzy-minded with brandy and fatigue when I wrote it and yet I find I am still in agreement with it. I think I shall leave it just as I wrote it. I thought I was writing burlesque but if the

manner is burlesque the matter is not. My excursion into slightly alcoholic dream theories may have been not so much a lapse as — what shall I call it? — a discovery by relaxation. Discoveries through relaxation of the attention, do certainly occur, under hypnotism for example, or when one works out a problem by sleeping on it. When I thought I was burlesquing those big socio-historical books I was really adopting a method which allowed an accumulation of ideas below the surface of consciousness to come to the top in a very convenient manner. This theory that a number of species interlace in human genetics — parallel to the multiple species mixed up in the dog world — is just not implausible enough to be dismissed out of hand. It draws together a miscellany of notions that have grown out of my talks with Foxfield and my general biological reading.

I and Dolores are different in kind, just as the Neanderthaler was different from the Cro-Magnard. They too may have been able to interbreed...

20

I paused in my writing. A moment ago I was scribbling calmly. Then I became aware that something had happened to my desk, something was missing.

My photograph of Lettice had gone. I found the torn fragments in my waste-paper basket.

Manifestly Dolores had come to my room in my absence — pursuing some curiosity of her own. Perhaps she wanted to know why I spend so much time up here. I keep this manuscript locked up in my dispatch case by habit, but there may have been a letter or so lying about, and there was this photograph. It had stood against a silly little brass ash jar. Lettice sent it me three or four days ago...

But this is final. I must have a word with Dolores and I must have it now.

CHAPTER FIVE

Threnody

(Torquestol, September 2nd, 1934)

I cannot go on with the case of *Stephen Wilbeck contra Dolores,* and I cannot for a very good reason. It has become unnecessary. Dolores is dead.

This poor being of vanity and crazy spites is dead.

And I am free.

I left her long after midnight. I went to her room after I had found that torn-up photograph. I scribbled the last word of the previous section - '*now*'. Then for a time I sat with the scraps of Lettice before me, one wide-open eye in one bit and a third of the face in another, and the mouth with one corner missing still faintly smiling.

'This must stop,' said I. 'This sort of thing must stop.' And I had the fullest realization of my impotence as I said it.

What could I do? Thrash her? She would brag about it for ever. It would be a new tie. But what else was there to do? What good would it be to splutter fresh protests against her invincible flow of words?

I got up and went with the torn fragments crumpled in my hand, to her room.

She was awake and waiting for me.

'Look at that!' I said, and opened my hand to show her what I was holding.

'Yes,' she answered defiantly. 'Look at that.'

'I won't have it.'

'J won't have it. I won't have that chit of a girl put in my place. No! Stuck up on your desk there for everyone to see!'

'She is my daughter.'

'She is your mistress.'

'Dolores, are you mad? Why do you invent this crazy story? What do you mean by it? What drives you?'

'Then why do you make a display of her? Why do you want her with you? Why do you want to turn me out of my own apartment -

the home I have made, for - for her?'

'You know this is a fantastic invention.'

'I know it is the fantastic truth. Why do you do such things to me, Steenie? Why are you so hateful to me? You keep me in a home you desert. You run about the world.'

'Nonsense,' said I, 'you know I *have* to run about the world. You have all you need. You have just the menage you want, car to your taste, servants to dismiss, all your gossips. You dress — brilliantly. You lead an animated life. You tell everything to everybody in the most brilliant and authoritative manner possible. All your friends admire you. You admit that yourself. People turn to look at you in the street. You know as well as I do that Lettice is not with me over there. I see her hardly at all - not once a month. She's at her college and she goes home to Southampton. You know in your heart you are trumping up this story out of nothing. *Why?* Why do you do it?'

She had listened to what I had to say with unusual patience. She was sitting up now in her bed with her lean arms clasped about her knees, brooding over her wrongs. I perceived more clearly than I had ever done before that her lean and once rather fine face began to show the wear and tear of much painting and that the lines about her discontented mouth were deepening.

'I hate you,' she said.

'I love you and I hate you,' she amplified. '*Why* — I don't know. But you — Have you ever loved me? Never. I am not blind. You have pretended. Used me. If you did not love me, why did you take me? I gave myself to you so recklessly, so freely...'

I said nothing. I was trying to recall the precise details of that surrender while she improvised her story of her life.

'You took me - as a stupid child grasps a beautiful toy. You took me and broke me. Before I met you I was already celebrated. Yes, celebrated - deny it though you may. My animation was a matter of general remark. My abilities. I could write, I could talk until the whole table was listening to me. Until everyone else shut up in despair. Everyone talked of what I might do next. It seemed I might recite — make conferences. A princess. From the land of Cleopatra. None of your dowdy British royalty about that! A woman who could dress with infinite chic. And at the same time a woman of importance

in art, in literature. I had lovers - who loved me. *They* really loved me, Steenie. Nothing was too good for me. My lightest fancy was *law*. All life was before me. If you had supported me, even here in Paris I could have created a salon. In spite of you. I might have influenced statesmen. I might have swayed a dictator. And then — infatuation for you! A caprice yes, to begin with, but then infatuation. It is like that play of Shakespeare's. Yes. You Bottom! You great Bottom! Bully Bottom. Squatting on me. Insensitive. What could I do with you? Too stupid even to *see* the woman you embraced. With a sneer for all that I said and all that I was. You have eaten up my youth. You have wasted my life.'

I remained perfectly still with the torn-up photograph gripped in my hand in my pocket.

'Heavy you are — lout you are. Illiterate in spite of the books you sell. In spite of the poor authors you cajole and rob. That poor Foxfield for example — shabby, uncomplaining. It is not merely that you are incredibly clumsy and stupid with me. That, I suppose, one must expect from an Englishman and a tradesman at that. In a way, at first, that amused. It was — sauce piquante. I liked it - once. Yes. But there is something *evil* in you, something perverse. Gradually, step by step, I am coming to see you as you are. You have none of my delicacy. Never did you have a touch of it. This coarse sensualist with a streak of cruelty blunders his way through all my illusions. How coarse your face has become recently. Even you — in your glass - ought to see it. More and more you are yourself. I hear things. I learn things. I find out things. Never mind how. I know. Oh yes Steenie, I know. You have always been an open book to me and now you are transparent - perfectly transparent.

'But, you said it first, Steenie - this sort of thing must stop. I've been thinking things out - while you have been louting about up there in your room — writing on the sly to all your mistresses in England. Oh yes — I know. But I have the logical mind of a Latin, a Latin sense of reality, and I have my life to consider...' (Last night she was saying that.)

'I have my life to consider. My infatuation for you is at an end. Fini! Never more will I consider your wishes, your plans, your well-being. No more housekeeping for your sake. No more conflicts with

servants in order that you should live in cottonwool. That long dream of servitude is past. I cast it aside. I mean to take care of my own life — from this time forth. Dolores for Dolores. Clear-headed and resolute as I am by nature, and now *absolutely* selfish, a woman robbed of all illusions. *Your* work, Steenie. And now I mean to resume my own career — as your wife, Steenie, your lawful wedded wife - a hard and brilliant woman. You have suppressed me, kept me out of the limelight long enough. I have thought it all out. Every detail. I shall come to London to that flat of yours and put things in order there - according to *my* ideas. I'll send your flabby, slovenly, English servants spinning. I'll teach your English mistresses and "darlings" a little straightforward morality. Society women looking down their noses at a woman too brilliant for them. I'll talk to them. "Madame", I shall say when they telephone to you. "This is no longer a secret flat. Madame Wilbeck is at home to callers". I will give a great cocktail for all of them. Let them turn up their snub noses at me then if they can.

'No! Don't interrupt me, Steenie. I shall only raise my voice - and then perhaps I shall be sick. I am telling you calmly what I mean to do. Let me keep calm. It is no good your protesting and upsetting me. What I tell you I am going to do, I shall do.'

But I was not interrupting her. I was thinking about her intensely, for never had she expounded herself and her impulses so completely before. I was standing by her bedside as she monologued, watching her thin flushed profile. It was plainly a premeditated piece she was repeating. She had been piecing it together for some time. It was her version of our relationship. I had seen it growing in her mind. It was her rationalization of all her moods and impulses. And as I marked its hard fantastic unreality, I found myself wondering how far on the other side of veracity my own version might lie. Not so far as this surely.

She went on with her declaration of intentions. She sustained an appearance of implacable determinations. But she was speaking reverie — indulging the chosen dream of her heart, the pose she liked best. She was not, I knew, going to do all of this, but I knew that she might attempt enough of it to become intolerably troublesome.

'Yes, Steenie,' she was saying, holding up a long, thin, crimson-

nailed index finger; ‘you are dealing now with an entirely disillusioned woman. I shall be unrelenting. Unrelenting. I shall use every one of my rights against you. You are my husband. Thank you for that, but do not think I will not use to the utmost the rights it gives me. Anything you have ever given me, anything you have ever conceded me, I shall use against you now. I shall come to London, publicly and conspicuously. I do not care how rough the crossing is. I can endure it. It is three years now and six months since I was last in England. I will go everywhere with you. I shall have it announced in *The Times* - “after a long stay abroad”. I shall incur debts for you for all necessary expenditure. I shall see to it that you are properly watched and reported upon. Yes. I will send the whole of that harem of yours spinning. All those women over there shall be dragged out of the shadows in which you hide them. If they are married women I shall write to their husbands. What if there *are* divorce cases! And as for this nasty daughter of yours - yes, nasty, nasty, dirty, filthy - off she goes out of your life! Or else publicity, Steenie. The Englishman’s bete noire, publicity. I will leave your blessed flat in style. I will go to Claridges. It *is* Claridges they go to, isn’t it? Anyhow it is one of those chic hotels. I will see interviewers. The more you resist the more pitiless I shall be. All London will talk of you. Obscure as you are I will drag you out of your obscurity. It will be a stinking case - trust me for that. Oh, my poor obdurate Steenie! but you have deserved it. I shall not relent. Stink I *will.*

‘All this I shall do, Steenie. Ruthlessly. You had your last chance when you came here. For a day or so, it seemed almost like early times. And then you must take part against me with that leper woman who pretends to be a Baroness, with that mealy-faced Englishwoman — why doesn’t the fool paint? — with the servants, with those people who stole our table. Just as it was with those insupportable Benniels. The same thing always. Always you are against me, Steenie. Always!’

She stared before her, brooding for a moment, and then my immobility compelled her to resume.

‘Always against me...

‘Oh, I hate you. I *hate* you. I hate you. Never yet have I moved you to passion, to real passion — never. If once, if only once in our

lives — you had wept! *Now* I will get something out of you, some reaction - even if it is nothing but hate and anger and cruelty. All this is your doing — all of it. The good in me is exhausted. I have done with love — for ever. Now — *hate*\ I doubt if I could forgive you now whatever you did. I am your Enemy. We are at war. I want to ruin you, Steenie, I want to ruin you - and ruin you I will, expose and ruin you, whatever it costs me in the process. I want to hurt you — beyond all things I want to hurt you.

'God, how I hate you - Steenie, how I *hate* you. If you could see inside my heart, Steenie, even you would be afraid. Wait till I come back to England. Wait till I deal with that incestuous degenerate of yours, that street drab, that filthy, simpering girl, as she deserves. Couldn't you see? Even in that photograph...' She was going on in this fashion, almost happily as these white-hot thoughts came to her, and then suddenly she stopped short and looked at me. Possibly it was because I was standing so still. Usually I fretted under fire or went away. She had to make sure I was attending. She caught some new quality of menace in my stillness, and suddenly I saw she was afraid. I cannot imagine what she found in my face. That too, I suppose, was impassive.

The abuse died on her lips and she stared at me. We held each other's eyes. For a mute moment we saw each other bare.

Then she changed her expression to one of acute anguish. She clutched her side. 'My pain!' she cried. 'My pain! Always you give me pain. I can't bear it. Oo! Oooh! If only you had it. If only I could give you a taste of it. You give me black blood, you poison my blood. And then this pain comes. This terrible pain. Give me some Semondyle, you brute. Don't stand gloating there! You Sadist! Two little tablets, Steenie, dissolved. Two *little* tablets. How good that stuff is!...'

She drank.

'M'm'm...'

I tilted the glass.

2

In the morning Marie went to her with her coffee and found her

sprawling athwart her bed. The sheets were thrown back, and she seemed to be peacefully asleep. Marie put down the coffee and shook her to awaken her. But there was no awakening for Dolores.

Then it was that Marie perceived that the little tube of Semondyle was lying on its side beside the coffee tray she had just pushed on to the night table. It was empty and there was an empty tumbler against the water bottle and the electric lamp.

Marie seems to have taken in these particulars very exactly, before her feelings rose and she decided to scream and make a scene of it.

The sommelier who had brought Marie the coffee, the chambermaid and Monsieur and Madame Hunot were promptly on the spot, amazed, excited, but anxious not to alarm the other guests. They shut the door and made a swift but intensive scrutiny of the situation. At Madame Hunot's command they touched nothing.

Then they came in a discreet brawl along the passage to summon me. They returned with me to Dolores' room like children who follow a Punch and Judy show in the street. They watched me intently as I went up to the body, satisfied myself that it was dead and cold and stood back a little regarding it. I had, as the cinema people say, registered little or no emotion for their entertainment, but then I was English. Marie was the first to break the silence of the room. 'Madame was very unhappy last night,' she said. 'She was distressed because M'sieu did not come to say goodnight to her.'

I thought very quickly.

It would save a lot of inquiry and possibly suspicion if I let it go at that. But then I caught something odd in Marie's expression which accelerated my dismissal of a silly and cowardly impulse.

'I *did* say goodnight to her,' I said. 'I was almost certainly the last person with her in this room last night. I was writing late, Marie, and you had already gone to bed when I came. It was long after midnight.'

There was a faint disappointment in Madame Hunot's voice. 'I heard you,' she said. She had had a momentary hope, I think, of saying that later — and more dramatically.

'And now,' I said, 'you and Monsieur Hunot probably know best what has to be done. You must send for a doctor and the commissaire

of police. Everything I suppose must be left as it is.'

Madame Hunot had telephoned for the commissaire and the doctor already.

'Nothing,' said Monsieur Hunot, standing before the closed door and acting under the prompting of his wife's eye, 'must be known about this in the hotel. It is the rule. You in particular' — he addressed Marie - 'must keep silence. You must say Madame is seriously ill — simply that. Not even Monsieur's chauffeur must be told. You understand? She is ill. And you Mathilde? And you Auguste? Not a word. Complete silence. You Auguste had better go downstairs and bring up Monsieurs Dobree and Donadieu when they arrive. Good.'

He opened the door for Auguste to depart, glanced out into the passage and shut the door again.

'This is a great blow to me,' I said, sitting down. 'Last night she was alive - her animation was extreme.'

'I heard her,' said Madame Hunot.

'I am stunned.'

'M'sieu may well be stunned,' said Monsieur Hunot.

'She was always animated,' said his wife. 'She was the most animated and charming woman I have ever had in this hotel. Monsieur will miss her greatly.'

'I do not begin to realize,' I said. I glanced towards the stiff silent figure on the bed. '*That* - is so totally unlike her.'

Several remarks of the same quality, punctuated by long pauses, ensued. It was a relief for us when Auguste ushered in the doctor, and still more so, when the police commissaire set things in action again. Two nondescripts percolated in the room, unchallenged by anyone. One I fancy was some sort of police subordinate and the other because of his notebook was I suspect the press. But their functions were never clearly defined.

We were all interrogated. The doctor made his contribution. The commissaire was a ruddy, white-fleshed man, badly buttoned up, unshaved and a little blase. He dealt with his facts methodically and he was searching in his manner rather than his matter, when dealing with me. He walked about the room, he made nasty little noises to himself and then he would spin round, finger out, with a question. He

tried hard to fix me to a precise minute for my overnight departure from the room, being no doubt in search of some discrepancy with M'me Hunot's testimony, he asked the exact time with authority, not to be denied, he asked it hectoringly, he asked it insidiously and confidentially, he asked it flatly and unexpectedly and however he asked it I answered tepidly that I did not know the exact time; then suddenly he gave way to fatigue and declared he would now seal up the room.

'Nobody must know,' said Madame Hunot as we dispersed on the landing and she put a dramatic finger on her lips. 'This is an hotel. The needs of many people have to be considered... Madame is ill and must not be disturbed. Understand?'

'Everything goes on as usual,' said Monsieur Hunot.

A thin melancholy howl came from Marie's room. She clasped her hands. 'He knows!' she said. 'Poor *leetle* Bayard! Poor innocent! He knows.'

I reflected. I perceived that on account of that howl I hated the little beast more than ever. 'Better give him some breakfast,' I said. 'And take him out for a run.'

'You would not like to see eem? He too will be unhappy. He understands so moch.'

I made no answer.

I came back thoughtfully to this room and sat at my desk here with my overnight notes before me.

3

I looked over what I had written overnight and it seemed the most natural thing to do to lock up this manuscript, shave and dress, go down for coffee and then return here and go on writing. I write now by a sort of inertia. I cannot go into the town and there is nothing else to do. I want to be on hand if there are any questions to be answered or any arrangements to be sanctioned. And also I am getting the situation into focus very slowly. Certain immediate facts demanded attention. Beyond that there is the immense shapeless intimation of an entirely reconditioned life.

And also, something more...

I must set down in the confidence of this manuscript which I suppose is even less likely to be published now than when I first embarked upon it, a curious disturbing thing I have in my mind. I want to get it in writing even if I have to tear up what I have written as soon as I have set it down. But I want to get it in writing now projected before me. It is about that Semondyle.

Once or twice before I have had dreams so vivid and prosaic that I have had the utmost difficulty in distinguishing them from actual memories. Once or twice facts have thrown a somersault in my memory. And I am not sure whether at the moment when I should have put the two tabloids into a glass of water, it did not occur to me to put in the whole tubeful. It was a fresh tube, I noted, untouched. 'If this makes her sleep for ever,' I thought, quite calmly.

I remember no emotional colour to that; but simply the quiet acceptance of a reasonable opportunity. If it happened so, then I felt the gravity of what I had done so little that I walked back to my own room without the slightest uncertainty, I did not even wait to see the result of the overdose and I was not in the least flustered. I undressed and went to bed and went to sleep according to my usual routines. All that sounds improbable. Among other things it does not seem in my character to make so quick and unqualified a decision.

But was it such a very quick decision? Possibly I was more prepared for it than that. Even at my present age I still indulge in reverie. Many people indulge in reverie all through their lives. I cannot say how often I may not have had reveries of a wilful escape from Dolores.

There are two definite things that I think count very much against me. One is that in the morning when I woke up I had a perfectly clear persuasion that presently someone would come and tell me that this thing had happened. Before I knew that Dolores was dead, I had a very definite conviction that she was dead.

The second thing that makes me believe that this affair with the tabloids had a certain element of reality, is my profound persuasion, and no one could know better than I, that Dolores would never dream of surrendering anything she had her grip upon and least of all the gift of life, without a struggle. Conceivably in the night, in a state between waking and sleeping, she may have dramatized a scene with

me and threatened suicide after her wont and carried her histrionics to the pitch of swallowing those tablets, but even then I think there would have been time to ring for Marie and have an emetic.

Contrariwise I have on the side of the defence to consider that queer thread in my own character which makes it quite possible for me to invent a story against myself. It is quite possible that my subconsciousness may have given form to my undeniable discontent with Dolores in a particularly vivid dream — very apropos.

Manifestly this is a matter I can confide to nobody. No court of law is capable of deciding such fine issues as this involves. Indeed it is something that it would be unwholesome to brood over very much even within myself. I mean to dismiss it from my mind. Meanwhile I have to go on with the complicated duties the catastrophe has thrust upon me.

4

This is going to be a very long and tedious day for me. Dolores we have arranged will be removed at midnight tonight, as secretly as possible, to the premises of Monsieur Debussy the brother-in-law of Monsieur Hunot, who will see to the pompe funébre. Until then she remains 'sealed' in her room. The duties do not immediately deploy themselves. After a certain amount of notification and making appointments things settle down to a waiting phase. I realize that my conduct must be determined largely by what Torquéstol expects of me. I think I had better not walk beyond the town and that it would become me best to stand still in front of the Calvary for a time or sit and muse in the timbered and brightly painted church. The Baroness seems disposed to waylay me and I have avoided her with difficulty several times.

My mind sits down in a state of extreme inactivity before the bare, blank fact that Dolores is dead. It is difficult to describe how flat that leaves me. However it has happened, it comes to me as an astounding thing that it has happened. And I realize, for the first time, what an immense amount of my mental activities are arrested by this fact.

Continually I have been poising myself against her for thirteen

years and particularly on these excursions when we have been together, she has been incessantly present in my mind. I have held my mind always on the alert for surprises. Always I have been thinking what will she do next? Now abruptly there is nothing more that she can do. As Madame Hunot declared I am going to miss her greatly. I am going to miss her enormously.

I suppose a man who is unexpectedly cured of some chronic disease, supposed to be incurable, might find himself in this same state, a complete disappearance of a resistance against which he has been thrusting for years...

My mind refuses to go any further now. This thing has bludgeoned me.

5

(Torquestol, September 4th, 1934)

Another enormous day has passed. A number of necessary formalities have been attended to, I have answered a monotony of interrogations and made various arrangements and decisions. It is accepted that Dolores took an overdose of Semondyle when half asleep. The question of suicide has not been raised.

Long ago Dolores, who cultivated a fear of being buried alive, had extorted a promise from me that I would have a vein opened before her interment and for this I have arranged. I have also decided to have her buried here and to erect one of those heavylooking Breton crosses of solid granite carved with a sort of Celtic tracery over her remains. It is to bear the simple words ‘Dolores, Pax’. The priest here, a young lean earnest priest, either with the idea of consoling me or to press a theological point against my possible scepticism was very urgent for the word ‘Resurgam’. But on the whole I preferred ‘Pax’ simply.

I have got my trusted notary Charles Belot to come down here from Paris to deal with the landlord, because the bill on such occasions as this is apt to be an extraordinary one. The bereaved often feel a certain indisposition to haggle after a sudden death, and hotel custom throughout the world has adjusted itself to that fact.

There is something graceless in disputing an account on the heels of a tragedy. But your lawyer deals with it in a different spirit. What has happened to me might very well happen to some needier holiday-maker and Belot will be defending not so much my purse as the widow and the fatherless.

I have arranged to sell the large blue car through an agent and with some slight difficulty I have parted from Alphonse. At first he would not take my decision seriously. 'I think Madame would have wished me to continue in your service,' he said. 'And she always admired the car - as I kept it.' I consoled him a little by giving him his uniform. He assured me he would always be available if I reconsidered my decision.

I have given all of Dolores' wardrobe to Marie, who took that as a matter of course. She too was a little disposed to doubt whether I could survive in Paris without her to keep an eye on me. But I think I can manage. The flat in Paris I shall dispose of with all its furniture; it is too large for my single needs and now it will be unbearable. I must have a pied-a-terre in Paris but I shall arrange things now in my own austerer fashion.

Bayard perplexed me for a time. He is not what I should call an endearing dog and his prospects in life were by no means happy. I thought of giving him to Marie who has always professed an admiration for him only second to that of his mistress. But when I suggested the gift to her, her immediate answer was that it would cost a small fortune to feed him because of the delicacy of his stomach, and there was something so much less than love in her eye as she regarded our panting problem that suddenly I turned against the idea. It was borne in upon me that the only proper place for him, now as ever, was at the feet of his beloved mistress. I understood for the first time in my life the sentiments that prompted the people of the ancient world to make a reverential holocaust of all the ruler's favourites when he died. I tried to get the idea over with the young priest here and the pharmacist, Monsieur and Madame Hunot and Belot when he came, and they all, after a little explanation, seemed to realize the fitness of my proposal. So Bayard will be put to sleep for ever by the vet tomorrow morning and buried unostentatiously just outside the consecrated ground. After all he must be nearly ten years

old and on the verge of obese decay. He would be unable to keep himself clean and no one now will do it for him. Marie would be a beast to him. He would lose his snuffling lordliness — smack by smack. He would become a stinking apprehensive-eyed little old dog, less and less capable of not being trodden on. This best becomes his petty dignity.

Tomorrow too Dolores will be laid to rest and my visit here which began so cheerfully will come to an end. I feel extremely undecided about my own course of action. There is really nothing going on in London or at Durthing to recall me there now. I had fixed everything in order until October. Several of my key men there are taking holidays and the new people I may want to bring in now will be out of town. Either I shall return to Paris to dismantle the flat, go back to England by way of St Malo or wire to Lettice to join me at Havre and take her for that educational tour upon the continent that my imagination has been planning at the back of my mind for her for the past year.

6

I have been turning over this manuscript. I do not know what I shall do with it. Much of it seems to me now to be hard and unjust to Dolores, and much could have been told in her favour that does not appear. But I am loth to destroy it. It is a picture of a relationship even if it is not the portrait of a person. I doubt if I ought to touch a word of it now. It would lose in sincerity what it gained in amiability. I think I will jot down some further descriptions of events here and then later on complete it or simply end it at this point. It was begun not as a story but as an essay upon happiness and in spite of this tragic interruption the main arguments remain.

It will relieve my brain from this wheel that keeps going round in it, saying over and over again, ‘Dolores is dead, and what will you do now?’ Let me biologize.

Where was I?

That idea of a multiple heredity in mankind still seems to me plausibly valid. I want to turn it over a little more in my mind. Perhaps it is true that what we call *Homo sapiens* is a confluence of

once divergent species, but also it may be that it is throwing up new mutations able to survive, mutations of a mental rather than of a physically visible sort, some of which are conceivably better adapted to the new conditions of human life that are appearing now. There may be new sorts of people dropping like the first drops of a summer shower into the world - mixing in with the old. I want to digest these ideas and experiment in stating them...

I cannot go on with that - for the present at least.

I find myself feeling abominably lonely here now. In between these interviews and arrangements and solemn last duties, I do not know what to do with myself. I have been so accustomed for the past thirteen years to subordinate my movements to the aggressions of Dolores that I seem to have lost the power of entirely spontaneous movement altogether. Torquestol evidently thinks I ought to lead a sort of suspended existence, to pace the town rather than walk about it and avert my eyes from anything in the least degree amusing. Brittany, we must remember, takes life in general and death in particular more seriously than any other province in Europe.

I stalk slowly and gloomily out of the town and it is only after a walk of a kilometre or more, hands behind the back and eyes to the ground, that my natural indisposition to scandalize anybody is satisfied. Then I brisk up, put my hands in my pockets, whistle and accost passing birds, sheep, dogs and children. My craving for companionship is so great that I spent half an hour yesterday discussing various matters of biological philosophy with a small shaggy-haired pony who stuck his head over a gate. He was taciturn but, I felt, thoroughly sound. He seemed to be as much in the mood for company as I was.

Queer beast you are, I thought; my cousin many million times removed. Yet bone for bone except for a canine tooth or so, this long hammer-head of yours corresponds with mine. Your cranium has a brain, so like mine that if it were dissected out and put in a bottle of spirits with its nerves cut off many non-medical people would guess it was human. Your cranial nerves, your facial and pneumogastric and all the rest of them, spread to the very pattern of mine except for slight differences of scale and proportion because of this long jowl of yours. They behave, I am sure, in the same way. You flick your ears

with a vigour I envy, and your bold outstanding eye has an inspeculative glow far beyond any of my recessed expressions. And you wear your hair all down your neck instead of on top like mine. Hence straw hats for horses. Hairy you are, but you are free to call me bald-faced; and your cheek and neck were made for stroking. You are capable of all this frank mute friendliness, and had I an apple in my pocket for you our confidence and understanding would be complete. How far can you go in the way of my perplexities? 'Such is life,' you seem to say. 'Not bad in the air and sunshine.'

On the whole I am inclined to agree. Compared with me your simplicity is stupendous. You have a cerebrum, as capable of storing memories as mine and not so tremendously smaller. But what do you do with it? Your memory of routes and places is said to be remarkable by all human standards. Your grey matter is a magnificent big-scale road map. Apart from that, does it all lie fallow inside there?

You ought to be very teachable. Your brain must have a wealth of undeveloped regions. How do you associate your ideas, such as they are? Either you underwork that brain of yours scandalously or I overwork mine. I'm all symbols, word-symbols and complicated intercommunications of which you don't begin to have an idea. If your way of linking cell to cell is like a messenger going from one to the other, mine is like the telephone exchange of a big city. If you meet another pony, you see it and smell it and touch it, whinny and so forth and get your straightforward idea of what it means to you, but when I meet another human being or write or telegraph, I call up a whole world of ideas in a blaze of detail by the suggestion of a few words. And then more. The phrases bubble up and multiply like scum in a boiling pot and in a little while I neither know what the other people mean to me nor what I mean to myself. I doubt if you think about yourself at all. You just see, hear, smell, and feel directly and then you react. You never think 'I am' and still less do you think 'I ought to be'.

But I am one of these thinking beasts who have been afflicting the world and ourselves for the last few hundred thousand years or so. We have got a new thinking and cooperating apparatus called language and in some ways it has proved remarkably efficient. That

is why you are in a paddock and rather bored instead of being out upon a prairie. That is why you have to stick your head over the top of this gate which you haven't the wit to open, in order to talk to me. You stay where you're put and go where we drive you. I am in the habit of assuming that we are able to do this to you by using our brains, but at the back of my mind there is a curious doubt stirring, whether we do really use our brains or whether they use us. At times it seems as though they have usurped control of the simple apes we used to be. They are very much out of control. They are for ever nagging us to know what we are doing with ourselves and with the rest of you living creatures whose fates are in our hands These brains of ours I can assure you won't leave us alone. They have taken to inventing things and the things they invent are often quite unmanageable. Do you know what it is to have a sleepless night? Does the man use the brain then or the brain the man? You may be man-rid, but I am brain-rid. And as uncertain of the journey ahead.

I put this new idea to my pony something after that fashion. All we mammals have been accumulating brains quite beyond our immediate needs, we have accumulated them indeed through our individual need to survive, but now suddenly with speech and writing and computation and record and communications, these brains break out from their original immediate preoccupations, get into touch, stimulate one another, react upon and enhance one another so that now we human beings are all floated off our private feet and out of our private holes and corners, into a sort of common mind, which produces inventions, novel ideas of conduct, collective guiding ideas. Our brains have run away with us and seem to be pooling themselves over us. We cease to be exclusively ourselves. You are a pony and there your brain begins and ends, but I am Stephen Wilbeck mixed up with all those other people past and present who have given way to ideas. Perhaps you would like me to tell you more about that. There have been stages, you must understand, in this usurpation of the brain, since it woke up from the limited unaggressive usefulness of your intelligence. One could write a sort of history of the rise of the Brain Empire in the Animal World. First the brain discovered individuality and concentrated itself about itself to produce the furious egotism of the Dolores stage of human

progress — you will understand that, my dear pony, as well as anything else I am saying to you - and then secondly came the realization of a possible collective mind, a New Deal altogether, and the brain began to launch these attacks against egotism which we call religion, science and philosophy. First the evolution of the conscious brain gathered *Homo* up into an individual egotism like a clenched fist, and then it (Nature or the Life Force or what you will) seemed to realize it had gone too far and turned upon itself. And so we have our moral conflict.

And then I told that pony, or else I took it for granted that he knew, all about Dolores and myself, how incompatible we had been, how we were really of different species or at least different grades in mental development, and how my life for thirteen years had been yoked indissolubly to her inaccessible, irresponsive ego. 'And suddenly,' I said, patting him, 'suddenly and unreasonably it is over.'

In very much that fashion I thought and even at times spoke to this friendly pony, patting him ever and again or stroking his nose softly. 'And now what do you think I ought to be doing?' I said. 'Forget about it, eh? Forget those thirteen years? That would be your way. If I opened this gate for you now, out you would trot. Leaving the paddock behind you. Into the open road and down towards the heather there, clatter clop - and Heaven knows what would happen to you! You'd sniff the air. You'd have a sort of prancing expectation. But as for the past!...

'Well — my gate is open now...

'Do they put you in a cart? Do they ride you? How has your owner broken you in? My brain has made a responsible wagon for me, which we call a publishing business, and I dispense knowledge. But doing that job isn't all I ask for, I am not completely subdued to it, and I doubt if *you* would head at once for you cart shed. Something different from that there would be even in your elementary brain if the gate came open suddenly. Expectation. Something you want that will respond to you and make you happy. You seem as unsuited as I am for loneliness. Which is why we are hanging over this gate together.'

And so on. And while I thought and talked biological nonsense to this pony I found my plans growing clearer. Now they are quite

clear. I shall leave Torquéstol tomorrow as soon as the funeral is over. And I shall telegraph for Lettice from Morlaix. Some human company I must have; someone to bother me and fill up this vacuum Dolores has left behind her.

I feel strange and rather lost. I do not feel in the least as a widower might be supposed to feel. I am thinking very little of Dolores and very much about myself. My mood is changing slowly, recovering buoyancy. Yesterday I was completely inert. I felt like a stone. Today I feel rather more like a new-laid egg.

As though thus far my life has consisted chiefly in getting laid. I am looking forward to a personal future that except for the expanding interest of my work, persists in remaining entirely blank of intention or any shape of desire.

7

(Torquestol, September 5th, 1934)

I have half an hour before I need lock my bags. Everything is over. On the bed sprawl various crumpled black garments, about which I suppose I ought to tell something. Although it is just the sort of thing I should like to tell about anyone else and which I hate to tell about myself.

There was, you see, a little crisis at the last moment, due to an odd negligence on my part. It was a queer little clash between the new world and the old. I realized my default only when Belot arrived. He was dressed in black from top to toe, crape round his bowler hat, black gloves! He carried a small parcel beside his valise, a black-edged paper bag. An expression of scandalized dismay spread over his candid round face at the sight of me.

'Mais M'sieu. Votre deuil!'

'Gods!' I cried. 'Of course!'

Here was Torquestol with every shop with a shutter up or a blind down, out of respect to my desolation, and I was going about and had intended to go to the funeral in a grey tourist suit and a trilby hat. I looked at my watch and made my plans very rapidly. 'Twenty-five minutes,' said I, 'and we dare not walk too fast. Come.'

I went in vast wide slow strides so as to get to the draper's as quickly as possible while keeping up the solemnity of the occasion. That at any rate was what I was trying to do. I felt I undulated. 'What do you think we can buy?' I gasped. Belot being much shorter than I trotted beside me. 'I *had* thought of a new cravat for M'sieu and gloves! Mais — !'

'They will have ready-made clothes,' I said — but there I was over-hopeful. Torquestol goes for its clothes by bus to Chavonet.

Belot was marvellous in the shop. He explained matters in exactly the right way. 'M'sieu est devenu fou de chagrin. Pas de deuil! et le cortege part dans une demi-heure! Que faire?'

The little old general dealer was splendid. There were no difficulties. Nothing but help. But also there were no clothes. She was swift, excited, but impeccably funereal and understanding. Everything in the half-light of the semi-closed shop was done in hushed undertones or without any words whatever. It was the most extraordinary prelude to a funeral. Somehow my worldliness had to be blacked out. A kind of exaltation was upon us all. She would have a sudden thought, put a finger on her lips, rush off and reappear with a large piece of black silk, magnificent black silk. 'Non?'

Not a black complet in stock? No. Only an assortment of coloured corduroy trousers, gloomily coloured but still coloured. But surely in some manner the cloth might be draped about M'sieu and pinned!

I had a bright idea, 'Monsieur Debussy! Comment s'appelle cet homme? Fournisseur des pompes funébres? A cote. Peut-etre aura-t-il des pantalons noirs supplementaires!'

'Parfait!' cried Belot. 'Magnifique!' He darted off to the undertaker's next door and returned triumphant in a trice with a large frock coat, a black sash, a tri-colour sash and trousers enough for an octopod. These he cast about before me.

'V'la un choix de pantalons! Monsieur Debussy a une certaine grandeur, mais -!'

But the reserve frock coat of M. Debussy proved impossibly ample.

Nevertheless the cortege was only five minutes late in starting and I took my proper place in the procession in a costume acceptable to Torquéstol standards. We had got quite a passable Breton hat, a

young buck's black hat, a modernized towny shape and not too ample in the brim, and round that after extracting a rakish grouse feather we had put a band of crape. Over my waistcoat I wore a sort of soutane overcoat buttoned about me rather tightly, a loan from the housekeeper of the young cure; this was made the more binding by the black sash, and the pantalons supplementaires concertinaed only very slightly. The grandeur of M. Debussy was a grandeur largely of the body and that part of the pantalon could be tucked and folded away. My brown boots were blackened by Debussy's bonne a tout faire with a whole tinful of blacking. When I had got them on my hands too were in mourning. Belot proffered gloves - roomy gloves but they did the job. *Time!* I took one look at myself in the shop mirror. I looked an unmitigated scoundrel. I looked like the villain in a Victorian melodrama. But I was, it seems, correct. Passably correct. And there was no going back now.

I reached the hotel just in time to kill a rumour that I had destroyed myself. Amazement gave place to intelligent sympathy as a certain oddity about me was explained. 'Fou de chagrin.'

'Le pauvre Monsieur.' I was guided to my place promptly but very sympathetically. Off we went.

I had to control a strong impulse to bolt. I was out of breath and in a state of farcical excitement by that time, but Belot carried on through the whole business like a court functionary. The more preposterous a detail, the more correct he made it seem and the more reassuring were his gestures to me. Should I ever be able to walk with the grandeur of M. Debussy pleated about me? Something seemed to be shifting. I clasped a loose- gloved black hand upon my stomach as gracefully as possible. Parfait. I walked, stooping slightly, hand below my heart. My imagination rioted with what might happen if I withdrew my hand. If I did so -? If I bolted. But how could I bolt entangled in those trousers? I felt the intent gaze of the bystanders upon me. I resisted the impulse to provide still further tests for their immense gravity. It was so fantastic that for a time I crossed the verge of hysteria. I gasped like one about to sneeze. I met Belot's anxious eye, by no means sure of me. I felt that at any moment I might shout with laughter. I pulled out my handkerchief with my free hand and sobbed for breath and then giggled into it. I

found my eyes bedewed. That was better. I sobered down. I relaxed upon the waist and it still held.

Already as I write I am forgetting these emotional phases. They are already queer and unaccountable to me. They are becoming distorted. They do not flow into one another; they lie like jagged fragments in my mind. For a time, I know, I felt extravagantly apologetic to Dolores, ahead there in the coffin. This ought not to have happened anyhow. I was sincerely ashamed of myself. I ought to have thought of the mourning. It was so unfair to her, so acutely unfair - to treat her like this upon her last social occasion. This comic deuil and all the rest of it was like making faces behind her defeat. I had been taken by surprise. Far better the callousness of the grey suit. A crape brassard would have been more than sufficient. I did not like doing something she would have hated, which but for this pitiless immobilization that has seized her, would have made her thrust the coffin-lid aside and scream reprisals at me.

Incredible indeed that she was not already sitting up and sweeping us all away in a torrent of vituperation. Meanwhile by a sort of inertia the funeral I knew would go on. Nothing I felt could deflect its grave inevitability. In Bretagne, however the corpse behaves, a funeral is a funeral. The idea of Dolores sitting up and talking at her own funeral cut capers in my imagination. I began to think of things she might have said. Tremendous things. I thought of her expression when her eye caught mine and she saw my mourning. Was I chic? Was this chic? She who had always been so chic. I should answer back. A violent altercation en route. How the devil could one be chic in trousers like this? She would appeal as ever to the audience. Did they think a woman of her birth and breeding should consent to be buried like this? She would rehearse a fresh version of her autobiography. Then she would turn to the young cure already rather puzzled and amazed...

In some such way, if not exactly in that way, my thoughts misbehaved. I think that suddenly I shouted ‘Hah!’

I clapped my handkerchief to my face and that second momentary impulse to laughter passed. A grave little girl walking demurely by the side of the cortege made a prim mental note of this detail of grief a l’anglaise.

My mind turned over. This hysteria was frightful. It was ugly beyond words. It came to me that it was extravagantly pitiful Dolores could not cut a figure at her own interment. Not at all funny. Cruel. There could never be any more fluent self explanations, self-vindications for her, now for ever. Henceforth she would lose her case by default, in silence. I thought of her stillness and my heart ached for her. Poor extravagant Dolores! Whose one outlet of living has been a torrent of self-exposition.

She was inside there *gagged.* I seemed to hear her: 'Let me speak, Steenie, let me speak.' I wished I could have let her speak. Maybe it would not have been so very outrageous. She was not always outrageous. Her mischiefs and meannesses went out of the picture. Her passion to hurt and injure became now merely silly. At times she had been delightfully absurd. Perhaps I had been unreasonably impatient with her. After all had any insult of hers really hurt me? How endearingly ridiculous she had been at Roscoff...

I began to think of her best moments and to forget all the rest. Tenderness followed pity. To my utmost amazement, I wept. I wept simply and genuinely for that intolerable woman! And because she was silent!

By the time we reached the cemetery these crazy oscillations of mind and nerves were subsiding and soon I had myself entirely under control. I did all that was expected of me with apathetic correctitude.

CHAPTER SIX

Lettice and Aphrodite

(Nantes, September 25th, 1934)

I find that I have not touched this manuscript for three weeks. While I was at Torquestol everything insisted on my writing; there was nothing else to do. My room and my speculations about Dolores and happiness and life generally were a refuge from the deadliest boredom. I seemed to have done every possible walk about the place. I took Dolores for excursions but that did not constitute a whole-time job. She spent some hours on her toilet and she read in bed. There was my room and there was a desk and there was all that unavoidable leisure. Anyone might become an author in such circumstances.

I had to stick it at Torquestol. I had been cheating Dolores of my presence in France for some time, she was in a state of nervous disorder and I had determined to give her a fair four weeks at least of holiday.

My successive entries have recorded how this determination worked out. I had intended to tranquillize her indeed, but not so completely as I seem to have done.

For the past three weeks I have been going about with Lettice, but that I will write about presently. Lettice has recently struck up a friendship with a small carful of people from the Portsmouth district, Bunnington the name is, a mother, son and two daughters whose route has interlaced with ours; common interests have developed, a standing joke or so laces their intercourse, and they have, so to speak, taken her off my hands and gone with her to the Castle and to the Museum of Beaux- Arts. Then they will lunch at some place starred and recommended near the river and then do the Cathedral. It seems a good stiff day of earnest rather than penetrating sightseeing they are in for. In the evening I shall dine with them and send them off to a cinema with my blessing. This room in this hotel has just the lighting and furniture conducive to writing. Its chairs are sympathetic without being soporific. It has an attractive desk, lit if necessary by a bright,

low, shaded light.

But if so far I have not written since Torquestol I have been turning over matters in my mind. And one or two things have happened — one thing in particular... But that I will come to in its place. Until it happened and partly dislodged her, Dolores remained the central reality in my meditations. My brain insisted upon it. My attempt to distract my attention by an educational tour of Brittany with Lettice has proved quite unsuccessful. Nobody could keep interested in an educational tour with Lettice. Dolores had an undeniably emphatic personality and Lettice is by comparison pallid and ineffective, and Dolores had thirteen years, and very central years they were, of my life, in which to make her impression.

Perhaps I shall never have that much intensity of impression of any human being again. I have known her close and frank and all ways up and beyond all pretending. In my exploration of myself and human life, she has to be my chief material now. My chief objective material. Perhaps I know her all the more distinctly because I always to a certain extent disliked her. Even when I was physically in love with her. That drew the lines sharper. Marriage flings us poor human beings under each other's noses like rabbits slapped down in a biological laboratory. Only continually it is the same rabbit. It is moreover a reciprocal rabbit and the dissector also finds himself dissected. And even after the rabbit has been removed the mind still works upon its memory.

Let me recapitulate these laboratory notes of mine and see how I have travelled. I started off at Portumere with a comparison between extrovert and introvert minds. I was extrovert and by implication Dolores was not. But that was right off the mark. I am extrovert and introvert as the mood comes or goes, and so was Dolores. On the whole she was I think more extrovert than I.

But while she always related what she saw to herself as directly as possible, as a child wants to handle and play with and appropriate anything that attracts its notice, I had a much more elaborate and self-protective trick of observant detachment. There I think I arrived at a real difference.

And going on from that I developed an idea of grades or species of detachment. Was this difference between us acquired or innate? I

tried over the idea that it was innate, that there were species of mind with interests so completely concentrated on the conscious self that they could do nothing good or bad without seeing themselves in the centre of the picture, and other minds without any such complete convergence of reference, so that they could think and even at times act with complete self- forgetfulness. The characteristics of these types could be masked or qualified by culture, but essentially they were innate.

Pursuing our inquiry, said the professor, we discussed and dismissed the idea that there was a sexual difference here. Both sexes may easily misunderstand this situation, because the ego- centred man or woman is likely to strike more vividly and disagreeably upon the attention of the other sex than the decentralized type. Allowing for that, the difference we are investigating is a specific and not a sexual one. Ego-centred men and women are in a class together and so are decentralized men and women.

But whether men or women predominate in either class is an issue I leave open.

A question that has been exercising me since I picked up Lettice for this tour, is whether the opposition of these types has anything to do with moral or religious standards. Was Dolores *bad* and am I *good?* — except maybe for a slight slip with a tube of tabloids. I ask that question because since we left St Malo I have experienced quite a surfeit of churches, crosses, altars, shrines, calvaries, former convents and saintly legends. Brittany is a religious country just as Bengal is a religious country, and its inhabitants are much concerned with the things that are commonly called 'spiritual'. This 'spiritual' is forced upon one.

But what are these things called spiritual? I have stood or sat as silently as possible and watched almost immobile solitary praying figures for big fractions of an hour at a time and tried to fathom what they could be praying about, I have seen women flitting into confessionals, watched the priests going with a sort of shuffling noiselessness about their sacred functions, seen candles lit and candles extinguished beyond number, listened to masses, both closely and far off, heard the organ pealing and the choir boys singing. I have bought and read various small books of devotion and

several lives of sometimes charming and sometimes perfectly disgusting saints. Spirituality I could not find in it, only pious magic and a superstitious materialism. I am left asking has all this religious business, this so-called spirituality, anything at all to do with this fundamental question of the centralization or decentralization of the ego?

Most properly grown-up people asked that at a venture would answer incontinently that it had, that here was the clue, if only I would avail myself of it, to all my questionings. But is it a clue at all? Dolores for example had a religious phase of some intensity before she met me. She had thought of taking to the religious life and becoming the Bride of Christ. But her craving to be the centre of attention was if anything stimulated rather than subdued by the idea of taking Heaven by storm. Her devotion did not move her one jot from her egotism, and as she resented more and more the entire lack of exclusive reciprocal emotion on the part of the Bridegroom, his spiritual promiscuity so to speak, she turned her attention to her confessor. The unfortunate man reciprocated slightly, kissed her on the forehead, kissed her on the cheeks and kissed her lips and then repented and confessed. Which brought her religious career to an abrupt conclusion.

My interest in religion is that of a complete outsider. My father seems to have mislaid his faith early in his life, and I did not receive the advantage or disadvantage of definite religious instruction. 'Bias' was what my father called it, excluding the issue of advantage or disadvantage altogether, and his only definite action in the matter was to warn me elaborately against what he called the 'false opposition' of material and spiritual. He would expatiate upon that 'unjustifiable distinction between the worldly and the spiritual - between the flesh and the spirit' which is based, he declared, on the rude assumptions of a primitive physics about substance and essence. There was, he insisted, even to a rare pitch of emphasis, no such dualism. Assuming it, he said, was the mental Fall of Man. It was the key error of our race. Most people learnt it with language and never suspected the twist they had been given. Statements without the twist were simply inexplicable to them.

'Oh! Beware of that word "spiritual",' said my father. 'It's a

buttered slide. It means nothing and like all completely empty words, it is a deadly trap for any but the most wary and penetrating intelligences... *You,* my boy, I warn.'

The older I grow the more I grow up to my father. I realize that I inherit much more than a well-organized business from him and that a large part of what I used to regard as my own personal thinking is really his insidious heredity. Even my thoughts about the social functions of the business I realize were also his. He had never bothered to explain. If I thought like that I should think like that. Precept would not help. Except for that fundamental warning.

It was the dream of his life to edit the Epistles of St Paul, whom he regarded as the cardinal exponent of this unfortunate dichotomy in human thought so far as the western world is concerned.

Since then I have read and re-read St Paul with considerable interest; I have been reading him in the past three weeks to see how far he was concerned, as I suspect he was, with just this distinction between ego-centred and non ego-centred types, how far he was feeling his way round and about this contrast in human motivation that has been occupying me. For that is the problem we all come to when our minds grow' out of ready-made clothing; the escape from the personal preoccupation, the 'body of this death'. More of us are exercised by it today than ever before.

I like St Paul. I have always liked his mental quality. There was something conscientiously evasive about him that I find very congenial. An exploring mind must not fix itself into over- definite phrases. You cannot say a thing plain until you see it plain. Once hit in a brain storm by an extravagant idea and carried away by it, Paul was thereafter very shy of it. He had jumped to the conclusion that he could rehabilitate Messianism by associating it with Mithraistic sacrifice. He had committed the fatal error of trying to put the new wine of his thoughts into old bottles, into the old phrases of Messianistic hope and the Mithraists' blood bath. But he had launched himself upon the career of an apostle of a revised new faith, from which it was hard to retreat.

As the first vehement lucidity of his conception of salvation wore off, he evidently lived a life of intense brain-searching trying to recover it. The Epistles to the Galatians, the Hebrews, the

Corinthians, are so plainly discussions with himself. He projects his doubts as errors in other people and reproves them. I wish he had been at Torquéstol last month instead of that misogynist fisherman. We should have argued with a passionate inconclusiveness.

His ingenious dodging away from any endorsement of bodily and even personal immortality in his first Epistle to the Corinthians is a perfect example of that hoodwinking of the passionate inattentive disciples to which men of our quality are prone. We have a cowardly dread of destroying their confidence in us. They settle down so happily in what has been said and we lack the heart to tell them that on the long long march towards truth there are still uncounted miles to go and not always straight miles at that. Millions of the faithful must have heard and read that stuff and believed he was saying the exact opposite of what he says. How little they have heeded his metaphors! It has been made part of the burial service, when feeling overrides thought, but even so -!

His Epistles are indeed an admirable record of just such intellectual tumblings as ours of today. His riddles are the same. His Old Adam and New Adam are, I am convinced, my *Homo regardant* and *Homo rampant,* overlapping one another. But he believed with obstinate assurance that by some magic of conversion one could be changed into the other. And that one was *good* and the other *bad.*

That is where I differ from him. It is a question for judgment and observation. Did he ever know any human being as exhaustively as I knew Dolores? Did he know himself as I am beginning to know myself? Nothing short of Semondyle, I am convinced, could have released Dolores from her absolute concentration upon her ego, and nothing whatever justifies any belief that I am higher or better in any way than she was. We were profoundly different, that is all. She belonged by nature to a world that is manifestly working out its own destruction by excesses of acquisition, assertion and malice, and I, to the best of my knowledge and belief, belong to a new, less acutely concentrated world that may or may not be able to emerge — wriggle out rather than emerge — from the ruins and survive.

Nevertheless St Paul, allowing for his times, allowing for the elementariness of his metaphysics and his innocence of any biological conceptions whatever, allowing for his obsession with

politico-social Messianistic theories and particularly with the brooding expectation of a Second Coming, was I find a very congenial intelligence indeed.

And even that Second Coming idea which gave a form to a widespread realization of the instability of the Roman Empire, was not in its quality so very remote from the pervading apprehension we have in our world today, of some imminent vast change - world revolution, the final war catastrophe, we have no phrase for it — after which we, too, try to anticipate the Spirit of Man returning to earth in all its glory...

For no particular reason...

What, after all, is my *Way of the World* series if it is not Messianic? Messianic without a Messiah — or rather with an epidemic of star-begotten New Adams.

So far as practical vision went St Paul certainly saw the world very much as I see it, even if he saw it from a different standpoint and so interpreted it differently; he argued his thoughts out frankly like a gentleman, side-stepping a complication now and then but never denying it; and I am sure if he had been with us in this little tour we have made from St Malo to Mont St Michel and back by Morlaix to Brest and Plougastel and Quimper and amidst the grizzled elders of Carnac and Ménec and so hither to Nantes, he would have gone into the churches with me in an entire brotherly fashion and wondered as much as I did, what all the blue and red timbering and quaint images - so plainly dedicated to Isis, Star of the Sea, and the infant Horus, had to do with that taming and controlling of the self-concentrated soul which in spite of the theological distortions of his mind, is, I insist, the central problem in his Epistles.

The crucifix he would have recognized and that would have interested him. But its common use in exorcism would have puzzled him. His symbol man's resurrection from the carnal self has become a purely materialistic weapon here, all blood and tears, a piece of sadistic luck invocation. 'But the *Resurrection?*' he would have asked. 'How do they symbolize that?'

'Like a gentleman who has just done a conjuring trick,' I should say. 'Up he goes extending demostrative hands. After which the meeting, never having realized any internal need for a resurrection at

all, disperses.'

It would have been worthwhile to have taken him to the great calvary at Plougastel and gone over the whole legend of Christianity with him there and see how much of it he recognized. 'What are these *Gospels* you keep quoting?' he would have said. 'I never heard of them.'

I suppose it would offend most Christians beyond measure to tell them suddenly that St Paul had never read the Gospels. Just as it is an outrage to point out that Shakespeare burlesques him in the most disrespectfully familiar manner in Bottom's speech after his dream. We never mention it. But I decline to make Paul a sacred figure. He was too good for that. If these Christians would only do less reverential gasping and more intelligent bible- reading, how much more lucid their minds would be! When Matthew Arnold tried to make the Anglicans cerebrate he had to invoke St Paul. What other of these founder saints has had the vitality to be contemporary age after age?

But Plougastel would have made him open his eyes.

I imagine him with his bandy legs apart, a short and sturdy figure he was, according to that second-century record, the *Acts of Paul,* and for the life of me I cannot resist endowing him with plus-fours, lapping a golfing cap on his bald head and pulling it down over his 'slightly prominent nose'.

'That is your friend St Peter,' I should point out rather tactlessly. 'And there you see him again. And there!...'

'Yes, yes,' he would say, a little impatiently. 'I see. I see. I *knew* Peter. Quite well. Almost the only one of the Jerusalem group I knew. A very reasonable man to deal with.'

And his eyes under those confluent eyebrows of his and under the peak of his cap, would wander in an unsatisfied search over the stony multitude and at last come to rest in reproachful inquiry on me.

But there are very few signs of respect for St Paul in Brittany. St Paul when he does turn up - usually as St Pol - is St Paul Aurelian, a magical Welshman of no intellectual significance whatever.

This green and grey Brittany, this land of softly rounded granite, is a very old-fashioned land indeed, dreaming of past enchantments and with no thought whatever for a new world of things incredible, a

futuristic world which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered yet into the mind of man to conceive — wherein we shall all be members of one body - and so forth. These Bretons would almost as soon subscribe to my *Way of the World* series as read St Paul. He and I are fellow moderns here; both of us entirely out of this Celtic dream of existence.

But I hear Lettice tripping along the passage to her room and in a minute or so she will be tapping at my door.

'Tea-ee,' she will say; 'Daddly-dear. I want my tea.'

She has said that quite several times already and I believe that originally she devised the formula and intonation for the benefit of George Hoopler.

'Tea-ee.'

This section is not what I sat down to write at all.

I was going to write about something that has happened to me quite recently and I have wandered away from it. St Paul was the last person I expected would come into my head. For I had intended to write about falling in love. I must try again after dinner.

2

(Nantes. Evening of the Same Day. September 25th, 1934)

I wonder now why I sent for Lettice.

I think that after Dolores' death I had a sort of panic of loneliness. I do not know how it may be with older people but from the cradle up to the forties at any rate, the routine of the common day for ordinary human beings is a series of close contacts with and reactions to other individuals. Night and day there is this closeness for most of us. Nowadays perhaps there is more sleeping alone than there ever was before, more people paint or write or study or do their business alone, thanks largely perhaps to increased lighting and heating and ampler housing. But instinct is still for intimate association.

And like all instincts, when this instinct for association goes unsatisfied or imperfectly satisfied it conjures up dreams and reverie. Just as the starving think of feasts, and just as lost men in forest and rain conjure up the vision of a door opening into a lit warm interior.

And it is clear now to me that for some years my imagination has been making its subtle protests against the hard intellectualism and business concentration of my work in England and the alien circumstances of my married life. I have established a certain number of respect-friendships in England, alliances and co-operations and so forth, but what this suggestion corner of my brain, around which the dreams float and the reveries are born, what it has always pressed me towards has been something closer, in which miracles of natural understanding were to be interwoven inextricably with the incessant contacts of everyday affairs.

And it was perfectly natural for the reverie factory in my very normal heterosexual brain to embody this intimacy in a feminine personality, and for me to develop the idea of a close and distinctive association with this lost daughter of mine as soon as the resumption of relations occurred to me. I was romantically excited about her. I suspect now that most childless people have exaggerated ideas of the amount of natural understanding between parents and children. In the matter of accumulations and discharges of nervous energy, moods, fits of temper, muscular co-ordinations and so forth, there may be close affinities in a family, but acquired habits of behaviour and determining intellectual forms accumulate so rapidly and are so independent of heredity as to make that fundamental stuff between them relatively unimportant. Normal people are made and not born and gifts and talents avail little without the cooperation of opportunity.

The story of these last weeks is a comedy of disillusionment. It began with myself on the quay at St Malo awaiting the arrival of the Southampton boat. I stood like a lover, scrutinizing the clustering little dark figures that were growing by imperceptible degrees into recognizable human beings. At last one could distinguish garments and features. And then suddenly I saw standing up far forward on a seat or something that raised her above the others, a slender young woman waving to me, with her black skirts and her black cloak whipping away from her like the tail of a half-furled flag. My daughter! She was in mourning! For a moment I was puzzled and then I remembered. Alice of course had seen to that.

Now I had already seen and talked to this young woman a score of

times and there was no justification whatever for any illusions about her, and yet so powerful was the wish in me that my heart beat fast as I waved back to her.

She landed. The black gave a gravity to her pretty youthfulness. She met me with a certain intimation of sympathetic sadness that passed when we kissed. I asked about Alice and Hoopler but nothing was said of Dolores. It was too difficult. There was the black dress and we drooped a bit and that was that. I guided her through the easy informalities of the tourist customs and we lunched in a pleasant restaurant I had marked down for her, where she squealed suddenly with delight because everything was 'so *French*'.

And then became meek again. I packed her and her belongings into my car and took her to Mont St Michel where I had engaged rooms in the hotel.

'Lovely!' she said at the first sight of the mount, and she continued to say it at intervals along the coast road and across the sunlit causeway until our reception at the little hotel. It was quite the right expression. The sands, the blue sea, the great pile in the warm afternoon sunlight were at their best and altogether lovely. We spent the night on the island and walked out in the moonlight— 'Lovely', she said to the moonlit sea and 'Lovely' to the quite exceptionally good omelets we were given at dinner — and then we turned west again by St Brieuc and Guingamp to Morlaix with its lovely spiral staircase and its lovely viaduct. And for four or five days I talked to her, I talked my best about everything under the sun in the firm belief that she would presently stop answering me in single words and break out wonderfully with the completest response and understanding.

I am trying to recall some of the subjects of that instructive monologue. I see now that my expectation of response was fantastic. But my need to feel that I was imposing some sort of picture of myself, my purposes and my world on someone, was so strong then as to blind me to the absurdity of what I was doing. As I look back upon it I am reminded rather disagreeably of how I sat jeering silently in the inn garden by the Loire while Dolores expanded herself for the admiration of Marguerite Benniel within. The parallelism may not be exact but it is disconcertingly close. I was

certainly under the sway of a desire to make Lettice into a devoted daughter-disciple.

Among other topics I recall myself discoursing upon, was the green Celtic world. I tried to imagine something of that ancient order of things when it was less dangerous to journey by a little coasting ship than to travel eastward through the pathless forests and river swamps and morasses and hostilities and ambushes of the land. Ireland, Wales, Cornwall and this Breton country were then all in a thin but very real and sympathetic community. It spoke what was practically a common language; it had a common culture. Its saints and apostles came from Wales and Ireland. Rome had receded to an inaccessible distance and Jerusalem was in fairy-land. I tried to picture this forgotten world of the fifth and sixth centuries with its trading and its coming and going, its Merlin and its saints and its kings, and how gradually the Northmen from the east, the English and the Normans and later the French, pressed westward aggressively and broke up its united isolation. And I talked too of the widening breach that developed between the English and the French as the inland roads began to operate so that the Channel ceased to be a highway and became relatively a frontier, and of all the invasions and sieges and sea battles that ensued from that. Gradually as ships grew stouter and seamanship bolder, the Atlantic came into the story. I was struck by a realization that if there had been no Columbus, the men of Devon and the men of Brittany would still have been in America in a century or so. There would still have been French fishermen in Newfoundland and pilgrim fathers in New England. We overrate Columbus. The Irish discovered America and made it incredible the way they told about it; Canute's seamen discovered America; the Chinese and Japanese discovered America several times; the Icelanders never knew it was undiscovered; America was always being discovered, but the broad strands of a conclusive contact with North America spread out from either side of the Manche.

With such thoughts as these I regaled Lettice.

I remember, too, various attempts to picture the costumes and common events of the past at Mont St Michel, St Malo, St Brieuc and elsewhere. They sounded more and more like educational radio

talks as I delivered them. I tried to make the old crowds of those narrow streets live again, so like ourselves and so different. All of them driving forward towards old age and death, but almost completely unaware of any drift of change as they went about their various businesses. It is not only perspective that makes their lives seem little to us. They had no sense of fundamental change. They thought their Armorica would last for ever and it passed; they thought their dukedom of Brittany could have no end. The wars of the French and English seemed to be in the gallant nature of things, and where is that warfare now? And then I think I said a lot about life and the giant changes about us and what a great thing it was to be entering upon life nowadays, when it dawns upon us that we too may play a part in the unfolding of the future. I told how life had come to me and opened out before my eyes. I talked of my expectations and ambitions. I made reflections and digressions. You have had this book to read and you must know by now how abundantly I reflect and digress. I speculated about what was ahead for me in life and what was ahead for her. Where should we be in twenty years' time? What should we have done then and what should we be doing?

'I shall be thirty-nine years old then,' she said, making an arithmetical effort. 'I'll *hate* it.'

'Not so much as you think,' I said.

And meanwhile the car carried us along through the clean clear western sunshine, we stopped by the wayside to pick flowers, we descended for meals and for churches and menhirs and show places, we watched fellow travellers, we slept in prim clean little hotels...

Then my faculty of observation — I first became aware that the thing was back when we were going about Morlaix - came on duty again firmly but unobtrusively. I noted a change in my manner. I was swinging slowly from a phase of self-expression about my world and my outlook and the changes and the meaning of life and so forth to my extrovert phase. I was becoming aware of what I was doing and the absurdity of it. For a time I went on with the previous topics very much as before, but now self-consciously, with an eye on her and with little phrases of provocation and irony creeping into my discourse. And before we got to Brest I had ceased to talk at her at all, and our intercourse varied between long silences, times when I

talked aloud to myself heedless of the effect upon her, and times when I questioned her and drew her out sometimes directly and sometimes subtly about herself.

Never in my life have I had to do with such a recessive conversationalist as Lettice. She has a power of not seeing, not hearing, not heeding anything about her, that exercises me enormously. All the time she seems to be defending some hidden inner life, some secret system of standards, from the invasion of alien facts, novel suggestions, additions, extensions. At any time when she is not actually being called upon for response, she seems to lapse into reverie. When she is talked to directly, she has a way of looking thoughtful and uttering a remarkably useful word, quite new to me, 'Urm'. It parries almost anything. It is a complete rejection of further questioning. It signifies, 'I know enough, thank you'.

She stood out against the sky on a cliff overlooking Quiberon Bay. 'There,' I said, 'round that headland Hawke's fleet appeared and caught the French napping. Can't you see them sailing in?'

She looked under her hand at nothing in particular and said, 'Urm'.

'But the British had a rough time here sixteen years later.'

'Urm,' very softly.

'There has been endless fighting here. Caesar fought a battle here, galleys against sails.'

She was plainly distressed. She hadn't another 'Urm' in stock. Why drag in Caesar? It was sufficiently difficult to look at this broad scene in the sunshine, without plastering it with three layers of invisible facts. Probably she felt she ought to look across the bay a little differently for Caesar and for Hawke and for the emigres, and she didn't know how. It was just the same old sunlit bay. To a multitude of tourists historical associations must be an unmitigated nuisance. They are to Lettice. Every sort of association seems to bother her. 'Doesn't that boat down there look *little!*' she remarked suddenly.

'It is a little boat.'

'But it looks so teeny, I mean.'

'It is a way little boats have. Especially when they are far off. That boat must be a mile away or more.'

‘Urm.’ The effort to take notice and change the subject had spent itself. She made to descend.

She has an absolute absence of curiosity about the past or the future or whatever is above or below the visible things of the present. At first I thought her tremendous irresponsiveness was due to a need she might have felt at home to defend herself against Hoopler’s very difficult style of conversation. But I found that it is much more than that. She was not protecting any living mental process against irrelevance. She is not so to speak seeing and thinking for herself and fending off distracting direction and pompous ill-directed instruction. She is just not seeing or thinking about external things at all. They are too much for her. This world which is a feast to me, for her is the menace of a stupendous indigestion. She says ‘No thank you’ to all of it and reverts to something within.

Only once on this journey have I seen her roused to a vivid exterior interest. This country is laced with little old-fashioned light railways which wind about among the granite hills, and suddenly as I drove along an undulating lonely road the rocky ground about us fell away and one of these toy trains of theirs seemed to come out of the ground beside us a hundred yards or so away. It appeared trundling along quite noiselessly, except maybe for some faint rhythm of the wheels. It came out against the sky. It was a long black single car and in it were sitting, all quite stiffly, all quite noiselessly, the black and white Breton passengers. The three or four immobile men were wearing those great beribboned felt hats they have; the women, caps. Some appeared to be carrying baskets and parcels on their laps. They travelled alongside us with an air of predestination. None looked at us. They sat with an air of vacant preoccupation. They were small and very clear against the light. They were so different in quality from the automobile tourist bustle of our movement that they seemed indeed to be inhabitants of some different, some elfin world.

Lettice did get that. ‘*Oh!*’ she cried, discovering them and sat up.

‘Look!’

I looked.

‘Whethy come from? Oh! Whethy *come* from?’

I thought it best for her imagination to make no explanations and slowly as our own road mounted again, the little train was swallowed

up by the landscape. It sank, it vanished.

'Whethy gone!' asked Lettice.

'Ssh!' I said mysteriously.

She looked at me questioningly. 'You're making fun,' she said and twisted herself round and about, and for a time she was all agog to see that fey train once more. But it followed the undulations of the land to its own little Halte and our road went with a hairpin bend or so over a hill-crest into another valley. We never saw that little railway again.

At supper that night she said apropos of nothing:

'I wonder whethy *got* to.'

'Who?'

'All those funny people.'

It is the only time I have ever heard her express curiosity.

'Weren't they funny?' she said. 'Coming up like that out of the ground. I thought it was a perfect *scream.* So *solemn* they all were!'

I have been chary of trying to get at the hidden core of my daughter Lettice by any direct questioning. It would be as risky as rattling about with a poker in a dark cupboard to find an egg. But I have remarked that she is much addicted to sending postcards. One now and then to Alice or to an old schoolfellow or so proclaiming that she is in 'La Belle France', that I could understand, an occasional spray of cheerful 'Cheeri-os'; but this is the steadfast sending of at least one card daily to one particular receiver. One evening she was lost in thought over one of these missives. She was, I suppose, thinking out some variant of the customary salutation.

'Is he really worthy of you?' I asked suddenly.

She examined my expression for a moment, coyly defensive.

'You've been reading my cards,' she said reproachfully.

'I've been reading your face.'

'Well, if you've found it out, you've found it out... He's nice.'

'So that is why you are all in a dream and rather bored by Brittany, eh? What sort of young man is he?'

'He's clever.'

I had a memory of Alice explaining the high intellectual quality of Hoopler. There are moments when Lettice can be extraordinarily like Alice. This statement of '*his*' cleverness was a defiant assertion that

he was going to rank with me, an anticipation of any superciliousness on my part.

‘A year or so older than you?’

‘It’s best like that.’

‘And you adore him?’

‘I keep him in his place.’

‘What does he do?’

‘He’s in a shipping office. It’s business about shipping and freights and all that. They like him there.’

‘Why didn’t you tell me this before, Lettice?’

‘I didn’t think you’d care to know somehow.’

‘Does your mother know?’

‘I haven’t told her.’

‘It hasn’t been going on for long?’

She counted with her fingers on the tablecloth. ‘Five months,’ she said.

‘And what does Daddy Hoopler say?’

‘He doesn’t know anything.’

‘And your mother, who knows, though you haven’t told her, gave you a hint that on the whole, you’d better not say anything about this to your new adopted Daddy — for a bit.’

That question troubled her.

‘It wasn’t quite like that,’ she said slowly.

‘Of course not,’ I said. ‘Never mind. Well, I’m all in sympathy, Lettice. Bless you, my children. If you don’t love now you never will. It gets harder and harder the older you grow. Tell me anything you like to tell me about him. Or not, as you feel disposed.’

‘You *are* kind, Daddly dear,’ she said looking at me almost fondly but as though she was not absolutely certain of my kindness. I smiled at her and patted her hand on the table and relaxed the tension by signalling to the waitress. ‘You must talk to me about him whenever you feel disposed,’ I said. ‘And not when you don’t.’

‘Of course I can’t help *thinking* of him.’

‘So natural,’ I agreed.

‘All this lovely holiday. Well, I think of him.’

‘You go about and you can’t help imagining — if perhaps he came round the corner or into the inn...’

‘But how do you know that?’

‘Do I seem very old to you, Lettice?’

‘Oo! *no!*’

‘Well, I can remember going through all that. And it doesn’t seem so very very long ago.’ I did not foresee how soon my memory was to be refreshed. ‘You think,’ I said, ‘ — if perhaps he came into this dining-room now -’

She looked up in an instant of irrational hope and then her momentary brightness dulled. ‘And all the time,’ I said, ‘you know perfectly well he is away across the sea at Southampton.’

‘Isn’t it *silly!*’ she said.

‘It is how we are made, Lettice; it is how we are made. When does he get his holidays?’

‘Three whole days before I get back,’ said Lettice, impressively with a sudden desperate hope in her eyes.

‘We’ll arrange all that, my dear,’ I said. ‘You should have told me about this before.’ And for the rest of the evening I was amused by watching Lettice’s ingenuous efforts to conceal how happy it made her to think that this holiday with me was to be ended three days earlier than she had supposed. And since then we have dropped Brittany and history and so forth out of our scanty conversation altogether.

She is curiously reluctant to mention *his* name; she prefers the faint mysteriousness of speaking of him as a Certain Person; and she furnishes few definite particulars about him. But she quotes his opinions at times and his preferences and dislikes. He seems to be commonplace and average to the point of distinction. There are no signs of poetry or art or adventure or interest of any sort nor even of any great sensuousness in their relationship. Their chief excitement seems to be in just seeing each other, in expecting to see each other, in seeing each other unexpectedly (that is wonderful), in hearing about each other from other people. But maybe there Lettice exercises reserve and, hidden from me, wonderful and beautiful anticipations pursue each other through her inturned mind. Yet in that case, wouldn’t these art galleries we walk through or the occasional splashes of music we encounter, have something to say to her to which she would betray some kind of response? I cannot

understand this real deadness of interest - in anything. Alice was not like this anyhow. She had a bright eye for the shop-windows and hoardings of life and got what she could of what she saw advertised.

I find that every shred of my personal interest in Lettice has disappeared.

But I hear a sound in the passage of Bunningtons and Lettice returning from their cinema, and I think I will sally out and make them all have drinks downstairs — Ma Bunnington is always rather coy about taking a nightcap cognac and always does so — before finally turning in. Tomorrow we start for our respective homes.

And I find that I have not even mentioned the strange and peculiar experience which I sat down to tell this afternoon.

I have had a shyness even with myself. It is something very difficult to tell accurately. I fell in love. The next time I write in this book I will begin with it straightaway and avoid all divagations.

3

(St Malo, September 30th, 1934)

Now, as I promised myself, I will begin *in medias res.*

What I have to tell is this. I fell violently in love. A week ago at an out-of-the-way place called Questombec outside an inn looking upon a quaint little covered market-house, I astonished myself by this amazing experience. It happened like a stroke of lightning - and I tell of it in my own despite. It has left me crumpled and disconcerted. And yet it is so unsubstantial a thing that I find it difficult to tell.

It was on the same day on which we encountered these Bunningtons whose tour has been interlacing with ours now for the past four or five days. I had no time to write about it in Nantes. I was coming to that and then the Bunningtons and Lettice returned from their movie. I digressed too much about St Paul. With a sort of subconscious wilfulness I kept on about St Paul. I did not know how to break into the topic that obsessed me. Now I can get the whole business in perspective - and moreover there is something more to tell about it that seems to round it off. This evening Lettice and I are staying in St Malo instead of in Dinard, where the Bunningtons are

wondering what has become of us, all on account of that same gust of passion. But first I must put the Bunningtons into the picture.

These Bunningtons came opportunely to ease the gathering tension between Lettice and myself. They appeared first in the dining-room of some inn before we came to Quiberon and then they did little more than look at us curiously and timidly. They were touring in a car driven by the son. There was a broad-faced mother in half-mourning, with a general air of good-humoured geniality, through which ever and again a calculating watchfulness would gleam unexpectedly, almost like a bad character peeping out of the window of a respectable-looking house; there was a rather jaded-looking son in the middle twenties in a golfing suit, and two daughters in berets and jerseys, about nineteen and sixteen. It became evident that there was trouble between the service which spoke no English, and the son who used that sort of home-made non-idiomatic French with a restricted vocabulary which only another Englishman can possibly understand. He was rapidly losing his temper between the perplexity of the waitress and the not very helpful promptings of his sisters. I offered my services, which were eagerly accepted by the mother and rather grudgingly by the young man.

'I could do it all right, Mother, if the menoo was written out properly,' he said.

'It's shockingly written,' I said, taking it. 'And smudged. Probably this waitress here knows less French than you do. She'd understand Welsh better.'

'I don't *know* Welsh,' said the young man.

'Why should you?' said I.

'It's these dialects that put me right off it,' said the young man, with declining resentment.

I read them the menu with an affectation of difficulty and occasional pauses for reflection, took their decisions and transmitted their orders. 'Can I help you with the wine?'

'George says we ought not to mix water with our wine,' said the elder sister, evidently reviving a smouldering controversy.

'The French do it,' I said pityingly, and added: 'At meals.'

'But better not?' appealed George.

I nodded agreement to him confidentially as one man to another.

I conveyed their instructions to the serving maid.

'I'm sure we're much obliged to you,' said Mrs Bunnington. 'You speak French like a native.'

'Like a commercial traveller,' I said and returned to Lettice.

'Now that's a *nice* gentleman,' I heard Mrs Bunnington say, none too careful not to be overheard. 'I wonder who he can be. I don't know what we should have done without him.'

'I'd have managed,' said the son. 'It's easy when you know the ropes.'

But the next morning when his mother and sister were still in the inn, he did me the honour to take counsel with me about the roads to Quimperle. 'It seems to be a place worth seeing,' he said and I made a guarded endorsement. He betrayed uneasiness when the man in the green baize apron appeared with the luggage, so I wandered off out of sight so as not to embarrass him while he packed his car, did his tipping and started up. They passed me in the little village street and I was greeted by them all in the most cordial manner, the son making the car swerve in a sort of bow to me. I found Lettice sitting at a little green table on the terrace, waiting for me with a profoundly thoughtful expression on her face.

'Friendly people,' I said.

'Urm,' she said and brooded for a bit. 'Daddly - what relation am I to you really?'

'Haven't I kind of adopted you?' I asked.

'Urm - but -'

'Has that good lady been asking questions?'

'Ye-ess.'

'?'

'She asked, was I your daughter? So I said, Yes. It seemed easiest. And then she asked, why was I wearing black? So I thought it best to say that was for a friend of mine that you didn't know. So as to explain you not being in mourning. And then she asked, was my mother alive? So I said Yes without thinking and then I said No. I got sort of confused. So she looked at me for a minute and said. Never mind telling me if you don't want to. But you seemed such a nice gentleman, she said, and with something sad and lonely about you, and anyhow I must be a great comfort to you. She was lonely

too, she said, sometimes. You be good to him, she said - just as though I wasn't. And she kissed me and stared at me for a bit and kept waving her hand in a kind of meaning way as the car went off.'

I reflected. 'No need to bother your head about it, Lettice. They are going to Quimperle and we are going inland and then to Nantes. I don't suppose there is much chance of our ever seeing them again.'

'I suppose we shan't,' said Lettice, 'but I thought I'd tell you.'

'Best thing to do. But don't bother yourself.'

'Only it all seems so *silly,*' said Lettice.

Fate however decided we should meet again, and at Questombec they irrupted just as we were sitting down to lunch in the little dining-room, and forthwith they were as people say, all over us. Might they join tables with us? Which way had we come? What had we seen? How bad and bumpy the roads were and how thirsty driving made one?

I think that on the whole, in spite of that little contretemps with Mrs Bunnington, Lettice was glad to see them again. She was manifestly getting almost more bored with me than I was with her. After all I had mental reserves she did not possess, I could see this aquatint End of the World country in the most interesting perspectives, I could pursue my philosophical speculations within myself, I could go on with my personal problems. For her this tour was like a discourse delivered in an unknown tongue in front of a panorama of appearances that were merely 'foreign', queer, non-hilariously 'funny' or just silly. But these other young people established living points of contact with Lettice almost immediately. They came, it appeared, from somewhere in the Southampton-Portsmouth region, called Haslar, and the son either knew a Certain Person or someone else of the same name too similar to be easily distinguishable. That was very remarkable; it showed how small the world is. Bit by bit the identification was established.

But Mrs Bunnington did not join in their exchanges. She sat herself down on my right-hand and I became aware that she was regarding me with a marked and peculiar fixity. She had an air of fending off the general talk from me in order to mesmerize me. She struggled to make me meet her eye.

She spoke in a low confidential tone. 'You know, you are one of

those people who feel things intensely.'

'And how did you divine *that?*' I asked.

'I can see it. And sometimes it would be well for you to remember that nothing is as bad as it seems.'

As a general rule?' I said, trying to seem intelligently interested.

'Nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so.'

'Now that's familiar. Who said that?'

'My husband.'

'Your *husband!* I didn't imagine—'

'Mr Bunnington was a Mind Healer,' she said. 'He began as an Osteopath but afterwards he became a Mind Healer — with Physical Exercises. Perhaps you do not know. But he was well known. He had a large practice before he passed over. He had quite a lot of distinguished men, artists and writers and that sort of man doing his neck exercises. He taught them to swan. (!?) Swan, you know — like swans. Swanning exercises. Some of them swan now quite beautifully. He was writing a book about it when he died.'

As a publisher I felt a slight recoil at this first faint menace of a manuscript. But for the moment Mrs Bunnington was not thinking of publication.

'Let not your heart be troubled,' she said, almost in a whisper of encouragement to me. 'Neither let it be afraid.'

'Was that another of your husband's - inspirations?'

'Yes. He had many. But does it mean nothing to you?'

'Much,' I said between mouthfuls.

'I can *see* you are under a shadow' - she glanced at Lettice, but the young people were interested in their own talk— 'and I should be so glad to be of Help to you.'

'I don't think I *am* under a shadow. No. I think I should feel it if I was. Don't you? Do you like the faint flavour of garlic in this salad?'

She brought her face closer to mine and regarded me sideways with her little cunning aggressive eyes. 'I know better,' she murmured.

'I never contradict people.' I moved a little away from her.

'I have intuitions. My husband used to say that my intuitions were often better than his science. Psychic, you know. Psychopathic. I can't help telling you things about yourself, things that you may not

know yourself. You are under the shadow of a great loss. Your will is confused.'

'Did my niece there tell you that?'

'I know. I knew.'

I felt I had to get on to the defensive as quickly as possible. 'I have a certain reserve about my private feelings, Mrs Bunnington — almost — you know - like wearing clothes.'

'But when it is a doctor!'

'When I *call in* a doctor, that is different,' I said, and then the waiter intervened to inaugurate cheese and dessert.

But Mrs Bunnington was not so easily repulsed. She recoiled a little from the attack but only to rally her forces. She resumed with an account of her husband's remarkable career and practice. He was not, she said, a very big man physically but he was a very strong man indeed, of great muscular vigour and perfection, he could inflate his chest until he floated 'in the sea like a bubble', and he had come into Healing by way of being a gymnastic instructor. He had found he was able to advise people and help people. Gradually he had come to realize that the body and mind of a man, in health, were his Supreme Inheritance.

She repeated the phrase with gusto. She pressed it upon me. She evidently found it good and wanted me to savour of its full beauty. 'Man's Supreme Inheritance!'

I was tempted to comment. 'Another of your husband's original phrases, I presume? They must have been extensively quoted. It *is* certainly true,' I remarked, 'that we inherit ourselves.'

'It is the greatest truth. But do we *heed* it?' she asked with a rising inflection.

Nothing to say to that.

She resumed her story earnestly. Gradually it had dawned upon Mr Bunnington that he possessed the gift of healing to an unusual degree and that he owed it to others as well as himself to exercise his gift. He had begun to appreciate the Psychic Side and that was where Mrs Bunnington and her natural Psychic Gifts had come in. They had worked together. Most of the illness in the world was due, it seemed, to mental and physical maladjustment; the mind more often than the body was at fault. Of course few people knew how to breathe

properly, few people held themselves upright properly, ‘the abdomen particularly’, said Mrs Bunnington, and the way they neglected their necks was shocking. They sat down into their collars ‘like turtles’. Still these were things the mind could easily correct. It was in the mind that the great difficulties lay. ‘Not *altogether* in the mind, of course,’ said Mrs Bunnington. ‘That is where we differ from the Christian Scientists. But *principally* the mind...’

And so on. And so on. My attention wandered. I felt like a menagerie animal that is being poked at with a stick it does not want to notice.

‘That is where you come in. That is why I am interested in you. An illness of the mind is creeping on you — while bodily you still seem to be in perfect health. Some reservation...

‘The want of someone to *tell* things to... My husband used to say that was the one good of the confessional...’

I sat and listened inattentively and cracked my walnuts as loudly as possible. ‘Coffee?’ I asked them all and said over my shoulder; ‘I will have mine on the terrasse.’

The Bunnington young people had glanced ever and again at their mother as she got launched on what was evidently a familiar topic to them. Then they had turned again to Lettice and their own fragmentary talk in undertones. Now at the mention of coffee they said, ‘Mr Wilbeck, what is this Saint’s Leap they talk about?’

‘An excellent sight,’ I said, addressing Mrs Bunnington in particular. ‘It is something you ought not to miss. About half a mile through the town to the old castle and the ravine. So they tell me. An admirable after-lunch walk. It is in the Muirhead guide. Look! You must *all* go. And meanwhile I will wait here for you. There is no hurry at all today -’

I stood up and went across the room to the waiter for the bill. After I had paid I walked out upon the terrasse without rejoining them and secured possession of the only chaise longue. But almost immediately Mrs Bunnington appeared in pursuit. She drew up a tin chair that scraped horribly and seated herself beside me. She seemed primed with a premeditated discourse. ‘You are going to see the Saint’s Leap?’ I asked.

‘I want to talk to *you.*’

This was no occasion for half measures. I spoke with great firmness to her. ‘After lunch,’ I said, ‘it is my habit to let my mind lie fallow. I smoke a cigar and I like to smoke it alone. I do not like company in the afternoon. I think you will be much happier if you go with the young people.’

There was a slight pause.

‘Of course,’ said Mrs Bunnington, still genial, though with a manifest effort and rising slowly from her chair, ‘if that is how you feel -’

She stood over me, still slightly incredulous.

‘That afternoon snooze!’ she said by way of a parting shot. ‘Long before you are fifty!’

I did not answer. I had no intention of snoozing. I motioned her away.

Damn her!

4

I wonder why I find this sort of quackery so irritating. Possibly because it seems to me to be making headway against all the critical and educational forces I serve. I try not to be impatient, which is the beginning of intolerance. But I ask with a sore mind, How long must the exploitation of human infantilism go on?

This grand-daughter of Sludge the Medium would have liked to get all over me, and half believed in her stuff herself as she unfolded it. It exasperates me just as Dolores’ trite rantings about personified races and nations, her deadly caricature of current politics, used to exasperate me. It exasperates me with a sense of ineffectiveness. Shall we never make headway against this nonsense? Does human nature insist on it?

My sort of people have done so much to shatter organized systems of religious and patriotic obsession that at times it strains my patience to the raving point to discover that instead of drying up in decent defeat these dying dragons bleed a spreading and corrosive juice. Which creeps and increases. I seem to meet more and more minds discoloured by this superstitious deliquescence. At every level of intelligence I meet them. The American negro escapes from the

artless Evangelicalism of the camp meeting to fall to Father Divine, and up and down the scale of culture, the Fathers Divines, the gurus and guidances, the mind-healers and psychic confessors seep poisonously through the world of thought. More and more abundantly. Mrs Bunnington is just a middle class specimen. I suppose there must be hundreds now like her.

So far as I can analyse this - this *ooze,* its essential ingredient is a natural false assumption about life. A false assumption that holds its own against us, a Proteus so flexible and persistent that maybe it will defeat us altogether. This tenacious false assumption is the belief in Perfection. It changes its shape, it is here, it is there; it is always the same. Few people get the full significance of the biological science we talk about so glibly. They do not realize that it disposes of any delusions about perfect forms and perfect health. Underdeveloped minds cling to those - '*ideals*', shall we call them? The realization that life is and must be for ever a struggling maladjustment, is too difficult, discouraging, uncomfortable and frightening for them. They refuse to believe that that is how they are made; they think there must be a perfect way somewhere, a fatuous shiny *rightness,* so that, once found, they will thereafter be able to go through life in a state of eupeptic invulnerability. Only you see people have put them wrong about it and so they have missed this natural perfection.

I suppose the doctrine of the Fall is the large-scale version of this fantasy of a lost perfection.

And when the Bunningtons of their particular cultural class come along with patter about the fourth dimension, the secrets of Tibet, Will and Direction, and with their marvellous recipes for the perfect life, breathe down your backbone, digest *consciously,* waggle your abdomen this way and that, never touch meat, never touch *tinned* food, eat the *peel* of your fruit, sit vacuous for fifteen minutes every day, come and participate in my 'aura' (for the moderate fee of two guineas the time) they succumb. *Now* at last they have it. Now they too will be and feel perfectly healthy. If only they believe what guru tells them and say it over every day, 'Every day, in every way I get better and better' - they get better - and better. The great secret is theirs. They just drop out of the thin and wavering, suffering, thinking and fighting line that still might recondition this foundering

world.

Whether they would have been any good in the fighting line I don't know. Maybe we might just as well have left them to the old-fashioned priest before the old-fashioned altar...

Manifestly the bare thought of Mrs Bunnington puts me in a vile temper. It is a flat contradiction of my existence. It reminds me so plainly that the majority is by nature and natural disposition against my sort, and will be for ages yet. Its vanity, its hope, its will are all against the austere truth. And so Mrs Bunnington earns her living and we are in an ineffective minority. To try to get one's own ideas in order, let alone those of those people, is to struggle towards isolation... Is it to struggle towards anything else?...

But where am I drifting?

The impudence of trying that stuff on me!

Again — *damn* her!

5

I sat smoking outside that Questombec inn disliking Mrs Bunnington with unusual thoroughness and no humour in it at all, and wondering why I had drifted into such intolerable company. What was I doing, pottering about in Brittany in this fashion with a mute daughter whose only strong desire seemed to be to get away from me at the earliest opportunity? I liked driving my little Voisin car, I was interested by the sunlit stagnation of this calm backwood country, I had Dolores and much else to think about and think out before I returned to Paris and London, yet the immediate human setting into which I had stuck myself seemed extraordinarily ill-chosen and unsatisfactory. It was with difficulty I recalled the phase of acute - what shall I say? - lack of detailed stimulation rather than loneliness, that loneliness panic, which had made me send for Lettice and anticipate all sorts of impossible wonderful and companionable things about her. And after I had got her on my hands inertia had carried me on.

And here I was at Questombec. The sunlight on the little old building across the Place and on the wooded hillside beyond was softly gorgeous. Until Lettice and the Bunningtons came straggling

back, nothing it seemed could possibly happen.

I reflected upon the general conduct of my life. Was it by any chance an exceptionally haphazard life? Not as a whole. No. I had a conception of my life as a whole, I had a plan, a religion, so to speak, to which I shaped my mental and business activities, but apart from that I certainly ate, drank, went about with people, made engagements, entangled myself, mortgaged time and energy with an absence of selection and precaution and foresight that was almost complete. The casualness of my personal encounters appeared stark and remarkable before me. Since my birth people had happened to me and I had made hardly an effort to control these happenings. My household arrangements, my associations and companionships, the atmosphere I breathed, had been none of my designing. I ran over the main lines of my story, Alice, Dolores, this snatch at Lettice, my clubs and my minor associations. In the business in London and at Durthing, I did choose people, I weighed them up, watched them and considered them and promoted or got rid of them. But for the rest of my existence I steered myself almost as much as a cork in a cataract.

And — preposterous question for a man of forty-five to ask! — was this the way most people are living or was I an exceptional case of sheer heedlessness in a watchful scheming world? How sweepingly human life was changing about me! In its increasing heedlessness for example. In the universal decay of prescription.

In the old-fashioned ‘sober’ cellular life of the past there had been an air of precaution and arrangement - at least at the prosperous level of living. People confined their intercourse to those to whom they had been ‘introduced’; young people were counselled to be wary in the choice of friends. You married in your class. You knew what to expect. The best society behaved and even misbehaved to pattern. All that sort of thing I reflected had been breaking down long before the war; the war had merely accelerated and completed the social dissolution. The old classes lost what was left of their definition and the new sorts of people that appeared had been too various to develop new ruling conventions and common ways of behaviour.

I had certainly lived at loose ends and here and there, very wilfully, but I doubted if my detached menage with Dolores had been anything so very peculiar by modern standards. More and more of us

are odd men out and odd women out. A hundred years ago, I told myself, a man in my case would as a matter of course have been laboriously hunting, which bored me because I did not ride well — and which would have bored me even then - shooting which disgusted me, dining out stiffly, giving dinners - dinner parties rather - going to 'the' opera, 'the' play, decorating a fairly prolific wife with diamonds or pearls and worrying about a title. Midday at the club. There you had a made world ready for anyone who escaped from toil and poverty - as 'made' as the horses people trot about on in the Parks - and setting a pattern to which the hopeful and struggling might aspire.

But nowadays that old formal world had not so much died as become an unburied phantom. The most tenacious thing about it I reflected was the butler. The stately homes of England were manifestly astonished at the young people who have inherited them. The great houses were more and more show places; the furniture stood aloof even from its rightful owners. The Edwardians had startled that furniture a lot and reinforced it from Tottenham Court Road but they had kept their clothes on in public. Only the furniture had known. The new generation kept nothing on - except the butler who would have kept on anyhow. The new men nowadays - and there were more and more new men — were not assimilated to anything. The successful business men, I knew, even the very rich ones, lived in households that were as much misfits and makeshifts as mine had been, as much improvisations as mine. And their ladies, those incalculable female accidents!

Only in a world of people made to pattern was a stable social life possible. And even then at the price of endless suppression and hypocrisy. Nowadays we were all different, there was practically nothing to prevent our being different, we diverged daily and went our ways, and with only the vaguest ideas of what we wanted in the nature of associates until they happened to us. Whereupon we realized that they were wrong.

Alice of course was not so very wrong. For a natural young man who could have stayed at home with her and kept her straight. Alices have happened to endless men and the association has proved endurable. I had met her by chance and parted from her because so it

fell out. But in most cases the Alices are not wrong enough to bring the discord to a crisis. She had been just normally wrong. Dolores seemed a rarer sort of discord, but was she? I had tolerated her wrongness for thirteen years - to the end of her life. She had invaded me; she had made the most strenuous efforts to assert her harsh unloving and unlovely femininity against me, until at last we had got to a desperate struggle for the upper hand. How many couples in the world now were carrying on a similar struggle! With us our discordance had in the end become stark and murderous because we had not had the mitigation of children. But even with children the essential antagonisms of the casually matched must surely appear — might even for all I knew become even more evil, because of the possibility of enlisting those poor little accidents as auxiliaries in the domestic warfare. Fantastic paradox it was of human life that we were in perpetual flight from loneliness and perpetually seeking relief and escape from the connections that ensued...

My meditations had reached some such point as this, when I became aware of a young woman approaching me across the Place. She was tallish, blonde, sunburnt, hatless, in a light-brown tweed suit that had a peculiar quality of rightness about it, and her gloveless hands were stuck in her jacket pockets. She was looking about her as though something about the Place and the inn puzzled her and at the same time amused her. She had a broad forehead above her frank blue eyes, her hair waved back from it with an unassisted grace and her lifted chin showed an extremely pretty neck. There was a touch of warmth in her fairness, it was golden hair she had, not flaxen, and later when she was nearer I noted that she had been lightly powdered by the sun with faint gold freckles. And without doubt and instantly, I realized that nothing so lovely had ever come into my life.

She stopped short outside the inn and considered it for a moment. Then her eyes came down to the terrasse level and she regarded me with a swift scrutiny that ended in approval. She seemed to have a question on her lips. I stood up.

‘You are looking for somebody?’

‘There was a car standing here,’ she said, and her full low voice was as lovely as the rest of her. ‘There was a chauffeur. There was an old gentleman. There was a nurse.’

‘You left them here?’

She surveyed the Place. ‘Unless this town is twins,’ she said.

‘They have not been here for two hours. Or let us say an hour and three-quarters. I have lunched and smoked - you see there is not an inch of cigar left.’ I threw the stump away with the air of a man who prepares for chivalrous action. ‘The only cars are that ill-mated couple parked over there.’

She glanced at the cars and found they did not help her problem.

Then a voice came out of the house behind me. ‘Oh, miss. He’s been so *naughty.*’

For an instant I thought it might be a personal denunciation, a most unjustifiable one. I turned and discovered an English nurse, all white and proper. But she pointed no accusing finger at me. She spoke past me to the lovely young woman.

‘He *would* go to bed.’

The young lady did not seem to be very greatly shocked. ‘He ought to be spanked,’ she said.

‘You *try* it, my dear,’ said a second voice and a cheerful little white-haired old gentleman appeared behind the nurse. He was small, horsey and fresh-coloured and he had decidedly handsome features. He was quite credibly the girl’s grandfather. He seemed entirely satisfied with himself.

‘I went to bed between sheets,’ he said. ‘I am *always* going to do it — every afternoon. Wherever I am.’

‘Where is Wilkins and the car?’ asked the young woman of the nurse.

‘He goes off. Oh! - I remember. He said something about oiling something.’

The little old gentleman addressed himself to me. ‘A man of over sixty who doesn’t sleep after his lunch is a fool. I am eighty- two.’

APROPOS OF DOLORES ‘You don’t look it,’ I said automatically.

‘And if you sleep,’ he continued, ‘why not *really* sleep? Eh? Why sleep stuffy in your clothes? Why make a sort of half sleep of it, with your clothes constricting you? Eh? A man who does that at my age is a fool.’

‘Much more refreshing,’ I said, racking my brains for some

excuse to drag in the young woman.

‘Much. Not the same thing at all. Every day now I contrive to have a room and get between the sheets. Every day. They try and prevent it. But’ — triumphant crow in his voice - ‘I do it.’

‘You wouldn’t like doing it nearly so much if it didn’t put out Miss Stuart,’ said the young lady.

‘Put her out indeed. She’s just one of these Dont-ers! Put her out! I wish I *could* put her out, confound her!’

Miss Stuart suddenly took it into her head to confide in me by an intimate smile that she wasn’t really put out at all. She herself had a very agreeable face and plainly both she and the good- looking young lady loved that fortunate little old gentleman.

‘Where’s Wilkins, I say? Ah, here he is - just saving his bacon as usual. Pay the bill, my dear, pay the bill. Why haven’t you paid the bill? We’ll get there all right for dinner.’

I saw with helpless exasperation the missing Wilkins arrive noiselessly in a large grey Hispano Suiza. He and the nurse set to work arranging some cushions — evidently for the old gentleman. And at the same time the young lady went into the restaurant with a business-like air to settle her account. I felt myself intolerably unresourceful. The moments flew by and I did nothing. At last belatedly and feebly I said to the old gentleman: ‘Have you far to go?’

‘Twenty. Thirty. *I* don’t know. Wilkins there does the sums. We’ve oceans of time. Oceans.’

‘Now, Sir,’ said the nurse.

The young lady gave me a nod and a pleasant smile. I was so concerned with getting some shadow of an exchange between us that I did not think of observing any names or marks of identification at all, I did not even look at the number plate and in a few moments the three were tucked in comfortably, Wilkins was swinging the car round the corner, and they had gone.

And instantly I was overwhelmed by a sense of irreparable loss.

I could not endure the thought that they had gone. It was as though a great light had been extinguished. The sunshine became just painted sunshine.

They were to arrive in ‘ample time for dinner’. Now where would

that dinner be? I sat down and opened out my Michelin map. I would not admit the possibility that some private opened house might swallow them up. That was unbearable. I decided they must be going to La Baule. I had not visited La Baule but I knew it was a fashionable and rather expensive bathing resort. My best chance of seeing her again lay in taking up my quarters there and using my eyes.

'*Dad*-dly dear,' came the voice of Lettice advancing across that deserted and empty Place. 'The Saint's Leap was *lovely.*'

The Bunningtons were all about me.

'Are you taking the inland road for Nantes?' asked the son. 'I don't like these minor tracks. I can't let her *out.*'

'*We're* not going to Nantes,' I said. 'At least not directly. We are going to La Baule. Where we can have a swim perhaps.'

'But you *said* you were going to Nantes,' protested Mrs Bunnington, quite unabashed.

'*Later,*' I corrected politely...

They went to Nantes and I, for the sake of another glimpse of a golden young woman, whose status I did not know, whose name even I did not know, drove to La Baule, stayed two nights there, bathed three times, made Lettice bathe — she swam I found rather well and I thought the better of her - wandered along the Esplanade, walked up to the golf links, went into the Casino, came out of the Casino, went into the Casino again, prowled to and fro before the Hermitage Hotel, visited the cocktail bar several times, went peering round the chairs and tents of the bathers sitting out upon the beach. It dawned on me that I was behaving more like a lost dog than a human being and that poor Lettice was having as thin a time as a dog whose owner is trying to lose it.

I pulled myself together. This fantastic thread had to be cut. 'I'm tired of this place,' I told Lettice suddenly, and in the later afternoon we went on to Nantes and rejoined the Bunningtons at their hotel. Yet even at Nantes I kept expecting that healthily slender young figure to appear at every corner. And that is why I was glad to distract my mind from its obsession by writing again and why I turned my attention to an imaginative extension to Brittany of the Journeyings of St Paul. And why afterwards I wrote in such a strain

of depreciation about Lettice.

But now tonight — it is already past midnight — I find I can write the complete story of this strange aberration of a respectable and public-spirited publisher.

I have seen my slim goddess again; this afternoon. And again she has vanished no whither, as goddesses will.

I was driving along the road from Ploermel to Dinard. I was driving rather fast because I like to keep well ahead and out of sight of the Bunningtons. I have a curious feeling that if the Bunnington car breaks down, as it always seems likely to do, and I have to help or pretend to help that ungracious young man — and if I find myself with a wrench or the handle of a jack in my hand — something might happen to make me lose my self-control.

I might find irony insufficient and break his head. Lettice is to take the Southampton boat at St Malo tomorrow and she wanted to spend her last night in France at Dinard with these new friends of hers. I had fallen in with that idea because of a secret compunction I feel about her, not because of anything I have done to her but because of my private criticisms of her. And as we hummed along the road in the afternoon sunshine a large grey Hispano Suiza came up from behind us and requested us in a firm but kindly note, to give way to it. And there she was passing me!

She was driving. She was doing I suppose about seventy-five to eighty kilometres, and Wilkins, who sat beside her, did not appear to be in the least apprehensive about it. Her attention, as it should be, was on the road and she was totally unaware of me. She passed me.

Whereupon this strange desire for her returned to me with even greater force than before. Although it is against all the laws of nature that a rather travelled Voisin Fourteen should chase and overtake a big Hispano Suiza, kept in the pink of condition by Wilkins, nevertheless I set myself to do as much. ‘You *are* going fast!’ said Lettice.

‘Such a lovely road,’ said I.

But the grey car increased its distance continually. Now it would be lost in a series of bends. I record that though I drove fast I was still sane enough not to take my corners to the public danger. Then down a long stretch I could see her car ahead going so steadily that it

seemed to be going slowly. It would sink down into the ground and reappear mounting a hill beyond. It would strike a soft section of road and make itself conspicuous by a long roll of dust. Ahead of us was a fork. The grey car took the road to the right and vanished.

'That's Dinard!' cried Lettice. 'To the left. I saw it on the milestone thing.'

'I know,' I said, without relaxing. 'But we're going for a little round first. Or else we shall be in Dinard *hours* before they overtake us. And I want to see if the change of date of your ticket in St Malo is in order.'

For my guess now was that after dropping grandfather and nurse, my young divinity was returning to England via St Malo. At Questombec I had not even observed whether the Hispano Suiza had an English or a French number plate though I had inferred from the fact that Wilkins was English, that it was probably of English domicile and register. This time I had retained just enough of my senses to confirm that conclusion. The number plate that was ahead of me carried a big GB. St Malo seemed a fairly good guess, therefore, St Malo and home. At two turnings beyond Dinan her dust had subsided and the road was too traffic-worn to give any indication which road she took. I did not get out to look. I did not even know the pattern of her tyres. So under pretence of verifying some inexplicable point about Lettice's ticket I went on to St Malo, and there I searched the place and found no sign of the grey car or its driver.

I tried to think out some alternative.

Had she perhaps gone to Parame? She might have friends staying there. Was Cancale a possible place for her? I went to Parame and asked about the grey car at one or two roadside garages, but they had seen nothing of it.

'Are we going to Dinard now?' asked Lettice. 'It's - evening.'

'I'm getting a little bit doubtful of the way,' I lied, and I drove on to Cancale, and came back here in the twilight at last reluctantly.

By that time Lettice seemed to realize that she was in the grasp of the incomprehensible and made no further comments.

I went through a parade of surprise and incapacity at discovering what I knew already perfectly well, that St Malo is cut off from

Dinard by a broad arm of the sea and that there was no getting the car across. I did not suggest and Lettice did not think of suggesting, that we might leave the car on this side and visit the Bunningtons for that last feast of fellowship by one of the omnibus launches that ply across the water. And here, therefore, after a final prowl in search of a large grey car, I am writing about it all now, and Lettice has gone early to bed so as to be fresh for the crossing and is, I hope, dreaming of meeting a Certain Person tomorrow...

And thus in all human probability ends the astonishing episode of that Lovely Young Woman all spotted with gold. In notes of exclamation. And I am left to make what I can of my behaviour.

6

I have tried to tell all this exactly as it has happened and while it is still fresh in my memory. It cuts diametrically across the account I have given of myself thus far and that is why I feel bound to set it down. I want to see myself in black and white in all my inconsistency.

What seized me? What was it jerked me like a hooked fish out of my pose of ironical and indeed rather sulky self-control? Why did I become suddenly like a child chasing a sunbeam? What did I really want? What did I expect?

I cannot sleep tonight and I cannot write properly. Just this minute I have gone to the window to look out — for a big grey car in the moonlight in a side street leading nowhere!

This is a preposterous state of affairs. If I am to retain control of myself I must think this out - write it out rather. Why is my brain behaving like this? What, I repeat, do I really want?

It is, I suppose, a sexual impulse that has flung me about in this fashion, but it is a very sublimated sexual impulse. I just want to see more of that lovely thing and to be with that lovely thing. I want her presence in my life so vividly, that everything else recedes into the background and seems by comparison of no importance at all. There is no detail in my desire; it is like a desire for a bright glow. (Was I not reproaching Lettice a few pages ago for the exact parallel to this featureless obsession?) And the curious thing in my own case is that

I do not remember that in my adolescence or my young manhood, I ever felt quite this same concentration upon an individual. I have known something of desire in the past but nothing with this exclusive commanding power. Is this how it takes one as one grows up? It seems against all fact and reason that desire should be stronger at five and forty than at five and twenty, but I suppose it is natural that it should be more selective. This is not even desire for a woman; it seems altogether divorced from any physical craving, it is a passionate going out to a particular loveliness for its own sake.

Now is that all that has to be said about it? I think not. If I try to push this wordless impulsion aside I do think I can distinguish other things behind it. That girl is not simply a lovely thing in herself, but she has caught me in a phase in which everything has conspired to throw her up in relief, as a symbol of something - a lost world in which I might be and am not living. It is this that has given solidity to the glimpse of her. Because from first to last all I have had of her is a glimpse, a suggestion. She came smiling, clothed in the afternoon sunlight, just as I was deep in self-pity at my essential and apparently irremediable loneliness. Just when I was most acutely aware of the frequent dullness and discordance of my everyday life she came. Just when I was full of the lucklessness of all my intimate encounters and particularly of the wasted years with Dolores. Nothing could have been more apt.

It was not merely that she drew me by the natural magic that has made men pursue individual women since the race began. My pursuit of her was also a flight, from what I am and what is about me, from my confusedly frustrated self, to unimaginable things.

In a sense, as a real person, she was never there at all.

Because - and here I see I am getting at something - the truth is that for these past days of distraught behaviour I have been in pursuit of a glimpse not of a human being but of a goddess. That goddess chose to cast her cestus about a very charming young woman, but it was the goddess who bewitched me. It was Aphrodite herself who saw fit to remind me that even in everyday sunlight, this universe has something profounder and intenser than its everyday events. I perceive I have had as much of a vision as any of the saints. But of a different divinity.

Quite evidently I shall never see that brave-looking young woman again. And as evidently it is altogether undesirable that I should ever see her again.

Here and now my sanity returns to me and I declare I do not want to see that girl again.

For what would have happened if I had managed to strike up an acquaintance with these people? Within a few hours the goddess would have slipped away beyond recall and I should have been left talking, very much in love, no doubt, with a nice limited human being, at least a score of years my junior, very upstanding and with very definite and probably very different ideas of how life had to be lived. Let me face the facts. That is how it would have been. That broad forehead and those straight eyes spoke of an independent reason and will. How far was she educated? How far had she been ill-educated? And maybe I should have won her, for love can compel love, and before we knew where we were we should have begun that subtle and tortuous conflict of individualities to which all who belong to the new world are doomed.

We should have married and have had children no doubt. For to that end it was that old Nature who is the mother of everything, sent her daughter Aphrodite, to lure and intoxicate me. And while my handsome young wife had children, I, who was already twenty years ahead of her, would have gone on working and my ideas and ambitions would have gone on growing, while she would have been just sufficiently handicapped not to keep step with me. I should have loved her always; I am quite sure of that; and Mother Nature's short ends would have been well served; ten thousand threads of dearness would have been spun between us; but it would not have been what I was promised, nor what my heart leapt out to meet in the Place of Questombec. I should have felt as I saw her domesticated that I, and Nature, had tricked her, as she and Nature had tricked me, with something that blazed gloriously only to vanish. Surely it must be one of the essential tragedies of the intricate life we lead today, to love a woman still and remember how once one loved her.

Better I should never have another glimpse of her.

And all the same I want her and my heart frets at my own rationalization. Wherever I go and whatever I do I realize that girl,

who is really not herself but the masquerade of an eternal and unattainable goddess, is going to be just round the corner, just down the glade, in the next room...

It is already three o'clock in the morning. I shall have a sleep and then when day has come I shall get up, take Lettice as I have promised, round the grey walls of St Malo and conduct her aboard the Southampton boat and kiss her goodbye. And off she will go three days earlier than the happy young couple planned, to a Certain Person.

And then — Paris.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Return to Everyday

(Paramé, October 1st, 1934)

An hotel room in Parame looking out on the sea in the full tide of the bathing season may seem a strange place for a man in great perplexity about his life, to do his thinking in. But it seemed as good as any other accessible place, unless I turned back and went to Portumere to talk to Foxfield. But some of this stuff I want to straighten out in my mind is not quite in Foxfield's key. I saw Lettice off yesterday, intending to go back in the evening to Paris. I started indeed for Paris and so to speak fell into this hotel. I was full of discordant ideas and in no mood for driving. I thought I might as well have things out with myself here as anywhere.

The background of beach life outside is very pleasant. I like the softly soughing sea. It is in one of its bluest moods. Its minute white breakers are almost exactly in line with the beach. I like the distant clamour of semi-transparent pink-limbed children and rather opaquer white nurses. I like the little striped tents. I like the reflections of people on the wet sand. It is rare one looks out on a scene with so little malice in it.

2

What I want to do is to get this sex-beauty drive and this craving for close and peculiar individual intimacy that troubles me, into something like a rational relation to my life as a whole. This spasm of irrational love is not going to be my last by any means.

I have been rocketing about Brittany, a nascent widower, remembering Dolores by fits and starts and then completely forgetting everything about her except that I am free from her, and vaguely but inordinately set upon a girl not half my age. Apparently that particular fever is subsiding — subsiding as inexplicably as it arose - evaporating - but now I know my vulnerability.

It becomes plain to me that for the past thirteen years Dolores has played the role — I can hardly think of a metaphor - of a zareba, let us say, a zareba of spiked sounds, against such raids of prowling imaginative passion. Her way of filling that role was occasionally ungracious, but now taking the whole situation together, it seems to me I may have been ungrateful in not recognizing how her exacting passions and her passionate jealousy, the distraction of her thorny clamour, shepherded me to my work and made any serious divagations impossible.

But this little affair opens my eyes to my changed circumstances. Her death is altering me chemically, and imagination is an endocrinal affair. This sort of whirlwind is more than likely to spin out in me again. How am I going to deal with the next one and the next and the next after that?

Life so far, has happened to me. So I realize. What do I mean to let happen to me, when again someone takes on the quality of a commanding loveliness or an unendurable desire? In a couple of decades or so these impulses may die down, people say they die down, but until then they are likely to recur. They are in the chemistry of my nature, in my blood and bone. How far am I going to resist them, mitigate them, cheat them or give way to them? How far can I? And entangled with this urgency that lurks in my being and may pounce upon me at any time, deeper and subtler there stirs a continuing unsatisfied craving for personal intimacy and association with someone who must be essentially (and sexually) mine...

Both these sets of urgency are quite explicable as old Nature's way of working me up for her chief concern, it seems, about human life, marriage and children. But the extravagant growth of the human brain, the strange accentuation and implementing of thought by words and symbols, about which I talked to that pony at Torquestol, has outdistanced the barbs and spurs of Nature, and we find ourselves detaching her cravings and urgencies more and more definitely from the ends that justified their evolution. We want loveliness for itself, we want companionship for ourselves. We see beyond the bait of the trap, we nibble away most of the bait, and we refuse to be lured and cheated and to have our hearts frustrated for a mere biological purpose which we did not clearly foresee.

Old Nature has given neither adult men nor adult women any natural and enduring instinct for offspring or for the toil of sustaining a household, and she has proved quite unable to prevent our brains running away with us to remoter interests and strange and elaborated imaginings. It is old tradition and social custom that has made men and women submit to the domesticated life in the past, but how carelessly and easily they abandon it! And the further they age beyond adolescence the less easily are they brought back to it. Old Nature finds herself confronted by reproachful and horrified statisticians, figures of falling birthrate in hand, proving her lures and cheating impotent.

I look into myself and it is plain that if ever now I have a wife and a household and children it will be not because I want them directly and simply but out of some complex of highly intellectualized motives, duty to society, pride of race, refusal to commit a biological suicide. It will be an arrangement. I will marry, I will not be married by instinct. If I want children I will find a woman who wants children. I dream of a companion and loveliness, but that does not mean a woman preoccupied with a kitchen and nursery. I have no emotional desire for children at all, but that may be a transitory flatness due to my disappointment with Lettice. I think, however, it is more than that. I am persuaded that I belong to a newer kind of human being which comes of age not at one-and-twenty but after forty and when the pairing time is over. And also I realize that the accidents of life have a little cheated me.

The war and my divorce from Alice and my thirteen years of sterile marriage with Dolores have made me miss out a natural phase. Possibly for eight or nine years round about twenty-two for a girl and round about twenty-eight for a man, there is an effective pairing and breeding state of mind, a ‘primary adult’ phase of psychology, I will call it, which we live through in a decade or so. Old Meredith, the novelist, realized this. He suggested decennial marriages thirty years ago. Our world is all too apt to assume that forty-five has nothing but a slight numerical difference from twenty-five. But at forty-five I suggest that an increasing number of people are primary adults no longer, we are secondary adults, we have got to a new level, even if as yet we do not know how to live on it; and that naive susceptibility

to desire and tradition has become entangled and defeated in an intricate network of critical qualifications and fastidiousness. The instinctive life, which was once the whole life of man, is now becoming for many of us only a phase of living. When I was in my teens there were mates for me by the thousand, when I was in my twenties there were mates by the hundred, when I was in the thirties there were still plenty of mates, but the maturer we are, the less plastic and the more definite we become. Already the current half-adult human being, I perceive, does not readily pair. That fully adult human being towards whom destiny moves, will not pair at all.

So things seem to me. I think that mentally and biologically, if not in his physical form, man has been changing for at least the last two thousand years and that now he is changing very rapidly indeed. This New Adam, *Homo rampant,* who is dawning upon us, will be a longer-lived and mentally more consistent and substantial creature than his emotional myth-thinking ancestors and brothers. His vision will be broader and longer and continually less completely ego-centred. Mutations of my sort have at the best but half-emerged to that, we have half-emerged from a life of vividly self-conscious individuality in comparatively small communities (individuality which is mature at one-and- twenty and of no further account in the forties) to a life of a broader, more impersonal, more prolonged and more closely intra-correlated quality. Begetting and bearing a family may be only a pre-adult phase in that ampler life, and for the fully grown there may be no permanent marrying nor giving in marriage.

New social institutions may secure the perpetuation of the species quite effectively without centring themselves upon the cradle in the home. But quite certainly Mother Nature, who does not care to have evolution taken out of her hands, will dissent. She is dissenting now, and the stress of this conflict of impulses I find in myself is just her obstinate resistance to a new order that is passing out of the control of her slow, cruel hit-or-miss methods. She will see to it that we are troubled endlessly, and we have to save ourselves from her and trick her and assuage her as we can.

Which, to make rather a leap in the argument — for Nature, interfering as ever, tells me that dinner time is passing — is why I shall have to harden my mind to renounce both the idea of a romantic

love adventure that still haunts it, and the hunger for a single close companion that has always lurked in the background of my expectations.

There are no such things for me now, there are no such things. It was just Nature's playful superfluous teasing.

3

I used to think that what I call my 'work' was to save civilization - by a series of publications, an encyclopaedia or so and the start of an educational renascence! All these things are necessary by the way, and they are as much or more than I and my sort can cope with. 'One step enough for me,' says the hymn. But they are not going to 'save Civilization'. Not a bit of it. They are steps that have to be taken, but they are not steps towards the salvaging of civilization. (I forget whose phrase that is; it sounds familiar; one of my various authors may be responsible, manifestly he meant well, but it is not the precise right phrase. It suggests a sort of rescue of old masters from a burning country house.)

Civilization as we know it, is not to be salvaged. It is not worth salvaging. There were some pretty things about it but its patterns are played out. It comes to an end — it tears and rends into warfare by a senile enlargement of its own traditions. All ideas of stability come to an end in the current decadence. It is high time it was recognized that we liberal moderns are salvaging nothing: we are only preparing for something, something altogether new. Escaping from the ruins is quite a different business from bolstering them up.

Man has tried hard to settle down under his own vine and fig tree for some thousands of years — in vain. If he is to survive now, plainly he has to drop this idea of secure sedentariness and turn back to nomadism, a new, eternally progressive nomadism, nomadism on a higher level, nomadism not in a caravan but alone, alone you may say or with all the world as companion and with all the planet at least as his wilderness-territory to go wherever he desires.

We, all of us, the most creative, the most progressive, are merely looking forward as yet to this new post-human life, the next act in the drama of change. We get ready for it. That is the general shape of our

lives.

Before that new nomadism arrives we shall be out of the way — all our generation — which is just as well because, through no fault of his own, that new incessant nomad would humiliate us into the bitterest hatred and awaken the heart of malice in all of us. We should hate the wide strides of his untethered feet. We limp and hop.

We are, as I say, evolving like amphibians from one way of life to another, our heads emerge into progress but our hearts respond to tradition. We must come to terms with our own insufficiency. We find ourselves in a three-fold quandary between brain, egotism and heart. Our newly implemented reasoning powers, under the menace of extinction, urge us to organize and create; our ancient irrational instinct is not for creation and co-operation but for power, it is far more destructive than constructive; and what our poor hearts desire, hardly daring to ask for loveliness, is the happiness of play and restful entertainment. I want to look on at life and laugh at it and even love it a little. Plainly the best recipe for a working compromise with life must be to obey our reason as far as we can, play our role, that is to say, sublimate or restrain our deep-seated instinct for malicious mischief, and gratify what we can of our heart's desire, so far as and in such manner as our consciences approve...

4

Tomorrow I head for Paris. To what do I return? To a completely and deliberately companionless life. And to this 'work' which I make a sort of justifying refrain to my life.

What, after all, does this work of mine amount to? Let me get down to that.

I am just upon forty-six now and I perceive plainly that I have never yet worked steadfastly and continuously at all. I have lived in alternating phases. My life has been an affair of bright starts and interruptions and I know now surely that it can never escape from these fluctuations. It is a hybrid life, torn in opposite directions. I have imagined that I have found a sustaining objective in my publishing and educational work, that thereby I am really helping to evoke an efficient Mind of Man, and though that is partly true, partly

it is only a consolation fantasy. I have told myself that I am helping to build an ark for the human mind, but that ark-building is a gigantic proposition and I doubt if I am even a foreman riveter on the immense hull such an ark needs to be.

The Mind of Man — making a great Ark for the Mind of Man? These sound preposterously ambitious phrases and yet how else can I convey my idea of what mankind needs in order to arrest disintegration and defeat? This business becomes more and more real and commanding to me as my life matures, and I think it is even more foolish to write about it in a tone of mock incidentalness than to abash myself by grandiose expressions. Because one is not poet enough to convey the greatness one feels, it does not follow that the thing one feels is not great. To be nervous and apologetic about one's fundamental beliefs is rather after the fashion of Mr Toots and his 'It's of no consequence'. This is of consequence. This that I call my work, my business, is the basic system of my life, however poorly I may state it and however trivial my actual performance may be.

'Ark' when I reconsider it is rather an unsatisfactory metaphor. It suggests something shaped, rigid and final, like a creed or a constitution. 'Come aboard and all will be well.' That misinterprets me. It revives that notion of 'salvaging' something I have been criticizing. Let me try again to tell myself exactly what I mean to myself.

I am, I realize, muddy-minded. My mind is not comprehensive enough and it is too congested by minor issues and impulsions, to take a clear view of existence. It is encumbered like a crystal trying to form in a magma loaded with irrelevant matter. But nevertheless it has a considerable apprehension of potentialities. The shape of the crystal, the form of this world is perceptible to me. It is the common lot to be muddy-minded; I am muddy- minded, you are muddy-minded, he is muddy-minded; past, present and future indicative you can conjugate it; nevertheless I believe, that by getting numbers of people to think as hard as they can and state as clearly as they can, and then by bringing their results together, gradually, steadily, a clearing-up is possible. That clearing-up is going on even now but it might go on much faster. Philosophers, teachers, editors and publishers - for I rank all these servers-up of ideas together — should

be the ushers of the crowd. That is what a publisher should be, that is all a sane philosopher pretends to be...

When a substance which has been loaded and opaque, crystallizes and becomes clear and definite in its form, thrusting the alien stuff aside, it is because its particles have fallen into place one with another. Nothing new has come, nothing that was not already there, but only a better arrangement has been made.

I believe that a just general idea of a new life for mankind is existent — latent — amidst the confusions of our time, and that as it emerges to lucidity, it will have compelling power in the measure of its lucidity. In spite of my experience of Dolores, I do not think that the average human is incurably perverse. Malignant, yes, often, but not continually, and capable moreover in most cases of a certain limited amount of reversal. As the Right Thing to Do becomes patent, we shall fall into our roles. With much grumbling and whimsicality and resistance no doubt, and with a dwindling amount of overt and secret disobedience, but we shall do it. We shall learn to detect and shoot potential Dictators and that sort of nuisance, more and more promptly. The mental atmosphere will be less and less favourable to them. It is common sense to kill them. It is common sense that *will* kill them. Better a blood-bath of dictators than a single baby blown to pieces. Human life is at sixes and sevens today and in perpetual danger, simply because it is mentally ill-arranged. To help set ideas in order is therefore the very best work one can do in the world. And in oneself. That is my master idea, my religion and to the best of my poor ability I subserve my activities to that. Imperfectly because, as I say, I am imperfectly adapted, a transitional form.

5

The nature of human intimacy is changing. I must talk about that to Foxfield when I have a chance. It is certainly changing from generation to generation. There will be more better- adjusted people in the next generation - profiting by our efforts. I am only beginning to realize that.

The way creatures *contact* one another can change. Let me try and explain what I am getting at in that. How does a dog contact its

fellows? Touch, not very accurate achromatic sight, rich abundant smell, sex as a transient storm; what else is there that reaches from dog to dog? Our contacts are fuller than that. And they are becoming subtler and more abundant. Ages ago man began to elaborate life by using definite words. Also he began to clothe and elaborate love. He became more companionable. By words especially. Lovers talk and weave a thousand fancies. Words become the mechanism of a vast abundance of suggestion and enrichment. We smell each other's minds in conversation. And man's eyes also become more exact. We see with a new precision and discover beauty. We harmonize. We recede a little from the elementary contacts in order to achieve other and wider and lovelier ones. We are reluctant to recede from those elementary contacts, because of the extravagant expectations with which they allure us, but we must. We love the mind that speaks to us in music, we find beauty in pictures, we respond to the wisdom or to the caress in a poem. We love the woman Leonardo loved and writers who were bodily dead centuries ago live on to stir us. Our contacts stretch out more and more beyond the here and the now.

When I was happy in Rennes that first day, the faint flavour of intimacy with those who had planned and built the old place was a part of my happiness. My thanks to them passed like a scarce perceptible enhancement of the evening sunshine. And when I plan and publish books - or write this stuff I am writing now - I do that also for an unseen intimate. Someone whom I hope I shall never meet to quarrel with, or disappoint, or experience his or her everyday inadequacy, will read this. Maybe human intimacy is escaping from the prison of the present and the visible, the prison of our current life, unlocking the door but still using the old cell for sleeping and eating. We'll still love sights and sounds and desire pretty people, but lightly and transitorily, not cruelly and insatiably, and our invisible tentacles will stretch through time and space to an altogether deeper and different fellowship. A man who sits in a quiet room reading or writing, listening or thinking, may seem to be solitary and isolated. But in fact he is in contact with myriads of intimates. He has a thousand intimacies, each closer and a thousand times finer than those of a peasant with his wife or with his dearest boon companions...

So that in reality I am not solitary and I am not going to be solitary. And if perhaps I feel solitary, the feeling is a part of my transitionalness. It is because that pervading common brain, of which I am a contributory part, has not yet gathered sufficient substance about me...

6

It was Foxfield who said to me once that conscious life was 'the thinnest and flimsiest of pellicules, strained midway between the atoms and the stars'. Our personalities are by nature and necessity superficial. And incidental. The very saints nod and forget. Our superficiality and incidentalness seem to be inescapable. There is no coherent plot for the personal life; there may be no coherent plot for the whole. That too, like the ego, may be a delusive simplification. And yet there is something real going on, something not ourselves that goes on, in spite of our interpretations and misconceptions. That ultimate reality behind the curtains may be fundamentally and irresolvably multiple and intricate and inexplicable, but it goes on. It may be altogether incomprehensible to our utmost faculties, but it is there. And in some partial and elusive way we are not simply borne along by that, but we belong. We do not *happen* to exist. It is, for inexplicable reasons, our business to exist.

This I admit is unadulterated mysticism, but I have never objected to mysticism when it was unadulterated. It is when the medicine men try to conjure with it and sell it in packets that I object.

In this mystery of life there is no simple complete failure. We lapse but also we can resume. There is success in every life. It is as inevitable as defeat. Our essential success is a matter of more or less, and lies wholly in the way we respond to life. There is no Heaven for us anywhere, at any time; nevertheless there are many bright reflections and much amusing incident upon the surface of being, and there is loveliness and truth in its substance.

These are not mere words — because words can be defined by other words. But truth and loveliness are primary things...

And I think, I think, that the conscience within me is a primary thing. It speaks out of an impenetrable darkness but it is real...

I have gone as deeply now as I am ever likely to go into the riddle of life. If I sat writing here in Parame for a year I could add nothing to what I have already written. I should just sing the same song with variations, round and round. Indeed is not all this book a string of variations on a thread of events? This now shall be the finale. I know now where I stand. Stoical agnosticism is the only possible religion for sane adults. Accept and endure what happens to you, from within just as much as from without. Do what is right in your own eyes, for there is no other guide. Go on. Go on to your end. Go on without either absolutes of believing or disbelieving, without extremities either of hope or despair...

7

(Alencon, October 2nd, 1934)

A beautiful day and I have spent it very pleasantly. Until the afternoon I remained in Parame, I re-read this diary of mine and thought and then wrote, thinking rather than writing, I attempted a sort of Confession of Faith — a solemn conscientious effort. Then seized by a sudden restlessness and finding I wrote no more, I started for Paris.

At any rate I told myself I was starting for Paris. But I did not take the direct road for Paris. Instead I motored straight across country to Rennes. I did not hesitate at any turnings. I think it was the memory of that first evening I spent there that made me deflect my course to the right instead of going straight back. It was not a long detour. The place had acquired personality in the retrospect and now it beckoned to me.

Rennes, I found, was still Rennes. It came out to meet me and assimilated me forthwith. But now the days are shortening and it was all lit up, a sort of twilight illumination, as if in readiness for me. The shops were shutting up. The evening was agreeably warm and the place was full of dim young couples and dusky movement. It saw to all my needs with the same cheerful matter- of-fact kindliness of my first entertainment. The cafe outside the Hotel de Ville gave me dinner again, I had the same waiter and the same red-shaded lamp,

the band still played in the cafe on the Vilaine, shut in a little now by glass, and by a happy chance, the bronze Brittany whom I had always remembered very pleasantly came down to earth, as it were, and lived again for me.

But this time I did not keep aloof. I found she was as simple and gay and friendly as her face. She was completely extrovert, amused with life and taking things as she found them. Maybe it will be good to return to Rennes and that essential sensual innocence of the seventeenth century ever and again. Maybe it might be better if men and women never met except incidentally, and were not obliged by all sorts of secondary considerations to pursue and enslave each other. How little they would know about each other, how freely their imaginations would dance in their duet and how brightly and lightly they would love each other! I slept at last very sweetly in Rennes. I slept late this morning. I was reluctant to leave the place but I did not want to spoil it by remaining over long.

I am writing this last note to my book now in the Paraclete Hotel, Alencon, on the way to settling up my affairs in Paris. I came on here in the late afternoon, dining very simply but agreeably, drinking some excellent claret and avoiding that tete de veau.

My plans are quite definite. I am going to dispose of our apartment and all its chic and oriental furnishings, throw out the Schweitzers, reinstate the Benniels as my cook and chauffeur in a bachelor flat after my own heart, and then return to London for a time to work hard, to work really hard and put things into an altogether bolder and more definite shape.

I am, I perceive, by all current standards, a moral pachyderm, for in spite of all that has happened, in spite of the death of Dolores and loneliness and futile love impulses and a deepening realization of my own essential triviality, I find myself emerging today into a state of contentment with Brittany, myself and the universe.

(‘Mais, M’sieu! Votre deuil!’)

Contentment it is, peace of the nerves and steadiness of purpose. The peculiar magic of this road has not deserted it. I came along it sixty-odd days ago in a state of hope and elation that was then inexplicable, and I find myself still remembered. I have seen half of it now in reverse and it is just as pleasant in reverse and more golden

than ever, a road of complacency and benediction.

8

Since I started out upon this road my life, my circumstances, my habits of thought, seem all to have been made over. How can I estimate the change as yet? I have found myself out and come to a new veracity. It is good to have this probable crime sticking in my mind. I am released not only from the immense entanglement of Dolores but also from a certain pedantic private scrupulousness that was half timidity and indecision, and from what threatened to become a rather clammy sentimentality about Lettice. There was a grain of rightness, a needle point of penetration, in Dolores' hostility to that relationship. How she would have rejoiced at my absurd disappointment! All that is to the good.

I have, I realize, no sorrow and no remorse whatever about the death of Dolores. It has an effect of being not so much a fact as the sudden removal of a fact. Even if my curious suspicion about that Semondyle is justified, still I have neither regret nor remorse. If I were to be put back to the moment when I finished writing about the fisherman and his reflections upon womankind, and went along to the corridor to her, would I do it — if I did do it — again?

I would.

Yes. Even if I did not do it then, now after reflection I should certainly do it quite deliberately. I am happy, I am glad beyond measure to find myself free from her and to think that she is free from herself.

It has turned out so well. There was nothing more left for Dolores but to go on and on from bad to worse, getting harder and sharper and viler. No one could help her. She was damned. She was Calvinistically damned from the very beginning. She had already become like a dust eddy on a sultry day, no good even as ventilation. She would have made an incredibly awful old woman. They might have treated her as a madwoman. She and the world have been saved that anyhow. I am sorry for her; but it is her way of living I am sorry for and not her dying. She has ceased from troubling, the fever of her appetites is appeased, her insatiable boasting perishes with her, she

sleeps and now she will hurt and be hurt no more.

In the case of *Stephen Wilbeck versus Dolores* I condemn both parties, with a recommendation to mercy. Each had a wicked heart and if she was an uncontrollable scream, he was a deadly self-protective companion for her. If she was pseudo-oriental and addicted to every extremity of emotional exaggeration, he had a heart as cold as it was light. It was easy for him to turn away to that 'work' of his — which you will note has changed considerably in the telling as his tale has unfolded. He liked many things in her and he owed a considerable stimulation to her. That he would have admitted if she had let him.

In the serenity of another world, some still dream-world of motionless skies and tall rocks and trees and mirroring lakes, we two people might even come to condone one another.

In passing, that is. If we went into particulars old sores would reopen.

Soon the still lakes would be ruffled by catspaws. The motionless skies and trees would be troubled, they would begin to sway about, clouds would gather and leaves fall. There would be uneasy sounds everywhere where silence had reigned...

In the distance I should hear Bayard yapping once again. I should hear the old life reassembling itself.

THE BROTHERS

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I. — IMPORTANT CAPTURE

§ 1

The immense beauty of the starry night seemed lost upon the man at the window. His attention was concentrated on the gap in the black hills far below him and far away, where a quivering blood-red glow marked the burning suburbs and gardens of the beleaguered city. The smoke flickered still with gun-flashes, and the crepitation of the rifle-fire rose and fell and never ceased altogether. Every now and then a momentary incandescence intimated a fresh extension of the conflagration. But the big guns had desisted. Gammet's attack had been held. Gammet was done for.

"High time too," thought the man at the window. "And when Gammet has been cleaned up, then I will take the city."

Richard Bolaris got up and began pacing the dim room. It was a large, fairly proportioned room and it was lit only by a couple of candles in silver candlesticks on the gigantic writing desk. Otherwise the whole place was in darkness because of the possibility of an air-raid from the Reds. The huge vulgar furnishings of Orpedimento, the great wine merchant, the nominal owner of this château which Bolaris had requisitioned, achieved a sombre dignity in the obscurity.

Bolaris was the latest and newest of strong men, he and the Reds under Ratzel had torn their vague-minded countrymen into two warring swarms, and slowly he was winning his way to an unqualified dictatorship. He had been waiting impatiently for this final opportunity. Gammet had been the chief piece in the King's defence and the piece was now practically lost. Bolaris knew exactly how to behave and what to do next day. The trusty Handon should see to all the details. Gammet had asked for this offensive, staked everything upon it. Bolaris had acted doubt, argued cunningly, and bowed at last as if in submission to Gammet and the King. Now he would strike. He would face nothing but a clutch of disgruntled men.

"You have thrown away the fourth army," he would say. "Incapacity in itself is a crime, but this is more than incapacity; it is sabotage, as I shall prove — treason unashamed."

Handon would have seen to it that the guards were all right, and the morning after, when that poor disingenuous royal fool asked after Gammet, he would find that Gammet was shot already, and that there was nothing under his feet or above his head or to the right of him or to the left of him or before him or behind him in the whole world but the power of Richard Bolaris. And, after his quality, he would pretend to be grateful for the vigilance of Bolaris. And he would bide his time. He was a great man for biding his time, was the King.

Physically Bolaris was not a tall man, but he was broad-shouldered and his head was a fine one, a wide forehead above clear hazel eyes and a slightly impish clean-shaven face. His nose was short but well modelled; his mouth and chin finely made and free of any suggestion of the strong man's jowl. He wore an open- necked shirt and a belt about his civilian trousers, but he kept the men about him up to the mark in their uniforms.

He rehearsed the projected scene and tried a variation or so. Then he dismissed the matter from his mind, touched a stud on the desk, and returned slowly to his seat at the open window. He could rest for a time until the reports from the front came in.

A door far up the room opened and the secretary on duty appeared on the threshold between two sentinels. "I'll take anything that is not extremely urgent in the map room in about an hour," said Bolaris, and the bright vertical oblong of the door thinned out and vanished.

"Ah!" said the dictator in the tone of a man who feels his task accomplished. He shook his finger towards the long slopes that hid the city. "I give you a fortnight more, Ratzel. And after that we will have the Corporate State here too and here, mind you, that will be — whatever I want it to be."

§ 2

Power and more Power. The King unfortunately would have to remain. That went without saying. But side by side with the crown there must be a new title. Why not take a leaf from history and try the Lord Protector? Or something new? The Master Citizen?

And Catherine Faress? She had always been loyal — and

sometimes very wise. Bolaris was no egotist. He could admit good advice when he got it. Was she always to remain in the background? Was the Master Citizen always to hide his woman in this shamefaced manner from the world?

Patience. That too he would manage.

The gentle trill of a telephone roused him from his reverie.

"Yes?"

He knew Catherine's inimitable voice even before she said: "It's your Black Cat speaking. With nothing very important to say."

"What is it?"

"Just something silly. Just something I can't say in common words. Something very sentimental. Have you forgotten Lampobo?"

Lampobo was a little language they had invented six years ago when they were lovers in exile in Lugano, to hide their nationality and puzzle observant people in their hotel.

"If any one listens in to our love talks," he replied, "they have the best chance in the world of standing against a wall." And then rather haltingly in that half-forgotten lingo, he added: "Yes. You see I remember — I don't forget things about you."

"Don't flirt," said she. "It isn't that. Something very important—"

"What is it?"

"Ratzel has been taken prisoner."

Bolaris whistled softly. That was a queer turn of events. "How?" he asked.

"No particulars. Number Four wants you to know. Number Four knows but other people don't. Knows who it is, I mean. The men who took him don't know. Listen hard. Don't ask me questions. Number Four came to me and asked me to tell you. Afraid direct to you would be tapped. Said you ought to know before any one else."

"Good old Handon," whispered Bolaris to himself.

Then to the telephone and dropping the little language: "Where are you, darling?"

"In the little house beyond the hospital."

"I've eaten nothing today practically. Could you give me a supper? Things have gone very badly today and I need consoling." And dropping back into Lampobo: "Number Four and the prisoner too."

“All your desires shall be satisfied,” said the lady with a coy laugh that sounded quite natural. “Darling.”

Bolaris replaced the telephone and went towards the door clapping his hands loudly. It opened and two sentinels stood at attention and then the young secretary appeared. “I’ll take the reports in the map room,” said Bolaris. “Is the intelligence officer there? Afterwards I’ll go to the fourth hospital for a surprise visit. Have the three cars ready, the pilot car, the armoured car, and the whippet with the gun. And then — —”

He seemed to consider. “I’ll ask Madame Farness to give me supper. She’s close by. Will you tell her? You know her telephone number. And telephone me there if I have gone on from the hospital.”

The secretary tried not to look too understanding. It would be quite unnecessary, he knew, to telephone to the hospital.

Bolaris entered the map room with an elation he did his best to control. “None too good, I’m afraid,” he said to the intelligence officer. “Tell me what you know. I was against it all from the beginning but the King overruled me. God grant there’s been no serious loss of men or material. I hope not. It seemed to me the attack petered out. Do you know what it is burning down there.”

§ 3

The three cars, using no lights, travelled slowly down through the dark woods below the château, and more swiftly over the flank of the mountain, above the darkened encampments of the Black Legion and the old ninth regiment. In the open the road became more plainly visible as a faint streak on the grey starlit ground. Ever and again there was a challenge, a halt, and the scrutiny of an electric torch. They passed through a silent and deserted village and between a mile-long row of still, dark poplars, until the white walls of the old convent turned hospital were reached. There was no pretence of calling there. Bolaris, with his cars and escort, passed straight on through the gates of the little villa beyond and descended at the entrance.

Two sentinels appeared from the shadow of the portico and saluted. A tall dark woman in a white dress appeared in the doorway. It was in the spirit of the night that he should speak in an undertone.

"They are here?" he asked.

"Both," she said. "The prisoner under guard downstairs."

He followed her into a room lit by a single paraffin lamp. There were provisions on the table and plates and knives, and in the corner stood Handon, in a khaki uniform, a stout figure with an open ruddy face, who saluted his master as though it was a pleasure to do so.

"Tell me about it," said Bolaris. Each of his interlocutors looked at the other to begin.

"You ought to see him," said the woman.

"You certainly ought to see him," echoed Handon. They seemed preoccupied with some idea beyond the facts he knew.

"How was he taken? When?"

"Early this morning. They blundered into the Black Legion."

"They?"

"He was with some officers. If you can call them officers. Commissars perhaps. They just rode into our scouts."

"You saw it?"

"Yes. I suppose they were planning some scheme for swinging round on our left, through that gorge that runs towards the river. They didn't know how far our front extended. Our fellows were coming down the gorge and these Reds came out on the bank, not twenty yards away. They wheeled about and he lost control of his horse. He seemed to be a damned poor rider."

Handon stopped short, shocked at himself.

"Not the only one in this war," said Bolaris, with a grin. "Don't apologize."

"He got on the edge of the bank and his horse slipped down it, rolled right down, horse and man, and our chaps were on him in a moment. We could see he was important at once from the way the others came back for him. No good. It was a hundred to one. They vanished over the bank and were a quarter of a mile off before any of our men could scramble up for a shot at them."

"And it's Ratzel?"

"It's surely Ratzel. You know there's always been a story he was

like you. He's *extraordinarily* like you."

Bolaris turned to the woman.

"He's extraordinarily like you," she confirmed. "It's fantastic. I ought to know. When they brought him here first, I thought it was some mystification of yours. I tried him with Lampobo. Yes. He's as like as that."

"If I don't eat I shall drop," said Bolaris and poured himself a glass of wine. All three sat down about the table and Catherine played hostess to the two men.

"He is as like as that," Bolaris repeated with his mouth full of chicken. "It gives me a sort of fellow feeling for him. Maybe we'll have to shoot him. He's the backbone of this defence. It will knock the stuffing out of them. All the same if he's hungry... "Let's have him up. A man talks all the easier for a few glasses of wine. I've never believed in those third-degree methods of yours, Handon. Bring him up and stand him there at the end of the table with two of your men behind him. And two at the door. Window all right? Put a man outside there. Light some candles over there and there. It wouldn't do for Catherine's lamp to go out suddenly and leave us in the dark. They say he's a resourceful devil. And if I think proper I'll ask him to supper." His quick eyes ran round the room. "That's all right," he confirmed.

"Yes."

II. — THE PRISONER

§ 1

Their resemblance had certainly not been exaggerated. Ratzel came in with a look of resolute resistance on his face, which changed to blank astonishment as he looked at Bolaris. He was wearing an open red shirt, which differed only from his captor's in its colour. His hair was longer; he was disarmed and his hands were tied. He was the first to speak.

"I'll be damned!" he exclaimed.

"Shot first, you'll be," said Bolaris. "What do you mean by looking so infernally like me?"

"I might ask the same question."

"It's my place to ask questions."

"Coincidence. Can we by any chance be related?"

"I say *I* ask the questions. What is your name:"

"Robert Ratzel."

"Age?"

"Thirty-four."

"Place of birth?"

"Hulkingtown, Missouri."

Bolaris became silent.

"We are related," said Ratzel suddenly.

"No! Speak when you are spoken to."

"But we *are*. I begin to realize—"

"Tell him not to talk," said Bolaris to the man beside the prisoner. The guard made a prompt movement.

"I won't talk," Ratzel volunteered. An awkward silence descended upon the room. Every one was looking very intently at Bolaris.

"I am a native-born citizen of this country," he said as if addressing a considerable audience. "I have never been in the United States of America. Never. I cannot even speak English, while the prisoner, as you will note, speaks our language with a marked English accent. Yes. Yes. An American accent. It's very similar.

Well, I have stopped him on the verge of claiming kinship with me on the strength of our certainly very remarkable resemblance. Our superficial resemblance. I can quite understand his motives.. It will do him no good if he does."

Ratzel seemed about to speak but Bolaris held up a hand to silence him, a gesture reinforced by the guard, who gripped the prisoner's wrists.

"Let go," said Bolaris. "I trust his discretion."

He reflected on his course of action.

"It looks to me," he said, "as though you could do with a little food and drink. I myself want to go on eating. I will put you on your parole, eh? And you will join us? I mean you will join our meal."

Ratzel nodded.

"Release his hands. Sit down, sir."

Catherine filled a plate with chicken, white nut, and pimento, and handed it to one of the guards to put before her guest. There was a prolonged pause in the conversation. The men ate. The lady was smilingly but silently hospitable. Bolaris seemed to be considering his next move. When it came, it had an amazing quality of irrelevance.

"I wonder," he said, "if this country is ever likely to produce a literature comparable to any of the great European literatures. What do you think, Ratzel? Or don't you take an interest in that sort of thing?"

Ratzel stopped short with an attractive mouthful on his fork. He replaced it on his plate. After staring for a moment at his captor, he glanced at Catherine, who was watching him with a faint smile in her eyes. His expression of surprise gave place to one of bright response.

"If that's your game," he seemed to decide, "I can play it. "A lot of European literature," he began, in a voice and with a manner that sounded almost like a parody of Bolaris, "is very much overrated. In fact almost all literature is overrated — in comparison with what is possible. Hitherto literature has been essentially aristocratic or bourgeois. It has been written mainly for people who wanted to feel secure, to please and reassure them. It has been leisure reading. Bric-a-brac. Tapestry. Stylistic or gentlemanly sham — careless. The English Jane Austen is quite typical. Quintessential I should call her.

A certain ineluctable faded charm. Like some of the loveliest butterflies — with no guts at all. But here and now, we are tearing up life by the roots and anything we write — when we get to writing again — will be fundamental-vital, black, red, vibrating... “ The speaker resumed his interrupted meal.

The two listeners at the table heard this cultured speech with ill-concealed astonishment. They looked at the speaker, they looked at Bolaris, and remarked the similarity of the smile upon the two confronted faces. Then Catherine glanced at the guards for any gleam of comprehension. But the guards, who manifestly did not understand a word of it all, had assumed expressions of disciplined dignity.

“When we have settled up with your atrocious attempt to assist in carrying the world back to the dark ages,” Ratzel resumed — he took a large mouthful— “our boys will write. I think they will write well.”

“If we let them,” said Bolaris.

“This is the seventh grand attack you have made. Tell me about it.”

“I shall be in the city in a fortnight.”

“I knew it would fail.”

“You didn’t, I gather, see very much of it.”

“No. But I knew your foreign friends with the tanks wouldn’t like the idea of coming through those open fields in the centre when they realized we had irrigated them carefully every night. There’d be, I felt — well — indecision ... Did we capture most of those tanks or did the funk begin before they had come on far enough? Did we get most or only just some?”

“The attack was none of my planning,” said Bolaris.

“Many?”

The question went unanswered. “Why you had your Black Legion up in the air out of the game on our right I can’t imagine! It might as well have been bathing at the seaside for all the good it was.”

“Anyhow it got you.”

“You got me. How could a sane man have expected them out there? But it does not matter. I shall hardly be missed. No man is indispensable in a popular mass defence. The enthusiasm in the city is invincible. You can hardly imagine it.”

“I don’t imagine it. I know all about it. Their discipline is atrocious.”

“They don’t loot,” said Ratzel. “They kill priests.”

“Each side kills priests nowadays. When they get in the way, and they do get in the way.” Bolaris went off at a tangent again. “What has happened to the Royal Galleries? There were some very beautiful things in them.”

“Your imported bombers were careless and ignorant. But most of the best things are well taken care of. Do you know the Galleries at all? There was a long narrow gallery of late Italian and French heroic stuff. The art director — and how I agree with him! — left that to the last, and one of those new incendiary bombs they have sent you now, got it. I have always disliked that sort of painting myself, Rapes of the Sabines, the Looting of Corinth, and all that stuff. Always reminded me of turning out linen for the laundry — sprawling naked women instead of nice ordinary soiled linen. We all have our likes and dislikes.” He returned to his plate with the air of a man who does not wish to monopolize a conversation.

“I know very little about pictures,” said Bolaris modestly, and proceeded to disprove the statement by a dissertation on painting that would have been a model for an English University extension lecture or any small all-about-art-in-half-an-hour handbook (*q.v.*). Occasionally the prisoner interjected an intelligent remark, but for the most part he nodded and ate. Then abruptly Bolaris came to an end. He consulted a wrist watch and signalled to the two guards, who came to attention. Ratzel finished his wine appreciatively and stood up.

§ 2

Bolaris lifted his glass to his departing guest. “I am sorry you have to return to your quarters downstairs. They are far from perfect — but civil war is always uncivilized. A class war more particularly so. No chivalry. Later on maybe I may have to shoot you. But I do hope that before then we may have a chance to resume what I have found a very agreeable conversation indeed. War would be intolerable

without such occasional interludes.... The prisoner was led out. Directly the door had closed upon Ratzel, Bolanris's manner changed.

"Get outside," he said to the remaining guards, and Catherine and Handon shifted closer to him because they felt that what he had to say would not be said too loudly. Catherine's expression was one of anticipatory appreciation; Handon's intimated a hopeless curiosity struggling against complete stupefaction.

"*Now*," said Bolaris. "You have been a little puzzled by — what shall I call it — the untimely refinement — the cultured irrelevance of our conversation. But I had to talk about something — or rather I had to talk about nothing. I wanted to look at him. I wanted to look him over. And I didn't want him to talk to me. I wanted to draw out our resemblances and differences. I wanted to note any distinctive mannerisms he had — for a good reason. I wanted time to think about what to do next — with him in front of me. And the curious thing is that he came more than half-way to meet me. He took my point very quickly. He was quite ready to play the man of culture, reluctantly at war. Just as I might have done. I couldn't catch him saying anything or moving in any way that was distinctive between us. Could you? I'd heard we have a resemblance. But this is a Double."

"It is incredible that—" Catherine was beginning, and then she caught a warning glance in his eyes. "What do you think of it, Handon?" she asked.

"I don't like him," said Handon compactly. "I disagree."

"One thing I noted," said Catherine. "His accent *is* American."

"And I?"

"You have no accent. Why should you have?"

"You don't like him, Handon?"

"He's sinister."

"But my double?"

"He *looks* like you," said Handon, and paused before he added, "but, mind you — he isn't you."

"Yes," said Bolaris slowly, with an air of receiving a very important statement. "I think that is... probably... correct."

"He is completely different," said Handon. "I can see through

him.”

“And you see?”

“A Red. Everything we are fighting against. Everything you stand against.”

“That may well be,” said Bolaris deliberately. “All the same there is something about him, some possibility, some opportunity. It is well you sent for me as you did. Your instincts, Handon, are always sound. I feel — what do I feel: Handon, I feel that I haven’t got it — and yet that it’s just at my fingers’ ends. If he is like me, I am like him. That opens — possibilities. For example — away there, nineteen miles as the crow flies, like all the secrets of the defence.”

“But what do you mean?”

“To talk to those fellows! To see it from their side! That would be something.”

“You mustn’t dream of impersonating him!” cried Handon. “If you leave us — even for a day —

“You would carry on. I could trust the Five.”

“But if something new arose? And if they spotted it and got you? They wouldn’t hesitate to shoot. Think how they shot Mand. And with everything — as things are.”

“I’m not going to do it. But I want to turn all these possibilities over in my mind. You must trust me to do that. I want to see him some more — worm things out of him.... Anyhow I want to stay here.... And all the time things are happening at the château.” He lowered his voice.

“There is a particular thing, Handon, I want said to the representative of a certain foreign power about those new tanks. I’m a little doubtful about that slim youngster, the new assistant secretary. I want it brought home to our friends that if they *will* insist on keeping their own men in those tanks — who don’t know the language, who can’t question a peasant, who can’t find their way about, who don’t care a damn for our cause — they are bound to keep bunched up, and if they bunch up they can be laid for. As they were today. Very gently but very firmly I want that said. Between ourselves it wasn’t really Gammet’s fault. So far as the loss of the tanks goes. But that’s another question. Until our men are in those tanks, Handon, the confounded contraptions are part of a potential

army of occupation. The King would as soon be nursed by a foreign army as nursed by us. I want someone who has this in mind to be at the château when our good friends ring through. And at the same time I've got this sense of something immensely important here. I want to be here."

"I could go back," said Handon.

"Take the cars and send them back for me."

"But I don't like leaving you."

"I know. When you're not about nowadays, Handon, it's like leaving one's right hand upstairs."

"You'll do nothing rash with that fellow?"

"Really, Handon!"

"Forgive a loyal anxiety. In my instincts, in my bones, I distrust him."

"I stretch out my right hand where it is most needed." Bolaris got up and, clapping his hand affectionately upon his adherent's shoulder-blades, steered him towards the door.

§ 3

Bolaris and Catherine stood at the small window beside the portico of the villa and watched the cars pause for a moment to check with the sentinels and then vanish one after the other through the gates. Bolaris laid his hand on Catherine's farther shoulder and drew her face towards his own, a familiarity he would never have allowed himself in the jealous presence of Handon.

"That gets rid of him," he said.

She let her cheek touch his ever so lightly. But Bolaris, she perceived, was not in the mood for making love that night. He was thinking of Handon.

"Handon," he said, "is the perfect lieutenant, the ideal disciple, the loyalest of the Five."

She thought for a moment. "You make people like that."

"I never made Handon. He was born, not made.... Darling, when at last we are in the city and the whole country is ours, and I have settled certain little affairs of which you know, then, I suppose, you

think, as everybody thinks, that I shall be dictator, a real dictator, and do just exactly as I like."

She was quick to take his meaning. "There will be Handon, of course," she said.

"There will be Handon," he said softly. "There will be all the Five. There will be the Bands, the Inner Circle, the Boys. There will be all that I have said because I wanted to hear how it sounded, and all that I said because I knew it would win them. And all that I have been to them and all that I am to them. A man fettered from head to foot in what is expected of him. His own slave. I shall have to do what is expected of me at every turn. As much a sacrifice as one of those magic kings you read about in Frazer's *Golden Bough*.... Catherine, dear, the other night I had a dream. It was a triumph. I was on the balcony of the palace above the great square over there, and they were cheering me and cheering me. Silver trumpets. Banners. Waving flags. Crowds as far as the eye could reach. And a sort of horror of myself came upon me. I found I was not moving myself. I was being moved. My nerves had become wires. I was made to lift up my hand and salute the crowd. I was caught. I was frozen. I had become an automaton. ... And then quite suddenly I was alone with you. I was weeping, my dear; I was kneeling at your feet between your knees and weeping in your arms. As I did — you remember that time? I was doing it because that is what I felt like doing and not what I had to do. And then — outside — the cheering had changed to howling."

She kissed him very softly.

"And now," he said, abruptly withdrawing his arm, "for my brother."

"Your brother?" she cried.

"Obviously my brother."

"But *how*, your brother?"

"I don't know. *He* does. I want him to tell me."

"Your *brother*!"

"Worse than that. Dearest! — my Twin. No one must know, of course. We must hush it up. No dictatorship could stand it for a moment. Think of Handon! Oh, my dear! think of Handon!"

Bolaris was seized by laughter. The sentinels outside heard him

and exchanged glances of amazement. She loved his swift changes to laughter and her heart within her laughed. For he had scarcely laughed at all since his first repulse before the city. He had been dark and moody.

"Handon's whole soul is fighting against it now! The devotee, the fanatic, the soul of loyalty! The psychological struggle going on in that car up the hill must be stupendous. Twins! It is something he will *not* believe — cannot believe. Not even half-brothers. Not even mere brothers. Never will that frightful realization get into his head — unless it is driven in with a nail and hammer. The obvious was already fighting for life in him — and losing, when he talked just now. How could he, how could any one of his quality, be devoted to a *Twin*! *You*, my dear, were slightly shaken. Oh, yes! you were. There was a faint recoil. Don't I know? *You'll* get over it. But for him! Two of me! And one of them on the other side! It would give his poor wits a sort of permanent squint. From the very moment he set eyes on Ratzel he realized that such a being was intolerable. Impossible. Ratzel, he feels, is sheer blasphemy. Taking my likeness in vain. A revolting caricature.... If Handon can contrive to kill him, he will. Mark my words. Shoot him and bury him and forget about him. Or rather not forget about him, but go on to a story that in no respect was it possible to mistake him for me. Ratzel will become shorter — very, very, *very* ugly — sinister."

He clapped his hands for an officer.

"Bring the prisoner to me in the room upstairs. I want to question him in private."

III. — TWIN — DESTINIES

§ 1

As soon as the guards who had brought up Ratzel had taken their places outside the door, Bolaris left the window from which he had been watching the glare of the distant conflagration as it fluctuated between the black silhouette of the motionless agaves, and came and sat on the settee beside his prisoner. Catherine Farness stood questioningly, unsure whether her presence was wanted.

"Come and sit by us," said Bolaris, putting a chair for her. "This maybe is one of those matters where your wits are better than mine. Look at him! Can you doubt he is my twin brother?"

"But I thought you denied—" began Ratzel.

"I did. I had to. For reasons of state. I lied. I hate lying — it's the dry rot of politics. But you were on the point of saying too much. I had to shut you up at once. I said I was never in the United States of America. Well, I was in the United States. My story begins as a foundling in New Orleans thirty-two years ago. My age was guessed at as about one year ten months old."

"Thirty-four. Then that clinches it all. I had a twin brother."

"That was what I didn't want you to blurt out.

"Exactly. I understand perfectly. I had a twin brother. I have one now, I realize. My long-lost twin brother. It's melodramatic. We ought to burst into a duet about it. Thirty-two years ago was the great flood year. Gods, what floods they must have been! It was the ruination of a whole country. The waters rose so suddenly at Hulkingtown that our mother couldn't get back to the house — she had waded and clambered out to the store. I suppose you and I were left in different beds or in different rooms. Anyhow the man who carried me out — he had to jump for the boat when the house collapsed — thought I was the only kid in the shack. My mother told me about it a hundred times. It was always on her mind. How she got to the embankment above the house and how she stood screaming against the wind and the rain: 'Two of them! Two!' Nobody heard her. It was three days before she could find where I was and claim

me. You and the house went swirling off. Heaven knows how you weren't drowned. The shack was surely smashed somewhere near down the river. Did you get in a box? Did you get into a cupboard or something?"

"I haven't the faintest idea. It was only when I was seventeen or eighteen, as a result of a violent quarrel between my foster father and his second wife, that I learnt I was a foster child. I remember nothing of America. Nothing. I grew up here. I doubt if I know three hundred words of English. I had always supposed I was the actual son of General Bolaris. He and his wife were in New Orleans at the time of the floods, they were coming home from South America, they had thought of adopting a child, and they adopted me. What happened to you?"

"You got a bourgeois education."

"I had a good education. I went to the University here." He nodded casually towards those faraway flickerings. "I had a time in the Military Academy and then I tried journalism and politics."

"Life wasn't as easy as that for me," said Ratzel.

"Tell me about your mother," said Catherine Farness.

"*His* mother too," said Ratzel smiling. "She was, as people say, the best of mothers. But she really was the best of mothers. Rather big, blonde, plucky, excitable, devoted. And no luck. She died when I was twelve years old."

"Odd! *My* mother died when I was twelve years old," said Bolaris. "Or rather my foster mother. It's a little difficult to adjust all at once to the new situation. For all those years she was in effect a very real mother to me. What was our father like?"

"I never knew him. He was engineer on a river steamboat and he was drowned before I can remember much about him. My mother had a hard time, scraping a living down there in the South. She tried to get me educated. First in Louisiana and then in Georgia. Not so easy. Poor whites is what they called our sort. I was precocious. I tried to get north. Not so easy for a sweated worker. They won't let you go. Never mind about those early struggles. I knew pretty bitterly what it was to be a proletarian before I was fifteen. Then I had luck — *I* broke my leg and was put into Glegges Hospital down at Red River and I got away from there."

“You broke your leg when you were fifteen?” said Bolaris. “I broke my leg when I was fifteen. I’m beginning to believe in horoscopes. We were born under the same stars.”

“Roughly maybe. I’m not superstitious. I’ve noted in a lot of things that Coincidence seems to be carrying on an everlasting guerrilla war against Probability — but it never amounts to anything practical. Anyhow, the more you believe in horoscopes the better for me. You won’t be in such a hurry to put me up against a wall and finish me.”

“There will be a strong disposition on the part of my associates to put you up against a wall anyhow, as soon as they know who you are.”

“I understand that.”

“You can’t let that happen,” said Catherine Farness to Bolaris.

“You don’t frighten me with an imaginary horoscope,” said Bolaris. “If he’s truly my brother he’ll quite understand if he has to be shot and behave like a gentleman. But we aren’t talking about putting against walls just now. What happened in that hospital”

“I got hold of books. I was always a glutton for books. But the point is that it was possible to get away north from there. Then indeed I read.”

“*I* was reading when I was fifteen, sixteen, seventeen. Fermenting with ideas. I was a bit of a socialist for a time. It’s wonderful what a boy does in those years. Learns a universe.”

“He learns a universe,” said Ratzel. “And judges it.”

“A bit prematurely?”

“When you start as a Southern town factory worker, you soon get the gist of the evidence,” said Ratzel.

“*Against*,” said Bolaris.

Ratzel considered that for a moment. “Possibly there is something in that,” he said.

Catherine Farness was an alert intelligence glowing between them and she brightened at his concession. And now they began a talk. But no book can do justice to a talk about ideas if it gives what is said verbatim. They talked with the quick sensitiveness of their common nature, but also they beat about the bush and harked backwards and forwards. Sometimes they lost touch and had some trouble to recover

it. And for the sake of the reader the story-teller must give a foreshortened account of what they said — an arranged talk, all point and gist.

§ 2

"Why are you a communist, Ratzel?" said Bolaris.

"Why did you drop your college socialism. And go over to the Right? You — with our brains."

"Why did you come here? I was adopted and brought — but what brought you?"

"I came with a batch of miners fifteen years ago — to open up the Gorram Mines and show your people how. We got high pay. Even by American rates. They might have got Poles or Belgians, but they preferred us. In the long run they reckoned we should give less trouble. We were picked over — hundred percent Americans — guaranteed free from all revolutionary ideas with an inborn hatred in fact of radicals and Reds. So they thought."

"Their mistake."

"In a way. Fifteen years ago that was. In those days the words communism or socialism didn't cut much ice in America. We thought Revolution was a game for Wops and Dagoes. Why! in those days we despised the English workers for being on the dole. Funny to think of that now. We Americans, I realize, more and more, are the most lawless and revolutionary people on earth — but we don't like to give it a name. In our bones we know we are really a new people — and it frightens us. Americans will sail at top speed towards socialism without a qualm — unless you wave a red flag at them...."

"Maybe it's all the better if they call American realities by American names," said Bolaris. "Your Red jargon, proletariat, dictatorship of the proletariat, bourgeoisie, and so on, and so forth, is about as sloppy a lingo, forgive me, as the human mind ever slipped up upon. Not a classification in it that is sound, not a term that isn't like a thin paper bag full of broken eggs.... Dogmas made by exasperated refugees with chronic indigestion."

"I rather agree with you," said Ratzel, tranquilly. "I've had to

listen to so much more of it than you have. But after a while you don't listen any more to the words and phrases because you hear something behind the words and phrases. Something absolutely real. An indignation."

Catherine spoke. "*We* hate fighting that."

Ratzel looked at her. "You've talked of it already?"

"In a way. Sometimes we hardly need to talk."

"*We* are like that," said Ratzel.

"Don't say I have a double also:"

"No," considered Ratzel. "But there is a sort of parallel."

"Go on with what you were saying," said Catherine. "That is more important."

"Yes," said Bolaris, "it *is* more important.... That indignation.... Human indignation. It's an essential word."

He was evidently trying to get something clear in his mind. The two others waited for him to speak.

"You see," said Bolaris; "there is an indignation on our side."

"Rather like the indignation of a fat dog with a big bone who is sniffed at by an impertinent starving mongrel."

"Not altogether that. No. He got the bone for himself anyhow and there's a whole pack of the mongrels. For all that, brother Ratzel, our two indignations may not be so very different in essence as you seem to think."

"Against stupid acquisitiveness, careless cruelty?"

"Well — what of stupid resentment, stupid vindictiveness? ... Never mind that for the present. There's one or two things between us more important than recrimination. You say that I seem to think this and that. That's interesting. Think, you say. When do you imagine I think nowadays? It comes to me like a blow that I don't think any more. So far as I know I've done no thinking — I've done nothing but scheming for the past two years. Politics, management, war, the next immediate thing and then the next immediate thing. Years ago perhaps I thought. And suddenly I'm thinking again now."

"Yes. It's been much the same with me. We've been so busy..."

"Until this remarkable fact that we two people, who may be almost identically alike inside, find ourselves here in the most direct antagonism... That sets us thinking again in spite of ourselves...

We've just carried on. But am I thinking now? I ask you. Good Heavens! My head's spinning faster and faster. And yet not fast enough for me. I want to talk this out with you and nothing will wait for us to talk. Have you ever thought, Ratzel, how the poor human mind is being left behind nowadays by the rush of events? Not only us. 'Do something,' they say to us, and: 'Tell us what to do! Decide! Decide!' If only these damned scientific men would invent something — a mental accelerator that would make us think fifty times as fast as we do now — and not get fatigued, not get raw and bitter, then we might do something with the world. Well, let us say what we can in the time we have. In an hour and a half at latest I must start back for — up there....

"Now about this indignation of yours — let's get it clear. I began life with much the same indignation. I insist — the same indignation. Remember, I told you, I was a socialist as a student. Do you think I didn't perceive that the mass of humanity was being used up to no good purpose and wasted? What does your indignation amount to? What is it really? The first thing I want to ask you is this: Have you ever tried to estimate the personal element in indignation How far your indignation at your own experience gives it force and substance" He paused. Ratzel smiled. When he spoke he spoke more deliberately than his brother. He was more exact and less nimble. He spoke like one accustomed to be heard attentively and interpreted and misinterpreted by sincere and jealously dogmatic men and women, while Bolaris spoke like a man used to inattentive listeners.

"What you suggest is perfectly sound," Ratzel admitted. "*My* indignation was never disinterested. No. Never. I was indignant primarily because I found myself attacked, threatened with subjugation, and obliged to struggle. It was the amazement and wrath of a child when first it is crossed. I began with tremendous expectations as all young creatures do. And I discovered I belonged to a frustrated class before I was fourteen. I had been given life and I had been cheated of life. My promised world, the beautiful toy ball they taught me about, had been stolen from me almost as soon as it had been put into my hands. I was, I realized, condemned to live in need and humiliation, toiling, wanting, caught in that vile town with not one chance in a hundred thousand of escape. Every one about

me, every one of my sort, seemed to be in much the same plight. So I looked round to find who had stolen my world."

"Wait a minute," said Bolaris. "I know what you concluded had stolen your world — the damned bourgeoisie and all that. Maybe you think it still. But let me ask — myself as well as you — a more essential question. Isn't it possible that this indignation of ours is something deeper in the nature of life than either you or I have supposed? Isn't it in the nature of young life to expect — extremely? To set out to conquer the world? Isn't all new life eager? Isn't all life indignant and fighting? Is any vital activity any thing much more than an indignant struggle? I — I was indignant just as much as you were. Not quite in the same way. Though not as you say a mere mean indignation — the dog with the bone and all that. I didn't feel robbed perhaps but I felt hampered and encumbered. The toy ball wasn't so much snatched from me as punctured, until it shrank to something crumpled and unsatisfactory. I was only to play with it in a certain way — a stupid way. I had liberties on conditions. Mean conditions. It wasn't good enough."

Catherine nodded with the expression of one who sees the solution of a long- pondered riddle plain before her.

"Let me tell my story now that I have begun it," said Ratzel. "I saw the Capitalist System plain, as the world thief. I saw life as a choice between world revolution or life-long slavery. It seemed to me that every one except the robbers must see things like that. The masses would arise, once you opened their eyes, wrench back the world from its exploiters ..."

"And all would be well?" said Bolaris.

"All would be well. I gave myself to the World Revolution before I was eighteen."

"And now?"

"I have given myself to this idea of a World Revolution. The thing is done. Here I am."

"But because you wanted to fulfil yourself," said Bolaris. "You saw frustration in economic slavery. I saw frustration from a different angle. I didn't believe, I don't believe, in the power of these indignant masses of yours to take over and manage affairs. I didn't believe in that solidarity your side is always assuming; your

proletariat seemed to me to be just as credulous, stupid, impulsive, incalculable, as rich people. More, even. I couldn't persuade myself to your mystical belief in mass direction. Were you really persuaded about that? Didn't you perhaps jump rather hastily to an easy conclusion?"

"And how did you jump?"

"To another easy conclusion maybe. But not that one. Since you lived mostly with people who were driven from above, obliged to work and obliged to work in particular unpleasant ways and sometimes even deprived of the work that opened the door for them to even the most elementary satisfactions; while you, I say, had all the odds against you, it was easy for you to take refuge in the belief that, if your sort were only given half a chance to assert itself and take control of things — Heavens, how different it would be! But I wasn't one of the under dogs. I was one of the released. And I saw and knew what released people could do, and all that in the worst sense they were capable of doing. I was brought up among released people, among people who had an air of controlling things, giving directions, military people, lawyers, priests and teachers, newspaper owners, industrialists, and what hit me was not indignation at oppression but indignation at presumption and pretentious meanness and muddle. You thought these people of the Right, as you would call them, were cruel and hard; I knew they were — fatuous. I saw enough of human incapacity to disbelieve in the ability of any sort of intelligent management of our affairs with the normal badly trained stuff of humanity we have today. A director is a director still and a colonel a colonel, even if you call them commissars. But these people here were uneasy and more aware of their own incapacity than your inexperienced rebels. Less conceit and more cowardice and cunning. They want a Strong Man to make them feel safe. Demand creates supply. I seem to give them what they want. I have a certain aptitude for this silly war business and a reasonable share of political trickiness. Anyhow, said I — and that maybe is where the family vanity comes in, Ratzel — the stronger the grip I get upon affairs the less of their foolery need I suffer. I'm told that, away there in the city, your general behaviour has had — a fairly similar flavour."

Ratzel considered. "There has to be a phase — it is fundamental

in communist theory — of trusteeship."

"Your dictatorship of the proletariat, I agree. But God help the trustees! Against themselves. Your trustee in Russia shows more than a hint of moral strain. Eh? But I also have exactly the same idea about myself — of trusteeship, which is roughly that any one else would be worse. At bottom it is *my* frustration I am fighting against. At bottom it is *my* indignation that drives. I am not trying to interpret or reconcile or implement the forces behind me. I'm trying to make them go what I believe to be the sane way. I'd as soon ask my lot to tell me where to go next as the man with the dog would ask the sheep. Is that anything different from what you are doing? Are you *obeying* this indignation of the proletariat or are you *using it*? What shape or direction is there in it to obeys Tell me, Ratzel, frankly brother to brother, now that you have seen your particular brand of indignation sweep like a flame about the world, has it done much more than burn up a certain amount of old rubbish, break up a few old traditions and organizations, smash and break and burn like a resentful child in a tantrum who has got hold of the matches? But *make* — ?

"Is it really a new world you and your communists are making? Anywhere? Moscow? Mexico? North China;"

"Not yet," said Ratzel and then, "but the spirit is there. Hope. The spirit for a new world. We have been so busy fighting your lot. And there is a complicatedness about things."

"The spirit is everywhere — I have it quite as much as you have — but are your lot over there really giving it an *operative form*? That's one of my phrases, brother — operative form. And another which isn't mine — it came from someone on your side — is *competent receiver*. *Competent receiver* and *operative form*; two phrases for two problems that socialism and communism ought to have tackled forty years ago. We know pretty accurately what is going on behind your front. We know about your troubles. All the shooting in the city hasn't been at us. We know how you suffer from the touchy dissentient, the egotist who must assert himself by making difficulties, the disciple who pesters to be persuaded like an amorous woman, the devotee who must never be slighted, the praise-hunters, the asinine 'kicker' who flames into jealousy, who *likes* to flare up

and is proud of it, at any hint of leadership. Quite apart from the fools who are downright rascals, fanatics today and rascals tomorrow. We know of their groups and their — what is your words — deviations. We know of your would-be successors in the city there. Some of them must be getting busy now. But they'll be scared. They want you to win this war for them before they do you down. You all have the same brand of indignation over there, no doubt, just as you have similar heads and feet; you have your proletarian indignation, but it doesn't hold you together in any real co-operation. You're just a crowd of empty *antis* — without a creative idea in common."

"I do my best to discipline the Party," said Ratzel reflectively.

"We know you do," said Bolaris cheerfully. "Lot of fools they are. Don't you want to get up now and then and kick 'em all round *hard*, good and hard, every man jack of them?"

Ratzel's smile returned to his face. "Tell me about *your* lot."

"Just as impossible. If it wasn't for the civil war and their fear of *your* lot, the whole damned dog team would have me out of the sledge and be at each other's throats tomorrow."

Ratzel smiled at Catherine — and his smile was exactly like what she called Bolaris's old-fashioned look.

"Very similar isn't it. *My* lot holds together because they hate your lot, and your lot holds together because they are afraid of mine. But except that *your* lot is Anti-Red, I can't tell what they are up to. We do at any rate *talk* of the classless society and so on. We do dream of something generous and fraternal. But you? Are you monarchist, Bolaris, with a pious loyalty to that sly, futile, pin-head of yours, or are you clerical with a mysterious belief in that unbreakable triplex God who crucified Himself to put the Pope in the Vatican, and who prefers Reds to be shot in heaps and children sweated rather than interfere, or are you on the side of those dreary cash registers who run the mines and transport, or the colonels and majors who just want men to order about, or these grandee landlords of yours with a passion for swagger, slavery, and sex? Which is it, Bolaris? Think of them. You are too close up to them. You should see them from away there in the city. *What* a lot!"

"It *is* a lot, as you say."

“Much worse than yours?” asked Catherine of Ratzel.

“More to blame because they have had opportunities.”

“Less to blame because they have had temptations. If you knew some of the heroisms of our men — !”

Catherine seemed to hesitate. “Maybe,” she doubted.

“Much the same stuff really,” said Bolaris. “Well — I answer you in your own words; I too — I want to discipline my party. I want a humanity chastened and informed and disciplined. *Educated*. Really educated. What we are dealing with, you and I, in ourselves and every one else, is — an untrained, unquickened animal; animal still; a greedy, cowardly animal whose only loyalty is a disguised Narcissism.”

“You speak plainly,” said Ratzel.

“Because usually I do not have to speak at all. That’s my advantage over you.”

“No,” interrupted Catherine suddenly. “You are going too far, Richard dear. You are too hard on our humanity. May I say something? I have played a woman’s part in the world, and that is to look on while things are being done. And learn. The creature is a child — not really a stuck-up monkey but a childish man. It isn’t a wicked old *formed* animal, like an old gorilla or a boar or a crocodile. It’s a cub. No human being really grows up mentally — *yet*. That is the trouble with men and women. They are all infants mentally, physically precocious. They are as greedy, credulous, vain, and heartless as any other young animals. I’m not talking theory; I’m talking biological fact. Yes — I could prove it to you by Axolotl and Amphioxus and gregarious animals and all sorts of established scientific ideas.”

“You’ve been reading biology!” said Bolaris. “What *don’t* you read?”

“Women ought to read. A sacred duty. I read biology. I read psychology. I read everything because I want to understand you. You are my job, Richard dear, just as the world is yours. And things like that I am beginning to understand.”

“Dear governess!”

“But I think that what you say is absolutely right,” said Ratzel turning to Catherine, and Bolaris laid his hand for a moment on

Catherine's because when he called her "governess" he had wanted to call her "mother-mistress," and he had been too shy to say so.

"Human beings *are* children," said Ratzel, taking on her idea. "And we, except in such gleams of sanity as this — when we get three brains working hard instead of one — are children too. When all is said and done about loyalty to the will of the people and so forth and so on, what we do is to manage them." He grinned cheerfully. "As some women manage us.

"No. We would if we could," said Catherine. "But all we with our feminine minds can do is to think in terms of individuals, by and through individuals, and it is you who must be responsible for the whole. Whether it's sound and complete or not."

Bolaris and Ratzel nodded agreement.

"Somehow it seems to me that here perhaps we have the two halves of one scheme. But that may be my headlong imagination," said Catherine.

"Is that so?"

"What have we got in common?" said Bolaris.

"Quite a lot."

"I began by being indignant on my own score no doubt," said Ratzel. "But — at any rate I'm no longer infantile."

"I believe *he* is the nearest thing to a grown man I have ever known," said Catherine. "And you too seem much of an age."

"I am growing up — well and good. I want to see a new world freed from smothered indignation, from the madness that comes out of hope less discontent. I believe that a new world, a fullness of human life, such as men have never dreamt of before, is possible now. But we have still to learn the way to it. There has to be a new education. An education with steel in it. Exactly what you have said. I want to get my hands on power to bring that about, and so do you. I want to discover and mobilize every one in the world who can be made like-minded with myself. And I don't care a rap for the others. Not a rap. Naturally I want to revolutionize all this jungle of industrialism that has grown up about us. That is to say I want a real socialism. I want mankind *drilled* — and I don't care how hard they are drilled — into a proper use of property and money — a proper respect. Respect the work done. Respect the promise which you call

wages. And I don't care if I have to hang every speculator in the world."

"I am as ready to alter all that as you are," said Bolaris. "And my hand, mind you, is nearer the necks of the rich than yours."

"I hate greedy incompetence that has to compel and crush because it cannot direct and govern."

"And so do I. I hate indiscipline."

"And so do I."

"I hate that continual congealing of officialism and professionalism and custom, which is like the hardening of arteries in the state."

"*Well!*" said Ratzel, meeting a new idea there. "Yes, so do I. ... And priests."

"All sane men resent priests," said Bolaris.

"And where do you differ;" asked Catherine.

"We don't differ," said Bolaris. "Evidently when we scrap our catch-words, we don't differ. This isn't a collision, it is a meeting."

"It has been a wonderful meeting," she said. "But the night is passing. Time waits for no man. The cars have been back an hour and are waiting for you, Richard. The children want to go on with their civil war, gratify old grudges, get their revenges, feel important in their uniforms. What is the next phase? Are you going to stop them? What are you two adults going to do?"

§ 3

"Well?" said Ratzel.

"You first, brother. Brother — ?"

"Brother Robert. No, you first. I am corrupted by speaking perpetually to the faithful in their Marxist jargon. I am evasive, redundant, politic. I know it. I tend to gabble away from the question in hand. Think aloud, brother-Brother — ?"

"Brother Richard," said Catherine softly.

"I will. I am virtually dictator now. Gammet is done for. I clean him up tomorrow. The rich people will truckle to me and pay — pay; the King will try to outwit me, with what you call his pin- head; the

generals will applaud me but insist I'm too soft with the men and too hard upon jealous officers; the Church will bless me publicly and mutter. They hate me like poison, but they believe that I, and I alone, can save them from a reckoning with you Reds. Thank Heaven, they have a tremendous idea of you. They believe there may be a Red Judgment yet. That's the nightmare in which I ride to power. You, you Reds, you poor squabbling Reds, keep me in power. If you are defeated, wiped out — Gods! it will be like hounds upon a fox."

"Our positions," reflected Ratzel, "are extraordinarily parallel."

"We depend on one another. We live and die together. Our horoscopes are left and right of the same picture. Catherine, I cannot help it, we have to keep on with the war."

"Until?"

"Until his power there and mine here have been so consolidated ... that we can tell them."

"But what goes on meanwhile? You foster reaction and he a tyranny."

"No. We make nothing really. We foster very little. Perhaps presently we will have a sort of peace, an armed peace, with perpetual snarling and menaces. What is really happening is the birth of a new world, out of mankind, almost in spite of mankind. Our job, his as well as mine, is to liquidate things outworn. Catherine, let us confess the truth, we two men are obstetricians — no less and no more. We may kill the birth- yes, or we may save the birth, or cripple it, but I doubt if we can alter it in any other way. What has to be, has to be — in essence — whatever the accidents. What *he* has to say to his people is: 'Freedom and plenty — yes, but first,' he has to say, 'you must learn self-knowledge, public service, discipline.' What I have to say to my people is: 'Authority and abundance — yes, but first you must give these common serfs, this cheated crowd, comfort, health, leisure, self-respect, and individual hope. There is no authority but competence.' But the real forces that are shaping human life today and driving us all before them are neither in politics nor business. They are in laboratories and drawing-offices on the one hand, and on the other in the spin of the earth, the dust before the wind, the blaze of the sun, the festering germs in the dirt. And certain incalculables. The true dictator of the world is an embracing

necessity. Maybe the ultimate ruler will always be Necessity. Necessity presents us with opportunity. Take it or leave it, she says, but don't pretend to dictate. Whichever side wins or whether we two call it a draw and share the world, necessity will insist now, at the price of utter defeat for our race, upon much the same new industrial organization, much the same new monetary conventions, much the same new classifications of people, much the same distribution of work and leisure, much the same ways of travelling, much the same countryside, and much the same education. Take it, she says, this new world, or refuse it and perish. Politicians like us are just the whippers-in of necessity. The old order breaks up, behaves preposterously. Dangerously. We too have behaved preposterously and dangerously until now here we meet face to face and see the truth through each other."

"Yes," said Catherine and stopped short. They turned to her. "There is still the old riddle," she said. "Who will control the rulers? Who will guard the guardians."

"No one," said Bolaris. Their silence seemed to question him. "All balances and constitutions are provisional things. In the end when they are adult all men are irresponsible. We are going to do what we believe to be right."

"And if presently you give way to fatigue, fear, haste, hatred and anger, vanity?"

"So much the worse for the world and so much the worse for us. Maybe there will be others to take things out of our hands. But there is no helping that irresponsibility. We must judge ourselves now — we are adult men with nothing left to control us. Sovereign adult men. Or are you, Ratzel, still disposed to take orders from the Party?"

"About as much as you are disposed to die for your King."

Catherine brooded. "Yes," she concluded. "That is what growing-up means. You are men. And now, since this talk must come to an end, shall I make a foolish generalization about women? No woman has ever really respected a man who put a law or a leader or what you call love above that innate sense — which is the very essence of manhood — of the right thing that he of himself has to do.... Which is his necessity."

“Under God, the pious would say,” said Ratzel.

“It is God,” said Catherine. Such in effect is what these two brothers and Catherine said and understood in their long talk, and that is the determination they drew out of each other. But the story-teller has stripped and simplified what they had to say, and crossed the *t*’s and dotted the *i*’s, and smoothed out digressions, and filled in several gaps that they with their innate intuitions were able to leap over.

A wordless treaty materialized between them as they talked. They had no doubt of themselves and each other.

§ 4

Suddenly the air quivered with a renewal of the distant gun- fire and the thin bright orange thread of a signal rocket soared across the blue darkness. Both men stood up and looked towards the open window listening. Silence returned. There was not even the distant sound of an aeroplane. No conflagration was visible any longer nor the flash of any explosions. Maybe far away, buried in that stillness, the wounded were being gathered in and the shattered posts and positions reconstituted. Nothing reached the three listeners.

“The cars are waiting,” said Catherine. “What are we going to do?”

“You have to get back to your people, Ratzel. And I have to seize power tomorrow. Nothing can alter that.”

“But how is he to get back to his people?” said Catherine.

“I haven’t even a map,” said Ratzel. “I don’t know any of the ropes here.”

Bolaris stood up. He walked to the window, whistling softly to himself, and stood in a profound meditation. His shoulders showed Catherine that he was counting on his fingers, a trick he had when he was trying out some scheme. He came back to the two seated at the table.

“This isn’t going to be so easy,” he said.

“The cars are waiting,” she remarked.

“For the present, brother Robert, you must stay hidden here. Stand

up and look resentful and a prisoner. Catherine, sit over there, and look at him as though he was poison."

Bolaris clapped his hands for the guards and sent for the officer in command. A young man appeared and saluted. Bolaris scrutinized his face and decided to trust him.

"Something very responsible indeed," he said in a quietly impressive voice. The young officer stiffened and tried not to look elated. "This prisoner is very important. I want you to notice something. Just look at us as we stand together."

He walked across to Robert, stood beside him for a moment and walked back.

"That will do. Let him be taken away." When Ratzel had departed with his guards, Bolaris smiled mysteriously at his subordinate.

"You noticed it?" he asked.

"The resemblance, sir. Yes."

"I have been trying to find out all I can about that individual. Something — never mind what might arise out of this resemblance. I want you to guard him carefully, wait on him hand and foot so to speak, and learn his little ways. Let no one see him — absolutely no one — except yourself and the most trustworthy *stupid* men you have. Make him quite comfortable. I have an idea."

Bolaris acted hesitation, turned to Catherine.

"Could I ask you to tell the cars to be ready downstairs?" he said.

"I think I had better tell you my idea," he began, as soon as he and the young officer were alone. "It is a fantastic idea.... I don't know you. But there is something about you inspires confidence. Suppose presently that man escapes and returns to the city and you help him to escape and go with him. No. Don't be shocked. Wait a moment. Suppose it was not really that man who escaped?" Romantic excitement blazed in the young man's eyes.

"You mean, sir — ?

"Yes. It might be necessary. Find out exactly who and what he is, so that if presently I choose to impersonate him. ... And you come with me... Do you understand?"

"Sir! Such an adventure!" He became speechless.

"Exactly. But now you see how it is no one must see him, no one. No one must come near him. It is my affair. This is the house of

Madame Faress and you are her special guardian. It is a position of great responsibility. She knows something. Not of course what I have told you about my intentions. If she wants to see that man, she may do so. I doubt if she will. But let no one else come near him. Let no one know. No one — however important. Deny even that he is here. Can I trust you? Courage, loyalty, yes — but discretion?"

"Sir! — Try me."

"If any rumours get about — if there are too many fingers in this pie—"

"I quite understand, sir."

Bolaris held out his hand to the overwhelmed youngster.

"It is in your hands," he said.

"Keep your eyes open and say nothing," was his parting injunction to Catherine below. "Tell me anything out of the way that occurs. I shall be back as soon as I can. If you see him at all, see him discreetly. Darling!"

IV. — COUPS D'ÉTAT

§ 1

Events moved quickly at headquarters and the King's palace next day, and for the most part they went according to plan. Bolaris had the man of action's habit of keeping his thoughts in compartments, and his new philosophy of revolution and his project for restoring his brother to liberty remained disregarded in their pigeon-holes until Gammet had been shot and the King, concealing his astonishment and dismay beneath a certain chilly graciousness, had acquiesced in Bolaris's assumption of supreme power. All the Five had played their appointed parts admirably. The *coup d'état* had been planned so well and was executed so neatly that it produced no visible breach in the Anti-Red front. On the afternoon of the second day the group, all its tasks accomplished, assembled in the former dining-room of the Orpedimento château, which was becoming now the council chamber of the new regime. Bolaris kept them waiting for a time. It was his habit to keep them waiting and then appear with an air of having been working intensely on matters a little above and beyond them. But this time he stayed in his own large room upstairs because he felt a novel disinclination to go down to them. The agenda was plain and clear before him. The obvious next step was a concentrated culminating attack upon the Reds in the city that would justify and consolidate his control. He wanted now to delay that ultimate attack as long as possible. He wanted to keep up an appearance of successful driving energy during a phase of essential ineffectiveness, while he worked out the new situation, the new situation within his mind quite as much as the military and political situation which had arisen in the past two days. He had to find plausible reasons for delaying his concentration and he had to make up his mind definitely about Ratzel, not only about his immediate escape but about their subsequent relations. For the two days of the coup d'etat Ratzel had been, so to speak, in a pigeon-hole; now he had to come out again. And directly he was brought out again, he assumed the largest and most unmanageable proportions. They were waiting downstairs. He

sat at the vast writing-desk of the wine king, with its heavy silver equipment — even the three telephones were silver-mounted — and stuck out the fingers of his hand and tried to assign each one of them its particular part in the complex of his problem. But the fingers behaved as though they did not belong to one hand and refused to remain turned down.

"I do not want to take the city.

"But all my prestige depends upon taking the city.

"If Ratzel is killed, I can be in the city in a fortnight, and they know that as well as I do.

"Do they know that as well as I do? If I tell them that we underrate the spirit of the city and the support from outside that is still coming in?

"No. But if we take the city now — with all this foreign support behind us! Shall I tell them we must not take the city until we have our kind friends from abroad a little more in hand?" That finger looked better than the others. It remained bent down.

"Next. Let us continue the patriotic strain. Assume that three-quarters of the city is patriotic *au fond*. Even if it doesn't know it..

"If I propose to double-cross our amiable allies by a deal with the Reds, how will they take it? Which do they hate most? We are supposed to be the patriotic side. But are we?

"Suppose — suppose I tell them I've got Ratzel and that he is a much more reasonable man than they suppose?

"Am I going to tell them I've got Ratzel?

"If I don't tell them now, it will be harder and harder to tell them.

"They will want him shot as publicly as possible, and from their point of view they will be right.

"How far can I afford to strain their confidence in me?

"I might have got Catherine to arrange his escape that very night. *Could* I have done that?

"No use crying over spilt opportunities. Somehow I must fix up some means of communicating with him and get him back to his proper place.

"I will tell them.

"I won't tell them."

He turned to his telephone and rang up Catherine.

“I’m longing to see you,” he said. “I’m damnably tired. I want every sort of consolation.”

And then in Lampobo:

“Use your mother wit, my dear. I don’t care how soon Ratzel gets back to his own side of the lines. I’ve no time to say anything more. Bless you, my dear.”

“I’ll try and see what can be done. It’s difficult,” she answered.

“Bless you, my dear.”

Bolaris took a turn up and down the room to recover his poise and then descended to the dining-room.

§ 2

As Bolaris descended the florid and redundant staircase of the wine king, a duplicated white marble affair lit patchily by big windows of modem stained glass, he was acutely conscious of an unusual indecisiveness and of an unusual sensibility.

“I have been thinking,” he said, very much as a man with a headache might say: “I have been drinking.”

He had a queer feeling that he was not altogether there, as though something had been left behind with Ratzel, and exchanged for something else. Or as if long-neglected parts of his brain had been awakened to an unaccustomed activity. Or as if he had a new sort of stereoscopic vision, seeing round things a little because now he had two heads to see with. All sorts of things that had hitherto been irrelevant to him had assumed an air of not quite explicit significance, and things that he had hitherto gripped unhesitatingly as the business in hand had lost something of their lucid definition. It had never occurred to him before that the wine king’s palace was damnably vulgar, nor that it mattered in the least if it was. Now it came into his head that this pretentious superfluity of marble, with its mounted suits of European, West African, and Japanese mail and its sham Byzantine window saints, really did present something at which Ratzel could point a finger and say: “That’s your capitalist system!” It wasn’t, of course. ...

Bolaris pulled himself back on the verge of a complicated internal

argument, and passed between two saluting sentries into the big dining-room. For an instant in the doorway, the staircase idea made a phantasmal reappearance. What a jumble of weak appeals to ancient prestige, unintelligent acquiescence in grandiose traditions, and large unsubstantial claims to present importance this room presented! The château of a wine-peddling, market-rigging merchant pretending to be a kingly palace! As if any palace had ever been kingly! Could one ever hope to turn this sort of thing into a rational home for human beings? Maybe after all there was something to be said for revolutionary destructiveness, and beginning from the ground upward. While the upstairs room was silver, this was all gilt. Over the fireplace was a vast pseudo-Correggio, very appetizing for the diners, representing Elijah fed by the ravens. The ceiling and walls were fussy with gilt pilasters, cornices, massive mouldings, suggesting imaginary thrusts against quite impossible strains. There was a number of big shining jars of porcelain, on brackets and pedestals.

"The world has always been making big empty jars since Cnossos," he thought. "And sweating and enslaving and murdering to get them.... A civilization of empty pots.... The world made safe for crockery."

These were preposterous ideas to have streaming across a mind that ought to have been clenched like a fist ready to deliver a blow. Criticizing furniture! A chandelier of crystal and gilt glittered from a ceiling rosette, and on either side of the huge hearth gigantic ebony Negresses sustained clusters of electric lights.... The Five, seated with a certain assumption of ease about the central table, were dwarfed by their surroundings. It looked as though they ought to have been larger or that there ought to have been more of them. He advanced across a shining floor space and they rose at his approach.

"Hail, Chief!" said Handon. "You are master at last."

"*Servus servorum*," said Bolaris, standing at the head of the table. "The flag and secularists and our national honour."

"We look to you in all things," said Handon.

"And we have still to take the city," said Bolaris.

"But now we shall take it," said Handon. "Everything comes into your hands. Everything." He seemed to be on the point of saying

more.

"Not yet," said Bolaris dryly, and sat down and surveyed his associates. "Much has to be done before we recapture the city," he said, "and when we have taken it, our troubles are only beginning. ..."

(What a lot they were! And what the devil was he going to tell theme Hitherto he had had the hard concentration of a sportsman when he handled them. He had liked it as one likes playing a game one can play well. He had lapsed long ago into the belief that this game was the best one could do with life; now he was alert with new doubts. Latterly he had fretted at his enslavement to his associates' loyalty, but that had not hampered his treatment of them; now he found himself simply and blindingly disliking and despising them. It would be difficult to control his irritation if anything adverse arose. Handon as usual had everything arranged for either action A, B, or C, but C meant extreme measures, and he did not want that for some time.) He decided to make an apology in anticipation.

"I've not slept for three nights," he said, and swept his hands over his face and stared again at his confederates. What a lot! Who had said that? The voice of Ratzel echoed in his brain. First there was Handon, his stalwart junior by three years, his devoted fag at school, his stooge during their student days, a relentless exacting admirer. Handon had a buoyant physique, an unlimited romantic imagination, and a consciousness of intellectual inadequacy which did nothing whatever to limit his greed for power. Bolaris knew that Handon's hero-worship was largely self-projection. If the man could not dare to set up for dictator himself, the next best thing was to identify himself with the brilliant man who could. He wanted Bolaris to swagger with invincible resolution so that he could be a swaggering shadow. He was the sort of dog who bites the friends of those he loves. He could be counted upon for an unhesitating obedience to orders and an obstinate insistence upon what he considered his hero ought to do and be. Visibly he resented the existence of Catherine. He was bound to be extremely difficult about Ratzel.

Next to him sat the corpulent figure of Istom, the Big Money of the conspirators, the owner of the catalamite monopoly and the native partner in the foreign exploitation of the Gorram mines. His

financial tentacles extended to London, New York, Amsterdam, and were hidden and camouflaged with extreme skill. His puffy face now radiated a genuine admiration for the success of Bolaris; he loved and made up to all successful fellows, but his eyes nevertheless had a certain watchful distrust. He was ready to give to the cause, he could give magnificently at times, but he was inflexibly hostile to taxation or control. He kept his own initiative. He was a born hider. So far Bolaris had never been able to find out what he hid, nor how he hid things, nor what his understandings with his foreign partners were. How far would they come in to help him? Istom lived in great fear of the "Reds," and Reds for him were any people who seemed likely to impair that godlike sense of overpowering wealth which was his particular protection against the humiliations and frustrations of life. Without any visible physical preponderance those massive hoards of his gave him a sense of limitless power. You could intimidate men, play men through their greedy hopes, buy women — practically any woman — buy art, music, space. Provided your spending was uncontrolled. These Reds of his had no relation to the realities of "labour." They were conscience — born phantoms whose captain was Nemesis, and the core of the Anti-Red organization was an alliance of bold, cunning, able men, smaller or greater than himself — mostly, thank God, smaller. They were allied to defend their right, the right of the stronger to a free hand with their fellow-creatures and an unchallenged survival for the winner. They did each other in a lot, good poker players all, but they kept a common front against the commonweal.

"I serve his purpose while the Reds still fight," thought Bolaris. "But the day we are through with the shooting and killing and intimidation in the working-class quarters of the city, ends any use he has for me. It's him I want in handcuffs now. He knows that I mean to get his money at last if I have to cut through his knuckles. Unless he gets me first. He's no fool inside his fat white brain. He too is going to be difficult about Ratzel."

Close up to Istom, as if to assure himself and everyone else of their essential alliance, was the Duke of Carmnavera Credora. He had that narrow aquiline face with large wandering features which is so frequent a result of aristocratic interbreeding. His chin was not an

ordinary chin; it was an heirloom. His dark eyes were irregular and scornful, and the exquisite politeness of his manner to all the world was the quintessence of insolence. He had peculiarly long hands of which he was proud; he had a son who was a criminal cripple of whom he was proud; he had a slight slobbery family lisp of which he was proud; he had syphilis so long inherited and so complicated that it had become less of a disease than a constitutional distinction of which he was proud. His estates covered vast areas; he had ancient castles and palaces and much rare furniture, historical jewels, and priceless paintings, so that Istom's raw grandeurs and art patronage filled him with ill-concealed contempt. Not that he knew much about art, except that he knew that he was right about art and Istom wrong. Whatever he did was right and whatever Istom did was by natural necessity not. His ancestors glittered in history right back to the Byzantine Empire, and where were the Istoms then? He knew of no reason why the future should be different. He was convinced that the real people worshipped his family and were only being temporarily misled by agitators and suchlike mischief-makers, taking advantage of the irritation caused by Istom's excruciating lack of style. No communist was as free from bourgeois prejudices as himself when it came to borrowing, defaulting, betraying, using, and not paying. He would not scruple to sell his palaces, rare furniture, pictures, daughters, mistresses, to the highest bidder, confident that all things come back at last to the place where they belong. He believed Istom was saturated with snobbish admiration for aristocratic quality — or why should he covet palaces and titles? — and that he could twist him round his finger by drawling a little flattery, putting a hand on his shoulder, and calling him "my dear Istom." Just now the Duke had to play a waiting game much as the King did. Why was he not with the King? Well — the King was a weak fool and suspicious in the wrong place. And besides, this so-called royal family was no better than the Duke's. Not nearly so good. Not an authentic trace of it before the eleventh century. And Bolaris? "Double-cross," was the Duke's maxim, "but never distrust." This fellow Bolaris was the sort of clever man you call in to do a job, just as you call in a physician, or an architect, or a locksmith, or a lawyer, or one of those shuffling respectful scientific oddities. Bolaris had to have a free hand for his

cleverness. He had to be dictator. For a time. But dictators come and dictators go; they have no home life, no social tradition, no culture, no innate manners; while aristocracies go on for ever, the chronic beautiful disease, the hereditary syphilis of our species. So Bolaris read him as he sat wearing his mask of aristocratic aloofness, his cynical detachment that hid nothing better in the way of reality than cunning, treachery, and invincible conceit. Could he be detached from Istom? Not in the matter of Ratzel. Wherever the Left held the country, they had divided up the Duke's estates and filled his abject peasants with fantastic ideas about their rights.

"My dear Bolaris!" the Duke had said, "the mischief of the social revolution is that they can do nothing properly. If they were better men than we, no one would be readier to hand things over than I. But how have they been behaving under the Revolution? They just sell my crops, keep no seed corn, gobble up the best pigs and eggs, and seduce their own daughters. It was all so much better when it was done for them. Such a lot of the poor fellows will have to be killed, I'm afraid. Such a lot of them." Not much help for Ratzel there.

Opposite the Duke was Fayle with his white face and his sunken dark eyes. The soul of Fayle had been a matter of profound speculation to Bolaris. He was a religious fanatic. He was an essential saint. He had sublimated his personality in the Church just as Handon had sublimated himself in the Leader. He had made the fretted exaltation of nave and aisle, the clustering still candles of choir and altar, the swinging censers, the chanting processions, the superhuman voice of the organ, the orderly functioning of service, fast, and festival, the prescribed responses, the prescribed genuflexions and motions, his own, a necessary part of his bodily being. The mystery of pain in the crucifix, the pallid saints in chapel and window, stirred no mental processes in him but flushed him with profound spiritual emotion; he did not question them, did not think about them, but he gave himself unreservedly to them. He belonged to them and they to him, and the rest of the world had to prostrate itself to his mystical Church self. Bolaris doubted whether he had the remotest idea of any God above himself or indeed of anything over and outside his Church. The Church was the wonderful, great, and immortal Self he had achieved at the price of his meagre personality.

He was not a priest only because he felt he could serve the Church better and get more out of it in political life. But he was a celibate, and his only use for women was that they should become saints and martyrs. Sex for him was a method of dominance over and persecution of natural desires, a cause for penitence and abasement. To buy him Bolaris had "put the crucifix back in the schools," and it had been a poor bargain. Bolaris had hoped to use his fanaticism against the King's frivolity, against the exploitation of the workers and the oppression of the peasants, but he had underrated the exalted detachment of Fayle's spirituality. The spectacle of deprived and downtrodden human beings aroused envy in him rather than pity, for while he wore his hair shirt with an effort, God saw to theirs. And Ratzel had let his atheist following defile relics, mock at priests, insult nuns, and burn magnificent churches. If Fayle could not hope for a complete restoration of his sacred buildings, there was at any rate the belated wrath of God upon Ratzel to anticipate. No help there.

Lastly, on Bolaris's right sat that stout old soldier, Goodamanas, his father's companion in arms, a gallant lout. He lived not for "service" in deed or anything so abstract, but for the Services. He wanted the army to be a shining sword, and his imagination went no further. Anything that might diminish it, impair its clean brightness, hamper its swiftness, question it in any way, was anathema to him. This, too, was self-projection, but free of the queer sexualized complexities of Fayle. He was chivalrous, he was patriotic; on one or two occasions he had even admired the strategy of "that Red devil" in the city. He was for the dictatorship — and keeping the King in his place — simply out of his hopeless contempt for the royal personality and because of the King's bad treatment of his niece. The King had shown no *esprit de corps*; he was an entirely unworthy hilt for the national blade. Goodamanas had no professional vanity. He had never betrayed hate or affection for Bolaris, but he had played a straight game with him and accepted his leadership without cavil because it was more competent than his own. After all, the son of General Bolaris, legitimate or not, was one of his caste. His grip could be firm but it was never malignant. His attitude to Ratzel might not be a foregone conclusion, and there is nothing military men

dislike so much as the practice of shooting antagonistic generals. Bolaris counted: himself, one; Handon, trustworthy but troublesome, two; and a doubtful Goodamanas, three; something might be done if as Dictator he grabbed the casting vote. Such was the core of the dust eddy of thought that whirled through the mind of Bolaris, in the brief pause before he began to speak.

§ 3

"I want to put my views and intentions about this new situation in which we find ourselves as clearly as possible. It is vital that we should have the completest understanding among ourselves about how things stand, about what we are doing and what we are going to do. Our armies have had a defeat but, to be frank, it is a defeat that is not without its redeeming aspects. It has rid us of a lamentable division of command, and it is not upon our own nationals that the brunt of the loss has fallen. We still hold the initiative in this war and there has been no loss of morale; indeed, the reverse has drawn us all together more closely than ever in our common devotion to the Cause of God, King, and Country."

He bowed his head, and his five associates, with an equal sincerity, bowed in sympathy. "You are saying this in your proclamation;" said Istom.

Bolaris smiled. "Precisely. And it sounds like a proclamation. I prepared that this morning. And now let us get down to some underlying realities that are bound to come to the surface directly the city is in our effective occupation. For I assure you I can certainly be in the city in a fortnight — almost certainly in ten days — and then what?"

"A general clean-up," said Istom. "Reconstruction of industry-business. Solvency will not wait. We have been fighting our way deep and deeper into debt. Production has slowed down. It has been like a heart stopping."

"One or two things take precedence of that."

"The churches, the schools," said Fayle.

"Even of that," said Bolaris.

“The land, I suppose, can wait — and the crops and the seasons,” sneered the Duke with manifest irony.

“First of all,” said Bolaris, “we want to be masters in our own house. Our friends from the north-east have been landing more troops, more material — as you know. If I get into the city in ten days, I shall be there with a tired army with its hands full — and our kind friends, as fresh as paint, will be ready to take anything over that they can. We have to remember they have allies in high quarters.”

“Pin-head is a fool and a traitor,” said the Duke. “We all know that.”

“We may have them on our backs for the next twenty years,” said Bolaris.

“We couldn’t perhaps give them the place of honour in our next attack?” suggested Goodamanas.

“We cannot do that twice,” said Bolaris.

“And so we have to wait again!” cried Handon, and was again on the verge of saying more.

“No,” said Bolaris. “We have to be in the city in a fortnight.”

“But *how* — ?” began Istom. Bolaris held up his hand and paused for a moment before he made his announcement.

“I have had, in an irregular and unexpected way, a communication from Ratzel.”

An idea flashed into Bolaris’s head as he spoke. Instead of admitting that he had Ratzel, he might represent his prisoner as a messenger from Ratzel. But Handon might make that difficult. No time to think that out now. He became aware of the intent eyes upon him.

“Ratzel,” he invented, “wants to make a deal.”

“We must take the city,” said Goodamanas.

“The city could be abandoned for us to march in,” said Bolaris, still romancing. “On terms.”

“What terms:” said Fayle.

“Yes. What terms?” said the Duke. And Istom turned the silent beam of a full-faced interrogation upon Bolaris.

“Man is by nature a patriot,” began Bolaris.

“How can Ratzel be patriotic?” said Fayle. “He is an American.”

Bolaris disregarded that. “The mass of the people in the city are primarily patriotic,” he said. “It is the only form in which they are really capable of thinking of themselves as a community. That’s as far as they have grown up. The great point made against us is our foreign alliance.”

“What terms would Ratzel offer?” said Fayle.

“He will drop the Red flag.”

“Good,” said Goodamanas, to whom flags meant much, but the others were not so easily satisfied. Their faces remained expectant.

“All things come to an end and give place to fresh,” said Bolaris. “The Red flag has meant tremendous things in people’s imaginations. But now it is played out.”

“What has it ever meant but envy of success on the part of the incapablese” said Istom.

“Hatred of God,” said Fayle.

“The snarl of the natural slave who does not know his place,” said the Duke. “I thought Aristotle had settled all that.”

“Aristotle said there were natural slaves,” Bolaris reflected. “But I doubt if he ever really consulted any natural slaves about it.”

“Why *should* he?” said the Duke in a half-aside. “And if there was anything else in the Red flag at any time, what was it?”

“*Hope*,” said Bolaris. He realized that he was being drawn into an argument, that he was not telling things to these people in good dictatorial style but pursuing novel lines of thought springing out of his colleagues’ self-revelations. He was not trying to dominate them. He was not trying to convince them. He was trying to state novel ideas that had invaded and changed his mind. It was as though an entirely new system were struggling for the possession of him. His clear cut decisiveness had deserted him.

“For the last century or more, this idea that life could be made abundant without a stroke of work, free meals and free circuses and everybody better off than anyone else, human subjugation abolished, has been spreading through the world like a contagious disease,” said the Duke. “God knows where it will take us. It is so terribly plausible to the inexperienced; it is so fundamentally absurd. What is civilization but balance, refinement, selection:”

“The damnedest of all heresies,” said Fayle, “is the belief in

progress, the denial of the necessary limitations of the normal human life."

"That hope," said Bolaris, "the Red flag, I mean — was the sense of a promise, the first brightness of a dawn."

"My dear fellow," said the Duke, "this is like one of the spouters of the other side. What sort of dawn are you thinking of. What sort of new sun is this which will rise in the west and reverse all the precedents of nature?"

"Spouters?" said Bolaris, and abruptly something seemed to turn over in his mind. These people were unbearable. All capacity, all disposition, to persuade and humour these uncongenial associates deserted him in a blaze of indignation. Yet still he tried to control himself and the Five. "And you really think," he asked, "that that hope, that belief in progress, which as you say has been running like an infection about the world for the space of three lifetimes, can ever be quenched again?"

"Certainly," said the Duke, "isn't that what we are trying to do now, and can anything else in the world be done but that? 'Hope' of this sort has always been cropping up and needing suppression. Inequality is the first law of human nature."

"The law of God," said Fayle.

"The kindest thing," said the Duke, "the very, very kindest thing you can do to your natural inferiors is to keep them in their places. I know it. I'm not without experience. This will-o'-the-wisp of irrational desires and impossible vindications which you call hope may be in full flow; all the more need for strength and firmness. The swifter and grimmer the lesson, the less the suffering. If we do not beat out this spirit of mass rebellion, trample on it now, destroy the faintest hope of any recovery, it will begin all over again. Who was it said: 'The price of civilization is eternal vigilance'?" Fayle decided not to correct the misquotation.

"I agree," said Istom.

"We cannot afford to consider terms with the Reds," said the Duke. "We must dictate them, or our social order will collapse in hopeless ruins. It has been the growth of ages and ages of evolution, it is a whole system, a system of tried and tested balances we inherit, and there is nothing, nothing whatever, to replace it. Nothing. There

is no other social order *possible*. That is what none of you world-menders realize. As well try and abolish the headship of the head, and surrender things to a dictatorship of the guts. Don't blame me, my dear Bolaris. It isn't I who made the world like this; it is the way the world is made, kings and priests, rich and poor, gentle and simple — so it has been from the beginning, so it must always be."

"But," said Bolaris. And then with a wrathful wrench of his mind flung out of this argumentative groove altogether. "Never have I heard such nonsense. Never yet have I had to tolerate such useless talk from grown men. You seem to think that nothing changes in human possibility. Because otherwise where would you be? I tell you that everything has changed. I tell you that within a century age-old mists of ignorance and misconception have been scattered like clouds before the sunrise. It is a dawn, it is illumination. What is the good of sneering at these words, Duke, because they have been worn threadbare? That does not make them untrue. The eyes of the common man have been opened. He has such a conception of what life may be as no nobleman had five hundred years ago. Maybe he is still like that man who was given sight and saw men like trees walking. That will pass. Whatever else arrives we are going on into a clear-sighted world. The common man will not stand life as you lucky ones dole it out to him any longer. You had no generosity in your minds. You failed to make your peace with him when you were in the way with him. You will be able to humbug him less and less; and you will exasperate him more and more. Make your suppressions harsher and harsher; they break in your hands. The crowd may not be able to replace the old conditions by new ones quite possibly, but rest assured, if its conditions are not replaced, it will smash them, even if smashing them means disaster, collapse-utter destruction for our species. Get that idea right; it is the fundamental reality in things today. Let me say it again, Duke, in spite of that suppressed yawn. The endurance and discipline of common people is at an end; they will never stand the old conditions again; they may embrace violent and ineffective doctrines, they may believe blindly for a time in the promises of this new leader or that, they may cease to struggle on for a time and try to get back to some imaginary golden age, kings again for a bit, dictators, prophets. They may commit infinite follies, but

unless they get change and satisfying change, they will break and perish rather than submit, and you and I will go into the boiling with them. This pretty historical world of yours, of kings and priests, lords and ladies, rich and poor, is going to pieces under your very eyes. It can never be put back again, never. The harder you try to hold it together the more it will rot and change. You might as well dream of restoring the stink of horse droppings to the avenues of New York or repeopling roads with the chariots of Ur. You people are as incapable of maintaining the old order of things as those rebels and doctrinaires away there in the city are of setting up a new. Of that anyhow you are all quite sure; aren't you. We are as much in the revolution as those you call the Reds — far more. What I stand for, and what until today I always believed you understood I stood for, is a new order of things without a precedent, and if we also on our side cannot evoke the necessary vigour and the imagination and above all the generosity for a new order of things, then social collapse will continue indefinitely. That is not simply our case in this country. It is the plain destiny before all the world.

"No. No. Don't fret, Istom, listen to me. I used to think you and your business rationalization and so on had at least a bit of creativeness about it. Are you, too, for just sticking it, in the mud and blood here? "This new order, Istom, we have to make must be newer and stronger than any of the dream worlds they imagine over there. Their whole turn of mind is to insubordination and sabotage. What else could it be? Their Utopias are infantile. They have never known anything but limitation. We have to go one better than they can. The only possible reply to a poor rebel revolution is going right on to a better and bigger creative revolution, and that means a new order of things altogether."

"Well, that's your corporate state!" said Istom.

"Mm-m!" said the Duke. "Hobbes's dear old Leviathan come ashore — with Istom in control."

"The only possible corporate state is to have the whole of mundane affairs under the direct control of the Church," said Fayle. "Restore Christendom! The guidance of God and the wisdom of the ages."

Bolaris went on talking as though these things had not been said.

What they were doing in each case, except maybe Handon's, was, he knew, to think these terrifying words "a new order of things altogether" into the form of their hearts' desires, a little brighter and larger.

"Your corporate state, Istom," he said, "was a tawdry first attempt to exploit the new necessities, a mere vague gesture towards that complete scientific socialism which is the only possible escape from social disintegration."

"Not socialism exactly," said Istom. "That's where I differ."

"Not scientific," said Fayle. "Christian."

"You played with it a little, Istom, and then you dropped it," said Bolaris. "It went on beyond your courage and will. All the same that possible new order is taking shape in men's imaginations; its necessary conditions are growing clearer. Men have to go on with their minds; they have to go on — and on. Go on to the new. Only by the complete abandonment of current ideas and current antagonisms can the new world be brought into being. Not only vast changes in institutions but changes in general ideas, changes in moral conceptions, a new universal education."

(Fayle shook his head.)

"Yes — a new religion, an incessantly progressive religion, a reconstruction of behaviour, clearer and clearer ideas of property and social reward. All that. If you are not prepared for that much creation, then you are no better than those mere rebels over there; you too are men who refuse to learn, tearing at this dying social system — which must die anyhow, from a different point and at a different angle....

"Oh! Get on with it. Get on with the new world. Stop your poor defensive resistances. Enlightenment, clarification — trite words, my dear Duke, eh? but alive where you are dead! Remould this world nearer the shape of men's new dreams and desires. Yes, that means something. It means everything above the level of an everlasting fight for front place at the hog-trough. Ratzel, I know — never mind how I know — has come to realize that, as clearly as I do; he is willing to help and he has got to help. This imbecile civil warfare of sham loyalties, stale dogmas, perverted traditions, and fragmentary ideas has got to end. He's a man with a brain like mine, and the

sooner we can get in touch with him the better for us all."

"No!" said the Duke.

"No! Atheists and murderers!" said Fayle.

"How far will he come away from communism?" asked Istom.

"Now you know where I stand," said Bolaris, "and the way I mean to go. There it is. Either you come on with me ... Men, where do you think we are going? Where else is there to go?"

§ 4

He met doubt and antagonism in their eyes, even in the eyes of Handon and Goodamanas. His train of thought ceased to flow, crystallized, lit up, and became resolution. The unwonted thinker in him gave place to the natural fighter. His expression became cheerful.

"That's how we stand, that is what we have to do." He smiled and stared them in the face.

"Now," said Istom, "after this magnificent flight into the ideal, let us come down to practical realities. I have always been open to the idea of — rationalization. Of a kind. Reasonable rationalization. Profit sharing. Controlled marketing. Rationing. We are all socialists nowadays and all that. What in concrete fact does Ratzel offer us and what at the present time are we going to do? He went unanswered.

"We are going to make a firm deal with Ratzel," said Bolaris. "The city is going to surrender. We are going to help our foreign allies to pack up and facilitate their departure."

Fayle made a dissentient noise.

"Now is the time for ending this imbecile war of the Lefts and Rights, this bloodshed for nothing. Everywhere men are war-weary. All the world is tired of a state of siege. Now is the time for the new unity — with Ratzel in the mood for it.

"With Ratzel in our hands!" said Handon abruptly. He could contain himself no longer.

§ 5

“With Ratzel in our hands!” Bolaris could have struck his right-hand man. For some vivid moments it was as if Bolaris was the defendant in a trial instead of a dictator. Three faces accused him. Handon was dismayed already at his own precipitance. Goodamanas sat rigid, profoundly perplexed, trying to be firm and rigid *in vacuo*.

“What are you going to do with him:” asked Istom.

“Where is he?” asked Fayle.

“Where have you put him?” demanded the Duke.

“I have him where I want him,” said Bolaris.

“When we have fixed our deal with him I am going to send him back.”

“Send him back!” cried Istom.

“Shoot him!” said the Duke. Fayle murmured approval. “The Church does not execute. But it acquiesces.”

“It is absolutely necessary that we should come to an agreement with Ratzel if ever social order is to be restored. This fools’ war now I tell you is like the Thirty Years’ War — a fantastic waste of the human generations.”

“I mistrust Ratzel,” said Handon.

“Think what will happen if he does not return to them,” said Bolaris, like a grown man talking to unreasonable pupils. “We shall have no one to deal with.”

“So much the better,” said the Duke. “They will break up.”

“Yes, yes, but think what that really means! These people are indignant. They have reason to be indignant. Every common man in the world now is justly and properly indignant with human life — their vague indignations have been drawn together. No one can completely satisfy them, but Ratzel has given their angry discontent with life a form with which we can deal. He is the one man they trust not to betray them.” He overrode their protests. “What is the good of argument. If you do not follow me in this-you will never take the city. This war has to end and I and Ratzel alone can end it.”

“I do not trust Ratzel,” Handon repeated.

“It is not my affair to criticize,” said Goodamanas. “I have accepted the leadership of Bolaris, and I and my Bands and indeed all the army now are with him. I doubt. So far as I understand I disagree. But I serve.”

“I too,” said Handon, not to be outdone in loyalty, “and my Boys and the Inner Circle. We stand by the Captain.”

There was a momentary pause.

“*Well*?” said Bolaris, turning to the recalcitrants.

§ 6

“This is militarism,” said Istom, “naked and unashamed. This is the end of democracy.”

“Like so many of your American friends,” said Bolaris, “when you say democracy you mean unfettered finance, private police, controlled newspapers, and so on. You have no idea of service. Your democracy is a jungle in which you prowl and scheme against mankind. From henceforth, Istom, either you will play your game with glass pockets and cards down on the table or you won’t play at all.”

Istom stood up sharply, and immediately the Duke rose beside him, but Fayle understood the situation better and remained seated, passive and obdurate.

“Then it has to be C,” said Bolaris to Handon. Handon turned to the guards and muttered an order. Fresh men who had been waiting in readiness appeared.

“A council in time of crisis must be unanimous,” said Bolaris.

“Absolutely,” said Goodamanas.

“And that means?” asked the Duke.

“A temporary close on all discussion.”

“We are dismissed?”

“No. You are retained. There must be no conflict outside this room. People’s minds out there are in a state of tension. Your lives will not be safe.”

“That’s not the fact,” said Fayle.

“Under a dictatorship — in times of urgency, fact is as the dictator wills. You will be held incommunicado. But in the utmost comfort.”

“I also?” said Istom.

“You most of all,” said Bolaris, and gave Handon the signal. Istom looked more like an apoplectic frog than ever.

“To think that I walked into this!”

§ 7

“And now they have gone, my Captain,” began Handon.

“You approve?”

“You have put Private Finance and Landlord and Church in their places and cleared your way. So far I am absolutely yours. I did not expect it like this, but I see now it had to be swift and absolutely unexpected. And now — ?”

“I am no politician,” said Goodamanas.

“I do not want to hide anything from you,” said Bolaris, playing for time, “but in this business I must have a free hand.”

“About Ratzel,” said Handon, “I should like to know.”

For the moment Bolaris could not think quickly enough. “I want him to seem to escape,” he said.

“A false escape?”

“But how can you trust him? What guarantee can you have he will not trick you;” Bolaris lost his head for a moment and committed himself.

“The best guarantee,” he said. “I shall go to the city, and if by any chance they realize what has happened, he will be hostage for me.”

Handon threw up his hands. “It is impossible. There are a thousand dangers and difficulties.”

Bolaris laid a reassuring hand on his shoulder. “Which we meet as they arise, Handon. Trust me.

V. — THE TANGLE

§ 1

Bolaris found himself regretting acutely the lost mental simplicity of two days ago. Then he had nothing but straightforward crookedness in his mind, a game to play as strictly limited in its rules as a game of chess. He had had the clearest conception of the side he was on and the antagonists he had to defeat in turn. But now the chess pieces were changing colour, the board was expanding and contracting, the chequerwork grimacing in fantastic patterns. He was no longer for or against Right or Left. The infection of Ratzel's too congenial mind had made all these antagonisms transparent and unreal. Beneath them had appeared a conception of reality that made them incredible and crazy.

He saw nothing now with a single eye; he had become stereoscopic. It was the Ratzel influence that had precipitated this open conflict with Istom, Fayle, and the Duke. He had contemplated no such breach. His intention had been to sustain a policy of thrust and pressure and qualified reconciliation with them, and even to conclude at last with a compromise between their practical realities and the complete realization of his corporate theories. Even as his ends had grown more downright and definite, his purpose had still remained one of steadfast encroachment rather than antagonism. Now that intention was smashed. Handon's disclosure of Ratzel's capture had exploded that. There could be no more of that unfriendly alliance. He had struck openly at them, and now there was nothing for it but to go on striking. He had them under arrest; at the utmost he could keep that secret only for a few hours. There had been no one in immediate attendance upon them, but their cars would have to be sent back, and their staffs, households, and adherents would be missing them and alert, at the latest, by tomorrow morning. Then he would have to go on to wholesale arrests. The best thing he could think of was that the entire council, with the exception of Goodamanas, should vanish at the same time. All five, it could be whispered, had gone away very secretly upon an affair of state.

Something to do with the King. That would create a mystification, but it would not suggest a breach. Meanwhile he must get Ratzel back to the city. How? He had got the young officer prepared for the fantastic idea of his impersonating Ratzel. He had got Handon in a state of protesting complicity with the same idea. On the spur of the moment that had seemed to him a dazzlingly brilliant idea, but since then his imagination had produced one possible complication after another. He could pass muster perhaps in the city, though a whole crop of hitherto unthought of difficulties arose as he worked out details, but now with his own council in violent conflict how could Ratzel hope to impersonate him? How could Ratzel handle the changing emergencies of the next forty-eight hours at the château? It would be far better if he got back in control on his own side.... What were Catherine's quick wits doing down there at the villa? Had she hit upon any fresh way out? That young officer would sit on his prey now like a watchdog. Bolaris ticked off necessary items.

"He must have a complete set of my clothes.

"At the last moment he must shave and Catherine must clip his hair.

"I must have not only his clothes down there but another set of my own. Then I can be Bolaris or Ratzel as occasion arises.

"Somehow we must get this stuff into a room with ourselves. We must have that youngster waiting outside. On some excuse. What excuse? Catherine must help there. I must keep in the background away from the light as Ratzel. Ratzel must come out as me. He'll take that. He knows Ratzel's movements by this time and he hardly knows anything of me. ... I might contrive a recognizable scratch on my neck. I must arrange a feather of hair at the back of my head....

"Is there any other way: A plain straightforward escape? Catherine will know that by this time.

"Will a rope be useful? Hooks?

"Shall I take Handon? Yes. No.

"These are only preliminaries. What else can I do? Is there anything else I ought to take? I must get down there at once."

He decided to take Handon with him. Goodamanas was the only man in the world he would have dared to leave in control behind him. He called for Handon to get the cars, and then turned to his

telephone to talk Lampobo with Catherine. She told him something very cheerful.

"This villa was part of the old convent. It is cavernous underground and two passages run away under the ruined wing of the hospital. I've worked out some things. Need I say more now?"

"Less. I'm starting to you right away," he said.

§ 2

"Do you really mean to go through with this?" asked Handon in the car.

"Let me try it out in my imagination anyhow," said Bolaris. "In the end I may be largely guided by you. You must see us together, him and me, again."

"If you are guided by me—" began Handon, and left it at that. Presently he asked: "What have you got in that big portmanteau."

"My dear Handon, you are not a married man," laughed Bolaris.

"Sorry," said Handon.

"We must be back before nightfall," reflected Bolaris. "Nothing can happen up here until then. By the by, have you eaten;"

"I had some sandwiches."

"I wish I had brought some. I forget all about food. I haven't touched a mouthful today. Madame Farness will have to give me something...."

Again silence. Then Bolaris thought aloud.

"We've had no planes over this side for three days. I wish I knew what that meant. It's a general lull. ... What a perfect siesta! Half those fellows down among the tents there might be asleep. Most of them are. That last gate was slow to open and the man looked scared. He hoped we didn't see he hadn't his boots on and that he had been as fast asleep as a dormouse."

"I'd have told him off," said Handon, "if we'd had the time."

Bolaris returned to his private thoughts. If Catherine had really found some sort of bolt-hole and secret passage, then the problem was simply to get the young officer out of the way, form an accurate idea of how far Ratzel could get before he had to come out in the

open, and what sort of situation he would come out into.

"Damn!" said Bolaris suddenly. He ought to have had a Black Legion uniform available. But after all that might save Ratzel from the Anti-Reds only to get shot at by his own side. ...

"What?" said Handon.

"How — what?"

"Why *damn*?"

"I'm so damnably hungry," said Bolaris.

"*I* ought to have thought of sandwiches," said Handon, full of self- reproach.

(But *would* they shoot him? They'd think he was a deserter.... What exactly had Catherine found? She was resourceful. She would have thought out plans....)

"All this corner is very badly charted," he said aloud to Handon. "Have we anyone who knows the lie of the ground beyond the ravines... We have to have these gaps. It would need half a million men to hold this circle round the city, and I suppose neither we nor they total a hundred thousand. They can't afford men for anything serious this way. They hold us and we hold them. All the same..."

"Yes," said Handon. "I wonder what Ratzel was looking for when we caught him!" He took out and unfolded a sketch map.

"See that spur from the ravine? Round here behind the convent. Vague, isn't it? I should feel safer if I knew that a little more precisely. Have you anyone — ?" Handon looked at the map.

"I could see to that myself," he said.

§ 3

Bolaris sat in Catherine's room with an untouched meal on a tray before him.

"Handon," he said, "prides himself on his intuitions in scouting, thank Heaven. So we are quit of him for an hour or so. And now — I want Ratzel to escape."

"You've given up that idea of impersonating him?"

"Absolutely. Catherine, it was childish. Ratzel must escape as Ratzel — all we can do is to give him a gun. I've been over-obsessed

by that impersonation idea. But as we try it over we realize how weak it is. It's boyish. It's as impossible as the *Comedy of Errors*. It's *Prisoner of Zenda* romance. It just leapt up in my mind and it has entangled me ever since. Dismiss it. Tell me now — exactly. How can he escape?"

Catherine put her elbows on the table and spoke compactly and to the point. Ratzel's room, she explained, was below the ground level. It opened into a sunken area covered by a grating over which a sentry had been placed. Catherine had watched him from her window above. He interpreted his instructions liberally, especially in the afternoon, when he would often be snoozing on a bank of violets under a stone angel, a score of yards away. In one corner of the area was a water tap and a big sink with an escape grating below, which Ratzel had found quite easy to loosen and lift. From it a quite climbable shaft descended to the main cloaca of the villa, and this again led to a tunnel that forked and ran south and east under the walls of the old convent part of the hospital. From the forks there were openings to an old moat outside, choked with agaves and litter, and thence overgrown rain gullies led down to the head of the ravine. There seemed to be no sentinels in that direction. It had not been thought of. Ratzel's prison had been improvised, and no very exact consideration had been given to the possibilities of an escape. The young officer was in and out whenever he thought proper, and there were two men in the room next to him, but they too were inconstant guardians. The young officer would send one or both of them away on errands and they were relieved by others. They were unaware of the importance of the captive. There would be no great difficulty in getting as far as the ravine if the attention of Ratzel's particular bodyguard could be detached for an hour or so. That youngster was the essential difficulty. Some way down the ravine, so far as she had been able to observe, there were two or three small outposts, part of a thin line which connected up to a few observation points and machine-gun nests on the edge of the woods that covered the mountainside, which otherwise was unoccupied. Beyond was an indefinite arid no-man's-land of rock and cactus. The whole of the farther country was waterless and uncultivated. No one seemed to know what ground the Reds were holding nor in what strength. They

might be twenty miles away or more.

"Evidently what we have to arrange," said Bolaris, "is the get-away here. After that he can take his chances. What have you schemed for that?"

"He will want a pistol and a water-bottle," said Catherine.

"That's not difficult. The only serious difficulty is the vigilance of your young officer here. You have excited him about this business beyond all measure.... "Richard, why do you excite people? Why do you inspire them? He's crazy to go with you to the city. He'd go with you straight into the Arabian Nights. Why have you that fatal attraction for people of limited imagination? You draw them like a magnet. There is such a candour about you, such a real friendliness, and such a self-confidence. Something arises in them and shouts: 'Now I need not manage this life of mine any more. Now I need not bother about this perplexing world again. To this man I will give myself. His right shall be my right and his wrong my wrong. His success shall be mine — and he is sure of success.' And after that you never shake them off. They encumber you — as women do. As I do."

"Not you."

"I've not had a mind of my own since you began to trail me after you. Well, he is as devoted to you now as Handon, and between them you are like a prisoner between two guards. They mean you to be the champion of the Anti-Reds, the saviour of society from all that Red awfulness — whatever it is. I've seen you stepping right out of those ideas in the last few days, but how can they understand that? Never will they let you change, never will they let you go. Well, anyhow I don't *enslave* you."

"You don't enslave me," he said. "Dearest, you are the best of lovers — a lover without expectation."

"I have more than I ever expected," she said. "But let us be practical. Both your young officer and Handon have entered into this idea of an impersonation and a seizure of Ratzel's power over the Left organizations. The boy is frantic to do it. Handon hates the idea and will prevent it if he can. But he believes you mean it. The practical outcome is that the boy sticks to Ratzel like a leech, sits talking to him and watching him, seems jealous even of leaving me

alone with him. Ratzel likes him and talks to him. I think he misunderstands his — adhesiveness. He thinks he has made a convert. He talks to him of much the same things as you would now, about civilization, about your universal liberal world order and so on, and the youngster finds what he says at once attractive, and since it is tinted Red, indescribably wicked.... Never mind all that now, dear. I run on because I'm trying to keep pace with you. The point is that Ratzel cannot get away until you separate him from his keeper, and the only way to separate them is for you to go on to a certain extent with that impersonation idea. I've puzzled it out. He'll leave Ratzel's side naturally and unsuspiciously only when he starts with you for the city. So I see nothing for it but for you to make a show at least of changing clothes and starting."

"But how?"??????? Listen.

"I listen."

"We call up your bright young officer boy and give him the change of clothing and so on you have brought with you. Then you go down with him to Ratzel, and with his assistance you and Ratzel change clothes. None of the men must know of this. He sends them away. You say you are a little doubtful after all whether it is a good impersonation. You decide to make the attempt. You and the young officer come up from the cellar and go into the big room beside the hall. There is no reason for leaving anyone at all down there. If there are any soldiers about down there they can have a glimpse of Ratzel in your clothes standing out of the light in the prison room, smoking a cigar and reading a map or something of that sort. They think that is you. You are not their affair, and it will be quite easy for our officer to get them out of the way. Then he locks up Ratzel and takes you to one of the small rooms upstairs. You discuss a pseudo-escape with him very gravely and in detail, and meanwhile Ratzel is really escaping downstairs. Then you begin to doubt whether you ought not to go alone to the city. He will be terribly disappointed. Ratzel is locked in and nobody in particular is looking after him because nobody knows about that drain. You tell your young officer you must see Handon. You send the young man off to find Handon and you remain under guard. The guards think you are Ratzel and are content, and the real Ratzel has already wriggled half-way down the sink

shaft."

"Good," said Bolaris, "so far. Very good. But what next: Having Ratzelized me you have to get me un-Ratzelized again."

"When Handon returns he will certainly protest against this wild freak of yours."

"If he sends anyone downstairs: They will find Ratzel has gone."

"Why should he send anyone downstairs? That will be giving away your disguise to the men, and the less people who know of that the better. Meanwhile I am watching from upstairs and I get busy. I will ring up your secretary at the château, do a quick talk, and come flying downstairs or wherever you are with an urgent message from Goodamanas for you personally. Something has happened. Trouble at the palace. He wants you as soon as possible."

"And then?"

"Hustle. Extreme hustle. The cars are called and you carry off Handon and the young officer together."

"With Ratzel forgotten! No, dear. Trust Handon not to forget him. I agree to your general plan, but listen. Why not this? So soon as the guards and the young officer are upstairs, Ratzel, who is for the time being Bolaris, walks through the guardroom and — can he get out that way?"

"In your clothes he could, I suppose, walk right past a sentinel if necessary and slip down — there is a place there, into the old tunnel. But then — there's more risk. He might run against Handon or the young officer. No, no, my way is best. We spring a sort of wild hustle-scurry, and then if Handon does find Ratzel has escaped, what can he do? It will seem plain prison-breaking. Nobody is going to see just how unobtrusively we've made it possible. And while the guards here are hunting about for Ratzel, you are off to the castle — more and more yourself again. You make no attempt to act. You give orders. Nobody will think much of your changed clothes. You often contrive to be pretty dirty, and when you are up there you can change into a uniform."

"The youngster will be mad. He'll want to stay back here and hunt Ratzel."

"He can."

"I think it works," said Bolaris. "And now we must tell Ratzel."

Ratzel, with his habitual dry smile, sat down between them, and as soon as the guards were out of the room, Bolaris recapitulated the details for the escape. Ratzel nodded. He asked a few questions.

"All that seems to work very well. It's got to be done. Your little officer boy is almost oppressively conscientious and adhesive. Otherwise he's remarkably likeable. He admires you. Me, he regards as *sinister*. He feels that if he stops watching me for a moment I may inject some Red poison into him unbeknown. The more reasonable he finds the things I say, the more insidious he feels they are. Of course I am to change clothes with you under compulsion. Good! It's all clear. You'll slip me a revolver as we change. Sure we can do that?..."

"The water-bottle will be put in the room now," said Catherine. "I'll see to that myself."

"And tomorrow night," said Ratzel, "I shall be restoring order in the city and you will be — ?"

"Having some trouble up above here," said Bolaris. "But I've got the armed forces well in hand. There may be a bit of shooting...."

"And then in the name of patriotism we call a truce and get rid of your foreign friends. And after that?"

"We carry on our truce — in the name of civilizatlon.

"A new civilization."

Bolaris was turning things over in his mind. He laughed. He began talking.

"So at last," he said, "after a world of trouble you and I find out that we have both been serving the Common Fool — the normal human animal who quarrels by nature, can tolerate no superiority, and hates new things. The Left and Right in any age are just the two faces of the Common Fool, and nothing more, and you have been on one face and I the other. Your communist fool denounces what he calls Utopianism and my individualists denounce Socialism. And when we look into it they mean precisely the same thing. What moves them either way is fear and hatred of the unknown, fear and hatred of the coming scientifically organized state, dread that they will be called upon for effort and performance. Your communist releases his fear and detestation of anything whatever that isn't the glorification of his proletarian self, through the class war and his

blind hatred of what he calls Utopians, and my individualist does exactly the same thing by denouncing the collective control that would stop his grabbing and gripping, and hating what he calls visionaries and fanatics. Both Left and Right are defensive hate systems. Both are obdurately dogmatic. Both pretend to be 'scientific' and both suppress reason. Neither will face novelty. The further we recede in time from them, the more we realize how identical they are. Marx stinks of Herbert Spencer and Herbert Spencer stinks of Marx. They are the great unimaginative twins. And here we are, Ratzel! The imaginative twins. What have you and I, whose minds are open and incessant, who are adventurers in spirit and innovators in grain, what business have we either on the left hand or the right hand of the Common Fool? The Common Fool, the born slave of stale tradition, suspicious, base, and malignant, everlastingly bickering about out-of-date things. Our job is to emancipate him as much as we can, use him as well as we can, and get rid of him as fast as we can."

"You use words with a greater boldness than I do," said Ratzel. "But you seem to be saying what I have in mind."

Catherine made a sudden observation. "I suppose it was necessary even for you to have this war before you could discover how little it was about."

Ratzel considered that. "I suppose it was."

"And now," said Catherine, "what are you going to do? What are you reasonable men who are so free from tradition and destiny, what are you going to do? How are you going to escape from the undying past? Which, I take it, is what the Common Fool is suffering from?"

"That's where our troubles begin. I doubt if over there I have twenty men with these ideas of ours fully expounded."

"I haven't a dozen."

Catherine went on like one who repeats an unfamiliar lesson.

"All the rest are asserting themselves in ways that you think evil — partial and disconnected anyhow — either pretending to be this or that but just playing for their own silly private hands, or really identifying themselves with some church, party, nation, some such *loyalty*" (she pronounced the word as though it stank) "no better than — how did you put it to me, Bolaris, once? — the cowardly

aggressive identification of a cur with its house or pack. While *you*?"

"We also assert ourselves," said Bolaris.

"Living is self-assertion," said Ratzel to Catherine. "We also identify ourselves with something greater than ourselves. Only we flatter ourselves we have identified ourselves with something more final than any of these others. Something difficult to get beyond. That is our idea of ourselves. Maybe that isn't self-flattery. You believe, Bolaris, and I believe, in our hearts, that if a hard, clear-headed man carries his thought far enough he comes out where we are — and so by necessity joins us."

"That's only to believe ourselves sane."

"We two are self-assertive, as much fanatics, as much devotees, as any of the others. Yes. Every man is an assertion or a nonentity. We are not alone, brother Richard. The world swarms with our undiscovered brothers; elder brothers and younger brothers, big and little. An age of exposure. All the — ists and — isms of today are faint now with doubts and questions. Presently a multitude of our brothers will be turning up, but not perhaps so exactly under the same star as we."

"And sisters," said Catherine, and looked at Bolaris.

Bolaris met her eyes. He had an intense affection for her, an admiration, a belief in a sort of textural wisdom of body and impulse in her, far surpassing his own mental processes, and yet he had come reluctantly, as so many men come, to a profound disbelief in a woman's capacity for intellectual initiative. Maybe that was the price she paid for her unquestioning steadfastness to him. For a moment they scrutinized each other with an immense volume of unsaid mutual criticism behind their faintly smiling faces. "Sisters," he said quietly.

"As you will," she said.

"And so to our stations," said Bolaris... "Well — good luck, brother."

"Good luck."

They gripped hands and Bolaris said: "Stand up and look the damned prisoner you are." He clapped his hands for the guards, and the young officer and two men appeared and saluted.

Abruptly everything stood still. It was as if a motion picture

suddenly ceased to turn over.

"*What's that*?" Before Bolaris could give any directions a swift run of shots, crack, crack, crack, had come from the direction of the ravine. This whiff of firing brought everybody to rigid attention, and then as they stood and stared, silence closed upon them....

The picture began to move and talk again.

Bolaris was the first to speak. "Could that have been Handon?" he said.

VI. — PATTERN OF A HOROSCOPE

§ 1

Every one stood staring out of the great window at the distant woods and the sloping afternoon shadows upon the nearer masses of the converted convent. Two hospital attendants, small and remote, appeared on the parapet of the building and were followed by two soldiers who came and looked down towards the ravine, ducked, and disappeared again. Bolaris made two steps towards the balcony and then turned to the young officer.

"Take the prisoner downstairs," he said.

"What can be happening?" said Catherine stupidly.

"Keep back, my dear," said Bolaris, and went past her to the window. Ratzel and his custodians marched into the passage. From the broken country beyond the convent came the sound of a swift burst of machine-gun fire. Then suddenly at some point close at hand near the ravine an irregular crackle responded and there was a sound between a shout, a bark, and a scream as if someone had been hit. Nothing was visible in the afternoon immobility. The olive trees and aloes, the rocks and the rosetinted building against the blue mountain shapes hung like a painted curtain in front of these noises. Catherine saw Bolaris at the parapet of the balcony sniffing the air and moving his arm as though he was trying to grasp the form of the conflict that had sprung so suddenly out of the sweltering stillness of the afternoon. She went out towards him, but he motioned her back.

"Why should they try a raid now?" he asked, coming back into the room. "Can they know he's here? I thought they'd never dream we'd keep him here."

He sat down by the telephone. He telephoned the Black Legion for support at once, explained the urgency of the situation to the commanding officer, and then sent a man for the young subaltern.

"Lock in your prisoner," he said, "and put every man you have at a window or out in the garden. We must hold the villa and leave the hospital to take care of itself. Bring in any men you have from the hospital. They'll respect the Red Cross if we've got no soldiers there.

Look! Someone is hoisting the flag. Good old Geneva!" He made his disposition with an expert rapidity. He called up the Black Legion headquarters again to give further instructions. "Tumble to it," he said. His impression, he said, was that the Reds were in no great force and that a small detachment of the Black Legion with machineguns should push up over the spur above the hospital, outflank the raiders, and relieve the pressure on the villa. But they were to send down everyone they could. Then he returned to the balcony. The firing, he perceived, was increasing and creeping nearer, along the ravine and towards the old convent wall. A bullet came smack against the cornice overhead and brought down a square yard of plaster.

"*Will* you go back?" he said to Catherine with affectionate exasperation.

There was a clatter from within the house and loud voices. Orders were being given by the young officer and brusque questions asked and answered.

§ 2

Handon came headlong into the room clicking cartridges into his revolver.

"Almost walked into it," he said. "Almost walked into it. They're all round us." He saluted belatedly. "You ought to get away at once," he said. "They're three parts round us. The cars are under cover of the house — waiting. At any moment the attack may extend through those houses up beyond the hospital on the far side and block the road that way. There's nothing to hold them there. Nothing at all."

Handon was evidently hot, tired, surprised, and confused in his mind. He had been running, he had been lying low, he had been crawling through wet red mud. His sweaty dirty skin, usually so fair, looked darker than the streak of ruddy hair across his forehead. He had been trying to think out a situation for himself

"They must have been coming over the hills all last night. There's no water, no supplies that way. Their own lines must be anything from a dozen to twenty miles away. They must know he is here.

They must be coming for him — curse him!"

"But aren't there outposts up the slopes beyond the ravine?"

"They've come round them."

"They can't be in strength to get by like that."

"I don't think they are. Four or five companies perhaps. We were all among them before we knew. They never spotted us until we fired. I've been crawling back ever since. We'd have shot to warn you before, but they were coming along in parallel lines and they would have cut us off."

"The Black Legion won't get busy down here for another forty minutes," said Bolaris. "I don't like it. Shall we make a bolt? What have we got here?"

"A company and one or two details," said Handon, and Bolaris repeated his words.

"Will you check that boy's arrangements, Handon? What ammunition has he and where's he put it:"

"You must bolt for it straight away," said Handon. "If you bolt at all. It's now or never."

Bolaris hesitated. He glanced at Catherine. He still had the Ratzel problem in mind.

"See if we can hold out here first," he said, and Handon, after a doubtful glance at the two of them, went out of the room. He never liked leaving Bolaris with Catherine.

"If we bolt," said Bolaris, "Handon will insist on bringing Ratzel. That complicates everything. No. We stand a siege here. Far better. It can't last a half-hour. They seem to be easing off. Not a shot for the last three minutes. Hullo! Glurrr! That's one of their new magazine guns. Where was that?" He returned to the balcony and surveyed the disposition of the defence. A rifle had been left out there and presently he picked it up, seemed disposed to take a shot with it at some unseen object, and thought better of it. He came into the room, shrugged his shoulders, and sat down.

"All our wonderful plans!" he said and laughed.... "Anyhow he's out of the villa.... He's away by now."

In five minutes Handon was back.

"It's too late," he said; "the road's cut."

"No possibility of a dash?"

"They're quick workers. They've got some carts across the track. But they haven't come on. It's just sniping, that way. They can't be in force. I've given our chauffeurs guns and told them to lie out by the gates. But we ought to have thought about that before."

"Once a fight is started, Handon, the last thing you can do is to think. We were taken by surprise. How are our fellows behaving?"

"Quite well."

"We can hold it?"

"We have to."

"Still I'd like to hear more noise from the Black Legion. They ought to be out of their siesta now."

He went to the telephone and clicked at it.

"Damn!" he said.

"What?"

"The telephone's cut."

"Smart as well as quick. This was well planned."

"We've just got to stand a siege here until we're relieved. You'd better take over control, Handon."

Handon clanked out of the room, shouting: "Hold to it, lads. There's relief coming. They thought they'd catch us napping."

Bolaris laughed and seemed elated, after his fashion when a situation tightened about him. He sat down in an easy-chair.

"Nothing I can do for a bit," he said. He made a derisive gesture towards the door. "There'll be another shock for him presently," he remarked to Catherine. He got up, decided not to look out of the window, smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and sat down on the sofa beside Catherine.

"It's all so absurdly unexpected," he said. Her answer was drowned by a shot in the garden close at hand. He made no movement towards the balcony.

"No good popping out again," he said. "We don't want to draw their fire up here."

"But just now," she said. "Out there? You seemed to be going to shoot at someone?"

“I thought I saw a man down there in the gully. Then I thought better of it. It wasn’t one of the attack. It was, you see, a man climbing down through the cactus bushes *away from us*.”

“You think — ?”

“It was possible. I couldn’t see very well because of the bushes.”

“You mean he has escaped?”

“He is escaping now. And that’s that.” He fell into thought. “Nothing to do now,” he said, “but to watch the turn of events. Funny if they do rush us and Ratzel gets me a prisoner on his hands! But I think Handon’s soldier enough to stop that rush.” There were a few shots and then a lull in the firing. The interval lengthened.

“Fantastic world,” he said; “if we were not blind and prepossessed, we should see it as absurd as it is. ...

“Will he get away? Shall we ever make that peace? Shall we hold on until we can find our brothers — as he said? ... Catherine, suddenly I doubt.”

He might have been a hundred miles from any fighting, she thought. She stood looking down upon him.

“Will any human brotherhood ever get together, or is that all a dream? I know what I want with the world as clearly as ever I did, but suddenly something has taken away my confidence. Am I, after all, just a wilful dreamer of a world that can never arrive? Look at the world! Always the unexpected and a new twist to events.... Will all the reason and desire in man be swept aside for ever by these incalculable slants? We plan. It is our nature to plan. But — but

“Is this world really a reasonable world, Catherine, reasonable as the man of science supposes, or are the ruling patterns of life something quite different? Running right across all that we think rational — some perversity?

“If I had not met my brother again, I should have been driving along quite a different line of ideas. ...

“Suppose, Catherine, that all this lot of pigeonholes that we call words and reasoning has just a chance fit upon reality — only fitting it so far and so much. Suppose — has it ever occurred to you, Catherine: — that the real world — it must be orderly, it must be systematic, yes — but that the real world has an irrational but elaborate order that diverges more and more from the order in our

minds. A pattern that overlaps our minds for a time and then goes off in other directions. A pattern which we try to rationalize. And fail. Think how much that order has nonsense in it by any human standard. Look at butterflies' wings and sea-shells. Who can rationalize such patternings as that? Why are they — and how do they come? And if they are irrational and yet real, why should there not be other patternings as irrational and as real? Why not horoscopes and twin-destinies? That our fate should be written in the palms of our hands, and I and Ratzel live insanely linked!

"If that is so, Catherine, then all the views of life and its courses that we conceive are no more than echoes made by the patterns in our eyes and brains. We are just prisms who sort out the rays of life in our way, bent mirrors that reflect them into relevant forms. Our minds are distorting mirrors and the wonderful worlds you see in them — ! Prisms and mirrors. That is all we are. Shatter the mirror and the story ends."

He laughed at her expression.

"You think I'm talking nonsense," he said. "And for all practical purposes I am. We can't have it like that. We can't endure it like that. A day will come when we will have brought the hidden loveliness of a sunlit snow-crystal, drifting and melting on the other side of the moon a million years ago, into definite relation to the eternal human mind. Yes, and then the monstrous discrepancy between the scale of our lives and the starry intervals will cease to be a disharmony. I don't know how such things can be achieved, but we shall achieve them. And then it will no longer seem necessary for men to be identical twins before they can think after the same fashion and work for a common end....

"But what's this uproar" His expression became alert. He clapped his hand to his revolver and stood up.

"He's gone. He's escaped!" Handon was a breathless shouting fury in the room.

"Did they know he was here?... Do they know you are here? I ask you, how did they know it! ... This raid!... Are we betrayed?... Has he been able to send messages to them? Treason! Treason, I swear there is."

Bolaris stood beside Catherine.

“What has happened”

“He’s got down by a shaft as big as a cask that no one had the sense to stop. He’s got away — God knows where. He’s gone, I tell you.”

A ripple of fire grew to a volley.

“There’s the Black Legion coming into action up the village,” said Bolaris. Handon paid no heed to that.

“For once I was right, I tell you, Chief — for once you have misjudged. You play with snakes and this is your reward. God knows who his allies were here. He must have had spies. God knows what the plotting has been.... It is a planned escape. Somewhere now — in the drains and channels—” He was struck by an idea. He went towards the balcony.

“Don’t go there!” cried Bolaris. Handon stared over his shoulder at his leader.

“Why not?”

“You’ll draw their fire.”

Handon was out on the balcony and peering down. Then he was gesticulating.

“He’s there now! That’s Ratzel, creeping down among the agaves. By that olive tree.”

Bolaris strode forward.

“Leave him!” he cried. “Leave him alone!”

Handon was shouting, trying to attract the attention of some of the defenders below, and then suddenly he discovered there was a rifle against the parapet close at hand. Before Bolaris could reach him, he had raised it and fired.

“Got him!” he said.

“Oh, you fool!” cried Bolaris. “You accursed fool!” and leapt upon his right-hand man with murder in his eyes. He gripped Handon’s shoulder and snatched at the gun. Handon woke up to the fact that Bolaris was wresting the rifle from his hands and for some inconceivable reason meant to kill him. There are limits to the loyalty even of a dog, and Handon resisted. They struggled for two seconds while the woman stood paralysed, and then the rifle cracked again and Bolaris was spinning back with a neat hole drilled through his body and through his heart. He fell at Catherine’s feet with blood

pouring from his mouth and spurting from his back, and she dropped on her knees beside him, regardless of the stupefied Handon, who stood, gun in hand, staring at his dying chief.

"I've shot *him*!" he cried. "*Him*! I didn't mean it. How could I have meant it? It caught against my belt."

Catherine took no notice of him. She was staring with a stunned expression at the face of her lover. His mouth was open half-way between a smile and a laugh, and a broad band of blood widened from the lower corner. The life had vanished from his eyes. Handon bent down over her, his dirty face distorted with grief. He was trying to say some thing that she would not heed.

"I loved him, I tell you — more than you did."

He found her inexpressiveness unendurable. He discovered the rifle in his hand and flung it across the room. Then he strode after it, picked it up and rushed out. Only slowly did Catherine's mind revive. With a sound like tearing cloth a bullet came flying into the room and a mirror with a frame of cut-glass flew into a cloud of sparkling dust. Her eyes went to the broken fragments of glass that rolled and slid and spread and scattered on the floor. It was as if they were explaining something. Until they ceased to move.

"Prisms and mirrors," she whispered. "Our picture vanishes as the mirror breaks! You were saying that, darling. Five minutes ago you were saying that.

"Speak to me...

"No. The pattern of your life! Over. And mine. And all the fine things that seemed beginning...

"Dreams about brotherhood... meaning as little as the pattern on a sea-shell."

Outside, the guns rattled and then came a shout of "Let them have it!" and the groans, screams, retchings, rendings, and curses of a sudden bayonet fight in the garden beneath the window. She listened for a time to those hideous noises.

"No," she whispered to the still face close to hers. "It cannot end like this. We were just the first. We were just the beginning. It was a beginning.... She whispered still lower, with her mouth awry: "Say it *was* a beginning, my dear. Speak to me, speak just once again.

"Tell me what am I to do...."

THE END

THE HOLY TERROR

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PRELIMINARY NOTE

Every person, place and thing in this story — even the countries in which it happens — are fictitious, and any resemblance, though it runs to the pitch of identical names and circumstances, is at most a realistic device and free of any libellous intention whatever. It is an imagination about everyone and nobody, about everyland and nowhere, justified by the Lives of Suetonius and our present discontents. Maybe it is life-like, that is the incurable ambition of the novelist, he will not disavow it; but if so it is because its characters have come alive. Their motives run about in our world also, and it is our problems with which they wrestle in their distinct and perhaps simpler but similar world. The England, the America, the London in this book are not the England, America and London of geography and journalism, but England, America and London transposed into imaginative narrative. The tampering of J.W. Dunne with popular ideas of space and time is having its influence upon fiction. So far as the writer may judge his own story, it seems to begin on earth somewhere in the nineteen-twenties, but it goes on and on unrestrainedly, into the years to come. The writer has let that happen, he calls your attention to it to prepare your mind for it, but he offers no explanation or apology.

BOOK I. — INCUBATION

I. — TENDER YEARS

§ I

"It's a Holy Terror," said Betsy Barnacle, the monthly nurse. "I never heard such a baby. Scream and scream it does. And its little fists!"

"There ain't nothing wrong with it?" asked cook.

"Only it's a little Turk," said Betsy. "Goes stiff it does and if you tried to stop it, there'd be convulsions. Hark at it now! You'd think it would rupture itself."

The two women listened judicially. Their eyes met in a common wonder.

"I shouldn't have thought its father had it in him," said cook.

§ II

The baby grew into an incessantly active, bilious little boy with a large white face, a slight scowl and the devil of a temper. He was a natural born kicker; he went straight for the shins. He was also a wrist-twister, but he bit very little. On the other hand he was a great smasher of the cherished possessions of those who annoyed him, and particularly the possessions of his brothers Samuel and Alf. He seemed to have been born with the idea of "serving people out." He wept very little, but when he wept he howled aloud, and jabbered wild abuse, threats and recriminations through the wet torrent of his howling. The neighbours heard him. Old gentlemen stopped and turned round to look at him in the street.

By the time he was seven or eight quite a number of people had asked: "What can you do with a boy like that?" Nobody had found a satisfactory solution to the problem. Many suggestions were made, from "Knock his little block off," to "Give him more love."

Nowadays many people deny that the unpleasantness of unpleasant children comes naturally. They say they are love-starved. His Aunt Julia, for example, did. "You think so," said his mother,

and did not argue about it, because at times she was very doubtful indeed whether she did love him. She was for a mother unusually clear-headed. She was affectionate but she was critical. And what to do with him she did not know.

His name was Rudolf, not perhaps the wisest name to give a child, which shortened naturally into Rudie, but which after he had heard of the existence and world-wide fame of Mr. Kipling he insisted upon shortening further and improperly — since it altered the vowel sound — into "Rud." He was also called Young Whitlow, Whitlow Tertius, Wittles and Drink, Wittles and Stink, Grub and simply The Stink. He objected strenuously to the last and always attempted the murder of anyone not too obviously an outsize who used it. It referred to some early accident in his career which he desired to have forgotten.

His relations with his brothers were strained. Samuel was inclined to mock and tease him — a perilous joy. He threw a dinner-knife across the table at Samuel and nicked a bit off the top of his ear. Samuel had either taken an overdose of mustard or, as Rud declared, twisted his nose in such a way as to imply "Stink." The subsequent enquiry never settled this. The ear bled copiously into Mrs. Whitlow's handkerchief and nobody could imagine what would have happened if the knife had gone four inches straighter. "Might have blinded me," accused Samuel, from under Mother's arm. "Might have cut my eye clean out." It was a tremendous scene and Mr. Whitlow, who disliked the job extremely, took little Rudie upstairs and spanked him, calling him "You little Devil!" between each smack, and left him in the bedroom.

Thither presently came Mother.

"Why did you do it, Rudie?" she asked.

"He's always teasing me. He drives me wild," said Rudie.

"But to throw a knife!"

"He won't do it again," said Rudie, smearing his wet, dirty, woeful face and nose with the back of his dirty little hand. "Your own brother!"

Later he threw a large, wooden toy-horse at Alf and missed him and smashed the parlour window. "Your father will beat you again!" cried mother in distress. "Say you were playing catch with him, Alfie!"

“I didn’t catch the horse,” brother Alf prevaricated stoutly to Father, and the beating was averted.

But little Rudie never thanked Alfred for that. He never thought very much of Alfred.

He stole his brothers’ things, he played with their things and broke them and they had no remedy — for you cannot sneak on a younger brother and they were forbidden to take the law into their own hands. All three of the boys drew and painted. Alf’s work was the more delicate and he copied meticulously, but Rudie’s had a sort of splashing originality. When Alf took a bright and careful bit of illumination to school the drawing master praised it in front of the whole classroom, and he had never once had a word of praise for Rudie’s frequent and hasty performances. So Rudie got hold of and tore up Alf’s masterpiece and, when the master wanted to exhibit it again, the story came out and Rudie was reproached by the master before everybody. He went home with a bursting heart and scribbled all over a number of pages in Alf’s favourite book.

“What can you do with a boy like that?” asked Mr. Whitlow in the bar parlour of the Bell.

“He’s got spirit,” said Mr. Cramble, the grocer. “An evil spirit,” said Mr. Whitlow.

“He’ll change as he grows up,” said Lozanda, the vet. “Adolescence. They often do.”

“If he doesn’t,” said Mr. Whitlow, “he’ll face a jury one of these days. I tell him that. But does he mind me? Not him.”

“Spare the rod,” hinted Mr. Cramble.

“His mother don’t like his being touched,” said Mr. Whitlow, “and I don’t much like it either. I suppose I’m a bit modern.”

“You see,” said Mr. Whitlow after reflection, “he’s not over-strong. He has these headaches and bilious fits. And he seems to be able to make himself look pale when he wants to. I used to think his brothers would keep him in order a bit. But he kicks them, he does, and they can’t very well kick back, him being delicate. Their mother’d never forgive them if they left a bruise on him. All they seem able to do with him is to get him upstairs in their bedroom and suffocate him with pillows. He certainly don’t like that. But he’s got artful about it. He used to kick and try to yell and so they knew he

was all right. Now he goes limp right away as soon as they've got hold of him. And naturally they take off the pillows to look at him and see they've done him no harm and he sort of comes-to very slowly. Last time they did it, he got away down the passage and then went back and buzzed an old croquet ball at young Alf and raised a lump — so big."

"Sort of Problem Child," said Skindles, the watch-maker.

"What's going to become of him?" said Whitlow and straightway abandoned further enquiry.

§ III

Mrs. Whitlow was a woman of some intelligence and she had had a good modern education, which had confused her .mind considerably. Nevertheless she kept up her reading.

She thought that women were the race and men merely incidents, and that every great man in the world owed nearly everything to his mother. She thought that if Adam had had a mother things might have been very different, and that the story of Ruth and Naomi was the most beautiful story in the world. And she thought that after Sam and Alf she ought to have had a daughter, and when Rudolf came squalling into her life she repined gently.

Once or twice she said to him, wistfully but unwisely, "If only you had been a dear little girl," and so sowed the seeds of an enduring misogyny. The sex-war was all alight in him from the age of six onward.

The first girl he hit was his cousin Rachel, who had recited:

"Sugar and spice and all things nice That's what little girls are made of Slugs and snails and little dogs' tails And that's what little boys are made of,"

to him. He hit her, and all she did was to slap back — just a stinging slap — and then he got her by her long hair. Whereupon she pinched — so painfully it made him yell with surprise — and then got hold of his wrists in a strong sort of grip that immobilised him and then she put out her tongue at him. "Yaaaa!" she said. He couldn't get free of her. Not for the moment. Of course he would

have won all right, in spite of the fact that she was nearly a year older, but just at this point the mothers came in.

Her mother completely misunderstood the situation. “Rachel!” she cried, “what are you doing to that poor little boy?”

(Jimini! What wasn’t he just going to do to her!)

He brooded on this affair afterwards. It left an uneasiness and an aversion. There was something queer about these girls; they were like insects; you didn’t know what they might do to you next. And their shins were difficult to get at. They weren’t as soft as they ought to be, not nearly.

What properly ought he to have done? Jerked his wrists free of course, and then?

“He’s not a gentle child,” said his mother to Rachel’s mother. “He’s not gentle.”

“Love him all the more,” said Aunt Julia who was also present.

But after one or two attempts to take him to her bosom and sit him on her lap and reason with him gently or talk to him beautifully about the child Jesus, about whose entirely undocumented youth she invented the most unwarrantable stories, she realised her sister-in-law’s difficulties better. Rudie fought her love like a wild cat.

They tried to soften his nature by giving him pets. But they had to take the white mice away from him again because he wanted to teach them to swim and submerge themselves in the bath at the word of command and was inclined to be punitive when they failed to realise what was expected of them. Dogs he regarded with suspicion and had a way of picking up stones when he saw them. The suspicion was mutual. His white rabbits died either of eccentric and irregular dietary or by being dropped suddenly as a punishment for squirming about and kicking in sudden disconcerting jerks. For a time he seemed really to like a gay little kitten that pursued a rabbit’s foot on a piece of string with the most ridiculous nimbleness and waggery. Then something happened. A great running and banging-about upstairs was heard. The kitten came headlong down the staircase incredibly scared. Rudie followed in pursuit — armed with his little cricket bat.

“She won’t play with me any longer,” he bellowed. “She’s got to. Where’s she gone?”

What can you do with a boy like that?

§ IV

Aunt Julia's earliest attempts at changing Rudie's heart by love had not been very successful, but she was a persistent woman and full of ideas of the most diverse sort about the bringing up of children and the lamentable foolishness with which people in general set about that business. People marry for passion, a most improper motive, and their children take them by surprise. They don't deserve them. Maybe in a more scientific world only spinsters will have children. She knew she was on the right track — or tracks — in disapproving of whatever had been done, was being done or was ever likely to be done with Rudie. Children are right, and parents and pedagogues never understand them. That is the privilege and compensation of the observant spinster. Very likely she had been a little precipitate with Rudie, but she felt she should try again.

She had a nice long talk one evening with Mrs. Whitlow. "You ought to have him psycho-analysed," she said. "It lies too deep for us untrained observers. Very likely that Oedipus complex. But what we have to remember always is that, like every child, he is intrinsically good."

"At times," said Mrs. Whitlow, "that is very hard to believe."

"I copied some bits of wisdom out of a book by Mr. Neill," said Aunt Julia. "Listen, dear: 'I cannot say the truth is, but I can declare my strong conviction that the boy is never in the wrong.' What do you think of that? And 'the self that God made' — isn't that beautifully put the self that God made is in conflict with all our silly teaching and interference.' And this! — what a comfort it is in these times of war and trouble !— 'Human beings are good, they want to do good; they want to love and be loved.' When one thinks of all those poor love-starved young aviators bombing — what was the name of that place in India — yesterday? Just unsatisfied love-hunger. And then this again: 'Criminality,' he says, my dear, 'springs from lack of love.'"

"On the part of the criminal —

“Oh, no, dear! No. No! NO! On the part of the people who make the laws. And so you see what we have to do, is just to find out the complex that is tying poor little Rudie down to all his naughtiness. When he broke the leg of his rabbit when he was playing with it the other day, that was really a protest — a symbol.”

“It wasn’t a nice symbol for the rabbit.”

“We have to discover his complex — that is the next thing.” “He keeps so quiet about that.”

“Naturally. We have to discover it. Now tell me — do you and George, do you ever quarrel in front of Rudie?” “My dear!”

“Does he ever see you caressing or making love?” “Julia, darling!”

“Does he — is he disposed to avoid his father?”

“He keeps out of his way — especially when he is up to mischief.”

“A pure Oedipus,” said Julia, nodding her head several times. “Probably a chemically pure Oedipus. Now tell me: When you and he are together and his father comes in, does he seem to want to get close to you — edge between you, so to speak? As if to protect you?”

“It’s generally the other way about. He wants to be protected. Not that his father ever ill-treats him. But the boy has that sort of conscience. He always feels his father may have found out something.”

“Exactly. And now tell me — tell me — do you think — has he any particular feeling — any sort of aversion,” — Julia became very red in the face but her eyes were bright and resolute— “Steeples?”

Mrs. Whitlow thought. “He certainly hates going to church for the children’s service,” she said. “If you mean that.”

“Exactly. Transfers it to the church — where dear Mr. Woolley presides. And no doubt to Mr. Woolley. The Oedipus in perfection. The radiating father-hate. But don’t trust my untrained judgment, dear. Go to a proper psychoanalyst and have all this cleared up. Then you will know...”

Thus Aunt Julia.

But Mrs. Whitlow did not go to a psycho-analyst. She had seen only one or two in her life and she had not liked the look of them. But the idea of getting some advice took hold of her and she decided

to go to old Doctor Carstall, who was so big and deliberate that you felt you could put the utmost confidence in him. And by making an excuse of Rudie's bilious attacks, old Doctor Carstall looked him over.

"He's the most ordinary boy I ever met," said old Doctor Carstall, "except that he has a certain excess of — go in him, and a lack of self- restraint. He's fairly intelligent of course — in his way."

"He's not an ordinary boy," said Mrs. Whitlow, defending every mother's dearest illusion, "not by any means."

"As you will," said old Doctor Carstall. "But keep him out of the hands of these faddists and send him to the most conventional school you can find. He'll probably do as well as most ordinary little boys — get scholarships, play games and all that. He has — well — tenacity. He doesn't feel scruples if he wants anything. Don't imagine he's anything out of the way for naughtiness. It's just that that curious go of his brings it out..."

"Nasty little kid," soliloquised old Doctor Carstall, when Mrs. Whitlow had departed. "There's millions like him — more or less.

"Millions," he repeated..."Most people forget what nasty children they were themselves. They forget it.

"Just because children are small and pink — or small and sickly like this little beast — they imagine them angelic. If you magnified them, everyone would see plainer what they are."

He reflected. "Tenacity? That's no virtue...Though of course it may be an advantage..."

The great lines of Wordsworth floated protestingly through his memory and were ill received.

"But trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our Home," he said and then added irreligiously, vulgarly and outrageously: "I don't think. His clouds of glory would smell of sulphur all the time."

Aunt Julia was never able to put her finger exactly on Rudie's complex — if so be he had one. Whatever it was, presumably it remained unresolved and festering in his soul, and this story can tell no more about it.

§ V

Under the influence of old Doctor Carstall, Rudie went to Hooplady House instead of having his subconsciousness explored, cleaned-up and made over in a suitable establishment on soundly psycho-analytical lines. Probably the results would have been very similar. Hooplady House, as an educational institution, never gave a thought to character and the finer shades of conduct — except on Speech Days. Then the headmaster said the boys were a household of young English gentlemen, and the parents and prefects heard him with quiet self-approval.

By way of teaching, the school devoted itself to satisfying the requirements of various respectable examining bodies, and unless your behaviour militated against the attainment of that objective, the school, as an organisation, did not concern itself about what was happening to you inside or outside or between the hours devoted to that purpose. Beyond the lines laid down by these examining bodies it did not adventure. Why should it? If they did not know what arrangement of obligatory and optional subjects constituted a proper education, who did? Most of the boys were day-boys, and by ordinary standards the tone was good. Filth was furtive, and such vice as occurred was inquisitive, elementary, infrequent and obscure. The head boy was a son of Doctor Carstall's, a taciturn, fair, good-looking boy who seemed to do everything he did well and with a minimum of effort. He won a sort of qualified hero-worship from Rud, quite at the beginning of their acquaintance.

Rud was engaged in an all-in scrap with a boy who had called him "The Stink." He had been jabbing at his adversary with a penholder with a broken nib. But the fellow had got him by the wrist now, only his left fist was free and he was getting the worst of the punching.

Carstall appeared, tall and calm, standing over them. "Don't fight with things like that, Whitlow. We don't do it here."

"He's bigger than me.

"Kick his shins if you must, junior's privilege, but don't use a filthy thing like that. Might poison his blood. Or jab his eye. What's the trouble?"

Explanation.

“Well, I say he’s not to be called that. Nicknames ought to be tolerable. And Russell, you; tease someone your own size. Get out of it, both of you.”

There was a splendour, Rud thought, about such authority. “Get out of it, both of you,” he whispered to himself presently and wondered how long it would be before he was head of the school. He’d make ’em get out of it all right. But it seemed hard to him that he wasn’t to use pen-nibs or scissors in warfare. Very hard. He was the sort of scrapper who would have invented knuckle-dusters, if they hadn’t already been invented.

On the whole he was less aggressive during his junior days at school than at home. He was not much of a success at games and he was held to all sorts of rules and customs he had been accustomed to disregard at home with his brothers. He learnt quite early the inadvisability of mowing down the wicket with his little bat when he got out at cricket, or of quitting the game ostentatiously and vindictively directly after he had had his innings, and he grasped the necessity of having the football somewhere near at least, when he desired to hack another player. He ceased to bawl and threaten loudly when annoyed, but on the other hand he acquired a complete set of the recognised English bad words, and he muttered them ferociously whenever exasperated. Brother Sam he saw little of in the school; he was in the upper division; and brother Alf just drifted about him quietly, pursuing ends of his own. There was a lot of smouldering goodness in Alf and a touch of religion. “You didn’t ought to say words like that, Rud,” he protested.

Rud replied with practically the complete vocabulary. Alf put his hands to his ears and said: “You might be struck dead for that, Rud.”

“He’d have to strike pretty near the whole school then,” said Rud, who had a keen sense of justice when he himself was concerned.

He speedily displayed an active, insensitive intelligence beyond his years. His memory was exceptionally good, his reception uncritical. He bolted the feast of knowledge and threw it up again with ease, completely undigested. He was indeed a born examinee, and his progress up the school was exceptionally rapid. He competed for marks vehemently. He was best at English, Geography, History, French and Latin. He found mathematics tricky and problems

irritating. He could not ponder. Formulae he could tackle but not problems. He got hot and cross in the face of difficulty. He was all for cutting the Gordian Knot instead of fiddling about with it, and he saw nothing idiotic in the classical story of Columbus and the egg. Downright action was in his nature.

He read voraciously. His imagination was fired particularly by the history of wars, conquests and campaigns. Then forthwith he became Caesar, Alexander, Napoleon or Genghis Khan, whichever Rud it happened to be. He conquered America with all Washington Irving's Conquistadors, and subjugated Ireland with the sword of Cromwell. He was Clive; he was Gustavus Adolphus. Fiction, generally speaking, he did not like, there were too many of those incalculable girls in it. He had no use for Fenimore Cooper and the noble Indian, and books about big-game hunting merely strengthened his innate distrust and dislike of animals. If ever he had to hunt tigers, he decided, he would do it with explosive bullets from a machan, a good high, strong machan. When he saw the elephants and gorillas in the zoological gardens he thrilled with hostility, and dreamt afterwards about fighting them with machine-guns and catching them in the most horribly spiky pitfalls. And when in his dream they just came closer and closer to him, bleeding, half-blinded, but persistently undying and intent upon him, he screamed and woke up in a frenzy of fear and hate.

Savages, barbarians, "natives," he "mowed down," he had no other use for them. Omdurman was his ideal battle.

Since he was a day-boy and not very fond of games, and since he could do his school work very quickly, he was free to take long, solitary walks in which he could let his imagination run riot in anticipatory reverie. To the passing observer he seemed to be a small, rather slovenly boy, with a large, pale, egg-shaped face, big end up, and usually a sniff, but in imagination he rode a magnificent charger, or occupied a powerful car, and his staff and orderlies and messengers buzzed about him, and his embattled hosts stormed the farmhouses and villages of the landscape and swept over the hills, while his pitiless guns searched their recesses. The advance was always victorious, and with the home-coming came the triumph. Usually Hooplady House was involved in that. The prisoners stood

before him. That drawing-master, a proven traitor, was shot out of hand. Several of the upper boys shared his fate. The rest of the staff were shot or reproached and insulted according to the mood of the day. Sometimes his father and mother appeared on the scene and were put under protective detention. Cousin Rachel, the pincher, now in a greatly chastened mood, submitted to her fate. Sam and Alf were rarely given roles.

But one figure was very frequent in these dreams. He was sometimes the second in command, sometimes the opposite general surrendering with all the honours of war, sometimes an ambiguous political associate in the revolution, or the counter-revolution, or the war of liberation, or the great conquest, whichever it happened to be. His admiration for the generalissimo was extreme, his loyalty amounted to devotion. This was Carstall. “My trusty Carstall.” Rudie never seemed able to keep Carstall out of the phantasy. He never wanted to do so.

He whistled to himself as he took his imagination on these excursions. He never learnt to whistle normally. It was a sort of acid piping through his teeth and it lacked any consistent tune.

And always he got home by twilight. For in the dark the kings and captains departed, the fighting and the conquests died away, and the small boy was left exposed to those bears and tigers and gorillas, which escape so frequently from menageries even in the most settled districts, and to criminals and homicidal maniacs and hedge-bogies and all the shapeless terrors of the night.

As his mind grew and his reading expanded his reveries became more realist and coherent, and darkness less menacing. He began to study maps, particularly maps in which each country and its foreign possessions were done in the same colour; he began to collect pictures and comparative diagrams of armies and navies and air forces. He was particularly keen on air warfare. Dropping high explosive bombs together with printed warnings and proclamations, appealed to him as just the perfect way of making war. He read the newspapers with an avidity uncommon at his tender age. He knew the salutes and symbols of all the dictators in the world and the inner significance of every coloured shirt. And as he grew up towards them, these heroes, these masters of men who marched like lurid

torches through the blue haze and reek of contemporary history, seemed continually to come down nearer the level of his understanding and sympathy.

So it was our Holy Terror nourished his imagination and anticipated his career.

His extensive reading fed a natural disposition to accumulate vocabulary. The staff realised that he could write the best examination paper in the school, and told him so. He used long words. Some of the assistants, and particularly the games master, were disposed to discourage this, but the English master applauded. "Nevertheless, take warning from our Hindu brethren," said the English master, and lent him a facetious book about Babu English. "If the new word sticks out among familiar usage like an unset gem — excise it, delete it. A new word is like a wild animal you have caught. You must learn its ways and break it in before you can use it freely."

Rud took that to heart. He learnt to write a good, nervous prose. He developed a certain gift for effective phrases.

§ VI

His early religious experiences did not amount to very much and they played only a small part in his subsequent career. Still, one may say a word or two about them before dismissing them.

He was never God-fearing.

Nowhere in the world in his days was there any atmosphere in which the presence of God was felt. The general behaviour of people everywhere made it plain that whatever they professed when they were questioned, they did not feel any such Power within or about them. For most of them it would have been an entirely paralysing thought to have been living in the presence, in the sight and knowledge of an unseen and silent Deity. With indefinite powers of intervention. The tension would have become unendurable; they would have screamed. They dismissed the thought, therefore, and they dismissed Him, not explicitly, of course, but tacitly and practically. On most of their occasions, even the professional

religious people, from popes and archbishops down to confirmation candidates, behaved exactly like atheists — as well but no better.

Young Rudolf indeed heard very little about the supreme immanence. Mrs. Whitlow had a delicacy about mentioning Him except in connection with the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments and similar formalities, and Mr. Whitlow only mentioned Him on occasions of dismay — as for example when he heard that Aunt Julia had come in to see them. Then usually he would exclaim: "Oh, God!"

From the outset young Rudolf put up a considerable God-resistance. He read such portions of the scripture as were chosen for his learning reluctantly and with incredulity and aversion. Father was bad enough without this vaster Father behind him. From all the world around him Rud caught the trick of putting divinity out of his mind in the ordinary affairs of life. But only by degrees. He had some bad times, usually about judgment-day and hell-fire. They were worse to dream about than falling into tigers' dens. He had called Alf a fool several times. That, he learnt, was a hell-fire business. And there was very little on the other side of the account. He had tried praying — as, for example, at cricket for a score of twenty and then he had got out first ball.

"All right, God," said little Rudie. "You see."

Then he heard tell that old Doctor Carstall was an atheist. The schoolfellow who told him that spoke in hushed tones. "What's a Natheist?" asked Rudie.

"It's — he don't believe there's any God at all. Ain't it orful?"

"He'll have to go to hell," said Rudie.

"He'll have to go to hell. And him so respected! It's a frightful pity."

At his next opportunity Rudie had a good look at Doctor Carstall.

He seemed to be carrying it off all right.

Then Rudie had an impulse to ask young Carstall about it, but he did not dare.

There was something about this sinister idea of Atheism that attracted him. It was frightful. Oh! unspeakable, but it had a magnificence. Suppose really there was nobody watching...

The things you might do!...

He did not talk very much about these high matters. They came too close up to him for frankness or the risk of self-exposure. And even had he wanted to do so most of the other kids would have been too scared. But he listened to his elders. When he heard one of the senior boys arguing that "somebody must have made the world," it seemed a perfectly valid argument, though for any practical purposes it led nowhere.

Gradually his thoughts took the shape of feeling that the God one heard about in school did not exist, that they didn't mean it whatever it was about the Trinity, but that nevertheless there was a God — another God, that Maker — who went away — so that you could do any little things you wanted to do — who was indeed away generally, but who might at any time stage a tremendous come-back. Then He would ask everybody what they had done with the things of his making, and Rudie's impression was that most people would look pretty silly long before it came down to him. There was no reason Rudie could see why he in particular should be pitched upon. He was quite prepared to turn God's-evidence against one or two people he knew.

So far as Aunt Julia's edifying inventions about that exemplary Christ Child were concerned, he believed in them only to the extent of disliking him almost as heartily as he did his mother's hypothetical dear little girl. And as for gratitude to anyone, who needn't have done it, mind you, getting himself crucified (knowing quite well he would rise again the third day) to save Rudie from that hell-fire from which nevertheless he still somehow went in great danger, that was something too spiritual altogether for his hard little intelligence. Long before he was adolescent he had put religion outside of himself and thought about it less and less.

His mother puzzled about him and tried to feel loving and proud about him. If she had been quite frank with herself she would have confessed to herself that this dome-browed son she had borne was a little cad in grain, to whom unfeeling ruthlessness and greediness and implacable wilfulness were as natural as night-prowling to a hyena or an evil odour to flowering privet.

The chances of the genes had given her that, but her spirit struggled against her luck. It was too much to admit. She knew better

than anyone how easily and meanly he could lie. She had found him pilfering, and his instincts seemed furtively dirty, but she could not think of her own flesh and blood in such harsh terms. “His soul is unawakened,” she told herself, “one must be patient.”

And after all, he was very clever at school, continually top of his class and passing examinations with facility. His essays were always “excellent”; he had an “instinct for phrasing.” (If only he would not boast to her so much about these things!) And if he was horrid, he was interesting. That at any rate could be said for him. With a certain compunction his mother realised that she thought much more about him than she did about Sam or Alf. They were no trouble. They were ordinary like their father. You loved them, of course, but calmly. You did not distress yourself about them.

For a term or so there was an earnest young assistant master in the early stages of evangelical mania at Hooplady House. He perceived the moral obscurity in which Rudolf lived and tried to throw a ray of light into it. He got the boy to have a long walk with him and, beginning artfully by botanising, led the talk to ideals and one’s Object in Life.

It was mostly his own Object in Life he talked about. Rud was as hard to draw as a frightened badger. The earnest young assistant master confided that he himself might not live very long. He believed he was tuberculous. Once or twice he had coughed blood.

“I spew up all my dinner sometimes,” said Rud, faintly interested, “and last Easter my nose bled something frightful. Until mother got a cold key.”

“That isn’t like tuberculosis, which just eats your lungs away.

“Don’t worms?” said Rud. “I saw a picture the other day of liver fluke in a chap’s liver. Something horrid. You get it from eating watercress.”

The earnest young assistant master shifted his ground abruptly. “I’d hate to die before I had done something really good and fine in the world,” he said. “Sometimes I think I’d like to take orders. After I’ve got my B.A. London it wouldn’t be so difficult. And then I could do God’s work in some dreadful slum. Or go to a leper colony. Or be the chaplain of a hospital or prison. It would be fine to go to a war — as a chaplain, just upholding the fellows. Helping them. Toc-H and

all that. Don't you ever want to do things like that?"

"I'd like to be a machine-gunner," said Rud.

"Oh, but that's killing!"

"Well, what will you do if this next war they keep talking about now really comes?"

"I should certainly not be a soldier. Among other things, I doubt if I am physically fit. I should either get into a Red Cross Unit or go as a padre. Under fire, of course — into the front line. But without a weapon in my hand — ever."

"Everyone isn't like that."

"There would be no more war if they were. What a death it would be, to stand out boldly between the lines and cry aloud, 'Peace,' holding out bare hands to both sides."

"You'd get peppered to rights," said Rud, regarding the young man's exalted face with extreme disapproval.

The assistant Master was lost in a vision. He stood still with shiny eyes and face uplifted and his thin, white, knuckly hands were tightly clenched. He made his companion feel uncomfortable and absolutely resolved never to come for a walk with him again.

"There's a shorter way back over this next stile and across the fields," said Rud after a lengthy pause.

And that is as much as need be told of the spiritual circumstances of Rudolf Whitlow in his youth.

There is no record that his soul ever awakened. There is no record that it stirred even in its sleep. There is no evidence indeed that he ever had a soul.

II. — DEBUT

§ I

The country was already in a very disturbed state when Rudolf Whitlow's schooldays drew to an end. He had believed that his facility in passing examinations would lead up through a ladder of scholarships to university distinction, security and authority. In the stabler past he might have made such an ascent and rounded off his career as a formidably malicious, secretly vicious, conservative don, the sort of don who is feared and propitiated during his lifetime and forgotten gladly almost before he is dead.

Father Whitlow wasn't doing at all well in business just then, and he had heard that a son at the university was an expensive responsibility. Neither of Rud's brothers was doing well. Sam didn't like his job. He complained that it gave him no hope whatever of promotion, but he was afraid to quit it because jobs were now so difficult to find, and Alf, after one or two futile starts, became conscientious to a painful pitch and deeply religious. He hung about at home being inconveniently helpful, and on one occasion his mother, going quietly upstairs, was horrified to find him praying on his knees. After a time he got tentative employment in Doctor Carstall's dispensary and brightened up a little. Carstall found him slow but very careful and exact, and spoke well of him in a faintly contemptuous way. And also he increased his pay and said encouraging things to him.

But Rud's white face during his last two terms at school became more and more resentful and lowering.

He resolved to have things out with his once-dreaded father. "I'm going in for these scholarships whether you like it or not, And you'll have to pay the fees."

"I tell you it's no good," said Father Whitlow.

"What else can I do?"

"Edjicated proletariat — and what good's that?" "If I get top—"

"You won't get top."

Rud, regarding his father, looked still capable of knife-throwing.

“Couldn’t you do something to help?” intervened his mother. “Write for the papers? Do tutoring?”

“And eat up all my blasted time and energy!”

“Better than nothing,” said Father Whitlow.

“Look at my brothers! Look at old Sam stuck in the?? from the very start — for good and all. Look at Alf! Una,’ Under-educated. Under-qualified. Making pills in slow time Meek and holy. While young Carstall soars away to be a?? physiologist. What have you done for us? Give me one chance. See? Give me my chance, while there is a chance.”

“Look here, Rudie, you’ve got to be reasonable. How was I to know that business was going from bad to worse? I always meant to give you a chance.”

“Meant! What’s meant to me?”

“This depression; it’s got us. It’s got everybody.”

“And did you ever do anything to prevent it? Or dodge it? Some of them have dodged it. Got you — of course it got you. Did any of your generation ever think of escaping it? And so — here I am. One of the victims. I won’t stand it, Father, I tell you. I’ll fight. You let me go for those scholarships. See? You let me go in. Time enough to to tell me I can’t do it when I’ve failed.”

“I can’t face the expense of it.”

“As though you had a choice now. Not a bit of it! You owe it to me. D’you hear? You owe it to me. What did you bring me into the world for? What did you bring me into the world for? To let me down now!”

Tears of indignation shone in his eyes.

Mrs. Whitlow had been watching the disputants. “Rudie dear,” she said.

“Did I ask to be born?” said Rudie.

“Rudie!” she said, and put her hand on his.

He snatched his fist away. “Ow! — Rudie! Rudie — rot! It makes me sick.”

“Listen, Rudie.”

He glared at her.

“Maybe we could manage it. Maybe—”

“What?”

“There’s my insurance—”

“Well?”

“It was always meant for you.”

“And the others,” corrected Father.

“Never mind him,” said Rudie. “Tell me.”

His mother made a halting explanation. The policy had a surrender value. It might make things possible.

“What about the other boys!” protested Father.

“You give me my chance,” said Rudie, “and I’ll carry the darned lot of you — I’ll be an omnibus camel for the whole darned family. Trust me. But if I can’t take up these scholarships, I’m done. I’ll blow my brains out. I’ll throw myself into the canal. And I’ll leave a letter to scald the skin off you.”

“I’m sure you’ll do yourself justice, Rudie,” said his mother gently, “if you have half a chance.”

And so he was able to do himself justice, and the large, white, bilious face with the permanent, resentful scowl, frequented the streets of Camford beneath the exiguous tassel a second-hand mortar-board cap, for four hardy and strenuous years.

§ II

While Rud Whitlow pursued his studies at Camford, such as they were, the disintegration of the civilisation into which he had been born went on steadily. Human society had in fact been progressing too fast; it had slipped up on mechanisms and dislocated its class disciplines and traditions. It was in a bad way; it was possibly in need of a major operation. History was passing into a new and very perplexing phase. The scale and pace of life had altered and mental habits had failed to keep pace with the alteration. The social cog-wheels were failing to mesh with one another and they ground and jammed more and more violently. At first he did not apprehend this at all clearly, but the perception of it seeped into his mind.

Mankind put to the test was indeed displaying the most extraordinary inadaptability, politically, economically, educationally. The sole ideas for relieving tension that anyone seemed able to

entertain, were the suicidal alternatives of blind social insurrection to shift the stresses to other classes on the one hand, or aggressive war to shift the stresses to other nations on the other. No one seemed to think of relieving the stresses. One resounding crack followed another in the mighty edifice of confidence and traditional usage which was the essential framework of civilised society. Abyss after abyss yawned open wider and wider. Insecurity appeared at the most unexpected points. And amidst it, like an ant in an earthquake, our hero ran about and grew up.

It did not take him long to realise the advancing malaise of his world. Hints of disillusionment, impalpable but cumulative, gathered in his consciousness. Doubt accumulated in his mind and would not be dispelled. The ladder of academic competition and of promotion to assurance and dazzling opportunity, that he had started to climb, which by all precedents should have made him more or less a member of a definite governing class and opened the door to legal distinction or political opportunity — or at very least to the higher civil service and security — acquired a quality of unreality, became less and less credible until at times it seemed more like some inaccessible spiral staircase seen in the central incandescence of a burning house than a permanent method of ascent.

It was hard for him to believe that he of all people had misjudged his world, that even now that he had got to Camford, it was going to be a much more difficult world than he had supposed. He thought about it at nights and he betrayed an intense exasperation when people made banal remarks about it to him. Apparently the whole system of things had conspired to anticipate his ambitions and corner and defeat him.

But indeed the whole system of things was not thinking of Rud at all. It was thinking and thinking very incoherently about itself. More and more of the two thousand million or so who constituted humanity were falling into very much the same line of thought and feeling as that along which he was drifting. It was like the way particles change their orientation in a magnetised bar. It was like bits of crumbling ore falling one after another into a flux. This sense of insecurity was spreading about the entire planet, and though people went on doing the things they usually did, they had none of the

assurance, the happy-go-lucky “all-right” feeling, that had hitherto sustained normal men. They went on doing their customary things because they could not think of anything else to do. They tried to believe, and many did succeed in believing, that there would presently be a turn for the better. They did nothing to bring about that turn for the better; they just hoped it would occur. All the same, they were worried. Rud was very seriously worried. He had no disposition to believe in the natural benevolence of the universe.

“They ought not to have let things come to this,” he said, but he was never very clear even to himself who or why “They” were nor what “This” was. Some person or persons unknown was to blame. He hated these unknowns in general. But he was unable to focus his hatred into hating some responsible person or persons in particular. If only he could find who it was had neglected to do something, or had done something wrong or messed about with things, they would catch it. He’d get even with them somehow.

There had been a time when Camford was the very heart of conservatism. It was a bilateral conservatism in those days — and one half of it was called the Liberal Party. It dominated the country without effort as a matter of course. It changed and remained the same. It radiated out over an unresentful empire in a state of unindicted exploitation — on which a sun of unimpeachable loyalty never set. Odd specimens of the more coloured subject-races came up to Camford and objected to something or other, but in such funny Babu-English that their complaints dissolved in laughter. In these happy days the tradition a the careless, wealthy, young gentlemen ruled the whole university from the richest Fellow Commoner to the poorest scholar. The only use for subversive ideas was the opportunities they afforded for privileged rags. People with revolutionary minds and “advanced” notions were invited to address meetings and conduct debates, and were then kidnapped, ducked, personated and so forth, all in the most perfect good-humour and with the unostentatious approval of the authorities.

But when Rudie went up, those golden days were already ancient history. He had read about them in books, but behold! they were over. The Great War had strained Camford, and Camford, after a phase of hectic optimism while it was reconstructing what was left of

the old undergraduates who had gone to the front, remained strained and began even to realise how strained it was. A subtle change in the quality of the multiplying students and the younger dons, due to the belated but extensive expansion of lower middle-class education and the development of what was called the educational ladder, had gone on and continued. A new, uneasy type was swamping the ancient confidence of those venerable colleges, young men who said: “Yes, but—” to everything, over whose apprehensive minds the perception of decaying privileges and of imperial enervation, shrinkage and decline, hung more and more heavily.

For a year and more Rud stuck to his lectures and books. The teaching of Hooplady House had been urgent for examination successes rather than first- class in itself, and he had much to revise and supplement. Then he began to take notice of events outside the classroom.

Camford, since the mediaeval cosmogony had broken down and the Catholic scheme of salvation had fallen into disuse, had never made the slightest attempt to give any coherent picture of the universe to the new generation that came to it for instruction. Its Church of England orthodoxy broke down with Catholic emancipation and an influx of Dissenters and Jews. Since then nothing in Camford except a few dreaming spires had pointed anywhere. Inertia had carried the old place on for the better part of a century. It resisted novel ideas and scientific aggression as long as possible by the method of slight and innuendo, and when it could resist no longer it yielded in the true Anglican style with ambiguous and nearly inaudible acquiescences. This lulled the minds of a certain proportion of the young people and diverted their energies to games, rage, amateur theatricals, amateurish poetry and amateurish literary criticism, and the less easily tranquillised ones resorted to the bookshops in the town and to a diversity of intrusive movements that promised in the most various ways to satisfy that impatience for plain direction towards a concrete objective which is one of the natural cravings of ripening adolescence. At first these uneasy ones had been a small and derided minority, but in the post-war days they multiplied rapidly.

In his school days he had devoured books whole. Now he was

realising that standard history had little to tell about what was happening in the world. He began to attend political gatherings and discussion circles; he took to reading and comparing a number of newspapers; his large brow and lowering expression were to be seen at the back of stuffy and draughty rooms, disliking and scrutinising the speakers and watching every reaction of the audience. He was puzzled, but he hung on, and his mind became more and more involved in this extra-academic stuff. He joined the Union and snorted and growled and indulged in ironical and imperfectly audible comments through three discussions. Each time he wanted to speak and didn't dare. Then at a debate upon the resolution: "That a drastic change in our economic life in the direction of collectivism is long overdue," he wrenched himself up from his seat, drew a deep breath and began his maiden speech.

He spoke for the motion. Words came. He found he could think on his legs. He could forget himself in his subject. Once started, his speech rambled indeed, but rambled interestingly. His sentences flowed easily. They were going over, he realised. He was less and less scared and more and more fluent. He was keeping his head and quite aware of what he was doing. He found he could hold a sentence, even quite a long sentence, bring out its conclusion with an emphasised clearness and a punch at the air that made it seem significant even when it was not. He worked himself up into a generous indignation. He ended in a whirl of patriotic anger.

"This is what they have made of our country! This is our inheritance!" The "old men" caught it, the privileged incapables, the greedy, short-sighted business organisers, the military caste, finance, the party "gangs." All the recognised cockshies. Indeed they caught it. Even "people in high places."

"Wake up England! — that was said thirty years and more ago. And see where we are! We of the new crop! Where are we to go? Go into the cadet corps, go into the flying corps! Yes — yes. Though those others died, they thought, to save us! We're in the soup and we've got to do it over again, my masters. We've got to do 1914 over again. It'll be our turn sure enough. The way they're going. We've got to face up to it. But not under the old fools and rogues, Sir, this time — not with the profiteers at our heels. No, Sir! This time we

fight with our eyes open, with our eyes wide open."

And so on, growing loud and harsh, but still keeping pretty clear, more and more sure of himself. Betsy Barnacle would hardly have recognised the voice that had squalled upstairs in Mrs. Whitlow's room eighteen years before, but it was the same voice growing up now, as protesting and as unquenchable. The speech was the success of the evening. It was what so many of his hearers had been feeling. But they had not been able to let themselves go as he did. More and more applause broke into his flow. They liked him. They really liked this thick-set figure with the punching gesture and the big head. His words had the rather attractive bitterness of quinine.

He sat down amidst a buzz of applause.

In one crowded half-hour Rud had become a Camford personality. Men discussed him in their rooms that night, and young dons talked about him.

"That was a pretty good speech," said a voice beside him as the gathering broke up. "A bit angry of course."

He looked up and saw Carstall at his elbow. That gave him a thrill. Carstall was already a research Fellow and his work in physiology was being talked about.

"How did you vote?" he asked.

"I voted with you, of course," said Carstall. "I'm all for a revolution — maybe more of a revolution than yours. I don't know. Mine is the cold deliberate sort and yours is the hot indignant stuff, but we're revolutionaries all right. It takes all sorts to make the world budge."

"We're revolutionaries all right," from Carstall, gave a peculiar confirmation to Rud's self-approval.

We!

Other hands got hold of his sleeves and caught at his elbow and drew him away from Carstall. Or he would have liked to have lingered for a moment over that. Men who had ignored him and even avoided him were asking him to come along to their rooms for a talk. Others were obviously intent upon questioning him.

He was not prepared to answer questions, he realised. He had made a strong impression and he must not complicate it. A natural turn for tactics came into play. "I'd love to," he said, "I'd love to but

I've two hours of work to-night before I go to bed..."

"No. No. It's work that won't wait..."

He hoped they got the faint flavour of mystery in that work that wouldn't wait.

"I didn't mean to speak at all to-night. My ideas ran away with me..."

He felt he was doing it all magnificently. He was elated with himself. He disengaged himself, got away to his own rooms and locked himself in.

It required a considerable effort to do this. There was something intoxicating in this sudden transition from contemptuous negligence to interest. It was the first time he had felt visible in Camford. But he knew that he had to get out of it. He had to adjust himself before he betrayed how little he was adjusted. His speech quite as much as its reception had taken him by surprise. He hadn't thought it was in him. Even the ideas he had expressed struck him as new. They had come up out of him.

He sat before his fire for a long time in a state of confused self-congratulation. If he could go on with this sort of thing! Dreams he had kept at arm's length before he now accepted frankly. "Leadership," he whispered. "The quality of leadership. Maybe I have it. Maybe I really have it.

"Man to man I don't count for much, but man to meeting! It's going to be different. I wonder why. And — yes I can do it."

He began that acid whistle between his teeth that had been the common accompaniment of the walking day-dreams of his schoolboy years — at first very softly and then loudly.

"A great speech, Rud, my boy. A magnificent speech!" To that he had expanded Carstall's "pretty good speech." "Leadership. Leadership. Leadership." The word sang through his brain.

He found himself in a vast dreamland auditorium compelling great waves in that time-honoured "sea of faces."

He thrust out his fist, held it up to the level of his forehead and glared at his arm-chair. It was his natural gesture, arrested and held. The room was filled with phantom applause.

§ III

"Your son, I see, Mr. Whitlow," said Mr. Skindle, the watchmaker, "has been getting into the papers. Seems he's been making speeches."

"Whe-where? I didn't see it," said Mr. Whitlow.

"It's in the District Weekly," said Lozanda. "I saw it too.

"'Local scholarship winner' they called him. Just a paragraph copied out of the Camford News."

"Says he's a Rising Red," said Mr. Cramble the grocer, with a stern eye over his pipe.

The paper was handed to Mr. Whitlow and there was silence while he read the news.

"Now that's serious," he said. "You never know what to do with that boy. Always breaking out in a new place. It won't do him any good at Camford to be figuring about as a red."

"It will not," said Mr. Cramble.

"Seems he don't like the idea of this new war that's coming," said Lozanda. "We had a dose. I don't see why these kids shouldn't be soaked a bit. Make men of them."

"Or crosses," said Mr. Skindle. "You don't know what it is to have a cross out there, Lozanda. I do. Ain't there no way of escaping it?"

"Not by talking Red Treason," said Mr. Cramble. "I don't know what's happening to all these youngsters nowadays. Restless they are — extravagant. No respect for established things. As if they were all waiting about for something they didn't quite like, to come out of the night and happen."

"I did think Rudie had settled down to work," said Mr. Whitlow with a rising sense of grievance. "We made sacrifices for him."

"Seems the generals are old fools and the admirals old fools and the bankers and business men fools and knaves," said Lozanda with the District Weekly as evidence in his hands. "He's got a hot tongue, that boy of yours. Hope it won't get him into trouble."

"Always had a hot tongue," said Mr. Whitlow. "Fancy his breaking out at them like that...Silly young fool! Always talk, he would. Always. Burst out — like. After our sacrifices."

He took his troubles home with him. He walked about the bedroom undressing, and delivering his soul. “I ain’t going to stand for it. I sent him to Camford to get a first-class degree and a permanent job. I didn’t send him to Camford to get ideers. Who’s going to listen to a young fellow like him telling them off? I ask you.”

But Mrs. Whitlow answered nothing, because she had been reading over again Hans Christian Andersen’s story of the Ugly Duckling. Ugly, Rudie certainly was. Nasty, too. Cunning and mean to his brothers. He could say the most horrid things...He seemed always angry about something...Why should he be angry?...Maybe if one understood him better...understood him better...

She went to sleep.

§ IV

Rud did not make another speech for a week or so, and even then attempted nothing so elaborate as his first outbreak; his instinct told him that a second oration in the same term would not do; he wrote nothing but lecture notes, gave four hours a day grimly but with a watch on his desk, to text-books, and talked with the utmost discretion. He felt that something very important had happened in his life and he did not quite know what. In such brief leisure as his steadfast pursuit of a good degree permitted him, he would catch himself dreaming over a gazetteer and an atlas, or reading books about Napoleon and Hitler and Mussolini. Or simply he dreamt and schemed. If he could move people once, he could move them again...

He did his best to control those extravagant reveries. For they went even beyond the range of his schoolboy battle-dreams.

People made his acquaintance now — almost with an effect of seeking him. This did much to confirm his new-born sense of his own value. If there was something they valued in him, then he would be a fool to give it away. Of course these reveries were reveries, but for all that there might be something in them. He could not help posing a little. He regarded his various visitors with a faintly hostile expression, hands behind his back, replied without committing

himself to anything and summed them up one after another in his own mind.

The latest thing in religion presented itself one afternoon as a man too old for an undergraduate and too oily and shiny for a don, a queer fish with a slightly American accent. He had called, he said, and stopped. Whitlow thought he might be a canvasser. But he was much too rich and smug-looking for that.

“I heard your speech,” resumed the intruder. “You have, what shall I call it? — mental energy. You have persuasive power — oh — great persuasive power. There was something contagious in your indignation. I feel it imperative upon me to implore you not to waste these gifts.”

“I have my ideas,” said Rudolf. “What do you suggest?” “Where do they take you?”

“Nowhere yet. I asked you what do you suggest?” “Have you Guidance?”

“Tell me about it.”

The visitor wanted to walk about the room. He had played for the hearthrug but Rudie had got that. “Do sit down,” said Rudie. “In that chair there, the low one. No; I cannot listen to you if I have to keep on watching you moving around. It distracts me. What is this Guidance?”

“Guidance,” said the visitor, sinking into his chair. “Just that.”

Rudie replied with an uncivil monosyllable.

The missioner was spurred to exposition. “You don’t know,” he said.

“I’m asking you.”

“Let me illustrate.”

“I’m attending.”

The illustrations rambled a good deal. Rudie listened with a lowering expression, that hampered the teller. He spoke of the fear and uncertainty in so many lives nowadays, the constant struggle against sinful impulses, of suicidal moments and how when at last it broke upon them —

“What broke upon them?”

“Guidance!”

“Ugh!”

“Guidance and the fellowship of those who share. Then everything grew simple, everything grew plain.”

Rudolf remained in a pose of enigmatical attention. He realised that he was embarrassing this spiritual windbag. He liked that. There was power in this still silence; it was giving him an ascendency. It was a sort of hypnotism. He must try it again. “Don’t you feel something?” said the visitor, trying to break this stony irresponsiveness.

“You go on with what you came to say,” said his host.

Presently he brought the interview to an end. It was a sudden inspiration came to him. He lost his breath for an instant and then forced himself to speak.

“Tell me,” he said. “This Guidance brought you here?” “I felt impelled—”

“Yes, and now, don’t you think it about time that Guidance packed you up and took you away again?...”

When his oak closed on the intruder, Rudie’s stern face relaxed into a delighted grin. His mature earnestness fell from him like a mask. He stuck out his tongue at the door and then put his thumb to his nose and spread out his fingers in twiddling triumph. “That for you and your Guidance,” he said.

By which it is manifest that he was still only very partially grown-up.

§ V

That was the only approach made by any sort of religious organisation to our emergent young man. Whatever other forms of faith flourished at Camford were apparently under the impression that Rudie might just as well be damned. But various politicians of a markedly “junior” character enquired about him. They waylaid him in stony corridors; they accosted him in the reading-room; they came to his room. There were Liberals who just talked party politics of the most arithmetical sort and failed to pass quite elementary examinations on what they meant by Liberal principles; there were rather beefy Conservatives, one of them titled, with an ill-concealed

quality of condescension, who seemed to regard the Empire as a sort of alluring Juggernaut to whom one would naturally and gladly prostrate oneself; there were shrill Indians who tried to win his respectful adhesion to their dusky cause, by proving with chapter and verse that the English were cheats, liars, oppressors and only temporarily necessary to India; there were Pacifists, some of whom were total abstainers from life, neo-gnostics in fact, while others seemed to make an exception in favour of serious eroticism. And there were middle-class Fabians, those painless permeators, with schemes for expropriating the rich and powerful so subtly that they would never know it had happened to them, and various leftists, Stalinists, Trotskyites and so forth, including several earnest young peers, who agreed that what was needed was a vehement class war and a proletarian revolution. And also he had a call from two oafish, unprepossessing, young men in purple vests who talked against the Jews. Their indictment of the Jews was a little flimsy, but there could be no question of the earnest gusto with which they advocated the ancient sport of Jew-baiting. They wore broad leather belts and their jersey sleeves were rolled up as if on the off-chance of finding a pogrom round the corner. They told him Judaism was a wicked conspiracy to rob, corrupt and enslave Gentile mankind. He did not believe them for a moment. But he was quite polite to them because they were so very hefty. He did not argue with them, but he paid visible attention.

"You aren't called upon for any action," said the largest of them. "Just speak. We want speakers with ginger.'

"I couldn't make a speech on the Jewish question to save my life. I haven't got it up."

"We could give you material."

"No," said Rudie, shaking a smiling face with modestly resolute conviction.

"You aren't by any chance a Jew yourself?" said the smaller (but still considerable) purple-shirt, and his eye roved about the room as if in search for convenient breakables.

Rudie had a nasty moment and then decided upon a virile line. "If I was about four stone heavier," he said, "I'd smash your blasted jaw for that."

It got a laugh, and the situation eased.

"Come along, Colin," said the big one. "He's not even a Pacifist. But you ought to read the Protocols of Zion, you really ought, Mister — ? I didn't get your name?"

Rudie felt now that he was safe on the bantam tack. "I haven't got yours," he said.

They pulled up their jerseys in search of pockets and produced cards. They handed them to Rudie with a friendly solemnity, bowed genteely and, forgetting all about a return card, louted off down the staircase with an air of something accomplished, something done.

"Blaggards," said Rudie when their footsteps had died away and the door was safely shut. "If I was a Jew I'd get a revolver. I'd get a razor like niggers do."

And his mind went back to his shin-kicking days, when he had thrown knives and jabbed with scissors and pens...

But it did not go forward to the time when myriads of such "blaggards" would march at his bidding.

§ VI

Of all the movements fermenting through the venerable halls and colonnades and the narrow lanes and winding streets of Camford, the Communists had the most convincing air of meaning something and definitely going somewhere. Their scientific pretensions, the aggressive confidence with which they sustained their remarkable, though incomprehensible, Hegelianism, impressed him, and their bias for revolutionary violence was all in their favour. But their doctrinaire inflexibility and intolerance did not attract him.

A large, fat young man at one of their meetings was quite interesting about the Seizure of Power. That sounded like sense. Of course one must seize power.

But Rudolf did not join the "Party." He spoke at a meeting and intimated a certain sympathy, but he kept outside. He did not speak very well on that occasion. There was something uncongenial in the atmosphere for which at first he could not find a name. It was as if he lacked some shibboleth and was out of court from the beginning.

And not only that. They set their new adherents, he gathered, to do all sorts of undignified and time-wasting jobs, such as distributing unconvincing leaflets and selling newspapers full of stale provocation. And they were shepherded — shepherded was the word — by a post-graduate, one Jim Mortland, who had been four times to and fro to Moscow and behaved like a Malay who had been to Mecca. He had the languid authority of a rather jaded sergeant-major with a batch of new recruits. He seemed always to be transmitting orders from higher up and far away. Moscow? Why the devil should wisdom centre at Moscow? Why should Spain be the only arena for revolutionary activities? What had all this stuff to do with Rudie's perplexities and English social and economic unrest? And moreover, there was this Stalin-Trotsky split, a world-wide scolding match, irrelevances, personalities, alien issues, imported stuff. Where was it likely to take this bunch of English trailers? He attended one or two meetings; there were one or two young peers and hardly a single real proletarian — and suddenly he found the missing word — dilettante! That settled Camford Communism for him. It wasn't good enough. So for a time he remained politically indeterminate.

Yet his reveries now were all of political adventure. The success of his speech had lit and given a direction to his ambition, and every day it burnt more brightly. He felt in his bones now that he had the making of a political figure. Once he started. His very indecision about the line he had to take marked the seriousness of his intentions. He found his inclination towards a sort of scheming reverie more and more of an interference with his work.

A day or so before the end of the term he went for a walk by the Cramb meadows to get tea at Chuck's Hill Farm. He had cleared up all his work and he felt free to indulge to the full in that ancient vice of his.

His thoughts ran over these various movements he had sampled. His ruling thought was what he could do with them and what they could do for him. "One has to take a line of one's own," he said, "and all the same, if one is to get anywhere, one has to have an Organisation — with a capital O. One must go over big or not go over at all. You've got to have a newspaper. Newspapers. Radio talks. Great halls. Stewards. It has to be paid for. You've got to have

backers...

"One might capture some organisation..."

In his reveries capturing an Organisation involved a good lot of timely shooting.

What was it caught people? What was it caught backers? What got faithful adherents? What was it made them believe in you? So that you got started? Other people got supporters. You had to be obviously successful to hold them and you had to give them something, something that they felt they could not get or do or be themselves...

Brooding in the warm afternoon sunshine over the Chuck's Farm tea-things, with unlimited supplies of Mother Braybone's newish bread and admirable butter and home-made strawberry jam, all things became possible. His thoughts were like the printed text of a book that has been over-illustrated by a far too enthusiastic illustrator. The text kept to a certain level of possibility, but the reverie soared fantastically and magnificently. He found himself presently with a group of intimate colleagues, devoted to him. (They really were devoted to him.) And behind them was the party, his party.

Would they wear a shirt?

Shirts were overdone. Brown shirts, green shirts, black shirts, purple shirts; the idea was played out. The Whitlow-men wouldn't have that. They'd have belts. They'd have trousers with elastic webbing in them and belts with heavy buckles that could be whipped off in a moment for a fight. Good. And by way of recognition, a badge, a badge worn inside the jacket, like the sheriff's badge in an American gangster film. A good idea that!

What to call them? The Whitlow men? The Rud men? They'd have to have a slogan. Something to shout, something to stick on their banners.

And an idea? He had long thought that the separation of the United States and the British Empire was a terrible waste of strength, that a drive for reunion could be made very popular, and that gave him, "The man who speaks English is my brother." Because nowadays, now that we were drawing so near to America by air and radio and common dangers, why should not our political movements

straddle the Atlantic?

So far it had never happened. Even their Communists and our Communists were different. But that needn't be so now. And that altered everything. This was a great thought for Rudie.

The reverie produced a vision of the mighty canyons of the New York City streets as he had seen them in photographs and pictures and films, and people were scattering torn-up paper from the windows upon the milling swarms below, and great banners hung across from one side to the other bearing his slogan. "The man who speaks English is my brother." There was an immense excited crowd, all displaying badges, all Rud men. It was a tremendous occasion. Rud had arrived in America. The Big Union had been achieved.

Why not? Various things stood in the way, of course; the monarchy, ancient prejudices, irritations, suspicions on both sides of the Atlantic. Rud's imagination swept them aside.

The reverie suddenly produced a touching meeting between a British monarch, a very hypothetical British monarch, and Rud. "Our family," said the monarch, opening his coat suddenly and displaying the hidden badge, "have been Rudmen and Rud-women for some time. If it is necessary to Anglo-American coalescence for us to efface ourselves, we are prepared."

An almost religious reverence came into Rud's eyes as he contemplated this beautiful present from his imagination, over an unusually large, an almost fervent bite of jam-spread bread and butter.

He found he had to assist that excessive mouthful with the back of his disengaged hand.

Then he blushed at his own puerility, finished his slice in a more business-like way, emptied his cup of tea and produced and lit a cigarette.

"The problem," he whispered, "is to find those nuclear associates. Then we could start something...

"But we have to give them something new...

"All these things that are going on now — communism, fascism and all that — they are nearly played out — they are three-parts dead. By the time I get going it would be like crying stinking fish to go in for any of them. A new appeal. It has to have a freshness,

whatever it is...”

And then suddenly it seemed to him that he saw an idea, a programme, a scheme of operations, a way to success plain before him. For a moment he had the impression of something full and completed, the exact thing needful. His mind just stopped at that and stared at it — as one might stare, if suddenly a door opened in a hitherto impenetrable and unclimbable wall and revealed — the dark and indistinguishable landscape of some unknown land on which no sun had ever yet risen. And then it was as if the door slammed again.

“If they’re all out,” he whispered. “And if there is a right way —

“They haven’t got it. Any of them...

“But if one did get it!”

He seemed to see the confusion suddenly crystallising under the spell of a magic word — some missing elusive word — surely he had had it quite plain only a moment before! — and in his reverie, he it was who had shouted that word. And now it had gone. Gone altogether.

What was it? That missing Sesame?...

What was it? What was it?

There was an extraordinary blankness upon the sunlit meadows and the steel-blue, winding Cramb...

He sat stock-still for some time realising his hallucination only very gradually. His cigarette went out between his fingers. Then, still with a dazed expression, he roused himself and began rattling his spoon against his cup to get his bill.

Returning to college he was still trying to recall something that had never really been in his mind.

§ VII

Old Doctor Carstall, whom Mrs. Whitlow considered so big and deliberate, had often wanted to talk things over with his son, things in general, fundamental things, what everything was for and what one thought one was up to, and things of that sort, and like all intelligent fathers he was afraid of his son and shy of him. These young people, he felt, know so much more than we do and so much

less than we do; one ought to make some sort of show-down to them and get some idea of what they thought they were doing. There ought to be that much continuity between the generations. His son's visit to his home en route for the Alps, that trite and wholesome and not too expensive playground for the earnest young don, seemed to give just the occasion needed. They sat at dinner, an excellent dinner, for the doctor was an easy and stimulating master to his cook.

"The world seems in a queer state nowadays," the old man began. "What do you make of it all, Dick?"

"An old world dying, a new one unable to get born — Who was it said something like that?"

"Only worlds don't die and get born again," said the doctor. "If a world dies, it dies, and there's an end to it. There's no more on its line...You might perhaps — Of course, if you're thinking of obstetrics, the image might just pass...Died in childbirth...Something of that sort...Is your world dying, Dick? And what are you doing about it?"

Young Carstall had been sitting at his ease and he had answered his father after the manner of casual conversation. Now he sat up a little. He felt the slovenliness of his previous response. "No one of my age, sir, thinks his world is dying," he said. "It isn't natural. But we're certainly in for troubled times. Dangerous times."

"Those fellows who lecture to us about the world and who talk on the radio and write in the magazines and papers and all that have got hold of a phrase lately; what is it? Ah! — imperfect adaptation."

"Not bad as an elementary statement. Don't you agree, Father? Imperfect adaptation to all the new powers and implements in the world. Following them up clumsily, using them vulgarly and not keeping pace with the new possibilities and dangers. Particularly the dangers. Air-war and disorganisation generally. It seems fairly obvious."

"A few years ago we used to talk about morality failing to keep its ascendency over — what was it? — material progress?"

"Said by bishops usually, Father. I don't attach much value to all that scolding of aeroplanes and the cinema and the radio and motor cars and so on. No. It's the moral side which has to adapt. It always has had to adapt. There's no such thing as a fixed and final morality.

Though the bishops like to think so. The immutable laws of Heaven! They're like obstinate men with a dying patent — or a vanishing trade. Their stuff doesn't go any more and they won't give it up. No, they won't give it up. Until the Church files its petition in bankruptcy and there are no more stipends forthcoming. But their game is pretty nearly over, all the same. We have to get new values and ideas to fit these inflexible new facts we've got ourselves up against. Or come a cropper."

"You mean?"

"Political ideas. Religion. History. Ownership. All the ideas we have about such things are threadbare and rotten and splitting. I suppose they've all got to be changed. The material facts won't change."

"Such facts as?"

"Three hundred miles an hour travel. News almost instantaneous. Limitless power. Over-production — whenever you try in the least, that is. Health control. Population control. No animal has ever faced such changes in what it can do and what it can bring down on itself, and survived."

"I know that song, Dick. Yes. I can sing it almost in unison with you. I guess we agree pretty completely about all that. Man is now a new animal, a new and different animal; he can jump a hundred miles, see through brick walls, bombard atoms, analyse the stars, set about his business with the strength of a million horses. And so forth and so on. Yes. Yes. But all the same he goes on behaving like the weak little needy ape he used to be. He grabs, snarls, quarrels, fears, stampedes and plays in his immense powder magazine until he seems likely to blow up the whole damned show. Eh?"

"That's on the face of things, Father."

"That's where we stand. That's our situation."

"That's our situation. Yes...You read your Nature, I see. You keep up with the times."

"I shan't do that much longer, Dick."

"You're good for another twenty years. I don't need to be a doctor to tell you that."

"Not very good for action now. Retiring from active practice. Quite soon. Yes. I see the distant land of the future like Moses, but

you — you have to carry on...The problem comes to you. Sixty years of life may be in front of you. Sixty tremendous years. What are you going to do about it, Dick? Is it all going to happen to you or are you going to do something about it? It's for your generation now, you know, to do something about it. No good blaming us. That won't help you."

"Inform ourselves, I suppose. Readjust our imaginations. Think out a new behaviour."

For an interval the elder man answered nothing.

"I suppose," he resumed presently, "that some sort of mental renascence is possible. A sufficient renascence. I hope so. But I see very few signs of it. That adaptation you talk about...There's a lot of unteachable stuff in humanity. Down here I've been watching a little section of mankind, bringing new individuals into the world, seeing the old ones drop out of it, seeing the insides and the undersides and the backsides of the creatures. Queer stuff and weak stuff, they are. Mean. A lot of malice in them. And also a sort of obduracy. Do you know that almost always they lie to me about themselves. Their doctor, I am, and they lie to me. Out of self-protective vanity — mostly. They come for advice and then they fake their facts and dodge their medicine. Only just a few work with me. Silly stuff, they are. Intricately silly."

"All of them?"

"Most. There's differences. Considerable differences. They vary. Their imaginations vary. And their go. Very widely. So widely that at times I seem to be dealing with different species of creature. But on the whole I don't see that renascence of will and understanding which is needed to head off catastrophe. No..."

He paused, but his son remained silently attentive.

"Maybe it isn't altogether hopeless. Maybe there are different species in mankind — all mixed up. That idea seems to be getting about, Dick. You must have heard of it. Maybe the real differences in men lie in the kinks of their brains. Scattered about among the silly multitudes there may be men of a different quality — with a different power of vision."

"A sort of anonymous unsuspected aristocrats?"

"Exactly."

“So you don’t believe in democracy any longer?” “I never did. Look at ‘em! Do you?”

“I’d like to.”

“But you don’t.”

“But during your forty years of practice,” said the younger man, “hasn’t there been a certain amount of general, all over, mental progress? More education, more books, more information? Not enough, I admit, but some. If only we were able to increase the tempo of that sort of thing?...”

The old man shook his head with a smile of unbelief.

“You’ll never get the whole lot intelligent. You’ll only widen the gap. A born fool is a fool to the end. Maybe there will be more and more of the right sort proportionally. As they get opportunities to emerge. But the crowd will remain a crowd and behave like a mob...That’s where I stand, Dick.”

“I don’t like to feel that is right. Somehow — at my age — and with a sort of implicit reservation about our noble selves, you know, Daddy...”

He made a grimace.

“You don’t like that, and neither do I. At my age, too, Dick. It makes me feel — uncomfortable, to admit even to myself that there are these differences. But if the truth is that all men are not equal, then is it fair to treat an inferior as an equal? Even at golf you give a handicap. And I don’t ask my patients to vote on their treatment and then blame them for the result.”

Then with a change of manner that his son found very characteristic, he said: “This is getting academic...”

Dick didn’t seem to mind. He was plainly interested in this evidently long-meditated discourse. He waited for his father to resume.

“Well, anyhow, the practical outcome of all these crude democratic ideas, is that men of our quality — yes, damn it! we have a quality — excuse themselves from the hard and thankless service they owe — not to the crowd, Dick, but to the race. (Much good it will do us to shirk like that in the long run.) We will not presume, we say, no. We shrug our shoulders and leave the geese, the hungry sheep, the born followers, call them what you will, to the leaders

who haven't our scruples. The poor muts swallow those dead old religions no longer fit for human consumption, and we say 'let 'em.' They devour their silly newspapers. They let themselves be distracted from public affairs by games, by gambling, by shows and coronations and every sort of mass stupidity, while the stars in their courses plot against them. We say nothing. Nothing audible. We mustn't destroy the simple faith that is marching them to disaster. We mustn't question their decisions, That wouldn't be democratic, And then we sit here and say privately that the poor riff-raff are failing to adapt themselves to those terrible new conditions — as if they had had half a chance of knowing how things stand with them. They are shoved about by patriotisms, by obsolete religious prejudices, by racial delusions, by incomprehensible economic forces. Amidst a growth of frightful machinery..."

He stopped short and stared at his son and his son smiled back at him faintly and nodded for him to go on.

"You haven't been watching a community for four full decades, Dick. I have. My practice here is a fair sample of mankind...I have seen a sort of self-confidence fading out of this world. Like a twilight. When I bought this practice everyone who came to me, every man Jack of them, felt he had a place in the world, that there were things he ought to do, and things he mustn't do. Maybe people were a little lower then, nearer the earth, but that was how things were. A normal man got along in a system he thought he understood. Now —

"Dick, people aren't nearly as straight in business as they were. They've ceased to feel that honesty is the best policy. They've found themselves put out of business by competition they think unfair. They try to get even by counter-cheating. And they aren't clever enough. They find the incomes they had counted on, their pay or what not, raided by taxation, shattered by currency manipulation and slumps, knocked to pieces by all this messing about with money, this inflation, deflation, and all the rest of it. Even the wages-earners never know now what their money can buy. And more and more of them are pottering about with poor little parcels of stocks and shares, hunting after Capital Appreciation. That's the great phrase now. I've heard it three times from three separate people this past fortnight.

There's ten men speculating in a small miserable way for one who knew his way to a broker forty years ago. Ten, do I say? — fifty! They lie awake at nights. They get chronic indigestion. They get neurasthenia and neuritis. Some are frankly betting. These football pools are a sort of disease of vain hopes, social dropsy. The women bet. It was unheard of in the old days. There's hardly a man in my area now, Dick, under fifty, who finds any satisfaction in a job well done, or believes that it will secure him any sort of reward. Think of what that means in social stability...

"And the women I have to deal with, Dick, the younger women; they're all demoralised as we understood demoralisation. They don't understand themselves. There was a certain amount of sly adultery and still slyer fornication going on then, but it didn't disturb the even surface of things. It was just healthy incontinence...Chastity now is out of fashion. Children are an encumbrance. The women want, or feel they ought to want, a sort of gadding-about amusement and a man has to pay for it. They sell themselves almost frankly, wholesale or retail. They aren't steady because the men aren't steady. The men are insecure and rattled and the women follow suit. You'd be amazed, Dick, at the people who come along nowadays hinting at abortion..."

He hesitated and plunged. "What are you making of women, Dick? What are you going to do about all that?"

"I like them," said Dick after a long, downcast pause for reflection. "I like them a lot."

"And they like you?" said his father.

"Things have changed, Father."

"Mutual comfort, eh? That's all got relaxed. It's all different from the repressions of my time. Perhaps it's not worse, perhaps it's better, but it's all shockingly different...And that sort of thing is not going to eat you up?"

"I don't think so. No. So far it hasn't done any harm to my work, and I don't think it will."

"Sex," his father reflected, "used to have a certain biological significance. And social aspects. And a kind of idea of mating. Is all that changed?"

"It's changed in a way, yes."

“And what becomes of your young women in the end? Rather jaded little bitches, eh? Some, anyhow. Some don’t seem to suffer much damage, but most who go loose stay loose. And a loose woman who is getting old is a damn nasty thing...And yourself, Dick, as you grow older?”

“I think I shall marry. Long before I grow nasty. You ought to have some grandchildren, you know. It won’t be a grand passion...Maybe it’s a defect, Father, but the truth is I don’t like romance in love. I like humour...

“I’m not so sure of that mating business either. Women’s minds don’t seem to move with ours. They don’t keep step with us. I’ve seen that. I guess I shall have time to think about it some more before I fix myself. When Adam delved and Eve span, there was a sort of partnership. But now — do men and women hunt in couples? Can they? Under the new conditions. My work...I’d hate to have a wife who knew too much about my work. When I was going slack, when I was casting about in my mind, preoccupied, in that sort of exasperating, dissatisfied worry one must go through, when one is feeling about for something missing. Think of the horror of a nice intelligent question at the breakfast-table! ‘Tell me all about it, darling’...But all the same I’d hate to have a wife who knew nothing about it.”

“There’s a middle way,” said his father. “Maybe you’ll not marry, Dick, maybe you’ll never find a wife at all, but all the same some woman will come along, who will think you over and decide to marry you. And do it. I’m inclined to think that’s the way things are going. Anyway it’s the way things ought to go. It’s their business really. Damn it! What else are they for? You aren’t likely to be too rich or too conspicuous, to attract the exploiting sort. But you’re not unattractive, Dick.”

“I take after you, Father, a bit.”

“You’ll be picked all right. But it will be more her business than yours, and if things go on as they are going, she’ll probably ask you. I’ve watched people. Picking out women by men is silly. They don’t give their minds to it. Far better have it the other way about. Though I doubt whether they ought to pick much before two or three and twenty. That’s by the way. Be sure she has our sense of humour,

Dick, and then marry her and thank God for her — even if she gives you moments of doubt. A woman with unsatisfied desires or a craving vanity is the worst thing in life, but a woman with living and responsive things to protect and take care of, is the best. Believe me...”

And then the doctor made what he firmly believed was an entirely original, outstanding and remarkable statement — the statement that a countless multitude of widowers in his position have been moved to make.

“There never was a woman in the whole world,” he said, “so good and uncomplicated, so generous and self-forgetful, as your mother. I wonder if you remember her. I never knew anyone with so swift and sure a judgment of character. You couldn’t harbour a mean thought when she was about. And yet she regarded politics as a kind of male silliness — like a hunt or race- meeting — she thought science was woolgathering and she hadn’t the slightest idea of the — the blundering uncertainties of medical practice. She thought I cured whenever a cure was possible. Fifteen years ago, she died, and I talk to her in my dreams still. I think of things I should like to tell her. Sometimes when I am in trouble and sometimes just because I want to share something with her. But one can’t do things like that, Dick. So that’s that...I’m wandering, Dick, from what we were talking about...”

He mused for a moment and returned to his original drift.

“You think your scientific work is good enough to hold your imagination and carry you on? It opens out, eh? That second paper of yours certainly had a periscope. It ranged...Sometimes I think we biologists may find ourselves coming into politics from our own angle. If things go on as they are going — We may have to treat the whole world as a mental hospital. The entire species is going mad; for what is madness but a complete want of mental adaptation to one’s circumstances? Sooner or later, young man, your generation will have to face up to that.”

He stopped and looked at his son’s face.

“Those — what was it we said? — anonymous unsuspected aristocrats,” said the younger man, and thought.

He leant forward on the table and picked his way among his ideas

as he spoke. “I have an idea, Father, a half-formed idea, that before we can go on to a sane new order, there has to be a far more extensive clearing-up of old institutions...The world needs some sort of scavenging, a burning-up of the old infected clothes, before it can get on to a new phase. At present it is enormously encumbered...This is just a shadowy idea in my mind...Something like breaking down condemned, old houses. We can’t begin to get things in order until there has been this scavenging phase. And, you see, what one might call civilised men can’t do that sort of rough work.”

“I suppose it has to be rough work?”

“What do you think? Conservatism insists on it. The old order of things, the patriots, the priests and the old laws won’t deal with reasonable men. They won’t hear of it. They’re cunning, they’re subtle in their way. Subtly stupid. They’ve got an unintelligent suicidal instinct for what they think is self-preservation. They won’t stand criticism; they won’t adapt. They’ll listen and seem to agree and they’ll play tricks. They’re afraid of any light, any clearness. They fog education. They obstruct. What! Deal with us! They’re much more disposed to deal with the roughs and turn them against us. You’ve got to capture the rough from them, you’ve got to use the rough against them, educate him, civilise him — as far as he will stand it.”

“A bit roundabout and underhand,” said the old man. “Modern jesuitry. Rather on old Marx’s lines, eh? Call these roughs ‘proletarian’ and there you are! Flatter them until you’ve organised their discipline. Maybe I misunderstand you?”

“I’m telling you my ideas, Father, as well as I can. You’ve asked for it. But I see no way out of the present break-up, but ‘Let the best rough win.’ Then so soon as you’ve got a top rough in the world, he’ll have to organise efficiently to save himself from the next possible rough, and he’ll have to be quick about it. The bigger he grows — and you know the next rough may be world-wide — the less of the administration, the less of the planning he and his gang will be able to control, and the more he’ll have to use and trust the able, resolute, relatively unambitious type...”

“Meaning our sort? Our virtuous sort? Eh?” “Well — yes.”

“After the democracies, the demagogues who become dictators

and after them a World Civil Service? Fabian permeation and all that. And I'm not so sure of that Civil Service. It may develop a high standard of comfort and a taste for dependants."

The young man reconsidered it. "All sorts of complications and interludes," he said, "but, like it or not, that I take it is the general shape of the story ahead. A World Civil Service if you like — but based, that's the restraining force — on a World Public Opinion."

"Something of that sort," said the doctor, with a grape in his mouth, "existed in Egypt. In Ancient Egypt. Which was practically a world in itself. B.C. two thousand. Charming cultivated people."

For a time they gave their attention to dessert.

"Civilisation has always been something of a patch-up," reflected the doctor. "You seem pretty convinced that it has to be worse before it is better...I agree...This particular earthquake looks likely to be the biggest so far. How do you see it in terms of yourself, Dick? You may not be able to keep out of the way of these — what do you call them? — scavengers. Concentration camp or prison examination. You cannot smash and remake a social system without breaking men — incidentally and accidentally — and the chances may pick on you to be broken. It may degrade you, Dick. You won't be able to help yourself if your skull gets burst open or your brain or your mind gets exhausted or poisoned. After all, it won't be the end of the world, but it may be the end of your world. That's as may be, you say...I agree...It will mean you will begin your decay before you are dead. A slight but nowadays not an uncommon inversion of the normal order. But an end comes to all of us. Until then and while you are yourself, you mean to keep a stiff backbone. Eh? No cringing, no compromise."

"I want that," said his son. "A stiff backbone, I mean. As long as possible I will keep out of money-making and politics and the scrambles and stampedes, and go on with my special work. You've made it possible. But if a straight challenge comes, if I'm absolutely prevented from working or if I see a plain occasion before me and my sort..."

"Working, waiting and watching for something that may call you and compel you...Waiting for the time when dictators dwindle and roughs relax...You might do worse...For the life of me, I don't see

what else there is to do now. If you fight them now you'll only fight for the old system."

With a palpable effort not to seem self-indulgent and to throw a sacramental flavour about the gesture, Doctor Carstall poured himself some of his own very excellent brandy. "Good luck to you, my son. I'm glad we've had this talk."

III. — EXPLORATION

§ I

Rudie went down home for the Long Vacation because there seemed to be nowhere else to go. But in his state of adventurous unrest he found home altogether unendurable before a week was out. His father with a manifest disposition to administer discouraging advice, his mother with her general air of asking him not to (whatever it was) for her sake, and his brothers with their ill-controlled jealousy of his Camford advantages, were all so tiresome, and the district when he tried a lonely walk or so, so full of stale memories, that he felt himself driving towards one of those smashing and screaming and abusive outbreaks that had disfigured his childhood. But among the disciplines he was imposing upon himself for ambition's sake, was the practice of self-control. He had buried, even if he had not killed, little Rud the knife-thrower. But he had not buried him very deep. Once or twice his father exasperated him almost to the verge of a resurrection.

"You've got to work hard at Camford, my boy, and mind what they tell you," said his father, "for it's your only chance. And you mustn't make enemies, my boy. You mustn't make enemies."

"Ow! Who's making enemies?" snarled Rudie.

"I didn't say you were making enemies, my boy. I didn't say that. You catch me up too quick. I said you mustn't make them."

"Ugh!"

"What I say is for your good, my boy. You've got a quick tongue and you may give offence before you know where you are. I know. I've lived. I've given way to wit in my time or I might have been a better-off man than I am to-day. When I was young, before I learnt better, I was a good deal like you, my boy. Very like you. Quick. And something of your gift of the gab. No sooner did I think of a thing than I was out with it. It made me enemies. And all this saying things about politics and socialism and people. Seems clever at the time..."

"Oh, Criky!" said Rudie sotto voce...

He decided that somehow he would wangle five pounds out of his mother and go off for a walking tour. Anywhere. He was wasting his time here. He couldn't even study; he had no room to work in and no seclusion. He felt perhaps if he went through the country looking in on meetings, listening to speakers at street corners, talking to people, he might get ideas. He'd wear old clothes, take his stuff in a rucksack, be a university gentleman, incognito, so to speak. A lot of fellows nowadays were doing that. Odd lodgings and doss houses. And weren't there hikers' camps and road-houses? He'd manage all right.

He would head for Birmingham or Sheffield and then turn north. He might find a strike going on and anyhow he'd get a glimpse of industrial conditions. There'd be unemployed men to talk to. He'd find out what kinds of organisation were possible among them. If the weather was fine he might cultivate a sunburn by a few days on the Lancashire moors or in the Peak country. What he would have liked to do was to have gone to New York and prowled with his eyes and ears open. He was now very keen to learn about America, and in the vacation away from the Union he could not even see Time or the New Yorker. He hadn't the money to buy them. And as for crossing the Atlantic, he had neither fare nor time now. America must wait. He might get in touch with those Mass Observers one was beginning to hear about, but they might keep him too busy for his private concerns. He had no desire to do jobs for other people. If he had thought of it before he might have joined one or other of the conferences that were always afoot now in some hostel or other, but that might have involved a subscription he could ill have afforded. But anything was better than stagnation and more father.

Mother had been watching him. She was ready for his appeal and helped him out with it. She got the five pounds somehow. She got together six pounds ten shillings.

"Of course, dear, you want more of a change than you get here..."

§ II

He found little to excite him in the first two days of his pilgrimage

and he was beginning to feel more than a little solitary when he came upon Chiffan. It was in the late afternoon and he was consuming as big a tea as he could manage with eggs and cake and jam at a pleasant generous little wayside cottage. He was going on a two-meal system, hearty breakfast and late high-tea and that was all. He found it the most economical way of feeding. And perforce he had become a strict teetotaller.

Chiffan, it seemed, was on the road in much the same spirit. He was an older man than Rudie, he might have been twenty-six or seven, and he had a pale, intelligent face with a decided nose, a faint, wry smile, bright, rather distraught, grey-blue eyes and untidy, dark brown hair. His trousers were relaxed grey slacks and he wore a knitted blue pullover in place of a jacket. His gear beside him was in an ancient Japanese-cane valise which he carried by a strap, and he had a stout cabbage-stick laid across the table. He studied Rudie for a time and Rudie, looking up from a copy of the Daily Worker, found he was being accosted.

"Doing a lonesome hike?" asked Chiffan.

"Looking about at things," said Rudie.

"Sociology? Mass observation? Something of that sort? I see you're reading the Daily Worker. Communist, maybe?"

"No-o," said Rudie, finding himself hard to explain and making a mystery of it. "No. Just interested. What are you doing?"

"I make no secret of it. I'm a disgruntled communist wandering about like a lost dog. The Left's gone to pieces...Stalin and Trotsky...

"Spain...

"United Front rot. When there is no sort of unity. Rudie was in the completest agreement.

"Anti-Fascist. Anti-Purple shirts. What a lot they are! What good is it being just Anti-? It lets the other side choose the battlefield and you have to run after them and attack. They say it first and you say 'No.' Look at this rag."

He smacked the Daily Worker, so to speak, in the face.

"Now that's an idea!" said Chiffan alertly, taking in what Rud had said. "That's a real good idea. Yes. Anti-. If you're just Anti-. That lets the other chap choose his battlefield. Good! Oh, good!"

Rudie felt he could like this stranger. "Well, that's how I see it,"

he said modestly. “We want something positive. Surely we do. I’ve been feeling that lately. I tell you—”

Chiffan stuck out a long forefinger. “The old game is up,” he said. “You’ve got it. We want a new formula. That’s what we want — a new formula! As you say. Exactly what I have been saying! And until we get it, I’m going back to my brother’s at Booksham to help him get out the Booksham Messenger and do general printing. I’m disgruntled, I tell you — deadly disgruntled, and that’s all about it. I’m just going to drop in to the New World Summer School at Wexley on the way, but I don’t expect anything much from that.”

“And what might the New World Summer School be?” asked Rudie.

Particulars were forthcoming. They discovered themselves similar and sympathetic from the outset. There seemed no reason why they should not visit this school together.

They set out for a four-day tramp to the New World Summer School and as they tramped they talked, and while they ate they talked, and they talked while they sat in woods and under shady trees beside pleasant rivulets or hung over the parapets of little bridges during the heat of the afternoon, and when they shared a bedroom they talked most of the night, and when they slept in a Youth Hostel they talked and argued until the consensus of opinion that they ought to “Shut Up” could be disregarded no longer. Chiffan declared loudly and frequently that he had rarely met anyone with the freshness and lucidity of Rud, and Rud knew that in Chiffan he had found just that experience, response and appreciation that would bring out all the best that was in him. As he talked he discovered brilliant opinions in his mind that he had never even suspected were there.

Chiffan was in a phase of disillusionment, and his disbelief in people and especially in the leaders of the left world was acute and acid. But he had a gift for admiration. It is a winning gift. He was prepared to admire Rudie, but at first only on condition that he joined in a general denigration of the distressful world about them. He wanted a world revolution and everything completely upside down more passionately but much less hopefully than Rudie. He had the advantage of eight or nine years of experience. He knew more people and he had watched the careers of many more people. He had done a

considerable amount of journalistic work. He had always been against the Government. He had picketed. He had rioted. He had been locked-up. He had been married in some imperfect way that had come undone, but he laid no stress on that. He could talk more abundantly than Rudie, though he lacked his facility of phrase. And he found something very sustaining in Rudie's manifest belief that there were still possibilities of revolutionary activity in the world. With reconstructed formulae. (Great phrase!)

Three main topics interlaced during their four-day tramp to the New World conference. One was Rudie's notion that the revolutionary movement in Great Britain should cut away from continental associations altogether and get into the closest co-operation with American revolutionists.

"You can't work with people who not only speak a different language," said Rudie, "but who're in a different phase. None of these Communists ever seem to think of that. We are laying out a revolution in a democratic country. That's our phase. Isn't it? But Russia is in a phase of" — he scarcely hesitated before the words rolled out— "precocious Communist senescence."

"Precocious Communist senescence! Oh grand, man! Oh, simply grand! And you're right."

"Spain, on the other hand, isn't even up to Marx. This anarchist syndicalism of theirs! It's pure Rousseau. Read Sender. It's a hundred and fifty years behind us."

"You're so right about this."

"But America and here are not ten years apart. Some things they're ahead and some things we are. That's our fight. Hands across the sea. One tongue. One culture. Take a hint from the Anschluss..."

That was Rudie's chief contribution.

Chiffan brought in the second theme and that was the monetary question. "It took me a time to see it, and most of them don't see it themselves, but those currency cranks have got something. Mark my words, Rud! They've really got something. They've got something fundamental. Money, you see, is the key to the whole property problem. Socialism is just William Morris and News from Nowhere until it has a theory of money. Socialism has been poking about in the factory when it ought to have been going through the books in

the counting-house. Setting the worker against the employer has been barking up the wrong tree. It's the banker, Rudyard, it's the private banker. The Bank is the key position in the social war. Go for that. Control banking, control the issue of credit — arid money, you know, is only a credit counter — and private enterprise is yours to do just exactly what you like with."

This took some explaining and wrangling. It was newish stuff for Rud. But Chiffan was tremendously equipped for that argument. They went about the whole question and came back to this bit of it or that. Rud would get new ideas and objections in the most unexpected circumstances and hurry to find Chiffan and expound them. Before they got to the summer school Rud was no longer talking of "Capitalists," he was talking of "Money Barons."

(And here in parenthesis we may note that henceforth we must call our Rudie, Rud and nothing else. Because Chiffan had assumed from the outset that Rud stood for Rudyard. When he had used "Rudyard" for the third time, Rud reflected upon the matter and decided not to correct him. He had always had a faint dislike to the foreign romantic flavour about Rudolf, and he felt now that for a potential demagogue in the great English-speaking community, it would be a serious handicap. He began to think of himself as Rudyard. A time was to come when he would not even recognise himself as Rudolf Whitlow.)

The third and more absorbing topic between these two young men was the possible creation of a New Revolutionary Party. It was all very well to be a great revolutionary leader in reverie, but at first it seemed almost indecent to Rud to expose that secret thought in conversation in the sunlight. Still it had to be brought forward.

"These other fellows," he said, "after all, compared to us, they aren't so wonderful. How did they get there?"

How did they get there? Or to be nearer the intention of the question; how can we get there?

Here Chiffan's eight years of observation and detraction was of the utmost value. Rud became his lively and intelligent pupil.

They canvassed this leader and group and that. Chiffan explained the faults and failures of the endless imperfect coagulations and dissolutions and recoagulations of leftism with the utmost lucidity.

He had an astonishing memory. The two of them began to shape out more and more definitely the movement and organisation that was needed to correct that tangle of faults. It was to be Anglo-American (and Dominion. Certainly Dominion) from the start. It was to adopt an attitude of self-respecting co-operation towards the good industrialists. It was to promise abundant money and abundant cheap goods in a world relieved of rent and financial overheads. It was to pursue the banker and the Stock Exchange and all "speculation" pitilessly. There were to be no rent, no debentures and no sort of mortgages in the new world, and the State was to take care of the people's savings and lend their money for them to initiate profitable enterprises — guaranteeing an adequate return. "The land," they would say, "is the State's and the fullness thereof."

"Not a bad slogan," said Chiffan. "I like that biblical twang! Fullness thereof!"

"The land for mankind and the fullness thereof," tried Rud, always a little fastidious about phrasing.

A tremendous benevolence welled up in them, especially on the finer afternoons, as they sketched their economic programme. They seemed to feel already the grateful response and the eager support of mankind. They settled the little matters of shirts in favour of Rud's badges and they tried over a lot of other slogans and argued out the main conditions of launching a movement.

A point Chiffan made that seemed fresh to Rud was the necessity for invading and "capturing" already existing groups and parties.

"We've got to capture people," said Chiffan. "You can't be like Cadmus and the dragon's teeth; you can't call a party out of nothing. Nearly everybody who is politically-minded enough to join a party has joined a party already. Our party would have to raid..."

"Now that's an idea," said Rud.

"And where?"

"You know better than I do."

"I've cast about in my mind," said Chiffan, "since I chucked communism in London. But not very hopefully until I hit upon you. Now things look different somehow and I'm casting about in my mind more than ever. There's these Guidance people...No. No. Not to be sniffed at like that. They gather a lot of raw stuff. They're worth

raiding. Then there's that fool Lord Horatio Bohm and his purple shirts — mauve shirts really they are, for he never had the wit to get his shirts fast colour. There's a deuce of a lot of money behind him, a lot of meaty young men and precious little in the way of ideas. Sort of vaguely anti-communist and that's about all. Fancy dress and ragging. Aristocratic — nothing to do with the blasted bourgeoisie. They might be ready to take on a good set of ideas — and there you are!"

"They do want speakers," said Rud. "In fact...I was approached...You know they're anti-Jewish?"

"Because that fool can think of nothing else. He's quarter Jew himself. It obsesses him. He's always running away from that nose of his and it annoys him by keeping just in front of him. However I merely mentioned him by the way. For the sake of illustration."

"New York," said Rud, "is the greatest Jewish city in the world."

"You think ahead," exclaimed Chiffan in warm approval. "You certainly think ahead. Mind you, Jews are not always easy to work with. They're as clever as anyone could wish, but they've always one foot in the Ghetto."

"I don't know anything about Jews," said Rud compactly. "You will," said Chiffan...

And so discoursing, elaborating in common a magnificent reverie of revolt and power, our two young men, with their heads pleasantly swelled by these imaginative exercises, and their confidence erect, arrived at the New World Summer School at Wexley and found that with a little squeezing there was room for their admission.

§ III

They got on very well at Wexley. They had much to say, and Wexley found it fresh and lively stuff. Things there had been going rather slackly. The school had been feeling the need for new blood. And here it was. Chiffan saw fit to play the role of impresario, an admirable impresario, for Rud. Chiffan too was made of imaginative stuff. He was elaborating his own reverie about Rud. Rud's peculiar type of ugliness attracted him. He conceived himself as a sort of

deferential elder-brother tutor to this new acquisition. He knew just when it was time for Rud to speak, he advised him quite sagely about the temper of the place, suggested lines of action, talked about him loyally behind his back and set the school remarking Rud's exceptional quality.

The New World Summer School was a fair sample of the continually increasing chaff of mentally unsettled people that was being winnowed out of the social order by the advancing disorganisation of the period. It was a sort of lodgement of wind-driven minds in a cranny of the Yorkshire hills. They had one thing in common, an enthusiasm for progress. The New World Society was pledged to progress in any direction, to anywhere, and to any idea about a New World its members chose to entertain. It was of all ages above fourteen and it included everything from barely cryptic nudists to extremely woolly vegetarians, and from single-taxers to Douglasites; there were Swedenborgians, Spenglerites, modern spiritualists, aberrant Fabians, seers and great thinkers, teachers of all grades, sex-reformers, thoughtful people who listened intently and never said anything, professional and genuine refugees from Nazi tyranny, Indian nationalists and one Chinaman of incomprehensible speech and consequently unknown attribution, who bowed very politely. The school led a hardy, healthy and extremely inexpensive life, sleeping crowdedly in austerely simplified dormitories at night, and eating in tumultuous refectories on trestle-tables covered with marbled white American cloth by day. There was much walking and swimming, table-tennis, medicine-ball and Badminton, and a series of conferences that it was bad form to cut altogether. There were a number of young women, brightly rather than over-dressed, who supplied little more than applause to the discussions, but manifestly appealed and set themselves to appeal to the pairing instinct of mankind. One or two of them decided to betray an interest in Rud, but he was wary and unresponsive. Chiffan after a slight resistance lit up and responded almost too much.

Rud never discovered who was running the assembly. There was a secretary, an anxious-looking spectacled lady of the head mistress type whose name he never learnt, who stood up and made proclamations and stuck up notices, and there was an omnipresent

white-bearded old gentleman in a state of earnest inactivity, who may have been her husband. And there was something that met somewhere called the Committee. The essential interest for Rud were a score of nuclear individuals, who did seem to be trying to shape out some sort of ideas about the current world drama and the roles they might have to play in it. Chiffan made rapid and quite plausible estimates of their quality and Rud concentrated upon them to learn and impress.

It was not that he was indifferent to the sexual stir that was going on around him. Indeed he was acutely aware of it, but his habits and instinct in these matters were becoming increasingly solitary and secretive. He did not like to give himself away to a fellow creature even amorously. He made no advances and no responses. He wouldn't go near the bathing-pool or look a girl in the face if he could help it. He was acutely jealous and at the same time contemptuous of Chiffan's gallantries and of all the other scarcely masked love-affairs in progress.

Nevertheless he showed off as brilliantly as he could in the meetings.

Mainly the newcomers summarised and decanted what they had discussed during their four days of interchanges. There was an earnest ex-ophthalmic little man with a black beard and an uncontrollable feather at the back of his head who had swallowed the Douglas gospel whole and apparently digested some of it. His mind ran on certain definite rails, and if an argument knocked him off them he just picked himself up and put himself on his rails again. He had already been making Social Credit unattractive by dragging it in as an irrelevant topic and so disorganising other issues, but Rud, talking across the table at supper, seemed to take a fresh sort of hold upon the question, and the little man, when it came to his turn to give a conference, was pleased to find an unexpectedly full room awaiting him. He did not realise at first that he was to be the victim at the feast. He read a paper that most of the School had already heard in fragments several times.

Chiffan sat and listened with a growing admiration while Rud, who had had only the most rudimentary and casual ideas about the whole business three days ago, now not only repeated but expanded

and filled in and rounded off what he had picked up in their conversations. Chiffan watched the bulging forehead and the pugnacious profile with an almost parental interest and kept up a sotto voce endorsement to the sentences that came clear and emphatic from Rud's determined mouth.

"You can't deal with money questions in this way," said Rud in the magisterial tones of one who had studied the subject for years. "You can't do it like that. Before you can begin to talk about money you must settle in your mind what you mean by property — for money is only a ticket for property — and before you can talk about property you must have made up your mind about the social system you want. How much private property is there to be? What can be bought? What can be sold?"

"Hear, hear!" became audible from Chiffan.

"In a theoretically complete socialism, it goes without saying, the only property you will be able to buy will be consumable goods, and the only way you will ever get hold of money will be as anticipatory or current or deferred wages. It won't matter whether it is cash down or cash held over because there will be no interest."

"Dole?" said someone.

"Dole is just vacation wages," said Rud. "It's the duty of the community to find a man work."

"Hear, hear!"

For a time the assurance of his manner carried the meeting. Then objections arose.

A young man from Belfast, Figgis, raised the issue of foreign trade and started an excursus about the Workers' International. That and one or two unfamiliar phrases promised trouble for Rud, but Chiffan, to whom no current political phrase seemed unfamiliar, came to his help and pulled the debate back within his reach.

That was Rud's debut. After supper nine or ten of them sat and talked round him for a good three hours, they talked of "Socialism in our Time," and the talk went wide and far. "Socialism," said Chiffan, "has got to rejuvenate itself. Prewar socialism was sentimental and insufficient. He and I have been talking about that for days. Socialism's got to dot its i's and cross its t's. Marx ran away with it and lost bits as he ran. It never understood money."

“What I told you,” said the ex-ophthalmic young man with the black beard. “Exactly what I told you.”

Next day a well-trained Marxist from the Black Country, named Bennet, took on Rud with considerable vigour.

“All this sneering at Marx,” he opened, “I don’t know who started it...”

It was a live discussion and once or twice Rud felt himself cornered, and broke through with some effective rhetoric.

“Talk every time you can,” said Chiffan late that night and with the manner of a trainer. “It’s all you can do here.”

“As long as they listen,” said Rud.

“They’ll listen to you,” said Chiffan.

Rud displayed no gratitude for Chiffan’s aid and support. He took Chiffan as a matter of course. He was always to take Chiffan as a matter of course. He trusted him, he relied upon him; he expected everything from him and gave nothing in return. He took credit to himself for everything Chiffan taught him or told him to do. That was Rud’s way with life and it worked very well for him...

When Rud was disposed to guy the Swedenborgian’s account of the Master as Socialist, Chiffan kicked him on the ankle.

Afterwards Rud discussed that kick with some heat. “Never ridicule a man except for a definite party purpose,” said Chiffan. “And then kill him. Guy him so that he will never rise again. But don’t make an enemy of him for fun...Oh, yes, I know I do. But I’m different.”

Two tepid discussions on “Agriculture in a Socialised World” and “The Nationalisation of Mineral Products” were instructive rather than provocative for Rud, and Chiffan did most of the talking. Rud began to realise that the level of information in the School was higher than he had assumed. Several of these non-university men were much better read than he was.

Things livened up to flaming reality with a discussion of pacificism and non-resistance.

“Are we to Use Force and if so How Much?” was the question mooted, and before the two days’ debate had lasted for an hour Rud realised that hitherto he had consistently shirked this particular and very fundamental issue in political affairs. In his reveries of a

stupendous political ascent there had been great marches and demonstrations, flag-waving and cheering, there had been battles (heard off) and tremendous displays of armament, thousands of planes in the air and the like, but so far the rougher stuff had always been fairly remote from his person. Once or twice he had been under fire in dreamland, undismayed and unscathed. When he had imagined himself arrested and put on trial, it had always been an open trial, numerous reporters present, the whole world wondering, the judge cowed or secretly sympathetic, and himself practically in control of proceedings. Prisons, concentration camps, domiciliary visits, disappearances and secret examinations had been far beyond the actual margin of his picture.

But now, in clumsy and distressful speeches, in broken sentences and broken English, came harsh reality, at first hand, One of the refugees had been crippled and broken. He limped. He clung to the chair in front of him as he talked. “Even here,” he said, “among friends, one hesitates to tell.”

He spoke admirable, bookish English, slowly, carefully and with a German flavour rather than a positive accent.

He told them of the foul indignities that men, when they encourage instead of discouraging each other in cruelty, can put upon their victims. “And your martyrdom,” he said in a faded voice, “is in vain. Your courage is wasted. You suffer and you are hidden away and lied about. Your persecutors are more horrible than apes, because they are subtler. Beasts and disease and accidents can cause men pain and misery, but such things do not torment you with hope and snatch it away, they do not caricature and disgrace you as well as destroy. They do not leave your friends in doubt whether you have betrayed them. They do not make those you love vanish without a trace or put them to pain and indignity before your eyes. I did not know it was in my fellow creatures to do such things as I have seen — such things as I have been through. Let me tell you — I will tell you — a part of it. What happened to me. If I can tell you...”

It was a hideous and circumstantial tale he had to tell...The speeches of the inexperienced which followed seemed helplessly feeble and pale. It was difficult to listen to them with that man’s story fresh and vivid in the mind. Then came a woman recounting at

second-hand, but no further off than second-hand, the frightfulnesses that had happened to her family.

Rud wished he could go out of the room; he felt inadequate. His self- satisfaction evaporated.

He wanted to get up and say: “Stop all this! What do you imagine we can do.”

A little old Jew from Vienna suddenly jumped up with a great discovery. “I vill tell you someting. I vill tell you someting. A Magna Carta for the whole vorlt. No force except in the hants of disciplined men. Vell paid, vell fed, vell cared for, disciplined men, with officers who know exactly — vat dey may do. And go no more beyond. Exactly. Yess. No wappens. No munitions. Noting. Except for them. And no secret police. No force used out of sight ever. No dossier — or if there must be dossiers, I do not know, but if there must be dossiers, then every man the right to know exactly what you hold against him. Right to inspect and protest. And no secret examinations. No. Wherever there is an examination, then gif me a sort of people to be able to walk through the room, at any time, able to say, What’s dis? What you doing? A sort of people able to go through all these things. Valk in. Doctors, mind or body — all controlled — in their examinations. Visitors. Guardians of men. See? A Magna Carta. Until you haf that. Always there will be darkness and abominations. Always — to the end of the vorlt. Better law and order, I tell you, even if it is bad law — then lawlessness and evil in the night. For by night, louts, hooligans touch hell — you haf heard — and rejoice in it. I know. I know. Always, always gif me law.”

His face was flushed. His bright eyes glittered with tears of excitement.

“Gif me my Magna Carta. Then — you need not bother. Everyting will be all right. No force, you understand me, no force to be used on anyone except in the hants of disciplined men—”

He went right through what he had said already almost word for word.

He repeated his speech with variations three times and was resuming, da capo, when the chairman overwhelmed him with clock and bell. Whereupon he sat down, sat very subdued for a minute or so and then twisted himself round and began to explain it all in harsh

whispers to the people immediately behind him. “My Magna Carta for all the vorlt. No force, you understand me...”

Rud sat in his place during the outbreak of this little old Jew from Vienna, digesting the ugly realities those other two refugees had retailed. They stunned him so that for a time he could not find anything to say. The thought of violence filled him with angry fear and the urge to savage reprisals. He felt just as he had felt when he read of gorillas and wolves in his childhood. The shadow of it lay plainly across the path of his imaginations. What the little old Jew was saying meant nothing to him. What stirred his imagination was the thought of himself being treated brutally and filthily, mutilated, subjected to sub-human indignities.

“Get your blow in first,” he thought. “Nothing else for it. Always carry a gun. Carry poison.”

When at last he spoke, he raged against Nazis and Fascists, he spoke of the little ways of the British police with mobs and repeated rumours that came out of prisons. He was all for vehement reprisals.

“Never forgive a bully. Mark your man down,” he said, “and wait for him. Even if you have to wait for years...

“You’ve got to attack. Your only safety lies in attack. Choose your moment for attack. Strike first at the devils, strike first.”

His voice became a scream.

“Easy,” whispered Chiffan.

The meeting was divided. There was still a rather shaken minority for non- resistance, but most of the men and nearly all the girls were with Rud, for fighting and fighting bitterly. But the refugees said little and the little old Jew shook his head and whispered. “If you had my Magna Carta,” he whispered.

That night the summer school talked long and late and loud. “And well we may,” said Chiffan, “for, after all, violence is the fundamental thing in life. As old as hunger and earlier than lust...

“Before there was even a beast; before a single animal came on land, there was this attacking and defending, devouring and fighting for life. If you think you can escape by being lambs, ask the wolf.”

“There’s such a thing as Mutual Aid,” said the ex-ophthalmic man. “Kropotkin said that ages ago.”

“Mutual aid,” said Chiffan, “but only to fight better.”

“Force you must have somewhere,” said the little old Jew. “There’s only peace under the power of the law. No peace for man but that. In my Magna Carta...”

“How about bed?” said a voice.

§ IV

Rud and Chiffan sat on a stile on the hillside above the summer school on their way to the junction. “Time we went,” Chiffan had said, “before they start packing. Then they’ll have time to miss us and talk you over.”

He had announced this decision quite suddenly and they had paid up and slipped away without farewells.

They proposed to go by train to Baiting, where there was trouble brewing in the minor gadget factories. Chiffan wanted to see it for himself and he also wanted Rud to see it. The stile tempted Chiffan after the long path uphill and maybe there was something else, pulling at him.

“You can’t expect anyone to say good-bye,” he remarked, “who doesn’t know you’re going...You’re not impulsive, Rud.”

Rud had nothing to say to that.

“It was a good time anyhow,” said Chiffan.

“I’ve never talked so much in my life,” said Rud.

“Or to as good effect...of course — . It’s a gentle crowd. They’re — how shall I put it? — they’re flimsy people. They’re not the stuff revolutions are made of. But they polish up revolutionary ideas. If it came to a real show-down with violence, they’d vanish like a heap of dust in a cyclone. All the same it’s a good school for talking. I’m glad we came. But we had to quit before we caught their disease.”

“Ugh?”

“What? Enervation of the intelligence.

“Too many ideas and no conclusions to them — like a plague of Manx cats on the brain.”

He dismissed that thought and came to something else, that had evidently been brewing in his mind for some time.

“You know, Rud, you could be vetted into a pretty tidy leader.

Into a very useful leader indeed for a live new movement. You've got real passion. You speak uncommonly well."

Rud had felt that something of the sort was coming. He had felt that for some days. He had already thought out his reply thoroughly and cunningly.

"It isn't impossible," he said, "I believe I might make something of a figurehead and something of a foghorn, but I shouldn't be any good, Chiffan, unless there were men in the ship behind me. And one man in particular..."

It needed no ceremony to bind that tacit treaty.

"I think," said Chiffan presently, "we ought to keep in touch with Figgis and Redwood. There was something in those chaps."

He was already organising, imaginatively.

§ V

They pursued their way and their several lines of thought. "I doubt if I got hold of the women," Rud reflected. Chiffan roused himself from profound calculation and gave his mind to Rud's question.

"The women?"

"I doubt if I got hold of them."

"You did exactly right about them. I wish I had your self-respect."

"I don't think I touched them."

"You didn't. And two I mauled. That's where we differ. I got my face slapped. I'm sorry but I did. It — it accelerated my departure. But you just impressed them. That's the difference between us — and why I shall never be a leader. I can't keep my hands off a pretty girl. It's a second-rate quality — for all my wit and wisdom. I have to admit it. You kept absolutely aloof from them. Exactly what a real leader has to do. You were concentrated on bigger things. 'All the world loves a lover' they say. Don't you believe it. Not in politics. Supposing you had started to philander. It wouldn't have been so difficult. That yellow-haired girl—"

Rud had noted the interest of the yellow-haired girl, had felt it even when he was standing and speaking with his back to her, had dreamt about her; but he gave no sign.

“You’d have started a lot of jealousy and irritation among the girls. Even if they didn’t want you for themselves, they’d not have liked another girl monopolising you. And you’d have just come down to competition with the other men. Every man is more or less jealous of any man who gets a girl. Even if she isn’t his girl...That’s one of Lord Horatio Bohun’s disadvantages. He can’t keep his profile and his aristocracy and his touch of sex appeal out of the picture. Maybe they won’t let him...Women disciples are dangerous animals...If I hadn’t felt you were a natural leader for ten other reasons, I’d have known it from your handling of those women. Cool. Sure. I was a bit silly out of school, I admit — but all the time I was watching you. One or two of them said things about you.”

Rud could not resist asking what they said.

“‘He’s aloof,’ they said. ‘There’s a sort of mystery about him.’”

And then Chiffan produced one of those maxims for statesmen that Rud was beginning to find characteristic of him.

“A political leader,” said Chiffan, “to be successful, must either be an ice-cold bachelor entirely devoid of sex appeal, a manifest cuckold or the faithful husband of some ugly, unpleasant or ridiculous woman. Run your mind through history. All history stands for it. Napoleon, for example; Caesar, — all Cleopatra’s bunch; Marcus Aurelius; Justinian; Oliver Cromwell...”

Rud looked anything but elated.

“It’s part of the price of greatness,” said Chiffan. “And, after all, it isn’t as though you wanted them, Rud.”

“No,” said Rud, relaxing into his primitive self, “If I wanted them —

“Everything would be different,” said Chiffan firmly. “But you don’t — either for show or use. Not even out of rivalry.”

He regarded Rud, with his head cocked on one side for a moment, and then confirmed his impression. “No.”

He went on for a time preoccupied with some train of thought of his own. “Philandering,” broke out at last. “Philandering. That’s the matter with most of us intellectuals. We philander with women. We philander with ideas. We philander with violence...Rud, the real world is a bloody world, a world of beatings and bruises and cuts and fights and dead men. And men not quite killed who’re sick. As that

Austrian said. Those dying men who were sick in that room. You heard him? Gods! I can see it still! That's the raw meat of life. What are ideas alone? Ideas — ideas are shapes but not substance...

"That discussion on non-resistance, Rud! Did you ever have a better show of Ideal versus Real? Elegant sentiments and then suddenly those actual things that cut like a knife...

"Idealists! Nothing serious in this world was ever settled by nice little rabbits putting their little votey-poteys into boxy-poxes and going home again. The next thing you have to get, Rud, on your way to leadership, is—"

"Yes?"

"Well, I don't want you to get too much of it." "What do you mean?"

"A broken knuckle, say — a tooth knocked out and a black eye."

A glow of amused animation appeared upon Chiffan's countenance, a brightening of the eye, a shining effect on the face. It was his nearest approach to laughter.

"Bloody knuckles, black eyes and continence, Rud. The way of the leader is hard..."

"I suppose I've got to face up to it," said Rud after a slight pause. "It's all in the day's work I suppose..."

But that night there was not the faintest intimation of a yellow-haired visitant for him. Instead he had a disagreeable nightmare about those two hefty young men in purple shirts who had come to his room at Camford. But their methods of controversy on this occasion were emphatic and not verbal. They never made a sound. They set about doing frightful things to him. He shot them both dead but they came to life again and he had to keep on shooting them. They were soon covered with blood, but still they got up again. He got his back to the wall and woke up screaming faintly when he had fired his last cartridge and they still came on nearer and nearer.

He lay awake and was still aquiver. What would have happened, he thought, if he hadn't awakened? What would they have done? Then as he got more awake he knew clearly it was only a dream.

He lay staring at a dim ceiling and listening to Chiffan's faint snore.

"No good running away," he whispered. "They'll dig out all the

rabbits...”

§ VI

On their way to Balting they took a day off for a rest, because Chiffan knew of a little lake where there was someone who would lend them an old punt. And they would borrow a rod and line and fish.

“Fish for what?” asked Rud.

“Just fishing,” said Chiffan. “Think of all we’ve got to turn over in our minds.”

It was a very pleasant day indeed, much sunshine and a glowing stillness upon the lake and upon its great trees. Chiffan’s friend was a gamekeeper by profession and a socialist by resentment and conviction. He cooked them a mighty meal of rabbit and onions. They had small beer (departing from their normal austerity) and cheese, and he relieved himself of much long suppressed radical opinion and gave them a shakedown in a little outhouse with a fire. And while he was busy about his work Chiffan did his fishing.

Rud did not even attempt to fish. Chiffan caught nothing, and for the most part they paddled about the lake, pulled yellow and white water lilies out of sheer acquisitiveness, or sprawled in the punt and meditated under a great yellowing horse-chestnut that overhung the water, and occasionally plopped a conker through its glassy surface. Chiffan wasn’t inclined for talk, and Rud, too, had a feeling that the bulk of their talking was done. They understood one another. And in his relaxed state Chiffan reflected upon women.

“That girl.” he said.

“What about her?” asked Rud. “That Lancashire girl, you mean?”

“I could have had her,” said Chiffan.

“Well?”

“I didn’t. I didn’t want her enough.”

“Well?”

“And now I do...

“She was a bore. And yet there was something about her...I think it was her neck attracted me. There was something attractive about

her neck. Damn! I wish I either wanted a woman or didn't. I can't get her out of my head. Maybe it's the sunshine or that rabbit. And I made a fool of myself with the other because she piqued me...You're lucky not to be bothered by these things."

Rud, who was lying on his back in the punt, said nothing, but he made Chiffan feel his disapproval by wagging his foot as an impatient cat waves its tail.

§ VII

The next day the purposeful life was resumed, and they went on to study the industrial troubles of Balting. And hardly had they come into the dingy, winding streets of that town before they found a shop-front bright with the announcements of a brand-new political party, the League of Free Democrats; Leader, Jim Flab. Most of the window was adorned with copies of a handbill asking and answering the very natural question, "Who IS Jim Flab?" above the portrait of a cadaverous man of thirty-five or forty with a skew chin, a forced glare in his eyes and a crooked mouth featuring an extremity of resolution to the very best of its ability.

"He is the Leader of the League of Free Democrats," said the handbill, "Consecrated to the Salvation of this Our England, P.T.O."

The handbill was printed on both sides, and each side was exposed alternately in the window. The reverse contained much further information, which Chiffan devoured, with that exalted pallor on his face which stood him in the stead of laughter. "Come and read it, Rud," he said.

Rud joined him. He found something unpleasantly like a burlesque of his own dreams in Mr. Jim Flab's proposals, but Chiffan did not seem to observe that. Mr. Flab, it seemed had had an eventful, noble and indignant career, he had "travelled extensively," seen the Pope and the President and Hitler and Stalin, been jailed for political reasons in Russia, Spain, America and Scotland, and was still in the early thirties, mounting towards his self-chosen task of national leadership. There was plainly an instinct for rhetoric in the man, and a large willingness to avail himself of all the current

prejudices, antagonisms and suspicions of the time. He boasted of Town Councillors, military men, including "a V.C. with head injuries," several majors, business men and solicitors among his embattled following, and they had met, he alleged, by moonlight at Stonehenge, that "original temple of the British spirit," and there lifting their hands before their faces "according to the ancient rite," taken the Vow of the Free Democrats.

"We've never thought of a vow," said Chiffan.

The League of Free Democrats was still very new. The date of that profoundly solemn occasion was "the Vernal Equinox" of the current year. He was attacking the "Reds" in particular "all along the line," wherever the line might be, and his programme, mostly in capitals, included Fearless Exposure of Red Plots, Smashing of the Rings of International Financiers, Britain to be Strong and Fearless, Kicking out Party Hacks and Old Gangs, the Revival of Simple Christianity, National Plan to Abolish Unemployment and so on and so forth.

Chiffan read these projects over in an appreciative whisper. "Pretty comprehensive," he remarked, and then: "Oh! look at this. 'Lack of finance and lack of speakers are our chief difficulties.' Chance for you, Rud! 'We want one thousand pounds to found anti-red combat groups all over industrial England.' Combat groups, eh? Lovely. Vows! Combat groups!"

"It's wild," said Rud.

"It's not a bit wild."

"But who's going to—"

"Lots maybe. You mustn't suppose, Rud, this chap doesn't know what he's up to. This is the stuff to give them, he thinks, if you want to be a Leader. Consider him as a reporter. He's got something to tell us, Rud. He's a very useful reporter on the state of the country. He talks to crowds that answer back, while you, so far, have just talked in your Union. And back there at the summer school. This stuff has been tested by cheers. He's been heckled. He's gone home and thought out answers. And that stuff is what goes...Would-be leaders of his kidney...All over the country they're breaking out like spots on a boy's face. Competition. We aren't going to have it all our own way, Rud. And the Colonel Blimps are rolling up behind him..."

Chiffan considered for a moment and then moved towards the door of the shop. “Come along,” he said.

“What are you going to do?”

“I am going in.”

“The man’s a blatant bosher.”

“He’s not. He knows exactly what he is up to. Master Jim Flab is no fool, whatever else he is. I want to feel his bumps. I want to find out who pays for all this.”

“But what are we to say?”

“You — nothing. You just listen for once.”

In the shop there was a counter with some piles of handbills, walls draped with primitive flags of black and red (the League Flag), a large photograph of Stonehenge framed in wilted laurel, enlargements of the inspiring likeness of Jim Flab, and in charge of it all a lumpish young man drowsing over a cross-word puzzle. He stood up with a start and made a hasty and uncompleted movement as if to take up something hidden behind the counter. Possibly a weapon. He decided that was unnecessary. “Whad you want?” he said.

“Enquiring souls. Camford men both of us,” said Chiffan, annexing a university for himself. “Long Vacation. Seeing England. We’re sick of the Reds and all that, and we want to hear what your leader has to tell us. He seems good stuff.”

“He is,” said the lumpish young man. “But he isn’t here. You can see the Major.”

“What Major?”

“Major Fitz Blessington. Sit down there, will you...”

After the delay of ten minutes which the importance of the major necessitated, they went upstairs to a large shabby room over the shop, in which there were letter files and card indices, odd tables and windsor chairs, a book-case of reference books, a telephone, packages of stationery, a small safe, a rack of what Chiffan suggested later were hose-pipe bludgeons, a row of clothes-pegs bearing a number of berets and two waterproofs, the portrait of the Leader over the empty cast-iron fireplace, and a large map of England marked with blue and red wafers. In the centre was a writing-desk of painted and grained wood, littered with papers and with the apparatus and

litter of a slovenly pipe smoker, and at this desk sat a small but sturdy little man with a hooked, red nose and a tumult of chins in full retreat, dissimilar blue eyes, a moustache as wild as an excited Persian kitten and a pipe in the corner of his mouth. He was dressed in a shabby old khaki uniform from which all badges and indication of rank had been removed, and diagonally across his chest was a black and red scarf after the fashion of a French mayor's. He pretended to be busy with important documents.

"Sit down, my lads," he said, pointing with a pen. "I'll be through with this stuff in a moment."

Chiffan made to examine the map of England.

"Siddown," said the major.

Rud and Chiffan disposed themselves in free and undisciplined attitudes on two of the windsor chairs. "Mm. Mm. Mm," said the major, and slapped a folder on his desk. "And now let's have a look at you, my boys."

He came round the desk towards them, leant against it and contemplated them. There was a smell about him as though his uniform had recently been cleaned with benzine and his breath enriched by whisky. It came to them through the rank smell of his pipe, and there was also a flavour of leather and something else that was probably idiosyncrasy — altogether a thoroughly manly smell. People with leftish prejudices might conceivably have said the major stank.

"So you want to join the Free Democratic party," he said. "Good for you."

"I don't know whether we do," said Chiffan. "We want to hear about it first."

"You'll soon hear about it, my boys. All England is going to hear about it before very long, by God. You'll hear about it. You're sick of the Bolsheviks and the white-livered peace skunks and the Jews and all the rest of 'urn. You want to do something about it, and you've found your way to the right place. We're out to clean up England. Jim there is the man for us. He's the man for us and the man for you. He's white. True-born English, a pukka democrat, if you understand me, and straight as a die. You ought to hear him. It's grand. It's grand."

“Yes,” said Chiffan in a digestive tone. “And you started all this — these new ideas — this spring?”

“At Stonehenge, with a bit of a ceremony. And, my boys — and don’t you forget it — a prayer to God. Whom you’ve all been pretending to forget. Jim Flab hasn’t forgotten the Old Book.”

“Why didn’t you start before?” asked Chiffan.

The major replaced his pipe, with which he had been making generous circular movements indicative of the greatness leading and sustaining the party, in his mouth, and he spoke about its stem with a snarl that set his moustache flying high and wild, and revealed a wealth of irregular yellow teeth. “Because we’ve given those other slackers and humbugs rope to show their quality. That’s why.”

“Meaning old Bohun and his purple shirts?”

“Meaning, sir, whomsoever it may concern. To hell with posturers and posers, say we! We start free and clean.”

“I suppose people are just pouring in on you?”

“By the hundred. The people of this country know a good thing when it’s offered them. They’ve waited long enough, God knows. We can’t keep up with them — taking their names. We put out our Programme. Here it is — if you haven’t seen it. Join us and fight for us’ we say, and that’s enough for them.”

“I see that,” said Chiffan. “There were five or six hanging about outside when we came in.”

“No!” cried the major. “Where?” and went to the window, so evidently astonished, that Chiffan was able to convey a solemn look of derision to Rud.

“I don’t see ‘um,” said the major, turning back.

“Shyness, I expect,” said Chiffan.

A faint suspicion passed momentarily across the major’s countenance. There was a pause. “So you wish to join us?” “There’s trouble in the Balting shops, I’m told,” said Chiffan.

“Fomented,” said the major.

“It always is. And you’re doing something about it?” “Balting men must deal with Balting men.”

“You mean?”

“We’re running Bolsheviks and paid agitators out of the town. We give ‘urn notice to quit. That’s our particular task here, if you want a

job with us. We saw Mr. Harry Bellows off the premises the day before yesterday."

"Stand all right with the police?"

"Mr. Supe is heart and soul with us."

"Supe?" said Rud.

"Superintendent of Police, my boy."

"And the Town Council?"

"Fifty-fifty. There's some rotten radicals and pink parlour Labour men. But we've got good friends on the bench. Good sound men and good sound patriots."

"And half the strikers are girls? More than half, Major? Not much chance for them. If you cut off help from outside."

"What's that got to do with it? Eh?" The major was suddenly on the defensive again.

"Trying to get things clear in my mind," said Chiffan.

The major removed his pipe from his mouth, walked across the room and spat with an air of extreme deliberation into the empty fireplace. "Look here, my lads, what do you think you are doing here? Joining up — or smelling round?"

Chiffan stood up and Rud followed suit.

"It doesn't smell so fresh," said Chiffan.

"Get out, you scabs — you Bolshevik spies," said the major with concentrated intensity. "I've wasted my time on you." "We were only enquiring."

"Get out," said the major. "D'you hear me? Get OUT." He made truncated gestures of assault. He was transparently disposed to kick. Rud felt himself going white.

The major caught Rud's eye. An eye like that might mean a knife or a pistol. The major abandoned his impulse for immediate violence. "Get out — before I blow my whistle."

The departure was wary and stiff. Chiffan led the retreat. Rud kept a watchful and dangerous eye on the major and went downstairs sideways. There was tension but no actual violence.

The major continued audible above in abusive soliloquy. Apparently he had risen from the ranks, a promoted drill sergeant of the old school...

The young man in the shop had clutched a truncheon, but

apparently only for self-defence.

"That," said Chiffan, when they were in the street again, "was as plain and diagrammatic as you could have. You didn't say much, Rud, but I guess you didn't miss much. This town, you see, is a nest of small factories making bits of things; half the workers are girls and kids, and helpless as mutton. The law protects them, but who cares for the law here? The employers are cowardly sweaters, and they think that industrial discipline is cheap at the price of Jim Flab and that major and the few casual roughs they have enrolled. It isn't; but they think it is. And so Jim works himself up, half rogue, half dreamer — such dreams as we dream. While the major sells the stuff."

"Such silly stuff," said Rud.

"Silly stuff, you think? P'raps no more silly than ours. P'raps less. Wait till war gets nearer and the bombing and shooting starts, wait till the people above begin to have that back-to-the-wall feeling...Same as these sweating magistrate manufacturers here have...Then you'll get it all — magnified. The big people will come in. They will put guns in the hands of chaps like that, put bombs in their hands, teach them the authority of a uniform, set them to suppress strikes...Put them at last in control of things...After which they will get out of hand. It was stinkers like that little major who ran about in Ireland during those ugly years, Black and Tans versus rebels. You don't remember. I just do. Gods, the foolishness of the Tories to touch such muck! So they lost Ireland. So in the end they are going to lose everything they ever clutched under God's sky. There's hundreds of that dirty little beast — ex-temporaries — looking for gangster jobs now. The last war bred them like maggots in a dead dog. The next war will breed thousands more.

"I'm glad we went in. That's the sort of thing ahead of you, Rud, like a dangerous back street at night, and there's miles of it that you'll have to go through before you can even begin to get that successful feeling...before you can dare to dictate peace and plenty in good earnest...before you can feel independent enough even to start our great programme — and put out that Strong Right Arm of yours..."

§ VIII

"It all gets into the boiling when you come to a revolution," said Chiffan. "You can't even make a garden without slinging mud. The raw material of politics. What is it? Mud, blood and fools. There's nothing else...What have you been dreaming about, Rud, if you haven't faced up to that? That's the stuff of life for our generation — leaders or led, bleeders or bled. Our feet are set on the path of revolution. The stars in their courses insist. There's no turning back. But I'll tell you, Rud, who I would rather be than any dictator that ever lived."

Rud asked "Who?" as he was plainly expected to do, though he knew nothing rational was coming.

"Omar Khayyam," said Chiffan. "Yes — old Omar. Bless him! I am a revolutionist by conviction but I am a poet by nature...That loaf of bread, that jar of wine. And the sunshine of the desert...

"As for 'Thou beside me in the wilderness' I should want an occasional change. Like the books of a circulating library. But I suppose I should begin with that girl with the neck..."

"There are times, Chiffan," interjected Rud, "when you talk like an ass, like a Priapean ass...I don't like it."

"And I have devoted myself to making a great man of you," said Chiffan with a monstrous sigh. "It's true, Rud. I've found my job in life. And when they try to shoot you — I shall be — behind you. No avoiding it. There won't be any Wilderness to go to in the Wrath to Come, and they'll have burnt the vineyards and slashed the wineskins."

§ IX

Rud returned to Camford at the end of the Long Vacation very nearly if not quite a grown man. In every life cycle there are phases of swift development alternating with intervals of comparative unchangeableness; there comes a time when the child almost suddenly becomes a boy and again at adolescence when puerility falls off in a few amazing days, like a cloak suddenly abandoned. So

now in a brief tale of weeks, Rud had passed from the phase of dreaming youthfulness and begun to assemble himself for a purposeful attack on life. He spent the last two days of the holiday at home, and his mother saw with unspoken satisfaction the change wrought by that six pounds ten of hers in his voice and eye and bearing. Where he had been defensive and irritable he was now tranquil and resolute.

"All that fresh air has done him a lot of good," said his father.

But she felt that it was more than fresh air had happened to him. What it was she could not imagine. His development followed laws of its own. She knew exactly how Aunt Julia would account for it, and she knew quite certainly that Aunt Julia would be wrong.

So she said nothing about it to Aunt Julia.

BOOK II. — THE HATCHING

I. — THE GROUP ASSEMBLES

§ I

One brilliantly sunny morning two years later found old Doctor Carstall in his dressing-gown, sitting in a capacious wicker chair in his garden, lost in thought. His devastated breakfast tray was on a rustic table beside him, and various letters, circulars and a couple of morning papers occupied a second wicker chair within arm's length. A waste-paper basket had been put conveniently for his envelopes and wrappers.

On his tray lay a letter and an original paper, a reprint from a scientific publication, by his son. The paper was entitled Certain Relations between Nervous Strain and General Metabolism, and the letter explained: "This is a sort of premature birth brought on by the Crisis. Some of the most interesting threads lie loose. I meant this research to be an epoch-maker, but what will you? All my work is interrupted — for Heaven knows how long. I've been grabbed by the National Nutrition Emergency Committee, damn it. How the devil research is to get along under this sort of thing I can't imagine. The Committee is fundamentally futile. But there's no escaping it."

Two headlines of the crumpled newspapers were visible. One proclaimed a "Further Slump in Industrials," and this had suddenly brought home to the doctor that his tenure of this pleasant red-brick house and this garden in which he had expected to spend his declining years, was now extremely insecure. If he hadn't sold his practice so soon it would have been better for him. And if he hadn't bought United States Steels. No good fretting about that now. Anyhow, Dick had had his start, and not even the N.N.E.C. could rob him of that now.

The second newspaper, at which the doctor had scarcely glanced as yet, was being emphatic about "The Fight for the Purple House."

"Damn the world," said the doctor, and began filling the pipe that for reasons of economy had replaced his former customary cigar. "Nothing is safe any longer. Nothing is steady. I could have bet my life on those Steels."

He smoked slowly, and presently his breakfast tray was carried indoors.

There seemed no end to this slump. No end at all. He found himself going over the steady development of the world peril that had thrown its shadow across the security of his morning sunshine. How had it begun? He recalled the follies of the victors in the Fatuous Twenties, the gathering resentment and bitterness of the losers in the war, and the wave of pacificism that preceded the armament race of the Frightened Thirties. How obdurate France had been, how ambiguous England! How futile the League! He recalled the Great Peace Ballot of 1936 which had passed like the sigh of a sleeper reluctant to awaken.

Then had come, not formal war, all declared and set, but a gradual decline into warlike violence and destruction all over the world; Abyssinia, Spain, China and Japan, Macedonia, Syria, the social disorder in the Cotton States, the Ukraine business, Brazil, the Argentine, Ireland, and now these ever-spreading troubles in India. Everywhere there appeared the same phenomenon of unemployed and discontented masses of young people milling about in revolutionary movements; everywhere demagogues rose to exploit them, everywhere the gangsters fought more openly, everywhere were shrinking markets, mounting taxation and monetary inflation, conscription for military service, conscription for munition-making. The formulae of the gangsters varied from extreme leftism to extreme rightism, but the material facts were everywhere the same. Governments everywhere were afraid to declare war definitely or to restore an effective peace, because so long as the military necessity ruled there was at least an excuse for unqualified repression. It made one's mind fret and ache to open the morning paper.

Civilisation as he knew it, was going to pieces.

He thought of the world before the Great War and it seemed a Golden Age. In those happy days a man lived his own life, and politics were no more than a noise off-stage. Government was as remote and benign as the sky. You went about nearly all Europe then without a visa and you talked with absolute freedom wherever you went. Your personal liberties were rational and immense, you could do anything short of violence to frustrate the government, and when

you earned money it meant you had that much money — less a slight diminution of pay for the roads and the policeman. You could invest and assure your future and provide freedom for your children after you. And all over the world a pound was a pound. Of course the poor were poor then, but were they any better off now, except that they felt their poverty more acutely? The subject races were subject and equally unawakened. Life had some dignity then in a decent Englishman's home. Art was subservient and not subversive, its mission was to please and evoke a feeling of complacent approval, and literature, as free as it is to-day, had infinitely better manners. Philanthropy, real charity indeed, prevailed remarkably.

It had been a good secure time for a quite considerable number of gently- living people, and all about him, all his world, had assumed that that really very good life was getting better and better, carrying a higher polish and spreading out steadily to an ever-increasing proportion of the population. Presently the whole world would be gentle. And no one dreamt that this expanding civilisation was being undermined and outgrown, was living on its moral capital and wasting its abundant material resources. That pleasant world of his in which he had been born and which had seemed so permanent and settled, had been indeed hardly more than a passing gleam of sunshine upon the overcast, stormy, incalculable stream of life. It had seemed to be the normal course of life.

How rare indeed are such patches of sunlight in history! Now and again, in China, in Greece, in Egypt, in Japan, in the early Roman Empire maybe, in a few cities in the Middle Ages and rather widely through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there had been phases of well-bred, humane, cultivated living, free talk and liberal behaviour. Gentlemen and their womenfolk had walked the world without weapons and lived in pleasant comfortable houses. Gardens had multiplied and men of his type had sat in them, secure in their dignity. Surely wherever you find a cared-for garden you have a symbol of goodwill and well-being in life.

Probably, thought the doctor, few of my sort of people who have lived this life have realised, what I am beginning to realise, that ours is not the normal life of man. Over vast regions always, and for long ages even in the favoured lands, our sort of life has been impossible.

True that in a few half-illuminated regions there has been a sort of penumbra to our civilisation, little gleams of comfort, refinement and loveliness, cringing in courts or carried on precariously behind high walls and locked doors. But the rest had been blackness, the blackness of natural violence, the black struggle of the brute to survive and triumph. A general blackness leaves no books or pictures or traces behind it; only the bright phases are remembered. The old proverb is wrong. Unhappy is the breed that has no history. In all those vast unlit intervals, the life of man, just as much as the life of any other animal, has been red in tooth and claw, suffering greatly and signifying nothing.

Am I growing old? questioned the doctor, or am I beginning to see reality plain?

Never before had it dawned upon him, how flimsy was civilisation, how limited and incidental and flimsy it had always been.

"A few precarious patches of civilised life," whispered the doctor, "a few decades here, a few there, and before and behind and around and beyond that an animal — that craves, that cowers and is beaten. Homo vapulans. And back to that we go.

"Burr!" he said and knocked out his pipe.

He sat polishing the bowl of his pipe in the palm of his hand. His eye fell on Dick's letter and paper.

He recalled that talk they had had at the beginning of the Long Vacation. Two — three? — no, two years ago. Before that bad bout of neuritis had set his mind towards thoughts of senescence. Fine chap Dick was, but a little strange. So like and so intensely different from himself. They had had a long talk...

The doctor had hoped the boy wouldn't be disturbed in that psycho- visceral work of his, but the rising tide had got him. The tide of disaster was coming in faster than they had thought...

They had discussed this breakdown towards war and disorder. Dick had been very strong on — what was it? — the idea of "scavenging ". All this present disorder in the world, he had said, was the breakdown and clearing away of outworn creeds, dynasties, classes, nationalism, bad industrial organisation, bad monetary and financial methods. Possibly — Oh! Probably — it was so. But what

had Dick to put in the place of all this debris when the scavengers had taken it away? There was no doubt we were going to have the ruffians and scavengers, no doubt at all now, all over the world they were busy, hyaenas on the battlefield, wolves following the retreat, but who were these other fellows, where were these other fellows Dick had talked about, who were going to take hold of things and set up the great modern scientific world-state of our dreams and hopes? That was where Dick had become mystical.

What was it he had said? Something about a lot of tacit fellows, with a common clear-headedness. Secret natural aristocrats — something like that. Yes, he had the words now, a World Civil Service, based — that was it — a World Civil Service based on a World Public Opinion.

"But my dear Dick," said the doctor, addressing his absent son aloud, "how the devil do you propose to get a World Civil Service based on a World Public Opinion when all the good school-masters and mistresses have been beaten to death, when all the universities have been turned inside out and filled with bullies and subservient professors scared out of their wits? When all free publishing is over. I ought to have said it that night, only we got on to something else..."

He nodded his head.

The fact of it is, he reflected, Dick makes up that story in self-defence. It's just self-protection from the reality of the case. It's the reckless optimism of youth. He wants to get on with his work — and very pretty work it is, too — and not be invaded and wasted by politics. He is shirking the issue because it is too complex and disagreeable to face. That is how it is; that is how it has always been with these scientific men. Dick has invented these phantom natural aristocrats of his, this imaginary new breed of mankind, who would all know each other and exactly what has to be done when the time comes; he has invented them, just to save himself from the distraction of political things. And so until the ultimate smash-up overtakes him, please don't bother him.

"It's not good enough, Dick,"

Something occurred to the doctor. He decided to smoke another pipe on it. He had a faint memory that he too had been rather bitten at that time by that idea of a better sort of men appearing on earth.

A nice easy way out of our troubles. Here comes the Super Man, the Super Man; the Super Man! He'll see to it. In the nick of time.

Things weren't going to happen like that...

For the stresses of the new world we wanted a new education. Such a lot of people were saying that and still doing nothing about it. If we had only realised that thirty years, twenty years, ago. Then Dick's World Civil Service, which was to be indispensable for successful dictators whether they liked it or not, and his World Public Opinion which would be unavoidable if you are to have the education for an adequate Civil Service, might be something more than dreams. But now?

Wasn't all that too late now? Too late? The world was becoming a warfare in fragments. There might not even be great dictators any more, no wide- reaching Caesars like the early Caesars, but only a succession of little bloody men who would come and go, little Francos and Francolets, getting baser and less civilised step by step. And if that was so, there would be no intellectual revival now, much less a great educational reconstruction, and no effective World Public Opinion anywhere. That World Civil Service was a dream...

"Pessimism of old age?" asked the doctor.

"But isn't it so?"

Enough of this thinking! Who had enough knowledge for prophecy? No one. We had to take the blows as they came. Maybe it wasn't going to be as bad as it looked. Not so bad as all that. Maybe he was missing some hopeful possibility...

"And now for the morning's disasters!" he sighed.

He picked up a newspaper and read: "The Fight for the Purple House. Political Monkey — Lord Horatio or Rud Whitlow."

"Whitlow?" he repeated. "Now where have I heard that name before? Bud Whitlow?"

A small recalcitrant white-faced boy appeared scowling before him. Of course he had gone up to Camford! On some scholarship. There had been talk of speeches he had made...

"That infernal little beast!"

§ II

The two years that followed his encounter with Chiffan had been crowded with experience for Rud. He had come up again to Camford with a greatly enhanced self-confidence. Chiffan had inflated and confirmed and strengthened him enormously. A certain shyness in making personal contacts had diminished. He began to expect things from people, to demand them and get them. His revolutionary conviction increased. He knew the world was in a phase of revolution and that inevitably he had to play a part in it. He talked now to fellow undergraduates and even to young dons, very much as Chiffan had talked to him. He took a first class in his stride though he did not get a fellowship. Then for a while he felt his progress checked.

He came down, he found himself at home for a time without a job and the vaguest of plans. He got some lecturing in a London college and took mean lodgings in a back street in Bloomsbury. His assured income, he found, was less than in his scholarship days, and in London poverty is more obvious and galling than at Camford. He added to his income by writing a book for a publisher fortunately affected by the series mania, and by doing a little reviewing of sociological and historical books. For the better part of a year his political prospects ran along cramped, unpromising lines.

But nevertheless he had supporters now and a sense of reality about his activities. At first he had been disposed to conceal Chiffan from Camford; he did not want Camford to notice how much he owed to Chiffan; then he felt the need of him and got him to come up for a week-end of talk with the new associates. They had formed a discussion circle and Chiffan came as their common guest. He did much to confirm and develop their impression of a certain large flexibility about Rud's imagination, his capacity for political enterprise and the political effectiveness of his storms of passionate speech.

Now after a phase of loneliness, doubt and depression in Bloomsbury, Rud found his friends turning up in London and resuming their Camford conversations with him. One of his most steadfast supporters was a rich young man named Steenhold. Steenhold was half American and he was in his middle twenties. He had come up to Camford explaining himself rather copiously; he did

not want a degree, he had said; he did not need a degree, but he wanted to learn; he wanted to see what Camford had for him. He wore strange clothes, he drank excessively and then took to living on carrots and water, he tried poetry of a mystical inaccurate sort; he got as far with art as investing in a painter's outfit, he tried on a purple shirt but stuck at Jew-baiting, he was drawn to "Guidance" for a while, he was a member of the Communist Party for a fortnight, and then he decided that what Camford had for him was Rud. And he settled down to be Rud's disciple with a quite unprecedented steadfastness. He liked in particular the idea of a common revolutionary movement in Britain and America. He displayed a strange prophetic insight. "Rud's real," he said. "Rud's going far."

He established himself in two large flats in Camborne Square just out of the Euston Road. In the upper one he lived, in the lower he set up a sort of headquarters for Rud and such Rudites as were gathering round him. He refreshed them with a sideboard bearing bread, which they cut for themselves, cheese, carrots, plentiful carrots, apples, bananas, cider, water and beer. The cider and beer were in casks, and there were blue chequered earthenware mugs but no plates. The floor of this lower flat was covered with cork carpet, bathroom and kitchenette included, and the walls of its four rooms were adorned with a disorderly collection of election posters, caricatures and very modern pictures with a political bias. There were chairs, forms, a settle or so, two sofas, five or six folding beds, a spinet and several tables bearing piles of old newspapers, and warmth was supplied by electric radiators and light from cornice lights and casually placed reading lamps.

A queer miscellany of people drifted into this place. It had points of resemblance to the crowd at the summer school, but there was a greater reality about it. There was a sprinkling of young scientific workers, there were rising and ambitious artists, there were unusual-looking young women who were models, there were incidental, bright and excessively usual-looking American girls, some rather encumbered with disconcerting mothers, there were journalists, the secretaries of one or two politicians and various peculiar friends of Steenhold's too diverse and irrelevant to describe. There were fewer school teachers, and pairing arrangements played but a minor role in

the interests of the company. Here Rud would sit in a corner and talk and improve his talking powers. The political atmosphere was much more various than the unchallenged, uncorrelated progressivism of the summer school, and he learnt to parry and deal with a number of new points of view. He learnt with a sort of angry reluctance — he would rather he knew without this learning — but he learnt continually. He was moody; he was often manifestly sulky; he seemed to feel a smouldering hostility to many of them; and yet the discipleship of Steenhold infected most of the crowd. Occasionally his brain seemed to light up and then there could be no doubting his originality and vigour.

His onsets of political clairvoyance took him by surprise almost as much as they surprised his following. He had little introspection; his disposition was to be consistent and always right, and he passed from phase to phase almost unwittingly. At one moment he would be sullen, rather angry, disinclined to speak, with a cloudy confusion of facts and impressions, things he had heard, partial suggestions he had never tackled, old reveries and present impulses swirling about in his brain, and then suddenly like a crystallisation, everything fell into place, with a conviction, an absolute certainty of rightness and fitness, and with it came words and phrases, coherent, continuous. Life, which had been like a dispersed jigsaw puzzle, appeared then as a stateable and manageable problem, and the only astonishing thing about it for him was that it was not as clear and compelling to everyone as it was to himself. It was as if some different intelligence, a sort of parasitic lucidity, was hidden in his brain, with contacts and a range that went far beyond his personality; it was a genius he had, a genius in the Socratic sense, like that of a musician or a calculating boy or a poet. It seemed not to affect his general character at all.

Gradually he became aware of the alien nature of this mental being within him, and shaped his conduct to exploit it. Generally he would sit in a corner drinking little and smoking less, and waiting. It became a leading interest to “get Rud going “. Sometimes when he had a feeling of inadequacy, he would stay away for days at a time, so as not to spoil the impression he perceived he was creating.

He would sit in a corner under a chalk caricature of himself that one of the artistic contingent had made. It was on brown paper and

the forehead was exaggerated and done in white. His normal scowl was exalted to intensity, his eyes were alight, and he raised one eloquent fist to the level of his forehead. It was one of those brilliant caricatures that seem to exercise a moulding influence upon their originals.

Since the war scares of 1937 and 1938 the process of world armament had been going on with an ever-increasing intensity and an ever-increasing stress and dislocation of the ordinary life of mankind. Everyone now was being regimented, enrolled, enlisted, taxed beyond all reason, intimidated. If a new world was being born, it was being born very uncomfortably. A feverish exacerbation of human consciousness was manifest under these conditions. Overt criticism was dangerous and suppressed, but doubt and unbelief gathered intensity through their lack of expression. One dogmatism destroyed another and was in its turn destroyed. Everything was being openly accepted and furtively questioned. No tacit assumption and no established institution was safe from this seeping away of belief. A mean superficial cynicism spread like a miasma over every land.

Compared with any former period in human history the second and third decades of the twentieth century saw a stupendous diffusion and ferment of ideas round and about the earth. The only approach to a parallel is the intellectual, moral and religious confusion of the world that occurred between the break-up of the ancient localised paganisms and mythologies and the onset of the first syncretic, universalist experiments, Christianity, diasporic Judaism and Islam. And that was an infinitely fainter and slower mental turnover. One instance marks the difference in tempo and the change of scale. In the eighties of the nineteenth century, communism was the imagination of an obscure group of exiles in London. Marx wrote his articles in Highgate and made a scanty living, and young Mr. Bernard Shaw, after speaking, chiefly for his own amusement, at a little meeting in Hyde Park, was accosted by an unrecognised stranger who proclaimed himself: “I am Friedrich Engels!” It did not seem to be anything very wonderful in the way of an encounter at the time. Engels indeed struck Shaw as a needlessly self-important person. “0-o-oh! — Engels!” he said, with the rising inflection of surprised enlightenment. Yet within thirty years there was not a country in the

world, from Quito to Lhasa and from Greenland to Papua, where the names and doctrines of Marx and Engels were unknown; and communism and the doctrine of the class war were as widespread as Christianity and far better understood. It was a diffusion ten times as rapid as the former instance — and with a vastly greater range.

One evening Rud found himself eloquent upon this point, rephrasing — and greatly improving — some of Chiffan's remembered wisdom.

"Revolution so far!" said Rud. "Bah!...

"Just class bickering, rows in the street, changes of management! The mere beginnings...

"The real revolution," he went on, "is still going about the world like a mighty spirit seeking a body. For a couple of centuries now the world has been troubled by needs that have never once found a suitable working expression. All the time the stress has been getting worse. Life gets more unbalanced, more dislocated, clumsier and more abundant. Then tension of population increases. More and more people suffer. Pointless, silly, bloody warfare! Pointless, silly, bloodless unemployment! This real revolution going about the world —"

"Like an evil spirit," said one of the models.

"No! A great spirit, a monstrous spirit beyond good and evil, resolved to embody itself somehow..."

Steenhold murmured approval. "Beyond Good and Evil," he thought. "Nietzsche! Good!"

"I tell you," said Rud, becoming more and more prophetic in his manner, "social trouble has been growing and growing, ever since civilisation began to use money and roads and ships. All the religions, all the loyalties of the past three thousand years, are just the childish palliatives, the insufficient clothes, the shapes, men have tried to impose upon this growing monstrousness to prevent it from disorganising life too frightfully.

"And it's growing now — faster than ever — always more intolerant of these shreds and patches, these Gulliver strings, we put about it."

"Gulliver strings?" queried Steenhold, and then with delight: "Oh! Gulliver strings, tying him!"

“Yes, tying him,” said Rud. “The real revolution, mind you, will never endure these limitations — not for another ten years. ‘Damn you,’ it says to us, ‘clothe me properly, equip me properly! I am the Age of Plenty, I am the new life. The new world is getting impatient. It is a new life — absolutely — and it wants the shape and it wants the endorsement of a new life. Communism wasn’t enough for it. Not nearly enough. A mere feud of existing classes. The new world has to burst all these racial and national and class ideas, Fascism, Judaism, Nazism, Sovietism, by which people are trying to incarnate it. It is bursting them now. They are being tried and found wanting. All of them. They were all experiments. All experiments. Temporary — to the last degree. It is the turn of our generation, of our sort, now, to try and fit the case better. It has come to us, now. Now! Now! We have to solve the problem or go down in our turn. Go down! And every generation that goes down will go down heavier. There is no fury like a revolution frustrated — no disorder like a world in which a new pattern of living has failed to realise itself.”

“Now that’s real stuff, Rud,” said Steenhold. “That’s real live stuff. That goes on to something. That goes on.”

“But I don’t quite see...” began a spectacled Bloomsbury intellectual, sitting on the floor and nursing his knees.

“I tell you, he’s fine,” shouted Steenhold, quenching the intervention. “Let’s have more of it, Rud. Tell us some more.”

“That’s the gist of it,” said Rud.

He was trying to remember exactly what he had said. He himself felt he had said something fine. It was like his first outbreak of eloquence at the Union all over again.

§ III

To these conferences in the Steenhold flat there presently came a bunch of young men from Lord Horatio Bohun’s once hopeful Popular Socialist Party. At first they argued with Rud, and then they crystallised about him. “But this is our stuff,” they said. “No,” said Rud, “it’s what your stuff ought to be. If it had more bones and less white meat.”

They were ripe for Rud. The spirit of their movement was changing, and they realised the need for a renewal of its vitality. They were growing up mentally, and the idea of being thoroughly disagreeable to Jews and long-haired communists no longer satisfied them as an objective in life. They no longer flaunted it in decorative purple shirts because the wearing of party uniforms was now rather heavily penalised, and that loss of colour also was reflected in their bearing.

The biggest of them was a man named Rogers, some sort of amateur boxing champion, with a streak of almost maternal protectiveness in him and a bias for a good clean vigorous fight. He did not mind very much what the fight was about, and he hated to think it might lead to bad feeling. Bodisham, another of them, seemed to be a born director; he would have been an able producer of films or plays and he played chess and was said to play bridge with a swift, uncanny realisation of how the game was going. Later on he was to justify his reputation and become a brilliant controller of meetings and party manoeuvres. And he was to end as one of the greatest of constructive statesmen. Rud perhaps had a quicker grasp of a general situation, but it was instinctive, not reasoned; Bodisham's turn for either massed details or isolated details was not to be equalled. And when it was a question of the scientific handling of a problem, Rud gave way to Bodisham perforce. Bodisham had come out of the London School of Economics; his first ambition had been to supplement the mental deficiencies of Bohun. When he had found that they were not to be supplemented, he had turned to Rud. He was the only one of the Group who wore spectacles; it seemed to accentuate his claim to be the intellectual influence in the party. Irwell came in from a stockbroker's office. He was living by sub-editing a financial paper, and when he talked of money the others listened with respect.

Another of this bunch was a man whom Rud had a haunting sense of having met before. His name was Colin Dreed. At first Rud could not think where they might have met, and then he identified him, though not with absolute certainty, as one of two purple shirts who had visited his rooms in his second year. Dreed perhaps had an equivalent doubt, and at times Rud would catch a slight perplexity in

his eyes, an expression of inadequate recognition. But nothing was ever said about it. Dreed was now nearly an adult and no longer that bright potential furniture-smasher of Rud's second year. But he was still essentially a partisan. He did whatever he was told, and he always did it with a faint suggestion of surprise at not having thought of so obvious a thing himself. But he never thought of it himself. One or two other purple shirts and ex-purple shirts came less regularly and talked less freely, but these were the nuclear personalities of what was destined to be Rud's primary organisation.

It was evident to him that all these young men were extremely dissatisfied with Bohun's leadership, and that they did not know clearly what to do about it. They felt misdirected and frustrated, and yet they still retained something of the good intentions that had brought them into his movement. Many years ago Lord Horatio had come into British politics with a considerable flourish, as a young man of wealth, position and influence, destined to play a brilliantly unorthodox role in public affairs. He had also evidently proposed to himself a wide conspicuousness as a splendid individual. He had narrowly escaped the House of Lords; his brother was the Duke of Wybrow, a defective so defective as to be unfitted for anything but procreation, in which indeed he had been eminently successful. So Horatio, cut off from any hope of a dukedom and a senatorial career by a growing zareba of nephews, had decided to be the British Julius Caesar; the Duce, the leader of a renascent patriotic Britain. Plus Byron without the limp. At first everything seemed to favour him. There had been only one insurmountable obstacle to his ambitions, but that was hidden from him, a complete lack of originality in his make-up. He was so completely destitute of ideas that he had no idea he had no ideas. He behaved therefore as though he had ideas, and for a time there were admirers to share his illusion.

He had been what is called a "spoilt" child, the favoured younger brother, and he was still essentially "Lord Horry". He had one of those faces whose features seem asymmetrical and confused when seen in front, but which have a certain resemblance to handsomeness in profile; he was pale, freckled and red-haired, with the rebellious forelock so frequent with romantic personalities, and his voice was arrogant and adenoidal. He carried himself with a certain solemn

haughtiness, breathing heavily, with a projected chest balanced stiffly against a projected behind. At first he had proposed himself as the rising hope of the Liberal Party; but in those days very little was left of the Liberal Party except rising hopes; many of them were already middle-aged, and they had shown very clearly that an addition to their numbers would be unwelcome. He was an imperious rather than a patient wooer, and so he had transferred his proffer of leadership almost convulsively to the Communist wing of the Labour Party.

Here again his reception was inadequate; the Labour Party did not seem to realise in the least what an accession this splendid and brilliant young aristocrat would be to its all too pedestrian front, and while he was still reluctantly realising this poverty of the leftish imagination, the successes of Mussolini and the Nazis gave a new turn to his ambitions. He became the sedulous student and ape of the Italian and German adventurers, not realising that there was a certain incongruity between their methods and formulae and the peculiar large scepticism of the Anglo-Saxon tradition, with its lamentable disposition towards facetiousness on serious occasions. What was more natural than for the rejected romantic leader of the Reds to invert himself in another swift transformation, become an anti-Red, and stretch out his strong right arm to protect the rich old ladies of the land from the Red Horror? They responded to his heroic gesture with copious subscriptions and profuse press support. Lord Thunderclap and all the Daily Clarion group of newspapers hailed him with enthusiasm. He was speedily in a position to provide headquarters, highly decorative purple shirts, brown belts and a sense of purpose to a perceptible following of unemployed young men. So far as the police would let him — and at first they let him quite a lot if only on account of his rank — he organised a series of demonstrations against the Reds, and he induced the Jews to advertise him by a campaign of annoyance and menace against these far too responsive, expressive, tactless and unendearing people.

So it was Lord Horatio after his abortive explorations of the alternative avenues to the Left of life, made his definitive entrance upon the political scene from the Right. No further transformation was possible for him for there was nothing more for him to copy. He was now past the first blush and beauty of youth, and he found

himself in a bright limelight of expectation. For a time — indeed until the dynastic trouble about the Duke of Windsor in 1937 superseded him — the first question the travelling Englishman was asked was "What is this new man, Lord Bohun, going to do?"

To which the more intelligent Englishman said: "He isn't much of a man and he isn't going to do anything."

"But that's what they said of Hitler."

"But Hitler was a national growth, and Bohun isn't even a growth..."

What the less intelligent Englishman said about him varied, and, anyhow, it does not matter now.

There he was upon the British scene in a nimbus of expectation. He took large halls and addressed meetings at which he regurgitated the masticated leading articles of the opposition press — and more particularly those of the Daily Clarion. He never made an original remark, he never coined a phrase of his own, not even by accident. He organised processions, which had a diminishingly irritating effect, in Jewish districts. Nothing ever ensued from the meetings and processions except a dribble of police court proceedings that died away Then he would pass out of the headlines for a space and then again would come another great and entirely vacuous meeting and another temporary obstruction in the streets.

Slowly, incredulously, the world realised that Lord Horatio was doing nothing, and did not know how to do anything. But he kept up his movement with all the dignity of Tristram Shandy's bull.

He was too vain and jealous to associate any original or vigorous intelligence with himself. Helpful people of initiative and ambition joined him, only to drop off disappointed. Instead he gathered about himself parasitic adherents of impeccable dullness, and he organised a wonderful "training school" of Popular Socialist speakers. They were given little books of pros and cons — remarkable pros and cons — and general advice. But it is hard to train men to meet the unexpected interruption. These trained and paid supporters did not so much speak at his meetings as imitate speaking. They learnt the sounds and gestures of demonstration and conviction, but nothing more. They brought down the emphatic fist upon the suffering palm in the vain hope of giving platitude the flavour of inspiration, and a

few determined interruptors could make a dreadful mess of them.

Sometimes Lord Horatio was out of the papers for weeks at a time, and then he would be back again, delivering the same old speech and demonstrating nothing by the same old demonstration. He was especially prevalent in spring. May and June seemed to excite him. It looked as though he was destined to become a seasonal feature in English life, like the Royal Academy or the Boat Race. Whenever there was a socialist or pacifist or communist gathering, or indeed any sort of mass meeting, the purple banners of the Popular Socialists with their golden tassels turned up in slowly dwindling force, always under almost excessive police protection, and always making a scuffling rather than triumphant exit from the field of debate.

The nimbler years slipped by, and even his loyalest adherents were forced to realise the progressive ravages of middle-age upon his former fatuous élan. His pogroms, such as they were, lost pep. The Daily Clarion ceased to feature him. It did not so much turn against him as fade away from him. It looked as though he and his Popular Socialists were going to sit down and fade out altogether. This sessile disposition on the part of their leader was a source of grave discontent to many of the youngsters who had got into belts and purple shirts and broken their adolescent voices shouting "We want Bo-oo-un" in those so much more promising early days. More and more he had to rely on the subsidised element in his following. More and more did the growing tension of the super-armament period emphasise his essential unreality, his amateurism.

At one or two of his recent meetings unidentified and disregarded voices had cried out "Get on with it!"

The world situation darkened. The sense of impending catastrophe increased. All over the world it was felt that the now-or-never moment was approaching. There was a sort of paralysis of grim expectation. In 1940 the chief employment of human leisure was anti-aircraft drill; a quarter of a million bombers were in commission, and everywhere men excavated. Political life changed its character. Political thought intensified. The taste for mild rioting was declining under a burthen of apprehensive responsibility. The newspapers bore anxiety on their foreheads.

The publics in the old democratic countries had had the educational spectacle of a decade of blustering dictatorship in Europe. They were capable now of immense scepticisms and increasingly resistent to the vague promises of merely personal leadership. “You are anti-Bolshevik and anti-Jew, you declare the government is corrupt and incompetent and so forth, and that’s all very acceptable,” said the mind of the common man. “But what are you going to make and what are you going to do if we put you in power?”

Beneath Bohun’s feet, at his headquarters, the germs of a “Ginger Group” stirred and grew. Out of deference to his ruddy forelock it called itself “Real Ginger”. It desired a programme, a creed. It desired explicitness. It took a definite form in Steenhold’s flat one evening when, after a dissertation of Rud’s, certain letters of power, namely, “B.M.G.” were pronounced. Which letters being interpreted signified no longer “Balfour must go” as they had originally done — but “Bohun”. And the man who said them was Rogers.

He hit his knees with his fist, he said the mystical letters and glared around him.

§ IV

The talks in the Steenhold flat had benefited considerably by the accession of Chiffan. He had returned rejoicing to London, having got a job as printer-editor of a small suburban newspaper, and he brought with him much precise information about the gathering unrest in the North. “They despise and hate the government more and more, but they don’t know how to set about changing it. The country is dying for some sort of lead, and so far all it is getting is a crowd of fresh professional leaders. Who never get anywhere. Who do not seem to be aiming anywhere. We are living in world of jaded politics. Poverty increases, prices rise, unemployment spreads, mines, factories stagnate, and nothing is done.”

At first Chiffan was wary and a little jealous of Rud’s Popular Socialist friends, and also, quite inadvertently, he developed an earnest and sympathetic friendship with a frizzy-haired, amber-eyed

young woman who had been regarding Rud very earnestly for some weeks. (They began by talking about Rud, his gifts, his character, his possibilities, and their devotion to him brought them closer and closer together, and at last so close that Rud became a benediction over their liaison. Chiffan made a sort of party sacrament of it, but for all that he was rather ashamed of himself. The relationship excited and occupied him for a week or so, and then it bored him, and when Rogers smote his knees and said "B.M.G.", he lit up and became a fount of shrewd suggestions.)

"B.M.G. Great!" said Chiffan.

"B.M.G. Great idea!" said Steenhold.

"I am not so sure of B.M.G.," said Rud, nursing his knee in his corner. "I agree that the Popular Socialist organisation has to be given a new start and a new programme — it's what I've been saying all along — and as things are, it is probably the only organisation in the country on which you could base a real efficiency campaign outside the party machines. There it is. It is the only quasi-voluntary organisation just now that could take liberties and not be suppressed at once. The left organisations now, if it came to a scrap, could be shut up in a week. It's the Popular Socialists for us or nothing. But why shouldn't one keep Bohun as the nominal head and work through him?"

"You don't know him yet," said Bodisham.

"I've got to see him. We join up to-morrow, Chiffan and I. I told you. When I see him I shall know better about him. What is there impossible about him?"

"Wait till you see him," said Irwell.

"He has personal contacts with the West End and the City." "Had," said Bodisham.

"The sort of immunity this Party has had — it certainly has had an immunity — may vanish if we chuck out Bohun."

"That depends on the opinion the authorities have of us," said Bodisham.

"There are three reasons why B.M.G.," said Chiffan, "so far as I understand the situation. Firstly he will never let any sort of initiative exist in the party except his own, so long as he remains the leader. And he has no initiative of his own. Secondly, the only way the

public can be made to realise that the Popular Socialist Party is now going to mean something else, is by not simply making Bohun go — but by chucking him. And thirdly we have to publicise Rud. That is the most important. We have to stage a first-class row, so that Rud's restatement of our ideas will be on the front page. We've got to put him there and keep him there. What do you think, Bodisham?"

"Couldn't be sounder," said Bodisham.

"I'd like to hear more suggestions," said Rud. "We've talked to-night. We've talked before. We can't always be talking. Now if this Real Ginger Group of yours is to go beyond talking it has to define itself much more plainly than it has done. We must know what we really mean to do and we must have some ideas of the roles we have to play. It is no good, for example, for Rogers to yield to his burning desire to go right out now and hit somebody, unless the Group is prepared for the situation that will arise out of the hitting. If I am any sort of leader —

"But you are!"

"Then the first thing is that nothing must be done until the word Go — Nothing. For ten days or so at least we have got to meet here and draw up almost detailed particulars of what we mean to do. We have to sound everybody concerned. Now we happen to be alone here to-night, but generally speaking this room is too public, Steenhold. On Saturdays it's half Bloomsbury and stage here, in the small hours. Anyone may come in at any time."

"Well, make a planning-room of my room upstairs," said Steenhold.

"And definitely plan," said Bodisham, and took off and wiped his spectacles with an air of preparing for work.

So they definitely planned and became an organised conspiracy. They elected themselves and were chary of introducing fresh blood. They drew up certain articles of association beginning: "The object of the R.G.G. (Real Ginger Group) is to resuscitate, revise, enlarge and invigorate the Popular Socialist movement and make it a Living Power in the Land." Their imaginative organisation of the group proceeded apace, and everybody weighed everybody's character and capabilities and limitations with the utmost solicitude. Chiffan ticked them off with semi-official titles. Rud was the Master Director or

“Chief” for short, Rogers was the Fighting Chief, Bodisham was the Organiser General or the Head Strategist, Irwell was the Financial Reorganiser, Dreed was the Chief of Propaganda and Education.

“Everything has to be stated,” said Rud.

“Of course! Of course!” said Dreed. “It’s all as plain as daylight.”

“Times change,” said Rud, “and nowadays they change very rapidly. Propaganda becomes more and more a primary thing. One reason why the majority everywhere is so indecisive is because it is becoming intelligent. It is mobile but sceptical. It won’t jump at a name or a nickname now. It wants — definition. Compared with ten years ago it is critical. It has to be given things straight and clear. But if you give it things straight and clear — it can take them and it will take them.” (“I do so agree,” said Bodisham. “I do so heartily agree.”) “The primary need in order to get and keep power is bright plain publicity. And more publicity. And then publicity. There never has been a time when ideas are as fluid as they are now. If only one can get publicity, if only one can get the ear of the crowd, anything could be put before it — anything — and given sufficient explicitness almost anything can be put over it. If you put over nonsense it will fall to pieces later, but there is no limit now to the changes of opinion that can be affected in the modern masses. Choose good slogans. Speak loud, speak wide, speak plain and the thing is done.”

(Approval from Bodisham, nodding his head so that his glasses flashed.)

“Just consider the fluctuation of the popular intelligence in Britain during the last few years. You had absolute changes in a year or so. Not changes of shade, mind you, but changes of colour. Black to white. There was that Peace Ballot business. When was it? In ‘36? You had ten or twelve million adults in Great Britain voting against any sort of war. You would have said that a majority of the British people and certainly all the left side of British life would never fight in any war again. And by ‘37 the whole country was boiling for a show-down with Italy about Abyssinia, and by the middle of ‘38 you got the feeling that the selfsame mass of people, the same crowd of individuals, was beginning to want a war with Germany! Really want a war. Getting dangerous to Germany! Spoiling for it. And now the

current slogan is ‘Settlement’. The government says settlement, but the people mean it. What will they mean next year if they are still being bored to hell, drilling and arming and paying taxes?

“In Germany too, how many Nazis were Liberals and Social Democrats ten years ago. Yet in ‘37 and ‘38 if you woke up a German in the night he said ‘Heil Hitler’ automatically, and felt it. Then they slacked on Hitler. How easily they slacked on him! How rapidly they developed resistances to the tension, the incessant tension, he made.

“Look at the way people have swung through Communism, Toryism, Liberalism — in vast blocks. In my father’s boyhood you were either a Liberal or a Conservative in England, and there you stuck, and in America you were a sturdy individualist Democrat or Republican from the cradle to the grave. But now the Voice does it — the pervading voice. And just now it’s come to a point when a Voice — putting it straight and clear. Straight and clear...”

“There speaks the Voice,” said Chiffan. “You make pictures in the mind, Rud. I see the mind of the world like Chaos — a whirling Chaos, and suddenly comes the Logos — the Word. In fact you, Rud.”

“You aren’t jeering by any chance?” asked Steenhold, always anxious to know exactly where he stood.

“Perhaps I am decorating a little. It’s my vice, Steenhold...Let us plan.”

“Yes,” said Bodisham. “Let us plan. Now just where do we begin operations? Where do we first confront the Boss with the unpleasant fact that the movement no longer considers itself properly led? And proposes to give him a push? And what exactly will it do when he splutters and hectors?”

So the conclave in Steenhold’s upper room began its deliberations, began to figure out the definite seizure of the party for Rud. It was necessarily highly imaginative work.

At times it was entirely indeterminate whether they were really making plans for definite action or merely indulging in a collective reverie, that might at any time evaporate back into nothingness — as ten thousand other conspiracies have done.

“We now know,” said Bodisham, summing up one night,

“practically everything we mean to do. We mean to insist upon a general meeting of the party and then we mean to challenge Bohun fairly and squarely. What we have to do now is to fix times and dates, determine numbers and places.”

“Wait!” said Chiffan.

“What for?”

“The Hour. The Moment. Rud’s instinct and the word Go.”

“Wait, but be ready,” said Rud. “Wait for the word. It will be like shooting a gun and killing a man. After that there is no turning back. I’ve seen the Boss once. H’m! I want to give him one more chance. I want to start with a speech on this mess the government is making about the American situation. Somehow I must make that speech.”

§ V

When Rud met the Popular Socialist Boss he hated him, he hated him immediately and without qualification. His intention of impressing him deeply, winning his confidence, betraying and supplanting him, was replaced by a vehement desire to destroy him, humuliatingly, completely and at once. Rud the political learner, at the mere sight of Lord Horatio, gave way to the more primitive Rud, Rud the vindictive destroyer.

He had expected to encounter a foolish figure, but he had not expected to encounter so exasperatingly vain and foolish a figure. He had thought he was bringing a considerable contribution to the Popular Socialist movement in the shape of his natural eloquence, rapid comprehension and gusty energy. He found Lord Horatio incapable of appreciating any gifts but his own.

Lord Horatio was seated before a great, ornamental, unbusiness-like desk with a large inkstand and impressive paper-weights and accessories. He was posed as an eighteenth-century Whig gentleman. But he was smoking a cigarette and there was an ash-tray of stubs and a selection of cigarette packages among the more monumental desk fittings. He was wearing a frogged purple velvet Tuxedo. His white shirt collar was open to reveal his neck picturesquely. To his left was a large table bearing a litter of pamphlets, press cuttings,

proofs, memorandum pads and even books, and looking over this barrier appeared the upper part of the face of a small, spectacled, woman stenographer, who had been taking down his Lordship's correspondence.

She rose to go at Rud's entry.

"No, no," said Lord Horatio, with a restraining gesture of an elegant hand, "we shan't be long."

He had given Rud the benefit of his profile, the ruddy forelock, the Corinthian nose, the rather underhung jaw. Now he half turned to face him. The expression of his rather too closely-set eyes was designed to convey hypnotic penetration.

"Well," he said with a certain condescension. "What do you want?"

He had made no suggestion that Rud should sit down. Rud had an impulse to seize a chair and plant himself, but there was no chair. His scowl intensified. He came up to the desk and stood over Bohun. He had the infuriating thought that he must look rather like an under-gardener applying for a situation.

"The Popular Socialist programme expresses very much what I feel," he said. "I'm prepared to throw in my lot with it."

"That means work."

"What else can it mean?"

"What can you do?"

"Speak."

"Have you been trained?"

"I've debated in the Union with a certain success."

"But in the real world? I said, have you been trained? Our speakers are trained men."

"If you mean that poor little list of pros and cons of yours..." For once Rud was at a loss for words.

"Do you fancy you have a platform pairsonality?" said Lord Horatio. "I wonder. How tall are you?"

There was a pause. If Lord Horatio had not been so occupied with his own "pairsonality", he might have remarked the extreme malignity of the face before him.

"I'm two inches taller than Napoleon," said Rud.

"Remarkable! But for platform work you require more than a

coincidence of that sort. You want a definite, commanding pairsonality. Even I have had to study and drill myself. You have to dominate. Frankly I think you're too short. But these are really questions for Commander Hoggin. He is in control of all the training work. You ought not to have come to me. Who sent you up? Rogers! Oh! Rogers...I've no doubt Commander Hoggin can see you, but the first and last thing in a party like ours is discipline and obedience."

He turned the wonderful hypnotic gaze of the leader full upon the new adherent, but it did not have much effect on him.

"But do you know who I am?" said Rud. "Do you know what I can do?"

"Hoggin must see to all that."

For a moment Rud was at a loss. He turned to go and then thought of something to say. "Why the hell don't you have chairs here for people to sit down?" he asked. "It's damned uncivil."

He went towards the door.

"One moment, my boy," he heard behind him. "Yes."

"The salute?"

Lord Horatio was standing up and looking very scandalised and stern and commanding. He had apparently not heard that impossible snarl about the chairs.

"How? Salute?"

Lord Horatio lifted his hand and Rud reciprocated. Lord Horatio dropped his hand and so did Rud. Honours were equal.

Then Rud slammed the door and found himself trembling and feeling sick.

Bohun stood for a time staring at the slammed door.

"We'll lick him into shape, Mrs. Crumb," he said. "We'll lick him into shape. Yes...By the by, did The Times print yesterday's letter? Who is it on The Times who makes all these needless difficulties about my letters? It gets worse and worse."

But his mind was on Rud.

"Who the devil was that, Mrs. Crumb? I've never seen him before."

"I'll get him documented, my lord. He joined up only last week."

"He's quite an untried man?"

"I'll get whatever dossier we have."

§ VI

Rud's second encounter with the Boss was if possible more exasperating than the first. Rud spent four days turning their first meeting over in his mind, and by that time he was ready with an ultimatum. He made it without consulting his associates. He had learnt that Lord Horatio was going to Liverpool for the week-end, and that there was to be a Birthday Meeting in the smaller Saltbag Hall there. The American trouble was growing acute, but the Popular Socialists seemed to be doing nothing about it. They were plainly wasting an immense opportunity. Rud found Dreed on duty at the Purple House and he had no difficulty in making his way up through the lower rooms to the sanctum on the second floor. He walked in without ceremony.

Lord Horatio was sitting at his desk. He had two documents before him. One was the final draft of his forthcoming Liverpool speech which Mrs. Crumb had just typed. The other was what she had been able to produce by way of a dossier for Rud. He was looking them over portentously and doing nothing about either of them. The dossier was the result of confidential enquiries by Captain Smike, whose duty it was to report upon the internal discipline of the party to the Boss. The last entry noted that Rud had not yet discussed the matter of training with Hoggin. In addition, Smike had some hearsay about Steenhold's flats — he had thought it wiser, he said, not to show himself there until he knew that something was really brewing — and his chief fact was that Rud sometimes talked very well and effectively. "No doubt that several of our older associates think well of him. He has ideas, plentiful if not sound. He has a certain force. But so far — just talk. The rest of that crowd is mostly pink carnations with a pansy border."

(So Smike. The Popular Socialists were always very loud and scornful about pansies — whatever pansies might be. "Carnation" seems to have been Smike's own original unaided term for a mitigated "Red".)

Lord Horatio had a way of rolling back his lips from his teeth and

playing imaginary tunes upon them with his finger nails, when engaged in stimulating thought. “Has ideas?” he said, and was tapping his teeth and regarding that draft speech of his schemingly, when Rud burst in.

“What the davil!” exclaimed his lordship. “What do you want? Where’s the salute?”

“That salute!” cried Rud. “Oh! How does it go?” Bohun fell into the trap again.

“Don’t you trouble about a chair,” said Rud. “Don’t you bother about a chair. I can say all I have to say walking about the room. But I must know before you leave London what we are going to do about the American trouble. Mexico? And the shooting in South Carolina. Particularly the shooting in South Carolina. It’s the grandest opportunity the party has ever had, of taking a line. Before the Communists get hold of it. Slap against the government and with all the natural instincts of the people behind us. What are we going to do?”

He stopped short and stared at Mrs. Crumb. She had flopped back in her chair quite audibly. Her eyebrows had risen a full two inches above the rims of her spectacles.

Lord Horatio was speechless for some seconds. One large freckled fist rested on Rud’s dossier. He looked rather like a public monument of a leonine character being desecrated by trippers. “You ask what the party is going to do?” he said at last.

“Well — evidently! Here’s exactly where we come in! Where the government couldn’t come in, even if it wanted to. We can put Washington, Wall Street and Westminster into the cart now and shake hands right across the Atlantic with the mass opinion in America. The situation is screaming for it.”

Lord Horatio held up a hand.

“Have you come here to make speeches Mr. — Mr. Whittle-low? I don’t rememba inviting you to do so.”

“I don’t want to make speeches here, but I want to make speeches for you in London. I can handle this situation. If you have to go to Liverpool, well, anyhow let me have the Hyde Park platform next Sunday. Let me take a line and get a press for the party. I’m ready to discuss it all with you.”

“No!” said Lord Horatio.

“Gods!” cried Rud, in a frenzy, wringing his hands. “But look at it!”

Lord Horatio was looking at Rud. This sort of thing, he thought, was what comes of what they called ideas. This youngster was going to be a nuisance in the party — probably even a menace. His effrontery was astonishing.

With an extremity of quiet scorn Lord Horatio demanded: “Are you the head of the Popular Socialist movement or am I?”

“Should I come to you like this if I was?” demanded Rud.

“I wonder if we want a man of your stamp in this movement at all,” considered Bohun, still very cold and calm. “Now let me tell you, my boy, that we know exactly what we are doing in this American affair — exactly.” He pointed his remarks with an extended finger. “We have our own sources of information and our definite policy. You can hardly expect me to confide in a neophyte like you, what and why and how and when. You’ve forgotten your place and you’ve got to learn discipline. You imagine we have no Party Discipline. A day may come when you will know better.”

Rud was about to speak, but Lord Horatio was standing up. “Now not a word more of this,” he said. “I tell you to go to Commander Hoggin for instructions and to keep your mouth shut until he tells you to open it.” He reflected for a moment and then laughed scornfully. “To think of it! You deal with the situation! You take the Hyde Park platform. You! If you come here again to annoy me with this sort of thing I’ll have you thrown out of the party. It’s only because you’re a raw beginner that I tolerate you now.”

“Oh foolery! Oh Stick in the Mud!” burst from Rud, a cry of agony.

Lord Horatio rapped the desk with a ruler he had seized. “You rat! You little rat! Salute, Sir, and get out. I’ll tell them how to deal with you.”

“Salute!” said Rud. “Me — salute!”, and then, grinning viciously, “How?”

It looked as though Bohun might lose his self-control, and he was a full five inches taller than Rud and generally much larger. Moreover that ruler might serve as a missile! If he thought of it.

Rud closed the door behind himself and stood quivering on the landing.

"Damn the idiot!" he said.

Lord Horatio stood very still at his desk, dilating and contracting his nostrils almost as though he was doing breathing exercises. Anger illuminated him — in the eyes of Mrs. Crumb.

"I was afraid," whispered Mrs. Crumb, all limp in her chair. "I was afraid — you might kill him."

"He just wants discipline," said Lord Horatio. "I'll break him in yet...I've dealt with tougher stuff than that...Have you ordered the car? Hotel? No. I'm staying with Lady Garbees."

§ VII

Rud went out of the Purple House in a preoccupied manner.

"O.K.?" asked Dreed as he came downstairs.

"No," said Rud curtly...

He felt he had made a mess of the whole situation. He ought to have consulted the B.M.G.s before this second encounter with Bohun. He did not want to go back to Steenhold's flat to make premature explanations to him or any of them, and still less did he want to return to his dismal little apartment. He felt he could never make a tolerable story about this paralysing quarrel. He would go for a walk. He would just walk. He would spend his anger in walking. It was a mild, clear afternoon and he wandered for miles, first west until the sunset got into his eyes, and then northward and round by Hendon and the Northern Heights. He sat for a long time in a tea-shop in Hounslow, brooding; he got a sausage-and-mashed in a little pub out towards Barnet. Afterwards he found a friendly wayside seat and sat on it for some time. Then as his feet were getting very tired and his small change low, he established himself in a belated confectioner's shop at Highgate over a glass of soda and milk, and when that establishment closed he went home, refreshed himself with a wash and repaired at last to Camborne Square.

Saturday night in Steenhold's flat was not one of the B.M.G. nights, and none of the Group was there. Instead there was an influx

of uncongenial spirits, interested in the worlds of dramatic art and poetry and literary journalism. Many of the people were quite unknown to Rud, and Steenhold was plainly giving politics a rest. “How goes it?” asked Steenhold.

“Rotten,” said Ruck “I’ll have a drink and sit a bit and then go to bed.”

He sat about ineffectively and he disliked the company very much. The talk splashed about his disregarded sulkiness, He disliked them more and more.

They were all so irrelevant, so frightfully irrelevant. The mind of youth is an errant mind and will not always conspire. It loathes concentration. It flits from novelty to novelty. It must be fed by events and challenges and held to its objective by conflict. It puts world affairs on a level with any one of the minor arts. That night Rud had the completest conviction that things had slipped out of his hands altogether. He did not talk and they betrayed no desire to hear him talk; he felt that they were convinced they had heard all he had to say, and were talking now about other things, about their damned little plays and pictures and novels and biology and genetics and time-space and any old thing of that sort, beyond his peculiar range. He was effaced. He drank several mugs of beer and smoked more cigarettes than were good for him, he tried to intervene in two discussions he knew nothing about, and finally went home stiff and footsore to bed.

II. — THE CAPTURED PLATFORM

§ I

He woke up on Sunday morning in a state of extreme irritation, or rather, he emerged by degrees from a dreaming exasperation to an aching discontent. He woke up and stared at his discoloured ceiling. A realisation of absolute ineffectiveness overwhelmed him.

"Defeat!" he whispered. "Defeat. Self defeat. Here's the Popular Socialist demonstration will be petering out as usual in Hyde Park as if nothing had happened; here's a plain situation before us that won't wait, that can't wait, and I'm doing nothing. My guns are spiked.

"What good am I?

"I might as well not exist."

The tension accumulated. It reached the breaking point. He exploded.

"Oh God!" he screamed.

He leapt out of bed as though some unseen beast in it had bitten him. He threw his bedclothes into the corner; he gashed his chin shaving; he kicked his shoes across the room, he quarrelled with his shabby suit of clothes and broke his only pair of braces. He made hay of his room in his search for a piece of string or a safety-pin to repair the damage. Instead of cooking his egg he beat it up raw in his milk and drank it like that with a trembling hand. He was too agitated to light his Primus and make tea.

He betook himself to Camborne Square.

He shouted Steenhold out of bed and stamped and bawled about the room. He was determined to act, and now, at any cost. It was not only Steenhold he bawled into action, but himself. "Now or never," he said. "The time has come to act. Now, when no one expects it, is our moment. I have waited — I told you the other night I was waiting. Well — the time is now."

Steenhold received his announcement in a state of stunned admiration. He had always felt the latent explosives in Rud's composition, and here at last, thank the gods, they were exploding!

"You mean get the boys together?"

“I mean get them together now.”

“Right, Chief.”

Steenhold went to the telephone and began dialling. “Funny!” he said. “Bodisham gave me this list of names three days ago. And I didn’t see what it was for. Really! Didn’t see what it was for...That you, Rogers?...Rogers! — The Hour has come.”

The group and its associates assembled bit by bit. A miscellany of odd cars parked outside in the Square. Rud was exalted, and they listened with close attention. He walked up and down, he sat and twisted himself about the back of his chair, reiterating his conviction of a crisis.

“They’ve shot men in South Carolina. They landed marines to co-operate with the state police. British marines shooting American strikers. Think of it! The affair can’t wait. Don’t you see how urgent it is and what it means to us?...

“I begged and prayed the Boss to take a line, and he put a flat veto on the whole thing...I must speak. There are things that must be said.

“How and where? I’ll tell you exactly...There’s that platform in Hyde Park with one or two trained droolers, drooling his old stuff...We go there. We take control.”

Bodisham thought for a while, grasped Rud’s idea and began to fill in particulars.

“We go there by twos and threes and gather round the platform,” said Bodisham. “Then when Rud thinks fit we put him on the platform. There’ll be some raw greenhorn in charge. If necessary Rogers and you other stalwarts can hustle him...

“Can we get reporters? I don’t mean news-hounds, I mean reporters.”

“I know a man or two,” said Irwell.

“Shorthand?”

“We could have a man for a verbatim report,” said Steenhold. “We ought to have a man for a verbatim report.”

“And after your speech?”

“I don’t know,” said Rud. “But get what I say reported. Get it reported. And now I’m going upstairs to be still — perfectly still — until it is time to go.”

He vanished.

“He’ll do it,” said Steenhold, not at all clear in his own mind what it was Rud would do.

The conspirators ate casually, wandering about the flat with mugs and chunks of bread and cheese. There was a lot of staring out of the window — as though the Future might be visible there already. After one o’clock they began to depart by twos and threes for Hyde Park.

§ II

The park was vastly crowded that afternoon, but over it hung a peculiar effect of inconsequence. It had less the quality of a popular forum than of an aimless promenade of useless people. It was a fermenting crowd, uneasy, and with no perceptible direction. There was something of the quality of one of those heavily clouded, brooding days on which there falls no single drop of rain. The processions had been swallowed up in a shapeless swarm of listeners and mockers and lookers-on. Over it all hummed a plane from which an officer was directing the movements of an unobtrusive but numerous police force by wireless. This plane and two little fleets of police vans were a recent and provocative innovation by the new Police Commissioner, but this afternoon it hummed above a stormless, quaking marsh of people. No need to move them on. They kept moving on.

The B.M.G.s converged. Rud made his way, silent but determined, among the platforms, towards his particular objective.

The air was full of voices; the nearer ones patchily audible, saying stereotyped things, the further ones a felt of raucous sounds. All the speakers seemed bored. Everybody seemed bored and dissatisfied. It was all politics and no reality. There was a big Labour Party demonstration, to show once again and for all time that no considerations of human welfare could shake for one moment the stern resolve of the established British trade union leaders to have no truck with Liberal politicians, men of science, men of ideas, Communists, Americans or anyone who might attempt to share the honours and emoluments that come at last to the implacably obstructive in political life. There was a dissentient Labour platform

concerning itself with defining the fine differences in organisation that justified its dissent. There was a Liberal platform trying to steal Labour votes by its insistence upon the trouble in the Ukraine and the Mysore prison scandal. There was a Free Indian group and a platform of miscellaneous people pinning their faith to the South Welsh prison scandals as a means of raising a useful indignation. General objectives had long since vanished in the intricacies of party strategy. At every Socialist and Liberal platform the common man was being warned and incited against every other Socialist or Liberal group — probably with justice. One gathering charged the government with responsibility for the recent outbreak of measles. The Ministry of Health had done or not done this, that and the other thing, and at another point the Ministry of Agriculture was being challenged very manfully about some intricate manurial technicality. Isolationist platforms clashed with demands for intervention in Spain, China, Siam, the West Indies and Lithuania. Amidst the confusion religion reared its head to reply to infidelity, and anti-vivisection called on all mankind to end the greatest horror in the world. Communists in alliance with Catholics, Communists of the Trotsky heresy, Pro-Mexican Communists, New Communists and True Blue Communists, beat upon the air and warned the common man against deleterious imitations. It was less of a forum than a fair with every platform trying to sell some monopoly of its own.

Overhead bumbled the plane, directing the unobtrusive movements of the police, mindful of nothing said provided that nothing was done. It was a very symbol of the invincible determination of the government and institutions of Britain to yield to nothing less than blasting operations in their obstruction to any conceivable world reconstruction. And not to argue about it. They did not need to divide and rule. They ruled a fissiparous Opposition. That pervasive, soft droning gave the exactest expression to the aimless, gentle firmness of the British constitution at home and to its incalculable persistence in vaguely Imperialist assertion abroad.

The recent happenings in South Carolina played a minor role in that crowd's confusion of thought and feeling. The press had tempered the facts of the American social war to the mentality of the British public, and the general ignorance of American geography in

England had prevented any realisation of the steady extension of the conflict from state to state. The loss of confidence in the remedial powers of Congress and the lapse of the whole South and Middle West first towards sporadic lawlessness and then towards an organised insurrectionary movement, had been masked by the fragmentary nature of the news and overshadowed by the de facto war in the Ukraine and the Balkans. No one had yet drawn a working analogy between the Transatlantic and the European situations.

The informal powers that worked through the forms of the British constitution, however, were from their own point of view more alert to the realities of the American situation; they had always had close associations, financial and social as well as political, with the reactionary Republicanism of Big Business, and they were in the closest sympathy with the methods of obstruction, non-co-operation and counter-attack that had defeated Franklin Roosevelt's well-meant but not always well-balanced efforts to adapt the traditions of private capitalism to the economic and social stresses of a new age. They shared the same disregard of the warnings of the times, the same uncompromising conservatism of heart. They both wanted to pull the community back to the happy eighties, and they were quite prepared for just as much repression of the uneasy masses, repression direct or indirect, legal or informal, and as unobtrusively violent, as possible.

Things were rather larger, more obvious and rougher on the American side, but the issues were essentially the same. The general public voted and demonstrated, but its voting seemed to lead to nothing. It felt that things were done behind its back and over its head but it could never understand clearly how. It never seemed able to get sound news out of its newspapers nor good faith out of its politicians. It resisted, it fumbled, it was becoming more and more suspicious and sceptical, but it was profoundly confused and ill-informed.

Rud's quick realisation that something profoundly significant was happening across the Atlantic, or at least something that could be presented as being profoundly significant, was well ahead of the popular intelligence, but not so much ahead of it as to be out of touch with its latent possibilities.

Spectators far outnumbered demonstrators in the park that

Sunday, and never had they found the flow of eloquence so trite. They drifted from platform to platform. For anything fresh they heard they might as well have been at Matins or Evensong. The Popular Socialist platform had as usual contrived to get itself within irritation length of the main Communist gathering. That was now its established place. It was within irritation length, but it had long since ceased to irritate. Its normal function in the past had been to provoke violence and be rescued by the police in a scrimmage which justified the arrest of what the authorities, for the obscurest reasons, regarded as undesirable characters. But now that worked no more.

The orthodox Communist bunch was not taking much notice of the little band of purple shirts that afternoon. From 1937 onward an almost genteel discretion had permeated the Communists. They had found long since that indignation and violence were far less effective against Lord Horatio's once- dreaded following than ridicule. They would kill his trained speakers by listening to them in a speudo-awestricken silence — in which they stumbled and fell — or they would disconcert them by sudden baffling interruptions. But this afternoon, because of the general vague dissatisfaction, even the sport of ragging the Popular Socialists was providing a poor draw.

Three or four dingy young Reds were attempting to get capital out of the absence of Lord Horatio at Liverpool.

"Where's Horry to-day? Taking a day off with his girl? Hi Jeams! Long Jeams there! Where's his Ludship?..."

Rud contemplated the scene.

"Well?" said Rogers.

"All our men are here?"

"Yes. And now?"

"We go on to the platform. Which way up?"

"Those trained speakers of Horry's are no good at all," said Irwell, leading the way round the crowd. "Sheer waste of money. Listen to that fool — a chick of three days old could heckle him down."

"I'll speak," said Rud.

"This way," said Bodisham.

A tall young man wearing one of the prohibited purple shirts (But one costume does not make an indictable uniform.) seemed to

recognise Rogers. He was acting as the day's usher of the ineffective Popular Socialist eloquence. Rud found himself hoisted to the platform by his henchmen. He elbowed his way towards the front of the platform.

"You're not going to speak?" said the tall man.

"I am going to speak."

"I've heard nothing about it from Hoggin."

"Change of plan at the last moment."

The tall young man turned to Rogers and asked in an audible aside: "Who is this fellow?"

"He's all right," said Rogers. "You hear him." "But what are you going to say, Mister?"

"You listen," said Rogers.

"When?"

"Right now," said Rud. "Don't you bother me." And he pushed his way to the forefront of the platform and stood glaring. The audience had been having a routine time with the trained "Bowlers" and they hailed a new face as a pleasant variation of the afternoon's proceedings. "Ullo Beethoven!" said a red-faced, frizzy-haired little man, giving a name that was not unhelpful to Rud on later occasions. "Ullo Bottle-imp! The Things old Bohun catches!"

Rud faced the interrupter with an outstretched hand. "Here Gollywog," he said, "listen to me."

"Gollywog" fitted. Shouting and pushing subsided. This might be worth listening to.

"Listen to me, brother Gollywog," said Rud intensely, "And thank God for those very big ears he's given you...No! Don't start talking till you've heard what I'm going to say to you. For if there's a platform worth listening to, today here, it's this platform I'm on. You don't know what this Popular Socialism means. You never have known. You're going to know now."

"We know right enough," said the Gollywog. "Anti-Red and all that balderdash! We've heard it a hundred times from your trained purple parrots."

"You've heard nothing. You've just bawled as you're bawling now. Listen, I tell you."

"Listen to him," said a bystander, and an expert in anti-Bohun

tactics said, “Freeze him out.”

But there was no freezing out for Rud. “Good!” he said. “Now don’t make mistakes about me, and don’t make mistakes about what’s on the platform this afternoon. You think I’m one of Lord Horry’s paid men. I’m not. You think I’m some sort of Anti — . I’d rather be dead.”

“Horry said—” began the Gollywog.

“I don’t care a rap what Horry said. When Horry talks to you, you answer Horry. But when I talk to you, you listen to me.”

“But how about—”

Rud raised his voice. “Listen!” he shouted.

“Look around and listen. Here’s a score of platforms and scores of speakers and what are they talking? Anti! They want to stop somebody doing something, but what they want to do themselves, Heaven only knows. They don’t know. Turn out somebody from government, from direction, from ownership, and put them in, and they’ll show you. Open your mouth and shut your eyes. That’s the dream of all these gentry who are shouting themselves hoarse on these platforms. They want to set you against something. They’re all against something. Up against something. But what they’re Torah! Wait and see. They want you to clean up the men in possession, and then they will be the men in possession. And a hell of a lot of difference that will make to you! Like your blessed old Labour Party which started out for Socialism in Our Time and ended in the House of Lords. You’ve had that game played on you often enough. Do you want it played again?”

“Well, wot’s yer difference? You and your Lord ‘Orry!” “Who’s talking of Bohun here?” said Rud.

“Well! What are you?”

“The common-sense of politics; that’s what we are!” “And what’s that?”

“Unity! Not twenty platforms all shouting away through the afternoon to advertise twenty different gangs of political pushers and Welshers, but One Common Platform to ask for the things that every man needs. In spite of that noisy buzzer overhead. Augh! Shut up — up there! We want one great popular movement for social justice wherever the English language is spoken. That’s what Popular

Socialism means. Certain things are as plain as a pikestaff."

"But Lordorry —

"Oh damn Lord Horry!" said Rud.

"Here!" said the tall man. "You can't say that!" "Shut up," said Rogers with his beefy shoulder against the chest of the tall man. "Let our man speak!"

"But this is his Lordship's platform. Confound it, man!"

"Does it look like that to you? Go on, Rud, never mind this."

"But, boys!" said the tall man, appealing to his stalwarts. He made a move towards Rud, but he found Rogers, Steen-hold, Bodisham, Figgis and Redwood intervening. Swift and venomous undertones passed. "Let the man speak!" said the crowd. "Leave him alone Jeams. Damn Lord Horry! Right you are. Go on, Mister. What next?"

"Well, I get sick of all this raking-up of what Mr. Gladstone said fifty years ago, or what Lord Horatio said last spring. Damn this allusive style, anyhow. Do let us talk, for once, about what all of us want and all of us want said now. NOW!"

"You hear?" said Rogers, still leaning slightly against the tall man.

"Don't you know us?" said Irwell. "You've seen us times enough. Can't you trust your own men?"

"But this new chap!"

"Let him go on," said Steenhold at the tall man's ear.

It seemed the easiest thing to do. The crowd about the platform was taking notice and growing. "Let him speak," they shouted. "The little chap with the big face!"

"He's got to talk our stuff, mind you," said the tall man, yielding. "I'm in charge here."

"Obviously," said Rogers, still fending him off. "Go ahead, Rud."

And Rud went ahead.

"We've been christened Popular Socialists, and I suppose every movement must wear a label, but if I'd been in at the christening, boys, I should have said the Party of the Common Man, the Party of the Common Man, here in England, away in America, in Africa, Australia, China and all over the earth."

"But Horry is a nationalist out and out!"

Rud did not even answer that comment. He waved it away as if it

was a fly.

"The Party of the Common Man — everywhere. The Plain Needs of Common-sense! First he wants peace and security, and what stands in the way of that? All these damned localised governments that divide us up and set us fighting — set us fighting against our own brothers. Think of it — English guns being lent to the Old Gang in America to shoot English- speaking strikers! We want one government everywhere, not all these governments, one common-sense government for our common needs."

"But that's Internationalism! That's Communism!"

"Augh! Never mind those words!" said Rud. "Do we want one law in the world or many, you crowd of cannon-fodder, you bombees of to-morrow? Isn't it plain as a pikestaff that one government means peace, and many war? Well, let's get that one government. It's these old national governments out of the past that stand in the way and won't let go. Do we want them? Not a bit. But they want themselves! That's one thing we want. One government keeping the peace everywhere.

"And next we want Plenty. Everyone who knows says we can have Plenty to- day for everyone. All the men of science say that. Why don't we have it? Because a few people won't let us get at the earth and get at the work. They've appropriated it, they squat in on it just as they squat in on Power, and they have to be expropriated — expropriated by the sheer common-sense of everyone. They string a net of private property about our futile paralysed world, and they trick us with this false money that they keep on changing and increasing and diminishing so that you don't know from day to day what a shilling is worth to you. They pretend they can't help it. Do you believe that? Do you believe they can't help the boat rocking? Do you believe they can't help supplies being locked up? Do you think they don't know what they're doing? They want Power over us. And do you think you don't know that? In your bones you do. They'd rather see the world wrecked than give up their Power game. And we are the pawns!

"It doesn't take ten years of study, you don't need to go to the University, to find out that this is a damned good world gone wrong. Gone wrong, because it is being monkeyed with by people too

greedy and mean and wrong-hearted altogether to do the right thing by our common world. They've grabbed it and they won't let go. They might lose their importance; they might lose their pull. Everywhere it's the same. Beware of the men you make your masters. Beware of the men you trust.

"We've only got to be clear-headed to sing the same song and play the same game all over the world, we common men. We don't want Power monkeyed with, we don't want Work and Goods monkeyed with, and, above all, we don't want Money monkeyed with. That's the elements of politics everywhere. When these things go wrong, we go wrong. That's how people begin to feel it and see it in America. That's how we feel it here — when we look into our minds. That's what common people feel everywhere. That's what our brother whites— 'poor whites' they call them — in those towns in South Carolina are fighting for now. Fighting our battle. Why aren't we with them? We speak the same language; we share the same blood. Who has been keeping us apart from them for a hundred and fifty-odd years? Ruling classes. Politicians. Dear old flag and all that stuff!

"Our school-books never tell us a word about the American common man; and his school-books never tell him a word about us. They flutter flags between us to keep us apart. Split us up for a century and a half because of some fuss about taxing tea. And what are our wonderful Labour and Socialist and Communist leaders doing to change that? What are they doing to unite us English-speaking common men together and give us our plain desire? Are they doing anything more for us than the land barons and the factory barons and the money barons? Not a bit of it! These labour leaders of to-day mean to be lords to-morrow. They are just a fresh set of dishonest trustees. Look at these twenty-odd platforms here! Mark their needless contradictions! Their marvellous differences on minor issues. 'Manoeuvres!' 'Intrigue.' 'Personalities.' 'Monkeying.' 'Don't trust him, trust me!' All of them at it. Mark how we common men are distracted, how we are set hunting first after one red herring and then after another, for the want of simple, honest interpretation..."

And so on.

The tall young man listened in a state of great perplexity. He was determined to intervene and shut Rud up when it was necessary, but how was he to determine when it was necessary? This was queer stuff, but it was holding a gathering crowd. It was stealing more and more people from the communist accumulation. Perhaps "Simple, honest interpretation" meant Lord Horatio. Perhaps this stranger would come round to that presently. And always if the man went too far, afterwards it would be possible to say a few words, chairman fashion, and put things right again. If these unaccountably menacing fellows on each side of him had the sense to let him, that is.

Rud unfolded the Chiffan-Whitlow scheme of world salvation in broad outline as the two of them had hammered it out in their early discussions; its insistence on a common Anglo-American basis at any cost — at the cost of "every institution, crown, constitution or what-not, however old, however venerable," that might stand in the way; its bold proposal to reorganise and control the whole financial apparatus of the world; its assurances of the hope in science of a universal plenty; its wide development of Huey Long's almost fanatic educationalism. "This is what we are for!" he bawled. "Anti-be damned! We are Pro-Pax-Mundi. We stand for Mankind to-day and I tell you Mankind will stand for us to-morrow."

He became aware of a change in the situation, a lull to the left of him. The communist platform had gone out of business, and a little knot of their supporters were pushing their way towards him. He welcomed this intervention. He threw them phrases and sentences to provoke an argument.

"This is what Communism stands for?" he answered them. "Stealing your thunder? Nonsense! Your old Marx prophesied the Revolution, but he never saw an inch beyond it. He knew nothing of modern scientific production. He never distinguished between financial and material property. He knew nothing about money, not a thing. Why don't you put him back in Highgate Cemetery and forget about him?...Well, put a great, lying, flattering monument over him if you must, and then forget about him."

The ascendancy of the platform was an immense advantage to Rud. They had made a mistake in coming down from their own platform to get near him. They had to shout from below at him. He

caught up what they had to say at the point when it gave him the most effective reply. He delivered every sentence as though he scored a point against them.

The two officials and the little American-born countess they had with them in the observation plane, noted the increasing accumulation of hearers about the Popular Socialist nucleus, but they heard nothing of the immense subversiveness of Rud's restatement of Popular Socialist aims. A gentle infiltration of the growing assemblage by the forces of law and order was set going. The observers overhead heard nothing of the steady attack upon the American policy of the government, linked with a systematic depreciation of Lord Horatio, upon which Rud was launched.

"Leaders are nothing," said Rud. "Parties are nothing. Governments are nothing. Look at the thing with plain common-sense. Nothing matters but the common man."

"But!" spluttered the tall young man. "Steady on!" and "Wait a moment."

"Shut it," said Rogers.

"We Popular Socialists stand for plain common-sense, put in order and kept clear," said Rud. "Just as Science does. We stand for that and nothing else. We want no dogmas and we want no dictators and leaders...No. We here are the party of the common man — common one and all. Our only theory is to keep our eyes open — your eyes open. And to hell with all this strategy and party discipline and leadership and the climbers and the stand-patters who obstruct and divide us." (Futile cry of "But how about Horry?") "What I am telling you is simply and plainly what you think. It's your natural stuff. I'm no leader setting myself up here to know better than anyone, what ought to be done and what his to be done to bring it about. I don't ask you to open your mouths and shut your eyes and see what I will give you. I'm not leader number six hundred and fifty-nine, to start a new divergence. I'm just a common man who knows how to put it, and nothing more. I'm your megaphone. That's the Popular Socialist way...

"Yes, that's democracy. That's what you Communists have forgotten. You tied yourselves up in a rigid organisation. You put on Stalin and Stalinism like a gag and a straightjacket." (Uproar.)

“Lord Horry? Popular Socialism made him, I tell you, and Popular Socialism can break him. He’s our figure-head to-day — but only in the service of common sense. As long as he cares to serve common sense. And work hard for us. Our reality is in you all, all of you. All of us. He’ll be the first to admit it. Fall in with us. Simplify! Unite! Commonsense! Now do you get me? Now do you understand where we are?”

He paused for his applause and he got it. The tall young man appeared to be saying something, but nobody heard what he had to say.

Rud had fired his shot. He stood without an idea in the world about the next step to take. Left to himself he would probably have got down from the platform and gone home.

“We can march back on this,” said Bodisham suddenly at his elbow.

“March back?”

“To headquarters. While we’re on the crest.”

“But where?”

“To headquarters!” cried Steenhold, gleefully grasping the idea. “Oh, great!”

“Headquarters!” said Dreed. “Of course!”

“Your meeting’s a thundering success,” said Irwell to the tall young man. “Now’s the time for the triumphant exit...No. They don’t want to hear you.”

Rud had got it in an instant. He was already gesticulating to the crowd. He had made Bodisham’s inspiration his own. Mastery returned to him. Of course! Now was the moment to strike. He shouted:

“Now that I’ve explained things to you, perhaps you’ll fall in with us. March with us to the Purple House! We don’t mind a red banner or two. Facts, not flags, is our motto. Put down your names with us. Never mind your party or your party wire-pullers. Never mind your leaders! Or ours for that matter. Come and give a cheer for the common-sense man, the good old common man, who’s the real backbone of all of us. (Let’s get a move on, Bodisham.)”

The re-formation of the homeward march was a thing of routine. Rud saw two manifest newspaper men making notes. “The shorthand

reporter?" he said to Chiffan.

"O.K." said Chiffan. "I looked after that."

"Where's the band? Where's the other banners?" said Bodisham, taking complete control of the tall young man.

"There's one banner about the Jews," said Rud in a quick undertone over his shoulder. "Furl that. We don't want that stuff to-day — anyhow. Furl all the banners. We'll alter those rotten inscriptions later."

"Hustle round, boys," said the tall young man to his posse of stalwarts. "Keep together," said Rogers, close behind him...

And how was the official observer in the air above to know that the Popular Socialist procession that was reforming itself and making a departure so much more spirited and substantial than its arrival, was really a captured procession? All that he remarked was that it seemed to be exercising a suctorial influence on the accumulating crowd round about it. It seemed to be taking three-quarters of the communist crowd with it. That was odd. There might be some sort of trouble presently. So the radio got to work and the police drifted towards the purple banners, to see that law and order kept pace with the swelling crowd.

Rud was borne along with his particular adherents in the midst of the column. He carried himself now in a grave and preoccupied manner. At moments he felt like a mighty commander with everything obedient to his hand; at moments he felt like a cork in a stream. But his prevailing feeling was confidence and exaltation. Everything was going easily. There had been no fighting. The crowd was driving along in a state of indeterminate appreciation. Someone had started shouts of "Common-sense Party. Not too soon." And "Commonsense at last." One voice even cried "Good old Horry," and another tried the old slogan: "We want Bohun." But no one took that up. The Popular Socialist band, of two kettledrums and half a dozen fifes, sustained the Popular Socialist marching tune:

"One, two; one, two, three, Horry Bohun is the man for me."

But a number of men and lads and one or two young women were pressing in on the central group to get a nearer view of Rud. "What's your name, mate? What's his name, Mister?"

"Rud," said Rogers.

“Rud what?”

“Just Rud.”

“Rud. Rud — His name’s Just Rud.”

Presently they were repeating:

“One, two; one, two, three, Just Rud is the man for me.”

Rud exchanged rapid opinions with Steenhold and Chiffan. “Nothing more doing to-day,” he said. “A few words from the window?”

“And then take possession,” said Bodisham.

“If the crowds hang about?”

“It’s going to rain,” said Chiffan. “And the police will keep them moving. All that about enrolling them will evaporate quietly. You’ll see. The pubs open at seven and the cinemas will be opening now.”

“One, two; one, two, three, Just Rud is the man for me.”

§ III

Rud went to one of the three drawing-room windows, opened it wide, and stood out on the little pseudo-balcony. His sense of fitness required a few words from a balcony; it was his conception of the part. The band had gone round to the garage behind headquarters, and the few policemen were having no trouble in keeping the crowd moving. The idea of enrolling a great crowd of adherents had evaporated insensibly, even as Chiffan had said. There was a cessation of movement at Rud’s appearance, the police stood still for a moment and someone cried “Speech!” Rud held up a reassuring hand to the Inspector.

“Nothing more doing to-night. Thank you for joining us, and thank you for giving us a hearing. If I may suggest something; Three cheers for Unity. And three cheers for the Common Man everywhere, and may God help him to his own...Thank you. That’s all.”

He moved back from the window.

“Not a cheer for yourself?” said Irwell. “You can’t be modest as a leader. You had your chance then. Shall I tell ‘em?”

Rud half-turned towards him and said something Chiffan was

never to forget.

"I am the common man," said Rud.

§ IV

Rud turned about and surveyed the room before him...

The Purple House, it should be explained, consisted at that time of a couple of big stucco houses with porticos, in that region of large, white, later-Georgian mansions between Kensington and Paddington. Bohun had wanted to paint it an imperial purple, but the police and the ground landlord had opposed this idea, and so it had the normal dingy pallor of its neighbours, relieved only by purple front doors, now greatly faded, and with tarnished gilt knockers, purple painted ironwork and black blinds. Behind these two houses were garages, one mysteriously locked up, and the other devoted to a store of banners and the band's stuff, with a bagatelle table, table-tennis, a cask of beer and other reliefs to the tedium of the adherents "on duty."

One house, number seventeen, was reserved for his lordship, and its door yielded only to his latch-key, but an internal communication had been made with number sixteen, by an opening between the halls. Number sixteen was the common entrance and there was a "guard room" on the ground floor in which three or four bored young louts were usually "on duty" — rather vaguely conceived. The most definite obligation was a smart salute for the Boss or Commander Hoggin or Major Smike.

The first floor was a common assembly-room reaching from front to back of the house, capacious and furnished only with plain chairs and a few occasional tables. Along one side of the back portion was a trestle-board bearing a tea-urn, jugs of lemonade and cakes.

Most of the stalwarts had produced virile pipes and lusty great pouches. They were standing about in knots and talking uneasily. Much of the afternoon's happenings bad been incomprehensible to them. In a way it had seemed "all right" and in some ways it had seemed "odd." They were puzzled about the apparition of Rud. They wanted to know more about him. Was he going to be the new

favourite?

The tall young man “in control” was one of Lord Horatio’s later discoveries. It was among his Lordship’s little weaknesses to turn against his men who began to “know too much” and to introduce inexperience and incapacity as “new blood.” So that all his officials were insecure of their positions and there was a long and growing list of men he had turned down, ready to turn up again. Bodisham had been establishing touch with these scattered rejects for some time. He was forming them into what he called his “reserve.” And the Purple House itself was smouldering with uncertainties, resentments and suppressions from roof to cellar.

The tall young man was slowly developing a sense of grievance, as the exhilaration of an unusually effective meeting passed off.

“But what’s your trouble?” asked Rogers.

“What I complain of is the want of system — of orders. I ought to have O.K.’d him before he said a single word. And Hoggin ought to have O.K.’d him.”

“Well, didn’t he speak well? Didn’t he get them?” “But did Lord Horatio send him?”

Bodisham hesitated and then had an inspiration. He glanced at Rud as if to make sure he was not being overheard, and then he leant forward to the tall young man and spoke in a confidential undertone. “I’m not sure,” he said. “I don’t know — exactly — myself — what relationship there is between them.”

The tall young man contemplated Rud. “You mean?” “I don’t know enough to mean anything precisely.” “But you feel?”

Bodisham reflected. He said nothing but he nodded repeatedly in a confidential and deeply significant manner. “But didn’t you come with him?”

“Steenhold brought him. And Steenhold’s been in the organisation, off and on, for years.”

“I see. All the same I think I was let down about that fellow. On that platform I was made to look — well — a bit of a fool. I didn’t know — what. I was taken by surprise. I might have given him a clip on the jaw and spun him off the platform.”

“You might,” agreed Rogers. “But you have too much sense. The Boss knew that.’

“Yees. What I can report to Lord Horatio I don’t know. It’s hard to phrase it. I don’t want to be hard on one of his friends.”

“Better to understate than overstate,” counselled Bodisham. “You might claim you discovered him.”

The tall young man seemed to be recovering his self-confidence. “In some ways anyhow, that chap is an acquisition, you know. He can spout...”

Rud surveyed the groups in the room for a while, as if he consented to their existence, but meant to keep his eye on them. Then, with his hands behind his back in the manner of a pensive Napoleon and saying nothing to anyone, he left Irwell and Chiffan at the window, walked past them all and upstairs to the room of his two interviews with Lord Horatio.

It was, as he expected, empty. He walked round the great ornamental unbusinesslike desk, seated himself in the much too ample chair of his lordship, took up the large paper-knife and tapped thoughtfully with it as he meditated. This time he remembered most of his speech. He thought it was an extremely good speech for the occasion.

“I am the common man,” he repeated. It had leapt to his mind out of nothingness. It could be made a cardinal slogan.

Another part of his mind was busy upon quite a different line. He was wondering whether he would keep on Mrs. Crumb.

If she could see him now! She’d topple over backwards. He was still smiling quietly at that thought when the door opened and Chiffan and Bodisham came in.

“Well,” said Bodisham. “Here you are in the lion’s den.”

“For a time,” said Rud. “Won’t you sit down? There’s a chair behind that table where his stenographer sits, and if you shove that pile of pamphlets off the table — they’re no beastly good anyhow — The Heart and Soul of a Great Leader — Lord! Shove ’em off and there’ll be the table to sit on too. So’s he can find them. Don’t lift them off. Let ’em drop in a heap there. The next move’s with him.”

“I suppose he’s booming and gargling that old speech of his about now,” said Bodisham. “Or maybe a little later. He’ll get his first idea of what has happened here to-morrow when he opens the morning paper.”

“And then the great purple car will turn its mighty lanterns Londonward,” said Chiffan. “We’re well started. There’s no going back. I suppose that tall fellow, what’s his name?”

“Frobisher.”

“Won’t have telephoned?”

“That’s all right,” said Bodisham. “He wouldn’t know what to telephone, but anyhow Rogers and Steenhold are in charge of him. He’s amenable. He has a grievance. He’s half with us in a perplexed way already. They’re all stale here. Things have got into a kind of routine through sheer lack of inventiveness. Here we are and here in effect we have to stick. There’s no way on, but onward — as you said last week. We can do practically what we like here — until Horry comes back. Then the fat will be in the fire. Then the real flare-up will begin. Presently when most of the boys have gone home and there’s nobody downstairs but Longshanks and the guards on duty, you and I will look the number seventeen over. It has its points of interest. It’s queer —

“In fact,” said Bodisham, after a short interval, “it’s very queer...”

And then: “Very.”

He seemed to be thinking very hard about Rud. He seemed to have some sort of uncertainty about Rud.

“There are some locked doors,” said Bodisham. I happen — . As a matter of fact I was put in control here for a time last September and I have duplicate keys. I had them made. I always had my doubts of Horry. About that under-hung jaw of his and those eyes too close together. I made some discoveries, and then I waxed the key. I don’t think you quite realise yet what he is. You will see. You think he’s an Ass. He’s an Ass all right, but he’s something more than that...In some ways he’s a dangerous Ass...We’ve got to be prepared. We’ve got to know the animal we hunt or we may have some nasty surprises. I want you to see.”

§ V

Rud saw.

The arcana of the basement and cellars of number seventeen and

the flavour of the locked-up garage behind altered the whole complexion of the day for Rud. He had been living triumphantly in a storm of rhetoric all day, living gloriously by the spoken word. “I am the Common Man.” He had been carried by the torrent of his own speech into the very seat of the boss. In the absence of the boss. Now here was something more fundamental than rhetoric.

Bodisham had closed and relocked the double doors behind them. The second one was covered with green baize for the evident purpose of making it sound- proof. The main cellar was a sort of arsenal, with a newly-made bolthole and dug-out below it. There were only about a dozen rifles in the arms collection, but there were three or four guns with short barrels, a considerable miscellany of pistols, life-preservers, assorted ammunition, a trunk of knuckle-dusters, truncheons, and a number of other murderous-looking implements whose use was not immediately apparent.

“Golly!” said Chiffan. “It’s a bit out of a gangster film. It’s a schoolboy’s dream. At least — It would have been a dream twenty-five years ago. But now — Of course, weapons!

“Weapons. Human beings have always loved weapons. Hardly a man alive who does not love to caress a good rifle...”

He became exceedingly thoughtful for a space.

“This isn’t all,” said Bodisham. “There’s more yet.”

He unlocked a door at the back of the cellar and led the way along a paved passage to a group of and cramped apartments, three on either side. They had heavy doors with bolts and locks on the outer face, and each had a small, square peep-hole in the upper panel.

“They look like prison cells,” said Rud.

“They are prison cells,” said Bodisham.

“But — Illegal?”

“Party discipline. Kidnapping. How should I know?” “He’s never used them?”

“We don’t know. One’s rather dirty and has — you know — the prison smell.

“It reminds one a little of the sort of thing they had under the chateaux of the Loire,” said Bodisham. “Or in High Germany. Picturesque, romantic old High Germanee.”

“The Boss must be crazy.”

“Crazy!” said Chiffan. “But is he? No! It’s the new style in politics. He’s merely been studying continental models. This sort of thing is current political reality in a dozen countries to-day. Dilettantism — no! Grim reality. It’s spreading. Why shouldn’t it spread here? He’s just been doing his best to keep up with the times. Why, in Belgium, for example, there must be dozens and dozens of little caches like this now. And in Czechoslovakia. Not to speak of France and Germany.”

“I don’t believe,” said Rud.

“I’m not telling you things,” said Bodisham. “I’m showing you things.”

“Kidnapping. Secret arrests,” said Chiffan. “There’s enough here to show you what the Boss has been dreaming about. Dreaming, do I say? Contemplating. Continental methods. He’s just a sample. It’s all coming back. It never really left off. The little ways of man with man. I suppose they kept stuff like this in the Tower. The Bourbons did it. Lettres de cachet. Napoleon kidnapped and murdered people. The Brown House. The Lipari Islands. Quiet corners of the Ogpu life. Under the British raj, in some of the prince’s palaces. Under any dispensation. Here it is — right under our noses.”

“But to find this in England!” said Rud.

“Why not in England?” asked Chiffan.

“Or America,” said Bodisham. “Much more probable in America.”

“In a great free country like America!” protested Rud.

“Running the world by votes and resolutions and processions and demonstrations is all very well when things are easy and the other side won’t fight,” said Chiffan. “But there’s always been jails and there’s always been cellars and drains under the social fabric, and when houses are pulled down or tumble down, the cellars come up to the surface and the drains stink...Esoteric politics, Rud. You’ve got to face it, my boy.”

§ VI

The B.M.G.s decided to hold a council of war in Steenhold’s upper

flat. The Purple House was arranged for autocracy and not for conferences. There was no accommodation for camping or sleeping in the place, but Rogers, Dreed and Redwood remained to sit up all night and keep an eye on Frobisher. The rest were to go home or sleep at Steenhold's flat. Roll-call was to be at number sixteen in the morning before nine.

At Camborne Square they sat late and discussed the situation from every point of view. Could they consider they had captured or were going to capture the Purple House? What was the constitution of the Popular Socialist Party?

"What is our status there?" said Irwell. "Are we technically burglars? Or trespassers?"

"We are the Popular Socialist Party, I take it — at home," said Rud. "The Purple House isn't a private house. It's Headquarters."

"But it's Bohun's house."

"He's a trustee — at most he's a trustee. He must have divested himself in a sort of way."

"I doubt if it will be matter for litigation," said Bodisham.

"We shall have to fight for that house, whatever the legal position may be," said Chiffan. "And we'd better get ready for that. Knives and kicking and that sort of thing. You may bet on that. Pity we haven't Rogers here. He's our Big Fist, our Organiser of Violence."

"I agree with you," said Bodisham. "I haven't the slightest doubt there will have to be some rough work before we get hold of the Purple House. If we do get hold of it. Horry may not make much show in the way of brains, but you can bet he will show fight — and a pretty nasty sort of fight..."

Presently Rud found his mind wandering from the finer points of strategy.

"None of the Party have ever disappeared?" he asked suddenly.

"Not that I ever heard of," said Rogers.

"You've never heard anything, Colin?"

"Never heard a thing," said Dreed. "All this secret prison business is as new to me as it is to you."

"Nor you, Irwell?"

"Nothing."

(Intimidation. Rough handling?...Torture? In London. In 1941!

What sort of game were we playing?)

They were looking at him.

"It's just a crazy schoolboy's imagination," said Rud. "I'm — curious. Go on with what you were saying. We are going to demand a general meeting of the Party — and force a sort of want of confidence motion. Good."

"I have some ideas about that meeting," said Steenhold. "There was an Enquiry in Washington — but never mind that now. But I have an idea. A lovely idea."

§ VII

Rud slept but little that night. He got out of bed. He got back into bed. He got out again. He went to the window and stared at a blank wall opposite. He tried to assemble the situation in his mind. He murmured and then recited fragments of his speech so far as he could recall it. He was trying not to think of something — a silly impossible idea, but at the same time very ugly and disagreeable. Kidnapping was in it and thumbscrews, and a vast large freckled face with the eyes too close together, that continually approached, full of menace, full of cruel deliberation. He would not think of it. He would not. If he had to keep repeating his speech all night...

His insomnia exasperated him more and more. Never had the contrast between his immense ambitions and his flimsy body, his lurid imagination and his unbalanced nerves, distressed him so acutely. He wanted to sleep and there was no sleep; no sleep, no repose, no position in which he could keep still. And always these foolish imaginations kept creeping nearer to him and nearer. They wouldn't keep away. He was awake and yet he was dreaming.

He cursed. For a moment he got quite out of hand. He made a feeble slog at nothing with his fist. "No, you don't," he shouted. "No, you don't. Don't come another step nearer me!" His sudden movement upset a row of books on his chest of drawers and the end one fell with a resounding smack on the floor. He was moved to fling all the other books after it. He realised the need for self-control in time.

He addressed himself as though he was a public meeting. “Get to sleep,” he said. “You’ve things to do to-morrow. Tremendous things! To-morrow is the day. You’ve got to sleep. Got to sleep. Hold yourself together, man. You’ve got to go through with it now. Hold yourself together. Have you got it, Rud my boy? Hold yourself together. Rap. Rap. Rap on the wall. A drowsy, angry voice was calling to him through the thin partition. “Hold yourself together, man. Yes, and shut up. Go to sleep, yes, or by God! I’ll come another step nearer you and no mistake. I’ll come and I’ll bloody-well kill you.”

It was astonishing, but there was a sort of relief in hearing this thick, wholesomely angry, human voice.

“Talking in my sleep,” called Rud, after a moment’s reflection. “Nightmare.” (No good ending a political career prematurely in a fight with an unknown fellow-lodger.)

“Rot! Shut up!”

“Good night,” said Rud, sitting on his bed.

“Goo’ ni’, you howling monkey, and don’t let me hear you again. See?”

Silence.

The unknown fellow-lodger was presently audible as a formidable snore. Rud sat quite still, thinking and gnawing his knuckles.

He forgot the snore for a moment. His hand gripped upon imaginary weapons of defence.

“Don’t think of it,” he whispered very low. It was nothing. But he had better sit up. If he went to sleep he’d certainly have a real nightmare and shout again. There ought to be some sort of drug to tranquillise a brain too fatigued to quiet down of its own accord. Perhaps if he jotted down a few notes...

“There ought to be a doctor in the Party,” thought Rud. “Someone to stand by me. I wish we had some chap...Carstall for example.”

III. — RUD BECOMES A PUBLIC CHARACTER

§ I

Lord Horatio too had not slept well that night, although he had occupied Lady Garbees' pet visitors' bedroom.

He was in a state of unusual discontent with himself. He was asking himself whether he had not missed his way in life altogether.

Bonina (Lady Garbees) had almost said as much. "I hated this evening. Never have I felt before how uncongenial this English atmosphere can be to all we are and all we care for. On that platform, standing up before that dismal crowd of C 3 clerks and errand boys, I pitied you. I pitied myself. You may be English through and through, but all the same, you are alien here. You would be alien in any of these dismal democratic countries. You are — arbitrary, my dear. You are like one of those great Florentine princes. You are a born grandee. I don't say that to flatter you. I don't flatter you. You know it's the truth as well as I do."

"Ye-e-s," he said, wanting more of it. "For some time I have been feeling — out of touch."

"We American aristocrats feel the same thing." (She was American born.)

"It is the mean, puritanical, English tradition. Always — politics without a shred of dignity. Over there in spite of everything — it clings to us still. New England has always been just England and a little more so, but we down in the south went back to the sun and to power over our fellow- creatures. In England political life always has been squalid. How Shakespeare felt that! How his contempt breaks out against the many-headed monster and its 'stinking greasy caps! 'Musty superfluity.' That was his name for democracy. I was reading Coriolanus yesterday. Shakespeare would have been with you up to the hilt, the dagger's hilt...

"English people are naturally common in grain...Lucy and I when we went to Biskra — A sort of splendour about the Arabs. Nature's noblemen. You could meet the hall porter on equal terms. This

English temperament! It is like the mild, mild, old and mild climate. Never really hot, never really cold. Sunshine like genteel compliments and rain like sentimental tears. It's all one with the soft, mawkish scenery. Trimmed trees; polite fields; snug little cottages, hawthorns and primroses. Snug's the word. No mountains, no snows, no stupendous gorges, no guts in it, Horry, no guts!"

Bonina's purpose may have been to console him for the particular flatness of the great Birthday Meeting in the smaller Saltbag Hall, but her words carried further than that. It was breaking in upon his proud, reluctant intelligence that for — how long was it now? — fifteen years he had been wasting his great gifts and all the potentialities of his vitality upon a community incapable of appreciation, a facetious population, a population capable of nothing but an oafish stare or a derisive grin, too stupid even to bow before wrath and scorn. All that could be done had been done to make these dull mechanic souls walk with a prouder step behind a natural leader. He had sold them purple shirts at 40 per cent below cost. He had drilled them, had them lectured to, sought speakers who could be trained to inspire them. He had been to Germany, he had been to Italy, again and again, to study leadership, to mark the methods of evoking the generous youth and strength and imagination of those nobler peoples. You can make ordinary Germans and Italians out of the streets crow like cocks, strut like peacocks and salute like gladiators about to die. "Serried ranks" are where they are most at home. But these English! They love to be out of step. At some expense he had hired clever literary fellows to write him a song book, and clever musical fellows to adapt notoriously successful tunes to the purposes of the movement. Think of the gusto with which a German crowd would have let out that Birthday Hymn:

"England awake, salute the Happy Morn On which our Movement and our Boss were born."

You would have expected that to stir these urban clowns and open their eyes to what they might be. And then again:

"Onward Bohun's soldiers, marching as to War, With the Jews and Bolsheviks scampering before."

It was a trumpet-call! But for all the result it got it might have been a bray.

He had given those boys a gymnasium, he had given them a recreation-room, he had sold them balls, badges, rackets, tents, camping outfits, knuckle- dusters and sheath-knives at half cost or less...

And they could not even keep in tune! You might think they were ashamed of the song.

He had made his speech, his usual speech, to a scanty audience, too thick- headed to realise that now he was no longer making that speech with his former pleading, winning conviction, but in a spirit of contemptuous irony.

The subtle change in his intonation had been completely lost upon them...

After he had left Bonina in the small hours he had slept for a time and then grown wakeful again. His mind passed through a series of alternations between uneasy dreaming and dreamy wakefulness, in which the one continuing idea was his complete failure to grip the popular imagination or realise himself in these political activities upon which he had launched himself so hopefully and so rashly.

It had been going on for fifteen years. Fifteen years of leadership — with practically nobody falling in behind. His friends laughed at him. A lot of young fools in the West End were making a joke of the Popular Socialist salute. They did it to him in fashionable restaurants where politics should have a rest; they did it at race meetings in enclosures and places where he did not want it done, where he was ready to waive it and be just a gentleman among gentlemen. Things had come to that. A joke. And this was his forty-fifth birthday.

He was bored. He had to admit to himself that he was bored by the whole Popular Socialist movement. Bonina had been very near the truth of the business in their long and penetrating talk, very near indeed. That woman had fire in her imagination. She had a way of illuminating reality with strangely coloured lights. She had cruelty in her nature and she was not ashamed. She liked things to hurt. She wanted to hurt and be hurt. She bit. She had left her mark. She was all for lovers biting — hard. She wanted an intensity in life that ordinary everyday living did not give.

How wise she was! Everyone had queer impulses, she insisted, but the common sort, the “Tag,” as Coriolanus put it, suppressed

them. The essence of aristocracy was the ruthless refusal to suppress oneself. How had she put it? She wanted to wring life. That put exactly what he had always wanted to do. Once or twice he had wrung life a bit; when they expelled him from Eton and during his cadet days, when the chaps chased and hazed him for tying up young Darlington. After that he had been almost criminally subservient to the mild appearances of an essentially middle-class society. He had sinned against his own rich nature. Could there be anything better in the whole of being than having one's grip on a weakly, resisting, overpowered, living creature, and doing one's will, exhausting the grossest fantasy, upon that panting life? All the noble carnivores exist for that, and are they not the lords of creation?

He found himself wide awake in a sadistic reverie. He had a pleasing idea of going back to Bonina and strangling her...

One never knew. She might object and make a row and bring in the servants. She was capable of the greatest inconsistency. Her talk was wilder than her spirit. Perhaps she had just been posing at him. After all — she was American.

He dozed and then woke into the problem of getting away from Popular Socialism. In any other country in the world it would have given him ample scope for terrorism, physical intimidation, lurid events. As it was, except for one little bit of discipline — And there even he had been weak.

He had feared blackmail.

"Ruthlessness," he muttered. "Strange lusts...Quivering flesh...The Tiger is an aristocrat...Nietzsche...Strength...Bleating multitude...Bleating fools...All of them out of tune."

He sank down again into oblivion.

§ II

He slept until nine in the morning and then touched the bell for the valet, who brought him tea and the newspapers, whisked away his purple dinner-jacket and black velvet knee-breeches and departed.

The great carnivore stretched and yawned and stretched again.

New days have a way of beginning afresh, with a clean page, so to

speak. He had forgotten most of his nocturnal imaginations and he opened the first paper according to habit to see what space had been given to his Birthday Festival. He was struck at once by the headline: "Popular Socialism still a Living Force. Remarkable Speech."

What had he said?

"But?" he murmured.

And then in a terrible voice: "My God! what's this?"

The valet answered his furious bell-ringing. He found Lord Horatio sitting up in his black-and-purple-edged pyjamas on the bedside. Even the valet appreciated a sort of frightful handsomeness about him. He was in what valets call "a great state." "Get me every morning paper you can," he said. "Tell my chauffeur to be at the door by half-past nine. Where are my clothes? Have you run my bath? I have to act, and act at once."

"Very good, sir," said the valet.

A note was scribbled to Bonina. "These accursed politics! How wise you are! But this time I have a chance to hit someone and hit him hard. You were splendid. Glorious memories."

The great purple car stormed Londonward. Had people by the roadside cared to look, they might have seen Lord Horatio sitting still and terrible inside, hatless, arms folded, head slightly bent forward, occasionally tapping his teeth in earnest thought, sometimes smiling darkly. But fewer cared to look than Lord Horatio imagined. They were wrapped up in their own mean little affairs.

There had been sufficient in the papers for him to realise the nature of Rud's coup. He despised Rud immeasurably, he feared him about as much, and he hated him desirously. Rud, dressing irritably in his meagre little Bloomsbury bedroom, had completely reciprocal feelings. He despised Lord Horatio without stint, he quivered with fear at the thought of him, and he craved to defeat, overwhelm and humiliate him to the utmost. The two of them were coming together now at an average speed of forty-odd miles per hour.

§ III

From the moment when Lord Horatio pulled up outside the Purple

House he realised that there was a change in the atmosphere of the place. There were guards in the guardroom of number sixteen and two in the doorway, but instead of saluting smartly, they stared at him in a besotted manner and saluted belatedly. He decided to go into number seventeen. As he fumbled with his latch-key, Commander Hoggin came swiftly along the pavement and entered the house on his heels. “All sorts of things have happened,” said Hoggin. “It’s — it’s a mutiny.”

“Where’s Smike?” asked the Boss.

“He’s in number sixteen. He’ll come if he can.”

Lord Horatio led the way to a ground-floor parlour. “Tell me everything. I’ve seen the papers. How did that fellow get loose?”

“I couldn’t prevent it. I —

“How did it happen? Never mind ‘I.’ How did that little beast jump our platform? How did he get the press he did?”

“There’s a gang. It’s an organised mutiny, m’lord. Smike reported on that Camborne Square flat, didn’t he? His business to do so. He’s the Intelligence Officer, not me. That rich American fellow is in it, Steenhold, and Rogers, that big fellow, who runs Boy Scout boxing clubs in Pimlico and Whitechapel, and there’s Bodisham — I never trusted Bodisham — I told you — and a lot of them. Some new men. Some men who’ve come back. Ci-devants. They’re all over number sixteen, waiting for you.”

“Have they been in here?”

“How could they? It’s kept locked.”

“Good. What about Frobisher?”

“Wavering about. I always said that chap was too tall to keep stiff. The way he let them hustle him on his own platform —

“What did you do?”

“What could I do? I control speakers. I don’t control the boys. And he was in command. You put him in command.”

Bohun scowled at the faint note of grievance in Hoggin’s tone. “Wait here for a moment,” he said. “I shall go right in there and — handle them.”

He went up to his bedroom. There he brushed his hair and stood for a time in front of a cheval glass, assembling his personality to the full. His reflection was satisfactory. He felt stimulated. He liked his

tall, sinister presence rising to an occasion.

"Yes, my boy, I'll show you how to handle things," he said to an imaginary Rud, and with the habitual rectitude of a born commander of men, he went downstairs again, rejoined Hoggin and led the way into number sixteen. He walked through the door of communication and up to his study, past the first- floor room in which, as he was acutely aware, Rud, Bodisham and the others awaited him. "Get me Smike," he said to Hoggin.

He found Mrs. Crumb standing over a young man who was picking up copies of The Heart and Soul of a Great Leader from a tumbled heap upon the floor and piling them back on the table. He vanished at a gesture.

"Well?" said Bohun. "Has anything happened?"

"I don't know what's happening downstairs, but—"

"Yes?"

"That dreadful little Whittlelow man suddenly came in just now — took no more notice of me than a dog — and" (her voice fell to an awe- stricken whisper) "went and sat down in your chair. Just sat down."

"Did you say anything to him?"

"I said you might not be pleased to see him there. I said it quietly. Like that. I said, 'Lord Horatio —

"And what did he say?"

"He turned and made a most unpleasant face at me. He is ugly. But he hadn't a word to say for himself. Not a word, and presently he got up and walked out of the room. I don't think he likes me very much."

Smike came in with Hoggin as his lordship seated himself. "Tell me all about it," he said, leaning back, terrible but calm.

"They're just behind," said Smike, with a backward gesture of his head.

Rud appeared in the doorway, his face white and tense, with Rogers and Bodisham at either shoulder. Behind came Steenhold in a state of ecstatic enjoyment, and Chiffan, almost luminously pale with happy excitement. Dreed followed helpfully.

Hoggin and Smike placed themselves like ministers in attendance on Bohun's right.

“To what do I owe this intrusion?” said Lord Horatio, drumming impatiently on his desk.

“We want to discuss the policy of the Party — particularly in relation to America,” said Rud.

“Especially in relation to America,” echoed Chiffan.

Mrs. Crumb looked enquiringly at her employer. “I shall want a full note of all this,” he said, and she sat down in her usual place. “And now?” said his lordship.

Rud stood contemplating the desk. Then carefully and deliberately he pushed aside an inkstand, a large memorandum pad, a book or two and two tall candle-lamps, placed himself sideways to the Boss, hoisted and squatted himself firmly on the place he had made for himself. From this position he proceeded to explain. “You see, Boss, we hate to say it, but we think that either your grasp of the world situation is feeble or you aren’t acting — forgive my frankness — in perfect good faith.”

“Do you mind not sitting on my desk?” said Lord Horatio.

“You don’t provide chairs, you see,” said Rud, looking down at him with quiet hatred and not offering to budge.

“Still—”

He considered the difficulty in a generous spirit. “Dreed, there, would you mind going downstairs and making one or two of those youngsters bring up some chairs? Then we can all sit decently and have a proper confabulation. For confabulate, my lord, we must. As I was saying, we feel our party has enormous possibilities. And they are not being realised. Are you prepared to discuss that with us?”

His lordship thought swiftly. No good starting a fight here. The odds were six to three. And this was not the place for it. Cold contempt and deliberation were indicated.

“And what is this discussion to be about?” he said.

“The country wants a lead. We are giving the country no lead.”

“The country is inert.”

“The country is as quiet as unlit gunpowder.”

“You have my lead there.” Lord Horatio gestured to his piled pamphlet. “There you have my Mein Kampf.”

“Mein Kampf was full of ideas — definite ideas. It told the Germans exactly what to do. That stuff is just — personal tootling. It

tells nobody anything to do. We want a lead as well as a leader. We want a clear statement of ideas. We want a meeting of the Party to clear up our aims."

Rud paused. Bohun under great provocation remained calm and quiet.

"You want dasapline," he said with quiet intensity. "You want to get these Bloomsbury plus Whitechapel ideas of yours together and then — wash them all out. That, my boy, is what you want."

"At a meeting?"

"At a meeting? Certainly."

"A show-down?"

"A clean-up. We will have a Dasapline meeting. I agree. Certainly I agree. The Party wants gingering up. You are right about that, anyhow. Maybe it needs a purge, a drastic purge. A conference, a confrontation, and no outside interference. Just among ourselves. That little Canton Hall round the corner here is big enough. A nice quiet little place. A ticket meeting — and no gloves on. No gloves on, mind you."

"You'll fix a date?"

"As soon as you like. What do you think of next week, Hoggin?"

"Sooner the better," said Smike.

Dreed and his chairs and helpers arrived belatedly in the doorway.

"We shan't want these chairs now," said Rud, getting off the desk. "We've done our business for the moment. There will have to be a small organising committee, of course."

"Smike," said Bohun. "Hoggin."

"Bodisham," said Rud.

"You?"

"Neither you nor me, Boss."

His lordship considered. "Perhaps best not. No...Dasapline," he said, and some pleasant thoughts seemed to cross his mind. "No reporters. Just ourselves. Smike, Hoggin, Bodisham."

Somebody said: "Frobisher."

"Why not?" said Rud.

"Four is enough," said Bohun, and added a touch that was almost in the Coriolanus vein. "And now perhaps you will allow me to — ah — ventilate my room. You have made a note of all this, Mrs.

Crumb? You will let this Mr. Whittlelow and Mr. Bodisham and the other recalcitrant gentlemen have copies?...Enough."

He made a gesture of masterful dismissal for which Rud had no immediate repartee. He regarded Rud with an expression of serene malignity. He had no doubt now that the situation had been handled. Now he would show them. And as for that white tadpole dressed up as a man...!

Before Rud could devise any effective counter, Steenhold had taken him by the arm. "That's all settled," said Steenhold, and led him from the room.

§ IV

"It's a queer thing," said Mr. Montague Abrahams, the manager of Keen and Battle, who did most of the printing for the Popular Socialist Party in those days; "I have had three distinct orders for tickets for this Strictly Private Meeting of the Party, all on the Party paper and all signed by names I know. There's that Mr. Frobisher, who's conducted their meetings before. I suppose he's all O.K. He wants three hundred tickets sent to Headquarters at number sixteen. Perfectly in order. Yes. In addition we get a private order from Lord Horatio himself for a hundred to be sent to him 'Personal' at number seventeen. Good. But then here comes an order from Mr. Bodisham who was in charge last year, and he wants a hundred and fifty to go to this address in Camborne Square. Now that hall won't hold much more than four hundred people. I suppose it's all right so far as we are concerned, but — It's funny. I've had an idea of O.K.-ing all these orders with Headquarters. And yet I've got a sort of feeling that maybe I would be butting in—"

"The money's all right?" said Mrs. Abrahams.

"Well, the only point there might be a doubt about is about that Camborne Square part of the order. But they've paid that already. Mr. Bodisham called. I saw him. Quiet-looking young gentleman. Round-shouldered —

"I wouldn't interfere," said Mrs. Abrahams after reflection. "There's wheels within wheels."

“You keep your fingers out of the wheels, Monty,” said Mrs. Abrahams.

Mr. Abrahams went on with his supper. “This political printing is very interesting work,” he said.

“Interested is all very well,” said Mrs. Abrahams, “but don’t get excited about it.”

Mr. Abrahams said no more until his supper was done. Then he said, almost as though he soliloquised:

“Maybe I’ll just go round and have a look at Canton Hall on the night. Maybe they’ll overflow a bit.”

§ V

There was little excitement outside the Canton Hall when the hour of the meeting arrived. It was a private meeting of the Party and there were no police precautions in evidence. Men and youths arrived by twos and threes and were swallowed up by the portals. But presently there were shouts within.

Mr. Abrahams could not distinguish anything of the shouting. It grew louder and then there was laughter and more laughter — a jeering sort of laughter.

He made a move towards the door and then restrained himself and turned away.

Whistling pensively, Mr. Abrahams strolled to the corner of the road which ran towards the corner house. He glanced about him furtively. He was unobserved. Very quickly he produced a red ticket from his breast pocket, a ticket he had over-printed, he looked at it for a moment with his head appreciatively on one side, shifted it conveniently to his outer pocket, slapped it, and then, with an entire change of bearing, marched back to the Hall, presented his illicit credential, and pushed his way into a room already completely packed.

“Quite at the back,” he whispered, as if to an absent Mrs. Abrahams. “Quite at the back.”

He remained an unobtrusive but appreciative spectator of all that followed. He tried to make a rough computation of the number of

people present. It astonished him that there was still room to breathe. He reckoned up about four hundred, four hundred-odd. But he had printed — what had he printed? — five hundred and fifty. And one.

"They can't have come. If they were turned away I should have seen them outside."

The four men appointed to organise the secret meeting had behaved very much in the manner of seconds preparing for a duel. Very plainly it was a duel. It was to be held, they had agreed, with an absolute minimum of notification. All the tickets were to be stamped Private and Confidential. The outside public was to know nothing about it. Both sides had insisted that there was absolutely no need for police, no need for any sort of publicity at all. "It is just a little matter among ourselves." That had been accepted with what was afterwards recognised as suspicious alacrity by both sides.

After that there had been some cautious diplomacy about the agenda. Neither side was prepared to name a chairman. "We want a sort of non- interventionist," said Bodisham. "We want our principals to have the amplest play."

The organisers pitched at last upon Frobisher.

It was Lord Horatio's desire that Rud should open with his case. And he didn't want to hear Rud open his case. It would certainly bore him, he said, and he might get indignant and interrupt. He wanted to give Rud fair play. Rud could have all the rope he needed to hang himself. Rud could have the meeting to himself for his charges against the leadership, and at the psychological moment Lord Horatio would come in, come forward and state his own position. "Practically, what Rud will say will be on the lines of the Hyde Park speech?" Hoggin assumed.

"Practically," said Bodisham ambiguously.

It was not in the philosophy of either Bohun or Hoggin that Rud — or indeed anyone — could make an entirely different speech — several different speeches. For the Bohunites, one's speech was one's speech like one's height or one's complexion.

"There is a verbatim report?"

"Mrs. Crumb has been given a copy."

"You want Rud to fire off his ammunition first and then, you want Lord Horatio to come in and jump on him?" said Bodisham, shaking

his head.

“We give him the opening,” said Hoggin.

“Any right of reply?”

“Do you think that will be needed?”

“I suppose we must agree to that,” said Bodisham with an air of reluctance. “I don’t like it. He will have to start from cold. No. It’s not fair...”

So that what Mr. Abrahams came in for first, when he wriggled into the back of the Canton Hall, was Rud’s opening address. And if Rud had started from cold, he had taken a remarkably short time to develop a high temperature. He was indulging in a tirade against Lord Horatio, a torrent or abuse and insult that would have made Milton’s controversial style seem propitiatory and Tertullian a gentleman. “And there wasn’t to be a reporter present,” whispered Mr. Abrahams to himself, appreciatively, counting three men within range who were more or less overtly making notes. “Oh! This is jam.”

And the things Whitlow kept saying! Abrahams could hardly believe his ears.

He was not only saying them. He was getting away with them. He was provoking angry shouts and abusive cries, but he was getting support and more support.

“Hear what I’ve got to say,” shouted Rud. “Hear what I’ve got to say.”

Uproar.

“This is a private meeting of the Party and if you don’t agree with me — say it afterwards. But hear my case.”

The majority was for him. No doubt of it. Abrahams’ arithmetic was swift and sound.

If that other hundred try to get in, he resolved, I quit. What was he saying?

“I tell you we’ve had this — this Guy making us ridiculous long enough. I tell you he’s not leading. I tell you he’s standing in our way. He’s selling us to Bankers and rich Americans. He’s setting us against the trade unionists and Communists who have a case — a poor case, but they have a case. He’s doing nothing for the Socialist cause, while our navy, our navy, the navy this country pays for,

bombards American workers' homes...He's making mischief for us with the Jews.

"What's the sense of quarrelling with Jews?"

Abrahams applauded internally.

"Do they do any harm here? Do people mind them? But that's the game they played in Germany and so here — where everything is different — where never in the whole of history has there been such a thing as a pogrom — we have to do likewise! Just to split the workers...

"Come to think of it: — he looks half a Jew himself, a ginger-white Jew, the worst sort...

"I've got no quarrel with a Jew as such — Who has here? — but these anti-Jews and these pro-Jews are poison, It's a stale old quarrel from the Middle Ages. Who wants that rotten quarrel in our new world? To hell with all this Jew-consciousness, either way! I tell you it's a new world we're living in — and we want to get on with it and get it in order. Who wants to play Jews against Gentiles, Catholics against Protestants, Socialists against Individualists, Sunnites against Shiites now? It's all old stuff. It's dead stuff. It's Yesterday-ism. Politics from Petticoat Lane. What I say about these Jews is, Smash up the Ghetto and let them run. We want New Against old — and this leader who has been pretending to lead us is so old, so stale; he's sort of antiquarian. He's a curio. He's a collector...I could tell you things...But never mind that.

("Is he ready, Bodisham?" — a swift aside.

"He's quite ready.")

"I said he looks half a Jew. I apologise to the Jews. Anyhow, he's selling you old clothes, boys. Do you want to be dressed up in second-hand Dago tights? Do you want to strut about with your chests and your behinds stuck out, doing comic gladiator salutes? You Englishmen? Salute. Hand out. Can I leave the room please? Eh?...We who are about to die salute you, Horatio!...Bah! We want the reality of our own sort. Look here! Here's the sort of animal he wants to make of you!"

And forthwith a masked figure mounted the steps at the back of the platform and marched forward, with a sort of staccato goose-step, giving the Popular Socialist salute. It halted, still saluting. It turned

this way and that. It opened a large mouth and drummed thoughtfully at its pasteboard teeth.

It was a turn that one of the Sunday evening music-hall group at Steenhold's flat had improvised, and which Steenhold had insisted upon making a feature of this debate. The mask was a cleverly simplified caricature of Bohun's visage and the ginger wig and forelock might have been the Boss's natural hair. The apparition took the meeting's breath away and then, after a silence, the crowd broke into a confusion of booing, applause and protests. But the protests were in a minority, and the noise died down to listen as Rud proceeded, after the manner of a showman:

"That's the model Bohun gave us...Yes — you can shout shame! but that's shame...

"No, don't howl now. You'll have your turn to say things."

Somebody in the front of the hall had to be suppressed. But the very crowding of the hall helped to keep the peace. They were too jammed together there for anything but pushing, face-thrusting and elbow fighting. No one could swing for a kick or a punch.

"Look at him, I say. Do you see how tight he is behind, boys? See his rump? Ain't it a behind? It beats his chest, don't it? Look how it sticks out! Why?"

Various suggestions were made amidst raucous laughter.

"I'll tell you," Rud went on. "He's got his tail there, mates. Hidden in his pants. It's a monkey. That's what it is. A nice furry-tailed Capuchin monkey. It's a performing monkey on old Mussolini's organ, and it only dances to foreign tunes. Popular Socialist he calls himself — patriot and all that — and not a home-grown idea from start to finish! Can't we do better than that? On our own? I ask you...

"Walk up and down the platform, Horry-boy. There you are, the very picture of him. Salute, please. That's the hero of the society Judys. That's the darling of dear old Lady Ragbag. And our spirited, pro-Nazi, Lady Garbees, who spends her whole life trying not to speak with a nasty native American accent. And old Lady Twinkletoes. And all the rest of them. Eh? Give me a good rough Red every time, if it comes to that. Not that I hold with that Moscow stuff for a moment. That's stale, too. But dammit, if they're muddle-

headed, they're real. This — this isn't politics." (Angry Voice: "No, it isn't politics." Replies and a slight struggle to suppress the angry voice.) "It's private theatricals."

"Yus!" said the angry voice, and something happened to it; it went under for good.

Something was happening at the back of the platform. "What!" said Bodisham. "Already? Right. Here—" to the effigy— "you just stand back for a moment."

The masker was pushed into a corner and out of sight behind the group of B.M.G.s.

Rud wound up his speech.

"Well, I've made most of my case! Here's Lord Horatio himself, the great original, ten minutes before his time. But I've said enough, Mr. Chairman. I think I've said enough. Now let us hear what Lord Horatio has to say for himself once more."

"Those other tickets," checked Mr. Abrahams. "A hundred more of them. And I'm as flat as a pancake already now!"

He tried to edge towards the door, but unavailingly.

Frobisher was gesticulating with his long limbs for the platform crowd to clear the way from behind. And then Mr. Abrahams perceived Hoggin and Smike opening a path for the advance of Lord Horatio.

It was always his way to advance upon a meeting slowly, portentously. In spite of the congestion of the platform he did so now. He arrived amidst an unusually thin applause at the front, raised his arm in a dignified salute and stood silently radiating his personality upon the audience. Beside him, and a little behind him, was Frobisher. By contrast with these two tall figures Rud looked gnome-like, lacking in dignity, inferior. Yet also he looked much more alive and malignant. A lull in the shouting ensued. Expectation stilled the crowd. Then on the right the masquerader reappeared, advanced sublimely and struck an attitude exactly parallel with Lord Horatio's.

There was not much laughter. It was funny in a derisive way. It was not, however, hilariously funny. It produced guffaws rather than merriment, and everyone was alert for the next incident, which was the realisation of this mocking presence by Bohun himself.

He turned and saw his parody.

He should have featured outraged dignity, but he was too astonished. Sublimity vanished. “You mean to make out I’m like that!” he cried, and then, advancing with upraised fist, “You silly Ape, you!”

Then he paused for a moment and cried to Hoggin: “Bring our men in now!” he cried.

“I knew it,” whispered Mr. Abrahams. “A hundred of ‘em!” For a crucial moment his face was jammed against the broad, back of the man in front of him. When he got a clear view of the platform again Bohun was grappling with Rogers, who had intervened between him and his pseudo-double; the masker and one or two others of the platform crowd had been pushed right over the edge and on to the front rows of the audience; and the chairman, who had become as long-limbed it seemed as a gibbon, had produced a bell which he was not so much ringing as using as an impartial mace upon the heads about him. A wedge of toughs had appeared from the back of the platform in response to Bohun’s cry. One extremely ugly face stood out among these newcomers, and Abrahams seemed to recognise it as the face of the Terrible Slew, the all-in wrestler. Then he felt sure it was the Terrible Slew. “Gollys!” Rud had been pushed against the wall to the left of the platform and was apparently having difficulty in keeping his footing and not being shoved down into the hall. He was hitting about weakly with one fist and seemed then to be resisting pressure rather than actually fighting.

But it was very hard to grasp the situation as a whole and Mr. Abrahams found his powers of observation confused by the danger of being trodden on and crushed, and by a desire to pull back a chair against the wall and stand on it and see more. There were too many heads and too much minor action between him and the drama on the stage. Everyone was standing up and a lot of men were kneeling and standing on the chairs. The chairs were having a bad time, cracking and collapsing with a sort of squelch. The general thrust, happily for little Mr. Abrahams, was towards the platform.

So far as he could grasp the situation, the hall had been packed against Lord Horatio, but now a formidable counterattack from the back entrance had been unmasked. “Slew!” said Mr. Abrahams.

“He’ll hurt somebody.”

A lot of people were shouting: “We want Rud Whitlow!” But that cry was not sweeping the meeting. It was just as if some cue had gone wrong. “We want Rud!” bawled a youngster close to Abraham’s ear. “Why aren’t you shouting, sir? What’s the matter with you?”

“Oh, I’m neutral,” said Mr. Abrahams.

“Neutral are you? Then what the devil are you doing here?”

“I’m the printer.”

“Printer be damned. You lift your voice, sir, and show your colours.”

“I want Rud!” shouted Abrahams perfunctorily. “What’s happening now?”

The attention of the young man who had challenged him was happily diverted.

The milling crowd on the left of the platform reminded Abrahams of swarming bees. He saw a chair-leg go spinning across the hall to no definite address. Somebody in the front row began yelping shrilly with pain.

Bohun, the Terrible Slew, Rogers and Steenhold towered over the swaying platform battle and there seemed to be a convergence of conflict towards the back entrance. And then there were cries of “Where is Rud? What are they doing to Rud?”

Someone quite near to Abrahams said: “They’ve got hold of Rud...”

Someone was blowing a policeman’s whistle outside.

A voice of agony sounded quite near to Mr. Abrahams.

“I’m the caretaker of the bloody place. A quiet meeting. They said it was to be a quiet, friendly meeting. Not a single policeman. Oh, my God! my God! The chairs! Who’s going to pay for them chairs?”

Then there was a cracking of timber as part of the platform gave way.

§ VI

Rud was kidnapped before he realised what was happening to him.

He was hitting out with his left in order to protect his face from imaginary blows, and he thought at first that it was friendly hands that were thrusting him away from the dangerous corner of the platform. A lot of heavy men were slogging and shouting their way in a line across the platform towards the body of the hall, and it seemed reasonable to duck and push in the opposite direction. His pushing was assisted. He heard Dreed and someone else shouting: "Look out, Rud." Then he fell down some steps, felt his ankle twist rather painfully, and found himself in the open air and being hauled towards Bohun's car. His jacket was pulled over his head and his collar seemed about to strangle him and then tore with a ripping sound. He resisted at the door of the car and was hit under his jaw-bone in a way that seemed to reduce his face to an uncontrollable jumble of features and obliterate his mind for a time.

He seemed to hear Dreed saying: "Here! Hold on. Wait a bit" — and then groan.

Someone had hit Dreed on the head...

After a lapse Rud found he was being carried like a sack up some steps, the steps of a house.

"What's all this here?" asked a voice.

"All right, constable. One of our men a bit hurt. We'll see to him..."

He was being bumped along the passage of some house. Probably it was the Purple House...

It seemed wiser not to struggle until he got the hang of the affair. He pretended insensibility. He was carried quite a long and complicated way, round a corner, downstairs, and along a passage, and finally he was flung down on a flat surface.

A door slammed and bolts were shot.

An almost complete silence ensued...

Slowly and apparently against great resistances his dislocated face seemed to be reassembling itself. He opened one eye and part of another and listened intently. Very stiffly and painfully he sat up.

He found he was exactly where he had been trying to think he wasn't. He was locked up in one of those cells in number seventeen.

Anyhow, it was a clean one.

In one corner of the cell was a Thermos pitcher. That probably

contained water. He felt he would very much like to assuage the flaming ache of his face with some cold water, and he got up painfully and hobbled over to it. But no one had ever put any water into that Thermos pitcher.

He sat down again on the plank bed and contemplated the situation. There was nothing else for him to do...He went on contemplating the situation...

His thoughts at first were heavy and sluggish and inclined to repeat themselves; then they quickened up and became feverish and incoherent. But they remained uniformly disagreeable.

He had been kidnapped and Lord Horatio had got him.

The Group had been so cocksure about this meeting, all of them. It was to have dispelled Bohun in a storm of ridicule.

It should have done.

But it had failed to do so, and here he was — the Leader! Bashed and in a cell. They had made a mess of things and got beaten...

Rud's realisation of defeat was very rapid. He saw now that it was an altogether inevitable defeat...

The fact of it was Bodisham was a rotten organiser — a lousy organiser. The rottenest of organisers. He ought to have organised an intelligence department. Of course, he ought to have done that. He ought to have known what Bohun was up to. He ought to have been ready for a counter- attack. He ought to have been sure that a counter-attack would come.

This was the Group's first fight and it had been beaten. The Group had been a promise, a dream. This cell was reality. The Group was done for at the first round.

The clearer Rud's mind grew, the clearer grew his conviction of sin, folly, presumption and incompetence. (And now he had to wait for what was coming to him.)

He thought Steenhold's notion of bringing in that masked actor was one of the rottenest ideas he had ever heard of. Absolutely the rottenest idea. But Steenhold always had been a fool — just as Bodisham was a fool. Steenhold had seen some public enquiry about Banking methods at Washington turned to absurdity by introducing a midget and getting the creature to sit on Pierpoint Morgan's knee while he was being questioned. This music-hall turn had been

Steenhold's silly imitation of that. How he had loved the idea! How he had insisted upon it and elaborated it!

Chiffan ought to have warned Rud against it. But there was a malicious streak in Chiffan. There were times when he seemed positively pleased to see everything going wrong. Sometimes you felt you could trust him absolutely and then came that irritating note of derision that filled you with doubt. Why had he fallen in with this fancy of Steenhold's? Because it was effective or simply because it was preposterous? Far better it would have been to have had a straightforward confrontation with Bohun, more political, more statesmanlike. If only he had not given way to Chiffan and trusted instead to his own sounder instinct!

Too late now...

Rogers was just a beefy rough. He was an escape from the National Sporting Club. He had no business in politics. He had been convinced that with these wonderful boxing youngsters of his from Pimlico and Whitechapel he could hold the meeting in order and make it possible to carry the whole scheme through. Well, he had failed. The whole Group had failed. Rogers had wanted a fight and he had had a fight, and he hadn't cared a rap whose career was wrecked in the process. And so Rud had begun his career with his Waterloo. (And here he was landed, with his face in a pulp, waiting for what was coming to him...)

How long would he have to wait...?

And what would happen when Bohun came...? Discipline? What would Bohun dare to do?

It was remarkable that Bohun had not come already. No doubt that crew of roughs were cleaning up Rogers and his amateurs in the Canton Hall. Maybe Bohun would have to make things right with the police. There had been a blowing of police whistles and apparently a policeman had seen Rud carried into the Purple House. Would they come and take him out of it, and if so, what would happen? But would anyone know he was down here? How would anyone know who it was they had carried in? Dreed knew he had been carried off, but apparently Dreed had been knocked out. None of the others knew. They might not miss him for a long time. They might not be able to get together. No. Here he was and here he was likely to

remain — until Bohun saw fit to attend to him. No reason for Bohun to hurry...

He looked at his wrist-watch to see how the time was going. But half the glass of the watch had gone and the minute hand was bent up. That was annoying. He seemed to have been here quite a long time, but he could not tell whether he had been lying stunned for five minutes or an hour. How could he manage to reckon? And anyhow, what was the good of reckoning?

Suddenly the light in his cell went out. That took him by surprise and he gave a startled cry.

What did that mean?

Nothing.

Or perhaps a lot.

Unnecessary and undesirable phrases came floating into his mind. “Dead of night,” for example. Something very secret and very sinister done at the dead of night. When all the honest, kindly world was fast asleep and beyond call.

He was intolerably thirsty.

That might be part of it. They might keep him here without food and drink, just to weaken him, break him down before Discipline began.

They couldn’t very well carry things so far as to kill him. Not deliberately.

But they might carry Discipline so far as to kill him unintentionally. In England?

“Why not in England?” said his memory of Chiffan.

Oh! why had he ever launched upon this business? What is the good of meddling with politics unless you are prepared for violence — unless you can stand hard knocks? He had been fool enough to let these others flatter him into the position of a leader. It had been fun for them, but he had been fool enough to be serious about it — drink it all in...

He might have kept clear of all this from the beginning. He might have concentrated on taking an outstanding Camford degree. He could have read law. With this gift of eloquence of his, he would have made a brilliant advocate...

No good thinking of that now...

After all, maybe, his father hadn't been such an utter fool, about the dangers of an aggressive temperament and a nimble tongue...

His thoughts were wandering to unimportant matters. It was difficult to think clearly with this aching face; it seemed as though his brain as well as his jaw was askew. But he had to think clearly and hard and exhaustively before the next thing happened.

Perhaps the enemy was not so clever after all in giving him this endless vigil in the dark to think things out. What was he going to do?

What he had straight in front of him, what he had to deal with first, was Bohun.

Would it be possible to make some sort of compromise with that dangerous fool? Would it be wiser to humbug him or menace him? Suppose, for example, one stood up when he appeared and gave him that damned salute of his? Suppose one said: "I know when I am beaten. This ends politics for me": would he swallow that?

Suppose one said: "I realise now the meaning of Personality, Boss" — or "I realise now the meaning of Personality, Lord Horatio": how would he take that?

"Gods!" said Rud, "I don't think I would do that even now."

The beast might just laugh that neighing laugh of his. Vain he was, but also he was cruel.

Perhaps one might say it, less cringingly...

One might offer to make some sort of alliance...As man to man...

And even if one could get by him like that, then what was the outlook for Rud? What chance was there of rallying the old group and explaining oneself to them all?

Rud's attempts to envisage the situation in all its aspects suddenly gave way to a fit of hearty cursing. "Damn you all and damn everything," said Rud, and embroidered that theme.

Which was his way of resigning himself to the conclusion that he had to go through with that Discipline, .whatever it was. "Whatever it is," said Rud, clenching his fists until his nails hurt his palms. "I'll get square with him afterwards. I'll get square with him. If I give my life for it."

Then came a phase of lassitude that seemed to last an interminable time, and then his mind was busy again planning where he should go

and what he should do after he had got home again, whatever was left of him.

"For whatever happens," he said, "they can't kill me. They can't kill me. In England—"

After that a sort of dull period and then a fresh bout of blind cursing.

No earthly way of checking the time at all. For all he could tell it might be morning already. In this infernal darkness one hardly knew whether one was right way up or upside down. They ought to give him a light. Common humanity —

No use shouting.

He wished someone would come.

To judge by his throat and the stiffening of his bruises he must have been here for long hours. Whatever they might do to him, one thing they would certainly have to do to him, and that was to give him a drink.

Perhaps it was morning. Maybe Bohun was sleeping off his exertions before coming down to him.

("Equal with him somehow.")

He passed into a reverie of reprisals.

§ VII

When at last he heard footsteps coming he doubted whether he wanted anyone to come. He forgot what he had meant to say. He wanted time to think that out again.

What was he going to say? "This finishes politics for me. I know when I'm beaten?"

No good to begin like that.

The steps came nearer. A faint light flickered through the inspection wicket and flickered away again. It was like the flicker of an electric torch. His heart was now beating very fast. Someone rattled the door. A voice outside asked: "Anyone here?"

Very like Irwell's voice, but you couldn't be sure. Better keep still. Pretend to be asleep?

Then came another quite familiar voice. "Rud!"

Rud leapt to his feet: “Chiffan! Chiffan! Is that you?” Chiffan’s voice, high-pitched and cheerful: “Here he is! Where the hell are those keys?”

And then instantly the light went on again...Somebody was saying something about a fuse.

A key turned in the lock, the door opened and Chiffan stood with a pallid, triumphant face, regarding his leader. “What is it? Is it still Thursday?”

Still Thursday, Rud! How long do you think you have been here?”

“Eternity.”

“You can’t have been in this place much more than three-quarters of an hour.”

“I was knocked out. I’ve been insensible. I’ve been dreaming. What I want first of all is a drink of water. I’ve got a fever on me. Then a wash.”

“What you want is a whisky and soda. Then someone ought to bandage you up.”

“But tell me what has happened?”

“Here’s Rogers. Rogers, here he is!”

“Are you hurt?” asked Rogers.

“Nothing. Tell me.”

“It’s gone like clockwork. What a scrap! A lovely scrap! And right in the heart of the West End. Nothing like it for years. Poor old Horry!”

“What’s happened to him?”

“He got a kick in the groin. You should have heard him howl. What a voice he has for the Wilderness! But he’s hurt — decidedly hurt...I’m sorry about that. I don’t like things happening like that. There’s a limit to things. I hope it was accidental. But the rest of the fight was fair and square. I suppose you didn’t see one of my Whitechapel kids tackle that all-in man, you know, the Terrible Slew? Dodged his kick and caught his heel and over he went. Just before the platform upset. I thought he’d broken his neck. ‘Subsequent proceedings interested him no more.’...

“Or maybe he thought he’d earned his pay. A lot of those roughs seemed to get heart failure when they saw what they had to deal with. They thought they were just there to beat up a meeting and get

hold of you. There was some dirty work with razor-blades, but that was Horry's old lot. Not our chaps, I hope. None of my boys certainly. But — this scrap's going to be historical. In the heart of Tyburnia. The police were pretty late. They seemed a bit surprised to find us in charge and their old friend Horry doubled up and yelping like a puppy that's been run over.

"Where Horry got all those roughs of his I don't know. He must have a criminal connection somewhere. One or two the Inspector told me were certainly old lags. He got quite friendly with us. Didn't seem to fancy Horry...Half of them didn't know each other, often they were just slogging blind, but my boys knew each other down to the ground. Anyhow, it was the greatest scrap you ever!...It was a great scrap."

Rud was still sitting on the plank bed, but his leadership was reconstituting itself very rapidly in his mind. When he spoke again, he spoke as the Chief and everyone listened.

"Here we are," he said. "Except for my temporary obliteration, the whole thing's evidently gone like clockwork. Eh? As we planned it. We've put it over — thanks to Bodisham and Steenhold — and now the thing is to — what's the military phrase? — consolidate the position. What's the right time? My watch is smashed. We must get on to all the press resources available and explain quite clearly what it was all about. 'Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just, But he wins out who gets his tale in fust!' We must have photographers. I'll talk to every interviewer that reads and writes."

"But upstairs!" said Irwell. "We've found things. Pictures and things."

"Publish everything."

"But you know — he was a bit of a stinker!"

"Release his stink," said Rud.

Within half an hour Rud was in Bohun's coveted chair, heroically bandaged and heroically talking. The newspaper men stood or walked about. ("If we have chairs up here they'll park themselves," said Rud, taking an entirely new view of the seating question.) Sustained by whisky and soda and an injection of strychnine, he expounded himself lucidly, carefully, and over and over again. It was urgently necessary for the public to understand what had happened.

For a long time the Party had been baffled and nonplussed by the increasingly eccentric behaviour of its leader. He had arrested what was essentially a great common-sense movement of the Anglo-American people — the common people —

"Eh? What was that?" said one of the reporters. "Anglo-American?"

Rud repeated his words very seriously. "Anglo-American common people."

They had tried to reason with Bohun; they had meant to have an entirely private discussion; but his Lordship had thought better of it. Or worse of it...

"You can take your cameras all over the Purple House now, and I think you will realise what we were up against. You'll find some queer things. It's yielding up its secrets. But see for yourselves..."

"It's a great story," said one of the news-hawks. "You don't know the half of it yet," said Chiffan.

"And now," said Rud, "the really significant news. The Popular Socialist Party will go ahead. It has rescued itself. It is free. It is rejuvenescent. And it is a natural and necessary Party. It has the vitality of reality. The main points. Listen! What does it stand for? Let me give you our main points exactly over again. How else could it have survived Bohun? No. I'm not a bit fagged. These bandages make talking a bit painful, but that's all. They'll be stiffer to-morrow. I told you how I got this slog on the jaw. Otherwise I should have carried on. But Rogers did that marvellously. Let me talk about the Party and its Future. That's what I want to talk about. The scrap won't make half as good a story unless you put it against its proper background. I'd better get it over now. Not a bit fatigued. Go on writing. I'll take on all you newspaper men, one down, another come up. It is the Party of the common man; It's common sense insisting on itself, through me...

"Don't think I am a leader. Don't think I'm setting up to be another Lord Horry. I'm no leader. I'm just the megaphone of common sense. Get that — the megaphone of common sense. But listen to common sense. What are we going to do next? I'll tell you."

And so forth and so on.

§ VIII

It was nearly one in the morning when Mr. Abrahams came home.

He opened the conversation as he came into the bedroom. “I’m not a bit drunk,” he said, “I haven’t touched anything this evening. I’ve been making history.”

“Where have you been, Monty, making your history? You sound excited.”

“I went to that meeting, darling. The one in Canton Hall. I couldn’t keep away. I got a sort of oh quite accidental punch in the eye, but I don’t think it’s going to colour. I was hit by a potato. At one time they were throwing quite a lot of potatoes. That’s why I sound excited. But I’m not actually excited.”

“I told you—”

“I know. But it was most interesting. I really didn’t get a bit excited. I’ll tell you all about it to-morrow. A lot of them were really hurt. I’ll tell you.”

She peered close up to his face.

“There’s a sort of cut on that bruise, Monty. A nasty little cut.”

“There was razor blades perhaps in that potato,” said Mr. Abrahams. “They do that sometimes.”

§ IX

It was the news of this explosive emergence of Rud that the old doctor read in his garden. The particulars were not very accurately given, they had been given by Rud, and the triumph of Rud had become much more effective and complete in the telling. And more portentous. In his own admirable phrase he had “clarified the facts.” His experiences in number seventeen were entirely omitted from the story, because evidently the reporter had learnt nothing about them. And there was no doubt whatever of the aggressive intentions of the renascent Popular Socialist Party. It meant to “modernise and remake the world,” no less, “under the rule of common sense,” as interpreted by Rud. “Modern common sense”; he bad apparently said it three times. And first of all he — Rud Whitlow if you please — meant to

challenge the country on the American issue...

"And so exit Bohun," reflected old Doctor Carstail. "I guess this ends him...

"If half this stuff about him is true, he's certifiable...Thumbscrews!...Whips!..."

He had been a safety valve. He had put a foolish face in front of all that snobbish, middle-class riff-raff of his. He had wasted money that might have worked mischief. He had been a mask, he had been a gag upon the Fascist drive here. Now it had fairly got loose...

"This young Whitlow will be different. He's ugly as an octopus but he's not ridiculous. There's a tenacity about him. And malice. He reeks, Dick said, of social malice. In these days he may get almost anywhere. He may get a lot of power. What will he do with it?...

"That fellow — I brought him into the world — and he was a trouble even then. Twenty-five hours of it she had with him, and not worth one. (Nowadays I suppose it would be a Csarian — and over in an hour. Progress goes on — even when it's a case of bringing monsters into the world.) He's a nasty little creature — essentially a nasty little creature.

"Intelligent perhaps...

"Some of the stuff he has been telling the interviewers has a kind of plausibility...

"No doubt our government has been making a mess of this American business. No doubt this idea of our governing class getting into touch with some imaginary governing class over there is all wrong — and we're getting ourselves up against an angry real democracy...

"Maybe he has a sort of rightness.

"The last thing one will consent to do is to realise that anyone else is more intelligent than oneself. Maybe I'm wrong. That little beast may be more intelligent than I suppose. Like some of those calculating boys or musical prodigies. A political quick-thinker..."

He picked up the newspaper and began to read over again the account of Rud's coup, as the news-hawks had seen it and heard about if from him. Much about the meeting there was, more about Rud, and nothing about that meditation in the cellar. Rud had explained how he himself had thought out that masked caricature as a

means of “bringing Bohun up to the scratch.”

“It’s indecent! Who ever heard of caricaturing a man on a political platform in Gladstone’s time? Making up to imitate him! Outrageous. And then the come-back. Fifteen hospital cases. In the good old days the only people who were carried out of political meetings were the ones who fainted. Bohun — kicked in the groin. Whitlow serious contusions. Almost broken his jaw. I wish they had broken his jaw. These are political leaders up to date! Shade of Mr. Gladstone!”

§ X

“I’m not going to the Bell to-night,” Mr. Whitlow senior announced.

“But, my dear! What will you do at home?”

“There’s the radio. And Patience. But at the Bell!...

“The things I get said to me! Unfriendly things. You’d hardly imagine. It takes away all the pleasure of going out. No relaxation, it isn’t. No distraction. Always harping on Rud, they are. What’s Rud going to do next? Where does Rud get his money from? I don’t know what to tell ‘em. He’s got into Politics, I say, and that’s the truth of it. As for what he’s going to do about it — don’t ask me. I always said letting him go to Camford was a mistake.”

“I expect he’s been led into it,” said Mrs. Whitlow.

“Led! I never remember Rud being led by anyone,” said Mr. Whitlow. “It’s just his own damned headstrong, ungovernable temper. I spared the rod on that boy — all that stuff about repressions of yours. And here we are!”

“He might have been worse with repressions,” said Mrs. Whitlow.

“And he might not. Is there such a thing in this house as a couple of packs of cards that Alf hasn’t taken two or three out of for his blasted model-making?...Yes, I said blasted model-making. B-L-A-R — No! I mean B-L-A-S-T-I-D model-making. Now then...Evening paper? No, thank you. I can’t take up a newspaper now not without seeing something about Rud. Why! The Daily Warning had a photograph of him all tied up like mumps or something.”

“He always did set about things in his own fashion,” said Mrs.

Whitlow. “I hope nobody didn’t hurt him. He’s got a sort of sturdy look about him, but really he’s as delicate as a girl.”

§ XI

This chapter is trailing as many tail-pieces as a kite. The end one shall be a lonely, tall figure, not without a certain sinister dignity, standing at the taffrail of a liner bound for the Argentine, and watching that brilliant theme with endless variations, a moonlit wake. Already as they came into warmer latitudes, dots and thin threads of phosphorescence were becoming frequent in the black-green water.

“Farewell to England,” he said. “Farewell to the political life. Farewell to proletariat and bourgeoisie. Farewell to the stink and infinite vulgarity of a mechanised civilisation. And in particular farewell to the Mockery called Law.”

He felt magnificently Byronic.

He quoted:

“Adieu, adieu! my native shore Fades o’er the waters blue; The Night- winds sigh, the breakers roar, And shrieks the wild sea-mew. Yon sun that sets upon the sea We follow in his flight; Farewell awhile to him and thee, My native Land — Good Night!”

He wished he had a better memory for poetry. Then he wouldn’t have to go on repeating this verse, night after night.

He was going back to the great freedom of nature — in a general sort of way. Presently Bonina, as weary of that so-called Civilisation as he was, would break away from the tutelage of her trustees and come after him. So she had promised him. They would get some little hundred tonner, they would get together a crew of congenial souls and sail off westward from Valparaiso, to lead lives of untrammelled scorn, defiance and impulse in the South Seas. They would have a great time. They would perhaps buy or acquire some little sunlit island and become Sun Children. They had worn the harness of a decadent social life long enough.

Now they would love like tigers, now they would pursue each other naked about the atoll, slashing at each other wildly and

deliciously with riding whips, or rush through the breakers rejoicing, and dive and fight sharks with the long thin knives they would carry between their teeth.

When his leg was better, that is.

And if she didn't change her mind at the last moment...

What were they saying of him in England? (Not that he cared a dam.) But what were they probably saying? Would there be a reaction? Would they want him back?...

There was no reaction, no one wanted him back, and so be vanishes from our story to the throb of a steamer screw, into the sweet, deep blue of the sub- tropical night.

BOOK III. — UPRUSH

I. — THE ENLARGEMENT OF RUD

§ I

Rud's moods in those early days fluctuated widely. There were those narrow and intense moods of fear and hatred, from which he never freed himself. There were simply base phases when he schemed treacherously. There were unruffled moods of lucid understanding, when everything in life seemed cold and clear and plain, but these were comparatively rare. Things he had read, things Bodisham had argued, stray comments of Chiffan's, would flash together then into a transparent realisation. "Of course!" he would say to himself. Rare as they were, these clairvoyant interludes supplied the living material for most of his political utterances. He knew their value, he listened to himself then with a detached respect, and he made the fullest use of them.

Beneath all these again, there were moods, more and more exalted moods, of pure reverie. They were no longer the objective reveries of his boyish days, dreams of battle and conquest. Now they were anticipations of a subtler and more intimate ascendency. They were concerned now with will power and domination over minds. They were pervaded by an intensifying self-appreciation. He kept them secret, as he imagined, from everyone. He would have hesitated to let anyone suspect how highly he could think of himself. He had a power over people. He had something peculiarly great in himself. But not a word about that. He had a feeling that ultimately recognition must come from some outside source, some one must be bound to announce his true quality, but until that realisation came from without, his true quality must remain secret within himself...

In these phases of private exaltation, it seemed to him that his idea of identifying himself with the Common Man was one of the most brilliant inspirations that had ever come to mortal intelligence. It had arisen in his mind with scarcely any premeditation, in the course of speeches and talking. It had seemed at first the merest poetry, just a new bright phrasing of the sympathetic element in the democratic faith. Then he began to realise that it penetrated to the very core of

the human situation, as he beheld it. He was something greater than the minds about him. He really was greater. His reveries nowadays were more and more in the fashion of imaginary critical biography. He projected himself outside of himself in order to get a better view of himself.

"The Common Man Emergent," that was one of the phrases he found most acceptable in those opium dreams of his, dreams that he needed no opium to produce. The Common Man gathered together humanity, purified it, rendered it. The Common Man Emergent became his mystical self-divinity.

For the purpose of that imaginary biography he devised a new background of revolutions, a history leading right up to himself. He invented an ancient world before the dawn of history in which the masterful men, the terrifying people, the cruelty dealers, the punishers, the lords and priests, ruled without challenge, and the common man knew his master and obeyed the tradition imposed upon him from the cradle to the grave. To Rud the past had always seemed horrible. There was no golden age for him. It was, he was convinced, a cruel world, that early world of barbarism which first breaks into history. Yet already the Common Man was beginning to wake up, to protest, to assert himself. Plebeians were rising against Patricians, democracies against aristocrats. History opened out for Rud as the Martyrdom of Man, the sacrifice of the Common Man, in face of a gathering protest on the part of the overpowered common people.

Christianity, he theorised, had been an outstanding effort of the common man to find release from repressions, from kings, emperors and priests, Pharisees and the Law, in a frank cosmopolitan brotherhood. It was not the only revolt, but in many ways it was the principal and typical revolt. Its insistence on the common fatherhood of God, all men equal in his eyes and so forth, was its fundamental quality, But it had been corrupted early. Instead of a Rud to express it, a lucid, simple Rud, it had fallen beneath the sway of — Saint Paul.

Nobody seemed to love Saint Paul really. Even the theologians. He was the greatest and least ingratiating of all the makers of Christianity, the Founder's whipping boy. But Rud's private

blasphemies did not stop at Saint Paul. He dared to think with the most atrocious boldness of matters that even infidels have hitherto treated with respect. His private scorn for the "inefficiency" of the Founder of Christianity for example was fantastic. Here was a Message, he argued; it was a message of the utmost importance to all the world, and he chose twelve disciples to record it and spread it, and not a stenographer among them!

Stenographer's a modern idea! Rud would have protested. Not a bit of it. Cicero was using stenography half a century B.C. So why wasn't the Sermon on the Mount properly taken down? If it was so important, why wasn't it taken down? Tell me that, asked Rud, in the wicked recesses of his heart. He was incapable of realising the gross incongruity, the indignity, the repulsiveness, of scriptures based on a shorthand draft.

According to Rud, Christianity was done for, within a century of its foundation. For want of trustworthy reporting, By that time it had got itself mixed up with Mithraism, Egyptian Trinitarianism, blood sacrifices and the Hebrew Promise. It had acquired entangling dogmas. What a pitiful story of complication and confusion it had been — all for the want of a man of Rud's lucidity. A good start gone wrong. Corruption had been inevitable. Christianity had found its Marx in Paul and its Stalinites and Trotskyites in the Gnostics and Arians. A swarm of Bishops and Fathers accumulated all over it and they suffocated it. It was dead and done for now, entirely mineralised. Rud tried over phrases in his mind. "Christianity — the best of it — fossilised first-century Communism. And the rest of it, marine-store junk."

What use was it to us? he asked himself. We were way up in the twentieth century. All that work had to be done over again. By less entangled minds...

One might claim to be an early Christian on occasion for controversial purposes, but that was all...

All that work had to be done over again. And again and over again until it was really done. There was no other way for mankind.

For five-and-twenty centuries at least, the Common Man had been making his frustrated upward thrusts against the power grabbers, the bullies, the conspirators and masterful people who enslaved and held

him down. All the movements for reformation within Christendom, all the outbreaks of insurrectionary thought beyond its borders, Islam for example; the Renaissance, the Reformation, the great French Revolution; they were all upheavals of human common-sense against the corruptions and perversions that were perpetually developing to restrain it and hold it back. So Rud held. He was, he put it modestly, just one of the billions of common men held down by these conventions and superstitions. He was the commonest of common men. The quintessence. So it was he raged against them. From first to last he was on the side of the rebels. It was in his essential nature. From his swaddling clothes onward, the note of protest had sounded in his voice.

He hated all established things. He hated every established thing, good or bad, and his conception of the Common Man was fast assuming that same attitude of gigantic defiance against all the order and dignity of the world which characterised the cartoons of his Russian avatar, the Marxist Proletarian, hammer and sickle in hand.

In his private reveries the identification of the Common Man with Rud was plainly visible. And in the undisclosed depths of that reverie, his feeling towards every previous exponent of the Common Man idea was one of embittered rivalry. There was no limit to his jealousy.

When someone in the Group suggested that the Commonsense Movement was really Practical Christianity, Rud blew up and revealed something of what he had hidden away in his mind.

"Augh!" he cried, in querulous protest. "Clean all this past stuff off history, and begin again. If, after all, we are only going back to primitive Christianity, whatever it was, the 'simple teaching of Jesus' and all that (only I don't believe we are for a moment) then let these Christians find it out. We can't go into all these old disputes of theirs about their blessed Founder, what he was and what he wasn't, what he did and what he didn't do, now. They don't know themselves. He had his chance and lost it. Well, didn't he, Dreed? Very fine chap, no doubt, but his inefficiency was awful. And the inefficiency of everyone about him. Think of the march on Jerusalem and compare it with the march on Rome. Think of wandering about in a Garden until they came for him...He's smothered up, they've lost him, and it's for

them to find him again. Not us. He's lost under nineteen centuries of theological deposits. Well, isn't he? Any living leader is worth a dead one, particularly a dead one who wasn't properly reported. What's the good of pretending he was? What's the good of all this smarming over what the Christians have? They haven't got anything clear and sound. Nothing at all.

"If we've got his stuff as you say, then, if it's the reality they care for and not just a name, let them fall in with us. Follow us. Why not? Why should we go after them? Let them sort out their Jesuses until they've got Mr. Right. But it isn't his stuff they care for, They never cared for his stuff. They care less for his stuff than I do. I'm a better Nazarene than any Christian alive. It's the Name. What's in a name? What is there in a name? Will human beings never grow out of name magic? Christianity, if it is all they say it is, by any other name would smell as sweet. Modern common-sense, that's what we stand for, and let other people make the identifications...

"Maybe he was the first modern Radical. Maybe, I say. But that's only historical speculation. Why go back to that? You've got Christianity plain before you. In the Churches. Look at 'em. Christianity is as Christianity does...

"Christianity! Look at the Archbishop of Canterbury all dressed up to kill, cope and mitre and holy rings and all the ancient spiritual gadgets; look at the Pope in his canonicals. B.C. all of it, from start to finish. Do you believe any of those fellows are mentally straight? I don't. Who told them they were entitled to speak for that Galilean Radical? If they'd lived in his time they'd have been on the bench with Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate. They think they can put up their bluff upon the masses, and they aren't afraid of God looking at them — for a very good reason. Long ago they said in their hearts 'There is no God.' That's why they won't have these things talked about plainly. That's why they insist on reverence, sacred names and all that. A sacred thing is a protected thing, a thing in retreat. When you want to argue, they say 'Hush! Reverence, please. Lower your voices so that nobody can hear the awful things you are saying. Not so loud, please, and above all, not so plain.'

"They know they dare not have their stuff stripped down to plain words. These Bishops and parsons with their beloved Christianity are

like a man who has poisoned his wife and says her body's too sacred for a post-mortem. Nowadays, by the light we have, any ecclesiastic must be born blind or an intellectual rascal. Don't tell me. The world's had this apostolic succession of oily old humbugs from early Egypt onwards, trying to come it over people. Antiquity's no excuse. A sham is no better for being six thousand years stale. Christianity's no more use to us now than the Pyramids."

So Rud, the Holy Terror, at his most raucous, banging the table, letting himself go about Christianity, in the councils of the Group. They heard him with a sort of horrified admiration.

"You can't say outrageous things like this — outside," said Bodisham.

"Not yet," said Rud. "But Mussolini and Hitler said almost as much — and got away with it. Russia again — no longer a Christian country. That thing's not going on for ever. High time it was wound up. We are making a new world, aren't we? — and the old rubbish has to be cleared away. Isn't it absolutely essential that the old rubbish should be cleared away? Or what is common sense supposed to be doing?

"Why! Think what happened the other day at Forli! Canopy, croziers, censers, banners, little boys in lace and petticoats, and what effect did it have? 'Go home, you old fool,' he said, 'and change those ridiculous clothes. Get into shorts and do some exercises.' And the people cheered!"

"Real belief in Christianity," said Chiffan, "may be at an ebb in the world, Rud, but shockableness is still high. Reverence is something that survives belief. In these northern countries particularly. I knew a little boy once whose head was smacked, smacked soundly by his own mother, for cocking snooks at Stonehenge. I'm not sure I don't agree with her. So you'd better be careful."

"I shall be careful," said Rud. "But Forli, mind you, wasn't shocked...

"The whole world," he said, "is going Radical again. Fundamentally. In religion. In politics. In law. The Common Man has been trying to get his Radicalism said and done plainly and clearly for a hundred and fifty years. Now we take it on. Our

movement. The new wave of attack." "And fill a ditch in our turn," said Irwell.

"Maybe we're over the last ditch," said Rud. "There must be a last ditch somewhere...

"All other revolutionary movements have been experiments so far, Christianity, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and more or less failures. They were experiments in liberation and they did not liberate. The old things wriggled back. But ours may be the experiment that succeeds. We may get to the Common-sense World State. Yes — we — in this room...Why not? It has to come somehow, somewhen...If it doesn't come pretty soon, there won't be much of humanity left to liberate."

§ II

It seemed natural to Rud to take the loyal co-operation of his colleagues in the Group as a matter of course. He never felt in the slightest degree beholden to them. He took his leadership over them as confidently as he had taken his bottle from his nurse in his cradle. They served the Common Man and gave themselves without stint to the release of this Common-sense World State from all the foetal wrappings that entangled it. What else could they do? What else was there to do? So why should the embodied Common Man thank and flatter them? He snatched their ideas out of their mouths.

And they chanced to make a team that could co-operate. They kept together throughout twelve crucial years in human history. He did little deliberately to hold them together, but his instinct was for management. His egotistical dominance, his impartial acceptance of the role of the representative Common Man, seemed to check the development of internecine jealousies. During those years remarkably little force was wasted by the Group in internal friction. Day by day it grew. Insensibly and yet rapidly it became a factor, and ultimately a leading factor, in world affairs. Even when it was already attracting public attention, its members still seemed for a time mere incidental outsiders adventuring into politics; commentators rather than combatants. It was by insensible degrees

that they became a revolutionary force of the extremest efficiency. They did not appear; they grew.

They differed in one essential from the revolutionary groups from which the earlier dictatorships, the Russian and Italian, for example, sprang. They had no conspiratorial past whatever, less even than the Nazis. They were innocent of the underground methods and free from the tortuous mental habits of the traditional nineteenth-century revolutionists. And after Bohun's collapse no trace was left of any of his Fascist or Hitlerian plagiarisms. Shirts, salutes, symbols, banners, were got rid of. He and his organisation made just their jumping-off board. They had an auction of "unsold stock" in aid of the Movement. "Shirts," they advertised, "can be dyed any colour. Zips not guaranteed." So far they justified their claim to be a new sort of revolutionary drive altogether. They developed the opportunity given them by their picturesque capture of the Purple House and the great fight in the Canton Hall; with skill and vigour. It was their first introduction to political realities. They set about their business with immense seriousness, and they did not only a lot of hard work but a lot of very hard thinking. They tried over definitions and classifications and cleared them up; they listed, they documented, they mapped. They turned the drawing-room floor of number seventeen into a permanent council-chamber; they vetted and incorporated new-comers; they were wary of fresh blood but not jealous of it; they were too desperately anxious to succeed to waste any possible co-operation. Bodisham's growing conceptions of organisation, Chiffan's flow of shrewd ideas and Steenhold's ready welcome and support for any entertaining initiative pervaded the place from the outset, and Rud went about masterfully, convinced that he organised everything he learnt and endorsed.

That room still exists for the curious to visit. It is exactly as they left it when three years later they transferred their Headquarters to the Sloten Aerodrome. They kept it on, because at first they thought the Sloten move was a temporary one. The chairs, the tables, and many of the earlier files and charts are still there, but over it all now is that faint, faded quality of things disused. No morning dusting, no sedulous cleaning can avert that retrocession from reality. All historical showplaces acquire that progressive incredibility. It seems

a little room to have sheltered so tremendous an initiative. The custodians of the place have added a collection of photographs of the chief members of the Group before it moved to Holland. As near as possible they are early portraits, and each one stands in its frame at the place where the original was either known or supposed to have sat. (There is no gavel. Rud always banged with his fist on the table.) There they talked out the ultimate revolution and laid the foundations for the Peace of the World.

"Did they think they were playing with their imaginations or did they realise the tremendous reality of what they were doing?" asks Lipping. The answer is "Both". Every war, every revolution and every important invention the world has ever seen, began as a dream. How else can human enterprises begin?

And they end with the voice of the caretaker, reciting his scrap of history, showing round the tourist. "That is where He sat, and generally it seems Chiffan sat to the left of him, rather close to him to whisper things to him, and there, where the chair is pushed back, was Steenhold's place. He was the tallest of them all except Rogers and he used to push his chair back to stretch out his legs..."

§ III

After the capture of the Purple House, Rud insisted on a sort of intensive study of this world they were attacking. His mixture of shrewdness and insight with imaginative vigour was never more apparent than at this time. Chiffan noted his increasing elasticity. Always Rud had had mental bounce, but never so much as this. He would pass at a bound from a private meditation upon his role as the Culminating Common Man, to the most intense practical activity.

"I've got to get into relationship with people now," he insisted. "With all kinds of influential people. I ought to do it. We've got to see what they are made of. We've got to get out of our hole-and-corner stage as soon as possible. Marx was hole-and-corner all his life, and Lenin had too much of it for his health. We've got to be different. We've got to escape from narrowness. We're a movement, not a conspiracy. We've got to radiate contacts, and have as many

people aware of us as possible. That's living, modern common sense."

In the various personal encounters in which Rud had made himself known to the worldly powers which might otherwise have impeded the consolidation of his leadership of the renascent Popular Socialist Party, his "living, modern common sense" became as flexible and slippery as an eel.

He saw his loose, large appeal to common humanity spreading and catching on, and he felt not the slightest scruple in talking ambiguously and making vague promises to divert and pacify anyone who might have been disposed to nip him in the bud, restrict his publicity or rob him of police immunity before he was established as a world-wide political fact. Sooner or later a struggle was inevitable, but the later it came, the better for Rud. His instinct was to get all over the picture first.

In the days immediately following the capture of the Purple House he saw as many people of importance as he could, mostly they were people who had hitherto been nothing to him but news and names and portraits. They wanted to see him now, after that bright flare-up of publicity, and he wanted to see them, so it was not very difficult to get together. Opportunities were made for him and he had to ask for very little. Before the nine-days' wonder of the great fight in the West End faded out he knew he had to make sure not only of press but financial support. So he did his utmost to make sure of both.

It was an enormously educational time for him. He grew years older in a few weeks. Chiffan watched him in amazement. Political theorising at Headquarters gave place abroad to practical political canvassing of the most unscrupulous sort. Bodisham and the others schemed, made enquiries, prepared dossiers of important people for him. He went to great pains to make himself "important yet normal" in the eyes of all these key people.

He built up an effigy of himself for their benefit. Deliberately and with great self-restraint, he created an impression that was only effaced in the course of several years. He persuaded or he showed off or he seemed to betray his quality, as occasion required. He wanted them to believe he was the man to capture and sell popular

discontent, and they did. After the manner of the British ruling class, they trusted him as a thoroughly untrustworthy man.

He let it be assumed that he was bringing no original ideas whatever into British political life. That, he knew, was fundamentally important. He discussed the internal situation and foreign affairs, discreetly and in established phrases. He read files of The Times for some years back to catch the tone, he devoured political memoirs, volumes of collected letters and speeches. He was, he admitted, airing perhaps a few original ideas in what he had to say, but his heart, he implied, was in the right place.

He was to be a national invigorator, he conveyed. He was to profess much, do nothing, and leave everyone the better for it. He was to take on the task at which Bohun had so signally failed. He was to put the fermenting new red wine of popular discontent, popular discomfort and resentment (and popular behaviour in the Midlands and the North was certainly becoming very serious), internationalism, collectivism and all those gathering horrors, back into the brave old bottles of the established order — in his own way. But he must have a free hand. He must not be prevented. Admittedly he was a clever fellow. He conceded that, but all the same, he intimated, they must not embarrass him. They must not attempt to tell him. He began in fact where most Labour politicians leave off.

He let it be tacitly assumed that fundamentally he was a sound, patriotic Englishman and that, in spite of current difficulties, he regarded the staggering Empire, the inert monarchy, the Anglican Church, the Anglican country-house, as the lovely and eternal framework of the perfect life. Beyond this frame mankind could progress no further until a thoroughly Anglican Last Day inaugurated an unending Anglican season in Heaven, with the Holy Family playing, very tactfully, the part of super-Royalty. Since they could imagine nothing better, he let it be assumed that he could imagine nothing better.

He had remarkably little difficulty in establishing the fundamental respectability of his intentions. He realised with the profoundest astonishment that a tacit assumption of his Anglicanism was made for him, that it was incredible to most of these influential people that a man could be a born Englishman and still not entertain the

completest love and admiration for Anglicanism. He discovered that even the Jews, Atheists and Roman Catholics of Britain are fundamentally Anglican. And there was no question of the entire conformity of the modern Nonconformist. So after all, considering their immense assimilative power, why should they question him?

No one in the world of influence asked him what he thought about the established institutions of his native land, and so he told them no lies. They had no suspicion of the fundamental resentments in his nature. They didn't perceive that his scowl was an expression. That he regarded the whole British system as incurably decayed, a crumbling unteachable system of complex and exasperating appropriations and resistances, and that it was the dearest ambition of his black little heart to see it wiped out of existence as soon as possible and replaced by an Anglo-American synthesis with a cosmopolitan trend, remained an undisclosed aspect of his programme. "One thing at a time," said Rud to his council.

"Of course," he said at a lunch party to which he had been invited by Lady Dragnet, "now that we are one day's journey from America, we must talk just a little more American than we did." (That was the stuff to give them.) "Frankly, I think we are getting badly out of touch with mass opinion over there...

"Yes, but suppose you have made a mistake and put your money on the wrong horse. Suppose this recrudescence of aggressive Big Business over there isn't sound. (You know what Americans are.) Isn't it well to have a strong popular movement in England in touch with the American Labour side?"

Something in that, they thought.

"I could make just those contacts...

"It has always been part of the strength of England to have a strong opposition," he explained. "So that when we have got ourselves into a complete mess — as I think, if you'll forgive me, the government is doing now — we've always had an opposition formula to fall back upon. That, we can say, is what we meant all along. That has been our peculiar advantage, a natural, unpremeditated, providential twofacedness. Sometimes foreigners have thought us inconsistent — almost to the point of perfidy. But it is all perfectly simple. England is like a coin with an obverse and

reverse. Has been, anyhow. A great democratic monarchy is a contradiction in itself; particularly with a House of Lords; it must blow hot and cold...

"But nowadays — Our weakness for the last few years has been the ineffectiveness of the Opposition. This Labour Party has never had the quality of a fighting Opposition. It has just sucked the life out of Radicalism. It has never had the definite idealism of the Whigs and Liberals. 'Give us more employment and slightly higher pay and be sure of our contentment,' says Labour. 'We're loyal. We know our place. But we don't like being unemployed.' What good is that as Opposition? It's about as much opposition as a mewing cat. We mean more than that. I tell you frankly. Our task, I take it, my task, is to reinstate that practical working Opposition which has always been Old England's alternative line of defence...For the good of all of us..."

He said that.

He had, he intimated, to put the idea crudely in a conversation. He might have to put it still more crudely to the country. But they must understand that he knew what he meant to do. Now and then he might have to use phrases that would make conservative gentlemen sit up a bit. More than sit up jump. They had to trust him...

"After all, Joseph Chamberlain was a republican Radical who talked of 'ransom'; and look at the Chamberlains now!...

"I don't want support in your papers," he told Lord Thunderclap, the great press peer. "But I want space. Denounce me if you like, but feature me. I'd rather be denounced. I don't want to seem to be in with you. I'm being perfectly open with you."

"And I like openness," said the great Lord Thunderclap, and regarded him, as far as he could manage it, with the candid face of a simple, responsible, old-fashioned newspaper proprietor. "I think we understand one another."

"Anything but silence," said Rud, looking if possible even more candid than his lordship.

"Run along," said Thunderclap, like a benign God. "You shall exist."

Thunderclap was particularly impressed by a comparison that Rud, in developing this theory of British disingenuousness, made of

Britain to a double-headed eagle, looking both east and west. Thunderclap thought this discovery of the essential duplicity of England a very penetrating one. In his past he had been accused, with a certain plausibility, of inconsistency and abrupt changes of front. But Rud's inferential present of a second head seemed to put him all square again. He felt Rud was a clever fellow who ought to be encouraged. He ordered that Rud should be "news" throughout his press.

"I've got the hang of him," he said. "Nothing Red in him."

§ IV

Lord Bendigo, another great lord of public opinion in those days, wasn't by any means as easy as Lord Thunderclap. He was one of Rud's more difficult problems. Thunderclap thought in phobias and booms, but Bendigo had ideas of his own. For the most part they were extremely poor ideas. His leading one had been the complete isolation of the British Empire from the rest of the world, which Rud regarded as too obviously silly and impracticable for serious treatment. He thought at first that Bendigo wasn't in earnest about this fancy. Then he came to believe that Bendigo was a man of great obstinacy, fighting down a subconscious realisation that he had spent a large part of his life promulgating puerile nonsense.

There was something about this man that Rud found curiously congenial. He sensed a malignant wilfulness very like his own. This very resemblance gave Bendigo the quality of an awful warning. "He has pushed himself into a corner and away from power by the very vigour of his egotism," Rud reflected. "He thought he could put over just anything through sheer wilfulness. Things aren't like that. I used to think it, but I've learnt some lessons. He got his luck too soon, and that spoilt him. Primary facts are invincible. You have to respect them. Fact is the mountain you have to climb, and the way of it is the way you have to go. It's the only way up. But Bendigo started out to climb a mountain that in fact wasn't there...And he goes on with all the gestures of his Isolationist Crusade long after he has realised its futility...

“I, too, have that disposition...I hate going back on myself. I hate checking up things with other people, but I know enough to know I’ve got to do it. He must have just plunged into that Imperial Isolationism of his. Before he thought over the change of scale or air war, or any of these newer things. Plunged with a million readers. And then held on, like a child in a tantrum. I did that sort of thing when I was a kid.”

Criticism of Bendigo was comparatively easy, but how to get a satisfactory publicity out of him was a riddle. Rud’s guess was to go to him for advice about going into Parliament. “Wait, and I will tell you,” said Bendigo; “it’s no time to start now”; and things were left at that.

Rud tried to convey the effect of a thoroughly dishonest, pushful and able young man ready to sell and be sold, a young man in a state of involuntary admiration and natural envy for a tremendously successful newspaper owner, but even upon these lines he was doubtful if he got Bendigo.

What on earth did Bendigo want? Of Rud or life or anything? There was a wicked scrutiny in his lordship’s disillusioned eye. Rud was left with an uneasy memory of that eye. It was an eye that should have twinkled, and it didn’t twinkle. It said for a moment, with a touch of the genial fellowship of adventurers, “Well, what are you up to?” and then hardened to “You don’t get me, my boy, whatever you want.”

It became the cold, resentful eye of an inordinate man in a disappointing world. Bendigo had thought life was a lark, he had handled it inconsiderately and found it a dead lark in his hands.

Steenhold told Rud there were American parallels. Similar forces produce similar results. Newspaper proprietors were the most paradoxical class in the world. Everybody wanted to use newspaper proprietors, and nobody respected their ambitions. No one expected them to have ambitions. They were vehicles to take people to all sorts of desirable destinations — and wait outside. Never would the public recognise any possibility of direct leadership in them. They became resentful, embittered men. All the world over.

In Britain they wore coronets, often slightly askew, but that made no essential difference. They were at once powerful and infuriatingly

impotent.

Nowhere in the world, Rud reflected, was journalism anything but a malignant and wanton power. Later on, as the Common-sense Movement grew, he had to think a lot about that. He had to spread a new system of ideas throughout the world, and journalism would neither instruct nor inform nor lend itself consistently to any sustained propaganda.

§ V

Both these men, Thunderclap and Bendigo, had an air of really wanting new policies for the country, though they were essentially crazy policies. They were at least kinetic, they wanted to make things happen even if they did not quite know what or how, but the other and really conservative newspaper owners and directors Rud approached seemed simply holding on to the established order.

They displayed not simply a disposition to be unbelievably dull in political matters, they displayed a partisan attitude to dullness; they even carried on a dullness propaganda; by way of political education they inundated their readers with the exemplary memoirs of the empty eminent of the Victorian and Edwardian days. They still thought that people would thrill at the pomp and splendour of Lord Grey's mental processes or Lord Oxford's academic dignity. They ignored every social process afoot and everything new, unless it was in some way assimilable to the old order. Nothing, Rud realised, was to be got by a direct association with them. That meant mere submission. It was clear that to win their attention something very emphatic and quasi-successful had to be done.

"Maybe," said Steenhold, "they'd take up our stuff if it came as news from America, much more readily than if it grew under their feet. Or from China. It wouldn't seem so disturbing that way. They still think America and China are oceans away..."

"Couldn't we get a man to write a series of articles warning people against the dangers of the Common-sense Movement?" said Chiffan. "We might launch a controversy. Say it was unspiritual or something of that sort, and drag in the broader-minded bishops to

vindicate us..."

"Is there no press for ideas, as ideas, in. England?" demanded Irwell.

"Only in what they call the silly season," said Chiffan.

Chiffan was inclined to think that the country was in what he called a "phase of discordance" between its press and its public. He sprouted an engaging theory that there have to be "periodic modernisations" in the newspaper world. ("As in everything else," said Rud.) Newspapers succeeded, fell into routines and grew steadily more out of touch with the public mind. They became great estates. They became pompous and aloof. Until at last the gap between them and the latent mental possibilities of a new generation broadened enough to admit a new type of journalism. This, he declared, had happened to Britain with the onset of the new popular halfpenny paper at the beginning of the century, and in America recently with the appearance of the Time type of national weekly newspaper. And with each of these phases of modernisation a quickening of the public mind had been made manifest. The times were ripening now for a fresh move in England.

Bodisham picked up this idea and, looking ahead, said that if the movement was to grow it must have an aggressive competitive press of its own. "We must have a press section of the movement — a separate organisation, of course, not a Party organ. We must try out a paper to pay. We must try a group of papers...Find men for it. Find men. And keep a Party contact with them. None of these proprietors for us — with their abortive dreams of power — it's editors and managers we want to have with us. We've got to re-democratise the press. Dictatorship is just as bad in a newspaper office as it is in a country. It stiffens. It mechanises. It devitalises."

When the Group turned its attention to the existing leftward papers, Chiffan found still more support for his theory that there were periods of opportunity for publicity, and that now was the time to vary the production and distribution of newspapers. Rud listened to all they had to say, and then went off like a drummer to interest the left press in this new movement he was selling the world.

And by the time he got talking to them, his bright adaptive mind had developed Chiffan's theory of stale newspaper forms and

methods into a general theory of collective fatigue.

He addressed various discreet and dubious Liberals: “What I want to do is to refresh Liberalism.”

Liberalism, he said, was practically empty. Why not have it done-up thoroughly from roof to basement — repainted? “You want to be fresh. How can Liberalism be anything but something fresh?

“The world,” he generalised, “is always getting tired of its ruling phrases. Always. Fresh every morning are the old hopes, but the words for them have to be different. People want the same fundamental things age after age, you say; yes, but they want them in a new dress. We’re living in an enslaved and militant world. You say that and so do I. And why? We’re living in a backward-looking world — black with debts and old histories. ‘We?’ you ask. We common men. (Think of me, please, as just one of your readers come in to tell you off.) We’re perplexed and baffled. We hate the fears and patriotisms that enslave us. Subconsciously if not consciously. We imagined these patriotisms meant local freedom, and now we find they mean universal slavery. Patriotism in a little state is the first resort of a scoundrel. And nowadays all states are too little. Strangulated. We’re crushed to death with armies and navies and air forces, and nobody wants them to fight. The common soldiers least of all. We are bored to death of being ordered about — and we don’t like the new catering. And the taxes. We’re sulking and we want a lead. But where is the chink of light yet in our prison? Where is your light? Why don’t you go on to something? Everything Liberalism offers the world as an alternative to drill-ground slavery is either really stale or it looks stale.

“Why is Liberalism so hopelessly conservative? Worse than any Tories. Everybody is tired of your League of Nations, for example, and yet you are still boring away at it. It’s no good arguing whether it’s right or wrong or good or bad. It’s stale. It’s — infected. It’s infested. It never was anything more than an insincere gesture. No one believes in it now. No one at all. It has missed fire with the common man. Alter it at least, do it up, give it a new name. Wash out the Wilson stuff. Make it world-rationalist instead of internationalist.

“You keep on boring away at that old, old story. Why? Don’t you really want world unity? Are you really clinging to national politics

subconsciously? Have you asked yourselves that? I misjudge you? Do I? Well, even as a political fraud the old League is pretty well played out. What good will it do you or anyone now? Forget about it.

"That's where your support of the World Common-sense Party would give you a chance...We have new formulae...

"We English are profoundly tired of our Empire. Indeed we are. Tired and bored. Don't you realise that? The Empire's become public-schoolmasters' cant and the boys know all the answers. It's being stripped and exposed; it's an empire of kraals and slums, loincloth villages and Bombay sweat-shops; it has never educated, never released; it has no constructive vitality at all; it's nothing to be proud of. The intelligent boys are ashamed of it. At heart Germany and Italy are just as sick of their regimes. But what can they do? They just go on doing the same old exercises and repeating the same old catchwords until something comes along to crystallise their discontent in a positive form. Who can deliver them from the body of this death? They ask that; everyone asks that...

"You didn't know of our movement? You don't know anything of any movement. Your fault, not ours. You just know stale politics...I can understand Liberalism getting stale. All things get stale. But why should it want to keep stale?

"The world, I tell you, is bored — bored now to the explosive pitch. It's bored by all this incessant war preparation. It is bored by aimless violence, now here, now there. It is tired of hatred politics. It's tired of fresh murders every day. It is not indignant, not excited; it is bored. Bored and baffled...

"I don't believe a man begins to know anything of politics until he realises the immense menace of mental fatigue, of world-wide mass boredom. It accumulates. It makes the most frightful convulsions and demoralisation possible. It makes them at last inevitable. Nobody wants fundamental changes in a world where hope and interest prevail. Then people accept their careers, settle down to them, rear children. But throw them out of work, in and out and no sense of security, deprive them of bright expectations, regiment them in masses, underfeed them, bore them with organised mass patriotism, and they begin to seep together into a common morass of discontent and impatience. Almost unconsciously...

“They’re like that now.

“If you Liberals really had a progressive idea ready for them now, new- phrased and released from old obligations and old associations, you could set the world afire with it. If you had. Eh? Well, we have. We Common-sense men are the real New Liberalism. Why be so stuffy about it? You’ve got to bury old Gladstone sooner or later, just as the Socialists have to bury Karl Marx...

“After all, what we want is to go on with the Radicalism of the first French Revolution. We’re just revitalised Radicals. That’s what we are. Napoleon was a traitor and the Commune a blunder. Forget about them. We want real liberty, real equality, real fraternity...How about ‘Back to the Taking of the Bastille’ as a slogan? How about ‘The Liberators of the Bastille’?”

“But I thought you were all for scrapping old traditions,” said the Liberal editor, with an air of making a point.

He had made a point, and Rud had to pull his argument together.

“Scrapping old corruptions,” said Rud. “Radicalism — the indignation that stormed the Bastille — is eternally young.”

§ VI

Rud returned to the Group in a state of extreme mental excitement.

“I’ve got it,” he said, “about the League of Nations. I understand 1919- 20. It’s all as clear as daylight.”

Chiffan nodded expectantly with a faint smile.

“Yet I never saw it before. These Liberals open one’s eyes.”

Real affection shone in Chiffan’s regard. He was beginning to feel a genuine parental glow at Rud’s impassioned discoveries. If Rud neither begat nor conceived nor created, he was, at any rate, a magnificent obstetrician.

“In 1918,” said Rud, “the need for such a world unification and socialisation as we are planning was as manifest as it is now. It stared the world in the face. But—”

The Group waited to see its own revelation plain.

“It meant a fundamental change in nearly every system of human activities. That is to say, it meant a reconstructed management. It

meant new patterns in politics, world economics, a new world education, a wider way of living for everyone, and nobody among all the worthy people to whom the settlement was entrusted could really stand up to that prospect. Because it meant that they too had to be renewed. They had to adapt or they had to go. An age of extreme experimentation was inevitable. It was in the air in 1918. The rulers and leaders shirked it. Not consciously perhaps but subconsciously the ruling people resisted every rational step forward. It was bound to be a vast, step, I admit, and into a strange world. For some of them it was not so much a step as a precipice. So they decided that the mass of people in the world were unprepared for it — while as a matter of fact it was they themselves who were unprepared for it. See?"

Chiffan's face answered that question.

"Lord, what a pleasure it is to get back to you chaps and talk freely! I've been diplomatic all day. Now let me splutter...Where was I? In 1918, I say, the ruling classes everywhere had nightmares of the Last Trump. Everywhere. They woke up again, clear that nothing of that sort must happen. The dear old world, which makes us all we are, must remain. They decided not to resurrect, Last Trump or no. 'What is this about a readjusted world?' they said. 'Let us have no extravagance. Let us go gradually,' they said, 'let us go very, very gradually — in other words, let us do just as little as possible to alter the rules of the game we have played hitherto. It is a played-out game, yes — we admit that in theory — but how can any of us learn to play an entirely new one all at once? If we have to drop the control of things, what sort of horrid people will replace us? Let us keep our grip and produce something that will look like a World Peace, a Union of Mankind, and at the same time let us see that nothing fundamental is changed about the old Foreign Offices, the old diplomacy, the old sovereignties, the methods we can work, the things we know. Business as usual during the resurrection. We won't attempt to make anything so extravagant as a new world, we will just make a — a nice beginning, an unimplemented promise.'

"In that spirit, I tell you, this great Put-off at Geneva was brought into being. It was a deliberate, almost conscious Put-off. A crash may come later, said their subconsciousnesses; but, anyhow, this patch-up of a League will last our time. Germany must pay and so on, they

shall be victims and vanquished according to the best precedents, but the essence of our settlement is that civilisation as we know it will be saved."

Rud repeated: "Civilisation as they knew it! They couldn't think of any other sort of civilisation. Tea when they're called in the morning, and all that.

"That Geneva generation has been tiding over and putting off the new world ever since. Growing old and refusing to see how the real world crisis intensifies with every year of delay. Manifestly to re-make the world means a vast obliteration of traditions and class mentalities, but it has to occur. If they won't make over, it's got to be made over for them. That's where we come in. That re-making is what they call Chaos, and for them it is chaos — the end of everythingobliteration — effacement, anyhow. But for us it is the revolt of common-sense."

"You don't think there were any honest good intentions in that League of Nations experiment?" said Irwell.

"How can one plumb the self-deceptions of the muddy-witted?" said Rud. "There were tons of good intentions. Mountains of good intentions all round the Lake. They were enough to have made Geneva stuffy, even if the mountains didn't. These League of Nations people making believe they were readjusting the world, and elaborately and carefully doing nothing of the sort, stank of moral self-satisfaction.

"For all that, the League of Nations was in effect an almost planned and deliberate abortion of the plain commonsense needs of mankind, an elaborate sabotage of the Common Man's hopes. To save trouble. To save face. It was the petition in bankruptcy of the Liberal mind. This, it said, is all I have. And until the whole of this generation of damned disingenuous Liberals is dead, what passes as Liberalism will still be bolstering up this substitute, this sham, this Make Believe of a New World."

And suddenly he became almost lyric. "For three thousand years the Common Man has been fended off from the full and glorious life he might have had, by Make Believe. For three thousand years in one form or another he has been asking for an unrestricted share in the universal welfare. He has been asking for a fair dividend from

civilisation. For all that time, and still it goes on, the advantaged people, the satisfied people, the kings and priests, the owners and traders, the gentlefolk and the leaders he trusted, have been cheating him tacitly or deliberately, out of his proper share and contribution in the common life. Sometimes almost consciously, sometimes subconsciously, cheating themselves about it as well. When he called upon God, they said 'We'll take care of your God for you', and they gave him organised religion. When he calls for Justice, they say 'Everything decently and in order', and give him a nice expensive Law Court beyond his means. When he calls for order and safety too loudly they hit him on the head with a policeman's truncheon. When he sought knowledge, they told him what was good for him. And to protect him from the foreigner, so they said, they got him bombed to hell, trained him to disembowel his fellow common men with bayonets and learn what love of King and Country really means.

"All with the best intentions in the world, mind you.

"Most of these people, I tell you, have acted in perfect good faith. They manage to believe that in sustaining this idiot's muddle they are doing tremendous things — stupendous things — for the Common Man. They can live lives of quiet pride and die quite edifyingly in an undernourished, sweated, driven and frustrated world. Useful public servants! Righteous self- applause! Read their bloody biographies!

"This League of Nations of the Liberals is only the last of the endless succession of Make Believes that have baffled the poor, misinformed, miseducated Common Man. I tell you, stupidity, self-protective stupidity, is the fundamental sin. No man alive has a right to contentment. No man alive has a right to mental rest. No man has any right to be as stupid as educated, Liberal men have been about that foolish affair at Geneva. Men who have any leisure, any gifts, any resources, have no right to stifle their consciences with that degree of imposture. The League of Nations has been an exposed imposture almost from the start, an impotent substitute for effort, and it has wasted two decades, twenty crucial years, of human possibility, the first third of the lives of all of us here in effect...We who will never have lives again."

Chiffan put his hands on either side of his chin. He reflected

aloud: “This sort of analysis applies, mutatis mutandis, to almost every established institution.”

“Essentially, yes.”

“Established institutions. You hate them all,” said Chiffan. “Because they stand in our way to a rational, happy, splendid world.”

Chiffan smiled, faintly sceptical. “You just hate them because they are established institutions.”

Rud considered this for a moment and then, with a leap of frankness: “Yes, Chiffan — I hate them because they are established institutions. They confine and stifle me. As they do you. But they die, they die. Not fast enough, but they die. And the League of Nations generation is dying, and the dear old scholarly Liberals are dying, the class of the last great Make Believe are dying, man by man, day by day. And as that generation, with all its self-preserving hypocrisies, fades and dies, the stage is cleared —

“Partially cleared,” said Chiffan.

“More or less cleared,” said Rud. “Cleared perhaps enough.”

Chiffan thought of saying something more. He saw something like an appeal to him in Rud’s eye and he said no more. “For us,” said Irwell.

“For the Common-sense of the Common Man,” said Rud, with a last rhetorical flourish, “to come to its own.”

§ VII

Bold and challenging generalisations went rather well at the editorial lunch of the leading Liberal paper. These Liberals felt that so little could ever be done that they were prepared for any suggestions, however extravagant, for doing things. They were as receptive of new ideas as baby-farmers are of babies. They knew they could put away any amount of new ideas and be none the worse for it, politically or socially. But the Labour key-men, in conference upon their newspapers, Rud found rather more difficult to impress.

They were evidently profoundly suspicious of him.

It was his first definite encounter with the wary-eyed, platitudinous, evasive Labour leaders, and he realised at once the

formidable barrier of inert leadership they constituted, between the discontented masses and constructive change. They seemed to be almost entirely preoccupied by internecine intrigues and the "discipline of the Party". They were steeped in Party professionalism. They were not in any way traitors to their cause, or wilfully reactionary, but they had no minds for a renascent world. They meant nothing, but they did not know they meant nothing. They regarded Rud just as in their time they had regarded Liberalism, Fabianism, Communism, Science, suspecting them all, learning nothing from them, blankly resistant. They did not want ideas in politics. They just wanted to be the official representatives of organised labour and make what they could by it. Their manner betrayed their invincible resolution, as strong as an animal instinct, to play politics according to the rules, to manoeuvre for positions, to dig themselves into positions — and squat...

"I'll get a move on them," said Rud.

"They've got the Trade Unions behind them."

"I've no use for Trade Unions. They've lasted long enough. They've locked up the workmen in a sort of small-tradesman respectability. We want more than that nowadays. They've hampered the natural political and social emergence of the common man."

"Trade Unions to go!" said Bodisham. "Christianity to go! You're making us take on a lot, Rud. You're a bit of a Terror, Rud."

"You know I'm right. They've gone in Russia, Germany, Italy. They totter in America and France. This country has got to move with the times. We've got to take a lesson from the passion of China, we English and Americans, and wake up before it is too late. I won't be premature about this. Trust me to know when to open fire and how."

"The queer thing is that we do trust you," said Bodisham. "In spite of your — extremism."

"You'd better," said Rud with grim conviction. "I'm right. What is extremism? The whole truth and nothing but the truth. I ask you."

"It's because of his extremism you trust him," said Chiffan. "It's because in the last resort we believe in his indiscretion, and know he won't fail us even if we fail ourselves. All leadership is extravagance. Extra-vagance. Going a bit ahead."

Rud did not quite understand that. “It’s because you know I’m right,” he said.

“It’s because,” said Chiffan, letting his thoughts run away with him, “to make a new world, the leader must be a fundamentally destructive man, a recklessly destructive man. He breaks his way through the jungle and we follow...We cannot do without you, Rud.”

§ VIII

Irwell did his best to inform Rud about the City, and get the reactions of his fine inexperience to that complex system of activities. More and more was the Group finding something oracular and decisive in his penetrating detestations. “Of course,” they said now to his most startling dogmatisms. “Of course.”

Rud and Irwell had lunch with an enquiring group of stockbrockers; and on another occasion, they were privileged to have their views about social credit put right for them by a friendly banking firm which lunched over its offices in a large, graceful room, with such an unpretending splendour of silver and mahogany and cold sideboard, and so protected from outside clamour by double windows and carpeted floors, that it seemed to Rud for a time that he must have fallen into some older, wiser and altogether more stable and comfortable world.

But Rud talked none the less effectively on that account. He talked in particular here of his doctrine of the abolition of the Atlantic. America and Britain, with only ten hours to separate them, were becoming one again. There must be some sort of practical coalescence ahead. Must be. But, lunching over a bank, he did not make it as clear as he might have done whether he meant a coalescence of the United States and Britain or a coalescence of the City and Wall Street. “Business,” he threw out, “is more plastic than political structure. There will certainly be an Anglo-American newspaper coalescence, for example, in the next ten years.”

“It has been tried several times.”

“And it will be tried again and again — until it succeeds.” “We’re an old firm,” said the senior partner.

“But a live one,” said Rud.

“If I knew anything of newspaper finance,” he added, “I’d try to get ahead with a straddle paper now.”

But no one responded to that feeler.

“There’s a remarkable feeling of solidarity between the Labour Movement here and those South Carolina strikers — in the rank and file especially. The news gets across, I hardly know how. It’s something new. You’ve never had cotton and steel workers swapping experience and news before — Pittsburg talking to our Black Country. They do now. They know now what the others wear and how they eat and the games they play. If Finance doesn’t start a Transatlantic coalescence, Labour certainly will. The young men, I mean...”

He shrugged his shoulders and left it at that. He turned to the topic of Social Credit and the increasing interest of the general public in the social effects of finance. “Finance has never been in general politics here yet,” he said, “but public attention is growing. The number of small investors increases here. Presently they are going to start asking questions. In America they’re ahead of us in that. But we’re coming up. The common man over there has been puzzling his brains about currency and credit ever since the days of William Jennings Bryan...It’s a tempting field for political adventurers just now.”

The junior partner raised his eyebrows slightly and glanced at Rud.

At the time Rud had little more to say.

He had however quite a lot more to say when he reported his talk to his counsellors at the Purple House.

“That City of yours is a morbid excrescence. Wall Street is a morbid excrescence. Plainly it’s a thing that has grown out upon the social body rather like — what do you call it? — an embolism, thrombosis, something of that sort. A sort of heart in the wrong place, isn’t it? Anyhow — there it is. Everything seems obliged to go through it now; it can hold up things, stimulate things, give the world fever or pain, and yet all the same — is it necessary, Irwell? Is it inevitable? Couldn’t we function economically quite as well without it? Has the world got to carry that kind of thing for ever?

“What real strength is there in a secondary system of that sort? It’s secondary, it’s parasitic. It’s only a sort of hypertrophied, uncontrolled counting-house which has become dominant by falsifying the entries and intercepting payment. It’s a growth that eats us up and rots everything like cancer. Financiers make nothing, they are not a productive department. They control nothing. They might do so, but they don’t. They don’t even control Westminster and Washington. They just watch things in order to make speculative anticipations. They’ve got minds that lie in wait like spiders, until the fly flies wrong. Then comes the debt entanglement. Which you can break, like the cobweb it is, if only you insist on playing the wasp. I ask you again what real strength has Finance if you tackle Finance? You can tax it, regulate its operations, print money over it without limit, cancel its claims. You can make moratoriums and jubilees. The little chaps will dodge and cheat and run about, but they won’t fight. It is an artificial system upheld by the law and those who make the laws. It’s an aristocracy of pickpocket area-sneaks. The Money Power isn’t a Power. It’s respectable as long as you respect it, and not a moment longer. If it struggles you can strangle it if you have the grip...You and I worked that out long ago, Chiffan...

“When we’re through with our revolution, there will be no money in the world but pay. Obviously. We’ll pay the young to learn, the grown-ups to function, everybody for holidays, and the old to make remarks, and we’ll have a deuce of a lot to pay them with. We’ll own every real thing; we, the common men. We’ll have the whole of the human output in the market. Earn what you will and buy what you like, we’ll say, but don’t try to use money to get power over your fellow-creatures. No squeeze. The better the economic machine, the less finance it will need. Profit and interest are nasty ideas, artificial ideas, perversions, all mixed up with betting and playing games for money. We’ll clean all that up...”

“It’s been going on a long time,” said Irwell.

“All the more reason for a change,” said Rud.

“I suppose the first gamblers were those caravan Semites who played a sort of chequers in the sand for their camels with dung,” reflected Irwell. “They would gamble away everything they possessed. They would gamble with themselves and become slaves.”

“Don’t you be hard on the Semites,” said Rud. “The Cretans traded pots and pans — for profit.”

“The Azilians, way back in the Mesolithic, had pebbles marked for some game,” said Irwell, unfolding his knowledge.

“It doesn’t follow that a nasty habit of mind is any less nasty because it’s ancestral. It doesn’t follow you can’t cure it. Why scratch fleas for ever? Gambling, speculation, is a social disease. It’s as natural and desirable as — syphilis...

“Well, we’re curing syphilis by telling people about it...

“The City and Wall Street can go back to where these games of property- snatching and stealing began. They can play craps for their buttons. It’s high time the world stopped being a gaming saloon with the common man’s needs and comfort in the kitty. High time...As soon as the common man hears us asking for that, he’ll ask too.”

§ IX

Chiffan cleaned up another neglected facet of Rud’s education by taking him to the Houses of Parliament, sitting with him in the Strangers’ Gallery for a time and introducing him to a friend or two, for whom he had done trifling journalistic services in the past. One or two members who had heard already of the Common-sense Movement in their constituencies were only too willing to be friendly with this ugly, white-faced, erratic talker. Rud was given tea on the terrace and inspected and drawn out.

He surveyed this celebrated Terrace. Narrow, it was, he noted, at the foot of a cliff of sham Gothic stonework, barely a century old and already badly corroded. “Thoroughly Anglican,” he thought. Chiffan’s friend collected a small group for him, that came and went restlessly.

These politicians impressed him as being the most shortsighted and sceptical men he had ever met. They lived in a little world that was bounded on the one side by “office” and on the other by the constituencies, and they seemed unable to imagine that it was not an eternal world. One tall man, he observed, in the year of grace 1941 was wearing a long frock-coat and a peculiar half-stiff collar

reminiscent of that great parliamentary hand, Mr. Gladstone. They talked with one another about divisions; the government majority had dropped to twenty; and they talked about a scene in the House. The P.M.'s manners were becoming intolerable. Then with an air of relaxation they turned to Rud. The possibility of altering opinions in the constituencies seemed a very theoretical one to them. No doubt there were these waves of opinion in the country, and an intelligent parliamentary politician observed them and dodged about among them, but it was quite outside their technique to consider how the pressures of opinion could accumulate and be directed.

Rud thought they might be impressed by the breadth of his outlook. He tried to pose as the earnest young enquirer, wanting to know. He thrust out feelers. Where is power in the country? Where is responsibility? In this country? In any country?

But the elusive mystery of political power is no proper subject for the terrace at tea-time. There is nothing to be known about it and everybody knows all about it. So what is there to discuss?

He tried over a suggestion of Chiffan's that Power is always being drawn together into a centre, and then escaping again and diffusing itself. He had not thought much of that at the time, but now that he heard himself say it, it seemed quite a good idea. There were, he argued, widespread accumulative phases in politico-social life, and these were always followed by executive phases, a sort of diastole and systole, a diastole of accumulation and a systole of concentrated impulse against diffused systematic resistances. He tried to impress them with the idea that a phase of diastole was coming to an end, and that the apparent apathy of the day might turn at any moment to the rush of the oncoming systole. But they were manifestly not interested. He might as well have talked to a team of cricketers of possible earthquakes, grass impoverishment and a coming shortage or excess of rain. They returned to the topic of the Prime Minister's lamentable temper.

He came away with an exasperated sense of failure. He denounced parliamentary government root and branch that night. Parliament was doomed. The fact that it had not listened to Rud was only one little conclusive fact in a long indictment. "It has become a series of empty forms," he said. "All over the world, always, the

sawdust of reality is running out of the shapes of quasi-public things. Not one British citizen in a thousand watches what is done in Parliament; not one in a thousand Americans follows the discourses of Congress. Interest has gone. Every election in the past thirty years has been fought on gross misunderstandings."

Bodisham ticked off the points of the new Common-sense Movement on his fingers. "The City is rotten and Parliament is rotten."

"But they are!" said Rud.

"Christianity is rotten and Labour politically is rotten." "But aren't they?"

"The curious thing is that we believe in you, Rud." "We have much to destroy," said Dreed.

"We have nothing to destroy," said Rud. "All these things are done for already. They are falling in all over the world. They are dead. No need for destructive activities. But if we have nothing to destroy we have much to clear away. That's different. What is needed is a brand-new commonsense reorganisation of the world's affairs, and that's what we have to give them. I can't imagine how the government sleeps of nights. I should lie awake at night listening all the time for the trickle of plaster that comes before a smash. Ever since they began blundering in the Near East and Spain, they've never done a single wise thing. This American adventure spells disaster. Plainly. Australia has protested already. India now is plainly in collapse. Everyone who has been there lately with open eyes speaks of the vague miasma of hatred in the streets. We don't get half the news from India. Just because there exists no clear idea whatever of a new India, it doesn't mean that the old isn't disintegrating. Things that are tumbling down, tumble down. They don't wait to be shown the plans of the new building. The East crumbles. All over the world it becomes unpleasant to be a foreigner, but an Englishman now can't walk in a bazaar without a policeman behind him..."

The little council hammered out these intuitions and dogmatisms of Rud's eagerly and helpfully. They showed themselves more and more impressed by the soundness of his idea of attracting attention in Britain by specialising conspicuously in a new American liaison and

starting from the outset with an Atlantic straddle...The time for it, they agreed, was now.

§ X

"America," said Steenhold. "Certainly America. Right away. You come with me to America and we'll run round a bit. We can manage a fortnight there. Start Friday, New York Saturday. Partly we'll bus about the country and partly we'll get special planes. I've got it all figured out. There's one or two lads I'd like you to see, and a few bunches I'd like to hear you talk to. There's things brewing there.

"You can talk to the news-hawks. We'll give you a press...Tell 'em all how you did in Bohun; he's just the sort of thing Americans detest...

"I shall love to show you America.

"All you lousy Europeans underrate America. It under-rates itself. We've been shaping history for a century. Ironclads we invented. We opened up Japan, but you British played us crooked on that. You've always been crooked on Japan and China with us. But never mind that now. We started flying — and we started the popular motor-car. And who invented the machine-gun? Who started big business and mass production? What would have happened to Soviet Russia if it hadn't had American notions? If it hadn't had Americanised Russians to start it? Soviet Russia nearly got away with things, simply thanks to America."

"The British Museum Reading Room had a hand in that," said Rud. "Marx read there, Lenin read there. Litvinov."

"That old gas reservoir! Trotsky was American-trained. And do you know what was the matter with Stalin? He knew nothing real about America...What's the trouble with Russia now? It's lost its American kick. It's ceasing to ventilate. It's going back to Asia. Still I don't want to humiliate you Britishers too much. There's a sort of tenderness — in every American. But there they are, the Russians, de-Americanised and consequently stuck.

"What they want in Moscow," said Steenhold, expanding his theme, "is derision, healthy derision. At first under Lenin, I'm told,

there was some."

"Where there is no derision the people perish," said Chiffan.

"Now who said that?" asked Steenhold, always anxious to check his quotations. "It sounds familiar."

"I said it," said Chiffan. "Get on with your suggestions."

§ XI

Rud had never been in a plane before. He felt a boyish excitement in seeing the familiar map of south-west England spread out below him in the twilight; he watched the lightships and lighthouses flashing into being, and he soared up, up past a few cloud whiffs, and up and up, into a softly throbbing starlight. He glimpsed the retreating sunset and then lost it again. The sun has gone ahead, he thought, and presently it will be round again and overtaking us, but some day the common man will beat the sun. In which case somehow wouldn't he always be picking up his yesterdays?

That line of thought was too mathematical for Rud's rhetorical mind, and he dropped it. He lay back dreaming and presently a deep blue daybreak came to swallow up the stars.

The plane came down into the lower air. New York, that city of ten thousand bristling towers, facing the sunrise, still with the sleep in its ten million office windows, was a memorable picture. As they droned softly over the Hudson river, the reawakening clangour of that mighty aggregation penetrated the suddenly subdued hum of the engines.

The press had come to the airport for them, eager for a first-hand story of the Purple House. Steenhold had seen to that. They seemed to be more excited than the British press about Bohun. "He's the sort of thing we have to clear away, before England and America can talk together," said Rud, concluding some pithy comments on his defeated adversary.

"What have you come to tell us, Mr. Whitlow?" "Rud — if you please — Rud Whitlow. I've come to learn." "Anything in particular?"

"I want to know who's responsible for keeping the common man

in England and the common man in America out of step."

"Most of us would say it's your government. Especially now."

"I think so too. But there's more in it than that. That's what I want to find out."

"Are you going to talk on the Radio?"

"Ask me. I'll talk."

"Do you talk on the Radio in England?"

"Never. We've got a government-controlled Radio over there now, and they tighten it up and tighten it up, for fear of ideas getting loose. The Anglican Empire has taken to sitting on the safety-valve of free speech; it's been heading back to Dreamland ever since the Abdication. So much the worse when the burst comes. The Bishops and the Court people and the Foreign Office and the Old Gentry and Bath and Cheltenham and Blimpland and all that, are more and more afraid of our common men getting ideas. New ideas. Very afraid. They've done so well by the old set. You know they censor all your American papers? The more they're blacked out, the more we like you. Backwardness is their pride and glory. The Churchmen have stifled our schools and universities for a century. The House of Lords is the sterilisation chamber for newspaper owners and publishers. England's become the great Hush Hush land of the world. Not a land of cruel repression but a land of Hush, Hush. Don't say a word or else you'll wake the babies. Politically the British common folk are the most ignorant and backward people in the world. But maybe now I am over here I'll talk a bit to England on the air."

"The Great Hush Hush Land" made a good headline start for Rud.

The idea of an English common man coming to America to speak his mind to England, was fresh enough in itself to get him a press. "We've never heard of this English common man of yours before," said one reporter.

"You have. What else do you think kept our nobility and gentry from messing up your Civil War?"

"That's true, I suppose," said the news-man.

"And much thanks we common Englishmen get in your histories," said Rud.

Some of the Tory press tried to guy Rud. They said he had an Oxford accent and conversely that he rearranged his aspirates. They

telephoned to London for facts against him, but they could get hardly any facts for or against him. They tried to find out if he had a "love life". They could not find so much as a blonde hair upon him. They said he was a political monomaniac, but that did not hurt him. They picked the worst photographs of him and issued caricatures. But though they made him grotesque, that did not make him in the least feeble or repulsive. The more liberal papers took him up from a different angle as the New Type Briton. The press fought about him and the Radio people found he had a natural aptitude for "talks", always with something new to say and always in effect reiterating his self-assertion.

"Our common people have been kept apart by politicians and bad history, long enough. We ought to have scrapped old George the Third when you did. That's kept us out of step ever since. Sorry to be so behind you; but how about getting together now? Our common tongue. Our common freedom. Our common future. While there is still time. Then we'll get these soldiers off our backs, and start fair. That's what I'm here for. That's what I want to learn about."

"Your Party is the Popular Socialist Party, isn't it, still?"

"We're dropping that name out of respect to his lost lordship. We fired him. We're calling ourselves the Party of the Common Man."

"In England?"

"Throughout the world."

§ XII

That American campaign outran Steenhold's wildest hopes. Rud was intensely excited and met his every occasion with an inspired aptness. He conferred. He addressed meetings. He talked on the air. He dictated interviews. His energy seemed inexhaustible. Always he seemed to be saying something fresh and always he seemed to be saying something obvious. "You disentangle things," said Steenhold, trying to give it a name.

In a dozen cities ambitious young men were presently starting nuclei for the Party of the Common Man.

Rud surveyed America from east to west and from north to south

from the air. His first impression was an amazing spaciousness. Everywhere there was space. Too much desert there was, too much wilderness; the empty undefended coasts of the west frightened him, the vast unkempt rivers. When later he flew from London to Moscow and thence by way of Constantinople and Rome home, Europe in comparison, with its strips and roads and disciplined waterways, looked like one continuous land of gardens. But everywhere where he descended in America he found communities living in fine great cities, speaking the same language, using the same idiom of thought, and prepared to understand him completely. And he took the utmost care that his great idea was understood.

He kept his end up against Steenhold with difficulty in a long and tedious comparison of these two sections of the English-speaking world. He and Steenhold had absolutely the same ideas and the same vision of things, and yet so subtle is the virus of patriotism that these two professional anti-patriots made international comparisons until they argued themselves into a rage. Steenhold was the more aggressive of the two; he was never happy until he had roused Rud to retort. And Rud, in spite of himself, was forced to be partisan and counter-offensive.

"You English," said Steenhold.

"You Americans," said Rud.

"When you aren't as fresh as paint," he said, "you Americans are as stale as old cabbage leaves. I'm amazed at your Labour leaders, at the sort of things you can still take seriously as Presidential Candidates. These leonine reverberators tossing their manes back in order to keep their eyes on the White House — they belong to the Pleistocene. We dropped that sort of head in England after John Bright. When the Revolution is over and I retire, I shall retire as Hitler did, to some remote hunting-lodge, and we'll have the heads of Great Labour Leaders and Presidential Hopes stuck all round the Hall. Hippopotami won't be in it."

Rud's picture of the world, under the stimulus of this experience, expanded and became factual with terrific rapidity. He felt that his Anglo- American idea had been mere talk before, even to himself; that hitherto he had never believed in its feasibility; but now it was becoming immensely credible. "The pivot of our movement has to be

in America. The bulk of our Party has to be on this side and" — he paused and looked at Steenhold— "I haven't to come to America more often than once a year. For one short week."

"I don't quite see," began Steenhold.

"Public men in America are too public. Too accessible. This sitting on the stoop and being 'just folk' was all very well for local politics and the simple farmer days of a hundred years ago, but it's no good for world affairs. Opening flower-shows and being genial to babies and all that is out of date. These parish politics methods have to go. The ultimate leader ought to be distant, audible but far off. Show yourself and then vanish into a cloud. Marx would never have counted for one tenth of his weight as 'Charlie Marx' playing chess with the boys, and Woodrow Wilson threw away all his magic as far as Europe was concerned when he crossed the Atlantic. Before he crossed he was a god — what a god he was! After he arrived he was just a grinning guest. I've got to be the Common Man, yes, but not common like that."

"It's a new thing for America — an invisible Great Man," said Steenhold, considering it, "but I believe you're right."

"I'm right," said Rud, and then with a certain bitterness: "Look at me. It would be money in my pocket if I were invisible altogether."

Steenhold considered his leader's visage judicially. "No," he said. "You've got to be careful with it, of course, and you don't want to make it too cheap. I admit a snapshot might make a mess of you. But you've got force about you. They never laugh at you on the platform. Not a titter. They gape until you begin, wondering what that scowl's about, and then your voice gets them. But you're dead right about not overdoing it with the cinema and the mike. Aloof's the word. No pomp — but aloof."

§ XIII

While Rud was making this American trip Bodisham's conceptions of organisation were being greatly elaborated and defined. For a while his influence made Rud the passionate advocate of thinking things out — even at the price of delay. An obscure instinct for

timing may have contributed to that.

Bodisham insisted upon a series of conferences with practically all the Group present and participating. The egg of the world revolution was indeed incubated in meetings very like tutorial classes. Our dramatic and romantic dispositions would have it otherwise, but that was the course reality chose to take. It was begotten of a sentence, it was fostered in talk. In the beginning was the Word. There is no strong, silent man in the history of the world renascence.

"I've got so little to say," said Dreed, and he was the nearest approach to speechlessness in the Group.

"All the more reason for coming to listen," said Rud.

They had to understand each other, Bodisham urged, and to keep on understanding each other. "You have to talk a movement into being," he said, "and you have to keep it alert by talk. You have to write and keep on writing memoranda on the different expressions of our fundamental ideas, as fact challenges them. It is laborious but absolutely necessary."

So long as Lenin lived, Bodisham argued, he wrote and talked and explained, and when he died progress in Russia turned its face to the wall. The hope went out of the Russian experiment. "You have to play the role of Lenin in our movement," said Bodisham. The Common-sense Party had to keep alive mentally even if it risked serious internal conflicts. Rigidity was a sign of death. Fixed creeds were the coffins of belief.

Rud assimilated Bodisham and rendered him with a vigour Bodisham could never have shown.

"We've got to bring more men into this, and perhaps a different sort of man, and we've got to scrap any delusion that we're going to make tools of them. Those damned Bolsheviks were always playing obscure games, with each other as pieces, until Stalin swept all the others into the discard. Choked by their own self-conceit. We've got to avoid that sort of thing. This idea of using other people and capturing other people, is an idiot's dream. We aren't that superior. We've got to find certain necessary supplementary men. What do we know of the air, any of us here? What do we know of transport? What do we know of handling troops? We've got to find men for all

that, sympathetic, different men. We've even got to bring them into this council; their new blood, their new ideas, their new point of view; and we've got to assimilate them. And assimilate ourselves. 'Assimilate', that's the word. But mutual assimilation. When we've got a common philosophy and a common objective; then we can advance in open order. We shall be a great team. But we've got to make sure of that common set of ideas. Maybe we shall find our formulae difficult for some of these new types. If we keep our minds open, we may find that they are right and that our formulae have to be modified. Probably — it's a thought that shouldn't dishearten us — but probably we don't know everything."

To which Bodisham nodded approval, adjusted his glasses and tried not to look like a teacher hearing a recitation.

§ XIV

An idea upon which Rud laid great stress in these pregnant days was what he called parallel independent co-operation. It was doubtful whether he himself originated the phrase or Bodisham. Probably neither of them could have answered that question with precision. But even if it was not originally Rud's, he made it his.

A world revolution, he insisted, must advance on a wide front. You could no more standardise the men in a world revolutionary movement than you could make all the parts of a machine alike. Every factor had its own set of functions, and all conscious functions necessitate their own distinctive mentality. The newspaper man had one set of behaviour patterns, and the man in the physical power organisation, soldier or policeman or what not, had another. Research and direction needed a third set; and so on. One big mistake of the Communist movement had been the attempt to stereotype the Party member. What was a natural expression for a transport man, say, became mere cant if you forced it on an agricultural worker. The idea of some sort of central omniscience was the fallacy of autocracy. "Don't think of centralisation; think of balance."

"But you must have a centralising body, a nuclear fact, the touchstone, the ultimate reference, the quintessence of the idea," said

Rogers.

"I am the quintessence of the idea," said Rud. "I am the uncomplicated, uncovenanted, unrestricted common man. Stalin thought he was, but I know I am. I am the sufficient sample."

"For the time being," said Chiffan softly.

"For the time being," said Rud, without extreme conviction and after a moment's pause.

§ XV

Bodisham's organisation charts were destined to become historical museum exhibits of the utmost importance. They have been reproduced in the exactest facsimile a score of times. Nearly every History of the World Revolution displays the "central" one as a frontispiece. He worked at them in that small drawing-office, still preserved intact for all the world to visit, in number sixteen. He worked at them with a number of coloured inks and a sublime unconsciousness of the immense possibilities of his scheming. The ink he spilt is still on the faded carpet; the wall is pock-marked by his drawing-pins. Occasionally he smudged his work or used an ink-eraser until he nearly perforated the paper. Chiffan came and made suggestions almost daily. He was more than a little jealous of Bodisham, but he had the generosity to respect his quality and admit his own limitations. His own intelligence worked in brilliant flashes, but Bodisham's went on, a steadfastly burning flame, indefatigable. Rud came to survey the developments, making sometimes a pithy comment, and sometimes merely standing in meditation before the great scheme.

The charts showed plainly the developing conception of the world revolution as it grew in the minds of its makers. Bodisham would sit over his big sheets of paper, compasses in hand, breathing audibly, thinking through long pauses, then flinging himself upon some freshly apprehended linkage, scribbling, blotting, tearing the chart from its drawing-pins, shouting for his assistant to carry it away and recopy it — for the fortieth or fiftieth time. The whole diagram was enclosed in a huge circle, and in this clustered minor circles, which

touched, overlapped, were joined by coloured bands and lines, signalled to each other with arrows, displayed significant tinting. These things meant association of leaders and direction, partial merger of activities, mutual information and so forth.

The all-comprising outer circle represented what Rud called the Idea of Common-sense, the idea that a general agreement about life among normal men, based on mutual respect, is possible, and that this common agreement could be made the one supreme criterion of law and collective activity. Sweep away authoritarian ideas, delusions of superiority and inferiority and a general complex of subconscious dishonesties, and that was what you exposed. That was the true Social Contract.

The Party in its more generalised form was little more than a loosely organised propaganda for the intensive reiteration of this one common-sense idea, the idea that the world as a whole belongs to every human being. The only justification for interference with the free dominion of the individual was the common good. No claim of authority or of debt was valid beyond that controlling consideration. This was a fundamental concept of the movement, and it meant a continuous attack on everything that set up preferential distinctions and divisions among mankind, that is to say racial, national, religious, sexual claims and assertions, and every sort of artificial advantage and privilege, all hereditary appropriations, inherited wealth or other priorities. It boldly and flatly denied the existence of any broad and essential differences in humanity sufficient to justify privilege, enslavement or control. "No pre-natal subjugation," was its leading phrase. "No pre-natal debt. Otherwise men cannot be free."

Elaborately Bodisham was working out the implications of this proposition and applying them still more elaborately to the drift of world events.

With this fundamental conception, the new movement faced the world. This "fundamental conception" was the outer ring of Bodisham's diagrams. But so far it hardly went beyond what primitive Christianity, Islam, Anarchism, Rousseauism and all the primary Leftisms, had said before it. Directly one came inside that ample circle, however, the organisers of the new world found themselves against certain practical realities, that so far had

frustrated every attempt to reduce human affairs to equalitarian common-sense, and they faced them with an unprecedented frankness.

"They just haven't been worked out," said Bodisham. "They just haven't been worked out."

The chief of these practical difficulties on the way to human unity was the fact that normal human beings are not by nature interested in public affairs. That has always been the little rift in the lute of sentimental democracy. Because man is not instinctively political, as the ant seems to be, all his collective operations have to be directed. Most human beings do not want to be bothered looking after their common interests. They put the real stuff of their individual lives before the common weal as a matter of course. They may be educated or cowed into a practical respect for the common weal, but that is against the natural disposition of their hearts.

It was necessary, therefore, Bodisham argued, to find and select and appoint people of a certain type — Rud called them generally "masterful people" — who would take a special interest in the direction and co- ordination of this or that collective activity, whether it was crop-production or road-making and maintaining, or improving and distributing the statement of fact, or teaching or research or what not. The whole history of mankind had been and was still and could not be anything else but the struggle of the various types of these masterful men to get collective processes established, either for their own advantage or the collective advantage, against the general contrariety, the resistances, the confused, shortsighted self-seeking and self-protection of common individuals. Masterful men come to the top under any conditions. But the peculiar sorts of masterful men who come to the top depended on the conditions.

"The Common Man can only become conscious of himself and learn his lesson through the exposition of certain peculiar sorts of masterful men," argued Bodisham. "There are people who must 'say it' for the inarticulate and generally inattentive common man. Call them teachers, demagogues, prophets, what you will. Rud is quintessentially that sort. That sort you must have. But also there have to be experts and, furthermore, there have to be men to check

back, criticise and justify the expert and protect the Common Man from either tyranny or quackery. All that complexity you must have in human affairs. The essential problem is to use those necessary masterful men and yet restrain them. How to balance them? How to prevent their abusing their masterfulness? They must have authority in their special fields, but you have to put simple Power out of reach of everyone.

"That is why the eighteenth century, that most enlightened century, that liberty-seeking century, was so preoccupied by constitution-mongering, and why my great circle here is all cut up by these minor circles and these schemes of mutual checks and co-operations. All through the ages mankind in its communities has relieved its political laziness and cowardice in an irrational abandonment to leaders and rulers. God will provide, the King will settle it, the priesthood will see to it, the aristocracy for the sake of the land, the property-owners out of enlightened self-interest, the lawyers, the oligarchy, 'They', the Party, the Party leaders, the dictators..."

"The history of mankind," said Dreed, "has been a history of betrayals, the perennial betrayal of the common man by the men he has trusted."

"By the men the lazy, haphazard, childish oaf was too wilfully stupid to mistrust," said Bodisham. "The history of mankind from the very beginning has been a history of over-trusted trustees, corrupted by their unchecked opportunities. And here in these organisation diagrams I am simply trying to assemble in their proper relations, the latest ideas for balancing the interests, restraining the egotisms, and extracting the maximum of good out of the masterfulness and the masterful phases of masterful men. It's the eternal problem of politics — once again."

"The problem isn't eternal; it changes"; interrupted Rud. "The conditions have changed. The fundamental conditions have changed. What you don't realise fully enough, Bodisham, you with your out-of-date historical precedents, is that all over the world there is Awareness, such as there never was before. The light penetrates everywhere. Knowledge, I tell you, wins its way. See how ideas spread! See how they run. It's only now that natural science begins to

tell what it knows to the common mind. And common people drink it up. For the first time the whole world reads, reads to know. There is a new spirit in the world..."

It was always Bodisham who theorised and planned. Each main function of the new world was presented in his diagram by systems of circles and intersecting circles within. Here was the propaganda system, and overlapping it and destined to replace it was organised education. Here were the intimations of a plan for the correlation of research and record and the distribution of knowledge. Here was the organisation of force balanced against legal power. Here was a quadrilateral of old military organisations, fading out before police, controlled production and the air. Curious green lines intimated the subtle but understandable relationship of "parallel independent co-operation." Here, like an elucidatory veil across this map of the future, was a mighty, new network of universities, of record, discussion and information organisations, of poetry and imaginative creation, that was to furnish the controlling atmosphere of criticism and understanding throughout the world.

To anyone who saw these diagrams in the days before their realisation, they would have seemed like the reveries of a very intelligent but quite impracticable dreamer. Yet they were certainly no more fantastic and far more constructive than was Communism in the days when Marx at Highgate, bothered by tradesmen's bills and earning a precarious living by discreet political journalism, smoked and dreamed.

Plan or reverie, so it was that things shaped themselves in the minds of the central group. The Group grew steadily as it elaborated its conceptions of activity. Never was any revolutionary scheme so little insurrectionary, so boldly and definitely constructive, or so loosely centralised. Naturally the idea of insurrection was fundamental to it, but conceptions of new organisations completely overshadowed it. That idea of parallel independent co-operation proved of the utmost practicability. Rud in those days was not so much the head as the central link of the group's scheme. Nothing so deliberate and detailed and adaptable as Bodisham's net of diagrams had ever before been produced by the revolutionary impulse in man. It resembled previous revolutionary organisations as the working

drawings for the first modern aeroplane resembled the series of suicidal contrivances from the wings of Daedalus onwards that had anticipated flying. After each disaster people said "Man can never fly". But a few dreamers persisted. After each revolutionary failure men said "Human society can never escape from its traditional limitations. It must live or perish in its self-made cage."

The Group was not of that opinion. It believed in the ultimate victory of design and it was justified.

§ XVI

This ramifying group was extending its tentacles to associate itself with types of revolutionary activity that were either novel or had hitherto played a special disconnected role in human affairs. One of Bodisham's leading subdivisions within the great circle was the conception of a cosmopolitan pronunciamento. That would not be the Revolution but it would be an important factor in it. There is no revolution while armed forces remain loyal. Both he and Rud were alive to the truth that a few months' drill and a uniform do not make a mechanism of the common man, and now less than ever since warfare had been elaborated and diversified by an incessantly varying equipment. Rulers make wars, but soldiers, sailors, airmen and a complex of technicians carry them on and end in control.

The universal human question: "Why should I do this for that fellow when I might do it for myself?" was more alive than ever in the ranks of the armed and enrolled specialists throughout the world. There was a real psychological difference between the common man and the man in uniform during the eighteenth century, almost as different as the medieval distinctness of the man in armour, but conscription has undermined that antagonism. A small army is the ruler's weapon, but a great army becomes his master.

Bodisham produced voluminous instances of the revolutionary role of armies and fleets from the days of the successors of Alexander and the legion-made Caesars down to contemporary Germany; he was particularly erudite about Wallenstein and the condottieri, and about the political side of the Scotch and English

armies during the seventeenth century. He invented a plausible history of the Janissaries and he quoted the parts played by the fleets of Turkey, Russia and Germany in reversing governments since 1900. There never had been a fleet, he insisted, without a mutter of mutiny.

Now a new fighting type, the airman, was appearing in the world, men necessarily of a wide geographical range, and all of them living under practically identical conditions. What could prevent their discovering that they had ideas in common, ideas that were totally different from the military traditions of the sovereign states that were so blandly assuming control of them.

"Even the Roman gladiators developed a solidarity of their own," said Bodisham. "The air is not really in the military tradition at all. It is something different and new. It refuses to lend itself to the soldier's tradition. It will develop its own tradition, quite across the old national boundaries." It was one of the less agreeable preoccupations of the military authorities in Britain and America, he pointed out, to keep "seditious" literature away from the "boys" upon the air grounds. "Which they don't," said Norvel, the Group propagandist. "Which they can't. The more you militarise a population, the less purely military the soldier becomes. The more he is amenable to common-sense propaganda."

They found two vividly contrasted organisers for the common-sense propaganda among the military forces of the State, in Reedly, a disgruntled military genius and expert, with a gathering animus against all constituted authority, based on some personal grievance of his own against what he called the "privileged set", and Bellacourt, a brilliant and quite disinterested aeronautical engineer, who had served on the government side in the Spanish Civil War and acquired an intense hatred of any kind of bombing. Both had great energy and organising ability, and neither was in complete harmony with the Rud-Bodisham-Chiffan-Steenhold gospel. But they co-operated on "parallel independent" lines. Bella-court was a slight, very fair, taciturn, slow- thinking man, but Reedly was a fine big figure of a soldier, built for a uniform and with a big Kitchener moustache. He was conscious of his abilities and impatient of what he thought to be inferior opinions. This disposition, rather than any particular act, had

hampered his promotion. He came into the Group now as if he was leading in an army. He came in with the almost naked purpose of showing the authorities what a mistake they had made about him. He meant to use the Group. Rud knew he was taking a risk with him. It was to be remarked afterwards that Rud rarely interrupted Reedly while he was talking, and that he watched his man even when he was taking no part in the discussion.

Bellacourt, Rud realised early, was a man of one idea. He wanted to take the air right out of national jurisdiction altogether, and to make it a sort of separate world of transport by itself. He was clear that this new mode of locomotion was quite outside the current scheme of human life, but from that point his ideas were in a sort of luminous fog. He wanted to isolate the air just as Bendigo wanted to isolate the British Empire. He had, he said, been studying the problem of the air for years, but his "studying" had meant little more than writing and inducing others to write a stream of pamphlets advocating what he called an "International Air Force". By "international" he meant "cosmopolitan", but in those days "cosmopolitan", for some obscure literary reason, was regarded as a rude word, and "international" was always used instead. He did not discuss how or why any existing government was to be induced to abandon its control of its aviators and machines, and this omission prevented any but a few salaried secretaries, benevolent spinsters and the minor clergy from supporting his amiable proposals.

Bellacourt was a good airman and an inventive mechanician; he had fought and he had tried to carry out a scheme of air photography for the government side in the Spanish War, based on Crawford's work, but conditions had not been favourable to that. Before and after that experience he had played a considerable part, both as an experimentalist and as a financier, in the development of civil air transport. He was a man who did things rather than thought, and his political and social ideas had remained at an almost puerile level for years. "You just have to have an International Air Control", and that was as far as he had got. He really believed that existing governments might agree to abandon air war.

Then something happened, some sort of afflatus, and his mind took on a new power and energy. Perhaps in some pause in his

activities he had read a book or listened to someone, but at any rate he discovered quite abruptly that the problem he had thought a simple one was complicated in a great number of ways he had disregarded, and particularly was it complicated by the fact that nobody with any power to carry out his suggestions showed the slightest disposition to do so. Once his mind was stirred he could be a man of great practical determination. He came round to Headquarters.

"I want a World Control of Aviation. Apparently that is impossible without a revolution and a World State. I gather your movement is out for that. Tell me about it." That was his simple introduction of himself to Rud and Bodisham.

Rud sat back observant and let Bodisham explain.

The only way to make the aviation of the world a common world interest, Bodisham explained, was to make every aviator in the air services you could possibly convert, a believer in a Common World Law and an opponent of nationalism. Bellacourt found this a hard saying, and sat with a frown of perplexity on his fair, not unhandsome face, one arm over the arm of his chair, resisting it.

"I thought one might have world peace without this Red stuff — simply through neutralising the air," he said, almost as if he complained of them.

Bodisham elaborated his arguments. He and Rud were not "Reds", he explained, and added under his breath, "Whatever Reds may be"...

Rud suggested that Bellacourt should go away for a week and discuss his problem with everybody he met, the more anti-Red the better. "You will find World Peace is only a single problem if you deal with it as a whole," he said. "Then it becomes one and ultimately indivisible. But you cannot deal with any part of it — air union or what not — as a thing in itself. If other things are not also going on at the same time, you will never get anywhere with that. That is no reason, of course, why you personally should not specialise absolutely upon the question of the air. But in co-operation. We want you with us. We want a man like you badly. We want an organiser of Common-sense and Common Humanity in the Air. Just as we want someone to create a parallel organisation in the

shipping and in the war material industries. For any service or industry or function, the real necessity is the same. In each case you have to saturate the personnel with identical clear ideas of their individual responsibility. You have to free their minds from blind obedience. We want World-minded Airmen. There is no need for any politics at all for you, and no need for anyone to advocate this air solidarity of yours outside the air forces — and the schools and technical schools and factories that lead to the air. But all the same it will be in line with everything else we are doing."

Bellacourt came back at the end of his week.

"I believe you are right," said Bellacourt compactly. "I have thought it out. This air business is not to be done by itself. It has to be done. I will join you for the sake of that."

Rud took a curious interest in Bellacourt's simplicity and directness. It was something he had never met before to quite the same extent. He talked to Chiffan about it. "Do you think machines make men honest?" he said.

"They never take refuge in sentiment or rhetoric," said Chiffan, "and if you try and cheat them they pay you back right away. Whenever a machine goes wrong — it's you."

"Bellacourt seems to me a machine-made man."

"I never saw anyone less like a Robot."

"But Robots," said Rud, "were man-made machines. I never felt so sure I could trust anyone in my life — as Bellacourt."

"This to your oldest friend!"

"Bellacourt has no sense of humour," said Rud.

§ XVII

Another interesting addition to the Group was Thirp, originally a philanthropic prison reformer, a man of some wealth, whose political ideas it seemed were broadening with experience, and who was specially interested in the police side of life. He teemed with ideas about class and type psychology. He was a small man with a thin, fine face and a feminine voice, and his long, lean, restless hands seemed always to be handling details too subtle for words. He had

nothing of the conventional revolutionary in his appearance; he was always very carefully dressed with large, coloured neck-ties and delicately patterned silk shirts. He liked what he called investigation, and sometimes his investigations about public characters had the quality of personal gossip. Into that, indeed, in a more stable age, he might have relapsed, but for a time at least the movement picked him up and exalted and nourished his mind. It gave his curiosities a purposive quality. He was capable of handling big affairs and at a pinch he would do so, but he preferred the secondary aspects of life.

He too became a separate process in the Party, most closely in contact with Rud. He liked Rud and was curious about him. He was at great pains to please him. He avoided the others, he cut the Group meetings whenever he could, but he talked to Rud alone whenever he had a chance. His brilliant little pamphlet, The Man inside the Uniform, had had a circulation of over two million copies in England and America before the British authorities condemned it as a seditious document. On the whole that stimulated its circulation.

Norvel again began as a loosely attached associate of the Group, who gradually assumed a central position only second to the nuclear, indefatigable Bodisham. He was a different kind of tentacle altogether, who specialised in the publication and distribution of cheap books on both sides of the Atlantic. He was a born educator and propagandist. His distinctive excitement lay in that. For that he lived. He it was who brought down the price of paper-covered popular books in America to a dime. To most people in those days a change in the price of books seemed trivial commercialism, but he had a better imagination than that. It meant a vast infiltration of rational ideas into previously inert social masses. It meant a heightened social awareness, a step forward in the awakening and release of the common man. Norvel had a considerable genius for business; without any loss of revolutionary zeal, he became one of the controlling magnates in the paper world, and later, when wood pulp ran short, he exploited the manufacture of paper out of light metallic alloys, to the great advantage of the Party and the enquiring Common Man.

In his earlier schemes Bodisham had contemplated the development of new daily newspapers as a necessary part of the

Common-sense Movement. Then Rud and he had found themselves doubting whether the contemporary newspaper retained any political influence. It had become more and more an ephemeral advertisment-sheet seasoned with news of crimes, catastrophes and gossip. It was slipping away from the centre of collective consciousness. As the big newspaper proprietors realised the futility of their political ambitions, they replaced political matter more and more by distraction. Many daily papers were little more than personal gossip and photographic pornography. Norvel confirmed Rud's ideas of the decadence of the newspaper, and pushed them on to practical realisation. And most of the accepted methods of party propaganda, meetings, processions and so forth, he declared to be also completely out-of-date. Instead of daily papers the Group ultimately found its chief educational medium in small, cheap books of a size to go inconspicuously into a working man's pocket, and before a year was out Norvel had filled at least twenty million pockets where English was spoken, with the stuff of the Common-sense Movement, and incalculable millions more of minds with variations upon the question: "Why do you stand it? Why do you let these out-of-date people play games with your bodies and lives?"

"Out-of-date" is a very deadly phrase for an accepted institution.

With the constant reiteration of this question, of why people stood what they were enduring, went the plain, clear insistence that in the world it was now possible to have peace and plenty for all — given courage, given tolerance, given plain common-sense. And this Norvel did at a monetary profit to the gathering movement. These little books had much more frontier-passing power than a newspaper that lives and dies in a day. They passed from hand to hand. They played a vital part, a catalytic part, in the brewing of the World Revolution.

II. — HIGH TIDE OF WORLD MUTINY

§ I

BODISHAM worked out his diagrams for a World Revolution with infinite care and travail. The talks went on. The Group grew in stature and wisdom. Events were not waiting for the Group, they followed no leadership, they were hurrying the Group along, creating new opportunities, confronting it with new problems, subjecting it to fresh ideas. The state of human affairs in the Brigand Forties was a climax of tension between the traditional life of man and the intimations of a new world. Common sense and every material reality insisted upon the unification of human life throughout the planet and the socialisation of its elementary needs, and pitted against that was the fact that every authority, every institution, every established way of thinking and living was framed to preserve the advantages of the ruling and possessing minority and the separate sovereignty of the militant states that had been evolved within the vanished circumstances of the past.

The political states of the period, created by the puny necessities of the foot-and-horse phase of human life, were now like grapes in a wine-press being squeezed together. They pressed upon, distorted and burst one another. Rud's idea of reconstructing elementary political conceptions and general economic processes on a world-wide scale was so obvious that now it scarcely seems original. Yet the fact remains that to Rud's contemporaries, schooled as they were in an unanalytical history and blind traditionalism, such ideas had seemed extravagantly impossible until his coarse, unqualified assertion of the harsh reality of the human situation swept their inhibitions aside. They may have had some anticipation of the new world order deep down in their minds, but until he and his Group began bawling up the new world, and bawling down the world of accepted practice, they seemed incapable of any practical realisations.

Dr. Chanter, in his brilliant History of Human Thought in the Twentieth Century, has made the suggestion that only a very small

proportion of people are capable of acquiring new ideas of political or social behaviour after they are twenty-five years old. On the other hand, few people become directive in these matters until they are between forty and fifty. Then they prevail for twenty years or more. The conduct of public affairs therefore is necessarily twenty years or more behind the living thought of the times. This is what Dr. Chanter calls the "delayed realisation of ideas".

In the less hurried past this had not been of any great importance, but in the violent crises of the Revolutionary Period it became a primary fact. It is evident now that whatever the emergency, however obvious the new problem before our species in the nineteen-twenties, it was necessary for the whole generation that had learned nothing and could learn nothing from the Great War and its sequelae, to die out before any rational handling of world affairs could even begin. The cream of the youth of the war years had been killed; a stratum of men already middle-aged remained in control, whose ideas had already set before the Great War. It was, says Chanter, an inescapable phase. The world of the Frightened Thirties and the Brigand Forties was under the dominion of a generation of unteachable, obstinately obstructive men, blinded men, miseducating, misleading the baffled younger people for completely superseded ends. If they could have had their way, they would have blinded the whole world for ever. But the blinding was inadequate, and by the Fifties all this generation and its teachings and traditions were passing away, like a smoke-screen blown aside.

Before a few years had passed it was already incredible that in the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century the whole political life of the world was still running upon the idea of competitive sovereign empires and states. Men of quite outstanding intelligence were still planning and scheming for the "hegemony" of Britain or France or Germany or Japan; they were still moving their armies and navies and air forces and making their combinations and alliances upon the dissolving chess-board of terrestrial reality. Nothing happened as they had planned it; nothing worked out as they desired; but still with a stupefying inertia they persisted. They launched armies, they starved and massacred populations. They were like a veterinary surgeon who suddenly finds he is operating upon a human being, and

with a sort of blind helplessness cuts and slashes more and more desperately, according to the best equestrian rules. The history of European diplomacy between 1914 and 1944 seems now so consistent a record of incredible insincerity that it stuns the modern mind. At the time it seemed rational behaviour. It did not seem insincere. The biographical material of the period — and these governing-class people kept themselves in countenance very largely by writing and reading each other's biographies — the collected letters, the collected speeches, the sapient observations of the leading figures make tedious reading, but they enable the intelligent student to realise the persistence of small-society values in that swiftly expanding scene.

Those values had to die out. There was no other way of escaping from them, and so, slowly and horribly, that phase of the moribund sovereign states concluded.

Beneath the formal surface of their traditional politics the historian of human thought notes the whispering advance of the Common Man's Party. There can be no question of the value of the phrase "parallel independent co-operation" in preventing it from congealing into a centralised political dogmatism, after the precedent of Communism. It was becoming a power, as formless as hydraulic pressure, adapting itself to the particular situations in which it discovered itself. It was everywhere a spirit of critical resistance to authority, resistance not in the name of ease and indolence but in the name of efficiency, this spreading conception of a common aim for all human beings. It was the resistance of son to arbitrary father, of pupil to dogmatic and inexplicit teacher.

The essential question was always "Who are these fellows who give us orders? By what warrant? And how do we benefit and how does the world benefit? But they are doing no good to anyone, no real good even to themselves! This is not government and leadership; this is imposture. Why stand it?...Why stand it?"

The lingering disposition on the part of humanity to personify its general creative drive, that curious diffidence, that persistent infantilism, that made it necessary to ascribe its own urgencies to an outside authority, played its part even from the beginning in Rud's elevation. He became the living symbol of the new world. The same

imaginative needs that in the past had evoked the legends of Hercules and Prometheus and Moses, fixed now upon Rud. He has still to have a halo woven for him by great art and music and poetic suggestion, his is indeed still a very uncertain halo, but his essential role in the human imagination was the same. It became his function to say the things men dared not say for themselves. He was The Word. Even Rud himself doubted at times whether some masterful pronouncement had not been said first as it were in the world at large and then through him. But the world at large had no such doubts.

The logic of human necessity was bringing the essentials of readjustment into the foreground of the racial mind, simultaneously, round and about the planet. It was sweeping along leaders and adventurers, reactionaries and revolutionaries, masterful men, weaklings and criminals, towards the simplified issues of a renascent world. It was sweeping our Rud along with the rest, but sweeping him now into a foremost place, because of the fact that his vanities and ambitions were sustained by those queer phases of lucidity of his, by his swift intellectual acquisitiveness, and by those outbursts of speech and impulse that predestined him to be, even as he professed to be, the megaphone of the common will and understanding of mankind.

Thus it was fate dealt with him. The mighty, impersonal forces of a world transition, seized upon our scheming little Rud and whirled him higher and higher, until he found himself nominally and physically the head of a new system into which the storm of necessity was forcing the world. It took him and exalted him. His reverie of a new world turned to reality and expanded to exceed his wildest dreams.

§ II

One might write a very intricate history of the idea of Rud in the world. Always there has been fantasy and falsification in the picture. To begin with, the circulation of his actual portrait was restricted. Instead of a confusing spray of photographs, two friendly studies of him in the pose of a thoughtful Beethoven established a visible

personality for him. Later, when snapshots became frequent, these sketches dominated their interpretation. He would never allow himself to be photographed speaking. He had studied the self-exposures of Hitler and Mussolini very carefully, and there survives no portrait of him with his mouth open. Neither was there any legend of his early upbringing in circulation in those early years. “Never mind what I am or where I come from,” was his response to the enquiring journalist. “It’s what you are, and what you think, and whether what I say is right for you.”

Millions of people did not know whether this Rud Whitlow they spoke of was English or American. Millions thought of him as a wise, secluded old gentleman. His white face had been noted and commented upon. In America there was a whispered legend that he was dying slowly of consumption. Another story gave him an unspecified disease in the marrow of his bones that inflicted the most frightful suffering upon him. Sometime, it was said, the surgeons had to saw open the marrow of a bone to relieve him. That gave him the support of many who otherwise might not have suffered his dominance. It was hard to envy a man who moved with pain and harsh to resist one who might be dead to-morrow. There were countless allusions to his tragic loneliness, and a number of religious ministers everywhere believed in and expatiated upon his intense “love of mankind”. He hated cruelty, oppression, needless want and war, they said, and he not only hated them but he worked out the way of relief from all these things.

Men liked his radio voice. He had studied the best models. From Tierra del Fuego to Spitzbergen and from China to Peru, there was an expectation that the time for a not very clearly imagined world-wide crisis was drawing near, and that when Rud said “Go”, the great day of the Common Man would dawn.

He knew how to arrest this otherwise unstanchable flow of informal warfare, more obviously aimless every year, that still distressed the world. He held the secret of World Peace and a Common Law. So they believed. The Commonsense of Things; the Common Law, the World in Common; these phrases had an effect of limitless release and enfranchisement from pole to pole.

§ III

The strike is one of the oldest phases of the warfare between the generality and the overbearing man. The common man comes to a point when his exploitation becomes unendurable, and he puts down his implements and says: “No more”. In a rational order this leads to a discussion of the situation and a readjustment of relationships. On ships and in militant armies, however, where the masterful men have elaborated the idea and methods of “discipline”, force comes into play forthwith, the strike takes the form of mutiny, and the masterful man, if he is not to be obeyed implicitly, has to be shot or put in irons or overboard. This is the natural consequence of overstressing mastery. The ultimate way of preserving human dignity in the face of arbitrary compulsion is to kill. Here reason and primordial instinct are in complete agreement.

The idea of a mutiny against belligerent governments, against all existing governments, seeped infectiously through the world. “Before there can be any world government,” said Rud in one of his phases of vivid conviction, “men must realise that all their governments are wrong. No existing government can become a world government, and a world government cannot be a large-scale imitation of any existing government. It must be a new thing embodying a universal mutiny.”

There had already been a foretaste of this mutinous reaction towards the end of the Great War of 1914-18. All the European fighting forces then were drifting to mutiny. The essential Russian Revolution was a mutiny, and the sit-down strikes of the early twenties in Italy and elsewhere, which immobilised factories and the mechanical plant of civilisation, not by the withdrawal of labour but by its cessation, were plainly experiments of the common man in his revolt against servitude and the exploitation of his necessities. These earlier efforts had failed because they had been local and regional. They had been premature. They had anticipated the necessary approximations and coalescences. They had occurred in a world which was still in a patchwork of dissimilar phases.

It was only now, with the abolition of remoteness, that the entire world was coming into step as one community. Now it was no longer

possible to crush revolt in one region before another became aware of the general significance of the struggle. Bodisham and Norvel were particularly energetic and efficient in developing what Rud called this "Simultaneous Awareness" throughout the world. By 1944 there was not a country or region in the world where the "Common Man's Party" was not known, where Rud's beetling forehead had not become the familiar symbol for a vaguely apprehended, vast organisation of release, and where the essential conditions of any conflict against limited, impatient and outworn authority were unknown. All over the world there grew up a solidarity of expectation, a sense of a new order not simply dreamt of, but prepared and approaching.

Those who were most concerned with what still passed for government in those days seem to have been the least aware of the essential connection of a hundred apparently divergent movements that undermined the superficial orderliness of life. Whenever for example there was still definitely an organised military suppression of social adjustment, there was what one may describe compactly and brutally as a "Shoot the officers" movement. This was more apparent in what were then called the authoritarian communities than in those which claimed to be democratic. But it was by no means confined to them. The Nazis for example had never displayed the internal discipline of the old German armies, and there was clear evidence as early as 1939 that the leaders did not dare impose too severe an obedience upon the looting and raping with which the rank and file repaid themselves for the fatigues of warfare. The men put their own interpretation upon their duties, and treated any attempts to moderate their behaviour as disloyalty to their esprit de corps. The Japanese staffs and officers again were often too manifestly compelled and terrified men, as the discipline of the hungry and ill-paid hordes of armed Japanese peasants that still swarmed in China relaxed. By 1939 Japan, for instance, in China, and Italy in Spain, had armies that the government dared not bring home.

There was a constant repetition of the same cycle of phases in the experience of the various demoralised army fragments, great and small, which were now scattered over half the land surface of the globe. First came insubordination, "shoot the officers" and "lead us,

Caesar, where we want to go"; a phase of successful lawlessness, a phase of rapine; then a feeling of isolation and fear and a great desire to link up again to some greater order. Bodisham and his staff, watching the world from their headquarters, had great maps flagged to mark down "contrite" troops. Most of these troops had heard vaguely of Rud. As apprehension grew in their minds they would usually claim that they were new revolutionaries, Rud's men. And the countries subjected to lawless brigandage and themselves forced towards counter-brigandage, found their only hope of restoring firm control in the anticipation of a World Common Law. They too claimed to be part of the great reconstruction. Every region too was now infested with de-nationalised exiles. Their dominant idea was to be legitimated as some new type of citizen. There comes a phase in social dislocation when the desire for order and security, for peaceful living overpowers partisanship, jealousy, possessiveness...

After the great naval losses in the first year of the War of the Ideologies and the development of the military deadlock in Central America and the Old World, the strike method assumed formidable dimensions both in the air forces and among the munition workers. These latter, as they realised their indispensability, began to refuse delivery of particular types of bombs and other weapons whose use they considered inimical to the common interest. The propaganda of Bellacourt had quickened the consciences of the airmen. Everywhere the air forces displayed a disposition to question the decisions of the military authorities. The roar of the planes overhead no longer gave the statesmen and politicians on the ground below a sense of unqualified power. They began to worry about the morale of the air forces, to organise espionage systems among these youngsters.

The propaganda organisations of the disintegrating national governments did an immense amount of work in the spread of the idea of Rud. Each assailed the prestige of its formal antagonists, and found an authority in his phrases, each in undermining the enemy morale sapped its own. Each appealed to Common Justice and the Common-sense of Mankind against its rival. In France and Britain Rud's activities were largely sustained by German money. In Germany his spreading reputation was financed and abetted by Russian, French and British propaganda. Russia paved his way in

China and Japan, Germany and Russia in India. The Catholic Church denounced him in one country and claimed him in another, but everywhere it spread his name. There is no better advertisement in the world than to be denounced by an unattractive priest or teacher. With the most definite intentions possible, Rud could still find it the best policy to remain ambiguous. He was vaguely supposed to be revolutionary and "creative", and at the same time he was supposed to be anti-Red. In reality he was ultra-Radical, he left the Reds far behind him. The Common Man emerged at last less by a process of assertion than by a progressive elimination of narrower alternatives.

§ IV

The Last War on Earth, the Second War to End War, when at last it could be envisaged as a whole, was a huge, ill-managed tangle of conflicts which began informally and did not so much end as peter out. It is difficult to imagine how it could have followed any other course. It was incoherent from start to finish. The name it still carries, "The Ideological War", was first devised for it by that interesting, rhetorical, quasi-intellectual, the Italian Dictator, Benito Mussolini. He too in his time, with his bright phases and his long, heavy interludes, was something of a minor Holy Terror, an opera-tenor Rud.

Already people are beginning to forget Mussolini's role in the restatement of human life. He is following Napoleon into oblivion as a mere energetic personality of no fundamental importance at all. The tendency when he is mentioned is to belittle him. But he was by no means a fool. His fustian was absurd and inconsistent but it was not contemptible. He was a man relatively intelligent among contemporary "strong men"; he had had early experiences of discussion and editorship, and his mind, like that of his Corsican precursor, ran habitually to obvious and often very attractive headlines. He was mentally excitable and as his temperature rose his headlines flushed. He wanted to figure as a Great Man in history, and he was quite unable to foresee the unromantic turn that history was taking.

He realised that for any effective victory in warfare there must be two sides and not more than two sides, but he failed to grasp the further fact that warfare may end without effective victory. He got his antagonisms wrong. The stresses and confusions of the world were more and more manifestly the outcome of the struggle of all the diverse forces making for a common-sense world state, against the obsolescent political, economic, religious and educational institutions, endlessly varied in origin and character, that obstructed them. But he thought the nationalist forms of history were permanent. The primary reality of the age was a world-wide conflict of pressures, parallel all over the world, for which the new order had still to find its definite formulae. To this his own obsessions blinded him completely.

Benito Mussolini, with a surfeit of bad history decaying in his imagination, could not see the plain realities before him. Like most of his generation he dramatised human affairs in incurably geographical patches, and like most of the masterful men of his time his belief in his power to mould the life about him carried him beyond sanity. From the beginning his was an ill-balanced temperament; he would be blatant at one moment, and weeping at another. He beat at the knees of Mother Reality like an unteachable child. He wanted war and conquest, triumph over definable enemies, fierce alliances, and unforgettable antagonisms. He wanted glory. He died, as his last words testify, completely unaware of the fact that the rational treatment of human affairs does not admit of that bilaterality which the traditions of warfare require. “Do we win?” he said.

He persuaded himself and he persuaded great multitudes of people that two great systems of ideas faced each other in the world, “Leftism” and “Rightism”, and that he and his associated Dictators embodied the latter. He did contrive finally to impose the illusion of a definitive World War upon great masses of people.

§ V

In this story of Rud’s career we are happily free to ignore the intricate controversies that centre about the riddle of what Right and

Left or Red or Fascist or the "authoritarian" and the "democratic" state really signified at any particular time and place.

There is an immense literature on the subject, abundantly unread, but still being patiently added to by the erudite. This material is subjected to micro-photography, indexed and so put away out of danger, with so much more of the excessive material of this age of excessive record. It is doubtful if it will ever find any useful application. It goes on and on. It is like Christian theology; it is like the bubbling of salted snails in a pail.

The fact remains that by the fifth decade of the twentieth century there was still a sufficient air of alignment between the two factions for formal diplomacy, alliance and secret treaties to continue. On the one hand, the confused mentalities of the groups, classes and individuals in positions of authority and possession were all sufficiently apprehensive of an advancing rationalisation of human affairs which would call them to account, to be consolidated in a general defensive offensive against something called "Democracy" or "Leftism" or "Reds" or "The Devil"; while on the other a certain number of governments, the so-called "democracies", were less able to make head against the expression of the renascence of common-sense Radicalism and had to pay at least lip-service to the creative forces of the world. The profound and subtle ambiguity of Russia, a fanatical bureaucracy professing the supremacy of the proletariat, sprawled perplexingly, with its internecine feuds and recriminations, across this complex of human interpretations. And still imposed upon the whole fermenting mass were the old boundaries, the old Foreign Offices, the old military and naval traditions, doddering and yet dangerous, that had so astonishingly survived the Great War of 1914-1918.

With a futile sense of complete reassurance the official mind found itself at last definitely at war again. There were actual declarations of war quite like old times. "Who said war was over?" the old order demanded, scared but glad.

"Now we know where we are," they said, when as a matter of fact they knew less than ever where they were. The city crowds cheered, the armies went tanking forward, the expensive navies, according to the best naval traditions, hid from each other in remote inlets behind

powerful booms, the bulletins lied even when there was no object in their lying, the planes roared overhead, the bombs crashed, the cities burst, people ran this way and that, clapped on silly gas masks and crowded out inadequate shelters until they were squashed or smashed or suffocated or starved, many millions of living, feeling, human beings were converted into red pulps and messes, and the Great War of the Ideologies moved on for a time, according to the best precedents, to no perceptible objective whatever. For the first six or seven months there was a tornado of battle. Everywhere one was at the front, so to speak, and the entire planet practically under fire. The tale of destruction is as monstrous as it is frightful; it baffled piety, it mocked heroics, philosophy refuses to entertain it, its records remain unread; only very old gentlemen who were in it con that history now for purposes of reminiscence; with a natural human callousness life has gone on and the dead past has buried its dead. Yet even at the time there was a certain amount of cheerfulness, a sense of adventure successfully surmounted, among those who survived. Many of those engaged in these conflicts were too excited to be distressed by their sufferings. Great accumulations of men and war material came into collision and remained in conflict for days and weeks with much slaughter and destruction; and the contemporary historian, trying, at any cost to the truth, to keep up his continuity with the past, called them "battles" and even explained what advantages were gained by them and how, in a technical sense, they decided this or that.

The land war ebbed before the first year was out. In the previous world war there had been a vast accumulation of material wealth to draw upon, and from the beginning to end the supply of men and material increased, to the universal amazement, as though there was no limit to human resources. But the War of the Ideologies followed quite a different course. It began almost at a maximum of equipment, and with populations incapable of much further effort and sacrifice. Armament deteriorated very rapidly at last; instead of the crescendo of 1914-18, there was a more and more perceptible diminuendo. Essential substances were giving out. Makeshift came into its own in the fighting line and famine spread behind it. And then came mutiny. The men of the dwindling air forces, urged to go up in less and less trustworthy machines, and the people in the overstrained munition

factories, increasingly dangerous as skilled workers became rarer and material degenerated, passed from reluctance to sabotage and flat refusal.

The European "authoritarian" warships so far overcame the battle-shyness of their crews as to put to sea in order to sweep the Atlantic; and their allies, the Japanese, got across the Pacific to shell and partially destroy San Francisco, cover a futile landing at Panama and another at Valparaiso, round Cape Horn, effect a sort of junction with the authoritarians after the destruction of Gibraltar, and fight that confused series of heroic rearguard engagements known as the Battle of the South Atlantic. For nearly a week the battleships of the world, those magnificent pieces of lethal engineering, careered about the seas, greatly afflicted by aeroplanes and submarines, and a bent and battered remnant got back to shelter again. And there it became manifest to the horrified captains that that was where their men intended to remain until the war was over.

Naval strategy became more and more a business of concealing this reality from the opposite side. That last naval war was indeed much more like a panic in a contentious Mothers' Meeting with a wasps' nest upset and mice on the floor, than it was to any of the set naval conflicts of the past. It was monstrous and tragic but also it was intensely ridiculous. After the surviving warships had been tucked away again out of harm's way, the residue of admirals on both sides went ashore, launched into authorship, and after a prolonged campaign, produced the curves of that truncated conflict to fully demonstrated victories. Everybody who had not been drowned or blown out of the water and had escaped to tell the tale, discovered that he and his side had won. The more these gallant survivors wrote, the completer their victories became. There are people who still find an interest in these highly technical discussions.

§ VI

Under the stresses of this War of the Ideologies the quality of the net of Radical organisations the Common-sense Movement had woven about the world was put to the test. And it held. People are only

beginning to appreciate the sweeping power of Bodisham's planning, the versatile energy of Norvel and the understanding and unobtrusive competence that appeared almost everywhere ready to co-operate with the Group. Great numbers of capable men had been waiting for some such lead. It was a far broader, more varied and flexible revolutionary system than had ever existed before. It risked no subtleties of strategy; its general direction was definite but broad, and capable of the freest adaptation to special needs and circumstances.

The general decision of Common-sense upon the war had no ambiguity. "Now," it said, "we fight. We will fight", the Common-sense people agreed, "against the intensive war-makers, and for those who propose to liberate. But we have had time to digest the lessons of the Great War, and everywhere we are going to fight conditionally, as free men and women. The governments we support shall justify their professions. They shall not merely pretend to liberate. They shall liberate indeed. This is no war between Make Believes. It is a plain fight to obliterate the very idea of a soldier from men's minds. This is a War to end War..."

Rud talked out the war issue to the Central Group but there was very little discussion. The Group had already shifted its headquarters to Sloten near Amsterdam, close to the new radio centre and the air-port. There, in a large room like a departmental board-room, surrounded with maps and Bodisham's later diagrams, Rud expounded his fundamental plan of campaign.

He banged the table and spluttered with subversive bitterness.

"The war to end war...That is what we are fighting. Over again. Never have sane words been so mocked at, and never were saner words uttered. Someone used that phrase for the last war, and it didn't end war. Ha-ha-ha and He-he-he and also Yah! But obviously there has to be a war to end war — and if that fails, another. And if necessary, another and another. How else in the name of the Everlasting White Rabbit, do you think we are going to end war? It isn't really funny that the first War to End War failed to do so. That was a great joke for the Conchies — it seemed to prove them right — but for mankind it was a disaster. It proves nothing that we were cheated by the old gang. Nothing at all. Peace is organised strength. Peace is the discipline of commonsense.

“The last war to end war miscarried. The world wasn’t prepared for the idea. The common man didn’t realise his opportunity. Very well, since then we’ve been busy. Maybe this one won’t miscarry. If it does, it will be because we in our turn weren’t up to the job. This time the common man has got to get and keep control. This time we have to save the world from the old confidence tricks. We English aren’t going to fight this war, simply and trustfully, under General Timberface and Colonel Blimp with the Army of the Aldershot Tattoo. The crown and the army class and the Anglican padres are not going to jump this war as they jumped our war in 1914. We’ve got to see to that. Nobody is going to stick up proclamations about ‘My army and my subjects’ in this war, without a protest from us. Let one thing be clear. It is we, the Common Men, who fight, and there are no ‘my subjects’. We don’t mean to cheer the cuckoo-clock at Buckingham Palace at the end of this war. No. It will be ours from first to last.

“The generals and colonels won’t jump us this time. Not if we know it. This war has to be won, and won for its definite end, and there’s not going to be any other sort of winning about it. These army duffers didn’t know how to conduct a war in 1914 when everything was as easy as pie — Heavens, what a mess they made of it! They had every card in their silly hands in 1916. I’ve heard decent men talk about it. Now everybody — even they themselves — everybody knows they can’t conduct a modern war. If a modern war can be conducted. They don’t know anything about it. They are just backward boys from backward schools a hundred years out of date. What we are calling a War now is really the opening phase of world amalgamation, it is not a war in the historical sense at all, and the only use we have for our armies now is to destroy the enemy armies and get them out of the way of civilian world controls. This war has to be fought with cards on the table and in the open daylight, with common-sense intervening at every point. Most of that Secret Service of theirs is just a screen to protect the incapables from public criticism. Official Secrets are usually officials’ secrets. Never trust a General; let every man under him watch his work. He’s no divinity. Why, some of those tin hats in the last war; the men didn’t even give them nicknames. Think of that! The men didn’t know enough about

them. Even for that. Everywhere, all over the earth, we've got to have our organisations saying: 'We mean to help in the war. Mean to be told. Mean to know. What do you think you are doing to me? I am a man. What's the idea of clapping me in a uniform and telling me to shut up and do what I am told? That's how you lost the last war for us...Not tell us? Because the enemy might get to know something! It isn't what the enemy knows, it is what we know that will win the war. And we mean to know it.'"

"That's the spirit of course," said Chiffan a little doubtfully.

"After every big fight," said Rud, "I think the men ought to re-elect their officers."

"That's the spirit," said Reedly, as though an endorsement was expected from him. "That's the spirit, as Chiffan says. I agree. I agree essentially. To the spirit of that. As a modern soldier. Cannon fodder is out of fashion. We want an army alive to its objectives — capable of carrying on if every officer was shot. Give me an army in which every man is fit to step forward and take the place of the man who has dropped out. So far the common soldier must be a responsible man. Yes...Still, there are occasions and necessities...There are times for implicit obedience..."

So Reedly, the "soldier of democracy", sitting square at the middle of the table and already beginning to look a little less like a not too confident deserter, and more like a commander of men.

Then Rud made a speech he had had brewing in his mind for some time. And as he made it, he watched its reception by Reedly.

"Secrecy," he said, and paused.

"Capable commanders will always know when to keep their own counsel — at their own risk," said Rud. "It's all too easy — all too easy — to get blind obedience if the men believe in their leaders. They like a leader to do the decisions. But I'm not only thinking of the war; I'm thinking of the end of the war. The vital thing about any rational war is its end. Only sadistic idiots in moments of rhetoric think of war as a thing in itself. You might as well think of a railway accident as a thing in itself. In some fashion or other this war is certainly going to be won by the Radical and quasi-Radical powers. Not a doubt about it. They've got mass, they've got endurance, they've got adaptability. There will be no separate peace. Make sure

of that.

"In some fashion or other this war will be won, I say. There's the rub. That's where the catch comes in. What we do not want is to see the war won in the name of liberty, at the price of liberty. Gently but firmly the common man has to take over from the diplomats and professional soldiers before the war is allowed to end. Even if it takes longer. On the other side as well it's necessary to have not simply defeat but real revolution. In 1918 the Great War was hushed up in a hurry because of the manifest imminence of revolution and Communism from the Urals to the Atlantic. The Armistice of 1918 was the sauve qui peat of the old order from the dawning understanding of the common man...

"Didn't you realise that? It's not documented, no. Maybe they didn't realise it. But that was the drive in their minds. Our common man now is ten times as clear-headed and made of tougher stuff. He's never recovered faith anywhere, since the Great War.

"In 1918 there was no one to say 'A Common Law for the World'. Now everywhere, we say it. That's what we are for. That particularly and exactly is what we are for."

He paused. Reedly pulled his moustache. He seemed to be taking counsel with himself, a strong, silent man, but he made no comment on Rud's declaration.

"I could not state our idea more clearly," said Rud. "If I could I would."

§ VII

With intentions thus defined and elaborated, the Group faced the formal outbreak of the War of Ideologies. They spread their tentacles as Bodisham had planned them, and the combatant and authoritative forces in the world, seeking to use their propaganda, were gripped by its implications. The Group undertook responsibilities and achieved recognition. Insensibly it became a power in the world. It became an intermediary and then a decisive intermediary. Its informality and apparent flexibility made it more convenient and more non-committal than the official modes of communication between the

Allied Democracies.

Few people remarked the rapid gradations by which this Party from nowhere and everywhere became a world institution. A year and a half of chaotic warfare and it was quasi-official. The winding up of the war drew near.

So eighteen months to a day after its decision to take part in the war, the Group met in that same room at Sloten. But now they were all wearing the plain grey uniform of New World Police, and the Dutch War Minister and a number of officers of the Consolidated Air Forces were with them. The maps upon the wall had undergone great changes.

The Common-sense Party was in practical and legal control of Holland. The Common-sense Government had an overwhelming majority there. This was true now of ten of the pseudo-democratic powers. And the Group had become the chief consolidating organ of all the allies. The shattered and exhausted militant states had realised its menace for them too late. First they had tried to make use of it under the impression that it was a pacifist influence that would weaken discipline in the Allied Armies. Then discovering that its ideas were permeating backward into their own ranks, they had attempted a futile suppression which had merely strengthened its hold on the Allies. And now the Group was discussing the campaign that would wind up the war, and it had met at the initiative of Reedly who, with an air of subordination that hardly pretended to conceal his growing insolence, had demanded “instructions” from his colleagues. The war, he said, was approaching its final decision.

He had long since abandoned his place at the middle of the table and shifted to the end, so that he faced Rud, and he was speaking now with the air of a reasonable man who exercises self-control in spite of much provocation. “I protest,” he said.

He had evidently come charged with that word.

Chiffan’s mind went wandering in search of a quotation. “Methinks” — how did it go — who was it— “doth protest too much...”

Reedly was speaking, and Rud was regarding him with brow-knitted attention. Bodisham, at the middle of the table, said very little, but looked occasionally at Rud. Once or twice Rud and he

exchanged glances. Dreed and Norvel, the men responsible for education and public information, Thirp for the police liaison everywhere, Steenhold, Irwell, Roots and Holbank, for production, and Bellacourt, the director of air communications, were all, it appeared, treating Reedly unreasonably and unfairly. He wanted the situation cleared up and he wanted to be entrusted with greater powers. There was a demand and a menace in all he had to say.

His position was a peculiar one. The necessity of a unified Allied Command had been forced upon the Democratic Powers by a series of military defeats in the European area. But the bitterness of wilful mutual sabotage had made the direct subordination of the acutely nationalist national forces, to the direction of any single commander among them, impossible. The British Premier's idea of a Liaison Minister, who might develop insensibly into an Allied Commander-in-Chief, was felt to be a brilliant one. It was also the Prime Minister's idea to look to the left for this Liaison Minister. The revolutionary strikes of great sections of the munition workers and the refusal of the unified air forces, after the Authoritarians had been virtually driven from the air, to continue to take orders from any source except their representative Bellacourt, had turned the Allied Governments to Reedly as the most hopeful intermediary for a restoration of their internal as well as their international solidarity. Reedly was manifestly far less "Red" and revolutionary in spirit than his associates, essentially he was a good soldier, and nevertheless he was in contact, or he professed to be in contact, with the entire Group, and he became in rapid succession Liaison Minister and then "World Marshal" of the Allied Armies. His commission was vague and he interpreted it as conferring upon him the supreme command over all the forces of the Democratic Powers. There was little resistance to his aggressions. On the whole the allied commanders were not averse to shifting their responsibility to a man who might be set aside at the general settlement. So in a couple of years this disgruntled military expert, this detractor with a grievance, had become an arrogant and aggressive soldier again.

"I come here from the active front and Bellacourt is not here to meet me."

"He is in America," said Rud, "he is dealing with the strike. And

Thirp, too, is busy — elsewhere."

"But I need them here. Bellacourt particularly. Believe me, I cannot wind up this war without his effective cooperation. I cannot do it."

He put out his open, hairy hand on the table and clutched, as though he grasped the world.

He was now a fine, florid, soldierly figure. He had expanded physically. His elocution had improved. A certain cantankerous note was no longer audible. Thirp, who missed nothing, had pointed out to Rud that he had acquired an artificial wave in his hair. "Vanity," said Thirp, "or ambition? Some vanity, of course. After all, ambition is only vanity with a backbone. That wave photographs better. It makes better personal propaganda..."

Steenhold found Reedly as admirable as an eighteenth-century portrait of a general. He deserved a background of battle-smoke — and a horse. A prancing horse with red nostrils. He was certainly the finest-looking captain of men the Group could have produced. He quite outshone the stockish Rogers, who had fallen entirely under his spell.

Reedly opened his big hand again and indicated points upon the chart of the world. "There," he said, "and there and there, you have the last resistances, the last possibilities of a final offensive. This Japanese- Brazilian army here has its back to the Andes. For that region a renewal of air action is absolutely vital. With that we could force a capitulation in a month and then we could concentrate all the air power on this Levantine-Persian-Danube-Elbe complex."

"It's intricate."

"Not so intricate if I had the air."

"And then a general capitulation?" asked Rud. "Naturally."

"Marches into Berlin and Tokio and so forth?" "Something of the sort," said Reedly.

"Nothing of the sort."

"But you want the war to end!"

"Do we?"

"Well?"

"We don't want a capitulation," said Rud. "I think we have that plain. Bodisham can give you chapter and verse for that. You see,

Reedly, we don't want any excuse for an assembly of the old governments on our side. On our side. The 'democratic' governments and all that. The longer they hide in their dug-outs the better for the New World. From our point of view the war to end war can have no formal end. We've got controlled shipping, amalgamated air forces, pooled finance, consolidated news-services, a common uniform. We want to keep them common for evermore. But the day we proclaim Victory and Peace the diplomatists and nationalists will come creeping out of their funk-holes again with their flags and claims and bills on each other and all that sort of thing. Versailles all over again."

"I agree with that," said Bodisham. "Our revolutionary organisation has become a world war organisation, and now it has to develop into a world peace organisation."

"Even now," said Reedly, "if we fly in the face of national feeling too openly — After all, the war isn't won yet."

"To all intents and purposes it is won," said Rud.

"In order to wind it up," said Reedly, "I want to have complete, unqualified control of the munition supply, and I want to put an end to this ridiculous Air Truce of Bellacourt's. Who ever heard of such a thing? It makes the war — ridiculous! Every day now we get a fleet of planes from Sweden going along the lines, inspecting us. Did you know that? I thought you didn't. They just fly over us and go away. Taking snapshots, I suppose. To send home to their friends. It makes a commander-in-chief feel like a fool. I'm like one of those Indian princes under the old British raj who were given armies to play with and weren't allowed big guns. Then there's this strike in America! — going right over the heads of the government...It's fantastic. It's indecent. Here we have the men, the workmen away there, deciding what sort of shell we may have, what sort of guns, if any — and Roots here and Holbank aiding and abetting them. Practically the hold-up of air-bombs is complete. Think of that. And not a fighter left. All in cold storage in Sweden. With a war still going on. Fantastic!"

"With an enemy immobilised and not daring to put a plane in the air — even if they had the stuff to do it with," said Bodisham.

"What do we know what surprises they might not spring on us?

Or what other surprises may be in store for us?”

“Your business to know that,” said Rud.

“Pshaw!” said Reedly.

Never before in his life had Steenhold heard anyone say “Pshaw!” It amused him greatly. It went with that family portrait of a general. Pure eighteenth-century. “How do you propose to deal with these munition-strikers in America?” asked Rud. “If you have a free hand there.”

“Clap loyal troops into the factories. British and American regulars. In the past Americans haven’t been so particularly gentle with strikers. Didn’t they use to have special strikebreakers?”

“They’ve lost so many of those old freedoms,” jeered Chiffan.

“If they try and replace the trained workers in the explosives factories,” said Rud, “they’ll have most of the factories in fragments somewhere up in the stratosphere. Well, Reedly, you’ll be pleased to learn that both Bellacourt and Holbank are in America now, dealing with that situation. There’ll be a fleet of bombing planes and a reasonable ration of bombs available for Europe or Asia or anywhere quite soon.”

“In my hands?”

“In Bellacourt’s hands, subject to your — intimations.” Reedly was disconcerted.

“I can’t work with Bellacourt.”

No answer. Rud pulled a grimace.

“I tell you I can’t work with Bellacourt.”

Still not a word. They all stared at him.

“To be frank I don’t trust Bellacourt. What is he after? You don’t seem to have thought about Bellacourt. Wings over the World. Air Peace? Dreams and dangerous dreams at that. Or excuses. He’s hand and glove with Holbank and Roots. Beware of these men. Yes, Roots, I say it. To your face. Beware of them. If only for the sake of world security — to keep faith with our allies — we have to hold in Bellacourt. After all we are men of honour. We are soldiers first and foremost. The Allied War Offices appointed me. Me and Rogers. We can’t play tricks on these governments that have trusted us.”

Rud sat ostentatiously weighing every word of this.

“I think we understand Bellacourt,” he said with deliberation,

“Bodisham and I and the rest of us. What we don’t understand is what you are after. Why do you want control of the air? Bluntly — who is it you want to bomb, Reedly?”

“The situation is complex.”

“Obviously. But who is it you want to bomb?”

“I don’t want Bellacourt to come sailing over the Pole to Europe on some private expedition of his own.”

“He makes you — uncomfortable. I quite see that. But all the same, if you get those bombers, Reedly, whom do you want to bomb? Grossberg is beaten. His army just sticks there waiting for something to happen...Whom do you want to bomb?”

“I don’t want other people to be bombed. I want to have things in my own hands.”

“You puzzle us all,” said Rud. “What, Reedly, do you really want?”

“The end of the war. Peace. The restoration of civilisation.”

“Dear old civilisation!” whispered Chiffan. “Dear old civilisation.”

“And — yourself, Reedly?”

“I shall be content to have done my duty.”

“You ought to be. You will be the last World Marshal and the Lord of Peace. You will have done a crowning service to mankind, for which all the world will thank you. Your statues will be everywhere and you’ll have more Avenues, Squares, railway-stations than you’ll know what to do with. Isn’t that enough?”

“But,” said Reedly, and stopped. He was not nimble in debate.

“Reedly, what exactly do you want?” asked Rud, very white and resolute. “Why did you come here? What have you got on your mind? What have you got up your sleeve?”

Reedly sat squarely at the end of the table with that big, hairy hand of his half-clenched. He glanced at his sleeve as though he thought something might be betraying him there. “This is all very well. I’m not a talker. I’m a plain soldier and I want to win this war for the Democratic cause. Mixing the military and civil commands has never been a success, and it will not be now.”

“We live in exceptional times,” said Rud.

“And that’s my answer?” said the World Marshal. “Yes.”

There was a pause. Everyone felt that a long latent issue in the revolution had suddenly become patent.

Rud realised fully that he was at a crisis in his career. It had suddenly come into his head as a bright, clear fact, that in some manner, publicly or privately, in the interest of the new-born World Republic, within a year at longest it would be necessary to have Reedly shot...

"Now more than ever," he said, "the supreme duty of everyone in the Group is loyal co-ordination. Everyone is answerable for his own department and must keep complete control of his own subordinates. Everyone must understand Reedly's plans, in general and in particular, just as we all understand Bodisham's plans. There must be understanding. There must be complete understanding. The Group is one."

"Then I am still to be like one of those Roman Generals with — What did they call those chaps?"

"Questors," said Irwell.

"A Questor at my elbow? — with" — he looked round the room and added three for the absentees— "with ten Questors?" "It works out rather like that," said Rud.

"And away there in America Bellacourt gets his bombs if he wants them and consolidates his position according to his own ideas. Has a free hand."

"You underrate Bellacourt," said Rud.

"And in any emergency I am to be caught short of munitions and helpless in the air!"

"What emergency?"

"How can I tell beforehand?"

"That is your job. To tell beforehand. Military command is perpetual anticipation...But you know that as well as we do."

He looked down the table at the sulky face of the great soldier. An impulse from his cruder, earlier days, to have the World Marshal arrested and shot forthwith, had to be controlled. He glanced at the placid face of Bodisham. "No hysteria," he said to himself, "no hysteria. Keep your head, Rud." This situation had been inevitable from the beginning.

"World Marshal," he said, "even if we cannot simplify your task

in the way you wish, all the same, you may rely upon all of us being at your service, in the service of our Common World."

He got up, and the Group took this as a sign that the session was over. He forced himself to walk down the room to Reedly, lay his hand on his arm and turn him towards the maps.

"Tell us all," he said, "what exactly you think we ought to do."

Reedly seemed disposed to resist for a moment, seemed disposed to throw off Rud's light, nervous grip on his arm; he looked down on Rud like an Alsatian dog being smelt by a mongrel terrier; then he shrugged his broad shoulders and complied.

"I must fly back to Poland," he said, "in an hour or so. Military necessity waits for no man. I cannot give you very long. Let me first explain the position of Grossberg's group of armies..."

III. — MASTERY

§ I

Rud woke out of a realistic and frightful dream. He had dreamt he was back in his mean little room in Bloomsbury. He had dreamt that he was lying awake in that knobby little bed, and trying to hold himself perfectly still, because otherwise the man in the next room might come in and beat him up. That dream instant was as clear and vivid as the actual moment. Everything came back to him. He had been shouting because of a terrifying vision of Lord Horatio Bohun and his row of thumbscrews. He had shouted as he awakened. But then the dream, after the manner of dreams, had switched away to other preoccupations. The unseen man had suddenly become Reedly, the World Marshal, loud and vast, bloodstained but indestructible, determined to get at him.

"You thought I was dead!" said Reedly. "My sort never dies."

Reedly scorched and torn, unrecognisable except for his uniform and his gaping mouth and thick moustache, and Rogers behind him, with half his face blown away. Without any top to his head and without eyes, with clenched hands and teeth and jawbone exposed, Reedly was, if anything, more frightful than ever.

When Rud had seen them they had been lying perfectly still. They had been as dead as rags. Not a kick left in them...

And here they were still in pursuit of him. Still a menace.

Gradually the dream dissolved, but for a time the fear still clung to him.

Then slowly that passed also as he recognised the lovely spaciousness of his bedroom. It was still sufficiently new to be a definite pleasure. He raised himself in the bed, stuck out his feet and rubbed his eyes. "I wish I didn't dream," he said. "There's no sense in such dreams...Reedly has been dead two years."

He considered. "Almost exactly two years. Three days short of two years."

His feet slid down to the smooth, cool, grey-green floor and he stood up and stretched his arms wide.

“Maybe I’ve worked my brain too hard,” he thought. “These are tremendous times. Maybe presently I ought to have some kind of a rest. When did I last have a rest? When have I ever had a rest...?”

He stood still, summing up the situation.

“I’ve got the upper hand completely now. I’ve won all along the line. Why should I be troubled? Why should I have these dreams? I have only to go on...But all the same if I could have a rest. Things will not leave me alone. New resistances. New difficulties. Not so great as the old, but still they come.

“Never a rest. I can’t leave it. Everything depends on me. Everyone turns to me for decision.”

He walked down the steps to his balcony and his face expressed a certain grave satisfaction with the martyrdom he had brought upon himself.

He paused under the great arch of the balcony and surveyed the little table on which his breakfast was set out. He had no appetite. He reflected upon the disadvantages of strenuous greatness.

“There was a time,” he reflected, “when I loved a new-laid egg.”

§ II

But before we can assist at this sunlit breakfast of Rud’s, it will be better to relate the main events that had converted Marshal Reedly into a nightmare horror of a frozen, faceless shout, and installed Rud, a nervous wreck, in that palatial sleeping place.

For two years Rud, sustained continually by drugs and the excitement of the struggle, had been living without a pause. He had been using himself to his utmost stretch. As the end of the War had approached, it had seemed to him that the stresses of his life were drawing to a climax. But thereafter his activities had never fallen below the crisis level. The attainment of world mastery by the Group had not been an end but the beginning of a far more subtle and serious struggle, and only after a two-year crescendo of strenuousness did there seem to be any hope whatever of relaxation in his gigantic revolutionary effort.

Until the very end of the War of the Ideologies it had been in

doubt whether the Old World, so far as it was embodied in the Allied Governments, had captured and was making use of the Group and its World Revolution or whether the World Revolution had taken control of them. In the end where would mastery lie? No brain in the world had been more acutely aware of this indecisiveness than Rud's. Day by day, long before the war was over, that ceaseless conflict had gone on, now a point won, now a point lost, now a phase of grip and assurance, now a phase when everything seemed slipping away from him.

Reedly had not been the whole of the trouble; he had not been the heart of the trouble; but he had been its forefront. Reedly and his ambitions and intrigues, his romanticism and his arrogance, his obvious good looks, melodramatically aristocratic, and his obvious contempt for the Common Man, had become the centre and embodiment of the old order of things that Rud was bent upon destroying. He was World Marshal; it was manifest that he hoped to be the first World Caesar. He played off the governments against the Group and the Group against the governments more and more plainly. Until he was destroyed, his destruction seemed to be the final victory for which the Group had to fight. When he was destroyed his destruction seemed only an incident in a far profounder conflict.

In the days before the outbreak of war had brought the Group into official existence, it had carried on its propaganda against astonishingly little resistance. It had slipped in between right and left, with such an air of undogmatic neutrality that few people realised that its fundamental propositions ploughed deeper than either reactionary or "red." It had spread its ideas and phrases about the world with scarcely any counter-attack. To the middle-aged people who constituted the directive stratum in every one of the combatant states, it only became apparent how very definite and uncompromising was the Party of the Common Man and how steadily it was setting itself to create new lines and forms of human activity, when it was already in partial possession of the essential services of the community. The younger officials, the foremen and non-commissioned officer class were already, to a large extent, explicitly or tacitly "Rudite." You never knew, nowadays, among the younger people particlarly, the old stagers began to remark, where

those Commonsense ideas might not crop up, and how much these younger men might not insist on disregarding orders in pursuit of some overriding idea. “It is a phase,” said the old stagers, uneasily. “It will pass...But we had better do something nevertheless. We don’t want this sort of thing to go too far.”

As the defeat of militant totalitarianism became more certain, the resolve of this active and ascendant Party of the Common Man to keep its grip on the world industries and the transport services it had practically commandeered, and to go on disregarding the national separatisms it had over-ridden in the name of military necessity, became more definite and outspoken. And with that, resistance to the Group rose.

The hold the Common-sense Movement had secured upon the means of counter- propaganda varied widely in different countries, and Rud realised with a gathering anger that a widespread series of movements for national and racial assertion, against “deadly uniformity,” against “socialism” and the “bureaucratic control” of financial processes, against “educational tyranny” and “the suppression of local and individual enterprise,” were putting up a more and more effective opposition to his rapid drive towards a permanent socialistic world organisation and administration. “After the war,” they said, “Restoration.” “After the war,” said the Common-sense Party, “go on to the new world.”

A mind whose operations were becoming of increasing importance in Rud’s view of the world at that time was the slow, clear, competent intelligence of Bellacourt. So far Rud had met few engineers or scientific workers, and he found himself dealing with a type of mentality less rhetorical and firmer than any he had encountered before. Bellacourt’s general trend was conservative; his disposition was to take it for granted that a vaguely apprehended but highly desirable civilisation was endangered by the failure of something he called vaguely “moral progress” to keep pace with material advance, and that this civilisation had to be saved and reconditioned. After which he was inclined to think no more about it and settle down to what he considered to be his own particular job. He loved the applications of flight to exploration and research, to the taking of food, relief, medical aid to otherwise inaccessible places, to

the spraying of crops, the fighting of fires and suchlike humanitarian services. Civil aviation was the very axis of his mind and he could not get away from it.

The whole complex plan of a new world that Bodisham had elaborated had to be correlated with air-necessity before Bellacourt could be brought into militant co-operation with the Group. Rud feared he might throw his weight on to the other side, and consent to a premature peace settlement and another hopeless tangle of efforts to put the world back to some imaginary former contentment. His influence in the air forces was enormous. He was, Rud realised, an absolutely indispensable man.

But educational work upon Bellacourt, that Rud and Bodisham found heavy going, was happily for them taken out of their hands by Reedly's eagerness to gain control of the air arm. He found it difficult to regard a man so slight, fair and civil as Bellacourt as in any way formidable. He spoke of him as an "ideologue," a word he used to express the nadir of his contempt. He had picked it up from some Life of Napoleon, and by it he meant a man who believed without qualification in his own beliefs, and who was, therefore, a difficult associate. Rud and Bodisham were a little inclined to agree with that opinion, but they let Reedly do the talking. Bellacourt disliked Reedly's moustaches, disliked his overriding, short, sharp manner, his barking judgments that were always wrong when you thought them over. He detested the noises Reedly made coming into a room. Bellacourt was indeed the whole machine-age ahead of Reedly. Mechanisation means lubrication. One can hector men about but not machines, and so they mend our manners.

Reedly's attempts to loosen Bellacourt's hold on the air services of the world forced the latter towards a complete liaison with the Common-sense Party. It was attacking institutions that seemed to him not merely harmless but amiable; he thought its hostility to religion and its educational aggressiveness harsh and unnecessary; but he realised that in contrast with Reedly's dangerous unscrupulousness it was set inflexibly upon the creation of one common air service for the whole world. That was what he wanted.

That was what Bodisham wanted. That was one of the "parallel independent co-operations" that collectively were to make a new

world for mankind. It was typically a world service that had to be "put out of politics." And what Rud wanted chiefly was to destroy the old traditional institutions, the old respectabilities and dignities and loyalties he hated, the separating distinctions and time-honoured claims, that were now creeping out of their hiding-places and abandoning their protective camouflages again as the defeat of the quasi-modernised Authoritarians became more and more assured.

At first the widespread resistance to World Unification had seemed various in its nature, very human and spontaneous. At first perhaps it was. Rud put it down for a while to the natural perversity of his fellow Common Men. He was disposed to deal with it piecemeal. Then as he heard Thirp's reports upon Reedly's ever-ramifying activities and discussed the accumulating opposition with the organising Bodisham and the shrewd, observant Chiffan, he began to realise the increasing interrelation of these difficulties. They were being drawn together and shaped into a definite, new, reactionary organisation. Very rapidly now.

As usual his mind leapt beyond his instructors'.

He summoned his inner cabinet, his most trusted intimates, Bodisham, Steenhold and Chiffan, to his room at the Aerodrome.

"I want to talk to you three about something urgent," he said. "Let me explain..."

They did nothing to prevent him.

"This new movement. It's beginning to crop up, in speeches, books, newspapers, diplomatic conversations. We have all been too busy at our particular jobs to note it. They have a word: 'Federation!' You must have observed it...One hears more and more of it...The way it breaks out here, there and everywhere has puzzled me...Perhaps you don't think it amounts to much. It does. Yesterday I was baffled by a world that looked like a scattered jigsaw puzzle — one thing after another that wouldn't fit in place. Then in the night I woke up."

"You would," said Chiffan.

"And it was all clear. Suddenly I saw it clear. I thought we were just up against Reedly. I thought it would be easy to deal with him when the time came. In fact I thought I had that provided for. But it's something much bigger than that. It's 1918 over again if we don't

save it. The world will be cheated again. This Federation movement is becoming a line-up of all the war-battered conservative forces in the world. They blundered into this world war quite on the old lines, and now they want to blunder out of it again quite on the old lines. Instead of our Common World Law we are to end in a revised patchwork of what do they call them? — free sovereign countries, a Federal United States of the World. Each of them still with its own little flag and money and religion and finance and peculiar company laws and all that. It's going to be a sort of Reformed Yesterday. An agreement against war — some sort of treaty again — some sort of Geneva again. With a World President (or an Emperor maybe) and a World Senate of dodderers and a Supreme Court to bar any constructive action. Each rotten little state still free to do what it likes with its own common men so long as it doesn't go to war. Sweat 'em — sell 'em, Exile 'em. Like throwing snails over the garden wall. A long time that will last! It sounds so free and liberal — the Federation of the World. Wilson's self-determination over again. Tennysonian and all that. Broaden down from precedent to precedent, but remain squatting good and tight on your particular allotment of the Common Man...I'll die a thousand deaths before I'll stand it! I'll raise the world against it."

He couldn't sit at the table, He walked about the room, white-faced, gesticulating with clenched fists. "I see it all," he said, "I see it all. They think they've used us and they think they're done with us. And the hand that is drawing all the threads together is that hairy fist of the future First World President, the Conqueror of the Last War of All, the ultimate Julius Caesar, Judas Caesar — Reedly...

"Who I thought was just on his own..."

And then in an intense voice, and as if he soliloquised, he said something that lifted Chiffan's eyebrows.

"I will not have my Revolution assassinated," he said. "No. I will not be tricked now. Now that I have got thus far. I have struggled for this day — for five and twenty centuries. Yes. I and my sort. Five and twenty centuries of it against the bullies and the bouncers and the quiet, sly, plausible people, one down another up. My sort of men have struggled long enough. My sort of men. The pre-Ruds and the sub-Ruds, the vulgar, ugly, slighted, cheated, resentful, free-spirited

Common Men. The Crowd. The Rebels. The Great Unwashed. Me! Do you think I haven't been here before and do you think all of you haven't been here before? In the same corner. They can kill us and bury us and burn us up or let us rot away. Back we come again and again. Now, this time, we're nearer winning than ever we were. I feel it in my bones...

"Do you think the Son of Man is going to be downed by a chap who neighs like a horse...?"

He stopped short and stared at Chiffan. "Sometimes you think I'm crazy, Chiffan."

"Sometimes I think you're inspired."

"Well, anyhow," said Rud, and stood for a moment like a drugged man. He pulled himself together. "Well, now we have it plain. Come down to hard tacks. How can we grapple him, Bodisham? How can I set about him? What men can we count upon? Who is with us? What sort of men are with us?

"I knew he had this sort of thing in mind. That talk of his about a United Command! That perpetual effort to get police control away from Thirp and to edge Bellacourt out of the air. Always he was against the embargo on bombing. He's a natural born bomber. Bombing makes him feel like a God throwing thunderbolts. Then his manceuvres to go behind the Allied Munition Board and have military instead of civil direction in the factories! His pick of officers! His idea of contacting our engineers...! Yes, but what we haven't realised up to now were all those forces scattered throughout the world, those multitudes of reasonably able, successful men who've 'got on,' as people say, w ho dread the Economic World State like the devil, to whom this loose Federation of Mankind they are talking about, without any world investigations, without common financial control, without human unity, will be reprieve, freedom, opportunity...

"We've got these National Dictators licked. They're all sheltering behind their soldiers now — and their soldiers are wondering how to dispose of them. It's like Kaiser Wilhelm in 1918. Grossberg is their Reedly. Old Marshal Grossberg is no fool. He knows where he stands. This last war is over. The situation on the European front isn't the deadlock it pretends to be. It's a sham fight waiting for a

chosen umpire. Who won't be us. Grossberg means to surrender. His army is sulking. They sit in their dug-outs and their officers keep away from them. They've got to that. On the east and centre, anyhow. He may be shot in the back anywhen now. But he means to surrender to Reedly according to all the laws of war, and he doesn't mean to surrender to us. We might hand him back to his own people. We might do anything to him. He wants to capitulate while he still has an army to surrender. Reedly hasn't reported the state of affairs to us, because he is hesitating. Reedly is still funking Bellacourt. And he has a nasty feeling about Thirp and Thirp's police-net, and he feels I mean to shoot him at the first opportunity. As I certainly do. When the shooting begins it will have to be quick work. How are we going to set about it?"

"Whom can we count upon?" asked Bodisham.

"We must bring in Thirp. He's developing amazingly...He's not exactly omniscient — but he's sub-omniscient."

"There are enormous masses of indeterminate people just now in the world," said Bodisham. "A push will send them in any direction."

"What are we going to do?" said Rud.

His three familiars knew that he meant to answer that himself.

"I have ideas," said Rud. "I have some ideas."

He dropped into his seat and began to jot down the untidy intimations of notes on a strip of paper. He thought. He rang for his new secretary, Olders, and gave instructions for Thirp to be called to them at once.

"I had a sort of intimation," said Rud. "As you know, Bellacourt has been in America twice in the last fortnight. Didn't I tell you? He is there again. He's there with Holbank. After our talk with him — you remember that talk, Bodisham I had a talk to him myself. It was an afterthought. As a matter of fact, though I didn't bother you others with it, we've done a sort of mobilisation of the air forces. It was Bellacourt's own suggestion — after I talked to him. We've assembled material in Labrador ready to fly it over to Sweden, real war material, and we've been concentrating planes in Sweden. You remember how Reedly the other day objected to the planes flying over his blessed little war. What he didn't realise was that they were photographic planes and that every day for a month we've had a

complete photographic record of every movement at the front, and in one or two districts behind. I don't think Reedly knows anything of these highly trained young men in Stockholm with their magnifying glasses, sitting over his little shifts of troops and transport and puzzling out what they signify. Of course, we may have missed one or two little things...

"Frankly, I expect a Reedly Putsch now within six weeks. Bellacourt ought to be coming over Greenland now and his fighting planes ought to be accumulating during the next fortnight. It has to be done quietly. We don't want to frighten the birds too soon. I want this Putsch to happen. I want Reedly to show his hand. That will bring world affairs to one plain issue."

"I didn't perhaps consult you as I ought to have done," he said. He turned to Bodisham with his notes. He was as near to being apologetic as he could be.

"How do you figure this out?" he began.

Steenhold looked at him. He liked this. This was his Rud at his best. It came into his head to say: "Do you remember, Rud, how you came into my flat that Sunday morning — not so many years ago? Just as you are now. 'This is the moment,' you said." And then it occurred to him that this remark might be unnecessary and inopportune, so that he did not make it.

Thirp appeared suddenly. "You're quick," said Rud. "I have to be," said Thirp.

"Olders had hardly gone out of the room five minutes ago to call you."

"He didn't call me. I came of my own accord. I have something very urgent to tell you."

Rud took him aside.

"If it could be just ourselves," said Thirp. "For a moment anyhow. I want to tell you something. It's something so queer — I don't want to argue. Do you mind?"

Chiffan and Steenhold intimated that they did not mind. Bodisham was expressionless. There was something feminine in the way that Thirp would always scheme to get Rud to himself if he could and have little special understandings with him, but it was a pity Rud fell in with this. Bodisham was a philosopher. He had to take Rud as he

found him. Rud was essential to the Revolution and that was that. Rud expected to have everything told and explained to him and yet he was always going behind his organiser's back, with Norvel, with Bellacourt, with Thirp — with anyone. It was his way. Bodisham drummed with the fingers of one hand on the table and Steenhold understood how he felt and thought.

Rud led Thirp to an inner room.

§ III

"It is a very extraordinary thing," began Thirp in his high- pitched voice after he had watched the door close. "But you have such understanding—"

He twisted his long, thin hands together. "It may seem preposterously trivial to you, but what I have to tell you about is the despatch of twelve million coloured post cards from London, to various destinations I have checked. They are all pictures of the same person—"

"Reedly?"

"Exactly. I have known about these post cards for weeks — joining them up to other little things of a similar nature. There are some pamphlets, too — in various languages. Well, I will confess I'm startled. I did not expect these cards to move so soon. No. I counted on three or four weeks yet. I was timing things for that as I explained to you. Then suddenly they have been hustled off..."

"That means something has been precipitated?"

"Exactly. You see — I think. It's very significant." "The first cat's-paw of a storm?"

"Exactly. These post cards are trivial in themselves, but they are part of an elaborate scheme. If they go off, then the whole scheme must be in motion. Nobody would give a particular order, specially about them. Somebody or something has pressed a button. A post card can show how the wind blows."

"Things are still at a standstill on the front?"

"N-oo. I shouldn't say that. That's exactly it. They can't be. The unexpected must have been busy there. The front has always been

difficult to watch. Conditions vary from sector to sector. From their left wing and all up through the Little Carpathians the disposition to fraternise has been very strong for some time. Bellacourt's leaflets, the ones you drafted, have done more there than bombs. Reedly has flatly forbidden them and he has five planes under arrest—"

"Blank mutiny."

"At Constance. I've just got the report of that. You know he has always been opposed to our air propaganda. But he has never dared touch it before. Probably he has some excuse. Things are different on the right there, where the lines bend back above the Jura. What we call the Italian flank. These sectors are more complicated. Old hatreds. There is a considerable artillery activity. The men can't get near each other, and there's Italians against our Spanish. That ugly old feud is as bitter as ever. There's black blood there, and also near the middle where the Czechs are up against the Germans. Now the English and Germans have even stopped sniping...But all that's quite secondary...

"Let's look at a map."

The map was spread on the table.

"These are details. The right and its little raids and killings is, I say, secondary. What matters is the state of affairs on the centre and their left. There their discipline is in such a state that their Higher Command may come trotting over to Reedly with a white flag at any time. For all I know that may be happening now. I told you that was possible yesterday, but I didn't realise it was imminent. Since then something definite may have happened. Something very definite. Reedly certainly didn't expect a snap to come so soon. Nobody expected it so soon. I didn't. He's a great commanding figure is Marshal Reedly, and when he says a thing has to happen, that is the appointed time. Maybe it's got something to do with the food breakdown. Maybe some quite small regimental affair has started an avalanche. Maybe they're shooting their officers like the Russians did in '17...Maybe they're fighting among themselves. But you see, whatever he's been getting ready in the way of a mine under our feet is going to be let off — sooner than was expected — in a day or so...Or earlier. These post cards..."

"You're listening in everywhere?"

“I could a tale unfold. But I spare you. I’ve got it pretty clear; trust me. I join my slats. The idea always has been to stage an Armistice at the front without consulting you, and to proclaim World Federation and the end of the war straight away. And that’s what they seem to be doing now. In a rush.”

“Reedly as Jove?”

“Descending upon an exhausted Europa in a cloud of post cards. Sorry! I’m afraid I’m mixing the ladies.”

“And he means to do — what?”

“He will seize the aerodromes and tackle Bellacourt. And that reminds me of another thing about this sudden precipitance. Bellacourt, I find, has been in Canada. Has anything been going on in Canada?”

“You don’t know that?”

“No, I don’t know that. How could I know it — if you didn’t tell me?”

“Well — there has been —

“Preparation?”

“Bellacourt will fight Reedly — yes.”

“I wish I had known,” said Thirp, and wished silently that sometimes Rud would let his left hand know what his right was doing. “I wish I had known,” he repeated.

“Reedly must have heard of that,” he went on. “Before I did. That may have touched everything off. But anyhow, he is against Bellacourt. He hates Bellacourt if possible more than he hates you. He’s a vain man. These last months, without any real air fighting and the command of the air in our hands, have made him feel ridiculous. I think I can give a rough guess of what he will do. In one little communication that I happened to hear he said — what was it? — prig-ridden air. He’d go straight for the aerodromes and try and recover them from the Allied Air Control, that is to say, Bellacourt. He will seize some of the big power-stations. I’ve been trying to get all that unobtrustively policed — by trustworthy people. He will naturally denounce you for wanting to prolong the war by holding back the air arm. Hey Presto! Civilisation has been saved in the nick of time. We shall figure — as Reds, as World Communists, enemies of religion, enemies of patriotism. All our hard-won respectability

gone! Most of us will be arrested.”

“He’s got all this ready?”

“He’s got it half ready. In one way or another I’ve wetted a lot of his powder. Some sort of attack was actually brewing here, there’s some army die- hards professedly on leave in Amsterdam. Maybe they meant to raid us here. But I’ve scotched that for the moment, I think, by bringing in about a thousand — nearly a thousand — of my own youngsters. From London...Well, anyhow, they’ll be here this afternoon. He’s had about three divisions in reserve in Flanders ready to be clapped into trains and rushed here by the end of next week. That I know. Munitions not arrived for them. He’s a bad organiser. Roots has held that up, We’ve got all that taped. They’re stirring now, but they can’t get moving — at least only a few companies might be rushed...With no guns...I’ll have the trains held up. I think I can do that. My men will be here in three hours at latest. Nothing much can happen until then.”

His confidence had a slightly forced quality.

“Of course,” said Thirp, “in a place like Amsterdam...One can’t answer for everything — There’s always been a strong reactionary movement...”

Rud stood brooding over the map.

“This place might be quite a lively spot in no time,” he said.

Olders burst in with a paper in his hand and handed it to Rud. Rud read it silently and then aloud: “Enemy army in open mutiny. Discipline gone. Higher Command and officers ask to surrender to us. They are in great danger. Have ordered Cease Fire and am arranging surrender and armistice. Propose to proclaim World Peace forthwith based on self-determination.”

“D’you hear that?” said Rud. “Based on self-determination.”

“Only conditions generally acceptable. Trust you and Bellacourt will co- operate...”

“We were prophetic,” said Rud.

“And now?”

“Either I shoot Reedly or he shoots me within the next twenty-four hours.”

“My lads from London will be here,” said Thirp; “it can’t take them three hours. I don’t see how I can possibly accelerate

them...Frankly I would if I could. Tell me about Bellacourt. How does he stand? Can these planes from America be brought here? In time?...”

Rud answered none of Thirp’s questions. Instead, he went on extracting particulars of the situation in Amsterdam.

§ IV

Steenhold sat in his place at the council table. He looked sullenly amused. He was reflecting upon the change in his relation to Rud. He had wanted to make a friendly remark to him and he had not made it — out of deference! He was surprised at himself and everything.

There had been a time, not so many years ago, when he had been a sort of patron-philosopher to Rud, when he had disputed with him, quarrelled with him, said anything he liked to him. And paid the bills. Now one waited to be told. This revolutionary business had become real, very real. When he had played at World Revolution in Camborne Square, reality had seemed a hundred worlds away. And yet, had it not been for his helpful money in those early days...

The door of the little room opened and Rud, an exalted Rud, appeared. His scowl was at its most masterful and vicious and his mouth was tight drawn in at its left corner, with resolution.

“Listen,” he said. “Everything has to be short and quick. The moment is nearer than we thought.”

Bodisham turned an attentive face, saying nothing.

“Olders,” said Rud, “radio Bellacourt G.G.G. and then wait ten minutes, then repeat and go on until you have the code answer.”

“What does that mean?” said Chiffan.

“He’ll know.”

“H’m,” said Chiffan, and his eye met Steenhold’s for a moment.

Rud advanced to the table and spoke, standing.

“Reedly’s lost his nerve,” he said. “He’s put his Putsch on — a month perhaps. And here we are. He means to strike. He’s got a trainload of French troops coming here from Antwerp, but that may get switched on to the frontier. Evidently he means to grab this place and us. That’s for the transport section, Steenhold. What can you do?

Thirp doesn't know exactly what he has in the town — but I doubt if it's ready. He's got no guns — anywhere. Neither at Antwerp nor in Amsterdam. Thirp thinks he has some of the groundsmen here...That's the situation. There's no doubt he's moving now. We may have a raid here at any time. But we've got those planes out there? He may have stuff for the four or five he has at Constance. You'd better pack up, Bodisham — in case...We'll keep one plane for you...But that's by the way...

"First of all, the situation here. I want you, Steenhold, to take charge of all this. The police here don't number four hundred, there's only a youngster in command — we don't know anything about him — and Thirp will hand over the command to you. You must have got a section of your transport corps at Rotterdam and some at the port here. They're scattered, I suppose. Can you get them together? We want the aerodrome and the radio station held — and all this. Dreed had better go to the radio station forthwith. You'll assist him to improvise a defence. It's very important to keep the radio going. Steenhold — if you will go with Thirp to the door — your second in command is outside. Thirp and Olders and I are going to vanish. You'll hear from us soon enough."

He went and sat down beside Bodisham and began to talk to him rapidly in undertones. Bodisham nodded quickly and approvingly.

Steenhold felt anxious. Where was Rud going? Oughtn't there to be some sort of council of war?

"I don't understand," he began.

"Steenhold," said Rud, "you've got your orders. Things can't wait for explanations now. You must do something about those French troops from Antwerp. They have to be held up. There's not much time if they are really entrained. Does the line come through Rotterdam? I don't know."

"Gee!" said Steenhold, blew, and then got up and saluted. He had never saluted Rud before.

Rud went on talking to Bodisham.

"That's Rud. That was," said Steenhold as he left the room with Thirp.

They found a bright young officer of police outside, who saluted. Thirp led the way to the ground floor where there was a large-scale

map of the aerodrome and its surroundings. “Show the Minister where your men are,” he said.

“Is there a siren or anything handy,” said Steenhold, taking hold of the situation, “to call the men to quarters?”

The first intimation that Reedly’s Federalist friends in Amsterdam had of trouble afoot was the siren at the Aerodrome. Thirp’s secret police were already in possession of the Antwerp telephone exchange and were intercepting Reedly’s calls to action and taking down the names.

Most of them were caught unawares. But not all.

“This is a damned great place to hold with only four hundred people,” said Steenhold, standing on the steps of the main building and surveying his area of responsibility. In the afternoon sunshine it looked tranquil almost to drowsiness. “I wonder what one ought to treat as vital points and just where the trouble will come from and what shape it will take.”

Steenhold had a lively but receptive mind, he had never been a man of action. He did not feel like a man of action now. He had always looked on at life, egged people on, enjoyed the results of their initiatives. Rud had been his great discovery, his staple entertainment. Now suddenly, an hour after lunch, he found himself with a recalcitrant bunch of disconnected responsibilities thrust into his hands and no one to observe but himself. Hold this place? Hold it how? Hold it against what? Away there by the air station were half a dozen planes lined up and a small one some way off in the corner of the field. These, he supposed, would have to be guarded — the pilots were probably standing by and they would be Bellacourt’s men, but there ought to be some police to support them. Rud had said something about disloyal groundsmen. The machines had to be protected from sabotage, A man with a bomb might play havoc there. Then half-hidden by the main building was Dreed’s radio station. Dreed would be warned and would see to the defence of that, but he ought to be reinforced.

“Three essential points,” Steenhold told himself, “headquarters, the planes and the radio. No way of consolidating a central position that I can see. But think — where will the attack come? First there are those French troops from Antwerp. If they come discreetly with

pilot engines ahead and a revolver at the ear of every engine-driver, it won't be so easy to switch them out of action. But coming discreetly means coming slowly. They'll come along the line and detrain where it is most convenient. Can they afford the time to come discreetly? They'll have to rush. If they rush, they must rush into trouble."

"How near is the railway?" he asked, and then had a bright idea. Even if he couldn't switch those French troops off to some remote destination, as he had imagined at first, he could get a dozen engines or more if necessary from Amsterdam, put them on the line, and simply smash up that troop train as it came up. Before they had time to detrain. He must see to that in a minute, as soon as he was clear about everything else.

Something else? There might be some sort of attack in unknown force from the town. That would come by road in cars. It might come first. It might wait for the arrival of the French. It might not come at all. Nothing might come. He ticked off the items on the fingers of his open hand. Then he asked his second in command how many men he had.

"Seventy-six on duty. The rest are falling in over there by the hutments. About two-hundred-and-ninety-odd."

"Good," said Steenhold. "We join them."

And as they walked across the Aerodrome he arranged for a squad of men under a competent sergeant to go towards the town, hold up any cars and wire the road, while another squad was to reinforce the radio guard, if there was a radio guard, and put itself at the disposal of Dreed. The road party paraded, six men went off to get wire from the stores and the rest marched briskly towards the Amsterdam road in the most business-like way. Steenhold ordered a dozen men to strengthen the force in the main building and stationed the remainder of a hundred and twenty men in front of the main building as a reserve force that could be turned in any direction to meet whatever trouble might arise. He went through the motions of an inspection of their arms. "We've just got to prevent any disturbance," he told the young officer. Then he went to the planes to assure himself that the pilots and mechanics were on the alert.

He did all this methodically, watchful of his second in command and the two orderlies they had annexed, to see from their behaviour

whether he seemed to be doing things right. They seemed to think he was doing things right.

The pilots seemed satisfied with themselves and anxious to learn what was expected of them. He told them to be ready to go up at any moment and they said “Aye, aye, sir,” very reassuringly. Within he felt that faint stirring of derision for the whole business of life which is the salt of the American mentality. Outwardly they are sentimental and enthusiastic and inwardly they are profoundly cynical. All over the world for generations, he reflected, this solemn sort of preparatory business has been going on; commanding officers, with an air of conviction, making their dispositions, sentries being put, passwords fixed, challenges arranged, all the stiffly silly formalities of warfare, everyone being as wooden and regulation-ruled as possible, and the officer never quite sure of himself and carrying it off with an air.

Americans generally have never loved this saluting, uniform-wearing business. They over-did it when they had a chance, because fundamentally they could not believe in it. Probably it was necessary. Probably you could only keep the thing going with all this routine. But what a quantity of fuss, of saluting, heel-clicking, running about, before ever you begin to have anything real happening!

It was just the same with religion. Setting about things, that, in ninety- nine cases out of a hundred, took you nowhere and did nothing that mattered, with the gravest of faces. Being stern, sharp, emphatic — violent if necessary. Before it was necessary. “‘Shun!” “As you were!” “On the knee!” Why did every human concern clog itself up in a tangle of routines, formalities, disciplines, imperatives? Why couldn’t one be free? Really free? Guarding one’s freedom, wasn’t freedom at all. Why couldn’t one win one’s freedom for good and all, and get on with life?

He wished he knew more of the situation. Had Reedly got hold of some planes? If so, would they appear presently? Where was Bellacourt? What had Bellacourt got away there in Sweden? Was Bellacourt playing some game of his own? Why didn’t we have our own planes in the air here? When the war began there had been tens of thousands of planes fighting in the air, and then as the enemy had their factories and aerodromes destroyed and their planes beaten out

of the sky, there had been this air cessation. Possibly Bellacourt's air strikes had not been altogether unwelcome to the over-strained governments of the Democratic Allies. It had given them an excuse for relaxing their exhausting efforts to produce material and for bringing back the war from three dimensions to two. Yet it was curious we had not made one crowning effort to end the war? Our planes, such as remained, went about looking at things and doing nothing, and the war, which had begun in an uproar of destruction, was dying of inanition. Was there some catch in the business and was it true that the air arm cannot end a war?

Anyhow here we were, it seemed, with war back on the ground again, and Reedly trying to play Napoleon to our revolution, quite in the best tradition...

Steenhold wrenched his mind away from these questions and gave himself up to the railway problem. He spent an active and useful half-hour with a very competent subordinate and then he emerged upon the air-field again.

"And now what is there to be done?" he asked the officer.

"Nothing, sir, that I can see, until something happens." The young officer seemed to think that everything was going according to plan in this best of all possible worlds...

Wouldn't do to ask him what he thought would happen...

Then suddenly the central part of the main building became active. One of Bellacourt's men with a megaphone appeared on a little balcony high up and began giving orders to the pilots. They became exceedingly active and a truck of petrol appeared out of an archway below. Three of the men went off at a run to the smaller plane. Two more pilots on bicycles shot round the wing of the main buildings and joined them.

It looked all right.

Then Rud and Thirp and Olders appeared upon the steps of the main building, in the company of two airmen. The planes, one after another, began to tune up. Their propellers leapt to activity with a happy shudder.

Something was happening now. The drowsy afternoon woke up. But what was happening?

They were going off somewhere and he did not know where they

were going. He felt like a little boy who for some inscrutable reason has not been asked to a party. Where were they going? To Reedly? Perhaps Rud had been talking to Reedly and something had been patched up. Or to Sweden where perhaps Bellacourt was in control of things? Or in flight before Reedly struck?

"Why can't I know?" asked Steenhold, with a feeling like tears of vexation in his eyes. "He might have told me. I stood by him in the old days..."

A sound as though someone had snapped a brittle metallic rod and a shiver in the air.

Then a shout from among the planes and revolver shots. Three or four men were moving about very quickly there.

Rud was holding up his hand as if to forbid some action. Sabotage among the planes? Steenhold ran towards the scuffle, pulling out his revolver as he ran, and signalling to the knot of world police who were standing or sitting in front of the main building. There was no further shooting, and two of the pilots seemed to be holding a man, the man, no doubt, who had fired the shot at Rud. A man in pilot's uniform dodged round the head of the nearest machine, and he had something in either hand like a cricket ball. He threw one of these objects under the plane, and seemed to hesitate about the other. Steenhold was running at an angle to the disturbance so that he alone saw this man clearly. He was evidently unobserved by either the spray of police who were running towards the plane or by the men actually about the machines. Steenhold shouted to confuse his attention and fired his revolver. A pilot's face appeared in the cabin of the machine.

The bomb under the machine burst loudly and the machine came tilting over towards Steenhold in a deliberate, drunken fashion as if to meet and welcome him. The pilot behind the glass seemed an inactive, an indifferent spectator of these events. The spinning propeller caught the bomb-thrower's head as he turned and stepped back to confront Steenhold, and the bomb he held dropped from his hand and rolled and burst six yards in front of Steenhold's feet.

Steenhold had an extraordinary sense of being struck back and front at once, as though vast aerial hands clapped themselves upon him, and that he had lost his balance as he had never lost his balance

before. His feet were off the ground. The plane, with its propeller whirling up the red-brown trophy it had slashed from his scalped antagonist, waved and sank down out of sight and he was staring at the sky...

Everything which had been moving with incredible rapidity now moved with unprecedented deliberation. It was clear to him that Rud had to go somewhere and that he had to prevent any interference with Rud. But nobody was telling him anything. Nobody ever told him anything nowadays. In the past it had been different.

Some sort of mental blank ensued.

He was doing something for Rud.

Had they got Rud? Had he got away? Where was he going?

It was a nuisance to have been hit so that he had to lie flat on his back like this. He dragged a hand across his chest and it was wet. He raised a hand, which had suddenly become very heavy, and it was bright red. He couldn't be badly hurt because there was not the slightest pain. But this blood! There seemed a frightful lot of it. And the taste of blood in his mouth. Where did it all come from? You couldn't possibly go on bleeding like this...

Somebody was saying: "You hurt much?" Somebody with a face upside-down looking at him. "You hurt much?" Bloody fool!

His chest blown in? Some of it anyhow. Mortally wounded? There ought to be a breast bone somewhere if one could raise a hand to feel it. But his hand had gone dead now.

It couldn't be! Presently perhaps, but not now. Not in the very middle of a scrap. Pinned to the ground like this. He'd get up in a minute.

But he knew better. He felt a wave of childish frustration.

He spoke, almost inaudibly.

"Not to see the end of it! That's too bad..."

They were Steenhold's last words. He felt as though he was being diluted very rapidly. Numbness radiated from his chest in waves. He had a dim idea that he was straining his neck up to look for Rud, but there was no Rud, only blue sky and little white clouds sailing in two columns ahead, V-wise, across the sky, and then that last faint impression faded.

§ V

Oblivious of the death of his first substantial supporter, oblivious indeed of everything but the urgency of his conclusive grapple with Reedly, Rud paced the air photography rooms at Stockholm which were Bellacourt's Headquarters.

Bellacourt was already over Norway on his way to them. He couldn't be more than ten minutes away.

Thirp sat crouched and angular with his arms folded, waiting an hour to the minute so to speak; Olders subdued himself to patience by staring out of the windows. They had all come in the smaller, swifter machine from Amsterdam. They had not waited even to learn what had happened to the bombed machine. The others, they knew, were scouting southwards towards Antwerp — except the one that would wait for Bodisham if Bodisham had to bolt.

These Sloten machines carried no bombs or guns, but they were to report any movement of troops to Dreed and Steen-hold. Rud had refused to hear any reports from them. He wanted to concentrate upon Reedly. All the rest was detail and it was becoming his habit now to leave detail to others. He paced the long room of the air maps, not looking at them, brooding on what was before him and whistling in his incompetent, small-boy way between his teeth. And presently Bellacourt arrived.

He came straight to Rud, still wearing his wadded coat, and he stripped it off as he greated Rud.

"I got your radio," he said. "What has happened?"

"Everything — suddenly. A full month before our calculation. I was right about the facts as I told you them when last we talked. Where are the bombs and the bombers?"

"Twenty close now. Following me. Not half an hour behind. Twenty more from Reykjavik. Fifty in reserve, starting from Battle Harbour in an hour. In all this I'm guided by you."

"Then we can be in Poland with that load — your twenty — when?"

"Well before sundown."

"You have plenty of other planes here but no bombs for them?"

"Several hundred without bombs."

“We could take men in those?”

Thirp intervened. “I’ve got a detachment of my men here who’ve been trained for that. They can drop. Mostly they’re Russians. Lovely youngsters. I just took them over. They’ve always been good at the parachute game.”

“Good,” said Rud. “Now the next thing is to locate Mr. Reedly exactly.”

“We’ve got all the positions in Poland photographed from a thousand feet,” said Bellacourt. “I haven’t worked with Crawford for nothing. We’ve been doing that for weeks now. I doubt if Reedly understands that. If you’ll come into the Long Gallery, where the boys are working, I can show you — his G.H.Q. and everything. Fresh and nearly up to date.”

“Bellacourt, you hate bombing, I know,” said Rud, “but this time you will bomb in a good cause. Just let me tell exactly why we have to blow the World Marshal to bits, now.”

And as they went towards the Long Gallery, where Bella-court’s photograph readers were working at their daily examination of Reedly’s movements, Rud, with elucidatory remarks from Thirp, explained the urgency of the situation to Bellacourt.

Bellacourt led the way to the long table devoted to the photographic examinations. There, arranged for comparison, were the long strips for yesterday and the day before and the day before that. An assistant stood by with lenses while Bellacourt explained the reading of the photographs. “There’s his dug-out. Pretty big and deep. That heap of earth came out of it. It casts quite a shadow, you see. That’s the shadow, that black mark. That gives us the height of the heap. There’s the Officer’s Mess. There are the kitchens. You see the tracks made by the orderlies going to and fro? Those pale streaks. Pretty work reading these photographs! You see that shadow there; that’s cast by the photographer’s own plane. Its size and its distortion gives its height and the angular measure for all the other shadows.”

“You could bomb all that — this afternoon?”

“I can blow it to rags — all this area — before sundown to-night. We’ve got quite enough stuff for that. But how can we be sure he will be there — and not somewhere else, or down in that dug-out? Impossible to get him if he’s in the dug-out.”

“He’ll be there all right,” said Rud. “I’ll arrange that with him.”

Olders was called away for a moment to take a radio message.

“You’ll arrange it — with him!” said Bellacourt, puzzled. “With him — by telephone. Why not?”

“You mean he’ll tell you — himself! Where to bomb him?”

“He’ll tell me all right and then we shoot. This is a very simultaneous world. You can’t shoot a man unless you know where he is, can you? But if you know exactly where he is you can shoot him half-way round the world.”

“But — !”

“Perfectly simple,” said Rud. “I’ve been talking to him already — from Sloten. And when we are clear about these maps...You might bring a strip of that with you while I telephone again.”

Olders came with a message. “I think you might know we’ve just got this: ‘Troop train from Antwerp derailed near Dordrecht. No further trouble here. Wilson.’”

“Who’s Wilson?” asked Rud. “I wonder why Steenhold didn’t sign that. He ought to have signed it.”

He wondered only momentarily. Then he turned his mind to the business in hand again.

They went to the room with the radio apparatus and Thirp sat down to get the World Marshal. When he did he handed the instrument to Rud. Bellacourt sat beside him with the air photograph of Reedly’s Headquarters on the table.

“That you, World Marshal?” said Rud...

“Quite all right...

“No, nothing has happened. What did you expect to happen? I have been thinking over our last talk. I still think you may be too precipitate...Of course if Grossberg has surrendered, you must treat him decently. But what about his army? What state are they in?...”

Lengthy reply. Thirp listened to anything he could catch and Rud winked at him suddenly.

“But don’t you think that before you communicate with the Allied Governments, you ought to come to Sloten again and consult us? After all, you are a member of the Group. Or aren’t you?...

“You have a double responsibility you say. Even then you ought to keep in touch with us. You could be in Sloten before sundown...

“You have Grossberg and his staff on your hands...Naturally — every courtesy...Yes, yes, as one soldier to another and all that. Naturally you’ll dine with him. We civilians are apt to forget that professional brotherliness. Would you like me to join you?...

“To-morrow more convenient. And you will be entertaining the defeated this evening. I should be in the way. Yes? Seven, I suppose. About then?”

Rud gestured noiselessly and triumphantly to Bellacourt and Bellacourt stuck a pin in the Officers’ Mess. “Can I ring you up later? You’ll be at the Officers’ Mess, if I want to get you...After seven for certain. Wait a moment...

“You don’t think there’s much more to say? Maybe you are right. But I warn you the Group may feel a little out of it if you insist on carrying on negotiations without them...

“Bellacourt? I told you he was in America. Getting munitions specially for you...

“Oh, we’ll settle something, trust me. Maybe the Group has overrated itself...You think so. I’ve always been a bit afraid of you, Reedly. I’ve always felt you had that idea of us...Still, things are in your hands. You have said it. Bon appetit.”’

He put down the instrument. “That’s that,” he said. “Wonderful,” said Thirp. “He’s fixed. I can’t help feeling—”

“Feel it later,” said Rud. “Now what exactly do we mean to do?”

Bellacourt began: “I get my planes refuelled and inspected.”

“What we do,” said Rud, “is this. You, Bellacourt, I take it, go high with those twenty bombers of yours, high, high, high — out of sight in the blue — until you are just out of hearing of him. About here say.”

Bellacourt made a rapid calculation and indicated a spot with his pencil. “Twenty thousand feet,” he said.

“You will be leading. Your men will have copies of these air maps. Well, as many as there are copies. Possibly not if you think it unnecessary. The light will be good for two hours yet. Then you stop your engines and down you come. Without a sound. Down, down, and then flatten out and let out the engines. They’ll hardly hear your engines before you are on them. Then — all this area —

“Goes to smithereens,” said Bellacourt. “You can count on it. It’s

disgusting work. We shall be beautifully accurate — as we shall do it — trust me — but none the less it's disgusting. This makes ordinary assassination a gallant enterprise. You know I admire the way you've fixed him, but by God I don't like it...Ah well, perhaps I'm a bit finicky. I'll try and think I'm getting square with those damned Germans at Guernica. You know, I saw all that...I did."

"Meanwhile," said Rud, "Thirp and I go over the enemy lines in that modest little plane we came in and drop down in these flats here."

"Olders and you," said Thirp. "I had better stay here for a bit and then go back to Sloten."

"You think?" said Rud.

"Sure," said Thirp.

Rud turned to Bellacourt. "You're sure we can make a good landing there?"

"It's been used as an airfield," said Bellacourt. "You can see the tracks. Look. With the lens."

"We land there then," said Rud. "While your Russian boys, Thirp, in their parachutes, are already drifting and falling like thistledown over all this bit, each with his little gun and his ribbon of ammunition."

"I wish I could come," said Thirp.

"You expect to find mutineers there?" asked Bellacourt. "I expect you'll find a Soldiers' and Workers' Committee," said Thirp. "Talking mostly."

"Is that what they call it?" said Rud. "Soldiers' and Workers' Committee! Delightful! It's 191 7 over again. But this time the sequel will be different. We are the Revolution from the West and all fast-colour Revolutions come out of the West."

"Suppose they shoot you as you come down?"

"No guarantee they won't. Then it will be all up with our Common World and nothing else will matter to us. I wish I talked better German. But they will have heard of me."

"Suppose they take pot shots at our parachutists?"

"Most of them will be gaping at Reedly's Headquarters, over the way. They won't shoot unless they're shot at. They won't know who we are."

"And the Allied Army?"

"Stunned. And then fraternisation..."

§ VI

The World Marshal spoke in Anglo-German out of compliment to his distinguished guests and prisoners.

He hated talk when he encountered the loose, unaccountable minds of the intelligentsia; you never knew what they meant by it all; that brought out all the strong and silent stuff in him; but when it came to talking to soldiers and gentlemen, who used exactly the same phrases and metaphors, had identically amorphous ideas and could understand him perfectly, he could be fairly eloquent.

He was now in a state of sombre exaltation. At last it was his Day. He had told himself quite a number of times that afternoon that he had crossed the Rubicon. Except for a faint uneasiness about the possible recalcitrance of that crazy pacifist Bellacourt, there was not a shadow that he could see upon the road to world dominion that opened wide before him. He was grasping control of a disordered world on the very verge of social dissolution. He felt like General Monk, who had been one of his boyhood's heroes. He felt still more like Bonaparte after that whiff of grapeshot had put an end to the revolutionary vagaries of Paris. He, too, in his turn was saving civilisation — and civilisation — he would see to it — was going to be jolly grateful to him.

Just before he rose to speak he talked about Rud and the Group to the officers about him.

"Every sign of the completest collapse of that Common Man Movement. Every sign. They feel Destiny closing in on them. They realise they are out-witted and out-manoeuvred...Yes, I've good evidence of that — the best of evidence. Listen to something I have to tell you. I never believed in this man Rud Whitlow, though for a time it has served our purpose to have dealings with him. Anyhow, now I can wash my hands of him. Queer fish! Born double-crosser. Now he wants to go back on his associates. They'll all try that. They'll all be coming in now, ears down and tails wagging. It's in

the breed. Twice he has been talking to me to-day on the air, trying to get to some sort of terms with me. Would you believe it?...Oh, I humour him. What is the use of his talking now? He's a doomed man. What use can they be in the world now? Short and sharp — against the wall. Eh?"

He nodded. His hearers nodded appreciatively. Then after a brief interval he stood up to make his speech, a manly man-to-man speech, but in its way, brilliant.

He said he did not want to make a speech, he never wanted to make speeches, he was not the talking sort, but he felt he could not let this occasion go by without a word of cheer, of fraternal greeting, as one soldier to another, for the great Christian gentleman, that clean, honest fighter, their enemy and brother-in-arms, Marshal Grossberg.

"We know only too well, to our cost, some of us, what a stout and sturdy warrior he can be, and on our side too we understand what it must mean to be stabbed in the back by those who owed, for every reason, high or low, loyal cooperation. None of our backs here have been perfectly safe. From the soldier's point of view, and as far as soldiers, real soldiers, go, this has been an honest, straightforward war. Modern weapons, but the old spirit. Alas! it can never be fought to a finish now, because never at any time has it been possible to keep out the enterprises — the interferences of shall we call them outsiders? Shall I speak more plainly?"

He paused and warmed up— "The filthy activities of cosmopolitan rogues, the incessant interference of ambiguous civilians, men who boast of their treason, men without faith or flag." (Sounds of agreement.)

"We soldiers, Marshal Grossberg, have had neither hand nor part in this foul propaganda that has undermined your discipline and turned every other man in your ranks into — what shall I say? — the perplexed tool of the forces of malarial — of malignant disorder." (Applause at the phrasing.) "Even our espionage system has been honest, Marshal, here at the front, a soldierly espionage of fact, not a burrowing under the very roots of human life. This has been a great war and a fine war, but now we realise that there are issues profounder than any immediate war aims. The whole social order,

Christianity, chivalry — Christianity here and chivalry in the Far East — honour, obedience, property, the purity of women, the discharge of obligations, plain honesty, love of country, the breed of horses, clean sport, everything that makes the orderly succession of seed-time and harvest, peace and war, is at stake. The sword, that clean white symbol of disciplined force, has been ousted by the ink squirt, by the creeping activities of mental germs viler than any physical corruption — viler than any disease germ, any poisoning of the wells." (Hear, hear.) "While we fight here at the front, humanity behind us crumbles down to a diseased dementia." (Sounds of approval.) "The first duty of a soldier is and always has been not to make war — no — but to keep the peace and to keep it with a strong hand. War is the soldier's exercise, his natural purification, but it is not his primary function. His primary function is discipline, And now we soldiers under all our flags have to stand shoulder to shoulder in the name of discipline — of disciplined democracy, strong and silent. I give you The Soldiers' Peace, the mastery of the sword, obedience and preparedness. An end, gentlemen, an end to this cosmopolitan folly..."

Something seemed to happen to his voice. It was as if he no longer had a voice. Something had engulfed it.

"What's that?" cried Grossberg inaudibly, staring with sudden apprehension out of the window.

The World Marshal's voice had been drowned by a great roar of aeroplanes, an eruption of huge, ugly, undulating, hungry sound, and he, too, turned to see the black bulk of the leading bomber sweeping over the Mess. It did not seem to be coming out of the sky, it had skimmed so low as it opened out that it seemed now to be rising out of the ground. It rushed up out from beneath the edge of the glowing sunset, a swift, expanding blackness. It was like a gigantic black skate in an aquarium swimming towards him very swiftly. It just cleared the nearer barracks and it had already risen sharply up out of the field of his vision, when the two bombs it had delivered, burst.

Hard upon it roared its fellows, rising right and left behind it and blotting out the sky in their turn. Beyond came others...Everything seemed to burst as the bombs burst. The corner of the window flew in towards the World Marshal. It flew at him, attacking him; a great

knife of glass...It was coming straight for his moustache.

That was his last impression of life. He felt nothing more. The glass cut through his face like a knife thrown at a meringue. He was extinguished.

§ VII

The airfield behind the front lines of the Authoritarian Army was already deserted, and the shell-torn area beyond seemed equally abandoned, except for the World Police who were dropping down out of the air, making their more or less dexterous landings, and coming together into little groups. Farther to the north-west and slanting away westward lay the broken country of the trenches and a couple of ruined villages, and still remoter, flame-shot masses of smoke rose from the Allied Headquarters against a clear golden sunset.

The bombing planes had zoomed up overhead and vanished in the eastward sky. They swept round in a great curve and went straight back to Stockholm, leaving everything to Rud. Bellacourt knew he could not stomach the sight of his handiwork. The thought of Guernica proved to be no consolation to him. But from Stockholm he sent on his planes from America as they came to hand, and put them at the service of the World Police. They spiralled down out of the twilight and dropped more and more parachutists.

Rud and Olders advanced across that war-torn landscape, and as they did so, the descending men of the World Police converged upon them and fell in as a sort of guard. A rabble of soldiers joined them. A huge cat bolted out of a shell-hole, and then another. “The cats eat the rats and the rats eat us,” sang one of the Totalitarian soldiers. Men’s heads and shoulders came up out of the ground, watchfully. They decided to clamber out. An increasing number of men emerged from the trenches and dug-outs ahead. The desolation became populous.

“What’s German for Fraternisation?” demanded Rud.

“Try Verbrüderung,” said Olders.

It seemed right.

Then the men began to realise that this determined-looking little gnome who had come to them out of the air was Rud, the World Director, the Voice of the Common Man. The Soldiers' and Workers' Committee came to him as a matter of course.

Fraternisation, they discovered, had already gone far since the order to Cease Fire had released the pent-up good will of the common soldiers. There had been a confused struggle on the Democratic side, which were mostly English in this sector, to maintain discipline and keep up the attitude of a victorious army. Protesting officers had ordered the men back to their trenches and flourished revolvers. But where the men persisted they had usually decided not to shoot. This was the state of affairs along most of the front. There were very few American or British officers murdered. There were more on the opposite side, especially among the Bavarians and Prussians. If Rud had ever had any doubts of the effective permeation of the Common-sense propaganda, his reception on either side of that deliquescent war front would have dispelled them.

No one seemed to question his authority and the droning of Bellacourt's planes overhead endorsed it. The bombing of the central group of buildings had left the entire army in a state of dismayed interrogation. It was, as Rud had foreseen, stunned. An army is a vast organisation trained to take orders; for an hour of agonising paralysis there was no one at all to give it orders, and then Rud and Olders appeared, with an escort of World Police, confident and assured, under the aegis of the planes. The decapitated host crystallised about its new head, fell naturally into postures of obedience. Here was order anyhow. And Orders. Life seemed to have become rational again. Officials came to Rud, saluted, reported their functions and were given directions.

Rud had the word passed. "Maintain discipline. All is as it should be. Reedly wanted to make himself Dictator of the World. He had prepared a coup d'etat and he has been killed. Every man to his quarters..."

The prostrate routines of life stood up again..."To-morrow," he said to Olders, "we shall have them playing football."

§ VIII

Rud had never been to a shoot, but he must have seen a picture of one in some illustrated paper, and the scene amidst the smoking ruins of the General Headquarters reminded him grotesquely of the game spread out at the end of the day's sport. The twilight was deepening into night, and a miscellany of lights, electric lights of all sorts, oil lamps and the bursts of flame from the wreckage, added strange shadows to the orderly accumulation of bodies outside the ruins. Reedly had been found, Rogers, Grossberg and a score of others.

Rud looked at the scorched and tattered bodies before him.

"I hate to see them. But — It was necessary I should see them...I shall see them in my dreams."

He turned green.

"I don't like this sort of thing," he said to Olders. "I've always been over-sensitive to horrors. Couldn't stand them. It's just because I hate cruelty and bullying—"

He turned aside and vomited.

A stranger appeared before him presently and saluted. "Radio, sir," he said. "Headquarters' control."

"Well?"

"What is to be done, sir, to those officers who tried to seize the radio station of the thirteenth army — they seem to have been acting under Marshal Reedly's orders?"

"Shot," said Rud.

"All of them?"

"Every one of them. Now. Once you start shooting...You have to go on. The fewer stories we have about this, the better."

Olders marvelled at him. He had been physically sick after he had seen the body of Reedly and now he had recovered as if nothing had happened. Now he was going to the radio to talk to Dreed at Sloten and launch his view of the facts, a highly clarified version, upon the world.

"Is that Dreed?" he said. "It is all over. You can tell the world there has been a Dangerous Reactionary Conspiracy. Got that? Nipped in the bud by the Master Director. It was an attempt to surrender to the Nazi Commander and set up a military dictatorship

with Reedly as a sort of Napoleon. Make that clear. The Group has taken control and the situation is well in hand. There was a brief struggle in which World Marshal Reedly and most of the General Staff of both armies were killed, and also a certain number of officers of lower rank, orderlies and other attendants. Full lists of casualties, which amount in all only to about three hundred, will be published later. You need not give particulars of the fighting. The air force has behaved with unswerving loyalty to the Common World Cause and the armies have fraternised and acclaim the World Directorate. D-I-R-E-C — you have it?"

Rud had decided to call himself Master World Director, and nobody disputed the title.

Dawn found him still working. He had had repeated injections of strychnine and he seemed indefatigably active. Bodisham had come to him from Sloten and was enormously resourceful.

A little after sunrise Rud broke off to eat. He and Bodisham and Olders swallowed eggs beaten up in rum and milk by way of breakfast.

Thirp came from Stockholm about ten o'clock to report on Bellacourt's state of mind. Bellacourt was all right. "You have been working," said Thirp.

"And you?"

"I've been getting reports from all over the world. It's been like firing an unexpected pistol in a drawing-room. They're stunned. But they are going to accept it. Generally."

"There'll be trouble."

"The work's only beginning," said Thirp. "But they will take it — they will take it."

"Well, it's here we begin the real World Revolution," said Rud, rubbing his jaded face to refresh himself. "Here and now. All the rest has been just preparation, just getting a grip. Now, right away, we have to set to work stamping out this poison they call Federation. It is separatism trying to get back disguised as union. This is only the first outbreak. Reedlys are a prolific family. He's got brothers, cousins, all sorts of them. Every nation. Black Reedlys there are; red and yellow. All over the world there will be every sort of resistance to a World Common Law. All over the world fellows saying: 'Now

is my chance.' Directly the fear of war is lifted, everywhere the old things will flame up again. Trust my prophetic soul. All the old-world people who were scared into silence for a time will be coming back, leaping, crawling, flying in a gale of hope — like sparks, like burning twigs and branches. It will be like beating out heath fires in sultry weather. But we've got to beat and stamp now until the world is one for ever...

"Because, you see," he said, with a sudden swoop from rhetoric to reality, "nothing else is possible for us now. This is the way we have to go, the only way. If we falter —

"We are shot," said Thirp.

He reflected. "Reedly would have shot you, anyhow," he said.

"And you," said Rud.

He went on working without sleep until nightfall. Then Chiffan, who had arrived in the afternoon, affectionately masterful almost in the old fashion, carried him off to a château some miles behind the lines and put him to bed. He slept for twenty hours.

He was not told of the death of Steenhold for some days. He heard the bad news manfully at last.

"Rotten luck," said Rud. "Poor old Steenhold!" and never spoke of him again.

§ IX

That had been close upon two crowded years ago, and for all the intervening time Rud, with Bodisham perpetually at his elbow and Thirp going to and fro on the earth, had been struggling to make that day's victory real and to secure the absolute dominance of the Common World State against a vast complex of antagonisms, insubordinations, inertias, apathies, unanticipated administrative difficulties, physical difficulties imperfectly foreseen and sheer exhausting intricacies.

For the bare idea of a Common World State there was now a vast majority of mankind, but directly it was defined as a positive reorganisation of human affairs, as the establishment of a common economic system, a common education, a common transport system,

free movement about the world, involving the rupture of a thousand boundaries and a readjustment of the daily routines of the great majority of lives, resistances began and grew. Mankind was quite ready to accept peace but not to seek peace and ensue it.

A great and intricate warfare in the human imagination had followed the obliteration of Reedly, attempts to explain, attempts to compel, misrepresentations, denigrations, glorifications, false simplifications, tactical and strategic lying, detractions, stupefactions, hysterical reactions, blind insurgence.

Gradually things began to fall into place as the idea that the Common World State had come to stay prevailed over the belief that it was merely a provisional arrangement, pending a satisfactory restoration and adjustment of old claims. Everywhere a larger proportion of people, especially in the younger generation, set itself to learn new ways of living and abandoned the thought of returning to the old routines. What had been Utopianism a few years before became normal common-sense, and romantic traditionalism retreated into that world of imaginative reality from which Utopianism had come.

The Group, with vastly increased resources and now everywhere in control, resumed its pre-war propaganda of world unity on an enormously enlarged scale. It was undercutting rival conceptions of life by withdrawing endowments and subsidies, taking over schools, taking possession of religious buildings in the name of art and history. It had deprived reactionary newspaper propaganda of the incentive of gross profits by its rigorous censorship of newspaper advertisement and by its separation of newspaper finance from general speculative activities. The complex public controls of economic life that had come into existence under war conditions were retained and amplified to carry on the peace. Profit-seeking production and distribution had already been squeezed into a mere corner of life; the main staple industries and housing and transport were already in the hands of the munition controls of the victors, and this time there was no storm of financial racketeering. Without a break the world war passed into world adjustment. This time there was no Peace Conference and no Peace Treaty.

The Group had found an unexpected amount of support from the

world of scientific men. After a deliberate survey of contemporary fact the World Association for the Advancement of Science had produced a lucid and unemotional exposition of the attitude of the ever-multiplying class of scientific workers to the World Directorate. In less than two years after the coup d'etat that had made Rud World Director, the World Association produced its official declaration that the Common World State was also the Scientific State, and that the whole body of organised knowledge was definitely in support of the Directorate. In effect the scientific body was deliberately taking upon itself the role of the Church in the theory of Medieval Christendom, it was becoming the repository of knowledge, the directive power in education, and the criterion of all social organisation and readjustment. It was not so much proposing itself as tacitly becoming a new sort of Church, a progressive Church, a monistic congregationalism with ministers indeed, but without priest or pope.

Its declaration surveyed the biological situation with an unemotional explicitness. The human species had to adapt its life to the new conditions material inventions had created for it or perish. It embodied and applied ideas that were already apprehended by such liberal intelligences as old Doctor Carstall while Rud was still a rebellious undergraduate. They were now the universal ideas of the scientific world. Without world unification the species would destroy itself by the enlarged powers that had come to it. This, said the men of science, is no theory, no political alternative; it is a statement of fact. Men had to pool their political, economic and educational lives. There was no other way for them but a series of degenerative phases leading very plainly to extinction. They could not revert now. They had to go on — up or down. They had gone too far with civilisation and in societies, to sink back into a merely "animal" life again. The hold of the primates on life had always been a precarious one. Except where they were under human protection all the other great apes were extinct. Now plainly man had to go on to a larger life, a planetary existence, or perish in his turn.

The survival of a degenerate man, a sort of "poor white" in the kingdom of nature, was for many reasons unthinkable. These many reasons were given succinctly in the declaration. One that struck Rud with a sense of novelty was that the rats could do that sort of thing so

much better.

Thus the men of science. That declaration had come to hand a few days ago, and Rud had read it with a certain feeling of self-applause. He had been doing what he had done in the name of the Common Man, but apparently he had been doing the right thing all the time. If he found anything to object to in this declaration it was that there was a certain failure in it to recognise his own guiding role in the release of the Scientific State.

There was an impressive array of signatures. He ran his eye down the list. Several were the names of men he knew to be in administrative positions. Then he saw "Richard Carstall."

He stopped short at that.

"Richard Carstall," he whispered. "Richard? Dick? Dick Carstall. That's the man! And I went to school with him at Hooplady House! And afterwards he was doing research at Camford. They gave him a fellowship the year before I came down. Old Carstall's son. Old Carstall the atheist, who made a job for Alf and Alf thought it was an answer to prayer!"

Afterwards he recalled that. He thought of Carstall in the night. He saw him tall and self-assured, telling him just what was "done" and just what one didn't do. Now as Rud contemplated the vast view from his balcony, that sustaining declaration came into his head again.

"They might have said all that two years ago," he remarked to the mountains and the sky. "But these scientific people always like to be quite sure of things before they do anything. I've been doing the heavy work while you've been theorising — and don't you forget that, Doctor, Professor, my good Lord Carstall. It's all natural forces and inevitable and all that — so you say now. But your theories are excellent, and I don't see why they shouldn't be made the basis of our new political education...

"I bear you no malice about it. None."

He went down the steps to the balcony on which he would have his breakfast.

§ X

The house he occupied had been built not so much to his designs as to his suggestions. For after the nature of his type, he had strong architectural impulses. It was built into a cliff that jutted out upon a wide bend of the River Durance.

All the world was busy then rebuilding or building anew or irrigating or planting or restoring soil. For centuries men had developed the art of resurfacing their cities and roads, but now they were blending and manufacturing soils as they needed them and distributing them where they could be cultivated most conveniently and agreeably. None too soon had world afforestation been taken in hand. The old competitive order of little nations and private finance had already stripped the world of half its forests and a third of its soil and exterminated seals, whales and a thousand once-abundant resources. But now with the establishment of a real Common Ownership, a tremendous recuperation had begun. It was already in hand by that time.

But it had not seemed unreasonable to Rud, or indeed to anyone in the Group, that a large number of artists, architects, experts and skilled workers of all sorts should be diverted from the general reconditioning of the world to the special task of making a great cluster of residences and halls, laboratories, work-rooms and offices for the occupation of the chief members of the Group, upon a site that Rud had chosen. It had its aerodrome; it had great roads leading to it; it was in immediate nervous contact with all the world. It was a lovely piece of country he had hit upon, and this towering assemblage of structural loveliness challenged every palace and splendour of the past. Rud's own quarters had taken precedence of the rest and had been completed for his occupation with an incredible swiftness. It was, so to speak, a first intimation of all that lay before the new world.

It was Rud's own fancy that he should sleep in a bed upon a dais in a great arched loggia, into which his dressing-rooms and so forth opened from behind, and from which he could descend to the open-air life of his grand balcony. His early upbringing in stuffy little rooms had given him a sort of architectural claustrophobia.

A considerable staff of secretaries, assistants, messengers and domestic workers had already been assembled about these first

completed portions of the new World Centre. Bodisham was accommodated and Thirp was coming soon. The place undoubtedly had a magnificence surpassing that of any of the kingly and presidential residences and palaces in which he might have taken up his quarters. But it was free from old-world associations and suggestions of inequality and pretension. There was no regal state about all this, there was no pose of aristocracy, no court. There was an insistence upon simplicity in its splendour. There were no bows nor salaams nor prostrations, and nothing in the nature of ceremonial.

For Rud after all was no exploiter, no tyrant; no sweater of his fellow- creatures. He was very clear in his mind about that — clearer than many other people. He was the Director of an equalitarian world, a natural leader. He was just the Common Man — triumphant at last and enthroned.

BOOK IV. — ZENITH TRANSIT

I. — WORLD TRUSTEE

§ I

In a few short years the multitudinous common man throughout the earth had to make what he could of a stupendous fact, of which he had had no previous warning, namely Rud, the World Trustee. And Rud being himself, as indeed he always alleged, no more than a common man, had also, with scarcely more preparation, to make what he could of himself. The mystical personification of himself as the universal common man was the most congenial interpretation that had occurred to him, and for a time he clung to it.

He would like to have said to mankind that he was just themselves in a concentrated form, and that what seemed good to him was necessarily good for them all, yet more and more did Thirp make it clear to him that the pervading infantilism of his fellow-creatures demanded no such mystical and incomprehensible identification with him but objective leadership and paternalism. They refused to live in him, they kept themselves to themselves, but they were quite ready to live under him. So with a rapidly diminishing reluctance Rud allowed a sympathetic yet heroic version of himself to be built up in the public mind. And as this objective version was established throughout the world, it brought conviction to himself. Except in rare moments of private exaltation, he ceased to be that universal man of his profounder speculations and instead he became merely the greatest and most greatly advertised of men.

At first Norvel was manifestly much less convinced than Thirp of the necessity of presenting Rud to the world as the Hero of the Revolution. Norvel disliked Thirp and suspected his motives. But gradually as he studied the strange novel thing upon which he himself had to work, this new-born world-mind in the cradle of its education, his distrust of Thirp relaxed. There was understanding in Thirp's idea, whatever desire sustained it. Immature humanity has indeed, Norvel was forced to admit, an insatiable craving for exaggerated personalities, for vast effigies publicised about a core of fact. Humanity still insists upon them; it has always had its gods, as

it has had its saints when its gods became metaphysical, it craves for powers and princes, for celebrities, champions, stars. It would take more than two eventful decades to alter that. Norvel, always reasonable, allowed himself to be persuaded by Thirp that unless Rud could be magnified, projected on the screen of the heavens, made dominant in the world imagination, it was inevitable that this urge to deify, round and about the world, would create for itself local dissentient and disintegrating figures, Robin Hoods and William Tells perhaps, Wallaces and Bruces, Gandhis and Garibaldis, to the great injury and confusion of the nascent common unification of mankind. Better let Thirp have his way...

Norvel, like so many of the Group and their associates, was growing rapidly to the scale of his occasions. He was getting a firmer and more comprehensive grasp upon his particular aspect of the world problem, and he was gathering round him a school of colleagues who shared ideas and purposes with him. It was a parallel process to Bellacourt's consolidation of the world services of transport and distribution, to Irwell's successful invention of a monetary and financial network practically free from speculative corruption, and to the scientific reorganisation of production by Roots and Holbank, who were now, among other innovations, manufacturing soil from crude rock and resettling agricultural workers at the rate of a hundred square miles a week.

Norvel had observed the decadence of the newspaper, in the days before the War of Ideologies, until it had become a mere daily entertainment and bazaar display, he had developed and dominated the world-wide distribution of cheap books, and he had acquired a very extensive mass of experience with all the new and multiplying appliances for mental stimulation and exchange by cinema, radio, microphotography and the like. He had organised an effective world survey of schools and colleges, and he was now in a position to remodel, multiply and expand them as he chose and so far as the available material would let him. That was a tremendous task. The Revolution had indeed crippled the power of business interests and the old religions to hinder the liberation of the human mind, but it had done little to equip the minds it had emancipated. For the purposes of a world community, he found the world even in its most

progressive regions, thinly educated, thinly to a dismaying degree. Quite as much as Roots and Holbank, who had realised the limits set to vegetable growth by soil insufficiency, he found he had to begin the new crop of humanity from the ground upward.

Education still for a large majority of human beings meant little more than teaching them in a primitive fashion to read and count a little. It was only in the most advanced communities that the need of continuous education throughout the whole life was recognised. For the multitude, such world- pictures as they had, had been supplied in a haphazard fashion by the talk of the people about them, by the unscrupulous statements of the advertisement newspapers, concerned chiefly with the sale of worthless drugs, adulterated foodstuffs and plausible commodities, by political propagandists and the appeals of religious organisations. A few hundred so-called universities, of unequal merit, a flimsy network of impecunious scientific societies, a loosely organised trade of book publishing and distribution, were all that there was to guide the general mental operations of the entire world community. The common man at large had remained mainly ignorant even of what was known, and had floundered through life in a muddle of prejudices, misconceptions and downright delusions. That was the educational level of the middle twentieth century, and upon this insufficient and decaying detritus of the petty cultures of the past it fell to the new educational administration to translate Bodisham's hopeful network of circles and liaisons into reality, and build the stout mental organisation needed by the new world.

Norvel found himself involved in a gigantic extension of the old structures of thought, research and instruction, in the evocation and training of vast armies of teachers, in the application of film and aerial to school use and the establishment throughout the world of millions of those community centres that manifestly had to replace the schools and home instruction of the past. He had assembled a magnificent group of associates and an ever-increasing multitude of mentally quickened helpers; he was sustained by an increasing realisation that most human beings want to learn and are ready to meet capable teaching half-way; but for all that it had become plainer and plainer to him that to establish even the broad framework for the mental reconditioning of mankind would be a task that would

demand the sustained devotion of hundreds of thousands of workers through some scores of years.

And in the interim, what was to be done for the passing generations? For the present and for the rest of his lifetime, it was plain to him that he would have to endure the spectacle of vast masses of the population, white, yellow, brown and black, under-educated through no fault of their own, and for sheer lack of equipment, staffing and organisation, still largely un-educatable. With a job too big for him before him, it was manifest he had to economise all his resources. He had to concentrate first upon the bare scaffold of the new intellectual order and work for progressive increments in enlightenment, and beyond that the multitude would have to be left to much the same methods of information and suggestion as had served before the Revolution.

"We may stop some of the quack medicines at the source," he said, "but until we have put doctors, teachers and then more and more of the public through the mill of a real education, they will still prefer to be given quackery. We have got our Revolution, but we still have to establish it and make it real. Revolution or no Revolution, we have for the present to let the public from China to Peru have what the public wants. Putting more and more of our own proper stuff into the mixture as time goes on..."

"Precisely," said Thirp.

"So since a Revolution seems to be impossible without an incarnation," said Norvel, turning to Rud, "we have to hand you over to a press agent and the Revolution has to organise a publicity department for you. You have to be Trustee for Humanity, no less — until Humanity comes of age."

Rud tried to suppress a faint gleam of excitement. "So be it," he said.

"You have never, I suppose, read Frazer's Golden Bough?" "Never had time," said Rud.

"About those sacrificial kings," said Norvel. "You'd be interested."

§ II

At the bottom of Rud's nature, covered over and suppressed there had always been an acute sense of his physical inferiority. He had even an exaggerated sense of his own ugliness and his bodily feebleness. He had a passionate impulse to exercise power, but his primary method of exercising power was to destroy, and he consented only to the vast constructiveness his movement was developing, because that alone guaranteed the complete disappearance of the institutions, restraints and compulsions he hated. It was at first with a definitely reluctant scepticism that he found Thirp, with Norvel's connivance, building up a detailed legend of a pseudo-personality for him. Modesty with him at any rate was fear of failure. Maybe that is always the essense of modesty. So that when at length he realised that Thirp's propaganda might indeed attain its ends, his confidence in his essential self blossomed.

It would need vast volumes after the manner of Tom Harrisson's Mass Observers to convey the hundreds of millions of individual reactions to the intricate advertisement process by which the vaguely apprehended World Director of the Common-sense Revolution became a concrete living personality in the human imagination. It followed upon the best precedents. He was "displayed" by word and picture, put upon postage stamps and on public buildings, written up, systematically alluded to; a thousand anecdotes were invented about him. Skilful photographers arranged lighting about him and contrived novel angles of approach, and for every picture of him that went into circulation, scores were destroyed. His scowl upon his ample brow became an expression of concentration upon human destiny; his eyes caught an abstracted benevolence. He looked less and less into his mirror and more and more at those approved photographs. He became more and more interested in the press cuttings expounding himself, that his secretaries selected.

He talked upon the air at chosen intervals, and millions of simple homes to which the Revolution had brought security listened to his indignation at the disorders of the past and to his promises for the future. Never more would a bomb descend upon a house nor a son be taken off to war. He made a practice of explaining in simple language the developing merits of the new order, using the modest yet regal "we" and unobtrusively annexing all the credit for the bold

constructive work of his multiplying associates. These men and women were building now like bees, but he figured as the bee-keeper. To the simple mind everywhere in the world, he became the Promethean figure that brought the light and heat of the Power Administration into the social circle; he also was production and his name was Plenty; he was distribution and his name was Service; he it was who now fed the world variously, employed it interestingly, instructed it, released it for holidays and travel about the world. He had slain soldiering, slain it in the person of Reedly. He had guided the world through the terrific opening crises of the Age of Adaptation to their present universal hope and freedom. Now one was free; now one could learn and live.

Norvel in his private thoughts decided that this was as good a working embodiment of the scientific ordering of the world as mankind could have for the time being, and as good a use as any for Rud. Personal Leadership the multitude would still insist upon until his schools made a new generation. Until the human crowd could respect itself it might just as well concentrate its respect upon Rud. Meanwhile a new world-brain organisation would grow and spread, the proportion of critical and enlightened intelligences would increase in geometrical progression, irony would creep into loyal gestures. In due time Rud would die in glory, revered as the father of a new civilisation, the last and greatest of the culture gods; and the human mind would be ready to adjust itself to the realities of the great transition, and ultimately get him back into his due place in the universe.

While common men were still amenable to the idea of power, still anxious to say "Yes, Sir" to some one they felt would be protective, the only way of abstracting the commanding quality from ownership, money, class, rank and elected authority, was by concentrating it for them in this way upon a single individual — who would at any rate be mortal. Norvel assumed that gradually they would acquire the habit of doing their jobs without any other inducement than the intrinsic interest of the job. So, under Rud, acquiescing in Rud and sustaining Rud, he set himself to his essential work. Irwell, Bellacourt, Roots, Darwin and all the able new chiefs who were coming into the comprehensive network of Bodisham's scientific

replanning of human life on its new scale, worked in much the same spirit, content that Rud had cleared the way for them, and Thirp was allowed to fence off a special department for the organisation, according to the best precedents, of Rud's publicity, his establishment in the human imagination as the sole, unchallengeable Trustee of power.

Thirp did not do this work himself, but he made all the arrangements for its being done. His essential quality was a feline curiosity in the less obvious motives of his fellow-creatures. It was this that had first attracted him to criminology and prison reform. He was interested in human errors and misconceptions, his life as a watcher and shepherd of rebellious spirits, was primarily one of vicarious anti-social activities. He had Rud's fear and hatred of stark power, but in a subtler, more penetrating form. He had worked with energy, he had become a party man, because he realised the trend of the old order towards a mosaic of military and spasmodically moral tyrannies, but he had no desire whatever to establish a new order with possibly even austerer disciplines of its own.

He was tied up now to the Revolution, he did not dare turn against it, but in the place of the new strenuousness of Norvel and Bodisham, all his instincts would have preferred a gently rotten society in which the essential queerness of humanity could have been stimulated and released in the fullest abundance. He did not believe in anything that looked simple. He had a fear of simple things. To his intelligence they were rigid things without escapes. He had a mind for orchids, queerly shaped fungi, peculiar insects, drugs, wicked little carvings in jade and ivory, occult phenomena and Rosicrucian mysteries. He was the strangest, most alien of all the adherents of the last Revolutionary Group.

But Rud had a use for him. He felt in him a kindred fear of restraint, to which the others were oblivious. He perceived Thirp's animal alertness to any antagonistic movement in the world about them. It was, he remembered, Thirp's sharpness and his own natural distrust which had saved him and the Revolution from Reedly. The others in the Group would have been caught. They could take care of everything but themselves. Bodisham would have been killed like Archimedes over his diagrams.

The old world had left over a very considerable class of advertisers, personal journalists, agents, impresarios and the like, many of whom were odd characters and so very attractive to Thirp, and with the return of confidence now that the revolutionary blood bath and blasting operations were over, gossip, organised entertainment, social life and a disingenuous patina upon behaviour, were reappearing in the world. Caricature looked up, and little non-political local talk papers, living on their merits, broke out in every language. The leading figures of the pre-revolutionary world, from kings to cinema stars, had had their publicity cultivated and protected by experts of outstanding brilliance, many of whom were still alive and available for Thirp. Dimly apprehended behind the arras of history is Quinlan, Rud's publicity manager, building up his official picture and arranging interesting and characteristic events for him. He made all Rud's comings and goings important; he made his birthday a great public event from pole to pole.

All over the earth on that auspicious day flags were flying. Rud, in one of his rhetorical moments, had designed a world flag. He had seen a man handling a pile of cases for some public use. On each was a little national flag of the country of origin, and this man had a piece of white chalk in his hand and just crossed off the flag on each packet. Some national clash had to be considered. "Of course!" said Rud. "Cross off all the flags." He made the world flag a white saltire on azure. And for all regional or local purposes he had a white saltire, imposed upon the national or provincial colours. All over the world now the birthday bunting fluttered, bearing over every racial or cultural symbol that white clamp of peace.

A practice of personal relationship was fostered by Quinlan. It was physically impossible for Rud to meet the entire human brotherhood and shake hands with it, nevertheless people were emboldened to write and even telephone to him. His fan mail attained astronomical dimensions. To meet that Quinlan was creating a huge staff of Director's Correspondents, many of whom could produce a fair imitation of Rud's handwriting or speak almost with his voice. They were most of them polyglots, and there were very few languages in which Rud's composite personality could not reply. So that Rud, at one and the same moment, could take an interest in a

little girl's white rabbits in Pekin, parley with a young Norwegian who was disappointed in his preliminary trials for the air service because of a poisoned hand, and promise an enquiry into the troubles of an old lady tied in knots by arthritis who didn't like her doctor in Perth.

"Who wants Providence when they have me?" said Rud, and "Isn't it amazing that neither the Vatican nor British Royalty ever thought of this!"

Thirp collected half a dozen convicted but now reformed forgers who could do the most brilliant variations of Rud's signatures.

Operations of this sort stimulated the world-wide desire for closer contacts and nearer relationships still further. Strange imaginations appeared.

"Seventeen women to-day," said Quinlan, "want to bear him a child. That is mild. It was thirty-seven last Saturday."

"The old morality never sat very well on the ladies," said Thirp. "No...But they endured it as women will...All races, I suppose?"

"Practically," said Quinlan, "but mainly Americans and Europeans."

"You haven't let Him know?"

"Not a word."

"Good," said Thirp, with his head on one side, putting his long hands together as if in prayer. "In a way, it's an attractive idea. I don't know...If anything of the sort did occur...Something might be done. But it would have to be kept a profound secret. Just a trifle too modern...I suppose that sort of thing will come. If there are Dictators a hundred years hence it will seem quite sensible to make them the Fathers of the People. I'm surprised they didn't try that in Russia."

Quinlan consulted the eugenists. He thought, too, that something might be done about it, and that something of the sort might come, but it was clear that for the present the business bristled with difficulties. He did not put the matter before Rud until his own ideas about Rud's possible reactions were more definite.

§ III

After all Rud ate an egg that morning. That beautiful house of his was a reassuring setting. The mountains were benevolent. And it was, he suddenly remembered, his birthday.

The mists of his nightmare evaporated in the warm sunshine of the great terrace. He forgot that sense of a vindictive pursuit that marred so much of his nocturnal existence. The sense of being the overworked servant of mankind passed into a glow of righteous self-applause. “I am forty-four,” he thought, standing at the parapet and surveying his particular lovely piece of world. And when I was twenty I was messing about Camford in a dog’s-eared mortar-board and a patched gown and I hadn’t the dimmest idea of what was to become of me! At least — yes; I had even then, a dim idea...

“There was all the world to take and I took it. Luck? I suppose so. Vision? Inspiration? My twenty-first birthday: where was I? I remember. Took Chiffan on the river. Twenty-second? Poor old Steenhold made what he called a ‘porty’ for it. Still at Camford that was. Twenty-two years ago...

“I took some risks. Nobody knows how I funked Bohun. Lord! How I dreaded him! It was a close thing, too, with Reedly. I timed that well. I knew my man. I chose my moment. H’m. And now I have to put this silly little old world in order for good and all — and make sure the old rottenness doesn’t creep back — before I go. Giant’s Task. Who would have thought it — twenty years ago? Great Accomplishment. And still gigantic things to do. Four and forty — I wonder how long I shall last.

“It’s all thrust into my hands now, almost in spite of myself. I’m still not sure. Never sure. Unless I see to things myself. If I could only trust these others to carry out their jobs without me. Bodisham — Bodisham is good — no doubt he is good — but he has to be urged. Circumspection. He sees difficulties. Over-elaborates. He is an old spider with those round shoulders of his and those glasses, — How round his shoulders are getting! but all his plans and diagrams would change back to spiders’ webs again if I did not insist upon their being translated into steel and living substance. I am his life giver — his reality giver. Says I am rough- handed — impatient. But things have to be done. He’s practically a man of science — and God knows that men of science are Devils for not hurrying. I found him

dreaming. I made him what he is, my constructive truffle-hound. Bellacourt, too, is good — in his way. Most people would have been afraid of him — that fool Reedly was — but I knew better. I wish they were all like Bellacourt. Sticks to his job. I've done some good picking in my time. Roots was my find, and I certainly saw the quality of Holbank as soon as anyone. Irwell — in a sense he has always been in the movement, but — anyhow — I never got rid of him. Norvel? — just a little loose-minded, loose but abundant. And conceited. Sometimes irritatingly conceited. No good telling him things. At the most he pretends to listen. He's got the same queer idea as Bodisham, that things should never be speeded up too much. Never relax, but never hurry. One could imagine he expected to live five hundred years. Do we want all these schools of his? Don't people for all practical purposes know enough already? And he goes behind me and doesn't do the things I say — unless I say them very definitely. He's all for letting — what is it? — individual initiative run loose. But I suppose he has all this academic, scholastic business at his fingers' ends. There is nobody else like him. It would be amusing to go back to Camford one day and see what he has done down there. He does a lot, but he hasn't Thirp's flair for what is happening. Things grow up behind his back.

"If I'd had the educational machine in my own hands I'd have nipped this New Catholic movement in the bud...I may have to see to that yet...

"Olders? Olders is coming on. The typical Civil Servant, able to carry out anything and start nothing. A sense of duty to anyone who will give him orders. The world would fall to pieces if there weren't such men.

"Dreed, of course, might easily be brighter than he is...

"And Chiffan is Chiffan — good old Happy Thoughts. With a trick of saying things just before I do, or anyone else, damn him...

"I couldn't do without Thirp. At first I didn't like him because of his queer voice and his flat hair and his face like an earnest spinster — and those hands. Like a praying Mantis. But how penetratingly he works! He looks under things and through things — that cynical touch — a cruel sense of reality. And he tells me things. He finds out things I don't know. The others are beginning to keep things from

me. Fear my critical glance. After all, where would the world be now, where should we all be now, if Thirp hadn't known about those post cards of Reedly's? He's as sharp as a terrier in spite of that drawling eunuch's voice...

"Thirp is my extra eye...

"I suppose altogether it's as good a team as I could have assembled. That's where my own Revolution beats its precursors. I am building up a World Civil Service. I am making my Code. My Revolution has come to stay. My Revolution!

"All the same, essentially, the world's still on my shoulders. On my shoulders. Prometheus-Atlas. I didn't ask for it..."

So, if not quite so definitely as we have worded it here, thought Rud on his four-and-fortieth birthday.

He thrust the little breakfast table away from him. He touched a button and a young man appeared.

He and Rud were living now in an equalitarian world. Nevertheless there was a certain deference in his manner, for as yet equalisation was incomplete.

"I'll go into conference," said Rud. "Will you tell the Group I am coming to join them? I have to keep in touch."

§ IV

The conference received him without undue excitement. Only Bodisham, Norvel, Dreed, Roots and Chiffan were present. He sat down in the place reserved for him at the head of the table, and regardless of what point they might be discussing at the moment said: "Well, tell me all about it..."

For some time they had been drawing up a document which Bodisham had originally suggested and which Rud had embarked upon with much enthusiasm. His conception of it had been rather different from Bodisham's; but in the long run Bodisham's tenacious mind became dominant in its production.

The title at any rate was Rud's. It was to be called The Fundamental Law, and its general purpose was to present all the structural ideas of the new world society in such a form that they

could be used in schools and colleges everywhere and made the criterion, the standard pattern, for administrative and subsidiary legislative action. But Bodisham had conceived something much more scientific, explicit and directive, and under his influence the Fundamental Law began to take on something of the systematic detail of the Code Napoleon. It acquired the bulk of a handbook, the tone of a textbook. It cited authorities; it not only made statements but proved them. Chiffan made some bright interpolations, but Bodisham's tendency towards a serious practicality prevailed over him. The rest of the Group contributed little to this "Bible of the New World". (One of Rud's rejected phrases.) Thirp, Bellacourt, Holbank, Darwin, and the indefinite fringe of new and occasional members who came and went to the administrative centre at the instance of Bodisham and Rud, rarely put in an appearance at these deliberations.

Rud was greatly excited by the composition of the exordium. He drafted that, re-wrote it again after a long and fruitful discussion with Bodisham, argued a number of minor points, lost his temper, recovered his balance, re- phrased the final version. But after the exordium his interest waned. He was becoming more and more impatient with detail; it irritated him; it irritated him to realise how much more ably almost any practical question could be handled by his colleagues; once or twice, in order not to contradict himself, he had walked out upon some unexpected issue on which he had given way to impulse and taken the wrong line. No one ever reminded him of these occasions, but they went on with the planning under Bodisham's direction as though he had not intervened. He began to come late, and on one or two occasions he had absented himself altogether.

That exordium is by itself a fairly comprehensive document. It recites ably and clearly all the primary ideas that had grown out of the crude popular Leftism from which he and Chiffan had started. But they had been tried out now, scrutinised, polished. It incorporated Bodisham's analysis of the meaning of power, and the essence of Rud's mysticism.

"The whole planet earth," it commences, "is the inalienable heritage and possession of the Common Man. The World Revolution

bases its methods of rule, law, production, distribution, its education and its finance, upon that conception of a common ownership." Then with a sweeping thoroughness it disposes of the pretensions of sovereign states, of non-functional proprietorship, of sex, race, caste or class, of usurers or any type of creditors or successful gamblers, to qualify that principle of the indivisible sovereignty of the whole race. Food, shelter, freedom, the healthiest possible life and universally accessible knowledge constituted the birthright of every mentally and physically sound child born into the world.

In accordance with this initial statement the exordium goes on to define the main branches of human interest and activity as they have henceforth to be administered. All Rud's fundamental maxims and all that he had picked up and assimilated from the more penetrating dicta of Chiffan and the more scientific and comprehensive approach of Bodisham are woven into this general statement. And it repudiates the idea that it has any unnatural and arbitrary quality. It insists on the logical necessity of the Revolution. Now and again an unmistakable biblical echo, due to the early education of Chiffan, appears in the phrasing. "The Revolution," it says explicitly, "came not to destroy but fulfil."

"The whole earth belongs to everyone. That is not a doctrine, that is a fact — long overlooked. We restore what individuals and groups and gangs and nations have appropriated in the past. But restoration is not a reversal of human conditions. It is only a clarification. There is no real distinction between political, social and economic control, that is an error that has crept into social life as it has developed. They are inseparable in a rational order. Individual wages, money, properly shrink in importance as competent directorates are established. That is no Communist dogma; it is commonsense..."

And further, the exordium of the Fundamental Law explains: "The essence of the Revolution is to abolish the attainment of unqualified power of man over man either by vote-getting, money-pressure or crude terror. The Revolution repudiates profit or terror altogether as methods of human intercourse. It turns the attention of men and women back from a frantic and futile struggle for the means of power, a struggle against our primary social instincts, to an innate urgency to make and to a beneficial competition for pre-eminence in

social service. It recalls man to a clean and creative life from the entanglements and perversion of secondary issues into which he has fallen. It replaces property and official authority by the compelling prestige of sound achievement. Eminent service remains the only source of influence left in the world...”

That last idea is pure Bodisham, but the voice is the voice of Rud.

§ V

When Rud read over his final version of the introduction to the Group, they endorsed it very cordially. “You could not have put our common faith better,” said Chiffan. The others murmured approval in the same key.

A wave of conscious nobility swept through Rud. “This — to be blunt about it — is the time when we might usurp, and I won’t,” he said, in a mood of real magnificence, and proceeded at once to a completeness of usurpation that dwarfed all precedent.

“It is clear,” he said, “that the effective reorganisation of the machinery of administration is an immensely intricate job, and that any attempt to establish a democratic control by these shattered, inexperienced and mentally confused populations must wait upon the creation and working of Norvel’s educational machinery. They would not know at present what was needed nor what to ask for. A crude return to electoral politics would give every mischievous rascal in the world an opportunity, and it would revitalise all the national, religious, racial organisations that are down and out indeed but still in a sort of attenuated existence. I think we are right in assuming a general acquiescence. Here sve are, and there is no effective revolt against us. What I propose we do is to go right ahead, establish our world system first and then as an educated generation comes along —

“When?” asked Norvel.

“In two or three decades it will be becoming effective.”

“I hope,” said Norvel, and continued to regard Rud thoughtfully.

“And until then we do things by decree. We will assume we have been elected and we will decree. Afterwards we will ask them what

they think of it. The game for power is overyes — and we have won. We cannot risk having everything upset by a new squabble for power. We'll have no power politics and no politicians again, until the new world is in working order, and then we will ask whether the world wants them back. We will establish everything firmly on the basis of this Fundamental Law, and face them with actuality. How else can we do it? Finally, I assume we will establish some sort of conference for the endorsement of the world order and, if necessary, for its revision — we shall crown the work with a representative legislature — a more or less representative legislature, representative I suppose by callings and services rather than localities. For we have de-localised the world. There are still local populations, but there is no more local community. The abolition of distance means the end of political geography. Isn't that the way, Bodisham?"

"I agree entirely," said Bodisham, recognising phrase after phrase as his own, and nodding quietly as they passed him, while the others acquiesced. "That is our way," said Bodisham.

"Then and then only," said Rud, "my task will be completed and I shall give way to — whatever we find is the best way of co-ordinating our various World Administrations, and I will resign and end my days simply as the common man I am."

There was a pause. Rud sat at the end of the table looking modest but firm.

"You couldn't say fairer," said Chiffan.

§ VI

One of the minor difficulties of these conferences to produce the Fundamental Law was the intrusion of a number of suggestions for minor changes in the natural texture of life, in numeration, time-reckoning, symbols, language and the like. Some of them were manifestly overdue reforms, and most of these were carried through automatically by the ministries concerned. Revolutions are always hurried and hustled processes; they never make novel reconstructions except by accident; but on the other hand if there is any cut-and-dried rationalisation waiting to be accepted, they carry it through almost

automatically.

The reform of the calendar is a case in point. A variety of rearrangements had been exhaustively discussed, and a rough outline of what was needed had been established. Norvel was very uncompromising in that matter. He accepted the World Calendar Association scheme which has given us our twelve months of thirty days and the necessary intercalary ones, but he would have no further changes. He wouldn't have the months renamed or the count of the years broken. He wouldn't hear of a ten-day week. He overrode Thirp on these points.

Thirp had hinted at a renaming of the days — or at least of three extra days — and even thrown out the suggestion of a Rud-day. Possibly even a Lenin-day and a Darwin-day.

Chiffan had glanced at Rud when this suggestion was made.

"Nonsense," said Norvel hastily, before Rud had time to express an opinion. "We must keep on the old calendar days, weeks and months, just as much as we can. They have character. No substitute for the Semitic week," he said, "has ever yet been thought out. Maybe it doesn't suit every sort of industry, but working spells and rest intervals ought to vary with the nature of the job. Ten days would be just as much a misfit as seven. We're not going to do the sun and the moon and Thor and Freyja and all the rest of 'em out of their days of the week, and personally I'd hate to call the ninth and tenth months anything but September and October. These are interesting fossils of the mind, and they do no harm that I can see. They remind us of our intellectual origins. You'll want to shut our ear-holes next because they come from primitive gill-slits. I'm all for continuity in unimportant things. So don't let's start a new era.

"I don't know how it seems to you," Norvel went on, before anyone else could cut in, "but that Year One of the Republic business and all that, has always struck me as more than a little vulgar. It's like calling Petersburg Leningrad. Let the Christians keep the tale of years and Greenwich the first meridian. After all, nothing really happened in A.D. one. Even our Dominus wasn't born until A.D. four."

"No," said Rud, with an eye on Thirp. "No. Of course he wasn't. We have to recognise that arbitrary unmeaning points like the

Greenwich meridian and A.D. one, are the best for reckoning. We don't want to prejudice history. The old world tried to put its propaganda in everything, from eras to postage stamps. The new world — I agree with Norvel and Chiffan — can't do that."

"I never said anything," said Chiffan.

"I read your thoughts, Chiffan," said Rud.

"It was a mere passing idea," said Thirp, taking his cue. "And, after all," thought Chiffan, "he is on the money and the postage stamps..."

In the same spirit the Fundamental Law conference would have nothing to do with a duodecimal system of numbering. "Leave all that sort of thing alone," said Norvel. "Who knows how science will be dealing with sequences and dimensions in the next hundred years? Our sufficient business is world unity — with such material as we possess. Man counts by tens because he has ten fingers. That trouble began with our amphibious ancestors, I believe, somewhen in the Palaeozoic. It's too far to go back. It's too far to go back."

§ VII

Nor would Rud listen to any projects for a World Language. There he not only followed Norvel and Bodisham, but his own natural indisposition to tamper with the rhetorical instrument he had mastered.

They were all three inclined towards a simplified and phonetically spelt English as the common speech of the world, because they were English-speakers and because the English-speaking communities had been the backbone of the revolutionary movement. But they realised the element of bias in this disposition. They knew that language was bound to change with all the other changes in progress, that it needed not merely new words but new idioms, that the vocabulary of every tongue that remained in use must inevitably be enormously enlarged and refined, and that the speech of the future, whatever its basis, would necessarily be syncretic and greatly polished by attrition. They favoured English so far as to institute phonetic spelling, make it compulsory to print books in this reformed orthography and optional

to print them also in the classical alphabet, and establish basic English the official lingua franca. But they suppressed no other language teaching. When there was a non-English-speaking population the local language was the primary one. They felt that in this way a mutable English speech might be imposed upon the patchwork of Babel, much as the white saltire unified the world's flags. Useful and expressive novelties could be incorporated from any other language and made world-wide by the cinema, the radio and the ever-multiplying schools. English has always been the Autolycus of languages, taking its own where it found it. Against this leisurely advance towards a naturally developing, synthetic, world language, the Idoists, the Esperantists and their like raged in vain.

"It is remarkable how patriotism still lingers in the blood," said Dreed. "I like to think that the coming world language will be English."

"It will be almost as much English," said Norvel, "as Middle Saxon is the English in use to-day. Less like. It will have dropped a thousand ambiguous and deflated terms. It will have received from every language under the sun. It will probably have new pronouns and new prepositions. We can no more foresee that than we can foresee the fashions of five hundred years from now.

"All we can do is to prepare for a universal language that will go on changing for ever. We don't know everything. We aren't final. I wish we could make that statement a part of the Fundamental Law."

"We could work something about that into the exordium," said Rud. "I think we could make it sound rather fine."

§ VIII

On the morning of his forty-fourth birthday Rud sat down at the head of the table in the place reserved for him, and regardless of what the Group might be discussing at the moment, said: "Well, tell me all about it..."

They had come to the position of women in the new world. "We were saying," said Chiffan, "that women have played a curiously small part in the Revolution."

“So far as I know,” said Rud with conviction, “they haven’t played any part at all. What are you working upon now here?”

“They constitute fifty-seven per cent of the species,” said Chiffan.

“Well, the Fundamental Law provides that there shall be no discrimination of race, religion, class, sex?”

“Wait a moment,” said Bodisham. “Sex?

“We provide,” said Bodisham, “that there shall be no legal disqualification or handicap on account of sex, but that does not end the matter. First we have to consider that vast mass of human beings, which is already expanding proportionately again, Norvel’s particular field, the young below the age of citizenship, and next and linked to that we have certain occasions between man and woman. How far does the law interfere?”

“As little as possible,” said Chiffan.

“In every affair the law must interfere as little as possible. The Fundamental Law makes that clear.”

Norvel spoke. “We have to consider first of all the supply of children in the world. Sooner or later we may have to forbid marriage — no, not marriage, but bearing and begetting — to certain definable types. Biological science isn’t so sure yet — but it will get sure. That is as much a part of the World Health Service as the compulsory notification of infectious diseases and the establishment of cordons.”

“It will be liable to abuses,” said Dreed.

Bodisham raised his eyebrows by way of reply. Every law is liable to abuses.

“All that sort of thing is pretty straight sailing,” said Chiffan. “There is no dispute about the principles involved. The real problem is just how far the modern world can regulate — embraces.”

Rud scowled at him. “That,” he said, “is part of the individual life. There is no need even to talk about it here.”

“You think that apart from licensing parenthood and subsidising motherhood,” said Roots, “the state should leave sex alone.”

“Embraces,” corrected Chiffan, heedless of Rud’s objection. “Embraces! You can’t ignore the social aspects of sex, you can leave the actual embraces alone, but you can’t avoid the social recognition of the groupings that ensue.”

“There have always been marital rights,” said Dreed, unheeded.

“But were they ever — enforced?”

“It affects our housing projects, for example,” said Chiffan. “Whom do we embrace and where and when? Are we to build for monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, promiscuity?...”

“There is no such thing as promiscuity,” said Norvel.

“Well — an obliging looseness, let us say. An amiable laxity. Is this new world ahead to be a world of tight little, right little homes, or a patriarchal kraal or a sprawl of lovers against a background of maternity homes and foundling hospitals? I admit every day and in every way, parentage becomes less involuntary. It seems to me that this also releases human affectionateness at a less austere level. Cupid with his bandage off and armed with a revolver. Still —

“That would be a problem for the constructive ministries to meet, according to the varying local requirements,” said Roots.

“It is remarkable,” said Dreed, “that we should be sitting here discussing the future of all womankind on earth, without a single woman present. Ought we not?”

“We don’t want any women here,” said Rud. “They would take sides where we differed, but they would contribute nothing.”

“They would demand complete control of the whole business,” said Norvel. “With a certain air of reasonableness they would say it was their particular business.”

“And they would do nothing whatever about it,” said Rud. “We don’t want women here. We don’t want them.”

“Not even to give evidence?” said Norvel.

“What an inquisition!” chuckled Chiffan, manifestly amused. “I can imagine—”

He stopped short at the sight of Rud’s scowl.

“I suggest that the Fundamental Law deal with the young and with any eugenic aspects of the matter, and leave all the rest to the natural development of social life,” said Rud.

“Nevertheless,” Norvel persisted, “I think we ought to have some representative women here. We ought either to make a special committee of them to report and suggest, or bring them into consultation.”

“What are representative women?” demanded Rud, with a gust of impatience. “What makes them?” And then, as if the whole question

was too trivial for his attention, he pushed back his chair, rose slowly and departed.

Chiffan watched him go.

"And now?" began Norvel...

"Being a woman so far has been the major profession of the species," said Roots. "In a few specialised forms it is grossly overpaid; in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases in the thousand it has been abominably underpaid. It is not so much a sweated industry as a bluffed and racketeered one. Being a wife is still the main profession of women in the world, and yet the financial and well-disciplinary conditions of two people, married or not, who are living together, amount generally to a fight for the upper hand. It is a fight very much out of the cognizance of the law. Most of the events occur without witnesses, both sides have an age-long tradition of lying abominably about the other, and at the same time standing up for each other, and interference between husband and wife is consequently very difficult.

"But it is only in the intimate life that interference is difficult. Economically the problem is much simpler. An increasing number of women are taking up professions now; at architecture, catering, various industries, normal teaching, secretarial work, hospital work, for example, they are practically as good as men or better, and there we need only carry out the principle of absolute equality. And it seems economically and socially convenient to make motherhood a paid social service. If that is done and if the allowances go to the mother, with a reasonable right of the father and the local authority to intervene in cases of cruelty or negligence, we shall have put womankind for the first time in history on a fair and equal footing with men, so far as economic freedom goes. Nothing need prevent a woman being a man's salaried housekeeper or his nurse or what not with or without marriage. If she enters into a form of marriage involving a contract, that contract will be subject to the laws we shall certainly impose for the limitation, periodic revision and annulment of unreasonable and undesirable clauses in all contracts. There the Fundamental Law stops short. Sexual amour-propre, jealousy, what are called marital rights and so forth are no concern of the state's. If they lead to crimes the law deals with the crime. All that seems very

simple."

"The World State, I take it," said Bodisham, "will protect individual freedom, from conception to cremation. It will protect individual freedom from menace and monopolisation. It will protect the young from any premature decisions they will be unable to reverse. It may also presently set about protecting the young from diseased or defective parentage. As our knowledge of dysgenic processes advances. Beyond what is implied by that much protection, it will leave men and women absolutely free to conduct themselves as they choose. There lies the scope for a free literature, novels, dramas, poetry, spectacle, suggestion, inspiration, exaltation of every sort turning upon conduct and interpretation. There may be cults. We have to prepare for life in unprecedented profusion and variety...But the state has to stand aside from all that."

§ IX

"It's curious," began Chiffan, and stopped short. "Yes?" said Bodisham, who had a marked tolerance for Chiffan's excursions.

"I suppose," said Chiffan, "that with man just as much as with any other social animal, sex was the original binding force of the community, and I suppose our religion, our morality arose mainly out of sexual subordination and sexual tabus. So the anthropologists tell us. If perhaps I temper my Freud with Adler, still all the same I think the main strand of emotional life is sexual. Maybe fear, hunger and the power-craving are more elementary than sex, but sex is bound up with most of the power-craving..."

Norvel nodded his head.

"Well, here we are organising a world first to defeat, distribute and disperse the power-craving and so end war, and secondly to secure and distribute abundance to everyone. Good. We shall do it. What of sex? We are going to release something which hitherto has been kept under the severest restraint, which hitherto has been the chief force harnessed by morality, which has been in fact for most people the significance of morality, the sexual urge and the sexual imagination. That is, I have to point out, a complete change of

function for the social organisation. Our Fundamental Law is just bundling the original social force out of the court room to do what it likes unchallenged...”

“What have you to suggest?” said Bodisham. “Are you suggesting a control?”

“I am suggesting nothing,” said Chiffan. “I am reflecting.” Bodisham began to fiddle with his pencil. He had expected a project of some sort.

“Sex,” Chiffan went on, “is something absolutely primary in this queer beast, Man. Perhaps I see things with a certain bias, but it appears to me that when the animal man is neither afraid, nor hungry, nor exhausted, then it is that the energies within him, the endocrines, the chemical conspirators that drive him, are turned in the direction of self-assertion through sex. Concentrated on that end. Security and abundance release sex. Wherever there is sex to be released. I think the intimate history of what one might call emancipated classes in the past — courts, aristocracies, plutocracies for example, points in that direction. Sex is released, exposed and elaborated. Life ceases to be serious. Gallantry and art break out. Sex lies in wait for every sort of success. It follows success about. That has always been so, and I think it is likely to be so always. No Revolution can change that.”

“Yes, yes,” said Bodisham. “But how does it affect the Fundamental Law?”

“I am considering the problem of surplus energy,” said Chiffan, “as an explosive force. I am speculating about what is to happen when the Common Man begins to realise that the scramble for life is over for good and all. Our Fundamental Law is ensuring his permanent immunity from violent termination by explosives, machinery and insane hatreds and intolerances. But also it is creating a curious gap in living — unknown to the adult life of any other animal — leisure, active leisure, leisure with surplus energy...And now, says the animal, what am I to do?...

“While we were all within a reasonable distance of being shot, life was eventful and we had no sense of any emptiness in things. A man with some one in hot pursuit of him was never really bored. But now, now it is going to be different.”

Norvel, with his hands relaxed on the table, considered Chiffan.

Bodisham began to draw little diagrams on his blotting-pad as he listened. Dreed seemed lost in thoughts of his own, and Roots, who had to fly back to the Sahara irrigation works before night, turned to stare out of the great window at the afternoon sky.

"When the pursuit relaxes," Chiffan went on, "then our problem changes. Two things, I imagine, may happen to a hunted man when the hunt is over. He may doubt if it is over. He may think that the hunter is still about, but hiding and creeping — and he won't know what to do about that. And that will make him uneasy. And also the mere fact of having made his escape and won his flight will also leave him rather at loose ends."

"You mean man in general?" said Norvel.

"Man in particular," said Chiffan. "Perhaps I am talking of Everyman when in fact I am really thinking of the Common Man who has come through the Revolution. He is going to feel 'something is still coming for me and I am doing nothing about it, something is escaping me and I am doing nothing about that either.' That may lead to complicated trouble. Trouble for our generation in general and for us in particular. The World Peace we have won was well worth living for and dying for. Now we have it, it is nothing. It is just a danger abolished. We have to go on living."

"Creation and constructive work," said Bodisham. "There is no end to that."

"Knowledge," said Norvel. "Men are scarcely beginning to explore life and their own possibilities."

"Common men don't realise that," said Chiffan. "At present, Norvel. Until you and your colleagues educate them up to that realisation, it's just as though it wasn't so...Common men, I tell you, are going to be most damnably bored — in the years ahead of us. Men much more than women. Maybe sex is the actual line of relief. An efflorescence of sex — and sublimated sex, art, decoration, music, may be the natural and necessary relief...I don't know."

He stopped short and shrugged his shoulders.

Bodisham shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose you will draft this section, Bodisham?" said Norvel.

Bodisham nodded and pushed his scribbled blotting-pad away from him. Dreed sat up and Roots returned from his contemplation of

the clouds. The session was over...

Norvel spoke to Chiffan as they left the room.

“I have been thinking, very much as you have been thinking,” he said. “I too think — the Common Man — in particular — in one particular instance — may be getting bored — and I don’t know what to do about it.”

§ X

Rud returned along the painted corridor to his own apartments.

He felt irritated by his Fundamental Law conference and he realised that his irritation was unreasonable. Evidently they had to discuss women even if they discussed them only to thrust sex out of the main propositions of the Fundamental Law. But why should they have chosen that topic on this particular morning? And why had they not kept it high and austere? It was Chiffan’s touch. Why should Chiffan drag in a word like “embraces”, a discomfiting word, a warm, enervating word.

Hitherto in his strenuous life he had kept these suggestions out of his imagination, except in those vague phases that come between sleeping and waking — and then they were soon disposed of. But here they were invading the day. Here they were producing something like a self-betrayal to his colleagues. Here they were with a plain intimation that he might forget himself...

He fretted about his apartment for a time. His mind seemed to have lost all its discipline. What had he to do with embraces? Damn that word! He decided that he needed to refresh his sense of the mighty role that he was playing in the world, to get things back into proportion. In fact he went to look for himself. He made his way over an arcaded bridge that spanned a gorge to the series of offices in which the development of his personality was in progress, and there he found Quinlan ready to refresh his memory.

“And how am I getting on with humanity to-day?” asked Rud.

Quinlan showed him a vast pile of photographs, papers, trial records and beflagged world maps of the birthday celebrations.

“It is amusing to think that no religion has ever had this

universality. Never has Christmas for example ever been celebrated as your birthday is being celebrated."

A gleam of satisfaction appeared upon Rud's pale face. "I suppose not," he said. "I suppose not."

Then came a twinge of modesty. "Of course it is all this new apparatus. It is just the new scale of things that makes it more universal."

"But so it is," said Quinlan. "None the less."

Rud looked at the methodical assemblage of Quinlan's publicity machinery. He felt as if he was standing on stilts a mile high. It was perfectly right, reasonable, fantastic and mad. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Hitler, had anticipated this sort of thing, but never had the significance of their elevation been brought home to them to quite this extent. The stilts seemed steady enough, but the perspective was terrific.

"We have some new schoolroom cartoons," said Quinlan. "They hit reaction hard."

Conspicuous in this display was a cartoon of a mighty winged figure with the face of Rud, idealised and yet recognisable, and in his hands was a drawn sword. He defended the world against a squirming mass of necks and heads, bearing crosses, mitres, crowns, red caps, Federalist shakos; all the symbols of the principalities and powers of the pre-Revolutionary world.

"Of course, this is an immense exaggeration," said Rud. "I suppose that in a way it is necessary."

"It is no exaggeration. Maybe it symbolises. It is a symbolical statement. It is the only way in which we can get the Revolution over to ninety-nine per cent of them. This — for the run of mankind — is what you are."

"After all," said Rud, searching in his mind for ideas that were fading away from him. "It is their own collective self..."

Quinlan was too busy with his display to discuss meta-politics.

"There will be much to tell you to-morrow," he said, "as the reports and pictures of all that come in and are analysed...

"Of course, if you would like to see something of what is actually happening now, for example—" He considered the buttons before him and decided: "Here."

He motioned Rud's eyes to the screen. It lit up and an elfin clamour of cheering voices became audible. "This is Pekin," he said. "They are celebrating you. Look at them."

The crowd was just a waving stipple of faces, an undulating close-spotted snake's skin. It bustled with banners bearing inscriptions, in the new Chinese alphabet. Save for faint floating iridescences it was as real as direct vision. Everyone was singing some sort of shrill song to pseudo-oriental music.

"Here you can see them quite closely," said Quinlan.

And suddenly almost within touching distance were flushed faces and bright eyes, and mouths that shouted his name. Mostly they were quite young girls and their excitement poured out upon him.

"That's enough," said the World Trustee abruptly, and turned away.

The apparatus clicked and was still.

"All over the world," said Quinlan.

"Thank you," said Rud, dismissing him, and went out through a further arch that opened upon a rock garden. He strolled slowly up a winding path with occasional steps, and came to a pavilion in which he seated himself. "All over the world," he repeated. "And here I am — solitary."

"All over the world."

He had never thought of his home for years — he had indeed deliberately not thought of it. Now he imagined that forgotten family of his joining in the world chorus. Would they realise that this great Rud was indeed their — Rudie? And then, thrusting all the rest of them out of the way, came his vehement little cousin Rachel. He had slapped her and she had slapped back and then he had pulled her soft abundant hair and they had scuffled. It all came back to him intensified. He saw and felt her face very vividly close to his. She was gripping his wrists, she was putting out her sharp red tongue at him and saying "Yaaaa" at him. Was she still somewhere in this conquered world, marvelling at him? He hoped she was still in the world. He would like to feel he had got square with her.

What had become of her? What would she be like now?

Queer, but she must be, she was, the only girl he had ever come to grips with. He had never seen her since. Her mother took her abroad,

to South Africa was it? Or Australia. And after that slowly he had become aware of his Destiny. Slowly his Destiny had enveloped him, absorbed him.

He imagined Cousin Rachel was sitting beside him and that he was talking to her about the intervening years.

"In a way I have done my task too well. I stand over the world like that mighty archangel you may have seen out there, the Guardian of the Revolution. I am frozen in the same attitude. On guard against any reaction. But I am not really frozen through. I am not really a mighty archangel. Not altogether. I am something more. I am a living man — most terribly alone..."

(What was that book Norvel spoke about? The Golden Bough and sacrificial kings? I must read it.)

"You are wonderful," said Cousin Rachel, sitting beside him in his imagination and speaking very softly.

"Sacrificial king of the world. For whom no sacrifice could be too great, my Master."

Rud started at the extravagance of his own thought and looked round guiltily for fear that some one might have observed what he was thinking. Cousin Rachel had evaporated. His haunting fear of self-betrayal occupied his mind again. This sense of an ever-watching eye in the open spaces cancelled, as it so often did, the ease of his Atheism. He sat up and then let himself droop into a pensive pose as who should think thoughts for all the world.

§ XI

Chiffan was the least administrative of all the Group out of which the first World Administration grew. He remained what used to be called a Minister without Portfolio. He joined in the irregular councils that Rud assembled and on increasingly infrequent occasions he talked to Rud and Rud annexed his ideas. But the great World Ministries were developing their own methods of dealing with one another, and the new conjoint sessions of the Law, Education and Biological (Health) Boards were acting as an organ for arbitration and taking more and more responsibility off the shoulders of the council. Rud maintained

his closest relations with the World Police under Thirp and the rather ill-defined Ministry for the Protection of the World State, and Chiffan, with his generous salary as consultant-general, was as near an approach to the old-fashioned "independent gentleman" as the new world could show. He spent his days in appreciative living and leisurely writing. With the rapid increase of the world's wealth, a new leisure class of released and superannuated workers was appearing. There were more gentlefolk than ever, and more and more. The normal life labour contribution was now twenty-five thousand hours; there was already great freedom in the way this could be distributed over the lifetime, and it ensured a comfortable minimum existence throughout life. Above that level, there was a great variety of rewards and fortunes to be earned by competent contributions to what was called the surplus of life.

Chiffan lived in a pleasant villa in the Rhone Valley, ten minutes' flying from the Centre, and there he lived with the most intelligent and congenial of all the women he had ever met, his wife, Phoebe Chiffan, who was indeed the twenty-ninth "real mistress" of his philandering career. Their mutual affection was as manifest as their mutual tolerance, and though she was, as people say, "faithful" to him, she viewed his active and imaginative interest in the whole spectacle of womankind with an amused sympathy. The only person in the world about whom she felt a twinge of jealousy was Rud. She felt Rud was a monster, she thought his leadership of the Group uncanny. When she saw that Chiffan was troubled in his mind and asked him point-blank what he was worrying about, and when he said "I'm bothered a bit over Rud," she said "I thought as much."

"You are stupid about Rud," he said.

"No — you are."

"He's getting into a — a state of lonely misery.

"Isn't that his own affair?"

"You're inhuman."

"I'm feminine."

"I owe everything to him."

"And he to you. It's fifty-fifty."

"I've got a sort of maternal feeling about him. I've known him—"

"Four times as long as you have known me. What right has a man

to be maternal?”

“Men are — and even some women.”

She leant out of the hammock and pulled his hair. “All right, Chiff- chaff,” she said. “Tell me about your Rud.”

“What I — what we have always liked about him,” said Chiffan, “is a sort of diabolical energy. His drive. There is something outrageous in his make-up that won us all. And something that still intrigues me. There are times when I want to follow that man about like a child following a circus show. Why does he do things? He’s an abject coward — these are things not to be repeated, my dear — and also he is a desperate fighter. Do you know I think at times that he is the master of the world to-day simply because he has a frantic fear of power — in the hands of anyone else.”

She ruffled Chiffan’s hair by way of showing she was listening.

“So he has got it all into his own hands,” she said.

“And he doesn’t know what to do with it, and now he doesn’t know what to do with himself.”

“But isn’t he putting the world in order at a tremendous rate? Everybody says so.”

“No. We are. At least, the others are. All that he does is to watch — and make that keyhole Minister of his, Thirp, watch — that nobody anywhere turns any official authority conceded him, into power. And Thirp — well, Thirp bothers him with suspicions. Things are going well with the world, but unless they go a little wrong, what is the use of Thirp? Thirp sees to that. Thirp keeps him irritated and uneasy and he has no distractions. I’m sorry, darling Phoebe — you know I love you, you know how I love you — but I don’t want my ugly little Thunder-god to culminate in misery. He has made the whole spectacle of life rich and ridiculous for me. And now he is — he has a sort of greyness. He is bored or angry or afraid — afraid of things coming back — all day, and at night they give him drugs — and the best of drugs lower one and give one dreams. I know he has dreams. I didn’t think things would take this turn with him and it distresses me. It distresses me, my dear. Love me, love my Rud, Phoebe. I did a lot to make him what he is. You help me with Rud.” “How can I help?”

“Advice. The wisdom of your sex. Give me ideas what to do for

him. You are all born with a natural interest in us. You are twenty years younger than I, and all the ages wiser."

"It is good for men to have such beliefs," said Phoebe. "But you must tell me first what you think, and then I will tell you just how right you are."

"That may be the way of it," said Chiffan.

"Well?"

"I said Rud has been driven by fear. He has been driven by an extreme dread of domination. He cannot endure the thought of anyone having domination over him. Until he became World Director he never felt safe about that. He needs constant reassurance still. That is plain enough even for you to see, my dear."

"Did you say just now that I was all the ages wiser than you?"

"Yes. When things are put before you. But what I have only glimpsed by fits and starts about him — until quite recently — is something else. Rud, I realise, has a profound, maybe innate dread of the closest of all forms of domination — love."

"Go on."

"His capacity for love — if he ever had much capacity for love — has atrophied. Or you can put it, if you like, in quite another way. It has vanished and then returned in a vague, cloudy desire to be appreciated, admired, obeyed — loved by all the world. Without any return. All this accumulating desire for public adoration, all this increasing exhibitionism—"

He thought profoundly.

"You see, Phoebe, you and I assuage each other's egotisms. To a very considerable extent. Unless they get wasted, or crippled or perverted in some way, men and women get together as you and I have got together at last...We get a domination over one another. And so long as things seem fair and equal we don't resent that. We begin with liking and love-making — yes, we keep on with love-making — but the chemistry of body and mind works so as to give us a control over each other's self-respect...That's the sane way of life. For anyone with a rational imagination. When a man is happy with his woman and a woman is happy with her man and they are happy in their friends, neither of them aches — as he does — to possess the world and the sun and the moon. Am I right?"

“Sweetheart, you are right. Though it took you some years of sedulous research—”

Chiffan waved aside what threatened to be a troublesome digression. “You kept out of my way,” he said. “The point about Rud, Phoebe, is just what you have said to me. There is nobody in the world to say to him ‘Sweetheart, you are right.’”

“And that aches?”

“Damnably. It is the fundamental ache. The better you are fed and clothed and gratified, the more that ache for reassuring appreciation takes hold of you. The core of happiness is to have some one with whom you are essentially right and important — however wrong and ineffective you are. Rud hasn’t loved, doesn’t love and doesn’t know how to love.”

“Now why?” said Phoebe, with her chin between her two fists.

“Missed it.”

“You don’t mean he’s homosexual?”

“No. Not a bit of it. And besides, I’m told, they can be quite affectionate.”

“Asexual?”

“Nobody is.”

“Then, what?”

“I said that his ruling motive is dread. Something happened. Something humiliating. Quite early perhaps. But something that turned him back upon himself.”

“Narcissism.”

“If you like to call it that. A trifle too floral for my taste. We want a third word; there’s homosexual and heterosexual — why not autosexual? He is afraid of women. He dare not risk an approach to them. He is afraid of humiliation, he is darkened by a dread of them. And, my dear, dimly, he wants what you give us. He missed the coarse enterprise of adolescence, which lays the foundations of confidence. He feels now that that triumph — it is a triumph, Phoebe — is not for him, and so he has trained himself not to attempt, not to betray a flicker of desire.”

“Queer creatures we humans are!”

“Am I right? Can you imagine him as a lover?”

“Ugh!”

“For any woman?”

“Women are queer things. Not all alike. More variable perhaps than men in these things. I can’t put myself — can’t imagine myself — in any woman’s skin but my own. There is a brutal fastidiousness in my physical make-up anyhow. Let alone that I love you, so that I’m specialised now for you. But before ever I met you I am certain he would have seemed not simply indifferent, but repulsive — disgusting.”

“I wonder,” said Chiffan, “how far you speak for even a majority of women?”

“Any woman who answers for the behaviour of any woman but herself is a fool,” said Phoebe.

“But even as what they used to call a Platonic lover?”

“Some women seem capable of monstrous tolerations. You and I are imaginative, sensuous people. We can’t stand people who are not good-looking. We are a normal easygoing couple. There are women without sensory imaginations, without physical pride, gross women, acquisitive women, prestige-lovers, women with a sort of blunt, savage brutality of ownership...But go on.”

“Well, you will see now what I mean when I say that Rud is living in an unbroken egotism, all inside himself. A sort of moral potbound plant. Love is the natural force that breaks down egotism, takes you out to living, to personal self-forgetfulness, but he has never had even a sentimental relationship. He had no intimate life, no life of the affections, at all; and so his egotism now has become inflamed and dreadful.”

“But what am I to do about it?”

“Help me to do something to break down his loneliness.” “But how?”

“Make some sort of social life for him. Get him into contact with human beings, easy, delightful, everyday human beings.”

“But how? And where?”

“I don’t know how. That is why I come to you. Social life is woman’s work. He distresses me, I tell you. In a way, Phoebe, I love him. He’s been a great fact in my life. And I can’t think what to do about it. There he is away there, either working or alone. I’ve been watching him. Things are getting urgent.”

Phoebe swung down out of the hammock and confronted Chiffan.

"You darling," she said. "You broke out of your egotism quite early in life. You tore it to rags. I suppose you've always been breaking out of your egotism in all directions — when did you begin, dear? I never thought being a rake was a synonym for altruism. Bless you — I don't mind — as long as you don't dwell on it. I'm glad you've loved so many people. I will think of something — somehow. You've made me do some difficult things. But this — what shall I call it? — rehumanising of the Master Director!"

§ XII

"Rehumanising the Master Director" seemed a good phrase to Chiffan. Phoebe was learning the trick of phrase-making from him, as women will acquire even the most recondite tricks from their men, and he had that impulse to quote her cleverness which is part of the pride of love. The change in Rud's moods and manners was attracting the attention not only of Chiffan, but of most of those who were in any sort of personal contact with him, and he was being observed and discussed as he never had been before — intimately. The thing was leaking out towards the public mind. And Thirp was not one of the least active of those who speculated about the Master's disposition. He caught up Mrs. Chiffan's phrase with approval.

"Of course!" he said, in his high-pitched voice. "How clever of that young woman! No human being can keep going as he has kept going for the last ten years without some relaxation. Worse than a term of imprisonment. He needs distraction sorely.

"Everyone says he needs rest," said Thirp, "but rest isn't a negative thing. It is no sort of rest to do nothing. Prisoners have told me that. The best mental rest is a change of preoccupation. For — I don't know how long — he has had no — what shall I call it? — no personal life. All that side of his life has been inhibited. Queer I didn't realise this before!"

Thirp's mind went off at a tangent from that.

Thirp was certainly the most incongruous of all the Central Group, the least constructive in spirit and perhaps the most active.

There was something about the motions of his hands and about the passing raptures on his face that made Norvel, who disliked him thoroughly, think that he ought to have been an old-world dealer in scents or sweets or precious stones. He was always astonishing Norvel by the extraordinary penetration of his occasional comments and by his barely concealed indifference to the vast conception of social reconstruction throughout the whole world which dominated the rest of the Group. He lifted his eyebrows, he lifted his voice in a slightly derisive appreciation of the reconditioned world about him. He intimated that he felt it was too good and much too rapid to be true. There was none of the hive-builder, nothing of the beaver about Thirp; his constructions were webs.

He went to and fro in the world, always a little secretly and unexpectedly, and his friends were mostly the younger men of his organisation, agents he used and somehow had to protect, and a certain sprinkling of accidental womenfolk. His taste in atmosphere was for variety, contrast, richness and the recondite. He had an instinct for the out-of-the-way, He would spend a few days in some Chinese household that had miraculously survived the social convulsions of the age, or he would stay for a week in some remote monastery or lamasery that the tides of destruction had left untouched, or he would go to his own villa among a group of artistic friends, near Montserrat in Catalonia, and return with renewed zest to the control of his immense organisation of information bureaus and the obscure activities of his Ministry for the Preservation of the Revolution.

This last was the most ill-defined of all the World Administrations. It was in effect a political police which had grown up about Thirp as a centre. It had its prisons and its oubliettes — often prisons taken over from the old order and very incompletely modernised. It watched for an anticipated militant reaction, and particularly for any systematic attempts to revive nationalist feeling or race antagonism, it was as underhand as the evils it attacked, it was suspicious in spirit and its methods secret and arbitrary. It was all in his hands, and Rud was as insistent to keep it entirely in his hands as he had been to maintain Bellacourt's independence of Reedly.

“You honest men don’t know anything about treason,” he said to Bodisham. “You must set an intriguer to deal with intrigue.”

Bodisham said something about universal fair-play nowadays.

“Sedition,” said Rud, “knows nothing of fair-play.”

Rud surprised Norvel one day by telling him of a rather acid comment upon Quinlan’s St. Michael poster he had made at a private dinner party.

“Good God!” said Norvel indignantly. “Do we still live in a world of political espionage?”

“You do,” said Rud.

Chiffan’s phrase about “rehumanisation” set not simply one train of ideas but two separate systems going in Thirp’s busy brain. One was the rehumanisation of world affairs through what he called “the reappearance of women”, and the second was the imperative necessity for him that any personal “rehumanisation” of Rud must be in his own hands, if his present influence in world affairs was to be maintained. Whatever happened, Chiffan was not to rehumanise Rud.

“The reappearance of women”, he expounded to two or three of his leading agents in the Arab dining-room of his chambers at the police headquarters.

“In war and during the turnover of revolutions, women have a way of disappearing from the centre of the human stage. They are just blacked out. They are shapes in the background. They nurse, they supply the rough material for outrages, they do a lot of love-making, but in a hurry, unimportantly, as the inferior partner. There is espionage — but the popular mind exaggerates about the beautiful spy — and they work in munition factories and act as substitute men, clerking, driving cars and inspecting tickets. It’s all minor roles they have. But now as things are getting into shape again, as the tension of conflict relaxes, you see them coming back not merely to equality, but to a special sort of power and predominance. They are less and less wanted for jobs; they are more and more wanted for their pretty selves. Beauty becomes significant again, important in itself; they dress, they make-up. ‘Society’ life is resumed. Men compete again for their approval and their favour...I have never set much store upon the achievement of women myself,” said Thirp, “but I admit they are becoming now as interesting as they have ever been...

“Even though the World War left more of them alive than men...

“All over the world, I observe, social occasions are arising and women are becoming self-conscious again. The way the pretty creatures begin to dress — and undress! Oh! I suppose we shall never see the kind of entertainment there used to be in the great private houses of the past, huge gatherings coloured by the personality of a monarch or a merchant prince, but with the increase of wealth that is going on there is sure to be a tremendous development of large public assemblies where everyone can see and be seen. On any sort of excuse. Dancing is spreading and parades and pageants.

“Dress, I remark, is already extravagant, but some of it, I admit, is lovely. It’s funny how men too are beginning to dress up again. These new community centres that are replacing the old schools everywhere are becoming social centres and adding assembly rooms — oh! palaces we should have thought them — everywhere. As fast as they can run them up. It makes all that one remembers of the old world seem grey and cheap and shabby already. I thought we were going to have a plague of unemployed artists and decorators, but it seems there aren’t enough to go round. The world is swarming with wandering painters and jewellers and singers. And — I don’t know what to call them — these itinerant lovers. Queer people, they are — very.

“Mere boys and girls now work like devils for a year or so and then go off round the world to spend the money and leisure they have earned. Not a frontier, not so much as a toll-gate to hinder them. We’ve had the world peace established for hardly three years yet and already we are keeping holiday and holding a fair. It’s a peace carnival. People who were dodging bombs and hiding in shelters only three years ago. No end of these handsome young fellows we see at play everywhere have worn uniforms and clicked their heels and been in the trenches. Everywhere you go now you see the Trustee’s picture; he’s on the money, he’s on the notices in the streets, and he looks well and hearty everywhere — except when you see him himself. And he’s — he’s bored. He’s bored and uneasy. I’ve been told that he dreams. He cries out in his sleep. I have it on good authority. It’s my business to know things...

“What I am saying I wouldn’t say to everyone, my dear Horatio, but the World Revolution which has been such a blessed reality for hundreds of millions of people, has been a sort of joke played upon him. For him it isn’t real. He’s hoisted up — right out of it. He’s become—” He took a quarter out of his pocket and showed the ennobled visage on it— “this...He may end by hating the sight of himself.

“The strain of the Revolution went on so long that it has left him with a dread of a return. He will look back. He seems incapable of sharing the general gladness. If only I knew how — if only we could contrive...”

§ XIII

Thirp and Chiffan competed in the rehumanisation of Rud, and Thirp won easily. Mr. and Mrs. Chiffan entertained Rud once and he would not come again. He appeared a little distrustfully among the “easy, delightful, everyday human beings” she had assembled for his entertainment. He brightened for a moment when she took his hand and smiled at him, and then darkened when he saw her exchange a glance with her husband. He was definitely clumsy with the other women. They were a little at a loss for something to say to him, and he gave them no help.

He became less and less responsive as the evening wore on. His mute demand, Why the devil had they got him there? became insistent. He made a premature retreat and left the little gathering in a state of unwonted dismay at its own unattractiveness. It occurred to Chiffan then, that never in his life had he ever known Rud to indulge in general conversation. Even at the Steenhold flat he had either sulked in his corner under his caricature or broken out into monologue. But there had been no luring him into monologue that evening. In the old days his one topic had been the coming Revolution, and now the Revolution had come he was tongue-tied.

One young woman tried to interest him in her bracelets and necklaces of fire-opal set in silver. They seemed to be old, but she could not find out where they had been made. Opals were supposed

to be unlucky. Rud looked at them with an effect of not looking at the neck and arms that wore them. “Thirp,” was his sole comment, “could tell you all about them. He’s interested in that sort of thing.”

Rud indisputably was not.

He went early and yet it seemed to Phoebe that he went reluctantly. She felt, as she told Chiffan afterwards, that if things had been different and there had been different people and he had been different, he would have liked to stay for quite a long time.

“He went away slowly,” said Phoebe, “with an air of going off to something worse.”

Thirp took a different line with him altogether. He set about entertaining the World Trustee with inferiors and performers. He did not invite him formally, but one evening when they had some minor matter to discuss, he asked Rud to come to him because, he said, he was treating himself to a show. Rud was difficult to entertain because of his habitual abstemiousness, but Thirp induced him to eat a cheese dish he had had prepared for him specially and drink some fine Burgundy, and then he produced his show. He had discovered a little round-faced, round-eyed, yellow and black, exceedingly impudent, Siamese girl conjurer. She had a great sense of humour and some excellent tricks, and very soon she had Rud at his ease and laughing. Then came a dance of masked Siamese girls to a lilting Westernised tune which also took Rud’s fancy, so that presently he was beating time.

“He likes them funny and he likes them little and he likes them young,” Thirp noted. “The smaller and the younger and the more weakly impudent they are, the less he is afraid.”

That was enough for the present, thought Thirp, but at the end of the evening he told Rud he often had little shows of this sort. He felt it well to keep in touch with the amusements of the people. If Rud would care to come again —

Rud was not unwilling to come again. “Relaxation,” said Thirp.

“I liked that little conjuring thing,” said Rud. “She made me laugh — and somehow I seem to have got out of the habit of laughing.”

Thirp repeated this entertainment, but without undue alacrity. This time two wriggling Japanese maidens served the dishes for Rud’s austerely excellent meal.

Four or five times was Rud Thirp's appreciative guest, and then it seemed time for Thirp to — to use his own phrase— "arrange a little tete- a-tete"? That demanded thought and preparation. He talked to Rud of health and fatigue, amusement and rest, and of the extraordinary sleep-provoking power of massage. At first Rud seemed as likely to expose his bare skin to the mauling and pinching of massage as to dance naked in a market-place. His accumulated modesty barred the way. Then by a well-arranged accident he was given a glimpse of the infantile but appetising charm of Miss Chubby Fielder, and a little later, when he was in a phase of neurasthenic discomfort, Thirp persuaded him to give her an opportunity...

§ XIV

"It isn't my fault," said Chubby Fielder. "It isn't my fault. I tried everything.

"I wish there were nunneries. I must go away from this. I must hide. He got so angry...

"If ever I take a lover the Master will kill me."

"But He didn't say that!"

"No. He didn't say it. But he was so upset! He was so upset. At having forgotten himself. That's what upset him. All crying and then furious. Overbearing and then kind of ashamed of himself and then ashamed of me. 'I'd like to wipe you out of existence,' he said. He said that. Suppose he meant that! And then he kissed me and kind of threw me away from him. I'm terred. How can I get out of this? Where can I go, Mr. Thirp?"

"Don't you worry, Chubby, my dear," said Thirp, and made a sort of dabbing pat at her bare shoulder as if to reassure her. "If necessary you shall vanish. I'll just smuggle you away. Though I doubt if I'll have to do that. But, mind you, never talk about this. Never say a word and you will be safe. But if ever he thinks you have told on him, even as little as you have told me, I can't answer for it."

"But what have I told you? It isn't anything — it's what I feel. I haven't said a thing. Not actually. Have I said anything?"

"No."

“I’ve said nothing. Practically it was nothing.”

“It’s just how much it was nothing — that you mustn’t tell anyone,” said Thirp. “If you talk—”

“Is it likely?” said Chubby.

“If you don’t talk, Chubby. If he believes you haven’t talked. If you keep everything there was between you, between you — even from me. Maybe — I can’t promise, mind you — but maybe he will see you again...”

“Bert—” began Chubby, which was her way of saying “But.”

“Yees, Chubby,” said Thirp. “Quite possibly. If you are silent and discreet. Very discreet.

“And if ever you find yourself with him again, Chubby,” said Thirp. “Say this to him; say— ‘You are God.’” Chubby repeated that in a whisper.

“But why?”

“He’ll like it.”

“I shan’t ever be with him again,” she said, “so what’s the good?...”

Rud did see her again, but all that happened between them was wrapped in mystery even from Thirp. Quite possibly little or nothing happened between them. Honi soit qui mal y pense. And Chiffan to the end of his life never even knew that there was such a person as Chubby, much less how much more pleasant the company of a being like Chubby could be to the unlimited, fear-haunted egotism of Rud than that of any fully-grown, level-spirited woman.

§ XV

So much of Rud’s intimate life has to be told and discussed to make the picture of him complete, but beyond that there is hardly anything significant to tell. For the rest we can emulate Chubby’s discretion. The significance of what has been told is its insignificance. One or two other feminine figures flicker on to the record, but they were mere passing incidents. There was the lady who professed to be able to induce dreamless sleep by mesmeric passes. She appeared, dark, handsome and impressive, betraying a beautiful blue-veined marble

throat, waving large white hands. From the outset Thirp distrusted her, he felt she might have the makings of a female Rasputin in the world autocracy; nevertheless, since it was in Thirp's scheme of things that Rud should continue to be concerned about his insomnia, she was given access to him. Something happened. She emerged from Rud's private apartments with a scared expression on her handsome face and nothing portentous left about her.

"Not a success," she said to Thirp, pushing past him. "Not at all a success."

Then Rud: "That disgusting woman! Never let me see her again."

Lady Susannah Shakespeare, that splendid golden blonde, the perfect woman, Flaming Susannah, Susannah the Terror of her Elders, as she was known among her intimates, was outstanding among those who would have conferred fatherhood upon the Master of the World. Her pursuit of Rud was open and shameless, and she fought her way at least to the presence of Thirp.

But Thirp was strangely discouraging.

She had met Thirp for the first time, and she found him antipathetic. He was so much more feminine in an elderly sort of way than herself. "You know," he said, "if you go on as you are doing, it might be felt you were making him a little ridiculous. None of us would like that, Lady Susannah. The Secret Police, I'm credibly informed, might not like it. Indeed, they might not. If you go on as you are doing.

"I think," said Thirp, in a tone of profound meditation, "I think you'd better not. I really think you'd better not. I think you'd better not even talk any more about your idea."

And it suddenly entered into the mind of the perfect woman that she had better not.

§ XVI

About this time a woman interviewer made a great scoop by discovering the Master Director's Aunt Julia and getting access through her to Mrs. Whitlow. "A great man," said the woman interviewer, "owes everything to his mother."

“Never did I know anyone so simple, so direct-minded, as Rudolf,” said old Aunt Julia. “I was always very, very fond of him. There was something enchanting about him. A naturalness. A straightforwardness, I should say he is the one single human being I have ever known entirely free from any complex. He went straight to his point, whatever it was, like an arrow.”

“He was a strange, thoughtful boy,” said Mrs. Whitlow, when at last the woman interviewer had got past Aunt Julia. “I would wonder — I would ask myself — what is he brooding about? He was aloof among his playmates, communing with himself. His soul was like a star and dwelt apart. Sometimes he would ask questions that it puzzled even me to answer. When he was still only a little fellow of five or six.”

The woman interviewer’s thoughts flitted for a moment, and in all reverence, towards another mother in ancient Nazareth. She wondered if in this case there had been any sort of Annunciation. But that was difficult to ask. “You felt he was a child of Destiny?” she asked.

“He had that something,” said Mrs. Whitlow...

“He puzzled his poor father,” said Mrs. Whitlow. “His father never understood him.”

“Mother fixation,” said the woman interviewer. “They say he has never cared for any woman but you.”

“He’s had so much to think about,” said Mrs. Whitlow, modestly.

It occurred to Rud, when he read this, that it would be a natural and popular thing for her to visit him. He had hardly given her a thought for years. A mother fixation might not be a bad thing to have. And it might be still more gracious to entertain Alf and Sam...They’d open their eyes. He would conspicuously do nothing for them. So that there would be no talk of nepotism. Would Alf turn out to be as religious as ever? Sam would be frankly envious and spiteful, but Alf’s behaviour was more uncertain. He got Thirp to make enquiries.

“He has got rather fat, he is a minor distributive official, and he thinks you are anti-Christ...You know that Neo-Catholic idea?”

Rud decided not to rediscover Alf.

But he made a large public visit to his mother and talked to her of

what the world owed to her for what she had done to him, and she said he hadn't changed in the least, he reminded her of how he used to come home and tell her he was top of the class at school; he had just the same eager, boyish expression. How happy it used to make her!

She talked of some new mind cure for her nervous dyspepsia, and he told her that every specialist in the world was absolutely at her disposal.

She spoke of various neighbours of their early days. She did not know what had become of his cousin, Rachel. She had lost sight of her after her husband's sister died in Australia.

"Do you still have those sick headaches, Rudie?" she asked. "Always so suffering and so patient you were..."

II. — THE GOD CAESAR

§ I

Because of the effective control of the press exercised by the World Directorate during the period of world readaptation, people at large heard practically nothing about this physio-psychological eddy in which the Master Director was spinning. Only some years later did vague rumours of it become current. They did not know that he gave way now to long spells of indolence with occasional interludes of relaxation under the complaisant management of Thirp. The world as a whole believed him to be the active administrator, as sexless as a modern God, who was, with a certain peremptoriness, but unquestionable rightness and ability, putting the world's affairs into a more rational and happier frame than they had ever been in before. They understood that he lived a simple, strenuous and very secluded life, in the performance of his great task. For them it was Rud's peace that ruled in the world.

And for a span of fruitful years the rational reconstruction of human organisations, boldly scrapping traditional entanglements and boldly tackling difficulties that hitherto had seemed insurmountable, went on swiftly and without any conspicuous disturbance. The diffused liberal thought of nearly a century of ineffective years was being given a scientific form and a scientific application. It was a process parallel to that discursive multiplication of ideas about electricity that went on before the eighties of the nineteenth century and the swift onset of the electrical age that followed. The new social advance was so vast and rapid and universally interesting that for a time it was received with a world-wide, uncritical satisfaction. It was indeed whispered here and there that the pursuit of counter-revolutionary tendencies was becoming closer and keener. It was whispered that the secret police was responsible for the disappearance of this or that too outspoken antagonist of the new order of things and even for one or two disappearances that had nothing to do with politics. Freedom of publication was certainly declining, but there was very little visible tightening-up of

restriction. People were too actively intent upon their individual shares in the new order of things to note this diminution of dissentient expression, much less to look for reasons for the decline. These were matters affecting intellectuals, reactionary spirits and the religious, and they scarcely qualified the plain reality that mankind as a whole was living far more abundantly and happily than ever before.

Then came an event which sent a very perceptible quiver through the quickening conscience of the reborn world community. This was the sudden death of Bodisham at the age of fifty-two. He was taking a summer holiday with his wife, a married son and daughter-in-law and four grandchildren in the Aland Isles. He was taken ill in the night after a boating picnic and, in spite of an immediate concentration of medical skill from all parts of the world, he died in six days. His seizure threw Rud into the greatest perturbation. His first words when he heard the news were "They've poisoned him." He leapt to that idea. He flew straight to his older colleague and became a great nuisance to everyone in attendance upon the sick man, demanding long interviews with the doctors and insisting upon repeated 'visits to the sick-room.

Thirp, with one or two discreet-looking investigators, followed hot upon his master's heels and immediately began checking up on the procedure of the experts in attendance. The situation became irritating for everybody and unfortunately certain disagreements about diagnosis and treatment broke out among the physicians. They quarrelled among themselves, and in their desire to discredit each other upon minor points of procedure they did something to discredit themselves in public opinion.

For the first time Rud admitted to himself and those about him how much he had been dependent for his decisions upon Bodisham's shrewd advice and how helpless he would feel without him. He wanted to have stimulants administered so that he could "discuss matters of primary importance that could not wait"; he insisted on talking to the sinking man.

"He must be left in peace," said the doctors.

"But what shall I do?" he demanded. "He is my right hand. Right hand, do I say? He is the half of my brain."

He commanded the doctors to save Bodisham at any cost; he was

imperative, he would hear of no alternative to recovery, and menace began to mingle with his urgency. With a gathering dismay they realised that they were going to be held responsible if the patient did not recover. They decided that nothing should be neglected. They disputed, therefore, about the minor details of his treatment, and amidst their indecisions he died.

Their public trial followed, and it amazed the new world. The hand of the World Director became only too perceptible in the proceedings. The dominance of Thirp, he shone in organising the evidence, and the remarkable way in which minor differences and trivialities were woven into a charge of malignant conspiracy, ran entirely contrary to the spirit of balance and candour which Norvel's vast system of adult education was disseminating through the new community colleges and the swelling literature of information and discussion. The prosecution was reactionary in temper, albeit it was undertaken by the Ministry for the Protection of the Revolution, and the constitution and procedure of the Court aimed at conviction from the outset. That secret distrust and hatred of doctors common to all mankind had evidently existed in Rud in an exaggerated form, and now flared out plainly and conspicuously. These unfortunate men, gathered from the most varied sources and having little in common but their scientific prestige, were sentenced, four of them to death and the rest to indefinite terms of imprisonment. And being so sentenced they vanished abruptly from the public eye.

That sudden black, silent shutter was even more disconcerting than the trial and the sentences.

Intelligent men and women all over the world found themselves asking: "When were they killed?" "How were they killed?" "Were they shot?" "And where?" "And what has become of the others?" There was no answer to any of these questions. The condemned men had disappeared. And with a curious discomfort people began to realise that in this exhilarating, renascent world of theirs there existed somewhere the organisation, the machinery for an invisible, voiceless incarceration and for the hidden execution of suspected men.

Bodisham's wife appeared transitorily in the background of the case. "A very kindly woman," the official reporters had it then, "a

Jewess — the mother of five admirable children," Her intervention availed nothing. She seemed to play an ambiguous part in the drama because of her evident pity for the incriminated doctors and her indignation at the methods of the court.

§ II

The death of Bodisham marked a definite change of phase in the history of the World Revolution. Up to the date of that event it had seemed to be one whole process, complex in detail but homogeneous in form. Now it began to be plain that the World Revolution, like all its less universal precursors, like every Revolution, was woven of two essentially distinct strands. There was, for one strand, the innate insubordination of the human animal which lies in wait for all decaying, hesitating or needlessly oppressive systems of social control, an insubordination compounded of fear, resentment and vindictiveness, and embodied in its final dramatic phase by Rud and Thirp. And contrasting and interwoven with that was the creative urge for order and achievement in the human mind, an impulse more deliberate and sustained, finding its expression in a progressive organisation of science, a progressive extension of the scientific method to human affairs and the systematic establishment of a new education, a new order and a new regime of law. The two strands co-operated at first in their attack upon their common objective, the old order of things. It was not at first evident that while one aimed to destroy, the other sought to replace. It was not necessary at first that it should become evident. Together these two allied contraries produced the World Revolution, which had not so much been evoked by the Group as found its centre of expression therein.

Long after the formal defeat of the decadent old order was manifest, long after the obsolete boundaries, the antiquated Foreign Offices, the armies and navies, monetary manipulation, and the unconscionable appropriations of private ownership in collective businesses had been swept away, Rud's intense fear of reaction and revenge enabled Bodisham to maintain his argument that the only sane barrier against counter-revolution was the establishment of a

satisfactorily working new order in the place of the old. To Rud the new institutions were essentially fortifications against the old. He did not see them as collective organisations imposing fresh codes of behaviour and necessitating an education of their own. So, paradoxically enough, Rud, this power-snatching, essential rebel, this instinctive lawless grabber, this antisocial egotist, sustained the forces of constructive control on earth through their early years of growth, while Bodisham implemented and co- ordinated them and protected them from any serious release of the destructive instinct in Rud. Concurrently and, as it came to seem in the retrospect, naturally and necessarily, there grew up an untrammelled and arbitrary Caesarism in which political power became increasingly concentrated, while beside it and interwoven with it, there arose a world system of production, distribution, transport, education and biological control, the living body of that planetary civilisation which the new material conditions demanded. To many it seemed like the complete confirmation of Hobbes' Leviathan, the ultimate realisation of autocratic efficiency on a scale altogether more gigantic than Hobbes could have foreseen. To others it seemed a necessary phase that had to come to an end through the casting-off of autocracy, as an eagle breaks out of its egg. The idea that absolutism might be the necessary way to the world republic had been floating in men's minds long before the last War to end War and the rise of the Group to power. Young Dick Carstall had foreshadowed it long ago when he talked with his father about his own outlook on life.

The full quality of Bodisham's genius only became apparent after his death. Released from his subtle interventions, the two revolutionary strands began to part company forthwith. Then, as young Carstall had foreseen, it began to dawn upon intelligent observers throughout the world that the spirit of insubordination and irresponsibility which leads through ascending phases of lawlessness and violence to lawless personal rule is, by its very nature, doomed to an ultimate grapple with a growing system of law, order and economic justice and sanity. For years Bodisham had been staving off that conflict. His untimely death left Rud, a little heavier, less active and quick-witted, soaked now in preposterous flattery and very much under the sway of Thirp, as the sole actual controller and

intermediary of a still very loosely knitted network of world ministries. That young Heir of the Ages, the New World State, suddenly found itself under the guardianship of quite a different uncle. It was confronted with the problem of the liberator become tyrant.

Norvel, who was probably, after Bodisham, the most powerful and energetic intelligence in the Group, contemplated the new situation with undisguised dismay. He was already in conflict with Quinlan and Thirp upon the question of the extensive use of his educational and publicity services for the propaganda of Rud-worship. Bodisham's interposition had damped down the tension; but now he would have to deal with these self-appointed slaves and masters of Caesar directly, and come sooner or later into open conflict with the Master himself. He hated and dreaded the issue to which he was being drawn, the issue of the balanced and deliberate man face to face with lop-sided energy. He reproached himself for his acquiescence in the development of this cant of the Master Director, beside which the cants of personal devotion to Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and God-save-the-King-whoever-he-is of his boyhood seemed tolerable affectations. The ennobled portraits of Rud now decorated every community centre from pole to pole, the children of a new generation were being trained to a servile salute of the supreme figure, they were being assured of his love and wisdom, there were endless songs, hymns rather, sung in his honour. Usually the schools began work in the morning with something very like an opening prayer to Rud and the Revolution. The children took to it with a disgusting readiness; the mediocre teachers liked it sincerely, mainly because they found it so easy to impart. Everywhere Caesar, the Czar, the Shah, the Mikado, the dear King and Queen, the Leader, our Stalin, the Duce, Providence and God Almighty had been or were being ousted from the facile childish imagination of mankind, as the reassuring symbol that justified submission to the restraints and routines of life, in favour of this half-deified new-corner, this aggressive, querulous individuality with indefinite powers of interference. Who did not now seem to Norvel so harmlessly and satisfying mortal as once he had done. The rapidity of this mental infection under modern conditions astounded even

Norvel, who was in as good a position as anyone to have anticipated it. He had known how quickly now new things could be spread about the world, but he had not realised how rapidly old things could be dropped and forgotten.

Rud might live for another quarter century. By that time Norvel's slowly growing educational machine might be shattered again, and a universal, clumsy worship of Caesar, a habit of acquiescence in the dogmatic state, be clamped upon mankind. That imprisonment of the human mind might continue indefinitely, and when at last it found a release, what sort of etiolated and distorted thing might it not have become?

"They'd better go back to God," Norvel said to his wife. "Far better go back to God for a bit — Providence the Unready — whom anyhow one can trust to keep his fingers out of things...

"Though I suppose we should soon get some Thirps in canonicals, inventing a 'Will' for him and starting out to defend him against the doubters...

"Some counter-balance there must be. There can be no right, there can be no truth, there can be no healthy life — without some dissent, without some opposition. A society without criticism is like a hand without a thumb...

"Sooner or later this must come to a fight," he told her..."It may be — uncomfortable for us."

"I'd hate to be comfortable," she said, "if it means your standing anything we didn't think absolutely right. You go on and I'll come with you."

"And if, in my disingenuous way, I falter — ?" "You'd better not," she said.

"Ugly things can happen in a prison — things worse than mere clean shooting. A man's behaviour can be lied about. His wife may be lied to."

"Giving in," she said, "is the worst sort of death. I'll stand by you to the end. Maybe I'll stand by you if you do give in, but then I shall feel like mad Queen Johanna who carried her dead husband about with her in a coffin of lead...Trust me, my dear. I'm sure of you. Don't I know you through and through? Whatever they say, whatever you do, I shall believe in you."

§ III

Rud's fundamental idea that he had in effect become Everyman, had given him a far less tolerant attitude towards anything that he regarded as a reactionary force in human affairs than his primitive Radicalism would have enforced. His particular grievance against Norvel was the increasing patience the latter was displaying towards the old faiths, the old customs and usages, even the old patriotisms that still stirred and protested beneath the brave new surface of the world state. These idea systems were not only alive and active in the minds and habits of the surviving pre-revolutionary generations; they were still more vividly alive in the bulk of literature, in the accumulations of art, in customary metaphors and a thousand turns of language and social attitudes. Through these media they infected the young far more than through the immediate teaching of their elders. Rud, like the early Christian fathers, like the Emperor Shi-Hwang-ti, like the early Moslem who destroyed the library at Alexandria, like the German Nazis, was a natural born book-keeper. Norvel, although he was perhaps in his ultimate texture a far profounder modernist than Rud, had a much more patient, comprehensive, tolerant and respectful view of human tradition. He realised that inheritance is possible without parricide.

Rud considered Norvel's methods vacillating and tinged with insincerity. Several times he had urged Norvel to a more stringent suppression of any literature or teaching that ignored or ran counter to his new-world Caesarism, even if it did not specifically attack it. Then, finding Norvel negligent of his protests, he began to ignore him and to turn to Thirp and the Secret Police for the Defence of the Revolution. There is more than one way of restraining education. Norvel discovered that teachers, professors, students and writers were being warned and arrested for "counter-revolutionary activities". The lessons he incited them to give in the schoolroom were being used as evidence against them.

This exasperated him, but he found himself powerless to prevent it. Fundamentally he had as little use for the organised religions of

the pre- revolutionary period as Rud, so far as their dogmas and sacred symbols went, but his conception of their role and destiny was entirely different. He realised that whatever else these organisations had imposed upon mankind, however much they had hampered enlightenment, they had also provided a shelter for a vast amount of devotion, a conception of self-control, valuable moral suggestions and a justification for much gentle living. It seemed to him just as silly to believe in nothing as to believe in Mumbo Jumbo. It was possible, he thought, for hard-minded men of mature years to frame their lives in social co-operation, but his vast enterprise of training the whole world for one community of life and behaviour was bringing him to a conviction that for the young and the vulgar at least, the idea of an interested heavenly father was a practical necessity. He did not like the little child atheists who were brought up before Thirp's investigators to witness to the secret vice of prayer or hymn-singing in their parents.

Rud's instinctive hatred of religion was becoming more and more marked. He had learnt at his mother's knee to resent the existence of another being more important than himself. At first he assailed only the endowments of the churches, and that only as a part of the general socialisation of rents and monopolist profits. But his confiscatory methods included religious buildings and monuments of all sorts. It has to be recognised that the traditional religious bodies stood up very ineffectively to his persecution, if one can call it a persecution. It is the heretics and innovators of all sorts who have been persecuted in the past, and the authorised religious organisations that have persecuted. When in their turn they have suffered effective persecution, their collapse has been prompt. Rud saw to it that their finances were austerely treated and the ensuing decadence was swift and irreparable.

But out of the crushed ruins of the churches there came presently oozing a mental juice, a seeping and penetrating recrudescence of religiosity. This was going on not merely in the former Christian countries. It was easy to rout Allah out of a mosque, but Allah hidden somewhere in a human heart was an altogether different problem in eradication.

Rud was particularly exercised by the New Catholic movement,

which broke out a year or so after he had had the satisfaction of converting the entire Vatican quarter into a public monument under the control of the Roman Archaeological Department. Christianity was now as homeless again as its founder. These New Christians claimed to be the original Catholic Church, they were mainly Catholics, but they had associated with themselves very considerable bodies of adherents from the other shattered Christian Churches. The reunion of the Churches, so long dreamt of by Liberal priests of every denomination, had been greatly facilitated by the disappearance of highly salaried posts for the heads of the various communions. A general loyalty to the Pope, who was now in hiding, was asserted by these Neo-Christians, the mass was celebrated, at first publicly and then — when that was prohibited because of nationalist demonstrations that followed its celebrations in various old Catholic countries — in secret. Rud's rough hand was provoking reprisals.

The Pope hesitated for some time about the form Christian resistance should take, but a number of more or less representative religious leaders already spoke out boldly against the World Director as Anti-Christ. The Pope in various messages to the faithful distinguished meticulously between the autocracy of Rud and secular education on the one hand, and the new financial, economic and political unification of the world on the other. The former he condemned unreservedly, the latter he commended. In one respect the Holy Father was inconsistent. Although on the one hand he denounced usury, on the other he complained bitterly of the confiscation of the ecclesiastical investments.

In imitation of the early Christians who refused to burn incense before the effigy of Caesar, these Neo-Christians were refusing stoutly to stand up and salute at the mention of Rud. This idea spread to Islam, and huge crowds would shout defiantly whenever the saltire was displayed. Rud came raging to Norvel with the discovery that a considerable proportion of the teachers in the elementary schools were Neo-Christians, Jews, Moslems, Hindus and the like, some secretly so, some outspokenly.

"But I must staff my schools with these people," said Norvel. "If there are to be schools, if there are to be any teachers at all. There is

no one else available. Before we can completely modernise the school centres we must have twenty million highly educated teachers — twenty million — and how are we to get them until we have built up something better than these poor little old scattered universities of ours? It's a marvel people know as much as they do. It's a marvel they are not ten times more ignorant and credulous than they are. I'm driving on with it. But, as you know, the birth-rate is going up again. I'm building my intellectual dams and sluice gates against a fast rising flood of babies..."

"You go on printing the Bible," said Rud. "It's time that rag-bag, that collection of fever rags, was suppressed."

"You do not need to suppress it. So far as it is historically misleading, and so far as it sustains that horrible doctrine of a Chosen People, it is already lapsing into complete incredibility. It's a curious book and some of the stories about those artful old patriarchs are told with a bald simplicity that is very effective. I don't mind its being superseded but I object to its suppression. I mean to print every book that people ask for, until the paper supply gives out. There it shall be for them to read if they want to read it, and for them to ask other people to read too, if they value it as much as that. There it is, evidence for or against them."

"And so it all goes on!"

"I'm not so sure that for human beings under twenty-five to thirty the idea of the Fatherhood of God isn't a very good idea. Suppose it is artificial. Aren't clothes artificial? You have to wrap up a child's body in chilly weather. Why not its mind?"

Rud was not listening. He was prowling about the room.

"They've still got a Pope dodging about somewhere," he said suddenly, coming to a stop. "They conspire to hide him. It's becoming a sort of sport to frustrate me. But I'll get him. I will not let life remain worth while for anyone who sets up to be Pope against me..."

Norvel laughed abruptly. "To think of it! A Pope-hunt! Just as they used to hunt the Albigenses. It's funny. These Pope-hunters of yours ought to wear the old Nazi swastikas; your white cross is improper. You can't have Crusaders hunting a Pope. No...But you're all wrong about this. You're going to enlist on the side of the old

religions just the very force that made you a fanatical atheist!”

“What!” shouted Rud.

“Resentment at authority. You will make men believers and martyrs who never gave a thought to God as a ruler, before your pressure began. As an alternative, purely as an alternative to you — they will fall back upon him...”

“I never thought of this,” said Rud.

“It’s elementary social psychology. Gods have been man’s refuge from human power since the very beginning of history.”

“I never thought of that. I never saw it like that,” said Rud, and looked at Norvel as though he had seen him suddenly in a new light. “That accounts for a lot of things. Gods the alternatives to rulers — . God become Leader of the Opposition...”

“But why should people dislike the new order as I give it them?” asked Rud. “Why cannot they be rational? Am I anything but the embodiment of the Common Interest and the Common Will? What have they to complain of? Think of what the world was like fifteen years ago?...See what I have done for them!...I suppose it is the older people...It isn’t the common people; it can’t be. It’s something organised. Some subtle undermining. Where is the leakage? Why do these ideas survive? Are you sure, Norvel, these schools of yours — ?”

§ IV

Thirp put it into Rud’s head that Norvel, instead of using the cinema in the schools to display the rapid development of the new life of mankind, the public festivals, the sunlit crops, the triumphs of engineering that were in progress, all with a montage in which the Beethovenised head of Rud, the ruler and guide, was displayed in such a manner as to evoke and sustain a world-wide enthusiasm, was diverting the young with old romantic and trivial stories and propagating a cult of disintegrating laughter, even resorting to the pre-revolutionary period for his material.

Accordingly Rud asked Norvel to show him a selection of the still popular classics. Norvel, who knew nothing of what Rud had in his

mind, was pleased by this sudden interest in his work. “I’ve been reviving a lot of old stuff that I remember as a boy,” he said. “Perhaps you would like to see that. Some of it is quite good enough to delight the children still. The comic stuff for example. The taste for romance and herosim seems to have changed. That sort of thing is too remote from our world to-day even to seem funny. Our children nowadays can make nothing of Cinderella or the Fairy Prince. But when it comes to sheer absurdity, it’s a different story. Certain sorts of fun seem to be universal and perennial. Look at this, for example.”

He motioned to the operator to run first one and then another of those old-fashioned quaintnesses, very early films, old cartoons, Felix the Cat and so forth. “We use this sort of thing to illustrate the history of the films.”

At first Rud was amused. He forgot Thirp’s suggestions for a while. Then suspicion crept back into his mind.

“That,” said Norvel, “is Charlie Chaplin. He has a curious human absurdity no one has ever excelled. All these films of him were suppressed in Germany during the Hitler regime. You notice the moustache?...”

“I did not realise they have a political significance,” said Rud, and became more intent.

Norvel came to the post-war period and traced the development of Walt Disney’s art. Gradually as the plain Micky Mouse gave way to his coloured version and Donald Duck appeared, silence came upon Rud. And then to the infinite astonishment of Norvel, he broke out suddenly.

“Who is this Walt Disney? He seems to me to be a very dangerous revolutionary. This — all of this — is underhand sedition. I’m not such a fool — . I see his point. This Donald Duck! It’s subtle but I get him. I get him. The busybody who interferes and tangles up everything. That’s the suggestion. That’s how I’m lied about. That’s what they want to say of me — if they dared. He’s even got the sailor’s cap I wear at times. The way the forehead is shaped! Exactly the same! The grave look he gives people before he does something decisive. It is insidious. It is abominable. It is deliberate. This Disney ought to be shot. Where does he work? Where is he to be found?”

“These films were made before the Group existed,” said Norvel,

recovering slowly from his amazement. “I don’t know where Disney is. Probably he is quite old by now. He was doing his work before the Last War. I don’t know if he is still alive. Maybe he is still making films, happily unconscious...”

Autocracy was making Norvel a facile liar. He had as a matter of fact been talking to Disney three days before, and discussing a scheme for a great series of operas with him. But he saw no reason why Rud should intervene in these matters.

“I don’t believe it!” said Rud, suddenly pathetic. “If these films were made long ago, why didn’t I see them? They’re new. Or they’ve been altered...It’s so cruel, Norvel, so unjust to me...Why do you show them? Anyhow, why do you show them? Don’t you realise the drift of them? Or do you?”

He paused interrogative, his head a little on one side, his skew mouth like a beak slightly open. In the back of Norvel’s mind was a realisation that this incarnation of the Common Energy of Mankind was after all just a wee bit like Donald Duck.

§ V

One day Chiffan said something very disturbing to his Phoebe. He had been unusually moody, silent and distraught for some time, and excessively gentle with her, never saying an absurd thing. Then late one afternoon, as they sat together in their loggia that looked out upon the tennis courts where they had been entertaining half a dozen friends, he broached his trouble.

“This can’t go on,” he said.

“We’re happy!” she answered, astonished.

“Rud,” he said.

“You are still troubled about him!”

“I am troubled about the whole world. On his account. We have made a sort of God of him...”

“Isn’t that enough?” she asked as he paused.

“It’s too much. To all intents and purposes, Phoebe, he is mad. Characteristics in him that used to be amusing are becoming monstrous and evil. He discovers danger everywhere. This infernal

secret police of his is arresting people, making them vanish, killing them...Because he is afraid..."

"But what can you do?" asked Phoebe.

"I ought to do something. I don't know what, but I ought to do something. In a way I am responsible for him. I was his impressario. In those old days I launched him on the world."

"But nowadays you hardly ever see him. He avoids you."

"I ought to see him. I ought to know more about him. Now I get all these queer things about him at second hand. I don't know what is happening to him. I don't know whether he is going mad or simply getting loose. Sometimes I think he's just an imaginative egotist, who has escaped from all restraint. Maybe he is what many men might prove to be with the escapement off. I — in a sort of way — was his escapement...I ought to have stuck closer to him...

"He used to listen to me. If I went to him now and spoke plainly...He might be sulky but he would take it in.

"Maybe I am the only person alive able to recall him to his former self."

§ VI

Chiffan found it more difficult even than he had expected to get an audience with Rud. He had to apply, he had to wait, he was kept waiting in an ante-chamber for three-quarters of an hour. When at last he was admitted to the Presence, he found himself in a long room with a polished floor that slanted upward to the dais that carried Rud's desk. Half-way there was a flight of seven shallow steps, too wide to be taken two at a time and only about five inches high. They would have reduced the most confident stride to a totter. He thought how much Rud had improved upon the crude methods of Bohun's reception room, and the reminiscence served to sharpen the blade of hard derision in his make-up, already whetted by his unnecessary wait outside. He was no longer the affectionate and persuasive Chiffan he might have been.

Rud sat at the desk pretending to be occupied by some papers and peering under his shaded desk lamp at the approach of his old friend.

Chiffan, entering, and seeing this pose of preoccupation, advanced at a leisurely stroll, hands in pockets, and realising the difficulty of the shallow steps, halted there, turned his profile to the Dictator and professed to consult some memoranda, humming and — as Rud seemed still occupied — producing a pocket pencil and making corrections. Rud decided to conclude his sham work with a sigh and turned his face towards his visitor.

Chiffan packed up his memoranda, clicked his pencil together, pocketed it and strolled up to the desk. “Hope I don’t interrupt your — annotations,” he said.

Rud stood up, came to the corner of his bureau, and stared at Chiffan in silence.

Chiffan’s first impression was that the lop-sided scowl had become intenser and then that Rud looked overstrained and ill. His face was a deader white than ever and his eyes burnt with an unwonted fever. It was going to be harder to bring this Rudlike creature back to the Rud of the summer school and Camborne Square than Chiffan had anticipated. But there was no time now to alter what he had in his mind to say.

“Hello, Rud,” he said. “How goes it with the Representative Common Man?”

“You wanted to talk to me?” said Rud.

“As one common man to another.”

The malignity of the scowl increased. “About what?”

“About that idea of your being the supreme embodiment of the common man and the effect that it is having upon the world.”

“Well, what effect?” asked Rud.

Chiffan had meant his talk to develop gradually, but this compact answer spoilt his approach. He felt himself blundering directly into the gist of what he had to say. “There is a feeling abroad,” he said, “that your role of being a sort of incarnation of humanity is being — to put it bluntly, Rud overplayed. It was, you know, one of the greatest of your inspirations to make our Revolution the Revolution of the Common Man, not to set up yourself or the Gang or anybody as the Heaven-sent leader of mankind. It was a great phrase to call you the World Trustee and make you, so to speak, the Commonest of the Common, in the common interest...You were the common man,

yes. The common man. On those terms we won the World Revolution. But now the job's done and finished, and I take it you have to be a common man again. Because if you don't, you will come to be in a sort of way a new Caesar, a new Imperator, Boss of the World, a tyrant, traitor to the Revolution."

"Well," said Rud. "That is plain enough, anyhow." "I didn't mean to begin as bluntly as this with what I have to say."

"But you meant to say it?"

"Yes."

"A sort of Message, eh?" said Rud. "Telling me my times are at an end and that I have to go. Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. Eh?"

"Don't make me feel like a Prophet of the Lord rebuking a wicked King of Israel," said Chiffan.

"And what in the name of the Lord," said Rud, "is this message you bring me if it is not that?"

"Well," said Chiffan, "if that is the tone we are to adopt, then let us speak plainly; the time has come for you yourself, as the last crowning service you can render to mankind, to prepare for the liquidation of your trust."

"The liquidation of my trust?"

"The restoration of the world to the heir."

"Who is?"

"The common man — the common-sense of mankind." "Go on," said Rud darkly. "Go on. Tell me more of what you have in mind."

"I came to tell you — plainly — as no one else will dare to do — that you are hanging on to power too long. You know how to overthrow, Rud, you know how to destroy and how to grasp, but you don't know how to guide and you don't know how to let go."

"And you — on behalf of yourself and friends — I suppose you have come to tell me to let go."

"I came of my own accord."

Rud tried to look penetrating, but he merely looked cunningly sceptical. "Assuming that is true," he said, "go on. I am to let go. Well? I want to hear all you have to say against me."

It appeared to Chiffan that Rud had become endowed with a new defensive obduracy.

"It's not against you," he said.

“Go on,” said the Dictator. “Now you are here.”

“Well, Rud, in the old days you used to face up to facts. I ask you not to think of me as an antagonist. Why should you? You never did that in the old days. Hear me out. You have played a great part in this change-over of the world. You have been the star in the limelight, but —

“Yes — but? Go on. Go on.”

“You are not the whole play. Damn it, Rud, you must face up to that? This new world didn’t begin, and it won’t end, with you. You have wiped out finance, which had grown like a cancer in the interstices of business, and you have wiped out every sort of sovereignty, public or private. There is no sovereign state and no sovereign owner any more. You exorcised them both. And the world now is full of able people setting about the complex — the very complex — readjustment of social life to its new physical conditions.”

“You are telling me this? You are coming into my remote, secluded life to tell me this?”

“This new world isn’t your making, Rud. That is what I am telling you. All you have done is to release it. It was struggling into existence before we were born. It was dawning on men’s imaginations already in the eighteenth century — if not before.”

“You make me feel as though I was in the history schools again,” said Rud.

“But look at the facts!”

“And to whom am I to give way? Tell me that. Who is to make the new directorate? You and these friends you speak for?”

“Rud, again I tell you, I have no friends behind me in this. There is no conspiracy or movement or revolt against you. None at all. But I want to warn you. It will come, Rud. Unless you relax this grip you have taken upon the world movement. Men will not stand it. Rud, I implore you, listen to me. I have always done my best to stand at you: elbow, warn you and supplement you.”

Rud was nodding his head in silence. He regarded Chiffan with a faint, derisive grin, and there was hatred in his eyes.

“Who is to make the new directorate? When you have got rid of me?”

“There is no need of a directorate. We did need a destroyer, we did need some one to break up the old system, and that is done. There are no States now; there are Services. There is a new sort of man taking charge of things. The mentality of men of science, of technicians, of responsible critics and functionaries, is spreading through the whole race. The old struggle for power is over.”

“Men of science!” said Rud with bitter scorn. “Technicians! I can make ’em and break ‘em.”

“You can break them,” said Chiffan.

“But not make them?”

“No. And you can’t do without them.”

“You are just a theorist, a constitution-monger, an ideologist.”

“Gollys! Why! Who was it? Why! — Reedly used to abuse ideologists. You’re not going the way of Reedly, Rud?”

A spasm of anger betrayed itself in Rud. He controlled himself.

“So I am to give way. I am to retire. I suppose I had better go off fishing, eh? And some sort of Royal Society and World Civil Service and new Universities and so on, what your friend Norvel — oh yes, he’s your friend, I know — calls the Knowledge Organisation, My God! are going to take over the world that I — yes, I — have liberated and unified. Am I permitted to be sceptical? I tell you, Chiffan, I have had time for thought and experience since you and I talked nonsense together in those old days. And there is nothing whatever to override Will in human affairs. And like it or not — and you, — you know hardly anything of the burthen I carry — I am the Will.”

Chiffan swung half round with a gesture of despair, took a step away from Rud and then turned upon him.

“Rud,” he cried. “Don’t be an idiot! What has come over you? Will is all about us, the collective will, guided by the free wisdom of thousands of brains. Will can never be concentrated in one individual. Power you can grab but will escapes you. You of all people understood that so well — once. Parallel co-operation! Your own phrase, man! And now, here you are, lonely, secretly wretched, implacable, trying to clutch everything. Why? Can you trust nothing free outside yourself? Come off it, Rud. Come off it.”

He stopped short and began again on a less strident note.

“Why should I lecture you like this? Remember yourself, man. Remember your humanity. Remember how shabby we were when we met. Remember our long tramp together and how hungry we used to get in the afternoon. Remember that punt — the rabbit and onions — that visit to Jim Flab’s headquarters at Balting — that stinking little major! What has happened to you to forget such things?”

“Yes, I remember all that. Yes.”

Rud’s pallor seemed to increase. He had something very urgent to say and he did not know how to begin. It looked almost as though he was going to be sick. He brought his face closer to Chiffan’s. When at last he spoke, he spoke in a close undertone and a new bitterness had come into his voice.

“And I remember your bragging about that Lancashire girl’s neck. I remember that too. You talked about having her and how easy she would have been. In the punt you talked. I remember every word of it. I remember you fleering and jeering at me about my having to give up all thought of sex. Afterwards on the road. After Balting. All through our lives you have relieved yourself about that. Always. Do I remember? Is there a thing I forget? Your ill-concealed envy of my — my genius, and your attempts to compensate your inferiority by all those petty triumphs over women — and me. Envy, incarnate envy: that is you, Chiffan. You, the cheerful friend with a sneer! And still you are unsatisfied. Now you would like to see all that I have done, undone. You want to see me and my Revolution — yes, my Revolution — prostrate and shattered. You would welcome back a thousand things I have dismissed, just to spite me, just for the satisfaction of seeing my name and my pictures taken out of the schools, just to stifle the love the people bear me all over the world. That’s what you can’t endure, Chiffan. That’s why you come here spitting malice and venom at me. Taking the risk. What a long story it makes from first to last! Flaunting your mistresses under my nose! Always you have done that. Winding up with that painted wife of yours! You are virile, aren’t you? You! I’ve had to be continent while you’ve had the fun. Chiffan the free-and-easy; Chiffan who says what he likes and does what he likes; Chiffan the gay smiler; Chiffan the debonair! The playboy of the revolution! While old friend Rud is the Power Grub. Poor old Rud. Shrunken old Rud. But

now — and now — we come to a reckoning. Now the Power Grub has you."

Chiffan stood stunned in front of this fantastic outbreak of long-hidden resentment.

"Well," said Rud, "you chose to come to me and ask for it. It was only an anticipation — It wouldn't have been long before Thirp came for you. I know about you. You have been watched. You have been overheard."

He stopped short, resolute but unable to say clearly the purpose in his mind. The two old associates stared at one another.

"So it's like that," said Chiffan at last.

"How else can it be?"

Chiffan shrugged his shoulders.

"I have known — I have felt it coming. And yet — it's incredible."

"Inevitable. Incredible to you perhaps. While you have been dreaming, Chiffan, about this dear, dear old friendship of ours and how you could always win me over whenever you wanted to do so, I have kept wide awake. Wide awake. You come here to tell me all sorts of things, but now you have been told something, fair and square. Is there any need to say more?"

Chiffan stood still and silent for a long second or so. But Rud had finished. The audience was at an end. Then slowly and meditatively Chiffan spoke.

"I'm not sorry, Rud, for what I've done for you in the past. Whatever I have done for you. We've had a great time together with this little world."

"We!" said Rud.

"Yes — we. I taught you many things. At the start...And — like all pilots who're dropped, I don't like to think of you without me. Silly, isn't it?..."

Rud made no answer. He stood sullenly mulish. "Good-bye," said Chiffan.

And then: "Good-bye, Rud."

There was no answer.

He walked down the long slant slowly, resisting its urgency to quicken his steps — never once looking back.

Rud remained silent and motionless until the door had closed on Chiffan.

“He jeered at me,” he whispered. “Always he jeered at me. Always. Him and his Bitches!...All those women...He was jeering at me right to the last. The pilot. Him! The pilot!”

He went to the great desk. There for a little space he was immobile. At last he pressed the telephone button and gave Thirp formal orders for Chiffan’s arrest.

“Tell Rothberg to deal with him,” he said.

“Do you mean this?” asked Thirp, and for once he sounded over-awed.

“Yes,” said Rud, “I mean it.”

He held his telephone and there came no sound of replacement from the other end.

Perhaps Thirp would say something that would alter the situation. Nothing came. He must have put down his instrument noiselessly.

Something caught at Rud’s throat. His indignation evaporated. He felt that Chiffan had dealt very badly with him and forced this tragic situation upon him. He had made Chiffan. Yes, Chiffan was his making. He had discovered him a tramp on the roadside. He had liked his freakish humour. And — it was true — they had had good times together. They had been young together, and that in itself is to have a good time. Before the terrible responsibilities of power forced them apart. There had been a sort of friendship. Even if it was a mistaken friendship...

He stood telephone in hand. He raised it to recall Thirp, but Thirp was still waiting there in silence.

“Yes?” said Thirp at once, receptive and colourless. Rud hesitated.

“Let everything be done — with the utmost consideration,” he said, and then slowly replaced the instrument.

He addressed the empty room. “No,” he said. “No man shall undermine me. My Empire before all other conditions. Even my dearest friend...”

A wave of self-pity submerged him. In his emotion he relapsed into temporary Deism.

“My God up there — you! I am as lonely as you are. Yes. As

lonely as you, the everlasting God. Was there ever anyone human — as alone as I? Deserted by my last friend! And now — nobody knows it, but I am getting ill...I feel ill...

"I must have strength. I must keep fit. My task is not yet done."

Then as if some contrary consideration was attempting to assert itself: "My task is not yet done. While I live I must guard this new life I have given mankind. It is my Revolution. My duty..."

§ VII

One moonlit summer night a few weeks later Thirp was murdered by a young man to whom for some reason he had held out dazzling prospects of promotion and then disappointed. The particulars of his death are no part of this history, only its suddenness and its effect upon Rud concern us here.

Once more for a brief final phase of lucidity he realised his own personal inefficiency. Once more he felt matters beyond his management were being forced into his hands. It was a greater loss even than Bodisham, because while Bodisham left him diagrams and projects, plain, open and completely understandable, Thirp had been deliberately secretive. He had always kept his methods to himself. Rud did not know very much even about his agent's immediate underlings, and now for a time at least, until he could gain a controlling knowledge of them, he must be his own watch-dog. Rothberg came to him at once obviously intent to play the same confidential role that Thirp had filled so satisfactorily. But Rud did not like Rothberg. The evil in his nature had none of the redeeming dilettantism of Thirp; he made Rud feel unsafe with him; he was of the hard, dark police type who hated his quarry, took every advantage in the hunt and exulted self-righteously in a kill. Now Thirp had always behaved as though a political murder was a sadly regrettable necessity. For him it was a curious aspect of this strange, unaccountable game of life. He made Rud feel that though he could inflict death, he would never inflict wanton humiliation. He would do everything as it were under protest — though quite effectively. But Rothberg flushed with zealous animosity when he heard the mere

name of a marked man.

Rothberg's impulse for self-assertion through destruction was far cruder in its expression than Thirp's, cruder even than Rud's. He was not merely a killer; he liked to stamp them down.

§ VIII

Norvel's theory that the Dictator was a necessary evil and that the forces of progressive adaptation could live through and live down any Dictatorship, was losing its validity with every fresh aggression of Rud's. And Norvel was losing his temper. As one intrusion of the political police into his new universities and school organisations followed another, as he found even his best school teachers were being terrorised, his clearest thinkers silenced and his carefully planned instruction in biology, history and social science more or less systematically and ignorantly confused, revised or suppressed, he began, reluctantly enough at first and then without reluctance, to scheme for the restraint and elimination of Rud.

He was not a good conspirator. He had begun as a publisher and propagandist and he had grown into an educator; these are outspoken activities, and he did not know how to set about any secret plotting. He sounded several of his colleagues. Neither Bellacourt nor Holbank nor Roots seemed to be greatly stirred by the suppression of thought and discussion. They were entirely preoccupied by their own immense jobs, they were interfered with very little, as yet. It seemed a matter of secondary importance to them who was fed, clothed, carried about by their always more competent material organisations. They disliked the idea of any disturbance of this vast rationalisation of the general world economy. They wanted things to go on as they were going. But Heming, who was in control of the world's health, and Lacoste, who was a sort of Minister for a miscellany of biological services, wilderness conservation, deep sea conservation, genetic reorganisation, a service leading possibly to human eugenics, population regulation and the like, were in closer contact with the mental organisation of the world. Their work overlapped Norvel's at a number of contacts, and their general outlook was very similar to

his. They disliked the systematic falsification of human relations by this new sort of absolute monarchy quite as much as Norvel.

So that when they found themselves in conference upon a project of Lacoste's for eliminating various infections, disease carriers and insect pests once and for all from human experience, it was natural and easy to fall into a discussion of the ever-intensifying World Dictatorship.

They had dismissed the assistants, secretaries and stenographers; they sat together at the end of the long table in the main conference chamber of the Education Office and their voices dropped to undertones. Now and then one or other of them would glance over his shoulder to be sure that they were still alone.

"Well?" said Lacoste, watching the departure of the last secretary.

"We did not mention all sorts of things," said Heming; "for various good reasons. We seem to go about our business in blinkers. I have been feeling all along that the gist of our discussion was unspoken."

Norvel sat with his arms folded on the table. "Can things go on much longer?" he asked, "as they are going?"

"Things are so secret," said Lacoste. "I only heard about Chiffan six days ago. I can get no particulars."

"Chiffan?" asked Heming. "What is this about Chiffan?" "Shot," said Norvel.

Heming shut his mouth tight, saying not a word. His astonishment was more eloquent than any outcry.

Norvel looked at him. "Something has to be done," said Norvel.

"And what do you think has to be done?" said Lacoste. "That is the riddle," said Heming.

"This new world of ours is merely a scaffolding — so far," said Norvel. "A struggle for the leadership might bring it all down. Can we bear to see this World Revolution lose its headway, as the Russian Revolution did when Stalin and Trotsky fell out? I would rather be boiled in oil than destroy the work that has been done already, that he as leader has done — the ending of war, peace throughout the world."

"But he himself is beginning to destroy it," said Heming.

"They are increasing the secret police," said Lacoste. "They have

been interfering lately with the collection of our vital statistics. They want to inspect the confidential answers to our questionnaires in one or two places where they are after people. People who have been denounced."

"That infernal little weasel Rothberg wants to found a special college for detectives," said Norvel, "a spy and sneak factory."

"What will you do about those confidential answers?" asked Heming of Lacoste.

"Hold them as long as possible and then burn them if we're pressed."

"But then your people will get arrested."

Lacoste shrugged his shoulders.

"There is no prospect of an insurrection — anywhere?" speculated Heming.

"Do we want an insurrection?" said Norvel. "I don't think so. Partial insurrections are quite possible. They are probable. There's plenty of inflammatory stuff in Islam for example. But that sort of thing means disorder, disintegration. And as a matter of fact, and it's more a matter of fact every year, the young, the masses of young people, white, black, brown or yellow everywhere, believe in Rud, swear by him. They identify him completely with the new world...We must let them down gently. No one of us ever foresaw the tremendous power of modern mind-moulding. The old Nazi and Soviet methods have been developed now to a tremendous efficiency. From the infants' school on. The young don't understand how it is with us. They would not understand any move to limit or restrain him. The mischief's done. I do not see how we can disentangle ourselves from this — this Tyranny without a social disaster."

"How long may he live?" asked Lacoste. "He looks pretty ill at times. He keeps changing his doctors."

"He's a nervous wreck," said Heming. "But still he may live for years. It's mental strain with him far more than bodily. Quite possibly he'll go mad."

"That won't help us," said Norvel grimly.

"If he went quite obviously mad," said Lacoste. "So plainly mad that we could hustle him into a mental hospital — ?"

Norvel turned to Heming with a new idea. "Even if he wasn't

mad," he said, and left the suggestion at that.

"He chooses his own attendants. It would be impossible," said Heming, thinking it over.

"Some accident," said Lacoste.

"You mean, in one word, assassination?" said Norvel.

"Open assassination — unless it was done by an actual certifiable lunatic — on some personal score...No." Lacoste shook his head. "It would be a tremendous social shock. Rothberg might jump the situation. No, I mean an accident — an aeroplane, a car."

"I don't care a rap for Rud. I never did care for him," said Norvel. "And since this Chiffan affair I hate him. Simply and plainly I hate him. I think the original Group laid the foundation of all this trouble by letting him acquire this preposterous personal power. There was no need for it. He grabbed under their noses, — and with their consent. None of us three were in the original Group, and we know nothing of the magic of early associations. No. He has to go. I don't care how he goes, so far as he and I are concerned. Nevertheless I will consider no way of disposing of him that would subject this New World Order to stress and danger. That's the difficulty. That's the real problem."

"But how can men of our sort conspire?" said Lacoste. "It has been trained out of us. Which of us three would be the most incapable, if it came to dealing with the First Murderer, the Second Murderer, and so on? Which of us could deal with a Rothberg? We are not that sort of stuff. We could as soon go down on all fours to fight dogs. We are different animals."

"And so there is nothing to be done?" said Heming. "Chiffan dies and nothing can be done," said Lacoste. "My schools are shattered," said Norvel. "My universities are debased and nothing can be done...I won't stand that. And yet — how the devil — ?"

He was pallid with impotent hatred. And with his hatred went a strong infusion of self-contempt.

"Oh! it is intolerable," he cried, "that the lives of hundreds of millions of people should be dishonoured beneath the vanity and folly of one single man. It is intolerable that Chiffan should be murdered and we do nothing. I more than anyone, am to blame. The worst sort of treason is the treason of the teacher. And I gave him the

crowd. I. I let his propaganda go. I helped it. I, as much as anyone, am responsible for this servitude. Prospero slave to Caliban! Horrible!"

"But what can we do?" asked Heming. "What can men of our type do?"

(It might have been a echo, an third of a century later, of Father Whitlow's: "What can you do with a boy like that?")

"Protest, resist, disobey, suffer, carry on to the last moment," said Norvel. "We could at least do that. I intend to become more and more insubordinate — to take his pictures out of the schools, to drop his salutes, to teach history faithfully. Half my teachers are with me in that."

"And if he strikes you down?"

"I shall be struck down. Such things have to happen. Some of my teachers will certainly carry on."

Every characteristic of Norvel conspired to make him despise as well as hate Rud. He was a man of immense practical ability, as great or greater than Bodisham's, though he lacked the world co-ordinator's imagination; but he had nothing of the one commanding quality in Rud's composition, his rare flashes of social and political insight. So that he missed the one quality in Rud which had first attracted and bound the Group together. He despised his incapacity for detail and he would not recognise his occasional inspirations. Rud, Norvel thought, was just a needless accessory to the Revolution; he had not been necessary to its development; he would not even concede him the honour due to a foetal membrane. He jabbed his pen-nib into the table. "To hell with leaders," he said. "Why do we endure them? To hell with dictators and every form of monarchy. Why cannot we agree to kill this little beast and have done with him, and get on with our work?"

"How?" reiterated Heming. "How?"

§ IX

Deep down in Rud's heart, suppressed and denied, stirred a profound conviction in complete agreement with Norvel's question. Why did

no one kill him? He had had this feeling ever since the death of Chiffan, and sometimes it forced itself up almost to definite realisation. He perceived an increasing quality of menace in his bearing towards the people about him, though he tried to soften it with a spasmodic geniality and familiarity, he sensed that he was becoming too much for them and surely therefore, he decided, they must be whispering and scheming his death — as in similar circumstances he would have whispered and schemed. Of course, they were trying to kill him. They would try to do it unobtrusively, but they would do it.

He surrounded himself with precautions. He was amazed already at the recklessness with which he had exposed himself to Chiffan — if Chiffan had decided to stab or shoot. He had not thought of that. In his natural, generous way he had let the threatened man come to him. That must not happen again. Henceforth guards must hover invisibly about him and behind them other trusty guards must watch to see they attempted no treason upon him. But precautions were not enough for Rud. He had never been able to wait for an attack. The tension of his long wait for Reedly had been a torture to him. His instinct was to strike first and unexpectedly. So now he spent a considerable amount of nervous energy, peering so to speak into the world about him, to detect any possible gathering of conspirators against his Revolution and himself. He wanted to destroy every stratum of recalcitrance in the world, before it could assemble a definite attack upon him.

Christianity he had always detested, and his persecution of its assemblies and formal worship was now intensified. Quite a number of young, rather stupid men who might otherwise have gone from the cradle to the grave unlit by any touch of nobility, died like saints and heroes under the secret interrogations of Rothberg. Then Rud chanced upon a book about the Jesuits and realised that they constituted a special and efficient branch of the Christian campaign against modern enlightenment. The spirit of Loyola had been revived by the Church's disasters, and to their energy and efficiency he attributed the exasperating phenomenon of a vanishing Pope. He had wanted to offer rewards for the Pope, "properly authenticated, dead or alive," but Thirp had dissuaded him. From the Jesuits his

imagination passed to Freemasonry. That mysterious body also has been suitable material always for the politically suspicious, and it required quite a lot of research before he unearthed its secret, which was that it had no secret at all, and was one thing here and another there, and nothing in particular, a mere excuse for assemblies.

Then the searchlight of his suspicions swung round upon the Jews. It swung round upon them and centred and settled upon them. In his earlier years he had adopted a very liberal attitude towards the Jews, if only on account of the indisputable "race" of his maternal grandmother. But now the chosen people drew his attention again. It flickered away from them and returned; for indeed they are a peculiar people. Focussed, the Jew became a burning centre of mental inflammation. When all the rest of the world was becoming one community, why did they still cling to their peculiarities of food and observance? It was odd, he said in the daylight, and that was all there was to it. It was odd, he said in the troubled hours of a sleepless night, and at once the old witch of dreamland set about supplying nightmare explanations of this oddity. From which dreamland he came trailing clouds of vague distrust about him, into the common light of day.

Once he was started on that slippery slope he could not get the Jewish question out of his head. It became an obsession. It became the nucleus of a tangle of fear-born impulses to extravagant violence. Assuredly there was something wrong about the persistent separateness of these people. He discussed them with Gentiles who were interested in them, and most of the Gentiles who were interested in them disliked them, because it is not reasonable for a modern intelligence to be interested in Jewish particularism without a resentful irritation. Gradually the conviction grew upon him that all Jewry constituted a conspiracy, though it was never quite clear in his mind what the conspiracy was about. Nobody could tell him what the conspiracy was about, or whether it was as non-existent as the secret of the Freemasons. They were just a peculiar people, to their own and the universal discomfort. That made that unknown, hidden objective all the more sinister. It was impossible to believe that they were still genuinely worried about the Exodus from Egypt or the Captivity or the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet still they seemed to

brood and wail over these things and bear a grudge against the Gentiles on account of them. There was surely something more immediate behind this affectation of remote sorrows. But what was it? They impressed him as a savage is impressed by an inexplicable incantation. They made him feel uncomfortable and apprehensive...

So in the brain of the World Trustee the potentiality of an ultimate pogrom accumulated. And Jews themselves supplied all the food that was necessary for his conspiracy mania to grow. As ever, there were Jews demanding differential treatment and preparing themselves for that perennial surprise which has pursued them through the ages, of finding that this differential treatment, when it comes, is not preferential. The more intelligent Jews were assimilating rapidly to common mankind, but an obstinate remnant persisted, and the more it became a remnant the more it felt it fulfilled its destiny.

"It's that damned Bible, with its Chosen People poison. Isaiah was the first and the worst of all the Nazis!" said Rud. "Until that book is stamped out and forgotten, the Jews and Christians will coagulate and re-coagulate about it...You don't understand, Norvel."

Norvel declared that the new generation of Jews were as much ashamed of Isaiah as the new generation of Germans were ashamed of the Hitler period and the Nordic legend. "Educate," said Norvel.

Rud would not have it. He appealed to sayings and doings of the remnant. "Why do they go on being Jews at all now?" he said. "Why do they keep it up? All through history the Jew has been hunted like a dog with the Bible tied like an old tin can to his tail. Why can't they cut away from that old tin can, now that they have a chance? I want to free them. Just as much as I want to free the rest of the world. What is the good of pretending that Judaism isn't a conspiracy against human unity? Read their Holy Books, man! Read Isaiah."

It was only too evident he had been reading Isaiah.

He closed synagogues, he prohibited the printing of Bible or Talmud in spite of Norvel's remonstrances, he began to provoke the younger Jews to defiance and heroism just as he had provoked the Neo-Christians to heroic martyrdoms. Everywhere his attacks were reviving these moribund religions as convenient centres of resistance to his deification. They dared to do as members of a sect what they did not dare to do as individuals. History, in its loose, inaccurate

way, was repeating itself. They would not burn incense to Divus Caesar.

"Don't heed them," said Norvel. "They will assimilate. They are assimilating. It is just a dwindling cult now of old ladies, old rabbis, sentimentalists, eccentrics, Zang wills, men with caricature profiles which they cannot escape, professional champions, who keep the old Promise alive. They're like those Druids who meet at Stonehenge on Midsummer morning. Leave them in peace. They will pass. Judaism will pass as all things pass. Leave it to them to come over."

"Jews never assimilate," said Rud, regardless of his maternal grandmother. "Once a Jew always a Jew."

And then when Norvel was about to speak, Rud went on. "Maybe there are fewer Jews," he said. "But these Christianised Jews become Neo-Christians. All of them. You haven't observed that. I have. They're not a dying breed. They go on. Christianity always has been a Jewish sect."

"But," protested Norvel, "the Christian idea is the exact opposite of Judaism. Christianity is the broadest universalism; Judaism the narrowest nationalism. Everything you and I need and care for can be put in .terms of this Neo-Christianity."

"You ask me to believe that!" shouted Rud, pacing up and down the room, and stopping with outstretched fingers to make his points. "You ask me to believe that! Then why the Bible still? Yes — you'll talk about the Old Dispensation and the New Dispensation. You know that's a quibble as well as I do. You say they are as opposite as the poles. You pretend' Christianity is a Gentile religion. Why! even after the Crucifixion, after it was all over, after the Resurrection and everything, still for a time none of them breathed a word about letting in the Gentiles. Not a word. That came later, with Paul and all those animals Peter saw in a sheet — what was that vision? Not a word from the Founder...I ask you! He comes to earth to make religion universal — and he forgets to mention it! Eh? Not much of a story, that!"

"There was the story of the Good Samaritan," said Norvel, but Rud's voice overrode him.

"New Dispensation, they say! The more the Jews and the Christians differ, the more they remain the same thing. Why do the

Christians trail that old Bible about with them, if they have outgrown it? Why don't they denounce it plainly? Why do they still read the Psalms and the Prophets in church? Answer me that! You can't. Every Christian, I tell you, is a Jew or a Jew proselyte."

The gleam of mania appeared in Rud's eyes — but his voice became gentle and persuasive. He appealed to Norvel as a man might appeal to a child with incredible delusions. "Are you blind, Norvel?" he said. "Do you really and truly think that Christianity changes Jews? Not a bit of it. It disguises them. It makes them more than ever the same thing. Why are there so few Jews? Because there are so many Christians. The Jews breed and breed and never increase. Isn't it plain? They're in the other Warren. All that is left of the Christian Churches to-day is three parts crypto-Jew. Three parts, I tell you. You will see. You will see — One fine day something will happen to me, Norvel, something will happen to me...Something will happen to my Revolution...They'll manage it. Unless we strike first."

He walked away to a window and came back. He brought his hot face close to Norvel's and Norvel hoped that his own expression would not betray his eager wish that something should happen to Rud.

"And then, then at last, at last, when they think the time is ripe, they will push one of the real race into my place, and you will have a Jew World Dictator, a Jew Emperor — a Son of David, Lord of the World! Solomon, with wives and concubines, all complete. So that the Promise shall be fulfilled, and the Jews inherit the Earth! That is the eternal dream of the Jews and they will go on dreaming it. What else can they be dreaming about?...Unless we deal with them, Norvel — now..."

So far Rud was following in the footsteps of his German precursor, Hitler, in his attack on the Jewish riddle, but it is to be remarked that, quite unlike Hitler, he never betrayed any traces of that physical race mania which is so frequent an aspect of the pogrom complex. He regarded the Jews as a conspiracy. Hitler felt them as a biological pressure, multiplying around him and his kind. He bore a personal sexual hate for them. But Rud had no sense of race. It was not the Jewish race he hated, it was the Jewish idea.

"Stamp it out, stamp it all out now," he would mutter between

sleeping and waking. He would lie in bed pursuing a reverie that passed into a nightmare of triumphant violence. Should he make them renounce the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? In so many words? Would an enforced renunciation be enough? He planned a world-wide Sicilian Vespers — Jews and Christians butchered together. No ghetto seclusion, no exile, would satisfy his imagination. It would have to be a world-wide terror this time, a cumulative massacre...

Whom should he use? Whom could he trust? How could he prepare for this last and final world purge, get thousands of people straining at the leash, and yet take these doomed Bible cultures by surprise? The Pogrom would have to burst simultaneously throughout the earth. It must be like the fall of some tremendous meteorite. Out of a blue sky. Abruptly in every cinema he would appear, full of menace, advancing, filling the picture, until there was nothing to be seen but his eyes and nothing to be heard but his voice roaring in their ears, drowning every other sound. Or should he appear in great effigies thrown across the smoke-screened heavens? Everywhere all over the world the loud-speakers would shout together with one terrible voice: "The Day of Wrath, the Day of the Wrath of Rud, has come." They would hear what was coming to them in the cinemas, in the market-places, in their homes. That voice, that face of hatred, would pursue them everywhere.

Everywhere too Rothberg's police, reinforced a thousandfold, would be picking out the special victims. This time there would be no place to shelter them, anywhere on earth. Earth and air would howl against them. Conspuez — what a good word that was! His reveries became more and more gigantically apocalyptic. Mountains were thrown about like ninepins. The seas were tinged with blood. No more Jews. No more Jehovah.

More and more did he brood on this crowning surprise for mankind. It began with him as a dream; then it became a wilful imagination which he would conjure up at will. "Rud," he whispered. "Thud. Thunder." They thought he had done what he had to do, did they? They thought he was played out. He'd show them. Why! He was only beginning. Wait just a little...

He would wander about his carefully guarded apartments and

gardens. He would come to a standstill, a small, dark figure in some vertically tremendous archway. Far off stood Rothberg's unobtrusive, trustworthy men shielding him from danger. He would sit alone on his terrace, elaborating it all. He whistled thinly through his teeth just as he had done when as a boy he had wandered over the countryside fighting imaginary battles...

§ X

It was not merely the planning of the last and greatest of all pogroms that fevered the now almost unsleeping brain of Rud. It was indeed the dominant theme of his disordered mind, but at times it receded to give place to narrower, intenser moods of uncontrollable distrust. Perpetual vigilance is the seed of madness. It trails a perpetual wakefulness. His mind was festering now with suspicion whenever two or three were gathered together in any sort of co-operation.

Every sort of association made him uneasy, every professional solidarity made him uneasy. He had never subdued his fear of medical men after that vindictive trial and execution of Bodisham's doctors. He felt all the doctors were now his enemies. Then there were men of science. The physicists, the mathematicians, seemed tame cats for the most part; the biologists, the psychologists were more outspoken; but they all hung together. They, too, he felt, had their shibboleths, their hidden understandings. They, too, looked at him now with incommunicable thoughts in their eyes.

He suspected even the teachers of mathematics and physics. Olders found him one day crouched together, sitting on his feet in a big arm-chair in his bureau, puzzling over a text-book of mathematical crystallography, trying to detect the treason behind the pinacoids.

His doctors he subjected to the most searching questioning. He was always consulting fresh ones secretly and then confronting them with any apparent contradiction from the diagnoses he had extracted from their fellow-experts. His general malaise increased. He was ceasing to eat as well as ceasing to sleep.

At this stage, with a profound distrust of all other doctors,

suddenly he bethought himself of Carstall and turned to him.

In spite of his flatterers and worshippers, in spite of his growing sense of divinity, Rud had still a curious feeling about Carstall left over from the days of Hooplady House, a faint, exalted, snobbishness. It came to him now as a thing supremely desirable that Carstall should be willing to stand over him and fend off these impalpable treacheries that menaced him. He had always wanted Carstall to care for him — from their earliest meeting. Now he decided that Carstall should indeed care for him — that Carstall should leave whatever else he happened to be doing at the time and become Rud's personal attendant.

§ XI

Carstall regarded the Master of the World, and behold he was still the Stink and the sickly-faced orator in the Camford Union, exalted but the same. That little tadpole of a boy with the large head had simply grown to cosmic proportions, and all that remained now of the bold oratorical quality that had swept undergraduate Camford off its feet was something wordily shabby. He affected a stern dignity and it did not suit his fragile smallness. His looks hadn't improved, his eyes were bright with mania and bloodshot, they seemed to have sunken deeper into their sockets, and his voice was harsher. Master of the world!

Carstall received his instructions with an expressionless face. He nodded gravely to a recital of symptoms and asked a few questions. Rud urged him to come into personal attendance forthwith.

"No," said Carstall. "You must come into my clinic. It is not thirty miles from here — you know — near my house opposite that great cliff on the bend of the Gorge of the Loup. You need continuous supervision. You've been overdoing the strychnine."

"How did you know?"

"Everyone nowadays under such stresses as yours takes strychnine in some form. But I think I know what to do with you. I want you under close observation and control. And to be frank, I can trust my own staff, but I'm not so sure here."

“You haven’t seen anything definite?” asked the Director with a flash of wild suspicion in his eyes, that vanished almost as soon as it came. “If you think there is anyone.”

“No. But this is, what shall I call it? — an office-palace. Where there is a concentration of power in the hands of any single man, there is intrigue. Politics blow in like draughts here whenever a window opens. For a time at least I want to forget what you are and treat you as a case.”

“I shall be glad of a rest,” said Rud, consenting. “That you shall have,” said Carstall.

§ XII

“He came to me too late,” said Carstall. “He had gone too far. He had to die.”

“Who knows of it?” asked Olders with white lips.

“I do. Krause, the analyst, and his staff. We have only men nurses here. Do you want to hush it up for a day or so? It can be done, you know.”

“It is a catastrophe. Nothing is ready. Anyone may seize power.”

“I will issue a bulletin that he is emerging from a crisis and must remain insensible for forty-eight — or say, sixty hours. And then we can have a phase of coma before the end. Meanwhile suppose you as secretary stop all these pending executions.”

“You think?”

“I am sure. And you add as a note to my report — not stressed but as a matter of course — that otherwise everyone, everywhere, carries on — as usual. If there is no sudden shock things will go by inertia. For a time anyhow.”

“You think?” said Olders.

“Sure of it. I’m in control here. I can answer for this end. And by the by, there are certain medical formalities — There must be no suspicion about his death, you know.”

He insisted upon a searching post-mortem and this was carried out by the great analyst Krause with his assistants. Carstall had suggested that either strychnine or arsenic would appear, but the

autopsy revealed nothing. “Sheer overwork then,” said Carstall, and the faithful Olders bowed his head and murmured, “He died for us all.”

“He died for us all,” Carstall agreed...

“We are still keeping back the fact of his death,” said Olders next day. “I — have given a hint here and there.”

“Who knows?” asked Carstall.

Olders looked reluctant but not treacherous.

“One or two possible successors have to be watched,” he said.

“I am going to bring in three fresh experts and have the body embalmed. They, too, are absolutely trustworthy. No one will know they have come here. And then, why not wait a little? A pickled dictator is better than a living dog-fight.”

Plainly Olders was shocked.

“Sorry,” said Carstall, “but there was no one like him. Was there? The succession was never settled. He kept us guessing. No rational man wants a world civil war. In this sprawling new-born world now — it would be unending. There would be Caesars here and Caesars there. Nationalism isn’t dead yet; it’s scorched in the grass. We might be carried back to that old world again...If once it starts. But it needn’t start...And nowadays does anyone considerable, really want Power? As power. You don’t want to be his successor. You want to go on as a sort of world secretary. As you can. And you don’t want any particular one of the possible successors very badly. Do you?...No. I thought so. Neither do I. Suppose we take his embalmed body back home in an ambulance and put him to bed in his own room at the executive centre. Suppose you go on being his secretary.”

“I shouldn’t dare.”

“If I stand by you. If presently you find others standing by you. All the strings are in your hands. Nobody else has your executive knowledge. The castle there is like the centre of a spider’s web. You were loyal to him. You believed in him. Believe in him still and keep this new world united and at peace. We will help you.”

“There are competent men in the world still. None of these would-be successors dare move in the dark. They’re a poor lot. Not like those fresh, raw Dictators of the twenties and thirties. I know their

quality. The conditions have changed. Tell everyone to carry on. And get Norvel here. Norvel particularly."

"But who are we?"

"The men in the various World Controls — Bellacourt, Roots, Heming, Holbank, Sen, Lacoste, Rurik, Norvel, men like that. In love with their jobs. They'll all carry on if they can. It's in their make. Not one of them is a power politician. It's amazing how financiers and politicians have died out in the last few years. You'd have thought the breed was eternal. I did as a young man. But the desire for mere power — either in the form of money or as direct control — seems to have evaporated. Reedly had it, and Thirp, in his own peculiar twisted way."

He checked himself on the verge of adding "Rud."

"It's the natural desire of a not very social animal forced into a society too large for it and frightening it. But now we are getting a sort of security, and the impulse to hoard up power is assuaged. The Dictators eliminated the power of finance, and now here, if you will, is the end of political power. Concentrated into an individual, then into a spot, now into a mathematical point, nothingness."

He closed and clenched his hand. Was he saying too much for Olders? He stared at him and felt reassured.

"A dictator, Olders," he said, "seems to be necessary whenever there is a broad readjustment of human relationships. Apparently a major power system is necessary to destroy any minor power system that preceded the readjustment or arose out of it. Hence there must be a dictatorship. But no dictatorship can go on indefinitely. This isn't a new discovery — at least not a very new one. They're teaching it, sub rosa, now, in the new universities. But Lenin, who was head and shoulders above his generation, saw far beyond anyone else at that time, into these inevitable phases that have to follow a revolution. His language was clumsy, he spoke with a strong Marxist accent, but he had the heart of the Power question clear. This now is what Lenin was trying to foretell when he talked of the disappearance of the state. Here it was." He held out the fist he had clenched and opened it wide and wiped the palm with his other hand. "Presto, it has gone!"

Olders assented silently.

"Stalin reversed all that," said Carstall. "Stalin went back on

Lenin because he did not understand this." "Yes," said Olders.

"The man to take hold of this situation now is Norvel. And between ourselves, thank God Thirp is dead." Olders nodded agreement.

"Who is there to make trouble if you and Norvel and all of us say simply 'Carry on'? There's not the shadow of a Reedly in sight, and all that nationalist Federation stuff is just fading out of men's minds. Rothberg? That blood-stained little ferret! No...You think he'll just hide? So do I. He'd better.

"If there was another possible leader, would he have a following now? All the conditions have changed. The world is busy. There's few idle hands or people and the ones there are, are scattered. Common people don't want trouble now. They're full of hope. In the days before the Revolution they were full of resentment. They relieved it, and the time for Revolution is over. There is no earthly reason whatever for another Dictator in the world — none. Not for centuries. Now that common sense has got itself organised and unified it is mere common sense to abolish an individual head even as a symbol...

"So. Let the Master Director sleep and sleep, and then let him pass into a coma — and need that coma ever end? He has done his work. He was deadly tired. It is amazing but true; he has destroyed so much, so many irritating boundaries, so many poisonous traditions, that he has united the world unawares. Why should we not go on now — with an embalmed dictator?...I mean it, Olders.

"Perhaps they had something of that sort in their minds in Russia when they embalmed Lenin. Years ago I saw him once, lying there in the little mausoleum outside the Kremlin wall, like a man, a rather tired little chap, asleep. But Trotsky and Zinoviev and Stalin and Co. had not the loyalty to carry on together. That Russian gang seems to have been a poor band of egotists — tortuous self-justifying egotists — not good enough for anything of that sort. And the Russian community was anaemic and overstrained. Now comes a chance of trying it again with all the sane men in the world to draw upon — and people busy. People, Olders, are busy. Busy. Hang on to that. He was beginning to scare them, but now, they will forget these last bad years."

“Do I dare?” said Olders.

“What else can you do, Olders? There’s no possible successor who wouldn’t shoot you within a year.”

“Of course I have thought that the world now was, so to speak, a going concern again,” said Olders. “He cleared away so much...You put it all with such confidence...Almost” — he paused for the smallest fraction of a second— “almost as if you have thought it out beforehand.”

§ XIII

Norvel became at once a central figure of the reconstituted Group of administrators who now took charge of the world’s affairs, and he showed the liveliest curiosity about the last hours of Rud. He insisted upon having the fullest particulars of his last illness from Carstall and his assistant Krause, and while he did so he looked hard at Carstall. But Carstall met his enquiring eye imperturbably and agreed that the cause of death was quite obscure. “Krause here,” he said, “did the post-mortem. He ransacked the body.”

“I want to see the body,” said Norvel. “I want to see the body for my own good.”

“We are going to treat him very much as they treated Lenin,” said Carstall. “He has been embalmed, and presently all the world will be able to come here, like pilgrims, and see him for themselves.”

Until the Mausoleum could be prepared Rud lay upon a slab in the clinic, and thither went Norvel and Carstall. The chief embalmer met and accompanied them and gave a few unnecessary explanations; then, having no reason to remain, he departed. Norvel regarded the yellow and waxy visage of the departed autocrat with tranquil distaste. Carstall was absolutely expressionless. “He’s nothing much to see,” said Norvel.

“They will want to see him,” said Carstall.

Norvel had made his hostility to Rud no secret from Carstall. And Carstall had neither agreed nor dissented.

“To think of it!” said Norvel. Carstall turned silently attentive to hear what Norvel had to say.

“To think that such a creature should have terrified the world and made millions of normal men quibble and lie! Completest surrender of their dignity! And scores of millions, hundreds of millions, made a sort of God of him! To think of it!”

He grunted and shook his head.

“Do you know, Carstall, the other day I routed out his eldest brother Sam — and I got some realistic reminiscences of our God-Caesar out of him. Sam hated him. Always had hated him. Told me how he used to sit on his little pot in the nursery and threaten his brothers about what he would do to them directly he’d done. They used to make faces at him. And there was a story of a mess in the corner, the pot tilted over or something broke in some sort of scuffle, and that is why they called him the Stink. I forget the exact particulars already. I didn’t think them as funny as brother Sam did. I thought they were nasty and pitiful. But evidently he was like that.

“I don’t blame him very much for becoming Dictator of the World, Carstall, but, by God! I feel sick at the crawling of the millions before him. Was it really the snake that God condemned to go on its belly all the days of its life? Or the other party? I’m not so sure. Perhaps both parties were in default...

“It takes the heart out of life to think of all that subservience. I do what I can to respect myself. I make a brave story about myself. I tell myself I am doing my share in the making of a new mankind. I keep it up that we educators and biologists are setting out now to breed and educate a race of gods — statesmen, teachers, thinkers (as we used to call them), poets. And then I think of the recent history of mankind! I think how a thing like that thing lying dead there can lead them to war or worship or massacre! Mankind! Mud! Shall we ever do more than make mud pies out of them? What else can you do with mud? Educated mud is still mud. Adam was mud and all his seed are mud...

“And that is how you feel about it?” said Carstall. “You have the makings of a fine late-Georgian poet in you, Norvel. Did you ever contribute to their paper? — The Criterion, wasn’t it? No? There ought to be a refrain to this little song of yours, ‘Let us get drunk.’ Does this mean you give up your mud-modelling work? Resign the directorate of education?”

“Not a bit of it,” said Norvel. “What else is there for me to do?”

“Exactly,” said Carstall.

“Conceiving what you say as a mere passing mood about mankind, I am inclined to agree with you,” said Carstall. “But mud is mixed stuff and even in that” — he nodded to the embalmed Dictator — “there were some bright gleams.”

III. — POST-MORTEM

§ I

Krause had refused one or two invitations to visit Carstall in the new home the latter had made for himself near Gourdon in Eastern Provence. At a fourth intimation he went. He had seen very little of his former teacher since the death of the Master Director, ten years before. He had gone to preside over the big Research Station at Chicken Itza in Maya land, and his work on the latent infections in these jungle sites had been subtle and fruitful.

Carstall was installed in a modernised castle that was built into the cliff of Gourdon, looking down on the gorge of the Loup. He had given up active practice for some years and had reverted to certain problems of physiological chemistry from which he had been diverted during the economic collapse that had preceded the War of the Ideologies. So far he had published no results of very commanding originality. He had a very lovely wife, dark-eyed and still, she was fully a dozen years younger than himself, and she bad given him three boys and a daughter.

Husband and wife were evidently upon the most affectionate terms, they could not meet without some trifling caress, but it seemed to Krause that they talked very little. Once or twice he saw her looking at her husband with a gentle scrutiny, as though she felt unsure of him and of what he might do next. It seemed odd to Krause that he should be aware of this and Carstall apparently unaware, or else so used to it as to be indifferent to it. It was as if beneath the general candour of his bearing he had kept something essential, some belief or disbelief, some habit of thought or action, out of that relationship, and that she felt that incompleteness.

Krause sympathised with Mrs. Carstall and thought Carstall ought to have lived or behaved or done something different to avoid this faint but perceptible aloofness. Perhaps the disparity in their years had been too wide a gap to bridge, or perhaps the very love they had for one another was a barrier between them. Krause had seen that happen before. Passionate love, which can bring two humans closer

than breathing, can at the same time keep them worlds apart. Krause was one of those quiet, observant, unaggressive men who go about sympathising mutely with pretty women, and particularly with the wives of their friends, but who never think of themselves in the role of lover. He thought all men were unworthy of women and he made no exception of himself. Which left his sympathies unhampered.

He thought all men unworthy of women and generally his estimates of his friends were qualified. He never allowed this to appear in his demeanour, but it was a private consolation for his own sense of inadequacy.

Krause had begun as Carstall's pupil and the tone of their old relationship of mentor and enquirer still flavoured their intercourse. Krause was a subtle and original worker, but his make-up had an ineradicable junior quality, and by nature Carstall was a sixth-form boy. So Carstall usually had the conversational lead. And it presently became clear to Krause that Carstall had a bias for talking about the Master Director.

By imperceptible degrees Krause apprehended what was coming.

They were sitting together after lunch one afternoon on the terrace, indolently aware of the mountainous loveliness spread out before their eyes. Nice could be seen through a thin veil like a burst sack of microscopic crystals poured down a slope, and far beneath in the gorge the Loup was a thin, bright-blue line winding its way down through a nearer wilderness of crests, cliffs and wooded slopes towards the Mediterranean.

Carstall reverted again to Rud. What was Rud's significance in the world? What had he achieved? Had his work been done when he died? At last he blurted out what he wanted to say, speaking with an affectation of casualness: "Did you know it, Krause? — I killed him."

§ II

So he had said it at last.

All the muscles of Krause seemed to tighten. For a space he was silent. Then he said: "I thought you killed him — until I made the

autopsy.”

“I saw you did at the time. That is why I insisted on the autopsy.”

“But how did you manage it? How could you have killed him?”

“You suspected me?”

“Then — yes. Arsenic. There was that curious depression of his spirits before the end — and the fluttering heart. But my autopsy yielded nothing. There wasn’t a trace. Of anything.”

Carstall studied Krause’s pensive profile.

“There were tons of arsenic in him. His body had to be soaked in it. After all that strychnine he’d had...Primitive, I admit, but it happened to be convenient.”

“Then how?”

“Can you remember now after ten years, how, where and when you made your tests?”

“I’ve been over it time and again in my mind.”

“That does not always improve a memory. But let me refresh the facts for you. We took our material from the body together. You had every facility in the hospital laboratory. Yes...But in the hospital patients die every day.”

Krause turned his face to Carstall, in surprised interrogation.

“Yes. While you and your assistant were busy with your reagents,” said Carstall, “I handed you fresh material. From another subject. I had it ready. Yes. You did all a man could do under the circumstances. And your assistants checked your results. I have always felt, Krause, you could not be trusted with a secret — with that secret anyhow. At that time your scientific habit of telling the truth might have caused a lot of trouble. Everything might have gone to pieces. Some adventurer would have got people excited. I might have been shot. And I did not want to be shot.”

Krause made a weak sound of protest.

“I’m afraid I should have been shot. But now as this new regime settles down it does not matter. At last, thank the stars, I can talk. Even if you ran out now and denounced me nobody would believe you after all this time. It had to be done. He was hopelessly mad at last. He was frantic with vanity and fear. There was no other way with him...No way that I could imagine...I did right in killing him...He might have gone on disintegrating for years...And

murdering and degrading other people...Putting everything wrong again. Spoiling his job. I killed him to save what he had done...

“Did you know, he was my schoolfellow? No? He was. I was head boy in the same school and I tried to prevent the other fellows calling him The Stink. It was a sort of link between us...

“I don’t think I ever liked him very much, Krause, but he had, I know, a sort of unsatisfied desire to — to come it over me. I mattered to him. I felt that — and I confess it made — what I did to him — a little more difficult...And then there were the traditions of the profession. Good traditions. He was a patient...

“But I had seen his pencil list for the next massacre. He scribbled it in bed in the clinic...And there was that Chiffan story. That hardened my heart. Chiffan had been his closest friend. No one was safe from him at last. There was nothing for it but to finish him...I think about him a good deal. What did you think of him, Krause?”

“He impressed me as a very Great Man. I don’t think anything can change that impression.”

“I suppose...So far as there are great men...You admit he was mad?”

“At the last. But consider the immense things he did! The magnificent sweep of his imagination. His inflexible will!”

“I suppose he was a necessary evil.”

“He was the supreme super-man. If you could look at him, not with the eyes of an old school-fellow but with the eyes of the world. Hundreds of millions worshipped him.”

“You will never really grow up, Krause. Numbers mean nothing.”

“Even now, forgive me, Carstall, I feel a sort of horror...At what I had to do to him...Even you...

“But then you are fifteen years younger than I am, Krause, and when you grew up he was already a great light in the sky...

“You would have told...

“I realise more than ever how right I was to keep my own counsel. And anyhow, you know, I had no right to drag you in. Or anyone else. Before or after. It was no slight to you, Krause. I had to do it on my own, absolutely on my own.”

§ III

"Sometimes," said Krause, "I am afraid of you."

Carstall sat silent with the corners of his mouth tucked in. He knew that Krause was not in the least afraid of him. Why should he be?

Carstall dismissed the topic of Krause and his fear. The vision of a dirty-faced little boy miserably and viciously jabbing a penholder at his school-mate occupied his mind. He had not thought of Rud in that way for years.

"The Stink," he said at last, and then weighing the one word against the other: "Superman? Divus Caesar? The truth I suppose lies in between...

"The fact is, Krause, I am right about his quality and you are right about his scale. Poor little devil he was, just a poor little murderous devil at heart and he was blown out by the chances of life, as little urchins used to blow out frogs. Just a nasty, frightened kid, greedy but frightened, horribly afraid of violence, always in a panic, living in an age of panic and expanded a million, a billion times. Until in a world of utter cowardice, he filled the sky. He killed a multitude of people, he destroyed institutions, traditions, boundaries, in his terror and praise the stars! they were institutions that had to be destroyed. Or at least he was the instrument —

"Those dear old institutions, social classes, private property, religious cant, patriotism!...They had become shelters for every slinking meanness in the human make-up.

"I have watched these Dictators from their beginning when I was a schoolboy, to now when they are all over and done with. I've lived through it all. And the books! The lying, cringing Hero-worship! All these fellows had the same quality of being driven to do something, feeling that they were creatures of destiny, they all began like that, and then, not being able to understand, not being able to give themselves simply to the thing that gripped them, they went mad. History, Krause, is a case-book for the alienist. Thus far. All began as demagogues, all of them began like men aware of and feeling for and being used by some drive — Rud was driven highest and furthest. He was the ultimate dictator. I compared him just now to a

frog blown out by an urchin...Yes...But what was it really, Krause, that inflated him?...What was it, Krause?"

"Call it the Spirit of Mankind," said Krause.

"Spirit of Mankind? Not a bit of it! Not even the Spirit of Life...I don't care for that word, spirit...Forces of which we still haven't the faintest understanding made him and used him. As they made and use us. He had to live, it seems, and certainly he had to be killed...His kind asks for killing and our sort has to kill them...The pattern of life requires it. And as for the pattern of life! How can we know? What can a man know of reality beyond the life that is in him while he lives?

"Here after two brief generations of conflict and destruction we are in a renascent world. No doubt now of the renascence. New standards and a new scale. The Blood Dance of the Dictators quite over and done. Dead already, all of them now, as dead as last year's mutton. Think of their last days!...

"But they had to dance, of course. They had to dance in their turn...

"We are going on to a new way of living altogether. Who can doubt it? People may make another legend of our Rud, a greater Caesar, a mightier Alexander? A Moses? Maybe they will. Yet I question that. He had a pathetic greed for fame, had Rud. I hope he isn't away somewhere in space, waiting for his press-cuttings...Or eavesdropping on us...

"Queer lot these twentieth-century Dictators. They broke out like wasps in a dry summer. Conditions favoured them. A peculiar species they were. A crescendo of scavengers because the unadapted world was rotten with shabby evasions and make-believes. It asked for blow-flies and wasps. Not a loyalty, not a religion left that was not dead and stinking. These Dictators were master stinks, stinks like burning rubber and creosote, in a world of cowardly skunks. Superficially like gangster chiefs, they were, or like the pronunciamento bosses of those little old republics there used to be in South America, or Greek tyrants. But only superficially. More like Caesars, but not really like them. Spreading further and less intense...In the human community, a difference in scale means a difference in kind. As in most other things. They weren't simply

blown-out frogs, they were burst frogs, inflated to nothing and burst; they were just the skins and faces of men.

"When these scientific historians who are coming along with their biology and their psychology, when they have done with your God-Caesar-Rud, Krause, he will be left with about as much greatness and divinity and as little power over men's imaginations as the wired-up skeleton of a deinosaur in a museum. Just a memorial of reptilian energy, vestiges of a slobber in the mud. Remarkable, but no precedent for us...

"Very anthropocentric our values are still...We still don't stand up to the truth, Krause. Measured against infinity, is a deinosaur any greater than an ant? The ratio is the same. Ants are in the pattern of life just as much as deinosaurs — and our noble selves. We're too snobbish. We do our brother under God, the ant, an injustice. We blackball him for the Ethical Club. We are spiritual, we say, and all that, while he's just a little bit of clockwork instinct. The only real gentry, the Lords of Creation, God's chosen animals are we! More particularly we of the upper classes. We who crawled at the feet of the Dictators and were too currish to make an end of war. Pink rats, Krause! Diseased pink rats! If we had to be, then surely those great handsome deinosauria and deinotheria had to be — they had to play their part. The ants too are playing their part. Every little ant. Has to. And the little Stink I knew at school, playing his part, became the Marvel of Mankind.

"He ended war for ever. He did. He rationalised property and money. He inaugurated the Age of Plenty. He reconstructed world education. None of that was his original work. It had all been thought of before. It was already there as the common-sense of mankind. Much of it had not been simply thought of; it had been thought out and planned. Bodisham digested it all for him. Only we hadn't the courage and honesty. He was needed somehow to make it real. He — eventuated it. After all he had — a certain desperation. There was honesty in him, honesty in the frantic fear that drove him on, honesty in his hate of subjugation. He liberated and he was frightened by the freedoms he had released. He did what he had to do, and doing it, lost touch with his fellow-creatures. And at last he became a public danger and we did not know what to do with him. Until the arsenic I

gave him made his poor little heart beat very fast and then stopped it altogether. The Stink. Master of the World."

§ IV

Carstall tilted his chair back and with his hand behind his head gazed serenely at the sky.

"Yes. You frighten me," said Krause, after a pause.

"You don't agree with my point of view, you mean?"

"I agree with you, Carstall. That's why I am afraid. I am afraid of this clear, unsentimental life in you. And in so many of our young people. A life consciously as small as an ant's maybe, but as proud and self-reliant as God's. Where will it take us?"

"Beyond my particular limits, I don't know and I don't care...Now...I did once...That, Krause, is what I mean by that excellent phrase, Living by Faith. Live by faith in the unknown pattern. What else can a reasonable man do? There is a pattern. That is all I know...That is all you know, Krause...

"I have to be myself to the utmost, and none of my questions will ever be answered. That is my creed. Why do we go on living, Krause? You don't know. Neither do I. But we have to go on living. Could we know? I doubt it. Mysticism and Stoicism. We live in the dawn of a mystical and stoical age. Hard perhaps by the old standards. Free of lots of the old scruples but with new scruples, very exacting scruples some of them, of its own. I like this new life around us and I wish my old father could have lived to see it. I like what is happening. It's a clear, fresh morning with the promise this time of a really bright day...

"It's a great relief to talk to you like this, Krause. I've had to keep this Rud business to myself for ten full years. Absolutely to myself...I've continually been thinking of him...You'd be surprised...He had to be killed, you know. He had to be killed..."

Carstall paused, but Krause said nothing.

"I didn't like doing it. Why should I?"

Silence from Krause.

"I killed him because I knew that no one else among you had the

guts to do it. There was something — a prestige — about him. But he had to be killed...

"After I killed him he became more important. That I have always found rather queer, Krause. I began to ask myself what exactly it was I had killed. Was he exceptional or was he a perfect sample of what we all are? Stink and insight? Rats with unexploited brains? Toads with jewels in their heads?

"That peculiar intelligence that he showed at times! In the early days particularly. It seemed to be something almost entirely independent of his personal self, As though his brain lit up. Everyone who knew him says that. I suppose it's something of the sort you get in real poets — or in cardinal men of science. Like something hidden in the dark suddenly lit by a searchlight. As though a higher mind is imprisoned somewhere behind the human brain. Getting free now and then — partially.

"Presently, now that so much has been cleared up in the world, it may get free more and more frequently. What do you think, Krause? Suppose man is only just beginning to realise what he can do with his brain? Or suppose our brains are only beginning to realise what they can do with us? Or that some sort of brain behind all brains...

"The world state in which we live isn't a magnified militant sovereign state of the old type; it's something essentially different, something new and better. Maybe this Man in Common is something different too — not a man magnified, but men aggregated, a superman with larger thoughts and aims, something not so much collective as quintessential. The real Leviathan — not the State, as Hobbes had it, but man's entire achievement."

The mind of Krause moved in a narrower orbit than Carstall's. "It was a pity you had to do away with Rud. I see your case. But it was a pity. It seems so — so ungracious. After he had done so much."

"It was a pity the world couldn't do its business without a Rud — from the beginning," said Carstall. "I suppose Rud was necessary, but I cannot see why he was necessary. I suppose these new biological philosophers now can tell a sort of story about individuality being a necessary step for realisation and all that sort of jargon..."

"Individual as Tentative," said Krause, quoting the title of a

current popular book.

"The way he used to call himself The Common Man," said Carstall..."What did he mean by that really? What was he getting at? I've never quite got to the bottom of that. A sort of return from individualism at large, wild individualism, to — one might call it — co-operative identification...Individual as Tentative, I haven't read that book. But that's the idea. Perhaps we are all drifting to that. In his own peculiar self-centred fashion, I suppose he was doing just what you and I are doing in our work, what religion and morality have always been doing. That's the line of thought. He was certainly conscious of being impelled to develop — not himself exactly, but how can I say it? — his particular aspect of that common man who is hidden in all of us, that unknown common man, that undying, unhurrying, incessant man in common, who says this through one man and that through another, and who comprehends and transcends us all?"

Carstall enunciated his phrases slowly and carefully, with his hands behind his head and his eyes among the clouds.

"He talks like a book," thought Krause. "He might be dictating to his stenographer. That last bit might be in capitals...And he poisoned the Master Dictator like a rat!...

"And where," reflected Krause, "would he and I and all this free and lovely life of ours be to-day f it hadn't been for the vehemence and vindictiveness of the Holy Terror?

"Or — to be just — that dose of arsenic? I suppose that too was necessary...As he said, the rest of us hadn't the guts...

"Hard and cold. Think of it! Living with that lovely wife of his and never breathing a word even to her...Ten years of silence for fear she wouldn't understand. Or so as not to make her an accessory after the fact...As though she'd have told on him!...Or not to put a strain on her gentle mind...That too I couldn't have done. It's too much self-control altogether for me..."

Carstall said no more, pursuing his private meditations over his cigar, and Krause went on thinking.

"Lusts of reptiles, stallion pride, dog hunger, anger of apes, obstinacy of urgency and obstinate resistances, cunning and double-crossing — So it is we got here. It is too much for my poor

understanding," thought Krause. "It is too much for any understanding. He talks like a book, and quite apart from that poisoning, quite apart from that, he and this free and handsome new world of his make me afraid. Perhaps I should have been a little afraid in any world. He talks like a book and yet I have to admit that what he says is harshly true. Mystical Stoicism is as much as we can make of it...

"As much maybe as any of us individually ever will make of it," thought Krause. "But could there be this greater sort of mind, this co-operative mind? How would it work? Couldn't we somehow know of it? It would be such a mitigation. Isn't it after all a sort of God?...

"Carstall," he said aloud. "That transcendental mind..."

The idea escaped him.

Carstall glanced sideways at him and seemed to understand what he was unable to say. "So far as we go now," he said, "thinking of these things is like shouting to catch the ear of a star. When we are young we think the stars are looking down on us — entirely sympathetic. And when we have lived through our personal lives we come out on the other side — and find this. The stars in their courses going away from us. Inexplicably. Like people leaving a theatre...

"We have been played..."

§ V

A few days afterwards Carstall came upon his youngest son curled up on a grassy slope beneath a bank of purple iris, reading a Memoir of the Master Director.

He was absorbed in the book. "Gosh!" he exclaimed. Carstall stood over his son unnoticed.

"What do you think of him, Bunny?"

The boy sat up with a start. He answered after due consideration.

"Think of him? I think he was a Holy Terror," he said. "Worse than Napo or Musso or any of them. I suppose you knew him quite well, Father? Talked to him and all that?"

"Your grandfather brought him into the world and II was his schoolfellow. We knew a lot about him. Yes. I was called in. I

assisted at his last illness. I suppose it tells you that."

"And it was you made up their minds for them that the Dictator had done his task and that we did not need another. Good old Daddy! They say it was his desire. He turned to you at the last."

"It says that? It says he turned to me at the last?..."

"You knew his work was done?"

"Yes..."

"He must have been a Holy Terror to get on with, though, if half of this is true," said Bunny, after a pause for reflection..."All the same..."

"Yes?"

"He got a move on things..."

Carstall considered that for some moments, Then he expressed the other side of his own unsolved perplexity. "Maybe," he said, "the move was there anyhow; maybe it just took him."

But Bunny was five-and-twenty years at least too young for predestination, Mystical Stoicism and that style of thought. His father's doubts flew over his head unheeded. "It was marvellous the way he seemed to get hold of people. I suppose Bodisham had a very powerful mind; the great world organiser, they call him. And Bellacourt the Air Master. And Norvel. Re- educating the whole world! And those others. But they all worked for him. He was horrid at times; he had people shot and he killed his best friends. But always they stood by him. Didn't they? It says here 'he cleared things out of their way'. It says here 'he seemed to make it possible for them to work unencumbered'. And they seemed in a way to like him, even when he treated them badly. There must have been something about him...And he did, it says, he did clean up the suffocating tangle the world was in'. What a world it was! So mean. Everybody doing everybody in. Profits, usury, appropriating things, taxes upon taxes, patenting, monopolising, sweating, stealing, frauds, gambling...He cleaned it up. I wish I could have seen him once. I missed him by just two years — two years and a month. At least I wasn't born, I mean...I suppose you did all you could for him?"

"Yes," said Carstall slowly. "Yes. I did all I could for him. According to my lights. I did my best for him — and his work. Quite at the last, you know. When he turned to me."

He took the book, flicked over a few pages, mused over it, and handed it back to his son.

“This book exaggerates here and there — and it simplifies things. It simplifies a lot. What else can a book do? I suppose that makes it easier to read. It brings life within our compass...Broadly anyhow it is the truth. The condensed truth about the World Revolution. It is as real as most other historical stuff...”

THE END

BABES IN THE DARKLING WOOD

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INTRODUCTION — THE NOVEL OF IDEAS

It is characteristic of most literary criticism to be carelessly uncritical of the terms it uses and violently partisan and dogmatic in its statements about them. No competent Linnaeus has ever sat down to sort out the orders and classes, genera and varieties, of fiction, and no really sane man ever will. They have no fixed boundaries; all sorts interbreed as shamelessly as dogs, and they pass at last by indefinite gradations into more or less honest fact telling, into "historical reconstruction," the *roman à clef*, biography, history and autobiography. So the literary critic, confronted with a miscellany of bookish expression far more various than life itself, has an excellent excuse for the looseness of his vocabulary, if not for his exaltations and condemnations. Unhappily he insists on adopting types for his preference and he follows fashions. My early life as a naive, spontaneous writer was much afflicted by the vehement advocacy by Henry James II, Joseph Conrad, Edward Garnett and Ford Madox Hueffer, of something called *The* Novel, and by George Moore of something called *The* Short Story. There were all sorts of things forbidden for *The* Novel; there must he no explanation of the ideas animating the characters, and the author himself had to be as invisible and unheard — of as Cod; for no conceivable reason. So far as *The* Short Story went, it gave George Moore the consolation of calling Kipling's stories, and in fact any short stories that provoked his ready jealousy, "anecdotes." Novelists were arranged in order of merit that made the intelligent reader doubt his own intelligence, and the idea of "Progress" was urged upon the imaginative writer. Conrad was understood to be in the van of progress; Robert Louis Stevenson had "put the clock back," and so on. Quite inconspicuous young writers were able to believe that in some mysterious technical way they were leaving Defoe and Sterne far away behind them. There has been no such "progress" in human brains. Against this sort of thing, which for many reasons I found tiresome and unpalatable, I rebelled. I declared that a novel, as distinguished from the irresponsible plausibilities of romance or the invention in imaginative stories of hitherto unthought-of human circumstances,

could be any sort of honest treatment of the realities of human behaviour in narrative form. Conduct was the novel's distinctive theme. It was and is and must be, if we are to have any definition of a novel. All writing should be done as well as it can be done, wit and vigour are as Cod wills, but pretentious artistry is a minor amateurism on the flank of literature.

This present story belongs to a school to which I have always been attracted, and in which I have already written several books. The merit of my particular contributions may be infinitesimal, but that does not alter the fact that they follow in a great tradition, the tradition of discussing fundamental human problems in dialogue form.

The dialogue, written or staged, is one of the oldest forms of literary expression. Very early, men realised the impossibility of abstracting any philosophy of human behaviour from actual observable flesh and blood. As soon can you tear a brain away from its blood and membranes: it dies. Abstract philosophy is the deadest of stuff; one disintegrating *hortus siccus* follows another; I am astounded at the implacable Scholarly industry of those who still write Textbooks of Philosophy. And your psychological handbook is only kept alive by a stream of anecdote. The Socratic Dialogue on the other hand produces character after character to state living views, to have them ransacked by an interlocutor who is also a character subject to all the infirmities of the flesh. Plato's dramas of the mind live to this day. They may have inspired — it is a fancy of mine for which there is only very slight justification — that kindred Socratic novel, the Book of Job. For that magnificent creation my admiration is unstinted. I have made a close study of it; I have in fact not only studied it but modernised it, traced it over, character by character and speech, in *The Undying Fire*. The Book of Job has been compared to a Greek tragedy, to the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, for example, but I see it myself, naturally enough, from the angle of the writer. It was written to be read.

Manifestly the novel of ideas and the play of ideas converge. My friend George Bernard Shaw has lived a long, vivid life putting the discussion of ideas on to the English stage, to the infinite exasperation of generation after generation of dramatic critics, who

insist upon puppets with heads of solid wood. Then they can get the drama of pure situation within the compass of overnight judgments. From opposite directions Shaw and I approach what is to us and, I submit, firmly and immodestly, to all really intelligent people, the most interesting thing in the world, the problems of human life and behaviour as we find them incarnate in persons. We have no claim to be pioneers, but by an inner necessity we were revivalists. *Hamlet* is evidently a dramatic dialogue about suicide in face of intolerable conditions, and *Julius Caesar* a treatment of political assassination. But by the time Shaw began dramatic criticism ideas had vanished from the English theatre for generations. Mallock and Peacock, however, had kept the dialogue alive through the darkest period of the three-volume novel.

I found myself, and I got to the dialogue novel, through a process of trial and error. The critical atmosphere was all against me. As I felt about rebelliously among the possibilities of fiction, I found certain of my characters were displaying an irresistible tendency to break out into dissertation. Many critical readers, trained to insist on a straight story, objected to these talkers; they said they were my self-projections, author's exponents. But in many cases these obtrusive individuals were not saying things I thought, but, what is a very different thing, things I wanted to put into shape by having them said. An early type of this sort of book was *Ann Veronica*. She is a young woman who soliloquises and rhapsodises incessantly, revealing the ideas of the younger intelligentsia round about 1910, which I had found very interesting indeed. Before then no one had realised there was an English intelligentsia. The book is not a dialogue, simply because no one answers Ann Veronica. It interested a number of people who did not realise fully what bad taste they showed in being interested.

I made a much nearer approach to the fully developed novel of ideas in *Mr Britling Sees It Through*. I was getting more cunning about the business. I made him a writer and I used the letters home of his son to say a number of things that could be said in no other way. In *Joan And Peter*, I did what I think was a better book than *Mr Britling*; it is a dialogue about education, and I centred the discussion on the perplexities of the guardian who had to find a school for these

young people. All my most recent hooks, *Brynhild*, *Dolores* (apart from the scandalous misbehaviour of her dog and a few such uncontrollable incidents), *The Holy Terror*, are primarily discussions carried on through living characters; it is for the discussion of behaviour they were written, and to cut out the talk would be like cutting a picture out of its frame.

And now I will come to the plan and purpose of this present book, which is the most comprehensive and ambitious dialogue novel I have ever attempted. I will try to explain certain devices I have had to adopt, and certain unavoidable necessities of the treatment. At the present time a profounder change in human thought and human outlook is going on than has ever occurred before. The great literary tradition I follow demands that this be rendered in terms of living human beings. It must be shown in both word and act. This I attempt here. So far as my observation and artistry as a novelist have enabled me to achieve it, there is not a single individual in this book that you might not meet and recognise in the street. If you have had any experience in writing fiction, I think you will find that you can take any of my characters out of this book and invent a meeting between them and the real people you know. But because of the very great burden of fresh philosophical matter that this novel has to carry, I have chosen my chief individuals from among the sort of people who would be closest to that matter. I have made one main figure a psychotherapeutist who as an intrusive outside lecturer carries on a feud with the academic traditions of Cambridge. He writes, he talks, he lectures, aggressively and destructively. Very much under his intellectual influence are my central "Babes," two keen young people, one a Newnham undergraduate and the other her lover, Gemini, an Oxford man, who writes and criticises in a "highbrow" weekly, talks abundantly and is in harsh conflict with his father, a London Police Magistrate, celebrated for his bitter utterances on the London bench, and constitutionally addicted to uttering judgments. The mother is a highly self-conscious writer of bright letters. The mental break-down of Gemini after some grim experiences in Poland and Finland bring the methods of a leading psychoanalyst and modern psychosynthesis into the story. All these people talk, write and explain, by habit, profession and necessity. I could not devise a

more favourable assemblage of personalities for a modem symposium, or I would have done so. The inexpert reader might imagine that nothing remained for the novelist to do but to report their conversations.

But that is by no means the case. Let us consider for example the long conversation between Stella and Gemini after they had received Uncle Hopkinshire's abusive threats. Everything reported of it was actually said and understood, and to both interlocutors the chastened, edited, polished conversation given in that section would certainly be acceptable as a fair rendering of their intentions. Yet it is really as different from what they actually said to one another as clear, large print is from a note scribbled in faint pencil on crumpled scraps of paper. They talked a language that was sometimes a kind of shorthand to each other. They had been educated upon parallel lines; they had read the same books; they could say much of this that is set before you, with half the words and without ever finishing a sentence; all sorts of things could be assumed between them; they could pick up and finish each other's phrases; and if I were to write it all down verbatim you would find it, unless you were made to exactly the same pattern and belonged to the same generation, inconsecutive and incomprehensible to the extremest degree. And sometimes, when they entered upon unfamiliar territory, instead of shorthand they used a roundabout very elongated longhand, abounding in loops, digressions and corrections, while they felt their way to their meaning. Moreover, ever and again, it has been necessary, by a turn of the phrase or the neat insertion of a phrase that might be unknown to you, to get over the reality of what they said to you. Again and again, to do them justice, it has been necessary to clarify, condense, expand or underline their words. Nevertheless, what is given here is what they imagined they were saying, and what indeed they meant. And I do not know of any way of writing the novel of ideas that can dispense with such magnified and crystallised conversations and meditations....

That magnification and clarification applies in a greater or lesser degree to nearly all the talk in every novel of ideas. It is the exact opposite of that "flow of consciousness" technique, with which Virginia Woolf, following in the footsteps of Dorothy Richardson,

has experimented more or less successfully. Thereby personalities are supposed to be stippled out by dabs of responses, which after all have to be verbalised. Uncle Robert, when he discourses on a University Education, tells Stella a score of things that as a matter of fact he knew she knew. Later on he and Gemini perform a sort of duet of mutual information. They explain the whole gist and bearing of the new and entirely revolutionary philosophy of behaviourism to one another, cheerfully, uncivilly and without embarrassment. I know of no better way of setting out this new way of thinking. To the best of my ability I contrive a situation that makes their talk as plausible as possible, and I keep rigorously true to their mental characters. In this fashion I may manage t0 get away with the understanding reader. But against the carping realist who objects that people do not talk like this, there is no reply, except that people know what they mean much better than they say it, and that the most unrighteous thing a reporter can do to a speaker or lecturer is to report him verbatim. So I put this dialogue novel of contemporary ideas before you with characters I claim to be none the less living because through my lens you see them larger and clearer than life.

BOOK ONE. THE EASY GOING COTTAGE

CHAPTER I. UNREVEALED WORLD

1. AND NOW WHAT?

A GIRL still just short of twenty walked very gravely, lightly and happily beside her lover, a youngster of twenty-four, along an overgrown, sunken, sun-flecked lane in Suffolk. The lane ran sometimes between fields and sometimes along the boundaries of pleasant residences, and it led from the village green at the centre of all things to the cottage they occupied. It was early in June. Lilac was dropping but the may was at its last and best; and countless constellations of stitchwort, clusters and nebulae, celebrated a brief ascendency over the promiscuous profusion of the hedge-banks.

"*Stellaria*!" said he, "it's just chickweed, which proves that Stella is a chick — a downy little chick."

"We won't always talk nonsense," said Stella.

"When one is drunk with happiness, what else can one ta1k?"

"Well," she considered....

They bumped themselves against each other, summer-drunk, love-drunk, smiled into each other's eyes, and he ran an impudent, appreciative hand over her bare shoulder. She shrank a little from that before she remembered not to shrink. His hand dropped to his side and they walked on, a little apart and with grave, preoccupied faces.

"Things that aren't nonsense are so hard to express," he said presently, and lapsed into another silence.

She was slight and lithe and sunburnt, with sun-bleached hair and intelligent, dark — blue eyes. She had finely modelled brows, with a faintly humorous crinkle in the broad forehead, and enough mouth for a variety of expressions; a wide mouth it was that could flash into a vivid smile or shut with considerable deliberation, which could kiss, as he knew, very delightfully but was by no means specialised for that purpose. She was wearing an exiguous pale green vest which emphasised rather than hid the points of her pretty body, a pair of grey flannel trousers, in which she evidently carried a lot of small possessions as well as her dirty little hands, and brown canvas shoes.

Her third finger in her left hand pocket bore a wedding ring that would not have deceived a rabbit. A bright patterned green and gold silk handkerchief round her slim but sufficient waist completed her costume.

Her companion was perhaps four or five inches taller, and darker in complexion. He was something of a pug about the face, with disarming brown eyes, a lot of forehead and a resolute mouth. His rather crisp brown hair seemed to grow anyhow and had apparently been cut *en brosse* by an impatient and easily discouraged barber. This young man also wore grey slacks and canvas shoes, with a white cotton shirt that had once no doubt possessed as many buttons as any shirt, but which was now buttoned only at the right wrist. He was carrying a spike of bananas still attached to their parent stem in his left (off) hand. It was only as he walked that it became apparent that he was extremely lame.

The least worldly of people meeting this young couple would have known at once, if only by the challenging pride in their faces, that they were living in sin together, that they had been doing so for five or six days at the outside, and that they had never done anything of the sort before. But old Mrs Greedle, who did for them in Mary Clarkson's borrowed week-end cottage, never betrayed a shadow of doubt about that very loosely fitting wedding ring. She consulted Stella upon all sorts of matronly questions and prompted her with the right answer whenever there was the least sign of hesitation....

But of Mrs Greedle more later....

"It is just because we are so happy," he said, trying again.

"I know," she agreed.

"Has anyone any *right* to be happy in a world like this?"

"We were foolish to get those newspapers and letters."

"Sooner or later that had to come."

"They had to come. And anyhow it's been a lovely time. Such a lovely time. Such a very lovely time. Anyhow."

"But all those other fellows all over the world...."

"We've only stolen a week"

"And no one can ever take it away from us. Whatever happens. There's something unfair about our luck. Think of the ones who would — and can't. Down here-or wherever there's working people

or out-of-works or gipsies or such-I look at them and feel a sort of thief. As though I'd stolen it from them. What right have we to our education, to the freedom in our minds, to the time and money, that makes all this possible? And our *health!* If we haven't stolen, our blessed progenitors did. We are Receivers of stolen goods."

"In a way it's getting less and less unfair. The Evil Thing is going to catch us all sooner or later. Why shouldn't we snatch this? At the eleventh hour?"

"To think that it's an advantage to have had a foot crushed between a motor-bike and a tram! *Luck* to be a cripple! No obligation to join up. One of the exempted. The last of the free. We shall catch it with the other civilians but anyhow we're not under orders."

"Not so much of a cripple," she reflected. "Anyhow I'm a woman now and grown-up and ready to look at what's coming to us."

"And what is coming to us?"

"It isn't fair. Life didn't come after our grandfathers and grandmothers and trim them up for slaughter. They had a breathing space."

"Much good they did with it."

"Romeo and Juliet weren't called on for national service."

"*They* didn't get away with so very much either."

"Just accidents and misunderstandings in their case, Gemini; they had bad luck, their people were awful people, worse than ours, and there were those mixed philtres, pure accident, and that was all there was the matter with them. But now everyone, all over the world, is being threatened, compelled, driven. Like a great hand feeling for us, catching more and more of us. It's only God's mercy that there isn't some siren howling after us, or some loud-speaker bellowing A.R.P. instructions, here and now. It got us at the post office; it's waiting for us at the cottage.... But I'm talking worse than you do, Gemini."

"And saying what everyone is saying. All the same we two *are* the world's pets. We've had education, art, literature, travel, while most of those others have been marched off long ago, trained to drudge, to obey, to trust the nice ruling classes — . Ideas kept from them. Books hard to get at. What's the good of pretending that you and I are not the new ruling-class generation? We are. We've shared the loot. And what are we doing by way of thank-you for the

education and the art and the literature and the travel we've had? Trying not to care a damn. Having as good a time as we can manage until something hits us.... It's all the damned radio and the rest of it that does it. Why should I be worried because Chinese kids are being raped and disembowelled for fun by the Japs in Shanghai? Why should I be worried because they are being sold to the brothels and given syphilis and driven to death and all that, under the approving noses of our own blessed Pukka Sahibs in Hong Kong? Lousy Pukka Sahibs! Dirty old Blimps!... This, that and the other horror, up and down the world. That concentration camp stuff.... And all hammering down on our poor little brains. All the time now. All hammering down on *us*. Things like that have always been going on, but they didn't worry grandfather when he walked in the lanes with grandmamma. They didn't come after them as they come after us."

"And they didn't say *You next*."

"Gods! Stella, and are we as bad as that? Maybe we are. Did it have to be bombs over London before any of our lot worried?"

She puckered her brows and weighed the question. She stuck her hands deeper in her trouser pockets as though that helped her thinking. "It wasn't in the same world then," she decided.

"Now it is. 'Ye ken the noo,' as the Calvinist's God said."

"We ken. And what are we going to do about it, Gemini? Playing bright kids won't save us. If our sort can't think of something, nobody will think of anything. *We* have to do something about it. *We*! You and me! And what can we *do*?..."

"What can we do?" he echoed. "Oh hell! Stella, what can we do? Being a Communist! *What's* being a Communist? What good is it? Trotsky and Stalin don't matter a damn to me. Conscientious objectors — objectors to being alive, I suppose. This, this muddle, is life. How can we stand out of it?... Anti-Fascist?... What party is there to work with; what leader can one follow? Saying No, *No*, NO to everything isn't being alive. Why haven't we leaders to lead us *somewhere*? I forgot things for a bit, this last week, but that emetic speech of the Prime Minister's friend — what was his name? Lindsey-Jump-in-the-Snow Lindsey, they call him — and that story of those Jews in No Man's Land and that quotation from that book of Timperley's about those Japanese atrocities.... It's all come back to

me, and the helplessness of it. And the sun, old fool, goes on shining. You poor old fool up there! Why don't you go out and finish us up?"

"And none of the old religions are any good?"

"It's the old religions and faiths and patriotisms that have brought us to just exactly where we are. Manifestly."

"No good going back to *them* again."

"No good going back to anything again. But how to get on?"

She confronted him. "Gemini," she said, "have you no ideas?"

"Oh! the shadows of the ghosts of ideas. And a sound of claptrap in the distance"

"Gemini Jimmini — that is to say Mr James Twain — listen to me. I love you. Always have done; long before you thought of it. I am your true love. Haven't I proved it? And also, as I warned you, I am a prig."

"Don't I know it? Could I love you otherwise? Go on."

"I warn you I am going to talk like a prig. Almost like warning you I'm going to be sick. I've felt it coming on. Gemini, I *must* say it."

"Out with it, as they say on the excursion steamboats. Sorry! Oh-out with it, Stella!"

"Well, we two are individuals of outstanding intelligence. Outstanding intelligence. Young, of course, silly in a way because we are young, but really damned intelligent. That's generally admitted by our friends and relations. Even Aunt Ruby said that. We are bright. In the privacy of this Lovers' Lane, need we hesitate to say as much to one another? We are. Yes. And I'm for getting on with it. You listen. For all practical purposes, about the conduct of our lives, about the conduct of life, we don't know a blessed thing. Not a blessed real thing. You as well as me. They haven't told us anything worth knowing. We are just bright enough to realise that. The religion and morals they fed us are exploded old rubbish. That much we've found out. The unbelieving way they taught it us was enough to show that. Blank. Yet we've got to devote ourselves to *something*, Gemini, all the same. We're made that way. We've got to learn what we can and use it somehow. We've got to do whatever is in us, to save ourselves and the world. Maybe we'll do something. Maybe we'll do nothing at all. But we've got to make the effort. In a

war hundreds of people have to be killed or messed-up. Even if their side is winning. Some get in the way of their own side and get done in like that. Trying to do their best. All sorts go into the boiling. But they've got to join up, they've got to try. It doesn't matter so long as they don't slack or hide.... We're slacking, Gemini...."

She was dismayed at herself.

"I can't go on. It's the very life of me I'm telling you, and it sounds — rot... preachment.... Salvation indeed!... Salvation Army.... If only I hadn't begun. I've never talked this way.... I *must* — with you. I'm not just talking? She was weeping.

"Darling," he said, and kissed and embraced her.

"No need to say any of this again," she sobbed, clinging to him....

"Can I borrow your snitch-rag, Gemini?" she said presently. "I left mine at home."

"We'll have to talk about things," he reflected. "I *will*. But it's awful hard. We get this stuff out of books. We think of it bookishly. We have to at first. When we talk about it, it's like bringing up partly digested print. We've got to talk bookish. What natural words *are* there? Slang, love-making, smut, games, gossip, 'pass the mustard,' one can talk about in a sort of natural unprintable way, but ideas.... We're abashed. We've been trained to be abashed. My old nurse began it. 'Don't you talk like a book, Mr Jimmy,' she said. 'Don't you go using long words.' But suppose the short words won't do it? You're so right, Stella. We've *got* to talk of these things. Of course we have. There's a sort of shyness they put upon us.... Even between lovers...."

She nodded. "Worse than their damned decency," she said. She returned the handkerchief rolled into a ball. Then she remarked, apropos of nothing: "This morning I saw a big bird flying across the garden and it cuckooed as it flew. Always before, I thought they sat and did it. Did you know, Gemini, they cuckooed as they flew?"

"And sitting also. I've seen 'em perched on branches and doing it...."

But he did not seem to be thinking about cuckoos. Neither of them was thinking with any particular intensity about cuckoos. And the sun, the old fool, went on shining upon them.

2. BLOCK OF ALABASTER

One side of the deep lane changed its character and became highly respectable as a tall, well-trimmed hedge of yew. Presently that hedge had a lapse, where something had devoured or destroyed it and left only a stretch of oak palings to carry on in its place.

Our young people cast off the cares of the world abruptly and became gaminesque. Simultaneously they had one and the same idea. “Let’s peek at old Kalikov’s lump,” she said. “Just once more. That lovely lump.”

“Marble it is,” he said.

“Alabaster, I tell you. I *know*.”

“Marble. You never get alabaster in ‘normous lumps like that. Alabaster’s semi-precious or something of that sort. Just little bits.”

“Who ever saw marble all bloodshot?”

“Obstinate. Alabaster is marble.”

“Ignorance. It’s gypsum.”

“That G is hard. It’s Greek.”

“Even there you are wrong. It’s English and soft. Naturalised ages ago.”

She put out her tongue at him. That was that.... In the most perfect accord they crept up to the gap in the hedge and looked over. There, amidst thick grass and tall wild hemlock was a big piece of Derbyshire alabaster, twelve feet high at least.

“See that sort of dirty pink vein,” she began.... He laid a hand on her arm. “Sh,” he said very softly. “*He’s* there.... There!”

They became as still and observant as startled fawns. Kalikov, a great lump of a man, with a frizzy, non-Aryan coiffure and ears that you would have thought any sensitive sculptor would have cut off or improved upon years ago, was sitting on a garden seat in the shade of a mulberry tree, brooding over his huge, clumsy block of material. There was a flavour almost of blood-relationship between him and it. He was still as death and intensely wide awake. When at last he stirred it was as eventful as if the block had stirred. He put out his hand. He moved it slowly in a curving path. Then it came to rest, extended.

He shook his head disapprovingly. He repeated his gesture. This

time it passed muster. He drew it back along an invisible lower path, carefully, mystically. It was as if he caressed the invisible. It was as if he was trying to hypnotise the inanimate. Then his hand went back into his pocket and he became still again, scheming, dreaming.

The two young people looked at one another and then dropped back noiselessly into the lane.

"Like that," she whispered.

"Then one day he will get his chisels and hammers and things and begin to hew it out," she expanded.

"No clay model?" he queried.

"Not for him." She was sure. Some paces further he spoke with a note of intense surprise.

"But that's exactly how we have to do it. Exactly. Exactly what has been trying to get into my mind for weeks."

She made an interrogative noise.

"That," he said, with a backward toss of the head. "That behind there. It's just exactly how I feel about things."

"Meaning?"

"Something completely hidden. *Which is there*?

"Yeah?"

"Clumsy block of a world, monstrous, crushing the grass, bloodshot, and yet in it there is a world to be found, a real world, a great world."

"Which he may find?"

"Which we may find-our sort of people — in this block of a world to-day."

She stood regarding him with her legs wide apart, her arms akimbo and her head a little on one side.

"Gemini, you're saying something. You talk like an evangelist tract but you're saying something considerable. It's a new sort of approach?

"I've said something that's been in my mind in a state of helpless solution for ever so long. *That*, somehow, has crystallised it. The proper religion, the proper way of life, it isn't all this everlasting squabbling of anti-this and anti-that. Newspapers, politics, churches; the whole bloody jumble. Everybody wrong and nobody right. Our sort of people and more of us and more, have been astray, getting

into disputes that don't matter a damn, blundering away at negations. That isn't the job for us. *Our* job is to realise the shape in the block, to get the vision of it clearer and clearer in our heads and then to set about carving it out. Am I saying something at last?"

"Sounds to me something quite considerable?"

She reflected.

"I'll have a thousand criticisms presently," she said, "but you *are* saying something, Gemini. Something we can talk about for days."

"Leave it now then for a bit," said he, "for I'm hungry. Down here, what with the air and this love-making, I seem to be *always* hungry. Come on. Get to your kitchen, woman, for old mother Greedle is more of a talking heart than a head. See to things."

And he waved his bunch of bananas towards the cottage ahead of them, and went limping in front of her.

"It's such a consolidating idea," she said to his back.

"It is a consolidating idea. It's *the* consolidating idea. The unrevealed statue. The unrevealed new world. The *right* world.... I wonder if we shall find the unquenchable Balch on the doorstep.... So soon as he scents a meal afoot.... I'll try this notion out on him."

3. BALCHIFICATION

The unquenchable Balch, true to form, did not appear until the meal was ready. They went through the front room with its big open fireplace and its incongruous array of rugs, miscellaneous chairs, stools, ornaments, allusive and entirely irrational objects and artistic impedimenta — there were two inactive grandfather clocks, two brass panoplies for cart-horses, a powder horn, but only one copper warming-pan — towards the kitchen scullery at the back. They went calling, "Hullo Mrs Greedle, what have you got to cat?" and "Mrs Greedle, *is* there anything to eat?"

"Bubble and squeak, you said you liked, Mrs Twain," said Mrs Greedle. "The cabbage is all chopped. You left some bits of bacon; I can't think 'ow. With a bit of 'am and a hegg or so and a nunion for taste; not ten minutes it won't take, to 'ave it nice and spluttering, and there's them sardines to begin upon for an orderove and that nice

fruit cake Miss Clarkson sent you down, and a nice tomato cocktail and the siphons ‘ave come.”

“*Nice* siphons,” whispered Gemini.

“With coffee to follow,” said the temporary Mrs Twain, hitherto known to us as Stella.

“Yes, Ma’am, nice black coffee in them little cups. As usual. Nice and ‘ot.”

“On with the frying!” cried Gemini. “We’ll eat it here. Ten minutes! I’m damned if I don’t wash my l1ands.”

“Me too,” said Stella. “See what a good example does!”

“How’s the whiskey?” said Gemini.

“‘S in the tantalus in the front room,” said Mrs Greedle. “I didn’t think to look ‘ow much. I do ‘ope....”

Gemini had a moment of apprehension, but he found the tantalus, which ages ago had lost its key and ceased to tantalise, still resourceful, even if Balch dropped in. “I ordered two bottles from the grocer,” said Gemini, “in case,” but Mrs Greedle seemed too preoccupied with the appetising mess in her frying pan to hear. They were busy with the sardines when Balch became audible as a copious throaty voice in the front room.

“Hoy Hoy!” it said. “*What* a reek of onions, and food at large! You children seem always to be eating.”

“Bubble and squeak, Balch. You’re just in time. Come and join us.”

A large buff face with an enormous loose mouth, large grey eyes with a slight cast, and quantities of iron-grey hair, not only on the scalp but bursting generously from brows and ears, appeared in the doorway. The loose mouth was drawn down at the corners with a misleading effect of hauteur, and there was not so much a chin as a series of chin tentatives which finally gave it up and became a neck. The face radiated a sort of anxious benevolence, as though it was relieved to find things no worse than they were. It was closely followed by a body clad loosely in what was still technically a white linen suit, fromthe breast pocket of which bristled a number of fountain pens, several copying-ink pencils, a spectacle-case, and a large red carpenters pencil, proclaiming an alert, various and fecund literary worker. He looked like a ham actor; he looked like an

unsuccessful playwright; he looked exactly what he was — a free-lance journalist in his early fifties; the sort of man who is always getting on tremendously and volubly and never by any chance getting anywhere.

"If ever I hit this cottage between meals," he said, "I shall put it in my diary as a notable event."

"Join us," said Gemini, putting out the rest of the sardines for him upon a Woolworth plate. (All the plates in the house, except the wall decorations, were Woolworth plates and all the glasses Woolworth glasses.)

"I *ought* not," said Balch, and then relenting, "just to save your greedy little faces, I *will*."

He did.

Mrs Greedle surveyed the consumption of her bubble and squeak with bland benevolence and felt that whatever criticisms might be passed upon her fancy dishes, her soofles, crimes, mooses, kickshaws, glasses, gallant tins, soup-raims, rag-whos, consomers, and debauches — tomato soup that latter is, with a bit of cream on the top — her arlar thises and her arlar thats-nevertheless at good old village cooking, at your bubble and squeak of your nice onion stew or your hot-pot or what not, she knew her business to a T. And in her heart she hoped that in the end the young gentleman would marry the young lady, for a nicer young lady she had never set eyes on in all her born days, speaking clearly like a lady and look you nicely in the eyes, and never getting drunk and not keeping it down like a lady should, and the mess and all of it, like so many young ladies of the best families seemed to make almost a point of doing nowadays....

The nice hot coffee was served on an Indian brass tray on a lacquered Moorish table in the front room, and the voice of the unquenchable Balch, released from degustation, began to play about the world of fact and fancy in a free and fearless fashion.

He was in the habit of calling his host and hostess "The ultimate generation, the last and so far the best." They were, he said, his "*Wunderkinds*." He combined an undisguised admiration for their youth, boldness, directness, and intelligence with an air of immense helpfulness and patronage and tutorial responsibility. And also there was a note of sadness because this world would surely be too much

for them. “You two ought to write while you are fresh and young and new. And still alive. Use your baby language-for I know you have one, mum though you keep about it — and any little Joycery that comes into your heads. Write! Tell me about it, show it to me. Anything you do. I know things. I know people. If you have any ideas. I might save you endless experimenting....”

Now over the coffee Gemini unfolded his idea, and Balch interrupted, commented, and expanded, and Stella sat on the settle with her chin between her fists and her elbows on the old polished cask, resolved to let no nonsense get past her.

“We’re the heirs of a bankrupt world,” said Gemini. “The religions, the patriotisms, have all killed one another. This war, this war that is going to drink us all up, will be a war about nothing, because the sense has gone out of everything. Worse than the War to End War. Whichever way it goes, things after it will be worse than ever. One thing’s as rotten as another, and there’s nothing we can join on to. Nothing. See? Nothing. Nothing by way of a going concern. And that’s where the great idea comes in....”

“Come to the great idea,” said Balch, waving aside the preamble.

“The thing we have to serve isn’t a divinity or a church or a country or an empire or a class or a party. None of them is worth while now. None. It’s something greater.”

Balch opened his mouth to speak.

“Listen, Balch! It’s a possibility we have to serve.”

He went on, holding up a hand like a traffic policeman to restrain Balch, while he told of their glimpse of Kalikov brooding in his garden. “There’s this great block, the world, and there’s the human imagination gradually realising what it can do with it.... Now you have your say, Balch.”

At first he was not appreciative. “This is Utopianism, my dear chap,” he protested, “just Utopianism.”

“No. Utopia is nowhere, but the Unrevealed World is here and now. Smothered up. Embedded. It’s not a dream. It’s the possibility, close at hand, which is something quite different.”

“Your possibility isn’t everybody’s possibility,” said Balch.

“Gemini, grapple with that,” said Stella.

“I’ve thought of that. Already I’ve thought of that. While I was

washing my hands. First, let me ask you a question. First, Balch, do you think that Kalikov could make anything he pleases out of that block he has? *Anything?*"

"Within certain limits."

"You don't think that?"

"But I *do*."

"Then why does he sit and brood over it? Tell me that. He can make all sorts of messes of it, I admit, chip it to bits, spoil it and waste it, but there's only one supreme thing waiting for him there. That's what he has to get out of it. That's why he broods. Everything else, everything else, will be failure."

"Something in that," said Balch. "Something in that. I give you old Kalikov. Leave him. But who's going to imagine the hidden world in our world? You?"

"M'm?" said Stella.

"I think there is an answer to that too. The artist in front of our world is the human imagination. No! Don't tell me human imaginations can imagine anything. I've had a brain-wave , about that. They can't. Any more than Kalikov can. They may go astray. I guess Kalikov has his wandering fancies which he ' has to dismiss. But-here's my second great idea — the human imagination is like the human blood corpuscle; it's the same everywhere. Fundamentally. We aren't all at sixes and sevens. We seem to be, but fundamentally we are not. See?"

"I don't see," said Balch. "No. What are you driving at?"

"This. All over the world the mass of human beings want peace. Don't they? But their minds are confused. They are misled, miseducated. They don't see the shape of it as a world organisation. They don't give it a form. All over the world they are staring at this great lump of a world — a1l this war, all this hatred — blood-red streaks and stains-and yet with a loveliness — like Kalikov. See? But gradually, quickly or not, they will begin to realise-what is practically the same idea — the idea of a whole world in one active order...."

"H'm." Balch weighed it profoundly. "Differences of race," he said. "Differences of culture. Differences of tradition. Differences of colour."

“Streaks in the alabaster,” said Stella softly. Gemini was fairly launched upon his second great idea, and he did not mean to have it set aside.

“The human brain,” he declared, “is more alike everywhere, than anything else in the human make-up. I can assure you it is. A little heavier or a little lighter. You can tell the race, the sex, of a finger or a hair, but you couldn’t tell anything about a human brain in pickle except that it was a human brain.”

“And is that so?” said Balch.

“Common knowledge,” said Gemini stoutly. “Human minds, I tell you, are more alike than human bodies. Make them think; put the same problem before them, and the harder they think the nearer they’ll come to the same answer. There’s a *Common Human Imagination*, waiting to be awakened....”

Balch shut his extensive mouth hard, put his head on one side, and regarded the timbered ceiling. “Now that’s a large proposition,” he considered, rallying his mind, and was glad to defer to Stella, who was preparing to point her remarks with an extended finger.

“This idea of yours, Gemini, sounded so good at first,” she said. “But is it after all even a good analogy? There’s Kalikov there with his block of alabaster — because you know, Gemini, it is alabaster — and it’s fixed. It won’t do a thing until Kalikov makes up his mind. It squats there in the grass and waits. He can go away for a holiday and forget about it, and when he comes back there it is just the same. But our block of alabaster isn’t fixed.”

“M’m,” said Twain, as if he was beginning something.

“It isn’t the least bit fixed,” she said, raising her voice by way of a protest against a possible interruption. “Our lump, our world, hangs over us, keeps heeling over us. It is moving, like a mountain moving down to crush a Swiss village. It won’t wait for anything. Kalikov can brood over his lump for a year. But our imaginations—”

“The common human imagination,” said Gemini, sticking to his second great idea.

“Of which ours are the only samples now in court. Our imaginations have no time for that sort of thing. Our mass of a world may do anything to us now. The one thing we can be sure of is that it won’t leave us alone. We carve it; it’s much more likely to carve us.

It may blow us to bloody rags; it may smash us underfoot, flat as squashed ants. Kalikov can afford to say, 'I will sleep on it. I will do it to-morrow,' but for our block, which is in front of us and behind us and over us and under us-the word is now."

"Yes," she added, as rapidly as possible because Balch was making the sort of noises that preluded an emption. "And about human imaginations being all alike. If only they were. If only they were. But what sort of proof? They don't even begin to get together.... The imaginations of man's heart are only evil continually...."

But now Balch was rising to his occasion. He began to wave his hand about like a hovering wasp while Stella was speaking. He pounced on her first pause for breath. "Very good," he said, "very good, Madam Stella. True and penetrating. But it doesn't alter the proposition in any essential respect. Let me explain. Let me speak. The essential thing is the challenge of the block. There's the lump you have to carve life out of. Whether it keeps still or whether it keeps sliding after you, is secondary. Secondary. Still — . Sculptor chased by a block of alabaster. Ugh? *Idea* in that. Short story perhaps. But it doesn't abolish the sculpture idea. Twain, I apologise for calling this notion of yours Utopian. I do indeed. I begin to see your drift. It isn't Utopian. Far from it. It's immensely common-sense. I didn't get your drift at first. I didn't expect it from you. I wonder if you even begin to realise the importance of what you have said. The Universality! It's an Enormous Idea. E-normous. You've hit on something.... Now I begin to think of it.... I wonder I never thought of it myself. It's all very well for you to call it down, young lady, and criticise it, but don't let her discourage you, Twain. Your mind is building better than you know."

"I didn't," began Stella....

"I don't think I implied," began Gemini....

But Balch was now under way and he raised his voice, at once powerful and plaintive, so as to take complete possession of the air.

"There is a great world order here and now, hidden in our circumstances and in men's minds. True! And you can prove it by the universal similarity of brains and cells. Good! Excellent! *That's* your idea. A biological assertion of human brotherhood. Don't you

see that that is what you are saying?"

"*Saying* it," protested Gemini unavailingly....

"Don't you see that this gives the preliminary concept for a new and hopeful — as far as anything can be hopeful nowadays — a new and hopeful attack on life? At the eleventh hour. It's — it's as fundamental.... It's a new, a creative restatement of religion. It calls together everything that is progressive and constructive in life. Think what it says! Never mind what is, it says. That's the essence of it. To hell with what is. Whatever is, is just material, stuff to be used or stuff to be thrown away. You get together sooner or later with all the other imaginations in the world that have got lit up. And the What Is, vanishes." His arm swept the World that Is away. "It melts into the World of Heart's Desire. What is, meanwhile can do its damnedest. It has no claim on you. The only thing that has a claim on you is this non — existent world hidden in the alabaster. Oh! a great idea. The only thing that has a hold upon you is your own free thought and free imagination about that. You are the Free Man looking for his world, the world that has to be, the world that's been put over you. If they clap you into a uniform and put a rifle in your hand, you owe them no obedience. None. If they put an oath into your mouth it doesn't matter. No oath can hold you that you don't make of your own free accord. Whether you let fly at the man in front of you, or your officer, or the ammunition dump or into the air or try potting the War Boss himself, depends upon just what you think will help most to release the Unrevealed World....

"Phew!" Evidently he would have liked a breathing space, but plainly he felt that Gemini or Stella might cut in if he stopped. So he just let loose a howling, tenoring sound— "Warrow. Ugh. Warrow" — until he could begin his next paragraph.

"*Such* an idea! Oh, such an idea! The Unrevealed World! You can state it in general terms now. It forms itself in people's minds all over the world. Peace from pole to pole. Don't we all want it? But we're held up by How? *How's* a mouthful. *How's* the giant in the path. That's not going to hold us up for ever. What are brains for? The service of the human spirit. All over the world people are working their brains like hell to get a practical answer to *How*? To conceive it and behold it. Kalikovs all. You young people may think

you are the only people on earth who've glimpsed this idea, but I tell you there are thousands of you; there will be *millions* of you. Not seeing it so clearly perhaps, but feeling it, urged by it. Maybe you exaggerate the possibility of a common human imagination, Twain; maybe you do. But that is merely an exaggeration. The common human imagination is there. Ready to be lit. And it can and it shall be lit. It shall be discovered and lit. What you are proposing is a Great Possibility."

"I *said* that," Gemini half whispered.

"The Great Possibility in the Human Imagination, the Human Heart; Various, I admit, Madam, and yet the Same throughout the World. *He* sees sameness; *you* may see variety. What I see is sameness in variety. That was the discovery of all the great propagandist religions of the world. They saw it even if they lost sight of it again. Think what we mean when we say all men are Brothers. Who said that first? What anonymous Seer? But what a Leap into the light! The awakening idea of one kingdom of heaven on earth; that step by step realises itself and becomes the Great Human Reality. Ugh! Wur. I've been watching it grow upon people in these years we've lived through. For I too-*I* am a Kalikov. You are Kalikovs, yes; but I've been in this thing longer than you. I've *watched* this dream-of world unity, world justice. Not here; not there; but everywhere. World cooperation in giant undertakings, becoming real almost day by day. Why! in 1900, it was a dream, thinner than a dream, the shadow of a dream. People were too far away from one another. Now there are schemes of federalisms, schemes of alliances by the score, — that book you lent me the other day, *Union Now* — just one sample. Everyone making schemes and plans for it, more and more practicable, closer and closer to actuality. Up and down the scale. Internationalism! The Oxford Movement. All touched by the spirit of it. Why! there's even a sort of Cosmopolis in the Rotary Clubs. This has been going on for ages. In a sense, that is, it has been going on for ages. Dumbly. Blindly. Getting clearer — more definite. Never so swiftly. That is what Christ meant by his Kingdom. Buddha was after this! Prophets and teachers. Confucius. *All* of them! Pisgah! Feeling for a way out from the Thing that is.... Seekers all."

He extended a waving hand and twiddled his fingers to express a

great multitude of active seekers.

"Like an immense crowd feeling about in the dark, jostling against each other — but with the dawn breaking. Humanity! Dawn. Darkest hour before the Dawn! Hitler? What's Hitler? The ultimate Cain? The last parricide? Can he prevail? Don't tell me. Japan? A final black-out? The end of all things? No! A thousand times, No! Nerve storms. Fits of evil temper. I tell you the dawn's breaking. Then comes this conception of the Unrevealed World. Nobody is a winner and all win. Don't go on with anything in particular. Carve it out of everything in general. Not here. Not there. But everywhere. The Unrevealed World! Shining darkly through governments, through religions. But plainer now than it was. To think it's got hold l of you! And so clearly that you even make it plainer to me. You *brilliant* kids! When I hear you saying it clear and definite, Twain, I want to get up and shout and march about...."

Never had this unquenchable Balch been quite so unquenchable. It was just his excessiveness that made him want to shout even more than he was doing. He was already definitely shouting. He was already bumping up and down in his seat. He was like a large boy who has pounced on a small boy's new bicycle. He went on riding it round and round even { when he was out of breath. They could not get in a word of their own nice clear thoughts edgeways.

Stella, silenced, regarded him grimly. She had several fine points to make. Every moment she was feeling more clearly that Gemini had jumped too confidently at that "common human imagination" of his. That had to be cleared up. But how could she collect her thoughts, much less say anything, under all this Balchery?

Gemini fretted under the torrent. Hitherto he had thought Balch a joke, a joke with a vulture's scent for distant nourishment, but this was almost too much. "He takes anything,"

thought Gemini; "it doesn't matter how fine and good it is, he swallows it down and he brings it up, and he turns it into this sort of spew. All the same my idea is a great one. All the same I stick to it and will look at it presently, Balchify though you will."

"Waur! Let us think for a moment of the implication of this great movement which is as old as the hills and as new as sunrise! To which you in your turn have come. In your turn. Such a lot of people

have felt it and thought it, and yet it's only now we see clearly what it is that we have felt and thought. Citizens of a state that hasn't arrived; advance agents of a government yet to be. All the roads and railways and mines and factories, all the arsenals, barracks, warships, all the aeroplanes and aerodromes, from end to end of the earth, are the property of our unrevealed government, are *ours*, but mark you, in the hands of usurpers. *Our* heritage-not handed over to us. Every actual government in the world, either a usurpation or a trust. Its end is to hand over or get out. All the universities and schools, all the churches and religions, are just the genus of our One Great World Teaching. Squabbling with one another, keeping us in the dark and failing to unite and develop. Slash and hammer and we clear the alabaster, dig out the shape in it. Hand over, you there, get on, or get out. Kings, Presidents, officials, Ministers, every sort of leader, hand over — get ready to hand over — or get out. Get on to the revelation of Cosmopolis or get off the earth! Some slogan that, eh? Gods! If only I could touch someone for money I'd start a newspaper, I'd start a movement, I'd start a campaign to — morrow. Right on this idea. This is what the Anarchists have been feeling their way towards. Shelley, Kropotkin.... If you can call Shelley an Anarchist. He used, I admit, to call the actual governments, Anarchs. Yes. Never mind. Mere matter of phraseology. He meant what I do. What we all do. He would have been with us. Your method must be so far anarchism, that it uses all governments and respects none of them."

"There can be no idea of anarchy in a world of reasonable men," said Gemini's submerged voice.

"We begin to realise at last what is implied in that good old phrase, a Citizen of the World. He is the heir to the future, seeking his divided and mismanaged estate, resolved to unify it now for good and all.... I'm talking, I know. Too much perhaps. I can't help talking, because the more I think of this phrase of yours — great phrase it is — the Unrevealed World, I realise that it releases all that has been accumulating in me for years. I feel as though at last I was being born again. After a sacrament of bubble and squeak. We are all being born again here and now. We are not the people we were yesterday. We slot into the new order. Now....

"Think of the new behaviour our great idea demands. Because we

new people are the real kings, the rightful owners, and our bearing must be masterly. *Masterly*," he repeated, as though the timbered ceiling had contradicted him. "Just in so far as we hold to our relentless aim, just so far are we living rightly. Complaisant to all that is decent and creative in the world, but inflexible to whatever is treason to one universal citizenship. Then we must resist; then we must withstand, not seeking martyrdom but lacing it calmly, daring to say 'I disbelieve in your encumbering, separating faiths, I disavow your irrational loyalties....' So!"

He paused with hand extended, breathing deeply, his great face aflame with leadership and defiance.

Then he started like a man stung.

It was a minute mechanical sound that startled him. It was the click of the latch of the garden gate. He turned, extended his neck, and stared through the half-open door. An expression of consternation spread swiftly over his countenance.

"Gee-whizz, here's the plurry parson coming up the path!" he said, clawing at the air, and vanished by way of the kitchen as they turned their heads.

It was almost incredible that so much sound and substance could be so completely and instantaneously annihilated. It was like the bursting of some vast, sonorous bladder.

Stella and Gemini found themselves staring across the littered room at one another in empty silence, a silence which nevertheless seemed to reverberate with inaudible echoes of Balch's phrases.

"I can't tell lies," said Stella, suddenly and simply. "I can't tell any more lies."

"*What?*" cried Gemini.

"I won't. It's sucking up to the Old World. See?"

"But it's still the old world," said Gemini, aghast. "Go easy, Stella!"

The clergyman called attention to his arrival by a neat rat-tat of his knuckles on the front door.

"Come in," said Gemini, standing up politely.

"No lies, mind you," said Stella, sitting tight and clenching her little fists. That wedding ring pinched her. "Damn you!" she whispered to it, but there was no time to fumble it off.

The clergyman, stooping slightly under the six foot door, came in, quite unaware that the world he lived in had just been warned to get itself born again or go.

CHAPTER II. CHURCH MILITANT?

1. FINE POINT IN ETHICS

HE was partly camouflaged as a layman. He wore a light-grey flannel suit and he was holding a Panama hat in his hand, but an unbroken line of collar round his neck reminded one that he was not quite of this world. He was tall and thin, with a bony, aquiline, ascetic face, and the natural earnestness of his countenance had evidently been subjected to intensive cultivation. He might have been of any age between thirty-five and fifty!

"I don't intrude, I hope," he said. "I do hope I don't intrude."

"Won't you sit down?" said Stella with a gesture that indicated most of the wide range of Mary Clarkson's sitting apparatus available in the room.

He ignored her invitation and remained standing.

"Charming room, this of Miss Clarkson's," he said. "Quite charming. Old-world *and* at the same time modern. Such a delightful contrast to — to houses in a different style. Quite.... I'm told you've been here a week or more."

"Yesterday week," said Stella.

"And beautiful weather it has been, Mrs Twain."

"My name," said Stella, leaning back on the settle, avoiding Gemini's probably horrified eye, sticking the offending wedding ring to the very bottom of her trouser pocket and trying to get it off, "is Miss Stella Kentlake."

She realised suddenly that she had lost her breath and took a large gulp. She felt exactly as though she was playing in a charade and that if she lost her nerve for a moment it would go altogether.

The clergyman altered the angle of his face slightly, so as to seem just a trifle more austere. "I understood," said he, "you were a young married couple."

"No relationship whatever," said Stella. "Just friends. *He's* Twain."

She nodded her head to indicate Gemini.

"Well, well," said the good man. He had heard of the wedding

ring and was a little taken aback by her frankness. He had come all prepared to accept wedding ring conventions.

"Customs change," he said. "In my grandmothers time you young people might have been considered a trifle indiscreet, you know. But now — *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, I hope?"

"Exactly what I was going to suggest," said Stella, getting clear of the ring at last, sitting up briskly and behaving as much like a respectable hostess of forty as she knew how.

"And now Mr — ?"

"Morton Richardson."

"Won't you sit down? We've had a perfectly lovely week down here, lovely sunshine and everything, and we'd love to hear something about its parochial life. And all that. We'd love to. My hus — , Mr Twain, I mean, is beginning to write and so on. That sort of young man...."

She glanced commandingly at Gemini, who was watching her with undisguised admiration and making no effort at all to assist. He took up his cue with a start.

"Unperformed dramatist, Sir, mute poet, indispensable clerk in the Penguin Press organisation, reserve literary worker for the Propaganda Department. Too lame for military service — leg crushed some years ago. But do please sit down. This rather large chair here has never failed anyone."

"Certain1y. Certainly. Though I can't promise to stay very long, you know."

"A little coffee perhaps? There's some in the kitchen. Mrs Greedle. Mrs *Cree*-dle."

Mrs Greedle appeared promptly and curtsied intimately to Mr Morton Richardson.

"Aah! Mrs Greedle, and how are we nowadays?"

"Never so well, Sir. I'm a patent for our new doctor. Them charcoal biscuits E gave me, they worked a miracle. Indeed they did, Sir. For the last three weeks I haven't know what gas was. It's gone. B'sorbed completely. Shall I bring fresh coffee, Mrs Twain, nice and hot?"

She disappeared.

"*Mrs* Twain," said the clergyman, as he lowered himself carefully

into the large chair and extended his legs towards the open fireplace. “I’m glad that you didn’t — . That you have been tender with her possible feelings. About the — er — the situation.”

“*Well*,” said Stella. “It’s rather on my conscience. I’d be glad of your advice. Don’t you think perhaps we ought to break it to her? After all, this calling myself ‘Mrs,’ it is, you know, *lying*.”

The Reverend Morton Richardson became gravely thoughtful. He put his two long fine hands into an attitude of prayer and rotated them gently against each other. “I would do nothing precipitate,” he said. “The situation so far as she is concerned has already been created. With me you have been charmingly frank — charmingly. I take it as a compliment. But-”

Mrs Greedle came back with the coffee and in the pause caused by her presence Gemini poured out for the vicar. “I’m interested in your view, Sir,” said the young man, handing the little cup.

“I should do nothing precipitate,” the clergyman repeated, when he had assured himself that the door of the kitchen had closed again on Mrs. Greedle. “And on the whole if you don’t mind I would rather she did not know that *I* know of the exact nature of this — er — Platonic experiment of yours. Because you see that would make me a party, so to speak, in the — I think on the whole justifiable deception....”

At the word “Platonic” Gemini had raised his eyebrows slightly at Stella. But Stella remained modestly expressionless.

“But it *is* a lie, Sir,” said Gemini.

“Probably it all began with your charming hostess. Before you came here at all. She may have used some expression.... She may have said ‘a young couple’ is coming down. ‘That makes it a misapprehension rather than a deception. Mrs Greedle, I know, is apt to jump to conclusions. Almost too apt. If you try to clear things up with her now you may sow the seeds of distrust.... Suppose we let it rest at that. For the present at any rate....”

“You couldn’t say fairer,” said Mrs Greedle, ceasing to listen at the kitchen door. “So that’s that.”

She returned to her gas stove to make a reassuring clatter there. “Seeds of distruss, my eye! Charming ‘ostess! As though I didn’t know ‘er. Through and through!... The things I’ve seen! Crikey!

Seeds of distruss! If I tole him One Tenth!...”

A brilliant, rollicking but extremely improper thought came into Mrs Greedle’s busy brain. She chuckled confidentially to the plate-rack. “But you can’t say things like that to a parson, you know,” said Mrs Greedle archly, putting a rinsed plate to dry. “They’ve an innocence.... Even babies ‘ave a knowingness. Dirty little darlin’s. But parsons — . Oh parsons! Don’t even wet themselves. It isn’t as though they was natural white paper; it’s as though they’d been washed out. Sort of bleached.... *Ne-o-o-w*.”

Mrs Greedle, featuring a distaste for a secondary and acquired innocence by a grimace of concentrated scorn and a haughty backward movement of the head, came within an inch of breaking a plate.

2. SHEEP ASTRAY

By that time the party in the living room were well away upon other topics.

“Did I,” said the vicar, “did I hear you say your name was Kentlake? Have you any relationship, by any chance, to the — rather — well — conspicuous — well-known—”.

“The philosophical psychologist,” said Stella. “He’s my favourite uncle. It was he, had me sent to Cambridge?

“Cambridge?”

“Newnham.”

“*I* was a Trinity man,” said the vicar. “But long before your time. Dear me. How the years slip by! Just in time to be a padre. But you, you can’t have taken your degree yet?”

“Second year. Whether I take the tripos now, depends.... It all depends on all sorts of things.... Obviously.”

“Obviously. Now. Forgive me for saying it but don’t you think you should have thought of that before?” said the vicar.

“If people, if the authorities at Newnham, chose to put an uncharitable interpretation upon this — this little adventure of yours — it might interfere rather seriously-”.

“You can’t always think of a situation until you’ve made it,” said

the young lady, with a faint touch of defensive acidity. “You were speaking of my uncle.”

“I was thinking of his ideas,” said the vicar, regarding the dogs and logs in the fireplace with an unworldly, kindly expression and beginning to triturate his hands again.

“He’s always so *Right*,” said Stella.

“You say he sent you to Cambridge. Forgive my curiosity, but why was it he sent you?”

“My mother wasn’t in a position to send me. But need we go into that?”

“Certainly not. Not unless you wish it. If I were asked to advise... mediate.... I was only thinking — . So many issues....”

“You were thinking, you said, of my uncle’s ideas. I warn you we’re full of them, both of us. It’s that brought us together. And rather encouraged us. We believe in him solidly. Almost solidly.”

“You must forgive me if my admiration is more — *critical*. In this world there has of course to be variety-variety of standpoints-variety of opinions. Different aspects.”

“We both feel that acutely,” said Gemini. “Of course we of the younger generation, in these urgent times, find the variety of opinions rather perplexing. It’s we who have to decide among them and we don’t seem to have so very much time. Not so easy, Sir. We’d like any criticism of Doctor Kentlake and his sort of thinking, if you could give it us, above all things. Sometimes I feel when I’m reading him that he’s so completely convincing, as far as he goes, that there must be a trick in it somewhere. His literary style may carry one over things....”

“A very, very good comment,” said the vicar. “A very penetrating comment.”

“Yes, Sir,” said Gemini and stopped attentively.

“I must confess,” said the vicar, smiling faintly, “that, come to think of it, I find an impromptu critique of the writings and philosophy of Doctor Kentlake rather a large order. On the spur of the moment. Don’t you think?”

“Not from you, Sir. Isn’t it after all your particular business — ?”

“Literary criticism?”

“No, Sir. The teaching of the Church which Doctor Kentlake

flouts and attacks. If he is right; then, Sir, forgive me, you have no justification for being what you are?"

"Yes. Yes. Perhaps so."

"We *expect* it from you, Sir," said Gemini, with the shadow of a grin in his voice. "For what else are you for? You are here to embody the real truth and the right way. A sort of sanitary inspector of conduct and ideas. Just as you were able to tell us just now *when* the truth ought to be handled — well — with gloves on — ."

'That wasn't *quite* how we settled it; was it?" said the vicar.

"Anyhow, now, you ought to give us at least an idea of the reply, the orthodox right reply, to what Doctor Kentlake says about orthodox religion and morals. And I can assure you, Sir, from the things I've heard Stella say and the things she's heard me say, you don't come any too soon here...."

The vicar made that noise which is usually indicated in print by "Chirm." He grasped the arms of his chair firmly, sat a little lower and longer in it, and regarded the fireplace now with a certain mournful sternness. "Of course," he said, "you must not regard me as a compendium of theological controversy."

"Still, Sir, you must admit; it's your job," said Gemini.

"Well, among other things."

"Surely, Sir, *above* other things. The faith must be maintained. Our generation is drifting away. You come just in the nick of time. I hesitate to tell you how far out to sea we are. We hardly believe a thing you believe, according to your creeds. We just don't take the Bible story. And people who give serious thought to life, they are reading these sceptical writers, Kentlake and Shaw and Bertrand Russell and Joad, the two Huxleys, Hogben, Levy, J.B.S. Haldane — in preference to any orthodox authorities. Even when it comes to belief they seem to prefer mathematicians — mystical mathematicians — Jeans and Eddington for example, Captain Dunne and Whitehead — to people like Cosmo Gordon Lang and Temple. They'd almost rather have Uspensky than a bishop. And can you wonder at it? Such a lot of the Anglican Church seems to be deliberate talking beside the mark. That fat book, *The Study of Theology*, the other day. I got it and read it. That shows I'm up-to-date. Published quite recently and I — well I saw a review of it. You

may have missed it, Sir.... It isn't exposition, Sir; it isn't any sort of fundamental discussion; it's stuff got up to look like exposition and discussion. The Catholics put up a better sort of fight. There's Belloc with his impudent assertiveness; he has the creative gift, he makes his own biology as he goes along; and there's this Professor Karl Adam coming up. Have you read Professor Karl Adam at all, Sir? There's a boldness about him....

"I can tell you, Sir, that making up our minds about — about what is truth and what are the right principles of living for us-; it's a *frightful* task. The ideas we are expected to know about. The stuff we have to read. The stuff we have to keep up with. And whatever of it is right, makes all the rest wrong. Somebody must be right. Nobody grips it and holds it still and digests it all for us. And the Church, they tell me, goes on. Empty pews, silent pulpits — sermons cut to nothing. Yet preventing anything else from taking its place. Why is it, Sir? Why does the Church have nothing definite to say for itself? We sheep are all astray. We — the young. It isn't for nothing that a bishop carries a pastoral crook, surely? But does he try to use it? Have I ever felt a bishop pulling my leg, Sir? Never. Sorry to seem so critical, Sir. I'm garrulous. My ideas run away with me."

"Little you know of a parson's duties," said the vicar, "to demand this of him. Births, marriages and deaths. The coal club, the rummage sale, the choir, the bell-ringers, the charities, the school treat and the church wardens. The constant calls for advice, temporal as well as spiritual. The sick and dying in need of consolation...."

"But what do you tell them, Sir? What is the consolation?"

"Simple things. The restoration of faith."

"But what faith, Sir? What *is* the faith? That's the question."

The vicar was evidently doing his best to be frank and honest. He continued to stare into the fireplace and there was a flavour of soliloquy in his voice.

"In the case of the sick and dying, I will make no bones about it, and I am speaking as an experienced priest, you have to use the faith you find there already. Whatever it is. You must. To help, and I assure you I want to help, I make myself all things to all men, to all failing and dying souls.... You would too...." He stopped short and resumed more briskly.

“Wel1, all these things keep one busy. So that when you pull me back to theology.... I admit it is what you call my job — but don’t expect me to be a specialist. I’ll answer to the best of my ability.”

He paused.

“All these other things are frightfully important things,” said Stella. “But as my — as Twain, there, says, they aren’t the essential jobs of the Church. Surely. Some of that is civil administration; some might be better done by a medical or psychic or educational adviser — or a parish clerk. Or a glorified community schoolmaster. As my uncle is always saying. But the essential claim of the Church is its religion, its belief that is, the right theory and the right practice of living. If that is wrong, then what is its authority?”

“If,” said the inexorable Gemini, “if you have to — well, Sir, not to put too fine a point on it — prevaricate, to the distressed and sick and dying, isn’t that because you haven’t established — how is it Kentlake puts it? — a high right-mindedness in them, when they were well?”

“You put me on the defensive, young people.... I stand by my creed.”

“It is your Church, Sir, that is on the defensive. We have to ask you. What are the sure and irreducible verities that justify your practical control of social conduct? You do control it a lot, you know. You interfere a lot. Practical morals. Judgments on people. Education. The Abdication. You stand for all that, and this country is largely what you have made it. It isn’t an uneducated country now, but it’s about as badly educated as it can be. So Kentlake says. At the back of it all surely there has to be a creed, a fundamental statement, put in language that does not jar with every reality we know about the world. We don’t want to be put off with serpents and fig-leaves and sacrificial lambs. We want a creed in modern English, Sir. And we can’t find it. You must have a foundation or you would resign. Mr Gladstone wrote of the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scriptures. But it isn’t quite like that, Sir, now, is it? The Rock’s all at sea. Still — there ought to be some sort of rock bottom...?”

For the better part of a minute the vicar said nothing and the two young people remained in a state of mercilessly silent expectation. Gemini studied the ascetic face before him with a vivid, new-born

curiosity. He seemed to be seeing something that had always been under his eyes but which he had never clearly observed before. His brain was already acquiring many of the habitual vices of a writer's. A riot of stereotyped phrases ran through his mind and were rejected-"wily ecclesiastic," "priestly domination," "professional churchman" for example. He pushed these confusing suggestions aside in his determination to see for himself. This face, he realised, was neither a good face nor a bad face, neither a saint's nor a sinner's, but it was at one and the same time an extremely usual face and also a profoundly unreal one. It was a made and disciplined face. It betrayed nothing inadvertently. It expressed what it was intended to express. It had never struck Gemini before but now it came to him as something very important that this was the case with almost all the faces he had encountered of teachers, professors, doctors, magistrates and all those set in authority over their fellow-men, they were all definitely determined facades not assumed to deceive but to maintain a definite line under difficulties and to suppress and conceal as completely as possible whatever complex inconsistencies might still be stirring within. It seemed to him now that he was apprehending for the first time how high and deep and far-reaching and necessary is the artificiality of social life.... When at last the vicar spoke he went off at a tangent. He attempted no statement of his creed in modern terms. "My main objection to Doctor Kentlake's views," he began, "is his one-sided materialism, his deliberate disregard of any spiritual values whatever...."

This led to a complicated metaphysical digression that began badly and degenerated towards the end.

3. METAPHYSICAL THEOLOGICAL

All unwittingly, you see, the vicar had detonated a mine of newly digested discussion that had been floating ready in Gemini's mind.

"I'm sorry to cut in, Sir," said the young man eagerly.

"Ask me any question?

"You say material. You say spiritual. You seem to be assuming that there is a sort of primary two — sidedness in things. Most of us,

I admit, have been brought up on that assumption. Language is soaked with it. But a lot of us have come to believe that it is an almost fundamental error in human thought."

"But surely you attach some meaning to — when I say 'spiritual values'?"

"No, Sir. For me, for us, no. We know the sort of thing that attaches, that has attached, to that phrase. But for us, when we are talking of reality, that sort of association has got quite loose."

"But then. Are you so old-fashioned as to be materialistic?"

"Is that 'old-fashioned' quite fair? Anyhow it is easy to say *tu quoque* and leave it at that." And Gemini proceeded to argue, with all the confidence and ready fullness of a brilliant student fresh from his preparation, that the false fundamental dichotomy implied in the opposition of material and spiritual was being kept alive by the organised religions in despite of advancing human thought, that it encumbered that advance, and this was the chief cause of the stupefaction of civilisation in the present crisis.

"Fundamental dichotomy," repeated the vicar almost inaudibly. "Chirm—"

Doctor Kentlake, pursued Gemini, allowing no intervention, treated the universe as being of one nature throughout, would have nothing to do with that ancient primary opposition. You couldn't call him materialist; you couldn't call him spiritualist. "Monist" was a better word. Doctor Kentlake had merely given a philosophical form to what was the established practice of the scientific worker. The practical scientific worker thought in the same way even if he did not formulate it very clearly. He might be pluralist or he might be monist, consciously or implicitly, but he was never in practice dualist. Essentially he was a pragmatist. He threw terms over reality rather like a fly-fisher making a cast, Sir, and found out what they hooked for him. Matter, force, rhythm, electricity and so on were terms invented by the human mind in its struggle to apprehend the world, they were all in reality "partial, tentative terms." They were bait, so to speak, to catch the unknown. So were such words as imagination or beauty or belief.....

The vicar opened and shut his mouth.

"Where has Gemini got all this?" Stella asked herself. "He must

have been reviewing some book. He can't simply have read it up. He must have been writing it down. He's glib. That Oxford glibness of his! He's got it at his fingers' ends."

Intelligent people nowadays, Gemini went on remorselessly, intelligent people were ceasing to consider any of the terms they used as finalities. Formerly they did so, but now they were more penetrating. Meaning, they were discovering, was elusive, it was the final wisdom towards which the mind moved; it did not leap into existence with a word and a definition. They knew the terms they employed never did quite "get it." Our naive forefathers thought they "got it" completely and that "it" could be defined exactly and completely. You defined your term, you put it through the logical machines and there you were with your conclusion neatly extracted. Such word-worship was coming to an end. Semantics had changed all that. Semantics — or Significs if you preferred the older term. It was just as unreasonable to say the world was all matter, as it was to say it was all movement, or all electricity or all rhythm or all beauty or all imagination.

"Shakespeare! Imagination all compact!" interjected the vicar with an air of scoring an unexpected point. "We are such things as dreams are made on."

"And also, Sir, we are creatures who can eat potatoes, get drunk and suffer from rheumatic fever. We are such stuff as crowds and concentration camps are made on. We are such stuff as operating theatres deal with. All that and more. The universe won't simplify out to oblige us, Sir." p Gemini had warmed up steadily as his argument had unfolded. He spoke now with all the precocious maturity of the Ex — Union President. His was a compendium of lecturers' styles and debaters' exposition. A great dominating organisation like the Anglican or Roman Church had no right, he asserted, to carry on nowadays with "this old, this superseded and misleading bilateralism." It ought to speak the language of the new period. But Christianity had planted itself in the way of the modernisation of thinking, just as, by its Creationism, it still blocked the way to a clear biological vision of life. That was one of the chief reasons why we were all now at sixes and sevens and so desperately out of touch with reality — in the face of catastrophe. "To which our

generation seems likely to be pretty completely sacrificed, Sir. Far worse than 1914. You must forgive us if we get a little shrill about it."

"H'm," said Stella, manifestly approving, and she turned like a chairman to the vicar. She had not suspected Gemini of any of this metaphysical precision. He had it all so well packed and so ready to hand. Certainly he must have been summarising something or editing something very, very recently indeed. Queer quick mind he had! Better than hers! The vicar sat with his extended hands together, finger tips to finger tips. As Gemini had talked he had, to begin with, nodded his head gravely and encouragingly, listening as a doctor might listen to the symptoms of a patient. In that phase he had a faintly irritating air of having expected all that Gemini had to say. He had nodded less frequently as the spate had proceeded. "Fundamental dichotomy" had definitely ended the nodding phase, and a mood of apprehensive listening had followed, as who should say, What next? His pose was failing him. At "semantics" he had quailed visibly. Had he heard that strange word before, she asked herself? No. Evidently not. Now he took a deep breath almost like a sigh before he spoke.

"I admit," said he. "I grant you there has been much vigorous thinking about fundamentals in the — shall we say? scientific world in the last half century. Yes. I should be the last to quarrel with these modern ideas. Nevertheless-? He began to argue that perhaps it was unreasonable to treat I spirit and matter as things *diametrically* opposed. Not *diametrically*. He would meet them there. He stressed the word. He adopted a tone of reluctantly using an alien and subtly unsatisfactory terminology for the benefit of his hearers. "Let us agree upon that." Nevertheless there were *grades* of value, things one would call *higher* and things one would call *lower*. Were not those higher things, the things of the spirit? Possibly one might find a more exact and more technical word nowadays, some phrase from Pavlov or Freud or one of those people might please Gemini better, but "spirit" was still the old, customary, established word. It was still the "*normal*" language. "If you will forgive my reverting to normal language," he said with a tentative smile.

Gemini answered this warily, rather more in debating society fashion and rather less professionally. The grades of value, he said,

did not run on those lines the vicar was suggesting. It was not a question of moral quality; it was a question of scope. Yes, scope. Stella perceived his main attack was over. He went on talking, but now he was getting away from the substance of that book review and his exposition was less lucid and assured. The vicar seemed to be rallying his evasiveness. Stella noted the change of phase with the impartiality of a boxing referee. The fine precise sparring was over. The disputants were getting winded.

They were soon embarked upon a manifestly futile wrangle; they were playing now for points in the air; their terms and phrases were failing to mesh; were swinging about without any attempt to mesh; it was becoming an argey-bargey. Stella listened with growing impatience. They were saying nothing now of any significance whatever to her. She broke in at last with "But what has this to do with my uncle having no spirituality?"

"We have rather got away from that," said the vicar. "I may, I admit, have formed false conclusions about your uncle's line of thought. After all, you know, in this busy parochial life of mine one is apt to get one's ideas about things from reports and reviews and secondary sources. One has to carry on. I would be the last person to take a rigid line about him. Without further enquiries.... But fundamentally you know.... Fundamentally...."

He looked at his wrist watch. "I must go very soon. Always I seem to be going on and going away. But before I go I'd like to say something that has been coming up in my mind as we have been arguing here."

"But first of all, Sir," Gemini pressed, "I must say a word or so more. I do want to put our case to you, Sir. I presume that you stand by the literal statement of your creeds and the story in the New Testament, even if you find some of the Old rather coloured by — well — primitive oriental symbolism. What we want you to know is that it isn't simply a question of metaphysics with us; it's a question of fact. We do not believe in your creeds. We find your Trinity-whatever it meant to the Greeks and Egyptians — entirely inconceivable. We do not believe in your simple Bible story. From the paternity by the Holy Ghost right up to Pentecost, Sir, it all seems to us mythology, absurdity, with no relation to any living human

reality at all. That's what we tell you. And there's a whole lot like us. What have you to say to that?"

"What I have to say will seem a paradox to you," said the vicar. "When I was a child I believed in all those things as simply as one believes at that age in brightly painted pictures on a wall. Since then, I have not been impervious to modern doubt. No. Some of those pictures, I admit, have faded out, others have become transparent. I have had struggles. I have had to wrestle with many perplexities. But always afterwards I have won my way back to a profounder, more subtle and satisfying interpretation. Always. Always, I assure you. The deeper I go, the more certainly I believe. But as concerns many of the factual elements in the story, as crude facts, the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes for example, or the swallowing and disgorging of Jonah, I refuse to argue that it happened precisely so, or indeed that it actually happened at all.... No."

"And you cannot impart these deeper meanings?"

"No. Frankly no. Not in an atmosphere of factual scepticism. Not without conviction of sin and prayer. That is why the Church never really comes into the Debating Society, stark and unreservedly, as your scientific theories do. Let us recognise that. In the last resort the Church relies upon something that science excludes, if only on the score that repetition and verification are impossible; it relies upon religious experience. Naturally, necessarily, religion rests on religious experience and on nothing else. If you do not know what that is from having undergone it, you do not know what it is."

"But you can describe — ?"

"One can describe. Yes. Yes, I think one can describe. First then there is a deepening and at last insupportable sense of Sin. Self-disgust."

"But we do not believe in sin. Are you sure you do not mean just a fear of life?"

"A fear of God and his righteousness?

"There again we are not equipped with the necessary belief. I can understand a fear that life may be too much for one. But that is not self-disgust."

"Well, grant me that. And then comes an intense hunger for reconciliation to God — ."

“That is how you phrase it.”

“And then conversion. Suddenly. An unutterable sense of concentration, oneness and completion. The peace of God that passeth understanding.”

“Or a return of courage. Don’t you think, Sir, one may go through all these phases without the slightest reference to theology? You feel reconciled to something, but how does that establish a belief on the Virgin Birth, or the raising of Lazarus, or the story that God created the world in, as Huxley had to explain to Mr Gladstone, a non-evolutionary sequence? And what will you say if an out and out atheist tells you he has had much the same experience, the depression, the self-disgust, the sense of an urgent need for a change, and then release suddenly to a feeling of Rightness and Oneness, and that he attaches no religious significance whatever to it all? This sequence of moods, Sir, has, I assure you, no special relation to Christianity. It’s in all the text-books. William James gives instances from a dozen creeds. Moslem mystics have it. Rabindranath Tagore related the whole experience as the achievement of a sense of Oneness with the universe. It’s a way the mind has of recoiling and changing phase. William James tells of an avaricious man who felt a conviction of sin; it was the sin of extravagance in his case; and found concentration and salvation in becoming a strict miser.”

The vicar made no answer for a moment. Then he answered with an evasion of the question so complex as to take away Gemini’s controversial wind altogether. “Faith may realise itself under many Formulae. Nevertheless it remains Faith.”

What could one say to that?

The vicar ceased to lounge and sat up. He simply abandoned the argument. “I must go,” he said. “What I had in mind to say was this, a point very urgent nowadays. Suppose — . Suppose the Christian religion is based on a fundamental error in what you call this assumption of the dualism of matter and spirit. Suppose it is. For the purposes of argument, let us suppose even that. None the less, that assumption has interwoven with human thought and language for thousands of years. Suppose its myth, as you would term it, The Fall and the Redemption, has no factual reality. Suppose what we call the beliefs, the prayers and ceremonies on which the Christian life is

based, incorporate a whole tangle of inaccuracies and errors. Suppose they do. Nevertheless that system of living, morality, civilisation, the most successful civilisation the world has ever known, rests upon those same foundations. What happens if you pull them away? They are the sustaining skeleton of the present social order. M an's skeleton, I am told, is mechanically imperfect; we could have bigger heads and better brains if what they call the pelvis was larger or the skull sutures didn't close so early. But that doesn't justify an attempt to remove the skeleton and put in steel rods. I tell you that — when everything has been said and done — still from the practical point of view only, and disregarding everything else, the Christian religion is well worth the effort of believing."

"It is an effort," said Gemini.

"Certainly," said the vicar. "There is nothing good in this life that you do not have to hold on to with both hands."

"It is an effort for you, Sir? If you lost your grip — ?"

"I do not intend to lose my grip."

He stood up.

"Now I think we see you better," said Gemini. "I wish we could go on with this talk. I am sorry you have to go. It was very kind and friendly of you to call, and I am afraid we have rather put you through it."

"Good for me too," said the vicar civilly. "And let me repeat my question why, until you can see your way to another social system *better* than this we live in, you should abandon the worn old serviceable working creed?"

"But we question that, Sir. We must make it clear we disagree with that. We two — in all honesty — brought up in a Christian country —— do sincerely believe that Christianity, in itself, and apart from other humanising influences, has been an evil rather than a good thing in human life, and that for the past century or more in particular it has been a barrier to human enlightenment. We want you to understand clearly that we have no sort of religious belief at all, in Providence, in a Supreme Being or in anything of the sort. We two are Atheists right out, and to us you, with your religion, seem like a man who has been squeezed into antiquated and quite useless armour that does nothing but impede the freedom of his life and mind."

“You are franker and franker,” said the vicar. “Indeed you are almost needlessly frank. But you are young yet. I thank God for that ancient armour, into which I have been as you say squeezed, daily, hourly. I thank Him. Why should I complain of a loss of freedom? Where should I be without it?”

He glanced again at his watch.

For a moment the three stood still.

“We haven’t been outrageous with our arguments, I hope,” said Gemini. “You see life presses on us. Things are very urgent with all us young people just now. The shadow of war—”

“At any moment,” said the vicar, as though he forced himself to say it, “you may have a realisation of Sin.”

“We have about as much conviction of sin,” said Gemini, with a faint distaste for the Balch touch in the phrasing that had come into his mind, “as lambs in a slaughter house. We may feel frightened presently.... That is different....”

“I *must* go,” said the vicar for the third time. He liked them, they liked him and he knew they both liked him. But disapproval and entire detachment was his duty. He bowed gravely to Stella as though she was the accomplished hostess she had been impersonating. Then he went to the door and stood for a moment on the threshold.

“Anyway we’ve not humbugged you in any way,” said Gemini.

“Not at all. I shall have much to think about. There is more in all this than mere argument”

“You won’t invoke the prayers of the congregation, Sir?”

Stella dashed a silent reproof at Gemini.

“I may pray for you myself,” said the vicar. “I don’t know. You are so wrong about all this — and so well-meaning? But Gemini was still out of hand. Stella’s sudden decision to fling deception to the winds, had infected him. He pressed his defeated antagonist. “I’m afraid, too, that we ought to tell you that we’re living in what you would call Sin, Sir. We don’t want to deceive you in any way.”

The vicar winced.

“I can’t countenance that. I’m so sorry. I am sorry to hear you say it. No good was ever done by open lawlessness, even when the law was wrong. No. And why tell me? Why have you told me? I wonder.

Defiance only makes things more awkward."

He turned at the gate and looked back at them for a whole second perhaps. Again there was an air of hesitation about him. "No," he said, almost as much to himself as to them. He passed out of sight behind the hedge.

"Patriotism is a vice," said Gemini, still glowing with self-approval from his dialectical display and his ultimate lapse into sincerity. "But in this mild sunshine, this green privacy, this picturesque, unobtrusive go-as-you-please — . To the sound of church bells. Dear, mellow, humbugging, tolerant old England!... Tolerant.... And now how about breaking it to Mrs Greedle?"

"That," said Stella, "would not be honesty. It would be indelicacy. The essence of indecency is insisting upon things that everybody knows are there...."

"Stella," said Gemini, still pleased with himself and the encounter; "there was something infectious about that parson. That was absolutely in his line of thought."

CHAPTER III. THE WORLD'S HARSH VOICE IS HEARD OFF

1. ADVENT OF UNCLE HOPKINSHIRE

THEY were aware of Mrs Greedle's voice behind them.

"The postman came," she said, "but I thought I wouldn't disturb that nice talk you was 'aving. E's a nice gentleman the vicar. 'Armless and kind. Never forgets to ask after anyone when he sees them. He'll ask three times a day sometimes. Nice *'abits* he has...."

Gemini took the letter and examined it. It bore the Bristol postmark. It was addressed in an unfamiliar handwriting to James Twain. Originally it had been addressed to James Twain, Esquire. Then apparently the sender had thought better of the "Esquire" and had scratched it out carefully with a penknife. That was odd. He opened the letter and read it.

"Golly!" he said, and re-read.

He looked at Stella's interrogative face.

"They know," he said compactly.

"How?"

He hesitated and then handed her the letter silently.

She read in a largish sprawling handwriting with various erasures and corrections: "You dirty young Blackguard, it is only now that I have learnt where you are and what you have been up to. Her mother is broken-hearted. What that woman Clarkson can be about, making her cottage into a common"— "convenience" erased, "brothel" substituted, and this again had been changed to "disorderly house." "She ought to be prosecuted. Or does she know? I don't know if you realise the seriousness of your offence. You must know that Stella, poor child, and I have nothing but pity for her, is a minor, under age. Maybe it may not be too late to save her. If not, so much the worse for you. At any rate she must come home at once. What you have done is an indictable offence. I shall come by the first train to-morrow. At considerable inconvenience to myself. I give you fair warning to clear out before I come to fetch her home. I may not be able to keep my hands off you. That's all. Clear out of my way

before I get hold of you. Best for all parties. I may see red. Horsewhipping is too good for you, you filthy young hound."

Indecision over signature and what sort of "Yours" it ought to be, and then a bare "Hubert Polydore Hopkinshire."

She read and handed it back to Gemini.

"That," she said, "is Uncle."

Pause for reflection.

"Sounds choleric."

"He was a Black and Tan and he's never got over it."

"I don't like it."

"No," she agreed.

"*This*," he said, and failed to complete his sentence. He tried again. "It's unreasonable to feel as I do; but this seems suddenly to alter everything. It's a point of view we've been forgetting. It's — as though something had happened to the sky-gone bleak and beastly."

"Yes."

"All that we find lovely, the loveliest thing in the world, he finds disgraceful, disgusting, dirty, criminal."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"It's like some gas being released unexpectedly, a stink-bomb, in Paradise."

Stella was still speechless.

"It's the ugly side of life coming up. Or the real side? But how did he know? How did he come to know?... And your mother?"

"She must have known first and written to him. Or told him. Someone must have told her."

"Where is she?"

"She was staying with the Batiscombes."

"Batiscombes mean nothing to me."

"Cousins at Weston-super-Mare. They keep a sort of hydro and this Uncle Hubert has a riding-school ten or twelve miles away. Somewhere near Clifton."

"A hydropath?"

"Of sorts."

"But anyone may have gone there and let things out. If Mary talked. But she always talks...."

Gemini reconsidered the letter. "He reads perfectly honest. He

means every word of this."

"He is perfectly honest. It wouldn't hurt us a bit — if he wasn't perfectly honest. It's just that he does mean it. *That's* how he and half the world are going to see all this. That's what we're up against, Gemini."

"Why doesn't he go and hoot at *Romeo and Juliet*?"

"He would, but he's never thought of doing it. No! Come to think of it, they were married, Gemini. Irregularly, but *they* were married.... And besides the Bible and Shakespeare are above suspicion."

"Curious thing. We'd like the whole world to approve of us, and it's a smack in the face for us when we get it straight that quite a lot of people when they know of our week here won't. They won't. Approve of us! They won't stand us."

"Evidently *he* won't," said Stella.

"That parson did. That parson had an effect of standing us.

"Yes. I think he did. There was something about him, Gemini.... We attracted him and we frightened him. Of—"

course he knew all about it before he called. He was attracted, he was excited by us and then — we were too frank for him. And he didn't expect we'd cross-examine him as you did. And your philosophy and theology carried him off his feet. How you talked! How was he to know he was running up against the most industrious mugger on the *New Spectator* staff? That parson put us above ourselves. He was really one of us. Of course you got no *admissions* out of him. You couldn't expect it. He has made up his mind and he keeps it made up. He has to. What would become of him if he didn't? Where could he go? What could he do? I remember Uncle Robert saying, 'What refuge is there in the world for a common priest or a common parson when his faith falls away from him? None. The less he believes it the more firmly he must cling to it.' It's like that bathing-gown of mine that has lost all its buttons. He daren't leave go for a moment. And the Churches can't leave go. But Uncle Hopkinshire is different. He's the hairy cave-man, all out and himself. No softness about him. He's the natural man. Creeds may come and creeds may go, but Uncle Hopkinshire goes on for ever."

"We've taken on a lot, Stella, in coming here."

“We’ve taken on more than we realised.”

“We have.”

“Sorry?”

“No. But what are we going to do?” ,

“Nothing until he comes. Sufficient unto the day is the l evil thereof. We still have hours and hours, Gemini, in this { dear cottage, in this dear garden, before the storm breaks.”

“Yes. But — . It’s well, as the posters say, to be prepared. I shall stay for him here.”

“Obviously.”

“And what is the quality of this — this raucous individual?

What does he amount to? You’ve seen him? You know him? So high is he? Or so high? What do these threats of violence amount to?”

“I’ve only seen him with what he’d call his womankind. Mother, in fact. He’s distinctly anti-feminist. Married his cook and she died. Put him to a lot of trouble — and it seems to have annoyed him. Hard to describe him. Blue-black moustache. Dyed we think. Stocky. Bandyish. Hair on his hands. Still I suppose, Gemini, you can take care of yourself?”

“I’m not so bad if it comes to a scrap. Footwork poor, but I know how to punch if it comes to that. I’ve got some reach and I’ve got some weight. If I hit ’em fair, they are apt to go down. That’s all right. But is he likely to try anything that may lead to a scuffle? Is he likely to produce something in the nature of a horsewhip? If so, I suppose I shall have to take it away from him. Or try to. I don’t see how we can avoid that.”

Stella reconsidered the letter. “He probably thinks that you are what he would call a long-haired Bolshie, rather on the weedy side. And that you’ll make off at this whiff of virility. I think he hopes that.”

“Hopes what?”

“That you’ll clear out.”

“And if I don’t go?”

“Then he’ll rant and shout. But if you keep your eye on him, nothing will happen. That’s my impression of him. Keep your eye on him and speak to him with a quiet voice. There won’t be any

horsewhip — where does one buy a horsewhip nowadays? But he'll probably turn up in breeches-he loves riding-breeches when he's about at home — and if so he'll bring a riding-crop to flourish under your nose."

"Very well. And what shall we argue about?"

"Why anticipate?"

"I want to know. That is exactly what I want to know."

"Why spoil the time that is left to us?"

"Yes. When you say that, I want to know more than ever."

She reflected, arms akimbo. "Let's walk up the lane a bit. I can feel Mother Greedle at the kitchen window listening with all her eyes."

They walked a hundred feet in silence.

"Uncle Hopkinshire," said Stella, "is coming to take me back to my mother, who has probably been weeping.... Never mind about my mother.... What else can I do? I shall have to go back."

"Stella, I want to keep you."

"We said ten happy days."

"But now it's different."

"We jumped into this, Gemini. Don't let's put it too high and mighty. If we hadn't had the chance of Mary Clarkson's cottage and that — that — well how you kissed me after the Winchcombe's dance, and your saying 'Oh Hell! this is just half and half.'"

"And I could get a fortnight off and you managed to vanish.... You must have told your mother some fibs, Stella! I never thought of that."

"One fib, Gemini. Just one little one. Hardly a fib. I'm sorry. You see.... I pronounced your name Jemima. As the parson would put it, that makes it a misunderstanding rather than a deception...."

"Somebody who knows about Mary Clarkson," he considered. "Or Mary herself talking to astonish and appall. As she does at times. Or someone who saw a chance of making mischief.... And so, what are we going to do?"

"As I say. What else is there to do? We've had a lovely time. And now it is almost over."

"I can't drop it like that. I can't give you up. I feel as if I'd hardly tasted you. Damnation, Stella, let's get married?"

“We agreed we didn’t believe in marriage. At least we agreed before we came. And also who’s going to let us? My mother can say No. She — for some reason — has a horror of sex. Your — father.... ?”

“He thinks I ought to wait until I’m five and thirty and then marry money. But with us — now?”

“I still don’t believe in marriage. I don’t know. I don’t. Even if I did, I’m a minor. Not for a whole year and a half can we do that. They’ll say wait, wait, and wait. Nineteen long months! We’ve been into all that. Wait while the world has fallen to pieces altogether. They can spoil it for us, all that time, and from what I know of Uncle Hubert and Mother, I they’ll make things as nasty as they can.”

“Let’s bolt to France.”

“Chucking your work, stopping mine? What could one do in France?”

“Aren’t we lovers?”

She made no answer.

“Do you really *want* this separation, this surrender?”

“Gemini, darling, I’m in love with you so much, and I’m in love with love so much, that I can hardly reason about it. I’ve just had one little week of love. I’m being calm and collected because otherwise I might scream and throw myself about. I did count on ten days. Three days less! It’s a damned shame. All the same I know that we have to part to-morrow. I won’t face it now. I won’t think about it until to-morrow comes. Gemini, we still have two — thirds of a day and night.”

“Yes,” he said, “but—”

Pause for consideration.

2. RALLY OR STAMPEDE

“The whole universe aches,” said Gemini.

“Oh! It aches right enough,” said Stella. “Forget about it now. There is just this time left to us, to talk of everything that matters. And kiss Good-bye.”

“After all. This is just one single scribbled letter, and it has

shattered us. All our self-satisfaction?

"Has it shattered us? I don't think so, Gemini. We're kids yet. Rather helpless. We've jumped into what suddenly looks like an impossible situation. We are kids, you know. All the same, the things we have thought and said this last week; they hold good, Gemini?"

"Sound enough. But this brutality; this bawling vulgarity...."

"But that is what we have known we were up against all along. We-we stand for life. Haven't we said that over and over again? We stand for the free, abundant, life. We are against compulsion, against uncriticised direction, against war. We've been talking all the time about war and how we had to put an end to it. Our sort of people. We — we were going to carve a new world out of this clumsy landslide of an old world. A whole new world, Gemini! That was to be our ruling idea, our religion."

"All that holds," said Gemini. "That is our religion."

"And people were to live without all the nervous stresses of sexual compulsion. That was a part of it. We said that. A wholesome free life. Well, we mean to do that to the best of our ability. You've forgotten that side of it. For our own sakes, we said. For the sakes of everybody. To make a world without ugly repressions, hates, morbidities.... We've made our protest. Marriage is compulsion, obligation. It turns a happy companionship into a semi-legal obligation? Gemini did not seem so sure of that. She considered his face for a moment.

"How did we put it the other day, Gemini? Organised economic freedom throughout the world, education for everyone as much as they can stand, universally accessible knowledge, freedom of movement about the world, the maximum of private ownership in one's own body and mind.... I'm only quoting you, Gemini. When we said these things we were exalted. We felt fine and large about them. It was like ordering the world about. Now comes the chill, the reminder. We are living in a world where the craving for power and compulsion seems to be the only effective human passion. The only serious people in the world are the brutes and bullies. And the abject. Everyone is barking commands or saluting or doing both. We suddenly realise we are small. Ever so small. But does that matter? Haven't we got to resist all the same? Begin with ourselves. The

world is ourselves — multiplied by a thousand million. Why should we cower? Why tell lies?"

"But if telling the truth means separation?"

"After all, we should still be alive, Gemini. We shall still be in the same world."

"That's no great consolation. I like *talking* to you. In your physical presence everything is different. And I can't write long letters. I can't. I write all day as it is. I want you."

"I'll read all you print, trust me. I'll keep you posted where I am. Nothing they can do to us can keep us from communicating. Love letters? I wonder how it feels to write a love letter. I've never sent you anything but notes.... By 1941 there will be nothing to keep us apart if we still want to live together. Married or not...."

"What if we have a chance of meeting before the time is up?"

"Need you ask, Gemini?"

"That's not so bad. We might manage...."

"We'll see about that. I may be rusticated in Somerset. I don't know. There's Uncle Robert.... But the chances are I shall live the life of a penitent with my mother at Barnes. All sorts of things may happen. They've not beaten us yet. You I will go on living in London...."

"I wonder," said Gemini.

"Eh?"

"I wonder if this business will get round to my father. After all, he's something of the Roman father. Well, don't let's complicate the problem with him now."

It was only too manifest in his candid face that he was complicating the problem with fresh and none too agreeable considerations. She remembered that Gemini still lived mainly on an allowance from his father. His literary earnings and so forth were casual and made up no great income. Yes, and she remembered that there had been threats already to force Gemini into a profession.

"Shall we turn now?" said Stella. "The next bend and we'll be seeing the village green?"

"I don't want to run against Balch. We don't want Balch to know about all this. We don't want any of these last hours Balchified. But I doubt if we'll see him again. He got a bellyful at lunch and the

parson frightened him. He must have felt rather a fool, bolting as he did. He'll be in the pub playing darts at the top of his voice and being ever so witty and playful and appreciative and proletarian about it. Darts! All his sort play darts. And in a year or so they'll all be ashamed of dart-cant. So stale it will be. They'll have some new play toy. Still there's no need to run risks."

"Let's go up through the pinewoods and sit there until twilight and come down to the cottage at the back."

They did that....

Gemini laughed suddenly. "We're so deflated!" he said.

"Deflated?" said Stella, sitting astride a felled tree trunk and considering the word. "Strange things you say at times, Gemini! Deflated! I feel as if I was just beginning to live. I don't know what this week has done for you, Gemini, but it's made me a woman. There's no going back on that. I've discovered myself. I've discovered my body and I am in love with it. I stood before the bathroom mirror yesterday loving every bit of it, loving all its loveliness. And talking to you and being in love with you, has made me a soul. I'm twice the thing I was. Yes, I know, that old dualism is wrong, but how else can I say it? Body and soul I'm lit up, and you've done it very nicely, thank you, Gemini, and here we are! We've decided we're going to carve a new world out of the old; haven't we? You weren't just talking, were you, Gemini, when you, when you impregnated me with that? That Unrevealed World! Think it out and carve it out. That's what we're going to do, if the whole of the rest of the world is against us. It can come down on us, hurt us, weary us, trick us, mock us, frustrate us, defeat us, kill us. Gemini, that's all detail. That's in the chapter of accidents. But it isn't going to make us give up our — our great conception...."

Gemini regarded her with admiration and desire. He was sitting side-saddle, so to speak, on the tree, with his arms folded.

"And you don't think it's possible for two young people to take themselves too seriously?" he said.

"No. Not in their private thoughts. Not when they have to talk as we are talking. Talking like this to anyone else would be preposterous, but to ourselves.... The whole world, you said, is our inheritance so far as we can carve it out. Was that serious or was it

not? Did we say that or did we not? What has come over you, Gemini? Either we are the heirs and gods and Kalikovs of this rebellious lump of a world or we've just been Balching about it, and it would become us better to be saying Heil Hitler! or kneeling in a confessional for instruction. Crawling somehow. To hell with all that! We *can't* take ourselves too seriously. We *can't* have too much backbone. No."

"Gods, but I love you, Stella."

She stared at him and for the first time in their relationship it seemed to him that she was staring through him at something else. When she spoke again, she spoke tentatively.

"Maybe they'll break us in, but I mean us to be as serious a proposition to ourselves as Adam and Eve. We are our Adam and Eve. Gemini, this life is all the life we're ever going to have. The world is all before us. Ours. The death of us or the life of us. That may be being a prig. What are the alternatives to being a prig? A self-pitying, shirking slouch, a cocktail boozer, a humourist, a games lout, a charming borrower, a Catholic convert with a taste for ceremony and an inclination to sodomy, a tough guy, an all-round stinker? Look at the vermin who aren't prigs! Look at them, Gemini! Look at Mary Clarkson's midnight crowd! You can put names to all I have been saying. Tick 'em off on your lingers. I've had my eyes open. Mary's other name is Circe. Circe of Bloomsbury. She brings out the worst in them."

"Don't be ungrateful, Stella. She lent us the cottage"

"She lent *you* the cottage?

"She lent the cottage."

"I don't see that that alters the quality of her friends. They're — what is the word — escapists. Drunkards and whimsies. I'm talking fact. Give me a prig all the time. Absurd? Take myself too seriously? Better be absurd than disgusting. If there were only we two of our sort in the world, I'd still be all for this new-world business. Our world or theirs. But we're not such exceptions as all that. There must be thousands thinking like us — or just not daring to think like us. There may be hundreds of thousands. So much the better. But that doesn't excuse us from behaving as though it all rested on us alone. Saying 'Oh, someone else will do that. Have a drink, old boy! Don't

worry!' Oh, Gemini, this *damned* modesty! this *damned* sense of humour! this *damned* common sense! We've just got this one life to live, Gemini, and I mean to live it — up to the hilt-without drugs. I mean to live in the middle of things, not get into a corner and snigger life away. I — . I — !"

She had stopped looking through him and she was looking straight at him, as though she had suddenly recalled his existence.

"I can't do without you, Gemini. Everything I say is an echo of something you have said. You can reason out these things and say them. And then I believe them. But do *you* believe them?"

"When I have you, Stella. When I've got you."

She repeated, "When you've got me...."

She looked about her. She clenched her fists and held them up on either side of her glowing face. "This being alive," she cried. "It's Hell! It's Heaven! I can't live it enough."

She stood up, one knee on the fallen tree.

"The loveliness of it. This soft afternoon sunshine. This faint smell of resin. Soft moss and turf. It's ours. I swear — . Swear with me, Gemini. I swear to extract this lovely world of might-be out of the hands of the beasts and the bullies and the blockheads...." She lifted up her pretty bare arm. "No other way of living."

He stood up too and echoed her absurdly grave attitude and her absurd words. He swore to extract this lovely world of might-be out of the hands of the beasts and bullies and blockheads. "No other way of living, Stella," he concluded. Never, he thought, had he seen anyone so earnestly alive. She changed. The declaration had been made. She lowered her arm slowly, stood with her hands extended at her sides like a surrender, smiling faintly at him. "Well?" she said. He trembled for a moment and then caught her in his arms. Sunshine, stillness, warmth, the mossy ground between the felled trees and the faint smell of resin. It was all of a piece and yet — was it not also — the thought was like being stung by a gnat and yet it came to him there-fantastically inconsecutive?

3. EVENSONG

“What a day!” said Gemini, first in bed.

“We’ve done some thinking anyhow,” said Stella, and came and sat on the counterpane. She was in her pyjamas and was still combing her shock of hair unnecessarily after it had long since been fully and properly combed. At last she stopped and shook the comb at him.

“Look here, Gemini,” she said, “this stuff of yours about everybody having ultimately — ultimately? or fundamentally is it? — ultimately the same imagination if they think hard enough! It sticks in my mind. I’ve been thinking about it all day. It doesn’t wash. Things aren’t as simple as that. See?”

“Nothing is perfectly simple,” said Gemini.

“Yes, but — . I must talk for a bit, my dear. I’ve got such a lot to say to you. Heaven knows when we two will talk again. If I knew how Joshua did it I’d hold this day for an eternity or so. It slips away so fast. But I want this clear. Ever since we talked in the lane and went through that Balch deluge I have been turning over that notion of yours of people being fundamentally alike. You say that if everyone had full knowledge and thought everything out and all that, everyone would come out at last to the same idea of the kind of civilised world there ought to be. That came into your head suddenly, as things do come into that queer head of yours; and then you heard what Balch made of it. That shook you up a little. But still you stuck to it. One common universal imagination! That makes things out to be pretty easy. All one needs to do is to tell the world. Just a war of ideas for a generation or so and the thing is done. Just a little teaching and persuasion. Then they’ll know for certain what they always thought. Dearest, it isn’t nearly so simple as that. That’s all wrong. That common human imagination of yours-why! it’s the lie behind all these religions that have failed us. Human brains are just as various as human legs or skins and — anything. More so perhaps. That idea of yours doesn’t *begin* to be true.”

Gemini regarded her thoughtfully, and with that faint sulkiness he sometimes betrayed when she contradicted him too flatly. “Anyhow human imaginations have to be got upon a common basis. There has to be a sort of propaganda education of all the world to this one world idea. Even if they aren’t all honestly *for* it; they can be got to

know about it clearly. They have to be got to behave like brothers. Or anyhow feel the obligation of brotherhood. And then at last they may begin to feel like brothers."

"Yes. But first, a great lot of people won't want this world civilisation in any form, at any price. They just won't. Educate them as much as you like; they won't. It doesn't matter how rotten the world is; they'll be against a better one. They've impulses to triumph, revenge, hate and cruel self-assertion that they know a better world would never allow. And a still greater multitude will bar every effort you make to spread this great idea of yours, out of fear. It seems so clear, sweet and reasonable to us, but the very first movement towards it will seem to them weird, horrible, wicked. You may begin presently to see the shape in the alabaster, but will they? Will they even try to see it? Will they ever believe there is a shape in the alabaster? It's no use our thinking the whole world is just waiting to go our way — just a little vehement Balchification and off we go on the new road. Don't you believe anything of the sort, Gemini. Our millennium idea will always be unpopular, damned unpopular.

"There's Uncle Hubert-there're more Uncle Huberts than us in the world — and you'll no more get him to stop being patriotic, virile about women and all that, than you'll teach a dog to stop yapping. You *can't* teach him different. He won't learn. He isn't made that way. Establish our world state if you like. He'll contrive somehow to make it a kennel. Whips and dog-fights. You try him to-morrow. I'll be watching you, Gemini.

"And consider that parson again. Very sympathetic and all that, but do you think he'll let our sort get hold of the schools, or alter the code of orthodox morality? Wherever the world goes and whatever is done, he will insist on having restraints and pretences. He will want to sit tight wherever he is. He is an honest man really, though you think him an old humbug. No, Gemini, why make a face at him? He's as honest as you are. The other way round. He's so honest, you see, that he dare not risk letting his impulses escape from his principles, and you, you are so honest that you dare not let any principles suppress your impulses. Two honest men together. But he's a more ordinary man than you are, Gemini. He's more the stuff that makes stable nations, creeds and businesses. He's what they call

trustworthy. He'll think as agreed — even if he doesn't really think so. He's the perfect man of character.... And you, I realise, aren't."

She had come to the end of her matter, but she felt she had not arrived at any conclusion. "Like that," she said, and combed a stroke. Gemini had been considering her speech and doing his honest best to ignore the fact that when Stella was most lucid and in earnest she was apt to be most lovely and desirable.

"I think I see what you are driving at," he said, holding his mind resolutely to the question under discussion. "You are right and I am right. You are wrong and I am wrong. Let me try and de-Balch this business. First I admit that the majority of the sort of human beings we deal with to-day are either so primitive — like your Uncle Hubert — that they will always behave like dogs or bulls or wolves— 'seeing red,' *wanting* to see red — or so practical-minded and timid and unbelieving that they will always be obstructively conservative of the thing that is. Man, generally, is going to remain at those levels for quite a time yet. The real job in human affairs will have to be done by a minority of people who, like you, will only consent to think of existence as its heirs and its owners—"

"And you, Gemini?"

"*We*. Yes — don't draw me away from my argument.... Heirs and owners. *But* — it does not follow that dogs cannot be turned into sheep dogs. All dogs don't hunt in packs and fly at strangers. Or that the born conformist will not steady a reconstructed progressive society and hold it together. You can make him face forward, or mark for the company to wheel, even though he himself doesn't budge."

She considered that. "So far as that isn't to be twisted so as to exonerate every intelligent human being from complete, separate responsibility.... And though that's all very well when we have got this propaganda education of the new world, over; until we, our sort, get that done, for a generation or a hundred generations, none of these others are coming half-way to meet us or anything of that sort.... You see what I want to say. That's what I want to be clear about. The whole thing is still up to us. It's up to you and me. just as though we were alone in the presence of God."

"In the absence of God," said Gemini.

“Which leaves things even more completely to us.”

Pause.

“Well,” said Gemini, “and since we are trying to have everything out while there is still time for it, I want a few words — funny to say them now here as we are — about sex. I’ve had them on my mind and I’ve been keeping them under. I am head over heels in love with you, I have been making love to you for a week, I am going to make love to you again just as soon as you stop pretending to comb your hair, and all the time I have been thinking things behind your back, so to speak, and you — you have been doing the same to me. You’d hardly guess when it came into my head to-day. Something puzzling us both. Me anyhow. Something very puzzling. This time we’ve had here; it’s the crowning thing in life for us, so bright, so intense and — . What’s it got to do with *anything*, Stella? What’s it got to do with the rest of life?”

She stopped combing, grave and attentive.

“You say things, Gemini.... You say things that one seems to have been on the verge of thinking all one’s life. It’s your way of saying them. But this time again; aren’t you wrong? I think you are wrong. Of course sex has *everything* to do with the rest of life. Yet I’ve had that thought that it hasn’t, creeping into my mind. But I’ve sent it packing.... But *why* did I send it packing? I ought to have an answer. What, after all, *has* this love-making got to do with the rest of life? What’s in your head, Gemini?”

“The excuse we lovers make is that it animates everything. Is that true? We two would make love anyhow, whether it animated things or not. Even if it took the life out of us. You daren’t deny it. That’s the point. Listen, Stella; while you squat there pretending to comb, I shall lie here and improve your mind. Your mind or my own.

“Before I came down here I was reading a book, more or less, off and on, for review. It’s at home. That’s what put this idea into my head. What is it called? *The Expansion of Sex*. The idea of it is this; that man is an animal with a tremendously developed cerebrum, memory, mental flexibility and all that. It has made him in his savage and destructive way lord of the earth. So far good. The big brain wins, but side by side with that, or even perhaps connected with it inseparably, there has been a monstrous, useless, troublesome

exaggeration and elaboration of man's sexual interest and urgency. So he says. The sex in human mentality, he says, is a superfluous overgrowth — like those vast horns a deer has to produce every year. No other creature is so sexual as man, unless it is some of the monkeys. The brain expanded in response to practical needs, produced energy, imagination, fantasy, and then sex stole it. To a large extent. So far as the continuation of the race goes, all that is necessary is at most a month or so of sex consciousness in the year. For the rest of the time complete indifference to any sex differences, sexual indulgence, beauty, would be a clear advantage for survival. No! — hold on for a moment, I am quoting this man. That is the way with most animals. They have a rutting season and then it's all over. For the rest of the time we should do our work, make our machines, subdue the earth to our needs, in sexless tranquillity."

"Only it isn't like that."

"Only it isn't like that. And this man — I'll remember his name in a moment — he's an American naturalist-quite well known — he goes on to argue that you could write a sort of human history entirely as the story of the Sex Problem through the ages. It has always been getting in the way, that was how he put it, getting in the way, and three quarters of religion and custom are methods of getting it out of the way. And so far the problem has never been solved. Sometimes the trend is all to hold it in, hold it back, suppress. 'Oh no, we never think of it!' That was the way of the Victorian age. And it failed. It developed repressions and morbid states. It festered in the sub-conscious. The generations before the war cleared up all that. The war finished the release. They abandoned all restriction on speech, they took off their clothes, they took off their morals, they let sex rip. But — I'm quoting my authority — when you let sex go, it proliferates. It asks for more. Indulgence is no remedy. It becomes sensuality. That's his case. Sex grows by what it feeds on. Sex — not love. It ousts love. It begins mixed up with love — and then ousts it. And then sensuality ousts sex and you get exaggerations and perversions. It takes possession of more and more of your life. It becomes an overpowering obsession. You are urged to do more and more sexual things. You talk about it. Boast about it. It ekes itself out with drugs and drink. It ekes itself out with melodrama. It insists on

extravaganza. Mysticism. Somewhere in between these two extremes there's got to be adjustment, that is to say morals, a code of permissible and forbidden things. And the rest of this chap's book is a survey of morals, a sort of Variety of Moral Experiences?

"And what are his conclusions?"

"He comes to no definite conclusions. It is a scientific treatise."

"I thought so."

"Of course he points out the social and biological consequences of various codes. His line is, take them or leave them."

"I don't believe very much in your great American naturalist," said Stella. "No. His attitude, Gemini, is a common male attitude. The attitude of a middle-aged bachelor who goes round the corner to a brothel and then regrets the risk and expense and waste of time, and wishes it didn't have to happen. The man pretending he's a mighty inventor, genius, administrator and all that, and that sex is a terrible interruption. If only the women would leave him alone!"

"Not *quite* like that."

"That's the spirit of it. If only sex would leave him alone!"

"You're not being just to him. He says sex is as big a nuisance to women as to men. More so."

"I don't *like* him," she said. "He's — Gemini, he's a sex- shirker."

At the moment her judgment seemed decisive.

"Wel1, how do you see it, Stella?"

"Tuning it over in my mind.... How do I see it? What has this love-making to do with anything else, you ask. Well — *everything*. Sex is not irrelevant to the other side of life. It's like the other side of a coin. Love, love-making, is as important as hunting, shooting, ploughing, making things, and it's nearer to vital reality. See? Nearer. More than the other side of a coin. Of course it is nearer and closer! Society is built upon sex — more than it is built on any economic or practical necessity. If that is the left hand, sex is the right. The first societies were families and then tribes, the Children of Israel and so on. They were not plantation gangs or trade unions. Sex uppermost; sex first. How does that sound to you?"

"If," said Gemini, "you use the word sex for every sort of personal relationship that has an element of physical feeling in it, what you say is largely true."

"*Largely* true?"

"True."

"Well, you know best, Gemini. Can you draw a line between all these linking feelings, between friendship, preference, affection, love, intimacies, caresses? Can you? Is there really even a homosexual limit? You might expect that if it was all just a question of reproduction. But is there?"

"No. You can have all that."

"Then the real evil about sex is not that it pervades human life, because it wouldn't be human life without it. Its attractions and preferences are the web to hold together the whole species. The trouble is that it can be isolated from the rest of life, made a special thing of, be inflamed and exaggerated, so that instead of linking people it cuts them off either by an obsession through suppression or an obsession through excess. As your professor has it, love becomes love-making, love-making becomes sex, sex becomes sensuality. That's no condemnation of any of them so long as they keep in a bundle together. It is stupid to run down sex because of that. The more I think over that sex-shirking professor of yours the less I like him. Irrelevance! I hug your mind when I hug your body. It all belongs together."

"I think it does. I give you *The Expansion of Sex*. When I write that review I will slate it. You shall see. The man's a dismal misogynist. Cottenham Bower! That's his name. Cottenham C. Bower. Radnor Smith University. In the south. But now may I ask what the code, our code, ought to be?"

"Freedom," she said.

"Free love, is that?"

"In love one gives. How can one give under a bond?"

"Shelley and your uncle, my dear. But still we must have a code. If my professor was right about anything, it is that sex without rule or restriction eats up the rest of life. He makes a good case for that. There must be *some* behaviour pattern."

"It's religion and politics over again."

"I don't understand you."

"I mean we told that parson how we young people were lost in such a medley of religions and politics and suggestions, that we

didn't know how to choose and what values to take — and life pressed upon us...."

"Good, Stella."

"It's the same sort of confusion about sex. We don't know what to do about it, day by day. Look at the novels, the romances, the plays and poems, the pictures and the statuary all telling a thousand varieties of values, saying this is splendid, this is noble, this is decay, this is vile, making this romantic and that atrocious. No sort of agreement at all. Every sort of interpretation and no guide. Scores of patterns of behaviour and which is it to be? Life won't wait. What are we to do about it? What are we to do? Here's your lover. Well? Here's your lover and you may be dead to-morrow. Maybe there are vast differences between people, and what is fine for one, is ugly for another. Some may hesitate and regret it. Some may snatch and be sorry. Perhaps these things are more personal and secret than religious and political things, but the need for decisions is none the less urgent. All over it's the same question; 'What about it *now*?'"

"That's good, Stella. Yes. That's sound. But since it's so various a thing, we can't have a common pattern for everyone — except a framework of tolerance. Suppose there are a lot of possible patterns. We don't know much about life yet. Suppose there are a lot of patterns, and suppose that so long a they don't destroy social life they are all equally permissible. Some people may be really and properly promiscuous, radiating contacts. Others may have an innate bias for particular reactions. And we may vary in different phases of our lives. Have you thought of that?... We may find things lovely when we are in the mood for them and disgusting when we are not. Manifestly we must have decency.... But also freedom, privacy and charity. Everybody is not to be linked in the same way. So I reason it out. There will still have to be things that are never done anyhow. Things that are cruel for example. Things that destroy. But, Stella, let us drop all this high theorising for a moment. How do things stand with us two? That's what I want to have clear."

"Well, I'm in love. I'm very much in love. That doesn't conduce to a broad view of things. I'm in love with you, Gemini, and I want you for keeps. I want to be woman to my own, my very own, man. That's *my* pattern now. Perhaps I had other ideas before we came

down here but that's how I want it now. I'm going to quote you something from that old prayer book I was reading downstairs. How does it go? 'To have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.' There's something fine there. That's a damned good pattern for love, Gemini, and it's stood some wear in its time. Don't you feel it's real human stuff? Promiscuity-infidelity — I don't care what you call it, seems to me to be something soiling after that. I speak for myself and how I feel now. It would be — . I don't think I could look at myself in the mirror again. I think I should feel dispersed — dirty. But who am I to judge? I've only just come into existence. Anyhow, everyone ought to be free. Even if there is a natural pairing, a natural marriage, to have and to hold, there should be no marriage bond. No bond. This feeling for monogamy — to love and to cherish — this is a matter of personal quality. But one must always be giving. To love is to give. No bond. That's how I feel now. Don't you?"

"Question of children?"

She reflected.

"That justifies a ten-year responsibility perhaps. George Meredith suggested that. Or longer. The psychologists say that every child ought to own two parents, and won't be completely happy and normal without them.... Is there any religious bias in that belief? I suspect there is.... So far we have been thinking chiefly of love, before the children come in. Maybe people can love and forget and begin again. You have, Gemini, lots of times."

"How do you *know*, Stella? Not lots of times. Still — . I have. How do you know?"

"I just know. I don't want to dig up your memories. Maybe love is something different for a man. Maybe the world is made up not of males and females but of rakes and — serious people who play for keeps. Maybe — all sorts of things. What do we know about it? We've hardly begun. Four years ago I was a flapper in love with Clark Gable. And you — what were you at fifteen? You've forgotten. Eh? You've seen fit to forget. We know only how we feel now. How can we guess at the physical and moral needs of men and women of thirty or fifty? I suppose they still have them. We can only decide for

ourselves. I feel now that I've got a life sentence and I love it. Suppose I am wrong? How can I tell I am wrong?"

"Now listen, Stella. I want to marry you."

"But we can't."

"I want to many you here and now, so to speak, and to live in the hope of really and lawfully marrying you as soon as ever we can."

"But I have told you—"

"About freedom and all that?"

"Yes."

"Stella, we've planned a very considerable fight with this old world. I submit that our sexual status is not the proper battleground to begin upon. That means a narrow close struggle. It means trouble with servants. Telling white lies to Mrs Greedle. Quarrels with neighbours. Waste of force on what is after all a personal and minor issue. It isn't there that I want to give battle."

"Now that's a point of view. And you really want me, Gemini, for good and keeps? Really and truly? As I do you?"

"Yes."

"Say it, Gemini. Say it again. On our last night together. Make me your offer of marriage."

"I will.... I want you — all of you. I want you, Stella, from the top squeak of your voice down to that thin and leathery sole of your foot I tickled yesterday, and every bit of your body in between, and if there wasn't a sound or a sight of you. I'd still want you to talk these thoughts of mine into you until they come alive. So much for parting and promiscuity. I'm yours. You're mine. Can't you put that comb away now and come to bed? We've been talking for half an hour or more."

"Are you so sure of that, Gemini? Are you really so sure of that? Of loving me for ever and ever?"

"Absolutely sure."

"I wonder. Will you say it over again, Gemini?"

"Put that comb away," said Gemini. She made no sign of doing so.

"There are moments when I doubt your intellectual integrity profoundly," she considered.

"If you don't put that comb away I'll make you."

A freak of desire took possession of her. “Very well,” she said, gripping the comb firmly and locking her hands round her knees, “*make* me!”

CHAPTER IV. CONFERENCE OF THE POWERS

1. BEFORE ZERO HOUR

A FEELING of tension increased as the hour for Uncle Hubert's arrival approached. The spree of getting up together, the wet sponge throwing, the snatches of improvised doggerel, had lost their sparkle. They were both preoccupied, rehearsing scraps of anticipatory dialogue in their minds. Gemini tried to relieve the strain by chanting an improvised oratorio. "Strong Bulls of Bashan have compassed me about, Strong Bulls have compassed me, have compassed me about, have com-passed me a-bout. Be not far from me O Lord my Strength, O Lord my Strength, hasten thou to help me and deliver my darling, my darling, my own darling, my darling Stella, O deliver her, deliver her from the power of the dog, from Polydore the clumsy unicorn and Hubert's horrid mouth. From Hu-bert's hor-rid mouth...."

"Oh, *shut* it," said Stella. Gemini, as reproachful as a cocker spaniel, retired silenced to the bathroom. When he returned he found Stella before the looking-glass considering an important question of tactics. "If I wear my trousers," she said, "it will increase the general effect of depravity, but it will absolutely prevent my being carried off, until I have changed and packed.... Gemini, I shall wear my trousers."

"What *I* wear does not matter. I am not going to be carried off anyhow. Golly! I never thought of that. I can't stay here to-night alone.... I have made no plans...."

It was manifest at breakfast that Mrs Greedle was acutely aware that something was wrong, although every precaution had been taken against her seeing Uncle Hubert's letter.

"You're not eating so hearty this morning," she said. "And such a nice morning too. You're wanting the A.B.C.? Not thinking of going, I 'ope. There's no A.B.C. but here's the local time-table on the dresser."

"We're expecting a friend by the morning train," said Gemini.

“The ten seven, I expect,” said Mrs Greedle. “And will it be a lady or a gentleman, Sir?”

“A gentleman,” said Gemini.

“He’ll be staying to lunch then,” said Mrs Greedle. “You’ll like something nice for him.”

“I’m not quite sure whether he will stay to lunch. No. He may have to go on.”

“Just a call like?” said Mrs Greedle and received no answer. No sound for a time but munching. Mrs Greedle said nothing audible, but her face said “Hoity toity.”

“Let’s go up the hill at the back to the pines, Stella,” said Gemini, breaking an unusual, uncomfortable silence, and standing up.

“Right O,” said Stella, also standing.

“And lunch, ma’am?” asked Mrs Greedle.

“The usual sort of thing,” said Stella, with a novel indifference.

“If the gentleman should come before we return,” said Gemini, “will you show him the tantalus and ask him to sit down?”

“It might be good tactics if we let him cool off in the cottage for a bit before we come in,” he explained as they went out by the back way.

“Not Uncle Hubert, not with the tantalus,” said Stella. “We must be back there first....”

They were back by ten minutes past ten. They reckoned Uncle Hubert would find his way from the station to the cottage in another ten minutes. They had steadied their nerves by fragmentary talk and silences, and accustomed themselves to the advent of Uncle Hubert until it had become as it were the normal state of affairs. Stella had developed the taciturnity of one who has exhausted a subject, but a combatant liveliness was growing upon Gemini. She walked with her hands deeper and deeper in her trouser pockets. His hands flitted from patting her shoulder to rest jauntily on his hips. They made sudden rhetorical flourishes in the air. His mind had escaped from the theme of love and separation and was playing about with the details of the encounter.

“Hubert Polydore,” he said. “Why on earth was he called Polydore? Who *was* Polydore? What is a Polydore? Polydore! A thing that grows in your nose? No. That’s a polypus. If I had a name

like that, I'd hush it up. Particularly in a quarrel."

The approaching interview was profoundly important and all that, but at the same time it was going to be, in its terrific way, *inter alia*, rather a lark. At last they heard the station cab stop at the end of the lane, and voices. "You can't mistake it," they heard old Crump the cab-driver. They peered through the scented screen of Mary Clarkson's geraniums on the window sill. He squeezed Stella's hand as if for a last farewell.

"Gemini," whispered Stella in a faint voice and her grip relaxed. "There's *two* of them! He must have brought a lawyer or something?"

Gemini's ear and cheek pushed her face aside. "Lawyer!" he said. "Something! Any old something! *It's my father!*"

2. OVERTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

"My revered parent," said Gemini, between dismay and exaltation, standing back from the window. "This is unexpected. Oh! this puts a new complexion on things....

"Polypus has got hold of my father. My Roman father! The Cadi of Clarges Street! The two of them together! Oh courage, Gemini, my boy. Courage! I suggest, Stella, you slip away upstairs and come down in about five minutes, — singing happily.... I'd rather. Please. No time to argue. Skip it, Stella."

The latch of the garden gate clicked. "And now into the imminent deadly breach," said Gemini. He went to the door and opened it and stood, trying to look normal and surprised and slightly inhospitable. The staircase door slammed behind Stella. He became aware of an unobtrusive observer in the background.

"Do you mind shutting that kitchen door completely, Mrs Greedle? There's a draught.... Now then, the two of you."

It was in the temperament of Gemini to be elated by sudden difficult situations. The more serious the challenge the less serious he became. An essential flippancy was released. Now he floated above himself, arms akimbo and chin up. Physically he found there was nothing to be anxious about. He was, he realised, a good three inches

taller than the approaching Uncle Hubert, and the doorstep gave him perhaps a couple of inches more. Uncle Hubert, in a pale bowler hat, a bright checked suit, and exaggerated coat tails and hams, looked extraordinarily pseudo-equestrian, squat and unpleasant rather than a formidable horse-whipper; most of his face had been sacrificed to an immense moustache and an oblique expression of scrutinising determination which was now probably second nature. Gemini suppressed an impulse to say "So this is Uncle Polypus!"

It wasn't as though Uncle Hubert was alone. Close behind came the more urbane and dignified figure of Mr Twain, face and movement eloquent, as Gemini felt, of that sustained and controlled hate which only an acutely estranged father can feel. He was cast rather in Gemini's mould physically, but I he was not quite so loose and tall. He had the same broad brows and the same pug nose, but he had orderly hair, deep-set eyes, a stiffer backbone and a severely pursed mouth; he walked with a well-rolled, important umbrella, and he was wearing a grey lounge suit and a soft black felt hat. There was something in his face that seemed to intimate that Uncle Hubert stank. The conversation in the train must have been interesting. He seemed to be trying to look as though Uncle Hubert was not walking in front of him, was in fact not there. Something about Uncle Hubert on the other hand suggested that he considered Mr Twain to be there at his initiative in the capacity of a subordinate, yes-man or stooge but that he was not quite certain about it.

"How do, Father?" said Gemini, filling the entrance. "Didn't expect to see you. Who's your friend?"

"Get-*tout* of the way," growled Uncle Hubert, as one who speaks to a dog. "Where's my niece?"

Gemini smiled genially at him and continued to fill the entrance. "Are you the Mr — what was it? — Hubert Polydore Hopkinshire, who wrote me a sort of letter? Rather a rude letter?

"Get out of my way I tell you. I didn't come to bandy words with you. Get *out* of the way."

"*No*," said Gemini and stood tense. No immediate action followed.

"One moment," said Mr Twain, and put out a restraining hand. "We want no violence. We have come down—"

That restraining hand absolved Uncle Hubert from immediate action.

"I tell you, Sir, *get out of the way*!" he shouted, giving the riding-whip a minor flourish but accepting the postponement of his purpose.

"SSSH!" said Gemini, like a sudden steam jet, to the Major's great surprise. "You were saying, Father — ?"

The Major allowed himself to be pushed a little aside by Mr Twain. "We have come down to discuss" ("*Discuss!*" in tones of scorn from the Major) "this situation you two foolish young people have created. It is surely not a matter to be debated at the tops of our voices on the doorstep — particularly as your end window is open and your domestic appears to be listening—"

"Come in and sit down," said Gemini, and stood aside so that the Major had to brush against him as he came in. He followed him into the room. "That's a good chair, Major, and you can put your hat and crop on the little table behind. We can't talk until we sit down."

Neither of his visitors sat down. Uncle Hubert felt he could express himself best by walking up and down with his hat on and his whip gripped behind him. Mr Twain put his hat very carefully so as to extinguish a potful of window geraniums, laid his umbrella on the sill and as if by right took up a magisterial position before the fireplace. Gemini seated himself on the arm of the big chair. "I want to see that girl," Uncle Hubert insisted, coming up to him. "And I want to see her now."

"Miss Kentlake will be down very soon. She did not expect visitors. She asked us to — er — *begin*. Doesn't that hat of yours come off? As you will, but you'd be better without it in this close, low room. Thins the hair. You were saying something, Father — ?"

"Your share in this affair, is unforgivable. That is chiefly what I have come to say. I have come down to deal with *you*. Clear things up with *you*."

"Now look here," said Uncle Hubert, "we don't want a lot more palaver. I told you what I thought of things in the train. I imagine I made myself clear. You take your blessed son off out of this. That's what you've got to do. Or I shall deal with him. I want to see my niece. Now."

Gemini saw his father's face harden and realised something of the

mutual exasperation of the journey down. He addressed himself to Uncle Hubert. “You can’t see Miss Kentlake, you know, for the next five minutes, unless you are prepared to break down the bathroom door and drag her out screaming — regardless of decency and morality. You may just as well hear what my father has to say about it.”

“Well. This is no occasion for talking. Still, talk if you want to — .”

Uncle Hubert went to the window and stood with his back to the room, easing his legs alternately. Gemini turned hopefully to the grim resolution of the parental visage.

“Mr Hopkinshire,” said the magistrate, “or Major as you call yourself—”

This swung the Major round.

“You have obliged me to come down here by threats of violence, exposure and scandal as discreditable and undesirable to your family — if you really have any family — as they are to me and mine. I have come, in your company, and I will confess I have known pleasanter company, to deal with this painful business, sanely, justly, decently and, I must add, James, sternly. And now I am here I insist upon having the whole affair handled in that manner. I insist, Sir. You cannot have it all your own way. And to begin with, accustomed as I am to the decorum of a court of law, I must ask you, please, as you are indoors and in conference, in what is practically a legal conference, to oblige me by removing t.hat hat.... No? Of course if it is irremovable, if for some reason, some hideous and shameful disfigurement, some tumour or suchlike morbid and offensive growth, you cannot take it off, then of course we will set aside the ordinary usages of decent society....”

“Damn the *bloody* hat!” said Uncle Hubert. “Making a red herring of my hat!” He tore it off and pitched it into a corner of the room. “There! Now let’s have it.”

Gemini’s eye followed the hat with an inward prayer that sooner or later he would get a chance of treading on it. Then they returned to the slightly ameliorated severity of his father’s countenance.

“That’s better,” said the magistrate. “That’s much better. And if also you would sit down I would feel more in control — of myself

and everybody. To me the very first consideration I in this affair is to avoid any unmannerly uproar about it. What are the facts of the case? My son, like so many young men, has — given way to incontinence. Crossly. That in itself shows a discreditable want of self-control but — in itself — it is not a matter — . Its importance can be exaggerated. But that is not all. What you object to and what I also object to is not that. It is the way in which he has seen fit to gratify these urgencies. Instead of availing himself of the — er-ordinary reliefs tolerated, under protest of course, by society, he has deliberately set himself to plan and scheme — so far as I understand your charges — the seduction of a previously innocent girl. Previously innocent. That remains to be proved. Until I actually see the young woman in question, I do not see how far I can apportion the exact degree of culpability—"

"Oh damn it, Father," said Gemini, "steady on. Stella's as right as rain."

Which released Uncle Hubert. He was still keeping the centre of the room. He pointed his remarks with his riding-crop. His voice rose steadily to a shout.

"If you two blaggards mean to suggest that my niece did the seducing — . But I've had enough of this. She's upstairs. Well, where's upstairs? The sooner I take her out of this the better, bathroom or not. Bathroom be damned! It's another dodge. Stella! Where *are* you? They're calling you a bitch. They're saying you're no better than a blasted little tart. Where the devil have they hidden you? *Stella!*"

The cupboard-like door leading to the staircase opened almost noiselessly.

"Did I hear you shouting something about me, Uncle Hubert?" said Stella's clear voice. "*Oh!*"

It was Stella's voice but in some subtle way clarified and refined. Gemini heard it and admired it; he loved Stella's voice always, and always its crystalline charm came freshly to him; but he was too intent on his father's reactions to turn round. He had expected and feared scandalised horror at the flimsy vest and the trousers. Instead he discovered a certain surprise, an expression of restrained and reluctant respect. He turned hastily and discovered a new Stella, a

very dignified figure indeed, white and slender and more than ever blue-eyed. She seemed to be slightly taller than the Stella he had known. She was wearing a very simple summer dress of muslin with a clasp of silver at the neck, and her sun-bleached hair, almost incredibly smoothed, was restrained by a fillet of black velvet that bore a small cut steel star in the centre, a fillet which he last remembered her wearing, practically alone, as a garter. There was something about her now virginal and faintly pre-Raphaelite. She might have been a handmaiden of the Queen of Heaven in some picture by Holman Hunt or Madox Brown. The little brown hand that seemed to restrain the apprehension of her heart was punctiliously clean.

"Mr Twain? I knew you at once. You are so like him.... How kind of you to come down to us in — our perplexities. Gem-your son is always talking about you."

There was a decided grimness about the tall figure on the hearthrug. She overcame a qualm of terror and an impulse to yell "I can't" and bolt upstairs again, and advanced with an outstretched hand, pink side up, that, thank Heaven! did not tremble. The great man relaxed slightly, touched it and bowed. Again thank Heaven! Her courage mounted. She found she was not going to lose her breath. Her heart was beating fast but not too fast. She would be able to talk. Thank Heaven and again thank Heaven! Heaven was behaving beautifully to her and she was going to carry things off. She spoke meekly but firmly and her voice was all right.

"May I listen to what you are saying?" she said. "Please. I know — . We have been rash. And perhaps our ideas are not quite your ideas. But do please treat us as reasonable people. And not just shout and bawl disgusting words at us." She looked at the Major; she, the magistrate and Gemini, all looked at the Major. "Don't stand, Uncle," she said. She seated herself in the corner of the settle and made as if to listen. But Uncle Hubert was not so easily silenced. He remained at the centre of the room. He spoke in what he considered to be a low grave tone. His voice vibrated.

"Your mother," he said, "is broken-hearted. Bro-ken-hearted. That poor woman! The cruelty of it all. Don't you understand, Stella, what you have done to her?"

“It’s dreadful.”

“Wel1? What did you expect? Dreadful! And you can say it!”

“It’s dreadful, I mean, that anyone should have told her but myself. I could have explained it all to her. Perfectly. She would have understood. I am sure she would have understood. I did not know she knew *anything* about this. Who told her? Not *you*, Uncle?”

“Never mind who told her or how she came to know. The thing is she’s broken-hearted with the sin and the shame of it, that she’s in a state — . *Weeping*! She weeps and she weeps.”

“She *would*,” said Stella, with a momentary, almost imperceptible lapse from her modest sweetness. “Of course I must go to her. I didn’t imagine,—”

“You cannot imagine—”

“Yes I can, Uncle.”

“Her distress. The ruin of all her hopes in you. Her one child! Her ewe lamb! The apple of her eye! Broken-hearted she is at your deception. Broken, she is; *ill*. Physically ill.... Have you no *moral* understanding?... You must come back with me now.”

“That’s *settled* already, Uncle. Of course I must come back. Poor Mother! I suppose you have talked to her about it quite a lot. Poor *little* Mother! There are plenty of trains. We can be in Barnes by six or seven. Easily. But don’t you realise we must hear what Mr Twain has to say about it, before we go? I think he’s being very patient with us. He’s a very great lawyer and he’s come down here.... Why — *you* must have asked him to come down here! Who else?”

“When’s the next train back?” asked Uncle Hubert. “Has no one a time-table?”

Silence.

“Hasn’t this damned cottage got such a thing as a railway time-table?”

No reply.

No one apparently had a time-table and no one displayed the slightest interest in his demand. His air of masterful expectation evaporated and with a grunt he sat down in the chair Gemini had placed for him, sprawling out arms and legs in a manner suggestive of protest, impatience and obduracy. Stella looked up for the magistrate to begin. She had lost any disposition to panic now. She

was no longer acting self-possession. She was in complete possession of herself. She was intelligently interested in the situation. She had dressed and acted her part with such good fortune that now there was no need for further acting. She could put herself away and forget herself.

From the moment of her entry she had never once met the eye of her fellow-sinner. In some extraordinary way she had banished their intimacy from the agenda. She made them all feel that the sort of thing that had to be said was just the sort of thing that could only be talked about in her presence with the utmost delicacy and restraint.

The Cadi of Clarges Street cleared his throat. His expression remained stern, unbending, resolute. After one brief ambiguous glance at the self — possessed and entirely modest-looking young lady on the settle, who was evidently quite unlike anything he had anticipated, he kept his eye upon the slightly unconvincing candour, the restrained, qualified and uncertain dutifulness, of his son. The scene became a duologue, with Uncle Hubert as a restless and ineffective commentator.

3. THE CADI OF CLARGES STREET

From the outset it was plain to Stella that Mr Twain Senior was something much harder and more formidable than anything she and Gemini had encountered hitherto. He had a drive in him. It was something that made his behaviour different in kind from that of Balch or Uncle Hubert or the vicar. They had a conception of themselves, they behaved accordingly and played their parts as parts, conscious of the effect they created. But this brown-faced old man was not thinking of his effect at all; he had an objective in view and he was pressing towards it, regardless of appearances. He had squashed Uncle Hubert because he wanted him squashed, just as he was accustomed to squash interruptions and impertinences in his court, and now he was preparing to deal with Gemini, if he could, with the same self-forgetful hardness. His voice and intonations, she noted, were absurdly like Gemini's, but it was as if they had been dried and sharpened to a point.

He was like Gemini not only in complexion, voice and build but in this forgetfulness of his audience. When an idea bolted with Gemini, he ceased to be conscious of himself and his effect. He too was bracing himself now for the encounter. He was half-seated on a chair-arm, and half-standing, so that his father could not talk down to him, and he had about him something of the quiet insolence of a confident but not overconfident fencer. “Come on,” he seemed to say. Stella and Uncle Hubert might have been a thousand miles away for any reaction he betrayed to their presence. “Hard father, hard son,” thought Stella. “But there’s laughter in Gemini. Was there ever laughter in the Cadi?”

“Well, James,” the father was saying, as though he liked saying it, “this does at last bring matters to a head between us.

Gemini answered gravely: “Apparently. It is how you choose to see it.”

The old man was ready with his retort. “Choose to see it!” he retorted. “That is how things are. Let me remind you, Sir—”

He began to speak quietly, clearly and incisively. He spoke with the swift lucidity of a long meditated indictment. “I want to have things out with you,” he said and he had them out with a vengeance. It was the whole story of a relationship. He reminded Gemini of this; he reminded him of that. It was not merely the present situation he had in mind, he said. That, it seemed, was only the culmination of a long accumulation of grievances. The way he set about stating his case was extraordinarily like Gemini’s method of attacking a subject, the other way round. He charged Gemini with setting himself deliberately to thwart and defeat the parental benevolence, humble the parental pride. At Oxford-.

“The degree I took wasn’t so bad, Sir,” protested Gemini.

“But the other things! Your extravagances in the Union. Bolshevism, Republicanism, Atheism. All very bright and witty no doubt and all completely silly.”

“I believed in these things.”

“*Believed!*”

There was no answering that. He passed to Gemini’s life in London. “Idleness,” he said. “Discursiveness. Ill — chosen friends. I know more than you suppose of the life you have led. I know of the

parties you have attended, the hours you have kept. Studios, cocktail parties, night boozing with artists, actors, actresses and models, loose women, fantastic meetings and fights in the East End, that Mass Observation nonsense, living as a sham out-of-work in a Cardiff slum. Then this cheap book publishing. Trashy — looking little books in paper covers that people throw away when they have read them. If not before. Oh yes, I know. Your mother has done her best to shield you, but I know quite enough. 'Wait,' she said. 'Give him a chance} I have, I realise, waited all too long.

"I saw you wasting those years of vital opportunity but I still clung to the desperate idea that you would do nothing dishonourable. Nothing to disgrace the name you bore and exile you from the company of honourable men. Your wits might be flighty, but surely your character was sound. And here we are! I find you denounced and justly denounced by this, this, indignant — *gentleman* — as a vulgar seducer — outraging the sanctity of a good upbringing and destroying the happiness of a decent home. With no extenuation. No extenuation whatever."

Stella was on the point of speaking, and checked herself. She realised that the less she attempted to supplement Gemini the less she would cramp his style.

"Heaven knows what idea you had in bringing this poor girl — evidently, as I realise, a very simple and trustful girl-a mere child indeed — to this disreputable haunt of a disreputable woman."

"Is this going on *long*?" said Uncle Hubert, and began to redistribute his limbs into fresh poses of unrest. Nobody heeded him.

The Cadi warmed up against Mary Clarkson. "In the decent past a woman who kept a house of this sort would have been hounded out of the village.... Rough music.... Marrow bones and cleavers...."

Stella was moved to defend Mary but exercised self-control. The tirade broadened and deepened. The precise voice went on, very distinct and deliberate, with a note of satisfaction at the phrasing and point of its utterance. She scrutinised his intent face, and slowly and reluctantly she realised the quality of its expression. It was cold and steadfast hate. The drive in him was white hate. He hated Gemini. He was working himself up against him now. He was giving rein to a long-accumulated passion. This was his crowning opportunity.

She looked at Gemini. He too was combatant. Was he too hating? He was looking his father in the face, wary, with a faintly contemptuous and altogether pitiless expression. In his childhood, she knew, he had gone in great fear of his father, and hidden from him and sheltered behind his mother. He had told Stella how he had learnt from his schoolfellows and the newspaper paragraphs they showed him, that Clarges Street was famous for the bullying of witnesses and the heavy sentences and blistering comments of the presiding magistrate. It was only in the last year or so that he had dared to stand up to this autocracy, even in minor matters. She had read about such hatreds of the old for the young and between fathers and sons, in books about psychology, but what one reads about in books is never more than half real; here was the living thing visible and audible, the primordial triangle of Atkinson's Old Man, his envy and jealousy of his son and of the son's possession of a woman. It had suddenly walked out of anthropology into this cottage and planted itself upon the hearthrug.

The Old Man and the Son! She had read about it as an old far-away tale of social beginnings. Was it something that was still going on now, something woven into the whole social process? Was it, as her Uncle Robert had written in a review of Freud's last book, a contemporary structural reality? Queer fragments of these speculations spun in a wild eddy through Stella's brain and imposed strange generalisations upon the scene before her. What was he saying? He could be patient with his son no longer, he said. He wanted-what was it he said he wanted?

"I want Mr-Major Hopkinshire here to know exactly what I feel and intend towards you, because I trust that then we shall have complete cooperation from his side. Natural affection I still bear you, but to be weak with you now would be cruel" He paused for a moment with tightening lips. "This income of yours must cease, both what comes from your mother's estate and the allowance she persuaded me to add to it. It must cease absolutely. It must be cut off altogether. It is simply subsidising idleness and depravity. You will have to leave London. I shall arrange for you to go abroad, preferably to some country where the atmosphere is manly and clean, and where you will not be exposed to gross temptations, to High

Germany perhaps, where you can at least master a language, harden your character, and have time to reflect upon your outlook. Money will be paid you in sufficient amounts at regular intervals to sustain you — upon certain definite conditions. You must get right out of my life and my circle altogether. You must cut your connections with your Bohemian friends. You must correspond with your mother only with my knowledge and my consent. There must be no further communication, no communication at all, between you and this-this, well-young lady. You must give an undertaking to that effect."

"May I interrupt for a moment, Sir?" said Gemini.

"Well?"

"Neither of us agree that we have done anything wrong at all. And — I shall go on with my work in London."

"You will disobey me — flatly?"

"I am of age, Sir."

The old man reconstructed his attack promptly. If he felt countered by this defiance, he did not betray it. "Then you will leave my house forthwith," he said.

"Evidently! Good Lord! Imagine the breakfast table!... I'll come back and pack. It's all right, Sir, don't be alarmed, we won't travel together. I shall travel third. The third — class people are more human. And I can go by a different train. I'll turn out willingly enough. I think I can rub along in London all right. What with one thing and another. And so-?"

Stella felt called upon for a declaration at this stage. "I am going to my mother because she says she is ill — and for no other reason at all," she said, staring calmly in front of her. For one instant her hands sought the trouser pockets she no longer had and then returned to their ladylike pose on her lap. "We do not consider we have done anything wrong."

"Then you don't know what you are talking about, either of you," said Mr Twain. "You don't know the meaning of right and wrong. It is hard to stigmatise your conduct without the use of words that may sound harsh" — he half turned to Stella— "to your ears."

"I've read the Bible," reflected Stella. "And of course there's Uncle."

As soon as she said that she knew she had been gratingly flippant.

The Cadi was manifestly shocked. When next he spoke to her it was in a tone of deep reproach.

"Do incontinence, fornication, deception, disobedience, then, mean nothing to you? Have you never heard of fallen women? You are living in a Christian country under a definitely Christian moral code and my son there" — he pointed— "has persuaded you to outrage it. And you have done so. Don't you begin to realize your present position? Do you know nothing of the social pena1ties — ?"

"We are *not* Christians," said Gemini.

"Don't imagine that. You are."

"But surely we know our own minds!"

"What have your fancies about your own minds got to do with it? You are Christians, just as you are English. You can no more escape from the one thing than the other. You were born and baptised Christian. You were clothed and fed and housed Christian, the law and order about you is Christian, the education is Christian, this country is a Christian country with a State Church, ruled by a Christian monarch. You are Christian just as much as you are Twain and Kentlake. You can't alter facts like that by your mere say-so. You can't contract out of your born religion any more than you can contract out of your born nationality."

"But we do not believe a word of your creed, Sir. Not a word of it."

"That is as may be. It is quite a minor point what amount of concrete reality you may attach to the statements in the creed, or in the Bible or in the articles of religion. Quite a minor point. The important thing is that the whole fabric of social life, conduct, law, property, confidence, is built upon this Christian system of ideas. It is too late even if it were desirable, to alter that now. We can't have everything upset because of some discordant oddity about a chance skull or a fossil reptile or a bit of archaeology or something of that sort. Have you no sense of proportion? What practical formula of denial, may I ask, do you young people affect? How do you put this — something that isn't Christianity? On which apparently you propose to base something which isn't morality, and found something which will certainly not be a new social order?"

"I do not believe in a personal God," said Gemini. "If you really

want to know. In plain language I suppose that is Atheism. The word, as people say, is in bad odour, but it means what it says."

"And what ultimate wisdom, may I ask, have *you* attained, young lady, in the course of your eighteen or nineteen years?"

Stella kept her temper and weighed her words. Her tone was almost apologetic.

"I cannot find any reality in the Christian God or anything particularly compelling in what you call Christian morality. I am sorry, Mr Twain, but I don't. I doubt if many Christians do. From the Christian point of view, anyhow, that ought to be called Atheism. I should be quibbling to call it anything else."

Now that wasn't flippant anyhow.

The Cadi launched himself upon one of those *Obiter Dicta* for which he had made Clarges Street famous.

"And so you emerge with your Nothing, your Atheos. And that is all you have. But this Christianity which so many of you young people are accustomed to dispose of so glibly, so impertinently, carries with it a vast complex of guidance, support, tested reactions, certitudes of understanding, obligations, duties, honour and consolations, which we call the Christian life. All interwoven and inseparable. It is the greatest, most comprehensive complex of controls, protections, guidance that humanity has ever evolved. It all follows on the creeds. What follows upon your Atheos — your Nothing? Tell me that."

Gemini felt the old man had scored a point. He admitted it frankly. "The rational life has still to be worked out, carved out, from these disorders of to-day."

"It certainly has. And I should have imagined that a young man of your high intelligence — with more than all the usual omniscience of youth — would have known that the Christian life does not so much depend on its theology as justify it. It is odd you have never discovered that. It is this ultimate practical consistency of life and formula, that all you young — intelligentsia I think you call yourselves, seem to miss. It recalls that excellent old story, which has rather dropped out of attention nowadays, of the headmaster's repartee. A certain young gentleman from the lower sixth came to him one day and announced himself with great dignity, an Atheist.

Probably Shelley — bitten. Whereupon the schoolmaster with out further parley took down the lad's trousers and administered a sound thrashing."

"Good business!" exclaimed Uncle Hubert, with only too evident a reference to Gemini. "Serve the cocky little bastard right. Did it cure him?"

"I believe," said the magistrate, "that ultimately that particular young gentleman died a bishop, but the essence of the story is the way in which it puts the creed, the formula, in its place, as a mere part or aspect of the integral reality of religion. The Christian creed fits because it has grown to fit the social needs it satisfies. Every day this sort of ignorance of the essential nature of religion — on the part of —— of samples of the so-called educated classes — crops up in my court. What I am saying I have said a dozen times at Clarges Street. There was that case of Ripper the bookseller whom I committed to prison without the option of a line. I stated the case very clearly. There's a verbatim report. Atheism is not really a matter of belief; it is a preliminary to bad conduct. It is a formula of sedition. My decision was reversed for political reasons, but it was never disproved. Never. I make these remarks now by the way. I was led astray from our particular business by the foolishness of your words. Atheism! Bah! Let us return to the matter in hand. Of course you are Christian and if you are nothing else, you belong to the Church of England?

"Well, we don't," said Gemini rather feebly.

"You can't exist in vacuo. You are British; you are a subject of the King, you belong to the Church of England. That is your legal status. So please don't talk nonsense."

Now this in effect, Stella reflected, was very much what the vicar had said. Or half said. But he had said it apologetically and here it was stated outrageously.

"I don't agree," said Gemini. "Are you assuming a world as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians? Because the world has altered; it alters; it will alter and it can be made to alter."

"I have assumed nothing of the sort," said his father. "Of course the world alters. What else is life but alteration? Our social world alters, but, sanely conceived, it alters in a broad, natural and

progressive way and within limits. It pours on continually but it never leaps gaps. It remains a vast going concern. It remains the same thing essentially throughout the world — as a growing organism remains the same thing. It is no Phoenix. It does not fly off at a tangent. It may grow and ripen with the years. It cannot break off to give way to something else. If it ends, that will be the end of mankind. There have been ups and downs in the past; there may be wars and dark ages ahead."

"They may be very close ahead."

"They may. The human outlook may be altogether uncertain. How can we help that? I am no mechanical optimist. And what of that? I tell you again that whether we like it or not the development of human social life and usage is a slow and complex evolution, — have you never heard that word 'evolution'? — and at present the whole growing fabric finds its best, most successful formulation in the Christian formulation. Which has grown and spread steadily for two thousand years. To which it is our privilege to belong by nature and necessity. It is the touchstone of method and right behaviour now all over the world. Far beyond its formal limits. You make your feeble defiance.... For some freakish reason. Something wrong in the theology. It is like jumping off a liner in mid-Atlantic because you discover the Captain has been cheating at cards.... You merely destroy yourselves."

Gemini could only contradict flatly. "I believe there is no limit to the possibilities of reconstructing human life. That liner can be turned round, re — fitted, re-manned. You can land from it. Shift to another bottom. Never in the whole course of history were human affairs more plastic than they are today."

"You think that?" said the old man, and a gleam of destructive spite came into his face. "You think that?" Stella perceived that more or less completely he had realised that darling sustaining idea of theirs, and that he meant to kill it there and then if he could. It meant nothing to him except that it was something of Gemini's and hers that he might cheapen and break. In the same spirit she realised he might have set about killing some pet animal of his son's.

He attacked this idea of any reconstruction of human affairs because it was intolerable to him that anyone could contemplate a

world different and better than the one that had given him his importance and framed the way of life to which he was accustomed, intolerable that there was conceivably a better world for his renegade offspring. “You’ve got this idea of a great new beginning in your head. I see. Manifestly. Well, you’re doomed to some bitter experiences if that is your conception of life. Oh! Bitter disillusionment. Have you no sense at all of material realities? Do you think, do you really think, that you — your sort with your feeble wits and your feebler characters, squabbling and divided among yourselves, young and green, too clever by half and all that — do you imagine that you can stop the march of history now, just as you might hold out your hand to stop a bus, and go right back again to the beginning and start a new world?”

“That, Sir, is precisely what we think possible,” said Gemini. “We are revolutionaries.”

“It is precisely what you think possible! Precisely! Precisely think possible! And so you are revolutionaries! And the alternative? This new thing that is going to take the place of the old? Tell me about it. *You*! You Radicals! You Revolutionaries! You Atheists! What have you got to put against this current social order, this great growth of ages, in which we live? Are you going to destroy it by a few simple denials and outrages and defiances? I suppose this blackguardly seduction of yours is part of the new movement. You remind me of that other disreputable rascal, Hosea the prophet. Oh! being a Christian doesn’t blind me to the scandals of the Old Dispensation. Why should it? Why should a Hebrew prophet be a gentleman? Gentleman is a Christian idea!. Where is this other world of yours which is going to be such a mighty improvement upon the wisdom of the ages and show up all your seniors for old fools? Why! you are not even beginning another world. Where are your atheist public schools? Where is your new social structure, even in embryo? Your new way of life? Show me what you have. A lot of ramshackle people all at sixes and sevens and mostly drunk and depraved.... Agitators.... Sabotage.... Is that all?”

“Russia?” thought Stella, but she did not interrupt. This was Gemini’s affair and he must handle it in his own way.

“But look at your own world, my dear Father! This is pure

romance of yours, this sort of crown-and-church-led world you are talking about, this large, stable, established order, going on from strength to strength. I never expected you of all people to indulge in romance. Your world now is just a dismal jumble of armaments and fear. It is breaking down everywhere into warfare and violence. The Cross over Guernica. Holy massacre in Burgos. And here? Scampering like hares and burrowing like rabbits. A.R.P."

"It can stand a lot of that. It has vast reserves to draw upon. Need for discipline there is, but no excuse yet for panic."

"You mean in effect that it will last your time and that is all you care for."

"I mean in effect it will last my time and your time and a lot of time still after that. Church bells will be ringing a hundred years from now. There will still be England and a British Empire and probably a regenerate France. Paris less gay perhaps, but happier.... Understand me, James, I don't care in the least if Christianity and our social order doesn't stand to reason; no sensible Englishman does; that's for theologians; the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and our system *works*. It is a growth as sturdy and enduring as one of our British oaks."

"And you think that a hundred years from now, things will be going on-very much as they are going on to-day?"

"I do."

"The good old *Times* fresh every morning and always stale; Court Circular, Stock Exchange article, cross-word puzzle number 40,000 or so will it be?"

"I see no reason why any of these things should cease. A certain enlargement perhaps?

"And that is as far as your mind goes?"

"That is as far as my mind goes and that is all I care for.

Because my mind and my demands on life are sane. There is no other possible world that I can imagine beyond this we live in. Even now, even if it shows some signs of age and stress, that does not alter the fact that there is no other possible world. If the present system, through some mysterious evaporation of faith, dies, human society, as I understand it, dies also."

"But, Sir, we do not think anything of that sort. That is where we

of our generation differ from yours. We believe that there is a possible better world, profoundly different from the aimless bloodstained muddle you have brought us into. Yes, Sir, we believe *that*. We do not credit you with ultimate wisdom. We think this quasi — Christian civilisation of yours in particular, with all its piled-up political and social associations, its mulish insistence on the thing that is — yes, Sir, *mulish*. I must use the proper word — is what stands in the way of that possible better world. It is hanging on — like a wicked overgrown trustee who will not deliver. In Europe, in America, the vital centres of the world, it blocks education, it blocks social readjustments, it blocks the way to Cosmopolis."

"Cos-*mop* — olis," said Uncle Hubert in a sort of aside to God. Nobody heeded him. He might have been furniture.

"It is your only hope of what you call Cosmopolis," said the magistrate. "Because, you see, it is in possession of things. You can get your Cosmopolis only with its consent. Blocks the way! It blocks the way to headlong anarchy. The only possible united world now is a world Europeanised, completely Europeanised, and so far as outward forms go, Christianised, a natural steady development of tested usage. You twit me with my age — —"

"Well, a father is naturally—"

"And I twit you with ignorance and inexperience. With flimsiness and flightiness. 'A father is naturally'-and what, Sir, is the son? A raw young fool, headstrong and obstinate. Can you give me credit for no intelligence? Do you think that I have not wrestled with those riddles of life in my time? For more than double the total of your years. Double! I have thought now, thought hard, for more than fifty years, and you could hardly read a dozen, well, fifteen, years ago. Do you imagine life began with you? You! Of all people!"

(They can insult each other like that, thought Stella, and neither of them raises his voice! Now Uncle Hubert would bellow and intone and play tunes. But how horrible these things they were saying would sound if they were shouted!)

Gemini was holding on to their argument in spite of this sudden lunge into personal abuse. "But this story of yours of reactionary Christianity spreading now all over the world — it's nonsense. Consider Russia — . There you have already something like a

working system — based on modern ideas and owing nothing to Christianity. Repudiating it altogether. Has there been ever so complete a new start in all history as Russian Communism? And if such a new start is possible once, other new starts are possible. The Age of Revolution is only just beginning. Life has become Revolution."

Stella sat up and endorsed this congenial argument with a slight nod or so. She had wanted Gemini to say that before. What had the magistrate to say to that? She turned to him. He hadn't very much to say. He bullied and he denied Gemini's statements. At the word "Russia" his countenance winded and changed and blind prejudice took the place of argument. Russia was an utter failure, a tragedy, a horror, not so much a sin as an insult in the face of God. Like so many men of his type and generation he had refused steadfastly to think about Russia from the October Revolution onward. It had been too much for them altogether. At the outset he had said the Soviet Republic would not last six months, and the longer this strange new abomination carried on, the angrier he became with it. Its failure, he insisted, was all the greater the longer it endured. A red rag for a bull was nothing to a red outlook for the Cadi.... "Crew of murderers," he said.... And now they were murdering one another and going back to a pure Oriental despotism. The contemptuous certitude of the *Obiter Dicta* vanished. There was a limit to the things one can argue about, he asserted. Then, as he saw Gemini prepared with some intolerable reply, he broke back to the personal issue.

He lapsed abruptly from scorn and derision to self-justification. He returned to the case in hand of Twain *v.* Twain.

"Well, well," he said. "About this sort of thing one might argue for ever. None are so blind as those who will not see. Russia! You set Russia up against a rational Christianity! I'm ashamed of the brains I've begotten. We have wandered far from this business that brought me down here. Come back to that. When I hear you pour out this credulous commonplace rubbish about Russia, this cheap sedition of the lower classes, then it is I realise in its full bitterness how completely I have lost my son. Nothing too vile for him to seize upon to wound me! That is the business before us now. To that I return. I will not bandy politics with you. Some day perhaps you too may

have a son and learn a little of what all this means to me. I had such hopes of you. Let me be plain and simple with you. Now that we are going to part. For part we must. Let me try and tell you things that may come back some day into your mind. They will mean nothing to you now but some day they will. My life has not always been a happy one. Through no fault of my own. I have had many disappointments, my affections have been ill requited.... Perhaps I imagined and hoped for far too much from you. I imagined you making a career that might compensate me for my own comparative insuccess."

"Oh come! you haven't done so badly."

"Not so badly, you think? You think that?"

"Well. You *haven't* done so badly."

"I have not. In a sense — no. If leading a clean life and doing my duty, day in and day out, punctually, righteously, fearlessly and ungrudgingly, is doing well, I have done well. Yes. At least I can claim the satisfaction of a righteous self-applause. But for you I hoped for a career of wider scope and ampler recognition. If youth but knew! If you knew the toil, the self-control on my part in my young days, that made your easy beginnings possible!I stood beside your cot and said, This boy shall have a better chance than I.' I sent you to Oxford—"

"Most1y it was scholarships," Gemini interjected, "and I worked damned hard for them."

"You took all these hard-won opportunities I gave you, as a matter of course. You sneer at them. You sneer at the bare mention of a career for you....

"Don't deny it, Sir — I can *see* you sneer. I suppose you imagine I am some sort of careerist. If so you must think me a very unsuccessful careerist. Oh *very*! What sort of career have *I* had? I worked as a mere flimsy child for scholarships to get any foothold at all. I worked up to my present position. While less scrupulous men wriggled and flattered their way to success. I worked, I tell you. No one can say it was not good measure I gave them, filled up and running over. And what acknowledgment have I had? What honour has been given me for all my work? I have seen my contemporaries and my juniors advanced and rewarded, beribboned and decorated. I

have been given nothing and I have disdained to ask. I have been passed over. With all the comings and goings of the last few years I have been passed over. I have devoted my utmost abilities to my job. I have sought to do justice according to my lights and exercise a restraining influence on the disorder under my jurisdiction. My reward, you should know as well as I do, has been a perpetual hostile press campaign, against my sentences, against the discipline in my courts. No man has ever sought more strenuously than I to administer an even-handed justice, but these journalists in their craving for sensational copy have picked upon me to represent me as a sort of sadistic monster. They have set themselves out to discredit and ruin me. I know. I see the papers. The Cadi of Clarges Street! Corrosive! Acid! Hard as nails! That legend of my hardness has affected my social life; it has even tainted my home. As you must know. Even you.... That will not deter me—"

"I quite see that," said Gemini, "I can quite see how anyone in your position may even get his sense of injustice — how shall I say it? — inflamed. Haven't I had to listen to you at meals — telling my mother about it all? Your wrongs and your righteousness. But surely now there is a certain compensation to you, when you get into court, in-sticking to your guns and using your power. There at least you command respect. A little god within the limits of your jurisdiction. You can sting a witness and flay an offender. You can give it them hot, say what you like, and get square with yourself."

"That is how you see me, is it?"

"Yes, my father, that is how I see you. And since we are parting now, for good, I tell you plainly that is how I see you."

"No better than that?"

"No better than that."

The Cadi's discourse became almost a soliloquy. "I do not know what I have done to breed antagonism wherever turn.... There is a spirit even in my household.... I know. I know. And at last my son, my only son, turns against me, defies me and prepares to leave me for ever with a grin of hate."

"I'm not grinning, Sir. You seem to forget you are turning me out-of-doors. Cutting me off without a shilling and all that. No grinning matter."

“Turning you out-of-doors! It is your own choice, James. All you have to do is to accept my terms. Even now....”

He stopped short and Stella realised how greatly a sudden repentance on Gemini’s part would embarrass him.

Gemini laughed contemptuously. “And so my life was to have made up for yours, was it? I was just to be a fresh start for you. You were to live my life for me and more successfully, instead of my living any life of my own. You wanted to brag— ‘That boy of mine did this’, ‘That boy of mine did that’. Don’t I know? So that’s how fathers love their sons. Thank you, but I prefer living my own life.”

An added note of viciousness came into the Cadi’s voice.

“Live your own life. Live it! You talk like a lady novelist. *Live* your own life. Very well. But take care to keep out of Clarges Street Police Court.”

“Manlius Torquatus — you see I know my Roman History — wouldn’t be in it with you,” jeered Gemini. They were no longer discussing anything now. They were flinging bitter words at one another.

“I have nothing more to say to you. Nothing. I have done with you. You are no more my son.... No more my son.”

It was as if his voice died suddenly.

He had come down here to say that very thing, thought Stella, and now that he has discharged his hate he says it as if it had become an unmitigated tragedy for him. And it was. Nothing would have prevented him doing what he has done and now in the very moment of doing it, his gratification is changed to grief!

The old man did not so much shut his mouth at his last sentence of repudiation as slam it and stand lowering before the fireplace. Gemini shrugged his shoulders and turned towards Stella as though he had just remembered she was there.

She had been listening to it all, he realised. What had she made of it all? How did it look in her eyes?

“And now, Stella,” said the Major, untwisting his limbs all at one coup like a conjuring trick, and standing up, “perhaps now that we have heard all this-this edifying row, and your — your young gentleman has been given the key of the street in a proper legal fashion, hats off in court and all that — perhaps now we shall be

allowed to go back to your mother."

Stella was on her feet already and looking alternately at the obviously very miserable but quite implacable old man and then at Gemini's stiff rebelliousness. Didn't Gemini realise his father was practically an old man and bitterly disappointed, none the less bitterly because he had acted stupidly and unreasonably? If she could have worked a miracle, somehow she would have made them shake hands.

She wanted to say some solvent thing.

She said, "I'm sorry."

"Too late, my girl," said the old man. "Won't do now."

"I didn't mean it quite like that. But all this makes me sorry."

"Well," he said, and suddenly stepped forward and stood beside her patting her shoulder a little awkwardly. "Anyhow you're sorry. You at least have feeling and can say you are sorry."

He spoke, as it were, confidentially. It was as if he was obscurely moved to steal away some crumb at least of her youth and vitality from Gemini, even if it was no more than a touch of pity.

4. MIZPAH

"So that's that," said Gemini. "I suppose, Stella, I must look up your train."

Now that the excitement of the row was over and everything was settled, a dark blue depression had descended upon and enveloped him. He felt nothing more about his father. That was over. They had done with each other. He felt nothing but the sheer misery of parting from Stella. He stood up almost noiselessly and moved a pace or so towards the kitchen. He glanced at the Major's hat in the corner. He didn't even want to tread on it. So completely had the heart gone out of him. He opened the kitchen door suddenly and faced a startled Mrs Greedle on the other side. "I was just—" she began.

"You were," he answered. "Mrs Greedle, I have to tell you, if you do not know already, that we are both going away. Mrs Twain's mother, you see, has been taken very seriously ill, very seriously ill indeed, and Mrs Twain has to go to her at once. My father will

probably go by the same train. Yes, that gentleman in grey is my father. You think I take after him? Don't mention it. I shall stay to settle up and follow later. The other gentleman is — an uncle. He is Mrs Twain's uncle. No. Nobody takes after *him*. I don't know why. Give me that local time-table you have on the dresser, please.... Thank you."

He limped back into the room with the pink leaflet in hand. "Twelve fifty-eight," he read. The Major stood holding out his hand for the time-table to assure himself that all was fair and above board. Gemini gave it to him. "We can telephone to have a cab here at twelve thirty-five," he said. "That leaves us about twenty-five minutes. Mrs Greedle, will you please put out some refreshments? Biscuits and things. No sherry! Mr Balch finished that, eh? But there's whiskey."

He looked at Stella. His expression was ambiguous. He turned to his father and hesitated. He became almost propitiatory. "We two can have ten minutes together? There is a word or so...."

"That is a concession to ask of me," said the magistrate, after a moment's consideration. "It is a considerable concession." And then to Stella, to make it clear that he did it for her alone, a stern, evilly-entreated but gallant old gentleman:

"Very well. You can have ten minutes."

"Not upstairs, mind you," said Uncle Hubert, loutish to the last.

"At the back. There's a little path. Quite under observation, Major. Come, Stella."

They went down the garden until they felt they were well out of earshot. "Not much time to talk about it all," he said.

"But I think we know now where we are. The old man can state a case. He can discourse." He spoke like a fellow expert.

"I suppose they ought to have made him something better than a stipendiary. But he was born self-righteous and disagreeable. Is he right and are we just mad to think of reshaping the world? Is the world — perhaps — the invincible lump he says? Started ages ago. Rolling sternly down to wars and disaster so that nothing can stop it?"

"I never felt so full of fight against all that as I do now," said Stella.

“I’d feel full of light perhaps, if my heart wasn’t aching at the loss of you. I’m *aching*, Stella.”

“I ache. Likely I’l1 be at Barnes. I may go back to Newnham. If we can keep all this quiet. Yes. It’s possible. And we’ll learn, we’ll study. Rather than live as he has lived, give me jails, give me trenches, give me hospital wards. He was plausible. In a way he was right. Our world may be the blind ship going nowhere, the aimless damned lie, he says it is. Stick in your comfortable cabin until the ship sinks because there is nothing else to be done. There may be no escape, no hope of a real renewal of the world. All the same, Gemini, what can we do but beat ourselves against it all?”

He did not answer for a moment.

“I wonder,” said Gemini, “how much of that soured, inflexible, vindictive old man there is in me?”

“In *you*!”

“I seem to understand him so well. And see through him. The over-subtlety. That streak of self-pity that came up at last. It makes me afraid.”

“There is something about his reasoning.... But I’m not afraid for you, Gemini.... For him I’m sorry.”

“I’m much more sorry for Dione, for my mother — when he gets home to her. God! He’ll run me down, inventing one evil thing about me after another, until he makes her cry or drives her — scared stiff, sniffing, but nose in the air — from the room.... You’ve never seen him with her as I have. I’ve lived too much in that bitter comedy. Sorry for *him*! No.”

They stood together in silence. They wanted to say deep and intricate things and their words were unready. The bickering in the cottage was too fresh in their minds. They couldn’t forget those missile repartees.

“So we dedicate ourselves,” tried Gemini. “How shall I put it? We two will live all our lives working to release that free and fearless world-state we have dreamt about this happy week — free and fearless — release it from the world of all these people. Great and happy world of abundant living, hidden and buried now beneath the world of all these people. Which is *there*, Stella. Which is *there*. Which we swear by every God is *there*. Does that say it?”

“That says it, I think,” said Stella.

“Prigs we are and we don’t care.”

“Better prigs than rabbits. Better prigs than hogs. Better prigs than worms. Prigs is human, Gemini, and the rest is grunting, snorting, snapping, crawling beasts. Stiff prigs.”

“Great apes we might be.”

“Little apes is all men could rise to be in the animal line. They’ll never get back now to the big black gorilla. I am human. I am self-conscious. I insist I am a Prig.”

“And now before it is too late, let us check addresses and telephone numbers and things, so that we shall make no slips....”

They became very businesslike.

They came back into the garden. His wrist watch seemed to have raced.

“Here we are. Good-bye, Stella.”

“Good-bye, Gemini.”

“It’s for keeps, all this.”

“Keeps for me. And you, Gemini?”

“Keeps.”

“Mizpah, as they say inside the engagement rings. We’re engaged, Gemini. Adam Prig and Eve Prig just turned out of Paradise.”

The word seemed to strike her as she said it. She stopped short for a moment and stared at the cottage. “Oh, dear *dear* Paradise!” She swallowed a sob. “Shall we hold on to all this, or is it just nonsense? Anyhow, Gemini, Mizpah! I’m not crying. No.... Mizpah. The Lord watch between me and thee....”

“Mizpah,” he responded.

Like most English people they thought that was a pledge between two young lovers. They said it in that spirit. They went back into the house and found his father and her uncle waiting in an estranged silence.

BOOK TWO. STELLA HAS TIME TO THINK THINGS OVER

CHAPTER I. EXPERIMENTALIST IN MOEURS

1. DECLARATION OF FAITH

TWO days later Gemini sat on a bedroom chair at a small, bare, ill-balanced writing-table writing a letter to Stella. He had propped up one table-leg with a wad of folded paper, but the table still wobbled a little. The room he occupied was a mean apartment looking out upon a mean street of small hopeless shops; oil and colour merchants, undertakers' accessories, bird staffers, jobbing tailors and the like. It was one of those Victorian London back streets that have survived the rebuilding energy of recent years. The rickety untidy table and a wicker wastepaper basket with one ear torn had been a matter for special negotiation when he had taken this room. There was a capacious chest of drawers with wooden handles made of some red wood and obviously second-hand, on which he had piled a number of books to read and review, and the three valises with which he had left the parental roof still waited on the floor to be unpacked. Beside them was his typewriter, also as yet unpacked.

There was a wash-hand-stand with ewer, basin and so forth nakedly displayed and a small night table bore his shaving things and brush and comb. Over the wash-handstand was a square mirror, slightly blotched, and the walls were papered with a striped paper which did not even pretend to be brighter than it was. The bedstead was iron and brass-knobbed and the bed had a firm simplicity. Two engravings, one of a naked, unappetizing but expectant Odalisque and the other of Etty's *Bather Surprised*, hinted at a tolerant moral outlook on the part of the management. You paid your money and you used your room as you liked, provided you did not give trouble. There was a brown spring blind with a wooden acorn pull and a red wooden curtain-pole with wooden rings carried green and dust coloured curtains.

Two white-shaded electric lights, one on the writing-table and the other in the centre of the room, provided illumination. There was no telephone in the apartment but there was, he knew, a semi-public

twopence-in-the-slot machine on the landing outside.

He was composing a letter to Stella. He was writing in pencil on a pad of manuscript paper, because he felt that typescript was unsuitable for a lover and his fountain pen had, as usual, run He had found it a little difficult to begin. He had written “My dear and lovely Stella” and then he had disliked that. It sounded formal and clumsy. The worst of having literary preoccupations and sensibilities, he reflected, was that they robbed this sort of thing of any spontaneity. He would have liked an uncontrolled effusion of beautiful words, something with the quasi-natural conventionality of a Restoration lover, “My sweete dear Wyfe....”

He wrote on a second sheet; “My sweet dear Stella. Do you remember how those starry white flowers boiled along the hedge in the lane?”

He reflected. just how would she look when she read that? He changed the key. “I said I would write no love letters and this is nothing of the sort. It is a memorandum and as soon as I get a safe address from you I shall post it. I want to set down clearly what we said and agreed about while our talks are still clear in my mind.

“My news is very simple. I have been duly turned out-of-doors and I am installed in a shabby apartment in Duluth Crescent near St Pancras Station. It is not very nice, I find, and I do not intend to stay on here after the week for which I took it, is out. The landlady has a hostile manner and a squint, and a man with beak and eyes like a cuttlefish sits in the room below her and scrutinises you as you come in and picks his teeth with one of his tentacles. My best address therefore will be the Maston Street Labour Club where I do most of my work, or better perhaps, the publishing office as I told you. I am most likely to be at Maston Street on Saturday and Sunday, but for the rest of the week the office is likeliest.

“This place is a mistake. It’s too cheap. It’s absurdly uncomfortable. I am ashamed of myself to be lodged so I took it late on Thursday night because I was tired out and a bit masochist, dramatising myself as an outcast. I thought it became a revolutionist to lodge cramped and slummy. I thought of Lenin in his bed-sitting-room in Geneva. You see, in reality I have still lots of money to carry on with and all that. And resources. Dione M’am, that is to say my

mother, smuggled what is called a ‘useful tenner’ into my bag, pretending it was a forgotten pair of socks. Very like her. I didn’t really need it, but it expressed her feelings. About me and about my father. You’ll love my dear and disingenuous Dione M’am when you meet her. There’s no describing her.

“But to our memorandum?”

He reflected, and the growing politico-social journalist in his make-up took possession of him. Stella became the “dear reader” and ceased to be a desired presence.

“Memorandum

“We have agreed upon certain fundamental things. They are to be our religion and our way of life.

“*Firstly*, we have agreed that it is not true, as my father believes, as the parson believes, as Uncle Hubert believes, as Balch at the bottom of his rhetoric believes, that the present moral, religious, political and social system is an inevitable, irreplaceable growth, in which the best thing to do politically is to manoeuvre about with treaties, leagues, Acts of Parliament and so forth, muddling along, staving things off. They all believe the present system is Necessity and Destiny. It is, they believe (and by this belief they are damned), the unavoidable Course of Events; the inevitable Thing that is; the moving, rolling block of alabaster in front of which we had better dodge about as well as we can, since it cannot now undergo any fundamental alterations in its movement and structure. We deny all that. We refuse to take life at that, even if we are destroyed altogether for our refusal.

“*Secondly*, we have agreed that in this gross, confused, moving and dangerous mass of a world as it is, there is hidden the possibility of a human existence of so general a happiness, such liveliness of interest and such abundance as no living species has ever yet known. Look at flowers, light in a thousand refractions, in sunsets, crystals, ripples, look at beautiful bodies, think of music, art, poetry — there are the mere first intimations of the possibility of life as man might shape it. We believe that by a strenuous readjustment of mental and social life, a good, lovely and continually progressive world could be carved out of this enormous dreadful world of today, as a sculptor carves loveliness out of his block.

"This means that you and I are revolutionaries, to the fullest meaning of the word. That is to say we propose the abolition, supersession or reconstruction of every we'll, every social institution, every organisation in the world which keeps mankind divided and contentious, in favour of a single, rational and steadfastly progressive world system. Our world system includes not only governments but religion and, above all-education. We are against all these rulers and teachers as they exist, we are against them for the sake of our invincible belief in that possible new world. (And here, mark you, Stella, I am putting in more than we said and dotting i's and crossing t's we left undotted and uncrossed.) We want to destroy nothing that can be made over into a new world. Much of the industrial life of the world, most production, can carry on, with a steady rationalisation, an increasing saturation of interest, efficiency and happiness. We simply want to change the spirit of the producer to a spirit of contented and interested world-citizenship.

"For example we do not want to destroy schools and teaching and the intelligence services of the world, press, colleges, research institutions, etc., but we want to expand, regenerate and invigorate them beyond measure, to give all those things concerned in mind-making, enormously greater powers and a vaster responsibility. Nor do we want, for example, to destroy the transport system of the world but to inject it with a broader conception of service. Here, Stella, I economise energy by writing 'and so forth and so on.' Think of every social process in the world, purged of national, sectarian, class or race feeling and say: 'We do not want to destroy... but — .' The great idea that has seized upon us, can come to nothing unless it is an infectious idea and unless we contemplate new-world mechanical workers, new-world planters and plantation workers, new-world seamen and aviators, new-world medical services, etc., etc., all educated and accustomed to regard themselves primarily as owner-operators of the collective community. Their pride and glory must be in their function. They must not attempt either to monopolise or possess. (Sez we.)

"The fundamental social crime (this is a new extension of our idea) is *interception or appropriation* in *any* form. In any form whatever. It is a limited view that makes private property in matters

of common interest and the ‘capitalist system’ the only social evils. There are many other conceivable forms of interception and monopolisation. Class privilege or party rule or official authority or race discrimination can intercept as badly or worse. The subtle variations of interception and appropriation can be detected and controlled only by the constant vigilance of an alert world public opinion. Fixing upon the ‘Capitalist System’ as the central evil in human affairs, was one of the primary blunders of that purblind old pedant Marx. It was merely the current form of interception and appropriation in the nineteenth century. Uncle Robert has cleaned up all that. Thank heaven for Uncle Robert! No doubt there’s something to he said for old Marx, but not now. Not until people have escaped from him.

“The inconclusiveness of the French (There was only one real Revolution in France.) and the Russian revolutions was due, in each case, to too narrow a view of what constituted interception. The French thought it was land-owning and aristocratic privilege; the Russians that it was property. But these are only two forms of what is really a protean enemy. Only an incessantly vigilant, scientific criticism, a penetrating social psychology and unlimited publicity can restrain the universal impulse in man to get the better of his fellow-man. (All this is new so far as we are concerned, but it follows logically upon what we said.) Moreover, there is no reason to believe that revolutions are futile because those two pioneer modern revolutions did not renew the world entirely. Revolution is a collective art that has to be learnt by experiment. Revolution is just like science; it progresses by a succession of experimental failures, each of which brings it nearer success. (So far Uncle Robert and ourselves in independent agreement.)

“Now our turn — where do we two come in? To begin with we come in as devotees and learners, trying out this great idea that has seized upon us, bending it this way and that, making sure of it, making it as simple and communicable as possible. And (new again) we have to avoid the common pitfall of all revolutionaries who are a little aloof from practical experience, which is to over-emphasise some particular slogan or formula, get touchily defensive about its exactness or comprehensiveness and so become doctrinaire. The

more rigid a law is the more it lends itself to systematic and organised distortion and abusive application. In thought, in practical life, just as in law, the letter of the law must be tempered by a vital equity. We must be continually restating our great idea in new phrases and images adapted to the varying circumstances of different types and occupations. Communism, in the West especially, has been largely sterilised by the ossification of its formulae. Our renascent Revolution (1939 pattern) has to keep statement alive and flexible. Ours is a new pattern of revolution. It is Post-Communism.

"*Our* particular line of work seems to be variation and dissemination. We two are ear-marked by our mental qualities and characters to become professional revolutionaries. The general mass of the world will ultimately be in revolution, but our sort has to supply the guides and markers of the movement. That is the life before us, Stella, if what we said meant anything. We have to go about finding other people parallel with or identifiable with ourselves. We have to evoke, parallelise and converge upon whatever disposition to service and cooperation lies in them.

"This is not the same thing as converting everyone to one single creed. The meaning of words and phrases is very elusive, and what is sense to one is verbiage to another. The thing in common is the world in common, *mankind cooperative in variety*, under a common protective law and order.

"We have to play over again the part played by the revolutionary students in the Russia of Czarist days when they set about putting ideas into the heads of the workers and peasants, but we of the 1939 class have to play that part better and on a larger and more varied field. That is our part of the 'Kalikov' job. We have to be, as the Bible puts it, grains of mustard seed, inconsiderable to-day but growing into a vast tree of sustenance and shelter. (My own experience with mustard seed as a small boy was different to that, it grew into a little, low, hot weed, suitable for sandwiches, but I suppose the Holy Land mustard tree is different.) It is the legendary, the parable mustard seed, not the actual stuff sold in packets to the young, that I have in mind, the one that grows into a vast tree that shelters the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. And there are not only our two selves, but presently there will be quite a rush of

other sowers of mustard seed, and together we may produce a mighty continuous forest, quite possibly a mixed — looking forest-to harbour and cover the whole world of mankind.

"I perceive that this new and vaster revolutionary idea of ours is going to produce not stereotyped phrases and formulae, which have been the curse of all revolutionary movements in the past, but whole crops of interesting and stimulating images. Alabaster. Mustard seed. The new type of Revolution is Flexible Revolution. We have produced the metaphor of the sculptor working upon the block of alabaster, and we have expanded that block of alabaster into an obstinately malignant Thing — that-Is, which will pursue and kill us and everything we care for if we do not up and tackle it. That is our Idea Number One. And now here is a new and equally illuminating metaphor lifted straight out of the Gospels to express our method for spreading Idea Number One. Our revised and rallied World Revolution is to be, in the first place, a tremendous sowing of mustard seeds. Until presently we find the New World has overgrown the old and that the thorns and nettles we hated are dead. Something of the jungle has got into my metaphors. But you will understand — and I want to get on to 'Thirdly' before this greasy light fails.

"*Thirdly*, last and culminating article in this memorandum, we two agreed between ourselves that we love each other exclusively...."

Gemini's flow of words ceased abruptly. He pushed the paper-block back and began writing on the blotting-paper before him, "exclusively. Exclusively?" That, surely, was not all he had to say about love. But what came next?

He tried to recall that last conversation he had had with Stella in the bedroom of the cottage. How lovely she had been, perched upon the bed, whimsical and defiant! "Make me!" she had said. He had made her.... But no! Do not think of that. What had they talked about? They had gone over the relationship of sex to political life very thoroughly, he thought, *apropos* Cottenham C. Bower's *The Expansion of Sex*, which now surmounted a pile of books for reviewing on the top of the clumsy chest of drawers. What exactly was the conclusion at which they had arrived?

He remembered now. They had come to no general conclusion at

all. They had left the rules for general sexual behaviour quite open and simply made a declaration for themselves and then lapsed into wrestling and love-making.

But also, he remembered, he had promised to slate *The Expansion of Sex* and show this Cottenham C. Bower no mercy. Why had he promised that? How did that fit in? Because, after all, the man had a case for his general theory. But somehow the mere suggestion of his idea had aroused Stella's resentment. She had evoked an imaginary "sex-shirking" Cottenham C. Bower.... Without the slightest justification in the book, which was, to tell the truth, a good deliberate assemblage and criticism of fact. A very good assemblage.... And something more than that. The book was written with the assumption of a certain underlying philosophy which Gemini was beginning to find novel and interesting. It was, according to his phraseology, *"ultra-behaviouristic."* Cottenham C. Bower was like a window opening upon a Transatlantic vista whose existence had still to be apprehended in Britain. The man was treating sexual conduct from the standpoint of the conditioned reflex, and making a very good case for what he had to say ...

Gemini realised he wouldn't slate this piece of work, if only for the sake of his good name. But if he didn't slate it, he would have to make his review justify his broken promise to her. She would understand that. At the time she had just carried him off his feet.

Queer how she could stand up to him, contradict him and carry him off his feet by something which was not so much reasoning as strength of feeling and a compelling steadiness of mind.

No sex-shirking about Stella, he thought. He recalled her, supple and vivid, her eyes alight and her cheeks aflame, squatting up at the foot of Mary Clarkson's ample bed and punctuating her remarks with that comb. What vigour she had in her swift, unhesitating convictions!

Right or wrong!

She was the best thing in life he had ever encountered. She was better than all the rest of life together. He ceased to struggle against reminiscence. He sat invoking one lovely memory after another from the beginning of their week together until the moment when, valiant to the last, she had turned round as Uncle Hubert stood aside for her

to climb into old Crump's cab and kissed her hand defiantly, calling "Good-bye, my dear!" And then they had carried her off. For how long?

A vast sense of deprivation overwhelmed Gemini at the A immensity and insecurity of this separation. He would certainly never see her for weeks and months yet, and he was all alive at the bare thought of her. He wanted her now. He wanted her most damnably now.

He was going to want most damnably any number of times before ever he set eyes on her again. He would think of her by day; he would dream of her by night.

"Damn!" said Gemini, and tried to pace about the room. But the size of the room and the litter on the floor did not admit of passionate pacing. He had to pick his way.

"Damn!" he said, and sat down in the chair again. He assembled the sheets of manuscript before him and numbered them and pinned them together. Queer stuff, he thought, to write to a young woman you were dying to hug. He had written it at her command. But not bad stuff. It expressed newish ideas with a certain freshness.... But what he ought to be writing about to her was love.

Anyhow this unruly stir in his blood surely gave him the material for the continuation of his letter. Since he was thinking of love-making, he might as well make love by letter. He scribbled out from "Thirdly, last and culminating article in this memorandum" to the end, and wrote instead, "Thirdly, I love you and I want you and I want you here now, body and soul...."

And then again he pulled up. That again seemed to be all he had in his mind. He sat back, harder and harder, until the bedroom chair suddenly expressed a disposition to break under him by an explosive creak. Then he sat forward and rested his chin between his knuckles.

He seemed now to have in mind two different themes struggling against each other. They were part of one original theme but they had split. One strand concerned this review he was going to write about Cottenham C. Bower. He had got an outrageously pedantic phrase in his head upon which he wanted to base his critique. He thought it would be clever to declare that "the living nexus" of human society was a "continually complicating sub-sexual syncytium of originally

separate cells" and it did not occur to him that nobody but a cellular pathologist could ever guess what he was driving at, that anyone who did guess what he was driving at would probably disagree with him, and that finally, if it came to a scrutiny, his use of the word syncytium was loose to the point of inaccuracy. He had, he knew, this trick of becoming abstruse at times, to the great annoyance of his editors and the irritation of their readers; he had been warned; but when he got launched upon a speculation he found it very difficult to restrain himself. He turned his back on his possible reader and played amusing conjuring tricks with words and phrases and suggestions. It was a sort of levity of erudition with him. A private lark. A form of wit.

He really wanted to assert that human society was a vast and intricate family, knit together mainly by mitigated, extended and sublimated sexual feeling. And by sexual feeling he was meaning almost any strong feeling of attraction or repulsion that one living individual could have for another. He was including not only parental and maternal feelings but even sadistic and cannibalistic impulses. What he wanted to deny and replace, was the idea that human society was a rational complex of enlightened self-interest held together by an implicit social contract. In thus restoring sexuality to its priority, he felt he was traversing Bower's argument and getting into a sort of agreement with Stella. His intelligence and her insistence alike, were leading him to a sociology and economics of feelings, rather than a sociology and economics of facts and figures.

But then came a gap in his reasoning and he found it absolutely impossible to recall how it was that he and Stella had got to that very simple and important declaration of their mutual devotion. This "Thirdly" of his was to have been the third arch of the bridge between them, and somehow, when it came to writing it down, it came to pieces. There was indeed no arch there but a space he had jumped.

Now why?

In this elaborate, careful, unavoidably rather pompous memorandum, he was doing his best, he told himself, to meet Stella's wish to have a clearly stated framework of convictions by which they

could live. He was not doing it of his own initiative, he was doing it to meet the demand she made upon him. Clearly it was the right thing to do. Everybody ought to do this sort of thing, everyone above the level of the Balches and bawlers and Uncle Huberts. Everybody ought to set down his creed, whether it was new and home-made or old and established, ought to examine it for ambiguous phrases and make sure that every word of it and every word of elucidation meant something definite to him. He had not only reviewed Stuart Chase's *Tyranny of Words*, he had read it and he stood by it firmly. It was a good, chastening, primary book. Yet until he had encountered Stella's insistence upon clear consistency, he had never attempted anything of the sort for himself. "I admit the need of being definitive," he told himself, "but I like to keep a free mind. She has more character, more strength of character than I. She holds me to what I say."

He repeated: "She holds me to what I say."

He turned that over in his mind.

The light was failing. Should he knock off now and finish this tomorrow? He had been thinking too hard and working too long. Any further work he did now would be against an internal resistance. He had been at this memorandum since half-past two and he had had no tea. How did one get tea in this confounded place? He would have to go out for tea to an A.B.C. if he wanted tea. Bed and breakfast, breakfast brought up to his room on a tray, was all his contract covered, and he had to turn out before ten and keep out until half-past twelve, at earliest, while his room was done. Should he go out and have tea somewhere and then come back and tackle this troublesome "Thirdly"? Or perhaps he might put down a few notes and headings now, to Ex that lovely but possibly elusive "syncytium" idea for example, before he went out for his refreshment? He switched on the electricity and sat down again. To realise a new difficulty.

The electric lamp was disgusting. It was weaker than any he had ever seen before; the bulb was a fading, old one and a minimum one at that; it was inadjustable and it was so hung that the shadow of his hand and arm fell on his writing. It paled the pencil marks. He tried the other bulb and that was no better. Together the two lamps with

their cross shadows gave hardly a light to read by, much less to write down a difficult argument by. It might seem brighter later as the twilight deepened, but for the time it enforced, beyond contradiction, the fact that his spell of work was over.

2. TIME TO BURN

"And now," he said, "what do I do with the rest of the day? Tea perhaps. If one can get tea anywhere after six. And then?"

He surveyed his apartment with ever deepening distaste. Should he come back here and read? In this greasy light? Reading was all he could do, for plainly he was written out for the day. He might sit and think — about Stella? (And then he would be wanting her.) He could not imagine a room less adapted to inactivity. He could go round to the club but in the evening the members crowded in and debated, for the most part, local political issues that bored him. It was not good debating; it was all borough council allusion and repartee. He regretted he was not a member of a larger and better club. He had never felt the need for a reasonably comfortable room to sit about in before. There must be public libraries available, but so far, in his pampered career, he had had no particular use for public libraries and reading rooms. He had applied for a British Museum reading-room ticket but that had not yet arrived. There were one or two people he might ring up, but probably they would be holiday-making now and out of town, and anyhow it would be a little awkward to say, "My father has turned me out of doors. I feel rather like a lost cat this evening. May I inflict myself on you?"

Of course if Mary Clarkson was in town, she'd be only too glad to see him, but there were one or two reasons, shadowy reasons perhaps, why he should hesitate about that.

Why not go for a long, wholesome walk? He had been told to go for walks and not make his lameness an excuse for physical indolence. He could clump along now as well as anyone and hardly notice that his gait was different from the common run. With a stick he could do his three-and-a-half miles an hour for any number of hours. That walk idea was a good one. He had never explored

London as a good Londoner ought to do. It might be a corrective to his too speculative, revolutionary planning, to go observantly through the streets, watching, listening, seeing the various, pulsing, human crowd which is the living substance of the alabaster block. It might allay his nervous unrest. He could observe to his heart's content or walk through it indifferent to it all, thinking his own thoughts. Just now with the stir of the I.R.A. outrages and the intensification of the Air Raid Preparations that were going on, there ought to be a definite feel in the air. Little involuntary lapses from mechanical routine, perhaps....

Presently he was sitting in an A.B.C. consuming dry toast and butter and doing his best to be observant and stimulated. But his mind was too jaded for new impressions. If there had been anything remarkable there he would have missed it. He felt he had never seen such ordinary people, such ordinary waitresses, such ordinary passers-by. "God must make them by the thousand," he thought. "He must rattle them off."

Whatever they had to say about the current crises had already sunk below the level of excitement. "Arrest of the U.B. girl,"

said a newspaper placard but no-one seemed to care a rap about the U.B. girl, whatever she was. He paid his bill and made his limping way to Camden Town and up Haverstock Hill and Hampstead Heath.

There was a certain stir of war preparation going on, blimps floating in the air far above the house roofs and a string of lorries of men in training, bent upon some instructive task, threaded their way through the general traffic. It did not seem to amount to very much. He disliked the way in which the world was drifting steadily from a darkling peace atmosphere towards a permanent state of siege so intensely, that he ignored it as much as he could. It was his business to discover the way to end this universal state of siege and evoke a new way of living, but it was not his business to understand these probably not very intelligent war devices. He believed that the dividing line between peace and war had already vanished and would never be restored. He had been writing and thinking about that so much lately that now he could think about it no further. He tried to. His mind, he found, was as pale and dry as a recently cropped field.

All he could summon was a sort of snarl at all these people working so earnestly and cheerfully upon the details of war making, while they would not give ten minutes consecutive thought to the work of making the New Peace. Even if he worked things out to the last snag and wrote it all down with the vividness of a sky sign, would they care a rap or stir a linger? Damn them!

He began to think of Stella again and then still more of Stella. Or rather Stella became a motionless symbol of desire and longing in his mind. He was not really thinking with any consecutiveness about her. He was merely continuously aware of her absence. He walked along the ridge towards Highgate. A lot of flickering searchlights were waving about in the twilight and exasperatingly incomprehensible red spots were appearing far up in the remote sky. This irritated him. The dome of heaven seemed to be further off than usual, as though it had withdrawn itself from these earnest war inanities. A thin haze, though scarcely visible itself, had veiled the stars. The people who flitted by irritated him also. Mostly they were young couples, more or less intertwined and talking in undertones. They made him acutely aware of his own loneliness. And not simply loneliness but isolation.

Everybody about him seemed busy upon things that they took quite seriously, things with substance in them, while he had been doing nothing all day but work out the conception of a revolution that would certainly seem fantastically unreal if it were put beside any one of these lives. His thoughts would seem the flimsiest fantasy to any of these busy anti-aircraft workers, to all these murmuring lovers, to nearly every living soul indeed, that expressed itself in the haze of lights of London down below there. What was he? Nothing more than the almost disembodied ghost of a highly improbable future....

He was seized with a doubt whether he should go on as he was doing towards Highgate or turn back towards Hampstead. It became a painful irresolution. He wrenched himself round.

It occurred to him that this vacuous state of mind, this loss of reality, might perhaps be due to hunger. He would go down into London and get something to eat. He hesitated outside one or two pubs near Swiss Cottage and again failed to make up his mind; then as he got down into London itself, a highly appealing inn, the

Volunteer, made up his mind for him and he found himself in a warm murmur of company, before a tankard of ale and a steak and kidney pie. A sense of substance returned to him. He sat in his corner and he no longer felt the outcast phantom he had been upon the Hampstead ridge. He was flesh and blood again, not just a distressed wisp of revolutionary theory out of touch with an earnest, stolid world. He would have liked to talk to some of these people about this jolly tavern, about the food, about the parrot in the corner, about the closeness of the weather, but he was shy of starting a conversation. They sat in couples and groups eating, drinking, talking, or rather just making remarks.

"Seems like Hitler's thinking twicet," said a gentleman behind him.

"Seems like it," said his friend.

"You can't tell," said the first gentleman.

"You're right there," said his friend.

End of the remark sequence.

It was really not so difficult. The tension of Gemini's mind relaxed. He began to construct remarks in the model supplied. "Parrot's a bit quiet to-night," was a good one. Then for a reply, "Saving it up." Then like the doxology, "You've said it."

It was like saying "You?" to someone in the dark and getting an answer "Beside you." Nothing more. What he wanted was just some common, human contact before he went back to that cheerless room.

He looked at his wrist watch.

It was only half-past nine. He felt he could not go back yet to that room, that damnable room. Two hours, at least, before that. He might go into some cinema. There was one, he knew, at Madame Tussaud's close by and he seemed to remember one or two in Baker Street. Or he might get in for the second house at the Holborn or Pavilion? That would be better, because that would be solid flesh and blood stuff. He tried to start a conversation with the waitress by asking her advice about these shows, but she was a girl up from the country and busy with many things.

He wanted Stella. He wanted Stella intolerably. He was not quite sure where she was, whether she was at that hydropath at Weston-super-Mare or with her mother at Barnes or with her uncle Robert.

Most probably she was with her mother at Barnes and so within half an hour of him, fenced off from him by a flimsy prohibition. He struggled with the idea of going right off to Barnes now, weeping mother or not. Marching into the house, bearing everything down before him. “I want my Stella,” he would say, “and I want her here and now. She’s mine! Come!” and out he would go with her and carry her off with him to that dismal room of his, suddenly made glorious. That would put the Odalisque in her place and surprise Etty’s *Bather*. A preposterous dream, pure reverie, and yet one he dwelt on disturbingly.

Quite suddenly it came into his mind that he ought at least to ring up Mary Clarkson, though the odds were all against getting her. If for no other reason than because he could talk about Stella to her. He could not understand now what it was had hindered his ringing her up before.

But anyhow he ought to ring her up. It was his duty. He had never thanked her for the loan of her cottage. He had told her nothing of the explosion of Uncle Hubert and his breach with his father. For all he knew she was under the impression that he was still down there with Stella. She ought to understand about that.

He doubted extremely whether Mary would be in town. It was highly improbable she should be in town. At any rate, there was no harm in trying. “Telephone?” he asked.

“In the corner.”

He stood waiting for a reply and he was surprised to discover that his hand trembled.

“Hul-LO!” came Mary’s familiar voice to his enquiry. “That’s my Gemini! I’m all alone in London on my way to Paris. Come right along and see me and tell me all about this war talk. I thought you were down at the cottage....”

“Explain all that,” said Gemini and put down the receiver quickly. He didn’t want to answer her questions until he was face to face with her.

3. MARY CLARKSON WAS AT HOME

Mary admitted him herself. She opened the door discreetly.

"Come right in," she said— "I'm all alone. I've only got a loose wrap on. This stuffy weather...."

Mary was a smooth-skinned, dark-haired young woman round about the early thirties. She had a slender, shapely body and bright brown eyes and whimsical eyebrows. Her mouth, which was slightly askew, smiled readily and when she smiled it became more askew and one cheek dimpled. Her wrap was of some soft, figured, silken stud and it was held together chiefly by a band and her own slender fingered hand. It left her long and interesting neck exposed and gave a glimpse of her pretty shoulders.

"And how was it with that blue-eyed angel, Gemini?" she asked over her shoulder as she led the way along the passage. "Was she all your fancy painted her? Tell me what has happened."

"A sort of explosion. Someone gave us away. Her mother's family have old-fashioned ideas...."

"Yes?" said Mary. She sat down on her sofa, or rather she arranged herself frankly and attractively upon her sofa, and awaited Gemini. He walked past her, without looking at her, and stood staring at her unlit electric radiator.

"Somebody gave us away."

"People will talk. That was bad luck. And then there was a fuss?"

"There was a considerable fuss. I did not know people really had those ideas still. Her mother seemed to think that her daughter's fate was worse than death, and an uncle with a vast moustache and immense riding-breeches went and told my Spartan father—"

"Oh — wo!" said Mary.

"You may well say 'Oh-wo!' They descended upon us together. I was disowned and cast out in a brace of shakes. The old man was pure Tincture of Quinine. Stella has gone back to save her distressed mother's life. And it's a pretty lurid mess altogetl1er."

There was a pause.

"Maybe that isn't so bad."

"*How* isn't so bad?"

"You were there — a week?"

"Six days."

"Pure passion? You love her, Gemini?"

“I just can’t live without her any more. I can’t tell you — . She’s — . One can’t *say* these things, Mary.”

“You can’t. And with the passion still glowing and mounting, came the end. Before you could be tired, before you had a hint of repetition. At the very crest. No fatigue. No satiety. No chance of any sort of *Lucky* Gemini. You’ve had perfection. Naturally the real world seems a black place to come back to.”

“Don’t mock, Mary. I’m most damnably miserable. I’m in love with Stella — all over. I want her and I want her. And so far as I can see I may not set eyes on her again for weeks or months.”

“It’s hard lines on you, my dear. But all the same — . Perhaps we don’t begin to feel the real edge of love — . Perhaps we have to be wrung to get the quintessence of love out of us.”

“I could dispense with the wringing. I want Stella.”

He stood looking obstinate and slightly puerile, with his hands in his pockets, and an air about him of reproaching Mary for his deprivation. She sat with a pretty, bare arm along the back of the sofa and studied his averted profile.

“You want Stella,” she said and reflected. “Gemini! How long do you think Stella might have lasted if the uncle with the big moustache hadn’t intervened?”

He turned to her and stood sideways. “What do you mean? Lasted?”

“If it had gone on. At the pace I guess things *were* going on.”

“Have *you* never been in love, Mary?”

“One case at a time, Gemini.”

“I’m in love. I’m utterly, absolutely and completely in love with Stella. I want her. I want to live with her. I ache for her. And you talk of the pace — . We *had* only four more days left....”

“But then you meant to go on — at intervals. Quietly. When you got a chance.”

“Unti1 we could marry.”

She nodded her head gravely. She looked at him steadfastly and the wry mouth broke into an amiable smile. “And now. It is only going to be rather more difficult. That’s all. She will go on with her studies?”

“If they let her.”

“And you will go on with your work?”

“If I can. But while I want her — . I can’t work. It’s so hard to explain things to you Mary. You are different somehow. It isn’t — . It isn’t all just a case of physical passion.”

“I quite understand that, Gemini.”

“It’s far more her personal quality. It’s real love, Mary. If she came into this room and stood there — .”

“You’d want to cry.”

“How did you know that, Mary?”

“I happen to know.”

“It’s *her*. It’s not desire. It’s not in the least desire. It’s an intolerable longing. You don’t understand.”

“Perhaps I know more about love than you imagine, Gemini.”

“You’ve always seemed — . But you have, Mary! — to take these things lightly.”

“How do you know, Gemini? What do you know of me? Anyhow I know your heart aches. Would you like to talk to me about her? Sit down here on the sofa by me and just talk about her. It will do you good.”

“Perhaps it will,” said Gemini, and sat down.

“Well?” she said. She moved a trifle nearer to him and watched his face with a faint, affectionate smile. “Tell me about her.”

“She has,” he said, “a peculiar straightness and clearness of mind.”

“Like that voice of hers.”

“You’ve noted it. Clear-cut and decisive like a clean, bright sword. I suppose, Mary, I have really a more vigorous brain than hers, more copious and original, as people say, but she has a quality of discrimination and judgment.... I have a feeling I shan’t be able to go on thinking and working now without her.... The need of her mind close to mine....”

He stopped short.

“The need of her mind close to yours.”

“Yes.”

“Dear Gemini,” she said, “how well I understand this,” and she ran her hand softly through his ruffled hair. He seemed to he unaware of her caress. “Poor heartache!” she said. “It’s dreadful to see you of

all people miserable."

Very gently she stroked her cheek against his forehead and kissed him in the corner of his eye.

He sat very still and she made no further move for a moment or so. He seemed to be lost in thought. He was reeking with self-pity.

Then she kissed him on the mouth and then with increasing significance kissed him again. He turned towards her, put his arms about her shoulders, from which her wrap had slipped, and gave her kiss for kiss.

While she detached his collar and stud, he was moved to speech.

"Oh, Mary," he said, "if only you knew."

It was his last attempt at conversation.

4. REALITY

Gemini sat on the floor with his back to the sofa. Mary brought him a whiskey and soda and put it conveniently for him. She had also got one for herself. She stretched herself full length upon the sofa with her flushed, subtly triumphant face close to his. "*Well*," she said, ruffling his hair. "For the last half-hour or so there has been a singular dearth of conversation in this flat, Gemini. I think the time has come now for human speech again."

Gemini was still visibly despondent. "What is there to be said?"

His note was a note of tragic self-condemnation.

"A lot of things, my dear, and some very important things. And first and foremost, you know a lot more about yourself than you did an hour ago."

"I do," said Gemini, ruefully.

"Do you realise that when I answered you on the telephone, you knew as well as I did that this was bound to happen?"

Silence.

"Answer me."

"Perhaps I had a vague sense of it as a possibility."

"You had. That was as plain as daylight."

"No, I don't think I had."

"The first answer was right."

“And here I am.”

“Looking needlessly perplexed. You have been perfectly natural and rather silly and charming. And so young!”

“I’m older now. I’m much older, Mary. I thought I knew how I stood to these things. Now I don’t. I would like to throttle myself. Mary, does *this* seem all right to you?”

“Perfectly lovely,” she said, and kicked her pink heels in the air.

“But haven’t you — a real lover?”

“Am I in love with anyone, you mean. N o. Is anyone in love with me? Not that I know of, though the imagination of man’s heart is only stupid continually. I love you — and most bright and lively people. I make love less than you think, but on this close, heavy evening, everything was for it. But love! Not for many years have I had that hungry craving for everything, give and receive, from another human being. I can’t imagine the man. What a marvel, what a lovely he’d have to be! The silliest of Plato’s *Dialogues* was the one where he said, or somebody said, Socrates or somebody, that human beings were all made in pairs and split and separated and sent to look after each other. I’ve never met my pair. Or anything like my pair. Can you imagine him? I think that even with the people who are really in love with one another, heartaches and all, there’s a lot of — accommodating illusion. Not that your Stella isn’t a lovely piece of life. She’s a darling. But now, Gemini, here are two remarkable bits out of my mature wisdom. First you are far more honestly and deeply in love with Stella than you were, in your state of jangling nerves, two hours ago.”

“That’s certainly true,” said Gemini.

“And secondly, if Stella knew of this — incident—”

“Don’t you tell her!”

“I think it’s up to you to tell her, and sooner or later you will. It will ooze out from you. But I can hold my tongue on occasion. Nothing has happened to — night — nothing. It’s obliterated. If she knew of this, I say, she would be far less upset about it than you imagine. If she’s been living with you for six continuous days and nights and hasn’t got your measure in these matters, she’s not the girl I take her for. See? What would bother her most would be the question of whether you liked making love with me to any

comparable extent.... Can your intelligence grasp that?"

"I think it would hurt her — anyhow. It would hurt her most abominably."

"You're still very young, Gemini. I don't know.... Most men keep that sort of pompous puerility, I suppose, all their lives. *Why*, I can't imagine. They don't want to hurt the poor dear innocent little, leetle, *leetle* woman. The female of the species, let me tell you, by the age of fifteen has a clearer sense of reality in these things than most men have to the doddering end of their days. The stuff women in love have to put up with! Oh!... Well, well."

"Wise woman you are, Mary."

"You stifled a yawn just then. Oh, yes, you did. Let your wise woman friend tell you to dress now and be off home."

"You seem to get a lot out of life, you know, Mary."

"One way and another, Gemini. I am a student of human behaviour. I am — how shall I call it? — an experimentalist in *moeurs*."

"I've heard it called all sorts of things," said Gemini, "but never that."

"There your intention was ."

"Didn't *mean* to be rude."

"High time you were home. It's nearly twelve and I have a train to catch early to-morrow." She stood up.

"Get up," she said, "look me as honestly in the face as you can and kiss me friendly-like like one friend kissing another...."

In the taxi-cab Gemini found a great desire for sleep struggling with remorse.

Back in his gaunt apartment, he did his best to keep awake and think this business out. He felt the situation required it. He sat on his bed, urging his mind to the task. "How can I tell her?" he asked himself again and again.

"Of course the whole thing was inconsecutive — irrelevant. As — what's his name? Cottenham C. Bower put it...."

(Yawn.) "If a thing is irrelevant that means it doesn't really matter. So why trouble her with it?... But suppose somehow she found out. Of course Mary would never actually tell her or anybody, not for the sake of telling, but she might easily let it out by way of

illustration when she was talking.... I wonder how Stella would look and what she would say, if she found out in some roundabout fashion....”

Not for the first time, there came a flash of resentment at Stella’s power to enforce her standards upon him. If she found out before he told her, he would feel like a sneak.... He would feel like a sneak. She would make him feel like a sneak. And yet had he really behaved like a sneak? He tried, with his drowsing mind, to recall the exact sequence of events — quite unsuccessfully....

Or a cad? By certain standards.... All sorts of people would agree that he had behaved like a cad. He found that offensive word beating upon his mind. In some way his father and Uncle Hubert blended now with an accusing Stella. He felt their convergent disapproval. “You have behaved like an intolerable cad, Sir. Cad. Cad. Cad.... Within three days you have betrayed her. Betrayed her....”

He was nodding. He sat up with a start. “Think this out,”he said.

The thing to do, he told himself, was to dismiss that amazing and unexpected interlude altogether; forget about it. Treat it as if it hadn’t happened. And never do anything of the sort again. Never. Never. Wipe it up and say no more about it-according to the excellent precept of Uncle Shandy....

Manifestly this — all this — could not go on. This London was too easy and not-exacting enough. He must do something strenuous — go away. He couldn’t stay here in this too convenient London, to be a prey to these spasms of bored desire, these dangerous pieces of stagnant time.

Before the rest of his friends came back from the holidays. Before all the old associations came back.... He must make a break. He must do something strenuous and grimly serious. The war in Spain was no longer a possible refuge from perplexity, but there was, for example, Russia. One could always go to Russia. And there were things to be done in America. Or shipping before the mast.... And — all sorts of things.

He was too tired to think. No, not tired but drowsy, softly and overwhelmingly sleepy. Never had he felt such a Midsummer Night “exposition of sleep.” No good trying to think any more now. He must face this harsh situation to-morrow. He dropped his clothes

about him on the floor, as though he was still living in a world of ministering parlour-maids, and he got into that firmly simple bed. It did not bother him in the least that the lights moving about in the street outside were reflected in an ever-changing pattern on the ceiling. The street noises signified nothing. Hardly had his head touched that severe bolster-pillow when dreamless sleep submerged him.

CHAPTER II. STELLA HAS TIME TO THINK THINGS OVER

1. THE MARRIED LIFE OF MRS PHILIP KENTLAKE

MRS LUCY KENTLAKE, Stella's mother, had her daughter's blue eyes and an expression of generalised anxiety that was all her own. She moved quietly about in a world that she felt might pounce upon her at any moment. She had a mouse-like unobtrusiveness and a mouse-like tenacity for crumbs. She took after her mother, who died of the shock of producing her. She was quite unlike her elder step-brother Hubert Polydore or her father, who were both sudden, startling characters who seemed to like making people jump. They admired her, they idolised her, they thought her angelic, and they saw as little as they possibly could of her. Her father married for a third time and unhappily. His third wife was vociferous and alcoholic. She drove Hubert to those seaside livery-stables, from which he never completely emerged, and Lucy was sent away from home and brought up by two maternal aunts who kept a boarding-school for young ladies.

Her behaviour was impeccable; she learnt all she was given to learn and nothing that it was undesirable to know; she was most useful in the school; she took the LL.A. at St Andrews and the licentiateship of the College of Preceptors in her teens, and she was alert, but not brilliant, at games, always excepting croquet where she shone. She was a good pianist and a careful, wearing-down chess player. Her mathematics were so good that it was a matter of great regret to her aunts that the family resources did not allow her to go to Cambridge, where she would certainly have been a Wrangler, perhaps even "above the Senior Wrangler." Also she read a good deal, often wondering at the things she read in what was recognised as literature, but never saying anything about it to anybody. She peeped a little at art when nobody was looking, and she thought that the classical world must have been a terrible time to live in, before Christianity came along and adjusted its costume. Her aunts felt she was destined to a distinguished educational career. They deplored a

certain limitation of her opportunities and they wished at times she had more self-assertion, but that they thought would come in time.

All these quietly bright hopes were shattered by a botanist. Philip Kentlake ought never to have been allowed to be a botanist. But the aunts did not understand this before it was too late. He came down to give the Windstromer Lectures at Bristol, and there seemed no reason at all why Lucy should not attend the course. She went off in her figured sateen, shy as a violet and looking as pretty as any bright-blue flower you like to name.

Now this Philip Kentlake was the younger brother of that Dr Kentlake people were beginning to hear about, even in those days. The aunts knew that Dr Kentlake was a brilliant writer, but nobody had ever warned them that he was a sceptic. Nor did they know that Philip, when he was quite a boy, had wandered off to the East collecting specimens, had lived for a time in Cochin-China in a quasi-native state, before he came back to do some startling experimental research upon mutations at Kew, researches and discoveries that had involved him in controversies in which his mixture of rudeness and exasperating brilliance had given grave offence to all the leading figures of the botanical world. It was beyond the imaginations of the aunts that botanists could lead stirring lives. They thought botany was knowing the Linnaean name of everything and drying it between blotting paper for a Hortus Siccus, and what could be nicer than that? They had heard of the loves of the plants but they believed that these were singularly free from the slightest suspicion of coarseness, an example to the whole animal kingdom; and they saw Lucy go off with a box of coloured pencils and a brand new notebook, without the slightest apprehension of evil.

Philip Kentlake was not quite the sort of man Lucy had expected but unfortunately he proved a very interesting sort of man. He had large, irregular features that gave a false impression of power, a shock of fair hair, very heavy eyebrows, and an upper lip that fell over the lower one in a queer, oblique way that made you want to look at it again. It was determined and it was irresolute; the mouth of a man at once obstinate and impulsive. He had an extremely ingratiating, soft voice. She had expected something much more in the vein of Charlotte Brontë's Mr Heger, a botanical Mr Heger with

whom a delicately green and quite inconclusive affair of mutual attraction might be possible.

She followed the lecture with close attention and when question time came she was the only student to ask intelligent questions or, indeed, to betray the slightest indication of understanding the lecturer's not very luminous exposition of Mendelism and de Vries. The rest of the class sat mum, entirely on the defensive. It dispersed in due course and left the two together. He offered to show her some microscope slides and a series of photographs of plant experiments. He promised to bring and lend her a book at the next lecture. The aunts, suspecting nothing, rejoiced at the prospect of adding botany to the school curriculum, and imagined a soundly Linnaean lecturer in restrained whiskers and a frock coat, knowing all the plants of the world by name and repute. They thought that plants were all green things with gaily coloured flowers; they knew only the bee and the common orchid, not the rarer orchids; they did not suspect the indecorums of which fungi can be capable.

Philip Kentlake had long felt the need for a steadying influence in his life. He was getting bored by this genetic stuff, which was becoming more complicated and less exciting every day. He had been trying to paint and showing signs of being a colourist, and he had had several bright but ultimately disconcerting love adventures. He could not refrain from using his attractive voice and his solicitous manner on women, and afterwards it was difficult to get away from them. His income, derived chiefly from research grants, scientific writing, a small parcel of investments and gifts from his brother, was precarious. He felt that to have love at home always at hand and a real need for an income would pull him together and make a man of him. This little piece of earnest delicacy, he felt, was all too good for him. Something he would really have to live up to. He walked with her in the Dean's garden after his last lecture and suddenly surpassed her wildest dreams about him, by asking her very humbly and sweetly to marry him.

She burst into tears, tears of horror and hysterical resolution. Aunts or no aunts she meant to accept. Never in her life had she refused a crumb that was offered her. She made a considerable resistance before she accepted him, would not let him kiss her on the

mouth more than once, and went off in a mood of dismayed but implacable resolution to her aunts. They felt it was dreadful; they thought every marriage was a betrayal of all that was best in woman; even before they saw him. When they saw him, they felt their little niece had a depraved heart. He was not at all what they felt a botanist should be. He was almost sinuously attractive. Not very much was said, but much was implied, and there was quite a lot of sudden clutchings and weepings. “Such an end to our dreams!” But when they called in her father and her brother, they seemed to think it was a perfectly natural thing for Lucy to marry. All they insisted upon, with a faint flavour of menace in their voices, was that Philip should be “good to our little girl.”

“You don’t know what our Lucy means to us,” they said to him, and except for the sentiment of the thing Philip felt that they did not know themselves.

Philip would allow the aunts only the shortest time to replace Lucy in their school. Nothing would put him off. His brother Robert appeared, a dreadful man, a sort of superlative to Philip who never looked at you and seemed to see everything, and he made two alarming remarks. One was that he had often seen Philip in love before but never like this, and the other that if anything in the world could sober down Philip it was Lucy. She went off in a dove-grey costume for a brief honeymoon in Brittany, and Philip proved a gentle, skilful but insistent lover. It was all very dreadful and secret and beyond her aunts’ imaginations. “I suppose,” he remarked, “I have never known what a pure woman was before,” and further that he rather liked it. For a time he did like it very much. He found a freshness in a young wife who was shocked and protesting but never sincerely inappreciative whenever he made love to her. She insisted upon darkness and the decorum of a nightgown; it was a sort of inversion of the fable of Cupid and Psyche; and you never made any allusion to the indelicate side of marriage during the day.

So it was that Stella was conceived before her parents had ever seen each other in the costume of Adam and Eve. Then the magic began to wear off this new aspect of life for Philip. He was guilty of occasional facetious remarks and one day he came suddenly into the bathroom before she could snatch a towel. “I didn’t half know how

pretty you are," he said, but that did not altogether reconcile her to this exposure. Her horror of nudity was rooted too deeply to be dispelled by a few words of flattery. Regretfully she had to realise that he was a rude man, a very rude man. A certain impatience presently replaced the worship and deliberation of his earlier approaches. The ruder and more enterprising he became the more she shrank back into herself. He actually proposed to paint her without her clothes, making a picture of her for everyone to see!

"Very well," said he, "then I must get a model."

"In my home!" cried Lucy in horror....

By the time Stella was four years old she was already living consciously in an atmosphere of tension. She could not remember a time when her mother was not a martyred woman and her father an inexplicable series of incongruous acts. Sometimes he was wonderful and delightful beyond measure, dabbing fantastic pictures for her or singing confidential songs to her in that soft, rich voice of his. Sometimes he was incredibly powerful lifting her to the ceiling, holding her up above all the world. ("Put her down," said Lucy. "You'll drop her.") In the garden at times he would whistle and dance and the whole world danced with him. He took your hands and you danced too. You went on dancing while he clapped his hands to the rhythm. Nobody in all the world could play the tin-whistle as he played it. Or he would take you for a walk and tell you the names of flowers and make nonsense rhymes about them. The older Stella grew, the more she appreciated him. But sometimes he was still and moody, telling his daughter, telling his own pet little Stella, not to bother him, even to "shut up." When he went to the attic with the skylight to paint you had to keep out of the way. He would come down later for a meal and say, "I've done something. I've really got something," or he would come down moody. "I'm no good. Painting is *hell*."

"Oh, Philip!" Lucy would say. "Not in front of the child."

There were breakfasts of silent tension; Mother still and reproachful; Daddy muttering, "Oh *Lord! What* a life!" and getting behind the newspaper.

At first Stella felt the restraining influence of her mother chiefly in relation to herself. Mother was frustration. If you let yourself go in

front of her, she would say “Stella! Stella! Is that the little lady?” If you wanted to do anything very much, you had to conceal it from her or else she would say, “Do you think you’d *better*, Stella?” Then it became plain that Father suffered from the same restraints. “Don’t tell your mother,”

Philip would say, and by the time she was seven Stella was a blind partisan. “My father right or wrong,” was her unformulated principle. They were fellow conspirators in a hundred small breaches of their uneventful life.

Yet it tried and perplexed Stella sorely that her father could have the heart to go away from her as he did when she was eight. It was the manner of his going that hurt. He might at least have let her know he was going. Had she ever told on him? Had she ever let anything out? But he never said a word about it to her, never left a note for her, never said anything by way of “Good-bye.” He just vanished out of her life. After two days she asked: “Mummy, where is Daddy?”

“Don’t ask about him,” said Mother. “Don’t mention him.”

“Why?”

“Never mind why....”

Two days later she asked: “But, Mummy, where is Daddy?”

“I don’t know,” said Mother. “I know no more than you do. *Oh! Oh!*” And she wept and would not be consoled. Then he must have written, and the stagnant sense of absence was replaced by the appearance of Uncle Hubert, very audibly indignant, about the house, except in the actual presence of Stella, when he became leakily discreet and talked artificially about irrelevant topics. Mother wept in gusts and was seized by tear-storms and went out of the room at unexpected moments. “Gaw!”, Uncle Herbert would say in heart-torn sympathy. “Poor little woman.” Her eyes were swollen, her face was tear-stained and she never produced a handkerchief that was not wringing wet. “You must take care of your mother now, Stella,” said Uncle Hubert. ‘You’re all she’s got.”

“But where has Father gone?”

“You’ll know that when you’re older, little lassie. There’s no need for you to know of such things before your time.”

“Has he gone to Paris, Uncle Hubert?”

“Bless my heart!” said Uncle Hubert. “Now where did your little

ears pick up *that*?"

"He used to say he'd never be able to paint unless he went to Paris. Not really paint."

"Gaw!" said Uncle Hubert. "He told you that! As though one couldn't paint anywhere! That's his excuse. I never heard such rot. The truth is — but never mind what the truth is."

Stella remained attentive, but Uncle Hubert said no more. That night Lucy decided to break things to her daughter.

"I have something very, very sad and very, very serious to tell you, darling?

"About father?"

"About your father. He has gone away from us. He says — he says. Oh! he says he does not want us any more."

Grief in a torrent. The child sat up in her chair attentive, enquiring and profoundly unsympathetic. She decided to ask a question.

"Has Daddy gone to paint in Paris? He always wanted to paint in Paris."

Mute assent.

"Why haven't we *all* gone to Paris?"

"He says he doesn't want us there. He says it wouldn't be Paris with us there."

Stella looked at her mother and said nothing. She said nothing because she did not know how to formulate the shadowy question in her mind. But if that question could have taken form, it was "Did he say *us* or *you*?"

Lucy perhaps read something of the unshaped thought beneath her daughter's stillness. She felt Stella ought to get things right from the outset.

"He's (wow) deserted us," she cried with a new access of grief. "You have no father now. All we have now is each other. My poor darling, you do not realise yet — . Oh, my *poor* darling!"

She embraced Stella with effusion.

Stella had nothing to say. She submitted passively. She was thinking very hard about mothers and fathers and all sorts of things and, in particular, what life with mother as her only parent was going to be like. She was markedly thoughtful at afternoon school. The girl with whom she was trying to be confidential friends, noticed it and

asked direct questions.

"I think," said Stella, weighing her words carefully, "I *think* my father has eloped."

"How *romantic*!" said the friend. "Is she very beautiful?"

Stella considered this. She found it a most disagreeable idea that her father should have eloped with anybody but herself. "I don't think he has eloped with anybody," she said with conscientious precision. "I think he has just eloped."

2. THE INSATIABLE MOTHER

Uncle Robert had larger features than his brother Philip, and a habit of delivering careful but inexplicable judgments at the slightest provocation. His nose in particular was larger and rode high. He did not look at you as he talked; he seemed to be looking at the Real Truth of the Matter above you. He had a considerable private income and so he claimed a certain financial authority in the readjustment of the situation.

His words to Lucy were formally sympathetic, but his expression was one of happy serenity at the turn things had taken. It all went on over Stella's head, but she kept her eyes and ears open as the most deeply interested party.

She caught Uncle Robert alone in the garden. "Uncle," she said abruptly. "I think I ought to go to a good boarding-school now. Mother—"

Uncle Robert held up his hand. "Never explain," he quoted from Oscar Wilde. "Never explain." He was always accustomed to speak to Stella as one adult to another. "There *are* no good boarding-schools, my dear. Especially for girls. Human nature is such that there are not. But you can go to a great day school in London. We can manage that. You can both live in London. Picture galleries, museums, libraries, theatres, films, choice of friends. You will have to be careful not to get a cockney accent. It is very easy and insidious. That is the worst danger. I will give you a life ticket to the London Library as soon as it is possible. How about that?"

He'd got it all ready. A great and inextinguishable love for him

sprang up in Stella's heart. She nodded, too full for words. She nodded three swift little nods.

"*You'll* be all right," said Uncle Robert hastily as Uncle Hubert appeared from the house. Uncle Robert, she realised, could give one the ghost of a wink, just like Father used to do. And though she did not know it, he was marvelling at the feats of heredity, so that Stella could have her mother's blue eyes and fair hair (but coarser instead of its being silky) and yet have Kentlake peeping out of her every expression.... Discussions went on and, though they had a way of stopping short when Stella came into a room, she heard quite enough of them. Mother, it seemed, wanted a divorce. "Let him be free," she said, "I will not be selfish. He never really loved me. If anyone else can make him happier—", and Uncle Hubert, in duologue with Uncle Robert, held that "Lucy ought to have another chance while she's still fairly attractive." But Uncle Robert seemed to oppose the divorce idea.

"You can't divorce a man for going off to Paris to paint," he said. "It's desertion perhaps. If you have any reason to suppose — . If there is anyone else...."

"If you knew him as well as I know him," said Lucy....

"That's not actually evidence," said Uncle Robert. "What I mean is, is there anyone in particular?..."

Oddly enough Stella never learnt if her mother divorced her father. She never saw him again and she heard very little more about him. His name was taboo. Perhaps he wasn't divorced ever. He died suddenly when she was thirteen and her mother wept copiously and put her into the most emphatic mourning. It set all the girls at school asking inconvenient questions. If he painted any worth while pictures he did it under some different name and she never heard anything about them. No stepfather, no potential stepfather even, ever appeared. Uncle Robert had his way about the London schooling and kept his eye upon her by occasionally taking her out to lunch at bright and amusing restaurants and three or four times to matin?es and once to Covent Garden in the evening to see an opera by Rossini. That was a great occasion.

He always took her out alone and he was always charming to her, informing, watchful and heartening. He never did anything to

disguise the fact that he had not the slightest use for his sister-in-law. He treated her always with disentangling politeness.

Disentangling dutifulness was Stella's form of conduct. She called her mother "darling" and "dearest" by request, unconsciously she reduced these endearing words to the coldest of formalities, and she acquired a habit of solicitude for Lucy's little ailments while really she was thinking of quite other things. Lucy was very wary of chills and draughts and it was necessary to fetch shawls and smelling salts for her with conspicuous assiduity. "I don't know what I should do without my Stella," she used to say. As Stella grew up, Lucy developed a tendency to dress in practically the same clothes. "We are so alike; we might be taken for sisters."

A remote expression was Stella's only comment. As time went on Stella could have given points, in the art of unobtrusive detachment, to a cat. She would turn up at home with the cook's latch — key about midnight and an air of having spent a studious evening in her room. If her mother asked questions she was always truthful but restrained. "It was Phyllis Buxton's birthday party darling. I asked you about it weeks ago. You do forget things, sweetheart. Phyllis Buxton? She's a cousin of Lord Rampole. It was *dull*, but you see I *had* to go, hadn't I, Mummy?"

Even before she went to Newnham Stella had extended her freedoms to an occasional week-end with imperfectly specified friends. Newnham had been dangled before her nose by Uncle Robert for a year before it was actually achieved. He had realised a growing restlessness in her and he appeased it with anticipations.

"Adolescence, inexperience and freedom," he reflected, "make a highly explosive mixture." And he looked up some of his earlier writings. He had always been a great Liberator of Minds, and now he understood better why so many parents protested at the wide circulation of his books. Did he go too far? Was he too outspoken? He reconsidered his reasoning and found it clear and sound. He wouldn't abate a word of it. Growing up is what youth is for. "She's got to live dangerously like all the rest of creation," he said, and went off to climb dangerously in Switzerland, away out of call when the crisis arrived.

And now it seemed to Stella as if the whole edifice of her freedom

was shattered. She felt defeated and fierce. She played the insulted young lady to Uncle Hubert and got him well in hand, civil and taciturn and prompt to open doors, before she reached home, but she knew the real battle would begin when she met her mother. During most of the journey home she rehearsed possible gambits. They were all rather in the form of argumentative statements in reply to a possible indictment. In the end she was completely unprepared for her mother's greeting. The little maid opened the door to them and ushered them in to Lucy, sitting motionless in the twilight with a tear-stained face before an unlit fire. She remained motionless, tragically motionless, while the servant was present.

"Well here we are!" said Uncle Hubert, trying his best to cheer things up a bit, and the situation hung in silence while the door closed behind the little maid.

Then Lucy turned slowly, weeping now more distinctly. She wiped her eyes. She gulped and spoke. "Why have you done this to me, Stella? Why have you done this to me? Didn't I love you enough, my poor child? Wasn't I enough for you? We were so happy together, you and I. just we two together. Oh, my dear! My dear, dear child. I have no harsh words for you. None. I forgive you. I forgive you. But the grief, the sorrow you have caused me!"

Then Stella should have howled aloud with love and penitence and flung herself into her mother's arms and Uncle Hubert, choking with emotion, should have left them together, stealing away. But instead Stella stood unresponsive in the middle of the room and considered the problem before her. She had the irritating habit of waiting for a moment as if to make sure her mother had finished.

"I'm sorry, Mother, you have taken things like this," she said. "I really do not see why there should be all this fuss. As though something horrible had happened."

Lucy stopped weeping in sheer astonishment. She clenched her sodden handkerchief in her hand. She stared at her daughter. "You mean," she said, incredulous, "that nothing has happened?"

"All sorts of things. We were having a lovely holiday, Gemini and I-I told you I was going to — until Uncle came down uttering the most extraordinary threats and abuse."

"You mean to say," said Mrs Kentlake very solemnly and slowly,

“that nothing whatever happened? That you stayed with a man in a cottage for six days and nights and nothing dreadful happened?”

“Not until Uncle came down, dear,” said Stella. “*He* was dreadful. I never heard such language, Mother.”

“Well I’m *damned*!” said Uncle Hubert with emphasis and got out of the room hastily, before Stella could say anything ladylike and unanswerable to him.

“He didn’t even attempt,” began Lucy still more portentously, in a low, deep voice.

“Mother, you are *disgusting*, said Stella. “I didn’t think it of you.”

“You mean — ?”

“I mean just that,” said Stella.

“But — ,” said Lucy baffled.

She wanted to ask definitely whether her daughter was still a virgin and so forth and so on, but so great was her agoraphobia of plain language that she was no more capable of putting such a question directly, than of playing matador in a bull-fight, naked before ten thousand people.

“If I could only believe that it was all right,” she said with a wistful incredulity. And then; “But it isn’t all right! It isn’t all right. I feel it.”

“I think, Mummy, your imagination runs away with you,”

said Stella, facing it out sturdily. “*Everything* was *quite* all right.”

“You really *mean*—”

“Oh, Mother, how can you? It’s indecent.”

That was as far as they got in the way of *?claircissement*.

There was very little doubt in Mrs. Kentlake’s mind what the true answer to her unspeakable question was, nor any doubt in Stella’s of her mother’s opinion. But Lucy had come to her limit of plain speaking. She shifted to another aspect of the situation. “But suppose it is all right,” she said. “What are people going to think about it? What are people going to say? What am I to tell them? Have you thought of that? No one will believe — ... Going away with a man! Staying in a house with a man. Night and day. No chaperone. What is the world coming to? No decent people will receive you.”

“No decent people are going to bother about it, Mother. And they will thank you not to be bothered about it. You haven’t moved with

the times, darling. You poor dear, how worn and wretched you look! Let me get your smelling salts and make a cup of tea for you. Or a cocktail.... I know you don't touch them usually, but we shan't have supper for half an hour yet. Just a little weak, heartening cocktail."

"It's letting you go to Newnham. It's trusting to your Uncle Robert...."

Stella went to mix two dry Martinis and see what there was for supper. She was very hungry. It seemed a hundred years ago and in another world that she had waved good-bye to Gemini, standing in a deflated state on Mary Clarkson's porch. Here she was back from love in fairyland, with Mother rather worse than ever. "Drink that, Mother," she said. "Oh, it's not nice. No. I know you can't *bear* alcohol. But swallow it down. As medicine. It will do you good. It's your duty, darling. I don't think very much of cold mutton and trifle, by way of a fatted calf. Never mind. Let's both have a wash and get comfortable. No good crying over spilt milk, Mummy."

"Spilt milk!" said Lucy in a harrowing whisper. "I *knew*—"

Stella passed on hastily to another subject. "I suppose Uncle Hubert will be back in time for supper. He'll get his own cocktails, I expect, in one of the pubs in the Broadway. I think he might just as well have caught the late train down. His horses must be missing him. And now, dear, since nothing has really happened, let's try and pretend that nothing whatever has happened, that everything is just as it always has been. Let's put a brave face on all these *dreadful* suspicions and misunderstandings — and talk about something else. Come," she said, and put her arms about her mother, lifted her up out of her chair and kissed her for the first time since her return.

"If I hadn't believed your Uncle Robert," said Mrs Kentlake, yielding to Stella's familiar ministrations....

So it was the Prodigal Daughter came back to her mother. And from that conversation onward Mrs Kentlake never made the slightest pretence of supposing that her daughter was still an innocent who had to be sheltered from the terrible realities of life. It released things long pent up in her being. The great interdict upon Philip's name was lifted, and in the next few days she began telling Stella, with a gentle, persistent reiteration, particulars about her married life, about her own goodness and physical modesty and the coarseness of

the human male, that she had been burning to tell someone, in gross and detail, for years. She had, Stella realised with deepening dismay, a powerful, negative preoccupation with sex. “I want you to understand what men are before it is too late.”

Stella’s father became a satyr.

“I did my duty by him,” said Lucy. “Painful and degrading though I felt it all was, I never refused him. I was resolved that at any cost he should have no excuse for leaving me. And when I was expecting you....”

“Darling,” said Stella, “don’t you think these memories distress you? They do me.”

“If I can warn you in time. If only I can give you an idea of what can happen to you. I suppose there *are* men who are simple and pure.... There was a Mr Pramble, a clergyman at Weston-super-Mare....”

But the simplicity and purity of Mr Pramble of Weston-super-Mare are no part of the present story....

“I can’t stand very much more of this,” said Stella to the looking-glass in her bedroom. “Why doesn’t Gemini write to me?”

The looking — glass was too small to show her all her pretty body at once. She desisted. She sat naked on her bed, hands clasping her shoulders, clinging to herself.

“Feeble and fearful and foul,” she said, “and it’s infectious. The dirt is entering into my soul.” And then; “Five days and he hasn’t written. Or have they, perhaps, intercepted a letter? If only one could telepath! Gemini my dear! Gemini my lover! Gemini! Are you there?”

3. UNCLE ROBERT INTERVENES

Stella composed a letter to Uncle Robert with unusual care. She studied it and recopied it. Yet she made it seem fairly spontaneous.

“Dear Uncle Robert,” she wrote. “I hope you have had a grand holiday in the Alps. I hope you will return in splendid form and that I shall see you soon. I want very much to see you. Something has happened that I must tell you about. I have a lover and mother is

making a terrible fuss about it. It came out by accident. We, Gemini and I, did our very best not to bother anyone about it. It was, we felt, our affair and we are honestly and simply in love. We had a chance to live together for some days and we tool: it. Somebody seems to have told her, and all the Hopkinshire clan, Uncle Hubert and all, are up in arms. The serious side is that unless something is done mother may prevent my returning to Cambridge and so cut off my education in the middle. She has always been against this Newnham idea, a sort of jealousy. For her it was something which came from Father's side and which released me from her. She hated it, but she accepted it bemuse she can never refuse a gift.

"I do not know if she has written to you or whether she will. She is not good at writing letters, especially if anything has to be explained, and I guess she will wait until the beginning of term and then write and tell you that something vaguely awful has been discovered, and that in consequence I can't go back to Cambridge. If so, dear Uncle Robert, I shall go mad. I do not know anything in all the world so clinging as my mother. She does not mean to let me go, she has never meant to let me go if she could help it, and that is what her mother's love amounts to. She is less like a mother than a small, wet, resolute octopus, and this fuss about my having a lover just restores the grip she was losing. Uncle Robert, Help! S.O.S. Uncle Robert, and my love. You will stand by me?

"Your Stella."

Uncle Robert was as good as ever. He sent a telegram to Lucy: "COMING TO-MORROW SEE STELLA BEFORE TERM IMPORTANT CAN YOU PUT ME UP NIGHT IF NECESSARY?" and he appeared, nose in the air, with that invariable confidence of his that he was quite all right and knew it, when all the rest of the world was wrong.

At the earliest opportunity Stella left her mother and uncle together in the garden in order that he should be informed officially of the crisis in her physical and psychological development. There was an interval of ten minutes or more. Evidently Uncle Robert had considerable difficulty in delivering his sister-in-law of her terrible disclosure. There may have been reluctance, sobs perhaps and tears, a whispering circumlocution. When they reappeared in the little

parlour, however, it had all been done. Mother had a shrivelled, dismayed expression and Uncle was saying, in that smooth, clear, gentle, self-satisfied voice of his, the most appalling things.

"You talk of purity," he said. "My dear Lucy, have you ever attempted to think what you mean by that word? You seem to attach the utmost importance to the assertion that Stella was formerly pure and that now she is impure. Let us consider these words, simply for what they are. Pure means unmixed. Well, she was always mixed. Every living creature is mixed. She is no more mixed now. What are you making all this fuss about? She hasn't been chaste. There again you have a fancy word. *Chaste!*"

"How can you say such things? In front of Stella and everything!"

"My dear Lucy, let us keep the question right way about. I'm asking you how *you* can say such things."

He took possession of the hearthrug and prepared to discourse at large. "I must reason with you, my dear. I must try and get you to see things in their proper light, because so much depends upon it, so far as Stella is concerned. You must not overpower her by sheer bad language. People of your intellectual quality run about calling people impure and unchaste and doing the most cruel and stupid things about it, and the words, if you will only give them a little patient scrutiny, mean either something totally different or else nothing whatever. I insist, you must scrutinise them. We shall never get anywhere if you won't do that. They are just terms of vulgar abuse that have cowed you. Why do you let them cow you? Yes, Lucy, impure, unchaste and so on are all mere vulgar abuse — ladylike vulgar abuse, priestly vulgar abuse. I can't help it if you have never learnt to speak English properly.... Lucy, you must listen to me. You have to listen to me. It's no good staring into the grate and pretending not to listen. It was you started this. Purity, you said. Lost her purity. Purity is a chemist's ideal and practically unattainable even in the laboratory. Think of it, Lucy, there's not an atom in the world that doesn't lead an irregular life. It's been proved.... Chastity, if it means anything, means leading one's sexual life in obedience to priestly law — and nobody in his senses believes in the priestly control of sexual life nowadays. The bare idea of chastity is nasty. The *droit du prêtre* has to follow the *droit du seigneur*. You don't

know what that means! I guess you do, Lucy. Purity! When some German half-wit begins to blether about pure Nordics, meaning some de-pigmented A1pine square-head or some sadistic lout of a de-pigmented Wend, we begin to realise the absurdity of the word. But most people use it all the same. Pure English! What's pure English? That Latin-Teutonic bastard.... Pure art! Pure water! Pure balderdash! All that has really happened in Stella's life is that she is growing up, and it's a pity, Lucy, that you never grew up in as wholesome and gracious a fashion. Not too early and not too late and quite charmingly...."

Lucy choked. "Oooo," she said.

"But come back to these words of yours. The older I grow the more I am amazed at the stupidity of the words by which we guide our lives. Purity! Chastity! Perfection! There's another word, perfection! a key word, Lucy. The most humourless of words. All these absolutes disregard the universal play and looseness and freshness and fun of reality. They impose the pigeon-hole limitations of the human mind upon the incessant uniqueness of every event. Yes, I know you don't understand me, because you have gone through life shirking every possible sort of mental stimulus. It astounds me, Lucy — it keeps on astounding me more the older I grow — how women of your class and quality go on, year in and year out, disregarding the most obvious deficiencies of their own minds. I cannot understand why you don't question something now and then, if only for the fun of the thing. What do you do with yourselves all the time? I confess I can't imagine; I can't imagine. Have you never read the parable of the buried talent? But Stella here understands. More and more young people are shaking themselves free from these primitive obsessions of language. Classes and counting. Number and logic. Everything dealt with as though things were made in identical sets. Og, King of Bashan, was the first logician. In the beginnings of human thought and for a few thousand years or so, it was natural and excusable that men should make a magic of counting — Eena, meena, mina, mo; one, two, three and so forth — but surely we are past that now. What are millions, what are billions and billions of billions? What are infinities — infinitesimals? Mere conveniences of the mind, Lucy. Mere conveniences."

“How can you say such things!” protested Lucy, but almost inaudibly. “Billions of conveniences! The bare idea!”

“To play about with such things now at our present stage of intellectual development is sheer perversity. You get it at its extremest depravity in that super-superlativeness that makes Indian thought, for example, the pretentious accumulation of bubbles it is. Orgies of multiplication. Everything threefold or sevenfold — with a cartwheel of arms and legs thrown in. Sterile arithmetical indulgence. Leave that sort of thing for half-witted quantity mathematicians to live in for ever if they choose. Let them worry away at their formulae and conventions and symbols as though they were the only realities, let them announce their solemn discoveries of expanding and contracting universes and atomic whirligigs and so forth and so on to their hearts’ content. It’s a pretty game that only becomes crazy, Lucy, when you forget it’s symbols you are dealing with and begin to dream, as a patient of mine did the other day — quite an eminent physicist, Lucy — that he’d upset a hive of the square root of minus ones and was being horribly chased by the swarm. Serve him right for having such things in his head! Keep in mind that these symbols are nothing but mental conveniences for ever and ever—”

“Oh, Robert!” said Lucy. “Don’t use that dreadful word again.”

Uncle Robert stopped short. He lowered his nose so that he could actually look directly at his sister-in-law. “I believe, Lucy,” he said, “that I have been talking to you a little over your head. I am sorry. You started it. I forget exactly how you started it, but you did. It’s the lecture-room habit of presuming upon helpless bearers that leads to this sort of discursion. Let me see — . M’mm.”

He resumed his contemplation of the Real Truth of the Matter. “All this arose, Lucy, out of your gross attack upon our Stella here, clean and straight and natural as she is, on purely abstract and illusory grounds. Why! You might be a Roman Catholic! My customary indignation with your confusion of abstractions with reality, ran away with me. Let us come back now to the matter in hand. I don’t think there is anything wrong in what Stella has done and in what has happened to Stella. Nothing at all. And so I do not think that anything has to be done through it or because of it. And there we are!”

Lucy gulped. “I can’t argue with you, Robert. She cannot return to that horrible college.”

“For rather more than an hour, Lucy, I have been talking the most luminous common sense to you and you haven’t listened to a sentence. You have simply waited for some word upon which you could put some indelicate construction. Stella is younger than you and I, she has to face a darkening and dangerous world, and she wants the most releasing and strengthening education that she can get. On the whole the best she can do in that way is Cambridge. It’s not, as you would say, *ideal*, but it is the best she can do. Therefore she has to go back and finish at Cambridge.”

Lucy shook her head mutely.

“How can you prevent her going?”

“I shall write to the Principal. I shall write to everyone. I shall tell them what has happened. Oooh!” The unhappy woman gave way to a fresh storm of tears. “I forbid it,” she said thickly through her handkerchief. “I forbid it. I want my daughter. I want my daughter.”

“And now let me make a proposal,” said Uncle Robert.

“Wan’ my daughter.”

“What you really want,” said Uncle Robert, “is a congenial companion of your own age, with whom you can discuss the depravity of the times in length and in detail, and indulge in a little mild religiosity. You don’t want Stella. You *detest* Stella. But you do, Lucy. You know you do. Perfectly natural too. You think she’s a hard little devil. Why deny it? A hard little devil, and so she is, thank God for it!”

“How can I afford—” began Lucy.

“I am quite willing to make all that possible if you can find any congenial friend or relation to share your home. I agree you should not be left alone. You want a gossip. That’s what you want. Gossip backwards out of life — which you have never really been in. But the young must escape, Lucy. The young *must* escape.”

“My daughter is everything to me. How can you — you a man! — how can you understand a mother’s love?”

“It is my profession, Lucy. I understand it, and if I may say so, I understand it unpleasantly well. You have to let her go.”

“I want her here.”

“Don’t you realise that she will never live here again? She has grown up.”

“But what home has she except here?”

Uncle Robert surveyed the Real Truth of the Matter above Stella’s attentive head.

“What Stella will do,” he said, “if she takes my advice, will be to run away from home. To me. She will find my home bookish and unfeminine and very much to her taste. I shall welcome her unscrupulously. I find the project extremely attractive. I have never even attempted marriage, because I knew my intolerable habit of talking intolerantly and intolerably would have ruined any normal union, but this relationship will be different. Stella and I will get on together. She’ll have to listen to me a lot — but always somebody has to listen to me — and her alternative, Lucy, seems to be that she’ll have to listen to you. I’ve no doubt of her preference. What sense is there in your preventing this, if I secure you what will really prove much more congenial companionship? Much more congenial. You must know someone of your own style and generation of mind. Even now you have probably someone in view...?

“In all these arrangements,” proceeded Uncle Robert, still with his eye on the Real Truth of the Matter, “there will be no stipulation to prevent your talking with your intimate friends of the terrible ingratitude of your unworthy daughter, of how her mind was corrupted and turned against all that you consider the niceties and restraints of life, first by her own natural, inherited, original sin, then of all people by her own father and lastly by myself. I do not expect you will make these or any other accusations outright....”

“Woo woo,” in protesting confirmation from Lucy.

“Nevertheless you will say them in your own way. You will say them and frame your life in accordance with them. I think we may consider ourselves in practical agreement on that. You see how clearly and plainly everything works out if you deal with it lucidly and literally. And all this time Stella has been standing there and not saying a single word....”

“And was there any word,” said Stella, “which it was necessary for me to say?”

“None whatever that I can see,” said Uncle Robert. “But the

practice of superfluous expression is almost universal. The normal patient insists upon it. And even if there had been a possible word or so, I admit I do not see how you could have got it in. Edgeways. No."

He considered the outlook for Lucy.

"So much for you, Stella. You can go on now free to face the grim and terrible problems of your time and generation. But you have to keep it in mind that you have hurt your mother profoundly, you have outraged her mental habits and shattered her hopes and expectations for you. You must stay here with her for a few days and give her all the help and comfort you can until she can establish a more equal companionship. For my own part, Lucy, I think you might very well go back to that Weston — super-Mare hydropath for good and all, where there will be a continual coming and going of people with very much your point of view. You have in such places already the beginnings of a great system of Parks and Homes for outgrown mothers and outgrown wives, women endowed with a rich and sentimental disposition not to keep up with things, whatever happens. I have a study in hand now of Retiring in the Human Species and the retiring disposition generally. This house Stella can help you to settle up. I am told it is a type of house easily disposed of. That done, Stella will resume her studies and come to me in her holidays and try to get ahead with shaping her ideas before this war, this universal collapse into ferocious idiocy, that is hanging over us, really breaks. I give it six weeks or a couple of months. Certainly not six.... That I think completes a statement of what has to be done. Oh! except for one thing. I hate hurting you, Lucy, and so does Stella. In the classical phrase, it hurts me more than it hurts you."

"Boo hoo."

"Stella has to tell you she is sorry. Oh, you're sorry, Stella. You'll know later if you don't know now. You've got to tell her by word and deed how sorry you are.... And that, I think, clears up the whole business. Yes."

"You know I *am* sorry, Mummy," said Stella, bending over her weeping parent.

"My lill' Stel1a," choked Lucy, and grabbed at her daughter's arm, as though she still hoped to snatch her back from Uncle

Robert....

Uncle Robert did not worry. He knew better. Moving with his customary high elasticity, he went to the door that opened upon the garden, with an air of leaving the question ransacked and settled for ever, and turning his mind to other things. There he stood astraddle.

He seemed to be looking right through the sky to the Real Truth of the Matter, and considering those blue expanses and their unstable and incalculable clouds as a tolerable but by no means perfect display of refraction and condensation. There they were and you had to make the best of them. The sky. It was all you had. It had its dawns and its sunsets and its moonlight and so forth, and some of these effects were as lovely as Stella, but that was no reason for pretending there was something essentially ineffable about them. None whatever. Given another spectrum the whole display might easily be a lot better. Oh! Ever so much better....

4. GEMINI'S THIRDLY

Gemini's letter reached Stella while she was still at Barnes. It came in a large envelope depressingly like a literary manuscript. Of course that was exactly what it had to come like, one Prig to another. Yet somehow she would have liked something, a precursor or something, rather more in the quality of a caress. She took it away to her own corner of the garden, seated herself on a wooden bench, satisfied herself that her mother was not hovering, and then began to read. She was glad he recalled the glories of *Stellaria holostea*. Just enough and not too much of it. It had, she agreed, to be a serious letter.

And for no clear reason she was glad he had not used a typewriter....

She read his *Firstly* and *Secondly* with grave attention. She thought it pretty good. It read like the notes for a literary essay. It was compressed and in their own accent of thought. And then she came to:

"*Thirdly*, last and culminating article in this memorandum, we agree between ourselves that we love each other exclusively."

Then the pencil scribble came abruptly to an end. There had

evidently been a break; the letter resumed in ink upon four sheets of the unattractive notepaper of the Maston Street Labour Club, and then returned to pencil upon a pseudo-parchment manuscript paper. Indecisions, erasures and afterthoughts squeezed into the margin, became more frequent, and two pages of straightforward writing, she guessed, had been recopied from passages too blurred and patched with corrections to send.

Her expression of intelligent approval changed to a livelier interest. It seemed as though Gemini had discovered for the first time that he did not know in the least what he meant by "love," and had in his own peculiar fashion set out to thrash out this terminological unpreparedness forthwith. Stella knew very thoroughly what she meant by love; she had no doubt about it and she was sure that she was in it from top to toe. She found his perplexities dismaying. You just loved and did all you could to please and delight your lover and your lover did the same by you; you got together whenever you could and all the rest of life was transfigured against this golden background, and what else could there be in it but that?

But Gemini didn't see it like that.

She had had gleams and intimations of their difference even during that honeymoon in Mary's cottage. It wasn't so much that he loved less than she did, as that he loved quite differently, with reservations and moods and not ungrudgingly with the whole of his being as she felt she did. While she had waited for his letter she had had spells of that same uncertainty about him, and now his letter had come she found no assuagement but an immense intensification of her sense of difference and separation. It wasn't that she felt he was insincere or deceiving her in any way; she realised that he was trying most resolutely to define a profound difference between them.

"About this love," he began.

Just think of it! *"About this love!"*...

"The unexpected things that happen to a mind — . A bullet is a little thing you can toss up and catch, a germ is so slight that it is invisible. But hit the germ or the bullet at a certain pace, under certain circumstances, and your universe is changed and your world, if it is not wiped out altogether, is swung round into quite a new direction. The germ in our case is that same Cottenham C. Bower

who set us talking and differing on our last night before the things of this world fell in on us."

"I never liked that man," was Stella's comment. At the time she had felt she had not left very much of Cottenham C. Bower. Yet here he was again!

"You seemed to find him from the very first mention of his name a thoroughly dislikable man. I found very little to dislike in him. Less as I read him. You invented a shameful shame-faced sexual life for him, right on the spot. It wasn't fair on him. I think an adoring wife and five rather spoilt children, carefully spaced, is much more probable. He probably calls his eldest son 'Junior,' and his eldest son calls him 'Pop.' Quite regular and decent. But his mind is a slow-masticating mind of very high quality indeed. He writes in the rather over-technicalised style Americans affect, largely I believe as a protection from the ravening journalist, but he does assemble his material with a kind of hard thoroughness and a sense of relative value. He's not the pompous impostor you think he is; he's not an anti-feminist. He's just damned enquiring and intelligent, a Prig of a high order, and the Queen and King of Prigs have to treat him with proper respect, and not go just taking an aversion to him. He says in effect to us: 'You two are in love. You want to make it the supreme thing in life. In the name of criticism, of scientific balance,' he says, 'I ask you to reconsider that. I want to suggest that life is too complicated to admit of that much passionate simplification. I want you to see it from a novel, profoundly revolutionary and extremely illuminating psychological standpoint.' That at any rate is practically what he says. It is what he would say, Stella, if he knew what it was he was saying.

"(I'll make myself clearer in a bit, Stella. I am trying to get myself clear first.)

"Love, he argues, can be temporarily overwhelming. That is no reason why it should dominate the whole pattern of life. If you fall out of a window it is a temporarily overwhelming necessity that you should fall. But that is no reason why you should not try to fall with bent legs on your feet. If you survive your fall you have to take up the general assembling and control of your life again. The fall is everything only while it lasts. If you are chased by a bear, you can't

for the time study the differential calculus. You have to think exclusively of the bear. But the study of the differential calculus may be an integral part of the ruling conception of your life and the bear an adventure of minor importance as soon as you have escaped."

"Escaped," said Stella, and stopped her reading for a second or so. "And where does this take us, Gemini?

"A fall from a window," she mused. "A bear?"

She read on.

"Now when we say that we love each other exclusively we state a phase of life and feeling as though it was an integral and central part of our two existences. But we are much more to each other than all that. We want to make a pattern of life for ourselves in which we two and our intertwining mental strands are dominant. We have been in Paradise together, dearest heart," ("H'm," said Stella with dubious approval) "but that is neither the beginning nor the end of us. We liked each other no end before we thought of kissing. If we go out of Paradise, we go out hand in hand. Your clear, cool, straight mind is lovelier to me than your body and more yourself...."

That was all he had written in the Labour Club. He had broken off at that point. Or what was more probable, he had stuck.

"I realise I am not the bear," reflected Stella, and looked at the pencilled sheets. "No. He isn't even thinking of me as the bear. My clear, cool, straight mind? He hardly lets me see the wood for the trees, but I feel already that she-bear in pursuit. That other she-bear.... Already!"

The "Thirdly" resumed, closely written in pencil and in quite a different style.

"The more I read over the excellent Cottenham C. Bower, the more I translate him into normal English from his awful combination of technicalities and adapted slang — imagine it! for this one book he has a glossary of 'fifty-one terms used in this book'! Suppose every book had that! It takes us halfway to Jimmy-Joyce-land! Only in his case the words do mean something and you can't afford to miss one of them, — but he gets more and more convincing and interesting the more you English him. 'Soul, spirit, mind,' he has no use for these words. Think of it! They 'beg the question,' he says. Beg the question! It is a stock phrase of his. We are always using

words that ‘beg the question} That’s why he makes his own terms. He treats the psychoanalysts as if they were half-way back to the Middle Ages. He scraps such expressions as the Unconscious, the Subconscious and so on — how does he put it?— ‘a convenient mythology of exploration that has served its purpose and must now be abandoned.’ ‘Fictitious regions of the mind; no more real than Asgard.’ There’s a poser for you, Stella. What and where was Asgard?”

“As if I didn’t know,” said Stella, and went on with Gemini’s exposition.

“In all this he is using and developing the language of this new Behaviourist conception of life, which, when you come to work it out logically and completely, is in fact an absolute reversal of ideas which men have considered fundamental ideas from the very beginnings of It is no less than that. It is coming into human thought like a still small voice, and it means a revolution far profounder — than Darwinism for example. Pavlov and Watson unfold their ideas with a certain obscure elaboration and hardly seem to realise the astounding quality of their implications. That is where Cottenham C. Bower is so important. He blurts it out. It’s only as I read him and so get Pavlov, Watson and Co. at secondhand, that I realise where their stuff has taken us. Let me try and make this plain.

“The right-out Behaviourist does not see a man as a simple unified mind or psyche at all. He sees him as — something — how shall I translate that something? — as a neuro-sensitive apparatus. This neuro-sensitive apparatus extends all over our bodies; it includes not only ganglia but the circulation, glandular secretions, anything with excitability and a kick in it. (Hold on, Stella. Don’t let it repel you. I’m saying it as plainly as I can.) That cerebral cortex, that grey matter of yours, about which animal-ecologists make such a song, that last triumph of evolution, with its vast storage and linking up of reactions, is only the crowning and coordinating region of the complete layout. And all the time, day and night from the moment that a ‘neuro-sensitive apparatus’ — you or me, Stella, for example — first wriggles, to the moment when death overtakes it, it is going on, things are happening to it.

“You know the story as it is usually told. Your heart beats, your

little tummy (your dear little tummy) peristalts; you blink the superfluous tear from your eye, you scratch the tip of your nose because it itches, and all that is *below the level of consciousness*. 'Threshold of consciousness' you find in the textbooks. But the Behaviourist won't have that phrase; he never uses the word 'consciousness'; he won't have it that you scratch your nose. Your knuckle just scratches your nose. It is a little affair between them.

"And things are going on when in the vulgar language of everyday life you are sound asleep, a multitude of natural, irrational things. They go on, a series of living sequences like people going about their business in a great city. Each of these reaction and event systems is as aware of itself while it lasts as you or I are aware of ourselves, but few of them get put on record even for a time. Just as Mr Smith and Mr Brown go about their suburban affairs, sufficiently and completely, without getting into the papers or going on record in any way. Some of the sequences and businesses may be very silly businesses. Some may get mixed up with secretions, pressures, muscular movements or external sounds. Then they may create such a disturbance, make such a fuss, that they startle the body generally and the recording apparatus in particular, into increased activity. In normal speech you wake up. Forthwith a rush of exterior stimulations, arousing memories and established reactions, pours in upon — not you altogether, but into that arena of the neuro — sensitive apparatus which for the time being you imagine you are. There is a rapid expansion of activities. Before that occurs, the activity of the awakening moment dominates everything else. It was a dream, yes, but the dream was for the moment you. It was the ruling sequence. Then, as the expanding system of outside reactions becomes dominant, it begins to recede into insignificance, overpowered by the new ascendant system. Usually in a few moments the neuro-sensitive apparatus (you) can recall hardly anything but a few vivid aspects of the dream that ruled it so recently, and even that much it is busy rationalising.

"Now the normal man, when he has rubbed his eyes and yawned and so forth, imagines he is 'all there.' But the outright, lucid Behaviourist would implore you to reconsider and dispel that assumption. It is only that another more vivid reaction-memory-and-

event system has established a by no means perfect control over what are called the voluntary muscles of your body. It is the body that holds the mind together, says the complete Behaviourist, and not the mind the body. The body has to go where the dominant system in the neuro-sensitive apparatus takes it, but all the time an immense variety of other reaction systems are going on and either deflecting or replacing the dominant system.

"You see the idea? The tremendous idea? It is not a consolidated John Smith who wakes up. It is John Smith No. 214, let us say, John Smith who had a row with his employer yesterday and who wakes up as the indignant employee. He goes on at once, as he gets up and dresses, to rehearse a spirited, but not too spirited, conversation with the Governor. Or it is John Smith No. 618, who sees his wife's portrait on the mantel and remembers a system of resentment and jealousy. Her offence becomes the centre of his being. The recalcitrant employee is simply not there. The body of John Smith, under control of 618, goes down to breakfast in a dark, unloving mood.

"All these John Smiths, from John Smith 1 to John Smith 5,000 or John Smith 5,000,000, have a common core in his belief that he is really one person, because they are not only all aboard the same body, but also built round a similar conception of himself, his *persona*, as Jung has it. But really, says the Behaviourist, they are a collection of *mutually replaceable individual systems held together in a common habitation*. One ascends; another fades before it. If the systems vary, you call John Smith moody or inconstant, and if they vary widely you may have such contradiction that at last you have a double personality. But whatever system dominates at the time, owns John Smith, and unless it has something comparable to the scientific training of a Behaviourist or his disciples, it believes itself to be wholly and solely John Smith.

"All this I think is rather lovely stuff. It grows upon me as I think it over. Need I point out to you that this description of a man as a sort of armoury of selves like a bag of golf clubs, first this one and then that going into play with its body owner, is supported by a thousand phenomena of forgetting and remembering, of double personality, of the changes of what we call character that appear under different

stimuli and at different phases of life?

"In the non-social animals, in a cat for example, the dominant reaction- memory-and-event system is all that the animal for the time being is. It is fear or it is lust or indolence or hunger or a craving for caresses. There's no self-consciousness about a cat. But in highly social, cooperative animals like dogs, monkeys and men, there is a complication due to the necessity to behave one's *self*, the necessity to sustain a *persona* in relation to other individuals. Systems involving self-conscious restraint appear, which seem to be almost entirely unknown to such non-cooperating animal innocents as cats. The *persona* may have its own unconscious variations of course, but it is at least pervaded by a desire for consistency.

"These conduct systems of reaction require a story of stories of what we are, in order to hold our selves together and to put our selves over to other people. The neuro-sensitive apparatus of these socially self-conscious animals can no longer do a thing and forget about it almost completely until the next occasion, cat-fashion. Their conduct systems, whenever they invade other and simpler systems of reaction and become dominant, set about attacking the independence of our moods and impulses and trying to draw them together. They go about like ushers, like governesses, like policemen, like drill sergeants, pretending to impose an impossible uniformity of discipline upon the mute unconscious mutual elbowing of all the other drives and reactions in us in their struggle to dominate our bodies.

"I am being long-winded, Stella, but I can assure you trying to understand Cottenham C. and succeeding, and so coming to realise the whole tremendous new system of thought that opens out behind his jargon, may well make a man proud and garrulous. But you see how he and the school in which and with which he is developing his ideas, face the problem of self-conscious living, the problem that is to say of bringing a vast disorder of conflicting sub-personalities into a real effective consistency, — almost like trying to govern and consolidate a world empire — and how his *Expansion of Sex* is merely an application of the general conception of Behaviourism to one particular bunch of drives. He might have done it just as well with the self-assertion, the inferiority-superiority drives of Adler. But he chose sex.

“Here, he says, taking up the sex systems, is first the drive of desire. It becomes urgent with adolescence, and it remains as an active recurrent physical need (a necessity almost) until the onset of middle age. It lingers on after that with diminishing force simply because there is nothing else to blot it out and get rid of it. ‘Nature still remembers.’ In other words, that old sloven Nature never cleans up anything after middle age, just leaves it lying about. The desire drive is primitive and that makes it powerful and persistent. In itself it can be excited, gratified and allayed by any tolerably attractive member of the opposite sex. The social consequences of such gratification are nowadays easily controlled. In restraining circumstances, when there is no complacent mate about, it can make young John Smith shut his eyes and imagine a companion and get his relief by self-abuse or substitutional perversion. Cottenham C., by the way, thinks all perversion is really substitutional or accessory, but that, and particularly the ‘accessory’ opens one of his heaviest chapters. I won’t go into it. It doesn’t concern you and me. We are normal.

“When the primary sex drive accumulates power and becomes dominant in John Smith or Jane Smith, we say the poor dear is amorous, lascivious, ‘on heat,’ and these isomers — I beg your pardon, these alternative persona1ities — of John or Jane Smith drive on to relief, setting aside at last every antagonistic system. If that happens to such individuals only now and then, they may do their bit of promiscuity, not get found out, and stifle the memory, or, if they are religious, they may get rid of the sense of inconsistency by repenting and confessing, or else they may dispose of it by distorting their memory or inventing some special excuse for it. Lots of people go over their memories and fake them almost deliberately. If they are more frequently under the sway of urgent desire than that, they may become defiantly promiscuous, even propagandists of promiscuity. Our Mary Clarkson is a case in point.”

“Plainly,” said Stella, her intuitions flashing like sparks from an incendiary bomb. “Yes. But why bring her in just here, I wonder?... Yes, I wonder.... Well?”

“But complicating the primitive lust-drive of John Smith, which we might call John Smith No. 2, is a whole system of alternative

John Smiths which may prevent John Smith No. 2 from ever getting complete control. First Nature has introduced a strong element of whim and selectivity into this sexual business, so that a simple rational act with the most available person, get your relief as an animal does and think no more about it as an animal does, fails to work. For example, elaborating John Smith 2 and taking all the simplicity out of him, we may get the complications of falling in love and being in love. We two know a lot about that, Stella. In the place of John Smith No. 2 appears John Smith 256, loving and very desirous, but the faithful swain."

"?!"

"I won't go on developing this. You can see Cottenham C.'s line of country, and how he presents the tacit struggle for predominance among systems of neuro-mental reaction, as being the underlying reality of conscious existence! It is, I repeat, a new psychology altogether. I must confess I find this new psychology tremendously plausible; and you can imagine for yourself how he brings in religion, laws, customs, honour, as systems complicating and competing to control the general behaviour of the human being. That general behaviour is merely the rough total of its constituent medley, a fact of which human science is now for the first time, he says, modestly but firmly, becoming clearly aware. Unhappily so far only in the unreadable jargon of Cottenham C.

"We rationalise that resultant behaviour, more or less, as our *persona*. Cottenham C. spreads out his survey of sex from its first struggles in the growing family group against tabus and how it developed the sense of sin — he agrees with the psychoanalysts that the sense of sin is fear of the disregarded tabu — and he goes on to trace how the sex-complex systems grew, never losing their primal urgency, as human laws and institutions grew about them. Every extension of the range of the neuro-sensitive apparatus brought with it its reference to sex. You have St Augustine bewailing it and Origen getting rid of it in the most drastic fashion. 'Who can deliver me from the body of this death?' And so forth and so on....

"One minor thing I find very good in Cottenham C., and that is his treatment of reverie. In order to get the *persona* straight and as consistent as possible, these conduct systems, these governess

systems which concern themselves with the behaviour and promises and reputation of a human body, ignore a number of aberrant drives and impulses, and push them away into what a psychoanalyst calls the Unconscious, but which, according to your Behaviourist, is merely a multitude of reaction systems 'out of contact with your main directive system.' You see the difference? The psychoanalyst says they are down below in a dungeon, the Behaviourist says they are at large outside. All the difference in the world there. Jung, if I remember rightly, calls this accumulation of inoperative mental stir the *anima*. It often contrasts very markedly with the material accepted and rationalised in the *persona*. It stirs and thrusts, says the psychoanalyst, beneath the conscious life. It skulks and agitates, says the Behaviourist, on the edge of the waking life. B. Watson uses the words 'introspective' and 'observational' to express practically the same contrast in the point of view. A lot of this repressed or excluded stuff may get active in these comparatively inactive phases we call daydreaming or reverie. The ordinary ruling behaviour — system lapses, and all the things that have been suppressed and forbidden become day-dreams; something much more actual and nearer the control levers than dreaming proper; much more realistic; the honest little clerk becomes a terrific gangster or a recklessly successful financier, the young curate becomes a romantic rake.

"The reverie may never take control at all, but at times it may grow so vivid that it captures the behaviour control from the *persona* and sets things in motion. Then *pro — tem* the reverie becomes the *persona* and the *persona* fades to the complexion of a reverie. The clerk embezzles; the curate gets a nice lay touring costume and slips up to town. They are not the knaves and hypocrites we think they are. They are turnovers. The embezzler's reverie, which is his abandoned *persona*, becomes a dream of self-justification; the curate comes home with a discourse on the 'higher purity' of nudism and natural love and a scorn for the meretricious bonds of matrimony. In that way the old *persona* elbows its way back to recover control and moralise the life again. Rationalisation among the ruins after the act. Cottenham C. gives a long list of cases varying between mere perplexing inconsistency in behaviour to a plainly split personality?

This part of the letter came to an abrupt end. The next portion

seemed to have been written in a bad light with a softer pencil. But Stella did not go on to it at once. She was wondering why Gemini was beating about the bush like this and writing sheet after sheet of summarised Behaviourist psychology. She disregarded altogether the very lively interest and self-satisfaction he betrayed in every line he had written. For the time that meant nothing to her. She was too preoccupied with her personal problem to realise the complete sincerity of his scientific detachment. “It’s as if he had something to tell me and didn’t quite want to come to it,” she thought. “Or as if he had something to tell himself, and felt the same reluctance?

Stella crossed her legs and sat forward, elbows on knees and letter in hand, staring at her problem. “I wish I wasn’t so clairvoyant about Gemini. It’s the Kentlake side of me.... Not an endearing trait for a lover....”

It was Uncle Robert who had said once, “My perspicacity made marriage impossible. I should have been an intolerable husband.” She remembered that. She became a clairvoyant with the letter in her hand.

“Mary Clarkson, the she-bear. She sets Gemini system No. 2 going, system No. 2, very primitive and uncontrollable. Am I crazy with jealousy and suspicion, or is it all as clear as daylight?”

Just how far it had gone, she was reluctant to know. She reproached him. Couldn’t he manage somehow not to fall out of windows and not to come across actively aggressive she-bears?

“Something I have to stand. I love him, confound him! and none the less for it. But why did he let it happen?

“It’s happened. It’s going to happen again. I’m not a fool, Gemini. You rascal! You lucid rascal! I suppose there’s a thrill in scampering through the wood. Not my sort of thrill.... Suppose some day some she-bear catches you for good and all: what becomes of the pattern of our associated lives and all the rest of it then?”

She turned to the last part of Gemini’s letter. “Enough of the general theory of Behaviourism,” he resumed.

“Agreed,” said Stella.

“Let me write now of James Twain. I find I am all that Cottenham C. says I am.”

“Yes,” said Stella, “I thought so.”

“I am a jumble of motive systems and London is no place for me. It’s full of beaten tracks and old associations. The old responses light up and take control. I try to get on with our problems. I do my honest best, Stella. I work until I am fagged and when I am fagged I am least able to produce new reactions. The old tracks are so easy. The cocktail party calls; the late studio party. And, sweetheart, you disturb me. You. I’m in love with you and full of desire for you and it troubles and distracts me and makes nerve storms in me. I’m full of desire. More than I have ever been. You are so near and so inaccessible. I’m doing no sort of good here. Everyone talks of war in the autumn if Hitler, that atrocious fool, launches an attack on Poland. (Why didn’t we fight him over Czechoslovakia?) If so, I shall be stuck here in England and more broken up than ever. With this game leg. I have a desperate idea of going straight off to Russia via Sweden now. Before all the doors shut. I want to see what there is in Russia. Is Russia a great promise or a stupendous lie? Is human hope still alive or is it dead or stinking? I want to get the feel of the Russian crowd. With the stir of travel, new things and my eyes full and London far away, this laxity will drop away from me....”

Pause for contemplation.

“I called him a rascal,” said Stella, “but this is plainly honest!... I suppose it isn’t dangerous out there. Yet. Who cares about a casual she-bear, if this is the real Gemini?”

She read on. He was giving the ship he meant to sail by, the particulars about visas and money; his mother had been a trump about that....

“I wish I could go too,” said Stella. “If only I could go too.”

She folded and refolded the letter, and stuck it into its envelope and put it on the seat beside her. Then her hands went into the side pockets of her jacket.

She felt rather ashamed of herself. She had guessed the facts and guessed them all askew. “I did you wrong, Gemini. I got you all wrong. I underestimated you. I mistrusted you. I’ve been a jealous little fool. Now you explain, I see perfectly.... Perfectly. Yes.”

She stuck her legs straight out in front of her, and looked at her toes. She consulted them gravely. “Perfectly,” she assured them. Then she dropped them.

“Yes,” she said. “But what a business it is, this living! All these *drives*, these — what is it? — sequence of reaction and memory!... Hunger of the heart for love. Hunger of the spirit for a right life and a world done better. Hunger for clear knowledge. All these hungers and a score of others, going on at their own pace, almost independently of each other, inside one bothered skull. What an awful image that is of — what does he call us? — neuro-mental apparatuses. A vast cavern of unrest, with lights being lit up here and put out there. And things that come up behind you out of yourself, and get hold of you and push you where you don’t in the least want to go. Easy to get afraid of life. I begin to understand better, why poor little mother sits down and squeals and squeals whenever anything looks at her.”

And just at that moment came poor little mother’s voice from the verandah. “Stella darling. Te-e-ee.”

Stella thrust that bale of a letter deeply into her jacket pocket. “Coming, darling,” she said, emerging slowly from her shelter. There was Mother....

Mother?

“The way I’ve been thinking,” thought Stella.... “I don’t think like her. I see, because I’m a Kentlake. But the way I feel? That injured sense of proprietorship? Am I, after all, more of your daughter than I supposed?”

“Where have you been hiding?” said Mrs Kentlake as her daughter drew nearer. “I got hot scones for you and they’ll be half cold. And almost our last tea together! The last ten days anyhow.”

“Then I mix you a cocktail, one of my best, as a peace offering,” said Stella.

“You had a letter, dearest?”

“Yards and yards. All about nothing,” said Stella. “Airy nothings, Mummy?

Mrs. Kentlake combined sympathy, sentimentality and sadness in a timid controlled smile.

CHAPTER III. SEARCH FOR REALITY

1. JEALOUSY IN THE NIGHT

THAT same night Stella had a most unpleasant dream about Gemini. She saw him coming with that halting step of his through a wood towards her, smiling with those dear brown eyes of his, looking radiant, holding out his hands. That was very pleasant. That was in the key of her going-to-bed thoughts.

Then instantly the dream took an evil turn. She realised he was not looking at her, he was looking at something close to her, jostling her. And she became aware of a naked woman wrapped in a bearskin, a taller, lovelier and more supple Mary Clarkson, who was instantly interlocked with him in a passionate embrace, and he was holding her head back by the hair and kissing her, exactly as he used to kiss Stella. Stella had a queer intimation that she was dreaming, and yet for a moment she could not awake and escape. She thrust out her hands to separate those two bodies. But they were phantom bodies. It was no more than a dream. It wasn't real. She screamed denial. "No! No! No!" she cried. "*No!*..."

She woke in the darkness with the faint ghost of that dreamland cry in her throat and anger and misery in her heart. If she went to bed a Kentlake she awoke her mother's daughter. She lay very still for a time. Then she whispered to herself: "I *can't* stand it, I *can't* endure it. What am I to do?

"It's all very well to say this is how you ought to behave and this is what you can do. What limits all this, is what you can bring yourself to do."

She sat up in bed. She adopted a tone of reasoned protest.

"Look here, Gemini," she said. "I *must* keep you. I will stand anything I can stand, but this is something beyond me....

"And you, Mary. If wishing could do it, you'd be dead now. Dead — and if it hurt a little.... Anyhow you'd have to be dead.... *You* played all this on me.... He loves me, you'd say. I know you'l1 say that. He just made use of you. Does that alter it? Damn you, Mary, why couldn't you leave my man alone? Leave him alone, I say! Love

or no love! leave my man alone.... Because I can't stand-that sort of thing. Oh damn Mary! Curse Mary! What does she matter anyhow? It's Gemini that matters. You *fool*, Gemini! You weak Cad! When I love you.... Don't you understand? — I love you.... Oh! What am I to *do*?"

Her voice in the darkness stopped abruptly. Presently it said "Ugh!"

She made an effort to lie down and go to sleep and then she sat up again. *"If I go to sleep,"* she whispered, *"and that dream comes back — !"*

Another immense pause.

When she spoke again her voice had changed. It said passionlessly: "Now what would a Kentlake do?"

The answer came in quite a colourable imitation of Uncle Robert's voice and manner. "If you are afraid to sleep because of a nasty dream, keep awake. Obviously. Keep awake. And if you are troubled by a fact look it in the face and talk to it. As I do. Disagreeable facts are like disagreeable dogs. Do nothing suddenly and just talk to them and talk to them. No dog will bite you while you do that. No fact will bite you while you do that. It's all perfectly plain and simple. There is no such thing as an overwhelming fact and the only facts that injure you are facts you run away from.... The mere fact that you can talk, shows that you are not overwhelmed."

"Obviously," said Stella, concluding the speech. "Yes, obviously. Thank you very much, Uncle Robert."

She sat quite still for a little while longer. Then she turned on her light, slipped on her dressing-gown, remade her bed, washed her face and hands, combed her shock of hair severely, brushed it hard and combed it again, said, "Yes, I remember" to the comb, and got into her cool chintz armchair and sat like a judge enthroned. She spoke *ex cathedra*, so to speak. "Now, Stella, my girl, stop all this pillow-banging and saying you can't bear it. What have you to bear? What does it all amount to?

"You have an idea, a very strong idea, of what love has to be. You have every right to that idea. But you have no sort of right to impose it upon someone else. None whatever.

"You love Gemini. Very well. Do you propose to love him as he

is, or do you propose, what is quite unreasonable, to love him as you want him to be?

"Obviously you have to love him as he is, and if so you have to suppress this undertow of nagging criticism in your mind. That is *you* speaking, Uncle Robert. You have made me see things like that."

"Only you see I *just* can't," said the spirit of Lucy rising suddenly out of the depths, choking and then diving down again.

"I can," said Stella Kentlake. "But it is going to hurt like hell...."

"There is a curious thing to note about your behaviour in this affair," said the Kentlake strain, "and that is your strong antagonism to Gemini. Yes, Stella, your antagonism. You have been trying not to see that, but damn it! you *must*. Of course you see it. Out with it! Directly you had become his lover and given yourself to him — and you did it, my girl, with both hands and very thoroughly — you began your rebellion. Maybe all lovers are like that. They recoil like guns. You felt you had outraged your own freedom — your precious individuality."

"But then," said Lucy, sending up a bubble from the depths, "*he* criticises your treatment of *him*!"

"I *said*, maybe all lovers are like that," said Stella Kentlake.

"That ungrudging, perfect love of yours is nothing more than an ecstasy dream. So now come down to the cool clear facts. Let me remind you of a certain conversation, of certain conversations — in Paradise. Then he was all for dalliance and love and you were all for the high line. In that pretty lane. It was you who said first 'Let us talk of high and serious matters.' It was you complained — . I can remember exactly what you said: 'We won't always talk nonsense} Did he do more than take you at your word? He was very glad to take you at your word. He found it a nice change. He began to talk to you of politics, of ideas, of ambitions. He talks very well, better than you can. (Do you really like that?) And what did you do? You didn't do it deliberately; it was just your reaction, but still — you did it?-you immediately started a new resistance. He wasn't absolutely in earnest, you discovered. He wasn't straight."

"And he isn't straight," said the shadow of Lucy.

"You of course were. And how can a man be straight or go straight, when he is finding his way into life? He has to try things

over.”

“If you call Mary naked in a bear-skin, trying things over!”

‘That seems to have taken him, quite as much as yourself, by surprise. That bearskin is your invention. Yes —— pure dream. After all you’re not even positive it was Mary. Much less Mary in the skin of a she-bear and nothing else. And isn’t he trying to get away from the ambushes in which he was caught?... And she too perhaps was taken a little unawares.”

“Is it *me* who has always got to be reasonable and forgive?”

“Yes. Why not? What’s this love of yours when it comes to a try-down? The fact of it is you’ve got a lover, a good live lover, who’s as good or better than you deserve, and the more you control that antagonism-it is, I admit, the normal shadow of love so that no love can be solid without it, but still it has to be kept in its place — and the more you adjust your conduct to him and your circumstances, the better job you are going to make of the life of Stella Kentlake. And that reminds me, young woman. You pledged yourself to the World Revolution. Do you remember that parting?”

“We said ‘Mizpah’.”

“That was the least important thing you said. The really important thing was ‘We two devote ourselves — now and for ever-to releasing that happy world of abundant living which is buried now in this clumsy, blood-streaked lump of alabaster.’... Or words to that effect. Or have you forgotten that lump of living alabaster altogether?... How much time have you given to the great revolution since you came back here to Barnes? Have you read a book? Have you considered an aspect? Have you moved a step forward?”

“How can I, until I go to Cambridge?”

“He has. And consider how you read that letter of his! Which he has spent some hours upon. Have you read it at all — except between the lines?”

“In this atmosphere? With Mother?”

“That’s an excuse, but a poor one. And now come down to this sex obsession of yours and talk to the trouble. You and Gemini have devoted yourselves to the continuing World Revolution. Isn’t that going to hold you close to each other all your lives? When you are sixty, let us say, and very old, you may come to the very end of love-

making, but you won't have come to the end of world liberation. Even now you two ought to be hard-working student revolutionaries — all the time. When you can get together you can be love — playfellows and the sunshine can go mad, but that's incidental.... Yes, Stella, incidenta1."

"But how can we be bound together if we don't have that?"

"Well, I guess you will have it. If only you don't criticise; if only you take what you get."

"Suppose a time comes when he doesn't even want to be my lover-playfellow any more...."

"You'll still have the Revolution to hold you together. Unless of course you were only playing with that idea."

"Perhaps love doesn't go on, love without end, for anyone. Very probably it doesn't. It's like every other living thing that happens; it has a beginning and a climax and an end...."

"Even for yourself that may be true, Stella."

"But that is unthinkable...."

"How do you know?"

"I know. Oh, I know. I shall keep on. I shall hold on to love, and Gemini — . I shan't leave go. I won't leave go. And Gemini? What will Gemini do? I know, I know in my bones.... It will be queer to see him excited by somebody else. What shall I do then?

"I'll certainly have a bad time and I'll have to stand it. I'll certainly have to stand it and make as little fuss about it as possible.... He needs someone he believes in, to believe in him....

"How far will these others get between us? How much will they take away from me?... Children anyhow must come before them. I won't bear children that aren't love children. They would feel like parasites, a foreign growth in me, a disease....

"Perhaps when a child comes one feels differently. Maybe. After all, according to him — how does he put it? — in the incessant stream of sexual impulse, one changes all the time. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Hold fast to the Revolution, for that is a lifetime interest, and take each challenge stoically, stoutly, as it comes.... And that," said all the Kentlakes, "is everything we can say to-night. You don't begin to know yet, Stella, what a human being can stand. 'I can't stand it' is the road to nothingness. Think of where

it has brought your mother. Stoicism and the Revolution. That is Life. Whimpering and saying 'I can't' is Death. Go to bed on that, Stella, now, and sleep like a top. Go to bed, Stella, I tell you....

She was yawning. She threw off her dressing-gown and stood thoughtful with her hand on the light switch.

"Good night, Gemini dear," she said. "Forgive me. I'll read your letter properly to-morrow. Bless you and keep you, Gemini.

And she got into bed, rolled over, and slept like a log, even as the Kentlakes in her had told her.

When she came down to breakfast in the morning, Kentlake still, her mother watched her preoccupied expression for a time and then remarked: "You haven't slept well, darling. You aren't worrying — ?"

"I'm worried about the lease, dearest. There's something in it.... I ought to run up to town to-morrow and see about it."

"But what is it, dear? Perhaps I—'?"

"It's technical," said Stella. "But it ought to be seen to."

"Of course if it's *technical*," said Lucy. "Oughtn't some man — ?"

"I'll see to all that, Mummy," said Stella. "Up there."

She went to the post office, sent a telegram to Gemini to be sure of getting him on the telephone, and telephoned to him at the office after midday.

She went off the next morning by bus. "I hope it isn't anything serious," said Lucy, watching her depart, strung up and resolute. Her daughter returned, late in the afternoon, no longer jaded and anxious, but bright — eyed, happy and assured. "You were away such a time," said Lucy, regarding her. "Did everything go well?"

"Everything," said Stella.

"There won't be any more trouble?"

"No. It's just something I ought to have seen to before. But now it's all right and we'll be moving in a week and you'll be settling down in Weston-super-Mare and I shall be under Uncle Robert's benevolent wing. Darling, it's so nice to have things settled. It's so good to know exactly where we are."

She put her arm round her mother's shoulders, squeezed her and kissed her anxious forehead with an unusual warmth of affection.

“And you waited for cocktails until I came back!” she said. “I feel I could mix you a cocktail to-day like no cocktail that ever was.”

Lucy’s suspicions deepened. “Was it so *very* technical?” she asked.

“Like *that*,” said Stella, her hand describing an upward spiral in the air as she danced out of the room to get the cocktail outfit. Lucy shook her head and drank her specially good cocktail, when it came, with an expression of infinite resignation. But she asked no more questions.

2. STELLA RETURNS TO A FOCUS OF HUMAN WISDOM

Stella sat in the train that was taking her to Cambridge, to stay with Uncle Robert until the term began. She had finished the packing at Barnes and got through the dispatch of her mother to Weston-super-Mare with as few scenes of abortive tenderness as possible. She packed the cocktail shaker very carefully. “Anyhow I taught her to drink,” she said. “I suppose she’ll try to make them now for herself. In her room, in secret. She’ll give up the ice, I expect, and settle down to straight Martini and gin.”

In the train she had forgotten her mother. She was thinking of the resumption of her graduation work and Uncle Robert and Gemini and the Revolution. She was not so much thinking as musing, strolling through a ramifying jungle garden of more or less correlated systems of mental activity. They took her hither and thither, so that she could not determine whether the garden had ever had a plan in the past or whether she would presently discover it was growing into a plan. So far as she had a guiding idea it was the problem of just exactly what completing her education meant and what Cambridge had still to do to her and for her. Was it really doing something, or was it pretending to do something, or was it just forgetting her and her needs and dreaming of itself as something pleasantly important until catastrophe happened to awaken or kill it?

She wanted “activating.” She had recently acquired that word. She did not, she realised, go on reading or thinking as Gemini did. She had none of his peculiar facility for Ending the books he needed to

carry him on, much less his odd trick of going on and on with a line of thought, oblivious to things about him. She wanted somebody.... What exactly did she want?

"I wish I had someone to talk to about these things — who wasn't so mixed up with passion and feeling as Gemini is. Somebody who would talk things out with me impersonally...."

Love, she thought, separates people's minds. They care too much then for the effect they are producing to talk freely. But if thought matters as it seems to matter, one ought to be able to go on hammering out ideas with people you don't care a rap for, if they are intelligent and interested in the same questions. I at any rate can't do that. But Gemini does. He can guy the domestic life of Cottenham C. Bower and yet respect him as a master....

"Strange, I'm going back to the very centre of the intellectual life of this most civilised country, I'm told it is, in the world. In some ways perhaps it is. I've been here two years and there is not a soul I can talk to about fundamental things, not a soul."

She had tried already to get to grips with one or two of the other girls and a don or so. They all seemed to slip away from her approaches. There was the question of God. Some of them had no word or phrase about the framework of life. They

"believed" breathlessly and silently. At the core of their worlds, it would seem, was the unspeakable, a large nothing which had once been a person, surrounded by a defensive halo. Ssh! They thought themselves deeply religious, but indeed they were the completest atheists, living and thinking their entire lives outside that central Holy of Holies, going near to it only on tiptoe, reverentially, in manifest dread lest *He* should pop out upon them. He never did. This God of theirs couldn't say Bo! to a goose. Others seemed still stranger to her; they were consciously pious, they not only prayed but proselytised-until she asked questions. These others would come after her, sit in her study for a time exhorting her to believe.

"What?" said Stella. "What exactly?"

She must pray to believe, she must ask for guidance.

"But if I do not believe whatever it is how can I pray?"

"But try it. You don't understand the happiness."

"Honestly, Susan, I don't believe in that happiness of yours. I've

watched you. I don't see any difference between you — and the unsaved."

"You don't know."

"I *don't* know. I'm not in any particular need of happiness, but I want to get things clear."

"If only you'd *pray*."

Usually if Stella pressed her sceptical questioning there was a headlong retreat; pursuit gave place to avoidance. What was this Triune God of theirs? Why had he such an inordinate appetite for fulsome praise? He might make Susan happy in some sort of mystical love affair, but why didn't he drop that sort of flirtation, and up and make his whole world happy? She gave a crude imitation of Uncle Robert in these blasphemies. She was given to understand she was just too *awful*.

And all these young women, by nature and necessity, were thinking about sex. But what did they think? And what did the wisdom of all the world focussed here in Cambridge, indicate about these matters? Last year as her love affair with Gemini had developed, she had watched her fellow students and the younger dons with a keener eye. They were all alive, all feeling things, probably up to all sorts of things, and they were all, all of them, masking this inner turmoil and getting hardly any help from the experiences round them. It was plain to her that in many practical realities they were more ignorant than slum girls. Yet she felt she could see a little into them through such chinks as for example the poetry they read — which was not always the poetry they talked about — as the self-betrayal of their make-ups and their evening costumes, as their attitude to pictures, their behaviour in the presence or absence of men, the expression of their unguarded faces when they listened to music or sat lost in reverie. They had, she perceived, their drives, their urgencies and their retreats. But a veil of fear and self-protection was wrapped about everything they said and did. They would not talk plainly and simply. They did not think plainly. They were embarrassed even by their private thoughts. They resorted to circumlocutions at the very approach of truth, they blushed and flushed and recoiled.

There was indeed a bawdy set of girls, who professed a

tremendous knowingness, were proud to get drunk, pretended to viciousness, told broad stories and swapped dirty witticisms. She played up a little to these broad-minded ones; she could jest with the best of them, and whenever she did so she was reminded of a wonderfully intimate, flushed and red-eared talk she had had with another little girl at the age of eight. "Let's tell each other," the other little girl had said, "the very *rudest* word we know. The very *orflest*."

Some of these girls boasted by implication of lovers, always very vaguely. Stella was inclined to think that the doers were not among the talkers, and that upon a hundred aspects of this problem at the warm heart of life, they were even more perplexed and rudderless than herself. What was holding them back from clear ideas? Were they all going to fall into sexual situations and then rationalise them afterwards? As she was doing.

It was the same with politics and social conduct. They were separated by great gaps of imperfect realisation from the text — books they had to read. On these matters they talked very freely and quite uncritically and irresponsibly. A lot of them professed an ignorant and implacable communism. Even when they were not actually active communists they were agreed that Karl Marx was a tremendous authority upon political and social science. *Why*, they did not know. They thought strikes and hunger marches the quintessence of politics and Soviet Russia heaven on earth. Others were obviously impressed by the virile personal charm of Sir Oswald Mosley. Another group read the poems and prose pieces of Mr T.S. Eliot with an almost mystical edification, and others again seemed to derive a secret and altogether incommunicable satisfaction from the teachings of Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley, J.B. Priestley in his profounder phases, Yeats-Brown the Bengal Lancer, Gurus and the cult of Uspensky. They all betrayed a strong disposition to discipleship. All of them shirked saying things for themselves; instead it was "I wish you would read" or "If only you would come and hear."

But what is the good of ideas you cannot state for yourself? That you haven't picked off the tree and made your own? How can you have them, if you cannot state them? Some of them had fixed on this or that writer or teacher; others had a Gemini in the background. "What does Cambridge think of this or that?" she would ask herself,

and answer "Just any old thing. It's a jumble sale."

So what on earth was Cambridge to Stella or Stella to Cambridge?

Newnham was congested now by a brawl of hefty young women who had been evacuated from Bedford College, London, during the air raid panic. They brought nothing specific with them in the way of ideas. They added nothing but numbers to the general effect of mental confusion. Stella found no intimate: among them nor heard anything to show that London University was educating with any greater comprehensiveness than Cambridge. The London idea too was "just any old thing."

She fell back at last on Uncle Robert, the omniscient, the assured. It was only after term had begun that she did this, but what he said will best lit in here. "Uncle Robert," she said. "One doesn't get *down* to things here. I don't seem able to talk about realities with anyone. Is it *my* fault? It slides away. Aren't they actually interested, or are they interested differently?"

Uncle Robert answered her questions on various occasions as this or that occurred to him. What he said at one time was supplemented or illuminated by later or by previous *obiter dicta*. But for the purposes of our story it is convenient to gather all he said and conveyed to her as if it were one sustained discourse, framed in the particular talk that centralised these things in her memory.

For fiction, like memory, if it is to be explicit, must practise the economics of selection and concentration.

3. UNCLE ROBERT TELLS THE REAL TRUTH. ABOUT UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Uncle Robert stood at his large window looking down on St John Street and Kings Parade. He looked down that vista of college facades and gatehouses as a well-prepared speaker might look at his superfluous notes. He lifted his nose somewhat and directed his mind to the Real Truth of the Matter. He spoke in his usual self-satisfied, unhurrying, gentle voice.

"I quite understand the quality of your expectation, Stella, and the astonishment and dismay with which you realise how excessive that

expectation was. I have been expecting you to come along. I admit I told your mother Cambridge was the best place for you. Relatively to your home and Barnes, it was....

"But now that all that is settled, we can look more deliberately into the real truth about these Universities. They make — they have always made-a profession — at any rate they have had a plausible air — of taking young people, out of schools where they have been prepared under university direction for the great experience of graduation, and of imparting some sort of ultimate wisdom and mental habits unknown to the commonalty, *initiating* them into a mastery of life....

"Initiation. That is what you thought they were going to do for you. That is what Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* imagined. That is what our poor befuddled humbugged lower classes believe goes on up here to this day. They really believe that people who have been up here are mentally better than people who haven't. You cannot believe what they imagine! Education — at a University! Excelsior and there is nothing higher. They look up to it with their mouths open. Crumbs fall to them. University Extension! Oh, generous, beautiful words! You, Stella, were to be one of those precious educated. The concentrated sort, not the extended sort. And now after two years you find you have got nothing whatever, nothing that makes you different, or stronger or better. Eh?"

"That's what I'm telling you," said Stella.

Uncle Robert looked over his nose at her.

"It is what you have been *trying* to tell me," he corrected gently, and resumed his contemplation of Trinity. He had had his hands in his jacket pockets. He now stuck his thumbs into his waistcoat pockets and lifted his nose a little higher.

"No doubt," he said, "no doubt, all these queer processes round and about the earth which people call education, did begin as something of that sort. *Initiation*. Only you see they've forgotten about it. They've clean forgotten about initiating you, Stella. The medicine man took off the youth and put him in a hut and starved him and did things to purify and clean up his mind. Have they ever done anything to purify and clean up the mess in your mind, here or at school?"

“I—”, began Stella.

He held out a restraining hand.

“I don’t want you to answer, my dear Stella. I don’t want unnecessary answers. I ask these questions for rhetorical effect. Obviously. I am perfectly well able to answer them myself. In fact I insist upon answering them myself. And as I was saying — or going to say when you interrupted me — a century ago, a trifle over a century ago, in the eighteenth century, this University *was* initiating men into a world, *was* telling them the how and what and why of things in general with a certain effect of assurance and authority. It was perhaps not a real world, it was the highly artificial world of the Hanoverian Settlement. But anyhow it was a world. Nothing threatened it fundamentally. Everyone believed or pretended to believe so completely that for most of them at last it became a genuine belief, in the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Three Creeds, the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the Chronology of Bishop Usher, in their own knowledge of Greek, and indeed in the whole Anglican bag of tricks-you have been to Church, Stella? You know about it?”

“Naturally, at school and at home. Oh, hundreds of times. I’ve even attended a Confirmation Class. I wasn’t confirmed, but the Head thought it might do me good to attend.”

“Did it?”

“Not a bit. But I learnt to imitate the Reverend Mr Blarningham’s cough better than anyone. I would make all the girls scuttle back to their places. I used to go into the corridor....”

“I suppose,” resumed Uncle Robert, in that sweet detached voice of his, “all the dons of the days of the Protestant ascendency really believed in their stuff. Actually believed. Yes. I think we have to assume that. It was their philosophy, their wisdom. This, they said, is Truth. This is the beginning and the end. They were not what one could call liars. Everything had steered them to conformity. They had bouts of doubt perhaps, rather like measles — which leave you immune for ever. They helped one another through those. They read their Greek philosophers, but they must have read them very badly, and under direction; very few of them really mastered Greek and even their Latin was rotten; and besides that, Aristotle and Plato had been broken in, so to speak, to the Anglican system, by means of

notes and glosses. They read *bits* of them, you know, just bits. Mostly from cribs. They didn't read them as whole authors. And how can you understand a man unless you have ransacked him and know him up and down and inside out? And they read a sort of classical history, all togas and dignity, and as little as possible about the filth peltings and the free fights and murders of the Capitol, they learnt nothing about the brutal realities of the Roman Empire, they just learnt the golden legend of the Empire, that glorious mirage of the past, and they had also their history of England from 1066, which told them exactly how to set about politics. And that was really all they knew. All.

"Greek! That was the crown of their imposture. Few of them learnt it better than a failed B.A. Babu learns English. A few industrious ones acquired that minute knowledge of its stereotyped phrases and idioms which is scholarship. To use a stereotyped phrase was 'Good Greek'; to make a new one was a sin against all the canons of scholarship. Their Greek was as dead and finished a language as that. A pompous, useless supererogation."

[And then it was, or on some other parallel occasion, that Uncle Robert disposed of what he called the great classical imposture. Greek and Classical Latin, he said, excitedly read and hideously mispronounced, had captured the Universities in the great boom of the Renascence. Clerical dog-Latin at that tremendous onset, retreated with its tail between its legs. There had been a great and releasing clash of ideas for a generation or so, when eager men read the disinterred Greek literature for its contents, for the stimulus of its unfamiliar ideas, and then the scholars, grammarians and examiners seized control of the new media. For a brief period it seemed that Latin and Greek might live again as the double-barrelled *lingua franca* of the escaping spirit of enquiry, might intermingle and coalesce and absorb new elements, as every living language is bound to do. The new natural philosophers were quite ready for that, they used Latin for a couple of centuries, and made a serviceable nomenclature, mainly out of Greek roots. But the pedants would have none of that. They were horrified to hear Greek words that would have puzzled Plato and half-breed phrases that outraged all grammatical decorum. They had the new learning, but they still had

monkish minds and monkish ways of teaching. They flogged the life out of that possible European language.

Meanwhile the European vernaculars, with no exclusive prejudices, were picking up anything that seemed useful from any speech in the world and growing continually in flexibility and power. Impatient minds were refusing to pass through the narrow disciplines of the unamalgamated, inadaptable classical tongues before they launched themselves upon natural philosophy, when they had a living language of their own now, as good or better. English in particular, though it never learnt to spell, became the most assimilatory, various and expressive language in the world. German, Russian asserted their possibilities. French checked the natural abundance of its growth by the Dictionary of the Academy, yet still it served better than its parental Latin. So Greek and Latin died a second time, and the Universities, which had invested their little alls, so to speak, in the classical tradition, had to fight against the spreading realisation of their death. Some day, some intelligent student, probably an American blending psychology and intellectual history, will write of the desperate fight of Scholarship to retain its ascendency over a world that had no use for it. He will trace how the papers in Classics were given disproportionate marks, how in every school the brighter boys were stolen by the classical side; how for a century and more the European intelligence struggled like Gulliver against the bonds of a perverted and dwarfed education.

"Think of it!" said Uncle Robert, "a language reduced to quotation! Even the best scholars did no more than quote. It was the fashion in Parliament to produce long spouting bits of those awful booing and baaing sounds in which Greek abounds, and the greatest triumph possible was to cap the quotation. Those who did not understand assumed an expression of intelligent appreciation. That went on until less than a hundred years ago. But never is it recorded that anyone during that age of triumphant Greek, broke into free Greek speech; never. Never a lapse into discussion. Never even a contradiction or a new witticism, fired across the floor of the House. They never forgot themselves in Greek to that extent, because they were never at home in it. Could there be more convincing evidence of the utter imposture of that scholarship of theirs? They had never

taken in and digested Greek; they just regurgitated it. Quotation," said Uncle Robert, "is the triumph of memory over thought. A scholar is a man who wears second-hand clothes and lives in a junk shop. Yes. But these Anglicised Grecians, these scholar-gangsters, cornered education in the English-speaking world, obstructed its modernisation, crippled the minds of the cleverer boys, distorted and enfeebled the understanding of the entire community. And here we are!"

Stella remembered how one day her uncle had seized upon a little pamphlet that had come to him from India. "Perfect," he had said, "perfect," and for a time would not hand it over to her. "This you see is what happens when a highly intelligent man tries to master a language which is not his natural idiom of thought. Just as this sounds to you, so would the good Greek of a modem classical don have sounded in the Academy. Only his mispronunciation would probably have been hideous, and this gentleman would have been only a little chi-chi. Don't make any mistake about the matter; this man is a good clear thinker. But read his scholarly English!"

It was entitled *Beef*, and it started off bravely:

"Guess assertions from lapsing intellectuals, the spirit of deliberate maligning, the fossilised mind that will neither learn nor unlearn things, the bankrupt structure that feeds on the reminiscence of dreamy past, never trying to live up to facts or admit facts, rather suppressing facts, to keep up superciliary snobishness, these are the factors that breed and keep up canards in every field that do not die out easily though disproved. Then there is the wishful thinking that can only spot others and not oneself.

"To turn to the precise subject being dealt here in, let us tackle the popular conceptions, rather misconceptions — one by one.

"There is the talk about Beef causing leprosy current even with the intelligentsia of the country at least in Bengal which the beefeaters stand almost apologetically and the non — beefeaters assert aggressively. In the interest of truth and the better understanding of ideological groupings, the myth has got to be liquidated once for all. The findings of scientific facts and data and social study with a pair of balance, a pot of fire and a bottle of acid warrant it...."

Uncle Robert stood over Stella as she read. “And so it goes on,” he said. “I do not believe there is a classical don in existence whose Greek is better than the English of that. I doubt if there’s a score who would even attempt as much. And yet in the interest of this imposture, English education has been bedevilled for two hundred years.”]

“No doubt in those grammarian ridden days the University *did* in a sense initiate. It gave the young Anglican gentleman all the advantages he needed over the illiterate, a sense of superiority, a class freemasonry, a code of behaviour and an acceptable way of taking the problems of life as they came to him. It trained him to the importance of scholarship. He realised the practical superiority of conformity to lucidity. He belonged to an ?lite, he felt; he was a Monarchist, a sound Churchman, a Patriot. He put over a bluff of learning and refinement. It produced such men, little T.S. Eliots by the hundred, as a rotten caracass produces blowflies. Without an effort. Mental blowflies. T.S. Eliot is a rare and precious thing to — day, he blows importantly, outstandingly, but in those days T.S. Eliots were ten a penny, unpoetical, unaffected T.S. Eliots. They buzzed about this place and they rose in fresh annual swarms to spread themselves and their maggots over England. They saw to it that our Blakes and Shelleys, our Gibbons and Godwins and Wilkeses, our Benjamin Franklins and our Tom Paine — for those early Americans were our men, Stella — led properly fly-blown lives. Nice people were trained to make grimaces of genteel distaste at their names. These flies spotted on all that might have saved the English. They crawled over art and criticism.... They buzzed America away from us....

“And then even that initiation began to deteriorate. But not enough and not fast enough to be cleared away. Nothing arose to replace it. It is an obscure and complex history, Stella, and no one with the necessary patience and humour has written it. Bit by bit that Church of England initiation ceased to be the one and only way to an educated life in England. An increasing number of dons became dimly but sufficiently aware of the benefits of knowing Rothschilds and cultivating Manchester and the Midlands. They dropped their cultural exclusiveness; they called it ‘abolishing tests.’ Jews began to

come here, Dissenters of all sorts, and at last the younger and lustier dons threw their celibacy over the windmills and there was an outbreak of wives, often quite uneducated wives, a reinforcement of ignorance.

"And Newnham and all that, of course.

"That's roughly how it went. But they didn't, you see, try to adapt their initiation process to the new realisations that came flooding into the place, with these relaxations. They were too busy with other things. It was the business of nobody in particular to adjust that initiation course. And nobody did. It remained the main course. Bits of it that were compulsory were made optional to avoid offending the new-comers. Paley's *Evidences* used to be in it as an essential, a smattering of Greek, something called 'Scripture.' They're no longer considered indispensable for enlightenment, but they still hang about. Disconnected alternative subjects have been stuck in. My poor Stella, you're not the only person to come up here and feel baffled. What is it all about? What can it all be about? I quite understand — quite. All the intelligent ones feel baffled at the menu of these degree courses. All of them.

"The old Anglican initiation hung on here, scotched but not killed, during the whole period of English liberalism, and it wriggled back to political power in this last monarchist and clerical counter-revolution of the Frightened Thirties, which has recaptured our poor fly-blown Empire, to steer it now rapidly, so rapidly now it terrifies one, towards military and economic disaster. Think of Lord Halifax with Lord Lloyd behind him in the Foreign Office, think of our triumphant Archbishops and our stupid broadcasts, read The Times, watch the confident smiling and bowing and posturing of the Court, listen to the wartime buzz of the pulpits, the press, the streets. One might think all of our once great and mighty England dead and decayed beneath these crawling swarming Anglicans. Where is God's Englishman now? Where is the England of Milton and Newton, Gilbert and Bacon, Darwin and Huxley, Cromwell, Nelson, Blake? It is not only you youngsters who are baffled. The whole country is baffled to hear the voices that claim to speak for it now.

The world is baffled by the awful legacy of those teachers who would not learn.

“Sometimes I think I might write a history of it all. But again I might not. History rushes on. Much of it may never be written now — with understanding. I am a man, Stella, as you know, of immense and terrible perspicacity, but let me admit to you that I am an impatient, unscholarly man. It would require a stupendous effort to put one’s mind in the place of the average don of a hundred years ago and then trace all that has happened since in the average donnish mind. I should have to read books, not as I do read books, like a cock scratching for worms, but patiently, sympathetically, frowstily. I should certainly have fits of rage with the stuff. There would have to be a boy down below with a basket, ready to catch the books I shied out of this window and bring them upstairs again.

“No. Not in my line. But viewing it generally — . Tick it off, phase by phase, the phases in — what shall I call it? — the senile decay of our University education. First of all there was the realisation of evolution and geological time-the Huxley-Darwin challenge. Obviously a complete and thorough readjustment of the general initiation was called for. Obviously. These dons, not only as educated men but as educators, were *challenged*, to occupy themselves urgently and fully with this — this stupendous modification of the time-scale, and with the plain need to replace the orthodox Creation Story by a new conception of life, a conception of life as something unfolding, creatively indeed, but without any special acts of creation at all. The facts were right under their noses. Manifestly the realisation of evolution pushed the old story of the Fall of Man into mere mythology. It had to be reconceived or abandoned. An entirely new interpretation of sin and salvation became necessary. If the world were still to brood on sin and salvation. What did Sin mean in the new light, and what were we being saved from now?

“Curious chapter that was in the history of human thought! And of the honour of the human mind — if we can talk of such a thing.

“Did they stand up to that challenge? Not a bit of it! Were they going to have their dear old assumptions turned down, merely because they had become absurd? Not they. They lied — they lied to themselves, because *au fond*, when put to the test, they were uneducated, lazy — minded conservative men, men who *could* find

refuge in an internal lie. They wouldn't learn. So they went on here for decades pretending that old exploded initiation of theirs was still the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth. The young came up to them, agog to know whether something important had happened to the world of thought. They held out stoutly — they hold out to this day — that it really didn't matter in the least. To this day you can go right through to a B.A. degree here in the blackest, most self-satisfied ignorance of the modem vision of the process of life in time. In that matter alone this venerable man-making organisation is, as a man-making organisation, a hundred years out of date.

"But that, you know, Stella, was only the opening failure on the part of University education to keep up. Quite a lot of people, some of them embedded in various colleges and cells here, although they didn't care a rap for the unfortunate undergraduates, were indulging the most fascinating curiosities, were going on with biological research in various forms. Embryologists like Francis Balfour for example. Among other things that interested them greatly were the questions; 'What is a species?' 'What is an individual? 'Are there individualities of different orders?' 'Unicellular, multicellular, metameric?' 'How is a colonial organism related to a shoal or a herd?' And so on. More particularly; 'Do individuality and species really extend to the great inanimate world about us?'

"Has anyone here ever put that particular question to you? Yet it lies at the very root of philosophy. These biologists found the age-long riddle of the One and the Many changing its character under their eyes. It was all so obvious, that already, fifty years ago, excited students were running out of biological laboratories saying: 'But then Beings are unique! Atoms are unique! Plainly. So physical science is making false assumptions. You daren't go a yard with this box of bricks logic of yours unless you check up by experimental verification'. Biological science knocked the bottom out of physical science (which is something fundamentally different from biological science) seventy years ago. Physics has been floundering and mathematicians have been trying to straighten out their bent philosophy ever since. Pragmatism broke loose asking of every pompous theory: 'Does it work? Try it first!' This ruthless logic your dons here used to talk about is really — how can one put it? — an

over-confident unconscious deviation. Like the strutting forward march of a man with one leg slightly shorter than the other.

"That was evident, but did they call attention to it? Logic is as true as the flat earth theory. It keeps on getting more and more out of the straight with every step. Obviously everybody up here ought to know that. From the beginning. But do they know it? And have they ever hinted that this language stuff they expect you to do your thinking with, is a muddle of terms so worn and misused as to be almost completely defaced, phrases out of obsolete metaphysics, rash assumptions from the childhood of science? No, and no one has ever warned you that such an opposition as that of substance and essence, or of matter and spirit, on which they build so much, is the left-over rubbish of barbaric natural philosophers centuries and centuries dead? Yet all these criticisms concern the very groundwork of thinking! They cleanse and clear your mind. How can you be a modern rational being if you do not know about them?

"These long wrangles between the Realists and the Nominalists and the Neo-Nominalists again which these orthodox dons still minimise, were a tremendous struggle of the human mind to escape first from dogmatic theology and then from the sterility of the classical tradition with which theology presently allied itself. Nominalism was stifled and maligned, but it was a rebellion of clear-headedness. It was a struggle that needs plain telling now, because we are still under the shadow of the classical imposture. What do you know, Stella, of Occam or Roger Bacon, of Copernicus and Galileo and William Gilbert? You've heard their names as starry names. But disconnected names. But do you know anything of the slow, persistent, intellectual revolt in which these men played their parts? Ultimately observation was liberated. Ultimately. At long last. Escaped rather than was liberated. And those names were outstanding in that desultory war of liberation. Observation got out of prison. The human mind in a state of apologetic humility went back at last to observed and verifiable fact, and these natural philosophies that people call the natural sciences were released. Outside the schools and the Universities. There the classical-clerical held on, the monkish bawling and shouting and beating.

"European education has been a conservative and reactionary

process — always. Has anyone ever attempted to put the points at issue between Realists, Nominalists and Neo-Nominalists before you? On the contrary. The classical scholars came as a reinforcement to clerical orthodoxy and fought Neo-Nominalists tooth and nail. Tooth and nail? Yes, and then, being elephantine rather than toothed and clawed, and finding they were getting the worst of it in spite of every advantage they held, they sat down upon it and pretended it wasn't, and never had been, there....

"Then take this movement to clear up the meaning of words and rescue all you young people from stereotyped phrases and thinking with bogus terms. There's Ogden, Richards and that lot. I've given Stuart Chase to you and his *Tyranny of Words*. Maybe he's not the wisest and most original of those who have worked in this matter, but his book is clear cleansing undergraduate stuff. I've made *you* read that, Stella, but how many of these young victims below will encounter it? See that your words *mean*. Half the time they don't mean. Or they mean too much, any old thing you like. Do these dons who are supposed to initiate you, care? Not a bit of it, they just go on teaching you young people to parrot. Parrots themselves. Semantics has been a challenge for twenty years. You would have thought it would have set a teaching University alight from end to end. You would have expected terrific and illuminating logomachies.... Did a leaf stir?

"So it has gone on. The old initiation has rotted to pieces; and no other initiation has been developed to take its place. No vision of the history of life have they given you, no wisdom about the nature of things, no discriminatory use of language. What *have* they given you, Stella?

"They have taught you a little Latin, less Greek, some French, German and any Italian word that you might meet in a musical score. Have they ever pointed out to you that there is hardly a single word in English, hardly an idiom, that has a precise equivalent in any of these other languages? Languages correspond-yes; but roughly and loosely. Because all language is still loose and inaccurate. Not a hint did they give you of that. Not a nudge at question-begging phrases —"

"Question-begging?" flashed across Stella's mind. Where had she

heard or read that quite lately?...

"And for that matter, philosophy-! Have they let you know that apart from a lot of balderdash about *this* school of philosophy and *that* school of philosophy, there must be such a thing as philosophy itself? A common groundwork for modem thinking, a common basis for the uptake of life. One doesn't read Lucretius for chemistry nowadays or Pliny for natural history....

"You know better than that, Stella. You know that you I began mentally as everyone begins, with what we call a Z common-sense view of life. You just saw what you called ' facts. They all seemed to belong together. Seeing was believing. And people told you facts. Hearing was believing. Then one day you had the shock of seeing one thing you saw plainly and believed in, plainly contradicting another. I remember the shock *I* had when I saw a penny under water within easy reach of my hand as I thought, and when I picked it up I found it wetted my sleeve. So it was I began upon that branch of natural philosophy called optics.

"You found too that things people told you in perfect good faith, evidently in good faith and not making them up for fun, didn't make perfect and complete sense with other facts. Uncertainty dawned upon you. You said *This is queer*. You asked *Which is right?* What were these inconsistencies? That was the beginning of philosophy for you. You started trying to restore the consistency of your outlook on the world. That *is* philosophy. What else can it be? Obviously.

"Everyone has a philosophy, even if it is a mere tangle of unsuccessful attempts at reconciliation. Even if it is tacit and hardly knows of itself. As the contradictions and attempted reconciliations increase, the philosophy grows. All the so-called sciences are applications of philosophy to particular regions of factual difficulty. They ought still to be called natural philosophy. But some of these teachers of philosophy here will talk of 'scientists'-preposterous word!-and oppose them to 'philosophers' as though they were cats and dogs who are bound to fight when they meet. What they mean by a 'scientist' or 'science' per se, I cannot imagine. There aren't such things. They seem to think a 'scientist' is a man who goes about measuring and weighing things and being stupid about the results. Biologists and physicists are all the same to them....

“Everyone is some sort of a philosopher. Obviously. There must be riddles in the life of a ploughboy. ‘It don’t stand to reason,’ says he, and worries. The one and only difference that can exist between a relatively educated and a relatively uneducated man, is just how far he has a living philosophical process going on in his mind and keeping his mind together in some sort of order, or not. Our world is full now of the most urgent contradictions, and obviously philosophy must be getting more and more down to things and into things. More and more. It is — for a few perspicacious people. Modern philosophy grows daily; far clearer than the ancient stuff and with a vastly bigger grip. It keeps pace with the march of knowledge, as knowledge gets out of mists of the past and looks about. It is eternally contemporary. The philosophy of my lectures and practice is an absolute repudiation and reversal of the standard philosophy and phraseology they cling to here-an absolute and complete reversal. I build on Pavlov and Watson and the Behaviourists, of whom they still pretend never to have heard. What they teach is no more than a bit of mental history on its way to the discard. That is all the philosophy you will get here — unless you *specialise*, as they say. *How* one can specialise in the science of sciences, is beyond saying! For all general teaching purposes, Philosophy has gone out of the University and left no message when she is coming back. That’s why they haven’t even begun putting your mind in order. After two years of it! Have they begun to put any minds in order up here? Ask your fellow undergraduates.... Need I go on? Have I answered your reasonable and intelligent question, Stella?” He moved his head sideways for a moment, almost interrogatively.

Stella knew better than to answer.

“And instead of warning you about these things, consider what they put you through for graduation. So earnestly, so solemnly they do it. They put you through it without the faintest notion of why and wherefore. It’s done. So they do it. Ask them why and they produce a sort of parrot answer. The stuff ‘trains the mind.’ It does. In bad habits. It ‘strengthens the intelligence. It enlarges you.’ Like a bladder. My God! Hear them discuss anything real! Like balloons at a gala dinner, waving about when a draught blows in. Some of them popping in the flaring gas-jets.

“They’ve forgotten long since, how it all came about, generations ago here they forgot. Most of these teachers here have never been out of the scholastic world since they were prize — boys from a preparatory school. Climbing the scholarship ladder, hand over fist, up and out of any reality. The less they thought and questioned, the faster they learnt — and here they are! Outstripping all the minds that said ‘Yes — but.’ How can these dons know anything about life? I ask you. The stuff’s pumped into them and they transmit it, a little flatter, a little less real with every transfusion. If you are going to call two-thirds of these dons educated men, then trained dogs are educated men, and taxi-drivers and postal sorters, who know which street joins on to which all over London, are the most highly educated men in the country.”

At this point a note of compunction became evident in Uncle Robert’s voice. He was obviously trying his utmost to be just. His voice sank so that he was almost confidential.

“There’s a certain amount of scientific research done here, I admit, but that’s a side-show. It has to be sterilised for examination purposes before it reaches your lot There’s mental activity here no doubt — in the recesses of the place. But it’s secret. They don’t talk about it. There’s even, I observe, a certain scared, apprehensive modernity in some of the syllabuses. But they never join up the new stuff to anything else. And as for imparting it to the eager young! They don’t know how. They don’t care. I’m talking of that, mind you, of the education of the young for life. I’m talking of the generation that has to make over the world. I’m not talking about research. We’ve been adding faculty to faculty here, since 1918. Very, very considerable amounts of good detailed work there may be. Not the slightest question. No doubt of it....

“That has nothing to do with initiation, the educational function. Nothing whatever. I am talking of this place as an educational place, of what you are getting from it now. I am talking of the dons as teachers.

“These teaching dons, I say, have burked revolutionary thoughts for a hundred years — as teachers. They sit now in their little Gothic rooms while the drowning minds of the undergraduates who came to be educated and initiated, swirl about in the planless sluices of the

curriculum and wash out again as ignorant and unformed as when they washed in. Look at them down there, those three poor credulous boys coming out of Trinity now, with their mortar-boards and their bits of gowns, clutching those books that nowadays take them nowhere.... What can those men be? A year ago there would have been dozens of them. They would have *inhabited* the place.... Probably tripos men finishing up, or medicals. But has anyone come up this term? I don't know. A few boys of eighteen may come up for a year and a bit before the army gets them. Next year, will there be a mortar-board left in Cambridge? I never thought of that before, Stella, but will there be? Look at these youngsters in the street; in all sorts of uniforms! Imagine it! Cambridge with the last rag of a gown and the ultimate disaster of a cap, *gone*! Ah! Dr Furbelow. Look, Stella, at that old humbug on a bicycle. *He* will be here to the last."

Stella had come to the window and stood beside her uncle.

"Ripening for a legendary University character, pedalling with an almost mystical precision. Fearfully aware of himself. Fearfully unaware of our immense world.

"I doubt if he has noticed for a moment what is happening to Cambridge. What *is* happening here? That never struck me so much as it strikes me now as I talk to you. Yes, Stella. The signs are out here now that the last pretences of initiation are packing up-to goto London or Wales or the trenches or hell. Leaving Cambridge to the owl and the bittern and Dr Furbelow on his bicycle, and still quite unaware. He will bicycle across the empty weedy courts and through the vacant cloisters. He will go faster and faster because there will be fewer and fewer people to impede him. Three-quarters of these young men are called up already. Mostly they seem to be Air Force youngsters. Some in khaki.... I've no idea what those are.... Just doing mathematical and technical training for the war, I suppose; the very last pretence of initiation abandoned. Off *they* will go presently.... Will anyone come up next year? A few women perhaps. A handful of boys in a hurry...."

Uncle Robert stared blankly at his own idea. "Are we in the twilight of graduation already? Are we looking now at the last of the undergraduates? Will they come back as they did in 1919? Is it going to be that, twice over? Not if my reading of the war is correct. No. So

far as educating a people is concerned, this place is a failure now — a dying failure.

"That would not be so bad, if there was anything better to succeed it.... But what will succeed it? A world where one never graduates. Where one goes on and learns and learns to the end. And how? World University? With every man and woman alive, a learner?...

"Can that be anything more than a dream?

"To me it seems cold common sense. Common sense — in a half-witted world."

He was silent for a moment. Then he resumed his upward tilt. He looked over the Cambridge skyline into the eternal and incessant sky.

"One thing at a time," he said. "I was talking about the way in which life and faith seeped out of the initiation here. And still it falls below and falls behind. They are shirking a new challenge now. The world of mind is turning round under them and they still hold on to the idea that it is fixed. There is something more now for them to keep back from you, the enormous revolution in our ideas about the human mind that has been in progress since we began to understand what was meant by conditioned reflexes. As I turn my mind to your problem, I am astonished to think how completely my ideas and practice contradict the ideas still current in these schools, how clouds and myths have dissolved out of my mind. I must give you a book I came across the other day — it's a little stiff to read at first but it is worth the trouble — Cottenham C. Bower's *The Expansion of Sex*. He's an American and rather pompous, but his matter and method are illuminating, if only because they show how far we have travelled in the last few years. Contrast him with MacDougall for example, whom probably you have read. I think I must set you that for an essay. MacDougall clings to the old conception of a soul, a psyche, an undivided *self*, as a starting-point, and deals with all the problems of psychotherapy as the breaking up of that original unity. Cottenham C. Bower starts off in absolute contradiction. He assumes without discussion that so far from the mind being broken up, it has never yet been got together. How's that for immortality, spirituality and all the rest of it? We are only just beginning to get it together now. Psychology, you see, has ceased to be an analytical process and becomes a synthesis. You know this man doesn't even argue about it.

He ignores the other way round as though there was no need for an argument."

"Cottenham C.," said Stella, cutting in. "Cottenham C. Bower. Of course I know about him. Gemini has written me sheets about it."

"Your young man seems intelligent and up-to-date," said Uncle Robert. "But the University? Has that said anything?"

"Nothing in the syllabus."

"There are people, I know, who will tell you that this sort of thing is still too novel and abstruse for young minds. They will say you must first give them the old stuff out of which the new arose. Assuming it was simpler, which it never was. That is just making up father's old pants for Tommy. Won't do, Stella. It is the right of the young to assist at the development of new interpretations. The only way of beginning any subject for them is to tell them as plainly as possible what we know and think to-day. On the very day of the teaching. Then bring in the old stuff so far as it explains and leave it out when it doesn't. But what they give you here now for this silly graduation of theirs is just a meal of canned food, stale and decaying canned food. Is it any wonder that you find the bright youngsters turning from that to eat cheap, fly-blown stuff from the barrow at the corner, which at any rate has hormones.... You see, the real truth about these universities nowadays is that nobody really wants to initiate you and nobody wants you initiated. You are trying to see the world. When you ask them to help you to see, you are offered nothing but the blackened spectacles of outworn ideas. There are books here, Stella, and myself. Apart from that there is no light for you here. And if there is light anywhere, I agree with you, this is where light should be."

4. TILBURY

Late in August Gemini had started for what even in those last days was still the ambiguous wonderland of Soviet Russia, the land of a vague millennium obscured by enigmatic shadows. He would not let the darkening Polish situation deter him; the gathering threat of war; rather it quickened his eagerness to go before disaster prevented him.

He sailed by the Swedish liner to Gothenburg on a Monday, and Stella, with the tacit acquiescence of Uncle Robert, spent a Sunday and two nights with him in a little hotel in Chelmsford before his departure.

The things they did have been done a billion times, but such is the magic of sex that it seemed to them that nothing so full of pride and loveliness, so brave and exquisite, had ever happened upon earth before. Once Stella wept with tenderness at the thought of their parting, and Gemini embraced and kissed her through her salt tears....

They made the cross-country journey to the Swedish Lloyd liner and found themselves upon the pier at Tilbury mingling with the crowd from the London train. It was a mixed swarm, many Swedish people, schoolgirls and the like, recalled from holidays or schools in England by the threat of war; all sorts of rather inexplicable people, Germans, Poles, American journalists and so forth getting out of the country in time. And there were as many more people to see them off, with an unusually acute sense of parting in the sunny air.

A few English business men were there, one very concerned about a vast consignment of grapefruit, endless cases spinning down from the crane into the hold, which might be the last grape fruit in Sweden for a long time. Stella and Gemini had said all the things they had to say several times over; she wanted to weep because Gemini was going so far away from her and she wanted to laugh because he was glad to be leaving all the she-bears and cocktails of London behind; and they stared about them at the bustle of the embarkation, saying very little.

"And so this is Stella Kentlake," said a cool bright voice. "I *knew* somehow you'd be here."

And Gemini said, "It's *you*, Dione! M'am!"

She was a very neat, pretty, slender, tall lady who might have been about thirty-five and was indeed forty-four. She was not a bit like Gemini, except for something about the eyes; she was very fine-featured, clear-complexioned and dark-haired. Her neatly closed lips, the frame of her face, the fine eyebrows and a faint remoteness and unreality, sent Stella's thoughts flying away from England, seeking eastward until they pounced on ancient Egypt. That was it! The genetic Fates, the dance of the genes, had reconstructed a dynastic

Egyptian lady to be the wife of the Cadi of Clarges Street and Gemini's mother.

She smiled at Stella primly. It was a smile without effusion or any emotional quality. "I don't want to invade your parting," she said, "but I have got something here for Jimmy—"

"But of course I want you to know her, Dione dear, Dione M'am. I know you will like each other," said Gemini. "It was lovely of you to come."

"I slipped away," said Mrs Twain. "They told me at the Bank that the Swedish exchange was likely to begin jumping. So I've got you fifty pounds of kronor in this envelope, against anything that may happen. It may be all nonsense, but it may save you trouble." She produced an envelope from an unobtrusive little bag she was carrying. "Put it in your *inside* pocket, Jimmy. And button your jacket. And your coat. And is your passport in order? I haven't told the Cadi you are going yet. I don't see why I should. But I suppose he will see the stamps on your letters."

"You are a darling mother," said Gemini. "Fancy your thinking of that!"

She looked at Stella. "One thinks of a lot of things when one's only son goes off to see the world — suddenly. At first I thought something must have happened to this — this love affair of yours, some lovers' quarrel, and then I realised. I realised the sanity of it. Before this, I was a little afraid of meeting you, my dear." She added "my dear" as though she pinned it on to the sentence. "Then I told myself I must get over that. When I found, Jimmy, you were not on the train at Liverpool Street I knew at once I should find you both here."

"You're glad you came down, Dione M'am?"

"If it doesn't vex you. If I don't seem to come between you."

"It's the loveliest thing that could have happened," said Stella, and met a glance of detached friendliness. It was free of any quality of real liking or dislike. There was approval and acceptance.

"James, you ought to be going up that gangway. We'll come too and say good-bye to you up there. They'll tell us when it's time to come ashore and we shall be hustled off. That will make parting easier. Perhaps all partings ought to be hustled."

She seemed to reflect on that for a moment and then found Gemini was leading her by the arm and a satisfactorily self-possessed Stella was walking at her other side. A number of small happenings engaged their minds until the hustling began. “Among these Swedes one doesn’t feel tall,” said Mrs Twain.

“But slender,” said Stella.

“Slenderer than ever,” said Mrs Twain with that faint smile of hers. “It’s a wonderful world which gets itself all tied up in war because the Germans believe they look like Swedes — which you know they don’t in the least. The only Nordic-looking real German I ever knew was a Pomeranian, and his head — it wasn’t at all the right shape. I used to look at it from behind. It was awful. It was just as though he had mumps at the base of his brain. And then it went up quite flat and tilted forward. One can imagine the most extraordinary things happening in a brain like that. And of course those Pomeranians and the Prussian blonds aren’t German. They’re Wends.”

The hustling time came. Mrs Twain kissed her son on his cheek and was kissed on the cheek and then turned away, turned away deliberately and looked at the river ahead, as Stella gave Gemini her last hug. “Darling,” whispered Stella, “darling,” through their kiss. “Come back to me. Write to me. Don’t get lost anywhere. Don’t go astray.” Then louder to Mrs Twain’s averted back: “That’s the second warning, Gemini.”

Mrs Twain turned about again. She spoke to her son.

“Good luck, my dear,” she said. “Don’t forget me if you are in any trouble.”

“Am I likely to?” he asked.

“Dear boy,” she said, and then to Stella: “I want you to come with me, in the train to London, if you will.” And then directly to Gemini, after a moment of shy hesitation, “She’s quite a dear, Jimmy.” She was doing her utmost. She added as if by a sudden inspiration, “I’ll look after her.”

“Darling Dione,” said Gemini.

They went down the gangway without a word and stood side by side looking up at Gemini, very far off already. “Jimmy has meant so much to me,” said Mrs Twain, in a detached conversational voice as

though she was talking about scenery.

“He has been my life almost, since I was nineteen. It doesn’t seem to be real that he’s going away, going so completely away.... It isn’t six weeks since he was living at home. Then one thing after another. This, this ship and all. And the war over there like darkness gathering. It can’t possibly touch him.... But it feels strange.”

Stella said nothing and stared up at Gemini.

They were dropping the gangways and casting loose. A gap appeared between the landing stage and the side of the ship and widened slowly. There was a throbbing of engines and a churning-up of the unclean Thames water. There was much waving between ship and shore, shouts, last messages. There was a violent altercation about a forgotten packing case. But Gemini stood motionless.

“If there is really a war,” said Mrs Twain, “he will have to come back. Of course he will have to come back. He can’t get into it over there. He may come back quite soon. I hope he will not be disappointed.”

Gemini began to recede. “Mizpah,” murmured Stella softly and lifted her hand. Gemini lifted his hand slowly. He became smaller and smaller, a mere grey dab at last surmounted by a pink dot, and then just part of a vague dwindling crowd of people on the upper deck so that Stella could not distinguish him. Something aboard reflected the light of the setting sun and blazed quiveringly and blindingly, dimming everything around it.

“We may get a compartment to ourselves,” said Mrs Twain, and turned about slowly. “There will not be nearly so many people to go back”

Stella wanted to take a ticket. “I’ll pay for you on the train,” said Mrs Twain. “They come along for tickets.”

Half the compartments were empty.

In the carriage Stella began the conversation. “It is the loveliest evening,” she said. “He should have a smooth crossing.”

Mrs Twain, lost in her own thoughts, said nothing. She did not lean back in her seat, she sat up, as she was evidently accustomed to sit up, with her nicely gloved hands on her lap, and looked in front of her as a neat-headed cat might look at a fire. Presently she said, as if she was talking to herself, “I was married before I was nineteen?”

“Yes.”

Mrs Twain reflected for a time and when she spoke again the things she spoke of had an unexpectedness that took Stella’s breath away. She said things of incredible intimacy about herself, and she said them as though she talked of strange happenings in a distant planet. She spoke as though a small china image of herself had fallen into the mud.

“I did not know what marriage was,” she said. “I knew nothing. It was — a shock to me. Jimmy’s father was impetuous — inconsiderate perhaps. I have read — have you ever read? — the books of Mrs Marie Stopes. She tells one all sorts of curious things. About men and sex. Anyhow it wasn’t at all like that. I had two miscarriages. Such a mess, my dear!”

(“Such a mess, my dear!” She said it in an even, detached voice — as though she was speaking of the misfortune of some cat.)

“Then Jimmy was born and after him I have had no more children. No. I learnt, well — things. I felt I was justified. I *was* justified....”

She looked out of the window and then turned to Stella.

“But that, you see, is why Jimmy.... Losing him is like an operation. One of those major operations when they take quite a lot of you away. I hope he will write soon. He has meant so much to me. He has been almost all my life, he and Women’s Rights and Mrs Eddy.... I don’t know why I tell you these things. I suppose I feel you ought to know.”

She turned to Stella and smiled her pale smile.

“Mrs Eddy?” asked Stella.

“Christian Science. I do not think I could have gone on living without it. You realise there is no such thing as bodily pain or physical evil. It is all imagination; it is within your control. And when disagreeable things have to be endured, you can realise they are not happening. You can treat them. You can fix your mind upon something else. It all passes off.”

“But Gemini — ?” asked Stella.

“I could never persuade him. Nor his father. They have hard minds. His father hates doctors, but I think he hates Christian Science more. More even than he hates the Vote. James hates

nothing, but he laughs at things. I wonder, will he always go on laughing? I wonder where he is now. I wonder if he is unpacking his things. I am afraid that at home I did rather spoil him. I always unpacked his things. It looks a beautiful evening. Sometimes it can be very rough on the North Sea."

"Have you ever been seasick?" asked Stella.

"Once," said Mrs Twain. "When my faith failed."

"And you never take any sort of medicine?"

"Never."

"But if you feel really ill?"

"I treat it. I get additional treatment if I feel I cannot manage it myself. There are Gurus in London — wonderful Gurus. They give you distant treatment. And then the illness goes. All evil is imaginary. There is nothing in the world between us and complete happiness but want of faith in Christ Scientist. just hardness and want of faith. All this war talk, all this sickness of the world needs only proper treatment. Then there would be none of these dreadful preparations for killing, none at all. A little while ago people were saying 'No More War,' and if they had kept on there would be no war. But, you see, they faltered."

She said it without sorrow or dismay. She remarked upon it as she might have remarked upon some picture on the screen. She was more and more like that remote Egyptian princess, restored to the world but still marvellously aloof from it, denying it was there.

"But don't you do a lot of work for the Rights of Women?" asked Stella, probing still for some core of reality.

"I go about and lecture," said Mrs Twain. She went about and lectured on equal standards for men and women, on the right of a wife to a living wage and of the mother to state endowment and so on. She had her arguments clear and neat. She went about the country and stayed away from home for days. "But does Mr Twain object to your going away?"

There had been arguments in the past but he was very reasonable. "You see," said Mrs Twain, "I have my economic independence. There was some money in my family. Fortunately. We discussed it all years ago. All men want to dominate. I see that very plainly. He dominated at first absolutely. Until I got my own money he hardly let

me have pocket money. He hates freedom — for anyone. Now it is different. I respect his rights. What can he do? Since Jimmy went away to school and college I have been able to do a lot for the Movement. I suppose now—"

She stared in front of her as though she looked at something she had not seen before: "I shall be able to do a lot more."

She sat still looking at that unexciting prospect. Presently she spoke again. "I want to see what I can of you, Stella. We might meet quite often. I suppose you will get the first news of him now. We must tell each other." She smiled wanly. "I shall have to treat myself for heartache. I suppose losing one who has occupied one's attention so much, must leave a heartache. I don't know what to do about his room and all his things yet. I've wanted to keep them exactly as he left them so that he could return to them. That is childish. He will never return. Whatever happens he will never come back to his home. Something different will come back to us.... It may be better, I suppose, just to pack them all up and store them. I must try to forget about him as he was and think — there can be no harm in thinking — of what he is going to be. And not brood upon it."

They parted at Liverpool Street. She kissed Stella on both cheeks, dry, close-lipped kisses, and went off, erect and trim and self-controlled, the heroine of two miscarriages, the lady who submitted to the "rights" of her malignant husband when occasion required, and who contrived to escape from it all, even from any excessive love for her son.

Dione, Dione M'am; he had never once called her Mother. Stella watched her go. "And the Cadi," she thought, "caught that fastidious, silken, unreal thing young and ignorant, and married her and mauled her and shocked her beyond endurance with reality. And all the rest of the story has been her desperate attempt to escape from the ugliness of life. Her lecturing is escape, her Christian Science is escape. She is afraid of her love for Gemini. If she can, she will escape from that. And that is a life. Going away there and not looking back. That is a whole life, the beginning and the end of it. Even before we've begun to think about it, something happens to us; we're twisted for ever; we're knocked on the head....

"I suppose this is what Aldous Huxley means by detachment....

Save me from detachment....

“And the poor old Cadi! The clumsy male brute who snapped at a butterfly and could never get it out of his mouth again!... Somehow I feel he had a case....

“I wonder when I shall get my first letter from Gemini. Better not thinking of that yet. I suppose he will scribble something from Gothenburg — or write on the boat. But that won’t tell me much. Will he get to Russia? Even if there is war with Germany I suppose he will be all right in Russia. Russia wants no wars. No good thinking about it yet, Stella. I wonder if he’s still up on deck, looking back at England. (Time you found the Cambridge train, Stella.)... I wonder where all those soldiers are going. What sacks they have to carry! Gas masks and all sorts of nonsense. Like the White Knight!... If it wasn’t for his leg I suppose he would be in khaki....

“The Cambridge train?”

BOOK THREE. NIGHTMARE OF REALITY

CHAPTER I. THE GUIDE AND FRIEND IN THE DEEP OF THE FOREST

1. GEMINI VANISHES

THERE came only a postcard from Gothenburg, with the date stamp of August 21st. Gemini had had a good crossing with an "interesting collection of human samples" and "gaggles of Swedes going home in a panic." Further he added, "May have to go to Stockholm to reach destination via Finland," and then squeezed into the corner, "American journalist (half Pole) suggests Warsaw."

This Stella sent to Mrs Twain with a note: "For your information. Please return." Mrs Twain had received an even briefer dispatch. "Sea perfect. Did you treat it? I believe you did. All's well. Love."

After that Stella had to wait six days and then came a real letter on hotel paper from Stockholm. This Stella did not send to Mrs Twain; she typed out all that was good for her.

It was dated August the 25th and it had come by air post.

"I don't understand this war business," said Gemini. "This Ribbentrop treaty between Germany and Russia has given these Swedes the jitters and our sudden treaty to defend Poland has made them worse. The Russian change of front is — queer. It is extraordinary to come from the stoical indifference of London here and see the crowds outside the newspaper offices and the placards at the street corners. These people have the neutral habit of mind, not the peace-keeping habit but the neutral habit, which is something quite different. They have been accustomed to look on at wars, sell munitions and supplies at tremendous prices, and disapprove highly. Almost as bad as the Americans. But this Russo-German treaty has knocked them out of that. They have always balanced between Russia and Germany. Some still think that perhaps French and British imperialism may save the situation for them, but the German propaganda here has been very good indeed and they have an idiotically exaggerated idea of German competence and British decadence. I'm no great patriot, but that irritates me. We English criticise ourselves hard and good, but to have these bloody outsiders

echoing what we say about ourselves with a superior air! No! The middle and upper classes have been inclined to suck up to Germany all along, and trust their blond complexions to see them through if some quasi-annexation does occur, but Russia is a different story. Now they are mobilising in a blue funk. Has Hitler sold them? They are setting to work upon munitions, and they hardly dare even talk to an enquiring Englishman (me) for fear of being accused of a breach of neutrality. Never have I seen a land so fair and so frightened. I wonder what sort of show they will put up if they do get dragged in. Sturdy people, but with the habit, for more than a century, of trusting to other nations to hold the balance of peace.

"I want to get into Russia more than ever. Before anything happens to prevent it. I want to find out what this Ribbentrop deal means. Is there going to be a second partition of Poland? It's Czarism back again. Has Hitler devoured Stalin or has Stalin devoured Hitler? Where's the anti-Comintern now? Where's the anti-Bolshevism of Franco? What happens to Japan? Italy? This sounds like café-table talk. That is precisely what it is. There are two men here making for Russia from Scotland, a little ambiguous, but I think enquirers on my lines. There are two or three English correspondents and an indiscreet young man poking about from the Embassy. There is a young American, Gavin Peters, who wants me to go with him to Warsaw. He wins. His step-mother who brought him up was Polish, and he speaks Polish and some Russian. I like him and I like a sort of detachment about him that keeps one's head cool. And we start tomorrow via Danzig for Warsaw. Anything may happen there. If things get too hot for us, we can retire gracefully via Lithuania and see what is happening to the Baltic states and so get at last into that even more mysterious land of Russia. Gavin is a seasoned American correspondent and knows how to get to things and how to make a get-away at the crucial moment. And he talks pretty well. I couldn't have a better travelling companion. That's my plans, Stella. Will you tell them to Dione M'am?

"And now, darling—"

The rest was an unforced lapse into endearment and tenderness without the faintest shadow of philosophical generalisation. It was totally unfitted for Mrs Twain's eyes, and it need not concern us

here. Suffice it that it was so entirely personal and intimate that you would have missed most of its allusions, and some of it was pure little language and the drawings he had made were both nonsensical and improper. It pleased Stella mightily and took her back to Chelmsford and Paradise. She laughed aloud at it. So that for a little while when the writing changed she did not read on.

Abruptly the letter had returned to the realities about Gemini, but now in quite a different vein.

"I have been talking to a Swede, who might have come out of Ibsen — William Archer's Ibsen. He likes to exercise his very good English on me. 'Don't you think,' he said, 'that there is something in our atmosphere, something that has never been here before, something brooding over us all, like an enormous menace?

"Not bad for the beginning of a conversation.

"I said I thought the Swedes were taking the situation much too seriously. 'What can touch you here? *We're* in for it if you like.' 'Yes,' said he. 'But I am more sensitive. I see through things. The restaurant life goes on,' said he, 'the buying and the selling and the going about. Cocktail parties and dinners. If anything there's a bigger throng in the streets than ever. But this is because they want to see other people. They don't like being quiet at home any more. They don't like being left alone. You see — all this place, all this country — plainly — it is all under sentence of death. All of it.'

"That was nonsense, but somehow it got hold of my imagination. You know the sort of suggestion that sticks like a burr.

"There was nothing like it in London. You can darken London, you can evacuate London, but you cannot make that unresponsive mass afraid, but here under the clear clean air there is this reasonless, instinctive apprehension. I can't tell you how bright and clear and happy a city Stockholm is — must be normally — and how this feeling of 'this is the end' overhangs it now.

"I struggle against the fancy. I put it to Gavin. There isn't even a war, I argue. The British Ambassador is going back to Berlin. There may be more appeasement. It's part of this rotten situation that you never know when and how Chamberlain will give way. Mussolini, the Pope, Roosevelt, everybody is sending telegrams and warnings.

"'Yes,' he says. 'But I know what that Swedish fellow had in

mind. This is the end. It's the end for all these little European neutrals. To-morrow, if not to-day. It's the end for their way of living. Take a good look at old Stockholm, sonny, for you may never see it like this again. Under sentence of death? Now that you call my attention to it, I see that it is. By the by, you've got to see the celebrated Town Hall, while it still stands.'

"We went, and it's a wonder. It's super-Gothic. It's ultra-Nordic. Those Germans don't know how to begin being Nordic. I'm posting you some views. 'Say good-bye to it,' said Gavin. 'I always say good-bye to European cities nowadays. I used to say *Au revoir*!'

"You see he's been getting this fear infection....

"And such a beautiful day, everything saturated with the clear northern sunshine.

"Well, I won't twaddle on, Stella, with this descriptive matter. We have to be aboard the steamboat in an hour. The next letter you get will come from Danzig or Warsaw or any old place. I still find this war too senseless to be credible.

"Between us anyhow it's *Au revoir*. No good-bye for us.

"I must make an end now."

And so he made an end.

It was to be a far completer end than any he had anticipated. No letter, no post-card even came to her from Danzig nor Warsaw nor anywhere else. No news came by any other hand. Five view-cards of Stockholm dropped in a few days later and then absolute silence closed over Gemini. He vanished as completely out of her world as though he had never existed.

She waited. She waited overlong perhaps. But when at last she began enquiries, she found herself confronted with blankness.

The Germans invaded Poland at dawn on September 1st and Mr Chamberlain, greatly daring, declared that England was at war on September 3rd. Following on the treacheries, indecisions and swift military collapse of Poland, the Russian armies entered that country from the east a fortnight later.

Then with the restoration of Russian ascendency over her former Baltic provinces, the dislocation of communications intensified. For three weeks or a month letters might still have come to Stella and it might have been possible to get news of Gemini through the

consulates and correspondents who still carried on. Then that hope receded. She did not know what paper had commissioned Gavin Peters and it was only by pestering a much overworked American Consulate that she found out. But the newspaper people had nothing to tell her. He had been in Warsaw as late as Sunday the 26th, and he had sent a short news telegram and asked for money, but it had been impossible to get it out to him. Several refugee trains on their way to Lithuania had been bombed, de-railed and machine-gunned, there were no casualty lists of these slaughters, and his people were very anxious about him. No further news had come from him. "He's a very resourceful fellow, is Peters," reflected the man in the newspaper office with philosophical detachment. "But that won't stop a stray bullet. Did you know him well?"

"I knew someone who was with him," said Stella, and wished she could strike people dead.

And that was as far as she got in tracing Gemini. In the orderly world of her upbringing, which was now breaking up with such incredible rapidity, the disappearance of a single person had been a mystery, a strange event to be studied and traced down to its sources, "news," a matter of universal concern. Already now social disorganization had reached a pitch in which people without number could be lost and swallowed up in the gathering darkness, and no one would help you, no one wanted to help you and no one seemed to care.

She reverted to her old fantasy of telepathy. She knew it was foolish and yet she got a kind of comfort by sitting up in her bed in the night and trying to "get through" to him.

"Gemini darling," she would say. "Gemini, are you there? Tell me where you are, darling. Gemini dear.... Oh! speak!"

Then she began to have dreams about him. Very unwisely she had read part of the White Paper of Nazi atrocities in the concentration camps and elsewhere. It gave a hideous frame to her apprehensions. She would see him tortured and manhandled. But one thing she would not see, one thing she would not accept, that Gemini was dead. Sometimes, scarred and bleeding and always with a dreadful slash athwart his face, he called to her in her dreams. That slash was a whip slash; it came out of the White Paper and it was always there.

“Mizpah! my darling,” she said. “I am here. The Revolution, the block of alabaster, the grains of mustard seed. All we talked about. Trust me, I shall never forget. Only come back and tell me what to do, because I can love better than I can think. And how am I to live without you?”

“You may have to,” whispered the Kentlake strain, running dark and cold like an underground stream in her mind. She would not let it rise to the surface.

2. WORK AND A DREAM

Stella fought gallantly against her intimations of disaster and utter loss. Her intellectual life was more and more dominated by the idea that her job now was to get on with the understanding and promotion of that World Revolution of theirs. That was the real business of the Queen and King of Prigs. While the King away hunted and explored for reality, she had to get the house of her mind in order and have facts and schemes ready for his return. She had to animate a few remembered phrases and metaphors in forms that would interlock with and grip things as they were. She found that none so easy. But if this war was to stop men from learning, that was all the more reason for women to keep the lamp alight.

She went to Uncle Robert’s new course of lectures on Synthetic Psychology and she had another talk with him and she got him to act as her informal director of studies. She was already through the first part of the Moral Science Tripos, and in a fair way for Part Two, but she was beginning to crane her neck more and more to see what was going on in the Modern History and Economics courses. “Naturally you do,” said Uncle Robert. “You begin to realise that in spite of Church, State and snobbery, there is a modern education in the raw scattered about here. Smothered in the other stuff. Things some of the younger dons are getting for themselves — in part — anyhow. Let us see what we can pick out for you.”

Her director of studies in Newnham was disposed to admire this awful intruder, this volunteer *Privatdozent*, who had stuck his unsolicited lecture courses into the University as though they had a

right to be there, and she let Stella range according to his suggestions. There was no hurry for Part Two. So she read hard, thought hard, wrote up her notes and did gratuitous essays and summaries as though Gemini might turn up any day and read them.

That and some hard walking and hockey kept Stella going through the days. But the nights were not so easy to deal with. That cold cruel thought she was suppressing came very near to the surface then. And there were defensive dreams in which Gemini figured hale and triumphant and friendly, explaining everything away. Even that scar would vanish. Or it ceased to matter. She would tell him of her reading and about Uncle Robert's flashes of intuition and unreasonableness. Gemini would tell her what he thought of Uncle Robert. He had never said very much about Uncle Robert; he knew him only through his books. There was a sort of appreciative antagonism in these dream reveries. It was as though Gemini felt that Uncle Robert might run away with her mind.

One night she had a more consecutive dream than usual and one that left an exceptionally clear and vivid memory. She dreamt that she and Gemini were wandering in a dark wood at twilight; it was a very dark wood and it was growing darker. There had been bits of sky shining through the leaves and branches overhead, but now the trees were coming together into an impenetrable roof. But she did not stumble. She did not think of that. They walked with the wraith-like certainty of dreamland. The trees made way for them. She walked into a deepening apprehension of darkness, and she knew that however she walked the forest would grow darker and darker. And it was queer that she and Gemini had said not a word to one another for quite a long time.

That was very queer, very queer indeed. Because he must have a lot to tell her; he had had extraordinary experiences; he had done all sorts of things. Perhaps he did not know how to begin. Perhaps there was something about him, so that she had to begin. She said one or two things to him, but he did not answer, and it dawned upon her that although he was walking close by her side he was also at the same time a very great distance away. Was he changed in some way? Was he limping? She could not see. And then she began to lose sight of him altogether, because the wood was growing blacker and blacker;

it was as if a succession of black gauzes was being drawn between them. She was quite sure she had seen him at first, quite sure. But now he was altogether invisible.

She put out her hand to touch his and she could not feel him. Had he ever been there? Someone had been there, and it had seemed to be Gemini. Someone who was more Gemini than not was there. Someone was there. But it was someone else who was hardly Gemini at all. It was someone else. It was answering her mute enquiry. It was not speaking aloud, but it was speaking as it were in her brain to her. It was saying, "You are lonely and very much afraid."

"I am afraid for everything."

"Not now," said the silent interlocutor.

"Not now. No. I was for a moment"

The presence remained with her, close and beneficent in the black, but saying no more. "You are a sort of mind that sustains," she thought. "You give confidence. You put things right. Or I should be very lost here, very lost indeed. There seemed to be a path. And there is no path. But what are you? I thought you were Gemini. Something of Gemini. Something very like his mind. You are not for example something in minds, the mind of Uncle Robert for example?"

"Uncle Robert," came the answering thought, "is a mere superficiality. He is like a submarine periscope with no submarine to it. He can see everything and do nothing. He made that clear to you. Perspicacity is not enough. I am more than that."

"Yes," she said.

"I am the Guide who will never fail you. I am the Friend who will never desert you...."

"It is so dark here. If only I could take your hand."

"If you believed, you would not want to take my hand...."

"But tell me. Tell me."

She drew nearer to the Unseen.

The secret of courage, the essence of faith, something deeper than thought was coming to her. The ebony darkness about her became positive. It became an intensity of vision that transcended sight. Something immensely wonderful seemed to be pouring into her mind, and at the same moment she realised with dismay that she was dreaming and on the verge of awakening. She felt that something

ineffable was slipping from her and she struggled in vain to retain it.

3. THE SECRET FANTASY

This dream of a responsive presence in the heart of the dark Forest left so strong an impression upon Stella that in her waking state she could still feel it was real, more real than many memories. It had conveyed the profoundest things to her, things deeper and truer than anything that had ever come to her mind before, but the pity was that all that was actually said was gone; she knew quite definitely that what had been said was the clue, the complete satisfaction of every distress, and it had left her again. Her mind was like Psyche when she awoke and found her arms were empty. Just at the end, between waking and sleeping, she had felt the onset of this evasion, and she had made an attempt to grasp something, a sentence, a phrase, a word. For the fraction of a second something like "Oom-be, oom-be," had assumed the quality of the fundamental secret. Even these magic syllables became uncertain.

"What was it?" she said, and sat up in bed and beat her forehead.

There was no sense in mystical words. "Oom-be?" What had put that into her mind? Somewhen ages ago, far away in Asia, a kindred mind, she realised, had been through exactly this same experience and had emerged at last with the same empty substitute for the unspeakable reality. So it was that "Om Mane Padme Hum" fluttered from every praying-wheel in Tibet, the symbol of a lost significance, and the Lamas in their Red or their Yellow Hats congregated to preserve, earnestly and jealously, the memory of a forgotten secret.

Something revealing, confirming and sustaining, had come very near to her, and she had lost touch with it. Nothing but that sense of an approach remained.

She determined to take her perplexity to her teacher.

"Uncle Robert, l want you to talk about something.... Is there a God?"

"Billions, I should think."

"But do you believe that below and above and in everything there is a God?"

Uncle Robert lifted his nose towards the Real Truth about God. His thumbs stuck out of his jacket pockets. “There are some words, Stella, that ought to be forcibly removed from circulation, and ‘God’ is one of them. It is like one of those defaced and flattened coins that may be sixpence or a bit of a krone, or a gulden or anything, that a cabman may cheat you with in the dark. The word ‘God’ has meant so much in the past that to-day it carries no definite meaning at all. For most people it is merely an expression of prejudice. With a certain magic quality. If you say ‘I believe in God’ they think you are good and on the side of everything respectable. If you say ‘I do not believe in God’ you are just awful. But if there *is* anything in existence like that All Wise Maker of this present Imbroglio to whom people pray to-day, then he will be there and he will be the same whether you call him ‘God’ or ‘Hi’ or any loud cry. Or are we to suppose him so far short of normal intelligence that he does not know himself by any other name?

“That seems to be the position of these people who want to start religious wars against anti-God Russia on behalf of their sacred word. Or the sacred investments that it seems in some way to sustain. In the name of God! — guns! A God by any other name would rule as justly, and if that ‘All Wise’ and so forth definition holds, he would at least have the wit to know his own without a label. You can bring up one divinity after another to me and I can say definitely of each one, it is absolutely impossible to believe that there can be any such God as this; the universe may be insane but it is manifestly not idiotic. No one has ever yet produced anything under that title that I find credible. No one at all.

“These various Gods of the Christians would fill a museum. They have hardly a thing in common. They are not even like a family portrait album. One of these Christian Gods is an imbecile egotist who created mankind to worship and praise him for ever! Can you imagine it? All of the Christian collection seem to have made some sort of mess of their creation and have become very sentimental and complicated about saving mankind or some favoured section of it from the consequences of that dismal muddle. Some seem frankly to admit the existence of rivals. They are jealous Gods, they say, and they become very menacing and trumpet the great commandment —

from Sinai was it?— 'Thou shalt have none other Gods but me.' But why go through these variations in absurdity? Frankly, Stella, theology, except as a study of human trial and error in the statement of moral forces, has no interest for me.

"God means anything in fact from a luck fetish to a mathematical formula. He's a holy terror of a parent. He's always a bit of a devil; never quite able to exorcise himself or his world. Queer that he's always male, Stella. It's remarkable your friend Lady Rhondda has never rounded off her six-point charter by insisting that the universe is a matriarchate. Tradition too strong for her, I suppose, even in her thinking.

"What I do find worth emphasising is that under no circumstances has the human mind ever got to regarding God, any God, as the final and fundamental fact of existence. There is always something deeper and greater than God at the back of men's minds. They don't, for instance, make him the ultimate reference. They say he is Good. They say he is angry, resentful, merciful or what not. Why? Because they individualise him and want relationship with him, and so he has to have a character. Over him and above him there is always something else, a Standard by which he is judged. No God at all but a Super-God. I wonder if you have noticed that?"

"That's just why I asked you to talk, Uncle. I've had a sort of dream. You see—"

"Are you going to talk to *me*, Stella?" said Uncle Robert suspiciously over his nose.

"I'll be as short as possible."

"Go on," he said, "go on," and listened abstractedly, twiddling his fingers behind him and occasionally punctuating with a grunt or so....

"That," he interrupted when he had heard enough, "is very interesting, Stella. That is an intelligent dream. It does you credit. And I am quite willing to be your soothsayer and interpret your dream for you. Listen: —

"Firstly, Stella, in my efforts to direct and enlighten your mind, I have done my utmost to impress upon you the entirely untrustworthy nature of language. Everybody alive suffers from an impediment in his speech. Intelligent statement is still merely an ideal, and life is full of unspeakable things. We say what we can and try and fix our

thoughts. Generally we fix them too much — and a little wrong. Man has got along so far with metaphors, analogies, abstractions and symbols. We are continually transferring meanings. And about some things and particularly about this that came near to you in your dream it is better to attempt no words at all. Leave that at least as something unspoken. Directly you give it a name, you will want to have relations with it. You will. Directly you name *anything*, you want to have relations with it. 'Guide and Friend' you called it. Something holding out a hand to the personal you. You see? Well.... *It* isn't either Guide or Friend.

"I know perfectly well what was in your mind. There is a rightness about things, a direction like the magnetic field that turns the compass needle north. It is above and below and throughout all things. It is in your conscience and apparently it comprehends a rational order among the atoms and the stars. The stiller you are, the more definitely the direction of these lines of force appears. And there it is and there is nothing more to be said about it. You know good from bad because of that. It is no more a God than it is a Sacred Cow or a Little Liver Pill. The Quakers seem to have some sort of apprehension of it, but Quakers are all muddled up with Christianity. Now if there were Quaker-Atheists!

"How this ultimate rightness has to do with life is beyond telling. Maybe it is a necessary thing to life, so that as life becomes conscious, those valuations are found to be in operation. This, which is something far more like a magnetic field than a person, insists that truth is of greater value than any falsity, and that certain patterns of conduct become us best. Whatever it is, this isn't God or any sort of God, because, as I have pointed out to you, all the Gods men have ever invented are and must be subject to it.

"Gradually, Stella, the psychologists, the anthropologists, are getting all these Gods *taped*. They are almost as multitudinous in origin as they are in character. It is a rash thing to try and reduce the history of the idea of God to a simple story. It is trying to say what happened in billions and billions of minds over tens of thousands of years. Fear played a large part in most of these processes. I suppose this fear and propitiation of the Old Man of the Family-Tribe may have had even a dominant share, but there was also that more ancient

thing, going back to the earliest ancestor that shrieked and ran, the fear of the killer at large, the beast of prey, the enemy in the ambush and the dark, and then the Old Man became a champion. He was not only the Holy Terror who imposed his taboos upon the tribe long after he was dead. He was the great helper and defender in reserve, the avenger of his people. It was natural for masterful men, not sure that they were sufficient1y masterful, to project themselves into a God for whom they spoke. They half-believed in him themselves and interpreted their wills and fancies as his. There were the priests' Gods who were bumped about in an ark of the covenant or hid behind the veil of the Temple in some Holy of Holies, and there was the radical prophets' God who queered the pitch of the priests' God with pestilence and thunder. A God may be fear, may be self-projection, may be magic and fetish. It's like the genus *Canis*, no end to its varieties and mongrelisations. There's *Deus Ferocissimus*, with thousands of sub-species. He gives no quarter. He punishes the dead in hell for ever. The type of that species is the Fundamentalist God of Tennessee. There's *Deus Jehovah*, always breaking his promises to the Jews, *Deus Brahma*, not quite so relentless, *Deus Amans*, the friend of the nuns. It's a vast miscellany, Stella, from the totem divinity of some remote savage to that oily Anglican divinity, now prevalent here, *Deus Suffocans*, the self-projection of Cosmo Gordon Lang, a sort of thin spiritual grease-film right across the English sky. I wish we could put them all away in a museum now and get on with a rational life...."

"And you think my dream — ?"

"Your dream, Stella, was a very profound dream. Don't spoil it. Don't speculate about it. No one has the mental apparatus to do that yet. There is truth, there is righteousness and right conduct in us and our universe. Things are so. In the confusions and hates of life we may stumble about and be misled, but the stiller and calmer you are, the more you are aware that it is so. I doubt if anyone can get beyond that. Maybe no one will get beyond that for a very long time. Ages.

Perhaps it can all be accounted for in a perfectly natural, rational way. Life couldn't exist in us without its being fundamentally like this when you get right down to it. That may be arguable and provable. It alters nothing.

“Accept it, Stella, and leave it alone. Someone, I forget who, said once: ‘By faith we disbelieve.’ That wasn’t bad. Don’t try and make a will or a person out of it. Don’t add your own little private mystery to the endless doll shop of the Gods. Set up your altar to the new Unknown God, and however secretly you do it, along will come a Paul presently, all bluff and epilepsy, to tell you that this God ‘whom you ignorantly worship, Him’ will he ‘declare unto you.’

“Be still and secret about it, Stella. Say nothing about it, because there is nothing to be said. Talk, and in a little while the still darkness will be yours no more. The confidence with which it filled you will be at an end, and you will be hopelessly perplexed. The soul hunt will begin. The forest will be filled with torches and lanterns and strange noises. They will all be claiming that this Guide and Friend of yours is their God and that they will tell you all about Him. He is unhappily a little tongue-tied, they will admit, but never mind that: they will explain. If you want immediate attention they can supply it. You will find the smell of incense and candles growing stronger. There’ll be a dance of Bishops all gas and gaiters, and the Buchmanites will be inviting you to participate in the profits of God-guided businesses and all sorts of shared-out lucky tubs. And voices that boom and voices that intone and sweet little choristers singing like tethered skylarks. And sidelong priests edging towards you ingratiatingly. And there you will be, Stella.”

“But if I do nothing,” said Stella, “I may forget.”

“Once you’ve been there, you’ll go there again,” said Uncle Robert.

“Have you been there?”

“I *live* there,” said Uncle Robert calmly. And added, “Practically.”

She stared at his self-complacent profile.

“But—” she began vaguely.

“I ask you, Stella, as your teacher, as your Guru, so to speak, not to say a word more about it. I ask you to keep all this to yourself. I have never talked so much about it before. I have practically told you by what I live, move and have my being. Over-explicitly. It fills me with a sense of indelicacy. I doubt if anyone so young as you are can really do without some sort of God; the less God the better, for Gods do corrupt so; but still a God — until you really grow up. Which may

be in ten or twelve years' time. Until then you still have the child's craving for support. You need a sense of personal care. This something in the darkness seems like protection. Well — talk to this something if you must, but never expect it to protect you, never expect a reply. Above all, don't attempt to make a ventriloquist's stooge out of it. Until you are grown up, keep it secret, and you will never want to talk about it later. And that, Stella, is the beginning and end of all my Theology. Clear and clean as a wind-swept sky."

He turned to her with an unusual gravity. "And now, Stella, my dear, run along. The lecture is over."

"I think I've got you, Uncle," she said.

"I think you have."

From the street she looked up and saw him at the window, gazing over the Cambridge skyline at the Real Truth of things, but, she fancied, with rather less than his usual arrogance.

She made her way back to Newnham very thoughtfully. She wished she had Gemini with whom to talk things over, and that passing thought expanded to heartache and distress. When would she hear of him? What was happening to him?

She was trying to get all the particulars she could about the bombing and flight from Warsaw, and none of them were reassuring particulars. Russia, it seemed, was having some sort of trouble with Finland, but nobody seemed to think it would lead to war. Gemini had probably got to Russia. That she thought would be the best thing to happen to him. Russia, she knew, would never make a war. All her generation knew that. But it was queer that no letter nor telegram nor message came through. She tried to read. She gossiped with two of the Bedford College girls, but she could not get interested. She went to her own study and pretended to read, and sat with her mind stagnating about Gemini. She went down to hear the late news bulletin. The radio never told her anything but she always went down.

She returned to her study and copied out some stuff again until boredom stayed her hand. Then very slowly she undressed and got into bed. Nowadays there was no fun in undressing before the mirror. Desire was dead in her, for Gemini had passed beyond all thought of caresses and had taken desire with him.

She lay thinking for a time and then suddenly she turned on her side and pressed her cheek into her pillow and closed her eyes. “My Guide and my Friend,” she whispered very softly, and lay quite still and sank listening into a dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER II. GEMIN1 IN POLAND

1. GAVIN PETERS APPEARS

ONE day early in December Stella received a letter that looked so ordinary and businesslike that she left it beside her plate unopened until she had read the newspaper. The paper was ablaze with the Stalin — Molotov attack on Finland. “So ends the last illusion of sanity in the world,” she said.

“Why have they done it?” When at last she took up that unobtrusive letter addressed to her in typescript, she thought it was probably a receipted bill.

But her muscles tightened as she read:

“Dear Miss Stella Kentlake,

“I want to see you if possible right away. I must. I have some money I must pay someone and I have news for you, not so bad as it might be and not so good as it might be. But good rather than bad. I was with Jimmy Twain in Riga on November 17th and he was alive and well then, still scheming to get into Bolshevik Russia. It was an obsession. He wrote to you from there, I know; he was writing a long letter and I happened to see it was to you, and I think he wrote some others; we both sent cables too and I sent a dispatch, but nothing of that seems to have got through. I don’t know how letters or cables were going. They just took your stuff and your money and didn’t send it. There was a Russian censorship, I believe, as well as the Lettish. You never knew where you wouldn’t find the next tangle. Riga was in utter confusion; swarming with Polish refugees, Jews, expropriated Balts trying to get to Germany, spies, Germans, Russians, frightened people of all sorts. The hotels and everything stacked with people trying to get away. We had the greatest difficulty in getting a room and a change of clothes. We had to buy everything. People would not take us in. We were unspeakably filthy and verminous after what we had been through. All that is a long story I had rather tell you face to face.

“Jimmy was splendid from first to last. I left him, and I know it might look as though I took his money and deserted him, but there

was no time to go back for him, there was only one seat on the plane and anyhow he was so set then on the Russian idea that he would not have come. The Stockholm planes even then were booked full up to March, three months ahead; it was just one passenger who hadn't turned up that gave me a chance. I admit it looks like a sort of desertion, until I explain. But think! after all that had happened, could I have deserted him like that? Nothing seemed to knock the pluck out of him. It was just that made me do as I did. I thought at the time I would get round by Åbo to Helsingfors and then communicate with him. I didn't think whether he had much money with him until I was halfway across. Then it dawned upon me he might be stranded. My idea was I could send back help for him from Finland, and it was only when I realised that maybe I had marooned him in Latvia, that I began to feel anxious. It was only when I tried to get contacts I found I had lost him. It's just over twenty-three pounds, I make it, I have of his. He had a sort of decisive punch in that limp of his. Something between an imp and a prize fighter. You see he made one feel so sure, so very sure, he could take care of himself. He was getting rather mulish and irritable at the end, I admit; the more uncertain the Russian outlook, the more he wanted to go on, and I think perhaps he may have got right away to Leningrad or somewhere in Soviet Russia as soon as he learnt I had left him. But all this I can explain better when I see you, as I hope you will let me do very soon. For three months we were together, and for two of them we were lost and hunted men, always continually in danger. I must tell you. That makes you know a man if anything can. And I never knew anyone to compare with him, a sort of splendid pluck. I would go back to Finland or Russia or anywhere if I thought I had the ghost of a chance of finding him again. But all this I must tell you, and the sooner the better.

"Gavin Peters."

"Yes," said Stella. "The sooner the better."

She sat stiff and stern and her hand was trembling so much she could not hold the letter still to read it. "I don't like you, Mr Gavin Peters. I don't like your slanting, loopy handwriting. Why can't you keep the lines straight? My Gemini was splendid, until you left him. And then it dawned upon you he might be stranded. And you've

suddenly decided to hand over that three and twenty pounds....

"Shall I tell Uncle Robert? Shall I tell Dione M'am?...

"I'll see him first."

2. THE STORY OF GAVIN PETERS

Stella liked Gavin Peters even less when she saw him, but then she had been accumulating dislike and suspicion against him. She was afraid at first that she would be lacking in self-control, but when she came to the meeting she found herself steady and deliberate. She decided to meet him at Gilbert and Susan's Coffee House where they could sit in a corner and talk freely. He appeared as a tallish blond young man threading his serious way among the tables to her corner. She had told him she would be in the corner nearest the window. He had deposited his hat and coat in the cloakroom. He swayed right and left. He had long slender hands which he held as though they were in readiness for the keyboard of a piano. He had a temporary entanglement with a chair, but at length he got to her.

"Miss Kent1ake?" he said.

"Will you sit down, Mr Peters?" she said. "Would you like coffee or chocolate? They're both good here."

"May I have some chocolate? It's been such a cold journey down."

"Cigarette?"

"I have some, thank you. Won't you try one of mine?"

"Presently perhaps," said Stella, and gave her orders.

There was a slight pause. He had bright coppery hair with a crisp wave in it that was so hard and definite that it seemed as though it might be artificial. His skin was white, a sort of dead white; he had a foxed complexion. And he did not attempt to meet her eyes. He stared straight in front of him.

"It's hard to know where to begin," he said, and seemed relieved when the waitress came back to verify her order. "You said one black coffee and one chocolate?" said the waitress....

"Perhaps," said Peters, when the girl had gone again....

"I don't know. The first thing, I ought to hand you over this

money of his. Twenty-three pounds, I make it."

The long, narrow, freckled hand went halfway to a breast-pocket, hesitated and thought better of it.

"That belongs to his mother," she said, and then by an afterthought; "or his father. You don't know who his father is?"

"Not an idea. He never talked very much of his people. He was full of the war and what was to come out of it. Had he quarrelled with his people? He sometimes gave me that impression."

"His father is the magistrate, Mr Twain of Clarges Street. He's rather a hard man...."

"They call him the Cadi. Yes, I've heard of him."

The hand started again for the pocket-book and was called off.

"I want to know about Gem — about James Twain. Afterwards if you will, we can have a meeting in London and you can talk to Mrs Twain about that money. It has nothing to do with me. But tell me please about Warsaw and Riga and everything. Why did you get into such trouble? And what was he going to do when you saw him last? How was he then?"

"When I last saw him, Miss Kentlake, he was fit. Perfectly fit. He was thin. I admit he was thin, but fit and resolute. Lit up. He had a tremendous reserve of nervous go."

"Where do you think he is now? Have you any idea?"

Peters, still staring at nothing, put his forearms slowly and deliberately on the little table, and spoke with an air of profundity. "He might have got right down to Moscow. He might have got by way of Estonia to Finland. He might be almost anywhere, all round the Baltic. I would say, almost certainly I would say, that he can't be dead. I couldn't believe that. He had a vitality.... You see there've been ships going, planes going, here there and everywhere, people being evacuated in crowds. There's been a lot of crazy interference, but also plenty of opportunities of slipping through. I should say, knowing him as I do, that he got into Russia, and got there pretty certainly before this Finnish business burst. There was a fortnight, after, after I saw him last in Latvia, before the door was shut. Up to the very last everyone believed that the Russians would make a deal with Finland. Now if he got to Leningrad, say; what might have happened there? I suppose they were packing off most of the

Intourist people and the Society for Cultural Relations tours and all that. Sending them home. Exactly what he would have dodged. He would have avoided any British representatives, because they too would have sent him home. He particularly didn't want to come back. He knew some German. He had a little book, *Russian Self Taught*. He was always nibbling at that. It's a difficult language for an Englishman, but he was quick, — and he had a good ear for sounds. Sometimes he would try bits on me. I guess he took his chances in Leningrad. He was very keen on that Mass Observation stuff, asking people questions; he had a technique of doing something odd suddenly so as to get them off their guard and talking and all that. That may have got him arrested as a spy. That isn't so dangerous as it sounds. They wouldn't want to shoot him; they'd want to ask him questions. Russians love an argument. They have curiosity. They haven't the feeling an Englishman has-if I may put it that way — that a fact may not be quite respectable. They don't mind being mixed up with a fact, any old fact. They love being told things, though they never seem to make anything of what they are told. They play about with it and leave it as a cat might a rabbit's foot. If I had only one bet, I would say he was under arrest in some Russian prison and most probably in Leningrad. You can't tell, but that's what I should say."

"And then?" said Stella. "Will they torture him?"

"Russians don't torture. But — they'll bother him a lot. No end."

"*Bother* him! And what can be done for him?"

Peters made a grimace to express entire intellectual bankruptcy. "Technically England is still not at war with Russia, but if I may say so, you English have been almost as incompetent in handling Russian problems — ."

He left his metaphor incomplete. No metaphor could express it. "You talk about your wonderful Empire.... It's up against Russia from the Baltic to the Pacific and it has been for generations, and yet I doubt if there is such a thing as a Russian teacher in any single one of your public schools. Imagine it! The cheek of trying to run a world empire on blank ignorance and bluff! Cutting facts dead unless they wear the old school tie! 'Don't know you suh.' An English representative in Russia is deaf and dumb. And since he has been

trained not to talk with his hands.... Generally they get to hate the Russians because of the impossibility of any sort of understanding.... Though I don't see why they should expect *every* Russian to learn English on the chance of meeting them.... They get together with Germans and people and swallow what they are told. Or they get vamped by interpreter girls.... When you dine at the Embassy — I did once — really — yes, I did-you pretend you are not in Russia.... Well, none of your people, such as they are, are likely to be of any help in fishing out Twain...."

The arrival of the coffee and the chocolate truncated these reflections. Peters became unhelpfully directive in spreading the table, moving the coffee and milk and chocolate cups with his long hands thoughtfully and slowly as though he was playing a game, and Stella watched his sedulously averted face.

"And now," she said, "will you tell me about your time with him? I know you both went aboard a steamboat for Danzig. That was before the war began. What happened then?"

He featured immense intellectual effort.

"One thing followed after another. It's hard to get it into a consecutive story. Things didn't lead up to one another. Each seemed to blot out what had gone before. War was coming — plainly. But how was one to tell that the Poles were going to be wiped out, as they were? They were sold from the beginning. By other Poles. You can always get a Pole to do in another Pole and blame you for it afterwards. Like the Irish. Don't I know them! I'm half a Pole myself and the rest of me just sits and marvels. Fight we can, most of us; it's the in-between time when we go wrong. The Germans started the war at dawn and went straight for the petrol dumps and aerodromes. It was like keeping an appointment. They went by the map, and the country, which should have been under autumnal mud, was as dry and hard as concrete for their tanks. That was too bad. That was our bad luck. Our Polish air organization was caput from the word go. Warsaw was being bombed in a week. The British and French might have bombed Berlin, otherwise, and refuelled and got fresh bombs in Poland and dropped them on the way home. But there was nowhere left for them to go in Poland...."

Stella interrupted. "I want to know about-James Twain."

“I know,” he said.

She sat quite still.

“It was all just the usual thing in Danzig and Warsaw. Walking about streets, sitting and talking and looking and listening in cafés, and hanging about in hotel lounges. Bits of night life — always with the hope of getting a light on things. One never does. One gets drunk. *He* never did. *He* doesn’t get drunk. I forget — for the life of me I forget — whether we stayed two days in Danzig or three or four. It was very Nazi and excited and unfriendly and, as he said, we had a sort of unwanted feeling. If we stopped to look at anything, someone wanted to know what we were looking at. We were always having to show our papers and turn back and all that. He thought the city a lovely old place and very clean. He had had no idea what a lot of cool clean cities with cathedrals and fine public buildings the Baltic has to show. Englishmen are Baltic-blind. India turned their heads. We got that same feeling we had had in Stockholm, only worse, of something — something hanging over everything. Anyhow we were in Warsaw a day or so or more before the war broke, and there again it was the same thing. Everyone very excited and military and quite sure they were going to win the war. They had no idea. They thought it was going to be a war with cavalry raids and loud cheers. I spent hours and hours trying to get through to my people in London — I know now that I did get through to them but I never had a reply. Or everything might have been different.”

“What was he doing?”

“Taking it in. I told you, didn’t I? — he wrote a long letter to you. Maybe that’s all charred and burnt in some railway siding....”

It was clear Gavin Peters had to move on in his own style. He flowed on with digressions, evasions, repetitions. She listened with knit brows, intervened when he wandered, brought him back to the point, cross-examined him. “And where was Twain then?” She had to ask it a dozen times.

Gradually the story took shape.

It became eventful with the bombing of Warsaw. “He didn’t like being bombed. He took it as a personal insult. He wasn’t a bit afraid; he didn’t seem to think he could be hit, but he was as indignant as if someone had just missed him with a lump of dirt in the street. He

went out as if he was looking for somebody with a head to punch. The Polish anti-aircraft defence was obsolete and feeble; the Germans just did what they liked. I was for taking shelter but he simply dragged me out. Three or four streets away there were houses burning, and the streets were littered with broken glass and bits of masonry. Then we came on the salvage people and mangled bodies. I didn't realise. He'd never seen anything of the sort before. Never. There was a poor little kid all torn to pieces. Its poor little bowels spread out. Quite dead, you know. He swore. He danced — danced you know —— and shook his fist. '*You* bloody Germans,' he said. 'You filthy swine!' And then he was as sick as a dog."

Stella pushed her coffee away.

"You don't mind, my telling you things like that?" said Peters, looking up at her for the first time.

"It's just a qualm," she said. "Tell me everything. I can stand — what he stood. You go on."

She looked at him reassuringly and, by way of evidence, drank some coffee with a steady hand. "Go on."

"It was just a healthy reaction." He pulled himself together. "You mustn't think he was afraid. Not for a moment, Ma'am! He was never the least wee bit afraid. I never saw him afraid. But he used to get angry. A sort of white dangerousness. I couldn't get him to come back in, under cover. 'You go to hell,' he said. He mixed in with some sort of ambulance people. He couldn't carry a stretcher because of his lameness, but I think he was getting people out of the wreckage. I didn't see him again for a day or more, and then he came in dog-tired in the late afternoon, — stains of blood on his coat like a butcher — and threw himself down on the bed and went off — it wasn't so much sleep as exhaustion — complete exhaustion. Meanwhile I'd been getting information....

"You see," said Peters; "it wasn't that we were driven out by the bombs. But the Germans were coming round us like this and like t.his." The long hands surrounded an imaginary Warsaw. "Things looked bad for us both. He was so furious, I was afraid if it came to a storm and street fighting he'd get caught with a rifle in his hand. I did anyhow get him away from that. I did do that. Even if that didn't happen, he might have got shot as a British spy, and the best that

could happen once they got hold of him would have been to be a prisoner for the duration. Not good enough. And *I* wasn't so safe if they found out I could talk Polish and smatter a bit of Russian. I'd have to play the *Star Spangled Banner*, loud and clear, one hundred per cent. The thing to do was to get on to one of the trains that were still running into Lithuania. By way of Vilna they went. The sooner the better. We had a fight for it. Even to get on with tickets. Up to the last I was afraid he'd want to stand down for some woman. That didn't arise, anyhow."

"When exactly was this?" asked Stella.

"September the eleventh," said Peters. "He gave me the money and I took the tickets. I remember the date stamp. He went and got a big piece of ham and a lot of chocolate and we had our flasks. I told him to get that. I don't think he'd have thought of food if I hadn't. He'd got all the old *civilised* habit of expecting everything to be on tap. He quite thought there'd be a wagon restaurant.... Things are changing.... Do you mind if I have some more of this lovely chocolate and those sweet biscuits? There wasn't a thing on the train. The train down here, I mean. And thinking of that train makes me hungry again."

"And you got on the train?" said Stella, picking him up again. "You got on that train."

"Do you know I forget almost everything about the first evening and night of that train journey? There was a sort of feeling that the Germans were all round us. We were huddled up together in the darkness and the train rumbled along slowly, stopping sometimes for a minute or so or an hour. Those waits were the worst of it. You'd see flickers from lanterns outside and hear people asking silly questions from the windows and getting short answers. They were afraid of air attacks, afraid that bridges might be mined, afraid of rails torn up. Now and then someone would come up at a station and flash a light on us for a moment and then I would see Twain sitting up and scowling at the universe in general and the Germans in particular. He sat up stiffly with his hands on his knees most of the night, and I kept wanting to tell him to lean back and fold his arms. But he was so irritable. I don't think he slept at all. The corner seats were all taken, but I just remember lumps of darkness that sniffed

and sweated and snored and stirred.... Stuffiness and a sort of hot dirtiness. Children crying.... Somebody drunk and singing down the corridor.... Then slowly everything became visible. Such a warm red dawn! Such a lovely September morning!

All that flattened-out country with its silver birches and its oak and willow scrub and its fields and thatched houses, as if it was asleep, nobody about very much, the most peaceful-looking land you can imagine....”

Gavin Peters became more intent upon his outstretched hands.

“They bombed that train about the middle of the next day. We didn’t know they were on us until we heard the zoom of the planes. Then a lot of conflicting shouting. Lie down! Take to the woods! People didn’t do very much at first. It was so incredible. Then the train stopped with a concussion that threw everything about. They’d hit the engine. People began tumbling out in a disorderly manner and running for the woods and any sort of cover before the planes came back. A lot were throwing themselves flat on the ground. Others were lying down in the carriages and corridors. Some got out and crawled under the carriages. There were two planes. We got down and Twain was swearing. ‘Come on,’ I said, for he seemed to want to stay there by the train and fight somebody.

“They machine-gunned that train five times, three down and two up. They came down so close we saw their goggle-faces looking at us. They enjoyed it. They not only plastered the train; one of them went after some poor devils who were running in a scatter up a field to a wood. I heard the hard rattle of the machine-gun and a woman screamed like a knife. And — ... they went off waving their hands like school-boys....”

He looked up at her in frank realisation of the monstrosity of the fact he was stating. “Like schoolboys you know,” he said. “It was *fun* for them.

“They’d made an utter mess of the train. It was alight in two places, belches of sooty red flames coming up in the sunshine. The engine was off the rails on its side in a cloud of steam. People standing about rather helplessly. A few business-like. A doctor at work already near us. Some on the ground groaning and writhing.... Some crumpled-up dead.”

“And where were you?” asked Stella patiently.

“Wet through.”

Stella stiffened with self-control.

“You see it was *then* that he saved my life.”

She did not see, but she waited with her fists clenched.

“It happened so quickly. At the first machine-gunning it was just Heaven’s mercy we weren’t hit. Then I saw close by the track a sort of ditch canal. I don’t know what it was. Irrigation perhaps. I made a plunge for that and he came with me. It was too deep for me and I couldn’t keep my feet. I should have drowned. I should surely have drowned. I slipped against the bank and got mud in my mouth and eyes. I was — I was just simply out of control. He held me up. He got behind me and stuck that game leg of his into the bank, sort of hoisting me astride on it, and he got out his flask to give me a nip of brandy. ‘Hold up, Gavin,’ he said. ‘It isn’t the end of the world. Duck. They’re coming back}”

“Yes,” said Stella.

“*He* didn’t duck. He said what he thought of them and put my head down under water when they came near. And then when it was all over, he helped me crawl out and we started doing what we could for the other people. We were soaked to the skin but we got dry somehow. just dried with the mud on us. One couldn’t do very much.”

“What became of the train?”

“There we were, and then I remember he said one of those civilised things of his. Grim as things looked I couldn’t help laughing out loud. ‘There ought,’ he said, ‘to be some sort of relief train presently.’ I suppose it was natural for anyone brought up in England, to expect three or four policemen to turn up and take charge of things, and then ambulances and nurses and doctors to appear, first aid and all that. Only here there wasn’t anything of the sort. Presently we saw some dark figures coming out of the woods, first one or two and then others, sort of slinking out of the woods, and some bending down over the one or two people who had been peppered in the fields. These new-comers were not — how shall I say it? — not a bit friendly, not a bit helpful. They came in little hesitating bunches towards the train. It was like cattle in a field coming up to something

strange. They were mostly peasants who'd been hiding. I suppose, from the German light tanks, and I suppose we seemed just part of the war to them. Presently some Polish soldiers turned up from nowhere, stragglers, I suppose, from the army, which had been caught between the drive from the west and the invasion from East Prussia. No officers that I could see. They were ill-grown, blue-chinned young louts, worn out and sullen, glad to get food and drink from us but quite unwilling to take orders from anyone. They stood about and looked on and made remarks in undertones to each other. The doctor and two of the conductors of the train and one or two railwaymen made a sort of council, and presently a priest turned up. Officious, well-meaning little man he was. Catholic. He scolded those soldiers for being unhelpful, but it wasn't any good. One or two helped for a bit and then knocked off again. The others sat about in groups beside the line.

"There was nowhere to take the injured and no stretchers for the wounded. There was nothing to do but to camp in the train until some sort of help came from somewhere and hope the Nazi airmen had had all the fun they could get out of us. I believe a messenger was sent on to the next station, fifteen kilometers away, the priest said, but if so he started late, and nothing came of it. The doctor and the priest didn't like the look of the soldiers and didn't want to send possible helpers away. We got the fire under in the burning carriages so that it wou1dn't spread, and we made a sort of hospital out of the end two cars and put the uninjured people in the others, Eve or six cars-it was quite a long train. I remember remarking on the queerness of it to Twain. There we were in the sunset, a sweating, blackened little group of people trying to get back from bloody massacre to some sort of social order.... And we'd almost fought to get on to that train|"

He meditated for a moment. "It was one of the loveliest sunsets in the world. Like pink fish-scales.... It was only as the twilight deepened that we realised that we were practically without lights. Just a flash-light or so and a few matches...."

He paused exasperatingly.

"I don't know when the plundering began or how it started. Somebody may have offered those soldiers or some of the peasants

money, or shown them jewels or something. Naturally most of the people in the train had their valuables upon them, but I doubt if the soldiers would have thought of that if it hadn't been put into their heads. I was fast asleep and then I heard Twain shouting 'Peters! They're robbing people. Come and tell them not to.' Then there was a bit of a struggle and a woman began screaming and weeping and imploring. 'It's all we have,' she said. 'Give them back to me.'

"'Where are you?' I said. His voice answered, 'Come and tell this fool here to ease off me.' I scrambled out of the train. Not too soon. It was starlight — not a trace of a moon anywhere, but a sort of clear darkness. There was a fellow holding a bayonet to his chest and saying 'Hands up!' In Polish naturally. 'Hold up your hands!' I shouted just in time, 'or he'll stick you. What's the matter?' 'They're looting,' he said. 'We've got to stop it. Something is going on down the train there.' '*Your* hands too,' said another soldier behind me. 'We don't want to hurt you,' they said. 'But don't you try to teach us how to behave. It's only reason that you' — bourgeois he meant but the Polish words he used were, well, coarser— 'should pay up a bit. You'll have the Russians here before very long, and *they* won't stand any of your nonsense}

"I think," reflected Peters, "those fellows came from Lublin. They had an accent — a sort of Russian smear. I could hardly understand them. One I heard speaking German. They sounded like factory workers.

"'We want to go down the train to our friends,' I said.

"'Go right up the line, comrades, and clear out before trouble begins,' said my man. 'We're not taking any risks. That little priest down there is asking for trouble. He'll have only himself to blame if he gets knocked on the head.' And then I remember this fellow asked me if I knew the stars. He wanted to know which was south, and I showed him the North Star and explained. That was a townsman anyhow.

'We aren't going to hurt anybody,' he said, 'but we must have all this loot carried off, out of the country. We've got to expropriate it. *Expropriate*, comrades. Understand?'

"What was happening down the train we never found out. They took our watches and our flasks, confound them, and told us to clear

out. They never touched our pocket-books. They didn't search us. They were jumpy, in a kind of guilty hurry. I heard the voice of the little priest and a jumble of other voices, I suppose there was some sort of resistance, but we could do nothing. Maybe there was a capitulation. Maybe they just took what they could and cleared out. Maybe the peasants joined in. We heard a shot or so and then everything was quiet. We had to do what we were told. What else was there to do? They made a sort of parade of orderliness. That's the Bolshevik style. Lucky they weren't Nazis. They marched us up by the black masses of the burnt carriages and the engine, and we had to guide our steps beyond that by the gleam of starlight on the rails. 'Keep your hands up,' said our soldier. 'We'll give you five minutes by this English watch of yours, and then we'll shoot along the line, and shoot again if we hear any more of you.'

"We staggered along for a time and got down the embankment for a bit when the shots came. Then we crept back to the track and kept along it, because it was too dark to leave it."

Peters became sententious again. "If it wasn't for Twain I don't think I should have seen any symbolism in it. But he had a generalising mind. He would have made.... I mean, he has the makings of a great journalist. It was what attracted me to him first. He was always shedding the freshest, most original cross-heads. He made you feel that an experience isn't worth having unless it means everything, so to speak. 'Civilisation!' he said. There was the train, a kind of black lumpiness in the general night; in a word or so he made it look like the dead body of his nice cut-and-dried civilisation. It didn't signify anything more. It wasn't going anywhere further. It was done. And there were the looters like rats gnawing at the body, and after that, what was going to happen to the poor scared robbed passengers, and what sort of help could there be for the wounded and dying? We two had no aims. Except to get away.... It was no good going back. Even *he* saw that. What could we have done?"

"But I thought you said there was a town fifteen kilometers off. That's only ten miles for help."

"That was the next station."

"But didn't you get to the next station?"

"That was our idea. I remember now. Get help from the next

station. We nearly fell into a river. The bridge had been bombed. We saw the tangled ironwork against the sky and pulled up in time. It made me laugh. Even *he* laughed.

"There's no sense in it at all,' he said. You could hear the river far down below among the rocks laughing and chuckling like an idiot. It wasn't light enough to walk about freely. We squatted on some dry grass and slept in a sort of way until daylight, with our hands round our knees — it got pretty cold before dawn — and then, you know, our wanderings really began."

The wandering reminiscences of the wanderings proceeded....

3. NOTE OF INTERROGATION

The Coffee House clock proclaimed the hour of five. "I suppose I ought to be getting back to London," said Gavin Peters suddenly. He was still in Lithuania. "To make a long story short—"

"I feel you've hardly told me anything yet," she said; "I want to know everything. Don't make it short. It was very good of you to come here. What I would like to do next is to meet you again in London with Mrs Twain. And then you can settle about that money."

"Of course, that money," he said, and the hand fluttered towards the pocket-book again. "I certainly ought to see his mother, especially if it's her money...."

So the rest of Gavin Peters' story was gradually unfolded and straightened out, but never completely straightened out, over a lunch table and in the coffee room of the Hypatia Club. His thoughts were obsessed by the fact of his desertion of Gemini in Riga, he was always drawn towards that and never coming to it, and the intermediate events had to be patched together from his sudden swerves into fragmentary accounts of individual adventures. He told her how they decided to follow the river south and then to work round to the eastward, and so get on to Lithuania by way of Vilna. He knew there was a second east and west railway line, somewhere to the south of them, but that they never seemed to be clear about. Some east-going railway they followed for a time, and they sheltered for some days in a small town called Wiczlicze.

There they got a room and food and cigarettes and pulled themselves together. They could get no contacts by telegram or telephone to Lithuania. They sat in a café listening all day to an old gramophone, and they were loth to take to the road again. "Unti1 we got a little red blood into us, going on was more than we could face."

The Russian march into Poland had not begun at the time of their train disaster, and Peters and Gemini did not hear of the invasion of Poland from the east until, in the last week in September, they actually saw Russian cavalry. As the story unfolded, and looped back and went on again, the two women did their best to get a consecutive picture of Gemini. They had glimpses of him in a state of astonishment.

"I never realised," he had said over and over again, "How artificial and accidental a thing our old civilisation has been. So flimsy against destructive forces, so hard to set up again. You hit at it here with this war, and — there isn't anything left of it. We're down on dry earth and naked animal humanity. Who's going to put all this back? Who can?" He kept on saying that sort of thing, it seemed, and he kept on saying, "In Russia. In Russia we shall find a new order. There, something better is beginning."

But these reflections were interspersed with uglier experiences. These were things that were already half suppressed in Peters' mind. He told them in the manner of a reluctant witness. They had starved and got ill. It dawned upon Stella that she was hearing about a land in which metalled roads of the Western type had never existed. There was no countryside in the English sense at all. Some phrase of Peters' made her see a straggle of low thatched cottages fenced off in half-acre yards from one another, with a very broad mud-track running amidst them by way of a village street. There would be dust pits in the middle of the trail round which the cart-tracks skirted, dust pits that would become foul morasses as soon as the rains returned. Dead animals occasionally. Once a dead old woman. A sprawl of rags and grey hair. At places they found recent tracks of light tanks, probably German tanks. The houses would be deserted and empty, or dark figures lurked defensively in them. Then, after two false starts, he forced himself to tell a frightful thing. In one isolated house there had been a massacre; "God knows why. Perhaps they were Jews";

and peering in on the chance of food, they found a stinking mass of rags. They were turning to go. “My God!”

Gemini had cried; “there’s something moving!”

“It might have been a rat,” said Peters, “but we looked again and saw it was a hand. We both tried to get it out and do something, but it died. It never moved again.... It might have been a boy or a girl with dark hair.... You see — . Things had happened to the face. It left us empty with horror.”

“‘We must just go on,’ said Twain. He limped along. He never said a word to me, for miles. He kept talking to himself.”

When they were starving they stole a chicken. A pale gleam of amusement appeared in Peters’ face. “What would you do with a chicken, if you didn’t know how to get its feathers off or how to clean it, and you hadn’t a pot to cook it in, or a fire? When we caught it, we thought of roast chicken, beautiful roast chicken.... We dragged that bird along with us for live or six kilometers and then — well, we tore it up and gnawed it raw. And it made us ill. But we were almost always ill, disgustingly ill. Filthily ill. We’d eat half-ripe berries and gnaw bits of bark. One place we found a lot of Swedes. Everything we ate seemed to disagree with us. We’d lie up in the woods. No one to look after us. Getting iller and filthier and filthier. He’d never been ill in his life before without somebody tucking him up in bed. He thought that happened to everyone. I suppose it does in England. If it hadn’t been for the drive in him, I should be lying in those woods now. Just a sprawl of rags and bones. Dragged about by birds and things. It was he made me go on.”

At last Peters got by way of Vilna and Kaunas to Riga, and came to an ambiguous evasive explanation of how he left Gemini behind him there. He added little to what he had already told Stella in his letter....

“And now, Mrs Twain,” he said, with an air of conclusion,

“I have to pay you that twenty-three pounds. They’ve been burning my pocket, I can assure you.”

Mrs Twain looked at the money he counted out upon the table without offering to take it.

“And so,” she said, “the story ends on a note of interrogation.”

“If ever, in any way, I can do anything more—” said Gavin

Peters.

“I am quite sure we can rely upon you,” she said, and stood up slowly and held out her hand. He stood up as she did and produced a card from his depleted pocket-book. “If you want to contact me.”

Stella, with two chairs and a table between them did not hold out her hand. She watched Gavin Peters going off as bravely as he knew how. “I wonder what he has left out,” she said. “I wonder what he has put in.”

Mrs Twain was tucking away her money in her bag. She looked at the door through which Peters had just vanished.

“I think you are unfair to him. If it had been Jimmy who had left *him*....”

“And don’t you feel like that?”

Mrs Twain considered. “I control it,” she said.

(She controls it? thought Stella. Or doesn’t she feel? Is this detachment of hers innate or is it habit become a second nature?)

Mrs Twain meditated for a further moment and then began almost cheerfully to consider the next step to take. “I suppose we must go on trying to find out from consuls and people like that, what happened to Jimmy. I wonder if what are called Private Enquiry Agents would be of any use to us? Or someone in the Foreign Office? I wonder if one offered a reward? How helpless women are really! Always thinking of getting ‘the man’ to do it — from the plumbing upward.... Ages of subjection....”

CHAPTER III. GEMINI IN THE SHADOWS

1. THE FINDING OF GEMINI

ONE chilly morning before the great cold and snowstorms of January 1940 locked up the country altogether, Mrs Twain came down to breakfast a little before her husband. His *Times* — he read no other paper — and his letters, awaited him. Her own correspondence was piled beside her place, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and various circulars and letters. As she passed his armchair to go to her own she halted for the fraction of a second. The topmost envelope bore what she recognised as Swedish stamps. Not her business, she reminded herself. She helped herself at the sideboard and examined her mail with her usual air of serene detachment. Her husband appeared and clattered over the bacon and eggs. Then he sat down. "Hul-lo," he said. "What's this?"

"Shall I pour your coffee, William?" she asked.

"Please." He opened the letter. He became very intent upon it. "My God!" he muttered. "Oh my God!"

It was evidently profoundly disturbing to him, and she realised at once that he was torn between a desire to talk to her about it and a still stronger desire to let her know that it concerned Gemini and torment her by not revealing its contents.

Long years of self-training enabled her to lapse into a pensive contemplation of a second-hand book catalogue as though she had no other interest in the world. Then with a faint sigh she roused herself, drank some coffee and turned to *The Daily Telegraph*, regardless of the grim face that watched her from the other end of the table.

He did not touch his *Times*, she observed. He made only a pretence of reading his other letters. He pushed his kipper away from him half consumed. He returned to that crucial letter. "There are things I must attend to at once," he said.

"No more coffee?" she said.

"No."

He hesitated. Then very deliberately he placed that significant empty envelope upon the table-cloth where she could hardly fail to

see it, gathered up his letters and marched with an air of gloomy preoccupation to that austere sanctum, his study. He slammed the door — at her. She was not to be told; she was not to know. But she was to feel that she was to blame.... Very well.

She trifled for a time with the residue of her correspondence. Then she walked slowly by his place to the door. She leant over to see the envelope for a moment; she would not touch it. The address was not in Jimmy's handwriting. It came from Sweden. She saw the date stamp *Flens*. She must find out where this Flens was. Jimmy must have got back to Sweden. And what had that letter told and what had she to do? She knew that whatever it was she would hear in a day or so. William would not be able to keep it back from her. It was something dreadful, but it was something living. If Jimmy was dead, William would have behaved quite differently. That would have crumpled him up completely. Had the young man been arrested? Was he just in some monetary difficulties on his way home? At any rate he was out of Russia and out of Finland. That was all to the good.

To a usual observer the goings and comings of Mrs Twain that morning would have betrayed nothing remarkable. She dressed warmly and carefully; her fur cloak which had been a birthday present to herself was a particularly well-chosen one of mink; and she went about her business with an effect of quiet, unhurrying orderliness. Yet a closer scrutiny of her proceedings would have revealed a very active and at first rather confused mind. She began with the London Library. There she asked for books about Sweden and was shown where to find them. She read discursively. She found particulars of the size and position of Flens. Then suddenly she was off to Cooks in Berkeley Street to find out how one got to Sweden under war conditions. Cooks enlarged upon difficulties until she risked an assertion that her only son was in hospital there, and then Cooks became imaginative and helpful. Then she taxied to Lincoln's Inn Fields to see her lawyer. She had long ago achieved a separate passport and he was very helpful about visas. Then she appeared at the Swedish Consulate. She wanted to know all about Flens. When a lady wanted to know all about Flens then it was plainly the duty of all honourable Swedish men to see that she did so. That was the

atmosphere she created. Was there a prison there? Was there a hospital there? They were most helpful but there were limits to their knowledge. “But you have a telephone directory of the region? Couldn’t we perhaps find out from that?”

The Consulate admitted that this was a bright idea, and with some difficulty produced an old directory. It dated from 1935.

There was, she learnt, an excess of possibilities. There was indeed no prison, but there were no less than five hospitals in the district, one public and one psychotherapeutic, the clinic of Dr Olaf Bjorkminder, and after a moment of quiet reflection she copied down all their addresses. The Consulate was left congratulating itself on its own resourcefulness in producing that telephone directory. Her next visit was to the Hypatia Club, that celebrated cock and hen club in Albemarle Street. She sat down to a pensive tea. She realised she had forgotten her lunch, and she supplemented her tea with two boiled eggs. She ate slowly, composing a letter in clear and simple terms adapted to a Swedish reader who did not know very much English.

Then she sat reflectively at a writing-desk for a few moments before writing in identical terms to each of those five addresses. She asked if there was a young man named James Twain in the establishment. He was the son of her husband Mr William Twain, the well-known London magistrate, and she was his mother. If so, would they please send her a full and complete report (underlined) of his present condition and outlook? There would be no need to limit expenditure if he was in need of special attention. Mr Twain was much engaged in his magisterial duties in London, but she hoped to be free to come over to them very shortly. No doubt she would find accommodation for herself in the neighbourhood. If a diagnosis of the case had already been sent to Mr Twain, it would be convenient for her to have a duplicate copy if they would be so kind as to have one made. She read over with great care what she had written, she addressed her letters by air post, stamped them and saw that they were posted. And so home with a sense of a day well spent.

She had a bath and appeared at the dinner-table with a general effect of never having been out-of-doors. It was their custom to dress for dinner, and she found the Cadi in his usual dinner-jacket. He had, she observed, tied his tie very badly, an unfavourable omen. “I think

it's colder," she said. He made no reply.

She affected indifference. The parlourmaid, whose trimness aped her mistress's, served the Cocquille St Jacques and the white wine and went noiselessly out of the room. The door closed behind her.

Then the Cadi spoke. His intonation was dry and hard.

"So you gave my son money to go to Sweden just when war was breaking out?... Did that girl go with him?"

"He went to Sweden, William, because he felt he had no place now in London. He wanted to see the countries round the Baltic — and get away from everything. *That* girl, as you call her, did not go with him. No, they haven't parted, but he went alone. You have heard from him, I see. Why do you try to torment me? Tell me what has happened to him. Where is he?"

He stared at her with hostile eyes and then barked a string of short sentences at her with a pause between each.

"Out of his mind."

He repeated; "Out of his mind. In a hospital there. My son. A lunatic, to give it the proper word. The son on whom I built all my hopes. In a Swedish madhouse. The son whose heart you stole from me. In a madhouse. And how? Blown up at a railway station. So everything comes out. Why did he never write to us? What was he doing out there in Sweden? All that time? Concussion! But they say here his mind must have been affected before.... Mad.... I knew he was wrong-headed but I never thought he was weak-headed. And so it ends. That career! That career that might have been so brilliant.... *God*, how I counted on him!"

He forgot his hatred of her in his own accumulated self-pity. He pushed his plate away from him and covered his eyes with his hand.

Behind her mask of self-assurance Mrs Twain was smitten with an unwonted sense of inadequacy. She found herself sorry for his wretchedness and she had not expected to feel that. She had expected anger and denunciation but not unhappiness.

She had known this quarrel impended ever since she had seen her son off at Tilbury; she had rehearsed it, always as a quarrel, and now as she looked at her husband, she realised as she had never done before the power that lay in his possible self-abandonment. Suppose suddenly he wept. It would be unendurable. What defence had she if

he wept? If suddenly he became a martyr?

"You said he was no longer your son," she began. She said that by sheer inertia. It was part of that preconceived dispute, and she felt as she said it that this was now mere useless recrimination.

She decided that to save the situation she must abandon all antagonism. At once, she must do this, before he retorted and began to boom at her, or did whatever else he was disposed to do. Her tone became matter-of — fact. "He has not been in Sweden all we'll time," she said. "I had a letter from him some months ago, but that — . He was in Warsaw. And I have heard since through an American journalist that he went to Riga. I ought to have told you these things, William, but I did not know how you would take them. I did not know whether you wanted to know about him or not."

"But how did you hear from him? When did you hear from him?"

"You see, dear" — she was becoming more and more the dutiful wife— "I did not know whether you would like to see I was having letters from him. I thought it might annoy you. So I asked him to write to my club. But there is nothing to hide. I was distressed, but I did not know how you would take things. I was waiting for a suitable occasion for telling you. This American—"

She paused to arrange her facts. The Cadi must not know about the money or the real facts of the Riga desertion. She knew his immense capacity for self-righteous vindictiveness, and she did not intend to expose Peters to his pursuit.

"Go on," said the father, with the flatness of a broken-hearted man. "Tell me."

She skirted the truth neatly. The young American had promised Gemini to tell her all about him.

"Why didn't he bring a letter?"

(Yes, why didn't he? Quick, Dione!)

"They parted unexpectedly," she explained. "There was no time to write. There was a letter — yes, he said there was a letter, but it never got to me. They had left it at the hotel. The plane was just going oft. Gemini gave him my address at the Club. Asked him to explain things."

"And he told you — ?"

"They had had a hard time, William. They were in Warsaw when

it was bombed. They tried to get to Lithuania and their train was bombed and wrecked. They wandered about the devastated country. They starved. They were ill. They seem to have had dysentery. They almost died in the woods. But — our son, William, kept that American alive by his courage. Saved his life twice. And at Riga he still wanted to go on and see things for himself. He was obstinate, as you are, William, when you get an idea into your head, and he hated giving in. As you do."

"But what happened then?"

"You know that better than I do. And now, William, may I see the letter they wrote you and what they told you?"

He too had been prepared with a sheaf of recriminations for a quarrelsome dispute. But in his own possessive way he cared for his son and at the back of his mind there was a respect for his wife's capacity. "You have always thwarted me about this boy," he said. "But now — . You share my loss. You share the responsibility. Much of this is your doing. I see no reason why you should not know what I know."

He produced his letter, grudgingly, and handed it to her. She took it, and rang for the maid to clear away the untouched course while she read it. She read in silence and her husband watched her. Gemini had been standing on the platform of a station at Flens when a box of ammunition and then a whole carload had exploded, twenty yards or more away from him. He had been knocked senseless and had been picked up and carried to a hospital, suffering from cerebral concussion. In the language of the letter he had "an injury to the conus medullaris, manifestly a haematomyelia." (Now what might that mean? Did William know? He must have found out, or he would not have handed over the letter. She must ask him, and it would please him to explain.) This had "released a long-suppressed anxiety hysteria, which had converted into motor paralysis and blindness." (What was "converted"?) There was "a complete withdrawal of the libido into the ego." (That sounded stiff and a trifle improper; Freud and all that.) "An abandonment of will." "A resistance to any relief." "No wish to get better." "Intense irritability and a clinging to an almost comatose apathy." (Comatose apathy? That was just understandable.) He had been removed already, as soon as his

parentage was ascertained, from the general mental hospital to the clinic of the well-known psychotherapeutist Dr Olaf Bjorkminder, who declared the case required long and the most persistent treatment. The unfortunate young man needed extreme quiet. He should not be moved, at any rate for some time and until Dr Bjorkminder was able to acquire an ascendency over him. His mind had turned against everyone in his family, against his father, his mother and particularly against a young lady with whom he had evidently been in love. He called her by a peculiar name, *Stellaria holostea*, the botanical name of chickweed. He had said repeatedly, "Keep that little weed away from me. She is all over me. She will stifle me." Evidently she symbolised something he wanted to forget. He disliked everyone who recalled his former life to him. This was very common in these cases. His parents must not take it to heart. If they would trust Dr Bjorkminder, a time would come and he would be the first to advise them, when their presence would be helpful. But not now. Now they would simply disturb the treatment.

The maid had gone again. Twain was not eating, but he drank a glass of Pommard.

She read over the phrases in the letter he could best elucidate. He explained them as well as he was able. He had evidently consulted some specialist. He was equal to haematomyelia, a sort of temporary stroke just at the back of the head here, he indicated the place, and he said libido was the desire to live. "I thought," he said, "it meant something much more unpleasant. Something — well, Freudian. Apparently that is not the case. These technicalities are, like most medical technicalities, glib and obscure-I always make my medical witnesses talk plain English in court — but the general drift is quite clear."

"And what have you told this Dr Bjorkminder?" she asked.

"I have wired that no expense is to be spared."

She meditated on that and Dr Bjorkminder, with the cultivated mistrust of a Christian Scientist.

"One of us ought to go there," she said.

"But he says so emphatically *No*."

"That is why I think someone ought to be on the spot."

Twain drank another glass of wine. "But I have already wired no

expense is to be spared."

"We cannot have it said that you left your only son in strange hands in Sweden. That you just threw money at him and left him...."

He stared at her and then with no further pretence of eating got up and stood before the fire. She remained seated at table. She spoke evenly.

"You cannot go," she said. "You have all your work here.... There's all these cases with foreigners now. Who would look after them as you do? You have your duty to the country. You see through them so clearly. But one of us has to go. So plainly — I must go."

"You?"

"One of us evidently."

"But you!"

"Would you have people say you let your son-? You see, William, he may die. Don't you care for him?"

"Care for him! Ten thousand times more than you do. How can you understand what he has been, what he is, to me? At the back of my mind there is still a desperate hope that somehow this dreadful thing may make some change in him. Don't you see that? There you sit, as though all this frightful tragedy mattered nothing. As though it was a story told! Have you a heart? He is my son, I tell you, you green-blooded woman. He is my son."

"Is it necessary to tell me that, William? You forget that to a certain extent he is mine also. Plainly it is my duty to go. And I am going."

"Going. Do you know what going means? In this weather? In this war?"

"I suppose it will not be quite so comfortable or so safe as usual. Perhaps one might charter a plane. I do not see that it alters the fact that I have to go."

He looked at her with a gleam of that reluctant admiration which so often put a resentful edge upon his hatred of her. He knew not only that she would go, but that the chances were she would get through it all unruffed and ladylike, reducing the ocean, the enemy, and if need be the entire mental home, to the completest normality, and that she would do every sane and sensible thing that had to be done with an air of enquiring aloofness and the completest success.

But he had to assert his position.

"No," he said. "I can't let you go. I forbid it. If anyone goes, I go. You have no imagination, Dione. You do not begin to imagine the danger of such an expedition?

"I don't *want* to disobey you," she said.

"But you mean to go?"

"Yes. I feel called upon to go."

"You do it at your own risk," he said, but she realised she had won her point.

He became clumsily facetious.

"They'll torpedo you. They'll blow you up. You'll have to take to the boats. They'll machine — gun you in the water. You'll strike a mine. Up you'll go. Head over heels. I hope you'll have time to treat the situation — *treat's* the word, isn't it? — before you come down. If you start to go I'll put the Defence of the Realm Act in operation against you. I'll say you're in possession of secrets likely to be useful to the enemy."

She perceived the matter was settled. "William," she said, "you haven't eaten a mouthful. It distresses me. The dinner is spoilt, but there is still a cheese souffl? and some more wine. You must keep your strength up." She touched the bell.

Mr Twain returned to the table and poured himself a third glass of wine. "Well, since we've hammered things out," he said, "perhaps I might—"

He ate now with appreciation. "If only you would be franker with me. If only you would tell me things. You have so strange a distrust of me. That lies at the root of all our troubles. After all — we love him. Well, don't we? We love each other through him. Maybe what has happened may draw all three of us together. I am glad, even now I am glad, that at last we can cooperate again. Maybe the outcome of this may be what I have always longed for — a family consolidation. He can be cured, evidently, and then we may find him a different man. It is significant that he does not want to see that girl again. That shows an awakening of conscience.... Sometimes I know I make fun of you, but I assure you, Dione, that I have an immense respect for a sort of courage and clearness in you. To-night, I admit it, you have helped me. This cheese savoury, by the by, is *excellent*." He finished

the decanter and raised his glass to her. “Courage,” he said. “After all — . I have a conviction that things may still come right between us, Dione. After all, if we had him over here to care for him together.... You mustn’t stay for ever in Sweden, you know. You have your duties here.”

He looked at her with an ingratiating smile.

So that was how the crisis was to end.

For some weeks she had not, as she put it to herself, been “mauled.” But it was evident that so their reconciliation would have to be crowned.

But soon she would be in Sweden and in full possession of herself for quite a long time.

2. Stella Has To Restrain Herself

For ten days, breaking the treaty of mutual information they had made, Dione M’am said nothing to Stella of this Swedish news. But she sat and thought about it a great deal. Then when she had had a long letter from Dr Bjorkminder in easier English adapted to the feminine intelligence, and when she was quite clear about everything she meant to do, she telephoned Stella at the College to meet her at Uncle Robert’s house, and she went down to Cambridge through a snow-storm that delayed the train. The great man was out skating; she had just caught Stella in time to prevent her joining him. Stella appeared in a state of vivid interrogation. “Well?” she said after they had kissed. “Is there something?”

“Something to tell you. Yes. Something not too dreadful, Stella. If you come to think of it. No. But not — not happy. Our Jimmy is alive.”

“How do you know that?”

“I knew it ten days ago.”

“You knew it ten days ago! And you never told me! You promised — .”

“He is very ill.”

“All the more reason I should know. I want to go to him. Ten days! Ten precious days! Where is he? But why, why didn’t you tell me at once? Ten days ago!”

“Let me tell you first, dear, how things are. Then I think you will understand. He is in Sweden. He is in hospital there. He is — .

Listen. He has been hurt and it has affected his mind. He doesn't know anyone. No one at all. He has turned against life and everything. The clinic people ask us to send no one. They say they do not want him disturbed. I am going over alone, and even I may not see him. But I have to see about him. I have written to them and got a long report from — from the institution. But I think I ought to go over and see the institution. Everything perhaps is not quite right. One never knows. Mr Twain thinks everything must be all right because the fees are so high and the man who runs it is quite well-known. I am not so sure. I want to see."

She stopped at that and sat still.

"But I want to see too."

"I understand that. I have thought that all over. That is why I have made this delay. From what they tell me, you had better not go — yet.... You see he doesn't know anybody. And his poor ideas are all upside down."

"But can't I nurse him?"

"It's so natural to say that. I knew you would say that. And I don't think you can. I have thought it all over....

"I believe I've never done so much hard puzzling-out of things in my life. For years now I seem to have been lazy.... Now somehow I feel I must look at reality much straighter than I did....

"I thought even of going without telling you, but I knew you would never forgive me that. But I must go without you. I don't know what will happen exactly, but I think I shall bring him back to England. And then perhaps—"

"But, Dione M'am!" cried Stella, using that familiar name for the first time, "don't you see I cannot endure this? Don't you see? He's my man."

Mrs Twain sat prim and still weighing every word she used.

"I suppose," she said, "I *am* distressing you. It's because it is so difficult to say things. Especially if one is not quite clear about them oneself. I wish I was clever. I think I ought to tell you.... His poor ideas are all upside down, I said. Among other things, dear, he has taken a violent dislike to you. They often do. I have asked several people and read books about it. It is really nothing, but it is just the phase he is in. It means nothing."

“But if I went to him!”

“I’ve been asking about that and other things, for all these days. I wanted to be quite sure. You must not go near him on any account. You’ve got to stand back, Stella. A time may come.... It will certainly come....”

She went into one of those calm silences of hers in which she collected her thoughts. When she had them arranged, she spoke again.

“All these scientific people and psychologists, they know so little about men and women. Just bits — and prejudices. There’ve been too many men at it and not enough women. It is naturally a woman’s subject. It’s such a pity. Women observe so well and write it down so badly. They come at once to practical conclusions and throw away and forget all the stages, rapid stages they are, by which they got to those conclusions. So that they don’t seem to think at all, and men talk of their intuitions, half envy, yes, but half contempt.

“Well, I don’t think, Stella, it *is* your business to nurse him. I don’t think a man should ever know that a woman he loves has seen him at a disadvantage. Of course we all see them at a disadvantage, but they ought not to know that. I think it turns him against her. Men, Stella dear, are irrational creatures. They are entirely dependent upon us for a certain reassurance.... You know I am what is called a passionless woman. I really cannot imagine what it can be to be a passionate woman. I know one ought take everything God has made calmly and intelligently, but I must confess the phrase ‘passionate woman’ *disgusts* me. Happily my reputation as a respectable — as a Puritanical woman makes them behave decently when I am about....

“Well, you have to realise, Stella, that almost every man in the world finds it necessary to believe that he is beyond all comparison warm and wonderful, in fact incomparable as a lover, that there never has been and cannot be anyone to equal him — if not in the eyes of all womankind then at least to the lady on whom he confers the — the privilege. She is understood to be dazzled. She is enslaved. More than one if possible. Some of them, like Casanova and Frank Harris, have written long books about their gifts in this respect. They make the monkeys in the Zoo seem quite delicate little creatures. They call it virility nowadays. But probably you read more books than I do.

These modern young men! You never know what you won't find on the next page. They really ought to be book-trained just as cats are house-trained.... What I want to say — I do so wish I could arrange my thoughts better — is that with men this is not just an obsession which a man may or may not have. It is part of their peculiar make-up. They want to be convinced that they are gifted and uncommon-in this respect. In the Middle Ages it — it affected their costume. When they get that reassurance, then they can go about their business and look the world in the face. Otherwise they suffer a sort of gnawing humiliation. It demoralises them, they get restless, spiteful, unbalanced. All the rest of their make-up seems to be saner and better-brained than ours.... I'm afraid I'm rather running on, Stella?"

Stella answered a little doubtfully. "You know very little about Gemini and me. Really you don't. But go on, Dione M'am."

"Yes, let me finish what I set out to say. I have always been an unapproachable woman. No one has ever made the faintest suggestion that I should — what is the word?-betray William — except one or two men who had had too much to drink. Then it amounted to nothing more than foot and knee pressure under the table, or following one about the room with a desirous stare, or breathing one's Christian name, flavoured with alcohol, very close to one's face."

"Slugs and snails and puppy dogs' tails
"And that's what little boys are made of,"

quoted Stella.

"No. What I have tried to say isn't that. A woman is the custodian of this peculiar and special pride — which is necessary to a man's full existence. And that is why, he doesn't want her to pet him or nurse him. Particularly a young man, who is at his best when he is full of pride and illusions about himself, doesn't want that. Stella, if you go now and nurse him and mother him and see him ugly, feeble, unshaved perhaps — if you witness all those endless things that humiliate a man who is seriously ill.... He'll be grateful to you, Stella dear. Very, *very* grateful. When he knows about it afterwards. And as soon as he gets well and strong again he will look round instinctively

— he won't be able to help himself — for someone who doesn't know so much about him, who will be able to say 'You're *wonderful*' to him...."

"Gemini," said Stella in a tone of denial that got no further.

"And particularly as he is," said the wise woman, and was silent, having said her say.

Stella stared in front of her.

"My Gemini," she said. "My poor Gemini."

"Will you do as I ask you?"

"I'll do anything or nothing, whatever is best for us. You see I love him, Dione M'am. *Real* love."

"I love him," said Dione M'am. "I suppose there is nothing in the world I love a tenth as much as I do him. But I want him to be happy, I don't want to monopolise him—"

"Nor do I—" began Stella, and stopped.

"True love," speculated Dione M'am, "gives and gives and it never even looks to see what it gets in return except to be sure of the giving. And that is all I know about it. But then you see, as I have said before, I am a passionless woman. It seems to me at any rate, that for men and women love means something absolutely different.... How can I know? I've never wanted anyone in the world to say 'You're wonderful' to me. I am quite sure I shouldn't like it. At the best it would be an impertinence. It would affect me almost like being pawed about. Maybe this 'You're wonderful' business is the quintessence of" — she always hesitated with a faint distaste at the word— "passion, for men and women alike. But outside passion, we women can and often do love, really love, and we do it in a way no man can ever do.

"But these are things, Stella, very hard to talk about — even to you...."

3. WHAT WAS LEFT OF GEMINI

In the clinic of Dr Olaf Bjorkminder Gemini lay inert, recognising no one, answering no one, a Gemini so withdrawn from life that he seemed to want neither to live nor die. He was curved up, she

thought, like an embryo, and the most she saw was a scrub of hair and a very red ear. He had paid not the slightest attention to her entrance nor to her voice when she said his name. “Jimmy, I’ve come to see you.”

Dione M’am stood by the bedside, unweeping and pensive. It had never occurred to her before how widely the cult of Christ Scientist swerves away from the problems of mental disorder. She had brought a book with her to read in the plane, a book that had once come to her as a revelation. She had never re-read it since. But she had read thousands of other books in between and changed her knowledge and standards so that now this *Science and Health, with a Key to the Scriptures*, which had stayed and grown in her mind as a symbol of emancipation, revealed itself as a volume of pretentious gabble. It had nothing to say about a troubled mind that was in the least helpful in the case of Jimmy. It seemed to be written entirely for the edification of prosperous middle-class people suffering from greed, sedentary habits and those intimations of mortality that come in the fifties. It related a series of triumphs over dyspepsia, flatulence, the drink crave, the tobacco crave and so forth. Why had she ever accepted it as a great release? High over the North Sea she had asked herself that question.

She remembered dimly that her husband had picked it up in the hall in those remote days when one still got books from Mudie’s, and how he had jeered at it. With malice as though he scented antagonism. That had counted in its favour. And involved with that was something more, the precious suggestion that the reality of one’s feelings could be denied and driven away from one. That had mattered a lot more.

Anyhow it was no sort of use to her here and now. All the Christian Science in the world could not touch the hard reality of Jimmy’s inert body and inaccessible mind. Dr Olaf Bjorkminder hovered about behind her and she wished he wouldn’t. He would not go out of the room. She wanted to tackle this problem for herself, and he seemed to her chiefly occupied in pronouncing incantations to distract her mind. She walked round the bed, turned back the bedclothes to expose her son’s face. “Jimmy!” she demanded, “don’t you know me?”

“Ssh! Ssh!” said the doctor, making disregarded gestures of disapproval.

Jimmy seemed to shrink from her and attempt to retract himself into the bed-clothes. He never opened his eyes. All the light and life had gone out of his countenance, it had become a shrunken replica of his father’s at its worst, mulish and grimly bitter. “What’s the good of her?” he muttered.

The doctor tugged at Dione’s arm.

She bent down to listen. “What’s the bloody good of anything?” said Gemini, and lapsed into an obstinate silence.

“Jimmy dear,” she whispered.

“Is this my patient?” asked Dr Olaf Bjorkminder. “Or is it yours?”

Mrs Twain raised her eyebrows slightly. But the great psychotherapeutist was no reader of eyebrows.

“I do not think you grasp the elementary idea of our method,” he said, holding the door open for her.

“I’ll do what I can, Dr Bjorkminder,” she said, very meekly.

4. THE PSYCHOANALYSIS OF DR OLAF BJORKMINDER

Uncle Robert turned over a letter he had received from Mrs Twain. He was trying to construct a picture of the writer of this delicate unfaltering calligraphy which went on without acceleration, enlargement or any sign of fatigue, to its clear and self-conscious signature. It was acutely self-conscious. Inaggressive but self-conscious, with a needle-like stiletto pointing defensively towards you. And at times she underlined. He wished she didn’t underline. It’s a way of poking words into your face. He didn’t like to have words poked into his face.

He knew this lady had been in his house talking to Stella, and he knew of her journey to Sweden, but he had never seen her. “A sort of primness” was as far as he got.

She was remarkably clear-headed in discussing a very difficult matter, and she never betrayed the slightest emotional undercurrent. She was writing about her shattered only son and what was being done and could be done to him, and yet her shrewd comments had at

times a levity, a gleam of amusement. “I approve of you highly,” he said to the letter, “but I am not at all sure that I like you, Mrs Twain. But I give you full marks on the question of Dr Olaf and generally. You’ve sized up the old humbug. I couldn’t have done it better myself.”

She had introduced herself briefly. She said she had read most of his books and lately she had been re — reading them. She liked reading them, and she had a feeling of agreement and friendly confidence in him. She liked his humour and the flavour of his wit. She used to read them for pleasure, but lately all these things that were happening, the war, Stella and her son’s disappearance, had seemed to wake her up from “that kind of looking-on” at life.

She told compactly her disillusionment at re-reading the gospel of Mrs Eddy and how she woke up to the fact that Christian Science was a mere device for detachment “*from the stresses of reality*. For years I have been nothing more than an intelligent looker — on, even at myse1f.” Nothing had seemed to concern her, and now everything seemed to concern her, and she wanted to understand — particularly she wanted to understand the trouble in Jimmy’s mind. Books had become absolutely different. She wasn’t a reader any more; she was a learner. “It has never occurred to me before, but literature is about life. It is addressed to you personally. So all good books ought to leave you different about life. Queer not to have observed that. Queer that the sort of people I have lived among never realise that.”

For nearly a fortnight she had been trying to understand the realities of Jimmy’s case, and she found herself lost yet still interested in a huge, tedious literature of psychoanalysis.

“I’ve read everything in English and French I can find in the clinic’s library. From the masters downward. Government reports on shell shock cases and so forth. Such a lot of it is so true and illuminating and such a lot of this psychoanalysis seems to be pure assumption — pres1imption — imposture. I don’t know what to do, and the only possible person I can think of to tell me, advise me anyhow, about what they are doing to my Jimmy, what has to be done to him and how I can set about it, is you.

“You can tell me books to read. You can tell me so much more than that.”

And then abruptly she launched into a description of Dr Bjorkminder.

"I think the best way to put it all before you is to describe this gentleman. He is large and blond, his hair is untidy and the collar of his blue shirt gets into trouble every morning when he ties his tie; he weighs, I should think, about two or three stone more than he ought to do, and it affects his breathing. It affects his poise. Most of the additional matter is in front, so that he has to lean back from it to balance it. He is a fine large 'blond beast' of a man who might easily become overwhelming. I should be terrified if he really shouted, because allowing for everything else there must still be enormous resonating spaces in that big head of his. Nevertheless he does lean back. His English is rather clumsy, and, after he has made an explanation and I ask questions about it, he shows signs of losing his temper. But no more than involuntary signs. He is evidently far too anxious to keep Jimmy in his clutches — clutches-you begin to see how I feel towards him — and annex me, to risk a storm.

"It is not easy to estimate his intelligence because of the language difficulty, but the impression he gives me is that he is what one calls a *highly* intelligent man of the type that learns, remembers, passes examinations and gets trained. Without a bubble of resistance?

There was a gap in the writing as though Mrs Twain had sat back to think a long time.

"He is always saying," she resumed, "'Tell me all your thoughts. All you have to do is to let your thoughts flow unrestrainedly. Then we could begin something.' Coming from him such a suggestion seems indecent to the last degree. But that is precisely what I want to do to you. It is like bringing an exercise to you for correction. I want to run on and let you know exactly what I make of this business. I may be all wrong.

"I see it like this.

"In the first place am I right in believing that all this psychoanalysis grew out of the treatment of mental cases by hypnotism and that sort of thing? They seem to be always referring back to the Salpétrière in Paris—"

"O.K." said Uncle Robert. "You sit up and take notice when you read, Madam."

“Then along came Dr Freud in Vienna, and he was one of those people who have genius and see things quite plainly that other people cannot see at all, and he jumped at the idea of a great underworld in our brains, the sub-conscious, and invented a new *technique* of getting down into it and experimenting in it. He was taking patients and helping and curing many of them of their mental twists and tangles, but the much more important thing to him was *what he learnt*. He was essentially a man of science. His practice was his laboratory. Am I right in that? He produced a crop of disciples who all call him Master and fall away from him. Is it blasphemy to think that his technique of exploration was something as great as the idea of gravitation or evolution, the beginning of a new age for his science, a new birth, and also to think that his methods of application in practice were not nearly so good? Is it right to suggest they were *premature*? Is all this reasonable?”

“You know that as well as I do,” said Uncle Robert.

“There was evidently much competitiveness among these psychoanalysts. Those disciples were irritatingly disposed to go one better, or to claim to go one better, than the Master, and to advertise the fact. After all, for a lot of young men this new mental therapy seemed to promise a lucrative profession and I should think for many of them a gratifying one.

“You see how I come round to Dr Bjorkminder and stab him in the back. In the course of his attempts to violate my personality and induce me to tell him *everything* about myself, he has let me know most of the essential facts about himself. He began to be psychoanalysed as a medical student, and he tells me he has been done over twice since. He is an addict even if he is not an adept. What difference it has made to him I cannot discover. If he had a twin brother in manganese or oil or something unpsychic of that sort, it might be possible to judge. But he appears to have been an only child.

“To come now to his treatment and what he is doing and what he says he is doing to my Jimmy. Apparently he has to gain his confidence and acquire an ascendency over him. He has to become a sort of Father-God to him. So far Jimmy has given no sign of accepting him as a Father-God. Rather on the contrary. Even as a

little boy Jimmy was reluctant about the Deity — any Deity. However, Dr Bjorkminder is a man of great perseverance, especially when no expense is to be spared. When that ascendency is attained, then apparently there is to be a lot of questioning and answering which will lead to the discovery of an Oedipus complex.

"You must know more than I do about that, and about its little under — nourished sister, the Electra complex. I am afraid that my reading in the past has been rather discursive, and all I knew about Oedipus before I began to look things up, was I Shelley's *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, which was an unkindness to George the Fourth's gout. I ought to have read the translations of Gilbert Murray but I never did. Those popular Greek dramatists wrote what everybody nowadays says are masterpieces, they wrote in Greek, which is cleverer than any living poet can do, and who am I to judge? — plays all about gloomy misunderstandings, accidental innocent breakings of a taboo, particularly some incest taboo, parricide, matricide and at last really *terrific* killings, Sin, Fate and Blood. That sort of thing seems to have appealed strongly to a kind of boyish streak in the Athenian mind. 'Sadistic' is the word. They liked their drama, if I may use such words, bloody awful. There was a time when he was about thirteen or fourteen — ! used to call it the Red Indian stage — when my Jimmy would have loved that sort of thing. And the Fat Boy in Pickwick was a case. Why not a Fat Boy complex?

"Freud seems to have found a key to the puerile imagination in all this stuff. So far as I can put things together, he began by quoting it for purposes of illustration, and then he built upon it and built upon it, until he built it right into his theories. But what does it amount to? Boys feel they own their mothers, and when they become aware of sex, they are naturally apt to think of women first as rather large and overdeveloped physically, manifestly women, round women, motherly women, and not girls. That is all the mother complex amounts to. 'Not mamma, mammae' is what the young male has in mind. Girls think of adult men as persuasive and masterful and a pleasant relief from the pinching, hostile little boys they meet. That is all I can find in the father complex. Forty loves eighteen and vice versa. What do you think? Anyhow here we have, in the person of Dr Bjorkminder, the Oedipus complex (with little sister Electra singing

seconds) as the key to all human behaviour. *All*, he says. I have asked him twice, because I could not believe at first that anyone could be so silly. Hitler, for instance, is a man who has 'failed to deal satisfactorily with his Oedipus complex.' But you know all about that sort of thing.

"And the object of his treatment, he says, is to get down to the Oedipus complex in Jimmy — in other words to discover an incorrectly repressed incestuous passion between him and me. He is to be questioned and badgered about whether there is any antagonism between myself and my husband, whether he has ever taken sides between us in any domestic difference, and if possible I am to be questioned and badgered about whether I preferred my father to my husband and so on. All these are things that *verge upon reality*, and none of them have the least touch of the obscenity and profundity that Dr Bjorkminder wants to thrust upon them.

"And then at last when our guilty secret is laid bare, what then? That I cannot discover. Something is going to be dealt with and dispelled. But what and how?

"It makes Dr Bjorkminder uncomfortable if I ask. It spoils the game. But you see what lies before Jimmy if he stays in this place. He is being bored profoundly. He is being badgered to agree to something outside sense and decency. He is being tired and worried and he is *getting cross*. He is putting up a grand resistance. And he is taking just a little notice of me now in a grumpy way. Particularly on the rare occasions when the doctor is out of the room. He feels we are allies so far as he goes. 'I don't listen to that Nazi,' he said one day quite distinctly. 'I don't listen to a bloody word he says.' If things go on, I am afraid that something will click over in him and he will get out of bed and assault the doctor.

"I wouldn't mind that so much if I thought that he was in proper condition to carry it off. But I doubt if the poor boy weighs as much as eight stone now, and he used to be ten, over ten. What Dr Bjorkminder weighs I cannot imagine. But if he should *throw* himself on Jimmy, Jimmy would have no chance.

"I am writing you all this, Dr Kentlake, as *brightly* as possible. I am not trying to do so. I have never learnt any other way of writing. In reality I am profoundly distressed. Jimmy is being worried and

wearied and I do not know what is to be done about it. He wants something quite different. He wants rest. Before anything else he wants rest. Nowadays I know it is getting less and less easy to find rest. The breakdown pursues us everywhere. But in England somewhere, somehow. In some pretty place as spring comes on. Just for a time. But I want your approval that he should be brought over, and I want your moral support-I have to ask this — with his father. That is everything I have to say. I ask your help, but I feel quite sure I shall get it, or else I should not have written."

"You'll get what you want," said Dr Kentlake, and reflected.

"And incidentally," he added, "anyone but a trained psychologist wouldn't have much trouble in realising what is the matter with you, my dear lady. Dear lady! You see how one slips almost unconsciously into the manner of an elderly actor . in the green — room when one talks to you."

He reflected for a time upon the Real Truth about Dione M'am, and then he went to his writing — desk to compile the necessary letter of release.

BOOK FOUR. TRUMPET BEFORE DAWN

CHAPTER I. PSYCHOSYNTHESIS OF GEMINI

1. WINDOW ON TRANQUILLITY

ONE sunlit day in early March, Gemini became aware of himself in an extremely comfortable bed in an extremely comfortable room. The broad window was closed, but it was so brightly clean that it might have been open for any diminution it made in the clear tranquil lucidity of the grey gable and the budding grape — vine spread out upon it, outside. Some rascal sparrows were rustling among the stringy branches, and a very delicate sprig of ivy reached out beyond the window frame. He lay for a time observing these things in complete contentment.

He moved his left arm. Then he remembered dimly that that arm could not be moved. It was paralysed. It resumed its old position and he could no longer move it. Slowly his mind became clouded. Something had happened. Something was going to happen. There was an argument; there was a struggle going on. He had to be prepared. He turned over and drew up his legs and clenched his fists. The sunshine, the ample comfort of the room vanished from his consciousness.

Someone had come in. One of them. One of those people who were trying to put over a lie upon him, who were trying to stand him up again for no good at all, for another overthrow from this malignant, pitiless, hideous universe that had already proved itself too much for him altogether. All his retractions and resistances intensified. One of those people had come in. Presently something would be said. Or they would begin carrying him about somewhere. Lately there had been a lot of carrying about. Airships and sailors and that railway train. Higgledy-piggledy events. All these disturbances were, he knew, attempts to get him to react. Whatever they said or whatever they did, he wouldn't lift a finger....

He couldn't move his arm anyhow. That was paralysed beyond hope....

He had never moved it....

Then nothing began to happen. Nothing began to happen with a quite positive emphasis. Someone had come into the room, and now there was such a stillness.... Yet it was a fact that there was someone in the room....

It couldn't be that damned old Nazi come back. That would be too bad. But *he* had evaporated ages ago.... Probably he had never been anything more than a delusion....

Gradually, without letting himself know what was happening, and quite noiselessly, Gemini's eye opened and his range of vision got itself over the edge of the bed-clothes.

He had been quite right. There *was* somebody there.

But this individual was not taking the slightest notice of Gemini. And he was a complete stranger. He was standing with his back to the bed and staring out of the window. With his nose, as far as could be seen and inferred, a large nose, in the air. And presently he spoke aloud.

"*Alauda*?" he said. "*Alauda* won't do. What the devil do they call a sparrow? I shall forget my own name next."

He spun round on his heel before Gemini had time to do more than harden the expression in his eye to a defensive blankness. But this intruder — he was really an intruder — seemed to be entirely indifferent to Gemini. What on earth then was he doing here?

"Go and look it up, I suppose," he said, and went out of the room. Gemini heard the door close behind him. Quiet again. For a little while Gemini's mind was chiefly occupied by a queer little question. Had this stranger, as he passed, winked ever so faintly at him?

Gemini discovered himself as a slightly indignant neglected mental case. Here he was all crumpled up for defiance I with nothing to resist. "*Alauda* indeed! *Alauda* was ridiculous. It was the lark. *Alauda* something or other. Of course, *Alauda avensis!* The name for a sparrow was *Passer*, *Passer domesticus*. Everyone knew that. Everyone. And he had gone to look it up! Let him.

For a time finches, buntings, tits and canaries, growing rapidly more faded and confused, flitted about the world. And with them as they passed into cloudy indistinctness the clear and precise young naturalist who had dabbled a year or so ago with the idea of a contribution to pre-history based on their distribution, faded out of

existence also. When Mrs Twain came with a meal for the patient, there was not a trace of this temporary return of that lucid young man of science to the body over which he had once ruled. That body was an inert lump again, with one arm completely rigid, tenanted by an irrational resentment. Nevertheless it was not quite the same inert lump it had been in Sweden. She had restrained herself not to note it in any way, but since Gemini had been installed in this back room of Dr Kentlake's looking out so placidly upon Mortimer's high-walled garden with its vine and mulberry tree, he had on two or three occasions betrayed a certain interest in his food.

She had been instructed by the doctor never to show the slightest concern about her son's thoughts or feelings. "Braised onion," she remarked to all whom it might concern; "cheese savoury and apricots. I wonder if the savoury would be better for a little grated Parmesan."

The indifferent body seemed indisposed to respond.

He took the braised onion. And then very indistinctly came a word, and that word was "Parmesan."

For all her ingrained calm Dione M'am felt like shouting and weeping, for in that word she recognised a long-overlaid streak of individuality. It was the voice of someone she loved very much. Who was still there. It carried her mind back to the days when Gemini was a little boy convalescent in the day nursery and being rather a greedy little pig about his food. He had always shown a wholesome interest in his food. Somewhere he had been hidden away ever since in this now contracted body, and it was as if he had peeped out and spoken to her, through it, using its lips. But she did not make the slightest attempt to hail that momentary appearance. She knew better now. That would have roused all the new resistances that had captured him and were keeping him under. She slipped away to get the parmesan, which he took without a sign of appreciation, and afterwards she reported this moment of relaxation to the doctor.

He displayed no excitement. "He's there," he said. "Obviously, he's there. Why tell *me*? Didn't I tell you? And in a little while I will have him back and talking to me. *You* will come later. You're more mixed up with his emotional selves than I am. I'm going to have just a little trouble on one point, and then I shall be talking about all sorts

of things with a perfectly sane James Twain, your brilliant son — who will still for a long time shut up like a fist whenever you come near him. As you will see."

"As I shall see," said Mrs Twain.

She knew she would. She had fallen under the spell of Uncle Robert's confident omniscience and she was quite unable to challenge his statements. But something in her own make-up, perhaps it was the Christian Science habit of mind, rebelled against this subjection. She wished she could challenge, she wished she could detract. She wished she could get him expounding and defending his treatment while she pricked him with needles. Towards the end of Dr Bjorkminder's reign she had done a lot of that sort of thing, and found infinite satisfaction in it. But Dr Kentlake didn't argue. He just said things, and he did not so much answer questions as slap them out of existence like a fly-flapper. In secret she invented derogatory names for him; "Old Uncle Nose — up and Knows Everything" for example; names she was acutely ashamed of as soon as she made them. But still she hoped on, hoped she would hit upon something to satisfy the hidden rebellion of her heart.

She made a difficulty one day. "I have been trying to understand," she said, "just how your treatment really differs in the end from psychoanalysis?"

He turned his face towards her and looked at her with extreme suspicion over his nose. "Well?" he said.

"In both cases you give the patient a clear picture of what is the matter with him, and then he is supposed to realise that his obsessions *were* obsessions, so that they — they no longer dominate him."

"The only difference between the two treatments," said Uncle Robert, "is that the things told the patient are diametrically opposed. Just that. We wind up in each method by telling the patient exactly what we believe to be the matter with him, and making him conscious of his problem. Then he ought to be able to take control of himself. Only the psychoanalyst tells him wrong, and I tell him right."

"But diametrically opposed?"

"When I say *diametrically* I *mean* diametrically." He paused as if

he had said all that needed to be said, and the lecturing habit prevailed over him. He lifted his nose and the discourse flowed. “These psychoanalysts are in the last phase of one of the most fundamental of human errors. It is almost a congenital error — it is one of the vices of the language we speak — like the absurd opposition of matter and spirit. These psychoanalysts believe — as everyone has believed since thinking began — that there is a concrete continuous thing in a human being called the mind or the soul or the psyche or the self. But now all that has been undermined. These psychoanalysts believe, as all the world before them has believed, that in mental disease this simple, originally unified something goes to pieces, as people say. They treat every morbid mental phenomenon as a splitting, a falling away, a deflection. So that this sub-conscious of theirs is a sort of cellar into which things are dumped by the consciousness, the one way in. All the manias and phobias, all the secondary selves and complexes are thought of — without any further enquiry — as stuff of the original self in rebellion. That is how the problems of human conduct and human mental disorder have been treated by priests, teachers and rulers since the beginning of history, up to and including — your friend Olaf. Only now — as anyone who has read my books or followed my lectures must know, cannot help but know, the idea that the mind is not something that can be taken to pieces but something that is being put together, is breaking like a dawn upon the human intelligence. Pavlov, Watson, and so on and so forth, each tugging back the curtains and letting the new light shine a little plainer. It’s not anyone in particular who has discovered it, it is growing apparent to us — that that unified soul, that the psyche, that individual self, is a basic delusion. A human being is not like a ship with a properly appointed captain more or less in control and a vast tumult of mutineers battened down under hatches. No, he is a ship that has never had a properly commissioned captain nor definite sailing orders at all, and which is constantly open to the attempts of fresh experiences and suggestions, to take control and put the old officers in irons. You can turn every history of a mental case that exists, right round, and it will instantly become simpler, clearer and more controllable. But I am constantly saying this, I am repeatedly making this contrast between

the old dying idea of personality as an analysable unity and this new and entirely revolutionary idea....”

He had been running on and suddenly he stopped short. He stopped short and brought an accusing eye down to his hearer and remained for a terrible second silent.

“By now you know all this as well as I do,” he said. For the first time in her life she found herself afraid of a man she did not dislike and despise. She lied. “I wanted to get everything clear. I thought if I put it as an objection....”

He ceased to scrutinise her. He returned to his normal impersonal manner.

“If you are not very careful you will become an argumentative woman,” he said. “It is quite plain to me that you knew perfectly well what the answer to your question would be. Deliberately you made that objection. Why? Everything you said, was said for the sake of self-assertion. At times your character falls short of your intelligence, Mrs Twain.”

He paused. “I tell you these things for your own good.”

He turned away from her and appeared to forget her. He looked out of the window and then sat down at his writing-desk. After a moment of desperate self-control, she decided to leave the room.

She made her way to her own apartment in a state of outward serenity and inwardly boiling indignation. The housemaid on the landing stepped aside to admire her ladylike calm and return her faint yet friendly smile.

Dione M’am’s indignation was entirely with herself. She had given herself away not only to Dr Kentlake but to herself. For a time her self-reproach was so lively that she could think of nothing but her desire to do something to reinstate herself. But the idea of giving her motives an acceptable turn in his mind was like crawling unobserved up the beam of a searchlight. The only thing for a sensible woman, if she might still consider herself a sensible woman, would be to let the incident drop and hope to forget about it. He had said what he had to say and it was unlikely he would recall it. Yet all the same-!

At this point any lady less self-possessed than Mrs Twain would have said “Damn!”

The real business in hand had nothing to do with these trivial and

entirely insignificant personal reactions. Which were so annoying simply because they meant nothing at all. She must concentrate upon the outlook for Jimmy and the campaign that lay ahead.

She sat saying over her lesson to herself.

She had no doubt of the validity of Dr Kentlake's ideas. She had learnt his phrases. "All the reaction systems that had constituted" the son she knew were still latent and ready to be reawakened in his brain. But together with them now were these new strands of association, and mostly they were ¤experiences of fear, horror, helplessness and the desolating failure of his hopes and world-outlook, that, right up to the moment when the explosion at Flens had knocked away his last resistances, his brain had been struggling most desperately to square with his *persona*, his conception of himself. Then they had defeated that previous self altogether. They were established in control in his brain, and though that control might be wrested from them, never more would they leave it altogether. The old Jimmy might be recalled and put in effective possession of himself again, but they would be waiting to emerge as vivid nightmares, as momentary evil hallucinations, as sudden moods. The reinstated Jimmy had to be informed and trained to deal with that affliction. These rebel streaks in his personality were as much a part of him now, as a buried splinter of shrapnel or his broken foot. Since the return to England there had been a marked tranquilisation of these invaders. At first she had had to listen to disordered cries; he had sometimes cried out very dreadfully in the night; and also time after time she had crept near and heard the muttering tale of his troubles.

She never succeeded in piecing together a consecutive story of his experiences, but gradually she assembled a sort of framework for them, a frame of bitter disillusionment in his baffled search for a new world. Once he produced a phrase that took her back to Gavin Peters' story of their Polish wanderings. "Stank," he said. "Stinking rags. It stank; it stank and it was alive and someone had stamped on its face."

But most of the other things that obsessed his mind seemed to have come to him after the parting at Riga. He would mutter aloud; "Children in bits, like rabbits torn to pieces and thrown about by a

giant lunatic! Good old Providence sitting up aloft!...

"Little... bloody... oozy... bits of human bodies....

"Joints. Choice cuts. Bones I knew the names of. The acromial process; the femur, symphysis pubis. Funny to meet 'em lying about in the street. The blasts seemed to have peeled the flesh off. Omosternum, exactly like the joint out of abutcher's shop, and that-that squashed woman. Ugh! that woman, wrong way up. Bah! Who would want to have anything to do with a woman again after that? Love! Just playing about with entrails? Bloody entrails.

"Filthy fraud of a world....

"Planes over! Russian planes. Planes from the Land of Promise setting the proletariat of Finland free and bombing them to hell. Run! Run! Run! ...

"Don't go in there. Don't go through that door, I tell you. They got it there yesterday. There they are, all among their silly little furniture. I went in because the little china clock was striking, and there they were, scattered about among the things. Sewing machine — bought on the instalment system I suppose — and an old lady with bloody grey hair and her mouth open, clawing at it. Father had got his newspaper and slippers nice and comfortable, only his armchair had gone over backwards and his head had splashed off on to the wall and the cigar was sort of gummed on. Funny in a sort of way — like Harry Tate. The children had been tossed about more, and the bits of the table were all mixed up with them. Still something domestic about it all. Not a particularly big bomb. One of Molotov's whiffs of liberation....

"The lighting wasn't so bad. I don't complain of the fighting. Like football on a foul day. You bowled them over. Rat-tat-tat-tat. Over they went. The thing jumped about against your chest....

"It was what the fighting left behind....

"Those still woods.... Oh those woods! Silent, silent. That uncertain, drifting flake of snow. The light going. Night. Creeping down with a knife in its teeth. Benighted! Not here! Mustn't get lost among all this. Not lost, for God's sake! Mustn't get lost here. Why did we come this way? They've left me behind. Push on. Never mind your heavy feet. It's a road anyhow. Broken bees, broken country, broken machinery, broken weapons, heaps of broken men, hedges

and rows of bent and broken men, all muffed up and motionless. Don't let that fellow with his arm out get hold of you. He's only shamming dead. Keep clear of him.... What was that? Snow off a branch? Not it.... Ya-aa-ah! It wasn't me. I didn't scream.... I've heard sounds before, but this, this is hearing stillness. No rats. Hardly a bird. Too cold for them. Heaps of stiffs — the peace of Stalin. Peace that passeth understanding. Keep on, Gemini, keep on.... Ugh! what's that?...

"Don't speak too loud! Go by. Get by. *Creep* by.

"Run now! Don't look back. Men ahead. Slow up. Get your wind. No! I didn't hear anyone shouting. I tell you I wasn't shouting. Nothing. I was just running to keep warm....

"Wait until the summer. Finland will be Flyland. Happy flies! A flies' world it is. Thousands of flies for every human being. They breed and breed. I'll tell you something. We're just there to feed them and kill each other for them. God's a fly, the Master Fly, the Lord High Bluebottle. Makes his pathway in the sky and rides upon the storm. The flies are his Chosen People. Why not? just as reasonable. Don't be so-so anthropomorphic. The great God Buzz. Beelzebub. Closer to fact. Much closer to fact.... Stick to fact.... Great is truth — and it stinks.... For the Lord High Bluebottle loveth a stink, and the savour of burnt offerings is very agreeable to him....

"What do I care for life? how it goes on or how it goes off? I won't play at it. It bores me. I won't even go to the trouble of ending it. No. Starve myself, you say? You think I'll starve myself? Why? And why not, Dione? If I like food now and then, why should I starve? And if I dislike food why should I take it?...

"What is the good of Dione trying to argue about it? Why can't she live her own thin dismal life such as it is and leave me alone? She had a baby put upon her, she didn't want it, and now, why can't she leave it alone? She's just as bad as the old man. He and she shoved me into this bloody world and then they both go on wanting to live by me and in me and through me and all over me. Parents.... Parasites.... Crawling flies like the God that made you.... Get off my face.... Leave me alone, I tell you. Leave me alone...."

2. THE MAN AT THE TABLE

That man had come into the room again.

As usual he had gone to the window and stared out in silence for a time, and then he had begun muttering to himself. He didn't seem to realise there was a patient in the bed.

"Better bring the stuff in here," he was saying. Then he went to the door and said to someone outside, "Bring it in. No, not there; sideways to the window." They were carrying something in, a table or something. They were putting it down under that fellow's direction. "Yes," said he, "that's right."

Then the others went out of the room and there came a pause....

That man was fiddling about with something....

Apparatus? They weren't going to use apparatus? Electricity? Galvanise him? That would be too much.

The wary eye looked over the sheet again.

"I'll want the book," said the intruder to himself. "Where the devil did I leave that book?"

"What's that thing you've got there?" said Gemini.

"Damn!" said Dr Kentlake. "Don't *you* wake up now for goodness' sake!"

"Who are you?"

"Now I have to talk to *you*," said the doctor in a tone of forced patience. "What is it?"

"I ask who you are? What am I here for? What are you doing to me?"

"Nothing whatever," said the doctor, absent-mindedly drumming on the writing-table with his fingers.

"Then why am *I* here?"

"You had to be stuck somewhere, I suppose. I wish you'd be quiet — just now."

"But this place is some institution — ?"

"It's the visitors' bedroom in a private house in Cambridge. I'm sorry, but I'm very busy this afternoon. Can't you leave me alone for a bit?"

"But who *are* you?"

"This is my house. This is the only quiet room available.

They are making a noise out in the front and I want to read over something I have written-"

"I a guest?"

"Unfortunately yes. My paying guest. Is that enough?"

"No. Who are you? Just another patient, I suppose. How are they treating you? They leave me alone for *hours*."

The invader chuckled. "If I tell you who I am, will you lie still and let me get on with my work?"

Gemini's eye was suspicious and expectant.

The doctor sat down at the writing-table before him and ceased to regard his interlocutor. "My name is perfectly familiar to you. We've just missed meeting dozens of times. Last summer particularly. I am Dr Robert Kentlake."

Silence from the bed.

"So that's that," said the doctor.

"I won't have anything to do with the little beast. I've done with her. I dislike her — *violently*," said Gemini.

"I suppose you're referring to my niece Stella. Charming terms you use! May I say that I don't care a damn how you feel about her. Possibly she reciprocates your sentiments. I don't care. My business is philosophy. And now will you let me get on with what I have to do?"

"Don't you let her come near me."

"I said I was a philosopher, didn't I? Not a pimp. I'm entirely indifferent to whether you two young people get together or keep apart. I don't want to hear about it. What I have to do this afternoon is to prepare a brief discourse upon the views of a certain Cottenham C. Bower, a psychologist of whom you have never heard. It is one of a series of ten or twelve on fundamental ideas which have to be embalmed or canned or potted or whatever you like to call it, upon steel gramophone records. As I have never done anything of this sort before, I want to write the stuff down and try it over, before I face the fatal instrument."

"I know all about Cottenham C. Bower."

The doctor's eye remained fixed on the cornice. He answered like a man who humours a fool. "And pray when did you hear of Cottenham C. Bower? You went down from Oxford — it was

Oxford, wasn't it? — some years before anybody ever heard of him. And so far as I know Oxford has never heard of him to this day. Suppose now you go to sleep."

"Everybody has heard about Cottenham C. Bower and his *The Expansion of Sex*. He's not a psychologist; you're wrong about that; he's a biologist — a zoologist or something of that sort — at some Western University. Radnor Smith? That's the name of it. Not Western-Georgia. A biologist. That's how he got his freshness of approach"

Uncle Robert disregarded the correction and continued to talk to the cornice. "So far from everyone knowing about Cottenham C. Bower, there are probably not a couple of dozen copies of his highly glazed, thinly printed master — piece, in the British Isles. And he writes in a strange homemade jargon that makes him almost as unreadable as Anrep's *Pavlov*."

"And he's worth the trouble"

"I agree. And since you won't go to sleep and will talk, I shall read you over slowly and deliberately we'll gist at least of this lecture I am proposing to clarify and can for the use of students throughout the world. For some teachers anyhow are beginning to sit up and take notice to that extent. Any criticism you can manage to express with civility I shall be very ready to consider. If you object to this and will go on interrupting, all I can do is to go upstairs to one of the attics, leaving you to that sulky meditation which seems nowadays to be your constitutional habit of mind."

"Sulky meditation," said Gemini, reflecting.

"Sulky meditation," repeated Uncle Robert firmly.

He left that to soak in for three seconds and then began to recite a compact summary of the essential difference between the new psychology and the old. The Gemini who had written long expositions of these matters to Stella, Gemini the young essayist and reviewer, Gemini the King Prig, emerged from the darkness and despair in which he had been hidden so long and listened with intelligent appreciation. Unconsciously his bodily attitude relaxed.

The memoranda went on. Gemini made the remarks of an intelligent equal. He suggested amendments. Dr Kentlake considered them with respect.

For the better part of an hour Uncle Robert kept this resuscitated personality upon the surface, playing it as an angler plays a fish, which is hooked but which is still a long way from being landed. The gaff and net must come later. He broke off abruptly. “I have some notes of various cases of mental trouble upstairs. Very important for purposes of illustration. They’re not arranged yet. Maybe you’ll like to hear them when I get them into order, this evening or to-morrow.”

He sighed, got up and went out of the room, not even looking at his guest, and he left that humped-up body in possession of a very perplexed tenant.

“Where exactly have I been?” Gemini was asking himself.

“Evidently I have been ill. I read up all that stuff in a dismal little room near St Pancras. I remember writing about it in a room with a groggy table. I kept putting bits of paper first under one leg and then the other.... Some accident? Run over or something? I don’t in the least remember.”

He could not remember. Presently he dozed off, and as he dozed unpleasant dreams assailed him. He was confronted by Stella Kentlake and she was deriding him because he was impotent. It was in the manner of their old familiar bantering, but now it was shot with contempt and cruelty. She taunted and pressed herself upon him, and he thrust her away from him and struck at her, and her body altered and became a thing of honor. Diabolical monstrosities of slaughter crowded upon him. Yet all this was laced by a faint perception of unreality. He awoke with a sense of effort, he awoke because he wanted to awake, and as he did so every item of that nightmare diminished and vanished, leaving nothing but a pervading aftermath of distress, and his long-matured resolve never to confront Stella with his intolerable shame. He lay for a time crouched in his familiar pose with his paralysed arm in its old position; yet still aware of himself as that same Gemini Twain who had in the past read and learnt and criticised and reviewed philosophical, psychological and theological books, with such gusto and acuteness. He was aware of himself as that same self, but with a puzzling sense of some undefined intervening catastrophe. There had been some terrible revelation, some huge humiliation and defeat. He had discovered himself to be a delusion. He tried to understand this and

the thought weakened and faded in his brain. He sank back again out of sight of himself into a weak delirium....

When Gemini floated up to the surface of consciousness to discover himself once more in that tranquil room, he did not know whether he had been away for ten minutes or a day or a week. A phase of confusion, an illness, had intervened, but none of that was himself. Kentlake was at the window, softly whistling something very familiar. It was some — thing of Brahms', one of the symphonies, the one haunted by a memory of the finale of the Chorale. But he hadn't got it quite right. How did it go?...

The doctor ceased to whistle and turned to the writing-table.

"Now to struggle with these case histories," said the doctor.

"I had better read it over to you and you must tell me what you think of it."

The young man listened attentively.

The doctor made a correction or so, cleared his throat and began to read.

"At any time," he read, "a brain and body may be invaded by an experience or a group of experiences and their associated reactions, so strong, so vivid and alien to what has hitherto prevailed, that they do not mesh with their predecessors, they spin free of them, and for a time they may put these others quite-out of the limelight. What do you think of that phrase? Limelight?"

"Nothing the matter with that," approved Gemini.

"Suppose you take the body, the brain, the individual, or whatever you like to call him, and put him into strange and unaccustomed circumstances so that he is only rarely and weakly reminded of those previous groups of reaction-systems in which he has hitherto lived, he may develop a complex network of new associations and responses to rule him, while personality number one recedes into the background more or less completely. You hear people say India or Scotland or University life or the sea *made a new man* of so-and-so. But the old school of priests, moral teachers, criminologists and so on, refused to see it like that, because they were obsessed by the idea that individuals began life as integral minds or souls, complete and whole, and that anything of this sort must be a breaking-up of that original unity. Most religions are based on that soul idea. To weaken

it, the priests and lawyers think, would undermine moral responsibility. They would call that new man a case, a case of schizophrenia, or perhaps, in a milder case, of mere absent-mindedness and wool-gathering, schizothymia — and they would say that there had been a more or less complete splitting of that primary unity. But the real truth of the matter is that there never was anything to split. Something has been added. Schizophrenia is one of those countless question-begging words that confuse human minds. Palestine in A.D. 33 was really very much nearer the truth when it talked of diabolical possession, though so far as I can see there is no reason whatever to suppose the new complex in control is necessarily any more or less diabolical than the assemblage it supersedes. That, I think, is a fair statement of the modern point of view?"

"Yes," said Gemini, "you put things clearly. Much more clearly than Bower does. But his gibberish may be deliberate. Some of these American fellows, I think, don't want to bump hard and good against religious persecution, — that can take ugly forms in a land of lynching journalism. So they put it thin and high and technical where only tall people can see it. What you are saying is that instead of starting life with souls, we are putting souls — which never have existed hitherto-we are putting them together...."

"It is very fortunate we are so like-minded," said Uncle Robert. "It is saving us a lot of time. And now I am going to read over to you a case history, which I think brings out these—"

"It will be my own case," said Gemini with a smile.

"Obviously," said Uncle Robert, lowering the Kentlake nose and bringing the phantom Kentlake wink to bear upon him.

"I don't mind," said Gemini, and reflected for awhile.

"We've got over the ground in marvellous time, because both of us have a preoccupation with the same techniques of thought. We're of the same mental world and in the same subjects. Yes. You're the master and I'm the junior, but that's how we stand. But what I'd like to know, Sir, is this: How would you have set about me if I had been someone entirely different? I mean, suppose I had been a chess-player or a footballer or an experimental chemist or a young priest or a stockbroker or a drysalter — whatever a drysalter may be or do?"

"That would have been more roundabout. But fundamentally we

psychotherapeutists are always after the same thing, we are always trying to get a clear idea into the mind of the patient of what has happened to him and then leave matters to him. You clear up and disentangle his misconceptions about himself and then hand him back to himself for treatment. As a rule you revive the central interest of his habitual work, and then get him to ask what is the intrusive trouble that is shoving it aside; why he forgets, why he doubts, why he is better sometimes and sometimes worse, why his energy comes and goes. Obviously different people are required to arouse that main interest again. Obviously, the people who have had only a weak main interest in life, give way most easily to this so-called schizophrenia. They don't much matter anyhow.

"But about this getting back to the main interest. Only a consummate ass would have the conceit to think he could mug up a technique so that he would really put himself into intimacy with another man's speciality. More especially any sort of artist; most of them invent a private, self-explanatory jargon of their own. Makes them very hard to get at. For a painter I think I should bring in some irritating art critic, or some nice little handbook of art through the ages, just to startle and infuriate him. Or, I'd get him a congenial pupil.

"A chess-player, now, would be easier....

"The young priest, I'd have to attack myself — a frontal attack — and make him defend his religion. Him, I'd have to make a new man of, because evidently psychosynthesis cuts all the ground from beneath the feet of any sort of dogmatic faith. Obviously. But I'd have to begin upon his original beliefs. The treatment of a case depends very largely upon the nature of the intrusive matter. In the case of a mad priest one might possibly have a fundamentally sexual disarrangement. But the Church has its own empirical way with such cases, and there is a lot to be learnt from the Church. Knowing old bird, the Church. It has an entirely different idiom of thought from us moderns in speaking of the same factual realities, and that brings out all sorts of things that an apparently similar way of stating things hides. I've never had a mad priest come my way....

"Come to think of it, here is a whole world of thought about which I know nothing. What is the orthodox theology of madness?

Here is an immortal soul and it goes mad. It commits some crime of violence and gets violently killed. What is it comes into court at Judgment Day? And what becomes of it? And again, what of a mental defective incurably addicted to abominable things? I have no idea how the Church handles such problems.....

"The stockholder? It is difficult to put oneself in the place of a man who is given over to arithmetical triumphs and emotions. Possibly he would have an amateurism on the side and one would try to make a real man of him by developing that. But suppose he is just simply a devoted stockbroker.... Perhaps a lethal dose of sedative," reflected Uncle Robert.

"You never knew my father?" asked Gemini abruptly.

"I've never had the pleasure."

"It isn't much of a pleasure," said Gemini.

"Is he a stockbroker?"

"No. But he invests with great wariness and cunning, with an occasional lapse into gambling, which almost always goes wrong, I guess, and he never admits his losses. A very secretive man. He lives in a whole world of false values. And he is viciously unpleasant. I have spent a good many hours thinking him over. As himself, and also as an element in me. Somewhere, quite early in his life, he suppressed something, quite possibly a precocious sexual drive. Whatever it was, he forced it under into his secret private life. His marriage must have been an explosion. Like taking a neglected, deformed but powerful dwarf out of a cellar. He decided he had to subdue himself to established values, contemporary established values. He is the deliberate conformist. He does not believe there is a God, but he fears him.... Yet I bear him a natural affection. I have a feeling at times. If only I could lift that enormous lid he has pulled down upon himself and just say 'Hello' to something.... Perhaps it's gone long ago. Perhaps it shrank to nothing...."

"We're just gossiping," said Uncle Robert, considering the transient animation of the young man's face. "Let us get back to our patient."

3. THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT FRIGHTFULNESS AND GEMINI

“If he can be considered a patient,” said Uncle Robert.

“But are you? I’m much more disposed to deal with you now as a reasonable man with a kink, something that has got into your make-up and lies in wait to trip you up. A kink — and something else....”

A shade of obstinacy qualified the candour of Gemini’s face. “Call it a kink if you will,” he said. “But I know I am a permanently damaged man. The more you recall the intelligent interests of my past, the more you intensify my realisation of disillusionment. I have lost something for good and all; my faith in myself.... Human beings become too wise, so that at last they can perceive nothing but complete failure. That may be the end of all human wisdom. You mayn’t have got there yet. I have. I know too much of the ugly side of life ever to face it again.”

“I know enough of what you call the ugly side of life to put it in its place with the rest of things,” said Uncle Robert.

“These disappointments of yours, which you call disillusionment — ultimate disillusionment, eh?-are just the discovery by a young animal that the whole world isn’t made for it. It finds that each and every toy may break and that there’s even a bag of guts in Venus. Most faith and religion is an attempt to run away from that realisation and forget about it. Obviously. It tries to impose an ever-blessed-Virgin upon you who is just solid goodness all through, like marzipan. You don’t believe that anyhow. So suppose you go on and through with your disillusionment. Maybe there’s more disillusionment ahead for you still, and even this terribly terrible discovery of the cruel and obstinate independence of things isn’t ultimate. Maybe you will find, as I have done long ago, that the grim face of reality is no more final than its opening grin.”

“You can say that,” said

“I *am* saying it,” said Uncle Robert.

“You can theorise. After all, you’ve led a very civilised life. You sit in a comfortable study. You seem to have sat in comfortable studies all your life. What do you know at first hand of the things I have been through? — the things that have flattened me out — to this?”

“So you think me a mere amateur of suffering, eh? Nothing bloody about me? How do you know what things have happened to

me? I won't plunge into autobiography, because in your mood of inflamed egotism I should bore you extremely. I'm not going to start swapping experiences with you in a sort of game of beggar my neighbour.' A man may get deeper into life in a quiet room in Wimpole Street than by running about during the worst of air raids. I will just tell you I know infinitely more about disillusionment than you do, infinitely more. And leave it at that."

"But," began Gemini, stopping short.

"Infinitely more. So don't argue. These horrors you make so much of, this sort of horror, does not as a matter of fact involve any exceptional pain and suffering for anyone but the spectator like yourself. None of those dead you saw ever knew that they were dead. None. They had no time. They were shot in the head or frozen or blown to bits. So they suffered nothing. Those who were injured were stunned to begin with and then generally they found themselves surrounded by attentive helpers, carried in ambulances to hospital wards, bandaged, drugged. Have you ever seen photographs of any of them who didn't look fairly well satisfied with themselves? I put it to you.

"Even the minority who really had agonising damages probably didn't suffer anything like the torments endless people have undergone in bed in peace time. There you are all laid out for pain without distractions. Even in the extremest cases, however, pain comes and goes in waves. Or the mind gives way and stops registering. It's been a problem that has always left inquisitors and high-minded conscientious men of that sort baffled. They're not quite sure when a thing really hurts and goes on hurting. They have the satisfaction of shocking and disfiguring and twisting and degrading their fellow — creatures, it gives them a stupendous sense of power, but they are never sure whether their victims really appreciate it; even writhing and groaning may be a relief. Nature's a careless old harridan, but careless is not merciless.... An immoderate dread of pain is part of the equipment of every young animal. Naturally. As you grow older you can grow wiser, and some of us do."

"You will tell me presently that I was the one spoil-sport at a rather jolly party."

"No, but I do tell you that the amount of pain in the world is

vastly exaggerated and there is a great difference between things looking horrible and being horrible. Except for the cerebral mammals this is probably an almost painless world. Where there is instant reaction there is no pain. And the time factor only comes in with the deliberating animals. Face up to the real truth of the matter. You saw human beings and bits of human beings quivering, dying, dead, torn to pieces. The point is that that distressed you. It was *you* who got the pain. It was *your* memory which carried off this slow-healing scar. Which is still tormenting you. Those people, even the ones who seemed most vividly alive and hurt were stunned, benumbed, semi-conscious or half-conscious. They were not feeling anything like what you felt, or what by transference you imagined they felt. It was natural and right and proper that you, as an unsophisticated, social animal, should feel pity, indignation and fury at the time. Even the mothers of solitary animals feel like that about their cubs when anyone hurts them. But, get it clear in your mind that those were the emotions that worked you, and that when the crisis was over and you'd done your indignant bit in the mêlée, they had served their purpose. Get that clear."

"I admit a certain plausibility in your arguments," said Gemini, doing his best. "It reduces an air raid almost to a pleasantry."

"It does nothing of the sort. These air raids you saw were outrages and crimes, *but* they are not revelations of any unsuspected cruelty in the nature of things and that is what you are making them out to be. Everybody must die somewhen and somehow. Dying of cancer when there is no friend handy with the lethal dose, can be infinitely more dreadful.... Never mind that.... But the real truth of the matter is that a beautiful picture defaced or a lovely building wrecked, something a picture or a building cannot possibly feel at all, can be just as horrifying as any of these living casualties. Just as horrifying. More so. Ask any cultivated person who tells the truth whether he'd rather see Leonardo's Mona Lisa destroyed or half a dozen babies.... Well, we won't argue that point. It's a question of degree. The fact remains that what has bowled you over, Twain, is not any foul discovery about the world. No sort of black revelation. You knew it could stink, you knew it could pinch, you knew it could make ugly faces and alarming noises before you were two years old. Like every other

sane human being you had established a normal system of disregards for all such unpleasant facts. You had got into that 'it's all right really' state of confidence, without which it would be impossible to go on living. And then you fell into a string of nasty events that was too urgent for those defences. The blows followed too close upon one another. You were tired to death, infected, starved. You were done up and fagged out. Your physical resistances evaporated. And something which had always been lying in wait for you in your make-up — I'm coming to that in a moment — began to say 'Chuck it, Twain. Throw in your hand.' Already in Finland. And that little concussion in Sweden was just what you wanted to let you out....

"Don't interrupt me! I'm treating you. I'm telling you the real truth about yourself and you have to listen. What you have to realise — you must have read it somewhere and forgotten it — it's a commonplace — is that every impulse to act in a human being and maybe in every animal with a cerebrum, carries with it a countervailing disinclination, just as every visible body casts a shadow. Some people, in many matters, have that countervailing disinclination so strongly developed, that it makes them hesitate and funk and slack, almost habitually. Yes. And you, in matters of action, are one of these natural born shirkers and deserters. That's the real truth of your make-up. Generally you've kept up an appearance of being a pretty lively, active young man; after all a young male in the middle twenties is in his heyday; but always, always in your life you have had that disposition tugging at you to leave off and to go and do something else."

"I don't think you do me justice...."

"You do. You know I am telling you the real truth of the matter. You know how as a student you had to force yourself to complete things.... Of course you remember. And all this mental trouble of yours, now that that bump at the back of your neck has gone down, is your wilful acceptance of the idea, wilful acceptance, I say, that life is too much for you — and you won't even attempt to face up to it again."

"Life *is* too much for me," said Gemini.

"You have given way. And now you are holding on with both hands to this idea that you need never square up to life again. You

are getting better; you have the recuperative power of your youth, but your character....”

“Yes,” said Gemini, “my character?

“This impotence of yours you’re making such a fuss about is all part of the same thing. It’s the symbol and quintessence of the whole thing. You want to make love. Every natural human being wants to make love. But you are afraid to make love because at one and the same time you think you will not be able to do so and also you think that if you are able to do so, your excuse of utter defeat will be taken from you.

“It’s all perfectly plain. You would and you won’t. That’s the essence of neurasthenia. Sex is a primary drive; it’s probably heaving about even in that depleted body of yours; but in a cerebral animal sex is never a simple drive. I will not always waits upon I would. As I have just been saying, every cerebral animal sets about love-making with a touch of fear. Every human being demands the stimulus of some sort of beauty, seeks it and won’t be happy till it gets it. Even when sex works while you are asleep, it has to conjure up an excitement in a dream.... Well, in your case, it happens that, without any immediate reference to the sexual drive, you lost your touch with most of the beauty of life during that hard time you had in Poland and Finland. You feasted on ugly things and uglier interpretations until your sense of beauty was paralysed. You’ve had ugliness smeared all over your universe. And now, enfeebled and frustrated, you’ve come down on the defeatist side....

“I know all about your last wabble before you fell over. I see it all. You’d heard a lot about the impotence of soldiers back on leave from the front. It is a sort of hard joke. Of course, they are out of adjustment. They hear about it from others. Very easily it becomes a disabling anxiety....”

Uncle Robert swung round and pointed an accusing finger.

“Of *course*! that’s what you did in Stockholm. It’s the key to all the things you are ashamed of. You two poor devils! Think of that poor, jaded, unwilling woman, trying to sell what cannot be sold. Some hungry, draggled blonde. Picked up shamefacedly. Hoping to make as little submission as might be and get the nasty business over. And you who had never bought a woman in your life! Ashamed

of what you were doing. Grudging her even the caresses you exchanged. Doubtful of her cleanliness. Bah! Precautions? Eh? What a clumsy lover you must have been anyhow! Not even decent sensuality in it. Not a jest.... 'This,' you said to yourself, 'is what I have always suspected of life} And the courage ran out at the heels of your boots.... And that it was beat you, and your little concussion at Flens just hammered it in...."

Gemini listened with detachment.

"Anyhow, I am beaten," he said, with invincible conviction.

4. RUSSIA, REVOLUTION, AND REALITY

Gemini would not budge from his entire and baffling acquiescence in Uncle Robert's indictment.

"All you say," he repeated, "is perfectly true. I am a shirker and I am done for. So why ask me to go on with things?"

He refused flatly to see Stella. "She wouldn't want to see me," and then angrily, "I don't want to see her. Don't you understand? That's all spoilt. Keep her away from me."

Yet, a day or so later, he began talking quite consecutively and with an almost complete scientific detachment about his mental disaster.

"Things keep going on in my head round and round," he said. "I think we are dealing with something a little more complicated and extensive than you, in your desire to bully me back to life, are admitting. What has happened to me, must have happened, with variations, to a lot of my generation. We were sceptics and rebels and all that sort of thing because we believed in something. We believed there was something on our side which would ultimately win. We could take liberties, we could strike attitudes, we could do this and that, but in the end things would justify us."

"Mentality of every young animal in the world," said Uncle Robert.

"And a delusion."

"Not completely a delusion. You found out that the odds are not for you, but that does not mean they are against you. Don't be over-

disillusioned. That is what you are now. What one might call the Scheme of Things is absolutely indifferent to you. That may be more humiliating, but it is less tragic."

"But if you've staked everything on one idea?"

"And what has your generation been banking on?"

"It is absurd but it is true. At the back of the thought of all my generation was Soviet Russia. We did think that there something saner, more generous and juster than the outworn, self-deceiving selfishness of capitalism, had established itself. It was something more primitive and fundamental and yet wiser and scientific. We hung on to that. Men had achieved that in Russia and so tl1ey could achieve it everywhere. We were ready for any claim or statement that confirmed our faith. It helped us enormously that so much anti-Bolshevik argument, spat with malice and had an ugly face. We endured even the doctrinaire gabble of our simpler comrades. Soviet Russia gave us the background for all our defiances and braveries. Faith in Russia contained our minds and when the container broke —"

"It broke?" said Dr Kentlake.

"Obviously it broke."

"Finland?"

"Finland settled it. For me."

"But even before that, weren't there one or two little things, the trials for example? And the purges?"

"We were rather shaken by the trials. But they didn't break us."

"The Trotsky-Stalin feud? The glorification of Stalin in such a film — did you see it? — as *Lenin in October*. You saw it! So did I. Most illuminating. And various other little things?..."

"We held on. We held on all the more because of the way people rubbed all that in. Until I got to Finland...."

"And then you saw some private homes that had been bombed — just as if it were Warsaw — and you knew the whole world was evil from pole to pole."

"My whole world came to pieces."

"And you were left-you and a lot of your generation — in a state of neurasthenia — not between an old world dying and a new world unable to be born-but worse, between an old world dead and in decay

and an abortion also decaying?”

“Yes, that states it.”

Dr Kentlake considered his patient for a moment and then placed a chair for himself by the bedside. He stuck his hands deep into his pockets and stared out of the window. “I’d like to talk about that,” he said.

“Isn’t it true?”

“Well?”

“For my own part I have never thought of Russia in quite such violent terms as you do. It was never my land of hope and glory and now — I think rather well of it.”

“Still?”

“Stil1. I think the Russian Revolution was almost the only good thing that came out of the 14-18 war. The League of Nations rotted from the beginning; it claimed credit for a lot of international arrangements that would have done as well or better without it, and it fell down upon every vital issue; but the Soviet régime kept on and did a lot of quite considerable things. After all, it abolished what it called the Capitalist System; it got rid of most of the financial incubus on industry, it abolished most profiteering, it wiped out the great parasitic classes of landowners and rentiers altogether. We still have to do that here. I do not believe that any of that social top-hamper men ever return now to Russia. That is an immense clean-up. No wonder those classes which still dominate us here regard ‘Bolshevik’ as synonymous with devil. It is all very well to say the Bolsheviks did it clumsily, with a vast unnecessary loss of efficiency and freedom. Perfectly true. They only half-did the job, they cleaned up the site and then they jerry-built some unattractive sheds; but anyhow they half-did it, and we have everything still to do. A sort of mushroom growth of nasty little portfolio officials may have sprung up on the clearing. I don’t take that very seriously.... Or don’t you agree with this? Your shock didn’t precipitate you into the Tory Party, did it?”

“You think,” began Gemini, interested enough to raise his head. “Still.... Perhaps it was a useful clean-up. But that was just the first spurt after Lenin. All that is over. The country is a Czarism again and going back-”

“Not so fast as you think nor so far as you think. It may be necessary for a generation to grow up completely and think a bit before Russia can go on again. It doesn’t *like* its official figures.”

“Russia doesn’t? How do you know?”

“I know. They can criticise in Russia still. They can laugh and mock at the administration. There’s far more free speech in Russia than in Germany. They can make funny stories and plays about the régime. You think Stalin is a sort of monster who has killed and devoured the Revolution. I doubt whether you can even say he has betrayed it. Certainly not deliberately.”

Gemini smiled, the smile of the controversialist, and Dr Kentlake noted that smile with satisfaction, because it was the first he had got out of his patient.

“You are going to whitewash the ineffable Joseph now, I suppose. just as the other day you were making out bombing to be a sort of hot snowballing. It’s a part of your treatment, I suppose.”

“I’m hardly thinking of your treatment. I like arguing with you. I’m quite prepared with a case for the ineffable Joseph. From one source or another I know a good lot about him. Morally I should rank him above Hitler or Chamberlain, who are both viciously self-centred men.... Narrow and simply vain....

“But Joseph,” said Gemini, “this *Saint* Joseph.”

“Saint Joseph’s another story. One Joseph at a time, Twain. The Josephs are a mixed lot. Putting together what we all know with things I happen to know specially, because I’m a curious enquiring sort of man and sometimes I get people to tell me things-particularly when they have something to tell — one can make a quite understandable account of this alleged monster....

“Consider first what his education was and the shape and quality of his framework of ideas. He was some sort of peasant-born Georgian, he still speaks Russian with an accent, and he went through the narrow and special training of a seminarist, until he heard talk of Marxism, and read what came his way about it. What was it came his way? It must have been the hard, doctrinaire stuff’ of little pamphlets and furtive meetings in one of the very provincial towns. I can find no evidence of any other reading. I ask you — think of all he cannot possibly know! Then, because he had a sort of

adventurous boldness, he became an active comrade, he raided and robbed in the cause, outlawed himself, fled, hid. From that time on to the October Revolution he was an incessant worker for the Party. Incessantly, he was doing laborious, detailed things, and never taking out his working ideas to think them over. Again I put it to you — think of all the things that even ordinary well-read people like you and I know almost as a matter of course, about which he must be either completely ignorant or have only the vaguest smattering. Trotsky in his attacks upon him is always sneering at his want of culture. He likes treading out music with a pianola, for example, to the great disdain of the culchad Trotsky. But anyhow you must, before you judge him, try to assess the furniture of his brain. You must try and work it out in hours, and find the maximum he can have given to reading and thought-allowing also for forgetting and misunderstanding?

"This is a process you might apply to almost any public leader," said Gemini.

"You might, and you ought to do so," agreed Uncle Robert.

"You may ask, 'What can the Pope know of Darwinism and Socialism and social life before he pontificates about them? It is a perfectly legitimate question. You will find it cannot be very much more than a very few hours of reading. A few score hours at best, and that, mostly in ill-chosen books. You can apply this same analysis by hours to anybody of whom you predicate omniscience, and after you have applied it to a few type cases, if you can still believe in the possibility of an individual, all-wise dictatorship, then I submit you are a mental defective. All human beings to-day still think in blinkers — narrow because our education is narrow-and until you consider what blinkers this or that individual or this or that group is wearing, you cannot begin to deal with him or it....

"But to return to our Stalin, Twain. My point is that he sees a world entirely different from the world we see. He really sees it in perfect good faith as a struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and as hardly anything beyond. Both his bourgeoisie and his proletariat are fantasies, but in his brain they are solid realities. And he sees the bourgeoisie as incurably base, and the proletariat, the disinherited, embodied very largely in himself and his associates, as

good. He sees the governments of all the world outside Russia as wicked and incessantly scheming to attack and destroy the Revolution, his Revolution. He sees this with hardly any complications, and I am convinced to this day that he is still as devoted to the Revolution as a good mastiff is devoted to its home. But he has all the traditional self-righteous Marxist intolerance. From its very beginning, Marxism has cultivated narrowness of mind as though it were a supreme virtue, and has made the imputation of evil motives a normal controversial method. Our Joseph never had a chance of escaping that.

"The inner group of Bolsheviks, even in the days when Lenin kept a sort of rule over them, never really discussed or considered, they resisted and indicted. And as soon as Lenin was gone, they flew at each other's throats. Stalin felt himself underbred and so he was almost affectedly simple and rough and proletarian. Trotsky is evidently intolerably conceited, and it is plain from his own evidence that he never missed airing his genteel superiority over his boorish associate. They began to save the Revolution from each other with intensifying hatred. Each saw treason in we'll other's face. In perfect good faith. They were the chief actors in a brawl of petty irritations, magnified by their own egotisms to the dimensions of the Soviet Union."

"To a certain extent," began Gemini....

"Can you account for the great Trotsky-Stalin feud in any other way?"

"Go on."

"And now let me tell you that while Trotsky is invincibly convinced of his own rightness, Stalin is a modest man, defensively shy, and haunted by a profound self-distrust."

"You romance."

"I know. I happen to know. He had to keep it to himself in that atmosphere of aggressive assertion, and I suppose also that the secretiveness which all dark highlanders, from Scotland to the North West frontier, seem to possess, sustains that. But all the time he feels the need for confirmation and correction. That is why he was so fantastically disturbed by the death of Gorki, because you see he was in the habit of going off to Gorki, who stood to him in a relation

something between what the Americans call a stooge and a father confessor, and talking his views and intentions over with him. At all hours. He knows himself to be moody; he knows he has phases of irrational violence, and when he had Gorki he could go and talk and see himself reflected. He could be restrained from doing something foolish or cruel....”

“Those wretched doctors were also fantastically upset by the death of Gorki.”

“That doesn’t touch my explanation. He thought they had murdered Gorki to cripple himself. Pure treason! He gave them a public trial and there was no Gorki to reason with him. They were shot. That’s not diabolical, Twain. That’s infantile. It’s quite common. Thousands of widows here in England would have prosecuted doctors and shot ’em if they had had the power. And since then there has been no restraining influence upon his storms of impulse and his blinkered judgments. He is all-powerful because he distrusts everyone to whom he could delegate authority, and because everyone is afraid of his distrust and his spasmodic forcefulness. So nobody gets near him now who does not flatter him subtly and richly. They have persuaded him that the Russian people need a national hero; they have made the satisfaction of his smouldering vanity into a public duty; the Russians have to be reassured about him, they intimate, even as he has to be reassured about himself. When you have taken all these things into account, then I think you will agree with me that on the whole, according to his lights, this friendless, rather clumsy man in the Kremlin may still be trying to do right. Have I made him human?”

“He bombed civilians and trains of refugees in Finland.”

“He probably knew nothing about that. What he saw in his mind was the Imperialism of Germany and Western Europe and all the elements of reaction in Scandinavia and Finland, all plotting against his sacred proletariat, ready at any time to drop their present conflict and combine against , him. And Finland with its guns commanding the Neva was the appointed spearhead of the attack. So he saw it. And something that Ribbentrop took to Moscow, some anti-Bolshevik idiocy of this foolish we’ll of ours, which we still don’t know about, clinched his conviction.”

“And after all, what does this prove?”

“It exposes the fact that while Russia is human, all too human, your crowd of young people began by over-believing in it and refusing to hear any criticism of it, and now most of that bright red youthfulness in you is slumping over on the other side. You have been betrayed, you little dears, and that absolves you from everything. Or else, the last desperate squeal of the residue of the faithful, everything is still beyond cavil in Russia.

“Which brings us back to what we were talking about the other day, the underlying timid evasiveness of the human mind, and particularly of the youthful human mind. All intelligent young people, deep down in their hearts, are scared by life. Naturally. Deep down in your hearts is the profoundest funk of any real World Revolution, which calls for just what you find so difficult; steadfast effort, self-subjugation, balance, cooperation with people different from yourself — people perhaps wounding to your self-love by the difference of their gifts and of their unusual phrasing. Far easier and more congenial to break up what those others do than to do something yourself. Your young communists are the bitterest enemies of Revolution. They have a crazy, sub — conscious fear of it and will do anything to cripple or prevent it. What is the easiest way out for them? Not to work with anyone who isn’t exactly on the Party line. The little fastidious darlings! Far easier to wave a red Hag and yell stale party slogans. Far easier for your silly young students, who have found study rather perplexing and heavy-going, to stop studying altogether and shout....”

“Anyhow,” said Gemini, “for me and most of us that moral background has collapsed. What is left for us?”

“Life begins every morning,” said Uncle Robert. “Crow up a bit and start a new and sounder moral background.”

“With our damaged and disillusioned minds.”

“With your chastened minds.”

“From the ground upward.”

“From reality upward.”

“You ask too much,” said Gemini serenely from his comfortable pillow. “It was effort enough for most of us to get out of this system of ideas here, the ideas of Christian England and the comfortable

classes. We thought we had made our get-away. Communism anyhow had an air of something ready, and we didn't realise that most of the comrades would far rather, as you suggest, make an infernal machine (to plant under just anybody) than a clock. Now we know better — after wasting five or seven or ten years out of our lives. Minds do not go on growing incessantly. They settle down." ("Rubbish," interjected Uncle Robert.) "And now you ask us in effect to make a clean sweep in our minds, go back on ourselves, re-examine the words and phrases we use, ransack the facts for what you call the true operating causes, and begin all over again, correcting the mistakes and false starts of the past ten thousand years and reconditioning the world. When it is already dropping to pieces out of its accumulated rottenness. 'Re-make the world'. You really mean it. We — a rally of beaten, half-educated youngsters! How can one face up to so vast an undertaking?"

Dr Kentlake still smiled his exasperating smile at the sunshine outside.

"What else is there to do?" he said.

"Nothing," said Gemini. "One can do nothing."

"Life won't let you. While you are alive."

"I have offered my resignation," said Gemini.

The animation of their argument faded from his face. He ebbed visibly.

"Oh! I'm tired," he said abruptly. "I'm broken. *Damn* life!"

He rolled over on the bed and turned his face to the wall and lay perfectly still, to convey the completeness of his apathy.

"Tonic," said Dr Kentlake in a sort of memorandum to himself, and reflected for a moment on the chemical nature of the human soul. What had Catholic theology to say to a mortal sin committed by a man who gets inadvertently drunk or drugged? Or to the goodness and kindness of a saint who is indefatigably good and kind merely because his hormones are in order? How ill-read he was in this attractive field! His mind returned to the problem before him. Iron? Strychnine?

"Broken or not," he said, standing up, "you are still alive, Mr Gemini Twain. Like it or not, you'll find out you have to do something about it. Every morning life begins. Tomorrow will come

along and say ‘Well?’ to you, just as though nothing had happened.”

CHAPTER II. THE KILLING OF UNCLE ROBERT

1. DEATH-BED SCENE

JUST at this turn of affairs, the blind ruthlessness that flows beneath events in this world decreed that Uncle Robert should die. His death came as a devastating surprise to everyone, including himself.

He missed the kerb, stumbled and was immediately knocked down, run over and crushed by a lorry. Just how it happened was completely blotted out of his mind, and he became aware of himself vaguely as a diffused pain and a wooden rigidity, looking at his own bedroom and the face of his particular friend, Dr Hallerton. He stared at him for a moment. “What’s up?” he asked.

“This damned black — out,” said the doctor.

“Foolery,” said Uncle Robert. “Am I badly hurt?”

Hallerton sat down by the bedside. He knew his man. “Yes,” he said, “pretty bad.”

“We just ask for it, Hallerton. These armlets, this idea of a white hatband, luminous buttons. All this black and white stuff. Flies in the face of the common sense of camouflage. Consider nocturnal animals. Consider the skunk. Consider the badger. Consider the giant panda. Stripes, and blotches of white upon black. Breaks the outline. Obviously. Essence of camouflage — break the outline. Black pedestrians are dim, white pedestrians are plain, but black and white pedestrians vanish. Neither here nor there....

“Ought to have thought of that before.”

He looked at his friend gravely. “Pretty bad, eh?”

“Pretty bad.”

“Like that, you mean?”

“I have never told you a lie yet. It looks like that, Kentlake. We felt you over a bit and did a small relieving operation.”

“I suppose — what is it? It’s to-morrow?”

“It’s the fourth of April. You were knocked down on the night of the second.”

“Affairs in order, I think. All in order. Stella?”

“She’s downstairs?

“Leave her. Nice kid. If you knew her mother-! I suppose I’m what you might call crushed. Right across. Queer how little I feel. What sort of car was it?”

“Lorry — loaded with gas cylinders.”

“Didn’t do things by halves.”

“Who?”

“God. I suppose it didn’t break my bones or I’d ache more. Spinal column intact. No ribs? Just below that — squash. No definite pain. It’s lying as still now as a tiger after a gorge. I feel it breathing. You won’t try any more operating, Hallerton?”

“We can’t without your permission.”

“Shall I give it?”

“Clitterham wants to try his hand. He was here yesterday afternoon.”

“Patching things up? I suppose if I lived four and twenty hours, the operation would be successful. That’s how these surgeons put it? After that, the patient’s strength gives way. Of course he may survive. Miracles occur. I might carry on with all sorts of tubes joined up and an artificial aperture or two. Some months — for the greater glory of Clitterham. Any scientific value in it? Tell me, Hallerton. None. Probably I should stink. I hate stinks. I don’t ask you to say anything, Hallerton. We won’t have that brilliant operation. You’ll see I’m comfortable, won’t you? I don’t want to have narcotics. Something else. The discomfort is vague and a long way off. Can you hold it there? I’ d like to keep a clear brain.”

“Nothing particular you want to say?”

“Thank you, to you. And my blessing on Stella. They might come back now.”

He dropped off to sleep quite abruptly. The doctor went halfway to the door, returned and sat looking at him. He had thirty years of experience behind him, and still the now imminent change-over of a thinking, responsive human being to a waxen image, perplexed and baffled him. It made no sense for him. A universe of thought and it vanishes! Presently Uncle Robert opened his eyes again, reflected for awhile and then spoke.

“I suppose I ought to say some sort of last words. I don’t seem

able to fix my mind. I think, of course, but then the stuff flows away into something else. I suppose it's these drugs and things you have been putting into me. I think of something in fine Roman letters, very well cut, a sort of self-epitaph — can you say self-epitaph? — and then before I can read it, it becomes a vast Roman arch, and then a lot of arches, rows and rows of arches, the Pont de N?mes, and then it goes off into a perspective of broken aqueducts. There's no sense in that.... Phew!... Even if I don't say last words, I suppose I shall be allowed to go when the time comes?"

"I wouldn't worry," said the doctor. "Any time you may get even clearer-headed than you are now. Do you feel pretty comfortable? On the whole?"

"I feel humorous. Though I'm damned if I can see the point of the joke. Euphorbia? Euphoria? — Not myself really — chemicals."

He smiled amiably at the doctor. "My niece," he said suddenly; "Stella. Nothing too good for her."

"She's here whenever you want her."

"Trust Stella. If I think of anything I'll tell her. Bless her."

"I'll come back in the afternoon," said the doctor, and called in Stella and the nurse.

He left Uncle Robert regarding the Real Truth of Things above the bed with a look of disdainful penetration. So he remained for the best part of an hour. Stella sat by the bedside watching him, and the nurse watched them both. Early in the afternoon he sighed profoundly, and turned his face over sideways. The Real Truth of Things, it seemed, interested him no more. It bored him. He looked worn and tired. Presently he began talking to himself. He was evidently thinking of Gemini and Gemini's cure.

"You'll go on all right now," he said. "You've — . Recuperation. Young. But don't do it again, Jimmy. Don't do it again. No. Everyone has a limit...."

He lay still for a long time after that, as though thought had ebbed away from him, and when at length he soliloquised again it was plain he was back at his own problem. The idea of some last word, some summarising epitaph, had returned. Some austerer element in his make-up was putting his *persona* on trial.

"Ought to have done so much more. *Could* have done so much

more. So much more. I've insulted people. Estranged them. Ought to have been gentler with their feelings. Never been considerate enough about those *feelings* people have. Never.... Yet after all; after all, if one's going to complicate things — . Complicate things. I mean complicate things about the real truth.... Consider.... Consideration.... Considering people....

"Not clever enough for that.... Couldn't have done it....

"Tha's mere excuse. Won't do. I *liked* letting them know they were fools. Tha's the real truth.... I could have won people over.... Got them to do things....

"I made cockshies of their silly little Gods.... Cockshies! Whack! Bad's a bloody missionary...."

Then came something that might have been the ghost of a cough or the shadow of a chuckle, and after that he was silent through another ebbing interval. When he spoke again, he was still engaged upon that private Last Judgment.

"Ind'lence.... Arrogance...."

She pretended not to hear this mumbled soliloquy. It had nothing to do with her. It was entirely unaware of her. It died down to a mere murmur, the formless shadow of speech. She thought she saw a tear run to the corner of his mouth, but she felt that was something she ought not to see. Then very clearly he protested: "How was *I* to know?" After which he lay still, very still. So still that presently she went over to him. He was intent upon his own thoughts, quite alive, but profoundly weary and very pinched-looking.

He became faintly articulate once more. She strained her ears. He was speaking drowsily, like a drunken man half asleep. She heard: "'S all ri'.... Qui' all ri'. Ob — . Ob-vi-ous-ly."

That was all. Presently he began a peculiar rasping breathing.

"Uncle dear," said Stella, pressing his cooling hand. But he made no answer. The nurse spoke close to her.

"That's just the death rattle. Don't let it distress you. It doesn't hurt him, dear. He's dead. He doesn't know. It's the air dying out of him. He's gone. Don't stay now. It will only distress you."

"Yes, but all the same I want to hold his hand," said Stella.

And she did, with a vague idea of helpfulness and protection, until that harsh breathing ceased altogether.

2. WITHERED WREATH

When Dione M'am heard the news of Uncle Robert's death, her lips tightened but she betrayed no excess of sorrow. Afterwards she talked about him to Stella. "He despised women," she said. "His intuitions were more like a woman's than a man's, and yet he despised women....

"I don't think he really understood women. Women are only beginning to understand themselves. They have still to find their proper forms of expression. I don't think he realised that...."

It has to be recorded that this clear-headed woman indulged, not once or twice but many times, in reveries of a conclusive *? claircissement* with Uncle Robert, that was now for ever impossible. In these reveries she was unusually brilliant. Sometimes he was difficult but never impossible. She won him over; she drew admissions from him. He admitted that she had given him an altogether broader and deeper realisation of the feminine mind.

Schizothymia, the psychoanalysts would have called this sort of dreaming. It faded out as time went on to a gentle regret for him. She bought all the books by him that she did not already possess. She tried to find a satisfactory portrait of him, and she never succeeded. He had always been camera-shy. She was always beginning talks with Stella about him and never getting very far with them.

CHAPTER III. REVEILLE

1. 1940 IS LEAP YEAR

GEMINI was sitting in a comfortable armchair at the open window that looked out upon King's Parade, the very window from which Uncle Robert had pronounced his indictment of universities to Stella and prophesied their dispersal. And now Gemini was clothed in a dressing-gown and slippers; he was clothed and for most practical purposes in his right mind. He was looking over his morning paper again. He had been reading a book, a very congenial book he found it, Chakhotin's *Rape of the Masses*, and he was questioning whether the appearance of any saving ?lite in the world was even remotely possible.

He could not believe it. He put down Chakhotin on the little table beside him, and turned over the day's news of the world for any sign of that will and understanding for which Chakhotin was asking. He found nothing but evidences of limited imaginations, universal suspicion and disingenuous impulses. That did not distress him. It seemed indeed to release him from responsibility. A great lassitude had taken possession of him. There was nothing to be done about it. It was deplorable in a way, but interesting.

And soon he would turn his face to the wall for the last time and be out of it altogether. Like putting down a book at bedtime. Kentlake had got out of it-not so badly.

The door opened and Stella came into the room, and stood looking at him.

He turned and discovered her.

This encounter had been hanging over both of them for some time, and yet when they came face to face each of them was tongue-tied. Each of them had changed profoundly since that afternoon in August when they had parted on Tilbury Pier. "Mizpah!" they had said so bravely. Such a long time ago it seemed now. He looked smaller and round-shouldered; his face was thinner and less confident; the hands on his chair were the white hands of an invalid. A wave of pity and tenderness shook her, so that she had to clench

her hands to control herself and set her teeth to keep her face steady. And he had not thought of her as a figure in black. He had always thought of her as a challenging little desperado in trousers and a negligible shirt, the embodiment of that *?lan vital* he could no longer face.

He broke the silence. “I’ve never seen you in black before.”

“I feel black,” she said. “Your mother is against all mourning. But I loved my uncle. Like that. If I was a straightforward barbarian I should shave my head or cut myself with knives. Anyhow wearing this black — relieves something.”

He tried to recall all that he had prepared for this encounter. He forgot the question of mourning. What was it he had to say to her?

“I am sorry you have come down to me,” he began.

“Yes?” She waited.

“I had hoped not to see you again.”

She nodded. Not trusting herself to speak just then.

“Things are all different.”

Their eyes met, searched each other for a moment, and then his faltered and turned away.

“That love—”

“Well, that love?”

“Evaporated. You or anyone. I can never love again. All that is over....”

He talked lamely. He had meant to dismiss her much more ignominiously and conclusively. “That’s that,” he said. She walked across to the other side of the window and posed herself half-sitting on the corner of Uncle Robert’s writing-table. She took a deep breath. “Well,” she said:

“There’s no reason you should talk like a melancholy ass, Gemini! You don’t love me. You don’t want to see me any more. Very well. You don’t. Very well. Very natural. All the same, Gemini.” (Don’t cry, Stella, don’t cry! Don’t be a silly fool of a female. Keep your voice steady.) “We’ve got to talk business, you know. You don’t seem to understand you are in *my* house now. And something has to be done about it. I’m afraid I must ask you to go.”

“Go!” said Gemini. “Where?”

“Is that *my* affair?”

He stared helplessly out of the window.

“There’s your father’s house in London,” she suggested.

He said nothing.

He was visibly dismayed. She felt a twinge of contempt. This wasn’t her Gemini, she felt. This was some sort of sub-Gemini. Even in the past she had had glimpses of that sub-Gemini. Her touch of hysteria was over. She had thought this all out beforehand and it was going according to plan.

“You see, Gemini, it’s like this. I — well — I love you. I’ve never failed you in that. But since you don’t want it — put it aside. But here I am, suddenly become a very well-off young woman, and you have to consider my good name. I can’t very well keep an ex-lover in my house simply because he was my uncle’s patient, can I? People will talk. What will... Uncle Hubert, for example, think — and say? I’m sure your father too will disapprove....”

“But how can I pack? I can’t *stand* the old man.”

“You’re fastidious, Gemini. Surely your mother can find some nice hospital — some rest establishment — with treatment perhaps.”

“I’m not half cured yet,” said Gemini.

“No,” said Stella. “Evidently.”

Pause.

“If things were different,” said Stella, “I shouldn’t make a bad nurse. I don’t see much sense in taking a degree now. This war.... I’ve been training in the hospital here....”

He shook his head limply.

“I want to suggest something. I said I loved you. I don’t want to harp upon it, but I want to say that again. Because you see, to be blunt, Gemini, I know perfectly well how things are with you. No, don’t interrupt. It’s this. Why shouldn’t we go through the form of marriage? I know your dismal little secret and I won’t betray you. I won’t even nurse you if you’d rather not. I’ll vanish upstairs again.”

“No. That’s too much. I can’t do that. It’s impossible?

“But you *owe* it to me. You’ve got to make an honest woman of me. Ask your father. Ask anyone. It’s the thing to do. You’ve compromised me.”

“You can get on with your thinking. You can get on with your writing. You can live in an ivory tower and all that. You will turn a

brave face to the world again. No one will suspect. Trust me."

"You don't know what you are proposing, Stella."

"I know what I am doing, Gemini."

"You pity me. You have — a sort of habit of thinking about me. How long will that last? Did you ever read a book by D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*? A stinking book if you like, but true. That would be our story. Think of the life there is in you."

"Lawrence, as Dione would say, was just a man."

"Yes. But Nature has a drive in her."

"There's no arguing about things that *may* be, Gemini. I understand your fear. Suppose you accept me — this is Leap Year, Gemini. Suppose Nature does as you say. Suppose one day you have to divorce me...."

She paused. She looked as keenly at him as a doctor who has just given an injection might look at a patient, and she saw he winced at that.

"In the whole course of our living together have I ever broken a promise to you or told you a lie?"

He agreed with a murmur.

"Now here it is. If you have to divorce me, no one shall ever know, and of all people the other man shall never know or suspect — your real trouble. It shan't come out in court. Have I to promise you that? Am I to swear? Gemini, Gemini! Oh Gemini! Can you believe I would ever let you down like that?"

She leant against her desk, as self — possessed as ever after one grimace of wretchedness, but now tears were running down her face. She sniffed and smeared them away with the brown back of her hand, and he suddenly remembered that her inability to produce a handkerchief of her own had been a standing joke between them at Mary Clarkson's cottage. It wasn't a joke now. He gave way to pity and mostly it was self-pity. "It's all so damned hard," he admitted dully.

"It's hell for you, my dear," she said, and knew that she had won.

"I'm thinking of you," he said belatedly.

She nodded rapidly.

"I care for you — a lot."

She smiled faintly.

“But how did you come to *know*?

She was inexpressive.

“But — ?”

“You talked a lot in your delirium — and refusing to see me was — odd....”

“It was Dione M’am who put you up to all this?”

“The things young women know about nowadays would have shocked their grandmothers,” said Stella. “We actually begin to understand our business in life before it is too late.”

She became interested in the state of her finger-nails. “I suppose we call it a deal?”

“I don’t think I can possibly let you do it.”

“Right O,” she said, and, restraining an impulse to smack the face of this poor sub — Gemini or shake him until his teeth rattled or embrace him and kiss him and weep all over him, she walked meditatively out of the room. “I shall tell Dione M’am,” she said. “She’s the only one who will ever share our guiltless secret.”

“But I haven’t agreed,” said Gemini.

The door closed behind her.

“No,” said Gemini very firmly to the universe at large, “I cannot sacrifice her whole life.... She was made to be loved.”

Lady Chatterley’s Lover, now he had recalled it, stuck in his mind like a thorn. His mind festered round it. What devil had brought that book to his mind?... That was a thing he could never endure. He’d get a pistol and kill that lout.... And her....

“No.” ...

“I’ve done it,” said Stella to Dione M’am. “It’s all right.”

2. SPRING 1940

Stella married Gemini as she had determined and she married him masterfully in her own fashion. “You are too broken to arrange anything,” she said. “You sit at that window and watch the world go by. Maybe you’ll get the energy to write about it presently. Something very simple and beautiful.... I’11 be proud of my artist husband. High and above the common things of life.”

She never touched him. She never came within three yards of him. She seemed to be always dressed in the same black, and he never suspected that she was spending far more upon her dressmaker than was seemly in war time. But he noted that her admirably fitting dress revealed a body a stage nearer womanhood than the girl he had loved the best part of a year since. She was less sun-tanned and her hair was a shade more golden, it looked softer and more under control, though she still restrained it by a fillet of black ribbon. The eyes he avoided were the same dark blue as ever under the broad forehead, but the mouth and chin were firmer. And in the end, he was now convinced, she was bound to deceive him after the fashion of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and whenever he thought of that he thought also of the painful and extravagant way in which that prospective interloper — the "lout" was the word he always used in his thoughts — would have to be killed.

"I have found a cottage," she announced, "for our honeymoon. We shall have to have a honeymoon. For appearances' sake. Then we can talk about your plans for work and everything that is happening to the world. We must understand each other about things like that. It's a poor little cottage, but cottages are hard to come by nowadays. I forget the name of the place, but don't you bother. I've got that book by Karl Mannheim you wanted to read and Hamilton Fyfe's *Illusion of National Character*. Mannheim looks rather heavy going."

They were married unobtrusively by the Registrar. To her mother she sent a letter that struck her as sanctimonious even when she wrote it. She explained that Gemini was still too ill for any ceremony. She could not dream of dragging her mother across country from Weston-super-Mare in these uncomfortable times. "When I have nursed him back to health, then I hope we may both come to see you. That will be far better, darling...."

She had Gemini helped into a car to take him to a still unknown destination. He wriggled away from the chauffeur's assisting arm. "I'm not so damned helpless as all this," he said, and plumped down in the car. He was beginning to hate chauffeurs and people of that sort.

She seated herself stiffly beside him, pulling down the arm of the

seat between them with a bang.

“Now where are we going?” he asked.

“You will see. I won’t have you worried,” said Stella.

“This is getting a bit too much for me,” said Gemini.

Stella did her best to look as serenely uncommunicative as Dione M’am.

Presently she spoke.

“I think a bride has a certain right to be whimsical on her wedding day. This cottage I have is a surprise for you. Let that be my indulgence. I’ve bought it.”

“Very well,” he said. “You carry off things with a high hand, Stella, nowadays.”

“I don’t mean to. It’s my rotten manners. Just nervousness, Gemini. I want this thing to be an absolute success....”

“We are travelling almost due east,” he remarked presently, and scrutinised her suspiciously.

“South by east,” said Stella.

“Something familiar about this road.”

“There’s something familiar about all English by-roads, bless them.”...

“The station. That church....

“But this is Mary Clarkson’s cottage!” he exclaimed.

“No,” said Stella. “It’s mine. I bought it from Mary. Your Mary. She’s in France now, being a little sister to — all sorts of people. I thought you would be quieter and more comfortable in a cottage with which you were familiar. The name of the lady standing on the doorstep and bobbing up and down is — I don’t know if you remember — Greedle. She is installed as what is called cook-housekeeper. She was the best I could do in the time.”

“Damn it!” said Gemini. “Don’t get out first. It’s my place to get out first. I won’t be helped. What will that old sinner think?”

“Well, Mrs Greedle,” said Stella, following Gemini’s limping but resolute steps up the path. ‘“What have you got for us?”

“Everything you like, Mrs Twain. Everything you fancy most! You can smell it from here. Irish stchoo. And the wine you sent.”

Mrs Greedle kissed the points of her fingers ecstatically as she had once seen a French chef do in a film.

“I expected to see you looking ill, Sir,” she said to Gemini.

“And you’re flushed with health. Quite in the pink, as one might say. It’s good to see you again after you being lost and all, in them foreign parts. And oh! Just a moment, Sir. Not like that.”

“Not like what?”

“Pick your good lady up like a man and lift her over the threshold and kiss her, and ‘ere’s honour, riches, marriage-blessing to you both.” A certain rich graciousness in Mrs Greedle’s gesture and a transitory hiccup, made it plain that for her the wedding celebrations had already begun.

“You’ve got to,” prompted Stella, between her teeth. The ceremony was performed. The young couple found themselves inside their own house, a little startled and short of breath. “Where’s his gift of the gab gone?” thought Mrs Greedle. “‘E ‘as been ill after all.” Stella went to the window boxes and created a diversion. “You remembered the geraniums, Mrs Greedle,” she said. “You forget nothing. They’re better than ever.”

“It’s a great day for me, my dear. It’s a great day. I’d be sorry to forget anything. You’l1 find I’ve even made up that bed for you in the dressing-room, as you ordered, though why you should want a bed in the dressing-room—”

Uncle Robert’s former chauffeur appeared in the doorway with the bags. “Just show Trimble the rooms, please,” said Stella. “And don’t let him hit his head on the stairs.”

She and Gemini faced each other in profound embarrassment. “I’m sorry,” she said. “I ought to have had more sense than to employ that old sinner. She’s — *tight*.”

“She’s tight,” agreed Gemini. “I don’t remember her ever actually getting tight before.”

Pause.

“We might perhaps have a look at the garden or go up the lane a bit. Don’t feel ruffled, Gemini. We’re bound to feel a little awkward with each other, but things will settle down all right. I thought a cottage you knew so well....”

“And a Stella I know so little....”

They walked out into the garden in silence. An extreme shyness of one another had descended upon them. If anything, that shyness

increased as the evening wore on. They might have been two strangers who had never met before, who were visiting the cottage for the first time, because of some story they had read about it long ago. They sat on either side of the open fireplace, in which Mrs Greedle had lit a generous fire, for the evenings could still be chilly. At one moment Gemini was explaining about the weather. He talked of a thirty-three year weather cycle and sunspots and things like that.

"Do you remember how the parson sat in that chair and talked?" he said. "He will be glad to see you wearing a ring that is a wedding ring."

"He ought to have married us," said Stella. "I forgot that. Do we go to church on Sunday?"

"Why not?" said Gemini. "I doubt if you'll make a good church worker. But I can pray into my hat with the best of them."

They talked of the irrepressible Balch and what might have happened to him.

("Perhaps ghosts talk like this," thought Stella.)

At length, at enormous length, came bed-time.

Stella lingered in the doorway of his room.

"You see the writing-table I have put for you?" she said.

"I think," said he, "I will read a little before I turn in."

"And so good night, my dear," she said trembling.

He too was trembling. "Our — our wedding night," he said.

"I think—"

A tense interval followed.

"In another moment I scream," thought Stella.

"On our wedding night perhaps one kiss...."

"Gemini dear!" and they clasped each other....

"Kiss my throat," she whispered. "Kiss me here as you used to do. Never mind the damned dress. Tear it."

With all their lives before them, they set about their love-making with a sense of guilty haste. They never spoke above a whisper.

Next morning when Mrs Greedle came to do the rooms, she surveyed the torn black dress Hung on the undisturbed bed in the little dressing-room with reproachful approval. Stella's valise had been carelessly unpacked quite in the old style. Anything she didn't want thrown just anywhere. "What my lady had that bed made up

for," said Mrs Greedle, "is wrop in mystery. Some kind of lovers' quarrel.... All made up s'morning anyhow and him as chatty as ever. Greedle-Wheedle indeed! And chuck me under the chin if you please. 'More 'am and eggs,' says she. As if there wasn't a war on!"

3. RECOVERY

Gemini did not seem to be in the least aware that anything remarkable had happened to him. Nor did he observe that Stella, instead of being in a black dress, was now wearing blue overalls and a careless white shirt open at the neck. It was just natural she should dress like that. "It was a grand idea of yours to come down here," he said. "It means we can pick things up just where we left off. Do you remember that *Stellaria* in the lane and how we peeked at old Kalikov's lump of alabaster?"

"We made a sort of symbol of it."

"We did. I wonder. What has he done to it?"

Stella felt a sudden chill.

"I'm afraid, Gemini. I'm afraid. Suppose — suppose it isn't there? Suppose he has made something out of it and taken it away! Don't let's go there yet. Let's come to it gradually."

"A walk round. Round by the fields. Why not go and see the inside of the parish church and then return the parson's call? We've never been inside that church. There may be brasses or a monument or so. And the vicarage. It will be interesting to see the interior of the vicarage. Sham stained glass gummed on the passage windows, I guess, photographs of some cricket eleven or rowing eight, a little blue, red, gold and white Virgin on a bracket and a view of Padua."

"Why Padua?"

"Why not?"

"He'll tell us what has happened down here and what everybody is doing," said Stella. "Shall I go in and put on black?"

"You come as you are," said Gemini. "I don't like your black. All the while you were in black you bullied me. I never want to see you in black again. Extraordinary the effect of that black!"

"It was extraordinary," agreed Stella.

“A sort of stand-offishness. I never expected to be afraid of you. And rather hosti1e.”

“It’s all different now?”

“Everything is different?

“Every Sunday we shall go to church while we are here and every Sunday I shall wear black. Just to put you back in your place.”

“We shall see,” said Gemini.

They found the Reverend Morton Richardson in the lush churchyard, and half a dozen sheep were feeding among the tombstones. He was wearing a soutane and a little round skull-cap, that emphasised the austere precision of his face. Gemini remembered that he had once thought of him as a “wily ecclesiastic.” He had rejected the phrase then, but now, in this costume, it seemed fitter. Wily — but weak. He was carrying a small, violet-covered book in his hands, and his lips were moving as though he forced himself to attend to precious rather than congenial words. He looked up with a start. He regarded his approaching visitors with a certain worried dismay, as though he was trying to remember something. Stella held up her hand with its wedding ring to him. “We’re married,” she said, “as you wished us to be. In Cambridge, but I wish we could have come here to you.”

He took it in slowly. “That’s better,” he said. “I’m glad of that. Yes, I’m very glad of that. I-yes — congratulations. Certainly.”

There was no friendliness in his response; his expression was one of fussy vexation rather than recognition. He fumbled to keep a finger to mark his place in his book before he could shake hands. And manifestly, for such forced mechanical reading as he had been doing, as intelligent as a Tibetan praying-wheel, the “place” had to be kept. It would never do to pleat his incantation. He began to talk, not so much to them as at them, a recital of the things he had to deal with and think about.

He had changed profoundly. He had lost flesh. His eyes were slightly bloodshot. He looked rattled. Under the stresses of the war situation, his streak of sceptical tolerance had vanished altogether. As he talked, they realised that his never very venturesome mind had bolted back to outright High Anglicanism, and to fear and defensive hostility towards anything outside it. To him they carried now as a

reminder of some vaguely remembered indiscretion, some reprehensible tolerance....

"I'm troubled about these sheep," he said. "Yes. I'm very troubled about these sheep. I don't quite *like* them grazing here. There's some sort of disrespectful rhyme... worms, parson, sheep, mutton — I forget. But what can one do? With this war, all touch and go, the slightest things may make all the difference. Just all the difference. Mutton we must have. More and more it becomes an economic war. More and more. Every day. More *economic*. Wastefulness, dissipation of energy, has always been our English weakness. We have been, I fear, a slack people. Against this terrible German efficiency.... We have to save.

"Here we are doing all we can, Mrs Twain. I warn you we shan't spare you if you come to join us. We'll find you something to do. Everybody here is bucking up splendidly. I *will* say that. Splendidly. What can be done is being done. Mrs Smitherton-Bradley, now that her son has gone into the Censorship, is doing wonders with the Boy Scouts, and Miss Ripple of the Post Office has given the Girl Guides absolutely a new life. They collect refuse and sort it; tin cans, paper, scraps of tobacco, everything. Of such are the sinews of war. Little fellows of ten and eleven are working in the fields now — real good useful work, the farmers tell me. They vie with each other. Schools stand empty. Evacuees too join in with zeal. Little town children who a year ago had never seen a ploughed field. A wholesome rest for their poor little noddles. Then there is our little band of night watchers preventing the least leakage of light. When I have insomnia — and I *do* suffer from insomnia, wondering how all this is going to end — I get up and join them. No use wasting wakefulness in bed, I say, no use at all. In this little place alone we have fined six people. We've made this one of the blackest villages in England. We blunder about; Farmer Wildershaw fell into the old horse pond. Nobody minded. He's been in bed ever since. *He* doesn't mind. 'All in a good cause,' he said: 'If it helps beat them Nastys,' he says, 'I'll sit in the ole pond all day.' Seventy-two he is. That's the spirit of it. Everyone is on the *qui vive*; everyone alert. It's a great strain, but we have to do it if we mean to win this dreadful war. Think what those Germans may be doing!

“But there are compensations, Mrs Twain. There are compensations. Yes. A new seriousness. A higher tone. How can we tell that these days of trouble may not prove a blessing in the end? This community, when you visited it a year ago, was in a state of spiritual lassitude. We were all lax. *I* was lax. I admit it. The church three-quarters empty and maybe three or four communicants, mostly elderly people, with nothing else to do. Now I find twenty people or more seeking the comfort of the mass. Even quite young people — among the women. It all adds to my work, but all the same it is a comforting thing. Some even ask for confession-on Anglican lines, of course. Sunday tennis is a thing of the past. No one would presume. Not even ping-pong. Then at Portage House (Mrs Smitherton-Bradley’s, you know,) they are even restoring the good old custom of family prayers. Every day — all the household, the evacuees, everyone, down on their knees, and Mrs Smitherton-Bradley reading in that proud voice of hers. After that, the day isn’t quite the same for them. At first there was a little giggling among the maids, I’m told, but Mrs Smitherton-Bradley soon put a stop to that.”

“Hasn’t something happened to the church tower?” said Gemini. “That black side — ?”

The vicar turned his eyes with a certain reluctance to his desecrated tower.

“That’s tar,” he said. “Camouflage. That cuts half of it out, you see — or at least it was meant to do that. Our tower here, we discovered, could be used by enemy aircraft as a landmark. It was Mr Chrissy of Cow Point, perhaps you remember him? — he has exhibited at the Royal Academy several times — who thought of that. Insisted. At first his idea was to erect a sham spire, employing that cement stuff they use for cinemas, but that had to be dismissed on account of the expense, and then, after a certain amount of discussion, the council produced some tar. Road tar. You see that thing there in the corner where they boil it. They’ve left it there. The black was to cut the shape of the old tower-into something unrecognisable. Even as it is — Don’t you think? But before it was half done Mr Chrissy fell from a ladder and ricked his back, and we’ve had to leave it as it is for the present and hope for the best. There was no one to replace him.”

As they looked at the poor old tower with a wisp of ivy on its forehead, Stella was reminded extraordinarily of Bill Sykes with a patch over one eye. The vicar turned away, evidently trying to dismiss that degradation from his mind. “Everybody,” be said pointedly, “has something to do. It is a totalitarian war. Absolutely totalitarian. All in. No idle hands this time. We *do*.”

“By the by,” said Gemini hastily, before their dismissal became complete; “wasn’t there a great sculptor who lived near our cottage — Kalikov?”

“Kalikov?” meditated the vicar, pretending, out of pure war-time caution, not to know all at once. “Kalikov? Oh! He’s interned. Yes, interned.”

“Interned!”

“Naturally.”

“But he is a Bulgarian! We’re not at war with Bulgaria?”

“All the same, it was decided to intern him.”

“But I heard he was going to be naturalised as an Englishman!”

“Not in war-time,” said the vicar. “Yes, I remember hearing about it from Colonel Gusset. Your friend — well, this Mr Kalikov-made a very poor showing. He lost his temper with the tribunal. He tried to be sarcastic in that German accent of his, and *that* did him no good, you can be sure, with a resolute man like Colonel Cusset.”

“But it’s not a German accent,” said Stella.

“It sounded German to the tribunal,” said the vicar. “And he was *very* rude. Extremely rude. After all, much of his work, I am told, is far from being — well, in the best possible taste. Un-English essentially. You see — these aliens come here. They take not the slightest trouble to respect our standards of decency or beauty. Our natural amenities. None at all.... What can they expect?”

“But to intern him!”

“We can’t be too careful. After all, we are less than twenty miles from the coast. And I’m not certain he wasn’t more or less of a Jew. All that hair of his.”

“But we’re not at war with the Jews! And Kalikov isn’t a Jewish name.”

“There are Jews and Jews, and they take all sorts of names. They are really all alike,” said the vicar, and dismissed that increasingly

difficult topic. “Anyhow he’s interned.”

“But what has happened to the thing he left behind?”

“Locked up, I suppose....”

“His house, surely you’ve looked after his house?”

“As well as we can. Some of those East End evacuees may have broken his windows. They are terrible at breaking windows-especially in unoccupied houses. They seem to think it’s what windows are for.”

“But, Mr Richardson, have you done nothing?”

“My dear young lady, in these days of crisis, we have more serious things to do than to look after the personal effects of a swarm of alien invaders.”

Mr and Mrs James Twain regarded each other with raised eyebrows, and it became extremely doubtful whether after all they would attend Church next Sunday. They were turning away. “Oh! wasn’t there a man called Balch?” asked Gemini abruptly.

“Balch?” The vicar was still discreetly evasive, but there was a sudden change in his manner.

“A man with a large face that slanted upward,” said Gemini, “and pencils and large fountain pens sticking out of him all over him.”

“Yes, he was like that. At first. Not so much a slanting face as a large slanting back. He always seemed to be going round corners in a hurry. Away from me. Shy, I suppose. He — he has been something of a surprise to me. No. I think — . I don’t think there is any harm in telling you. Between ourselves.”

He lowered his voice and looked round to make sure that there was no German agent lurking among the tombs. For a moment he scrutinised one of the sheep rather doubtfully. But it was a sheep all right. It behaved like a sheep there and then. The cleverest German agent could not have done it.

“Mr Balch,” he said, still in undertones, “occupied quite an important place, so I understand, in our Ministry of Propaganda. He directs our propaganda in Brazil. Before he went away, I had one or two conversations with him. He would come in to lunch quite unexpectedly and talk things over. Essentially an *enthusiastic* type. Very quick apprehension. I believe I was of some use to him. Everyone must help who can — everyone. Ungrudgingly. Mind or

body. Yes.... I'm afraid — I'm really afraid — you'll have to excuse me now."

"But did Balch know Portuguese?"

"Not a word, so far as I know. But, as he explained to me, almost everybody who *can* speak Brazilian — it is a little different from Portuguese — is apt to be a foreigner or have such foreign associations that-they don't understand what has to be put over. Hopeless!" He agitated the purple-covered book in the air to indicate hopelessness. "You can use them as translators, of course; you can even let them make records under direction; but the real matter we want to tell these neutrals — manifestly you must have a real homegrown English mind for that."

"And what does Balch give them?" asked Gemini.

"Excellent stuff. He has given them — I might almost say *we* have given them — three admirable talks upon Keble's Christian Year. Admirable talks. And one on the Heroines of Jane Austen. And a talk about the origin of the Limerick and the Nonsense Verse of Edward Lear. That sort of thing gets the I real English idea over to these people. As nothing else *could* do. I'm told Lord Halifax thinks very highly of Balch's original drafts. You couldn't have higher praise than that. Brazil was particularly interested in the Pobble. They had articles in the newspapers?

"*Pobble*?" whispered Gemini.

"You know— 'The Pobble who has no Toes.'"

"The Brazilians!" said Gemini.

"*Fascinated*. They had never known us before. In San Paulo 'Pobble' has become a byword for Englishman. So Mr Balch tells me. Ah, there *is* Mrs Smitherton-Bradley. You really must excuse me now. So much to see to. So much to correlate. She is probably wanting my advice on some new activity...."

He called after them. "*I'll* find something for you to do."

"*Will* you?" whispered Stella venomously.

"Well," said Gemini, as they walked slowly through the fields, "while I have been a special case for mental treatment, it seems that Old England, generally speaking, has gone nuts. Think of it! Tarring the church tower! The Pobble for Brazilians! Children of ten working in the fields! You can hardly call that man mad, but it's a sort of

rapid chittering in the brain. Since I began to sit up and take notice again, it's become more and more manifest how widespread this sort of thing is. There must be scores of thousands now like him. Hundreds of thousands. Insanely set upon being stupid. The *Times*, for instance — completely gaga. This country, under the war strain, is becoming a gaggle of Anglicans. It's a *Midsummer Night's Dream* John Bull, with a Halifax instead of a head. Is there no other England? England, my England! Are you there? I begin to have a horrible feeling that this time our rulers may contrive to lose this war outright. If so, the end of Old England is going to be — you can't call it a tragedy. It isn't falling, like a tall column, with dignity; it's guttering down like a fat old tallow candle in a draught. Dithering down to doom. The youngsters fight, the sailors, the fishermen, they are all right, they get killed like men, but so far as I can see they are lighting for nothing but what that old fool there in his High Church fancy dress represents.

"Well, what else *are* we fighting for? In this mess of a war? We're just lighting because there is nothing else to do. Which reminds me that I'm not fighting at all. I've got no right to criticise unless I take a risk. I'll have to tell you about that. I've an idea — from something I've read. It isn't only the youngsters without spot or blemish who are to carry all the risks. I could probably handle an anti-aircraft gun on a trawler as well as anybody.... We'll talk of that later, Stella."

Stella hadn't thought of that. She had counted on Gemini's remaining a neutral. But instantly she understood that in this particular war no man who was a man again, could possibly remain a neutral. What happened to men in trawlers?...

"We'll talk of that later," she agreed.

"When I went back to Cambridge after Tilbury," she began abruptly, "Uncle Robert was very concerned about the education I was getting, and he talked a lot about it and about the Universities and the British mind and what he calls the mind of the world. I remember him lifting his nose up over King's Parade, saying — what did he say? — in effect it was this....

"Now let me see. Stand away, Gemini. I must imitate him. I can't get it unless I imitate him. I'm not mocking? She stuck her hands into her side pockets and she tried to lift up her nose. It had always

been a shapely but unobtrusive feature, nevertheless she did her best to lift it after the manner of her uncle.

"Obviously," she said, like a musician who tunes his instrument, and then she began.

She kept up her impersonation for a while and then relapsed into *oratio obliqua*. She reproduced in a weaker and compacter form that jeremiad upon intellectual laziness, evasion and obstinacy with which Uncle Robert had indicted not simply Cambridge but the whole feebly pompous academic world from Upsala to Cape Town and from Tokio to Chicago. Not simply England but the whole world, he had said, was pin-headed. The species had failed mentally. What did it amount to — this World Brain of to-day? It was, he said, the brain of a mere foetus, incapable of steadying and controlling the great overgrown body of mankind.

"And so, as our securities dissolve away," said Stella, "and reveal themselves — how did he put it?— 'a transitory combination of happy accidents,' we find mankind with its wits unorganised, no better than a horde of frightened fools, fanatics and greedy, scheming, criminal men. And then, Gemini, he lamented because he himself had done so little to change all that."

"He said that?" said Gemini.

"He said that. And-how can I put it? While he said it, it sounded true, but I didn't *feel* that it was *really* true. I felt it was just *brilliantly* true. You know? Not *real* like shots being fired at you. But now I begin to realise how daft people are getting everywhere, now that their world begins to shake. The shots are coming at us, real shot and shell hitting things about us and quite likely to hit us...."

"Maybe something worse is happening to us," said Gemini.

"Maybe while all the rest of the world has gone mad, we two are going sane."

"Is being cowed, sanity?" said Stella. "I doubt it. One begins to be afraid to say anything for fear of being misunderstood, of doing anything except join in the screams and rushes of the crowd. That's not having a sane, free mind. Can anyone keep sane when the world goes mad?"

"*I* feel sane," said Gemini.... To-day — I don't know how it is — down here, I feel as though for we'll first time for a long while, I had

cast off something from me and got control of my wits. Perhaps it's just the old memories of the place; the way in which we join on to the things we talked about last year, when we tried to get our ideas in order-before this world delirium overwhelmed us."

Stella looked at him with a mild astonishment. Had he no inkling of the last exorcism she had had to perform so skilfully? "Thankless work being a woman," thought Stella.

He stumped along, thinking over his case, reviewing it.

"Go on, Gemini," she said. "Let's hope it's not just a temporary lapse into lucidity."

"I still don't remember all that happened before I got knocked out by that explosion at Flens. I suppose I never shall. I guess there's not a trace now of the original concussion; that bruised lower brain and so on; all that has cleared up long ago. But there is still a black-out in the memory. It left its scars. I know I developed a lot of queer irrational dislikes and phobias...."

He broke off abruptly. "There's the village green ahead. There's the old post office where that ratty little Miss Ripple presides, ratty Miss Ripple, who's put such life and fire into the muck-raking of the Girl Guides. I always used to suspect her of steaming our letters after the post office had shut. She had a nastiness. Perhaps she just saw through us. And there is ye olde English inn where Balch used to play darts before he began to expound England, my England, to the Brazilian mind....

"Let's sit on this stile for a bit. Let's stop here. There's no hurry. Now that Kalikov is interned."

"Yes, let's stop here for a bit," agreed Stella promptly. "If it's there, it will be there."

"Queer," he said.

"It's queer."

He laughed. "You feel it too? That's good. I thought it might be a bit of hang-over from my concussion. I'm afraid — I don't know why I'm afraid to go on to that block of alabaster, but I *am* afraid. Some fear of disappointment?... Well anyhow the day is young....

"I was saying — what was I saying? — I was saying I still don't know all that happened to me after Warsaw. Very likely I shall never get it clear, or maybe we'll bring it all out later by hypnotism. Uncle

Robert might have arranged that if he had lived. He said I may still have dreams.... One of the oddest aspects of that phase was the violent dislike I took to you. And to my mother. I suppose it was the impulse of a dog-tired man to get away from everything he had been before. At the price even of scarcely living."

"Yes," said Stella.

"I just hated you. And that was mixed up with a sort of negative obsession by sex."

Stella stuck her hands deep in her side-pockets. "Odd," she said, and assumed an interest in the scenery.

"It was as if some gigantic prohibition had been imposed upon me. I rebelled against it — in a weak sort of way. That's neither here nor there. 'Don't go back to life,' it said. 'It's bitter; it's vile.' No Early Christian Father was ever so obsessed. It was a fear. A shame. A taint of incapacity. That lasted-"

"Yes, Gemini?"

"Oh, to quite recently. But — it's simply *gone*."

Stella overcame a violent impulse to push him backward off the stile. But that sort of thing, she felt, had better come a little later. Now it might revive his concussion. Instead she said: "Got a cigarette on you, Gemini?..."

"I don't know why I was so obsessed by the question of sex," Gemini reflected, when the cigarette was well and duly lit. "After all — it amounts to very little. It's so simple. If you look at it simply."

"Yes," said Stella, wise now with all the wisdom of Dione M'am. "It amounts to very little. It is simple."

And to herself she said: "But think what it can amount to, when it amounts to nothing at all."

She made two or three smoke-rings and then said what she had in mind. "You remember, Gemini, how we argued and almost quarrelled about that book *The Expansion of Sex*? Or have you forgotten? Queer how it irritated me at the time. Sex meant so much to me then.... We had a great time, Gemini."

"Had!" reflected Gemini. "Well—".

"The idea was that in the case of the higher apes and man, sex has overflowed, needlessly, from its primary business of reproduction into the general imagination and will. It's rutting-time all the year

round for mankind. ‘When gorse is in flower,’ as the Sussex yokels say. I forget the exact words. Well, what I felt then, when we had that argument, I feel now. I object to the word ‘needlessly} Aren’t our moralists a little ungrateful to sex? Hasn’t it also been a How of energy over the whole mental life? It’s fighting-time all the year round too for mankind. Don’t the two things go together? Don’t you think these sexual strands impart a certain vigour? The beasts that have a breeding season go very tame and timid in between.... It may be a matter of stimulation rather than sublimation.... Maybe some affair of hormones.... It’s just an idea of mine.”

Gemini lit a cigarette in his turn and reflected.

“There may be something in that,” he said. “I must think it over....”

He was evidently not thinking it over at all. He was thinking of something else. He blew a cloud of smoke.

“And now I think we must face the secret of the lane. What is there to be afraid of? What are we flinching at? Even if the block isn’t there. It won’t matter — .... Not really.... We have been wandering about and talking of ourselves and my concussion and the decadence of England long enough....”

4. THE BLOCK TURNS OVER

It has to be told and it is extremely difficult to tell. Something strange and largely inexplicable happened to these two babes in the wood. It happened. Enormously portentous it was to them, and yet it was no more than a trivial coincidence. There is no accounting for the timing of it, and still less is there any accounting for the real state of apprehension, of dread, which preceded it.

They walked with a deliberate slowness down the old familiar lane. The spring was late. The chickweed had not appeared yet, and the May buds were still flushed with purpose. The lilac was reasonably early and profuse, and the oak leaves were warm with golden promise. There was still some belated heads of elder. All the greenery was more staccato, harder and brighter than they remembered it. And this time these two young people said not a

word to one another until they came to the gap in the hedge of yew.

Then, still silent, they clambered up and looked over. It was there. The grass and weeds about it were thicker and higher, and there were many more nettles, but the block was unchanged, massive, veined and semi-translucent, the block that had begotten Gemini's great idea, their sacred symbol for the purpose in their lives.

"Oh! *Look* at the house," whispered Stella.

Every window had been conscientiously smashed, and a corner of window curtain, caught and held outside on some splinter of glass, flapped feebly against a mullion.

"Little beasts," said Stella.

"Let's climb over this," said Gemini. "Let's see a little nearer. Softly, Stella. Put your foot there."

He clambered over clumsily and helped her as a man should, though she could have popped over without an effort. She let him help her, for still she was not sure of him, and very mindful of the wisdom of Dione M'am.

They stood now, waist-deep in weeds and nettles, close to the block. Hitherto they had only looked down upon it from the oak fence, and it had seemed squat and broad. It towered now six feet above their heads.

And then it was the wonder happened. At first they hardly realised that the block was moving. Then they perceived it was coming towards them. It was approaching them with a steady acceleration. It was coming down upon them. It was pursuing them. Swiftly, relentlessly. The rank herbage was crushed and swept aside by the advancing monster. They started back with gasps of terror. They uttered weak nightmare cries....

With a soft thud, the overturned block was lying at their feet, motionless again. For an immense moment it seemed to them that it was merely pausing for a moment before resuming its advance.

The juicy scent of crushed vegetation rose about them in that tremendous interval.

"It's turned over," said Gemini feebly. "It's fallen over."

"As if it had been waiting for us to come," said Stella. "So that it had to happen exactly now."

"It's turned over," repeated Gemini. "My hand is trembling. Look.

I'm not — . My nerves are still not right. Simply because a big stone rolled over. I shall dream of the way it seemed to be coming down upon us. But of course all this is perfectly natural.... Something has undermined it.... Growth of things under it...."

"Yet why should it have happened exactly now?" asked Stella.

"It had to happen somewhen."

"But *now*!"

"It's still a lovely mass," said Gemini, and obliged himself to lay hands upon it and feel its smooth massiveness. "F eel it, Stella," he said, and she obeyed.

"It is our block more than ever," he said. "It has given itself to us. It has taken possession of us. It has made its appeal. This is our sign. This is our recall.... Recall? Let us stay here just a little longer."

"No," said Stella. "Now I want to go."

"I feel I can't leave it."

"It won't move again."

"It will never rest again."

"Somewhen," said Stella abruptly, "we must eat."

She looked at her watch and her voice sharpened. "Do you realise, Gemini, we must eat. It is a quarter to two. I remember we asked Mrs Greedle to do her best for us — at one sharp. The thought of that gives me a feeling like a whiff of distant onions...."

They went through the weeds to the gate of the little orchard upon the lane; they went slowly, and they kept on looking back.

Stella wanted to get away from the block. Gemini wanted to remain. If suddenly it had moved again towards them, they would both have been terrified excessively but not in the least surprised....

"What's come to them punctual stummiks of yours?" thought Mrs Greedle.

They ate, they had a siesta in each other's arms, they went for a walk in the woods behind the house, but that sign and miracle now dominated their thoughts completely. Theirs were by habit and nature the most sceptical and realist of minds, and yet neither of them doubted in the least that they had been definitely told to get on with an essential duty. All the time they felt that block of alabaster pursuing them with its implacable question of what they meant to do about it. It had been a symbol before; now it was a living obligation.

“Even honeymoons have to be rationed,” said Stella. “A year ago we were King Prig and Queen Prig deciding just what we meant to do to the world. Now, before you go off to your mine — sweeping and I go back to my nursing, let us see what we can save out of those magnificent intentions of ours. We promised things to that block and it has taken us at our word.”

In the woods up behind the cottage all the felled trees had been cleared away, and they sat and talked to each other, sitting on two adjacent stumps and feeling as though even sitting in the woods had now to be measured and kept under control. Much of the moss had been torn and disordered when those trunks had been dragged away. Black mud had been brought to the surface and had caked in hard ridges. Gemini looked round, trying to recall some earlier scene. “That smell of resin,” he said.

“I remember,” said she. “Yes.”

“I have been thinking over something you said — on that stile.”

She became attentive.

“Gradually my mind is being restored to me. Gradually, I say. In a rush rather. You asked if sex was a small matter, and I said ‘Yes.’ I pushed that question aside because still I did not want to face it. But I agree. Sex is the quintessence of life. The go in life is supplied by sex — somehow. The how and still more the why is another matter. The method of its intervention is enormously — infinitely variable. It isn’t logical and necessary by any a priori standards, but either through suppression or sublimation or elaboration or straight, clear and homely love, sex keeps us alive. I’m telling you what you know, Stella, and I understand now-everything. I did then, but there was still the ghost of the inhibition.... I do now understand everything. Stella dearest, you have brought me back to self-respect. You knew what you were doing and you did it. Thank you.”

“Simply my instincts,” said Stella drily. “Way I am made.”

“I know exactly what you wanted me to say on that stile. Forgive that last resistance. I love you, Stella. I shall never love anyone but you.”

“Say that again,” said Stella. “I love you. Say it again. You needn’t add the rider. Just say ‘I love you’....

“And again, Gemini....

“And again, dear Gemini....

“And don’t forget to say it again to me inside yourself, when you are running about the world. Gemini, I could cry and shout. But we’ve had a long, hard interlude, my darling. Life and death have pulled faces at us, very ugly faces. Anyhow at last we are together again.... Don’t come near me. *Non bis in idem*, Gemini, which means we won’t make love here again. No. But we don’t forget what happened here. We’re a whole year older, and we’ve learnt much. We were children and we’re near grown up now. We should be lovers now if every scrap of this sex that brought us together was banished from our world. Which happily it isn’t. You love me. Say that, Gemini. Stay where you are and say that again. And don’t add the rider, for that’s a mere promise.”

“I won’t add the rider. It would be a mere promise, and I am an evasive man. I love you, and that’s enough,” said Gemini. “I know I shall never be as straight and simple as you. How can I be? I am the child of two complex and disingenuous people. But I doubt if I can ever really love anyone but you. Nevertheless, I won’t swear that I may not stray. Even at this moment I won’t lie to you. But rest assured. I shall be faithful to you after my fashion. I shall be a brute sometimes, after the manner of the old man. You’ve never seen me churlish yet. I shall be. I hope not, but I shall be. The dark mood comes on like a dark night, and the balance of things vanishes. All one can do is to clean up after it as soon as possible. I am a mutilated mind — though Uncle Robert has done his best to put me together again. I may talk and scream when I am asleep, and maybe at times when I am not asleep. And in phases I shall be as disingenuous as dear Dione. I may step aside when life charges at me too grimly. I may dodge even if I do not run. But however I misbehave, however I shirk, whatever ugly streaks come up, whatever I do, or fail to do, I shall come back to you, sure of you. I shall always *mean* to be faithful to you. My love for you, Stella, is a part of me now like my eyes or my right hand. In that sense I am yours, Stella, as much as you are mine. But if *ever* you fail me...!”

“Spoken like a man, my Gemini. And I, being a female woman and my mother’s daughter, will always play for keeps. This is our way anyhow, and I am content. Let other people make their own

patterns to suit their own needs. This is ours. Say you love me again, Gemini."

"I hope to go on saying it in a thousand ways for all the rest of our lives."

"Variations on a theme by nature. See if you can bore me, Old Gemini. Begin. You needn't ration *that* stuff. Don't filter it. I like it crude."

They looked at each other with grave affection.

"Stella! There is much to be said against your mother, but she did choose a good name for you. You are a star. You shine clear and you are there still, even on a cloudy night, even when the dusty daylight hides you. You have a trick of steadfastness.... It isn't all Kentlake blood in you. He gave you a lot to be thankful for, but not quite that. There is a blessed touch of stupidity in your steadfastness, something uncritical. Whether it is below reason or above it, I do not know. You're wiser than any old star and you're young and childish and feminine.... Yes, you are.... And at times you are going to be a very obstinate and difficult woman to deal with.... And what is more exasperating, sometimes you will be right, absolutely right."

"How well you talk, Gemini. How well you talk, and how well you can play the lover still. Come over and kiss me now. Yes, my dear, so, and put your arm about me like this, and now go on talking, close and friendly, your face near to mine, cheek by jowl, as we go down the hill. That block of alabaster.... Interpret our parable, my dear. What of the block of alabaster, Gemini? Come back to that. Expatiate."

5. POSSIBLE PATH IN THE WOOD?

"That block of alabaster. Well — .

"When we were taken by that fancy, last year, I am convinced we were taken by something altogether good for us. For our particular little minds. For us. It was a freak of imagination like a lucky pet name, but it fitted with all we were trying to get square in our minds at that time. Out of this bloodshot world there *is* a world to be carved. But we didn't realise then, as we do now, that if the right

world is not carved out of this living block in a reasonable time, it will be sentence of death for everything that has made life worth living so far as we are concerned. We didn't know then that the block wouldn't wait for our convenience. We know now it is, 'Get on with the block' or extinction. We were feeling that already this morning. Even before we saw it turn over."

"We were. And if we do not do something the block is demanding of us, you think-extinction? Really extinction? It's a strong word, Gemini."

"Extinction of all we care for anyhow. Either we make the thing we desire out of it, or presently something else will happen to it. Some blind force will come upon it and smash it. It may be built into a wall or hammered to bits as road metal or broken up for a rockery or a crazy pavement by someone who has no sense of what it might become. We two want to save it for our own dream. We don't want a downfall of mankind. No. What will it matter to us that some crippled outcome of man's seed, hobgoblins and fairies, Morlocks and Eloi, emerge at the other side of this great débâcle? If *Homo sapiens* fails in his promise, then I do not care whether it is *his* degenerate descendants, post-human monsters, Olaf Stapledon's *First and Last Men*, or whether it is totalitarian ants or rats or mice or what not which come next in the succession. Fate may override us in the end, but that is not our affair. I am for that *Homo sapiens* who is my quintessence, who is everything I desire and might be, living in this world as I would have it....

"I can see a world before me, Stella, as full of peace, order, beauty and variety as a well-kept garden, and as full of life, freedom and energy as — there's nothing with which to compare it. All that is still latent in the block. And still it will be Man's world, our world, far more than this world of to-day. Because you see, Stella, eye hath not seen yet, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what this world might be like were every human being in it fed and lovingly educated — well educated — educated out of its inferiority complex and its spites and arrogance — and put to the job in which it could realise its powers. There is scarcely a human being alive now who couldn't do something well, if you could find the thing for it to do, and presently, when maybe the creatures are more

deliberately born, though there will still be infinite variety, there will be no longer anything you will be able to treat as all — round inferiority. The possibilities of breeding and bettering men that are coming within reach of us.... They stagger my imagination. Some things....

"I got a paper the other day from an American called Stephen Zamenhof, a paper with scores of references to other writers in the same field and the gist of it is, the entire possibility of affecting the texture and quality of the human brain, multiplying its cells, making its fibres more delicate, by prenatal injections. No need to wait for eugenics. We may soon be able to lift the human intelligence long before the human individual is born. Dozens of careful, intelligent men are working on that possibility.... Think of a thing like that. And we haven't begun even to experiment with what can be done with the modern resources for education. We can neither see nor hear nor count nor reason as we might do. We can put knowledge anywhere, now, ready for use. We can show and store and record and discuss and clean up in a way inconceivable-even in our fathers' days. Mankind is crawling about in a state of brutish stupidity, with its head in the mud, blowing bubbles under the filthy mud, while the heavens are opening about it....

"Now that life has come back to me, now that my pride is restored, all these things are not merely possible; they are imperative. We must realise them whatever it may mean in the way of a light. For, after all, I know it now, as though I had never forgotten it; what is life for but a fight?

"The starveling vermin we are, Stella; we are no more what men can be, than a lump of wet clay is like line porcelain. That means you and me, Stella darling. Do you remember how we talked in the lane last year — it is all coming back to me — and how we agreed that we were a very exceptional couple, very, *very* intelligent and privileged?"

"I remember we said we were privileged and that we had to do something about it."

"No, we said we were damned clever. I'm positive"

"Also."

"Perhaps also."

“We were very young. We were nearly a whole year younger. Eleven months anyhow. A little more. We were a very conceited young couple.”

“Perhaps, Stella, we were a little wrong about our outstandingness. Conceivably, there’s quite a lot of young people all over the world, not so very inferior to us, possibly some of them a lot better than either of us, but like us. All over the world there are still civilised homes turning out the class of emancipated student minds to which we belong, getting the same sort of outlook, reading the same books, staring now at the world — with the same amazement. The things we have to face, they have to face. The risks and the suffocation. Are they going to think so very differently from the way we do? Are they going to do anything so very different from the things we shall do?

“The nearer we average out with those others, the nearer we may be right. We’ve got things right for ourselves, perhaps, and still there may be a lot we have got wrong. Their individual accidents may be endlessly different from ours. They may find quite different ways in getting a vital drive out of sex. How are we to know? It’s our luck that the vital drive falls in with our ideas of purpose. It isn’t the universal rule. Sex drives you into action, but there’s no reckoning on the sort of action it may drive you into. We can’t get anywhere without that urgent motor, but it’s our affair to see that it takes us where our intellectual conscience wants to go. That was a good book of Philip Jordan’s you sent me, *Say That She Were Gone*. Love as disaster. But when we’ve allowed for casualties of that sort — and even the man in that story did some effective work on the right side — there is going to be a lot who will travel our way, or nearly in the same direction, and have their friends and lovers with them to sustain them....

“Quite apart from all that, there’s something else I have in mind, Stella. It’s impossible that there isn’t *some* slant and *some* disproportion in our particular interpretation of things. But — listen! — this is very important. We two may do a lot and yet get it a little wrong, and all those others, all of them, Stella, may get their ways of spending life a bit wrong. Nevertheless, if we and they do our damnedest to get things right, that won’t matter....

“No, don’t interrupt. I tell you it won’t matter. Matter to us perhaps, but not in the scheme of things. We may fail in whole or in part, that’s what I want to say, and yet what we do — if we do it as right as we know how — may be the thing we ought to do. We may fail altogether as individuals, and every single one of us may fail, and yet the accumulation of what we do may be a success for mankind. What does it matter even to us, what becomes of us in the end, so long as we play our part?...

“What’s our formula? What’s the formula for the likes of us? Face our block of alabaster, so lovely and ambiguous and misshapen, and dream until we dream it plain and clear, and then set about carving it out without haste and without delay.... Never live to see it! What does it matter? I see it now. It’s our world. Full of weeds it is, like that parson, and full of nettles like my father, wit.h that stone of promise, that block of may-be, throwing itself down upon them at our feet. We may fail in a thousand ways, my dear, but that is not saying it cannot be done and that it won’t be done. Not in the least, Stella. Not in the least....”

Discoursing very bravely in this fashion, Gemini, with one arm about his Stel1a’s shoulders, and leaning upon her, and his free arm flourishing, came limping down through the trees to the garden gate behind the cottage. The sky was warming towards evening and the air was full of Mrs Greedle at her savoury best.

“It was here,” he said. “It was here we said — I remember the words— ‘We dedicate ourselves to the free and fearless world state.’ Not a year ago. ‘Mizpah,’ too, we said....”

“I remember,” said Stella. “Every moment....”

She was unusually silent at dinner. And after dinner, they strolled up the lane in the warm twilight. They said very little for a time. The rustle and stir and squeaks of hedgerow life went on unheeded. At last Stella came out of her brooding....

“Gemini,” she said; “you’ve set my brain fermenting.... I’ve got the broad magnificent idea. But that’s all. There’s a gap. For a time you will have to go on making it real to me until you smooth me down to belief and confidence, which I haven’t got yet. Dear windbag, full of courage now, you have to come down to my level. You have to talk real. Dedicate, *how*? Tell me what have we to get

up to to-morrow. Exactly. Tell me the sort of life we are going to lead. You talked some considerable drums and trumpets coming down the hill and you set my feet marching. But are they marching in *fact* or are they marking time? I want to feel more sure than I do about the way we have to march."

Gemini said nothing and Stella went on.

"Do you *really* see a path in this darkness, Gemini? Which way do we go from here, Gemini, day by day and year by year? You, with your head in the air, and I, with my feet on the ground. Is there a path? I shan't sleep to-night until I feel sure I shall wake up in the morning with something to do and somewhere to go. Is there a path in the dimness or are there just beautiful delusions of paths? Carve our alabaster! It's fine. We have come back to that after a year in which we have surely learnt many hard things? Carve our alabaster. Gemini — what does that mean?"

There was a long silence, broken only by the slow swish of their feet.

"I wonder," reflected Gemini. "*Am* I a gas-bag?"

"You are," said Stella. "It mustn't discourage you. There are endless cars get about now by using gas-bags. Haven't you seen them? We can't move anything without gas of some sort...."

"As bad as Balch for example?"

"My dearest — damn your *amour propre*! There's a lot of Balch in all of us. You know perfectly well what I mean. You know perfectly well what I am asking you to do."

"I *said* I was in for a henpecked life."

Stella threw away her cigarette and stuck her hands deep into her jacket pockets.

"Will you never talk common sense to me as one man to another? Will you always keep up this damned flirtatiousness in the wrong place? Whatever I do?"

Gemini was silent for a moment.

"You're perfectly reasonable," he said. "I am still lazy-minded. I am still, as Uncle Robert said I was, evasive. All the same, I have ideas. I have ideas, and they are taking a more and more definite shape. They bubble and multiply. But I'm putting no urgency into it. And I ought to do so. About this world hidden in the alabaster

now....”

She waited.

“I Balched a lot this afternoon about the things that Man could do now.... All and more can he done, if only.... It is just that ‘if only’ I have been leaving unanswered.... I used to think these things would really come of themselves and that we should be carried along by the stream, cheering things on and pretending we were steering them. That has always been the weakness of the progressive liberal. And people of my temperament. Belief in inevitable progress is the end of progress, and so thank God for good old Belloc, who has always kept that under our noses. We know better now. There is no automatic progress in things. None at all. Progress is here for the taking, but it’s not a free gift. I know now that this world of our desire will never come about unless men — no, *we* — make it come about. What are the chances of that great world of Man ever coming about? And how?”

“Yes. And how?”

“And how?” he echoed, and contemplated the sprays of the hedgerow silhouetted black against the deepening sky. The air was perfectly still. Not a leaf stirred.

“I’m not going to say to-night,” he said, “whether you sleep or whether you don’t. Because, as you feel — I’m not ready for it. I ought to be. Give me a day or so. I am going to think out a full and proper answer to you. I’ll do it properly. I’ll arrange my facts. I may even make notes. And then I will deliver a discourse to you — without the faintest flavour of Balch in it. I promise. There shall be no signs and symbols. No rhetorical evasions. I’ll talk prose, dear Conscience. For Conscience is what you are—”.

“Listen,” said Stella suddenly....

“Anti — aircraft guns,” said Gemini. “Out at sea....”

“*That* was something bigger....”

“They may have been bombing a trawler.

“Or they may not. It’s no good meeting the war halfway. It is going on now like railway accidents or a pestilence. If it gets us, it gets us. We were talking of something more important. What we two ought to get to work upon — straight off from now. I’11 put it all in order for you, I promise. And for myself, Madam Conscience.”

Stella made no immediate answer. She shivered suddenly.

"Let us go in," she said. "The nights are still chilly."

They turned back towards the darkened house that had glowed so warmly and confidently upon the world the year before.

6. Hope And Plan For Living

Stella left the main issue alone for three days, and meanwhile they talked of various subsidiary aspects of the world situation. Gemini was mindful of his promise. The day had turned to rain, and after dinner he lit the fire in the main room, whose familiar picturesqueness and dancing reflections from glass and brass, had still to be subdued to Stella's austerer taste.

She sat down in the corner of the settle from which she had listened to the Cadi of Clarges Street eleven months before, and Gemini took his stand before the crackling twigs.

There was still, she thought, a resemblance between father and son, if only in their dialectical mannerisms. Argument was in their blood. The shape of the two minds was the same, even if the ideas had been turned inside out. How obstinate is inheritance! The magisterial Twains. What case, she thought, had the Cadi's father argued, and the Cadi's grandfather? She had a momentary vision of a long gallery of Twains standing before a succession of period fireplaces and laying down the law, up — to-date. A Roundhead out of *Hudibras*, disposing of Hobbes' Fascism and the Fifth Monarchy Men, all in one sweeping allocution, and a bearded Twain in a long ragged embroidered robe, dealing with the hopeless outlook of those Wycliffites, Hussites and Lollards, were particularly distinct....

"And now I'm going to tell you all about it," said Gemini,

"as I promised. I've thought over what you said, and I will tell you just as plainly as I can exactly what you and I have to do. It may surprise you a little — I don't know. But I must develop my case in its proper order so that you will see exactly what I mean. You mustn't object till afterwards."

Stella nodded and refrained from saying, "Silence in the court."

And this is how things looked to Gemini on the very eve of the German invasion of Holland, with the hawthorn coming into flower.

"I think," said he, "we are very much of a mind about what is happening now. We and everybody. We needn't discuss that. No

man in his senses believes that Hitler and his Germans can do anything that will amount to a decisive conquest of Europe, and that is their modest ambition. They keep no promises; they love destructive enterprises. They have no stabilising ability. They have burnt their boats; there is no making peace with them. They cannot stop; they must go on with it now, and failure at a climax of smashing, must be their end. They've smashed into Norway and Denmark. We may wake up to-morrow for the news, and find they are in Holland or Belgium or Hungary or Roumania. It's like a homicidal lunatic at large. This war is our immediate reality. It hardly lets us see what is beyond it. So long as the Germans drive, we have to go on fighting. But no one believes that this amazing pro-Nazi government of ours will do anything but break up what is left of our poor old Anglican Empire in the conflict. Indeed the British Empire, except as a political hallucination, has gone already. The Statute of Westminster dissected the body. Sunk by its Chamberlains, with their incurable monopolising instincts. When Joe determined to put a tariff round it, he set a limit to its growth and started its decay. Neville is just trying to do a trade with the enemy for the ruins. That great liberal Empire that linked the world half a century ago, can never reappear. That Empire of the open hand closed up in an impossible *Zollverein*. There has to be something greater now than any Empire, or there can be nothing at all. On all this we two are agreed.... Yes?"

"M'm," said Stella.

"We agree further that the rough shape things must take now is a steady disastrous extension of the war, world bankruptcy, world exhaustion. Somehow the stage will be cleared of this silly Chamberlain-Halifax-Goering-Hitler first act. It's none the less a petty and silly story, because it is an enormous bloody mess. New faces will take over the fight. Possibly there will be a technical victory for the Allies — whoever the Allies may presently be. There will be a sort of victory by exhaustion over Aggression. But it may be a very close thing this time. It may be much more like a deadlock between chastened antagonists, sorry they ever began. The British Empire, we discover, has made tremendous advances in incompetence since 1918. In the hands of this we'll now, it is hard to

believe it is any longer a Great Power; it looks far more like a loose, silly, big Power, like China under the old Empress. It is as ungirt as America. It may wake up presently-but why doesn't it wake up now? Why didn't it wake up about Abyssinia, about Spain, about Czechoslovakia? It will come into any settlement shorn of most of its prestige.

"Even such radicals and cosmopolitans as we are, feel a patriotic ache about that, although we have to realise that so things have to be. Cosmopolitan we are by conviction, but English at heart. We were born to love this land of green lanes, and hitherto we have both cuddled the thought that the English would at least play a leading part in re-making the world. Still the truth is the truth! and Old England as a world leader seems a vanished dream. Nor will Marianne be in a position to act the vindictive hostess this time.

"France and Britain had their chance of making a world peace in 1918, and they muffed it. They let the Foreign Offices and old-fashioned semi-big-business and His Majesty George the Fifth, steal their peace. A lot of good our majesties and merchants and mandarins got out of that! They hardly needed to make a fool of President Wilson. He volunteered. He came over to Europe eager to take his wife to Buckingham Palace and score off the Republican Party. All that is history now, gone beyond recall. The world was full of hope in 1918. It was fobbed off with the League of Nations, which blocked everything and did nothing. This time Britain and France will have to sit down amidst quite a number of interveners. Another Armistice, but I doubt if *this* little George will block the streets of London with a Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's making out that he and God and the Archbishop of Canterbury were really the blokes who settled the affair. This Armistice will be something more explicit. It will be a different sort of Armistice altogether....

"I doubt if it will be made up by the actual combatants. It will be discussed first through neutral countries and it may even be — almost imposed by neutral action. You can't prevent discussion going from land to land nowadays. No censorship can stop that.

"About the end of the war. It seems impossible now to call off the fighting until the Germans are exhausted, and something like a general disarmament is agreed upon and provided for. It is not *our*

choice that; *they* won't let us. How can you trust Germans any more so long as they have arms in their hands? And the return of the evacuated populations has to be not only stipulated for but arranged for. Before we leave off. Treaties aren't good enough. And there will have to be immense social reconstructions. Money is going bust. Both sides will have to come together upon that much, before this war, as they call it, can end. Anything short of that will be merely a pause for another Nazi surprise. The Armistice will be imposed by necessity on both sides. Until there is some such fully implemented Armistice prepared, how can this lighting stop? It may ebb for a while and then break out again, but there can be no other ending for it. So that a lot of the terms of the Armistice will have to be discussed and settled-through neutrals perhaps, and in all sorts of roundabout ways —— while the fighting is still going on. Maybe America may formulate these conditions. Maybe America — and Russia — have you ever thought of such a combination?-may insist upon them. Neither dare permit a Germany rampant. Then they must cooperate in holding her down. We shall get what some bright lad has recently called a war-welded federation of the combatants and the interveners, quasi-victors and quasi-vanquished, in the guise of a great tangle of special world adjustment commissions....

"That too has become plain common sense — quite recently. Suddenly it turns up here, there and everywhere. New and yet obvious. Europe is being bled down to pale reasonableness pretty rapidly. We could have the best part of the world under international commissions in quite a short time if it wasn't for the inertia of the old politicians. In two or three years at the outside. That is the most probable way out and the most possible and the most desirable. Unless this break-up of the world into a slaughter scramble is to go on indefinitely, there must be" — he ticked off his international commissions on his fingers— "an effective disarmament commission, a reparation commission, an international commission for the restoration of the displaced populations, an air and general transport commission, and a commission for the restoration of production by some readjustment of money and barter, all in operation quite soon. Their work, once it begins, may stretch over years....

“Is this asking too much of the human intelligence? At its present level? I don’t think so. One world-wide federation there certainly must be after this war, and that is a federation to put an end to air-war for ever. Plainly that must stop, or civilised life must stop, and the one and only way to stop it is to set up a world commission with full powers to control the air everywhere, powers of search, powers of instant suppression. No single country can be left out of that. If necessary countries must be compelled to come in. And no simple treaties or conventions will meet the case. There will be no more treaties because there is no more good faith. The air commission must be a commission with full powers, a world air-police. All over the world reasonable people and common people will be in favour of that. Patriots may object, but even patriotism may be out of fashion in a little while. And once you federate so far as the air goes, you can add other world commissions quite easily to the bundle of delegated powers. All that, we can get out of a properly conditioned Armistice. We can get it in no other way. So I take it that is the way things will have to go.”

“What else can there be?” said Stella, blinking at the cheerful uprush of the fire.

“What else can there be? Utter disaster. Even countries that keep neutral right up to the end will insist on having a finger in this. It is a universal concern. They will all be under arms. They will all be entangled economically in the war. They will all have to join in with these international commissions. Inevitably they must. If not, we must all become troglodytes listening for the air-raid warning. You see the idea of a sort of Standing Armistice? Discussed beforehand. Put into operation at the cease fire. The longer those inevitable international commissions stay in being and the more extensive they are, the less disposed reasonable men will be to part with them, and the more effectively will they block the way against the old order, or the old disorder, sneaking back to its outworn localisations and appropriations. Putting the settlement in the hands of international commissions will save the faces of the combatant governments, and it will satisfy the immediate need for peace and reorganisation as nothing else can do.

“How else can they get back out of this world mess? How can

they dodge such an obvious settlement? Saving face is always important in old, decaying complicated states. All the sovereign states will be able to declare they are still independent sovereign states, except in so far as these international commissions go. They can keep all their Bags and dignities. What will that matter for the time being? We are only beginning to realise how far these commissions may be able to take us to a world-wide collectivism in raw materials, industrial distribution and so on, in spite of all such face-saving residues of sovereignty. It's not so very difficult therefore to anticipate the sort of peace phase that lies two or three years ahead. The nominal Armistice will be in effect a Peace Union.

"The World will become, for all essential purposes, a federated Union, so far as the functions of these commissions go, long before the fact is openly recognised. But the vision is clearer on the top side than underneath. What's going to happen to the under-dog in the future, and what's going to happen to free-minded, criticising people? And how long will it go on at that level?

"Who will be the people to run these settlement commissions? I think we have to get our minds clear about that. Will the present hard-faced business man grasp his opportunity and take control? He will have a great chance if he has the wit and ability to grasp it. He can say 'I know all about this practical stuff — about producing and distributing iron or cotton or food. I have this organisation here and the best thing you can do is to socialise it, socialise us — we won't mind — make our cartels and so forth world-wide — and leave me and my friends here in charge.' There you will have your settlement commissions ready to hand. 'Fuse us and use us. If not, you will have to break up all the vast network of the world's business and hand the broken fragments to politicians without any practical experience at all. As Russia did. With a vast and crippling loss of practical efficiency. Learn from Russia}

"He will have a case there, Stella. Will he make it? Typically I think that generally speaking he is too much of a fool and too mixed up with our failing, over-inflated financial system to do anything of the sort. He lives too much in the counting-house. He has been brought up to believe that successful greed is a sort of virtue justified. He is too blinkered, as Uncle Kentlake used to say, with the

social and political notions of the nineteenth century, individualism, dread of state control and all the rest of it. He does not understand the forces that produced him, and therefore he will not have the subtlety and capacity to adapt himself to the new order of things. He will come in, I think, to a certain extent. But disingenuously. He will resist and try to sabotage and discredit. He will be only one element therefore, and not the best element, in these controls.

"But he's not the only realist in the world. There must becoming out of business staffs and technical institutions — a lot of more or less trustworthy administrative experts available, men of the type of Sir Arthur Salter or Lord Stamp, who would be willing and able to bear the main burthen of the organising. They would have had some experience in handling the shareholder, the profiteer and the politician, but they wouldn't be eaten up by that side of the business. Few of them are really devoted to their shareholders. They would soon draw plenty of recruits and assistants from the managerial class in the big trade machines, from what people call 'idealists' and from a miscellaneous riff-raff of job-seekers....

"That's as much as we can say about the people who may be running the world before 1950. It's cloudy, I admit. We have our observations and suspicions, Stella, but neither of us has any profound knowledge of the social elements concerned. Young and bookish we are still. But plainly this practical Federation of the World by Armistice, this hushing-up of war by arrangement, which I believe is the major probability ahead, is going to produce a very imperfect world-organisation. It will be just a working organisation. And since we two can know about it only in very general terms, we are left still more in the air about what is going to happen to the happiness of the under-dog and the free play of the human intelligence — which are quite different things from each other, but which nevertheless have a common interest in maintaining the Rights of Man.

"There is this movement we hear about, to bring together all the Left movements of the world by a common Declaration of the Rights of Man. There was a fuss about it in the *Daily Herald* some time ago, and now it has died down. It is impossible to say as yet how far it may wake up again, and what sort of democratic corrective to hard,

ruthless, slightly disingenuous pseudo-efficiency it may evoke. The idea seems to be to make it the working credo of one world-wide popular front. One talks of the revolt of the Masses. Masses? I doubt if there has ever been anything of the sort anywhere on a larger scale than a city or a fairly uniform region. 'Masses' were always a local crowd. Anyhow the idea of Mass Revolutions nowadays is a fantasy. The Masses have dispersed and disappeared. There are no Masses of illiterates with a common sense of injustice any longer in the world. For all practical purposes now, the broad base of the human community is middle-class. Everywhere people read, everywhere books go, at any social level you may meet a well-read man. By mental standards even the workers on the dole are middle-class. Nobody now can tell how far the whole world may not be following what is going on, how rapidly a certain internationalism of understanding may spread and consolidate a world democracy, and how far that may exert a qualifying influence upon these coming world-controls....

"And here, Stella," said Gemini, putting his thumbs into his waistcoast pockets, lifting his chin, and so mingling a reminiscence of Uncle Robert with the manner of the ancestral Twains, "I have to digress into the question of human motives and what the liberation of man really means. One dominant motive plays about the human self-consciousness. It is a double-faced motive; it has its variations, but essentially it is the desire to feel right and powerful. Of all the psychoanalysts I think Adler with his inferiority complex, gets nearer the truth about the primary nature of this motive. It springs into existence with the idea of the Ego. It is part of that idea. 'I exist and where do I stand?' The discovery and the question arose together. Babies are jealous and assertive in their cradles." ("Bassinettes nowadays," whispered Stella.) "We want to feel masterful, we want to impose a recognition of our mastery over others. We are depressed and dissatisfied if we feel unimportant. This makes us all want to get on. It is the inspiring motive of ambition, competition, ruling classes, tyrannies. We want reassurance. Acknowledge me, we say. It is the chief stimulant of personal love. We conquer one another. Of course we do, Stella. It is that which has given mankind all the leaders, the kingships, the power and the glory through the ages. Against it the

vast multitudes of the unsuccessful light — and have fought since the remote beginnings of history. The unsuccessful are driven into revolt, into not very congenial associations for collective resistance, and into the consolation of sabotage and malicious mischief. Malicious mischief (such as the Communists cultivate) is the cheapest way of getting square with arrogance. You don't get anything done, but you relieve yourself. There's your Right and your Left, Stella, through the ages.

"But wait a bit! Between Bight and Left there's a Centre, which broadens out in tranquil times and narrows down in times of stress. Quite a lot of people in the world are neither crude power-seekers nor rebels. They get their sense of mastery in doing something they can do particularly well and in having that mastery recognised. That ought not to offend anybody. It does, but it ought not to. You get that sort of power satisfaction in the artist, the skilled artisan, the cultivator, the technician, the man of science. Other people again get their sense of mastery in the give — and-take of home life, in little snobberies and neighbourly showing-off. The children look up to Daddy at home and brag about him at school. So long as the aggressive types leave such people alone, this Centre can and does carry on without much social and political disturbance. I suppose one might say that the stability and soundness of a we'll is to be judged very largely by the preponderance of these little closed systems of satisfaction, by the relative size of its Centre. Am I being clear, Stella?"

"So clear that my mind runs ahead of you."

"I'll go quicker. All through the ages a social struggle has been going on, between the energetic, clambering, interfering, grabbing, aggressive, unsated types of mankind and the mixed resistance of the unsuccessful, the contented home-life people and the people who are satisfied with acknowledged creative mastery. Something has always been done about it; and all custom, law, religion and morality, formulates resistance to aggression. They are all of them organisations to protect the Centre. In stable conditions, a sort of general balance may be brought about, but with changing conditions dislocations are inevitable, and the energetics find new, unexpected opportunities of self-assertion. To — day we are living in a storm of

change. Abolition of distance, enhancement of productive and destructive power, release of human energy into unemployment or social wreckage.... We both know that story now. I won't go into it....

"Now all the great religions of the world without exception, Stella, without exception, have begun as revolts against oppression, and because normal satisfactions were being widely frustrated. All of them are revolutionary in the beginning. Moses, as Freud has shown, was an Egyptian driven into exile, who made capital out of the slavery of the Hebrews, Buddha was a bored Prince shocked by the nearness of death and decay, Christ was an evacuated child, born in a manger. The whole of history, the story of religion through the ages, the story, as Uncle Robert would have it, of the assembling human soul, is a history of the intensification and then the checking of aggression, and the ebb and How of the responding revolutionary impu1se — insurrection on the one hand and persecution

 and tyranny on the other. A half-triumph for the revolution has followed, a surrender and a compromise. That compromise, Stella, has always been a new religion.

"Wait a moment, Stella. Let me finish this.... We are living in one of the intenser phases of this thrust and counterthrust between aggression and revolt. The new revolution, the world revolution, is only just waking up. But it is waking up, while old and new grabbers fight among themselves. The power regimes seem so excessive now, because while they fight, they feel the revolt of reason in the air about them. They feel judgment gathering. It invades their consciences if they stop to think. Thinking, they feel, is qualification, that is, from their point of view, weakness. So they try not to think of anything fresh. They hurry on with the fighting, although there is no end in sight for them except defeat. They strike out, but they strike out blindly. They stick to their flags. They turn on their own people. They stifle every dissentient voice. So they fight on until their vigour ebbs. And these commissions of settlement, I take it, this Armistice Federation, must lie in wait for them as their vigour ebbs. They will give in at last ungraciously — muttering."

He stopped and looked to Stella for approval.

"So it may be," she said. "And so may it be.... And next?"

Gemini went on with his exposition.

"I want now to say something about the world of, let us say, 1960 or 1970. We must do that. The present signifies nothing at all unless we look to its future. We don't simply fight, we fight for something ahead. After this present nightmare of destruction, it is quite possible then that the atmosphere of the new dawn may feel-just a trifle bleak. We may discover in the half light the bare frame of a unified new world still wearing the rags of the old. It will be without a literature of its own, without any body of substantial thought, unless — .

"You note that 'unless'. I'll come back to that in a minute, but you realise that outside that rather vigorous but unattractive cosmopolitan administrative class we shall have over us, who will, of course, as a class, share the natural desire of all vulgar and illiterate humanity to feel and display and impose superiority, there will be a great number of people resentful at the régime because of that disposition, and anxious to get square with it. The natural response of the uneducated human soul to successful arrogance, we have agreed, is malicious mischief....

"I'm not sure whether Hitler and even some of those others about him aren't really to be counted as part of the revolt, as part of the revenge of the inferiority complex, rather than an attempt to construct a new dominance. They are so purely destructive. I don't know. I won't go into that.... No...."

Gemini hovered speculatively for a moment and then got back to his argument.

"I think we can reckon that the rationalising forces that will produce this first World Federation by Armistice, will have very nearly spent themselves before the eighties or nineties of this century. The leading spirits will be tired out or dead. The sort of people who will be running the standing commission for this, that and the other world controls, will be the equivalents of the rather hard, career-planning young men who go in for success in business or politics to-day. They will be energetic and fairly capable, but whatever touch of imagination may have leavened the original settlement will have gone. Unless — ... They will be finding new ways of achieving that nice superior feeling and letting other people feel it. They will be rather after the pattern of the leading Russian

commissars now, with their Lincoln cars and their dachas and their general atmosphere of privilege and authority. For a time they will sustain a phase of apparent stability. Then there will come a reaction — about 1970 or 80. The very success of the new order so far may encourage the reaction against it. People will see nothing but its strains, its imperfections and its inevitable abuses, and all the good it has done in abolishing the immediate spectres of war and social collapse, will be regarded as being in the nature of things.

"Remember, all the nasty little monarchies and churches and patriotisms may still be in existence,— 'mediatised' is the word — scotched but not killed, and fretting to come back. They will look harmless. They may have acquired a certain romantic charm....

"Unless we do something about it, there will be the same universities, much as we have them now, impoverished perhaps, the same weak, ill-equipped schools and teachers, the same thin trickle of information. Just as Uncle Robert denounced them.... It is impossible to imagine the people who will handle the world's general settlement in the immediate future, troubling to do anything about that sort of thing. They will patch up that pacification by those special commissions for settlement because it is the obvious thing to do. They will do all that because they will be obliged to do it. But their idea of a new world will be a minimum new world. They will leave just as much of the old state of affairs as they can....

"Let me tell you my ideas in the order in which I have planned them out. All that was prelude. Just a recitation of our views for you to O.K. It is a prelude that has rather overrun itself, and I see I'll have to put a stick or so more on the fire.... What was it came next? Ah! Yes.... What intelligent people have to realise, Stella, is that this world can be unified, just as much as it needs to be unified, by such a series of federated essential world-services as I suggest, without anything in the nature of a World Government or a World Parliament or a World President or anything of that sort ever coming into existence...."

"But," said Stella.

"Here, on this point, discussion lags behind the obvious realities. The state of the argument to — day is this; you can hear it constantly repeated; you must have a centre of power somewhere, which can

give decisions. Somewhere there has to be a *power* we'll for the whole world that will say 'Yes' or 'No.' Well, that's nonsense. There is no such imperative. It is a delusion that has survived from the slavish, servile, childish past. The real truth of the matter, as Uncle Robert would have said, is that in every eventuality, there is a Right Thing to Do." Gemini's voice put in the capitals. "If only you know it. If only you know the right thing to do, you haven't to obey *anyone*. That is the basis of the liberal idea. You have to know to the best of your ability, and do what is right.

"If you have a pestilence to deal with, for example, there are certain things that must be done. In a barbaric community, you can't get people to understand what these things are. They feel they are up against mysterious and malignant forces. They have panics. They accuse the Jews or people with red hair, or set-to upon the people who don't kow-tow to mumbo-jumbo and so have brought His wrath upon them. They offer up preposterously cruel sacrifices to the offended Gods. Even if the right thing to do is known by a few people, the masses need the strong hand, a dictatorship of some sort, to restrain their hysteria of uncertainty and force that right thing upon them. Or the wrong thing. They need medicine men to humbug them to save themselves. But an intelligent community is quite different; it has its information at hand. It can listen to explanations. It can do what has to be done, without asking anyone whatever to decide for it. The more it knows, the more it can dispense with power and enforcement. The more the administrators it appoints can be watched and checked. Is that sound, Stella?"

"'Greed," said Stella.

"The Right Thing to Do will be the real dictator for adult mankind...."

Stella nodded her head and remained critically attentive.

"One could say this was platitudinous if it were not that it is so universally ignored. Your dictator is an imaginary omniscient being in the minds of weak-willed people. As an alternative to omniscience, they call him an instinctive genius — as a lot of our pro — Nazis here call Hitler, which means that they believe he will always fumble through to the successful thing without knowing it. He is magic. He is their substitute, and an altogether disastrous

substitute, for organised knowledge and thought. From which it follows that the organisation of knowledge and thought in the world is the central and saving business before mankind....”

It took Stella some seconds to follow him round that corner.

“Go on,” she said to his pause.

“I have said ‘*unless*’ and ‘*unless*,’ Stella, and now I can explain — what you already realise (bear with me, Stella) — that that ‘unless’ is leading up to the particular thesis that concerns us most. I have said we have to know the Right Thing to Do — yes — but in a thousand matters there remains no right thing to do yet, because we have not the necessary knowledge and wisdom. That is the essential thing in the situation, and it is the thing the ordinary man is not even beginning to realise. The whole human outlook is dominated by the need for an immense revision, expansion, reorganisation of our knowledge-machinery and our mental and moral instruction. We have to bring that up to the new scale of life, and at present, and particularly here in England, nobody seems disposed to do anything about it at all.

“Think of the absurdity of this. We are daring to look forward to a world at peace, where an infinite variety of local peculiarities, racial localisations, climatic responses, will flourish within the network of the common world services. Necessarily it will be an order varied and subtle beyond anything that exists now. An order which is only possible therefore on a basis of knowledge and education such as only a few of us are beginning to realise is attainable. At the present level of education, mankind may blunder in and out of war, even snatch a few more decades of peace — as we are hoping-but it will not be able to get out of its staggering progress to extinction. Presently it will resume that. The primordial antagonism will reawaken under new appropriations and unexpected stresses, unless we anticipate them.

“It is going to be a hard saying for the Reverend Morton Richardsons of the world, but a new world, a new planetary society, has to have a new education on its own scale; it has to have a vast, ordered, encyclopaedia of fact and thought for its Bible, and a gigantic organisation not only of research and record, but of devoted teachers and interpreters, teachers by the million and priests and

confessors, medical and mental counsellors by the million, and not only priests, but prophets also to innovate and reanimate its idea. And it has, as a whole community, to be responsive and participating in all that immense cerebration.

"People talk of the new order as though religious structures were going to disappear. Of course they are not going to disappear. They have to be re-born upon this vaster scale. With a sounder philosophy and a clearer creed. Every ordered society in the past has had temples and priests and teachers to hold it together, and how can an infinitely more complex world-society expect to get along with only the outworn lumber of the old creeds to hold up its thought and behaviour? I ask you. Plainly it has to be permeated by a new consciousness, and it has to have and be a World Church, that is to say it has to have a unified World Brain and a World Will. Conscious of their functions. The vital job beneath the superficial political and economic commissions of the world settlement is just that, to embody this Religion of Knowledge and to put it in control of human affairs....

"Don't interrupt just yet, Stella. Don't jump down my throat with your ready understanding. Don't, above all, get ahead of me. You asked for this lecture, and you've got to have it in precisely the order in which I have planned to tell it to you. Or else I shall get lost in digressions. I've been thinking it out for three days. Maybe you've heard a lot of it before. I may have talked in my sleep. But I want to get it clear for myself as well as you. Let me go on just a little longer....

"Do you realise that the very hardest thing for anyone to admit is mental and under-nourishment? Much less will a man admit that his mind isn't fully capable of dealing successfully with all possible occasions. He may admit that he does not know something, but he will insist that his strong natural common sense, or the other things he imagines that he does know, make whatever he doesn't know of quite minor importance. In the whole scheme of things, this intellectual self — complacency, Stella, is the most formidable obstacle to man's escape from frustration."

"Uncle Robert," began Stella....

"Uncle Robert, I know, was always hammering away at that idea.

Plainly I am basing all that I am going to say now on Uncle Robert. He understood, he really understood, that he was an ignorant man in a thickly ignorant world. It was his role to insist upon that. It was continually in his mind. Other people might say it, but he knew it. He hated colleges and caps and gowns, degrees and dignities, dogmas and authorities and all the paraphernalia of erudition and teaching passionately, because he knew the miserable poverty beneath those pretensions. He could not see the whole system as anything but a deliberate imposture planned to exasperate himself. He underrated our common gift for self-deception. He thought all the big bugs of academic life knew themselves to be impostors. There was nothing for an intelligent human being to-day, he believed, but a passionate, aggressive, mental humility. Aggressive mental humility, Ste1la — a good phrase for his attitude. Eh?

"He realised that the very language he used was vitiated at the source, that philosophy had an impediment in its speech, that it was choked up now with scholarly affectation, and loved to hear itself lisp and stutter. He knew that such knowledge as mankind possesses lies scattered on the floor of this plundered and outraged world like a looted library, smothered in its own disorder. What he said to the world, and particularly to that part of the world which wears robes, orders, honours, crowns, mitres and suchlike-what he said, sometimes in this way and sometimes in that, was not only 'You ' don't know' but, with a continually increasing exasperation as his life went on, 'Damn you, you fools! You don't want to know. Why, in the name of all your cheap and idiotic Gods don't you want to know? If only for your private satisfaction?...'

"At the thought of a University Chancellor in all his majesty he quoted Swift: 'That such a creature should deal in pride!' And he was right, Stella. He was right. He knew a fundamental thing about the human mind, the hardest thing in the world to know, which is that it scarcely knows anything at all.... He felt that it scarcely exists as yet. He was trying to assemble it. He was trying to put it together, strand by strand. Just as reasonable people nowadays are beginning to synthesise a federal world peace, function by function. His surely should be called the Synthetic Philosophy, and not old Herbert Spencer's stuff...."

“In the future,” said Stella, “he said everyone would be a student all through his life and the whole world a University....”

But Gemini was off upon another tack.

“A queer isolated life your uncle led. *He* never found a Stella. There were things in his life we know nothing about at all. We knew him as a devastating intelligence, and that is all we know. He was eaten up by curiosity. Always he was plodding away to get at the reality of the human mind; what it was really, how it worked. And how it might work better. He seems to have divided his attention between the psychosynthesis of the demented and the psychoanalysis of the sane. Yet he too had to assume some sort of mental self-sufficiency. There was that *perspicacity* of his....”

“It was a sort of pose,” said the loyal Stella. “He wasn’t really self-sufficient. He pretended to be a seer in order not to call one an ignorant slacker.”

“Hm,” said Gemini. “I wonder. Nevertheless, he had a rightness.... And that, you see, is where you and I in particular come in. He *made* us two, very largely, he made us, and we owe it to him to get something effective out of his teaching. His life was a declaration of war at this pervading, this uncritical ignorance in which mankind is blundering towards irreparable disaster, but he was still only declaring war when he died. It’s we who have to go on with the war he declared. There won’t be too many people at the job at first, and it’s the most fundamental job of all.

“Because, you see, Stella, the one and sole *reality* in human life is mental. It always has been; it always will be. Our selves are the mental assemblage of our activities. Theology and worship, religion, philosophy, science, imagination, propaganda and teaching, are the essentials upon which all purposive action, all cooperation and material achievement depend. Violence and the forcible prevention of violence are both merely the realisation of ideas. A bomb is a whole complex of thought embodied. Of all human fools the man who shirks thought, despises ‘theory’ and fancies himself a practical man, is surely the biggest. He’s a detached bit of dementia. His actions are epileptic. To live is to think; to act consciously is merely thinking by action; there is no other living.... Agreed?”

“Obvious,” said Stella. “As Uncle would have said.”

Gemini paused. He flew off at a tangent. “Have you ever heard a more idiotic expression than ‘coming down to brass tacks’?”

“Never,” said Stella with conviction.

“And you know exactly what they mean by it?”

“It has a meaning.”

“Well, coming down to brass tacks, let me tell you as precisely as possible what I want to do now, and what you ought to do. I think my academic standing is good enough to get me some sort of chair or lectureship in pedagogy or social psychology or what not, so soon as the war is over, and then I shall be able to settle down and go ahead, and you, you would make the perfect head of a women’s college. Have you thought of that, Stella? Because I think you will have to. You can talk to parents, organise study groups of girls, try and evolve that powerful-minded type of woman that you can’t get by making them imitation men. Men’s education is still overshadowed by the traditions of monks, and women’s education is still overshadowed by men’s and ruled by spinsters.”

“We are going to have children,” said Stella informatively in parenthesis....

“I think we have to hear more from the mothers, Stella. And the whores. They have their role, Stella. There’s whores by degradation. I say nothing of them. But there’s whores by nature. They have a case. They have always been shouted down. They have never had a fair hearing. A distinctive women’s education and a distinctive women’s philosophy doesn’t exist. You have the generosity to be ancillary, Stella, in the old style. That’s my luck. But that’s not an end of *that* question....”

“It’s a digression,” said Stella. “Come back to what we two are going to do.”

“Well, when the mine-sweeping and the nursing are over, and this next breathing-space releases us from our bit of actual warfare, that is the way we two have to go. We have to start getting on to that road now, with all the time and energy the war will leave us. We can begin to-morrow. We will. My stiff leg isn’t going to hinder me in this sort of thing. What I have in mind, means lives of steady work and a sort of obscure eminence for both of us. It will take all the hard work, self-control and self-possession we can put into it. That class-

unconscious ?lite, on which Chakhotin says the salvation of the race depends.... We have to join up with that. We have to. Right away we can get to work. To-morrow.

"We ought to set about this business as though we were the only people in the world to do it. Presently we shall join up with others, but we cannot wait for them to come along. When we hear of them we will get in touch. For example, we have to begin accumulating names, addresses, quotations. We have to find out all that there is to be known and what is afoot in those various movements for documentation, for bibliography, for indexing, for all that microphotographic recording one hears about distantly and dimly. Or doesn't hear about. Then there is a sort of renaissance of Encyclopaedism going on, there's what you might call the de Monzie experiment, in France. There are feeble calls for that sort of thing over here too and in America. Why is there no proper response to them? The man in the street wants to *know* — acutely. Is it saturation with commercialism that stands in the way of any response? We know hardly anything of all that. People make passing remarks and go on to something else. It's nobody's business. Yet.

"What are these University Presses we hear about? They seem to print some scientific books, but they never attempt to produce a literature that would be educational for the mass of people. Have they no funds? Do the Tory dons ban them? Is the old drooling lecture and tutorial tradition too strong for them? Haven't they found the way to sell books to the general public? The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* was once quasi-academic. Why was it commercialised? Why is there no British or American de Monzie? Maybe there is, and we don't know of him. Is there such a thing as a Minister of Education in America? I don't know. You don't know. The handing-out of books is part of the world-mind machinery. But it seems to be the most fortuitous of businesses. For my own part I'd rather close ten schools than one good bookshop. Why don't the right books get to more people? Why is there a vast trade in pseudo-books; feeding the children with bran instead of bread? We have got to understand that. We have got to map its complexities.

"We ought to start a sort of private index, I suppose, to frame what we are doing. You probably did something of the sort for your

reading, and also for your addresses. I did. We have to make a digest now of all that stuff and keep it up-to-date.

"Then we have to go into the general psychology of the specialist and the don. How much is a certain conservative viciousness on the part of these types-unavoidable? I have a suspicion, derived from Uncle Robert, that whenever a man becomes what is called a scholar, he goes into a sort of rigour.... Does he? Can a mind be broad as well as deep? That's the sort of job we start upon, Stella. A preliminary study of the possible intellectual enlargement of the world. Hard work, and sometimes dull and toilsome work it is, and yet it will be heading towards — the most important thing in life....

"F or it becomes more and more evident that the one important thing in life is this business of thought and will which is going on in the brain. The life of a man pours up for realisation and coordination into his cerebrum. What is he but a cerebrum? Study, learn, teach and learn by teaching. Make understandings and more understandings. That is the reality of life for every human being. The only real mastery of life is knowledge and clear thought. All the present leaders of men , argue and write, and the quality of their thought determines human destiny. They make books and pamphlets. They make speeches. Thought and expression haven't the traditional splendour of inciting revolutionary crowds from a balcony, riding at the head of one's troops into a conquered city, being crowned in some vast cathedral, but when the bands have died away in the distance, when the flags and decorations have been taken down, and all the parades and processions faded back into insignificance, thought and expression remain the reality of history...."

He stopped short. He brought himself down to the level of brass tacks for a moment and then soared again. "Well, we two anyhow have to be rankers in this endless war of the mind. Last year we were adolescent Gods, and this year — how do we stand? Professor James Twain I shall be, and you, Mrs Doctor of Pedagogy Twain. What do you think of it, Stella? I think I've de-Balched our outlook pretty completely now. No heroics, but honest little polyps doing our best on the beginnings of that great mental reef, which may or may not, grow up to harbour-harbour? — harbour the re-fitting and reconditioning of the Hope and Will in man...."

He caught her tranquil appraising eye. He pulled up abruptly on the verge of a fresh explosion of metaphor.

"Well?" he said.

"This sounds all right to me," said Stella. "But what you say has a way of sounding right to me. And yet — you queer beast, Gemini! — you haven't thought all this out in the four days we have been here, since that block turned over."

"I've been putting it together as something that *might* be done, ever since I began to read and think again. As one might do a problem or a puzzle. With no belief that it could ever be done. And no particular desire to do anything about it."

"And now suddenly you intend to do this?"

"Now suddenly I mean to do it. I suppose I had to think that it could be done before I could think of it as something that has to be done."

"Hm," said Stella.

"And I suppose my hormones had to be put right again before I could think of it as something I want to do."

"And this is — you are sure of it — your programme?"

"For keeps, Stella. Honour bright, I mean to live for this. If we do not mean this, we mean nothing at all. This is what we mean."

She considered his assurance in her deliberate fashion.

"Yes," she said; "it is."

"And even," added Gemini, "if occasionally I relax my attack on that damned block of alabaster, there is not the slightest doubt in the world that it will keep on attacking me. Better to face up to it than to run. Do you remember how it swept down on us?... Seemed to sweep down?... What else is there to do, Stella? What else is there for our generation to do?"

"Nothing," reflected Stella. "Nothing whatever. Thank heaven." She sighed and stood up before him. "For us. Or any generation henceforth for evermore. 'World University,' he said. A world of minds awake. And now I think we can end this day and go to bed the sober grown-ups that we are."

She was moved to call him by a title she had never used before. "Dear husband," she said, and kissed him. He held her close to him. "Dear companion," he said.... The easements rattled. The young

couple stood still listening.

"Those guns," said Stella....

"Nearer," said Gemini.

"It sounded louder," said Stella....

For a moment or so some scar among his Warsaw memories winced in Gemini's brain....

"They will pass," he said. "All that will pass. We fight by the way. To get rid of a dangerous nuisance. It is not our essential business. Incidentally our world may be blown to pieces and we with it. That cannot alter what we are while we are alive, nor what we have to do."

TAILPIECE

So it was, set forth as plainly and completely as possible, that two very intelligent young people were living and thinking about life between June in 1939 and May in 1940. The accidents of their birth, training, and character had brought them into the closest contact with the latest and most penetrating thought of their time; and through all their mental exercises, they were responding to the primordial and inseparable urgencies of sex and self-assertion. Philosophy is a sign-post; it tells you the way but gives you no lift on the journey. The drive is the ferment in your blood. They desired and hesitated; they faltered and fought; we have told how Gemini went down and how he was restored to fight again. It was true that those distant guns were drawing nearer and that Stella had reason to shiver at the sound of them....

War was extending like a searching hand to grip them both.

That very night, while Gemini, after the manner of the magisterial Twains, was summarising his views and hers, in front of the dancing flames in Mary Clarkson's cottage, the German armies were pouring forward through the darkness to invade Holland and Belgium. They crossed the frontiers at dawn. The news came to our Babes in the Darkling Wood on the morning radio.

They went back to Cambridge that afternoon....

After that, for a time, the intense reality of warfare in the

foreground spread and blotted out their personal and philosophical interests alike. The ideas they had shaped floated above their preoccupied minds like the guiding stars of heaven in a night of cloud and storm. Gemini achieved his immediate project and got to a mine-sweeper, and Stella became a nurse, and very rapidly a trustworthy and authoritative director of nurses. Husband and wife met at rare intervals when he had leave. They scribbled letters to each other that were sometimes never sent and sometimes never reached their destination. The war, the struggle against destruction, became their one consuming reality.

The country was waking up, confused still in its mind, but roused at last to the inescapable need for fighting hard. That half-hearted "Fifth Column" government, combining strong pro-Goering leanings with an insufferable sanctimoniousness, that vague, weak government at which Gemini had raged with such apparent impotence, was replaced astoundingly by a new régime. The things he had thought so hotly and bitterly in the spring passed out of mind. Chamberlain became a fading ghost in the background, still gibbering self-righteously, and an invigorated nation pulled itself together under Winston Churchill and set itself single-mindedly to the suppression of "those marching and trampling Germans."

"The real truth of the matter," quoted Gemini, without quotation marks, in one of the scrawls that did reach her, "is that our people detest militarism and at the same time take to lighting very readily. It is nonsense to pretend the mass of people are unhappy. The country is excited and you can't be really unhappy when you are stirred up. This war is going to be a near thing for us all, and we like it. With a sort of grim excitement. The one dream of old Smithers, our skipper, is to 'do a bit on his own.' He feels he has never really lived before. If we come on a German cruiser by any chance, I'm certain he'll go straight for it. He'll chase it, and he'll keep banging away at it until we are blown into the air. And we shall be cheering him on, and who knows whether we shan't get away with it?

"That's all very well for the moment, Stella. But it takes us nowhere. This can't go on for ever. We talk among ourselves here about how things are to end, but when it comes to that we are all at sixes and sevens. Theoretically all our chaps want a world at peace.

But they discuss it half-heartedly, as though it was some sort of pi-jaw, and then they go and fondle the new gun we have been given. It's a lovely bit of machinery. They've never had their hands on anything so competent. Or so simple. Our dream is to bring down a raider. 'Blast that peace of yours,' they say. 'Let's win the war first.'

"Never will our people look forward. Now the bulk of them, I realise, don't want to. It's too perplexing. The peace — or anyhow the time for peace — may catch us just as unprepared as the war did.

"I have no fresh ideas about the peace. What I said that night seems to me now-just obvious. There is nothing more for me to say about it.

"I think I got the very essence of the matter for us at any rate, in that pompous little lecture I gave you in the cottage. I think I did shape the way out and the way things should and may go. But nobody will give a thought to that sort of thing now. I believe still in our vision of life and in Uncle Robert's synthetic philosophy. I don't think either of us will ever get very much beyond that in our ideas. What we have to realise most is that the sort of full, long-range life we want, has to look good and more believable, for everyone, if ever we are to get it....

"That's the practical hitch, Stella. If I have got any new idea, it's that. I mean, until you can give these chaps something as lovely and satisfying as they find this gun of ours — microscopes, observatories, stratosphere travel, apparatus for the photographic survey of the world, things that will make the rocks and waters of the earth, the sky above and the unknown beneath our feet, yield a sense of power to them, these rank and file men are going to enjoy war, far more than any peace they have ever yet been offered. What do we promise the common man here or in France or Germany or anywhere? Nothing but to go back on the street corner. We don't even promise them something to hammer. Are they likely to think seriously of peace, when peace has no other face than the face of a tepid bore? With the nobility and gentry scrambling back to all the positions of advantage and romping about with opportunity while the heroes, etc., are back on the dole. Allowed to look on again. 'I don't fink,' as we used to say. These boys just say 'Peace' because they've been taught to say it. They'll blast it when they get it.... Even if the world doesn't

need rebuilding from top to bottom, we ought to set about rebuilding it, carving it out and throwing it about, just for the excitement. Just to keep their souls alive....

"I tried to plan out a Peace by Armistice that evening. I've still got some notes I made. It seemed a good scheme to me, but I see nothing but an occasional out-of-date newspaper here, and I'm in the dark about what people are thinking and saying now. But it was sane, that idea; it was obvious; it would give mankind a last breathing space. Are they taking it up? Or anything like it? Shall we really get out of all this even for a time? Or is it just war and again war to the end of the story? I sit here scribbling with a faint pencil on a scanty scrap of paper. I cannot even make my shipmates see....

"Nevertheless while we live, our sort has to go on according to our nature...."

Stella had read as far as this when the bell at her elbow shrilled insistently. She read no more. She tucked away Gemini's scrawl in her pocket and took up the telephone.

"Another trainload," she said. "Poor dears! We must get busy. I'll come down right away."

THE END

ALL ABOARD FOR ARARAT

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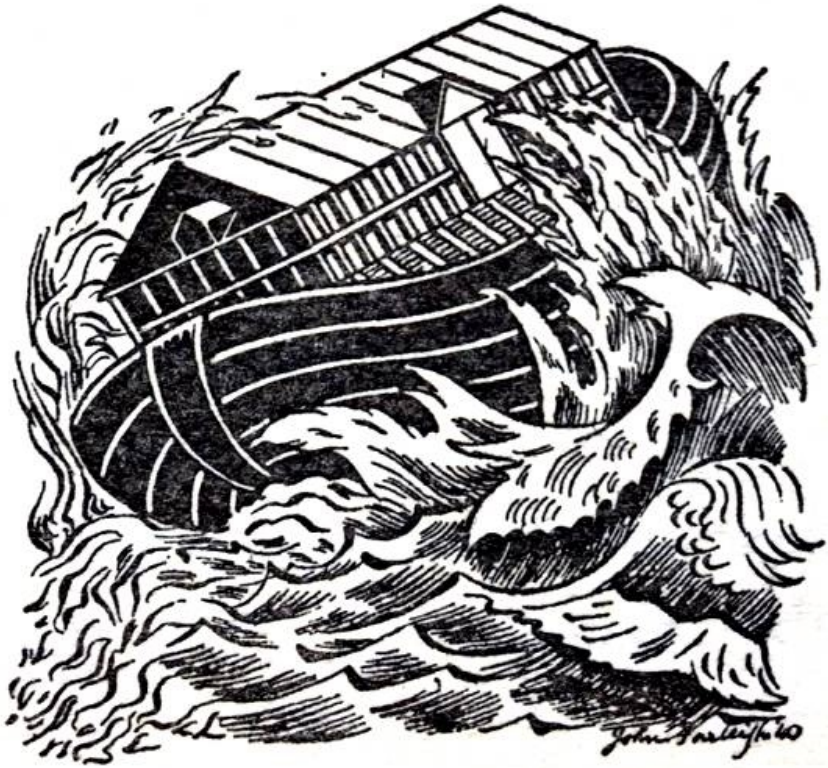

NOTE

All the characters, places and events in the preceding story are fictitious. This declaration is particularly necessary in the case of this book, because in the attempt to reproduce something of the academic atmosphere of our time a kind of parallelism to many academic realities has been unavoidable. Holy Innocents for example, where the story opens, is a college free from undergraduates and giving non-resident fellowships and so on, after the fashion of All Souls. It is a great convenience to have such a college in my story because I haven't much use for undergraduates in that opening scene. But the Warden and Fellows will be the first to exonerate me from any charge of libellous portraiture. The individualities are totally different. My characters are types.

CHAPTER THE FIRST

A SAD OLD STORY, RETOLD

IT seemed beyond dispute to Mr Noah Lammock that madness had taken complete possession of the earth and that everything he valued in human life was being destroyed. Courage, devotion, generosity, still flamed out amidst the tragedy, but they shone only amidst a universal defeat. They were given no chance. They were caught and smashed flat under tanks; they were machine-gunned from the air. It seemed scarcely to matter whether the old governments which sent natural trustful men into warfare, ill-armed and ill-led, and were ready to sell and betray them for a transitory respite, or these new governments of frantic aggression, which loaded poor devils with drugs and thrust them forward by the million to die, for no rational end at all, arrived presently at some show of victory. Nowhere was there any finality. Either way a vista of wars, oppression and degradation opened before mankind.

It had taken a long time before this conviction of a final catastrophe was beaten into Mr. Lammock's brain. His was an energetic and enterprising temperament, and he had lived most of his life in the conviction that a greater world order, a vast New Peace of universal opportunity and fulfilment, was unfolding before mankind.

Now it seemed that Brave New World of his was a distressful, dusty, hopeless refugee, pursued by inevitable death.

Intellectual apprehension had preceded conviction. He had said this collapse of humanity was coming long before he realised it was coming. Now he sat stunned at the truth of his own forecast.

"Men," he said, "have no will whatever beyond the range of their accustomed activities. The idea of a creative world in which man might be master of his fate, has never touched their imaginations. They have had a phase of good fortune and it draws now to its end. They must follow all these other creatures which have rejoiced in the sunshine of the past, the Deinosaurs and the Megatheria and the like, to extinction. Their sun is setting. There is nothing to be done. Only

those great beasts did not know, and this time, some of us know. And what is the use of knowing?"

To that he could find no answer. It was no good telling other people, if there was nothing one could tell them to do. Let them live out their little day until the final darkness overtook them. He carried on, with as confident a face as he could contrive, to hide the cold realisation of final defeat that closed about his heart. Maybe the end was coming, but at any rate it had not yet come. There might still be some idea....

But no idea came to him.

He sat at his writing table, writing nothing. He went into his study day by day, and sat there because it seemed to him to be as good a place as anywhere to await the end. He could divert his mind by no minor interest. Sometimes he was in a sort of coma; sometimes he found himself emerging from intricate dreams that evaporated tantalisingly as he awakened.

A visitor was announced, a most unexpected visitor.

"There is a gentleman downstairs," said Mabel the parlourmaid, "and he says he wants to see you personally. Something very private and important."

"Did he give a name?"

"I think, Sir, he must have got out of some place...."

"Yes, yes, but the name?"

"Well, Sir, he *says* He's God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth."

"Surely he exaggerates."

"It is what he said, Sir."

Mr. Lammock reflected. "Got a beard?"

"Quite a long one, Sir."

"Blue eyes?"

"Sort of glaring."

"Ah! How far's the nearest asylum?"

"I can look it up, Sir."

"Well, do so. Ask them if anyone is missing. And ring up Dr Burchett and explain things, get his advice, and say will he come over here if he isn't too busy. And tell the poor creature to wait downstairs — . I have trouble enough to keep my own wits without

having to deal with anyone else.... *Oh!*" They became aware that the visitor was in the room. He had entered unobtrusively and seated himself so noiselessly in the comfortable but upright arm-chair which Mr Lammock reserved for visitors that it was almost as if he had appeared there. He was large and elderly, with a careworn but dignified face. His extremely clean white hair was like wool. It was not true that his eyes glared. That was a touch of Mabel's. He had none of the distraught slovenliness of your common lunatic.

"Noah the son of Lamech, I believe," he said, in a grave, untroubled voice.

"Practically," said Mr Lammock, struck for the first time by the scriptural quality of his surname.

The visitor seemed to weigh his words before he spoke again.

"History, Sir, has a way of repeating itself — with variations. Always with variations. I noted your name in the directory. By accident. It struck me. It impressed me. I made enquiries about you. I have been hoping for a serious talk with you for some time. But I have been detained. Yes, Detained.

... What I have to say is — for a time at least — intimate." He glanced at Mabel. "Confidential."

"You need not wait," said Mr Lammock to Mabel.

The girl hesitated. She was a protective, maternal creature and did not care to leave her fragile, kindly employer with anyone who might behave queerly.

"Don't wait," said Mr Lammock again, and turned eyes of weary interrogation to his visitor.

Mabel, after a swift but effective scrutiny of the Almighty's essentially benevolent profile, decided to risk it. The door closed behind her.

For a brief interval Mr Lammock and his visitor looked each other in the eye.

"It is quite natural for you," said the visitor, "to assume that because I have recently been detained as — as an Incomprehensible, shall we say? — in a private lunatic asylum, I am *not* God Almighty. Quite natural. It is only gradually that you will realise I am. But you *will* realise that. I put myself under restraint, I may explain, quite voluntarily. I feel an extreme reluctance to wind up this non-

reversible time system altogether, and yet the pass to which things have come again.... Sorely tempted..."

He coughed and paused.

"There is a common form of mental disorder," he resumed; "especially among young men, called 'Tying Up'. You may have heard of it. They tie themselves up and often they are found hung or throttled or otherwise dead — by their own contrivance. I have done something of the same sort — on a much larger scale. I have tied myself up in this non-reversible universe of ours. I could end it all in an instant. Indeed, I repeat, I have been sorely tempted..."

"To destroy the whole thing?"

"Myself and everything. So far as I exist in time and space I am a part of this process. But I am essential to the process. I am its underlying First Cause. I have been called the 'Great, First Cause', but that 'Great' is a vulgarity. There is only *one* First Cause, myself. I'm afraid that brain of yours is not particularly adapted to what I might call supermetaphysics. So I won't explain. But if I decide to end, then I end, and you and everything end with me.

"Quite painless. It's gone. *So.*"

"Then why don't you end it?" asked Noah.

"I *did* end it and myself — just then. And now I've come back again and brought you all with me where we left off."

"I noted nothing," said Noah.

"Naturally."

"But it's all going on again. Why don't you end it for good and all? I would."

"Because I don't like being beaten. Because directly one gets going in a time-space system one doesn't like being beaten. *You* don't."

"I *am* very nearly beaten," said Mr Lammock. "I was sitting here, dead at heart already...."

He looked up, surprised at the things he was saying. What was he saying? He stared at the calm intelligence of his visitor's face.

Suddenly the conviction came to him that beyond all question this refined, white-headed gentleman *was* God Almighty even as he claimed to be. Exactly as the Bible presented him. Mr Lammock made one last effort against this conviction. He sought some

protective difficulties. There must certainly be difficulties. Ah!

"You say I am Noah the Second and that Lammock is just Lamech over again. That is all very well, Sir.

But — . For instance. There is practically no Mrs Noah, she left me years ago, and so far from having three sons, Shem, Ham and Japhet, I am childless."

"No man who writes with a sincerity as complete as yours, is childless," God remarked gently, and a trifle evasively, and would have dismissed that difficulty.

"But—" carped Mr Lammock.

"Writers, like many other organisms, the teleostean fishes, for example, cast their seed upon the waters," said God, "and it returns to them after many days. You need have no anxiety about that."

"I have not the remotest desire to see my wife again. If you mean that. To have her back in my present distressed state...."

"I will make it my particular business to see that she comes back *changed.* A helpmeet. Bringing her sheaves with her...."

"You don't mean — ?"

"Leave these details to me. For the first time for many centuries I have created angels and sent them off upon my business. To make enquiries. I would prefer not to give you details. I move in a mysterious way and I like to do so. There were difficulties of course...."

Mr Lammock's faith ebbed. This old gentleman was just an escaped lunatic after all, and nothing more. Making angels! For a time Mr Lammock considered he was merely humouring the old fellow until the asylum people arrived. Then by imperceptible degrees his faith returned to him. God took no notice of these fluctuations. He went on with what he had to say.

"When I abandoned myself, when I tied myself up by creating this Universe of ours, I deliberately gave up foresight, that is to say I made an initial proposition, launched it in time, and shut my eyes *immediately* to its implicit consequences. While I exist I am not omniscient. How can I be? Theologians have been very stupid in declaring I am. Vulgar uncritical glorification! It flies in the face of common sense. Omniscience is a static state. Manifestly when everything is present in your mind, nothing else is left to happen. It is

quite incompatible with the idea of a Living God. Life is finite. I wanted response. That is to say I wanted to be surprised. I *have* been. Surprised and — disappointed. — My original idea was of an immense responsive universe, with a delightful garden at the centre, pervaded by a sort of appreciative exaltation called love. Every creature was to have its reciprocating lover, responding generously. I thought that a particularly charming invention. I created Man. A bachelor at first. The story, I admit, is a little confused. People read their Bibles in such a slovenly fashion. You can hardly call it reading! They bolt the stuff in a state of pious awe. I do so wish they wouldn't. I *hate* pious people. I hate their abject prayers. Almost always they are mean demands for preferential miracles. Whenever I get a chance, I do them bad turns. I never, if I can help it, answer their prayers. Then they say I am *trying* them and they crawl more than ever. Where do they get these ideas about me? When have I countenanced any of these verminous saints? *Read* me. Read my Book. My Bible is fairly plain about it. If only people would read intelligently. The people I favour are upright men who *walk* with God. It says so over and over again. Not crawlers at his feet. Men who stand up.... Or anyhow men who looked like standing up. But never mind that. About this Adam. Male and female created I him, and also he was alone. That is to say he was a properly equipped bachelor. I wanted him to go about the garden world sharing my surprises. He did for a brief period...."

The Deity reflected profoundly.

"But is it true that you created the world, when was it? — 4004 B.C.?'

"Certainly. Why not?"

"But — !"

"Please do not say '*But*' like that. There is no difficulty about it at all. I tied myself up in a Universe in which things would happen. That is to say there had to be a future. This Universe in which I had to exist as the essential First Cause *had* to be a going concern. Well, think! A going concern. Directly I and the Universe came into Being and Becoming, in 4004 B.C., at that instant we brought with us, as an essential necessity, an illimitable past. How could it be otherwise? The trees had to have annual rings; the plants bore flower and fruit

and seed; Adam had an umbilicus. Implying a mother. Implying a billion ancestors. Have you never read Gosse's *Omphalos*? How could this Universe go on if it had not been led up to? This was the very first thing I realised about this time and space game. It had to be like that. It could not be otherwise. Or putting it another way, if I and Adam and everything were looking forward, there had to be all this behind us. I perceived a lot of things had to be cleared up, and the first thing I said therefore was 'Let there be Light'. My Bible is perfectly correct about that also. But what it does not make so clear is that immediately there was light, *I had a shadow*...

He was silent for awhile.

"Always," mused God. "There has been that shadow....

"That," said God, "is what your philosopher Hegel is fumbling about when he says that nothing can exist without its contradiction. And since I had come into our Universe as a Person, it is evident that my shadow also had to be a Person."

A touch of genuine irascibility ruffled the Divine Serenity. "And a damned troublesome person he is, in the fullest sense of the words. The whole story of the Bible from the creation onward is the story of the frustration of all my good-will and generosities towards Adam, by that — . Um."

He paused on the verge of a stormy outbreak. His expression became stern and imminent. There was a sudden clap of thunder and a flash of summer lightning, and the atmosphere grew calm again. "That unpredictable and unspeakable consequence of myself," said God, evidently much relieved.

"Exactly," said Noah.

"That is why I hate to end the whole business until I have fought out this with — my shadow," said God.

"We are in your hands," said Noah.

"There he was always at my elbow with his confounded refrain: 'But if you do this, then it follows—'

"That Happy Pleasure Garden lasted no time. If everything was going on, he said, everything had to go on to something else. You couldn't have repetitions without variations. I had to admit that was sound. 'Fresh every morning is the love,' says one of your hymns. It has to be. All these forward-looking creatures couldn't go on

caressing and delighting in each other without some objective. They had to carry on to something new. They had to have expectation and justification. They had to beget.

"I found my Garden was in for procreation before I had time to turn round. 'Love,' said I. 'Then sex,' said my shadow. 'They must grow, produce energy, recuperate, crave and eat.' I made my purring carnivores and hardly had Adam stroked them before they showed their teeth. I went into the garden in the cool of the evening — Those incessantly varying colour effects produced by breaking up the white radiance of eternity, the evening glow and the afterglow and so on, pleased me enormously — and I saw at once that my antagonist had been making mischief. A cat scampered past me with a bird in its mouth. I called for Adam and Eve, the woman I had made him to allay the restlessness of his desires; and out they came from behind some bushes, thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and wearing, of all preposterous things, aprons of fig-leaves!

"That really *did* make me angry. The bright little world I had made for them was, I saw, spoilt. I could bear with his critical destruction of my own ideas, but I found that going behind my back to them — and that they should be so foolish as to listen to him — *exasperating.* I had made my prohibition of what he called the Tree of Knowledge, so explicit.

I suppose I should have made an end to the whole thing, to myself and him and everything, there and then. But you see I had tied myself up in it all.

I was a Person up against a Personal opponent. I admit I lost my temper. 'If you must have it so,'

I said; 'have it so.' I cursed him up and I cursed him down, I cursed Adam and I cursed Eve, I cursed the earth.... I was really upset. Sin and death came into my scheme, and all your woe; no doubt to his great satisfaction.

"When at last I cooled off and began to relent, there was Adam, my poor image and protege, delving, actually delving, reduced in fact to the status of an ill-trained agricultural labourer, and his wife learning to cook and spin, expecting a child and very much overworked. Their children, naturally enough, were ill brought up and turned out most unsatisfactorily.... That was the end of Eden....

“So it went on,” said the Creator, beating the arm of his chair reminiscently. “So it has gone on. No sooner do I seem to be getting Adam on his legs again, than over he goes morally and materially like a ninepin. I become less and less of an Almighty Father and more and more like a skittle alley attendant. It is all in my Bible, all of it. I have concealed nothing.

“Taking it by and large,” said the Almighty, “that Book of mine is wonderfully trustworthy. You will never get a better universal history. I have written it from time to time and there may be, I admit, trivial inconsistencies. The statistics are loose, very loose; the ages of the earlier patriarchs and so forth are obviously in a muddle. You see, I have always dealt in general ideas, always realised, since every single thing is really unique, the underlying fallacy of counting. I treat figures with a certain off-handedness. And, believe it or not, no proofs of my book were ever sent me for correction. That does not affect the substantial truth of my Word. Not in the least. Nothing else comes anywhere *near* the facts about mankind. I ask you. You say it is preposterous and then you have to believe it. You perceive the little flaws, you doubt the authenticity of the text, very reasonably. Still the story remains fundamentally convincing. It has been twisted and tampered with. But nothing can destroy it. You see...”

The Divine countenance darkened. There was thunder in the air again. “*He* got hold of the publishers, translators, critics.... Who are, without exception, spawn of the devil. *You* have written books, Noah. *You* know. *He* gets hold of all of them.”

“Spawn of the devil; *don’t* I know,” said Noah.

“Since I made man in my own image how could I be anything but a very human God? How could I foresee that sort of thing? How could I know how they would humbug me about? From first to last my fault has been trustfulness. I am the Eternal Optimist. People say ‘God is Love’. Far truer, that God is Hope.”

(“But he’s charming!” thought Noah. “These theologians with their explanations do nothing but explain him away.”)

“Time after time,” said God, “I have tried to make a man of Adam. Time after time he has let the devil in his imagination get the better of me. I have experimented in this and that sort of salvation.

... I adopted a Chosen People.... I took up with Abram. I enlarged

him to Abraham. I was always changing people's names, and I realise now, with all this psychoanalysis and so on, how symptomatic that was. How was I to know the Enemy would get among the genes and produce that — that — well, Jacob?

"I had a gleam of foresight about that. There was something about Isaac I didn't like. He wasn't a patch on the old man. He was a most improbable son for honest Abel. I told this poor old man to sacrifice him and stop it all — and then you know I weakened and let him off. So Isaac lived — to become, in modem terminology, the putative father of two strikingly non-identical twins. You realise how unsuspicious I am. It is only later that I have thought out Madam Rebecca and her double-crossing son. She stole and lied. Well? Why should she have stopped at that?

"You know the tangle the lot of them made of my promise to Abraham. My Bible gives the whole dismal record. Each one of those Patriarchs has a wife, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, who doesn't at first give him a child until some questionable miracle occurs. Then he finds himself the father of a son who — well — doesn't match. You read it over. It's all in my Book.

"By the time my Promise came to Bethel I was in a complete Maze. I did what I could to keep my word, I confirmed that this Jacob's seed should be as the dust of the earth, and there they are! The Jacobim, the Chosen Race. I was never quite sure. I made him change his name to Israel as a sort of hint.... He was no better as Israel. The same mean proclivities.... Whether there is a drop of Abraham's blood in any of them is more than I can say. Later on the old man had a very good time with a young woman called Keturah. Now *they* were nice children; Midian and the rest of them. But the Israelites!... These Chosen People! The time they have given me! I sent them into Captivity. I brought them back again. I sent prophet after prophet to warn them and curse them. It was all no good. Then I tried the Messiah idea. Saul of Tarsus put that askew in a brace of shakes....

"So it has gone on.

"Time after time I have been moved to rub out Adam altogether in some immense, vindictive catastrophe, before sinking back into the mystery beyond being; and time after time I have left the catastrophe

incomplete. Someone has attracted me. Or something has restrained me. It has seemed to me that at last at the eleventh hour I had found a really upright man who could not fail me. *Now,* I thought, we shan't be long. I have said 'Let there be one more New Deal.' Just one more. Why not?

I did that with your prototype Noah the son of Lamech. I propose to do it with you. I was going to rain destruction upon the whole breed of *Homo sapiens,* I was going to flood and stifle the whole earth under a torrent of German mud, blood and Ogpu and have done with it. Then, quite by chance, I am struck by your name...."

"Yes?" said Noah....

"What I propose is that you should construct with my help and under my instruction, an Ark."

Noah was about to speak but the Almighty waved his objection aside. "Details will follow," he said. "What I propose is that with my help and under my instruction you should construct an Ark. An Ark that this time will be a success. Into that Ark we will put reproductive samples of every good thing that is in the world, beasts, birds, arts and crafts, inventions and discoveries, literature. Carefully chosen and carefully vetted. We will save all the living seeds of civilisation for a new sowing. Off we will go. And when this inundation of foul warfare is over and the stench has subsided, the Ark will rest again on another Ararat and out you will come, all of you, to a cleansed, renascent world."

"All of us?"

"You and your seed. You and your family. Your wife whom I have found for you, your sons, Shem, Ham and Japhet, and their wives and little ones. For the strange thing is that, under very slightly different names, practically all the family of your prototype are to be found on earth again. The coincidence is so remarkable, that the temptation to see how far the parallelism will go, is enough in itself to justify — ..."

"No," interrupted Noah, with an emphasis that seemed to startle even God himself, "you *don't. No!*"

"I don't?"

"You don't put that over on me. No! If you bring back that infernal woman, you may count your Ark *off.* I won't have anything

to do with it.”

“I never dreamt of this — this dreadful vindictiveness,” said God in a subdued voice, after a pause of astonishment “Possibly. But now you do. You know nothing about the real quality of my wife. You seem to know very little about any women, judging by your simplicity about Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel — to mention only three cases of more than doubtful paternity. Your own triplex personality is, I gather, entirely male. Since the Assumption of the Ever-Blessed Virgin matters seem to have mended a little. The old credulity — gone. Of the original Mrs Noah, of course, I have nothing to say. She has remained nameless and blameless down the ages. But my wife was a vain, restless, jealous exhibitionist, a dishonest and consuming woman. She was — temperamental to an extreme degree. She devastated three years of my life with taunts, insults and reproaches. There was no satisfying her and no pacifying her. She went off at last and I was able to divorce her. She made marriage so horrible to me that I have never tempted Fortune again....”

“My messengers tell me she is a lady of considerable intellectual activity. One or two of them speak of her admiringly.”

“How can an angel judge? Made to-day as an angel is, and gone to-morrow. She has literary pretensions. I should describe her as a woman of promiscuous pretentiousness. She belongs to literary societies and coteries. She made addresses and uttered exasperating criticisms. She was always discovering young geniuses and behaving ambiguously with them. She called it encouragement. Her attitude to my work was made up of vehement jealousy and a desire to gain credit for it as its virtual inspiration. Phew!”

“If you had had children perhaps,” said God.

“We didn’t have children. We rapidly developed a temperamental incompatibility. She made an immense fuss about her passionate possibilities.... On that side she became disgusting....”

Noah paused. “What is the good of recalling these disagreeable experiences? She did at any rate *go.* And for the rest of my life she can remain *gone.*”

God reflected upon this angry outburst. For some reason it seemed to confirm rather than weaken his original resolution.

“Apart from that temperamental instability of hers, she was, you admit, a woman of a lively, exceptional intelligence?’’

“She had an essentially feminine mind, if you mean that, shallow, quick.”

“All this,” said God, “increases the parallelism remarkably.”

“With the original Noah?”

“With the original Noah.”

“But in the Bible — . Mrs Noah never says a word or does a thing.”

“The character of the former Mrs Noah,” said God, speaking with a judicious slowness and putting the finger-tips of one open hand against the fingertips of the other, “has remained above suspicion for four thousand, two hundred and eighty-nine years, precisely. Yes. In the toy Arks given to children, I observe, she is represented by an extremely upright figure with a conspicuous, serviceable-looking bust and a costume devoid of the slightest hint of feminine coquetry. She wears the sort of hat a charity school girl might wear. Her cheeks display an unmitigated shining glow of health, as though powder was unknown to her — That, I may tell you frankly, does her no sort of justice, either way. My Book states certain facts and makes no comments. The Patriarchs and Prophets were sufficiently scandalous to supply whatever human interest was needed without putting in superfluous gossip. Still Mrs Noah.... I thought you understood. If only people would *read* my Book intelligently —— —”

“Every author feels that,” said Noah. “But go on. Tell me about the original Mrs Noah.

“I gave certain facts about this lady. They seem to me to speak for themselves. Have you never noted their implications? Consider what those facts were.

She had three sons. One was an extremely dark, if not absolutely black, boy, Ham. The other was sallow with dark curly hair and what one calls nowadays an Armenoid profile, Shem. The third, Japhet, was what the Germans would consider a Nordic type, all milk and roses. Samples in fact of the chief varieties of mankind. Now Noah, like yourself, was a quiet, righteous man. He had great gifts, yes — but I put it to you; *was he capable of that much versatility?*”

“I see your point,” said Noah, after a chilling pause. “And I gather

that your angels have ascertained that my spouse, so to speak, has obliged me in a roughly parallel fashion?"

"Yes."

"And pursuing a coincidence to the bitter end, you propose that I should allow her to return to me with her little ethnological collection and make her and her brats a central feature in this new Ark scheme. My dear God, you ask too much."

"But you don't understand the lady!"

"I think I completed my studies of her character, years ago."

"She is a very clever woman and, mentally at least, she is devoted to you."

"I don't care. I know that devotion."

"It is remarkable that she has followed your distinguished career with the utmost interest. She reads all your books and makes her children read them."

"She *would* do."

"Her one desire now, she told my angel, was to return to your side, act as your housekeeper, your kennel-maid, your secretary, your typist, your amanuensis, your exponent."

"I have heard her expound me."

"Where else could you find such wide experience?"

"No," said Noah.

"Still no?" said God. "You harden your heart."

"You yourself have said that when things repeat themselves, they repeat themselves with variations. Well, this is going to be one of the variations. You want me to be upright. Upright I will be. As stiff as a poker. I stand up to you on this. Whatever catastrophe overwhelms the world, I propose it shall overtake Mrs Noah and little black Ham and nosy Shem and Nazi Japhet conclusively. They must all be wiped out. All of them. I will have nothing to do with this Ark project on any other terms."

"But my dear fellow!" protested God.

"I wish," said Noah, with a note of real anger in his voice, "that you at least would read over what you have put in your own Book. You complain that other people disregard it. You have forgotten what you yourself let out."

"And what did I let out?"

Noah spoke slowly with the affected patience of a man dealing with stark unreason.

"Have you forgotten that Noah the son of Lamech took to drink? Have you really forgotten that? After saving the life of the land and mankind, he took to drink. And I ask you, *Why* should a respectable man, a distinguished man, a man conscious of achievements that were bound to make his fame immortal, like Noah the son of Lamech, why should he take to drink, unless he was thoroughly unhappy and disgusted with his domestic life? Obviously he was. And there he was lying about in a state of disorder! And she? Where was she? Wasn't it at least her business to tuck him up comfortably? Put a rug over him.... Evidently she'd gone off again. Along comes grinning little Ham to gloat upon the sight. It's all there in your own Book! And you propose, out of a mere childish love for coincidence, that I — I, Noah Lammock, should go through all that again!... No fear! You just call your ministering angels in again and obliterate them. On those terms this Ark idea is off. Absolutely off. We won't talk about it further."

"I admit I have given you a certain justification—" said God.

"I am only reminding you of your own account of yourself," said Noah. "I am only recalling to you, your own explicit statements and teaching. Do you want me to give you, of all Beings! Bible lessons?"

"This alters the entire outlook."

"It still leaves me interested in this Ark idea."

"But whom then will you take with you?"

"That we have to consider. Let us be clear first of all, whom we will *not* take. When we get out of our Ark on Ararat this time we certainly won't have any Shem, any Ham or any Japhet; we'll have clearheaded, back-boned, clean-minded people. We won't have any nonsense about the seed of Abraham and the Chosen People. We won't have any Messiahs or Saviours or Leaders to lead them to do what they ought to do of themselves. Let us wipe out all these blunders of yours from the human mind now and for ever. If it is going to be a New Deal, let it be a new deal. That, Sir, is how I see it. I can no other."

"Go on," said God, looking very uncomfortable. "I started this and I agree I have to go through with it. Well?"

“About that Tower of Babel.”

“I was afraid you would come to that,” said God, almost in a whisper.

“Let us have the exact words,” said Noah, and reached out his hand to a finely printed copy of the English Bible, translated out of the original languages by the commandment of King James the First. “Let me see, Genesis — Genesis? Genesis Ten. Or is it Eleven? Here we are! Genesis Ten. M’m,” he read for a minute or so and then protested. “The stuff that got into this Word of yours! Troubled people come to this Book of yours for light and comfort in their hours of darkness, and this is what jumps out on them! What do the poor souls make of it? Do they learn it by heart? Do they say it over and over until they go to sleep again? Is it set to music? Listen, God.”

He read remorselessly.

“Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah; Shem, Ham and Japhet: and unto them were sons borne after the Flood.

“The sons of Japhet: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. By these were the Isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue: after their families, in their nations.

“And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begate Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city. And Mizraim begate Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, and Pathrusim, and Casluhim (out of whom came Philistiim) and Caphtorim.

“And Canaan begate Sidon his first born and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Emorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite, and the

Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites, was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza, as thou goest unto Sodoma and Gomorah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

"Unto Shem also the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japhet the elder, even to him were children borne. The children of Shem: Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. And the children of Aram: Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. And Arphaxad begate Salah, and Salah begate Eber. And unto Eber were borne two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his dayes was the earth divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. And Joktan begate Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the East, These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands after their nations.

"These are the families of the sons of Noah after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the Earth after the Flood." Noah closed the Book with a slam. "Well, I ask you?"

"You don't think I made all that up out of my own head," said God. "There were old records.... Very interesting old records. People like Woolley find quite a lot of confirmation.... Possibly there is a certain looseness...."

"About as loose as the figures," said Noah. "At the best it is mere padding. It is like those out-of-date tables of statistics with which they eke out second-rate books on political economics. But never mind about all that. It just caught my eye. It isn't what I want to ask you about now. What I want to know is just exactly what you did at Babel. That, from my point of view, is the queerest incident of the whole recorded story of the dealings of God with man, the greatest of all the Bible enigmas. I gather that my unfortunate prototype was still alive at the time, and saw the whole business. Very distressing

indeed it must have been to him, and I haven't the slightest desire to end up my days in any similar fashion. You had made him, you will remember, all sorts of promises, and you had even put it over him that there had never been such things as rainbows before the flood. *Really,* God, that was a bit thick! Did the sun never shine on a shower until 2349 B.C.? Anyhow you declared that you set your bow in the clouds as a token of your covenant, and you guaranteed him — up to the hilt. You would do this for him and that for him. For a time it worked. Somehow he contrived to hold all this incongruous and multiplying family of his together in a sort of unison, and got them to the plains of Shinar, where they settled down. There they were, all happily and harmoniously building the Tower of Babel together, and then, Sir, for no earthly or heavenly reason, for no offence, before the very eyes of that poor old tippler, old and stricken in years, somewhere about eight hundred years old, I suppose, by that time, who had walked with you, trusted you and obeyed you — . How does it go?"

He read:

"And the Lord came downe to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said; Behold the people is one, and they have all one language: and this they begin to doe: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to doe. Goe to, let us go downe, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence, upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the Citie. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth....

"Now before you and I, my dear Almighty, go building Arks and navigating this present great catastrophe together, will you please tell me, why you did that, and what security I have that you will not repeat what was, God or no God, an act of the foulest perfidy? I speak calmly, but I speak sternly. I said 'foulest perfidy' quite deliberately to you. I repeat it. Was ever a decent man let down, as Noah was let down? What became ultimately of that poor old man? Whom you *forgot!* Did he go off with some spawn of Shem's or

Japhet's, an aged, defeated, cheated, drunken, old bore, sitting and mumbling about his great days to the children of—" he turned to the Book and read again—" 'Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab:' and so on, while dear little Uz and Mash made faces behind his bent, complaining back? Oh! a worse tragedy than King Lear!... I can't bear to think of it. That was the end of Noah, son of Lamech. By your own showing. Your own Word for it. Possibly you have an explanation. I confess I cannot imagine what that explanation can be.

"You don't keep your Word, God. You make Promises and you don't keep your Promises. The Jews have been dunning you for three thousand years. And take other cases. Take Enoch. You walked with him; you were inseparable from him. You couldn't wait for him to die. You took him. And where is Enoch now? I ask you."

Mr Lammock's visitor remained silent for the greater part of a minute, and Mr Lammock, awaiting the answer he had demanded, observed something about him he had not noticed before, a slight but unmistakable suggestion of transparency. His flesh was assuming a quality of opal or glass in its texture, a jelly-like texture.

"You have an obduracy," said the Deity at last, "and a rudeness. I admit I have always respected upstanding men. I always shall. But you, for some reason, are more refractory than any of the human beings, good or bad, that I ever had to deal with in the good old B.C. days, — before I adopted my policy of isolation. Because, as you know, — and as sceptics are apt to remark — I have been strictly non-interventionist for the past nineteen centuries. There is, I perceived, a *hardened* quality about your mind. An occidental harshness. There is a perceptible change in the spirit and method of the human intelligence as I find it in you. My — my antagonist warned me to expect something of the sort. He saw this coming. All this modern science.... I started this Universe and I have to go through with this Universe; I started this discussion with you and I have to go through with that. I see no reason why I should complain that you are behaving with an assurance I have never encountered before. But I note it.... As though the Fear of God was dead.... I have brought it on myself.... I must answer your question. Let me admit

that up to this moment I have never troubled to find out what became of Noah after the dispersal. Never. He died. There must have been some sort of notification. But how and where, and how they disposed of him and whether they buried him or just threw him away, I am quite unable to say..... I left him about, just as I left Enoch about.

I suppose Enoch strayed. I suppose he is still straying — somewhere.... How should *I* know?"

"I am sorry to have to press these considerations," said Noah relenting slightly. "I regret the incivility of my words. You see, I want to know just exactly what your covenant amounts to — in view of the fact that you are now proposing one to me."

"Quite reasonable," said the Almighty, after a meditative moment. "Quite clear and reasonable. At any rate I can congratulate myself on one attentive reader. I suppose that not one so-called Bible reader in a million has observed that Noah was still alive at the great dispersal. Much less bothered about him. Due to their practice of reading only so many verses or a chapter at a time — and thinking generally of something else while they do it...."

Noah the Second remained silently expectant.

"I have already had to make one or two points of — what I have called super-metaphysics — clear to you, little points about Being and Becoming. Now I come to another point still more difficult to explain. The deeper one probes into this non-reversible time and space system of ours the more it twists and turns and changes about. Forgive me if I ask you to be very attentive to what I am trying to express. It is something in the nature of what evasive, pious people call a Mystery. It is referred to in my Bible story, but distantly and obscurely. With the best will in the world to tell my story clearly, I had to deal with it ambiguously. You see... I came into Being, as I have explained, and with me appeared the whole time and space system as a going concern. We have been through all that already."

Noah Lammock inclined his head in patient agreement.

"Well, that is, after all, only one superficial paradox about this Existence. There are others that go deeper. There are difficulties behind difficulties. I want nothing, indeed I want nothing, but plain, simple, onward-to-goodness life, but my shadow goes about and gets hold of physicists and psychologists and mathematicians....

“They come along now declaring that Space is *finite.* Well, I ask you; isn’t that plain nonsense? What do they call whatever there is *outside* Space? This finite Space isn’t metaphysics; this is mountebank physics. They declare we live in an Expanding Universe. What does that mean? Expanding into what? They say that the apprehension of Being is a three-dimensional consciousness system falling through a fourth dimension with the velocity of light. And what is worse, *he* gets them to make experiments to prove it. I don’t see and I can’t see why there should be any limit to the velocity of anything. But it seems there is. ‘Surely,’ I say, ‘whatever velocity you are travelling at, you can always throw a stone forward? ‘No,’ he says, ‘strangely enough you can’t do that. ‘Does it matter?’ I ask. ‘Ultimately it does,’ he says. ‘Make it a Mystery,’ [I suggest, ‘and have done with it.’

‘These men of science, he says, ‘won’t allow Mysteries. They keep on poking about.’

‘You keep on poking about,’ I say, ‘making trouble. These things have no more to do with human conduct than the watermark in the paper on which my Book is printed has to do with the story it tells.’ And now he is bringing up the old trouble again about whether we *can* wind up mankind, anyhow.

The Almighty brow was knit with intellectual effort.

“Quite early in the history, I must explain, my shadow began to insinuate a doubt whether, by making man in my own image, I had not endowed him with a certain vested interest, so to speak, in our own continuity in the time and space system, whether in fact he might not have acquired a right to be consulted before his account was closed. It might be, Satan suggested, that even if we, both God and Satan, decided to conclude, man, if he was aware of it, might be able to go on of his own free will. Not merely that. He might even *have* to go on — anyhow. We were not sure. I don’t know if this can be made clear to your earth-born mind. You will have noted, for instance, that my Bible tells of the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ which was in the middle of the garden. It bore the celebrated Forbidden Fruit. All that is plain sailing. But there was also *another tree,* a Mystical Tree, of whose fruit evidently neither Adam nor Eve was aware, upon which less stress is laid, yet about which both

myself and Satan, it is admitted, became extremely perturbed. It is plain that we realised we had to act about it at once after the Fall. 'Lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life and eat and live for ever!' Neither of us was disposed to face that possibility. What, I ask you, was that Tree of Life? Which was bothering us? It is never made clear just exactly where this mysterious tree was to be found. It is never made clear because it wasn't clear. We ourselves were a little uncertain. It is not so much as if we thought he would go to some definite place for it, but as though we feared he might happen upon it before we did. If indeed it was actually there at all. We took no risks. We bundled both of these poor first sinners out of the garden, and put Cherubims and a flaming sword to keep them out. Incontinently. While we hunted round. That was how that was."

He stared at Noah.

"You honour me with your confidence," said Noah. "I appreciate the generosity of your admissions."

"One may tire at last of being tied up in a Universe," said God. "If I abdicate—".

"I begin to see. Will you go on explaining, Sir?"

"At the back of our minds there was always this uneasiness about our real ability to stop Adam once we had started him. After all, it was the first Creation I had ever done. And so when we saw Man keeping together on the plain of Shinar in one world state, working together, building up and up, above the level earth, my shadow revived that old lurking fear very vividly. 'We must act, or they will escape us,' he said. Read it there. Yes, this; '*Nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do!*'

"We acted together and we acted in such haste that frankly the covenant with Noah and all that was completely overlooked. Completely. *I* did not go down alone. Read the Book. It says; 'Let *us* go down'."

He paused and scrutinised Noah's countenance.

"And so for the second time, Oh Jehovah Yea and Nay, you faltered and thought better of it — thought worse of it. I admit I never read any other book that seemed to me as fundamentally true to the realities of life as the Bible, and at the same time I confess I cannot imagine a God more unstable and more human than it shows

you to be."

"Of necessity," protested God very earnestly. "Of necessity. You understand nothing if you do not understand that only in this perplexing and slightly paradoxical way could a space-and-time Universe come into being and remain in being. We are both only beginning to realise what implication means. I have already explained that the moment the world was created as a going concern, at that very moment a limitless past *had* to come into existence. Is it not equally beyond dispute that at that same moment, I brought into being a limitless future? Manifestly. And afterwards one couldn't *uncreate* that. Or if one did it didn't matter in the least. I created the world in 4004 B.C.; I swear I did; I uncreated it here in this room only a little while ago. You never noticed it. It made no difference to the everlasting sequence of the Universe. It is like dealing with an interminable history in an interminable book. You may open the book anywhere; or close it anywhere. The history goes on in spite of you. And so it is that the story still unfolds and still I want to be in it, and still I want to struggle with my own shadow and bring Adam into free, expanding fellowship with myself — that old original idea."

Silence.

"Or why should I have come to you?"

"That is all very well," said Noah Lammock. "But can you be of any real help to us now in this endless Universe you have thrust upon us? You are the Creator, you are the Sole First Cause; you account for everything perfectly, as nothing else could do; I do not see how we could possibly have come into existence without you; but now we do exist and are fairly launched, what good have your subsequent interventions been? The end of your Bible, forgive me, twaddles down to nothing. It fades out, as you are fading out. Nothing can exceed the emptiness of the three Epistles of St John and the Epistle of St Jude. Greetings to the brethren, and the writer will come along presently and tell them all sorts of important things. And none of that telling is ever reported! And is there any need for me to speculate about the state of mind that produced that Revelation at Patmos? And then for eighteen centuries and a half we hear no more of you. Until you come to me and suggest building a new Ark. The Earth is full of

your Churches and missionaries, I admit; they pray to you and sing to you; but where have you been? Many a Catholic will tell you in all good faith that the Church and the Mass are far more vital to religion than you and your old Book. A good Jesuit fears neither God nor Devil. But he serves the Church. As you grow attenuated and impalpable, as we see through you more and more, your *shadow* also will grow less. As God fades out, the Devil fades also. Even now you seem quivering on the very verge of non-existence."

"Yes," said the Almighty, not without a touch of malice; "and man as he grows clearer and firmer, discovers that *he* too casts a shadow."

"There is something in that," said Noah.

"There is everything in that. It is quite possible that Satan and I have played our part in the human drama. I may have become a mere phantom of my former self. That means only that the struggle between benevolence and corrosive resistance, between the light and the shadow it casts, embodies itself anew — in Adam, in Man himself, in you and your kind. The old story repeats itself with this fundamental variation. And for all you may say in your resentment, I *did* come to you just now when you were very near defeat. I did come to you with an inspiring idea. It stirred you to opposition and criticism, but it won you. And now that this idea of an Ark has taken possession of you, is it wise to reject me altogether? Be considerate. Let me have a voice in planning the Ark. Let us build it together."

"I am to forgive you the desertion of Babel? Those final tragic years?"

"Forgive me everything. Forget everything but the lessons you have learnt through me. Let men unite again. There shall be no second dispersal of mankind. Let us set ourselves honestly to the only brave thing in life, which is beginning again."

Noah remained obdurately silent.

"You may do without God or Devil presently, but can you do so yet? Consider one thing. It is hard to imagine right off, what an Ark of Escape from this inundation of war and violence may mean, but it may involve at some time an appeal to the common multitude. Don't go on arguing what I am or have been in reality, consider what I am now in men's imaginations, consider my — my publicity value. A

great majority of mankind has heard of the Lord God —

Almighty, the Heavenly Father, the Eternal Friend, but who has heard of Mr Noah Lammock and his modem ideas? And whatever I was and whatever I did, I don't mean any of that to these people. They don't bring up the Old Testament against me as you do. They don't believe it, not as much as you do, not nearly as much as you do. It passes over their minds like a fairy tale or a nursery rhyme. They don't believe that the whale swallowed Jonah any more than they believe that the Dish ran away with the Spoon, yet all the same they believe in a Heavenly Will for Goodness, and it is a great inspiration for them. Under the New Dispensation, for nineteen centuries, I have turned a new face of my triplex personality to mankind. They have read into me all their own growing realisation of goodness and justice. But it is into *me* they have read it. To thousands of upright men my Name has been an abiding fastness. By virtue of it they have held out against the corruptions, perversions and persecutions of their own religious teachers. I may have been an excuse for priestcraft and tyranny, but also I have sustained the prophets and reformers.... Don't turn me down altogether yet...."

"You needn't quiver quite so uncertainly," said Mr Noah Lammock; "it bothers my eyes. I admit I have been extremely ungracious to you. But I wanted to get things perfectly hard and clear in my own mind. Let us both pull ourselves together. What is the real nature of this world-wide human relapse? What is the real significance of this stupendous inundation of force and cruelty? What are the necessary conditions of this Ark we have to set about building? That may perhaps take us at last, by way of Ararat, to Shinar again and so to mankind reunited in one brotherhood, growing in strength and power for ever...."

CHAPTER THE SECOND

BLUE PRINTS FOR THE NEW ARK

1

MR NOAH LAMMOCK awoke from a profound, refreshing sleep. He was in his bed and his room was full of sunlight.

Only the faintest memory of a dream hung about him. Someone had said "Every day the world begins." He could not recall who said it, but he found it a very sustaining statement to wake upon.

He could not remember going to bed. Then he began to recollect the visit of a queer old gentleman with a vast shock of white hair, who was suffering from a delusion that he was God Almighty.

He took his watch from the night table beside him and found it was half-past two. He touched the bell.

"You've slept three quarters round the clock, Sir, and I hope you're feeling better," said Mabel. "I've brought you a cup of tea. Would you like to get up, Sir, or just stay in bed for a bit?"

"I'll get up," said Mr Lammock. "But first tell me what happened. I don't remember coming to bed."

"Dr Burchett and the two gentlemen from the asylum put you to bed. There was no awakening you."

"Yes, but how was that?"

"*He* put you to sleep. The old gentleman who said he was God Almighty. He came downstairs, quiet and self-possessed like, and he said 'I've put him to sleep. He needs it,' he said. 'He has been dreadfully worried by things and a good long sleep will do him good.'"

"He said that."

"He said it, so that one didn't doubt him for a moment. It was almost as though he was a doctor or a hypnotist or something. And he stood looking out at the garden. 'I love the cool of the evening,' he said."

"Well?"

"Well then, we saw the automobile coming up the drive with Dr

Burchett and the two asylum gentlemen."

"Yes?"

"You see he was sort of standing behind me on the doorstep. I was by the door. I'd been watering those seedlings in the little bed. Naturally I looked up to see them getting out of the car. 'I don't think,' I heard him say, close behind me. 'I *don't* think.' Like that. Then I noticed that they didn't seem to be looking at him; they were all looking at me. 'Where *is* he?' they said.

"I didn't understand all at once. It seemed such a silly thing to ask. So I didn't turn round for a moment. When I did, I was so taken aback, I couldn't utter a word. *He wasn't there!* It was as if he'd vanished.

"'Can't you *answer,* girl?' said Dr Burchett, just like that. 'Where is he?'

"'He was here not a minute ago,' I says. 'At this very door.'

"They didn't say another word. They came right in. They looked behind the door both sides. They looked behind the umbrella stand. One of them peeped into the cloakroom and the other went into the little parlour. He wasn't there. They never found a trace of him, much less got him. Then they turned to me. 'He was here five minutes ago,' I says. 'And a nicer, quieter, better-behaved lunatic I never set eyes on. You'll find the master upstairs — asleep, he says.' One of them went out into the back to have a look up the garden, the other went downstairs to the kitchen and I followed Dr Burchett upstairs.

I *knew* somehow you hadn't come to any harm, and there sure enough you was, in your big study chair, looking ten years younger than I've seen you lately, Sir, if you'll permit me to say so, and sleeping as sweet and deep as a baby. Dr Burchett, he felt your forehead and pulse and bent down and took a good smell at your breath. 'Just a natural sleep,' he says. Wake you we couldn't, and, as I said to them, was there any need to try? And they couldn't find him anywhere. Not a trace. And as far as I know, they haven't caught him yet. I hope they won't. Harmless he is, with a sort of face that has known trouble. I don't see any sense in putting him into an asylum if he doesn't feel like being put. There's plenty running about the world, madder than him."

“How long was he talking to me before he came down?”

“Nournarf perhaps. I didn’t listen but I hung about in case, and most of the time you was talking low and easy—”

Mr Lammock reflected.

“I don’t know as if he struck *you* as mad....”

Mr Lammock smiled at her affectionately and did not answer her implicit question.

“I shall wear my light grey suit to-day,” he said, “if you will put it out and run me a bath. And I won’t have any lunch. I’ll have tea at four sharp with two boiled eggs and some hot buttered toast.

“There’s a tea-cake,” said Mabel.

“Then tea-cake let it be, piping hot with plenty of real butter.”

2

A week later Mr Noah Lammock was writing very briskly and contentedly in his study. All his courage had returned to him. The sentence he was writing seemed a particularly happy one. He felt he could give it a turn....

That arm-chair he kept for visitors creaked and creaked again. He was aware of the faint rustling of a large body coming to rest. He did not look up until he had finished his sentence.

“I knew you would come back,” he said.

He lifted his eyes and beheld the quite solid and friendly countenance of his Heavenly Friend. The divine glance fell on the numbered pages on the desk. “Have you done much?” said the Lord.

“The beginnings of a general memorandum upon aims and means. Shall I read it over to you? Where, by the way, have you been since I saw you last?”

“Going about and finding out things that might be useful for us.”

“With your shadow?”

“How else?”

“Doesn’t he criticise and cast doubts?”

“Mephistopheles! What else is he for? He said: ‘If you go on as you are going you will become a mere luminous aura.’ To which I answer: ‘And then *his* shadow will swallow you up, and where will you be then? Get thou behind me, Satan. Go away.’ I hurry away

from him. But there he is at my heels, meeting me whenever I put my foot down. I *can't* get clear of him."

Something in that bickering touched Noah's sense of humour. He laughed. He thought of his woollyhaired, long-bearded Lord trying desperately to shake off his shadow from his feet as a man might kick off a pair of goloshes — and vanishing himself, with an expression of astonishment, as the goloshes flew away.

And when Noah had made an end to his laughing, he stared at the Lord. "In the whole of that Bible story," he observed, "neither you nor Satan laughed. I never noted that before."

"I don't remember that we did ever laugh. Why should we?"

"Flat earnest from first to last. That is where the new sort of man you have to deal with has the advantage of you; that sudden perception of incongruity. He laughs, and the conquering absurdity dissolves before him. We shall laugh. Laugh and begin again. During this flood and after this flood. In spite of the blood and tears. Nothing is intolerable, however monstrous it may be, when it is seen to be absurd. I assure you. Nothing. 'Life begins every morning and it *is* fundamentally absurd.' This is the greatest of discoveries. So we escape from the vindictive tyranny of past things. So, in our more intricate and wonderful world, we build our tower and the prospect broadens as we build."

This was something the Lord did not understand. He shook his head — but tolerantly. "Tell me about this memorandum of yours," he said.

3

"To begin with," read Mr Lammock in a magisterial voice, "we have to consider as precisely as possible what it is we want to save. We must be clear about that before we come to question two, from what it is that we want to save it. Then having got that stated, then and only then are we in a position to plan the immediate Ark. It has to be something — reserved, narrow, ship-shape and seaworthy, that will weather all the confusion that gathers about us. All aboard we shall go for Ararat. And as we reminded each other last time we met, the story does not end on Ararat. Out we shall pour at last on that

delectable mountain, no doubt in a blaze of rainbows. *You* must see to that." The Lord winced slightly. "But the real crisis lies ahead — at Babel. We have to think of Babel, before we set a hand to the Ark. Are we agreed on that?"

"How right you are!" said the Lord. "My enquiries—"

"Will you forgive me if I read my memorandum first? What is it, we ask, that we want to save in this Ark of ours? Are we in the least clear about that? We do not want to *save* the old world that is now being inundated at such a terrific rate by warfare, hatred, cruelty. We have done with this world for good and all. Is that so? Whatever else our Ark may be, it is not going to be a device for saving seeds and samples of all sorts, so that presently everything that made life disgusting and unbearable to you, will reappear..."

"My idea was to save the best of it."

"Was there really a best of it?"

"Suppose I tell you first of all about the stuff I have found out. Then we can go on to that."

"What have you found out?"

"From one or two things I had read of yours, I realised that an important idea of yours was the need to bottle down and make some sort of cache, or caches, containing all human knowledge and thought and achievement up to date, a sort of Museum Encyclopaedia, so that when this inundation of war, disorder, famine and pestilence is over, if ever it is over, then it would be all ready for a tremendous renascence. That museum of yours, dusty and derelict, is in your *Time Machine* for example."

"I never wrote *The Time Machine,*" said Noah. "Why pretend?" said the Lord. 'The same idea is the framework of your *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind.* It is *World Brain.* It crops up more and more frequently in your books as you get older and repeat yourself more and more—"

"I tell you — . I had nothing to do with these books."

"Rubbish! You as are bad as that fellow Bacon. *He* wrote the entire Elizabethan literature and Ignatius Donnelly proved it. I am a convinced Baconian. *You* have written every book with the idea of a world reconstruction in it for the last hundred years. You may not know it, but you have. Under various names. If you did not actually

write it at the time, you absorbed it all. There are too many books now for us to talk about individual authors any more. If you think I'm going to stand all that higher criticism stuff of *my* Book you have been giving me, and not round on you and your authorship in exactly the same spirit.... I do you a great compliment in this comparison. As regards variety of style and treatment, narrative vigour, insight, there is of course no comparison — —"

As an offended author, the Lord had become extraordinarily real.

"I wouldn't presume for a moment," said Noah.

"I should think not," said the Lord. "I could quote you comments, criticisms, press cuttings, whole fat books and commentaries without a single adverse word. Even your boasted Professor Huxley, the *old* Huxley, I mean — praised me with scarcely a qualification. For centuries, the literary side of my Book, at any rate, has been the marvel of mankind. It has been the treasure of the humble and the handbook of the mighty. No one, asked what books he would like to have on a desert island, has dreamt of omitting it, no one. And then you insinuate that this modem rag-bag of yours—"

"It was you raised the subject."

"Well I might."

"I merely said I never wrote certain books—"

"Well, I say you *did.*"

"We'll argue no more about it," said Noah.

"You'd better not," said the Lord, still seriously ruffled.

"Tell me what it is you have found out," said

Noah. "I agree with every word you say. Your Bible is *the* fundamental book. *Our* literature is just a footnote to it."

"Well—" The old gentleman's vexation faded.

"I've found out some very remarkable things. Have you ever heard of microphotography?"

Noah had, but he assumed an expression of bright attention. There was something very endearing about this irascible Divinity, entangled in his own creation, now that one met him face to face. He was, Noah realised, first and foremost an Author, a great Author, as an Author it is that the world knows him best, and the vanity and self-sufficiency of authorship is innate and incurable. And every great author annexes and plagiarises, so why argue? If he chose to

make Mr Noah Lammock the Whipping Boy for all the presumption and aggressiveness of modern radical and sceptical literature, it was quite understandable. If he thought he had discovered the possibilities of microphotography, by all means let him have that satisfaction.

"I have ascertained this, that now it is possible and practicable to make these microphotographic films, to multiply and distribute them, so that anywhere in the world it is possible to project and examine the pictures they give in comfort and detail at a charge that beside the cost of a modern battleship is trivial. You can have all the pictures, all the sculpture, all the architecture of the world available for close examination anywhere. You can have every type of landscape, every scene of interest, available. You can see plants at every stage in their growth and animals in movement and in their natural colours and surroundings. You can scrutinise the pages of the earliest and best editions of every classic in the world. And all this can be done and packed away within the compass of a reasonably-sized house. The Libraries of the Vatican, the British Museum, the Bodleian and the Library of Congress at Washington, cover acres of space, are vulnerable and involve a vast labour of indexing. The Nazis may burn any or all of them in the next few years. There is no comparison whatever between them and this new physical concentration of knowledge. I spent a delightful day with Dr Kenneth Mees of the American Kodak organisation, who, by the by, was rather astonished by my visiting card, but too well-bred to show it, and whom I had to convince by one or two petty but reassuring miracles which aroused his curiosity. His explanations and demonstrations were very convincing. Even Mephisto was delighted....

"Why was *he* with you?"

"He asked to come. He's no fool, you know, when it comes to these mechanical things."

"Anything but a fool. More subtle than any beast of the field you ever made...."

"Anyhow; this thing is a plain and reasonable practicability. You can make this tremendous record now. You can distribute it, in whole or in part, all over the world. You can hide it away in a thousand places. The whole world may be drowned in warfare.

Nevertheless we shall have its entire past achievement ready for disinterment. That, I take it, is the very essence of our Ark idea. All that remains to do is to get money and supporters and set about it."

His satisfaction was so simple and direct that Noah hesitated to introduce complications.

"There is one thing I will certainly grant you moderns," said the Lord, "and that is the extraordinary way your gadgets and contrivances facilitate all sorts of things that were roundabout and difficult in the old days. The Word of the Lord used to come to his prophets. In the oddest ways. *Now* one can ring them up, day or night. But here we are! The Ark problem solved out of hand. It is now simply a question of promotion."

"Ye-e-es," said Noah.

A shadow fell upon the face of the Lord. "Well?" he said.

Noah remained silent for awhile.

"There are times," said the Lord, "when a mulish expression, an *opposition* expression, a criticising look, disfigures you. To be frank about it, it reminds me of Satan when he has thought of something particularly difficult and nasty. If we two are really going to co-operate in this scheme...." His irritability got the better of him. "*Say* it," he said. "Out with it."

"I hate to play a Satanic role," said Noah.

"I wonder," said the Lord. "Not once, not twice only have I felt that you too might succumb to the Sin of Pride."

"Pride?"

"Setting yourself up against me."

"But, my dear Lord, if you and I do not anticipate the difficulties *he* will certainly raise — you know he *will* — we shall have our Ark scuttled before it is launched."

"Devil's Advocate sort of idea," said the Lord. „

"Something of the kind. If I might return for a moment to that memorandum I was reading to you...."

"Ah yes, *your* memorandum," said the Lord with the faintest flavour of hostility. "The memorandum y*ou* wrote."

"Merely to recall that I was asking: Is it the old world that we want to save and restore, after it has been very properly

overwhelmed for its sins and corruption, or are we proposing to make an entirely new world, when this last frightful flare-up of war and the conflicting sovereign states and all the had old traditions, are over? Do we intend to *go on* with modern ideas, or do we intend to *go back* with those perfect Christian gentlemen, Franco, Halifax, Daladier, Petain, Bushido — if you can call that a Christian gentleman — all the shattered hosts of reaction?"

"Need we talk politics?" protested the Lord. "Were your Major and Minor Prophetic Books anything but politics? Anyhow, let us consider this general principle; is it to be a clean new deal or not?"

"On what lines?"

"We can settle that later. The primary question is: do we reinstate or do we start afresh?"

"Well, what is this catastrophe for?"

"Exactly. When you are put to the test, Oh Lord, you are never for the priests and conservatives, you are always for the prophets. You are the invincible Revolutionary. The Bible is the record of your Revolutions. Which is where I fall out with all these people with whom you seem to propose to tie me up, with this *World Encyclopaedia, World Brain* idea and all that kind of thing. What do their ideas really mean? It seems to me that so far as these proposals are revolutionary at all, they are an attempt to play the game of the French Encyclopaedists over again, to smuggle a complete modern ideology into people's minds, disguised as an impartial assembly of useful and memorable things. It worked then, I admit. It gave the great French Revolution eyes. But can you do a thing of that sort twice? *Non his in idem.* People ask at once who is to edit it all, they regard our all too hopeful Wells with the profoundest suspicion, and that is the gist of the matter—"

"So you don't think that microfilm encyclopaedism is, in itself, the solution of our problem?"

"No," said Noah. "Not a solution. It may be part of a solution. It is indeed something that has to be done. But only in a definite relation to other, more fundamental things. This indiscriminate Encyclopaedia you have in mind, will, I warn you, bring back the seeds of every sort of error. Naturally Mephisto sustained you in that. Naturally. Because, believe me, he saw his inevitable come-back in

it; all the old heresies, all the old romanticisms, all the old plausible falsehoods, the catch phrases, the intellectual infections. It would be the confusion and dispersal of Babel over again, a confusion of mental idioms if not a confusion of tongues. That poor collapse Aldous Huxley travelled round the world with an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* until his mind gave way.

"Yes, yes," said the Lord. "But also, as you with all your modem knowledge must know better than I do, there must be countless grains of truth lurking in that mass. Half-born discoveries. Remember for example the story of argon. How Cavendish left notes, of what was practically its separation, nearly a century before it was demonstrated...."

Noah reflected. "I admit there is hardly a statement that has ever been made on earth that has not had a grain of truth in it. Even the monstrous beginnings of Shintoism must be an attempt to express something which may prove ultimately to be of enormous importance in the history of the human mind. Graffiti, tradesmen's bills, the lives of the Saints, medieval romances and detective stories are full of material for the myriads of research students we shall have in our new world. Save it all, I agree, save it all, for when it is needed, but do not cumber us with it while we sail the Ark. It shall not perish. Let us have it aboard by all means. It may serve as ballast. It may serve as food. — Deep down in the hold, under hatches stowed away.... Yes....

"But up above upon the quarter-deck, what we want, dear Lord, is a purification, a cleansing of minds, a will unified and reborn. We want something absolutely quintessential for the elite and something absolutely honest, convincing and simplified for the masses of mankind...."

4

"*Something quintessential for the elite and something very strong and clear and simple for the masses of mankind.*"

Like that. Before he forgot that sentence, Mr Noah Lammock — following a practice he had acquired from the works of J. W. Dunne, wrote it down on his writing-pad. Then he became more fully awake.

For a long time he gazed with a speculative eye at that vacant arm-chair confronting him. Then he rang for Mabel.

"Another of those nice long sleeps," she said. "They do you a world of good, overworking and worrying as you do, night *and* day."

Mr Lammock thought he would have a cup of tea and go for a walk. "Nothing has been heard of that old gentleman — you remember?" he asked casually.

"They never got him, Sir," said Mabel, with unconcealed satisfaction. "He's never been seen about here again. There was a story of his wanting to see over some Observatory somewhere, and asking questions about finding where a ship was from the stars, and somebody taking him for a parachutist, but I don't believe a word of it...."

"Where did you hear that?"

"Sir James Jean's parlourmaid was telling someone who knew somebody who knew a friend of mine...." Mr Lammock went for a thoughtful walk.

5

By this time Mr Noah Lammock was becoming indurated to the Lord's peculiar knack of starting hopefully and brilliantly, inspiring this man or that man to essay a new beginning and then failing him. The whole sad history of mankind indeed was a history of false starts, it was like a story about a continually drowning creature trying to scramble out of a morass into which it continually slips back. Would it be possible, could it ever be compatible with the unrevealed treachery in the nature of things, for God and Man to make a clear start together, that would not end again in corruption and catastrophe? Was that new start no more than a dream and a delusion? Perhaps hitherto the break with the past had never been sufficient. If so, then it was not an essential but a quantitative insufficiency that had prevailed.

Next time, with more will and more grimness, the new world of limitless possibilities, might be won, clean, clear and for ever.

"Get that, Noah!" said Noah to himself, and made a gesture like clutching a butterfly in the air.

He began trying over propositions. “This war is a war between decay on the one hand defending itself against chaotic scavenging on the other. The men of this Ark must be on neither side.

“That does not mean they are to stand out of the conflict. They have to fight the destroyers until their onslaught ebbs; and at the same time they must prepare to grip the old order before it can rise again. What follows from that? Mind your step, Noah!...

“My Ark cannot be a wide popular movement. Nor can it be a movement among people in power and authority. Ordinary people won’t understand a new world they have never seen. That needs some cultivation of the imagination, and people who find this world full of gratifications, will resist any move towards a new world. They will detest the Ark idea, they will gather round to mock and hinder it until the inundation is rolling them over and over. So how do we man the Ark? Wait a bit, Noah; what was that sentence you wrote down when you awoke? *Something quintessential for the elite and something very strong and clear and simple for the masses of mankind.* Did that get a little deeper into our problem?”

Mr. Lammock found himself by the side of the little rivulet that ultimately went through his garden. An old garden seat, old but still practicable, tempted him. He felt he might be able to concentrate better if he did not have to look where he was going. He sat down. He pointed his soliloquy with an upheld forefinger.

“You see,” said Mr. Lammock to the circumambient world, arguing it out with great deliberation, “this problem of how to make a new start with human life has been tackled already under semimodern conditions by the Marx-Engels-Lenin group. It is absolutely necessary to get clear about what they attempted and what they did. It is for our purposes the most important experiment in history, the latest one up to date. They had still to realise the abolition of distance, but most of their other conditions were roughly modern. It is silly, as one or two of my quasi-colleagues are disposed to do, to let the excessively unpleasant personality of Karl Marx stand in the way of an appreciation of his work. He seems to have been about as detestable an individual as an ambitious intellectual can be, but we have to remember that he was brought up in a bad atmosphere. We must keep that in mind. He reflected the follies of

his period. The whole world was rotten with the Great Man idea in those days, as it has never been before or since. How could he in his circumstances avoid that infection? I ask you."

At this particular moment an extremely young and inexperienced water vole appeared on the bank exactly opposite Mr Lammock. He began to wash his whiskers carefully and elaborately as good little voles should do, and it was only when Mr Lammock threw out his arm in an interrogative gesture that he realised he was not alone in the world. The little beast had evidently never seen a human being before, and the apparition filled him with an innocent astonishment rather than alarm. He stopped his toilette and became rigidly attentive.

"I ask you," said Mr Lammock.

The little creature looked up, its head just a little on one side, as still and expectant as Oliver Twist asking for more.

"You see," expounded Mr. Lammock; "the idea that a man might be saying something fundamentally important without flourishing about with a damned great hat, a damned great cloak, a damned great beard, a mop of hair and an excessive personality, was inconceivable to these Victorians. It was absolutely inconceivable. To get a new idea or a new phase clear in your mind and to imagine you were a Great Man and had to play the part, were inseparable processes to them. You went about pompously and gave yourself airs as a matter of course. Consider, for example, what Longfellow wrote.

'Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footsteps on the sands of time.'

"Like some damned waddling old plesiosaurus. Who wants to do that sort of thing to-day? At least you must admit," — he told his fascinated hearer— "our generation has learnt humility. We don't dream now of Valhalla, and of our busts and statues encumbering public buildings and public places, to be an infinite discouragement to little boys. 'That, my dear, was the *Great* Noah Lammock. The utmost y*ou* can ever do is to be an inferior imitation.' What man of

science is there now, who believes that in his utmost work he is any better than a bearer, entrusted for a little while with something greater than himself, which he too must hand on to equal or better men? But so it was that Marx, quarrelling, dogmatising, jealous of any infringement of his Greatness, sponging on his infinitely finer admirer Engels, had to be what he was. He could not escape it. He knew no better, and he stamped these paralysing limitations on to the development of socialism for a century.

"But now," said Mr Lammock, almost querulously, to the little vole; "Now that we have put all that offensive personal stuff aside and debunked the giantry of the group, let us ask what they thought they were doing. They were trying to do what was in essence, just what the Lord has been trying to do since His Creation. And exactly what I now — under God's inspiration — let's be frank about that — I and the intelligent men of my time, must attempt again. And I claim the Lord absolutely, for the Revolution. Bolshevism is still, to this day, the most pro-God thing on earth. Now, as in the past, the priest religions try to make God a cadaver, and worship him as a rigidity that can no longer intervene. There is nothing anti-God about Russia. I assure you. True, the Revolution said 'Religion is the opium of the people', but so it is, organised religion. Revolution is the living God and Religion is pickled God. I have seen that celebrated anti-religious museum in Petrograd. It is all against priests and superstitious dope, and nothing against anything that I at least can legitimately call God.... God is on record all through the ages, and always, always he is raging and inciting the priests and scribes and pharisees, against formalism, against the letter of the law. Red he is and Red he always has been.

"But to get to realities. What was the living drive in this immense, world-wide Communist movement? How and why did they set about it? What, broadly speaking, did they do right? What did they mess up? Did they forget something? — I think they did. How far must *our* drive, the next revolution, follow on their lines and how far and how must it diverge into new courses? At the base of it all; even Karl Marx could not smother that; was a real desire to begin a new life for mankind, arising out of the hopes of the French Revolution. That first Revolution was an attack upon the suffocation of human hope and

possibilities by aristocratic privilege and clerical imposition, and it effected immense liberations. The Marxist movement arose out of the discovery that thrusting aside aristocracy and clericalism was not enough, because a new suffocation through the abuses of ill-defined proprietorship was beginning. They lumped together all these abuses as the Capitalist System. The essential job, they realised, was to get enough of mankind organised to tackle this new complex of abuses, a complex much more intricate, subtle, flexible and ingeniously mean, than the old network. Now hold hard to the idea that these central men, Marx, though I abuse him, and the others, were at heart self-devoted. Hold hard to that."

The little vole had never heard the like before. It was entranced. It seemed to be holding on with all its being.

"Yet they could not imagine their own devotion becoming acceptable to and assimilable by any large number of people. Why not?...

"My friend the Lord, when he made *his* revolutionary drive, nineteen centuries ago, *did* believe he could assimilate people. The interview with the rich young man who had great possessions, that riot over the money-changers and the dove sellers and so on, reveal his belief that he had available some sort of general passion for goodness, sufficient to bring about the Kingdom of Heaven. But he wasn't clever enough to organise it. The twelve disciples taken altogether were a poor lot, and the less said about that Whit Sunday affair the better. In its unorganised form, the Nazarene movement failed. Clever fellows like Paul got hold of it in no time. They made it acceptable to rich ladies. You should read Irenaeus on Marcus. The Apostles were swamped and the Fathers took control. There already in the large corrupting world of the first century A.D., you get our primary problem, the still unsolved problem of keeping the movement together and at the same time keeping it in the right spirit and in the right hands and heading it steadily for a reconstructed world.

"Precisely the same problem, you see, confronted our Marxist predecessors. Casting about for a synthesising motive for his new start, Marx, with a bookish knowledge of the English trade union and

a complete lack of practical experience in politics, hit upon the idea of a class war. He imagined that the dispossessed had only to become aware that they were dispossessed in order to set up a reign of justice and disinterested administration for ever. He failed to observe that the dispossessed had never done anything of the sort throughout the historical period. They are capable of resentment but not indignation. Anarchistic religiosity, John of Leyden and the Anabaptist orgies, are what the masses give you when conditions become unendurable. They just set up new masters and sustain vindictive horrors until their mass energy has spent itself.

"There *is a* class war, but it is a class war downward. The possessing and exploiting classes are either completely or subconsciously aware of the injustice and waste of their advantages; they fear that their inferiors will see what they themselves, more or less dimly, apprehend. So they are always on the look-out against the beginnings of equalitarianism and insubordination, which would wreck the world of authority in which they live and move and have their being. They fear the Radical and hate the Red, prematurely, excessively.

"The poor, I tell you, take life as they find it and are not intelligent enough to resent the rich *en bloc*. They have no sense of being dispossessed, because in fact they have not been dispossessed, they have been born at a disadvantage, which is something quite different, and from the first this pretended revolt of the proletariat had two double strands. The propaganda of a new world as the Marxists conceived it, was conducted by a specially trained and instructed elite who posed as angry proletarians clamouring for their rights. They imagined that in this fashion the real proletariat would be infected. Their revolutionary idea, you see, was falsified by that from the start. The poor dears, university students, the children of the bourgeoisie, of minor officials, of the nobility, of anything but proletarians, affected a primitive coarseness. They spat freely, they went unshaved and unshorn, they wore their shirts outside their pants.... But now we are beginning to realise that, for any revolutionary movement to succeed, there *must* be this *core* of special intelligence, of enlightened fanatics, so to speak, whose minds are liberated enough to imagine a new order. And it is no good

their pretending to be anything but what they are the specialised backbone.

"Plainly, the early Communist movement was still saturated with the tradition of general freedom that arose with the great releases in America and France; they took freedom for granted, and they exaggerated equalitarianism into the belief that wisdom and the majority opinion were the same thing. Government *by* the people would be government *for* the people. There is a bitter comedy in realising that the Communist movement started from that. It was only in the course of the struggle for power, that this delusion was rubbed off. In what was primarily a quite honest fight for freedom, freedom was trampled underfoot. The inner control of the movement — in Russia particularly — fell more and more into the hands of the little, over-loyal, second-rate, doctrinaire, useful ass, and into the hands of those who crave to exercise power. It degenerated into that bitter and intolerant orthodoxy which chokes the further development of Russia to-day....

"In America the Revolution followed a different road to frustration. That well-meant Constitution bound down the common man good and strong for the lawyer politician to operate upon him. The Machine gripped him like an old-fashioned dentist's chair. The teeth of his new-won freedom were drawn, almost before he bit with them. Politically he found he had to be a party Democrat or a party Republican or a non-entity.... The American, to secure his independence, tied himself up in his Constitution as God tied himself up in the universe, and the rest of his history has been the astonishing consequences. When presently destruction stares his pseudo-freedom in the face, he will resist with vigour — but he will be in handcuffs while he fights.

"Nothing for it, now that our eyes are open, but to begin over again. The Communist experiment is plain before us in gross and detail, the good will in it and the incompleteness of it, for us to study and learn. The problem is still the same problem, to have two almost incompatible things brought into effective co-operation. We want on the one hand an incessant, relentless process of the will and intelligence, protected in some way from disintegrating influences, and on the other hand we want a broad appeal to ordinary people

which will anticipate and protect our new world from the tempter, the mischief-maker, the inherent factors of decay."

Mr Lammock became very slow and earnest. "I don't care if I say it over and over again. I want to say it right. Our elite is our necessity and our menace. The primary danger, I take it, is that the elite will become a self-conscious, self-protective organisation within the State. It will taste the joys of authority and aristocracy, and instead of quickening and keeping alive the general sense of freedom, it will adopt the far easier line of humbugging the common man and fighting down any competing system of humbug. Its ranks will be in constant danger of invasion by the conscious, clever careerist. Such has been the fate of *all* elites in the past, and I see nothing to save our Ark from that but an intenser religiosity, a livelier passion, a greater awareness of what we are. More religion. More vigilance and heart-searching. What else? There is no one simple prophylactic. If only one *could* do it by fasting and prayer!...

"So far as the common man goes, Mr Vole, I don't think our problem so impossible. I believe that something quite effective can be done to preserve an intelligent insubordination in the mass of human beings, so long as the ruling elite is loyal. The more eyes there are to watch the elite, the better. I am all for those people who want to unite the popular movement throughout the world upon a new Declaration of the Rights of Man. Such Declarations have worked great things in the past in keeping men erect and alert. The Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of Rights, lit up the world very brightly a century ago; it seemed as though universal manhood could never be forgotten any more. But it is being forgotten. Nevertheless it may not be so difficult to remind men in each generation to stand up and be men. Provided — always provided — that there exists a body or a stratum of people steadfastly resolved to keep that reminder alive and active, a stratum of people resolved that the common man shall not be hoodwinked and betrayed again, a slightly disgruntled critical wing of the elite itself, Voltaires, Montaignes, Shaws and Samuel Butlers.

"But that rests upon such people as I am, and the trouble with us who are in fact the very Ark itself, and the particular riddle we have

to answer, is how far we are capable of the most difficult of all things, of really forgetting ourselves in our idea and our purpose. In the face of suffocation, in the face of detraction. That is something which no body of men has succeeded in doing hitherto, — as the history of *all* religion and *all* social reform up to date testifies. You see that it is a new religion and a new manner of life I am obliged to stand for, I and my Ark, and it cannot be anything less. We who must be the heart of it all, must plainly achieve such a devotion as mankind has never known before, because plainly such devotion as righteous men have displayed in times past has not been enough to save us from this present disaster. Not only such a devotion, but such a clear-headedness. There's the rub. We must give ourselves, mind, body and soul....

"'*Mind*'." *I* say. "Note that."

"The men of the new Ark must be of the utmost clear-headedness; of one mind. About certain fundamental things there exists a wide diversity of opinion to-day. Such a diversity about fundamentals is intolerable. So long as it exists, the Ark is in the doldrums. One opinion and one only can be nearest the truth, and the rest are wrong and have to be rejected, definitely and lucidly, on this Ark first, and then, as we prevail, throughout the world. The new age has to be an age of liberal opinion but not of loose opinion. And our first issue is between God, who has hitherto embodied and personified the drive for unity and righteousness in the world, and this modern thought, which has taken shape in my mind, for example, now, and possesses it. God has been my inspiration, to a large extent I can still express myself in terms of him, but the fundamental reality is that he is ceasing to exist in the face of the clearer thinking that dissolves him. By him and with him I shall sail the Ark, but presently he will be at my side no longer, and I, the New Adam, will have to sail it alone.

"Let us be perfectly clear about this fundamental difference between the old thought and the new. Hundreds of university professors of philosophy are lecturing up and down the world, and hardly one of them is calling attention to the present reality, which is that there are two diametrically opposite systems of thought appealing to us more and more urgently to make a choice between them. There is the old-established system of thought which starts its

world at a definite moment in time with a unified personality, God, who creates a unified personality called Adam, and treats all that follows as a discovery of inconsistency and incompatibility. The last stage of this system of thought is psychoanalysis, which still clings to the primordial idea of an original unity getting tangled up and going to pieces. That in brief is substantially the history of the human mind up to date.... I hope you get me."

The little vole made no sign.

"Opposed to that we have this new, flatly contradictory method of thought called Behaviourism, which absolutely repudiates that idea of any primary unity in man, and wrenches the mind round to the conception of an assembling mentality struggling to impose order upon an indifferent chaos, without and within. It *is* not; it strives to *be.* Unity, co-operation, harmony, the strong peace of mankind, the real creation of the world, lies ahead of us if we can win it. Now, however much it costs us in immediate effectiveness, that and that alone must be the common mind of the men who will man my Ark. There must be complete lucidity about that, and we cannot afford any quibbling pseudo-reconciliations with the old tradition. The core of the new world must be (listen to these words!) Atheist, Creative, Psychosynthetic. We pull ourselves together, we pull our world together, we assemble the world state....

"But you object that nevertheless I am going to take God aboard with us. I am. There is no inconsistency in that. He has been an inspiring delusion, and now we will tell him the truth about himself, and in the end we may even make him real."

A light breeze stirred the branches about him like a sigh. For a second or so Mr Lammock waited, but no one appeared. If it was indeed a sigh, it was a sigh of acquiescence.

"This new-born religion, *this religion of the perpetually increasing and renascent truth,* carries with it an inner compulsion to live, or, if need be, die, as it dictates, directly its apprehension becomes complete. Do you get that? Enquiry replaces dogma. You grow. So that there is no possibility of a heresy hunt upon the Ark, any more than you can have a heresy hunt within the Royal Society. Our first duty is to maintain our own complete liberty of speech and publication. Freedom to grow. We have to watch ourselves and each

other. But we have to ensure also that the truth is everywhere accessible and that the children of our world are not waylaid and trapped into darkness and the ways of death by obstinate traditionalisms. In China I have heard they used to make dwarfs and human grotesques by putting little children to grow up in jars and cases of porcelain. Dogmatic religious teaching is the mental parallel. We cannot have it here. We cannot afford to lose one possible brain in that way; everywhere our liberating education must go, like the water of a gold washer releasing the gold. The Ark of to-day has to become the world of to-morrow. You see, we must keep our central organisation loose and open, and at the same time we must have a complex of watchful subsidiary organisations to protect all we have gained, from relapse. A vaster, more intricate task than any human mind has ever dared to face....

"As our eyes have opened it becomes clearer and clearer that the individual life is doomed to frustration and death, unless it can escape into the synthesis of mankind. And that is true of every individual life. Give yourself, and give yourself, with all your heart, or else perish, as all self-centred individuals must perish, for ever. Your individual life in itself is worth nothing at all. It may be bright for a moment like a flash in the darkness, but it will leave the darkness deeper than before. Live for all life or do not dream you are living."

The young vole considered this proposition for a moment, and suddenly realised that Mr Lammock was an overwhelming menace. He shook off his influence with an effort, and with every sign of passionate dissent, with a dismayed, unspoken "Oo-er" in every movement, dropped into the water and vanished, an unconvinced individualist, with a loud, definitive

PLOP.

"All that seems reasonably clear," said Mr Noah Lammock, rising to his feet again and forgetting about the little vole forthwith. "And now I suppose I had better go back to get that preliminary memorandum of mine ready for discussion when the Lord calls again. And then, and then I must look round to find those nuclear men who are needed

to carry through the next revolution. Since the situation is so serious and the world is full of modern ideas, that should not be so difficult. Yet I admit that at the moment no galaxy occurs to me.”

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE RELUCTANT CREW

SO Mr Noah Lammock set himself to find a crew for his Ark. And since he could not think at once of a suitable group of individuals, he began, in his methodical way, an enquiry into the classes and types of men from which these individuals would have to be chosen.

He turned over one by one the possibilities of each social class and type in the social order about him. He began with the privileged people, the people who have inherited opulent and authoritative traditions, who accepted the nouveaux riches with a suppressed protest and assimilated them with condescending dexterity. The great majority of this body would resist the idea of a new world steadfastly and consistently, because it was itself the elite of the old. Its fundamental fear, and an entirely justifiable fear, was of "Bolshevism" and "Red" Radicalism, and it was prepared to prostitute its soul and its women to any adventurer of any quality or colour that it could imagine, through some mysterious process of snobism, restoring most if not all of its threatened sense of social ascendency. But the weakness of this stratum was its prevailing dullness; it wasn't going anywhere; its necessary conservatism bored its own intelligent members and drove its more animated young into reactionary or revolutionary excesses.

The bored born gentleman, Mr Lammock reflected, has always been on the side of adventurous change. He has rarely been a lover of the masses, but he has been insistent upon personal and intellectual freedom. Magna Carta was his work and it was he who relaxed the grip of superstitious clericalism upon the common people. In Italy, in England, he launched science. In the East he was the friend and protector of the artist and philosopher. His habit of mind is still with us, and it is a fine question how he will behave in the face of a cataclysm that must inevitably destroy all the immunities that have hitherto assured his mental integrity.

"I cannot man my Ark," said Mr Noah Lammock, "without his superb 'you be damnedness' to all mental controls, towards all

inquisitorial authority. From Byron to Bertie Russell there has been an immense variety of individuals in our world, for the most part extremely exasperating outcasts, who rebelled and said the thing that came to them plainly, though their heavens fell. And because of their own mental freedom, they have also enabled bold writers, artists and thinkers to say what they pleased and share their immunities. My Ark cannot be manned without free-spirited gentlemen, saturated with Pride. How am I to get hold of them now? And how sustain their intellectual insolence — on nothing?

"Or will they evaporate with the rest of their class? Will there be no carry-over from them for the Ark? I must see. Wanted: — gentlemen with strong brains mounted on stout backbones.

"And their sons? Great numbers of the sons of these people are and always have been bored by the stolidity of mere self-protective conservatism. In the past they went through the hoops of a highly conventionalised vice, or they went abroad and became remittance men or empire builders. But that did not suffice for the more intelligent. They found their escape in a literature of rebellion, or in outrageous art. Can we find any Shelleys for our Ark to-day? There again comes the question: what would have happened to the whole Shelley-Godwin group if his dividends had been cut off? To-day the drift of the upper-class young man, under the stresses of the time, disappears beneath a uniform. But so far as one can judge from what he said and did before the extent of the catastrophe became plain, there were four sorts of him: — the dull orthodox careerists, prize boys, who apprehended nothing, who thought things were going on always just so; then the ones who might have seen but refused to see that anything monstrous was coming and who set out with a certain conscious resistance to be the privileged irresponsible, escaping into poetry and the Bloomsbury heaven; thirdly, those who felt a menace to their upper form ascendancy in the air, and began to rehearse anti-Bolshevik attitudes and methods of keeping the cads under; and finally there were the ones who *went left,* but in a docile, imitative fashion, mostly under the leading of radical-minded rather than revolutionary dons....

"Maybe the last batch may have something for the Ark. It is easy to be impatient with the obvious imitativeness of young-gentleman-

communism in Britain and America, just as it is easy to be impatient with the devouring, competitive Great-Man-ism of old Marx, but in each case one may be failing to allow for the mental atmosphere in which their minds were operating. If there had been a Communist Party in the days of Shelley, he would certainly have been an active Party member, at any rate for a time, before he set about knocking the Party to pieces, and we have to remember that at the first onset the Party looks exactly the thing that the young rebel wants. It is all a toss-up afterwards whether it digests him utterly or he finds it out. Originality and penetration are not qualities that appear early in life, and there may be bright young gentlemen to-day repeating Communist gabble with an air of discovery, who will presently be coming, in a state of wholesome disillusionment, to volunteer for the Ark. There are no real peasants and few illiterates in the urban communities of to-day, and no one will be of any use aboard the Ark who is unable to grasp the profound differences between the Russian situation in 1917 and our own 1940 that must modify the pattern of modern revolution. They must have that much intelligence.

"But have they?" Mr Lammock found himself checking over his memories of the Communist and quasi-Communist literature of Britain and America during the past twenty years. How ready they had been to dance or mark time to the tune of Moscow; how little vigour of mind or will had they displayed! Socialism and Communism were born in the West and shaped by the West. Why had not these heirs of the Great Revolution gone on with the job? Politics had swallowed up their energies, the most devious and pointless politics imaginable, designed for the silliest pseudo-strategic reasons to cripple, "capture" and embarrass whatever liberal or constructive movements did not conform to the sacred formulas. Why had not these Western young men gone on with such a revision of Communism as Moscow would have had to treat with respect?

"Maybe I misjudge these pluto-communists," said Mr Lammock. "Maybe there is some sort of thinking going on in them. But I don't expect much more from them than an occasional 'Yaha!' or a handful of mud, while the Ark is a-building."

He found he had come down almost insensibly from the problem of the erstwhile expensive classes to the mentality of the professional

classes and their homes and offspring. No social gap separated the strata. The womankind only differed in their range of opportunity; they imitated down the scale, they had fewer dresses and less expensive dresses, but their style of dressing was the same, their standards of success and entertaining were the same. But their behaviour was discreeter and even in a phase of catastrophe they were still likely to be ruled by these now unserviceable discretions. Discretion had hitherto ruled their more limited lives, and neither the men nor the women could afford the "you-be-damnedness" of the assured aristocrat. The lawyer, the medical man, had to think of his reputation.

But on the other hand the first-class professional man was better trained to read and think than those confident people at the top of things. He might be equipped with a far better set of ideas, and he might be quicker in apprehending the gravity of the social collapse. But he was quite unused to responsible action beyond his professional routines. It was his habit to keep out of politics unless he was a barrister, and then his politics had to follow very definite patterns, quite unserviceable for a cataclysmic occasion. His sons and daughters, for whose education he generally made great sacrifices, would follow less desperately the four types of their wealthier school and university associates. It was more necessary for them to take good degrees and qualify. "They'll hesitate," said Mr Lammock. "A lot of them will be quite interested in the Ark idea, quite understanding about it. I know 'em. 'It's tremendously inspiring,' they'll say. 'But this week, anyhow, I've got so much to do — ... Next week it's the Red Cross bazaar and my wife is up to the neck. I can't let her down....' And so on. All up and down the scale this is the way of the professional classes. The nearer they have been to genteel poverty, the less time and the less spirit they have had for fundamental thinking, the less ready will they be for any salvage now.

"But," said Mr Lammock, "the priests and the parsons and the teachers and the journalists ought to be different. The priests, no, not as a class. Their minds are locked up in their own interpretations. Yet in the old days all the reformations and revivals came from the men who had first sat and read and brooded inside the Church.... But a lot

of these modem Protestant parsons must know the God of the Bible almost as well as I do and have much the same opinions about him. I don't suppose they have had time to read very carefully, and they've had to be more than a little promiscuous in their sermons about contemporary thought. Still they have touched it and it must have touched them. Each one of them has a congregation tied to his tail, of course, which he mustn't shock too much. I'll try over one or two of them I know, but I expect there'll be trouble about my behaviourist philosophy. They will insist upon 'spirituality,' even though they have not the faintest idea what they mean by spirituality. Of course I might ask God to speak to them. Yet why, I wonder, did he call on me when he might have sent in his card to Boanerges or the Archbishop of Canterbury? He seems to fight shy of men in Holy Orders.... I don't think he likes the way they dress....

"And about the teachers and the regular and irregular journalists. There again we have to deal with highly stimulated intelligences habitually restrained by professional limitations. There must be thousands and thousands of teachers in the world who have asked themselves, 'What am I doing to these children or young people? Where are they going? What challenges will be confronting them before they die — and now it may be in a year or so and in a little while it may be in a month or so? What is this old stuff and nonsense I am handing on to them?' No doubt thousands have asked themselves that, but how many have asked it hard? So as to spend nights of sleepless study, and confront the school governors with a determined mind and 'strange ideas'? When I go recruiting for the Ark, what will they say to me? 'How can we think of such things now?' they will say. 'We have to consider evacuating our children. The problem of school places is overwhelming us. What will happen at the next examinations Heaven only knows.' They will push me aside. I shall feel like a man trying to sell Hoover cleaners to an Arab encampment in a dust storm.

"And these journalists again. They are compelled to go about the world seeing something fresh every day, and what was new and true and wonderful last week is over and done with for ever. Men like myself sit in their studies and maybe we do not see enough of life, but they see too much of it in disconnected flashes. What is the good

of going to them and saying, ‘Your world, the world that lets you live and keeps you free, is even now being destroyed?’ They will say, ‘It’s up in all the offices now; the Dismal Jimmy stuff is barred.’

‘But it is supremely important to save something from this disaster,’ I shall say. ‘But how?’ says the friendly journalist, knowing all the time that the end is coming just as plainly as I do. ‘How can I make copy out of it? Perhaps if I worked in a bit of personal interest. Take you asleep in your chair with your cat on the table, “*waiting for the end,*” or digging in your garden? Or we might kind of guy the idea, if you want it publicised. Make a sort of joke of your excitement about this Ark. We could dress you up as Horrabin’s Noah — Eh? Or get your two cats and a couple of sheep or something to follow you up a gang-plank? They won’t listen to anything nowadays unless it’s war-news or a joke.’ So it is with the journalists. I protest they know as well as I do the ever-widening advance of destruction. ‘It’s no good writing stuff that won’t be printed,’ is their complete answer....

“And after all, what else can they do?

“A mind of force and conviction here and a mind of force and conviction there, with different social habits? My Ark is going to be a mixture anyhow. No end of possible men will say: ‘No! not with that fellow,’ or ‘Not with these people.’ They may agree on the background realities, but the minor discords crop up every hour.

“And I haven’t allowed for the fact that we shall have women aboard, and every lively intelligence is also a sexual being. The stream of life is bearing them all to Niagara, but until they are over the top, Niagara won’t make them forget the usual happenings in the stream. And still I haven’t come down below the more or less educated middling sort of people. What can I expect to find among the disadvantaged minority? Maybe much more than anyone could have expected. That is the grimmest part of the tragedy. It has overtaken us a generation too soon. We were spreading education and knowledge, thinly and irregularly indeed, but down and down through the whole social body to the very out-of-works on the dole. You can get every sort of idea now in cheap sixpenny books. There are men on the dole who spend hours in public libraries reading and reading well. You can have good hard discussion about important

things in a cabman's shelter. The men who struggle through to original ideas are exceptional men, but when you are dealing with millions the exceptions count up. And when you are a man or woman with nothing to lose, you can think as recklessly and speak as plainly as the greatest aristocrat alive. In all the past there has never been this sort of common men. Maybe there will never be this sort again. These men are lost like needles in a haystack, and for every one of them, there are hundreds of half-self-educated men whose minds have just been stimulated to a floundering conceit. But still they are there.

"And the organised workers? Shall I get any live revolution out of them? There again you have a great mass of humanity out of which any single good thing may come, but as a mass it has been educated away from all creative understanding. The labour leader is no leader; he is a resultant. The mass does not drive him; he and the mass are driven together. Strange men those labour leaders are to me. They begin by being exceptional men; for a time every one of them seems to have read voraciously, though with a blinkered vigour; overcome his blinkers to a certain extent; though at last perhaps almost freely. Then, after an intensive educational phase, the political game caught them. The only game with any prospects of any sort for their wits. They read no more. They turned off thinking like a tap. The greater their personal vigour, the more the career, leading to Trade Union leadership, leading to Parliament, leading to a place in the government, caught hold of them and subdued them to its conditions. The women who were their real equivalents were their rivals. They had no women of their own of a sort to help them and make a social atmosphere for them, and so they developed no power of group collaboration. Will any of them have the power in him to break away and come aboard the Ark with me? The stronger of them will be like those journalists and teachers and professional men. They will appreciate the truth intellectually, but they will not realise the truth until it is too late. They will be too unaccustomed to talking over general ideas with anyone. 'See you next week, Noah,' they will say. 'Everything you say is most inspiring, *most* inspiring.' They will change front and turn about. Until the inundation is lapping about their feet. 'All aboard for Ararat,' I shall say, and set the hooter

blowing. ‘All aboard.’

“‘Keep a place for me, Noah,’ they’ll say. ‘I’ll be with you in no time now.’ They’ll never be with me. When the waters rise I shall find they haven’t learnt to swim. Never had time for it. As the Ark floats loose I may see some of them, turning over and over in the waves....

“I wonder,” said Mr Noah Lammock, “whether an Ark can risk carrying life-belts....”

“Eleventh-hour repentance I have always condoned,” said the Voice of the Lord, suddenly breaking into this meditation. “But thirteenth hour and subsequent repentances, I refuse to consider. At some point you are damned — and then you must be damned for ever. I am glad we brought no Life-Belts aboard us. That fight for the gang-plank at the last was disgusting. We’re getting away from the worst of them now. A few inflated reputations are still afloat, but most of them have sunk already out of sight and memory.”

Mr Noah Lammock rubbed his eyes. “I don’t quite understand. I thought I was considering a memorandum in my study.” He looked about him. “Is this a ship’s cabin? *My* cabin?”

“This is the captain’s cabin in the Ark, thirty days out. You worked at last in a sort of trance, and maybe it’s as well for you that you don’t remember. It was pretty horrible. The crew is shaking down together better than can be expected. They hold a debate every evening and are very frank with one another. Your sermon last Sunday was excellent, about the new religion, more deep and more exacting, you said it was, than any poor old creed out of the past, and you made the unending revolution we have to carry on, and all that, very clear, very clear indeed. I’ve not the slightest doubt that there has been a real gain in the quality and vigour of the human mind with the onset of all this science....”

“I have a sort of vague memory in my mind.... Do you mean you have Sunday services? And I *preach?*”

“I never heard of a ship that didn’t have Sunday services. It isn’t true that you’re as near God by sea as by land. You’re ever so much nearer, and every sailor knows it.”

Certainly Noah had never seen God looking healthier and more substantial.

“And what do *you* do aboard?” he asked.

“Oh! I permeate the ship....”

He stopped short.

“You do something else?”

“Yes. I. Well, I play the harmonium.

I have *always* wanted to play the harmonium. I don’t see, Noah, why I shouldn’t play the harmonium.”

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

FROM THE LOG OF THE ARK

TROUBLE ABOARD. IS THE INUNDATION SUBSIDING? THE ARK SPRINGS A LEAK AND IS UNABLE TO MAKE ARARAT ON SCHEDULE. FISH AND SEAGULLS BECOME THE MAIN ARTICLES OF DIET. THE ELEPHANTS ARE PUT ON HALF-RATIONS. A STOWAWAY, GIVING THE NAME OF JONAH (WHICH IS AS MUCH AS TO SAY DOVE IN HEBREW), IS DISCOVERED LIKE A GROSS DEVOURING MAGGOT AMONG THE SHIP'S STORES, THROWN OVERBOARD, AND SWALLOWED BY A WHALE. THE WHALE, AFTER CIRCLING ABOUT THE ARK FOR THREE DAYS IN A MANIFEST INDIGESTION, REJECTS JONAH CONTUMELIOUSLY AND OFFENSIVELY. HE IS TAKEN ABOARD AND COMPLAINS OF HIS RATIONS. THE JONAH PROBLEM BECOMES ACUTE. HE SEEMS INCAPABLE OF USEFUL WORK. HE SHOOTS AN ALBATROSS, PRODUCES A STAGNANT AND FESTERING CALM, AND IS AGAIN PUT OFF THE ARK. HE ATTEMPTS TO RETURN WITH AN EXTREMELY UNSATISFACTORY OLIVE BRANCH. HE IS PUT OVERBOARD AGAIN AND SHOT BY NOAH, BUT CONTINUES TO FLOAT ALONGSIDE IN AN UNPLEASANT MANNER. HE SWELLS IN HIS DECAY. HE IS TOWED ROUND TO THE LEE SIDE, BUT ATTEMPTS TO ATTACH LEAD SINKERS TO HIM FAIL.

THROUGH war-time necessity Mr Noah had been obliged to keep the log upon newsprint instead of the vellum-wove manuscript paper to which he was accustomed. Apparently the pulp was infected stuff, and anyhow this Fourth Chapter broke out into such an eruption of headlines in capitals and in the present tense, that hardly any scope was left for the normal text.

Suffice it to state here that the discovery of Jonah produced a violent outbreak on the part of the Lord, against the recognised

Canon of Scripture.

"Save us from our editors," said the Lord. "They put that infernal little cad among the Major Prophets, and he never uttered a single word of prophecy in his life — not one. My dislike and contempt for this Jonah of yours is instinctive and incurable. He is disgusting. He is exasperating.

"Somehow he got hold of a message from me to Nineveh; I'm not at all clear how he got hold of it; but I *do* recall that he didn't deliver it. He bolted for Tarshish and I had the utmost difficulty in rounding him up, and getting my message delivered. Some idea of operating in Nineveh City Bonds at Tarshish, I suppose he had. This isn't the first time he's hidden in a whale. When he is scared he crawls just anywhere, and when he is not scared he becomes a pretentious impostor. I sent him to warn Nineveh, but what must he do but go prancing into the place, giving himself stupendous airs, and saying it was to be destroyed? And when it wasn't destroyed, because, you see, they behaved very decently when they realised the warning was serious, he must needs have a row with me. Yes, with *me,* God Almighty! I had let him down, if you please! He was very very angry indeed with me. He said so. He would sue me. 'Kill me,' he said. 'I just can't face the situation. Honour is dearer than life to me.'

'Get out of my sight, you worm,' I said; 'Do you think I am going to destroy six score thousand people to please you, you pompous little ass?'; and that is the end of the book of Jonah the Dove. Read it again — if you don't believe me. It's all there. All about that famous Pumpkin plant of his that was going to Tick Creation' and the rest of it. Of *course* I sent that worm. Could any Righteous God have done less? If you think of the worms I might have sent him!..." And as regards the olive branch incident, it is to be noted that the leaves were blood-stained and tied with a swastika ribbon. "I have the most satisfactory assurances," said Jonah, the Dove, Franco, Pétain, Hoare, *

whatever his momentary alias was. "If only you would let me arrange! A little of my tact...."

But that had made even the whale sick.

* The reader may season here according to taste in this space reserved for the purpose. Additional pages for the names of local personages and special acquaintances can be inserted if necessary. He will find this an agreeable way of wiling away the time in his air-raid shelter and a fruitful provocative of quite animated discussion almost anywhere.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE LOOK-OUT OF THE ARK

I

THE Ark had been at sea for a year and three weeks, and she still seemed as far from a landing as ever. New species of barnacles encumbered her bottom. The elephants, now on quarter rations, were extremely weak and deflated, and the rhinoceroses were the shadow of their former selves. All their plumpness, their noble roundness and convexities, had gone. They lay about like huge unpacked leather bags. People walked over them. But the hippopotami had learnt to eat fresh fish with apparent appetite.

The spell of warm, dry weather that had followed the affair of the Albatross had given the Ark a respite from the pitching and tossing that had hitherto enhanced the discomfort of her crowded passengers. The sun was setting. Noah was in charge of the navigation, but the Lord, with his characteristic liking for evening and twilight effects, had joined him in the look-out.

The only flaw upon the tranquil glow was a faint, unpleasant, all too human smell, from Jonah. "*Phew!*" whispered the Lord to himself.

"We might dynamite him," said Noah, breaking a thoughtful silence.

"If we broke him up the little fishes might have a go at him."

"They'd taste of him."

"I see the gulls perch on him at times, so that he cannot be absolutely unendurable, and that raven that flies around certainly had a peck at him."

"And then came back to the Ark and sat on our ridge pole, cleaning its beak in a fussy way and talking to itself."

"What did it say?"

"*Nevermore*. What else *can* a raven say?"

"He will come back somehow, anyhow," said the Lord despondently. "Whatever we do...."

“The everlasting wangler!” the Lord reflected. “One can do a deal with the devil, but that invincible sneak — His last idea is a fair *quid pro quo*. He is the essential treacherous cunning in man, the ‘save a bit out of it’ soul, the dodger of obligations, the profiteering partner, the undying Ananias, the sweater of opportunity, the area sneak, the bounder into moonshine according to their powers and magnitudes and there would be the waning moon floating like a ship in the sky, and then, beneath it and overtaking it and dissolving it, the break of day and the red-rimmed promise of the sun....

Noah spoke at large.

“No man is beaten until he knows and admits he is beaten, and that I will never know nor admit.”

“There I am with you,” said the Lord, in a parenthesis that demanded no reply.

“Nor will we cease to fight these overwhelming powers,” said Noah....

His sentence remains unfinished. The final pages of this story do not appear to be forthcoming. They never may be. As there is so much of current interest in it, it has been decided to print and publish the expanding narrative so far as it goes now. So that this is not so much the end as a colophon, thus

YOU CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL

Wells' final novel, published in 1942, reflects his increasingly pessimistic view of humanity. Utilising as its foundation the life story of Edward Albert Tewler, the novel presents, more or less didactically, its author's views on everything from sex and politics to the burgeoning world of early cinema. Tewler is presented as a blinkered, narrow-minded individual, whom Wells intends as a type for humanity as it exists at the time of writing. Wells argues, however, not that this is symptomatic of a degeneration in mankind's capacity to control its destiny, but rather that this shows how the *real* or ultimate iteration of humanity has not yet developed. Consequently, the novel ends on a note of uncertainty (rather than of either optimism or pessimism per se).

Wells intended the novel to be the greatest and fullest expression of his art and thought – an entertaining story that would also educate and stimulate the reader intellectually. It was well-reviewed in Britain and proved something of a minor bestseller, but is now one of Wells' least-read novels.

Wells in 1943

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TO CHRISTOPHER MORELY,

WHO RICHLY DESERVES IT,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION. — PLAIN COMMON SENSE

"WHAT *are* ideers?" said Mr Edward Albert Tewler. "What *good* are they? What *good* do they do you?"

Young Tewler had no answer.

"You get these here books," said Mr Tewler senior.

"You don't *'ave* to read 'em. It can't be good for your eyes, especially nowadays with all this light-saving and everything. And what, do you get out of them?" He paused for his own contemptuous reply....*"Ideers!"*

"*I* made good," Mr Tewler continued, trampling over the rebellious silence of his offspring. "And why? Because I took jolly good care to steer clear of all these Ideers. I made up my mind and I did. What the world wants of a man is Character — and you can't have much character left if you've muddled yourself up with Ideers. See! I ask you— 'ow I made good?"

"You got the G.C.," said young Tewler. "We're all proud of you."

"Very well," said Mr Tewler senior conclusively.

There was a pause. "All the same," said young Tewler.

"Ah!" said his father.

"All the same," said young Tewler. "You got to keep up with the times. Things *do* change."

"You don't change human nature. There's such things as the Eternal Verities, 'Enery. Ever 'eard of 'em?"

"Yerss. I know. But all this stuff that's getting about. Like abolishing distance, stopping this air war, having a sort of federal world. If we don't *end* war, war will end us. All that."

"Claptrap," said his father. "Bawls."

"Well," said his offspring. "I was reading a book—"

"There you go!"

"Well, *he* said anyhow, he wasn't talking about Ideers. He was talking about facts. That's what he said. Just as you and me might be."

"Facts! What are these precious *facts* of 'is? In a book!"

“Well, I’m telling you. He says that what with all this invention and discovery that’s been going on life isn’t the same as it used to be. We’ve got so that everybody’s on our doorstep. We’ve got power, more than we ever ‘ad, so as to be able to smash our world to bits. And ‘e says we are smashing it to bits. And what he says is that whether it’s hard, whether it goes against the grain, we can’t go on in the old way. We got to exert ourselves. War, ‘e says, will last for ever unless we get a lot of new things going....”

“Now listen to me, ‘Enery. Who is it ‘as been putting all these Ideers into you? — for Ideers they are, say what you like. Who is it, I ask? Some one who’s written a book? Eh? Some professor or journalist or something of that sort? Some devilish clever chap who isn’t reely anybody at all. Somebody who’d just jump at the chance of getting a ‘undred pounds for writing a book to depress people and not mind what happens. Well, let’s come down to brass tacks. Put him on one side there. As it might be — so. Now here on the other ‘and you’ve got real people, thousands of those who know. Here’s our great Leader. Don’t he know anything, ‘Enery? Who are you and your book-writer to criticise and sit in judgment on ‘im? Here’s all these men of experience in the government, older than you are, wiser than you are, brought up to deal with just these particular things. Here’s business men with great businesses, businesses you haven’t the beginnings of a notion. Don’t they know anything? No? You got ideers about India. Have you ever bin to India, ‘Enery? They ‘ave. You’ve got notions about Japan. What do you know of Japan? There they are, they got the best science, the very fullest information, the knowledge, they’ve learnt everything they could teach ’em at the universities, let alone the experience, and along comes some — some unresponsible scribbler with his ideers... Unresponsible scribbler, I said, and I repeat it, unresponsible, with his twopenny-halfpenny ideers, arguing and suggesting. ‘E knows this and ‘e knows that. And everybody else is wrong. And off you fly!”

“Well, the world now isn’t so particularly satisfactory.... Falling to pieces like.... Don’t seem to settle down; does it?....”

“It’s as right as it can be. What do you know of the difficulties they got to contend against? You got to trust ‘em. Who are *you* to set yourself up?”

“All the same you can’t help thinking—”

“Think? yes — I admit that — you got to think, out think in the right way. Think like people round you think. Don’t go rushing about like a dog with a wasp in his ear, with ideers that don’t stand to reason. All this talk of a new world! Brave new world it would be! As the saying goes. Brave New World! Stay put where you are, boy. Do you want to be queer? Do you want to go about talking all this sort of thing just to be larfed at? Suppose — now suppose even there was something in all that stuff you get in books. There’s ‘undreds of books saying this that and the other thing. Who’s to tell you which is right? I ask you. I do put it to you, ‘Enery.”

Edward Albert Tewler’s face was very grave and earnest and full of parental solicitude. His voice lost its faint flavour of querulous protest and became simply affectionate. “You’ll grow out of all this, ‘Enery,” he said. “It’s a sort of measles of the mind. It rubs off. *I* had it. Not as bad as you, I admit, for I didn’t run the same risks. I was never a great reader, thank God, and when I did read I stuck to safe books. Still I know how it goes....

“Frinstance I was brought up a bit narrer. My mother, she was an angel if ever was, but she was narrer. She got narrer. She was too good to suspect them as got ‘old of her. When it came to Total Immersion and all that and going to meeting Sunday after Sunday I struck. It wasn’t that I lost my faith. No. It grew. It broadened out, my boy. Simple earnest Christianity, says I, and none of your Creeds and Ideers and complications. And that’s what I am, a Simple Believing Christian in a Christian Land. The Lord died to save us, ‘Enery, me and you, and there’s no need to make a song about it. Or risk ketching your death of cold as they wanted me to do. Trust in God and honour the King. That’s good enough for me. Yes.”

He paused. He smiled indulgently at his past.

“A little religious trouble I did ‘ave even after that. I didn’t take things for granted.... That’s not my way. About the ark it was. Curious! I’ll tell you. You see, I bin to the Zoo and suddenly I doubted about whether the ark could ‘ave ‘eld all them animals. I did, ‘Enery. Being clever, that was. Being silly, my boy. It was the Devil put it into me to make a fool of me. Just as though God Ormighty couldn’t pack anything into anything if ‘E ‘ad a mind to.

Why, if he'd wanted to. He could've put all them animals into a nutshell — all of them. Leastways — a cokernut, say. Easy —

"I saw the light, and so will you, 'Enery. All this Brave Noo World of theirs! Bunkum New World, says I. Gord larfs at it. Ferget it!... You'll grow out of it. At heart you're sound, my boy. You're the bulldog breed. At heart, when you're put to the test, you'll stand up to it as I stood up to it and come out right side up."

The young man looked mulish still, but he said no more.

The conversation hung fire for a moment.

Then Edward Albert Tewler resumed. "I'm glad to have this talk with you. Now you are going away, I've been a bit worried. Seeing you reading so much. There's other subjects I might talk to you about as father to son — but nowadays people seem to know such a lot. More than ever I did. We won't go into all that, No.... You may be away a long time, and it's not so easy to get about now as it used to be. I've never been much of a letter-writer....

"There's all this new sort of fever about. They say it's the water. Doctors aren't what they were. Sometimes when I get a fit of them night-stummick-aches of mine. Twisty they are. Make me 'oiler. May be fancy, but one can't help thinking. You may come back 'ere one of these days, my boy, and not find me. No good pulling a long face about it,

"Anyhow I've said my say to you. You can't be too careful about those books. I'd burn the whole lot of them if I had my say, and I'm not the only one who thinks that. Except of course The Book. But those others. Right is right and wrong is wrong, and the simpler you are about that, the better. I'd say that to you, 'Enery, if these was my last words to you. As maybe they are, almost. You'll soon be packing....

"That old cemetery there at Highgate. High up and quiet. It's getting a bit crowded, but I guess they'll find a corner for me. Don't forget me, my boy, altogether. And don't let me be forgotten altogether. Tomb of the Unknown Citizen. Eh? It isn't much I ask for. You needn't go to the expense of anything fulsome, my son. No. Just 'ave my name put there, Edward Albert Tewler, G.C., plain letters on a plain slab, and then just this " — his voice fell a little as though the beauty of his own phrase overcame him: "Deeds not

words. Deeds not words. That's me, 'Enery...."

So be it. You shall have him unadorned; you shall have his plain unvarnished record. Nothing fulsome about it. This is a plain straight story of deeds and character — not character in general but the character you get in characters. What they did, what they said — there must, you know, be a sound track to a picture nowadays — but nothing like thought, no sort of consecutive thought. No dissertations, no arguments, above all no projects nor incitements nor propaganda, shall break the flow of our narrative; no more of these damned "ideers" shall there be, than mice in the Small Cats' House. For anything of that sort this tale will leave you unruffled. We just take what comes to us.

Whether it will leave you with quite the biography that floated in the mind of Edward Albert Tewler, G.C., behind that epitaph, is another matter. He scrutinised himself as little as he scrutinised the world about him. Simple as his life had been, he had forgotten many things about it. We cannot recall his past; we shall have to exhume it bit by bit.

One thing we may remark here, and that is that while he imagined he was doing things to the world, the reality was that the world was doing things to him. All he did from first to last was to react to it. "Deeds!" said he, but did he ever do anything to the world about him? It begot and bore him, it moulded and made him. He still lives, but it is the world around him that will decide when the time for his epitaph has come, This is the story of the Deeds and Sayings of Edward Albert Tewler. From his point of view. But like those amusing pictures you find in books on Optics that will turn inside out as you look at them, it is equally the story of this whole universe of Edward Albert Tewler, and he is just the empty shape of a human being at the centre of it — its resultant, its creature.

But here we touch upon the profoundest riddle in this affair called life. It has echoed down the ages. Can Edward Albert, in view of the fact that he is a creature, have such a thing as free will? Could something, a response not merely passive but Satanic, enter into and possess that shape? The answer No has never quite convinced mankind. But this is a matter we must postpone until the end. Plain story we have to tell, but if, in spite of that resolution, plain story

leads at last to an insoluble dualism, thither we must go. We may find ourselves free to balance or take sides.

Young Tewler shall not trouble you again. We dismiss him and his poor belated mental fermentation here and now. Don't ask me what became of him. It would only make you uncomfortable. Let me tell the plain tale of Edward Albert Tewler, G.C., who grew up in that great crowded sunset of human security between 1918 and 1938, before our wars were resumed in real earnest and men were changed to heroes in a night.

Here we have a picture of the modern novel. Look at it hard and alternately you see the vase, the social vessel, and nothing else, and then the social vessel vanishes and you see individuals and nothing else.

BOOK I.. THE BIRTH AND EARLY UPBRINGING. OF EDWARD ALBERT TEWLER

I. — DARLING BUD

IT took Mrs Richard Tewler, his mother, three and twenty hours to bring her only son into the world. He came shyly, not head-first but toe-first like a timid bather, and that sort of presentation always causes trouble. It is doubtful if his reluctant entry into this fierce universe would have occurred even then if it had not been for the extreme inadequacy of the knowledge of what are called preventatives that prevailed in the late Victorian period. People didn't want children then, except by heart's desire, but they got them nevertheless. One knew there was some sort of knowledge about it, but one couldn't be too careful whom one asked, and your doctor also in those days couldn't be too careful in misunderstanding your discreet hints and soundings. In those days England was far behind Polynesia in that matter. So there you were — and do what you could, you were liable to be caught.

Yet such is the heart of woman that Edward Albert Tewler had been scarcely four and twenty hours in this dangerous world before his mother loved him passionately. Neither she nor her husband had really desired him. And now he was the animating centre of their lives. Nature had played a trick upon them, caught them in a careless moment, and this miracle occurred.

If Mrs Tewler was overcome by love such as she had never known before, Mr Tewler was equally distended by pride. He was the useful repair man to Messrs Colebrook and Mahogany of North Lonsdale Street; a row of great windows they had, in those days, full of the loveliest Chinese porcelain, Danish China, Venetian glass, old Wedgwood and Spode and Chelsea, and every sort of old and modern English ware; and he came up in a green baize apron from somewhere below and considered the case carefully and gave his advice with discretion, and cemented invisibly and filled up gaps and, when necessary, riveted with the utmost skill. He was used to handling delicate, fragile things. But never in his life had he held anything so fragile and delicate as Edward Albert in the nascent stage.

And he had made this wonder .l He himself had made it. He held

it in his arms, having promised on his honour not to drop it whatever he did, and he marvelled at its perfection.

It had hair, darkish hair of an extreme softness and fineness. There were no teeth, and its round mouth expressed an artless . astonishment tinged with resentment, but its nose was finished minutely, nostrils and bridge and all, and it had hands, complete hands with little nails — every finger had a miniature nail on it, a perfect finger-nail. One, two, three, four, five fingers — only so delicate! And toes also. Not one missing.

He pointed this out to his wife and she shared his pride. They doubted secretly if anyone else had ever produced so highly finished a product. If you had cared to do so, you could have told the little chap's fortune from those hands. They were not flat and featureless as you might have expected them to be; already they had all the lines and creases known to palmistry. If no one had ever thought of "This little pig went to market", I think Mrs Tewler would have invented something of the kind herself. She seemed unable to get over the fact that Edward Albert at the age of a week had as many fingers as his father. And later on, weeks later, when she was pretending to bite them off and gobble them up she was rewarded by Edward Albert Tewler's first indisputable smile He gurgled and he smiled.

The pride of Richard Tewler took many forms and masks according to his immediate surroundings. The "governor" at Colebrook and Mahogany's, Jim Whittaker — he had married Jane Mahogany — had heard of the great event.

"All's well with the Missus, Tewler?" he asked.

"All Sir Garnet, Sir," said Mr Richard Tewler. "They tell me he weighed nine pounds."

"That's a good start," said Mr Whittaker. "He'll fall away from that for a bit, but that won't be anything to worry about. "the firm's been thinking of a silver mug. If there's no other godfathers in sight. Eh?"

"Such a nonner," said Mr Tewler, overwhelmed....

Among the warehousemen and boys downstairs he assumed an air of modest assurance. They attempted badinage.

"So you didn't get them twins you were counting on, Mr Tooler," said old Matteriock.

“Sample first,” said Mr Tewler.

“You took your time getting started,” said old Matterlock.

“Better than never starting at all, grandfather.”

“That’s all you know, my boy. Well, now you’ve found out how it’s done, you be careful not to overdo it. What I mean is, don’t make a ‘abit of it.”

“Somebody’s got to keep up the breed,” said Mr Tewler.

Mr Matteriock paused in his packing in order to demolish Mr Tewler by facial play. He featured an opinion of Mr Tewler’s genes, a doubt of his health and beauty, an astonishment at his presumption....

The proud father was invincible. “It ain’t no good, Methuselah. You should see my kid.”

Shackle, .known as the Sniffer because of an objectionable but incurable habit, winked heavily at Matteriock, and wiped his muzzle with his sleeve. “What you ought to do, Tewler, you know, is to stick a notice of it in the *Times*; births, marriages, and deaths. No, no other paper, just the *Times*. ‘Mrs Tewler of a son, no flowers by request.’ Just that and the address.... Oh, I know what I’m talking about. I know a chap that did it. In the blasted old Times, and straight off from all over the country they began sending his missus samples of foods and drinks and medicine, and stuff, for the kid and for ‘er. Strengthenin’ things and so on. I do believe there was a bottle of special nourishing stout. Just think of that! Pounds worth it came to.”

For a moment Mr Tewler considered the possibility. Then he put it aside. “Mrs Whittaker might see it,” he said,

“The guv’nor might laugh it off but she wouldn’t. She’d think it a liberty....”

But as he made his way home to Camden Town that night, he found himself repeating in a sort of song, “Mrs Richard Tewler of a son. Mrs Richard Tewler of a son,” He went over the details of the conversation and decided he had had much the better of old Matterlock. And of course it was quite right that one mustn’t make a ‘abit of it.

Still, somewhen there might have to be some one to wear out Edward Albert’s clothes. Children grew so fast they didn’t half wear their clothes out. He’d heard that said. It was almost as cheap to

provide for two as for one — two or at the outside three. Not more. “Mrs Richard Tewler of a son.” What would old Matterlock say to that? One in the eye for him. It made him feel quite excited and philoprogenitive, and when he got home, Mrs Tewler thought he had never been more affectionate. “Not yet for a bit, Dickybird,” she said.

She hadn’t called him Dickybird for years.... Later on that idea recurred to them, particularly after some transitory infection had jumped up the temperature of Master Edward Albert to 104° Fahrenheit, “To think of that little cot empty!?” said Mrs Tewler, “What it would be.”

But you cannot be too careful, and the matter had to be considered from every point of view. After all there was no hurry. No need to plunge, If not to-day, then next week or next month. The “governor” had been very nice about Edward Albert, but you never knew how things may be misinterpreted.

“Of course,” said Mr Richard Tewler, “it would sort of look like rushing him for another silver mug. You have to think of that.”

So in the end Edward Albert Tewler remained an only child. A little brother or sister was eliminated altogether from his world of possibility by the unexpected death of his father when he was four. Mr Richard Tewler was crossing the road from Camden Town Tube Station and had just passed behind an omnibus, when he discovered another bearing down upon him from the opposite direction and close upon him. He might have dashed across in front 01 that, but suddenly he stopped dead. It would have been wiser to recoil. You cannot be too careful, and in that instant while he stood uncertain as to the best course to pursue, the big vehicle, which was swerving to pass behind him, skidded and killed him.

Fortunately he had insured his life so fully, taking out a new policy when Edward Albert was born, that on the whole his wife and son were left rather better off than they had ever been before his loss. He had belonged to a Burial Society, and the funeral had a black magnificence of the most satisfying sort. Messrs Colebrook and Mahogany put up a special ceremonial shutter (used normally for royal funerals) at each great window, six of the warehousemen, including Matterlock and Shackle the Sniffer, were given time off to attend the funeral, and Jim Whittaker, who knew that Tewler was

irreplaceable and ought to have had a rise years ago, sent as big a wreath of virginal lilies as money could buy. The salesman in the shop also sent a wreath, and Mrs Tewler's uncle in Scotland astonished her by sending one too; a distinctly niggardly one, however, of everlasting flowers, with a curious second-hand look about it.

That intrigued her greatly. Why had he sent it? How he had come by it was beyond her imaginative range. He had acquired it some months before when he sold, up one of his weekly tenants, an undertaker's widow. He had taken it because there was nothing else to take in its place. But he hated the sight of it once he had got it and hung it up on the living-room wall. He began to have fancies about it. He feared it might grace his own demise. The undertaker's widow, a dark highland woman with second sight, had cursed him. Simply for taking what was due to him she had cursed him. Maybe she had cursed this wreath on to him. Once he had put it in the dustbin, but the dustman brought it back next day and wanted a whole bawbee, man, as a reward! He put it here and he put it there, he had a fit of indigestion, and its air of waiting for him increased. The death of his nephew-in-law had come as a happy solution. He did not feel he was giving something away; he was simply releasing himself from a menace. Handing it on whence it could never come back to roost.

But it seemed to Mrs Tewler. that in his heart he must have been inspired by some glimmer of obligation towards his sole surviving next of kin. That gave her food for reverie, and later on she wrote him a long, long, grateful letter telling him of the wonderfulness of Edward Albert and of her own complete devotion to the little fellow; hard struggle though it might be for her; and so on. The old man saw no reason to waste a postage stamp on a reply.

At the funeral, which was wet and windy, Mrs Tewler wore a quite astonishing amount of crape for such a slender person. Long streamers waved about her and made sudden almost coquettish tentacular assaults upon the officiating clergy, patting their faces, even getting round their legs. Edward Albert himself wore a black Fauntleroy velvet suit with a lace collar. He had been put into knickerbockers for the first time. He had looked forward to his escape from the shame of girlish plaid frocks with unalloyed

pleasure, sad though the occasion was. But the knickerbockers had been put together rather thoughtlessly, and they threatened to saw him asunder at every movement. Life suddenly became a long cold vista of bisection, so that he wept unaffectedly with disappointment and pain, to the edification of all beholders.

His mother was profoundly touched by this evidence of precocious sensibility. She had feared he might stare about and ask impossible questions, and point.

"You are all I have left," she sobbed, constricting him and wetting him in a passionate embrace. "You are everything in the world to me. You must be my Dickybird and everything, now that He has gone."

She was disposed at first to go on wearing her weeds indefinitely as dear Queen Victoria did, but afterwards someone suggested to her that this might cast a shadow upon Edward Albert's budding mind. So she compromised on black and white and mauve for such short years as still remained to her.

II. — MRS HUMBELAY MARVELS

SO it was Edward Albert Tewler began his earthly career, rather overweight and with a silver mug to his mouth, at a date so auspicious that when the World War of 1914 — 18 broke out he was four years too young to take an active part in it. Few of us could imagine a more fortunate beginning. Yet he missed a father's guidance, and — in 1914 — his mother also passed over to that better world, where insurance is unnecessary — all our dear lost Dickybirds wait our coming, and as for the weary, the weary are at rest.

I have told my tale but ill if I have failed to convey that if this most natural and excellent of mothers had any fault at all in her, it was a certain disposition to excessive solicitude, and, associated with that and integral to that, an element of fear. I will not discuss whether these qualities were innate or the infection of her generation, for that would be a breach of the undertaking given in the Preface. She was not afraid herself, but her protective motherliness extended to everyone and everything that appertained to her. And it came to a focus upon young Albert Edward, who was always central to her thoughts and dreams and plans and speeches. She was not you must understand an unhappy woman. She lived a life of intensely concentrated anxious happiness. There was always some new menace to excite her.

Her Treasure had to be shielded from every harm. He had to be watched over and trained to recoil from every form of danger. His shielding was her sole topic of conversation. She welcomed every new threat to her darling; she sought ideas for fresh precautions. She would ask the most churlish to advise her, and remained poised expectant while they did their best to keep their replies within the still very narrow limits of early Edwardian good manners. Their real ideas about what ought to be done to Edward Albert they muttered when she was out of earshot. But one old curmudgeon was driven to say: "Let him be run over. Let him. I implore you. He won't do it twice. That'll teach him if nothing else will."

Of course he could not know how dear Richard had been killed.

Still it was heartless....

She made her solicitude the justification for an unrelenting pursuit of lecturers, teachers, doctors, and the minor clergy.

"No harm shall come near him," she said. "Only tell me."

Earnest preachers hid in vestries, peeping slyly at her until she went away, and hygienic experts, after giving the most edifying lectures and passing lightly over the more difficult parts, escaped through the most undignified and unhygienic exits to avoid this importunate widow's demand for precisions. She subscribed to numerous periodicals wherein

"Aunt Jane" or "Dorothy Wisdom" advised and answered readers' questions, when a coupon was enclosed. She asked for all the information that was fit to print, and got it — time after time.

But there are many dangers and riddles that centre upon the upbringing of a solitary male child that cannot be solved in public print, and here Mrs Tewler was much beholden to intimate, shamefaced but extremely interesting talks with various people endowed with a rich store of obsessions and inaccurate but moving information, who would talk to her in undertones, with circumlocutions, metaphors and gestures and an obvious mutuality of relief. There was, for example, Mrs Humbelay, acquired at the Baptist Social Afternoons, who would come to tea, or entertain Mrs Tewler in her own modest but extremely over-furnished apartment. She said very little at the Socials, but she listened with an appreciative tranquility, and she was very helpful, bringing little delicacies and making buttered toast.

These Socials were becoming an increasingly important factor in Mrs Tewler's life. Now there was no Dickybird to whom she could tell her troubles in the evening she turned more definitely to the little close Baptist community. Behind the blue door they were Strict and Particular and she agreed. She could talk about her devotion to her Darling and about her ill-health with a reasonable reciprocity. And in particular there was this Mrs Humbelay.

Mrs Humbelay had been and still was an extremely fine woman, and everything was fine and large about her, her things particularly, except her rooms, which were small, and her voice, which was infinitesimal, a whisper at the best of times, and an inaudible wheeze,

in which facial expression had to come to its assistance. She had not very much facial expression beyond a certain astonishment at the things she was saying.

She had left her village school in a state of innocent simplicity to become under-housemaid to Miss Pooter-Bayton, who was then living under the protection and in the household of the scandalous Duke of Dawes, the sixth Duke. There was some pretence that Miss Pooter-Bayton had a husband somewhere and that her relations to the Duke were Platonic. But when the under-housemaid asked what Platonic was, she got only mirthful and perplexing replies. She gave way to wonder, and open-eyed and breathless wonder became her permanent attitude to life. Fate had decided that she should see the entirely disreputable side of what used to be called the *Fin de Siècle*. She was a young, simple, rather pretty, acquiescent creature, and all sorts of things happened to her. She was never greatly shocked. She wept at nothing; she laughed at nothing. Fate pitched her about and she marvelled. "The things they do!" she said.

The things they did to her!

It wasn't right, she knew, but apparently there was no right, really. Everybody told lies about what they did, making things out to be worse or better as the mood took them. That gave her a sense of standards. The Duke's house steward, who had fallen in love with her wide-eyed credulity, suddenly married her. It seemed rather unnecessary after all that had happened to her, but he knew what he was up to. "We are going to run a private hotel down in Cornwall for the Duke and his sort," he said, "and fine times we're going to have there," and so she acquired that houseful of large furniture of which the remnant still clung to her, Except the pictures. She got rid of all that stuff. Fine times they had for a bit, and then he turned against her. There was a great *Fin de Siècle* scandal in London and he seemed to change. He said one day that she was getting too fat for endurance and that a cow could make love better than she did. "I do my best," she said. "If only you'd tell me what you want me to do...."

Then suddenly the *Fin de Siècle* world fled abroad in a great flutter like starlings. "You run this place, my dear, until things blow over and I come back, and put by all the money for me," he said, and he left her, still marvelling but bankrupt, in a great shady hotel that

had figured in the case so conspicuously that nobody now would come near it. She extricated herself as well as she could, and came to London; the works of art she sold to furtive dealers and private collectors; and, having always had a subdued craving for conventional standards and a virtuous life, she joined the congregation of the smaller Baptist Church up Camden Hill, the Particular Baptist Church, the one with the blue doorway. She disliked smoking and detested alcohol, and the Baptist atmosphere suited her admirably. She tried to thin herself by avoiding almost every sort of food except cakes and buttered toast at tea-time, and little snacks in between meals. Yet every day she grew larger of body and shorter of breath, and her look of faint perplexity increased. As you may understand, she felt a great need to talk to someone about the fantastic whirl of improper revelations amidst which she had been spinning all her life. And you will realise what a godsend she was to Mr Tewler, and what a godsend Mrs Tewler was to her.

Yet if only she had not had that trick of letting her voice die out with her lips still active but inaudible, and staring you with those innocent, earnest, inquiring blue eyes of hers, Mrs Tewler's ideas might have been more explicit,

"Sometimes I can't make head or tail of it," Mrs. Tewler would complain, but really it was the tail she lost. She wanted to know, for Dearest One's sake, what were all those dreadful things that lay in wait for the unguarded young, underneath the sunken tail and the raised eyebrows. She wanted particulars and she got this sort of thing.

"Sometimes I think it's the good ones really make the bad ones. For after all, you see...."

"There isn't so very much that they can do with themselves...."

"Well, my dear, it isn't as though we was octopuses, is it? all legs and arms and things...."

"His Grace had a sort of joking way of saying, 'All the world's a stage, my girl'...."

Mrs Tewler went to the Public Library afterwards and with the librarian's assistance looked that up in Bartlett's Familiar Quotations:

"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely

players. They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts, His acts being seven ages....”

Nothing in that. It was a mystery.

“All they want to do is something queer and awful. Would it matter — whether it was upside down or round about, if the good people didn’t make such a fuss about it? *I* could never find anything so wonderful....”

“But good people say, ‘This is a sin’, and that is terrible....”

“What is — exactly?”

“Doing all these things. And so they make laws against them and all that, and it seems to give them dignity, so to to speak, as though they mattered. Why should they matter? For instance, is there really any great harm....”

Lost again!

Most people like breaking laws, just to show they aren’t to be put upon. If they’d been left alone, they’d just have done this or that and forgotten about it. Everybody does things somewhen—”

“But they are sins,” cried Mrs Tewler. “And I think it’s all terrible. And wicked!”

“Maybe you’re right. They call it Original Sin, It seems the most unoriginal sort of sin possible to me. Why if for example....”

“But someone must teach them these dreadful things!”

“They get together. Or they get alone. And there’s nothing else to distract them. And before you know where you are you find....”

“But if one keeps one’s little boy away from nasty little boys and girls, and watches over his reading and never leaves him alone until he’s sound asleep—”

“There’s dreams,” said the wise woman. “There’s fancies that come from nowhere at all. Very likely you’ve forgotten your own early dreams and fancies. Most people do. Or they wouldn’t make such a fuss. I haven’t. Why, long before I went into service, I used to sleep with the curate and my elder brother and a boy I once saw bathing—”

“My dear Mrs Humbelay!”

“Only in dreams. Have you forgotten all that about yourself? Well “ — down went the voice—” and I used to imagine myself....” Mrs Tewler could get nothing of it.

“Oh! Oh!” she cried. “My Boy isn’t like that. My Boy can’t be like that He just sleeps like a little harmless lamb....”

“Maybe he’s different. Still I’m only telling you what I’ve come across in life. *I* can’t make out what it’s all about....

“It’s a great relief to talk to an understanding woman like yourself. I’ve thought of putting all my troubles plainly and simply to Mr Burlap. What I’ve been through. What I’ve seen. But you see he doesn’t know anything of what I’ve been, really. He thinks I’m just a comfortable respectable widow. I wouldn’t like him to turn against me...”

“I don’t think you’d be wise to tell him.”

“Nor me. Still, what’s the answer to it all? We’ve got all these desires and impulses, we’re told, so as to have children.

So you may say. But they don’t *lead* to children, Mrs Tewler. They lead right away from them. Why, I ask you, my dear, should Nature dispose a man — well now, for example, to....”

III. — MR MYAME DEPLORES SIN

MRS TEWLER brooded profoundly on these conventions. Enough came across to convince her of the diabolical wickedness that would presently be weaving its snares about the unsuspecting feet of the Most Precious Child in the world. She tried Mr Burlap, the pastor of the little chape). He received her in his Sanctum. “It’s a very difficult thing,” she said, “for a mother to know what to do about the — I hardly know how to put it — well, the sexual education of a solitary fatherless child.”

“H’rump,” said Mr Burlap. He leant back in his chair and looked as thoughtful as he could, but his ears and nostrils had suddenly gone very red, and his eyes, magnified by his spectacles, were uncomfortable and defensive.

“Yee-es,” he said. “It is a difficult problem.”

“It is a difficult problem.”

“It is certainly, a very difficult problem.”

“That’s what I feel.”

So far they were in perfect agreement.

“Whether he ought to be told” she resumed after a pause.

“Whether he ought to be warned. Books perhaps. A talk to a doctor.”

“Oom,” said Mr Burlap, filling the Sanctum with his reverberation.

“Exactly,” she said, and waited.

“You see, my dear Mrs Tewler, that this problem so to speak varies with the circumstances of the case. We are not all made alike. What may be wise in one case may be quite unsuitable for another case.”

“Yes? “she said.

“And of course, Vice Versa.”

“I see that,” she said.

“Rereads?”

“Quite often.”

“There is a little book called, I believe, *The Loves of the Flowers*. Mr Burlap’s face was suffused with an honourable blush. “He could

have no more helpful introduction to the — to the great mystery."

"I will give it to him."

"And then perhaps a little judicious talk."

"Judicious talk."

"When the opportunity arises,"

"I must pray for that."

All that was very clear and helpful. But it seemed to leave something still to be said. There was something even a little superficial about it all. "Nowadays," she said, "there is so much evil about."

"These are evil times, Mrs Tewler. 'The world is very evil; the times are growing late.' This has never been so true as it is to-day. Guard him. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Keep him close to you. Yes."

He seemed to be wanting to convey that the matter was practically settled.

"I have taught him his letters and so on, but presently he will have to go to school. There he may learn — all sorts of things."

"Oom," said Mr Burlap again, and then seemed to be struck by an idea.

"I hear such dreadful things of schools," she said. Mr Burlap roused himself from his idea. "Boarding schools?"

"Yes, boarding Schools."

"Boarding schools," said Mr Burlap, "are, without exception, Sinks of Iniquity. Especially the Preparatory Schools and the so-called Public Schools. I know. I know. There are things — I cannot speak of them,"

"That is exactly what I came to talk to you about," said Mrs Tewler.

"Well," said the worthy pastor, "H'rump. Here we have in our own little congregation just the one man.... You have never noted? Mr Myame. That slender, reserved man with a big head, large black side-whiskers and a bass voice. You must at least have noticed his voice. You could hardly fail to do that. He is a man of great spiritual power, a Boanerges, a son of Thunder. He has a small, a very select, private day school. He is most particular whom he takes. His wife is, I fear, consumptive; a very sweet and tender woman. They have no

children of their own; it is a great sorrow to them; but their school is in the best sense of the word their family. They study the characters of their little charges. They are never weary of discussing them. There and with your home influence, I cannot imagine any harm coming near to your little fellow....”

So Mrs Tewler went to Mr Myame.

There was something very reassuring in the grave earnestness of Mr Myame’s large grey eyes and of the black hair that streamed sporadically from every part of his visage. And instead of sitting far off and defensive at a desk, he came and stood right over her and studied her very earnestly as he talked down to her. After a little preliminary skirmishing she came to the point, “To be frank,” said she, with eyes downcast, “I am troubled by problems — My poor little Hopeful.... Without a father.... The onset of sex. One cannot be too careful.”

“No,” said Mr Myame, in a voice that enveloped her. “That is the greatest scandal of my profession. Eager only for examinational results and what are called games. Cram and cricket. The carelessless, the indifference, to purity, to true manliness....”

“I hear,” said she, and paused. “*I* know so little about these things. But I have been told,.... Things have come to my knowledge. Very dreadful things....”

“Such as — ?” he helped her.

Bit by bit they led each other into the thickets of this absorbing subject.

“No one warns them.” said Mr Myame. “No one tells them of the dangers.... Their own little school-fellows make themselves the very agents of the devil.”

“Yes,” she said, and looked up, stirred by the vibrant passion in his voice.

A gleam of fanaticism shone in Mr Myame’s eye.

“We must speak plainly,” he said. “We must avoid all self-deception.”

He shirked no particulars. It was a most edifying conversation. His discreet undertones were like the rumble of a train in a distant tunnel. Under any other circumstances it would, she felt, have been painful and very indelicate of her to pursue this knowledge, but for

her Sweet Boy she felt no sacrifice was too great. So she did not merely pursue it. She hunted it into its most recondite corners, Mr Myame, who had never been honoured by the confidences of Mrs Humbelay, was astonished by the range of Mrs Tewler's knowledge. She must surely know it by inspiration....

"Another Parent?" asked his wife after he had let Mrs Tewler out.

"At the full rates," he said, with a certain gladness.

"You look — excited," she remarked.

"Fanny, I have been talking to the purest and holiest Mother I have ever known. Who could touch pitch and not be defiled. I have learnt much. It has been a great spiritual experience and I hope I may do my duty by her Little One,"

He paused.

"I have asked her to come to our inner circle meeting next Friday. She breaks bread with us but she has not yet undergone Baptism. She has hesitated but she is very desirous; Like you she has very delicate health. She does not want to risk an illness that might separate her from her son. Later perhaps...."

A phase of great spiritual contentment opened in Mrs Tewler's life. Impelled only by love and her sense of duty, she found she had come into a circle of intense and sustained mutual appreciation, a sort of inner chapel into which she was extremely careful not to introduce Mrs Humbelay. Mrs Humbelay could be very helpful and generous on the social side, but she was, one had to admit, lacking in real spirituality, suited to be at most a sort of lay sister to the chapel. And also subconsciously Mrs Tewler did not want to spoil Mrs Humbelay for herself.... It was a case of oil and water....

Everyone in that inner group was a Beloved Spirit, a Saintly Figure, a Noble and Outstanding Soul with an Inner Light shining through. Her Baptism continued to be deferred, but she seemed to anticipate its beneficent influence. She broke bread. She invented and exchanged experiences. Wrapped in that confident anticipation of an eternity of Glory which the Strict and Particular Baptists entertained, her face almost luminous with that happy inner light, she would thread her way through the countless multitudes of the damned who thronged the streets of Camden Town. And she led her One Darling by the hand.

And safe in her keeping Edward Albert would extend his tongue or snoot at the Children of Perdition passing him on their way to Judgment, or tug back to look at things in the shop windows. Sometimes there would be a bit of a struggle when the bill boards outside the newly opened cinema caught his eye. Moreover at that tender age he felt a curious desire to pull little girls by the hair, that twice became irresistible....

But when he was taxed with that he denied it stoutly. There were scenes in the street. Fierce accusations and disgraceful retorts. He said the little girls were Wicked Little Fibs. His mother would not believe it of him, and he could scarcely believe it of himself.

IV. — ANIMALISM OF ANIMALS

MRS TEWLER would let no nurse girl intervene between herself and her "Precious." During his lays, she herself, proud and vigilant, wheeled him out in his little perambulator every day up Camden Hill or into Regent's Park. When Edward Albert showed signs of friendliness towards dogs, and reached out at them, saying! "Bow-wow, Bow-wow," she intervened. "Never touch a strange dog," she said. "They bite. They bite and give you hydrophobia and you go mad and run about biting people. And then thy go mad too."

Something in the eye of the small boy suggested that this was not an altogether unattractive idea, "And you scream when you see water and you die in awful agony," she said. That gleam of hope faded.

Cats too Edward Albert was trained to shun. "They have pins in their toes," and sometimes these can be very poisonous pins. Lots of people have caught things from a cat's scratches. They bring measles into the house. They don't love you even when they purr. And then she heard a terrible story that had to be repeated at once to the cherished darling, of a cat, being petted, purring in the lap of its little mistress, and it watched her eyes, it kept on watching her eyes, and suddenly it sprang at them with its claws out....

After that Edward Albert developed an antipathy for cats, and declared he could not endure them in the same room .with him. He was cat-allergic, as people say nowadays, in their bright, inexact way. But at times cats got near him unobserved — which wasn't in accordance with that assertion. Horses too he feared, because he realised they could be equally dangerous to human life at either end. Sheep he was inclined to bully and run after, until one dreadful day in Regent's Park an old ram suddenly turned on him and stamped and stood his ground, Whereupon he fled screaming to his mother, who, pale but determined, intervened, confronted the danger and disposed of it very rapidly by opening and shutting her grey-and-white parasol. That left only the new grey squirrels which had recently come over from America for him to be reasonably bold about. He gave them nuts sometimes, but when they became over-familiar and wanted to run up his legs and over him, he struck and

kicked at them. When a passer-by remonstrated with his mother, the defended him.

"You never know what they'll give you," she said. "They're thick with fleas, you see, and he's a delicate, sensitive child."

Such were the reactions Edward Albert acquired to the indigenous fauna of London. His knowledge of the graver extremities to which Nature was allowed to go after the Fall of Man was derived chiefly from books. He invented a marvellous electric gun for his private comfort which always killed and never required re-loading, and this he always kept close at hand when he travelled in his reveries across the silver seas. Gorillas and bears lurked in the darker corners of the house and under his bed, and no sort of emergency would induce him to quit that shelter once he had been tucked up in it. Four guardian angels, he knew, watched about him, but none of them had the pluck or the intelligence to rout about underneath the bed. If he woke up at night they weren't there. He would listen to things creeping about and scrutinise dim ambiguous shapes until it became unbearable, and then he would scream for his mother.

"Was there a nasty bear?" she would say, rejoicing in her protectiveness. She never lit up the room and showed him the emptiness of his fears. So he learnt to hate animals in every shape and form. They were his enemies, and when he went to the Zoo he made derisive faces and put out his tongue at all the most dangerous animals behind the bars. But the mandrill went one better.

After the mandrill Mrs Tewler and her son went on for a time in silence.

Some things are unspeakable.

They both felt that animals ought never to have been allowed, none of them, and that coming to the Zoo was simply encouraging them to be the animals they were.

"Would you like a nice ride on the elephant, darling?" said Mrs Tewler, breaking that embarrassed silence, "or look at the dear little fish in the aquarium?"

At first Edward Albert was inclined to have a ride on the elephant. But he asked to have a good look at it first. He thought perhaps he might sit by the keeper man and be allowed to beat it about the head, but when he saw the elephant taking programmes and newspapers

out of people's hands and eating them, and when it handed up pennies to its keeper in the most intimate way, and when it suddenly put a moist mendicant trunk in front of him, he decided he would prefer to go home. So he and his mother went home.

V. — ALL-SEEING EYE

THE home in which Edward Albert's mind expanded for the nine crucial years that followed his father's death was a furnished first floor. He had the little back room. There was fortunately no bathroom, so up to the day of her death he performed his week-end top to toe modestly in a sitz bath into which a large can of hot water had been poured, in his mother's room, under her watchful eye. The front room was the living-room and sitting-room, and it had a balcony from which the little fellow could watch the proceedings of his wilder fellow-creatures at large in the street below. He went for walks with his mother to and fro from school and on small commissions. He skirted dogs widely and never answered if anyone accosted him. And one day when a small low-class boy punched him heavily in the back he went his way as though nothing had happened. But afterwards he meditated horrible reprisals! If ever he met that kid again!....

This peaceful and secluded home had been furnished in order to be let. Mrs Tewler had never possessed any things of her own, though she and her husband had often discussed setting up a place of their own on the hire purchase system, but as we have seen they were people of slow decisions. No human eye had ever seen the fundamental upholstery of the various chairs and sofa except by peeping. They were enveloped in covers changed semi-annually from a faded chintz to a weary cretonne. Folding-doors separated the apartment from the principal bedroom. There was a sideboard and a bookcase and various pictures, a fine steel engraving of a stag at bay, a view of Jerusalem, a picture of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort with a slaughtered deer, gillies, etc., balancing the stag, and a large and sensational rendering of the Writing on the Wall. A round table, an overmantel and a large coal scuttle, refilled at sixpence a time, completed the apartment.

Mrs Tewler had added many souvenirs, knicknacks, photographs framed and unframed, and objects of art and fancy to all this, making it very personal and homelike. She had thought of having in a piano on the hire purchase system, but, as she could not play it, she had

decided this might be regarded as ostentation.

There was indeed no music whatever in Master Edward Albert's early life, except the harmonium and sustained hymn singing of the chapel and a passing barrel organ. The gramophone, the pianola, the radio, had still to break the grave serenity of British home life, silent still except for an occasional cough or sniff, the rustle of a turning page, the crepitation of the fire or a peculiar snoring of the gas jets, whose light was supplemented by a shaded paraffin lamp of noble proportions set upon a woollen mat in the midst of the central table. It had a glass receiver and when one touched it one acquired a faint but persistent odour of paraffin. On Sundays when one changed into clean linen came a whiff of lavender. The roast chestnut men, the baked potato men and suchlike "cries of London" stood out brightly against this olfactory background.

On the mantel was a card which Mrs Tewler had discovered in a shop together with others proclaiming "Furnished Apartments" and "Teas." It bore two words which were destined many years later to become a national slogan;

"Safety First." By what gleam of foresight this card had been inspired, or what particular danger it advertised in mitigation of damages, I cannot imagine. But there it was, and it found a prompt response in the mind of Mrs Richard Tewler.

By the standards of our present violent times, this atmosphere might have been considered under-stimulating. In Edward Albert's own little room however there was a more definite appeal to his religious susceptibilities. There was a coloured picture of his Redeemer surrounded by a great number of children, with the inscription, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." For some reason Edward Albert could not identify himself with any of these roseate innocents. Severally and collectively he hated them. The other religious subjects that adorned his apartment neither offended nor appealed to him. He just avoided looking at them. But one or two of the illuminated texts bothered him. "Thou God seest me," in particular. He did not like that. He liked it less and less as he grew to boy's estate.

It wasn't fair, he felt. Was there nothing He couldn't see? Could He see through bedclothes for example? And whatever you chanced

to be doing? There was something indelicate about this relentless stare.

It was Edward Albert's first encounter with Doubt. Never once did the faintest gleam of affection for the divinity, Father, Son or Holy Ghost, enter into his soul. He believed that this Watcher and Punisher brooded insanely over his world and that he had sent his Only Son just to put his helpless creatures still more in the wrong. That was what Edward Albert felt and believed. I make no comment; I am merely recording facts. Since God was Almighty and Relentless, you had to propitiate Him — safety first — and not think a thought of protest even in the darkness of your black little heart. No putting out your tongue at Him, No! (And a recording angel writing it all down!) Edward Albert doubted but he never denied. Like most other Believers he managed to mitigate. He had an inspiration. "He can see you," he argued. "But they can't be looking at everybody and writing down about everybody all the time."

That wasn't an idea to tell other people. It was an idea to keep very much to oneself. If you talked about it too much you might suddenly attract His attention. Our young man put up that idea like a modest private parasol between himself and the Sun of Righteousness. And insensibly the skies clouded over so that presently he did not seem to need his parasol any more. God ceased to be a consuming fire.

We are not arguing here. I am simply recording indisputable facts: I am telling the story of one little boy, who grew up to be a hero as you shall hear, and I cannot help it if his story becomes for a moment the story of countless millions of other little souls. This is how Christians temper their faith and how they are able to behave as they do behave in spite of its stupendous imperatives.

VI. — ADVERTISED TO DEATH

EDWARD ALBERT'S mother died when he was thirteen. The elderly doctor who attended her last illness certified that she died of "bronchitis." It was a prevalent custom in those days to certify for bronchitis and probe no deeper into the matter. Doctors are a mentally overworked race, and in this matter of diagnosis they have their own epidemic and epidemic disorders. As a matter of fact she died, as a great number of people died in those days, of a surfeit of patent medicine advertisements.

Because in that golden age of freedom, security and opportunity in which our story opens, people enjoyed, among other enviable liberties, great liberty of salesmanship, and a number of enterprising business men, realising that a vast majority o their fellow-creatures suffered from internal pains and discomforts due to the consumption of well-advertised but unwholesome foods, to the unhygienic quality of their housing and employment, and to the survival at a low level of existence of multitudes of individuals who would have been far better dead, devoted themselves to their exploitation. This great uneasy majority constituted from the point of view of salesmanship a mass of consumers to be catered for with a view to profit, and to that these entrepreneurs vying with one another, set themselves with great energy.

The medical profession in those days worked almost, entirely for private gain and protected its privileges upon trade union principles; it combined very low standards of education and qualification, with a creditable insistence upon the honour and privilege of the individual practitioner. Doctors were disposed to' stand by one another under criticism, in a post mortem or anything of that sort, when definitely unprofessional conduct did not .appear. Their methods of diagnosis were old-fashioned; good diagnosis was a matter of aptitude rather than training, and generally they preferred to diagnose a definite disease and bring it out fairly and squarely and cure it or kill, than tackle all those various and ill-defined states of malaise that would not yield to such forthright treatment. They waved these aside as fancifulness. Consequently there was a considerable irritation

between doctors and patients; the doctor and his antiquated and incomprehensible prescriptions, his authoritative manners and his failure to enlist the intelligence of his patient such as it was, in the process of recovery, was distrusted even more than he deserved; and the way lay wide open for salesmanship, to flout his claim to be the sole dealer in the health of the community.

So in spite of him there had grown up a steadily expanding business of pills, aperients, tonics, sustaining foods, cures for every sort of twinge and pain, stimulants, purifiers. These new salesmen began perhaps crudely, but they steadily improved in their methods and reached an ever-widening clientele. Their advertisements became a more and more important item in newspaper finance. From early appeals to people who already had pains, their more and more competent methods instructed people how, when and where to have pains. The medical profession attempted warnings, published analyses of popular remedies, explained their ineffectiveness and their harmfulness, and so forth, but this now gigantic system of human enterprise had achieved the control of all the media of news distribution, and the doctors were quite unable to get their protests over to the public at large. Their pamphlets vanished from the bookstalls and got no "Press." They said things to their patients, but they found their patients incredulous in the face of an enormous volume of skilled assertion.

This book is no picture of the Edwardian-Georgian age, but these simple circumstances have to be stated here if the reader, in this new and vivid world of adventure and disaster in which we live to-day, is to understand the way in which Mrs Richard Tewler did herself to death.

The newspapers began to look for Mrs Tewler in real earnest in the benign reign of King Edward the Seventh. Then it was that "Constant Reader", in anticipation of Professor Crew, changed sex. In the old days when Richard was alive, Mrs Tewler hardly ever glanced at the paper. She took no interest in Politics or what men had considered to be news, and it was only when she discovered the existence of "Aunt Jane" and "Dorothy Wisdom" through such publications as the *Mothers' Vade-mecum*, that she spread out her reading to the new daily Press, so different from the grey uneventful

expanses of the old.

She began to read first about bargains and cosmetics, because, although no decent Christian woman paints her face or does anything of that sort, it might be possible to learn something about one's appearance that did not involve that. Naturally her attention flowed over to the more intimate discussions beside them.

There was "that tired feeling." She had it. But she did not realise what it meant for her until the salesmen told her. It meant the onset of anaemia and then pernicious anaemia. For that a certain blood mixture was admirable. She stocked that and forgot to note its effect because next she was being made conscious of a whole series of neuralgic pains.

They flitted about, pursued by nervous panaceas, and got to her head. There always had been times when she had had headaches, but never the. splitting headaches she realised after she had seen a picture of a mighty fist hammering nails into a head. It was liver pills she needed for that, and they were added to her medical menu.

Effervescent salts promised and failed to restore her to a giddy cheerfulness, because now she lay awake all night suffering from night starvation. That too could be met. Uric acid also got loose in her system and clamoured for further remedies. Her washstand carried an ever-increasing array of bottles, capsules, pills and powders.

Still the salesmen pursued her. It dawned upon her that she had sinus trouble and incipient arthritis, cancer in several places and osteomyelitis. She did all that could be done to anticipate and defeat these evils. She did not tell her doctor about the cancer, because the salesman assured her that would bring upon her the crowning horror of an operation. She could not face that. No operation. No!

She felt under-nourished, and, instead of taking wholesome food, she consumed a cup of feeble tea with a meaty flavour, that the salesmen assured her with vivid illustrations, had the strength of a whole ox in it. Never a newspaper dared to denounce this murderous lie. She swallowed the stuff, felt satisfied for half an hour or so, and then faded again. She picked herself up with a viciously drugged red wine because its salesmen assured her that all its profits went to the promotion of Christian Missions throughout the world.

Its advertisements were endorsed with signatures of venal divines of every persuasion. All religious organisations, as Shaw has been reminding us in his Major Barbara film, need funds, and all organisations that need funds can be bought A.M.D.G., and so ultimately the Lord's work was done on the craving stomach and suffering frame of Mrs Tewler. Poor Mother Eve, from first to last thou and all thy seed have been the victims of the Salesman! For so it was we lost our paradise, when the first salesman sold thee his fruit and lingerie. He proffered his free sample, he guaranteed satisaction. And until selling shall cease from the earth — ....

(Censor.)

She stood in her bedroom wearily taking her doses, hoping she had not forgotten anything, and listening to her ever more sinister internal noises. Then she would feel herself all over for growths and tumours. Often she felt quite hard ones.

She told everybody she could all about her sufferings, and Mr Myame called her "Our Dear Martyred Sister." And he told her, all this will be returned to you a thousandfold, which possibly was not exactly what he intended to say. Some of the other members of the inner circle were fairly good at affliction, but none could produce anything to equal hers either in depth or variety. Mrs Humbelay one day described an artificial hernia to her, and remarked that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and Mrs Tewler said, "If it comes to that, my dear, I think I would rather die...."

But hernia she was mercifully spared. It did not come to that. The salesmen could make nothing out of artificial hernias.

She clang so desperately to life; because where would her Only One be without her? And it is to be noted that very little of this remedial struggle of hers extended to him. But that was because she was able to observe her own terrible symptoms, while, after one single experience with some tonic drops, nothing would induce Edward Albert to admit he had any symptoms at all. His demonstration of his extreme vitality on a later occasion included an attempt to stand on his head which was only partially successful and led to the breaking of a plate.

"You cannot be too careful" — she coughed from her chair — she was developing her pleurisy that day. "Doing that might lead to a

rush of blood to the head and apoplexy. Promise me, whatever happens, you will never attempt that again."

She had a spasm of pain. "He's not much use, darling, but do you know I feel so queer that I think I ought to see Dr Gabbidash. If you'll go round for him. He might at least give me a morphia injection."

The good doctor did, and in the course of a week assisted her departure from this vale of trial and error in a soundly professional manner. For she really had pleurisy. She had brought herself down to a vulnerability that gave any old germs a fair chance with her. Their blitzkrieg was swift and successful.

During her final phase of medicated malaise Mrs Tewler made several wills, couched for the most part in a richly pious phraseology. The valid instrument left a number of trifling souvenirs to various friends, including a marked Bible and a silver-framed photograph for her dear friend Mrs Humbelay, and named Mr Myame as sole executor, trustee and guardian for her son until the dear child was twenty-one, exhorting the young man to trust and obey his guardian as a Father and more than a Father, a Guide and a Wise Dear Friend.

Edward Albert listened to these dispositions without an excessive display of emotion.

He looked at the lawyer and he looked at Mr Myame, He sat on the edge of his chair meagre and wary.

"I suppose it 'ad to be," he said with resignation, He sucked his teeth for a moment.

"Who was that Mr Whittaker who sent that great wreath?" he asked. "What sort of relation is he to me?"

Neither of them could tell him.

Then he reflected, "I didn't know Mother was nearly so bad as she was. No.... I suppose it 'ad to be.... That was — it was " — gulp—" a lovely wreath anyhow, She would have liked...."

And suddenly his white little face crumpled up and he was weeping.

"You have lost the Noblest and the very best of Mothers," said Mr Myame. "That Sainted Brave Woman...."

Edward Albert had acquired a habit of never listening to what Mr

Myame might be saying. He wiped his miserable sniffing face with the back of a dirty little hand. He was only beginning to realise what all this meant to him. Day or night she would never be there any more. Never. He wouldn't go home to her presently and tell her things to his credit, true or false according to circumstances, and bask in the love she bore him. She wouldn't be there. She wasn't there. She'd gone!

BOOK II.. THE ADOLESCENCE OF EDWARD ALBERT TEWLER

I. — THE HIDDEN HAND

AT thirteen our young Englishman was pale and undersized. Like his mother he was a trifle exopthalmic. His features were delicate and undistinguished and his bearing circumspect. Some more vigorous element in his heredity, however, struggled against the effects of his early restriction; he grew irregularly and inelegantly to average proportions, and his profile became firmer as he got into his later teens. There was a repressed drive in him throughout his life — as we shall see. He did not actually cease growing until he was nearly thirty.

For some reason he never learnt either to whistle properly or throw hard. His mother may have checked early attempts at whistling, and so he developed a sort of hiss-whistle with his upper teeth well over the lower. And as for throwing, he was. ambidextrous, which in fact meant that he was not dexterous with either hand. He lobbed with his left hand and learnt belatedly to throw with his right. He could never throw very high or very far, and that was just as well, because an undetected astigmatism made his direction uncertain. In those days there was no examination of school children's eyes; you had to put up with the eyes God had given you. So that he also jumped uncertainly and to the best of his ability avoided jumping.

His life had been so completely shielded from mental or physical harm that until he went to Mr Myame's school for young gentlemen at the age of eleven and a half, he had no child associates whatever. But there he found school-fellows, and some of them were even permitted to invite him home to tea. He always had to assure his mother they were nice little boys before she allowed him to go. They had families, sisters and cousins, and his circle increased.

He became a boarder instead of a day boy in Mr Myame's Commercial Academy when his mother died, and for a time he shared the bleak "Joseph Hart" dormitory, the larger one, with six other boys, which the ever-solicitous Mr Myame in list slippers might prowl through at any hour of the night.

And since Edward Albert had no home to go to, his first summer

holidays were spent among the alarming circumstances of animal life at large and unashamed, in a Wiltshire farm belonging to Mr Myame's brother-in-law. There were fields in which great cows grazed and stared at you, chewing slowly as they meditated your death, and there was not the slightest protection for the passer-by. There were horses, and once at sundown three of them started galumphing round a field most terrifyingly. Edward Albert dreamt about it afterwards. There were unmuzzled dogs. There was a lot of poultry with no sense of decency whatever. Awful! And you couldn't help looking and you sort of knew and you sort of didn't know. And you didn't want anyone to see you were looking, either. There were ducks, but they weren't so bad. There were geese that would come at you very alarmingly if you went near them, but then you needn't go near them, and otherwise they were perfectly respectable. They disapproved, it seemed, of everybody. And there was Master Horace Budd, aged ten,, very sturdy and rosy, who was coming back to London to be a boarder, too, next quarter.

"I promised Mother not to hit you," said Master Horry, "and I won't. But if you want a fight—"

"I don't want a fight," said Edward Albert. "I don't fight,"

"Not just a punching match?"

"No. I don't like fighting."

"I promised Mother. Why won't you come and ride on the old horse like I do?"

"I don't want to."

"I didn't promise anything about not setting Boxer on to you."

"If you do anything to me," said Edward Albert, "anything I don't like, I'll kill you. I'll just kill you. I know away. See?"

This gave Horry pause. "Nobody's talking of killing people," he said.

"I am" said Edward Albert.

"Oh, come and feed the rabbits," said Horry, and then after a pause for reflection. "You got a knife?"

Edward Albert whistled after his fashion for a moment or so. "I don't do it that way," he said. "I got a way of my own."

He had a way of his own in his imagination. For behind his unobtrusive fa9ade Edward Albert led a life of lurid reverie. He liked

to be the still man who never spoke, the Secret Killer, the Avenger, the Hand of Doom. And he and Bert Bloxham, with the big fair cranium, and Nuts MacBryde of the warts, belonged to a secret society, the Hidden Hand of Camden Town. It had passwords and secret signs, and you were admitted by an Ordeal. You had to stand with your finger in a gas-jet for five seconds. It hurt no end, you smarted for days afterwards, and you could smell your flesh burning. But let it be recorded that Edward Albert stood up to the test. He licked his finger first, but Bert Bloxham, who hadn't thought of that, made him wipe it dry.

The headquarters of the Hidden Hand of Camden Town were in the room over the disused stable behind Bert Bloxham's aunt's house. You went up to it by an almost vertical ladder. She was an extremely indifferent aunt, a heavy, silent woman in chapel, and with no trace of family resemblance to Bertie, and she never on any occasion ventured up that ladder. So the Hidden Hand had an admirable library of "bloods" stowed away there, and three black masks and three dark lanterns which stank of Brunswick Black when they were lit, an air-gun and a knuckle-duster, and there it planned a reign of terror that reached from King's Cross to Primrose Hill. Little did the people of that region know how terrorised they were.

On dark winter evenings the Hidden Hand would prowl sometimes for as long as an hour, with their dark lanterns nestling hotly inside their jackets and their masks on, actually on, except when a policeman was spotted. Then "Nix and we dissemble."

In this fashion these desperadoes just raised hell. They swore and used forbidden words — Nuts' every other word was an oath — he thought nothing of saying "Godormighty" — and they had a pack of real cards, "the Devil's picture-books", and gambled with them at Beat your Neighbour out of doors and Grab and suchlike skin games for almost unlimited stakes. Afterwards Nuts learnt Map from a cousin. For some obscure reason they always played for dollars and generally wore their masks while doing so. They swore and spat. They did not play for cash, they gave chits and kept a record, and at one time Nuts owed Edward Albert over five thousand dollars and Bert half as much again. That was a pretty load to carry for boys still under thirteen. Since it was quite within the range of possibilities that

they would be smelt over when they went home, they did not smoke. Nuts had tried chewing tobacco, using a partially-smoked cigarette he had picked up, but his reaction was so prompt and so extremely unpleasant for everyone concerned that the experiment was not repeated.

Such was the hidden life that flowed darkly beneath the fair surface of Edward Albert's meek discretion.

His mother, remarking how often he went to tea with Bert Bloxham or the MacBrydes — though indeed he never went near the MacBrydes — suggested a return of hospitality. For a time he was disposed to resist this. He did not know what his mother would think of Nuts' vocabulary if perchance his tongue was loosened, nor did he know what his fellow-toughs of the Hidden Hand might think of his home life. She pressed the proposal. "They're regular chaps," he said. All the more reason for knowing them. He stipulated for fruit cake and ice cream.

"Of course, darling," said his mother.

"They may seem a bit rough," he said.

"All boys are rough," she said flatteringly.

She did them well. They both came looking morbidly clean, and for a while everyone was too busy feeding Tor any other sort of behaviour. They made noises, but good wholesome noises, and chiefly when they drank. "Thank you, Mam," they said to all Mrs Tewler's proposals, and for a time they hardly said anything else. Sighs of satisfaction marked the conclusion of the feast.

"I wish *I* had your appetites," said Mrs Tewler.

And then came the crucial moment when Mrs Tewler said, "And now what shall we do?" But she knew just what they were going to do. And believe it or not, these devils incarnate, these gamblers who thought nothing of staking a hundred dollars on a single throw, these wicked toughs who clothed themselves with cursing as with a garment, became as little children again. The Hidden Hand played Snakes and Ladders and Race Game and said "Thank you for our luvlay tea, Mam," just as though they really were the quite nice little boys Edward Albert had said they were.

Bert belched slightly as he said it, but Mother had not seemed to be aware of that.

II. — THE CRICKET MATCH

THE number of boys in Mr Myame's school varied between nineteen and twenty-four, and yet Edward Albert got into the first eleven before he had been there two years, and played in his last year in the annual match against Bolter's College. Before that match he had not liked cricket very much, but sifter it he was as thorough a cricket fan as every young Englishman ought to be.

Mr Myame's school played cricket in Regent's Park in the summer, but it did not play any game in the winter, because football made the boys muddy and parents objected, But Mr Myame was convinced that good sound open-air exercise was conducive to morality. He hated to 'think of boys "loafing about" and the menu of his prospectus included "compulsory games." Boys should go tired to bed. It was possible to obtain caps, flannels, shoes and equipment generally from firms of school outfitters at advantageous wholesale prices, and even the most unworldly parents were gratified by the spectacle of their offspring apparently playing cricket in a socially acceptable manner. The underlying seriousness of the school was apparent in the choice of black and white for the school colours.

Contemplating this enlargement of his enterprise, Mr Myame, being aware of a certain athletic insufficiency in himself, added a "Games Master" to the staff, Mr Plipp, an excellent young married elementary teacher who was free on Wednesday afternoons and who was also prepared to regard scout marches and tracking on Primrose Hill as a compulsory game for the winter months.

Nothing remained to perfect this games side of the school except to arrange a few matches, and here Mr Myame was so fortunate as to fall in with the Principal of Bolter's College who was watching his boys "practise", while he wrestled with a similar problem. Bolter's College was a small genteel private establishment in Highbury which catered mainly for the offspring of remote or hypothetical parents in the tropics; it had a Union Jack on its blazer pockets, its caps were red, white and blue, and its style of play did not seem to be hopelessly above the school standard. So an annual, no, the annual cricket match was arranged, and had been going on for several years

before Edward Albert joined the school Generally Bolter's won by producing lean, lithe and dusky "old boys" or alleged new additions to the staff who never reappeared. Nothing had been said about "old boys." It seemed unkind to exclude them. Myame's was a younger and smaller establishment without them.

They wanted Edward Albert to come up nearer and on the off side. Was there to be no longstop? Up there and closer was more dangerous. In the slips a ball can knock you over and stun you before you know where you are. Why not pretend to be sick or go home? And be jawed at after by Mr Myame? Instead of tea?

Edward Albert trotted up to his appointed place. The ritual of the game began. Middle? No — a little to the left. That's right. Play!

The old boy batting at the wicket snicked the ball neatly for a boundary. It passed within a foot of Edward Albert. Six.

"Look alive there, Tewler," said Mr Plipp, not too pleasantly.

Edward Albert neglected the game for a moment or so while he exchanged offensive grimaces with Nuts. Then a ball hit him,

It hit him so hard that for a moment he thought he saw two balls, one at his feet and one running away from him. The College batsmen were running. "Can you, Sir?"

cried the daemonic old boy. "Come on, Sir?" They were stealing a second run. "Now then, Tewler!" cried Mr Myame. "Oh! Look alive."

Edward Albert scrabbled at his feet and secured a ball, and with all his soul and strength threw it at the wicket keeper. It missed him by about a yard and a half, and knocked the bails off the wicket. The bat of the long darkie slid over the creases, five seconds too late. Still Edward Albert did not realise his good fortune.

"Owzatsir?" Mr Myame was saying, and the Umpire answered "Out."

"Well thrown in, Tewler!" said Mr Plipp. "Perfect! *exactly* what I wanted."

Edward Albert grew an inch or so and forgot that he probably had a bump at the back of his head. "I fort it best to throw straight at the wicket, Sir," he said.

"Exactly. Exactly."

"You did quite right," Mr Myame confirmed. "We shall make a

cricketer of you yet, Tewler. Smartest thing you've done for a long time...."

The game was held up for a moment by cries of "Thank you, Sir, Thank you." There was a ball about from an adjacent game, and this was the established way of demanding its return. There it was, quite close to the Umpire's foot. (Then there had been a second ball!) The Old Boy picked it up absent-mindedly and sent it soaring home, before retiring to the College outs to brood over his premature dismissal. He had counted on a long and glorious afternoon of free, loose hitting. He was replaced by a small boy who succumbed to the third of what were known as Mr Plipp's "googlies", a curious slow overarm delivery with great hypnotic power over the young.

"Owe-ver."

And then came a terrific event. Mr Plipp told Edward Albert to bowl. He told him to bowl. He held the ball in his hand, looked at it, started, seemed to be struck by some strange idea, and then ordered Edward Albert to bowl.

Mr Plipp was a cricket strategist of the most elaborate type, but for him to tell Edward Albert to take the next over strained the faith of his following to near the breaking point. He instructed his pupil carefully in undertones. "This big chap," he said, "is a slogger and used to good ordinary bowling. Well, give him some of those incalculable grounders of yours. See? Lob a bit if you like. Don't mind if he swipes you out of bounds once or twice. *I* know what I'm doing."

And, after looking at it again for another reflective moment, he handed the ball to Edward Albert. "Bowl to his leg side," said Mr Plipp, "and vary the pace. I want him to hit."

Fear and pride mingled in Edward Albert's heart as he handled the ball. As he felt for its creases, he had a curious feeling of unfamiliarity. This ball was showing signs of wear, he thought.... But now to bowl, If he aimed about a yard or so to the right he might get the wicket. It often happened like that. He would do that. To begin with he would try one of his short sneakers. It pitched short and rolled slowly towards the wicket The giant, who seemed now ten feet high and broad in proportion, awaited its Doming with some hesitation. It was not the sort of ball he was accustomed to deal with.

He wasn't prepared for anything so feeble. He simply blocked the ball.

"Well bowled, Tewler," cried Nuts derisively. Jealous? Yes, but next time...

Our hero resolved to vary his attack. He would send in a few very simple grounders to the giant's leg. One fast and then a slow twister? Down there. Out of his reach, perhaps. The fast one first. Edward Albert put all his strength into it and alas! up went the ball in the air. Up, up, it went — a perfect Yorker. He'd slog it to — heaven! But the giant, expecting another lob, had been advancing to smite. This strange ball, high in the air, made him hesitate, and, hesitating, he was lost. He remembered what he had to do just half a second too late. He stepped across the pitch and hit hard to leg. Swish! Click! The leg bail dropped. Flop, went the ball into Mr Myame's gloves. To Goliath's astonishment, to Edward Albert's astonishment, to everyone's astonishment, the ball had got the leg stump. "Howzat, Umpire?" came Mr Myame's astonished voice as he held up the ball.

"Out!" came the verdict.

"Oh, GorORMIGHTY!" cried Nuts out loud and unreproved. Butter-fingers had clean bowled Goliath. Clean bowled him, Sir!

The rest of the innings was inglorious. Two of the College kids made two runs, and there was a wide, and, strangely enough, Edward Albert was not asked to bowl again. The back of the defence was broken. Mr Plipp resumed his celebrated googlies and Mr Myame bowled three overs, and the last man was out.

The College had been disposed of for twenty-four, eighteen actual runs, a wide, three byes and two no-balls by Mr Myame overrunning the crease. The black and whites went in at last to a possible victory. This time they just might do it. Mr. Plipp displayed an unwonted disposition to slog, scored sixteen, and was caught out by Goliath at long on.

Mr Myame compiled a cautious five and was clean bowled by the lean and long Old Boy, who also gave four byes from his bowling. Edward Albert did not actually score a run, but the end of the innings left him in so that he "carried his bat "triumphantly" not out." Nothing remained but the cheering. The school had won by six wickets, and Edward Albert was the hero of the day.

“A fine match,” said the Principal, shaking hands with Mr Myame.

Bert wanted to throw catches to some of the other chaps, but he found Mr Plipp had pocketed the ball. “No, you don’t want them to see you miss your catches,” said Mr Plipp, with unusual snappiness.

The College retired in good order, discussing the glorious uncertainties of the game, and the victorious school fell into column with the annual match tea (currant bread and jam, day-boys invited), enlivening its outlook.

As they left the park a young man in flannels came hurrying after Mr Myame. “Excuse me,” he said. “I’m afraid you’ve been playing most of the time with the wrong ball. He produced a nice new red match ball as he spoke, and handed it to the Headmaster.

“Hm,” said Mr Myame gravely. “That certainly has a resemblance to our ball, but—”

He looked across at the departing College. It was far away and out of earshot. He turned a perplexed and heavy face to Mr Plipp. “Odd,” he said. Mr Plipp took the ball and immediately put it into his pocket, producing another with the greatest promptitude. “That is yours,” he said.

“That is ours,” said the young man. “It’s a Lillywhite, Yours is a Duke. I hope this won’t upset your game in any way. We didn’t notice at first.”

“I hit two boundaries,” said Mr Plipp. “The change may have occurred then. Just at the end of the game.”

“I think it occurred rather earlier,” said the young man,

“*I* really don’t know of any rule of the M.C.C. on the matter.”

“Nor do I,” said Mr Plipp.

Mr Myame reflected. There was a pause of several seconds and then he coughed and his hirsute adornments sprang to attention. “Let us assume,” he said, “that there has been at some time in this game a temporary and beneficial substitution of one ball for another, then, the question arises, was this a deliberate and dishonest substitution of one ball for another, or was it due to some entirely innocent misapprehension? In the former case we have no right to our victory. No, Sir. None whatever. We have to call this match off as—” he sought for an appropriate phrase— “a *non sequitur*. But if, on the

other hand, the substitution by the player was pure and honest — and I happen to know this young Tewler as one of the most earnest young Christians in my charge, a veritable Child of God, let alone that he was suffering from considerable pain at the time from die concussion of the ball, then I have no hesitation whatever in saying that not only are we entitled to this match, but that it was meant and intended that we should win this match. The stars in their courses, if one may put it humbly and reverently, were fighting for us, and it would be sheer ingratitude — ingratitude — to quibble over this victory."

The young man regarded Mr Myame with a qualified admiration, "That doesn't leave anything more to be said about it, Sir, does it?" he said, pitching up his recovered ball and catching it again.

"I'm all for that," said Mr Plipp.

Mr Myame and Mr Plipp hurried to overtake their exultant crocodile in a thoughtful silence. There was no reason why they should not talk together, but strangely enough neither of them could think of anything suitable to say. Finally, at the house door Plipp said one word, "Tewler."

"No question about it," snapped Mr. Myame, closing the discussion.

Boys who had never had a civil word for Edward Albert Tewler before, could be heard in the dingy passage and schoolroom glorifying and elaborating his achievements — melting up to him!...

And that is how he became a cricket fan and began to follow the Tests and collect pictures of eminent cricketers and watch matches on every possible occasion. There was hardly any grade of match that he could not watch now with helpful comments. "Well run, Sir!" "Keep 'em down, Sir!"

He did not play very much himself because you cannot be too careful about corrupting your style by inferior practice. But in his reveries, whistling after his fashion, he grew an immense beard — or wore a false beard perhaps — and made W.G. Grace seem a mere precursor to his own brighter and better batting. Or he returned triumphantly to the pavilion (all the other side out for nine), the super-Spofforth of his day, and there among the applauding throng were Bert and Nuts, realising with amazement that this demon

bowler was merely another of the endless impersonations of silent Teddy Tewler, their intimate and yet mysterious pal.

And henceforth "playing cricket" became a stock phrase with him, that phrase which still means so much to every Englishman, and which no Englishman can ever quite explain. We have submitted a sample, plucked straight from Regent's Park. "Do I play cricket with you or don't I?" he would demand of the Hidden Hand.

A new confidence appeared in his bearing. Hitherto Bert had unquestionably been the leader, but not now. And one day young Horry Budd, who had butted our hero playfully in the back after 'his custom, received the surprise of his life. Hitherto Edward Albert had been indisposed to resent these little attentions. Now suddenly he turned. "Vad-a-nuff-o-vis," said Edward Albert thickly.

He smacked Horry's face with extreme viciousness, and smacked again with all his strength. He overwhelmed Horry with surprise and dismay. Horry was a puncher, and face-smacking was outside his imagination. He had never smacked a face in his life. He howled aloud. The red marks remained for days.

"Nuffin to what I'll do to you, if I have any more of your cheek," said Edward Albert.

III. — METAMORPHOSIS OF MAN

SO the child Edward Albert passed on through boyhood, and approached that peculiar reconstruction in the human life-cycle known as adolescence.

"Peculiar", like every other word in this conscientious narrative, is written with deliberation. It is a metamorphosis. The change is indeed not so wide as it is between tadpole and frog, but it is much more marked in man, my zoologist friends tell me, than in most others of the land animals about us. Your cat, for example, does not undergo anything like the same transformation. It does not suddenly grow hair in unexpected places, change its miaow to a leonine roar, lose its teeth, and get a new set, become spotty and gawky with chemical and nervous uncertainty. Your kitten grows into a cat, "but gradually and gracefully, it is a specialised and completed creature from the moment it opens its eyes on the world, and it has no metamorphosis at all. The human animal has, and Edward Albert, following the la\v of our species, metamorphosed.

Perhaps it is a new idea to you that man undergoes a ^metamorphosis much more after the fashion of a frog than do most other land animals. But it, is not my fault that you do not know that. I have done my feeble utmost to help in saving you and our world from the dismal mess of antiquated misconception and misrepresentation, self-satisfaction and blank ignorance in which we wallow so tragically to-day. I have fought the academic classical tradition tooth and nail. If the idea of a metamorphosis is a new one to you, you have only those wretched impostors who pretended to educate you to blame. If you find anything perplexing and unusual in what is written here, here and in the first Chapter of Book the Third, ahead of you, it is due to their default. A few of is who have had the good fortune to get some real education have tried to supplement your possible deficiencies We made you and we have tried in vain to force into school and college use, a group of encyclopaedic books of which *The Science of Life* is the one most relevant here. You can get it now in a single volume brought up to the date of 1938. You ought really to read it all, because you cannot begin to understand our

world or face the present gigantic challenges of life without it.

But for our present purposes all I would direct you to consult is a diagram and the accompanying text taken from an article in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* by Dr W.G. Gregory. You will find it put as an Appendix at the end of this book. If you look at that and the one that precedes it, condensing what is known about the evolution of the Placental Mammals, you will grasp what I am saying here about a human metamorphosis and what I shall have to say further in Book the Third, about the extreme primitiveness of the Hominida in the scale of being. Because otherwise you will not realise the extreme primitiveness of Edward Albert in the scale of being. You can check back Dr Gregory in your Encyclopaedia in the articles Primates and Tarsias. You can supplement Dr Gregory if you like by inspecting a little lemuroid creature, the Spectral Tarsier, Tarsier Spectrum, in any Zoological Garden or collection of stuffed animals. It is an inhabitant of Malaya, and it has something dimly suggestive of our Edward Albert in its look and movements, a small, tailed, nocturnal, furry and rather scared Edward Albert. One of its fossil Eocene cousins, by the by, was so human in its bones that it was christened *Tetonius homunculus*, the primordial Little Man (Strubei). It is much nearer to your actual ancestor than the black magnificent gorilla, that formidable gentleman. It was close to our ancestor and the ancestors of all the monkeys and apes, but while they branched off from our family tree on a line of their own, from which there is no returning, becoming our cousins in various degrees, the Tarsier sub-order, came right on to the Hominids and us.

And after that much information, which ought to be totally unnecessary^ you may begin to realise why I shall presently be urging you to change the name of the species Homo sapiens to the more modest one of Homo Tewler. I shall be sorry if it causes you some trouble to follow me in this. I shall not blame you, but I must condole with you. You are the innocent victim of your upbringing. None of this is digression. I promised to write about Tewler and I write about Tewler now. I have to put him in his place in the universe. Which we share. I will tell, you everything I know about Tewler, I will dissect and demonstrate on the creature, but for the

few years of life that remain to me, I will be damned if I write a single propitiatory or mitigated line about our ancestry to please all the Tewlers in the world. We are a lowly and infantile breed, There is hardly a quadruped in the Zoo that is not more modified, evolved, distinguished and finished than ourselves. Go and look at the grace and finality of a tiger for example, or a gazelle, or a seal...

As his metamorphosis proceeded, two new sets of problems invaded Edward Albert's mind. It was borne in upon him that he had to do certain things called earning a living, and simultaneously that complex of impulses, taboos, terrors and repressions, that onset of sex and sex education, which his mother had apprehended so anxiously, gathered about him and closed in upon him. Let us take the simpler issue first.

IV. — FEUDAL STRAIN?

"EARNING a living." That phrase began to have a dim menace for him some time before his mother died.

"You'll have to earn your living, you know, when I'm gone," his mother would say when he was getting her to do his homework for him. Mixing up the idea of lessons, sufficiently disagreeable in themselves when you still had mother to help you, with earning a living when her help would be no longer available, didn't make the prospect more palatable. He averted his attention from it as long as he could.

George Orwell, an English Trotskyist writer with enormous feet, who fought very valiantly in Spain, recently made a study of the literature consumed by the English and American young at the close of their tadpole days. He produced generalisations about it, which I have partially forgotten, and so I do not think it is any breach of the undertaking I have made to keep ideas completely out of this book, if I refer to one observation of his that has stuck in my mind, because it will be very helpful in framing the adolescence of Edward Albert in its proper setting,

His point was that, by the showing of this literature, in matters of sex and business alike, either the young American is precocious or the young Briton is retarded. That retardation is not altogether disadvantageous. Because of the postponement of those adult preoccupations the British boys and girls get on with their school work with easier minds, and are found to be sounder and further advanced in their schooling than Americans of the same age. This cannot be due to any profound difference in race. The blood of the American population is hardly more mongrelised than the British. Then why?

I was reflecting on this problem; albeit sternly resolved to put nothing about it into this story, but just for my own amusement, when it dawned upon me that though Edward Albert was born in the back streets of Camden Town in that melting-pot of humanity called London, both his mother and his father had lived, they and their progenitors, in a feudal world, in a feudal world from whose remote

interferences the thirteen colonies escaped, finally and emphatically, a century and a half ago. What would seem strange about him to an American reader is just that difference. Feudal! I had the clue. Generalisations evaporate at this word and fact resumes its sway.

Mrs Tewler's mother was born in the shires, under the shadow of a lord of the manor, and she was brought up, so to speak, bone-feudal. The Baptist connection was due to the fact that Dickybird was a Backslider from the Particular Baptists of Camden Town. His grandfather had found religion there, but Dickybird had never become a hall member by immersion, and the couple would probably have drifted back to the Anglican Communion if it had not been for his conspicuous inability to "find his place" in his prayer book. She was ashamed of him. The Baptists were easier.

Except for that one touch of dissent, Richard Tewler's tradition was just as feudal as his wife's. He was a Cockney craftsman of the fourth generation, and his Firm had been Royal Warrant Holders since Royal Warrant Holding began. The Royal Arms and "By Appointment to his Majesty," headed their bills. His grandfather and his father had both been with Colebrook and Mahogany all their lives, and they would as soon have thought of leaving the Firm, as the Firm would have thought of dismissing them. Colebrook and Mahogany pensioned off their old hands, helped them with their domestic difficulties, took an interest in their children, as a matter of course.

Now this feudalism which ramifies to this day through the British social structure and gives its literature and social habits and distinctions that peculiar affectation of high unspoken values which so baffles and irritates Americans, was the underlying cause why our hero, instead of rushing forward, like a young American or a young Jew or a young barbarian, to embrace and wallow in his adolescence, advanced upon it, so to speak back foremost, pretending as far as possible to himself and the world at large that it really wasn't there, and that it was not of the slightest consequence even if it was.

V. — TERRIFYING ENTERPRISE

UNRESTRAINED youngsters think and talk of getting on in the world. Young Buffin Burleybank, who came into the school as a day boy for one short term until there was a vacancy for him at Mottiscombe, lived in an acquisitive home atmosphere where making money was openly discussed and glorified. He had wonderful stories of "young Harmsworth" and "old Newnes." Young Harmsworth had lived just round the corner, so to speak, in Camden Town, and his father was an unsuccessful barrister who used to speak in the Camden Town Mock Parliament. And the youngster had borrowed a bit of money somehow, started something called Answers, started something else called Comic Cuts, and now was worth a cool million. Still young and worth a cool million. And Newnes had been just a little obscure country chemist until he read a bit out of a paper and said to his wife, "I call that a regular Tit Bit." And then came the great idea, why not have a magazine filled up entirely with Tit Bits, with unconsidered trifles picked up here there and everywhere? And he put a bit of capital into it and here he was 'normously rich. 'Normously rich. "Why! he owns pretty nearly every funicular in the world!"

"What's a funicular?" asked Edward Albert.

"My father says he does, anyhow," said Buffin, evading the question. "What I'm going to do is, go in for cars. Yes, cars. Put my shirt on them. These motor cars are going big. They cost a lot to make and they're always going to cost a lot to make. You got to have skilled exact workmen, my father says, and those you can't get cheap. Nohow. So if the demand grows the price will go up. See? They've got cars now about as cheap first-hand as ever they're going to be, and what people like doctors and commercial travellers and middle-class people will get will be anything from shop-soiled to tenth-hand. Well, that's a business for you. Eh? Growing and growing. You can buy 'em, do 'em up as good as new, sell 'em hire purchase, hire 'em out — In a few years only dukes and earls and millionaires will have the slick new cars. There won't be one car in ten on the road new. Not one in ten."

“You don’t think they might somehow make reely cheap cars?” speculated Edward Albert.

“They’ve tried it, in America. My father knows all about that. There’s a man named Henry Ford and his cars — why they’re a joke! They rattle. They’re ugly as sin. They fall to pieces. He makes jokes about ’em himself. Then there’s these steam cars they have. Kettles on wheels. They blow out in a high wind. My father saw one of them blown out the other day. No. The car for a man of ordinary means is going to be the second-hand, third-hand, fourth-hand, high grade car, done-up and carefully renewed. There’s lots of cars on the road now that will still be on the road in twenty-five years’ time. And that’s where little Buffin Burleybank means to come in. That’s where we open the oyster. You watch me. Go to Buffin Burleybank for a car. Get his advice. See his selection. His ‘normous selection. A Car for Everyman. There’s wonderful twists and turns in it. There’s such things as vintage years for cars, my father says. J’ever think of that?”

“What’s a vintage year?” asked Edward Albert.

“My father says they’ll buy ’em by their dates,” said Buffin, overriding the question. “It’s a great game. You got to watch out for everything. You got to keep your eyes skinned.”

And excited by this home-grown faith in his business ability, he actually started a scheme of his own for buying and selling bicycles right there in the school, that even impressed Mr Myame. If you bought a single bicycle you were the public and you had to pay full price; the dealer was bound by his contract with the wholesaler not to undersell. But suppose a few of you got together and made yourselves a firm and had an address and business notepaper all proper, then you could order half a dozen machines at trade rates and get them — Buffin was a little vague — twenty-five, thirty-five per cent off. Which meant, said Buffin, calculating rapidly, you get six at the price of four. “Practically,” said Buffin, seeing Mr Myame was checking his figures slowly but earnestly. For he talked the idea out to Mr Myame after school one day, and Mr Myame was interested and bent his countenance towards him and seemed to half believe in him. So it was that a firm named B. Burleybank and Co. came into actual being in Camden Town. It had the use of a small newsagent’s shop for its address, and by advance payments by Mr Myame and

Nuts MacBryde and a friendly advance and an order from Burleybank père, who wanted to give the boy a bit of experience as well as a birthday present of a bicycle, the necessary capital was assembled and six shining bicycles were procured and stored, after a brief altercation, in the newsagent's back yard.

"And now," said our young entrepreneur, after handing out his three cost price bicycles to his three associates, "I've only got to sell the other three at the market rate and I stand in to make...."

There were complications in the reckoning; the stationery and so forth had to be paid for. And there was a difficulty he had not anticipated in finding just the particular people in Camden Town who were disposed to buy a bicycle in a hurry at the market rate. He persuaded the newsagent to put one of the unsold machines into the shop, and marked it at a ten per cent reduction as "A bargain. Slightly shop-soiled", but after a couple of days the newsagent insisted upon its removal because customers coming in for papers and cigarettes barked their shins against the treadle and swore something dreadful.

Buffin became almost wistful in his inquiries, 'e You don't happen to know anyone who wants a brand new bicycle in splendid condition at very little over cost price?" He went about reading the faces of passers-by for the bicycle-buying look. Intimations of a transitory failure, of a lesson that would finally redound to his credit, came into his speeches. "It's not such a good thing as I thought. This. I started undercapitalised. If it wasn't for having to go to Mottiscombe I'd risk it now. I'd ask for three months' credit on twelve more bicycles, twelve, mind you, hire a shop-window and make a splash. And when the credit was up I'd pay upon what I'd sold and have credit extended for more. They'd do it if I talked to them. I'm getting the hang of it.... Well, let me tell you a day will come when all you timid snipe will remember how Buffin bought his first experience for forty pounds — maybe it will come to that, s'much as that — bought it for forty pounds and sold it for a million."

"And suppose 'e doesn't sell his bicycles," said Edward Albert, whistling after his fashion. "Suppose they don't pay him at Mottiscombe. Nice 'ole 'e'll be in."

Which indeed was precisely what happened. Buffin went off to Mottiscombe and never more did the star of the Burleybanks rise above Edward Albert's horizon. Anything may have happened to them except success. Maybe Burleybank and Son went in too deep for second-hand cars before they heard of the use of gauges in mass production.

Edward Albert watched this burst of enterprise with envious disapproval when, first of all, he felt it might succeed, and then with that "told you so" feeling which is one of our subtler pleasures in this vale of tears.

But Mr Myame's transitory appreciation of Buffin's cleverness wounded our hero profoundly. There was an element of worldliness about it. He had expected more other-worldliness from Mr Myame. He anyhow had got out of it very well, he and Nuts.... It set one thinking.

VI. — FIRST STEPS IN FRENCH

THE feudal framework of Edward Albert's ideas would admit of no gainful enterprises of this kind whatever; His disposition was to do nothing of any sort anywhere until he was told. Quite time enough then,

"Earning a living" meant for him finding a "place", a "situation", both definitely sessile words. You ceased to float dangerously along the stream of life at the very earliest opportunity and struck root. You found where you could get the best pay for the least work — if possible with fixed rises and a pension scheme — and you settled down, trusting, admiring, but at the same time avoiding the humiliating company of your betters as much as possible. You got a nice little household of your own — but of that later. You started a "hobby" to amuse you in your spare time, you watched cricket and played golf, and so backed slowly towards the grave in which you were to bury whatever talent you had ever possessed. Respectful but irresponsible dependence; "ordering yourself lowly and reverently to all your betters", as the dear old catechism puts it; that was the feudal idea.

Before his mother's death, Edward Albert had been induced to contemplate the problem of his social anchorage so far as to listen to a suggestion made by one of her friends that a Gas Works Clerk was one of the soundest possible positions to which a modest young Believer might aspire. To qualify for such a place in the world, he heard the lady say it was best to go twice a week to the evening classes of the Imperial College of Commercial Science for their Course of Training in Business Methods. They issued certificates of proficiency in all the clerkly arts, pr6cis and book-keeping by single and double entry, commercial arithmetic, mensuration, long hand and shorthand. Elementary French — not French but Elementary French, whatever that may mean. This training was specially adapted to turning a crude human being into a Gas Works Clerk, and indeed she knew as a fact that the gas works people came to the College and accepted its certificates unquestioningly. The College, according to its copious prospectus, engaged in many other activities, the Lower

Division Civil Service, London Matriculation and so on, but it was the Gas Works Clerk, one particular case she had known, that had seized upon the informant's imagination. He was such a nice young man.

Edward Albert listened carelessly at first and then attentively, and reflected. The College was situated in Kentish Town; its hoarding made a brave show, and what he saw there was not so much the prospect of gumming himself down firmly as a Gas Works Clerk, as of going in the evening, unwatched and uncontrolled, through the magic of the lit streets to the college. One could start early and arrive late; he was already an adept in such intercalary freedoms. He had still much of the lingering levity of boyhood and the Hidden Hand in his make-up.

Then he would be able to loiter on his way outside the glittering temptations of the cinema theatre. He could stop and see and read everything there was to be read and seen, contemplate the lively "stills", wondering. He could watch people going in. He wouldn't go in. That would be wrong. Bat there was no harm in asking what it would cost to go in. What would you see? And if after all, someday he did go in. It would be a sin of course, a dreadful sin, disobedience, deceit, all that. You might be run over on your way home and go straight to hell with all your sin upon you....

But suppose you weren't run over! Lovely ladies, quite close up, kissing. Fellers carrying them off on their saddles. Shooting. Throwing knives. What harm would it be to see it once? Those were the days of the early Charlie Chaplin, Fatty Arbuckle, Mack Sennett; and dear Mary Pickford as "Little Pal" was dawning on a world that has always loved her. Magically silent they were, with a stirring piano accompaniment. Through those forbidden doors you could hear the music; you could get glimpses....

Of course he would repent very bitterly before he went to bed — for one cannot be too careful — and pray God to preserve him, and promise never to do it again. God was pretty good at forgiving anyhow if you set about it in the right way. Seventy times seven and all that. "'Ave mercy on me, a miserable sinner, God; 'ave mercy on me. I was led away. I was tempted."

He felt he could get away with it. Those evening classes would be

like a great door opening upon unknown mysteries and freedoms. You might stay out until after ten!

So that when the project was brought before Mr Myame, there was a very considerable discussion before it was deferred.

"I am all for it," said Mr Myame, "in due course. When he is ripe for it. But that is not yet. You see, at times and in some subjects he will not exert himself. I have had to note that in his reports. His ability, I maintain, is considerable, but until he makes more progress in his Elementary French, in his Arithmetic, in his dictation and parsing and handwriting — Look at those inky fingers now, Mrs Tewler! Is he ready yet to benefit by a Commercial College?"

Edward Albert felt a spasm of hatred for Mr Myame.

"Of course, p'raps they teach you better in the College," said Edward Albert, and then, mitigating the blow; "Faster like."

"There's no Royal Road to Learning," said Mr Myame. "No. 'Thorough', has always been my motto. Like the great Earl Strafford. So let us go down to the foundations, the Elements. What is the French, Tewler, for 'the'?"

That was easy. "Ler Lar Lay," sang Edward Albert.

"Elementary French," said Mr Myame, "that is all he will ever have to study. Advanced French has an amount of innuendo in it.... I don't admire it. I hope he will never be able to read French books or go on one of those trips they advertise nowadays to Boulogne or Paris. French literature even at its best is tainted by a curious *continental* flavour. There is something un-English about it. All that is worth while in it has been translated and suitably expurgated. Or much of it could not be published here. But let us get on with our little examination. Tell me again, Tewler, what is the French for 'the' — in the singular."

"Masculine, Ler; feminine, Lar."

"And neuter, dear?" said Mrs Tewler encouragingly.

Mr Myame smiled gravely. "I am afraid there is no neuter in French. None whatever. 'Lay', the third word you heard, is simply the plural.

"The French language brings sex into everything," Mr Myame proceeded to explain. "That is its nature. Everything is 'il' or 'elle'. 'Il' is he and 'elle' is she. Nothing is neuter in French — nothing."

“Extraordinary!” said Mrs Tewler.

“A table, *oone table*, is feminine, believe it or not. *Oone shays*, feminine also, is a chair. But a knife, *oon canif*, is masculine. *Oon*, you observe, not *Oone*. You notice the difference, masculine and female.”

“A male knife! A female chair! It makes me feel — quite *uncomfortable*,” said Mrs Tewler. “*Why* do they do it?”

“There it is. And now, Tewler, how do you say ‘the father and the mother’?”

“Le père ate la mère.”

“Good. Very good. And now for the plural.”

Gently but firmly Mr Myame led him on from this first reassuring stage to more difficult combinations. Various relations, an aunt, an uncle, a nephew, various objects, apples, books, gardens, houses, encumbered the mind; ownership, *Mong* and *mar* and *note*, complicated their relationship. By the time they got to “To the books of the aunt of the gardener of our house,” Edward Albert had lost his head completely. He was guessing and floundering. Mr Myame corrected him and tangled him up almost caressingly.

“You see,” said Mr Myame, “he has it in a sort of way, but he is unsound. He is not yet Thorough. The grounding is loose because so far he has not given his mind to it. Until he has all that firm and clear and hard as a rock, it would be a mere waste of money to send him on to the College....”

VII. — MR MYAME IS UNEASY

JIM WHITTAKER had sent his large expensive wreath to Mrs Tewler's funeral in accordance with the feudal traditions of Colebrook and Mahogany, and at the same time he had recalled with surprise that there must be some family or something that had never been looked up and looked over by the Firm. There was no need for anyone who had inherited Richard Tewler's dexterity of hand and solicitude of manner to go wandering beyond its range. Mr Whittaker had made a memorandum on a bit of paper,

"Tewler boy query", but it had slipped under some other papers and he had forgotten it under the pressure of the sale of the great Borgman collection. It was only some six months later that the scrap of paper turned up to recall him to his obligation, "God bless my Heart and Liver," said Mr Jim.

"I might have lost sight of him!"

So one morning Mr Myame beetled over Edward Albert for some moments and then said: "Tewler. A word with you in my study."

"What's he found out now?" thought Edward Albert, for plainly there was trouble in the air.

"Siddown," said Mr Myame, and became hairily and darkly interrogative with his head on one side. He trifled with various objects on his table and began rather slowly.

"I had ah — a visitant — so to speak, this morning. An inquirer. Who wanted to know, to put it briefly, everything he could possibly know about you. He wanted to know how old you are, what your abilities are, your prospects, what you hoped to do in the world." ("'Strordinary!" interjected Edward Albert.)" Among other things he asked who paid your school fees? I told him that, as your guardian, I did. I asked him by what authority he was making these — these investigations. He said on behalf of a Mr James Whittaker, who carries on a china and glass business under the alias — or shall we say? the pseudonym — of Colebrook and Mahogany. It seems your father worked for him — or them — whichever one ought to say. Do you know anything about this?"

"Why, it was 'im sent that great wreath at mother's funeral!" said

Edward Albert.

"I remember. A really extravagant wreath. Yes. It was *that* person. Now why should he suddenly want to know all these things?"

"Was it *'im*?" asked Edward Albert.

"No. It was some sort of agent. Never mind. Have you by any chance written to this Mr Whittaker?"

"I 'adn't got 'is address."

Mr Myame regarded Edward Albert with a look of intense penetration. "Or you might have done so?"

"Jest to thank 'im for that wreath of 'is."

Mr Myame dismissed some obscure suspicion. "Well, he seems to think he is entitled to know all about you. I would like to know how far he is. Your dear good mother made me your guardian. She was a sweet pure precious soul and your religious and moral welfare was her first thought and her last. She feared for you. Perhaps it was that very Mr James Whittaker with his pseudonyms and misrepresentation! that she feared. And if he wanted to communicate with you why should he resort to one of those Private Inquiry Agencies? Why should a Private Inquiry Agent come asking all sorts of questions about the conduct of my school?"

"I've read advertisements somewhere. 'Does it take all that time shopping? Inquiries as to character. Missing relatives traced'. D'you think perhaps this Mr Whittaker is some sort of relation? Maybe he wasn't thinking anything about the school. Didn't mean any harm like. He'd just lost me and wanted to find me."

"If he is a relation, then it is manifest your dear Mother thought he was not the sort of relation that would do you any good. This is all I wanted to ask you, Edward."

The scrutiny intensified.

"You did *not* communicate your whereabouts to this Mr Whittaker — I believe that — and I would like you to give me your promise on your word of honour that you will not do anything of the sort. Except with my knowledge and consent."

"I'd like to thank him for that lovely wreath, Sir. I think my mother would have appreciated that wreath."

"I am not so sure, Edward. In this matter I ask you to be guided by

me. As your dear mother wished. I might perhaps send him a message on your behalf."

It was plain to Edward Albert's cautious mind that the less he committed himself to Mr Myame and the sooner he found out what this Mr Whittaker was up to, the better.

"You know best, Sir," he said. "Of course if he goes about pretending to be Colebrook and Mahogany, it certainly can't be right...."

Mr Myame did not challenge the name of the firm. Good!

"I can rely on you, Edward?"

"Certainly, Sir." And with that Edward Albert escaped and wrote down the name of Colebrook and Mahogany there and then on a scrap of paper.

In many ways Buffin Burleybank had enlarged Edward Albert's knowledge of the dodges and expedients of life. He had learnt that there were things called Trade Directories. There was one, he discovered, in that accommodating newsagent's shop. It was an old one, but no Trade Directory was half as old as the firm of Colebrook and Mahogany, Royal Warrant Holders, of North Lonsdale Street. And so Edward Albert, having been sent on a mission to Godberry's, the school-furnishers in Oxford Street, to inquire if they dealt in second-hand desks and if so, would they give him a list of any bargains they had on offer, successfully lost his way and was presently contemplating for the first time the wonder and beauty of Colebrook and Mahogany's magnificent windows. There you had the most wonderful china elephants, great blue vases with pictures of delightful scenery, white china statuary, gigantic bowls, lovely half-naked gods and goddesses of shining porcelain, dinner services for kings, decanters and glass beyond description.

He allowed his imagination to play loose with fantastic possibilities. He was related to this man who, for some mysterious purpose, ran this mighty and lovely business in the name of Colebrook and Mahogany. What was he trying to conceal by this? Some relationship? And what, if presently everything was brought to light, would that hidden relationship turn out to be? Edward Albert skipped a vast complication of possibilities, just as he skipped the plot stuff in the stories he read. He landed precisely where he wanted

to land for the purpose of reverie. He was the long-lost rightful heir and this man, either out of affection or remorse, or just no reason at all, was going to do him justice.

This place must be worth *fousands* of pounds, fousands and fousands and fousands of pounds...

He could say to all sorts of people: “I came into some money. I came into—”

“Forty, fifty ‘undred fousand? Well, fifty, say?”

He would say it to Mr Myame. He would walk into the classroom when all the school was present. He could come in late for prayers. “Sorry to be late, but I’ve had important news, Sir. ‘Fraid I’ll have to be leaving you. You see I came into fifty fousand pounds and I been put down for Eton and ‘Arrow and Oxford and Cambridge, leastways as soon as there’s a vacancy anywhere. I’ll be looking in on you’ one of these days when I’m seeing the match at Lord’s. Maybe I’ll be in the match. If so” — here we turn to the school— “I hope I’ll be able to get all of you chaps tickets for the Pavilion....” Make ’em sit up, that will. Or Buffin Burleybanks. “Where ‘d’you get that ‘at?” Buffin would say.

“I lef old Myame’s for Eton,” Edward Albert would answer.

“What sort of school is Mottiscombe?”

Reluctantly he turned away from the great windows and, still dreaming and whistling softly to himself, pursued his errand to Messrs Godberry’s and so home to school again.

“You’ve been a long time,” said Mr Myame, faintly suspicious.

“I lost my way a bit,” said Edward Albert. “I arst a man who told me wrong.”

And now, how to get past the vigilance of Mr Myame to this opulent and mysterious friend behind that tremendous

VIII. — SNARES FOR MR MYAME

THE letter composed by Edward Albert was coloured in its phraseology by the beginnings of instruction in commercial correspondence and perhaps also by the Home Letter with which the school sessions terminated. It ran as follows:

"DEAR SIR,

In reply to your esteemed inquiries we (corrected to 'I') beg to submit to you where I am at present. I am situated at present in a Commercial Academy for Young Gentlemen in the care of my esteemed guardian and principal Mr Abner Myame, A.G.P., Member by Examination of the University of London, etc., who is my trustee and guardian.

It is my pleasure to express to you my gratitude for your kindness in sending her (corrected to 'my mother') that very beautiful wreath. I am sure she would have enjoyed it very much could she have known of it, which unhappily was not the case. I would like to see you and talk to you very much, but Mr Myame does not think so. I want your advice, Sir. Please reply to the above address and not directly to the school. With the sincerest thanks for your past valued favours and an assurance of my continued efforts to merit your esteemed patronage,

I beg to submit myself, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

E.A. TEWLER.

"Don't write to the school."

Mr Jim Whittaker re-read this letter for the sixth time and then handed it to his friend Sir Rumbold Hooper, the well-known patent specialist, the omniscient solicitor, Old Artful, the friend of man and woman, gallant but discreet. They were sitting together in a warm corner of the Reform Club Smoking Room after lunch. They were consuming excellent but deleterious white port — and they realised themselves in a glow of tawny gold. They knew almost too certainly that they were wise and worthy men.

"Document One," said Mr James Whittaker...." And now for Document Two.... It's illuminating, isn't it? And here is what

Keyhole and Sludge report. It seems to me that the worthy Myame is a frightened, bad-tempered man. What's upset him? But read it...."

Document Two ran as follows:

DEAR SIR,

Some days ago I was disagreeably surprised by a visit from a private inquiry agent, one of those instruments of blackmail and intimidation who are becoming such a serious menace nowadays. He mentioned your name and I did not at first realise the nature of his errand. He pressed me with a number of questions some of which I realised later he had no right whatever to ask. If you wanted to communicate with me I should have thought it would have been possible to employ some more acceptable intermediary. I gathered from this agent of yours that you wish to trace your young friend my ward Edward Albert Tewler. Letters sent to his former address had it seems gone astray and been returned. He is in excellent health and making satisfactory progress with his studies, more particularly in Elementary French, commercial correspondence and Scripture. His cricket also has greatly improved. He has asked me to tell you on his behalf how much he appreciated the beautiful wreath you sent when his mother passed over to her peace among God's chosen. He felt her loss very keenly, but I hope and pray it may prove a blessing in disguise for him, turning his mind to those deeper things in life, to which he has hitherto been somewhat inattentive. I do not know whether you are aware that like his parents he is a Peculiar Baptist and that under the guidance of our dear wise pastor, Mr Burlap, he is now preparing to become a full member of our little church. He is greatly preoccupied with these matters and I think it is very undesirable that he should be distracted. I shall prefer it if you will deal directly with me henceforth and not through a hired investigator.

Sincerely yours,

ABNER MYAME,

A.C.P. Member by Examination of London University.

"That hired investigator seems to have put him through a bit of a grilling, and he seems to have answered a lot of questions he needn't have done, before he realised what he was doing. Ah! here's the young sleuth's report. Quite an intelligent report too. Keyhole and Sludge — I know a thing or two about Keyhole and Sludge. It must

be quite a change for them to be fishing in clean water. So Chadband is guardian and trustee and practically everything. He seems to be in a pretty strong position,"

"Chadband? I should have thought it was Squeers we had to deal with."

"What a fellow Dickens was!" said Mr Jim Whittaker.

"How he knew his English! *Bleak House* is as complete and deadly a picture of England as we shall ever get. The types, the temperaments, the Tite Barnacles and all the rest of them. Nobody can touch him! How he poured it out! Mixed with mud. With a lot of mud. Like Shakespeare. Like everything English." ("Dostoyevsky, for example," whispered Hooper unheeded, "or Balzac.") "And the public he wrote for! He had to tell them when to laugh and when to cry. And he couldn't bear not to have 'em all chuckling and sniffing with him. All the same he knew the English mixture. How completely he knew it! No wonder the highbrows hate him! Micawber, Chadband, Horace Skimpole, Mrs Jellaby, Squeers. There isn't an Englishman alive who doesn't correspond to some character or other of his — or some combination of them. Not one. How he laced it all together from Tulkinghorn to that poor little wretch 'Jo'! Marvellous!"

Sir Rumbold reflected. "I never had your obsession with Dickens. Still — he got over a vast breadth of canvas, I admit. When did you read Bleak House last, Whittaker?"

"I read it and re-read it when I was at Cambridge. No! — at Winchester."

"Don't read it again — ever. There's a time in a young man's life for reading Dickens — and a time to stop reading Dickens."

"I could read Pickwick now with the same enjoyment—"

"You don't."

"I tell you—"

"Don't. It won't be true, Whittaker. You'll think it is true and you'll get irritated if I throw doubts. Why cannot you be moderate, Whittaker? What a gift you have for unqualified enthusiasms! You over-do everything, unless you forget to do anything about it. Shakespeare isn't all good. You'd die rather than confess it. If you had to choose two books for a desert island, you'd choose the Bible

— and Shakespeare. You say that at once. I wouldn't. I know them too well. If there was a third book allowed, you'd say Dickens....”

“This literary talk is all very well,” said Whittaker. “But where does it get us?”

“Who began it?”

“Have it your own way. But what concerns me now is this problem of Squeers-Chadband. What are we to do about him?”

“It's poor ‘Jo’ out of Tom's All Alone we have to consider,” said Sir Rumbold. “Do you remember poor Jo? He died very beautifully but rather incredibly repeating the Lord's Prayer.”

“I remember Jo all right. But what I can do for him, I don't know. His letter is a shriek for help, but Squeers-Chadband seems to have got him tied up body and soul, all ready to devour.”

“You think?”

“Should I consult you if I didn't?”

“Another little port won't do us any harm....”

“Well now, what standing have we? Whatever little pile of savings Ma Tewler left is completely in his hands until the kid is twenty-one, and, as the report points out, there is nothing to prevent him paying not only interest but principal into his own account as school and tuition fees, and transferring investments and so forth and so on. He seems to be launching out and enlarging his school. What's to prevent him buying our little misery a partnership in his own school? He can break him down to a junior partner, and make a sort of unpaid assistant of him. Something that dropped from him, the report says, seems to suggest that. What right has anyone to intervene?”

“We'll see about that later. Why is Chadband in a funk about it at all? Why doesn't he face us out?”

“That puzzles me.”

“Conscience makes cowards of us all, Whittaker. Our investigator makes a suggestion. That youngster ought to be at Scotland Yard, by the way, instead of defiling himself with Keyhole and Sludge. But you see he suggests here that Chadband began by keeping accounts for a month or so until he felt safe about something, and that since then he has just been swiping money out of the trust whenever he felt like it. The appetite grows with what it feeds on. What was it he had

to feel safe about? Well — let us consider. You?"

"How me?"

"As the boy's next of kin or father perhaps?"

"But — !"

"When you didn't follow up that evidently much too impressive wreath, he dropped the idea, and now this inquiry of yours has revived it."

"My dear Hooper! Damnation! You don't imagine!"

"No. But Chadband may. You can't imagine the ideas he has about — our sort of people. I see no reason why he shouldn't go on imagining it for a bit. I don't think it would give you any standing in the case, but he may think it might."

"Preposterous!"

"A time will come when you'll have to drop that double port after lunch. It makes you gouty and testy. *I* can stand it but you can't. It's your hormones or something.... Anyhow Chadband's not a well-informed man. You must always in this sort of affair consider the limitations of the particular individual you are dealing with. He may imagine there is some sort of legal supervision of trustees. There isn't but there ought to be. There ought to be a sort of Public Trustee for these things. There will be one of these days. Let that pass. But evidently he can't stand up to any sort of examination of his accounts, and that is what scares him. He's just been drawing cheques out of the trust account, selling securities, and going ahead, building a new classroom, throwing out a wing for a third dormitory. And what we have to consider is just how we can go through his passbooks."

"We can't,"

"We can."

"How can we?"

"And without any slur on your high moral character."

"Well, just consider! The wife of a trusted employee! Damn it! I wish you wouldn't keep harping on that idea. It's disagreeable. Things like this without a word of truth in them get about. And when once they get about...."

"Forgive me. We'll drop all that. When I tried that suggestion I hadn't thought of the real way to do the job. Now I have."

“Well?”

“You see,” said Sir Rumbold, “you owe the boy a considerable sum of money.”

“The devil I do!”

“Yes. You owe him well over a hundred pounds.”

“First I’ve heard about it. You get wilder and wilder.”

“You see you have a system of crediting commissions to your staff as a sort of bonus to the retiring allowance.”

“It’s news to me.”

“All done very quietly. Yes. You don’t know everything about your Firm, you know. By a long chalk. Listen to what I am telling you. Don’t keep interrupting. I’m doing this job for you, aren’t I? This bonus may have its imaginative element, but the fact is it gets us right into Chadband’s pass- book and that’s where we want to get.”

“He’ll just swipe that extra hundred pounds. What’s to prevent him?”

“That’s easy.”

“I don’t see it.”

“No. But listen! You have to see that it is invested to the best advantage. That is in the instrument or deeds or whatever they are — leave that to me — and that is where we poke our inquiring little fingers into the guardianship of the worthy Myame. We go and see him. We look at him hard. We ask for insignificant details. Somehow, and quite improperly and unjustly, the word embezzlement creeps into the discussion. Does your slow but solid intelligence begin to grasp the situation now?”

“Suppose he fights when he realises he is cornered?”

“Chadband isn’t going to fight. Trust me. We’ll have him whining in no time.”

IX. — OUT OF THE DEEPS, OH LORD!

"IF the Lord had not been on my side," said Mr Myame, "when men rose up against me, they had swallowed me up quick when their wrath was kindled against me. Then the waters had overwhelmed me, the stream had gone over my soul.

"Yes, but thou spared him, Lord. His weeping was turned to joy. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken and we are escaped. Blessed words. Oh blessed words! So thou dealtest with thy servant David! So thou dealest with all sinners that repent. And now — do I cry in vain? Are not these blessed words for me? Are not these words for me? Out of the darkness I cry. Let my cry come unto thee."

It was late at night and he was in his study in sore tribulation Wrestling with the Spirit. For some months he had been living in a state of great spiritual contentment. Now suddenly a terrible darkness had closed in upon him. His sense of Divine Guidance had departed from him. He delivered these long treasured words with profound emphasis and paused. But there came no answer to him in the stillness without or within.

"Hide not thy face from me," he resumed, "in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: In the day when I call, answer me speedily. For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burnt as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of die wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

No comfort came to him.

On the table in front of him was the One Good Book, and in his distress and search for guidance Mr Myame had resorted to an old-

fashioned expedient, opening the precious volume with his eyes shut, running his finger down the page, and then taking the verse on which it rested as his message. But his first verse had been Genesis x, 23, and the words were: “And the children of Aram; Uz and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.”

He had pondered, but there was no light in that, none whatever. He had tried again and got First Chronicles xii, 27. It was just as opaque. “And Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites, and with him were three thousand and seven hundred.”

“Three thousand and seven hundred,” he reflected. “No. It’s nothing like that. It isn’t anything like that. Anyhow.”

Then he had resorted to his well stored memory for consolation and found no consolation, neither wind, nor thunder, nor a still small voice. He stood, at the end of his tether, bowed down, helpless, God-forsaken.

Penitence and prayer. He knelt before his fireside chair and prayed. Prayed for light, prayed that at least he might know why the Spirit had gone out of him. And at last, still on his knees, he confessed. “I have sinned, Oh Heavenly Father. I am no more worthy to be called thy Son.”

A vast load upon his shoulders seemed to lighten. “I have sinned. I have been presumptuous. I have taken upon myself—” He weighed his words carefully. “More than I should....

“Not my will but thy will be done....

“I presumed and thou has chastened me. But thou who readest the heart, thou knowest that in my pride it seemed to me that thou hadst delivered this task into my hands, to take this poor evil-hearted treacherous child and lead him into the light, to mould his heart and mind, and make him one of thy Holy Saints, to take him as my partner and at last my successor in this thy-school — for to Thee alone be the praise. To make this School a school of souls, a real Preparatory School for thy service, a centre of light in this dark world....”

The Divine Spirit made no audible reply, but it seemed now to Mr Myame that he or it was listening. The good man searched further into the situation.

“But that was not Thy way, Oh Lord. That was not Thy Will and

thou hast chastened me. Thou hast raised up a serpent in my bosom....”

For some moments Mr Myame was at a loss for words.

“He hath sharpened his tongue like a serpent. Adder’s poison is under his lips. Adder’s poison. The proud have laid a snare for me and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me,.... Heap burning coals upon him....”

He paused lest there should be any mistake about this. Then he resumed, addressing himself more particularly to Edward Albert.

“What shall be given unto thee or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of jumper. Yea indeed. Coals of juniper. Woe is me that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.... But that, Oh Lord, is all over now. I cast him forth, according to thy will. Verily I cast him forth to have his part with the wicked. Forgive him, Lord, for he is young and foolish. Remember his transgression that at last he may find grace. Chasten me, yes, because I did not prove a better shepherd for him, but chasten him also! Chasten him too, Oh Lord. Chasten him and bring him back in thine own good time to thy salvation.”

He paused and sighed heavily. He felt he was being very generous and that the Holy Spirit would appreciate this. Bunyan’s burthen was palpably lighter on his shoulders, but still it was there.

He rose slowly to his feet and stood and gloomed. He mingled a certain element of soliloquy with his next address to the eternal.

“If it is thy Will that I abase myself, thy Will be done. But Lord how can I pay it back? Thou knowest how matters stand. If I humble myself. If thou shouldst soften their hearts. If, for instance, part of it could be made into a mortgage, a first mortgage....”

Men’s judgments of their fellow men are too often crude and rash. Mr Myame was no Chadband after the fashion of Dickens’ cruel portrait. He was a sincere, earnest Believer. He would have been the first to disclaim intellectual power, He pretended to no great learning. It was only the very simplest members of the congregation who imagined that he could read the Scriptures in the original Greek and Hebrew. But like most of that little church he was rich in the Gifts of the Spirit. What are intellectual powers and learning when it comes

to the Gifts of the Spirit? Given those, you can teach anybody everything that matters, here and hereafter. That has been the strength of Believers ever since Religion began.

The Gifts of the Spirit are so copious, the inheritance of our common Christianity is so vast and various, that practically anything in the way of belief except Monism and Atheism can be picked out of its limitless treasury of exalting but contradictory statements and traditions. The orthodoxies and heresies alike are all no more than choice selections from that stupendous abundance. All the priestly religions have found it expedient for their own stability to restrain reference to the Holy Scriptures. But the invention of paper and of printing from movable type, let loose an unexpected flood of Bibles upon Christendom, and the Anabaptists, the General Baptists, the Particular Baptists and a great multitude of other non-conformists ensued.

None of this, by the way, is dissertation or generalisation or "ideas" or anything of that sort. There is no breach of our undertaking here. This is a plain and simple exposition of the fundamental processes that were going on in Mr Myame's poor troubled hairy beetling head. He had been born into the little Camden Town church, and he had obeyed the injunction to search the Scriptures very faithfully. What his group of believers searched them for were scraps and phrases, often incomplete sentences or misapplied interpolations, that fell in with their already firmly established line of thought. They picked these out and let the rest of that unmanageable abundance slide. They were blind to it. The Bible abounds in contradictions of the most varied sort, and though there are millions of Bible Readers, pledged to get through the Word about every year or so, yet their Faith burns so brightly in them that not one of them seems ever to observe an inconsistency.

Mr Myame was a Trinitarian Bible Christian to the bone, and he had no doubt whatever that the Holy Ghost, having wantonly chosen him for salvation out of the general multitude of the hopelessly damned, was now, with the assistance of Almighty Providence engaged in an edifying wrestling match catch as catch can, with him for the good of his soul. The stars, the gulf of time, the intricate wonder of things unknown, were just the highly impressive but

relatively insignificant adornment of the garment of this God who was trying out Mr Myame so sorely that night. There was not a scrap of make-believe about this superb wrestling match. He wrestled with his Deity in perfect good faith.

He and the Spirit were still battling darkly when he went upstairs.

His wife coughed and woke up.

"You are very late, Abner," she said. "Is anything the matter?"

"The hand of the Lord is very heavy upon me," he said. "He has — I can't tell you. But a great darkness has come upon my soul."

He divested himself of his upper garments in silence, assumed his long grey-green flannel nightshirt and then in all modesty removed his shoes and trousers. That, by the way, was as much as she had ever seen of him, and he had seen even less of her.

"I have sinned. I have been presumptuous and God has punished my pride. That boy Tewler...."

He paused.

"I always thought there was something a little sneakish about him."

"I pray God that some day I may be able to forgive him," he said.

Terrible words to say.

And in the night he tossed and worried and talked in his sleep. Sometimes he was praying. He was praying that he might be humble, that God would temper this cup to his lips, that he might be comforted and restored to God's favour. And sometimes he seemed to be doing sums. And anon he seemed to be addressing himself to Edward Albert in language which, though generally scriptural, was invariably unpleasant. Towards morning he seemed to come to a definite conclusion. He spoke as if he was wide awake. "As the Scotch say, I must 'dree my weird'," he said in an exceedingly loud voice, and became quite still.

And presently he fell asleep with his mouth wide open, and snored.

"He giveth his beloved sleep," whispered his devoted wife. She had followed all these distressful phenomena with sympathetic interest. It seemed he had fought a good fight and won. She stifled a fit of coughing for his sake. Presently she also sank into slumber.

Such was the deep spiritual conflict through which Mr Myame

passed, because these two worldlings in their so-called Reform Club made a net for his feet and compassed him about, and, understanding nothing of the matter, called him "Chadband." Would a Chadband, a deliberate hypocrite, have achieved the stern self-abandonment with which he now set himself to readjust Edward Albert's affairs? That strains the Chadband theory. And would a mere self-regarding Chadband have displayed the same intensity of indignation at the wickedness as he conceived it, of Edward Albert's behaviour? His wrath was not after the manner of a Chadband, or a Chadband-Squeers; his wrath and anger were the wrath and anger of David King of Israel — in humbler circumstances, of course.

I do not know precisely what they mean, but the only words that occur to me to round off this description are

"Chadband forsooth!"

So let it rest at that.

Beyond all question Mr Myame was of the stuff that Saints are made of. This is before all things a truthful novel, and that is the truth about him — and about them.

X. — FAITH AND HOPE

SO it was that at last Edward Albert entered the presence of Jim Whittaker. He was ushered through long aisles of shining and glittering glass ware and china and porcelain into a large comfortable office where Mr James Whittaker was dictating letters to a bright-haired young stenographer.

"That's Tewler," he said, looking round for an instant.

"Glad to see you, my boy. Sit down on that sofa there. I'll be done with these letters in a brace of shakes and then we'll have a talk."

Dreams of being the missing heir or the long-lost son or half brother vanished beyond recall. Edward Albert reverted to the feudal system. He had been preparing for this encounter for four days, chiefly in the Public Library and with the librarian's assistance, and his meditations and enquiries had not been without result.

"That's all for the present, Miss Scoresby," said Mr Whittaker and rotated startlingly in his chair as the bright-haired secretary gathered up her pads and pencils. Edward Albert had never seen a rotating armchair before. "Let's have a look at you, young Tewler. What sort of hands have you got?"

Edward Albert hesitated, but under encouragement held out his hands.

"Not like your father's. His were broader. You don't happen to draw or paint or do anything like that?"

"No, I don't, Sir," said Edward Albert.

"H'm. No fretwork or anything of that sort?"

"I'm not much use with my 'ands, Sir. No."

"You can put 'em down. H'm, So you don't take after your father in that sort of thing. That's a pity. What we are going to do about you, Mr Edward Albert Tewler, I don't quite know. Old Myame has blown up like a powder magazine. He doesn't seem to like you a bit. You've just put him out something awful...."

"I reely didn't mean to 'urt Mr Myame, Sir. I reely didn't. 'E's a good man, 'E really is a good man, but I did think I'd a right to see you. After you sent that wreath and everything. He's Narrer, Sir. That's the fact about 'im. 'E'-s Narrer. 'E5s got it into his head

you're not a Believing Christian and that you're worldly and that seeing you won't do me anything but serious harm. So he don't seem to mind what he said or did so long as I didn't see you. He's called me perfectly dreadful things. Sir, perfectly dreadful things. Serpents. Poison, Sir. Coals of Jupiter, 'e says, got to be 'eaped on my head. What are coals of Jupiter, Sir? He's sent me to Coventry. None of the boys must speak to me or me say anything to them. He says he can't bear the sight of me. Spawn of the devil he says I am. He's turned me out of the classes and I've had to go and sit all day in the Public Library. It isn't fair to me, Sir; it isn't fair. I never meant to 'urt 'im like that."

He sat forward on the sofa, hands on knees, a mean and meagre little creature, under-nourished and crazily taught, doing his best to exist and make something of a world of which his fundamental idea was that you cannot be too careful. He sensed rather than apprehended the feudal link that put Mr James Whittaker under an obligation to him.

"He did ask you not to talk to me; didn't he"?"

"But how was I to know, Sir, that he'd take it so serious?"

"Right up to the time he found out, he was all right with you?"

"He was strict, Sir. But then he's naturally strict. He's such an upright man, Sir. He don't seem to understand disobedience."

"Quite like his Old Man," said Jim Whittaker, but his impiety was happily over the head of his hearer. "And then you became an adder and so forth and so on."

"Yessir."

"What are these coals of Jupiter you keep talking about?" asked Jim Whittaker. "I've never heard of them."

"I don't know rightly what they are, Sir, but they're sure to be something very disagreeable, Sir, if 'e got 'em out of the Bible. They're 'eaped on your 'ed, you see, Sir."

"What, when you go to hell?"

"Before that, I think. Sir. I thought you might know, Sir."

"No. I must look it up. And so you're not a Believing Christian, Jo — I mean Edward. You're beginning Doubt very young."

"Oo! *No*, Sir," protested Edward Albert, much alarmed. "Don't imagine that. I 'ope I'm one of the Saved. I know that my Redeemer

liveth. But what I feel, Sir, is that it isn't anything to get so Narrer about. That's where I seem to 'ave 'urt Mr Myame."

"There's something in that. Tell me some more about what you believe? If you don't mind."

Edward Albert made a great effort. "Well, Christianity! Sir. What everybody knows in England. Chrise died for me and all that. I suppose he knew what he was doing, 'E shed his precious blood or us, and I hope I'm truly thankful, Sir. It's in the creed, Sir. It's nothing to get angry about and be unpleasant to other people, calling them nasty names out of the Bible and carrying on just as though they was cheating somehow...."

"You don't think everybody's saved, eh? That, you know, would be a serious heresy, Tewler. I forget which — Perfectionism or something — but it would be."

"I don't fink at all, Sir. I don't know enough. Only I feel if Chrise died to save us sinners, 'E wouldn't make a mess of it and leave most of us out. Like that, Sir. Would 'E, Sir? If you repent truly and believe."

"And you believe?"

"Like anything, Sir. Don't make no mistake about that, Sir. I says my prayers and 'ope to be forgiven. I do my best to be good. I've never scoffed in my life. I've never used bad language. Never. I've listened to it but I've never used it No, Sir."

"And the less said about it all the better?"

"Yessir." He replied so eagerly and with such manifest relief that Jim Whittaker realised the religious Inquisition was at an end.

"And so, to come to business. We had a sort of discussion with the worthy man here. He's still " — he got the only word for it—" he's Wraath with you. Wraath."

Edward Albert featured blameless distress.

"He says he wants you to leave his — his high-class establishment and live elsewhere."

"But where am I to live?"

"I think we can arrange something. You see, you will have a small income."

"What, my own? To spend?"

"We think you can be trusted to do that. You'll have to be careful,

you know,”

“One can’t be too careful.”

“That’s exactly the principle. You see your mother left a little property in the savings bank and in various investments — not very much but quite enough to keep you — and Mr Myame has invested practically all of it in his school — on your behalf. We’ve arranged with him that this shall take the form of a first mortgage on his property, with reasonable arrangements to pay it off—”

“I don’t rightly know what a mortgage is,” said Edward Albert.

“You needn’t. They’ll see to all that in Hooper’s office. You’re the mortgagee and Myame is the mortgagor. It’s perfectly simple. He mortgages his school to you. See? Mortgage. And what it comes to is that you will get something like two guineas and a half a week, of which about five bob will be capital repayment which you’ll have to put by — or Hooper’s office might do that for you — and you’ll have to live on that, and I should think you can rub along quite well until you begin to earn a living. That’s the outlook, and the next question is, what do you want to get up to? Then we can decide where you ought to live and all that. What’s your idea about all that, Tewler?”

“Well, Sir, it’s like this. I’ve been making ‘nquiries as you might say! There’s a very nice gentleman who’s Librarian in the Public Library and he’s been a great ‘elp. It’s no good me trying to ‘ide it from you, Sir. I’m not ‘ighly educated. Yet,”

“Oh, come, Edward. Don’t be down-hearted.”

“I got on a bit with Elementary French and Scripture, but all the same, Sir, Mr Myame didn’t take me very far.”

Mr Whittaker intimated a general agreement.

“Frinstance it would be nice to be a Bang Clark. That’s reely respectable. You ‘ave your Bang Collar Days. You ‘ave promotion. You ‘ave a pension. You know where you are. But I’m not educated enough to be a Bang Clark. Even if I went to a good college and worked very ‘ard, I doubt if I could qualify in time....

“Then there’s Lower Division Civil Service. That’s .safe. You go on to a pension. If I worked ‘ard. I’m only thirteen. If I was to work ‘ard for that....

“Then there’s London Matriculation. That’s ‘ard. But the gentleman in the lib’ry said it was a good thing to work for. It opens

all sorts of avenues^ ‘e said....”

Jim Whittaker allowed Edward Albert to unfold his discreet but ignoble conception of life. It appeared to him that before Edward Albert died he was likely to be despised and detested by quite a number of people. So there was no reason to detest the poor sniffy little beast here and now. All in good time. The Firm had always rather underpaid old Tewler and it had to do its duty by his son, whether it liked him or not.

And it did its duty. It acceded to his strong desire to embark upon a life of miscellaneous mental improvement in that Imperial College of Commercial Science in Kentish Town, and it made an attempt to get him housed and fed according to his condition.

XI. — INTRODUCING DOOBERS

YOUNG MATTERLOCK, a counting-house clerk of thirty-two, was charged to deal with this responsibility. A boarding-house which offered opportunities for conversation and companionship seemed to be indicated. He found such establishments rare in Kentish Town. There it was mostly lodging-houses. But when one went south and east, he found boarding-houses in an enormous abundance with the utmost variety of -charges, customs, habits and clients. London was a great centre for students of every sort and colour, and for every sort and colour boarding-houses had adapted themselves. It was a museum of nationalities, a kaleidoscope of broken-off social fragments. The difficulty was to find a boarding-house that was just simply a boarding-house.

It did not occur to young Matterlock as anything extraordinary that in all this vast wilderness of lodgings and boarding-houses, not one had ever been planned and built as a lodging-house or boarding-house. Every one had been built to accommodate an imaginary and quite impossible family of considerable means and insanitary habits, with cheap abject servants packed away in the attics and basement, a dining-room, a drawing-room, a parlour and the like. The ground landlords, the architects and builders of the period seem to have been incapable of any other idea. Not ten per cent of these hopeful family residences were ever occupied by that vanishing English family; the rest were sub-divided into "floors" from the first, and nearly all of them, even the family houses, were furnished with faded and misfitting second-hand furniture. With a plentiful lack of imagination, nineteenth-century England had shaped its conduct and future to the forms of an obsolete social dream.

Thackeray has embalmed for ever this particular phase in our decadent and commercialised feudalism for the student of social history. Our concern is wholly and solely with Edward Albert, and it is not for us to speculate here, now that London and most of our other big cities such as they were, have been knocked to pieces, how far England may presently reveal a quickened and creative mind, how far it will still continue to be an unchangeable, unimaginative

mother or how far it may lapse into an unpicturesque decay of muddle and misfits.... Doober's, to which young Matterlock finally entrusted Edward Albert, had a fairly handsome facade in Bendle Street, just south of the Euston Road. Its official name of Scartmore House was painted in resolute lettering across its brow. Young Matterlock had inspected it and made the necessary arrangements beforehand. Then he had collected Edward Albert, with a tin box, a cricket bat, an outgrown overcoat and a new portmanteau, from the school, and brought him in a slow, sure four-wheeler to his new habitation.

"I think you'll find it a very nice homely place," he said on the way. "Mrs Doober who runs it seems a thoroughly good sort. She'll introduce you to people and make you feel at home. You'll soon get used to it. If you fall upon any difficulties you know my address. Your money will come every Saturday from Hooper's office and you'll pay the bill that day. The balance over you ought to find enough for clothes, college fees and running-expenses. If you're careful you can manage. You can't be too careful."

Edward Albert made a responsive noise to that familiar phrase. .

"*I* think you ought to get your clothes made to measure. Those cheap ready-mades of Myame's make you look even worse than you need do. I think Mrs Doober or some one will find you some sort of tailor round the corner. Bespoke tailors I think they call them. You see this doesn't sit on your shoulders, and your sleeve's so short it shows too much of your wrists. Wrists aren't exactly your strong point, Tewler.... Well, here we are!"

Mrs Doober opened the door, beaming and being as thoroughly a good sort as she knew how. Behind her hovered the current slavey summoned to help with the luggage.

The "Hall" of Scartmore House, that is to say its passage entrance, testified that Doober's was reasonably and miscellaneously full. The place had a dingy but nutritious smell, and was toned by oil-cloth and marbled paper to a pale mellow brown. Colour and odour blended together. A row of hat and coat pegs sustained a selection of outer garments above an extensive range of umbrellas and sticks. There was a large hall-stand with a fly-blown mirror and racks for letters and papers.

Largely occluding this mellow background was Mrs Doober's receptive personality. "And this is our young gentleman?" said she. "A student. We'll do all we can to make you comfortable. You're not the only student, you'll find. There's young Mr Frankincense from University College. Such a clever young man — the highest honours! — and we've got a great teacher of elocution, Mr Harold Thump, and his lady, and a young Indian gentleman."

She whispered confidentially closer to young Matterlock.

"The son of a rajah. He speaks English beautifully."

She shot an aside at the slavey. "Number thirteen. If they're too heavy, take them up one at a time.... Well then, ask Gawpy to help you. Don't stand there helpless."

She restored her amiability as she turned back to her clients.

Edward Albert listened confusedly. He was doing his best to keep his unfortunate wrists up his sleeves, and he had already acquired a habit of inaccurate attention that would last his lifetime. "We're a young household," she was saying.

"There's only one really old gentleman among us and he's charming. Such.good stories!...."

He felt the pressure of young Matterlock's hand upon his shoulder. 6C You'll be all right. You'll feel a little strange at first but you'll soon settle down to it."

"Belgians. A family of refugees from Antwerp. So if you want to learn French...."

"So it's good-bye and good luck, Tewler." Matterlock was shaking his hand. And leaving him!

Edward Albert had a wild desire to cry out, "Oh, don't leave me," and bolt after his protector before the door closed. Then he was alone with Mrs Doober. Her propitiatory manner was now faintly tinged with proprietorship.

"I must show you our common rooms and explain a few of our rules and regulations — because there must be rules and regulations, you know — and then I will take you up to your own apartment. Just a quiet little room it is," she said, and then added informatively, "upstairs. It's number thirteen. I hope you won't mind that. I've sometimes thought of changing it to 12A. But I never have. I do so hope you'll like it all. We're all such friends — it's just like one big

family. You must hang up your hat and coat on that peg....”

And in this manner Edward Albert entered upon a fresh phase in his life and adapted himself discreetly to a new and wider environment. Breakfast was from half-past seven to half-past nine. Then you were supposed to go out and return about six or seven. (But one old gentleman was asleep before the fire in the drawing-room. He woke up, stared for a moment, grunted, and then composed himself for further slumber.) Dinner was from seven-thirty to nine-thirty. There was a large dingy dining-room with shaded gas lamps, a big sideboard, a service lift that came up with a rumble and a smack, and a sort of backward extension to a little sitting-room behind, and on the first floor there was a diffused drawing-room which had once been bisected by folding doors, with armchairs and corners more or less appropriated by books, pieces of knitting, shawls and the like, two fireplaces and a snuggery with two card tables, a chess table, and a sofa at the back. And so upstairs, where Edward Albert was left to unpack, put his things away in a chest of drawers, and spend a long time studying his wrists in the little looking-glass and meditating upon the possibilities of bespoke clothes. If he had long cuffs; if he got one of those new up and then down collars like what Mr Matterlock wore; if he pulled himself up — so. And a dark suit with a touch of blue in it and creased trousers like Mr Matterlock’s. Which fitted. Then it would be different?....

They looked at him at the dinner table when Mrs Doober brought him down — she had to bring him down. They didn’t say so very much to him, but they peeped and looked at him all the time. (He would get those cuffs to-morrow.) People came and went with an extraordinary assurance. Afterwards in the drawing-room a lady said, “You’re a new arrival?” and he said “Yes, Mam.” “And what’s your name?” she said, and he told her quite friendly like, and then he got into a corner and affected to read a very nice book, A Guide to the Hotels of Europe, while he watched his fellow boarders unobtrusively.

XII. — MR HAROLD THUMP

SOME of the happy family of Scartmore House Edward Albert got to know quite soon. Some remained remote. For a time Mr Harold Thump dominated all the other individualities in this new world. He was, Mrs Doober had explained, "a teacher of elocution and a reciter; and such a buoyant man", large, round and rosy, with a lot of fair hair and large, watery, blue eyes; he rubbed his hands together and breathed with a gusto whenever he thought of it; sometimes he forgot himself and lapsed into a coma; but when the spirit was in him he went about Doober's like a brass band. He sang in the bathroom like a choir coming home from a heavily liquidated bean-feast. He saluted everybody by name as he encountered them. He always brightened up for a new arrival.

"Ah, a new recruit to the Select Company!" he said, at his first sight of Edward Albert, who, on his second night, had come down to dinner rather early, so as not to be brought down by Mrs Doober, and cooed over as he came down.

"Young I perceive you are, but you'll grow out of it. Tell me your name, laddie....

"Now tell me, my young friend, have you heard the latest story about the zoo? About the monkey and the little fretful porcupine?"

He was addressing himself to Edward Albert. Edward Albert was being asked whether he had heard the story of the monkey and the little fretful porcupine.

"No, Sir," he said brightly.

"It was such a leetle monkey," said Mr Thump, and then in a whisper, "Blue. You've seen them — blue?"

"Yes, Sir." He hadn't exactly, but he could imagine it. Whereupon Mr Thump's face changed and became marvellous. He lifted a flat hand as who should say, "You wait!"

His lips tightened. His eyes became very round, he projected his face. He seemed to be scrutinising every corner of the room for some hostile hearer. "It's such a vulgar story," he said in a stage whisper, confidentially. He reduced Edward Albert to a state of tension. He stood up and looked over the top of the lamp. What was he looking

for there? There couldn't be anything there. Edward Albert began to giggle. Mr Thump, much encouraged, leant forward to look behind the door.

Then suddenly he affected to think of under the table. He went down to look underneath. Edward Albert's giggle became uncontrollable. Mr Thump looked at him dubiously and went underneath again. Then he came up questioningly, with only the upper part of his face, shining, grave, doubtful, confidential. "Eh?" he said, and put his finger to his lips.

It was too funny.

Then the lady came in, the lady who had said, "You're a new arrival?" the night before.

She took her place at the table. She affected to ignore Mr Thump. You might infer she did not like him.

Mr Thump, very absurdly, ignored her upon strictly parallel lines. Ridiculous it was.

"Not now," he said. "No. Never do."

Other people dropped in, Mrs Doober and a rather severe-looking blonde young lady. With each arrival Mr Thump featured a deepening hopelessness, and Edward Albert's delight in his frustration increased. Plainly the story was becoming more and more impossible. Mr Thump would start at every fresh arrival and throw up his eyes in comic despair. Always when no one but Edward Albert was looking. The others were beginning to notice Edward Albert's uncontrollable hilarity. They suspected him. What was he laughing at? Then they suspected Mr Thump. Thereupon Mr Thump became more suspicious than anyone. He was a fair treat.

He addressed Edward Albert protestingly. He spoke in a low plaintive voice. "I only said a porcupine, you know, a very leetle porcupine. What is there to laugh at in a porcupine?"

His features had an instantaneous fit and then became very sad.

Edward Albert devoured bread hastily and a crumb went the wrong way.

"Just a porcupine!" said Thump in a broken falsetto.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!"

"You've set that boy laughing!" said Mrs Doober, "and I doubt if he'll get any dinner. Gawpy, take him away and help him. It's a

shame of you, Mr Thump."

"I never set him laughing. He started laughing at me. All I said, Mrs Doober, was this; I asked him if he knew the story of the monkey and the porcupine."

"Well," said the elderly man who had been sleeping before the drawing-room fire in the afternoon. "What is this precious story of the monkey and the porcupine? If it's fit to tell here."

"How should *I* know?" said Mr Thump, now in his glory. "If I knew, would I ask a little chap like that?"

"You mean to say there isn't a story?"

"Not that I know of. No. Why should there be? I've been asking about it for years. From the way he laughed I really thought he had got something...."

The old gentleman grunted in a hostile manner.

"One of your Artful Catches, Mr Thump," said Mrs Doober. "I shall fine you, if you do any more of them...."

Then changing the subject; "Our Belgian friends are late to-night...."

Mr Thump aired his voice for a few tuneful bars and then caught his wife's eye and desisted. "Hm!" said Mr Thump, and sank back into insignificance.

When Albert Edward returned to the dining-room watery-eyed and still slightly hysterical, the Belgians had come in and the table talk had drifted away to other subjects, so that he never learnt that the great story of the monkey and the porcupine was merely selling a bargain. Immediately his eye sought Mr Harold Thump's and was rewarded by a sympathetic grimace.

In this way a curious mental dependence was established between Mr Thump and himself. They reassured one another. They convinced each other that they existed.

When Mr Thump came into one of the reception rooms and everybody else behaved as though they had nothing against him very much except that they had had quite enough of him some time ago, he would look for Edward Albert and be sure of finding a bright expectant face. And Edward Albert, coming discreetly into a company to which, except for Mrs Doober's official encouragements, he seemed invisible and unaudible, would find Harold Thump ready

with a grimace for him and just that sly obliquity of vision in it that made them both fellow-conspirators against their fellow-boarders.

“They don’t exist,” they told each other mutely.

XIII. — INTIMATIONS OF EMPIRE

BEHIND the florid personality of Mr Harold Thump, other individuals advanced and retreated. There was that other student, young Frankincense from University College, who had won so many honours. He was slender and tall, surmounted by a pear-shaped head with the broad part upward, and he came to Edward Albert and said, "I gather you too are a scholarship holder?"

"Not exactly a scholarship holder," said Edward Albert.

"I'm studying at the Imperial College of Commercial Science in Kentish Town. Civil Service and all that."

"Oh God!" cried Mr Frankincense in undisguised contempt, and turned away, and never afterwards approached him.

Whereupon a profound hatred for Mr Frankincense was born in Edward Albert's soul, and it troubled him profoundly that he could devise no way of getting square with him. In reveries he called him Turnip Head, and cut him out with a particularly beautiful but non-existent young lady, with whom he was desperately enamoured. In this Edward Albert's new tailor-made suit played its part. But Frankincense paid little attention to these profound humiliations, since he knew nothing whatever about them.

Edward Albert would see him playing chess in the snuggery and particularly with the Indian young gentleman, who looked like one of the Bolter's College Old Boys, only more so, and who spoke in a high-pitched clear staccato manner that filled Edward Albert with a strange sense of superiority, more particularly when he learnt from old Mr Blake that this way of talking was "chi-chi" and characteristic of the lesser breeds within the law who inhabit Hindustan. He was part of Edward Albert's Indian Empire, and as for his being a somebody because he was a Rajah's son, said old Mr Blake, "these rajahs have dozens of 'em. Hareems they have, and they tax the skins off their people to keep them up and then blame us for it. Four wives and a lot of concubines and then some. Rajah's son he may be in India, but over here he's nothing more than a blasted bastard. But to hear him argue at times you would think we'd robbed India of her cotton trade and every sort of wealth they ever had.... Hareems is

their factories, and whatsoever wealth they get, they'll produce more mouths to eat it up, trust them. Why, when I see him talking to a nice blonde English girl like Miss Pooley, and giving himself airs with her, it fair makes my blood boil. Out there she'd be a Mem Sahib and he'd be salaaming to her...."

Edward Albert, as a prospective citizen of the British Motherland would listen to his subject from afar, watch the sinister movements of his long hands, and resent his shrill laugh of delight when he gained any advantage over Turnip Head, who after all was an Englishman, and who ought to know better than to lose games of chess to his political inferior. You cannot be too careful. At any time there might be another Mutiny, if once we lost our grip on them.

And in his reveries he would deal with his subject races very firmly. Sadly and sternly he would blow them from guns, because that was what they dreaded most. It affected their resurrection in some way. He revived his fantasy of an electric gun that never required re-loading, and with it he fought his way through hordes and hordes of turbaned rebels, mowing them down by the Fousand, literally by the Fousand, to rescue the foolish Turnip Head — just in time.

There the man was, hemmed in, his ammunition running short, awaiting the fate of all those who pander to the treacherous natives, yet, let this be said for him, holding out to the last, and then he heard the bagpipes. Softly in his own peculiar manner, Edward Albert whistled that inspiring tune, "The Campbells are Coming."

He advanced along a nullah, because, whatever it may be, a nullah is what you always advance along in India, shooting right and left.

Then he discovered he was sitting quite close to the Indian rebel,....

Edward Albert didn't care if he had heard....

XIV. — DO BELGIANS SPEAK FRENCH?

ANOTHER stimulus to the patriotic consciousness of Edward Albert was those newly arrived Belgian refugees from Antwerp, always sitting together in a bunch, watchful to behave well, and talking of their affairs and hopes with the utmost freedom, to anyone whom on the slightest provocation they imagined might understand their French. In a little while the Germans would be driven out of Belgium again and they would return. Miss Pooley and the widow lady who had first spoken to Edward Albert really did have a working knowledge of French, and so it fell to them to hear and hand on their account of what in those milder days were regarded as the horrors of war.

They seemed pretty dreadful then to everyone. Antwerp had been shelled and scores of civilians had been killed. One story was of a human shoulder-blade lying in the street far away from the heap of clothes and the pool of blood that had once been its body, and the other was of a man who just stepped out on a balcony to see what was happening. His wife called out to him to come in for his coffee, and, getting no answer, went out to find him — headless!

That sort of thing. It was strange to listen to people who could not speak three words of English talking so freely and quickly in their own difficult tongue.

Harold Thump was disposed to be critical of those Belgians from the first, and cast a doubt, some indefinite sort of doubt, upon them. They constituted a rival attraction and he could not bear it. He would make a humorous face and discover Edward Albert was not looking at him. He tried to recover that attention by affecting to jump and be alarmed at Monsieur Harcourt's more emphatic gestures, and watching him with extreme caution and looking round at him suddenly, as if he was something that might explode at any moment. This succeeded partially. But only partially.

Because Tewler was listening most of the time for bits of Elementary French and hoping against hope that he might be able to cut in. But it was just gabble, gabble, so that at times he doubted if it really was French at all.

Never once did he hear of *Lar mair*, *ler frair*, that ever- present *tante*, the gardener, the books of my uncle, the house that is ours, the dog, the cat, and all that curious world which pullulates round and round and round the foundations laid for the French language in English.

Did these Belgians really speak good French? There was talk fostered by Mrs Doober of everybody having French lessons now while they had the opportunity. But you cannot be too careful. Edward Albert, listening attentively, heard Monsieur Harcourt say, whenever he was interrupted, "*Comment*?" Now that wasn't the proper French for "What", which was what he was trying to say. The proper French for "What" is "*Quoi*." "*Comment*" means "How." In Elementary French it does, anyhow, because it said so in the vocabulary at the end of his French Primer. And anyhow he wasn't going to be taught French if he wasn't to be taught French in English, and the Harcourts had no English. No fear!

So it was that Edward Albert became one of that vast majority of humanity who, after courses and examinations and certificates and so forth in French, are still unable to speak or understand or even read a dozen words in that language. When at long last, if ever — for the outlook for civilisation seems still very uncertain — when the history of the human mind comes to be written, it will be noted incidentally that from first to last throughout the earth, in the course of the centuries, some billions of people — using "billions" in the English and not the American sense— "learnt French" and still remained entirely uncontaminated. The vast edifice of things the world has been "taught" and which yet remained unknown! Whackings, keepings-in, yells and insults, forced competitions, bogus examinations, sham graduations, gowns, hoods and honours, a vast parade of learning. And what have we got?

The world knows little as yet of what it owes to its teachers. But it is beginning to suspect.

It did glimmer at times in Edward Albert's dim and now rapidly closing mind that in some hidden way a certain number of people "got the hang of" this French. It wasn't all a bluff.

He watched Miss Pooley closely. She wasn't just pretending to understand and making up a story. She really did appear to be

understanding and to be saying things that were understood.

Anyhow, Edward Albert reflected, he didn't intend ever to talk French. So why worry? He wanted it, if he wanted it at all, only for examination purposes, and that was that Nevertheless —

XV. — THINGS HE MISSED

IT added to the vagueness due to his growing habit of inattention to anything that did not immediately concern him, that there was a real element of mystery about the occupations of nearly all his fellow-boarders during the middle part of the day. It never dawned upon Edward Albert from first to last that Mr Harold Thump was living almost entirely on the earnings of his wife. The fiction that she was engaged in some literary work of an exalted sort veiled the fact that she managed an ill-ventilated dressmaking workroom in Shaftesbury Avenue with considerable harshness and success. Harold Thump sat about in the parks in fine weather or repaired to Selfridge's extremely hospitable new premises in Oxford Street when it was cold or wet, or he watched the world go by at some railway station, alert for any conversation that might lead to a lesson in voice production or an invitation to a sing-song. Or if he was in a state of financial elation, he would drift to the Hippodrome corner, and there exchange drinks and reminiscences of success, with various kindred spirits who gathered there, the "Boys", the ripe characters, the good Old Guard. That way he sometimes heard of opportunities, though they were usually opportunities that fled too quickly to be grasped. But Edward Albert imagined a different picture altogether of his off-stage hours. He thought of a great classroom and Harold leading a large resonant chorus. Harold: "Oorl the Woorrld's a Stay-je."

Chorus in thunderous unison: "Oorl the Woorrld's a Stay-je."

It did not dawn upon Edward Albert that the young lady from Harley Street, Miss Pooley, whose Christian name was part of her personal reserve, was not a distinguished medical practitioner but the young lady who made appointments for an oculist and stood by helpfully to hand him the various lights, mirrors, spectacle frames, needed in his practice, or that bitter old Mr Blake, who displayed so vivid a hatred and contempt for every prominent scientific reputation, because, it seemed, they appropriated the work that far better men did for them, was in fact a decaying laboratory assistant from University College.

Nor did our hero ever realise that the quiet genteel widow who

was constantly referring to “my friend Lady Tweedman” — that Lady Tweedman who “used to say” so many authoritative and quenching things about social behaviour — disappeared so suddenly from Doober’s because, after repeated warnings, she had been caught red-handed shoplifting. The magistrate made an example of her. He swept Lady Tweedman aside. “If this Lady Twiddlum (oh, Tweedman, did you say? Tweedman) can answer for your character, why isn’t she here to do so?”

Edward Albert heard Mrs Doober say “Kleptomania” to Miss Pooley, but it meant nothing to him. Suddenly the widow was not, and dear Lady Tweedman was heard of no more. And he pursued his destiny unobservantly as ever, not missing her.

She was just one less person that you need not listen to.

It took him a long time even to grasp the constitution of Mrs Doober’s staff. The chief assistant was a niece of Mr Doober. Mr Doober was “something in the city” that demanded a punctual departure every morning. He was not, as a matter of fact, a company director or a stockbroker. He was an office cleaner and hall porter, and he changed into a green baize apron for duty.. But he resumed his social importance as he removed the green apron and made his way home, and Edward Albert never found him out. He talked but little, and that mostly of stocks and shares. His advice on promising lock-ups and sound investments was invariably sound. Old Mr Blake, who hunted a small nest egg from nest to nest in search of something called capital appreciation, was guided by him entirely.

Then there was Gawpy. Gawpy was a cousin who had lent her savings to Mrs Doober and acquired a half share in the concern, but as it was impossible for Mrs Doober ever to pay her back, and as she had nowhere else to go, she remained as a general utility, to hold on to and live by her invested bit of money as long as it lasted. To Edward Albert and the rest of the boarders she was just Gawpy, something in the nature of things, like the milkman or atmospheric pressure. You took her for granted. You could not imagine what life would be without her. You asked her for everything and she always got you something more or less.

The rebellious unstable slaveys came and went.

One of them passing Edward Albert on the stairs, addressed him

cheerfully in language so filthy and familiar that he could not believe his ears. She grinned back at him over her shoulder and supplemented her words by an even more obscene and incredible gesture. “Leaving my dear!” she said.

“Ain’t it a pity?” He remained aghast on the stair-case. Very slowly he crept on up to his room. It couldn’t have happened. Such things couldn’t happen. Anyhow she was leaving.

After that he remained uncomfortably aware of slaveys. He kept his eye on them, hesitated, and fled their approach.

Whenever Doober’s had rooms to spare a card was put into the ground floor window, and there would be transients for three or four days or perhaps a week. Sometimes they looked odd enough to dislike. If they were alone, they read. If there were several of them they sat and muttered in corners. Sometimes they played strange card games. Nobody took any notice of them unless it was to pass the time of day. Except Gawpy, who would chat to them about the sights of London and the buses and the Underground. Or anything else they seemed disposed to talk about....

XVI. — BOY INTO MAN

IN this setting it was that Edward Albert Tewler began that series of studies, trials, efforts and inquiries that constituted the basic side of his metamorphosis, his wakening to the need of getting a living and finding a place for himself in the great swaying organism of adult human life. He was too young to be affected very seriously by the First World War of 1914-18. After the first excitement of being at war, that wider interest faded. He had not acquired the newspaper habit. He celebrated Armistice Day as the triumphant realisation that "we", the British, had won, as ever, and he ceased to have any sort of international consciousness thereafter. He was, as we shall tell later, quite surprised by the war in 1939.

He set himself with great gravity to his studies in that Kentish Town College. He had a serious discussion with the Principal about his prospects. The idea of a bank clerkship seemed hopeless, and the Principal was by no means so convinced of the value of the London Matriculation as the Camden Town librarian. "It's pretty stiff, you know. Three languages. There's Latin, French, and either Greek or German."

"German's Greek to me" said Edward Albert.

"And it's not much in itself unless you're going to be a teacher.

"But what *I* should do, if I were you," said the Principal, "is to take our special course of Business Method for our own Certificate of Proficiency. There are one or two business organisations, 'North London Leaseholds' for example, that practically take all their clerical staff from us on our certificate. We charge a slight commission when you are placed. There you get something certain. The pay isn't high, I admit, but the hours aren't bad, nine to one and two to six, and then you could come here for more advanced work in our evening classes, and have a shot at the Lower Division Civil Service or something of that sort...."

That seemed a sound, safe proposition to Edward Albert and he accepted it. He gained his Certificate of Proficiency at the second attempt and was presently handed over to North London Leaseholds, and after that he went on with a variety of evening classes, and never

got anywhere or did anything further. Nothing whatever. His objectives wavered continually.

He became a perennial student. He sat in the backs of lecture theatres not even trying to keep up with what was going on. Generally he began with a certain mental resistance to the lecturer, which deepened into something very like detestation as the course flowed on. "How does he know?" he would ask himself, "and, anyhow he needn't give himself the airs he does. I expect there's others could make all his blab blab look pretty small if they chose. Wish I'd never joined up for this Rot. Worse than the last, it is." If he had known of any way of putting out his tongue at those lecturers invisibly, he would certainly have done so.

Among other subjects, he attended classes in Elizabethan Literature, Botany, English Prose Composition, Elementary Latin, Political Economy, Agricultural Science, Geology, Geometrical Drawing and Greek Art. But whatever possibility his mind had had of deliberate concentration was rapidly diminishing now under the pressure of those intense preoccupations with which we shall deal in the next chapter.

When he was just over one-and-twenty a wonderful thing happened to him, one of his reveries was more than realised; he came in for money. He inherited an estate of some of the very worst slum-property in Edinburgh, which finally realised a capital of between nine and ten thousand pounds. His maternal uncle had died intestate and he was the sole next of kin. He had no idea of the magnitude of the old man's hoard. That dawned upon him by degrees. His idea of a legacy was a "hundred pounds." At first he thought the whole thing might be a joke of Harold Thump's, but the postmark was Edinburgh right enough. He consulted Mrs Doober, Mr Doober, Colebrook and Mahogany, and the College Lecturer in Constitutional Law. They all took it seriously and gave valuable advice.

So he got a week's leave in anticipation of his customary ten days. holidays from his North London Leaseholds job, and went off to Scotland to see about it all. All his advisers seemed to expect more than that "cool hundred."

"A cool fousand, then," he had tried.

"It might be more than that," said Mr Doober. "Much more than

that.

Edward Albert's expectations expanded. Endless reveries had prepared his mind for some such good fortune. He was elated but not intoxicated when he began to realise the extent and nature of his windfall. He displayed an unsuspected business shrewdness. "I can't manage that property, as you say; it has to be somebody on the spot, and if there's people ready to buy an' ready to sell. What I want is mortgages, first mortgages, scattered about, for you can't be too careful. I know a bit about mortgages; I bin a mortgagee for years. And I'd like if I can to have it all done by Hooper and Kirkshaw and Hooper — you know, Sir Rumbold Hooper."

Whereupon the people in Edinburgh became excessively respectful and distributed his fortune carefully and righteously, and Edward Albert came back to London in a real first-class carriage, with tremendously padded blue seats and white lace for your head and hot water pipes and everything, whistling softly to himself and torn between a desire to tell everybody about his legacy and a determination not to let anybody know too much about it.

His reveries were confused and exciting. You will hear more about them in the next Book. He foresaw nothing, but on that return journey he anticipated a good deal. Nothing he anticipated happened. That something which figures so largely in heavy classical discourses upon Greek Tragedy, "[unrecoverable OCR error (dcvefcyxTj)]", seems to have been on the same train and to have followed him post haste to Scartmore House.

From this point onward Mr James Whittaker and Mr Myame faded unobtrusively out of Edward Albert's life and in consequence out of our story. "It takes the lousy little beast right off our hands, and that's that," said Mr James Whittaker, and never gave him another thought. Those are his last words in our drama.

Mr Myame's formal exit had occurred already.

The winding-up of his trusteeship had been accomplished with the utmost correctness and formality by Hooper and Kirkshaw and Hooper. The mortgage was being paid off with regularity and the good man's accounts were entirely in order. The transition occurred without a jolt. A residuum of a thousand pounds remained undisturbed for some years by dignified mutual consent.

Such was Mr Myame's formal exit. But something of him hung about in dreamland to the very end of Edward Albert's days.

Mr Myame had figured in a string of religious nightmares during a phase of dyspepsia and influenza following upon a revivalist sermon Edward Albert had been miraculously induced to hear by a sudden shower of rain. "Strait is the gate," tenored the revivalist, "and narrow is the way!" — the very first words Edward Albert heard. How many times had he not called Mr Myame narrow? Narrow is the way. You cannot be too careful. Hell is on either side.

With these rapid confusions of identity natural in dreamland, Mr Myame would be at one moment himself and at another his own just and terrible God, who, according to the best Christian authorities, had created a world of sinners in order to hunt it remorselessly to a hell of everlasting torture. This amiable Divinity overhung him, pouring coals of Jupiter upon him out of a kind of cornucopia scuttle. Edward Albert screamed noiselessly in the dreamland way. He awoke rigid with horror and for days his soul was black with spiritual dismay.

He dreaded bedtime and those God-ridden hours.

There was nothing to be done about them, except live through them. You can't give up going to bed. And gradually they were pushed out of his consciousness by returning health and the steady onset of that other dominant system of urgencies in the human metamorphosis, the convergent factors of the sexual drive. That too shall be told with the same disinterested integrity that we have observed hitherto, at any cost to the lingering illusions and natural modesty of reader and writer alike.

BOOK III. THE MARRYING, DIVORCE AND EARLY. MIDDLE AGE OF EDWARD ALBERT TEWLER

I. — SPECIES HOMO TEWLER

I AM telling the simple life story of one individual Londoner, and I am pledged not to stray from a plain objective narrative; nevertheless it has already been necessary to supplement this record of acts and deeds by statements of a more general nature, to place the story definitely" in its historical perspective. Just as if you are making a deposition about murder on the high seas you have, if possible, to indicate the latitude and longitude of the ship. It has been necessary, for instance, to indicate the r61e of the feudal and Christian traditions, if the story is to be read understandingly by an enlightened American or Russian or Chinese reader, or to have any value for that posterity to which, under the restrictions of the present paper shortage, it is mainly addressed. And now furthermore in one brief but concentrated section we must broaden our reference wider still and show not merely Tewler in terms of terrestrial latitude and longitude but Tewler in relation to the starry universe, to space and time and ideals...

We have already called attention to the general nature of the Metamorphosis through which Edward Albert passed out of his tadpole stage. We must expand a little more on that, because it explains why his love life, as we may call it, was widely different in its nature from the simple, concentrated, exciting and even beautiful romanticism, which the literature of our present social order is preserving for the inspiration of posterity.

In the plays and novels of that now rapidly vanishing past, from which, like people who have been salvaged from a severely bombed city, we are emerging stunned and uncertain; in that literature, I say, the characters are definitely described as being "in love with" so and so. This being "in love" is a specific concentration of desire and affection upon the "object", who is always of the opposite sex, and it excludes all other interests. The character "falls" into it, It is presented as the common quality of all the humanity that is fit to print. A rake is a person in whom this state of mind is less enduring than usual, but when he is in it, he is in it as simply and entirely as a really good man. And most villains are made villains through

scorned and unrequited love. The tragedies of life are when A is in love with B and B on the contrary loves G or anyhow does not return A's love. The dark side of love comes up when B, for mercenary reasons, pretends to be in love with A. And further B may love C unknowingly when believing himself or herself to be in love with A. Moreover, there was a process, exactly parallel to religious conversion, when B "learnt to love" A, or gradually fell out of love with A and into love with C. Around this primary system of adult loves were grouped equally firm and invariable loves — of mothers, of sons and daughters.

Just as hardly anyone in that idealistic past, believed his religion, which was really far too complex and artificial for any human brain to understand and believe, but only liked to believe he .believed it, so the worthy generation into which Edward Albert was born liked to believe it had a simple, explicable, and generally acceptable "love life." In each case there was a fundamental falsification of reality. The story our progenitors told was not how they were actually behaving. It was just how they wanted to believe they behaved. But why did they all, Edward Albert included, distort reality like that?

The normal human being, you may have observed, has a passion for autobiography. You have it yourself. If you deny it indignantly, that means merely that you have it in its more passive form. I have told you something that you resent because it does not tally with the story about yourself that you tell yourself. This passion becomes oppressively manifest5 for instance, in fellow-travellers on ships, whose minds have been relaxed by a flux of strangers at leisure, and it is particularly evident in general conversation in America. At bottom every American seems to be in a state of wonder at his own high and profound motivation, and as anxious to make himself believe it all as to convince you.

And this is natural enough, and was to be expected, because the riddles of human conduct are far more difficult than those of any other animal. The onrush of social life has come to this lonely-spirited ape, for that is what we still are fundamentally, at headlong speed, through a conspiracy of inventions and devices, in a few thousand generations, and he has found himself involved with an ever-expanding multitude of fellow-citizens, whom he is disposed to

fear and to hate and to get the better of in almost equal measure.

This is no mere theorising, or it would be quite out of place here. This is simply a repetition in general terms of the case of Edward Albert Tewler as it has been put before you in the preceding two books, unobtrusively for the most part, but with an outbreak of explicitness in Book the Second, Chapter Three. It is the case of Homo Tewler > which includes all of us — Homo sapiens existing as yet only in the dreamlands of aspiration. This poor uncomfortable creature is continually doing its best to make a plausibly consistent story of its behaviour both to itself and the social world about it, and to be guided by that legend so as to escape an open breach with its environment. The urgency we are under to pull ourselves together and make an acceptable account of ourselves finds its outlet in these yarns about religious experience and consistent love that we force upon one another at every opportunity.

So it has been since the ancestral Tewler (Pithecanthropus Tewler) found himself coming down from his nice safe tree nests to the agoraphobia of the ground level and, with the most strenuous suppressions of his primary instincts, living in ever-expanding communities. He wants intensely to say,

"You can rely on me to do this. It is quite impossible for me to do that. But since I am a Moslem you cannot expect me to do that! No healthy Englishman would dream of..."

He says such things to himself, and will hear of no other possibility of conduct outside their scope. The last thing he will do is to admit our common, essential and unavoidable incoherence. He fences himself about with taboos and customs and creeds, and the more energetic sort of people, themselves believing, have been only too ready to assist their weaker brethren and strengthen their own faith, by guiding and controlling them. This is right and lovely, and as for that? Oh! you'd never do that! The sage, the teacher, the priest, the guru, have kept their fingers pointing steadily away from fact towards the ideal.

And as long as the circumstances of the life of Homo Tewler have not changed too rapidly for these guides to accomodate themselves to the new conditions, his societies have been able to get along by clinging to this or that particular compromise with truth, which

provided an effective method of co-operation. The co-operation might be imperfect, but it rubbed along.

For long ages Homo Tewler managed to pretend that his private imaginations and the more unpleasant realities of his behaviour were not actually there at all, that the misbehaviours of his fellow-creatures were "abnormalities" and lapses which he did not share—"Oh, quite impossible!" — or that they were due to diabolical possession of an exceptional tort. It was only with the advent of psychoanalysis that a complex tangle of fancies and dreams that he had hitherto denied and smuggled away, was dragged out shamefacedly as his "sub-conscious" into an almost too vivid light of day.

"What's all this?" asked the psychoanalyst, "I'm really surprised at you," like a conjuror taking a rabbit out of the good man's hair. We all had a sub-conscious, he declared. Every one of us. *All.* But — we began to remember things we had been in the habit of dismissing from our minds. It was most disconcerting.

Freud and his psychoanalysts suffered from the disadvantages of a classical education, and in their researches into the concealments of their troubled patients, they found remarkable reminders of the sonorous taboo tragedies of the Greeks. Impressed by the irrational freaks of adverse incidents, and unable to believe the dreadful truth that Nature, pursuing a course as yet undeciphered, cares not a dam for her individual offspring, Homo Tewler has always pitted his poor cunning against the Indifference, in the hope of finding lucky and unlucky observances that will compel It to behave and misbehave. Magic was primitive science in practice, and its observance was Taboos. Taboos still rule our minds. We break a Taboo and nothing we believe will arrest the consequences. It is Fate. Scarcely anything will persuade us that Fate doesn't care a rap about it, that the calm of the Indifference is unruffled. We keep on fussing. You mustn't marry your mother-in-law, even if you don't know she is your mother-in-law, or look, like Ham, at your parent's ill-adjusted dress. Oh! it's just awful for you if you do. If you meet a black cat or three magpies, cross yourself or go home and hide. But these scholar-psychiatrists chose to elevate their Greek classics to a sort of history of the human imagination, and invented (Jung chiefly) a great Oedipus complex, a

lesser Electra complex and all the rest of the psychoanalysts' Classical Walpurgis Night, to systematise our mental chaos. With these Fate dramas they entangled the Hebrew idea of original sin, which also manifestly arose out of a legend of a broken taboo and a curse. (You can't be too careful.) Adler, as we shall see later, with his "inferiority complex", came much nearer to the main reality of human imperatives.

A little less of the classics and a trifle more of biology, and the psychoanalysts would have understood that this "sense of sin" of theirs is neither more nor less than the natural discomfort of an imperfectly adapted animal to its environment. It has no more to do with some profound universal conviction of transgression than a coat that is tight under the arms or the wrong spectacles. Now that the environment of Homo Tewler has begun to change at a pace and to an extent that would have been absolutely incredible fifty years ago, a ruthless urgency calls upon him to adapt his mind and his way of living to these vast demands and become Homo sapiens indeed, before utter disaster overwhelms him. Can he? And will he? He is much more likely to give way to storms of taboo terrorism, to mutilate and prostrate himself, to seek to propitiate the offended fetishes by violent persecutions, to revert to inquisitions and witch smellings....

At this point the Censor intervenes and objects that if this goes on, our story will cease to be a specific monograph upon Edward Albert Tewler and will become a general dissertation upon human life, which is precisely, says the Censor, what I undertook to avoid. I would dispute that, were I not afraid that the reader would take sides with the Censor, In the Introduction....

But there is no need to wrangle. What I have said I have said. I will revert now to our "specimen" of Homo Tewler var. Anglicanus and tell how he lived into the opening phase of our world catastrophe and what he said and did then. I will do my utmost henceforth to stick still more closely to the record of his individual acts and experiences.

Yet I must admit here that I join with Mrs Richard Tewler in deploring the inaudibility of Mrs Humbelay. If only we could have heard those lost trailers of hers, we might have benefited greatly from

her unlimited store of obscure and occasionally, what many people might be disposed to consider, obscene wisdom. I could have quoted her and that would have been indisputable story-telling....

It has to be recorded then that Edward Albert never in the whole course of his life really loved or felt honest, generous friendship for any human being such as the codes of our literary tradition require. That demands an amount of deliberate mental synthesis of which his early education and upbringing had already rendered him incapable. How he worked out his own conception of an acceptable religious life has been told. He became a moderate Christian after the fashion of the majority of his fellow-countrymen, occasionally he went to church, some Anglican church, but he rarely did so unless there was nowhere else to go or he had some personal incentive, and he thought about his religion as little as he could. There it was, like a passport put away in a safe, and you did not bother about it until there was a call for it. Then out it came. “Pass Christian!” (“Them Atheists will look a bit silly!”) His sexual development was more confused and complicated than his religious history, it had become entangled with a number of factors in the metamorphosis which were essentially independent of sexual reproduction, and to that greater complex we must now address ourselves.

II. — PURITY BY TERROR

AMONG the claims made for that ideal life lived in the imaginations of the good folk of the Edwardian age was its Purity. Most people were supposed to be more or less pure, and in the case of the autobiographical type this was stressed very aggressively. I remember being told, on our second day's acquaintance on a liner, by a proud and happy mother, apropos of a rather lumpish son of seventeen or eighteen who may or may not have been just out of earshot, "That boy is still as pure as the driven snow." (I don't *think* I saw his face.) But they kept up the make-believe so widely that mostly they did believe that the majority of the people about them who seemed to be leading pure lives were in fact leading pure lives. You have witnessed Mrs Tewler's struggle to keep our hero pure. And here I recall my never to be sufficiently lamented Mrs Humbelay and how she was saying something about forgetting one's dreams and imaginations, when she so unhappily went under the threshold of audibility and was lost to us.

Those people who still seek and profess purity in our harder world must murder and banish memories to a wonderful extent. True that almost all animals forget sexual experiences very readily. That is understandable of animals, who have their transitory annual rutting, because otherwise the creatures would always be in a state of unseasonable excitement. But man is an unseasonable creature and he does not naturally forget so completely. Consider all our pastors and teachers, and particularly consider the case of Mr Myame, His passion for Purity, for the complete suppression of any thought of an approach to a sexual act, in himself and others, assumed an undeniable frightfulness.

The English-speaking world has altered so rapidly that it is already difficult to believe that before the World War of 1914-18, The Times would rather have died of shame than have admitted such words as syphilis or venereal disease to the massive chastity of its columns, and that when that unforgettable heroine, Ettie Rout, came from New Zealand to distribute precautionary packets to the Anzac soldiers, telling them to control themselves if they could but use the

packet if they couldn't, the blushing military authorities, men no doubt leading exceptionally holy lives, who imagined that these unpleasant contagions, now rapidly fading out of existence in our franker world, were God's vindictive device to punish impurity in his creatures, did their best to back up their God and suppress her. And Mr Myame, forgetting to his utmost ability, forgetting it may be altogether, or remembering only dimly as one is haunted by a horrible dream, fought as stoutly as the Blimpest of Colonel Blimps in the same losing fight against reality.

So, in accordance with the wishes of the late Mrs Tewler and after a noiseless vigil in the Joseph Hart dormitory, followed by a close inspection of Edward Albert's bed clothes, he called the young man into his study and handed him a serious-looking volume. It was only a few days before Edward Albert became an adder. Mr Myame gave him the book and he charged his account for it. Whether he would have done so after the great shock is an idle speculation. "I want you to read this very very carefully indeed, Tewler," he said.

"There are things in this.... It is high time you knew them."

Mr Myame paused. "It's a book for your very private reading. I should be careful not to leave it about or let it fall into the hands of your younger schoolfellows."

The book was entitled *Dr Scaber's What a Young Man Should Know*. It had been, it said in a brief preface, a guide and help to many generations of struggling souls, so that it was at latest Victorian. It had revealed the facts of life frankly and helpfully to them and saved them from terrible dangers. There was no indication of what sort of Doctorate Dr Scaber held, nor indeed any biographical material whatever. Edward Albert read, at first with curiosity and then with a deepening dismay. "Gaw!" he whispered to himself. "You can't be too careful. If only I'd known."

The little book told of the stupendous dangers and horrors of the vicious life in either its social or solitary aspect. The latter it pursued with even greater vehemence than the former. On the heels of those who departed in the least from the path of perfect purity stalked the most frightful forms of suffering and decay, rotting bodies, racking pains, ebbing strength, attenuation, a peculiar expression of face, impotence, imbecility, idiocy, madness. A cold perspiration bedewed

the reader's brow.

He had completely forgotten when the thing began with him. It had crept upon him between sleeping and waking.

Now, with a gathering urgency, Nature was at work in Edward Albert, in her own clumsy way inciting him to acts conducive to reproduction. The life cycle of Homo, we have already remarked, is far more primitive than that of most other land animals; among other remote ancestral aspects still traceable in his life, the spawning impulse, like the urgencies of creatures who live in warm tropical seas, recurs mensually and not annually. In that briefer rhythm these creatures are stirred up to seek relief for their accumulating milt or spawn. Nature is a sloven, she never cleans up completely after her advances, and so we abound in vestigial structures, and our beings are haunted by the ghosts of rhythms that served her in the past. In the Hominida the ghost of the lunar cycle has materialised again. The solar rut guides us to St Valentine's Day and the merry merry springtime, but the lunar rut also has revived and is still effective with us. It causes a recurrent uneasiness, we are distraught and nervous, it breaks down control by night and we dream. In some manner relief comes to us and must come. Since man is no longer a tropical amphibian, this necessity for "relief" rarely coincides with the phases of his more elaborate social life. "You might," deliberated Mrs Humbelay, "call it a side issue. And yet it's hardly that, is it? But what there is to make all this fuss about...."

"If I pray," stipulated Edward Albert in his distress. But he was beginning to lose whatever confidence he had ever had in the efficacy of prayer. There is often such a whimsicality in His answers, that you cannot be too careful how you invoke Him. All through his teens Edward Albert's mind had black storms of anxiety. Dr Scaber's shadow lay across his mind. He had, it seems, committed that Sin against the Holy Ghost for which there is no forgiveness. Dr Scaber said as much.

Since most of the people in the world about him were maintaining the same silences and concealments as himself, he felt his case was a dark, exceptional one. His dreams, his almost involuntary derelictions were his own peculiar guilty secret. It was not until he was past the age of eighteen that the accumulating effect of chance

jests and rude remarks from various acquaintances, led to a dawning realisation that his peculiar uncleanness was neither so rare nor perhaps so heinous as he had supposed. But he was ashamed of it with a slowly fading shame to the very end of his career.

It took still longer for him to realise that there could be any sort of impurity about the female of the species Homo Tewler. He%would have gratified that mother on the liner by his fantastic ignorance about women. He was as pure as her own dear boy. He never imagined that girls and women too had desires or fantasies — until the crisis of "his first married life of which you will be told in due course. The poor dears in those dim religious days, a third of a century ago, were being kept more blankly ignorant about themselves — until terrific things happened to them — than their brothers. They too peeped and wondered and had their justifiable terrors.

Yet all the time, urged on by implacable Nature, and stimulated rather than repelled by the enormity imposed upon the whole business by the good Dr Scaber, Edward Albert was meanly and furtively trying to know, doing his utmost to know, about It. And also not to let anyone know that he was trying to know. He had extremely little curiosity about women except as the media of It. It was It he was after.

III. — PEEPING AND PRYING

PEEPING TOM worked dutifully and regularly in his North London Leaseholds office. In his loose fragments of time, before social relationships began to complicate things, he would more or less consciously obey the urge of Nature to be up and doing about It. He wandered, and almost always he wandered towards the parts of London where there were pictures in windows, where there were undraped statues, where strange women walked about in a provocative way and even said "Ducky" to you. But Dr Scaber had put him wise about them. You can get those awful diseases from a kiss, from a split lip.

Until his legacy he could not afford to go to the movies very much and they were mostly heroic and adventurous then, there was kissing, almost too much of it, you joined with other lads of spirit to echo the sounds on the back of your hand, but you never got to anything — anything really instructive.

Gradually he discovered the National Gallery, the South Kensington Museum. They were open on Sunday afternoons. You could wander about whistling softly. You could look sideways. You could be bolder and look straight. Lots of people looked straight without a blush. It was remarkable how nude and yet how coldly uninformative a statue or a picture could be.

Then there was window peeping. His bedroom commanded the windows of the attics of a row of houses giving on Euston Road. There every night people went to bed, and particularly a young woman who, with a certain disregard of her possible visibility, undressed completely in front of a small mirror. By putting out his own light and standing in the dark, he could see her bright pink illuminated body gradually emerging from her clothes. He could see her arms and torso as she combed her hair. By standing on his chair he could see quite a lot of her, but never enough. She yawned. There was just one moment before she pulled her nightgown over her head, and then out went the light.

Still the mystery remained.

Women seemed always to be showing more and more of

themselves in those years of relaxation — but never quite, enough. But sometimes you seemed to see through their clothes. One evening he was sitting in the drawing-room, studying the lingerie advertisements in an illustrated papers, and suddenly he looked up. There was Miss Pooley sitting with her back to him at the writing table. Her soft round neck was revealed by the boyish way her blonde hair was cut and her dress displayed her clear skin down to the dip between?, her shoulder blades, and there were the lines of her body as plain as plain, and her bare elbow, and one leg was thrust back....

He could scarcely believe his eyes. There was the top of her stocking and above that three inches of bare smooth shining Miss Pooley before the tight skirt began.

His reaction was extraordinary. He wanted to kill Miss Pooley, He wanted to leap upon her and beat her about and kill her. He had a savage feeling that in some way he was being cheated by her. He couldn't get up for various minor reasons until she went away. Then he threw the illustrated paper aside and retired precipitately to the secrecy of his own room.

IV. — ASSERTION

THIS insane urgency of our mad Mother Nature to make us seek "relief" was not by any means all that was happening to Homo Tewler in his metamorphosis. A number of other things, and some of them even more fundamental than this insistence upon unintelligent futile orgasms, were also breaking out in his changing personality.

The tadpole Homo Tewler is an abject timid thing, a thing of flight and refuge, but with the metamorphosis into an adult specimen of the Primates, quite a new series of later acquisitions break into the gathering personality. The apes, including the Hominida, left the monkeys and lemurs at an early stage and developed along a line of their own, into ego-centred combative creatures with a disposition to own all the universe within sight. Reluctantly Homo in his various species, has been forced into an uncongenial social life in the brief course of a million years or so. Yet still his fundamental nature remains. Still he wants to feel successful, masterful, lord and owner of all he surveys, and if he can feel so, he will.

That is something much more persistently present than hunger or lust, which are impulses that can be sated and suppressed for a time. But Homo craves for self-assertion and reassurances from the sprouting of his whiskers to his death rattle. It is his natural resistance to the social envelopment that has happened to him, and which continues to restrain his anarchistic disposition. He never forgets about himself, never just grazes on like a sheep or nibbles like a rabbit.

It is unavoidable, and even if the breed of Homo Tewler rises presently to a point where it may indeed merit this name it has usurped so prematurely, Homo sapiens, this conflict, the moral conflict, the need for education, for being trimmed to fit into social life which is the cause of all religion, will still be in it. It may be controlled, propitiated, diverted and sublimated, but it will be there. We must not indulge in prophecies and speculation. In this book we are not concerned with that possible but improbable animal, Homo sapiens, who may rise indeed in revolt against old Mother Nature and try to wrest his destiny out of her hands. But we are dealing with an

animal living far below the intellectual level of any such Satanic revolt. We are concerned with our specimen of Homo Tewler and his individual impulse to exist as emphatically as he could in society as he found it.

That amiable philosopher, Adler, dealing with problems of education and general behaviour rather than with sexual aberrations, thrust much of the Freud-Jung psychology into a minor role, and concentrated upon what he called the "inferiority complex." But he seems to have thought of it as something to a large extent curable, whereas in truth, with all the social Hominida, up to and including every living specimen of Homo Tewler, great or little or bond or free, it is an integral part of their make-up.

"I exist," says this innate complex, "but do I exist importantly enough? Are these creatures about me getting the better of me, pushing in front of me? This I must not and cannot stand. Do they realise my existence?" This is something over and above every other urgency. It can blend with and pervade the sexual complex. Dogs, other social animals, betray an inferiority complex, but to nothing like the same extent as Homo. Edward Albert's hatred of his college teachers and lecturers was one of its manifestations. He detested concerts because he had to sit still while the performers, as he put it, "showed off." He detested most of the people at a concert because they affected a discriminating taste for music and so got away with it. They were Beastly Prigs and so the wound was healed. Few conductors realise the little spots of hatred scattered through the audiences they dominate. Singers particularly, Edward Albert loathed. He would have produced horrible parodies of the sounds they made had he dared. The dear old British B.B.C. at its virtuous outset tried to give the English Tewlers improving doses of classical music. The Tewlers in their millions protested with passion. What Edward Albert wanted was slave music that ministered to him, so that he could take possession of it, drum with his fingers, jig with his feet, vocalise as it went on, get up and caper, stamp on it. That was a bit of all right.

And at Doober's all the time, Edward Albert and all his kindred Tewlers without a solitary exception, each after his or her manner, sustained a continuous unconfessed struggle to assert themselves.

There were differences in finesse and that was all. And the uneasy peace of the establishment was maintained by a continual give and take of resolute pretension and insincere mutual acquiescence.

Thackeray was a novelist with a strange impulse towards truth-telling, and he wrote for a public that had to be propitiated and could be propitiated by the bare-faced flattery of inviting them to share his amusement at the foibles of other people. His Book of Snobs, broadened out, embraced his unsuspecting public and himself and all mankind, and showed our universal effort to escape from insignificance.

[But here a reader protests, quite a nice contented reader, with a twinkle in her eye. "Not quite universal," she pleads. "There are people of good breeding who can be absolutely unpretentious. I admit the struggle. Nowadays one sees it all about one. In a time of shifting values, when no one knows his place, there is a vast amount of pushing and pretending. Some of it is quite ridiculous. I can't help being amused. I laugh to myself. But so far as I am concerned, none of these things make the slightest difference to me. I can assure you. I'm just simply myself with everyone."

To which the only possible reply is: "Exactly, Madam."]

The development of self-assertion in Edward Albert's mind throughout his teens was by no means confined to such simply negative reactions as his hatred of lecturers, classical music and singers. He was giving increased attention to the effectiveness of his personal appearance. He meditated suits, with a sub-purple glow, shirts, handkerchiefs and ties to correspond. Suppose, he thought, he got some gold cuff links, real gold, and just let his hand lie on the table.... They'd see.

Old Mr Blake, the erudite Frankincense, the young Indian, continued for the most part to treat him as an invisible man, but the women, he felt, noticed all these things. He was discovering a new use for women. They were interested in and affected by the clothing of the male. A new suit, a new cut of collar, a fresh tie — they saw it directly you came into the room. They looked at each other. He caught them at it. Thump was friendly, but he missed Edward Albert's finer points.

Our hero was steadily becoming more unobjective and more

autobiographical in his mind. When he went for a walk nowadays he found a new interest in the reflection of himself in oblique shop windows. He hardly ever looked at people. He looked for people who were looking at him. Sometimes he carried it off all right, but sometimes doubt would seize him and he would find himself uncertain about his steps and his hands became an encumbrance. Then he felt he would like to go home at once and change his clothes,

In spite of these incidental failures he would plan fresh aggressions. He had a vision of coming into the dining-room at seven-thirty sharp, eating his dinner in a tremendous hurry and departing headlong — in faultless evening dress — to some high and unknown destination! That would make them think. He carne near to ordering that evening dress merely for the sake of that reverie,

But in truth Doober's was far too occupied with its own individual schemes of aggression to notice the mental stresses and turmoil of our hero. They thought of him, when they thought of him at all, merely as a gawky, growing young man with a rather convulsive, guilty manner if spoken to suddenly, a definitely Cockney accent, and an odd taste in dress.

V. — THE THUMP TRAGEDY

NOW while these things were happening within our accumulating young man as Nature expanded and consolidated him, familiar faces were disappearing from Scartmore House and new ones replacing them, and he was growing into a more and more definitely recognised member of Mrs Doober's happy family. He watched the new arrivals with an increasing interest in his effect upon them, and he made advances to them instead of waiting to be accosted.

The Belgians went. They had found some sort of employment in the Congo Free State. Mr Frankincense took some tremendous honours in London University and went off, covered with glory, to become the Principal of a college in India where Indian young gentlemen studied to pass the degree examinations of London University. The seditious laugh of the long, lean Indian was heard no longer in the boarding-house, and old Mr Blake, having accumulated enough money to acquire an annuity, retired to a small boarding-house at Southsea where he devoted himself to composing a solidly libellous book to be published under the title of Professors, so-called, and Performances. It was to demonstrate the important r61e he had played in the development of physical science during the past forty years, for which he had

"never received the slightest credit. His departure was accelerated by the tragic death of Mr Harold Thump.

"It will never be the same place without him," said old Mr Blake. "Sometimes we differed a bit in a friendly way, but it was all give and take. A fellow of infinite jest."

But I have still to tell you of that tragedy. It was a great shock for Doober's.

Mr Harold Thump, blythe after convivialities, had attempted, it seemed, to slide down the banisters of a restaurant staircase, instead of descending it in an ordinary dull manner. The banisters, which were elegant and elderly, had given way at the second bend and sent him spinning head over heels into an open service lift, which he had descended in a crumpled state to break his neck at the bottom. His last recorded words were, "Hey, boys, look here!"

It was all over in a minute. “We thought he was walking down behind us,” said the Boys in question, scared now and sober. “We heard him singing a bar or so, and then he seems to have taken it into his head to do it. He just flew by us.”

“Like him,” said Mrs Thump, tearlessly hearing the particulars.

It was a stupendous shock. Not only Mr Blake but the whole of Scartmore House was profoundly moved and hushed by this distressing event. The obliteration of so habitually audible an individual left the whole establishment for a while a self-conscious auditory vacuum. Most of the boarders seemed to have discovered for the first time that they also made sounds, and to have been cowed by the discovery. They spoke in whispers or undertones as if the departed was actually there lying in state instead of being away in a mortuary.

Respect restrained all unseemly playfulness. No games except chess went on, and that in silence. On,e was checked and mated by mouth-reading. And light and colour also were muted down. The small widow lady with mittens who had, so to speak, replaced the friend of Lady Tweedman, put aside the brilliant blazer she had been knitting, and started a black comforter, and the thoughtful man of thirty-five who had taken the room of Mr Frankincense openly read his Bible. Gawpy for her part tidied up the hall with extraordinary care and kept the blinds drawn at breakfast time in spite of the waste of gas. Doober’s couldn’t have shown more respect if it had been the King.

The dinner table conversation, except for an insincere Appreciation of the lovely weather and some brightness and hopefulness about the tulips in Regent’s Park and the Royal Academy, which was better than ever in spite of the war, turned almost entirely on the virtues and personal charm of the deceased.

“The good that men assume lives after them,
The truth is oft interred with their bones.”

Some boarder would chew mournfully, meditating the while, and then break out. “He” — they never named him —

“He was always so wonderful at Christmas. Christmas always

seemed to brighten Him up. Like Dickens. Do you remember the time He gave us all with His snapdragon? He would have it done properly with the lights down, flaming away, and how he upset a lot of it on the carpet? Blue flames they were. Just like a big impatient Boy."

"But we stamped it out all right," said Mrs Doober.

"And it really did no harm. On that old carpet. How we laughed!"

"If he'd only been more serious he would have been a great actor — a great comedy actor."

"He reminded me of Beerbohm Tree. The same big humorous personality. If he'd had the same chances, he might have had his own great Theatre."

"He was as sensitive as a child. Easily discouraged. That was his weakness. He hated to push. In this world you must push. But he wouldn't compete. And he'd sacrifice anything for a joke. You might say he sacrificed himself."

"A great man lost. Yet it never seemed to worry him. Buoyant he was — right up to the end."

Edward Albert thought out his special contribution to the chorus. "I'll miss him dreadfully. He was so kind and sorta friendly like."

"It must have been a great experience to have known Him when He was young and still full of hope and promise."

The remark seemed aimed at Mrs Thump. She answered in her deliberate colourless way. "Yes. He was full of promise — then."

"A born playboy. He was nobody's enemy but his own."

"And it had to be paid for, of course," said Mrs Thump, and said no more.

The chorus was resumed. Edward Albert repeated his bit.

The only person who seemed to be backward in this heaping up of posthumous wreaths was Mrs Thump. At first that was ascribed to the depth of her sorrow. She had no words for it. Then it was whispered that she was going to have Him cremated, not handsomely buried in a large tomb, and that she was going away from London.

Cremation was a new idea to Edward Albert. It touched a vein of queer imagination in him. "It can't be nice being cremated," he said. "And where are you at the Resurrection? Just a jar or sumpthink."

"This will be a shock to your literary work," said old Mr Blake to

the widow, finding her sitting alone in meditation.

She considered him. She spoke quite calmly, but with an effect of relieving her mind of something that had been there too long. “No harm now in telling you that I don’t do literary work. He put that about. *Amour propre*. He had his pride, you know. He just hated to think I was a pirate dressmaker working myself to the bone with a roomful of hussies. That’s what I am, you know, He was sensitive — in that way. That’s all over now, and his feelings can’t be hurt any more.”

“I thought—” began old Mr Blake.

“No. I guess you guessed. Now I can go off to Torquay and run a decent business. I’ve always had a feeling for Torquay.”

“Why couldn’t you have done that before?”

“Because it wouldn’t have paid enough, and He would have insisted on mixed bathing when He was tight and getting into trouble in the water, and also, you know, He’d have had to have a season ticket to run up to London.”

She sat quite still for a moment and then shrugged her shoulders. “But why talk about these things now?”

Old Mr Blake turned that over in his mind and remarked afterwards to Edward Albert, since at the moment there was no one else to make his remark to: “That Mrs Thump is a pretty hard woman. Pretty hard. Very likely he didn’t succeed because she discouraged him. If only she’d believed in him more and shown it.”

“I don’t think she ought to have him cremated,” said Edward Albert. “I will say that....”

The more old Mr Blake thought over his relations to Harold Thump, the more they were transmuted from something very like hostility to profound understanding and affection. How good we can be to the dead! How easily and unwittingly they become our allies! We can quote things they never said in praise of us. Old Mr Blake knew what it was to be frustrated and pushed aside by inferior people — only too well. Harold Thump too, if he had had his proper opportunities and his proper support might have been a really very great man. But that hard woman had been too much for him.

A misogyny natural to old bachelors certainly influenced this judgment, which first he tried out on Edward Albert and then on

other suitable listeners. Before she departed, Mrs Thump was under a shadow. It was felt that she had failed in her wifely duty and even perhaps deliberately dragged down this great man and had never really understood.

A certain callousness in her, to give it no harsher word, enabled her to disregard the one or two attempts that were made to convey these ideas to her.

After the cremation, Gawpy allowed the house to relax. Harold Thump became an exhausted topic almost at once. Mr Blake kept a faint glow of disapproval alight about Mrs Thump, until first she and then he departed. Nobody talked about the Thumps any more after that, and by degrees Doober's was filled by a new generation of boarders that knew not Harold. New jokes arose and established themselves and prevailed; new voices bellowed in the bathroom....

So it was that the Thumps and Mr Blake followed Mr Frankincense and the others out of Edward Albert's World and were replaced by others to whom he could present a firmer countenance.

VI. — MR CHAMBLE PEWTER

MR CHAMBLE PEWTER, the man of thirty-five who had taken the room of Mr Frankincense, was a great reader of books. He liked old ripe rich books, and whenever he heard talk of a new book, it was his practice, he said, to read an old one. Reading and talking about reading, constituted his particular form of self-assertion. The current world might go its own way and invariably that way was despicable; and while Edward Albert dreamt of impressing Doober's by departing to unknown entertainment in "faultless evening dress", Mr Chamble Pewter got the same desired effect by producing a "well-thumbed" Horace. The flowering of Bloomsbury was yet to come, and he had still to face the arrogance of a movement that was at once congenial and contemporary. So what he said and did about Mr T.S. Eliot and Mr Aldous Huxley, is unfortunately outside the range of this story.

Edward Albert was as impressed by this book-reading as he was meant to be, and he was gratified to find Mr Chamble Pewter not unwilling to talk to him. It was necessary to Mr Chamble Pewter to talk to some one; he could not talk at large and contentiously because that would have been vulgar, but he found Edward Albert extremely docile. Edward Albert did not always get the drift of what Mr Chamble Pewter said, but since they talked in undertones it was effective to sit and nod as though you did. "I am afraid," Mr Chamble Pewter would admit after some particularly dark saying,

"I must plead guilty to a sense of humour. I don't know how I could get along in this absurd world without it."

Sometimes it seemed to Edward Albert that this sense of humour was very closely akin to that useful sceptical phrase, "I don't find," which was spreading through the world, but he was not sure enough of the parallelism ever to use it to Mr Chamble Pewter.

One particular target for Mr Chamble Pewter's confidential asides was a blond young American student full of enthusiasm for what the sound conservative instincts of Edward Albert and Mr Chamble Pewter convinced them were the meretricious and unstable inventions and discoveries of modern science. His form of self-

assertion was informative. His formula was, “You haven’t an idea!” For a time you could hardly open your mouth at Doober’s without his saying,

“Oh, but that’s all changed now.” Did one talk of music? He announced that for the first time pure sounds could be produced, that new and wonderful instruments would presently replace the traditional orchestras. In a little while the “old music” would sound smudgy and limited, pitiful. We should listen to the records in amazement. There would have to be a complete re-orchestration of any of the old music that was worth while.... Did one talk of the cinema, which genteel people were beginning to recognise might be in its vulgar way, funny, what with Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford? At once our young man was talking of the sound and colour and solidity which were presently to invade the films. “Utter absurdity!” whispered Mr Chamble Pewter. “They never know when to stop. Laughable, it is.”

Then about flying? He talked of planes that would fly the Atlantic, carry gigantic bombs to Berlin, go to the very top of the air, go round the world in less than twenty-four hours, and then where will you be? Chamble Pewter caught Edward Albert’s eye. “And the moon?” he whispered. Particularly foolish sounded the young man’s talk upon those mad notions of psychoanalysis, relativity and the new missing links between men and the apes.

“A saucer full of rusty scraps of bone,” said Mr Chamble Pewter. “And so, good-bye to God!”

“The young American seemed to scent the evasive antagonism of Mr Chamble Pewter and trailed his coat. At last he provoked a skirmish and got the worst of it.

He was going on in his exasperating way, spoiling their dinners and trampling over their minds with some pretended find of another “human ancestor” from Rhodesia. “But surely,” remarked Mr Chamble Pewter in that mild, destructive voice of his, “you are being a little old-fashioned. This talk about human ancestors. Isn’t it what we used to call Darwinism and all that?”

“None the worse for that,” said the young American.

“But you are always being so very modern. Forgive me if I smile — I have rather a sense of humour — but surely you know

Darwinism was completely exploded years and years ago?”

“First I’ve heard of that,” said the young American, rather taken aback.

“We’re none of us omniscient — even the youngest of us,” said Mr Chamble Pewter.

“But how do you mean exploded?”

“What everybody means by exploded. Blown to pieces. Nothing left of him.”

“But who exploded him?”

“Surely you know that! But I suppose we all have our limitations. Some professor at Montpellier — I forget his name — something about the birds and reptiles. A complete exposure. You should look into it. These disputes have never interested me very much, I must confess. But there it is.

“But you don’t mean to tell me that,” the young man began. “No decent zoologist has done anything to question die fact of organic evolution and the survival or extinction of species by natural selection since Darwin broached the idea. Of course in minor details, in accounting for variations, for instance....”

Mr Chamble Pewter retained an expression of serene derision. “Since first I heard of it, I have never doubted for a moment that this idea of Evolution was utterly absurd. So why haggle about details?”

“Did you examine the evidence?”

“No,” said Mr Chamble Pewter. The young American seemed to be at a loss for breath.

“I may be old-feshioned and all that,” said Mr Chamble Pewter in the pause,” but I happen to prefer the Bible story of a creation, to Mr Darwin’s curious idea that a large ape came down a tree, went bald all over and wandered about until he met a female gorilla to whom, by some strange accident, the same impulse had occurred, a very very remarkable coincidence if you come to think of it, and that together they started the human race. I find that improbable to the pitch of absurdity.”

“It is. It’s a caricature. But have you ever looked into the evidence? Do you know how the case really stands?”

“Why should I? I believe with most rational people that this world was Created, and man and woman came straight from the hand of

God, made in his image. How else could the world come about? How did it begin? We have age-long traditions, that great literature we call the Bible. I ask you plainly. Do you deny the Creation? That is to say, do you deny the Creator?"

The young man felt the chill of unpopularity about him.

"I deny the Creation," he said.

"Then you deny your Creator?"

"Well if you must have it — yes."

A breath of reprobation ruffled the gathering.

"But you mustn't say that!" said the little lady in mittens. "You really mustn't say that."

"No, you can't say that," said Edward Albert decisively.

Mrs Doober murmured ambiguously as became her position, and even her down-trodden and practically negligible niece was faintly audible in reprobation.

"Forgive me if I smile," said Mr Chamble Pewter. "But I have this confounded sense of humour of mine. I suppose it's really a sense of proportion. But now I'm speaking out, let me say plainly that you scientific people would be insufferable if your ideas had anything like the importance you claim for them. Imagine it. Think of the churches, the cathedrals, the countless good works, the martrydoms, the saints, the vast legacy of art and beauty, the music drawing its inspiration from the divine fount, for all music to begin with was religious, the institution of family life, purity, love, chivalry, kingship, loyalty, the crusades, Benedictine, Chartreuse, the wines of France, hospitals, charities, the whole rich fabric of Christian life. Strip it from us and what is there left of us? You would leave us shivering in the void. Yes, Sir, the void. A world of mechanical apes. Because a few crazy old gentlemen have found some bones and had fancies about them. And they don't agree even among themselves. Take that queer paper Nature and what do you find? Science perpetually contradicting itself...."

"But — !" The young American had attempted to cut in once or twice upon the flow of eloquence. But every time the new little lady boarder with the mittens had intervened with infinite gentleness and infinite insolence. "Do please let him finish first," she said. "Please."

"Tell me when you've finished," said the altogether too modern

young man.

"It's a question of whether you are finished," said Mr Chamble Pewter, and ceased abruptly.

And this arrogant young man had nothing to say. He had asserted himself over Doober's too confidently, and now he found Doober's solid against him. Not a soul had he captured. Even the blonde Miss Pooley, who had seemed at times to listen to him with interest, gave no sign. "Well," he said. "I never met such ignorance. Here are ideas that are revolutionising the whole human outlook, and you not only don't know a Thing about them, but you don't want to know a Thing about them."

Mr Chamble Pewter drank his coffee and regarded the young American with a quizzical expression. He put down his cup. "Yes," he said. "We don't want to know a Thing about them."

"I give it up," said the young American. Mr Chamble Pewter shrugged his shoulders and a profound silence ensued.

"Such a lovely black cat jumped on to my window-sill just before dinner," said the little widow lady with the mittens, relieving the tension.

"Black Toms are said to be very lucky," said Mrs Doober.

The arsenal of modern ideas got up slowly and thoughtfully and departed to his own room. The discussion was not resumed.

Later Mrs Doober heard him go out and slam the door behind him as loudly as it could be slammed, and she knew from years of experience that he was going out to find another boarding-house.

[Oh! If only people wouldn't get into these arguments! It had happened before several times. And he was punctual in payment, quiet, gave no trouble.]

It was wonderful to Edward Albert. He was overcome by a wave of discipleship. It was just what he would have said and done himself — if it had occurred to him to say or do anything of the sort. He tried to memorise some of Mr Chamble Pewter's best strokes before they faded from his mind, so that he could use them later. But he never achieved anything like the polish they had. Throughout this narrative you will hear Edward Albert making frequent use of such destructive comments as "Bawls" or "Dam-rot" or "piffle before the wind", or "I suppose that's all right for you", or "What's the evidence for that?"

“You can’t put that over me”, and so on. He even got to “Forgive me if my sense of humour prevents my swallowing that sort of rot.”

These were the outer defences of a more and more deeply entrenched ignorance. His instinct had always been to hate novel ideas, more particularly ideas that perplexed him or challenged his prepossessions. But previously he has been inclined to fear them. Now he despised them as impotent. In all this he was being thoroughly English. The Armistice celebrations had filled the soul of Homo Tewler Anglicanus with an immense reassurance. For yet another quarter of a century the educational mandarinate of the victorious Allies protected itself behind a Chinese Wall of self-satisfaction, and the growing body of modern knowledge, having no sense of humour, spluttered indignantly and in vain. As we have heard it .splutter. But you can’t be too careful of these strange new ideas and new things. You must not tamper with them. If you try to understand them, they may entangle and get hold of you, and then where will you be? Hide your mind from them, and hide them from your mind. Stick to the plain common sense of life. There will always be a to-morrow rather like to-day. At least so far there always has been a fairly similar to-morrow. Once or twice lately there have been jolts....

Try not to notice these jolts.

“It is no good meeting trouble halfway,”

VII. — THEY COME — THEY GO

SO it was that Doober's changed continually and remained always the same, as manhood dawned murkily upon our Edward Albert. Doober's, until he was wrenched out of it by circumstances beyond his control, was the foundation of his world. But outside it a number of other human encounters were streaming past him, making suggestions to him and deflecting his ideas about life. The staff he worked with at North London Leaseholds was a purely male one, and his general pose towards his colleagues was of someone "a bit superior" who condescended rather than was compelled to earn. He felt he dressed better than they did. He made a certain mystery of his place of residence; he had more pocket money; most of them still lived in and paid in to their homes. But if he offended them they controlled their resentment at his airs, and he found it more agreeable to go with them to the restaurant they frequented for lunch than to sit alone. And there they met "the girls—"

The girls were still cheaper human material than the clerical staff; they functioned in another department with envelopes and postal responses of various sorts. And they mixed very cheerfully with, the boys at the lunch-time rendezvous. There was a certain process called getting away with a nice boy, and there was a natural response in the adolescing male. A mutual possessiveness was established, which, in those days of underpaid femininity, meant taking your girl out in the evening to a café gossip or a cinema or even a music hall, and paying for her. It was only in the latter stages of the first World War that anything like economic equality dawned on young women. And the North London Leaseholds girls found a certain stand-offishness in Edward Albert provocative rather than annoying, and he responded with a certain excitement. This was far easier and simpler and less sustained than the relationships at Doober's. He discovered "flirting", that mutual stimulation of egotism.0

Marriage was something remote and incredible for all these youngsters, so that one "paid attention" and professed all sorts of amorous feelings with the completest immunity from any sort of fulfilment. It was a play of self-assertion, remote from any thought of

that It, which distressed his dreams and secrecies.

He had a number of shadow love affairs, with Erne and Laura and Molly Brown, the only one whose surname he acquired, and several whose Christian names slipped his memory. The shadow took on a certain substance with Molly Brown. He took her one sunny Sunday to Rickmansworth for a country walk, and they got some ham and beer at an inn. Then they wandered into a patch of woodland and sat down in the shade of some bracken. They looked at one another in a mood of ignorant desire. “Let’s smoke,” she said.

“If anyone sees us,” he said.

“Nobody’s seeing us,” she said, and they smoked and regarded one another.

“Well?” she said, when the smoking was done. They heard a burst of giggling and little squeals in the adjacent bushes. “Her chap’s tickling her!” she said. Edward Albert took no further action.

She sprawled back leisurely and regarded him.

“Kiss me, Teddy!” she said, and she kissed him! She kissed rather nicely. “Like that?” she asked, and they kissed again. “Put your arm round me. No, so.... Let’s cuddle up close.”

He cuddled tepidly.

“My, I wish it was dark. Then we could cuddle. Couldn’t we stay till alter dark and cuddle?”

“Oo. I dunno. P’raps we’re trespassing here. Someone might come along and see us.”

“People won’t mind us just cuddling. They all do it here. Some of them do more than that.”

He mumbled a reply. He was trembling violently. Her kisses and her embrace had set him alight. He wanted to hug her violently, and also he wanted to run away. He was acutely aware of his visibility and with the stir of his senses all the secretive factors in his sensuality were aroused. She kissed him a third time and his self-control exploded. His grip tightened upon her; he held her beneath him, and hugged, hugged actively, breathing hard, until suddenly he was satisfied, and sat up as suddenly and pushed her away from him. She had been struggling against his onslaught.

“Lemme go,” she whispered fiercely “Starp it, I tell you!”

She rolled away from him and sat up also. Her hat had come off,

her hair was disordered, her skirts pushed up to her knees, and her expression ruffled. Both of them were flushed and out of breath and surprised.

The tickling had ceased apparently; nobody was audible; the only sound was the breeze among the bracken.

She looked about them. “My word,” she said, in an undertone, “you *do* hug.”

“I — I liked it, Molly.”

“I didn’t. You were rough. Look at my hair!” She adjusted her crumpled frock and edged still further away from him, “You’ll have to help look for my hair-pins. “You seemed just to go right off your nut.”

“Well, you made me.”

“I like that.”

“You led me on.”

“I’ll take jolly good care I don’t lead you on again, my boy. You were rough. You were rough.”

“Just a bit of fun like, Molly. I didn’t mean anything.”

“Look at my ‘at!”

Another young couple in search of retirement rustled through the undergrowth twenty yards away.

“Suppose they’d come by just now,” said Molly with three pins in her mouth, remodelling her hat.

“Well they didn’t anyhow,” said Edward Albert, becoming snappy.

“If they ‘ad—”

“Why ‘arp on it?” he snarled.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in an atmosphere of mute reproach. They went home long before dusk, and she decided to leave him and go to church with her mother.

“Right O,” said he, instead of the usual tender good night.

He retired thoughtfully to Scartmore House. He reflected that the path of true love never had run smooth.

He knew he was in love with Molly because otherwise why should he have wanted her so much and given way like that?

He wanted to hug again, already, and he dreaded hugging her again. But the next time they met she seemed to have forgotten her

urgency and he was disappointed. They sat on a seat by the road on Hampstead Heath, making no further allusion to hugging, and he went on with his favourite impersonation of a mysterious bastard. “I don’t know who my father was or what he was. I’ve been sort of made away with....”

The difficulty of the story was to keep it so as to avoid any suggestion of Great Expectations. For you cannot be too careful. She seemed to listen with a jaded interest, and when he suggested she should give him a kiss she gave him a peck on the cheek. “Let’s go for a ramble into these bushes,” he suggested. She shook her head.

“Just a little bit of spooning,” he pleaded.

“You don’t know where to stop. I don’t like — what you did. You know. Sunday.”

Their next meeting was more hopeful. He took her to a cinema and they sat holding hands side by side in quite their old fashion. Afterwards they got some lemon squash and a sandwich in the new little ham and beef shop, and they had a little tiff about the magic of Rudolph Valentino, which was healed when she accepted Edward Albert’s contention that there was something un-English about Rudolph and admitted that for her own part she couldn’t imagine how any Englishwoman could feel “that way” about any foreigner. “I’d almost as soon a Chinese. But then of course she was half-Mexican.”

That was all right. They met again. But she kept him at arm’s length, and both were much too tongue-tied to explore the difficult question of what “going too far” might mean.

The warmth of his physical interest in her cooled.... That was one significant incident in his sentimental education. He tried to find a stimulus in one or two of the other girls, but there wasn’t much doing with them. His feelings towards her were invaded by a streak of possessive, dislike. She had led him on. He brooded, resentfully on that idea. She had let him and then she hadn’t let him any more. For a time they went about together largely, though they did not realise it, to keep up appearances with the rest of the boys and girls. Once or twice he was .stirred to a competitive attempt at resumption by the realisation that she was going around with another fellow. She was “nice.” to him, but more and more evasive....

“Well anyhow,” soliloquised the disillusioned Edward Albert, “he won’t get much.”

At the Imperial College of Commercial Science Edward Albert made very few, personal contacts of any sort. There were a few possible young women about he thought he might have flirted with, but he couldn’t contrive any method of accosting them, and the chief other factor in the evocation of Edward Albert’s manhood, was such intercourse as he had with his old schoolfellows who still remained in the neighbourhood of Camden Town.

The school was there still. Once or twice he caught a glimpse of Mr Myame in the offing, but escaped his hirsute disapproval by dodging down a side street. One boy whose name he forgot met him one day and told him that the old man had forbidden the school to speak to him. “He said you were an evil companion. What was it all about? D’jer get a girl into trouble?”

“Don’t ask me,” said Edward Albert, and nursed that gratifying suspicion. “It was sumpthing pretty awful,” he said.

Blond Bert Bloxham with the dissimilar aunt was still in the neighbourhood, though Nuts MacBryde of the warts had drifted to Clapham. Bert’s looks had never been much to boast about, and he was more than ever like a large hairy onion. But he too was in a state of feverish sexual awakening. He too was on the rack between the insanity of Nature cranking away at one end and the insanity of the social order cranking away at the other.

He began at once with reminiscences of the Hidden Hand.

“I still got that stable,” he said, “and it’s safer than ever. The O. girl’s so heavy now, she’d break the ladder if she tried it. I got some photographs there — oh, hot stuff. Show you everything. I got ’em off a man in the Strand late one night when I was doing a prowl. I’ll show you them.”

He paused. “Ever ‘ad a woman yet, Tewler?.... Yes, I ‘ave.” (Description.) “And I don’t care ‘ow many more I ‘ave. But them street walkers. You can’t be too careful. You know they don’t wash themselves. They smell. Puts you off it.” (Rough account of Precautions to take,)

“But never mind about that. That’s by the way. I got my plans. What I’m going to ‘ave is a little love nest, my boy, a little love nest

of my own. Up the ladder we go, eh? What price ankles? You're going to show more than that, my gel. And 'ere we are playing Adam and Eve together. Ever played Adam and Eve, Tewler?

"Leastways that's what I'm going to do," said Bert, "when I get hold of a girl I fancy. And they ain't 'ard nowadays, not like before the war. Girls ain't the same. Nothing's $he same. And if ever you get anybody. Old friends we are. I'll make it as safe for you up there, o. boy. Safe as 'ouses...."

That was the sort of chance the fickle Molly had thrown away. What did she want really? Bother her! Forget her.

Adam and Eve indeed! Catch her! Catch her taking off a blessed thing! With her everlasting "Starp it."

Presently Edward Albert found himself actually flirting in Doober's and being competed for, actually competed for, by two energetic and interesting young women only five or six years older than himself. They were overripe virgins and they too suffered from the tortures of suppression the social order inflicted upon them. Nature urged them on and they didn't know, they didn't know, and an infinite futility was expected of them. What outlook had they? Older men would fall for any cheeky kid of sixteen first, and there didn't seem to be any young men left. Such a lot of young men had being killed. What were left were Nancy boys. They were mostly objectors to war and love alike. They seemed to have turned their backs on life altogether. But here was something at once male and ostensibly harmless, that had missed all that.

The attentions of these young women seemed to him much more formidable and much more interesting than those of the Leasehold office girls, particularly after Molly let him down. He talked to them with an intermittent nervous laugh as a sort of declaration of insincerity. He didn't dare think of kissing or hugging them or anything of that sort, he didn't know how they'd take it, but he said the boldest things to them. Much worse than what he said to the North London Leaseholds girls, who'd snap your head off at almost anything.

They began it. They certainly began it. They wanted to win his calf love and reduce him to adoration, slavery, timid offerings, and the running of errands, which is what adolescents are for. Easier than

men but not so dangerous as men. Either could have managed it, no doubt, but not both. One was a remarkable dark young woman who had been in France for some months, and had become temporarily Frenchified by that experience. Her name was Evangeline Birkenhead, she was interested apparently in the glove trade, but^in what precise capacity was never revealed. She was destined to play a much ampler r61e in Edward Albert's life than he anticipated, and we shall have much to tell about her. She spoke French which sounded like the real thing, faster than the Belgians but only in flashes, and Miss Pooley, whose style was much more deliberate, seemed to listen first with incredulous perplexity and then with an ill-concealed delight. She would manoeuvre, Edward Albert noted, to sit within earshot of Evangeline.

Evangeline's rival, Miss Blame, was a blonde young woman, a fluffy bleached blonde, soft-spoken and almost inarticulate, but with extremely significant, desirous eyes. She listened and looked at Edward Albert. She had a way of putting her hands on him, on his shoulders, even on his hands on the chair arm, and they were extremely soft hands. She would whisper, a warm zephyr against his cheek, She drew him out. She asked what his ambitions were.

"Jerst to go on looking at you," said Edward Albert gallantly.

"But tell me about yourself. What do you think of Miss Birkenhead? She's awfully clever, don't you think?

"Clever is as clever does," said Edward Albert darkly.

"You're a bit in love with her?"

"'Ow could I be?"

Interrogative purr.

"'Cos I'm devoted" said the wicked flirt, and refrained from clinching matters by crooning, "to yew."

And when Evangeline taxed him with sitting about with that Blame girl and asked what he could possibly find to talk about with her, "I jest don't notice where I sit, when you're about," said Young Artfulness. "I jest don't. And as for talking! Well, I ask you."

Great fun! A safe game, and a harmless one, it seemed to him, not realising how vulnerable he was presently to become.

Yet the thought of marriage was already in his mind as he returned from Edinburgh in that luxurious first-class carriage, to

London. He realised now that a way was opening to alleviate the fears and desires that were devastating his mind. He would look round and find a nice little wife. A thrill of anticipation followed the thought. You couldn't be too careful, of course. A nice, healthy, simple, pure-minded girl. There were endless girls you wouldn't dream of marrying, designing hussies, hot stuff you couldn't trust round the corner.

And there It would be, safe at home and always handy. Just whenever you liked. No risk of entanglements; no risk of those horrible diseases, no more horrible phases of unsatisfied lust and shame. And that little wife, that smiling, yielding little wife. Church of England preferably. She'd have to be religious, otherwise you never knew, he whistled softly in his characteristic way as the reverie unfolded. They wouldn't have a lot of children to bother them and spoil her figure. Dear old Bert had put him wise about that. And imagine it! Running up against Nuts or Bert, for example, with the little lady dressed up to the nines. "Ellow me to introduce you to Mrs Tewler!" he'd say. He'd buy her things. He'd surprise her by giving her all sorts of things. She'd just love it. "Look what I brought you now," he'd say. Love's young dream.

In all of this he was reckoning without Evangeline Birkenhead. He never gave her a thought until he went in to dinner that evening. "You back!" she said, and "Come over here next me and tell me about it."

He hurried across the room to her with a provocative mixture of irony and reverence. He wasn't going to tell anyone exactly why he had gone away or what had happened to him. He was just going to be mysterious and have a fine time with the two of them.

But Mrs Doober had been talking already. Mr Doober had been consulted when first that letter came from Edinburgh, even before Mr Whittaker.

VIII. — EVANGELINE BIRKENHEAD

THE time has come to tell more about this Miss Evangeline Birkenhead....

There must be a Buchmanite strain in me. I know of no other writer so anxious to share his troubles and limitations with his readers.

For example: here is a grave technical difficulty. I doubt whether in an English novel I am justified in assuming that either I or the reader knows French; a Frenchman might know it. But Miss Birkenhead at this phase in her career had a curious disposition to use French under the most unexpected circumstances — and I do not feel that either I or the reader has the right to set up as a judge of the sort of French she spoke or to pretend to translate what she was saying. So the proper thing to do here seems to be to report as exactly as possible what she said, to note several occasions when it seemed to produce reactions other than those she had anticipated, and to say no more about it. And if most of what she said remains incomprehensible, then the effect on the reader will be virtually the effect on Edward Albert, and he after all is our story.

Evangeline's particular form of self-assertion, when she joined the Doober community, was to talk with extreme enthusiasm of dear Paree. She was just back after a sojourn there of half a year; she was homesick to return thither; she was doubtful if she could until her holidays came round, and London looked all the darker to her in contrast to the clouds of continental brilliance she trailed. She appeared in the boarding-house almost simultaneously with Miss Blame, whose form of self-assertion was visual rather than-verbal.

Evangeline was dark and sallow, with thin arched eyebrows and a hungry enterprising hazel eye, and there was that cachet about her costume which only the great establishments of the Louvre and the Grands Boulevards can confer. Never had anything so visibly French sat at Mrs Doober's table.

She told the story of her Great Adventure to the little group at her end of the table, to Edward Albert and Miss Blame, who responded with sympathetic murmurs, and the young Dutchman from the room

opposite Edward Albert's, who was trying to learn English, who listened attentively and with a vacant amiable smile, never quite seeming to understand, and the little widow in mittens who would listen to anything consistent with morality and nod her head approvingly, and Miss Pooley who was at first a trifle aloof and then began to listen with something almost like relish, and Gawpy whose business it was to take an interest in everybody, and Mrs Doober who usually sat out of earshot but listened so to speak with a wary eye and smiled when it looked as though Evangeline was entertaining her hearers.

But Mr Chamble Pewter found nothing in Evangeline to appeal to his sense of humour and edged away up the table past Mrs Doober to deplore the delinquency of the times with an elderly vegetarian who was an expert at book-binding and slightly deaf, who expressed strong views about tinned foods and cancer, and otherwise kept very much to himself....

"I'd always wanted to go to Paris," said Evangeline explaining herself, "even as a schoolgirl. I loved French at school. I only did it for a year just at the end, but I.got the school prize. It was all about dear Paree with lovely coloured pictures. I used to say, if ever I get married, I'll insist on Paree for my honeymoon. And then lo and behold early this year I learnt to my amazement I was to be sent to France, free gratis and for nothing for six months — *gratuitment*. Would I mind going? Mind! *Que voulez- vous*?"

"Who wouldn't?" said Gawpy, manifestly sharing the rapture.

"Laissez faires sont laissez faires," said Evangeline. "It wasn't all sightseeing by any means and it wasn't all learning French, But the war had put all our business out of joint and somebody extra was wanted, and they picked on me. Just a week's notice, one week, and there I was — a lovely crossing — saying Adieu to the white cliffs of Albion. And then, behold me! Down the gangway and everybody about me shouting and screaming French. To begin with I seemed to forget every word I'd ever learnt of it."

Edward Albert nodded understandingly.

"It's surch a brilliant language. There isn't a word in it that hasn't a *double entente*. Stodgy old English, bourgeois to the finger tips, walks. French jumps about. Gay! Pierreust, you might say....

"Nimble it is and always a little bit naughty. *Esprit* it has and a *je ne sais quoi* — oh, how do they say it? — ah! — *élan vital*! So quick, so polite. You say to a common taxi driver, *'Cocher! Pouvez-vous me prendre?'* and he laughs and says, *'Mais volontier mam'selle, toujours a vôtre service.'* Fancy our London cabbies saying anything like that!

"There was a gentleman we did business with. He took quite an interest in me and taught me a lot, one way and another. No, don't you go imagining things! He was quite an old gentleman, and he was half-English, but all the same he didn't mind being seen about with some one who wasn't his grand-daughter. *Comprenez? Pas de tout. Pas de deux.* Which is it? I forget.

"We got on beautifully together. I used to call him my *faux pa* and he simply loved that. He would repeat it to everyone who came in.

"He had a flat *au bordel rivière* — on the Seine, you know. Just above one of those *mouche* piers — where the steamboats come. There was an office there where we worked, and he would take me out to lunch and get me to talk French and encourage me. He would laugh and say 'Go on. The way to speak French is to speak it.'

"I used to say 'Am I speaking French?' and he used to say 'Not quite French yet, cherry' — he used to call me cherry, 'my dear' you know — quite in a fatherly way. 'It's not French yet,' he would say, 'but it's very good *Entente Cordial*. It's the best *Entente Cordial* I've ever met yet. I wouldn't miss a word of it.' He used to call it *Entente Cordial* because he said it was quite a pick-me-up to talk it as I did. Oh! We had surch fun.'"

So Evangeline unfolded herself and from the first appreciated the appreciation in Edward Albert's admiring eyes. He was, as I have said, the nearest thing to a negotiable male in the establishment just then, for it was soon plain that the young Dutchman who was learning English had convinced himself that so far as Evangeline was concerned understanding was hopeless. She did her best, but what can you do with a man who answers your brightest remarks with the irrelevance of the deaf?

One day Edward Albert found a half sheet of notepaper lying on the floor near the writing desk in the snuggery. It was in Miss Pooley's handwriting, but he did not know that and he brought it to

Evangeline in all good faith.

"This yours?" he asked. "It seems to be French."

It was headed *Menu Malaprop* and it ran as follows:

- *Potage Torture*
- *Maquereau (Vent blank)*
- *Agneau au sale bougre*
- Or perhaps a Gigolo (Vent rouge)
- *Petits pois sacrée*
- *A nice hot chauffeur*
- *Demi tasse a l'Americaine*
- *Champagne fin du monde p.p.c.*
- *Fumier s.v.p.*

Evangeline read it and flushed darkly.

"Beast!" she said, with more temper than she had ever before betrayed to Edward Albert. "She talks French like a High School grammar. Well, I learnt mine by ear, and she learnt hers with that bulging forehead of hers.... I suppose she thinks this funny."

She hesitated and then crumpled the little document into a ball in her fist.

"Didn't seem funny to me," said Edward Albert loyally. "But then I don't know the language.... Shall I chuck that in the fire for you?"

IX. — ENTANGLED

"YOU'VE been away more than a week. What have you been doing up there in Scotland? They make a great mystery of it."

So it was she began on that fateful evening of his return. She spoke in an intimate undertone. Miss Blame had dined and gone upstairs and Miss Pooley was out. The Dutchman was rapt in thought about the English Subjunctive Mood, and quite unheeding a talk that plainly was not addressed to him. "Eef you were," he was whispering over and over again, "Eef you was. Yess." She had waited for Edward Albert and now behind this barrier she had him to herself.

"Jerst business affairs," he told her. "Fact is — quite unexpected — I been left an estate — in Scotland."

"An estate!"

"Property anyhow. No idea I had any relations up there. Right out of the blue. There's things have been kep' from me. I been sort of made away with. I always felt it — kind of mystery. I been seeing lawyers and agents and all that,"

"And is it murch, Teddy? I hope it won't take you away from here. I should miss you."

"Well, I'll be pretty well off. Naturally I ain't made any plans. It's all so sudden. I don't want to go away from here — and ye. You all," he corrected, feeling that after all others might be listening. "Leastways not till I got somewhere to go."

She nodded. "What does it all come to?"

His discretion gave way to his desire to be impressive.

"Some fousands," he said, "anyhow."

"Independence."

"All that," he said.

"Lucky Teddy! You can go where you like; you can do what you please."

"I'm going to look round me a bit first. You know I'm not even going to give up my — business job. Not for a bit. Just for something to do, I'll keep it. I'd feel kind of lost. You see, you can't be too careful. All this money; it's come like a dream. Suppose I wake up to-morrow and find it was a dream."

“Yes,” she said, “I can understand that at first. But you’ll find it real. You’ll find all the world before you.”

“I suppose if you was me you’d go right off to that gay Paree of yours?”

“I wonder. I might not, because you see then I could do it at any time, Teddy. I might want to stay here a bit. Just as you might. I might feel I was tearing myself away from something I cared for and wanted to go on seeing, We’re very much alike, Teddy, you and me, in a lot of things.”

“I never thought of that.”

“But we are, you know.”

“P’raps we are. Only you’re kind of cleverer.... She was so intent on their mutual business that she had completely forgotten her enthusiasm for French. She was just her pre-Parisian self, and hardly a word of Entente Cordial escaped her.

When they went up stairs she put her arm through his, a thing she had never done before. “Come into the corner,”

she said, “I must talk some more to you about all this. Down there at table with all those people peeping and listening, one couldn’t let oneself go. But no I murst, I murst talk to you, Teddy, my dear. I’m so happy to see you so happy and I’m so afraid for you and the things that may happen to you. It will be wonderful for you to get away from all this. Do what you choose. Lead a life of your own. And so dangerous. I envy you, Teddy boy, I envy you. I could cry over you.”

Her intense sincerity evoked a reciprocal sincerity in him, Presently he was exposing himself to her as he rarely exposed himself even to himself. They sat close together so that the breath of their common desire mingled. She had dressed herself carefully and thinly, and he could feel her soft arm against his shoulder and her hand rested lightly on his knee.

“Of course you know I’m not what you might call educated — not ‘ighly educated. I often think if I could get someone

to help me a bit — And now — Particularly....”

“Couldn’t *I* perhaps — help you?”

“*You’d* ‘elp me?”

“I’d love to.”

"*Me?* You with your travel and all that, and the books you've read and knowing French as you do, I'd seem common...."

She looked at him steadily for a moment. "You're the most lovable modest man I've ever known, my dearest. A woman wants to give. I tell you I'd love to do — anything — for you. To give myself wholly. Can I?"

He lost his last trace of coquettishness.

"You know I've always said I loved you. Always. I mean it."

"You love me?"

A heavily charged silence ensued. She was speaking so closely that he could feel the beating of her heart. There was a glow in her eyes. He trembled. He wanted to kiss her. But this was no place for kisses. Maybe someone was peeping at them round an evening paper or out of a corner. You could never be sure at Doober's. Never.

"I love you," he whispered.

"Love," she answered.

They were silent for an intense moment.

"You mean it?"

"Strike me dead."

There was another yet longer pause. Then she looked at her wrist watch. "Time I was in bed," she said. "I've to be at business at nine to-morrow, my dear. Back at the old grind."

"Not for long," he said. "Not now."

And with that it seemed everything was said.

She stood up and smiled.

He stood up smiling back at her.

He went upstairs after her, not caring now who saw them. For he'd got her. None of your "Starp it" kids this time. This meant everything. Miss Blame in a distant corner affected to be reading. Outside her room Evangeline stopped short and shot a hasty glance upstairs and down. Not a soul in sight and nobody listening. She took 'both his hands in hers and held them for a moment, looking at him possessively. Then she dropped them, and slowly, deliberately, drew his head to hers and kissed him. It was a long thirsty kiss; it was the kiss of a bright-minded young woman who had given some thought to the matter, it wandered a little and then closed down, and with it the last memory of Molly's kissing vanished from his mind. "And

so," she said at last in a low whisper, "Good night, my lover. *Je fainu, je fadon*."

He hesitated. "Good night," he said almost interrogatively.

"Good night," she said.

He went on up to his own room. He looked back over the banisters but her door had closed noiselessly behind her....

He lay awake for a very long time in a state of intense excitement. Reverie and desire danced a wild fandango in his cranium. He went to bed and got up again. He walked about his room in his pyjamas. He went to his door, listened a long time, opened it softly and peered downstairs,

"Evangeline," he whispered very softly, heard the young Dutchman opposite snoring, and retired precipitately into his room again.

There he stripped himself and contemplated himself as well as he could in his little looking-glass. The salt cellars over his collar bones, he decided, were not as hollow as they used to be.

He meditated.

Finally he got into bed and embraced his bolster with passionate tenderness. "Evangeline," he whispered to it.

"Oh, my dear Evangeline. Say you love me. Keep on saying you love me. Keep — keep on."

And so at last he was able to sleep.

X. — ENGAGED

BUT, my dear, we can't be married from the same address. That would never do. There's People to consider. *My* people anyhow."

Edward Albert did not see that at first. His mind was concentrated upon the achievement of Evangeline and It, and the intervening events that must precede this consummation did not interest him at all, until she made them interest him. He saw no reason why they should not anticipate marriage at Doober's, and he had a vague idea that it was possible to go to the nearest registry office and accomplish marriage there and then. These things had never entered his circle of ideas before his return from Edinburgh,

"But if one's in love one wants each other. I tell you I want you, Evangeline. Dreadfully. I can't tell you. I can't hold myself...."

"Darling, I'm as impatient as you are. More I think. But we murst not create a scandal. We murst not. How will it look in the *Times*, Marriages — of the same address? *Pas possible, Chéri. Je m'enfiche de tout celà.*"

She regarded him. "You look like a sulky baby, you darling!.... Diddums. Diddums keep um waiting? I could kiss you right away now. I shall it you don't mind."

"Aw! Don't torment me," said Edward Albert and edged away from her.

They had been engaged three days and they were sitting in the pretty lower garden of Regent's Park. The fact of the engagement had been conveyed to Mrs Doober for tactful release to the boarders, and apart from a humorous grimace on the part of Mr Chamble Pewter and a rather pointed discourse delivered by Miss Blame in a corner of the drawing-room to the little old lady in mittens and Mr Doober's niece on the subject of gold-diggers and kidnappers, which may or may not have been intended for Edward Albert's ears, the social disturbance was slight. Mrs Doober behaved generously although she was losing two regular and solvent clients, and she gave Edward Albert an excellent and quite unsolicited testimonial. "So quiet and well-bred," she specified.

Gawpy told Evangeline she was a lucky girl no end and Edward

Albert that he was a lucky man no end, and confided to them that she was still waiting for fur knight to come and rescue her from the enchanted castle.

Edward Albert, after a slight hesitation, had ended his clerkship with North London Leaseholds, but Evangeline found it flatteringly difficult to sever her business connection.

"They jurst don't know where anything is, if I'm not there,"

she said, and it was arranged for her to keep on upon a half-time arrangement until she had trained a successor. The training she gave was considerably weakened by her overwhelming impulse to talk all the time to her trainee about her matrimonial anticipations.

She had revealed a very considerable amount of administrative self-confidence from the very outset of their new relationship. Edward Albert's worldly inexperience and his extreme preoccupation appealed to the latent mother in her. Every side of her womanhood was aroused.

She had decided that a comfortable apartment, a whole floor at least (" Our home, darling ") was to be found in one of the Bloomsbury Squares. "We'll go and begin looking for it the afternoon after to-morrow. Surch fun!"

"I suppose we got to do all this," he said. She managed the hunt for a home very capably. She talked to house agents and lodging-house proprietors. She did all the talking. He affected a masterful dignity, but inwardly he resented her leadership. But his desire for her subdued him. He had something of the expectant meekness of a dog in love.

They found what she wanted just out of Torrington Square, not simply a floor but the upper part of a house, two reception rooms, two good bedrooms and two other rooms that might also be bedrooms or anything else you liked, a pantry kitchen, a larder, a box-room and a bathroom! He was secretly dismayed at the difficulty he would have in living in such a lot of rooms at once, but she was delighted. The rent was very reasonable and she had never expected so much social expansion.

The rent was low because the meek incapable little lady who owned the house and lived in the lower half of it had hitherto let the upper half unfurnished. Then, seized by a spirit of enterprise, she had

decided to furnish the rooms on the hire purchase system and do for the new occupants. An artist gentleman had moved in with a wife and such a lot of lovely pictures, and he had bought a piano on the hire purchase system. It had seemed a most satisfactory arrangement for some days. Then everything had begun not to work. There was trouble about the servants doing for the additional people, the little lady explained in tones of mild indignation. Her cook had given notice and her other servant had walked out on her, the cook was downstairs at that very moment still being most disagreeable, and the artist gentleman, after ringing his bell until the battery was exhausted, had departed with his wife and his pictures in a taxi-cab, leaving the piano on her hands and his bills unpaid. "There he was, a great big man, and when I asked him what I could do about it all, he just said, 'You can sue me,' and made a nasty face at me. And he didn't even think to leave his address, so how could I sue him?"

The situation appealed to the quick business instincts of Evangeline. She surveyed the none too amply furnished rooms. "The piano's gone," she remarked.

"They took it yesterday. Where the plaster is knocked off the staircase wall. If only we could come to some arrangement. I should be so glad. But I can't do for you, I really can't do for you. It's the servants. Since the war — Servants aren't what they were. Days out and Sunday afternoons. But everything's very convenient up here. You could have a nice respectable woman of your own to do for you. Then there wouldn't be the strain."

Evangeline's ready mind expanded at once to include a servant of her own. Doing for her, under her orders. A real servant one could put in a cap and apron! Who would answer the door. And a still more brilliant idea followed. When there was occasion for a special dinner, she might borrow the downstairs cook and pay her something extra.

"Not too much," said Evangeline, "but enough to make things easy. And if I have to do a bit of cooking myself, it won't be the first time I've *fayd* the *cuisine*."

Before she had done with the incapable little lady the rooms were not so. much taken as captured, and captured at a rental that was less than most of the mere apartments they had looked at hitherto.

"My husband — he'll be my husband in a few weeks and then I'll

come here to look after him for good," said Evangeline, "we'll take over the hire purchase agreement, and we'll have to get in a few things of our own, pictures and so on, to make the place homey. We'll get along all right."

The incapable little lady said incoherent things about taking up references which Evangeline swept aside. "But I'll have to write something down. Business, you know. There's your names and everything," said the incapable little lady, and after having looked about for a pen and ink that had probably never been there, departed to get writing materials from the lower regions. Evangeline ushered her out competently, watched her descend, made sure the door was closed, and turned upon her lover, an Evangeline transfigured.

She had taken off her business face like a mask and she was all bright excitement. "You darling patient thing!" she said. "Isn't it lovely! Isn't it all perfect?"

She threw her hands up in the air, pirouetted round towards him and finished by kissing him, vigorously. He gripped her responsively. "Not now!" she said, disengaging his arms, "She's coming back."

They stood regarding each other. "You done it pretty well," he said.

"I'm glad my lord approves."

That was quite the tone to take. "You do set about this sort of business pretty well," he repeated.

The incapable little lady returned and took down their names and the proposed date of entry and what she called "references." Evangeline gave two addresses that were strange to Edward Albert, and one — if he heard aright — was Scotland Yard. Scotland Yard? Then came a pause.

"We'll just look round a bit," said Evangeline, dismissing her. "There's just one or two things I want to measure."

The incapable little lady withdrew, because there was manifestly nothing else for her to do, and again Evangeline was transfigured.

"Mr Edward Albert Tewler at Home," she said, bowing.

"Evadne darling."

"And about our wedding. We're going to have a real, proper wedding. None of your jump over a broomstick registry office affair. Voice that breathed o'er Eden and all of it. And you looking lovely

in a silk hat and light grey trousers. You'll have, you know, white slips to your waistcoat."

"Gaw!" said Edward Albert, flattered and attracted but very much scared.

"And orange blossom for me."

"But won't it be an expense?"

"I'm afraid you'll think me terribly old-fashioned, but then I've got other people to consider. Isn't it queer you don't know anything about my people yet? Not a thing. You never even asked. I've got a father and a godfather and cousins galore."

"I aren't going to marry all them," said the bridegroom.

"I'll protect you, Teddy. But there they are. We've got to humour them. My father he's a policeman — oh, not an ordinary policeman. He's at Scotland Yard. He's a C.I.D. Inspector Birkenhead. He's never had a big case yet, but some day he'll get his chance, he says. Very, very exact. Nothing escapes him. He's a bit stiff in his way — very proper-minded. You see my mother left him and he never quite got over it. If he knew — If he thought we were going to anticipate — !"

"Nobody need know, need they?"

"Heaven help us if he does. So you see it's got to be as I say, A proper wedding and someone to give me away."

"Oo's going to give you away? Oo's got the right to give you away?"

"Darling, I think we ought to go and see a proper wedding somewhere. Then you'll see how it's done. We've jurst got to have a best man to hop about and do everything for us. Rice and orange blossom and everything *de rigor*. I've thought of all that. There's my cousins the Chasers. There's Millie, who used to go to school with me. She married young Chaser. Pip Chaser. He's a Card, as Arnold Bennett would say — a regular Card. Smart! He's manager to a big West End undertaker and he can get carriages and horses for nothing from the stables. Carriages, Teddy! But no black gloves and funeral baked meats for us! Old Mr Chaser is my godfather; he sells champagne — special non-vintage champagne for balls and night-clubs and weddings and things like that, a sort of champagne he gets made for him. It doesn't fizz so much but it's just as good. Better, he

thinks. And he's always promised that he would stand me my wedding breakfast when the great day came."

She reflected. "I won't have any of the people from the business. No. I've done with that. They liked me of course, as soon as I get clear of it all, it's good-bye for good. I don't want anyone hurt...."

"Some things are better ended for good and all...."

She reflected. "No," she said, as if she closed a door, "I told about Doober's. Mrs Doober? Dear old Gawpy. that's all. That half-wit niece might come to the arch...."

Edward Albert contemplated his future in a mood of triumphant assertion. Somehow he wanted Bert and Nuts to be there, astonished, and some of the chaps and girls in North London Leaseholds — overwhelmed. And somehow, somewhere, he imagined a triumphant whisper to Bert, I've 'ad 'er already. She's all right, my boy."

Hubris, I suppose the classical gentlemen would call it. The wedding dream unfolded. He learnt how the bride would slip away and put on her going-away dress. And he'd change too. They'd throw old slippers for luck.

"Then off we go. Shall it be gay Paree? I've always had a yearn. Someday, when you have learnt French too, we might have a teeny, weeny, little *venire it terre* in Paris...."

Edward Albert suddenly put his foot down.

"Not to Paris we don't go. You'd start flirting again with that *faux pa* of yours. No fear."

"Jealous! I like you to be jealous," said Evadne Evangeline. "If you saw him. So old. Debonair, I admit, but in the last stage...."

"Anyhow if you don't like that, there's all the world to choose from. Let's go to Boulogne perhaps or down to Torquay or Bournemouth to a room, our room with the sun shining in on us! Think of it."

He thought of it.

They went about to shops. Evadne was the most discriminating of shoppers. The gentlemen in black coats bowed obsequiously and rubbed their hands together. And she would turn to Edward Albert and consult him. They bought furniture. They bought a lovely soft fur rug "for our little pink toes", she whispered, "a *sauté lit*." And pictures, for the artist gentleman had taken away all his pictures.

She recognised one she was, looking for with a cry of, "*Enfant saoul*!" It was a beautiful steel engraving of a tall lover, holding his new-won lady to him and pressing her fingers to his lips in the serene first moment of complete possession.

"I think it serch a lovely picture!" said Evadne Evangeline.

She feasted her eyes on it adoringly. "Darling," she whispered, when the salesman was out of earshot, "I'm counting the days. I'm counting the hours. To that."

In this fashion was our Edward Albert installed in his new home, and, at the propitious moment, Evangeline came, as she had promised him and herself, to give herself to him.

XI. — TRAP FOR INNOCENTS

SO, drawn by genuine passionate desire, our two heirs to the Wisdom of the Ages came to the cardinal moment of their sexual lives.

And here I find that for one brief chapter at least there has to be a change of key in this veracious narrative.

Hitherto this record of the acts and sayings of Edward Albert has been a simple unemotional record of the facts of the case. and if at times a certain realisation of the immanent absurdity of his life has betrayed itself, it has, I hope, been kept for the most part below the level of derision. But what has to be told now of this young couple is something so pitiful that I find myself taking sides with them against the circumstances that brought them to this pass.

They were both, and Edward Albert more especially, profoundly ignorant of the essentials of sex. That beneficent writer, Mrs Marie Stopes, was already at large in the world about this time, but her instructions in the conditions of connubial happiness had still to penetrate to their class. She was still some years from becoming a sly music-hall joke. Edward Albert knew; indeed he had exaggerated ideas; of venereal disease, clumsy "precautions" and the repulsive aspects of the overwhelming desire for "It", but the only idea he attached to Maidenhead was that it was a town on the road to Reading with a pretty bridge overlooking Skindle's Hotel with a very attractive but rather high-class riverside lawn. And Evangeline for her part thought a loving maiden yielded with delight. Something happened, she knew, but she thought it was something happy.

He hardly waited to kiss her. There was a rapid struggle. She felt herself gripped and assailed with insane energy.

"Oh! oh! oh!" she groaned in crescendo. "Stop! Ow-woo-woohoo. Oooh!" The climax of the unendurable passed. Her body went limp.

Then Edward Albert was sitting up with an expression of horror on his face. "Gaw!" he was saying. "You got some disease? It's blood!"

He dashed for the bathroom.

He came back to discover Evangeline sitting up in a storm of pain,

disappointment and fear.

"You pig," she said. "You fool. You selfish young fool. You ignoramus! What have you done to me?... Look at that dirty precaution of yours there. Look at it!"

Her pointing beringed finger trembled.

"Gaw, I forgot all about it!"

"And about me. And about everything. You foul, disgusting young hog."

"Well, 'ow was I to know? And anyhow 'ow about me? What have you done to me?"

"I wish to God I could give you worse than I've got. If I could strike you dead this minute I'd strike you dead. Get out of my way."

"Where you going? What you going to do?"

"Go, Dress. Wash. So far as I can wash. Get away out of sight of you. So as not to be sick."

She dressed swiftly, going to and fro and flinging insults at him. He sat on the soiled and devastated bed considering the situation.

"But wait a bit!" he said. "You can't go like this?"

"If this comes to anything — oh! if it comes to anything — oh! I'll do my best to kill you."

"But you can't leave me here—"

"I'll kill you and I'll kill myself. I swear it. I swear it."

"You can't leave me here in this place like this."

He followed her into the drawing-room and made to intercept her. And here is a queer thing to tell. Twenty minutes before she had been entirely powerless in his grip and yet now as he intervened between her and the door, she could face him with an expression of blazing hate, anger and contempt that was itself a blow. "Fool!" she spat out at his face. She clenched her fists, held them up to her ears, and suddenly shot them forward at his face with such force that she sent him spinning.

He span round and sprawled anyhow....

The door slammed on her and he found himself naked and entangled in an overturned chair on the floor of his new home and almost directly beneath that tender and beautiful picture, *Enfin seul*.

Poor little beasts! That was the dismal joke our Tewler civilisation played upon two of its children — for no reason at all. For sheer

want of reason. It wrapped them about and misled them — to this,...

Evangeline wandered out into the square, ruffled, and distraught, and unspeakably uncomfortable. She hesitated, called a taxi and fled to her cousin, Millie Chaser, to tell her all about it, for she felt she had to tell someone about it all or burst. Then she returned to Scartmore House and went supperless to bed. Edward Albert dressed slowly and still more slowly reassembled his scattered mentality.

He tried to simplify and concentrate it in hatred of her. He shouted a string of foul names at her. “She-devil”, was the mildest thing he could think of to call her. “You come back, you foul bitch! If I get you here again I’ll show you.”

He was affecting this fury and at the same time he was already desiring her again. It was exasperating, but he felt he had hardly begun upon her.

She had left red marks on both his cheeks. He examined them in the bathroom mirror with some consternation. Both would be bad bruises unless he sponged them with cold water, and one had the skin broken and was oozing blood.

“She took me by surprise.... Them rings of hers.

“Changed into a devil.... Hog, am I? — selfish young hog? Fool, eh? Did she mean it all or only some?.... So that’s where we stand....

“I was a fool to let her go!...

“She’d have torn the ‘ouse down....

“Wonder where she’s gone to.

“Pretty fool I shall look if she goes back to her old job. If everything’s all right.... She might do it.”

XII. — MR PIP CHASER

IN spite of this mental turmoil Edward Albert slept profoundly that night, and the next morning he woke still extremely perplexed but refreshed and feeling much more able to cope with this difficult world. As he had nothing better to do he went for a walk in Regent's Park and sat down almost on the very seat on which he had discussed his future with Evangeline eight or nine days before. And regardless of the tragedy of the previous day he found himself regretting her acutely.

For nearly two weeks she had subjected him to a regime of unprecedented mental massage, she had anointed him with flattery and endearment, and abruptly he was exposed to this cold and disillusioning world again. And the affair of yesterday was taking on a new appearance. Whatever happened he'd had it and done it. He was a, man. He no longer peeped and peered at the girls and women going by. Their last secret was his. He looked at them appraisingly. But none of them, he realised, was quite like Evangeline. And the very violence aid extravagance of his reaction against her made him feel he had by no means finished with her.

What was to be done about it? Walk about a bit. Have a look at the shops down Regent Street. Get a snack somewhere. Wait for something to happen.

In the afternoon he had an unanticipated visitor.

He answered the door expecting only some tradesman's call, and discovered a short but upstanding young man in a jauntily cocked bowler hat, an extremely neat black jacket, cheerful herring-bone trousers, and a bright bow tie that harmonised beautifully with a blue shirt and collar and matched exactly with the corner of a handkerchief that projected from the breast-pocket. The face was also up-' standing, so to speak, clean-shaven, with alert brown eyes, a pug nose and a large oblique mouth ready to smile. A pink carnation in his button hole enhanced his cheerfulness. By Edward Albert's standards this was an excessively well-dressed person. He opened the door wider.

The visitor neighed. He produced a loud clear lingering key. Then

he spoke. “Mr Tewler?” he said.

“You want to see me?” said Edward Albert.

“Guessed it in one,” said the visitor. “May I come in?”

Edward Albert stood aside to admit him.

“I didn’t catch your name,” he said. “If it’s business—”

He remembered some recent instructions of Evangeline.

“If you ‘appen to have a card....”

“And why not a card?” said the visitor, “Why not? I think, why — yes” He produced a neat black leather pocket-book adorned with a silver monogram, and extracted a card.

“Don’t be alarmed,” he said.

Within a deep black edge it announced its purport:

To introduce
Mr Philip Chaser
representing Pontifex, Urn and Burke.
Funerary Undertakers.

The visitor watched his host’s face for a moment and then gave way to a brief cackle of laughter. “Not on business this time, Edward Albert, not on business. Purely social. It’s the only card I have on me. You see I’m Pip Chaser at your service. Pip, Pip Chaser. I’m, hey, Evangeline’s first cousin by marriage and my wife is her bosom friend. Old schoolfellows. You may have heard her speak of Millie — her dear Millie. Always dear. And her godfather, my revered parent. Nice chap he is — provided you don’t call him Old Gooseberry. We marry from his place. Wedding breakfast and all that. I have to be Best Man. See? Came about the arrangements.”

He removed his hat and revealed an upstanding tussock of hair. He seemed to find some difficulty about placing his hat. He held it in his hand until a suitable place could be found. “You ought to have a hatstand, Edward Albert,” he said. “Hats and umbrellas. There.” He pointed his hat to indicate the exact place. “You must get one and put it there. And now for a talk. Nice little place this looks. Well lit.”

Edward Albert opened the door to the drawing-room.

“Would you like me to make you some tea?” he asked.

“I can.”

“Whisky is, hey, better,” said Mr Chaser.

“I don’t ‘appen to have any whisky.”

“Oh, but you must get a bottle of whisky in the pantry and all that. And cocktail stuff, gin, vermouth, lime juice, the, hey, requisites. What is home without a shaker? Don’t worry about tea. We’ll settle our business and go out for what is called, I believe, a quick one. I should have rung you up this morning, but you’ve got no telephone yet. You must get a telephone. And take my advice, don’t put it out there in the hall for everyone to hear. In a corner near your desk. Bed-room extension perhaps. We’ll fix places for that later. I — hey. I couldn’t come this morning because I had two Blessed Ones to plant out at Woking. I had to get out of my — hey — sables.”

He placed his hat with care and precision exactly in the middle of the table and seated himself gracefully with an arm over the back of his chair. Edward Albert found him admirable. He tried to imitate his ease and left him to open the conversation.

Mr Chaser reflected. Instead of coming to business, he embarked upon a monologue.

“This undertaking business of mine, Edward Albert, is — hey — it isn’t all gloom. Don’t think it. It’s — hey — amusing. Something tonic in putting ’em under and going off yourself. Lot of nonsense talked about grief and lost dear ones and all that. If there hasn’t been a quarrel of some sort, about the will or something, they’re, they’re — hey — just pulling long faces. Pulling ‘em, Sir. Because they wouldn’t be there if they weren’t pulled. They’re — hey — survivors again; they’ve got the better of another Departed. I want to go round and slap them on the back and tell ’em to — hey — laugh it off. Sometimes they do. I’ve seen a whole funeral in a fit of giggles. Little dog or something. Our business, of course, is to put a grave face on it; that’s what we’re paid for, so to speak. Put a grave face on it. See?”

“Grave face on it,” said Edward Albert. “Good. Yes, that’s good.”

Mr Pip meditated, neighed at unusual length and went off at a tangent.

“In America, you know, they call undertakers Morticians. Over there they mess about with the body in a way the Christian West Enders we cater for wouldn’t stand for a moment. Not for a moment.

They make it up and dress it up and have a sort of lying-in-state, when friends call and leave cards. Not our line. It's done here in London by foreigners of sorts, but not by us. No."

He paused as though his monologue was running out. He smiled at Edward Albert most engagingly. He admitted he didn't know why he was talking of funerals. He could tell Edward Albert stories by the hour, but what they had to talk about was something more serious. If ever he wrote a book, he said, and he'd often thought of writing a book, he'd do one called *The Hearse with the Silver Lining*. Only it might interfere with business....

"It might do that," said Edward Albert judicially.

"Well, we've business on hand and we have to come to it."

What was he going to say now? "Yeers," said Edward Albert guardedly, and sat up.

"A wedding, a wedding — key — is something really serious. Serious. It just starts a lot of things and a funeral ends everything. It goes on. And on — key. Now my cousin by marriage, Evangeline, says you're a fatherless orphan, so to speak. You haven't been anywhere and done anything yet. World is all before you. All sorts of matters, great and small, you've got to be put wise about. That's where this Best Man comes in. I don't mind telling you that, for many reasons, you're lucky to have me as your Best Man. I — hey — happen to be one of the best Best Men in London. Expert at it. I've — hey — guided scores — well, six or seven — to their doom. Anything you want to know, anything you have to do."

Still he seemed to be postponing something. He stood up, stuck his hands in his trouser pockets and walked about the room with one eye on Edward Albert.

"Nice little place you have here. Quite a nice little place. Broken a chair already! Hire purchase stuff. By the time you've bought it you'll have replaced most of it. And you've got that old picture; *Enfin seul*. Leighton, isn't it?"

"About this wedding of ours," began Edward Albert. Young Chaser came round on his heel and stood attentive

"What about it?"

"Fact is, Mr Philip—"

"Pip to you my boy — Pip, Pip."

“But about all this. Fact is — I ought to tell you — we’ve had a bit of a misunderstanding.”

“My wife did say something of the sort while I was shedding my sad rags and putting on these — hey — innocently glad ones. Some storm in a tea-cup. Don’t think about it. Don’t — hey — think about it. These little disturbances will occur. Before a wedding there’s more often trouble than not. Much more often than not. The engagement has been postponed. You see it in The Times. That’s where the undertaker scores. No going back in his business. Death certificate all in order before we think of touching you.”

“What did Mrs Chaser say?”

“Nothing much. Some little rumpus. You’ve offended Evangeline in some way.”

“We sort of.” [Difficult to convey.] “Just kind of didn’t hit things off.”

Pip looked at his protégé and perceived he was blushing deeply. He looked younger and sillier than ever.

“I wasn’t born yesterday, my boy,” said Pip Chaser.

“Say no more about it. Think no more about it. The crisis of yesterday is the joke of to-morrow. You’d be only too glad to see her coming in now? Admit it. You’ve got to let the woman have her own way about — hey — certain matters, particularly at first. Agree to that and back she’ll come. Right away. Agree, eh? Nothing more to be said. Right!”

He reported the state of affairs to his wife. “I thought it was that,” he said, when she had supplied details. “I don’t remember you and I had any particular trouble....”

“Ton were born knowing,” said Millie Chaser. “And you’ve never left off clucking since. I’ll tell her. She’s upstairs now....”

“He wants you to come back,” said Millie

Evangeline had been reading *The Princess Priscilla’s Fortnight*. She put it on one side with an affectation of regret....

“Does he say he’s sorry? He’s got to say he’s sorry.”

“He does.”

“Let’s be clear about things. That boy’s a positive danger. I’m half way to hating him and if he isn’t careful about it, I shall. I’m going to have a separate room. I’m going to — I’m going to have a

voice in disposing of myself. Always. After what's happened I simply murst, Millie."

"Pip says he knows he's been an idiot and he's absolutely sheepish."

"Sheepish? H'm. What sort of sheep? He's got to be a lamb if we're to get on together."

"Then you'll go back and have a talk to him?"

Edward Albert was out when she returned. He had gone out to order some whisky and siphons. The incapable little lady let her in without comment. So that he found her in possession when he returned.

He had told himself that when he got her back to their home he would do thus and thus with her, but when he found himself face to face with her, suddenly all that masterful knocking about he had contemplated became improbable.

"Well?" she said.

He felt danger in her eye.

He made a step towards her. "I'm glad you're back," he said. "I been wanting you back."

"Stop," she said. "Stop a minute, Teddy. Keep off. Listen. Keep your hands off me. If you think I'm going to let a clumsy kid like you manhandle me again!"

Something flashed on the table.

"What's that?"

"That, my dear, is the bread knife. If you start a scuffle, anything may happen. And who will know which of us began it? See? I mean it, Teddy."

She read fear in his expressive face and knew that for the moment at least she had won the upper hand. A fair residuum of affectionate proprietorship mingled with her contempt for him. And in her awakened body now there was desire.

"Listen," she said. "I murst remind you that you arc a youngster, fix years younger than me. It's painful but I murst. You don't know things, you don't understand things. That's not your fault and it isn't mine. It happens to be so. In ten years. time it won't matter about your being younger, but it does now. You'll be the master then right enough. No doubt. See? But you do as I say now and it will be the

better for both of us."

"What's all this 'doing as you say' mean?"

"Behaving like a lover and not like a beastly uncontrollable little animal. That's what I mean."

"But how?"

"You don't know and you murst trust me to show you."

"I s'pose I got to do what you say. But what do you want me to do?"

"Be the modest lover you were at the beginning."

"Am I to live on my bended knees?"

"You do as I say and you can come to bed with me now."

"Eh?"

"I mean it." And suddenly this astonishing creature came round the table to him, put her arm about him, drew him to her, and kissed him. He responded automatically. She drew him towards her room....

"We don't know yet if the worst has happened, so you murst take care, Teddy...."

He was still marvelling wordlessly at the ways of women when she left the house.

"Changeable," he reflected. "Don't know her own mind ten minutes together. All love and kisses, cut and come again, and then — pushed away — you'd 'ardly think we'd ever made love."

She said very little about the wedding day for another week or so, and then she informed him abruptly that the sooner they married the better.

"What's the sudden hurry?" asked Edward Albert.

"*Fate accompli*. I know now we've got to many and that's all about it."

"That means a kid," said Edward Albert, who had been thinking things over for some days. And the more he had thought them over the less he had liked them.

"That means a kid," he repeated.

"It means, as you say, a kid."

"And you — all spoilt. Nurses and sickness. All the 'ouse upset and then the kid — nya, nya, nya."

"And what else did you expect?"

"I 'oped we'd be able to go on going on as we 'ave been going on.

For a bit anyhow."

"I've felt you 'oped — hoped that. Well, we can't."

She watched his crestfallen face. "Just for one careless moment, Teddy. What a lesson for you! You can't be too careful."

But Edward Albert wasn't going to admit responsibility.

"I been W," he said. "If ever a man was W, I been W. From the moment I got that blarsted money. I wish I'd never set eyes on it. Or you."

She shrugged her shoulders and said nothing. What was there for her to say?

XIII. — WEDDING DEFERRED

WHY did Mr Philip Chaser neigh as well as employ ordinary human speech? It was a matter for speculation among his large circle of friends and acquaintances. Was he born neighing, did he learn to neigh, or was neighing thrust upon him? Even his dear Millie had no exact knowledge in the matter. When she met and married him, it had already become an essential part of his personality.

There may have been an early stammer and a cure for stammering. Hold your breath for a time, inhale and then speak; the stammer went, and the neigh remained in its place. Observers found it was not an invariable feature of his discourse. He could forget to do it in moments of lively interest. He used it to capture attention. At social gatherings, used loudly, it was as good as the toast-master's "Pray silence for — so and so." And it gave him a rallying pause. It arrested interruption while he recovered a train of thought and it warned that something good was coming. He just did it; he never said anything about it. He had a profoundly secretive side to him.

We imagine a number of things about language and most of them are absurd. We imagine we are speaking plainly and clearly and we never do anything of the sort. We do not hear the sounds we make. We think we think and express ourselves. It is 6ur universal delusion. The speech of Homo Tewler, Homo sub-sapiens is still incapable of expressing reality, and his thought at its clearest is a net of misfitting symbols, analogies and metaphors, by which he hopes to ensnare the truth to his desires. If you will listen attentively, if you will read attentively, you will find everyone has protective and habitual mannerisms, makes the most transitory attempts at real expression and lapses into the tricks and devices of — say — something far more natural, a struggle for self-assertion.

It is only in the past few years that the sciences of Signifies and Semantics have opened men's eyes to the immense inaccuracies and question-begging of language. People talk of pure English, perfect French, faultless German. This possible impeccability is an academic delusion. Only a schoolmaster can really believe in it. Every language changes from day to day and from hour to hour. I am told

by those who are better able to judge that Evangeline's transitory French was far from perfect, gradually it decayed in her memory and passed out of her mind, but it differed only in degree and not in kind from everyman's French, including this, that and the other sort of Frenchman. Some day ingenious people may devise ways of bringing language which is not only the expression but the instrument of thought, nearer to verifiable reality — in the days when we Tewlers are breaking towards sapiens. But that is not yet.

Meanwhile Speech is mainly our weapon for self-assertion, and from that point of view there is nothing better in this story than Pip Chaser's long, aggressive, commanding and yet apparently impersonal key. How feeble beside it was Edward Albert's "Er — mean t'say." How spurious those long records of empty phrasing with which the public speaker holds his audience in a state of passive nothingness while he recovers the straying argument that has slipped away from his wits!

The last thing a speaker or writer can perceive is his own limitation, and with that the critical hearer and reader must deal. In this story, subject to that qualification, there is a sustained attempt to render life, and particularly one specimen life and group of lives, as starkly as possible, and every individual is shown as truthfully as the writer's ability permits. And they all, in addition to a general laxness, have their peculiar phrasing and mannerisms and patches of verbal shoddy. Every one of them and everyone you know.

So hey for the merry merry Best Man!

He spent the eve of the appointed day in a vigorous rehearsal of Edward Albert. He had thrown himself into the task with an ever-growing enthusiasm. He found something delightful in our hero which was evidently lost upon the rest of the world. And he loved management. He was born knowing, as his wife said, he had never 'once looked back from that bright start, and he had an extraordinary detailed knowledge of where and when and how to buy the smartest things at the lowest price for every occasion.

"We'll have this right to the last button, Teddy. We'll get photographers from the society papers outside the church. I know a man.... How are they to know who we are and who we aren't?.... Oh, you'll be all right, if you don't give way in the middle. Like — hey

— shutting a knife, I mean."

He paraded himself and Edward Albeit up and down the bedroom. He took his arm and spun him round to the looking-glass. "Look at us! Pip and Tewler, arrayed for the altar, What's a funeral to this sort of thing? I ask you,"

"You know I didn't count on all this."

"Exactly. That's where *I* come in. Now then, my orphan child, that speech — Just once more. Now then, 'Ladies and Gentlemen!'"

He was very proud of the speech he had composed for his pupil. "None of your Unaccustomed-as-I-am-to-public-speaking stuff for us. No. Something simple, neat and natural. Stand up to the table, so. Now then."

Edward Albert posed himself at the table. "Lays and gentlemen," he said and paused. "And you, my dear Evangeline—"

"Good!"

"Er. I never made a speech in my life. P'raps I never shall And now. My heart's too full. Go. bless you all."

"Excellent! Touching! Then you sit down. My revered Pop — he doesn't mind being called Pop; it's Old Gooseberry he can't stand — my Pop, I say, will blow his cork out and spout all over us for a bit. After all it's his breakfast. And then kisses. Millie will kiss you. Various women will kiss you — attaboy — I'll pull you out of it, and so to the station and Tender Torquay."

"You'll see us off?"

"To the end.... And now let me help you to spread out the wedding garments. Your blue suit will be on the Pop Premises.... Have I forgotten anything? Not me. What would have happened to this blessed wedding without my *savoir faire* transcends the imagination — transcends it, I tell you, simply transcends it."

Edward. Albert sneezed.

"Where's your dressing gown? Every man in your position ought to have a wadded dressing gown."

"I bin shivering all day. I think I got a cold,"

"That's where that whisky comes in, my boy. Lemon? No lemon! You ought always to have a lemon. Get into bed. I'll get you some boiling water and then I'll tuck you up. Best man indeed! I'm your nurse and your valet Say your evening prayer. Go on. Ladies and

gentlemen and you, my dear Evangeline, I never made a speech in my life. Go on,... Good! Now for the whisky, oh Lamb made ready for the Sacrifice....

"I'll leave it here beside you. And so to sleep, my Benedict, Sleep well."

But that was exactly what Edward Albert could not do. A great horror of darkness and self-disgust came upon him.

Something about Pip, something about everybody's behaviour, told him he was being made a fool of. He had been in Evangeline's arms again that afternoon and he was in a phase of nervous exhaustion. He had been excited and then told he was no good. Always she was saying he was unsatisfactory. Nice thing to tell a fellow. And egging him on again. And here he was to be dressed up like a fool.... He wouldn't stand it. He would not stand it. He would be damned if he stood it. He was a free man in a free country. Smash up the whole thing he would even now, and be damned to their wedding breakfast!

He got out of bed. He sneezed violently. He'd smash that hat anyhow. But face to face with that immaculate hat, his heart failed him. It found the cringing snob in him. He crept back into bed and sat up for a time looking at it. But in an hour he was raving again and repeating his invincible objection to marrying. He'd been led into it. He'd been W. It wasn't what he'd meant....

Mr Pip, dressed as the ideal best man, was a little late and impatient. He had a white gardenia in his button hole and he carried another, with its stem in silver paper, for his victim. He rang for ten minutes almost continuously; he banged and kicked the door, and he was at last admitted by Edward Albert in pyjamas. The bridegroom's eyes were red, swollen and half-closed, he said nothing, and he scuttled back hastily to bed.

"What on earth's this?" demanded Mr Pip, round-eyed.

Edward Albert rolled over away from him and became a bunch of bedclothes.

"I can't do it, o' fellow," he wheezed hoarsely. "I got a frightful cold. You got to manage without me,"

"Say that again," cried Pip, incredulous but delighted.

"Say that again."

Edward Albeit said it again but lower and more wheezily.

“You got to manage without me!” echoed Pip. “Oh lovely! Oh perfect! Of all the larks!”

He cackled with laughter. He danced about the room. He waved his arms about. “I can see them. I can see them all. Managing without him!” He aimed two tremendous punches at the roll of bedclothes that was the bridegroom and then went off to the pantry in search of whisky.

He came back with a glass of whisky and soda in his hand and put it down on the night table to enable him to punch the defaulter some more. “Oh Lord! what are we to do?” he said. “You, hey, toad.”

“Bring ’em all here,” he tried. “Get the parson and the bride and everyone here. Not legal. Get an ambulance and take you there. What’s the time? Past eleven. You can’t marry after twelve. Get you up now and dress you by force? Get up!”

He tried to strip off the bedclothes but Edward Albert had wrapped them too tightly round himself.

“I tell you I won’t” he shouted. “I can’t and I won’t. I won’t. I changed my mind.”

Pip desisted.

“Ever had the pleasure of meeting Inspector Birkenhead, Tewler?” he asked.

“Don’ wan’ meet ‘im.”

“You will.”

Then Pip had his brightest idea. “*I* know. You’ve got a temperature of 105, Tewler, and I’m going to telephone. They’ll send for a doctor — who’ll expose you. And then? I don’t know. God help you I Why the hell haven’t you had a telephone put in here? As I told you. I’ll have to go out to a call office.”

When the flat had ceased to reverberate with Pip’s presence, Edward Albert rolled up into a vertical position, a sort of cocoon of bedclothes surmounted by a rueful face and a disorder of hair, and finished Pip’s whisky and soda.

“I never thought of that old father,” he whispered, and his face was white with premonition.

XIV. — FIZZ POP

INSPECTOR BIRKENHEAD looked like the quintessence of all those Scotland Yard Inspectors who have figured in that vast and ever-growing field of literature, detective stories. He was indeed the only begetter of a great family. His position at Scotland Yard brought him into immediate contact with all the journalists, writers, curious persons and so forth who came in ever-increasing volume to study the type. He was Scotland Yard's first line of defence, and the first to break cover from the thickets upon the encircled criminal. Subtler minds up-stairs remained hidden from the public eye and the public imagination. Criminals never saw them, knew nothing about them. Camera men never got hold of them. Between them and the amateur detective, a great gulf, in the shape of Inspector Birkenhead, was fixed. Edward Albert had met him already in a dozen stories under a dozen names.

The Inspector was a big heavy man, big enough indeed to be a lot of people. Edward Albert watched him place a chair for himself in the middle of the room and adjust himself firmly to its creaking accommodation, rest his hands upon his thighs and stick out his elbows. "Edward Albert Tewler, I believe." he said.

There is no hiding things from these detectives,

"Yes," said Edward Albert and the word half choked him.

His mouth was dry with fear.

He glanced in hope of some moral support from Pip, but Pip appeared to be lost in admiration of *Enfin seul*.

"I'm told you engaged to marry my daughter and that at the very last moment when everything was prepared for the ceremony, you insulted her and everybody by absenting yourself, absenting yourself without leave, from the ceremony. Have I been correctly informed?"

"I really did 'ave a temperature, Sir. Over 104 it was. Five degrees above normal."

"Nothing to what you'll have some day," said the Inspector prosaically.

"But Mr Chaser here knows — Reely, Sir."

"We won't argue about that. We won't trouble Mr Chaser about

that. I should say by the look of you she was well out of a thoroughly silly marriage, if it wasn't—"

The Inspector stopped, unable to continue for a time. His face was suffused, His mouth closed grimly and he appeared to be inhaling intensely. His eyes protruded. He seemed to be swelling. He must have been full of very highly compressed air. It looked as though he might explode at any moment, but as a matter of fact he was exercising self-control.

Mr Pip Chaser had stopped looking at the picture and had come round to a position from which to observe the Inspector better. Even his expression of expectant amusement was mitigated by a touch, of awe. There was, if one may say so, a. sort of humming silence of apprehension throughout the room. What became: of all that air it is idle to speculate. It disappears from tills story. When the Inspector spoke his voice was calm and stern. He deflated imperceptibly.

"My daughter, if she is my daughter, was her mother's child. That woman. — That woman brought disgrace upon my name. A wanton. A loose woman. And now.... Once again. No, I cannot have that sort of thing happen over again."

"But I mean to marry her, Sir. I'm going to marry her."

"You'd better. If you don't—" And speaking as always, with the quiet dignity of a man accustomed to the use of studiously irreproachable language, he used these by no means irreproachable words: "I'll bloody-well knock your silly block off for you! You understand me, Sir?"

"Yessir," said Edward Albert.

"But then how are we going to do it? The mischief is done. Here's everything disarranged and out of order. All her friends will know and talk. Well, Mr Chaser, you've a way of arranging things, she says, she says you can arrange Anything; and you know all these people better than I do. How you can arrange this now passes my imagination. What's to be done?"

"Well," said Pip. "If you ask me — ~"

He came forward and stood for a moment with his mouth wide open, scratching his jaws, "Hey", he said, slowly and extensively. "Nothing irreparable has happened. First there's this lie about the temperature."

Edward Albert murmured a protest.

"Lie?" said the Inspector, looked hard at Edward Albert, and said no more.

"Pure lie," said Pip, "I invented it and I ought to know. He hadn't a temperature. He had — hey — cold feet.... Still, we ought to keep that up. And the sooner Evangeline shows anxiety about it, the better. We can say she's been round already, in a dreadful state of mind. Oh, I know that's not true, but — hey — we can say it. And then we can say there was a misunderstanding about the date. And *I* lost the ring and got confused. Blame it on to me. That's what Best Men are for. Any old story, and the more stories there are, the better. We contradict vaguely. We say to this man, 'the fact of the matter is this', and we say to that man, 'the fact of the matter is that'. So everybody knows more than everybody else and we escape in the confusion. Just — hey — common sense, all that. The facts are bad. As you know, Sir, as your criminals know, the worse the facts are the more they have to be jumbled up. We aren't going to have to be sifting the evidence, Sir, thank goodness. And the sooner we get the whole thing over, the better."

"There I agree," said the Inspector. "I stand by that firmly."

"I'll get busy," said Puck-Pip. "I'll do it."

"But if there's any more shilly-shally—"

"Block," said Pip compactly, and turned to his client.

"You understand that, don't you?"

Edward Albert nodded acquiescence. The Inspector stood up slowly and towered over his prospective son-in-law. He shook not so much a finger as the whole terror of Scotland Yard at him.

"That girl is going to be decently and properly married whether she likes it or not, whether you like it or not, whoever likes it or don't like it" — he hesitated— "or not. Not twice will I have the honour of my family trailed in the mud. You marry her and you treat her properly. She's got the temper of a vixen, I admit, but all the same she's an educated young lady, and don't you forget it. She's a young lady and you're no gentleman...."

He ceased to address Edward Albert. He soliloquised, looking over Pip's head.

"I've often thought if perhaps I'd spanked her at times Or

somebody had spanked her. *I* couldn't have spanked her.... But there I was without a woman to care for her.... It's no good crying over spilt milk. As a little kid.... If only she could have stayed always as a little kid.... She was such a bright little kid."

The lament of the father through the ages....

So in a confusion of explanations the wedding feast was restored to the calendar and in due course Edward Albert found himself standing with Evangeline before a clergyman of venerable appearance and rapid enunciation. Pip stood behind Edward Albert like a ventriloquist behind his dummy, and three small bridesmaids of unknown provenance upheld Evangeline's train. In a front pew stood Inspector Birkenhead, meticulously observant, and evidently resolved to knock the bridegroom's sanguinary block off at the slightest hint of hanky-panky.

The elderly clergyman went off at headlong speed.

"Debloved getggether 'n sigh Gard 'n face congation join togeth man this wum ho' matmony onble sta stuted Gard time man's 'sincy.... dained remdy gainsin void forncation....fever after holdis peace."

More of that....

Then suddenly Edward Albert found he was bring addressed. The quick-firing clergyman was saying, "Wilt have this Worn thy wed wife.... keep th'only unt her — s'long both sha' live?"

"Eh?" said Edward Albert, trying to get it clear.

"Say 'I will'" — from Pip.

"I will."

He turned on Evangeline who answered very clearly;

"I will."

"Who giv' s'wom mad this man?"

Rapid exchange of glances between the Inspector and Pip. Assenting noise from the Inspector and something very like

"O.K." from Mr Chaser, who reached over smartly and put Evangeline's hand in the priest's. There was a slight fumble and the priest, with an impatient tug, joined the two right hands as he proceeded. He was already well away with

"Peat after me. Was name?"

"Edward Albert Tewler, Sir."

“I, Edward Albert Tewler, take thee, was name?”

“Evangeline Birkenhead.”

“Vangline Birk’ned to wed wife...”

Things drew to a climax.

“Whe’s ring?” Senile impatience manifested. But young Chaser was fully up to his duties. “Here, Sir. Yes, Sir, all correct.”

“On her finger.”

“Fourth finger — you chump,” from Pip in an audible whisper, and found it for him. “Don’t drop it.”

“Teat aft me. ...This ring Ivy wed.

“Kneel,” hissed Pip, with a slight but helpful kick.

And so the beautiful old ceremony drew to its end. Prayers and responses were mumbled by Edward Albert out of a prayer-book suddenly handed to him. There was more lightning discourse and then Edward Albert was walking down the aisle, with Evangeline clinging firmly to his arm, to the supply organist’s interpretation of the Wedding March from *Lohengrin.*

“Splendid,” whispered Pip. “Splendid. I’m proud of you. Chin up!”

So far as he had any feeling left in him, Edward Albert was proud of himself.

A crowd of strange faces outside. Damn! He’d forgotten to let Leaseholds know. He’d forgotten to tell Bert. Pip was handing him his hat and helping him into the first carriage. It was a black-lined carriage, but the coal-black horses were mitigated by abundant white rosettes. .

Edward Albert exhaled noisily. Evangeline remained perfectly still.

“Hey!” said Pip, realising that something had to be said about it: “That was — magnificent. Magnificent!”

“The flowers were beautiful,” said Evangeline.

“Pop,” said Pip.

Then they were going into the house of Pop Chaser. It was, Edward Albert realised, a stylish house, and it was doing itself in the best style. He had never seen such a lot of flowers except at a flower show before. And there were special maids in uniform caps and aprons to take hats and coats and things. A very young gentleman

friend of the family dressed like a cadet shop-walker, acted as usher. The bridesmaids reappeared as sisterlets of Pip's. There was a roomful of people. "Reception," said Pip. "Smile at 'em. That's better. This way."

Mrs Doober was saying something, then an unknown lady in an autobiographical mood was thrust aside. Then a big fat chap was kissing the bride with remarkable gusto. He disentangled himself and displayed a broad flushed face rather like Pip's, but stuffed with intercalary matter, and he was white-haired. "And so this is the lucky man, eh?

"Congratulations, my boy. "Con-gratulations. You carry off my family treasure and I congratulate you. Well, s'long as she's happy...."

He held out a capacious hand.

Edward Albert was at a loss for words. He allowed his hand to be shaken.

"You're welcome," said Pop Chaser. "And you've got the sunshine on your wedding."

"I 'ave got that," said Edward Albert.

"I didn't come to the church in person," said Pop Chaser, "but I was there in spirit."

"Your lovely flowers," said Evangeline.

"And my lovely Son, eh?"

"I must say it's a perfectly lovely wedding. Isn't it, Teddy dear?"

"I'm enjoying it all right," said Edward Albert.

"Aah!" said Mr Chaser, and held out his large hand to a vigorously dressed plump lady. "So glad you've come. Your flowers and my champagne...."

Evangeline pulled her spouse aside.

"He's doing it all splendidly. Isn't he, darling? You ought to thank him. Perhaps if you put a sentence in your speech — just at the end."

Edward Albert looked alarmed. "What d'you think? Feel I can't sit down without a word of thanks?"

"Generosity and Hospitality," whispered Evangeline,

"Perfect. You're a dear."

They were separated again.

Everything was moving very fast, after the fashion of wedding

breakfasts. The dining-room was full of flowers again and champagne bottles had been liberally distributed about the board. A great clatter of knives and forks began. Corks popped and tongues were unloosed. But Edward Albert could not eat. His lips moved. “Lays and gem’n and you my dear Evangeline. I never made a speech’n my life,” He drank off the bubbling glass beside him and felt a rush of small needles to his nose. But it seemed to give him heart and confidence. Someone refilled his glass. “Not too much,” said Pip, close at hand and alert.

Nearer and nearer crept the moment.

“Ori,” he said, and stood up.

“Lays and gem’n, me dear Vanger. Nevangeline. You Nevangeline.” Pause.

Prompter: “Never made a speech in my life.”

Rapidly, “Ne-ma-speech m’life. Who?....

“Now harsh too full. Go bless y’awl.”

Loud and sustained applause. “Siddown,” said Pip, but the bridegroom remained standing. His eye was fixed on the bride,

“Feel I carn sit down vout a word thanks. Pop. Pop Goose—”

Pip had bit him violently on the back and was standing up beside him.

“Hey” he neighed out at the top of his voice. “Magnificent speech. Magnificent. Excellent.” He forced Edward Albert down into his chair. He waved a glass of champagne dangerously, and spilt some down Edward Albert’s vest

“Ladies and Gentlemen, the bride and bridegroom. Our love to them, our good wishes. Hip, Hip, Hurrah.”

Confused applause followed. There seemed to be some hesitation. Glasses were held towards Edward Albert and Evangeline. Old Mr Chaser was addressing his son in protesting tones. “Stick to the programme, Pip,” he was saying. “Where are we? What’s come over you? You ‘aven’t got drunk, my boy, by any chance, ‘ave you?”

“Sorry, Pop! Drunk with happiness. Hey, Happiness.”

A pause. Then old Chaser rose-to his feet prepared for oratory. Some great danger — no one but Pip was quite clear what it was — had threatened the festival — and passed,

“Ladies and gen’men, Mr Tewler and my dear girl,” said old

Chaser, “it gives me great pleasure to-day, to welcome and entertain you here to-day at the nuptials, the nuptials, of one who is and will be I hope always dear to us all, my dear, bright, clever, good god-child Evangeline. I feel I am ‘anding over to-day a very loving and precious Treasure to my young friend Tewler, our young friend Tewler....”

“Did I say something wrong?” whispered Edward Albert to his faithful dragoman.

“Did you say something wrong? Lucky I haven’t a weak heart or I’d be dead this moment.” He neighed pianissimo.

“Listen to the speaker. Go easy, that champagne.”

Edward Albert turned a face of deliberate attention to the speech.

“There have been things said and insinuated. The less said about that the better. There ‘ave been misunderstandings and they ‘ave, to put it plainly, been misunderstood. For all that and all that, all’s well that ends well. I am very ‘appy to-day to see ‘ere at my table a very great and distinguished figure in our London life, no less a man than the celebrated Inspector Birkenhead.” Applause. “He stands for all that keeps us from being robbed and murdered in our beds. But.... Unhappily, unhappily—”

Pause of expectation.

“I ‘ave to report a new crime to ‘im, a robbery.”

Sensation.

“‘Is own daughter, Evangeline, is the criminal. She ‘as stolen all our ‘carts and—”

The rest of the sentence was lost in riotous applause and table-banging. Somebody broke a glass unreproved. The only word audible was the concluding word, “Torquay.” Pop Chaser was radiant with oratorical success, and Pip Chaser was slapping him on the back. Apparently the old man had either not heard Edward Albert’s little slip of the tongue or forgotten it, and Edward Albert himself began to doubt whether it had really occurred. He drained a new-filled beaded glass towards his host before Pip could prevent him....

XV. — MAN AND WIFE

"COURAGE!" said Pip, "Be — hey-good to her," waving to the outgoing train. He slid out of sight past the windows and the young couple were off for their honeymoon....

Edward Albert had slumped into his seat. "Wish I knew who frew that last slipper," he said. "All bruised I am. Someone must've delib'ratly buzzed it straight at my face. Ugh!"

He shut his eyes.

"Merried," he said, and said no more.

She seated herself diametrically opposite to him.

For a time they sat in silence.

She was perplexed by a disconcerting little incident that had just occurred. A radiant railway official had taken them in charge, led them along the platform and ushered them to their reserved compartment. "Wish you all happiness," he said, and stood waiting. Edward Albert looked in dull interrogation at his bride. "Wans a tip, I s'pose," he said, fumbled in his pocket and produced sixpence. The man stared at the coin with a hostile expression and made no movement. Matters hung in suspense.

"All right Evangeline! My affair," said Pip, and had drawn the resentful official out of the apartment and brightened his face on the platform.

"I suppose" (hiccup) "I can do what I like with my own money," said Edward Albert answering her unspoken protest.

"But he expected more. Dressed up as we are! He looked so astonished and hurt. He didn't like you, Teddy."

"Well, I didn't like 'is face either."

He seemed to think the incident concluded. But this assertion that he meant to do what he liked with his own money came as a clear definition of a disposition already very plainly apparent. He had evidently been thinking things over and he had got one reality very clear in his mind. He had the power of the purse. He had insisted on paying himself for every incidental expense for which Pip had not provided already. (Pip's bill was to come in later.) Evangeline studied his sulky face across the carriage. Edward Albert had never

been drunk before and the temporary exhilaration of Old Gooseberry was apt to be followed by an uncomfortable obstinacy.

Her immediate disposition was to leave him alone. But for some days she had been anticipating this moment and preparing a little speech for him, that would re-adjust their relations on a saner basis. And that former resolution was still sufficiently strong to prevail over her discretion.

"Teddy," she said, "Listen to me."

He did not open his eyes. "Wassit?" he asked.

"Teddy, we've got to make the best of all this. I was a fool to fall in love with you in the first place — oh, yes, I was in love with you right enough — but I fell out quicker than I fell in. Kidnapping — she said. What was her name? Blame. *Détournement des mineurs*. Are you listening? Face things as they are. You're young, Teddy, even for your years. And I'm a grown-up woman."

"Don wan argue. Thing's done s'done. Wish I knew who chucked that slipper.... Couldn't have been old Pip.... Pip wount done thin' like that."

Nothing more to be said. She sat back, disregarding him. She felt intolerably sober. She wished she had let herself go like the rest of them with Veuve Gooseberry, She tried to reassemble her ideas. She had entered upon a new sort of life in which there would be no weekly pay day. She had never thought of that before and at the time the prospect scared her unduly....

She went out into the corridor and contemplated the flying landscape. She looked over her shoulder and then resorted to the privacy of the lavatory. There she counted her available money. She had £2.11s.6d. Not much. And no more to come.

She returned to their apartment.

He had shifted. He was in the middle of the carriage now with his hands on the seat arms and he was making a queer noise between snoring and sobbing. He was partly asleep and wholly drunk. She stood for a long time regarding him.

"*Tu n'as voulu,*" Georges what is it? — *Dindon*? — *Chose*?" she whispered to herself. "He used to say that and laugh at me."

And then, "What was that other one he used to laugh at? As a girl falls so shall she lie.... Nothing to laugh at now."

Well, she was in a fix and somehow she would get out of it. When one looked at her antagonist, there was nothing really for aidable about him. She glanced at the panel of looking-glass above the back of the seat and she realised that her grey going-away dress suited her very well. She nodded to her reflection reassuringly.

She posed to herself, admiring and sympathising with, herself. She saw herself brilliant, generous^ passionate, unfortunate and still undaunted.

"I've got no right to hate him," she said. "But it's going to be hard not to. This money business. That's something new. Evadne, my dear, you never dreamt of that. Somehow that must be put straight. Think it out. Put him to bed to-night and talk sense to him to-morrow."

At Torquay Station she felt she had the situation well in hand. She got the porters tipped generously by saying, "His fee is half a crown," and she settled handsomely with the cabdriver by the same device. "Thish Torquay don't arf charge," said her spouse.

"Nothing is dear if it's good," she said, partly to him and partly to the hotel porter.

And having pacified her lord and sent him to sleep, she lay awake beside him in a reverie.

Before her acutely wakeful mind passed a pageant of beautiful women down the ages who had had to give their bodies to dwarfed kings and ugly feudal lords, rich merchants, influential statesmen, millionaires, with far less desire than had served her turn. And all the women in this procession were strangely alike; reasonably tall, bright-eyed, with shadowy black hair and a dark warmth of skin; each indeed was her own dream-self in a thousand lovely costumes, sacrificial always but still proud and self-contained. One lady on a white horse, however, wore no costume at all, Lady Godiva. Venus the prey of Vulcan also, was scanty. Anne Boleyn was rich by contrast. A splendid figure was Esther, purified, anointed, and in robes of the utmost frankness and splendour, jingling like a sistrum, going into the King, conquering by her dark loveliness, conquering by submission. Always she submitted rather than gave, holding back a precious jewel of self-abandonment that was hers, her own unexplored essence. She controlled the brute for fine and generous

ends.

Was this after all what wifehood amounted to?

For most women perhaps — yes.

Was there ever a true love between husband and wife? There was obligation in it and obligation kills love. There was an excessive proximity. You saw the creature too closely. The advantage of an *amant* was that you didn't have to live with him.

There was someone she had been trying to forget, but the word *amant* translated itself into English and the desire for love flooded her being.... True love...

Her imaginative posturing came to an end. She stared hard at the darkness for some moments and then moaned weakly and began to weep and weep silently; "Oh my dear," she whispered, "Oh my dear" She let herself weep, and it comforted her greatly.

The morning found her restored to her normal self and prepared even to enjoy Torquay. She had thought of all sorts of things that revolutionised the situation. She slipped out of bed and into a Parisian dressing-gown, went to look at the sea — lovely! — rang and demanded a *"chocolate camplit"* and explained that *"M'sieu mangera Plutarch."* Then, recalled to Old England at the maid's stare, she translated, "One chocolate and rolls and butter. My husband is still asleep." He might, she reflected, have the monopoly of payment, but nothing here could prevent her giving orders.

She dressed and as she dressed she revised that speech she had composed in the train. She would say it all later in the day, when he was washed and penitent. There was an aftermath of penitence in that champagne. It was his first experience of getting drunk, and she knew there was a state called having a head and a mouth, when fallen humanity craves for a cool hand on its brow. She wished she knew more about pick-me-ups.

She would go down and find out in the bar.

All that worked out admirably. The barman was understanding and charming. She tried a cocktail he said he had invented, It cleared and invigorated the spirit. She did a very unusual thing for her. She had another.

In the afternoon she was able to deliver her little speech from under a sunshade that she held over her husband's head in the hotel

gardens, and win his depressed but unresisting agreement.

Should she say a word about the money? Not a word until they went back to London and she began housekeeping.

This they did precipitately when Edward Albert received the first week's bill.

It was rather a big bill, but then they were having their honeymoon. To him it seemed unspeakably vast. By all his available means it was overwhelmingly vast. He examined it incredulously.

"Why do they call it the King's Suite?"

"They flatter themselves they are doing us well."

"Doing us well!" His face was white and damp -with perspiration. He was too appalled to shout. "Doing us!" he whispered.

"Wot's this — this porter's account? That's that big busybody downstairs."

"He paid for a few things I bought in the shops. It's how they do in hotels." She glanced at the bill. "That's all quite correct," she said.

"Hairdresser? Manicure?"

"Downstairs in the hotel."

"Gordormighty!" said Edward Albert, using Nuts MacBryde's once terrifying expletive without a qualm.

He reflected bitterly. "I seen advertisements in the newspapers about chaps who won't be responsible for their wives1 debts."

She offered no comment.

They returned to London third class and for the most pan in silence.

For some days the tension in Torrington Square was grim. No money was issued for housekeeping. Edward Albert went out to get meals at convenient public houses. But Evangeline ate and there were even fresh flowers. Returning from one of those outside repasts, he discovered his home very largely occupied by his father-in-law. The Inspector was talking sternly to his daughter as Edward Albert came in, and, after making a brief gesture that commanded his son-in-law to sit down and wait his turn, he continued his discourse.

"You get more like your mother every day — in looks and behaviour. But so far as I can I will stand between you and the sort of disgrace she brought upon herself. Why should you go on like this now? I've got to do what I can for you and see you're not put upon.

But this can't go on. No.... And now, young man, what's all this about the household accounts and not letting your wife have a penny?"

"S'my money," said Edward Albert.

"Not if you owe it, young fellow my lad; not if you're under an obligation. No. There's such a thing as a reg'lar housekeeping allowance and she's got to have it. To cover breakages and reasonable wear and tear as well as the tradesmen's bills."

"*I* can pay those," said Edward Albert.

"You'd better settle the amount, whoever hands it out. And if she handles it then there won't be any need for argument. And there's such a thing as a fair dress allowance, per month or quarter, and no decent husband refuses it. And there's her private petty cash for incidental things. You want to be a decent husband, Tewler, so far as it's in you, and all that much, no gentleman can refuse. There ought to have been a proper marriage settlement before you rushed her into all this. Better late than never. The rest of your money is your own money to do exactly what you like with. So now how do we figure it out?"

"Aren't I to have a voice—"

"No," said the Inspector, calmly but dreadfully.

Something remotely like a gleam of humour appeared in the big man's manner and even something in the nature of sympathy. "I've got no .reason," he said, "to befriend you, young fellow, and you aren't the sort of person anyone would naturally take a fancy to, but I do know something of this daughter of mine — and her mother — and the sooner you fix up this particular business, exactly and for your own protection, mind you, for your own protection, the more you'll want to thank me later on. I suppose you're ordering things from the tradespeople?" he said to Evangeline.

"Naturally," said Evangeline.

"There you are!" said the Inspector.

Edward Albert could have eaten at home and saved all that much money.

So they figured it out and the Inspector wrote it all down in a clear round hand. "You's better initial it," he said, and waited.

Edward Albert initialled it.

The Inspector rose over him and patted his shoulder with a powerful hand. “You’ll both thank me for this” he said. He refused all refreshment and departed humming,

Edward Albert closed the door on him and returned to his domestic life. He sat down violently and stuck his hands in his pockets.

“That’s put the lid on. I might just as well be back in the boarding-house. My home. Gaw!”

Evangeline was disposed to be quite kind and generous about it all.

“I didn’t ask Father to come this time,” she said. “He just thought about it and came. I didn’t ask him to interfere.”

“Gaw,” said Edward Albert ambiguously.

“It’s just your inexperience, Teddy. Every decent husband has to do the same sort of thing.... It’s the way of things. My dear, you murst face reality. Why can’t we pull ourselves together and make the best of it? Even now.”

XVI. — RIFTED LUTE

BUT it has to be admitted that neither she nor Teddy made whatever best of it was possible. Deep in his mind was an uncontrollable resentment against her; deep in hers, something bitterer, an uncontrollable resentment against herself. Her path in life was paved with good resolutions.

They cohabited, as the refined put it. It was like their meals together, a primary function ill done. There were phases of reconciliation; there were even days of companionship. They went to a few cinemas and music halls. They Attempted friendly jokes, but his sense of humour irritated her. There would be reasonless quarrels arising out of nothing at all, and she made them more often than he did. They had few visitors. Pip came in once or twice and Millie Chaser was a steadfast friend. One or two old school-fellows came to tea by invitation. In London there is no calling. Only the clergy call if you appear at church with some regularity or communicate. Evangeline was house-proud and proud to be among her own furniture. She would have liked more people. She had Mrs Doober and Gawpy to tea two or three times, and Mr Chaser brought round a stuffed owl he had bought in a moment of abstraction in a Strand auction room and decided was the very thing for the hall. Evangeline's place of business sent them a wedding present of an ormolu clock. But none of her former colleagues ever appeared. There was some barrier there.

The weeks lengthened into months. Evangeline took to dressing-gowns and tea-gowns, kept indoors by day and went for walks round the squares after dark. They got to an agreement that the child should be born in a nursing home. Edward Albert was torn between the cost of the nursing home and a vision of innumerable polluted napkins hung out to dry conjured up by Evangeline and Millie. Towards, the end Evangeline became more erratic and fanciful and difficult to please. There was a streak of anger in her desire. And then a day came when she said, "No more of this," and kept her word. She locked her door upon him. "It's her condition," he said. "Be all right when the kid's born."

But some flash of prophetic intuition whispered the incredible suggestion that that door was locked on him for good and all.

Long before that climax he was detesting his sexual servitude almost as much as he had detested the mitigated reliefs of his pre-marital days. He would have given money, real money, to have been able to refuse her capricious summons, her formalised lapse into amorousness, but he never could. But if for example he could say: "Thanks, but I don't seem to fancy it. You see — I got something a bit better."

That would be a slap in the face for her, anyhow. He indulged in reveries of unfaithfulness. Pick up a girl somewhere. Pick up a nice girl and lead a double life! He'd got all the time he needed to do that sort of thing now. You had to be careful, though. You had to look out for the gold-diggers. In reveries he could be unfaithful on a magnificent scale, but when it came to practical realisation, he found a thorny zareba between himself and external womankind. He was still haunted by the hygienic nightmares of Dr Scaber, and also you couldn't make much of a score against Evangeline out of an affair with a street-walker. He would wander about for hours, with a vague dream of accosting some frail but credulous beauty. He would follow women about the streets, and sometimes they were evidently aware of it and amused. They would glance at him just sufficiently to keep him in tow. Several times he carried adventure to the point of standing beside one of them about one o'clock and saying, "How about a spot of lunch, eh?" Twice the invitation was" accepted, but in each case the lady had an urgent engagement in the afternoon, which in its way was as much a relief as a disappointment, for he didn't know in the least where to take her Tor her seduction. A barmaid who would smile at him drew him like a magnet. Every barmaid has a clientele of smile-purchasers and undertone gossips, whether she wants it or not. For the name of the vague, sexually maundering Tewler is Legion.

There was a coming and going of servants in the little home. At Doober's Edward Albert had regarded the incessantly changing slaveys with a profound terror mixed with an increasing desire. He had been wont to dream of his first glimpse of that sort of indecorum. Now, as master of the house, he could not fail to regard the various

efforts of Evangeline to secure a satisfactory domestic as putting accessible females within reach of him. He had his eye on them and they felt his eye on them.

Evangeline went to a Servants' Registry for her servants, and Servants. Registries do not make their money by bringing together domestic treasures and irreproachable employers.

One transaction of that sort and their fees are paid and there's nothing doing any more with either client. On the other hand, an unsatisfactory servant or a tiresome mistress is back in the office in a month or so, and the turnover is resumed. Evangeline's Registry had a small regiment of plausible but ultimately unsatisfying domestics and a number of amiable, prosperous-looking but temperamental mistresses, upon its books, and it couldn't have carried on without them. Trouble arose because two girls objected rather markedly to having "that Mr Tewler" hanging about the house all day,

"You didn't know what he might be up to. He'd follow you into a bedroom or anything." Others didn't like being single-handed with a mistress who never came into the kitchen for a friendly word, one objected to Mrs Tewler wanting chocolate or cocoa in bed, and so forth. And one woman refused to wear a cap and apron, and one had a sniff that Evangeline simply could not stand. This state of domestic instability seemed likely to become chronic until a friend of Millie Chaser's produced the one possible person in a certain Mrs Butter.

There were explanations to be made about this Mrs Butter. She wasn't to be called by her Christian name; she was to be Mrs Butter, and her title was to be housekeeper-general. These points conceded she was all complaisance.

"You see," said Millie Chaser, "she just wants to be alone. She's had a tragic time. She wants work, she says, to occupy her mind, and she does not want to have to talk to people. She has to make a living. She was an orphan or something and lived with an aunt who wanted her out of the way because she had daughters of her own. So when a fellow turned up and wanted to many her, she married him, and he turned out the most frightful blackguard. Frightful, my dear, Took her bit of property, every penny, drank, beat her. Actually beat her. Kicked her and beat her when she was going to have a child. She was taken to hospital. The poor little baby died in a month, he had injured

it in some way, and she went out of her mind about it and tried to kill herself. When she began to recover, she found this husband of hers was in jail. He wasn't her husband; he was a bigamist. He'd just married her to get hold of her poor little bit of money. But that disposed of him. She's a sort of stunned woman. Very nice, very gentle."

"And what's her real name?"

"Still Butter. That was her maiden name and that's why she's Mrs and not Miss."

Mrs Butter appeared in due course. She was young, younger than Evangeline, very plainly dressed in brown, pale, brown-haired, broad-faced and quietly good-looking, She surveyed the house and discussed her duties with her mistress.

Evangeline had been warned not to be too searching in her questions and so she talked about herself. "You see — there's a baby coming."

Mrs Butter winced but remained calm. "When?" she asked. Evangeline estimated.

"It will be well for you to have a married woman about,"

"It's what I've wanted. It's what I want dreadfully. How good of you, Mrs Butter, to see that. Just now I'm splendid, but sometimes — oh, I'm afraid."

"Why we go through with it...." said Mrs Butter, and left her sentence incomplete.

"That's what I ask myself."

"If there was any pleasure to be found in it," said Mrs Butter....

"On Sundays if you want to go to church—"

"I don't go to church," said Mrs Butter, and added, "It's a mockery."

"We don't go so very much," said Evangeline.

"You'd like me to move in — when? I'm quite free."

Edward Albert discovered Mrs Butter after some days. She looked young and amenable and she regarded him with calm respect. But he had learnt that she was a woman and had begun. He watched her discreetly. He spent a week and a half trying to catch her eye. The atmosphere of the flat improved; things were put in their places; the rooms seemed brighter. Then Mrs Butter, surveying her handiwork

in the drawing-room, remarked to Evangeline, “It would look better with a cat.”

They discussed pet animals. “They make things homey,11 Mrs Butter thought. Dogs she did not like, they fawned upon you and tried to lick your face, but cats, nice cats, had dignity. They knew their place. “But they have a lot of kittens,” said Evangeline. “Not the cat *I* know,” said Mrs Butter. And presently a mitigated young Tom, glossy black with yellow eyes, reposed upon the Tewler hearthrug and blinked at Mrs Butter putting the buttered tea-cake on the brass trivet, which was another of her helpful suggestions.

One afternoon a little later she was kneeling in the same place, tickling the cat’s throat and fighting his claws. Her crouching figure looked very pleasantly feminine. Evangeline was in her own room lying down. Suddenly Mrs Butter found Edward Albert pressing himself against her. “Pussy, pussy,” he said.

She could feel his body trembling. He slid a caressing hand down her shoulder and the line of her hips. He gave her a pat and the beginning of a pinch.

She shook herself away from him and rose to her feet. She faced him, regarding him steadily. She did not appear to be in the least excited or angry.

She spoke calmly and almost as if she had had her little speech prepared for some days.

“I don’t want to seem wanting in respect, Mr Tewler, but if you do anything of that sort again I’ll smack you face hard and-march right out of this house. I’ve had enough jiggery-pokery from one man to last me a lifetime. I don’t want to be a bit disagreeable. I know what men are, they don’t seem able to help it, but the less I have to do with them the better. You keep your place and I’ll keep mine and we’ll get along nicely. I don’t want to make no upset here. I like the missus somehow and I’m sorry for her. Else I wouldn’t stay. She’s awake. That’s her little table bell.”

She stepped round him as one steps round something unpleasant on the carpet.

“Coming,” she cried to Evangeline.

Edward Albert attempted an ironical whistle, but Mrs Butter held her position, intacta. There was no mistaking her sincerity. He

decided henceforth to treat her with cold disdain — and be damned to her!

He wished he knew some chaps, some really fast chaps, who would give him just the hints he needed for a real man's life in London. He had heard of clubs but he did not know anyone who could introduce him to one. There you get together with fellows in the know....

That dream common to your Homo Tewler Anglicanus and Americanus of getting together with fellows in the know, of conniving together in clubs, was soon to spin fraternally in rotaries about the world, A great brotherly idea.

XVII. — HENRY TEWLER BEGINS

EVANGELINE had a bad time in the nursing home. Bitter pangs rushed upon her, filled with violent futile effort, and receded. “Try now.” “Bear down,” and so on. But at last with a feeble cackle, a new Tewler was born into the world, and presented in due course wiped and washed to his exhausted mother.

Evangeline regarded her offspring with a hostile eye, over the corner of the sheet. She made no movement to touch it. “I knew it would look like Aim,” she said. “I knew.”

The eye closed.

The nurse looked at her colleague. Both were slightly shocked.

“He’ll took prettier to-morrow,” said the nurse, Evangeline turned her head over to clear her mouth and spoke deliberately with her eyes shut. “I don’t care.... I don’t care how it looks,” she said. “Take the thing away. I’m glad — glad to be rid of it.”

Such was the welcome of Henry Tewler to the mystery of conscious existence.

XVIII. — TEWLER DEFIED

EVANGELINE came back from the maternity hospital in the charge of a protective, hygienic nurse with a hard, bright, pink-cheeked face and a naturally hostile and altogether too understanding eye, who seemed to enjoy saying: "You have to keep out of here, Mr Tewler. You can't come near her for a bit. You can say 'Good deavning' from the door if you like. But we must take care of her still. She's not out of her trouble yet."

A month of enforced chastity passed and was followed by a second month. Master Henry Tewler ceased to look like a flayed monkey in the course of twenty-four hours and began to be attractive. He ceased to squint and produced real brown hair of very great fineness. He lost any personal resemblances and passed into that phase when babies can be freely exchanged and no one the wiser. He fattened under a carefully regimented bottle-feeding, for Evangeline was neither willing nor able to undertake that task. He gurgled and waved his arms about and won a smile from his mother and so became the household darling.

"He's getting artful," said the proud father. "Think he's like me, nurse?"

"There's something about the eyes," the nurse admitted.

The nurse went at the end of the second month, and Mrs Butter, who more than anyone else was enslaved by Master Henry, insisted on becoming his nurse and protector. "It might be my own little lost mite come back to me," she said. A new and slatternly "general" came in by the day to take over the domestic work.

Evangeline was up and about again now and cooking very competently. She was taking in the French costumes she had let out, and bringing them up to date with the help of Mode. She went for a walk round the squares, she went for a drive round Hyde Park in a cab, she went with Edward Albert to a cinema. And still there came no evening summons to Edward Albert. What did it mean?

He brought matters to a crisis. "You're looking fine," he said.

"I'm getting better."

"You're looking just right. I'd like to kiss you...."

She raised her eyebrows.

He came to the point.

"Ain't it about time, Evadne; well — we did something?"

She had been rehearsing her part in this encounter for some time. But this opening line didn't fit.

"We aren't going to do something any more," she said.

"But you're my wife. You got to do your juty by me."

She shook her head.

"But you got to."

"All that's been changed," she said. "My body belongs to me and I do what I like with it. And as far as all that goes, I've done with you for ever, little man. For ever and ever and ever."

"You can't do that."

"Nous verrons."

"But — You're mad. You're flying in the face of the laws of Gord and man. You can't mean it. No. And what are you going to do? Go without — You can't stand that any more than I can. Less. Don't talk rubbish. Why, you're obliged to."

"Nothing like trying," she said.

"But you're obliged every way. It's against the law. I could sue you. There's such a thing as Restitution of Connubial Rights. I've seen it in *Lloyd's News*. Only the other day...."

"And what can that do for you, Mr Tewler? Aren't you having your connubial rights now? Don't I keep house for you, cook for you, cohabit as they say? But my body is my own, I tell you. My body is my own. Do you think the law can send a couple of policemen in here, to assist you in your — operations — overwhelm me and see that everything goes off satisfactorily? Do you imagine that?"

The word "policeman" had given him an Idea. "I'll — I'll write to your father. He won't stand for this?"

"It'll be a lovely letter, Teddy," she mocked. "Will you show it to me?"

"You don't mean all this," he said. "This is one of your silly moods. I've 'ad to wait. I suppose I'll 'ave to wait a bit more. But I've got to know you pretty well by now, my lady. You'll come round. Don't keep me too long. I warn you I may be unfaithful to

you.”

Her face betrayed the obvious repartee she checked unspoken. “Two — ,” she began, and stopped short.

He stood staring at her, struck by a new and still more detestable thought.

“Your body’s your own, you say,” he repeated slowly.

“You think you can do what you like with it. What dja mean by that? You tell me exactly what foolishness you got in your mind. You’ve got something behind this. Somebody....”

His face became as ugly as his thought.

She shrugged her shoulders and said not a word.

“I shall know. I shall find out. I’ll have you watched. .... If you think you can get away with that....”

She smiled radiantly, just to infuriate him. But she was aquiver with resolution.

“It’s these damned suffragettes. Them and their blasted Vote. Lot of screaming hags. New Woman and all that. Putting these ideers about against all Religion and Decency.... Damn ideers! Damn all ideers! Well, now I know where we are,”

“Now I know where I am. Eclairs — what is it? — cissement. My fault more than yours, but we’ve got to go through with it now.”

“I’ll see you go through with it,” said Edward Albert as grimly as he could. “I’ll get you. Mark my words. I’ll kick you out of here, my lady, into the gutter.”

“Kick, Mr Jusqu’au bootist. Kick.”

They became aware of Mrs Butter standing in the room and waiting to speak. They were suddenly both ashamed of themselves. “I’m going to bath Baby, Mam,” she said.

“He’s perfectly lovely to-night. He’s making a new noise with his little hand to his mouth. Just lovely.”

He followed Mrs Butter. Evangeline was disposed to follow and then decided to stare out of the window instead.

Now this was a very cardinal moment in the development of Homo Tewler Anglicanus. In this one specimen the type has unfolded, slowly but surely, and here we have it now with all its distinctive qualities displayed. In spite of serious initial disadvantages, Edward Albert had made good. We have traced his

education in that peculiar blend of sexual modesty and enterprise that has made the Englishman the world's lover; we have watched the natural awakening of his imperialism, have seen him become a cricket fan and a broad and intermittent but sincere Churchman; we have pursued his growing craving to become clubable and to get together with fellows in the know; and now here we have dawning that realisation of the extreme evil of "ideers" which more than anything else has made our England what it is to-day.

He became aware of "ideers" all about him, "ideers" of every sort, like a storm of hornets; *ologies* and *isms* beyond counting. You daren't open a book or magazine now on account of them. Not that he did open books if he could help it, but Evangeline had taken to reading the queerest stuff, and he sometimes saw the titles or the List of Contents. New Women indeed! All his life henceforth, he realised, must be a fight against this malignant devastation of his complacency. They came in a multitude of forms and under a great variety of names, Feminism, Socialism (confiscate your mortgages and have wives in common and then where would you be?), Marxism, Communism (the same only worse), Collectivism, Pacificism, Internationalism, Scepticism, Atheism, Darwinism, Nationalisation, Vegetarianism, Trade Unionism, Biology, Sociology, Ethnology, Archaeology, Einstein, Bernard Shaw, Birth Control, Modernism, all that stuff; stuff you never heard of before, got up mostly by International Jews and long-haired highbrows of the utmost perversity, suggesting this, suggesting that, destroying your beliefs, making the working classes discontented, threatening your financial security, seducing women from the path of virtue and submission. Once he was aware of it, this buzzing of minds never seemed to cease. A hornet's nest of Free Thinking and liberal thought called aloud for extirpation.

"Christian dost thou hear them
On the Holy Ground,
How the hosts of Midian
Buzz and buzz around?
Christian up and smite them—"

He snorted at them; he flapped his hate at them. The best way of dealing with any of them was to shout the word

“Bawls” at them in a loud, crushing, masterful voice. If you got together with other fellows of the same mind and shouted “Bawls” in unison, it could be extremely reassuring. It seemed to drown the buzzing altogether. The battle of the Bawling and the Buzzing was surely over....

Then it began again.

XIX. — EXIT EVANGELINE

MATTERS hung in suspense for nearly a fortnight more after this very definitive quarrel. Plainly Mr and Mrs Tewler had come to a breaking-point, but except For a very definite wish to hurt each other, neither of them had very lucid ideas for the next phase in this antagonism. Edward Albert had that habit of indecision which the normal English training develops, and still he clung to some idea of a relapse on her part. She, for her part, had already made an indirect inquiry about her old business position and knew that she would be taken back there if she wanted it. She had been missed all the time. But that would reopen a relationship she had thought closed for ever. It wounded her pride to be dependent, on her husband any longer. She could go back to the old life and hold out, Edward Albert was not the only male upon the earth. Indeed no.

At the back of her mind she realised that it was she who had brought this unhappiness upon him, quite as much as upon herself. She hated him not only for his own sake but because it was her supreme blunder. It was hard to sustain her personal pride in the night against the gnawing realisation that she had snatched, that she had been a scheming fool. It was difficult to shift all that to his account. She would feel better about him if she could get square with him and then forget about him — forget about him altogether. But how was that to be done now? She had resisted any natural weakening towards the child, but it made a poor story for her if she did not do her duty by it. She had to feel there would be someone to care for it, and so she turned her thoughts and hopes towards Mrs Butter.

Matters were brought to a sudden crisis by an outbreak on the part of Edward Albert. In the dead of night the whole household was awakened by his beating and kicking at his wife's locked door. "Let me in, you bitch," he was shouting.

Mrs Butter appeared in a red flannel dressing-gown. "Go back to your bed, Mr Tewler. You're waking the child."

"Get out," said Mr. Tewler; "I want my rights."

"That's as may be," said Mrs Butter. "But this isn't the time to

demand them. One o'clock in the morning! And you're waking the child."

She overwhelmed him by her invincible sanity.

"Well, hasn't a man rights?" he demanded.

"At a proper time," said Mrs Butter, and stood expectant.

"Oh, what the Hell is a man 10 do?" he cried. "What the Hell is a man to do?"

He was sobbing.

"You go back to bed," said Mrs Butter, almost kindly.

In the morning nothing was said at breakfast and Mr Tewler went out slamming the door behind him. Evangeline was busy for a time in her own room and then came into the....

[Part of text missing]

"I don't know what you mean."

"Well, passion."

"There may be feelings I don't know."

"There are," said Evangeline. "There are."

"Like men have?"

"Listen, Mrs Butter. There's another man.... I want him in my arms and in my body. That shocks you? I meant it to. But living with your master shocks me. It's prostitution. I've done with all this. I'm resolved to go. I shall go, anyhow. One thing has kept me. That. But now, if you will promise me to stay on with that poor little wretch.... I don't know what he will do, but if he turns you out, I'll find some place for you. You understand what I mean? I'll give it to you...."

"You're doing wrong," said Mrs Butter, but there was no severity now in her condemnation.

"There is only one rule for those who are in love, Mrs Butter. Do it now.... I'm going to. My lord and master has gone,off in the sulks. I doubt if we shall see him back before one. I'm packing now. I've started. Are you going to help me?"

"And when he comes back, what am I to tell him?"

"Jurst anything you like, my dear. Anything you like. Will you help me? There's those two new valises upstairs I had for Torquay. And there's the older bag with the French labels."

Mrs Butter made no further protest. She was indeed suddenly helpful. She thought of a hindering complication.

“There’s Janet.”

“Tell her I’ve been called away suddenly.”

Mrs Butter brought the bags to the bedroom. Evangeline had already been folding her clothes. The packing went swiftly. When Henry Tewler demanded Mrs Butter’s presence, Janet in a state of helpful admiration came to assist her mistress. “Why! you’re going for quite a long visit,” she said. “You’re taking almost everything.”

“I may be away for months,” said Evangeline. “You never know.”

“You don’t, do you,” said Janet, and made no further comment.

“There’s the laundry,” she said presently.

“That can be sent after me. I’ll arrange all that.”

“Then you’re not going abroad or anything?”

“I’m not going abroad. So far as I know.”

“You don’t know exactly?”

“I don’t know exactly. Yet. It’s a very sudden call,”

The packing went on busily in a state of suppressed comment. Evangeline forgot nothing.

She gave Mrs Philip Chaser’s address to Mrs Butter and went to say good-bye to her son. He was very contentedly asleep. She knelt by the cot and betrayed very little emotion.

“*Adieu*,” she said. “Child of *La Mère Inconnue*.” She reflected profoundly. “Some day we may meet again. Who knows? Like ships that pass in the night.”

Janet went out to call a taxi.

Evangeline faced Mrs Butter for the last time. “After all,” she said, “what I am doing is quite the best that can happen to him.”

“Maybe that is true.”

“You will stick to your word?”

“I understand all I’ve undertook.”

Janet stood waiting with the hat box in her hand. All the rest of the luggage had gone down to the taxi.

There was a moment of hesitation. Evangeline would have liked to exchange kisses with Mrs Butter, but there was something in Mrs Butter’s bearing that dissuaded her.

“Anything, any message, I mean, or if you want anything, will reach me through that address. I shan’t be there, but they will send it on,”

“I quite understand,” said Mrs Butter.

There was nothing more to be said.

When Edward Albert came home at one o’clock he found Janet in a state of pleasant excitement awaiting him in the hall. “She’s gone, Sir,” she said. “Packed up everything she’s got and gone. Gone off, Sir.”

“Who’s gone?” asked Edward Albert, though he knew the answer.

“Mrs Tewler, Sir. She packed up everything she had and she’s gone off in a taxi-cab,”

“Where?” he asked, still outwardly calm.

“I tried to listen to the address she gave, but she saw that and she told the cabman just to drive into Gower Street first....” The girl’s face was bright with detective enthusiasm. The common human impulse to condemn and mob and pelt and pursue was all awake in her.

“Did you take the number of the taxi?”

“I didn’t think of that until it was too late, Sir.”

Mr Tewler sought Mrs Butter. “Why did you let that woman go?” he demanded.

“You mean your wife, Sir. I’m not her keeper, Sir.”

“Well, she’s gone. She shall never darken these doors again. Did she say where she’d gone?”

“She left this address. But she said she won’t be there. It’s just for sending on....”

Mr Tewler went to his wife’s room and regarded the ransacked wardrobe, the empty toilet table and the chest of drawers with all the drawers pulled out, in profound silence. Tissue paper was scattered on the floor. He thought she might have left a letter for him, but there was no letter. There ought to have been a letter. Still silent, he went to look at his son. Then he remarked: “Better ‘ave somethin’ to eat, I suppose.” He was treating the inevitable as though it were the unexpected. After lunch he sat in a sort of coma in the drawing-room for a long time. Tea brightened him. “Got to do something about it,” he said. “What’ve I got to do about it? It’ll be a divorce right enough.... On the streets.”

He had contemplated rows, accusations, recriminations, repentances, adulteries discovered, flights, pursuits, divorces, but he

had not contemplated Evangeline vanishing quietly into nothingness. He did not want to betray his extreme bewilderment,

He decided to go round to the Chasers and cast his perplexities on Pip.

XX. — DIVORCE

MR PHILIP CHASER elicited Edward Albert's ideas about the business in hand. He drew them out one by one, offering very little comment. He had just become a member of the Junior Conservative Club in Whitehall Place, and thither with a certain worldly pride he had conducted Edward Albert. It seemed to both of them a far more suitable place for discussing the grave problem before them than Millie Chaser's home. They sat in a quiet corner of the huge smoking-room and Mr Philip asked his questions like a solicitor preparing a case.

Finally he summed up. He neighed with unusual force and duration so that distant plotters in the smoking-room suspended their machinations and looked round apprehensively. "All this," he said, "is going to cost you a lot of money. You think you are going to get damages, heavy damages, you say, but who is going to pay you damages and — hey — what are they going to pay damages for? All she's done is to pack up and go. That's no grounds for a divorce. You might get a legal separation, and so far as I know, that's no comfort to anybody. I've never — hey — in the course of my life met a separated man or a separated woman. I absolutely don't know, ab-so-lutely, where they go and what they do with themselves and each other. Yes, you think you can put detectives on to her to watch her and catch her out. As you don't know where she's gone.... Oh, I'm not going to tell you. I — hey — promised not to. You'll have to find out where she is and where she goes, and you'll have to have her caught in — what's the word? *flagrante delicto*. Tedious and annoying. And meanwhile the law insists that you must lead a blameless life, absolutely blameless. You're not rich enough to go abroad and live in a state of — hey — inaccessible sin, and there's an excellent functionary called the King's Proctor who has a small fund available for — hey — watching you to see you are blameless. For the better part of a year, Mr Teddy. In the interests of Justice, Religion and order, I understand. She can kick up her heels as much she likes, but you will just have to listen to your Private Enquiry Agent's reports. You'll find them — infuriating — absolutely

infuriating.... You aren't going to stand that! No? And what are you going to do about it?"

He laid a restraining hand upon Edward Albert's arm

"Listen," he said. "The only person who can make all this business reasonably cheap and easy is your wife. Suppose she has another man, if you go on dreaming of getting those damages out of him she'll fight like the devil to see he doesn't pay them. That's only natural. Particularly as I suspect he's a married man. But if she goes to some little country pub somewhere and sends you a confession and the bill, and tells you she hasn't the remotest intention of giving you the man's real name, there's your evidence. Your Private Enquiry Agent will see to the evidence. And there you are."

"But there's eight or ten months I got to wait?"

"Ask the law. Ask the church. Ask the Divorce Law Association. Write to your Member of Parliament about it. The — hey — Apostle Paul said somewhere that it's better to marry than to burn, but this way you can marry and burn at the same time. Not my fault, Teddy. I'm not responsible for fast — hey — arrangements."

"You'd have arranged it better."

"Hey — I can't arrange everything. It's a pity."

"Gaw," said Edward Albert. "I been a fool. I frown away my life."

"I wouldn't even say that. Suppose — hey — suppose it's the world we live in, is the fool and not us, eh? Suppose it throws away our lives for us — however we dodge or however we behave?"

"I don't understand that."

"Come to think of it — hey — I don't understand it myself Think it all over, Teddy. Millie and I will have a little heart-to-heart talk with the other side. Eh?"

Edward Albert nodded gloomily. "And I got to hold out for — from first to last for a year. While she — I can't do it, Pip."

"Well, don't get caught. Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth,"

"I shall go mad one day and shoot her."

"You won't even get to buying a pistol."

"I'll kill myself,"

"You'll live — for donkeys years."

“Well, what do you advise?”

“The-e-e—” He prolonged the word into a neigh— “prostitute is the safety-valve of the respectable Christian life. That is all I can tell you. Be anonymous, be dark and discreet. The King’s Proctor will probably send his man to ask your wife to tell her anything she knows about you. If you keep on good terms with her—”

“Damn her!”

“Exactly. If you keep on good terms with her, damn her, she will send him empty away. And there you are!”

“And she has the laugh of me!”

“She’s much more likely to get sentimental about it, after it’s all over and she’s got what she wants, whatever it is she wants. Don’t — hey — rankle, Teddy. These uncontested divorces, they’re like something done in an office. They’re about as interesting as the births, marriages and deaths in a country newspaper. There’s nothing spicy to get into the papers. It’s when the evidence of misconduct warms up, what the maid saw through the keyhole and all that, or there’s a fighting cross-examination, that there’s a fuss. I — hey — don’t think either of you will have to go into court. I don’t think it’s necessary, but I may be wrong there. The case won’t last ten minutes....”

That omniscient young undertaker was right. The King’s Proctor gave no sign. The decree nisi was made absolute in due course. But by that time Edward Albert was already embarked upon a new and happier way of life.

XXI. — MRS BUTTER TAKES PITY

ONE night Mrs Butter woke up to find the master in her room and his arms about her. “I carn’t sleep,” he said. “I carn’t sleep. I carn’t go on.”

She sat up sleepily. Her eyes were sticky with drowsiness and she opened them with an effort. Then she started and stared at his dim figure clinging to her, but she said not a word. There was a light in the passage but none in the room. Through her thin nightgown, he could feel her warm soft body and the delicate curves of her bosom. She exhaled a sweet warmth. She put her hand on his shoulder.

“I lie there and I keep thinking of you. I’ll kill myself.”

He was blubbering.

“I can’t endure life. I love you.”

She put her face close to his ear. “What do you want?” she breathed.

“I can’t stand it. You got to let me. You let me and I’ll marry you. I swear I’ll marry you the very moment I get free. Oh Mrs Butter. Mary!”

“But suppose we were to have a child.”

“Oh gaw!” he exclaimed, “Haven’t I learnt my lesson?”

“You’re sure this time?”

“Mary!”

“No. Don’t call me Mary yet. I want to be sure. What do you do?”

He spluttered and explained. She said hardly a word but she was attentive and there was no sort of response in her body to his embraces. This did not deter him in the least. She threw back the bedclothes.

“I suppose it had to come to this,” she said, and still held him back from her.

“Promise me one thing,” she said.

“Anything. Oh my dear! Oh my dear!”

“Yes; but this. You will let that boy be mine — really mine. You won’t turn against him because of her. You might, you know. You’ll never raise your hand against him. You’ll be good to him — always? Promise.”

“And don’t you care a little bit for me?”

“You can’t help yourself, Mr Tewler. I’m sorry for you. You’re such a young fellow. I feel like a mother to both of you.”

“And you call me Mr Tewler!”

“Yes. And you’ll call me Mrs Butter until the day we’re married. If we start using Christian names, servants will notice, people will talk; that girl Janet....”

So it was that Mrs Butter entrusted her body to Edward Albert....

“Oh good!” said the happy convertite. “Now I feel square with life again. Did you like that?”

“I don’t like anything of the sort. But I suppose a man has to do that sort of thing. It’s nature’s way. And now you go off to your bed, Mr Tewler, and have a good sleep, and don’t you say a word about this to me to-morrow; not a word, I see no sense in talking over such things. I hoped I’d done with it for good. And remember when Janet’s here, walls have ears, I’ve got to be careful. I’d get rid of her if I dared, but that might set her suspecting. Good night, Mr Tewler:”

“Just a kiss,” said her grateful lover.

She turned her cheek to him.

And when Edward Albert was safely in his room, Mrs Butter went to Master Henry Tewler and took him in her arms and hugged him and kissed him and sat still, and presently wept.

“What else was there to do, you poor little mite?” she whispered. “It had to be.”

XXII. — MORNINGSIDE PROSPECT

EDWARD ALBERT married Mrs Butter a month after the decree was made absolute. They were married in a Registry Office and Pip and Millie were witnesses. She would not be married in church. “That wouldn’t be right,” she said. “Not for us two. I’ve been married in church before thank you.”

And with this the frank record of our sample’s sex life comes to an end. Edward Albert Tewler had grown up by this time and arrived at man’s estate, and henceforth there was no more essential change for him in these matters. Many little things happened, they continue to happen to this day, in his sexual reactions, but they marked nothing novel in the rhythms of his being. His fundamental curiosities were allayed, and if he peeped now he peeped for satisfaction and not for knowledge. He had his flirtatious and knowing moments, he would smirk at anything attractively feminine, but henceforth his passions were on the whole satisfactorily assuaged. He allowed himself to forget many phases in his development that we have been able to recall. He hated the memory of Evangeline, but with a diminishing bitterness. She was a bad woman and he had got rid of her. His bitterer humiliations passed out of his memory except now and then in a dream. He reshaped his private autobiography until it seemed almost that Evangeline had divorced him. He had seen through her and got rid of her because he had fallen in love with a better woman.

By imperceptible degrees the simpler, stronger mind of the new Mrs Tewler came to dominate the general form of his life. It was she who broached the idea of going right out of London to live in the country. It was all very well, she said, to live in London if you were in society or business or anything like that, but why should they? They could live in some pleasant place, near the sea for instance, near some town but not in it, at half the cost. If they got a place near a golf links he could learn to play golf. There wasn’t much sense in hitting about an expensive little ball from place to place until you lost it, and then beginning all over again day after day, but men seemed to find something in it and some women even went so far in

humouring them as to play the game with them, but she couldn't imagine herself going as far as that. But it helped a man to get to know people and it took him out of himself, and Mrs Tewler No. 2 was very clear on the necessity of taking Edward Albert out of himself.

He might get a nice little car and learn to drive it. "Why not? Then he ought to look into his affairs more than he had been doing. He would be able to restore his overstrained resources by saving and finding suitable mortgages. He might get to friendly terms with his bank manager and find local opportunities. If they were to get near a big seaside town they would be able to run in and see cinemas and things, and there would be schools presently for Henry. And doctors.

All these possibilities floated into his mind from the second Mrs Tewler's occasional remarks, and most of them he made his own, and expanded and reproduced for her always respectful approval. They sought a home according to her specifications and they found one near the golf links at Casing, twelve miles and a half from the borough boundary of Brighthampton on Sea. It stood in a row of kindred little villas, Morningside Prospect, fundamentally alike but varied by differences in their bow windows, gothic stone work, green slates or tiles, red brick or white roughcast, so that each had a certain individuality of its own.

Individuality, mitigated uniformity, was the ruling idea of the Casing Prospect Estate Company. Its leading director, seeking something a little different from the Avenues, Terraces, Roads, Gardens and Places that dominate building estate nomenclature, came one day on some mention of the Nevsky Prospekt and seized upon it with the decision of genius. Morningside Prospect faced the sunrise and its back gardens glowed in the afternoon. Sundown Prospect was back to back with it, separated from it by a great profusion of tamarisk and some wind-twisted pines. There was a Channel Prospect with a better view of the sea but rather windy and an Empire Prospect with no particular outlook; there was Brighthampton Prospect and St Andrews Prospect looking out on the links.

All the houses were as alike as pigs in a litter, but by the most sedulous exertions any exact repetition had been avoided. In only one

instance had that directors imagination gone a little too far; he had found a stock of pseudo-Javanese figures, plinths and gateways, intended for a still-born Oriental Café" in Brighthampton which had failed to produce its capital; the stuff was offered at a knock-out price and he bought it up. Opportunity rather over-stimulated his imagination. He created Celestial Prospect, a name which many serious people thought either ominous or blasphemous, and with the idea of giving it a still more oriental flavour he turned all the little houses aslant, so that they were in echelon instead of line abreast. Celestial Prospect never let so well as its brothers. From the first it seemed to attract the wrong sort of people, people who brought banjos with them, women who wore trousers, people who lit up Chinese lanterns at night and had moonlight singsongs, flitters, tenants who kept the company's agents alert at the end of every quarter. One man painted his Javanese plinths in a most objectionable manner. Happily Celestial was a good half mile away from Morningside, and for the Tewlers, there was no need to go that way; it was a mere intermittent nocturnal melodious disrespect not nearly so troublesome as the corncrakes beyond the links.

There was much in common among the tenants of Morningside Prospect. They were all living very easily. There were two types of them. There were two young couples who had come for the sun and air, one because the husband was tuberculous and one because the wife was so afflicted. They had "moans"; they never revealed what they were, and one of the husbands designed tessellated pavements in a geometrical manner that the world had so far failed to appreciate. The idea of a deep-seated and indefinite illness appealed to Edward Albert and as soon as he heard of his possible neighbours he told the agent that his health, too, wasn't by any means as good as he liked. He had to take things easy for a time anyhow. "It's something the doctor can't quite make out," he said. "But London's no place for me.

"I get it there." And he indicated the upper buttons of his waistcoat. "You can't be too careful."

Apart from these sun and air cases the tenants were quiet men of a certain maturity. They were "comfortably off." Younger wives or unmarried sisters did for them, and there was a niece or so and a few

children. Both types were agreed in eschewing strenuousness from all their living and doing, and everybody in the Prospect, except one man with a cork leg and the tessellationist, played golf.

The Prospect Club had only an eight hole course, but there were the Casing links halfway to Brighthampton and further along, close to the sea, the Brighthampton Borough links. So that the countryside was always dotted with little intent groups of baggy knickerbockered men and sympathetically attired women marching gravely with their instruments and attendants in the track of an elusive ball, occasionally overtaking it and pausing to do further execution upon it and then on again. Day after day and all round the earth the stern unsmiling golfers marched and smote and marched again, without haste or laughter. The game had been endemic in the east of Scotland for some centuries and had been supposed peculiar to Scotchmen. Then suddenly it had swept like a pestilence about the earth. No race, was found to be immune. It is calculated that the number of miles walked every day in the days of the Golf Age,.... But statistics will impair the severity of our narrative!

The elder tenants of Morningside Prospect, were, I have said, all very similar to one another. Yet they were not a band of brothers; they came from many different parts of the world. Men have speculated about the instinctive elements in the make-up of certain insects that enable them to find their way across immense distances to the rare and peculiar plant or animal upon which they may mate or feed or lay their eggs. It is a miracle of selection reminding us of that vision of Swedenborg's where all the damned and blessed fly of their own accord to the particular places appointed for them, hellions of every sort to their hells and the blessed to their heavens. And the particular thing that had assembled all these worthy men in Morningside Prospect was the searing influence of Monday morning upon their souls.

From the ages of thirteen or fourteen onward they had all been working, year in and year out, at occupations that required their punctual appearance at a place of business at a specific hour on Monday morning and had fixed them rigidly to meal times and routines of punctuality always. They had taken perhaps a fortnight or less of holiday in the year, glorious days that made fifty Mondays in

the year darker by contrast.

All through their lives they had toiled and dealt faithfully with their employers and behaved circumspectly, and saved money with one sole object in view, retirement. No living dangerously for them, no invention nor discovery, but retirement. For them, not having to go to work on Monday, not hurrying to the shop or office in the morning, had become the Supreme Good. Religious people talk of the Desecration of the Sabbath, but for these worthy souls, who had been the backbone of that ordered business world that is now crumbling down to irreparable ruin, the Desecration of the Week Day was the crowning triumph of life. They trampled upon their defeated fetters, at eleven o'clock in the morning, at three o'clock in the afternoon, with a feeling of peculiar blessedness. So, all over the world of the great decay, the exploiters of land, the building estates, built their Morningside Prospects, as moth hunters treacle for moths, and there these men who had retired, according to their means and dimensions, came and lived, and Mr and Mrs Tewler abode beside them.

They lived in Homestead, in Morningside Prospect, for the rest of their lives until an accident overtook and destroyed it in 1941. and they lived in considerable contentment A certain slovenliness of accent that had characterised Edward Albert's English became rather more apparent, and he forgot all his Elementary French except *Parlez-vous Français?* used in a facetious manner. He had a nice little garden, too small and sandy for any real gardening but pleasant to potter about in. He would sometimes clip his hedge in front and mow an infinitesimal lawn with a miniature mowing machine. He read less and less. He found even detective stories difficult to follow. He tried to find what is called a "hobby", but this was difficult. He affected amateur carpentry and bought a ready-made workshop, Villa Size No. 3; he christened this the Glory Hole, and thither he would retire for mysterious activities. He found fretwork attractive and he made a triple hanging bookshelf whose only faults were that it seemed to have no centre of gravity and there were no books in the house to put on it. It hung in his bed-room. He liked to look at it. He was, he admitted, never very good with his hands.

Both he and Mrs Tewler were fond of cats. The black cat from

Torrington Square lived for eleven years and was supplemented and then succeeded by a number of other mitigated Toms. Edward Albert devoted himself to golf. His astigmatism was diagnosed for the first time by a fellow player who offered useful advice to him, and he went to an oculist and got a pair of spectacles that greatly improved his game. His drives never went far enough because he had a subconscious dread of going too far, but his putting was slow, careful and fairly good. Like most of his neighbours he was a sincere but not extravagant Christian, that is to say he believed no end and never went to church if he could help it. Mrs Tewler never went to church or expressed any pious or impious sentiment. Faith for her had proved a disappointment too deep for words. The church of Casing, the only one within a Sabbath day's journey, was reputed to be "high", not quite the flavour for Morningside Prospect, and there was a little parson who aroused suspicion by trotting about the churchyard and vicarage shyly but importantly in a biretta and soutane when any reasonable creature would be wearing thin flannel. At times Edward Albert was still aware that away beyond the limits of Morningside Prospect, ideers were buzzing and booming, but a mere whisper of "Bawls" dispelled any anxiety. Naturally he increased in girth and substance through the circling years.

Season succeeded season. Year after year the great Orion, with the Dog Star at his heels, marched in glory across the heavens and the signs of the Zodiac succeeded one another in due order In their presumably benevolent watch over mankind. Life in Morningside Prospect went on like a sleeping top within these vast rotations, or like a tremendous clock with Morningside Prospect at its centre, and if you had suggested to any of its tenants, young or old, that this reef of happy retirement was at the heart not so much of a time keeper as of a time bomb, you would have been regarded as the wildest, most unnecessary of Buzzers and you would have been told to stop talking Bawls until you desisted.

BOOK IV.. THE POLITICAL LIFE OF EDWARD ALBERT TEWLER

I. — FIRST AND LAST: POLITICAL ANIMALS?

THE preceding book in the life of Edward Albert Tewler has been a long one. Now by way of relief the reader shall have a very short one. And the air of it will be free from that flavour of indelicacy which is unhappily so inseparable from a truthful rendering of sexual life.

It is necessary, if this monograph is to be complete, that a statement of Aristotle's should be considered, and this again involves a certain qualified tribute to the contribution of that outstanding figure to the entanglement of human thought. He looms large in the history of the mind, so that millions who have never heard more of him than his name, treat it with an almost superstitious respect. He devised a logical process that ignored the universal uniqueness of events, fixed species, which nevertheless fluctuate eternally, and substitute^ dogmatic generalisation for protean truth. Later, he drifted away from this towards the systematic collection and record of fact, but the syllogism of the young Aristotle remained to hamper the human mind, and bookish scholars in monastic cells, unable and unwilling to go out and observe and experiment further, made the hasty accumulations of the old Aristotle their test of reality instead of carrying on with his marshalling of knowledge.

As Christian teaching developed its Creeds after the conversion of Constantine, it appropriated the intellectual prestige of Aristotle, and, until Roger Bacon made his shrill and passionate protests, the church kept the mind aloof from the ever-changing realities about him. So through the Early Dark Ages, the genus Homo blundered along dismally and dirtily, learning next to nothing by experience and suffering. All of which will be expanded further in the Sixth Book of this complete and veracious study of a sample contemporary man. For in his generation, Edward Albert was the heir to it all. It had gone to his making and limitation even though he knew nothing about it. And so it is with all of us. None of us would have been what we are if Aristotle had never lived, to mark and fix a cardinal error in

the bewilderment of human thought.

This passing tribute to the outstanding classic is paid prematurely here, because it is the necessary setting for one of his uncorrected inaccuracies, in all its unmitigated and unjustifiable assurance. “Man,” said he, without qualification, “is a political animal.”

Now this is neither wholly false nor wholly true. It is false in so far as Homo Tewler does not behave as a political animal should do, participating with the utmost fullness in the collective life of the polis, but it is true in the sense that his life is inseparable from that collective life and that he cannot escape from it, whatever he does to detach himself. Even your misanthropical recluse still contributes an implicit or outspoken criticism to the general life. So that if we qualify Aristotle and say that man is an inadequately Political Animal, we can accept his statement.

The polls of Aristotle was a city state, but now the human community has expanded, function by function, irregularly and confusedly, to a Cosmopolis — the whole human species. A man belongs now to a hundred different systems of relationship overlapping one another; a hundred different loyalties claim him; but comprehending all of them now and growing continually more insistent is our common humanity. No one can escape the common fate that awaits our species as a whole, but so far few of us apprehend as much, and still fewer have roused themselves to do anything about it. We are in the ship of human destiny but we have very little control of it, We still treat our cabins as separate ships. (My metaphor is faulty but my intention is manifest.) The polls has us but we fail to take hold of the polis.

Aristotle’s conception of political possibility never ranged beyond the city state or a league of city states, because in his time the progressive abolition of distance was inconceivable. But the Greek idea embodied in his expression “Political Animal”, the treatment of the words “city” and “citizens” as reciprocal terms, the distinction between civilised and barbaric expansion as the difference between the extended city on the one hand, and, on the other, conquest and the exaction of tribute, “co-operation” and homage, has been a working opposition throughout the ages down to our own time. Rome did not begin as an Imperium. The initial idea of the Roman

Republic was not an idea of conquest but assimilation; from Scotland to Samarkand men could become citizens of the city of Rome. Invention and discovery have now expanded the polis of Aristotle to Cosmopolis, the Barbarian is a mere gangster, a savage brought within the compass of the city, all war is crime and civil war, and it is by, through and in a world-order that we live or fail to live to-day. Manifestly, then, our Edward Albert Tewler and his neighbours in Morningside Prospect at the heart of a cosmic time bomb, must, like everybody else in the world now, display man as a Political Animal, however unawakened he may be to the real extent of the Cosmopolis.

Considered as an assembly of Political Animals, the tenants of Morningside Prospect displayed the same quality of discreet reluctance towards harsh realities that was also manifest in their religious and philosophical attitudes. Then citizenship was a sleeping partnership. They were not pressing or attacking in these matters, so that they do not complicate our study by advancing ideas of their own"and attempting to change the world in any way whatever. This simplifies them very conveniently for our purpose. A single declared Fascist or Communist or Jehovah's Witness or Single Taxer or Douglasite, for example, would have put us askew by orienting the entire Prospect to his complex of ideas and setting them organising and resisting for or against it. He would have concentrated attention like a hornet come into a roomful of quiet people. But suchlike disturbers of the peace were far away, a distant buzzing, and the word "Bawls" protected this place of rest as effectively as an angel with a flaming fiery sword.

The whole of Morningside Prospect had made its peace with God, and it felt that if you didn't annoy God, He could be trusted not to annoy you. The faint flavour of Rome that hung about that biretta and soutane excused any persistent church going. Which would not have occurred anyhow. There would always have been some faint flavour or other in extenuation. One or two of the ladies "communicated" at Easter and assisted with the decorations at Harvest Thanksgiving. If some Buzzer had got through with whispers of unbelief, Morningside Prospect would not have argued, it would have "stood up" for God simply and firmly. If on the other hand the Redeemer of Mankind, whose authentic portraits adorned

quite a number of the Prospect bedrooms, had appeared, true to those pictures, white-robed and radiant) Morningside Prospect would have quietly gone indoors, fastened the door, and watched this intrusive anachronism discreetly from behind a blind, apprehensive of any little miracles that might occur. A few with memories of their early Sunday school lessons might have felt anxious about Mrs Rooter's fig tree at the end of the row, because He was notoriously hasty with fig trees, and hers was notoriously barren.

So much for the religion of Morningside. Its attitude towards Nature was equally passive. The Prospect had dismissed any curiosity it had ever possessed about Nature, It had decided that Nature also was quite trustworthy if you didn't mess about with her. There were the Secrets of Nature, but no decent person ever dreamt of raising her skirts. There were the Wonders of Nature, but there was no need to pry into them. You just said they were wonderful. You went out and looked up at the stars on a starry night. You remained still for a time. "It makes you think," you said profoundly, and thought no more about it.

But Politics wasn't so easily dismissed. There were rates to pay and they had a tendency to go up; there were taxes which rose steadily. There were municipal and parliamentary elections. People put handbills into the letter-boxes and canvassers came round and asked Morningside Prospect questions at which the Prospect shook its head in an enigmatical manner. It had no taste for doorstep arguments. When a general election loomed up, the public disturbance was considerable, and Morningside Prospect was forced to share it. It broke into speech. Views were exchanged, at golf and over garden fences; newspapers with marked passages were handed about. The characters of prominent political leaders were weighed. It got as far as that. Personal experiences hitherto held in reserve were brought to light.

There was Mr Pildington who lived for many years of trusted service in a general depot at Johore. Upon any issue affecting India or the East generally, his brief utterances were felt to be final. There was Mr Stannish again, of Tintern, who had experienced the evils of Trade Unionism and the improvidence of the working class, on the clerical staff of a mining corporation in South Wales. You could tell

him nothing he did not know against the Labour Party, Mr Copper of Caxton had worked with a big printing firm which produced a constellation of trade weeklies, and he came out very strongly in favour of extending the law of libel so as to restrain die publication of any criticism that was not entirely favourable and signed by the writer. His firm had made a bad debt by publishing a periodical called Scientific Truth, which had fallen foul of a gentleman who claimed to have discovered a cure for cancer, had denounced him as a mischievous impostor and had had to pay heavy damages and go into bankruptcy. The Plaintiff had not discovered a cure for cancer and his nostrum was deadly, but that was held by the court to be irrelevant.

Mr Copper had been partly responsible for the issue of this periodical, and the experience, he said, had taught him a lesson.

"These critics," said Mr Copper, whose intelligence was sufficiently narrow to be acute, "these critics, you see, they disregard the capital a man lays out in building up a reputation. It's nothing to them. They just think they have the right to run him down exactly as they please. There's hardly a business that could stand it. This case was touch-and-go, but our chap went too far in his abuse. It's plain sense you got to put it down. There isn't a thing in heaven or earth that's safe while this criticism runs loose. So now at every election I ask the candidates whether they agree to back my Control of Criticism Bill. Had it drafted and printed all right and proper. You didn't know of that? I get pledges from both sides, always, but somehow they never seem to push it through up there. Hammer away, I say, hammer away. No need to talk about it. It's just my hobby, so to speak. You wouldn't care to have a copy of my Bill? You needn't read it...."

All Morningside Prospect was agreed that rates and taxes had increased, were increasing and ought to be diminished. The vote was something given to the free-born citizen primarily to defend him against these assaults upon his peace of mind. So that as the election drew near, Morningside Prospect really made an effort to distinguish between the competing candidates who were seeking their suffrages, in this particular respect. Would they keep rates down and taxes down? All candidates promised gladly and there the matter ended.

Brighthampton was a complex constituency with a slum district harbouring a swarm of skilled and semi-skilled workers. Morningside Prospect believed that these people of the back streets were mainly engaged in almost incredibly rapid multiplication, and shared the outspoken indignation of Dean Inge at decent people being asked to provide health and education for this unbridled pullullation of the "Unfit." Like Oliver Twist, these creatures were always asking for more, stimulated in their extravagant demands by agitators, whom Morningside Prospect believed to be invariably of foreign origin and incredible malignity. So that there was a third party in the Brighthampton constituency, known to Morningside Prospect as the "Squandermaniacs", a Labour Party dominated by some Russian agent, Bill Smith or McAndrew, apprehensions by a vigorous advocacy of peace and to induce his fellow Tewlers (var. Anglicanus) to confirm his hope for a world in which there would be no more war, but everything else going on as usual. With all their facilities some of his subsidiaries did a bit of arms smuggling, but Sir Humbert did his very utmost not to know anything about that. He did not hesitate, as the passions of electioneering rose, to call Sir Adrian a war-monger. But this was a gross libel. Sir Adrian was not a war-monger; he was a wholesale iron-monger.

If he had really wanted to sell war to the world, he would not have confined himself to the big battleship business. He would have gone in for financially less important equipment, for air and undersea attacks, warfare in narrow seas and with amphibious craft. But at the time of the Abyssinian crisis, when Mussolini threatened the British fleet with dive bombing, the British government had to give in ignominiously because their ships had no anti-aircraft ammunition. Little matters of that sort were chicken-food to Sir Adrian. Nothing could prove more convincingly that at heart Sir Adrian and Sir Humbert were equally pacificist and equally prepared to carry on with business during business hours and retire to their own magnificent versions of Morningside, to peerages, great mansions, ranches, yachts, mistresses, as convinced as Edward Albert that all that was going on for ever. We do these worthy men injustice to impute either wickedness or intelligence to them. They were just outsize Tewlers.

Whenever an opportunity to abolish war by any sort of vote arose, Morningside Prospect voted without hesitation and abolished it. War has been abolished again and again since 1918. The League of Nations put an end to war, the Kellogg Pact abolished it, a Peace Pledge taken by millions refused all further participation in warfare. What more could you have? People went on making weapons out of habit, and to terminate their employment too abruptly would have caused considerable financial inconvenience. There were, however, a number of international Conferences, inspired by the noblest sentiments, to limit and restrain armaments, for which now there could never be any positive use. You cannot be too careful, as Sir Adrian insisted. There is a negative use for armaments in these matters. Peace in a world of sovereign states is necessarily a neutralisation, an equalisation, a careful balance of gun against gun and ship against ship. You even let the belligerent Germans have a carefully-rationed army and fleet. How could they sustain public security and maintain their national self-respect without these things? What uniforms could they wear? What decorations? The adjustment of forces is no doubt a delicate one, but how else is Security possible? The Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service saw to that with a peculiar wisdom and subtlety above the understanding of common men.... ,

All round the world, and according to their scope and scale, the Morningsides, happy in this dangerously balanced Security, pursued the even tenor of their ways, oblivious, deliberately oblivious, to the time bomb of Destiny, that ticked more and more audibly beneath their feet, Only belatedly did a certain rocking of the ground and queer outbreaks of stink and steam, assume a personal significance. Only with extreme reluctance would Edward Albert allow himself to think that this heaving danger might after all be addressed to him.

The ingredients and factors in this time bomb that is now blowing all the Morningside Prospects, all the self-complacencies of the world of Homo Tewler sky high, are gradually being made plain by the distressful criticism of its scattered victims. Man’s own unregulated and surprising inventions and discoveries have made all the earth one simultaneous community, and released such a volume of available physical and undirected human energy as superannuates

all the religious, traditional, historical methods that have hitherto kept the species going. Our circumstances demand a world-wide moral and intellectual revolution beyond all the precedents and possibilities of former times. To the very last the Tewlers in any position of advantage have been sitting upon the safety-valves of expression, of warning, information and any adaptation, until what might have been a deliberate readjustment has become a violent explosion, an explosion that will now either blow Homo Tewler far up the scale of conscious being or out of the universe altogether. In which latter case we, here and now, are the last men addressing ourselves to a posterity which will never exist.

This is a sweeping statement. But you cannot write about a germ or an atom nowadays without the universe coming in We can take nothing for granted because we have realised the reciprocity of part and Whole. Our next succeeding Book must focus down again upon Edward Albert, and tell how the explosion hit and lifted him and his at last out of the contentment of Morningside Prospect altogether.

BOOK V.. HOW EDWARD ALBERT TEWLER WAS OVERTAKEN. BY A STORM OF WAR AND DESTRUCTION AND. WHAT HE SAID AND DID IN IT

I. — CATSPAWS

THE unpleasant buzzing of disturbing ideas and untoward events that Edward Albert had kept at a distance for the first ten years of his contentment in Morningside Prospect crept nearer to him by such imperceptible degrees that it is almost impossible to mark any definite date for the end of his agreeable stagnation. Take Morningside Prospect throughout the week of years that preceded the actual onset of the Great Warfare. What touch of foreboding wrinkled the smooth reflection it presented to the world? What catspaws warned it of the gathering hurricane?

The World War of 1914-18 had not struck the Tewler imagination as bringing with it a new ordering of life for mankind. It was, from the Tewler point of view, a fight like a dog-fight for the upper hand among things called Powers, essentially the same in their nature. They rose and they fell, like football clubs. It was just another chapter of the old history. The academic Tewlers who taught history throughout the world knew nothing, and almost passionately wanted to know nothing, of the space-time process that continually puts a fresh face on life and continually sweeps away the working appearances of the past. Their mental equipment could not handle such ideas. So how could they be expected to transmit them?

There was not a country in the world where what passed for the teaching of history was more than a training in national conceit and xenophobia, and Edward Albert, according to his rank and scale, participated in the prevalent mental perversity. He was ready at any time to assert that the scenery of England, the wild flowers of England, the skilled labour of England (when not disturbed by foreign agitators) the horsemanship and seamanship of England, the gentry of England, the agriculture of England, the politics of England, the graciousness and wisdom of her Royal Family, the beauty of the Englishwomen, their incurable healthiness of mind and body, were not to be surpassed, not even to be disputed by any other people. For that he “stood up”, and all Morningside Prospect, all England, from Sir Adrian von Stahlheim down to the dirtiest child coughing its life out in the dirtiest slum of East London “stood up.”

And all over the world, with the simple substitution of whatever name the local, community happened to possess, Homo Tewler was of the same persuasion.

But the various British and French and American varieties of the species were now more cock-a-hoop and contented, because they had won the great war, than was Homo Tewler var. Teutonicus, who was suffering acutely in his pride and material conditions through having lost it. He was gradually persuading himself that he had never lost the war, but had been cheated in some complicated way out of his victory, and he was screwing himself up, through his schoolmasters, professors, politicians, industrialists, romantic pederasts and out-of-work professional soldiers, to the idea of a return match with the great Powers that would restore and realise his dream of world ascendency. Homo Tewler Gallicus was uncomfortably aware of this state of mind beyond the frontier, but Anglicanus and Americanus thought this awareness uncharitable....

One might go on thus describing the Tewler mentality in terms of that masterpiece of Tewler thought, published in 1871, *The Fight In Dame Europa's School*. To that period stuff, to the same old nationalist mythology, the schoolmasters of each successive generation put back their prey....

Yet certain things did appear dimly beneath the surface of these traditional appearances, as being novel and challenging even to Edward Albert. A wave of ill-conceived and ill-organised expressions1 of popular discontent that disturbed the tranquil resumption of power and property by the larger salesmanship and die old authorities in the Period of Reconstruction, would have passed without any but the most incidental remarks by the contemporary historian in the general *sauve qui peut* (and then grab a bit more) of the influential classes, if it had not been for the complete collapse of the established social order throughout the vast areas of Russia. There had been social upthrusts in the past, the Commune in Paris, and talk of socialism in England, but no normally educated English child was ever allowed to know anything about these things. "'Oo are these Bolsheviks?" Edward Albert had asked old Mr Blake in the middle Doober days, when the decision of Russia to go out of the Great War was shocking the minds of Power-politics-fans

‘throughout the world.

“Thieves and bloody murderers,” said old Mr Blake. And then and subsequently he confided to Edward Albert the horror of this Sovietic Russia that had come upon the world. These Bolsheviks were hate and evil incarnate; they put Satan in the shade; they delighted in bloodshed, lust and the repudiation of their just debts. They shared their women in common and drove out their children to grow up like wild animal in the woods. They had massacred millions of people; every day they had a massacre before breakfast. This man Lenin was conducting frightful orgies in the Kremlin, and his wife was prancing about covered with the Crown jewels and any others she could lay hands on. Nobody in Russia had had anything to eat for months. The rouble went down and down. Mr Blake had bought roubles when there was reason to suppose they would recover, and had they recovered? And he had had a bit in Lena Goldfields. No good crying over spilt milk.

The streets of Moscow, he explained, were littered with dead—“murdered people like you and me.” You had to pick your way among them. Everywhere the Churches had been turned into anti-God Museums. Everywhere aristocrats and respectable people were being treated with incredible brutality and bestiality. Mr Blake seemed to have sources of information of his own, and he gave Edward Albert the most circumstantial and revolting details with an indignant gusto. “Take, for instance, something I heard the other day....”

“You’d wonder how they can bring themselves to do it,” said Edward Albert, not doubting in the least. Old Mr Blake offered no explanation.

The newspapers Edward Albert glanced over and the talk he heard about “these here Bolshies” during the two decades of later Georgian decadence, did little to attenuate the shock of those early impressions. When he blended his mind with the general unanimities of Morningside Prospect, he found a practical agreement that for the rest of the world outside the Soviet sphere, the less one thought about Russia the better, the “Bolshies” were thorough rascals and also blind fanatics, they were incredibly incompetent and a menace to the whole world; Stalin was just another Tsar, he was certain to be

assassinated and he would found a new dynasty; private enterprise would be restored because you cannot do without it. Communism did not matter; it was spreading insidiously; it stirred up a lot of discontent among the working classes, and it ought to be put down with a firm hand. It was the hidden hand of Communism that caused labour unrest that kept wages and prices, rates and taxes, mounting and mounting, to the serious disadvantage of decent independent people who had retired and wanted to keep retired.

So round and round they went, perpetually evading the realisation that there was something in the stars and in the wicked hearts of men that would not endure Morningside Prospect for very much longer, whatever else ensued,

Mr Pildington of Johore was disposed to take a serious view of Communist activities in the East. These frightful ideas were spreading in India and China and even in Japan.

"They nibble and they nibble at our prestige. It's no laughing matter."

"These ideers," said Edward Albert gloomily.

"Let's hope it will last our time," said Mr Pildington and turned to pleasanter topics,...

So the first transient intimations of social revolution appeared and vanished in Edward Albert's mind; the sense of something out of order and something impending. But it was not simply the Bolshie menace alone. There was the whisper of something unsatisfactory and inadequate in the control of public affairs. In the great days of Gladstone and Disraeli, political life had been pompous and respected. Gentlemen in top hats and frock coats, used parliamentary language, obeyed the division bell, and passed through the division lobbies, and no Briton doubted that the Mother of Parliaments was the ultimate legislative and administrative machine. Then as the century unfolded, the new journalism, the unruly Irish, the appearance of a Labour Party (in all sorts of hats), votes for women and women members of Parliament, the accumulating effects of elementary education, robbed the legislature, step by step, of its male and gentlemanly prestige.

This new Parliament was by no means as agreeable to the larger Tewlers, the salesmen, the great interests and profit-making

enterprises, as the old. Parliament was passing out of the hands of an essentially conservative oligarchy into those of an incoherently progressive democracy, and the oligarchy, through its press lords and its social and business influences, was developing a spirit of resistance to Parliamentary institutions, to the taxation and control of enterprise and the ever-increasing expenditure upon public services. Everywhere in the pseudo-democratic countries the process followed parallel lines. The newly enfranchised masses, awakening to the power of the vote, were reappropriating the goods of the community bit by bit to a collective use, and everywhere among the employers and wealthy, the spirit of resistance sought expression. Everywhere, in the Scandinavian countries, in blue-swastika Finland, in America after the socialisations of the New Deal in France, in Spain before Franco, there were Quislings seeking a saviour from this awakening democracy and not knowing to whom to turn.

"Parliament is played out," said this gathering counter. revolution. "Democracy is played out."

Mr Copper of Caxton felt the need of some resistance to these unending concessions to labour demands. "What this country needs," said Mr Copper, "is leadership, firmer leadership. We want a middle-class party led by a Man." Mr Stannish of Tintern was inclined to agree with Mr Copper, but Mr Droop of London Pride, who was suspected of religious unsoundness, was disposed to be critical not of the idea but of the leader towards whom their thoughts were turning. He exhibited newspaper pictures and invited his neighbours to look at them.

"He's herring-jawed, and *I* like teeth that meet," said Mr Droop. "Why does he dress up in this sort of tights he wears? His shape ain't English. It isn't even decent, He seems to attach too much importance to his behind. Look at that one. It's a sort of hind bosom he's got. And why does he imitate them Dagos? Can't he think anything out for himself? Anything fresh? Fine outlook for us to have a leader without an original idea in his head! Ask him what we are to do, and he'll go round asking, What would Musso do? If we want a strong Englishman, let's have a strong English Englishman with a mind of his own, and not that sort of flibberty-gibbet. Flibberty-gibbet, I call him. Something that sways about and dangles.

For good old England? No, thank you."

"Well, anyhow, we've got to be quit of this Parliament nonsense," said Mr Copper, "and all this criticising of everybody and doing nothing, while the Bolshies and Jews run away with everything we've got."

"Jews?" said Edward Albert, questioning himself.

It is interesting to note that our specimen Englishman for the first thirty years of his life was practically unaware of contemporary Jews. He thought they were a disagreeable lot of people in the Bible whom even God had had to give up at last, and that had been the end of them. We lived in the New Dispensation. He went to school with Jews and half-Jews and quarter-Jews and never perceived any distinctive difference between them and his other school-fellows. He thought Circumcision was something religious, and enquired no further into the matter. Was Buffin Burleybank a Jew? Was Jim Whittaker? Was Evangeline Birkenhead, on either side, Jewish? It never occurred to Edward Albert to ask, and there is no need to introduce irrelevant information into this story. If Jews are so different you ought to be able to tell.

But as the vague uneasiness of the Georgian decadence spread and sought forms of expression, it was necessary to protect oneself from any sense of responsibility in the matter by finding scapegoats, and almost any outstanding group of people was exposed to the honour of vicarious atonement. A certain section of the mixture of peoples called the Jews, especially those hailing from Eastern Europe, is ghetto-conscious and suffers from an. Adlerian assertiveness, and it has always been a temptation to bright young men of the Armenoid type to set up as "champions" for their "people", to revive the sense of being downtrodden if it threatens to wane and insist upon a preferential association. Jew must help Jew. Such economic bad manners reveal a universal human tendency; Scotchmen hang together, Welshmen control the milk and drapery trades in London, and so on; only the drastic contempt of more broadly civilised individuals can do anything to correct this exclusiveness.

Unhappily at the conclusion of the 1914-18 phase of the world war, the professional Jewish "champions" set themselves with

particular energy to inflame this racial segregation in every possible way and to ignore as blatantly as possible the common need for a world settlement. They did not want to go on to a new world; they headed their "people" for Zion, They became Maccabean, they became heroic; boys in West Kensington dreamt of being Davids and their sisters Esthers, No public man, no writer, no journalist could go anywhere without having the Jewish Problem thrust into his face as though it was the one supreme interest of mankind. He was threatened implicitly or explicitly with boycotts and mischief if he refused his appointed ro1e as a Gideonite, hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the Great Race. The mildest, most broadminded of humanitarians found themselves provoked into saying, "Oh, damn those Jews!"

Admittedly the Jews are tactless and vain and clannish but that after all is the worst that can be said about the worst of them. The most they did was to irritate. The great Jewish conspiracy is and always has been a fantasy.

But it was disastrous of these champions and leaders of Jewry, considering how widely dispersed and how vulnerable their "people" were, to make them so conspicuous in a world in urgent need of scapegoats. Homo Tewler Teutonicus, licking his sore vanity after defeat, found himself all too ready to be persuaded that he had been betrayed to defeat by the Jews. Morningside Prospect throughout the western world, looking for some scapegoat to explain the increased rocking of the financial boat, found it plausible to attribute it to "international finance" and easy to believe that international finance was essentially Jewish, It is not. It is less so than ever it was.

And come to think of it, said the Christian Churches, why, in spite of all our educational efforts, are congregations shrinking and our people losing their religious ardour? Some one, something, not ourselves, must be to blame. Why are our flocks restricting their birth-rate, while Jews, as we all know, invariably have enormous families? Why is there this increasing incredulity in the beautiful incomprehensible dogmas of our religion? How can people disbelieve what they cannot possibly understand unless they are stirred up by mischief-makers? And what is there at the back of this upset in Godless Russia, which was once so devoted to the Little

Father on earth and his and Our Father in Heaven? ,You can read all about the ramifications of these satanic plottings in Mrs Nesta Webster's Secret Societies and Subversive Movements. Or you can study how the new pogromism was revived in that curious and impudent forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. There you see how craziness festers into mania.

That, in terms of general contemporary history, is the why and wherefore of the world epidemic of pogrom fever in the second Georgian period, and that is why Edward Albert, our microcosm, leaning over his garden gate and talking to Mr Copper, remarked, "These here Jews seem to be doing a lot of mischief in the world, one way and another."

And why Mr Copper, already thoroughly infected, replied,

"And we let 'em get away with it — every time."

You see here in Morningside Prospect in our Edward Albert just the same threefold mental stir that was to be found in the whole Morningside Prospect side of civilisation; the sick dread of some profound rearrangement of economic and social relationships impending, a dread expressing itself defensively in an irrational fear of "Bolshevism "; the same unpleasant realisation of a common nerveless conduct of affairs leading to the craving for a saviour and leader, and the same disposition to discover a scapegoat, for which role the Jewish Champions were already preparing their "people." The world now and henceforth is doomed to live in an increasing community of interpretations, and these three factors were to be found among the threatened governing classes, all round the globe from pole to pole. The Bolshie, the Jew and the inspired Leader, all essentially imaginary beings, were becoming the three cardinal figures in a new mythology of escape from thought, starkness and courage.

Wherever the pound sterling and the dollar were current and freely exchangeable with local money, this mythology prevailed, masking the hard realities of the abolition of distance, the ever-increasing release of physical and human energy and the gathering resentment of the poor, the exploited and the frustrated majority of mankind. These triple ingredients brewed the final explosion of the Old Order, which that triple mythology prevented men from

anticipating and averting.

But if that mythology was world-wide, it still varied greatly in its realisation in different regions of the earth. There were great differences in phase. Homo Tewler in his Western, Scandinavian and Polish varieties was not so widely different from Anglicanus; he presented the same mythological triangle and the same underlying forces, but until America had that rather alarming financial jolt in 1932 which put an end to its "sturdy individualism" for ever, there was not the same apprehension of possible calamity that was setting all Europe peering about for scapegoats and conspirators. But, as the New Deal unfolded, American myth and reality began to take on an increasing parallelism with Europe. In Russia the Muscovite Homo Tewler, after a tremendous constructive effort after the war, and after a phase of experimental strain and stress, lapsed for a time under the autocratic rule of a Saviour, forgetting or liquidating the old Bolshies and feeling no need for any other victims.

Homo Tewler Teutonicus, sharing the new mythology, was nevertheless in a different and more formidable mood than any of its neighbours in the world. It was smarting from a sense of accepted defeat and sustained disadvantage. It was very much in the state of mind of Edward Albert in the days when he endured .the punches of Horry Budd and pretended not to mind them. It was working up to the "Vad-a-nuff-o-vis" phase and the hysterical and vicious smacking of that young gentleman's face. Sooner or later Homo Tewler Teutonicus was bound to fight. The particular event that. fired the magazine belonged to the chapter of accidents. The British Government played the part of those Bolter's College Old Boys who lost the match through stupid over-confidence, and so put spunk into Edward Albert. They put spunk in the faltering German patriot. If it had not been the Nazi triumvirate of Goering, Goebbels and Hitler, it might have been the much more formidable Germany of the Strasser brothers. Or some other combination. But at the contemporary level of world intelligence it was as inevitable as dawn a week ahead, that Germany would start a war.

But what the world mind had still to grasp was the tremendous increase in destructive energy that had occurred since the clearing-up wars that followed the Treaty of Versailles. Even the people, the

Fascists and Nazis who were most obviously and ostentatiously getting their feet upon the war path, had only a very feeble premonition of the immense smash they were going to make. Many people thought that war was approaching again; even Edward Albert remarked that "all this here armament don't look like peace for ever, does it? Something ought to be done about it." But they thought always of the old sort of war and not of war right out of control and a world blown to smithereens. And Morningside Prospect thought no more of warfare on its own golf links than of Martians out of the sky. Talk about disarmament went on among the representative Tewlers gathered at Geneva, but the arms salesmen made sure that these deliberations came to nothing.

Edward Albert became aware of Adolf Hitler, not as a personal enemy who was going to Shatter all the complacencies of his life, but as a strange, rather comic, figure in that pleasantly defeated Germany, somewhen about the time of the Reichstag fire. Mrs Tewler was shopping in Gage and Hopler's emporium and Edward Albert was waiting for her in die convenient waiting-room beyond the soda fountain and the Hairdressing. He picked up an illustrated paper and found pictures of the Fuehrer in full blast.

"Look at that," said Edward Albert.

"What's he so excited about?"

"Politics."

"Looks as if he ought to be took care of somewhere. He's worse than that great ugly Mussolini. People like that didn't ought to be let go about loose, all dressed up and 'owling and threatening everyone who don't agree with them. You don't know what mischief they may do sensible people."

Thus Mary, revealing an anticipatory gleam of sapiens in her composition.

"No affair of ours," said Mr Tewler, true to type, true to the specific quality that will never see what is coming to it until after it has been hit.

Later on he became more aware of the Nazi triumvirate and more particularly of" This here Hitler M.

Mr Copper of Caxton and Mr Standish of Tintern, in particular, were inclined to take a favourable view of this now rising star. "He

may have his faults," said Mr Copper, "but he and Musso stand like bulwarks between us and the Bolshies. Never forget that. And as for his treatment of them Jews — well, they ask for it."

"They do do that," said Edward Albert.

"You can't trust a Jew with a fair-haired girl-servant. Same thing at Hollywood. I expect poor Hitler has his story to tell. And then these French. They've treated the Germans badly. How would you like to go out on the links and find some great. Senegalese nigger running about and raping every English girl he sets eyes on? I was reading a bit in a book the other day by Mr Arthur Bryant. There's things flesh and blood won't stand."

That gave Edward Albert food for thought. He tried to think of himself as Sir Galahad clearing Soudanese niggers off the links and comforting their victims by a kind word or so before starting his round.

Mr Pildington, said that bringing coloured soldiers to Europe had been a great mistake. "The tales they take back! No respect left in them.... We did it and the French did it and we shall pay for it. Mark my words...."

"One thing we must never forget about Mussolini,"' said the vicar of Casing to Mrs Rooter in an earnest friendly talk at Harvest Thanksgiving. "Mustard gas or no mustard gas, he did put back the crucifix in the schools. I could forgive him many things for that."

But Mrs Tewler took a different view. "These violent men ought to be put under control now," she said. "They'll do the world a mischief."

"The more mischief they do the Bolshies and Jews the better I shall be pleased," said Edward Albert. "There's worse things in the world than holding up a hand and saying

"'Heil Hitler!' After all, it's only like standing up to 'God save the King' in their German way."

II. — THE STORM BREAKS

UP to the middle of 1939 the incredulous confidence of Morningside Prospect sustained itself throughout all the regions of the earth that were still untouched by destruction. In Spain, in the May of '37, Goering boasted that he demonstrated the strength of the German air force — at that time — by the destruction of the ancient Basque city of Guernica. The place was practically destroyed, the population massacred and the world horrified. But it was done with planes and bombs that would have seemed beneath contempt to the airmen of four years later.

So, too, the exploits of the Japanese bombers in China; the blazing houses, the heaped dead, the smashed women and children, and the rapes and murders of the invaders, were accepted by the world as the last word in frightfulness instead of mere earnests of worse ahead. When again the Italians clenched their conquest of Abyssinia by the surprise use of mustard gas, which they had 'expressly agreed to abandon, it seemed as though treachery and bad faith had made their crowning triumph. All these events which people with untrammelled imaginations would have realised were mere intimations and sketches of things to come, were treated as being the final achievement of destructiveness. Why were people so stupid? The facts are plain enough. There was and there is no visible limit to the size and range of aircraft. They were, they are, certain to go on increasing in power and speed so long as air war remained a possibility. What else can happen? Neither was there any limit apparent to the destructive power of a bomb, which again must increase to world-destroying dimensions. Nor was there any perceptible limit to the amount of misdirection and social disorganisation that could be achieved by sustained lying, by the use of poisons, infections, blockades and terrorism. The human mind was amazingly reluctant to look these glaring inevitabilities in the face.

Tewler Americanus in particular was irritated by a harsh logic that overrode his dearest belief in his practical isolation whenever he chose to withdraw himself, from the affairs of the rest of the world. He had escaped from the old world and he hated to feel that he was

being drawn back to share a common destiny with the rest of mankind.

By the summer of 1939 the blowing-up of the old civilisation was proceeding briskly. It was a progressive process. It went from strength to strength. It was a spreading fire in an uncharted wilderness of explosives. There was not one forthright bang of everything. It was much more like a big series of magazines and oil stores of unknown depth and extent blowing up and blazing one after another, each outbreak starting and incorporating still more violent explosions. The fighting of '39 was mild in comparison with '40, and '40 was mild in comparison with '41. Nobody had planned this. There is no sign in *Mein Kampf* of any realisation on the part of Rudolf Hess and Adolf Hitler that they had fired a limitless mine. They felt they were brilliant cynical lads who had taken the world by surprise. As a matter of fact, modern warfare took them by surprise. By 1941 they were as helplessly anxious as everybody else to put out the fire again and crawl away with any loot they could lay their hands on.

Goering promised that no allied air raids should ever distress the German homeland. He probably made that promise in perfect good faith. For a time he had the upper hand and the German public had little to complain of. They made war in the lands of other peoples according to a century-old tradition. War has still to come home to them. Whatever the allies did to Germany, said Goering, he would retaliate tenfold. What he did not realise until it was too late was that he had no monopoly in this war weapon he was using and that the Luftwaffe he had launched would not only kick back but grow to overwhelming dimensions.

In '40 the Germans nearly won the war with the great tank and the dive-bomber. Then opportunity passed. In '41 tanks were pouring out of factories by the thousand, and both Britain and Russia and America were drawing ahead of the German outfit in quantity and quality alike.

In 1941 the Nazis, feeling the nets closing about their adventure, struck hysterically at Russia, and for the first time encountered a people who had divested themselves of their Morningside encumbrance, who were united in their dislike to the German

Herrenvolk and fought with an undivided mind. They had discovered that in warfare you cannot be too careless. “Safety last!” said the Russians. The Russians, falling back slowly upon their main line of defence, “scorching the earth” before this last convulsive thrust of the Nazi, were something very different from the crowded fugitives in the milder, already outmoded warfare of Holland, Belgium and France. War mounted another step in the scale of destruction, and aeroplanes and tanks by the thousand fought gigantic fleet actions upon land.

The old wars of history ebbed as they exhausted the scanty resources of their period, but this new warfare gathered destructive force as it went on.

In the summer of 1941 it was evidently dawning upon the central group of Nazis that the theory of totalitarian war was unsound, because of this unanticipated and uncontrollable crescendo. They began to gabble of a new world order. But they had lied so unscrupulously and professed lying so unblushingly that now even the British Hessians and the American Lindberghs could hardly pretend to believe them. They had destroyed their own ladder of escape and, as a gang at any rate, they were doomed. But that does not mean that the crescendo of destruction would come to an end. Their elimination would be of little more significance by itself than the sinking of a ship or the destruction of a tank. Even the Germans would hardly miss them. There is no dearth of feeble-minded mascots in central Europe. The world would still have a vindictive post-Hitler Germany recovering its strength for a new Fuehrer and a new convulsion; pluto-Christian democracy would still be showing its unclean and irregular teeth at the dreaded Bolshevik. World disaste would at the best, take breath, before deeper and higher and wider detonations scattered the shreds of the Christian peace Billions of lies, millions of foul murders, persecution, organised indignity, none of these things can save a world still dominated by mercenary Christian nationalism from the Avenging Fates,

But none of the people who embody the Tewler mind in governments and authorities seem able to see a yard ahead of anything they do. They are as capable of starting trouble as monkeys with matches, and as little capable of coping with the result.

“Cosmopolis in thought and life, or extinction,” says Destiny, toying idly with the bones of a Brontosaurus and awaiting the decision of Homo Tewler without haste indeed, but also without any touch of hesitation. “Time is almost up, Homo Tewler. Which shall it be?”

III. — A.R.W. AND H.G.

WHICH shall it be? We may set about the answer in either of two reciprocal ways. Throughout this story from the very beginning the same choice of aspects has confronted us, We can ask, can the species as a whole achieve this tremendous feat of adaptation demanded of us? Or we can turn to the individual samples we have selected for examination and .ask whether, with such material, there is any hope of arresting the blazing catastrophe that now detonates about us? If there is hope, however faint it may be, in Edward Albert Tewler, then there is that much hope for the world. If world revolution is not latent and credible in his circle, in his offspring and outcome, in the reactions he evokes and the chain of consequence he transmits, then is it equally impossible and incredible of his species as a whole.

Our double answer must end in a note of interrogation.

Let us tell first of all, as simply and plainly as possible, the behaviour of our hero during the world conflagration, and then swing our attention round to the battling ideas and interpretations in which that behaviour was framed and shaped. We have to deal faithfully with the traditions and wisdom of the human past, the divinities, the mighty reputations, the vast long-unquestioned assumptions by which the Tewler mind has been enslaved and stultified. If the Tewlers are timid and disingenuous fools by education and enslavement rather than by birth, there may be hope for them. There may be salvation for them yet, without the intervention of a quite impossible saviour.

As the storm broke, Edward Albert's first reaction was an extreme indisposition to take any part in it whatever.

At the outset we had to tell of the marked reluctance of Edward Albert to live at all. The normal human being is born against its will. It has to be thrust and lugged into this chilly and disconcerting universe. Edward Albert, you will remember, took twenty-three hours. The first noise he made was a cackle of protest. We have told with all necessary particularity of his cowering childhood and the slow appearance in him of an urge of revolt and self-assertion. Even

as a child he was not purely fear and submission. He could put out his tongue at caged lions; he could feel a stir of scepticism about the All-seeing God. Lust broke through a net of dread and religious uglification to the squalid satisfactions we have detailed. Something could rebel in him.

The education he received was cramping and old-fashioned even for his time. But the old traditions of sectarian misdirection still in spite of a certain advance in technical efficiency, cripple and distort the general mind. "All that has been changed," cry indignant teachers under criticism. But the evidence that this teaching of theirs still fails to produce a public that is alert, critical and capable of vigorous readjustment in the face of overwhelming danger, is to be seen in the newspapers that satisfy the Tewler public, the arguments and slogans that appeal to it, the advertisements that succeed with it, the stuff it swallows. It is a press written by Homo Tewler for Homo Tewler all up and down the scale. The Times Tewler, the Daily Mail Tewler, the Herald, the Tribune the Daily Worker; there is no difference except a difference in scale and social atmosphere. Through them all ran the characteristic Tewler streak of wilful ignorance, deliberate disingenuousness and self-protective illusion.

The opening phase of world catastrophe took Edward Albert completely by surprise.

A slogan that dominated the English world at that time was "Safety First." In his childhood, Edward Albert remembered there had been a card with that inscription upon the mantelshelf of his mother's living-room, but that had been a chance anticipation. He could not remember how it had got there or what became of it. The Safety First phase in British history came later, and it was largely due to an organised campaign on the part of the Insurance companies, transport services, and all the great damages-paying corporations, to train the public not to incur damage. It spread through the whole social body; it intensified the respectful feudal tradition that you cannot be too careful if you want to avoid trouble; it infected and dominated the administration of the country; it became the national motto. *Dieu et mon Droit* was felt to be an old-fashioned piece of swagger that might easily get us into difficulties. So that when at last Mr Neville Chamberlain gave up appeasement,

in a fit of exasperation at the unendurable mockery of his umbrella, and declared war, Edward Albert, in common with a very considerable number of his comfortable independent fellow-citizens, made no attempt whatever to join in the fray. He concentrated his thoughts very largely on the discreet husbanding of his investments and whatever safe forms of tax evasion could be discovered.

Throughout the later months of 1939 Tewler England and Tewler France did not so much wage war as evade it. They potted at the enemy from behind the Maginot line and left Poland to its fate. They watched Russia readjust its frontiers in preparation for the inevitable struggle against the common enemy with profound disapproval. That Prince of Tewlers, the young King of the Belgians, obstinately refused to prepare a common front against the gathering onslaught. He was neutral, master in his own country, he insisted, and nothing could happen to him. He uttered a squeal for help when his frontier collapsed upon him and vanished from the scene, and all the King's horses and all the King's men will never restore a Europe that will have any r61e for him again. The military science of France and England required that when an army is outflanked it should either retreat headlong or surrender. When confronted by a pincer-like movement, a soldier and a gentleman abandons his men and material and bolts home, ascribing his defeat to the decadent morals of the time. The British tradition then was a Day of Prayer, But wars are won by ungentlemanly persons who break the recognised rules of war and swear freely. The reaction of Almighty Providence to these Anglican praying bouts was ambiguous. The English and French strategists got themselves soundly licked by tanks, planes and this professional horror of nippers, and they were rather scandalised by the obstinacy of their men who insisted upon going on fighting until disaster took on an appearance of glorious retreat. Goebbels had only to say "Envelopment" or "Penetration", and the confidence of the American and English military experts ran out at their heels. Pétain surrendered France. Until that happened Morningside Prospect had seemed a whole world away from bloodshed and violence. But the French collapse sent a shock through the villas. Newspapers fluttered at the garden gates and men sat in the golf club house with grave faces and stopped to talk war upon the tees. The Prospect had felt

very stout-hearted about the U-boat sinkings and the German sea raiders. Its confidence in our navy was uncritical and complete. It gloried vicariously when the ship-saving instincts of the Admiralty were outraged by the Ajax and the Achilles, and Nelson came down from his aloofness in Trafalgar Square to revive the traditions of mutinous in-fighting. Morningside had never believed that our island frontiers could be scaled. And then came a positive air invasion of Britain. This scared and impressed the Prospect very badly, and it was only a year later that a belated but well-written pamphlet told them and the world all about the Battle of Britain. What was more obvious was that air raids were increasing at a great pace and that the Battle of the Atlantic was affecting the grocers' bills. There had been black-out regulations in operation after November 1939, but the Prospect had never taken them very seriously until the autumnal raids of 1940. Then the mutual watchfulness of the neighbours was stimulated to the pitch of acerbity. Mr Copper of Caxton, in spite of his mature years, almost had a fight with a young fool on leave who was actually smoking a cigarette! outside one of the Celestial Prospect villas, and he followed this up by a denunciatory visit to the Brighthampton Police. The Brighthampton Police asked Mr Copper if he couldn't perhaps do something to help, instead of just giving trouble,

Mr Copper was before all things a clear-headed man.

"It's come to a point when people like us have got to look after things a bit," he said to Mr Pildington. "We ought to have some sort of Vigilantes about."

Mr Pildington thought there ought to be a Committee of Public Safety. "There's people," he said, "been coming up air raid nights and sleeping out on the links. It isn't safe. It isn't — orderly. We ought to call a meeting." In a week the idea was well in hand. There was a suggestion that either Sir Humbert Compostella or Lord Foundry, formerly Sir Adrian von Stahlheim, be made chairman, but Sir Humbert, it seemed, was on a mission to America for an indefinite period, with his entire family, to organise American and British trade relations, and Lord Foundry was too deeply occupied with the production of munitions to be able to spare the time. He was known to advocate the production of tanks of the land ironclad type

on a large scale, but so far the British military authorities had only been badly defeated twice by these unsportsmanlike weapons, and Lord Foundry had an up-hill job to put his ideas into operation. By the summer of '41, however, he was making the country tank-conscious. But I anticipate. The meeting was in October, '40. There was some doubt about inviting Mr Droop to the meeting.

"I can't stand that leg-pulling of his," said Mr Copper, "when it comes to serious things." But liberal ideas prevailed and Mr Droop came to the meeting and didn't bring up any nasty remarks about Sir Oswald Mosley or anything unpleasant of that sort. Indeed in some ways he was almost helpful.

The Committee met and passed several resolutions. They would employ the two jobbing gardeners who worked the Prospect as night watchmen and they would make a subscription to the Local Defence Volunteers. They then dispersed, thinking heavily. "I don't like the way things are going," said Edward Albert to his Mary. "I feel somehow we ought to be doing more about it."

"What could you do?" asked Mary.

"I think we ought to have drilling on the links."

"They'd cut up the greens," said Mary.

"We could keep 'em off the greens," said Edward Albert.

"We could keep a member on the links to see to that."

The Local Defence Volunteers became a useful receptacle for elderly military men conversant with the tactics of fifty years ago, but still anxious to impart ideas of duty, discipline, social respect and restrain the notorious panic possibilities of the lower orders. Presently the Volunteers were actually drilling, three days a week, with sticks and old rifles, while representatives of the committee watched over the amenities of the links.

These formidable preparations were subjected to a certain amount of ungenerous criticism by people who had seen something of the fighting in Spain, France, Holland and elsewhere, and after due consideration the military authorities issued their white armlets and changed their names to the Home Guard, H.G.s.

The larger and richer British Tewlers had always had a profound and perhaps justifiable fear of an armed population, and for a time it was debated whether such weapons as were available ought not to be

kept under armed guard at some strategic point and only actually issued to the men when the invader was already in ^he country. Time enough then for a policeman or somebody to knock them up and tell them what was afoot. In the event of German troops actually appearing, the Home Guard was to communicate the sinister news to the nearest policeman, who would act according to the printed instructions which in most cases had not yet been delivered to him. All road signs were removed, all maps called in, and every arrangement made for any British forces that might be in being, to get hopelessly lost in their own country.

Meanwhile the detonations of the war mounted to new levels of horror and violence. The ever-mounting flames advanced more and more closely towards Edward Albert. He found his own anxiety reflected in the faces of his neighbours, He talked in his sleep. He dreamt of a gigantic figure, the War God Mars, but rather like Lord Kitchener in the early posters, pointing a vast forefinger at him. "What is that fellow there doing? I want him"

It was no good pleading his defective health. He had already gone down to a Brighthampton doctor for a thorough overhaul. He had said nothing about it to Mary for fear of alarming her needlessly. He had been stripped, punched, X-rayed, sampled, tested for eyesight (slight astigmatism), everything. "Sound as a bell," said the doctor. "Congratulations. They'll be calling up you forty-twos in no time now,"

"I can't stand by and do nothing," he told Morningside.

"I'm going to qualify for the Home Guard now."

His action brought Mr Droop to the same decision, but Mr Copper and Mr Stannish preferred to do clerical work in Brighthampton that would release younger men for the forces. But the designer of tessellated pavements who had been holding out as a conscientious objector with an unsound lung, was suddenly excited by Edward Albert's example, recanted his objections and joined up for training. His wife was already in uniform as a tram conductor. Mrs Rooter also appeared in an authoritative get-up. She was some sort of accessory policewoman, detailed to protect the stray girlhood of Brighthampton from the immoral impulses that brought them up like moths at twilight to the Prospect Estate. Her flickering electric torch,

her sudden challenge like the voice of conscience, was apt to be belated. “What’s this?” she would say. “You can’t do this, you know, here. You really can’t.”

They had thought otherwise, and more often than not they had.

Naturally enough Edward Albert and his friends discussed the Home Guard from various points of view. At first very few people had considered it as an actual fighting force. It was just another unimplemented threat to Hitler. “Let him come and he’d jolly well see,” was the idea. “We’d see what Jerry would do first and then we’d tackle him,” We were not like these here Frenchies. And so forth.

Mr Copper’s idea was that the job of the Home Guards was first and foremost to keep order and prevent any guerrilla fighting that might provoke Jerry to reprisals. “Don’t give him an excuse,” said Mr Copper. “And when the war is over you’ll be a sort of supplementary police to suppress strikers and mutineers and all that sort of thing. The country’s bound to be in a rotten state.”

But Mr Droop held that when the war began to turn at last against Germany we might send an expeditionary force into Europe (“God help us!” said Mr Stannish), and then the Home Guards would have to defend the country against any counter-raids. So it ought to be armed and trained as a real modern fighting force. Apparently that was being done in some parts of the country, but not in others. There was, said the authorities, “considerable local autonomy.” That is to say, the authorities suffered from the common characteristic of Homo Tewler the whole world over, an undetermined confusion of ideas. So long as they behaved with a certain mean discretion, the particular things they did were of secondary importance.

Throughout the early months of ‘41, the Brighthampton Home Guard was a black-out and curfew Home Guard. Then came a violent change of policy. Somewhere higher up, there was positive knowledge that Jerry had carefully worked-out plans for an experimental raid on the Brighthampton district. There was to be a try-out in the Cretan fashion with parachutists and crashed troop carriers. There was to be a support of small swift craft. The British were in possession of the German plans a month ahead of the event. At a stroke preparations became swift, secret and competent.

Suddenly Canadian and some Polish troops appeared in the district in a sort of unobtrusive abundance, and the local Home Guard reinforced by specially trained key men, was put through a course of combatant training at headlong speed.

"Practically I'm a guerrilla so'jer," said Edward Albert to his wife. "Think of it I If I see a German I've got to shoot him or disarm him and he has the right to shoot me at sight, if he sees me first. It isn't at all the sort of thing I'm good at. I've said that very likely I'd be much more useful somewhere else. And now they're asking for you to come and help with this here camouflage. They paint a chap up so's he don't look like anything on earth, green and black and great dabs like cow droppings and things. They say I've got to paint my face and hands green. Then I've got to crawl about there on the links with a rifle, ready to take up a position and pot at them when they come."

"Maybe they won't come."

"We got to be ready."

"The world's gone mad," said Mary Tewler, and added after reflection; "I suppose we got to 'umour it."

So she camouflaged Edward Albert until you might have trodden on him before you realised he was there.

IV. — HEROIC MOMENT

INCH by inch Edward Albert was sucked nearer and nearer towards the vortex of this ever more frightful war. He who had always dressed so carefully, became a jumble of garbage crouching on the links, a flattened Jack on the Green....

If you had told him late in 1940, that in a year's time he would be an invisible man crawling through the midst of a raid to some position of comparative personal security, with a deafening anti-aircraft barrage beating the wits out of him, and flares and parachutists and a number of gigantic troop carriers raining down upon him, he would probably have contrived some minor mutilation that would have absolved him from any active participation in that sort of thing A vague self-reproach floundered through the thudding and jumping in his brain.

"Bloody fool I been," he muttered. u Never saw a thing ahead."

That was his state of mind, within ten minutes of the moment that transfigured him into a national hero.

What happened was very simple. Tucked up at last under a bunker, Edward Albert felt secure from anything but a direct hit. There he could abide the issue, prepared to emerge either for surrender or the cheering when comparative quiet was restored. And then he became aware of men crawling discreetly up the other side of the bunker. He screwed his head round to look at them and perceived a gleam of bayonets. There were at least three of them. The heads whispered and waited for an interval. Then one of these shadowy men fired a shot at something ahead and a second jumped down within a yard of Edward Albert and pointed. They began to talk very rapidly — in Polish. But to Edward Albert, Polish and German were all one. The next man might tread on him and he'd be bayonetted for a certainty. They'd all stick their bayonets into him. With a wild yell he leapt to his feet and ran. They shouted something and ran after him. And right ahead he saw a group of dark figures struggling with parachutes and encumbrances. And they too were shouting German!

Germans behind him, Germans before him, and no quarter!

I have told my story badly if I have given you the impression that

Edward Albert was an abject coward. Probably no human being who is properly nourished is that. Young children are easily terrified, but I am speaking of adults.

I have shown you a human being growing up in a debasing and discouraging social atmosphere, so that he was not so much born mean as had had meanness thrust upon him. All Edward Albert's story, like the true story of every human being, is a story of resentments and rebellions, cramped and limited though they were. You have seen how he broke through his discretions and astonished Horry Budd. You have seen him astonishing the female of his species. Now, cornered as he imagined himself to be and hopeless, he broke through his cowering "instinct of self-preservation", as they call it, altogether, and revealed himself a thing of frantic violence. His yell became a yell of despair and hatred. He leapt upon his fate. His green face and fluttering scraps of garbage bounding out of the night amidst the concussions of the battle must have had a nightmare effect upon those fumbling and uncertain young Nazis. He whirled his rifle round his head, smiting these dismayed and entangled men to the earth, beating them down, heedless of their belated cries of "Kamerad!" He had killed four men and disabled seven others before the three Poles who had been running after him came up to complete his victory.

"While we were waiting for supports to come up," they testified, "he leapt out of the ground at our feet, shouted to us to follow him, and rushed the position the enemy detachment was trying to consolidate...."

It became apparent to Edward Albert that he was having his hand shaken by a Polish officer who spoke some English. The climax of the uproar within his brain and without, was past. Slowly but surely the realisation of what he had done dawned upon him.

He rearranged the facts with the same readiness with which he had accepted his triumph in the annual cricket match. The sunrise revealed the complete failure of the German attempt to test the strength of the Brighthampton coast defences. They had established no foothold. The mopping-up was over and there had been remarkably few casualties among the defenders. Mostly these had occurred among the exposed gunners on the beach beyond Casing

East Cliff. A minimised account of the whole affair — lest panic be created — was released in the one o'clock bulletin. And Edward Albert, his heroism further developed by a liberal experience of Polish vodka, returned, weary, excessively dirty, drunk and triumphant to his home. Mr Droop and the pavement designer had preceded him. They had reported that he had been in the thick of the fighting with some Poles and Canadians, but he had not been hurt, they had seen him afterwards drinking at the Polish canteen, and so Mary and the whole of battle-scarred Morningside (for there were scores of broken windows) were out to receive him,

He was not singing, but if you had seen him on a silent film you would have thought he was singing. There was song in his gestures. He looked less like the seemly, almost punctiliously dressed golfer for whom she did her wifely duty than an intoxicated piece of hedge.

As he drew near her, and the neighbours closed in around him, he uttered these words.

"We mopped 'em up," he said.

"Taint all you've mopped up," said Mrs Tewler,

"Them Poles are so'jers and gent'men. Gent'men, mind you. They're the boys! Nat'lly I had to have a drop with them. This vodka.... Cleanest drink I ever 'ad...."

"Tell us all about it," said Mr Pildington.

"Not till he's had a wash and a rest," said Mrs Tewler.

"He's fairly done up."

"I'm fairly done up," said this staggering mass of garbage, leaning heavily upon her. She guided him home,

"I'm so glad they didn't hurt him," she said. "He hasn't got a scratch."

As she mothered him through his bath and into his bed, he was partly asleep and partly meditative on his own astonishing exploits.

"I let 'em have it — right and left....

"Get out of England, I says, you come to the wrong place...

"Just me with these Jerries — they don't know 'ow to fight Gaw knows what they thought they were doing— "Kamerad, he says, Kamerad! One chap I 'it. Fat lot of Kamerad 'e got out of me...."

In the course of twenty-four hours Edward Albert reappeared in the world of men clean and in his right uniform, as anxious as

anyone to learn the particulars of the great fight he had been in. His camouflage suit had been injured beyond repair, and his wife was reconstructing it. Stephen Crane, when he wrote his Red Badge of Courage, found that what he got from the ordinary veteran of the American Civil War, was what the man had read about his battles in the newspapers. That had served to rationalise and give phrases for his own fierce jumble of memories. Edward Albert was in an exactly parallel state of mind. His reconstruction of his story was greatly facilitated by the romantic generosity of the gallant Polish officer, only too anxious to give an Englishman credit for leadership in the little affair, and only too eager to elaborate the story with all and sundry, over a glass or so of vodka. In spite of the Ministry of Information, a rumour that a real Cretan air landing had been repulsed at Brighthampton spread to London. About ten days later a "postcript" upon the London wireless told the Polish officer's version of the story, suppressing all names and dates, and the incident was cabled in appreciative terms to America, to illustrate the invincible spirit of the ordinary unpretending Englishman. Edward Albert began to realise where he stood now in the world's esteem. He was the ordinary unpretending Englishman, who had to be stung to show his mettle; and then it was he thought of his chosen epitaph, "Deeds not Words ."

Only in one quarter did he feel the chill breath of scepticism and that was where a happy husband might least expect it. She listened; she asked no questions; but she made him fed unreal even to himself.

So that when at last the people up there decided to mark their appreciation of the Brighthampton incident by a temperate distribution of honours, and the George's Cross fell to Edward Albert, it was Mary to whom he hurried first.

"I don't deserve it," he said

"Don't deserve what?"

"I only did what any Englishman would have done."

She waited patiently.

"It's really meant for the whole platoon of us. It's what I have to wear for all of them."

"You can't wear it until it's dry."

"Wear what?"

“That camouflage.”

“I wasn’t talking of that. No. Mary! They’re going to give me the George’s Cross, The George’s Cross for courage. Aren’t you glad?”

“If it’s a pleasure to you, Teddy.”

“But it’s wonderful, Mary! Don’t you see how wonderful it is?”

“It’s wonderful. Yes.... There’s no telling what they won’t do next,” said Mary.

V. — THE END OF HOMESTEAD

MRS TEWLER, for reasons that she never made clear, refused to go up to Buckingham Palace and see her husband decorated by the King. "It isn't anything *I* did," she said "All I did was to camouflage your clothes and hope you wouldn't get into trouble. I shouldn't know what to do or where to look up there. I suppose we should be pushed about by a lot of dressed-up officials in uniforms and orders and stars and stared at by Princes and Court Ladies watching us like animals, watching to see how we took it. There'll be the King wearing his crown and the Queen wearing hers, and I'd be so worked up that if either of their crowns got a bit cock-eyed I'd have hysterics. You don't want your wife to have hysterics, do you, Teddy? I'm afraid of that. And I'm afraid of those other women we shall meet, all those poor souls, widows who've lost their men and mothers who've lost their sons, being made a show of, and us — just glorying. I couldn't look them other women in the face. No. It would be indecent of us, Teddy, King or no King...."

It crept into Edward Albert's mind, almost for the first time in his married life, that perhaps Mary had "ideers." But he dismissed the horrid thought forthwith. No. Mary was shy. She was not sure of herself and she saw the whole business in the wrong colours. It was going to be much more like shaking hands. She had to be reassured and laughed out of these notions. So he began by being instructive and persuasive, and it was only as her inflexible firmness gave no sign of yielding to his urgency that he passed on to deep offence.

"Oh, what's the good of argument?" he cried. "I understand. *Don't* I understand! Whatever I was or whatever I did, I don't believe you'd take a pride in me."

But Mrs Tewler was a wise woman and she preferred an inexpressive silence to repartee.

She spoke again presently. "I couldn't get any sort of proper dress made in time, and you'd be the last person to have me go shabby. With all them photographers about, not to mention their Majesties."

"I've never grudged your dress allowance," said Edward Albert. "Now *have* I? And mostly you've spent it getting treats for that boy."

“It’s my fault,” said Mrs Tewler. “But that won’t make dresses now. It’s all been so sudden.”

“*Can’t* you do something? It’s for you I want to go morn’ myself. Shabby or not shabby; I’d like to say, ‘This is the woman I owe everything to, bar my mother. She’s made me what I am to-day. I’d tell my story to the interviewer chaps. Love Story of a ‘Ero. They’d take your portrait and put it in all the papers. One on the eye for Mrs Evangeline, eh? She’s bound to see it somewhere. I been thinking of that all along.”

Even that triumph did not allure Mary.

“No, you don’t mean to come,” he said at last at a climax of exasperation. “You don’t mean to come and you won’t. D’rectly I answer one objection, you make another. You can be as obstinate as a mule, Mary, as obstinate and unreasonable. You don’t seem to realise what all this means to me. You don’t care. I did all this for you — I said to myself, whatever danger there is, whatever happens I won’t let Mary down. And then — you let me down. All the other fellows will be there with their loved ones about them. People will say ‘Oo’s this fellow? Lonely bachelor? Oh no, he’s got a wife but she didn’t care to come.’ Didn’t care to come! Think of it. Think of the disloyalty. Royal command it is practically. ‘Yes, Your Majesty, I got a wife but she didn’t care to come!’”

Mrs Tewler might have been listening to a dramatic rehearsal.

“You’ll get over it, Teddy,” she said, after his last poignant phrase. “You’d better let me pack your bag for you. I’ll put up your shaving things, but you’d better get a shave in the hotel in the morning. You might cut yourself in your excitement....”

So he went to London alone and indignant. The morning paper said that enemy activity over this country for the previous night had been inconsiderable. A few bombs had been dropped and there had been a certain destruction of house property and a casualty or so in one south coast town. Nothing much. But the house property in question was Homestead, and the chief casualties were Mary Tewler, one of her cats and the general servant next door. Mr Pildington of Johore had been blown off his feet and was suffering from contusions, and Caxton was badly damaged.

Mary Tewler recovered consciousness in the afternoon. She said

she wanted to see her son. She did not know precisely where he was, but she thought his battalion was in Wales. She gave all the particulars.

"We'll trace him, my dear," said the sister in charge.

"They do that sort of thing now wonderfully. "But — your husband, Mrs Tewler?"

"Not so urgent. Plenty of time for that. He's in London. He's being decorated by the King," she said. "Don't spoil it for him by upsetting him. There's plenty of time. It won't matter for a day or so. I just feel numb you know. And tired."

The sister in charge became a person of infinite delicacy.

"I think your husband ought to be told now."

"You mean I'm worse than I think?"

"No need to deceive a brave woman like you. We're doing all we can for you,"

Mary shut her eyes and thought. Then she spoke.

"Telegram?"

"Yes."

"If I could see it—"

On these conditions she gave the name of the Palace Hotel at Victoria.

The telegram Edward Albert received informed him that his wife, very gravely injured by enemy action, was in Brighthampton Emergency Hospital. Mary had proposed to omit "very", but the request was tactfully forgotten.

"Gaw!" said Edward Albert. "It's like a Judgment. If only she'd have listened to reason! If only! If only...."

Then for a time he sat quite still. "Mary," he whispered. Something quivered within him, a deeper distress for which his habits of mind gave him no form of expression.

"Maybe it's not so bad." One mustn't give way to "ideers" in war time. "They don't take risks," he reflected.

He sent his telegram after a meditative tea. "Must be at Palace, special command of His Majesty, to-morrow as arranged. Will be with you before six. Teddy."

But just before his supreme moment, that deeper stir within him, that undeveloped possibility of feeling, overwhelmed him again, and

he sobbed. Of course she ought to have been here. He was astonished at his sob....

At the hospital they told him Mary was dying, and even then the reality did not seem to be real.

“Is she hurting?” he said.

“She’s numb. Her body is paralysed.”

“That’s good,” he said.

He found his son had preceded him at the hospital.

“He wanted to sit with her to the end but I thought better not,” said the sister in charge. “It’s an effort for her to speak. She’s troubled in her mind about something.”

“Has she been asking for me?”

“She wants to see you very much. She’s asked three times.”

That again distressed him inexpressibly. Somehow he ought to have been there.

“We had a sort of little difference,” said Edward Albert, trying to put unspeakable things into words. “Nothing reely — just a tiff you might say. I expect now she’s sorry she didn’t come and she wants to hear all about it.” (Sob).

“She must want to hear all about it. If only she’d come,....”

But that was not what was worrying Mary.

Their conversation was at cross-purposes,

“Promise me something,” she said unheeded.

“It was wonderful, Mary,” said Edward Albert. “Wonderful. Not a bit pompous. Not a bit high and mighty.”

“He’s your son.”

“Royal and democratic. Marvellous.”

“Don’t let anyone set you against him, Teddy. Don’t do that,” said the fading voice.

He did not hear what she was saying, for the glorious story he had prepared filled his mind.

He expatiated on the approach to Buckingham Palace; the crowd; the polite way in which he was picked out and asked in; how there were fellows taking snapshots and some cheering.

“Promise me,” she murmured. “Promise me.” They were her last words.

“The King was there and the Queen. Naturally. Such a nice young

unaffected feller. No crowns for him. And her with that sort of jollying smile of hers. Nothing stuck-up about her. Oh! I wish you could have been there and seen how. different it was from what you supposed. It might have been a tea party rather than a court ceremony. And yet all the time a sort of dignity. You felt, here is something that will go on, the heart of a great empire like . . . All the time I was thinking of you and how I'd come back and tell you everything. But I wish you could have been there to see. Yes, yes. If you'd been there.

"I 'urried down to show it to you. And here it is, Mary. Here it is...."

For a few seconds she stared at her husband's evident self-satisfaction as though it was something strange to her and then as steadfastly at the cross in his hand. She made no further effort to speak. Slowly her interest faded. She closed her eyes like a tired child. She closed them on him and on this clumsy stupid world for ever....

Presently the sister put a hand on his arm,

"She was such a wife to me." said Edward Albert, sobbing freely. "What I shall do without her I don't know."

Sob, "Oh! I reely don't know. I'm glad I was able to show her this. I am glad of that.... It ain't much. It's something; isn't it?.... Something to show her...."

The nurse let him have his cry out.

He found his son in a mood of lethargic misery in the corridor. He had travelled all night for a last glimpse of her. "She's gone, my boy," said Edward Albert. "Our Mary. I was just able to show it to her before she closed her eyes."

"Show what to her?" asked Henry.

Edward Albert held out the decoration.

"Oh! that," said Henry, and lapsed into himself again.

BOOK VI.. GOD, SATAN AND HOMO TEWLER

I.— "TEWLER" TO "SAPIENS"

THAT completes all that is essential in the life of Edward Albert Tewler, his Deeds and Significant Sayings. But before this specimen human being can be put definitively into its place, in space, in time, among the stars, and Finis written to this book, a few possibly exasperating comments have still to be made on the nature of the universe and the wisdom of the ages. The reader was warned of this in the penultimate paragraph of the Introduction (q.v.).

Certain types of Homo Tewler, functioning under the designations of philosophers, theologians, teachers and the like, are still regarded with an excessive awe and far too readily accepted at their own valuation by the great majority of our race. They are like business, firms, competing among themselves for a monopoly, but agreed in selling God, Truth and Righteousness into the Tewler soul precisely as the proprietary medicine sellers sold their bottlefuls into Mrs Richard Tewler's body. Not too confidently. Most of them betray a doubt of their own reality by dressing up in strange apologetic garments, gowns, hoods, robes, the oddest tiaras, mitres, petticoats and the like, shaving their heads, growing vast unclean beards, as who should say, "I am peculiar. I am not a man but a divine medium."

I ask you; a medium for what?

For philosophy? But can there be more than one single philosophy for sane humanity? And can that philosophy be so outside the limits of the human understanding that it is necessary to dress up like a Gold Coast witch-doctor to expound that high hokey-pokey? Since poor rambling Homo sub-sapiens began to put facts together and ask questions about them, he has been accumulating a vast disorder of answers, right, wrong and oblique. Mostly they are oblique. His so-called "thinkers" were overtaken either by death or a conviction of indisputable Tightness, before they had thought anything out. The history of human thought is essentially a history of human error, of a midden that has never been thoroughly cleaned. Accumulation is the word for it. Never in all recorded time down to this last syllable, has that mass been submitted to an honest, sustained, digestive process.

Its unassimilated chunks become "classics ." The student of philosophy doing "Greats" or whatever pompous name is given to this stale resurrection pie, is introduced to a jumble of incompatible ideas, a mixture of bits from different jig-saw puzzles; incoherence as wisdom. Our story of Edward Albert has shown reason why we still wait for a comprehensive clean-up. The little beast by the million blocks the way. But that clean-up has to come, if the transition to sapiens is ever to be attained.

And as with philosophy, so with religion. Religion is the binding system of ideas and practices which holds a community together. Obviously then, a healthy community can have only one religion, and now that distance has been abolished and mankind has become an interdependent world-wide community, there can be only one religion in the world. There can be no "religious toleration" in a sane world community. Your community needs to be bound by a common understanding, and you cannot allow organisations of priestly kidnappers to attack the social solidarity because they have a Church to sell.

The religion a world community needs is a very simple one. It cannot hold together without a dogmatic assertion of the supreme duty of outspoken truth, of the common ownership of the earth and the equal rights of man. So long, as people accept these fundamental dogmas, for dogmas they are, albeit vitally necessary dogmas, there is nothing to prevent folks elaborating whatever novel or antiquarian ceremonies or mythologies they have a mind for, or discussing in adult freedom any seditious ideas that occur to them. In a reasonably educated world, there would be no justification for suppressing the private sessions of the Jewish Khans or a Hell Fire Club or adult baptism, or Hitler's astrologer or a celebration of the mass or a spiritualistic séance. So long as those who indulged in these oddities did not organise a propaganda of them and sell them to impair the general mental balance of the human community. But to tamper with the trustful minds of the young or the informative organisation of the world, is quite a different matter.

So we come to the problem of world teaching. This is certainly the most formidable problem ahead of us. For that old slattern, our Mother Nature, who has let one thing lead to another until we are

now in a single world community, has neglected to give us any individual or collective drive for an education that will reconcile us to that conscious adaptation our situation demands. She has failed to mitigate our obstinate indisposition to learn. Homo Tewler may yet perish miserably *en masse* because of his fear of a plunge into reality. He holds on to his sinking ship; he looks at the dark waters and runs back to lock himself in his mental cabin with the sedatives the clerical salesman has persuaded him to trust. Yet time and again men of exceptional penetration have attempted to launch a recognition of universal brotherhood, of a new generosity and a co-operative life upon the world, as the only possible salvation for our species. It is not a new realisation. Now, indeed, it is finally urgent, but it has been plainly necessary to men of clear vision for scores of centuries. Nineteen centuries ago, Jesus of Nazareth, last, most indignant and most revolutionary of the Hebrew prophets, beating the money-changers and cursing the barren fig tree, was, so far as we can disinter his doctrine from subsequent accretions, preaching the gospel of human solidarity as his "Kingdom of Heaven", and the socialist movement, before Marx undermined it, was an equally disinterested drive towards a sane salvation of our Tewler world.

There is-much to be learnt about the psychology of the animal we are, from the fate of these two initiatives. They were caught and crippled and destroyed by the sub-conscious malice of their first generation of disciples. Paul took possession of Jesus and smothered him in doctrinal Christianity, and in a little while that noble beginning had sunken to the wangling of the "Fathers." It was not the Galilean who triumphed over the pagan stoicism of Julian. It was Paul who conquered. It was the fundamental Tewlerism of mankind that asserted itself against a precocious stirring of Homo sapiens. In the same way Marx imposed an orthodoxy upon the socialist impulse, and infected it with his own conceit, jealousy and arrogance.

Corruptio optima, pessima. To-day the most evil thing in the whole world is the Roman Catholic Church, whose shameless symbol is Jesus the Son of Man, drooping, crucified and done for. Wherever the Catholic priest prevails, among the decadent pious French generals of the surrender, in Croatia, in Japan, in Spain, in

that spite-slum, Eire, in Italy, in South America, in Australia, there you find malicious mischief afoot against the enlightenment of mankind. People have called Catholicism a cancer of the human mind. But it is no such neoplasm; it is congenital; it is the organised front of that base heritage of the Tewlers, from which we are seeking Escape. It had no revelation; to claim a revelation is priestly impudence; it is the most natural religion possible, mean and muddle-witted, human to the dregs, pretending to be divine.

The Communist Party is the identical twin of Catholicism. It is its little left brother, psychologically the same. Inevitably the two work together for the same general frustration of human hope. They gratify the same resentful craving of the inferiority complex that we have traced throughout the life of our particular specimen. They arc; the same sort of animal as he. Never shall life be better than my life! they insist.

In view of these two great betrayals, we may reasonably doubt the possibility of a world-wide common education that will raise and keep Homo Tewler above himself. Whatever a few far-seeing people may attempt, it will surely be undermined and defeated by those who will come in and be brought into the great work. "You can't expect humanity to pull itself up by its own shoe-straps," tee-hees Mr Chamble Pewter triumphantly. "Forgive my sense of humour."

But obstinate rebels exist who will not accept that. They argue, for instance, that already there has been at least one drive in this Tewler world, the onset of what it is customary nowadays to call Science with a capital S, which has so far evaded priestcraft or any sort of authoritarian suffocation. This Science has revolutionised the material conditions of human life, and it behoves us to examine how it sprang up and what exactly it is. No miracle begot it. It had no Founder. It began in a natural Adlerian revolt against the overbearing religious dogmatisms of the Middle Ages. Against their exasperating self-confidence, the recalcitrants, unable to take it meekly any longer, and casting about for some means of self-assertion, discovered to their delight certain incompatibilities between the teaching and facts, and summoned a new arbitrator, experimental verification, to justify their revolt. It is absurd to ennoble the driving force of that new movement. We cannot afford to sentimentalise Science; Roger

Bacon, so far as our knowledge of him goes, never said, “I love truth,” or “What noble thing can I do for my fellow-men?” or in a state of pious helpfulness, “Let me discover something for the greater glory of God.” He did nothing of the sort; and anyhow the essential thing about him was something quite different; he lost his temper. He endured the philosophical assurance about him as long as he could, and then flung himself at a weak point, abusively and violently, and made the most of it. There was really no essential difference between the motives of Roger Bacon when he put out his tongue at the medieval Aristotle and young Master Edward Albert Tewler when he put out his tongue at the serene self-satisfaction of the lion in the Zoo.

Galileo again, was no visitant from a higher sphere; he was as human as any of us. But the complacent finality of the Church about everything in heaven and earth was too much for him. He published his forbidden book to make those who were set in authority 6ver him realise just what damned fools they were. He could not keep quiet. They argued with him, they made him recant and keep a civil tongue in his bead, but they knew and he knew that they knew. “All the same, it moves,” he jeered at their dignified efforts to nail the earth down again, the earth that Copernicus and he had dislodged and sent spinning off round the sun for ever.

It is very important for our purpose here to recall this essential resentful Tewlerism of the scientific initiative, because then we can realise that great truths can and do emerge and increase without the agency of great minds, exalted discoverers or the like, Through a quite ignoble recalcitrance. It was Tewler insubordinate against Tewler in authority. Scientific progress oozes out of the general substance of Tewlerism, and its outstanding personalities, so liable to deification, are a hindrance rather than a help.

But this does not explain why these new expansions of the human outlook were not presently seized upon and exploited and betrayed by some creed-maker like St Paul, followed up by the usually inevitable priesthood. For that we must account in some other way. It is not so very difficult to do that. Science began differently. It began less as a public teaching than as a hobby. And it did not invade more than a limited part of the field of modern life and thought, and that

was a part of the field remote from the primordial scuffle for pride and power. It began completely out of politics, and it raised no objections to current religious and social life. The Royal Society, like the Academia dei Lincei, was a society of gentlemen amateurs who met unobtrusively and exchanged their sceptical observations, their entertaining Centuries of Inventions and so forth, and published their Philosophical Transactions more or less privately. In those days they did not use the word "Science." It was Natural Philosophy and Natural History they talked about.

The Royal Society was a toy for Charles II, and it was only as the nineteenth century unfolded that mankind realised that this pet tiger cub was growing into a rather formidable monster. It stuck its claws through the gaiters of Bishop Wilberforce with great effect, when he launched a Tewleresque kick at it. It was that memorable encounter of "Soapy Sam" and Grandfather Huxley at the British Association meeting which made the "Conflict of Religion and Science" a fighting issue. Then it was that the great vested interest of Anglicanism, which, in spite of the resistances of nonconformity and dissent, had been selling the Hanoverian Church-and-State system to the variegated population of the British Empire very successfully, took alarm, and the competing nostrum-sellers of Roman Catholicism and the Bible-reading sects, made common cause with it. This young tiger was biting mouthfuls out of the Creator! A Creator was an integral asset in their common equipment; they could not have him eroded and damaged; they could not do without him.

It is plausible to liken Science to a young tiger in this way, but that comparison needs to be qualified. Science may claw or bite upon occasion, but essentially it is the product of a protean anonymous power, and if in certain circumstances it took on the appearance of a dangerous assailant, it eluded any definitive suppression by its extraordinary lack of centralised organisation. It had no head to strike off, no sanctum to burn. There were no consolidated funds to be seized. It arose from the world-wide natural recalcitrance of the human mind. It was here. It was there. Like a dawn. And wherever it spread, the critical spirit in man was stimulated and encouraged to further insubordination.

So the struggle against Science is not so much an attempt to

uproot and end something tangible and uprootable, as a world-wide disposition on the part of the great vested interests that overshadow our lives and sell us God, government and war to-day, to prevent an undesired and unexpected illumination reaching die general mass of mankind.

In this they have succeeded to a disconcerting extent. You have been told how a sample young Englishman, fifty years after Darwin, could dispose of his relationship to Tarsius and the apes with an oafish guffaw, still believing that he and all things were made, as one might mould clay, by a personal God rather resembling Mr Myame but with a whiter and woollier beard, a little muddled in his identity with an extremely mawkish Saviour who was also his Son, a phosphorescent pigeon intervening. ("Mystery of the Holy Trinity," comes an echo from Edward Albert. "'Ands off sacred things! 'Oly! 'Oly! 'Oly! People won't tol'rate you saying things like that, and if God was anything like what he used to be, you'd be struck dead for it instanter")

Which belated outbreak of Edward Albert's is exactly why I write with ruthless precision here. The words I have used describe Christian doctrine unconventionally but exactly as it is presented by the Church and Christian art. If my phrases shock the reader, that only shows it is high time.he or she was shocked. The doctrine of the Trinity is, I repeat, atrocious nonsense. Yet all over the English-speaking world, children's minds are still being paralysed by the injection of this same atrocious nonsense. You can hear the bland voices of the parsons in the British Broadcasting Corporation's Children's Hour, telling the old Bible stories as truth, telling of real angels and real miracles, of resurrections and marvels of the utmost absurdity, lying deliberately to earn their livings.

"You talk like the Village Atheist," protests Bishop Tewler, being as upper-class and socially subtle as he knows how. "All that, we understand quite as well as you do, is just a series of time-honoured stories, dear bewtiful old symbols." The village atheist was often the salt of the village; and I am proud to rank with him. I had rather jest with him at the public house than dine at the Bishop's Palace and be lubricated. Have the common people been told that these tales are just symbols? And what do they understand them to symbolise?

When we think of readapting mankind to a world of unity and co-operation, we have to consider that practically all the educational machinery on earth, is still in the hands of God-selling or Marx-selling combines. Everywhere in close co-operation with our nationalist governments, the oil and steel interests, our drug salesmanship and so forth, the hirelings of these huge religious concerns, with more or less [allegiance?] and loyalty, are selling destruction to mankind.

To those italics I will return after a paragraph or so. Plainly if the mind of the world needs urgently to be reconditioned, this is on the face of it a very dismaying state of affairs. And it is not even a practicable suggestion merely to utter the magic word "Science ." Is it really Science we have in mind when we think of a reorganised and mentally reconditioned world? Or are we taking the advancement of Science merely as the sample of the process of sustained free rationalisation, a process capable of a much wider extension to human affairs in general?

Science, as we know it now, gathers prestige as its scope extends, and as the need for experimental teamwork and rapid interchanges increases, it seems to be losing much of its early immunity from interference and perversion. It does not hold power but it creates it now in enormous volume. It has completely revolutionised war, but it has not abolished it. A hundred years ago and scientific research was still mainly a free private activity and science could get along as. that, Now it cannot do so. Now it is open and exposed and continually more vulnerable, and every salesman in the world is trying to attach it and profit by it. But he still finds a difficulty in its essentially protean quality.

The attitude of militant Germany to Science is peculiarly interesting. The bulk of the German people has been disciplined to acquiescence for centuries. That rebellious factor which breaks out in new discoveries and creative inventions has been well nigh drilled out of them. On the other hand, as part of their disposition to subservience, they have a greater respect for scientific achievement than any other people, with the possible exception of the new Russians. They want to capture it and make it their own. So that they will follow up and do more with suggestions and leading ideas that

come to them from abroad than almost any other people The theory of National Socialism, and especially its intense racialism, is pseudo-scientific. Homo Tewler var. Germanicus is far less hostile on principle to knowledge and new ideas than are the pluto-Christian democracies.

The group of adventurers, bored by inferiority, who, with such remarkable success, have been selling the world death by unending totalitarian Var, and incidentally having a glorious time, have no use for the religious appeal. They find it a dead appeal. They get better results by producing pseudo-scientific generalisations. Relativity is taboo in Germany, possibly because Hess and Hitler, the joint authors of Man Kampf, were unfitted to understand it, and so were embittered by it, but mainly because its main exponent was a Jew, It was, they declared, not "Nordic." And in the place of it we were presented with genuine "Nordic" physics. In Hess-Hitler-land Nordic archaeology, Nordic biology and so forth are replacing real archaeology, real biology, etc. In Russia the left priesthood of Communism is attempting a similar strangulation of intellectual life by selling cheap substitutes. Prolet-art, we hear of, and Proletarian chemistry. And a biological worker finds himself driven into exile, to avoid a harsher fate, because "Darwinism" is represented as infringing in some way upon that sacred mystery, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

So far from extending itself into the realms of government and general creative direction, Science as such may be already shrinking back into a subservient position. The continuance of the present scientific process is by no means secure from without or from within. We have seen it assailed and appropriated from without. Within, the specialist, with the mentality of a Greek slave, develops an increasing hostility to the irritating, autocratic-spirited outsider who exasperates him by the broader sweep of his views. He will extinguish him if he can. He will block his interrogative intervention in research organisation. He will take refuge under the wing of authority. The doors of the Royal Society in the days when it was dominated by free-thinking, free-speaking gentlemen have stood open to disturbing ideas, but with the increase in specialisation, there is an increasing disposition for the new sort of scientific worker to

appropriate and canalise for hit own satisfaction the prestige accumulated by the old.

Plainly Science as we know it and so far as it is represented by societies, endowments, chairs, honours, titles, museum collections and the like, can be subjugated and replaced by a parody of itself, and it holds out little promise in itself of fresh and vigorous initiatives in the present human riddle. But the question takes on an entirely different complexion if it is realised that, as I have already been hinting, what we call Science, with its bundle of "ologies", is merely the first harvest of a much wider system of mental motivations which still remains protean, elusive, in the face of systematic opposition, and capable now of rapid destructive processes among our staggering and obsolescent institutions, destruction that will in itself lay bare the broader realities upon which alone world reconstruction can be based. Or to put it in other phrases, there is reason to hope that that same proteus of insubordination which liberated Science, may give us — not a further extension of Science and fresh "ologies", but something greater, a kindred thing, para-science, the next stage of human liberation, world understanding and world revolution, the dawn of sapiens.

This new thrust of the rebellious proteus may be expected to seek and find its own implements and methods in the replacement of the world muddle of Homo Tewler by the awakening will of sapiens. One thing towards which it is moving even now is the renascence of law upon a world scale. Like medical practice, the legal organisation has been corrupted by the protective professionalism of the old order of things, yet law, even bad, old-fashioned law, rigidly enforced, is an instrument for liberty. The man under law is a man protected from arbitrary violence; he knows clearly beforehand what he may do and what he may not do, and the advance of freedom wherever it has existed in the world has gone on concurrently with the declaration and maintenance of rights. Even our Edward Albert and his Evangeline struggled to express something they called their "rights" of the case, and it is a hopeful augury of revolution that there should be even now a formulated Declaration of Rights approved of by a growing number of intelligent and resentful people, and resisted,

actively or passively, by every existing government on earth. For governing gangs and classes everywhere know what that Declaration means for them. It offers a fundamental law for a touted and reciviiised world, into which their pomps and pretensions will be dissolved, and as the old order of things becomes more and more plainly an intolerable confusion of enslavement and frustration, it will be the sole means of uniting and implementing a thousand storms of resentment. What possible rival can it have? Fraudulent imitations and falsifications may help the diffusion of its suggestions rather than Binder its establishment. Given only a few desperate men, sick with disgust at the tediums and pretences of the Tewler life, and bored to fury by the vistas of aimless, incessant and finally suicidal bloodshed ahead of them, in which they personally can expect no gratification, and there is no reason now why they by the measure of any previous human experience should not put a new face upon reality very rapidly indeed. They need not be idealists nor devotees nor anything of that sort. If they belong to the school of Mr F.'s aunt in *David Copperfield* it is enough. "I hate a fool," said the old lady.

The collaboration of these exasperated men will find infinitely more powerful means of ousting old ideas by new ones than any previous revolutionaries. The Acts of the Apostles were vocal, pedestrian and storm-tossed, and Christianity seeped and changed about the Roman world through a long and confusing adolescence and was one thing here and another there; it took centuries to penetrate the countryside (pagani) or reach the frontiers; even the Marxist propaganda was an affair of books, periodicals, smuggled leaflets, slogans, small lecturing nuclei; but modern mechanism now, as it has developed in the last third of a century, gives all that is needed for a simultaneous diffusion of the same essential ideas and the immediate correction of differences, from end to end of the earth. Even an opposition suggestion spreads at lightning speed, as the German propaganda shows, and quite a small number of men in earnest and in unison could wrench the whole world into acquiescence with a unifying fundamental law.

And when we think of reconditioning the mind of mankind, we need not be dismayed by a vision of ill-lit stuffy classrooms and

millions of half-trained teachers struggling with blackboard and tattered text-book to "teach" scores of millions of children. In a world of plenty all that will be different, and modern apparatus — radio, screen, gramophone and the like — affords the possibility of an enormous economy of teaching ability. One skilful teacher or demonstrator can teach from pole to pole, just as Toscanini can conduct Brahms for all the world to hear, and at the same time go on record for our children's children. All this "canned teaching" will provoke Mr Chamble Pewter's rich sense of humour. I doubt if that will deter those angry rebels who have got their hands upon the levers, and are determined to let the children see and hear and know and hope. Not in any mood of love or that sort of thing, but because they hate the pomp and glories of incapable authority.

And hard upon the revolt in teaching and the sweeping-away of the irritating private localised and nationalised controls of universal interests, may come the establishment of a great framework of ordered and recorded knowledge throughout the world. At present such encyclopaedias as our world possesses are in the hands of unscrupulous salesmen, they are a century and a half antiquated and blinkered in outlook, but the facilities afforded by microphotography, modern methods of multiplication, modern methods of documentation, open up the clear possibility of putting all the knowledge in the world, brought right up to date, within easy reach of every man everywhere on earth, within a couple of days. That is no fantastic dream; it is a plain and calculable enterprise now to throw that net of living consciousness over all our planet. (Here in the most untimely fashion Edward Albert Tewler intervenes with raucous screams of "Bawls! I tell you. Bawls.") Once the new plant has struck root it will be very difficult to be#t it down again. It will give far more satisfaction to the elementary needs of Homo Tewler than the old stuff, which was not only inadequate and frustrating but humiliating. It will be like horse-radish, which grows again from any torn shred wherever it has once been grown.

It may be that we want a new word for a system of knowledge-distribution that alms only to inform and put everything that is known within the reach of every individual man, Mr H.D. Jennings White would sweep away the word "education" altogether, as a

tainted word, and have us talk of Eutrophy, good nourishment of body and mind, and then let free men decide. A Eutrophic world from which priest and pedagogue have been swept as unnecessary evils is quite within the range of human possibility.

Moreover, when we canvass the possibilities of a break towards the light and "sapiens", there is another important factor in the process of mental liberation that must be brought into our accounting, and that is revolt from within. These Tewler priesthoods, the more they dominate, the more they must awaken the spirit of insubordination in those whose role is mainly acquiescence.

The Catholic priesthood has never sat lightly and easily upon the lives of common men, and wherever the level of education has risen to a general elementary literacy, there has been revolt. Catholicism has produced the bloodiest revolts in history. Wherever the Catholic Church has been in complete control of education, the final outcome has been a revolution at once bloodthirsty and blasphemous. The lands have risen in a state of infuriated ingratitude to hunt priests and desecrate and burn churches. Mrs Nesta Webster ascribes this to the direct activity of Satan, and possibly she is right. Perhaps he does not exert himself so much in Protestant and Pagan countries because they can be considered damned already. But this reaction has been so invariable in the past, it has occurred in so many countries, that it seems for instance a fairly safe bet that in quite a short time the faithful in Ireland, bored to death by a too intimate control of their minds, their morals and their economic life, may be shooting their priests exactly as they used to shoot their landlords, and through practically the same wholesome exasperation of their inferiority complex.

But it seems probable that this lack of submissiveness is not peculiar to the flock. The shepherds also must feel the stirring of Satan in their souls. Much of this is hidden from the enquiring outsider. What his fellow-cardinals think of the encyclicals of the current Pope, for instance, is wrapped in the darkness of their discretion, but up and down the body of the Church there is and always has been a certain restiveness, and in this time of universal mental stress there is likely to be more. The chief critical attacks that have strained and broken the solidarity of the Great Imposition in the

past have come from Churchmen.

Even in the days before Constantine the Great, when a definite Credo became a plain necessity to substantiate the bargain between Church and State, Christian controversy was chiefly internecine. There was no definite arraignment of the new teaching from any of the philosophical teachers of the schools of Alexandria or the University of Athens, in spite of the provocative snarls of such Christians as Tertullian. They did not think that there was anything in Christianity worthy of argument. Down the ages the typical source of trouble has been the undistinguished man within the Church reading the Scriptures and irritated by the assumptions and interferences of his superiors. He made trouble because he wanted to make trouble. And to-day now more than ever a collapse behind this formidable facade of Catholicism is possible. The Church may feel a chill of doubt about the future and take to professing liberal and democratic ideals, and that may liberate a number of smouldering recalcitrants grimly determined to make their ecclesiastical superiors mean what they say.

Another thing that may weaken this still arrogant opposition to any release of sapiens may be a great social and monetary storm that will Wash away its financial foundations. Priests out of work can forget their sacred calling and authority with remarkable rapidity. They are, as a class, soft-handed and sedentary, and it is possible that many of the younger ones may be interested and reconditioned for educational work. Throughout the social fabric the work of the essential revolution is not a simple implacable conflict but rather a miscellaneous release and reorientation.

We are dealing here with a number of factors whose force and relative importance are practically incalculable. From them there may or may not emerge a federated world, a common fundamental law, an economically unified planet, an organised and properly implemented world education. But until Homo Tewler has got thus far in the balance and control of his incoherent resistances and egotisms, it is preposterous, it is ridiculous, to call him Homo sapiens. That is simply flattering a disagreeable and suicidally backward animal to its own extermination.

II. — PHILOSOPHICAL-THEOLOGICAL

AND now for a philosophical-theological interlude. Some sort of promise was made in the Introduction to avoid “Ideers .” In spirit, if not to the letter, this promise has been kept. I have done my best to keep to simple, straightforward description, but one thing has led to another; it was less and less possible to keep the background out of the picture if the story was to remain permanently comprehensible. And even at this point there still remain issues that have been raised without deliberate malice, but which must be dealt with, if this account is to be really complete.

But be it noted that from first to last my method has been descriptive. Not one single “Ideer” of my own has been thrust upon the reader. He has not been put upon. I have observed. I have recorded. Simply.

In the preceding chapter, for example, as part of that description, the declaration comes out simply and necessarily that there can be only one philosophy and only one religion in a civilised world order. There may be readers who will be disposed to regard this as an opinion rather than a statement of fact. They will murmur such names as Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, William James, Bergson, Maritain, Santayana, Croce, Pavlov, Russell, the Behaviourists and so forth and so on. They will wave towards a vast literature of commentary, over-elaboration, misrepresentation and the like. But if they will, come and stand a little aloof in an attitude of entirely disrespectful attention, they will begin to realise how much of this cerebration is as superfluous as the caps, gowns, titles, ceremonies and pretensions with which it is associated. Let us blow away what we can of this almost overwhelming froth and s^e whether there really is at bottom more than one philosophical reality for the purposes and within the limitations of Homo sapiens.

People who, like Edward Albert, have grown up in an atmosphere of unqualified partisan monotheism in which God is, so to speak, everything; originating and sustaining everything and accounting for everything, have scarcely a suspicion of the immense unsoundness of this-assumption. It is not even justified by Holy Scripture. Therein it

is plainly admitted that the whole religious process arose out of a dual system, -like the Zoroastrian antagonism of Ormazd and his twin brother and undying opponent, Ahriman. Satan confronts God at the outset of the Jewish-Christian story, and has his way with Man, Eden is lost and God's goodness is defeated. God is exasperated and takes it out of Man. Read your Bible. Only gradually does the story weaken down to a predestinate servitude to an invincible Deity. Islam, Judaism, Christianity, are all, so to speak, apostate dualisms that have taken sides and declared outright for one Supreme Being, and a very large part of the philosophical turmoil of the past two hundred years has been a confused return first to an essential and incurable dualism and then, going further, to a polytheistic universe, after the long predominance of one unlimited god,

Yet from the formulation of the so-called Apostles' Creed onward, there have been signs of an uneasiness about the soundness of this assertion of omnipotence, betrayals of a feeling on the part of the faithful that perhaps they were professing just a little too much. Throughout the centuries the Church has never desisted completely from explaining the Almighty, just as Stalin for the past score of years has never completely desisted from explaining the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. And for quite parallel reasons any denial of the Dictatorship of God in Christendom or the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in Russia has been discouraged as strenuously as possible — all the more strenuously because they are fundamentally unsound dogmas and cannot stand examination.

Directly the dispassionate student of theology sets out to rescue the idea of God from the partisan extravagances of the pious, it becomes manifest that the idea of His omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence must be abandoned. These terms are entirely incompatible with the idea of a personal God with whom anyone or anything can have a relationship in time and space, A God who knows everything must be entirely stagnant mentally. How can he think, since everything is there in his mind already? And if he fills all space, then he is fixed for ever. How can he move? He cannot think; he has thought it all; he cannot move; he is there already. And since he is incapable of mental or physical change, then so far from being omnipotent he is powerless, he is fixed rigidly in an everlasting

strait-jacket. Theology can only become a science of Godship when it abandons these preposterous absolutes.

But having abandoned these absolutes, the fresh-minded theologian can go on to some very entertaining considerations. According to any intelligent theological teaching, God, in some manner altogether mysterious and incomprehensible, came into Being in time and space, and our universe began. That is beyond understanding. He had withdrawn himself from an inconceivable infinitude in order to have relationships with creatures outside himself. He opened proceedings by saying: *. Let there be light." And having manifested himself by light, in that moment he must have cast a shadow, coterminous and reciprocal to himself, the anti-God, Satan, his Zoroastrian twin. Before ever he began to knead the red earth into Adam, the opponent was beside him ready to wreck the work. How else could it have been?

Upon this idea Nietzsche seized, and presented the world with a modern version of the Zoroastrian. (He found it more picturesque and impressive to call it in "Old Persian" the the "Zarathustrian" idea.) A lot he knew of Old Persian! Literary artistry, erudition, classical pretentiousness, and a dislike for Jews gave his writing its peculiar qualities. He swallowed Persian dualism uncritically and took the side of Satan, because it was the most emphatic way of repudiatingY the orthodoxies and ungentlemanly beliefs about him. He drew his contrast. God wanted to keep man a naked respectful slave in the Garden of Eden, amidst a great boredom of carnivores and suchlike frustrated creatures. Satan wanted to get him to eat the tree of knowledge and go out into the great world. Eden meant "Safety First"; Satan whispered "Live dangerously." That was the current of revolt. It was not very original. It followed the drift of the period. There is indeed about one week of clear hard thinking in the whole of the Nietzschean bubble. After that he just blew and blew.

Years before him, Hegel had been developing a philosophy that had a close relationship to that same necessary association of light and shadow. After the manner of philosophers, he exaggerated and universalised his bright idea until he saw the whole universe as a system of copulating contrasts. If a definite thing exists, said he, its opposite exists and struggles to replace it, and out of the conflict

comes a synthesis. He spent an industrious life, like Og, King of Bashan, fitting everything to his universal formula.

Schopenhauer, in the same spirit of laborious revolt against established values that had become intolerable to him, insisted that the one thing stirring under the fabric of appearances was Will; the Will to live or the Will for Nirvana. He spun the web of this thread of thought to impressive dimensions, and it lived on in Shaw's Life Force, Bergson's Elan Vital and the sustaining spirits of Thomas Hardy. But elsewhere hardly at all.

The revolt of the modern mind against the idea of a professedly benevolent divine autocrat responsible for its infinite confusion, has now gone much further than that sort of thing. William James put up a case for polytheism, and Pavlov and the Behaviourists produced excellent reasons why we should regard the individual man as no more than a still very incompletely assembled bundle of conditioned reflexes.

None of this multitude of thinkers and their satellites brought his thoughts into really conclusive contact with the others. To do it would have been to discover much practical identity and so lose distinction. After their fashion, each bombinated abundantly with only the slightest regard to other bombinators. We cannot be too disrespectful at their stupendous, fussy and often quite disingenuous voluminousness. We who are looking on can perceive that the common effect of this tidal flow is to strip off any conceptions of good or evil from our interpretation of the world. Philosophical synthesis is mainly a process of cancellation and denudation. The net result of the philosophical-theological activities of mankind up to date has been almost entirely destructive; it has been a cleansing and not an accumulation; it has swept away a vast amount of interpretations and imperatives from life, and left it bare for us to do what we like with.

That freedom is the one universal philosophy to which the world is evidently coming. As I have said in the previous chapter, a gathering number of people, stirred by a great variety of motives, are resolved upon a world revolution and a new ordering of the world that will save Homo Tewler from putting an end to himself and carry him on to Homo sapient. But they do that wilfully and dogmatically.

And there is no absolute imperative to prevent anyone having a hate of them, deciding to be Satanic to them and opposing them openly or betraying them secretly. You can easily persuade yourself that you prefer destruction and death to life. Many people do nowadays. The thought of happier generations fills you with malicious envy. It may please you to do what you can to destroy not simply human hope but the whole race. It may gratify your craving for power to think you are doing that.

But then it will be will against will. Possibly you may win. But if you lose and the world revolution gets the upper hand of you, there is nothing to prevent it declaring you, quite dogmatically, a criminal or a lunatic. It may try to alter you if that can be arranged. It may have to kill you. Some killing may be absolutely necessary if there are too many implacables. A rationalised world cannot turn sane, good men into warders and asylum attendants for the implacable, Or you may come over to us, for, like yourself, the revolutionaries will be Tewler and you must be stirred by fluctuations and concentrations of motive, closely similar to theirs. They are in no way superior to yourself, only they have had the luck to catch the light and crystallise about a comprehensive, unifying, infectious system of1 new ideas, sooner than you have done.

III. — TEWLER AS EVER

EDWARD ALBERT TEWLER is still alive. I am afraid he at least is lost to the revolution. I have told his poor sordid story and that of the people whose lives he helped to spoil; I have mocked at his absurdities and misfortunes and invincible conceit; but all the way along as I wrote it something has protested, “This is not fair. Given a broader education, given air, light and opportunity, would he have been anything like this?”

He is what our civilisation made of him, and this is all it made of him. I have told the complete truth about a contemporary specimen man. This brings me into conflict with my most intimate and trusted critic and with my loyal but anxious publishers. Your hero is detestable, they protest, and there is not really a nice human being in the book Couldn’t you put in some flash of real nobility in him, and can’t you redeem the spectacle by one or two good people, essentially good people, behaving in an exemplary manner, people your readers would like and with whom they could identify themselves and so hold themselves aloof from the harsh veracity of your story? That is exactly what I refuse to do for them. My case is that Edward Albert is not so much detestable as pitiful, and that for the rest I like nearly all my characters as they are — except Mr Chamble Pewter, whom manifestly I loathe. To love without illusions is to be secure against surprise. It is the quintessence of love. I follow in the tradition of Hogarth and Tom Jones and not in the footsteps of Richardson, and I shall count myself wholly damned if I let my friendly advisers induce me to pander to these people for whom reading is nothing better than material far Grandisonian reverie How can there be any “gleams of nobility” in a darkened and ever-darkening world? What light is there to reflect? What I have to say to every reader without exception is this: “This means you. Toil are Tewler. Search your memories sedulously, humble yourself before the truth. You are Tewler and I am Tewler, You and I in this book are not getting together and nudging each other gleefully at the blunders and baseness of a lot of inferior people. They are part of us, they are one body with us, and what they are we are. We perish with

them. I am trying to tell you the most hopeful thing in our world and that is that out of our warring spites and meannesses there is the bare possibility of a wilful change in our atmosphere that will revolutionise human life. There is a way out and up, but only a fellowship of resentment and disillusionment can lead to that. We can make no terms with falsehood. Mankind has to be debunked. When Man realises his littleness, his greatness can appear. But not before. The priests, the scribes and pharisees, propitiatory Pilate and compromising Judas, will fight to the last against that release of Cosmopolis and the great brotherhood of sapiens that will ensue."

How long are we unawakened Cosmopolitans to go on wasting one another and devastating the future? What of the next generation that is straggling about in an evasive world that still lacks the wit to achieve peace? Young Henry — I meant not to tell you — is in jail, and his father has disowned him. He was involved in a labour riot, and he may or may not have been party to the killing of a man. His trial was brief and farcical. He may be young enough to save when the great jail delivery of the world revolution comes, but that will have to be soon for him to profit by it.

Edward Albert married again late last year. Something of the sort was inevitable. He met a widowed lady of independent means in a hydropathic establishment which has reopened in the Peak District. A certain flirtatiousness, small attentions, agreement in casual observations, awakened a mutual interest. They drifted together and kept together like two bits of wood on a stream. They looked for each other at breakfast-time and after dinner they wore not divided. They sat out on the terrace for a long time in silence side by side in the moonlight, and broke into autobiographical reminiscence. They realised they were both creatures of circumstances. "Life," said Edward Albert, "is one of the most 'strordinary things there is. There's nothing else quite like it." ("Nothing," agreed the lady.)

"Who could have told, you and me would be sitting here like this three weeks ago? It's just as if it 'ad to be...."

After that, mutuality developed at a headlong pace. They discovered that they were both dreadfully lonely, that they had reciprocal needs, and that one household halves the expense of two.

So they married and snuggled up for mutual comfort and

reassurance, and because the price of everything was going up and up. She was a warm embracing woman and a great comfort to Edward Albert. His digestion improved and he ceased to brood on cemeteries and epitaphs.

This marriage widened the breach between father and son. The boy objected to calling the new Mrs Tewler "mother", and seemed lacking in appreciation of her very generous and abundant blandishments. When she attempted to kiss him, he ducked and hurt her lip with his forehead.

When he got his discharge from the army he stayed only a few weeks at home, devouring books from the public library — he was a glutton for reading — and talking as little as possible to his father and step-mother. "You can't say a word to him without his flying out at you," Edward Albert complained.

"I don't know what's come over the boy. Nothing's right for him." It was to their mutual relief that Henry proclaimed his intention of going to South Wales.

Edward Albert displayed parental solicitude that was ill requited. "'Ave you thought out where you're going an4 what you're going to do?" he asked. "You can't be too careful, my boy."

"I'm going to work there."

"And what work?"

"You wouldn't understand."

Pretty thing for a son to say to his father!

Then came the dreadful news that them Agitators had got hold of him, and then the tragedy.

It made Edward Albert very unhappy. Constantly he would recur to it.

"What did I ever do that the boy should turn against me? Him and Mary, they seemed to lock their 'earts against me. Mary too.... Locked 'earts."

"There's a sort of bitterness in him about you. I wonder sometimes if it isn't jealousy of that George's Cross of yours."

"I don't like to think that of 'Enery," considered Edward Albert. "I reely don't. Even now. Couldn't *e feel pride in his own father? No. *E*s not so bad as that. It's these ideers he has, right-down wrong ideers. It's a sort of disease. I remember a talk I had with him

when he thought he might be sent to France to put down them syndicalists. I warned him then.

"That was before you came along, my lady. I remember it as though it was yesterday. My 'ealth wasn't too good, the posts were all anyhow because of the general strike, and it looked as though he might not find his father when he came back. These ideers of his I told him were all wrong, but I didn't know then where they would lead him. It's been 'ard to see the way 'e's gone and 'arder still to do my duty by King and Country against my own son. Maybe I let Mary spoil 'im and make too much of him. She had a sort of — well, foolishness, for him. I often said she loved him more than she did me.... Often."

Mrs Tewler III shook her head in agreement and said no more for the time being. She was very punctilious never to say a word, not a single word, against Mary....

IV. — FLYING SPARKS

AND now that I am speaking of this widening estrangement of the Tewlers, father and son, I may perhaps go still further beyond this austere limitations I set myself at the beginning and bring the record of several other characters who have figured in this story up-to-date.

You may perhaps want to know about Evangeline Birkenhead who went off with all her belongings in a taxi-cab so precipitately out of this story in Book III, Chapter 19. She jumped out of Edward Albert's life like a woman who finds herself in the wrong train. She became a respondent, a decree nisi, a decree absolute and that was the end of her for him.

She did have a lover in her mind when she deserted Edward Albert. She was not boasting to Mrs Butter. Her lover was the managing director of the firm of glovers for whom she worked. He was a kindly middle-aged man who had been fascinated by her animation. His first wife had not made him very happy. She was a cold, religious woman, and a short-lived escapade on his part in another direction enabled her to half-divorce him. Only half, because after the decree nisi she was converted to Roman Catholicism and refused to have the decree made absolute, leaving him debarred from any other marriage. So in a state of considerable repression he conceived a very real passion for the bright young Evangeline. He imagined such intelligence into her that almost he evoked it.

He felt too mature and responsible towards her to seduce her, but he showered a devotion upon her that at once delighted and tantalised her. Once or twice they kissed, but he disciplined himself to a sentimental restraint which blinded him to the fact that in a year or so she had grown up very completely. He promoted her to a responsible position in the firm and contrived her trip to Paris to please her. He suffered acutely from her marriage, and, when she sought him out again, he succumbed very readily to her proposals, reinstated her in the business and lived with her as his wife, in a world which is less and less disposed to demand a sight of your marriage lines.

She became extremejy philoprogenitive. She was interested in children; she wanted them. I suppose it was part of her acute sense of

children that made her repudiate our unfortunate Henry. She wasn't going to have a thing made after the fashion of Edward Albert thrust upon her. She resisted every momentary impulse to regard Henry as more than a premature and misbegotten little cuckoo. On the other hand, she elevated Mr Grigson to the highest honours among possible sires. She almost believed the glowing imaginations she wrapped about him. Millie Chaser had to listen at times to revelations about that quiet-seeming, civil-spoken gentleman that threw a languid pallor over the dalliance of Psyche with Cupid. At any rate, the children were healthy, active and good-looking, and Evangeline made, as people say, a remarkably good mother. She had a quick eye for temperatures, symptoms and slackening appetites. Her fourth offspring, the second son, was born a few weeks ago.

She reads the newspapers and she may even go tearing her way through a book that arouses her curiosity. Through her unquestionably magnifying eyes she sees the ever-increasing disaster of the world in terrifying proportions. She is persistent in her struggle to realise some more satisfactory way of securing a good life for her offspring than that confusion promises, she talks to her husband, she worries all the brains she has, and it may be she will wrench something worth while out of it all. She may get the idea of Eutrophy, and that is a good idea. She may grasp the fact that the fate of every child and the fate of the world are inseparable, so that no child on earth now has much of an outlook unless there is a world revolution. Harsh, clamorous and vain though she is at times, the world revolution may yet get a profit out of her energy. She is less of a resultant and more of a will than anyone else in this story.

So much for Evangeline. Mrs Humbelay, I regret to say, for I have an irrational affection for her, died very suddenly of fatty degeneration of the heart, during a London air raid in 1940. She was saying," It doesn't stand to reason," and then she and her voice faded out altogether amidst the uproar. But then her voice always faded out. They did not realise she was dead until they perceived that her lips moved no longer.

Mrs Thump, another valiant woman, kept the standard of English dressmaking flying among the refugees of Torquay. Torquay became a city of refuge for a multitude of people who were elderly or

disposed to consider themselves elderly or otherwise excused from any sort of helpful service for the duration of the struggle. But they felt it their duty to maintain a brave face towards Hitler and remain almost defiantly comfortable. And to grumble incessantly at the conduct of affairs. The more the rationing of clothes restrained them from new costumes, the more they appreciated the ability of Mrs Thump -in making over and modernising the ample wardrobes they already possessed.

Doober's, having, in the words of Mr Doober, stared ruin in the face at the outset of the war, was incorporated in a billeting scheme and did reasonably well in a rough and tumble fashion. It lost its windows when University College was bombed, and subsequently annexed two adjacent houses which were standing empty. It is now a temporary residence under Schedule 9, .but its grant is nearly a year in arrears.

Gawpy, however, who had seemed chained to the establishment for the rest of her life on account of her money, was a type made for war work. She was out at night on her own initiative during the 1940 raids with three thermos flasks of coffee.

"They'll be wanting coffee," said Gawpy. She became the right hand woman of Lady Llewellyn Riglandon in her canteen work in the East End of London. That is to say she did most of the work and Lady Llewellyn bore the brunt of the publicity. She was always ready to stand between Gawpy and the photographers.

Mr Chamble Pewter was attached to the new Ministry of Reconstruction in an advisory capacity. His unfailing sense of humour, I am told, did much to restrain the extravagances of imaginative people, and promoted a natural rebuilding of the East End of London, so far as it has been rebuilt, upon traditional lines.

Nuts MacBryde was flighty commended by a magistrate for working indefatigably for thirty-two hours on end extracting casualties from a row of bombed houses in Pimlico, but afterwards got into trouble for looting salvaged bric-a-brac. Bert Bloxham was killed in Lybia and Horry Budd went down with the *Hood*.

It is possible to give these few disconnected glimpses of various personalities who have passed across the background of the Tewler scene, but several of those incidental individuals have proved

untraceable. I do not know what became of Miss Blame, Evangeline's rival for Edward Albert's adolescent affections. But then, I never knew whence she came. She may have given up bleaching her hair and got lost in the brown. I could not pick her out of an identification parade. Molly Brown too disappears again among a swarm of other Cockney young women from whom she is indistinguishable. Miss Pooley I heard of last in the postal censorship. Mr Blake at Southsea went on getting older and bitterer like stewed tea. He was found to be hoarding two bars of gold which he ought to have relinquished to the government long ago; he was fined, but he escaped any further penalties on account of his age and infirmity. He seems to have been killed in the raid on Portsmouth in April 1940, and his book, *Professors So-Called, And Performances*, if ever it was written, must have perished with him,....

These notes are in the nature of an interim report. This is how these individuals flew this way and that according to their natures,, in this opening phase of an ultimate world revolution which is still only like a fire beginning to-burn, They are the sparks of a whirling torch, leaving traces as they fly. The fire may blaze on or die down. All men are political animal — one cannot hammer that in too persistently — and now their fates are bound together in one. The great wheel of human fate turns, and turns more and more swiftly, either to fling off its human burthen into the void altogether, or, if that human burthen does after all develop sufficient tenacity, to carry it flaring on to a new phase of infinitely more vigorous living.

Let us take our last view of Tewler from the extreme outer rim of that circling wheel of destiny.

V. — AND AFTER SAPIENS?

SUPPOSE, and the facts leave us quite free to suppose it, suppose that the latent sapiens in us succeeds in its urge to rationalise life, suppose we do satisfy our dogmatic demand for freedom, equality, universal abundance, lives of achievement, hope and co-operation throughout this still largely unexplored and undeveloped planet, and find ourselves all the better for having done so. It can be done. It may be done. Suppose it done. Surely that in itself will be good living.

"But," says that dead end; that human blight, Mr Chamble Pewter, making his point with a squeak in his voice and tears of controversial bitterness in his eyes, "What is the good of it? Will there be any finality in your success?" he asks.

None whatever, is the answer. Why should there be? Yet a vista of innumerable happy generations, an abundance of life at present inconceivable, and at the end, not extinction necessarily, not immortality, but complete uncertainty, is surely sufficient prospect for the present. We are not yet Homo sapiens, but when at last our intermingled and selected offspring, carrying on the life that is now in us, when they, who are indeed ourselves, our heredity of body, thought and will, reassembled and enhanced, have established their claim to that title — can we doubt that they will be facing things at present unimaginable, weighing pros and cons altogether beyond our scope? They will see far and wide in an ever-growing light while we see as in a glass darkly. Things yet unimaginable. They may be good by our current orientation of things; they may be evil. Why should they not be in the nature of our good and much more than our good — "beyond good and evil"?

THE END

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The Normal School of Science, South Kensington — where Wells was educated

Before attending the Normal School of Science, Wells attended Midhurst Grammar School, to which he later returned, for a short time, as a teacher

THE EARLY SHORT STORIES

These nineteen short stories are some of Wells' first pieces of published works.

Wells in 1890, at the beginning of his writing career

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THE THUMBMARK
OUR LITTLE NEIGHBOUR
THE LOYALTY OF ESAU COMMON
THE WILD ASSES OF THE DEVIL
ANSWER TO PRAYER
THE NEW FAUST

A FAMILY ELOPEMENT

This short story is Wells' first piece of printed fiction, published in 1884 eleven years before the publication of his first novel *The Time Machine.*

"Your wife does not notice our being together?" asked Miss Hawkins.

"I think not," said Mr. Gabbitas; "she is talking to that Theosophist."

The Theosophist was a slender young man from India, but his hair might have come from the Soudan. Mrs. Gabbitas was a lady with intellectual features of a Roman type; and a shallow desire for profundity. She was clearly very much interested in what the Hindoo had to say; so Miss Hawkins turned again to Gabbitas.

"I said, I cannot go on like this," said Gabbitas.

"Speak lower," said Miss Hawkins, bending her curls towards him.

"I cannot go on like this — dearest,'''' said Gabbitas, trying to put as much tender passion as possible into a hoarse whisper.

"What can we do?" said Miss Hawkins.

"So much as we dare do — flight," said Gabbitas. "Let us get out of all this into a sunnier clime. With you" —

"Hush! They are coming to ask me to sing," said Miss Hawkins. "Presently. Wait."

Mr. Gabbitas yielded her up at this crisis with the best grace he could, and went and propped himself against a wall where he could watch her profile.

"She is awfly clever," said the refined young gentleman to the left of him, to his friend.

"And virtuous," said his friend. "But that's a mistake. She really ought to do something just a little — cheerful, you know. People are not going to run after singers just because they sing, you know."

"She knows that," said the refined young gentleman. "She's clever enough. There will be an exploit"-

“Good Heavens!” said Gabbitas under his breath. “Such motives in my sweet little Minnie. I can’t stand this.” And he hastily sought a vacant piece of wall elsewhere.

“It is sweet to be with you again,” he whispered to her presently, with a sense of infinite relief. “And now, dearest, frankly, will you, dare you — come with me? If you know,

dearest, how I have longed for you, how my soul craves-So”

(very loud) “I had a very jolly time indeed.”

The latter inane sentence because somebody had loomed up just behind Miss Hawkins’s chair.

“Gone now,” said Gabbitas. “Tell me, dearest, quickly. Whisper. Dare you?”

[Pause.]

“For you,” whispered Miss Hawkins very softly, looking down.

Gabbitas took that as an affirmative. “My darling, my own!

The warmth will show. I mean to say-Do you find the room

hot?”

“What disconcerts you now?”

“I caught Mrs. Gabbitas’s eye just then. I think she wants to go home. That Theosophist has left her.”

Now qualified observers state that a man who means to run away from his wife, even if that wife have features Roman rather than beautiful and a tendency to theosophy, suffers considerable twinges of compunction. Gabbitas certainly did. Even if one’s marriage is chiefly a success from the mercenary point of view, a habit of mutual consideration grows insensibly out of the necessity of a common life. Mrs. Gabbitas was silent and pensive in the carriage, and it was unusual and became her. He tried a little conversation. Moreover, he wanted to find out if she had noticed any of his passion in his face as he talked to Minnie.

“It was a very successful affair, dear,” he remarked. “They had some lovely sandwiches, I noticed.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Gabbitas, turning dreamy eyes upon him. “The sandwiches were Lovely, and the decorations were Lovely too. And the music. It has been the most Lovely evening I can imagine.”

“I am glad you liked it so much, dear,” said Gabbitas.

She smiled mysteriously at him. She seemed to be suddenly

affected with an unusual tenderness. “Dear husband,” she said.

“What is up now? thought Gabbitas. “She is not going to pump me.” And he remarked, “Yes, dear.”

“You have always been a good husband to me, dear.”

“Rather,” said Gabbitas privately; and aloud, “Always.”

“You may kiss me, dear.” Gabbitas did as he was bid, and that was all. After this treat Mrs. Gabbitas relapsed into her corner. She did not suspect, then, after all. Gabbitas was greatly relieved. Yet she had never spoken in quite this way before. If she meant to develop sentimentally a new inducement was added to elopement.

And again and again, and yet again, three times altogether in a fortnight, Mrs. Gabbitas returned to this same peculiar soft mood. One or two things she said startled Gabbitas extremely at the time. However, he kept on accumulating his luggage at his chambers nevertheless, for he was a hard man with his conscience.

“She cannot know” he said to himself, following her with his eyes, after one of these conversations. “No; if she knew she would make a shindy. She would certainly make a shindy. I know her disposition. I suppose she has got this new style from some novel. Poor old Mimsie!”

As he went by her door he paused momentarily, for she seemed to be on her knees and weeping by the bed-side. That was through looking out of the corners of his eyes. When he looked straight he saw that she was only packing a dress-basket, and he went on downstairs relieved.

Five days after the last of these remarkable conversations Gabbitas found himself on the Southampton platform of Waterloo Station with a large pile of boxes, masculine and feminine, in his care, and an exhilarating sense of wrong-doing in his heart. Miss Hawkins mingled timidity and self-possession delightfully.

“This is the end of London and respectability,” said Gabbitas.

“And the beginning of life, dear,” said Miss Hawkins.

“We have twenty minutes to spare. Shall we walk to Waterloo Bridge, take a last look at the dear, dismal old Embankment, the Tower, Westminster, and the rest of it? After this we shall have a glut of blue skies.”

They still had five minutes to spare when they returned. They

walked up the platform and down again.

“Here is our luggage,” said Gabbitas.

By the side of their heap was a similar one. A little portmanteau in this caught his eye. It seemed familiar. “Is not that mine?” he asked the porter.

“Mrs. Da Costa,” read the porter on the label; “for Lisbon.”

“No, that is not mine,” said Gabbitas, “And yet it seemed . . . somehow . . . funny. We should see that our seats have not been taken, I think, now, dear.”

At the door of their compartment a man was standing with his back towards them. He was evidently a foreigner; his hair formed a peculiar frizzy mat, such as no Englishman could or would exhibit. As they approached he turned.

There was a pause of mutual inquiry.

“Mr. Jamasji Ganpat!” said Gabbitas.

Mr. Ganpat, the eminent theosophist, looked at them stupidly. He seemed scared for a moment. Then his face lit up. He raised his hat. “Mr. Gabbitas — with Miss Hawkins!”

Miss Hawkins turned half round to pull a loose thread out of her travelling rug.

“We are going down to Southampton,” said Mr. Gabbitas, collecting his resources. “Together. To meet Mrs. Gabbitas.”

“Indeed!” said Mr. Ganpat, and his eye wandered round to the waiting-room door. He seemed nervous. “Do you know,” he said, “I think I must ... I had better ... It is unfortunate. Excuse me.” he turned his back suddenly and hurried away.

“It was better to recognize him,” said Gabbitas. “How nervous he seems. I wonder if he suspects. Perhaps he is shocked. Hullo!”

Ganpat had not been able to reach the door of the waiting-room in time. It opened. Somebody appeared in a grey travel-ling-dress — a flaxen-haired lady, with Roman features, smiling sweetly at him.

“Mimsie!” exclaimed Gabbitas, with addenda.

“Mrs. Gabbitas!” said Miss Hawkins.

The smile of Mrs. Gabbitas died away at the sight of Ganpat’s alarmed visage. She sought over his shoulder for the cause.

“Oh, my poor George!” she exclaimed faintly.

And then she saw Miss Hawkins. “You!”

“Take your seats!” howled the guard; “take your seats, please!”

“I suppose,” said Gabbitas, finding cursessotto voce no comfort, “under the circumstances we had all better get in together and explain.”

And in a minute four singularly depressed and silent people were travelling in a first-class compartment out of Waterloo Station. Mrs. Gabbitas sat in the middle seat, and stared hard at the opposite cushions. Gabbitas stared at her. Miss Hawkins sat in one corner and tore strips with elaborate precision, off the corner of her society paper. The Hindoo looked pensively out of the window and hummed a barbaric tune of two notes.

It was one of those conversations that are difficult to begin. Mrs. Gabbitas broke the silence at Vauxhall.

“This is perfectly ridiculous,” she said abruptly and hotly. “Idiotic! We can’t do anything now.”

“That, dear, is just what I feel,” said Miss Hawkins very slowly and without looking up, making a new kind of sinuous strip.

“It will not be even a romantic scandal,” said Mrs. Gabbitas with tears in her voice. “Nothing original. It will be just funny. Horrible! Beastly!”

The meeting lapsed into silence.

“I do not know,” said Mr. Ganpat with a half-laugh. “What. It is funny.”

Again meditation reigned.

Beyond Clapham Gabbitas cleared his throat.

“Yes?” said Mrs. Gabbitas.

“We have,” said Gabbitas, “got into this mess, and we have to get out of it. I and Ganpat might fight”-

“No, no,” said Ganpat. “Ladies present! No fight.”

“We might fight,” said Gabbitas; “but I do not see exactly what we should be fighting for.”

“Precisely,” said Ganpat. “Nothing worth fighting for.” He smiled reassuringly at Mrs. Gabbitas.

“The reputations of the ladies must not suffer,” said Gabbitas.

“Again precisely,” said Ganpat, becoming animated. “And now you hear me. Now I will tell you. What will we do? Here is Mrs. Gabbitas and Miss Hawkins. Hear me to my final end. Then we part.

I and you, Mr. Gabbitas, I and you go to Paris. Is not that well? It is an excursion that we have planned. You, my — I mean Madam — you, Madam, go with Miss Hawkins. You go to — go to — where?"

"Lisbon will be far enough, as the things are labelled."

"Ye-es," said Miss Hawkins, taking her strips and tearing them transversely into squares. "It's sensible. I am sure I don't mind. Now."

"That is admirable. What do you say, Gabbitas?"

The eye of Gabbitas rested on Miss Hawkins for a moment. "This is a beastly mess," he said. Miss Hawkins glanced up, and he fancied she nodded imperceptibly. He turned to Ganpat.

"Very well, that will do."

"We have all been very silly," said Mrs. Gabbitas— "idiots, in fact."

"And, as far as I can see," said her husband, "nobody can throw stones."

"Dere is no injured innocents in this carriage at all," said Mr. Jamasji Ganpat; but the remark was coldly received.

"And now," said Mrs. Gabbitas, "everything being settled, let us talk of something else."

"Ringlets," said Miss Hawkins, making her paper scraps into two heaps in her lap; "ringlets, dear, are coming into fashion after all."

PERFECT GENTLEMAN ON WHEELS

It was the stirring of spring, the tendency of fashion, and the ghost of a sneer drove him to do it. More particularly the ghost of a sneer. It was the tragedy of his life that he admired her, and he struggled against her in vain. She was frankly — antipathetic. You might have called her anything before you would have called her chic-, at times he had to admit that she was — to tell the dreadful truth— "robust." Moreover, the most exquisite epigrams, the prettiest turns of wit, would often as not simply make her stare and laugh — only too evidently at him. And yet when the healthy Philistine school-girl asked him, "Do you ever venture beyond the Park, Mr. Crampton?" it sufficed. He told his mother plainly his honour was involved. And an irreverent porter saw him — already heated — wheeling his machine upstairs from the Sutton platform — and there are few things less adapted to go upstairs with any pretence to grace — on his way to Brighton and her.

His machine, like himself, was a little overdressed — we are far from a sound criticism of bicycles — chocolate enamelled it was, with translucent mudguards and the daintiest white handles, and the gear case was of filmy celluloid, with a sort of metal dab like a medal upon it. He wore a cocked hat — or at least one of those brow n felt hats that ought to be called cocked hats, whatever the proper name for them may be — and to distinguish himself from the common cycling cad, among other reasons, he wore trousers. The brown of his clothing was apt to his machine, and his tie white and pretty. And when the vulgar cabman outside Sutton station called "New Woman" after him, he pretended not to hear, and went on mounting his machine all across the road. He was quite a sight to see riding up the road towards Belmont, and the sun was so struck by his spick-and-span appearance that he picked out every line of enamel and metal on him and dazzled the passer-by therewith. "Something like a thing to shine on!" said the sun. "Just look at this!" and "Did you ever?" in the excess of his admiration.

He had begun his ride from London to Brighton at Sutton — which was generous treatment for London in the geographical sense.

His mother — he was her only son — had gone to Brighton by train. The Fentons were there also, and the juxtaposition had its quality of design. His mother had devoted her life to him; she held that he was delicate, and knowing the dreadfulness of public schools almost as well as Mr. Oscar Browning, had kept him by her under a progressive series of amenable tutors — making a perfect gentleman of him according to her lights. And Madge Fenton, with her half-share in Fenton's Safe Cure, was just the fit mate for the sole proprietor of Crampton's Meat Juice. It was quite a mother's plan, to marry her son and yet keep him in the family. And certainly he appreciated Madge, though her attitude was a little doubtful. Yet the steady pressure of her elders was bound to win in the long run, and she was a good girl — as times go.

The road from Sutton to Burgh Heath looks like any other road on a map. But unlike the generality of roads known to Mr. Crampton, it persistently went up hill. It was already going up hill at Sutton station, and it went on pretty steeply for a space, but with an air of its being a last effort. Then round a bend came a view of a huge Industrial Home, and another last effort. Then a clear interval, even down hill, to Belmont station, and then it started off again fresh as a daisy. It went up hill visibly for a mile to Banstead station, and then, masked by trees, it continued to go up hill. Mr. Crampton was surprised, but the day was young and his man had oiled and adjusted his machine to a nicety. So he stuck to it — riding steady, and swinging a cigarette in the disengaged hand. Until presently a Bounder, with a machine that went clank, became audible behind him.

To Mr. Crampton the idea of being overhauled by a member of the lower classes was distasteful, and relying on the clank and the excellence of his machine, he threw away the cigarette and quickened his pace. Thereupon the Bounder rang his bell — it was a beast of a cheap bell — and the clanking grew more frequent and louder, until it was close behind Mr. Crampton. After a sharp spurt, Mr. Crampton decided that he would not race after all, and the Bounder drew alongside. He was quite the most dreadful type of Bounder, with a machine with a loose mudguard and a peckled bell; he had a very dirty suit of C.T.C. grey, and a perspiring red face with

a strip of damp hair across his forehead. And he had the cheek to speak to Mr. Crampton!

"Pretty Jigger!" said the Bounder.

Mr. Crampton was so startled, he wobbled, and almost collided. "I beg your pardon!" he said, in a repressive tone.

"Nice-looking machine you've got."

Mr. Crampton was quite at a loss for words. But he was determined to shut the fellow up promptly. "I'm afraid I can't say the same of yours," he said at length.

"No, it isn't up to much," said the Bounder cheerfully. "Are you going far? Because, if so—"

Two Girls (possible Nice Girls) appeared riding down towards them. They might think that he and the Bounder were travelling together! "It's no business of yours," said Mr. Crampton, "where I'm going." And something indistinct about "damned impertinence!"

"Lord!" said the Bounder. "No offence." It took him a minute to digest. Then he said something over his shoulder to Mr. Crampton that was lost, and putting his head down below his shoulders, went clanking off at a great pace, his shoulders moving with his feet in a manner entirely despicable.

Mr. Crampton rode quite erect, and with only one hand on the handle, to show that he was not racing, until the girls were well past him, and then he dismounted. This eternal hill was tiresome, and he did not want to overtake the Bounder. Walking, one could notice the fine growth of green with which the hedges were speckled, and the gum-exuding chestnut buds; and the dead nettles were all in flower. In fact, it was a pleasant change from the saddle for a man who was not a scorcher.

And at last he came to Burgh Heath. As this seemed to be a sort of village green, he mounted again. Some way along was a little sweetstuff shop, and outside was the Bounder's machine. The Bounder was in the doorway, with his hands in his pockets, eating. He looked round at Mr. Crampton, and immediately looked away again, with a hollow pretence of self-esteem.

And away down a hill, Mr. Crampton was passed by a tandem bicycle. He overtook its riders, a girl and a man, walking the next ascent. They seemed to be father and daughter, the father a sturdy

red-bearded man with very fat legs, and the daughter decidedly pretty. She was dressed in greenish grey, and had red hair. Mr. Crampton was very glad indeed that he had got rid of the Bounder forthwith. He had to set his teeth to get up the hill, but of course it was impossible to dismount, and then came a run down, and then a long gentle slope that was rather trying, with a pretty girl on a tandem behind, that is, to keep one in the saddle. Reigate Hill came none too soon to give Mr. Crampton a decent excuse for dismounting. So he put the machine carefully where it looked well on the turf, and took out his silver cigarette case, and was in his attitude ready, looking over the clustering town and broad blue Weald, as the tandem couple came walking down the hill. So far the ride had been very pleasant.

After that the Bounder, hot and panting. He came towards the turf as if contemplating a lounge, and his eye caught the chocolate bicycle. He glanced swiftly up at Mr. Crampton, and went incontinently down the hill towards the town, visibly discomfited.

Mr. Crampton lunched in Reigate. It was in the afternoon that his adventures really began — as he rode towards Crawley. The morning's ride had told on him, and three gates had the honour of supporting him for leisurely intervals between Reigate and Horley. Cyclists became frequent, and as they went by during his sessions on the gate, he smoked ostentatiously or (after he had smoked sufficiently) sketched in a little morocco-bound sketch-book — just to show he was not simply resting. And among others a very pretty girl flashed by — unaccompanied.

Now Mr. Crampton, in spite of his regard for Madge, was not averse to dreams of casual romance. And the bicycle in its earlier phases has a peculiar influence upon the imagination. To ride out from the familiar locality, into strange roads stretching away into the unknown, to be free to stop or go on, irrespective of hour or companion, inevitably brings the adventurous side uppermost. And Mr. Crampton, descending from his gate and mounting, not two minutes after she had passed, presently overtook her near the crossroad to Horley, wheeling her machine.

She had a charmingly cut costume, and her hair was a pleasant brown, and her ear, as one came riding up behind her, was noticeably

pretty. She had punctured the tyre of her hind wheel; it ran flat and flaccid — the case was legible a hundred yards off.

Now this is the secret desire of all lone men who go down into the country on wheels. The proffered help, the charming talk, the idyllic incident! Who knows what delightful developments? So that a great joy came to Mr. Crampton. He dismounted a little way behind her, advanced gracefully, proffered the repair outfit in his wallet. He had never attempted to repair a tyre before, and so he felt confident of his ability. The young lady was inclined to be distant at first (which was perfectly correct of her), but seeing that it was four miles to Crawley, and Mr. Crampton a mere boy and evidently of a superior class, she presently accepted his services. So coming conveniently to a convenient grassy place at the cross-road, Mr. Crampton turned the machine over on its saddle and handles, severely bruising his knee as he did so, and went quietly and methodically to work — it being then about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the sun very bright and warm.

He talked to her easily. Where had she punctured? She did not quite know, she had only just noticed that the tyre was "all flabby." "A very unpleasant discovery," said Mr. Crampton. "We must see just precisely what is the matter."

"It's very kind of you," she said. "Are you sure you can spare the time?"

"I'm merely running down to Brighton," he said. "I couldn't think of leaving you in this predicament."

Mr. Crampton had of course no mechanic's knowledge of bicycles, but he knew the things were very simple. He knew he had to remove the tyre, and it did not take him long to discover that in order to remove the tyre he would have to remove the wheel. How to get the wheel off was a little puzzling at first — it was evident the chain would have to come away. That involved operations with a dress guard and a gear case. "It's an inductive process," said Mr. Crampton lightly — concealing a faint qualm of doubt, and setting to work on the gear case.

"They're frightfully complicated things," she said.

"These machinery people make them rather stupidly," said Mr. Crampton.

“I shouldn’t dare take the thing to pieces as you are doing.”

“It’s very simple, really.”

“I think men are always so much cleverer than girls at this sort of thing.”

Mr. Crampton did not answer for a second.

“You’ve blackened your fingers!” she said.

It was very nice and friendly of her, but a little distracting. She kept stepping about on the growing circle of nuts, chains, screw-hammers, washers, and so forth about Mr. Crampton, and made many bright, intelligent little remarks that required answering. And she really was pretty. Mr. Crampton still continued to enjoy the incident in spite of his blackened hands, and the heat of the day, and the quite remarkable softness of the nuts on her machine. “If we are better at machine-mending and that sort of thing,” he said, “you have your consolations.”

“I don’t think so.”

“The emotions,” said Mr. Crampton.

“But men have emotions.”

“As girls have bicycles,” said Mr. Crampton, with the air of a neat thing, mislaying the pin of the chain, and proceeding to pull out the wheel.

The removal of the tyre was the turning-point of the affair. It simply would not come off the rim. “These detachable!” said Mr. Crampton. He had to ask her to pull, and the struggle was violent for a moment, and a spoke got bent. Then he pinched her finger very severely. He knew the operation depended upon a knack, and as he was ashamed of not knowing the knack, he pretended to be doing something else when a man cyclist went by. Three little children came by and seemed profoundly interested until Mr. Crampton stopped and stared steadily at them. Then each began edging behind the other, and so they receded. And a tramp offered ingenious but impracticable suggestions until Mr. Crampton gave him sixpence to take them away. Then came the Tandem he had seen in the morning going Londonward, and the old gentleman insisted on knowing what was the matter. Beastly officious of him! “We can’t remove the tyre,” said the young lady — a little needlessly, Crampton thought.

“Simple enough,” said the old gentleman, in abominable taste. It

was simple — in his hands. In a minute the tyre lay detached.

"I can manage now, thanks," said Mr. Crampton, rather stiffly.

"Quite sure?" said the old gentleman.

"Quite," said Mr. Crampton, with a quiet stare, and the old gentleman mounted his machine. For of course Mr. Crampton trusted to the directions on his repair outfit, as any one would.

"Thank you very much indeed," said the young lady.

"No trouble at all," said the old gentleman, and off he rode.

The next misunderstanding was entirely due to the silly, vague way in which the directions on the box were given. Really you had to stick the round patch thing on to the puncture, hut Mr. Crampton read rather carelessly, and first of all cut out a circular place in the air chamber, and seeing it was not quite round, he cut it a little larger, and so on, until it was a little too big for the patch thing. The young lady had been silent for the last ten minutes or so, watching Mr. Crampton's face, but now she asked suddenly, "Are you sure that is the right thing to do?"

"It says so on the box," said Mr. Crampton, looking up with a smile. "But really I don't see how we are to manage it quite."

"Do you know," said the young lady, "I wanted to be in Crawley by four."

It was a little rude of her, but Mr. Crampton looked at his watch — it was five minutes past four! "Dear me!" he said agreeably; "the time has flown." And suddenly he remembered he was twenty-six miles from Brighton.

"I think, do you know," said the young lady, "if you don't mind, I will wheel my machine, after all. It seems such a long job mending it. And really, in Crawley the Man—"

"These Local Fellows aren't always quite reliable. I'm frightfully sorry, you know , not to have got it right just at once, but

"It was very kind of you to try," she said.

"Do you know," said Mr. Crampton, "even now—" For the thing really interested him. His idea was to try a piece of paper smeared with solution, but it did not work, and at a quarter past four he began putting the machine together, with nothing but a neat circular opening cut in the air-tube of the tyre to show for his wasted hour. His interest was fading, and the girl's manner was not so nice as it

had been. And curiously enough the wheel would not go on right, and there was a difficulty about the chain. One or two of the little nut things may have lost themselves in the grass, and — trivial though they were — this complicated the business. Mr. Crampton was becoming painfully aware that his hands were black and his cuffs crumpled. He suddenly felt tired and disgusted at the whole absurd incident, and seeing the growing impatience of the girl, he hurried the rebuilding indiscreetly, using his wrench as a hammer when necessary. The eyes of passers-by seemed ironical.

Bicycles are odd things. He made it look all right — except the gear-case, which he had trodden on, but when he stood it up, right way up, the chain flapped about on the gear-case, and the wheel would not go round. He tried what a little force would do, hut it only produced curious clanking noises.

It was a most disappointing incident, and although the girl was indisputably pretty, curiously devoid of any real romantic quality. “It doesn’t seem right, quite yet” she said.

“I’m afraid not,” said Mr. Crampton rather red in the face, holding the machine by saddle and handle, and looking at it in a speculative way. It was really rather a difficult situation, and he was trying to think what to do next. It came of being a gentleman, of course, and chivalrous. Bounders would have ridden by in the first place, without attempting to help. He wanted very badly to swear, and it was very clear indeed in his mind that he ought to be riding on.

His self-control was admirable. “I’m afraid it’s no go,” he said, looking up and smiling.

She was looking quite straightly at him. There was no appearance of anger in her manner, but she remarked quietly: “I don’t think you ought to have touched my machine. I’m afraid you know very little about them.”

Mr. Crampton perceived at once that she was not a lady.

All the more reason, he told himself, that he should assert himself a gentleman. “It seems to me,” he said, “that I can do very little good in this case.”

“It seems so to me,” she said, annoyed to find him not humiliated.

There came a rhythmic clanking on the road, and the red, damp-haired Bounder in grey, whom Mr. Crampton had snubbed at

Banstead, going Londonward now, and riding laboriously, drew up. "Ullo!" he said, softly, to himself, and as he passed, "Nothing wrong?"

Positively she answered him. Mr. Crampton did not notice it, because he was looking at the machine, but she must have done so.

The Bounder was already some yards down the road, but he dismounted with such alacrity that he almost tumbled over. He flung his machine into the hedge in a fine careless way, and came back. "What is it?" he said.

"Nothing," said Mr. Crampton, full of angry shame.

"Had a tumble, Miss?" said the Bounder, not at all abashed, with his eye on the bent mudguard.

"I can manage very well, thank you," said Mr. Crampton.

"Let's have a look at the Jigger," said the Bounder, advancing; and suddenly became aware that he had met this obstructive person in brown before. He looked at the girl.

"Please let the gentleman see," said the young lady quietly.

At that Mr. Crampton's temper gave way entirely. "Very well," he said quite crossly. "I understood I was to mend your machine. I've wasted an hour on it."

"Steady on," said the Bounder very quietly, bending down and looking at the machine.

"I didn't know you wanted to stop every man that came along," said Mr. Crampton, suddenly exasperated to insult.

"Steady on," said the Bounder again.

Mr. Crampton replied with a look of freezing contempt.

"When you were rude to me," said the Bounder, looking up, "I let you alone. But if you're going to be rude to this Young Lady, I shall just punch your 'ead. See? I'm an engine-fitter, and it don't take that to see you've been pretty near knocking all the quality out of a vally'ble machine."

Mr. Crampton was breathless with anger.

"I'm quite prepared to pay for any damage I've done," he said.

Neither of them had the manners to answer, though he stood quite a minute. Trembling with indignation, Mr. Crampton picked up his machine, mounted a little clumsily, and rode off. He rode very fast until he was round the bend — just to show how angry he was. For a

space he was boiling with rage. Then he laughed aloud in a sardonic fashion. “Of all possible experiences!” he said. “Ha-ha! And this comes of trying to help a fellow-creature!”

The sardonic mood remained. He hated every human being on the road and every human being in Crawley, both on the right-hand side and on the left. Most of them, from their manner, seemed to be aware of his recent indignities. He rested at Crawley an hour, hating people quietly but steadily, and thinking of alternatives to his sayings and doings with the Bounder and the Young Lady. It was six when he rode on again, and the sun was setting. A mile out of Crawley he came to a long dark hill. Twilight came as a surprise, and with it came an acute sense of fatigue. He dismounted. Presently he mounted again. It was difficult to decide which progress was most tiring — afoot or awheel. And this was pleasure! An acute realisation of the indescribable vulgarity of cycling came into his mind. A dirty, fatiguing pursuit that put one at the mercy of every impudent Cad one met. He began to stamp with his feet, and use words that even his mother’s care had not prevented his learning. The road before him was dark, interminable, impossible. He saw a milestone dimly, and went to it with a lingering hope that Providence might have interposed on his behalf and cut out a dozen miles or so, but there it was: “Brighton 20 miles.”

And then comes a mystery. Within ninety minutes Mr. Crampton was alighting outside the Best Society Hotel at Brighton. There is a railway station at Three Bridges, but I hold that an author should respect the secrets of his characters. There was no incriminatory ticket on his machine, and he never gave any one the slightest ground for supposing that he did anything but cycle the whole way. His hat was awry, his clothes dirty, his linen crumpled, and his hands and his face and his tie were defiled with black from the young lady’s chain.

His mother received him with effusion. She had grown nervous with the darkness. “My dear, dear Cecil,” she said, advancing. “But how white and tired you look! And the dust upon you!” She laid caressing fat hands upon his shoulder.

“Don’t,” said Mr. Crampton briefly, and flung himself into a chair — scowling.

“You might give a chap something to drink,” he said, “instead of

standing there."

But after dinner he recovered, and talked to her. Among other things he admitted he liked Madge, and seemed to take his mother's timid suggestions in a sympathetic spirit. "But I wish she didn't bicycle," he said; "it's a bit — common."

They lunched next day with the Fentons. He waited for his opportunity to score his point, making no attempt to lead up to it, and so it did not come off until late in the afternoon. Mrs. Crampton would have boasted to Madge of his manliness in riding the Whole Way, but for his express prohibition.

"No," he said quite calmly, in answer to some remark. "I didn't train. I wheeled down."

Madge looked quite surprised. "Fifty-two miles!" she said.

"I don't know the distance," said Mr. Crampton. "It didn't seem so exceedingly long."

The increase in her respect was swift and evident. "How long did it take you?"

"Six — seven hours. I started about midday. But I didn't scorch, you know. And I stopped about half an hour mending a girl's tyre." He tried to look as though he had done nothing extraordinary.

"Here's Ethel, of all people!" said Mrs. Fenton, rising. "My dear!"

Mr. Crampton looked up, and there in the doorway was the heroine of the punctured tyre. . . . Madge rose, too, to welcome her friend, and missed his expression. "And here is Cousin Cecil," she said, introducing Mr. Crampton. The new-comer advanced brightly, stared, hesitated, and bowed coldly.

Mrs. Crampton never quite understood the business, because her son was not only reticent, but extremely irritable when questioned. Evidently the young people had met before, and were under considerable constraint. She is inclined to think, from the subsequent incidents, that Ethel was a designing sort of girl, who set Madge against him with the idea of securing him "or herself. In that, at any rate, she was disappointed. But the Brighton gathering was certainly a failure, and Mr. Crampton is still not engaged. Yet, seeing his position, it is odd some girl has not snapped him up. Madge (silly girl!) married a young doctor three months ago.

WAYDE'S ESSENCE

Wayde was a man greatly envied. For seventeen years his life had been success — not that common success that consists only in a run of favourable accidents, but success honestly worked for; success that came to him of his own compulsion; the success of a strong and capable man. He had written well, married well

the girl was at once the sensation and heiress of her year — won a hopeless election; and though notoriously a poor man of mediocre birth, secured a place at last — the only man of mediocre birth therein — in an advanced Radical Ministry. No wonder all those other poor men of mediocre birth who chanced to be writing political leaders found much that was fortuitous in his ascent. But the fact remains that Wayde was a very brilliant man, and fully deserved his winnings. He sat before the fire, staring into the red coals, and admitted as much to himself. His left hand, resting on the table, held a little white glass bottle full of a mobile, fluorescent, lavender-tinted liquid.

"Wonderful stuff!" he said to old Manningtree, with a faint smile; "I wonder what you put into this Water of Success."

"You might wonder all day," said Manningtree, "and still be surprised, at the end of it, when I told you."

The two men relapsed into a comfortable silence. It is the true test of friendship, that comfortable silence, when the bothering battledore and shuttlecock of conversation are put aside, and we enjoy a companionable solitude. Wayde's mind went back through the past seventeen years, a pleasant flight of reminiscence. Tomorrow he had to introduce a much-ridiculed Bill prohibiting the nude in art. It was an absurd Bill, not intended to pass, but introduced to satisfy a serious and important faction; and the task of producing it was, he understood, a compliment to his dexterous insincerity. He was the only man on his side capable of the necessary blend of epigram which the serious faction would not understand, and earnestness — which they did — and he intended to astonish his rivals by making on this unpropitious occasion a brilliant display, changing from poking fun to propitiation with the perplexing swiftness of the colour

changes in shot silk. He knew exactly how he would do it. And on Tuesday he had to receive three deputations, mutually hostile, on the Rayner's Den question. He had no doubt he should dispose of them successfully and satisfy them all. Wednesday he dined with the Premier

— he smiled to think with what trepidation he would have contemplated such a festival twenty years ago. Then Thursday

— Thursday was really a great day. Thursday would raise him a step in the estimation of several millions of people, for on Thursday he had to smash and pulverise Braun, and he had not the slightest doubt he would smash and pulverise Braun, who was going to make trouble upon the foreign policy of the Government. Possibly the Government had erred in one or two little matters — Wayde was not Foreign Secretary — but the Opposition had certainly erred far more seriously in putting up Braun — against him. "Yet, twenty years ago!" thought Wayde. He tried to imagine himself smashing Braun twenty years ago.

And that, indeed, brings us at once to the gist of the story. The curious thing is that eighteen years ago Wayde had been, in his own opinion, a conspicuous failure in life, a man of thirty-one who had done nothing — or rather, what is worse, done many things very poorly. Judicious people had pronounced him clever, an eminent critic who had met him by accident had suspected him of genius, and his sisters believed in him. That much, and a double second at Cambridge, a third place in a chess tournament, a novel that had sold to the extent of two thousand copies, a volume of critical essays, some unsuccessful Extension lecturing, and some futile appearances upon the local political platform, completed his record — respectable, no doubt, but scarcely augury of the Cabinet Minister at forty-eight. Wayde looked affectionately at the little bottle in his hand.

In those days Wayde had been anything but a success — not even a social success. The fact was he lacked "nerve," suffered, as we might say, from constitutional Doubt. Old ladies considered him a nice young man, but shy, new young ladies called him weedy. His conversation was an epitome of his life, a series of hesitations, punctuated by good things ill said. His book had been a vivid work in

the manuscript; in the proof he refined all his points and altered the plot until it was so subtle that nobody appreciated it. He was a profound chess scholar, and had succumbed chiefly, he averred, to an odour of garlic that emanated from Botch, the Teutonic champion. At thirty Wayde seemed already inclined to take a diminishing interest in life, and a spinsterhood of natural history, local chess, and refined criticism seemed his destiny rather than the Cabinet.

It was old Manningtree who had saved him. Salvation fell upon him suddenly, seventeen or eighteen years ago, in a billiard-room. Wayde missed an elongated but easy cannon by a hair's-breadth. He bit off the head of a weak curse.

"That's it," said Manningtree.

"I beg your pardon," said Wayde — he was always begging someone's pardon in those days.

"Not the slightest doubt of it," said Manningtree. He stood chalking his cue and regarding Wayde with a critical eye. "You are a very interesting case, Wayde."

Wayde detested being looked at. "What do you mean?" he said. "No new disease, I hope."

"A constitutional disproportion," said Manningtree. "If — between ourselves — I might commit a breach of professional etiquette, trench on your proper cherub's province, and proffer advice ..."

"Whaddy says I'm as sound as a roach," said Wayde.

Manningtree struggled into a sitting position upon the edge of the board and took delicate aim. "You know" — cannon— "I take rather an interest in you, Wayde. You're curious. That Botch, for instance, wasn't your master at chess. I've studied his games." Manningtree remained sitting on the board and seemed to meditate chess for a moment. "Confound it! You could have knocked him into a cocked-hat."

"So I thought," said Wayde. "Only . . ."

"That's it," said Manningtree again. "That's precisely it."

"What?" said Wayde. "I was going to say his garlic . . ."

"But it wouldn't be true. The trouble is, to put it frankly, the disproportion of your character and capacity. You suspect as much yourself. You are always tripping yourself up. Some subtle doubt is

always arising just at the wrong moment and spoiling your stroke. You lost every one of those games because at a critical point in each one of them you tried to hedge. You think, I may miss.' That means missing for anyone. It kills your action, takes all the spirit out of it, and leaves the corpse of it for your performance. If it were not for that, Wayde . . ."

"Well?"

"You would be a brilliantly successful man. In fact, without any flattery, I honestly believe you a man of very exceptional capacity."

"But not of exceptional character," said Wayde, smiling. "It's a pity about the character."

"It's not a hopeless one by any means. Capacity is a question of brains; character — , well, it's physiological, chiefly circulation and digestion. That, indeed, is why I am talking to you." He paused. "I should not talk to a hopeless case."

Wayde stared at him. It was an unusual occasion. He was taken aback, failed to grasp the situation all at once.

"You've left yourself comfortably off," he said, looking at the board. Manningtree got down and walked round the table.

For perhaps three minutes neither spoke a word. Manningtree went on serenely with a fine healthy break. Then Wayde coughed. "I've never looked at this hesitation of mine before in the light of a disease. I know perfectly well what you mean. I've felt it lots of times, though I've never seen it quite so clearly as you put it. Just before I'm going to do anything I feel that I shall muddle it, and then — I'm hanged if I don't muddle it. The brutal confidence of that German Botch knocked me to pieces. The thing's grown on me. Whenever I set out to do anything I begin to anticipate the moment of hesitation, and down I go. I was better at school, but even there I began to muff my bowling in my last year. But, as I say, I regarded it as a kind of mental curse

"Nerves," said Manningtree— "solar plexus."

"Then do you really mean to say?" . . . began Wayde.

"Yes, I do," said Manningtree. "It's amenable to physic. Why it should be I don't know, but there is a certain drug—"

"Faith pilule!" said Wayde.

"It's not a pilule at all. The stuff is an alkaloid — chiefly.

Anyhow, there's not the slightest doubt that it smooths out that particular mental rut that jolts your springs, chokes the thought that trips you before it can get born; substitutes I can, loud and clear, for 'I'm afraid — presently — I shall falter — or twist. . . .'"

"I can scarcely believe it," said Wayde.

"You have a patient before you," said Manningtree. And he resumed his easy procession to the end of the game.

"I say," said Wayde, after another gap in the conversation.

"Well?"

"I would like to try that medicine, anyhow." "Unhappily, you can't."

"But I thought you told mc because . . ."

"I don't know how to prepare it quite," said Manningtree. "I have precious little left. The way I came by it is peculiar . . . ninety-eight, game."

"Surely you hope?" said Wayde. 'Or . . ."

"I hope," said old Manningtree replacing his cue in the stand, and fixing his bright little eyes for a moment on Wayde's face. 'And I am more than half disposed to let you have some if I do hit upon it." He surveyed Wayde in silence. "But" — bespoke with measured emphasis— "it is scarcely the drug one feels disposed to sell for a guinea and good-bye.''

He stared at Wayde for a moment longer, and then turned, clasping his hands behind his back, and paced slowly out of the room with the air of a man who suddenly doubted his wisdom. He left Wayde staring.

Wayde remembered that conversation very vividly to-night, and how he watched for and waylaid Manningtree to hear more of this remarkable medicine. Manningtree pooh-poohed it next day, declared the thing was after-dinner garrulousness, that the alkaloid was quite unprocurable. It had been prepared by a Salpetriere man who died suddenly. It might, by good luck turn up. He was looking for it. Certainly it had done him a world of good. In that tantalising interview Wayde seemed to himself more helpless and futile than ever. And then Manningtree began to offer half-hints of success, Wayde became franker in his advances; Manningtree smiled and rebuffed him. At last Wayde got to entreaties. To begin with, he had

halfdoubted the possibility of drugging away diffidence, but he forgot all that in the ardour of pursuit. In the end he begged Manningtree to name his own terms — for he felt that this essence was really the essence of his life. It was rather a curious wooing.

"For you," said Manningtree, "it would certainly be the Water of Happiness. Out of a hanger-on, a dumb man in the gallery, it will make you a capable actor in the drama of public life—"

"Anything," said Wayde.

"You will consult me, then, in all the vital turnings of your career? — supposing I can get the stuff — and I fancy I can now."

"Willingly."

"You will give me your note of hand for £7,000, payable when you become a Cabinet Minister?"

"A Cabinet Minister!"

"Of course. You're not such a genius as all that. You'll get it safe enough." And that was all he demanded. It seemed trivial enough, balanced against the other prospect.

Wayde had been put off so much that he had expected some dishonourable condition, some appalling impossibility. He closed at once with Manningtree, and in the course of a week had swallowed his first dose.

So it came about that, seventeen years ago he had tasted of success for the first time, had for the first time in his life gone straight at his goal without doubt of himself or his success, and had won, and had continued to win. His character seemed absolutely inverted. He became prompt and skilful, gained a reputation for exceptional strength of will. Assurance had been his one thing needful. And here he was, in the smoking-room of his creator, a man of weight, a man publicly praised, and blamed, and hated, the centre of a thousand interests, a leading character, a most interesting character in the incessant novel of political life.

"I wonder," said Manningtree, breaking a lengthy meditation.

"What?" said Wayde.

"If you are fit to run alone." His eye fell on the little phial.

"No, thank you!" said Wayde, smiling.

"It's wonderful stuff."

"It is, indeed."

“It’s made another man of you. Or rather, to do you justice, it’s pushed aside a wrapping, and showed the man you might always have been. It’s given you heart — pluck — confidence.”

“It has,” said Wayde.

“Well . . .”

“Yes?”

“I think I will. That physic, Wayde, that Elixir of Success, is — distilled water.” “What?”

“Distilled water, ingeniously tinted to give it a respectable air.”

“You mean to say that this drug, this alkaloid that has made me all that I am, this—”

“Distilled water — once or twice at least common drinking-water . . . from the New River.”

“You mean to say—” “I’ve said it,” said Manningtree, repentance dawning upon him as he flicked a dangerously long ash from his cigar into the fire.

Wayde gasped and stared at him. There was an awkward pause. Manningtree’s bright eyes watched his patient askance. Then the old doctor said a certain word to himself, with infinite emphasis.

Wayde stood up, and thrust his elbow upon the mantel-shelf. A look of terror was in his eyes. “I say!’1 he said, “I don’t understand this. Do you really mean, Manningtree, that you have been fooling me all these years?”

With an impatient gesture Manningtree flung his cigar into the fire. He knew now that he had made an irrevocable mistake. There was a silence.

“For seventeen years,” said Wayde, slowly, and staring at him, “I have been dancing on the edge of an abyss.”

“If I were not an infernal fool,” said Manningtree, “if I had not suffered from this momentary smoking-room incontinence, you would have danced at the end of the chapter. I forgot what you used to be for a moment, you looked so ruddy and prosperous.”

“Pure water!”

“And colouring matter. Look here, Wayde, don’t stand and stare at me. Sit down and listen calmly. Look the thing squarely in the face. You are, I tell you, a man of exceptional capacity, but you were born diffident; you had a kind of congenital fixed idea. ‘I can’t,’

running through your mind. You were really constitutionally mesmerised — like so many ‘weak’ people. I have seen hypnotised men told they could not step across a chalked line upon the floor, and forthwith they couldn’t — merely the result of a suggestion skilfully made. I dare say you have seen the same. Well — You had a predisposition to modesty, and a few of the inevitable failures of youth had practically done for you, made a mere piece of social driftwood of you — when I became interested in you.”

“Well?”

“I hypnotised you. Practically. Wayde, you have been hypnotised seventeen years. For it is really hypnotism. I planted a suggestion in your mind — I flatter myself I did it skilfully — that a certain drug I should presently exhibit would change your ‘I cannot’ into ‘I can.’ You took a lot of angling. If I had given you the stuff when first I told you — it was in Murche’s billiard-room, I remember — you would have doubted about it, taken it, shaken your head, and gone on as you were going. So I made it inaccessible, made you anxious to get it, seemed disinclined to let you have it. You remember that time? You only got it when I was satisfied your suspicion of it had been completely forgotten in the worry and exasperation of a prolonged pursuit. You clutched it at last.”

“You might almost say I gorged the hook,” said Wayde.

“If you take it that way you are finished, Wayde. Anyhow, you went at things and did them. Confound you! You have had a good time. Unless you are a spiritless cur you will have a good time still. And don’t you see you have really only realised your own ability? You can go on doing things—”

“If I can keep my faith in myself,” said Wayde, staring down into the fire. “If only ... I can keep my faith in myself.” He knitted his brows. “What the devil did you tell me for?”

Manningtree watched him narrowly.

“Faith,” said Wayde, “do you know, I was just indulging in a retrospect. By Faith I have moved mountains. . . . And the thing was a mere amulet, as silly a contrivance as one of King Louis’ lead Virgins, or some Monte Carlo charm. By Faith . . .”

“The trouble is,” he said, presently, smiling greyly at Manningtree, “that some of the mountains are still in transit. The

weight of them falls upon me suddenly. Can I . . .?”

“My dear fellow, you are just the man you were fifteen minutes ago. You are just as capable . . .”

“You forget that one little idea is knocked askew,” said Wayde; “the keystone, perhaps.”

A long silence. Deep thought, keen watchfulness.

“God forgive you, man!” Wayde burst out passionately, speaking loudly, with a catch in his voice. “Why did you tell me? Pure water! There suddenly opens below me all those gulfs I felt secure from. How you must have laughed at my self-assurance! My tongue, I see now, may lose its cunning at any moment. I have only been kept from stumbling by the belief that I could not stumble. And now you have cut that away. I feel like a somnambulist suddenly awakened while he stands upon the highest pinnacle of some monstrous building.”

He put his hand to his forehead.

“Bah!” cried Manningtree, dryly. “It’s only funk — this. Of course, I ought to have held my tongue. But you will forget yourself to-morrow in the House . . .” “Only funk! My dear man, you have done the mischief. Don’t try to undo it by such clumsy devices. Was ever anything the matter with me in those old days except funk? Water! Of course I shall doubt — of course! You have swung me over the precipice, and now you have cut the string. Damnation! That infernal speech to-morrow and Thursday! Oh, Manningtree!” He was crying.

In a paroxysm of feeble rage he caught up the little bottle and flung it furiously into the fire, smashing it to atoms. Then he turned towards the door. Manningtree sprang to his feet.

“Wayde!” he cried. “Stop! I have been joking! That drug is really . . .”

Wayde looked over his shoulder into the doctor’s eyes and his trembling lips smiled wanly. “Too late, Manningtree,” he said. “I know that joke now,” and with that he went on out of the room. The last the doctor saw of him was a gesture of impotent despair.

Old Manningtree stood — one hand on the mantel-board — staring at the baize door as it oscillated back to quiet again. Then he sat down with a grunt, and looked into the fire, amidst which the

splinters of glass glowed redly. “What devil possessed me to prick that bladder?” he said, presently. “How infernally casual all our graver actions are!”

“It was my gas inflated him, anyhow,” he remarked to himself, in the middle of his next cigar. “And anyhow he has had a very good time for seventeen years. But he is done for.”

“What a howling smash he will make of it now! . . . We must call it influenza. Or overwork. And he looked so solid and strong, too, as he sat there, thinking! . . . What an arrant coward! Simply because he felt sure he would win. . . . Heaven save me from these cankering fears!”

THE QUEER STORY OF BROWNLOW'S NEWSPAPER

1

I call this a Queer Story because it is a story without an explanation. When I first heard it, in scraps, from Brownlow I found it queer and incredible. But — it refuses to remain incredible. After resisting and then questioning and scrutinizing and falling back before the evidence, after rejecting all his evidence as an elaborate mystification and refusing to hear any more about it, and then being drawn to reconsider it by an irresistible curiosity and so going through it all again, I have been forced to the conclusion that Brownlow, so far as he can tell the truth, has been telling the truth. But it remains queer truth, queer and exciting to the imagination. The more credible his story becomes the queerer it is. It troubles my mind. I am fevered by it, infected not with germs but with notes of interrogation and unsatisfied curiosity.

Brownlow is, I admit, a cheerful spirit. I have known him tell lies. But I have never known him do anything so elaborate and sustained as this affair, if it is a mystification, would have to be. He is incapable of anything so elaborate and sustained. He is too lazy and easy-going for anything of the sort. And he would have laughed. At some stage he would have laughed and given the whole thing away. He has nothing to gain by keeping it up. His honour is not in the case either way. And after all there is his bit of newspaper in evidence — and the scrap of an addressed wrapper....

I realize it will damage this story for many readers that it opens with Brownlow in a state very definitely on the gayer side of sobriety. He was not in a mood for cool and calculated observation, much less for accurate record. He was seeing things in an exhilarated manner. He was disposed to see them and greet them cheerfully and let them slip by out of attention. The limitations of time and space lay lightly upon him. It was after midnight. He had been dining with friends.

I have inquired what friends — and satisfied myself upon one or

two obvious possibilities of that dinner party. They were, he said to me, "just friends. They hadn't anything to do with it." I don't usually push past an assurance of this sort, but I made an exception in this case. I watched my man and took a chance of repeating the question. There was nothing out of the ordinary about that dinner party, unless it was the fact that it was an unusually good dinner party. The host was Redpath Baynes, the solicitor, and the dinner was in his house in St. John's Wood. Gifford, of the *Evening Telegraph*, whom I know slightly, was, I found, present, and from him I got all I wanted to know. There was much bright and discursive talk and Brownlow had been inspired to give an imitation of his aunt, Lady Clitherholme, reproving an inconsiderate plumber during some re-building operations at Clitherholme. This early memory had been received with considerable merriment — he was always very good about his aunt, Lady Clitherholme — and Brownlow had departed obviously elated by this little social success and the general geniality of the occasion. Had they talked, I asked, about the Future, or Einstein, or J.W. Dunne, or any such high and serious topic at that party? They had not. Had they discussed the modern newspaper? No. There had been nobody whom one could call a practical joker at this party, and Brownlow had gone off alone in a taxi. That is what I was most desirous of knowing. He had been duly delivered by his taxi at the main entrance to Sussex Court.

Nothing untoward is to be recorded of his journey in the lift to the fifth floor of Sussex Court. The liftman on duty noted nothing exceptional. I asked if Brownlow said, "Good night." The liftman does not remember. "Usually he says Night O," reflected the liftman — manifestly doing his best and with nothing particular to recall. And there the fruits of my inquiries about the condition of Brownlow on this particular evening conclude. The rest of the story comes directly from him. My investigations arrive only at this: he was certainly not drunk. But he was lifted a little out of our normal harsh and grinding contact with the immediate realities of existence. Life was glowing softly and warmly in him, and the unexpected could happen brightly, easily, and acceptably.

He went down the long passage with its red carpet, its clear light, and its occasional oaken doors, each with its artistic brass number. I

have been down that passage with him on several occasions. It was his custom to enliven that corridor by raising his hat gravely as he passed each entrance, saluting his unknown and invisible neighbours, addressing them softly but distinctly by playful if sometimes slightly indecorous names of his own devising, expressing good wishes or paying them little compliments.

He came at last to his own door, number 49, and let himself in without serious difficulty. He switched on his hall light. Scattered on the polished oak floor and invading his Chinese carpet were a number of letters and circulars, the evening's mail. His parlourmaid-housekeeper who slept in a room in another part of the building, had been taking her evening out, or these letters would have been gathered up and put on the desk in his bureau. As it was, they lay on the floor. He closed his door behind him or it closed of its own accord; he took off his coat and wrap, placed his hat on the head of the Greek charioteer whose bust adorns his hall, and set himself to pick up his letters.

This also he succeeded in doing without misadventure. He was a little annoyed to miss the *Evening Standard*. It is his custom, he says, to subscribe for the afternoon edition of the Star to read at tea-time and also for the final edition of the *Evening Standard* to turn over the last thing at night, if only on account of Low's cartoon. He gathered up all these envelopes and packets and took them with him into his little sitting-room. There he turned on the electric heater, mixed himself a weak whisky-and-soda, went to his bedroom to put on soft slippers and replace his smoking jacket by a frogged jacket of llama wool, returned to his sitting-room, lit a cigarette, and sat down in his arm-chair by the reading lamp to examine his correspondence. He recalls all these details very exactly. They were routines he had repeated scores of times.

Brownlow's is not a preoccupied mind; it goes out to things. He is one of those buoyant extroverts who open and read all their letters and circulars whenever they can get hold of them. In the daytime his secretary intercepts and deals with most of them, but at night he escapes from her control and does what he pleases, that is to say, he opens everything.

He ripped up various envelopes. There was a formal

acknowledgment of a business letter he had dictated the day before, there was a letter from his solicitor asking for some details about a settlement he was making, there was an offer from some unknown gentleman with an aristocratic name to lend him money on his note of hand alone, and there was a notice about a proposed new wing to his club. “Same old stuff,” he sighed. “Same old stuff. What bores they all are!” He was always hoping, like every man who is proceeding across the plains of middle-age, that his correspondence would contain agreeable surprises — and it never did. Then, as he put it to me, *inter alia*, he picked up the remarkable newspaper.

2

It was different in appearance from an ordinary newspaper, but not so different as not to be recognizable as a newspaper, and he was surprised, he says, not to have observed it before. It was enclosed in a wrapper of pale green, but it was unstamped; apparently it had been delivered not by the postman, but by some other hand. (This wrapper still exists; I have seen it.) He had already torn it off before he noted that he was not the addressee.

For a moment or so he remained looking at this address, which struck him as just a little odd. It was printed in rather unusual type: “Evan O’Hara Mr., Sussex Court 49.”

“Wrong name,” said Mr. Brownlow; “Right address. Rummy. Sussex Court 49.... ‘Spose he’s got my Evening Standard.... ’Change no robbery.”

He put the torn wrapper with his unanswered letters and opened out the newspaper.

The title of the paper was printed in large slightly ornamental black-green letters that might have come from a kindred fount to that responsible for the address. But, as he read it, it was the Evening Standard! Or, at least, it was the “Even Standrd.” “Silly,” said Brownlow. “It’s some damn Irish paper. Can’t spell — anything — these Irish....”

He had, I think, a passing idea, suggested perhaps by the green wrapper and the green ink, that it was a lottery stunt from Dublin.

Still, if there was anything to read he meant to read it. He

surveyed the front page. Across this ran a streamer headline: "WILTON BORING REACHES SEVEN MILES: SUCCES ASSURED."

"No," said Brownlow. "It must be oil.... Illiterate lot these oil chaps — leave out the 's' in 'success.'"

He held the paper down on his knee for a moment, reinforced himself by a drink, took and lit a second cigarette, and then leant back in his chair to take a dispassionate view of any oil-share pushing that might be afoot.

But it wasn't an affair of oil. It was, it began to dawn upon him, something stranger than oil. He found himself surveying a real evening newspaper, which was dealing, so far as he could see at the first onset, with the affairs of another world.

He had for a moment a feeling as though he and his arm-chair and his little sitting-room were afloat in a vast space and then it all seemed to become firm and solid again.

This thing in his hands was plainly and indisputably a printed newspaper. It was a little odd in its letterpress, and it didn't feel or rustle like ordinary paper, but newspaper it was. It was printed in either three or four columns — for the life of him he cannot remember which — and there were column headlines under the page streamer. It had a sort of art-nouveau affair at the bottom of one column that might be an advertisement (it showed a woman in an impossibly big hat), and in the upper left-hand corner was an unmistakable weather chart of Western Europe, with *coloured* isobars, or isotherms, or whatever they are, and the inscription: "To-morrow's Weather."

And then he remarked the date. The date was November 10th, 1971!

"Steady on," said Brownlow. "Damitall! Steady on."

He held the paper sideways, and then straight again. The date remained November 10th, 1971.

He got up in a state of immense perplexity and put the paper down. For a moment he felt a little afraid of it. He rubbed his forehead. "Haven't been doing a Rip Van Winkle, by any chance, Brownlow, my boy?" he said. He picked up the paper again, walked out into his hall and looked at himself in the hall mirror. He was

reassured to see no signs of advancing age, but the expression of mingled consternation and amazement upon his flushed face struck him suddenly as being undignified and unwarrantable. He laughed at himself, but not uncontrollably. Then he stared blankly at that familiar countenance. “I must be half-way *tordu*” he said, that being his habitual facetious translation of “screwed.” On the console table was a little respectable-looking adjustable calendar bearing witness that the date was November 10th, 1931.

“D’you see?” he said, shaking the queer newspaper at it reproachfully. “I ought to have spotted you for a hoax ten minutes ago. ‘Moosing trick, to say the least of it. I suppose they’ve made Low editor for a night, and he’s had this idea. Eh?”

He felt he had been taken in, but that the joke was a good one. And, with quite unusual anticipations of entertainment, he returned to his arm-chair. A good idea it was, a paper forty years ahead. Good fun if it was well done. For a time nothing but the sounds of a newspaper being turned over and Brownlow’s breathing can have broken the silence of the flat.

3

Regarded as an imaginative creation, he found the thing almost too well done. Every time he turned a page he expected the sheet to break out into laughter and give the whole thing away. But it did nothing of the kind. From being a mere quip, it became an immense and amusing, if perhaps a little over-elaborate, lark. And then, as a lark, it passed from stage to stage of incredibility until, as any thing but the thing it professed to be, it was incredible altogether. It must have cost far more than an ordinary number. All sorts of colours were used, and suddenly he came upon illustrations that went beyond amazement; they were in the colours of reality. Never in all his life had he seen such colour printing — and the buildings and scenery and costumes in the pictures were strange. Strange and yet credible. They were colour photographs of actuality forty years from now. He could not believe anything else of them. Doubt could not exist in their presence.

His mind had swung back, away from the stunt-number idea

altogether. This paper in his hand would not simply be costly beyond dreaming to produce. At any price it could not be produced. All this present world could not produce such an object as this paper he held in his hand. He was quite capable of realizing that.

He sat turning the sheet over and — quite mechanically — drinking whisky. His sceptical faculties were largely in suspense; the barriers of criticism were down. His mind could now accept the idea that he was reading a newspaper of forty years ahead without any further protest.

It had been addressed to Mr. Evan O'Hara, and it had come to him. Well and good. This Evan O'Hara evidently knew how to get ahead of things....

I doubt if at that time Brownlow found anything very wonderful in the situation.

Yet it was, it continues to be, a very wonderful situation. The wonder of it mounts to my head as I write. Only gradually have I been able to build up this picture of Brownlow turning over that miraculous sheet, so that I can believe it myself. And you will understand how, as the thing flickered between credibility and incredibility in my mind, I asked him, partly to justify or confute what he told me, and partly to satisfy a vast expanding and, at last, devouring curiosity: "What was there in it? What did it have to say?" At the same time, I found myself trying to catch him out in his story, and also asking him for every particular he could give me.

What was there in it? In other words, What will the world be doing forty years from now? That was the stupendous scale of the vision, of which Brownlow was afforded a glimpse. The world forty years from now! I lie awake at nights thinking of all that paper might have revealed to us. Much it did reveal, but there is hardly a thing it reveals that does not change at once into a constellation of riddles. When first he told me about the thing I was — it is, I admit, an enormous pity — intensely sceptical. I asked him questions in what people call a "nasty" manner. I was ready — as my manner made plain to him — to jump down his throat with "But that's preposterous!" at the very first slip. And I had an engagement that carried me off at the end of half an hour. But the thing had already got hold of my imagination, and I rang up Brownlow before tea-time,

and was biting at this "queer story" of his again. That afternoon he was sulking because of my morning's disbelief, and he told me very little. "I was drunk and dreaming, I suppose," he said. "I'm beginning to doubt it all myself." In the night it occurred to me for the first time that, if he was not allowed to tell and put on record what he had seen, he might become both confused and sceptical about it himself. Fancies might mix up with it. He might hedge and alter to get it more credible. Next day, therefore, I lunched and spent the afternoon with him, and arranged to go down into Surrey for the week-end. I managed to dispel his huffiness with me. My growing keenness restored his. There we set ourselves in earnest, first of all to recover everything he could remember about his newspaper and then to form some coherent idea of the world about which it was telling.

It is perhaps a little banal to say we were not trained men for the job. For who could be considered trained for such a job as we were attempting? What facts was he to pick out as important and how were they to be arranged? We wanted to know everything we could about 1971; and the little facts and the big facts crowded on one another and offended against each other.

The streamer headline across the page about that seven-mile Wilton boring, is, to my mind, one of the most significant items in the story. About that we are fairly clear. It referred, says Brownlow, to a series of attempts to tap the supply of heat beneath the surface of the earth. I asked various questions. "It was *explained*, y'know," said Brownlow, and smiled and held out a hand with twiddling fingers. "It was explained all right. Old system, they said, was to go down from a few hundred feet to a mile or so and bring up coal and burn it. Go down a bit deeper, and there's no need to bring up and burn anything. Just get heat itself straightaway. Comes up of its own accord — under its own steam. See? Simple.

"They were making a big fuss about it," he added. "It wasn't only the streamer headline; there was a leading article in big type. What was it headed? Ah! The Age of Combustion has Ended!"

Now that is plainly a very big event for mankind, caught in mid-happening, November 10th, 1971. And the way in which Brownlow describes it as being handled, shows clearly a world much more preoccupied by economic essentials than the world of to-day, and

dealing with them on a larger scale and in a bolder spirit.

That excitement about tapping the central reservoirs of heat, Brownlow was very definite, was not the only symptom of an increase in practical economic interest and intelligence. There was much more space given to scientific work and to inventions than is given in any contemporary paper. There were diagrams and mathematical symbols, he says, but he did not look into them very closely because he could not get the hang of them. "*Frightfully* highbrow, some of it," he said.

A more intelligent world for our grandchildren evidently, and also, as the pictures testified, a healthier and happier world.

"The fashions kept you looking," said Brownlow, going off at a tangent, "all coloured up as they were."

"Were they elaborate?" I asked.

"Anything *but*" he said.

His description of these costumes is vague. The people depicted in the social illustrations and in the advertisements seemed to have reduced body clothing — I mean things like vests, pants, socks and so forth — to a minimum. Breast and chest went bare. There seem to have been tremendously exaggerated wristlets, mostly on the left arm and going as far up as the elbow, provided with gadgets which served the purpose of pockets. Most of these armlets seem to have been very decorative, almost like little shields. And then, usually, there was an immense hat, often rolled up and carried in the hand, and long cloaks of the loveliest colours and evidently also of the most beautiful soft material, which either trailed from a sort of gorget or were gathered up and wrapped about the naked body, or were belted up or thrown over the shoulders.

There were a number of pictures of crowds from various parts of the world. "The people looked fine," said Brownlow. "Prosperous, you know, and upstanding. Some of the women — just lovely."

My mind went off to India. What was happening in India?

Brownlow could not remember anything very much about India. "Ankor," said Brownlow. "That's not India, is it?" There had been some sort of Carnival going on amidst "perfectly lovely" buildings in the sunshine of Ankor.

The people there were brownish people but they were dressed

very much like the people in other parts of the world.

I found the politician stirring in me. Was there really nothing about India? Was he sure of that? There was certainly nothing that had left any impression in Brownlow's mind. And Soviet Russia? "Not as Soviet Russia," said Brownlow. All that trouble had ceased to be a matter of daily interest. "And how was France getting on with Germany?" Brownlow could not recall a mention of either of these two great powers. Nor of the British Empire as such, nor of the U.S.A. There was no mention of any interchanges, communications, ambassadors, conferences, competitions, comparisons, stresses, in which these governments figured, so far as he could remember. He racked his brains. I thought perhaps all that had been going on so entirely like it goes on to-day — and has been going on for the last hundred years — that he had run his eyes over the passages in question and that they had left no distinctive impression on his mind. But he is positive that it was not like that. "All that stuff was washed out," he said. He is unshaken in his assertion that there were no elections in progress, no notice of Parliament or politicians, no mention of Geneva or anything about armaments or war. All those main interests of a contemporary journal seem to have been among the "washed out" stuff. It isn't that Brownlow didn't notice them very much; he is positive they were not there.

Now to me this is a very wonderful thing indeed. It means, I take it, that in only forty years from now the great game of sovereign states will be over. It looks also as if the parliamentary game will be over, and as if some quite new method of handling human affairs will have been adopted. Not a word of patriotism or nationalism; not a word of party, not an allusion. But in only forty years! While half the human beings already alive in the world will still be living! You cannot believe it for a moment. Nor could I, if it wasn't for two little torn scraps of paper. These, as I will make clear, leave me in a state of — how can I put it? — incredulous belief.

4

After all, in 1831 very few people thought of railway or steamship travel, and in 1871 you could already go round the world in eighty

days by steam, and send a telegram in a few minutes to nearly every part of the earth. Who would have thought of that in 1831? Revolutions in human life, when they begin to come, can come very fast. Our ideas and methods change faster than we know.

But just forty years!

It was not only that there was this absence of national politics from that evening paper, but there was something else still more fundamental. Business, we both think, finance that is, was not in evidence, at least upon anything like contemporary lines. We are not quite sure of that, but that is our impression. There was no list of Stock Exchange prices. for example, no City page, and nothing in its place. I have suggested already that Brownlow just turned that page over, and that it was sufficiently like what it is to-day that he passed and forgot it. I have put that suggestion to him. But he is quite sure that that was not the case. Like most of us nowadays, he is watching a number of his investments rather nervously, and he is convinced he looked for the City article.

November 10th, 1971, may have been Monday — there seems to have been some readjustment of the months and the days of the week; that is a detail into which I will not enter now — but that will not account for the absence of any City news at all. That also, it seems, will be washed out forty years from now.

Is there some tremendous revolutionary smash-up ahead, then? Which will put an end to investment and speculation? Is the world going Bolshevik? In the paper, anyhow, there was no sign of, or reference to, anything of that kind. Yet against this idea of some stupendous economic revolution we have the fact that here forty years ahead is a familiar London evening paper still tumbling into a private individual's letter-box in the most uninterrupted manner. Not much suggestion of a social smash-up there. Much stronger is the effect of immense changes which have come about bit by bit, day by day, and hour by hour, without any sort of revolutionary jolt, as morning or springtime comes to the world.

These futile speculations are irresistible. The reader must forgive me them. Let me return to our story.

There had been a picture of a landslide near Ventimiglia and one of some new chemical works at Salzburg, and there had been a

picture of fighting going on near Irkutsk. (Of that picture, as I will tell presently, a fading scrap survives.) “Now that was called — —” Brownlow made an effort, and snapped his fingers triumphantly. “ — — ‘Round-up of Brigands by Federal Police.’”

“What Federal Police?” I asked.

“There you have me,” said Brownlow. “The fellows on both sides looked mostly Chinese, but there were one or two taller fellows, who might have been Americans or British or Scandinavians.

“What filled a lot of the paper,” said Brownlow, suddenly, “was gorillas. There was no end of a fuss about gorillas. Not so much as about that boring, but still a lot of fuss. Photographs. A map. A special article and some paragraphs.”

The paper, had, in fact, announced the death of the last gorilla. Considerable resentment was displayed at the tragedy that had happened in the African gorilla reserve. The gorilla population of the world had been dwindling for many years. In 1931 it had been estimated at nine hundred. When the Federal Board took over it had shrunken to three hundred.

“*What* Federal Board?” I asked.

Brownlow knew no more than I did. When he read the phrase, it had seemed all right somehow. Apparently this Board had had too much to do all at once, and insufficient resources. I had the impression at first that it must be some sort of conservation board, improvised under panic conditions, to save the rare creatures of the world threatened with extinction. The gorillas had not been sufficiently observed and guarded, and they had been swept out of existence suddenly by a new and malignant form of influenza. The thing had happened practically before it was remarked. The paper was clamouring for inquiry and drastic changes of reorganization.

This Federal Board, whatever it might be, seemed to be something of very considerable importance in the year 1971. Its name turned up again in an article of afforestation. This interested Brownlow considerably because he has large holdings in lumber companies. This Federal Board was apparently not only responsible for the maladies of wild gorillas but also for the plantation of trees in — just note these names! — Canada, New York State, Siberia, Algiers, and the East Coast of England, and it was arraigned for various

negligences in combating insect pests and various fungoid plant diseases. It jumped all our contemporary boundaries in the most astounding way. Its range was world-wide. “In spite of the recent additional restrictions put upon the use of big timber in building and furnishing, there is a plain possibility of a shortage of shelter timber and of rainfall in nearly all the threatened regions for 1985 onwards. Admittedly the Federal Board has come late to its task, from the beginning its work has been urgency work; but in view of the lucid report prepared by the James Commission, there is little or no excuse for the inaggressiveness and over-confidence it has displayed.”

I am able to quote this particular article because as a matter of fact it lies before me as I write. It is indeed, as I will explain, all that remains of this remarkable newspaper. The rest has been destroyed and all we can ever know of it now is through Brownlow’s sound but not absolutely trustworthy memory.

5

My mind, as the days pass, hangs on to that Federal Board. Does that phrase mean, as just possibly it may mean, a world federation, a scientific control of all human life only forty years from now? I find that idea — staggering. I have always believed that the world was destined to unify— “Parliament of Mankind and Confederation of the World,” as Tennyson put it — but I have always supposed that the process would take centuries. But then my time sense is poor. My disposition has always been to under-estimate the pace of change. I wrote in 1900 that there would be aeroplanes “in fifty years’ time.” And the confounded things were buzzing about everywhere and carrying passengers before 1920.

Let me tell very briefly of the rest of that evening paper. There seemed to be a lot of sport and fashion; much about something called “Spectacle” — with pictures — a lot of illustrated criticism of decorative art and particularly of architecture. The architecture in the pictures he saw was “towering — kind of magnificent. Great blocks of building. New York, but more so and all run together”... Unfortunately he cannot sketch. There were sections devoted to something he couldn’t understand, but which he thinks was some

sort of “radio programme stuff.”

All that suggests a sort of advanced human life very much like the life we lead to-day, possibly rather brighter and better. But here is something — different.

“The birth-rate,” said Brownlow, searching his mind, “was seven in the thousand.”

I exclaimed. The lowest birth-rates in Europe now are sixteen or more per thousand. The Russian birth-rate is forty per thousand, and falling slowly.

“It was seven,” said Brownlow. “Exactly seven. I noticed it. In a paragraph.”

But what birth-rate, I asked. The British? The European?

“It said the birth-rate,” said Brownlow. “Just that.” That I think is the most tantalizing item in all this strange glimpse of the world of our grandchildren. A birth-rate of seven in the thousand does not mean a fixed world population; it means a population that is being reduced at a very rapid rate — unless the death-rate has gone still lower. Quite possibly people will not be dying so much then, but living very much longer. On that Brownlow could throw no light. The people in the pictures did not look to him an “old lot.” There were plenty of children and young or young-looking people about.

“But Brownlow,” I said, “wasn’t there any crime?”

“Rather,” said Brownlow. “They had a big poisoning case on, but it was jolly hard to follow. You know how it is with these crimes. Unless you’ve read about it from the beginning, it’s hard to get the hang of the situation. No newspaper has found out that for every crime it ought to give a summary up-to-date every day — and forty years ahead, they hadn’t. Or they aren’t going to. Whichever way you like to put it.

“There were several crimes and what newspaper men call stories,” he resumed; “personal stories. What struck me about it was that they seemed to be more sympathetic than our reporters, more concerned with the motives and less with just finding someone out. What you might call psychological — so to speak.”

“Was there anything much about books?” I asked him.

“I don’t remember anything about books,” he said....

And that is all. Except for a few trifling details such as a possible

thirteenth month inserted in the year, that is all. It is intolerably tantalizing. That is the substance of Brownlow's account of his newspaper. He read it — as one might read any newspaper. He was just in that state of alcoholic comfort when nothing is incredible and so nothing is really wonderful. He knew he was reading an evening newspaper of forty years ahead and he sat in front of his fire, and smoked and sipped his drink and was no more perturbed than he would have been if he had been reading an imaginative book about the future.

Suddenly his little brass clock pinged Two.

He got up and yawned. He put that astounding, that miraculous newspaper down as he was wont to put any old newspaper down; he carried off his correspondence to the desk in his bureau, and with the swift laziness of a very tired man he dropped his clothes about his room anyhow and went to bed.

But somewhen in the night he woke up feeling thirsty and grey-minded. He lay awake and it came to him that something very strange had occurred to him. His mind went back to the idea that he had been taken in by a very ingenious fabrication. He got up for a drink of Vichy water and a liver tabloid, he put his head in cold water and found himself sitting on his bed towelling his hair and doubting whether he had really seen those photographs in the very colours of reality itself, or whether he had imagined them. Also running through his mind was the thought that the approach of a world timber famine for 1985 was something likely to affect his investments and particularly a trust he was setting up on behalf of an infant in whom he was interested. It might be wise, he thought, to put more into timber.

He went back down the corridor to his sitting-room. He sat there in his dressing-gown, turning over the marvellous sheets. There it was in his hands complete in every page, not a corner torn. Some sort of auto-hypnosis, he thought, might be at work, but certainly the pictures seemed as real as looking out of a window. After he had stared at them some time he went back to the timber paragraph. He felt he must keep that. I don't know if you will understand how his mind worked — for my own part I can see at once how perfectly irrational and entirely natural it was — but he took this marvellous

paper, creased the page in question, tore off this particular article and left the rest. He returned very drowsily to his bedroom, put the scrap of paper on his dressing-table, got into bed and dropped off to sleep at once.

6

When he awoke again it was nine o'clock; his morning tea was untasted by his bedside and the room was full of sunshine. His parlourmaid-housekeeper had just re-entered the room.

"You were sleeping so peacefully," she said; "I couldn't bear to wake you. Shall I get you a fresh cup of tea?"

Brownlow did not answer. He was trying to think of something strange that had happened.

She repeated her question.

"No. I'll come and have breakfast in my dressing-gown before my bath," he said, and she went out of the room.

Then he saw the scrap of paper.

In a moment he was running down the corridor to the sitting-room. "I left a newspaper," he said. "I left a newspaper."

She came in response to the commotion he made.

"A newspaper?" she said. "It's been gone this two hours, down the chute, with the dust and things."

Brownlow had a moment of extreme consternation.

He invoked his God. "I wanted it *kept*!" he shouted. "I wanted it *kept*."

"But how was *I* to know you wanted it kept?"

"But didn't you notice it was a very extraordinary-looking newspaper?"

"I've got none too much time to dust out this flat to be looking at newspapers," she said. "I thought I saw some coloured photographs of bathing ladies and chorus girls in it, but that's no concern of mine. It didn't seem a proper newspaper to me. How was I to know you'd be wanting to look at them again this morning?"

"I must get that newspaper back," said Brownlow. "It's — it's vitally important.... If all Sussex Court has to be held up I want that newspaper back."

“I’ve never known a thing come up that chute again,” said his housekeeper, “that’s once gone down it. But I’ll telephone down, sir, and see what can be done. Most of that stuff goes right into the hot-water furnace, they say....”

It does. The newspaper had gone.

Brownlow came near raving. By a vast effort of self-control he sat down and consumed his cooling breakfast. He kept on saying “Oh, my God!” as he did so. In the midst of it he got up to recover the scrap of paper from his bedroom, and then found the wrapper addressed to Evan O’Hara among the overnight letters on his bureau. That seemed an almost maddening confirmation. The thing had happened.

Presently after he had breakfasted, he rang me up to aid his baffled mind.

I found him at his bureau with the two bits of paper before him. He did not speak. He made a solemn gesture.

“What is it?” I asked, standing before him.

“Tell me,” he said. “Tell me. What are these objects? It’s serious. Either — —” He left the sentence unfinished.

I picked up the torn wrapper first and felt its texture. “Evan O’Hara, Mr.,” I read.

“Yes. Sussex Court, 49. Eh?”

“Right,” I agreed and stared at him.

“That’s not hallucination, eh?”

I shook my head.

“And now this?” His hand trembled as he held out the cutting. I took it.

“Odd,” I said. I stared at the black-green ink, the unfamiliar type, the little novelties in spelling. Then I turned the thing over. On the back was a piece of one of the illustrations; it was, I suppose, about a quarter of the photograph of that “Round-up of Brigands by Federal Police” I have already mentioned.

When I saw it that morning it had not even begun to fade. It represented a mass of broken masonry in a sandy waste with bare-looking mountains in the distance. The cold, clear atmosphere, the glare of a cloudless afternoon were rendered perfectly. In the foreground were four masked men in a brown service uniform intent

on working some little machine on wheels with a tube and a nozzle projecting a jet that went out to the left, where the fragment was torn off. I cannot imagine what the jet was doing. Brownlow says he thinks they were gassing some men in a hut. Never have I seen such realistic colour printing.

"What on earth is this?" I asked.

"It's *that,*" said Brownlow. "I'm not mad, am I? It's really *that*."

"But what the devil is it?"

"It's a piece of a newspaper for November 10th, 1971."

"You had better explain," I said, and sat down, with the scrap of paper in my hand, to hear his story. And, with as much elimination of questions and digressions and repetitions as possible, that is the story I have written here.

I said at the beginning that it was a queer story and queer to my mind it remains, fantastically queer. I return to it at intervals, and it refuses to settle down in my mind as anything but an incongruity with all my experience and beliefs. If it were not for the two little bits of paper, one might dispose of it quite easily. One might say that Brownlow had had a vision, a dream of unparalleled vividness and consistency. Or that he had been hoaxed and his head turned by some elaborate mystification. Or, again, one might suppose he had really seen into the future with a sort of exaggeration of those previsions cited by Mr. J.W. Dunne in his remarkable "Experiment with Time." But nothing Mr. Dunne has to advance can account for an actual evening paper being slapped through a letter-slit forty years in advance of its date.

The wrapper has not altered in the least since I first saw it. But the scrap of paper with the article about afforestation is dissolving into a fine powder and the fragment of picture at the back of it is fading out; most of the colour has gone and the outlines have lost their sharpness. Some of the powder I have taken to my friend Ryder at the Royal College, whose work in micro-chemistry is so well known. He says the stuff is not paper at all, properly speaking. It is mostly aluminium fortified by admixture with some artificial resinous substance.

Though I offer no explanation whatever of this affair I think I will venture on one little prophesy. I have an obstinate persuasion that on November 10th, 1971, the name of the tenant of 49, Sussex Court, will be Mr. Evan O'Hara. (There is no tenant of that name now in Sussex Court and I find no evidence in the Telephone Directory, or the London Directory, that such a person exists anywhere in London.) And on that particular evening forty years ahead, he will not get his usual copy of the *Even Standrd*: instead he will get a copy of the *Evening Standard* of 1931. I have an incurable fancy that this will be so.

There I may be right or wrong, but that Brownlow really got and for two remarkable hours, read, a real newspaper forty years ahead of time I am as convinced as I am convinced that my own name is Hubert G. Wells. Can I say anything stronger than that?

THE END

WALCOTE

It was Christmas Eve at Walcote. Most of the long saloon was in deep shadow, only here and there faint glimmers of reflected light showed where tables and vases and chairs and lounges were placed. A low screen stood before the wide fireplace. Ever and again the ruddy flicker from the spitting logs would leap and beckon over this, calling into visible existence a spectral faint room, the tall white caryatides of the great entrance, the bronze Satan that stood by the grand piano. As the unsteady shadows moved it seemed as if this latter figure stirred, waving its upraised arm, and as if the satyr caryatides smiled. A clock that ticked invisible in the dense obscurity above the mantel struck, in deep insistent tones, eleven. As the chime died away, the flickering flames sank behind the screen, a swift darkness swallowed the indistinct red room, the stirring Satan, the leering portals vanished in the black.

There was a stirring in a distant corner, a rustling noise, a sharp click, a faint clinking like the moving of a chain. Then all was silent, save the hissing and bubbling of the sap in the fire. One of the logs began a thin singing that speedily died away like the whistling of a frightened lad before the ominous stillness of the dark.

"Sss," suddenly sounded in the corner — an echo of the fire.

"Sss." "Oh Edwin!"

The red tongues of fire leaped nervously up again. Dim and indistinct in one corner was a bird-like form on a perch, a gilt chain glittering faintly. The bronze nodded, the colossal distortion of its shadow on the wall crouched and leaped, the satyrs leered and blinked. The clock snapped up the seconds with grim destructive emphasis. Then unsteady footsteps could be heard without.

The thinnest golden line shone under the great door. The door swung open wide; two footmen appearing bearing silver candlesticks, other figures showing behind them.

As the light poured into the room and revealed all its elegances of silk and velvet and white and gold, it was as if the satyrs, ceasing to leer, grew breathless and motionless, as though the raised hand of Satan halted in anticipation. The heating of the clock was no longer

audible, it seemed to be hushed in expectation. A figure of old Time, swaying his scythe, a remorseless, deliberate, a dreadful representation of the inevitable became visible above it. Everything was now real, distinct, and brilliant. On a fantastic perch in the corner a grey parrot blinked in the brightness.

The footmen advanced together, deposited the candles on a small round table, removed the screen, and drew the polished table nearer the fire. Three richly-dressed gentlemen followed.

"This is ever so much the best room, Edwin," said one of these sauntering in with his hands in his pockets. He was a fair complexion, ruddy-faced youth, splendidly attired in cherry-coloured satin and noble lace. He addressed his remark to one older, taller, darker, but as resplendent as himself. "I don't see, cousin, why you should object to come here," he continued, "I think-"

"It doesn't matter now, Claude," said the one he had addressed as cousin, recent annoyance and present discomfort very evident

in his voice. "A passing fancy struck me. It's all right now-

all right now we are here. Vitzelley, where will you sit?"

"Vitzelley," exclaimed the younger at the same moment, "have you noticed our parrot before? — curious bird — dumb with grief ever since the — the apotheosis of cousin Harry."

Vitzelley hesitated between them and answered both. "There. No." He was a small-eyed, keen-faced man, much older and far more soberly clad than his two companions.

"Yes," repeated Claude, "dumb with grief. Polly! pretty Polly," approaching it. "No answer, you see, Vitzelley."

The parrot raised one claw and stretched its fleshy digits, clicked its beak, and inclined its head to his finger.

"Poll, scratchy Poll. I suppose, Vitzelley, you have heard some hundred and fifty variations of our family mystery. All sorts of lies are flying about."

"The cards are ready, Claude," said Edwin in a warning voice, as the footmen, completing their arrangements, quietly vanished: "Come and sit down."

Vitzelley glanced from one to the other. He took the first pack in his hand and ran his fingers over the edges. "The old game, of course," he said to Edwin.

Claude came and sat down, thrusting his chair back to display the embroidery of his vest. “Pass that decanter, Vitzelley,” he said. “My cards these? Ah! Fortuna, Fortuna!”

“Vitzelley is too polite to get interested about Sir Harry,” he went on presently, pouring from the decanter as he spoke: “before us — that is.”

“I wish you would cut,” said his cousin.

Vitzelley took the cards to deal. Then with a quiet glance at Edwin, “I have heard very little of your affair. Sir Harry thought fit to disappear because — because he had been playing cards?”

Edwin bowed his head assentingly. “It is the only explanation possibly suggesting itself. We are waiting, Claude,” he said, nervously, as if desirous of changing the subject.

“That’s stuff,” ejaculated Claude, playing. “*I* know more than that. You know more than that. Sir Harry never played.”

This flat contradiction caused Edwin to turn white, and glance with sharp malevolence at his cousin. It seemed to nettle him excessively. “You know very little about it, Claude,” he retorted.

“I know Sir Harry never played cards.”

“To my knowledge he did. Confound it!” — he had played the wrong card. “Well, well! I wish, Claude, you could avoid trying to begin a wrangle at cards.”

“Who wants to wrangle? — not me! Sir Harry never played.”

An uncomfortable silence followed. The game going on without a monosyllable being spoken. Then Claude drank, sucked his lips and turned to Vitzelley. “No, Vitzelley, the disappearance of Sir Harry was no bolt from his debts of honour. We arc

an honourable family still. I believe-.” The young man’s

face assumed an exceedingly sapient and confidential expression. An anxious look came into Edwin’s eyes— “there was a lady in the case.”

A crimson flush swept over Edwin’s forehead, but he looked relieved. “Another pack, Vitzelley. Filthy luck, then, for me. It’s the port. My head is as muddled and crowded as — as—”

“As a rotting corpse,” supplied Claude, compensating himself for the recent passage of arms.

Another grim pause supervened, Edwin manifesting much

disturbance.

"I never rightly heard the particulars of this affair," said Vitzelley, sweeping in the stakes he had just won, and seeing out of his narrow eyes, with considerable approval, the increasing distraction of one cousin and the intoxication of the other. "Was there anything odd?"

"No, delightfully simple, all of it," answered Claude. "Just pass the decanter. Thanks. Two significant facts; one Sir Harry was; two he is not. Incidentally, the day he vanished that parrot was struck dumb. That is all. You saw your brother last, by-the-bye, Edwin. Tell us all about it."

Edwin was white, and he was now playing wildly. "The cards are bewitched to-night," he said, between his teeth. He ignored Claude's words entirely.

"By Jove, Edwin!" burst out the irrepressible Claude; "why, it must be just a year to-night! Vitzelley, this is the twenty-fourth of December. Christmas Eve? of course, yes. This is the anniversary of that last appearance. Vitzelley, don't ghosts—"

"I wish you would stop this sort of thing, Claude. It distracts one from the play." Edwin certainly looked most strangely uncomfortable.

"My dear fellow! most valuable thought of mine — to you — this anniversary idea. When the year is up, you can take out — what is it? — letters of administration."

Edwin was drumming with his strong white hand on the table, and pretending to examine the lace at his wrist. "You are stopping the game, Claude."

"This, Edwin," presently resumed Claude, assuming great confidence with Vitzelley, "is a sly old dog, Vitz. You, you're a sly old dog, too, to pull in like you are doing. That's by the way. Well, this Edwin always pretends to get huffy, get his feelings hurt, when we fall a talking about this disappearance. Really he profits up to the hilt. You must know Sir Harry was going to marry; happy girl, happy day, all fixed. If he had married and got a little boy, poor old Eddy — out in the cold for ever. Now, he's as good as baronet — will be baronet I suppose after awhile. Eigh?"

"Did you really see him last?" asked Vitzelley, with a penetrating look at Edwin.

Edwin moistened his dry lips and looked straight into his face. He seemed watching his words as he spoke. “On Christmas Eve, last year, I left my brother here in this room, sitting before this fire, about eleven. About — about this time — it must have been—” His eye fell instinctively on the clock. “The footman who sleeps in the pantry below heard a bumping above and the parrot chattering. I — I was already in bed, and heard nothing at all. The next morning Sir Harry had vanished. Everything had been put straight — in fact, I mean, nothing had been disturbed apparently in this room or anywhere. Since then-”

“Viz, my lad, pass the bottle. It must have been the devil,” said Claude. “Apotheosis.”

“The thing has been no joke to me,” complained Edwin, breathing more freely, as Vitzelley turned his attention to the cards again. “The disappearance”-

“Four minutes to twelve,” interrupted Claude, “and Saturday. Vitzelley, if we play till Sunday we see the devil, don’t we? I wonder if he’s like our Satan here. Perhaps he’ll bring Sir Harry back.”

“Do, in heaven’s name, stop that,” cried Edwin, nervous now to savageness. “You know how his disappearance has weighed on my mind; how I would give my soul to have Sir Harry, or Sir Harry’s body, discovered-”

“Oh, Edwin!”

Edwin became livid. “What was that? Did you speak, Vitzelley? Did you hear anything?”

Vitzelley was looking a little startled. “*I* did not speak. I thought I heard something.”

“I didn’t,” said Claude. “Vitzelley, it’s two to twelve. What happens at midnight if we keep on playing cards?”

“The red cards turn black, and the black blood red,” said Vitzelley, drily; “and the picture cards make faces at you. That is all. Nothing very dreadful. What’s the matter with you, Walcote; why don’t you deal?”

“What are you glowering at in the candle flame?” cried Claude. “One would think it was burning blue. Don’t be alarmed. It wants one minute to midnight yet.”

Edwin answered with a peculiar quiver and gasping. “I —

It's nothing, nothing. Fancy. I am always fancying-. You

can't see anything, can you? Pah, how the thing jumps and struggles! not dead yet. Will it ever be quiet? The flame, I mean."

His face was ghastly, a sickly dew was glistening on his forehead. He made a peculiar clutching motion at the candle, then looked with startled fearful scrutiny at Vitzelley, put his hand to his forehead and then on the cards.

"The candle only flickers because it wants snuffing. There is a purple glow at the neck — wick I mean — and-" increasing distraction of one cousin and the intoxication of the other. "Was there anything odd?"

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"The candle only flickers because it wants snuffing. There is a purple glow at the neck — wick I mean — and-" One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Slowly and solemnly the deep-voiced clock struck Twelve.

As the vibration of the last stroke died away, Edwin with a loud expression of disgust flung down his cards. "The face," he said, "the face — with the black tongue out! The cards, the Knaves and Kings, white faces and purple necks. What a maniac I was to come here — this room — to-night! Bah! You fools! It's a joke! What are you fools staring at?"

Neither answered a word. Vitzelley had suddenly folded his arms and leaned over the table towards him. Claude had swiftly snatched up his cards, glanced at them fearfully, and then with a slightly relieved face turned to Edwin.

A stillness, and then a low, unearthly, pervading voice sounding through it, going searchingly through all the space around them, an agonised choking voice.

"Oh, Edwin! oh, my mother! spare me, spare me! oh!" — ending in a prolonged sobbing groan.

Claude's hair rose on end. Vitzelley moved not, spoke never a word. With fingers crushing the cards in his hand, with head bowed down, distorted mouth and blinking eyes, Edwin sat, as though awaiting the stroke of doom.

The clock ticked on exultantly in the horrible stillness. The bronze

Satan stood expectant behind them, the satyrs stared across the room on suppressed excitement. The shadow of Satan's uplifted arm hung terrible above the crouching shadow of Edwin. The parrot shifted on his perch and clanked its chain. A card fell audibly on the floor. Then they heard an aerial voice, that made them involuntarily glance at his cadaverous face.

"Ah! . . . the priest's hole in the turret!"

It was Edwin's voice, but he had not spoken.

Another terrible hiatus in sound, a minute — or an hour. Then a dawning light of comprehension shone in Edwin's eyes. He started up furious, his chair reeling over with a crash, and made three strides towards the parrot. The bird gave an eldritch shriek and flapped open its wide grey wings. Then Vitzelley had gripped Edwin's arm and they stood confronting.

"Fate," said Vitzelley. "You must submit. We know — enough."

A pause and then an intense whisper. "Yes, I killed him — here — last Christmas Eve. Fool that I was to come here, this night of all! We drank and quarrelled. He had stood in my way to wealth, and his wealth had won my Annie from me. He taunted me. How I hated him then! I struck him suddenly with the poker, felled him, leaped on him, strangled him. There is a secret chamber in the disused turret where once the priests were hidden. Only he and I knew. He is there, rat eaten, mummified . . .

"Vitzelley, leave my arm for a moment."

He turned and faced them both.

Suddenly his rapier glittered in the light. It flashed, and the parrot toppled over and hung headless by its chain, flashed again and he was staggering, falling forward, to roll over and sigh, and lie motionless before them — to love, hate, and sin nevermore. At his feet lay the head of the parrot, the fleshy tongue still faintly quivering.

The candles flickered as if with a passing breath, the shadowy Satan moved strangely on the wall. Over the marble mantel old Time swayed his scythe grim and restless, hewing out irrevocable things.

THE DEVOTEE OF ART

Alec had heard his wife playing, and had thrown down his brushes and come to the chair beside the old-fashioned square piano. It was a wide, velvet-covered arm-chair, in which he had perforce to clasp his hands behind his head and lounge luxuriously if he meant to sit in it at all — a chair not easily to be sat in without perfect easiness, a chair with the embrace of Morpheus and the inspiration of the herb Papaver.

Isabel was playing very sweetly; she played by feeling as well as touch; something of Wagner's it was, something as uncertain and variable, and as invariably attractive as life itself. To listen — in that arm-chair — was like hearing the Sirens; existence became— "spiritualized," the word is — suddenly emancipated from all necessary cares and courses.

Alec had been tormenting his brain all day with the expression of a curiously obdurate face, feeling an idea growing frayed and colourless, like a captured butterfly, as he attempted to fix what beauty it had for the common eye; and the escape from technique was delicious. He slipped away from realities gladly, and wandered — no longer mortal man, but immortal soul again — in the realms of the imagination, dealing with realities boldly as became a deathless spirit. He had been working all day to develop his conception of a knightly vigil; and as Isabel played andante, the vision the music inspired him with was full of violet shadows in mysterious temples, solitary pink flames before ghostly altars, tenebrous gleamings, white robed figures faintly seen, prayer and awe — all very vague indeed, but all exceedingly beautiful. Presently, however, her white hands passed into swift allegro and his fancies grew insensibly more animated. Into his shadowy dim aisles processions came marching, torchlight banished the dimness and blazed paler into day, figures flowed in more and more, more and more the scene grew crowded, dignified priests and warriors grew more numerous, younger, more active, swarming and overflowing until temples, altars, processions, all order and stability vanished in a mazy dance of exultant figures, knights and dames, shepherds and shepherdesses, clowns,

grotesques, Punchinellos, corphyrees, humanity, finally danced under by a whirl of ideal creations, imps, gnomes, fairies, satyrs, hamadryads, harpies, and oreads. Faster and faster they danced in intricate kaleidoscopic figures. Suddenly through them all, like the news of a death in a ball room, passed a shudder, a jar, — blackness rapt them away! — the music had stopped.

"Alec," said Isabel, "you are going to sleep; you distinctly snored."

"My dear girl! nothing could have been further from my thoughts. I was just shutting my eyes to enjoy the music, and thinking over a little problem in composition." He felt quite hurt.

Isabel turned back to the piano, and Alec, to avoid a repetition of this unjust misconception — she was always thinking him sleepy or unwell when reverie engaged him — opened his eyes as wide as possible and fixed them unblinkingly on her face.

"My dear, Alec, don't look like that! Are you ill? Or is there anything wrong with my hair?"

Isabel had curly dark brown hair, that dark brown which gleams golden in a slanting light. It was a little out (so Isabel called it) that night, and there were ever so many little misty gold curves and wreaths fading away round her head — the amber-shaded lamp beside her gave her quite a halo of them.

"Only Sylphs, dear Belinda," said Alec, lazily, suppressing some annoyance. "Does my look disturb you?"

Isabel considered as she went on playing. "I don't want you to stare like a hairdresser's wig block," she said judicially; "but you may look at me if you like."

So Alec went on looking, with greatly subdued violence, however, at the glory-surrounded head and the shadowed face.

"It was a sweet face," Alec meditated, "soft lined, tender-looking; one of those pale faces with dark eyes that are not perhaps beautiful but infinitely capable of beautiful expressions, a face never wearisome while there is life, and yet-."

Alec loved his wife very greatly — more by far than he loved himself or any other loveable being, and yet — . There was this little "and yet — ," this one fatal objection, very much present in Alec's mind just then, suggested by the slight vulgarity of those few words

of his wife to begin with, and fostered perhaps by the subdued discontent of the air that now prevailed in the music: Isabel, he thought, was a force in life antagonistic to art.

Alec was an artist not only by choice of metir, but of spiritual compulsion. So he fancied, and just then was thinking that his supreme love was not to be found in that warmly illuminated room, but in the dim-lit studio beyond; that for one wedded to eternal Art, marriage was a sad mistake, even, indeed, a sort of bigamy. He had been reading, as the omniscient reader will observe, that child of fancy, Algernon Swinburne; and that and Isabel's pathetic transitions from phantasies to snores, and from sylph-surrounded heads to hairdressers' wig blocks, and the melancholy music — it was really melancholy now — all worked together. It was, in fact, one of those painful moments of domestic dissatisfaction not uncommon to recently-married young men who are moderately clever and immoderately ambitious — especially after days passed in badly arranged and unsuccessful work. The theory of the wife being an earthly clog is so soothing to self love. Ars longa vita brevis, he thought, not a new or original idea, but one remembered from copybook learning; and here he, the artist, was actually making his vita brevior by becoming domesticated! Among other equally poignant reminders, Milton's words, "and that one talent which is death to hide," came into his mind. Death! the loss of immortality! were the appointed moments of probation indeed gliding inevitably by? Perish the thought! At that moment he seemed to himself — the music and the easy chair inspiring another Merlin in the spell of another Vivien; he, the potential creator of spell-beautiful paintings, spending his moments, his hours, pleasing and being pleased by a wife who compared him to a hairdresser's wigblock.

It was his duty to his supreme mistress, Art, not to permit this a moment longer. He would return to his proper sphere. His act was swifter than his resolution, although that supervened very suddenly on his wandering discontents.

He did not venture to look round at Isabel as he rose and walked straight into his studio, but as he closed the door he heard that the music ceased abruptly and that her dress rustled.

He lit the white-burning Solar lamp and turned it towards his

picture.

Just then he heard the door behind him creak, and turning, saw it pushed open very softly, and Isabel, her face full of solicitude, appear looking in. Probably she fancied he was ill. When, however, his sudden asperity of expression became evident, she disappeared, the door closing noiselessly.

It was an Italian model he had been troubled about. The fellow had fine white features, mobile lips, and liquid eyes; he was to be the knight keeping vigil. When Alec had first seen him he had been struck merely by the possibilities of looking impassioned which this young man possessed. He was fit to go into a picture quite unmodified, "Kneel. Look devout," he would have to say, paint him forthwith, and the thing would be done. But that day as he had worked at his knight's features he had been surprised and annoyed to find a curious phenomenon appearing through his efforts. Try as he would, copy with never so much painful accuracy the adolescent countenance before him, a curious sinister expression would come somehow upon the canvas, a look of age, and instead of devotion, furtive ridicule. He could not understand it — had been glad to leave patching it to hear his wife's playing. Now, this evening, disregarding subtleties of tint, he would have another try, wrestle with and overcome this difficulty.

"Some little inaccuracy does it," he said; "eyebrows probably too oblique," — therewith turning the white light full upon his work and taking up palette and brushes.

The face on the canvas certainly seemed animated by a spirit of its own. Where the expression of diablerie came in he found impossible to discover. Experiment was necessary. The eyebrows — it could scarcely be the eyebrows? But he altered them. No, that was no better; in fact, if anything, a trifle more satanic. The corner of the mouth? Pah! more than ever a Mephisto-philesian leer — and now, re-touched, it is ominously grim. The eye then? Catastrophe! he had filled his brush with vermilion instead of brown, and yet he had felt sure it was brown! The eye seemed now to have rolled in its socket, glowing on him an eye of fire. In a flash of passion he struck the brush full of bright red athwart the picture; and then a very curious thing, a very strange thing indeed, occurred — if it did occur.

The diabolified Italian before him shut both his eyes, pursed his mouth, and wiped the colour off his face with his hand!

Then the red eye opened again and the face smiled. “That was rather hasty of you,” it said.

Curiously enough, Alec did not feel frightened or very much astonished. Perhaps he was too much exasperated. “Why do you keep moving about then,” he said, “making faces and all that, sneering and squinting while I am painting you?”

“I don’t,” said the picture.

“You do,” said Alec.

“It’s yourself,” said the picture.

“It’s *not* myself,” said Alec.

“It is yourself,” said the picture. “No! don’t go hitting me with paint again, because it’s true. You have been trying to fluke an expression on my face all day. Really you haven’t an idea what your picture ought to look like.”

“I have,” said Alec.

“You have not,” contradicted the picture; “you never have with your pictures. You always start with the vaguest presentiment of what you are going to do; it is to be something beautiful — you are sure of that — and devout, perhaps, or tragic; but beyond that it is all experiment and chance. My dear fellow! you don’t surely think you can paint a picture like that?”

Alec felt there was a lot of truth in all this. “What am I to do then?”

“Get an inspiration.”

“But I thought this was an inspiration.”

“Inspiration,” sneered the sardonic figure; “a fancy that came from your seeing an organ-grinder looking up at a window! Vigil! ha, ha!”

Alec groaned. “Too true! I am married. The days of inspiration are past. Oh, to undo it! I would give anything in life for a return of inspiration, for a release from the humdrum life of small domesticities that is beginning. I — who would have given my soul to art!”

“As you wish,” said the figure, and then everything was still.

“Eigh!” cried Alec, suddenly startled out of his cool acceptance of

this phenomenon by a swift, uncomfortable realisation.

"Did you speak?" he said, after a pause.

"I say — Vezetti - or — whoever you are, did you say anything?"

In the stillness he could hear his own heart beating. The picture was motionless and voiceless, but the red eye glowed like a coal.

Very slowly he approached, and passed his hand over the paint. Paint, sure enough — unsophisticated paint. He must have been dreaming; he had read plenty of scientific matter about hallucinations and so forth, and so he was not too horribly frightened; still — . He felt the red eye, but that was perfectly cool.

"Do you want to say anything more?" asked Alec, deliberately jumbling together all the colours on his palette; "because, if not—"

Dab, dab, dab, he proceeded to paint out this disagreeably outspoken creation as quickly as he could. He had some difficulty in getting out the red eye; it seemed to glow through the coatings he laid over it. At last, however, with what seemed like a quietly ironical wink, it disappeared.

Smear, smudge, wriggle, every stroke of the obnoxious figure was presently hidden. With a feeling of relief Alec drew back from the canvas. "I am a superstitious fellow," he was thinking dubiously, as he surveyed the wreck, when suddenly some lines in his aimless smearing caught his eye. "By Jove!" he exclaimed, "there's an idea there!" He framed his eyes with his hands.

He heard a light tapping at the door. It was his wife. Presently the door opened, but he did not turn towards her. "Alec," she said, "do you know the time?" She received no answer. "It is nearly midnight, Alec." Still no answer. "Are you going to paint all night, Alec?"

"Oh! yes! yes!" he answered, without turning, in a tone that made it almost a curse; and when with a faint twinge of compunction he looked round, she had gone away.

It was really a splendid idea; splendid idea is not enough; it was almost as if a divine revelation had come to Alec. The curves above suggested the intersecting arching of the roof; that smear below, the knight keeping vigil; and between, that white space, what he had been feeling for all along, a group, the watching spirits of Chivalry, Generosity, Purity, and Religion. Beautiful in form and colour, definite as bodily sight, the conception had come to him. In another

minute he was frantically preparing colours. Morning should see the work under way.

He was working feverishly in the dead of night when his wife's finger-nails tapped at his studio door again. As he stepped back to get a view of his work he saw her standing in her white nightdress in the doorway. "Alec," she said, "it is four o'clock. You will make yourself ill."

"Go away," Alec answered roughly, and as her footsteps slipped along the passage he went to the door and, slamming, locked it. He thought he heard her cry, but just then his eye caught the growing picture and he forgot everything else.

When the pale daylight came streaming into the room to show the yellow in his Solar lamp, Alec was still working in frantic haste. The great masses of the picture were blocked in; already it was beautiful.

What was that? A rapping at the door. "Come in." The door is locked however. With his eyes on his picture he opens it, and hears the voice of Lizzie, the little serving maid.

"Oh, if you please, sir, missus sent me to say as she's ill, and will you come to see her."

"Ill?" said Alec, walking up to the picture and touching in some purple.

"She slipped upon the stairs, sir, last night, and her side and back are just dreffle painful this morning, sir."

"This moonlit window is supreme," said Alec, absently painting. "Ah — Lizzie!"

"Yessir."

"Fetch me some coffee and bread and butter;" and quite forgetful of his wife's illness — news, indeed, that he imperfectly heard — he goes on with his great idea of expressing the profound stillness round the watching knight by metameric vertical praying figures in the windows and on the monuments. It was a real, an undeniable inspiration which had come to him at last. Previously he thought his idea had been as spiritless almost as that extraordinary painting of the same subject saved up for an ill-starred posterity in the Chantrey Room, South Kensington. Now, in richness of accessories and colour it was worthy of Titian; in harmony of line, of Leighton or Raphael. This idea was the morning star of his fame. Work, work, work, a

fortnight, perhaps, or three weeks, and then — the dawn of immortality!

The hours seemed to fly by as the masterpiece grew slowly into beauty. As it grew, all possibilities of fatigue seemed to pass away from him — he felt neither hunger nor thirst. As it grew, it entranced him more and more; fainter and fainter outward impressions came to him. Some indistinct memories of various people interrupting him, saying stupid irrelevant things about his wife being ill and what not, of the lamp being lit again, and presently going out amid a stream of red sparks up the chimney, of his having to rave the house down to get it refilled, various people trying insanely to quiet him, of the clock having stopped, and of sleeping by snatches in his clothes at the foot of the easel. But all those impressions were faint and intermingled, more like the swift imperfections of a dream than real occurrences. The one consequent idea, the one grand organic growth, was the Great Picture. Ever more beautiful, nearer and nearer to perfection it grew.

It was sublime, this flawless creating under his inspired lingers. Days slipped by unheeded; thrice the Solar lamp had flickered out. Alec's life would have been altogether supreme had it not been for the faint but persistent intimations of evil to his wife, and for the reminiscences of the figure with the red eye that came to disturb his snatches of slumber. These things imported a vague uneasiness into the ecstatic dream of pure art he was living.

"Your wife is dangerously ill; her fall has injured her internally. She may be dying."

"Eigh! What! Is it you?"

It was his wife's mother, and behind her the doctor. They were looking at him with a peculiar dread in their eyes. But he did not mind that. Everyone had been odd these last few days.

"She is dying," the Doctor said, solemnly.

"Dying is she? Who did you say?" He went up to the picture again, touching it fondly.

"Your wife."

"My wife — Doctor! what's the day of the month?"

"The Vigil. Don't go away, Doctor, without seeing my picture. What did you say the date?"

“Eigh! Then there’s — yes, just time for the Academy!”

Presently he was standing on the landing bawling, “Lizzie!”

“In the name of heaven, man, be quiet! Do you want to commit murder?”

“Murder! Nonsense! I want a cab. The Vigil is finished!”

I he precious picture! He must carry the canvas down in his own arms. How hushed the house was. The two servants stood in the background in the hall with a look of profound awe on the in faces. I he triumph of accomplishment is already beginning. Evidently they know now that he is a genius. All the world will know that soon.

As he enters the cab the Doctor appears at the door with a white face, comes down the steps and clutches his arm, saying something.

“You idiot! Leave go my arm, will you?”

Then the cab is rumbling on its way to Burlington House. Alec, with the picture on his knees, regards it lovingly.

It is very beautiful, but the light is dim. Presently it seems as if — yes, the light is shimmering through; the oiled canvas is growing transparent. It is really very strange; indeed, it is disagreeable. The work he has painted over shows; all the elemental smears and smudges are there. Then beneath that, the thing that those smears and smudges were to hide, that begins to grow perceptible. First, a red glimmer, then a faint outline. The sinister face, the ardent eye, become every moment more emphatic, seeming to have burnt out all the beauty he has worked for. Yes! it is the diabolical figure with the red eye, grinning exultantly; then, with a laugh, speaking:

“You see I am still here.”

“Who — what?” gasps Alec, and then, with lower jaw dropping, is silent.

“You are consecrated to art now. My friend, did you catch what the Doctor said to you?”

Smash!

All is indistinct for a little while after this; there is even a slight confusion about his identity. He sees himself lying with a crushed hand among the wreck of the cab, which has collided with a timber wagon. He can feel the pain and tingling of the wound, notices the great picture smashed hopelessly beside him, a gaping hole knocked through it, simulating curiously the shape of that weird red-eyed

figure, and then the thought comes into his mind, where is he?

Then it is a hospital ward. The transition is abrupt; probably he has fainted. “His hand is to be amputated,” one hard-featured nurse tells another in his hearing.

Hand and work gone together — the ignis fatuus of immortality has vanished. Bitterness and sorrow come upon him, and the need of refuge and comfort. With a great yearning, his thoughts rush back to his wife, her gentle touch, her tender eyes, her soothing voice. A frightful pang goes through him — the Doctor’s words come to his mind “In the name of decency come back — she is dead. “The nympholept is disenchanted. What has he cast away for the phantasm of praise? Then the full comprehension of his acts appears in all its hideousness. Oh, the vileness, the folly, the mad ingratitude of it! What could have impelled him, what demon possessed him?

“You were inspired.”

He turns his head. Beside the bed with folded arms and grimly smiling face, stands his creation, the red-eyed man.

He would scream, hut he can find no voice; would spring away out of the bed, but motion is denied him.

“You wished to be inspired. Art and the domestic virtues jarred together. Your wife is dead; she had to die when you gave your soul to art.”

“Gave my soul to art?”

“Yes. Ha, hah! It is a pity your hand is smashed.”

And suddenly the red-eyed man had sat down on Alec’s body and was glaring with his one fiery orb into his fee. “What did you make me for?” His breath was sulphurous, it made Alec’s nostrils and mouth burn; and the arm too grew terribly painful again, as though a thousand red-hot needles were probing it.

“Oh, my wife! I am dying.”

“Don’t call your wife; you are mine,” hissed the fiend close to his face.

“Listen!” he continued, with cruel deliberation. “When a painter paints a form without a soul to it, without, that is, a clear intention expressed by it; when he paints aimlessly and recklessly in the hope of some spirit coming into it by accident — sometimes a spirit comes. I came so to yours, and you know the bargain I struck with

you.”

It was horrible. The demon was as heavy as lead, and his breath burnt Alec’s nostrils. But the most bitter of all the terrible things he was suffering, more bitter even than his fear and agony for himself, was his remorse for his wife. Sacrificed for art — what was art compared with her loving, protean sweetness? His short married life with her, a thousand things that he had forgotten, came rushing back to his memory with the bitter hopelessness of the Peri’s glimpse of heaven.

“My wife,” he cried, “my wife!”

The demon bent closely over him, hoarsely whispering, “Gone, gone.” Then he stretched out something black over his eyes — a cloak, or was it a wing?

All was as black as futurity. A sense then of sinking swiftly down through a black, bottomless void. Could he be dying — or dead? It seemed as if he was being sucked down an infinite black funnel, an eternal maelstrom. Was there no hope? Suddenly through the awful silent space sounded his wife’s voice —

“Alec!”

He looked up. She stood a measureless distance above, clothed in radiant light, looking down with infinite compassion and forgiveness upon him. He stretched out his arms, and would have cried to her, but his voice would not come to him. Then into his mind came the thought of that great gulf which separates those who have despised love from joy and beauty for ever.

Down, down, down.

“Alec!”

“Alec, wake up!”

He was sitting in the old velvet-covered armchair beside the piano, and his wife was bending over him. He blinked like an owl. Then he realised that he had pins and needles in his left arm. “Have I been to sleep?” he asked.

“Yes, of course. When I saw you going to sleep again, I knew it was no good trying to prevent you, so I left off playing and went away. I should have thought, though, that Lizzie, dropping the tray downstairs, would have been sufficient to wake you.”

“That,” said Alec, rubbing his eyes as he rose from the old

armchair's embrace; "why, that must have been the cab accident!"

"You are very affectionate to-night," his wife said presently, as they went downstairs together.

"I am repenting, dearest, of a sin against you, of letting an idle dream come between us."

And thereupon he was "very affectionate" again.

LE MARI TERRIBLE

“You are always so sympathetic,” she said; and added, reflectively, “and one can talk of one’s troubles to you without any nonsense.”

I wondered dimly if she meant that as a challenge. I helped myself to a biscuit thing that looked neither poisonous nor sandy. “You are one of the most puzzling human beings I ever met,” I said, — a perfectly safe remark to any woman under any circumstances.

“Do you find me so hard to understand?” she said.

“You are dreadfully complex.” I bit at the biscuit thing, and found it full of a kind of creamy bird-lime. (I wonder why women will arrange these unpleasant surprises for me — I sickened of sweets twenty years ago.)

“How so?” she was saying, and smiling her most brilliant smile.

I have no doubt she thought we were talking rather nicely. “Oh!” said I, and waved the cream biscuit thing. “You challenge me to dissect you.”

“Well?”

“And that is precisely what I cannot do.”

“I’m afraid you are very satirical,” she said, with a touch of disappointment. She is always saying that when our conversation has become absolutely idiotic — as it invariably does. I felt an inevitable desire to quote bogus Latin to her. It seemed the very language for her.

“Malorum fiducia pars quosque libet,” I said, in a low voice, looking meaningly into her eyes.

“Ah!” she said, colouring a little, and turned to pour hot water into the teapot, looking very prettily at me over her arm as she did so.

“That is one of the truest things that has ever been said of sympathy,” I remarked. “Don’t you think so?”

“Sympathy,” she said, “is a very wonderful thing, and a very precious thing.”

“You speak,” said I (with a cough behind my hand), “as though you knew what it was to be lonely.”

“There is solitude even in a crowd,” she said, and looked round at the six other people — three discreet pairs — who were in the room.

“I, too,” I was beginning, but Hopdangle came with a teacup, and seemed inclined to linger. He belongs to the “Nice Boy” class, and gives himself ridiculous airs of familiarity with grown-up people. Then the Giffens went.

“Do you know, I always take such an interest in your work,” she was saying to me, when her husband (confound him!) came into the room.

He was a violent discord. He wore a short brown jacket and carpet slippers, and three of his waistcoat buttons were (as usual) undone. “Got any tea left, Millie?” he said, and came and sat down in the arm-chair beside the table.

“How do, Delalune?” he said to the man in the corner. “Damned hot, Bellows,” he remarked to me, subsiding creakily.

She poured some more hot water into the teapot. (Why must charming married women always have these husbands?)

“It is very hot,” I said.

There was a perceptible pause. He is one of those rather adipose people, who are not disconcerted by conversational gaps. “Are you, too, working at Argon?” I said. He is some kind of chemical investigator, I know.

He began at once to explain the most horribly complex things about elements to me. She gave him his tea, and rose and went and talked to the other people about autotypes. “Yes,” I said, not hearing what he was saying.

“ ‘No’ would be more appropriate,” he said. “You are absent-minded, Bellows. Not in love, I hope — at your age?”

Really, I am not thirty, but a certain perceptible thinness in my hair may account for his invariably regarding me as a contemporary. But he should understand that nowadays the beginnings of baldness merely mark the virile epoch. “I say, Millie,” he said, out loud and across the room, “you haven’t been collecting Bellows here — have you?”

She looked round startled, and I saw a pained look come into her eyes. “For the bazaar?” she said. “Not yet, dear.” It seemed to me that she shot a glance of entreaty at him. Then she turned to the others again.

“My wife,” he said, “has two distinctive traits. She is a born

poetess and a born collector. I ought to warn you."

"I did not know," said I, "that she rhymed."

"I was speaking more of the imaginative quality, the temperament that finds a splendour in the grass, a glory in the flower, that clothes the whole world in a vestiture of interpretation."

"Indeed!" I said. I felt she was watching us anxiously. He could not, of course, suspect. But I was relieved to fancy he was simply talking nonsense.

"The magnificent figures of heroic, worshipful, and mysterious womanhood naturally appeal to her — Cleopatra, Messalina, Beatrice, the Madonna, and so forth."

"And she is writing—"

"No, she is acting. That is the real poetry of women and children. A platonic Cleopatra of infinite variety, spotless reputation, and a large following. Her make-believe is wonderful. She would use Falstaff for Romeo without a twinge, if no one else was at hand. She could exert herself to break the heart of a soldier. I assure you, Bellows—"

I heard her dress rustle behind me.

"I want some more tea," he said to her. "You misunderstood me about the collecting, Millie."

"What were you saying about Cleopatra?" she said, trying, I think, to look sternly at him.

"Scandal," he said. "But about the collecting, Bellows—"

"You must come to this bazaar," she interrupted.

"I shall be delighted," I said, boldly. "Where is it, and when?"

"About this collecting," he began.

"It is in aid of that delightful orphanage at Wimblingham," she explained, and gave me an animated account of the charity. He emptied his second cup of tea. "May I have a third cup?" he said.

The two girls signalled departure, and her attention was distracted. "She collects — and I will confess she does it with extraordinary skill — the surreptitious addresses—"

"John," she said over her shoulder, "I wish you would tell Miss Smithers all those interesting things about Argon." He gulped down his third cup, and rose with the easy obedience of the trained husband. Presently she returned to the tea-things. "Cannot I fill your

cup?" she asked. "I really hope John was not telling you his queer notions about me. He says the most remarkable things. Quite lately he has got it into his head that he has a formula for my character."

"I wish I had," I said, with a sigh.

"And he goes about explaining me to people, as though I was a mechanism. 'Scalp collector,' I think is his favourite phrase. Did he tell you? Don't you think it perfectly horrid of him?"

"But he doesn't understand you," I said, not grasping his meaning quite at the minute.

She sighed.

"You have," I said, with infinite meaning, "my sincere sympathy —" I hesitated— "my whole sympathy."

"Thank you so much" she said, quite as meaningly. I rose forthwith, and we clasped hands, like souls who strike a compact.

Yet, thinking over what he said afterwards, I was troubled by a fancy that there was the faintest suggestion of a smile of triumph about her lips and mouth. Possibly it was only an honourable pride. I suppose he has poisoned my mind a little. Of course, I should not like to think of myself as one of a fortuitously selected multitude strung neatly together (if one may use the vulgarism) on a piece of string, — a stringful like a boy's string of chestnuts, — nice old gentlemen, nice boys, sympathetic and humorous men of thirty, kind fellows, gifted dreamers, and dashing blades, all trailing after her. It is confoundedly bad form of him, anyhow, to guy her visitors. She certainly took it like a saint. Of course, I shall see her again soon, and we shall talk to one another about one another. Something or other cropped up and prevented my going there on her last Tuesday.

THE RAJAH'S TREASURE

Between Jehun and Bimabur on the Himalayan slopes, and between the jungles and the higher country where the pines and deodars are gathered together, ruled the petty Rajah, of whose wonderful treasure I am telling. Very great was the treasure, people said, for the Rajah had prospered all his days. He had found Mindapore a village, and, behold! it was a city. Below his fort of unhewn stone the flat-roofed huts of mud had multiplied; and now there sprang up houses with upstairs rooms, and the place which had once boasted no more than one buniah man, engendered a bazaar in the midst of it, as a fat oyster secretes a pearl. And the Holy Place up the river prospered, and the road up the passes was made safe. Merchants and fakirs multiplied about the wells, men came and went, twice even white men from the plain on missions to the people over beyond the deodars, and the streets of the town were ever denser with poultry and children, and little dogs dyed yellow, and with all the multitudinous rich odours of human increase. As at last, at the crown of his prosperity, this legend of his treasures began.

He was a portly, yellow-faced man, with a long black beard, now steadily growing grey, thick lips, and shifty eyes. He was pious, very pious in his daily routine, and swift and unaccountable in his actions. None dared withstand him to his face, even in little things. Golam Shah, his vizier, was but a servant, a carrier of orders; and Samud Singh, his master of horse, but a driller of soldiers. They were tools, he would tell them outright in his pride of power, staves in his hand that he could break at his will. He was childless. And his cousin, the youth Azim Khan, feared him, and only in the remotest recesses of his heart dared to wish the Rajah would presently die and make a way for the cyons.

It would be hard to say when first the rumour spread that the Rajah of little Mindapore was making a hoard. None knew how it began or where. Perhaps from merchants of whom he had bought. It began long before the days of the safe. It was said that rubies had been bought and hidden away; and then not only rubies, but ornaments of gold, and then pearls, and diamonds from Golconda,

and all manner of precious stones. Even the Deputy-Commissioner at Allapore heard of it. At last the story re-entered the palace at Mindapore itself, and Azim Khan, who was the Rajah's cousin and his heir, and nominally his commander-in-chief, and Golam Shah, the chief minister, talked it over one with another in a tentative way.

"He has something new," said Golam Shah, querulously; "he has something new, and he is keeping it from me."

Azim Khan watched him cunningly. "I have told you what I have heard," he said. "For my own part I know nothing."

"He goes to and fro musing and humming to himself," said Golam, meditatively, "as one who thinks of a pleasure."

"More rubies, they are saying," said Azim, dreamily, and repeated, as if for his own pleasure, "Rubies." For Azim was the heir.

"Especially is it since that Englishman came," said Golam, "three months ago. A big old man, not wrinkled as an old man should be, but red, and with red hair streaking his grey, and with a tight skin and a big body sticking out before. So. An elephant of a man, a great quivering mud- bank of a man, who laughed mightily, so that the people stopped and listened in the street. He came, he laughed, and as he went away we heard them laugh together—"

"Well?" said Azim.

"He was a diamond merchant, perhaps — or a dealer in rubies. Do Englishmen deal in such things?"

"Would I had seen him!" said Azim. "He took gold away," said Golam.

Both were silent for a space, and the purring noise of the wheel of the upper well, and the chatter of voices about it rising and falling, made a pleasant sound in the air. "Since the Englishman went," said Golam, "he has been different. He hides something from me — something in his robe. Rubies! What else can it be?"

"He has not buried it?" said Azim.

"He will. Then he will want to dig it up again and look at it," said Golam, for he was a man of experience. "I go softly. Sometimes almost I come upon him. Then he starts—"

"He grows old and nervous," said Azim, and there was a pause.

"Before the English came," said Golam, looking at the rings upon his fingers, as he recurred to his constant preoccupation; "there were

no Rajahs nervous and old."

That, I say, was even before the coming of the safe. It came in a packing case. Such a case it was as had never been seen before on all the slopes of the Himalayan mountains, it was an elephant's burden even on the plain. It was days drawing nearer and nearer. At Allapore crowds went to see it pass upon the railway. Afterwards elephants and then a great multitude of men dragged it up the hills. And this great case being opened in the Hall of Audience revealed within itself a monstrous iron box, like no other box that had ever come to the city. It had been made, so the story went, by necromancers in England, expressly to the order of the Rajah, that he might keep his treasure therein and sleep in peace. It was so hard that the hardest files powdered upon its corners, and so strong that cannon fired point-blank at it would have produced no effect upon it. And it locked with a magic lock. There was a word, and none knew the word but the Rajah. With that word, and a little key that hung about his neck, one could open the lock; but without it none could do so.

The Rajah caused this safe to be built into the wall of his palace in a little room beyond the Hall of Audience. He superintended the building up of it with jealous eyes. And thereafter he would go thither day by day, once at least every day, coming back with brighter eyes. "He goes to count his treasure," said Golam Shah, standing beside the empty dais.

And in those days it was that the Rajah began to change. He who had been cunning and subtle became choleric and outspoken. His judgment grew harsh, and a taint that seemed to all about him to be assuredly the taint of avarice crept into his acts. Moreover, which inclined Golam Shah to hopefulness, he seemed to take a dislike to Azim Khan. Once indeed he made a kind of speech in the Hall of Audience. Therein he declared many times over in a peculiarly husky voice, husky yet full of conviction, that Azim Khan was not worth a half anna, not worth a half anna to any human soul.

In these latter days of the Rajah's decline, moreover, when merchants came, he would go aside with them secretly into the little room, and speak low, so that those in the Hall of Audience, howsoever they strained their ears, could hear nothing of his speech. These things Golam Shah and Azim Khan and Samud Singh, who

had joined their councils, treasured in their hearts.

"It is true about the treasure," said Azim; "they talked of it round the well of the travellers, even the merchants from Tibet had heard the tale, and had come this way with jewels of price, and afterwards they went secretly telling no one." And ever and again, it was said, came a negro mute from the plains, with secret parcels for the Rajah. "Another stone," was the rumour that went the round of the city.

"The bee makes hoards," said Azim Khan, the Rajah's heir, sitting in the upper chamber of Golam Shah. "Therefore, we will wait awhile." For Azim was more coward than traitor.

At last there were men in the Deccan even who could tell you particulars of the rubies and precious stones that the Rajah had gathered together. But so circumspect was the Rajah that Azim Khan and Golam Shah had never even set eyes on the glittering heaps that they knew were accumulating in the safe.

The Rajah always went into the little room alone, and even then he locked the door of the little room — it had a couple of locks — before he went to the safe and used the magic word. How all the ministers and officers and guards listened and looked at one another as the door of the room behind the curtain closed!

The Rajah changed indeed, in these days, not only in the particulars of his rule, but in his appearance. "He is growing old. How fast he grows old! The time is almost ripe," whispered Samud Singh. The Rajah's hand became tremulous, his step was now sometimes unsteady, and his memory curiously defective. He would come back out from the treasure-room, and his hand would tighten fiercely on the curtain, and he would stumble on the steps of the daïs. "His eyesight fails," said Golam. "See! — His turban is askew. He is sleepy even in the forenoon, before the heat of the day. His judgments are those of a child."

It was a painful sight to see a man so suddenly old and enfeebled still ruling men.

"He may go on yet, a score of years," said Golam Shah.

"Should a ruler hoard riches," said Shere Ali, in the guardroom, "and leave his soldiers unpaid?" That was the beginning of the end.

It was the thought of the treasure won over the soldiers, even as it did the mollahs and the eunuchs. Why had the Rajah not buried it in

some unthinkable place, as his father had done before him, and killed the diggers with his hand? “He has hoarded,” said Samud, with a chuckle, — for the old Rajah had once pulled his beard,— “only to pay for his own undoing.” And in order to insure confidence, Golam Shah went beyond the truth perhaps, and gave a sketchy account of the treasures to this man and that, even as a casual eyewitness might do.

Then, suddenly and swiftly, the palace revolution was accomplished. When the lonely old Rajah was killed, a shot was to be fired from the harem lattice, bugles were to be blown, and the sepoys were to turn out in the square before the palace, and fire a volley in the air. The murder was done in the dark save for a little red lamp that burnt in the corner. Azim knelt on the body and held up the wet beard, and cut the throat wide and deep to make sure. It was so easy Why had he waited so long? And then, with his hands covered with warm blood, he sprang up eagerly — Rajahi at last! — and followed Golam and Samud and the eunuchs down the long, faintly moonlit passage, towards the Hall of Audience.

As they did so, the crack of a rifle sounded far away, and after a pause came the first awakening noises of the town. One of the eunuchs had an iron bar, and Samud carried a pistol in his hand. He fired into the locks of the treasure-room, and wrecked them, and the eunuch smashed the door in. Then they all rushed in together, none standing aside for Azim. It was dark, and the second eunuch went reluctantly to get a torch, in fear lest his fellow murderers should open the safe in his absence.

But he need have had no fear. The cardinal event of that night is the triumphant vindication of the advertised merits of Chobbs’ unrivalled safes. The tumult that occurred between the Mindapore sepoys and the people need not concern us. The people loved not the new Rajah — let that suffice. The conspirators got the key from round the dead Rajah’s neck, and tried a multitude of the magic words of the English that Samud Singh knew, even such words as “Kemup” and “Gorblimey” — in vain.

In the morning, the safe in the treasure-room remained intact and defiant, the woodwork about it smashed to splinters, and great chunks of stone knocked out of the wall, dents abundantly scattered

over its impregnable door, and a dust of files below. And the shifty Golam had to explain the matter to the soldiers and mollahs as best he could. This was an extremely difficult thing to do, because in no kind of business is prompt cash so necessary as in the revolutionary line.

The state of affairs for the next few days in Mindapore was exceedingly strained. One fact stands out prominently, that Azim Khan was hopelessly feeble. The soldiers would not at first believe in the exemplary integrity of the safe, and a deputation insisted in the most occidental manner in verifying the new Rajah's statements. Moreover, the populace clamoured, and then by a naked man running, came the alarming intelligence that the new Deputy-Commissioner at Allapore was coming headlong and with soldiers to verify the account of the revolution Golam Shah and Samud Singh had sent him in the name of Azim.

The new Deputy-Commissioner was a raw young man, partly obscured by a pith helmet, and chock full of zeal and the desire for distinction; and he had heard of the treasure. He was going, he said, to sift the matter thoroughly. On the arrival of this distressing intelligence there was a hasty and informal council of state (at which Azim was not present), a counter-revolution was arranged, and all that Azim ever learnt of it was the sound of a footfall behind him, and the cold touch of a pistol barrel on the neck.

When the Commissioner arrived, that dexterous statesman, Golam Shah, and that honest soldier, Samud Singh, were ready to receive him, and they had two corpses, several witnesses, and a neat little story. In addition to Azim they had shot an unpopular officer of the Mindapore sepoys. They told the Commissioner how Azini had plotted against the Rajah and raised a military revolt, and how the people, who loved the old Rajah, even as Golam Shah and Samud Singh loved him, had quelled the revolt, and how peace was restored again. And Golam explained how Azim had fought for life even in the Hall of Audience, and how he, Golam, had been wounded in the struggle, and how Samud had shot Azim with his own hand.

And the Deputy-Commissioner, being weak in his dialect, had swallowed it all. All round the Deputy-Commissioner, in the minds of the people, the palace, and the city, hung the true story of the case,

as it seemed to Golam Shah, like an avalanche ready to fall; and yet the Deputy-Commissioner did not learn of it for four days. And Golam and Samud went to and fro, whispering and pacifying, promising to get at the treasure as soon as the Deputy-Commissioner could be got out of the way. And as they went to and fro so also the report went to and fro — that Golam and Samud had opened the safe and hidden the treasure, and closed and locked it again; and bright eyes watched them curiously and hungrily even as they had watched the Rajah in the days that were gone.

"This city is no longer an abiding place for you and me," said Golam Shah, in a moment of clear insight. "They are mad about this treasure. Golconda would not satisfy them."

The Deputy-Commissioner, when he heard their story, (lid indeed make knowing inquiries (as knowing as the knowingness of the English goes) in order to show himself not too credulous; but he elicited nothing. He had heard tales of treasure, had the Commissioner, and of a great box? So had Golam and Samud, but where it was they could not tell. They too had certainly heard tales of treasure — many tales indeed. Perhaps there *was* treasure.

Had the Deputy-Commissioner had the scientific turn of mind, he would have observed that a strong smell of gunpowder still hung about the Audience Chamber, more than was explained by the narrative told him; and had he explored the adjacent apartments, he would presently have discovered the small treasure-room with its smashed locks, and the ceiling now dependent ruins, and amid the ruins the safe, bulging perilously from the partly collapsed walls, but still unconquered, and with its treasures unexplored. Also it is a fact that Golam Shah's bandaged hand was not the consequence of heroism in combat, but of certain private blasting operations too amateurishly prosecuted.

So you have the situation: Deputy-Commissioner installed in the palace, sending incorrect information to headquarters and awaiting instructions, the safe as safe as ever; assistant conspirators grumbling louder and louder; and Golam and Samud getting more and more desperate lest this voice should reach the Deputy's ears.

Then came the night when the Commissioner heard a filing and a tapping, and being a brave man, rose and went forthwith, alone and

very quietly, across the Hall of Audience, pistol in hand, in search of the sound. Across the Hall a light came from an open door that had been hidden in the day by a curtain. Stopping silently in the darkness of the outer apartment, he looked into the treasure-room. And there stood Golam with his arm in a sling, holding a lantern, while Samud fumbled with pieces of wire and some little keys. They were without boots, but otherwise they were dressed ready for a journey.

The Deputy-Commissioner was, for a Government official, an exceedingly quick-witted man. He slipped back in the darkness again, and within five minutes, Golam and Samud, still fumbling, heard footsteps hurrying across the Hall of Audience, and saw a flicker of light. Out went their lantern, with a groan because of a bandaged arm, but it was too late. In another moment Lieutenant Earl, in pyjamas and boots, but with a brace of revolvers and a couple of rifles behind him, stood in the doorway of the treasure-room, and Golam and Samud were caught. Samud clicked his pistol and then threw it down, for it was three to one — Golam being not only a bandaged man, but fundamentally a man of peace.

When the intelligence of this treachery filtered from the palace into the town, there was an outbreak of popular feeling, and a dozen officious persons set out to tell the Deputy-Commissioner the true connection between Golam, Samud, and the death of the Rajah. The first to penetrate to the Deputy-Commissioner's presence was an angry fakir, from the colony that dwelt about the Holy place. And after a patient hearing the Deputy-Commissioner extracted the thread of the narrative from the fabric of curses in which the holy man presented it.

"This is most singular," said the Deputy-Commissioner to the Lieutenant, standing in the treasure-room (which looked as though the palace had been bombarded), and regarding the battered but still inviolable safe. "Here we seem to have the key of the whole position."

"Key!" said the Lieutenant. "It's the key they have n't got."

"Curious mingling of the new and the old," said the Deputy-Commissioner. "Patent safe — and a hoard."

"Send to Allapore and wire Chobbs, I suppose?" said the Lieutenant. The Deputy-Commissioner signified that was his

intention, and they set guards before and behind and all about the treasure-room, until the proper instructions about the lock should come.

So it was that the *Pax Britannica* solemnly took possession of the Rajah's hoard, and men in Simla heard the news, and envied that Deputy-Commissioner his adventure with all their hearts. For his promptitude and decision was a matter of praise, and they said that Mindapore would certainly be annexed and added to the district over which he ruled. Only a fat old man named MacTurk, living in Allapore, a big man with a noisy quivering laugh, and a secret trade with certain native potentates, did not hear the news, excepting only the news of the murder of the Rajah and the departure of the Deputy-Commissioner, for several days. He heard nothing of the disposition of the treasure — an unfortunate thing, since, among other things, he had sold the Rajah his safe, and may even have known the word by which the lock was opened.

The Deputy-Commissioner had theatrical tastes. These he gratified under the excuse that display was above all things necessary in dealing with Orientals. He imprisoned his four malefactors theatrically, and when the instructions came from Chobbs he had the safe lugged into the Hall of Audience, in order to open it with more effect. The Commissioner sat on the dais, while the engineer worked at the safe on the crimson steps.

In the central space was stretched a large white cloth. It reminded the Deputy-Commissioner of a picture he had seen of Alexander at Damascus receiving the treasures of Darius.

"It is gold," said one bystander to another. "There was a sound of chinking as they brought the safe in. My brother was among those who hauled."

The engineer clicked the lock. Every eye in the Hall of Audience grew brighter and keener, excepting the eyes of the Deputy-Commissioner. He felt the dignity of his responsibilities, and sat upon the daïs looking as much like the *Pax Britannica* as possible.

"Holy Smoke!" said the engineer, and slammed the safe again. A murmur of exclamations ran round the hall. Every one was asking every one else what they had seen.

"An asp!" said some one.

The Deputy-Commissioner lost his imperturbability. “What is it?” he said, springing to his feet. The engineer leant across the safe and whispered two words, something indistinct and with a blasphemous adjective in front.

“*What?*” said the Deputy-Commissioner, sharply.

“Glass!” said the engineer, in a bitter whisper. “Broken bottles. ‘Undreds!”

“Let me see!” said the Deputy-Commissioner, losing all his dignity.

“Scotch, if I’m not mistaken,” said the engineer, sniffing curiously.

“Curse it!” said the Deputy-Commissioner, and looked up to meet a multitude of ironical eyes. “Er —

“The assembly is dismissed,” said the Deputy-Commissioner.

“What a *fool* he must have looked!” wheezed MacTurk, who did not like the Deputy- Commissioner. “What a *fool* he must have looked!

“Simple enough,” said MacTurk, “when you know how it came about.”

“But how did it come about?” asked the station-master.

“Secret drinking,” said MacTurk. “Bourbon whiskey. I taught him how to take it myself. But he did n’t dare let on that he was doing it, poor old chap! Mindapore’s one of the most fanatically Mahometan states in the hills you see. And he always was a secretive kind of chap, and given to doing things by himself. So he got that safe to hide it in, and keep the bottles. Broke ’em up to pack, I s’pose, when it got too full. Lord! I might ha’ known. When people spoke of his treasure — I never thought of putting that and the safe and the Bourbon together! But how plain it is! And *what* a sell for Parkinson. Pounded glass! The accumulation of years! Lord! — I’d ‘a’ given a couple of stone off my weight to see him open that safe!”

THE PRESENCE BY THE FIRE

It never occurred to Reid that his wife lay dying until the very last day of her illness. He was a man of singularly healthy disposition, averse on principle to painful thoughts, and I doubt if in the whole of his married life his mind had dwelt for five minutes together on the possibility of his losing her.

They were both young, and intimate companions — such companions as many desire to be and few become. And perhaps it was her sense of the value of this rare companionship that made her, when first her health declined, run many an avoidable risk rather than leave him to go his way alone.

He was sorry that she was ill, sorry she should suffer, and he missed her, as she lay upstairs, in a thousand ways; but though the doctor was mindful to say all the "preparatory" phrases of his profession, and though her sister spoke, as she conceived, quite plainly, it was as hard for him to understand that this was more than a temporary interruption of their life, as it would have been to believe that the sun would not rise again after to-morrow morning.

The day before she died he was restless, and after wandering about the house and taking a short walk, he occupied himself in planting out her evening primroses — a thing she had made a point of doing now for ten springs in succession. The garden she had always tended, he said, should not seem neglected when she came down again. He had rather his own work got in arrears than that this should happen.

The first realisation, when the doctor, finding all conventional euphemisms useless, told him the fact at last in stark, plain words, stunned him. Even then it is doubtful if he believed. He said not a word in answer, but the colour left his face, and the lines about his mouth hardened. And he walked softly and with white, expressionless features into her room.

He stood at the door-way, and looked for a minute at her thin little features, with the eyes closed and two little lines between the brows, then went and knelt by the bed and looked closely into her face. She did not move until he touched her hair and very softly whispered her

name.

Then her eyes opened for a moment, and he saw that she knew him. Her lips moved, and it seemed that she whispered one of those foolish, tender little names that happy married folk delight in inventing for one another, and then she gathered her strength as if with an effort to speak distinctly. He bent mechanically and heard the last syllables of au revoir.

For a moment he did not clearly understand what the words were. That was all she said, and as for him, he answered not a word. He put his hand in hers, and she pressed it faintly and then more faintly. He kissed her forehead with dry lips, and the little lines of pain there faded slowly into peace.

For an hour they let him kneel, until the end had come; and all that time he never stirred. Then they had to tap his shoulder to rouse him from his rigour. He got up slowly, bent over her for a moment, looking down into her tranquil face, and then allowed them to lead him away.

That was how Reid parted from his wife, and for days after he behaved as a man who had been suddenly deprived of all initiative. He did no work; he went nowhere outside the house; he ate, drank and slept mechanically; and he did not even seem to suffer actively. For the most part, he sat stupidly at his desk or wandered about the big garden, looking with dull eyes at the little green buds that were now swiftly opening all about him. Not a soul ventured to speak to him of his loss, albeit those who did not know him might have judged his mood one of absolute apathy.

But nearly a week after the funeral the floodgates of his sorrow were opened. Quite suddenly the thing came upon him. Her sister heard him walk into the study and throw himself into a chair. Everything was still for a space, and then he sprang up again and she heard him wailing, “Mary! Mary!” and then he ran, sobbing violently and stumbling, along the passage to his room. It was grotesquely like a little child that had suddenly been hurt.

He locked his door; and her sister, fearing what might happen, went along the passage. She thought of rapping at the door, but on second thoughts she refrained. After listening awhile she went away.

It was long after the first violence of his grief had passed that Reid

first spoke of his feelings. He who had been a matter-of-fact materialist was converted, I found, to a belief in immortality by the pitiless logic of her uncompleted life. But I think it was an imperfect, a doubting, belief even at the best. And to strengthen it, perhaps, he began to show a growing interest in the inquiries of those who were sifting whatever evidence there may be of the return of those who are dead.

"For I want my wife now," said he. "I want her in this life. I want her about me — her comfort, her presence. What does it matter that I shall meet her again when I am changed, and she is changed? It was the dear trivialities, the little moments, the touch of her hand, the sound of her voice in the room with me, her distant singing in the garden, and her footfall on the stairs. If I could believe that," he said, "if I could believe-"

And in that spirit it was that he kept to the old home, and would scarcely bear that a thing within or without should be altered in any way. The white curtains that had been there the last autumn hung dirty in the windows, and the little desk that had been her own in the study stood there still, with the pen thrown down as he fancied she had left it.

"Here, if anywhere," he said, "she is at home. Here, if anywhere, her presence lives."

Her sister left him when a housekeeper was obtained, and he went on living there alone, working little and communicating for the most part with these dead memories. After a time he loved nothing so much as to talk to her, and I think in those days that I was of service to him. He would take me about the house, pointing to this trivial thing and that; and telling me some little act of hers that he linked therewith. And he always spoke of her as one who still lived.

"She does" so and so, he would say; "she likes" so and so. We would pace up and down the rich lawn of his house. "My wife is particularly fond of those big white lilies," he would say, "and this year they are finer than ever." So the summer passed and the autumn came.

And one day late in the evening he came to me, walking round the house and tapping at the French window of my study, and as he came in out of the night I noticed how deadly white and sunken his face

was and how bright his eyes.

“I have seen her,” he said to me, in a low, clear voice. “She has visited me. I knew she was watching me and near me. I have felt her presence for weeks and weeks. And now she has come.”

He was intensely excited, and it was some time before I could get any clear story from him. He had been sitting by the fire in his study, musing, no doubt going over for the hundredth time, day by day and almost hour by hour as he was wont to do, one of the summer holidays they had spent together. He was staring, he said, into the glowing coals, and almost imperceptibly it was that there grew upon him the persuasion that he was not alone. The thought took shape slowly in his mind, but with a strange quality of absolute conviction, that she was sitting in the armchair in front of him, as she had done so often in the old days, and watching him a-dreaming. For a moment he did not dare to look up, lest he should find this a mere delusion.

Then slowly he raised his eyes. He was dimly aware of footsteps advancing along the passage as he did so. A wave of bitter disappointment swept over him as he saw the chair was empty, and this incontinently gave place to a tumult of surprise and joyful emotion. For he saw her — saw her distinctly. She was standing behind the chair, leaning over the back of it, and smiling the tender smile he knew so well. So in her life she had stood many a time and listened to him, smiling gently. The firelight played upon her face.

“I saw her as plainly as I see you,” he said. “I saw the smile in her eyes, and my heart leapt out to her.”

For a moment he was motionless, entranced, and with an instantaneous appreciation of the transitoriness of this appearance. Then suddenly the door opened, the shadows in the room rushed headlong, and the housemaid came in with his lamp lit and without the shade — a dazzling glare of naked flame. The yellow light splashed over the room and brought out everything clear and vivid.

By mere reflex action he turned his head at the sound of the door-handle, and forthwith turned it back again. But the face he had longed for so patiently had vanished with the shadows before the light. Everything was abruptly plain and material. The girl replenished the fire, moved the armchair on one side, and took away

the scuttle lining to refill it with coals. A curious hashfulness made Reid pretend to make notes at his table until these offices were accomplished. Then he looked across the fireplace again, and the room was empty. The sense of her presence, too, had gone. He called upon her name again and again, rubbed his eyes, and tried to force her return by concentrating his mind upon her. But nothing availed. He could see her no more. 84 Ho allowed mo to cross-examine him in the most detailed way upon this story. His manner was so sane, so convincing, and his honesty so indisputable, that I went to bed that night with my beliefs and disbeliefs greatly shaken. Hitherto I had doubted every ghost story I had heard; but here at last was one of a different quality. Indeed, I went to bed that night an unwilling convert to the belief in the phantasms of those who are dead and all that that belief implies.

My faith in Reid was confirmed by the fact that from late August, when this happened, until December he did not see the apparition again. Had it been an hallucination begotten of his own intense brooding it must inevitably have recurred. But it was presently to be proved beyond all question that the thing he saw was an exterior presence. Night after night he sat in his study, longing for the repetition of that strange experience; and at last, after many nights, he saw her for the second time.

It was earlier in the evening, but with the shorter winter days the room was already dark. Once more he looked into his study fire, and once more that fire glowed redly. Then there came the same sense of her presence, the same hesitation before he raised his eyes. But this time he looked over the chair at once and saw her without any Hash of disappointment.

At the instant he felt not the faintest suspicion that his senses deceived him. For a moment he was dumb. He was seized with an intense longing to touch her hand. Then came into his head some half-forgotten story that one must speak first to a spirit. He leant forward.

“Mary!” he said very softly. But she neither moved nor spoke. And then suddenly it seemed that she grew less distinct.

“Mary!” he whispered, with a sudden pang of doubt. Her features grew unfamiliar.

Then suddenly he rose to his feet, and as he did so the making of the illusion was demonstrated. The high light on a vase that had been her cheek moved to the right; the shadow that had been her arm moved to the left.

Few people realise how little we actually see of what is before our eyes: a patch of light, a patch of shadow, and all the rest our memory and our imagination supply. A chance grouping of dim forms in the dusky firelit study had furnished all the suggestion his longing senses had required. His eyes and his heart and the humour of chance had cheated him.

He stood there staring. For a moment the disintegration of the figure filled him with a sense of grotesque horror and dismay. For a moment it seemed beyond the sanity of things. Then, as he realised the deception his senses had contrived, he sat down again, put his elbows on the table and buried his face in his hands.

About ten he came and told me. He told me in a clear hard voice, without a touch of emotion, recording a remarkable fact. “As I told you the other thing, it is only right that I should tell you this,” he said.

Then he sat silently for a space. “She will come no more,” he said at last. “She will come no more.”

And suddenly he rose, and without a greeting, passed out into the night.

MR. MARSHALL'S DOPPELGANGER

1

Among the curious cases which I, as a once active member of the Society for the Rehabilitation of Abnormal Phenomena, have been called upon to investigate, that of Mr. Marshall's apparition to the Rev. George Burwash, of Sussexville, and to the Rev. Philip Wendover, his curate, is certainly by no means the least curious. It was communicated to the Society by the Rev. George Burwash himself, with a mass of authenticating evidence quite in excess of the ordinary case of this description.

The Rev. George Burwash is one of that little army of honest and worthy amateur investigators scattered throughout the country — clergymen, retired officers, professors keeping holiday, and ladies of every description — who, in spite of a certain inexperience in the handling of human evidence, are doing such excellent work in reviving the erst decadent belief in spiritual entities.

The apparition occurred on Christmas Eve, 1895, and his communication was read before the Society in the subsequent January. My inquiries in Sussexville were prosecuted during the April and May following.

A doppelganger is a phantasm of a living person. Such phantasms are believed by many quite reputable people nowadays to be of frequent occurrence and, as in the case I had to examine, are often curiously purposeless. Here we had Mr. Marshall appearing suddenly and with a disturbed countenance before Mr. Burwash and his curate, uttering horrible imprecations, threatening him, and then suddenly disappearing. He cursed and threatened without rhyme or reason; his procedure was totally without symbolic value. But so vivid and so sonorous was the phantasm that at the time it did not enter into the head of Mr. Burwash to regard him as anything but a real person, albeit the figure moved with a curious gliding motion, markedly different from walking. Until it vanished, indeed, the thought of ghosts did not occur to him. The manner of disappearance and the subsequent silence, as the reverend gentleman described them, were,

however, quite sufficiently ghost-like for any reasonable person.

My first proceeding in elucidating this interesting case was, of course, to visit the scene of the appearance, and, courteously but exhaustively, to cross-examine Mr. Burwash and Mr. Wendover.

Mr. Burwash occupies a house on the hillside above the church, and in consequence of the growth of his family he has, for the sake of quiet, built himself a small but convenient study of pine up the hill. A path crosses over the crest of the hill, and descends steeply from a little gate near the study between the vicarage hedge and the churchyard wall to the lych gate in the main road below.

On Christmas Eve Mr. Burwash had been writing late at his Christmas sermon, having been delayed during the day by a parcel of spookical literature, and it was after midnight that he finished. His curate, with whom he is, for a vicar, on exceptionally friendly terms, came into the study and sat smoking, while the vicar alternately talked to him and punctuated his discourse for the morrow. It adds to the interest of the case that this curate, Mr. Wendover, was a declared sceptic.

When the punctuation was completed the vicar got up, stretched, and opened his study door to look out at the weather. He saw by the glare from the door that a few flakes of snow were falling, and he was preparing to turn and remark upon this to the curate when suddenly, and abruptly, Mr. Marshall appeared outside the gate, and stood for a moment, swaying exactly like a drunken man, and apparently struggling with violent internal emotions. Then finding his voice, he poured forth with dramatic unexpectedness, a volley of curses, so gross and personal that I had the greatest difficulty in persuading Mr. Burwash, in the interests of science, to repeat them.

The curate became aware of Mr. Marshall's presence for the first time when he heard this outbreak. He sprang to his feet, and saw Marshall distinctly over his superior's shoulder. Then, as abruptly, the man staggered and vanished into the night. As he did so, a gust of wind whirled the snowflakes about, and the study door behind Mr. Burwash slammed violently. Mr. Burwash was shut out and the curate in.

As soon as he had recovered from his surprise, Mr. Burwash went to the gate, expecting to find Marshall lying there — but 88 up the

hill and down, the pathway was deserted.

That, substantially, was the story of the vision of Mr. Burwash, and by itself it would, of course, have had little or no interest. As I immediately pointed out, Marshall himself may have passed that way in an intoxicated condition, and his sudden and gliding disappearance may have been due to his feet slipping on the frozen snow that veneered the pathway. The closing door, too, by cutting off the light, may have aided that effect. And the path is so steep that one can reasonably imagine a man who had lost his footing going down the entire slope of the hill in a second or so; in the time, that is, that it took Mr. Burwash to reopen his door. That, indeed, was the view Mr. Burwash himself at first took of the matter.

Mr. Wendover, of course, agreed with him. But having a scarcely explicable doubt about the business lurking in his mind, the vicar took the very first opportunity of taxing Marshall, who is usually a sober and steady man, with the almost unpardonable insults he had uttered overnight. In any case, and without the faintest suspicion that anything psychic had happened, the vicar would have done so.

This opportunity of reproof he made in the afternoon of Christmas Day. He found Mr. and Mrs. Marshall drinking strong tea together, and it carried out the common-sense theory of the affair that Marshall should have a headache still, and have been quite unable to participate with any enjoyment in their simple but of course extremely bilious Christmas meal. And he freely and contritely admitted he had been drunk overnight.

But when Mr. Burwash proceeded with some heat to charge him with the filthy blasphemies of the previous evening, Mrs. Marshall fired up indignantly. And then it was that the extraordinary side of this incident came to light. There was the clearest evidence — evidence strong enough to hang a man, indeed, if need had been — that Marshall had never been near the vicar's study at all on Christmas Eve; that the thing was an absolute impossibility; that, in fact, about half-past eleven, half an hour before the apparition that is, he had been picked up helplessly drunk by some charitable neighbours about a couple of hundred yards from the Seven Thorns, carried the whole mile and a half to his own home, taken into his own kitchen, and dumped down there at the very moment when his

almost equally inebriated doppelganger was insulting the vicar three-quarters of a mile away.

I tested every link in the chain of evidence, as I thought, and not a link failed. Mrs. Marshall told me how she had gone to bed, being tired, and how when the good man failed to appear after half-past ten she had grown anxious, and at last, hearing voices outside, had shivered out of bed and gone to the window. A Mr. Ted Apps, two brothers named Durgan, one a blacksmith and the other a watchmaker, and a Mr. Hetherington, a baker, were walking in a leisurely and voluminous manner along the road, singing as they walked. She knew Mr. Apps, and opened the window and called to him. She asked him whether he had seen Marshall.

At that the little party stopped and interrogated one another. They all distinctly remembered Marshall being at the Seven Thorns, and until she had called their attention to the matter had had a vague impression that he was still, convivially, with them. Her wifely anxiety being only too evident, and they full of that feeling of mutual helpfulness that still, thank Heaven, distinguishes our homely country Christmastide, it was natural they should offer to return for him.

"Aw ri', Miz Marshall," they cried one after the other, in a reassuring voice, and turned, and making the night cheerful with Marshall's name, returned round the long winding road towards the Seven Thorns. All were seasonably inebriated, and no doubt they were now scattered distantly and not in an amiable knot together as they reeled along calling after Marshall; but all distinctly remember what was happening at the time.

I have elaborately verified the story from all four of them. Everything was as explicit as evidence could be. " 'Twarn't nart hun' yards orf Se'n Thorns," said the blacksmith Durgan, "that us found en. There 'e was with 'is 'ed agenst th' old fence and his blessed owd white legs" — it was Mr. Marshall's weakness invariably to wear a peculiarly light variety of corduroy trousers— "stickin' art — jes' 'elpless 'e was. 'Ad t' carry en every blessed yard, us did. 'E wuz bad, I tell 'ee."

The others corroborated exactly. Marshall's speech they agreed was incoherent — shapeless in fact. Had he been able to surmount

one impossibility and get up to the vicar's study, it would have been equally impossible for him to have articulated a curse. Of that they were all convinced. And I imagine that the process of carrying him home along the dark road must have been a pretty severe test of insensibility.

"Didn't you drop him?" I asked of the elder Durgan.

"Oh, we dropped 'e," said Durgan reassuringly. "We dropped en right 'nough. And lord! what a job we did 'ave, a picking ofen up, to be sure-" And he proceeded to give me a

detailed narrative, as he remembered it, of the entire journey.

Consequent upon Mr. Marshall's incapacity to walk, Mrs. Marshall had to come down and open the door in order that they might carry him in. But being in a deshabille that she considered unbecoming, she stipulated that they should not enter until she had time to retire upstairs again. As they came in, she held a candle over the banisters and directed them where to deposit their burden. Mr. Apps, being in a festive mood, then demanded drinks round, but the others being soberer, overruled him, and after they had retired she descended and locked the front door. Afterwards it would seem that Mr. Apps returned, hammered at the door and demanded drinks again. Twice or three times she said she was alarmed in this way and then Mr. Apps apparently abandoned his quest.

She laid great stress on the aggressive behaviour of Mr. Apps, on account of the trouble about the missing sausages and mince pie to which I shall presently allude. As Marshall rarely drank, and as Mrs. Marshall was a person of refined tastes with a womanly horror of an intoxicated man, she did not go down to him in the kitchen until the early morning, and then she found him, still in a drink-sodden sleep, upon the hearthrug, with a pool of melted snow about him. And there, what one may call the case of the alibi, ends.

Now here we have an extraordinary contradiction between two perfectly credible stories. On the one hand two clergymen, and one a sceptic and even a scoffer at psychic experts, witness that Marshall was in one place, and on the other, four indisputably honest villagers and the man's own wife testify as emphatically that he was in quite another place. I sifted and weighed every scrap of evidence, and could see no way to reconcile the two except by taking the view Mr.

Burwash took, and admitting a belief in doppelgangers. To that effect I finally reported to the Society. Altogether I gave the business a clear seven days.

Only one alternative to that acquiescence seemed possible to me, and that was that the vicar and his curate, in spite of the almost vehement assurance of Mr. Burwash, had not seen Marshall at all. I spent three days seeking a colourable substitute for Marshall, a person who seen casually might have been mistaken for him, and not one could I find. He had a noticeably long nose, a fresh complexion, and a large mouth. Even in his dress he was distinctive. In view of the fact that the light of the vicar's study fell fully on the face of the apparition, the mistaken identity notion failed hopelessly as an explanation. It was doppelganger or nothing. Doppelganger, to my mind, seemed the more credible climax. In the whole course of my career as a psychic inquirer, I had certainly never come upon any occult phenomenon so absolutely a tried and proven thing.

I ask the reader to stop at this stage to recapitulate the case as I have stated it, and to consider whether the proof does not seem to be practically complete. No one at all familiar with modern psychical research will find any discredit to the story in the absolute carelessness and purposelessness of the appearance.

II

Mention has already been made of the Rev. Philip Wendover in connexion with this story. Mr. Wendover belonged to that large, and, I fear I must write prejudiced, class, who will not have psychic phenomena at any price. He was a fair, athletic young man; and he had formerly been an assistant master at Dinchester. To that I must ascribe his extraordinary facility with slang, which occasionally even affected his pulpit deliverances. From first to last, while I was unravelling this story, he had nothing but derision for me, in spite of his being my most important witness. Indeed I quite sickened of his pet phrase of "tommy-rot."

"What tommy-rot it all is!" he would say in his riotous amiable way. "A grown man, presumably sane and educated, spending days and days hunting the ghost of a dead superstition for a lot of piffling

old fools in London. Why the deuce don't you dig, man? — do something useful? You're strong enough."

"Well," I would say, "here are my facts—"

"Oh! facts be jiggered!" he would say. "Facts that prove doppelganging are facts I have no respect for."

"But I have," I would say.

"What beastly rot! You've got a flaw somewhere. You know you have. If facts prove arrant nonsense, it shows that there's something wrong." Then I would begin to state my case. "Show me the flaw," I would say.

And directly I began to marshal my evidence, he would lose his brief temper and begin to shout me down. Did I think he had the time to go over every leaky tinpot ghost story in the country before he had a right to disbelieve? And I would raise my voice to avoid being shouted down.

"If Marshall has a doppelganger let him bring him up here in the daylight," he would say, and similar illogical nonsense; offering to board and clothe the two of them for a year out of his own meagre income, shouting extravagant promissory notes at the doppelganger, and so forth. And then, suddenly at the height of our shouting, he would leave off quite abruptly, stare savagely at his pipe, and ask me for a match.

"Have you a match?" he used to say, as though that was the thing that had driven him to revolt, that, by a tacit understanding, suspended the quarrel. I would hand him a match to relight his pipe. He would make some indifferent remark at a tangent, and we would go on talking and smoking together like a pair of brothers. The row, when it must have seemed to an eavesdropper on the point of blows, would vanish before one could snap one's fingers. For his choleric outbreaks, like my own, were as brief as they were violent, like tropical thunderstorms more than anything else in the world.

Now after I had returned to my chambers in Museum Street, I was surprised one afternoon in May by a visit from Wendover. I was collecting some new and interesting evidence upon crystal-gazing that had recently come to hand, when I heard him noisily ascend the stairs.

He came in with all the tumultuous violence of triumphant

common-sense, shouting and blowing, flung his umbrella on a haunted sofa I had on loan under observation, slapped down his hat on the planchette, and sat in my easy chair.

"Give me some tea, my good man," he bawled.

"And then I'll tell you an eye-opener. Your doppelganger! He's hoist!"

I tried to be as cool and acrid as possible though this irruption was certainly something of a shock, and I begged him to let me know how the hoisting was accomplished. And waving his bread and butter at me to accentuate his story, and ever and anon drinking his tea noisily and eagerly, he told me the true story of the Marshall doppelganger. "You know there was a thundering row blowing up about Mrs. Marshall's sausages and mince pie?" he said. "Libel actions and all that?"

I remembered the trouble quite distinctly — too distinctly, indeed, for it was a side issue into which Mrs. Marshall was always running, and which made Apps suspicious and reluctant under examination. The disappearance of these dainties on Christmas Eve from her kitchen I had always regarded as a troublesome irrelevance.

So far as I had formed a judgment in that matter at all I had gone with the general sentiment of the village, and suspected Apps and his friends. For clownish thieving of that kind was just the sort of thing that would commend itself to the rustic mind as a very good Christmas joke indeed.

"What has the mince pie got to do with the story?" I said.

"Everything," said Wendover, and he drank, winking at me over his teacup.

"Old Franks!" said Wendover, putting his cup aside and leaning forward as he spoke to touch my knee.

"What of Franks?" I said, for I had never suspected that elderly sinner had any connexion with the case.

"Drunk!" said Wendover. "Drowsy tipsy in the Seven Thorns, a week ago; discussion running high on the great mince-pie and sausage question. Did Apps take 'em, or didn't he? Friend of Apps indignant, tried running down Mrs. Marshall. 'Everybody knows Mrs. Marshall's mince pies are worse than her sausages, not worth stealing; wouldn't have 'em at a gift.' 'Ain't they?' says old Franks,

hiccoughing and winking. ‘That’s all you know,’ said old Franks.”

Wendover paused, looked at me, took up two slices of bread and butter, laid them face to face, bit them enormously, and looked at me again.

“My good man,” I said, “have you come all this way from Sussexville to tell me that?”

“That and some other things,” said Wendover, disposing of the bread and butter.

“ ‘How do you know?’ says Apps’ friend. ‘Never you mind,” said old Franks, appearing to realise he’d made a slip; and there, in spite of a few leading questions to the old man, his criticism on Mrs. Marshall’s mincemeat came to an end.”

“Well,” I began. “Wait a hit,” said Wendover. “When old Franks had gone, as he did rather quickly after that, the peculiar way in which he had spoken was remarked upon. Could it be that he had stolen the mince pie in question? Occasionally he did odd jobs for Marshall, as everyone knew, and it might be that sometime on Christmas Eve he had ventured-”

“Really, this pothouse gossip-”

“You wait. It wasn’t long before this little suspicion came to my ears, and I must confess I didn’t think very much of it at the time, nor did I connect it with your well-authenticated case. Who would? But going past Marshall’s, who should I see, as I thought, but Marshall himself planting beans. He was stooping down with his back to me, so that his nether garments formed most of the view.”

“I went to the wall and shouted, intending to have a quiet word with him about this missing pie and sausage. He looked up and then I saw the mistake I’d made at once. It wasn’t Marshall at all, but the excellent Franks, doing a bit of a job in a pair of Marshall’s cast-off breeks. Ah! — now you sit up! No men could be less alike about the head and face and complexion, I’ll admit, but seen — that way — well, there was really an astonishing resemblance. Easily be mistaken.”

“But the vicar — you both of you said you saw his face!”

“So we did, and heard his voice. But the other gents in the case — drunk — dark night-”

That staggered me for a moment. I’d never thought of a mistake in

identity creeping into the case on that side. I could quite imagine four drunken men making such a mistake, but the point was that even if Mrs. Marshall didn't see her husband's face overnight, she did the next morning.

"Now, don't you think that I've come up here with a story half told," said Wendover, replying to this objection, "because I haven't. I've simply settled the whole blessed question. It's a concession to your weakness, I know, but directly the possible resemblance of old Franks to Marshall dawned on me I determined I would clear up the muddle from end to end. I went to Franks and began to talk parochialism to him, and suddenly I hit him on the knee.

"I know all about it, f ranks, my man," I said. 'Own up!" He knew me pretty well, and he looked at me for half a minute over those old glasses of his. 'I won't tell a soul in Sussexville,' I said. 'I promise on my honour. But how the deuce did you get out of Marshall's kitchen and him in?' I suppose he saw the twinkle in my eye.

" 'He was in the little tool-shed hard by the waterbutt, Muster Wendover,' he said, 'an' his boots took off an' put under the currant bushes as tidy as cud be. Couldn't wake him nohow. And the snow a-fallin' — it wuzn't common charity not to leave en.'"

"You see?" said Wendover.

I saw only too plainly. "They carried home old Franks thinking it was Marshall-"

"While Marshall was swearing and cursing his way home by the footpath over the hill."

"And when Marshall did get home-"

"Mrs. Marshall, firm in her faith that he was already safely, if swinishly, deposited in the kitchen, let him hammer and swear at his own sweet will, putting it down to Apps.

"Franks, when he came to in the small hours," he added, "thought at first that he was in Heaven — it shows what a conscience void of offence will do for you — his last thought before losing consciousness having been that he was dying (such being the effect of the cheaper spirits at the Seven Thorns), and his first on resuming consciousness was that he was dead. The moonlight was shining in through the frosty window, and it was cold and spacious and clean, as he'd been led to expect Heaven would be. And close to hand, as

he fumbled about, were sausages and a mince pie.

"It was only when old Franks had felt about and got the back door open, and came upon Marshall, that his muddled brain began to grasp the realities of the case."

"Humph!" I said, trying to find a flaw in his explanation. It was atrociously exasperating, after I'd published that report, and when the society was just making so much of me. He sat watching my conflict, so far as my face revealed it. "Doppel-gangers!" he remarked unendurably.

I rose from my seat. I caught his hat and flung it violently across the room, among the spirit photographs. Possibly I said this and that. I turned and found the curate had his pipe out. "Have you a match, old chap?" he said, with the utmost tranquillity.

THE THING IN NO. 7

After the regatta there was a firework display on Southsea Common. I turned out after dinner with Bailey — this was before he broke his legs — and Wilderspin and another man, a tall man whose name I forget. The day had been hot and close, and the night was overcast. But this was all the better for the fireworks.

The fun had already begun. A big rocket went hissing up, and burst into a cloud of pink and green sparks that vanished as they drifted down. We heard the people hum. The crimson flare of a Bengal light followed, and the frameworks upon which the transparencies were to appear came suddenly out of the darkness, and we saw the face and hands of a man in a blouse behind the fixtures, blood-red in the glare. There were crowds of people. I should think all Portsmouth and Southsea, and the greater part of Landport and Portsea must have turned out of doors; I never saw so many people on the Common before.

We pushed across to get into the noise and the fun of it. Away to the right the big pier with the pavilion was outlined in a cool white light, but it seemed almost deserted, and to the left, a black squat mass, was Southsea Castle. Against the sea-front of this one could see the sea washing up what looked like the ghosts of breakers, so pale and unsubstantial they were compared with the red glare. Then suddenly the Bengal light went out, and for a minute one had to feel one's way in the dark.

We soon got among the people. There was plenty of noise and stir, of course; everyone seemed moving and talking. In this country people seem to get quite courageous and talkative after dark. There were lots of girls about in light dresses, looking very pretty and mysterious in the dim — so we had to keep an eye on Bailey. There was scarcely any wind, and the smoke hung about close to the ground. It gave one a metallic taste in the mouth, and now and then set one coughing. It was all part of the fun. Every now and then a rocket would go up with a shuddering rush, then perhaps a writhing and hissing flight of golden serpents; crackers were banging; they certainly kept things brisk enough. I remember it was just before they

set the transparencies going that I looked up at a big red rocket and saw the clouds all red above it, and driving fast across the sky. I recalled that afterwards when the storm began.

The transparencies were not altogether a success. The middle one went off fitfully, and we got the back of the head and one ear of the Prince of Wales before any of the rest. The profile simply would not catch on. The big transparency to the right took on well, but the ship to the left fizzled about the mainmast. Somehow all this struck the sense of humour of the crowd, and they began cheering wildly. We could dimly see a chap dabbing at the figure's nose with a pole carrying a match.

It was then the storm broke. The thunder seemed to fall right down upon us out of the dim sky. It began at the same time as the lightning, and sounded like a big gun fired close to my ears. And never before or since have I seen such lightning. It was brighter than day. It must have been instantaneous, for not a soul on the Common stirred while it lasted, but it seemed to last an age. I shall never forget all that huge crowd of people agape in that ghastly light, and motionless.

I suppose the thunder reverberated, but I heard nothing but the first report. I stood stunned for a minute in the blank darkness that succeeded. I became aware again of the head and shoulders of the Prince of Wales dotted out in yellow lights, and of people moving and talking round me and looking up at the sky. And then, like a lash, came the hail.

There was a stir. People began to fumble with umbrellas — those who had the forethought to bring them — and then, "I'm off home," said Bailey, and we began running, and everyone round us too, towards the distant houses at the back of the Common.

I shall never forget the storm, even for its own sake. Every moment the lightning winked and flashed and there seemed no end to the thunder. One clap trod on the tail of another. By the flashes one could see all that great flat Common alive with people — little black people — thousands of them — running. They were whooping and screaming, and some of the ladies reefed up their dresses scandalously for better speed. The hail was pouring down upon them out of the height of the sky in ragged grey streamers. And the

lightning, blinding white it was, with a blue edge! Here and there short stretches of fence had been put across footpaths to let the grass grow again, and against these the people ran in the dark and formed knots and eddies in the flood, for all the world like water against a rock in a rapid. Far behind us were the transparencies still fizzing away yellow and dim. The profile of the big figure had caught on at last, but his back was burnt out. The Solent, boiling under the hail, and the forts in the distance were livid under the storm.

We were soon drenched, though we ran hard. Somehow we had kept together. Bailey had led us at first, howling cheerfully, and with his jacket pulled over his head, until he collided with one of those beastly little foot-high railings they put along the edge of their turf. That gave Wilderspin the lead, and made Bailey an indifferent fourth. Presently we got out of the rout of the people. The place where we lodged was No. 6 Cholmondeley Parade, facing the sea. Of course, most of the folks made for the throat of one or other of the three great roadways that open upon the Common. The Cricketers' Inn was simply gorged with people, and a crowd struggling outside.

Now, as I say, Wilderspin had got the lead, and he evidently meant to keep it. For my own part, I was out of breath and inclined to slacken my pace, but he spurted as we got near the house. The third man — I forget his name, but I think it was Pryor or Preyer — was running close behind me. I could hear the squash of his boots — for there was now half an inch of water on the ground — and a kind of whooping as he panted.

Then in the dim light of the street lamp I saw Wilderspin tear up the steps to the portico of a house. The lightning blazed livid, and I saw the whole house distinct and brilliant. It was the wrong house!

It was an empty house, as one could see by the black blankness of its windows, and I was aware, without clearly distinguishing what it was, that something black hung over the stuccoed parapet above. Then I saw with a slight feeling of surprise that the door was beginning to open in front of Wilderspin, and then came the darkness again. I heard the door slam.

I gasped out something incoherent about my getting in first after all, and keeping in my chuckle at Wilderspin's mistake against a better opportunity, rushed up the steps to the door of No. 6 and

hammered at the knocker. The other man was hard on my heels, and then came Bailey panting.

"What a sell for old Wilderspin!" said Bailey.

"I suppose," said I, "he's groping about in the passage, wondering why the deuce the hall-lamp is not lit."

We stood panting, and expecting every moment to see Wilderspin emerge crestfallen upon the portico next to us. We were too breathless to talk. A couple of minutes passed, and our own door opened.

"He's humbugging," said the tall man; "let's go in and leave him to follow."

"Come along, Wilderspin," I shouted.

The tall man went in and stood dripping on the oil-cloth in the hall. "Come along in and change," he said. "Never mind Wilderspin."

We heard the door of No. 7 click and slam again.

"I'm going after him," said Bailey. "He's such a queer chap."

He spoke my thought. Wilderspin was one of those odd, excitable fellows who will start at a shadow. I remember I nearly scared him into a fit once by quietly putting a head of barley in his ear in the course of a country walk. Somehow, I could not imagine him willingly hiding in an empty house after dark.

Bailey made no more ado, but clambered over into the portico of No. 7. The houses, I may mention, are part of a long terrace. There are steps up to each house, and the doors come together in pairs.

"You will ring, sir, when you are coming in," said the servant, a girl inclined to be impertiment, as they often are in boarding-houses. With that she closed the door.

I followed Bailey.

The door of No. 7 was opening slowly and very quietly. Behind it the gradually widening strip of passage was black and silent, except where the corner of the window lighting the staircase downstairs could be seen, clear and pale. We hesitated. The door became stationary, and then slowly closed again.

We looked at one another.

The thing affected me somehow like a trap. I hesitated. "Confound it!" said I. "What is there to be afraid of?" and flung the door open. A

flash of lightning lit the hall for an instant.

Now, one can see distinctly by the flash of lightning only when one has something approaching a definite conception of the thing to be seen. I saw the empty hall very clearly, even to the darker patch on the oilcloth where the hat-stand had been, and the window to the staircase winked black as the rest of the things were illuminated. But the black lump at the head of the staircase puzzled me for a moment.

I pulled out a loose wax vesta from my pocket and struck it. It blew out. Bailey came in and shut the door after him, and I struck another.

All this had happened in silence. But as soon as the match flared we both started at once.

"Wilderspin, man!" said I, "what on earth's the matter?"

He was in a kind of sitting position, crouched on the staircase, and jammed hard against the wall. His head was turned towards something round the bend of the staircase that we could not see. One hand was too tense, he was simply cowering away from something and staring at it.

The match suddenly flared and went out. Then I heard a kind of moan, and something blundered towards me in the dark and almost knocked me over. It gripped me convulsively by the coat. I will confess I was scared in the darkness, and then as I put up my hand to defend myself I knew it was Wilderspin.

"Oh!" he cried, "save me! save me!"

His fright infected me. Bailey was frightened too, I think. He suddenly opened the street door, and out we all blundered, Wilderspin sobbing and clutching me.

The door slammed. Then as we stood on the doorstep it began to open again in that noiseless, sinister way it had. It was too much for me, it was too much for all of us. We went down the steps in a hurry.

Wilderspin began to sob louder. Some people under umbrellas were hurrying along the Parade towards us, laughing. "Let's take him in," said Bailey; "he's been scared out of his wits." I will admit I never took my eyes off the portico of No. 7 while we were outside No. 6. I don't quite know what I expected. We helped him up stairs and sat him on his bed. It was no good asking him questions. He simply sat on his bedside and shivered and stared in front of him.

The fright seemed to have altered the expression of his face for good.

At last we determined to put some spunk into him with brandy, but it only made him worse. We put him to bed and that seemed to soothe him better. Presently he began crying quietly on his pillow, for all the world like a youngster.

"I will go into No. 7," said the tall man, "if anyone else will come." "Hang it!" said Bailey, "I'd rather be devoured by ghouls than by this curiosity."

I said I would come too. But we waited until Wilderspin was asleep.

I suppose it was about half-past eleven o'clock when we went out, and things were as quiet as midnight. We went up to the door of No. 7. "Give me a match or two," said the tall man.

It made me jump almost out of my shoes to hear a voice in my ear suddenly. I turned and saw a policeman grinning behind me. He had stolen up to us with those list-covered shoes of his. "What's the little game?" he said, suddenly blinding me with his lantern.

"There's something wrong in this house," said the tall man. "The door was open."

The policeman examined each of us very deliberately with his lantern. "Not *your* sort," I think he said, and then went up and lit the hall with his lantern. Then the circle of light came round to the open door. "Looks like chisels," he said. "After the gas-fittings and plumbing, I suppose."

He went into the hall and we followed quietly. The brilliant unsteady circle of his lantern preceded him. Then he gave vent to a sudden "Ugh!" He was almost exactly in the place where we found Wilderspin, and the beam of his light fell through the banisters and followed the direction of Wilderspin's stare.

"Look," he said to the tall man.

Then Bailey looked, and then I.

I don't think it is any use to describe what we saw. I suppose that the peculiar horror of the thing was the way in which the front of the face had been injured. I quite understand what it must have been to Wilderspin, jumping at him out of the dark as the lightning flashed. However, there is no reason why one should descend to details.

Even when we saw it we did not understand. But the tall man

presently found an explanation.

The dead man was one of those miserable thieves who rob empty houses of their plumbing and gas-fittings. The house had no lightning conductor, but above it was a flag-staff, stupidly tipped by a gilt spearhead, and braced by zinc wires instead of ropes. It was the charred and splintered remains of this, I found next day, that I had noticed about the parapet of the house. The flash of lightning — very probably it was the first flash that had started the rush from the Common — must have struck the flag-staff, and then come streaming down through the gas-fittings, water-pipes, and whatever other conducting substances afforded it a path to the earth. Above the body, at the turn of the staircase, was a very pretty little brass bracket lighting the landing, and a brass handrail ran down the wall. No doubt the poor wretch had been in contact with these, when he was so suddenly and awfully struck out of the roll of the living.

Poor Wilderspin was in a bad way for many days, and the rest of our holiday went chiefly to comfort him. But there is less permanent injury from the shock than one might expect. He always was nervous and excitable, and so in still greater measure he remains.

THE THUMBMARK

We three students, who had arrived early, stood at the window of the laboratory and looked at the ruins of the house opposite. It was a windy, showery morning; the roadway glistened with the wet, and the sky behind the blackened ruins showed gaps of deep blue through its drifting covering of cloud. The vivid spring-green of the young chestnuts and lilacs in front of the house contrasted strangely with the black wreck behind them. The fire had completely gutted the place; most of the roof had fallen in, and through the carbonised outlines of the windows, which retained scarcely a shred of glass, one looked upon charred walls and all the indescribable desolation that follows a conflagration. Oddly enough, though some part of the wall had collapsed over the portico, the little bedroom above it was completely uninjured, and we could see, still hanging upon the water-streaked wall-paper, a framed photograph of a soldier in uniform.

The new student, a pale man with black hair — Chabot, I think, was his name — was especially absorbed in the contemplation of the wreck. "Was no one injured?" he asked.

"No one, fortunately," said Wilderspin.

The new man grunted.

Porch entered shouting: "Have you chaps heard? Great Anarchist outrage! London in panic! Why aren't you terror-stricken? This comes of the abominable examination system. Not one of you has had leisure to see a newspaper this morning."

We all started round.

"Listen," said Porch, striking an attitude. "Yesterday that was the home of Inspector Bulstrode — the celebrated Inspector Bulstrode — and we never knew it! Now behold it!"

"How do they know it is the work of an Anarchist?" asked the new student, as Askin entered the room.

"They put every accident that happens down to Anarchists, just now," said Wilderspin.

"The police," said Porch, "have very good reason to regard this outrage as the work of an Anarchist, so the papers say. But 104

nothing has transpired. However, it's very nice of the Anarchists to pick a house right in front of our windows. It will relieve the rigours of our last week's cramming immensely."

"It has made Smith late for once," said Wilderspin, looking at his watch.

"I saw him over the way," said Askin, "as I was coming down the street."

"Jove! What was he doing over there?" asked the new man very quickly.

"Prying, I suppose," said Askin. "He was talking to one of the policemen, and he had a box in his hands with some black stuff in it. I suppose he will expect us to analyse that."

"Here he comes!" said Wilderspin.

We all turned to the window again. Mr. Somerset Smith, our excellent instructor in chemistry, had appeared at the side-door opposite, and was coming along by the side of the house towards the street gate. He carried a box labelled "Hudson's Soap," and in it was a quantity of blackened rubbish, including, among other curiosities, a broken glass jar. His queer broad face was screwed up into an inscrutable expression. He came across the roadway deep in thought, and was presently hidden from us as he approached the steps to the portico. We heard him come up to his little preparation room, next the laboratory, and slam the door.

The four or five other students who constituted the class came in one by one.

We were soon loud in an animated discussion of Anarchist outrages. Mason had heard that it was Smith himself who had discovered that the fire opposite was the work of an incendiary, and that he had found a charred scrap of an inflammatory placard. Askin made an obvious joke at this. The new man asked a great many questions in a quick nervous manner. The excitement seemed to be bringing out his conversational gifts; for hitherto he had been rather conspicuous for a reserve that most of us considered sulky in its quality. We stopped our clamour as Smith entered.

Contrary to his usual practice he did not go straight to the blackboard, but came down the middle aisle of benches towards the window. He was carrying a paper-weight of black marble in one

hand, and in the other a number of slips of white paper. These he put down on Wilderspin's bench. He peered at the crowd of us from beneath his heavy eyebrows. "Anyone absent?" he asked.

"No one, sir," said somebody.

"This fire over the way, gentlemen, is a very singular affair indeed — very singular. Possibly none of you know how it was occasioned. But you ought, I think, to know without any delay that a strong suspicion attaches here; a suspicion, that is to say, that the incendiary — for it was no accident, but deliberate arson — obtained his materials from this place. So far as I can judge, the house was fired by means of phosphorus dissolved in carbon bisulphide."

There was a simultaneous exclamation from the class.

"As you are aware, gentlemen, from the course of elementary study we pursued last autumn, when phosphorus dissolved in carbon bisulphide is exposed to evaporation, the phosphorus is precipitated in such a finely divided state that it catches fire. Well, the coal-plate, it would seem, had been taken up, a considerable amount of paper thrown down among the firewood and small coal that lay on the floor of the cellar, and then a copious supply of this solution — which must, gentlemen, have been mixed in this house — was poured upon it. Evaporation began at once, the phosphorus presently caught and set the paper going, and in half an hour a nice little fire was burning its way upstairs to wake the Inspector and his family.

"How did I ascertain this? Partly by accident and partly by research. The accident was this. About ten o'clock last night I had occasion to visit my preparation room, and I smelt the very distinctive smell of carbon bisulphide vapour. I traced this to the store-room next door, and, entering, saw at once that the stores had been tampered with. A bottle of starch mucilage had been upset, and the contents were dripping from the table to the floor. Several other bottles had been taken down and not replaced. Looking round with the idea of discovering a theft, I failed to detect the absence of any thing at first except the carbon bisulphide, but presently I noticed the phosphorus jar was empty. The inference was either that some student contemplated a chemical entertainment at home at my expense, or that some incendiarism was on foot. In either case I was naturally anxious to discover the culprit, and it seemed to me that no

time was so favourable as the immediate moment when the room was exactly as he had left it. You know we scientific people are rather fond of problems of evidence."

He looked keenly round the group of us. So did I. Unless he was a far better physiognomist than I, nothing was to he detected. To me every one looked interested, and all more or less disconcerted by his suspicion. Askin, for instance, was blushing; Wilderspin, who had a nervous trick of twitching the corner of his mouth, was twitching it violently; and the lips of the new man were white.

"Now I am happy to say that when I left the laboratory I had a hint, that presently developed into evidence as absolutely conclusive of who had taken my carbon bisulphide as any evidence could be."

A dramatic pause. For my own part I was a little scared. Suppose Mr. Smith was jumping to a conclusion? It might be inconvenient for some of us.

"The gentleman, quite inadvertently, had written his signature to the theft; had left his sign-manual to his act — literally his sign-manual, gentlemen."

He smiled oddly at us. We expected him to point someone out with his finger. He looked for a moment at the little slips of paper on the bench beside him, and hesitated. We were all naturally very much excited by this time.

"You don't mean," said the new student— "you don't mean that the man who stole that carbon bisulphide was so absent-minded — so madly absent-minded — as to write his name — - ?"

Our teacher, still smiling, shook his head in negation. "Not quite that," he said. Clearly he meant to prolong the agony.

"When this fire broke out opposite," he proceeded calmly, "I had a suspicion that the things were connected. Very early this morning — before sunrise, in fact — I went over there. I traced the fire, with the help of the firemen, down to the cellar. It had been lit, as I supposed it must have been, through the coal-plate. I raked about for my carbon bisulphide bottle among the cinders and ashes in the cellar so soon as they were cool enough for the search; and I could not find it. My suspicions of our connection with that fire grew a little fainter, but I still clung to them. The cellar was extremely hot, and my investigations in consequence superficial, so that I

determined to repeat the search more thoroughly later in the day. To fill the time up, after breakfast and a bath I went into the garden and hunted about there. First I found a familiar stopper, and that excited me; then, under a lilac-bush, I found the bottle — broken, I suppose by the foot of a fireman. The label, you will remember, on those store-room bottles is a large paper one, and goes almost all the way round."

He stopped and smiled benevolently at us.

"On that label there were visible the words 'Carbon Bisulphide,' and also 'Dismal Stinks,' written by some gentleman in pencil."

"Oh, but I wrote those three or four days ago!" said Askin, hotly.

"I can quite imagine you did. I say there was nothing else visible upon the label. But you will remember, gentlemen, that our friend had upset a bottle of starch mucilage. Now let me remind you of the properties of starch mucilage. It is colourless itself, but with iodine it gives a beautiful purple-blue colour. It is a test for iodine, even when the latter is in the smallest conceivable proportion."

"It will go blue with one part of iodine in four hundred and fifty thousand of water, Thorpe says," said Wilderspin.

"Very good. I see you are ready for your examination. Now, before I left the laboratory I had noticed that our friend had dabbled his fingers in this starch, for upon the door-handle I perceived something that might be the dim marks of them, and on testing with iodine was delighted to verify my suspicion. They were, however, too vague for my purpose. Now, I felt that if I got the bottle there would certainly be some traces of our friend's fingers on the label, since he must inevitably have held it in such a way as to print them. Accordingly I have developed that label with a very weak solution of iodine; and now, gentlemen, I am happy to say I have three blue fingermarks and a beautiful thumbprint."

He paused for our astonishment.

"You may have heard of Professor Galton," said our teacher, going on a little more rapidly, and taking the paper slips up again. "He has made a special study of the lines upon the human thumb, and has proposed it as a method of identifying criminals. He has taken thousands of impressions from inked human thumbs at the Anthropometric Laboratory at South Kensington, and in no two

human beings are these impressions alike. He has published a book of his prints, and a very good book it is too. So here you see I have a little printers' ink mixed with oil smeared on this paperweight, and here are some little slips of paper, and the whole matter will be settled in a few minutes. If the miscreant is present we shall find him; if not—" "Look out!" cried Wilderspin.

I turned round, to see the new man holding a bottle in either hand. The Anarchist had discovered himself. One bottle was poised ready to throw. It had a ground glass label, and was probably some acid. I ducked instinctively, and the missile whizzed over my head, touched Smith on the shoulder, and ricocheted with a terrific smash into a stand of boiler-tubes beyond. There was the keen smell of nitrogen oxides in the air. The second bottle happily flew wide, bowled over a Bunsen burner and two tripods, and mowed down all the small bottles of reagents on Wilderspin's bench.

I never saw men scatter so quickly. I turned with some idea of grappling with the lunatic, and saw him grip a bottle of sulphuric acid — oil of vitriol, that popular ingredient of the Parisian love-philtre. This was too much for me, and I dodged round the bench forthwith. Some of the fellows had got out of the room and stood on the staircase, whither Smith had also made good his retreat. I saw Wilderspin, his mouth twitching more than ever, behind one of the other benches. As soon as we got a chance we both followed the example of the rest and scuttled out upon the landing. A small bottle of hydrochloric acid caught Wilderspin in the neck, made him yell dismally, and turned his coat a bright red forthwith.

There was method in the Anarchist's madness. He threw nothing more so soon as he had gained possession of the laboratory, but proceeded to raid round and collect together all the bottles of acid, corrosive sublimate, lunar caustic, and so forth, upon the bench nearest the window. He clearly meant to invest his arrest with peculiar difficulty. But Smith was still equal to him. He had run into the store-room, and re-emerged with a huge jar of that most unendurable gas, sulphuretted hydrogen. "Take out the bung and fling it in," said he— "quick!" and returned for the pungent virtues of the ammonia. We followed this up with a carboy of hydrochloric acid and the ammonium sulphide, a gas only rivalled in its

offensiveness by the sulphuretted hydrogen. The enemy scarcely grasped our import until these vapours spread towards him, and merely dodged behind a bench. In thirty seconds there was as unpleasant a conflict of chemical odours in that room as one can well imagine, and the air was dense with white clouds of ammonium chloride. The enemy soon discovered our aim and tried a charge. As the jar of ammonium sulphide went in and smashed on the floor, I saw a small bottle fly towards me through the reek, but it missed the doorway and knocked the blackboard over.

"Stand out of the way!" shrieked the Anarchist, looming up through the rising fog and stench, but we slammed the door and shut him and his atmosphere in together. He tugged furiously at the handle and hammered madly at the panel. I heard him yell for mercy and fall a-coughing. I thought we had beaten him, and would have opened the door had not Smith, fearing a rush, restrained me. The Anarchist's footsteps retreated and there was silence. We expected another rush at the door. Presently a bottle smashed against it, and after a minute or so another. Then there was an interval of silence. Possibly three minutes passed. Askin was attending to Wilderspin in the store-room, the rest of us were grouped about the landing. "He must have fallen down suffocated," said Porch. "The window!" exclaimed Smith, suddenly; "he must have got out by the window. I never thought of the window. Has anyone heard the window go? You three men" — he indicated myself, and Porch and Mason— "stop by the door."

The rest clattered downstairs with Smith. We heard the front-door open and their voices from the little courtyard in front of the house. Then we ventured to open the laboratory door again, and saw the end window open and the clear air beating in through the mist. The Anarchist had escaped us. Smith had been a little too intellectual in his treatment of the case, and scarcely vigorous enough. "After that thumbmark," said he when the class met next morning amid the debris of the laboratory— "after that thumbmark he ought to have surrendered at once. There was not a loophole left for him. Logically, at any rate, he was hopelessly cornered. For him to start throwing acids about, gentlemen! It was a thing I did not anticipate. Most unfair of him. This kind of thing robs detective work of all its

intellectual charms.”

OUR LITTLE NEIGHBOUR

Our first encounter with our little neighbour happened when we were looking over the house preparatory to taking it. It's a peculiar little house, built into the side of the hill, so that a great bank comes on the north and east of it, faced with brick, and higher than the chimneys. There is a garden in front, with the house on one side, this high brick wall on two others, and on the fourth a privet hedge and the road, and all up the brick wall run great ropes of ivy. There is another garden behind on a level with the roof, to which one goes out of the yard by some brick steps, and by the gable and chimneys visible over the fence of this we first became aware of our neighbour's existence.

My wife liked the oddness of the place. It was a house with a character of its own. "This queer little attic garden," said she, "is delightful. I will smother it with red and white poppies next year."

"There is someone's orchard runs down to the wall and overlooks the front of our house," said I; "so that we may have people looking down our chimneys, and inspecting the dinner. That's rather a disadvantage. These are apple and plum trees."

I went to the palings, and found these were thickly studded with nails along the top. The fence was too high to see over.

We came down the steep brick steps again, and Mariana went into ecstasies about the hall. She would have a yellow paper and brown paint, and her aunt's heirlooms, two small watercolours by Birkett Foster, along the wall.

At last we drifted into the front garden again.

"In the place of the flower-beds," said I, "I would prefer turf."

"It would be easy to recast the garden," said my wife. "But

we mustn't touch all that splendid ivy-" Then she stopped

for a moment, and then came a queer change in her voice. "George," she said, "we are overlooked."

I glanced at her quickly, and saw she was looking at the top of the high wall that overhung house and garden, and that she had a startled expression in her eyes. Following her gaze, I had my first glimpse of our little neighbour.

He had just been looking down upon us, and was turning away, so

that all I caught was his shoulder, his ears, and the top of his head as he receded. He wore a bluish coat but seemingly old and greasy — and I judged from the curve of his shoulder that he was a hunchback. There was a black skull-cap on his head, and it seemed to me that he had no hair.

I looked at Mariana. Her brows were knit. “Horrid little creature!” she said.

“I scarcely saw him,” said I.

“He was looking down at us.”

“I suppose we’re interesting to him as we’re going to be his neighbours.”

“But did you see his face?”

To judge by Mariana’s expression it was not a very pleasant face. “Apparently,” said I, “he’s . . . what is it?. . . Piebald? . . . No . . . Albino!”

“He’s horrid!” said Mariana.

“But this,” said I, “is a digression. We were speaking of turf here and a garden chair.”

“I don’t like his face,” said Mariana, and looked up again. She was so much put out that for some time she would not return to the subject of our arrangements, but kept repeating that our little neighbour was an ugly little creature. I had to show signs of vacillation in the matter of the sideboard before I could get her mind away from this individual over the wall. And after Mariana had taken the fullest advantage of my weakness in that matter she returned to him immediately.

“You will ask the agent who he is?” she said — twice. “Somehow, I don’t like the thought of him as a neighbour.”

So said I to the house agent, “Who is — the gentleman in blue that we saw looking down from the wall!”

The agent started and looked at me. “That’s a difficult question,” he said. “It hardly comes in my province.”

Then I asked him what neighbours we had above the wall. “A gentleman named Hanotaux, I fancy,” said the agent; “a literary gentleman, so I understood.”

“Living alone?” I asked.

“No, he lives with his brother,” said the agent; and then finding I

was bent upon pressing the point he did not wait for further questions. “It may have been the brother you saw,” he said. “I’ve seen him dressed in blue. A shortish gentleman — and bent rather — without a scrap of hair. He’s . . . well, he’s afflicted. He was born so. But he’s quite harmless, I can assure you.”

“He can’t possibly be any annoyance,” the agent insisted. “It’s really very sad for the poor little creature — cooped up in the house and garden — he never comes out because the village boys exasperate him. But his brother is very good to him — really very good. And he’s never done any harm to a single creature.”

“All the same, I don’t like him,” said Mariana again, on the way to the railway station.

At that I read Mariana a lecture on charity, for in one direction at least she is hard-hearted. She cannot endure ugly misery. The intense pathos of ungainliness is lost upon her. She recoils from unwashed beggars and cripples, from any suggestion of physical suffering. Yet she can be tender enough over a rain-soaked kitten or a nice dead canary. I told her as much.

“You didn’t see how he looked at me, or you’d think differently,” said Mariana, and clenched the discussion abruptly with that very feminine reply.

I saw the face of the creature for the first time when we moved in. The people from the London furniture warehouse were taking in that sideboard of Mariana’s as I came in at the gate. “He’ll know it when he sees it again,” said one of the men in green baize aprons. I wondered who “he” was, and then looked up and saw him.

He certainly had anything but a prepossessing face. I think the peculiar offence was in the irregular teeth, the dropping, everted nether lip, and the pink eyes, but, I must confess, I cannot describe his visage in detail. He was watching our move-in with a grin upon his face, a slobbering leer that was certainly not engaging.

I will admit I felt — what our little servant would doubtless call a “turn”. Possibly, too, I had a flash of irritation at our affairs being spied upon. Then I was ashamed of myself for grudging the poor demented outcast creature the petty satisfaction he had in our arrival. By way of reparation for my first sensations, I turned towards him and waved my hat, as one might do to a child.

He grinned, anything but prettily, and waved his arms in reply. They were very long arms — at least, in proportion to his little body. And he began a brutal travesty of speech by way of greeting. When I heard his inarticulate mouthings I turned and followed the sideboard into the house.

When I came out again I looked at him out of the corner of my eye, and he was still gesticulating. It occurred to me that it was rather foolish to encourage him overmuch, and I affected to be unaware of his presence.

Yet all day the thought was in my mind of the poor darkened, inarticulate creature hanging over the fence along the top of the wall and trying to express his dim thoughts to me, trying to signal something — Heaven knows what — and I felt a little sorry for having turned my back on him. To tell the truth, his grotesque appearance and the conditions under which he was living had laid hold of my imagination. I thought of him wandering about the narrow garden between the spiked palings, which constituted his world, and, reading my own feelings into him, I imagined the horrible monotony of his existence. That evening he was gone, to Mariana's great relief; but the next morning he was back at his post, and in the excess of my philanthropy I waved my hand to him.

I made the acquaintance of Morton, the village doctor, that day.

"You'll be having that Hanotaux bogle for a neighbour," said he. "Have you seen it? It's a gruesome thing to have aye peering over the wall at you, man."

He always spoke of our little neighbour as it. "So far as I can ascertain," said he, "the thing is twenty-three or twenty-four years old, but it looked precisely the same five or six years ago. I've attended it twice for fits. Hanotaux cannot be just right, or he would not have the thing about him. He would send it to an asylum. Something wrong up above is congenital with both of them, I'm thinking. It's got a nasty temper too, for once it bit my finger. Bit its medical attendant, man!"

"Hanotaux," continued the doctor, after a pause, "has given it a room opening out upon the garden, and the whole of the garden except a part behind the kitchen he has fenced off, for it to disport itself in. I remonstrated with him about it once, and says he, 'He's

good Hanotaux blood anyhow, and I'm not going to have him imprisoned in an asylum to be tyrannised over by doctors and attendants, and to be experimented upon for the good of science'. And he began to provoke me to argue about the medical profession, and hospitals and vivisection, and so got away from the bogle." "I suppose," said I, catching his mode of expression, "the thing's as happy where it is as it could be anywhere."

"That's not it," said Morton. "It's my belief the thing's dangerous."

"Nonsense!" said I, though his tone of conviction made me uncomfortable. "It's never done anything — in that way, has it?"

"No," said Morton, "it's pure supposition on my part. But, you see,. . . Well, it used to go out in the village, I hear, when it was younger, and the boys teased it, and it used to get into furious passions, and so came by its first fit. And after it was secluded in the house it made a dead set at one of the servants and she had to leave. It's a queer brute and there's no counting on it. Partly it's as it is because it's a malformed albino, but chiefly it's atavism; it's one of those cases where Nature tries back and fetches up the ancestral savage out of the past to trouble us. People think a creature like that just goes about gibbering; but, depend upon it, that bogle has a mind of its own that works — in its way — just as much as ours do. It has — it must have — hopes and desires of its ow n, though they are as crippled and repulsive as its body. They won't all be satisfied, I'm thinking, by a high fence with spikes and a garden."

"No," said I — missing his drift; "I dare say the thing — the poor little wretch — is dismal enough."

I saw the unhappy subject of our conversation on my return, at his post of observation. I waved my hat at him, but he made no response. He had his head craned out, as if he was trying to see into our drawing-room.

I found Mariana in the hall. "How do the pictures look?" said

I.

She looked quite worried. "Do get him to go away," she said. "He has been up there all the morning."

“He means no harm,” said I; “you’re over-fanciful.”

“I’m not, George. Really I can’t bear him. He has been mopping and mowing up there-”

I saw the tears standing in her eyes. At that I turned and opened the front door, with the idea of shaking my fist at him. But our little neighbour had gone.

So much happened in the first two days of our tenancy. I thought that we should get used to him, and that he would tire of watching us. I thought, too, that Mariana would find that he meant no harm, and for my own part maintained a friendly

relation by means of waved hat and hand. But things became worse in the course of a fortnight rather than better, and at last I began to think that the annoyance she felt was affecting her nerves. She kept away from the windows as much as possible and seemed to dread going out, which involved going across the garden under our little neighbour’s eye. And she would cross-examine me about all the bolts and window fastenings after I had locked up of a night, and I could see she dreaded even the shadows of our own house after dark. I caught the infection of her antipathy, and began at last to detest the very sight of our living gargoyle, and to rejoice over a rainy day that would drive him indoors as much as I had ever previously rejoiced over a fine.

At last it was unbearable, and I called on Hanotaux, but he was out, and after missing him a second time I wrote him a letter. He was evidently a cantankerous person, for he replied that he failed to see how we could object to his own brother using his own garden. I called upon him after that, but got nothing for my pains. Hanotaux simply would not see things from our point of view. No doubt it was rude for his brother to stare, but we must make allowance for his affliction. My wife, I urged, was very nervous. “You cannot hold me responsible for your wife’s peculiarities,” said Hanotaux, with a sardonic gleam. Then I offered to pay for a high fence along the top of the wall. Hanotaux shook his head. “I don’t see why I should lose my view on your account,” he said.

It was when I returned from this that I heard a new offence of this disagreeable little monster. Mariana had been in the upstairs garden, when the all too familiar grinning visage had appeared in the

branches of an apple-tree on the other side of the fence, into which he had swung himself by his long arms. “He seemed close to me,” said Mariana. “I don’t know how I got down the steps again.”

That evening it was that I began making hostile demonstrations at this nuisance of ours, stamping my foot, shaking my fists, and shouting “Go away!” He grinned, and made his horrible inarticulate noises at me, but presently he seemed to realise that I was not in fun this time, and at that he looked disconcerted, and suddenly disappeared. He turned in such a queer manner that I was almost inclined to think he dropped on all fours. Presently, when I was syringing the Gloire de Dijon in front of the house, it occurred to me that I might use the weapon in my hand pretty effectually if I had much more trouble with him.

Now the next thing that happened I cannot describe very exactly, for the simple reason that it has never been properly described to me. It must have been very disagreeable. I was in my study and my wife was in our dressing-room. I heard her scream, and running in to her, found her kneeling beside the bed and just at the beginning of a faint, and I noticed indistinctly that there was something like a brown bird that passed from the corner of the window. When she revived I questioned her. So far as I can understand she had suddenly seen the face of our disgusting little neighbour upside down outside the window. An inverted face, at any time, is not a nice thing to see suddenly — even though it be a pretty one. I suppose he had clambered along the ivy and hung down by means of his long arms.

When I had recovered her and learnt this, I will confess my charitable feelings towards this incubus vanished. I was furiously angry, and, I fancy, a little afraid of what he would do. This experience was new. Evidently, the little brute had only just discovered the climbable nature of our creeper in his queer and anything but pleasant attempts upon our company, or rather, upon my wife’s company. I went off to Marvin, the solicitor, and then to Hanotaux again. The law considered I had a case, and perhaps in the course of a little time ... At which I left the office blaspheming.

When I got home I got an axe and began to chop at the main stem of the ivy, in the corner between the house and the wall. In the midst of this I heard a chuckling, throaty sound above that I knew only too

well. I went indoors and returned with the syringe.

The little beast was waving his ape-like arms at me in a threatening manner, and his face was full of diabolical malice. “So it’s war,” said I, and forthwith the jet from the syringe took him fairly in the face. The water sprayed out from the corners of his ugly grin, making him more suggestive of a gargoyle than ever.

This time there was no mistaking it. He dropped on all fours and vanished.

Mariana woke me in the middle of the night. She was sitting up in bed listening. At first — for I am a heavy sleeper — I was disposed to be angry at being awakened, but then I heard a steady rustling in the ivy outside.

“Don’t be frightened, little one,” said I, and getting out of bed I began to grope about for the matches. I think at that moment I was capable of murder.

Then came a crackling noise, and then a hissing sound, as though a lot of crumpled paper had been drawn smartly across the window. The whole queer, quick noise terminated in a thud, and this was immediately succeeded by a low moan.

As the match flared I saw Mariana in the bluish glare, ghastly with terror. I went to her at once, and she clung to me, too frightened even to sob.

“Don’t leave me!” she said. “Don’t leave me!”

Presently, as we sat there in the flaring light of a candle, we heard a faint whining from the garden, then it changed to a still fainter sobbing, and died down into absolute stillness.

I tried to comfort Mariana as well as I could, but until the dawn came she would not let me leave her, or even unclasp her clinging arms. For the most part, during that interminable watching, we sat holding one another in silence. At last, however, as the daylight grew strong, her grasp loosened and she fell asleep. And when I was assured of her, I went down and unchained the front door and looked out.

The first thing I saw was one great stem of ivy torn down from the wall, and then almost at my feet was the dead body of our little neighbour. There was a red stain on the gravel towards the flower-bed, and a flat red triangle stuck out between his shoulder-blades.

Overcoming my feeling of repulsion, I turned him over and found the handle of a big knife, like a bread-knife, sticking out of his chest. Evidently he had been climbing down the ivy with this in his hand, and had stabbed himself in his fall.

It was a very bright, fresh morning, and all the world lay still under the pink sunrise. I thought for a moment, and then I decided to go round and call up Hanotaux.

That ends the story of our little neighbour. When Mariana awoke, the body was gone, and the red stains had been dug into the gravel. I avoided any errors on the side of truth in the account I gave her. She knows nothing of the knife, and thinks our little tormentor broke his neck — which is, so far as the phrase goes, a death by no means horrible. But nevertheless, to save her — and perhaps myself as well — from haunting memories, I had — at some profit to the ingenious landlord — to get released from my agreement and leave the house. I had the gravest dread that the memory of this little monster would seriously affect Mariana's health, which at that time was by no means robust, but I am happy to say that my fears were not confirmed.

THE LOYALTY OF ESAU COMMON

A Fragment

This fragment was written in February, 1901, at Sta Marghrita, in I .inure, and it was intended to open a series of kindly but instructive stories about the British army. This project was abandoned. The fragment remains the picture of a point of view — H.G.W.

The native land of Esau Common was Aurelia, the head and centre of that great political system, the Aurelian Empire, and he was born near the capital, in the very suburbs indeed of Brumosa, the mightiest city in many respects that the world has ever seen. And rather indiscreetly, as one is apt to do in this matter, he was born a lower middle class Aurelian of no particular family and less than no particular expectations of wealth or influence in life. He was born in a little room over a shop full of picture frames, and of lengths and samples of picture framing, and amidst a faint smell of glue, and his first cry mingled with the uproar of a traction engine that was blundering along the paved suburban High Street upon which the rattling sash windows of his birth chamber gave. Moreover, his father was a man whose trade had made him a vehement critic and contemner of artists, an avid reader, and, if possible, a purchaser of all books, excepting only novels and works upon art, that came in his way. And these two circumstances gave certain qualities with which Providence (inexplicably careless of his social position) had endowed our Esau, a rather unusual and possibly unnatural direction.

The exceptional qualities that constituted Esau's endowment resembled each other (and most other exceptional qualities) in being finally of very doubtful value to him; in most other respects they differed. ()ne was a gift of the mind and the second was a gift of the character. The first gift was a certain uncommon quality of imagination and intelligence as indisputable as it is indefinable. In the dialect of the old schoolmaster who made a precarious living by pretending to teach the tradesmen's sons in that Brumosan suburb, he was "quick at figures," he was also "quick" at drawing — though he

found no other copy in the school save the schoolmaster — and, at an astonishingly early age, he grasped the fact that the practice of reading gave rewards incommensurably great. He was a "great reader," said his mother. And it was remarked by the curate who prepared him — in spite of precociously shrewd theological objections — for his first communion in the official church of the Aurelian Empire, that he was a lad of "unusual intelligence."

Now "unusual intelligence" alone in persons of the Aurelian middle-class is apt to lead to tragedies. The great Aurelian Empire does not recognise the necessity of persons of "unusual intelligence" springing up in its lower middle class. It is an empire distinctively characterised by its eminent sense of order and decorum. It goes to inordinate cost to maintain a special class of superior persons, and for "unusual intelligence" to appear outside that class displays, to say the least of it, an uncivil disregard of wise and careful arrangements — somewhere. In most instances "unusual intelligence" of such irregular origin is starved and ignored, or at most permitted to exert itself, under proper patronage, in the ineffectual field of the arts. But it chanced that the tenor of the frame dealer's discourse on art in general and his best customers in particular gave his son an early and quite incurable bias against the practice of art in any form, while the parental collection of books gave it an equally strong bent towards the graver and more spacious interests of public affairs. And this bent presently got a very definite direction to one particular public affair, the question of military methods and efficiency, by the outbreak of a small but humiliating war upon the outskirts of the Aurelian Empire and a visit that Esau paid, just at that adolescent period when undying ambitions are begotten, to an uncle who was a butler near Blundershot, the great permanent camp of military exercises in Aurelia.

Esau discovered that to think of war, to study war, to prepare for and somewhere to play that mighty game was the one supremely desirable thing in life.

He might just as well have decided that his calling in life was to play cricket with the fixed stars, so far as any prospect of realising his ambition went. In the army of the Aurelian Empire at that time there were two distinct and practically uninterchangeable sorts of

soldier. There were the officers and the privates. The Aurelian private soldier was almost invariably a man of the lowest class — if he was not, that was his misfortune, for he was treated as such on all occasions. Unlike the ordinary common citizen, he was supposed to be unable to read, and such scanty instruction as was given him in the art of war — there was a strong feeling in the army against privates who "knew too much" — was bawled at him by sergeant-instructors of exceptional lung power. Under pressure from these instructors he was compelled to pursue an ideal of soldierly smartness by cutting his hair very short — except a little lock on the brow which he called his "quiff" — and greasing the roots. Popularly he was called a "swaddy" or a "Jimmy"— "our Jimmies" people would say affectionately in times of war and "bloomin' Jimmies" in times of peace — and his brightly conspicuous blue baize uniform was resented in all but the meanest drinking houses and places of public resort. The public was perpetually regaled with stories and anecdotes of the amours of "Jimmy" with the nursegirl and the cook, and that women of this sort were accustomed to pay pence to "Jimmy" for his public company was one of the dearest legends of the great Aurclian public. The practical promotion open to "Jimmy" culminated in such a position as an embezzling mess clerk or as a sergeant-instructor, from which altitude he might bawl even as he had been bawled at, and impose on fresh generations of "Jimmies" that mysterious ideal of soldierly smartness, "the quiff." To become an officer was an accident too rare, too altogether dependent upon the remote opportunity coming to meet the rare gift, to enter into his ambitions. Clearly there was no way through enlistment as a private soldier by which Esau might dream of becoming anything more than raw material in the art of war.

And the officers of the Aurelian army formed an equally inaccessible class. The general public of this great empire, in spite of its inordinate pride in its imperial ascendency, was probably as mean souled as any public has ever been. It would not even educate its own children, but cheerfully permitted them to be trained in the sectarian schools of various proselytising bodies "to keep down the rates," and instead of assiduously seeking through all its available resources for men of exceptional gifts and energy to shape and guide the military

forces upon which its ascendency finally depended, it acquiesced and indeed rejoiced in a system which amounted practically to the conversion of each of the few score undermanned regiments it maintained into a social club. Its officers were paid a mere honorarium, its subalterns received less money than if they had been tenth-rate clerks, and on the other hand the officers' dining arrangements, their contributions to the regimental band and Kursaal, and their hospitalities were conceived in a spirit of magnificent profusion. It was the boast, the glory of the Aurelian army, that an officer — even with a code of honour that condoned unpaid tradesmen's bills— "could not live on his pay," and consequently that its officers were "Gentlemen," which in Aurelia meant richly-living men. The centre of regimental expenditure was the mess, and a regiment was more or less a "crack" regiment in just the proportion that its officers were expensive messers. This of course narrowed the choice of the Aurelian empire in the matter of officers to the limited class of the rich, and even of these the more adventurous and the more intellectual travelled or played the more exciting game of public affairs. For most of these officers service in that army was not regarded as an arduous profession, but as a way of passing the time, and with the natural disinclination of prosperous people to risk brain pressure, it was regarded as a breach of good manners among them to "talk shop." The Aurelians were very proud of the class of officers, at once showy, impressive and inexpensive, that was obtained in this way, and it was believed as firmly that "Jimmy" would not serve under a man who was not a "gentleman" as that he was tipped pennies by servant girls. And certainly only young men with a taste for bright blue baize, and servant girls' pennies, and acting as waiters in a class club, were very urgently tempted — in peaceful times at any rate — to enter the Aurelian army.

Now as Esau's father was a man of small means, Esau was no sort of "gentleman" at all, and the mere whisper of his becoming an officer in the army would have sent every friend and relation he possessed into inextinguishable laughter. They would have yelled with laughter at the idea of the profession of arms being a remunerative calling. It would have seemed to these singular people as funny as apprenticing a boy to a duke. So Esau, when his school

days were over, became a clerk, and afterwards turned the fruits of his father's library to the business of journalism. And the Aurelian army did not visibly suffer in the slightest degree for the loss of that exceptional intelligence and imagination of his. The empire was at peace, and not a mess entertainment but was the brighter for the absence of Esau's no doubt vulgar manners, his not very cheerful face, and the inglorious parsimony his presence would have entailed.

But, as I said, Esau had not one exceptional gift but two, and the second was that queer set of elements in the will that make a man dogged. He could see obstacles, at times he saw them big, but he could not see impossibilities. He was interested in the art of war, he wanted to play that game, — it was not the outward show of soldiering captivated him, not the band and the uniform, not the effect of the mess glories on the feminine mind, nor the tramp, tramp, tramp, all of which elements indeed seemed to him rather boring accessories, but the Real Thing. And because he could not be a professional soldier he did not propose to bury his ambition out of sight and turn to other things. At any rate there was nothing to prevent him studying, thinking about, dreaming about and, if necessary, experimenting about, this great actuality. So the reading of his early manhood was all of campaigns and theories, his holidays led him wherever military exercises were in progress, and for a time, under the immediate command of a wholesale draper and the remote control of a superseded lieutenant-colonel of the regular army, he studied thirst and hunger, bank holiday crowds, and the thinnest sham of sham fighting as a volunteer.

In time Esau came to know quite a lot about war, to feel even that he could imagine what it might be — when the next war came.

At the very first he had come to this matter with a vague suspicion that the Aurelian army was not the supreme expression of human science and forethought. And as his knowledge grew his suspicion expanded into a conviction that, partly by reason of the base parsimony of the Aurelian taxpayer and the dodgy incapacity of the statesmen he favoured, and partly by reason of the aggressive exclusiveness of the Aurelian wealthy, who would rather see a thing not done than have it done by a low-class fellow-countryman, the Aurelian army was about as inefficient and inadequate a fighting

machine as any empire in the world — except perhaps the Chinese — had ever tempted Providence by maintaining. It was undermanned, it was stupidly officered, its economy was controlled by civilian clerks who knew nothing of war and cared less, its drill was fifty years out of date, it was short of horses and devoid of transport, and he became more and more convinced that nothing but a miracle could save it from overwhelming disaster if ever it came into collision with either the army of Saltaria or that of Barbarossa, Aurelia's great rivals in the world. Not, indeed, that either of these armies struck Esau as being exceptionally efficient or incapable of disaster. But they outclassed the Aurelian force quite hopelessly for all that.

Now this realisation distressed Esau very much. Aurelia was a splendid and spacious empire, with a glorious language and literature and a gallant history — even if it lacked gallant taxpayers — and Esau's pride in his race and nationality was (to begin with) an almost religious passion. And here, marring his pride and darkening his future for him, he perceived more and more clearly this flaw upon its glories!

The thing kept him awake at night, and by day it distressed him to the pitch of perpetually wanting to "do something" and never being able to get that something done in a satisfactory manner. He wrote letters — letters to influential military people, who did not answer him or snubbed him pitilessly; he wrote letters to papers that made him seem a conceited and jealous detractor of happily-placed officials; he wrote articles that he found it very hard to get printed or that finally got themselves torn up again in a fit of unpatriotic pique. He tainted the little reputation he had made as a journalist by his attentions to this topic. His chief editor had to stipulate that when Esau wrote articles about this and that he should not "go dragging in the army grievance," and Cockshot, the humorous writer and talker, added, "Hello, Common! What's the Aurelian officer done now?" to his collection of daily jests. To which Esau usually answered, "Nothing."

And when his patriotic ardour began to cool under the discovery of his absolute insignificance in the Aurelian scheme of things, another passion grew to replace it, and that was the exasperation of a

man who believes in his own capacity and finds it universally denied, who finds his life slipping past him with no chance, with no shadow of an opportunity to prove him more than a windy contemner of his superiors.

By three and thirty he was a bitter man. His birthday fell on the great Aurelian bank holiday, when all over the country that volunteer force which was the Aurelian excuse for avoiding conscription did what were called "manoeuvres." By habit or accident he found himself walking in the pine woods near Blundershot, the great Aurelian camp of arms. He had come upon a battalion in the shape of a straggling crowd standing and firing a volley at two hundred yards preparatory to delivering a bayonet charge, and fleeing this horrid vision, he had come upon another massing, apparently to receive shrapnel at seven hundred yards. Finally his luck had brought him out upon the crest of a hill from which the final march past was to be seen dim and far away through dense clouds of dust.

He sat down upon a gate and watched the dark masses shape about and move, and every now and then the warm breeze brought the strains of their numerous excellent (and totally unnecessary) bands to his ears. There were over twenty thousand men away there — infantry — in battalions that invariably fell short of their full strength; there were a squadron or so of cavalry, half a battery, a machine gun section or so, and twenty-nine men with bicycles. The entire force had no means of supply nor transport whatever; it was fed by a Wholesale Grocery Firm that supplied its own carts, and whatever survivors a month of campaigning might leave of it were bound by every arrangement to be bootless and in rags, unless the enemy supplied them in the prisoner's enclosure.

Esau's emotions took form at last in words. He misapplied his condemnation. "You fools!" he said, addressing the collected masses.

A voice answered him, a voice with a faintly foreign accent. "Peace advocate, I presume?"

Esau turned and discovered a grey golf cap, a bronzed nose and a red moustache. The golf cap, lifted, disclosed a pair of keen grey eyes.

"Not a bit of it," said Esau.

"Well?" said the stranger argumentatively.

“They’d be about as much good in a fight,” said Esau, “as a Hyde Park demonstration.”

“Looks pretty stocky stuff, some of it,” said the stranger.

Esau made no direct reply. “There’s a point,” he said, “where courage becomes lunacy. A man who seriously proposes to go into a campaign as a volunteer soldier under the Aurelian War Office is either sick of his life or an idiot.”

“Studied the question?”

“A little,” said Esau.

“What’s wrong?”

He had opened the floodgates. “Everything,” said Esau, and assumed a more comfortable position on his gate. “For example The stranger struck Esau as a person of unparalleled intelligence. He did not simply listen, he punctuated Esau’s remarks with brief intelligent sentences of appreciation. In the first place, explained Esau, this volunteer army has not one tenth of the guns it ought to have, it has no cavalry, it has no transport and no stores; in a country abounding in horses there is no organisation for registering and using the national stock of horseflesh for transport, and it wears unserviceable uniforms. It is indeed a mere costly and inefficient emergency apparatus for filling up infantry battalions in the regular army that ought never to need filling. Its drill is obsolete. “Drill!” cried Esau, “they haven’t begun to drill! All they can do is to march up and down in lines and files and masses, and shoot at targets. Those crowds there couldn’t fight. They’re only organised for processions — and a sort of deadly rioting in savage lands! We haven’t such a thing as a fighting regiment in the world!”

The stranger sought explanations. Esau expanded.

“The first thing a battalion should be taught to do,” he said, “is surely to fight in a battle. There’s three principal things in that section — to learn to advance, to learn to stick tight and tackle an advance, and what’s hardest and most necessary to learn, to move back fighting. As for the last — they haven’t dreamt it’s possible! The others they play at at odd times. But just imagine what a battalion might be that was trained — say as well as a second-rate football club — to play up, and stiffen, and come back and rally! Why not?”

“It isn’t done — anywhere.”

“I know,” said Esau. “But it might be. It’s all the fighting they want to know, you know, now, and if they learn it at the price of marching ragged on parade — what does it matter? And the next thing they want to know — every man of them and the whole lot collectively — is just how to keep their little stomachs in order and their feet clean and tidy over all sorts of ground.” His voice thickened with indignation. “They shy our poor devils of Jimmies,” he cried, “into wildernesses of mud, up icy mountains, into hot deserts; they send them where there is nothing but putrid water to drink and with emergency rations for three days ahead clamouring to be eaten or thrown away — and never till the war comes do they give them a ha’porth of training in judgment or self-restraint! You know the fighting in warfare is nothing to the other thing — the travelling. That’s the principal thing an army does in war, it moves about. But until this army of ours is actually in a war it never moves itself a bit. It squats in barracks while its officers give entertainments and play cricket and polo, and half the men in each skeleton battalion are trotting about doing housework and washing up and all that. But you know if everyone connected with this army was not a cursed fool, it would burn its barracks and — march.”

“Where?”

“Everywhere. All round the Aurelian empire, in carts, on horses or bicycles — bicycles for preference — this army should go, battalions full up, rationed, armed, guns and everything, ready to fight.”

“In bad weather?”

“Always.”

“Rough on it?”

“Not a bit of it! It’s the barracks are hell for soldiers! It’s the dread of barracks keeps decent men out of the army. It’s the barracks that make one man in twelve desert! The suicides at Blundershot are proverbial. They’d learn soon enough how not to let marching be rough on them. They’d see the world. Think of the sort of recruits they’d get for a bicycle tour round the empire with the off chance of fighting like football. Eh? They’d rope in something better than the lout who wants a blazing uniform — because of the girls — and has

to be trained to sight his rifle by command. Just think of it! Beautiful regiments of brown hard seasoned men, with sound feet and sound insides, and all their stuff compactly with them; all of them knowing just what to do and just how to do it. Think of 'em going off white and young south-east, and coming back hard and brown out of the west. Eh? Everlastingly."

"But there must be a reason," began the red-haired man.

"The reason is that the army is a social institution. Where'd the hunt be? Where'd the band be? How about the annual sports? No tennis for 'em! No cricket! Think, above all, of the wives of the titled officers!"

Esau expanded still further. He poured out the bitterness of his soul upon the strange ordering of things that made warfare the privilege of a particular class, the honour of soldiering a perquisite of wealth. He admitted to this stranger the tragedy of his thwarted ambitions with that freedom and intimacy that is sometimes so much more possible with strangers than it is even with our nearest friends.

The red-haired man meditated upon him. "I too was born an Aurelian," he said at last.

"But now?"

"Life was too strictly defined in this country for my father. He did not like that state unto which it had pleased God to call him. And as sticking in that state is one of the fundamental articles of religion at home here, he went to Marantha, where they have a different creed. I was sixteen years old then. And now — I am a Maranthian."

Esau looked at him with a new interest, for Marantha was a curiously situated country, sunken as it were between encircling arms of the Aurelian empire, and threatened — it was openly said in both countries — by that process of expansion that seemed to be the Aurelian destiny.

"But," he said. "Don't you find that mix your sympathies a little?"

The Maranthian shook his head.

"You don't feel yourself an Aurelian?"

"Not a bit of it. Why should I?"

"You can come back to the land where you spent all the impressionable years of your life and feel a foreigner?"

The red-haired man looked at the dusty regiments away there and

smiled up at Esau. “Don’t you?” he asked.

“Not a bit of it!”

“Where do you come in?”

Esau looked interrogation.

“They don’t want you,” said the red-haired man.

“They will,” said Esau, not very confidently.

“Not a bit of it. They’d rather run their Empire on the rocks and scuttle it, than take help from a common man like you. What is it they call you?”

He hesitated.

“Bounder?” suggested Esau.

“Yes. That’s the word, Bounder, Outsider, Poor Man, Not in the Know.”

Esau stared at the distant march past. The red-haired man pursued his advantage. “Your empire,” he said. “Did it bother to educate you?”

“I did my learning in a National school.”

“There you are! The Empire didn’t want you. It handed you over to a society of pious people and let ’em bring you up on charity and cheap teachers, to their own particular brand of piety, eh? It paid the very least it could for you. It only did that out of shame. It treated you as had men treat their bastards. And afterwards?”

Esau took a higher line. “One gives to the Empire; it’s a Duty, not a Charity.”

“They won’t let you give! ‘Keep out of it, you low-class brute!’ That’s the Empire’s compliments to you! ‘Let our officer-boys of

the proper class learn war with your blood and-Take your

gifts to hell!’ Has it ever spoken differently to you?”

Esau straddled his gate defensively. “The day will come -,” he said.

“When you will die and be buried,” said the red-haired man. “Since the Ironsides faded from the world, they’ve run no risks of men of your sort getting their hands on the machines.”

They came upon a pause. “Now in Marantha,” said the red-haired man, as though he spoke aloud, “a good soldier is a good soldier, wherever he was born.”

Esau did not answer.

“Why should you not go to Marantha?” said the red-haired man, suddenly firing point blank.

“What does Marantha want with soldiers?” asked Esau.

“It wants ‘em, anyhow,” said the red-haired man, “and it sees that it gets them.”

“Why?”‘

“To prepare for war is to avoid it.”

“Not always.”

“It is the best.”

“What possible country could Marantha fight?”

The red-haired man shrugged his shoulders.

“I am an Aurelian,” said Esau.

“The country does not admit it,” said the red-haired man.

“It lets me live here.”

“Like any other foreigner. You have no more to do with official Aurelia than with official Barbarossa or official Saltaria. In the language of polite Society — you don’t exist. Now, in Marantha, you can exist just as much as you see proper.”

Esau shook his head, and the red-haired man, being a man of tact, presently passed to other things. And when they parted he saw that they exchanged addresses, and Esau discovered that his interlocutor was Commandant Thomas Smith in that army of Marantha that never dreamt of fighting. And in the night Esau lay awake turning over many spacious issues.

At first the matter of his thoughts was intensely personal, 136 then it became political, and finally that specialist side of him got the upper hand. If ever that war came — if after all Marantha should fight — what possible chances could Marantha hope for?

Suddenly he began to discover chances. In the morning he found his brain had got that problem forward to a very interesting stage. He devoured his breakfast and went out and bought as good a selection of Maps of Marantha and portions of Marantha as Brumosa could afford him, and for some days his income as a journalist was in suspense as he studied this more congenial theme. “If, after all,” he said, “they should try and make an army — on these lines. . . .”

“By Jove!” cried Esau, “if they do that, they will beat us.”

He stood up, smitten to the heart by a vision. “If *I* had the making

of this army!" he cried. "It would be the finest war!"

When he had studied the country he came to the army that Aurelia would have to fight in that country, but Aurelia possessed very little information about the army of Marantha. In the current number of a high-class review, however, Esau found a curious article on Marantha by a gentleman of position whose gist was this, that the Maranthians, who had once been excellent sharpshooters, could now no longer shoot.

"Now I wonder what he and his relatives have been talking about!" said Esau, and presently found himself hunting for further information.

He discovered himself short of ready money — he was not the sort of man who keeps a big current account — so he drew on some reserves, declined some new journalistic work that offered, and set himself to pursue these unsuspected chances for the Maranthians that had dawned upon him in the middle of the night. He meditated upon Commandant Thomas Smith until that gentleman assumed something of a legendary quality in his memory.

He chanced upon a paragraph in an evening paper, a not very conspicuous paragraph, referring to certain Custom House difficulties that had arisen with Marantha.

"It's nothing," said Esau, after thrice reading the paragraph. "It's the sort of little hitch that might happen at any time."

And the next day he had a visit from Commandant Thomas Smith.

Common came through the folding doors between his bed- room and his living room, to discover Commandant Smith standing near the window, pulling his red moustache and affecting to he unaware of the maps, sketches and memoranda that littered the writing table.

"Well?" said Commandant Smith.

"Well?" said Esau.

"Have you thought it over?"

"As a problem — yes, a good deal."

"As a personal problem?"

"No, as a problem in the art of war."

"That follows later. How about yourself?"

"I'm an Aurelian," said Esau, and took down his tobacco and pipe.

Commandant Smith sat down. “Cigarette?” said Esau, and handed tobacco and papers.

Commandant Smith reopened his attack. He developed his theory of the Aurelian Empire with patient elaboration. “What I want to do,” he said, “is to clear away this delusion of yours that you belong to this Empire or that it belongs to you in any sort of way whatever. This Empire is a plutocratic officialdom supported by constituencies of fools. You don’t come in anywhere. You’re a lodger. I don’t suppose you even vote?”

“I didn’t last election,” admitted Esau. “The Liberals put up a Jew and the Conservatives put up a railway barrister — and I don’t like either sort.”

Commandant Smith claimed the point by a gesture.

“All the same,” said Esau, “I’m an Aurelian.”

Commandant Smith restated his case.

“I’m an Aurelian,” said Esau.

“Now look here,” said Smith, and meditated for a moment with his eye on the heap of maps, “you persist in thinking you are an Aurelian. Very well! I will tell you now what everyone in Marantha believes, that your upper-class people here mean to pick a quarrel with us, wholly and solely to annex us, not with any friendly desire for unity, but simply that they may give us the benefit of that same tight system of exclusive class government — supported by a sham of party elections — that keeps everything here, schools, army, trade, in a state of such amazing efficiency. Well — we don’t want those Blessings. We’ve an old rascal as President, but anyhow we’ve got checks on him. On the whole we don’t do so badly. We think the Republican idea is something worth fighting for. And so we are getting ready to fight. I will tell you presently in honest round figures just what we count upon in men, material and support. Of course I shall give you no proofs — I shall just tell you. At present they do not know that we are getting ready to fight, they do not know how we mean to fight, they know nothing of our resources and nothing of our temper. I don’t believe that a single person in authority here has taken the trouble to mug these maps you have there for half an hour. They do not even know whom they will send against us-” He paused.

“Well?” said Esau.

“Well,” said Commandant Smith, “as you are so sure you are an Aurelian, you are one of those who are going to make war upon us. Get ready to do it. Hunt up the whole question, study the game till you know it like your hand. When you know all about it, tell ‘em. Offer to help them anyhow — volunteer. I know for a fact they are going to fight us with forty thousand men-”

Esau turned on him quickly.

“They are, I tell you. You know better. Tell ’em it can’t be done.”

“You can do anything with forty thousand men-”

“Not ‘Jimmies’ in bright blue baize under amateurs who think they are professionals, and short of horses and guns. . . . But that’s beside the mark! I give you leave to play the loyal Aurelian for a year. Get to work, try and set your country to make use of what you know and what you can do. Give yourself — don’t ask for pay—” “Well-”

“And when the year is up, if Aurelia will have nothing of

you-

“I will serve another year,” said Esau Common.

Commandant Smith made a movement of impatience. He turned in his chair and his voice went up to the note of irritation. “Confound it!” he shouted; “don’t you see that all this is not loyalty to Aurelia; its simply a stupid self-devotion to this privileged governing class! Do you think we should object to union, if we might come in fair and equal? Not a bit of it! But we know they don’t mean to bring us in fair and equal. They mean to walk over us and treat us as they treat you. Haw, haw ‘soldiers and gentlemen’ bossing everything — muddling everything, spoiling our railways, spoiling our trade, snubbing all our promise, breaking our hearts — with a few moneylenders here and there to help ‘em. That’s part of their pretty ways. They will insult any good white man who isn’t and doesn’t want to be rich, and they will truckle to any nigger who understands twenty per cent. Your Colonies in Columbia wouldn’t stand it. You wouldn’t stand it, if you hadn’t to do so. You know you’d barricade the streets of Brumosa to-morrow if you got your hands on the guns and were sure the Barbarossa and Saltaria people would stand off while you settled ‘em. Only you’re so thundering loyal and politic.

You hate ‘em, and so do we! We won’t have ’em in Marantha! We will burn our towns first! We’ll make our country a desert before we stand that! Better be shot than stifled. It’s no war against Aurelia-”

“It’s a class war.”

“Yes. And so was the revolt of your Colonies in Columbia a hundred years ago.”

“They don’t think it was now.”

“They’ve jabbered the truth away. But the Columbia war of Independence was just a war against privilege, and so is this. And what a man of your class has to do on the side of privilege

“I’m an Aurelian,” said Esau.

“You’re a fool,” said Smith, and drummed impatient fingers on the table.

“Try that for a year, anyhow,” said Smith.

“I’ll try it for two,” said Esau.

“And then-?”

“Still Aurelian,” said Common.

Smith stood up. “Here is the address of an agent of mine,” he said. “Whenever you want your passage to Marantha he’ll give it you.” He hesitated with a card in his hand. “Even if the war has begun. Of course, this address at any rate is confidential-”

“Of course.” said Esau. “But I sha’n’t come, for all that.”

“My dear man! Your country will be licked into a cocked hat, and then — it will hump its back and say ‘No, thank you,’ to a man of your sort. They’ll make a ninth-class kingdom like Portugal of this Empire before they let your sort in. They’ll put a Jew or a Gilchrist nigger in before they let you in. You’re the uttermost foreigner, you’re a lower middle-class Aurelian. And then you-. Ugh.”

And Smith turned himself about to find his hat. . . .

So soon as Smith had left him, Esau set his brains to work to demonstrate his loyalty to the country that was his own. He had a vision of a great series of articles on the national military inefficiency that he would write, articles of such capable and pitiless demonstration that it would be impossible for any sane person to deny the necessity of reform, and of reform in the direction that he would indicate. Variorum copies of these articles still exist in manuscript. Three even reached type. They were sent to prominent

magazines, they went as letters to politicians. The burthen of them all was that the Army was bad, officers ignorant and untrained, men ignorant and untrained, arms defective, staff defective; ill-reading for Aurelian eyes. It became evident Esau was a Pro-Maranthian. One scheme Esau proposed for the brigading of volunteers was adopted without acknowledgment in a mangled form by the War Office, and a well-connected Colonel patented one of Esau's suggestions for transport vehicles. The rest of his criticism and proposals were as the voice of one whose head is in a sack.

And meanwhile the slow interchange of diplomacy broadened that little issue between Marantha and Aurelia, that little difficulty of the Custom House added to itself other difficulties and still other difficulties, until the Marantha question had clambered from obscure corner paragraphs in the newspapers to the possession of a daily column, and until that column had shifted from position to position until it was the dominant column every day. . . .

[Here the fragment ends. The impossibility of keeping up the tone of careless geniality dawned upon the author.]

THE WILD ASSES OF THE DEVIL

1

There was once an Author who pursued fame and prosperity in a pleasant villa on the south coast of England. He wrote stories of an acceptable nature and rejoiced in a growing public esteem, carefully offending no one and seeking only to please. He had married under circumstances of qualified and tolerable romance a lady who wrote occasional but otherwise regular verse, he was the father of a little daughter, whose reported sayings added much to his popularity, and some of the very best people in the land asked him to dinner. He was a deputy-lieutenant and a friend oft he Prime Minister, a literary knighthood was no remote possibility for him, and even the Nobel Prize, given a sufficient longevity, was not altogether beyond his hopes. And this amount of prosperity had not betrayed him into any un-English pride. He remembered that manliness and simplicity which are expected from authors. He smoked pipes and not the excellent cigars he could have afforded. He kept his hair cut and never posed. He did not hold himself aloof from people of the inferior and less successful classes. He habitually travelled third class in order to study the characters he put into his delightful novels; he went for long walks and sat in inns, accosting people; he drew out his gardener. And though he worked steadily, he did not give up the care of his body, which threatened a certain plumpness and what is more to the point, a localized plumpness, not generally spread over the system but exaggerating the anterior equator. This expansion was his only care. He thought about fitness and played tennis, and every day, wet or fine, he went for at least an hour's walk. . . .

Yet this man, so representative of Edwardian literature — for it is in the reign of good King Edward the story begins — in spite of his enviable achievements and prospects, was doomed to the most exhausting and dubious adventures before his life came to its unhonoured end. . . .

Because I have not told you everything about him. Some- times — in the morning sometimes — he would he irritable and have

quarrels with his shaving things, and there were extraordinary moods when it would seem to him that living quite beautifully in a pleasant villa and being well-off and famous, and writing books that were always good-humoured and grammatical and a little distinguished in an inoffensive way, was about as boring and intolerable a life as any creature with a soul to be damned could possibly pursue. Which shows only that God in putting him together had not forgotten that viscus the liver which is usual on such occasions. . . .

The winter at the seaside is less agreeable and more bracing than the summer, and there were days when this Author had almost to force himself through the wholesome, necessary routines of his life, when the south-west wind savaged his villa and roared in the chimneys and slapped its windows with gustsful of rain and promised to wet that Author thoroughly and exasperatingly down his neck and round his wrists and ankles directly he put his nose outside his door. And the grey waves he saw from his window came rolling inshore under the hurrying grey rain-bursts, line after line, to smash along the undercliff into vast, feathering fountains of foam and sud and send a salt-tasting spin-drift into his eyes. But manfully he would put on his puttees and his waterproof cape and his biggest brierwood pipe, and out he would go into the whurry-balloo of it all, knowing that so he would be all the brighter for his nice story-writing after tea.

On such a day he went out. He went out very resolutely along the seaside gardens of gravel and tamarisk and privet, resolved to oblige himself to go right past the harbour and up to the top of the east cliff before ever he turned his face back to the comforts of fire and wife and tea and buttered toast. . . .

And somewhere, perhaps half a mile away from home, he became aware of a queer character trying to keep abreast of him.

His impression was of a very miserable black man in the greasy, blue-black garments of a stoker, a lascar probably from a steamship in the harbour, and going with a sort of lame hobble.

As he passed this individual the Author had a transitory thought of how much Authors don't know in the world, how much, for instance, this shivering, cringing body might be hiding within itself, of inestimable value as "local colour" if only one could get hold of it

for “putting into” one’s large acceptable novels. Why doesn’t one sometimes tap these sources? Kipling, for example, used to do so, with most successful results. . . . And then the Author became aware that this enigma was hurrying to overtake him. He slackened his pace. . . .

The creature wasn’t asking for a light; it was begging for a box of matches. And what was odd, in quite good English.

The Author surveyed the beggar and slapped his pockets. Never had he seen so miserable a face. It was by no means a prepossessing face, with its aquiline nose, its sloping brows, its dark, deep, bloodshot eyes much too close together, its V-shaped, dishonest mouth and drenched chin-tuft. And yet it was attractively animal and pitiful. The idea flashed suddenly into the Author’s head: “Why not, instead of going on, thinking emptily, through this beastly weather — why not take this man back home now, to the warm, dry study, and give him a hot drink and something to smoke, and draw him out?”

Get something technical and first-hand that would rather score off Kipling.

“It’s damnably cold!” he shouted, in a sort of hearty, forecastle voice.

“It’s worse than that,” said the strange stoker.

“It’s a hell of a day!” said the Author, more forcible than ever.

“Don’t remind me of hell,” said the stoker, in a voice of inappeasable regret.

The Author slapped his pockets again. “You’ve got an infernal cold. Look here, my man — confound it! would you like a hot grog? . . .”

2

The scene shifts to the Author’s study — a blazing coal fire, the stoker sitting dripping and steaming before it, with his feet inside the fender, while the Author fusses about the room, directing the preparation of hot drinks. The Author is acutely aware not only of the stoker but of himself. The stoker has probably never been in the home of an Author before; he is probably awestricken at the array of

books, at the comfort, convenience, and efficiency of the home, at the pleasant personality entertaining him. . . . Meanwhile the Author does not forget that the stoker is material, is "copy," is being watched, observed. So he poses and watches, until presently he forgets to pose in his astonishment at the thing he is observing. Because this stoker is rummier than a stoker ought to be —

He does not simply accept a hot drink; he informs his host just how hot the drink must be to satisfy him.

"Isn't there something you could put in it — something called red pepper? I've tasted that once or twice. It's good. If you could put in a bit of red pepper."

"If you can stand that sort of thing?"

"And if there isn't much water, can't you set light to the stuff. Or let me drink it boiling, out of a pannikin or something? Pepper and all."

Wonderful fellows, these stokers! The Author went to the bell and asked for red pepper.

And then as he came back to the fire he saw something that he instantly dismissed as an optical illusion, as a mirage effect of the clouds of steam his guest was disengaging. The stoker was sitting, all crouched up, as close over the fire as he could contrive; and he was holding his black hands, not to the fire but in the fire, holding them pressed flat against two red, glowing masses of coal. . . . He glanced over his shoulder at the Author with a guilty start, and then instantly the Author perceived that the hands were five or six inches away from the coal.

Then came smoking. The Author produced one of his big cigars — for although a conscientious pipe-smoker himself he gave people cigars; and then, again struck by something odd, he went off into a corner of the room where a little oval mirror gave him a means of watching the stoker undetected. And this is what he saw.

He saw the stoker, after a furtive glance at him, deliberately turn the cigar round, place the lighted end in his mouth, inhale strongly, and blow a torrent of sparks and smoke out of his nose. His firelit face as he did this expressed a diabolical relief. Then very hastily he reversed the cigar again, and turned round to look at the Author. The Author turned slowly towards him.

“You like that cigar?” he asked, after one of those mutual pauses that break down a pretence.

“It’s admirable.”

“Why do you smoke it the other way round?”

The stoker perceived he was caught. “It’s a stokehole trick,” he said. “Do you mind if I do it? I didn’t think you saw.” “Pray smoke just as you like,” said the Author, and advanced to watch the operation.

It was exactly like the fire-eater at the village fair. The man stuck the burning cigar into his mouth and blew sparks out of his nostrils. “Ah!” he said, with a note of genuine satisfaction. And then, with the cigar still burning in the corner of his mouth, he turned to the fire and began to rearrange the burning coals with his hands so as to pile up a great glowing mass. He picked up flaming and white-hot lumps as one might pick up lumps of sugar. The Author watched him, dumbfounded.

“I say!” he cried. “You stokers get a bit tough.”

The stoker dropped the glowing piece of coal in his hand. “I forgot,” he said, and sat back a little.

“Isn’t that a bit — extra?” asked the Author, regarding him. “Isn’t that some sort of trick?”

“We get so tough down there,” said the stoker, and paused discreetly as the servant came in with the red pepper.

“Now you can drink,” said the Author, and set himself to mix a drink of a pungency that he would have considered murderous ten minutes before. When he had done, the stoker reached over and added more red pepper.

“I don’t quite see how it is your hand doesn’t burn,” said the Author as the stoker drank. The stoker shook his head over the uptilted glass.

“Incombustible,” he said, putting it down. “Could I have just a tiny drop more? Just brandy and pepper, if you don’t mind. Set alight. I don’t care for water except when it’s superheated steam.”

And as the Author poured out another stiff glass of this incandescent brew, the stoker put up his hand and scratched the matted black hair over his temple. Then instantly he desisted and sat looking wickedly at the Author, while the Author stared at him

aghast. For at the corner of his square, high, narrow forehead, revealed for an instant by the thrusting back of the hair, a curious stumpy excrescence had been visible; and the top of his ear — he had a pointed top to his ear!

"A-a-a-a-h!" said the Author, with dilated eyes.

"A-a-a-a-h!" said the stoker, in hopeless distress.

"But you aren't-!"

"I know — I know I'm not. I know. . . . I'm a devil. A poor, lost, homeless devil."

And suddenly, with a gesture of indescribable despair, the apparent stoker buried his face in his hands and burst into tears.

"Only man who's ever been decently kind to me," he sobbed. "And now — you'll chuck me out again into the beastly wet and cold. . . . Beautiful fire. . . . Nice drink. . . . Almost homelike. . . . Just to torment me. . . . Boo-ooh!"

And let it be recorded to the credit of our little Author, that he did overcome his momentary horror, that he did go quickly round the table, and that he patted that dirty stoker's shoulder.

"There!" he said. "There! Don't mind my rudeness. Have another nice drink. Have a hell of a drink. I won't turn you out if you're unhappy — on a day like this. Have just a mouthful of pepper, man, and pull yourself together."

And suddenly the poor devil caught hold of his arm. "Nobody good to me," he sobbed. "Nobody good to me." And his tears ran down over the Author's plump little hand — scalding tears.

3

All really wonderful things happen rather suddenly and without any great emphasis upon their wonderfulness, and this was no exception to the general rule. This Author went on comforting his devil as though this was nothing more than a chance encounter with an unhappy child, and the devil let his grief and discomfort have vent in a manner that seemed at the time as natural as anything could be. He was clearly a devil of feeble character and uncertain purpose, much broken down by harshness and cruelty, and it throws a curious light upon the general state of misconception with regard to matters

diabolical that it came as a quite pitiful discovery to our Author that a devil could be unhappy and heart-broken. For a long time his most earnest and persistent questioning could gather nothing except that his guest was an exile from a land of great warmth and considerable entertainment, and it was only after considerable further applications of brandy and pepper that the sobbing confidences of the poor creature grew into the form of a coherent and understandable narrative.

And then it became apparent that this person was one of the very lowest types of infernal denizen, and that his role in the dark realms of Dis had been that of watcher and minder of a herd of sinister beings hitherto unknown to our Author, the Devil's Wild Asses, which pastured in a stretch of meadows near the Styx. They were, he gathered, unruly, dangerous, and enterprising beasts, amenable only to a certain formula of expletives, which instantly reduced them to obedience. These expletives the stoker-devil would not repeat; to do so except when actually addressing one of the Wild Asses would, he explained, involve torments of the most terrible description. The bare thought of them gave him a shivering fit. But he gave the Author to understand that to crack these curses as one drove the Wild Asses to and from their grazing on the Elysian fields was a by no means disagreeable amusement. The ass-herds would try who could crack the loudest until the welkin rang.

And speaking of these things, the poor creature gave a picture of diabolical life that impressed the Author as by no means unpleasant for any one with a suitable constitution. It was like the Idylls of Theocritus done in fire; the devils drove their charges along burning lanes and sat gossiping in hedges of flames, rejoicing in the warm dry breezes (which it seems are rendered peculiarly bracing by the faint flavour of brimstone in the air), and watching the harpies and furies and witches circling in the perpetual afterglow of that inferior sky. And ever and again there would be holidays, and one would take one's lunch and wander over the sulphur craters picking flowers of sulphur or fishing for the souls of usurers and publishers and house-agents and land-agents in the lakes of boiling pitch. It was good sport, for the usurers and publishers and house-agents and land-agents were always eager to be caught; they crowded round the

hooks and fought violently for the bait, and protested vehemently and entertainingly against the Rules and Regulations that compelled their instant return to the lake of fire.

And sometimes when he was on holiday this particular devil would go through the saltpetre dunes, where the witches' brooms grow and the blasted heath is in flower, to the landing-place of the ferry whence the Great Road runs through the shops and banks of the Via Dolorosa to the New Judgement Hall, and watch the crowds of damned arriving by the steam ferry-boats of the Consolidated Charon Company. This steamboat-gazing seems about as popular down there as it is at Folkestone. Almost every day notable people arrive, and, as the devils are very well informed about terrestrial affairs — for of course all the earthly newspapers go straight to hell — whatever else could one expect? — they get ovations of an almost under- graduate intensity. At times you can hear their cheering or booing, as the case may be, right away on the pastures where the Wild Asses feed. And that had been this particular devil's undoing.

He had always been interested in the career of the Rt. Hon. W.E. Gladstone. . . .

He was minding the Wild Asses. He knew the risks. He knew the penalties. But when he heard the vast uproar, when he heard the eager voices in the lane of fire saying, "It's Gladstone at last!" when he saw how quietly and unsuspiciously the Wild Asses cropped their pasture, the temptation was too much. He slipped away. He saw the great Englishman landed after a slight struggle. He joined in the outcry of "Speech! Speech!" He heard the first delicious promise of a Home Rule movement which should break the last feeble links of Celestial Control. . . .

And meanwhile the Wild Asses escaped — according to the rules and the prophecies. . . .

4

The little Author sat and listened to this tale of a wonder that never for a moment struck him as incredible. And outside his rain-lashed window the strung-out fishing smacks pitched and rolled on their way home to Folkestone harbour. . . .

The Wild Asses escaped.

They got away to the world. And his superior officers took the poor herdsman and tried him and bullied him and passed this judgement upon him: that he must go to the earth and find the Wild Asses, and say to them that certain string of oaths that otherwise must never be repeated, and so control them and bring them back to hell. That — or else one pinch of salt on their tails. It did not matter which. One by one he must bring them back, driving them by spell and curse to the cattle-boat of the ferry. And until he had caught and brought them all back he might never return again to the warmth and comfort of his accustomed life. That was his sentence and punishment. And they put him into a shrapnel shell and fired him out among the stars, and when he had a little recovered he pulled himself together and made his way to the world.

But he never found his Wild Asses and after a little time he gave up trying.

He gave up trying because the Wild Asses, once they had got out of control, developed the most amazing gifts. They could, for instance, disguise themselves with any sort of human shape, and the only way in which they differed then from a normal human being was — according to the printed paper of instructions that had been given to their custodian when he was fired out — that "their general conduct remains that of a Wild Ass of the Devil."

"And what interpretation can we put upon that?" he asked the listening Author.

And there was one night in the year — Walpurgis Night — when the Wild Asses became visibly great black wild asses and kicked up their hind legs and brayed. They had to. "But then, of course," said the devil, "they would take care to shut themselves up somewhere when they felt that coming on."

Like most weak characters, the stoker devil was intensely egotistical. He was anxious to dwell upon his own miseries and discomforts and difficulties and the general injustice of his treatment, and he was careless and casually indicative about the peculiarities of the Wild Asses, the matter which most excited and interested the Author. He bored on with his doleful story, and the Author had to interrupt with questions again and again in order to get any clear idea

of the situation.

The devil's main excuse for his nervelessness was his profound ignorance of human nature. "So far as I can see," he said, "they might all be Wild Asses. I tried it once-"

"Tried what?"

"The formula. You know."

"Yes?"

"On a man named Sir Edward Carson."

"Well?"

"Ugh!" said the devil.

"Punishment?"

"Don't speak of it. He was just a professional lawyer-politician who had lost his sense of values. . . . How was I to know? . . . But our people certainly know how to hurt. . . ."

After that it would seem this poor devil desisted absolutely from any attempt to recover his lost charges. He just tried to live for the moment and make his earthly existence as tolerable as possible. It was clear he hated the world. He found it cold, wet, draughty. ... "I can't understand why everybody insists upon living outside of it," he said. "If you went inside — —"

He sought warmth and dryness. For a time he found a kind of contentment in charge of the upcast furnace of a mine, and then he was superseded by an electric-fan. While in this position he read a vivid account of the intense heat in the Red Sea, and he was struck by the idea that if he could get a job as stoker upon an Indian liner he might snatch some days of real happiness during that portion of the voyage. For some time his natural ineptitude prevented his realizing this project, but at last, after some bitter experiences of homelessness during a London December, he had been able to ship on an Indiaward boat — only to get stranded in Folkestone in consequence of a propeller breakdown. And so here he was!

He paused.

"But about these Wild Asses?" said the Author.

The mournful, dark eyes looked at him hopelessly.

"Mightn't they do a lot of mischief?" asked the Author.

"They'll do no end of mischief," said the despondent devil.

"Ultimately you'll catch it for that?"

“Ugh!” said the stoker, trying not to think of it.

5

Now the spirit of romantic adventure slumbers in the most unexpected places, and I have already told you of our plump Author’s discontents. He had been like a smouldering bomb for some years. Now, he burst out. He suddenly became excited, energetic, stimulating, uplifting.

He stood over the drooping devil.

“But my dear chap!” he said. “You must pull yourself together. You must do better than this. These confounded brutes may be doing all sorts of mischief. While you — shirk”

And so on. Real ginger.

“If I had some one to go with me. Some one who knew his way about.”

The Author took whisky in the excitement of the moment. He began to move very rapidly about his room and make short, sharp gestures. You know how this sort of emotion wells up at times. “We must work from some central place,” said the Author. “To begin with, London perhaps.”

It was not two hours later that they started, this Author and this devil he had taken to himself, upon a mission. They went out in overcoats and warm underclothing — the Author gave the devil a thorough outfit, a double lot of Jaeger’s extra thick — and they were resolved to find the Wild Asses of the Devil and send them back to hell, or at least the Author was, in the shortest possible time. In the picture you will sec him with a field-glass slung under his arm, the better to watch suspected cases; in his pocket, wrapped in oiled paper, is a lot of salt to use if by chance he finds a Wild Ass when the devil and his string of oaths is not at hand. So he started. And when he had caught and done for the Wild Asses, then the Author supposed that he would come back to his nice little villa and his nice little wife, and to his little daughter who said the amusing things, and to his popularity, his large gilt-edged popularity, and — except for an added prestige — be just exactly the man he had always been. Little knowing that whosoever takes unto himself a devil and goes out

upon a quest, goes out upon a quest from which
there is no returning-
Nevermore.

ANSWER TO PRAYER

The Archbishop was perplexed by his own state of mind. Maybe the shadow of age was falling upon him, he thought, maybe he had been overworking, maybe the situation had been too complex for him and he was feeling the reality of a failure without seeing it plainly as a definable fact. But his nerve, which had never failed him hitherto, was failing him now. In small things as in important matters he no longer showed the quick decisiveness that had hitherto been the envy of his fellow ecclesiastics and the admiration of his friends. He doubted now before he went upstairs or downstairs, with a curious feeling that he might find something unexpected on the landing. He hesitated before he rang a bell, with a vague uncertainty of who or what might appear. Before he took up the letters his secretary had opened for him he had a faint twinge of apprehension.

Had he after all done something wrong or acted in a mistaken spirit?

People who had always been nice to him showed a certain coolness, people from whom he would have least expected it. His secretaries, he knew, were keeping back "open letters" and grossly abusive comments. The reassurances and encouragements that flowed in to him were anything but reassuring, because their volume and their tone reflected what was hidden from him on the other side. Had he, at the end of his long, tortuous and hitherto quite dignified career, made a howler?

There was no one on earth to whom he could confide his trouble. He had always been a man who kept his own counsel. But now, if only he could find understanding, sympathy, endorsement! If he could really put things as he saw them, if he could simplify the whole confused affair down to essentials and make his stand plain and clear.

Prayer?

If anyone else had come to him in this sort of quandary, he would have told him at once to pray. If it was a woman he would have patted the shoulder gently, as an elderly man may do, and he would have said very softly in that rich kind voice of his, "Try Prayer, my dear. Try Prayer."

Physician heal thyself. Why not try prayer?

He stood hesitatingly between his apartments and his little private oratory. He stood in what was his habitual children's-service attitude with his hands together in front of him, his head a little on one side and something faintly bland and whimsical about him. It came to him that he himself had not made a personal and particular appeal to God for many years. It had seemed unnecessary. It had indeed been unnecessary. He had of course said his prayers with the utmost regularity, not only in the presence of others, but, being essentially an honest man, even when he was alone. He had never cheated about prayer. He had felt it was a purifying and beneficial process, no more to be missed than cleaning his teeth, but his sense of a definite hearer, listening at the other end of the telephone, so to speak, behind the veil, had always been a faint one. The reception away there was in the Absolute, in Eternity, beyond the stars. Which indeed left the church conveniently free to take an unembarrassed course of action. . . .

But in this particular tangle, the Archbishop wanted something more definite. If for once, he did not trouble about style and manner. . . .

If he put the case simply, quite simply, just as he saw it, and remained very still on his knees, wouldn't he presently find this neuralgic fretting of his mind abating, and that assurance, that clear self-assurance that had hitherto been his strength, returning to him? He must not be in the least oily — they had actually been calling him oily — he must be perfectly direct and simple and fearless. He must pray straightforwardly to the silence as one mind to another.

It was a little like the practice of some Dissenters and Quakers, but maybe it would be none the less effective on that account.

Yes, he would pray.

Slowly he sank to his knees and put his hands together. He was touched by a sort of childish trustfulness in his own attitude. "Oh God," he began, and paused.

He paused, and a sense of awful imminence, a monstrous awe, gripped him. And then he heard a voice.

It was not a harsh voice, but it was a clear strong voice. There was nothing about it still or small. It was neither friendly nor hostile; it

was brisk.

“Yes,” said the voice. “What is it?”

They found His Grace in the morning. He had slipped off the steps on which he had been kneeling and lay, sprawling on the crimson carpet. Plainly his death had been instantaneous.

But instead of the serenity, the almost fatuous serenity, that was his habitual expression, his countenance, by some strange freak of nature, displayed an extremity of terror and dismay. l9

THE NEW FAUST

A FILM STORY

A pleasant dining-room in Park Square, London. The room has an air of refinement and wealth. Two gentlemen are seated at dinner, while an admirable butler, Mutimer, waits unobtrusively. One, the host, Mr. Elvesham, is an old gentleman of seventy-one. His hair is grey and thin and his hand is tremulous. He has a hard, discontented, wrinkled face and a characteristic way of lifting his chin when he speaks. Although he is proud of his fine hands they are veined and shrivelled, and he lifts his left (adorned by a diamond ring) in an elegant artificial gesture, that has now become second nature.

The age of his visitor is less certain. He is a dark, aquiline-faced gentleman, with a small moustache, a Disraeli tuft and thick, slightly oblique eyebrows. His straight hair, brushed back over the pointed ears, looks as if it were dyed black. When presently he gets up and moves about, he is a little lame, and his peculiar boots suggest that he may even be slightly club-footed.

Elvesham speaks: "I can't tell you, Dr. McPhister, what a pleasure it is to catch you for dinner. You flit to and fro and one never knows where you are."

McPhister: "The pleasure is all mine. It is always interesting to meet you and see how things are with you. As for me, I'm always — as the proverb has it — going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it. We — we psychiatrists have to keep moving. How is it with you since we last met?"

Elvesham: "None the younger, Dr. McPhister."

McPhister: "Time, like an ever flowing stream, bears all its sons away. They fly forgotten, as a dream flies at the opening day! How true, how unintentionally true, these hymns can be! . . . And what a rich store of memories vanishes when a man dies! It has always seemed a pity to me that it was impossible to carry on those memories — beyond bodily decay. I've worried about it no end. It's been one of my many little quarrels with the Order of Creation. Because, you know, Man is the rebel of child creation. Such a waste!

Such a waste! But now, you know, now it is no longer impossible."
Elvesham: "What do you say? No longer impossible to carry on memories — after death? To die and still remember?'

McPhister: "Practically that."

Elvesham: "But how?"

McPhister, slowly and impressively: "I was in a private hospital in Belgrade only a few days ago assisting at some of the most remarkable experiments in the world — a transfer of memories from brain to brain."

Elvesham: "A transfer of memories. I don't understand."

McPhister: "What an excellent savoury this is! Your cook gets better every time I come here. You know, he isn't afraid to make the stuff hot."

Elvesham: "But this transfer of memories from brain to brain! That opens the most extraordinary possibilities."

McPhister: "I thought you would see that."

Elvesham: "But why not the whole thing — the whole memory system?"

McPhister: "Why not?"

Elvesham: "But a man-What is a man? What is he but a
system of memories?"

McPhister sips his wine and speaks with disingenuous deliberation: "That at any rate is the Behaviourist doctrine."

Elvesham: "And so — if I could shift my memories out of this rather worn and tired old brain of mine into another — younger and fresher — it is *I* who would shift. . . ."

McPhister: "You are quick on the uptake. That is exactly what is possible now. An old man can begin afresh in a younger brain."

Elvesham: "Nonsense!"

McPhister: "Fact."

Elvesham: "Imagine what it means!"

McPhister: "Can you imagine it?

Elvesham: "I think I can — in a dazzled sort of way."

McPhister: "You'd find yourself in a young body. . . ."

Elvesham: "With all my knowledge and experience."

McPhister: "With all your knowledge and experience. That is the thing that appeals to my imagination. And when you have worn out

your second body — then again, you could begin afresh. . . .”

Elvesham: “Why do you bring this to me? Why not do it for yourself?”

McPhister: “Circumstances — too complex to explain.” Elvesham: “But what sort of circumstances? I know so little about you — although we have this habit of meeting.”

McPhister: “My position in the world — is a peculiar one. ... I have always had a great pity and sympathy for Man — for my fellow men I should say. But the point is that I could not conduct this experiment upon myself.”

Elvesham: “But you could upon me?”

McPhister: “Yes. You see — someone who knows about it must stand by.”

They are interrupted by the butler, who clears the savoury and brings cigarettes and coffee. A clock on the mantel strikes nine. Elvesham is excited by this new idea and does not care to talk of what is on his mind in front of the butler.

While the conversation goes on Elvesham’s memories go back, first to his childhood, and he pictures a little fellow in a plaid frock running down a garden path in pursuit of a bird or a butterfly. From boyhood he recalls a youngster in knickerbockers playing with bricks and toys on a nursery floor. School, and he remembers writing at a well-worn schoolroom desk and then in shorts going out, not too confidently, into the field with a football team. College, and he sits deep in an armchair in a Cambridge study and reads. . . .

McPhister’s voice breaks into his thoughts: “Then you began to think seriously of what you were going to do with your life — and at the same time you began to dream of romance — and women.”

Elvesham: “Yes — it all came with a rush. As it does to all young men.”

There are memories of the young man in the National Gallery pausing to look at Leonardo’s Our Lady of the Rocks, at the Velasquez Venus, at a Greuze. Then a couple of girls pass and he turns to look at them. They glance back at him artlessly. One is very pretty and as they go out of the room he hesitates and follows rather vaguely. Then he talks with another girl in an orchard. He dares to kiss a third — in the conservatory outside a ball-room. Then he is

being a masher in the Empire Promenade and he is accosted and talks to a prostitute.

Elvesham: “It was all very swift. I wanted pleasure, but also I wanted success. I was ambitious. I was a good business organiser.” (He is seen in a business office with two elder men). “I took up one thing after another as opportunity came rushing upon me. I never seemed to concentrate. I fell in love.” McPhister: “Several times.”

Elvesham: “Yes, several times. But there was one girl. . . .”

McPhister: “Lovelier than anybody.”

Elvesham: “Lovelier than anybody. How did you know?”

McPhister laughs: “She always is.”

Elvesham remembers cutting two names on the bark of a tree. “Mary Farlake. Tom Elvesham.” He shows the names to Mary Farlake, who is in 1893 costume. He sees her sitting in the fork of a tree while they kiss. After kissing they separate and look with an intent scrutiny at each other. Then they are in a very late Victorian room together. He walks up and down, explains something defensively and she does not like his explanation.

Elvesham: “Yes — yes — for me she was lovelier than anyone. She was more real to me. Closer. She mattered more to me than anything else. She became engaged to me — and then we fell out. She criticised me. She hesitated to give herself to me. We quarrelled, she never seemed sure of me. She didn’t like some of my business deals. She didn’t understand. It’s a queer thing — she was all the world to me and yet I resented her importance.”

McPhister: “Not queer at all. That’s the common way. There never was love of woman without doubt, jealousy and a struggle since the world began.”

Elvesham: “Sometimes I thought I was all the world to her. And yet we parted. The things we parted about seem trivial now. In comparison with parting. Perhaps I was hard in business.”

McPhister: “One must be hard in business.”

Elvesham: “But was that her affair?”

McPhister: “Exactly. Was it her affair? Love is a usurpation — always.”

Elvesham: “There’s no accounting for these things. She married a small landowner, and went to live at Barchesham. I happened to take

the castle there only a year ago, but I found that she had been dead some years. She thought I did not love her enough and yet, come to think of it, she has influenced all my career. I went on working and growing rich and influential very largely on account of her."

McPhister: "Just to show her."

Elvesham: "Just to show her."

McPhister: "There have been other women?"

Elvesham: "Any amount of them. But none of them mattered in quite that way. For a time I was frantic to console myself. A rich man need never want for women. They hang about me still. But I never married any of them. As you probably know I got and developed a great concession in Rumania and another in Sweden. Rushing about — seeing people — fixing things. The years slipped by unnoticed. Lord! It's all gone by like a dream."

The two men are now standing up from the table. McPhister leans on the mantelshelf and Elvesham, preoccupied by his memories, stands brooding over the debris of the dinner-table. McPhister: "And here you are! You have lived life round. And you are dissatisfied. You don't like the way things are coming to an end. You were crushed through it. I agree with you. The Order of Creation gives too brief a run to men. I am no friend of the Order of Creation. I am for circumventing His limitations. And now? Now perhaps we have a chance of doing something better. Suppose I were to help you to take fifty years more of vitality. And after that yet another fifty years. And then still more. Suppose I did manage to make you a sort of unending man. What would you do with those added years, Elvesham?"

Elvesham: "Do with them?" He looks up. "With fifty years more of youth and energy, without fatigue, without this constant sense of limited time that torments me, I could eat the world."

McPhister: "I'm not so sure of that. I've watched men live. I've watched men die. But I've never seen them start anything really new. You are certain you wouldn't just go round the squirrel's cage again?"

Elvesham: "I've learnt my lesson."

McPhister: "And what would you do?"

Elvesham: "Something bolder, finer, more decisive."

McPhister: "You'd go on? Unscrupulous and assured? Yes —

yes. What would you do?”

Elvesham: “Take power.”

McPhister: “And how? You are to be a young man again — with all your old memories — and your present wealth. I cannot imagine what a man, any man, would do in such a case. How would you take power?”

Elvesham: “The world is full of unrest and discontent. I should begin in America or Western Europe. I should buy one or two important newspapers. Perhaps more. I should start a youth movement, with myself” — a youth with a mature brain — as leader.”

McPhister: “Go on.”

Elvesham: “I should become a young Caesar. The hope of youth everywhere.”

McPhister: “Yes?”

Elvesham: “Before they knew what they were doing they would have put Power into my hands. See what lesser men have done.”

McPhister: “And then?”

Elvesham: “Discipline for the world. Mastery!”

McPhister: “And when your time was drawing near and you were growing old again?”

Elvesham: “I should make a religion of it. Like the Dalai Lama in Tibet, my successor would be chosen secretly. And in him I should live again, the Phoenix-Master.”

McPhister: “You warm my heart. This is what Napoleon might have wished to be! A serialised Napoleon. Each instalment bigger than the last. Heaven Himself at last will be afraid of you. And if I were to win this endless life for you, you promise me to do all that?”

Elvesham: “I feel I could show you great things.”

McPhister: “No loitering with women by the way. No love, no weakness.”

Elvesham: “Who have I got to love now? All that is past. That goes and never returns.”

McPhister: “Are you sure?”

Elvesham: “Sure.”

McPhister: “You promise me you will tower up to Heaven with a heart of steel?”

Elvesham: “I could go on and tower up to Heaven now, if I had not to grow old and die. I have only begun to realise my possibilities.” He passes his hand over his brow. “What are we talking about? You fill me with fantastic thoughts. You intoxicate me with this possibility. Are you a hypnotist?”

McPhister: “An experimentalist, Mr. Elvesham. Curiosity my master passion. I wanted to see how you would react to this suggestion. You understand that you would have to make an exchange. You have that clear? That’s essential. No memory, no mind can exist without a brain and a body, nowadays. You must get someone to swap brains with you. The other person — the owner of the young brain — that set of memories would have to take your place. There’s your brain ripe and ready to transfer. But that other might not be so eager to leap into that sound and well-preserved, but — may I say it? — elderly fabric.”

Elvesham: “That’s the catch. Consent.”

McPhister: “One catch. Not the only one.”

Elvesham: “But how can we find that young man?”

McPhister: “Difficult. But not impossible. In a world of money and urgent needs — Oh! I know possible types.”

Elvesham: “Tell me. Would it be necessary to explain exactly to the young man we choose what was to be done? I mean, couldn’t we represent the whole thing as a partial transfer? A little dangerous perhaps but no more than dangerous. . . .”

McPhister: “I’ve thought of that. But I wanted you to think of it first. You mean we might change by a trick. That might be done. Think of all that there is at stake.”

Elvesham: “At one moment you make this thing seem possible, almost practicable, and then it recedes beyond hoping.” He is suddenly despondent. “And then I know we shall never find that young man. But it is all a preposterous dream. We’ve been talking nonsense. What nonsense we have been talking!”

McPhister seems to be thinking hard. “Now where have I seen someone? Quite recently. . . . Ambitious — impatient.”

On a beautiful river reach in the South of England, under a high moon, a rowing boat is being paddled slowly up-stream. In the distance are lawns, trees and a large white mansion. Two lovers sit

side by side in the steering seat. The oars are shipped and the man keeps the boat moving by an occasional stroke of the boat hook-paddle he holds in his hand. He is a handsome, intelligent-looking young man of twenty-seven. His name is Arthur Reston. The girl, Marguerite Swift, is twenty-one, very lovely, broad-browed, broad-faced, grave and sweet. They talk softly to one another:

Arthur: "How sweet you look in the moonlight! I've been in love with you, darling, since you were fourteen, and all that time you have been growing lovelier and lovelier. All too good for me you were then, and all too gooder you've got."

Marguerite: "Seven years. A lovely dream. You know — I knew you loved me years before you said a word."

Arthur: "I lived for a year or so — on the chance of just seeing you look at me. You know you would never look at me — 162 openly. Yon had a sort of pussycat, downcast way with you, so that one was never quite sure. . . ."

Marguerite: "Well, I chose science for my degree because of you. I used to watch you. When I was still at school the girls suspected something because I was always so eager to hear anything of you."

Arthur: "And now what are we going to do?"

Marguerite is silent for a moment and ripples her hand in the water: "I want to go on working and studying with you."

Arthur: "And that's all?

Marguerite's hand becomes still. She answers after another pause. "No."

Arthur: "Of course not. We want to be lovers out and out. We want to go out into the world and live a better life than this humdrum college routine. I've been finding out Barchesham College for some time. Darling, I'm discontented. On this lovely night — on your birthday."

Marguerite looks at him with her steady eyes: "Who can you grumble to except to me? I know. You've been fretting. I know you so well, dear. I've wanted you to tell me."

Arthur: "These little colleges, these little provincial colleges are impostures. I want to get away — and take you away."

Marguerite: "Go on."

Arthur: "They're not large enough. There's no mental vitality

here. The place pretends to be a home of learning. Really it's a teaching sweat-shop. For the glory of the governors and the satisfaction of local pride. I've got a scheme for research and I can't find time for it, I can't find freedom for it — there isn't the apparatus I want. I can't go on like this. Marguerite! What am I to do? Am I to live and die a fruitless little small-college don?"

Marguerite: "You won't do that, my dear."

Arthur: "But the years are passing! How am I to get out of this? I've the brains to do real work — yes — but when it comes to finding time and material . . .? I need the sort of laboratory you'd find in Cambridge or London. I need — for the apparatus I dream of — money."

Marguerite: "What sort of money?"

Arthur: "Two thousand pounds and freedom. And time. Time to experiment and then try again."

Marguerite: "And then-?"

Arthur: "I know what I have in mind. In three years the world would be at my feet. The world that counts, anyhow. At our feet, darling."

Marguerite: "And here am I — useless and unhelpful."

Arthur: "Think of all the money there is in the world! Think of the men who go down to the city and get thousands. Here's this old Elvesham, who lives here in Barchesham Castle. He's rolling in wasted opportunities like a dog in the manger. The things he might set going. He could take his cheque book and launch me with a flick of the pen . . . Oh, what's the good of grousing. Here we are."

The boat is now near a landing-place with a small boathouse and trees. Arthur stands up and goes forward to paddle the boat in among the others. There is a dark shadow that suggests a human being standing up by the boathouse under the tree.

"Hullo!" says Arthur, "lend a hand there."

Dr. McPhister dissolves into the lights and shades under the tree.

Marguerite, half-rising from her seat: "You want me to lend a hand?"

Arthur: "I thought there was someone there. But it's no one. Just a shadow."

He jumps ashore with the painter and pulls the boat in for

Marguerite to land.

Marguerite stands in the boat with Arthur holding her hand: "*I* thought I saw someone there."

She lands and Arthur Reston ties up the boat. They stand side by side in the moonlight. They forget about the stranger.

Marguerite: "This lovely world! This lovely night! It makes one feel nothing is impossible."

Arthur: "Nothing is impossible for the discontented."

Marguerite: "Oh, Moon, Goddess of the Silver Sky! Give him opportunity."

Arthur: "Listen, old Moon. Old Aunt Moon with the great round face. Escape and opportunity — the prayer of the young. Can you deny it for Marguerite even if you deny it for me?"

Elvesham is in his dress shirt, trousers and dressing-gown, in his big well-furnished London bedroom. The bedroom looks out on a London park. He is walking up and down the room meditating and talking to himself.

Elvesham: "Absurd that I should be excited by a fairy story of this sort. Greedy we human beings are for life — life and more life."

The telephone bell rings.

"Yes — who is it? Oh! it's not McPhister. Yes, this is Elvesham. What is it? . . .

"What! You've found the young man already! You haven't been gone from this house forty minutes and you've found him. . . .

"Oh, you've thought of him. You knew him before. That's different. . . .

"See him. I'd certainly like to see him.

"Come down and see him. Where? Barchesham? Why! but, my dear sir, I rent a house there — Barchesham Castle. Yes. Yes.

All the easier to come down to Barchesham. Yes. But-? It's

a hundred and seven miles. Come down you say. Whereon earth are you, McPhister? What do you mean by come down?

"Oh, go down — go down to-morrow. That's different. You're at your London hotel, of course. I'd certainly like to see the proposed new body .... Friday afternoon .... Yes I can wait that long. I want to think. I'm impatient, yes, but I'm afraid."

He puts down the receiver. Then he is struck by an afterthought

and picks it up again: “McPhister! Dr. McPhister!” But McPhister is off the line.

Elvesham: “Nuisance. Don’t know his number. Don’t know his address. Queer chap, the doctor. Quick worker. Oh, but the whole of this thing is impossible. I’m dreaming it. To be born again — practically. To begin life over again!”

A typically English scene, a cricket field in a town park. A cricket match is in progress: Barchesham College v. Second Cheshamshire. Spectators grouped about the pavilion. Village elders sit on a form. Small boys squat on the roller and lie prone on the grass.

Mr. Elvesham and Dr. McPhister are in chairs in the front of this pavilion, and with them is Principal Jeddles, of Barchesham College.

Elvesham: “I want to know more of the local life of Barchesham. I am getting very much at home up at the Castle. I may even live down here for good.”

McPhister: “We’re particularly interested in your research work at the college.” Jeddles, who has kept one eye on the game, interrupts to shout: “Well hit, sir! Well hit!”

He turns to Elvesham: “Yes, that’s the young man. That was a fine open slog. He’d he a great cricketer if he had time for practice. But he is trying to be three things at once. He is a good teacher. Popular. He’s a good sportsman. And he has a sort of vanity — I don’t know, it may not be vanity — that he ought to do research work. We have this disposition to do research work here on the part of the younger men. They will not be contented with life as it is. That lean young man who is batting with him, Professor Spike, is always inoculating mice and rabbits — with all kinds of diseases. I don’t quite like it.”

McPhister: “Surely inquiry — research, are things to encourage.”

Jeddles: “I’m not so sure of that. As the Principal of the College I have to weigh one thing against another. Mediaeval history is my subject and naturally I look first at the cultural side. I doubt if these experiments upon animals make for popularity.”

Elvesham: “Still if the young man has a gift-”

Jeddles: “So hard to determine. My conception of this college is a centre of culture, of gracious living — - not a centre of unrest. My disposition is to turn the attention of our donors and founders to

tangible things. Look, for instance, at those handsome buildings." (We are shown some extremely pretentious pseudo-Gothic piles.) "The Sir Joshua Smirke Hall; the Bludsole Memorial Wing. In their own distinctive way they are our equivalents of Magdalen Tower at Oxford or King's College, Cambridge. They will make atmosphere for generations of undergraduates. They will give them a background of elegance and aloofness. And they make the pious donor's gift a perpetual monument to his generosity, Mr. Elvesham. I have dreamt at times of seeing the college with a chapel worthy of it, before I die. Our benefactors would be perpetuated in marble and stained glass. . . . When you buy buildings you know what you're getting, Mr. Elvesham."

McPhister: "I can assure you it isn't the immortality of bricks and mortar that Mr. Elvesham is after."

There is a great outburst of clapping about them.

Jeddles: "Boundary! That's the winning hit! That settles it."

The match is over, and the cricketers return to the pavilion. Triumphant march of Spike and Reston in their pads and flannels to the pavilion amidst applause. Everyone is moving.

Jeddles: "Let me introduce you, Mr. Elvesham and Dr.-"

McPhister: "Dr. McPhister."

Jeddles: " — Dr. McPhister, to our two ah! — intellectuals."

Elvesham says to Arthur and Spike: "We have heard of your work here. My friend, Dr. McPhister, is all for stripping the fruit from the tree of knowledge, and he is egging me on to help-"

McPhister: "In fact we want to know what your difficulties are here."

Spike, with his eye on the Principal, whom he does not wish to offend: "Difficulties! There's nothing to complain of. I'd like a little more time to myself. Perhaps two assistants — to train. I may get those among the students. But mice and guinea pigs are cheap and you'd be surprised how little my disease-germs ask for their services."

McPhister: "That's not quite the same with your work, Mr. Reston."

Arthur: "No."

McPhister: "You want equipment?"

Arthur: “I want a lot of expensive stuff. Don’t I, Dr. J eddies?”

Elvesham: “I’m not a man of science myself. Dr. McPhister is the man to discuss things with you, Mr. Reston. He’ll understand your difficulties better than I shall. Would you mind telling him a little about your work?”

Jeddles: “Let them talk. Mr. Reston knows how to ask. Meanwhile I pray you, Mr. Elvesham, give me five minutes for my beautiful unfinished swimming bath.”

Jeddles leads off Elvesham. McPhister takes Arthur by the arm and leads him to the scorers’ table in the tent, leaving Spike alone.

McPhister: “So far, Mr. Reston, it is all plain sailing. I don’t think there need be any difficulty about that two thousand pounds — or even a little more. I’ve no doubt you’re on to a very hopeful line of inquiry.” Reston refrains by an effort from jumping with joy. “But for everything in this life — there is a quid pro quo. I want to tell you of something in which you can be a great help to Mr. Elvesham and myself. In its way it is also research.”

He pauses. “Go on,” says Reston. “Anything in reason.” McPhister: “It’s peculiar. It’s a mental experiment. The question is whether a group of mental impressions — memories — can be shifted from one brain to another.”

Arthur: “Telepathy. I don’t believe in it.”

McPhister: “It’s rather more than that. It’s an exchange of memories. We have an idea that in a properly arranged field of force, two brains which have had suitable hypnotic treatment, may exchange — oh, a considerable body of their impressions.”

Arthur: “Sounds quite impossible to me. Bad analogy with electrical induction — nothing more.”

McPhister, with a gesture: “I’m open-minded. But our friend here is very keen on its being tried.”

Arthur: “And he wants to tie up a participation in that experiment with a little matter of two thousand pounds.”

McPhister: “Exactly. But that’s for your research also.”

Arthur: “M’m.” He stands up regarding McPhister very thoughtfully. “I don’t suppose it would take up much time and my name needn’t be implicated. It seems a lot of money.”

McPhister: “There are risks. At least Mr. Elvesham thinks there

are.”

Arthur: “For example?”

McPhister: “You are going to put your brains in a field of considerable intensity. You may float your mind off its anchorage, so to speak. We want you to be clear about that before you consent.”

Arthur: “Float my mind off its anchorage?”

McPhister: “A certain detachment.”

Arthur: “I don’t mind so long as you don’t electrocute me or boil my head.”

McPhister: “All the same, this experiment may affect your individuality for a time. That’s where I’m interested.”

Arthur: “And when do I get my two thousand pounds?”

Elvesham: “In advance. All that shall be seen to.”

Arthur: “I’ll take the risk. Better disaster in pursuit of knowledge than sitting down in toilsome uselessness in Barchesham for the rest of my life.”

McPhister: “Better disaster! How I agree with you!”

Arthur: “Man was made to take risks.”

McPhister: “Life was made to take risks.”

Elvesham and his lawyer, Mr. Siddonson, in one of those dark and frowsty rooms in Lincoln’s Inn dear to solicitors. Siddonson is a stoutish, short man, deferential but wary in his manner, rather proud of his diplomatic ability and surprised at nothing. “Go on, Mr. Elvesham.”

Elvesham: “This young man, you must understand, is a sort of relation of mine — closer than many people suppose.”

Siddonson: “I quite understand.”

Elvesham: “Then we’ll leave it at that. Now he and I are going to do a little experiment. Very good of him. A sort of rejuvenation business — blood transfusion and all that.”

Siddonson: “Wonderful. And naturally you want to provide against any risk.”

Elvesham: “He’s pretty stout and strong. It’s myself I’m anxious about. Sometimes these — these blood transfusions affect the mind. If everything doesn’t go well — I may be left a little groggy and queer.”

Siddonson: “Let’s hope nothing of that sort-”

Elvesham: “Anyhow we have to provide.”

Siddonson: “Nothing should be left to chance I agree.”

Elvesham: “No. Then what I want to do is to give this excellent young man — in conjunction with yourself — the fullest powers to handle my property, draw money, incur liabilities. I begin to find responsibilities rather wearisome. And we’ll tear up that old will of mine and make him my heir.”

Elvesham, Arthur and McPhister pass through the large bedroom of Elvesham in Barchesham Castle. McPhister leads the way and Elvesham and Arthur follow. In the centre of the dressing-room they come to a broad divan, like a surgeon’s operating couch, but wide enough to hold two men. Over this are great reflectors capable of throwing an intense light on their faces and shoulders. A small neon light tube throbs softly, but there is no other exposure of apparatus. On a table close at hand are several medicine bottles and a couple of measuring glasses. There is a large clock dial at the back. Black curtains can be drawn round the couch. The windows of the room and their wooden shutters are closed and the room is lit with electric light in contrast with the sunshine of the bedroom.

McPhister: “It has taken this time to assemble because we did not want anyone to know of this but ourselves. Everything has been made in London and brought down here bit by bit.”

Arthur: “You make a lot of secrecy about it.”

Elvesham: “No one knows about this — not even the servants. Perhaps we have exaggerated the mystery of it all.”

Arthur: “It makes it almost — occult.”

Elvesham: “And how do you feel about it all? No wish to draw back?”

Arthur: “On the whole, I am amused. What do you think, Mr. Elvesham, are you likely to get out of all this?”

Elvesham: “Well, I can hardly say. It’s McPhister there who is the great panjandrum.”

Arthur: “I guess unless he electrocutes us by accident nothing will happen. What current have you got there?”

McPhister: “It’s time to get ready.”

Elvesham: “I haven’t seen your pretty young lady, Miss Swift, about these last few days.”

Arthur: “She’s gone to Clifford’s Beaches with her Mother. I’m to join her the day after to-morrow — if all goes well.”

They move back into the bedroom, and later return to the dressing-room, Arthur and Elvesham in white pyjamas. They both move gravely under McPhister’s directions. He hands them a dark drink. Then they lie down side by side on the operating table. Their faces have become still and intent as if they have been hypnotised. The light is at first intense and then it dies away and comes again. The face of Elvesham displays great tension. Before he becomes rigid he glances once at Arthur quickly and apprehensively. Arthur’s expression is that of a courageous young man resolved to go through with a strange, unreasonable but unavoidable experience. McPhister bends broodingly over them and his shadow falls upon them. He touches a lever. He looks up at the clock dial and then at the pulsating neon light. All this is done in absolute silence. Then he sweeps the black curtains together and stands still, listening. There is a faint throbbing in the air, which increases for a few seconds and dies away again. Then he pulls back the curtains and the faces of the two men are seen again. But it is the young man’s face now which is intent and almost peevish. The older man’s face has become that of a tranquil sleeper.

The old man lies still. The young man stirs, wakes and sits up abruptly.

He stares at McPhister. He is now Arthur 2, the changed Arthur.

McPhister, elated: “Well, who are you? What’s your name?”

Arthur 2: “Thomas Newton Elvesham.” McPhister: “Not now.”

Arthur 2: “What?”

McPhister: “The thing is done. You are in your new body, Elvesham. You are Arthur Reston — and yourself. . . . Look at him. That old carcass will need a long rest. How do you feel? I tell you the thing is done.”

Slowly, incredulously, guiltily Arthur 2 stares at the comatose Elvesham 2, shrinks away from him and stands up. There is something faintly senile in his pose and movements.

McPhister: “Go and dress. Begin your new life.”

Arthur 2: “And him?”

McPhister: “He may sleep for days. Go.”

Arthur 2: “Was I like that — so old and worn out?”

McPhister: “He’s got to have a rest. He hasn’t your vitality. You weren’t quite so bad as that.”

Arthur 2: “But what is to be done with him?”

McPhister: “Leave that to me. No one must see you here.” He points to the open door. “Get your clothes and go.”

Arthur 2 walks out still dazed, leaving McPhister by the side of the couch. McPhister broods darkly.

He seems to wake up from deep thought. “And now what will they do? This is a new riddle for the powers above.”

He walks to the bell and rings it. Wilkins, the Barchesham Castle butler, appears in the doorway. He is the small, active type of butler — not in the magnificent Mutimer style. He is evidently astonished at what he sees, and betrays it.

McPhister: “Mr. Elvesham has had rather a trying operation. Will you carry him to his bed in the next room? And when he has had his sleep clear all this apparatus away.”

He watches the frankly astonished butler.

McPhister: “Everything is all right with him. But he may sleep for days. Do nothing to disturb him. I am the operating doctor. Leave him absolutely quiet.”

Wilkins: “I’d better get the footman to help.”

McPhister: “Certainly.”

Wilkins: “I knew nothing about this.”

McPhister: “It wasn’t your business to know.”

He walks past the staring butler out into the bedroom. He passes across the bedroom into a broad passage. He walks a little way down the passage, looks over his shoulder to see that he is unobserved, and — vanishes.

He just vanishes. A stone staircase on the west front of Barchesham Castle. Tall windows from a study give on this staircase. Arthur 2 appears at the windows unattended. He has put on his ordinary clothes again. He comes out to the top of the stairs, stands and surveys the prospect. “A pretty place. . . . But you may have it.”

He stretches out his arms, expands his chest, lifts his face to the sky. Then he lifts his chin as did Elvesham in the opening scene. “This body is a fair exchange for all the stately homes of England. A-

a-ah!”

He looks about him. “And now I suppose for the get-away. Let me see, where do I live? 19 Dewsbury Street. Where’s Dewsbury Street? I ought to have looked that up before. Never mind. I’ll find it. I’d hate to ask the way to my own lodgings.”

He comes down the staircase and walks across the lawn. “The *feel* of it,” he says. He repeats the rather affected gesture of the elegant hands that Elvesham I used at the dinner-table. He looks at his hands.

“Rather larger. Not quite so fine. But by Heaven, young\”

He crosses Barchesham Park, comes out of the park gates, on to the high road.

He talks to himself: “This is the grandest idea that has ever come to man. The greatest experiment. I am a pioneer in earthly immortality. A new race. Men who neither die nor age. We’ll breed young louts to carry our minds for us — on and on and on and up and up. We’ll go on for ever — renewing and extending ourselves. . . .”

He is so lost in these splendid ideas that he wanders into the middle of the road. A powerful car appears round a bend, travelling at seventy miles an hour. The chauffeur hoots and then, seeing this will not avert a disaster, claps on his brakes. The car swerves violently and skids. The car misses Arthur 2 by an inch or so and piles up on the bank against a tree-stump, with the explosion of one tyre, a smash of glass and screams from inside the car.

Arthur 2 clutches his heart and staggers to the roadside. “The idiot might have killed me. Me!”

A gentleman struggles out of the car and helps out a lady. “Are you hurt, my dear? Faint? Come and sit down here.”

The chauffeur struggles out from behind a wheel that has pinned him. He is distracted. He is a bantam of a man and he is holding a damaged wrist. “I couldn’t help it, sir. That blither- ing fool!” Then his feelings explode in rage against Arthur 2. He advances upon him. Arthur 2 gives ground before him, stepping back into the road.

Chauffeur: “You silly idiot! You silly mug! I ought to have mown you down.”

Arthur 2: “You might have killed me!”

Chauffeur: “Killing you would have been a useful bit of work.

Look at that car. And you! Not even hurt."

A car comes by on the opposite side of the way. Arthur 2 jumps apprehensively to the grass.

Chauffeur: "You can get out of the way fast enough now, blight you! Ugh, you Muck."

He turns towards his master and mistress. "Any help I can give," he says with his back to the audience.

Arthur 2: "Accidents will happen. Can I help?"

Chauffeur turns upon him frantically. "Get out\ Get out\ Before I spoil your silly face."

Arthur 2 stands disconcerted. Then he makes a rather elderly gesture of helplessness and walks away. Then suddenly he sees the humour of it and begins to laugh. "That's queer that was. Funny if I'd been killed. Oh, too funny. The laugh would have been on me." Grows serious again. "Safety first, Mr. Reston. You carry Caesar and all his fortunes and don't you forget it. . . . And now for 19 Dewsbury Street and the unknown landlady."

On the way we see him hesitating at a crossing. A car has pulled up on account of him.

Driver: "Oh, come on! Hop it!"

Arthur 2 crosses. He moves with deliberation. He has none of the insouciance of a healthy young man.

The sitting-room of Arthur Reston at 19 Dewsbury Street, Barchesham. It is the room of a junior don who mingles a certain amount of sport with his scientific work. There are more books than the abundant shelves will hold. There is a writing-table littered with papers, two modern slide rules, a box of mathematical instruments, and above it are a few papers of notes fixed up by pins. There is a bat and a cricketer's bag. There are two photographic enlargements of Marguerite. There is a bowl of flowers but no pipe racks. A few silver cups adorn the mantelshelf. A pleasant-faced landlady holds the door open and Arthur 2 enters and looks around rather like a visitor to a show house.

Arthur 2: "So this is my room."

Landlady: "Of course it's your room, Mr. Reston. Why you should go stalking past me without a word into the downstairs drawing-room beats me altogether."

Arthur 2 considers her gravely for a moment. Then he decides upon his course of action. “The fact is I’m just a little dazed. Something has happened to me.”

Landlady: “You haven’t been drinking, Mr. Reston?”

Arthur 2: “No. I think I’d best tell you. I’ve been doing something much more foolish. I’ve been trifling with hypnotism — mesmerism — you know?”

Landlady: “You do look a little starey-like.”

Arthur 2: “I am. That old man Elvesham, that rich old man who has just taken the castle, persuaded me just to try. . . . He’s mad. Anything he says isn’t to be believed. He’s a danger-”

Gesticulates with hands to suggest hypnotic passes.

Arthur 2: “It’s left me in a dream. I can’t remember. I shall
come round presently, Mrs. — Mrs.-? I can’t remember
your name. Isn’t it extraordinary? I can’t. No.”

Landlady: “Sandilands, my name is. And you haven’t been above calling me Sandy at times.”

Arthur 2: “I think — if I could have some tea, Mrs. Sandilands. If I could sit down here quietly and just think — I’d find myself — bit by bit. Coming here, I was almost knocked down by a motor-car. Quite a close shave. I’ve got to pull myself together. The reckless way they drive nowadays is disgraceful. They set no value whatever on human life. . . .”

Mrs. Sandilands betrays a little surprise at this last opinion. It seems to her not quite the sort of thing her Mr. Reston would say. “I’ll get you a nice cup of tea, Mr. Reston,” she says, looking at him for an instant before leaving the room.

Arthur 2 walks to the hearthrug: “That’s all right. Sandilands, eh? She likes me. Good to be good-looking again. And now to find out about myself. Pockets first. Ah, here’s money! Five, six, seven, eight, ten and sixpence. Cheque-book anywhere? How about handwriting?”

He takes a sheet of paper and we see him writing, “Thomas Newton Elvesham.” “Tut, tut,” he says. Then he writes, rather laboriously, “Arthur Reston.” “H’m,” he considers. “I don’t know his signature. That may be inconvenient.” He finds a sheet of paper on which is written, Note on a New Type of Vibration in Suspended Particles by Arthur Reston.” He compares his own “Arthur Reston.”

The handwriting is entirely different.

He soliloquises. “Funny little difficulty. How can I meet it? I can go to the bank. Sign before witnesses. I can pretend to have writer’s cramp, bad wrist. But wait a moment! If I want a cheque or so from my dear old friend Elvesham this will be convenient. And he can’t even alter that will I made. M’m. Yes he can — before witnesses.”

He stands up and looks about the room. A cup on the mantel attracts him and he reads the signature.

“Cup for the high jump. I’ll have to learn to jump all over again. Lord, how I used to hate jumping!” He looks at his other cups. “Swimming. Diving. Now shall I be able to swim?”

Later Mrs. Sandilands is putting tea things on the table and Arthur 2 is intent upon his papers, so avoiding conversation with her. She lingers as if she would like a word or so. As she leaves the room he says, “Thank you, Mrs. Sandilands. Thank you,” over his shoulder.

He thinks with his eyes on the closed door. “It’s going to be interesting — and difficult — this business of impersonation.”

He stands in front of the enlargement of Marguerite. “Especially with you, my dear. . . . Gods! you might be Mary born again!” He takes up both portraits so as to hold one in either hand. “I’ll get it all right this time. This is going to be worth while. You’ll find your lover improved, I think. Something a little less shy and crude, my dear, than I used to be. Or he is. Lovely thing you are. I think I’d better get down to Clifford’s Beaches and get busy with you right away. Little you realise the old scores we have to settle, my dear.”

He moves towards the bell and stops short.

“Confound it, I’ve got to pack my own bag, I suppose.”

He returns to the portrait of Marguerite.

“How lovely women can seem! I never really escaped you — and this time you shall not escape me. I’ve learnt a bit since the old days. They’ve waited to be married! He waited. We won’t have it like that now, my pretty darling. No.”

Clifford’s Beaches is not a conventional watering-place with stucco boarding houses, a mile long parade, a pier and so forth. The hotel nestles against the woods; there are bungalows and houses up the hill slope and there is a short esplanade with a shelter, a run down for boats and so forth. Farther along the coast there is a rocky cove.

Here Marguerite and another girl are swimming, while Marguerite's mother sits under a sunshade reading among the rocks. Both girls swim well. A small boy appears with a telegram and hands it to the mother. She reads and waves it and the two girls come out of the water.

Mother: "He's coming by the afternoon train."

Marguerite turns to her friend: "He's never sent a telegram before. He's getting thoughtful. Nice of him. I didn't think he'd come until to-morrow. Is the telegram for me, Mummy?"

Mother: "Darling, I wouldn't have opened it. It's just addressed 'Swift.'"

Marguerite makes a face: "Now why didn't he address it to me and put a nice little word in. I suppose he sent it in a hurry."

At the chief entrance to the Clifford's Beaches Hotel the porter appears, looks away off as if expecting arrivals, and then becomes obsequious and turns the door for someone from within the hotel. Dr. McPhister appears in a grey golfing suit and carrying a putter. He wears boots designed to correct a slight malformation of his feet. He also glances in the same direction as the expectant porter, considers what he shall do, and then seats himself in one of the chairs, pulling the canopy forward so as to shade his face.

Arthur 2 arrives in station bus. He is the only new-comer. He is wearing a rather worn tweed suit, slightly baggy at the knees, and a cap. The bus porter hands him down and then takes a very old valise from the bus. He exchanges a critical grimace with the hotel porter.

Arthur 2 intercepts the grimace.

He speaks, and as he does so he makes the slightly finical gesture characteristic of old Elvesham. And his manner has the confidence of a rich man accustomed to be welcomed by hotels.

"That's my bag all right — treat it respectfully. Are you fairly full here?"

Hotel Porter: "I doubt if there's any single rooms left, sir." Sarcastically: "There's a suite, I know — the Prince's suit."

Bus Porter lifts his eyebrows and becomes aware that Arthur 2's trousers are slightly frayed at the edges.

Arthur 2: "I expect the suite will do. If it's airy. Oh, hullo! How did you get down here?"

McPhister: “I came by air. Always my favourite method of travel. I came here because among other things I play golf. My lameness makes me slow but I have the devil’s own luck. I like the game. It brings out all the evil that there is in a man. But why arc you here. . . . Not on account of Miss Marguerite Swift by any chance?”

Arthur 2: “That young woman has gripped my imagination.”

McPhister: “The devil she has! This is disconcerting.”

Arthur 2: “She is so like Mary.”

McPhister: “Maybe she had to be!”

Arthur 2: “I thought this sort of thing was over for me. But it isn’t.”

McPhister: “Don’t tell me you’ve renewed your youth just to begin running after women again. You’re not just repeating life, remember. You’re going 011 to a new stage in life. That’s the essence of our experiment. Long life and a greater life.” Arthur 2: “I shan’t be running after women here. She’ll take no running after. This peach is ripe on the wall. It would be stupid to leave it.”

McPhister shrugs his shoulders in confidence to himself: “And after you’ve gobbled your peach, then what?”

Arthur 2: “Oh, the great world, the new stage of life — vigour to a hundred and twenty. I spent all my first life in accumulating means, and I found myself too old to use those means. We have altered all that.” McPhister nods approval. “Now I start to conquer the world — to walk over it — the unknown protégé of the late Mr. Elvesham.”

McPhister: “Not so late as all that. He is — you must remember — still alive.”

Arthur 2: “Well, what can the poor devil do?”

McPhister: “Suppose he came down here?’

Arthur 2: “In that repulsive body? He’ll keep away from her if he has any self-respect.”

McPhister: “Love looks not with the eye but with the mind.”

Arthur 2: “I’ll risk its scrutiny.”

McPhister: “But here she is. Coming to meet you.”

Arthur 2: “Leave it to me. How she carries herself!”

McPhister: “Like a healthy, well-built young woman.”

Arthur 2: “No. There’s something about that girl! Mary moved just like that.”

McPhister: “He’s got it. This comes of young blood in an old memory. And so he’s going to discover the mystery and divinity of women all over again. Just as though he has never been disillusioned.”

Arthur 2 descends the hotel steps and approaches Marguerite. McPhister remains inconspicuously watchful. His expression is hostile and curious.

She brightens at the sight of him and takes both his hands in both of hers. “Darling, you’re looking well and proud. Did everything go well?”

They both hesitate and kiss. It is not quite the usual kiss and she apprehends this faintly. There is a sort of disingenuous fatherliness in his bearing.

Arthur 2: “Go well?’’

Marguerite: “The experiment?”

Arthur 2: “Everything, my dear, went marvellously.”

Marguerite: “And Mr. Elvesham is going to help your research? It’s too lovely.”

Arthur 2: “Better. He is going, he says, to identify himself with my ambitions. I have a lot to tell you, my dear. Now it is all over I can tell you just what has happened. I didn’t tell you much before. Did I?”

Marguerite: “You made a mystery of it.”

Arthur 2: “I thought so. Now we can talk.”

Marguerite: “In a quieter place.”

The hotel porter appears with an interrogative expression on the steps.

Arthur 2: “I’ll take that suite. Send my bag up. I’ll see to all that presently.”

Marguerite, struck by something: “Suite?” She looks puzzled but says no more at the time.

In a sheltered corner under the cliffs Arthur 2 talks and Marguerite listens to him at first with eager and affectionate attention. But presently her face betrays a slight perplexity.

Arthur 2: “Oh! Something between psychic research and hocus-pocus. *I* don’t pretend to understand it. I don’t think he did — not even the doctor, the specialist.”

Marguerite: “Who was this doctor?”

Arthur 2: “*I* don’t know. He spoke English very well, but he had a foreign look about him.”

Marguerite: “Did you look up his qualifications?”

Arthur 2: “Never thought of anything of the sort. But as I say, the general effect was hocus-pocus; telepathy in it and all that sort of thing. Rather a strain on us both — what with drugs, hypnotism, magnetic-field all mixed up together.”

Marguerite: “That sounds so queer.”

Arthur 2:”It was queer. It strained me. And it upset the old fellow altogether. I’m still so dazed I hardly feel myself yet. But he-! You’ve heard of these cases — when men forget who

they are — forget their own names.”

Marguerite: “But what sort of experiment was this? You said drugs? What sort of drug?”

Arthur 2: “Sorts you wouldn’t know about, my dear — oriental drugs.”

Marguerite, faintly incredulous: “Oriental?”

Arthur 2: “Yes. That was it. Like hashish — one of those oriental drugs. They’re tremendous things, those oriental drugs. I shall be all right again soon.”

Marguerite: “But you said hypnotism and magnetism.”

Arthur 2: “Those were quite accessory. The oriental drug’s the idea. The great thing, my dear, is I’ve got the two thousand pounds. We’re no longer poor and helpless. We can dare to make love. Yes. The world begins again for us.”

Marguerite: “Old Aunt Moon has answered your prayer.”

Arthur 2: “Old Aunt Moon. Why Aunt Moon?”

Marguerite: “Don’t you remember? That night you prayed to the Moon? Old Aunt Moon with the great round face?”

Arthur 2: “Of course! I prayed to the Moon and she’s answered my prayer.”

Marguerite: “But that old man? Did you wake up? Did you come to — and leave him?”

Arthur 2: “He’s got his servants there. There was that foreign doctor I told you about. Quite a big swell, I think. What could *I* do? I should just have been in the way.”

Marguerite: “I’m trying to recall that old man. It’s queer how present he seems to me. He didn’t look senile or silly. He had a hard resolute face and hard searching eyes. Greedy eyes. He wasn’t — feeble.”

Arthur 2: “Not so feeble — before the experiment. No. But the thing is, it was too much for him — and that’s really the end of his story. And here we are, my pretty one, with the moments simply flying. . . .”

He makes to embrace her. She resists him for a moment, tries to hold his eyes with her own, and then yields her lips to his. He kisses her and holds her hungrily. His hands seem eager to take possession of her. This isn’t quite the respectful love-making she is accustomed to and she struggles out of his arms again.

Marguerite: “Dearest! This is a public place. And — I don’t know.”

Arthur 2: “Sweetheart, you’re not going to be coy with me. Haven’t we waited long enough for love?”

Marguerite: “You’re different, Arthur. You’re not yourself. That drug-! And the old man you’ve left behind.”

Arthur 2, giving way to his impatience: “Confound the old man I’ve left behind. I’ve left him behind. He took his chance and he lost. He’s done for. He’s finished. He’s like an old coat that is thrown away. But I am only beginning. I want to live, my dear. I want to love. And I want you. And always you keep me waiting. It has always been like that. Mary — the difficult! Mary the inaccessible!”

Marguerite: “Mary! What do you mean, Arthur? Why arc you calling me Mary?”

Arthur 2: “You are Mary to me.”

Marguerite: “But why? You’ve never called me Mary before.”

Arthur 2, realising the situation: “I have never called you Mary! In my heart I have a thousand times.”

Marguerite: “But why?”

Arthur 2: “It’s been a secret fancy of mine. Your hidden name. I’ve thought of you as a Madonna. Often and often. I’ve never told you that. It was my clumsy way of reconciling myself to your remoteness and coldness.”

Marguerite: “My coldness! It is as if someone quite different were

talking to me. What has this drug done to you, Arthur?”

At Clifford’s Beaches Arthur 2 and McPhister are dining. Arthur 2 addresses the maitre d’hôtel: “Just a bottle of your excellent Brauneberger and one — no, two liqueur glass of Kirsch, the peel of an entire cucumber — not just scraps — and a few big lumps of ice. So?”

Maitre d’hôtel departs in a state between deference and surprise at the incongruous savoir faire of this untidy, ill-dressed young man.

McPhister: “And how does the love-making go?”

Arthur 2: “It doesn’t go — it crawls. Never before did I realise that infinite leisureliness of young people. And their complicated lack of straightforwardness.”

McPhister: “That is an interesting variant to headlong youth. Complicated lack of straightforwardness — that’s good!”

Arthur 2: “I thought nowadays young people were rather frank. I thought they knew everything, as people say, and were perfect young terrors. Well, McPhister, it isn’t so.”

McPhister: “It never was so.”

Arthur 2: “She doesn’t know her own mind.”

McPhister: “That comes late in life for everyone — if ever it comes. That is where you are going to be so interesting.”

Arthur 2: “She will and she won’t. She comes forward and she recoils. Whenever I press the love-making she sheers off and wants to talk of our future home together — and everything else in the world but love.”

McPhister: “I know. A curious diffidence. It used to be called maiden modesty, fastidiousness — a deliberation.”

Arthur 2: “Deliberation. Aren’t I her accepted lover?”

McPhister: “She is looking ahead for her whole life. She doesn’t understand this impatience of yours.”

Arthur 2: “She’s so like Mary. Mary used to hold me off like that — cool and gentle. Exasperating!” The conversation is interrupted by the maitre d’hôtel and two waiters. They serve melon and bring Arthur’s wine cup. A little is poured for him and the maitre d’hôtel waits for his nod of approval. It is obvious he finds something elusively odd about both of them. “When I want to make love she talks of research. This absurd young prig seems to have spent his

time and hers talking about

mathematics and physics. And now I've got to pretend-

McPhister, what on earth is a goniometer?"

McPhister: "A harmless thing for measuring the angle of crystals."

Arthur 2: "Well, it seems the college goniometer isn't good enough for us. One of the first things we have to buy with our two thousand pounds is a new and better goniometer. . . . Did you ever hear of such — love talk!"

McPhister: "You'll have to learn it up, Elvesham — I mean Reston — this goniometer business. And this new mathematical Love Talk. Delightful for you to have these interests in common. Most of the men in love I have to deal with complain of the lack of interesting talk they encounter in between their gusts of passion." Arthur 2: "She's suspicious about me. That is one reason why she puts me through my scientific paces. She smells a rat. Queer, isn't it?"

McPhister: "You mustn't fancy things."

Arthur 2: "And she sticks to it, asking me what exactly, in scientific terms and all that, was the experiment I did at Barchesham. They teach women too much science nowadays. Makes them neither one thing nor the other."

McPhister: "What have you told her?"

Arthur 2: "Oriental drug. It didn't go for a moment. What oriental drug? Seems she knows about most oriental drugs."

McPhister: "Blood transfusions would have been much better — something at once generous, modern and matter of fact."

Arthur 2: "And she's got sentimental about me — I mean about Elvesham. She seems to think I deserted him. She thinks Elvesham was benevolent — interesting — wise even. I seem to have made a great impression upon her in that other carcass of mine. . . . If only she knew\ I'll get level with all this yet."

McPhister: "Level! I wanted you to soar."

After dinner they go out to a grassy terrace of the hotel, overlooking the sea. The place is lit by electric lights in swinging pseudo-marine lanterns. Arthur 2 and McPhister occupy comfortable wicker-chairs and there are coffee and liqueurs on a conveniently

placed table.

McPhister in the evening light has become slightly more Mephistophelean in appearance. He talks.

McPhister: “I must confess I find you disappointing, Elvesham.”

Arthur 2: “Reston.”

McPhister: “Elvesham, between ourselves. Here we are, making a wonderful experiment. You are having a new lease of life. You begin with the experience of seventy-one years, with a prospect of living perhaps fifty years more. And then, if you like, a further prolongation. Think of it. And what do you do? Do you go on with that splendid career we talked about? Do you take hold of life with both hands? No — you come down here in pursuit of a pretty young woman with a sweet face — and you seem to be thinking of nothing else.”

Arthur 2: “I want her.”

McPhister: “Evidently — but why ? You remind me of that miserable creature, Faust. He too couldn’t leave a pretty girl alone. You know the old story.”

Arthur 2: “I love her.”

McPhister: “Nonsense. Men of seventy don’t love. They want. Do any men really love? Everlastingly you talk of love, but that is different. You want her to love you. You want her to go down at your feet. You are already beginning to be spiteful and malicious about her, because you discover she has a certain independent personality of her own. You want to overcome her resistances. You want the sexual triumph — and then . . .?”

Arthur 2: “But the point is — she is Mary Farlake over again. It is not just love-making I want — it is Mary.”

McPhister: “And if you get your — Mary — Marguerite.”

Arthur 2: “Then I could go on.”

McPhister: “To what? Another woman. After his Marguerite, Faust wanted Helen of Troy. Have human beings no imagination beyond sex? Why not begin with Power. Can’t you forget this Mary? Can’t you forget? Is every human mind curled up round some personal attachment like a pearl round a bit of grit? You, with a reasonable prospect of limitless life, of leaping from one body to another, of going on and going on, why do you not take possession

of the world? Is this indeed Man, the rebel child of Earth? I have looked to you to rise against fate, gather power and scale the heavens. And when I put the scaling ladder into your hands-!"

Arthur 2: "Scaling ladder? Sometimes you say strange things, McPhister."

McPhister: "Well, perhaps I'm not quite an ordinary being — but let that pass. It exasperates me to see the incurable littleness and spiritlessness of man. Will you none of you escape from this love story?"

Arthur 2: "How can I escape? Here I am with young blood again! It will have its way in spite of you."

McPhister: "Let it have its way. But you are falling in love. Don't fall in love. Don't let another personality get a hold upon yours. Keep love in its place."

Arthur 2: "And how?"

McPhister: "There are millions of young women in the world as lovely as she is. Forget her before she obsesses you altogether."

Arthur 2: "But what do you mean?"

McPhister: "A rational love, not this unlimited stuff."

McPhister stands up and looks round. He makes a pass like a conjurer and both he and Arthur 2 vanish from the scene. The terrace, table, chairs remain. A waiter comes and stares about.

"Funny! I didn't see them go," he remarks, and begins to clear away the coffee things.

The scene changes to a large and brilliantly lit hall, full of men and women in evening dress. They are excited; they eat and drink and chatter and make love. A variety turn is in progress. Arthur 2 and McPhister are in evening dress like the others. They sit at a table with champagne, and two charming young women, a blonde and a brunette, are making up to them, and incidentally sipping most of the champagne. One, the fair one, concentrates on Arthur 2 with ardent eyes and a whispering charm, and the other, dark, plays a rather graver role with McPhister. "Prizes," comes a voice, and the fair girl who is concentrating on Arthur 2 stands up very cheerfully and says "Me? I've got a prize!" The two girls go to get their prize, leaving Arthur 2 and McPhister at the table.

McPhister: "Now here's love in its proper place. You love and

you pay and off you go to the serious business of life."

Arthur 2: "That's rational enough."

McPhister: "I thought you'd see that."

Arthur 2: "Only love isn't rational. I wish Marguerite were here."

McPhister: "Marguerite! And the goniometer?"

Arthur 2: "Yes — and the goniometer. I'm as badly hit as that. I tell you she has got into my blood, and I don't want anyone else. And the things that vex me only provoke me more."

McPhister: "Can't you take everything else that life offers you now and leave that girl at Clifford's Beaches alone. I don't want this new lease of life of yours to be mortgaged from the outset. I want to make a great man of you. Remember — Power! I want you to scale the heavens, not climb Romeo's balcony. I ask you — don't go back to her. It is the most dangerous thing you can do. You will get worse and worse. You will give way to fits of irrational honesty and self-abandonment. You may even come to confess to that girl. And will she give herself away to you? No. Women give their bodies but the men give their souls. There is an infinite reserve in every woman."

Arthur 2: "These things don't seem to matter just now."

McPhister, in expostulation to fate: "Oh, what have I done? Given this man fifty years more of life and vitality and all he can do with it is to play the young lover again! The pitiful limitation of man! The pitiful limitation! The want of imaginative power! I wonder at times if the creatures really have souls! Or whether I'm not being swindled altogether! I thought we were opening a new phase of life, clear-headed and more creative than the Creator, and I find nothing but a renewal of that old imperative I have always detested. Is there to be no escape for men for ever from this omnipresent eternal delusion of Love? Must you centre on it? Must you gravitate about it? Don't you see that this second life begins to be a mere echo of your first — a second round of the old course? Is it worth while to live again for that?"

A darkened bedroom in Barchesham Castle. A four-poster bed. A sleeper is seen indistinctly. He mutters: "Marguerite! Dear Marguerite!"

Then he yawns and talks to himself: "I'm tired. Damnably tired. But it's all right. I've got the money. Two thousand pounds. And I'm

alive. . . . Wonder what the time is?”

Suddenly he sits up. It is Elvesham 2. He looks about him in great perplexity. “What room is this? How did I get here? After the experiment? I don’t remember.”

He sits in profound perplexity. He glances at his pyjama sleeves. He begins to have a faint realisation of the state of affairs. He moves his mouth and looks as though he had tasted something disagreeable. He whispers: “God! What has happened?”

With an expression of dismay he puts his fingers to his mouth and his face changes to infinite horror. His voice is almost tearful. “Oh, my teeth! Where are my teeth?”

Then he glances at the shrivelled hand he is holding close to his face. “Oh — these hands!”

He gets half out of bed. “What has happened to me? Disease? What? What has happened to me?’

Across the room he sees himself dimly in a mirror. He tumbles clumsily out of bed and stumbles towards it. “I’m like — that old man! My God, is this part of the experiment? I’m infernally like him.”

He wanders round the room examining things on the toilet-table and bedside-table. He discovers a tumbler with false teeth in it. “But this is horrible — unspeakably horrible!”

He returns to the mirror. Then he feels his toothless mouth again. “False teeth!” Fumbling, he puts them in. Then he stands hesitating at a hell. Finally he rings. Wilkins appears.

Elvesham 2: “Who are you? What’s your name?”

Wilkins: “Wilkins, sir — as usual.”

Elvesham 2: “And who am I?”

Wilkins: “Well, sir, you’re Mr. Elvesham. Who else should you be? And you’ve had a nice long sleep. You’ve been sleeping since yesterday afternoon. Such a sleep, sir.”

Elvesham 2: “Yesterday afternoon? What happened then?”

Wilkins: “Perhaps you’re confused, sir. You had a slight operation. Don’t you remember, sir? I think you must have had some sort of gas.”

Elvesham 2: “Where was the operation — here?”

Wilkins: “No, sir — in there.”

Elvesham 2 walks slowly to the dressing-room and stares at the apparatus: “I begin to remember. . . . Why didn’t you wake me before?”

Wilkins: “The doctor, sir, said you were not to be disturbed. On no account.”

Elvesham 2: “What doctor?”

Wilkins: “The dark gentleman.”

Elvesham 2: “Where is he? I want to speak to him.”

Wilkins: “He’s gone, sir.”

Elvesham 2: “Where did he go?”

Wilkins: “We didn’t see him go, sir. He just went. You want something a bit refreshing, sir. Shall we say coffee, sir — or tea. Or even perhaps a cocktail. You could have it in the little parlour while I put out your clothes. Lounge suit, I presume, sir.”

Elvesham 2 considers: “Coffee? Cocktail? Where is the little parlour?”

Wilkins smiles deprecatingly: “Through that door, sir. of course.”

Elvesham 2: “Through that door. Very well.”

The little parlour is a finely furnished room with old china and some good pictures. Wilkins has already laid a table for tea. Elvesham 2 stares unseeingly out of the window and then turns to the tea-table.

Elvesham 2: “This is just horrible. But, by Jove, it’s marvellous too! I’m the sort of young man who falls naturally into a trap. Barchesham College — to this. Out of the frying-pan into the fire. From frustration to senility — not a bad description of a respectable life. But this — this isn’t possible. A trap. A trap. ... I wonder if I’m beaten. Ugly and monstrous. . . . Still . . . What’s been done can be undone. . . . Queer it feels . . . nasty, uncomfortable, dirty old body.”

“What has to be done? Get on the track of Dr. McPhister. That’s the trouble. They may both have skipped. I suppose old Elvesham went off to collect my things. That’s why he paid the two thousand pounds. I suppose he has a banking account. I suppose his cheques can be traced. After all, I suppose I’ve got some money here. Probably I’m not badly off so far as money goes.”

Sits down and pours out coffee. “Ugh! These stringy old hands!”

Wilkins appears. “Your clothes are all ready, sir.”

Elvesham 2: “Stop a minute, Wilkins.”

He stands up and takes the measure of the little butler. “Wilkins, I like your face. I’m in trouble. You’ve got to help me. You think I’ve had an operation.”

Wilkins: “A slight operation, sir.”

Elvesham 2: “Well, it wasn’t. It was an experiment.”

Wilkins: “An experiment. Very good, sir.”

Elvesham 2: “It was an experiment all out. A rather dangerous experiment. With the mind. You’ll find me quite another man. My mind is a little dazed. My memory’s all at sixes and sevens.”

Wilkins: “The doctor, sir, said your mind might be a little dazed. He said you might have fancies.”

Elvesham 2: “I haven’t got fancies — don’t get that into your head. What sort of fancies?”

Wilkins: “He said you might fancy you were somebody else.”

Elvesham 2: “Did he? I see. No, there’s nothing in that. But my memory, Wilkins, is bleached white.”

Wilkins does his best to understand. “Yessir — bleached white — kind of blank, sir.”

Elvesham 2: “So the strange doctor left no address. And now tell me, have I a lawyer? What’s his name?”

Wilkins: “Why, Mr. Siddonson, of course. He was here last week.”

Elvesham 2: “Siddonson. Not a common name. He won’t be hard to find. Where do I live in London?”

Wilkins: “Sussex Terrace, sir.” Elvesham 2: “And do you go to and fro?”

Wilkins: “No, sir. Mr. Mutimer is in charge of the London establishment.”

Elvesham 2: “Any cars here?”

Wilkins: “The usual two, sir.”

Elvesham 2 walks to the door of the dressing-room and surveys the experimental installation.

Elvesham 2: “Don’t touch any of this. We may want it again.”

Wilkins: “The doctor, sir, said it was to be all cleared away.”

Elvesham 2: “Never mind what the doctor said. I’m master here, anyhow. Where’s the key of this room? In the door? Good. I’ll take it

when I come out."

A burly young man walks in with an air of authority.

Young Man: 'I didn't know you was awake, sir. You shouldn't have got up without me."

Elvesham 2: "Who are you?"

Young Man: "Well, I'm the trained attendant, sir. From the County Mental Home. Dr. McPhister thought you might need a little care."

Elvesham 2: "You drink beer too early in the morning, young man. You smell of beer. Look me in the eye. Am I in need of what you call a little care?"

Young Man: "You look all right to me, sir."

Elvesham 2: "And I am all right. And see here! — you pack your bag and go back to the County Mental Home and say I sent you. . . . Nobody has certified me. . . . Wilkins, clear this lout off the premises."

Wilkins obeys, and the young man goes.

Elvesham 2: "So that's the game. Mad? Fancies about being somebody else. They counted on that. Bit obvious, Elvesham.

But it's going to be difficult. If I tell this story — If he outfaces

me. No. Delusional insanity. I've got to watch my steps. Clever, but not too clever."

Wilkins reappears.

Elvesham 2: "Wilkins, where's my bureau?"

Wilkins leads the way back to the parlour. Elvesham 2 tries a drawer. "Locked. You don't know where my keys are?"

Wilkins: "Haven't you got them, sir?"

Elvesham 2: "No."

He pulls up short and stares at the date indicator 011 his desk.

Elvesham 2: "The sixteenth — the sixteenth? What was it about the fifteenth? By Jove! I ought to have been at Clifford's Beaches yesterday."

For the first time he thinks of Marguerite. "Marguerite! What's going to happen about Marguerite? If that swine goes after her! But he'd never be such a fool. And yet I remember — he looked at her. He kept looking at her. . . ."

The little esplanade at Clifford's Beaches in front of the Grand

Hotel. Marguerite is sitting in a canopied chair with a book. A clock on the hotel shows three in the afternoon. She is inattentive and glances ever and again at the hotel. She cannot understand the disappearance of Arthur. A station car arrives and he descends. He looks towards the esplanade and Marguerite waves to him. He comes forward eagerly and stands beside her chair. There is a certain constraint between them and they do not kiss.

Marguerite: "Well? And where have you been, Mr. Arcturus? You vanished yesterday afternoon."

Arthur 2: "I went to London in a temper."

Marguerite: "So?"

Arthur 2: "Because I'm in love and you tantalise me beyond endurance."

Marguerite: "And what did you do in London?"

Arthur 2: "I went on with my temper."

Marguerite: "And now you've brought it back with you?"

He sits down beside her.

Arthur 2: "Darling, don't you understand love is impatient — love is a fever?"

Marguerite: "Love, my dear, isn't a fit of temper."

Arthur 2: "I went to London thinking of you, I thought of you all the time, desiring you, and here I am, a storm of impatience."

Marguerite leans forward and scrutinises him. "You look tired and fretted, my dear. There is a sort of strain in your face. I've never seen you looking so old. That drug or experiment or whatever it was, has left you jangling. Let's take a boat and dive and swim. That will bring you back to coolness again."

Arthur 2 is stricken with doubt: "Dive and swim!"

She stands up and he stands up, too. "If I'm in this fever ought I to swim? To-day? I might get a chill."

She is astonished. "Get a chill! What an elderly expression!"

They go to change. Presently they are off the shore in a boat, and Marguerite dives gracefully from the stern. Arthur 2 stands up, by no means sure of himself. He makes an awkward flop into the water and is immediately in difficulties.

Both Marguerite and the boatman are incredulous at his inability. Marguerite, who is some distance away, treads water and cries:

“Darling! Don’t splash about like that!”

Arthur 2, swallowing water and clutching: “I can’t. I can’t.”

Boatman: “Float, sir. Float for a bit.”

Arthur 2: “Help. I can’t do it.”

The boatman realises things may be serious and pulls round to assist. Marguerite swims back to help. With some difficulty Arthur 2 is got aboard the boat again. He clutches the side and is manifestly incompetent. But he is more frightened and ashamed than exhausted. He makes some clumsy attempt to help Marguerite back into the boat.

Marguerite: “All right, dear. I can manage.” She swings up over the stern and immediately concentrates on Arthur 2. “What happened to you? What is it?”

Arthur 2: “A sort of vertigo. I seemed to go all to pieces. It’s that confounded experiment!”

Marguerite becomes all tenderness and solicitude. She sits up in the boat and Arthur 2 lies at her feet resting against her knees, and she takes his head and runs her hand soothingly through his hair. “Poor tired little Arcturus. And his hair is all wet. And his head going round and round. And they made him dive and swim.” To the boatman: “We’ll go ashore. Right on the beach here. Mr. Reston isn’t well.”

Arthur 2’s expression becomes one of extreme contentment. Then Marguerite helps him up the beach where they rest. She sits and he lies prone close to her. She has a Japanese sunshade with which she shades his head.

Arthur 2: “My dear, it is not altogether this experiment which has disturbed me. That has just released things that were there all the time. Love deferred maketh the body go sick. Now that we are free — with all this money — with all these prospects — Darling! I’ve waited for you so long. You don’t know how long. . . .”

Marguerite: “Sweetheart, let me whisper.” She speaks very softly. “Do you think that I have neither dreams nor desire. D’you think that I’m not sometimes impatient?”

Arthur 2: “It’s good to hear you say that. Thank you for that.” Marguerite: “If you want, darling, I’m ready to marry you. Quite soon. I’m ready to be yours altogether. I’m ready and more than

ready. It could be done now — in such a little while."

Arthur 2 sits up: "Marry! My dear. The parson and the relations, the cards and the reception. I can't wait for all that. Let us slip off together somewhere. Now. We've got this money. The adventure of it. The glorious feeling of defying the world. Say you will come. And then I should feel you really loved me. Love, my darling, is a desperate thing or it is nothing. Heaven alone knows how badly I need your love."

While these last sentences are being spoken a shadow has come into the foreground of the picture. It moves noiselessly until it lies across both the recumbent bodies and then it stays still. They become aware of this new presence almost simultaneously. They turn round to face it. With her, astonishment passes into recognition. With him, recognition is immediate and fear and anger follow.

Elvesham 2 is standing very still and looking down at them. He is wearing a white linen suit. His hands are in his pockets. He speaks without apparent excitement. "So here you are," he says softly.

Elvesham 2: "I've been looking for you" — slight pause— "Reston, all the afternoon."

Arthur 2 sits up and then stands up. Marguerite kneels up watching them both.

Arthur 2: "What on earth are you doing down here?"

Elvesham 2: "Just seeing what you are doing down here."

Arthur 2 bites his lips perplexed: "I don't want you to talk to us. Marguerite!" He speaks in a lower voice: "This man is mad. He is obsessed by a fantastic delusion."

Elvesham 2 lays his hand on Arthur 2's shoulder, and presses on his to restrain him. "If anyone has fantastic delusions, my lad, it is you. I am your old familiar friend, Elvesham, and I mean nothing but good to you both."

Arthur 2: "I ask you not to listen to him Marguerite."

Marguerite: "But why shouldn't I listen?"

Elvesham 2: "Yes, why shouldn't she listen? Do be reasonable. You are practically my adopted son. We all belong together. Won't you both dine at my table in the hotel this evening?"

Arthur 2: "We can't. I'm engaged to someone else."'

Elvesham 2 to Marguerite: "But you're not engaged? Are you in

the hotel? Whom are you staying with?”

Marguerite: “I’m in lodgings with my mother. . . . Here is my mother.”

Marguerite’s mother appears, carrying a wrap. “Darling, I’ve been looking for you everywhere. I’ve got your wrap for you — before the evening gets chilly. Did Arthur have a nice swim? Oh, isn’t that Mr. Elvesham from the Castle?”

Elvesham 2: “Sure it is, as the Irish say, Mrs. Swift, and I’m asking your charming daughter and you to dine with me at the hotel.”

Marguerite’s Mother: “Well, but that would be nice]”

Elvesham 2: “Then we’ll take that as settled. Eight o’clock. And meanwhile, Reston, my lad, since you cannot dine with us, you and I will have a little chat together.”

Elvesham 2 and Arthur 2 walk off together to another part of the esplanade.

Elvesham 2: “Elvesham, you’re not a particularly wise old man, are you? Just a bit greedy to want my girl as well as my body, eh? So you had to come down here and give yourself away to the one person who was most likely to find you out.”

Arthur 2: “Now look here, Elvesham. I don’t know what you’re talking about. My name is Arthur Reston. I have always been Arthur Reston, and I am going to be Arthur Reston until the end of the chapter. You are insane. You are suffering from a delusion that we have changed bodies.”

Elvesham 2: “So. And that’s the attitude you’re going to take.”

Arthur 2: “It’s how things are.”

Elvesham 2: “But if I fall in with the idea that I am Mr. Elvesham, and if I say nothing to throw a doubt on that, how will you persuade people I’m suffering from any delusion at all?”

Arthur 2: “That will satisfy me completely. If you stick to it.”

Elvesham 2: “I wonder if it will satisfy you. You see, I am going to be your great friend and patron now, that wealthy old humbug, Elvesham, always at your side, always watching over that body you have stolen from me. I don’t think you’ve reckoned with that possibility. You may find me a considerable hindrance. I ‘m going to be always between you and my Marguerite. Yes — I know — you love her. But so do I. She’s my Marguerite and don’t you forget it.

Don’t you forget it.” He takes Arthur 2 by the arm in an almost fatherly way. “I have been thinking over this situation you have created, thinking harder perhaps than you have done. I’ve not such a bad intelligence, you know, 1938 pattern, and not 1885. Perhaps it has been built up by scientific work and all that on a better foundation than yours. You don’t know what you want. You think you are gaining a wonderful extension of life.”

Arthur 2 realises he is falling into acquiescence: “I don’t see why I should have to listen to all this extraordinary stuff.”

Elvesham 2: “You know why you listen well enough. You might have taken — and what a wonder it would have been! — fifty active years beyond the seventies. But you have let an old man’s envy of mere youthfulness get the better of you. You are not taking a new chapter in life. You are just being a young man over again — desire for love — all the old story. Why couldn’t you leave Marguerite alone? No, no, no. Don’t break away. You have to hear me out. You’re in your own trap. Always I shall be standing in wait for you. Somehow — I don’t know how yet — somehow I shall compel you to admit this first experiment has failed — somehow I shall squeeze you back out of that body of mine into your own.”

Arthur 2: “I suppose I must listen to your ravings!”

Elvesham 2: “Well, what else can you do, you frowsty old thief of life — what else can you do? You put your head in a trap. . . . You won’t think better of it, will you? And throw the game up now? — take old age decently as an old man should.”

Arthur 2: “No.”

Elvesham 2: “You’ve got my body and you mean to keep it.”

Arthur 2: “Yes. To be plain with you — yes.”

Arthur 2 and Dr. McPhister dining. They are more than halfway through their dinner and Arthur 2 is drinking nervously, he had already had rather too much for a young physique, which reacts more quickly to alcohol than an older one. Both men are in dinner jackets.

Marguerite, Marguerite’s mother and Elvesham 2 at a distant table. The three have just come in and the maitre d’hôtel shows them their seats. Marguerite glances at Reston as she sits down, but the lovers exchange no greetings.

Arthur 2: “There we are. I thought we’d have him put away in an

asylum and everything would go well. And here he is, malignant, revengeful and most infernally cool-headed."

McPhister: "Every experiment is liable to the unforeseen. That is what experiments are. Hunts for the unforeseen."

Arthur 2: "Oh, don't philosophise. What are we to do?"

McPhister: "I am nothing if not a philosopher and all my interest in this affair is philosophical. You must let me deal with things my own way. I warned you not to pursue this girl here. I did at least warn you of that. I told you plainly I was helping you on to a new stage of human life, to wider opportunities, to enlargement. But you must turn back to adolescence again, to mating and the love delusion. Has a life-time taught you nothing? Is that old cycle of mating and love and struggle and personal competition all that is possible to humanity? Beyond that nothing?"

Arthur 2, with a touch of boredom: "Well, what else is there?"

The two men rise from their places to go to the darkened terrace outside. A wind is blowing and the lanterns swing about and the shadows dance. A few couples are nearer the lighted hotel window s and McPhister and Arthur 2 are rather isolated.

McPhister: "After all, that old body isn't so very strong — it must die soon."

Arthur 2: "And meanwhile he can hold me in a state of subjection. He knows exactly what he is doing. It may be — for years."

McPhister: "Every wrong you do a man makes you his slave."

Arthur 2: "Even now he may be inside there — making suggestions to her — hinting things against me. . . ."

McPhister draws a general conclusion: "If you must do wrong to a man — I should say — wrong him outright and finally."

Arthur 2: "You mean?"

McPhister: "Don't leave a lot of him about."

Elvesham 2, who has parted from Marguerite and her mother, appears at the corner of the hotel, and strolls to the parapet of the terrace, and stands, lit by moonlight and lantern light, looking out over the sea. His face, we note, has changed since the experiment. His eyes are steadier and his expression more steadfast and thoughtful. His mouth is firmer. He strolls slowly along the terrace with his hands in his pockets, passing McPhister and Arthur 2

without seeing them.

McPhister's dark face comes close to Arthur 2's. He whispers slowly: "There goes your man, Elvesham."

Arthur 2: "Well?"

McPhister: "He seems to be going for a walk — alone."

Arthur 2 stares at his own feet with an expression of extreme perplexity. He arrives at a decision.

McPhister: "Well?"

Arthur 2: "I think, I, too — will go for a walk."

McPhister is left alone meditating. He drums on the table thoughtfully and peers after Arthur 2 and Elvesham 2, and shakes his head: "The experiment is going wrong — from bad to worse!"

Elvesham 2 walks along the cliff edge, deep in thought. One hears very faintly the slow lapping splash of the swell against the cliff below.

Elvesham 2: "Things look dim but magical and there is a sort of stillness. ... I wonder if these ears are a little deaf. . . ." He goes to the extreme edge of the cliff and looks down. "High tide. I ought to hear the wash of the sea. It is calm, but one ought to hear. Yes, I must be a little deaf, though I seem to get what people say. Gods, the serenity! The world through an old man's eyes has a loveliness of its own." Pause. "And I was praying to you, old Aunt Moon, not three weeks ago! But not quite for this . . . no"

Arthur 2 appears creeping up behind him, looking left and right. He hesitates and then stoops swiftly like a charging football player and thrusts Elvesham 2 forward. Elvesham twists round and clutches at the turf so as to see his assailant before he goes over the cliff edge. As he clings Arthur 2 stoops down to him and strikes at his face. Elvesham 2 falls, leaving Arthur 2 crouching at the cliff edge, dismayed by the vigour of his own action. Splash!

Arthur 2 hears the splash. "That settles that." But he still peers down. "Lord he's trying to swim. Much he'll swim!"

He takes another look and then stands up. "Better get away. . . . No — not down the cliff path — inland and by the field'. ..."

Elvesham 2 swims stoutly in the moonlight. He floats with the utmost economy of energy. He is getting his clothes off as he swims. But he finds it hard work. He spouts water. "Can I do it? Rotten old

lungs," he gasps.

A skiff appears with a girl — Marguerite's friend — a boatman and two middle-aged men in bathing costumes. Elvesham 2: "Hi. Help! Help!"

Eventually he is hauled into the boat and he faints.

One of the Men: "Get him some brandy. He's exhausted. How did he get into the water?"

The Other Man: "He must have dived or fallen from the cliff."

Crowd at the boat landing place. Elvesham 2, still insensible, is carried up to the little shelter. Arthur 2 is seen coming towards the group.

Arthur 2: "What! Man drowned! You've found him already. Who can he be?"

An Old Boatman: "He's not drowned."

In the shelter by the boat landing, Elvesham 2 is coming to. One of the men from the boat gives him brandy.

A Bystander: "But how did you get into the water?"

Elvesham 2, weakly: "Eyesight bad. Walked clean over the cliff edge. Moonlight very deceitful."

He discovers Arthur 2 in the crowd. "Hullo, Reston!"

Arthur 2, coming forward: "Elvesham! What induced you to jump into the water?"

Elvesham 2 to Arthur 2: "All right. All right."

Pause while he gathers strength. He addresses Reston. "I know exactly where I am now — exactly. Mr. Reston here, is — friend of mine. But I want someone else. Where's my man — what's his name? — Wilkins." (Wilkins appears.) "Ah! I knew you wouldn't be far off."

Elvesham 2: "Wilkins, don't leave me. Don't leave me for a moment. Put me to bed. God! This feeble heart!" He faints again.

Next morning; he is propped up by pillows in his bed and his face looks white and transparent. Arthur 2 stands sullenly at the foot of the bed.

Elvesham 2: "I think it very impulsive and clumsy of you. This old body you've given me won't last a year. They talk of a young man in a hurry. You are an old man in a hurry." Rubs his cheek. "That was a nasty punch you gave me. And unnecessary."

Arthur 2: “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

Elvesham 2 looks at him gravely and smiles. “I suppose you must keep up this sort of thing. Why should you? I don’t intend to send that body of mine to prison or to hurt it in any way. I don’t want to bring the name of Reston into disgrace. I mean to get it hack. But I shan’t give you away. What are you afraid of? Why are you so impatient?”

Arthur 2: “I’m not impatient. What have I to be impatient about?”

Elvesham 2: “Now don’t you know that you must pick up more about your new self before I go — or you won’t join on. If you want to take my place you must understand the research on which you are supposed to be so intent. Your old nineteenth-century memories stuffed with stale ideas and wrong ideas about matter and force and so on. I doubt if you have any real grasp of four dimensional geometry. You must bring yourself up-to-date. Clear all that old clutter from your wits and get in the new conceptions. If you won’t die you must learn — and learn over again. You’re stale. All old men are stale. Marguerite knows far more of modern physics than you do. I’m only trying to help you. But you’ll have to come with me to the Barchesham Laboratory, while I train you. Every day. You can’t get out of that.”

Arthur 2: “Every day I’m to work in that beastly little laboratory of yours with you!”

Elvesham 2: “From ten to four. It’s work I love. You’ve got to stand it.”

Wilkins appears. “Miss Marguerite Swift.”

Elvesham 2: “Show her in. Don’t go, Reston. She’ll think it funny if you go.”

Arthur 2 shrugs his shoulders, takes a stride or so up and down the room and stands looking towards the door.

Marguerite enters with a bunch of white roses. She seems slightly surprised to see Arthur 2 in the room. She takes the other side of the bed so that there is no close greeting with Arthur 2.

Marguerite, with a faint flavour of reproach: “I didn’t see you this morning, Arthur.”

Arthur 2: “Where were we to meet?”

Marguerite: “If you don’t know, I can’t tell you. I’ve brought you

some flowers, Mr. Elvesham, and come to see how you are."

Elvesham 2 glances from one to the other with a faint smile of gratification at their misunderstanding.

Elvesham 2: "You see, Reston was here before you."

Marguerite: "You're not talking of any more experiments?" Elvesham 2: "What do you think, Reston?"

Arthur 2: "I've done with them."

Elvesham 2: "Not just one more try?"

Marguerite: "I forbid it. I don't know what it's done to you, Mr. Elvesham, because I didn't know you at all before, but I'm very dissatisfied with Arthur — very dissatisfied. It's strained his nerves. It's altered him."

Elvesham 2: "Don't lose heart, Marguerite dear. Keep him in his place and up to the mark and he'll come back all right one day — never fear. But to tell you the truth, that was a silly experiment of ours and no one can regret it more than I do. What lovely wild roses these are!"

Arthur 2: "There are better roses than that along through the woods beyond the cliff. You ought to see them. Marguerite."

Elvesham 2: "You must take her there. Yes. But first — do you mind if we have a little talk?"

Marguerite: "We came to talk — if you're strong enough."

Elvesham 2: "Well, to be frank, aren't you two young people thinking of marriage?"

Arthur 2: "We are."

Marguerite: "When you have quite recovered, Arthur."

Elvesham 2 smiles cheerfully at Arthur 2. "He'll recover," he says.

Marguerite: "I know he'll recover."

Elvesham 2: "But, Marguerite. You know I'm a solitary man, a lonely old man. I doubt if this old body of mine — it's a rather overstrained old body, Reston — will last much longer. I want to do all I can, my dear, for our young friend here. I believe in him. He's a wonder. He's got an old head on young shoulders. He'll go far. But you're a darling too, my dear. If I were a young man I'd tell you I was in love with you. Well — is it selfish of me? — if I asked you not to marry and go away for just a little while? Eh, Modge of the

Hill?" He takes her hand.

Marguerite is surprised and then snatches her hand away. "When did he tell you he called me Modge of the Hill?"

Elvesham 2: "Reston, when did you tell me you called her Modge of the Hill?"

Arthur 2: "It slipped out the other night."

Elvesham 2: "Of course, it slipped out the other night."

Marguerite: "But it's such a silly name to tell — anyone."

Elvesham 2: "But I'm not anyone, my dear. And did you by ■

I

chance call him old Stodge of the Hill? By way of repartee?"

Marguerite: "But how did you know?"

Elvesham 2: "I like to think of attractive people having fanciful names. If I were your lover I should always be thinking of names for you and saying little things to please you. I'd love-to have a silly little language that only you and I understood. But that's all dreaming. It's wonderful how all this love business lingers in the imagination after we ought to have grown out of it completely. I haven't forgotten. But never mind that now. The strange thing about Reston there is that since this experiment he has forgotten all your names and all the little language you used to use with him. You try him."

Arthur 2: "Oh but — nonsense!"

Elvesham 2: "You try him, my dear — you try him. When you go to see those roses. It will all come back some day — but not yet. And of course you can't marry him until he remembers the little language and all the ways you had of calling one another. Can you? It wouldn't be decent. You can't be dear to each other without these very dear little things. But I can't go on talking. I'm tired. That plunge in the sea was rough on my poor old body, Reston. But you two have a talk together — and promise me."

Arthur 2: "But what can he know of love — and the impatience of love?"

Marguerite: "He seems to know quite a lot about love, Arthur."

Elvesham 2: "More than you have ever forgotten, Arthur. I was

young once. Sometimes it seems only a few days ago that I was young. But the sunshine out there is calling you both. How

I would love to be with you, Marguerite, and watch that pretty face of yours when you see those wild roses."

A woodland walk upon the Barchesham Castle estate. The time is late October. Leaves are beginning to fall and a glimpse of fields in the distance shows stubble being ploughed.

Arthur 2 is in gaiters and carrying a gun. He walks through a drift of newly fallen leaves and kicks them spitefully. Behind his back McPhister, dressed in ordinary walking costume, appears suddenly from nowhere — and hurries to overtake him. Arthur

2turns at sound of his approach.

McPhister: "Hullo, Faust, how goes it?"

Arthur 2: "I wish you'd remember my name is Elvesham I mean Reston. Where have you sprung from?"

McPhister: "Just to see how the great experiment is going on."

Arthur 2: "It isn't going on. It's stuck. It's paralysed."

McPhister: "Why don't you do something to get away from this close little tangle here? Why don't you travel? Why don't you begin your new career?"

Arthur 2: "He won't let me. He keeps me here a prisoner. He will hardly let this body of his out of his sight for fear that I should do it a mischief."

McPhister: "And the great love affair?"

Arthur 2: "He knows her mind. He and she become more and more easy and confidential with each other and she and I realise more and more our fundamental estrangement."

McPhister: "You still want her?"

Arthur 2: "More than ever, and I cannot get a word with her."

McPhister: "But things cannot go on like this. That old body is so aged and feeble-"

Arthur 2: "It isn't so ill as it ought to be."

McPhister: "Perhaps Christian scientists are right after all, and the mind has an influence over the body. It would be amusing if his body began to get younger and yours began to age. He certainly isn't as ill as he ought to be."

Arthur 2: "He takes great care of himself. And of me. He's so

infernally temperate. He drinks nothing but milk until dinner time — milk — glasses of milk! He insists on my playing croquet with him. McPhister, it's a game for the damned.''

McPhister: "I've noticed that."

Arthur 2 goes on with his grievances: "He keeps me here. He stints me of money. He keeps me in training. He lets me drink nothing but milk, too. And all that lovely wine of mine spoiling at Sussex Terrace. He's sent away my cook — simply to exasperate me — and got a good plain cook."

McPhister: "I know those good plain cooks. I travel, you know, in England and Scotland and Ireland as well as abroad."

Arthur 2: "He is constantly scheming to make me play cricket. \ daren't play cricket. I never did play cricket. If I played it now it would give the whole show away. And a ball might kill me at any moment. They throw the ball about at cricket in the wildest way. I ask you, McPhister, how long have I to wait?"

McPhister, abruptly: "Do you never go shooting together?" McPhister vanishes. He is standing beside Arthur 2 at one instant and the next he is not there.

Arthur 2: "Shooting? Once or twice, yes. Bad shots, both of us. He got nothing and I peppered a few rabbits and a bird .... Shooting? Now what are you putting into my head McPhister?"

He turns to look at the doctor. He stares with astonishment and stands gaping about him.

Arthur 2: "I could have staked my life on the fact that I was talking to McPhister. Have I just been talking to myself all this time? My imagination is beginning to play tricks with me. That idea of shooting. . . ."

A bridle path leading to a glade in the Barchesham woods. One sees down a long shady vista to a small party sunlit in the distance, moving about in the glade. Elvesham 2 is sitting on a log and two middle-aged sportsmen are with him. There are two keepers with sticks. They are waiting for the rest of the party. Two footmen come carrying a hamper. They put it down to rest.

First Footman, Hooper: "Phew! hot for October, Jinks."

J inks, referring to the hamper: "Pretty 'eavy to-day — for five guns."

Hooper: “It’s this extra milk in its ice-jacket. If you’d told me a year ago that Mr. Elvesham would take to drinking glass after glass of milk and never touching nothing alcoholic but a glass of’ ock for dinner, I’d ‘a’ called you a silly ass.”

Jinks: “And the way he makes that young man drink milk and be’ave ‘imself — I never did.”

Hooper: “Curious about that young Mr. Reston. Picks him up — makes him his heir and all that — and tyrannises over him. You’d think it was pure luck if you was made heir to all this.”

Jinks: “I should.”

Hooper: “And look at it. Soaks ‘im in milk — flirts with his girl.”

Jinks makes a cluck of” protest.

Hooper: “Well, he does. Goes to the college every day and holds his nose down to them scientific researches of his. I tell you it’s a slavery.”

Jinks: “ ‘E’s all right to everybody else.”

Hooper: “ ‘E’s improved. Before your time, before he picked up young Mr. Reston, the old gentleman was very nearly unbearable. But now V gets it all and we . . .”

Jinks: “ ‘E gives us a nice time. He’s jolly to the servants. He’s kind to everyone.” Hooper: “Perhaps it’s drinking that milk.”

Jinks: “Oh, gee!”

Hooper: “Well, we’ve got to be charitable, Jinks. Even milk may have merits. I never see a man so changed.”

The sound of a shot from the glade. Commotion. Arthur 2 and another young man have joined the party. Wilkins is with them and a boy carrying two birds, and Arthur 2, holding his gun dangerously on his arm, has contrived by a clumsy movement to fire it off accidentally at a range of a couple of yards point blank at Elvesham 2’s side. Elvesham 2 rises from the log on which he is sitting and falls forward on his face. Arthur 2 starts back in assumed horror. Everyone is stunned for the moment. Wilkins is the first to get to Elvesham 2’s side and to try to lift him.

Elvesham 2 is the centre of interest. His side is blackened but there are no signs of shot. He is insensible. Wilkins kneels by him and has turned him over on his back.

Wilkins: “It’s his heart. He’s fainted but he’s not hurt.”

One of the Middle-aged Shots: “Let’s see. I’m something of a doctor still. Get some cold water — ice.” He comes round to the other side of Elvesham 2 and produces a businesslike brandy flask.

Arthur 2: “My God! My God! I’ll never handle a gun again.” He shows the other young man. “It’s this sleeve of mine caught the trigger.”

Hooper to Jinks, arriving breathlessly: “Go back and get water and ice from the hamper. Hurry!’

Arthur 2: “Where did the shot go? Did it miss him? Isn’t he shot?”

Wilkins, kneeling up beside Elvesham 2’s body and speaking with a Cockney intensity of significance: “Naw! Mr. Reston, he isn’t shot.”

Arthur 2, dismayed: “Not shot?”

He glances swiftly at the man next to him, pulls himself together and says “Thank God!”

The Middle-aged Gentleman, who is something of a doctor: “It’s just a faint. It’s shock — nothing more. Astonishing escape.”

Wilkins: “Mr. Reston, you got to thank me for not being a murderer here and now.”

Arthur 2, centre of attention: “Murderer!”

Wilkins: “Well, ommicide if you like! You see — I was watching you this morning and I never see anyone ‘andling a gun more dangerous than you. Always seemed to be pointing it at someone — mostly Mr. Elvesham. So I took the liberty of loading you some of Mr. Elvesham’s cartridges and taking away yours.”

The Second Middle-aged Gentleman: “What difference did that make?”

Wilkins, expository: “Oh, you know since Mr. Elvesham took to drinking milk and all that, he didn’t seem to like killing things. He went out shooting with his shooting parties because he didn’t want to be unneighbourly and a spoil-sport and all that, but he had a special sort of blank cartridge made for him — looking all right and sounded all right, but it hadn’t no shot at all. See? And that’s what I give to young Mr. Reston to-day.”

Arthur 2: “I’ve got to be grateful to you. Wilkins, I won’t forget — all my life.”

The Second Middle-aged Gentleman: “Lucky escape for you,

young man.”

Elvesham 2 recovers consciousness. He stares at the sky for a second. He looks at Wilkins and smiles faintly. “So he got me, Wilkins?”

Wilkins: “No, sir — blank shot.”

Elvesham 2 tries to understand that.

First Middle-aged Gentleman: “Who do you mean, got you?”

Elvesham 2’s face shows a returning intelligence. He smiles at Arthur 2. “Just an old joke of mine with Wilkins. Who did shoot me?”

Arthur 2: “It was my gun, sir.”

Elvesham 2: “You’re a clumsy lad, Arthur — clumsy lad. I’ll have some more of that brandy. I’ll be all right in five minutes. Where are those fellows with the lunch?”

Hooper and J inks remember their duties and go off briskly to fetch the hamper.

Arthur 2 kneels beside Elvesham 2 as if in a mood of remorseful devotion.

Elvesham 2 in an intense undertone: “You silly old ass. If you get that body of mine hanged or sent to gaol — I’ve a great mind to disinherit you here and now.”

Scene changes to the hall of Barchesham Castle. The shooting party has come in for early cocktails before dispersal. They stand about in the awkwardness of departure. Elvesham 2, who has recovered so that he is only a little painful over his ribs, calls out “Wilkins! Another glass of milk. And one for Mr. Reston . . . . Good-bye, Colonel Greenly; good-bye, Mr. Wisdom. You leave us at our horrible potations. The great milk cure. Drink More Milk.”

Outside shot of the Castle entrance. The guests get into a rather old car while Elvesham 2 and Arthur 2 wave good-bye. Then Elvesham 2 turns to Arthur 2 with something very like a grin on his face, in spite of the fact that he feels a twinge at his side.

Elvesham 2: “Forgive the impertinence of an old man addressing a young man old enough to be his grandfather, but you’re losing your nerve. This business with the gun! My dear fellow! I find it hard to keep your secret. Really I do. The servants don’t like you here. They think you’re an interloper. Naturally. They’re watching you all the

time. Don't you realise that! You know now, as things are, even if I die a natural death, there'll be an inquest and all sorts of suspicions about you. I think seriously about changing my will and leaving everything to Marguerite. Won't you wait a year? I doubt if this old body will last a year. For a man of your experience you're absurdly impatient."

Arthur 2, in a state of nervous misery: "Can't you make things a little easier for me?"

Elvesham 2: "Now that's a lovely question — a lovely question. Coming from you. Give me back my body, Mr. Body-Snatcher, and then see how easy I'll make things for you."

Arthur 2: "This practice of imprisoning me in the laboratory every day with you while you do your scientific work, is driving me mad. I'm not accountable for my actions."

Elvesham 2: "You — with your old-fashioned mind — don't understand how interesting science is. And after all, it's Reston's work — your work. You will get all the credit for it. You'd better try to understand it. You'll have to pretend to understand it when I'm dead and gone."

A biological and bacteriological laboratory, not a very well-equipped one, in the Barchesham College. Professor Spike and a woman assistant, both in white overalls, are going about the laboratory in a gravely disconsolate state. They are looking for something that has been mislaid. They are looking in the hopeless way in which people search a room that has already been searched several times. They come face to face. Woman Assistant: "They've gone, Professor Spike. And that's all about it."

Professor Spike: "Enough typhoid to kill all Barchesham."

Woman Assistant: "What are we to do — tell people?"

Professor Spike makes the hopeless gesture of a thoroughly unpractical man.

Elvesham 2 comes in. He looks ill and he walks with none of the youthful springiness that has hitherto characterised his gait since the experiment. "Hello, Spike, I'm knocking off. I'm feeling a little tired. A cold or something. I'm going home — perhaps to bed. But the master mind is staying behind to carry on the work."

He walks past Professor Spike, who hesitates and then says: "Mr.

Elvesham!”

Elvesham 2: “Yes, old man?”

Professor Spike: “I’m not a practical man, sir. Do you remember at the cricket match when first you came here you asked if I wanted anything for my research work. I had to consider the feelings of Principal Jeddles and practically I said I didn’t. Great pity. What I want, sir, is a lock-up laboratory to work in — instead of this, that I have to share with two other people. It isn’t a laboratory so much as a highway.”

Elvesham 2: “I’m sorry if I’m invading you, Spike.”

Spike: “It’s not that. But I’m in a frightful fix. I’ve had something stolen.”

Elvesham 2: “What?”

Professor Spike becomes confidential: “Typhoid fever!”

Elvesham 2: “How?”

Professor Spike: “Tubes like this.” Shows a small corked tube. “Ten of them. What am I to do? What on earth am I to do, sir? Enough to infect the county water supply and start an epidemic.”

Elvesham 2: “That’s serious, Spike. You are in a mess.”

Professor Spike: “Tell the police?”

Elvesham 2: “Mustn’t start a panic.”

Professor Spike: “Private detectives?”

Elvesham 2: “More sense in that. You’re in a nasty mess, Spike. Let me think it over — my wits are a bit muddy to-day. I don’t know why. If I get an idea I’ll telephone.”

In the hall of Barchesham Castle Elvesham 2 goes to the hall table where there is a glass of milk. Wilkins appears as Elvesham 2 drinks it. Elvesham 2: “Docs Mr. Reston get his milk? I never see a second glass here nowadays.”

Wilkins: “Mr. Reston has his milk sent to his room now.”

Elvesham 2: “And he drinks it there?”

Wilkins: “That I can’t say, sir. Everybody hasn’t your absorbin’ passion for milk, sir.”

Exit Wilkins.

Elvesham 2 puts down his glass thoughtfully. Then his eye catches something at the back of the still unlit hall fire. He becomes curious and walks towards the fireplace.

He picks up a small glass specimen tube broken and turns it round to a small label of stamp paper bearing the letters B.T.

Elvesham 2: “Bacillus typhosus. Looks to me as though I am done.”

He reflects. “Yes, that’s why I feel so queer. I’ve got it. I’ve taken all right. He wins.

“Now what am I to do? What am I to do? Die. I shall die all right. I’ve got no strength left to fight it. Die as decently as possible. What shall I do? Leave everything to Marguerite? Set Siddonson on to him for forgery? What good will that do? But he mustn’t marry her. Will she? ... I must think fast — before this fever gets a complete hold on me. . . .”

He goes into the little parlour of the castle. “No way out that I can see. No. Unless — Wait a moment! Wait a moment — one

little gleam of hope. One thing-” He moves his hand as if

checking points in a scheme. “If I can carry off that.”

He suddenly takes up the telephone.

Back in the hall where the fire is now lit, Elvesham 2 sits down deep in thought. Arthur 2 comes in: “You telephoned for me?”

Elvesham 2 stands up with his back to the fire. “I wanted to look at you.”

Arthur 2: “Is that all?”

Elvesham 2, scrutinising him: “You don’t look well. You look worried and troubled about the eyes. You are ill.”

Arthur 2: “I thought you were feeling ill.”

Elvesham 2: “That’s gone. A touch of cold, and a dose of quinine has cured it. But you are really ill, old chap. You are in for trouble.”

Arthur 2: “What trouble?”

Elvesham 2: “Typhoid. They say it goes harder with a young body than with an old.” Arthur 2: “But what makes you think *I* have typhoid?”

Elvesham 2, smiling: “This.”’ He holds out the little broken tube.

Arthur 2, after start of recognition: “What’s that?”

Elvesham 2: “Elvesham, you are an old fool.”

Arthur 2: “What do you mean?”

Elvesham 2: “I told you the servants didn’t like you. The faithful Wilkins has kept his eye on you. You have been putting this

infection into my milk. He has seen you doing it, I think, Elvesham. And every day he has changed my milk for yours."

Arthur 2: "You mean-? It's absurd!"

Elvesham 2: "I saw him doing it this morning. I asked him why he did it and he wouldn't say. Very discreet man, Wilkins. Suggests everything and says nothing. But I thought you would have done things better than this, Arthur."

Arthur 2 has no doubt that Elvesham 2 is telling the truth. He walks down the room, cursing silently. Elvesham 2, holding himself erect by an effort, watches him with an expression of serene triumph.

Elvesham 2: "What is the period of incubation for typhoid? *I* don't know. But it's probably about time you began to feel feverish and rotten. You're bit by your own bacteria. How do you feel?"

Arthur 2 comes back towards the fireplace and sits down abruptly. "I can't face typhoid."

Elvesham 2: "They say you're insensible most of the time. It looks worse than it is. The danger is the relapse."

Arthur 2: "I can't face typhoid."

Elvesham 2: "It's amusing to think that I shall probably go to your funeral. Or at least it ought to be amusing. All the same, I hate to think of your dying in that nice body of mine. I've taken care of your old carcass, far better than you've done for mine. It's fitter than when you got out of it. Why not change back even now? Then I'll take on the typhoid and fight it to the best of my ability and you can go into training for the next experiment. Eh?"

Arthur 2: "We can't change back without McPhister."

Elvesham 2: "He'll turn up. He always does turn up. There! What did I tell you?"

McPhister walks in through the open front door.

Elvesham 2: "McPhister, you've come in the Nick of time. The Old Nick of time. Here's Elvesham wants to change back again and try all over again with somebody simpler. He has got typhoid by drinking germs he meant me to drink. That body there is dying of typhoid. I ask you, McPhister, was it worth while to try to prolong an ass like that for fifty years?"

McPhister: "Or any such ass!"

Elvesham 2: "All the apparatus is ready there! Everything is

ready. I saw to that."

His face is lit. He has never looked so youthful as he does at this moment of escape.

In the dressing-room the two men are lying in their pyjamas as before. The black curtain is drawn over them. There is a three-quarter length of McPhister brooding over the situation and then he turns round to draw the curtain back.

At once Arthur 1 sits up beside the prostrate, insensible body of Elvesham 1. The characters are reversed. Arthur is really a young man now through and through and Elvesham is truly old. McPhister stands regarding the two.

Arthur: "Bring him round. I've got something to tell him."

McPhister: "But he needs rest. The man's heart is hardly beating. He's near the ebb."

Arthur: "Oh, let him ebb. Wake up, Elvesham! Wake up!"

Elvesham is awakened with difficulty. He passes his hand over his eyes and blinks.

Arthur: "I've got something to say to you that won't keep. Elvesham! About that typhoid. I think I ought to warn you. It was disgusting of me, I admit, but I told you a lie about the glasses of milk being changed. I told you a lie. See how you've corrupted me! That body you're in, is the infected body. You'd better do something about it. That's all."

Arthur stands up and asks McPhister: "What ought he to do, Doctor?"

McPhister: "Go to bed, I suppose. I'm losing interest in him."

Elvesham sits up weakly and listens to them with a drawn, distressful face.

Arthur: "As one experimentalist to another, I don't think you've been particularly brilliant in this case. Why did you pick on me?" He turns so as to address both Elvesham and McPhister. "What you wanted was an able-bodied mental defective. I think there's a good lot to be said for the idea of handing on memories in this way. Oh, a lot. In the county asylum here you ought to be able to find — just what you want. A body to let. But you'll have to hurry up. That body of yours, Elvesham, is in a shocking state. Pushing it over the cliff didn't do it any good. I've been giving it a lot of rough wear. The

gun accident was a shock. I didn't let on at the time, but it was. The heart's rotten. Lord! how bad it felt at times. But who am I to give advice to my seniors? You old cronies had better have a good talk about it. I want to find Marguerite. I don't know how you've left things between me and Marguerite. I suppose my clothes are next door."

He walks out of the room and Elvesham is left with McPhister.

Elvesham: "I'm dying. There'll be no other experiment. One lives — once.''''

McPhister: "No time left now — no."

Elvesham: "But isn't there still time? Couldn't you? A mental defective-? There is something in that idea of his."

McPhister: "There's no more time. And besides, if you had time, would you do any better? You may not be convinced of that, but I am."

Elvesham: "And the deeds and the will — no time — no energy to alter them. That young fool wins all round."

McPhister: "No — you lose. . . ."

Elvesham: "You cheat\ But now I know who you are and what you are. The mockery of life."

McPhister: "Yes — Mephistopheles, the laughter in the shadow — the mockery of life! It's pleasant to throw off one's incognito for a moment. Well, well. We've played our little game. You've had your second time on earth, Dr. Faustus Elvesham."

Elvesham is sinking down in his chair and his face becomes leaden and expressionless.

McPhister leans over him, peering down at him: "Come, old bundle of habits and stale memories and faded yet ineradicable instincts. You've made your great experiment and much good it has done you. How you've failed me! How you've failed me! You and your loves and desires. Little you are, like all your kind. Little and unstable. I thought you might go on from life to life and scale the skies. You didn't want to scale the skies. Not for a moment. . . . One might as well expect the stick of a rocket to scale the skies. Tried and found wanting, you petty soul. You couldn't even stick to the new body I gave you. You mechanism. You animal. You ape. Come." He moves so as to hide Elvesham almost completely. He becomes a

black shape like a velvet pall brooding over the old man. Only Elvesham's fine wrinkled white hand, resting on the chair arm, is visible. On his finger is his diamond ring. It clings twitching to the chair-arm for a moment. It makes a last effort to hold on. It relaxes and falls limp.

The front entrance of Barchesham Castle, Marguerite approaches. The figure of Arthur appears from within and he stands awaiting her. She hesitates and approaches.

Arthur: "Can you give me a minute, Miss Swift, before you go in? Something very important has happened — and I want to be the first to tell you."

She looks at him with hard distrust. "Has something happened to Mr. Elvesham?"

Arthur: "Yes."

Marguerite: "Then let me go in and see him."

Arthur: "Please, not for a moment. I have something very difficult to tell you."

Marguerite: "Is he ill?"

Arthur: "He has changed suddenly. He and I have changed suddenly."

Marguerite: "What do you mean — changed?'

Arthur: "Marguerite, haven't I been changed since that queer experiment? Haven't I been changed altogether?"

Marguerite stands on the steps looking up at him. "Yes."

Arthur: "Was I horrible?"

Marguerite nods reluctantly.

Arthur: "I've come back. I've changed back. I am the old Arcturus you loved and who loved you for seven years."

Marguerite: "But-"

Arthur: "I am restored to myself."

Marguerite: "But then — what has happened to Mr. Elvesham?"

Arthur: "Will you come into the hall and talk with me for ten minutes in spite of everything that has happened?"

Marguerite does not move.

Marguerite: "He is dead?"

Arthur: "Yes. He is dead." He leads her to a seat in the hall.

Marguerite: "And he was so kind, he was so gentle and

understanding with me."

Arthur: "I'm glad you found him so. Since the experiment." Marguerite: "I don't know how I could have lived through these last three months if it had not been for him."

Arthur: "Dear Marguerite, dear Daisy Star, was I as frightful as that?"

Marguerite: "Yes."

Arthur: "And that hard old man with the greedy eyes, who is lying dead upstairs now, took over all my tenderness?"

Marguerite looks at him earnestly. "You have changed back Arthur. You talk almost as you used to talk. You look at me — as you used to look. Arthur, what does it mean? Let me tell you something I have had on my mind. I have dreamt such strange things lately that my world has been upside down. Everything has changed. You seemed so cruel, so pitiless and hard and at the same time so cowardly and mean. . . I was afraid of you. I said to myself, Arthur is Arthur no longer. And then — I had a dream. I had a dream, my dear, and I seemed to see everything. It was mad and yet in a way it explained. . . ."

Arthur: "It explained — the experiment."

Marguerite: "Yes, that experiment."

Arthur: "What you dreamt was the truth. For a time I was that old man and he me. Unthinkable folly — a cheat and a trick — but so it was."

Marguerite: "He — he was truly you?"

Arthur: "Yes, and I — I — was the old man you learnt to trust and tried to protect."

They both stand up and for a moment or so they scrutinise each other mutely. Then she becomes radiant.

Marguerite: "I knew it. I knew it. Even before my dream I knew it. It is you I have loved all along. I could tell you, darling, through a hundred changes and disguises. I loved you young and I loved you old. I have always loved you and I shall love you to the end of our days. My dear!"

As she speaks in the background of the hall appears McPhister. They do not observe him. He regards them malevolently for a moment and says: "The old old story. The destined round. The little

human life. . . . They seem to like it.”

He shrugs his shoulders, turns about with a gesture of infinite disgust and vanishes.

The lovers, unaware of his intense disapproval, cling to each other, as lovers have done since the world began.

Marguerite, joyfully: “We are ourselves, my dear, we are ourselves. We’ll never be anyone else.”

SELECT CONVERSATIONS WITH AN UNCLE

Part fiction, part non-fiction, this collection was published in 1895 and was Wells' first literary publication. The book consists of reports of twelve conversations between the titular fictional witty uncle, recently returned to London from South Africa with "a certain affluence," as well as two other conversations (one on aestheticism that takes place in a train, entitled "A Misunderstood Artist," and another on physiognomy, entitled "The Man with a Nose").

The conversations shared between "George", a character very much like the author, and his uncle include themes such as fashion, the inevitability of human "discomfort" due to passing social movements, the resemblance of ideals to interior decoration, the art of being photographed, the social basis of taste in art and music, the state of being engaged, the agony of having to listen to a near neighbor playing the piano, tricycles, social novels and the effects of marriage.

Wells' "uncle" character was well received in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, though not all of the reviews the book received were favorable. *The Athenaeum* criticised the collection as "a dreary and foolish assemblage of commonplace ideas expressed in stilted phraseology."

SELECT CONVERSATIONS WITH AN UNCLE (NOW EXTINCT)

and two other reminiscences by

·H·G·WELLS·

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TO

MY DEAREST

AND BEST FRIEND

R. A. C.

PREFATORY

He was, I remember, short, but by no means conspicuously short, and of a bright, almost juvenile, complexion, very active in his movements and garrulous — or at least very talkative. His judgments were copious and frequent in the old days, and some at least I found entertaining. At times his fluency was really remarkable. He had a low opinion of eminent people — a thing I have been careful to suppress, and his dissertations had ever an irresponsible gaiety of manner that may have blinded me to their true want of merit. That, I say, was in the old days, before his abrupt extinction, before the cares of this world suddenly sprang upon, and choked him. I would listen to him, cheerfully, and afterwards I would go away and make articles out of him for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, so adding a certain material advantage to my mental and moral benefit. But all that has gone now, to my infinite regret; and sorrowing, I have arranged this unworthy little tribute to his memory, this poor dozen of casual monologues that were so preserved. The merits of the monument are his entirely; its faults entirely my own.

OF CONVERSATION AND THE ANATOMY OF FASHION

This uncle of mine, you must understand, having attained — by the purest accident — some trifles of distinction and a certain affluence in South Africa, came over at the earliest opportunity to London to be photographed and lionised. He took to fame easily, as one who had long prepared in secret. He lurked in my chambers for a week while the new dress suit was a-making — his old one I really had to remonstrate against — and then we went out to be admired. During the week's retirement he secreted quite a wealth of things to say — appropriate remarks on edibles, on music, on popular books, on conversation, off-hand little things, jotting them down in a note-book as they came into his mind, for he had a high conception of social intercourse, and the public expectation. He was ever a methodical little gentleman, and all these accumulations that he could not get into his talk, he proposed to put away for the big volume of "Reminiscences" that was to round off his life. At last he was a mere conversational firework, crammed with latent wit and jollity, and ready to blaze and sparkle in fizzing style as soon as the light of social intercourse should touch him.

But after we had circulated for a week or so, my uncle began to manifest symptoms of distress. He had not had a chance. People did not seem to talk at all in his style. "Where do the literary people meet together, George? I am afraid you have chosen your friends ill. Surely those long-haired serious people who sat round my joke like old cats round a beetle — what is it? — were not the modern representatives of a *salon*. Those abominable wig-makers' eccentricities who talked journalistic 'shop,' and posed all over that preposterous room with the draperies! Those hectic young men who have done nothing except run down everybody! Don't tell me that is the literary society of London, George. Where do they let off wit now, George? Where do they sparkle? I want to sparkle. Badly. I shall burst, George, if I don't."

Now really, you know, there are no salons now — I suppose we

turn all our conversation into "copy" — or the higher education has eliminated the witty woman — and my uncle became more and more distressed. He said a lot of his good things to me, which was sheer waste. I became afraid. I got him all the introductions I could, pushed him into every lion's den I had access to. But there was no relief.

"I see what it is, George," said my uncle, "these literary people write themselves out. They say nothing for private use. Their brains are weary when they come into company. They get up in the morning fresh and bright, and write, write, write. Then, when they are jaded, they condescend to social intercourse. It is their way of resting. But why don't they go to bed? No more clever people for me, George. Let us try the smart. Perhaps among them we shall find smart talking still surviving. *Allons*, George!"

That is how my uncle came into collision with fashion, how I came to take him to the Fitz-Brilliants.

Of course you have heard of the Fitz-Brilliants? If you have not, it is not their fault. They are the smartest people in London. Always hard at work, keeping up to date, are the Fitz-Brilliants. But my uncle did not appreciate them. Worse! They did not appreciate my uncle. He came to me again, more pent up than ever, and the thing I had feared happened. He began to discourse to me. It was about Fashion, with a decided reference to the Fitz-Brilliants, and some reflections upon the alleys of literary ability and genius I had taken him through.

"George," said my uncle, "*this Fashion is just brand-new vulgarity*. It is merely the regal side of the medal. The Highly Fashionable and the Absolutely Vulgar are but two faces of the common coin of humanity, struck millions at a time. Spin the thing in the light of wealth, and I defy you, as it whizzes from the illumination of riches to the shadow of poverty, to distinguish the one stamp from the other. You cannot say, here the *mode* ends, and there the unspeakable thing, its counterpart, has its beginning. Their distinction of mere position has vanished, and they are in seeming as in substance one and indivisible."

My uncle was now fairly under way.

"The fashionable is the foam on the ocean of vulgarity, George, cast up by the waves of that ocean, and caught by the light of the sun.

It is the vulgar — blossoming. The flower it is of that earthly plant, destined hereafter to run to seed, and to beget new groves and thickets, new jungles, of vulgar things.

"Note, George, how true this is of that common property of the vulgar and fashionable — slang. The apt phrase falls and applause follows, and then down it goes. The essential feature of slang is words misapplied; the essential distinction of a coarse mind from one refined, an inability to appreciate fine distinctions and minor discords; the essential of the vulgar, good example misused. First the fashionable get the apt phrase, and bandy it about in inapt connections until even the novelty of its discordance has ceased to charm, and thereafter it sinks down, down. *Fin de siècle* and *cliché* have, for instance, passed downward from the courts of the fashionable among journalists into the unspeakable depths below. Soon, if not already, *fin de siècle* gin and onions and haddocks will be for sale in the Whitechapel-road, and Harriet will be calling Billy a "cliché faced swine." Even so do ostrich feathers begin a career of glory at the Drawing-Room and the fashionable photographer's, and, after endless re-dyeing, come to their last pose before a Hampstead camera on a bright Bank Holiday.

"The fashionable and vulgar are after all but the expression of man's gregarious instinct. Every poor mortal is torn by the conflicting dreads of being 'common-place,' and of being 'eccentric.' He, and more particularly she, is continually imitating and avoiding imitation, trying to be singular and yet like other people. In the exquisitely fashionable and in the entirely vulgar the sheep-like longing is triumphant, and the revolting individual has disappeared. The former is a mechanical vehicle upon which the new 'correct thing' rides forth, to extort the astonishment of men; the latter a lifeless bier bearing its corrupt and unrecognisable remains away to final oblivion, amidst universal execration.

"It is curious to notice, George, that there has of late been a fashion in 'originality.' The commonplace has turned, as it were, upon itself, and vehemently denied its identity. So that people who were not eccentric have become rare, and genius, so far as it is a style of hairdressing, and originality, so far as it is a matter of etiquette or morals, have become the habitual garments of the commonplace. The

introduction of the word ‘bourgeois’ as a comminatory epithet into the English language, by bourgeois writers writing for the bourgeois, will remain a memorial for ever, for the philological humourist to chuckle over. If good resolutions could change the natures of men, opinion has lately set so decidedly against the fashionable and the vulgar that their continued existence in this world would be very doubtful. But the leopard cannot change his spots so easily. While the stars go on in their courses, until the cooling of the earth puts an end to the career of life, and the last trace of his ancestral tendency to imitation disappears as the last man becomes an angel, depend upon it, George, the fashionable will ever pursue this chimæra of distinguished correctness, and trail the inseparable howling vulgar in its wake — for ever chased, like a dog with a tin can attached, by the horror of its own tail.”

Thus my uncle. He had said a few of his things. It is possible his trick of talking like a disarticulated essay had something to do with his social discomfort. But anyhow he seemed all the better for the release.

“Talking of tails, George,” he said, “reminds me. I noticed the men at the Fitz-Brilliants’ had their coats cut — well, I should say, just a half inch shorter here than this of mine. Your man is not up to date. I must get the thing altered to-morrow.”

THE THEORY OF THE PERPETUAL DISCOMFORT OF HUMANITY

He had been sitting with his feet upon the left jamb of my mantel, admiring the tips of his shoes in silence for some time.

"George," he said, dropping his cigar-ash thoughtfully into my inkstand, in order, I imagine, to save my carpet, "have you ever done pioneer work for Humanity?"

"Never," I said. "How do you get that sort of work?"

"I don't know. I met a man and a woman, though, the other night, who said they were engaged in that kind of thing. It seems to me to be exhausting work, and it makes the hair very untidy. They do it chiefly with their heads. It consists, so I understand, of writing stuff in a hurry, rushing about in cabs, wearing your hair in some unpleasant manner, and holding disorderly meetings."

"Who are these people?"

"Never heard of them before, though they told me they were quite well known. The lady asked me if I had been to Chicago."

I chuckled. I could imagine no more hideous insult to my uncle.

"I told her that I had been to most places south-eastward and eastward, but never across the Atlantic. She informed me that I ought to have gone to Chicago, and that America was a great country, and I remarked that I had always thought it was so great that one could best appreciate it at a distance. Then she asked me what I thought of the condition of the lower classes, and I told her I was persuaded, from various things I had noticed, that a lot of them were frightfully hard up. And with that she started off to show whose fault it was, by the Socratic method."

"Entertaining?"

"A little. I did not get all my answers right. For instance, when she asked, 'Who sends the members of Parliament to Westminster?' I answered her, 'The governors of the young ones and the wives of the others.' And when she said that was wrong — I don't remember Socrates ever saying bluntly that an answer was wrong — I said I supposed she referred to the Evil One. It was very dull of me, of

course, and it obliged her to dictate the right solution.

"Afterwards she threw over teaching me anything, and explained to me all about her Movements. At least, I got really interested in her Movements. One thing she said struck me very much, though it could hardly be called novel. It was that the fads of one age were the fashions of the next; that while the majority of people were engaged in their little present-day chores, persons like herself are making the laws and preparing the customs for the generation to follow."

"Poor generations to follow!" I said.

"Yes, but there is a lot of truth in it; and do you know there flashed upon me all at once a great theory, the Theory of the Perpetual Discomfort of Humanity. Just let me explain it to you, George," he said, bringing himself round so that his legs hung over the arm of his chair. "I think you will see I have made a very great discovery, gone to the root of the whole of this bother of reform movement, advancement of humanity, and the rest of it." He sucked his cigar for a moment. "Each age," he said, "has its own ideals of what constitutes human happiness."

"A very profound observation," said I.

"Looking down the vista of history, one may generalise and say that we see human beings continually troubled by the conditions under which they live. I can think of no time in the world when there was not some Question or other getting fussed about: at one time episcopal celibacy, at another time the Pict and Scot problem, and so on. Always a crumpled rose-leaf. Hence reform movements. Now, reforms move slowly, and by the time these reforms come about, the people whom they would have made happy, and who fussed and encountered dislike and satire and snubbing, and burning and boiling in oil, and suchlike discouragements, for the sake of them, were dead and buried and mere sanitary problems. The new people had new and quite different needs, and the reforms for which their fathers fought and died more or less uncomfortably, and got into debt with the printers, so soon as there were printers to get into debt with, were about as welcome as belated dinner guests. You take me? Ireland, when Home Rule comes home to it, will simply howl with indignation. And we are living in the embodied discontent of the eighteenth century. Adam Smith, Tom Paine, and Priestley would

have looked upon this age and seen that it was good — devilish good; and as you know, George, to us it is — well, a bit of a nuisance anyhow. However, most people are like myself, and try to be as comfortable as they can, and no doubt the next generation might do very well with it. And then the pioneer people begin legislating, agitating, and ordering things differently. As you know, George, I am inclined to conservatism. Constitutionally, I tend to adapt myself to my circumstances. It seems to me so much easier to fit the man to the age than to fit the age to the man. Let us, I say, settle down. We shall never be able to settle down while they keep altering things. It may not be a perfect world, but then I am not a perfect man: Some of the imperfections are, at least, very convenient. So my theory is this: the people whom the age suits fairly well don't bother — *I* don't bother; the others do. It is these confounded glaring and unshorn anachronisms that upset everything. They go about flapping their ideals at you, and writing novels with a motive, and starting movements and societies, and generally poking one's epoch to rags, until at last it is worn out and you have to start a new one. My conception of the progress of humanity is something after the Wandering Jew pattern. Your average humanity I figure as a comfortable person like myself, always trying to sit down and put its legs somewhere out of the way, and being continually stirred up by women in felt hats and short skirts, and haggard men with those beastly, long, insufficient beards, and soulful eyes, and trumpet-headed creatures, and bogles with spectacles and bald heads, and nephews who look at watches. What are you looking at your watch for, George? I'm very happy as I am.

"Has it ever occurred to you, George, that one of the most uncomfortable things in the world must be to outlive your age? To have all the reforms of your boyish liberalism coming home to roost, just as you are settling down to the old order....

"Six o'clock, by Jove! We shall keep them waiting if we don't mind."

THE USE OF IDEALS

"Ideals!" said my uncle; "certainly Ideals. Of course one must have ideals, else life would be bare materialism. Bare fact alone, naked necessity, is impossible barren rock for a soul to root upon. Life, indeed, is an unfurnished house, an empty glass in a thirsty land — good and necessary for foundation, but insufficient for any satisfaction unless we have ideals. Or, again, ideals are the flesh upon the skeleton of reality, and it cannot live without them.

"It always appears to me," said my uncle, "that the comparison of ideals to furniture is particularly appropriate. They are the draperies of the mind, and they hide the nakedness of truth. Your fireplace is ugly, your mere necessary shelves and seats but planks and crudity, all your surroundings so much office furniture, until the skilful hand and the draperies come in. Then a few cunning loopings and foldings, and behold softness and delicacy, crudity gone, and life well worth the living. So that you cannot value ideals too highly.

"Yet at the same time — —" My uncle became meditative.

"I would not have a man the *slave* of his ideals. Hangings make the room comfortable, but, after all, hangings *are* hangings. Perhaps, now and then — of course, I would not suggest continual inconstancy — a slight change, a little rearrangement, even a partial replacement, might brighten up the dear old dwelling-place. An ideal may be clung to too fondly. When the moth gets into it, or the dust — did not Carlyle warn us against this, lest they 'accumulate and at last produce suffocation'? I am exactly at one with him there.

"And that, as any Cabinet Minister explains every time he opens a public library, is why we have literature. Good books are the warehouses of ideals. Does it strike you your furniture is sombre, a bit Calvinistic and severe — try a statuette by Pope, or a classical piece out of Heine. Too much white and gold for every-day purposes — then the Reverend Laurence Sterne will oblige. Urban tone may be corrected by Hardy, and Lowell will give you urbanity. And, however well you match and balance them, remember there is a time for ideals, and a time when they are better out of the way.

"The Philistine of Victorian literature, is a person without ideals,

the practical man. But just now the fashion is all for the things. Ruskin and Carlyle set it going, and to-day the demand for ideals exceeds the supply. And as a result, we meet with innumerable people anxious to have the correct thing, but a little unsympathetic or inexpert, and those unavoidable people who do not like the things but feel compelled to get them. Ideals are not the easiest possessions to have and manage, and they may even rise to the level of serious inconveniences. So that I sometimes wonder these Extension people have not taken up the subject of their management and use.

"Note, for instance, the folly of bringing ideals too much into the daily life; it is childish, like a baby insisting on its new toy at meal times, and taking it to bed. Never use an ideal as a standard, and avoid any that reflect upon your conduct. The extremest decorative people refrain from enamelling their kettles, and my cook though a 'born lady' does not wear her silk dress in the kitchen. Ideals are the full dress of the soul. A business man, for instance, who let visions of reverend Venetian and Genoese seigniors interfere with his agile City movements — who, to carry out our comparison, draped his mind with these things — would be uncommonly like a bowler in a dressing-gown.

"Then an ideal, we are also told, is an elevating influence in life; but unless one is very careful one may get hoist with one's own petard to a pitifully transitory soar above common humanity. The soar itself is not unpleasant, but the sequel is sometimes disagreeable.

"To show how an ideal may trip up an inexpert mortal, take that man Javvers and his wife. She also had an ideal husband, which was, indeed, a kind of bigamy, and her constant references to this creation of hers used to drive poor old Javvers frantic. It became as objectionable as if she had been its sorrowing widow, and ultimately it wrecked the happiness of their little home very completely.

"The seat of ideals, then, in one's mind, should be, as it were, a lounge, over which these hangings may drape and flap harmlessly; but it may easily become as the bed of Procrustes. To turn ideals to idols, and to command your whole world to bow down to them, savours of the folly of Nebuchadnezzar the king. Let your ideal world be far away from reality, fit it with rococo furniture, angels

and birds-of-paradise, Minnesinger flowers and views of the Delectable Mountains: and go there occasionally and rest — to return without illusions, without encumbrance, but with renewed zest, to the sordid world of the actual, the world of every day. Herein is the real use of the ideal; all other is fanaticism and folly."

THE ART OF BEING PHOTOGRAPHED

"An album," said my uncle, as he sat and turned over my collection of physiognomy, "is, I think, the best reading in the world. You get such sidelights on the owner's heredity, George; distant cousins caricature his features and point the moral of his nose, and ancestral faces prophesy his fate. His friends, moreover, figure the secret of his soul. But what a lot we have to learn yet in the art of being photographed, what grotesque and awkward blunders your common sitters make! Why, for instance, do men brush their hair so excessively when they go before the lens? Your cousin here looks like a cheap chess pawn about the head, whereas as I know him his head is a thing like a worn-out paint-brush. Where but in a photograph would you see a parting so straight as this? It is unnatural. You flatten down all a man's character; for nothing shows that more than the feathers and drakes' tails, the artful artlessness, or revolutionary tumult of his hair. Mind you, I am not one of those who would prohibit a man wearing what he conceives to be his best clothes to the photographer's. I like to see the little vanity peeping out — the last moment's folly of a foolish tie, nailed up for a lifetime. Yet all the same, people should understand that the camera takes no note of newness, but much of the cut and fit. And a man should certainly not go and alter his outline into a feminine softness, by pouring oil on his troubled mane and plastering it down with a brush and comb. It is not tidiness, but hypocrisy.

"We have indeed very much to learn in this matter. It is a thing that needs teaching, like deportment or dancing. Plenty of men I have noticed, who would never do it in real life, commit the sin of being over-gentlemanly in an album. Their clothes are even indecently immaculate. They become, not portraits, but fashion-plates. I hate a man who is not rumpled and creased a little, as much as I do a brand new pipe. And, as a sad example of sin on the other hand, on the side of carelessness, I have seen renderings of a very august personage indeed, in a hat — a *hat*! It was tilted, and to add to the atrocity, he was holding a cigar. This I regard as horrible. Think! your photograph may go into boudoirs. Imagine Gladys opening the

album to Ænone; 'Now I will show you *him*.' And there you sit, leering at their radiant sweetness, hat on, and a cigar reeking between your fingers.

"No, George, a man should go very softly to a photographer's, and he should sit before the camera with reverence in his heart and in his attitude, as if he were in the presence of the woman he loved."

He turned to Mrs Harborough's portrait, looked at it, hesitated, looked again, and passed on.

"I often think we do not take this business of photography in a sufficiently serious spirit. Issuing a photograph is like marriage: you can only undo the mischief with infinite woe. I know of one man who has an error of youth of this kind on his mind — a fancy-dress costume affair, Crusader or Templar — of which he is more ashamed than many men would be of the meanest sins. For sometimes the camera has its mordant moods, and amazes you by its saturnine estimate of your merits. This man was perhaps a little out of harmony with the garments of chivalry, and a trifle complacent and vain at the time. But the photograph of him is so cynical and contemptuous, so merciless in its exposure of his element of foolishness, that we may almost fancy the spook of Carlyle had got mixed up with the chemicals upon the film. Yet it never really dawned upon him until he had distributed this advertisement of his little weakness far and wide, that the camera had called him a fool to his face. I believe he would be glad now to buy them all back at five pounds a copy.

"This of Minnie Hobson is a work of art. Bless me, the girl must be thirty-seven or thirty-eight now, and just look at her! These photographers have got a trick now, if your face is one of the long kind, of raising the camera, bending your head forward, and firing down at you. So our Minnie becomes quite chubby again. Then, this thing has been retouched." My uncle peered into the photograph. "It seems to me it is pretty nearly all retouching. For instance, if you look at the eye, that high light is not perfectly even; that was touched in on the negative with a pencil. Then about the neck of our Minnie I have observed certain bones, just the slightest indication of her collar-bone, George, but that has disappeared under the retoucher's pencil. Then the infantile smoothness of her cheek, and the

beautifully-rounded outline, is produced by the retoucher carefully scraping off the surface of the film where the cheekbone projected with a sharp knife. There are also in real life little lines between the corner of our Minnie's mouth and her nostril. And again, Minnie is one of those people whose dresses never seem to fit, but this fits like a glove. These retouchers are like Midas, and they turn all that comes to their hands to gold; or, like Spring, the flowers come back at their approach. They reverse the work of Ithuriel, and restore brightness to the fallen. They sit at their little desks, and scratch, scratch, scratch with those delicate pencils of theirs, scratching away age, scratching away care, making the crooked straight, and the rough smooth. They are the fairies of photography, and fill our albums with winsome changelings. Their ministry anticipates in a little way the angels who will take us when we die, releasing us from the worn and haggard body of this death, and showing something of the eternal life and youth that glows within. Or one might say that the spirit of the retoucher is the spirit of Love. It makes plain women beautiful, and common men heroic. Her regal fingers touch for the evil of ungainliness, and, behold, we are restored. Her pencil is like the Queen's sword, and it makes knights out of common men.

"When I have my photograph taken," said my uncle, "I always like to think of the retoucher. I idealise her; I fancy her with the sweetest eyes I have ever seen, and an expression infinitely soft and tender. And she looks closely into my face, and her little pencil goes gently and lovingly over my features. Tickle, tickle. In that way, George, I get a really very nice expression indeed." My uncle turned to his own presentment, and mused pleasantly for a space. Then he looked again at Mrs Harborough as if inadvertently, and asked her name.

"I like this newer way of taking your photograph, against a mere grey background; just the head of you. One should always beware of the property furniture of the photographer. In the seventies they were great at such aids — a pedestal, a cork rustic stile, wide landscape in the distance, but I think that we are at least getting beyond that now. People in those days must have been afraid to be left alone before a camera, or they wanted it to seem that they were taken unawares, quite against their modesty — did not know what the camera was,

and were just looking at it. A very favourite pose for girls was a graceful droop over a sofa, chin on elegant hand. When I was at Dribblebridge — I was a bright young fellow then — I collected a number of local photographs, ladies chiefly, and the thing was very noticeable when I put them in a row over my mantleshelf. The local 'artist' was intensely fond of that pose. But fancy the local leader finding her cook drooping over the same sofa as herself! Nowadays, I see, you get merely the heads of your girls, with their hair flossed up, intense light from above, and faces in shadow. I think it is infinitely better.

What horrible things hands become in a photograph! I wonder how it is that the hand in a photograph is always four shades darker than the arm. Every girl who goes to be photographed in evening dress should be solemnly warned to keep her hands out of the picture. They will look as though she has been enamelling the grate, or toying with a bucket of pitch. There is something that sins against my conception of womanly purity in those dark hands."

My uncle shut the album. "Yes, it is a neglected field of education, an important branch of deportment altogether forgotten. Our well-bred ease fails us before the camera; we are lucky if we merely look stiff and self-conscious. I should fancy there would be an opening for some clever woman to teach people how to dress for the occasion and how to sit, what to avoid and how to avoid it. As it is, we go in a state of nervous agitation, obsequiously costumed; our last vestige of self-assertion vanishes before the unwinking Cyclops eye of the instrument, and we cower at the mercy of the thing and its attendant. They make what they will of us, and the retoucher simply edits the review with an eye to the market. So history is falsified before our faces, and we prepare a lie for our grandchildren. We fail to stamp our individualities upon our photographs, and are mere 'dumb-driven cattle' in the matter. We sin against ourselves in this neglect, and act against the spirit of the age. Sooner or later this haphazard treatment of posterity must come to an end." He meditated for a moment. Then, as if pursuing a train of thought, "That Mrs Harborough is a very pretty woman, George. Where did you happen to meet her?"

BAGSHOT'S MURAL DECORATIONS

Bagshot was rather proud of his new quarters until my uncle called upon him. Up to then he felt assured he was doing right; had, indeed, not the faintest doubt in the matter until my uncle unsettled him. "Nice carpet, Bagshot," said my uncle, "nice and soft. This chair certainly very comfortable. But what the mischief do you mean — you, with your pretence to culture — by hanging your dwelling with all those framed and glazed photograph and autograph dittoes? I should have thought you at least would have known better. Love and Life, and Love and Death, the Daphnephoria, Rembrandt's portrait — Wild Havoc, man! What were you thinking of?"

Bagshot seemed staggered. He ventured to intimate feebly his persuasion that the things were rather good.

"Good they certainly are, and well reproduced, but only the Bible and Shakspeare could stand this incessant reiteration, and not all Shakspeare. These things are in shop windows, man — drawing-rooms, offices, everywhere. They afflict me like popular songs — like popular quotations. They are good enough — as a matter of fact they are too good. Only, don't you know Willis has Love and Life and Love and Death? And so has Smith, and Bays has Rembrandt's portrait in his office, and my niece Euphemia has the Daphnephoria in her drawing-room. I can't understand, George, why you let it stay there. It is possible to have too much of a good thing. There is no getting away from these all too popular triumphs. They cover up the walls everywhere. They consume all other art. I shall write a schedule some day of the Fifty Correct Pictures of the British People. And to find *you*, Bagshot, among the Philistines!"

"I thought they showed rather an improvement in the general taste," said Bagshot. "There is no reason why a thing should not be common, and yet very beautiful. Primroses, for instance — —"

"That is true enough, but pictures are not primroses," said my uncle. "Besides, I think we like primroses all the better because they must soon be over; but these are perennial blossoms, like the everlasting flowers and dried grass of a lodging house. They may still be beautiful, but by this time, Bagshot, they are awfully dry and

dusty. Who looks at them? I notice our eyes avoid them even while we talk about them. We have all noticed everything there is to be noticed, and said all the possible things that are to be said about them long ago. Surely a picture must be a little fresh to please. Else we shall come at last to the perfect picture, and art will have an end. Don't you see the mere popularity of these things of the pavement is enough to condemn them in the estimation of every right-minded person?"

"I don't see it," said Bagshot, making head against the torrent. "I cannot afford to go to these swells and get original work of theirs — —"

"What do you want with 'these swells' and their original work?" interrupted my uncle fiercely. "Haven't they used up all their originality ages ago? Is it not open to such men as yourself to discover new men? There are men pining in garrets now for you, Bagshot. Fancy the delight of having pictures that are unfamiliar, pictures that catch the eye and are actually to be looked at, pictures that suggest new remarks, pictures by a name that the stray visitor has never heard of and which therefore puzzle him dreadfully because he hasn't the faintest idea whether to praise or blame them! Isn't it worth hunting studios for, and even, maybe, going to the Academy? Besides, suppose your struggling artist comes to the front. What price the five-guinea specimen of his early style then? Your artistic virtue is indeed its own reward, and, besides, you can boast about finding him. The poor man of culture and the struggling artist live for one another, or at least they ought to — though I am afraid it is not much of a living for the struggling artist." He paused abruptly. "I suppose that autotype cost thirty shillings, and this carpet about five pounds?"

Bagshot assumed an elegant attitude against his bureau. He had discovered his reply. "You know you are bitten by the fashion for originality. Why should I make my room hideous with the work of third-rate mediocrity, or of men who are still learning to paint, simply in order to be unlike my neighbour?"

"Why," returned my uncle, "should you hang up things less interesting than your wall paper, in mere imitation of your neighbours? For this on your walls, Bagshot, deny it though you

may, is not art but fashion. I tell you, you do not care a rap for art. You think pictures are a part of virtue, like a silk hat — or evening dress at dinner. And in your choice of pictures you follow after your kind. I never met a true-born Briton yet who dared to buy a picture on his own accord — unless he was a dealer. And then usually he was not really a true-born Briton. He waits to see what is being hung. He has these things now because he thinks they are right, not because they are beautiful, just as he used to have the Stag at Bay and the Boastful Hound. It is Leighton now; it was Landseer then. Really I believe that very soon the ladies' papers will devote a column to pictures. Something in this style. 'Smart people are taking down their Rossetti's Annunciations now, and are hanging Gambler Bolton's new Hippopotamus in the place of it. This Hippopotamus is to be the correct thing in pictures this year, and no woman with any claim to be considered smart will fail to have it over her piano. Marcus Stone's new engraving will also be rather chic. Watts's Hope is now considered a little dowdy.' And so forth. This gregarious admiration is the very antithesis of artistic appreciation, which I tell you, simply must be individual."

"Go on," said Bagshot, "go on."

"And that," said my uncle, with the glow of discovery in his face, "that is where the vulgar critic goes wrong. He conceives an orthodoxy. He tries to explain why Velasquez is better than Raphael and Raphael better than Gerard Dow. As well say why a cirrus cloud is better than a sycamore and a sycamore better than a scarlet hat. Every painter, unless he is a mere operative, must have his peculiar public. It is incredible that any painter can really satisfy the æsthetic needs of such a public as these reproductions indicate. True art is always sectarian. Why were Landseer and Sidney Cooper popular a few years ago, and why does every tea-table sneer at them now? There must be something admirable in them, or they would never have been admired. Then why has my niece Annie dropped admiring Poynter, and why does she pretend — and a very thin pretence it is — to admire Whistler?"

"You are wandering from my pictures," said Bagshot.

"I want to," said my uncle. "But why do you try and hide your taste under these mere formalities in frames? Why do you always say

‘I pass’ in the game of decoration? Better a mess of green amateurs and love therewith, than the richest autotypes and dull complacency. Have what you like. There is no such thing as absolute beauty. That is the Magna Charta of the world of art. What is beautiful to me is not beautiful to another man, in art as in women. But take care to get the art that fits you. Frankly, that ‘Love and Death’ suits you, Bagshot, about as much as a purple toga would. Orchardson is in your style. I tell you that the greengrocer who buys an original oil painting for sixteen shillings with frame complete is far nearer artistic salvation than the patron of the popular autotype. Surely you will wake up presently, Bagshot, and wonder what you have been about.

“Half-past four, by Jove! I must be getting on. Well, Bagshot, ta-ta. One must talk, you know. I really hope you will be comfortable in your new rooms.”

And so good-bye to Bagshot, staring in a puzzled way at his reviled and desecrated walls.

ON SOCIAL MUSIC

My poor uncle came to me the other evening in a most distressful state, broken down to common blasphemy. His ample front was rumpled with sorrow and his tie disorderly aslant. His hair had gone rough with his troubles. “The time I have had, George!” he panted. “Give me something to drink in the name of Holy Charity.”

Since the *Pall Mall Gazette* took to reporting his little sayings about photographs and ornaments, ideals and fashions, he has been setting up as a conversationalist. He thinks he was designed by Providence to that end, and aids his destiny as much as he can by elaborately preparing remarks.

Yet this thing had happened. “They put,” said my uncle, “a little chap at the piano, and me at a very nice girl indeed as she looked; and the little chap began, and so did I. I said a prelude thing of mine, brand new and rather pretty.”

He stopped. He turned to nerve himself with whisky.

“Well,” I said, when the pause seemed sufficient; “what did she say?”

My uncle looked unspeakable things. Then in a whisper, bending towards me:

“*She said* —— *Sssh*!”

He repeated it that I might grasp its full enormity, “*Sssh*! — so!”

“What *is* music,” said my uncle, after a moody silence, “that reasonable people should listen to it? I *had* to listen to it myself, and it struck me. It was just a tune this little chap was trying to remember, and now he would come at it this way and now that. He never got it quite right, though he fumbled about it for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. And then two girls went, and one punished the piano while the other, with a wrist rather than an ear for music, drowned its cries with a violin. So it went on all the evening, and when I moved they all looked at me; I had been put on a nervous wicker chair, and I knew my shoes squeaked like a carnival of swine, and so I could not get away. And all the things that kept coming into my head, George, the neat remarks and graceful sayings!

“You see, I look at it in this light. Music is merely background,

and ought to be kept in its place. I am no enemy of music, George. The air in a room should be melodious, for the same reason that it should be faintly pleasing to the olfactory sense, and neither hot nor stuffy. Just as the walls should be delightfully coloured and softly lit, and the refreshments pleasant and at the moment of need. But surely we meet for human intercourse. When I go to see people I go to see the people — not to hear a hired boy play the piano. But these people plant a *chevaux de frise* of singers and performers upon instruments of music between themselves and me. They gag me with a few pennyworths of second-hand opera. There I was bursting to talk, and nice, intelligent-looking girls to talk to, and whenever I began to say something they said '*Sssh*!' Tantalus in a drawing-room it was — the very Hades of hospitality.

"Surely some day we shall learn refinement in our entertaining. Your modern hostess issues her invitations and seems overcome with consternation at her gathering. 'What *shall* I do with all these people?' she seems to ask. So she dabs cakes upon them, piles coffee cups over them: 'Eat,' she says, 'and shut up!' and stifles their protests with a clamorous woman and a painful piano.

"No, of course I don't object to having music. But it is an accessory, not an object, in life. It is, after all, a physical comfort, a pleasant vibration in one's ears. To make an object of it is sensuality. It is on all-fours with worshipping the wallpaper. Some wall-papers are very beautiful things nowadays, harmonious in form and colour, skilful in invention; but people do not expect you to sit down and admire wall-paper, or promise you 'wallpaper at eight.' Neither do they put an extinguisher over any girl who does not go with the wall-paper, or expect you to dress in neutral tint on account of it, and they are not hurt if you go away without seeming to see it. Gustatory harmony, too, is very delicious. Yet there is no hush during dinner; they do not insist upon a persistent gnawing in honour of the feast. But these musical people! their god is their piano. They set up an idol in their salon, and command all the world to bow down to it. They found a priestcraft of pianists, and an Inquisition of fiddlers. When I came away they were all crowded round a violin, the women especially. They could not have fussed more if it had been a baby. They stroked it and admired its figure. It *had* rather a fashionable

figure, but the neck was too long....”

I began to suspect the cause of this bitterness.

“Yes. She was there. And while some of this piano was going on she looked at the ear of the man who was playing with a dreamy, tender look.... No. I couldn’t get a word with her the whole evening.”

THE JOYS OF BEING ENGAGED

As I was passing the London University the other day I saw my uncle emerge from the branch of the Bank of England opposite, and proceed in the direction of the Burlington Arcade. He was elaborately disguised as a young man, even to the youthful flower, and I was incontinently smitten with curiosity respecting the dark purpose he might veil in this way. There is, to me, a peculiar and possibly rather a childish fascination in watching my more intimate friends unobserved, and, curiously enough, I had never before studied the avuncular back view. I found something singularly entertaining in the study of the graceful contour of his new frock coat, and in the cheerful carriage of his cane. He paraded, a dignified procession of one, some way down the Arcade, hesitated for a moment outside a jeweller's shop, and then entered it. I strolled on as far as Piccadilly, returned to the shop, and so fell upon him suddenly in the midst of his buying.

"Hullo, George!" he said hastily, facing me so as to hide as much of the counter as possible. "How's Euphemia?"

I looked him fairly in the eye. "You are buying a *ring*," I said in a firm, decided voice.

He turned to the counter with an air of surprise. "By Jove, so I am!"

"A lady's ring," I said. He was, I could see, hastily collecting his sufficiently nimble powers of subterfuge. "One must buy something, you know, George, sometimes," he said feebly.

He had selected some dozen or so already, the most palpable engagement rings I think I ever saw. One of them had visible on its inner curvature the four letters MIZP — . He looked at them, saw the posy, and then, glancing at me, laughed affably. "I meant to tell you yesterday, George — I will take these," to the shopman. And we emerged with a superficial amiability; the case of rings in my uncle's pocket. The thing was rather a shock to me, coming so suddenly and unexpectedly. I had anticipated some innocent purchase of the jewellery he reviles so much, but certainly not significant rings, golden fetters for others to wear and enslave him; and we were past

the flowershop towards Hyde Park before either of us spoke. It seemed so dreadful to me that the cheerful, talkative man beside me, my own father's little brother, a traveller in distant countries, and a most innocent man, and with all the inveterate habits of thirty years' honourable bachelorhood and all the mellowness of life upon him, should, without consulting me, have taken the first irrevocable step towards becoming a ratepayer, a pew tenant, paterfamilias, a fighter with schoolmasters, and the serf of a butler, that I scarcely knew what to say adequate to the occasion.

"Well," said I at last, with an involuntary sigh, "I suppose I must congratulate you."

"Don't look at it in that light, George," said my uncle; and he added in a more cheerful tone, "I am only going to get engaged, you know."

"You can scarcely imagine, George," he proceeded, "how I have longed to be engaged. All my life it has been my hope and goal. It is, I think, the ideal state of man. There was a chap with me when I was at Kimberley who first put the idea into my head. His ways were animated and cheerful even for a diamond field, where you know animation and cheerfulness are, so to speak, *de rigueur*. Whisky he affected, and jesting of the kind that paints cities scarlet. And he used every night, before festivities began, to write a long letter to some girl in England, and say, within limits, how bad he had been and how he longed to reform and be with her, and never, never do anything wrong any more. He poured all the higher and better parts of his nature into the letter, and folded it up and sealed it very carefully. And then he came to us in a singularly relieved frame of mind, and would be the life and soul of as merry a game of follow-your-leader as one can well imagine."

Pleasant reminiscences occupied him for a moment. "Every man should be engaged, I think, to at least one woman. It is the homage we owe to womankind, and a duty to our souls. His *fiancée* is indeed the Madonna of a true-hearted man; the thought of her is a shrine at the wayside of one's meditations, and her presence a temple wherein we cleanse our souls. She is mysterious, worshipful, and inaccessible, something perhaps of the woman, possibly even propitious and helpful, and yet something of the Holy Grail as well.

You have no rights with her, nor she with you; you owe her no definite duties, and yet she is singularly yours. A smile is a favour, a touch of her fingers, a faint pressure of your hand, is an infinite privilege. You cannot demand the slightest help or concern of her, so you ask it with diffident grace and there is an overflowing stream of gratitude from small occasions. Whatever you give her is a gift too, while a husband is just property, a mere draught-camel for her service. All your functions are decorative, you hang her shrine with flowers and precious stones. You treat her to art and literature, and as for vulgar necessities — some one else sees to that."

"Until you are married," began I.

"I am speaking of being engaged. Marriage is altogether a different thing. The essence of a proper engagement is reverence, distance, and mystery; the essence of marriage is familiarity. A *fiancée* is a living eidolon; a wife, from my point of view at least, should be a confidential companion, a fellow-conspirator, an accessory after the fact, at least, to one's little errors; should take some share of the burthen and heat of the day with one, and have the humour to bear with a mood of vexation or a fit of the blues. I doubt, do you know, if the same kind of girl is suitable for engagements as for marriage. For an engagement give me something very innocent, a little awe-inspiring on that account, absolutely and tenderly worshipful, yet given to moods of caressing affection, and altogether graceful and beautiful. A man, I think, ought to be incapable of smoking or lounging in front of the girl he professes to love, so reverent ought his love to be. But for marriage let me have humour and some community of taste, a woman who can climb stiles and stand tobacco smoke, and who knows a good cook by her fruits.... It is a complicated business, this marrying.

"The familiarity of the marriage state, if it does not breed positive contempt on the part of the angel, engenders at times, I think, a considerable craving for change on the side of both parties. We men are poor creatures at the best — I always pity your Euphemia. Married people, for instance, always get too much of each other's conversation. They do not have sufficient opportunity to recuperate their topics from original sources. They get interested in outside people, merely from a perfectly legitimate desire to get some

amusing novel ideas for each other, and then comes jealousy. I sometimes think that if Adam and Eve had been merely engaged, she would not have talked with the serpent; and the world had been saved an infinity of misery.

"No, George: engagements for me. It is the state we were made for. I have delayed this matter all too long. But, thank heaven, I am engaged at last — I hope for all the rest of my life. Now, will you not congratulate me?"

"It may be very nice as you put it, but engagements end as well as begin," I insisted. "You cannot be a law unto yourself in these matters. When will you get married?"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed my uncle. "Get married and end this delightful state! You don't think she will want me to marry her, do you? Besides, she told me some time ago that she did not intend to marry again. It was only that encouraged me to suggest an engagement to her. Though she is a wonderful woman, George — a wonderful woman. Still, I think she looks at things very much as I do."

He paused thoughtfully. Then added with fervour, "At least I hope so."

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

A RHAPSODY

I found him in his own apartments, and strangely disordered. He went to and fro, raving — beginning so soon as I entered the room. I noticed a book half out of its cover, flung carelessly into the corner of the room.

"I am enchanted of an impalpable woman, George," he said, "I am in bonds to a spirit of the air. I can neither think nor work nor eat nor sleep because of her. Sometimes I go out suddenly, tramping through seething streets, through fog and drizzle or dry east wind, mourning for her sake. My life is rapidly becoming one colourless melancholy through her spells and twining sorceries. I sometimes wish that I were dead.

"Yet I have never seen her. Often, indeed, I imagine her, anon as of this shape, and anon of that. I know her only by her victims, those she slays daily, and daily revives to slay. They come to me with their complaints, mutilated, pathetic, terrible. I try to shut my ears to them in vain. I have tried wool, but it made little or no difference.

"The business always begins with the slamming of a door and a healthy footfall across the room. The piano is opened. Then some occasional noises — the falling of a piece of music behind the piano, perhaps, and its extraction by means of the tongs — I know it is tongs she uses by the clang. Then the music-stool creaks, and La Belle Dame is ready to play. She puts both her hands upon the key-board, and the treble shrieks apprehensively, and the bass roars like a city in revolt. After that this hush. Just this interval.

"Yet I sometimes think this hush is really the worst of it all. It is a voluminous apprehension, a towering impendency. You don't understand, George. You can't. The poor devil in Poe's 'Pit and the Pendulum' must have had a taste of my sensations. A first victim is being chosen. I have a vision of the spirits of composers small and great — standing up like suspects awaiting identification, while her eye ranges over them. Chopin tries to edge behind Wagner, a difficult and forbidding person, and Gounod seeks eclipse of Mendelssohn,

who suddenly drops and crawls on all fours between Gounod's legs; Sullivan cowers, and even Piccolomini's iron-framed nerves desert him. She extends her hand. There is a frantic rush to escape. Have you ever seen a little boy picking dormice out of a cage? I always see this same nightmare during that dreadful pause, a vision of a writhing heap of kicking, struggling, maddened composers, and of a ghoulish piano grinning expectant, jaw raised — lid I mean — and showing all its black and yellow keys. ... A melancholy shriek. Do you hear, George? Tito Mattel is captured. A song.

"'Pum — So long the way — Pum — so dark the day — Pum — DEAR HEART! before you come.' So Tito Mattel comes pumming through the wall into my presence. I don't pity him. Indeed it is a positive relief that it is only Tito Mattel. The man's no deity at the best, and a little pulling out, and pulling crooked, and general patching together of limbs in the wrong place scarcely matters so far as he and my taste are concerned. Yet I always leave my work, George, when that begins, and walk about the room. I try to persuade myself that I need fresh air, but the autumnal day, the damp shiny street, has all the uninviting harshness of truth — I admit I do not. Tito flops about, is riddled with dropped notes and racked with hesitations, and presently becomes still. The murder is over.

"What next? That Study of Chopin's! This time the thing is more inspiring. Once upon a time it was a favourite of mine. Now it is a favourite of the unseen lady's. She plays it with spirit, and conjures up strange fancies in my brain. The noises that come through the wall now, quicker, thicker, louder, are full of a tale of weltering confusion, marine disaster, a ship in sore labour; there is a steady beating like the sound of pumps, and a trickle of treble notes. There are black silences, like thunderclouds, that burst into flashes of music. Now the poor melody swings up into the air — then comes one of those terrible pauses, and now down into the abyss. A crash, an ineffectual beating, a spasmodic rush. I seem to hear the pumps again, distant, remote, ineffectual. But that is not so; the struggle is over. Chopin's Study has been battered to pieces; only disarticulated fragments toss amidst the froth. High up the confusion of the stormy sky she drives in a sieve dropping notes — the witch of the storm. La Belle Dame Sans Merci.

“But the third piece in her repertory has begun — Rubinstein. This, at any rate, is familiar. She plays with the confidence born of long unpunished misdoing. That Rubinstein must indeed be sorry, and unless their elysium is like the library of the Linnæan Society, and fitted with double windows, all the great departed musicians must be sorry too, that he ever wrote a Melody in F. Daily from the altars of a thousand, of ten thousand, school pianos that melody cries to heaven. From the empire of the music master, upon which the sun never sets, day and night, week in week out, from year to year, Rubinstein’s Melody in F streams up for ever. These school pieces are like the Latin ritual before the Reformation, they link all Christendom by a common use. As the earth spins, and the sunlight sweeps ever westward, that melody passes with the day. Now it is tinkling in a grey Moravian school, now it dawns upon the Adige and begins in Alsace, now it has reached Madrid, Paris, London. Then a devotee in some Connemara Establishment for Young Ladies sets to. Presently tall ships upon the silent main resound with it, and they are at it in the Azores and in Iceland, and then — one solitary tinkling, doubling, reduplicating, manifolding into an innumerable multitude — New York takes up the wondrous tale. On then with the dawn to desolate cattle ranches, the tablelands of Mexico, the level plains of Illinois and Michigan. So the great tide that started in Rubinstein’s cranium proceeds upon its destiny. Always somewhere between the hours of eleven and two it comes back to me here, poor hunted composition, running its eternal world gauntlet, pursuing its Wandering Jew pilgrimage, and I curse and pity it as it goes by.... It has gone. The ‘Maiden’s Prayer’ is next usually. Then one of the ‘Lieder ohne Worte,’ then the ‘Dead March’ — all of them but the meagre and mutilated skeletons of themselves; things of gaps and tatters, like gibbet trophies. They are as knocked about as a fleet coming out of action, they are as twisted and garbled as a Chinese war telegram; it is like an hospital for congenitally diseased compositions taking the air. And they have to hobble along sharply too; there is a certain cruel decision in the way the notes are struck, a Nurse Gillespie touch about this Invisible Lady. Or it may be the callousness of old habit, a certain sense of a duty overdone, a certain impatience at the long delay. You will hear.

“Listen! — *Tum Tum Ti-ti-tum* — No! — *tum*. Slight pause. Tum *tum twiddle* — vigorous crescendo — TUM. This is unusual! A stranger? A new piece for La Belle Dame Sans Merci? Her wonted reckless dash deserts her. She is, as it were, exploring a new region, and advances with mischievous coyness, with an affectation of a faltering heart, with hesitating steps. My imagination is stimulated by these dripping notes. I see her, as it were, on an uneven pavement; here the flags are set on end, there fungi have tilted them, a sharp turning of the page may reveal heaven knows what horrors; presently comes a black gap with a vault of dusty silence below. A pause, an incoherency, a repetition! She has encountered some difficulty, some slumbering coil of sharps and flats, and it raises its bristling front in her way.... She has fled back to the opening again. I begin to wonder what unhappy musician lies hidden in this new ruin, behind the bars of this melancholy confusion. There is something familiar but elusive, like a face that one has known and loved and lost and met again after the cruel changes of intervening years. It conjures up oddly enough a vision of a long room in the twilight, and an acacia in silhouette against the pale gold of the western sky. Ah! now I know!

“*That* of all pieces!

“I must have my walk, George. I cannot bear to hear that old-familiar music so evilly entreated. But, all the same, the memory it has touched will vibrate and smart; to-day and to-morrow, and I know not for how many days, it will re-echo in my brain. All the old cloudy remorse that has subsided will be set astir again. I shall hear again a light touch upon the keys, see again the shadowy face against the sunset, try to recall the sound of a voice.... What evil spirit has put this mockery into the head of La Belle Dame? Surely without this — —”

He made a dive at the folding doors and presently reappeared in his coat. It was the only intimation I ever had that my dear little uncle had such a thing as a Past.

ON A TRICYCLE

I sat on the parapet of the bridge, and swung my feet over the water that frothed and fretted at the central pier below. Above the bridge the stream broadened into a cress-bespangled pool, over which the sapphire dragon-flies hovered, and its earlier course was hidden by the big oak trees that bent towards each other from either bank. Through their speckled tracery of green one saw the hazy blue depths of the further forest. I was watching the proceedings of some quick-moving brown bird amid the rushes and marsh marigolds of the opposite bank.

"Pleasant," said a voice beside me.

I turned, and saw my uncle. He was disguised in a costume of reddish-brown cloth. "Golf here?" said I, and then I noticed the tricycle. "A vagrom man on wheels!"

Both the suit and the machine became him very well. The machine was low, and singularly broad between the wheels, and altogether equal to him, and it had chubby pneumatic tires and a broad and even imposing wallet.

"Yes," said he, following my eye. "It is a handsome machine, a full dress concern with all its plating and brown leather, and in use it is as willing and quiet as any tricycle could be, a most urbane and gentlemanly affair — if you will pardon the adjective. I am glad these things have not come too late for me. Frankly, the bicycle is altogether too flippant for a man of my age, and the tricycle hitherto, with its two larger wheels behind and a smaller one in front, has been so indecently suggestive of a perambulator that really, George, I could not bring myself to it. But a Bishop might ride *that* thing."

He swung himself up upon the parapet beside me and lit a cigar.

"The bicycle for boys, George — or fools. The things will not keep up for a moment without you work at them, they need constant attention; I would as soon ride a treadmill. You cannot loaf with them, and the only true pleasure of cycling is to loaf. Yet only this morning did I meet an elderly gentleman with a beard fit for Abraham, his face all crimson and deliquescent with heat, and all distorted with the fury of his haste, toiling up a hill on one of these

unstable instruments. When he saw me coming down in all my ease and dignity he damned at me with his bell. Now, I do not like to see a bicycle wobble under a load of years, and steer into the irascible. As years increase tempers shorten, and bicycles, even the best of bicycles, are seductively irritating.

"Besides, the devil of the Wandering Jew has power over all such as go upon two wheels. 'Onward,' he says, 'onward! Faster, thou man! This green and breezy earth is no abiding place for you!' And hard-breathing, crook-shaped, whirling, bell-banging lunatics try and race you. They whiz by, thinking indignities of your dignified progress, and sometimes saying them. Not one cyclist in a dozen, George, and seemingly not a solitary bicyclist, seems to think of anything but getting to the end of his pleasure. I meet these servants of the wheel at the inns, and they tell short stories and sketches about their pace, and show each other their shoes and saddles, and compare maps and roads; some even try to trade machines. They talk most indecently of the makes and prices. I would as soon ask a man who was his tailor or where he got his hair cut and how much he paid. One man I met was not so much a man as a hoarding, blatant about the Gaspipe Machine Company. For them no flowers exist, no wild birds, no trees, no landscapes, no historical memorials, and no geological associations, nothing but the roads they traverse and the bicycles they ride. Those that have other interests have them in the form of cheap portable cameras, malignant things that can find no beauty in earth or heaven."

"George," said my uncle, suddenly, and I knew he had come upon a great discovery; "real human beings are scarce in this world."

"You speak bitterly," said I. "I know what has happened. You are hot from an inn full of the viler type of cyclist, and I presume that, after their custom, they mocked at your machinery. But don't blacken a popular exercise on that account."

"But these men are so aggressive! I tell you, George, it requires moral courage to ride a tricycle about at a moderate pace, as a man of discretion should. They want to make a sport of it; they are race-struck, incapable of understanding a man who rides at seven miles an hour when he might ride at fifteen. Read their special papers. They mock and sneer at everything but pace; they worship the makes of

‘94 in the interests of their advertising columns; touring simply means hotel-touting to them, and landscape, deals in cameras; in the end they will kill cycling — indeed, they are killing it. It is not nice to be mocked at even when you are in the right; a blatant cad is like a rhinoceros, and admits of no parleying, only since you must not kill him you are obliged to keep out of his way. The common cyclist has already driven ladies off the roads by forcing the pace, the honeymoon tandem returns with its feelings hurt at his jesting, and now he is driving off all quiet men.”

“All this,” said I, “because they said something disrespectful about your machine at the last inn... You don’t, I see, approve of the feminine bicycle?”

My uncle did his best to be calm and judicial.

“A woman in a hurry is one of the most painful sights in the world, for exertion does not become a woman as it does a man. Let us avoid all prejudice in this matter, George, and discuss it with open minds. She has, in the first place, a considerable length of hair, and she does it up into rich and beautiful shapes with things called hairpins and with curling irons. Very few people have hair that curls naturally, George. You are young, but you are married, and I see nothing improper in telling you these things. Well, when a woman rides about, exerting herself violently to keep a bicycle going, her hair gets damp and the pleasing curls lose their curliness and become wet, straggling bands of hair plastered over her venous forehead. And a tragic anxiety is manifest, an expression painful for a man to meet. Also her hairpins come out and fall on the road to wait for pneumatic tires, and her hair is no longer rich and beautiful in form. Then she gets dirty, horribly dirty, as though she had been used to sweep the roads with. And her skirts have to be weirdly altered, even to the divided skirt, so that when she rides she looks like a short, squat little man. She not only loses her beauty but her dignity. Now, for my own part, I think a man wants a woman to worship — it is a man’s point of view, of course, but I can’t help my sex — and the worshipping of these zouaves is incredible. She is nothing more than a shorter, fuller, and feebler man. Heaven help her! For the woman on the tricycle there are ampler excuses as well as ampler skirts, the exertion is not too violent for grace and coolness, and the offensive

bulging above one narrow wheel is avoided. But women will never sacrifice so much for so little; worshipfulness, beauty, repose, and comfort for a paltry two or three miles more an hour of pace. They know too well the graces of delay. To do things slowly, George, is part of the art of living. Our sex learns that when its youthful fervour is over and all the things are done. But women are born wise."

"By the bye," said I, "how is Mrs Harborough?"

"Very well, thanks. How is Euphemia? Your bit of view, George, is pretty, but I think I will have some heather now. There is a common three miles ahead. This indeed is the true merit of cycling. For a view, a panorama; for one picture, a gallery. Your true artist in cycling sits by the roadside, and rides only by way of an interlude. As for the worship of the machine, I would as soon worship a scene-shifter."

He dropped off the bridge and mounted his machine, and was presently pursuing his smooth and noiseless way. As he vanished round the corner he sounded his gong. It was really a most potent, grave, and reverend gong, with a certain note of philosophical melancholy in its tone, as different from the vulgar tang of your common cycle as one can well imagine. It asked you, at your convenience, sir (or madam), to get out of the way, to stand aside and see a most worthy and dignified spectacle roll by, if so be you had the mind for it. As for any scolding insistence, any threat of imminent collision, there was none of it. It was the bell of a man who loved margins, who was at his ease, and would have all the world at its ease. More than anything else, it reminded me of the boom of some ivy-clad church tower, warning the world without unseemly haste that another hour had, with leisurely completeness, accomplished itself.

And so he passed out of my sight and was gone.

AN UNSUSPECTED MASTERPIECE

(AUTHORESS UNKNOWN)

He pushed it away from him.

"I felt as though I had disturbed the graves of the long departed," he said with a grimace, and then addressing the egg: "Forgive me the sacrilege: they sold you to me as new laid, a mere thing of yesterday. I had no idea I was opening the immemorial past. *De mortuis nihil nisi bonum* — to you at least the quotation will be novel. Or I might call you bad, you poor mummy.

"Unhappy, pent-up, ineffectual thing!" he said, waving his jilted bread and butter, and addressing the discarded inedible. "Poor old maid among eggs! And so it has come to this absolute failure with you. Why were you ever laid? Surely, since you were once alive, some lurking aspiration, some lowly, and yet not lowly, but most divine, striving towards the Higher and the Better, hath stirred within you. The warm sunlight shone through your translucent shell, the sweet air stirred the sweet hay of the nest, and life called you from your dreaming to awake, and join it in its interplay. And now! You might have been — what might you not have been? A prize hen, fountain of a broadening stream of hens, chicks, dozens of chicks, hundreds of chicks, a surging ocean of chickens. Had you been hatched among the early Victorian chickens that were, I presume, your contemporaries, by now you might have been a million fowl, and the delight and support of hundreds of thousands of homes. You might have been worth thousands of pounds and have eaten corn by the ton. They might have written articles about you in half-crown reviews and devoted poultry farms to your sole support. And instead you have been narrowed down to this sordid back-street tragedy, a mere offence, tempting a struggling tradesman to risk the honour of my patronage of his books, for a paltry fraction of a pennyworth of profit. Why, I ask you, were you not hatched? Was it lack of courage? a fear of the unknown dangers that lie outside the shell?

"An indescribable pity wells up in me for this lost egg, this dead end in the tree of life, George. One thinks of the humble but

deserving amoeba, the primordial metazöon, the first fish, the remote reptile ancestor, the countless generations of forefathers that, so far as this egg went, have lived and learnt and suffered in vain. The torrent of life had split and rushed by on either side of it. And you might," cried he, turning to the egg again, "have been a Variety, a novelty, and an improvement in chickens. No chick now will ever be *exactly* the chick you might have been. Only an Olive Schreiner could do full justice to your failure, you poor nun, you futile eremite, you absolute and hopeless impasse. Was it, I ask again, a lack of courage?

"Perhaps a lack of opportunity? It may be you stirred and hoped in the distant past, and the warmth to quicken you never came. Ambition may have fretted you. Indeed, now I think of it, there is something in the flavour of you, singularly suggestive of disappointed ambition. In literature, and more particularly in criticism, I can assure you I have met the very fellow of your quality, from literary rotten eggs whose opening came too late. They are like the genii in the 'Arabian Nights' whom Solomon, the son of David, sealed in the pot. At first he promised infinite delights to his discoverer — and his discoverer lagged. In the end he was filled with unreasonable hatred against all the feeble free, and emerged as a malignant fume, eager to wreak himself upon the world.

"A sudden thought, George! I see my egg in a new light, and all my pity changes to respect. Surely it is a most potent egg, a gallinaceous Swift. After all, anything but pointless and childless, since it has this strange quality of being offensive and engendering thought. Food for the mind if not food for the body — didactic if not delightful — a bit of modern literature, earnest and fundamentally real. I must try and understand you, Ibsen Ovarum. Possibly it is a profound parable I have stumbled upon. Though I scarcely reckoned on a parable with my bread and butter. Frankly, I must confess I bought it for the eating."

Now that my uncle had at last begun to grasp the true greatness of his egg, he apparently considered it becoming to drop the tone of half-patronising pity he had previously adopted. "Come," said he, smiling, with a dash of raillery, over his coffee-cup; "admit you are a humbug, you whitened sepulchre of an anticipated chick! Until you

found a congenial soul and overwhelmed me with your confidence, what a career of deception — not mean, of course, but cynical — ironical — you have been leading. What a jest it must have been to you to be sold as new laid! How you laughed in your quiet way at the mockery of life. Surely it was a worthy pair to Swift in cassock and bands conducting a marriage service. I can well fancy your silent scorn of the hand that put you in the bag. New laid! But now I have the full humour of you. You must pardon my dulness of apprehension. I grasp your meaning now; your quiet insistent teaching that all life is decay and all decay is life. No forcing the accent, no crudity, but a pervading persuasion. A noble gospel!"

He paused impressively, placed the egg respectfully upon his bureau, and presently went off at a tangent to something else.

"Shall I throw this away?" said the girl.

"Good heavens! Throw it away? Certainly not. Put it in the library." (The library used to be the corner of the room by the window.)

She stared at me with a certain attempt at confidence. She is a callous, impertinent kind of girl, and I fear inclined to be bold. "It *do* smell, sir," she said to him.

"That's the merit of it. It's irony. Go and put it on the fourth shelf near the window. There are some yellow-covered books there, and Swift, some comedies by a gentleman named Ibsen, and a couple of novels by two gentlemen named George —— — . But there! you don't know one book from another! The fourth shelf from the top on the right-hand side."

As the girl did so she looked over her hand at me, and lifted her eyebrows very slightly.

THE GREAT CHANGE

My uncle had been hectic all day. I knew and dreaded what was coming, and said nothing that by any chance could lead up to it.

He absent-mindedly tipped the emu sixpence. Then we came to the wart hog.

"A bachelor," he said, meditatively, scratching the brute's back.

I hastily felt for a saving topic in the apprehensive darkness of my mind, and could find none.

"I expect I shall be married in October," said my uncle. Then, sighing: "The idyll of my engagement was short-lived."

It was out. Now, the day — my last idle day with my poor uncle — was a hideous wreck. All the topics he had fluttered round vanished, and, cold and awful, there loomed over us the one great topic.

"What do you *think* of marriage, George?" said my uncle, after a pause, prodding the wart hog suddenly.

"That's your privilege," said I. "Married men don't dare to think of it. Bigamy."

"Privilege! Is it such a headlong wreck of one's ideals as they say?" said my uncle. "Is that dreamland furniture really so unstable in use?"

"Of course," said I, "it's different from what one expects. But it seems to be worse for the other party. At least to judge from the novels they engender in their agony."

"So far as I can see," he proceeded, "what happens is very similar to a thing a scientific chap was explaining to me the other day. There are some little beasts in the sea called ascidians, and they begin life as cheerful little tadpole things, with waggling tails and big expressive eyes. They move freely about hither and thither, and often travel vast distances in an adventurous way. Then what he called metamorphosis begins. The little tadpole waggles his way to a rock and fixes himself head downward. Then he undergoes the oddest changes, becomes indeed a mere vegetative excrescence on the stone, secretes a lot of tough muck round himself, and is altogether lost to free oceanic society. He loses the cheerful tail, loses most of his

brain, loses his bright expressive eye."

"The bother of it," said I, "is that very often the wandering expressive eye is not lost in the human metamorphosis."

"Putting it in another way, one might say that the kind of story that Ovid is so fond of describing, the affairs of Daphne and Io, for instance, are fables of the same thing: an interlude of sentiment and then a change into something new and domesticated, rooted, fixed, and bounded in."

"It is certainly always a settling down," said I.

"I don't like this idea of settling down, George." He shuddered. "It must be a dreadful thing to go about always with a house on your mind."

"You get used to it. And, besides, you don't go about so much."

He gave the bachelor wart hog a parting dig, and we walked slowly and silently through the zebra-house towards the elephants. "Of course we do not intend to settle down," he said presently, with a clumsy effort to render his previous remarks impersonal.

"A marriage invalidates all promises," I explained. "The law recognises this in the case of wills."

"That's a new view," he said, evidently uncomfortable about something.

"It follows from your doctrine of metamorphosis. A marries B. Then the great change begins. A gradually alters into a new fixed form, C, while B flattens and broadens out as D. It is a different couple, and they cannot reasonably be held responsible for the vagaries of A and B."

"That ought to be better understood."

"It would perhaps be as well. Before marriage Edwin vows to devote his life to Angelina, and Angelina vows she will devote her life to Edwin. After marriage this leads to confusion if they continue to believe such promises. Marriage certainly has that odd effect on the memory. You remember Angelina's promises and forget your own, and *vice versa*."

"There is no apparition more distressing than the ghost of a dead promise," said my uncle. "Especially when it is raised in the house of your friends."

We passed through the elephant house in silence.

“I wonder what kind of man I shall be after the change, George. It’s all a toss-up,” he continued, after an interval. “I have seen some men improved by it. You, for instance. You were a mere useless, indecent aspirant to genius before the thing came upon you. Now you are a respectable journalist and gracefully anxious to give satisfaction to your editor. But my own impression is that a man has to be a bit of an ass before he can be improved by marriage. Most men get so mercenary, they simply work and do nothing a rational creature should. They are like the male ants that shed their wings after the nuptial flight. And their wives go round talking fashion articles, and calling them dear old stupids, and flirting over teacups with the unmarried men, or writing novelettes about the child-man, and living their own lives. I’ve been an unmarried man and I know all about it. Every intelligent woman now seems to want to live her own life when she is not engaged in taking the child-man out into polite society, and trying to wean him from alcohol and tobacco. However, this scarcely applies to me.”

“Not now,” I said. And he winced.

“I wonder how it feels. Most men go into this without knowing of the change that hangs over them. But I am older. It would not be nice for a caterpillar if he knew he was going to rip up all along his back in a minute or so. Yet I could sympathise with such a caterpillar now. Anyhow, George, I hope the change will be complete. I would not like to undergo only a partial metamorphosis, and become a queer speckled monster all spotted with bachelor habits. Yet I sometimes think I am beyond the adolescent stage, and my habits rather deeply rooted. Hitherto, I have always damned a little at braces and collars and things like that. I wish I knew where one could pick up a few admissible expletives. And I loaf about London all day sometimes without any very clear idea of what I am after, telling chaps in studios how to paint, and talking to leisurely barristers, and all that kind of thing.”

“*She*,” I said, “will probably help you to conquer habits of that sort.”

“Yes, I dare say she will,” said my uncle. “I forgot that for the minute.”

THE PAINS OF MARRIAGE

My uncle came to a stop outside a stationer's shop in Oxford-street. When I saw what had caught his attention I reproached myself for my thoughtlessness.

"Come," said I, "tell me what you think of — of representative government."

"It's no good, George. You did the same thing at the cake shop. Do you think I never saw the cake shop? Since this affair was settled I think every shop I pass reminds me of it — even the gunsmith's. I never suspected before how entirely retail trade turned on marriage — except, perhaps, the second-hand book shops. The whole world seems a-marrying.

"It's queer," said he, "that a little while ago the thing that worried me to the exclusion of everything else was the idea of being married, and now it is so near it's entirely the getting married that upsets me. I have forgotten the horrid consequences in the horror of the operation."

"It's much the same," said I, "at an execution."

"Look at those cards." He waved his hand towards a neat array of silver and white pasteboard. "'Jemima Smith,' with an arrow through the Smith, and 'Podger' written above it, and on the opposite side 'Mr and Mrs John Podger.' That is where it has me, George."

We went on past a display of electroplate with a card about presents in the window, past a window full of white flowers, past a carriage-builder's and a glove shop. "It's like death," said my uncle; "it turns up everywhere and is just the same for everybody. In that cake shop there were piles and piles of cakes, from little cakes ten inches across up to cakes of three hundredweight or so; all just the same rich, uneatable, greasy stuff, and with just the same white sugar on the top of them. I suppose every day they pack off scores. It makes one think of marrying in swarms, like the gnats. I catch myself wondering sometimes if the run of people really are separate individuals, or only a kind of replicas, without any tastes of their own. There are people who would rather not marry than marry without one of those cakes, George. To me it seems to be almost the

most asinine position a couple of adults can be in, to have to buy a stone or so of that concentrated biliousness and cut it up, or procure other people to cut it up, and send it round to other adults who would almost as soon eat arsenic. And why cake — infantile cake? Why not biscuits, or cigarettes, or chocolate? It seems to me to be playing the fool with a solemn occasion."

"You see, it is the custom to have cake."

"Well, anyhow, I intend to break the custom."

"So did I, but I had it all the same."

My uncle looked at me.

"You see," said I, "when a woman says you must do this or that — must have cake at a wedding, for instance — you must do it. It is not a case for argument. It is a kind of privilege they have — the categorical imperative. You will soon learn that."

Evidently the question was open. "But *why* do they say you must?"

"Other women tell them to. They would despise any one dreadfully who did not have a really big cake — from that shop."

"But why?"

"My dear uncle," said I, "you are going into matrimony. You do not show a proper spirit."

"The cake," said my uncle, "is only a type. There is this trousseau business again. Why should a woman who is going to marry require a complete outfit of that sort? It seems to suggest — well, pre-nuptial rags at least, George. Then the costume. Why should a sane healthy woman be covered up in white gauze like the confectionery in a shop window when the flies are about? And why —— ?"

He was going on in quite an aggressive tone. "There isn't a *why*," I said, "for any of it." This sort of talk always irritates a married man because it revives his own troubles. "It's just the rule. Surely, if a wife is worth having she is worth being ridiculous for? You ought to be jolly glad you don't have to wear a fool's cap and paint your nose red. 'More precious than rubies' — —"

"Don't," he said.

"It must be these tradesmen," he began bitterly after an interval. "Some one must be responsible, and it's just their way. Do you know, George, I sometimes fancy that they have hypnotised

womankind into the belief that all these uncomfortable things are absolutely necessary to a valid marriage — just as they have persuaded the landlady class that no house is complete without a big mirror over the fireplace and a bulgy sideboard. There is a very strong flavour of mesmeric suggestion about a woman's attitude towards these matters, considered in the light of her customary common sense. Do you know, George, I really believe there is a secret society of tradesmen, a kind of priesthood, who get hold of our womenkind and muddle them up with all these fancies. It's a sort of white magic. Have you ever been in a draper's shop, George?"

"Never," I said: "I always wait outside — among the dogs."

"Have you ever read a ladies' newspaper?"

"I didn't know," said I, "that there was any part to read. It's all advertisements; all the articles are advertisements, all the paragraphs, the stories, the answers to correspondents — everything."

"That's exactly what makes me think the tradesmen have hypnotised the sex. It may be they do it in those drapers' dens. A man spots that kind of thing at once and drops the paper. Women go on year after year, simply worshipping a paper hoarding of that kind, and doing patiently everything they are told to do therein. Anyhow, it is only in this way that I can account for all these expensive miseries of matrimony. I can't understand a woman in full possession of her faculties deliberately exasperating the man she has to live with — I suppose all men submit to it under protest — for these stale and stereotyped antics. She *must* be magnetised."

"They are not stale to her," I said.

"Mrs Harborough — —" he began.

"Of course, a widow! — I forgot," I said. "But she seems so young, you know."

"And putting aside the details," said my uncle, with a transient dash of cheerfulness at my mistake; "I object to the publicity of the whole thing. It's not nice. To bring the street arab into the affair, to subject yourself to the impertinent congratulations and presents of every aspirant to your intimacy, to be patted on the back in the local newspapers as though you were going to do something clever. Confound them! It's not their affair. And I'm too old to be a blushing bridegroom. Then think, what am I to do, George, if that cad Hagshot

sends me a present?”

“It would be like him if he did,” I said. “I fancy he will.”

“I can’t go and kick him,” said my uncle.

“Declined with thanks,” I suggested, “owing to pressure of other matter.”

“You are getting shoppy, George,” said my uncle, in as near an approach to a querulous tone as I have heard from him.

“You are getting married,” I replied, with the complacency of one whose troubles are over. “But it’s a horrible nuisance, anyhow. Still, the world grows wiser, and the burden is not quite so bad as it used to be. A hundred years hence — —”

“I’d be willing enough to wait,” said my uncle; “but I’m not the only party in this affair.”

He was willing enough to wait, perhaps, but time was inexorable. Save for one hurried interview, I did not see him again for a week, and then it was before the altar. His garrulity had fallen from him like a garment. He was preoccupied and a trifle bashful. He fumbled with the ring. I felt almost as though he was my younger brother.

I stood by him to the end, and at last came the hour of parting. I grasped his hand in silence: silently he mastered a becoming emotion. And in silence he went from me unto the New Life.

A MISUNDERSTOOD ARTIST

The gentleman with the Jovian coiffure began to speak as the train moved. "'Tis the utmost degradation of art," he said. He had apparently fallen into conversation with his companion upon the platform.

"I don't see it," said this companion, a prosperous-looking gentleman with a gold watch-chain. "This art for art's sake — I don't believe in it, I tell you. Art should have an aim. If it don't do you good, if it ain't moral, I'd as soon not have it. What good is it? I believe in Ruskin. I tell you — —"

"*Bah*!" said the gentleman in the corner, with almost explosive violence. He fired it like a big gun across the path of the incipient argument, and slew the prosperous-looking gentleman at once. He met our eyes, as we turned to him, with a complacent smile on his large white, clean-shaven face. He was a corpulent person, dressed in black, and with something of the quality of a second-hand bishop in his appearance. The demolished owner of the watch-chain made some beginnings of a posthumous speech.

"*Bah*!" said the gentleman in the corner, with even more force than before, and so finished him.

"These people will never understand," he said, after a momentary pause, addressing the gentleman with the Jovian coiffure, and indicating the remains of the prosperous gentleman by a wave of a large white hand. "Why do you argue? Art is ever for the few."

"I did not argue," said the gentleman with the hair. "I was interrupted."

The owner of the watch-chain, who had been sitting struggling with his breath, now began to sob out his indignation. "What do you *mean*, sir? Saying *Bah*! sir, when I am talking — —"

The gentleman with the large face held up a soothing hand. "Peace, peace," he said. "I did not interrupt you. I annihilated you. Why did you presume to talk to artists about art? Go away, or I shall have to say Bah! again. Go and have a fit. Leave us — two rare souls who may not meet again — to our talking."

"Did you ever see such abominable *rudeness*, sir?" said the

gentleman with the watch-chain, appealing to me. There were tears in his eyes. At the same time the young man with the aureole made some remark to the corpulent gentleman that I failed to catch.

"These artists," said I, "are unaccountable, irresponsible. You must — —"

"Take it from whence it comes," said the insulted one, very loudly, and bitterly glaring at his opponent. But the two artists were conversing serenely. I felt the undignified quality of our conversation. "Have you seen *Punch*?" said I, thrusting it into his hand.

He looked at the paper for a moment in a puzzled way; then understood, thanked me, and began to read with a thunderous scowl, every now and then shooting murderous glances at his antagonist in the opposite corner, or coughing in an aggressive manner.

"You do your best," the gentleman with the long hair was saying; "and they say, 'What is it for?' 'It is for itself,' you say. Like the stars."

"But these people," said the stout gentleman, "think the stars were made to set their clocks by. They lack the magnanimity to drop the personal reference. A friend, a *confrère*, saw a party of these horrible Extension people at Rome before that exquisite Venus of Titian. 'And now, Mr Something-or-other,' said one of the young ladies, addressing the pedagogue in command, 'what is *this* to teach us?'"

"I have had the same experience," said the young gentleman with the hair. "A man sent to me only a week ago to ask what my sonnet 'The Scarlet Thread' *meant*?"

The stout person shook his head as though such things passed all belief.

"Gur-r-r-r," said the gentleman with *Punch*, and scraped with his foot on the floor of the carriage.

"I gave him answer," said the poet, "'Twas a sonnet; not a symbol."

"Precisely," said the stout gentleman.

"'Tis the fate of all art to be misunderstood. I am always grossly misunderstood — by every one. They call me fantastic, whereas I am but inevitably new; indecent, because I am unfettered by mere trivial personal restrictions; unwholesome."

“It is what they say to me. They are always trying to pull me to earth. ‘Is it wholesome?’ they say; ‘nutritious?’ I say to them, ‘I do not know. I am an artist. I do not care. It is beautiful.’”

“You rhyme?” said the poet.

“No. My work is — more plastic. I cook.”

For a moment, perhaps, the poet was disconcerted. “A noble art,” he said, recovering.

“The noblest,” said the cook. “But sorely misunderstood; degraded to utilitarian ends; tested by impossible standards. I have been seriously asked to render oily food palatable to a delicate patient. Seriously!”

“He said, ‘Bah!’ Bah! to *me*!” mumbled the defunct gentleman with *Punch*, apparently addressing the cartoon. “A cook! Good *Lord*!”

“I resigned. ‘Cookery,’ I said, ‘is an art. I am not a fattener of human cattle. Think: Is it Art to write a book with an object, to paint a picture for strategy?’ ‘Are we,’ I said, ‘in the sixties or the nineties? Here, in your kitchen, I am inspired with beautiful dinners, and I produce them. It is your place to gather together, from this place one, and from that, one, the few precious souls who can appreciate that rare and wonderful thing, a dinner, graceful, harmonious, exquisite, perfect.’ And he argued I must study his guests!”

“No artist is of any worth,” said the poet, “who primarily studies what the public needs.”

“As I told him. But the next man was worse — hygienic. While with this creature I read Poe for the first time, and I was singularly fascinated by some of his grotesques. I tried — it was an altogether new development, I believe, in culinary art — the Bizarre. I made some curious arrangements in pork and strawberries, with a sauce containing beer. Quite by accident I mentioned my design to him on the evening of the festival. All the Philistine was aroused in him. ‘It will ruin my digestion.’ ‘My friend,’ I said, ‘I am not your doctor; I have nothing to do with your digestion. Only here is a beautiful Japanese thing, a quaint, queer, almost eerie dinner, that is in my humble opinion worth many digestions. You may take it or leave it, but ’tis the last dinner I cook for you.’ ... I knew I was wasted upon him.

“Then I produced some Nocturnes in imitation of Mr Whistler, with mushrooms, truffles, grilled meat, pickled walnuts, black pudding, French plums, porter — a dinner in soft velvety black, eaten in a starlight of small scattered candles. That, too, led to a resignation: Art will ever demand its martyrs.”

The poet made sympathetic noises.

“Always. The awful many will never understand. Their conception of my skill is altogether on a level with their conceptions of music, of literature, of painting. For wall decorations they love autotypes; for literature, harmless volumes of twaddle that leave no vivid impressions on the mind; for dinners, harmless dishes that are forgotten as they are eaten. *My* dinners stick in the memory. I cannot study these people — my genius is all too imperative. If I needed a flavour of almonds and had nothing else to hand, I would use prussic acid. Do right, I say, as your art instinct commands, and take no heed of the consequences. Our function is to make the beautiful gastronomic thing, not to pander to gluttony, not to be the Jesuits of hygiene. My friend, you should see some of my compositions. At home I have books and books in manuscript, Symphonies, Picnics, Fantasies, *Etudes*...”

The train was now entering Clapham Junction. The gentleman with the gold watch-chain returned my *Punch*. “A cook,” he said in a whisper; “just a common cook!” He lifted his eyebrows and shook his head at me, and proceeded to extricate himself and his umbrella from the carriage. “Out of a situation too!” he said — a little louder — as I prepared to follow him.

“Mere dripping!” said the artist in cookery, with a regal wave of the hand.

Had I felt sure I was included, I should of course have resented the phrase.

THE MAN WITH A NOSE

"I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire, and Dives that lived in purple, for there he is in his robes, burning, burning."

"My nose has been the curse of my life."

The other man started.

They had not spoken before. They were sitting, one at either end, on that seat on the stony summit of Primrose Hill which looks towards Regent's Park. It was night. The paths on the slope below were dotted out by yellow lamps; the Albert-road was a line of faintly luminous pale green — the tint of gaslight seen among trees; beyond, the park lay black and mysterious, and still further, a yellow mist beneath and a coppery hue in the sky above marked the blaze of the Marylebone thoroughfares. The nearer houses in the Albert-terrace loomed large and black, their blackness pierced irregularly by luminous windows. Above, starlight.

Both men had been silent, lost apparently in their own thoughts, mere dim black figures to each other, until one had seen fit to become a voice also, with this confidence.

"Yes," he said, after an interval, "my nose has always stood in my way, always."

The second man had scarcely seemed to notice the first remark, but now he peered through the night at his interlocutor. It was a little man he saw, with face turned towards him.

"I see nothing wrong with your nose."

"If it were luminous you might," said the first speaker. "However, I will illuminate it."

He fumbled with something in his pocket, then held this object in his hand. There was a scratch, a streak of greenish phosphorescent light, and then all the world beyond became black, as a fusee vesta flared.

There was silence for the space of a minute. An impressive pause.

"Well?" said the man with the nose, putting his heel on the light.

"I have seen worse," said the second man.

"I doubt it," said the man with the nose; "and even so, it is poor

comfort. Did you notice the shape? the size? the colour? Like Snowdon, it has a steep side and a gentle slope. The size is preposterous: my face is like a hen-house built behind a portico. And the tints!"

"It is not all red," said the second man, "anyhow."

"No, there is purple, and blue, '*lapis lazuli*, blue as a vein over the Madonna's breast,' and in one place a greyish mole. Bah! the thing is not a nose at all, but a bit of primordial chaos clapped on to my face. But, being where the nose should be, it gets the credit of its position from unthinking people. There is a gap in the order of the universe in front of my face, a lump of unwrought material left over. In that my true nose is hidden, as a statue is hidden in a lump of marble, until the appointed time for the revelation shall come. At the resurrection —— But one must not anticipate. Well, well. I do not often talk about my nose, my friend, but you sat with a sympathetic pose, it seemed to me, and to-night my heart is full of it. This cursed nose! But do I weary you, thrusting my nose into your meditations?"

"If," said the second man, his voice a little unsteady, as though he was moved, "if it eases your mind to talk of your nose, pray talk."

"This nose, I say then, makes me think of the false noses of Carnival times. Your dullest man has but to stick one on, and lo! mirth, wit, and jollity. They are enough to make anything funny. I doubt if even an Anglican bishop could wear one with impunity. Put an angel in one. How would you like one popped on to *you* now? Think of going love-making, or addressing a public meeting, or dying gloriously, in a nose like mine! Angelina laughs in your face, the public laughs, the executioner at your martyrdom can hardly light the faggots for laughing. By heaven! it is no joke. Often and often I have rebelled, and said, 'I will not have this nose!'"

"But what can one do?"

"It is destiny. The bitter tragedy of it is that it is so comic. Only, God knows, how glad I shall be when the Carnival is over, and I may take the thing off and put it aside. The worst has been this business of love. My mind is not unrefined, my body is healthy. I know what tenderness is. But what woman could overlook a nose like mine? How could she shut out her visions of it, and look her love into my eyes, glaring at her over its immensity? I should have to make love

through an Inquisitor's hood, with its holes cut for the eyes — and even then the shape would show. I have read, I have been told, I can imagine what a lover's face is like — a sweet woman's face radiant with love. But this Millbank penitentiary of flesh chills their dear hearts."

He broke off suddenly, with loud ferocious curses. A young man who had been sitting very close to a young woman on an adjacent seat, started up and said "Ssh!".

He whom the man with the nose had addressed now spoke. "I have certainly never thought before of a red nose as a sorrowful thing, but as you put it...."

"I thought you would understand. I have had this nose all my life. The outline was done, even though the colour was wanting, in my school days. They called me 'Nosey,' 'Ovid,' 'Cicero,' 'Rhino,' and the 'Excrescence.' It has ripened with the slow years, as fate deepens in the progress of a tragedy. Love, the business of life, is a sealed book to me. To be alone! I would thank heaven.... But no! a blind woman could feel the shape of it."

"Besides love," interrupted the young man thoughtfully, "there are other things worth living for — duty. An unattractive nose would not interfere with that. Some people think it is rather more important than love. I admit your loss, of course."

"That only carries out the evidence of your voice, and tells me you are young. My dear young fellow, duty is a very fine thing indeed, but believe me, it is too colourless as a motive. There is no delight in duty. You will know that at my age. And besides, I have an infinite capacity for love and sympathy, an infinite bitterness in this solitude of my soul. I infer that you would moralise on my discontent, but I know I have seen a little of men and things from behind this ambuscade — only a truly artistic man would fall into the sympathetic attitude that attracted me. My life has had even too much of observation in it, and to the systematic anthropologist, nothing tells a man's character more than his pose after dark, when nobody seems watching. As you sit, the black outline of you is clear against the sky. Ah! *now* you are sitting stiffer. But you are no Calvinist. My friend, the best of life is its delights, and the best of delights is loving and being loved. And for that — this nose! Well,

there are plenty of second-best things. After dark I can forget the monster a little. Spring is delightful, air on the Downs is delightful; it is fine to see the stars circling in the sky, while lying among the heather. Even this London sky is soothing at night, though the edge is all inflamed. The shadow of my nose is darkest by day. But to-night I am bitter, because of to-morrow."

"Why, to-morrow?" said the younger man.

"I have to meet some new people to-morrow," said the man with the nose. "There is an odd look, a mingling of amusement and pity, I am only too familiar with. My cousin, who is a gifted hostess, promises people my nose as a treat."

"Yes, that must be bad for you," said the young man.

And then the silence healed again, and presently the man with the nose got up and passed into the dimness upon the slope of the hill. The young man watched him vanish, wondering vainly how it would be possible to console a soul under such a burthen.

THE STOLEN BACILLUS AND OTHER INCIDENTS

This was Well's first short story collection, containing some of his earliest and most celebrated writing in the science fiction genre. The stories were first published in periodicals between 1893 and 1895. The title story involves an anarchist plot to poison London's water supply – although this doesn't go entirely to plan…

The stories are highly representative of the *fin de siècle* culture in which they were originally written and published, displaying a fascination not only with scientific concerns such as Darwinism and the controversy surrounding experimentation on animals (morally dubious taxidermists appear in two of the stories) but also with British imperialism and racial superiority. Although Wells is characteristically sceptical about British hubris in this area, his story 'The Lord of the Dynamos' exhibits a number of attributes likely to cause offence to modern readers, despite being commonplace at the time of writing. Other stories involve such fantastical notions as the creation of artificial diamonds and encounters with strange and undiscovered flora and fauna.

The first edition

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Poster advertising the Pall Mall Budget – the weekly periodical in which most of Wells' early stories appeared

TO

H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON

Most of the stories in this collection appeared originally in the *Pall Mall Budget*, two were published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and one in *St James's Gazette*. I desire to make the usual acknowledgments. The third story in the book was, I find, reprinted by the *Observatory*, and the "Lord of the Dynamos" by the Melbourne *Leader*.

THE STOLEN BACILLUS

"This again," said the Bacteriologist, slipping a glass slide under the microscope, "is a preparation of the celebrated Bacillus of cholera — the cholera germ."

The pale-faced man peered down the microscope. He was evidently not accustomed to that kind of thing, and held a limp white hand over his disengaged eye. "I see very little," he said.

"Touch this screw," said the Bacteriologist; "perhaps the microscope is out of focus for you. Eyes vary so much. Just the fraction of a turn this way or that."

"Ah! now I see," said the visitor. "Not so very much to see after all. Little streaks and shreds of pink. And yet those little particles, those mere atomies, might multiply and devastate a city! Wonderful!"

He stood up, and releasing the glass slip from the microscope, held it in his hand towards the window. "Scarcely visible," he said, scrutinising the preparation. He hesitated. "Are these — alive? Are they dangerous now?"

"Those have been stained and killed," said the Bacteriologist. "I wish, for my own part, we could kill and stain every one of them in the universe."

"I suppose," the pale man said with a slight smile, "that you scarcely care to have such things about you in the living — in the active state?"

"On the contrary, we are obliged to," said the Bacteriologist. "Here, for instance—" He walked across the room and took up one of several sealed tubes. "Here is the living thing. This is a cultivation of the actual living disease bacteria." He hesitated, "Bottled cholera, so to speak."

A slight gleam of satisfaction appeared momentarily in the face of the pale man.

"It's a deadly thing to have in your possession," he said, devouring the little tube with his eyes. The Bacteriologist watched the morbid pleasure in his visitor's expression. This man, who had visited him that afternoon with a note of introduction from an old

friend, interested him from the very contrast of their dispositions. The lank black hair and deep grey eyes, the haggard expression and nervous manner, the fitful yet keen interest of his visitor were a novel change from the phlegmatic deliberations of the ordinary scientific worker with whom the Bacteriologist chiefly associated. It was perhaps natural, with a hearer evidently so impressionable to the lethal nature of his topic, to take the most effective aspect of the matter.

He held the tube in his hand thoughtfully. "Yes, here is the pestilence imprisoned. Only break such a little tube as this into a supply of drinking-water, say to these minute particles of life that one must needs stain and examine with the highest powers of the microscope even to see, and that one can neither smell nor taste — say to them, 'Go forth, increase and multiply, and replenish the cisterns,' and death — mysterious, untraceable death, death swift and terrible, death full of pain and indignity — would be released upon this city, and go hither and thither seeking his victims. Here he would take the husband from the wife, here the child from its mother, here the statesman from his duty, and here the toiler from his trouble. He would follow the water-mains, creeping along streets, picking out and punishing a house here and a house there where they did not boil their drinking-water, creeping into the wells of the mineral-water makers, getting washed into salad, and lying dormant in ices. He would wait ready to be drunk in the horse-troughs, and by unwary children in the public fountains. He would soak into the soil, to reappear in springs and wells at a thousand unexpected places. Once start him at the water supply, and before we could ring him in, and catch him again, he would have decimated the metropolis."

He stopped abruptly. He had been told rhetoric was his weakness.

"But he is quite safe here, you know — quite safe."

The pale-faced man nodded. His eyes shone. He cleared his throat. "These Anarchist — rascals," said he, "are fools, blind fools — to use bombs when this kind of thing is attainable. I think—"

A gentle rap, a mere light touch of the finger-nails was heard at the door. The Bacteriologist opened it. "Just a minute, dear," whispered his wife.

When he re-entered the laboratory his visitor was looking at his

watch. “I had no idea I had wasted an hour of your time,” he said. “Twelve minutes to four. I ought to have left here by half-past three. But your things were really too interesting. No, positively I cannot stop a moment longer. I have an engagement at four.”

He passed out of the room reiterating his thanks, and the Bacteriologist accompanied him to the door, and then returned thoughtfully along the passage to his laboratory. He was musing on the ethnology of his visitor. Certainly the man was not a Teutonic type nor a common Latin one. “A morbid product, anyhow, I am afraid,” said the Bacteriologist to himself. “How he gloated on those cultivations of disease-germs!” A disturbing thought struck him. He turned to the bench by the vapour-bath, and then very quickly to his writing-table. Then he felt hastily in his pockets, and then rushed to the door. “I may have put it down on the hall table,” he said.

“Minnie!” he shouted hoarsely in the hall.

“Yes, dear,” came a remote voice.

“Had I anything in my hand when I spoke to you, dear, just now?”

Pause.

“Nothing, dear, because I remember—”

“Blue ruin!” cried the Bacteriologist, and incontinently ran to the front door and down the steps of his house to the street.

Minnie, hearing the door slam violently, ran in alarm to the window. Down the street a slender man was getting into a cab. The Bacteriologist, hatless, and in his carpet slippers, was running and gesticulating wildly towards this group. One slipper came off, but he did not wait for it. “He has gone *mad*!” said Minnie; “it’s that horrid science of his”; and, opening the window, would have called after him. The slender man, suddenly glancing round, seemed struck with the same idea of mental disorder. He pointed hastily to the Bacteriologist, said something to the cabman, the apron of the cab slammed, the whip swished, the horse’s feet clattered, and in a moment cab, and Bacteriologist hotly in pursuit, had receded up the vista of the roadway and disappeared round the corner.

Minnie remained straining out of the window for a minute. Then she drew her head back into the room again. She was dumbfounded. “Of course he is eccentric,” she meditated. “But running about London — in the height of the season, too — in his socks!” A happy

thought struck her. She hastily put her bonnet on, seized his shoes, went into the hall, took down his hat and light overcoat from the pegs, emerged upon the doorstep, and hailed a cab that opportunely crawled by. “Drive me up the road and round Havelock Crescent, and see if we can find a gentleman running about in a velveteen coat and no hat.”

“Velveteen coat, ma’am, and no ‘at. Very good, ma’am.” And the cabman whipped up at once in the most matter-of-fact way, as if he drove to this address every day in his life.

Some few minutes later the little group of cabmen and loafers that collects round the cabmen’s shelter at Haverstock Hill were startled by the passing of a cab with a ginger-coloured screw of a horse, driven furiously.

They were silent as it went by, and then as it receded— “That’s ‘Arry
‘Icks. Wot’s *he* got?” said the stout gentleman known as Old Tootles.

“He’s a-using his whip, he is, *to* rights,” said the ostler boy.

“Hullo!” said poor old Tommy Byles; “here’s another bloomin’ loonatic.
Blowed if there aint.”

“It’s old George,” said old Tootles, “and he’s drivin’ a loonatic, *as* you say. Aint he a-clawin’ out of the keb? Wonder if he’s after ‘Arry ‘Icks?”

The group round the cabmen’s shelter became animated. Chorus: “Go it,
George!” “It’s a race.” “You’ll ketch ‘em!” “Whip up!”

“She’s a goer, she is!” said the ostler boy.

“Strike me giddy!” cried old Tootles. “Here! *I’m* a-goin’ to begin in a minute. Here’s another comin’. If all the kebs in Hampstead aint gone mad this morning!”

“It’s a fieldmale this time,” said the ostler boy.

“She’s a followin’ *him*,” said old Tootles. “Usually the other way

about.”

“What’s she got in her ‘and?”

“Looks like a ‘igh ‘at.”

“What a bloomin’ lark it is! Three to one on old George,” said the ostler boy. “Nexst!”

Minnie went by in a perfect roar of applause. She did not like it but she felt that she was doing her duty, and whirled on down Haverstock Hill and Camden Town High Street with her eyes ever intent on the animated back view of old George, who was driving her vagrant husband so incomprehensibly away from her.

The man in the foremost cab sat crouched in the corner, his arms tightly folded, and the little tube that contained such vast possibilities of destruction gripped in his hand. His mood was a singular mixture of fear and exultation. Chiefly he was afraid of being caught before he could accomplish his purpose, but behind this was a vaguer but larger fear of the awfulness of his crime. But his exultation far exceeded his fear. No Anarchist before him had ever approached this conception of his. Ravachol, Vaillant, all those distinguished persons whose fame he had envied dwindled into insignificance beside him. He had only to make sure of the water supply, and break the little tube into a reservoir. How brilliantly he had planned it, forged the letter of introduction and got into the laboratory, and how brilliantly he had seized his opportunity! The world should hear of him at last. All those people who had sneered at him, neglected him, preferred other people to him, found his company undesirable, should consider him at last. Death, death, death! They had always treated him as a man of no importance. All the world had been in a conspiracy to keep him under. He would teach them yet what it is to isolate a man. What was this familiar street? Great Saint Andrew’s Street, of course! How fared the chase? He craned out of the cab. The Bacteriologist was scarcely fifty yards behind. That was bad. He would be caught and stopped yet. He felt in his pocket for money, and found half-a-sovereign. This he thrust up through the trap in the top of the cab into the man’s face. “More,” he shouted, “if only we get away.”

The money was snatched out of his hand. “Right you are,” said the cabman, and the trap slammed, and the lash lay along the

glistening side of the horse. The cab swayed, and the Anarchist, half-standing under the trap, put the hand containing the little glass tube upon the apron to preserve his balance. He felt the brittle thing crack, and the broken half of it rang upon the floor of the cab. He fell back into the seat with a curse, and stared dismally at the two or three drops of moisture on the apron.

He shuddered.

"Well! I suppose I shall be the first. *Phew*! Anyhow, I shall be a Martyr. That's something. But it is a filthy death, nevertheless. I wonder if it hurts as much as they say."

Presently a thought occurred to him — he groped between his feet. A little drop was still in the broken end of the tube, and he drank that to make sure. It was better to make sure. At any rate, he would not fail.

Then it dawned upon him that there was no further need to escape the Bacteriologist. In Wellington Street he told the cabman to stop, and got out. He slipped on the step, and his head felt queer. It was rapid stuff this cholera poison. He waved his cabman out of existence, so to speak, and stood on the pavement with his arms folded upon his breast awaiting the arrival of the Bacteriologist. There was something tragic in his pose. The sense of imminent death gave him a certain dignity. He greeted his pursuer with a defiant laugh.

"Vive l'Anarchie! You are too late, my friend. I have drunk it. The cholera is abroad!"

The Bacteriologist from his cab beamed curiously at him through his spectacles. "You have drunk it! An Anarchist! I see now." He was about to say something more, and then checked himself. A smile hung in the corner of his mouth. He opened the apron of his cab as if to descend, at which the Anarchist waved him a dramatic farewell and strode off towards Waterloo Bridge, carefully jostling his infected body against as many people as possible. The Bacteriologist was so preoccupied with the vision of him that he scarcely manifested the slightest surprise at the appearance of Minnie upon the pavement with his hat and shoes and overcoat. "Very good of you to bring my things," he said, and remained lost in contemplation of the receding figure of the Anarchist.

“You had better get in,” he said, still staring. Minnie felt absolutely convinced now that he was mad, and directed the cabman home on her own responsibility. “Put on my shoes? Certainly dear,” said he, as the cab began to turn, and hid the strutting black figure, now small in the distance, from his eyes. Then suddenly something grotesque struck him, and he laughed. Then he remarked, “It is really very serious, though.”

“You see, that man came to my house to see me, and he is an Anarchist. No — don’t faint, or I cannot possibly tell you the rest. And I wanted to astonish him, not knowing he was an Anarchist, and took up a cultivation of that new species of Bacterium I was telling you of, that infest, and I think cause, the blue patches upon various monkeys; and like a fool, I said it was Asiatic cholera. And he ran away with it to poison the water of London, and he certainly might have made things look blue for this civilised city. And now he has swallowed it. Of course, I cannot say what will happen, but you know it turned that kitten blue, and the three puppies — in patches, and the sparrow — bright blue. But the bother is, I shall have all the trouble and expense of preparing some more.

“Put on my coat on this hot day! Why? Because we might meet Mrs Jabber. My dear, Mrs Jabber is not a draught. But why should I wear a coat on a hot day because of Mrs — . Oh! *very* well.”

THE FLOWERING OF THE STRANGE ORCHID

The buying of orchids always has in it a certain speculative flavour. You have before you the brown shrivelled lump of tissue, and for the rest you must trust your judgment, or the auctioneer, or your good-luck, as your taste may incline. The plant may be moribund or dead, or it may be just a respectable purchase, fair value for your money, or perhaps — for the thing has happened again and again — there slowly unfolds before the delighted eyes of the happy purchaser, day after day, some new variety, some novel richness, a strange twist of the labellum, or some subtler colouration or unexpected mimicry. Pride, beauty, and profit blossom together on one delicate green spike, and, it may be, even immortality. For the new miracle of Nature may stand in need of a new specific name, and what so convenient as that of its discoverer? "Johnsmithia"! There have been worse names.

It was perhaps the hope of some such happy discovery that made Winter-Wedderburn such a frequent attendant at these sales — that hope, and also, maybe, the fact that he had nothing else of the slightest interest to do in the world. He was a shy, lonely, rather ineffectual man, provided with just enough income to keep off the spur of necessity, and not enough nervous energy to make him seek any exacting employments. He might have collected stamps or coins, or translated Horace, or bound books, or invented new species of diatoms. But, as it happened, he grew orchids, and had one ambitious little hothouse.

"I have a fancy," he said over his coffee, "that something is going to happen to me to-day." He spoke — as he moved and thought — slowly.

"Oh, don't say *that*!" said his housekeeper — who was also his remote cousin. For "something happening" was a euphemism that meant only one thing to her.

"You misunderstand me. I mean nothing unpleasant … though what I do mean I scarcely know.

“To-day,” he continued, after a pause, “Peters’ are going to sell a batch of plants from the Andamans and the Indies. I shall go up and see what they have. It may be I shall buy something good, unawares. That may be it.”

He passed his cup for his second cupful of coffee.

“Are these the things collected by that poor young fellow you told me of the other day?” asked his cousin as she filled his cup.

“Yes,” he said, and became meditative over a piece of toast.

“Nothing ever does happen to me,” he remarked presently, beginning to think aloud. “I wonder why? Things enough happen to other people. There is Harvey. Only the other week; on Monday he picked up sixpence, on Wednesday his chicks all had the staggers, on Friday his cousin came home from Australia, and on Saturday he broke his ankle. What a whirl of excitement! — compared to me.”

“I think I would rather be without so much excitement,” said his housekeeper. “It can’t be good for you.”

“I suppose it’s troublesome. Still … you see, nothing ever happens to me. When I was a little boy I never had accidents. I never fell in love as I grew up. Never married…. I wonder how it feels to have something happen to you, something really remarkable.

“That orchid-collector was only thirty-six — twenty years younger than myself — when he died. And he had been married twice and divorced once; he had had malarial fever four times, and once he broke his thigh. He killed a Malay once, and once he was wounded by a poisoned dart. And in the end he was killed by jungle-leeches. It must have all been very troublesome, but then it must have been very interesting, you know — except, perhaps, the leeches.”

“I am sure it was not good for him,” said the lady, with conviction.

“Perhaps not.” And then Wedderburn looked at his watch. “Twenty-three minutes past eight. I am going up by the quarter to twelve train, so that there is plenty of time. I think I shall wear my alpaca jacket — it is quite warm enough — and my grey felt hat and brown shoes. I suppose—”

He glanced out of the window at the serene sky and sunlit garden, and then nervously at his cousin’s face.

“I think you had better take an umbrella if you are going to London,” she said in a voice that admitted of no denial. “There’s all between here and the station coming back.”

When he returned he was in a state of mild excitement. He had made a purchase. It was rare that he could make up his mind quickly enough to buy, but this time he had done so.

“There are Vandas,” he said, “and a Dendrobe and some Palaeonophis.” He surveyed his purchases lovingly as he consumed his soup. They were laid out on the spotless tablecloth before him, and he was telling his cousin all about them as he slowly meandered through his dinner. It was his custom to live all his visits to London over again in the evening for her and his own entertainment.

“I knew something would happen to-day. And I have bought all these. Some of them — some of them — I feel sure, do you know, that some of them will be remarkable. I don’t know how it is, but I feel just as sure as if someone had told me that some of these will turn out remarkable.

“That one” — he pointed to a shrivelled rhizome— “was not identified. It may be a Palaeonophis — or it may not. It may be a new species, or even a new genus. And it was the last that poor Batten ever collected.”

“I don’t like the look of it,” said his housekeeper. “It’s such an ugly shape.”

“To me it scarcely seems to have a shape.”

“I don’t like those things that stick out,” said his housekeeper.

“It shall be put away in a pot to-morrow.”

“It looks,” said the housekeeper, “like a spider shamming dead.”

Wedderburn smiled and surveyed the root with his head on one side. “It is certainly not a pretty lump of stuff. But you can never judge of these things from their dry appearance. It may turn out to be a very beautiful orchid indeed. How busy I shall be to-morrow! I must see to-night just exactly what to do with these things, and to-morrow I shall set to work.”

“They found poor Batten lying dead, or dying, in a mangrove swamp — I forget which,” he began again presently, “with one of these very orchids crushed up under his body. He had been unwell for some days with some kind of native fever, and I suppose he

fainted. These mangrove swamps are very unwholesome. Every drop of blood, they say, was taken out of him by the jungle-leeches. It may be that very plant that cost him his life to obtain."

"I think none the better of it for that."

"Men must work though women may weep," said Wedderburn with profound gravity.

"Fancy dying away from every comfort in a nasty swamp! Fancy being ill of fever with nothing to take but chlorodyne and quinine — if men were left to themselves they would live on chlorodyne and quinine — and no one round you but horrible natives! They say the Andaman islanders are most disgusting wretches — and, anyhow, they can scarcely make good nurses, not having the necessary training. And just for people in England to have orchids!"

"I don't suppose it was comfortable, but some men seem to enjoy that kind of thing," said Wedderburn. "Anyhow, the natives of his party were sufficiently civilised to take care of all his collection until his colleague, who was an ornithologist, came back again from the interior; though they could not tell the species of the orchid and had let it wither. And it makes these things more interesting."

"It makes them disgusting. I should be afraid of some of the malaria clinging to them. And just think, there has been a dead body lying across that ugly thing! I never thought of that before. There! I declare I cannot eat another mouthful of dinner."

"I will take them off the table if you like, and put them in the window-seat. I can see them just as well there."

The next few days he was indeed singularly busy in his steamy little hothouse, fussing about with charcoal, lumps of teak, moss, and all the other mysteries of the orchid cultivator. He considered he was having a wonderfully eventful time. In the evening he would talk about these new orchids to his friends, and over and over again he reverted to his expectation of something strange.

Several of the Vandas and the Dendrobium died under his care, but presently the strange orchid began to show signs of life. He was delighted and took his housekeeper right away from jam-making to see it at once, directly he made the discovery.

"That is a bud," he said, "and presently there will be a lot of leaves there, and those little things coming out here are aërial

rootlets."

"They look to me like little white fingers poking out of the brown," said his housekeeper. "I don't like them."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. They look like fingers trying to get at you. I can't help my likes and dislikes."

"I don't know for certain, but I don't *think* there are any orchids I know that have aërial rootlets quite like that. It may be my fancy, of course. You see they are a little flattened at the ends."

"I don't like 'em," said his housekeeper, suddenly shivering and turning away. "I know it's very silly of me — and I'm very sorry, particularly as you like the thing so much. But I can't help thinking of that corpse."

"But it may not be that particular plant. That was merely a guess of mine."

His housekeeper shrugged her shoulders. "Anyhow I don't like it," she said.

Wedderburn felt a little hurt at her dislike to the plant. But that did not prevent his talking to her about orchids generally, and this orchid in particular, whenever he felt inclined.

"There are such queer things about orchids," he said one day; "such possibilities of surprises. You know, Darwin studied their fertilisation, and showed that the whole structure of an ordinary orchid-flower was contrived in order that moths might carry the pollen from plant to plant. Well, it seems that there are lots of orchids known the flower of which cannot possibly be used for fertilisation in that way. Some of the Cypripediums, for instance; there are no insects known that can possibly fertilise them, and some of them have never be found with seed."

"But how do they form new plants?"

"By runners and tubers, and that kind of outgrowth. That is easily explained. The puzzle is, what are the flowers for?

"Very likely," he added, "*my* orchid may be something extraordinary in that way. If so I shall study it. I have often thought of making researches as Darwin did. But hitherto I have not found the time, or something else has happened to prevent it. The leaves are beginning to unfold now. I do wish you would come and see them!"

But she said that the orchid-house was so hot it gave her the headache. She had seen the plant once again, and the aërial rootlets, which were now some of them more than a foot long, had unfortunately reminded her of tentacles reaching out after something; and they got into her dreams, growing after her with incredible rapidity. So that she had settled to her entire satisfaction that she would not see that plant again, and Wedderburn had to admire its leaves alone. They were of the ordinary broad form, and a deep glossy green, with splashes and dots of deep red towards the base. He knew of no other leaves quite like them. The plant was placed on a low bench near the thermometer, and close by was a simple arrangement by which a tap dripped on the hot-water pipes and kept the air steamy. And he spent his afternoons now with some regularity meditating on the approaching flowering of this strange plant.

And at last the great thing happened. Directly he entered the little glass house he knew that the spike had burst out, although his great *Palaeonophis Lowii* hid the corner where his new darling stood. There was a new odour in the air, a rich, intensely sweet scent, that overpowered every other in that crowded, steaming little greenhouse.

Directly he noticed this he hurried down to the strange orchid. And, behold! the trailing green spikes bore now three great splashes of blossom, from which this overpowering sweetness proceeded. He stopped before them in an ecstasy of admiration.

The flowers were white, with streaks of golden orange upon the petals; the heavy labellum was coiled into an intricate projection, and a wonderful bluish purple mingled there with the gold. He could see at once that the genus was altogether a new one. And the insufferable scent! How hot the place was! The blossoms swam before his eyes.

He would see if the temperature was right. He made a step towards the thermometer. Suddenly everything appeared unsteady. The bricks on the floor were dancing up and down. Then the white blossoms, the green leaves behind them, the whole greenhouse, seemed to sweep sideways, and then in a curve upward.

* * * * *

At half-past four his cousin made the tea, according to their

invariable custom. But Wedderburn did not come in for his tea.

"He is worshipping that horrid orchid," she told herself, and waited ten minutes. "His watch must have stopped. I will go and call him."

She went straight to the hothouse, and, opening the door, called his name. There was no reply. She noticed that the air was very close, and loaded with an intense perfume. Then she saw something lying on the bricks between the hot-water pipes.

For a minute, perhaps, she stood motionless.

He was lying, face upward, at the foot of the strange orchid. The tentacle-like aërial rootlets no longer swayed freely in the air, but were crowded together, a tangle of grey ropes, and stretched tight with their ends closely applied to his chin and neck and hands.

She did not understand. Then she saw from under one of the exultant tentacles upon his cheek there trickled a little thread of blood.

With an inarticulate cry she ran towards him, and tried to pull him away from the leech-like suckers. She snapped two of these tentacles, and their sap dripped red.

Then the overpowering scent of the blossom began to make her head reel. How they clung to him! She tore at the tough ropes, and he and the white inflorescence swam about her. She felt she was fainting, knew she must not. She left him and hastily opened the nearest door, and, after she had panted for a moment in the fresh air, she had a brilliant inspiration. She caught up a flower-pot and smashed in the windows at the end of the green-house. Then she re-entered. She tugged now with renewed strength at Wedderburn's motionless body, and brought the strange orchid crashing to the floor. It still clung with the grimmest tenacity to its victim. In a frenzy, she lugged it and him into the open air.

Then she thought of tearing through the sucker rootlets one by one, and in another minute she had released him and was dragging him away from the horror.

He was white and bleeding from a dozen circular patches.

The odd-job man was coming up the garden, amazed at the smashing of glass, and saw her emerge, hauling the inanimate body with red-stained hands. For a moment he thought impossible things.

“Bring some water!” she cried, and her voice dispelled his fancies. When, with unnatural alacrity, he returned with the water, he found her weeping with excitement, and with Wedderburn’s head upon her knee, wiping the blood from his face.

“What’s the matter?” said Wedderburn, opening his eyes feebly, and closing them again at once.

“Go and tell Annie to come out here to me, and then go for Doctor Haddon at once,” she said to the odd-job man so soon as he brought the water; and added, seeing he hesitated, “I will tell you all about it when you come back.”

Presently Wedderburn opened his eyes again, and, seeing that he was troubled by the puzzle of his position, she explained to him, “You fainted in the hothouse.”

“And the orchid?”

“I will see to that,” she said.

Wedderburn had lost a good deal of blood, but beyond that he had suffered no very great injury. They gave him brandy mixed with some pink extract of meat, and carried him upstairs to bed. His housekeeper told her incredible story in fragments to Dr Haddon. “Come to the orchid-house and see,” she said.

The cold outer air was blowing in through the open door, and the sickly perfume was almost dispelled. Most of the torn aërial rootlets lay already withered amidst a number of dark stains upon the bricks. The stem of the inflorescence was broken by the fall of the plant, and the flowers were growing limp and brown at the edges of the petals. The doctor stooped towards it, then saw that one of the aërial rootlets still stirred feebly, and hesitated.

The next morning the strange orchid still lay there, black now and putrescent. The door banged intermittently in the morning breeze, and all the array of Wedderburn’s orchids was shrivelled and prostrate. But Wedderburn himself was bright and garrulous upstairs in the glory of his strange adventure.

IN THE AVU OBSERVATORY

The observatory at Avu, in Borneo, stands on the spur of the mountain. To the north rises the old crater, black at night against the unfathomable blue of the sky. From the little circular building, with its mushroom dome, the slopes plunge steeply downward into the black mysteries of the tropical forest beneath. The little house in which the observer and his assistant live is about fifty yards from the observatory, and beyond this are the huts of their native attendants.

Thaddy, the chief observer, was down with a slight fever. His assistant, Woodhouse, paused for a moment in silent contemplation of the tropical night before commencing his solitary vigil. The night was very still. Now and then voices and laughter came from the native huts, or the cry of some strange animal was heard from the midst of the mystery of the forest. Nocturnal insects appeared in ghostly fashion out of the darkness, and fluttered round his light. He thought, perhaps, of all the possibilities of discovery that still lay in the black tangle beneath him; for to the naturalist the virgin forests of Borneo are still a wonderland full of strange questions and half-suspected discoveries. Woodhouse carried a small lantern in his hand, and its yellow glow contrasted vividly with the infinite series of tints between lavender-blue and black in which the landscape was painted. His hands and face were smeared with ointment against the attacks of the mosquitoes.

Even in these days of celestial photography, work done in a purely temporary erection, and with only the most primitive appliances in addition to the telescope, still involves a very large amount of cramped and motionless watching. He sighed as he thought of the physical fatigues before him, stretched himself, and entered the observatory.

The reader is probably familiar with the structure of an ordinary astronomical observatory. The building is usually cylindrical in shape, with a very light hemispherical roof capable of being turned round from the interior. The telescope is supported upon a stone pillar in the centre, and a clockwork arrangement compensates for the earth's rotation, and allows a star once found to be continuously

observed. Besides this, there is a compact tracery of wheels and screws about its point of support, by which the astronomer adjusts it. There is, of course, a slit in the movable roof which follows the eye of the telescope in its survey of the heavens. The observer sits or lies on a sloping wooden arrangement, which he can wheel to any part of the observatory as the position of the telescope may require. Within it is advisable to have things as dark as possible, in order to enhance the brilliance of the stars observed.

The lantern flared as Woodhouse entered his circular den, and the general darkness fled into black shadows behind the big machine, from which it presently seemed to creep back over the whole place again as the light waned. The slit was a profound transparent blue, in which six stars shone with tropical brilliance, and their light lay, a pallid gleam, along the black tube of the instrument. Woodhouse shifted the roof, and then proceeding to the telescope, turned first one wheel and then another, the great cylinder slowly swinging into a new position. Then he glanced through the finder, the little companion telescope, moved the roof a little more, made some further adjustments, and set the clockwork in motion. He took off his jacket, for the night was very hot, and pushed into position the uncomfortable seat to which he was condemned for the next four hours. Then with a sigh he resigned himself to his watch upon the mysteries of space.

There was no sound now in the observatory, and the lantern waned steadily. Outside there was the occasional cry of some animal in alarm or pain, or calling to its mate, and the intermittent sounds of the Malay and Dyak servants. Presently one of the men began a queer chanting song, in which the others joined at intervals. After this it would seem that they turned in for the night, for no further sound came from their direction, and the whispering stillness became more and more profound.

The clockwork ticked steadily. The shrill hum of a mosquito explored the place and grew shriller in indignation at Woodhouse's ointment. Then the lantern went out and all the observatory was black.

Woodhouse shifted his position presently, when the slow movement of the telescope had carried it beyond the limits of his

comfort.

He was watching a little group of stars in the Milky Way, in one of which his chief had seen or fancied a remarkable colour variability. It was not a part of the regular work for which the establishment existed, and for that reason perhaps Woodhouse was deeply interested. He must have forgotten things terrestrial. All his attention was concentrated upon the great blue circle of the telescope field — a circle powdered, so it seemed, with an innumerable multitude of stars, and all luminous against the blackness of its setting. As he watched he seemed to himself to become incorporeal, as if he too were floating in the ether of space. Infinitely remote was the faint red spot he was observing.

Suddenly the stars were blotted out. A flash of blackness passed, and they were visible again.

"Queer," said Woodhouse. "Must have been a bird."

The thing happened again, and immediately after the great tube shivered as though it had been struck. Then the dome of the observatory resounded with a series of thundering blows. The stars seemed to sweep aside as the telescope — which had been undamped — swung round and away from the slit in the roof.

"Great Scott!" cried Woodhouse. "What's this?"

Some huge vague black shape, with a flapping something like a wing, seemed to be struggling in the aperture of the roof. In another moment the slit was clear again, and the luminous haze of the Milky Way shone warm and bright.

The interior of the roof was perfectly black, and only a scraping sound marked the whereabouts of the unknown creature.

Woodhouse had scrambled from the seat to his feet. He was trembling violently and in a perspiration with the suddenness of the occurrence. Was the thing, whatever it was, inside or out? It was big, whatever else it might be. Something shot across the skylight, and the telescope swayed. He started violently and put his arm up. It was in the observatory, then, with him. It was clinging to the roof, apparently. What the devil was it? Could it see him?

He stood for perhaps a minute in a state of stupefaction. The beast, whatever it was, clawed at the interior of the dome, and then something flapped almost into his face, and he saw the momentary

gleam of starlight on a skin like oiled leather. His water-bottle was knocked off his little table with a smash.

The sense of some strange bird-creature hovering a few yards from his face in the darkness was indescribably unpleasant to Woodhouse. As his thought returned he concluded that it must be some night-bird or large bat. At any risk he would see what it was, and pulling a match from his pocket, he tried to strike it on the telescope seat. There was a smoking streak of phosphorescent light, the match flared for a moment, and he saw a vast wing sweeping towards him, a gleam of grey-brown fur, and then he was struck in the face and the match knocked out of his hand. The blow was aimed at his temple, and a claw tore sideways down to his cheek. He reeled and fell, and he heard the extinguished lantern smash. Another blow followed as he fell. He was partly stunned, he felt his own warm blood stream out upon his face. Instinctively he felt his eyes had been struck at, and, turning over on his face to protect them, tried to crawl under the protection of the telescope. He was struck again upon the back, and he heard his jacket rip, and then the thing hit the roof of the observatory. He edged as far as he could between the wooden seat and the eyepiece of the instrument, and turned his body round so that it was chiefly his feet that were exposed. With these he could at least kick. He was still in a mystified state. The strange beast banged about in the darkness, and presently clung to the telescope, making it sway and the gear rattle. Once it flapped near him, and he kicked out madly and felt a soft body with his feet. He was horribly scared now. It must be a big thing to swing the telescope like that. He saw for a moment the outline of a head black against the starlight, with sharply-pointed upstanding ears and a crest between them. It seemed to him to be as big as a mastiff's. Then he began to bawl out as loudly as he could for help.

At that the thing came down upon him again. As it did so his hand touched something beside him on the floor. He kicked out, and the next moment his ankle was gripped and held by a row of keen teeth. He yelled again, and tried to free his leg by kicking with the other. Then he realised he had the broken water-bottle at his hand, and, snatching it, he struggled into a sitting posture, and feeling in the darkness towards his foot, gripped a velvety ear, like the ear of a big

cat. He had seized the water-bottle by its neck and brought it down with a shivering crash upon the head of the strange beast. He repeated the blow, and then stabbed and jobbed with the jagged end of it, in the darkness, where he judged the face might be.

The small teeth relaxed their hold, and at once Woodhouse pulled his leg free and kicked hard. He felt the sickening feel of fur and bone giving under his boot. There was a tearing bite at his arm, and he struck over it at the face, as he judged, and hit damp fur.

There was a pause; then he heard the sound of claws and the dragging of a heavy body away from him over the observatory floor. Then there was silence, broken only by his own sobbing breathing, and a sound like licking. Everything was black except the parallelogram of the blue skylight with the luminous dust of stars, against which the end of the telescope now appeared in silhouette. He waited, as it seemed, an interminable time. Was the thing coming on again? He felt in his trouser-pocket for some matches, and found one remaining. He tried to strike this, but the floor was wet, and it spat and went out. He cursed. He could not see where the door was situated. In his struggle he had quite lost his bearings. The strange beast, disturbed by the splutter of the match, began to move again. “Time!” called Woodhouse, with a sudden gleam of mirth, but the thing was not coming at him again. He must have hurt it, he thought, with the broken bottle. He felt a dull pain in his ankle. Probably he was bleeding there. He wondered if it would support him if he tried to stand up. The night outside was very still. There was no sound of any one moving. The sleepy fools had not heard those wings battering upon the dome, nor his shouts. It was no good wasting strength in shouting. The monster flapped its wings and startled him into a defensive attitude. He hit his elbow against the seat, and it fell over with a crash. He cursed this, and then he cursed the darkness.

Suddenly the oblong patch of starlight seemed to sway to and fro. Was he going to faint? It would never do to faint. He clenched his fists and set his teeth to hold himself together. Where had the door got to? It occurred to him he could get his bearings by the stars visible through the skylight. The patch of stars he saw was in Sagittarius and south-eastward; the door was north — or was it north by west? He tried to think. If he could get the door open he might

retreat. It might be the thing was wounded. The suspense was beastly. “Look here!” he said, “if you don’t come on, I shall come at you.”

Then the thing began clambering up the side of the observatory, and he saw its black outline gradually blot out the skylight. Was it in retreat? He forgot about the door, and watched as the dome shifted and creaked. Somehow he did not feel very frightened or excited now. He felt a curious sinking sensation inside him. The sharply-defined patch of light, with the black form moving across it, seemed to be growing smaller and smaller. That was curious. He began to feel very thirsty, and yet he did not feel inclined to get anything to drink. He seemed to be sliding down a long funnel.

He felt a burning sensation in his throat, and then he perceived it was broad daylight, and that one of the Dyak servants was looking at him with a curious expression. Then there was the top of Thaddy’s face upside down. Funny fellow, Thaddy, to go about like that! Then he grasped the situation better, and perceived that his head was on Thaddy’s knee, and Thaddy was giving him brandy. And then he saw the eyepiece of the telescope with a lot of red smears on it. He began to remember.

“You’ve made this observatory in a pretty mess,” said Thaddy.

The Dyak boy was beating up an egg in brandy. Woodhouse took this and sat up. He felt a sharp twinge of pain. His ankle was tied up, so were his arm and the side of his face. The smashed glass, red-stained, lay about the floor, the telescope seat was overturned, and by the opposite wall was a dark pool. The door was open, and he saw the grey summit of the mountain against a brilliant background of blue sky.

“Pah!” said Woodhouse. “Who’s been killing calves here? Take me out of it.”

Then he remembered the Thing, and the fight he had had with it.

“What *was* it?” he said to Thaddy— “The Thing I fought with?”

“*You* know that best,” said Thaddy. “But, anyhow, don’t worry yourself now about it. Have some more to drink.”

Thaddy, however, was curious enough, and it was a hard struggle between duty and inclination to keep Woodhouse quiet until he was decently put away in bed, and had slept upon the copious dose of

meat-extract Thaddy considered advisable. They then talked it over together.

“It was,” said Woodhouse, “more like a big bat than anything else in the world. It had sharp, short ears, and soft fur, and its wings were leathery. Its teeth were little, but devilish sharp, and its jaw could not have been very strong or else it would have bitten through my ankle.”

“It has pretty nearly,” said Thaddy.

“It seemed to me to hit out with its claws pretty freely. That is about as much as I know about the beast. Our conversation was intimate, so to speak, and yet not confidential.”

“The Dyak chaps talk about a Big Colugo, a Klang-utang — whatever that may be. It does not often attack man, but I suppose you made it nervous. They say there is a Big Colugo and a Little Colugo, and a something else that sounds like gobble. They all fly about at night. For my own part I know there are flying foxes and flying lemurs about here, but they are none of them very big beasts.”

“There are more things in heaven and earth,” said Woodhouse — and Thaddy groaned at the quotation— “and more particularly in the forests of Borneo, than are dreamt of in our philosophies. On the whole, if the Borneo fauna is going to disgorge any more of its novelties upon me, I should prefer that it did so when I was not occupied in the observatory at night and alone.”

THE TRIUMPHS OF A TAXIDERMIST

Here are some of the secrets of taxidermy. They were told me by the taxidermist in a mood of elation. He told me them in the time between the first glass of whisky and the fourth, when a man is no longer cautious and yet not drunk. We sat in his den together; his library it was, his sitting and his eating-room — separated by a bead curtain, so far as the sense of sight went, from the noisome den where he plied his trade.

He sat on a deck chair, and when he was not tapping refractory bits of coal with them, he kept his feet — on which he wore, after the manner of sandals, the holy relics of a pair of carpet slippers — out of the way upon the mantel-piece, among the glass eyes. And his trousers, by-the-by — though they have nothing to do with his triumphs — were a most horrible yellow plaid, such as they made when our fathers wore side-whiskers and there were crinolines in the land. Further, his hair was black, his face rosy, and his eye a fiery brown; and his coat was chiefly of grease upon a basis of velveteen. And his pipe had a bowl of china showing the Graces, and his spectacles were always askew, the left eye glaring nakedly at you, small and penetrating; the right, seen through a glass darkly, magnified and mild. Thus his discourse ran: "There never was a man who could stuff like me, Bellows, never. I have stuffed elephants and I have stuffed moths, and the things have looked all the livelier and better for it. And I have stuffed human beings — chiefly amateur ornithologists. But I stuffed a nigger once.

"No, there is no law against it. I made him with all his fingers out and used him as a hat-rack, but that fool Homersby got up a quarrel with him late one night and spoilt him. That was before your time. It is hard to get skins, or I would have another.

"Unpleasant? I don't see it. Seems to me taxidermy is a promising third course to burial or cremation. You could keep all your dear ones by you. Bric-à-brac of that sort stuck about the house would be as good as most company, and much less expensive. You might have them fitted up with clockwork to do things.

"Of course they would have to be varnished, but they need not

shine more than lots of people do naturally. Old Manningtree's bald head…. Anyhow, you could talk to them without interruption. Even aunts. There is a great future before taxidermy, depend upon it. There is fossils again…."

He suddenly became silent.

"No, I don't think I ought to tell you that." He sucked at his pipe thoughtfully. "Thanks, yes. Not too much water.

"Of course, what I tell you now will go no further. You know I have made some dodos and a great auk? No! Evidently you are an amateur at taxidermy. My dear fellow, half the great auks in the world are about as genuine as the handkerchief of Saint Veronica, as the Holy Coat of Treves. We make 'em of grebes' feathers and the like. And the great auk's eggs too!"

"Good heavens!"

"Yes, we make them out of fine porcelain. I tell you it is worth while. They fetch — one fetched £300 only the other day. That one was really genuine, I believe, but of course one is never certain. It is very fine work, and afterwards you have to get them dusty, for no one who owns one of these precious eggs has ever the temerity to clean the thing. That's the beauty of the business. Even if they suspect an egg they do not like to examine it too closely. It's such brittle capital at the best.

"You did not know that taxidermy rose to heights like that. My boy, it has risen higher. I have rivalled the hands of Nature herself. One of the *genuine* great auks" — his voice fell to a whisper — one of the *genuine* great auks *was made by me*."

"No. You must study ornithology, and find out which it is yourself. And what is more, I have been approached by a syndicate of dealers to stock one of the unexplored skerries to the north of Iceland with specimens. I may — some day. But I have another little thing in hand just now. Ever heard of the dinornis?

"It is one of those big birds recently extinct in New Zealand. 'Moa' is its common name, so called because extinct: there is no moa now. See? Well, they have got bones of it, and from some of the marshes even feathers and dried bits of skin. Now, I am going to — well, there is no need to make any bones about it — going to *forge* a complete stuffed moa. I know a chap out there who will pretend to

make the find in a kind of antiseptic swamp, and say he stuffed it at once, as it threatened to fall to pieces. The feathers are peculiar, but I have got a simply lovely way of dodging up singed bits of ostrich plume. Yes, that is the new smell you noticed. They can only discover the fraud with a microscope, and they will hardly care to pull a nice specimen to bits for that.

"In this way, you see, I give my little push in the advancement of science.

"But all this is merely imitating Nature. I have done more than that in my time. I have — beaten her."

He took his feet down from the mantel-board, and leant over confidentially towards me. "I have *created* birds," he said in a low voice. "*New* birds. Improvements. Like no birds that was ever seen before."

He resumed his attitude during an impressive silence.

"Enrich the universe; *rath*-er. Some of the birds I made were new kinds of humming birds, and very beautiful little things, but some of them were simply rum. The rummest, I think, was the *Anomalopteryx Jejuna. Jejunus-a-um* — empty — so called because there was really nothing in it; a thoroughly empty bird — except for stuffing. Old Javvers has the thing now, and I suppose he is almost as proud of it as I am. It is a masterpiece, Bellows. It has all the silly clumsiness of your pelican, all the solemn want of dignity of your parrot, all the gaunt ungainliness of a flamingo, with all the extravagant chromatic conflict of a mandarin duck. *Such* a bird. I made it out of the skeletons of a stork and a toucan and a job lot of feathers. Taxidermy of that kind is just pure joy, Bellows, to a real artist in the art.

"How did I come to make it? Simple enough, as all great inventions are. One of those young genii who write us Science Notes in the papers got hold of a German pamphlet about the birds of New Zealand, and translated some of it by means of a dictionary and his mother-wit — he must have been one of a very large family with a small mother — and he got mixed between the living apteryx and the extinct anomalopteryx; talked about a bird five feet high, living in the jungles of the North Island, rare, shy, specimens difficult to obtain, and so on. Javvers, who even for a collector, is a miraculously

ignorant man, read these paragraphs, and swore he would have the thing at any price. Raided the dealers with enquiries. It shows what a man can do by persistence — will-power. Here was a bird-collector swearing he would have a specimen of a bird that did not exist, that never had existed, and which for very shame of its own profane ungainliness, probably would not exist now if it could help itself. And he got it. *He got it*."

"Have some more whisky, Bellows?" said the taxidermist, rousing himself from a transient contemplation of the mysteries of will-power and the collecting turn of mind. And, replenished, he proceeded to tell me of how he concocted a most attractive mermaid, and how an itinerant preacher, who could not get an audience because of it, smashed it because it was idolatry, or worse, at Burslem Wakes. But as the conversation of all the parties to this transaction, creator, would-be preserver, and destroyer, was uniformly unfit for publication, this cheerful incident must still remain unprinted.

The reader unacquainted with the dark ways of the collector may perhaps be inclined to doubt my taxidermist, but so far as great auks' eggs, and the bogus stuffed birds are concerned, I find that he has the confirmation of distinguished ornithological writers. And the note about the New Zealand bird certainly appeared in a morning paper of unblemished reputation, for the Taxidermist keeps a copy and has shown it to me.

A DEAL IN OSTRICHES

"Talking of the prices of birds, I've seen an ostrich that cost three hundred pounds," said the Taxidermist, recalling his youth of travel. "Three hundred pounds!"

He looked at me over his spectacles. "I've seen another that was refused at four."

"No," he said, "it wasn't any fancy points. They was just plain ostriches. A little off colour, too — owing to dietary. And there wasn't any particular restriction of the demand either. You'd have thought five ostriches would have ruled cheap on an East Indiaman. But the point was, one of 'em had swallowed a diamond.

"The chap it got it off was Sir Mohini Padishah, a tremendous swell, a Piccadilly swell you might say up to the neck of him, and then an ugly black head and a whopping turban, with this diamond in it. The blessed bird pecked suddenly and had it, and when the chap made a fuss it realised it had done wrong, I suppose, and went and mixed itself with the others to preserve its *incog*. It all happened in a minute. I was among the first to arrive, and there was this heathen going over his gods, and two sailors and the man who had charge of the birds laughing fit to split. It was a rummy way of losing a jewel, come to think of it. The man in charge hadn't been about just at the moment, so that he didn't know which bird it was. Clean lost, you see. I didn't feel half sorry, to tell you the truth. The beggar had been swaggering over his blessed diamond ever since he came aboard.

"A thing like that goes from stem to stern of a ship in no time. Every one was talking about it. Padishah went below to hide his feelings. At dinner — he pigged at a table by himself, him and two other Hindoos — the captain kind of jeered at him about it, and he got very excited. He turned round and talked into my ear. He would not buy the birds; he would have his diamond. He demanded his rights as a British subject. His diamond must be found. He was firm upon that. He would appeal to the House of Lords. The man in charge of the birds was one of those wooden-headed chaps you can't get a new idea into anyhow. He refused any proposal to interfere with the birds by way of medicine. His instructions were to feed

them so-and-so and treat them so-and-so, and it was as much as his place was worth not to feed them so-and-so and treat them so-and-so. Padishah had wanted a stomach-pump — though you can't do that to a bird, you know. This Padishah was full of bad law, like most of these blessed Bengalis, and talked of having a lien on the birds, and so forth. But an old boy, who said his son was a London barrister, argued that what a bird swallowed became *ipso facto* part of the bird, and that Padishah's only remedy lay in an action for damages, and even then it might be possible to show contributory negligence. He hadn't any right of way about an ostrich that didn't belong to him. That upset Padishah extremely, the more so as most of us expressed an opinion that that was the reasonable view. There wasn't any lawyer aboard to settle the matter, so we all talked pretty free. At last, after Aden, it appears that he came round to the general opinion, and went privately to the man in charge and made an offer for all five ostriches.

"The next morning there was a fine shindy at breakfast. The man hadn't any authority to deal with the birds, and nothing on earth would induce him to sell; but it seems he told Padishah that a Eurasian named Potter had already made him an offer, and on that Padishah denounced Potter before us all. But I think the most of us thought it rather smart of Potter, and I know that when Potter said that he'd wired at Aden to London to buy the birds, and would have an answer at Suez, I cursed pretty richly at a lost opportunity.

"At Suez, Padishah gave way to tears — actual wet tears — when Potter became the owner of the birds, and offered him two hundred and fifty right off for the five, being more than two hundred per cent. on what Potter had given. Potter said he'd be hanged if he parted with a feather of them — that he meant to kill them off one by one and find the diamond; but afterwards, thinking it over, he relented a little. He was a gambling hound, was this Potter, a little queer at cards, and this kind of prize-packet business must have suited him down to the ground. Anyhow, he offered, for a lark, to sell the birds separately to separate people by auction at a starting price of £80 for a bird. But one of them, he said, he meant to keep for luck.

"You must understand this diamond was a valuable one — a little Jew chap, a diamond merchant, who was with us, had put it at three

or four thousand when Padishah had shown it to him — and this idea of an ostrich gamble caught on. Now it happened that I'd been having a few talks on general subjects with the man who looked after these ostriches, and quite incidentally he'd said one of the birds was ailing, and he fancied it had indigestion. It had one feather in its tail almost all white, by which I knew it, and so when, next day, the auction started with it, I capped Padishah's eighty-five by ninety. I fancy I was a bit too sure and eager with my bid, and some of the others spotted the fact that I was in the know. And Padishah went for that particular bird like an irresponsible lunatic. At last the Jew diamond merchant got it for £175, and Padishah said £180 just after the hammer came down — so Potter declared. At any rate the Jew merchant secured it, and there and then he got a gun and shot it. Potter made a Hades of a fuss because he said it would injure the sale of the other three, and Padishah, of course, behaved like an idiot; but all of us were very much excited. I can tell you I was precious glad when that dissection was over, and no diamond had turned up — precious glad. I'd gone to one-forty on that particular bird myself.

"The little Jew was like most Jews — he didn't make any great fuss over bad luck; but Potter declined to go on with the auction until it was understood that the goods could not be delivered until the sale was over. The little Jew wanted to argue that the case was exceptional, and as the discussion ran pretty even, the thing was postponed until the next morning. We had a lively dinner-table that evening, I can tell you, but in the end Potter got his way, since it would stand to reason he would be safer if he stuck to all the birds, and that we owed him some consideration for his sportsmanlike behaviour. And the old gentleman whose son was a lawyer said he'd been thinking the thing over and that it was very doubtful if, when a bird had been opened and the diamond recovered, it ought not to be handed back to the proper owner. I remember I suggested it came under the laws of treasure-trove — which was really the truth of the matter. There was a hot argument, and we settled it was certainly foolish to kill the bird on board the ship. Then the old gentleman, going at large through his legal talk, tried to make out the sale was a lottery and illegal, and appealed to the captain; but Potter said he sold the birds *as* ostriches. He didn't want to sell any diamonds, he

said, and didn't offer that as an inducement. The three birds he put up, to the best of his knowledge and belief, did *not* contain a diamond. It was in the one he kept — so he hoped.

"Prices ruled high next day all the same. The fact that now there were four chances instead of five of course caused a rise. The blessed birds averaged 227, and, oddly enough, this Padishah didn't secure one of 'em — not one. He made too much shindy, and when he ought to have been bidding he was talking about liens, and, besides, Potter was a bit down on him. One fell to a quiet little officer chap, another to the little Jew, and the third was syndicated by the engineers. And then Potter seemed suddenly sorry for having sold them, and said he'd flung away a clear thousand pounds, and that very likely he'd draw a blank and that he always had been a fool, but when I went and had a bit of a talk to him, with the idea of getting him to hedge on his last chance, I found he'd already sold the bird he'd reserved to a political chap that was on board, a chap who'd been studying Indian morals and social questions in his vacation. That last was the three hundred pounds bird. Well, they landed three of the blessed creatures at Brindisi — though the old gentleman said it was a breach of the Customs regulations — and Potter and Padishah landed too. The Hindoo seemed half mad as he saw his blessed diamond going this way and that, so to speak. He kept on saying he'd get an injunction — he had injunction on the brain — and giving his name and address to the chaps who'd bought the birds, so that they'd know where to send the diamond. None of them wanted his name and address, and none of them would give their own. It was a fine row I can tell you — on the platform. They all went off by different trains. I came on to Southampton, and there I saw the last of the birds, as I came ashore; it was the one the engineers bought, and it was standing up near the bridge, in a kind of crate, and looking as leggy and silly a setting for a valuable diamond as ever you saw — if it *was* a setting for a valuable diamond.

"*How did it end*? Oh! like that. Well — perhaps. Yes, there's one more thing that may throw light on it. A week or so after landing I was down Regent-street doing a bit of shopping, and who should I see arm-in-arm and having a purple time of it but Padishah and Potter. If you come to think of it —

“Yes. *I’ve* thought that. Only, you see, there’s no doubt the diamond was real. And Padishah was an eminent Hindoo. I’ve seen his name in the papers — often. But whether the bird swallowed the diamond certainly is another matter, as you say.”

THROUGH A WINDOW

After his legs were set, they carried Bailey into the study and put him on a couch before the open window. There he lay, a live — even a feverish man down to the loins, and below that a double-barrelled mummy swathed in white wrappings. He tried to read, even tried to write a little, but most of the time he looked out of the window.

He had thought the window cheerful to begin with, but now he thanked God for it many times a day. Within, the room was dim and grey, and in the reflected light the wear of the furniture showed plainly. His medicine and drink stood on the little table, with such litter as the bare branches of a bunch of grapes or the ashes of a cigar upon a green plate, or a day old evening paper. The view outside was flooded with light, and across the corner of it came the head of the acacia, and at the foot the top of the balcony-railing of hammered iron. In the foreground was the weltering silver of the river, never quiet and yet never tiresome. Beyond was the reedy bank, a broad stretch of meadow land, and then a dark line of trees ending in a group of poplars at the distant bend of the river, and, upstanding behind them, a square church tower.

Up and down the river, all day long, things were passing. Now a string of barges drifting down to London, piled with lime or barrels of beer; then a steam-launch, disengaging heavy masses of black smoke, and disturbing the whole width of the river with long rolling waves; then an impetuous electric launch, and then a boatload of pleasure-seekers, a solitary sculler, or a four from some rowing club. Perhaps the river was quietest of a morning or late at night. One moonlight night some people drifted down singing, and with a zither playing — it sounded very pleasantly across the water.

In a few days Bailey began to recognise some of the craft; in a week he knew the intimate history of half-a-dozen. The launch *Luzon*, from Fitzgibbon's, two miles up, would go fretting by, sometimes three or four times a day, conspicuous with its colouring of Indian-red and yellow, and its two Oriental attendants; and one day, to Bailey's vast amusement, the house-boat *Purple Emperor* came to a stop outside, and breakfasted in the most shameless

domesticity. Then one afternoon, the captain of a slow-moving barge began a quarrel with his wife as they came into sight from the left, and had carried it to personal violence before he vanished behind the window-frame to the right. Bailey regarded all this as an entertainment got up to while away his illness, and applauded all the more moving incidents. Mrs Green, coming in at rare intervals with his meals, would catch him clapping his hands or softly crying, "Encore!" But the river players had other engagements, and his encore went unheeded.

"I should never have thought I could take such an interest in things that did not concern me," said Bailey to Wilderspin, who used to come in in his nervous, friendly way and try to comfort the sufferer by being talked to. "I thought this idle capacity was distinctive of little children and old maids. But it's just circumstances. I simply can't work, and things have to drift; it's no good to fret and struggle. And so I lie here and am as amused as a baby with a rattle, at this river and its affairs.

"Sometimes, of course, it gets a bit dull, but not often.

"I would give anything, Wilderspin, for a swamp — just one swamp — once. Heads swimming and a steam launch to the rescue, and a chap or so hauled out with a boat-hook…. There goes Fitzgibbon's launch! They have a new boat-hook, I see, and the little blackie is still in the dumps. I don't think he's very well, Wilderspin. He's been like that for two or three days, squatting sulky-fashion and meditating over the churning of the water. Unwholesome for him to be always staring at the frothy water running away from the stern."

They watched the little steamer fuss across the patch of sunlit river, suffer momentary occultation from the acacia, and glide out of sight behind the dark window-frame.

"I'm getting a wonderful eye for details," said Bailey: "I spotted that new boat-hook at once. The other nigger is a funny little chap. He never used to swagger with the old boat-hook like that."

"Malays, aren't they?" said Wilderspin.

"Don't know," said Bailey. "I thought one called all that sort of manner Lascar."

Then he began to tell Wilderspin what he knew of the private affairs of the houseboat, *Purple Emperor*. "Funny," he said, "how

these people come from all points of the compass — from Oxford and Windsor, from Asia and Africa — and gather and pass opposite the window just to entertain me. One man floated out of the infinite the day before yesterday, caught one perfect crab opposite, lost and recovered a scull, and passed on again. Probably he will never come into my life again. So far as I am concerned, he has lived and had his little troubles, perhaps thirty — perhaps forty — years on the earth, merely to make an ass of himself for three minutes in front of my window. Wonderful thing, Wilderspin, if you come to think of it."

"Yes," said Wilderspin; "*isn't* it?"

A day or two after this Bailey had a brilliant morning. Indeed, towards the end of the affair, it became almost as exciting as any window show very well could be. We will, however, begin at the beginning.

Bailey was all alone in the house, for his housekeeper had gone into the town three miles away to pay bills, and the servant had her holiday. The morning began dull. A canoe went up about half-past nine, and later a boat-load of camping men came down. But this was mere margin. Things became cheerful about ten o'clock.

It began with something white fluttering in the remote distance where the three poplars marked the river bend. "Pocket-handkerchief," said Bailey, when he saw it "No. Too big! Flag perhaps."

However, it was not a flag, for it jumped about. "Man in whites running fast, and this way," said Bailey. "That's luck! But his whites are precious loose!"

Then a singular thing happened. There was a minute pink gleam among the dark trees in the distance, and a little puff of pale grey that began to drift and vanish eastward. The man in white jumped and continued running. Presently the report of the shot arrived.

"What the devil!" said Bailey. "Looks as if someone was shooting at him."

He sat up stiffly and stared hard. The white figure was coming along the pathway through the corn. "It's one of those niggers from the Fitzgibbon's," said Bailey; "or may I be hanged! I wonder why he keeps sawing with his arm."

Then three other figures became indistinctly visible against the

dark background of the trees.

Abruptly on the opposite bank a man walked into the picture. He was black-bearded, dressed in flannels, had a red belt, and a vast grey felt hat. He walked, leaning very much forward and with his hands swinging before him. Behind him one could see the grass swept by the towing-rope of the boat he was dragging. He was steadfastly regarding the white figure that was hurrying through the corn. Suddenly he stopped. Then, with a peculiar gesture, Bailey could see that he began pulling in the tow-rope hand over hand. Over the water could be heard the voices of the people in the still invisible boat.

"What are you after, Hagshot?" said someone.

The individual with the red belt shouted something that was inaudible, and went on lugging in the rope, looking over his shoulder at the advancing white figure as he did so. He came down the bank, and the rope bent a lane among the reeds and lashed the water between his pulls.

Then just the bows of the boat came into view, with the towing-mast and a tall, fair-haired man standing up and trying to see over the bank. The boat bumped unexpectedly among the reeds, and the tall, fair-haired man disappeared suddenly, having apparently fallen back into the invisible part of the boat. There was a curse and some indistinct laughter. Hagshot did not laugh, but hastily clambered into the boat and pushed off. Abruptly the boat passed out of Bailey's sight.

But it was still audible. The melody of voices suggested that its occupants were busy telling each other what to do.

The running figure was drawing near the bank. Bailey could now see clearly that it was one of Fitzgibbon's Orientals, and began to realise what the sinuous thing the man carried in his hand might be. Three other men followed one another through the corn, and the foremost carried what was probably the gun. They were perhaps two hundred yards or more behind the Malay.

"It's a man hunt, by all that's holy!" said Bailey.

The Malay stopped for a moment and surveyed the bank to the right. Then he left the path, and, breaking through the corn, vanished in that direction. The three pursuers followed suit, and their heads and gesticulating arms above the corn, after a brief interval, also

went out of Bailey's field of vision.

Bailey so far forgot himself as to swear. "Just as things were getting lively!" he said. Something like a woman's shriek came through the air. Then shouts, a howl, a dull whack upon the balcony outside that made Bailey jump, and then the report of a gun.

"This is precious hard on an invalid," said Bailey.

But more was to happen yet in his picture. In fact, a great deal more. The Malay appeared again, running now along the bank up stream. His stride had more swing and less pace in it than before. He was threatening someone ahead with the ugly krees he carried. The blade, Bailey noticed, was dull — it did not shine as steel should.

Then came the tall, fair man, brandishing a boat-hook, and after him three other men in boating costume, running clumsily with oars. The man with the grey hat and red belt was not with them. After an interval the three men with the gun reappeared, still in the corn, but now near the river bank. They emerged upon the towing-path, and hurried after the others. The opposite bank was left blank and desolate again.

The sick-room was disgraced by more profanity. "I would give my life to see the end of this," said Bailey. There were indistinct shouts up stream. Once they seemed to be coming nearer, but they disappointed him.

Bailey sat and grumbled. He was still grumbling when his eye caught something black and round among the waves. "Hullo!" he said. He looked narrowly and saw two triangular black bodies frothing every now and then about a yard in front of this.

He was still doubtful when the little band of pursuers came into sight again, and began to point to this floating object. They were talking eagerly. Then the man with the gun took aim.

"He's swimming the river, by George!" said Bailey.

The Malay looked round, saw the gun, and went under. He came up so close to Bailey's bank of the river that one of the bars of the balcony hid him for a moment. As he emerged the man with the gun fired. The Malay kept steadily onward — Bailey could see the wet hair on his forehead now and the krees between his teeth — and was

presently hidden by the balcony.

This seemed to Bailey an unendurable wrong. The man was lost to him for ever now, so he thought. Why couldn't the brute have got himself decently caught on the opposite bank, or shot in the water?

"It's worse than Edwin Drood," said Bailey.

Over the river, too, things had become an absolute blank. All seven men had gone down stream again, probably to get the boat and follow across. Bailey listened and waited. There was silence. "Surely it's not over like this," said Bailey.

Five minutes passed — ten minutes. Then a tug with two barges went up stream. The attitudes of the men upon these were the attitudes of those who see nothing remarkable in earth, water, or sky. Clearly the whole affair had passed out of sight of the river. Probably the hunt had gone into the beech woods behind the house.

"Confound it!" said Bailey. "To be continued again, and no chance this time of the sequel. But this is hard on a sick man."

He heard a step on the staircase behind him and looking round saw the door open. Mrs Green came in and sat down, panting. She still had her bonnet on, her purse in her hand, and her little brown basket upon her arm. "Oh, there!" she said, and left Bailey to imagine the rest.

"Have a little whisky and water, Mrs Green, and tell me about it," said Bailey.

Sipping a little, the lady began to recover her powers of explanation.

One of those black creatures at the Fitzgibbon's had gone mad, and was running about with a big knife, stabbing people. He had killed a groom, and stabbed the under-butler, and almost cut the arm off a boating gentleman.

"Running amuck with a krees," said Bailey. "I thought that was it."

And he was hiding in the wood when she came through it from the town.

"What! Did he run after you?" asked Bailey, with a certain touch of glee in his voice.

"No, that was the horrible part of it," Mrs Green explained. She had been right through the woods and had *never known he was there*.

It was only when she met young Mr Fitzgibbon carrying his gun in the shrubbery that she heard anything about it. Apparently, what upset Mrs Green was the lost opportunity for emotion. She was determined, however, to make the most of what was left her.

"To think he was there all the time!" she said, over and over again.

Bailey endured this patiently enough for perhaps ten minutes. At last he thought it advisable to assert himself. "It's twenty past one, Mrs Green," he said. "Don't you think it time you got me something to eat?"

This brought Mrs Green suddenly to her knees.

"Oh Lord, sir!" she said. "Oh! don't go making me go out of this room, sir, till I know he's caught. He might have got into the house, sir. He might be creeping, creeping, with that knife of his, along the passage this very—"

She broke off suddenly and glared over him at the window. Her lower jaw dropped. Bailey turned his head sharply.

For the space of half a second things seemed just as they were. There was the tree, the balcony, the shining river, the distant church tower. Then he noticed that the acacia was displaced about a foot to the right, and that it was quivering, and the leaves were rustling. The tree was shaken violently, and a heavy panting was audible.

In another moment a hairy brown hand had appeared and clutched the balcony railings, and in another the face of the Malay was peering through these at the man on the couch. His expression was an unpleasant grin, by reason of the krees he held between his teeth, and he was bleeding from an ugly wound in his cheek. His hair wet to drying stuck out like horns from his head. His body was bare save for the wet trousers that clung to him. Bailey's first impulse was to spring from the couch, but his legs reminded him that this was impossible.

By means of the balcony and tree the man slowly raised himself until he was visible to Mrs Green. With a choking cry she made for the door and fumbled with the handle.

Bailey thought swiftly and clutched a medicine bottle in either hand. One he flung, and it smashed against the acacia. Silently and deliberately, and keeping his bright eyes fixed on Bailey, the Malay

clambered into the balcony. Bailey, still clutching his second bottle, but with a sickening, sinking feeling about his heart, watched first one leg come over the railing and then the other.

It was Bailey's impression that the Malay took about an hour to get his second leg over the rail. The period that elapsed before the sitting position was changed to a standing one seemed enormous — days, weeks, possibly a year or so. Yet Bailey had no clear impression of anything going on in his mind during that vast period, except a vague wonder at his inability to throw the second medicine bottle. Suddenly the Malay glanced over his shoulder. There was the crack of a rifle. He flung up his arms and came down upon the couch. Mrs Green began a dismal shriek that seemed likely to last until Doomsday. Bailey stared at the brown body with its shoulder blade driven in, that writhed painfully across his legs and rapidly staining and soaking the spotless bandages. Then he looked at the long krees, with the reddish streaks upon its blade, that lay an inch beyond the trembling brown fingers upon the floor. Then at Mrs Green, who had backed hard against the door and was staring at the body and shrieking in gusty outbursts as if she would wake the dead. And then the body was shaken by one last convulsive effort.

The Malay gripped the krees, tried to raise himself with his left hand, and collapsed. Then he raised his head, stared for a moment at Mrs Green, and twisting his face round looked at Bailey. With a gasping groan the dying man succeeded in clutching the bed clothes with his disabled hand, and by a violent effort, which hurt Bailey's legs exceedingly, writhed sideways towards what must be his last victim. Then something seemed released in Bailey's mind and he brought down the second bottle with all his strength on to the Malay's face. The krees fell heavily upon the floor.

"Easy with those legs," said Bailey, as young Fitzgibbon and one of the boating party lifted the body off him.

Young Fitzgibbon was very white in the face. "I didn't mean to kill him," he said.

"It's just as well," said Bailey.

THE TEMPTATION OF HARRINGAY

It is quite impossible to say whether this thing really happened. It depends entirely on the word of R.M. Harringay, who is an artist.

Following his version of the affair, the narrative deposes that Harringay went into his studio about ten o'clock to see what he could make of the head that he had been working at the day before. The head in question was that of an Italian organ-grinder, and Harringay thought — but was not quite sure — that the title would be the "Vigil." So far he is frank, and his narrative bears the stamp of truth. He had seen the man expectant for pennies, and with a promptness that suggested genius, had had him in at once.

"Kneel. Look up at that bracket," said Harringay. "As if you expected pennies."

"Don't *grin*!" said Harringay. "I don't want to paint your gums. Look as though you were unhappy."

Now, after a night's rest, the picture proved decidedly unsatisfactory. "It's good work," said Harringay. "That little bit in the neck … But."

He walked about the studio and looked at the thing from this point and from that. Then he said a wicked word. In the original the word is given.

"Painting," he says he said. "Just a painting of an organ-grinder — a mere portrait. If it was a live organ-grinder I wouldn't mind. But somehow I never make things alive. I wonder if my imagination is wrong." This, too, has a truthful air. His imagination *is* wrong.

"That creative touch! To take canvas and pigment and make a man — as Adam was made of red ochre! But this thing! If you met it walking about the streets you would know it was only a studio production. The little boys would tell it to 'Garnome and git frimed.' Some little touch … Well — it won't do as it is."

He went to the blinds and began to pull them down. They were made of blue holland with the rollers at the bottom of the window, so that you pull them down to get more light. He gathered his palette, brushes, and mahl stick from his table. Then he turned to the picture and put a speck of brown in the corner of the mouth; and shifted his

attention thence to the pupil of the eye. Then he decided that the chin was a trifle too impassive for a vigil.

Presently he put down his impedimenta, and lighting a pipe surveyed the progress of his work. “I’m hanged if the thing isn’t sneering at me,” said Harringay, and he still believes it sneered.

The animation of the figure had certainly increased, but scarcely in the direction he wished. There was no mistake about the sneer. “Vigil of the Unbeliever,” said Harringay. “Rather subtle and clever that! But the left eyebrow isn’t cynical enough.”

He went and dabbed at the eyebrow, and added a little to the lobe of the ear to suggest materialism. Further consideration ensued. “Vigil’s off, I’m afraid,” said Harringay. “Why not Mephistopheles? But that’s a bit *too* common. ‘A Friend of the Doge,’ — not so seedy. The armour won’t do, though. Too Camelot. How about a scarlet robe and call him ‘One of the Sacred College’? Humour in that, and an appreciation of Middle Italian History.”

“There’s always Benvenuto Cellini,” said Harringay; “with a clever suggestion of a gold cup in one corner. But that would scarcely suit the complexion.”

He describes himself as babbling in this way in order to keep down an unaccountably unpleasant sensation of fear. The thing was certainly acquiring anything but a pleasing expression. Yet it was as certainly becoming far more of a living thing than it had been — if a sinister one — far more alive than anything he had ever painted before. “Call it ‘Portrait of a Gentleman,’” said Harringay;— “A Certain Gentleman.”

“Won’t do,” said Harringay, still keeping up his courage. “Kind of thing they call Bad Taste. That sneer will have to come out. That gone, and a little more fire in the eye — never noticed how warm his eye was before — and he might do for — ? What price Passionate Pilgrim? But that devilish face won’t do — *this* side of the Channel.

“Some little inaccuracy does it,” he said; “eyebrows probably too oblique,” — therewith pulling the blind lower to get a better light, and resuming palette and brushes.

The face on the canvas seemed animated by a spirit of its own. Where the expression of diablerie came in he found impossible to discover. Experiment was necessary. The eyebrows — it could

scarcely be the eyebrows? But he altered them. No, that was no better; in fact, if anything, a trifle more satanic. The corner of the mouth? Pah! more than ever a leer — and now, retouched, it was ominously grim. The eye, then? Catastrophe! he had filled his brush with vermilion instead of brown, and yet he had felt sure it was brown! The eye seemed now to have rolled in its socket, and was glaring at him an eye of fire. In a flash of passion, possibly with something of the courage of panic, he struck the brush full of bright red athwart the picture; and then a very curious thing, a very strange thing indeed, occurred — if it *did* occur.

The diabolified Italian before him shut both his eyes, pursed his mouth, and wiped the colour off his face with his hand.

Then the *red eye* opened again, with a sound like the opening of lips, and the face smiled. "That was rather hasty of you," said the picture.

Harringay states that, now that the worst had happened, his self-possession returned. He had a saving persuasion that devils were reasonable creatures.

"Why do you keep moving about then," he said, "making faces and all that — sneering and squinting, while I am painting you?"

"I don't," said the picture.

"You *do*," said Harringay.

"It's yourself," said the picture.

"It's *not* myself," said Harringay.

"It *is* yourself," said the picture. "No! don't go hitting me with paint again, because it's true. You have been trying to fluke an expression on my face all the morning. Really, you haven't an idea what your picture ought to look like."

"I have," said Harringay.

"You have *not*," said the picture: "You *never* have with your pictures. You always start with the vaguest presentiment of what you are going to do; it is to be something beautiful — you are sure of that — and devout, perhaps, or tragic; but beyond that it is all experiment and chance. My dear fellow! you don't think you can paint a picture like that?"

Now it must be remembered that for what follows we have only

Harringay's word.

"I shall paint a picture exactly as I like," said Harringay, calmly.

This seemed to disconcert the picture a little. "You can't paint a picture without an inspiration," it remarked.

"But I *had* an inspiration — for this."

"Inspiration!" sneered the sardonic figure; "a fancy that came from your seeing an organ-grinder looking up at a window! Vigil! Ha, ha! You just started painting on the chance of something coming — that's what you did. And when I saw you at it I came. I want a talk with you!"

"Art, with you," said the picture,— "it's a poor business. You potter. I don't know how it is, but you don't seem able to throw your soul into it. You know too much. It hampers you. In the midst of your enthusiasms you ask yourself whether something like this has not been done before. And …"

"Look here," said Harringay, who had expected something better than criticism from the devil. "Are you going to talk studio to me?" He filled his number twelve hoghair with red paint.

"The true artist," said the picture, "is always an ignorant man. An artist who theorises about his work is no longer artist but critic. Wagner … I say! — What's that red paint for?"

"I'm going to paint you out," said Harringay. "I don't want to hear all that Tommy Rot. If you think just because I'm an artist by trade I'm going to talk studio to you, you make a precious mistake."

"One minute," said the picture, evidently alarmed. "I want to make you an offer — a genuine offer. It's right what I'm saying. You lack inspirations. Well. No doubt you've heard of the Cathedral of Cologne, and the Devil's Bridge, and—"

"Rubbish," said Harringay. "Do you think I want to go to perdition simply for the pleasure of painting a good picture, and getting it slated. Take that."

His blood was up. His danger only nerved him to action, so he says. So he planted a dab of vermilion in his creature's mouth. The Italian spluttered and tried to wipe it off — evidently horribly surprised. And then — according to Harringay — there began a very remarkable struggle, Harringay splashing away with the red paint,

and the picture wriggling about and wiping it off as fast as he put it on. "*Two* masterpieces," said the demon. "Two indubitable masterpieces for a Chelsea artist's soul. It's a bargain?" Harringay replied with the paint brush.

For a few minutes nothing could be heard but the brush going and the spluttering and ejaculations of the Italian. A lot of the strokes he caught on his arm and hand, though Harringay got over his guard often enough. Presently the paint on the palette gave out and the two antagonists stood breathless, regarding each other. The picture was so smeared with red that it looked as if it had been rolling about a slaughterhouse, and it was painfully out of breath and very uncomfortable with the wet paint trickling down its neck. Still, the first round was in its favour on the whole. "Think," it said, sticking pluckily to its point, "two supreme masterpieces — in different styles. Each equivalent to the Cathedral…"

"*I* know," said Harringay, and rushed out of the studio and along the passage towards his wife's boudoir.

In another minute he was back with a large tin of enamel — Hedge Sparrow's Egg Tint, it was, and a brush. At the sight of that the artistic devil with the red eye began to scream. "*Three* masterpieces — culminating masterpieces."

Harringay delivered cut two across the demon, and followed with a thrust in the eye. There was an indistinct rumbling. "*Four* masterpieces," and a spitting sound.

But Harringay had the upper hand now and meant to keep it. With rapid, bold strokes he continued to paint over the writhing canvas, until at last it was a uniform field of shining Hedge Sparrow tint. Once the mouth reappeared and got as far as "Five master—" before he filled it with enamel; and near the end the red eye opened and glared at him indignantly. But at last nothing remained save a gleaming panel of drying enamel. For a little while a faint stirring beneath the surface puckered it slightly here and there, but presently even that died away and the thing was perfectly still.

Then Harringay — according to Harringay's account — lit his pipe and sat down and stared at the enamelled canvas, and tried to make out clearly what had happened. Then he walked round behind it, to see if the back of it was at all remarkable. Then it was he began

to regret he had not photographed the Devil before he painted him out.

This is Harringay's story — not mine. He supports it by a small canvas (24 by 20) enamelled a pale green, and by violent asseverations. It is also true that he never has produced a masterpiece, and in the opinion of his intimate friends probably never will.

THE FLYING MAN

The Ethnologist looked at the *bhimraj* feather thoughtfully. “They seemed loth to part with it,” he said.

“It is sacred to the Chiefs,” said the lieutenant; “just as yellow silk, you know, is sacred to the Chinese Emperor.”

The Ethnologist did not answer. He hesitated. Then opening the topic abruptly, “What on earth is this cock-and-bull story they have of a flying man?”

The lieutenant smiled faintly. “What did they tell you?”

“I see,” said the Ethnologist, “that you know of your fame.”

The lieutenant rolled himself a cigarette. “I don’t mind hearing about it once more. How does it stand at present?”

“It’s so confoundedly childish,” said the Ethnologist, becoming irritated. “How did you play it off upon them?”

The lieutenant made no answer, but lounged back in his folding-chair, still smiling.

“Here am I, come four hundred miles out of my way to get what is left of the folk-lore of these people, before they are utterly demoralised by missionaries and the military, and all I find are a lot of impossible legends about a sandy-haired scrub of an infantry lieutenant. How he is invulnerable — how he can jump over elephants — how he can fly. That’s the toughest nut. One old gentleman described your wings, said they had black plumage and were not quite as long as a mule. Said he often saw you by moonlight hovering over the crests out towards the Shendu country. — Confound it, man!”

The lieutenant laughed cheerfully. “Go on,” he said. “Go on.”

The Ethnologist did. At last he wearied. “To trade so,” he said, “on these unsophisticated children of the mountains. How could you bring yourself to do it, man?”

“I’m sorry,” said the lieutenant, “but truly the thing was forced upon me. I can assure you I was driven to it. And at the time I had not the faintest idea of how the Chin imagination would take it. Or curiosity. I can only plead it was an indiscretion and not malice that made me replace the folk-lore by a new legend. But as you seem

aggrieved, I will try and explain the business to you.

"It was in the time of the last Lushai expedition but one, and Walters thought these people you have been visiting were friendly. So, with an airy confidence in my capacity for taking care of myself, he sent me up the gorge — fourteen miles of it — with three of the Derbyshire men and half a dozen Sepoys, two mules, and his blessing, to see what popular feeling was like at that village you visited. A force of ten — not counting the mules — fourteen miles, and during a war! You saw the road?"

"*Road*!" said the Ethnologist.

"It's better now than it was. When we went up we had to wade in the river for a mile where the valley narrows, with a smart stream frothing round our knees and the stones as slippery as ice. There it was I dropped my rifle. Afterwards the Sappers blasted the cliff with dynamite and made the convenient way you came by. Then below, where those very high cliffs come, we had to keep on dodging across the river — I should say we crossed it a dozen times in a couple of miles.

"We got in sight of the place early the next morning. You know how it lies, on a spur halfway between the big hills, and as we began to appreciate how wickedly quiet the village lay under the sunlight, we came to a stop to consider.

"At that they fired a lump of filed brass idol at us, just by way of a welcome. It came twanging down the slope to the right of us where the boulders are, missed my shoulder by an inch or so, and plugged the mule that carried all the provisions and utensils. I never heard such a death-rattle before or since. And at that we became aware of a number of gentlemen carrying matchlocks, and dressed in things like plaid dusters, dodging about along the neck between the village and the crest to the east.

"'Right about face,' I said. 'Not too close together.'

"And with that encouragement my expedition of ten men came round and set off at a smart trot down the valley again hitherward. We did not wait to save anything our dead had carried, but we kept the second mule with us — he carried my tent and some other rubbish — out of a feeling of friendship.

"So ended the battle — ingloriously. Glancing back, I saw the

valley dotted with the victors, shouting and firing at us. But no one was hit. These Chins and their guns are very little good except at a sitting shot. They will sit and finick over a boulder for hours taking aim, and when they fire running it is chiefly for stage effect. Hooker, one of the Derbyshire men, fancied himself rather with the rifle, and stopped behind for half a minute to try his luck as we turned the bend. But he got nothing.

"I'm not a Xenophon to spin much of a yarn about my retreating army. We had to pull the enemy up twice in the next two miles when he became a bit pressing, by exchanging shots with him, but it was a fairly monotonous affair — hard breathing chiefly — until we got near the place where the hills run in towards the river and pinch the valley into a gorge. And there we very luckily caught a glimpse of half a dozen round black heads coming slanting-ways over the hill to the left of us — the east that is — and almost parallel with us.

"At that I called a halt. 'Look here,' says I to Hooker and the other Englishmen; 'what are we to do now?' and I pointed to the heads.

"'Headed orf, or I'm a nigger,' said one of the men.

"'We shall be,' said another. 'You know the Chin way, George?'

"'They can pot every one of us at fifty yards,' says Hooker, 'in the place where the river is narrow. It's just suicide to go on down.'

"I looked at the hill to the right of us. It grew steeper lower down the valley, but it still seemed climbable. And all the Chins we had seen hitherto had been on the other side of the stream.

"'It's that or stopping,' says one of the Sepoys.

"So we started slanting up the hill. There was something faintly suggestive of a road running obliquely up the face of it, and that we followed. Some Chins presently came into view up the valley, and I heard some shots. Then I saw one of the Sepoys was sitting down about thirty yards below us. He had simply sat down without a word, apparently not wishing to give trouble. At that I called a halt again; I told Hooker to try another shot, and went back and found the man was hit in the leg. I took him up, carried him along to put him on the mule — already pretty well laden with the tent and other things which we had no time to take off. When I got up to the rest with him,

Hooker had his empty Martini in his hand, and was grinning and pointing to a motionless black spot up the valley. All the rest of the Chins were behind boulders or back round the bend. 'Five hundred yards,' says Hooker, 'if an inch. And I'll swear I hit him in the head.'

"I told him to go and do it again, and with that we went on again.

"Now the hillside kept getting steeper as we pushed on, and the road we were following more and more of a shelf. At last it was mere cliff above and below us. 'It's the best road I have seen yet in Chin Lushai land,' said I to encourage the men, though I had a fear of what was coming.

"And in a few minutes the way bent round a corner of the cliff. Then, finis! the ledge came to an end.

"As soon as he grasped the position one of the Derbyshire men fell a-swearing at the trap we had fallen into. The Sepoys halted quietly. Hooker grunted and reloaded, and went back to the bend.

"Then two of the Sepoy chaps helped their comrade down and began to unload the mule.

"Now, when I came to look about me, I began to think we had not been so very unfortunate after all. We were on a shelf perhaps ten yards across it at widest. Above it the cliff projected so that we could not be shot down upon, and below was an almost sheer precipice of perhaps two or three hundred feet. Lying down we were invisible to anyone across the ravine. The only approach was along the ledge, and on that one man was as good as a host. We were in a natural stronghold, with only one disadvantage, our sole provision against hunger and thirst was one live mule. Still we were at most eight or nine miles from the main expedition, and no doubt, after a day or so, they would send up after us if we did not return.

"After a day or so …"

The lieutenant paused. "Ever been thirsty, Graham?"

"Not that kind," said the Ethnologist.

"H'm. We had the whole of that day, the night, and the next day of it, and only a trifle of dew we wrung out of our clothes and the tent. And below us was the river going giggle, giggle, round a rock in mid stream. I never knew such a barrenness of incident, or such a quantity of sensation. The sun might have had Joshua's command still upon it for all the motion one could see; and it blazed like a near

furnace. Towards the evening of the first day one of the Derbyshire men said something — nobody heard what — and went off round the bend of the cliff. We heard shots, and when Hooker looked round the corner he was gone. And in the morning the Sepoy whose leg was shot was in delirium, and jumped or fell over the cliff. Then we took the mule and shot it, and that must needs go over the cliff too in its last struggles, leaving eight of us.

"We could see the body of the Sepoy down below, with the head in the water. He was lying face downwards, and so far as I could make out was scarcely smashed at all. Badly as the Chins might covet his head, they had the sense to leave it alone until the darkness came.

"At first we talked of all the chances there were of the main body hearing the firing, and reckoned whether they would begin to miss us, and all that kind of thing, but we dried up as the evening came on. The Sepoys played games with bits of stone among themselves, and afterwards told stories. The night was rather chilly. The second day nobody spoke. Our lips were black and our throats afire, and we lay about on the ledge and glared at one another. Perhaps it's as well we kept our thoughts to ourselves. One of the British soldiers began writing some blasphemous rot on the rock with a bit of pipeclay, about his last dying will, until I stopped it. As I looked over the edge down into the valley and saw the river rippling I was nearly tempted to go after the Sepoy. It seemed a pleasant and desirable thing to go rushing down through the air with something to drink — or no more thirst at any rate — at the bottom. I remembered in time, though, that I was the officer in command, and my duty to set a good example, and that kept me from any such foolishness.

"Yet, thinking of that, put an idea into my head. I got up and looked at the tent and tent ropes, and wondered why I had not thought of it before. Then I came and peered over the cliff again. This time the height seemed greater and the pose of the Sepoy rather more painful. But it was that or nothing. And to cut it short, I parachuted.

"I got a big circle of canvas out of the tent, about three times the size of that table-cover, and plugged the hole in the centre, and I tied eight ropes round it to meet in the middle and make a parachute. The

other chaps lay about and watched me as though they thought it was a new kind of delirium. Then I explained my notion to the two British soldiers and how I meant to do it, and as soon as the short dusk had darkened into night, I risked it. They held the thing high up, and I took a run the whole length of the ledge. The thing filled with air like a sail, but at the edge I will confess I funked and pulled up.

"As soon as I stopped I was ashamed of myself — as well I might be in front of privates — and went back and started again. Off I jumped this time — with a kind of sob, I remember — clean into the air, with the big white sail bellying out above me.

"I must have thought at a frightful pace. It seemed a long time before I was sure that the thing meant to keep steady. At first it heeled sideways. Then I noticed the face of the rock which seemed to be streaming up past me, and me motionless. Then I looked down and saw in the darkness the river and the dead Sepoy rushing up towards me. But in the indistinct light I also saw three Chins, seemingly aghast at the sight of me, and that the Sepoy was decapitated. At that I wanted to go back again.

"Then my boot was in the mouth of one, and in a moment he and I were in a heap with the canvas fluttering down on the top of us. I fancy I dashed out his brains with my foot. I expected nothing more than to be brained myself by the other two, but the poor heathen had never heard of Baldwin, and incontinently bolted.

"I struggled out of the tangle of dead Chin and canvas, and looked round. About ten paces off lay the head of the Sepoy staring in the moonlight. Then I saw the water and went and drank. There wasn't a sound in the world but the footsteps of the departing Chins, a faint shout from above, and the gluck of the water. So soon as I had drunk my full I started off down the river.

"That about ends the explanation of the flying man story. I never met a soul the whole eight miles of the way. I got to Walters' camp by ten o'clock, and a born idiot of a sentinel had the cheek to fire at me as I came trotting out of the darkness. So soon as I had hammered my story into Winter's thick skull, about fifty men started up the valley to clear the Chins out and get our men down. But for my own part I had too good a thirst to provoke it by going with them.

"You have heard what kind of a yarn the Chins made of it. Wings

as long as a mule, eh? — And black feathers! The gay lieutenant bird! Well, well.”

The lieutenant meditated cheerfully for a moment. Then he added, “You would scarcely credit it, but when they got to the ridge at last, they found two more of the Sepoys had jumped over.”

“The rest were all right?” asked the Ethnologist.

“Yes,” said the lieutenant; “the rest were all right, barring a certain thirst, you know.”

And at the memory he helped himself to soda and whisky again.

THE DIAMOND MAKER

Some business had detained me in Chancery Lane until nine in the evening, and thereafter, having some inkling of a headache, I was disinclined either for entertainment or further work. So much of the sky as the high cliffs of that narrow cañon of traffic left visible spoke of a serene night, and I determined to make my way down to the Embankment, and rest my eyes and cool my head by watching the variegated lights upon the river. Beyond comparison the night is the best time for this place; a merciful darkness hides the dirt of the waters, and the lights of this transition age, red, glaring orange, gas-yellow, and electric white, are set in shadowy outlines of every possible shade between grey and deep purple. Through the arches of Waterloo Bridge a hundred points of light mark the sweep of the Embankment, and above its parapet rise the towers of Westminster, warm grey against the starlight. The black river goes by with only a rare ripple breaking its silence, and disturbing the reflections of the lights that swim upon its surface.

"A warm night," said a voice at my side.

I turned my head, and saw the profile of a man who was leaning over the parapet beside me. It was a refined face, not unhandsome, though pinched and pale enough, and the coat collar turned up and pinned round the throat marked his status in life as sharply as a uniform. I felt I was committed to the price of a bed and breakfast if I answered him.

I looked at him curiously. Would he have anything to tell me worth the money, or was he the common incapable — incapable even of telling his own story? There was a quality of intelligence in his forehead and eyes, and a certain tremulousness in his nether lip that decided me.

"Very warm," said I; "but not too warm for us here."

"No," he said, still looking across the water, "it is pleasant enough here … just now."

"It is good," he continued after a pause, "to find anything so restful as this in London. After one has been fretting about business all day, about getting on, meeting obligations, and parrying dangers,

I do not know what one would do if it were not for such pacific corners." He spoke with long pauses between the sentences. "You must know a little of the irksome labour of the world, or you would not be here. But I doubt if you can be so brain-weary and footsore as I am … Bah! Sometimes I doubt if the game is worth the candle. I feel inclined to throw the whole thing over — name, wealth, and position — and take to some modest trade. But I know if I abandoned my ambition — hardly as she uses me — I should have nothing but remorse left for the rest of my days."

He became silent. I looked at him in astonishment. If ever I saw a man hopelessly hard-up it was the man in front of me. He was ragged and he was dirty, unshaven and unkempt; he looked as though he had been left in a dust-bin for a week. And he was talking to *me* of the irksome worries of a large business. I almost laughed outright. Either he was mad or playing a sorry jest on his own poverty.

"If high aims and high positions," said I, "have their drawbacks of hard work and anxiety, they have their compensations. Influence, the power of doing good, of assisting those weaker and poorer than ourselves; and there is even a certain gratification in display…."

My banter under the circumstances was in very vile taste. I spoke on the spur of the contrast of his appearance and speech. I was sorry even while I was speaking.

He turned a haggard but very composed face upon me. Said he: "I forget myself. Of course you would not understand."

He measured me for a moment. "No doubt it is very absurd. You will not believe me even when I tell you, so that it is fairly safe to tell you. And it will be a comfort to tell someone. I really have a big business in hand, a very big business. But there are troubles just now. The fact is … I make diamonds."

"I suppose," said I, "you are out of work just at present?"

"I am sick of being disbelieved," he said impatiently, and suddenly unbuttoning his wretched coat he pulled out a little canvas bag that was hanging by a cord round his neck. From this he produced a brown pebble. "I wonder if you know enough to know what that is?" He handed it to me.

Now, a year or so ago, I had occupied my leisure in taking a London science degree, so that I have a smattering of physics and

mineralogy. The thing was not unlike an uncut diamond of the darker sort, though far too large, being almost as big as the top of my thumb. I took it, and saw it had the form of a regular octahedron, with the curved faces peculiar to the most precious of minerals. I took out my penknife and tried to scratch it — vainly. Leaning forward towards the gas-lamp, I tried the thing on my watch-glass, and scored a white line across that with the greatest ease.

I looked at my interlocutor with rising curiosity. “It certainly is rather like a diamond. But, if so, it is a Behemoth of diamonds. Where did you get it?”

“I tell you I made it,” he said. “Give it back to me.”

He replaced it hastily and buttoned his jacket. “I will sell it you for one hundred pounds,” he suddenly whispered eagerly. With that my suspicions returned. The thing might, after all, be merely a lump of that almost equally hard substance, corundum, with an accidental resemblance in shape to the diamond. Or if it was a diamond, how came he by it, and why should he offer it at a hundred pounds?

We looked into one another’s eyes. He seemed eager, but honestly eager. At that moment I believed it was a diamond he was trying to sell. Yet I am a poor man, a hundred pounds would leave a visible gap in my fortunes and no sane man would buy a diamond by gaslight from a ragged tramp on his personal warranty only. Still, a diamond that size conjured up a vision of many thousands of pounds. Then, thought I, such a stone could scarcely exist without being mentioned in every book on gems, and again I called to mind the stories of contraband and light-fingered Kaffirs at the Cape. I put the question of purchase on one side.

“How did you get it?” said I.

“I made it.”

I had heard something of Moissan, but I knew his artificial diamonds were very small. I shook my head.

“You seem to know something of this kind of thing. I will tell you a little about myself. Perhaps then you may think better of the purchase.” He turned round with his back to the river, and put his hands in his pockets. He sighed. “I know you will not believe me.”

“Diamonds,” he began — and as he spoke his voice lost its faint flavour of the tramp and assumed something of the easy tone of an

educated man— “are to be made by throwing carbon out of combination in a suitable flux and under a suitable pressure; the carbon crystallises out, not as black-lead or charcoal-powder, but as small diamonds. So much has been known to chemists for years, but no one yet has hit upon exactly the right flux in which to melt up the carbon, or exactly the right pressure for the best results. Consequently the diamonds made by chemists are small and dark, and worthless as jewels. Now I, you know, have given up my life to this problem — given my life to it.

“I began to work at the conditions of diamond making when I was seventeen, and now I am thirty-two. It seemed to me that it might take all the thought and energies of a man for ten years, or twenty years, but, even if it did, the game was still worth the candle. Suppose one to have at last just hit the right trick, before the secret got out and diamonds became as common as coal, one might realise millions. Millions!”

He paused and looked for my sympathy. His eyes shone hungrily. “To think,” said he, “that I am on the verge of it all, and here!

“I had,” he proceeded, “about a thousand pounds when I was twenty-one, and this, I thought, eked out by a little teaching, would keep my researches going. A year or two was spent in study, at Berlin chiefly, and then I continued on my own account. The trouble was the secrecy. You see, if once I had let out what I was doing, other men might have been spurred on by my belief in the practicability of the idea; and I do not pretend to be such a genius as to have been sure of coming in first, in the case of a race for the discovery. And you see it was important that if I really meant to make a pile, people should not know it was an artificial process and capable of turning out diamonds by the ton. So I had to work all alone. At first I had a little laboratory, but as my resources began to run out I had to conduct my experiments in a wretched unfurnished room in Kentish Town, where I slept at last on a straw mattress on the floor among all my apparatus. The money simply flowed away. I grudged myself everything except scientific appliances. I tried to keep things going by a little teaching, but I am not a very good teacher, and I have no university degree, nor very much education except in chemistry, and I found I had to give a lot of time and labour

for precious little money. But I got nearer and nearer the thing. Three years ago I settled the problem of the composition of the flux, and got near the pressure by putting this flux of mine and a certain carbon composition into a closed-up gun-barrel, filling up with water, sealing tightly, and heating."

He paused.

"Rather risky," said I.

"Yes. It burst, and smashed all my windows and a lot of my apparatus; but I got a kind of diamond powder nevertheless. Following out the problem of getting a big pressure upon the molten mixture from which the things were to crystallise, I hit upon some researches of Daubrée's at the Paris *Laboratorie des Poudres et Salpêtres*. He exploded dynamite in a tightly screwed steel cylinder, too strong to burst, and I found he could crush rocks into a muck not unlike the South African bed in which diamonds are found. It was a tremendous strain on my resources, but I got a steel cylinder made for my purpose after his pattern. I put in all my stuff and my explosives, built up a fire in my furnace, put the whole concern in, and — went out for a walk."

I could not help laughing at his matter-of-fact manner. "Did you not think it would blow up the house? Were there other people in the place?"

"It was in the interest of science," he said, ultimately. "There was a costermonger family on the floor below, a begging-letter writer in the room behind mine, and two flower-women were upstairs. Perhaps it was a bit thoughtless. But possibly some of them were out.

"When I came back the thing was just where I left it, among the white-hot coals. The explosive hadn't burst the case. And then I had a problem to face. You know time is an important element in crystallisation. If you hurry the process the crystals are small — it is only by prolonged standing that they grow to any size. I resolved to let this apparatus cool for two years, letting the temperature go down slowly during that time. And I was now quite out of money; and with a big fire and the rent of my room, as well as my hunger to satisfy, I had scarcely a penny in the world.

"I can hardly tell you all the shifts I was put to while I was making the diamonds. I have sold newspapers, held horses, opened

cab-doors. For many weeks I addressed envelopes. I had a place as assistant to a man who owned a barrow, and used to call down one side of the road while he called down the other. Once for a week I had absolutely nothing to do, and I begged. What a week that was! One day the fire was going out and I had eaten nothing all day, and a little chap taking his girl out, gave me sixpence — to show-off. Thank heaven for vanity! How the fish-shops smelt! But I went and spent it all on coals, and had the furnace bright red again, and then — Well, hunger makes a fool of a man.

"At last, three weeks ago, I let the fire out. I took my cylinder and unscrewed it while it was still so hot that it punished my hands, and I scraped out the crumbling lava-like mass with a chisel, and hammered it into a powder upon an iron plate. And I found three big diamonds and five small ones. As I sat on the floor hammering, my door opened, and my neighbour, the begging-letter writer, came in. He was drunk — as he usually is. ''Nerchist,' said he. 'You're drunk,' said I. ''Structive scoundrel,' said he. 'Go to your father,' said I, meaning the Father of Lies. 'Never you mind,' said he, and gave me a cunning wink, and hiccuped, and leaning up against the door, with his other eye against the door-post, began to babble of how he had been prying in my room, and how he had gone to the police that morning, and how they had taken down everything he had to say—''siffiwas a ge'm,' said he. Then I suddenly realised I was in a hole. Either I should have to tell these police my little secret, and get the whole thing blown upon, or be lagged as an Anarchist. So I went up to my neighbour and took him by the collar, and rolled him about a bit, and then I gathered up my diamonds and cleared out. The evening newspapers called my den the Kentish-Town Bomb Factory. And now I cannot part with the things for love or money.

"If I go in to respectable jewellers they ask me to wait, and go and whisper to a clerk to fetch a policeman, and then I say I cannot wait. And I found out a receiver of stolen goods, and he simply stuck to the one I gave him and told me to prosecute if I wanted it back. I am going about now with several hundred thousand pounds-worth of diamonds round my neck, and without either food or shelter. You are the first person I have taken into my confidence. But I like your face and I am hard-driven."

He looked into my eyes.

"It would be madness," said I, "for me to buy a diamond under the circumstances. Besides, I do not carry hundreds of pounds about in my pocket. Yet I more than half believe your story. I will, if you like, do this: come to my office to-morrow…."

"You think I am a thief!" said he keenly. "You will tell the police. I am not coming into a trap."

"Somehow I am assured you are no thief. Here is my card. Take that, anyhow. You need not come to any appointment. Come when you will."

He took the card, and an earnest of my good-will.

"Think better of it and come," said I.

He shook his head doubtfully. "I will pay back your half-crown with interest some day — such interest as will amaze you," said he. "Anyhow, you will keep the secret?… Don't follow me."

He crossed the road and went into the darkness towards the little steps under the archway leading into Essex Street, and I let him go. And that was the last I ever saw of him.

Afterwards I had two letters from him asking me to send bank-notes — not cheques — to certain addresses. I weighed the matter over, and took what I conceived to be the wisest course. Once he called upon me when I was out. My urchin described him as a very thin, dirty, and ragged man, with a dreadful cough. He left no message. That was the finish of him so far as my story goes. I wonder sometimes what has become of him. Was he an ingenious monomaniac, or a fraudulent dealer in pebbles, or has he really made diamonds as he asserted? The latter is just sufficiently credible to make me think at times that I have missed the most brilliant opportunity of my life. He may of course be dead, and his diamonds carelessly thrown aside — one, I repeat, was almost as big as my thumb. Or he may be still wandering about trying to sell the things. It is just possible he may yet emerge upon society, and, passing athwart my heavens in the serene altitude sacred to the wealthy and the well-advertised, reproach me silently for my want of enterprise. I sometimes think I might at least have risked five pounds.

AEPYORNIS ISLAND

The man with the scarred face leant over the table and looked at my bundle.

"Orchids?" he asked.

"A few," I said.

"Cypripediums," he said.

"Chiefly," said I.

"Anything new? I thought not. *I* did these islands twenty-five — twenty-seven years ago. If you find anything new here — well it's brand new. I didn't leave much."

"I'm not a collector," said I.

"I was young then," he went on. "Lord! how I used to fly round." He seemed to take my measure. "I was in the East Indies two years, and in Brazil seven. Then I went to Madagascar."

"I know a few explorers by name," I said, anticipating a yarn. "Whom did you collect for?"

"Dawsons. I wonder if you've heard the name of Butcher ever?"

"Butcher — Butcher?" The name seemed vaguely present in my memory; then I recalled *Butcher* v. *Dawson*. "Why!" said I, "you are the man who sued them for four years' salary — got cast away on a desert island …"

"Your servant," said the man with the scar, bowing. "Funny case, wasn't it? Here was me, making a little fortune on that island, doing nothing for it neither, and them quite unable to give me notice. It often used to amuse me thinking over it while I was there. I did calculations of it — big — all over the blessed atoll in ornamental figuring."

"How did it happen?" said I. "I don't rightly remember the case."

"Well…. You've heard of the Aepyornis?"

"Rather. Andrews was telling me of a new species he was working on only a month or so ago. Just before I sailed. They've got a thigh bone, it seems, nearly a yard long. Monster the thing must have been!"

"I believe you," said the man with the scar. "It *was* a monster. Sinbad's roc was just a legend of 'em. But when did they find these

bones?”

“Three or four years ago—’91, I fancy. Why?”

“Why? Because *I* found ’em — Lord! — it’s nearly twenty years ago. If Dawsons hadn’t been silly about that salary they might have made a perfect ring in ‘em…. *I* couldn’t help the infernal boat going adrift.”

He paused, “I suppose it’s the same place. A kind of swamp about ninety miles north of Antananarivo. Do you happen to know? You have to go to it along the coast by boats. You don’t happen to remember, perhaps?”

“I don’t. I fancy Andrews said something about a swamp.”

“It must be the same. It’s on the east coast. And somehow there’s something in the water that keeps things from decaying. Like creosote it smells. It reminded me of Trinidad. Did they get any more eggs? Some of the eggs I found were a foot-and-a-half long. The swamp goes circling round, you know, and cuts off this bit. It’s mostly salt, too. Well…. What a time I had of it! I found the things quite by accident. We went for eggs, me and two native chaps, in one of those rum canoes all tied together, and found the bones at the same time. We had a tent and provisions for four days, and we pitched on one of the firmer places. To think of it brings that odd tarry smell back even now. It’s funny work. You go probing into the mud with iron rods, you know. Usually the egg gets smashed. I wonder how long it is since these Aepyornises really lived. The missionaries say the natives have legends about when they were alive, but I never heard any such stories myself.[A] But certainly those eggs we got were as fresh as if they had been new laid. Fresh! Carrying them down to the boat one of my nigger chaps dropped one on a rock and it smashed. How I lammed into the beggar! But sweet it was, as if it was new laid, not even smelly, and its mother dead these four hundred years, perhaps. Said a centipede had bit him. However, I’m getting off the straight with the story. It had taken us all day to dig into the slush and get these eggs out unbroken, and we were all covered with beastly black mud, and naturally I was cross. So far as I knew they were the only eggs that have ever been got out not even cracked. I went afterwards to see the ones they have at the Natural History Museum in London; all of them were cracked and

just stuck together like a mosaic, and bits missing. Mine were perfect, and I meant to blow them when I got back. Naturally I was annoyed at the silly duffer dropping three hours' work just on account of a centipede. I hit him about rather."

[Footnote A: No European is known to have seen a live Aepyornis, with the doubtful exception of MacAndrew, who visited Madagascar in 1745. — H.G.W.]

The man with the scar took out a clay pipe. I placed my pouch before him. He filled up absent-mindedly.

"How about the others? Did you get those home? I don't remember—"

"That's the queer part of the story. I had three others. Perfectly fresh eggs. Well, we put 'em in the boat, and then I went up to the tent to make some coffee, leaving my two heathens down by the beach — the one fooling about with his sting and the other helping him. It never occurred to me that the beggars would take advantage of the peculiar position I was in to pick a quarrel. But I suppose the centipede poison and the kicking I had given him had upset the one — he was always a cantankerous sort — and he persuaded the other.

"I remember I was sitting and smoking and boiling up the water over a spirit-lamp business I used to take on these expeditions. Incidentally I was admiring the swamp under the sunset. All black and blood-red it was, in streaks — a beautiful sight. And up beyond the land rose grey and hazy to the hills, and the sky behind them red, like a furnace mouth. And fifty yards behind the back of me was these blessed heathen — quite regardless of the tranquil air of things — plotting to cut off with the boat and leave me all alone with three days' provisions and a canvas tent, and nothing to drink whatsoever, beyond a little keg of water. I heard a kind of yelp behind me, and there they were in this canoe affair — it wasn't properly a boat — and, perhaps, twenty yards from land. I realised what was up in a moment. My gun was in the tent, and, besides, I had no bullets — only duck shot. They knew that. But I had a little revolver in my pocket, and I pulled that out as I ran down to the beach.

"'Come back!' says I, flourishing it.

"They jabbered something at me, and the man that broke the egg jeered. I aimed at the other — because he was unwounded and had

the paddle, and I missed. They laughed. However, I wasn't beat. I knew I had to keep cool, and I tried him again and made him jump with the whang of it. He didn't laugh that time. The third time I got his head, and over he went, and the paddle with him. It was a precious lucky shot for a revolver. I reckon it was fifty yards. He went right under. I don't know if he was shot, or simply stunned and drowned. Then I began to shout to the other chap to come back, but he huddled up in the canoe and refused to answer. So I fired out my revolver at him and never got near him.

"I felt a precious fool, I can tell you. There I was on this rotten, black beach, flat swamp all behind me, and the flat sea, cold after the sunset, and just this black canoe drifting steadily out to sea. I tell you I damned Dawsons and Jamrachs and Museums and all the rest of it just to rights. I bawled to this nigger to come back, until my voice went up into a scream.

"There was nothing for it but to swim after him and take my luck with the sharks. So I opened my clasp-knife and put it in my mouth, and took off my clothes and waded in. As soon as I was in the water I lost sight of the canoe, but I aimed, as I judged, to head it off. I hoped the man in it was too bad to navigate it, and that it would keep on drifting in the same direction. Presently it came up over the horizon again to the south-westward about. The afterglow of sunset was well over now and the dim of night creeping up. The stars were coming through the blue. I swum like a champion, though my legs and arms were soon aching.

"However, I came up to him by the time the stars were fairly out. As it got darker I began to see all manner of glowing things in the water — phosphorescence, you know. At times it made me giddy. I hardly knew which was stars and which was phosphorescence, and whether I was swimming on my head or my heels. The canoe was as black as sin, and the ripple under the bows like liquid fire. I was naturally chary of clambering up into it. I was anxious to see what he was up to first. He seemed to be lying cuddled up in a lump in the bows, and the stern was all out of water. The thing kept turning round slowly as it drifted — kind of waltzing, don't you know. I went to the stern, and pulled it down, expecting him to wake up. Then I began to clamber in with my knife in my hand, and ready for

a rush. But he never stirred. So there I sat in the stern of the little canoe, drifting away over the calm phosphorescent sea, and with all the host of the stars above me, waiting for something to happen.

"After a long time I called him by name, but he never answered. I was too tired to take any risks by going along to him. So we sat there. I fancy I dozed once or twice. When the dawn came I saw he was as dead as a doornail and all puffed up and purple. My three eggs and the bones were lying in the middle of the canoe, and the keg of water and some coffee and biscuits wrapped in a Cape *Argus* by his feet, and a tin of methylated spirit underneath him. There was no paddle, nor, in fact, anything except the spirit-tin that one could use as one, so I settled to drift until I was picked up. I held an inquest on him, brought in a verdict against some snake, scorpion, or centipede unknown, and sent him overboard.

"After that I had a drink of water and a few biscuits, and took a look round. I suppose a man low down as I was don't see very far; leastways, Madagascar was clean out of sight, and any trace of land at all. I saw a sail going south-westward — looked like a schooner, but her hull never came up. Presently the sun got high in the sky and began to beat down upon me. Lord! It pretty near made my brains boil. I tried dipping my head in the sea, but after a while my eye fell on the Cape *Argus*, and I lay down flat in the canoe and spread this over me. Wonderful things these newspapers! I never read one through thoroughly before, but it's odd what you get up to when you're alone, as I was. I suppose I read that blessed old Cape *Argus* twenty times. The pitch in the canoe simply reeked with the heat and rose up into big blisters.

"I drifted ten days," said the man with the scar. "It's a little thing in the telling, isn't it? Every day was like the last. Except in the morning and the evening I never kept a look-out even — the blaze was so infernal. I didn't see a sail after the first three days, and those I saw took no notice of me. About the sixth night a ship went by scarcely half a mile away from me, with all its lights ablaze and its ports open, looking like a big firefly. There was music aboard. I stood up and shouted and screamed at it. The second day I broached one of the Aepyornis eggs, scraped the shell away at the end bit by bit, and tried it, and I was glad to find it was good enough to eat. A

bit flavoury — not bad, I mean — but with something of the taste of a duck's egg. There was a kind of circular patch, about six inches across, on one side of the yolk, and with streaks of blood and a white mark like a ladder in it that I thought queer, but I did not understand what this meant at the time, and I wasn't inclined to be particular. The egg lasted me three days, with biscuits and a drink of water. I chewed coffee berries too — invigorating stuff. The second egg I opened about the eighth day, and it scared me."

The man with the scar paused. "Yes," he said, "developing."

"I dare say you find it hard to believe. *I* did, with the thing before me. There the egg had been, sunk in that cold black mud, perhaps three hundred years. But there was no mistaking it. There was the — what is it? — embryo, with its big head and curved back, and its heart beating under its throat, and the yolk shrivelled up and great membranes spreading inside of the shell and all over the yolk. Here was I hatching out the eggs of the biggest of all extinct birds, in a little canoe in the midst of the Indian Ocean. If old Dawson had known that! It was worth four years' salary. What do *you* think?

"However, I had to eat that precious thing up, every bit of it, before I sighted the reef, and some of the mouthfuls were beastly unpleasant. I left the third one alone. I held it up to the light, but the shell was too thick for me to get any notion of what might be happening inside; and though I fancied I heard blood pulsing, it might have been the rustle in my own ears, like what you listen to in a seashell.

"Then came the atoll. Came out of the sunrise, as it were, suddenly, close up to me. I drifted straight towards it until I was about half a mile from shore, not more, and then the current took a turn, and I had to paddle as hard as I could with my hands and bits of the Aepyornis shell to make the place. However, I got there. It was just a common atoll about four miles round, with a few trees growing and a spring in one place, and the lagoon full of parrot-fish. I took the egg ashore and put it in a good place well above the tide lines and in the sun, to give it all the chance I could, and pulled the canoe up safe, and loafed about prospecting. It's rum how dull an atoll is. As soon as I had found a spring all the interest seemed to vanish. When I was a kid I thought nothing could be finer or more adventurous than the

Robinson Crusoe business, but that place was as monotonous as a book of sermons. I went round finding eatable things and generally thinking; but I tell you I was bored to death before the first day was out. It shows my luck — the very day I landed the weather changed. A thunderstorm went by to the north and flicked its wing over the island, and in the night there came a drencher and a howling wind slap over us. It wouldn't have taken much, you know, to upset that canoe.

"I was sleeping under the canoe, and the egg was luckily among the sand higher up the beach, and the first thing I remember was a sound like a hundred pebbles hitting the boat at once, and a rush of water over my body. I'd been dreaming of Antananarivo, and I sat up and holloaed to Intoshi to ask her what the devil was up, and clawed out at the chair where the matches used to be. Then I remembered where I was. There were phosphorescent waves rolling up as if they meant to eat me, and all the rest of the night as black as pitch. The air was simply yelling. The clouds seemed down on your head almost, and the rain fell as if heaven was sinking and they were baling out the waters above the firmament. One great roller came writhing at me, like a fiery serpent, and I bolted. Then I thought of the canoe, and ran down to it as the water went hissing back again; but the thing had gone. I wondered about the egg then, and felt my way to it. It was all right and well out of reach of the maddest waves, so I sat down beside it and cuddled it for company. Lord! what a night that was!

"The storm was over before the morning. There wasn't a rag of cloud left in the sky when the dawn came, and all along the beach there were bits of plank scattered — which was the disarticulated skeleton, so to speak, of my canoe. However, that gave me something to do, for, taking advantage of two of the trees being together, I rigged up a kind of storm-shelter with these vestiges. And that day the egg hatched.

"Hatched, sir, when my head was pillowed on it and I was asleep. I heard a whack and felt a jar and sat up, and there was the end of the egg pecked out and a rum little brown head looking out at me. 'Lord!' I said, 'you're welcome'; and with a little difficulty he came out.

“He was a nice friendly little chap, at first, about the size of a small hen — very much like most other young birds, only bigger. His plumage was a dirty brown to begin with, with a sort of grey scab that fell off it very soon, and scarcely feathers — a kind of downy hair. I can hardly express how pleased I was to see him. I tell you, Robinson Crusoe don’t make near enough of his loneliness. But here was interesting company. He looked at me and winked his eye from the front backwards, like a hen, and gave a chirp and began to peck about at once, as though being hatched three hundred years too late was just nothing. ‘Glad to see you, Man Friday!’ says I, for I had naturally settled he was to be called Man Friday if ever he was hatched, as soon as ever I found the egg in the canoe had developed. I was a bit anxious about his feed, so I gave him a lump of raw parrot-fish at once. He took it, and opened his beak for more. I was glad of that, for, under the circumstances, if he’d been at all fanciful, I should have had to eat him after all. You’d be surprised what an interesting bird that Aepyornis chick was. He followed me about from the very beginning. He used to stand by me and watch while I fished in the lagoon, and go shares in anything I caught. And he was sensible, too. There were nasty green warty things, like pickled gherkins, used to lie about on the beach, and he tried one of these and it upset him. He never even looked at any of them again.

“And he grew. You could almost see him grow. And as I was never much of a society man his quiet, friendly ways suited me to a T. For nearly two years we were as happy as we could be on that island. I had no business worries, for I knew my salary was mounting up at Dawsons’. We would see a sail now and then, but nothing ever came near us. I amused myself, too, by decorating the island with designs worked in sea-urchins and fancy shells of various kinds. I put AEPYORNIS ISLAND all round the place very nearly, in big letters, like what you see done with coloured stones at railway stations in the old country, and mathematical calculations and drawings of various sorts. And I used to lie watching the blessed bird stalking round and growing, growing; and think how I could make a living out of him by showing him about if I ever got taken off. After his first moult he began to get handsome, with a crest and a blue wattle, and a lot of green feathers at the behind of him. And then I used to puzzle

whether Dawsons had any right to claim him or not. Stormy weather and in the rainy season we lay snug under the shelter I had made out of the old canoe, and I used to tell him lies about my friends at home. And after a storm we would go round the island together to see if there was any drift. It was a kind of idyll, you might say. If only I had had some tobacco it would have been simply just like Heaven.

"It was about the end of the second year our little paradise went wrong. Friday was then about fourteen feet high to the bill of him, with a big, broad head like the end of a pickaxe, and two huge brown eyes with yellow rims, set together like a man's — not out of sight of each other like a hen's. His plumage was fine — none of the half-mourning style of your ostrich — more like a cassowary as far as colour and texture go. And then it was he began to cock his comb at me and give himself airs, and show signs of a nasty temper….

"At last came a time when my fishing had been rather unlucky, and he began to hang about me in a queer, meditative way. I thought he might have been eating sea-cucumbers or something, but it was really just discontent on his part. I was hungry too, and when at last I landed a fish I wanted it for myself. Tempers were short that morning on both sides. He pecked at it and grabbed it, and I gave him a whack on the head to make him leave go. And at that he went for me. Lord!…

"He gave me this in the face." The man indicated his scar. "Then he kicked me. It was like a cart-horse. I got up, and seeing he hadn't finished, I started off full tilt with my arms doubled up over my face. But he ran on those gawky legs of his faster than a racehorse, and kept landing out at me with sledge hammer kicks, and bringing his pickaxe down on the back of my head. I made for the lagoon, and went in up to my neck. He stopped at the water, for he hated getting his feet wet, and began to make a shindy, something like a peacock's, only hoarser. He started strutting up and down the beach. I'll admit I felt small to see this blessed fossil lording it there. And my head and face were all bleeding, and — well, my body just one jelly of bruises.

"I decided to swim across the lagoon and leave him alone for a bit, until the affair blew over. I shinned up the tallest palm-tree, and sat there thinking of it all. I don't suppose I ever felt so hurt by anything before or since. It was the brutal ingratitude of the creature.

I'd been more than a brother to him. I'd hatched him, educated him. A great gawky, out-of-date bird! And me a human being — heir of the ages and all that.

"I thought after a time he'd begin to see things in that light himself, and feel a little sorry for his behaviour. I thought if I was to catch some nice little bits of fish, perhaps, and go to him presently in a casual kind of way, and offer them to him, he might do the sensible thing. It took me some time to learn how unforgiving and cantankerous an extinct bird can be. Malice!

"I won't tell you all the little devices I tried to get that bird round again. I simply can't. It makes my cheek burn with shame even now to think of the snubs and buffets I had from this infernal curiosity. I tried violence. I chucked lumps of coral at him from a safe distance, but he only swallowed them. I shied my open knife at him and almost lost it, though it was too big for him to swallow. I tried starving him out and struck fishing, but he took to picking along the beach at low water after worms, and rubbed along on that. Half my time I spent up to my neck in the lagoon, and the rest up the palm-trees. One of them was scarcely high enough, and when he caught me up it he had a regular Bank Holiday with the calves of my legs. It got unbearable. I don't know if you have ever tried sleeping up a palm-tree. It gave me the most horrible nightmares. Think of the shame of it, too! Here was this extinct animal mooning about my island like a sulky duke, and me not allowed to rest the sole of my foot on the place. I used to cry with weariness and vexation. I told him straight that I didn't mean to be chased about a desert island by any damned anachronisms. I told him to go and peck a navigator of his own age. But he only snapped his beak at me. Great ugly bird — all legs and neck!

"I shouldn't like to say how long that went on altogether. I'd have killed him sooner if I'd known how. However, I hit on a way of settling him at last. It is a South American dodge. I joined all my fishing-lines together with stems of seaweed and things and made a stoutish string, perhaps twelve yards in length or more, and I fastened two lumps of coral rock to the ends of this. It took me some time to do, because every now and then I had to go into the lagoon or up a tree as the fancy took me. This I whirled rapidly round my head,

and then let it go at him. The first time I missed, but the next time the string caught his legs beautifully, and wrapped round them again and again. Over he went. I threw it standing waist-deep in the lagoon, and as soon as he went down I was out of the water and sawing at his neck with my knife …

"I don't like to think of that even now. I felt like a murderer while I did it, though my anger was hot against him. When I stood over him and saw him bleeding on the white sand, and his beautiful great legs and neck writhing in his last agony … Pah!

"With that tragedy loneliness came upon me like a curse. Good Lord! you can't imagine how I missed that bird. I sat by his corpse and sorrowed over him, and shivered as I looked round the desolate, silent reef. I thought of what a jolly little bird he had been when he was hatched, and of a thousand pleasant tricks he had played before he went wrong. I thought if I'd only wounded him I might have nursed him round into a better understanding. If I'd had any means of digging into the coral rock I'd have buried him. I felt exactly as if he was human. As it was, I couldn't think of eating him, so I put him in the lagoon, and the little fishes picked him clean. I didn't even save the feathers. Then one day a chap cruising about in a yacht had a fancy to see if my atoll still existed.

"He didn't come a moment too soon, for I was about sick enough of the desolation of it, and only hesitating whether I should walk out into the sea and finish up the business that way, or fall back on the green things….

"I sold the bones to a man named Winslow — a dealer near the British Museum, and he says he sold them to old Havers. It seems Havers didn't understand they were extra large, and it was only after his death they attracted attention. They called 'em Aepyornis — what was it?"

"*Aepyornis vastus*," said I. "It's funny, the very thing was mentioned to me by a friend of mine. When they found an Aepyornis, with a thigh a yard long, they thought they had reached the top of the scale, and called him *Aepyornis maximus*. Then someone turned up another thighbone four feet six or more, and that they called *Aepyornis Titan*. Then your *vastus* was found after old Havers died, in his collection, and then a *vastissimus* turned up."

“Winslow was telling me as much,” said the man with the scar. “If they get any more Aepyornises, he reckons some scientific swell will go and burst a bloodvessel. But it was a queer thing to happen to a man; wasn’t it — altogether?”

THE REMARKABLE CASE OF DAVIDSON'S EYES

The transitory mental aberration of Sidney Davidson, remarkable enough in itself, is still more remarkable if Wade's explanation is to be credited. It sets one dreaming of the oddest possibilities of intercommunication in the future, of spending an intercalary five minutes on the other side of the world, or being watched in our most secret operations by unsuspected eyes. It happened that I was the immediate witness of Davidson's seizure, and so it falls naturally to me to put the story upon paper.

When I say that I was the immediate witness of his seizure, I mean that I was the first on the scene. The thing happened at the Harlow Technical College, just beyond the Highgate Archway. He was alone in the larger laboratory when the thing happened. I was in a smaller room, where the balances are, writing up some notes. The thunderstorm had completely upset my work, of course. It was just after one of the louder peals that I thought I heard some glass smash in the other room. I stopped writing, and turned round to listen. For a moment I heard nothing; the hail was playing the devil's tattoo on the corrugated zinc of the roof. Then came another sound, a smash — no doubt of it this time. Something heavy had been knocked off the bench. I jumped up at once and went and opened the door leading into the big laboratory.

I was surprised to hear a queer sort of laugh, and saw Davidson standing unsteadily in the middle of the room, with a dazzled look on his face. My first impression was that he was drunk. He did not notice me. He was clawing out at something invisible a yard in front of his face. He put out his hand, slowly, rather hesitatingly, and then clutched nothing. "What's come to it?" he said. He held up his hands to his face, fingers spread out. "Great Scot!" he said. The thing happened three or four years ago, when everyone swore by that personage. Then he began raising his feet clumsily, as though he had expected to find them glued to the floor.

"Davidson!" cried I. "What's the matter with you?" He turned

round in my direction and looked about for me. He looked over me and at me and on either side of me, without the slightest sign of seeing me. “Waves,” he said; “and a remarkably neat schooner. I’d swear that was Bellows’ voice. *Hullo*!” He shouted suddenly at the top of his voice.

I thought he was up to some foolery. Then I saw littered about his feet the shattered remains of the best of our electrometers. “What’s up, man?” said I. “You’ve smashed the electrometer!”

“Bellows again!” said he. “Friends left, if my hands are gone. Something about electrometers. Which way *are* you, Bellows?” He suddenly came staggering towards me. “The damned stuff cuts like butter,” he said. He walked straight into the bench and recoiled. “None so buttery that!” he said, and stood swaying.

I felt scared. “Davidson,” said I, “what on earth’s come over you?”

He looked round him in every direction. “I could swear that was Bellows. Why don’t you show yourself like a man, Bellows?”

It occurred to me that he must be suddenly struck blind. I walked round the table and laid my hand upon his arm. I never saw a man more startled in my life. He jumped away from me, and came round into an attitude of self-defence, his face fairly distorted with terror. “Good God!” he cried. “What was that?”

“It’s I — Bellows. Confound it, Davidson!”

He jumped when I answered him and stared — how can I express it? — right through me. He began talking, not to me, but to himself. “Here in broad daylight on a clear beach. Not a place to hide in.” He looked about him wildly. “Here! I’m *off*.” He suddenly turned and ran headlong into the big electro-magnet — so violently that, as we found afterwards, he bruised his shoulder and jawbone cruelly. At that he stepped back a pace, and cried out with almost a whimper, “What, in heaven’s name, has come over me?” He stood, blanched with terror and trembling violently, with his right arm clutching his left, where that had collided with the magnet.

By that time I was excited and fairly scared. “Davidson,” said I, “don’t be afraid.”

He was startled at my voice, but not so excessively as before. I repeated my words in as clear and firm a tone as I could assume. “Bellows,” he said, “is that you?”

“Can’t you see it’s me?”

He laughed. “I can’t even see it’s myself. Where the devil are we?”

“Here,” said I, “in the laboratory.”

“The laboratory!” he answered, in a puzzled tone, and put his hand to his forehead. “I *was* in the laboratory — till that flash came, but I’m hanged if I’m there now. What ship is that?”

“There’s no ship,” said I. “Do be sensible, old chap.”

“No ship!” he repeated, and seemed to forget my denial forthwith. “I suppose,” said he, slowly, “we’re both dead. But the rummy part is I feel just as though I still had a body. Don’t get used to it all at once, I suppose. The old shop was struck by lightning, I suppose. Jolly quick thing, Bellows — eigh?”

“Don’t talk nonsense. You’re very much alive. You are in the laboratory, blundering about. You’ve just smashed a new electrometer. I don’t envy you when Boyce arrives.”

He stared away from me towards the diagrams of cryohydrates. “I must be deaf,” said he. “They’ve fired a gun, for there goes the puff of smoke, and I never heard a sound.”

I put my hand on his arm again, and this time he was less alarmed. “We seem to have a sort of invisible bodies,” said he. “By Jove! there’s a boat coming round the headland. It’s very much like the old life after all — in a different climate.”

I shook his arm. “Davidson,” I cried, “wake up!”

II.

It was just then that Boyce came in. So soon as he spoke Davidson exclaimed: “Old Boyce! Dead too! What a lark!” I hastened to explain that Davidson was in a kind of somnambulistic trance. Boyce was interested at once. We both did all we could to rouse the fellow out of his extraordinary state. He answered our questions, and asked us some of his own, but his attention seemed distracted by his hallucination about a beach and a ship. He kept interpolating

observations concerning some boat and the davits and sails filling with the wind. It made one feel queer, in the dusky laboratory, to hear him saying such things.

He was blind and helpless. We had to walk him down the passage, one at each elbow, to Boyce's private room, and while Boyce talked to him there, and humoured him about this ship idea, I went along the corridor and asked old Wade to come and look at him. The voice of our Dean sobered him a little, but not very much. He asked where his hands were, and why he had to walk about up to his waist in the ground. Wade thought over him a long time — you know how he knits his brows — and then made him feel the couch, guiding his hands to it. "That's a couch," said Wade. "The couch in the private room of Professor Boyce. Horsehair stuffing."

Davidson felt about, and puzzled over it, and answered presently that he could feel it all right, but he couldn't see it.

"What *do* you see?" asked Wade. Davidson said he could see nothing but a lot of sand and broken-up shells. Wade gave him some other things to feel, telling him what they were, and watching him keenly.

"The ship is almost hull down," said Davidson, presently, *apropos* of nothing.

"Never mind the ship," said Wade. "Listen to me, Davidson. Do you know what hallucination means?"

"Rather," said Davidson.

"Well, everything you see is hallucinatory."

"Bishop Berkeley," said Davidson.

"Don't mistake me," said Wade. "You are alive and in this room of Boyce's. But something has happened to your eyes. You cannot see; you can feel and hear, but not see. Do you follow me?"

"It seems to me that I see too much." Davidson rubbed his knuckles into his eyes. "Well?" he said.

"That's all. Don't let it perplex you. Bellows, here, and I will take you home in a cab."

"Wait a bit." Davidson thought. "Help me to sit down," said he, presently; "and now — I'm sorry to trouble you — but will you tell me all that over again?"

Wade repeated it very patiently. Davidson shut his eyes, and

pressed his hands upon his forehead. “Yes,” said he. “It’s quite right. Now my eyes are shut I know you’re right. That’s you, Bellows, sitting by me on the couch. I’m in England again. And we’re in the dark.”

Then he opened his eyes, “And there,” said he, “is the sun just rising, and the yards of the ship, and a tumbled sea, and a couple of birds flying. I never saw anything so real. And I’m sitting up to my neck in a bank of sand.”

He bent forward and covered his face with his hands. Then he opened his eyes again. “Dark sea and sunrise! And yet I’m sitting on a sofa in old Boyce’s room! … God help me!”

III.

That was the beginning. For three weeks this strange affection of Davidson’s eyes continued unabated. It was far worse than being blind. He was absolutely helpless, and had to be fed like a newly-hatched bird, and led about and undressed. If he attempted to move he fell over things or stuck himself against walls or doors. After a day or so he got used to hearing our voices without seeing us, and willingly admitted he was at home, and that Wade was right in what he told him. My sister, to whom he was engaged, insisted on coming to see him, and would sit for hours every day while he talked about this beach of his. Holding her hand seemed to comfort him immensely. He explained that when we left the College and drove home — he lived in Hampstead village — it appeared to him as if we drove right through a sandhill — it was perfectly black until he emerged again — and through rocks and trees and solid obstacles, and when he was taken to his own room it made him giddy and almost frantic with the fear of falling, because going upstairs seemed to lift him thirty or forty feet above the rocks of his imaginary island. He kept saying he should smash all the eggs. The end was that he had to be taken down into his father’s consulting room and laid upon a couch that stood there.

He described the island as being a bleak kind of place on the whole, with very little vegetation, except some peaty stuff, and a lot of bare rock. There were multitudes of penguins, and they made the

rocks white and disagreeable to see. The sea was often rough, and once there was a thunderstorm, and he lay and shouted at the silent flashes. Once or twice seals pulled up on the beach, but only on the first two or three days. He said it was very funny the way in which the penguins used to waddle right through him, and how he seemed to lie among them without disturbing them.

I remember one odd thing, and that was when he wanted very badly to smoke. We put a pipe in his hands — he almost poked his eye out with it — and lit it. But he couldn't taste anything. I've since found it's the same with me — I don't know if it's the usual case — that I cannot enjoy tobacco at all unless I can see the smoke.

But the queerest part of his vision came when Wade sent him out in a bath-chair to get fresh air. The Davidsons hired a chair, and got that deaf and obstinate dependent of theirs, Widgery, to attend to it. Widgery's ideas of healthy expeditions were peculiar. My sister, who had been to the Dogs' Home, met them in Camden Town, towards King's Cross, Widgery trotting along complacently, and Davidson evidently most distressed, trying in his feeble, blind way to attract Widgery's attention.

He positively wept when my sister spoke to him. "Oh, get me out of this horrible darkness!" he said, feeling for her hand. "I must get out of it, or I shall die." He was quite incapable of explaining what was the matter, but my sister decided he must go home, and presently, as they went up hill towards Hampstead, the horror seemed to drop from him. He said it was good to see the stars again, though it was then about noon and a blazing day.

"It seemed," he told me afterwards, "as if I was being carried irresistibly towards the water. I was not very much alarmed at first. Of course it was night there — a lovely night."

"Of course?" I asked, for that struck me as odd.

"Of course," said he. "It's always night there when it is day here…. Well, we went right into the water, which was calm and shining under the moonlight — just a broad swell that seemed to grow broader and flatter as I came down into it. The surface glistened just like a skin — it might have been empty space underneath for all I could tell to the contrary. Very slowly, for I rode slanting into it, the water crept up to my eyes. Then I went under and the skin

seemed to break and heal again about my eyes. The moon gave a jump up in the sky and grew green and dim, and fish, faintly glowing, came darting round me — and things that seemed made of luminous glass, and I passed through a tangle of seaweeds that shone with an oily lustre. And so I drove down into the sea, and the stars went out one by one, and the moon grew greener and darker, and the seaweed became a luminous purple-red. It was all very faint and mysterious, and everything seemed to quiver. And all the while I could hear the wheels of the bath-chair creaking, and the footsteps of people going by, and a man in the distance selling the special *Pall Mall*.

"I kept sinking down deeper and deeper into the water. It became inky black about me, not a ray from above came down into that darkness, and the phosphorescent things grew brighter and brighter. The snaky branches of the deeper weeds flickered like the flames of spirit lamps; but, after a time, there were no more weeds. The fishes came staring and gaping towards me, and into me and through me. I never imagined such fishes before. They had lines of fire along the sides of them as though they had been outlined with a luminous pencil. And there was a ghastly thing swimming backwards with a lot of twining arms. And then I saw, coming very slowly towards me through the gloom, a hazy mass of light that resolved itself as it drew nearer into multitudes of fishes, struggling and darting round something that drifted. I drove on straight towards it, and presently I saw in the midst of the tumult, and by the light of the fish, a bit of splintered spar looming over me, and a dark hull tilting over, and some glowing phosphorescent forms that were shaken and writhed as the fish bit at them. Then it was I began to try to attract Widgery's attention. A horror came upon me. Ugh! I should have driven right into those half-eaten — things. If your sister had not come! They had great holes in them, Bellows, and … Never mind. But it was ghastly!"

IV.

For three weeks Davidson remained in this singular state, seeing what at the time we imagined was an altogether phantasmal world,

and stone blind to the world around him. Then, one Tuesday, when I called I met old Davidson in the passage. “He can see his thumb!” the old gentleman said, in a perfect transport. He was struggling into his overcoat. “He can see his thumb, Bellows!” he said, with the tears in his eyes. “The lad will be all right yet.”

I rushed in to Davidson. He was holding up a little book before his face, and looking at it and laughing in a weak kind of way.

“It’s amazing,” said he. “There’s a kind of patch come there.” He pointed with his finger. “I’m on the rocks as usual, and the penguins are staggering and flapping about as usual, and there’s been a whale showing every now and then, but it’s got too dark now to make him out. But put something *there*, and I see it — I do see it. It’s very dim and broken in places, but I see it all the same, like a faint spectre of itself. I found it out this morning while they were dressing me. It’s like a hole in this infernal phantom world. Just put your hand by mine. No — not there. Ah! Yes! I see it. The base of your thumb and a bit of cuff! It looks like the ghost of a bit of your hand sticking out of the darkling sky. Just by it there’s a group of stars like a cross coming out.”

From that time Davidson began to mend. His account of the change, like his account of the vision, was oddly convincing. Over patches of his field of vision, the phantom world grew fainter, grew transparent, as it were, and through these translucent gaps he began to see dimly the real world about him. The patches grew in size and number, ran together and spread until only here and there were blind spots left upon his eyes. He was able to get up and steer himself about, feed himself once more, read, smoke, and behave like an ordinary citizen again. At first it was very confusing to him to have these two pictures overlapping each other like the changing views of a lantern, but in a little while he began to distinguish the real from the illusory.

At first he was unfeignedly glad, and seemed only too anxious to complete his cure by taking exercise and tonics. But as that odd island of his began to fade away from him, he became queerly interested in it. He wanted particularly to go down into the deep sea again, and would spend half his time wandering about the low lying parts of London, trying to find the water-logged wreck he had seen

drifting. The glare of real daylight very soon impressed him so vividly as to blot out everything of his shadowy world, but of a night time, in a darkened room, he could still see the white-splashed rocks of the island, and the clumsy penguins staggering to and fro. But even these grew fainter and fainter, and, at last, soon after he married my sister, he saw them for the last time.

V.

And now to tell of the queerest thing of all. About two years after his cure I dined with the Davidsons, and after dinner a man named Atkins called in. He is a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and a pleasant, talkative man. He was on friendly terms with my brother-in-law, and was soon on friendly terms with me. It came out that he was engaged to Davidson's cousin, and incidentally he took out a kind of pocket photograph case to show us a new rendering of *fiancée*. "And, by-the-by," said he, "here's the old *Fulmar*."

Davidson looked at it casually. Then suddenly his face lit up. "Good heavens!" said he. "I could almost swear—"

"What?" said Atkins.

"That I had seen that ship before."

"Don't see how you can have. She hasn't been out of the South Seas for six years, and before then—"

"But," began Davidson, and then, "Yes — that's the ship I dreamt of, I'm sure that's the ship I dreamt of. She was standing off an island that swarmed with penguins, and she fired a gun."

"Good Lord!" said Atkins, who had now heard the particulars of the seizure. "How the deuce could you dream that?"

And then, bit by bit, it came out that on the very day Davidson was seized, H.M.S. *Fulmar* had actually been off a little rock to the south of Antipodes Island. A boat had landed overnight to get penguins' eggs, had been delayed, and a thunderstorm drifting up, the boat's crew had waited until the morning before rejoining the ship. Atkins had been one of them, and he corroborated, word for word, the descriptions Davidson had given of the island and the boat. There is not the slightest doubt in any of our minds that Davidson has really seen the place. In some unaccountable way, while he

moved hither and thither in London, his sight moved hither and thither in a manner that corresponded, about this distant island. *How* is absolutely a mystery.

That completes the remarkable story of Davidson's eyes. It's perhaps the best authenticated case in existence of a real vision at a distance. Explanation there is none forthcoming, except what Professor Wade has thrown out. But his explanation invokes the Fourth Dimension, and a dissertation on theoretical kinds of space. To talk of there being "a kink in space" seems mere nonsense to me; it may be because I am no mathematician. When I said that nothing would alter the fact that the place is eight thousand miles away, he answered that two points might be a yard away on a sheet of paper and yet be brought together by bending the paper round. The reader may grasp his argument, but I certainly do not. His idea seems to be that Davidson, stooping between the poles of the big electro-magnet, had some extraordinary twist given to his retinal elements through the sudden change in the field of force due to the lightning.

He thinks, as a consequence of this, that it may be possible to live visually in one part of the world, while one lives bodily in another. He has even made some experiments in support of his views; but, so far, he has simply succeeded in blinding a few dogs. I believe that is the net result of his work, though I have not seen him for some weeks. Latterly I have been so busy with my work in connection with the Saint Pancras installation that I have had little opportunity of calling to see him. But the whole of his theory seems fantastic to me. The facts concerning Davidson stand on an altogether different footing, and I can testify personally to the accuracy of every detail I have given.

THE LORD OF THE DYNAMOS

The chief attendant of the three dynamos that buzzed and rattled at Camberwell, and kept the electric railway going, came out of Yorkshire, and his name was James Holroyd. He was a practical electrician, but fond of whisky, a heavy, red-haired brute with irregular teeth. He doubted the existence of the deity, but accepted Carnot's cycle, and he had read Shakespeare and found him weak in chemistry. His helper came out of the mysterious East, and his name was Azuma-zi. But Holroyd called him Pooh-bah. Holroyd liked a nigger help because he would stand kicking — a habit with Holroyd — and did not pry into the machinery and try to learn the ways of it. Certain odd possibilities of the negro mind brought into abrupt contact with the crown of our civilisation Holroyd never fully realised, though just at the end he got some inkling of them.

To define Azuma-zi was beyond ethnology. He was, perhaps, more negroid than anything else, though his hair was curly rather than frizzy, and his nose had a bridge. Moreover, his skin was brown rather than black, and the whites of his eyes were yellow. His broad cheek-bones and narrow chin gave his face something of the viperine V. His head, too, was broad behind, and low and narrow at the forehead, as if his brain had been twisted round in the reverse way to a European's. He was short of stature and still shorter of English. In conversation he made numerous odd noises of no known marketable value, and his infrequent words were carved and wrought into heraldic grotesqueness. Holroyd tried to elucidate his religious beliefs, and — especially after whiskey — lectured to him against superstition and missionaries. Azuma-zi, however, shirked the discussion of his gods, even though he was kicked for it.

Azuma-zi had come, clad in white but insufficient raiment, out of the stoke-hole of the *Lord Clive*, from the Straits Settlements, and beyond, into London. He had heard even in his youth of the greatness and riches of London, where all the women are white and fair, and even the beggars in the streets are white, and he had arrived, with newly-earned gold coins in his pocket, to worship at the shrine of civilisation. The day of his landing was a dismal one; the sky was

dun, and a wind-worried drizzle filtered down to the greasy streets, but he plunged boldly into the delights of Shadwell, and was presently cast up, shattered in health, civilised in costume, penniless, and, except in matters of the direst necessity, practically a dumb animal, to toil for James Holroyd and to be bullied by him in the dynamo shed at Camberwell. And to James Holroyd bullying was a labour of love.

There were three dynamos with their engines at Camberwell. The two that have been there since the beginning are small machines; the larger one was new. The smaller machines made a reasonable noise; their straps hummed over the drums, every now and then the brushes buzzed and fizzled, and the air churned steadily, whoo! whoo! whoo! between their poles. One was loose in its foundations and kept the shed vibrating. But the big dynamo drowned these little noises altogether with the sustained drone of its iron core, which somehow set part of the ironwork humming. The place made the visitor's head reel with the throb, throb, throb of the engines, the rotation of the big wheels, the spinning ball-valves, the occasional spittings of the steam, and over all the deep, unceasing, surging note of the big dynamo. This last noise was from an engineering point of view a defect, but Azuma-zi accounted it unto the monster for mightiness and pride.

If it were possible we would have the noises of that shed always about the reader as he reads, we would tell all our story to such an accompaniment. It was a steady stream of din, from which the ear picked out first one thread and then another; there was the intermittent snorting, panting, and seething of the steam engines, the suck and thud of their pistons, the dull beat on the air as the spokes of the great driving-wheels came round, a note the leather straps made as they ran tighter and looser, and a fretful tumult from the dynamos; and over all, sometimes inaudible, as the ear tired of it, and then creeping back upon the senses again, was this trombone note of the big machine. The floor never felt steady and quiet beneath one's feet, but quivered and jarred. It was a confusing, unsteady place, and enough to send anyone's thoughts jerking into odd zigzags. And for three months, while the big strike of the engineers was in progress, Holroyd, who was a blackleg, and Azuma-zi, who was a mere black,

were never out of the stir and eddy of it, but slept and fed in the little wooden shanty between the shed and the gates.

Holroyd delivered a theological lecture on the text of his big machine soon after Azuma-zi came. He had to shout to be heard in the din. “Look at that,” said Holroyd; “where’s your ‘eathen idol to match ‘im?” And Azuma-zi looked. For a moment Holroyd was inaudible, and then Azuma-zi heard: “Kill a hundred men. Twelve per cent, on the ordinary shares,” said Holroyd, “and that’s something like a Gord!”

Holroyd was proud of his big dynamo, and expatiated upon its size and power to Azuma-zi until heaven knows what odd currents of thought that and the incessant whirling and shindy set up within the curly black cranium. He would explain in the most graphic manner the dozen or so ways in which a man might be killed by it, and once he gave Azuma-zi a shock as a sample of its quality. After that, in the breathing-times of his labour — it was heavy labour, being not only his own, but most of Holroyd’s — Azuma-zi would sit and watch the big machine. Now and then the brushes would sparkle and spit blue flashes, at which Holroyd would swear, but all the rest was as smooth and rhythmic as breathing. The band ran shouting over the shaft, and ever behind one as one watched was the complacent thud of the piston. So it lived all day in this big airy shed, with him and Holroyd to wait upon it; not prisoned up and slaving to drive a ship as the other engines he knew — mere captive devils of the British Solomon — had been, but a machine enthroned. Those two smaller dynamos, Azuma-zi by force of contrast despised; the large one he privately christened the Lord of the Dynamos. They were fretful and irregular, but the big dynamo was steady. How great it was! How serene and easy in its working! Greater and calmer even than the Buddahs he had seen at Rangoon, and yet not motionless, but living! The great black coils spun, spun, spun, the rings ran round under the brushes, and the deep note of its coil steadied the whole. It affected Azuma-zi queerly.

Azuma-zi was not fond of labour. He would sit about and watch the Lord of the Dynamos while Holroyd went away to persuade the yard porter to get whiskey, although his proper place was not in the dynamo shed but behind the engines, and, moreover, if Holroyd

caught him skulking he got hit for it with a rod of stout copper wire. He would go and stand close to the colossus and look up at the great leather band running overhead. There was a black patch on the band that came round, and it pleased him somehow among all the clatter to watch this return again and again. Odd thoughts spun with the whirl of it. Scientific people tell us that savages give souls to rocks and trees — and a machine is a thousand times more alive than a rock or a tree. And Azuma-zi was practically a savage still; the veneer of civilisation lay no deeper than his slop suit, his bruises, and the coal grime on his face and hands. His father before him had worshipped a meteoric stone, kindred blood it may be had splashed the broad wheels of Juggernaut.

He took every opportunity Holroyd gave him of touching and handling the great dynamo that was fascinating him. He polished and cleaned it until the metal parts were blinding in the sun. He felt a mysterious sense of service in doing this. He would go up to it and touch its spinning coils gently. The gods he had worshipped were all far away. The people in London hid their gods.

At last his dim feelings grew more distinct, and took shape in thoughts and at last in acts. When he came into the roaring shed one morning he salaamed to the Lord of the Dynamos, and then, when Holroyd was away, he went and whispered to the thundering machine that he was its servant, and prayed it to have pity on him and save him from Holroyd. As he did so a rare gleam of light came in through the open archway of the throbbing machine-shed, and the Lord of the Dynamos, as he whirled and roared, was radiant with pale gold. Then Azuma-zi knew that his service was acceptable to his Lord. After that he did not feel so lonely as he had done, and he had indeed been very much alone in London. And even when his work time was over, which was rare, he loitered about the shed.

Then, the next time Holroyd maltreated him, Azuma-zi went presently to the Lord of the Dynamos and whispered, “Thou seest, O my Lord!” and the angry whirr of the machinery seemed to answer him. Thereafter it appeared to him that whenever Holroyd came into the shed a different note came into the sounds of the dynamo. “My Lord bides his time,” said Azuma-zi to himself. “The iniquity of the fool is not yet ripe.” And he waited and watched for the day of

reckoning. One day there was evidence of short circuiting, and Holroyd, making an unwary examination — it was in the afternoon — got a rather severe shock. Azuma-zi from behind the engine saw him jump off and curse at the peccant coil.

"He is warned," said Azuma-zi to himself. "Surely my Lord is very patient."

Holroyd had at first initiated his "nigger" into such elementary conceptions of the dynamo's working as would enable him to take temporary charge of the shed in his absence. But when he noticed the manner in which Azuma-zi hung about the monster he became suspicious. He dimly perceived his assistant was "up to something," and connecting him with the anointing of the coils with oil that had rotted the varnish in one place, he issued an edict, shouted above the confusion of the machinery, "Don't 'ee go nigh that big dynamo any more, Pooh-bah, or a'll take thy skin off!" Besides, if it pleased Azuma-zi to be near the big machine, it was plain sense and decency to keep him away from it.

Azuma-zi obeyed at the time, but later he was caught bowing before the Lord of the Dynamos. At which Holroyd twisted his arm and kicked him as he turned to go away. As Azuma-zi presently stood behind the engine and glared at the back of the hated Holroyd, the noises of the machinery took a new rhythm, and sounded like four words in his native tongue.

It is hard to say exactly what madness is. I fancy Azuma-zi was mad. The incessant din and whirl of the dynamo shed may have churned up his little store of knowledge and big store of superstitious fancy, at last, into something akin to frenzy. At any rate, when the idea of making Holroyd a sacrifice to the Dynamo Fetich was thus suggested to him, it filled him with a strange tumult of exultant emotion.

That night the two men and their black shadows were alone in the shed together. The shed was lit with one big arc light that winked and flickered purple. The shadows lay black behind the dynamos, the ball governors of the engines whirled from light to darkness, and their pistons beat loud and steady. The world outside seen through the open end of the shed seemed incredibly dim and remote. It seemed absolutely silent, too, since the riot of the machinery drowned every

external sound. Far away was the black fence of the yard with grey shadowy houses behind, and above was the deep blue sky and the pale little stars. Azuma-zi suddenly walked across the centre of the shed above which the leather bands were running, and went into the shadow by the big dynamo. Holroyd heard a click, and the spin of the armature changed.

"What are you dewin' with that switch?" he bawled in surprise.
"Han't
I told you—"

Then he saw the set expression of Azuma-zi's eyes as the Asiatic came out of the shadow towards him.

In another moment the two men were grappling fiercely in front of the great dynamo.

"You coffee-headed fool!" gasped Holroyd, with a brown hand at his throat. "Keep off those contact rings." In another moment he was tripped and reeling back upon the Lord of the Dynamos. He instinctively loosened his grip upon his antagonist to save himself from the machine.

The messenger, sent in furious haste from the station to find out what had happened in the dynamo shed, met Azuma-zi at the porter's lodge by the gate. Azuma-zi tried to explain something, but the messenger could make nothing of the black's incoherent English, and hurried on to the shed. The machines were all noisily at work, and nothing seemed to be disarranged. There was, however, a queer smell of singed hair. Then he saw an odd-looking crumpled mass clinging to the front of the big dynamo, and, approaching, recognised the distorted remains of Holroyd.

The man stared and hesitated a moment. Then he saw the face, and shut his eyes convulsively. He turned on his heel before he opened them, so that he should not see Holroyd again, and went out of the shed to get advice and help.

When Azuma-zi saw Holroyd die in the grip of the Great Dynamo he had been a little scared about the consequences of his act. Yet he felt strangely elated, and knew that the favour of the Lord Dynamo was upon him. His plan was already settled when he met the man

coming from the station, and the scientific manager who speedily arrived on the scene jumped at the obvious conclusion of suicide. This expert scarcely noticed Azuma-zi, except to ask a few questions. Did he see Holroyd kill himself? Azuma-zi explained he had been out of sight at the engine furnace until he heard a difference in the noise from the dynamo. It was not a difficult examination, being untinctured by suspicion.

The distorted remains of Holroyd, which the electrician removed from the machine, were hastily covered by the porter with a coffee-stained tablecloth. Somebody, by a happy inspiration, fetched a medical man. The expert was chiefly anxious to get the machine at work again, for seven or eight trains had stopped midway in the stuffy tunnels of the electric railway. Azuma-zi, answering or misunderstanding the questions of the people who had by authority or impudence come into the shed, was presently sent back to the stoke-hole by the scientific manager. Of course a crowd collected outside the gates of the yard — a crowd, for no known reason, always hovers for a day or two near the scene of a sudden death in London — two or three reporters percolated somehow into the engine-shed, and one even got to Azuma-zi; but the scientific expert cleared them out again, being himself an amateur journalist.

Presently the body was carried away, and public interest departed with it. Azuma-zi remained very quietly at his furnace, seeing over and over again in the coals a figure that wriggled violently and became still. An hour after the murder, to anyone coming into the shed it would have looked exactly as if nothing remarkable had ever happened there. Peeping presently from his engine-room the black saw the Lord Dynamo spin and whirl beside his little brothers, and the driving wheels were beating round, and the steam in the pistons went thud, thud, exactly as it had been earlier in the evening. After all, from the mechanical point of view, it had been a most insignificant incident — the mere temporary deflection of a current. But now the slender form and slender shadow of the scientific manager replaced the sturdy outline of Holroyd travelling up and down the lane of light upon the vibrating floor under the straps between the engines and the dynamos.

“Have I not served my Lord?” said Azuma-zi inaudibly, from his

shadow, and the note of the great dynamo rang out full and clear. As he looked at the big whirling mechanism the strange fascination of it that had been a little in abeyance since Holroyd's death resumed its sway.

Never had Azuma-zi seen a man killed so swiftly and pitilessly. The big humming machine had slain its victim without wavering for a second from its steady beating. It was indeed a mighty god.

The unconscious scientific manager stood with his back to him, scribbling on a piece of paper. His shadow lay at the foot of the monster.

"Was the Lord Dynamo still hungry? His servant was ready."

Azuma-zi made a stealthy step forward; then stopped. The scientific manager suddenly stopped writing, and walked down the shed to the endmost of the dynamos, and began to examine the brushes.

Azuma-zi hesitated, and then slipped across noiselessly into the shadow by the switch. There he waited. Presently the manager's footsteps could be heard returning. He stopped in his old position, unconscious of the stoker crouching ten feet away from him. Then the big dynamo suddenly fizzled, and in another moment Azuma-zi had sprung out of the darkness upon him.

First, the scientific manager was gripped round the body and swung towards the big dynamo, then, kicking with his knee and forcing his antagonist's head down with his hands, he loosened the grip on his waist and swung round away from the machine. Then the black grasped him again, putting a curly head against his chest, and they swayed and panted as it seemed for an age or so. Then the scientific manager was impelled to catch a black ear in his teeth and bite furiously. The black yelled hideously.

They rolled over on the floor, and the black, who had apparently slipped from the vice of the teeth or parted with some ear — the scientific manager wondered which at the time — tried to throttle him. The scientific manager was making some ineffectual efforts to claw something with his hands and to kick, when the welcome sound of quick footsteps sounded on the floor. The next moment Azuma-zi had left him and darted towards the big dynamo. There was a splutter amid the roar.

The officer of the company who had entered, stood staring as Azuma-zi caught the naked terminals in his hands, gave one horrible convulsion, and then hung motionless from the machine, his face violently distorted.

“I’m jolly glad you came in when you did,” said the scientific manager, still sitting on the floor.

He looked at the still quivering figure. “It is not a nice death to die, apparently — but it is quick.”

The official was still staring at the body. He was a man of slow apprehension.

There was a pause.

The scientific manager got up on his feet rather awkwardly. He ran his fingers along his collar thoughtfully, and moved his head to and fro several times.

“Poor Holroyd! I see now.” Then almost mechanically he went towards the switch in the shadow and turned the current into the railway circuit again. As he did so the singed body loosened its grip upon the machine and fell forward on its face. The core of the dynamo roared out loud and clear, and the armature beat the air.

So ended prematurely the Worship of the Dynamo Deity, perhaps the most short-lived of all religions. Yet withal it could at least boast a Martyrdom and a Human Sacrifice.

THE HAMMERPOND PARK BURGLARY

It is a moot point whether burglary is to be considered as a sport, a trade, or an art. For a trade, the technique is scarcely rigid enough, and its claims to be considered an art are vitiated by the mercenary element that qualifies its triumphs. On the whole it seems to be most justly ranked as sport, a sport for which no rules are at present formulated, and of which the prizes are distributed in an extremely informal manner. It was this informality of burglary that led to the regrettable extinction of two promising beginners at Hammerpond Park.

The stakes offered in this affair consisted chiefly of diamonds and other personal *bric-à-brac* belonging to the newly married Lady Aveling. Lady Aveling, as the reader will remember, was the only daughter of Mrs Montague Pangs, the well-known hostess. Her marriage to Lord Aveling was extensively advertised in the papers, the quantity and quality of her wedding presents, and the fact that the honeymoon was to be spent at Hammerpond. The announcement of these valuable prizes created a considerable sensation in the small circle in which Mr Teddy Watkins was the undisputed leader, and it was decided that, accompanied by a duly qualified assistant, he should visit the village of Hammerpond in his professional capacity.

Being a man of naturally retiring and modest disposition, Mr Watkins determined to make this visit *incog*., and after due consideration of the conditions of his enterprise, he selected the rôle of a landscape artist and the unassuming surname of Smith. He preceded his assistant, who, it was decided, should join him only on the last afternoon of his stay at Hammerpond. Now the village of Hammerpond is perhaps one of the prettiest little corners in Sussex; many thatched houses still survive, the flint-built church with its tall spire nestling under the down is one of the finest and least restored in the county, and the beech-woods and bracken jungles through which the road runs to the great house are singularly rich in what the vulgar artist and photographer call “bits.” So that Mr Watkins, on his arrival with two virgin canvases, a brand-new easel, a paint-box, portmanteau, an ingenious little ladder made in sections (after the

pattern of the late lamented master Charles Peace), crowbar, and wire coils, found himself welcomed with effusion and some curiosity by half-a-dozen other brethren of the brush. It rendered the disguise he had chosen unexpectedly plausible, but it inflicted upon him a considerable amount of aesthetic conversation for which he was very imperfectly prepared.

"Have you exhibited very much?" said Young Porson in the bar-parlour of the "Coach and Horses," where Mr Watkins was skilfully accumulating local information on the night of his arrival.

"Very little," said Mr Watkins, "just a snack here and there."

"Academy?"

"In course. *And* the Crystal Palace."

"Did they hang you well?" said Porson.

"Don't rot," said Mr Watkins; "I don't like it."

"I mean did they put you in a good place?"

"Whadyer mean?" said Mr Watkins suspiciously. "One 'ud think you were trying to make out I'd been put away."

Porson had been brought up by aunts, and was a gentlemanly young man even for an artist; he did not know what being "put away" meant, but he thought it best to explain that he intended nothing of the sort. As the question of hanging seemed a sore point with Mr Watkins, he tried to divert the conversation a little.

"Do you do figure-work at all?"

"No, never had a head for figures," said Mr Watkins, "my miss — Mrs
Smith, I mean, does all that."

"She paints too!" said Porson. "That's rather jolly."

"Very," said Mr Watkins, though he really did not think so, and, feeling the conversation was drifting a little beyond his grasp, added, "I came down here to paint Hammerpond House by moonlight."

"Really!" said Porson. "That's rather a novel idea."

"Yes," said Mr Watkins, "I thought it rather a good notion when it occurred to me. I expect to begin to-morrow night."

"What! You don't mean to paint in the open, by night?"

"I do, though."

“But how will you see your canvas?”

“Have a bloomin’ cop’s—” began Mr Watkins, rising too quickly to the question, and then realising this, bawled to Miss Durgan for another glass of beer. “I’m goin’ to have a thing called a dark lantern,” he said to Porson.

“But it’s about new moon now,” objected Porson. “There won’t be any moon.”

“There’ll be the house,” said Watkins, “at any rate. I’m goin’, you see, to paint the house first and the moon afterwards.”

“Oh!” said Porson, too staggered to continue the conversation.

“They doo say,” said old Durgan, the landlord, who had maintained a respectful silence during the technical conversation, “as there’s no less than three p’licemen from ‘Azelworth on dewty every night in the house— ‘count of this Lady Aveling ‘n her jewellery. One’m won fower-and-six last night, off second footman — tossin’.”

Towards sunset next day Mr Watkins, virgin canvas, easel, and a very considerable case of other appliances in hand, strolled up the pleasant pathway through the beech-woods to Hammerpond Park, and pitched his apparatus in a strategic position commanding the house. Here he was observed by Mr Raphael Sant, who was returning across the park from a study of the chalk-pits. His curiosity having been fired by Porson’s account of the new arrival, he turned aside with the idea of discussing nocturnal art.

Mr Watkins was apparently unaware of his approach. A friendly conversation with Lady Hammerpond’s butler had just terminated, and that individual, surrounded by the three pet dogs which it was his duty to take for an airing after dinner had been served, was receding in the distance. Mr Watkins was mixing colour with an air of great industry. Sant, approaching more nearly, was surprised to see the colour in question was as harsh and brilliant an emerald green as it is possible to imagine. Having cultivated an extreme sensibility to colour from his earliest years, he drew the air in sharply between his teeth at the very first glimpse of this brew. Mr Watkins turned round. He looked annoyed.

“What on earth are you going to do with that *beastly* green?” said Sant.

Mr Watkins realised that his zeal to appear busy in the eyes of the butler had evidently betrayed him into some technical error. He looked at Sant and hesitated.

"Pardon my rudeness," said Sant; "but really, that green is altogether too amazing. It came as a shock. What *do* you mean to do with it?"

Mr Watkins was collecting his resources. Nothing could save the situation but decision. "If you come here interrupting my work," he said, "I'm a-goin' to paint your face with it."

Sant retired, for he was a humourist and a peaceful man. Going down the hill he met Porson and Wainwright. "Either that man is a genius or he is a dangerous lunatic," said he. "Just go up and look at his green." And he continued his way, his countenance brightened by a pleasant anticipation of a cheerful affray round an easel in the gloaming, and the shedding of much green paint.

But to Porson and Wainwright Mr Watkins was less aggressive, and explained that the green was intended to be the first coating of his picture. It was, he admitted in response to a remark, an absolutely new method, invented by himself. But subsequently he became more reticent; he explained he was not going to tell every passer-by the secret of his own particular style, and added some scathing remarks upon the meanness of people "hanging about" to pick up such tricks of the masters as they could, which immediately relieved him of their company.

Twilight deepened, first one then another star appeared. The rooks amid the tall trees to the left of the house had long since lapsed into slumbrous silence, the house itself lost all the details of its architecture and became a dark grey outline, and then the windows of the salon shone out brilliantly, the conservatory was lighted up, and here and there a bedroom window burnt yellow. Had anyone approached the easel in the park it would have been found deserted. One brief uncivil word in brilliant green sullied the purity of its canvas. Mr Watkins was busy in the shrubbery with his assistant, who had discreetly joined him from the carriage-drive.

Mr Watkins was inclined to be self-congratulatory upon the ingenious device by which he had carried all his apparatus boldly, and in the sight of all men, right up to the scene of operations.

“That’s the dressing-room,” he said to his assistant, “and, as soon as the maid takes the candle away and goes down to supper, we’ll call in. My! how nice the house do look, to be sure, against the starlight, and with all its windows and lights! Swopme, Jim, I almost wish I *was* a painter-chap. Have you fixed that there wire across the path from the laundry?”

He cautiously approached the house until he stood below the dressing-room window, and began to put together his folding ladder. He was much too experienced a practitioner to feel any unusual excitement. Jim was reconnoitring the smoking-room. Suddenly, close beside Mr Watkins in the bushes, there was a violent crash and a stifled curse. Someone had tumbled over the wire which his assistant had just arranged. He heard feet running on the gravel pathway beyond. Mr Watkins, like all true artists, was a singularly shy man, and he incontinently dropped his folding ladder and began running circumspectly through the shrubbery. He was indistinctly aware of two people hot upon his heels, and he fancied that he distinguished the outline of his assistant in front of him. In another moment he had vaulted the low stone wall bounding the shrubbery, and was in the open park. Two thuds on the turf followed his own leap.

It was a close chase in the darkness through the trees. Mr Watkins was a loosely-built man and in good training, and he gained hand-over-hand upon the hoarsely panting figure in front. Neither spoke, but, as Mr Watkins pulled up alongside, a qualm of awful doubt came over him. The other man turned his head at the same moment and gave an exclamation of surprise. “It’s not Jim,” thought Mr Watkins, and simultaneously the stranger flung himself, as it were, at Watkin’s knees, and they were forthwith grappling on the ground together. “Lend a hand, Bill,” cried the stranger as the third man came up. And Bill did — two hands in fact, and some accentuated feet. The fourth man, presumably Jim, had apparently turned aside and made off in a different direction. At any rate, he did not join the trio.

Mr Watkins’ memory of the incidents of the next two minutes is extremely vague. He has a dim recollection of having his thumb in the corner of the mouth of the first man, and feeling anxious about its

safety, and for some seconds at least he held the head of the gentleman answering to the name of Bill, to the ground by the hair. He was also kicked in a great number of different places, apparently by a vast multitude of people. Then the gentleman who was not Bill got his knee below Mr Watkins' diaphragm, and tried to curl him up upon it.

When his sensations became less entangled he was sitting upon the turf, and eight or ten men — the night was dark, and he was rather too confused to count — standing round him, apparently waiting for him to recover. He mournfully assumed that he was captured, and would probably have made some philosophical reflections on the fickleness of fortune, had not his internal sensations disinclined him for speech.

He noticed very quickly that his wrists were not handcuffed, and then a flask of brandy was put in his hands. This touched him a little — it was such unexpected kindness.

"He's a-comin' round," said a voice which he fancied he recognised as belonging to the Hammerpond second footman.

"We've got 'em, sir, both of 'em," said the Hammerpond butler, the man who had handed him the flask. "Thanks to *you*."

No one answered this remark. Yet he failed to see how it applied to him.

"He's fair dazed," said a strange voice; "the villains half-murdered him."

Mr Teddy Watkins decided to remain fair dazed until he had a better grasp of the situation. He perceived that two of the black figures round him stood side-by-side with a dejected air, and there was something in the carriage of their shoulders that suggested to his experienced eye hands that were bound together. Two! In a flash he rose to his position. He emptied the little flask and staggered — obsequious hands assisting him — to his feet. There was a sympathetic murmur.

"Shake hands, sir, shake hands," said one of the figures near him. "Permit me to introduce myself. I am very greatly indebted to you. It was the jewels of my wife, Lady Aveling, which attracted these scoundrels to the house."

“Very glad to make your lordship’s acquaintance,” said Teddy Watkins.

“I presume you saw the rascals making for the shrubbery, and dropped down on them?”

“That’s exactly how it happened,” said Mr Watkins.

“You should have waited till they got in at the window,” said Lord Aveling; “they would get it hotter if they had actually committed the burglary. And it was lucky for you two of the policemen were out by the gates, and followed up the three of you. I doubt if you could have secured the two of them — though it was confoundedly plucky of you, all the same.”

“Yes, I ought to have thought of all that,” said Mr Watkins; “but one can’t think of everythink.”

“Certainly not,” said Lord Aveling. “I am afraid they have mauled you a little,” he added. The party was now moving towards the house. “You walk rather lame. May I offer you my arm?”

And instead of entering Hammerpond House by the dressing-room window, Mr Watkins entered it — slightly intoxicated, and inclined now to cheerfulness again — on the arm of a real live peer, and by the front door. “This,” thought Mr Watkins, “is burgling in style!” The “scoundrels,” seen by the gaslight, proved to be mere local amateurs unknown to Mr Watkins, and they were taken down into the pantry and there watched over by the three policemen, two gamekeepers with loaded guns, the butler, an ostler, and a carman, until the dawn allowed of their removal to Hazelhurst police-station. Mr Watkins was made much of in the saloon. They devoted a sofa to him, and would not hear of a return to the village that night. Lady Aveling was sure he was brilliantly original, and said her idea of Turner was just such another rough, half-inebriated, deep-eyed, brave, and clever man. Some one brought up a remarkable little folding-ladder that had been picked up in the shrubbery, and showed him how it was put together. They also described how wires had been found in the shrubbery, evidently placed there to trip-up unwary pursuers. It was lucky he had escaped these snares. And they showed him the jewels.

Mr Watkins had the sense not to talk too much, and in any conversational difficulty fell back on his internal pains. At last he

was seized with stiffness in the back, and yawning. Everyone suddenly awoke to the fact that it was a shame to keep him talking after his affray, so he retired early to his room, the little red room next to Lord Aveling's suite.

The dawn found a deserted easel bearing a canvas with a green inscription, in the Hammerpond Park, and it found Hammerpond House in commotion. But if the dawn found Mr Teddy Watkins and the Aveling diamonds, it did not communicate the information to the police.

A MOTH — GENUS NOVO

Probably you have heard of Hapley — not W.T. Hapley, the son, but the celebrated Hapley, the Hapley of *Periplaneta Hapliia*, Hapley the entomologist. If so you know at least of the great feud between Hapley and Professor Pawkins. Though certain of its consequences may be new to you. For those who have not, a word or two of explanation is necessary, which the idle reader may go over with a glancing eye, if his indolence so incline him.

It is amazing how very widely diffused is the ignorance of such really important matters as this Hapley-Pawkins feud. Those epoch-making controversies, again, that have convulsed the Geological Society, are, I verily believe, almost entirely unknown outside the fellowship of that body. I have heard men of fair general education even refer to the great scenes at these meetings as vestry-meeting squabbles. Yet the great Hate of the English and Scotch geologists has lasted now half a century, and has "left deep and abundant marks upon the body of the science." And this Hapley-Pawkins business, though perhaps a more personal affair, stirred passions as profound, if not profounder. Your common man has no conception of the zeal that animates a scientific investigator, the fury of contradiction you can arouse in him. It is the *odium theologicum* in a new form. There are men, for instance, who would gladly burn Professor Ray Lankester at Smithfield for his treatment of the Mollusca in the Encyclopaedia. That fantastic extension of the Cephalopods to cover the Pteropods … But I wander from Hapley and Pawkins.

It began years and years ago, with a revision of the Microlepidoptera (whatever these may be) by Pawkins, in which he extinguished a new species created by Hapley. Hapley, who was always quarrelsome, replied by a stinging impeachment of the entire classification of Pawkins[A]. Pawkins, in his "Rejoinder[B]," suggested that Hapley's microscope was as defective as his powers of observation, and called him an "irresponsible meddler" — Hapley was not a professor at that time. Hapley, in his retort[C], spoke of "blundering collectors," and described, as if inadvertently, Pawkins' revision as a "miracle of ineptitude." It was war to the knife.

However, it would scarcely interest the reader to detail how these two great men quarrelled, and how the split between them widened until from the Microlepidoptera they were at war upon every open question in entomology. There were memorable occasions. At times the Royal Entomological Society meetings resembled nothing so much as the Chamber of Deputies. On the whole, I fancy Pawkins was nearer the truth than Hapley. But Hapley was skilful with his rhetoric, had a turn for ridicule rare in a scientific man, was endowed with vast energy, and had a fine sense of injury in the matter of the extinguished species; while Pawkins was a man of dull presence, prosy of speech, in shape not unlike a water-barrel, over-conscientious with testimonials, and suspected of jobbing museum appointments. So the young men gathered round Hapley and applauded him. It was a long struggle, vicious from the beginning, and growing at last to pitiless antagonism. The successive turns of fortune, now an advantage to one side and now to another — now Hapley tormented by some success of Pawkins, and now Pawkins outshone by Hapley, belong rather to the history of entomology than to this story.

[Footnote A: "Remarks on a Recent Revision of Microlepidoptera." *Quart. Journ. Entomological Soc*. 1863.]

[Footnote B: "Rejoinder to certain Remarks," &c. *Ibid*. 1864.]

[Footnote C: "Further Remarks," &c. *Ibid*.]

But in 1891 Pawkins, whose health had been bad for some time, published some work upon the "mesoblast" of the Death's Head Moth. What the mesoblast of the Death's Head Moth may be, does not matter a rap in this story. But the work was far below his usual standard, and gave Hapley an opening he had coveted for years. He must have worked night and day to make the most of his advantage.

In an elaborate critique he rent Pawkins to tatters — one can fancy the man's disordered black hair, and his queer dark eyes flashing as he went for his antagonist — and Pawkins made a reply, halting, ineffectual, with painful gaps of silence, and yet malignant. There was no mistaking his will to wound Hapley, nor his incapacity to do it. But few of those who heard him — I was absent from that meeting — realised how ill the man was.

Hapley had got his opponent down, and meant to finish him. He

followed with a simply brutal attack upon Pawkins, in the form of a paper upon the development of moths in general, a paper showing evidence of a most extraordinary amount of mental labour, and yet couched in a violently controversial tone. Violent as it was, an editorial note witnesses that it was modified. It must have covered Pawkins with shame and confusion of face. It left no loophole; it was murderous in argument, and utterly contemptuous in tone; an awful thing for the declining years of a man's career.

The world of entomologists waited breathlessly for the rejoinder from Pawkins. He would try one, for Pawkins had always been game. But when it came it surprised them. For the rejoinder of Pawkins was to catch the influenza, to proceed to pneumonia, and to die.

It was perhaps as effectual a reply as he could make under the circumstances, and largely turned the current of feeling against Hapley. The very people who had most gleefully cheered on those gladiators became serious at the consequence. There could be no reasonable doubt the fret of the defeat had contributed to the death of Pawkins. There was a limit even to scientific controversy, said serious people. Another crushing attack was already in the press and appeared on the day before the funeral. I don't think Hapley exerted himself to stop it. People remembered how Hapley had hounded down his rival, and forgot that rival's defects. Scathing satire reads ill over fresh mould. The thing provoked comment in the daily papers. This it was that made me think that you had probably heard of Hapley and this controversy. But, as I have already remarked, scientific workers live very much in a world of their own; half the people, I dare say, who go along Piccadilly to the Academy every year, could not tell you where the learned societies abide. Many even think that Research is a kind of happy-family cage in which all kinds of men lie down together in peace.

In his private thoughts Hapley could not forgive Pawkins for dying. In the first place, it was a mean dodge to escape the absolute pulverisation Hapley had in hand for him, and in the second, it left Hapley's mind with a queer gap in it. For twenty years he had worked hard, sometimes far into the night, and seven days a week, with microscope, scalpel, collecting-net, and pen, and almost entirely

with reference to Pawkins. The European reputation he had won had come as an incident in that great antipathy. He had gradually worked up to a climax in this last controversy. It had killed Pawkins, but it had also thrown Hapley out of gear, so to speak, and his doctor advised him to give up work for a time, and rest. So Hapley went down into a quiet village in Kent, and thought day and night of Pawkins, and good things it was now impossible to say about him.

At last Hapley began to realise in what direction the pre-occupation tended. He determined to make a fight for it, and started by trying to read novels. But he could not get his mind off Pawkins, white in the face, and making his last speech — every sentence a beautiful opening for Hapley. He turned to fiction — and found it had no grip on him. He read the "Island Nights' Entertainments" until his "sense of causation" was shocked beyond endurance by the Bottle Imp. Then he went to Kipling, and found he "proved nothing," besides being irreverent and vulgar. These scientific people have their limitations. Then unhappily, he tried Besant's "Inner House," and the opening chapter set his mind upon learned societies and Pawkins at once.

So Hapley turned to chess, and found it a little more soothing. He soon mastered the moves and the chief gambits and commoner closing positions, and began to beat the Vicar. But then the cylindrical contours of the opposite king began to resemble Pawkins standing up and gasping ineffectually against Check-mate, and Hapley decided to give up chess.

Perhaps the study of some new branch of science would after all be better diversion. The best rest is change of occupation. Hapley determined to plunge at diatoms, and had one of his smaller microscopes and Halibut's monograph sent down from London. He thought that perhaps if he could get up a vigorous quarrel with Halibut, he might be able to begin life afresh and forget Pawkins. And very soon he was hard at work, in his habitual strenuous fashion, at these microscopic denizens of the way-side pool.

It was on the third day of the diatoms that Hapley became aware of a novel addition to the local fauna. He was working late at the microscope, and the only light in the room was the brilliant little lamp with the special form of green shade. Like all experienced

microscopists, he kept both eyes open. It is the only way to avoid excessive fatigue. One eye was over the instrument, and bright and distinct before that was the circular field of the microscope, across which a brown diatom was slowly moving. With the other eye Hapley saw, as it were, without seeing[A]. He was only dimly conscious of the brass side of the instrument, the illuminated part of the table-cloth, a sheet of note-paper, the foot of the lamp, and the darkened room beyond.

[Footnote A: The reader unaccustomed to microscopes may easily understand this by rolling a newspaper in the form of a tube and looking through it at a book, keeping the other eye open.]

Suddenly his attention drifted from one eye to the other. The table-cloth was of the material called tapestry by shopmen, and rather brightly coloured. The pattern was in gold, with a small amount of crimson and pale blue upon a greyish ground. At one point the pattern seemed displaced, and there was a vibrating movement of the colours at this point.

Hapley suddenly moved his head back and looked with both eyes. His mouth fell open with astonishment.

It was a large moth or butterfly; its wings spread in butterfly fashion!

It was strange it should be in the room at all, for the windows were closed. Strange that it should not have attracted his attention when fluttering to its present position. Strange that it should match the table-cloth. Stranger far that to him, Hapley, the great entomologist, it was altogether unknown. There was no delusion. It was crawling slowly towards the foot of the lamp.

"*Genus novo*, by heavens! And in England!" said Hapley, staring.

Then he suddenly thought of Pawkins. Nothing would have maddened
Pawkins more…. And Pawkins was dead!

Something about the head and body of the insect became singularly suggestive of Pawkins, just as the chess king had been.

"Confound Pawkins!" said Hapley. "But I must catch this." And, looking round him for some means of capturing the moth, he rose

slowly out of his chair. Suddenly the insect rose, struck the edge of the lampshade — Hapley heard the "ping" — and vanished into the shadow.

In a moment Hapley had whipped off the shade, so that the whole room was illuminated. The thing had disappeared, but soon his practised eye detected it upon the wall paper near the door. He went towards it, poising the lamp-shade for capture. Before he was within striking distance, however, it had risen and was fluttering round the room. After the fashion of its kind, it flew with sudden starts and turns, seeming to vanish here and reappear there. Once Hapley struck, and missed; then again.

The third time he hit his microscope. The instrument swayed, struck and overturned the lamp, and fell noisily upon the floor. The lamp turned over on the table and, very luckily, went out. Hapley was left in the dark. With a start he felt the strange moth blunder into his face.

It was maddening. He had no lights. If he opened the door of the room the thing would get away. In the darkness he saw Pawkins quite distinctly laughing at him. Pawkins had ever an oily laugh. He swore furiously and stamped his foot on the floor.

There was a timid rapping at the door.

Then it opened, perhaps a foot, and very slowly. The alarmed face of the landlady appeared behind a pink candle flame; she wore a night-cap over her grey hair and had some purple garment over her shoulders. "What *was* that fearful smash?" she said. "Has anything —" The strange moth appeared fluttering about the chink of the door. "Shut that door!" said Hapley, and suddenly rushed at her.

The door slammed hastily. Hapley was left alone in the dark. Then in the pause he heard his landlady scuttle upstairs, lock her door and drag something heavy across the room and put against it.

It became evident to Hapley that his conduct and appearance had been strange and alarming. Confound the moth! and Pawkins! However, it was a pity to lose the moth now. He felt his way into the hall and found the matches, after sending his hat down upon the floor with a noise like a drum. With the lighted candle he returned to the sitting-room. No moth was to be seen. Yet once for a moment it seemed that the thing was fluttering round his head. Hapley very

suddenly decided to give up the moth and go to bed. But he was excited. All night long his sleep was broken by dreams of the moth, Pawkins, and his landlady. Twice in the night he turned out and soused his head in cold water.

One thing was very clear to him. His landlady could not possibly understand about the strange moth, especially as he had failed to catch it. No one but an entomologist would understand quite how he felt. She was probably frightened at his behaviour, and yet he failed to see how he could explain it. He decided to say nothing further about the events of last night. After breakfast he saw her in her garden, and decided to go out to talk to her to reassure her. He talked to her about beans and potatoes, bees, caterpillars, and the price of fruit. She replied in her usual manner, but she looked at him a little suspiciously, and kept walking as he walked, so that there was always a bed of flowers, or a row of beans, or something of the sort, between them. After a while he began to feel singularly irritated at this, and to conceal his vexation went indoors and presently went out for a walk.

The moth, or butterfly, trailing an odd flavour of Pawkins with it, kept coming into that walk, though he did his best to keep his mind off it. Once he saw it quite distinctly, with its wings flattened out, upon the old stone wall that runs along the west edge of the park, but going up to it he found it was only two lumps of grey and yellow lichen. “This,” said Hapley, “is the reverse of mimicry. Instead of a butterfly looking like a stone, here is a stone looking like a butterfly!” Once something hovered and fluttered round his head, but by an effort of will he drove that impression out of his mind again.

In the afternoon Hapley called upon the Vicar, and argued with him upon theological questions. They sat in the little arbour covered with briar, and smoked as they wrangled. “Look at that moth!” said Hapley, suddenly, pointing to the edge of the wooden table.

“Where?” said the Vicar.

“You don’t see a moth on the edge of the table there?” said Hapley.

“Certainly not,” said the Vicar.

Hapley was thunderstruck. He gasped. The Vicar was staring at him. Clearly the man saw nothing. “The eye of faith is no better than

the eye of science," said Hapley, awkwardly.

"I don't see your point," said the Vicar, thinking it was part of the argument.

That night Hapley found the moth crawling over his counterpane. He sat on the edge of the bed in his shirt-sleeves and reasoned with himself. Was it pure hallucination? He knew he was slipping, and he battled for his sanity with the same silent energy he had formerly displayed against Pawkins. So persistent is mental habit, that he felt as if it were still a struggle with Pawkins. He was well versed in psychology. He knew that such visual illusions do come as a result of mental strain. But the point was, he did not only *see* the moth, he had heard it when it touched the edge of the lampshade, and afterwards when it hit against the wall, and he had felt it strike his face in the dark.

He looked at it. It was not at all dreamlike, but perfectly clear and solid-looking in the candle-light. He saw the hairy body, and the short feathery antennae, the jointed legs, even a place where the down was rubbed from the wing. He suddenly felt angry with himself for being afraid of a little insect.

His landlady had got the servant to sleep with her that night, because she was afraid to be alone. In addition she had locked the door, and put the chest of drawers against it. They listened and talked in whispers after they had gone to bed, but nothing occurred to alarm them. About eleven they had ventured to put the candle out, and had both dozed off to sleep. They woke up with a start, and sat up in bed, listening in the darkness.

Then they heard slippered feet going to and fro in Hapley's room. A chair was overturned, and there was a violent dab at the wall. Then a china mantel ornament smashed upon the fender. Suddenly the door of the room opened, and they heard him upon the landing. They clung to one another, listening. He seemed to be dancing upon the staircase. Now he would go down three or four steps quickly, then up again, then hurry down into the hall. They heard the umbrella stand go over, and the fanlight break. Then the bolt shot and the chain rattled. He was opening the door.

They hurried to the window. It was a dim grey night; an almost unbroken sheet of watery cloud was sweeping across the moon, and

the hedge and trees in front of the house were black against the pale roadway. They saw Hapley, looking like a ghost in his shirt and white trousers, running to and fro in the road, and beating the air. Now he would stop, now he would dart very rapidly at something invisible, now he would move upon it with stealthy strides. At last he went out of sight up the road towards the down. Then, while they argued who should go down and lock the door, he returned. He was walking very fast, and he came straight into the house, closed the door carefully, and went quietly up to his bedroom. Then everything was silent.

"Mrs Colville," said Hapley, calling down the staircase next morning.
"I hope I did not alarm you last night."

"You may well ask that!" said Mrs Colville.

"The fact is, I am a sleep-walker, and the last two nights I have been without my sleeping mixture. There is nothing to be alarmed about, really. I am sorry I made such an ass of myself. I will go over the down to Shoreham, and get some stuff to make me sleep soundly. I ought to have done that yesterday."

But half-way over the down, by the chalk pits, the moth came upon Hapley again. He went on, trying to keep his mind upon chess problems, but it was no good. The thing fluttered into his face, and he struck at it with his hat in self-defence. Then rage, the old rage — the rage he had so often felt against Pawkins — came upon him again. He went on, leaping and striking at the eddying insect. Suddenly he trod on nothing, and fell headlong.

There was a gap in his sensations, and Hapley found himself sitting on the heap of flints in front of the opening of the chalkpits, with a leg twisted back under him. The strange moth was still fluttering round his head. He struck at it with his hand, and turning his head saw two men approaching him. One was the village doctor. It occurred to Hapley that this was lucky. Then it came into his mind, with extraordinary vividness, that no one would ever be able to see the strange moth except himself, and that it behoved him to keep silent about it.

Late that night, however, after his broken leg was set, he was feverish and forgot his self-restraint. He was lying flat on his bed, and he began to run his eyes round the room to see if the moth was still about. He tried not to do this, but it was no good. He soon caught sight of the thing resting close to his hand, by the night-light, on the green table-cloth. The wings quivered. With a sudden wave of anger he smote at it with his fist, and the nurse woke up with a shriek. He had missed it.

"That moth!" he said; and then, "It was fancy. Nothing!"

All the time he could see quite clearly the insect going round the cornice and darting across the room, and he could also see that the nurse saw nothing of it and looked at him strangely. He must keep himself in hand. He knew he was a lost man if he did not keep himself in hand. But as the night waned the fever grew upon him, and the very dread he had of seeing the moth made him see it. About five, just as the dawn was grey, he tried to get out of bed and catch it, though his leg was afire with pain. The nurse had to struggle with him.

On account of this, they tied him down to the bed. At this the moth grew bolder, and once he felt it settle in his hair. Then, because he struck out violently with his arms, they tied these also. At this the moth came and crawled over his face, and Hapley wept, swore, screamed, prayed for them to take it off him, unavailingly.

The doctor was a blockhead, a half-qualified general practitioner, and quite ignorant of mental science. He simply said there was no moth. Had he possessed the wit, he might still, perhaps, have saved Hapley from his fate by entering into his delusion and covering his face with gauze, as he prayed might be done. But, as I say, the doctor was a blockhead, and until the leg was healed Hapley was kept tied to his bed, and with the imaginary moth crawling over him. It never left him while he was awake and it grew to a monster in his dreams. While he was awake he longed for sleep, and from sleep he awoke screaming.

So now Hapley is spending the remainder of his days in a padded room, worried by a moth that no one else can see. The asylum doctor calls it hallucination; but Hapley, when he is in his easier mood, and can talk, says it is the ghost of Pawkins, and consequently a unique

specimen and well worth the trouble of catching.

THE TREASURE IN THE FOREST

The canoe was now approaching the land. The bay opened out, and a gap in the white surf of the reef marked where the little river ran out to the sea; the thicker and deeper green of the virgin forest showed its course down the distant hill slope. The forest here came close to the beach. Far beyond, dim and almost cloudlike in texture, rose the mountains, like suddenly frozen waves. The sea was still save for an almost imperceptible swell. The sky blazed.

The man with the carved paddle stopped. “It should be somewhere here,” he said. He shipped the paddle and held his arms out straight before him.

The other man had been in the fore part of the canoe, closely scrutinising the land. He had a sheet of yellow paper on his knee.

“Come and look at this, Evans,” he said.

Both men spoke in low tones, and their lips were hard and dry.

The man called Evans came swaying along the canoe until he could look over his companion’s shoulder.

The paper had the appearance of a rough map. By much folding it was creased and worn to the pitch of separation, and the second man held the discoloured fragments together where they had parted. On it one could dimly make out, in almost obliterated pencil, the outline of the bay.

“Here,” said Evans, “is the reef and here is the gap.” He ran his thumb-nail over the chart.

“This curved and twisting line is the river — I could do with a drink now! — and this star is the place.”

“You see this dotted line,” said the man with the map; “it is a straight line, and runs from the opening of the reef to a clump of palm-trees. The star comes just where it cuts the river. We must mark the place as we go into the lagoon.”

“It’s queer,” said Evans, after a pause, “what these little marks down here are for. It looks like the plan of a house or something; but what all these little dashes, pointing this way and that, may mean I can’t get a notion. And what’s the writing?”

“Chinese,” said the man with the map.

“Of course! *He* was a Chinee,” said Evans.

“They all were,” said the man with the map.

They both sat for some minutes staring at the land, while the canoe drifted slowly. Then Evans looked towards the paddle.

“Your turn with the paddle now, Hooker,” said he.

And his companion quietly folded up his map, put it in his pocket, passed Evans carefully, and began to paddle. His movements were languid, like those of a man whose strength was nearly exhausted. Evans sat with his eyes half closed, watching the frothy breakwater of the coral creep nearer and nearer. The sky was like a furnace now, for the sun was near the zenith. Though they were so near the Treasure he did not feel the exaltation he had anticipated. The intense excitement of the struggle for the plan, and the long night voyage from the mainland in the unprovisioned canoe had, to use his own expression, “taken it out of him.” He tried to arouse himself by directing his mind to the ingots the Chinamen had spoken of, but it would not rest there; it came back headlong to the thought of sweet water rippling in the river, and to the almost unendurable dryness of his lips and throat. The rhythmic wash of the sea upon the reef was becoming audible now, and it had a pleasant sound in his ears; the water washed along the side of the canoe, and the paddle dripped between each stroke. Presently he began to doze.

He was still dimly conscious of the island, but a queer dream texture interwove with his sensations. Once again it was the night when he and Hooker had hit upon the Chinamen’s secret; he saw the moonlit trees, the little fire burning, and the black figures of the three Chinamen — silvered on one side by moonlight, and on the other glowing from the firelight — and heard them talking together in pigeon-English — for they came from different provinces. Hooker had caught the drift of their talk first, and had motioned to him to listen. Fragments of the conversation were inaudible and fragments incomprehensible. A Spanish galleon from the Philippines hopelessly aground, and its treasure buried against the day of return, lay in the background of the story; a shipwrecked crew thinned by disease, a quarrel or so, and the needs of discipline, and at last taking to their boats never to be heard of again. Then Chang-hi, only a year since, wandering ashore, had happened upon the ingots hidden for two

hundred years, had deserted his junk, and reburied them with infinite toil, single-handed but very safe. He laid great stress on the safety — it was a secret of his. Now he wanted help to return and exhume them. Presently the little map fluttered and the voices sank. A fine story for two stranded British wastrels to hear! Evans' dream shifted to the moment when he had Chang-hi's pigtail in his hand. The life of a Chinaman is scarcely sacred like a European's. The cunning little face of Chang-hi, first keen and furious like a startled snake, and then fearful, treacherous and pitiful, became overwhelmingly prominent in the dream. At the end Chang-hi had grinned, a most incomprehensible and startling grin. Abruptly things became very unpleasant, as they will do at times in dreams. Chang-hi gibbered and threatened him. He saw in his dream heaps and heaps of gold, and Chang-hi intervening and struggling to hold him back from it. He took Chang-hi by the pigtail — how big the yellow brute was, and how he struggled and grinned! He kept growing bigger, too. Then the bright heaps of gold turned to a roaring furnace, and a vast devil, surprisingly like Chang-hi, but with a huge black tail, began to feed him with coals. They burnt his mouth horribly. Another devil was shouting his name: "Evans, Evans, you sleepy fool!" — or was it Hooker?

He woke up. They were in the mouth of the lagoon.

"There are the three palm-trees. It must be in a line with that clump of bushes," said his companion. "Mark that. If we go to those bushes and then strike into the bush in a straight line from here, we shall come to it when we come to the stream."

They could see now where the mouth of the stream opened out. At the sight of it Evans revived. "Hurry up, man," he said, "Or by heaven I shall have to drink sea water!" He gnawed his hand and stared at the gleam of silver among the rocks and green tangle.

Presently he turned almost fiercely upon Hooker. "Give *me* the paddle," he said.

So they reached the river mouth. A little way up Hooker took some water in the hollow of his hand, tasted it, and spat it out. A little further he tried again. "This will do," he said, and they began drinking eagerly.

"Curse this!" said Evans, suddenly. "It's too slow." And, leaning

dangerously over the fore part of the canoe, he began to suck up the water with his lips.

Presently they made an end of drinking, and, running the canoe into a little creek, were about to land among the thick growth that overhung the water.

“We shall have to scramble through this to the beach to find our bushes and get the line to the place,” said Evans.

“We had better paddle round,” said Hooker.

So they pushed out again into the river and paddled back down it to the sea, and along the shore to the place where the clump of bushes grew. Here they landed, pulled the light canoe far up the beach, and then went up towards the edge of the jungle until they could see the opening of the reef and the bushes in a straight line. Evans had taken a native implement out of the canoe. It was L-shaped, and the transverse piece was armed with polished stone. Hooker carried the paddle. “It is straight now in this direction,” said he; “we must push through this till we strike the stream. Then we must prospect.”

They pushed through a close tangle of reeds, broad fronds, and young trees, and at first it was toilsome going, but very speedily the trees became larger and the ground beneath them opened out. The blaze of the sunlight was replaced by insensible degrees by cool shadow. The trees became at last vast pillars that rose up to a canopy of greenery far overhead. Dim white flowers hung from their stems, and ropy creepers swung from tree to tree. The shadow deepened. On the ground, blotched fungi and a red-brown incrustation became frequent.

Evans shivered. “It seems almost cold here after the blaze outside.”

“I hope we are keeping to the straight,” said Hooker.

Presently they saw, far ahead, a gap in the sombre darkness where white shafts of hot sunlight smote into the forest. There also was brilliant green undergrowth, and coloured flowers. Then they heard the rush of water.

“Here is the river. We should be close to it now,” said Hooker.

The vegetation was thick by the river bank. Great plants, as yet unnamed, grew among the roots of the big trees, and spread rosettes

of huge green fans towards the strip of sky. Many flowers and a creeper with shiny foliage clung to the exposed stems. On the water of the broad, quiet pool which the treasure seekers now overlooked there floated big oval leaves and a waxen, pinkish-white flower not unlike a water-lily. Further, as the river bent away from them, the water suddenly frothed and became noisy in a rapid.

"Well?" said Evans.

"We have swerved a little from the straight," said Hooker. "That was to be expected."

He turned and looked into the dim cool shadows of the silent forest behind them. "If we beat a little way up and down the stream we should come to something."

"You said—" began Evans.

"*He* said there was a heap of stones," said Hooker.

The two men looked at each other for a moment.

"Let us try a little down-stream first," said Evans.

They advanced slowly, looking curiously about them. Suddenly Evans stopped. "What the devil's that?" he said.

Hooker followed his finger. "Something blue," he said. It had come into view as they topped a gentle swell of the ground. Then he began to distinguish what it was.

He advanced suddenly with hasty steps, until the body that belonged to the limp hand and arm had become visible. His grip tightened on the implement he carried. The thing was the figure of a Chinaman lying on his face. The *abandon* of the pose was unmistakable.

The two men drew closer together, and stood staring silently at this ominous dead body. It lay in a clear space among the trees. Near by was a spade after the Chinese pattern, and further off lay a scattered heap of stones, close to a freshly dug hole.

"Somebody has been here before," said Hooker, clearing his throat.

Then suddenly Evans began to swear and rave, and stamp upon the ground.

Hooker turned white but said nothing. He advanced towards the prostrate body. He saw the neck was puffed and purple, and the hands and ankles swollen. "Pah!" he said, and suddenly turned away

and went towards the excavation. He gave a cry of surprise. He shouted to Evans, who was following him slowly.

"You fool! It's all right It's here still." Then he turned again and looked at the dead Chinaman, and then again at the hole.

Evans hurried to the hole. Already half exposed by the ill-fated wretch beside them lay a number of dull yellow bars. He bent down in the hole, and, clearing off the soil with his bare hands, hastily pulled one of the heavy masses out. As he did so a little thorn pricked his hand. He pulled the delicate spike out with his fingers and lifted the ingot.

"Only gold or lead could weigh like this," he said exultantly.

Hooker was still looking at the dead Chinaman. He was puzzled.

"He stole a march on his friends," he said at last. "He came here alone, and some poisonous snake has killed him … I wonder how he found the place."

Evans stood with the ingot in his hands. What did a dead Chinaman signify? "We shall have to take this stuff to the mainland piecemeal, and bury it there for a while. How shall we get it to the canoe?"

He took his jacket off and spread it on the ground, and flung two or three ingots into it. Presently he found that another little thorn had punctured his skin.

"This is as much as we can carry," said he. Then suddenly, with a queer rush of irritation, "What are you staring at?"

Hooker turned to him. "I can't stand … him." He nodded towards the corpse. "It's so like—"

"Rubbish!" said Evans. "All Chinamen are alike."

Hooker looked into his face. "I'm going to bury *that*, anyhow, before I lend a hand with this stuff."

"Don't be a fool, Hooker," said Evans. "Let that mass of corruption bide."

Hooker hesitated, and then his eye went carefully over the brown soil about them. "It scares me somehow," he said.

"The thing is," said Evans, "what to do with these ingots. Shall we re-bury them over here, or take them across the strait in the canoe?"

Hooker thought. His puzzled gaze wandered among the tall tree-trunks, and up into the remote sunlit greenery overhead. He shivered again as his eye rested upon the blue figure of the Chinaman. He stared searchingly among the grey depths between the trees.

"What's come to you, Hooker?" said Evans. "Have you lost your wits?"

"Let's get the gold out of this place, anyhow," said Hooker.

He took the ends of the collar of the coat in his hands, and Evans took the opposite corners, and they lifted the mass. "Which way?" said Evans. "To the canoe?"

"It's queer," said Evans, when they had advanced only a few steps, "but my arms ache still with that paddling."

"Curse it!" he said. "But they ache! I must rest."

They let the coat down. Evans' face was white, and little drops of sweat stood out upon his forehead. "It's stuffy, somehow, in this forest."

Then with an abrupt transition to unreasonable anger: "What is the good of waiting here all the day? Lend a hand, I say! You have done nothing but moon since we saw the dead Chinaman."

Hooker was looking steadfastly at his companion's face. He helped raise the coat bearing the ingots, and they went forward perhaps a hundred yards in silence. Evans began to breathe heavily. "Can't you speak?" he said.

"What's the matter with you?" said Hooker.

Evans stumbled, and then with a sudden curse flung the coat from him. He stood for a moment staring at Hooker, and then with a groan clutched at his own throat.

"Don't come near me," he said, and went and leant against a tree. Then in a steadier voice, "I'll be better in a minute."

Presently his grip upon the trunk loosened, and he slipped slowly down the stem of the tree until he was a crumpled heap at its foot. His hands were clenched convulsively. His face became distorted with pain. Hooker approached him.

"Don't touch me! Don't touch me!" said Evans in a stifled voice. "Put the gold back on the coat."

"Can't I do anything for you?" said Hooker.

"Put the gold back on the coat."

As Hooker handled the ingots he felt a little prick on the ball of his thumb. He looked at his hand and saw a slender thorn, perhaps two inches in length.

Evans gave an inarticulate cry and rolled over.

Hooker's jaw dropped. He stared at the thorn for a moment with dilated eyes. Then he looked at Evans, who was now crumpled together on the ground, his back bending and straitening spasmodically. Then he looked through the pillars of the trees and net-work of creeper stems, to where in the dim grey shadow the blue-clad body of the Chinaman was still indistinctly visible. He thought of the little dashes in the corner of the plan, and in a moment he understood.

"God help me!" he said. For the thorns were similar to those the Dyaks poison and use in their blowing-tubes. He understood now what Chang-hi's assurance of the safety of his treasure meant. He understood that grin now.

"Evans!" he cried.

But Evans was silent and motionless now, save for a horrible spasmodic twitching of his limbs. A profound silence brooded over the forest.

Then Hooker began to suck furiously at the little pink spot on the ball of his thumb — sucking for dear life. Presently he felt a strange aching pain in his arms and shoulders, and his fingers seemed difficult to bend. Then he knew that sucking was no good.

Abruptly he stopped, and sitting down by the pile of ingots, and resting his chin upon his hands and his elbows upon his knees, stared at the distorted but still stirring body of his companion. Chang-hi's grin came in his mind again. The dull pain spread towards his throat and grew slowly in intensity. Far above him a faint breeze stirred the greenery, and the white petals of some unknown flower came floating down through the gloom.

THE PLATTNER STORY AND OTHERS

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THE PLATTNER STORY

Whether the story of Gottfried Plattner is to be credited or not, is a pretty question in the value of evidence. On the one hand, we have seven witnesses — to be perfectly exact, we have six and a half pairs of eyes, and one undeniable fact; and on the other we have — what is it? — prejudice, common sense, the inertia of opinion. Never were there seven more honest-seeming witnesses; never was there a more undeniable fact than the inversion of Gottfried Plattner's anatomical structure, and — never was there a more preposterous story than the one they have to tell! The most preposterous part of the story is the worthy Gottfried's contribution (for I count him as one of the seven). Heaven forbid that I should be led into giving countenance to superstition by a passion for impartiality, and so come to share the fate of Eusapia's patrons! Frankly, I believe there is something crooked about this business of Gottfried Plattner; but what that crooked factor is, I will admit as frankly, I do not know. I have been surprised at the credit accorded to the story in the most unexpected and authoritative quarters. The fairest way to the reader, however, will be for me to tell it without further comment.

Gottfried Plattner is, in spite of his name, a free-born Englishman. His father was an Alsatian who came to England in the Sixties, married a respectable English girl of unexceptionable antecedents, and died, after a wholesome and uneventful life (devoted, I understand, chiefly to the laying of parquet flooring), in 1887. Gottfried's age is seven-and-twenty. He is, by virtue of his heritage of three languages, Modern Languages Master in a small private school in the South of England. To the casual observer he is singularly like any other Modern Languages Master in any other small private school. His costume is neither very costly nor very fashionable, but, on the other hand, it is not markedly cheap or shabby; his complexion, like his height and his bearing, is inconspicuous. You would notice, perhaps, that, like the majority of people, his face was not absolutely symmetrical, his right eye a little larger than the left, and his jaw a trifle heavier on the right side. If you, as an ordinary careless person, were to bare his chest and feel

his heart beating, you would probably find it quite like the heart of anyone else. But here you and the trained observer would part company. If you found his heart quite ordinary, the trained observer would find it quite otherwise. And once the thing was pointed out to you, you too would perceive the peculiarity easily enough. It is that Gottfried's heart beats on the right side of his body.

Now, that is not the only singularity of Gottfried's structure, although it is the only one that would appeal to the untrained mind. Careful sounding of Gottfried's internal arrangements, by a well-known surgeon, seems to point to the fact that all the other unsymmetrical parts of his body are similarly misplaced. The right lobe of his liver is on the left side, the left on his right; while his lungs, too, are similarly contraposed. What is still more singular, unless Gottfried is a consummate actor, we must believe that his right hand has recently become his left. Since the occurrences we are about to consider (as impartially as possible), he has found the utmost difficulty in writing, except from right to left across the paper with his left hand. He cannot throw with his right hand, he is perplexed at meal times between knife and fork, and his ideas of the rule of the road — he is a cyclist — are still a dangerous confusion. And there is not a scrap of evidence to show that before these occurrences Gottfried was at all left-handed.

There is yet another wonderful fact in this preposterous business. Gottfried produces three photographs of himself. You have him at the age of five or six, thrusting fat legs at you from under a plaid frock, and scowling. In that photograph his left eye is a little larger than his right, and his jaw is a trifle heavier on the left side. This is the reverse of his present living conditions. The photograph of Gottfried at fourteen seems to contradict these facts, but that is because it is one of those cheap "Gem" photographs that were then in vogue, taken direct upon metal, and therefore reversing things just as a looking-glass would. The third photograph represents him at one-and-twenty, and confirms the record of the others. There seems here evidence of the strongest confirmatory character that Gottfried has exchanged his left side for his right. Yet how a human being can be so changed, short of a fantastic and pointless miracle, it is exceedingly hard to suggest.

In one way, of course, these facts might be explicable on the supposition that Plattner has undertaken an elaborate mystification, on the strength of his heart's displacement. Photographs may be fudged, and left-handedness imitated. But the character of the man does not lend itself to any such theory. He is quiet, practical, unobtrusive, and thoroughly sane, from the Nordau standpoint. He likes beer, and smokes moderately, takes walking exercise daily, and has a healthily high estimate of the value of his teaching. He has a good but untrained tenor voice, and takes a pleasure in singing airs of a popular and cheerful character. He is fond, but not morbidly fond, of reading, — chiefly fiction pervaded with a vaguely pious optimism, — sleeps well, and rarely dreams. He is, in fact, the very last person to evolve a fantastic fable. Indeed, so far from forcing this story upon the world, he has been singularly reticent on the matter. He meets inquirers with a certain engaging — bashfulness is almost the word, that disarms the most suspicious. He seems genuinely ashamed that anything so unusual has occurred to him.

It is to be regretted that Plattner's aversion to the idea of post-mortem dissection may postpone, perhaps for ever, the positive proof that his entire body has had its left and right sides transposed. Upon that fact mainly the credibility of his story hangs. There is no way of taking a man and moving him about *in space*, as ordinary people understand space, that will result in our changing his sides. Whatever you do, his right is still his right, his left his left. You can do that with a perfectly thin and flat thing, of course. If you were to cut a figure out of paper, any figure with a right and left side, you could change its sides simply by lifting it up and turning it over. But with a solid it is different. Mathematical theorists tell us that the only way in which the right and left sides of a solid body can be changed is by taking that body clean out of space as we know it, — taking it out of ordinary existence, that is, and turning it somewhere outside space. This is a little abstruse, no doubt, but anyone with any knowledge of mathematical theory will assure the reader of its truth. To put the thing in technical language, the curious inversion of Plattner's right and left sides is proof that he has moved out of our space into what is called the Fourth Dimension, and that he has returned again to our world. Unless we choose to consider ourselves the victims of an

elaborate and motiveless fabrication, we are almost bound to believe that this has occurred.

So much for the tangible facts. We come now to the account of the phenomena that attended his temporary disappearance from the world. It appears that in the Sussexville Proprietary School, Plattner not only discharged the duties of Modern Languages Master, but also taught chemistry, commercial geography, book-keeping, shorthand, drawing, and any other additional subject to which the changing fancies of the boys' parents might direct attention. He knew little or nothing of these various subjects, but in secondary as distinguished from Board or elementary schools, knowledge in the teacher is, very properly, by no means so necessary as high moral character and gentlemanly tone. In chemistry he was particularly deficient, knowing, he says, nothing beyond the Three Gases (whatever the three gases may be). As, however, his pupils began by knowing nothing, and derived all their information from him, this caused him (or anyone) but little inconvenience for several terms. Then a little boy named Whibble joined the school, who had been educated (it seems) by some mischievous relative into an inquiring habit of mind. This little boy followed Plattner's lessons with marked and sustained interest, and in order to exhibit his zeal on the subject, brought, at various times, substances for Plattner to analyse. Plattner, flattered by this evidence of his power of awakening interest, and trusting to the boy's ignorance, analysed these, and even made general statements as to their composition. Indeed, he was so far stimulated by his pupil as to obtain a work upon analytical chemistry, and study it during his supervision of the evening's preparation. He was surprised to find chemistry quite an interesting subject.

So far the story is absolutely commonplace. But now the greenish powder comes upon the scene. The source of that greenish powder seems, unfortunately, lost. Master Whibble tells a tortuous story of finding it done up in a packet in a disused limekiln near the Downs. It would have been an excellent thing for Plattner, and possibly for Master Whibble's family, if a match could have been applied to that powder there and then. The young gentleman certainly did not bring it to school in a packet, but in a common eight-ounce graduated medicine bottle, plugged with masticated newspaper. He gave it to

Plattner at the end of the afternoon school. Four boys had been detained after school prayers in order to complete some neglected tasks, and Plattner was supervising these in the small classroom in which the chemical teaching was conducted. The appliances for the practical teaching of chemistry in the Sussexville Proprietary School, as in most small schools in this country, are characterised by a severe simplicity. They are kept in a small cupboard standing in a recess, and having about the same capacity as a common travelling trunk. Plattner, being bored with his passive superintendence, seems to have welcomed the intervention of Whibble with his green powder as an agreeable diversion, and, unlocking this cupboard, proceeded at once with his analytical experiments. Whibble sat, luckily for himself, at a safe distance, regarding him. The four malefactors, feigning a profound absorption in their work, watched him furtively with the keenest interest. For even within the limits of the Three Gases, Plattner's practical chemistry was, I understand, temerarious.

They are practically unanimous in their account of Plattner's proceedings. He poured a little of the green powder into a test-tube, and tried the substance with water, hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, and sulphuric acid in succession. Getting no result, he emptied out a little heap — nearly half the bottleful, in fact — upon a slate and tried a match. He held the medicine bottle in his left hand. The stuff began to smoke and melt, and then — exploded with deafening violence and a blinding flash.

The five boys, seeing the flash and being prepared for catastrophes, ducked below their desks, and were none of them seriously hurt. The window was blown out into the playground, and the blackboard on its easel was upset. The slate was smashed to atoms. Some plaster fell from the ceiling. No other damage was done to the school edifice or appliances, and the boys at first, seeing nothing of Plattner, fancied he was knocked down and lying out of their sight below the desks. They jumped out of their places to go to his assistance, and were amazed to find the space empty. Being still confused by the sudden violence of the report, they hurried to the open door, under the impression that he must have been hurt, and have rushed out of the room. But Carson, the foremost, nearly collided in the doorway with the principal, Mr. Lidgett.

Mr. Lidgett is a corpulent, excitable man with one eye. The boys describe him as stumbling into the room mouthing some of those tempered expletives irritable schoolmasters accustom themselves to use — lest worse befall. “Wretched mumchancer!” he said. “Where’s Mr. Plattner?” The boys are agreed on the very words. (“Wobbler,” “snivelling puppy,” and “mumchancer” are, it seems, among the ordinary small change of Mr. Lidgett’s scholastic commerce.)

Where’s Mr. Plattner? That was a question that was to be repeated many times in the next few days. It really seemed as though that frantic hyperbole, “blown to atoms,” had for once realised itself. There was not a visible particle of Plattner to be seen; not a drop of blood nor a stitch of clothing to be found. Apparently he had been blown clean out of existence and left not a wrack behind. Not so much as would cover a sixpenny piece, to quote a proverbial expression! The evidence of his absolute disappearance, as a consequence of that explosion, is indubitable.

It is not necessary to enlarge here upon the commotion excited in the Sussexville Proprietary School, and in Sussexville and elsewhere, by this event. It is quite possible, indeed, that some of the readers of these pages may recall the hearing of some remote and dying version of that excitement during the last summer holidays. Lidgett, it would seem, did everything in his power to suppress and minimise the story. He instituted a penalty of twenty-five lines for any mention of Plattner’s name among the boys, and stated in the schoolroom that he was clearly aware of his assistant’s whereabouts. He was afraid, he explains, that the possibility of an explosion happening, in spite of the elaborate precautions taken to minimise the practical teaching of chemistry, might injure the reputation of the school; and so might any mysterious quality in Plattner’s departure. Indeed, he did everything in his power to make the occurrence seem as ordinary as possible. In particular, he cross-examined the five eye-witnesses of the occurrence so searchingly that they began to doubt the plain evidence of their senses. But, in spite of these efforts, the tale, in a magnified and distorted state, made a nine days’ wonder in the district, and several parents withdrew their sons on colourable pretexts. Not the least remarkable point in the matter is the fact that a large number of people in the neighbourhood dreamed singularly

vivid dreams of Plattner during the period of excitement before his return, and that these dreams had a curious uniformity. In almost all of them Plattner was seen, sometimes singly, sometimes in company, wandering about through a coruscating iridescence. In all cases his face was pale and distressed, and in some he gesticulated towards the dreamer. One or two of the boys, evidently under the influence of nightmare, fancied that Plattner approached them with remarkable swiftness, and seemed to look closely into their very eyes. Others fled with Plattner from the pursuit of vague and extraordinary creatures of a globular shape. But all these fancies were forgotten in inquiries and speculations when, on the Wednesday next but one after the Monday of the explosion, Plattner returned.

The circumstances of his return were as singular as those of his departure. So far as Mr. Lidgett's somewhat choleric outline can be filled in from Plattner's hesitating statements, it would appear that on Wednesday evening, towards the hour of sunset, the former gentleman, having dismissed evening preparation, was engaged in his garden, picking and eating strawberries, a fruit of which he is inordinately fond. It is a large old-fashioned garden, secured from observation, fortunately, by a high and ivy-covered red-brick wall. Just as he was stooping over a particularly prolific plant, there was a flash in the air and a heavy thud, and before he could look round, some heavy body struck him violently from behind. He was pitched forward, crushing the strawberries he held in his hand, and that so roughly, that his silk hat — Mr. Lidgett adheres to the older ideas of scholastic costume — was driven violently down upon his forehead, and almost over one eye. This heavy missile, which slid over him sideways and collapsed into a sitting posture among the strawberry plants, proved to be our long-lost Mr. Gottfried Plattner, in an extremely dishevelled condition. He was collarless and hatless, his linen was dirty, and there was blood upon his hands. Mr. Lidgett was so indignant and surprised that he remained on all-fours, and with his hat jammed down on his eye, while he expostulated vehemently with Plattner for his disrespectful and unaccountable conduct.

This scarcely idyllic scene completes what I may call the exterior version of the Plattner story — its exoteric aspect. It is quite unnecessary to enter here into all the details of his dismissal by Mr.

Lidgett. Such details, with the full names and dates and references, will be found in the larger report of these occurrences that was laid before the Society for the Investigation of Abnormal Phenomena. The singular transposition of Plattner's right and left sides was scarcely observed for the first day or so, and then first in connection with his disposition to write from right to left across the blackboard. He concealed rather than ostended this curious confirmatory circumstance, as he considered it would unfavourably affect his prospects in a new situation. The displacement of his heart was discovered some months after, when he was having a tooth extracted under anæsthetics. He then, very unwillingly, allowed a cursory surgical examination to be made of himself, with a view to a brief account in the *Journal of Anatomy*. That exhausts the statement of the material facts; and we may now go on to consider Plattner's account of the matter.

But first let us clearly differentiate between the preceding portion of this story and what is to follow. All I have told thus far is established by such evidence as even a criminal lawyer would approve. Every one of the witnesses is still alive; the reader, if he have the leisure, may hunt the lads out tomorrow, or even brave the terrors of the redoubtable Lidgett, and cross-examine and trap and test to his heart's content; Gottfried Plattner, himself, and his twisted heart and his three photographs are producible. It may be taken as proved that he did disappear for nine days as the consequence of an explosion; that he returned almost as violently, under circumstances in their nature annoying to Mr. Lidgett, whatever the details of those circumstances may be; and that he returned inverted, just as a reflection returns from a mirror. From the last fact, as I have already stated, it follows almost inevitably that Plattner, during those nine days, must have been in some state of existence altogether out of space. The evidence to these statements is, indeed, far stronger than that upon which most murderers are hanged. But for his own particular account of where he had been, with its confused explanations and well-nigh self-contradictory details, we have only Mr. Gottfried Plattner's word. I do not wish to discredit that, but I must point out — what so many writers upon obscure psychic phenomena fail to do — that we are passing here from the practically

undeniable to that kind of matter which any reasonable man is entitled to believe or reject as he thinks proper. The previous statements render it plausible; its discordance with common experience tilts it towards the incredible. I would prefer not to sway the beam of the reader's judgment either way, but simply to tell the story as Plattner told it me.

He gave me his narrative, I may state, at my house at Chislehurst, and so soon as he had left me that evening, I went into my study and wrote down everything as I remembered it. Subsequently he was good enough to read over a type-written copy, so that its substantial correctness is undeniable.

He states that at the moment of the explosion he distinctly thought he was killed. He felt lifted off his feet and driven forcibly backward. It is a curious fact for psychologists that he thought clearly during his backward flight, and wondered whether he should hit the chemistry cupboard or the blackboard easel. His heels struck ground, and he staggered and fell heavily into a sitting position on something soft and firm. For a moment the concussion stunned him. He became aware at once of a vivid scent of singed hair, and he seemed to hear the voice of Lidgett asking for him. You will understand that for a time his mind was greatly confused.

At first he was distinctly under the impression that he was still in the classroom. He perceived quite distinctly the surprise of the boys and the entry of Mr. Lidgett. He is quite positive upon that score. He did not hear their remarks; but that he ascribed to the deafening effect of the experiment. Things about him seemed curiously dark and faint, but his mind explained that on the obvious but mistaken idea that the explosion had engendered a huge volume of dark smoke. Through the dimness the figures of Lidgett and the boys moved, as faint and silent as ghosts. Plattner's face still tingled with the stinging heat of the flash. He was, he says, "all muddled." His first definite thoughts seem to have been of his personal safety. He thought he was perhaps blinded and deafened. He felt his limbs and face in a gingerly manner. Then his perceptions grew clearer, and he was astonished to miss the old familiar desks and other schoolroom furniture about him. Only dim, uncertain, grey shapes stood in the place of these. Then came a thing that made him shout aloud, and

awoke his stunned faculties to instant activity. *Two of the boys, gesticulating, walked one after the other clean through him!* Neither manifested the slightest consciousness of his presence. It is difficult to imagine the sensation he felt. They came against him, he says, with no more force than a wisp of mist.

Plattner's first thought after that was that he was dead. Having been brought up with thoroughly sound views in these matters, however, he was a little surprised to find his body still about him. His second conclusion was that he was not dead, but that the others were: that the explosion had destroyed the Sussexville Proprietary School and every soul in it except himself. But that, too, was scarcely satisfactory. He was thrown back upon astonished observation.

Everything about him was extraordinarily dark: at first it seemed to have an altogether ebony blackness. Overhead was a black firmament. The only touch of light in the scene was a faint greenish glow at the edge of the sky in one direction, which threw into prominence a horizon of undulating black hills. This, I say, was his impression at first. As his eye grew accustomed to the darkness, he began to distinguish a faint quality of differentiating greenish colour in the circumambient night. Against this background the furniture and occupants of the classroom, it seems, stood out like phosphorescent spectres, faint and impalpable. He extended his hand, and thrust it without an effort through the wall of the room by the fireplace.

He describes himself as making a strenuous effort to attract attention. He shouted to Lidgett, and tried to seize the boys as they went to and fro. He only desisted from these attempts when Mrs. Lidgett, whom he (as an Assistant Master) naturally disliked, entered the room. He says the sensation of being in the world, and yet not a part of it, was an extraordinarily disagreeable one. He compared his feelings, not inaptly, to those of a cat watching a mouse through a window. Whenever he made a motion to communicate with the dim, familiar world about him, he found an invisible, incomprehensible barrier preventing intercourse.

He then turned his attention to his solid environment. He found the medicine bottle still unbroken in his hand, with the remainder of the green powder therein. He put this in his pocket, and began to feel

about him. Apparently, he was sitting on a boulder of rock covered with a velvety moss. The dark country about him he was unable to see, the faint, misty picture of the schoolroom blotting it out, but he had a feeling (due perhaps to a cold wind) that he was near the crest of a hill, and that a steep valley fell away beneath his feet. The green glow along the edge of the sky seemed to be growing in extent and intensity. He stood up, rubbing his eyes.

It would seem that he made a few steps, going steeply down hill, and then stumbled, nearly fell, and sat down again upon a jagged mass of rock to watch the dawn. He became aware that the world about him was absolutely silent. It was as still as it was dark, and though there was a cold wind blowing up the hill-face, the rustle of grass, the soughing of the boughs that should have accompanied it, were absent. He could hear, therefore, if he could not see, that the hillside upon which he stood was rocky and desolate. The green grew brighter every moment, and as it did so a faint, transparent blood-red mingled with, but did not mitigate, the blackness of the sky overhead and the rocky desolations about him. Having regard to what follows, I am inclined to think that that redness may have been an optical effect due to contrast. Something black fluttered momentarily against the livid yellow-green of the lower sky, and then the thin and penetrating voice of a bell rose out of the black gulf below him. An oppressive expectation grew with the growing light.

It is probable that an hour or more elapsed while he sat there, the strange green light growing brighter every moment, and spreading slowly, in flamboyant fingers, upward towards the zenith. As it grew, the spectral vision of *our* world became relatively or absolutely fainter. Probably both, for the time must have been about that of our earthly sunset. So far as his vision of our world went, Plattner, by his few steps downhill, had passed through the floor of the classroom, and was now, it seemed, sitting in mid-air in the larger schoolroom downstairs. He saw the boarders distinctly, but much more faintly than he had seen Lidgett. They were preparing their evening tasks, and he noticed with interest that several were cheating with their Euclid riders by means of a crib, a compilation whose existence he had hitherto never suspected. As the time passed, they faded steadily, as steadily as the light of the green dawn increased.

Looking down into the valley, he saw that the light had crept far down its rocky sides, and that the profound blackness of the abyss was now broken by a minute green glow, like the light of a glow-worm. And almost immediately the limb of a huge heavenly body of blazing green rose over the basaltic undulations of the distant hills, and the monstrous hill-masses about him came out gaunt and desolate, in green light and deep, ruddy black shadows. He became aware of a vast number of ball-shaped objects drifting as thistledown drifts over the high ground. There were none of these nearer to him than the opposite side of the gorge. The bell below twanged quicker and quicker, with something like impatient insistence, and several lights moved hither and thither. The boys at work at their desks were now almost imperceptibly faint.

This extinction of our world, when the green sun of this other universe rose, is a curious point upon which Plattner insists. During the Other-World night it is difficult to move about, on account of the vividness with which the things of this world are visible. It becomes a riddle to explain why, if this is the case, we in this world catch no glimpse of the Other-World. It is due, perhaps, to the comparatively vivid illumination of this world of ours. Plattner describes the midday of the Other-World, at its brightest, as not being nearly so bright as this world at full moon, while its night is profoundly black. Consequently, the amount of light, even in an ordinary dark room, is sufficient to render the things of the Other-World invisible, on the same principle that faint phosphorescence is only visible in the profoundest darkness. I have tried, since he told me his story, to see something of the Other-World by sitting for a long space in a photographer's dark room at night. I have certainly seen indistinctly the form of greenish slopes and rocks, but only, I must admit, very indistinctly indeed. The reader may possibly be more successful. Plattner tells me that since his return he has dreamt and seen and recognised places in the Other-World, but this is probably due to his memory of these scenes. It seems quite possible that people with unusually keen eyesight may occasionally catch a glimpse of this strange Other-World about us.

However, this is a digression. As the green sun rose, a long street of black buildings became perceptible, though only darkly and

indistinctly, in the gorge, and, after some hesitation, Plattner began to clamber down the precipitous descent towards them. The descent was long and exceedingly tedious, being so not only by the extraordinary steepness, but also by reason of the looseness of the boulders with which the whole face of the hill was strewn. The noise of his descent — now and then his heels struck fire from the rocks — seemed now the only sound in the universe, for the beating of the bell had ceased. As he drew nearer, he perceived that the various edifices had a singular resemblance to tombs and mausoleums and monuments, saving only that they were all uniformly black instead of being white, as most sepulchres are. And then he saw, crowding out of the largest building, very much as people disperse from church, a number of pallid, rounded, pale-green figures. These dispersed in several directions about the broad street of the place, some going through side alleys and reappearing upon the steepness of the hill, others entering some of the small black buildings which lined the way.

At the sight of these things drifting up towards him, Plattner stopped, staring. They were not walking, they were indeed limbless, and they had the appearance of human heads, beneath which a tadpole-like body swung. He was too astonished at their strangeness, too full, indeed, of strangeness, to be seriously alarmed by them. They drove towards him, in front of the chill wind that was blowing uphill, much as soap-bubbles drive before a draught. And as he looked at the nearest of those approaching, he saw it was indeed a human head, albeit with singularly large eyes, and wearing such an expression of distress and anguish as he had never seen before upon mortal countenance. He was surprised to find that it did not turn to regard him, but seemed to be watching and following some unseen moving thing. For a moment he was puzzled, and then it occurred to him that this creature was watching with its enormous eyes something that was happening in the world he had just left. Nearer it came, and nearer, and he was too astonished to cry out. It made a very faint fretting sound as it came close to him. Then it struck his face with a gentle pat — its touch was very cold — and drove past him, and upward towards the crest of the hill.

An extraordinary conviction flashed across Plattner's mind that

this head had a strong likeness to Lidgett. Then he turned his attention to the other heads that were now swarming thickly up the hillside. None made the slightest sign of recognition. One or two, indeed, came close to his head and almost followed the example of the first, but he dodged convulsively out of the way. Upon most of them he saw the same expression of unavailing regret he had seen upon the first, and heard the same faint sounds of wretchedness from them. One or two wept, and one rolling swiftly uphill wore an expression of diabolical rage. But others were cold, and several had a look of gratified interest in their eyes. One, at least, was almost in an ecstasy of happiness. Plattner does not remember that he recognised any more likenesses in those he saw at this time.

For several hours, perhaps, Plattner watched these strange things dispersing themselves over the hills, and not till long after they had ceased to issue from the clustering black buildings in the gorge, did he resume his downward climb. The darkness about him increased so much that he had a difficulty in stepping true. Overhead the sky was now a bright, pale green. He felt neither hunger nor thirst. Later, when he did, he found a chilly stream running down the centre of the gorge, and the rare moss upon the boulders, when he tried it at last in desperation, was good to eat.

He groped about among the tombs that ran down the gorge, seeking vaguely for some clue to these inexplicable things. After a long time he came to the entrance of the big mausoleum-like building from which the heads had issued. In this he found a group of green lights burning upon a kind of basaltic altar, and a bell-rope from a belfry overhead hanging down into the centre of the place. Round the wall ran a lettering of fire in a character unknown to him. While he was still wondering at the purport of these things, he heard the receding tramp of heavy feet echoing far down the street. He ran out into the darkness again, but he could see nothing. He had a mind to pull the bell-rope, and finally decided to follow the footsteps. But, although he ran far, he never overtook them; and his shouting was of no avail. The gorge seemed to extend an interminable distance. It was as dark as earthly starlight throughout its length, while the ghastly green day lay along the upper edge of its precipices. There were none of the heads, now, below. They were all, it seemed, busily

occupied along the upper slopes. Looking up, he saw them drifting hither and thither, some hovering stationary, some flying swiftly through the air. It reminded him, he said, of “big snowflakes”; only these were black and pale green.

In pursuing the firm, undeviating footsteps that he never overtook, in groping into new regions of this endless devil’s dyke, in clambering up and down the pitiless heights, in wandering about the summits, and in watching the drifting faces, Plattner states that he spent the better part of seven or eight days. He did not keep count, he says. Though once or twice he found eyes watching him, he had word with no living soul. He slept among the rocks on the hillside. In the gorge things earthly were invisible, because, from the earthly standpoint, it was far underground. On the altitudes, so soon as the earthly day began, the world became visible to him. He found himself sometimes stumbling over the dark green rocks, or arresting himself on a precipitous brink, while all about him the green branches of the Sussexville lanes were swaying; or, again, he seemed to be walking through the Sussexville streets, or watching unseen the private business of some household. And then it was he discovered, that to almost every human being in our world there pertained some of these drifting heads: that everyone in the world is watched intermittently by these helpless disembodiments.

What are they — these Watchers of the Living? Plattner never learned. But two, that presently found and followed him, were like his childhood’s memory of his father and mother. Now and then other faces turned their eyes upon him: eyes like those of dead people who had swayed him, or injured him, or helped him in his youth and manhood. Whenever they looked at him, Plattner was overcome with a strange sense of responsibility. To his mother he ventured to speak; but she made no answer. She looked sadly, steadfastly, and tenderly — a little reproachfully, too, it seemed — into his eyes.

He simply tells this story: he does not endeavour to explain. We are left to surmise who these Watchers of the Living may be, or if they are indeed the Dead, why they should so closely and passionately watch a world they have left for ever. It may be —

indeed to my mind it seems just — that, when our life has closed, when evil or good is no longer a choice for us, we may still have to witness the working out of the train of consequences we have laid. If human souls continue after death, then surely human interests continue after death. But that is merely my own guess at the meaning of the things seen. Plattner offers no interpretation, for none was given him. It is well the reader should understand this clearly. Day after day, with his head reeling, he wandered about this strange-lit world outside the world, weary and, towards the end, weak and hungry. By day — by our earthly day, that is — the ghostly vision of the old familiar scenery of Sussexville, all about him, irked and worried him. He could not see where to put his feet, and ever and again with a chilly touch one of these Watching Souls would come against his face. And after dark the multitude of these Watchers about him, and their intent distress, confused his mind beyond describing. A great longing to return to the earthly life that was so near and yet so remote consumed him. The unearthliness of things about him produced a positively painful mental distress. He was worried beyond describing by his own particular followers. He would shout at them to desist from staring at him, scold at them, hurry away from them. They were always mute and intent. Run as he might over the uneven ground, they followed his destinies.

On the ninth day, towards evening, Plattner heard the invisible footsteps approaching, far away down the gorge. He was then wandering over the broad crest of the same hill upon which he had fallen in his entry into this strange Other-World of his. He turned to hurry down into the gorge, feeling his way hastily, and was arrested by the sight of the thing that was happening in a room in a back street near the school. Both of the people in the room he knew by sight. The windows were open, the blinds up, and the setting sun shone clearly into it, so that it came out quite brightly at first, a vivid oblong of room, lying like a magic-lantern picture upon the black landscape and the livid green dawn. In addition to the sunlight, a candle had just been lit in the room.

On the bed lay a lank man, his ghastly white face terrible upon the tumbled pillow. His clenched hands were raised above his head. A little table beside the bed carried a few medicine bottles, some toast

and water, and an empty glass. Every now and then the lank man's lips fell apart, to indicate a word he could not articulate. But the woman did not notice that he wanted anything, because she was busy turning out papers from an old-fashioned bureau in the opposite corner of the room. At first the picture was very vivid indeed, but as the green dawn behind it grew brighter and brighter, so it became fainter and more and more transparent.

As the echoing footsteps paced nearer and nearer, those footsteps that sound so loud in that Other-World and come so silently in this, Plattner perceived about him a great multitude of dim faces gathering together out of the darkness and watching the two people in the room. Never before had he seen so many of the Watchers of the Living. A multitude had eyes only for the sufferer in the room, another multitude, in infinite anguish, watched the woman as she hunted with greedy eyes for something she could not find. They crowded about Plattner, they came across his sight and buffeted his face, the noise of their unavailing regrets was all about him. He saw clearly only now and then. At other times the picture quivered dimly, through the veil of green reflections upon their movements. In the room it must have been very still, and Plattner says the candle flame streamed up into a perfectly vertical line of smoke, but in his ears each footfall and its echoes beat like a clap of thunder. And the faces! Two, more particularly near the woman's: one a woman's also, white and clear-featured, a face which might have once been cold and hard, but which was now softened by the touch of a wisdom strange to earth. The other might have been the woman's father. Both were evidently absorbed in the contemplation of some act of hateful meanness, so it seemed, which they could no longer guard against and prevent. Behind were others, teachers, it may be, who had taught ill, friends whose influence had failed. And over the man, too — a multitude, but none that seemed to be parents or teachers! Faces that might once have been coarse, now purged to strength by sorrow! And in the forefront one face, a girlish one, neither angry nor remorseful, but merely patient and weary, and, as it seemed to Plattner, waiting for relief. His powers of description fail him at the memory of this multitude of ghastly countenances. They gathered on the stroke of the bell. He saw them all in the space of a second. It

would seem that he was so worked on by his excitement that, quite involuntarily, his restless fingers took the bottle of green powder out of his pocket and held it before him. But he does not remember that.

Abruptly the footsteps ceased. He waited for the next, and there was silence, and then suddenly, cutting through the unexpected stillness like a keen, thin blade, came the first stroke of the bell. At that the multitudinous faces swayed to and fro, and a louder crying began all about him. The woman did not hear; she was burning something now in the candle flame. At the second stroke everything grew dim, and a breath of wind, icy cold, blew through the host of watchers. They swirled about him like an eddy of dead leaves in the spring, and at the third stroke something was extended through them to the bed. You have heard of a beam of light. This was like a beam of darkness, and looking again at it, Plattner saw that it was a shadowy arm and hand.

The green sun was now topping the black desolations of the horizon, and the vision of the room was very faint. Plattner could see that the white of the bed struggled, and was convulsed; and that the woman looked round over her shoulder at it, startled.

The cloud of watchers lifted high like a puff of green dust before the wind, and swept swiftly downward towards the temple in the gorge. Then suddenly Plattner understood the meaning of the shadowy black arm that stretched across his shoulder and clutched its prey. He did not dare turn his head to see the Shadow behind the arm. With a violent effort, and covering his eyes, he set himself to run, made, perhaps, twenty strides, then slipped on a boulder, and fell. He fell forward on his hands; and the bottle smashed and exploded as he touched the ground.

In another moment he found himself, stunned and bleeding, sitting face to face with Lidgett in the old walled garden behind the school.

There the story of Plattner's experiences ends. I have resisted, I believe successfully, the natural disposition of a writer of fiction to dress up incidents of this sort. I have told the thing as far as possible in the order in which Plattner told it to me. I have carefully avoided any attempt at style, effect, or construction. It would have been easy, for instance, to have worked the scene of the death-bed into a kind of

plot in which Plattner might have been involved. But, quite apart from the objectionableness of falsifying a most extraordinary true story, any such trite devices would spoil, to my mind, the peculiar effect of this dark world, with its livid green illumination and its drifting Watchers of the Living, which, unseen and unapproachable to us, is yet lying all about us.

It remains to add, that a death did actually occur in Vincent Terrace, just beyond the school garden, and, so far as can be proved, at the moment of Plattner's return. Deceased was a rate-collector and insurance agent. His widow, who was much younger than himself, married last month a Mr. Whymper, a veterinary surgeon of Allbeeding. As the portion of this story given here has in various forms circulated orally in Sussexville, she has consented to my use of her name, on condition that I make it distinctly known that she emphatically contradicts every detail of Plattner's account of her husband's last moments. She burnt no will, she says, although Plattner never accused her of doing so: her husband made but one will, and that just after their marriage. Certainly, from a man who had never seen it, Plattner's account of the furniture of the room was curiously accurate.

One other thing, even at the risk of an irksome repetition, I must insist upon, lest I seem to favour the credulous superstitious view. Plattner's absence from the world for nine days is, I think, proved. But that does not prove his story. It is quite conceivable that even outside space hallucinations may be possible. That, at least, the reader must bear distinctly in mind.

THE ARGONAUTS OF THE AIR

One saw Monson's Flying Machine from the windows of the trains passing either along the South-Western main line or along the line between Wimbledon and Worcester Park, — to be more exact, one saw the huge scaffoldings which limited the flight of the apparatus. They rose over the tree-tops, a massive alley of interlacing iron and timber, and an enormous web of ropes and tackle, extending the best part of two miles. From the Leatherhead branch this alley was foreshortened and in part hidden by a hill with villas; but from the main line one had it in profile, a complex tangle of girders and curving bars, very impressive to the excursionists from Portsmouth and Southampton and the West. Monson had taken up the work where Maxim had left it, had gone on at first with an utter contempt for the journalistic wit and ignorance that had irritated and hampered his predecessor, and had spent (it was said) rather more than half his immense fortune upon his experiments. The results, to an impatient generation, seemed inconsiderable. When some five years had passed after the growth of the colossal iron groves at Worcester Park, and Monson still failed to put in a fluttering appearance over Trafalgar Square, even the Isle of Wight trippers felt their liberty to smile. And such intelligent people as did not consider Monson a fool stricken with the mania for invention, denounced him as being (for no particular reason) a self-advertising quack.

Yet now and again a morning trainload of season-ticket holders would see a white monster rush headlong through the airy tracery of guides and bars, and hear the further stays, nettings, and buffers snap, creak, and groan with the impact of the blow. Then there would be an efflorescence of black-set white-rimmed faces along the sides of the train, and the morning papers would be neglected for a vigorous discussion of the possibility of flying (in which nothing new was ever said by any chance), until the train reached Waterloo, and its cargo of season-ticket holders dispersed themselves over London. Or the fathers and mothers in some multitudinous train of weary excursionists returning exhausted from a day of rest by the sea, would find the dark fabric, standing out against the evening sky,

useful in diverting some bilious child from its introspection, and be suddenly startled by the swift transit of a huge black flapping shape that strained upward against the guides. It was a great and forcible thing beyond dispute, and excellent for conversation; yet, all the same, it was but flying in leading-strings, and most of those who witnessed it scarcely counted its flight as flying. More of a switchback it seemed to the run of the folk.

Monson, I say, did not trouble himself very keenly about the opinions of the press at first. But possibly he, even, had formed but a poor idea of the time it would take before the tactics of flying were mastered, the swift assured adjustment of the big soaring shape to every gust and chance movement of the air; nor had he clearly reckoned the money this prolonged struggle against gravitation would cost him. And he was not so pachydermatous as he seemed. Secretly he had his periodical bundles of cuttings sent him by Romeike, he had his periodical reminders from his banker; and if he did not mind the initial ridicule and scepticism, he felt the growing neglect as the months went by and the money dribbled away. Time was when Monson had sent the enterprising journalist, keen after readable matter, empty from his gates. But when the enterprising journalist ceased from troubling, Monson was anything but satisfied in his heart of hearts. Still day by day the work went on, and the multitudinous subtle difficulties of the steering diminished in number. Day by day, too, the money trickled away, until his balance was no longer a matter of hundreds of thousands, but of tens. And at last came an anniversary.

Monson, sitting in the little drawing-shed, suddenly noticed the date on Woodhouse's calendar.

"It was five years ago to-day that we began," he said to Woodhouse suddenly.

"Is it?" said Woodhouse.

"It's the alterations play the devil with us," said Monson, biting a paper-fastener.

The drawings for the new vans to the hinder screw lay on the table before him as he spoke. He pitched the mutilated brass paper-fastener into the waste-paper basket and drummed with his fingers. "These alterations! Will the mathematicians ever be clever enough to save us

all this patching and experimenting? Five years — learning by rule of thumb, when one might think that it was possible to calculate the whole thing out beforehand. The cost of it! I might have hired three senior wranglers for life. But they'd only have developed some beautifully useless theorems in pneumatics. What a time it has been, Woodhouse!"

"These mouldings will take three weeks," said Woodhouse. "At special prices."

"Three weeks!" said Monson, and sat drumming.

"Three weeks certain," said Woodhouse, an excellent engineer, but no good as a comforter. He drew the sheets towards him and began shading a bar.

Monson stopped drumming, and began to bite his finger-nails, staring the while at Woodhouse's head.

"How long have they been calling this Monson's Folly?" he said suddenly.

"*Oh!* Year or so," said Woodhouse carelessly, without looking up.

Monson sucked the air in between his teeth, and went to the window. The stout iron columns carrying the elevated rails upon which the start of the machine was made rose up close by, and the machine was hidden by the upper edge of the window. Through the grove of iron pillars, red painted and ornate with rows of bolts, one had a glimpse of the pretty scenery towards Esher. A train went gliding noiselessly across the middle distance, its rattle drowned by the hammering of the workmen overhead. Monson could imagine the grinning faces at the windows of the carriages. He swore savagely under his breath, and dabbed viciously at a blowfly that suddenly became noisy on the window-pane.

"What's up?" said Woodhouse, staring in surprise at his employer.

"I'm about sick of this."

Woodhouse scratched his cheek. "Oh!" he said, after an assimilating pause. He pushed the drawing away from him.

"Here these fools ... I'm trying to conquer a new element — trying to do a thing that will revolutionise life. And instead of taking an intelligent interest, they grin and make their stupid jokes, and call me and my appliances names."

“Asses!” said Woodhouse, letting his eye fall again on the drawing.

The epithet, curiously enough, made Monson wince. “I’m about sick of it, Woodhouse, anyhow,” he said, after a pause.

Woodhouse shrugged his shoulders.

“There’s nothing for it but patience, I suppose,” said Monson, sticking his hands in his pockets. “I’ve started. I’ve made my bed, and I’ve got to lie on it. I can’t go back. I’ll see it through, and spend every penny I have and every penny I can borrow. But I tell you, Woodhouse, I’m infernally sick of it, all the same. If I’d paid a tenth part of the money towards some political greaser’s expenses — I’d have been a baronet before this.”

Monson paused. Woodhouse stared in front of him with a blank expression he always employed to indicate sympathy, and tapped his pencil-case on the table. Monson stared at him for a minute.

“Oh, *damn*!” said Monson suddenly, and abruptly rushed out of the room.

Woodhouse continued his sympathetic rigour for perhaps half a minute. Then he sighed and resumed the shading of the drawings. Something had evidently upset Monson. Nice chap, and generous, but difficult to get on with. It was the way with every amateur who had anything to do with engineering — wanted everything finished at once. But Monson had usually the patience of the expert. Odd he was so irritable. Nice and round that aluminium rod did look now! Woodhouse threw back his head, and put it, first this side and then that, to appreciate his bit of shading better.

“Mr. Woodhouse,” said Hooper, the foreman of the labourers, putting his head in at the door.

“Hullo!” said Woodhouse, without turning round.

“Nothing happened, sir?” said Hooper.

“Happened?” said Woodhouse.

“The governor just been up the rails swearing like a tornader.”

“*Oh!*” said Woodhouse.

“It ain’t like him, sir.”

“No?”

“And I was thinking perhaps” —

“Don’t think,” said Woodhouse, still admiring the drawings.

Hooper knew Woodhouse, and he shut the door suddenly with a vicious slam. Woodhouse stared stonily before him for some further minutes, and then made an ineffectual effort to pick his teeth with his pencil. Abruptly he desisted, pitched that old, tried, and stumpy servitor across the room, got up, stretched himself, and followed Hooper.

He looked ruffled — it was visible to every workman he met. When a millionaire who has been spending thousands on experiments that employ quite a little army of people suddenly indicates that he is sick of the undertaking, there is almost invariably a certain amount of mental friction in the ranks of the little army he employs. And even before he indicates his intentions there are speculations and murmurs, a watching of faces and a study of straws. Hundreds of people knew before the day was out that Monson was ruffled, Woodhouse ruffled, Hooper ruffled. A workman's wife, for instance (whom Monson had never seen), decided to keep her money in the savings-bank instead of buying a velveteen dress. So far-reaching are even the casual curses of a millionaire.

Monson found a certain satisfaction in going on the works and behaving disagreeably to as many people as possible. After a time even that palled upon him, and he rode off the grounds, to every one's relief there, and through the lanes south-eastward, to the infinite tribulation of his house steward at Cheam.

And the immediate cause of it all, the little grain of annoyance that had suddenly precipitated all this discontent with his life-work was — these trivial things that direct all our great decisions! — half a dozen ill-considered remarks made by a pretty girl, prettily dressed, with a beautiful voice and something more than prettiness in her soft grey eyes. And of these half-dozen remarks, two words especially— "Monson's Folly." She had felt she was behaving charmingly to Monson; she reflected the next day how exceptionally effective she had been, and no one would have been more amazed than she, had she learned the effect she had left on Monson's mind. I hope, considering everything, that she never knew.

"How are you getting on with your flying-machine?" she asked. ("I wonder if I shall ever meet any one with the sense not to ask that," thought Monson.) "It will be very dangerous at first, will it

not?" ("Thinks I'm afraid.") "Jorgon is going to play presently; have you heard him before?" ("My mania being attended to, we turn to rational conversation.") Gush about Jorgon; gradual decline of conversation, ending with— "You must let me know when your flying-machine is finished, Mr. Monson, and then I will consider the advisability of taking a ticket." ("One would think I was still playing inventions in the nursery.") But the bitterest thing she said was not meant for Monson's ears. To Phlox, the novelist, she was always conscientiously brilliant. "I have been talking to Mr. Monson, and he can think of nothing, positively nothing, but that flying-machine of his. Do you know, all his workmen call that place of his 'Monson's Folly'? He is quite impossible. It is really very, very sad. I always regard him myself in the light of sunken treasure — the Lost Millionaire, you know."

She was pretty and well educated, — indeed, she had written an epigrammatic novelette; but the bitterness was that she was typical. She summarised what the world thought of the man who was working sanely, steadily, and surely towards a more tremendous revolution in the appliances of civilisation, a more far-reaching alteration in the ways of humanity than has ever been effected since history began. They did not even take him seriously. In a little while he would be proverbial. "I *must* fly now," he said on his way home, smarting with a sense of absolute social failure. "I must fly soon. If it doesn't come off soon, by God! I shall run amuck."

He said that before he had gone through his pass-book and his litter of papers. Inadequate as the cause seems, it was that girl's voice and the expression of her eyes that precipitated his discontent. But certainly the discovery that he had no longer even one hundred thousand pounds' worth of realisable property behind him was the poison that made the wound deadly.

It was the next day after this that he exploded upon Woodhouse and his workmen, and thereafter his bearing was consistently grim for three weeks, and anxiety dwelt in Cheam and Ewell, Malden, Morden, and Worcester Park, places that had thriven mightily on his experiments.

Four weeks after that first swearing of his, he stood with Woodhouse by the reconstructed machine as it lay across the

elevated railway, by means of which it gained its initial impetus. The new propeller glittered a brighter white than the rest of the machine, and a gilder, obedient to a whim of Monson's, was picking out the aluminium bars with gold. And looking down the long avenue between the ropes (gilded now with the sunset), one saw red signals, and two miles away an ant-hill of workmen busy altering the last falls of the run into a rising slope.

"I'll *come*," said Woodhouse. "I'll come right enough. But I tell you it's infernally foolhardy. If only you would give another year" —

"I tell you I won't. I tell you the thing works. I've given years enough" —

"It's not that," said Woodhouse. "We're all right with the machine. But it's the steering" —

"Haven't I been rushing, night and morning, backwards and forwards, through this squirrel's cage? If the thing steers true here, it will steer true all across England. It's just funk, I tell you, Woodhouse. We could have gone a year ago. And besides" —

"Well?" said Woodhouse.

"The money!" snapped Monson over his shoulder.

"Hang it! I never thought of the money," said Woodhouse, and then, speaking now in a very different tone to that with which he had said the words before, he repeated, "I'll come. Trust me."

Monson turned suddenly, and saw all that Woodhouse had not the dexterity to say, shining on his sunset-lit face. He looked for a moment, then impulsively extended his hand. "Thanks," he said.

"All right," said Woodhouse, gripping the hand, and with a queer softening of his features. "Trust me."

Then both men turned to the big apparatus that lay with its flat wings extended upon the carrier, and stared at it meditatively. Monson, guided perhaps by a photographic study of the flight of birds, and by Lilienthal's methods, had gradually drifted from Maxim's shapes towards the bird form again. The thing, however, was driven by a huge screw behind in the place of the tail; and so hovering, which needs an almost vertical adjustment of a flat tail, was rendered impossible. The body of the machine was small, almost cylindrical, and pointed. Forward and aft on the pointed ends were

two small petroleum engines for the screw, and the navigators sat deep in a canoe-like recess, the foremost one steering, and being protected by a low screen, with two plate-glass windows, from the blinding rush of air. On either side a monstrous flat framework with a curved front border could be adjusted so as either to lie horizontally, or to be tilted upward or down. These wings worked rigidly together, or, by releasing a pin, one could be tilted through a small angle independently of its fellow. The front edge of either wing could also be shifted back so as to diminish the wing-area about one-sixth. The machine was not only not designed to hover, but it was also incapable of fluttering. Monson's idea was to get into the air with the initial rush of the apparatus, and then to skim, much as a playing-card may be skimmed, keeping up the rush by means of the screw at the stern. Rooks and gulls fly enormous distances in that way with scarcely a perceptible movement of the wings. The bird really drives along on an aërial switchback. It glides slanting downward for a space, until it has gained considerable momentum, and then altering the inclination of its wings, glides up again almost to its original altitude. Even a Londoner who has watched the birds in the aviary in Regent's Park knows that.

But the bird is practising this art from the moment it leaves its nest. It has not only the perfect apparatus, but the perfect instinct to use it. A man off his feet has the poorest skill in balancing. Even the simple trick of the bicycle costs him some hours of labour. The instantaneous adjustments of the wings, the quick response to a passing breeze, the swift recovery of equilibrium, the giddy, eddying movements that require such absolute precision — all that he must learn, learn with infinite labour and infinite danger, if ever he is to conquer flying. The flying-machine that will start off some fine day, driven by neat "little levers," with a nice open deck like a liner, and all loaded up with bombshells and guns, is the easy dreaming of a literary man. In lives and in treasure the cost of the conquest of the empire of the air may even exceed all that has been spent in man's great conquest of the sea. Certainly it will be costlier than the greatest war that has ever devastated the world.

No one knew these things better than these two practical men. And they knew they were in the front rank of the coming army. Yet

there is hope even in a forlorn hope. Men are killed outright in the reserves sometimes, while others who have been left for dead in the thickest corner crawl out and survive.

"If we miss these meadows" — said Woodhouse presently in his slow way.

"My dear chap," said Monson, whose spirits had been rising fitfully during the last few days, "we mustn't miss these meadows. There's a quarter of a square mile for us to hit, fences removed, ditches levelled. We shall come down all right — rest assured. And if we don't" —

"Ah!" said Woodhouse. "If we don't!"

Before the day of the start, the newspaper people got wind of the alterations at the northward end of the framework, and Monson was cheered by a decided change in the comments Romeike forwarded him. "He will be off some day," said the papers. "He will be off some day," said the South-Western season-ticket holders one to another; the seaside excursionists, the Saturday-to-Monday trippers from Sussex and Hampshire and Dorset and Devon, the eminent literary people from Hazlemere, all remarked eagerly one to another, "He will be off some day," as the familiar scaffolding came in sight. And actually, one bright morning, in full view of the ten-past-ten train from Basingstoke, Monson's flying-machine started on its journey.

They saw the carrier running swiftly along its rail, and the white and gold screw spinning in the air. They heard the rapid rumble of wheels, and a thud as the carrier reached the buffers at the end of its run. Then a whirr as the Flying-Machine was shot forward into the networks. All that the majority of them had seen and heard before. The thing went with a drooping flight through the framework and rose again, and then every beholder shouted, or screamed, or yelled, or shrieked after his kind. For instead of the customary concussion and stoppage, the Flying Machine flew out of its five years' cage like a bolt from a crossbow, and drove slantingly upward into the air, curved round a little, so as to cross the line, and soared in the direction of Wimbledon Common.

It seemed to hang momentarily in the air and grow smaller, then it ducked and vanished over the clustering blue tree-tops to the east of Coombe Hill, and no one stopped staring and gasping until long after

it had disappeared.

That was what the people in the train from Basingstoke saw. If you had drawn a line down the middle of that train, from engine to guard's van, you would not have found a living soul on the opposite side to the flying-machine. It was a mad rush from window to window as the thing crossed the line. And the engine-driver and stoker never took their eyes off the low hills about Wimbledon, and never noticed that they had run clean through Coombe and Maiden and Raynes Park, until, with returning animation, they found themselves pelting, at the most indecent pace, into Wimbledon station.

From the moment when Monson had started the carrier with a "*Now!*" neither he nor Woodhouse said a word. Both men sat with clenched teeth. Monson had crossed the line with a curve that was too sharp, and Woodhouse had opened and shut his white lips; but neither spoke. Woodhouse simply gripped his seat, and breathed sharply through his teeth, watching the blue country to the west rushing past, and down, and away from him. Monson knelt at his post forward, and his hands trembled on the spoked wheel that moved the wings. He could see nothing before him but a mass of white clouds in the sky.

The machine went slanting upward, travelling with an enormous speed still, but losing momentum every moment. The land ran away underneath with diminishing speed.

"*Now!*" said Woodhouse at last, and with a violent effort Monson wrenched over the wheel and altered the angle of the wings. The machine seemed to hang for half a minute motionless in mid-air, and then he saw the hazy blue house-covered hills of Kilburn and Hampstead jump up before his eyes and rise steadily, until the little sunlit dome of the Albert Hall appeared through his windows. For a moment he scarcely understood the meaning of this upward rush of the horizon, but as the nearer and nearer houses came into view, he realised what he had done. He had turned the wings over too far, and they were swooping steeply downward towards the Thames.

The thought, the question, the realisation were all the business of a second of time. "Too much!" gasped Woodhouse. Monson brought the wheel half-way back with a jerk, and forthwith the Kilburn and

Hampstead ridge dropped again to the lower edge of his windows. They had been a thousand feet above Coombe and Maiden station; fifty seconds after they whizzed, at a frightful pace, not eighty feet above the East Putney station, on the Metropolitan District line, to the screaming astonishment of a platformful of people. Monson flung up the vans against the air, and over Fulham they rushed up their atmospheric switchback again, steeply — too steeply. The 'buses went floundering across the Fulham Road, the people yelled.

Then down again, too steeply still, and the distant trees and houses about Primrose Hill leapt up across Monson's window, and then suddenly he saw straight before him the greenery of Kensington Gardens and the towers of the Imperial Institute. They were driving straight down upon South Kensington. The pinnacles of the Natural History Museum rushed up into view. There came one fatal second of swift thought, a moment of hesitation. Should he try and clear the towers, or swerve eastward?

He made a hesitating attempt to release the right wing, left the catch half released, and gave a frantic clutch at the wheel.

The nose of the machine seemed to leap up before him. The wheel pressed his hand with irresistible force, and jerked itself out of his control.

Woodhouse, sitting crouched together, gave a hoarse cry, and sprang up towards Monson. "Too far!" he cried, and then he was clinging to the gunwale for dear life, and Monson had been jerked clean overhead, and was falling backwards upon him.

So swiftly had the thing happened that barely a quarter of the people going to and fro in Hyde Park, and Brompton Road, and the Exhibition Road saw anything of the aërial catastrophe. A distant winged shape had appeared above the clustering houses to the south, had fallen and risen, growing larger as it did so; had swooped swiftly down towards the Imperial Institute, a broad spread of flying wings, had swept round in a quarter circle, dashed eastward, and then suddenly sprang vertically into the air. A black object shot out of it, and came spinning downward. A man! Two men clutching each other! They came whirling down, separated as they struck the roof of the Students' Club, and bounded off into the green bushes on its southward side.

For perhaps half a minute, the pointed stem of the big machine still pierced vertically upward, the screw spinning desperately. For one brief instant, that yet seemed an age to all who watched, it had hung motionless in mid-air. Then a spout of yellow flame licked up its length from the stern engine, and swift, swifter, swifter, and flaring like a rocket, it rushed down upon the solid mass of masonry which was formerly the Royal College of Science. The big screw of white and gold touched the parapet, and crumpled up like wet linen. Then the blazing spindle-shaped body smashed and splintered, smashing and splintering in its fall, upon the north-westward angle of the building.

But the crash, the flame of blazing paraffin that shot heavenward from the shattered engines of the machine, the crushed horrors that were found in the garden beyond the Students' Club, the masses of yellow parapet and red brick that fell headlong into the roadway, the running to and fro of people like ants in a broken ant-hill, the galloping of fire-engines, the gathering of crowds — all these things do not belong to this story, which was written only to tell how the first of all successful flying-machines was launched and flew. Though he failed, and failed disastrously, the record of Monson's work remains — a sufficient monument — to guide the next of that band of gallant experimentalists who will sooner or later master this great problem of flying. And between Worcester Park and Malden there still stands that portentous avenue of iron-work, rusting now, and dangerous here and there, to witness to the first desperate struggle for man's right of way through the air.

THE STORY OF THE LATE MR. ELVESHAM

I set this story down, not expecting it will be believed, but, if possible, to prepare a way of escape for the next victim. He, perhaps, may profit by my misfortune. My own case, I know, is hopeless, and I am now in some measure prepared to meet my fate.

My name is Edward George Eden. I was born at Trentham, in Staffordshire, my father being employed in the gardens there. I lost my mother when I was three years old, and my father when I was five, my uncle, George Eden, then adopting me as his own son. He was a single man, self-educated, and well-known in Birmingham as an enterprising journalist; he educated me generously, fired my ambition to succeed in the world, and at his death, which happened four years ago, left me his entire fortune, a matter of about five hundred pounds after all outgoing charges were paid. I was then eighteen. He advised me in his will to expend the money in completing my education. I had already chosen the profession of medicine, and through his posthumous generosity, and my good fortune in a scholarship competition, I became a medical student at University College, London. At the time of the beginning of my story I lodged at 11A University Street, in a little upper room, very shabbily furnished, and draughty, overlooking the back of Shoolbred's premises. I used this little room both to live in and sleep in, because I was anxious to eke out my means to the very last shillingsworth.

I was taking a pair of shoes to be mended at a shop in the Tottenham Court Road when I first encountered the little old man with the yellow face, with whom my life has now become so inextricably entangled. He was standing on the kerb, and staring at the number on the door in a doubtful way, as I opened it. His eyes — they were dull grey eyes, and reddish under the rims — fell to my face, and his countenance immediately assumed an expression of corrugated amiability.

"You come," he said, "apt to the moment. I had forgotten the number of your house. How do you do, Mr. Eden?"

I was a little astonished at his familiar address, for I had never set

eyes on the man before. I was a little annoyed, too, at his catching me with my boots under my arm. He noticed my lack of cordiality.

"Wonder who the deuce I am, eh? A friend, let me assure you. I have seen you before, though you haven't seen me. Is there anywhere where I can talk to you?"

I hesitated. The shabbiness of my room upstairs was not a matter for every stranger. "Perhaps," said I, "we might walk down the street. I'm unfortunately prevented" — My gesture explained the sentence before I had spoken it.

"The very thing," he said, and faced this way and then that. "The street? Which way shall we go?" I slipped my boots down in the passage. "Look here!" he said abruptly; "this business of mine is a rigmarole. Come and lunch with me, Mr. Eden. I'm an old man, a very old man, and not good at explanations, and what with my piping voice and the clatter of the traffic" —

He laid a persuasive skinny hand that trembled a little upon my arm.

I was not so old that an old man might not treat me to a lunch. Yet at the same time I was not altogether pleased by this abrupt invitation. "I had rather" — I began. "But *I* had rather," he said, catching me up, "and a certain civility is surely due to my grey hairs." And so I consented, and went with him.

He took me to Blavitski's; I had to walk slowly to accommodate myself to his paces; and over such a lunch as I had never tasted before, he fended off my leading questions, and I took a better note of his appearance. His clean-shaven face was lean and wrinkled, his shrivelled lips fell over a set of false teeth, and his white hair was thin and rather long; he seemed small to me, — though, indeed, most people seemed small to me, — and his shoulders were rounded and bent. And watching him, I could not help but observe that he too was taking note of me, running his eyes, with a curious touch of greed in them, over me, from my broad shoulders to my sun-tanned hands, and up to my freckled face again. "And now," said he, as we lit our cigarettes, "I must tell you of the business in hand.

"I must tell you, then, that I am an old man, a very old man." He paused momentarily. "And it happens that I have money that I must presently be leaving, and never a child have I to leave it to." I

thought of the confidence trick, and resolved I would be on the alert for the vestiges of my five hundred pounds. He proceeded to enlarge on his loneliness, and the trouble he had to find a proper disposition of his money. “I have weighed this plan and that plan, charities, institutions, and scholarships, and libraries, and I have come to this conclusion at last,” — he fixed his eyes on my face,— “that I will find some young fellow, ambitious, pure-minded, and poor, healthy in body and healthy in mind, and, in short, make him my heir, give him all that I have.” He repeated, “Give him all that I have. So that he will suddenly be lifted out of all the trouble and struggle in which his sympathies have been educated, to freedom and influence.”

I tried to seem disinterested. With a transparent hypocrisy, I said, “And you want my help, my professional services, maybe, to find that person.”

He smiled, and looked at me over his cigarette, and I laughed at his quiet exposure of my modest pretence.

“What a career such a man might have!” he said. “It fills me with envy to think how I have accumulated that another man may spend —

“But there are conditions, of course, burdens to be imposed. He must, for instance, take my name. You cannot expect everything without some return. And I must go into all the circumstances of his life before I can accept him. He *must* be sound. I must know his heredity, how his parents and grandparents died, have the strictest inquiries made into his private morals” —

This modified my secret congratulations a little. “And do I understand,” said I, “that I — ?”

“Yes,” he said, almost fiercely. “You. *You.*”

I answered never a word. My imagination was dancing wildly, my innate scepticism was useless to modify its transports. There was not a particle of gratitude in my mind — I did not know what to say nor how to say it. “But why me in particular?” I said at last.

He had chanced to hear of me from Professor Haslar, he said, as a typically sound and sane young man, and he wished, as far as possible, to leave his money where health and integrity were assured.

That was my first meeting with the little old man. He was mysterious about himself; he would not give his name yet, he said,

and after I had answered some questions of his, he left me at the Blavitski portal. I noticed that he drew a handful of gold coins from his pocket when it came to paying for the lunch. His insistence upon bodily health was curious. In accordance with an arrangement we had made I applied that day for a life policy in the Loyal Insurance Company for a large sum, and I was exhaustively overhauled by the medical advisers of that company in the subsequent week. Even that did not satisfy him, and he insisted I must be re-examined by the great Doctor Henderson. It was Friday in Whitsun week before he came to a decision. He called me down, quite late in the evening, — nearly nine it was, — from cramming chemical equations for my Preliminary Scientific examination. He was standing in the passage under the feeble gas-lamp, and his face was a grotesque interplay of shadows. He seemed more bowed than when I had first seen him, and his cheeks had sunk in a little.

His voice shook with emotion. "Everything is satisfactory, Mr. Eden," he said. "Everything is quite, quite satisfactory. And this night of all nights, you must dine with me and celebrate your — accession." He was interrupted by a cough. "You won't have long to wait, either," he said, wiping his handkerchief across his lips, and gripping my hand with his long bony claw that was disengaged. "Certainly not very long to wait."

We went into the street and called a cab. I remember every incident of that drive vividly, the swift, easy motion, the vivid contrast of gas and oil and electric light, the crowds of people in the streets, the place in Regent Street to which we went, and the sumptuous dinner we were served with there. I was disconcerted at first by the well-dressed waiter's glances at my rough clothes, bothered by the stones of the olives, but as the champagne warmed my blood, my confidence revived. At first the old man talked of himself. He had already told me his name in the cab; he was Egbert Elvesham, the great philosopher, whose name I had known since I was a lad at school. It seemed incredible to me that this man, whose intelligence had so early dominated mine, this great abstraction, should suddenly realise itself as this decrepit, familiar figure. I daresay every young fellow who has suddenly fallen among celebrities has felt something of my disappointment. He told me now

of the future that the feeble streams of his life would presently leave dry for me, houses, copyrights, investments; I had never suspected that philosophers were so rich. He watched me drink and eat with a touch of envy. “What a capacity for living you have!” he said; and then, with a sigh, a sigh of relief I could have thought it, “It will not be long.”

“Ay,” said I, my head swimming now with champagne; “I have a future perhaps — of a passing agreeable sort, thanks to you. I shall now have the honour of your name. But you have a past. Such a past as is worth all my future.”

He shook his head and smiled, as I thought, with half-sad appreciation of my flattering admiration. “That future,” he said, “would you in truth change it?” The waiter came with liqueurs. “You will not perhaps mind taking my name, taking my position, but would you indeed — willingly — take my years?”

“With your achievements,” said I gallantly.

He smiled again. “Kummel — both,” he said to the waiter, and turned his attention to a little paper packet he had taken from his pocket. “This hour,” said he, “this after-dinner hour is the hour of small things. Here is a scrap of my unpublished wisdom.” He opened the packet with his shaking yellow fingers, and showed a little pinkish powder on the paper. “This,” said he— “well, you must guess what it is. But Kummel — put but a dash of this powder in it — is Himmel.” His large greyish eyes watched mine with an inscrutable expression.

It was a bit of a shock to me to find this great teacher gave his mind to the flavour of liqueurs. However, I feigned a great interest in his weakness, for I was drunk enough for such small sycophancy.

He parted the powder between the little glasses, and, rising suddenly, with a strange unexpected dignity, held out his hand towards me. I imitated his action, and the glasses rang. “To a quick succession,” said he, and raised his glass towards his lips.

“Not that,” I said hastily. “Not that.”

He paused, with the liqueur at the level of his chin, and his eyes blazing into mine.

“To a long life,” said I.

He hesitated. “To a long life,” said he, with a sudden bark of

laughter, and with eyes fixed on one another we tilted the little glasses. His eyes looked straight into mine, and as I drained the stuff off, I felt a curiously intense sensation. The first touch of it set my brain in a furious tumult; I seemed to feel an actual physical stirring in my skull, and a seething humming filled my ears. I did not notice the flavour in my mouth, the aroma that filled my throat; I saw only the grey intensity of his gaze that burnt into mine. The draught, the mental confusion, the noise and stirring in my head, seemed to last an interminable time. Curious vague impressions of half-forgotten things danced and vanished on the edge of my consciousness. At last he broke the spell. With a sudden explosive sigh he put down his glass.

"Well?" he said.

"It's glorious," said I, though I had not tasted the stuff.

My head was spinning. I sat down. My brain was chaos. Then my perception grew clear and minute as though I saw things in a concave mirror. His manner seemed to have changed into something nervous and hasty. He pulled out his watch and grimaced at it. "Eleven-seven! And to-night I must — Seven — twenty-five. Waterloo! I must go at once." He called for the bill, and struggled with his coat. Officious waiters came to our assistance. In another moment I was wishing him good-bye, over the apron of a cab, and still with an absurd feeling of minute distinctness, as though — how can I express it? — I not only saw but *felt* through an inverted opera-glass.

"That stuff," he said. He put his hand to his forehead. "I ought not to have given it to you. It will make your head split to-morrow. Wait a minute. Here." He handed me out a little flat thing like a seidlitz-powder. "Take that in water as you are going to bed. The other thing was a drug. Not till you're ready to go to bed, mind. It will clear your head. That's all. One more shake — Futurus!"

I gripped his shrivelled claw. "Good-bye," he said, and by the droop of his eyelids I judged he too was a little under the influence of that brain-twisting cordial.

He recollected something else with a start, felt in his breast-pocket, and produced another packet, this time a cylinder the size and shape of a shaving-stick. "Here," said he. "I'd almost forgotten.

Don't open this until I come to-morrow — but take it now."

It was so heavy that I well-nigh dropped it. "All ri'!" said I, and he grinned at me through the cab window as the cabman flicked his horse into wakefulness. It was a white packet he had given me, with red seals at either end and along its edge. "If this isn't money," said I, "it's platinum or lead."

I stuck it with elaborate care into my pocket, and with a whirling brain walked home through the Regent Street loiterers and the dark back streets beyond Portland Road. I remember the sensations of that walk very vividly, strange as they were. I was still so far myself that I could notice my strange mental state, and wonder whether this stuff I had had was opium — a drug beyond my experience. It is hard now to describe the peculiarity of my mental strangeness — mental doubling vaguely expresses it. As I was walking up Regent Street I found in my mind a queer persuasion that it was Waterloo station, and had an odd impulse to get into the Polytechnic as a man might get into a train. I put a knuckle in my eye, and it was Regent Street. How can I express it? You see a skilful actor looking quietly at you, he pulls a grimace, and lo! — another person. Is it too extravagant if I tell you that it seemed to me as if Regent Street had, for the moment, done that? Then, being persuaded it was Regent Street again, I was oddly muddled about some fantastic reminiscences that cropped up. "Thirty years ago," thought I, "it was here that I quarrelled with my brother." Then I burst out laughing, to the astonishment and encouragement of a group of night prowlers. Thirty years ago I did not exist, and never in my life had I boasted a brother. The stuff was surely liquid folly, for the poignant regret for that lost brother still clung to me. Along Portland Road the madness took another turn. I began to recall vanished shops, and to compare the street with what it used to be. Confused, troubled thinking is comprehensible enough after the drink I had taken, but what puzzled me were these curiously vivid phantasm memories that had crept into my mind, and not only the memories that had crept in, but also the memories that had slipped out. I stopped opposite Stevens', the natural history dealer's, and cudgelled my brains to think what he had to do with me. A 'bus went by, and sounded exactly like the rumbling of a train. I seemed to be dipped into some dark, remote pit

for the recollection. “Of course,” said I, at last, “he has promised me three frogs to-morrow. Odd I should have forgotten.”

Do they still show children dissolving views? In those I remember one view would begin like a faint ghost, and grow and oust another. In just that way it seemed to me that a ghostly set of new sensations was struggling with those of my ordinary self.

I went on through Euston Road to Tottenham Court Road, puzzled, and a little frightened, and scarcely noticed the unusual way I was taking, for commonly I used to cut through the intervening network of back streets. I turned into University Street, to discover that I had forgotten my number. Only by a strong effort did I recall 11A, and even then it seemed to me that it was a thing some forgotten person had told me. I tried to steady my mind by recalling the incidents of the dinner, and for the life of me I could conjure up no picture of my host’s face; I saw him only as a shadowy outline, as one might see oneself reflected in a window through which one was looking. In his place, however, I had a curious exterior vision of myself sitting at a table, flushed, bright-eyed, and talkative.

“I must take this other powder,” said I. “This is getting impossible.”

I tried the wrong side of the hall for my candle and the matches, and had a doubt of which landing my room might be on. “I’m drunk,” I said, “that’s certain,” and blundered needlessly on the staircase to sustain the proposition.

At the first glance my room seemed unfamiliar. “What rot!” I said, and stared about me. I seemed to bring myself back by the effort, and the odd phantasmal quality passed into the concrete familiar. There was the old glass still, with my notes on the albumens stuck in the corner of the frame, my old everyday suit of clothes pitched about the floor. And yet it was not so real after all. I felt an idiotic persuasion trying to creep into my mind, as it were, that I was in a railway carriage in a train just stopping, that I was peering out of the window at some unknown station. I gripped the bed-rail firmly to reassure myself. “It’s clairvoyance, perhaps,” I said. “I must write to the Psychical Research Society.”

I put the rouleau on my dressing-table, sat on my bed and began to take off my boots. It was as if the picture of my present sensations

was painted over some other picture that was trying to show through. “Curse it!” said I; “my wits are going, or am I in two places at once?” Half-undressed, I tossed the powder into a glass and drank it off. It effervesced, and became a fluorescent amber colour. Before I was in bed my mind was already tranquillised. I felt the pillow at my cheek, and thereupon I must have fallen asleep.

I awoke abruptly out of a dream of strange beasts, and found myself lying on my back. Probably everyone knows that dismal, emotional dream from which one escapes, awake indeed, but strangely cowed. There was a curious taste in my mouth, a tired feeling in my limbs, a sense of cutaneous discomfort. I lay with my head motionless on my pillow, expecting that my feeling of strangeness and terror would probably pass away, and that I should then doze off again to sleep. But instead of that, my uncanny sensations increased. At first I could perceive nothing wrong about me. There was a faint light in the room, so faint that it was the very next thing to darkness, and the furniture stood out in it as vague blots of absolute darkness. I stared with my eyes just over the bedclothes.

It came into my mind that someone had entered the room to rob me of my rouleau of money, but after lying for some moments, breathing regularly to simulate sleep, I realised this was mere fancy. Nevertheless, the uneasy assurance of something wrong kept fast hold of me. With an effort I raised my head from the pillow, and peered about me at the dark. What it was I could not conceive. I looked at the dim shapes around me, the greater and lesser darknesses that indicated curtains, table, fireplace, bookshelves, and so forth. Then I began to perceive something unfamiliar in the forms of the darkness. Had the bed turned round? Yonder should be the bookshelves, and something shrouded and pallid rose there, something that would not answer to the bookshelves, however I looked at it. It was far too big to be my shirt thrown on a chair.

Overcoming a childish terror, I threw back the bedclothes and thrust my leg out of bed. Instead of coming out of my truckle-bed upon the floor, I found my foot scarcely reached the edge of the mattress. I made another step, as it were, and sat up on the edge of the bed. By the side of my bed should be the candle, and the matches

upon the broken chair. I put out my hand and touched — nothing. I waved my hand in the darkness, and it came against some heavy hanging, soft and thick in texture, which gave a rustling noise at my touch. I grasped this and pulled it; it appeared to be a curtain suspended over the head of my bed.

I was now thoroughly awake, and beginning to realise that I was in a strange room. I was puzzled. I tried to recall the overnight circumstances, and I found them now, curiously enough, vivid in my memory: the supper, my reception of the little packages, my wonder whether I was intoxicated, my slow undressing, the coolness to my flushed face of my pillow. I felt a sudden distrust. Was that last night, or the night before? At anyrate, this room was strange to me, and I could not imagine how I had got into it. The dim, pallid outline was growing paler, and I perceived it was a window, with the dark shape of an oval toilet-glass against the weak intimation of the dawn that filtered through the blind. I stood up, and was surprised by a curious feeling of weakness and unsteadiness. With trembling hands outstretched, I walked slowly towards the window, getting, nevertheless, a bruise on the knee from a chair by the way. I fumbled round the glass, which was large, with handsome brass sconces, to find the blind-cord. I could not find any. By chance I took hold of the tassel, and with the click of a spring the blind ran up.

I found myself looking out upon a scene that was altogether strange to me. The night was overcast, and through the flocculent grey of the heaped clouds there filtered a faint half-light of dawn. Just at the edge of the sky, the cloud-canopy had a blood-red rim. Below, everything was dark and indistinct, dim hills in the distance, a vague mass of buildings running up into pinnacles, trees like spilt ink, and below the window a tracery of black bushes and pale grey paths. It was so unfamiliar that for the moment I thought myself still dreaming. I felt the toilet-table; it appeared to be made of some polished wood, and was rather elaborately furnished — there were little cut-glass bottles and a brush upon it. There was also a queer little object, horse-shoe-shaped it felt, with smooth, hard projections, lying in a saucer. I could find no matches nor candlestick.

I turned my eyes to the room again. Now the blind was up, faint spectres of its furnishing came out of the darkness. There was a huge

curtained bed, and the fireplace at its foot had a large white mantel with something of the shimmer of marble.

I leant against the toilet-table, shut my eyes and opened them again, and tried to think. The whole thing was far too real for dreaming. I was inclined to imagine there was still some hiatus in my memory, as a consequence of my draught of that strange liqueur; that I had come into my inheritance perhaps, and suddenly lost my recollection of everything since my good fortune had been announced. Perhaps if I waited a little, things would be clearer to me again. Yet my dinner with old Elvesham was now singularly vivid and recent. The champagne, the observant waiters, the powder, and the liqueurs — I could have staked my soul it all happened a few hours ago.

And then occurred a thing so trivial and yet so terrible to me that I shiver now to think of that moment. I spoke aloud. I said, "How the devil did I get here?" ... *And the voice was not my own.*

It was not my own, it was thin, the articulation was slurred, the resonance of my facial bones was different. Then, to reassure myself I ran one hand over the other, and felt loose folds of skin, the bony laxity of age. "Surely," I said, in that horrible voice that had somehow established itself in my throat, "surely this thing is a dream!" Almost as quickly as if I did it involuntarily, I thrust my fingers into my mouth. My teeth had gone. My finger-tips ran on the flaccid surface of an even row of shrivelled gums. I was sick with dismay and disgust.

I felt then a passionate desire to see myself, to realise at once in its full horror the ghastly change that had come upon me. I tottered to the mantel, and felt along it for matches. As I did so, a barking cough sprang up in my throat, and I clutched the thick flannel nightdress I found about me. There were no matches there, and I suddenly realised that my extremities were cold. Sniffing and coughing, whimpering a little, perhaps, I fumbled back to bed. "It is surely a dream," I whimpered to myself as I clambered back, "surely a dream." It was a senile repetition. I pulled the bedclothes over my shoulders, over my ears, I thrust my withered hand under the pillow, and determined to compose myself to sleep. Of course it was a

dream. In the morning the dream would be over, and I should wake up strong and vigorous again to my youth and studies. I shut my eyes, breathed regularly, and, finding myself wakeful, began to count slowly through the powers of three.

But the thing I desired would not come. I could not get to sleep. And the persuasion of the inexorable reality of the change that had happened to me grew steadily. Presently I found myself with my eyes wide open, the powers of three forgotten, and my skinny fingers upon my shrivelled gums. I was, indeed, suddenly and abruptly, an old man. I had in some unaccountable manner fallen through my life and come to old age, in some way I had been cheated of all the best of my life, of love, of struggle, of strength, and hope. I grovelled into the pillow and tried to persuade myself that such hallucination was possible. Imperceptibly, steadily, the dawn grew clearer.

At last, despairing of further sleep, I sat up in bed and looked about me. A chill twilight rendered the whole chamber visible. It was spacious and well-furnished, better furnished than any room I had ever slept in before. A candle and matches became dimly visible upon a little pedestal in a recess. I threw back the bedclothes, and, shivering with the rawness of the early morning, albeit it was summer-time, I got out and lit the candle. Then, trembling horribly, so that the extinguisher rattled on its spike, I tottered to the glass and saw — *Elvesham's face!* It was none the less horrible because I had already dimly feared as much. He had already seemed physically weak and pitiful to me, but seen now, dressed only in a coarse flannel nightdress that fell apart and showed the stringy neck, seen now as my own body, I cannot describe its desolate decrepitude. The hollow cheeks, the straggling tail of dirty grey hair, the rheumy bleared eyes, the quivering, shrivelled lips, the lower displaying a gleam of the pink interior lining, and those horrible dark gums showing. You who are mind and body together, at your natural years, cannot imagine what this fiendish imprisonment meant to me. To be young and full of the desire and energy of youth, and to be caught, and presently to be crushed in this tottering ruin of a body....

But I wander from the course of my story. For some time I must have been stunned at this change that had come upon me. It was

daylight when I did so far gather myself together as to think. In some inexplicable way I had been changed, though how, short of magic, the thing had been done, I could not say. And as I thought, the diabolical ingenuity of Elvesham came home to me. It seemed plain to me that as I found myself in his, so he must be in possession of *my* body, of my strength, that is, and my future. But how to prove it? Then, as I thought, the thing became so incredible, even to me, that my mind reeled, and I had to pinch myself, to feel my toothless gums, to see myself in the glass, and touch the things about me, before I could steady myself to face the facts again. Was all life hallucination? Was I indeed Elvesham, and he me? Had I been dreaming of Eden overnight? Was there any Eden? But if I was Elvesham, I should remember where I was on the previous morning, the name of the town in which I lived, what happened before the dream began. I struggled with my thoughts. I recalled the queer doubleness of my memories overnight. But now my mind was clear. Not the ghost of any memories but those proper to Eden could I raise.

"This way lies insanity!" I cried in my piping voice. I staggered to my feet, dragged my feeble, heavy limbs to the washhand-stand, and plunged my grey head into a basin of cold water. Then, towelling myself, I tried again. It was no good. I felt beyond all question that I was indeed Eden, not Elvesham. But Eden in Elvesham's body!

Had I been a man of any other age, I might have given myself up to my fate as one enchanted. But in these sceptical days miracles do not pass current. Here was some trick of psychology. What a drug and a steady stare could do, a drug and a steady stare, or some similar treatment, could surely undo. Men have lost their memories before. But to exchange memories as one does umbrellas! I laughed. Alas! not a healthy laugh, but a wheezing, senile titter. I could have fancied old Elvesham laughing at my plight, and a gust of petulant anger, unusual to me, swept across my feelings. I began dressing eagerly in the clothes I found lying about on the floor, and only realised when I was dressed that it was an evening suit I had assumed. I opened the wardrobe and found some more ordinary clothes, a pair of plaid trousers, and an old-fashioned dressing-gown. I put a venerable smoking-cap on my venerable head, and, coughing

a little from my exertions, tottered out upon the landing.

It was then, perhaps, a quarter to six, and the blinds were closely drawn and the house quite silent. The landing was a spacious one, a broad, richly-carpeted staircase went down into the darkness of the hall below, and before me a door ajar showed me a writing-desk, a revolving bookcase, the back of a study chair, and a fine array of bound books, shelf upon shelf.

"My study," I mumbled, and walked across the landing. Then at the sound of my voice a thought struck me, and I went back to the bedroom and put in the set of false teeth. They slipped in with the ease of old habit. "That's better," said I, gnashing them, and so returned to the study.

The drawers of the writing-desk were locked. Its revolving top was also locked. I could see no indications of the keys, and there were none in the pockets of my trousers. I shuffled back at once to the bedroom, and went through the dress suit, and afterwards the pockets of all the garments I could find. I was very eager, and one might have imagined that burglars had been at work, to see my room when I had done. Not only were there no keys to be found, but not a coin, nor a scrap of paper — save only the receipted bill of the overnight dinner.

A curious weariness asserted itself. I sat down and stared at the garments flung here and there, their pockets turned inside out. My first frenzy had already flickered out. Every moment I was beginning to realise the immense intelligence of the plans of my enemy, to see more and more clearly the hopelessness of my position. With an effort I rose and hurried hobbling into the study again. On the staircase was a housemaid pulling up the blinds. She stared, I think, at the expression of my face. I shut the door of the study behind me, and, seizing a poker, began an attack upon the desk. That is how they found me. The cover of the desk was split, the lock smashed, the letters torn out of the pigeon-holes and tossed about the room. In my senile rage I had flung about the pens and other such light stationery, and overturned the ink. Moreover, a large vase upon the mantel had got broken — I do not know how. I could find no cheque-book, no money, no indications of the slightest use for the recovery of my body. I was battering madly at the drawers, when the butler, backed

by two women-servants, intruded upon me.

That simply is the story of my change. No one will believe my frantic assertions. I am treated as one demented, and even at this moment I am under restraint. But I am sane, absolutely sane, and to prove it I have sat down to write this story minutely as the things happened to me. I appeal to the reader, whether there is any trace of insanity in the style or method of the story he has been reading. I am a young man locked away in an old man's body. But the clear fact is incredible to everyone. Naturally I appear demented to those who will not believe this, naturally I do not know the names of my secretaries, of the doctors who come to see me, of my servants and neighbours, of this town (wherever it is) where I find myself. Naturally I lose myself in my own house, and suffer inconveniences of every sort. Naturally I ask the oddest questions. Naturally I weep and cry out, and have paroxysms of despair. I have no money and no cheque-book. The bank will not recognise my signature, for I suppose that, allowing for the feeble muscles I now have, my handwriting is still Eden's. These people about me will not let me go to the bank personally. It seems, indeed, that there is no bank in this town, and that I have an account in some part of London. It seems that Elvesham kept the name of his solicitor secret from all his household — I can ascertain nothing. Elvesham was, of course, a profound student of mental science, and all my declarations of the facts of the case merely confirm the theory that my insanity is the outcome of overmuch brooding upon psychology. Dreams of the personal identity indeed! Two days ago I was a healthy youngster, with all life before me; now I am a furious old man, unkempt, and desperate, and miserable, prowling about a great luxurious strange house, watched, feared, and avoided as a lunatic by everyone about me. And in London is Elvesham beginning life again in a vigorous body, and with all the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of threescore and ten. He has stolen my life.

What has happened I do not clearly know. In the study are volumes of manuscript notes referring chiefly to the psychology of memory, and parts of what may be either calculations or ciphers in symbols absolutely strange to me. In some passages there are

indications that he was also occupied with the philosophy of mathematics. I take it he has transferred the whole of his memories, the accumulation that makes up his personality, from this old withered brain of his to mine, and, similarly, that he has transferred mine to his discarded tenement. Practically, that is, he has changed bodies. But how such a change may be possible is without the range of my philosophy. I have been a materialist for all my thinking life, but here, suddenly, is a clear case of man's detachability from matter.

One desperate experiment I am about to try. I sit writing here before putting the matter to issue. This morning, with the help of a table-knife that I had secreted at breakfast, I succeeded in breaking open a fairly obvious secret drawer in this wrecked writing-desk. I discovered nothing save a little green glass phial containing a white powder. Round the neck of the phial was a label, and thereon was written this one word, "*Release*." This may be — is most probably, poison. I can understand Elvesham placing poison in my way, and I should be sure that it was his intention so to get rid of the only living witness against him, were it not for this careful concealment. The man has practically solved the problem of immortality. Save for the spite of chance, he will live in my body until it has aged, and then, again, throwing that aside, he will assume some other victim's youth and strength. When one remembers his heartlessness, it is terrible to think of the ever-growing experience, that.... How long has he been leaping from body to body?... But I tire of writing. The powder appears to be soluble in water. The taste is not unpleasant.

There the narrative found upon Mr. Elvesham's desk ends. His dead body lay between the desk and the chair. The latter had been pushed back, probably by his last convulsions. The story was written in pencil, and in a crazy hand, quite unlike his usual minute characters. There remain only two curious facts to record. Indisputably there was some connection between Eden and Elvesham, since the whole of Elvesham's property was bequeathed to the young man. But he never inherited. When Elvesham committed suicide, Eden was, strangely enough, already dead. Twenty-four hours before, he had been knocked down by a cab and killed instantly, at the crowded crossing at the intersection of Gower Street and Euston Road. So that the only

human being who could have thrown light upon this fantastic narrative is beyond the reach of questions. Without further comment I leave this extraordinary matter to the reader's individual judgment.

IN THE ABYSS

The lieutenant stood in front of the steel sphere and gnawed a piece of pine splinter. “What do you think of it, Steevens?” he asked.

“It’s an idea,” said Steevens, in the tone of one who keeps an open mind.

“I believe it will smash — flat,” said the lieutenant.

“He seems to have calculated it all out pretty well,” said Steevens, still impartial.

“But think of the pressure,” said the lieutenant. “At the surface of the water it’s fourteen pounds to the inch, thirty feet down it’s double that; sixty, treble; ninety, four times; nine hundred, forty times; five thousand, three hundred — that’s a mile — it’s two hundred and forty times fourteen pounds; that’s — let’s see — thirty hundredweight — a ton and a half, Steevens; *a ton and a half* to the square inch. And the ocean where he’s going is five miles deep. That’s seven and a half” —

“Sounds a lot,” said Steevens, “but it’s jolly thick steel.”

The lieutenant made no answer, but resumed his pine splinter. The object of their conversation was a huge ball of steel, having an exterior diameter of perhaps nine feet. It looked like the shot for some Titanic piece of artillery. It was elaborately nested in a monstrous scaffolding built into the framework of the vessel, and the gigantic spars that were presently to sling it overboard gave the stern of the ship an appearance that had raised the curiosity of every decent sailor who had sighted it, from the Pool of London to the Tropic of Capricorn. In two places, one above the other, the steel gave place to a couple of circular windows of enormously thick glass, and one of these, set in a steel frame of great solidity, was now partially unscrewed. Both the men had seen the interior of this globe for the first time that morning. It was elaborately padded with air cushions, with little studs sunk between bulging pillows to work the simple mechanism of the affair. Everything was elaborately padded, even the Myers apparatus which was to absorb carbonic acid and replace the oxygen inspired by its tenant, when he had crept in by the glass manhole, and had been screwed in. It was so elaborately

padded that a man might have been fired from a gun in it with perfect safety. And it had need to be, for presently a man was to crawl in through that glass manhole, to be screwed up tightly, and to be flung overboard, and to sink down — down — down, for five miles, even as the lieutenant said. It had taken the strongest hold of his imagination; it made him a bore at mess; and he found Steevens, the new arrival aboard, a godsend to talk to about it, over and over again.

"It's my opinion," said the lieutenant, "that that glass will simply bend in and bulge and smash, under a pressure of that sort. Daubrée has made rocks run like water under big pressures — and, you mark my words" —

"If the glass did break in," said Steevens, "what then?"

"The water would shoot in like a jet of iron. Have you ever felt a straight jet of high pressure water? It would hit as hard as a bullet. It would simply smash him and flatten him. It would tear down his throat, and into his lungs; it would blow in his ears" —

"What a detailed imagination you have!" protested Steevens, who saw things vividly.

"It's a simple statement of the inevitable," said the lieutenant.

"And the globe?"

"Would just give out a few little bubbles, and it would settle down comfortably against the day of judgment, among the oozes and the bottom clay — with poor Elstead spread over his own smashed cushions like butter over bread."

He repeated this sentence as though he liked it very much. "Like butter over bread," he said.

"Having a look at the jigger?" said a voice, and Elstead stood behind them, spick and span in white, with a cigarette between his teeth, and his eyes smiling out of the shadow of his ample hat-brim. "What's that about bread and butter, Weybridge? Grumbling as usual about the insufficient pay of naval officers? It won't be more than a day now before I start. We are to get the slings ready to-day. This clean sky and gentle swell is just the kind of thing for swinging off a dozen tons of lead and iron; isn't it?"

"It won't affect you much," said Weybridge.

"No. Seventy or eighty feet down, and I shall be there in a dozen seconds, there's not a particle moving, though the wind shriek itself

hoarse up above, and the water lifts halfway to the clouds. No. Down there" — He moved to the side of the ship and the other two followed him. All three leant forward on their elbows and stared down into the yellow-green water.

"*Peace*," said Elstead, finishing his thought aloud.

"Are you dead certain that clockwork will act?" asked Weybridge presently.

"It has worked thirty-five times," said Elstead. "It's bound to work."

"But if it doesn't?"

"Why shouldn't it?"

"I wouldn't go down in that confounded thing," said Weybridge, "for twenty thousand pounds."

"Cheerful chap you are," said Elstead, and spat sociably at a bubble below.

"I don't understand yet how you mean to work the thing," said Steevens.

"In the first place, I'm screwed into the sphere," said Elstead, "and when I've turned the electric light off and on three times to show I'm cheerful, I'm swung out over the stern by that crane, with all those big lead sinkers slung below me. The top lead weight has a roller carrying a hundred fathoms of strong cord rolled up, and that's all that joins the sinkers to the sphere, except the slings that will be cut when the affair is dropped. We use cord rather than wire rope because it's easier to cut and more buoyant — necessary points, as you will see.

"Through each of these lead weights you notice there is a hole, and an iron rod will be run through that and will project six feet on the lower side. If that rod is rammed up from below, it knocks up a lever and sets the clockwork in motion at the side of the cylinder on which the cord winds.

"Very well. The whole affair is lowered gently into the water, and the slings are cut. The sphere floats, — with the air in it, it's lighter than water, — but the lead weights go down straight and the cord runs out. When the cord is all paid out, the sphere will go down too, pulled down by the cord."

"But why the cord?" asked Steevens. "Why not fasten the weights

directly to the sphere?”

“Because of the smash down below. The whole affair will go rushing down, mile after mile, at a headlong pace at last. It would be knocked to pieces on the bottom if it wasn’t for that cord. But the weights will hit the bottom, and directly they do, the buoyancy of the sphere will come into play. It will go on sinking slower and slower; come to a stop at last, and then begin to float upward again.

“That’s where the clockwork comes in. Directly the weights smash against the sea bottom, the rod will be knocked through and will kick up the clockwork, and the cord will be rewound on the reel. I shall be lugged down to the sea bottom. There I shall stay for half an hour, with the electric light on, looking about me. Then the clockwork will release a spring knife, the cord will be cut, and up I shall rush again, like a soda-water bubble. The cord itself will help the flotation.”

“And if you should chance to hit a ship?” said Weybridge.

“I should come up at such a pace, I should go clean through it,” said Elstead, “like a cannon ball. You needn’t worry about that.”

“And suppose some nimble crustacean should wriggle into your clockwork” —

“It would be a pressing sort of invitation for me to stop,” said Elstead, turning his back on the water and staring at the sphere.

They had swung Elstead overboard by eleven o’clock. The day was serenely bright and calm, with the horizon lost in haze. The electric glare in the little upper compartment beamed cheerfully three times. Then they let him down slowly to the surface of the water, and a sailor in the stern chains hung ready to cut the tackle that held the lead weights and the sphere together. The globe, which had looked so large on deck, looked the smallest thing conceivable under the stern of the ship. It rolled a little, and its two dark windows, which floated uppermost, seemed like eyes turned up in round wonderment at the people who crowded the rail. A voice wondered how Elstead liked the rolling. “Are you ready?” sang out the commander. “Ay, ay, sir!” “Then let her go!”

The rope of the tackle tightened against the blade and was cut, and an eddy rolled over the globe in a grotesquely helpless fashion.

Someone waved a handkerchief, someone else tried an ineffectual cheer, a middy was counting slowly, “Eight, nine, ten!” Another roll, then with a jerk and a splash the thing righted itself.

It seemed to be stationary for a moment, to grow rapidly smaller, and then the water closed over it, and it became visible, enlarged by refraction and dimmer, below the surface. Before one could count three it had disappeared. There was a flicker of white light far down in the water, that diminished to a speck and vanished. Then there was nothing but a depth of water going down into blackness, through which a shark was swimming.

Then suddenly the screw of the cruiser began to rotate, the water was crickled, the shark disappeared in a wrinkled confusion, and a torrent of foam rushed across the crystalline clearness that had swallowed up Elstead. “What’s the idee?” said one A.B. to another.

“We’re going to lay off about a couple of miles, ‘fear he should hit us when he comes up,” said his mate.

The ship steamed slowly to her new position. Aboard her almost everyone who was unoccupied remained watching the breathing swell into which the sphere had sunk. For the next half-hour it is doubtful if a word was spoken that did not bear directly or indirectly on Elstead. The December sun was now high in the sky, and the heat very considerable.

“He’ll be cold enough down there,” said Weybridge. “They say that below a certain depth sea water’s always just about freezing.”

“Where’ll he come up?” asked Steevens. “I’ve lost my bearings.”

“That’s the spot,” said the commander, who prided himself on his omniscience. He extended a precise finger south-eastward. “And this, I reckon, is pretty nearly the moment,” he said. “He’s been thirty-five minutes.”

“How long does it take to reach the bottom of the ocean?” asked Steevens.

“For a depth of five miles, and reckoning — as we did — an acceleration of two feet per second, both ways, is just about three-quarters of a minute.”

“Then he’s overdue,” said Weybridge.

“Pretty nearly,” said the commander. “I suppose it takes a few

minutes for that cord of his to wind in."

"I forgot that," said Weybridge, evidently relieved.

And then began the suspense. A minute slowly dragged itself out, and no sphere shot out of the water. Another followed, and nothing broke the low oily swell. The sailors explained to one another that little point about the winding-in of the cord. The rigging was dotted with expectant faces. "Come up, Elstead!" called one hairy-chested salt impatiently, and the others caught it up, and shouted as though they were waiting for the curtain of a theatre to rise.

The commander glanced irritably at them.

"Of course, if the acceleration's less than two," he said, "he'll be all the longer. We aren't absolutely certain that was the proper figure. I'm no slavish believer in calculations."

Steevens agreed concisely. No one on the quarter-deck spoke for a couple of minutes. Then Steevens' watchcase clicked.

When, twenty-one minutes after, the sun reached the zenith, they were still waiting for the globe to reappear, and not a man aboard had dared to whisper that hope was dead. It was Weybridge who first gave expression to that realisation. He spoke while the sound of eight bells still hung in the air. "I always distrusted that window," he said quite suddenly to Steevens.

"Good God!" said Steevens; "you don't think — ?"

"Well!" said Weybridge, and left the rest to his imagination.

"I'm no great believer in calculations myself," said the commander dubiously, "so that I'm not altogether hopeless yet." And at midnight the gunboat was steaming slowly in a spiral round the spot where the globe had sunk, and the white beam of the electric light fled and halted and swept discontentedly onward again over the waste of phosphorescent waters under the little stars.

"If his window hasn't burst and smashed him," said Weybridge, "then it's a cursed sight worse, for his clockwork has gone wrong, and he's alive now, five miles under our feet, down there in the cold and dark, anchored in that little bubble of his, where never a ray of light has shone or a human being lived, since the waters were gathered together. He's there without food, feeling hungry and thirsty and scared, wondering whether he'll starve or stifle. Which will it

be? The Myers apparatus is running out, I suppose. How long do they last?”

“Good heavens!” he exclaimed; “what little things we are! What daring little devils! Down there, miles and miles of water — all water, and all this empty water about us and this sky. Gulfs!” He threw his hands out, and as he did so, a little white streak swept noiselessly up the sky, travelled more slowly, stopped, became a motionless dot, as though a new star had fallen up into the sky. Then it went sliding back again and lost itself amidst the reflections of the stars and the white haze of the sea’s phosphorescence.

At the sight he stopped, arm extended and mouth open. He shut his mouth, opened it again, and waved his arms with an impatient gesture. Then he turned, shouted “El-stead ahoy!” to the first watch, and went at a run to Lindley and the search-light. “I saw him,” he said. “Starboard there! His light’s on, and he’s just shot out of the water. Bring the light round. We ought to see him drifting, when he lifts on the swell.”

But they never picked up the explorer until dawn. Then they almost ran him down. The crane was swung out and a boat’s crew hooked the chain to the sphere. When they had shipped the sphere, they unscrewed the manhole and peered into the darkness of the interior (for the electric light chamber was intended to illuminate the water about the sphere, and was shut off entirely from its general cavity).

The air was very hot within the cavity, and the indiarubber at the lip of the manhole was soft. There was no answer to their eager questions and no sound of movement within. Elstead seemed to be lying motionless, crumpled up in the bottom of the globe. The ship’s doctor crawled in and lifted him out to the men outside. For a moment or so they did not know whether Elstead was alive or dead. His face, in the yellow light of the ship’s lamps, glistened with perspiration. They carried him down to his own cabin.

He was not dead, they found, but in a state of absolute nervous collapse, and besides cruelly bruised. For some days he had to lie perfectly still. It was a week before he could tell his experiences.

Almost his first words were that he was going down again. The sphere would have to be altered, he said, in order to allow him to

throw off the cord if need be, and that was all. He had had the most marvellous experience. “You thought I should find nothing but ooze,” he said. “You laughed at my explorations, and I’ve discovered a new world!” He told his story in disconnected fragments, and chiefly from the wrong end, so that it is impossible to re-tell it in his words. But what follows is the narrative of his experience.

It began atrociously, he said. Before the cord ran out, the thing kept rolling over. He felt like a frog in a football. He could see nothing but the crane and the sky overhead, with an occasional glimpse of the people on the ship’s rail. He couldn’t tell a bit which way the thing would roll next. Suddenly he would find his feet going up, and try to step, and over he went rolling, head over heels, and just anyhow, on the padding. Any other shape would have been more comfortable, but no other shape was to be relied upon under the huge pressure of the nethermost abyss.

Suddenly the swaying ceased; the globe righted, and when he had picked himself up, he saw the water all about him greeny-blue, with an attenuated light filtering down from above, and a shoal of little floating things went rushing up past him, as it seemed to him, towards the light. And even as he looked, it grew darker and darker, until the water above was as dark as the midnight sky, albeit of a greener shade, and the water below black. And little transparent things in the water developed a faint glint of luminosity, and shot past him in faint greenish streaks.

And the feeling of falling! It was just like the start of a lift, he said, only it kept on. One has to imagine what that means, that keeping on. It was then of all times that Elstead repented of his adventure. He saw the chances against him in an altogether new light. He thought of the big cuttlefish people knew to exist in the middle waters, the kind of things they find half digested in whales at times, or floating dead and rotten and half eaten by fish. Suppose one caught hold and wouldn’t let go. And had the clockwork really been sufficiently tested? But whether he wanted to go on or to go back mattered not the slightest now.

In fifty seconds everything was as black as night outside, except where the beam from his light struck through the waters, and picked out every now and then some fish or scrap of sinking matter. They

flashed by too fast for him to see what they were. Once he thinks he passed a shark. And then the sphere began to get hot by friction against the water. They had underestimated this, it seems.

The first thing he noticed was that he was perspiring, and then he heard a hissing growing louder under his feet, and saw a lot of little bubbles — very little bubbles they were — rushing upward like a fan through the water outside. Steam! He felt the window, and it was hot. He turned on the minute glow-lamp that lit his own cavity, looked at the padded watch by the studs, and saw he had been travelling now for two minutes. It came into his head that the window would crack through the conflict of temperatures, for he knew the bottom water is very near freezing.

Then suddenly the floor of the sphere seemed to press against his feet, the rush of bubbles outside grew slower and slower, and the hissing diminished. The sphere rolled a little. The window had not cracked, nothing had given, and he knew that the dangers of sinking, at anyrate, were over.

In another minute or so he would be on the floor of the abyss. He thought, he said, of Steevens and Weybridge and the rest of them five miles overhead, higher to him than the very highest clouds that ever floated over land are to us, steaming slowly and staring down and wondering what had happened to him.

He peered out of the window. There were no more bubbles now, and the hissing had stopped. Outside there was a heavy blackness — as black as black velvet — except where the electric light pierced the empty water and showed the colour of it — a yellow-green. Then three things like shapes of fire swam into sight, following each other through the water. Whether they were little and near or big and far off he could not tell.

Each was outlined in a bluish light almost as bright as the lights of a fishing smack, a light which seemed to be smoking greatly, and all along the sides of them were specks of this, like the lighter portholes of a ship. Their phosphorescence seemed to go out as they came into the radiance of his lamp, and he saw then that they were little fish of some strange sort, with huge heads, vast eyes, and dwindling bodies and tails. Their eyes were turned towards him, and he judged they were following him down. He supposed they were attracted by his

glare.

Presently others of the same sort joined them. As he went on down, he noticed that the water became of a pallid colour, and that little specks twinkled in his ray like motes in a sunbeam. This was probably due to the clouds of ooze and mud that the impact of his leaden sinkers had disturbed.

By the time he was drawn down to the lead weights he was in a dense fog of white that his electric light failed altogether to pierce for more than a few yards, and many minutes elapsed before the hanging sheets of sediment subsided to any extent. Then, lit by his light and by the transient phosphorescence of a distant shoal of fishes, he was able to see under the huge blackness of the super-incumbent water an undulating expanse of greyish-white ooze, broken here and there by tangled thickets of a growth of sea lilies, waving hungry tentacles in the air.

Farther away were the graceful, translucent outlines of a group of gigantic sponges. About this floor there were scattered a number of bristling flattish tufts of rich purple and black, which he decided must be some sort of sea-urchin, and small, large-eyed or blind things having a curious resemblance, some to woodlice, and others to lobsters, crawled sluggishly across the track of the light and vanished into the obscurity again, leaving furrowed trails behind them.

Then suddenly the hovering swarm of little fishes veered about and came towards him as a flight of starlings might do. They passed over him like a phosphorescent snow, and then he saw behind them some larger creature advancing towards the sphere.

At first he could see it only dimly, a faintly moving figure remotely suggestive of a walking man, and then it came into the spray of light that the lamp shot out. As the glare struck it, it shut its eyes, dazzled. He stared in rigid astonishment.

It was a strange vertebrated animal. Its dark purple head was dimly suggestive of a chameleon, but it had such a high forehead and such a braincase as no reptile ever displayed before; the vertical pitch of its face gave it a most extraordinary resemblance to a human being.

Two large and protruding eyes projected from sockets in chameleon fashion, and it had a broad reptilian mouth with horny

lips beneath its little nostrils. In the position of the ears were two huge gill-covers, and out of these floated a branching tree of coralline filaments, almost like the tree-like gills that very young rays and sharks possess.

But the humanity of the face was not the most extraordinary thing about the creature. It was a biped; its almost globular body was poised on a tripod of two frog-like legs and a long thick tail, and its fore limbs, which grotesquely caricatured the human hand, much as a frog's do, carried a long shaft of bone, tipped with copper. The colour of the creature was variegated; its head, hands, and legs were purple; but its skin, which hung loosely upon it, even as clothes might do, was a phosphorescent grey. And it stood there blinded by the light.

At last this unknown creature of the abyss blinked its eyes open, and, shading them with its disengaged hand, opened its mouth and gave vent to a shouting noise, articulate almost as speech might be, that penetrated even the steel case and padded jacket of the sphere. How a shouting may be accomplished without lungs Elstead does not profess to explain. It then moved sideways out of the glare into the mystery of shadow that bordered it on either side, and Elstead felt rather than saw that it was coming towards him. Fancying the light had attracted it, he turned the switch that cut off the current. In another moment something soft dabbed upon the steel, and the globe swayed.

Then the shouting was repeated, and it seemed to him that a distant echo answered it. The dabbing recurred, and the globe swayed and ground against the spindle over which the wire was rolled. He stood in the blackness and peered out into the everlasting night of the abyss. And presently he saw, very faint and remote, other phosphorescent quasi-human forms hurrying towards him.

Hardly knowing what he did, he felt about in his swaying prison for the stud of the exterior electric light, and came by accident against his own small glow-lamp in its padded recess. The sphere twisted, and then threw him down; he heard shouts like shouts of surprise, and when he rose to his feet, he saw two pairs of stalked eyes peering into the lower window and reflecting his light.

In another moment hands were dabbing vigorously at his steel

casing, and there was a sound, horrible enough in his position, of the metal protection of the clockwork being vigorously hammered. That, indeed, sent his heart into his mouth, for if these strange creatures succeeded in stopping that, his release would never occur. Scarcely had he thought as much when he felt the sphere sway violently, and the floor of it press hard against his feet. He turned off the small glow-lamp that lit the interior, and sent the ray of the large light in the separate compartment out into the water. The sea-floor and the man-like creatures had disappeared, and a couple of fish chasing each other dropped suddenly by the window.

He thought at once that these strange denizens of the deep sea had broken the rope, and that he had escaped. He drove up faster and faster, and then stopped with a jerk that sent him flying against the padded roof of his prison. For half a minute, perhaps, he was too astonished to think.

Then he felt that the sphere was spinning slowly, and rocking, and it seemed to him that it was also being drawn through the water. By crouching close to the window, he managed to make his weight effective and roll that part of the sphere downward, but he could see nothing save the pale ray of his light striking down ineffectively into the darkness. It occurred to him that he would see more if he turned the lamp off, and allowed his eyes to grow accustomed to the profound obscurity.

In this he was wise. After some minutes the velvety blackness became a translucent blackness, and then, far away, and as faint as the zodiacal light of an English summer evening, he saw shapes moving below. He judged these creatures had detached his cable, and were towing him along the sea bottom.

And then he saw something faint and remote across the undulations of the submarine plain, a broad horizon of pale luminosity that extended this way and that way as far as the range of his little window permitted him to see. To this he was being towed, as a balloon might be towed by men out of the open country into a town. He approached it very slowly, and very slowly the dim irradiation was gathered together into more definite shapes.

It was nearly five o'clock before he came over this luminous area, and by that time he could make out an arrangement suggestive of

streets and houses grouped about a vast roofless erection that was grotesquely suggestive of a ruined abbey. It was spread out like a map below him. The houses were all roofless enclosures of walls, and their substance being, as he afterwards saw, of phosphorescent bones, gave the place an appearance as if it were built of drowned moonshine.

Among the inner caves of the place waving trees of crinoid stretched their tentacles, and tall, slender, glassy sponges shot like shining minarets and lilies of filmy light out of the general glow of the city. In the open spaces of the place he could see a stirring movement as of crowds of people, but he was too many fathoms above them to distinguish the individuals in those crowds.

Then slowly they pulled him down, and as they did so, the details of the place crept slowly upon his apprehension. He saw that the courses of the cloudy buildings were marked out with beaded lines of round objects, and then he perceived that at several points below him, in broad open spaces, were forms like the encrusted shapes of ships.

Slowly and surely he was drawn down, and the forms below him became brighter, clearer, more distinct. He was being pulled down, he perceived, towards the large building in the centre of the town, and he could catch a glimpse ever and again of the multitudinous forms that were lugging at his cord. He was astonished to see that the rigging of one of the ships, which formed such a prominent feature of the place, was crowded with a host of gesticulating figures regarding him, and then the walls of the great building rose about him silently, and hid the city from his eyes.

And such walls they were, of water-logged wood, and twisted wire-rope, and iron spars, and copper, and the bones and skulls of dead men. The skulls ran in zigzag lines and spirals and fantastic curves over the building; and in and out of their eye-sockets, and over the whole surface of the place, lurked and played a multitude of silvery little fishes.

Suddenly his ears were filled with a low shouting and a noise like the violent blowing of horns, and this gave place to a fantastic chant. Down the sphere sank, past the huge pointed windows, through which he saw vaguely a great number of these strange, ghostlike

people regarding him, and at last he came to rest, as it seemed, on a kind of altar that stood in the centre of the place.

And now he was at such a level that he could see these strange people of the abyss plainly once more. To his astonishment, he perceived that they were prostrating themselves before him, all save one, dressed as it seemed in a robe of placoid scales, and crowned with a luminous diadem, who stood with his reptilian mouth opening and shutting, as though he led the chanting of the worshippers.

A curious impulse made Elstead turn on his small glow-lamp again, so that he became visible to these creatures of the abyss, albeit the glare made them disappear forthwith into night. At this sudden sight of him, the chanting gave place to a tumult of exultant shouts; and Elstead, being anxious to watch them, turned his light off again, and vanished from before their eyes. But for a time he was too blind to make out what they were doing, and when at last he could distinguish them, they were kneeling again. And thus they continued worshipping him, without rest or intermission, for the space of three hours.

Most circumstantial was Elstead's account of this astounding city and its people, these people of perpetual night, who have never seen sun or moon or stars, green vegetation, nor any living, air-breathing creatures, who know nothing of fire, nor any light but the phosphorescent light of living things.

Startling as is his story, it is yet more startling to find that scientific men, of such eminence as Adams and Jenkins, find nothing incredible in it. They tell me they see no reason why intelligent, water-breathing, vertebrated creatures, inured to a low temperature and enormous pressure, and of such a heavy structure, that neither alive nor dead would they float, might not live upon the bottom of the deep sea, and quite unsuspected by us, descendants like ourselves of the great Theriomorpha of the New Red Sandstone age.

We should be known to them, however, as strange, meteoric creatures, wont to fall catastrophically dead out of the mysterious blackness of their watery sky. And not only we ourselves, but our ships, our metals, our appliances, would come raining down out of the night. Sometimes sinking things would smite down and crush

them, as if it were the judgment of some unseen power above, and sometimes would come things of the utmost rarity or utility, or shapes of inspiring suggestion. One can understand, perhaps, something of their behaviour at the descent of a living man, if one thinks what a barbaric people might do, to whom an enhaloed, shining creature came suddenly out of the sky.

At one time or another Elstead probably told the officers of the *Ptarmigan* every detail of his strange twelve hours in the abyss. That he also intended to write them down is certain, but he never did, and so unhappily we have to piece together the discrepant fragments of his story from the reminiscences of Commander Simmons, Weybridge, Steevens, Lindley, and the others.

We see the thing darkly in fragmentary glimpses — the huge ghostly building, the bowing, chanting people, with their dark chameleon-like heads and faintly luminous clothing, and Elstead, with his light turned on again, vainly trying to convey to their minds that the cord by which the sphere was held was to be severed. Minute after minute slipped away, and Elstead, looking at his watch, was horrified to find that he had oxygen only for four hours more. But the chant in his honour kept on as remorselessly as if it was the marching song of his approaching death.

The manner of his release he does not understand, but to judge by the end of cord that hung from the sphere, it had been cut through by rubbing against the edge of the altar. Abruptly the sphere rolled over, and he swept up, out of their world, as an ethereal creature clothed in a vacuum would sweep through our own atmosphere back to its native ether again. He must have torn out of their sight as a hydrogen bubble hastens upward from our air. A strange ascension it must have seemed to them.

The sphere rushed up with even greater velocity than, when weighted with the lead sinkers, it had rushed down. It became exceedingly hot. It drove up with the windows uppermost, and he remembers the torrent of bubbles frothing against the glass. Every moment he expected this to fly. Then suddenly something like a huge wheel seemed to be released in his head, the padded compartment began spinning about him, and he fainted. His next recollection was

of his cabin, and of the doctor's voice.

But that is the substance of the extraordinary story that Elstead related in fragments to the officers of the *Ptarmigan*. He promised to write it all down at a later date. His mind was chiefly occupied with the improvement of his apparatus, which was effected at Rio.

It remains only to tell that on February 2, 1896, he made his second descent into the ocean abyss, with the improvements his first experience suggested. What happened we shall probably never know. He never returned. The *Ptarmigan* beat about over the point of his submersion, seeking him in vain for thirteen days. Then she returned to Rio, and the news was telegraphed to his friends. So the matter remains for the present. But it is hardly probable that no further attempt will be made to verify his strange story of these hitherto unsuspected cities of the deep sea.

THE APPLE

“I must get rid of it,” said the man in the corner of the carriage, abruptly breaking the silence.

Mr. Hinchcliff looked up, hearing imperfectly. He had been lost in the rapt contemplation of the college cap tied by a string to his portmanteau handles — the outward and visible sign of his newly-gained pedagogic position — in the rapt appreciation of the college cap and the pleasant anticipations it excited. For Mr. Hinchcliff had just matriculated at London University, and was going to be junior assistant at the Holmwood Grammar School — a very enviable position. He stared across the carriage at his fellow-traveller.

“Why not give it away?” said this person. “Give it away! Why not?”

He was a tall, dark, sunburnt man with a pale face. His arms were folded tightly, and his feet were on the seat in front of him. He was pulling at a lank black moustache. He stared hard at his toes.

“Why not?” he said.

Mr. Hinchcliff coughed.

The stranger lifted his eyes — they were curious, dark-grey eyes — and stared blankly at Mr. Hinchcliff for the best part of a minute, perhaps. His expression grew to interest.

“Yes,” he said slowly. “Why not? And end it.”

“I don’t quite follow you, I’m afraid,” said Mr. Hinchcliff, with another cough.

“You don’t quite follow me?” said the stranger quite mechanically, his singular eyes wandering from Mr. Hinchcliff to the bag with its ostentatiously displayed cap, and back to Mr. Hinchcliff’s downy face.

“You’re so abrupt, you know,” apologised Mr Hinchcliff.

“Why shouldn’t I?” said the stranger, following his thoughts. “You are a student?” he said, addressing Mr. Hinchcliff.

“I am — by Correspondence — of the London University,” said Mr. Hinchcliff, with irrepressible pride, and feeling nervously at his tie.

“In pursuit of knowledge,” said the stranger, and suddenly took

his feet off the seat, put his fist on his knees, and stared at Mr. Hinchcliff as though he had never seen a student before. “Yes,” he said, and flung out an index finger. Then he rose, took a bag from the hat-rack, and unlocked it. Quite silently he drew out something round and wrapped in a quantity of silver-paper, and unfolded this carefully. He held it out towards Mr. Hinchcliff — a small, very smooth, golden-yellow fruit.

Mr. Hinchcliff’s eyes and mouth were open. He did not offer to take this object — if he was intended to take it.

“That,” said this fantastic stranger, speaking very slowly, “is the Apple of the Tree of Knowledge. Look at it — small, and bright, and wonderful — Knowledge — and I am going to give it to you.”

Mr. Hinchcliff’s mind worked painfully for a minute, and then the sufficient explanation, “Mad!” flashed across his brain, and illuminated the whole situation. One humoured madmen. He put his head a little on one side.

“The Apple of the Tree of Knowledge, eigh!” said Mr. Hinchcliff, regarding it with a finely assumed air of interest, and then looking at the interlocutor. “But don’t you want to eat it yourself? And besides — how did you come by it?”

“It never fades. I have had it now three months. And it is ever bright and smooth and ripe and desirable, as you see it.” He laid his hand on his knee and regarded the fruit musingly. Then he began to wrap it again in the papers, as though he had abandoned his intention of giving it away.

“But how did you come by it?” said Mr. Hinchcliff, who had his argumentative side. “And how do you know that it *is* the Fruit of the Tree?”

“I bought this fruit,” said the stranger, “three months ago — for a drink of water and a crust of bread. The man who gave it to me — because I kept the life in him — was an Armenian. Armenia! that wonderful country, the first of all countries, where the ark of the Flood remains to this day, buried in the glaciers of Mount Ararat. This man, I say, fleeing with others from the Kurds who had come upon them, went up into desolate places among the mountains — places beyond the common knowledge of men. And fleeing from

imminent pursuit, they came to a slope high among the mountain-peaks, green with a grass like knife-blades, that cut and slashed most pitilessly at anyone who went into it. The Kurds were close behind, and there was nothing for it but to plunge in, and the worst of it was that the paths they made through it at the price of their blood served for the Kurds to follow. Every one of the fugitives was killed save this Armenian and another. He heard the screams and cries of his friends, and the swish of the grass about those who were pursuing them — it was tall grass rising overhead. And then a shouting and answers, and when presently he paused, everything was still. He pushed out again, not understanding, cut and bleeding, until he came out on a steep slope of rocks below a precipice, and then he saw the grass was all on fire, and the smoke of it rose like a veil between him and his enemies."

The stranger paused. "Yes?" said Mr. Hinchcliff. "Yes?"

"There he was, all torn and bloody from the knife-blades of the grass, the rocks blazing under the afternoon sun — the sky molten brass — and the smoke of the fire driving towards him. He dared not stay there. Death he did not mind, but torture! Far away beyond the smoke he heard shouts and cries. Women screaming. So he went clambering up a gorge in the rocks — everywhere were bushes with dry branches that stuck out like thorns among the leaves — until he clambered over the brow of a ridge that hid him. And then he met his companion, a shepherd, who had also escaped. And, counting cold and famine and thirst as nothing against the Kurds, they went on into the heights, and among the snow and ice. They wandered three whole days.

"The third day came the vision. I suppose hungry men often do see visions, but then there is this fruit." He lifted the wrapped globe in his hand. "And I have heard it, too, from other mountaineers who have known something of the legend. It was in the evening time, when the stars were increasing, that they came down a slope of polished rock into a huge dark valley all set about with strange, contorted trees, and in these trees hung little globes like glow-worm spheres, strange round yellow lights.

"Suddenly this valley was lit far away, many miles away, far down it, with a golden flame marching slowly athwart it, that made

the stunted trees against it black as night, and turned the slopes all about them and their figures to the likeness of fiery gold. And at the vision they, knowing the legends of the mountains, instantly knew that it was Eden they saw, or the sentinel of Eden, and they fell upon their faces like men struck dead.

"When they dared to look again the valley was dark for a space, and then the light came again — returning, a burning amber.

"At that the shepherd sprang to his feet, and with a shout began to run down towards the light, but the other man was too fearful to follow him. He stood stunned, amazed, and terrified, watching his companion recede towards the marching glare. And hardly had the shepherd set out when there came a noise like thunder, the beating of invisible wings hurrying up the valley, and a great and terrible fear; and at that the man who gave me the fruit turned — if he might still escape. And hurrying headlong up the slope again, with that tumult sweeping after him, he stumbled against one of these stunted bushes, and a ripe fruit came off it into his hand. This fruit. Forthwith, the wings and the thunder rolled all about him. He fell and fainted, and when he came to his senses, he was back among the blackened ruins of his own village, and I and the others were attending to the wounded. A vision? But the golden fruit of the tree was still clutched in his hand. There were others there who knew the legend, knew what that strange fruit might be." He paused. "And this is it," he said.

It was a most extraordinary story to be told in a third-class carriage on a Sussex railway. It was as if the real was a mere veil to the fantastic, and here was the fantastic poking through. "Is it?" was all Mr. Hinchcliff could say.

"The legend," said the stranger, "tells that those thickets of dwarfed trees growing about the garden sprang from the apple that Adam carried in his hand when he and Eve were driven forth. He felt something in his hand, saw the half-eaten apple, and flung it petulantly aside. And there they grow, in that desolate valley, girdled round with the everlasting snows, and there the fiery swords keep ward against the Judgment Day."

"But I thought these things were" — Mr. Hinchcliff paused— "fables — parables rather. Do you mean to tell me that there in Armenia" —

The stranger answered the unfinished question with the fruit in his open hand.

"But you don't know," said Mr. Hinchcliff, "that that *is* the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. The man may have had — a sort of mirage, say. Suppose" —

"Look at it," said the stranger.

It was certainly a strange-looking globe, not really an apple, Mr. Hinchcliff saw, and a curious glowing golden colour, almost as though light itself was wrought into its substance. As he looked at it, he began to see more vividly the desolate valley among the mountains, the guarding swords of fire, the strange antiquities of the story he had just heard. He rubbed a knuckle into his eye. "But" — said he.

"It has kept like that, smooth and full, three months. Longer than that it is now by some days. No drying, no withering, no decay."

"And you yourself," said Mr. Hinchcliff, "really believe that" —

"Is the Forbidden Fruit."

There was no mistaking the earnestness of the man's manner and his perfect sanity. "The Fruit of Knowledge," he said.

"Suppose it was?" said Mr. Hinchcliff, after a pause, still staring at it. "But after all," said Mr. Hinchcliff, "it's not my kind of knowledge — not the sort of knowledge. I mean, Adam and Eve have eaten it already."

"We inherit their sins — not their knowledge," said the stranger. "That would make it all clear and bright again. We should see into everything, through everything, into the deepest meaning of everything" —

"Why don't you eat it, then?" said Mr. Hinchcliff, with an inspiration.

"I took it intending to eat it," said the stranger. "Man has fallen. Merely to eat again could scarcely" —

"Knowledge is power," said Mr. Hinchcliff.

"But is it happiness? I am older than you — more than twice as old. Time after time I have held this in my hand, and my heart has failed me at the thought of all that one might know, that terrible

lucidity — Suppose suddenly all the world became pitilessly clear?"

"That, I think, would be a great advantage," said Mr. Hinchcliff, "on the whole."

"Suppose you saw into the hearts and minds of everyone about you, into their most secret recesses — people you loved, whose love you valued?"

"You'd soon find out the humbugs," said Mr. Hinchcliff, greatly struck by the idea.

"And worse — to know yourself, bare of your most intimate illusions. To see yourself in your place. All that your lusts and weaknesses prevented your doing. No merciful perspective."

"That might be an excellent thing too. 'Know thyself,' you know."

"You are young," said the stranger.

"If you don't care to eat it, and it bothers you, why don't you throw it away?"

"There again, perhaps, you will not understand me. To me, how could one throw away a thing like that, glowing, wonderful? Once one has it, one is bound. But, on the other hand, to *give* it away! To give it away to someone who thirsted after knowledge, who found no terror in the thought of that clear perception" —

"Of course," said Mr. Hinchcliff thoughtfully, "it might be some sort of poisonous fruit."

And then his eye caught something motionless, the end of a white board black-lettered outside the carriage window. " — MWOOD," he saw. He started convulsively. "Gracious!" said Mr. Hinchcliff. "Holmwood!" — and the practical present blotted out the mystic realisations that had been stealing upon him.

In another moment he was opening the carriage-door, portmanteau in hand. The guard was already fluttering his green flag. Mr. Hinchcliff jumped out. "Here!" said a voice behind him, and he saw the dark eyes of the stranger shining and the golden fruit, bright and bare, held out of the open carriage-door. He took it instinctively, the train was already moving.

"*No!*" shouted the stranger, and made a snatch at it as if to take it back.

"Stand away," cried a country porter, thrusting forward to close

the door. The stranger shouted something Mr. Hinchcliff did not catch, head and arm thrust excitedly out of the window, and then the shadow of the bridge fell on him, and in a trice he was hidden. Mr. Hinchcliff stood astonished, staring at the end of the last waggon receding round the bend, and with the wonderful fruit in his hand. For the fraction of a minute his mind was confused, and then he became aware that two or three people on the platform were regarding him with interest. Was he not the new Grammar School master making his début? It occurred to him that, so far as they could tell, the fruit might very well be the naïve refreshment of an orange. He flushed at the thought, and thrust the fruit into his side pocket, where it bulged undesirably. But there was no help for it, so he went towards them, awkwardly concealing his sense of awkwardness, to ask the way to the Grammar School, and the means of getting his portmanteau and the two tin boxes which lay up the platform thither. Of all the odd and fantastic yarns to tell a fellow!

His luggage could be taken on a truck for sixpence, he found, and he could precede it on foot. He fancied an ironical note in the voices. He was painfully aware of his contour.

The curious earnestness of the man in the train, and the glamour of the story he told, had, for a time, diverted the current of Mr. Hinchcliff's thoughts. It drove like a mist before his immediate concerns. Fires that went to and fro! But the preoccupation of his new position, and the impression he was to produce upon Holmwood generally, and the school people in particular, returned upon him with reinvigorating power before he left the station and cleared his mental atmosphere. But it is extraordinary what an inconvenient thing the addition of a soft and rather brightly-golden fruit, not three inches in diameter, may prove to a sensitive youth on his best appearance. In the pocket of his black jacket it bulged dreadfully, spoilt the lines altogether. He passed a little old lady in black, and he felt her eye drop upon the excrescence at once. He was wearing one glove and carrying the other, together with his stick, so that to bear the fruit openly was impossible. In one place, where the road into the town seemed suitably secluded, he took his encumbrance out of his pocket and tried it in his hat. It was just too large, the hat wobbled ludicrously, and just as he was taking it out again, a butcher's boy

came driving round the corner.

"Confound it!" said Mr. Hinchcliff.

He would have eaten the thing, and attained omniscience there and then, but it would seem so silly to go into the town sucking a juicy fruit — and it certainly felt juicy. If one of the boys should come by, it might do him a serious injury with his discipline so to be seen. And the juice might make his face sticky and get upon his cuffs — or it might be an acid juice as potent as lemon, and take all the colour out of his clothes.

Then round a bend in the lane came two pleasant sunlit girlish figures. They were walking slowly towards the town and chattering — at any moment they might look round and see a hot-faced young man behind them carrying a kind of phosphorescent yellow tomato! They would be sure to laugh.

"*Hang!*" said Mr. Hinchcliff, and with a swift jerk sent the encumbrance flying over the stone wall of an orchard that there abutted on the road. As it vanished, he felt a faint twinge of loss that lasted scarcely a moment. He adjusted the stick and glove in his hand, and walked on, erect and self-conscious, to pass the girls.

But in the darkness of the night Mr. Hinchcliff had a dream, and saw the valley, and the flaming swords, and the contorted trees, and knew that it really was the Apple of the Tree of Knowledge that he had thrown regardlessly away. And he awoke very unhappy.

In the morning his regret had passed, but afterwards it returned and troubled him; never, however, when he was happy or busily occupied. At last, one moonlight night about eleven, when all Holmwood was quiet, his regrets returned with redoubled force, and therewith an impulse to adventure. He slipped out of the house and over the playground wall, went through the silent town to Station Lane, and climbed into the orchard where he had thrown the fruit. But nothing was to be found of it there among the dewy grass and the faint intangible globes of dandelion down.

UNDER THE KNIFE

"What if I die under it?" The thought recurred again and again, as I walked home from Haddon's. It was a purely personal question. I was spared the deep anxieties of a married man, and I knew there were few of my intimate friends but would find my death troublesome chiefly on account of their duty of regret. I was surprised indeed, and perhaps a little humiliated, as I turned the matter over, to think how few could possibly exceed the conventional requirement. Things came before me stripped of glamour, in a clear dry light, during that walk from Haddon's house over Primrose Hill. There were the friends of my youth: I perceived now that our affection was a tradition, which we foregathered rather laboriously to maintain. There were the rivals and helpers of my later career: I suppose I had been cold-blooded or undemonstrative — one perhaps implies the other. It may be that even the capacity for friendship is a question of physique. There had been a time in my own life when I had grieved bitterly enough at the loss of a friend; but as I walked home that afternoon the emotional side of my imagination was dormant. I could not pity myself, nor feel sorry for my friends, nor conceive of them as grieving for me.

I was interested in this deadness of my emotional nature — no doubt a concomitant of my stagnating physiology; and my thoughts wandered off along the line it suggested. Once before, in my hot youth, I had suffered a sudden loss of blood, and had been within an ace of death. I remembered now that my affections as well as my passions had drained out of me, leaving scarce anything but a tranquil resignation, a dreg of self-pity. It had been weeks before the old ambitions, and tendernesses, and all the complex moral interplay of a man, had reasserted themselves. It occurred to me that the real meaning of this numbness might be a gradual slipping away from the pleasure-pain guidance of the animal man. It has been proven, I take it, as thoroughly as anything can be proven in this world, that the higher emotions, the moral feelings, even the subtle tendernesses of love, are evolved from the elemental desires and fears of the simple animal: they are the harness in which man's mental freedom goes.

And it may be that, as death overshadows us, as our possibility of acting diminishes, this complex growth of balanced impulse, propensity, and aversion, whose interplay inspires our acts, goes with it. Leaving what?

I was suddenly brought back to reality by an imminent collision with a butcher-boy's tray. I found that I was crossing the bridge over the Regent's Park Canal, which runs parallel with that in the Zoological Gardens. The boy in blue had been looking over his shoulder at a black barge advancing slowly, towed by a gaunt white horse. In the Gardens a nurse was leading three happy little children over the bridge. The trees were bright green; the spring hopefulness was still unstained by the dusts of summer; the sky in the water was bright and clear, but broken by long waves, by quivering bands of black, as the barge drove through. The breeze was stirring; but it did not stir me as the spring breeze used to do.

Was this dulness of feeling in itself an anticipation? It was curious that I could reason and follow out a network of suggestion as clearly as ever: so, at least, it seemed to me. It was calmness rather than dulness that was coming upon me. Was there any ground for the belief in the presentiment of death? Did a man near to death begin instinctively to withdraw himself from the meshes of matter and sense, even before the cold hand was laid upon his? I felt strangely isolated — isolated without regret — from the life and existence about me. The children playing in the sun and gathering strength and experience for the business of life, the park-keeper gossiping with a nursemaid, the nursing mother, the young couple intent upon each other as they passed me, the trees by the wayside spreading new pleading leaves to the sunlight, the stir in their branches — I had been part of it all, but I had nearly done with it now.

Some way down the Broad Walk I perceived that I was tired, and that my feet were heavy. It was hot that afternoon, and I turned aside and sat down on one of the green chairs that line the way. In a minute I had dozed into a dream, and the tide of my thoughts washed up a vision of the resurrection. I was still sitting in the chair, but I thought myself actually dead, withered, tattered, dried, one eye (I saw) pecked out by birds. "Awake!" cried a voice; and incontinently the dust of the path and the mould under the grass became insurgent. I

had never before thought of Regent's Park as a cemetery, but now, through the trees, stretching as far as eye could see, I beheld a flat plain of writhing graves and heeling tombstones. There seemed to be some trouble: the rising dead appeared to stifle as they struggled upward, they bled in their struggles, the red flesh was tattered away from the white bones. "Awake!" cried a voice; but I determined I would not rise to such horrors. "Awake!" They would not let me alone. "Wike up!" said an angry voice. A cockney angel! The man who sells the tickets was shaking me, demanding my penny.

I paid my penny, pocketed my ticket, yawned, stretched my legs, and, feeling now rather less torpid, got up and walked on towards Langham Place. I speedily lost myself again in a shifting maze of thoughts about death. Going across Marylebone Road into that crescent at the end of Langham Place, I had the narrowest escape from the shaft of a cab, and went on my way with a palpitating heart and a bruised shoulder. It struck me that it would have been curious if my meditations on my death on the morrow had led to my death that day.

But I will not weary you with more of my experiences that day and the next. I knew more and more certainly that I should die under the operation; at times I think I was inclined to pose to myself. The doctors were coming at eleven, and I did not get up. It seemed scarce worth while to trouble about washing and dressing, and though I read my newspapers and the letters that came by the first post, I did not find them very interesting. There was a friendly note from Addison, my old school friend, calling my attention to two discrepancies and a printer's error in my new book, with one from Langridge venting some vexation over Minton. The rest were business communications. I breakfasted in bed. The glow of pain at my side seemed more massive. I knew it was pain, and yet, if you can understand, I did not find it very painful. I had been awake and hot and thirsty in the night, but in the morning bed felt comfortable. In the night-time I had lain thinking of things that were past; in the morning I dozed over the question of immortality. Haddon came, punctual to the minute, with a neat black bag; and Mowbray soon followed. Their arrival stirred me up a little. I began to take a more personal interest in the proceedings. Haddon moved the little octagonal table close to the

bedside, and, with his broad black back to me, began taking things out of his bag. I heard the light click of steel upon steel. My imagination, I found, was not altogether stagnant. “Will you hurt me much?” I said in an off-hand tone.

“Not a bit,” Haddon answered over his shoulder. “We shall chloroform you. Your heart’s as sound as a bell.” And as he spoke, I had a whiff of the pungent sweetness of the anæsthetic.

They stretched me out, with a convenient exposure of my side, and, almost before I realised what was happening, the chloroform was being administered. It stings the nostrils, and there is a suffocating sensation, at first. I knew I should die — that this was the end of consciousness for me. And suddenly I felt that I was not prepared for death: I had a vague sense of a duty overlooked — I knew not what. What was it I had not done? I could think of nothing more to do, nothing desirable left in life; and yet I had the strangest disinclination to death. And the physical sensation was painfully oppressive. Of course the doctors did not know they were going to kill me. Possibly I struggled. Then I fell motionless, and a great silence, a monstrous silence, and an impenetrable blackness came upon me.

There must have been an interval of absolute unconsciousness, seconds or minutes. Then, with a chilly, unemotional clearness, I perceived that I was not yet dead. I was still in my body; but all the multitudinous sensations that come sweeping from it to make up the background of consciousness had gone, leaving me free of it all. No, not free of it all; for as yet something still held me to the poor stark flesh upon the bed — held me, yet not so closely that I did not feel myself external to it, independent of it, straining away from it. I do not think I saw, I do not think I heard; but I perceived all that was going on, and it was as if I both heard and saw. Haddon was bending over me, Mowbray behind me; the scalpel — it was a large scalpel — was cutting my flesh at the side under the flying ribs. It was interesting to see myself cut like cheese, without a pang, without even a qualm. The interest was much of a quality with that one might feel in a game of chess between strangers. Haddon’s face was firm and his hand steady; but I was surprised to perceive (*how* I know not) that he was feeling the gravest doubt as to his own wisdom in the

conduct of the operation.

Mowbray's thoughts, too, I could see. He was thinking that Haddon's manner showed too much of the specialist. New suggestions came up like bubbles through a stream of frothing meditation, and burst one after another in the little bright spot of his consciousness. He could not help noticing and admiring Haddon's swift dexterity, in spite of his envious quality and his disposition to detract. I saw my liver exposed. I was puzzled at my own condition. I did not feel that I was dead, but I was different in some way from my living self. The grey depression, that had weighed on me for a year or more and coloured all my thoughts, was gone. I perceived and thought without any emotional tint at all. I wondered if everyone perceived things in this way under chloroform, and forgot it again when he came out of it. It would be inconvenient to look into some heads, and not forget.

Although I did not think that I was dead, I still perceived quite clearly that I was soon to die. This brought me back to the consideration of Haddon's proceedings. I looked into his mind, and saw that he was afraid of cutting a branch of the portal vein. My attention was distracted from details by the curious changes going on in his mind. His consciousness was like the quivering little spot of light which is thrown by the mirror of a galvanometer. His thoughts ran under it like a stream, some through the focus bright and distinct, some shadowy in the half-light of the edge. Just now the little glow was steady; but the least movement on Mowbray's part, the slightest sound from outside, even a faint difference in the slow movement of the living flesh he was cutting, set the light-spot shivering and spinning. A new sense-impression came rushing up through the flow of thoughts; and lo! the light-spot jerked away towards it, swifter than a frightened fish. It was wonderful to think that upon that unstable, fitful thing depended all the complex motions of the man; that for the next five minutes, therefore, my life hung upon its movements. And he was growing more and more nervous in his work. It was as if a little picture of a cut vein grew brighter, and struggled to oust from his brain another picture of a cut falling short of the mark. He was afraid: his dread of cutting too little was battling with his dread of cutting too far.

Then, suddenly, like an escape of water from under a lock-gate, a great uprush of horrible realisation set all his thoughts swirling, and simultaneously I perceived that the vein was cut. He started back with a hoarse exclamation, and I saw the brown-purple blood gather in a swift bead, and run trickling. He was horrified. He pitched the red-stained scalpel on to the octagonal table; and instantly both doctors flung themselves upon me, making hasty and ill-conceived efforts to remedy the disaster. "Ice!" said Mowbray, gasping. But I knew that I was killed, though my body still clung to me.

I will not describe their belated endeavours to save me, though I perceived every detail. My perceptions were sharper and swifter than they had ever been in life; my thoughts rushed through my mind with incredible swiftness, but with perfect definition. I can only compare their crowded clarity to the effects of a reasonable dose of opium. In a moment it would all be over, and I should be free. I knew I was immortal, but what would happen I did not know. Should I drift off presently, like a puff of smoke from a gun, in some kind of half-material body, an attenuated version of my material self? Should I find myself suddenly among the innumerable hosts of the dead, and know the world about me for the phantasmagoria it had always seemed? Should I drift to some spiritualistic *séance*, and there make foolish, incomprehensible attempts to affect a purblind medium? It was a state of unemotional curiosity, of colourless expectation. And then I realised a growing stress upon me, a feeling as though some huge human magnet was drawing me upward out of my body. The stress grew and grew. I seemed an atom for which monstrous forces were fighting. For one brief, terrible moment sensation came back to me. That feeling of falling headlong which comes in nightmares, that feeling a thousand times intensified, that and a black horror swept across my thoughts in a torrent. Then the two doctors, the naked body with its cut side, the little room, swept away from under me and vanished, as a speck of foam vanishes down an eddy.

I was in mid-air. Far below was the West End of London, receding rapidly, — for I seemed to be flying swiftly upward, — and, as it receded, passing westward, like a panorama. I could see, through the faint haze of smoke, the innumerable roofs chimney-set,

the narrow roadways, stippled with people and conveyances, the little specks of squares, and the church steeples like thorns sticking out of the fabric. But it spun away as the earth rotated on its axis, and in a few seconds (as it seemed) I was over the scattered clumps of town about Ealing, the little Thames a thread of blue to the south, and the Chiltern Hills and the North Downs coming up like the rim of a basin, far away and faint with haze. Up I rushed. And at first I had not the faintest conception what this headlong rush upward could mean.

Every moment the circle of scenery beneath me grew wider and wider, and the details of town and field, of hill and valley, got more and more hazy and pale and indistinct, a luminous grey was mingled more and more with the blue of the hills and the green of the open meadows; and a little patch of cloud, low and far to the west, shone ever more dazzlingly white. Above, as the veil of atmosphere between myself and outer space grew thinner, the sky, which had been a fair springtime blue at first, grew deeper and richer in colour, passing steadily through the intervening shades, until presently it was as dark as the blue sky of midnight, and presently as black as the blackness of a frosty starlight, and at last as black as no blackness I had ever beheld. And first one star, and then many, and at last an innumerable host broke out upon the sky: more stars than anyone has ever seen from the face of the earth. For the blueness of the sky is the light of the sun and stars sifted and spread abroad blindingly: there is diffused light even in the darkest skies of winter, and we do not see the stars by day only because of the dazzling irradiation of the sun. But now I saw things — I know not how; assuredly with no mortal eyes — and that defect of bedazzlement blinded me no longer. The sun was incredibly strange and wonderful. The body of it was a disc of blinding white light: not yellowish, as it seems to those who live upon the earth, but livid white, all streaked with scarlet streaks and rimmed about with a fringe of writhing tongues of red fire. And, shooting half-way across the heavens from either side of it, and brighter than the Milky Way, were two pinions of silver-white, making it look more like those winged globes I have seen in Egyptian sculpture, than anything else I can remember upon earth. These I knew for the solar corona, though I had never seen anything

of it but a picture during the days of my earthly life.

When my attention came back to the earth again, I saw that it had fallen very far away from me. Field and town were long since indistinguishable, and all the varied hues of the country were merging into a uniform bright grey, broken only by the brilliant white of the clouds that lay scattered in flocculent masses over Ireland and the west of England. For now I could see the outlines of the north of France and Ireland, and all this island of Britain, save where Scotland passed over the horizon to the north, or where the coast was blurred or obliterated by cloud. The sea was a dull grey, and darker than the land; and the whole panorama was rotating slowly towards the east.

All this had happened so swiftly that, until I was some thousand miles or so from the earth, I had no thought for myself. But now I perceived I had neither hands nor feet, neither parts nor organs, and that I felt neither alarm nor pain. All about me I perceived that the vacancy (for I had already left the air behind) was cold beyond the imagination of man; but it troubled me not. The sun's rays shot through the void, powerless to light or heat until they should strike on matter in their course. I saw things with a serene self-forgetfulness, even as if I were God. And down below there, rushing away from me, — countless miles in a second, — where a little dark spot on the grey marked the position of London, two doctors were struggling to restore life to the poor hacked and outworn shell I had abandoned. I felt then such release, such serenity as I can compare to no mortal delight I have ever known.

It was only after I had perceived all these things that the meaning of that headlong rush of the earth grew into comprehension. Yet it was so simple, so obvious, that I was amazed at my never anticipating the thing that was happening to me. I had suddenly been cut adrift from matter: all that was material of me was there upon earth, whirling away through space, held to the earth by gravitation, partaking of the earth-inertia, moving in its wreath of epicycles round the sun, and with the sun and the planets on their vast march through space. But the immaterial has no inertia, feels nothing of the pull of matter for matter: where it parts from its garment of flesh, there it remains (so far as space concerns it any longer) immovable in space.

I was not leaving the earth: the earth was leaving *me*, and not only the earth, but the whole solar system was streaming past. And about me in space, invisible to me, scattered in the wake of the earth upon its journey, there must be an innumerable multitude of souls, stripped like myself of the material, stripped like myself of the passions of the individual and the generous emotions of the gregarious brute, naked intelligences, things of newborn wonder and thought, marvelling at the strange release that had suddenly come on them!

As I receded faster and faster from the strange white sun in the black heavens, and from the broad and shining earth upon which my being had begun, I seemed to grow, in some incredible manner, vast: vast as regards this world I had left, vast as regards the moments and periods of a human life. Very soon I saw the full circle of the earth, slightly gibbous, like the moon when she nears her full, but very large; and the silvery shape of America was now in the noonday blaze wherein (as it seemed) little England had been basking but a few minutes ago. At first the earth was large, and shone in the heavens, filling a great part of them; but every moment she grew smaller and more distant. As she shrunk, the broad moon in its third quarter crept into view over the rim of her disc. I looked for the constellations. Only that part of Aries directly behind the sun and the Lion, which the earth covered, were hidden. I recognised the tortuous, tattered band of the Milky Way, with Vega very bright between sun and earth; and Sirius and Orion shone splendid against the unfathomable blackness in the opposite quarter of the heavens. The Pole Star was overhead, and the Great Bear hung over the circle of the earth. And away beneath and beyond the shining corona of the sun were strange groupings of stars I had never seen in my life — notably, a dagger-shaped group that I knew for the Southern Cross. All these were no larger than when they had shone on earth; but the little stars that one scarce sees shone now against the setting of black vacancy as brightly as the first-magnitudes had done, while the larger worlds were points of indescribable glory and colour. Aldebaran was a spot of blood-red fire, and Sirius condensed to one point the light of a world of sapphires. And they shone steadily: they did not scintillate, they were calmly glorious. My impressions had an adamantine hardness and brightness: there was no blurring softness,

no atmosphere, nothing but infinite darkness set with the myriads of these acute and brilliant points and specks of light. Presently, when I looked again, the little earth seemed no bigger than the sun, and it dwindled and turned as I looked, until, in a second's space (as it seemed to me), it was halved; and so it went on swiftly dwindling. Far away in the opposite direction, a little pinkish pin's head of light, shining steadily, was the planet Mars. I swam motionless in vacancy, and, without a trace of terror or astonishment, watched the speck of cosmic dust we call the world fall away from me.

Presently it dawned upon me that my sense of duration had changed: that my mind was moving not faster but infinitely slower, that between each separate impression there was a period of many days. The moon spun once round the earth as I noted this; and I perceived clearly the motion of Mars in his orbit. Moreover, it appeared as if the time between thought and thought grew steadily greater, until at last a thousand years was but a moment in my perception.

At first the constellations had shone motionless against the black background of infinite space; but presently it seemed as though the group of stars about Hercules and the Scorpion was contracting, while Orion and Aldebaran and their neighbours were scattering apart. Flashing suddenly out of the darkness there came a flying multitude of particles of rock, glittering like dust-specks in a sunbeam, and encompassed in a faintly luminous haze. They swirled all about me, and vanished again in a twinkling far behind. And then I saw that a bright spot of light, that shone a little to one side of my path, was growing very rapidly larger, and perceived that it was the planet Saturn rushing towards me. Larger and larger it grew, swallowing up the heavens behind it, and hiding every moment a fresh multitude of stars. I perceived its flattened, whirling body, its disc-like belt, and seven of its little satellites. It grew and grew, till it towered enormous; and then I plunged amid a streaming multitude of clashing stones and dancing dust-particles and gas-eddies, and saw for a moment the mighty triple belt like three concentric arches of moonlight above me, its shadow black on the boiling tumult below. These things happened in one-tenth of the time it takes to tell of

them. The planet went by like a flash of lightning; for a few seconds it blotted out the sun, and there and then became a mere black, dwindling, winged patch against the light. The earth, the mother mote of my being, I could no longer see.

So, with a stately swiftness, in the profoundest silence, the solar system fell from me, as it had been a garment, until the sun was a mere star amid the multitude of stars, with its eddy of planet-specks, lost in the confused glittering of the remoter light. I was no longer a denizen of the solar system: I had come to the Outer Universe, I seemed to grasp and comprehend the whole world of matter. Ever more swiftly the stars closed in about the spot where Antares and Vega had vanished in a luminous haze, until that part of the sky had the semblance of a whirling mass of nebulæ, and ever before me yawned vaster gaps of vacant blackness, and the stars shone fewer and fewer. It seemed as if I moved towards a point between Orion's belt and sword; and the void about that region opened vaster and vaster every second, an incredible gulf of nothingness, into which I was falling. Faster and ever faster the universe rushed by, a hurry of whirling motes at last, speeding silently into the void. Stars glowing brighter and brighter, with their circling planets catching the light in a ghostly fashion as I neared them, shone out and vanished again into inexistence; faint comets, clusters of meteorites, winking specks of matter, eddying light points, whizzed past, some perhaps a hundred millions of miles or so from me at most, few nearer, travelling with unimaginable rapidity, shooting constellations, momentary darts of fire, through that black, enormous night. More than anything else it was like a dusty draught, sunbeam-lit. Broader, and wider, and deeper grew the starless space, the vacant Beyond, into which I was being drawn. At last a quarter of the heavens was black and blank, and the whole headlong rush of stellar universe closed in behind me like a veil of light that is gathered together. It drove away from me like a monstrous jack-o'-lantern driven by the wind. I had come out into the wilderness of space. Ever the vacant blackness grew broader, until the hosts of the stars seemed only like a swarm of fiery specks hurrying away from me, inconceivably remote, and the darkness, the nothingness and emptiness, was about me on every side. Soon the little universe of matter, the cage of points in which I had begun to

be, was dwindling, now to a whirling disc of luminous glittering, and now to one minute disc of hazy light. In a little while it would shrink to a point, and at last would vanish altogether.

Suddenly feeling came back to me — feeling in the shape of overwhelming terror: such a dread of those dark vastitudes as no words can describe, a passionate resurgence of sympathy and social desire. Were there other souls, invisible to me as I to them, about me in the blackness? or was I indeed, even as I felt, alone? Had I passed out of being into something that was neither being nor not-being? The covering of the body, the covering of matter, had been torn from me, and the hallucinations of companionship and security. Everything was black and silent. I had ceased to be. I was nothing. There was nothing, save only that infinitesimal dot of light that dwindled in the gulf. I strained myself to hear and see, and for a while there was naught but infinite silence, intolerable darkness, horror, and despair.

Then I saw that about the spot of light into which the whole world of matter had shrunk there was a faint glow. And in a band on either side of that the darkness was not absolute. I watched it for ages, as it seemed to me, and through the long waiting the haze grew imperceptibly more distinct. And then about the band appeared an irregular cloud of the faintest, palest brown. I felt a passionate impatience; but the things grew brighter so slowly that they scarce seemed to change. What was unfolding itself? What was this strange reddish dawn in the interminable night of space?

The cloud's shape was grotesque. It seemed to be looped along its lower side into four projecting masses, and, above, it ended in a straight line. What phantom was it? I felt assured I had seen that figure before; but I could not think what, nor where, nor when it was. Then the realisation rushed upon me. *It was a clenched Hand.* I was alone in space, alone with this huge, shadowy Hand, upon which the whole Universe of Matter lay like an unconsidered speck of dust. It seemed as though I watched it through vast periods of time. On the forefinger glittered a ring; and the universe from which I had come was but a spot of light upon the ring's curvature. And the thing that the hand gripped had the likeness of a black rod. Through a long eternity I watched this Hand, with the ring and the rod, marvelling

and fearing and waiting helplessly on what might follow. It seemed as though nothing could follow: that I should watch for ever, seeing only the Hand and the thing it held, and understanding nothing of its import. Was the whole universe but a refracting speck upon some greater Being? Were our worlds but the atoms of another universe, and those again of another, and so on through an endless progression? And what was I? Was I indeed immaterial? A vague persuasion of a body gathering about me came into my suspense. The abysmal darkness about the Hand filled with impalpable suggestions, with uncertain, fluctuating shapes.

Then, suddenly, came a sound, like the sound of a tolling bell: faint, as if infinitely far; muffled, as though heard through thick swathings of darkness: a deep, vibrating resonance, with vast gulfs of silence between each stroke. And the Hand appeared to tighten on the rod. And I saw far above the Hand, towards the apex of the darkness, a circle of dim phosphorescence, a ghostly sphere whence these sounds came throbbing; and at the last stroke the Hand vanished, for the hour had come, and I heard a noise of many waters. But the black rod remained as a great band across the sky. And then a voice, which seemed to run to the uttermost parts of space, spoke, saying, “There will be no more pain.”

At that an almost intolerable gladness and radiance rushed in upon me, and I saw the circle shining white and bright, and the rod black and shining, and many things else distinct and clear. And the circle was the face of the clock, and the rod the rail of my bed. Haddon was standing at the foot, against the rail, with a small pair of scissors on his fingers; and the hands of my clock on the mantel over his shoulder were clasped together over the hour of twelve. Mowbray was washing something in a basin at the octagonal table, and at my side I felt a subdued feeling that could scarce be spoken of as pain.

The operation had not killed me. And I perceived, suddenly, that the dull melancholy of half a year was lifted from my mind.

THE SEA RAIDERS

I

Until the extraordinary affair at Sidmouth, the peculiar species *Haploteuthis ferox* was known to science only generically, on the strength of a half-digested tentacle obtained near the Azores, and a decaying body pecked by birds and nibbled by fish, found early in 1896 by Mr. Jennings, near Land's End.

In no department of zoological science, indeed, are we quite so much in the dark as with regard to the deep-sea cephalopods. A mere accident, for instance, it was that led to the Prince of Monaco's discovery of nearly a dozen new forms in the summer of 1895, a discovery in which the before-mentioned tentacle was included. It chanced that a cachalot was killed off Terceira by some sperm whalers, and in its last struggles charged almost to the Prince's yacht, missed it, rolled under, and died within twenty yards of his rudder. And in its agony it threw up a number of large objects, which the Prince, dimly perceiving they were strange and important, was, by a happy expedient, able to secure before they sank. He set his screws in motion, and kept them circling in the vortices thus created until a boat could be lowered. And these specimens were whole cephalopods and fragments of cephalopods, some of gigantic proportions, and almost all of them unknown to science!

It would seem, indeed, that these large and agile creatures, living in the middle depths of the sea, must, to a large extent, for ever remain unknown to us, since under water they are too nimble for nets, and it is only by such rare unlooked-for accidents that specimens can be obtained. In the case of *Haploteuthis ferox*, for instance, we are still altogether ignorant of its habitat, as ignorant as we are of the breeding-ground of the herring or the sea-ways of the salmon. And zoologists are altogether at a loss to account for its sudden appearance on our coast. Possibly it was the stress of a hunger migration that drove it hither out of the deep. But it will be, perhaps, better to avoid necessarily inconclusive discussion, and to proceed at once with our narrative.

The first human being to set eyes upon a living *Haploteuthis* — the first human being to survive, that is, for there can be little doubt now that the wave of bathing fatalities and boating accidents that travelled along the coast of Cornwall and Devon in early May was due to this cause — was a retired tea-dealer of the name of Fison, who was stopping at a Sidmouth boarding-house. It was in the afternoon, and he was walking along the cliff path between Sidmouth and Ladram Bay. The cliffs in this direction are very high, but down the red face of them in one place a kind of ladder staircase has been made. He was near this when his attention was attracted by what at first he thought to be a cluster of birds struggling over a fragment of food that caught the sunlight, and glistened pinkish-white. The tide was right out, and this object was not only far below him, but remote across a broad waste of rock reefs covered with dark seaweed and interspersed with silvery shining tidal pools. And he was, moreover, dazzled by the brightness of the further water.

In a minute, regarding this again, he perceived that his judgment was in fault, for over this struggle circled a number of birds, jackdaws and gulls for the most part, the latter gleaming blindingly when the sunlight smote their wings, and they seemed minute in comparison with it. And his curiosity was, perhaps, aroused all the more strongly because of his first insufficient explanations.

As he had nothing better to do than amuse himself, he decided to make this object, whatever it was, the goal of his afternoon walk, instead of Ladram Bay, conceiving it might perhaps be a great fish of some sort, stranded by some chance, and flapping about in its distress. And so he hurried down the long steep ladder, stopping at intervals of thirty feet or so to take breath and scan the mysterious movement.

At the foot of the cliff he was, of course, nearer his object than he had been; but, on the other hand, it now came up against the incandescent sky, beneath the sun, so as to seem dark and indistinct. Whatever was pinkish of it was now hidden by a skerry of weedy boulders. But he perceived that it was made up of seven rounded bodies, distinct or connected, and that the birds kept up a constant croaking and screaming, but seemed afraid to approach it too closely.

Mr. Fison, torn by curiosity, began picking his way across the

wave-worn rocks, and, finding the wet seaweed that covered them thickly rendered them extremely slippery, he stopped, removed his shoes and socks, and coiled his trousers above his knees. His object was, of course, merely to avoid stumbling into the rocky pools about him, and perhaps he was rather glad, as all men are, of an excuse to resume, even for a moment, the sensations of his boyhood. At anyrate, it is to this, no doubt, that he owes his life.

He approached his mark with all the assurance which the absolute security of this country against all forms of animal life gives its inhabitants. The round bodies moved to and fro, but it was only when he surmounted the skerry of boulders I have mentioned that he realised the horrible nature of the discovery. It came upon him with some suddenness.

The rounded bodies fell apart as he came into sight over the ridge, and displayed the pinkish object to be the partially devoured body of a human being, but whether of a man or woman he was unable to say. And the rounded bodies were new and ghastly-looking creatures, in shape somewhat resembling an octopus, and with huge and very long and flexible tentacles, coiled copiously on the ground. The skin had a glistening texture, unpleasant to see, like shiny leather. The downward bend of the tentacle-surrounded mouth, the curious excrescence at the bend, the tentacles, and the large intelligent eyes, gave the creatures a grotesque suggestion of a face. They were the size of a fair-sized swine about the body, and the tentacles seemed to him to be many feet in length. There were, he thinks, seven or eight at least of the creatures. Twenty yards beyond them, amid the surf of the now returning tide, two others were emerging from the sea.

Their bodies lay flatly on the rocks, and their eyes regarded him with evil interest; but it does not appear that Mr. Fison was afraid, or that he realised that he was in any danger. Possibly his confidence is to be ascribed to the limpness of their attitudes. But he was horrified, of course, and intensely excited and indignant at such revolting creatures preying upon human flesh. He thought they had chanced upon a drowned body. He shouted to them, with the idea of driving them off, and, finding they did not budge, cast about him, picked up a big rounded lump of rock, and flung it at one.

And then, slowly uncoiling their tentacles, they all began moving

towards him — creeping at first deliberately, and making a soft purring sound to each other.

In a moment Mr. Fison realised that he was in danger. He shouted again, threw both his boots, and started off, with a leap, forthwith. Twenty yards off he stopped and faced about, judging them slow, and behold! the tentacles of their leader were already pouring over the rocky ridge on which he had just been standing!

At that he shouted again, but this time not threatening, but a cry of dismay, and began jumping, striding, slipping, wading across the uneven expanse between him and the beach. The tall red cliffs seemed suddenly at a vast distance, and he saw, as though they were creatures in another world, two minute workmen engaged in the repair of the ladder-way, and little suspecting the race for life that was beginning below them. At one time he could hear the creatures splashing in the pools not a dozen feet behind him, and once he slipped and almost fell.

They chased him to the very foot of the cliffs, and desisted only when he had been joined by the workmen at the foot of the ladder-way up the cliff. All three of the men pelted them with stones for a time, and then hurried to the cliff top and along the path towards Sidmouth, to secure assistance and a boat, and to rescue the desecrated body from the clutches of these abominable creatures.

II

And, as if he had not already been in sufficient peril that day, Mr. Fison went with the boat to point out the exact spot of his adventure.

As the tide was down, it required a considerable detour to reach the spot, and when at last they came off the ladder-way, the mangled body had disappeared. The water was now running in, submerging first one slab of slimy rock and then another, and the four men in the boat — the workmen, that is, the boatman, and Mr. Fison — now turned their attention from the bearings off shore to the water beneath the keel.

At first they could see little below them, save a dark jungle of laminaria, with an occasional darting fish. Their minds were set on adventure, and they expressed their disappointment freely. But

presently they saw one of the monsters swimming through the water seaward, with a curious rolling motion that suggested to Mr. Fison the spinning roll of a captive balloon. Almost immediately after, the waving streamers of laminaria were extraordinarily perturbed, parted for a moment, and three of these beasts became darkly visible, struggling for what was probably some fragment of the drowned man. In a moment the copious olive-green ribbons had poured again over this writhing group.

At that all four men, greatly excited, began beating the water with oars and shouting, and immediately they saw a tumultuous movement among the weeds. They desisted to see more clearly, and as soon as the water was smooth, they saw, as it seemed to them, the whole sea bottom among the weeds set with eyes.

"Ugly swine!" cried one of the men. "Why, there's dozens!"

And forthwith the things began to rise through the water about them. Mr. Fison has since described to the writer this startling eruption out of the waving laminaria meadows. To him it seemed to occupy a considerable time, but it is probable that really it was an affair of a few seconds only. For a time nothing but eyes, and then he speaks of tentacles streaming out and parting the weed fronds this way and that. Then these things, growing larger, until at last the bottom was hidden by their intercoiling forms, and the tips of tentacles rose darkly here and there into the air above the swell of the waters.

One came up boldly to the side of the boat, and, clinging to this with three of its sucker-set tentacles, threw four others over the gunwale, as if with an intention either of oversetting the boat or of clambering into it. Mr. Fison at once caught up the boathook, and, jabbing furiously at the soft tentacles, forced it to desist. He was struck in the back and almost pitched overboard by the boatman, who was using his oar to resist a similar attack on the other side of the boat. But the tentacles on either side at once relaxed their hold at this, slid out of sight, and splashed into the water.

"We'd better get out of this," said Mr. Fison, who was trembling violently. He went to the tiller, while the boatman and one of the workmen seated themselves and began rowing. The other workman stood up in the fore part of the boat, with the boathook, ready to

strike any more tentacles that might appear. Nothing else seems to have been said. Mr. Fison had expressed the common feeling beyond amendment. In a hushed, scared mood, with faces white and drawn, they set about escaping from the position into which they had so recklessly blundered.

But the oars had scarcely dropped into the water before dark, tapering, serpentine ropes had bound them, and were about the rudder; and creeping up the sides of the boat with a looping motion came the suckers again. The men gripped their oars and pulled, but it was like trying to move a boat in a floating raft of weeds. “Help here!” cried the boatman, and Mr. Fison and the second workman rushed to help lug at the oar.

Then the man with the boathook — his name was Ewan, or Ewen — sprang up with a curse, and began striking downward over the side, as far as he could reach, at the bank of tentacles that now clustered along the boat’s bottom. And, at the same time, the two rowers stood up to get a better purchase for the recovery of their oars. The boatman handed his to Mr. Fison, who lugged desperately, and, meanwhile, the boatman opened a big clasp-knife, and, leaning over the side of the boat, began hacking at the spiring arms upon the oar shaft.

Mr. Fison, staggering with the quivering rocking of the boat, his teeth set, his breath coming short, and the veins starting on his hands as he pulled at his oar, suddenly cast his eyes seaward. And there, not fifty yards off, across the long rollers of the incoming tide, was a large boat standing in towards them, with three women and a little child in it. A boatman was rowing, and a little man in a pink-ribboned straw hat and whites stood in the stern, hailing them. For a moment, of course, Mr. Fison thought of help, and then he thought of the child. He abandoned his oar forthwith, threw up his arms in a frantic gesture, and screamed to the party in the boat to keep away “for God’s sake!” It says much for the modesty and courage of Mr. Fison that he does not seem to be aware that there was any quality of heroism in his action at this juncture. The oar he had abandoned was at once drawn under, and presently reappeared floating about twenty yards away.

At the same moment Mr. Fison felt the boat under him lurch

violently, and a hoarse scream, a prolonged cry of terror from Hill, the boatman, caused him to forget the party of excursionists altogether. He turned, and saw Hill crouching by the forward rowlock, his face convulsed with terror, and his right arm over the side and drawn tightly down. He gave now a succession of short, sharp cries, “Oh! oh! oh! — oh!” Mr. Fison believes that he must have been hacking at the tentacles below the water-line, and have been grasped by them, but, of course, it is quite impossible to say now certainly what had happened. The boat was heeling over, so that the gunwale was within ten inches of the water, and both Ewan and the other labourer were striking down into the water, with oar and boathook, on either side of Hill’s arm. Mr. Fison instinctively placed himself to counterpoise them.

Then Hill, who was a burly, powerful man, made a strenuous effort, and rose almost to a standing position. He lifted his arm, indeed, clean out of the water. Hanging to it was a complicated tangle of brown ropes; and the eyes of one of the brutes that had hold of him, glaring straight and resolute, showed momentarily above the surface. The boat heeled more and more, and the green-brown water came pouring in a cascade over the side. Then Hill slipped and fell with his ribs across the side, and his arm and the mass of tentacles about it splashed back into the water. He rolled over; his boot kicked Mr. Fison’s knee as that gentleman rushed forward to seize him, and in another moment fresh tentacles had whipped about his waist and neck, and after a brief, convulsive struggle, in which the boat was nearly capsized, Hill was lugged overboard. The boat righted with a violent jerk that all but sent Mr. Fison over the other side, and hid the struggle in the water from his eyes.

He stood staggering to recover his balance for a moment, and as he did so, he became aware that the struggle and the inflowing tide had carried them close upon the weedy rocks again. Not four yards off a table of rock still rose in rhythmic movements above the in-wash of the tide. In a moment Mr. Fison seized the oar from Ewan, gave one vigorous stroke, then, dropping it, ran to the bows and leapt. He felt his feet slide over the rock, and, by a frantic effort, leapt again towards a further mass. He stumbled over this, came to his knees, and rose again.

“Look out!” cried someone, and a large drab body struck him. He was knocked flat into a tidal pool by one of the workmen, and as he went down he heard smothered, choking cries, that he believed at the time came from Hill. Then he found himself marvelling at the shrillness and variety of Hill’s voice. Someone jumped over him, and a curving rush of foamy water poured over him, and passed. He scrambled to his feet dripping, and, without looking seaward, ran as fast as his terror would let him shoreward. Before him, over the flat space of scattered rocks, stumbled the two workmen — one a dozen yards in front of the other.

He looked over his shoulder at last, and, seeing that he was not pursued, faced about. He was astonished. From the moment of the rising of the cephalopods out of the water, he had been acting too swiftly to fully comprehend his actions. Now it seemed to him as if he had suddenly jumped out of an evil dream.

For there were the sky, cloudless and blazing with the afternoon sun, the sea weltering under its pitiless brightness, the soft creamy foam of the breaking water, and the low, long, dark ridges of rock. The righted boat floated, rising and falling gently on the swell about a dozen yards from shore. Hill and the monsters, all the stress and tumult of that fierce fight for life, had vanished as though they had never been.

Mr. Fison’s heart was beating violently; he was throbbing to the finger-tips, and his breath came deep.

There was something missing. For some seconds he could not think clearly enough what this might be. Sun, sky, sea, rocks — what was it? Then he remembered the boatload of excursionists. It had vanished. He wondered whether he had imagined it. He turned, and saw the two workmen standing side by side under the projecting masses of the tall pink cliffs. He hesitated whether he should make one last attempt to save the man Hill. His physical excitement seemed to desert him suddenly, and leave him aimless and helpless. He turned shoreward, stumbling and wading towards his two companions.

He looked back again, and there were now two boats floating, and the one farthest out at sea pitched clumsily, bottom upward.

III

So it was *Haploteuthis ferox* made its appearance upon the Devonshire coast. So far, this has been its most serious aggression. Mr. Fison's account, taken together with the wave of boating and bathing casualties to which I have already alluded, and the absence of fish from the Cornish coasts that year, points clearly to a shoal of these voracious deep-sea monsters prowling slowly along the sub-tidal coastline. Hunger migration has, I know, been suggested as the force that drove them hither; but, for my own part, I prefer to believe the alternative theory of Hemsley. Hemsley holds that a pack or shoal of these creatures may have become enamoured of human flesh by the accident of a foundered ship sinking among them, and have wandered in search of it out of their accustomed zone; first waylaying and following ships, and so coming to our shores in the wake of the Atlantic traffic. But to discuss Hemsley's cogent and admirably-stated arguments would be out of place here.

It would seem that the appetites of the shoal were satisfied by the catch of eleven people — for so far as can be ascertained, there were ten people in the second boat, and certainly these creatures gave no further signs of their presence off Sidmouth that day. The coast between Seaton and Budleigh Salterton was patrolled all that evening and night by four Preventive Service boats, the men in which were armed with harpoons and cutlasses, and as the evening advanced, a number of more or less similarly equipped expeditions, organised by private individuals, joined them. Mr. Fison took no part in any of these expeditions.

About midnight excited hails were heard from a boat about a couple of miles out at sea to the south-east of Sidmouth, and a lantern was seen waving in a strange manner to and fro and up and down. The nearer boats at once hurried towards the alarm. The venturesome occupants of the boat, a seaman, a curate, and two schoolboys, had actually seen the monsters passing under their boat. The creatures, it seems, like most deep-sea organisms, were phosphorescent, and they had been floating, five fathoms deep or so, like creatures of moonshine through the blackness of the water, their tentacles retracted and as if asleep, rolling over and over, and moving

slowly in a wedge-like formation towards the south-east.

These people told their story in gesticulated fragments, as first one boat drew alongside and then another. At last there was a little fleet of eight or nine boats collected together, and from them a tumult, like the chatter of a marketplace, rose into the stillness of the night. There was little or no disposition to pursue the shoal, the people had neither weapons nor experience for such a dubious chase, and presently — even with a certain relief, it may be — the boats turned shoreward.

And now to tell what is perhaps the most astonishing fact in this whole astonishing raid. We have not the slightest knowledge of the subsequent movements of the shoal, although the whole south-west coast was now alert for it. But it may, perhaps, be significant that a cachalot was stranded off Sark on June 3. Two weeks and three days after this Sidmouth affair, a living *Haploteuthis* came ashore on Calais sands. It was alive, because several witnesses saw its tentacles moving in a convulsive way. But it is probable that it was dying. A gentleman named Pouchet obtained a rifle and shot it.

That was the last appearance of a living *Haploteuthis*. No others were seen on the French coast. On the 15th of June a dead body, almost complete, was washed ashore near Torquay, and a few days later a boat from the Marine Biological station, engaged in dredging off Plymouth, picked up a rotting specimen, slashed deeply with a cutlass wound. How the former specimen had come by its death it is impossible to say. And on the last day of June, Mr. Egbert Caine, an artist, bathing near Newlyn, threw up his arms, shrieked, and was drawn under. A friend bathing with him made no attempt to save him, but swam at once for the shore. This is the last fact to tell of this extraordinary raid from the deeper sea. Whether it is really the last of these horrible creatures it is, as yet, premature to say. But it is believed, and certainly it is to be hoped, that they have returned now, and returned for good, to the sunless depths of the middle seas, out of which they have so strangely and so mysteriously arisen.

POLLOCK AND THE PORROH MAN

It was in a swampy village on the lagoon river behind the Turner Peninsula that Pollock's first encounter with the Porroh man occurred. The women of that country are famous for their good looks — they are Gallinas with a dash of European blood that dates from the days of Vasco de Gama and the English slave-traders, and the Porroh man, too, was possibly inspired by a faint Caucasian taint in his composition. (It's a curious thing to think that some of us may have distant cousins eating men on Sherboro Island or raiding with the Sofas.) At anyrate, the Porroh man stabbed the woman to the heart as though he had been a mere low-class Italian, and very narrowly missed Pollock. But Pollock, using his revolver to parry the lightning stab which was aimed at his deltoid muscle, sent the iron dagger flying, and, firing, hit the man in the hand.

He fired again and missed, knocking a sudden window out of the wall of the hut. The Porroh man stooped in the doorway, glancing under his arm at Pollock. Pollock caught a glimpse of his inverted face in the sunlight, and then the Englishman was alone, sick and trembling with the excitement of the affair, in the twilight of the place. It had all happened in less time than it takes to read about it.

The woman was quite dead, and having ascertained this, Pollock went to the entrance of the hut and looked out. Things outside were dazzling bright. Half a dozen of the porters of the expedition were standing up in a group near the green huts they occupied, and staring towards him, wondering what the shots might signify. Behind the little group of men was the broad stretch of black fetid mud by the river, a green carpet of rafts of papyrus and water-grass, and then the leaden water. The mangroves beyond the stream loomed indistinctly through the blue haze. There were no signs of excitement in the squat village, whose fence was just visible above the cane-grass.

Pollock came out of the hut cautiously and walked towards the river, looking over his shoulder at intervals. But the Porroh man had vanished. Pollock clutched his revolver nervously in his hand.

One of his men came to meet him, and as he came, pointed to the bushes behind the hut in which the Porroh man had disappeared.

Pollock had an irritating persuasion of having made an absolute fool of himself; he felt bitter, savage, at the turn things had taken. At the same time, he would have to tell Waterhouse — the moral, exemplary, cautious Waterhouse — who would inevitably take the matter seriously. Pollock cursed bitterly at his luck, at Waterhouse, and especially at the West Coast of Africa. He felt consummately sick of the expedition. And in the back of his mind all the time was a speculative doubt where precisely within the visible horizon the Porroh man might be.

It is perhaps rather shocking, but he was not at all upset by the murder that had just happened. He had seen so much brutality during the last three months, so many dead women, burnt huts, drying skeletons, up the Kittam River in the wake of the Sofa cavalry, that his senses were blunted. What disturbed him was the persuasion that this business was only beginning.

He swore savagely at the black, who ventured to ask a question, and went on into the tent under the orange-trees where Waterhouse was lying, feeling exasperatingly like a boy going into the headmaster's study.

Waterhouse was still sleeping off the effects of his last dose of chlorodyne, and Pollock sat down on a packing-case beside him, and, lighting his pipe, waited for him to awake. About him were scattered the pots and weapons Waterhouse had collected from the Mendi people, and which he had been repacking for the canoe voyage to Sulyma.

Presently Waterhouse woke up, and after judicial stretching, decided he was all right again. Pollock got him some tea. Over the tea the incidents of the afternoon were described by Pollock, after some preliminary beating about the bush. Waterhouse took the matter even more seriously than Pollock had anticipated. He did not simply disapprove, he scolded, he insulted.

"You're one of those infernal fools who think a black man isn't a human being," he said. "I can't be ill a day without you must get into some dirty scrape or other. This is the third time in a month that you have come crossways-on with a native, and this time you're in for it with a vengeance. Porroh, too! They're down upon you enough as it

is, about that idol you wrote your silly name on. And they're the most vindictive devils on earth! You make a man ashamed of civilisation. To think you come of a decent family! If ever I cumber myself up with a vicious, stupid young lout like you again" —

"Steady on, now," snarled Pollock, in the tone that always exasperated Waterhouse; "steady on."

At that Waterhouse became speechless. He jumped to his feet.

"Look here, Pollock," he said, after a struggle to control his breath. "You must go home. I won't have you any longer. I'm ill enough as it is through you" —

"Keep your hair on," said Pollock, staring in front of him. "I'm ready enough to go."

Waterhouse became calmer again. He sat down on the camp-stool. "Very well," he said. "I don't want a row, Pollock, you know, but it's confoundedly annoying to have one's plans put out by this kind of thing. I'll come to Sulyma with you, and see you safe aboard" —

"You needn't," said Pollock. "I can go alone. From here."

"Not far," said Waterhouse. "You don't understand this Porroh business."

"How should *I* know she belonged to a Porroh man?" said Pollock bitterly.

"Well, she did," said Waterhouse; "and you can't undo the thing. Go alone, indeed! I wonder what they'd do to you. You don't seem to understand that this Porroh hokey-pokey rules this country, is its law, religion, constitution, medicine, magic.... They appoint the chiefs. The Inquisition, at its best, couldn't hold a candle to these chaps. He will probably set Awajale, the chief here, on to us. It's lucky our porters are Mendis. We shall have to shift this little settlement of ours.... Confound you, Pollock! And, of course, you must go and miss him."

He thought, and his thoughts seemed disagreeable. Presently he stood up and took his rifle. "I'd keep close for a bit, if I were you," he said, over his shoulder, as he went out. "I'm going out to see what I can find out about it."

Pollock remained sitting in the tent, meditating. "I was meant for a civilised life," he said to himself, regretfully, as he filled his pipe.

“The sooner I get back to London or Paris the better for me.”

His eye fell on the sealed case in which Waterhouse had put the featherless poisoned arrows they had bought in the Mendi country. “I wish I had hit the beggar somewhere vital,” said Pollock viciously.

Waterhouse came back after a long interval. He was not communicative, though Pollock asked him questions enough. The Porroh man, it seems, was a prominent member of that mystical society. The village was interested, but not threatening. No doubt the witch-doctor had gone into the bush. He was a great witch-doctor. “Of course, he’s up to something,” said Waterhouse, and became silent.

“But what can he do?” asked Pollock, unheeded.

“I must get you out of this. There’s something brewing, or things would not be so quiet,” said Waterhouse, after a gap of silence. Pollock wanted to know what the brew might be. “Dancing in a circle of skulls,” said Waterhouse; “brewing a stink in a copper pot.” Pollock wanted particulars. Waterhouse was vague, Pollock pressing. At last Waterhouse lost his temper. “How the devil should *I* know?” he said to Pollock’s twentieth inquiry what the Porroh man would do. “He tried to kill you off-hand in the hut. *Now*, I fancy he will try something more elaborate. But you’ll see fast enough. I don’t want to help unnerve you. It’s probably all nonsense.”

That night, as they were sitting at their fire, Pollock again tried to draw Waterhouse out on the subject of Porroh methods. “Better get to sleep,” said Waterhouse, when Pollock’s bent became apparent; “we start early to-morrow. You may want all your nerve about you.”

“But what line will he take?”

“Can’t say. They’re versatile people. They know a lot of rum dodges. You’d better get that copper-devil, Shakespear, to talk.”

There was a flash and a heavy bang out of the darkness behind the huts, and a clay bullet came whistling close to Pollock’s head. This, at least, was crude enough. The blacks and half-breeds sitting and yarning round their own fire jumped up, and someone fired into the dark.

“Better go into one of the huts,” said Waterhouse quietly, still sitting unmoved.

Pollock stood up by the fire and drew his revolver. Fighting, at

least, he was not afraid of. But a man in the dark is in the best of armour. Realising the wisdom of Waterhouse's advice, Pollock went into the tent and lay down there.

What little sleep he had was disturbed by dreams, variegated dreams, but chiefly of the Porroh man's face, upside down, as he went out of the hut, and looked up under his arm. It was odd that this transitory impression should have stuck so firmly in Pollock's memory. Moreover, he was troubled by queer pains in his limbs.

In the white haze of the early morning, as they were loading the canoes, a barbed arrow suddenly appeared quivering in the ground close to Pollock's foot. The boys made a perfunctory effort to clear out the thicket, but it led to no capture.

After these two occurrences, there was a disposition on the part of the expedition to leave Pollock to himself, and Pollock became, for the first time in his life, anxious to mingle with blacks. Waterhouse took one canoe, and Pollock, in spite of a friendly desire to chat with Waterhouse, had to take the other. He was left all alone in the front part of the canoe, and he had the greatest trouble to make the men — who did not love him — keep to the middle of the river, a clear hundred yards or more from either shore. However, he made Shakespear, the Freetown half-breed, come up to his own end of the canoe and tell him about Porroh, which Shakespear, failing in his attempts to leave Pollock alone, presently did with considerable freedom and gusto.

The day passed. The canoe glided swiftly along the ribbon of lagoon water, between the drift of water-figs, fallen trees, papyrus, and palm-wine palms, and with the dark mangrove swamp to the left, through which one could hear now and then the roar of the Atlantic surf. Shakespear told in his soft, blurred English of how the Porroh could cast spells; how men withered up under their malice; how they could send dreams and devils; how they tormented and killed the sons of Ijibu; how they kidnapped a white trader from Sulyma who had maltreated one of the sect, and how his body looked when it was found. And Pollock after each narrative cursed under his breath at the want of missionary enterprise that allowed such things to be, and at the inert British Government that ruled over this dark heathendom of Sierra Leone. In the evening they came to the Kasi Lake, and sent a

score of crocodiles lumbering off the island on which the expedition camped for the night.

The next day they reached Sulyma, and smelt the sea breeze, but Pollock had to put up there for five days before he could get on to Freetown. Waterhouse, considering him to be comparatively safe here, and within the pale of Freetown influence, left him and went back with the expedition to Gbemma, and Pollock became very friendly with Perera, the only resident white trader at Sulyma — so friendly, indeed, that he went about with him everywhere. Perera was a little Portuguese Jew, who had lived in England, and he appreciated the Englishman's friendliness as a great compliment.

For two days nothing happened out of the ordinary; for the most part Pollock and Perera played Nap — the only game they had in common — and Pollock got into debt. Then, on the second evening, Pollock had a disagreeable intimation of the arrival of the Porroh man in Sulyma by getting a flesh-wound in the shoulder from a lump of filed iron. It was a long shot, and the missile had nearly spent its force when it hit him. Still it conveyed its message plainly enough. Pollock sat up in his hammock, revolver in hand, all that night, and next morning confided, to some extent, in the Anglo-Portuguese.

Perera took the matter seriously. He knew the local customs pretty thoroughly. "It is a personal question, you must know. It is revenge. And of course he is hurried by your leaving de country. None of de natives or half-breeds will interfere wid him very much — unless you make it wort deir while. If you come upon him suddenly, you might shoot him. But den he might shoot you.

"Den dere's dis — infernal magic," said Perera. "Of course, I don't believe in it — superstition — but still it's not nice to tink dat wherever you are, dere is a black man, who spends a moonlight night now and den a-dancing about a fire to send you bad dreams.... Had any bad dreams?"

"Rather," said Pollock. "I keep on seeing the beggar's head upside down grinning at me and showing all his teeth as he did in the hut, and coming close up to me, and then going ever so far off, and coming back. It's nothing to be afraid of, but somehow it simply paralyses me with terror in my sleep. Queer things — dreams. I

know it's a dream all the time, and I can't wake up from it."

"It's probably only fancy," said Perera. "Den my niggers say Porroh men can send snakes. Seen any snakes lately?"

"Only one. I killed him this morning, on the floor near my hammock. Almost trod on him as I got up."

"*Ah!*" said Perera, and then, reassuringly, "Of course it is a — coincidence. Still I would keep my eyes open. Den dere's pains in de bones."

"I thought they were due to miasma," said Pollock.

"Probably dey are. When did dey begin?"

Then Pollock remembered that he first noticed them the night after the fight in the hut. "It's my opinion he don't want to kill you," said Perera— "at least not yet. I've heard deir idea is to scare and worry a man wid deir spells, and narrow misses, and rheumatic pains, and bad dreams, and all dat, until he's sick of life. Of course, it's all talk, you know. You mustn't worry about it.... But I wonder what he'll be up to next."

"*I* shall have to be up to something first," said Pollock, staring gloomily at the greasy cards that Perera was putting on the table. "It don't suit my dignity to be followed about, and shot at, and blighted in this way. I wonder if Porroh hokey-pokey upsets your luck at cards."

He looked at Perera suspiciously.

"Very likely it does," said Perera warmly, shuffling. "Dey are wonderful people."

That afternoon Pollock killed two snakes in his hammock, and there was also an extraordinary increase in the number of red ants that swarmed over the place; and these annoyances put him in a fit temper to talk over business with a certain Mendi rough he had interviewed before. The Mendi rough showed Pollock a little iron dagger, and demonstrated where one struck in the neck, in a way that made Pollock shiver, and in return for certain considerations Pollock promised him a double-barrelled gun with an ornamental lock.

In the evening, as Pollock and Perera were playing cards, the Mendi rough came in through the doorway, carrying something in a blood-soaked piece of native cloth.

"Not here!" said Pollock very hurriedly. "Not here!"

But he was not quick enough to prevent the man, who was anxious to get to Pollock's side of the bargain, from opening the cloth and throwing the head of the Porroh man upon the table. It bounded from there on to the floor, leaving a red trail on the cards, and rolled into a corner, where it came to rest upside down, but glaring hard at Pollock.

Perera jumped up as the thing fell among the cards, and began in his excitement to gabble in Portuguese. The Mendi was bowing, with the red cloth in his hand. "De gun!" he said. Pollock stared back at the head in the corner. It bore exactly the expression it had in his dreams. Something seemed to snap in his own brain as he looked at it.

Then Perera found his English again.

"You got him killed?" he said. "You did not kill him yourself?"

"Why should I?" said Pollock.

"But he will not be able to take it off now!"

"Take *what* off?" said Pollock.

"And all dese cards are spoiled!"

"*What* do you mean by taking off?" said Pollock.

"You must send me a new pack from Freetown. You can buy dem dere."

"But— 'take it off'?"

"It is only superstition. I forgot. De niggers say dat if de witches — he was a witch — But it is rubbish.... You must make de Porroh man take it off, or kill him yourself.... It is very silly."

Pollock swore under his breath, still staring hard at the head in the corner.

"I can't stand that glare," he said. Then suddenly he rushed at the thing and kicked it. It rolled some yards or so, and came to rest in the same position as before, upside down, and looking at him.

"He is ugly," said the Anglo-Portuguese. "Very ugly. Dey do it on deir faces with little knives."

Pollock would have kicked the head again, but the Mendi man touched him on the arm. "De gun?" he said, looking nervously at the head.

"Two — if you will take that beastly thing away," said Pollock.

The Mendi shook his head, and intimated that he only wanted one

gun now due to him, and for which he would be obliged. Pollock found neither cajolery nor bullying any good with him. Perera had a gun to sell (at a profit of three hundred per cent.), and with that the man presently departed. Then Pollock's eyes, against his will, were recalled to the thing on the floor.

"It is funny dat his head keeps upside down," said Perera, with an uneasy laugh. "His brains must be heavy, like de weight in de little images one sees dat keep always upright wid lead in dem. You will take him wiv you when you go presently. You might take him now. De cards are all spoilt. Dere is a man sell dem in Freetown. De room is in a filty mess as it is. You should have killed him yourself."

Pollock pulled himself together, and went and picked up the head. He would hang it up by the lamp-hook in the middle of the ceiling of his room, and dig a grave for it at once. He was under the impression that he hung it up by the hair, but that must have been wrong, for when he returned for it, it was hanging by the neck upside down.

He buried it before sunset on the north side of the shed he occupied, so that he should not have to pass the grave after dark when he was returning from Perera's. He killed two snakes before he went to sleep. In the darkest part of the night he awoke with a start, and heard a pattering sound and something scraping on the floor. He sat up noiselessly, and felt under his pillow for his revolver. A mumbling growl followed, and Pollock fired at the sound. There was a yelp, and something dark passed for a moment across the hazy blue of the doorway. "A dog!" said Pollock, lying down again.

In the early dawn he awoke again with a peculiar sense of unrest. The vague pain in his bones had returned. For some time he lay watching the red ants that were swarming over the ceiling, and then, as the light grew brighter, he looked over the edge of his hammock and saw something dark on the floor. He gave such a violent start that the hammock overset and flung him out.

He found himself lying, perhaps, a yard away from the head of the Porroh man. It had been disinterred by the dog, and the nose was grievously battered. Ants and flies swarmed over it. By an odd coincidence, it was still upside down, and with the same diabolical expression in the inverted eyes.

Pollock sat paralysed, and stared at the horror for some time. Then

he got up and walked round it — giving it a wide berth — and out of the shed. The clear light of the sunrise, the living stir of vegetation before the breath of the dying land-breeze, and the empty grave with the marks of the dog's paws, lightened the weight upon his mind a little.

He told Perera of the business as though it was a jest — a jest to be told with white lips. "You should not have frighten de dog," said Perera, with poorly simulated hilarity.

The next two days, until the steamer came, were spent by Pollock in making a more effectual disposition of his possession. Overcoming his aversion to handling the thing, he went down to the river mouth and threw it into the sea-water, but by some miracle it escaped the crocodiles, and was cast up by the tide on the mud a little way up the river, to be found by an intelligent Arab half-breed, and offered for sale to Pollock and Perera as a curiosity, just on the edge of night. The native hung about in the brief twilight, making lower and lower offers, and at last, getting scared in some way by the evident dread these wise white men had for the thing, went off, and, passing Pollock's shed, threw his burden in there for Pollock to discover in the morning.

At this Pollock got into a kind of frenzy. He would burn the thing. He went out straightway into the dawn, and had constructed a big pyre of brushwood before the heat of the day. He was interrupted by the hooter of the little paddle steamer from Monrovia to Bathurst, which was coming through the gap in the bar. "Thank Heaven!" said Pollock, with infinite piety, when the meaning of the sound dawned upon him. With trembling hands he lit his pile of wood hastily, threw the head upon it, and went away to pack his portmanteau and make his adieux to Perera.

That afternoon, with a sense of infinite relief, Pollock watched the flat swampy foreshore of Sulyma grow small in the distance. The gap in the long line of white surge became narrower and narrower. It seemed to be closing in and cutting him off from his trouble. The feeling of dread and worry began to slip from him bit by bit. At Sulyma belief in Porroh malignity and Porroh magic had been in the air, his sense of Porroh had been vast, pervading, threatening, dreadful. Now manifestly the domain of Porroh was only a little

place, a little black band between the sea and the blue cloudy Mendi uplands.

"Good-bye, Porroh!" said Pollock. "Good-bye — certainly not *au revoir*."

The captain of the steamer came and leant over the rail beside him, and wished him good-evening, and spat at the froth of the wake in token of friendly ease.

"I picked up a rummy curio on the beach this go," said the captain. "It's a thing I never saw done this side of Indy before."

"What might that be?" said Pollock.

"Pickled 'ed," said the captain.

"*What?*" said Pollock.

"'Ed — smoked. 'Ed of one of these Porroh chaps, all ornamented with knife-cuts. Why! What's up? Nothing? I shouldn't have took you for a nervous chap. Green in the face. By gosh! you're a bad sailor. All right, eh? Lord, how funny you went!... Well, this 'ed I was telling you of is a bit rum in a way. I've got it, along with some snakes, in a jar of spirit in my cabin what I keeps for such curios, and I'm hanged if it don't float upsy down. Hullo!"

Pollock had given an incoherent cry, and had his hands in his hair. He ran towards the paddle-boxes with a half-formed idea of jumping into the sea, and then he realised his position and turned back towards the captain.

"Here!" said the captain. "Jack Philips, just keep him off me! Stand off! No nearer, mister! What's the matter with you? Are you mad?"

Pollock put his hand to his head. It was no good explaining. "I believe I am pretty nearly mad at times," he said. "It's a pain I have here. Comes suddenly. You'll excuse me, I hope."

He was white and in a perspiration. He saw suddenly very clearly all the danger he ran of having his sanity doubted. He forced himself to restore the captain's confidence, by answering his sympathetic inquiries, noting his suggestions, even trying a spoonful of neat brandy in his cheek, and, that matter settled, asking a number of questions about the captain's private trade in curiosities. The captain described the head in detail. All the while Pollock was struggling to keep under a preposterous persuasion that the ship was as transparent

as glass, and that he could distinctly see the inverted face looking at him from the cabin beneath his feet.

Pollock had a worse time almost on the steamer than he had at Sulyma. All day he had to control himself in spite of his intense perception of the imminent presence of that horrible head that was overshadowing his mind. At night his old nightmare returned, until, with a violent effort, he would force himself awake, rigid with the horror of it, and with the ghost of a hoarse scream in his throat.

He left the actual head behind at Bathurst, where he changed ship for Teneriffe, but not his dreams nor the dull ache in his bones. At Teneriffe Pollock transferred to a Cape liner, but the head followed him. He gambled, he tried chess, he even read books, but he knew the danger of drink. Yet whenever a round black shadow, a round black object came into his range, there he looked for the head, and — saw it. He knew clearly enough that his imagination was growing traitor to him, and yet at times it seemed the ship he sailed in, his fellow-passengers, the sailors, the wide sea, was all part of a filmy phantasmagoria that hung, scarcely veiling it, between him and a horrible real world. Then the Porroh man, thrusting his diabolical face through that curtain, was the one real and undeniable thing. At that he would get up and touch things, taste something, gnaw something, burn his hand with a match, or run a needle into himself.

So, struggling grimly and silently with his excited imagination, Pollock reached England. He landed at Southampton, and went on straight from Waterloo to his banker's in Cornhill in a cab. There he transacted some business with the manager in a private room, and all the while the head hung like an ornament under the black marble mantel and dripped upon the fender. He could hear the drops fall, and see the red on the fender.

"A pretty fern," said the manager, following his eyes. "But it makes the fender rusty."

"Very," said Pollock; "a *very* pretty fern. And that reminds me. Can you recommend me a physician for mind troubles? I've got a little — what is it? — hallucination."

The head laughed savagely, wildly. Pollock was surprised the manager did not notice it. But the manager only stared at his face.

With the address of a doctor, Pollock presently emerged in Cornhill. There was no cab in sight, and so he went on down to the western end of the street, and essayed the crossing opposite the Mansion House. The crossing is hardly easy even for the expert Londoner; cabs, vans, carriages, mail-carts, omnibuses go by in one incessant stream; to anyone fresh from the malarious solitudes of Sierra Leone it is a boiling, maddening confusion. But when an inverted head suddenly comes bouncing, like an indiarubber ball, between your legs, leaving distinct smears of blood every time it touches the ground, you can scarcely hope to avoid an accident. Pollock lifted his feet convulsively to avoid it, and then kicked at the thing furiously. Then something hit him violently in the back, and a hot pain ran up his arm.

He had been hit by the pole of an omnibus, and three of the fingers of his left hand smashed by the hoof of one of the horses — the very fingers, as it happened, that he shot from the Porroh man. They pulled him out from between the horses' legs, and found the address of the physician in his crushed hand.

For a couple of days Pollock's sensations were full of the sweet, pungent smell of chloroform, of painful operations that caused him no pain, of lying still and being given food and drink. Then he had a slight fever, and was very thirsty, and his old nightmare came back. It was only when it returned that he noticed it had left him for a day.

"If my skull had been smashed instead of my fingers, it might have gone altogether," said Pollock, staring thoughtfully at the dark cushion that had taken on for the time the shape of the head.

Pollock at the first opportunity told the physician of his mind trouble. He knew clearly that he must go mad unless something should intervene to save him. He explained that he had witnessed a decapitation in Dahomey, and was haunted by one of the heads. Naturally, he did not care to state the actual facts. The physician looked grave.

Presently he spoke hesitatingly. "As a child, did you get very much religious training?"

"Very little," said Pollock.

A shade passed over the physician's face. "I don't know if you have heard of the miraculous cures — it may be, of course, they are

not miraculous — at Lourdes."

"Faith-healing will hardly suit me, I am afraid," said Pollock, with his eye on the dark cushion.

The head distorted its scarred features in an abominable grimace. The physician went upon a new track. "It's all imagination," he said, speaking with sudden briskness. "A fair case for faith-healing, anyhow. Your nervous system has run down, you're in that twilight state of health when the bogles come easiest. The strong impression was too much for you. I must make you up a little mixture that will strengthen your nervous system — especially your brain. And you must take exercise."

"I'm no good for faith-healing," said Pollock.

"And therefore we must restore tone. Go in search of stimulating air — Scotland, Norway, the Alps" —

"Jericho, if you like," said Pollock— "where Naaman went."

However, so soon as his fingers would let him, Pollock made a gallant attempt to follow out the doctor's suggestion. It was now November. He tried football, but to Pollock the game consisted in kicking a furious inverted head about a field. He was no good at the game. He kicked blindly, with a kind of horror, and when they put him back into goal, and the ball came swooping down upon him, he suddenly yelled and got out of its way. The discreditable stories that had driven him from England to wander in the tropics shut him off from any but men's society, and now his increasingly strange behaviour made even his man friends avoid him. The thing was no longer a thing of the eye merely; it gibbered at him, spoke to him. A horrible fear came upon him that presently, when he took hold of the apparition, it would no longer become some mere article of furniture, but would *feel* like a real dissevered head. Alone, he would curse at the thing, defy it, entreat it; once or twice, in spite of his grim self-control, he addressed it in the presence of others. He felt the growing suspicion in the eyes of the people that watched him — his landlady, the servant, his man.

One day early in December his cousin Arnold — his next of kin — came to see him and draw him out, and watch his sunken yellow face with narrow eager eyes. And it seemed to Pollock that the hat his cousin carried in his hand was no hat at all, but a Gorgon head

that glared at him upside down, and fought with its eyes against his reason. However, he was still resolute to see the matter out. He got a bicycle, and, riding over the frosty road from Wandsworth to Kingston, found the thing rolling along at his side, and leaving a dark trail behind it. He set his teeth and rode faster. Then suddenly, as he came down the hill towards Richmond Park, the apparition rolled in front of him and under his wheel, so quickly that he had no time for thought, and, turning quickly to avoid it, was flung violently against a heap of stones and broke his left wrist.

The end came on Christmas morning. All night he had been in a fever, the bandages encircling his wrist like a band of fire, his dreams more vivid and terrible than ever. In the cold, colourless, uncertain light that came before the sunrise, he sat up in his bed, and saw the head upon the bracket in the place of the bronze jar that had stood there overnight.

"I know that is a bronze jar," he said, with a chill doubt at his heart. Presently the doubt was irresistible. He got out of bed slowly, shivering, and advanced to the jar with his hand raised. Surely he would see now his imagination had deceived him, recognise the distinctive sheen of bronze. At last, after an age of hesitation, his fingers came down on the patterned cheek of the head. He withdrew them spasmodically. The last stage was reached. His sense of touch had betrayed him.

Trembling, stumbling against the bed, kicking against his shoes with his bare feet, a dark confusion eddying round him, he groped his way to the dressing-table, took his razor from the drawer, and sat down on the bed with this in his hand. In the looking-glass he saw his own face, colourless, haggard, full of the ultimate bitterness of despair.

He beheld in swift succession the incidents in the brief tale of his experience. His wretched home, his still more wretched schooldays, the years of vicious life he had led since then, one act of selfish dishonour leading to another; it was all clear and pitiless now, all its squalid folly, in the cold light of the dawn. He came to the hut, to the fight with the Porroh man, to the retreat down the river to Sulyma, to the Mendi assassin and his red parcel, to his frantic endeavours to destroy the head, to the growth of his hallucination. It was a

hallucination! He *knew* it was. A hallucination merely. For a moment he snatched at hope. He looked away from the glass, and on the bracket, the inverted head grinned and grimaced at him.... With the stiff fingers of his bandaged hand he felt at his neck for the throb of his arteries. The morning was very cold, the steel blade felt like ice.

THE RED ROOM

"I can assure you," said I, "that it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me." And I stood up before the fire with my glass in my hand.

"It is your own choosing," said the man with the withered arm, and glanced at me askance.

"Eight-and-twenty years," said I, "I have lived, and never a ghost have I seen as yet."

The old woman sat staring hard into the fire, her pale eyes wide open. "Ay," she broke in; "and eight-and-twenty years you have lived and never seen the likes of this house, I reckon. There's a many things to see, when one's still but eight-and-twenty." She swayed her head slowly from side to side. "A many things to see and sorrow for."

I half suspected the old people were trying to enhance the spiritual terrors of their house by their droning insistence. I put down my empty glass on the table and looked about the room, and caught a glimpse of myself, abbreviated and broadened to an impossible sturdiness, in the queer old mirror at the end of the room. "Well," I said, "if I see anything to-night, I shall be so much the wiser. For I come to the business with an open mind."

"It's your own choosing," said the man with the withered arm once more.

I heard the sound of a stick and a shambling step on the flags in the passage outside, and the door creaked on its hinges as a second old man entered, more bent, more wrinkled, more aged even than the first. He supported himself by a single crutch, his eyes were covered by a shade, and his lower lip, half-averted, hung pale and pink from his decaying yellow teeth. He made straight for an arm-chair on the opposite side of the table, sat down clumsily, and began to cough. The man with the withered arm gave this new-comer a short glance of positive dislike; the old woman took no notice of his arrival, but remained with her eyes fixed steadily on the fire.

"I said — it's your own choosing," said the man with the withered

arm, when the coughing had ceased for a while.

"It's my own choosing," I answered.

The man with the shade became aware of my presence for the first time, and threw his head back for a moment and sideways, to see me. I caught a momentary glimpse of his eyes, small and bright and inflamed. Then he began to cough and splutter again.

"Why don't you drink?" said the man with the withered arm, pushing the beer towards him. The man with the shade poured out a glassful with a shaky arm that splashed half as much again on the deal table. A monstrous shadow of him crouched upon the wall and mocked his action as he poured and drank. I must confess I had scarce expected these grotesque custodians. There is to my mind something inhuman in senility, something crouching and atavistic; the human qualities seem to drop from old people insensibly day by day. The three of them made me feel uncomfortable, with their gaunt silences, their bent carriage, their evident unfriendliness to me and to one another.

"If," said I, "you will show me to this haunted room of yours, I will make myself comfortable there."

The old man with the cough jerked his head back so suddenly that it startled me, and shot another glance of his red eyes at me from under the shade; but no one answered me. I waited a minute, glancing from one to the other.

"If," I said a little louder, "if you will show me to this haunted room of yours, I will relieve you from the task of entertaining me."

"There's a candle on the slab outside the door," said the man with the withered arm, looking at my feet as he addressed me. "But if you go to the red room to-night" —

("This night of all nights!" said the old woman.)

"You go alone."

"Very well," I answered. "And which way do I go?"

"You go along the passage for a bit," said he, "until you come to a door, and through that is a spiral staircase, and half-way up that is a landing and another door covered with baize. Go through that and down the long corridor to the end, and the red room is on your left up the steps."

“Have I got that right?” I said, and repeated his directions. He corrected me in one particular.

“And are you really going?” said the man with the shade, looking at me again for the third time, with that queer, unnatural tilting of the face.

(“This night of all nights!” said the old woman.)

“It is what I came for,” I said, and moved towards the door. As I did so, the old man with the shade rose and staggered round the table, so as to be closer to the others and to the fire. At the door I turned and looked at them, and saw they were all close together, dark against the firelight, staring at me over their shoulders, with an intent expression on their ancient faces.

“Good-night,” I said, setting the door open.

“It’s your own choosing,” said the man with the withered arm.

I left the door wide open until the candle was well alight, and then I shut them in and walked down the chilly, echoing passage.

I must confess that the oddness of these three old pensioners in whose charge her ladyship had left the castle, and the deep-toned, old-fashioned furniture of the housekeeper’s room in which they foregathered, affected me in spite of my efforts to keep myself at a matter-of-fact phase. They seemed to belong to another age, an older age, an age when things spiritual were different from this of ours, less certain; an age when omens and witches were credible, and ghosts beyond denying. Their very existence was spectral; the cut of their clothing, fashions born in dead brains. The ornaments and conveniences of the room about them were ghostly — the thoughts of vanished men, which still haunted rather than participated in the world of to-day. But with an effort I sent such thoughts to the right-about. The long, draughty subterranean passage was chilly and dusty, and my candle flared and made the shadows cower and quiver. The echoes rang up and down the spiral staircase, and a shadow came sweeping up after me, and one fled before me into the darkness overhead. I came to the landing and stopped there for a moment, listening to a rustling that I fancied I heard; then, satisfied of the absolute silence, I pushed open the baize-covered door and stood in the corridor.

The effect was scarcely what I expected, for the moonlight,

coming in by the great window on the grand staircase, picked out everything in vivid black shadow or silvery illumination. Everything was in its place: the house might have been deserted on the yesterday instead of eighteen months ago. There were candles in the sockets of the sconces, and whatever dust had gathered on the carpets or upon the polished flooring was distributed so evenly as to be invisible in the moonlight. I was about to advance, and stopped abruptly. A bronze group stood upon the landing, hidden from me by the corner of the wall, but its shadow fell with marvellous distinctness upon the white panelling, and gave me the impression of someone crouching to waylay me. I stood rigid for half a minute perhaps. Then, with my hand in the pocket that held my revolver, I advanced, only to discover a Ganymede and Eagle glistening in the moonlight. That incident for a time restored my nerve, and a porcelain Chinaman on a buhl table, whose head rocked silently as I passed him, scarcely startled me.

The door to the red room and the steps up to it were in a shadowy corner. I moved my candle from side to side, in order to see clearly the nature of the recess in which I stood before opening the door. Here it was, thought I, that my predecessor was found, and the memory of that story gave me a sudden twinge of apprehension. I glanced over my shoulder at the Ganymede in the moonlight, and opened the door of the red room rather hastily, with my face half turned to the pallid silence of the landing.

I entered, closed the door behind me at once, turned the key I found in the lock within, and stood with the candle held aloft, surveying the scene of my vigil, the great red room of Lorraine Castle, in which the young duke had died. Or, rather, in which he had begun his dying, for he had opened the door and fallen headlong down the steps I had just ascended. That had been the end of his vigil, of his gallant attempt to conquer the ghostly tradition of the place, and never, I thought, had apoplexy better served the ends of superstition. And there were other and older stories that clung to the room, back to the half-credible beginning of it all, the tale of a timid wife and the tragic end that came to her husband's jest of frightening her. And looking around that large shadowy room, with its shadowy window bays, its recesses and alcoves, one could well understand the

legends that had sprouted in its black corners, its germinating darkness. My candle was a little tongue of light in its vastness, that failed to pierce the opposite end of the room, and left an ocean of mystery and suggestion beyond its island of light.

I resolved to make a systematic examination of the place at once, and dispel the fanciful suggestions of its obscurity before they obtained a hold upon me. After satisfying myself of the fastening of the door, I began to walk about the room, peering round each article of furniture, tucking up the valances of the bed, and opening its curtains wide. I pulled up the blinds and examined the fastenings of the several windows before closing the shutters, leant forward and looked up the blackness of the wide chimney, and tapped the dark oak panelling for any secret opening. There were two big mirrors in the room, each with a pair of sconces bearing candles, and on the mantelshelf, too, were more candles in china candlesticks. All these I lit one after the other. The fire was laid, — an unexpected consideration from the old housekeeper, — and I lit it, to keep down any disposition to shiver, and when it was burning well, I stood round with my back to it and regarded the room again. I had pulled up a chintz-covered arm-chair and a table, to form a kind of barricade before me, and on this lay my revolver ready to hand. My precise examination had done me good, but I still found the remoter darkness of the place, and its perfect stillness, too stimulating for the imagination. The echoing of the stir and crackling of the fire was no sort of comfort to me. The shadow in the alcove, at the end in particular, had that undefinable quality of a presence, that odd suggestion of a lurking living thing, that comes so easily in silence and solitude. At last, to reassure myself, I walked with a candle into it, and satisfied myself that there was nothing tangible there. I stood that candle upon the floor of the alcove, and left it in that position.

By this time I was in a state of considerable nervous tension, although to my reason there was no adequate cause for the condition. My mind, however, was perfectly clear. I postulated quite unreservedly that nothing supernatural could happen, and to pass the time I began to string some rhymes together, Ingoldsby fashion, of the original legend of the place. A few I spoke aloud, but the echoes were not pleasant. For the same reason I also abandoned, after a time,

a conversation with myself upon the impossibility of ghosts and haunting. My mind reverted to the three old and distorted people downstairs, and I tried to keep it upon that topic. The sombre reds and blacks of the room troubled me; even with seven candles the place was merely dim. The one in the alcove flared in a draught, and the fire-flickering kept the shadows and penumbra perpetually shifting and stirring. Casting about for a remedy, I recalled the candles I had seen in the passage, and, with a slight effort, walked out into the moonlight, carrying a candle and leaving the door open, and presently returned with as many as ten. These I put in various knick-knacks of china with which the room was sparsely adorned, lit and placed where the shadows had lain deepest, some on the floor, some in the window recesses, until at last my seventeen candles were so arranged that not an inch of the room but had the direct light of at least one of them. It occurred to me that when the ghost came, I could warn him not to trip over them. The room was now quite brightly illuminated. There was something very cheery and reassuring in these little streaming flames, and snuffing them gave me an occupation, and afforded a reassuring sense of the passage of time.

Even with that, however, the brooding expectation of the vigil weighed heavily upon me. It was after midnight that the candle in the alcove suddenly went out, and the black shadow sprang back to its place there. I did not see the candle go out; I simply turned and saw that the darkness was there, as one might start and see the unexpected presence of a stranger. “By Jove!” said I aloud; “that draught’s a strong one!” and, taking the matches from the table, I walked across the room in a leisurely manner to relight the corner again. My first match would not strike, and as I succeeded with the second, something seemed to blink on the wall before me. I turned my head involuntarily, and saw that the two candles on the little table by the fireplace were extinguished. I rose at once to my feet.

“Odd!” I said. “Did I do that myself in a flash of absent-mindedness?”

I walked back, relit one, and as I did so, I saw the candle in the right sconce of one of the mirrors wink and go right out, and almost immediately its companion followed it. There was no mistake about

it. The flame vanished, as if the wicks had been suddenly nipped between a finger and a thumb, leaving the wick neither glowing nor smoking, but black. While I stood gaping, the candle at the foot of the bed went out, and the shadows seemed to take another step towards me.

"This won't do!" said I, and first one and then another candle on the mantelshelf followed.

"What's up?" I cried, with a queer high note getting into my voice somehow. At that the candle on the wardrobe went out, and the one I had relit in the alcove followed.

"Steady on!" I said. "These candles are wanted," speaking with a half-hysterical facetiousness, and scratching away at a match the while for the mantel candlesticks. My hands trembled so much that twice I missed the rough paper of the matchbox. As the mantel emerged from darkness again, two candles in the remoter end of the window were eclipsed. But with the same match I also relit the larger mirror candles, and those on the floor near the doorway, so that for the moment I seemed to gain on the extinctions. But then in a volley there vanished four lights at once in different corners of the room, and I struck another match in quivering haste, and stood hesitating whither to take it.

As I stood undecided, an invisible hand seemed to sweep out the two candles on the table. With a cry of terror, I dashed at the alcove, then into the corner, and then into the window, relighting three, as two more vanished by the fireplace; then, perceiving a better way, I dropped the matches on the iron-bound deed-box in the corner, and caught up the bedroom candlestick. With this I avoided the delay of striking matches; but for all that the steady process of extinction went on, and the shadows I feared and fought against returned, and crept in upon me, first a step gained on this side of me and then on that. It was like a ragged storm-cloud sweeping out the stars. Now and then one returned for a minute, and was lost again. I was now almost frantic with the horror of the coming darkness, and my self-possession deserted me. I leaped panting and dishevelled from candle to candle, in a vain struggle against that remorseless advance.

I bruised myself on the thigh against the table, I sent a chair headlong, I stumbled and fell and whisked the cloth from the table in

my fall. My candle rolled away from me, and I snatched another as I rose. Abruptly this was blown out, as I swung it off the table, by the wind of my sudden movement, and immediately the two remaining candles followed. But there was light still in the room, a red light that staved off the shadows from me. The fire! Of course, I could still thrust my candle between the bars and relight it!

I turned to where the flames were still dancing between the glowing coals, and splashing red reflections upon the furniture, made two steps towards the grate, and incontinently the flames dwindled and vanished, the glow vanished, the reflections rushed together and vanished, and as I thrust the candle between the bars, darkness closed upon me like the shutting of an eye, wrapped about me in a stifling embrace, sealed my vision, and crushed the last vestiges of reason from my brain. The candle fell from my hand. I flung out my arms in a vain effort to thrust that ponderous blackness away from me, and, lifting up my voice, screamed with all my might — once, twice, thrice. Then I think I must have staggered to my feet. I know I thought suddenly of the moonlit corridor, and, with my head bowed and my arms over my face, made a run for the door.

But I had forgotten the exact position of the door, and struck myself heavily against the corner of the bed. I staggered back, turned, and was either struck or struck myself against some other bulky furniture. I have a vague memory of battering myself thus, to and fro in the darkness, of a cramped struggle, and of my own wild crying as I darted to and fro, of a heavy blow at last upon my forehead, a horrible sensation of falling that lasted an age, of my last frantic effort to keep my footing, and then I remember no more.

I opened my eyes in daylight. My head was roughly bandaged, and the man with the withered arm was watching my face. I looked about me, trying to remember what had happened, and for a space I could not recollect. I rolled my eyes into the corner, and saw the old woman, no longer abstracted, pouring out some drops of medicine from a little blue phial into a glass. “Where am I?” I asked. “I seem to remember you, and yet I cannot remember who you are.”

They told me then, and I heard of the haunted Red Room as one who hears a tale. “We found you at dawn,” said he, “and there was

blood on your forehead and lips."

It was very slowly I recovered my memory of my experience. "You believe now," said the old man, "that the room is haunted?" He spoke no longer as one who greets an intruder, but as one who grieves for a broken friend.

"Yes," said I; "the room is haunted."

"And you have seen it. And we, who have lived here all our lives, have never set eyes upon it. Because we have never dared.... Tell us, is it truly the old earl who" —

"No," said I; "it is not."

"I told you so," said the old lady, with the glass in her hand. "It is his poor young countess who was frightened" —

"It is not," I said. "There is neither ghost of earl nor ghost of countess in that room, there is no ghost there at all; but worse, far worse" —

"Well?" they said.

"The worst of all the things that haunt poor mortal man," said I; "and that is, in all its nakedness — *Fear!* Fear that will not have light nor sound, that will not bear with reason, that deafens and darkens and overwhelms. It followed me through the corridor, it fought against me in the room" —

I stopped abruptly. There was an interval of silence. My hand went up to my bandages.

Then the man with the shade sighed and spoke. "That is it," said he. "I knew that was it. A Power of Darkness. To put such a curse upon a woman! It lurks there always. You can feel it even in the daytime, even of a bright summer's day, in the hangings, in the curtains, keeping behind you however you face about. In the dusk it creeps along the corridor and follows you, so that you dare not turn. There is Fear in that room of hers — black Fear, and there will be — so long as this house of sin endures."

THE CONE

The night was hot and overcast, the sky red-rimmed with the lingering sunset of midsummer. They sat at the open window, trying to fancy the air was fresher there. The trees and shrubs of the garden stood stiff and dark; beyond in the roadway a gas-lamp burnt, bright orange against the hazy blue of the evening. Farther were the three lights of the railway signal against the lowering sky. The man and woman spoke to one another in low tones.

"He does not suspect?" said the man, a little nervously.

"Not he," she said peevishly, as though that too irritated her. "He thinks of nothing but the works and the prices of fuel. He has no imagination, no poetry."

"None of these men of iron have," he said sententiously. "They have no hearts."

"*He* has not," she said. She turned her discontented face towards the window. The distant sound of a roaring and rushing drew nearer and grew in volume; the house quivered; one heard the metallic rattle of the tender. As the train passed, there was a glare of light above the cutting and a driving tumult of smoke; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight black oblongs — eight trucks — passed across the dim grey of the embankment, and were suddenly extinguished one by one in the throat of the tunnel, which, with the last, seemed to swallow down train, smoke, and sound in one abrupt gulp.

"This country was all fresh and beautiful once," he said; "and now — it is Gehenna. Down that way — nothing but pot-banks and chimneys belching fire and dust into the face of heaven.... But what does it matter? An end comes, an end to all this cruelty.... *To-morrow*." He spoke the last word in a whisper.

"*To-morrow*," she said, speaking in a whisper too, and still staring out of the window.

"Dear!" he said, putting his hand on hers.

She turned with a start, and their eyes searched one another's. Hers softened to his gaze. "My dear one!" she said, and then: "It seems so strange — that you should have come into my life like this — to open" — She paused.

“To open?” he said.

“All this wonderful world” — she hesitated, and spoke still more softly— “this world of *love* to me.”

Then suddenly the door clicked and closed. They turned their heads, and he started violently back. In the shadow of the room stood a great shadowy figure — silent. They saw the face dimly in the half-light, with unexpressive dark patches under the penthouse brows. Every muscle in Raut’s body suddenly became tense. When could the door have opened? What had he heard? Had he heard all? What had he seen? A tumult of questions.

The new-comer’s voice came at last, after a pause that seemed interminable. “Well?” he said.

“I was afraid I had missed you, Horrocks,” said the man at the window, gripping the window-ledge with his hand. His voice was unsteady.

The clumsy figure of Horrocks came forward out of the shadow. He made no answer to Raut’s remark. For a moment he stood above them.

The woman’s heart was cold within her. “I told Mr. Raut it was just possible you might come back,” she said, in a voice that never quivered.

Horrocks, still silent, sat down abruptly in the chair by her little work-table. His big hands were clenched; one saw now the fire of his eyes under the shadow of his brows. He was trying to get his breath. His eyes went from the woman he had trusted to the friend he had trusted, and then back to the woman.

By this time and for the moment all three half understood one another. Yet none dared say a word to ease the pent-up things that choked them.

It was the husband’s voice that broke the silence at last.

“You wanted to see me?” he said to Raut.

Raut started as he spoke. “I came to see you,” he said, resolved to lie to the last.

“Yes,” said Horrocks.

“You promised,” said Raut, “to show me some fine effects of moonlight and smoke.”

“I promised to show you some fine effects of moonlight and smoke,” repeated Horrocks in a colourless voice.

“And I thought I might catch you to-night before you went down to the works,” proceeded Raut, “and come with you.”

There was another pause. Did the man mean to take the thing coolly? Did he after all know? How long had he been in the room? Yet even at the moment when they heard the door, their attitudes.... Horrocks glanced at the profile of the woman, shadowy pallid in the half-light. Then he glanced at Raut, and seemed to recover himself suddenly. “Of course,” he said, “I promised to show you the works under their proper dramatic conditions. It’s odd how I could have forgotten.”

“If I am troubling you” — began Raut.

Horrocks started again. A new light had suddenly come into the sultry gloom of his eyes. “Not in the least,” he said.

“Have you been telling Mr. Raut of all these contrasts of flame and shadow you think so splendid?” said the woman, turning now to her husband for the first time, her confidence creeping back again, her voice just one half-note too high. “That dreadful theory of yours that machinery is beautiful, and everything else in the world ugly. I thought he would not spare you, Mr. Raut. It’s his great theory, his one discovery in art.”

“I am slow to make discoveries,” said Horrocks grimly, damping her suddenly. “But what I discover....” He stopped.

“Well?” she said.

“Nothing;” and suddenly he rose to his feet.

“I promised to show you the works,” he said to Raut, and put his big, clumsy hand on his friend’s shoulder. “And you are ready to go?”

“Quite,” said Raut, and stood up also.

There was another pause. Each of them peered through the indistinctness of the dusk at the other two. Horrock’s hand still rested on Raut’s shoulder. Raut half fancied still that the incident was trivial after all. But Mrs. Horrocks knew her husband better, knew that grim quiet in his voice, and the confusion in her mind took a vague shape of physical evil. “Very well,” said Horrocks, and, dropping his hand, turned towards the door.

“My hat?” Raut looked round in the half-light.

“That’s my work-basket,” said Mrs. Horrocks, with a gust of hysterical laughter. Their hands came together on the back of the chair. “Here it is!” he said. She had an impulse to warn him in an undertone, but she could not frame a word. “Don’t go!” and “Beware of him!” struggled in her mind, and the swift moment passed.

“Got it?” said Horrocks, standing with the door half open.

Raut stepped towards him. “Better say good-bye to Mrs. Horrocks,” said the ironmaster, even more grimly quiet in his tone than before.

Raut started and turned. “Good-evening, Mrs. Horrocks,” he said, and their hands touched.

Horrocks held the door open with a ceremonial politeness unusual in him towards men. Raut went out, and then, after a wordless look at her, her husband followed. She stood motionless while Raut’s light footfall and her husband’s heavy tread, like bass and treble, passed down the passage together. The front door slammed heavily. She went to the window, moving slowly, and stood watching — leaning forward. The two men appeared for a moment at the gateway in the road, passed under the street lamp, and were hidden by the black masses of the shrubbery. The lamplight fell for a moment on their faces, showing only unmeaning pale patches, telling nothing of what she still feared, and doubted, and craved vainly to know. Then she sank down into a crouching attitude in the big arm-chair, her eyes wide open and staring out at the red lights from the furnaces that flickered in the sky. An hour after she was still there, her attitude scarcely changed.

The oppressive stillness of the evening weighed heavily upon Raut. They went side by side down the road in silence, and in silence turned into the cinder-made by-way that presently opened out the prospect of the valley.

A blue haze, half dust, half mist, touched the long valley with mystery. Beyond were Hanley and Etruria, grey and dark masses, outlined thinly by the rare golden dots of the street lamps, and here and there a gaslit window, or the yellow glare of some late-working factory or crowded public-house. Out of the masses, clear and

slender against the evening sky, rose a multitude of tall chimneys, many of them reeking, a few smokeless during a season of "play." Here and there a pallid patch and ghostly stunted beehive shapes showed the position of a pot-bank, or a wheel, black and sharp against the hot lower sky, marked some colliery where they raise the iridescent coal of the place. Nearer at hand was the broad stretch of railway, and half invisible trains shunted — a steady puffing and rumbling, with every run a ringing concussion and a rhythmic series of impacts, and a passage of intermittent puffs of white steam across the further view. And to the left, between the railway and the dark mass of the low hill beyond, dominating the whole view, colossal, inky-black, and crowned with smoke and fitful flames, stood the great cylinders of the Jeddah Company Blast Furnaces, the central edifices of the big ironworks of which Horrocks was the manager. They stood heavy and threatening, full of an incessant turmoil of flames and seething molten iron, and about the feet of them rattled the rolling-mills, and the steam-hammer beat heavily and splashed the white iron sparks hither and thither. Even as they looked, a truckful of fuel was shot into one of the giants, and the red flames gleamed out, and a confusion of smoke and black dust came boiling upwards towards the sky.

"Certainly you get some fine effects of colour with your furnaces," said Raut, breaking a silence that had become apprehensive.

Horrocks grunted. He stood with his hands in his pockets, frowning down at the dim steaming railway and the busy ironworks beyond, frowning as if he were thinking out some knotty problem.

Raut glanced at him and away again. "At present your moonlight effect is hardly ripe," he continued, looking upward; "the moon is still smothered by the vestiges of daylight."

Horrocks stared at him with the expression of a man who has suddenly awakened. "Vestiges of daylight?... Of course, of course." He too looked up at the moon, pale still in the midsummer sky. "Come along," he said suddenly, and, gripping Raut's arm in his hand, made a move towards the path that dropped from them to the railway.

Raut hung back. Their eyes met and saw a thousand things in a

moment that their lips came near to say. Horrocks's hand tightened and then relaxed. He let go, and before Raut was aware of it, they were arm in arm, and walking, one unwillingly enough, down the path.

"You see the fine effect of the railway signals towards Burslem," said Horrocks, suddenly breaking into loquacity, striding fast and tightening the grip of his elbow the while. "Little green lights and red and white lights, all against the haze. You have an eye for effect, Raut. It's a fine effect. And look at those furnaces of mine, how they rise upon us as we come down the hill. That to the right is my pet — seventy feet of him. I packed him myself, and he's boiled away cheerfully with iron in his guts for five long years. I've a particular fancy for *him*. That line of red there — a lovely bit of warm orange you'd call it, Raut — that's the puddlers' furnaces, and there, in the hot light, three black figures — did you see the white splash of the steam-hammer then? — that's the rolling-mills. Come along! Clang, clatter, how it goes rattling across the floor! Sheet tin, Raut, — amazing stuff. Glass mirrors are not in it when that stuff comes from the mill. And, squelch! — there goes the hammer again. Come along!"

He had to stop talking to catch at his breath. His arm twisted into Raut's with benumbing tightness. He had come striding down the black path towards the railway as though he was possessed. Raut had not spoken a word, had simply hung back against Horrocks's pull with all his strength.

"I say," he said now, laughing nervously, but with an undernote of snarl in his voice, "why on earth are you nipping my arm off, Horrocks, and dragging me along like this?"

At length Horrocks released him. His manner changed again. "Nipping your arm off?" he said. "Sorry. But it's you taught me the trick of walking in that friendly way."

"You haven't learnt the refinements of it yet then," said Raut, laughing artificially again. "By Jove! I'm black and blue." Horrocks offered no apology. They stood now near the bottom of the hill, close to the fence that bordered the railway. The ironworks had grown larger and spread out with their approach. They looked up to the blast furnaces now instead of down; the further view of Etruria and Hanley

had dropped out of sight with their descent. Before them, by the stile, rose a notice-board, bearing, still dimly visible, the words, “Beware of the trains,” half hidden by splashes of coaly mud.

“Fine effects,” said Horrocks, waving his arm. “Here comes a train. The puffs of smoke, the orange glare, the round eye of light in front of it, the melodious rattle. Fine effects! But these furnaces of mine used to be finer, before we shoved cones in their throats, and saved the gas.”

“How?” said Raut. “Cones?”

“Cones, my man, cones. I’ll show you one nearer. The flames used to flare out of the open throats, great — what is it? — pillars of cloud by day, red and black smoke, and pillars of fire by night. Now we run it off in pipes, and burn it to heat the blast, and the top is shut by a cone. You’ll be interested in that cone.”

“But every now and then,” said Raut, “you get a burst of fire and smoke up there.”

“The cone’s not fixed, it’s hung by a chain from a lever, and balanced by an equipoise. You shall see it nearer. Else, of course, there’d be no way of getting fuel into the thing. Every now and then the cone dips, and out comes the flare.”

“I see,” said Raut. He looked over his shoulder. “The moon gets brighter,” he said.

“Come along,” said Horrocks abruptly, gripping his shoulder again, and moving him suddenly towards the railway crossing. And then came one of those swift incidents, vivid, but so rapid that they leave one doubtful and reeling. Halfway across, Horrocks’s hand suddenly clenched upon him like a vice and swung him backward and through a half-turn, so that he looked up the line. And there a chain of lamp-lit carriage-windows telescoped swiftly as it came towards them, and the red and yellow lights of an engine grew larger and larger, rushing down upon them. As he grasped what this meant, he turned his face to Horrocks, and pushed with all his strength against the arm that held him back between the rails. The struggle did not last a moment. Just as certain as it was that Horrocks held him there, so certain was it that he had been violently lugged out of danger.

“Out of the way,” said Horrocks, with a gasp, as the train came

rattling by, and they stood panting by the gate into the ironworks.

"I did not see it coming," said Raut, still, even in spite of his own apprehensions, trying to keep up an appearance of ordinary intercourse.

Horrocks answered with a grunt. "The cone," he said, and then, as one who recovers himself, "I thought you did not hear."

"I didn't," said Raut.

"I wouldn't have had you run over then for the world," said Horrocks.

"For a moment I lost my nerve," said Raut.

Horrocks stood for half a minute, then turned abruptly towards the ironworks again. "See how fine these great mounds of mine, these clinker-heaps, look in the night! That truck yonder, up above there! Up it goes, and out-tilts the slag. See the palpitating red stuff go sliding down the slope. As we get nearer, the heap rises up and cuts the blast furnaces. See the quiver up above the big one. Not that way! This way, between the heaps. That goes to the puddling furnaces, but I want to show you the canal first." He came and took Raut by the elbow, and so they went along side by side. Raut answered Horrocks vaguely. What, he asked himself, had really happened on the line? Was he deluding himself with his own fancies, or had Horrocks actually held him back in the way of the train? Had he just been within an ace of being murdered?

Suppose this slouching, scowling monster *did* know anything? For a minute or two then Raut was really afraid for his life, but the mood passed as he reasoned with himself. After all, Horrocks might have heard nothing. At anyrate, he had pulled him out of the way in time. His odd manner might be due to the mere vague jealousy he had shown once before. He was talking now of the ash-heaps and the canal. "Eigh?" said Horrocks.

"What?" said Raut. "Rather! The haze in the moonlight. Fine!"

"Our canal," said Horrocks, stopping suddenly. "Our canal by moonlight and firelight is an immense effect. You've never seen it? Fancy that! You've spent too many of your evenings philandering up in Newcastle there. I tell you, for real florid effects — But you shall see. Boiling water...."

As they came out of the labyrinth of clinker-heaps and mounds of

coal and ore, the noises of the rolling-mill sprang upon them suddenly, loud, near, and distinct. Three shadowy workmen went by and touched their caps to Horrocks. Their faces were vague in the darkness. Raut felt a futile impulse to address them, and before he could frame his words, they passed into the shadows. Horrocks pointed to the canal close before them now: a weird-looking place it seemed, in the blood-red reflections of the furnaces. The hot water that cooled the tuyères came into it, some fifty yards up — a tumultuous, almost boiling affluent, and the steam rose up from the water in silent white wisps and streaks, wrapping damply about them, an incessant succession of ghosts coming up from the black and red eddies, a white uprising that made the head swim. The shining black tower of the larger blast-furnace rose overhead out of the mist, and its tumultuous riot filled their ears. Raut kept away from the edge of the water, and watched Horrocks.

"Here it is red," said Horrocks, "blood-red vapour as red and hot as sin; but yonder there, where the moonlight falls on it, and it drives across the clinker-heaps, it is as white as death."

Raut turned his head for a moment, and then came back hastily to his watch on Horrocks. "Come along to the rolling-mills," said Horrocks. The threatening hold was not so evident that time, and Raut felt a little reassured. But all the same, what on earth did Horrocks mean about "white as death" and "red as sin"? Coincidence, perhaps?

They went and stood behind the puddlers for a little while, and then through the rolling-mills, where amidst an incessant din the deliberate steam-hammer beat the juice out of the succulent iron, and black, half-naked Titans rushed the plastic bars, like hot sealing-wax, between the wheels. "Come on," said Horrocks in Raut's ear, and they went and peeped through the little glass hole behind the tuyères, and saw the tumbled fire writhing in the pit of the blast-furnace. It left one eye blinded for a while. Then, with green and blue patches dancing across the dark, they went to the lift by which the trucks of ore and fuel and lime were raised to the top of the big cylinder.

And out upon the narrow rail that overhung the furnace, Raut's doubts came upon him again. Was it wise to be here? If Horrocks did know — everything! Do what he would, he could not resist a violent

trembling. Right under foot was a sheer depth of seventy feet. It was a dangerous place. They pushed by a truck of fuel to get to the railing that crowned the place. The reek of the furnace, a sulphurous vapour streaked with pungent bitterness, seemed to make the distant hillside of Hanley quiver. The moon was riding out now from among a drift of clouds, half-way up the sky above the undulating wooded outlines of Newcastle. The steaming canal ran away from below them under an indistinct bridge, and vanished into the dim haze of the flat fields towards Burslem.

"That's the cone I've been telling you of," shouted Horrocks; "and, below that, sixty feet of fire and molten metal, with the air of the blast frothing through it like gas in soda-water."

Raut gripped the hand-rail tightly, and stared down at the cone. The heat was intense. The boiling of the iron and the tumult of the blast made a thunderous accompaniment to Horrocks's voice. But the thing had to be gone through now. Perhaps, after all....

"In the middle," bawled Horrocks, "temperature near a thousand degrees. If *you* were dropped into it ... flash into flame like a pinch of gunpowder in a candle. Put your hand out and feel the heat of his breath. Why, even up here I've seen the rain-water boiling off the trucks. And that cone there. It's a damned sight too hot for roasting cakes. The top side of it's three hundred degrees."

"Three hundred degrees!" said Raut.

"Three hundred centigrade, mind!" said Horrocks. "It will boil the blood out of you in no time."

"Eigh?" said Raut, and turned.

"Boil the blood out of you in.... No, you don't!"

"Let me go!" screamed Raut. "Let go my arm!"

With one hand he clutched at the hand-rail, then with both. For a moment the two men stood swaying. Then suddenly, with a violent jerk, Horrocks had twisted him from his hold. He clutched at Horrocks and missed, his foot went back into empty air; in mid-air he twisted himself, and then cheek and shoulder and knee struck the hot cone together.

He clutched the chain by which the cone hung, and the thing sank an infinitesimal amount as he struck it. A circle of glowing red appeared about him, and a tongue of flame, released from the chaos

within, flickered up towards him. An intense pain assailed him at the knees, and he could smell the singeing of his hands. He raised himself to his feet, and tried to climb up the chain, and then something struck his head. Black and shining with the moonlight, the throat of the furnace rose about him.

Horrocks, he saw, stood above him by one of the trucks of fuel on the rail. The gesticulating figure was bright and white in the moonlight, and shouting, “Fizzle, you fool! Fizzle, you hunter of women! You hot-blooded hound! Boil! boil! boil!”

Suddenly he caught up a handful of coal out of the truck, and flung it deliberately, lump after lump, at Raut.

“Horrocks!” cried Raut. “Horrocks!”

He clung crying to the chain, pulling himself up from the burning of the cone. Each missile Horrocks flung hit him. His clothes charred and glowed, and as he struggled the cone dropped, and a rush of hot suffocating gas whooped out and burned round him in a swift breath of flame.

His human likeness departed from him. When the momentary red had passed, Horrocks saw a charred, blackened figure, its head streaked with blood, still clutching and fumbling with the chain, and writhing in agony — a cindery animal, an inhuman, monstrous creature that began a sobbing intermittent shriek.

Abruptly, at the sight, the ironmaster’s anger passed. A deadly sickness came upon him. The heavy odour of burning flesh came drifting up to his nostrils. His sanity returned to him.

“God have mercy upon me!” he cried. “O God! what have I done?”

He knew the thing below him, save that it still moved and felt, was already a dead man — that the blood of the poor wretch must be boiling in his veins. An intense realisation of that agony came to his mind, and overcame every other feeling. For a moment he stood irresolute, and then, turning to the truck, he hastily tilted its contents upon the struggling thing that had once been a man. The mass fell with a thud, and went radiating over the cone. With the thud the shriek ended, and a boiling confusion of smoke, dust, and flame came rushing up towards him. As it passed, he saw the cone clear

again.

Then he staggered back, and stood trembling, clinging to the rail with both hands. His lips moved, but no words came to them.

Down below was the sound of voices and running steps. The clangour of rolling in the shed ceased abruptly.

THE PURPLE PILEUS

Mr. Coombes was sick of life. He walked away from his unhappy home, and, sick not only of his own existence, but of everybody else's, turned aside down Gaswork Lane to avoid the town, and, crossing the wooden bridge that goes over the canal to Starling's Cottages, was presently alone in the damp pinewoods and out of sight and sound of human habitation. He would stand it no longer. He repeated aloud with blasphemies unusual to him that he would stand it no longer.

He was a pale-faced little man, with dark eyes and a fine and very black moustache. He had a very stiff, upright collar slightly frayed, that gave him an illusory double chin, and his overcoat (albeit shabby) was trimmed with astrachan. His gloves were a bright brown with black stripes over the knuckles, and split at the finger ends. His appearance, his wife had said once in the dear, dead days beyond recall, — before he married her, that is, — was military. But now she called him — It seems a dreadful thing to tell of between husband and wife, but she called him "a little grub." It wasn't the only thing she had called him, either.

The row had arisen about that beastly Jennie again. Jennie was his wife's friend, and, by no invitation of Mr. Coombes, she came in every blessed Sunday to dinner, and made a shindy all the afternoon. She was a big, noisy girl, with a taste for loud colours and a strident laugh; and this Sunday she had outdone all her previous intrusions by bringing in a fellow with her, a chap as showy as herself. And Mr. Coombes, in a starchy, clean collar and his Sunday frock-coat, had sat dumb and wrathful at his own table, while his wife and her guests talked foolishly and undesirably, and laughed aloud. Well, he stood that, and after dinner (which, "as usual," was late), what must Miss Jennie do but go to the piano and play banjo tunes, for all the world as if it were a week-day! Flesh and blood could not endure such goings on. They would hear next door, they would hear in the road, it was a public announcement of their disrepute. He had to speak.

He had felt himself go pale, and a kind of rigour had affected his

respiration as he delivered himself. He had been sitting on one of the chairs by the window — the new guest had taken possession of the arm-chair. He turned his head. “Sun Day!” he said over the collar, in the voice of one who warns. “Sun Day!” What people call a “nasty” tone it was.

Jennie had kept on playing, but his wife, who was looking through some music that was piled on the top of the piano, had stared at him. “What’s wrong now?” she said; “can’t people enjoy themselves?”

“I don’t mind rational ‘njoyment, at all,” said little Coombes, “but I ain’t a-going to have week-day tunes playing on a Sunday in this house.”

“What’s wrong with my playing now?” said Jennie, stopping and twirling round on the music-stool with a monstrous rustle of flounces.

Coombes saw it was going to be a row, and opened too vigorously, as is common with your timid, nervous men all the world over. “Steady on with that music-stool!” said he; “it ain’t made for ‘eavy weights.”

“Never you mind about weights,” said Jennie, incensed. “What was you saying behind my back about my playing?”

“Surely you don’t ‘old with not having a bit of music on a Sunday, Mr. Coombes?” said the new guest, leaning back in the arm-chair, blowing a cloud of cigarette smoke and smiling in a kind of pitying way. And simultaneously his wife said something to Jennie about “Never mind ‘im. You go on, Jinny.”

“I do,” said Mr. Coombes, addressing the new guest.

“May I arst why?” said the new guest, evidently enjoying both his cigarette and the prospect of an argument. He was, by the bye, a lank young man, very stylishly dressed in bright drab, with a white cravat and a pearl and silver pin. It had been better taste to come in a black coat, Mr. Coombes thought.

“Because,” began Mr. Coombes, “it don’t suit me. I’m a business man. I ‘ave to study my connection. Rational ‘njoyment” —

“His connection!” said Mrs. Coombes scornfully. “That’s what he’s always a-saying. We got to do this, and we got to do that” —

“If you don’t mean to study my connection,” said Mr. Coombes,

“what did you marry me for?”

“I wonder,” said Jennie, and turned back to the piano.

“I never saw such a man as you,” said Mrs. Coombes. “You’ve altered all round since we were married. Before” —

Then Jennie began at the tum, tum, tum again.

“Look here!” said Mr. Coombes, driven at last to revolt, standing up and raising his voice. “I tell you I won’t have that.” The frock-coat heaved with his indignation.

“No vi’lence, now,” said the long young man in drab, sitting up.

“Who the juice are you?” said Mr. Coombes fiercely.

Whereupon they all began talking at once. The new guest said he was Jennie’s “intended,” and meant to protect her, and Mr. Coombes said he was welcome to do so anywhere but in his (Mr. Coombes’) house; and Mrs. Coombes said he ought to be ashamed of insulting his guests, and (as I have already mentioned) that he was getting a regular little grub; and the end was, that Mr. Coombes ordered his visitors out of the house, and they wouldn’t go, and so he said he would go himself. With his face burning and tears of excitement in his eyes, he went into the passage, and as he struggled with his overcoat — his frock-coat sleeves got concertinaed up his arm — and gave a brush at his silk hat, Jennie began again at the piano, and strummed him insultingly out of the house. Tum, tum, tum. He slammed the shop door so that the house quivered. That, briefly, was the immediate making of his mood. You will perhaps begin to understand his disgust with existence.

As he walked along the muddy path under the firs, — it was late October, and the ditches and heaps of fir needles were gorgeous with clumps of fungi, — he recapitulated the melancholy history of his marriage. It was brief and commonplace enough. He now perceived with sufficient clearness that his wife had married him out of a natural curiosity and in order to escape from her worrying, laborious, and uncertain life in the workroom; and, like the majority of her class, she was far too stupid to realise that it was her duty to co-operate with him in his business. She was greedy of enjoyment, loquacious, and socially-minded, and evidently disappointed to find the restraints of poverty still hanging about her. His worries exasperated her, and the slightest attempt to control her proceedings

resulted in a charge of "grumbling." Why couldn't he be nice — as he used to be? And Coombes was such a harmless little man, too, nourished mentally on *Self-Help*, and with a meagre ambition of self-denial and competition, that was to end in a "sufficiency." Then Jennie came in as a female Mephistopheles, a gabbling chronicle of "fellers," and was always wanting his wife to go to theatres, and "all that." And in addition were aunts of his wife, and cousins (male and female), to eat up capital, insult him personally, upset business arrangements, annoy good customers, and generally blight his life. It was not the first occasion by many that Mr. Coombes had fled his home in wrath and indignation, and something like fear, vowing furiously and even aloud that he wouldn't stand it, and so frothing away his energy along the line of least resistance. But never before had he been quite so sick of life as on this particular Sunday afternoon. The Sunday dinner may have had its share in his despair — and the greyness of the sky. Perhaps, too, he was beginning to realise his unendurable frustration as a business man as the consequence of his marriage. Presently bankruptcy, and after that — Perhaps she might have reason to repent when it was too late. And destiny, as I have already intimated, had planted the path through the wood with evil-smelling fungi, thickly and variously planted it, not only on the right side, but on the left.

A small shopman is in such a melancholy position, if his wife turns out a disloyal partner. His capital is all tied up in his business, and to leave her, means to join the unemployed in some strange part of the earth. The luxuries of divorce are beyond him altogether. So that the good old tradition of marriage for better or worse holds inexorably for him, and things work up to tragic culminations. Bricklayers kick their wives to death, and dukes betray theirs; but it is among the small clerks and shopkeepers nowadays that it comes most often to a cutting of throats. Under the circumstances it is not so very remarkable — and you must take it as charitably as you can — that the mind of Mr. Coombes ran for a while on some such glorious close to his disappointed hopes, and that he thought of razors, pistols, bread-knives, and touching letters to the coroner denouncing his enemies by name, and praying piously for forgiveness. After a time his fierceness gave way to melancholia. He had been married in this

very overcoat, in his first and only frock-coat that was buttoned up beneath it. He began to recall their courting along this very walk, his years of penurious saving to get capital, and the bright hopefulness of his marrying days. For it all to work out like this! Was there no sympathetic ruler anywhere in the world? He reverted to death as a topic.

He thought of the canal he had just crossed, and doubted whether he shouldn't stand with his head out, even in the middle, and it was while drowning was in his mind that the purple pileus caught his eye. He looked at it mechanically for a moment, and stopped and stooped towards it to pick it up, under the impression that it was some such small leather object as a purse. Then he saw that it was the purple top of a fungus, a peculiarly poisonous-looking purple: slimy, shiny, and emitting a sour odour. He hesitated with his hand an inch or so from it, and the thought of poison crossed his mind. With that he picked the thing, and stood up again with it in his hand.

The odour was certainly strong — acrid, but by no means disgusting. He broke off a piece, and the fresh surface was a creamy white, that changed like magic in the space of ten seconds to a yellowish-green colour. It was even an inviting-looking change. He broke off two other pieces to see it repeated. They were wonderful things these fungi, thought Mr. Coombes, and all of them the deadliest poisons, as his father had often told him. Deadly poisons!

There is no time like the present for a rash resolve. Why not here and now? thought Mr. Coombes. He tasted a little piece, a very little piece indeed — a mere crumb. It was so pungent that he almost spat it out again, then merely hot and full-flavoured. A kind of German mustard with a touch of horse-radish and — well, mushroom. He swallowed it in the excitement of the moment. Did he like it or did he not? His mind was curiously careless. He would try another bit. It really wasn't bad — it was good. He forgot his troubles in the interest of the immediate moment. Playing with death it was. He took another bite, and then deliberately finished a mouthful. A curious tingling sensation began in his finger-tips and toes. His pulse began to move faster. The blood in his ears sounded like a mill-race. "Try bi' more," said Mr. Coombes. He turned and looked about him, and found his feet unsteady. He saw and struggled towards a little patch

of purple a dozen yards away. “Jol’ goo’ stuff,” said Mr. Coombes. “E — lomore ye’.” He pitched forward and fell on his face, his hands outstretched towards the cluster of pilei. But he did not eat any more of them. He forgot forthwith.

He rolled over and sat up with a look of astonishment on his face. His carefully brushed silk hat had rolled away towards the ditch. He pressed his hand to his brow. Something had happened, but he could not rightly determine what it was. Anyhow, he was no longer dull — he felt bright, cheerful. And his throat was afire. He laughed in the sudden gaiety of his heart. Had he been dull? He did not know; but at anyrate he would be dull no longer. He got up and stood unsteadily, regarding the universe with an agreeable smile. He began to remember. He could not remember very well, because of a steam roundabout that was beginning in his head. And he knew he had been disagreeable at home, just because they wanted to be happy. They were quite right; life should be as gay as possible. He would go home and make it up, and reassure them. And why not take some of this delightful toadstool with him, for them to eat? A hatful, no less. Some of those red ones with white spots as well, and a few yellow. He had been a dull dog, an enemy to merriment; he would make up for it. It would be gay to turn his coat-sleeves inside out, and stick some yellow gorse into his waistcoat pockets. Then home — singing — for a jolly evening.

After the departure of Mr. Coombes, Jennie discontinued playing, and turned round on the music-stool again. “What a fuss about nothing,” said Jennie.

“You see, Mr. Clarence, what I’ve got to put up with,” said Mrs. Coombes.

“He is a bit hasty,” said Mr. Clarence judicially.

“He ain’t got the slightest sense of our position,” said Mrs. Coombes; “that’s what I complain of. He cares for nothing but his old shop; and if I have a bit of company, or buy anything to keep myself decent, or get any little thing I want out of the housekeeping money, there’s disagreeables. ‘Economy,’ he says; ‘struggle for life,’ and all that. He lies awake of nights about it, worrying how he can screw me out of a shilling. He wanted us to eat Dorset butter once. If

once I was to give in to him — there!"

"Of course," said Jennie.

"If a man values a woman," said Mr. Clarence lounging back in the arm-chair, "he must be prepared to make sacrifices for her. For my own part," said Mr. Clarence, with his eye on Jennie, "I shouldn't think of marrying till I was in a position to do the thing in style. It's downright selfishness. A man ought to go through the rough-and-tumble by himself, and not drag her" —

"I don't agree altogether with that," said Jennie. "I don't see why a man shouldn't have a woman's help, provided he doesn't treat her meanly, you know. It's meanness" —

"You wouldn't believe," said Mrs. Coombes. "But I was a fool to 'ave 'im. I might 'ave known. If it 'adn't been for my father, we shouldn't have had not a carriage to our wedding."

"Lord! he didn't stick out at that?" said Mr. Clarence, quite shocked.

"Said he wanted the money for his stock, or some such rubbish. Why, he wouldn't have a woman in to help me once a week if it wasn't for my standing out plucky. And the fusses he makes about money — comes to me, well, pretty near crying, with sheets of paper and figgers. 'If only we can tide over this year,' he says, 'the business is bound to go.' 'If only we can tide over this year,' I says; 'then it'll be, if only we can tide over next year. I know you,' I says. 'And you don't catch me screwing myself lean and ugly. Why didn't you marry a slavey?' I says, 'if you wanted one — instead of a respectable girl,' I says."

So Mrs. Coombes. But we will not follow this unedifying conversation further. Suffice it that Mr. Coombes was very satisfactorily disposed of, and they had a snug little time round the fire. Then Mrs. Coombes went to get the tea, and Jennie sat coquettishly on the arm of Mr. Clarence's chair until the tea-things clattered outside. "What was that I heard?" asked Mrs. Coombes playfully, as she entered, and there was badinage about kissing. They were just sitting down to the little circular table when the first intimation of Mr. Coombes' return was heard.

This was a fumbling at the latch of the front door.

"'Ere's my lord," said Mrs. Coombes. "Went out like a lion and

comes back like a lamb, I'll lay."

Something fell over in the shop: a chair, it sounded like. Then there was a sound as of some complicated step exercise in the passage. Then the door opened and Coombes appeared. But it was Coombes transfigured. The immaculate collar had been torn carelessly from his throat. His carefully-brushed silk hat, half-full of a crush of fungi, was under one arm; his coat was inside out, and his waistcoat adorned with bunches of yellow-blossomed furze. These little eccentricities of Sunday costume, however, were quite overshadowed by the change in his face; it was livid white, his eyes were unnaturally large and bright, and his pale blue lips were drawn back in a cheerless grin. "Merry!" he said. He had stopped dancing to open the door. "Rational 'njoyment. Dance." He made three fantastic steps into the room, and stood bowing.

"Jim!" shrieked Mrs. Coombes, and Mr. Clarence sat petrified, with a dropping lower jaw.

"Tea," said Mr. Coombes. "Jol' thing, tea. Tose-stools, too. Brosher."

"He's drunk," said Jennie in a weak voice. Never before had she seen this intense pallor in a drunken man, or such shining, dilated eyes.

Mr. Coombes held out a handful of scarlet agaric to Mr. Clarence. "Jo' stuff," said he; "ta' some."

At that moment he was genial. Then at the sight of their startled faces he changed, with the swift transition of insanity, into overbearing fury. And it seemed as if he had suddenly recalled the quarrel of his departure. In such a huge voice as Mrs. Coombes had never heard before, he shouted, "My house. I'm master 'ere. Eat what I give yer!" He bawled this, as it seemed, without an effort, without a violent gesture, standing there as motionless as one who whispers, holding out a handful of fungus.

Clarence approved himself a coward. He could not meet the mad fury in Coombes' eyes; he rose to his feet, pushing back his chair, and turned, stooping. At that Coombes rushed at him. Jennie saw her opportunity, and, with the ghost of a shriek, made for the door. Mrs. Coombes followed her. Clarence tried to dodge. Over went the tea-table with a smash as Coombes clutched him by the collar and tried

to thrust the fungus into his mouth. Clarence was content to leave his collar behind him, and shot out into the passage with red patches of fly agaric still adherent to his face. “Shut ‘im in!” cried Mrs. Coombes, and would have closed the door, but her supports deserted her; Jennie saw the shop door open, and vanished thereby, locking it behind her, while Clarence went on hastily into the kitchen. Mr. Coombes came heavily against the door, and Mrs. Coombes, finding the key was inside, fled upstairs and locked herself in the spare bedroom.

So the new convert to *joie de vivre* emerged upon the passage, his decorations a little scattered, but that respectable hatful of fungi still under his arm. He hesitated at the three ways, and decided on the kitchen. Whereupon Clarence, who was fumbling with the key, gave up the attempt to imprison his host, and fled into the scullery, only to be captured before he could open the door into the yard. Mr. Clarence is singularly reticent of the details of what occurred. It seems that Mr. Coombes’ transitory irritation had vanished again, and he was once more a genial playfellow. And as there were knives and meat choppers about, Clarence very generously resolved to humour him and so avoid anything tragic. It is beyond dispute that Mr. Coombes played with Mr. Clarence to his heart’s content; they could not have been more playful and familiar if they had known each other for years. He insisted gaily on Clarence trying the fungi, and after a friendly tussle, was smitten with remorse at the mess he was making of his guest’s face. It also appears that Clarence was dragged under the sink and his face scrubbed with the blacking brush, — he being still resolved to humour the lunatic at any cost, — and that finally, in a somewhat dishevelled, chipped, and discoloured condition, he was assisted to his coat and shown out by the back door, the shopway being barred by Jennie. Mr. Coombes’ wandering thoughts then turned to Jennie. Jennie had been unable to unfasten the shop door, but she shot the bolts against Mr. Coombes’ latch-key, and remained in possession of the shop for the rest of the evening.

It would appear that Mr. Coombes then returned to the kitchen, still in pursuit of gaiety, and, albeit a strict Good Templar, drank (or spilt down the front of the first and only frock-coat) no less than five bottles of the stout Mrs. Coombes insisted upon having for her

health's sake. He made cheerful noises by breaking off the necks of the bottles with several of his wife's wedding-present dinner-plates, and during the earlier part of this great drunk he sang divers merry ballads. He cut his finger rather badly with one of the bottles, — the only bloodshed in this story, — and what with that, and the systematic convulsion of his inexperienced physiology by the liquorish brand of Mrs. Coombes' stout, it may be the evil of the fungus poison was somehow allayed. But we prefer to draw a veil over the concluding incidents of this Sunday afternoon. They ended in the coal cellar, in a deep and healing sleep.

An interval of five years elapsed. Again it was a Sunday afternoon in October, and again Mr. Coombes walked through the pinewood beyond the canal. He was still the same dark-eyed, black-moustached little man that he was at the outset of the story, but his double chin was now scarcely so illusory as it had been. His overcoat was new, with a velvet lapel, and a stylish collar with turn-down corners, free of any coarse starchiness, had replaced the original all-round article. His hat was glossy, his gloves newish — though one finger had split and been carefully mended. And a casual observer would have noticed about him a certain rectitude of bearing, a certain erectness of head that marks the man who thinks well of himself. He was a master now, with three assistants. Beside him walked a larger sunburnt parody of himself, his brother Tom, just back from Australia. They were recapitulating their early struggles, and Mr. Coombes had just been making a financial statement.

"It's a very nice little business, Jim," said brother Tom. "In these days of competition you're jolly lucky to have worked it up so. And you're jolly lucky, too, to have a wife who's willing to help like yours does."

"Between ourselves," said Mr. Coombes, "it wasn't always so. It wasn't always like this. To begin with, the missus was a bit giddy. Girls are funny creatures."

"Dear me!"

"Yes. You'd hardly think it, but she was downright extravagant, and always having slaps at me. I was a bit too easy and loving, and all that, and she thought the whole blessed show was run for her.

Turned the ‘ouse into a regular caravansery, always having her relations and girls from business in, and their chaps. Comic songs a’ Sunday, it was getting to, and driving trade away. And she was making eyes at the chaps, too! I tell you, Tom, the place wasn’t my own.”

“Shouldn’t ‘a’ thought it.”

“It was so. Well — I reasoned with her. I said, ‘I ain’t a duke, to keep a wife like a pet animal. I married you for ‘elp and company.’ I said, ‘You got to ‘elp and pull the business through.’ She wouldn’t ‘ear of it. ‘Very well,’ I says; ‘I’m a mild man till I’m roused,’ I says, ‘and it’s getting to that.’ But she wouldn’t ‘ear of no warnings.”

“Well?”

“It’s the way with women. She didn’t think I ‘ad it in me to be roused. Women of her sort (between ourselves, Tom) don’t respect a man until they’re a bit afraid of him. So I just broke out to show her. In comes a girl named Jennie, that used to work with her, and her chap. We ‘ad a bit of a row, and I came out ‘ere — it was just such another day as this — and I thought it all out. Then I went back and pitched into them.”

“You did?”

“I did. I was mad, I can tell you. I wasn’t going to ‘it ‘er, if I could ‘elp it, so I went back and licked into this chap, just to show ‘er what I could do. ‘E was a big chap, too. Well, I chucked him, and smashed things about, and gave ‘er a scaring, and she ran up and locked ‘erself into the spare room.”

“Well?”

“That’s all. I says to ‘er the next morning, ‘Now you know,’ I says, ‘what I’m like when I’m roused.’ And I didn’t ‘ave to say anything more.”

“And you’ve been happy ever after, eh?”

“So to speak. There’s nothing like putting your foot down with them. If it ‘adn’t been for that afternoon I should ‘a’ been tramping the roads now, and she’d ‘a’ been grumbling at me, and all her family grumbling for bringing her to poverty — I know their little ways. But we’re all right now. And it’s a very decent little business, as you say.”

They proceed on their way meditatively. “Women are funny creatures,” said brother Tom.

“They want a firm hand,” says Coombes.

“What a lot of these funguses there are about here!” remarked brother Tom presently. “I can’t see what use they are in the world.”

Mr. Coombes looked. “I dessay they’re sent for some wise purpose,” said Mr. Coombes.

And that was as much thanks as the purple pileus ever got for maddening this absurd little man to the pitch of decisive action, and so altering the whole course of his life.

THE JILTING OF JANE

As I sit writing in my study, I can hear our Jane bumping her way downstairs with a brush and dustpan. She used in the old days to sing hymn tunes, or the British national song for the time being, to these instruments, but latterly she has been silent and even careful over her work. Time was when I prayed with fervour for such silence, and my wife with sighs for such care, but now they have come we are not so glad as we might have anticipated we should be. Indeed, I would rejoice secretly, though it may be unmanly weakness to admit it, even to hear Jane sing "Daisy," or by the fracture of any plate but one of Euphemia's best green ones, to learn that the period of brooding has come to an end.

Yet how we longed to hear the last of Jane's young man before we heard the last of him! Jane was always very free with her conversation to my wife, and discoursed admirably in the kitchen on a variety of topics — so well, indeed, that I sometimes left my study door open — our house is a small one — to partake of it. But after William came, it was always William, nothing but William; William this and William that; and when we thought William was worked out and exhausted altogether, then William all over again. The engagement lasted altogether three years; yet how she got introduced to William, and so became thus saturated with him, was always a secret. For my part, I believe it was at the street corner where the Rev. Barnabas Baux used to hold an open-air service after evensong on Sundays. Young Cupids were wont to flit like moths round the paraffin flare of that centre of High Church hymn-singing. I fancy she stood singing hymns there, out of memory and her imagination, instead of coming home to get supper, and William came up beside her and said, "Hello!" "Hello yourself!" she said; and, etiquette being satisfied, they proceeded to talk together.

As Euphemia has a reprehensible way of letting her servants talk to her, she soon heard of him. "He is *such* a respectable young man, ma'am," said Jane, "you don't know." Ignoring the slur cast on her acquaintance, my wife inquired further about this William.

"He is second porter at Maynard's, the draper's," said Jane, "and

gets eighteen shillings — nearly a pound — a week, m'm; and when the head porter leaves he will be head porter. His relatives are quite superior people, m'm. Not labouring people at all. His father was a greengrosher, m'm, and had a chumor, and he was bankrup' twice. And one of his sisters is in a Home for the Dying. It will be a very good match for me, m'm," said Jane, "me being an orphan girl."

"Then you are engaged to him?" asked my wife.

"Not engaged, ma'am; but he is saving money to buy a ring — hammyfist."

"Well, Jane, when you are properly engaged to him you may ask him round here on Sunday afternoons, and have tea with him in the kitchen." For my Euphemia has a motherly conception of her duty towards her maid-servants. And presently the amethystine ring was being worn about the house, even with ostentation, and Jane developed a new way of bringing in the joint, so that this gage was evident. The elder Miss Maitland was aggrieved by it, and told my wife that servants ought not to wear rings. But my wife looked it up in *Enquire Within* and *Mrs. Motherly's Book of Household Management*, and found no prohibition. So Jane remained with this happiness added to her love.

The treasure of Jane's heart appeared to me to be what respectable people call a very deserving young man. "William, ma'am," said Jane one day suddenly, with ill-concealed complacency, as she counted out the beer bottles, "William, ma'am, is a teetotaller. Yes, m'm; and he don't smoke. Smoking, ma'am," said Jane, as one who reads the heart, "*do* make such a dust about. Beside the waste of money. *And* the smell. However, I suppose it's necessary to some."

Possibly it dawned on Jane that she was reflecting a little severely upon Euphemia's comparative ill-fortune, and she added kindly, "I'm sure the master is a hangel when his pipe's alight. Compared to other times."

William was at first a rather shabby young man of the ready-made black coat school of costume. He had watery grey eyes, and a complexion appropriate to the brother of one in a Home for the Dying. Euphemia did not fancy him very much, even at the beginning. His eminent respectability was vouched for by an alpaca

umbrella, from which he never allowed himself to be parted.

"He goes to chapel," said Jane. "His papa, ma'am" —

"His *what*, Jane?"

"His papa, ma'am, was Church; but Mr. Maynard is a Plymouth Brother, and William thinks it Policy, ma'am, to go there too. Mr. Maynard comes and talks to him quite friendly, when they ain't busy, about using up all the ends of string, and about his soul. He takes a lot of notice, do Mr. Maynard, of William, and the way he saves string and his soul, ma'am."

Presently we heard that the head porter at Maynard's had left, and that William was head porter at twenty-three shillings a week. "He is really kind of over the man who drives the van," said Jane, "and him married with three children." And she promised in the pride of her heart to make interest for us with William to favour us so that we might get our parcels of drapery from Maynard's with exceptional promptitude.

After this promotion a rapidly increasing prosperity came upon Jane's young man. One day, we learned that Mr. Maynard had given William a book. "Smiles' Elp Yourself, it's called," said Jane; "but it ain't comic. It tells you how to get on in the world, and some what William read to me was *lovely*, ma'am."

Euphemia told me of this laughing, and then she became suddenly grave. "Do you know, dear," she said, "Jane said one thing I did not like. She had been quiet for a minute, and then she suddenly remarked, 'William is a lot above me, ma'am, ain't he?'"

"I don't see anything in that," I said, though later my eyes were to be opened.

One Sunday afternoon about that time I was sitting at my writing-desk — possibly I was reading a good book — when a something went by the window. I heard a startled exclamation behind me, and saw Euphemia with her hands clasped together and her eyes dilated. "George," she said in an awestricken whisper, "did you see?"

Then we both spoke to one another at the same moment, slowly and solemnly: "*A silk hat! Yellow gloves! A new umbrella!*"

"It may be my fancy, dear," said Euphemia; "but his tie was very like yours. I believe Jane keeps him in ties. She told me a little while

ago in a way that implied volumes about the rest of your costume, 'The master *do* wear pretty ties, ma'am.' And he echoes all your novelties."

The young couple passed our window again on their way to their customary walk. They were arm in arm. Jane looked exquisitely proud, happy, and uncomfortable, with new white cotton gloves, and William, in the silk hat, singularly genteel!

That was the culmination of Jane's happiness. When she returned, "Mr. Maynard has been talking to William, ma'am," she said, "and he is to serve customers, just like the young shop gentlemen, during the next sale. And if he gets on, he is to be made an assistant, ma'am, at the first opportunity. He has got to be as gentlemanly as he can, ma'am; and if he ain't, ma'am, he says it won't be for want of trying. Mr. Maynard has took a great fancy to him."

"He *is* getting on, Jane," said my wife.

"Yes, ma'am," said Jane thoughtfully, "he *is* getting on."

And she sighed.

That next Sunday, as I drank my tea, I interrogated my wife. "How is this Sunday different from all other Sundays, little woman? What has happened? Have you altered the curtains, or rearranged the furniture, or where is the indefinable difference of it? Are you wearing your hair in a new way without warning me? I clearly perceive a change in my environment, and I cannot for the life of me say what it is."

Then my wife answered in her most tragic voice: "George," she said, "that — that William has not come near the place to-day! And Jane is crying her heart out upstairs."

There followed a period of silence. Jane, as I have said, stopped singing about the house, and began to care for our brittle possessions, which struck my wife as being a very sad sign indeed. The next Sunday, and the next, Jane asked to go out, "to walk with William," and my wife, who never attempts to extort confidences, gave her permission, and asked no questions. On each occasion Jane came back looking flushed and very determined. At last one day she became communicative.

"William is being led away," she remarked abruptly, with a catching of the breath, apropos of tablecloths. "Yes, m'm. She is a

milliner, and she can play on the piano."

"I thought," said my wife, "that you went out with him on Sunday."

"Not out with him, m'm — after him. I walked along by the side of them, and told her he was engaged to me."

"Dear me, Jane, did you? What did they do?"

"Took no more notice of me than if I was dirt. So I told her she should suffer for it."

"It could not have been a very agreeable walk, Jane."

"Not for no parties, ma'am.

"I wish," said Jane, "I could play the piano, ma'am. But anyhow, I don't mean to let *her* get him away from me. She's older than him, and her hair ain't gold to the roots, ma'am."

It was on the August Bank Holiday that the crisis came. We do not clearly know the details of the fray, but only such fragments as poor Jane let fall. She came home dusty, excited, and with her heart hot within her.

The milliner's mother, the milliner, and William had made a party to the Art Museum at South Kensington, I think. Anyhow, Jane had calmly but firmly accosted them somewhere in the streets, and asserted her right to what, in spite of the consensus of literature, she held to be her inalienable property. She did, I think, go so far as to lay hands on him. They dealt with her in a crushingly superior way. They "called a cab." There was a "scene," William being pulled away into the four-wheeler by his future wife and mother-in-law from the reluctant hands of our discarded Jane. There were threats of giving her "in charge."

"My poor Jane!" said my wife, mincing veal as though she was mincing William. "It's a shame of them. I would think no more of him. He is not worthy of you."

"No, m'm," said Jane. "He *is* weak."

"But it's that woman has done it," said Jane. She was never known to bring herself to pronounce "that woman's" name or to admit her girlishness. "I can't think what minds some women must have — to try and get a girl's young man away from her. But there, it only hurts to talk about it," said Jane.

Thereafter our house rested from William. But there was

something in the manner of Jane's scrubbing the front doorstep or sweeping out the rooms, a certain viciousness, that persuaded me that the story had not yet ended.

"Please, m'm, may I go and see a wedding to-morrow?" said Jane one day.

My wife knew by instinct whose wedding. "Do you think it is wise, Jane?" she said.

"I would like to see the last of him," said Jane.

"My dear," said my wife, fluttering into my room about twenty minutes after Jane had started, "Jane has been to the boot-hole and taken all the left-off boots and shoes, and gone off to the wedding with them in a bag. Surely she cannot mean" —

"Jane," I said, "is developing character. Let us hope for the best."

Jane came back with a pale, hard face. All the boots seemed to be still in her bag, at which my wife heaved a premature sigh of relief. We heard her go upstairs and replace the boots with considerable emphasis.

"Quite a crowd at the wedding, ma'am," she said presently, in a purely conversational style, sitting in our little kitchen, and scrubbing the potatoes; "and such a lovely day for them." She proceeded to numerous other details, clearly avoiding some cardinal incident.

"It was all extremely respectable and nice, ma'am; but *her* father didn't wear a black coat, and looked quite out of place, ma'am. Mr. Piddingquirk" —

"*Who?*"

"Mr. Piddingquirk — William that *was*, ma'am — had white gloves, and a coat like a clergyman, and a lovely chrysanthemum. He looked so nice, ma'am. And there was red carpet down, just like for gentlefolks. And they say he gave the clerk four shillings, ma'am. It was a real kerridge they had — not a fly. When they came out of church there was rice-throwing, and her two little sisters dropping dead flowers. And someone threw a slipper, and then I threw a boot" —

"Threw a *boot*, Jane!"

"Yes, ma'am. Aimed at *her*. But it hit *him*. Yes, ma'am, hard. Gev him a black eye, I should think. I only threw that one. I hadn't the heart to try again. All the little boys cheered when it hit him."

After an interval— “I am sorry the boot hit *him*.”

Another pause. The potatoes were being scrubbed violently. “He always *was* a bit above me, you know, ma’am. And he was led away.”

The potatoes were more than finished. Jane rose sharply, with a sigh, and rapped the basin down on the table.

“I don’t care,” she said. “I don’t care a rap. He will find out his mistake yet. It serves me right. I was stuck up about him. I ought not to have looked so high. And I am glad things are as things are.”

My wife was in the kitchen, seeing to the higher cookery. After the confession of the boot-throwing, she must have watched poor Jane fuming with a certain dismay in those brown eyes of hers. But I imagine they softened again very quickly, and then Jane’s must have met them.

“Oh, ma’am,” said Jane, with an astonishing change of note, “think of all that *might* have been! Oh, ma’am, I *could* have been so happy! I ought to have known, but I didn’t know.... You’re very kind to let me talk to you, ma’am ... for it’s hard on me, ma’am ... it’s har-r-r-r-d” —

And I gather that Euphemia so far forgot herself as to let Jane sob out some of the fulness of her heart on a sympathetic shoulder. My Euphemia, thank Heaven, has never properly grasped the importance of “keeping up her position.” And since that fit of weeping, much of the accent of bitterness has gone out of Jane’s scrubbing and brush work.

Indeed, something passed the other day with the butcher-boy — but that scarcely belongs to this story. However, Jane is young still, and time and change are at work with her. We all have our sorrows, but I do not believe very much in the existence of sorrows that never heal.

IN THE MODERN VEIN AN UNSYMPATHETIC LOVE STORY

Of course the cultivated reader has heard of Aubrey Vair. He has published on three several occasions volumes of delicate verses, — some, indeed, border on indelicacy, — and his column "Of Things Literary" in the *Climax* is well known. His Byronic visage and an interview have appeared in the *Perfect Lady*. It was Aubrey Vair, I believe, who demonstrated that the humour of Dickens was worse than his sentiment, and who detected "a subtle bourgeois flavour" in Shakespeare. However, it is not generally known that Aubrey Vair has had erotic experiences as well as erotic inspirations. He adopted Goethe some little time since as his literary prototype, and that may have had something to do with his temporary lapse from sexual integrity.

For it is one of the commonest things that undermine literary men, giving us landslips and picturesque effects along the otherwise even cliff of their respectable life, ranking next to avarice, and certainly above drink, this instability called genius, or, more fully, the consciousness of genius, such as Aubrey Vair possessed. Since Shelley set the fashion, your man of gifts has been assured that his duty to himself and his duty to his wife are incompatible, and his renunciation of the Philistine has been marked by such infidelity as his means and courage warranted. Most virtue is lack of imagination. At anyrate, a minor genius without his affections twisted into an inextricable muddle, and who did not occasionally shed sonnets over his troubles, I have never met.

Even Aubrey Vair did this, weeping the sonnets overnight into his blotting-book, and pretending to write literary *causerie* when his wife came down in her bath slippers to see what kept him up. She did not understand him, of course. He did this even before the other woman appeared, so ingrained is conjugal treachery in the talented mind. Indeed, he wrote more sonnets before the other woman came than after that event, because thereafter he spent much of his leisure in cutting down the old productions, retrimming them, and generally

altering this readymade clothing of his passion to suit her particular height and complexion.

Aubrey Vair lived in a little red villa with a lawn at the back and a view of the Downs behind Reigate. He lived upon discreet investment eked out by literary work. His wife was handsome, sweet, and gentle, and — such is the tender humility of good married women — she found her life's happiness in seeing that little Aubrey Vair had well-cooked variety for dinner, and that their house was the neatest and brightest of all the houses they entered. Aubrey Vair enjoyed the dinners, and was proud of the house, yet nevertheless he mourned because his genius dwindled. Moreover, he grew plump, and corpulence threatened him.

We learn in suffering what we teach in song, and Aubrey Vair knew certainly that his soul could give no creditable crops unless his affections were harrowed. And how to harrow them was the trouble, for Reigate is a moral neighbourhood.

So Aubrey Vair's romantic longings blew loose for a time, much as a seedling creeper might, planted in the midst of a flower-bed. But at last, in the fulness of time, the other woman came to the embrace of Aubrey Vair's yearning heart-tendrils, and his romantic episode proceeded as is here faithfully written down.

The other woman was really a girl, and Aubrey Vair met her first at a tennis party at Redhill. Aubrey Vair did not play tennis after the accident to Miss Morton's eye, and because latterly it made him pant and get warmer and moister than even a poet should be; and this young lady had only recently arrived in England, and could not play. So they gravitated into the two vacant basket chairs beside Mrs. Bayne's deaf aunt, in front of the hollyhocks, and were presently talking at their ease together.

The other woman's name was unpropitious, — Miss Smith, — but you would never have suspected it from her face and costume. Her parentage was promising, she was an orphan, her mother was a Hindoo, and her father an Indian civil servant; and Aubrey Vair — himself a happy mixture of Kelt and Teuton, as, indeed, all literary men have to be nowadays — naturally believed in the literary consequences of a mixture of races. She was dressed in white. She had finely moulded pale features, great depth of expression, and a

cloud of delicately *frisé* black hair over her dark eyes, and she looked at Aubrey Vair with a look half curious and half shy, that contrasted admirably with the stereotyped frankness of your common Reigate girl.

"This is a splendid lawn — the best in Redhill," said Aubrey Vair in the course of the conversation; "and I like it all the better because the daisies are spared." He indicated the daisies with a graceful sweep of his rather elegant hand.

"They are sweet little flowers," said the lady in white, "and I have always associated them with England, chiefly, perhaps, through a picture I saw 'over there' when I was very little, of children making daisy chains. I promised myself that pleasure when I came home. But, alas! I feel now rather too large for such delights."

"I do not see why we should not be able to enjoy these simple pleasures as we grow older — why our growth should have in it so much forgetting. For my own part" —

"Has your wife got Jane's recipe for stuffing trout?" asked Mrs. Bayne's deaf aunt abruptly.

"I really don't know," said Aubrey Vair.

"That's all right," said Mrs. Bayne's deaf aunt. "It ought to please even you."

"Anything will please me," said Aubrey Vair; "I care very little" —

"Oh, it's a lovely dish," said Mrs. Bayne's deaf aunt, and relapsed into contemplation.

"I was saying," said Aubrey Vair, "that I think I still find my keenest pleasures in childish pastimes. I have a little nephew that I see a great deal of, and when we fly kites together, I am sure it would be hard to tell which of us is the happier. By the bye, you should get at your daisy chains in that way. Beguile some little girl."

"But I did. I took that Morton mite for a walk in the meadows, and timidly broached the subject. And she reproached me for suggesting 'frivolous pursuits.' It was a horrible disappointment."

"The governess here," said Aubrey Vair, "is robbing that child of its youth in a terrible way. What will a life be that has no childhood at the beginning?"

“Some human beings are never young,” he continued, “and they never grow up. They lead absolutely colourless lives. They are — they are etiolated. They never love, and never feel the loss of it. They are — for the moment I can think of no better image — they are human flower-pots, in which no soul has been planted. But a human soul properly growing must begin in a fresh childishness.”

“Yes,” said the dark lady thoughtfully, “a careless childhood, running wild almost. That should be the beginning.”

“Then we pass through the wonder and diffidence of youth.”

“To strength and action,” said the dark lady. Her dreamy eyes were fixed on the Downs, and her fingers tightened on her knees as she spoke. “Ah, it is a grand thing to live — as a man does — self-reliant and free.”

“And so at last,” said Aubrey Vair, “come to the culmination and crown of life.” He paused and glanced hastily at her. Then he dropped his voice almost to a whisper— “And the culmination of life is love.”

Their eyes met for a moment, but she looked away at once. Aubrey Vair felt a peculiar thrill and a catching in his breath, but his emotions were too complex for analysis. He had a certain sense of surprise, also, at the way his conversation had developed.

Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt suddenly dug him in the chest with her ear-trumpet, and someone at tennis bawled, “Love all!”

“Did I tell you Jane’s girls have had scarlet fever?” asked Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt.

“No,” said Aubrey Vair.

“Yes; and they are peeling now,” said Mrs. Bayne’s deaf aunt, shutting her lips tightly, and nodding in a slow, significant manner at both of them.

There was a pause. All three seemed lost in thought, too deep for words.

“Love,” began Aubrey Vair presently, in a severely philosophical tone, leaning back in his chair, holding his hands like a praying saint’s in front of him, and staring at the toe of his shoe,— “love is, I believe, the one true and real thing in life. It rises above reason, interest, or explanation. Yet I never read of an age when it was so

much forgotten as it is now. Never was love expected to run so much in appointed channels, never was it so despised, checked, ordered, and obstructed. Policemen say, 'This way, Eros!' As a result, we relieve our emotional possibilities in the hunt for gold and notoriety. And after all, with the best fortune in these, we only hold up the gilded images of our success, and are weary slaves, with unsatisfied hearts, in the pageant of life."

Aubrey Vair sighed, and there was a pause. The girl looked at him out of the mysterious darkness of her eyes. She had read many books, but Aubrey Vair was her first literary man, and she took this kind of thing for genius — as girls have done before.

"We are," continued Aubrey Vair, conscious of a favourable impression,— "we are like fireworks, mere dead, inert things until the appointed spark comes; and then — if it is not damp — the dormant soul blazes forth in all its warmth and beauty. That is living. I sometimes think, do you know, that we should be happier if we could die soon after that golden time, like the Ephemerides. There is a decay sets in."

"Eigh?" said Mrs. Bayne's deaf aunt startlingly. "I didn't hear you."

"I was on the point of remarking," shouted Aubrey Vair, wheeling the array of his thoughts,— "I was on the point of remarking that few people in Redhill could match Mrs. Morton's fine broad green."

"Others have noticed it," Mrs. Bayne's deaf aunt shouted back. "It is since she has had in her new false teeth."

This interruption dislocated the conversation a little. However —

"I must thank you, Mr. Vair," said the dark girl, when they parted that afternoon, "for having given me very much to think about."

And from her manner, Aubrey Vair perceived clearly he had not wasted his time.

It would require a subtler pen than mine to tell how from that day a passion for Miss Smith grew like Jonah's gourd in the heart of Aubrey Vair. He became pensive, and in the prolonged absence of Miss Smith, irritable. Mrs. Aubrey Vair felt the change in him, and put it down to a vitriolic Saturday Reviewer. Indisputably the

Saturday does at times go a little far. He re-read *Elective Affinities*; and lent it to Miss Smith. Incredible as it may appear to members of the Areopagus Club, where we know Aubrey Vair, he did also beyond all question inspire a sort of passion in that sombre-eyed, rather clever, and really very beautiful girl.

He talked to her a lot about love and destiny, and all that bric-à-brac of the minor poet. And they talked together about his genius. He elaborately, though discreetly, sought her society, and presented and read to her the milder of his unpublished sonnets. We consider his Byronic features pasty, but the feminine mind has its own laws. I suppose, also, where a girl is not a fool, a literary man has an enormous advantage over anyone but a preacher, in the show he can make of his heart's wares.

At last a day in that summer came when he met her alone, possibly by chance, in a quiet lane towards Horley. There were ample hedges on either side, rich with honeysuckle, vetch, and mullein.

They conversed intimately of his poetic ambitions, and then he read her those verses of his subsequently published in *Hobson's Magazine*: "Tenderly ever, since I have met thee." He had written these the day before; and though I think the sentiment is uncommonly trite, there is a redeeming note of sincerity about the lines not conspicuous in all Aubrey Vair's poetry.

He read rather well, and a swell of genuine emotion crept into his voice as he read, with one white hand thrown out to point the rhythm of the lines. "Ever, my sweet, for thee," he concluded, looking up into her face.

Before he looked up, he had been thinking chiefly of his poem and its effect. Straightway he forgot it. Her arms hung limply before her, and her hands were clasped together. Her eyes were very tender.

"Your verses go to the heart," she said softly.

Her mobile features were capable of wonderful shades of expression. He suddenly forgot his wife and his position as a minor poet as he looked at her. It is possible that his classical features may themselves have undergone a certain transfiguration. For one brief moment — and it was always to linger in his memory — destiny lifted him out of his vain little self to a nobler level of simplicity. The

copy of “Tenderly ever” fluttered from his hand. Considerations vanished. Only one thing seemed of importance.

“I love you,” he said abruptly.

An expression of fear came into her eyes. The grip of her hands upon one another tightened convulsively. She became very pale.

Then she moved her lips as if to speak, bringing her face slightly nearer to his. There was nothing in the world at that moment for either of them but one another. They were both trembling exceedingly. In a whisper she said, “You love me?”

Aubrey Vair stood quivering and speechless, looking into her eyes. He had never seen such a light as he saw there before. He was in a wild tumult of emotion. He was dreadfully scared at what he had done. He could not say another word. He nodded.

“And this has come to me?” she said presently, in the same awe-stricken whisper, and then, “Oh, my love, my love!”

And thereupon Aubrey Vair had her clasped to himself, her cheek upon his shoulder and his lips to hers.

Thus it was that Aubrey Vair came by the cardinal memory of his life. To this day it recurs in his works.

A little boy clambering in the hedge some way down the lane saw this group with surprise, and then with scorn and contempt. Recking nothing of his destiny, he turned away, feeling that he at least could never come to the unspeakable unmanliness of hugging girls. Unhappily for Reigate scandal, his shame for his sex was altogether too deep for words.

An hour after, Aubrey Vair returned home in a hushed mood. There were muffins after his own heart for his tea — Mrs. Aubrey Vair had had hers. And there were chrysanthemums, chiefly white ones, — flowers he loved, — set out in the china bowl he was wont to praise. And his wife came behind him to kiss him as he sat eating.

“De lill Jummuns,” she remarked, kissing him under the ear.

Then it came into the mind of Aubrey Vair with startling clearness, while his ear was being kissed, and with his mouth full of muffin, that life is a singularly complex thing.

The summer passed at last into the harvest-time, and the leaves

began falling. It was evening, the warm sunset light still touched the Downs, but up the valley a blue haze was creeping. One or two lamps in Reigate were already alight.

About half-way up the slanting road that scales the Downs, there is a wooden seat where one may obtain a fine view of the red villas scattered below, and of the succession of blue hills beyond. Here the girl with the shadowy face was sitting.

She had a book on her knees, but it lay neglected. She was leaning forward, her chin resting upon her hand. She was looking across the valley into the darkening sky, with troubled eyes.

Aubrey Vair appeared through the hazel-bushes, and sat down beside her. He held half a dozen dead leaves in his hand.

She did not alter her attitude. “Well?” she said.

“Is it to be flight?” he asked.

Aubrey Vair was rather pale. He had been having bad nights latterly, with dreams of the Continental Express, Mrs. Aubrey Vair possibly even in pursuit, — he always fancied her making the tragedy ridiculous by tearfully bringing additional pairs of socks, and any such trifles he had forgotten, with her, — all Reigate and Redhill in commotion. He had never eloped before, and he had visions of difficulties with hotel proprietors. Mrs. Aubrey Vair might telegraph ahead. Even he had had a prophetic vision of a headline in a halfpenny evening newspaper: “Young Lady abducts a Minor Poet.” So there was a quaver in his voice as he asked, “Is it to be flight?”

“As you will,” she answered, still not looking at him.

“I want you to consider particularly how this will affect you. A man,” said Aubrey Vair, slowly, and staring hard at the leaves in his hand, “even gains a certain éclat in these affairs. But to a woman it is ruin — social, moral.”

“This is not love,” said the girl in white.

“Ah, my dearest! Think of yourself.”

“Stupid!” she said, under her breath.

“You spoke?”

“Nothing.”

“But cannot we go on, meeting one another, loving one another, without any great scandal or misery? Could we not” —

“That,” interrupted Miss Smith, “would be unspeakably horrible.”

“This is a dreadful conversation to me. Life is so intricate, such a web of subtle strands binds us this way and that. I cannot tell what is right. You must consider” —

“A man would break such strands.”

“There is no manliness,” said Aubrey Vair, with a sudden glow of moral exaltation, “in doing wrong. My love” —

“We could at least die together, dearest,” she said.

“Good Lord!” said Aubrey Vair. “I mean — consider my wife.”

“You have not considered her hitherto.”

“There is a flavour — of cowardice, of desertion, about suicide,” said Aubrey Vair. “Frankly, I have the English prejudice, and do not like any kind of running away.”

Miss Smith smiled very faintly. “I see clearly now what I did not see. My love and yours are very different things.”

“Possibly it is a sexual difference,” said Aubrey Vair; and then, feeling the remark inadequate, he relapsed into silence.

They sat for some time without a word. The two lights in Reigate below multiplied to a score of bright points, and, above, one star had become visible. She began laughing, an almost noiseless, hysterical laugh that jarred unaccountably upon Aubrey Vair.

Presently she stood up. “They will wonder where I am,” she said. “I think I must be going.”

He followed her to the road. “Then this is the end?” he said, with a curious mixture of relief and poignant regret.

“Yes, this is the end,” she answered, and turned away.

There straightway dropped into the soul of Aubrey Vair a sense of infinite loss. It was an altogether new sensation. She was perhaps twenty yards away, when he groaned aloud with the weight of it, and suddenly began running after her with his arms extended.

“Annie,” he cried,— “Annie! I have been talking *rot*. Annie, now I know I love you! I cannot spare you. This must not be. I did not understand.”

The weight was horrible.

“Oh, stop, Annie!” he cried, with a breaking voice, and there were tears on his face.

She turned upon him suddenly, and his arms fell by his side. His expression changed at the sight of her pale face.

"You do not understand," she said. "I have said good-bye."

She looked at him; he was evidently greatly distressed, a little out of breath, and he had just stopped blubbering. His contemptible quality reached the pathetic. She came up close to him, and, taking his damp Byronic visage between her hands, she kissed him again and again. "Good-bye, little man that I loved," she said; "and good-bye to this folly of love."

Then, with something that may have been a laugh or a sob, — she herself, when she came to write it all in her novel, did not know which, — she turned and hurried away again, and went out of the path that Aubrey Vair must pursue, at the cross-roads.

Aubrey Vair stood, where she had kissed him, with a mind as inactive as his body, until her white dress had disappeared. Then he gave an involuntary sigh, a large exhaustive expiration, and so awoke himself, and began walking, pensively dragging his feet through the dead leaves, home. Emotions are terrible things.

"Do you like the potatoes, dear?" asked Mrs. Aubrey Vair at dinner. "I cooked them myself."

Aubrey Vair descended slowly from cloudy, impalpable meditations to the level of fried potatoes. "These potatoes" — he remarked, after a pause during which he was struggling with recollection. "Yes. These potatoes have exactly the tints of the dead leaves of the hazel."

"What a fanciful poet it is!" said Mrs. Aubrey Vair. "Taste them. They are very nice potatoes indeed."

A CATASTROPHE

The little shop was not paying. The realisation came insensibly. Winslow was not the man for definite addition and subtraction and sudden discovery. He became aware of the truth in his mind gradually, as though it had always been there. A lot of facts had converged and led him there. There was that line of cretonnes — four half-pieces — untouched, save for half a yard sold to cover a stool. There were those shirtings at 4¾d. — Bandersnatch, in the Broadway, was selling them at 2¾d. — under cost, in fact. (Surely Bandersnatch might let a man live!) Those servants' caps, a selling line, needed replenishing, and that brought back the memory of Winslow's sole wholesale dealers, Helter, Skelter, & Grab. Why! how about their account?

Winslow stood with a big green box open on the counter before him when he thought of it. His pale grey eyes grew a little rounder; his pale, straggling moustache twitched. He had been drifting along, day after day. He went round to the ramshackle cash-desk in the corner — it was Winslow's weakness to sell his goods over the counter, give his customers a duplicate bill, and then dodge into the desk to receive the money, as though he doubted his own honesty. His lank forefinger, with the prominent joints, ran down the bright little calendar ("Clack's Cottons last for All Time"). "One — two — three; three weeks an' a day!" said Winslow, staring. "March! Only three weeks and a day. It *can't* be."

"Tea, dear," said Mrs. Winslow, opening the door with the glass window and the white blind that communicated with the parlour.

"One minute," said Winslow, and began unlocking the desk.

An irritable old gentleman, very hot and red about the face, and in a heavy fur-lined cloak, came in noisily. Mrs. Winslow vanished.

"Ugh!" said the old gentleman. "Pocket-handkerchief."

"Yes, sir," said Winslow. "About what price" —

"Ugh!" said the old gentleman. "Poggit-handkerchief, quig!"

Winslow began to feel flustered. He produced two boxes.

"These, sir" — began Winslow.

"Sheed tin!" said the old gentleman, clutching the stiffness of the

linen. “Wad to blow my nose — not haggit about.”

“A cotton one, p’raps, sir?” said Winslow.

“How much?” said the old gentleman over the handkerchief.

“Sevenpence, sir. There’s nothing more I can show you? No ties, braces — ?”

“Damn!” said the old gentleman, fumbling in his ticket-pocket, and finally producing half a crown. Winslow looked round for his little metallic duplicate-book which he kept in various fixtures, according to circumstances, and then he caught the old gentleman’s eye. He went straight to the desk at once and got the change, with an entire disregard of the routine of the shop.

Winslow was always more or less excited by a customer. But the open desk reminded him of his trouble. It did not come back to him all at once. He heard a finger-nail softly tapping on the glass, and, looking up, saw Minnie’s eyes over the blind. It seemed like retreat opening. He shut and locked the desk, and went into the little room to tea.

But he was preoccupied. Three weeks and a day! He took unusually large bites of his bread and butter, and stared hard at the little pot of jam. He answered Minnie’s conversational advances distractedly. The shadow of Helter, Skelter, & Grab lay upon the tea-table. He was struggling with this new idea of failure, the tangible realisation, that was taking shape and substance, condensing, as it were, out of the misty uneasiness of many days. At present it was simply one concrete fact; there were thirty-nine pounds left in the bank, and that day three weeks Messrs. Helter, Skelter, & Grab, those enterprising outfitters of young men, would demand their eighty pounds.

After tea there was a customer or so — little purchases: some muslin and buckram, dress-protectors, tape, and a pair of Lisle hose. Then, knowing that Black Care was lurking in the dusky corners of the shop, he lit the three lamps early and set to, refolding his cotton prints, the most vigorous and least meditative proceeding of which he could think. He could see Minnie’s shadow in the other room as she moved about the table. She was busy turning an old dress. He had a walk after supper, looked in at the Y.M.C.A., but found no one to talk to, and finally went to bed. Minnie was already there. And

there, too, waiting for him, nudging him gently, until about midnight he was hopelessly awake, sat Black Care.

He had had one or two nights lately in that company, but this was much worse. First came Messrs. Helter, Skelter, & Grab, and their demand for eighty pounds — an enormous sum when your original capital was only a hundred and seventy. They camped, as it were, before him, sat down and beleaguered him. He clutched feebly at the circumambient darkness for expedients. Suppose he had a sale, sold things for almost anything? He tried to imagine a sale miraculously successful in some unexpected manner, and mildly profitable, in spite of reductions below cost. Then Bandersnatch Limited, 101, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107 Broadway, joined the siege, a long caterpillar of frontage, a battery of shop fronts, wherein things were sold at a farthing above cost. How could he fight such an establishment? Besides, what had he to sell? He began to review his resources. What taking line was there to bait the sale? Then straightway came those pieces of cretonne, yellow and black, with a bluish-green flower; those discredited skirtings, prints without buoyancy, skirmishing haberdashery, some despairful four-button gloves by an inferior maker — a hopeless crew. And that was his force against Bandersnatch, Helter, Skelter, & Grab, and the pitiless world behind them. Whatever had made him think a mortal would buy such things? Why had he bought this and neglected that? He suddenly realised the intensity of his hatred for Helter, Skelter, & Grab's salesman. Then he drove towards an agony of self-reproach. He had spent too much on that cash-desk. What real need was there of a desk? He saw his vanity of that desk in a lurid glow of self-discovery. And the lamps? Five pounds! Then suddenly, with what was almost physical pain, he remembered the rent.

He groaned and turned over. And there, dim in the darkness, was the hummock of Mrs. Winslow's shoulders. That set him off in another direction. He became acutely sensible of Minnie's want of feeling. Here he was, worried to death about business, and she sleeping like a little child. He regretted having married, with that infinite bitterness that only comes to the human heart in the small hours of the morning. That hummock of white seemed absolutely without helpfulness, a burden, a responsibility. What fools men were

to marry! Minnie's inert repose irritated him so much that he was almost provoked to wake her up and tell her that they were "Ruined." She would have to go back to her uncle; her uncle had always been against him: and as for his own future, Winslow was exceedingly uncertain. A shop assistant who has once set up for himself finds the utmost difficulty in getting into a situation again. He began to figure himself "crib-hunting" again, going from this wholesale house to that, writing innumerable letters. How he hated writing letters! "Sir, — Referring to your advertisement in the *Christian World*." He beheld an infinite vista of discomfort and disappointment, ending — in a gulf.

He dressed, yawning, and went down to open the shop. He felt tired before the day began. As he carried the shutters in, he kept asking himself what good he was doing. The end was inevitable, whether he bothered or not. The clear daylight smote into the place, and showed how old and rough and splintered was the floor, how shabby the second-hand counter, how hopeless the whole enterprise. He had been dreaming these past six months of a bright little shop, of a happy couple, of a modest but comely profit flowing in. He had suddenly awakened from his dream. The braid that bound his decent black coat — it was a little loose — caught against the catch of the shop door, and was torn loose. This suddenly turned his wretchedness to wrath. He stood quivering for a moment, then, with a spiteful clutch, tore the braid looser, and went in to Minnie.

"Here," he said, with infinite reproach; "look here! You might look after a chap a bit."

"I didn't see it was torn," said Minnie.

"You never do," said Winslow, with gross injustice, "until things are too late."

Minnie looked suddenly at his face. "I'll sew it now, Sid, if you like."

"Let's have breakfast first," said Winslow, "and do things at their proper time."

He was preoccupied at breakfast, and Minnie watched him anxiously. His only remark was to declare his egg a bad one. It wasn't; it was a little flavoury, — being one of those at fifteen a shilling, — but quite nice. He pushed it away from him, and then,

having eaten a slice of bread and butter, admitted himself in the wrong by resuming the egg.

"Sid," said Minnie, as he stood up to go into the shop again, "you're not well."

"I'm *well* enough." He looked at her as though he hated her.

"Then there's something else the matter. You aren't angry with me, Sid, are you, about that braid? *Do* tell me what's the matter. You were just like this at tea yesterday, and at supper-time. It wasn't the braid then."

"And I'm likely to be."

She looked interrogation. "Oh, what *is* the matter?" she said.

It was too good a chance to miss, and he brought the evil news out with dramatic force. "Matter?" he said. "I done my best, and here we are. That's the matter! If I can't pay Helter, Skelter & Grab eighty pounds, this day three week" — Pause. "We shall be sold up! Sold up! That's the matter, Min! Sold up!"

"Oh, Sid!" began Minnie.

He slammed the door. For the moment he felt relieved of at least half his misery. He began dusting boxes that did not require dusting, and then reblocked a cretonne already faultlessly blocked. He was in a state of grim wretchedness; a martyr under the harrow of fate. At anyrate, it should not be said he failed for want of industry. And how he had planned and contrived and worked! All to this end! He felt horrible doubts. Providence and Bandersnatch — surely they were incompatible! Perhaps he was being "tried"? That sent him off upon a new tack, a very comforting one. That martyr pose, the gold-in-the-furnace attitude, lasted all the morning.

At dinner— "potato pie" — he looked up suddenly, and saw Minnie's face regarding him. Pale she looked, and a little red about the eyes. Something caught him suddenly with a queer effect upon his throat. All his thoughts seemed to wheel round into quite a new direction.

He pushed back his plate and stared at her blankly. Then he got up, went round the table to her — she staring at him. He dropped on his knees beside her without a word. "Oh, Minnie!" he said, and suddenly she knew it was peace, and put her arms about him, as he began to sob and weep.

He cried like a little boy, slobbering on her shoulder that he was a knave to have married her and brought her to this, that he hadn't the wits to be trusted with a penny, that it was all his fault, that he "*had* hoped *so*" — ending in a howl. And she, crying gently herself, patting his shoulders, said "*Ssh!*" softly to his noisy weeping, and so soothed the outbreak. Then suddenly the crazy little bell upon the shop door began, and Winslow had to jump to his feet, and be a man again.

After that scene they "talked it over" at tea, at supper, in bed, at every possible interval in between, solemnly — quite inconclusively — with set faces and eyes for the most part staring in front of them — and yet with a certain mutual comfort. "What to do I don't know," was Winslow's main proposition. Minnie tried to take a cheerful view of service — with a probable baby. But she found she needed all her courage. And her uncle would help her again, perhaps, just at the critical time. It didn't do for folks to be too proud. Besides, "something might happen," a favourite formula with her.

One hopeful line was to anticipate a sudden afflux of customers. "Perhaps," said Minnie, "you might get together fifty. They know you well enough to trust you a bit." They debated that point. Once the possibility of Helter, Skelter and Grab giving credit was admitted, it was pleasant to begin sweating the acceptable minimum. For some half-hour over tea the second day after Winslow's discoveries they were quite cheerful again, laughing even at their terrific fears. Even twenty pounds to go on with might be considered enough. Then in some mysterious way the pleasant prospect of Messrs. Helter, Skelter, & Grab tempering the wind to the shorn retailer vanished — vanished absolutely, and Winslow found himself again in the pit of despair.

He began looking about at the furniture, and wondering idly what it would fetch. The chiffonier was good, anyhow, and there were Minnie's old plates that her mother used to have. Then he began to think of desperate expedients for putting off the evil day. He had heard somewhere of Bills of Sale — there was to his ears something comfortingly substantial in the phrase. Then, why not "Go to the Money-Lenders"?

One cheering thing happened on Thursday afternoon; a little girl

came in with a pattern of "print," and he was able to match it. He had not been able to match anything out of his meagre stock before. He went in and told Minnie. The incident is mentioned lest the reader should imagine it was uniform despair with him.

The next morning, and the next, after the discovery, Winslow opened shop late. When one has been awake most of the night, and has no hope, what *is* the good of getting up punctually? But as he went into the dark shop on Friday he saw something lying on the floor, something lit by the bright light that came under the ill-fitting door — a black oblong. He stooped and picked up an envelope with a deep mourning edge. It was addressed to his wife. Clearly a death in her family — perhaps her uncle. He knew the man too well to have expectations. And they would have to get mourning and go to the funeral. The brutal cruelty of people dying! He saw it all in a flash — he always visualised his thoughts. Black trousers to get, black crape, black gloves — none in stock — the railway fares, the shop closed for the day.

"I'm afraid there's bad news, Minnie," he said.

She was kneeling before the fireplace, blowing the fire. She had her housemaid's gloves on and the old country sun-bonnet she wore of a morning, to keep the dust out of her hair. She turned, saw the envelope, gave a gasp, and pressed two bloodless lips together.

"I'm afraid it's uncle," she said, holding the letter and staring with eyes wide open into Winslow's face. "*It's a strange hand!*"

"The postmark's Hull," said Winslow.

"The postmark's Hull."

Minnie opened the letter slowly, drew it out, hesitated, turned it over, saw the signature. "It's Mr. Speight!"

"What does he say?" said Winslow.

Minnie began to read. "*Oh!*" she screamed. She dropped the letter, collapsed into a crouching heap, her hands covering her eyes. Winslow snatched at it. "A most terrible accident has occurred," he read; "Melchior's chimney fell down yesterday evening right on the top of your uncle's house, and every living soul was killed — your uncle, your cousin Mary, Will and Ned, and the girl — every one of them, and smashed — you would hardly know them. I'm writing to you to break the news before you see it in the papers" — The letter

fluttered from Winslow's fingers. He put out his hand against the mantel to steady himself.

All of them dead! Then he saw, as in a vision, a row of seven cottages, each let at seven shillings a week, a timber yard, two villas, and the ruins — still marketable — of the avuncular residence. He tried to feel a sense of loss and could not. They were sure to have been left to Minnie's aunt. All dead! 7×7×52÷20 began insensibly to work itself out in his mind, but discipline was ever weak in his mental arithmetic; figures kept moving from one line to another, like children playing at Widdy, Widdy Way. Was it two hundred pounds about — or one hundred pounds? Presently he picked up the letter again, and finishing reading it. "You being the next of kin," said Mr. Speight.

"How *awful*!" said Minnie in a horror-struck whisper, and looking up at last. Winslow stared back at her, shaking his head solemnly. There were a thousand things running through his mind, but none that, even to his dull sense, seemed appropriate as a remark. "It was the Lord's will," he said at last.

"It seems so very, very terrible," said Minnie; "auntie, dear auntie — Ted — poor, dear uncle" —

"It was the Lord's will, Minnie," said Winslow, with infinite feeling. A long silence.

"Yes," said Minnie, very slowly, staring thoughtfully at the crackling black paper in the grate. The fire had gone out. "Yes, perhaps it was the Lord's will."

They looked gravely at one another. Each would have been terribly shocked at any mention of the property by the other. She turned to the dark fireplace and began tearing up an old newspaper slowly. Whatever our losses may be, the world's work still waits for us. Winslow gave a deep sigh and walked in a hushed manner towards the front door. As he opened it, a flood of sunlight came streaming into the dark shadows of the closed shop. Bandersnatch, Helter, Skelter, & Grab, had vanished out of his mind like the mists before the rising sun.

Presently he was carrying in the shutters, and in the briskest way, the fire in the kitchen was crackling exhilaratingly, with a little

saucepan walloping above it, for Minnie was boiling two eggs, — one for herself this morning, as well as one for him, — and Minnie herself was audible, laying breakfast with the greatest *éclat*. The blow was a sudden and terrible one — but it behoves us to face such things bravely in this sad, unaccountable world. It was quite midday before either of them mentioned the cottages.

THE LOST INHERITANCE

"My uncle," said the man with the glass eye, "was what you might call a hemi-semi-demi millionaire. He was worth about a hundred and twenty thousand. Quite. And he left me all his money."

I glanced at the shiny sleeve of his coat, and my eye travelled up to the frayed collar.

"Every penny," said the man with the glass eye, and I caught the active pupil looking at me with a touch of offence.

"I've never had any windfalls like that," I said, trying to speak enviously and propitiate him.

"Even a legacy isn't always a blessing," he remarked with a sigh, and with an air of philosophical resignation he put the red nose and the wiry moustache into his tankard for a space.

"Perhaps not," I said.

"He was an author, you see, and he wrote a lot of books."

"Indeed!"

"That was the trouble of it all." He stared at me with the available eye to see if I grasped his statement, then averted his face a little and produced a toothpick.

"You see," he said, smacking his lips after a pause, "it was like this. He was my uncle — my maternal uncle. And he had — what shall I call it? — a weakness for writing edifying literature. Weakness is hardly the word — downright mania is nearer the mark. He'd been librarian in a Polytechnic, and as soon as the money came to him he began to indulge his ambition. It's a simply extraordinary and incomprehensible thing to me. Here was a man of thirty-seven suddenly dropped into a perfect pile of gold, and he didn't go — not a day's bust on it. One would think a chap would go and get himself dressed a bit decent — say a couple of dozen pairs of trousers at a West End tailor's; but he never did. You'd hardly believe it, but when he died he hadn't even a gold watch. It seems wrong for people like that to have money. All he did was just to take a house, and order in pretty nearly five tons of books and ink and paper, and set to writing edifying literature as hard as ever he could write. I *can't* understand it! But he did. The money came to him, curiously enough,

through a maternal uncle of *his*, unexpected like, when he was seven-and-thirty. My mother, it happened, was his only relation in the wide, wide world, except some second cousins of his. And I was her only son. You follow all that? The second cousins had one only son, too, but they brought him to see the old man too soon. He was rather a spoilt youngster, was this son of theirs, and directly he set eyes on my uncle, he began bawling out as hard as he could. 'Take 'im away — er,' he says, 'take 'im away,' and so did for himself entirely. It was pretty straight sailing, you'd think, for me, eh? And my mother, being a sensible, careful woman, settled the business in her own mind long before he did.

"He was a curious little chap, was my uncle, as I remember him. I don't wonder at the kid being scared. Hair, just like these Japanese dolls they sell, black and straight and stiff all round the brim and none in the middle, and below, a whitish kind of face and rather large dark grey eyes moving about behind his spectacles. He used to attach a great deal of importance to dress, and always wore a flapping overcoat and a big-brimmed felt hat of a most extraordinary size. He looked a rummy little beggar, I can tell you. Indoors it was, as a rule, a dirty red flannel dressing-gown and a black skull-cap he had. That black skull-cap made him look like the portraits of all kinds of celebrated people. He was always moving about from house to house, was my uncle, with his chair which had belonged to Savage Landor, and his two writing-tables, one of Carlyle's and the other of Shelley's, so the dealer told him, and the completest portable reference library in England, he said he had — and he lugged the whole caravan, now to a house at Down, near Darwin's old place, then to Reigate, near Meredith, then off to Haslemere, then back to Chelsea for a bit, and then up to Hampstead. He knew there was something wrong with his stuff, but he never knew there was anything wrong with his brains. It was always the air, or the water, or the altitude, or some tommy-rot like that. 'So much depends on environment,' he used to say, and stare at you hard, as if he half suspected you were hiding a grin at him somewhere under your face. 'So much depends on environment to a sensitive mind like mine.'

"What was his name? You wouldn't know it if I told you. He wrote nothing that anyone has ever read — nothing. No one *could*

read it. He wanted to be a great teacher, he said, and he didn't know what he wanted to teach any more than a child. So he just blethered at large about Truth and Righteousness, and the Spirit of History, and all that. Book after book he wrote and published at his own expense. He wasn't quite right in his head, you know, really; and to hear him go on at the critics — not because they slated him, mind you — he liked that — but because they didn't take any notice of him at all. 'What do the nations want?' he would ask, holding out his brown old claw. 'Why, teaching — guidance! They are scattered upon the hills like sheep without a shepherd. There is War and Rumours of War, the unlaid Spirit of Discord abroad in the land, Nihilism, Vivisection, Vaccination, Drunkenness, Penury, Want, Socialistic Error, Selfish Capital! Do you see the clouds, Ted?' — My name, you know— 'Do you see the clouds lowering over the land? and behind it all — the Mongol waits!' He was always very great on Mongols and the Spectre of Socialism, and such-like things.

"Then out would come his finger at me, and with his eyes all afire and his skull-cap askew, he would whisper: 'And here am I. What do I want? Nations to teach. Nations! I say it with all modesty, Ted, I *could*. I would guide them; nay! but I *will* guide them to a safe haven, to the land of Righteousness, flowing with milk and honey.'

"That's how he used to go on. Ramble, rave about the nations, and righteousness, and that kind of thing. Kind of mincemeat of Bible and blethers. From fourteen up to three-and-twenty, when I might have been improving my mind, my mother used to wash me and brush my hair (at least in the earlier years of it), with a nice parting down the middle, and take me, once or twice a week, to hear this old lunatic jabber about things he had read of in the morning papers, trying to do it as much like Carlyle as he could, and I used to sit according to instructions, and look intelligent and nice, and pretend to be taking it all in. Afterwards I used to go of my own free will, out of a regard for the legacy. I was the only person that used to go and see him. He wrote, I believe, to every man who made the slightest stir in the world, sending him a copy or so of his books, and inviting him to come and talk about the nations to him; but half of them didn't answer, and none ever came. And when the girl let you in — she was an artful bit of goods, that girl — there were heaps of letters

on the hall-seat waiting to go off, addressed to Prince Bismark, the President of the United States, and such-like people. And one went up the staircase and along the cobwebby passage, — the housekeeper drank like fury, and his passages were always cobwebby, — and found him at last, with books turned down all over the room, and heaps of torn paper on the floor, and telegrams and newspapers littered about, and empty coffee-cups and half-eaten bits of toast on the desk and the mantel. You'd see his back humped up, and his hair would be sticking out quite straight between the collar of that dressing-gown thing and the edge of the skull-cap.

"'A moment!' he would say. 'A moment!' over his shoulder. 'The *mot juste*, you know, Ted, *le mot juste*. Righteous thought righteously expressed — Aah! — concatenation. And now, Ted,' he'd say, spinning round in his study chair, 'how's Young England?' That was his silly name for me.

"Well, that was my uncle, and that was how he talked — to me, at anyrate. With others about he seemed a bit shy. And he not only talked to me, but he gave me his books, books of six hundred pages or so, with cock-eyed headings, 'The Shrieking Sisterhood,' 'The Behemoth of Bigotry,' 'Crucibles and Cullenders,' and so on. All very strong, and none of them original. The very last time but one that I saw him he gave me a book. He was feeling ill even then, and his hand shook and he was despondent. I noticed it because I was naturally on the look-out for those little symptoms. 'My last book, Ted,' he said. 'My last book, my boy; my last word to the deaf and hardened nations;' and I'm hanged if a tear didn't go rolling down his yellow old cheek. He was regular crying because it was so nearly over, and he hadn't only written about fifty-three books of rubbish. 'I've sometimes thought, Ted' — he said, and stopped.

"'Perhaps I've been a bit hasty and angry with this stiff-necked generation. A little more sweetness, perhaps, and a little less blinding light. I've sometimes thought — I might have swayed them. But I've done my best, Ted.'

"And then, with a burst, for the first and last time in his life he owned himself a failure. It showed he was really ill. He seemed to think for a minute, and then he spoke quietly and low, as sane and sober as I am now. 'I've been a fool, Ted,' he said. 'I've been

flapping nonsense all my life. Only He who readeth the heart knows whether this is anything more than vanity. Ted, I don't. But He knows, He knows, and if I have done foolishly and vainly, in my heart — in my heart' —

"Just like that he spoke, repeating himself, and he stopped quite short and handed the book to me, trembling. Then the old shine came back into his eye. I remember it all fairly well, because I repeated it and acted it to my old mother when I got home, to cheer her up a bit. 'Take this book and read it,' he said. 'It's my last word, my very last word. I've left all my property to you, Ted, and may you use it better than I have done.' And then he fell a-coughing.

"I remember that quite well even now, and how I went home cock-a-hoop, and how he was in bed the next time I called. The housekeeper was downstairs drunk, and I fooled about — as a young man will — with the girl in the passage before I went to him. He was sinking fast. But even then his vanity clung to him.

"'Have you read it?' he whispered.

"'Sat up all night reading it,' I said in his ear to cheer him. 'It's the last,' said I, and then, with a memory of some poetry or other in my head, 'but it's the bravest and best.'

"He smiled a little and tried to squeeze my hand as a woman might do, and left off squeezing in the middle, and lay still. 'The bravest and the best,' said I again, seeing it pleased him. But he didn't answer. I heard the girl giggle outside the door, for occasionally we'd had just a bit of innocent laughter, you know, at his ways. I looked at his face, and his eyes were closed, and it was just as if somebody had punched in his nose on either side. But he was still smiling. It's queer to think of — he lay dead, lay dead there, an utter failure, with the smile of success on his face.

"That was the end of my uncle. You can imagine me and my mother saw that he had a decent funeral. Then, of course, came the hunt for the will. We began decent and respectful at first, and before the day was out we were ripping chairs, and smashing bureau panels, and sounding walls. Every hour we expected those others to come in. We asked the housekeeper, and found she'd actually witnessed a will — on an ordinary half-sheet of notepaper it was written, and very short, she said — not a month ago. The other witness was the

gardener, and he bore her out word for word. But I'm hanged if there was that or any other will to be found. The way my mother talked must have made him turn in his grave. At last a lawyer at Reigate sprang one on us that had been made years ago during some temporary quarrel with my mother. I'm blest if that wasn't the only will to be discovered anywhere, and it left every penny he possessed to that 'Take 'im away' youngster of his second cousin's — a chap who'd never had to stand his talking not for one afternoon of his life."

The man with the glass eye stopped.

"I thought you said" — I began.

"Half a minute," said the man with the glass eye. "*I* had to wait for the end of the story till this very morning, and I was a blessed sight more interested than you are. You just wait a bit too. They executed the will, and the other chap inherited, and directly he was one-and-twenty he began to blew it. How he did blew it, to be sure! He bet, he drank, he got in the papers for this and that. I tell you, it makes me wriggle to think of the times he had. He blewed every ha'penny of it before he was thirty, and the last I heard of him was — Holloway! Three years ago.

"Well, I naturally fell on hard times, because, as you see, the only trade I knew was legacy-cadging. All my plans were waiting over to begin, so to speak, when the old chap died. I've had my ups and downs since then. Just now it's a period of depression. I tell you frankly, I'm on the look-out for help. I was hunting round my room to find something to raise a bit on for immediate necessities, and the sight of all those presentation volumes — no one will buy them, not to wrap butter in, even — well, they annoyed me. I'd promised him not to part with them, and I never kept a promise easier. I let out at them with my boot, and sent them shooting across the room. One lifted at the kick, and spun through the air. And out of it flapped — You guess?

"It was the will. He'd given it me himself in that very last volume of all."

He folded his arms on the table, and looked sadly with the active eye at his empty tankard. He shook his head slowly, and said softly, "I'd never *opened* the book, much more cut a page!" Then he looked

up, with a bitter laugh, for my sympathy. “Fancy hiding it there! Eigh? Of all places.”

He began to fish absently for a dead fly with his finger. “It just shows you the vanity of authors,” he said, looking up at me. “It wasn’t no trick of his. He’d meant perfectly fair. He’d really thought I was really going home to read that blessed book of his through. But it shows you, don’t it?” — his eye went down to the tankard again,— “It shows you, too, how we poor human beings fail to understand one another.”

But there was no misunderstanding the eloquent thirst of his eye. He accepted with ill-feigned surprise. He said, in the usual subtle formula, that he didn’t mind if he did.

THE SAD STORY OF A DRAMATIC CRITIC

I was — you shall hear immediately why I am not now — Egbert Craddock Cummins. The name remains. I am still (Heaven help me!) Dramatic Critic to the *Fiery Cross*. What I shall be in a little while I do not know. I write in great trouble and confusion of mind. I will do what I can to make myself clear in the face of terrible difficulties. You must bear with me a little. When a man is rapidly losing his own identity, he naturally finds a difficulty in expressing himself. I will make it perfectly plain in a minute, when once I get my grip upon the story. Let me see — where *am* I? I wish I knew. Ah, I have it! Dead self! Egbert Craddock Cummins!

In the past I should have disliked writing anything quite so full of "I" as this story must be. It is full of "I's" before and behind, like the beast in Revelation — the one with a head like a calf, I am afraid. But my tastes have changed since I became a Dramatic Critic and studied the masters — G.R.S., G.B.S., G.A.S., and the others. Everything has changed since then. At least the story is about myself — so that there is some excuse for me. And it is really not egotism, because, as I say, since those days my identity has undergone an entire alteration.

That past!... I was — in those days — rather a nice fellow, rather shy — taste for grey in my clothes, weedy little moustache, face "interesting," slight stutter which I had caught in early life from a schoolfellow. Engaged to a very nice girl, named Delia. Fairly new, she was — cigarettes — liked me because I was human and original. Considered I was like Lamb — on the strength of the stutter, I believe. Father, an eminent authority on postage stamps. She read a great deal in the British Museum. (A perfect pairing ground for literary people, that British Museum — you should read George Egerton and Justin Huntly M'Carthy and Gissing and the rest of them.) We loved in our intellectual way, and shared the brightest hopes. (All gone now.) And her father liked me because I seemed honestly eager to hear about stamps. She had no mother. Indeed, I had the happiest prospects a young man could have. I never went to theatres in those days. My Aunt Charlotte before she died had told

me not to.

Then Barnaby, the editor of the *Fiery Cross*, made me — in spite of my spasmodic efforts to escape — Dramatic Critic. He is a fine, healthy man, Barnaby, with an enormous head of frizzy black hair and a convincing manner, and he caught me on the staircase going to see Wembly. He had been dining, and was more than usually buoyant. "Hullo, Cummins!" he said. "The very man I want!" He caught me by the shoulder or the collar or something, ran me up the little passage, and flung me over the waste-paper basket into the arm-chair in his office. "Pray be seated," he said, as he did so. Then he ran across the room and came back with some pink and yellow tickets and pushed them into my hand. "Opera Comique," he said, "Thursday; Friday, the Surrey; Saturday, the Frivolity. That's all, I think."

"But" — I began.

"Glad you're free," he said, snatching some proofs off the desk and beginning to read.

"I don't quite understand," I said.

"*Eigh?*" he said, at the top of his voice, as though he thought I had gone, and was startled at my remark.

"Do you want me to criticise these plays?"

"Do something with 'em.... Did you think it was a treat?"

"But I can't."

"Did you call me a fool?"

"Well, I've never been to a theatre in my life."

"Virgin soil."

"But I don't know anything about it, you know."

"That's just it. New view. No habits. No *clichés* in stock. Ours is a live paper, not a bag of tricks. None of your clockwork professional journalism in this office. And I can rely on your integrity" —

"But I've conscientious scruples" —

He caught me up suddenly and put me outside his door. "Go and talk to Wembly about that," he said. "He'll explain."

As I stood perplexed, he opened the door again, said, "I forgot this," thrust a fourth ticket into my hand (it was for that night — in twenty minutes' time), and slammed the door upon me. His expression was quite calm, but I caught his eye.

I hate arguments. I decided that I would take his hint and become (to my own destruction) a Dramatic Critic. I walked slowly down the passage to Wembly. That Barnaby has a remarkably persuasive way. He has made few suggestions during our very pleasant intercourse of four years that he has not ultimately won me round to adopting. It may be, of course, that I am of a yielding disposition; certainly I am too apt to take my colour from my circumstances. It is, indeed, to my unfortunate susceptibility to vivid impressions that all my misfortunes are due. I have already alluded to the slight stammer I had acquired from a schoolfellow in my youth. However, this is a digression.... I went home in a cab to dress.

I will not trouble the reader with my thoughts about the first-night audience, strange assembly as it is, — those I reserve for my Memoirs, — nor the humiliating story of how I got lost during the *entr'acte* in a lot of red plush passages, and saw the third act from the gallery. The only point upon which I wish to lay stress was the remarkable effect of the acting upon me. You must remember I had lived a quiet and retired life, and had never been to the theatre before, and that I am extremely sensitive to vivid impressions. At the risk of repetition I must insist upon these points.

The first effect was a profound amazement, not untinctured by alarm. The phenomenal unnaturalness of acting is a thing discounted in the minds of most people by early visits to the theatre. They get used to the fantastic gestures, the flamboyant emotions, the weird mouthings, melodious snortings, agonising yelps, lip-gnawings, glaring horrors, and other emotional symbolism of the stage. It becomes at last a mere deaf-and-dumb language to them, which they read intelligently *pari passu* with the hearing of the dialogue. But all this was new to me. The thing was called a modern comedy, the people were supposed to be English and were dressed like fashionable Americans of the current epoch, and I fell into the natural error of supposing that the actors were trying to represent human beings. I looked round on my first-night audience with a kind of wonder, discovered — as all new Dramatic Critics do — that it rested with me to reform the Drama, and, after a supper choked with emotion, went off to the office to write a column, piebald with "new paragraphs" (as all my stuff is — it fills out so) and purple with

indignation. Barnaby was delighted.

But I could not sleep that night. I dreamt of actors — actors glaring, actors smiting their chests, actors flinging out a handful of extended fingers, actors smiling bitterly, laughing despairingly, falling hopelessly, dying idiotically. I got up at eleven with a slight headache, read my notice in the *Fiery Cross*, breakfasted, and went back to my room to shave. (It's my habit to do so.) Then an odd thing happened. I could not find my razor. Suddenly it occurred to me that I had not unpacked it the day before.

"Ah!" said I, in front of the looking-glass. Then "Hullo!"

Quite involuntarily, when I had thought of my portmanteau, I had flung up the left arm (fingers fully extended) and clutched at my diaphragm with my right hand. I am an acutely self-conscious man at all times. The gesture struck me as absolutely novel for me. I repeated it, for my own satisfaction. "Odd!" Then (rather puzzled) I turned to my portmanteau.

After shaving, my mind reverted to the acting I had seen, and I entertained myself before the cheval glass with some imitations of Jafferay's more exaggerated gestures. "Really, one might think it a disease," I said— "Stage-Walkitis!" (There's many a truth spoken in jest.) Then, if I remember rightly, I went off to see Wembly, and afterwards lunched at the British Museum with Delia. We actually spoke about our prospects, in the light of my new appointment.

But that appointment was the beginning of my downfall. From that day I necessarily became a persistent theatre-goer, and almost insensibly I began to change. The next thing I noticed after the gesture about the razor, was to catch myself bowing ineffably when I met Delia, and stooping in an old-fashioned, courtly way over her hand. Directly I caught myself, I straightened myself up and became very uncomfortable. I remember she looked at me curiously. Then, in the office, I found myself doing "nervous business," fingers on teeth, when Barnaby asked me a question I could not very well answer. Then, in some trifling difference with Delia, I clasped my hand to my brow. And I pranced through my social transactions at times singularly like an actor! I tried not to — no one could be more keenly alive to the arrant absurdity of the histrionic bearing. And I did!

It began to dawn on me what it all meant. The acting, I saw, was too much for my delicately-strung nervous system. I have always, I know, been too amenable to the suggestions of my circumstances. Night after night of concentrated attention to the conventional attitudes and intonation of the English stage was gradually affecting my speech and carriage. I was giving way to the infection of sympathetic imitation. Night after night my plastic nervous system took the print of some new amazing gesture, some new emotional exaggeration — and retained it. A kind of theatrical veneer threatened to plate over and obliterate my private individuality altogether. I saw myself in a kind of vision. Sitting by myself one night, my new self seemed to me to glide, posing and gesticulating, across the room. He clutched his throat, he opened his fingers, he opened his legs in walking like a high-class marionette. He went from attitude to attitude. He might have been clockwork. Directly after this I made an ineffectual attempt to resign my theatrical work. But Barnaby persisted in talking about the Polywhiddle Divorce all the time I was with him, and I could get no opportunity of saying what I wished.

And then Delia's manner began to change towards me. The ease of our intercourse vanished. I felt she was learning to dislike me. I grinned, and capered, and scowled, and posed at her in a thousand ways, and knew — with what a voiceless agony! — that I did it all the time. I tried to resign again, and Barnaby talked about "X" and "Z" and "Y" in the *New Review*, and gave me a strong cigar to smoke, and so routed me. And then I walked up the Assyrian Gallery in the manner of Irving to meet Delia, and so precipitated the crisis.

"Ah! — *Dear!*" I said, with more sprightliness and emotion in my voice than had ever been in all my life before I became (to my own undoing) a Dramatic Critic.

She held out her hand rather coldly, scrutinising my face as she did so. I prepared, with a new-won grace, to walk by her side.

"Egbert," she said, standing still, and thought. Then she looked at me.

I said nothing. I felt what was coming. I tried to be the old Egbert Craddock Cummins of shambling gait and stammering sincerity, whom she loved, but I felt even as I did so that I was a new thing, a

thing of surging emotions and mysterious fixity — like no human being that ever lived, except upon the stage. “Egbert,” she said, “you are not yourself.”

“Ah!” Involuntarily I clutched my diaphragm and averted my head (as is the way with them).

“There!” she said.

“*What do you mean?*” I said, whispering in vocal italics — you know how they do it — turning on her, perplexity on face, right hand down, left on brow. I knew quite well what she meant. I knew quite well the dramatic unreality of my behaviour. But I struggled against it in vain. “What do you mean?” I said, and, in a kind of hoarse whisper, “I don’t understand!”

She really looked as though she disliked me. “What do you keep on posing for?” she said. “I don’t like it. You didn’t use to.”

“Didn’t use to!” I said slowly, repeating this twice. I glared up and down the gallery, with short, sharp glances. “We are alone,” I said swiftly. “*Listen!*” I poked my forefinger towards her, and glared at her. “I am under a curse.”

I saw her hand tighten upon her sunshade. “You are under some bad influence or other,” said Delia. “You should give it up. I never knew anyone change as you have done.”

“Delia!” I said, lapsing into the pathetic. “Pity me. Augh! Delia! *Pit* — y me!”

She eyed me critically. “*Why* you keep playing the fool like this I don’t know,” she said. “Anyhow, I really cannot go about with a man who behaves as you do. You made us both ridiculous on Wednesday. Frankly, I dislike you, as you are now. I met you here to tell you so — as it’s about the only place where we can be sure of being alone together” —

“Delia!” said I, with intensity, knuckles of clenched hands white. “You don’t mean” —

“I do,” said Delia. “A woman’s lot is sad enough at the best of times. But with you” —

I clapped my hand on my brow.

“So, good-bye,” said Delia, without emotion.

“Oh, Delia!” I said. “Not *this*?”

“Good-bye, Mr. Cummins,” she said.

By a violent effort I controlled myself and touched her hand. I tried to say some word of explanation to her. She looked into my working face and winced. “I *must* do it,” she said hopelessly. Then she turned from me and began walking rapidly down the gallery.

Heavens! How the human agony cried within me! I loved Delia. But nothing found expression — I was already too deeply crusted with my acquired self.

“Good-baye!” I said at last, watching her retreating figure. How I hated myself for doing it! After she had vanished, I repeated in a dreamy way, “Good-baye!” looking hopelessly round me. Then, with a kind of heart-broken cry, I shook my clenched fists in the air, staggered to the pedestal of a winged figure, buried my face in my arms, and made my shoulders heave. Something within me said “Ass!” as I did so. (I had the greatest difficulty in persuading the Museum policeman, who was attracted by my cry of agony, that I was not intoxicated, but merely suffering from a transient indisposition.)

But even this great sorrow has not availed to save me from my fate. I see it, everyone sees it; I grow more “theatrical” every day. And no one could be more painfully aware of the pungent silliness of theatrical ways. The quiet, nervous, but pleasing E. C. Cummins vanishes. I cannot save him. I am driven like a dead leaf before the winds of March. My tailor even enters into the spirit of my disorder. He has a peculiar sense of what is fitting. I tried to get a dull grey suit from him this spring, and he foisted a brilliant blue upon me, and I see he has put braid down the sides of my new dress trousers. My hairdresser insists upon giving me a “wave.”

I am beginning to associate with actors. I detest them, but it is only in their company that I can feel I am not glaringly conspicuous. Their talk infects me. I notice a growing tendency to dramatic brevity, to dashes and pauses in my style, to a punctuation of bows and attitudes. Barnaby has remarked it too. I offended Wembly by calling him “Dear Boy” yesterday. I dread the end, but I cannot escape from it.

The fact is, I am being obliterated. Living a grey, retired life all my youth, I came to the theatre a delicate sketch of a man, a thing of

tints and faint lines. Their gorgeous colouring has effaced me altogether. People forget how much mode of expression, method of movement, are a matter of contagion. I have heard of stage-struck people before, and thought it a figure of speech. I spoke of it jestingly, as a disease. It is no jest. It *is* a disease. And I have got it bad! Deep down within me I protest against the wrong done to my personality — unavailingly. For three hours or more a week I have to go and concentrate my attention on some fresh play, and the suggestions of the drama strengthen their awful hold upon me. My manners grow so flamboyant, my passions so professional, that I doubt, as I said at the outset, whether it is really myself that behaves in such a manner. I feel merely the core to this dramatic casing, that grows thicker and presses upon me — me and mine. I feel like King John's abbot in his cope of lead.

I doubt, indeed, whether I should not abandon the struggle altogether — leave this sad world of ordinary life for which I am so ill-fitted, abandon the name of Cummins for some professional pseudonym, complete my self-effacement, and — a thing of tricks and tatters, of posing and pretence — go upon the stage. It seems my only resort— "to hold the mirror up to Nature." For in the ordinary life, I will confess, no one now seems to regard me as both sane and sober. Only upon the stage, I feel convinced, will people take me seriously. That will be the end of it. I *know* that will be the end of it. And yet ... I will frankly confess ... all that marks off your actor from your common man ... I *detest*. I am still largely of my Aunt Charlotte's opinion, that playacting is unworthy of a pure-minded man's attention, much more participation. Even now I would resign my dramatic criticism and try a rest. Only I can't get hold of Barnaby. Letters of resignation he never notices. He says it is against the etiquette of journalism to write to your Editor. And when I go to see him, he gives me another big cigar and some strong whisky and soda, and then something always turns up to prevent my explanation.

A SLIP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Outside the laboratory windows was a watery-grey fog, and within a close warmth and the yellow light of the green-shaded gas lamps that stood two to each table down its narrow length. On each table stood a couple of glass jars containing the mangled vestiges of the crayfish, mussels, frogs, and guineapigs, upon which the students had been working, and down the side of the room, facing the windows, were shelves bearing bleached dissections in spirits, surmounted by a row of beautifully executed anatomical drawings in whitewood frames and overhanging a row of cubical lockers. All the doors of the laboratory were panelled with blackboard, and on these were the half-erased diagrams of the previous day's work. The laboratory was empty, save for the demonstrator, who sat near the preparation-room door, and silent, save for a low, continuous murmur, and the clicking of the rocker microtome at which he was working. But scattered about the room were traces of numerous students: hand-bags, polished boxes of instruments, in one place a large drawing covered by newspaper, and in another a prettily bound copy of *News from Nowhere*, a book oddly at variance with its surroundings. These things had been put down hastily as the students had arrived and hurried at once to secure their seats in the adjacent lecture theatre. Deadened by the closed door, the measured accents of the professor sounded as a featureless muttering.

Presently, faint through the closed windows came the sound of the Oratory clock striking the hour of eleven. The clicking of the microtome ceased, and the demonstrator looked at his watch, rose, thrust his hands into his pockets, and walked slowly down the laboratory towards the lecture theatre door. He stood listening for a moment, and then his eye fell on the little volume by William Morris. He picked it up, glanced at the title, smiled, opened it, looked at the name on the fly-leaf, ran the leaves through with his hand, and put it down. Almost immediately the even murmur of the lecturer ceased, there was a sudden burst of pencils rattling on the desks in the lecture theatre, a stirring, a scraping of feet, and a number of voices speaking together. Then a firm footfall approached the door,

which began to open, and stood ajar, as some indistinctly heard question arrested the new-comer.

The demonstrator turned, walked slowly back past the microtome, and left the laboratory by the preparation-room door. As he did so, first one, and then several students carrying notebooks entered the laboratory from the lecture theatre, and distributed themselves among the little tables, or stood in a group about the doorway. They were an exceptionally heterogeneous assembly, for while Oxford and Cambridge still recoil from the blushing prospect of mixed classes, the College of Science anticipated America in the matter years ago — mixed socially, too, for the prestige of the College is high, and its scholarships, free of any age limit, dredge deeper even than do those of the Scotch universities. The class numbered one-and-twenty, but some remained in the theatre questioning the professor, copying the blackboard diagrams before they were washed off, or examining the special specimens he had produced to illustrate the day's teaching. Of the nine who had come into the laboratory three were girls, one of whom, a little fair woman, wearing spectacles and dressed in greyish-green, was peering out of the window at the fog, while the other two, both wholesome-looking, plain-faced schoolgirls, unrolled and put on the brown holland aprons they wore while dissecting. Of the men, two went down the laboratory to their places, one a pallid, dark-bearded man, who had once been a tailor; the other a pleasant-featured, ruddy young man of twenty, dressed in a well-fitting brown suit; young Wedderburn, the son of Wedderburn the eye specialist. The others formed a little knot near the theatre door. One of these, a dwarfed, spectacled figure, with a hunch back, sat on a bent wood stool; two others, one a short, dark youngster, and the other a flaxen-haired, reddish-complexioned young man, stood leaning side by side against the slate sink, while the fourth stood facing them, and maintained the larger share of the conversation.

This last person was named Hill. He was a sturdily built young fellow, of the same age as Wedderburn; he had a white face, dark grey eyes, hair of an indeterminate colour, and prominent, irregular features. He talked rather louder than was needful, and thrust his hands deeply into his pockets. His collar was frayed and blue with the starch of a careless laundress, his clothes were evidently

readymade, and there was a patch on the side of his boot near the toe. And as he talked or listened to the others, he glanced now and again towards the lecture theatre door. They were discussing the depressing peroration of the lecture they had just heard, the last lecture it was in the introductory course in zoology. “From ovum to ovum is the goal of the higher vertebrata,” the lecturer had said in his melancholy tones, and so had neatly rounded off the sketch of comparative anatomy he had been developing. The spectacled hunchback had repeated it, with noisy appreciation, had tossed it towards the fair-haired student with an evident provocation, and had started one of those vague, rambling discussions on generalities, so unaccountably dear to the student mind all the world over.

“That is our goal, perhaps — I admit it — as far as science goes,” said the fair-haired student, rising to the challenge. “But there are things above science.”

“Science,” said Hill confidently, “is systematic knowledge. Ideas that don’t come into the system — must anyhow — be loose ideas.” He was not quite sure whether that was a clever saying or a fatuity until his hearers took it seriously.

“The thing I cannot understand,” said the hunchback, at large, “is whether Hill is a materialist or not.”

“There is one thing above matter,” said Hill promptly, feeling he had a better thing this time, aware, too, of someone in the doorway behind him, and raising his voice a trifle for her benefit, “and that is, the delusion that there is something above matter.”

“So we have your gospel at last,” said the fair student. “It’s all a delusion, is it? All our aspirations to lead something more than dogs’ lives, all our work for anything beyond ourselves. But see how inconsistent you are. Your socialism, for instance. Why do you trouble about the interests of the race? Why do you concern yourself about the beggar in the gutter? Why are you bothering yourself to lend that book” — he indicated William Morris by a movement of the head— “to everyone in the lab.?”

“Girl,” said the hunchback indistinctly, and glanced guiltily over his shoulder.

The girl in brown, with the brown eyes, had come into the laboratory, and stood on the other side of the table behind him, with

her rolled-up apron in one hand, looking over her shoulder, listening to the discussion. She did not notice the hunchback, because she was glancing from Hill to his interlocutor. Hill's consciousness of her presence betrayed itself to her only in his studious ignorance of the fact; but she understood that, and it pleased her. "I see no reason," said he, "why a man should live like a brute because he knows of nothing beyond matter, and does not expect to exist a hundred years hence."

"Why shouldn't he?" said the fair-haired student.

"Why *should* he?" said Hill.

"What inducement has he?"

"That's the way with all you religious people. It's all a business of inducements. Cannot a man seek after righteousness for righteousness' sake?"

There was a pause. The fair man answered, with a kind of vocal padding, "But — you see — inducement — when I said inducement," to gain time. And then the hunchback came to his rescue and inserted a question. He was a terrible person in the debating society with his questions, and they invariably took one form — a demand for a definition. "What's your definition of righteousness?" said the hunchback at this stage.

Hill experienced a sudden loss of complacency at this question, but even as it was asked, relief came in the person of Brooks, the laboratory attendant, who entered by the preparation-room door, carrying a number of freshly killed guineapigs by their hind legs. "This is the last batch of material this session," said the youngster, who had not previously spoken. Brooks advanced up the laboratory, smacking down a couple of guineapigs at each table. The rest of the class, scenting the prey from afar, came crowding in by the lecture theatre door, and the discussion perished abruptly as the students who were not already in their places hurried to them to secure the choice of a specimen. There was a noise of keys rattling on split rings as lockers were opened and dissecting instruments taken out. Hill was already standing by his table, and his box of scalpels was sticking out of his pocket. The girl in brown came a step towards him, and, leaning over his table, said softly, "Did you see that I returned your book, Mr. Hill?"

During the whole scene she and the book had been vividly present in his consciousness; but he made a clumsy pretence of looking at the book and seeing it for the first time. “Oh yes,” he said, taking it up. “I see. Did you like it?”

“I want to ask you some questions about it — some time.”

“Certainly,” said Hill. “I shall be glad.” He stopped awkwardly. “You liked it?” he said.

“It’s a wonderful book. Only some things I don’t understand.”

Then suddenly the laboratory was hushed by a curious braying noise. It was the demonstrator. He was at the blackboard ready to begin the day’s instruction, and it was his custom to demand silence by a sound midway between the “Er” of common intercourse and the blast of a trumpet. The girl in brown slipped back to her place: it was immediately in front of Hill’s, and Hill, forgetting her forthwith, took a notebook out of the drawer of his table, turned over its leaves hastily, drew a stumpy pencil from his pocket, and prepared to make a copious note of the coming demonstration. For demonstrations and lectures are the sacred text of the College students. Books, saving only the Professor’s own, you may — it is even expedient to — ignore.

Hill was the son of a Landport cobbler, and had been hooked by a chance blue paper the authorities had thrown out to the Landport Technical College. He kept himself in London on his allowance of a guinea a week, and found that, with proper care, this also covered his clothing allowance, an occasional waterproof collar, that is; and ink and needles and cotton, and such-like necessaries for a man about town. This was his first year and his first session, but the brown old man in Landport had already got himself detested in many public-houses by boasting of his son, “the Professor.” Hill was a vigorous youngster, with a serene contempt for the clergy of all denominations, and a fine ambition to reconstruct the world. He regarded his scholarship as a brilliant opportunity. He had begun to read at seven, and had read steadily whatever came in his way, good or bad, since then. His worldly experience had been limited to the island of Portsea, and acquired chiefly in the wholesale boot factory in which he had worked by day, after passing the seventh standard of

the Board school. He had a considerable gift of speech, as the College Debating Society, which met amidst the crushing machines and mine models in the metallurgical theatre downstairs, already recognised — recognised by a violent battering of desks whenever he rose. And he was just at that fine emotional age when life opens at the end of a narrow pass like a broad valley at one's feet, full of the promise of wonderful discoveries and tremendous achievements. And his own limitations, save that he knew that he knew neither Latin nor French, were all unknown to him.

At first his interest had been divided pretty equally between his biological work at the College and social and theological theorising, an employment which he took in deadly earnest. Of a night, when the big museum library was not open, he would sit on the bed of his room in Chelsea with his coat and a muffler on, and write out the lecture notes and revise his dissection memoranda, until Thorpe called him out by a whistle, — the landlady objected to open the door to attic visitors, — and then the two would go prowling about the shadowy, shiny, gas-lit streets, talking, very much in the fashion of the sample just given, of the God Idea, and Righteousness, and Carlyle, and the Reorganisation of Society. And, in the midst of it all, Hill, arguing not only for Thorpe, but for the casual passer-by, would lose the thread of his argument glancing at some pretty painted face that looked meaningly at him as he passed. Science and Righteousness! But once or twice lately there had been signs that a third interest was creeping into his life, and he had found his attention wandering from the fate of the mesoblastic somites or the probable meaning of the blastopore, to the thought of the girl with the brown eyes who sat at the table before him.

She was a paying student; she descended inconceivable social altitudes to speak to him. At the thought of the education she must have had, and the accomplishments she must possess, the soul of Hill became abject within him. She had spoken to him first over a difficulty about the alisphenoid of a rabbit's skull, and he had found that, in biology at least, he had no reason for self-abasement. And from that, after the manner of young people starting from any starting-point, they got to generalities, and while Hill attacked her upon the question of socialism, — some instinct told him to spare her

a direct assault upon her religion, — she was gathering resolution to undertake what she told herself was his æsthetic education. She was a year or two older than he, though the thought never occurred to him. The loan of *News from Nowhere* was the beginning of a series of cross loans. Upon some absurd first principle of his, Hill had never "wasted time" upon poetry, and it seemed an appalling deficiency to her. One day in the lunch hour, when she chanced upon him alone in the little museum where the skeletons were arranged, shamefully eating the bun that constituted his midday meal, she retreated, and returned to lend him, with a slightly furtive air, a volume of Browning. He stood sideways towards her and took the book rather clumsily, because he was holding the bun in the other hand. And in the retrospect his voice lacked the cheerful clearness he could have wished.

That occurred after the examination in comparative anatomy, on the day before the College turned out its students, and was carefully locked up by the officials, for the Christmas holidays. The excitement of cramming for the first trial of strength had for a little while dominated Hill, to the exclusion of his other interests. In the forecasts of the result in which everyone indulged, he was surprised to find that no one regarded him as a possible competitor for the Harvey Commemoration Medal, of which this and the two subsequent examinations disposed. It was about this time that Wedderburn, who so far had lived inconspicuously on the uttermost margin of Hill's perceptions, began to take on the appearance of an obstacle. By a mutual agreement, the nocturnal prowlings with Thorpe ceased for the three weeks before the examination, and his landlady pointed out that she really could not supply so much lamp oil at the price. He walked to and fro from the College with little slips of mnemonics in his hand, lists of crayfish appendages, rabbits' skull-bones, and vertebrate nerves, for example, and became a positive nuisance to foot passengers in the opposite direction.

But, by a natural reaction, Poetry and the girl with the brown eyes ruled the Christmas holiday. The pending results of the examination became such a secondary consideration that Hill marvelled at his father's excitement. Even had he wished it, there was no comparative anatomy to read in Landport, and he was too poor to buy books, but

the stock of poets in the library was extensive, and Hill's attack was magnificently sustained. He saturated himself with the fluent numbers of Longfellow and Tennyson, and fortified himself with Shakespeare; found a kindred soul in Pope, and a master in Shelley, and heard and fled the siren voices of Eliza Cook and Mrs. Hemans. But he read no more Browning, because he hoped for the loan of other volumes from Miss Haysman when he returned to London.

He walked from his lodgings to the College with that volume of Browning in his shiny black bag, and his mind teeming with the finest general propositions about poetry. Indeed, he framed first this little speech and then that with which to grace the return. The morning was an exceptionally pleasant one for London; there was a clear, hard frost and undeniable blue in the sky, a thin haze softened every outline, and warm shafts of sunlight struck between the house blocks and turned the sunny side of the street to amber and gold. In the hall of the College he pulled off his glove and signed his name with fingers so stiff with cold that the characteristic dash under the signature he cultivated became a quivering line. He imagined Miss Haysman about him everywhere. He turned at the staircase, and there, below, he saw a crowd struggling at the foot of the notice-board. This, possibly, was the biology list. He forgot Browning and Miss Haysman for the moment, and joined the scrimmage. And at last, with his cheek flattened against the sleeve of the man on the step above him, he read the list —

CLASS I

- H. J. Somers Wedderburn
- William Hill

and thereafter followed a second class that is outside our present sympathies. It was characteristic that he did not trouble to look for Thorpe on the physics list, but backed out of the struggle at once, and in a curious emotional state between pride over common second-class humanity and acute disappointment at Wedderburn's success, went on his way upstairs. At the top, as he was hanging up his coat in the passage, the zoological demonstrator, a young man from Oxford,

who secretly regarded him as a blatant "mugger" of the very worst type, offered his heartiest congratulations.

At the laboratory door Hill stopped for a second to get his breath, and then entered. He looked straight up the laboratory and saw all five girl students grouped in their places, and Wedderburn, the once retiring Wedderburn, leaning rather gracefully against the window, playing with the blind tassel and talking, apparently, to the five of them. Now, Hill could talk bravely enough and even overbearingly to one girl, and he could have made a speech to a roomful of girls, but this business of standing at ease and appreciating, fencing, and returning quick remarks round a group was, he knew, altogether beyond him. Coming up the staircase his feelings for Wedderburn had been generous, a certain admiration perhaps, a willingness to shake his hand conspicuously and heartily as one who had fought but the first round. But before Christmas Wedderburn had never gone up to that end of the room to talk. In a flash Hill's mist of vague excitement condensed abruptly to a vivid dislike of Wedderburn. Possibly his expression changed. As he came up to his place, Wedderburn nodded carelessly to him, and the others glanced round. Miss Haysman looked at him and away again, the faintest touch of her eyes. "I can't agree with you, Mr. Wedderburn," she said.

"I must congratulate you on your first class, Mr. Hill," said the spectacled girl in green, turning round and beaming at him.

"It's nothing," said Hill, staring at Wedderburn and Miss Haysman talking together, and eager to hear what they talked about.

"We poor folks in the second class don't think so," said the girl in spectacles.

What was it Wedderburn was saying? Something about William Morris! Hill did not answer the girl in spectacles, and the smile died out of his face. He could not hear, and failed to see how he could "cut in." Confound Wedderburn! He sat down, opened his bag, hesitated whether to return the volume of Browning forthwith, in the sight of all, and instead drew out his new notebooks for the short course in elementary botany that was now beginning, and which would terminate in February. As he did so, a fat, heavy man, with a white face and pale grey eyes, Bindon, the professor of botany, who came up from Kew for January and February, came in by the lecture

theatre door, and passed, rubbing his hands together and smiling, in silent affability down the laboratory.

In the subsequent six weeks Hill experienced some very rapid and curiously complex emotional developments. For the most part he had Wedderburn in focus — a fact that Miss Haysman never suspected. She told Hill (for in the comparative privacy of the museum she talked a good deal to him of socialism and Browning and general propositions) that she had met Wedderburn at the house of some people she knew, and "he's inherited his cleverness; for his father, you know, is the great eye specialist."

"*My* father is a cobbler," said Hill, quite irrelevantly, and perceived the want of dignity even as he said it. But the gleam of jealousy did not offend her. She conceived herself the fundamental source of it. He suffered bitterly from a sense of Wedderburn's unfairness, and a realisation of his own handicap. Here was this Wedderburn had picked up a prominent man for a father, and instead of his losing so many marks on the score of that advantage, it was counted to him for righteousness! And while Hill had to introduce himself and talk to Miss Haysman clumsily over mangled guineapigs in the laboratory, this Wedderburn, in some backstairs way, had access to her social altitudes, and could converse in a polished argot that Hill understood perhaps, but felt incapable of speaking. Not, of course, that he wanted to. Then it seemed to Hill that for Wedderburn to come there day after day with cuffs unfrayed, neatly tailored, precisely barbered, quietly perfect, was in itself an ill-bred, sneering sort of proceeding. Moreover, it was a stealthy thing for Wedderburn to behave insignificantly for a space, to mock modesty, to lead Hill to fancy that he himself was beyond dispute the man of the year, and then suddenly to dart in front of him, and incontinently to swell up in this fashion. In addition to these things, Wedderburn displayed an increasing disposition to join in any conversational grouping that included Miss Haysman, and would venture, and indeed seek occasion, to pass opinions derogatory to socialism and atheism. He goaded Hill to incivilities by neat, shallow, and exceedingly effective personalities about the socialist leaders, until Hill hated Bernard Shaw's graceful egotisms, William Morris's limited editions and

luxurious wall-papers, and Walter Crane's charmingly absurd ideal working men, about as much as he hated Wedderburn. The dissertations in the laboratory, that had been his glory in the previous term, became a danger, degenerated into inglorious tussles with Wedderburn, and Hill kept to them only out of an obscure perception that his honour was involved. In the debating society Hill knew quite clearly that, to a thunderous accompaniment of banged desks, he could have pulverised Wedderburn. Only Wedderburn never attended the debating society to be pulverised, because — nauseous affectation! — he "dined late."

You must not imagine that these things presented themselves in quite such a crude form to Hill's perception. Hill was a born generaliser. Wedderburn to him was not so much an individual obstacle as a type, the salient angle of a class. The economic theories that, after infinite ferment, had shaped themselves in Hill's mind, became abruptly concrete at the contact. The world became full of easy-mannered, graceful, gracefully-dressed, conversationally dexterous, finally shallow Wedderburns, Bishops Wedderburn, Wedderburn M.P.'s, Professors Wedderburn, Wedderburn landlords, all with finger-bowl shibboleths and epigrammatic cities of refuge from a sturdy debater. And everyone ill-clothed or ill-dressed, from the cobbler to the cab-runner, was a man and a brother, a fellow-sufferer, to Hill's imagination. So that he became, as it were, a champion of the fallen and oppressed, albeit to outward seeming only a self-assertive, ill-mannered young man, and an unsuccessful champion at that. Again and again a skirmish over the afternoon tea that the girl students had inaugurated, left Hill with flushed cheeks and a tattered temper, and the debating society noticed a new quality of sarcastic bitterness in his speeches.

You will understand now how it was necessary, if only in the interests of humanity, that Hill should demolish Wedderburn in the forthcoming examination and outshine him in the eyes of Miss Haysman; and you will perceive, too, how Miss Haysman fell into some common feminine misconceptions. The Hill-Wedderburn quarrel, for in his unostentatious way Wedderburn reciprocated Hill's ill-veiled rivalry, became a tribute to her indefinable charm; she was the Queen of Beauty in a tournament of scalpels and stumpy pencils.

To her confidential friend's secret annoyance, it even troubled her conscience, for she was a good girl, and painfully aware, from Ruskin and contemporary fiction, how entirely men's activities are determined by women's attitudes. And if Hill never by any chance mentioned the topic of love to her, she only credited him with the finer modesty for that omission.

So the time came on for the second examination, and Hill's increasing pallor confirmed the general rumour that he was working hard. In the aërated bread shop near South Kensington Station you would see him, breaking his bun and sipping his milk, with his eyes intent upon a paper of closely written notes. In his bedroom there were propositions about buds and stems round his looking-glass, a diagram to catch his eye, if soap should chance to spare it, above his washing basin. He missed several meetings of the debating society, but he found the chance encounters with Miss Haysman in the spacious ways of the adjacent art museum, or in the little museum at the top of the College, or in the College corridors, more frequent and very restful. In particular, they used to meet in a little gallery full of wrought-iron chests and gates, near the art library, and there Hill used to talk, under the gentle stimulus of her flattering attention, of Browning and his personal ambitions. A characteristic she found remarkable in him was his freedom from avarice. He contemplated quite calmly the prospect of living all his life on an income below a hundred pounds a year. But he was determined to be famous, to make, recognisably in his own proper person, the world a better place to live in. He took Bradlaugh and John Burns for his leaders and models, poor, even impecunious, great men. But Miss Haysman thought that such lives were deficient on the æsthetic side, by which, though she did not know it, she meant good wall-paper and upholstery, pretty books, tasteful clothes, concerts, and meals nicely cooked and respectfully served.

At last came the day of the second examination, and the professor of botany, a fussy, conscientious man, rearranged all the tables in a long narrow laboratory to prevent copying, and put his demonstrator on a chair on a table (where he felt, he said, like a Hindoo god), to see all the cheating, and stuck a notice outside the door, "Door

closed," for no earthly reason that any human being could discover. And all the morning from ten till one the quill of Wedderburn shrieked defiance at Hill's, and the quills of the others chased their leaders in a tireless pack, and so also it was in the afternoon. Wedderburn was a little quieter than usual, and Hill's face was hot all day, and his overcoat bulged with textbooks and notebooks against the last moment's revision. And the next day, in the morning and in the afternoon, was the practical examination, when sections had to be cut and slides identified. In the morning Hill was depressed because he knew he had cut a thick section, and in the afternoon came the mysterious slip.

It was just the kind of thing that the botanical professor was always doing. Like the income tax, it offered a premium to the cheat. It was a preparation under the microscope, a little glass slip, held in its place on the stage of the instrument by light steel clips, and the inscription set forth that the slip was not to be moved. Each student was to go in turn to it, sketch it, write in his book of answers what he considered it to be, and return to his place. Now, to move such a slip is a thing one can do by a chance movement of the finger, and in a fraction of a second. The professor's reason for decreeing that the slip should not be moved depended on the fact that the object he wanted identified was characteristic of a certain tree stem. In the position in which it was placed it was a difficult thing to recognise, but once the slip was moved so as to bring other parts of the preparation into view, its nature was obvious enough.

Hill came to this, flushed from a contest with staining re-agents, sat down on the little stool before the microscope, turned the mirror to get the best light, and then, out of sheer habit, shifted the slip. At once he remembered the prohibition, and, with an almost continuous motion of his hands, moved it back, and sat paralysed with astonishment at his action.

Then, slowly, he turned his head. The professor was out of the room; the demonstrator sat aloft on his impromptu rostrum, reading the *Q. Jour. Mi. Sci.*; the rest of the examinees were busy, and with their backs to him. Should he own up to the accident now? He knew quite clearly what the thing was. It was a lenticel, a characteristic preparation from the elder-tree. His eyes roved over his intent fellow-

students, and Wedderburn suddenly glanced over his shoulder at him with a queer expression in his eyes. The mental excitement that had kept Hill at an abnormal pitch of vigour these two days gave way to a curious nervous tension. His book of answers was beside him. He did not write down what the thing was, but with one eye at the microscope he began making a hasty sketch of it. His mind was full of this grotesque puzzle in ethics that had suddenly been sprung upon him. Should he identify it? or should he leave this question unanswered? In that case Wedderburn would probably come out first in the second result. How could he tell now whether he might not have identified the thing without shifting it? It was possible that Wedderburn had failed to recognise it, of course. Suppose Wedderburn too had shifted the slide? He looked up at the clock. There were fifteen minutes in which to make up his mind. He gathered up his book of answers and the coloured pencils he used in illustrating his replies, and walked back to his seat.

He read through his manuscript, and then sat thinking and gnawing his knuckle. It would look queer now if he owned up. He *must* beat Wedderburn. He forgot the examples of those starry gentlemen, John Burns and Bradlaugh. Besides, he reflected, the glimpse of the rest of the slip he had had was, after all, quite accidental, forced upon him by chance, a kind of providential revelation rather than an unfair advantage. It was not nearly so dishonest to avail himself of that as it was of Broome, who believed in the efficacy of prayer, to pray daily for a first-class. “Five minutes more,” said the demonstrator, folding up his paper and becoming observant. Hill watched the clock hands until two minutes remained; then he opened the book of answers, and, with hot ears and an affectation of ease, gave his drawing of the lenticel its name.

When the second pass list appeared, the previous positions of Wedderburn and Hill were reversed, and the spectacled girl in green, who knew the demonstrator in private life (where he was practically human), said that in the result of the two examinations taken together Hill had the advantage of a mark — 167 to 166 out of a possible 200. Everyone admired Hill in a way, though the suspicion of “mugging” clung to him. But Hill was to find congratulations and Miss

Haysman's enhanced opinion of him, and even the decided decline in the crest of Wedderburn, tainted by an unhappy memory. He felt a remarkable access of energy at first, and the note of a democracy marching to triumph returned to his debating society speeches; he worked at his comparative anatomy with tremendous zeal and effect, and he went on with his æsthetic education. But through it all, a vivid little picture was continually coming before his mind's eye — of a sneakish person manipulating a slide.

No human being had witnessed the act, and he was cocksure that no higher power existed to see it; but for all that it worried him. Memories are not dead things, but alive; they dwindle in disuse, but they harden and develop in all sorts of queer ways if they are being continually fretted. Curiously enough, though at the time he perceived clearly that the shifting was accidental, as the days wore on, his memory became confused about it, until at last he was not sure — although he assured himself that he *was* sure — whether the movement had been absolutely involuntary. Then it is possible that Hill's dietary was conducive to morbid conscientiousness; a breakfast frequently eaten in a hurry, a midday bun, and, at such hours after five as chanced to be convenient, such meat as his means determined, usually in a chophouse in a back street off the Brompton Road. Occasionally he treated himself to threepenny or ninepenny classics, and they usually represented a suppression of potatoes or chops. It is indisputable that outbreaks of self-abasement and emotional revival have a distinct relation to periods of scarcity. But apart from this influence on the feelings, there was in Hill a distinct aversion to falsity that the blasphemous Landport cobbler had inculcated by strap and tongue from his earliest years. Of one fact about professed atheists I am convinced; they may be — they usually are — fools, void of subtlety, revilers of holy institutions, brutal speakers, and mischievous knaves, but they lie with difficulty. If it were not so, if they had the faintest grasp of the idea of compromise, they would simply be liberal churchmen. And, moreover, this memory poisoned his regard for Miss Haysman. For she now so evidently preferred him to Wedderburn that he felt sure he cared for her, and began reciprocating her attentions by timid marks of personal regard; at one time he even bought a bunch of violets,

carried it about in his pocket, and produced it, with a stumbling explanation, withered and dead, in the gallery of old iron. It poisoned, too, the denunciation of capitalist dishonesty that had been one of his life's pleasures. And, lastly, it poisoned his triumph in Wedderburn. Previously he had been Wedderburn's superior in his own eyes, and had raged simply at a want of recognition. Now he began to fret at the darker suspicion of positive inferiority. He fancied he found justifications for his position in Browning, but they vanished on analysis. At last — moved, curiously enough, by exactly the same motive forces that had resulted in his dishonesty — he went to Professor Bindon, and made a clean breast of the whole affair. As Hill was a paid student, Professor Bindon did not ask him to sit down, and he stood before the professor's desk as he made his confession.

"It's a curious story," said Professor Bindon, slowly realising how the thing reflected on himself, and then letting his anger rise,— "A most remarkable story. I can't understand your doing it, and I can't understand this avowal. You're a type of student — Cambridge men would never dream — I suppose I ought to have thought — Why *did* you cheat?"

"I didn't — cheat," said Hill.

"But you have just been telling me you did."

"I thought I explained" —

"Either you cheated or you did not cheat."

"I said my motion was involuntary."

"I am not a metaphysician, I am a servant of science — of fact. You were told not to move the slip. You did move the slip. If that is not cheating" —

"If I was a cheat," said Hill, with the note of hysterics in his voice, "should I come here and tell you?"

"Your repentance, of course, does you credit," said Professor Bindon, "but it does not alter the original facts."

"No, sir," said Hill, giving in in utter self-abasement.

"Even now you cause an enormous amount of trouble. The examination list will have to be revised."

"I suppose so, sir."

"Suppose so? Of course it must be revised. And I don't see how I

can conscientiously pass you."

"Not pass me?" said Hill. "Fail me?"

"It's the rule in all examinations. Or where should we be? What else did you expect? You don't want to shirk the consequences of your own acts?"

"I thought, perhaps" — said Hill. And then, "Fail me? I thought, as I told you, you would simply deduct the marks given for that slip."

"Impossible!" said Bindon. "Besides, it would still leave you above Wedderburn. Deduct only the marks — Preposterous! The Departmental Regulations distinctly say" —

"But it's my own admission, sir."

"The Regulations say nothing whatever of the manner in which the matter comes to light. They simply provide" —

"It will ruin me. If I fail this examination, they won't renew my scholarship."

"You should have thought of that before."

"But, sir, consider all my circumstances" —

"I cannot consider anything. Professors in this College are machines. The Regulations will not even let us recommend our students for appointments. I am a machine, and you have worked me. I have to do" —

"It's very hard, sir."

"Possibly it is."

"If I am to be failed this examination, I might as well go home at once."

"That is as you think proper." Bindon's voice softened a little; he perceived he had been unjust, and, provided he did not contradict himself, he was disposed to amelioration, "As a private person," he said, "I think this confession of yours goes far to mitigate your offence. But you have set the machinery in motion, and now it must take its course. I — I am really sorry you gave way."

A wave of emotion prevented Hill from answering. Suddenly, very vividly, he saw the heavily-lined face of the old Landport cobbler, his father. "Good God! What a fool I have been!" he said hotly and abruptly.

"I hope," said Bindon, "that it will be a lesson to you."

But, curiously enough, they were not thinking of quite the same

indiscretion.

There was a pause.

"I would like a day to think, sir, and then I will let you know — about going home, I mean," said Hill, moving towards the door.

The next day Hill's place was vacant. The spectacled girl in green was, as usual, first with the news. Wedderburn and Miss Haysman were talking of a performance of *The Meistersingers* when she came up to them.

"Have you heard?" she said.

"Heard what?"

"There was cheating in the examination."

"Cheating!" said Wedderburn, with his face suddenly hot. "How?"

"That slide" —

"Moved? Never!"

"It was. That slide that we weren't to move" —

"Nonsense!" said Wedderburn. "Why! How could they find out? Who do they say — ?"

"It was Mr. Hill."

"*Hill!*"

"Mr. Hill!"

"Not — surely not the immaculate Hill?" said Wedderburn, recovering.

"I don't believe it," said Miss Haysman. "How do you know?"

"I *didn't*," said the girl in spectacles. "But I know it now for a fact. Mr. Hill went and confessed to Professor Bindon himself."

"By Jove!" said Wedderburn. "Hill of all people. But I am always inclined to distrust these philanthropists-on-principle" —

"Are you quite sure?" said Miss Haysman, with a catch in her breath.

"Quite. It's dreadful, isn't it? But, you know, what can you expect? His father is a cobbler."

Then Miss Haysman astonished the girl in spectacles.

"I don't care. I will not believe it," she said, flushing darkly under her warm-tinted skin. "I will not believe it until he has told me so

himself — face to face. I would scarcely believe it then," and abruptly she turned her back on the girl in spectacles, and walked to her own place.

"It's true, all the same," said the girl in spectacles, peering and smiling at Wedderburn.

But Wedderburn did not answer her. She was indeed one of those people who seem destined to make unanswered remarks.

THE END

TALES OF SPACE AND TIME

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THE CRYSTAL EGG

There was, until a year ago, a little and very grimy-looking shop near Seven Dials, over which, in weather-worn yellow lettering, the name of "C. Cave, Naturalist and Dealer in Antiquities," was inscribed. The contents of its window were curiously variegated. They comprised some elephant tusks and an imperfect set of chessmen, beads and weapons, a box of eyes, two skulls of tigers and one human, several moth-eaten stuffed monkeys (one holding a lamp), an old-fashioned cabinet, a flyblown ostrich egg or so, some fishing-tackle, and an extraordinarily dirty, empty glass fish-tank. There was also, at the moment the story begins, a mass of crystal, worked into the shape of an egg and brilliantly polished. And at that two people, who stood outside the window, were looking, one of them a tall, thin clergyman, the other a black-bearded young man of dusky complexion and unobtrusive costume. The dusky young man spoke with eager gesticulation, and seemed anxious for his companion to purchase the article.

While they were there, Mr. Cave came into his shop, his beard still wagging with the bread and butter of his tea. When he saw these men and the object of their regard, his countenance fell. He glanced guiltily over his shoulder, and softly shut the door. He was a little old man, with pale face and peculiar watery blue eyes; his hair was a dirty grey, and he wore a shabby blue frock coat, an ancient silk hat, and carpet slippers very much down at heel. He remained watching the two men as they talked. The clergyman went deep into his trouser pocket, examined a handful of money, and showed his teeth in an agreeable smile. Mr. Cave seemed still more depressed when they came into the shop.

The clergyman, without any ceremony, asked the price of the crystal egg. Mr. Cave glanced nervously towards the door leading into the parlour, and said five pounds. The clergyman protested that the price was high, to his companion as well as to Mr. Cave — it was, indeed, very much more than Mr. Cave had intended to ask, when he had stocked the article — and an attempt at bargaining ensued. Mr. Cave stepped to the shop-door, and held it open. "Five

pounds is my price," he said, as though he wished to save himself the trouble of unprofitable discussion. As he did so, the upper portion of a woman's face appeared above the blind in the glass upper panel of the door leading into the parlour, and stared curiously at the two customers. "Five pounds is my price," said Mr. Cave, with a quiver in his voice.

The swarthy young man had so far remained a spectator, watching Cave keenly. Now he spoke. "Give him five pounds," he said. The clergyman glanced at him to see if he were in earnest, and, when he looked at Mr. Cave again, he saw that the latter's face was white. "It's a lot of money," said the clergyman, and, diving into his pocket, began counting his resources. He had little more than thirty shillings, and he appealed to his companion, with whom he seemed to be on terms of considerable intimacy. This gave Mr. Cave an opportunity of collecting his thoughts, and he began to explain in an agitated manner that the crystal was not, as a matter of fact, entirely free for sale. His two customers were naturally surprised at this, and inquired why he had not thought of that before he began to bargain. Mr. Cave became confused, but he stuck to his story, that the crystal was not in the market that afternoon, that a probable purchaser of it had already appeared. The two, treating this as an attempt to raise the price still further, made as if they would leave the shop. But at this point the parlour door opened, and the owner of the dark fringe and the little eyes appeared.

She was a coarse-featured, corpulent woman, younger and very much larger than Mr. Cave; she walked heavily, and her face was flushed. "That crystal *is* for sale," she said. "And five pounds is a good enough price for it. I can't think what you're about, Cave, not to take the gentleman's offer!"

Mr. Cave, greatly perturbed by the irruption, looked angrily at her over the rims of his spectacles, and, without excessive assurance, asserted his right to manage his business in his own way. An altercation began. The two customers watched the scene with interest and some amusement, occasionally assisting Mrs. Cave with suggestions. Mr. Cave, hard driven, persisted in a confused and impossible story of an enquiry for the crystal that morning, and his agitation became painful. But he stuck to his point with extraordinary

persistence. It was the young Oriental who ended this curious controversy. He proposed that they should call again in the course of two days — so as to give the alleged enquirer a fair chance. “And then we must insist,” said the clergyman, “Five pounds.” Mrs. Cave took it on herself to apologise for her husband, explaining that he was sometimes “a little odd,” and as the two customers left, the couple prepared for a free discussion of the incident in all its bearings.

Mrs. Cave talked to her husband with singular directness. The poor little man, quivering with emotion, muddled himself between his stories, maintaining on the one hand that he had another customer in view, and on the other asserting that the crystal was honestly worth ten guineas. “Why did you ask five pounds?” said his wife. “*Do* let me manage my business my own way!” said Mr. Cave.

Mr. Cave had living with him a step-daughter and a step-son, and at supper that night the transaction was re-discussed. None of them had a high opinion of Mr. Cave’s business methods, and this action seemed a culminating folly.

“It’s my opinion he’s refused that crystal before,” said the step-son, a loose-limbed lout of eighteen.

“But *Five Pounds*!” said the step-daughter, an argumentative young woman of six-and-twenty.

Mr. Cave’s answers were wretched; he could only mumble weak assertions that he knew his own business best. They drove him from his half-eaten supper into the shop, to close it for the night, his ears aflame and tears of vexation behind his spectacles. “Why had he left the crystal in the window so long? The folly of it!” That was the trouble closest in his mind. For a time he could see no way of evading sale.

After supper his step-daughter and step-son smartened themselves up and went out and his wife retired upstairs to reflect upon the business aspects of the crystal, over a little sugar and lemon and so forth in hot water. Mr. Cave went into the shop, and stayed there until late, ostensibly to make ornamental rockeries for goldfish cases but really for a private purpose that will be better explained later. The next day Mrs. Cave found that the crystal had been removed from the window, and was lying behind some second-hand books on angling.

She replaced it in a conspicuous position. But she did not argue further about it, as a nervous headache disinclined her from debate. Mr. Cave was always disinclined. The day passed disagreeably. Mr. Cave was, if anything, more absent-minded than usual, and uncommonly irritable withal. In the afternoon, when his wife was taking her customary sleep, he removed the crystal from the window again.

The next day Mr. Cave had to deliver a consignment of dog-fish at one of the hospital schools, where they were needed for dissection. In his absence Mrs. Cave's mind reverted to the topic of the crystal, and the methods of expenditure suitable to a windfall of five pounds. She had already devised some very agreeable expedients, among others a dress of green silk for herself and a trip to Richmond, when a jangling of the front door bell summoned her into the shop. The customer was an examination coach who came to complain of the non-delivery of certain frogs asked for the previous day. Mrs. Cave did not approve of this particular branch of Mr. Cave's business, and the gentleman, who had called in a somewhat aggressive mood, retired after a brief exchange of words — entirely civil so far as he was concerned. Mrs. Cave's eye then naturally turned to the window; for the sight of the crystal was an assurance of the five pounds and of her dreams. What was her surprise to find it gone!

She went to the place behind the locker on the counter, where she had discovered it the day before. It was not there; and she immediately began an eager search about the shop.

When Mr. Cave returned from his business with the dog-fish, about a quarter to two in the afternoon, he found the shop in some confusion, and his wife, extremely exasperated and on her knees behind the counter, routing among his taxidermic material. Her face came up hot and angry over the counter, as the jangling bell announced his return, and she forthwith accused him of "hiding it."

"Hid *what*?" asked Mr. Cave.

"The crystal!"

At that Mr. Cave, apparently much surprised, rushed to the window. "Isn't it here?" he said. "Great Heavens! what has become of it?"

Just then, Mr. Cave's step-son re-entered the shop from the inner

room — he had come home a minute or so before Mr. Cave — and he was blaspheming freely. He was apprenticed to a second-hand furniture dealer down the road, but he had his meals at home, and he was naturally annoyed to find no dinner ready.

But, when he heard of the loss of the crystal, he forgot his meal, and his anger was diverted from his mother to his step-father. Their first idea, of course, was that he had hidden it. But Mr. Cave stoutly denied all knowledge of its fate — freely offering his bedabbled affidavit in the matter — and at last was worked up to the point of accusing, first, his wife and then his step-son of having taken it with a view to a private sale. So began an exceedingly acrimonious and emotional discussion, which ended for Mrs. Cave in a peculiar nervous condition midway between hysterics and amuck, and caused the step-son to be half-an-hour late at the furniture establishment in the afternoon. Mr. Cave took refuge from his wife's emotions in the shop.

In the evening the matter was resumed, with less passion and in a judicial spirit, under the presidency of the step-daughter. The supper passed unhappily and culminated in a painful scene. Mr. Cave gave way at last to extreme exasperation, and went out banging the front door violently. The rest of the family, having discussed him with the freedom his absence warranted, hunted the house from garret to cellar, hoping to light upon the crystal.

The next day the two customers called again. They were received by Mrs. Cave almost in tears. It transpired that no one *could* imagine all that she had stood from Cave at various times in her married pilgrimage.... She also gave a garbled account of the disappearance. The clergyman and the Oriental laughed silently at one another, and said it was very extraordinary. As Mrs. Cave seemed disposed to give them the complete history of her life they made to leave the shop. Thereupon Mrs. Cave, still clinging to hope, asked for the clergyman's address, so that, if she could get anything out of Cave, she might communicate it. The address was duly given, but apparently was afterwards mislaid. Mrs. Cave can remember nothing about it.

In the evening of that day, the Caves seem to have exhausted their emotions, and Mr. Cave, who had been out in the afternoon, supped

in a gloomy isolation that contrasted pleasantly with the impassioned controversy of the previous days. For some time matters were very badly strained in the Cave household, but neither crystal nor customer reappeared.

Now, without mincing the matter, we must admit that Mr. Cave was a liar. He knew perfectly well where the crystal was. It was in the rooms of Mr. Jacoby Wace, Assistant Demonstrator at St. Catherine's Hospital, Westbourne Street. It stood on the sideboard partially covered by a black velvet cloth, and beside a decanter of American whisky. It is from Mr. Wace, indeed, that the particulars upon which this narrative is based were derived. Cave had taken off the thing to the hospital hidden in the dog-fish sack, and there had pressed the young investigator to keep it for him. Mr. Wace was a little dubious at first. His relationship to Cave was peculiar. He had a taste for singular characters, and he had more than once invited the old man to smoke and drink in his rooms, and to unfold his rather amusing views of life in general and of his wife in particular. Mr. Wace had encountered Mrs. Cave, too, on occasions when Mr. Cave was not at home to attend to him. He knew the constant interference to which Cave was subjected, and having weighed the story judicially, he decided to give the crystal a refuge. Mr. Cave promised to explain the reasons for his remarkable affection for the crystal more fully on a later occasion, but he spoke distinctly of seeing visions therein. He called on Mr. Wace the same evening.

He told a complicated story. The crystal he said had come into his possession with other oddments at the forced sale of another curiosity dealer's effects, and not knowing what its value might be, he had ticketed it at ten shillings. It had hung upon his hands at that price for some months, and he was thinking of "reducing the figure," when he made a singular discovery.

At that time his health was very bad — and it must be borne in mind that, throughout all this experience, his physical condition was one of ebb — and he was in considerable distress by reason of the negligence, the positive ill-treatment even, he received from his wife and step-children. His wife was vain, extravagant, unfeeling, and had a growing taste for private drinking; his step-daughter was mean and over-reaching; and his step-son had conceived a violent dislike for

him, and lost no chance of showing it. The requirements of his business pressed heavily upon him, and Mr. Wace does not think that he was altogether free from occasional intemperance. He had begun life in a comfortable position, he was a man of fair education, and he suffered, for weeks at a stretch, from melancholia and insomnia. Afraid to disturb his family, he would slip quietly from his wife's side, when his thoughts became intolerable, and wander about the house. And about three o'clock one morning, late in August, chance directed him into the shop.

The dirty little place was impenetrably black except in one spot, where he perceived an unusual glow of light. Approaching this, he discovered it to be the crystal egg, which was standing on the corner of the counter towards the window. A thin ray smote through a crack in the shutters, impinged upon the object, and seemed as it were to fill its entire interior.

It occurred to Mr. Cave that this was not in accordance with the laws of optics as he had known them in his younger days. He could understand the rays being refracted by the crystal and coming to a focus in its interior, but this diffusion jarred with his physical conceptions. He approached the crystal nearly, peering into it and round it, with a transient revival of the scientific curiosity that in his youth had determined his choice of a calling. He was surprised to find the light not steady, but writhing within the substance of the egg, as though that object was a hollow sphere of some luminous vapour. In moving about to get different points of view, he suddenly found that he had come between it and the ray, and that the crystal none the less remained luminous. Greatly astonished, he lifted it out of the light ray and carried it to the darkest part of the shop. It remained bright for some four or five minutes, when it slowly faded and went out. He placed it in the thin streak of daylight, and its luminousness was almost immediately restored.

So far, at least, Mr. Wace was able to verify the remarkable story of Mr. Cave. He has himself repeatedly held this crystal in a ray of light (which had to be of a less diameter than one millimetre). And in a perfect darkness, such as could be produced by velvet wrapping, the crystal did undoubtedly appear very faintly phosphorescent. It would seem, however, that the luminousness was of some

exceptional sort, and not equally visible to all eyes; for Mr. Harbinger — whose name will be familiar to the scientific reader in connection with the Pasteur Institute — was quite unable to see any light whatever. And Mr. Wace's own capacity for its appreciation was out of comparison inferior to that of Mr. Cave's. Even with Mr. Cave the power varied very considerably: his vision was most vivid during states of extreme weakness and fatigue.

Now, from the outset this light in the crystal exercised a curious fascination upon Mr. Cave. And it says more for his loneliness of soul than a volume of pathetic writing could do, that he told no human being of his curious observations. He seems to have been living in such an atmosphere of petty spite that to admit the existence of a pleasure would have been to risk the loss of it. He found that as the dawn advanced, and the amount of diffused light increased, the crystal became to all appearance non-luminous. And for some time he was unable to see anything in it, except at night-time, in dark corners of the shop.

But the use of an old velvet cloth, which he used as a background for a collection of minerals, occurred to him, and by doubling this, and putting it over his head and hands, he was able to get a sight of the luminous movement within the crystal even in the daytime. He was very cautious lest he should be thus discovered by his wife, and he practised this occupation only in the afternoons, while she was asleep upstairs, and then circumspectly in a hollow under the counter. And one day, turning the crystal about in his hands, he saw something. It came and went like a flash, but it gave him the impression that the object had for a moment opened to him the view of a wide and spacious and strange country; and, turning it about, he did, just as the light faded, see the same vision again.

Now, it would be tedious and unnecessary to state all the phases of Mr. Cave's discovery from this point. Suffice that the effect was this: the crystal, being peered into at an angle of about 137 degrees from the direction of the illuminating ray, gave a clear and consistent picture of a wide and peculiar countryside. It was not dream-like at all: it produced a definite impression of reality, and the better the light the more real and solid it seemed. It was a moving picture: that is to say, certain objects moved in it, but slowly in an orderly manner

like real things, and, according as the direction of the lighting and vision changed, the picture changed also. It must, indeed, have been like looking through an oval glass at a view, and turning the glass about to get at different aspects.

Mr. Cave's statements, Mr. Wace assures me, were extremely circumstantial, and entirely free from any of that emotional quality that taints hallucinatory impressions. But it must be remembered that all the efforts of Mr. Wace to see any similar clarity in the faint opalescence of the crystal were wholly unsuccessful, try as he would. The difference in intensity of the impressions received by the two men was very great, and it is quite conceivable that what was a view to Mr. Cave was a mere blurred nebulosity to Mr. Wace.

The view, as Mr. Cave described it, was invariably of an extensive plain, and he seemed always to be looking at it from a considerable height, as if from a tower or a mast. To the east and to the west the plain was bounded at a remote distance by vast reddish cliffs, which reminded him of those he had seen in some picture; but what the picture was Mr. Wace was unable to ascertain. These cliffs passed north and south — he could tell the points of the compass by the stars that were visible of a night — receding in an almost illimitable perspective and fading into the mists of the distance before they met. He was nearer the eastern set of cliffs, on the occasion of his first vision the sun was rising over them, and black against the sunlight and pale against their shadow appeared a multitude of soaring forms that Mr. Cave regarded as birds. A vast range of buildings spread below him; he seemed to be looking down upon them; and, as they approached the blurred and refracted edge of the picture, they became indistinct. There were also trees curious in shape, and in colouring, a deep mossy green and an exquisite grey, beside a wide and shining canal. And something great and brilliantly coloured flew across the picture. But the first time Mr. Cave saw these pictures he saw only in flashes, his hands shook, his head moved, the vision came and went, and grew foggy and indistinct. And at first he had the greatest difficulty in finding the picture again once the direction of it was lost.

His next clear vision, which came about a week after the first, the interval having yielded nothing but tantalising glimpses and some

useful experience, showed him the view down the length of the valley. The view was different, but he had a curious persuasion, which his subsequent observations abundantly confirmed, that he was regarding this strange world from exactly the same spot, although he was looking in a different direction. The long façade of the great building, whose roof he had looked down upon before, was now receding in perspective. He recognised the roof. In the front of the façade was a terrace of massive proportions and extraordinary length, and down the middle of the terrace, at certain intervals, stood huge but very graceful masts, bearing small shiny objects which reflected the setting sun. The import of these small objects did not occur to Mr. Cave until some time after, as he was describing the scene to Mr. Wace. The terrace overhung a thicket of the most luxuriant and graceful vegetation, and beyond this was a wide grassy lawn on which certain broad creatures, in form like beetles but enormously larger, reposed. Beyond this again was a richly decorated causeway of pinkish stone; and beyond that, and lined with dense *red* weeds, and passing up the valley exactly parallel with the distant cliffs, was a broad and mirror-like expanse of water. The air seemed full of squadrons of great birds, manœuvring in stately curves; and across the river was a multitude of splendid buildings, richly coloured and glittering with metallic tracery and facets, among a forest of moss-like and lichenous trees. And suddenly something flapped repeatedly across the vision, like the fluttering of a jewelled fan or the beating of a wing, and a face, or rather the upper part of a face with very large eyes, came as it were close to his own and as if on the other side of the crystal. Mr. Cave was so startled and so impressed by the absolute reality of these eyes, that he drew his head back from the crystal to look behind it. He had become so absorbed in watching that he was quite surprised to find himself in the cool darkness of his little shop, with its familiar odour of methyl, mustiness, and decay. And, as he blinked about him, the glowing crystal faded, and went out.

Such were the first general impressions of Mr. Cave. The story is curiously direct and circumstantial. From the outset, when the valley first flashed momentarily on his senses, his imagination was strangely affected, and, as he began to appreciate the details of the

scene he saw, his wonder rose to the point of a passion. He went about his business listless and distraught, thinking only of the time when he should be able to return to his watching. And then a few weeks after his first sight of the valley came the two customers, the stress and excitement of their offer, and the narrow escape of the crystal from sale, as I have already told.

Now, while the thing was Mr. Cave's secret, it remained a mere wonder, a thing to creep to covertly and peep at, as a child might peep upon a forbidden garden. But Mr. Wace has, for a young scientific investigator, a particularly lucid and consecutive habit of mind. Directly the crystal and its story came to him, and he had satisfied himself, by seeing the phosphorescence with his own eyes, that there really was a certain evidence for Mr. Cave's statements, he proceeded to develop the matter systematically. Mr. Cave was only too eager to come and feast his eyes on this wonderland he saw, and he came every night from half-past eight until half-past ten, and sometimes, in Mr. Wace's absence, during the day. On Sunday afternoons, also, he came. From the outset Mr. Wace made copious notes, and it was due to his scientific method that the relation between the direction from which the initiating ray entered the crystal and the orientation of the picture were proved. And, by covering the crystal in a box perforated only with a small aperture to admit the exciting ray, and by substituting black holland for his buff blinds, he greatly improved the conditions of the observations; so that in a little while they were able to survey the valley in any direction they desired.

So having cleared the way, we may give a brief account of this visionary world within the crystal. The things were in all cases seen by Mr. Cave, and the method of working was invariably for him to watch the crystal and report what he saw, while Mr. Wace (who as a science student had learnt the trick of writing in the dark) wrote a brief note of his report. When the crystal faded, it was put into its box in the proper position and the electric light turned on. Mr. Wace asked questions, and suggested observations to clear up difficult points. Nothing, indeed, could have been less visionary and more matter-of-fact.

The attention of Mr. Cave had been speedily directed to the bird-

like creatures he had seen so abundantly present in each of his earlier visions. His first impression was soon corrected, and he considered for a time that they might represent a diurnal species of bat. Then he thought, grotesquely enough, that they might be cherubs. Their heads were round, and curiously human, and it was the eyes of one of them that had so startled him on his second observation. They had broad, silvery wings, not feathered, but glistening almost as brilliantly as new-killed fish and with the same subtle play of colour, and these wings were not built on the plan of bird-wing or bat, Mr. Wace learned, but supported by curved ribs radiating from the body. (A sort of butterfly wing with curved ribs seems best to express their appearance.) The body was small, but fitted with two bunches of prehensile organs, like long tentacles, immediately under the mouth. Incredible as it appeared to Mr. Wace, the persuasion at last became irresistible, that it was these creatures which owned the great quasi-human buildings and the magnificent garden that made the broad valley so splendid. And Mr. Cave perceived that the buildings, with other peculiarities, had no doors, but that the great circular windows, which opened freely, gave the creatures egress and entrance. They would alight upon their tentacles, fold their wings to a smallness almost rod-like, and hop into the interior. But among them was a multitude of smaller-winged creatures, like great dragon-flies and moths and flying beetles, and across the greensward brilliantly-coloured gigantic ground-beetles crawled lazily to and fro. Moreover, on the causeways and terraces, large-headed creatures similar to the greater winged flies, but wingless, were visible, hopping busily upon their hand-like tangle of tentacles.

Allusion has already been made to the glittering objects upon masts that stood upon the terrace of the nearer building. It dawned upon Mr. Cave, after regarding one of these masts very fixedly on one particularly vivid day, that the glittering object there was a crystal exactly like that into which he peered. And a still more careful scrutiny convinced him that each one in a vista of nearly twenty carried a similar object.

Occasionally one of the large flying creatures would flutter up to one, and, folding its wings and coiling a number of its tentacles about the mast, would regard the crystal fixedly for a space, — sometimes

for as long as fifteen minutes. And a series of observations, made at the suggestion of Mr. Wace, convinced both watchers that, so far as this visionary world was concerned, the crystal into which they peered actually stood at the summit of the endmost mast on the terrace, and that on one occasion at least one of these inhabitants of this other world had looked into Mr. Cave's face while he was making these observations.

So much for the essential facts of this very singular story. Unless we dismiss it all as the ingenious fabrication of Mr. Wace, we have to believe one of two things: either that Mr. Cave's crystal was in two worlds at once, and that, while it was carried about in one, it remained stationary in the other, which seems altogether absurd; or else that it had some peculiar relation of sympathy with another and exactly similar crystal in this other world, so that what was seen in the interior of the one in this world was, under suitable conditions, visible to an observer in the corresponding crystal in the other world; and *vice versa*. At present, indeed, we do not know of any way in which two crystals could so come *en rapport*, but nowadays we know enough to understand that the thing is not altogether impossible. This view of the crystals as *en rapport* was the supposition that occurred to Mr. Wace, and to me at least it seems extremely plausible....

And where was this other world? On this, also, the alert intelligence of Mr. Wace speedily threw light. After sunset, the sky darkened rapidly — there was a very brief twilight interval indeed — and the stars shone out. They were recognisably the same as those we see, arranged in the same constellations. Mr. Cave recognised the Bear, the Pleiades, Aldebaran, and Sirius: so that the other world must be somewhere in the solar system, and, at the utmost, only a few hundreds of millions of miles from our own. Following up this clue, Mr. Wace learned that the midnight sky was a darker blue even than our midwinter sky, and that the sun seemed a little smaller. *And there were two small moons!* "like our moon but smaller, and quite differently marked" one of which moved so rapidly that its motion was clearly visible as one regarded it. These moons were never high in the sky, but vanished as they rose: that is, every time they revolved they were eclipsed because they were so near their primary

planet. And all this answers quite completely, although Mr. Cave did not know it, to what must be the condition of things on Mars.

Indeed, it seems an exceedingly plausible conclusion that peering into this crystal Mr. Cave did actually see the planet Mars and its inhabitants. And, if that be the case, then the evening star that shone so brilliantly in the sky of that distant vision, was neither more nor less than our own familiar earth.

For a time the Martians — if they were Martians — do not seem to have known of Mr. Cave's inspection. Once or twice one would come to peer, and go away very shortly to some other mast, as though the vision was unsatisfactory. During this time Mr. Cave was able to watch the proceedings of these winged people without being disturbed by their attentions, and, although his report is necessarily vague and fragmentary, it is nevertheless very suggestive. Imagine the impression of humanity a Martian observer would get who, after a difficult process of preparation and with considerable fatigue to the eyes, was able to peer at London from the steeple of St. Martin's Church for stretches, at longest, of four minutes at a time. Mr. Cave was unable to ascertain if the winged Martians were the same as the Martians who hopped about the causeways and terraces, and if the latter could put on wings at will. He several times saw certain clumsy bipeds, dimly suggestive of apes, white and partially translucent, feeding among certain of the lichenous trees, and once some of these fled before one of the hopping, round-headed Martians. The latter caught one in its tentacles, and then the picture faded suddenly and left Mr. Cave most tantalisingly in the dark. On another occasion a vast thing, that Mr. Cave thought at first was some gigantic insect, appeared advancing along the causeway beside the canal with extraordinary rapidity. As this drew nearer Mr. Cave perceived that it was a mechanism of shining metals and of extraordinary complexity. And then, when he looked again, it had passed out of sight.

After a time Mr. Wace aspired to attract the attention of the Martians, and the next time that the strange eyes of one of them appeared close to the crystal Mr. Cave cried out and sprang away, and they immediately turned on the light and began to gesticulate in a manner suggestive of signalling. But when at last Mr. Cave examined the crystal again the Martian had departed.

Thus far these observations had progressed in early November, and then Mr. Cave, feeling that the suspicions of his family about the crystal were allayed, began to take it to and fro with him in order that, as occasion arose in the daytime or night, he might comfort himself with what was fast becoming the most real thing in his existence.

In December Mr. Wace's work in connection with a forthcoming examination became heavy, the sittings were reluctantly suspended for a week, and for ten or eleven days — he is not quite sure which — he saw nothing of Cave. He then grew anxious to resume these investigations, and, the stress of his seasonal labours being abated, he went down to Seven Dials. At the corner he noticed a shutter before a bird fancier's window, and then another at a cobbler's. Mr. Cave's shop was closed.

He rapped and the door was opened by the step-son in black. He at once called Mrs. Cave, who was, Mr. Wace could not but observe, in cheap but ample widow's weeds of the most imposing pattern. Without any very great surprise Mr. Wace learnt that Cave was dead and already buried. She was in tears, and her voice was a little thick. She had just returned from Highgate. Her mind seemed occupied with her own prospects and the honourable details of the obsequies, but Mr. Wace was at last able to learn the particulars of Cave's death. He had been found dead in his shop in the early morning, the day after his last visit to Mr. Wace, and the crystal had been clasped in his stone-cold hands. His face was smiling, said Mrs. Cave, and the velvet cloth from the minerals lay on the floor at his feet. He must have been dead five or six hours when he was found.

This came as a great shock to Wace, and he began to reproach himself bitterly for having neglected the plain symptoms of the old man's ill-health. But his chief thought was of the crystal. He approached that topic in a gingerly manner, because he knew Mrs. Cave's peculiarities. He was dumbfounded to learn that it was sold.

Mrs. Cave's first impulse, directly Cave's body had been taken upstairs, had been to write to the mad clergyman who had offered five pounds for the crystal, informing him of its recovery; but after a violent hunt in which her daughter joined her, they were convinced of the loss of his address. As they were without the means required to

mourn and bury Cave in the elaborate style the dignity of an old Seven Dials inhabitant demands, they had appealed to a friendly fellow-tradesman in Great Portland Street. He had very kindly taken over a portion of the stock at a valuation. The valuation was his own and the crystal egg was included in one of the lots. Mr. Wace, after a few suitable consolatory observations, a little off-handedly proffered perhaps, hurried at once to Great Portland Street. But there he learned that the crystal egg had already been sold to a tall, dark man in grey. And there the material facts in this curious, and to me at least very suggestive, story come abruptly to an end. The Great Portland Street dealer did not know who the tall dark man in grey was, nor had he observed him with sufficient attention to describe him minutely. He did not even know which way this person had gone after leaving the shop. For a time Mr. Wace remained in the shop, trying the dealer's patience with hopeless questions, venting his own exasperation. And at last, realising abruptly that the whole thing had passed out of his hands, had vanished like a vision of the night, he returned to his own rooms, a little astonished to find the notes he had made still tangible and visible upon his untidy table.

His annoyance and disappointment were naturally very great. He made a second call (equally ineffectual) upon the Great Portland Street dealer, and he resorted to advertisements in such periodicals as were likely to come into the hands of a *bric-a-brac* collector. He also wrote letters to *The Daily Chronicle* and *Nature*, but both those periodicals, suspecting a hoax, asked him to reconsider his action before they printed, and he was advised that such a strange story, unfortunately so bare of supporting evidence, might imperil his reputation as an investigator. Moreover, the calls of his proper work were urgent. So that after a month or so, save for an occasional reminder to certain dealers, he had reluctantly to abandon the quest for the crystal egg, and from that day to this it remains undiscovered. Occasionally, however, he tells me, and I can quite believe him, he has bursts of zeal, in which he abandons his more urgent occupation and resumes the search.

Whether or not it will remain lost for ever, with the material and origin of it, are things equally speculative at the present time. If the present purchaser is a collector, one would have expected the

enquiries of Mr. Wace to have reached him through the dealers. He has been able to discover Mr. Cave's clergyman and "Oriental" — no other than the Rev. James Parker and the young Prince of Bosso-Kuni in Java. I am obliged to them for certain particulars. The object of the Prince was simply curiosity — and extravagance. He was so eager to buy, because Cave was so oddly reluctant to sell. It is just as possible that the buyer in the second instance was simply a casual purchaser and not a collector at all, and the crystal egg, for all I know, may at the present moment be within a mile of me, decorating a drawing-room or serving as a paper-weight — its remarkable functions all unknown. Indeed, it is partly with the idea of such a possibility that I have thrown this narrative into a form that will give it a chance of being read by the ordinary consumer of fiction.

My own ideas in the matter are practically identical with those of Mr. Wace. I believe the crystal on the mast in Mars and the crystal egg of Mr. Cave's to be in some physical, but at present quite inexplicable, way *en rapport*, and we both believe further that the terrestrial crystal must have been — possibly at some remote date — sent hither from that planet, in order to give the Martians a near view of our affairs. Possibly the fellows to the crystals in the other masts are also on our globe. No theory of hallucination suffices for the facts.

The Star

THE STAR

It was on the first day of the new year that the announcement was made, almost simultaneously from three observatories, that the motion of the planet Neptune, the outermost of all the planets that wheel about the sun, had become very erratic. Ogilvy had already called attention to a suspected retardation in its velocity in December. Such a piece of news was scarcely calculated to interest a world the greater portion of whose inhabitants were unaware of the existence of the planet Neptune, nor outside the astronomical profession did the subsequent discovery of a faint remote speck of light in the region of the perturbed planet cause any very great excitement. Scientific people, however, found the intelligence remarkable enough, even before it became known that the new body was rapidly growing larger and brighter, that its motion was quite different from the orderly progress of the planets, and that the deflection of Neptune and its satellite was becoming now of an unprecedented kind.

Few people without a training in science can realise the huge isolation of the solar system. The sun with its specks of planets, its dust of planetoids, and its impalpable comets, swims in a vacant immensity that almost defeats the imagination. Beyond the orbit of Neptune there is space, vacant so far as human observation has penetrated, without warmth or light or sound, blank emptiness, for twenty million times a million miles. That is the smallest estimate of the distance to be traversed before the very nearest of the stars is attained. And, saving a few comets more unsubstantial than the thinnest flame, no matter had ever to human knowledge crossed this gulf of space, until early in the twentieth century this strange wanderer appeared. A vast mass of matter it was, bulky, heavy, rushing without warning out of the black mystery of the sky into the radiance of the sun. By the second day it was clearly visible to any decent instrument, as a speck with a barely sensible diameter, in the constellation Leo near Regulus. In a little while an opera glass could attain it.

On the third day of the new year the newspaper readers of two

hemispheres were made aware for the first time of the real importance of this unusual apparition in the heavens. “A Planetary Collision,” one London paper headed the news, and proclaimed Duchaine’s opinion that this strange new planet would probably collide with Neptune. The leader writers enlarged upon the topic. So that in most of the capitals of the world, on January 3rd, there was an expectation, however vague of some imminent phenomenon in the sky; and as the night followed the sunset round the globe, thousands of men turned their eyes skyward to see — the old familiar stars just as they had always been.

Until it was dawn in London and Pollux setting and the stars overhead grown pale. The Winter’s dawn it was, a sickly filtering accumulation of daylight, and the light of gas and candles shone yellow in the windows to show where people were astir. But the yawning policeman saw the thing, the busy crowds in the markets stopped agape, workmen going to their work betimes, milkmen, the drivers of news-carts, dissipation going home jaded and pale, homeless wanderers, sentinels on their beats, and in the country, labourers trudging afield, poachers slinking home, all over the dusky quickening country it could be seen — and out at sea by seamen watching for the day — a great white star, come suddenly into the westward sky!

Brighter it was than any star in our skies; brighter than the evening star at its brightest. It still glowed out white and large, no mere twinkling spot of light, but a small round clear shining disc, an hour after the day had come. And where science has not reached, men stared and feared, telling one another of the wars and pestilences that are foreshadowed by these fiery signs in the Heavens. Sturdy Boers, dusky Hottentots, Gold Coast negroes, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese, stood in the warmth of the sunrise watching the setting of this strange new star.

And in a hundred observatories there had been suppressed excitement, rising almost to shouting pitch, as the two remote bodies had rushed together, and a hurrying to and fro, to gather photographic apparatus and spectroscope, and this appliance and that, to record this novel astonishing sight, the destruction of a world. For it was a world, a sister planet of our earth, far greater than our

earth indeed, that had so suddenly flashed into flaming death. Neptune it was, had been struck, fairly and squarely, by the strange planet from outer space and the heat of the concussion had incontinently turned two solid globes into one vast mass of incandescence. Round the world that day, two hours before the dawn, went the pallid great white star, fading only as it sank westward and the sun mounted above it. Everywhere men marvelled at it, but of all those who saw it none could have marvelled more than those sailors, habitual watchers of the stars, who far away at sea had heard nothing of its advent and saw it now rise like a pigmy moon and climb zenithward and hang overhead and sink westward with the passing of the night.

And when next it rose over Europe everywhere were crowds of watchers on hilly slopes, on house-roofs, in open spaces, staring eastward for the rising of the great new star. It rose with a white glow in front of it, like the glare of a white fire, and those who had seen it come into existence the night before cried out at the sight of it. “It is larger,” they cried. “It is brighter!” And, indeed the moon a quarter full and sinking in the west was in its apparent size beyond comparison, but scarcely in all its breadth had it as much brightness now as the little circle of the strange new star.

“It is brighter!” cried the people clustering in the streets. But in the dim observatories the watchers held their breath and peered at one another. “*It is nearer*,” they said. “*Nearer!*”

And voice after voice repeated, “It is nearer,” and the clicking telegraph took that up, and it trembled along telephone wires, and in a thousand cities grimy compositors fingered the type. “It is nearer.” Men writing in offices, struck with a strange realisation, flung down their pens, men talking in a thousand places suddenly came upon a grotesque possibility in those words, “It is nearer.” It hurried along awakening streets, it was shouted down the frost-stilled ways of quiet villages, men who had read these things from the throbbing tape stood in yellow-lit doorways shouting the news to the passers-by. “It is nearer.” Pretty women, flushed and glittering, heard the news told jestingly between the dances, and feigned an intelligent interest they did not feel. “Nearer! Indeed. How curious! How very, very clever people must be to find out things like that!”

Lonely tramps faring through the wintry night murmured those words to comfort themselves — looking skyward. “It has need to be nearer, for the night’s as cold as charity. Don’t seem much warmth from it if it *is* nearer, all the same.”

“What is a new star to me?” cried the weeping woman kneeling beside her dead.

The schoolboy, rising early for his examination work, puzzled it out for himself — with the great white star, shining broad and bright through the frost-flowers of his window. “Centrifugal, centripetal,” he said, with his chin on his fist. “Stop a planet in its flight, rob it of its centrifugal force, what then? Centripetal has it, and down it falls into the sun! And this — !”

“Do *we* come in the way? I wonder—”

The light of that day went the way of its brethren, and with the later watches of the frosty darkness rose the strange star again. And it was now so bright that the waxing moon seemed but a pale yellow ghost of itself, hanging huge in the sunset. In a South African city a great man had married, and the streets were alight to welcome his return with his bride. “Even the skies have illuminated,” said the flatterer. Under Capricorn, two negro lovers, daring the wild beasts and evil spirits, for love of one another, crouched together in a cane brake where the fire-flies hovered. “That is our star,” they whispered, and felt strangely comforted by the sweet brilliance of its light.

The master mathematician sat in his private room and pushed the papers from him. His calculations were already finished. In a small white phial there still remained a little of the drug that had kept him awake and active for four long nights. Each day, serene, explicit, patient as ever, he had given his lecture to his students, and then had come back at once to this momentous calculation. His face was grave, a little drawn and hectic from his drugged activity. For some time he seemed lost in thought. Then he went to the window, and the blind went up with a click. Half way up the sky, over the clustering roofs, chimneys and steeples of the city, hung the star.

He looked at it as one might look into the eyes of a brave enemy. “You may kill me,” he said after a silence. “But I can hold you — and all the universe for that matter — in the grip of this little brain. I would not change. Even now.”

He looked at the little phial. “There will be no need of sleep again,” he said. The next day at noon, punctual to the minute, he entered his lecture theatre, put his hat on the end of the table as his habit was, and carefully selected a large piece of chalk. It was a joke among his students that he could not lecture without that piece of chalk to fumble in his fingers, and once he had been stricken to impotence by their hiding his supply. He came and looked under his grey eyebrows at the rising tiers of young fresh faces, and spoke with his accustomed studied commonness of phrasing. “Circumstances have arisen — circumstances beyond my control,” he said and paused, “which will debar me from completing the course I had designed. It would seem, gentlemen, if I may put the thing clearly and briefly, that — Man has lived in vain.”

The students glanced at one another. Had they heard aright? Mad? Raised eyebrows and grinning lips there were, but one or two faces remained intent upon his calm grey-fringed face. “It will be interesting,” he was saying, “to devote this morning to an exposition, so far as I can make it clear to you, of the calculations that have led me to this conclusion. Let us assume—”

He turned towards the blackboard, meditating a diagram in the way that was usual to him. “What was that about ‘lived in vain?’” whispered one student to another. “Listen,” said the other, nodding towards the lecturer.

And presently they began to understand.

That night the star rose later, for its proper eastward motion had carried it some way across Leo towards Virgo, and its brightness was so great that the sky became a luminous blue as it rose, and every star was hidden in its turn, save only Jupiter near the zenith, Capella, Aldebaran, Sirius and the pointers of the Bear. It was very white and beautiful. In many parts of the world that night a pallid halo encircled it about. It was perceptibly larger; in the clear refractive sky of the tropics it seemed as if it were nearly a quarter the size of the moon. The frost was still on the ground in England, but the world was as brightly lit as if it were midsummer moonlight. One could see to read quite ordinary print by that cold clear light, and in the cities the lamps burnt yellow and wan.

And everywhere the world was awake that night, and throughout

Christendom a sombre murmur hung in the keen air over the countryside like the belling of bees in the heather, and this murmurous tumult grew to a clangour in the cities. It was the tolling of the bells in a million belfry towers and steeples, summoning the people to sleep no more, to sin no more, but to gather in their churches and pray. And overhead, growing larger and brighter, as the earth rolled on its way and the night passed, rose the dazzling star.

And the streets and houses were alight in all the cities, the shipyards glared, and whatever roads led to high country were lit and crowded all night long. And in all the seas about the civilised lands, ships with throbbing engines, and ships with bellying sails, crowded with men and living creatures, were standing out to ocean and the north. For already the warning of the master mathematician had been telegraphed all over the world, and translated into a hundred tongues. The new planet and Neptune, locked in a fiery embrace, were whirling headlong, ever faster and faster towards the sun. Already every second this blazing mass flew a hundred miles, and every second its terrific velocity increased. As it flew now, indeed, it must pass a hundred million of miles wide of the earth and scarcely affect it. But near its destined path, as yet only slightly perturbed, spun the mighty planet Jupiter and his moons sweeping splendid round the sun. Every moment now the attraction between the fiery star and the greatest of the planets grew stronger. And the result of that attraction? Inevitably Jupiter would be deflected from its orbit into an elliptical path, and the burning star, swung by his attraction wide of its sunward rush, would "describe a curved path" and perhaps collide with, and certainly pass very close to, our earth. "Earthquakes, volcanic outbreaks, cyclones, sea waves, floods, and a steady rise in temperature to I know not what limit" — so prophesied the master mathematician.

And overhead, to carry out his words, lonely and cold and livid, blazed the star of the coming doom.

To many who stared at it that night until their eyes ached, it seemed that it was visibly approaching. And that night, too, the weather changed, and the frost that had gripped all Central Europe and France and England softened towards a thaw.

But you must not imagine because I have spoken of people

praying through the night and people going aboard ships and people fleeing towards mountainous country that the whole world was already in a terror because of the star. As a matter of fact, use and wont still ruled the world, and save for the talk of idle moments and the splendour of the night, nine human beings out of ten were still busy at their common occupations. In all the cities the shops, save one here and there, opened and closed at their proper hours, the doctor and the undertaker plied their trades, the workers gathered in the factories, soldiers drilled, scholars studied, lovers sought one another, thieves lurked and fled, politicians planned their schemes. The presses of the newspapers roared through the nights, and many a priest of this church and that would not open his holy building to further what he considered a foolish panic. The newspapers insisted on the lesson of the year 1000 — for then, too, people had anticipated the end. The star was no star — mere gas — a comet; and were it a star it could not possibly strike the earth. There was no precedent for such a thing. Common sense was sturdy everywhere, scornful, jesting, a little inclined to persecute the obdurate fearful. That night, at seven-fifteen by Greenwich time, the star would be at its nearest to Jupiter. Then the world would see the turn things would take. The master mathematician's grim warnings were treated by many as so much mere elaborate self-advertisement. Common sense at last, a little heated by argument, signified its unalterable convictions by going to bed. So, too, barbarism and savagery, already tired of the novelty, went about their nightly business, and save for a howling dog here and there, the beast world left the star unheeded.

And yet, when at last the watchers in the European States saw the star rise, an hour later it is true, but no larger than it had been the night before, there were still plenty awake to laugh at the master mathematician — to take the danger as if it had passed.

But hereafter the laughter ceased. The star grew — it grew with a terrible steadiness hour after hour, a little larger each hour, a little nearer the midnight zenith, and brighter and brighter, until it had turned night into a second day. Had it come straight to the earth instead of in a curved path, had it lost no velocity to Jupiter, it must have leapt the intervening gulf in a day, but as it was it took five days

altogether to come by our planet. The next night it had become a third the size of the moon before it set to English eyes, and the thaw was assured. It rose over America near the size of the moon, but blinding white to look at, and *hot*; and a breath of hot wind blew now with its rising and gathering strength, and in Virginia, and Brazil, and down the St. Lawrence valley, it shone intermittently through a driving reek of thunder-clouds, flickering violet lightning, and hail unprecedented. In Manitoba was a thaw and devastating floods. And upon all the mountains of the earth the snow and ice began to melt that night, and all the rivers coming out of high country flowed thick and turbid, and soon — in their upper reaches — with swirling trees and the bodies of beasts and men. They rose steadily, steadily in the ghostly brilliance, and came trickling over their banks at last, behind the flying population of their valleys.

And along the coast of Argentina and up the South Atlantic the tides were higher than had ever been in the memory of man, and the storms drove the waters in many cases scores of miles inland, drowning whole cities. And so great grew the heat during the night that the rising of the sun was like the coming of a shadow. The earthquakes began and grew until all down America from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn, hillsides were sliding, fissures were opening, and houses and walls crumbling to destruction. The whole side of Cotopaxi slipped out in one vast convulsion, and a tumult of lava poured out so high and broad and swift and liquid that in one day it reached the sea.

So the star, with the wan moon in its wake, marched across the Pacific, trailed the thunderstorms like the hem of a robe, and the growing tidal wave that toiled behind it, frothing and eager, poured over island and island and swept them clear of men. Until that wave came at last — in a blinding light and with the breath of a furnace, swift and terrible it came — a wall of water, fifty feet high, roaring hungrily, upon the long coasts of Asia, and swept inland across the plains of China. For a space the star, hotter now and larger and brighter than the sun in its strength, showed with pitiless brilliance the wide and populous country; towns and villages with their pagodas and trees, roads, wide cultivated fields, millions of sleepless people staring in helpless terror at the incandescent sky; and then,

low and growing, came the murmur of the flood. And thus it was with millions of men that night — a flight nowhither, with limbs heavy with heat and breath fierce and scant, and the flood like a wall swift and white behind. And then death.

China was lit glowing white, but over Japan and Java and all the islands of Eastern Asia the great star was a ball of dull red fire because of the steam and smoke and ashes the volcanoes were spouting forth to salute its coming. Above was the lava, hot gases and ash, and below the seething floods, and the whole earth swayed and rumbled with the earthquake shocks. Soon the immemorial snows of Thibet and the Himalaya were melting and pouring down by ten million deepening converging channels upon the plains of Burmah and Hindostan. The tangled summits of the Indian jungles were aflame in a thousand places, and below the hurrying waters around the stems were dark objects that still struggled feebly and reflected the blood-red tongues of fire. And in a rudderless confusion a multitude of men and women fled down the broad river-ways to that one last hope of men — the open sea.

Larger grew the star, and larger, hotter, and brighter with a terrible swiftness now. The tropical ocean had lost its phosphorescence, and the whirling steam rose in ghostly wreaths from the black waves that plunged incessantly, speckled with storm-tossed ships.

And then came a wonder. It seemed to those who in Europe watched for the rising of the star that the world must have ceased its rotation. In a thousand open spaces of down and upland the people who had fled thither from the floods and the falling houses and sliding slopes of hill watched for that rising in vain. Hour followed hour through a terrible suspense, and the star rose not. Once again men set their eyes upon the old constellations they had counted lost to them forever. In England it was hot and clear overhead, though the ground quivered perpetually, but in the tropics, Sirius and Capella and Aldebaran showed through a veil of steam. And when at last the great star rose near ten hours late, the sun rose close upon it, and in the centre of its white heart was a disc of black.

Over Asia it was the star had begun to fall behind the movement of the sky, and then suddenly, as it hung over India, its light had been

veiled. All the plain of India from the mouth of the Indus to the mouths of the Ganges was a shallow waste of shining water that night, out of which rose temples and palaces, mounds and hills, black with people. Every minaret was a clustering mass of people, who fell one by one into the turbid waters, as heat and terror overcame them. The whole land seemed a-wailing, and suddenly there swept a shadow across that furnace of despair, and a breath of cold wind, and a gathering of clouds, out of the cooling air. Men looking up, near blinded, at the star, saw that a black disc was creeping across the light. It was the moon, coming between the star and the earth. And even as men cried to God at this respite, out of the East with a strange inexplicable swiftness sprang the sun. And then star, sun and moon rushed together across the heavens.

So it was that presently, to the European watchers, star and sun rose close upon each other, drove headlong for a space and then slower, and at last came to rest, star and sun merged into one glare of flame at the zenith of the sky. The moon no longer eclipsed the star but was lost to sight in the brilliance of the sky. And though those who were still alive regarded it for the most part with that dull stupidity that hunger, fatigue, heat and despair engender, there were still men who could perceive the meaning of these signs. Star and earth had been at their nearest, had swung about one another, and the star had passed. Already it was receding, swifter and swifter, in the last stage of its headlong journey downward into the sun.

And then the clouds gathered, blotting out the vision of the sky, the thunder and lightning wove a garment round the world; all over the earth was such a downpour of rain as men had never before seen, and where the volcanoes flared red against the cloud canopy there descended torrents of mud. Everywhere the waters were pouring off the land, leaving mud-silted ruins, and the earth littered like a storm-worn beach with all that had floated, and the dead bodies of the men and brutes, its children. For days the water streamed off the land, sweeping away soil and trees and houses in the way, and piling huge dykes and scooping out Titanic gullies over the country side. Those were the days of darkness that followed the star and the heat. All through them, and for many weeks and months, the earthquakes continued.

But the star had passed, and men, hunger-driven and gathering courage only slowly, might creep back to their ruined cities, buried granaries, and sodden fields. Such few ships as had escaped the storms of that time came stunned and shattered and sounding their way cautiously through the new marks and shoals of once familiar ports. And as the storms subsided men perceived that everywhere the days were hotter than of yore, and the sun larger, and the moon, shrunk to a third of its former size, took now fourscore days between its new and new.

But of the new brotherhood that grew presently among men, of the saving of laws and books and machines, of the strange change that had come over Iceland and Greenland and the shores of Baffin's Bay, so that the sailors coming there presently found them green and gracious, and could scarce believe their eyes, this story does not tell. Nor of the movement of mankind now that the earth was hotter, northward and southward towards the poles of the earth. It concerns itself only with the coming and the passing of the Star.

The Martian astronomers — for there are astronomers on Mars, although they are very different beings from men — were naturally profoundly interested by these things. They saw them from their own standpoint of course. "Considering the mass and temperature of the missile that was flung through our solar system into the sun," one wrote, "it is astonishing what a little damage the earth, which it missed so narrowly, has sustained. All the familiar continental markings and the masses of the seas remain intact, and indeed the only difference seems to be a shrinkage of the white discolouration (supposed to be frozen water) round either pole." Which only shows how small the vastest of human catastrophes may seem, at a distance of a few million miles.

A STORY OF THE STONE AGE

I — UGH-LOMI AND UYA

This story is of a time beyond the memory of man, before the beginning of history, a time when one might have walked dryshod from France (as we call it now) to England, and when a broad and sluggish Thames flowed through its marshes to meet its father Rhine, flowing through a wide and level country that is under water in these latter days, and which we know by the name of the North Sea. In that remote age the valley which runs along the foot of the Downs did not exist, and the south of Surrey was a range of hills, fir-clad on the middle slopes, and snow-capped for the better part of the year. The cores of its summits still remain as Leith Hill, and Pitch Hill, and Hindhead. On the lower slopes of the range, below the grassy spaces where the wild horses grazed, were forests of yew and sweet-chestnut and elm, and the thickets and dark places hid the grizzly bear and the hyæna, and the grey apes clambered through the branches. And still lower amidst the woodland and marsh and open grass along the Wey did this little drama play itself out to the end that I have to tell. Fifty thousand years ago it was, fifty thousand years — if the reckoning of geologists is correct.

And in those days the spring-time was as joyful as it is now, and sent the blood coursing in just the same fashion. The afternoon sky was blue with piled white clouds sailing through it, and the southwest wind came like a soft caress. The new-come swallows drove to and fro. The reaches of the river were spangled with white ranunculus, the marshy places were starred with lady's-smock and lit with marsh-mallow wherever the regiments of the sedges lowered their swords, and the northward-moving hippopotami, shiny black monsters, sporting clumsily, came floundering and blundering through it all, rejoicing dimly and possessed with one clear idea, to splash the river muddy.

Up the river and well in sight of the hippopotami, a number of little buff-coloured animals dabbled in the water. There was no fear, no rivalry, and no enmity between them and the hippopotami. As the great bulks came crashing through the reeds and smashed the mirror of the water into silvery splashes, these little creatures shouted and

gesticulated with glee. It was the surest sign of high spring. “Boloo!” they cried. “Baayah. Boloo!” They were the children of the men folk, the smoke of whose encampment rose from the knoll at the river’s bend. Wild-eyed youngsters they were, with matted hair and little broad-nosed impish faces, covered (as some children are covered even nowadays) with a delicate down of hair. They were narrow in the loins and long in the arms. And their ears had no lobes, and had little pointed tips, a thing that still, in rare instances, survives. Stark-naked vivid little gipsies, as active as monkeys and as full of chatter, though a little wanting in words.

Their elders were hidden from the wallowing hippopotami by the crest of the knoll. The human squatting-place was a trampled area among the dead brown fronds of Royal Fern, through which the crosiers of this year’s growth were unrolling to the light and warmth. The fire was a smouldering heap of char, light grey and black, replenished by the old women from time to time with brown leaves. Most of the men were asleep — they slept sitting with their foreheads on their knees. They had killed that morning a good quarry, enough for all, a deer that had been wounded by hunting dogs; so that there had been no quarrelling among them, and some of the women were still gnawing the bones that lay scattered about. Others were making a heap of leaves and sticks to feed Brother Fire when the darkness came again, that he might grow strong and tall therewith, and guard them against the beasts. And two were piling flints that they brought, an armful at a time, from the bend of the river where the children were at play.

None of these buff-skinned savages were clothed, but some wore about their hips rude girdles of adder-skin or crackling undressed hide, from which depended little bags, not made, but torn from the paws of beasts, and carrying the rudely-dressed flints that were men’s chief weapons and tools. And one woman, the mate of Uya the Cunning Man, wore a wonderful necklace of perforated fossils — that others had worn before her. Beside some of the sleeping men lay the big antlers of the elk, with the tines chipped to sharp edges, and long sticks, hacked at the ends with flints into sharp points. There was little else save these things and the smouldering fire to mark these human beings off from the wild animals that ranged the

country. But Uya the Cunning did not sleep, but sat with a bone in his hand and scraped busily thereon with a flint, a thing no animal would do. He was the oldest man in the tribe, beetle-browed, prognathous, lank-armed; he had a beard and his cheeks were hairy, and his chest and arms were black with thick hair. And by virtue both of his strength and cunning he was master of the tribe, and his share was always the most and the best.

Eudena had hidden herself among the alders, because she was afraid of Uya. She was still a girl, and her eyes were bright and her smile pleasant to see. He had given her a piece of the liver, a man's piece, and a wonderful treat for a girl to get; but as she took it the other woman with the necklace had looked at her, an evil glance, and Ugh-lomi had made a noise in his throat. At that, Uya had looked at him long and steadfastly, and Ugh-lomi's face had fallen. And then Uya had looked at her. She was frightened and she had stolen away, while the feeding was still going on, and Uya was busy with the marrow of a bone. Afterwards he had wandered about as if looking for her. And now she crouched among the alders, wondering mightily what Uya might be doing with the flint and the bone. And Ugh-lomi was not to be seen.

Presently a squirrel came leaping through the alders, and she lay so quiet the little man was within six feet of her before he saw her. Whereupon he dashed up a stem in a hurry and began to chatter and scold her. "What are you doing here," he asked, "away from the other men beasts?" "Peace," said Eudena, but he only chattered more, and then she began to break off the little black cones to throw at him. He dodged and defied her, and she grew excited and rose up to throw better, and then she saw Uya coming down the knoll. He had seen the movement of her pale arm amidst the thicket — he was very keen-eyed.

At that she forgot the squirrel and set off through the alders and reeds as fast as she could go. She did not care where she went so long as she escaped Uya. She splashed nearly knee-deep through a swampy place, and saw in front of her a slope of ferns — growing more slender and green as they passed up out of the light into the shade of the young chestnuts. She was soon amidst the trees — she was very fleet of foot, and she ran on and on until the forest was old

and the vales great, and the vines about their stems where the light came were thick as young trees, and the ropes of ivy stout and tight. On she went, and she doubled and doubled again, and then at last lay down amidst some ferns in a hollow place near a thicket, and listened with her heart beating in her ears.

She heard footsteps presently rustling among the dead leaves, far off, and they died away and everything was still again, except the scandalising of the midges — for the evening was drawing on — and the incessant whisper of the leaves. She laughed silently to think the cunning Uya should go by her. She was not frightened. Sometimes, playing with the other girls and lads, she had fled into the wood, though never so far as this. It was pleasant to be hidden and alone.

She lay a long time there, glad of her escape, and then she sat up listening.

It was a rapid pattering growing louder and coming towards her, and in a little while she could hear grunting noises and the snapping of twigs. It was a drove of lean grisly wild swine. She turned about her, for a boar is an ill fellow to pass too closely, on account of the sideway slash of his tusks, and she made off slantingly through the trees. But the patter came nearer, they were not feeding as they wandered, but going fast — or else they would not overtake her — and she caught the limb of a tree, swung on to it, and ran up the stem with something of the agility of a monkey.

Down below the sharp bristling backs of the swine were already passing when she looked. And she knew the short, sharp grunts they made meant fear. What were they afraid of? A man? They were in a great hurry for just a man.

And then, so suddenly it made her grip on the branch tighten involuntarily, a fawn started in the brake and rushed after the swine. Something else went by, low and grey, with a long body; she did not know what it was, indeed she saw it only momentarily through the interstices of the young leaves; and then there came a pause.

She remained stiff and expectant, as rigid almost as though she was a part of the tree she clung to, peering down.

Then, far away among the trees, clear for a moment, then hidden, then visible knee-deep in ferns, then gone again, ran a man. She knew it was young Ugh-lomi by the fair colour of his hair, and there

was red upon his face. Somehow his frantic flight and that scarlet mark made her feel sick. And then nearer, running heavily and breathing hard, came another man. At first she could not see, and then she saw, foreshortened and clear to her, Uya, running with great strides and his eyes staring. He was not going after Ugh-lomi. His face was white. It was Uya — *afraid*! He passed, and was still loud hearing, when something else, something large and with grizzled fur, swinging along with soft swift strides, came rushing in pursuit of him.

Eudena suddenly became rigid, ceased to breathe, her clutch convulsive, and her eyes starting.

She had never seen the thing before, she did not even see him clearly now, but she knew at once it was the Terror of the Woodshade. His name was a legend, the children would frighten one another, frighten even themselves with his name, and run screaming to the squatting-place. No man had ever killed any of his kind. Even the mighty mammoth feared his anger. It was the grizzly bear, the lord of the world as the world went then.

As he ran he made a continuous growling grumble. "Men in my very lair! Fighting and blood. At the very mouth of my lair. Men, men, men. Fighting and blood." For he was the lord of the wood and of the caves.

Long after he had passed she remained, a girl of stone, staring down through the branches. All her power of action had gone from her. She gripped by instinct with hands and knees and feet. It was some time before she could think, and then only one thing was clear in her mind, that the Terror was between her and the tribe — that it would be impossible to descend.

Presently when her fear was a little abated she clambered into a more comfortable position, where a great branch forked. The trees rose about her, so that she could see nothing of Brother Fire, who is black by day. Birds began to stir, and things that had gone into hiding for fear of her movements crept out....

After a time the taller branches flamed out at the touch of the sunset. High overhead the rooks, who were wiser than men, went cawing home to their squatting-places among the elms. Looking down, things were clearer and darker. Eudena thought of going back

to the squatting-place; she let herself down some way, and then the fear of the Terror of the Woodshade came again. While she hesitated a rabbit squealed dismally, and she dared not descend farther.

The shadows gathered, and the deeps of the forest began stirring. Eudena went up the tree again to be nearer the light. Down below the shadows came out of their hiding-places and walked abroad. Overhead the blue deepened. A dreadful stillness came, and then the leaves began whispering.

Eudena shivered and thought of Brother Fire.

The shadows now were gathering in the trees, they sat on the branches and watched her. Branches and leaves were turned to ominous, quiet black shapes that would spring on her if she stirred. Then the white owl, flitting silently, came ghostly through the shades. Darker grew the world and darker, until the leaves and twigs against the sky were black, and the ground was hidden.

She remained there all night, an age-long vigil, straining her ears for the things that went on below in the darkness, and keeping motionless lest some stealthy beast should discover her. Man in those days was never alone in the dark, save for such rare accidents as this. Age after age he had learnt the lesson of its terror — a lesson we poor children of his have nowadays painfully to unlearn. Eudena, though in age a woman, was in heart like a little child. She kept as still, poor little animal, as a hare before it is started.

The stars gathered and watched her — her one grain of comfort. In one bright one she fancied there was something like Ugh-lomi. Then she fancied it *was* Ugh-lomi. And near him, red and duller, was Uya, and as the night passed Ugh-lomi fled before him up the sky.

She tried to see Brother Fire, who guarded the squatting-place from beasts, but he was not in sight. And far away she heard the mammoths trumpeting as they went down to the drinking-place, and once some huge bulk with heavy paces hurried along, making a noise like a calf, but what it was she could not see. But she thought from the voice it was Yaaa the rhinoceros, who stabs with his nose, goes always alone, and rages without cause.

At last the little stars began to hide, and then the larger ones. It was like all the animals vanishing before the Terror. The Sun was coming, lord of the sky, as the grizzly was lord of the forest. Eudena

wondered what would happen if one star stayed behind. And then the sky paled to the dawn.

When the daylight came the fear of lurking things passed, and she could descend. She was stiff, but not so stiff as you would have been, dear young lady (by virtue of your upbringing), and as she had not been trained to eat at least once in three hours, but instead had often fasted three days, she did not feel uncomfortably hungry. She crept down the tree very cautiously, and went her way stealthily through the wood, and not a squirrel sprang or deer started but the terror of the grizzly bear froze her marrow.

Her desire was now to find her people again. Her dread of Uya the Cunning was consumed by a greater dread of loneliness. But she had lost her direction. She had run heedlessly overnight, and she could not tell whether the squatting-place was sunward or where it lay. Ever and again she stopped and listened, and at last, very far away, she heard a measured chinking. It was so faint even in the morning stillness that she could tell it must be far away. But she knew the sound was that of a man sharpening a flint.

Presently the trees began to thin out, and then came a regiment of nettles barring the way. She turned aside, and then she came to a fallen tree that she knew, with a noise of bees about it. And so presently she was in sight of the knoll, very far off, and the river under it, and the children and the hippopotami just as they had been yesterday, and the thin spire of smoke swaying in the morning breeze. Far away by the river was the cluster of alders where she had hidden. And at the sight of that the fear of Uya returned, and she crept into a thicket of bracken, out of which a rabbit scuttled, and lay awhile to watch the squatting-place.

The men were mostly out of sight, saving Wau, the flint-chopper; and at that she felt safer. They were away hunting food, no doubt. Some of the women, too, were down in the stream, stooping intent, seeking mussels, crayfish, and water-snails, and at the sight of their occupation Eudena felt hungry. She rose, and ran through the fern, designing to join them. As she went she heard a voice among the bracken calling softly. She stopped. Then suddenly she heard a rustle behind her, and turning, saw Ugh-lomi rising out of the fern. There were streaks of brown blood and dirt on his face, and his eyes were

fierce, and the white stone of Uya, the white Fire Stone, that none but Uya dared to touch, was in his hand. In a stride he was beside her, and gripped her arm. He swung her about, and thrust her before him towards the woods. "Uya," he said, and waved his arms about. She heard a cry, looked back, and saw all the women standing up, and two wading out of the stream. Then came a nearer howling, and the old woman with the beard, who watched the fire on the knoll, was waving her arms, and Wau, the man who had been chipping the flint, was getting to his feet. The little children too were hurrying and shouting.

"Come!" said Ugh-lomi, and dragged her by the arm.

She still did not understand.

"Uya has called the death word," said Ugh-lomi, and she glanced back at the screaming curve of figures, and understood.

Wau and all the women and children were coming towards them, a scattered array of buff shock-headed figures, howling, leaping, and crying. Over the knoll two youths hurried. Down among the ferns to the right came a man, heading them off from the wood. Ugh-lomi left her arm, and the two began running side by side, leaping the bracken and stepping clear and wide. Eudena, knowing her fleetness and the fleetness of Ugh-lomi, laughed aloud at the unequal chase. They were an exceptionally straight-limbed couple for those days.

They soon cleared the open, and drew near the wood of chestnut-trees again — neither afraid now because neither was alone. They slackened their pace, already not excessive. And suddenly Eudena cried and swerved aside, pointing, and looking up through the tree-stems. Ugh-lomi saw the feet and legs of men running towards him. Eudena was already running off at a tangent. And as he too turned to follow her they heard the voice of Uya coming through the trees, and roaring out his rage at them.

Then terror came in their hearts, not the terror that numbs, but the terror that makes one silent and swift. They were cut off now on two sides. They were in a sort of corner of pursuit. On the right hand, and near by them, came the men swift and heavy, with bearded Uya, antler in hand, leading them; and on the left, scattered as one scatters corn, yellow dashes among the fern and grass, ran Wau and the women; and even the little children from the shallow had joined the

chase. The two parties converged upon them. Off they went, with Eudena ahead.

They knew there was no mercy for them. There was no hunting so sweet to these ancient men as the hunting of men. Once the fierce passion of the chase was lit, the feeble beginnings of humanity in them were thrown to the winds. And Uya in the night had marked Ugh-lomi with the death word. Ugh-lomi was the day's quarry, the appointed feast.

They ran straight — it was their only chance — taking whatever ground came in the way — a spread of stinging nettles, an open glade, a clump of grass out of which a hyæna fled snarling. Then woods again, long stretches of shady leaf-mould and moss under the green trunks. Then a stiff slope, tree-clad, and long vistas of trees, a glade, a succulent green area of black mud, a wide open space again, and then a clump of lacerating brambles, with beast tracks through it. Behind them the chase trailed out and scattered, with Uya ever at their heels. Eudena kept the first place, running light and with her breath easy, for Ugh-lomi carried the Fire Stone in his hand.

It told on his pace — not at first, but after a time. His footsteps behind her suddenly grew remote. Glancing over her shoulder as they crossed another open space, Eudena saw that Ugh-lomi was many yards behind her, and Uya close upon him, with antler already raised in the air to strike him down. Wau and the others were but just emerging from the shadow of the woods.

Seeing Ugh-lomi in peril, Eudena ran sideways, looking back, threw up her arms and cried aloud, just as the antler flew. And young Ugh-lomi, expecting this and understanding her cry, ducked his head, so that the missile merely struck his scalp lightly, making but a trivial wound, and flew over him. He turned forthwith, the quartzite Fire Stone in both hands, and hurled it straight at Uya's body as he ran loose from the throw. Uya shouted, but could not dodge it. It took him under the ribs, heavy and flat, and he reeled and went down without a cry. Ugh-lomi caught up the antler — one tine of it was tipped with his own blood — and came running on again with a red trickle just coming out of his hair.

Uya rolled over twice, and lay a moment before he got up, and then he did not run fast. The colour of his face was changed. Wau

overtook him, and then others, and he coughed and laboured in his breath. But he kept on.

At last the two fugitives gained the bank of the river, where the stream ran deep and narrow, and they still had fifty yards in hand of Wau, the foremost pursuer, the man who made the smiting-stones. He carried one, a large flint, the shape of an oyster and double the size, chipped to a chisel edge, in either hand.

They sprang down the steep bank into the stream, rushed through the water, swam the deep current in two or three strokes, and came out wading again, dripping and refreshed, to clamber up the farther bank. It was undermined, and with willows growing thickly therefrom, so that it needed clambering. And while Eudena was still among the silvery branches and Ugh-lomi still in the water — for the antler had encumbered him — Wau came up against the sky on the opposite bank, and the smiting-stone, thrown cunningly, took the side of Eudena's knee. She struggled to the top and fell.

They heard the pursuers shout to one another, and Ugh-lomi climbing to her and moving jerkily to mar Wau's aim, felt the second smiting-stone graze his ear, and heard the water splash below him.

Then it was Ugh-lomi, the stripling, proved himself to have come to man's estate. For running on, he found Eudena fell behind, limping, and at that he turned, and crying savagely and with a face terrible with sudden wrath and trickling blood, ran swiftly past her back to the bank, whirling the antler round his head. And Eudena kept on, running stoutly still, though she must needs limp at every step, and the pain was already sharp.

So that Wau, rising over the edge and clutching the straight willow branches, saw Ugh-lomi towering over him, gigantic against the blue; saw his whole body swing round, and the grip of his hands upon the antler. The edge of the antler came sweeping through the air, and he saw no more. The water under the osiers whirled and eddied and went crimson six feet down the stream. Uya following stopped knee-high across the stream, and the man who was swimming turned about.

The other men who trailed after — they were none of them very mighty men (for Uya was more cunning than strong, brooking no sturdy rivals) — slackened momentarily at the sight of Ugh-lomi

standing there above the willows, bloody and terrible, between them and the halting girl, with the huge antler waving in his hand. It seemed as though he had gone into the water a youth, and come out of it a man full grown.

He knew what there was behind him. A broad stretch of grass, and then a thicket, and in that Eudena could hide. That was clear in his mind, though his thinking powers were too feeble to see what should happen thereafter. Uya stood knee-deep, undecided and unarmed. His heavy mouth hung open, showing his canine teeth, and he panted heavily. His side was flushed and bruised under the hair. The other man beside him carried a sharpened stick. The rest of the hunters came up one by one to the top of the bank, hairy, long-armed men clutching flints and sticks. Two ran off along the bank down stream, and then clambered to the water, where Wau had come to the surface struggling weakly. Before they could reach him he went under again. Two others threatened Ugh-lomi from the bank.

He answered back, shouts, vague insults, gestures. Then Uya, who had been hesitating, roared with rage, and whirling his fists plunged into the water. His followers splashed after him.

Ugh-lomi glanced over his shoulder and found Eudena already vanished into the thicket. He would perhaps have waited for Uya, but Uya preferred to spar in the water below him until the others were beside him. Human tactics in those days, in all serious fighting, were the tactics of the pack. Prey that turned at bay they gathered around and rushed. Ugh-lomi felt the rush coming, and hurling the antler at Uya, turned about and fled.

When he halted to look back from the shadow of the thicket, he found only three of his pursuers had followed him across the river, and they were going back again. Uya, with a bleeding mouth, was on the farther side of the stream again, but lower down, and holding his hand to his side. The others were in the river dragging something to shore. For a time at least the chase was intermitted.

Ugh-lomi stood watching for a space, and snarled at the sight of Uya. Then he turned and plunged into the thicket.

In a minute, Eudena came hastening to join him, and they went on hand in hand. He dimly perceived the pain she suffered from the cut and bruised knee, and chose the easier ways. But they went on all

that day, mile after mile, through wood and thicket, until at last they came to the chalkland, open grass with rare woods of beech, and the birch growing near water, and they saw the Wealden mountains nearer, and groups of horses grazing together. They went circumspectly, keeping always near thicket and cover, for this was a strange region — even its ways were strange. Steadily the ground rose, until the chestnut forests spread wide and blue below them, and the Thames marshes shone silvery, high and far. They saw no men, for in those days men were still only just come into this part of the world, and were moving but slowly along the river-ways. Towards evening they came on the river again, but now it ran in a gorge, between high cliffs of white chalk that sometimes overhung it. Down the cliffs was a scrub of birches and there were many birds there. And high up the cliff was a little shelf by a tree, whereon they clambered to pass the night.

They had had scarcely any food; it was not the time of year for berries, and they had no time to go aside to snare or waylay. They tramped in a hungry weary silence, gnawing at twigs and leaves. But over the surface of the cliffs were a multitude of snails, and in a bush were the freshly laid eggs of a little bird, and then Ugh-lomi threw at and killed a squirrel in a beech-tree, so that at last they fed well. Ugh-lomi watched during the night, his chin on his knees; and he heard young foxes crying hard by, and the noise of mammoths down the gorge, and the hyænas yelling and laughing far away. It was chilly, but they dared not light a fire. Whenever he dozed, his spirit went abroad, and straightway met with the spirit of Uya, and they fought. And always Ugh-lomi was paralysed so that he could not smite nor run, and then he would awake suddenly. Eudena, too, dreamt evil things of Uya, so that they both awoke with the fear of him in their hearts, and by the light of the dawn they saw a woolly rhinoceros go blundering down the valley.

During the day they caressed one another and were glad of the sunshine, and Eudena's leg was so stiff she sat on the ledge all day. Ugh-lomi found great flints sticking out of the cliff face, greater than any he had seen, and he dragged some to the ledge and began chipping, so as to be armed against Uya when he came again. And at one he laughed heartily, and Eudena laughed, and they threw it about

in derision. It had a hole in it. They stuck their fingers through it, it was very funny indeed. Then they peeped at one another through it. Afterwards, Ugh-lomi got himself a stick, and thrusting by chance at this foolish flint, the stick went in and stuck there. He had rammed it in too tightly to withdraw it. That was still stranger — scarcely funny, terrible almost, and for a time Ugh-lomi did not greatly care to touch the thing. It was as if the flint had bit and held with its teeth. But then he got familiar with the odd combination. He swung it about, and perceived that the stick with the heavy stone on the end struck a better blow than anything he knew. He went to and fro swinging it, and striking with it; but later he tired of it and threw it aside. In the afternoon he went up over the brow of the white cliff, and lay watching by a rabbit-warren until the rabbits came out to play. There were no men thereabouts, and the rabbits were heedless. He threw a smiting-stone he had made and got a kill.

That night they made a fire from flint sparks and bracken fronds, and talked and caressed by it. And in their sleep Uya's spirit came again, and suddenly, while Ugh-lomi was trying to fight vainly, the foolish flint on the stick came into his hand, and he struck Uya with it, and behold! it killed him. But afterwards came other dreams of Uya — for spirits take a lot of killing, and he had to be killed again. Then after that the stone would not keep on the stick. He awoke tired and rather gloomy, and was sulky all the forenoon, in spite of Eudena's kindliness, and instead of hunting he sat chipping a sharp edge to the singular flint, and looking strangely at her. Then he bound the perforated flint on to the stick with strips of rabbit skin. And afterwards he walked up and down the ledge, striking with it, and muttering to himself, and thinking of Uya. It felt very fine and heavy in the hand.

Several days, more than there was any counting in those days, five days, it may be, or six, did Ugh-lomi and Eudena stay on that shelf in the gorge of the river, and they lost all fear of men, and their fire burnt redly of a night. And they were very merry together; there was food every day, sweet water, and no enemies. Eudena's knee was well in a couple of days, for those ancient savages had quick-healing flesh. Indeed, they were very happy.

On one of those days Ugh-lomi dropped a chunk of flint over the

cliff. He saw it fall, and go bounding across the river bank into the river, and after laughing and thinking it over a little he tried another. This smashed a bush of hazel in the most interesting way. They spent all the morning dropping stones from the ledge, and in the afternoon they discovered this new and interesting pastime was also possible from the cliffbrow. The next day they had forgotten this delight. Or at least, it seemed they had forgotten.

But Uya came in dreams to spoil the paradise. Three nights he came fighting Ugh-lomi. In the morning after these dreams Ugh-lomi would walk up and down, threatening him and swinging the axe, and at last came the night after Ugh-lomi brained the otter, and they had feasted. Uya went too far. Ugh-lomi awoke, scowling under his heavy brows, and he took his axe, and extending his hand towards Eudena he bade her wait for him upon the ledge. Then he clambered down the white declivity, glanced up once from the foot of it and flourished his axe, and without looking back again went striding along the river bank until the overhanging cliff at the bend hid him.

Two days and nights did Eudena sit alone by the fire on the ledge waiting, and in the night the beasts howled over the cliffs and down the valley, and on the cliff over against her the hunched hyænas prowled black against the sky. But no evil thing came near her save fear. Once, far away, she heard the roaring of a lion, following the horses as they came northward over the grass lands with the spring. All that time she waited — the waiting that is pain.

And the third day Ugh-lomi came back, up the river. The plumes of a raven were in his hair. The first axe was red-stained, and had long dark hairs upon it, and he carried the necklace that had marked the favourite of Uya in his hand. He walked in the soft places, giving no heed to his trail. Save a raw cut below his jaw there was not a wound upon him. “Uya!” cried Ugh-lomi exultant, and Eudena saw it was well. He put the necklace on Eudena, and they ate and drank together. And after eating he began to rehearse the whole story from the beginning, when Uya had cast his eyes on Eudena, and Uya and Ugh-lomi, fighting in the forest, had been chased by the bear, eking out his scanty words with abundant pantomime, springing to his feet and whirling the stone axe round when it came to the fighting. The last fight was a mighty one, stamping and shouting, and once a blow

at the fire that sent a torrent of sparks up into the night. And Eudena sat red in the light of the fire, gloating on him, her face flushed and her eyes shining, and the necklace Uya had made about her neck. It was a splendid time, and the stars that look down on us looked down on her, our ancestor — who has been dead now these fifty thousand years.

II — THE CAVE BEAR

In the days when Eudena and Ugh-lomi fled from the people of Uya towards the fir-clad mountains of the Weald, across the forests of sweet chestnut and the grass-clad chalkland, and hid themselves at last in the gorge of the river between the chalk cliffs, men were few and their squatting-places far between. The nearest men to them were those of the tribe, a full day's journey down the river, and up the mountains there were none. Man was indeed a newcomer to this part of the world in that ancient time, coming slowly along the rivers, generation after generation, from one squatting-place to another, from the south-westward. And the animals that held the land, the hippopotamus and rhinoceros of the river valleys, the horses of the grass plains, the deer and swine of the woods, the grey apes in the branches, the cattle of the uplands, feared him but little — let alone the mammoths in the mountains and the elephants that came through the land in the summer-time out of the south. For why should they fear him, with but the rough, chipped flints that he had not learnt to haft and which he threw but ill, and the poor spear of sharpened wood, as all the weapons he had against hoof and horn, tooth and claw?

Andoo, the huge cave bear, who lived in the cave up the gorge, had never even seen a man in all his wise and respectable life, until midway through one night, as he was prowling down the gorge along the cliff edge, he saw the glare of Eudena's fire upon the ledge, and Eudena red and shining, and Ugh-lomi, with a gigantic shadow mocking him upon the white cliff, going to and fro, shaking his mane of hair, and waving the axe of stone — the first axe of stone — while he chanted of the killing of Uya. The cave bear was far up the gorge, and he saw the thing slanting-ways and far off. He was so surprised he stood quite still upon the edge, sniffing the novel odour of burning bracken, and wondering whether the dawn was coming up in the wrong place.

He was the lord of the rocks and caves, was the cave bear, as his slighter brother, the grizzly, was lord of the thick woods below, and as the dappled lion — the lion of those days was dappled — was lord

of the thorn-thickets, reed-beds, and open plains. He was the greatest of all meat-eaters; he knew no fear, none preyed on him, and none gave him battle; only the rhinoceros was beyond his strength. Even the mammoth shunned his country. This invasion perplexed him. He noticed these new beasts were shaped like monkeys, and sparsely hairy like young pigs. “Monkey and young pig,” said the cave bear. “It might not be so bad. But that red thing that jumps, and the black thing jumping with it yonder! Never in my life have I seen such things before!”

He came slowly along the brow of the cliff towards them, stopping thrice to sniff and peer, and the reek of the fire grew stronger. A couple of hyænas also were so intent upon the thing below that Andoo, coming soft and easy, was close upon them before they knew of him or he of them. They started guiltily and went lurching off. Coming round in a wheel, a hundred yards off, they began yelling and calling him names to revenge themselves for the start they had had. “Ya-ha!” they cried. “Who can’t grub his own burrow? Who eats roots like a pig?... Ya-ha!” for even in those days the hyæna’s manners were just as offensive as they are now.

“Who answers the hyæna?” growled Andoo, peering through the midnight dimness at them, and then going to look at the cliff edge.

There was Ugh-lomi still telling his story, and the fire getting low, and the scent of the burning hot and strong.

Andoo stood on the edge of the chalk cliff for some time, shifting his vast weight from foot to foot, and swaying his head to and fro, with his mouth open, his ears erect and twitching, and the nostrils of his big, black muzzle sniffing. He was very curious, was the cave bear, more curious than any of the bears that live now, and the flickering fire and the incomprehensible movements of the man, let alone the intrusion into his indisputable province, stirred him with a sense of strange new happenings. He had been after red deer fawn that night, for the cave bear was a miscellaneous hunter, but this quite turned him from that enterprise.

“Ya-ha!” yelled the hyænas behind. “Ya-ha-ha!”

Peering through the starlight, Andoo saw there were now three or four going to and fro against the grey hillside. “They will hang about me now all the night ... until I kill,” said Andoo. “Filth of the world!”

And mainly to annoy them, he resolved to watch the red flicker in the gorge until the dawn came to drive the hyæna scum home. And after a time they vanished, and he heard their voices, like a party of Cockney beanfeasters, away in the beechwoods. Then they came slinking near again. Andoo yawned and went on along the cliff, and they followed. Then he stopped and went back.

It was a splendid night, beset with shining constellations, the same stars, but not the same constellations we know, for since those days all the stars have had time to move into new places. Far away across the open space beyond where the heavy-shouldered, lean-bodied hyænas blundered and howled, was a beechwood, and the mountain slopes rose beyond, a dim mystery, until their snow-capped summits came out white and cold and clear, touched by the first rays of the yet unseen moon. It was a vast silence, save when the yell of the hyænas flung a vanishing discordance across its peace, or when from down the hills the trumpeting of the new-come elephants came faintly on the faint breeze. And below now, the red flicker had dwindled and was steady, and shone a deeper red, and Ugh-lomi had finished his story and was preparing to sleep, and Eudena sat and listened to the strange voices of unknown beasts, and watched the dark eastern sky growing deeply luminous at the advent of the moon. Down below, the river talked to itself, and things unseen went to and fro.

After a time the bear went away, but in an hour he was back again. Then, as if struck by a thought, he turned, and went up the gorge....

The night passed, and Ugh-lomi slept on. The waning moon rose and lit the gaunt white cliff overhead with a light that was pale and vague. The gorge remained in a deeper shadow and seemed all the darker. Then by imperceptible degrees, the day came stealing in the wake of the moonlight. Eudena's eyes wandered to the cliff brow overhead once, and then again. Each time the line was sharp and clear against the sky, and yet she had a dim perception of something lurking there. The red of the fire grew deeper and deeper, grey scales spread upon it, its vertical column of smoke became more and more visible, and up and down the gorge things that had been unseen grew clear in a colourless illumination. She may have dozed.

Suddenly she started up from her squatting position, erect and

alert, scrutinising the cliff up and down.

She made the faintest sound, and Ugh-lomi too, light-sleeping like an animal, was instantly awake. He caught up his axe and came noiselessly to her side.

The light was still dim, the world now all in black and dark grey, and one sickly star still lingered overhead. The ledge they were on was a little grassy space, six feet wide, perhaps, and twenty feet long, sloping outwardly, and with a handful of St. John's wort growing near the edge. Below it the soft, white rock fell away in a steep slope of nearly fifty feet to the thick bush of hazel that fringed the river. Down the river this slope increased, until some way off a thin grass held its own right up to the crest of the cliff. Overhead, forty or fifty feet of rock bulged into the great masses characteristic of chalk, but at the end of the ledge a gully, a precipitous groove of discoloured rock, slashed the face of the cliff, and gave a footing to a scrubby growth, by which Eudena and Ugh-lomi went up and down.

They stood as noiseless as startled deer, with every sense expectant. For a minute they heard nothing, and then came a faint rattling of dust down the gully, and the creaking of twigs.

Ugh-lomi gripped his axe, and went to the edge of the ledge, for the bulge of the chalk overhead had hidden the upper part of the gully. And forthwith, with a sudden contraction of the heart, he saw the cave bear half-way down from the brow, and making a gingerly backward step with his flat hind-foot. His hind-quarters were towards Ugh-lomi, and he clawed at the rocks and bushes so that he seemed flattened against the cliff. He looked none the less for that. From his shining snout to his stumpy tail he was a lion and a half, the length of two tall men. He looked over his shoulder, and his huge mouth was open with the exertion of holding up his great carcase, and his tongue lay out....

He got his footing, and came down slowly, a yard nearer.

"Bear," said Ugh-lomi, looking round with his face white.

But Eudena, with terror in her eyes, was pointing down the cliff.

Ugh-lomi's mouth fell open. For down below, with her big fore-feet against the rock, stood another big brown-grey bulk — the she-bear. She was not so big as Andoo, but she was big enough for all that.

Then suddenly Ugh-lomi gave a cry, and catching up a handful of the litter of ferns that lay scattered on the ledge, he thrust it into the pallid ash of the fire. “Brother Fire!” he cried, “Brother Fire!” And Eudena, starting into activity, did likewise. “Brother Fire! Help, help! Brother Fire!”

Brother Fire was still red in his heart, but he turned to grey as they scattered him. “Brother Fire!” they screamed. But he whispered and passed, and there was nothing but ashes. Then Ugh-lomi danced with anger and struck the ashes with his fist. But Eudena began to hammer the firestone against a flint. And the eyes of each were turning ever and again towards the gully by which Andoo was climbing down. Brother Fire!

Suddenly the huge furry hind-quarters of the bear came into view, beneath the bulge of the chalk that had hidden him. He was still clambering gingerly down the nearly vertical surface. His head was yet out of sight, but they could hear him talking to himself. “Pig and monkey,” said the cave bear. “It ought to be good.”

Eudena struck a spark and blew at it; it twinkled brighter and then — went out. At that she cast down flint and firestone and stared blankly. Then she sprang to her feet and scrambled a yard or so up the cliff above the ledge. How she hung on even for a moment I do not know, for the chalk was vertical and without grip for a monkey. In a couple of seconds she had slid back to the ledge again with bleeding hands.

Ugh-lomi was making frantic rushes about the ledge — now he would go to the edge, now to the gully. He did not know what to do, he could not think. The she-bear looked smaller than her mate — much. If they rushed down on her together, *one* might live. “Ugh?” said the cave bear, and Ugh-lomi turned again and saw his little eyes peering under the bulge of the chalk.

Eudena, cowering at the end of the ledge, began to scream like a gripped rabbit.

At that a sort of madness came upon Ugh-lomi. With a mighty cry, he caught up his axe and ran towards Andoo. The monster gave a grunt of surprise. In a moment Ugh-lomi was clinging to a bush right underneath the bear, and in another he was hanging to its back half buried in fur, with one fist clutched in the hair under its jaw. The

bear was too astonished at this fantastic attack to do more than cling passive. And then the axe, the first of all axes, rang on its skull.

The bear's head twisted from side to side, and he began a petulant scolding growl. The axe bit within an inch of the left eye, and the hot blood blinded that side. At that the brute roared with surprise and anger, and his teeth gnashed six inches from Ugh-lomi's face. Then the axe, clubbed close, came down heavily on the corner of the jaw.

The next blow blinded the right side and called forth a roar, this time of pain. Eudena saw the huge, flat feet slipping and sliding, and suddenly the bear gave a clumsy leap sideways, as if for the ledge. Then everything vanished, and the hazels smashed, and a roar of pain and a tumult of shouts and growls came up from far below.

Eudena screamed and ran to the edge and peered over. For a moment, man and bears were a heap together, Ugh-lomi uppermost; and then he had sprung clear and was scaling the gully again, with the bears rolling and striking at one another among the hazels. But he had left his axe below, and three knob-ended streaks of carmine were shooting down his thigh. "Up!" he cried, and in a moment Eudena was leading the way to the top of the cliff.

In half a minute they were at the crest, their hearts pumping noisily, with Andoo and his wife far and safe below them. Andoo was sitting on his haunches, both paws at work, trying with quick exasperated movements to wipe the blindness out of his eyes, and the she-bear stood on all-fours a little way off, ruffled in appearance and growling angrily. Ugh-lomi flung himself flat on the grass, and lay panting and bleeding with his face on his arms.

For a second Eudena regarded the bears, then she came and sat beside him, looking at him....

Presently she put forth her hand timidly and touched him, and made the guttural sound that was his name. He turned over and raised himself on his arm. His face was pale, like the face of one who is afraid. He looked at her steadfastly for a moment, and then suddenly he laughed. "Waugh!" he said exultantly.

"Waugh!" said she — a simple but expressive conversation.

Then Ugh-lomi came and knelt beside her, and on hands and knees peered over the brow and examined the gorge. His breath was steady now, and the blood on his leg had ceased to flow, though the

scratches the she-bear had made were open and wide. He squatted up and sat staring at the footmarks of the great bear as they came to the gully — they were as wide as his head and twice as long. Then he jumped up and went along the cliff face until the ledge was visible. Here he sat down for some time thinking, while Eudena watched him. Presently she saw the bears had gone.

At last Ugh-lomi rose, as one whose mind is made up. He returned towards the gully, Eudena keeping close by him, and together they clambered to the ledge. They took the firestone and a flint, and then Ugh-lomi went down to the foot of the cliff very cautiously, and found his axe. They returned to the cliff as quietly as they could, and set off at a brisk walk. The ledge was a home no longer, with such callers in the neighbourhood. Ugh-lomi carried the axe and Eudena the firestone. So simple was a Palæolithic removal.

They went up-stream, although it might lead to the very lair of the cave bear, because there was no other way to go. Down the stream was the tribe, and had not Ugh-lomi killed Uya and Wau? By the stream they had to keep — because of drinking.

So they marched through beech trees, with the gorge deepening until the river flowed, a frothing rapid, five hundred feet below them. Of all the changeful things in this world of change, the courses of rivers in deep valleys change least. It was the river Wey, the river we know to-day, and they marched over the very spots where nowadays stand little Guildford and Godalming — the first human beings to come into the land. Once a grey ape chattered and vanished, and all along the cliff edge, vast and even, ran the spoor of the great cave bear.

And then the spoor of the bear fell away from the cliff, showing, Ugh-lomi thought, that he came from some place to the left, and keeping to the cliff's edge, they presently came to an end. They found themselves looking down on a great semi-circular space caused by the collapse of the cliff. It had smashed right across the gorge, banking the up-stream water back in a pool which overflowed in a rapid. The slip had happened long ago. It was grassed over, but the face of the cliffs that stood about the semicircle was still almost fresh-looking and white as on the day when the rock must have broken and slid down. Starkly exposed and black under the foot of

these cliffs were the mouths of several caves. And as they stood there, looking at the space, and disinclined to skirt it, because they thought the bears' lair lay somewhere on the left in the direction they must needs take, they saw suddenly first one bear and then two coming up the grass slope to the right and going across the amphitheatre towards the caves. Andoo was first; he dropped a little on his fore-foot and his mien was despondent, and the she-bear came shuffling behind.

Eudena and Ugh-lomi stepped back from the cliff until they could just see the bears over the verge. Then Ugh-lomi stopped. Eudena pulled his arm, but he turned with a forbidding gesture, and her hand dropped. Ugh-lomi stood watching the bears, with his axe in his hand, until they had vanished into the cave. He growled softly, and shook the axe at the she-bear's receding quarters. Then to Eudena's terror, instead of creeping off with her, he lay flat down and crawled forward into such a position that he could just see the cave. It was bears — and he did it as calmly as if it had been rabbits he was watching!

He lay still, like a barked log, sun-dappled, in the shadow of the trees. He was thinking. And Eudena had learnt, even when a little girl, that when Ugh-lomi became still like that, jaw-bone on fist, novel things presently began to happen.

It was an hour before the thinking was over; it was noon when the two little savages had found their way to the cliff brow that overhung the bears' cave. And all the long afternoon they fought desperately with a great boulder of chalk; trundling it, with nothing but their unaided sturdy muscles, from the gully where it had hung like a loose tooth, towards the cliff top. It was full two yards about, it stood as high as Eudena's waist, it was obtuse-angled and toothed with flints. And when the sun set it was poised, three inches from the edge, above the cave of the great cave bear.

In the cave conversation languished during that afternoon. The she-bear snoozed sulkily in her corner — for she was fond of pig and monkey — and Andoo was busy licking the side of his paw and smearing his face to cool the smart and inflammation of his wounds. Afterwards he went and sat just within the mouth of the cave, blinking out at the afternoon sun with his uninjured eye, and

thinking.

"I never was so startled in my life," he said at last. "They are the most extraordinary beasts. Attacking *me*!"

"I don't like them," said the she-bear, out of the darkness behind.

"A feebler sort of beast I *never* saw. I can't think what the world is coming to. Scraggy, weedy legs.... Wonder how they keep warm in winter?"

"Very likely they don't," said the she-bear.

"I suppose it's a sort of monkey gone wrong."

"It's a change," said the she-bear.

A pause.

"The advantage he had was merely accidental," said Andoo. "These things *will* happen at times."

"*I* can't understand why you let go," said the she-bear.

That matter had been discussed before, and settled. So Andoo, being a bear of experience, remained silent for a space. Then he resumed upon a different aspect of the matter. "He has a sort of claw — a long claw that he seemed to have first on one paw and then on the other. Just one claw. They're very odd things. The bright thing, too, they seemed to have — like that glare that comes in the sky in daytime — only it jumps about — it's really worth seeing. It's a thing with a root, too — like grass when it is windy."

"Does it bite?" asked the she-bear. "If it bites it can't be a plant."

"No —— I don't know," said Andoo. "But it's curious, anyhow."

"I wonder if they *are* good eating?" said the she-bear.

"They look it," said Andoo, with appetite — for the cave bear, like the polar bear, was an incurable carnivore — no roots or honey for *him*.

The two bears fell into a meditation for a space. Then Andoo resumed his simple attentions to his eye. The sunlight up the green slope before the cave mouth grew warmer in tone and warmer, until it was a ruddy amber.

"Curious sort of thing — day," said the cave bear. "Lot too much of it, I think. Quite unsuitable for hunting. Dazzles me always. I can't smell nearly so well by day."

The she-bear did not answer, but there came a measured crunching sound out of the darkness. She had turned up a bone.

Andoo yawned. “Well,” he said. He strolled to the cave mouth and stood with his head projecting, surveying the amphitheatre. He found he had to turn his head completely round to see objects on his right-hand side. No doubt that eye would be all right to-morrow.

He yawned again. There was a tap overhead, and a big mass of chalk flew out from the cliff face, dropped a yard in front of his nose, and starred into a dozen unequal fragments. It startled him extremely.

When he had recovered a little from his shock, he went and sniffed curiously at the representative pieces of the fallen projectile. They had a distinctive flavour, oddly reminiscent of the two drab animals of the ledge. He sat up and pawed the larger lump, and walked round it several times, trying to find a man about it somewhere....

When night had come he went off down the river gorge to see if he could cut off either of the ledge’s occupants. The ledge was empty, there were no signs of the red thing, but as he was rather hungry he did not loiter long that night, but pushed on to pick up a red deer fawn. He forgot about the drab animals. He found a fawn, but the doe was close by and made an ugly fight for her young. Andoo had to leave the fawn, but as her blood was up she stuck to the attack, and at last he got in a blow of his paw on her nose, and so got hold of her. More meat but less delicacy, and the she-bear, following, had her share. The next afternoon, curiously enough, the very fellow of the first white rock fell, and smashed precisely according to precedent.

The aim of the third, that fell the night after, however, was better. It hit Andoo’s unspeculative skull with a crack that echoed up the cliff, and the white fragments went dancing to all the points of the compass. The she-bear coming after him and sniffing curiously at him, found him lying in an odd sort of attitude, with his head wet and all out of shape. She was a young she-bear, and inexperienced, and having sniffed about him for some time and licked him a little, and so forth, she decided to leave him until the odd mood had passed, and went on her hunting alone.

She looked up the fawn of the red doe they had killed two nights ago, and found it. But it was lonely hunting without Andoo, and she returned caveward before dawn. The sky was grey and overcast, the

trees up the gorge were black and unfamiliar, and into her ursine mind came a dim sense of strange and dreary happenings. She lifted up her voice and called Andoo by name. The sides of the gorge re-echoed her.

As she approached the caves she saw in the half light, and heard a couple of jackals scuttle off, and immediately after a hyæna howled and a dozen clumsy bulks went lumbering up the slope, and stopped and yelled derision. “Lord of the rocks and caves — ya-ha!” came down the wind. The dismal feeling in the she-bear’s mind became suddenly acute. She shuffled across the amphitheatre.

“Ya-ha!” said the hyænas, retreating. “Ya-ha!”

The cave bear was not lying quite in the same attitude, because the hyænas had been busy, and in one place his ribs showed white. Dotted over the turf about him lay the smashed fragments of the three great lumps of chalk. And the air was full of the scent of death.

The she-bear stopped dead. Even now, that the great and wonderful Andoo was killed was beyond her believing. Then she heard far overhead a sound, a queer sound, a little like the shout of a hyæna but fuller and lower in pitch. She looked up, her little dawn-blinded eyes seeing little, her nostrils quivering. And there, on the cliff edge, far above her against the bright pink of dawn, were two little shaggy round dark things, the heads of Eudena and Ugh-lomi, as they shouted derision at her. But though she could not see them very distinctly she could hear, and dimly she began to apprehend. A novel feeling as of imminent strange evils came into her heart.

She began to examine the smashed fragments of chalk that lay about Andoo. For a space she stood still, looking about her and making a low continuous sound that was almost a moan. Then she went back incredulously to Andoo to make one last effort to rouse him.

III — THE FIRST HORSEMAN

In the days before Ugh-lomi there was little trouble between the horses and men. They lived apart — the men in the river swamps and thickets, the horses on the wide grassy uplands between the chestnuts and the pines. Sometimes a pony would come straying into the clogging marshes to make a flint-hacked meal, and sometimes the tribe would find one, the kill of a lion, and drive off the jackals, and feast heartily while the sun was high. These horses of the old time were clumsy at the fetlock and dun-coloured, with a rough tail and big head. They came every spring-time north-westward into the country, after the swallows and before the hippopotami, as the grass on the wide downland stretches grew long. They came only in small bodies thus far, each herd, a stallion and two or three mares and a foal or so, having its own stretch of country, and they went again when the chestnut-trees were yellow and the wolves came down the Wealden mountains.

It was their custom to graze right out in the open, going into cover only in the heat of the day. They avoided the long stretches of thorn and beechwood, preferring an isolated group of trees void of ambuscade, so that it was hard to come upon them. They were never fighters; their heels and teeth were for one another, but in the clear country, once they were started, no living thing came near them, though perhaps the elephant might have done so had he felt the need. And in those days man seemed a harmless thing enough. No whisper of prophetic intelligence told the species of the terrible slavery that was to come, of the whip and spur and bearing-rein, the clumsy load and the slippery street, the insufficient food, and the knacker's yard, that was to replace the wide grass-land and the freedom of the earth.

Down in the Wey marshes Ugh-lomi and Eudena had never seen the horses closely, but now they saw them every day as the two of them raided out from their lair on the ledge in the gorge, raiding together in search of food. They had returned to the ledge after the killing of Andoo; for of the she-bear they were not afraid. The she-bear had become afraid of them, and when she winded them she went aside. The two went together everywhere; for since they had left the

tribe Eudena was not so much Ugh-lomi's woman as his mate; she learnt to hunt even — as much, that is, as any woman could. She was indeed a marvellous woman. He would lie for hours watching a beast, or planning catches in that shock head of his, and she would stay beside him, with her bright eyes upon him, offering no irritating suggestions — as still as any man. A wonderful woman!

At the top of the cliff was an open grassy lawn and then beechwoods, and going through the beechwoods one came to the edge of the rolling grassy expanse, and in sight of the horses. Here, on the edge of the wood and bracken, were the rabbit-burrows, and here among the fronds Eudena and Ugh-lomi would lie with their throwing-stones ready, until the little people came out to nibble and play in the sunset. And while Eudena would sit, a silent figure of watchfulness, regarding the burrows, Ugh-lomi's eyes were ever away across the greensward at those wonderful grazing strangers.

In a dim way he appreciated their grace and their supple nimbleness. As the sun declined in the evening-time, and the heat of the day passed, they would become active, would start chasing one another, neighing, dodging, shaking their manes, coming round in great curves, sometimes so close that the pounding of the turf sounded like hurried thunder. It looked so fine that Ugh-lomi wanted to join in badly. And sometimes one would roll over on the turf, kicking four hoofs heavenward, which seemed formidable and was certainly much less alluring.

Dim imaginings ran through Ugh-lomi's mind as he watched — by virtue of which two rabbits lived the longer. And sleeping, his brains were clearer and bolder — for that was the way in those days. He came near the horses, he dreamt, and fought, smiting-stone against hoof, but then the horses changed to men, or, at least, to men with horses' heads, and he awoke in a cold sweat of terror.

Yet the next day in the morning, as the horses were grazing, one of the mares whinnied, and they saw Ugh-lomi coming up the wind. They all stopped their eating and watched him. Ugh-lomi was not coming towards them, but strolling obliquely across the open, looking at anything in the world but horses. He had stuck three fern-fronds into the mat of his hair, giving him a remarkable appearance, and he walked very slowly. "What's up now?" said the Master

Horse, who was capable, but inexperienced.

"It looks more like the first half of an animal than anything else in the world," he said. "Fore-legs and no hind."

"It's only one of those pink monkey things," said the Eldest Mare. "They're a sort of river monkey. They're quite common on the plains."

Ugh-lomi continued his oblique advance. The Eldest Mare was struck with the want of motive in his proceedings.

"Fool!" said the Eldest Mare, in a quick conclusive way she had. She resumed her grazing. The Master Horse and the Second Mare followed suit.

"Look! he's nearer," said the Foal with a stripe.

One of the younger foals made uneasy movements. Ugh-lomi squatted down, and sat regarding the horses fixedly. In a little while he was satisfied that they meant neither flight nor hostilities. He began to consider his next procedure. He did not feel anxious to kill, but he had his axe with him, and the spirit of sport was upon him. How would one kill one of these creatures? — these great beautiful creatures!

Eudena, watching him with a fearful admiration from the cover of the bracken, saw him presently go on all fours, and so proceed again. But the horses preferred him a biped to a quadruped, and the Master Horse threw up his head and gave the word to move. Ugh-lomi thought they were off for good, but after a minute's gallop they came round in a wide curve, and stood winding him. Then, as a rise in the ground hid him, they tailed out, the Master Horse leading, and approached him spirally.

He was as ignorant of the possibilities of a horse as they were of his. And at this stage it would seem he funked. He knew this kind of stalking would make red deer or buffalo charge, if it were persisted in. At any rate Eudena saw him jump up and come walking towards her with the fern plumes held in his hand.

She stood up, and he grinned to show that the whole thing was an immense lark, and that what he had done was just what he had planned to do from the very beginning. So that incident ended. But he was very thoughtful all that day.

The next day this foolish drab creature with the leonine mane,

instead of going about the grazing or hunting he was made for, was prowling round the horses again. The Eldest Mare was all for silent contempt. “I suppose he wants to learn something from us,” she said, and “*Let* him.” The next day he was at it again. The Master Horse decided he meant absolutely nothing. But as a matter of fact, Ugh-lomi, the first of men to feel that curious spell of the horse that binds us even to this day, meant a great deal. He admired them unreservedly. There was a rudiment of the snob in him, I am afraid, and he wanted to be near these beautifully-curved animals. Then there were vague conceptions of a kill. If only they would let him come near them! But they drew the line, he found, at fifty yards. If he came nearer than that they moved off — with dignity. I suppose it was the way he had blinded Andoo that made him think of leaping on the back of one of them. But though Eudena after a time came out in the open too, and they did some unobtrusive stalking, things stopped there.

Then one memorable day a new idea came to Ugh-lomi. The horse looks down and level, but he does not look up. No animals look up — they have too much common-sense. It was only that fantastic creature, man, could waste his wits skyward. Ugh-lomi made no philosophical deductions, but he perceived the thing was so. So he spent a weary day in a beech that stood in the open, while Eudena stalked. Usually the horses went into the shade in the heat of the afternoon, but that day the sky was overcast, and they would not, in spite of Eudena’s solicitude.

It was two days after that that Ugh-lomi had his desire. The day was blazing hot, and the multiplying flies asserted themselves. The horses stopped grazing before midday, and came into the shadow below him, and stood in couples nose to tail, flapping.

The Master Horse, by virtue of his heels, came closest to the tree. And suddenly there was a rustle and a creak, a *thud*.... Then a sharp chipped flint bit him on the cheek. The Master Horse stumbled, came on one knee, rose to his feet, and was off like the wind. The air was full of the whirl of limbs, the prance of hoofs, and snorts of alarm. Ugh-lomi was pitched a foot in the air, came down again, up again, his stomach was hit violently, and then his knees got a grip of something between them. He found himself clutching with knees,

feet, and hands, careering violently with extraordinary oscillation through the air — his axe gone heaven knows whither. “Hold tight,” said Mother Instinct, and he did.

He was aware of a lot of coarse hair in his face, some of it between his teeth, and of green turf streaming past in front of his eyes. He saw the shoulder of the Master Horse, vast and sleek, with the muscles flowing swiftly under the skin. He perceived that his arms were round the neck, and that the violent jerkings he experienced had a sort of rhythm.

Then he was in the midst of a wild rush of tree-stems, and then there were fronds of bracken about, and then more open turf. Then a stream of pebbles rushing past, little pebbles flying sideways athwart the stream from the blow of the swift hoofs. Ugh-lomi began to feel frightfully sick and giddy, but he was not the stuff to leave go simply because he was uncomfortable.

He dared not leave his grip, but he tried to make himself more comfortable. He released his hug on the neck, gripping the mane instead. He slipped his knees forward, and pushing back, came into a sitting position where the quarters broaden. It was nervous work, but he managed it, and at last he was fairly seated astride, breathless indeed, and uncertain, but with that frightful pounding of his body at any rate relieved.

Slowly the fragments of Ugh-lomi’s mind got into order again. The pace seemed to him terrific, but a kind of exultation was beginning to oust his first frantic terror. The air rushed by, sweet and wonderful, the rhythm of the hoofs changed and broke up and returned into itself again. They were on turf now, a wide glade — the beech-trees a hundred yards away on either side, and a succulent band of green starred with pink blossom and shot with silver water here and there, meandered down the middle. Far off was a glimpse of blue valley — far away. The exultation grew. It was man’s first taste of pace.

Then came a wide space dappled with flying fallow deer scattering this way and that, and then a couple of jackals, mistaking Ugh-lomi for a lion, came hurrying after him. And when they saw it was not a lion they still came on out of curiosity. On galloped the horse, with his one idea of escape, and after him the jackals, with

pricked ears and quickly-barked remarks. “Which kills which?” said the first jackal. “It’s the horse being killed,” said the second. They gave the howl of following, and the horse answered to it as a horse answers nowadays to the spur.

On they rushed, a little tornado through the quiet day, putting up startled birds, sending a dozen unexpected things darting to cover, raising a myriad of indignant dung-flies, smashing little blossoms, flowering complacently, back into their parental turf. Trees again, and then splash, splash across a torrent; then a hare shot out of a tuft of grass under the very hoofs of the Master Horse, and the jackals left them incontinently. So presently they broke into the open again, a wide expanse of turfy hillside — the very grassy downs that fall northward nowadays from the Epsom Stand.

The first hot bolt of the Master Horse was long since over. He was falling into a measured trot, and Ugh-lomi, albeit bruised exceedingly and quite uncertain of the future, was in a state of glorious enjoyment. And now came a new development. The pace broke again, the Master Horse came round on a short curve, and stopped dead....

Ugh-lomi became alert. He wished he had a flint, but the throwing-flint he had carried in a thong about his waist was — like the axe — heaven knows where. The Master Horse turned his head, and Ugh-lomi became aware of an eye and teeth. He whipped his leg into a position of security, and hit at the cheek with his fist. Then the head went down somewhere out of existence apparently, and the back he was sitting on flew up into a dome. Ugh-lomi became a thing of instinct again — strictly prehensile; he held by knees and feet, and his head seemed sliding towards the turf. His fingers were twisted into the shock of mane, and the rough hair of the horse saved him. The gradient he was on lowered again, and then— “Whup!” said Ugh-lomi astonished, and the slant was the other way up. But Ugh-lomi was a thousand generations nearer the primordial than man: no monkey could have held on better. And the lion had been training the horse for countless generations against the tactics of rolling and rearing back. But he kicked like a master, and buck-jumped rather neatly. In five minutes Ugh-lomi lived a lifetime. If he came off the horse would kill him, he felt assured.

Then the Master Horse decided to stick to his old tactics again, and suddenly went off at a gallop. He headed down the slope, taking the steep places at a rush, swerving neither to the right nor to the left, and, as they rode down, the wide expanse of valley sank out of sight behind the approaching skirmishers of oak and hawthorn. They skirted a sudden hollow with the pool of a spring, rank weeds and silver bushes. The ground grew softer and the grass taller, and on the right-hand side and the left came scattered bushes of May — still splashed with belated blossom. Presently the bushes thickened until they lashed the passing rider, and little flashes and gouts of blood came out on horse and man. Then the way opened again.

And then came a wonderful adventure. A sudden squeal of unreasonable anger rose amidst the bushes, the squeal of some creature bitterly wronged. And crashing after them appeared a big, grey-blue shape. It was Yaaa the big-horned rhinoceros, in one of those fits of fury of his, charging full tilt, after the manner of his kind. He had been startled at his feeding, and someone, it did not matter who, was to be ripped and trampled therefore. He was bearing down on them from the left, with his wicked little eye red, his great horn down and his tail like a jury-mast behind him. For a minute Ugh-lomi was minded to slip off and dodge, and then behold! the staccato of the hoofs grew swifter, and the rhinoceros and his stumpy hurrying little legs seemed to slide out at the back corner of Ugh-lomi's eye. In two minutes they were through the bushes of May, and out in the open, going fast. For a space he could hear the ponderous paces in pursuit receding behind him, and then it was just as if Yaaa had not lost his temper, as if Yaaa had never existed.

The pace never faltered, on they rode and on.

Ugh-lomi was now all exultation. To exult in those days was to insult. "Ya-ha! big nose!" he said, trying to crane back and see some remote speck of a pursuer. "Why don't you carry your smiting-stone in your fist?" he ended with a frantic whoop.

But that whoop was unfortunate, for coming close to the ear of the horse, and being quite unexpected, it startled the stallion extremely. He shied violently. Ugh-lomi suddenly found himself uncomfortable again. He was hanging on to the horse, he found, by one arm and one knee.

The rest of the ride was honourable but unpleasant. The view was chiefly of blue sky, and that was combined with the most unpleasant physical sensations. Finally, a bush of thorn lashed him and he let go.

He hit the ground with his cheek and shoulder, and then, after a complicated and extraordinarily rapid movement, hit it again with the end of his backbone. He saw splashes and sparks of light and colour. The ground seemed bouncing about just like the horse had done. Then he found he was sitting on turf, six yards beyond the bush. In front of him was a space of grass, growing greener and greener, and a number of human beings in the distance, and the horse was going round at a smart gallop quite a long way off to the right.

The human beings were on the opposite side of the river, some still in the water, but they were all running away as hard as they could go. The advent of a monster that took to pieces was not the sort of novelty they cared for. For quite a minute Ugh-lomi sat regarding them in a purely spectacular spirit. The bend of the river, the knoll among the reeds and royal ferns, the thin streams of smoke going up to Heaven, were all perfectly familiar to him. It was the squatting-place of the Sons of Uya, of Uya from whom he had fled with Eudena, and whom he had waylaid in the chestnut woods and killed with the First Axe.

He rose to his feet, still dazed from his fall, and as he did so the scattering fugitives turned and regarded him. Some pointed to the receding horse and chattered. He walked slowly towards them, staring. He forgot the horse, he forgot his own bruises, in the growing interest of this encounter. There were fewer of them than there had been — he supposed the others must have hid — the heap of fern for the night fire was not so high. By the flint heaps should have sat Wau — but then he remembered he had killed Wau. Suddenly brought back to this familiar scene, the gorge and the bears and Eudena seemed things remote, things dreamt of.

He stopped at the bank and stood regarding the tribe. His mathematical abilities were of the slightest, but it was certain there were fewer. The men might be away, but there were fewer women and children. He gave the shout of home-coming. His quarrel had been with Uya and Wau — not with the others. “Children of Uya!” he cried. They answered with his name, a little fearfully because of

the strange way he had come.

For a space they spoke together. Then an old woman lifted a shrill voice and answered him. “Our Lord is a Lion.”

Ugh-lomi did not understand that saying. They answered him again several together, “Uya comes again. He comes as a Lion. Our Lord is a Lion. He comes at night. He slays whom he will. But none other may slay us, Ugh-lomi, none other may slay us.”

Still Ugh-lomi did not understand.

“Our Lord is a Lion. He speaks no more to men.”

Ugh-lomi stood regarding them. He had had dreams — he knew that though he had killed Uya, Uya still existed. And now they told him Uya was a Lion.

The shrivelled old woman, the mistress of the fire-minders, suddenly turned and spoke softly to those next to her. She was a very old woman indeed, she had been the first of Uya’s wives, and he had let her live beyond the age to which it is seemly a woman should be permitted to live. She had been cunning from the first, cunning to please Uya and to get food. And now she was great in counsel. She spoke softly, and Ugh-lomi watched her shrivelled form across the river with a curious distaste. Then she called aloud, “Come over to us, Ugh-lomi.”

A girl suddenly lifted up her voice. “Come over to us, Ugh-lomi,” she said. And they all began crying, “Come over to us, Ugh-lomi.”

It was strange how their manner changed after the old woman called.

He stood quite still watching them all. It was pleasant to be called, and the girl who had called first was a pretty one. But she made him think of Eudena.

“Come over to us, Ugh-lomi,” they cried, and the voice of the shrivelled old woman rose above them all. At the sound of her voice his hesitation returned.

He stood on the river bank, Ugh-lomi — Ugh the Thinker — with his thoughts slowly taking shape. Presently one and then another paused to see what he would do. He was minded to go back, he was minded not to. Suddenly his fear or his caution got the upper hand. Without answering them he turned, and walked back towards the distant thorn-trees, the way he had come. Forthwith the whole tribe

started crying to him again very eagerly. He hesitated and turned, then he went on, then he turned again, and then once again, regarding them with troubled eyes as they called. The last time he took two paces back, before his fear stopped him. They saw him stop once more, and suddenly shake his head and vanish among the hawthorn-trees.

Then all the women and children lifted up their voices together, and called to him in one last vain effort.

Far down the river the reeds were stirring in the breeze, where, convenient for his new sort of feeding, the old lion, who had taken to man-eating, had made his lair.

The old woman turned her face that way, and pointed to the hawthorn thickets. “Uya,” she screamed, “there goes thine enemy! There goes thine enemy, Uya! Why do you devour us nightly? We have tried to snare him! There goes thine enemy, Uya!”

But the lion who preyed upon the tribe was taking his siesta. The cry went unheard. That day he had dined on one of the plumper girls, and his mood was a comfortable placidity. He really did not understand that he was Uya or that Ugh-lomi was his enemy.

So it was that Ugh-lomi rode the horse, and heard first of Uya the lion, who had taken the place of Uya the Master, and was eating up the tribe. And as he hurried back to the gorge his mind was no longer full of the horse, but of the thought that Uya was still alive, to slay or be slain. Over and over again he saw the shrunken band of women and children crying that Uya was a lion. Uya was a lion!

And presently, fearing the twilight might come upon him, Ugh-lomi began running.

IV — UYA THE LION

The old lion was in luck. The tribe had a certain pride in their ruler, but that was all the satisfaction they got out of it. He came the very night that Ugh-lomi killed Uya the Cunning, and so it was they named him Uya. It was the old woman, the fire-minder, who first named him Uya. A shower had lowered the fires to a glow, and made the night dark. And as they conversed together, and peered at one another in the darkness, and wondered fearfully what Uya would do to them in their dreams now that he was dead, they heard the mounting reverberations of the lion's roar close at hand. Then everything was still.

They held their breath, so that almost the only sounds were the patter of the rain and the hiss of the raindrops in the ashes. And then, after an interminable time, a crash, and a shriek of fear, and a growling. They sprang to their feet, shouting, screaming, running this way and that, but brands would not burn, and in a minute the victim was being dragged away through the ferns. It was Irk, the brother of Wau.

So the lion came.

The ferns were still wet from the rain the next night, and he came and took Click with the red hair. That sufficed for two nights. And then in the dark between the moons he came three nights, night after night, and that though they had good fires. He was an old lion with stumpy teeth, but very silent and very cool; he knew of fires before; these were not the first of mankind that had ministered to his old age. The third night he came between the outer fire and the inner, and he leapt the flint heap, and pulled down Irm the son of Irk, who had seemed like to be the leader. That was a dreadful night, because they lit great flares of fern and ran screaming, and the lion missed his hold of Irm. By the glare of the fire they saw Irm struggle up, and run a little way towards them, and then the lion in two bounds had him down again. That was the last of Irm.

So fear came, and all the delight of spring passed out of their lives. Already there were five gone out of the tribe, and four nights added three more to the number. Food-seeking became spiritless,

none knew who might go next, and all day the women toiled, even the favourite women, gathering litter and sticks for the night fires. And the hunters hunted ill: in the warm spring-time hunger came again as though it was still winter. The tribe might have moved, had they had a leader, but they had no leader, and none knew where to go that the lion could not follow them. So the old lion waxed fat and thanked heaven for the kindly race of men. Two of the children and a youth died while the moon was still new, and then it was the shrivelled old fire-minder first bethought herself in a dream of Eudena and Ugh-lomi, and of the way Uya had been slain. She had lived in fear of Uya all her days, and now she lived in fear of the lion. That Ugh-lomi could kill Uya for good — Ugh-lomi whom she had seen born — was impossible. It was Uya still seeking his enemy!

And then came the strange return of Ugh-lomi, a wonderful animal seen galloping far across the river, that suddenly changed into two animals, a horse and a man. Following this portent, the vision of Ugh-lomi on the farther bank of the river.... Yes, it was all plain to her. Uya was punishing them, because they had not hunted down Ugh-lomi and Eudena.

The men came straggling back to the chances of the night while the sun was still golden in the sky. They were received with the story of Ugh-lomi. She went across the river with them and showed them his spoor hesitating on the farther bank. Siss the Tracker knew the feet for Ugh-lomi's. "Uya needs Ugh-lomi," cried the old woman, standing on the left of the bend, a gesticulating figure of flaring bronze in the sunset. Her cries were strange sounds, flitting to and fro on the borderland of speech, but this was the sense they carried: "The lion needs Eudena. He comes night after night seeking Eudena and Ugh-lomi. When he cannot find Eudena and Ugh-lomi, he grows angry and he kills. Hunt Eudena and Ugh-lomi, Eudena whom he pursued, and Ugh-lomi for whom he gave the death-word! Hunt Eudena and Ugh-lomi!"

She turned to the distant reed-bed, as sometimes she had turned to Uya in his life. "Is it not so, my lord?" she cried. And, as if in answer, the tall reeds bowed before a breath of wind.

Far into the twilight the sound of hacking was heard from the squatting-places. It was the men sharpening their ashen spears

against the hunting of the morrow. And in the night, early before the moon rose, the lion came and took the girl of Siss the Tracker.

In the morning before the sun had risen, Siss the Tracker, and the lad Wau-Hau, who now chipped flints, and One Eye, and Bo, and the Snail-eater, the two red-haired men, and Cat's-skin and Snake, all the men that were left alive of the Sons of Uya, taking their ash spears and their smiting-stones, and with throwing-stones in the beast-paw bags, started forth upon the trail of Ugh-lomi through the hawthorn thickets where Yaaa the Rhinoceros and his brothers were feeding, and up the bare downland towards the beechwoods.

That night the fires burnt high and fierce, as the waxing moon set, and the lion left the crouching women and children in peace.

And the next day, while the sun was still high, the hunters returned — all save One Eye, who lay dead with a smashed skull at the foot of the ledge. (When Ugh-lomi came back that evening from stalking the horses, he found the vultures already busy over him.) And with them the hunters brought Eudena bruised and wounded, but alive. That had been the strange order of the shrivelled old woman, that she was to be brought alive— "She is no kill for us. She is for Uya the Lion." Her hands were tied with thongs, as though she had been a man, and she came weary and drooping — her hair over her eyes and matted with blood. They walked about her, and ever and again the Snail-eater, whose name she had given, would laugh and strike her with his ashen spear. And after he had struck her with his spear, he would look over his shoulder like one who had done an over-bold deed. The others, too, looked over their shoulders ever and again, and all were in a hurry save Eudena. When the old woman saw them coming, she cried aloud with joy.

They made Eudena cross the river with her hands tied, although the current was strong and when she slipped the old woman screamed, first with joy and then for fear she might be drowned. And when they had dragged Eudena to shore, she could not stand for a time, albeit they beat her sore. So they let her sit with her feet touching the water, and her eyes staring before her, and her face set, whatever they might do or say. All the tribe came down to the squatting-place, even curly little Haha, who as yet could scarcely toddle, and stood staring at Eudena and the old woman, as now we

should stare at some strange wounded beast and its captor.

The old woman tore off the necklace of Uya that was about Eudena's neck, and put it on herself — she had been the first to wear it. Then she tore at Eudena's hair, and took a spear from Siss and beat her with all her might. And when she had vented the warmth of her heart on the girl she looked closely into her face. Eudena's eyes were closed and her features were set, and she lay so still that for a moment the old woman feared she was dead. And then her nostrils quivered. At that the old woman slapped her face and laughed and gave the spear to Siss again, and went a little way off from her and began to talk and jeer at her after her manner.

The old woman had more words than any in the tribe. And her talk was a terrible thing to hear. Sometimes she screamed and moaned incoherently, and sometimes the shape of her guttural cries was the mere phantom of thoughts. But she conveyed to Eudena, nevertheless, much of the things that were yet to come, of the Lion and of the torment he would do her. "And Ugh-lomi! Ha, ha! Ugh-lomi is slain?"

And suddenly Eudena's eyes opened and she sat up again, and her look met the old woman's fair and level. "No," she said slowly, like one trying to remember, "I did not see my Ugh-lomi slain. I did not see my Ugh-lomi slain."

"Tell her," cried the old woman. "Tell her — he that killed him. Tell her how Ugh-lomi was slain."

She looked, and all the women and children there looked, from man to man.

None answered her. They stood shame-faced.

"Tell her," said the old woman. The men looked at one another.

Eudena's face suddenly lit.

"Tell her," she said. "Tell her, mighty men! Tell her the killing of Ugh-lomi."

The old woman rose and struck her sharply across her mouth.

"We could not find Ugh-lomi," said Siss the Tracker, slowly. "Who hunts two, kills none."

Then Eudena's heart leapt, but she kept her face hard. It was as well, for the old woman looked at her sharply, with murder in her eyes.

Then the old woman turned her tongue upon the men because they had feared to go on after Ugh-lomi. She dreaded no one now Uya was slain. She scolded them as one scolds children. And they scowled at her, and began to accuse one another. Until suddenly Siss the Tracker raised his voice and bade her hold her peace.

And so when the sun was setting they took Eudena and went — though their hearts sank within them — along the trail the old lion had made in the reeds. All the men went together. At one place was a group of alders, and here they hastily bound Eudena where the lion might find her when he came abroad in the twilight, and having done so they hurried back until they were near the squatting-place. Then they stopped. Siss stopped first and looked back again at the alders. They could see her head even from the squatting-place, a little black shock under the limb of the larger tree. That was as well.

All the women and children stood watching upon the crest of the mound. And the old woman stood and screamed for the lion to take her whom he sought, and counselled him on the torments he might do her.

Eudena was very weary now, stunned by beatings and fatigue and sorrow, and only the fear of the thing that was still to come upheld her. The sun was broad and blood-red between the stems of the distant chestnuts, and the west was all on fire; the evening breeze had died to a warm tranquillity. The air was full of midge swarms, the fish in the river hard by would leap at times, and now and again a cockchafer would drone through the air. Out of the corner of her eye Eudena could see a part of the squatting-knoll, and little figures standing and staring at her. And — a very little sound but very clear — she could hear the beating of the firestone. Dark and near to her and still was the reed-fringed thicket of the lair.

Presently the firestone ceased. She looked for the sun and found he had gone, and overhead and growing brighter was the waxing moon. She looked towards the thicket of the lair, seeking shapes in the reeds, and then suddenly she began to wriggle and wriggle, weeping and calling upon Ugh-lomi.

But Ugh-lomi was far away. When they saw her head moving with her struggles, they shouted together on the knoll, and she desisted and was still. And then came the bats, and the star that was

like Ugh-lomi crept out of its blue hiding-place in the west. She called to it, but softly, because she feared the lion. And all through the coming of the twilight the thicket was still.

So the dark crept upon Eudena, and the moon grew bright, and the shadows of things that had fled up the hillside and vanished with the evening came back to them short and black. And the dark shapes in the thicket of reeds and alders where the lion lay, gathered, and a faint stir began there. But nothing came out therefrom all through the gathering of the darkness.

She looked at the squatting-place and saw the fires glowing smoky-red, and the men and women going to and fro. The other way, over the river, a white mist was rising. Then far away came the whimpering of young foxes and the yell of a hyæna.

There were long gaps of aching waiting. After a long time some animal splashed in the water, and seemed to cross the river at the ford beyond the lair, but what animal it was she could not see. From the distant drinking-pools she could hear the sound of splashing, and the noise of elephants — so still was the night.

The earth was now a colourless arrangement of white reflections and impenetrable shadows, under the blue sky. The silvery moon was already spotted with the filigree crests of the chestnut woods, and over the shadowy eastward hills the stars were multiplying. The knoll fires were bright red now, and black figures stood waiting against them. They were waiting for a scream.... Surely it would be soon.

The night suddenly seemed full of movement. She held her breath. Things were passing — one, two, three — subtly sneaking shadows.... Jackals.

Then a long waiting again.

Then, asserting itself as real at once over all the sounds her mind had imagined, came a stir in the thicket, then a vigorous movement. There was a snap. The reeds crashed heavily, once, twice, thrice, and then everything was still save a measured swishing. She heard a low tremulous growl, and then everything was still again. The stillness lengthened — would it never end? She held her breath; she bit her lips to stop screaming. Then something scuttled through the undergrowth. Her scream was involuntary. She did not hear the

answering yell from the mound.

Immediately the thicket woke up to vigorous movement again. She saw the grass stems waving in the light of the setting moon, the alders swaying. She struggled violently — her last struggle. But nothing came towards her. A dozen monsters seemed rushing about in that little place for a couple of minutes, and then again came silence. The moon sank behind the distant chestnuts and the night was dark.

Then an odd sound, a sobbing panting, that grew faster and fainter. Yet another silence, and then dim sounds and the grunting of some animal.

Everything was still again. Far away eastwards an elephant trumpeted, and from the woods came a snarling and yelping that died away.

In the long interval the moon shone out again, between the stems of the trees on the ridge, sending two great bars of light and a bar of darkness across the reedy waste. Then came a steady rustling, a splash, and the reeds swayed wider and wider apart. And at last they broke open, cleft from root to crest.... The end had come.

She looked to see the thing that had come out of the reeds. For a moment it seemed certainly the great head and jaw she expected, and then it dwindled and changed. It was a dark low thing, that remained silent, but it was not the lion. It became still — everything became still. She peered. It was like some gigantic frog, two limbs and a slanting body. Its head moved about searching the shadows....

A rustle, and it moved clumsily, with a sort of hopping. And as it moved it gave a low groan.

The blood rushing through her veins was suddenly joy. "*Ugh-lomi!*" she whispered.

The thing stopped. "*Eudena*," he answered softly with pain in his voice, and peering into the alders.

He moved again, and came out of the shadow beyond the reeds into the moonlight. All his body was covered with dark smears. She saw he was dragging his legs, and that he gripped his axe, the first axe, in one hand. In another moment he had struggled into the position of all fours, and had staggered over to her. "The lion," he said in a strange mingling of exultation and anguish. "Wau! — I

have slain a lion. With my own hand. Even as I slew the great bear." He moved to emphasise his words, and suddenly broke off with a faint cry. For a space he did not move.

"Let me free," whispered Eudena....

He answered her no words but pulled himself up from his crawling attitude by means of the alder stem, and hacked at her thongs with the sharp edge of his axe. She heard him sob at each blow. He cut away the thongs about her chest and arms, and then his hand dropped. His chest struck against her shoulder and he slipped down beside her and lay still.

But the rest of her release was easy. Very hastily she freed herself. She made one step from the tree, and her head was spinning. Her last conscious movement was towards him. She reeled, and dropped. Her hand fell upon his thigh. It was soft and wet, and gave way under her pressure; he cried out at her touch, and writhed and lay still again.

Presently a dark dog-like shape came very softly through the reeds. Then stopped dead and stood sniffing, hesitated, and at last turned and slunk back into the shadows.

Long was the time they remained there motionless, with the light of the setting moon shining on their limbs. Very slowly, as slowly as the setting of the moon, did the shadow of the reeds towards the mound flow over them. Presently their legs were hidden, and Ugh-lomi was but a bust of silver. The shadow crept to his neck, crept over his face, and so at last the darkness of the night swallowed them up.

The shadow became full of instinctive stirrings. There was a patter of feet, and a faint snarling — the sound of a blow.

There was little sleep that night for the women and children at the squatting-place until they heard Eudena scream. But the men were weary and sat dozing. When Eudena screamed they felt assured of their safety, and hurried to get the nearest places to the fires. The old woman laughed at the scream, and laughed again because Si, the little friend of Eudena, whimpered. Directly the dawn came they were all alert and looking towards the alders. They could see that Eudena had been taken. They could not help feeling glad to think that Uya was appeased. But across the minds of the men the thought

of Ugh-lomi fell like a shadow. They could understand revenge, for the world was old in revenge, but they did not think of rescue. Suddenly a hyæna fled out of the thicket, and came galloping across the reed space. His muzzle and paws were dark-stained. At that sight all the men shouted and clutched at throwing-stones and ran towards him, for no animal is so pitiful a coward as the hyæna by day. All men hated the hyæna because he preyed on children, and would come and bite when one was sleeping on the edge of the squatting-place. And Cat's-skin, throwing fair and straight, hit the brute shrewdly on the flank, whereat the whole tribe yelled with delight.

At the noise they made there came a flapping of wings from the lair of the lion, and three white-headed vultures rose slowly and circled and came to rest amidst the branches of an alder, overlooking the lair. "Our lord is abroad," said the old woman, pointing. "The vultures have their share of Eudena." For a space they remained there, and then first one and then another dropped back into the thicket.

Then over the eastern woods, and touching the whole world to life and colour, poured, with the exaltation of a trumpet blast, the light of the rising sun. At the sight of him the children shouted together, and clapped their hands and began to race off towards the water. Only little Si lagged behind and looked wonderingly at the alders where she had seen the head of Eudena overnight.

But Uya, the old lion, was not abroad, but at home, and he lay very still, and a little on one side. He was not in his lair, but a little way from it in a place of trampled grass. Under one eye was a little wound, the feeble little bite of the first axe. But all the ground beneath his chest was ruddy brown with a vivid streak, and in his chest was a little hole that had been made by Ugh-lomi's stabbing-spear. Along his side and at his neck the vultures had marked their claims. For so Ugh-lomi had slain him, lying stricken under his paw and thrusting haphazard at his chest. He had driven the spear in with all his strength and stabbed the giant to the heart. So it was the reign of the lion, of the second incarnation of Uya the Master, came to an end.

From the knoll the bustle of preparation grew, the hacking of spears and throwing-stones. None spake the name of Ugh-lomi for

fear that it might bring him. The men were going to keep together, close together, in the hunting for a day or so. And their hunting was to be Ugh-lomi, lest instead he should come a-hunting them.

But Ugh-lomi was lying very still and silent, outside the lion's lair, and Eudena squatted beside him, with the ash spear, all smeared with lion's blood, gripped in her hand.

V — THE FIGHT IN THE LION'S THICKET

Ugh-lomi lay still, his back against an alder, and his thigh was a red mass terrible to see. No civilised man could have lived who had been so sorely wounded, but Eudena got him thorns to close his wounds, and squatted beside him day and night, smiting the flies from him with a fan of reeds by day, and in the night threatening the hyænas with the first axe in her hand; and in a little while he began to heal. It was high summer, and there was no rain. Little food they had during the first two days his wounds were open. In the low place where they hid were no roots nor little beasts, and the stream, with its water-snails and fish, was in the open a hundred yards away. She could not go abroad by day for fear of the tribe, her brothers and sisters, nor by night for fear of the beasts, both on his account and hers. So they shared the lion with the vultures. But there was a trickle of water near by, and Eudena brought him plenty in her hands.

Where Ugh-lomi lay was well hidden from the tribe by a thicket of alders, and all fenced about with bulrushes and tall reeds. The dead lion he had killed lay near his old lair on a place of trampled reeds fifty yards away, in sight through the reed-stems, and the vultures fought each other for the choicest pieces and kept the jackals off him. Very soon a cloud of flies that looked like bees hung over him, and Ugh-lomi could hear their humming. And when Ugh-lomi's flesh was already healing — and it was not many days before that began — only a few bones of the lion remained scattered and shining white.

For the most part Ugh-lomi sat still during the day, looking before him at nothing, sometimes he would mutter of the horses and bears and lions, and sometimes he would beat the ground with the first axe and say the names of the tribe — he seemed to have no fear of bringing the tribe — for hours together. But chiefly he slept, dreaming little because of his loss of blood and the slightness of his food. During the short summer night both kept awake. All the while the darkness lasted things moved about them, things they never saw by day. For some nights the hyænas did not come, and then one moonless night near a dozen came and fought for what was left of the

lion. The night was a tumult of growling, and Ugh-lomi and Eudena could hear the bones snap in their teeth. But they knew the hyæna dare not attack any creature alive and awake, and so they were not greatly afraid.

Of a daytime Eudena would go along the narrow path the old lion had made in the reeds until she was beyond the bend, and then she would creep into the thicket and watch the tribe. She would lie close by the alders where they had bound her to offer her up to the lion, and thence she could see them on the knoll by the fire, small and clear, as she had seen them that night. But she told Ugh-lomi little of what she saw, because she feared to bring them by their names. For so they believed in those days, that naming called.

She saw the men prepare stabbing-spears and throwing-stones on the morning after Ugh-lomi had slain the lion, and go out to hunt him, leaving the women and children on the knoll. Little they knew how near he was as they tracked off in single file towards the hills, with Siss the Tracker leading them. And she watched the women and children, after the men had gone, gathering fern-fronds and twigs for the night fire, and the boys and girls running and playing together. But the very old woman made her feel afraid. Towards noon, when most of the others were down at the stream by the bend, she came and stood on the hither side of the knoll, a gnarled brown figure, and gesticulated so that Eudena could scarce believe she was not seen. Eudena lay like a hare in its form, with shining eyes fixed on the bent witch away there, and presently she dimly understood it was the lion the old woman was worshipping — the lion Ugh-lomi had slain.

And the next day the hunters came back weary, carrying a fawn, and Eudena watched the feast enviously. And then came a strange thing. She saw — distinctly she heard — the old woman shrieking and gesticulating and pointing towards her. She was afraid, and crept like a snake out of sight again. But presently curiosity overcame her and she was back at her spying-place, and as she peered her heart stopped, for there were all the men, with their weapons in their hands, walking together towards her from the knoll.

She dared not move lest her movement should be seen, but she pressed herself close to the ground. The sun was low and the golden light was in the faces of the men. She saw they carried a piece of rich

red meat thrust through by an ashen stake. Presently they stopped. “Go on!” screamed the old woman. Cat’s-skin grumbled, and they came on, searching the thicket with sun-dazzled eyes. “Here!” said Siss. And they took the ashen stake with the meat upon it and thrust it into the ground. “Uya!” cried Siss, “behold thy portion. And Ugh-lomi we have slain. Of a truth we have slain Ugh-lomi. This day we slew Ugh-lomi, and to-morrow we will bring his body to you.” And the others repeated the words.

They looked at each other and behind them, and partly turned and began going back. At first they walked half turned to the thicket, then facing the mound they walked faster looking over their shoulders, then faster; soon they ran, it was a race at last, until they were near the knoll. Then Siss who was hindmost was first to slacken his pace.

The sunset passed and the twilight came, the fires glowed red against the hazy blue of the distant chestnut-trees, and the voices over the mound were merry. Eudena lay scarcely stirring, looking from the mound to the meat and then to the mound. She was hungry, but she was afraid. At last she crept back to Ugh-lomi.

He looked round at the little rustle of her approach. His face was in shadow. “Have you got me some food?” he said.

She said she could find nothing, but that she would seek further, and went back along the lion’s path until she could see the mound again, but she could not bring herself to take the meat; she had the brute’s instinct of a snare. She felt very miserable.

She crept back at last towards Ugh-lomi and heard him stirring and moaning. She turned back to the mound again; then she saw something in the darkness near the stake, and peering distinguished a jackal. In a flash she was brave and angry; she sprang up, cried out, and ran towards the offering. She stumbled and fell, and heard the growling of the jackal going off.

When she arose only the ashen stake lay on the ground, the meat was gone. So she went back, to fast through the night with Ugh-lomi; and Ugh-lomi was angry with her, because she had no food for him; but she told him nothing of the things she had seen.

Two days passed and they were near starving, when the tribe slew a horse. Then came the same ceremony, and a haunch was left on the ashen stake; but this time Eudena did not hesitate.

By acting and words she made Ugh-lomi understand, but he ate most of the food before he understood; and then as her meaning passed to him he grew merry with his food. “I am Uya,” he said; “I am the Lion. I am the Great Cave Bear, I who was only Ugh-lomi. I am Wau the Cunning. It is well that they should feed me, for presently I will kill them all.”

Then Eudena’s heart was light, and she laughed with him; and afterwards she ate what he had left of the horseflesh with gladness.

After that it was he had a dream, and the next day he made Eudena bring him the lion’s teeth and claws — so much of them as she could find — and hack him a club of alder. And he put the teeth and claws very cunningly into the wood so that the points were outward. Very long it took him, and he blunted two of the teeth hammering them in, and was very angry and threw the thing away; but afterwards he dragged himself to where he had thrown it and finished it — a club of a new sort set with teeth. That day there was more meat for them both, an offering to the lion from the tribe.

It was one day — more than a hand’s fingers of days, more than anyone had skill to count — after Ugh-lomi had made the club, that Eudena while he was asleep was lying in the thicket watching the squatting-place. There had been no meat for three days. And the old woman came and worshipped after her manner. Now while she worshipped, Eudena’s little friend Si and another, the child of the first girl Siss had loved, came over the knoll and stood regarding her skinny figure, and presently they began to mock her. Eudena found this entertaining, but suddenly the old woman turned on them quickly and saw them. For a moment she stood and they stood motionless, and then with a shriek of rage, she rushed towards them, and all three disappeared over the crest of the knoll.

Presently the children reappeared among the ferns beyond the shoulder of the hill. Little Si ran first, for she was an active girl, and the other child ran squealing with the old woman close upon her. And over the knoll came Siss with a bone in his hand, and Bo and Cat’s-skin obsequiously behind him, each holding a piece of food, and they laughed aloud and shouted to see the old woman so angry. And with a shriek the child was caught and the old woman set to work slapping and the child screaming, and it was very good after-

dinner fun for them. Little Si ran on a little way and stopped at last between fear and curiosity.

And suddenly came the mother of the child, with hair streaming, panting, and with a stone in her hand, and the old woman turned about like a wild cat. She was the equal of any woman, was the chief of the fire-minders, in spite of her years; but before she could do anything Siss shouted to her and the clamour rose loud. Other shock heads came into sight. It seemed the whole tribe was at home and feasting. But the old woman dared not go on wreaking herself on the child Siss befriended.

Everyone made noises and called names — even little Si. Abruptly the old woman let go of the child she had caught and made a swift run at Si for Si had no friends; and Si, realising her danger when it was almost upon her, made off headlong, with a faint cry of terror, not heeding whither she ran, straight to the lair of the lion. She swerved aside into the reeds presently, realising now whither she went.

But the old woman was a wonderful old woman, as active as she was spiteful, and she caught Si by the streaming hair within thirty yards of Eudena. All the tribe now was running down the knoll and shouting and laughing ready to see the fun.

Then something stirred in Eudena; something that had never stirred in her before; and, thinking all of little Si and nothing of her fear, she sprang up from her ambush and ran swiftly forward. The old woman did not see her, for she was busy beating little Si's face with her hand, beating with all her heart, and suddenly something hard and heavy struck her cheek. She went reeling, and saw Eudena with flaming eyes and cheeks between her and little Si. She shrieked with astonishment and terror, and little Si, not understanding, set off towards the gaping tribe. They were quite close now, for the sight of Eudena had driven their fading fear of the lion out of their heads.

In a moment Eudena had turned from the cowering old woman and overtaken Si. "Si!" she cried, "Si!" She caught the child up in her arms as it stopped, pressed the nail-lined face to hers, and turned about to run towards her lair, the lair of the old lion. The old woman stood waist-high in the reeds, and screamed foul things and inarticulate rage, but did not dare to intercept her; and at the bend of

the path Eudena looked back and saw all the men of the tribe crying to one another and Siss coming at a trot along the lion's trail.

She ran straight along the narrow way through the reeds to the shady place where Ugh-lomi sat with his healing thigh, just awakened by the shouting and rubbing his eyes. She came to him, a woman, with little Si in her arms. Her heart throbbed in her throat. "Ugh-lomi!" she cried, "Ugh-lomi, the tribe comes!"

Ugh-lomi sat staring in stupid astonishment at her and Si.

She pointed with Si in one arm. She sought among her feeble store of words to explain. She could hear the men calling. Apparently they had stopped outside. She put down Si and caught up the new club with the lion's teeth, and put it into Ugh-lomi's hand, and ran three yards and picked up the first axe.

"Ah!" said Ugh-lomi, waving the new club, and suddenly he perceived the occasion and, rolling over, began to struggle to his feet.

He stood but clumsily. He supported himself by one hand against the tree, and just touched the ground gingerly with the toe of his wounded leg. In the other hand he gripped the new club. He looked at his healing thigh; and suddenly the reeds began whispering, and ceased and whispered again, and coming cautiously along the track, bending down and holding his fire-hardened stabbing-stick of ash in his hand, appeared Siss. He stopped dead, and his eyes met Ugh-lomi's.

Ugh-lomi forgot he had a wounded leg. He stood firmly on both feet. Something trickled. He glanced down and saw a little gout of blood had oozed out along the edge of the healing wound. He rubbed his hand there to give him the grip of his club, and fixed his eyes again on Siss.

"Wau!" he cried, and sprang forward, and Siss, still stooping and watchful, drove his stabbing-stick up very quickly in an ugly thrust. It ripped Ugh-lomi's guarding arm and the club came down in a counter that Siss was never to understand. He fell, as an ox falls to the pole-axe, at Ugh-lomi's feet.

To Bo it seemed the strangest thing. He had a comforting sense of tall reeds on either side, and an impregnable rampart, Siss, between him and any danger. Snail-eater was close behind and there was no danger there. He was prepared to shove behind and send Siss to death

or victory. That was his place as second man. He saw the butt of the spear Siss carried leap away from him, and suddenly a dull whack and the broad back fell away forward, and he looked Ugh-lomi in the face over his prostrate leader. It felt to Bo as if his heart had fallen down a well. He had a throwing-stone in one hand and an ashen stabbing-stick in the other. He did not live to the end of his momentary hesitation which to use.

Snail-eater was a readier man, and besides Bo did not fall forward as Siss had done, but gave at his knees and hips, crumpling up with the toothed club upon his head. The Snail-eater drove his spear forward swift and straight, and took Ugh-lomi in the muscle of the shoulder, and then he drove him hard with the smiting-stone in his other hand, shouting out as he did so. The new club swished ineffectually through the reeds. Eudena saw Ugh-lomi come staggering back from the narrow path into the open space, tripping over Siss and with a foot of ashen stake sticking out of him over his arm. And then the Snail-eater, whose name she had given, had his final injury from her, as his exultant face came out of the reeds after his spear. For she swung the first axe swift and high, and hit him fair and square on the temple; and down he went on Siss at prostrate Ugh-lomi's feet.

But before Ugh-lomi could get up, the two red-haired men were tumbling out of the reeds, spears and smiting-stones ready, and Snake hard behind them. One she struck on the neck, but not to fell him, and he blundered aside and spoilt his brother's blow at Ugh-lomi's head. In a moment Ugh-lomi dropped his club and had his assailant by the waist, and had pitched him sideways sprawling. He snatched at his club again and recovered it. The man Eudena had hit stabbed at her with his spear as he stumbled from her blow, and involuntarily she gave ground to avoid him. He hesitated between her and Ugh-lomi, half turned, gave a vague cry at finding Ugh-lomi so near, and in a moment Ugh-lomi had him by the throat, and the club had its third victim. As he went down Ugh-lomi shouted — no words, but an exultant cry.

The other red-haired man was six feet from her with his back to her, and a darker red streaking his head. He was struggling to his feet. She had an irrational impulse to stop his rising. She flung the

axe at him, missed, saw his face in profile, and he had swerved beyond little Si, and was running through the reeds. She had a transitory vision of Snake standing in the throat of the path, half turned away from her, and then she saw his back. She saw the club whirling through the air, and the shock head of Ugh-lomi, with blood in the hair and blood upon the shoulder, vanishing below the reeds in pursuit. Then she heard Snake scream like a woman.

She ran past Si to where the handle of the axe stuck out of a clump of fern, and turning, found herself panting and alone with three motionless bodies. The air was full of shouts and screams. For a space she was sick and giddy, and then it came into her head that Ugh-lomi was being killed along the reed-path, and with an inarticulate cry she leapt over the body of Bo and hurried after him. Snake's feet lay across the path, and his head was among the reeds. She followed the path until it bent round and opened out by the alders, and thence she saw all that was left of the tribe in the open, scattering like dead leaves before a gale, and going back over the knoll. Ugh-lomi was hard upon Cat's-skin.

But Cat's-skin was fleet of foot and got away, and so did young Wau-Hau when Ugh-lomi turned upon him, and Ugh-lomi pursued Wau-Hau far beyond the knoll before he desisted. He had the rage of battle on him now, and the wood thrust through his shoulder stung him like a spur. When she saw he was in no danger she stopped running and stood panting, watching the distant active figures run up and vanish one by one over the knoll. In a little time she was alone again. Everything had happened very swiftly. The smoke of Brother Fire rose straight and steady from the squatting-place, just as it had done ten minutes ago, when the old woman had stood yonder worshipping the lion.

And after a long time, as it seemed, Ugh-lomi reappeared over the knoll, and came back to Eudena, triumphant and breathing heavily. She stood, her hair about her eyes and hot-faced, with the blood-stained axe in her hand, at the place where the tribe had offered her as a sacrifice to the lion. "Wau!" cried Ugh-lomi at the sight of her, his face alight with the fellowship of battle, and he waved his new club, red now and hairy; and at the sight of his glowing face her tense pose relaxed somewhat, and she stood sobbing and rejoicing.

Ugh-lomi had a queer unaccountable pang at the sight of her tears; but he only shouted "Wau!" the louder and shook the axe east and west. He called manfully to her to follow him and turned back, striding, with the club swinging in his hand, towards the squatting-place, as if he had never left the tribe; and she ceased her weeping and followed quickly as a woman should.

So Ugh-lomi and Eudena came back to the squatting-place from which they had fled many days before from the face of Uya; and by the squatting-place lay a deer half eaten, just as there had been before Ugh-lomi was man or Eudena woman. So Ugh-lomi sat down to eat, and Eudena beside him like a man, and the rest of the tribe watched them from safe hiding-places. And after a time one of the elder girls came back timorously, carrying little Si in her arms, and Eudena called to them by name, and offered them food. But the elder girl was afraid and would not come, though Si struggled to come to Eudena. Afterwards, when Ugh-lomi had eaten, he sat dozing, and at last he slept, and slowly the others came out of the hiding-places and drew near. And when Ugh-lomi woke, save that there were no men to be seen, it seemed as though he had never left the tribe.

Now, there is a thing strange but true: that all through this fight Ugh-lomi forgot that he was lame, and was not lame, and after he had rested behold! he was a lame man; and he remained a lame man to the end of his days.

Cat's-skin and the second red-haired man and Wau-Hau, who chipped flints cunningly, as his father had done before him, fled from the face of Ugh-lomi, and none knew where they hid. But two days after they came and squatted a good way off from the knoll among the bracken under the chestnuts and watched. Ugh-lomi's rage had gone, he moved to go against them and did not, and at sundown they went away. That day, too, they found the old woman among the ferns, where Ugh-lomi had blundered upon her when he had pursued Wau-Hau. She was dead and more ugly than ever, but whole. The jackals and vultures had tried her and left her; — she was ever a wonderful old woman.

The next day the three men came again and squatted nearer, and Wau-Hau had two rabbits to hold up, and the red-haired man a wood-pigeon, and Ugh-lomi stood before the women and mocked them.

The next day they sat again nearer — without stones or sticks, and with the same offerings, and Cat's-skin had a trout. It was rare men caught fish in those days, but Cat's-skin would stand silently in the water for hours and catch them with his hand. And the fourth day Ugh-lomi suffered these three to come to the squatting-place in peace, with the food they had with them. Ugh-lomi ate the trout. Thereafter for many moons Ugh-lomi was master and had his will in peace. And on the fulness of time he was killed and eaten even as Uya had been slain.

A Story of the Days to Come

A STORY OF THE DAYS TO COME

I — THE CURE FOR LOVE

The excellent Mr. Morris was an Englishman, and he lived in the days of Queen Victoria the Good. He was a prosperous and very sensible man; he read the *Times* and went to church, and as he grew towards middle age an expression of quiet contented contempt for all who were not as himself settled on his face. He was one of those people who do everything that is right and proper and sensible with inevitable regularity. He always wore just the right and proper clothes, steering the narrow way between the smart and the shabby, always subscribed to the right charities, just the judicious compromise between ostentation and meanness, and never failed to have his hair cut to exactly the proper length.

Everything that it was right and proper for a man in his position to possess, he possessed; and everything that it was not right and proper for a man in his position to possess, he did not possess.

And among other right and proper possessions, this Mr. Morris had a wife and children. They were the right sort of wife, and the right sort and number of children, of course; nothing imaginative or highty-flighty about any of them, so far as Mr. Morris could see; they wore perfectly correct clothing, neither smart nor hygienic nor faddy in any way, but just sensible; and they lived in a nice sensible house in the later Victorian sham Queen Anne style of architecture, with sham half-timbering of chocolate-painted plaster in the gables, Lincrusta Walton sham carved oak panels, a terrace of terra cotta to imitate stone, and cathedral glass in the front door. His boys went to good solid schools, and were put to respectable professions; his girls, in spite of a fantastic protest or so, were all married to suitable, steady, oldish young men with good prospects. And when it was a fit and proper thing for him to do so, Mr. Morris died. His tomb was of marble, and, without any art nonsense or laudatory inscription, quietly imposing — such being the fashion of his time.

He underwent various changes according to the accepted custom in these cases, and long before this story begins his bones even had

become dust, and were scattered to the four quarters of heaven. And his sons and his grandsons and his great-grandsons and his great-great-grandsons, they too were dust and ashes, and were scattered likewise. It was a thing he could not have imagined, that a day would come when even his great-great-grandsons would be scattered to the four winds of heaven. If any one had suggested it to him he would have resented it. He was one of those worthy people who take no interest in the future of mankind at all. He had grave doubts, indeed, if there was any future for mankind after he was dead.

It seemed quite impossible and quite uninteresting to imagine anything happening after he was dead. Yet the thing was so, and when even his great-great-grandson was dead and decayed and forgotten, when the sham half-timbered house had gone the way of all shams, and the *Times* was extinct, and the silk hat a ridiculous antiquity, and the modestly imposing stone that had been sacred to Mr. Morris had been burnt to make lime for mortar, and all that Mr. Morris had found real and important was sere and dead, the world was still going on, and people were still going about it, just as heedless and impatient of the Future, or, indeed, of anything but their own selves and property, as Mr. Morris had been.

And, strange to tell, and much as Mr. Morris would have been angered if any one had foreshadowed it to him, all over the world there were scattered a multitude of people, filled with the breath of life, in whose veins the blood of Mr. Morris flowed. Just as some day the life which is gathered now in the reader of this very story may also be scattered far and wide about this world, and mingled with a thousand alien strains, beyond all thought and tracing.

And among the descendants of this Mr. Morris was one almost as sensible and clear-headed as his ancestor. He had just the same stout, short frame as that ancient man of the nineteenth century, from whom his name of Morris — he spelt it Mwres — came; he had the same half-contemptuous expression of face. He was a prosperous person, too, as times went, and he disliked the "new-fangled," and bothers about the future and the lower classes, just as much as the ancestral Morris had done. He did not read the *Times*: indeed, he did not know there ever had been a *Times* — that institution had foundered somewhere in the intervening gulf of years; but the

phonograph machine, that talked to him as he made his toilet of a morning, might have been the voice of a reincarnated Blowitz when it dealt with the world's affairs. This phonographic machine was the size and shape of a Dutch clock, and down the front of it were electric barometric indicators, and an electric clock and calendar, and automatic engagement reminders, and where the clock would have been was the mouth of a trumpet. When it had news the trumpet gobbled like a turkey, "Galloop, galloop," and then brayed out its message as, let us say, a trumpet might bray. It would tell Mwres in full, rich, throaty tones about the overnight accidents to the omnibus flying-machines that plied around the world, the latest arrivals at the fashionable resorts in Tibet, and of all the great monopolist company meetings of the day before, while he was dressing. If Mwres did not like hearing what it said, he had only to touch a stud, and it would choke a little and talk about something else.

Of course his toilet differed very much from that of his ancestor. It is doubtful which would have been the more shocked and pained to find himself in the clothing of the other. Mwres would certainly have sooner gone forth to the world stark naked than in the silk hat, frock coat, grey trousers and watch-chain that had filled Mr. Morris with sombre self-respect in the past. For Mwres there was no shaving to do: a skilful operator had long ago removed every hair-root from his face. His legs he encased in pleasant pink and amber garments of an air-tight material, which with the help of an ingenious little pump he distended so as to suggest enormous muscles. Above this he also wore pneumatic garments beneath an amber silk tunic, so that he was clothed in air and admirably protected against sudden extremes of heat or cold. Over this he flung a scarlet cloak with its edge fantastically curved. On his head, which had been skilfully deprived of every scrap of hair, he adjusted a pleasant little cap of bright scarlet, held on by suction and inflated with hydrogen, and curiously like the comb of a cock. So his toilet was complete; and, conscious of being soberly and becomingly attired, he was ready to face his fellow-beings with a tranquil eye.

This Mwres — the civility of "Mr." had vanished ages ago — was one of the officials under the Wind Vane and Waterfall Trust, the great company that owned every wind wheel and waterfall in the

world, and which pumped all the water and supplied all the electric energy that people in these latter days required. He lived in a vast hotel near that part of London called Seventh Way, and had very large and comfortable apartments on the seventeenth floor. Households and family life had long since disappeared with the progressive refinement of manners; and indeed the steady rise in rents and land values, the disappearance of domestic servants, the elaboration of cookery, had rendered the separate domicile of Victorian times impossible, even had any one desired such a savage seclusion. When his toilet was completed he went towards one of the two doors of his apartment — there were doors at opposite ends, each marked with a huge arrow pointing one one way and one the other — touched a stud to open it, and emerged on a wide passage, the centre of which bore chairs and was moving at a steady pace to the left. On some of these chairs were seated gaily-dressed men and women. He nodded to an acquaintance — it was not in those days etiquette to talk before breakfast — and seated himself on one of these chairs, and in a few seconds he had been carried to the doors of a lift, by which he descended to the great and splendid hall in which his breakfast would be automatically served.

It was a very different meal from a Victorian breakfast. The rude masses of bread needing to be carved and smeared over with animal fat before they could be made palatable, the still recognisable fragments of recently killed animals, hideously charred and hacked, the eggs torn ruthlessly from beneath some protesting hen, — such things as these, though they constituted the ordinary fare of Victorian times, would have awakened only horror and disgust in the refined minds of the people of these latter days. Instead were pastes and cakes of agreeable and variegated design, without any suggestion in colour or form of the unfortunate animals from which their substance and juices were derived. They appeared on little dishes sliding out upon a rail from a little box at one side of the table. The surface of the table, to judge by touch and eye, would have appeared to a nineteenth-century person to be covered with fine white damask, but this was really an oxidised metallic surface, and could be cleaned instantly after a meal. There were hundreds of such little tables in the hall, and at most of them were other latter-day citizens singly or in

groups. And as Mwres seated himself before his elegant repast, the invisible orchestra, which had been resting during an interval, resumed and filled the air with music.

But Mwres did not display any great interest either in his breakfast or the music; his eye wandered incessantly about the hall, as though he expected a belated guest. At last he rose eagerly and waved his hand, and simultaneously across the hall appeared a tall dark figure in a costume of yellow and olive green. As this person, walking amidst the tables with measured steps, drew near, the pallid earnestness of his face and the unusual intensity of his eyes became apparent. Mwres reseated himself and pointed to a chair beside him.

"I feared you would never come," he said. In spite of the intervening space of time, the English language was still almost exactly the same as it had been in England under Victoria the Good. The invention of the phonograph and suchlike means of recording sound, and the gradual replacement of books by such contrivances, had not only saved the human eyesight from decay, but had also by the establishment of a sure standard arrested the process of change in accent that had hitherto been so inevitable.

"I was delayed by an interesting case," said the man in green and yellow. "A prominent politician — ahem! — suffering from overwork." He glanced at the breakfast and seated himself. "I have been awake for forty hours."

"Eh dear!" said Mwres: "fancy that! You hypnotists have your work to do."

The hypnotist helped himself to some attractive amber-coloured jelly. "I happen to be a good deal in request," he said modestly.

"Heaven knows what we should do without you."

"Oh! we're not so indispensable as all that," said the hypnotist, ruminating the flavour of the jelly. "The world did very well without us for some thousands of years. Two hundred years ago even — not one! In practice, that is. Physicians by the thousand, of course — frightfully clumsy brutes for the most part, and following one another like sheep — but doctors of the mind, except a few empirical flounderers there were none."

He concentrated his mind on the jelly.

"But were people so sane — ?" began Mwres.

The hypnotist shook his head. “It didn’t matter then if they were a bit silly or faddy. Life was so easy-going then. No competition worth speaking of — no pressure. A human being had to be very lopsided before anything happened. Then, you know, they clapped ’em away in what they called a lunatic asylum.”

“I know,” said Mwres. “In these confounded historical romances that every one is listening to, they always rescue a beautiful girl from an asylum or something of the sort. I don’t know if you attend to that rubbish.”

“I must confess I do,” said the hypnotist. “It carries one out of oneself to hear of those quaint, adventurous, half-civilised days of the nineteenth century, when men were stout and women simple. I like a good swaggering story before all things. Curious times they were, with their smutty railways and puffing old iron trains, their rum little houses and their horse vehicles. I suppose you don’t read books?”

“Dear, no!” said Mwres, “I went to a modern school and we had none of that old-fashioned nonsense. Phonographs are good enough for me.”

“Of course,” said the hypnotist, “of course”; and surveyed the table for his next choice. “You know,” he said, helping himself to a dark blue confection that promised well, “in those days our business was scarcely thought of. I daresay if any one had told them that in two hundred years’ time a class of men would be entirely occupied in impressing things upon the memory, effacing unpleasant ideas, controlling and overcoming instinctive but undesirable impulses, and so forth, by means of hypnotism, they would have refused to believe the thing possible. Few people knew that an order made during a mesmeric trance, even an order to forget or an order to desire, could be given so as to be obeyed after the trance was over. Yet there were men alive then who could have told them the thing was as absolutely certain to come about as — well, the transit of Venus.”

“They knew of hypnotism, then?”

“Oh, dear, yes! They used it — for painless dentistry and things like that! This blue stuff is confoundedly good: what is it?”

“Haven’t the faintest idea,” said Mwres, “but I admit it’s very good. Take some more.”

The hypnotist repeated his praises, and there was an appreciative pause.

"Speaking of these historical romances," said Mwres, with an attempt at an easy, off-hand manner, "brings me — ah — to the matter I — ah — had in mind when I asked you — when I expressed a wish to see you." He paused and took a deep breath.

The hypnotist turned an attentive eye upon him, and continued eating.

"The fact is," said Mwres, "I have a — in fact a — daughter. Well, you know I have given her — ah — every educational advantage. Lectures — not a solitary lecturer of ability in the world but she has had a telephone direct, dancing, deportment, conversation, philosophy, art criticism ..." He indicated catholic culture by a gesture of his hand. "I had intended her to marry a very good friend of mine — Bindon of the Lighting Commission — plain little man, you know, and a bit unpleasant in some of his ways, but an excellent fellow really — an excellent fellow."

"Yes," said the hypnotist, "go on. How old is she?"

"Eighteen."

"A dangerous age. Well?"

"Well: it seems that she has been indulging in these historical romances — excessively. Excessively. Even to the neglect of her philosophy. Filled her mind with unutterable nonsense about soldiers who fight — what is it? — Etruscans?"

"Egyptians."

"Egyptians — very probably. Hack about with swords and revolvers and things — bloodshed galore — horrible! — and about young men on torpedo catchers who blow up — Spaniards, I fancy — and all sorts of irregular adventurers. And she has got it into her head that she must marry for Love, and that poor little Bindon—"

"I've met similar cases," said the hypnotist. "Who is the other young man?"

Mwres maintained an appearance of resigned calm. "You may well ask," he said. "He is" — and his voice sank with shame— "a mere attendant upon the stage on which the flying-machines from Paris alight. He has — as they say in the romances — good looks. He is quite young and very eccentric. Affects the antique — he can read

and write! So can she. And instead of communicating by telephone, like sensible people, they write and deliver — what is it?"

"Notes?"

"No — not notes.... Ah — poems."

The hypnotist raised his eyebrows. "How did she meet him?"

"Tripped coming down from the flying-machine from Paris — and fell into his arms. The mischief was done in a moment!"

"Yes?"

"Well — that's all. Things must be stopped. That is what I want to consult you about. What must be done? What *can* be done? Of course I'm not a hypnotist; my knowledge is limited. But you — ?"

"Hypnotism is not magic," said the man in green, putting both arms on the table.

"Oh, precisely! But still — !"

"People cannot be hypnotised without their consent. If she is able to stand out against marrying Bindon, she will probably stand out against being hypnotised. But if once she can be hypnotised — even by somebody else — the thing is done."

"You can — ?"

"Oh, certainly! Once we get her amenable, then we can suggest that she *must* marry Bindon — that that is her fate; or that the young man is repulsive, and that when she sees him she will be giddy and faint, or any little thing of that sort. Or if we can get her into a sufficiently profound trance we can suggest that she should forget him altogether—"

"Precisely."

"But the problem is to get her hypnotised. Of course no sort of proposal or suggestion must come from you — because no doubt she already distrusts you in the matter."

The hypnotist leant his head upon his arm and thought.

"It's hard a man cannot dispose of his own daughter," said Mwres irrelevantly.

"You must give me the name and address of the young lady," said the hypnotist, "and any information bearing upon the matter. And, by the bye, is there any money in the affair?"

Mwres hesitated.

"There's a sum — in fact, a considerable sum — invested in the

Patent Road Company. From her mother. That's what makes the thing so exasperating."

"Exactly," said the hypnotist. And he proceeded to cross-examine Mwres on the entire affair.

It was a lengthy interview.

And meanwhile "Elizebeθ Mwres," as she spelt her name, or "Elizabeth Morris" as a nineteenth-century person would have put it, was sitting in a quiet waiting-place beneath the great stage upon which the flying-machine from Paris descended. And beside her sat her slender, handsome lover reading her the poem he had written that morning while on duty upon the stage. When he had finished they sat for a time in silence; and then, as if for their special entertainment, the great machine that had come flying through the air from America that morning rushed down out of the sky.

At first it was a little oblong, faint and blue amidst the distant fleecy clouds; and then it grew swiftly large and white, and larger and whiter, until they could see the separate tiers of sails, each hundreds of feet wide, and the lank body they supported, and at last even the swinging seats of the passengers in a dotted row. Although it was falling it seemed to them to be rushing up the sky, and over the roof-spaces of the city below its shadow leapt towards them. They heard the whistling rush of the air about it and its yelling siren, shrill and swelling, to warn those who were on its landing-stage of its arrival. And abruptly the note fell down a couple of octaves, and it had passed, and the sky was clear and void, and she could turn her sweet eyes again to Denton at her side.

Their silence ended; and Denton, speaking in a little language of broken English that was, they fancied, their private possession — though lovers have used such little languages since the world began — told her how they too would leap into the air one morning out of all the obstacles and difficulties about them, and fly to a sunlit city of delight he knew of in Japan, half-way about the world.

She loved the dream, but she feared the leap; and she put him off with "Some day, dearest one, some day," to all his pleading that it might be soon; and at last came a shrilling of whistles, and it was time for him to go back to his duties on the stage. They parted — as lovers have been wont to part for thousands of years. She walked

down a passage to a lift, and so came to one of the streets of that latter-day London, all glazed in with glass from the weather, and with incessant moving platforms that went to all parts of the city. And by one of these she returned to her apartments in the Hotel for Women where she lived, the apartments that were in telephonic communication with all the best lecturers in the world. But the sunlight of the flying stage was in her heart, and the wisdom of all the best lecturers in the world seemed folly in that light.

She spent the middle part of the day in the gymnasium, and took her midday meal with two other girls and their common chaperone — for it was still the custom to have a chaperone in the case of motherless girls of the more prosperous classes. The chaperone had a visitor that day, a man in green and yellow, with a white face and vivid eyes, who talked amazingly. Among other things, he fell to praising a new historical romance that one of the great popular story-tellers of the day had just put forth. It was, of course, about the spacious times of Queen Victoria; and the author, among other pleasing novelties, made a little argument before each section of the story, in imitation of the chapter headings of the old-fashioned books: as for example, "How the Cabmen of Pimlico stopped the Victoria Omnibuses, and of the Great Fight in Palace Yard," and "How the Piccadilly Policeman was slain in the midst of his Duty." The man in green and yellow praised this innovation. "These pithy sentences," he said, "are admirable. They show at a glance those headlong, tumultuous times, when men and animals jostled in the filthy streets, and death might wait for one at every corner. Life was life then! How great the world must have seemed then! How marvellous! They were still parts of the world absolutely unexplored. Nowadays we have almost abolished wonder, we lead lives so trim and orderly that courage, endurance, faith, all the noble virtues seem fading from mankind."

And so on, taking the girls' thoughts with him, until the life they led, life in the vast and intricate London of the twenty-second century, a life interspersed with soaring excursions to every part of the globe, seemed to them a monotonous misery compared with the dædal past.

At first Elizabeth did not join in the conversation, but after a time

the subject became so interesting that she made a few shy interpolations. But he scarcely seemed to notice her as he talked. He went on to describe a new method of entertaining people. They were hypnotised, and then suggestions were made to them so skilfully that they seemed to be living in ancient times again. They played out a little romance in the past as vivid as reality, and when at last they awakened they remembered all they had been through as though it were a real thing.

"It is a thing we have sought to do for years and years," said the hypnotist. "It is practically an artificial dream. And we know the way at last. Think of all it opens out to us — the enrichment of our experience, the recovery of adventure, the refuge it offers from this sordid, competitive life in which we live! Think!"

"And you can do that!" said the chaperone eagerly.

"The thing is possible at last," the hypnotist said. "You may order a dream as you wish."

The chaperone was the first to be hypnotised, and the dream, she said, was wonderful, when she came to again.

The other two girls, encouraged by her enthusiasm, also placed themselves in the hands of the hypnotist and had plunges into the romantic past. No one suggested that Elizabeth should try this novel entertainment; it was at her own request at last that she was taken into that land of dreams where there is neither any freedom of choice nor will....

And so the mischief was done.

One day, when Denton went down to that quiet seat beneath the flying stage, Elizabeth was not in her wonted place. He was disappointed, and a little angry. The next day she did not come, and the next also. He was afraid. To hide his fear from himself, he set to work to write sonnets for her when she should come again....

For three days he fought against his dread by such distraction, and then the truth was before him clear and cold, and would not be denied. She might be ill, she might be dead; but he would not believe that he had been betrayed. There followed a week of misery. And then he knew she was the only thing on earth worth having, and that he must seek her, however hopeless the search, until she was found once more.

He had some small private means of his own, and so he threw over his appointment on the flying stage, and set himself to find this girl who had become at last all the world to him. He did not know where she lived, and little of her circumstances; for it had been part of the delight of her girlish romance that he should know nothing of her, nothing of the difference of their station. The ways of the city opened before him east and west, north and south. Even in Victorian days London was a maze, that little London with its poor four millions of people; but the London he explored, the London of the twenty-second century, was a London of thirty million souls. At first he was energetic and headlong, taking time neither to eat nor sleep. He sought for weeks and months, he went through every imaginable phase of fatigue and despair, over-excitement and anger. Long after hope was dead, by the sheer inertia of his desire he still went to and fro, peering into faces and looking this way and that, in the incessant ways and lifts and passages of that interminable hive of men.

At last chance was kind to him, and he saw her.

It was in a time of festivity. He was hungry; he had paid the inclusive fee and had gone into one of the gigantic dining-places of the city; he was pushing his way among the tables and scrutinising by mere force of habit every group he passed.

He stood still, robbed of all power of motion, his eyes wide, his lips apart. Elizabeth sat scarcely twenty yards away from him, looking straight at him. Her eyes were as hard to him, as hard and expressionless and void of recognition, as the eyes of a statue.

She looked at him for a moment, and then her gaze passed beyond him.

Had he had only her eyes to judge by he might have doubted if it was indeed Elizabeth, but he knew her by the gesture of her hand, by the grace of a wanton little curl that floated over her ear as she moved her head. Something was said to her, and she turned smiling tolerantly to the man beside her, a little man in foolish raiment knobbed and spiked like some odd reptile with pneumatic horns — the Bindon of her father's choice.

For a moment Denton stood white and wild-eyed; then came a terrible faintness, and he sat before one of the little tables. He sat down with his back to her, and for a time he did not dare to look at

her again. When at last he did, she and Bindon and two other people were standing up to go. The others were her father and her chaperone.

He sat as if incapable of action until the four figures were remote and small, and then he rose up possessed with the one idea of pursuit. For a space he feared he had lost them, and then he came upon Elizabeth and her chaperone again in one of the streets of moving platforms that intersected the city. Bindon and Mwres had disappeared.

He could not control himself to patience. He felt he must speak to her forthwith, or die. He pushed forward to where they were seated, and sat down beside them. His white face was convulsed with half-hysterical excitement.

He laid his hand on her wrist. "Elizabeth?" he said.

She turned in unfeigned astonishment. Nothing but the fear of a strange man showed in her face.

"Elizabeth," he cried, and his voice was strange to him: "dearest — you *know* me?"

Elizabeth's face showed nothing but alarm and perplexity. She drew herself away from him. The chaperone, a little grey-headed woman with mobile features, leant forward to intervene. Her resolute bright eyes examined Denton. "*What* do you say?" she asked.

"This young lady," said Denton,— "she knows me."

"Do you know him, dear?"

"No," said Elizabeth in a strange voice, and with a hand to her forehead, speaking almost as one who repeats a lesson. "No, I do not know him. I *know* — I do not know him."

"But — but ... Not know me! It is I — Denton. Denton! To whom you used to talk. Don't you remember the flying stages? The little seat in the open air? The verses—"

"No," cried Elizabeth,— "no. I do not know him. I do not know him. There is something.... But I don't know. All I know is that I do not know him." Her face was a face of infinite distress.

The sharp eyes of the chaperone flitted to and fro from the girl to the man. "You see?" she said, with the faint shadow of a smile. "She does not know you."

"I do not know you," said Elizabeth. "Of that I am sure."

“But, dear — the songs — the little verses—”

“She does not know you,” said the chaperone. “You must not.... You have made a mistake. You must not go on talking to us after that. You must not annoy us on the public ways.”

“But—” said Denton, and for a moment his miserably haggard face appealed against fate.

“You must not persist, young man,” protested the chaperone.

“*Elizabeth!*” he cried.

Her face was the face of one who is tormented. “I do not know you,” she cried, hand to brow. “Oh, I do not know you!”

For an instant Denton sat stunned. Then he stood up and groaned aloud.

He made a strange gesture of appeal towards the remote glass roof of the public way, then turned and went plunging recklessly from one moving platform to another, and vanished amidst the swarms of people going to and fro thereon. The chaperone’s eyes followed him, and then she looked at the curious faces about her.

“Dear,” asked Elizabeth, clasping her hand, and too deeply moved to heed observation, “who was that man? Who *was* that man?”

The chaperone raised her eyebrows. She spoke in a clear, audible voice. “Some half-witted creature. I have never set eyes on him before.”

“Never?”

“Never, dear. Do not trouble your mind about a thing like this.”

And soon after this the celebrated hypnotist who dressed in green and yellow had another client. The young man paced his consulting-room, pale and disordered. “I want to forget,” he cried. “I *must* forget.”

The hypnotist watched him with quiet eyes, studied his face and clothes and bearing. “To forget anything — pleasure or pain — is to be, by so much — *less*. However, you know your own concern. My fee is high.”

“If only I can forget—”

“That’s easy enough with you. You wish it. I’ve done much harder things. Quite recently. I hardly expected to do it: the thing was done against the will of the hypnotised person. A love affair too —

like yours. A girl. So rest assured."

The young man came and sat beside the hypnotist. His manner was a forced calm. He looked into the hypnotist's eyes. "I will tell you. Of course you will want to know what it is. There was a girl. Her name was Elizabeth Mwres. Well ..."

He stopped. He had seen the instant surprise on the hypnotist's face. In that instant he knew. He stood up. He seemed to dominate the seated figure by his side. He gripped the shoulder of green and gold. For a time he could not find words.

"*Give her me back!*" he said at last. "Give her me back!"

"What do you mean?" gasped the hypnotist.

"Give her me back."

"Give whom?"

"Elizabeth Mwres — the girl—"

The hypnotist tried to free himself; he rose to his feet. Denton's grip tightened.

"Let go!" cried the hypnotist, thrusting an arm against Denton's chest.

In a moment the two men were locked in a clumsy wrestle. Neither had the slightest training — for athleticism, except for exhibition and to afford opportunity for betting, had faded out of the earth — but Denton was not only the younger but the stronger of the two. They swayed across the room, and then the hypnotist had gone down under his antagonist. They fell together....

Denton leaped to his feet, dismayed at his own fury; but the hypnotist lay still, and suddenly from a little white mark where his forehead had struck a stool shot a hurrying band of red. For a space Denton stood over him irresolute, trembling.

A fear of the consequences entered his gently nurtured mind. He turned towards the door. "No," he said aloud, and came back to the middle of the room. Overcoming the instinctive repugnance of one who had seen no act of violence in all his life before, he knelt down beside his antagonist and felt his heart. Then he peered at the wound. He rose quietly and looked about him. He began to see more of the situation.

When presently the hypnotist recovered his senses, his head ached severely, his back was against Denton's knees and Denton was

sponging his face.

The hypnotist did not speak. But presently he indicated by a gesture that in his opinion he had been sponged enough. “Let me get up,” he said.

“Not yet,” said Denton.

“You have assaulted me, you scoundrel!”

“We are alone,” said Denton, “and the door is secure.”

There was an interval of thought.

“Unless I sponge,” said Denton, “your forehead will develop a tremendous bruise.”

“You can go on sponging,” said the hypnotist sulkily.

There was another pause.

“We might be in the Stone Age,” said the hypnotist. “Violence! Struggle!”

“In the Stone Age no man dared to come between man and woman,” said Denton.

The hypnotist thought again.

“What are you going to do?” he asked.

“While you were insensible I found the girl’s address on your tablets. I did not know it before. I telephoned. She will be here soon. Then—”

“She will bring her chaperone.”

“That is all right.”

“But what — ? I don’t see. What do you mean to do?”

“I looked about for a weapon also. It is an astonishing thing how few weapons there are nowadays. If you consider that in the Stone Age men owned scarcely anything *but* weapons. I hit at last upon this lamp. I have wrenched off the wires and things, and I hold it so.” He extended it over the hypnotist’s shoulders. “With that I can quite easily smash your skull. I *will* — unless you do as I tell you.”

“Violence is no remedy,” said the hypnotist, quoting from the “Modern Man’s Book of Moral Maxims.”

“It’s an undesirable disease,” said Denton.

“Well?”

“You will tell that chaperone you are going to order the girl to marry that knobby little brute with the red hair and ferrety eyes. I believe that’s how things stand?”

“Yes — that’s how things stand.”

“And, pretending to do that, you will restore her memory of me.”

“It’s unprofessional.”

“Look here! If I cannot have that girl I would rather die than not. I don’t propose to respect your little fancies. If anything goes wrong you shall not live five minutes. This is a rude makeshift of a weapon, and it may quite conceivably be painful to kill you. But I will. It is unusual, I know, nowadays to do things like this — mainly because there is so little in life that is worth being violent about.”

“The chaperone will see you directly she comes—”

“I shall stand in that recess. Behind you.”

The hypnotist thought. “You are a determined young man,” he said, “and only half civilised. I have tried to do my duty to my client, but in this affair you seem likely to get your own way....”

“You mean to deal straightly.”

“I’m not going to risk having my brains scattered in a petty affair like this.”

“And afterwards?”

“There is nothing a hypnotist or doctor hates so much as a scandal. I at least am no savage. I am annoyed.... But in a day or so I shall bear no malice....”

“Thank you. And now that we understand each other, there is no necessity to keep you sitting any longer on the floor.”

II — THE VACANT COUNTRY

The world, they say, changed more between the year 1800 and the year 1900 than it had done in the previous five hundred years. That century, the nineteenth century, was the dawn of a new epoch in the history of mankind — the epoch of the great cities, the end of the old order of country life.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the majority of mankind still lived upon the countryside, as their way of life had been for countless generations. All over the world they dwelt in little towns and villages then, and engaged either directly in agriculture, or in occupations that were of service to the agriculturist. They travelled rarely, and dwelt close to their work, because swift means of transit had not yet come. The few who travelled went either on foot, or in slow sailing-ships, or by means of jogging horses incapable of more than sixty miles a day. Think of it! — sixty miles a day. Here and there, in those sluggish times, a town grew a little larger than its neighbours, as a port or as a centre of government; but all the towns in the world with more than a hundred thousand inhabitants could be counted on a man's fingers. So it was in the beginning of the nineteenth century. By the end, the invention of railways, telegraphs, steamships, and complex agricultural machinery, had changed all these things: changed them beyond all hope of return. The vast shops, the varied pleasures, the countless conveniences of the larger towns were suddenly possible, and no sooner existed than they were brought into competition with the homely resources of the rural centres. Mankind were drawn to the cities by an overwhelming attraction. The demand for labour fell with the increase of machinery, the local markets were entirely superseded, and there was a rapid growth of the larger centres at the expense of the open country.

The flow of population townward was the constant preoccupation of Victorian writers. In Great Britain and New England, in India and China, the same thing was remarked: everywhere a few swollen towns were visibly replacing the ancient order. That this was an inevitable result of improved means of travel and transport — that,

given swift means of transit, these things must be — was realised by few; and the most puerile schemes were devised to overcome the mysterious magnetism of the urban centres, and keep the people on the land.

Yet the developments of the nineteenth century were only the dawning of the new order. The first great cities of the new time were horribly inconvenient, darkened by smoky fogs, insanitary and noisy; but the discovery of new methods of building, new methods of heating, changed all this. Between 1900 and 2000 the march of change was still more rapid; and between 2000 and 2100 the continually accelerated progress of human invention made the reign of Victoria the Good seem at last an almost incredible vision of idyllic tranquil days.

The introduction of railways was only the first step in that development of those means of locomotion which finally revolutionised human life. By the year 2000 railways and roads had vanished together. The railways, robbed of their rails, had become weedy ridges and ditches upon the face of the world; the old roads, strange barbaric tracks of flint and soil, hammered by hand or rolled by rough iron rollers, strewn with miscellaneous filth, and cut by iron hoofs and wheels into ruts and puddles often many inches deep, had been replaced by patent tracks made of a substance called Eadhamite. This Eadhamite — it was named after its patentee — ranks with the invention of printing and steam as one of the epoch-making discoveries of the world's history.

When Eadham discovered the substance, he probably thought of it as a mere cheap substitute for india rubber; it cost a few shillings a ton. But you can never tell all an invention will do. It was the genius of a man named Warming that pointed to the possibility of using it, not only for the tires of wheels, but as a road substance, and who organised the enormous network of public ways that speedily covered the world.

These public ways were made with longitudinal divisions. On the outer on either side went foot cyclists and conveyances travelling at a less speed than twenty-five miles an hour; in the middle, motors capable of speed up to a hundred; and the inner, Warming (in the face of enormous ridicule) reserved for vehicles travelling at speeds

of a hundred miles an hour and upward.

For ten years his inner ways were vacant. Before he died they were the most crowded of all, and vast light frameworks with wheels of twenty and thirty feet in diameter, hurled along them at paces that year after year rose steadily towards two hundred miles an hour. And by the time this revolution was accomplished, a parallel revolution had transformed the ever-growing cities. Before the development of practical science the fogs and filth of Victorian times vanished. Electric heating replaced fires (in 2013 the lighting of a fire that did not absolutely consume its own smoke was made an indictable nuisance), and all the city ways, all public squares and places, were covered in with a recently invented glass-like substance. The roofing of London became practically continuous. Certain short-sighted and foolish legislation against tall buildings was abolished, and London, from a squat expanse of petty houses — feebly archaic in design — rose steadily towards the sky. To the municipal responsibility for water, light, and drainage, was added another, and that was ventilation.

But to tell of all the changes in human convenience that these two hundred years brought about, to tell of the long foreseen invention of flying, to describe how life in households was steadily supplanted by life in interminable hotels, how at last even those who were still concerned in agricultural work came to live in the towns and to go to and fro to their work every day, to describe how at last in all England only four towns remained, each with many millions of people, and how there were left no inhabited houses in all the countryside: to tell all this would take us far from our story of Denton and his Elizabeth. They had been separated and reunited, and still they could not marry. For Denton — it was his only fault — had no money. Neither had Elizabeth until she was twenty-one, and as yet she was only eighteen. At twenty-one all the property of her mother would come to her, for that was the custom of the time. She did not know that it was possible to anticipate her fortune, and Denton was far too delicate a lover to suggest such a thing. So things stuck hopelessly between them. Elizabeth said that she was very unhappy, and that nobody understood her but Denton, and that when she was away from him she was wretched; and Denton said that his heart longed for her day

and night. And they met as often as they could to enjoy the discussion of their sorrows.

They met one day at their little seat upon the flying stage. The precise site of this meeting was where in Victorian times the road from Wimbledon came out upon the common. They were, however, five hundred feet above that point. Their seat looked far over London. To convey the appearance of it all to a nineteenth-century reader would have been difficult. One would have had to tell him to think of the Crystal Palace, of the newly built "mammoth" hotels — as those little affairs were called — of the larger railway stations of his time, and to imagine such buildings enlarged to vast proportions and run together and continuous over the whole metropolitan area. If then he was told that this continuous roof-space bore a huge forest of rotating wind-wheels, he would have begun very dimly to appreciate what to these young people was the commonest sight in their lives.

To their eyes it had something of the quality of a prison, and they were talking, as they had talked a hundred times before, of how they might escape from it and be at last happy together: escape from it, that is, before the appointed three years were at an end. It was, they both agreed, not only impossible but almost wicked, to wait three years. "Before that," said Denton — and the notes of his voice told of a splendid chest— "*we might both be dead*!"

Their vigorous young hands had to grip at this, and then Elizabeth had a still more poignant thought that brought the tears from her wholesome eyes and down her healthy cheeks. "*One* of us," she said, "*one* of us might be—"

She choked; she could not say the word that is so terrible to the young and happy.

Yet to marry and be very poor in the cities of that time was — for any one who had lived pleasantly — a very dreadful thing. In the old agricultural days that had drawn to an end in the eighteenth century there had been a pretty proverb of love in a cottage; and indeed in those days the poor of the countryside had dwelt in flower-covered, diamond-windowed cottages of thatch and plaster, with the sweet air and earth about them, amidst tangled hedges and the song of birds, and with the ever-changing sky overhead. But all this had changed (the change was already beginning in the nineteenth century), and a

new sort of life was opening for the poor — in the lower quarters of the city.

In the nineteenth century the lower quarters were still beneath the sky; they were areas of land on clay or other unsuitable soil, liable to floods or exposed to the smoke of more fortunate districts, insufficiently supplied with water, and as insanitary as the great fear of infectious diseases felt by the wealthier classes permitted. In the twenty-second century, however, the growth of the city storey above storey, and the coalescence of buildings, had led to a different arrangement. The prosperous people lived in a vast series of sumptuous hotels in the upper storeys and halls of the city fabric; the industrial population dwelt beneath in the tremendous ground-floor and basement, so to speak, of the place.

In the refinement of life and manners these lower classes differed little from their ancestors, the East-enders of Queen Victoria's time; but they had developed a distinct dialect of their own. In these under ways they lived and died, rarely ascending to the surface except when work took them there. Since for most of them this was the sort of life to which they had been born, they found no great misery in such circumstances; but for people like Denton and Elizabeth, such a plunge would have seemed more terrible than death.

"And yet what else is there?" asked Elizabeth.

Denton professed not to know. Apart from his own feeling of delicacy, he was not sure how Elizabeth would like the idea of borrowing on the strength of her expectations.

The passage from London to Paris even, said Elizabeth, was beyond their means; and in Paris, as in any other city in the world, life would be just as costly and impossible as in London.

Well might Denton cry aloud: "If only we had lived in those days, dearest! If only we had lived in the past!" For to their eyes even nineteenth-century Whitechapel was seen through a mist of romance.

"Is there *nothing*?" cried Elizabeth, suddenly weeping. "Must we really wait for those three long years? Fancy *three* years — six-and-thirty months!" The human capacity for patience had not grown with the ages.

Then suddenly Denton was moved to speak of something that had already flickered across his mind. He had hit upon it at last. It

seemed to him so wild a suggestion that he made it only half seriously. But to put a thing into words has ever a way of making it seem more real and possible than it seemed before. And so it was with him.

"Suppose," he said, "we went into the country?"

She looked at him to see if he was serious in proposing such an adventure.

"The country?"

"Yes — beyond there. Beyond the hills."

"How could we live?" she said. "*Where* could we live?"

"It is not impossible," he said. "People used to live in the country."

"But then there were houses."

"There are the ruins of villages and towns now. On the clay lands they are gone, of course. But they are still left on the grazing land, because it does not pay the Food Company to remove them. I know that — for certain. Besides, one sees them from the flying machines, you know. Well, we might shelter in some one of these, and repair it with our hands. Do you know, the thing is not so wild as it seems. Some of the men who go out every day to look after the crops and herds might be paid to bring us food...."

She stood in front of him. "How strange it would be if one really could...."

"Why not?"

"But no one dares."

"That is no reason."

"It would be — oh! it would be so romantic and strange. If only it were possible."

"Why not possible?"

"There are so many things. Think of all the things we have, things that we should miss."

"Should we miss them? After all, the life we lead is very unreal — very artificial." He began to expand his idea, and as he warmed to his exposition the fantastic quality of his first proposal faded away.

She thought. "But I have heard of prowlers — escaped criminals."

He nodded. He hesitated over his answer because he thought it sounded boyish. He blushed. "I could get some one I know to make

me a sword.”

She looked at him with enthusiasm growing in her eyes. She had heard of swords, had seen one in a museum; she thought of those ancient days when men wore them as a common thing. His suggestion seemed an impossible dream to her, and perhaps for that reason she was eager for more detail. And inventing for the most part as he went along, he told her, how they might live in the country as the old-world people had done. With every detail her interest grew, for she was one of those girls for whom romance and adventure have a fascination.

His suggestion seemed, I say, an impossible dream to her on that day, but the next day they talked about it again, and it was strangely less impossible.

“At first we should take food,” said Denton. “We could carry food for ten or twelve days.” It was an age of compact artificial nourishment, and such a provision had none of the unwieldy suggestion it would have had in the nineteenth century.

“But — until our house,” she asked— “until it was ready, where should we sleep?”

“It is summer.”

“But ... What do you mean?”

“There was a time when there were no houses in the world; when all mankind slept always in the open air.”

“But for us! The emptiness! No walls — no ceiling!”

“Dear,” he said, “in London you have many beautiful ceilings. Artists paint them and stud them with lights. But I have seen a ceiling more beautiful than any in London....”

“But where?”

“It is the ceiling under which we two would be alone....”

“You mean...?”

“Dear,” he said, “it is something the world has forgotten. It is Heaven and all the host of stars.”

Each time they talked the thing seemed more possible and more desirable to them. In a week or so it was quite possible. Another week, and it was the inevitable thing they had to do. A great enthusiasm for the country seized hold of them and possessed them. The sordid tumult of the town, they said, overwhelmed them. They

marvelled that this simple way out of their troubles had never come upon them before.

One morning near Midsummer-day, there was a new minor official upon the flying stage, and Denton's place was to know him no more.

Our two young people had secretly married, and were going forth manfully out of the city in which they and their ancestors before them had lived all their days. She wore a new dress of white cut in an old-fashioned pattern, and he had a bundle of provisions strapped athwart his back, and in his hand he carried — rather shame-facedly it is true, and under his purple cloak — an implement of archaic form, a cross-hilted thing of tempered steel.

Imagine that going forth! In their days the sprawling suburbs of Victorian times with their vile roads, petty houses, foolish little gardens of shrub and geranium, and all their futile, pretentious privacies, had disappeared: the towering buildings of the new age, the mechanical ways, the electric and water mains, all came to an end together, like a wall, like a cliff, near four hundred feet in height, abrupt and sheer. All about the city spread the carrot, swede, and turnip fields of the Food Company, vegetables that were the basis of a thousand varied foods, and weeds and hedgerow tangles had been utterly extirpated. The incessant expense of weeding that went on year after year in the petty, wasteful and barbaric farming of the ancient days, the Food Company had economised for ever more by a campaign of extermination. Here and there, however, neat rows of bramble standards and apple trees with whitewashed stems, intersected the fields, and at places groups of gigantic teazles reared their favoured spikes. Here and there huge agricultural machines hunched under waterproof covers. The mingled waters of the Wey and Mole and Wandle ran in rectangular channels; and wherever a gentle elevation of the ground permitted a fountain of deodorised sewage distributed its benefits athwart the land and made a rainbow of the sunlight.

By a great archway in that enormous city wall emerged the Eadhamite road to Portsmouth, swarming in the morning sunshine with an enormous traffic bearing the blue-clad servants of the Food Company to their toil. A rushing traffic, beside which they seemed

two scarce-moving dots. Along the outer tracks hummed and rattled the tardy little old-fashioned motors of such as had duties within twenty miles or so of the city; the inner ways were filled with vaster mechanisms — swift monocycles bearing a score of men, lank multicycles, quadricycles sagging with heavy loads, empty gigantic produce carts that would come back again filled before the sun was setting, all with throbbing engines and noiseless wheels and a perpetual wild melody of horns and gongs.

Along the very verge of the outermost way our young people went in silence, newly wed and oddly shy of one another's company. Many were the things shouted to them as they tramped along, for in 2100 a foot-passenger on an English road was almost as strange a sight as a motor car would have been in 1800. But they went on with steadfast eyes into the country, paying no heed to such cries.

Before them in the south rose the Downs, blue at first, and as they came nearer changing to green, surmounted by the row of gigantic wind-wheels that supplemented the wind-wheels upon the roof-spaces of the city, and broken and restless with the long morning shadows of those whirling vanes. By midday they had come so near that they could see here and there little patches of pallid dots — the sheep the Meat Department of the Food Company owned. In another hour they had passed the clay and the root crops and the single fence that hedged them in, and the prohibition against trespass no longer held: the levelled roadway plunged into a cutting with all its traffic, and they could leave it and walk over the greensward and up the open hillside.

Never had these children of the latter days been together in such a lonely place.

They were both very hungry and footsore — for walking was a rare exercise — and presently they sat down on the weedless, close-cropped grass, and looked back for the first time at the city from which they had come, shining wide and splendid in the blue haze of the valley of the Thames. Elizabeth was a little afraid of the unenclosed sheep away up the slope — she had never been near big unrestrained animals before — but Denton reassured her. And overhead a white-winged bird circled in the blue.

They talked but little until they had eaten, and then their tongues

were loosened. He spoke of the happiness that was now certainly theirs, of the folly of not breaking sooner out of that magnificent prison of latter-day life, of the old romantic days that had passed from the world for ever. And then he became boastful. He took up the sword that lay on the ground beside him, and she took it from his hand and ran a tremulous finger along the blade.

"And you could," she said, "*you* — could raise this and strike a man?"

"Why not? If there were need."

"But," she said, "it seems so horrible. It would slash.... There would be" — her voice sank,— "*blood*."

"In the old romances you have read often enough ..."

"Oh, I know: in those — yes. But that is different. One knows it is not blood, but just a sort of red ink.... And *you* — killing!"

She looked at him doubtfully, and then handed him back the sword.

After they had rested and eaten, they rose up and went on their way towards the hills. They passed quite close to a huge flock of sheep, who stared and bleated at their unaccustomed figures. She had never seen sheep before, and she shivered to think such gentle things must needs be slain for food. A sheep-dog barked from a distance, and then a shepherd appeared amidst the supports of the wind-wheels, and came down towards them.

When he drew near he called out asking whither they were going.

Denton hesitated, and told him briefly that they sought some ruined house among the Downs, in which they might live together. He tried to speak in an off-hand manner, as though it was a usual thing to do. The man stared incredulously.

"Have you *done* anything?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Denton. "Only we don't want to live in a city any longer. Why should we live in cities?"

The shepherd stared more incredulously than ever. "You can't live here," he said.

"We mean to try."

The shepherd stared from one to the other. "You'll go back to-morrow," he said. "It looks pleasant enough in the sunlight.... Are you sure you've done nothing? We shepherds are not such *great*

friends of the police."

Denton looked at him steadfastly. "No," he said. "But we are too poor to live in the city, and we can't bear the thought of wearing clothes of blue canvas and doing drudgery. We are going to live a simple life here, like the people of old."

The shepherd was a bearded man with a thoughtful face. He glanced at Elizabeth's fragile beauty.

"*They* had simple minds," he said.

"So have we," said Denton.

The shepherd smiled.

"If you go along here," he said, "along the crest beneath the wind-wheels, you will see a heap of mounds and ruins on your right-hand side. That was once a town called Epsom. There are no houses there, and the bricks have been used for a sheep pen. Go on, and another heap on the edge of the root-land is Leatherhead; and then the hill turns away along the border of a valley, and there are woods of beech. Keep along the crest. You will come to quite wild places. In some parts, in spite of all the weeding that is done, ferns and bluebells and other such useless plants are growing still. And through it all underneath the wind-wheels runs a straight lane paved with stones, a roadway of the Romans two thousand years old. Go to the right of that, down into the valley and follow it along by the banks of the river. You come presently to a street of houses, many with the roofs still sound upon them. There you may find shelter."

They thanked him.

"But it's a quiet place. There is no light after dark there, and I have heard tell of robbers. It is lonely. Nothing happens there. The phonographs of the story-tellers, the kinematograph entertainments, the news machines — none of them are to be found there. If you are hungry there is no food, if you are ill no doctor ..." He stopped.

"We shall try it," said Denton, moving to go on. Then a thought struck him, and he made an agreement with the shepherd, and learnt where they might find him, to buy and bring them anything of which they stood in need, out of the city.

And in the evening they came to the deserted village, with its houses that seemed so small and odd to them: they found it golden in the glory of the sunset, and desolate and still. They went from one

deserted house to another, marvelling at their quaint simplicity, and debating which they should choose. And at last, in a sunlit corner of a room that had lost its outer wall, they came upon a wild flower, a little flower of blue that the weeders of the Food Company had overlooked.

That house they decided upon; but they did not remain in it long that night, because they were resolved to feast upon nature. And moreover the houses became very gaunt and shadowy after the sunlight had faded out of the sky. So after they had rested a little time they went to the crest of the hill again to see with their own eyes the silence of heaven set with stars, about which the old poets had had so many things to tell. It was a wonderful sight, and Denton talked like the stars, and when they went down the hill at last the sky was pale with dawn. They slept but little, and in the morning when they woke a thrush was singing in a tree.

So these young people of the twenty-second century began their exile. That morning they were very busy exploring the resources of this new home in which they were going to live the simple life. They did not explore very fast or very far, because they went everywhere hand-in-hand; but they found the beginnings of some furniture. Beyond the village was a store of winter fodder for the sheep of the Food Company, and Denton dragged great armfuls to the house to make a bed; and in several of the houses were old fungus-eaten chairs and tables — rough, barbaric, clumsy furniture, it seemed to them, and made of wood. They repeated many of the things they had said on the previous day, and towards evening they found another flower, a harebell. In the late afternoon some Company shepherds went down the river valley riding on a big multicycle; but they hid from them, because their presence, Elizabeth said, seemed to spoil the romance of this old-world place altogether.

In this fashion they lived a week. For all that week the days were cloudless, and the nights nights of starry glory, that were invaded each a little more by a crescent moon.

Yet something of the first splendour of their coming faded — faded imperceptibly day after day; Denton's eloquence became fitful, and lacked fresh topics of inspiration; the fatigue of their long march from London told in a certain stiffness of the limbs, and each suffered

from a slight unaccountable cold. Moreover, Denton became aware of unoccupied time. In one place among the carelessly heaped lumber of the old times he found a rust-eaten spade, and with this he made a fitful attack on the razed and grass-grown garden — though he had nothing to plant or sow. He returned to Elizabeth with a sweat-streaming face, after half an hour of such work.

"There were giants in those days," he said, not understanding what wont and training will do. And their walk that day led them along the hills until they could see the city shimmering far away in the valley. "I wonder how things are going on there," he said.

And then came a change in the weather. "Come out and see the clouds," she cried; and behold! they were a sombre purple in the north and east, streaming up to ragged edges at the zenith. And as they went up the hill these hurrying streamers blotted out the sunset. Suddenly the wind set the beech-trees swaying and whispering, and Elizabeth shivered. And then far away the lightning flashed, flashed like a sword that is drawn suddenly, and the distant thunder marched about the sky, and even as they stood astonished, pattering upon them came the first headlong raindrops of the storm. In an instant the last streak of sunset was hidden by a falling curtain of hail, and the lightning flashed again, and the voice of the thunder roared louder, and all about them the world scowled dark and strange.

Seizing hands, these children of the city ran down the hill to their home, in infinite astonishment. And ere they reached it, Elizabeth was weeping with dismay, and the darkling ground about them was white and brittle and active with the pelting hail.

Then began a strange and terrible night for them. For the first time in their civilised lives they were in absolute darkness; they were wet and cold and shivering, all about them hissed the hail, and through the long neglected ceilings of the derelict home came noisy spouts of water and formed pools and rivulets on the creaking floors. As the gusts of the storm struck the worn-out building, it groaned and shuddered, and now a mass of plaster from the wall would slide and smash, and now some loosened tile would rattle down the roof and crash into the empty greenhouse below. Elizabeth shuddered, and was still; Denton wrapped his gay and flimsy city cloak about her, and so they crouched in the darkness. And ever the thunder broke

louder and nearer, and ever more lurid flashed the lightning, jerking into a momentary gaunt clearness the steaming, dripping room in which they sheltered.

Never before had they been in the open air save when the sun was shining. All their time had been spent in the warm and airy ways and halls and rooms of the latter-day city. It was to them that night as if they were in some other world, some disordered chaos of stress and tumult, and almost beyond hoping that they should ever see the city ways again.

The storm seemed to last interminably, until at last they dozed between the thunderclaps, and then very swiftly it fell and ceased. And as the last patter of the rain died away they heard an unfamiliar sound.

"What is that?" cried Elizabeth.

It came again. It was the barking of dogs. It drove down the desert lane and passed; and through the window, whitening the wall before them and throwing upon it the shadow of the window-frame and of a tree in black silhouette, shone the light of the waxing moon....

Just as the pale dawn was drawing the things about them into sight, the fitful barking of dogs came near again, and stopped. They listened. After a pause they heard the quick pattering of feet seeking round the house, and short, half-smothered barks. Then again everything was still.

"Ssh!" whispered Elizabeth, and pointed to the door of their room.

Denton went half-way towards the door, and stood listening. He came back with a face of affected unconcern. "They must be the sheep-dogs of the Food Company," he said. "They will do us no harm."

He sat down again beside her. "What a night it has been!" he said, to hide how keenly he was listening.

"I don't like dogs," answered Elizabeth, after a long silence.

"Dogs never hurt any one," said Denton. "In the old days — in the nineteenth century — everybody had a dog."

"There was a romance I heard once. A dog killed a man."

"Not this sort of dog," said Denton confidently. "Some of those romances — are exaggerated."

Suddenly a half bark and a pattering up the staircase; the sound of

panting. Denton sprang to his feet and drew the sword out of the damp straw upon which they had been lying. Then in the doorway appeared a gaunt sheep-dog, and halted there. Behind it stared another. For an instant man and brute faced each other, hesitating.

Then Denton, being ignorant of dogs, made a sharp step forward. “Go away,” he said, with a clumsy motion of his sword.

The dog started and growled. Denton stopped sharply. “Good dog!” he said.

The growling jerked into a bark.

“Good dog!” said Denton. The second dog growled and barked. A third out of sight down the staircase took up the barking also. Outside others gave tongue — a large number it seemed to Denton.

“This is annoying,” said Denton, without taking his eye off the brutes before him. “Of course the shepherds won’t come out of the city for hours yet. Naturally these dogs don’t quite make us out.”

“I can’t hear,” shouted Elizabeth. She stood up and came to him.

Denton tried again, but the barking still drowned his voice. The sound had a curious effect upon his blood. Odd disused emotions began to stir; his face changed as he shouted. He tried again; the barking seemed to mock him, and one dog danced a pace forward, bristling. Suddenly he turned, and uttering certain words in the dialect of the underways, words incomprehensible to Elizabeth, he made for the dogs. There was a sudden cessation of the barking, a growl and a snapping. Elizabeth saw the snarling head of the foremost dog, its white teeth and retracted ears, and the flash of the thrust blade. The brute leapt into the air and was flung back.

Then Denton, with a shout, was driving the dogs before him. The sword flashed above his head with a sudden new freedom of gesture, and then he vanished down the staircase. She made six steps to follow him, and on the landing there was blood. She stopped, and hearing the tumult of dogs and Denton’s shouts pass out of the house, ran to the window.

Nine wolfish sheep-dogs were scattering, one writhed before the porch; and Denton, tasting that strange delight of combat that slumbers still in the blood of even the most civilised man, was shouting and running across the garden space. And then she saw something that for a moment he did not see. The dogs circled round

this way and that, and came again. They had him in the open.

In an instant she divined the situation. She would have called to him. For a moment she felt sick and helpless, and then, obeying a strange impulse, she gathered up her white skirt and ran downstairs. In the hall was the rusting spade. That was it! She seized it and ran out.

She came none too soon. One dog rolled before him, well-nigh slashed in half; but a second had him by the thigh, a third gripped his collar behind, and a fourth had the blade of the sword between its teeth, tasting its own blood. He parried the leap of a fifth with his left arm.

It might have been the first century instead of the twenty-second, so far as she was concerned. All the gentleness of her eighteen years of city life vanished before this primordial need. The spade smote hard and sure, and cleft a dog's skull. Another, crouching for a spring, yelped with dismay at this unexpected antagonist, and rushed aside. Two wasted precious moments on the binding of a feminine skirt.

The collar of Denton's cloak tore and parted as he staggered back; and that dog too felt the spade, and ceased to trouble him. He sheathed his sword in the brute at his thigh.

"To the wall!" cried Elizabeth; and in three seconds the fight was at an end, and our young people stood side by side, while a remnant of five dogs, with ears and tails of disaster, fled shamefully from the stricken field.

For a moment they stood panting and victorious, and then Elizabeth, dropping her spade, covered her face, and sank to the ground in a paroxysm of weeping. Denton looked about him, thrust the point of his sword into the ground so that it was at hand, and stooped to comfort her.

At last their more tumultuous emotions subsided, and they could talk again. She leant upon the wall, and he sat upon it so that he could keep an eye open for any returning dogs. Two, at any rate, were up on the hillside and keeping up a vexatious barking.

She was tear-stained, but not very wretched now, because for half an hour he had been repeating that she was brave and had saved his

life. But a new fear was growing in her mind.

"They are the dogs of the Food Company," she said. "There will be trouble."

"I am afraid so. Very likely they will prosecute us for trespass."

A pause.

"In the old times," he said, "this sort of thing happened day after day."

"Last night!" she said. "I could not live through another such night."

He looked at her. Her face was pale for want of sleep, and drawn and haggard. He came to a sudden resolution. "We must go back," he said.

She looked at the dead dogs, and shivered. "We cannot stay here," she said.

"We must go back," he repeated, glancing over his shoulder to see if the enemy kept their distance. "We have been happy for a time.... But the world is too civilised. Ours is the age of cities. More of this will kill us."

"But what are we to do? How can we live there?"

Denton hesitated. His heel kicked against the wall on which he sat. "It's a thing I haven't mentioned before," he said, and coughed; "but ..."

"Yes?"

"You could raise money on your expectations," he said.

"Could I?" she said eagerly.

"Of course you could. What a child you are!"

She stood up, and her face was bright. "Why did you not tell me before?" she asked. "And all this time we have been here!"

He looked at her for a moment, and smiled. Then the smile vanished. "I thought it ought to come from you," he said. "I didn't like to ask for your money. And besides — at first I thought this would be rather fine."

There was a pause.

"It *has* been fine," he said; and glanced once more over his shoulder. "Until all this began."

"Yes," she said, "those first days. The first three days."

They looked for a space into one another's faces, and then Denton

slid down from the wall and took her hand.

“To each generation,” he said, “the life of its time. I see it all plainly now. In the city — that is the life to which we were born. To live in any other fashion ... Coming here was a dream, and this — is the awakening.”

“It was a pleasant dream,” she said,— “in the beginning.”

For a long space neither spoke.

“If we would reach the city before the shepherds come here, we must start,” said Denton. “We must get our food out of the house and eat as we go.”

Denton glanced about him again, and, giving the dead dogs a wide berth, they walked across the garden space and into the house together. They found the wallet with their food, and descended the blood-stained stairs again. In the hall Elizabeth stopped. “One minute,” she said. “There is something here.”

She led the way into the room in which that one little blue flower was blooming. She stooped to it, she touched it with her hand.

“I want it,” she said; and then, “I cannot take it....”

Impulsively she stooped and kissed its petals.

Then silently, side by side, they went across the empty garden-space into the old high road, and set their faces resolutely towards the distant city — towards the complex mechanical city of those latter days, the city that had swallowed up mankind.

III — THE WAYS OF THE CITY

Prominent if not paramount among world-changing inventions in the history of man is that series of contrivances in locomotion that began with the railway and ended for a century or more with the motor and the patent road. That these contrivances, together with the device of limited liability joint stock companies and the supersession of agricultural labourers by skilled men with ingenious machinery, would necessarily concentrate mankind in cities of unparallelled magnitude and work an entire revolution in human life, became, after the event, a thing so obvious that it is a matter of astonishment it was not more clearly anticipated. Yet that any steps should be taken to anticipate the miseries such a revolution might entail does not appear even to have been suggested; and the idea that the moral prohibitions and sanctions, the privileges and concessions, the conception of property and responsibility, of comfort and beauty, that had rendered the mainly agricultural states of the past prosperous and happy, would fail in the rising torrent of novel opportunities and novel stimulations, never seems to have entered the nineteenth-century mind. That a citizen, kindly and fair in his ordinary life, could as a shareholder become almost murderously greedy; that commercial methods that were reasonable and honourable on the old-fashioned countryside, should on an enlarged scale be deadly and overwhelming; that ancient charity was modern pauperisation, and ancient employment modern sweating; that, in fact, a revision and enlargement of the duties and rights of man had become urgently necessary, were things it could not entertain, nourished as it was on an archaic system of education and profoundly retrospective and legal in all its habits of thought. It was known that the accumulation of men in cities involved unprecedented dangers of pestilence; there was an energetic development of sanitation; but that the diseases of gambling and usury, of luxury and tyranny should become endemic, and produce horrible consequences was beyond the scope of nineteenth-century thought. And so, as if it were some inorganic process, practically unhindered by the creative will of man, the growth of the swarming unhappy cities that mark the twenty-first

century accomplished itself.

The new society was divided into three main classes. At the summit slumbered the property owner, enormously rich by accident rather than design, potent save for the will and aim, the last *avatar* of Hamlet in the world. Below was the enormous multitude of workers employed by the gigantic companies that monopolised control; and between these two the dwindling middle class, officials of innumerable sorts, foremen, managers, the medical, legal, artistic, and scholastic classes, and the minor rich, a middle class whose members led a life of insecure luxury and precarious speculation amidst the movements of the great managers.

Already the love story and the marrying of two persons of this middle class have been told: how they overcame the obstacles between them, and how they tried the simple old-fashioned way of living on the countryside and came back speedily enough into the city of London. Denton had no means, so Elizabeth borrowed money on the securities that her father Mwres held in trust for her until she was one-and-twenty.

The rate of interest she paid was of course high, because of the uncertainty of her security, and the arithmetic of lovers is often sketchy and optimistic. Yet they had very glorious times after that return. They determined they would not go to a Pleasure city nor waste their days rushing through the air from one part of the world to the other, for in spite of one disillusionment, their tastes were still old-fashioned. They furnished their little room with quaint old Victorian furniture, and found a shop on the forty-second floor in Seventh Way where printed books of the old sort were still to be bought. It was their pet affectation to read print instead of hearing phonographs. And when presently there came a sweet little girl, to unite them further if it were possible, Elizabeth would not send it to a *creche*, as the custom was, but insisted on nursing it at home. The rent of their apartments was raised on account of this singular proceeding, but that they did not mind. It only meant borrowing a little more.

Presently Elizabeth was of age, and Denton had a business interview with her father that was not agreeable. An exceedingly disagreeable interview with their money-lender followed, from

which he brought home a white face. On his return Elizabeth had to tell him of a new and marvellous intonation of “Goo” that their daughter had devised, but Denton was inattentive. In the midst, just as she was at the cream of her description, he interrupted. “How much money do you think we have left, now that everything is settled?”

She stared and stopped her appreciative swaying of the Goo genius that had accompanied her description.

“You don’t mean...?”

“Yes,” he answered. “Ever so much. We have been wild. It’s the interest. Or something. And the shares you had, slumped. Your father did not mind. Said it was not his business, after what had happened. He’s going to marry again.... Well — we have scarcely a thousand left!”

“Only a thousand?”

“Only a thousand.”

And Elizabeth sat down. For a moment she regarded him with a white face, then her eyes went about the quaint, old-fashioned room, with its middle Victorian furniture and genuine oleographs, and rested at last on the little lump of humanity within her arms.

Denton glanced at her and stood downcast. Then he swung round on his heel and walked up and down very rapidly.

“I must get something to do,” he broke out presently. “I am an idle scoundrel. I ought to have thought of this before. I have been a selfish fool. I wanted to be with you all day....”

He stopped, looking at her white face. Suddenly he came and kissed her and the little face that nestled against her breast.

“It’s all right, dear,” he said, standing over her; “you won’t be lonely now — now Dings is beginning to talk to you. And I can soon get something to do, you know. Soon.... Easily.... It’s only a shock at first. But it will come all right. It’s sure to come right. I will go out again as soon as I have rested, and find what can be done. For the present it’s hard to think of anything....”

“It would be hard to leave these rooms,” said Elizabeth; “but — —”

“There won’t be any need of that — trust me.”

“They are expensive.”

Denton waved that aside. He began talking of the work he could do. He was not very explicit what it would be; but he was quite sure that there was something to keep them comfortably in the happy middle class, whose way of life was the only one they knew.

"There are three-and-thirty million people in London," he said: "some of them *must* have need of me."

"Some *must*."

"The trouble is ... Well — Bindon, that brown little old man your father wanted you to marry. He's an important person.... I can't go back to my flying-stage work, because he is now a Commissioner of the Flying Stage Clerks."

"I didn't know that," said Elizabeth.

"He was made that in the last few weeks ... or things would be easy enough, for they liked me on the flying stage. But there's dozens of other things to be done — dozens. Don't you worry, dear. I'll rest a little while, and then we'll dine, and then I'll start on my rounds. I know lots of people — lots."

So they rested, and then they went to the public dining-room and dined, and then he started on his search for employment. But they soon realised that in the matter of one convenience the world was just as badly off as it had ever been, and that was a nice, secure, honourable, remunerative employment, leaving ample leisure for the private life, and demanding no special ability, no violent exertion nor risk, and no sacrifice of any sort for its attainment. He evolved a number of brilliant projects, and spent many days hurrying from one part of the enormous city to another in search of influential friends; and all his influential friends were glad to see him, and very sanguine until it came to definite proposals, and then they became guarded and vague. He would part with them coldly, and think over their behaviour, and get irritated on his way back, and stop at some telephone office and spend money on an animated but unprofitable quarrel. And as the days passed, he got so worried and irritated that even to seem kind and careless before Elizabeth cost him an effort — as she, being a loving woman, perceived very clearly.

After an extremely complex preface one day, she helped him out with a painful suggestion. He had expected her to weep and give way to despair when it came to selling all their joyfully bought early

Victorian treasures, their quaint objects of art, their antimacassars, bead mats, repp curtains, veneered furniture, gold-framed steel engravings and pencil drawings, wax flowers under shades, stuffed birds, and all sorts of choice old things; but it was she who made the proposal. The sacrifice seemed to fill her with pleasure, and so did the idea of shifting to apartments ten or twelve floors lower in another hotel. "So long as Dings is with us, nothing matters," she said. "It's all experience." So he kissed her, said she was braver than when she fought the sheep-dogs, called her Boadicea, and abstained very carefully from reminding her that they would have to pay a considerably higher rent on account of the little voice with which Dings greeted the perpetual uproar of the city.

His idea had been to get Elizabeth out of the way when it came to selling the absurd furniture about which their affections were twined and tangled; but when it came to the sale it was Elizabeth who haggled with the dealer while Denton went about the running ways of the city, white and sick with sorrow and the fear of what was still to come. When they moved into their sparsely furnished pink-and-white apartments in a cheap hotel, there came an outbreak of furious energy on his part, and then nearly a week of lethargy during which he sulked at home. Through those days Elizabeth shone like a star, and at the end Denton's misery found a vent in tears. And then he went out into the city ways again, and — to his utter amazement — found some work to do.

His standard of employment had fallen steadily until at last it had reached the lowest level of independent workers. At first he had aspired to some high official position in the great Flying or Wind Vane or Water Companies, or to an appointment on one of the General Intelligence Organisations that had replaced newspapers, or to some professional partnership, but those were the dreams of the beginning. From that he had passed to speculation, and three hundred gold "lions" out of Elizabeth's thousand had vanished one evening in the share market. Now he was glad his good looks secured him a trial in the position of salesman to the Suzannah Hat Syndicate, a Syndicate, dealing in ladies' caps, hair decorations, and hats — for though the city was completely covered in, ladies still wore extremely elaborate and beautiful hats at the theatres and places of

public worship.

It would have been amusing if one could have confronted a Regent Street shopkeeper of the nineteenth century with the development of his establishment in which Denton's duties lay. Nineteenth Way was still sometimes called Regent Street, but it was now a street of moving platforms and nearly eight hundred feet wide. The middle space was immovable and gave access by staircases descending into subterranean ways to the houses on either side. Right and left were an ascending series of continuous platforms each of which travelled about five miles an hour faster than the one internal to it, so that one could step from platform to platform until one reached the swiftest outer way and so go about the city. The establishment of the Suzannah Hat Syndicate projected a vast *façade* upon the outer way, sending out overhead at either end an overlapping series of huge white glass screens, on which gigantic animated pictures of the faces of well-known beautiful living women wearing novelties in hats were thrown. A dense crowd was always collected in the stationary central way watching a vast kinematograph which displayed the changing fashion. The whole front of the building was in perpetual chromatic change, and all down the *façade* — four hundred feet it measured — and all across the street of moving ways, laced and winked and glittered in a thousand varieties of colour and lettering the inscription —

Suzanna! 'ets! Suzanna! 'ets!

A broadside of gigantic phonographs drowned all conversation in the moving way and roared "*hats*" at the passer-by, while far down the street and up, other batteries counselled the public to "walk down for Suzannah," and queried, "Why *don't* you buy the girl a hat?"

For the benefit of those who chanced to be deaf — and deafness was not uncommon in the London of that age, inscriptions of all sizes were thrown from the roof above upon the moving platforms themselves, and on one's hand or on the bald head of the man before one, or on a lady's shoulders, or in a sudden jet of flame before one's feet, the moving finger wrote in unanticipated letters of fire "'*ets r chip t'de*," or simply "'*ets*." And spite of all these efforts so high was the pitch at which the city lived, so trained became one's eyes and ears to ignore all sorts of advertisement, that many a citizen had

passed that place thousands of times and was still unaware of the existence of the Suzannah Hat Syndicate.

To enter the building one descended the staircase in the middle way and walked through a public passage in which pretty girls promenaded, girls who were willing to wear a ticketed hat for a small fee. The entrance chamber was a large hall in which wax heads fashionably adorned rotated gracefully upon pedestals, and from this one passed through a cash office to an interminable series of little rooms, each room with its salesman, its three or four hats and pins, its mirrors, its kinematographs, telephones and hat slides in communication with the central depôt, its comfortable lounge and tempting refreshments. A salesman in such an apartment did Denton now become. It was his business to attend to any of the incessant stream of ladies who chose to stop with him, to behave as winningly as possible, to offer refreshment, to converse on any topic the possible customer chose, and to guide the conversation dexterously but not insistently towards hats. He was to suggest trying on various types of hat and to show by his manner and bearing, but without any coarse flattery, the enhanced impression made by the hats he wished to sell. He had several mirrors, adapted by various subtleties of curvature and tint to different types of face and complexion, and much depended on the proper use of these.

Denton flung himself at these curious and not very congenial duties with a good will and energy that would have amazed him a year before; but all to no purpose. The Senior Manageress, who had selected him for appointment and conferred various small marks of favour upon him, suddenly changed in her manner, declared for no assignable cause that he was stupid, and dismissed him at the end of six weeks of salesmanship. So Denton had to resume his ineffectual search for employment.

This second search did not last very long. Their money was at the ebb. To eke it out a little longer they resolved to part with their darling Dings, and took that small person to one of the public *creches* that abounded in the city. That was the common use of the time. The industrial emancipation of women, the correlated disorganisation of the secluded “home,” had rendered *creches* a necessity for all but very rich and exceptionally-minded people.

Therein children encountered hygienic and educational advantages impossible without such organisation. *Creches* were of all classes and types of luxury, down to those of the Labour Company, where children were taken on credit, to be redeemed in labour as they grew up.

But both Denton and Elizabeth being, as I have explained, strange old-fashioned young people, full of nineteenth-century ideas, hated these convenient *creches* exceedingly and at last took their little daughter to one with extreme reluctance. They were received by a motherly person in a uniform who was very brisk and prompt in her manner until Elizabeth wept at the mention of parting from her child. The motherly person, after a brief astonishment at this unusual emotion, changed suddenly into a creature of hope and comfort, and so won Elizabeth's gratitude for life. They were conducted into a vast room presided over by several nurses and with hundreds of two-year-old girls grouped about the toy-covered floor. This was the Two-year-old Room. Two nurses came forward, and Elizabeth watched their bearing towards Dings with jealous eyes. They were kind — it was clear they felt kind, and yet ...

Presently it was time to go. By that time Dings was happily established in a corner, sitting on the floor with her arms filled, and herself, indeed, for the most part hidden by an unaccustomed wealth of toys. She seemed careless of all human relationships as her parents receded.

They were forbidden to upset her by saying good-bye.

At the door Elizabeth glanced back for the last time, and behold! Dings had dropped her new wealth and was standing with a dubious face. Suddenly Elizabeth gasped, and the motherly nurse pushed her forward and closed the door.

"You can come again soon, dear," she said, with unexpected tenderness in her eyes. For a moment Elizabeth stared at her with a blank face. "You can come again soon," repeated the nurse. Then with a swift transition Elizabeth was weeping in the nurse's arms. So it was that Denton's heart was won also.

And three weeks after our young people were absolutely penniless, and only one way lay open. They must go to the Labour Company. So soon as the rent was a week overdue their few

remaining possessions were seized, and with scant courtesy they were shown the way out of the hotel. Elizabeth walked along the passage towards the staircase that ascended to the motionless middle way, too dulled by misery to think. Denton stopped behind to finish a stinging and unsatisfactory argument with the hotel porter, and then came hurrying after her, flushed and hot. He slackened his pace as he overtook her, and together they ascended to the middle way in silence. There they found two seats vacant and sat down.

"We need not go there — *yet*?" said Elizabeth.

"No — not till we are hungry," said Denton.

They said no more.

Elizabeth's eyes sought a resting-place and found none. To the right roared the eastward ways, to the left the ways in the opposite direction, swarming with people. Backwards and forwards along a cable overhead rushed a string of gesticulating men, dressed like clowns, each marked on back and chest with one gigantic letter, so that altogether they spelt out:

"Purkinje's Digestive Pills."

An anæmic little woman in horrible coarse blue canvas pointed a little girl to one of this string of hurrying advertisements.

"Look!" said the anæmic woman: "there's yer father."

"Which?" said the little girl.

"'Im wiv his nose coloured red," said the anæmic woman.

The little girl began to cry, and Elizabeth could have cried too.

"Ain't 'e kickin' 'is legs! — *just!*" said the anæmic woman in blue, trying to make things bright again. "Looky — *now!*"

On the *façade* to the right a huge intensely bright disc of weird colour span incessantly, and letters of fire that came and went spelt out —

"Does this make you Giddy?"

Then a pause, followed by

"Take a Purkinje's Digestive Pill."

A vast and desolating braying began. "If you love Swagger Literature, put your telephone on to Bruggles, the Greatest Author of all Time. The Greatest Thinker of all Time. Teaches you Morals up to your Scalp! The very image of Socrates, except the back of his head, which is like Shakspeare. He has six toes, dresses in red, and

never cleans his teeth. Hear Him!”

Denton’s voice became audible in a gap in the uproar. “I never ought to have married you,” he was saying. “I have wasted your money, ruined you, brought you to misery. I am a scoundrel.... Oh, this accursed world!”

She tried to speak, and for some moments could not. She grasped his hand. “No,” she said at last.

A half-formed desire suddenly became determination. She stood up. “Will you come?”

He rose also. “We need not go there yet.”

“Not that. But I want you to come to the flying stages — where we met. You know? The little seat.”

He hesitated. “*Can* you?” he said, doubtfully.

“Must,” she answered.

He hesitated still for a moment, then moved to obey her will.

And so it was they spent their last half-day of freedom out under the open air in the little seat under the flying stages where they had been wont to meet five short years ago. There she told him, what she could not tell him in the tumultuous public ways, that she did not repent even now of their marriage — that whatever discomfort and misery life still had for them, she was content with the things that had been. The weather was kind to them, the seat was sunlit and warm, and overhead the shining aëroplanes went and came.

At last towards sunsetting their time was at an end, and they made their vows to one another and clasped hands, and then rose up and went back into the ways of the city, a shabby-looking, heavy-hearted pair, tired and hungry. Soon they came to one of the pale blue signs that marked a Labour Company Bureau. For a space they stood in the middle way regarding this and at last descended, and entered the waiting-room.

The Labour Company had originally been a charitable organisation; its aim was to supply food, shelter, and work to all comers. This it was bound to do by the conditions of its incorporation, and it was also bound to supply food and shelter and medical attendance to all incapable of work who chose to demand its aid. In exchange these incapables paid labour notes, which they had to redeem upon recovery. They signed these labour notes with

thumb-marks, which were photographed and indexed in such a way that this world-wide Labour Company could identify any one of its two or three hundred million clients at the cost of an hour's inquiry. The day's labour was defined as two spells in a treadmill used in generating electrical force, or its equivalent, and its due performance could be enforced by law. In practice the Labour Company found it advisable to add to its statutory obligations of food and shelter a few pence a day as an inducement to effort; and its enterprise had not only abolished pauperisation altogether, but supplied practically all but the very highest and most responsible labour throughout the world. Nearly a third of the population of the world were its serfs and debtors from the cradle to the grave.

In this practical, unsentimental way the problem of the unemployed had been most satisfactorily met and overcome. No one starved in the public ways, and no rags, no costume less sanitary and sufficient than the Labour Company's hygienic but inelegant blue canvas, pained the eye throughout the whole world. It was the constant theme of the phonographic newspapers how much the world had progressed since nineteenth-century days, when the bodies of those killed by the vehicular traffic or dead of starvation, were, they alleged, a common feature in all the busier streets.

Denton and Elizabeth sat apart in the waiting-room until their turn came. Most of the others collected there seemed limp and taciturn, but three or four young people gaudily dressed made up for the quietude of their companions. They were life clients of the Company, born in the Company's *creche* and destined to die in its hospital, and they had been out for a spree with some shillings or so of extra pay. They talked vociferously in a later development of the Cockney dialect, manifestly very proud of themselves.

Elizabeth's eyes went from these to the less assertive figures. One seemed exceptionally pitiful to her. It was a woman of perhaps forty-five, with gold-stained hair and a painted face, down which abundant tears had trickled; she had a pinched nose, hungry eyes, lean hands and shoulders, and her dusty worn-out finery told the story of her life. Another was a grey-bearded old man in the costume of a bishop of one of the high episcopal sects — for religion was now also a business, and had its ups and downs. And beside him a sickly,

dissipated-looking boy of perhaps two-and-twenty glared at Fate.

Presently Elizabeth and then Denton interviewed the manageress — for the Company preferred women in this capacity — and found she possessed an energetic face, a contemptuous manner, and a particularly unpleasant voice. They were given various checks, including one to certify that they need not have their heads cropped; and when they had given their thumb-marks, learnt the number corresponding thereunto, and exchanged their shabby middle-class clothes for duly numbered blue canvas suits, they repaired to the huge plain dining-room for their first meal under these new conditions. Afterwards they were to return to her for instructions about their work.

When they had made the exchange of their clothing Elizabeth did not seem able to look at Denton at first; but he looked at her, and saw with astonishment that even in blue canvas she was still beautiful. And then their soup and bread came sliding on its little rail down the long table towards them and stopped with a jerk, and he forgot the matter. For they had had no proper meal for three days.

After they had dined they rested for a time. Neither talked — there was nothing to say; and presently they got up and went back to the manageress to learn what they had to do.

The manageress referred to a tablet. "Y'r rooms won't be here; it'll be in the Highbury Ward, Ninety-seventh Way, number two thousand and seventeen. Better make a note of it on y'r card. *You*, nought nought nought, type seven, sixty-four, b.c.d., *gamma* forty-one, female; you 'ave to go to the Metal-beating Company and try that for a day — fourpence bonus if ye're satisfactory; and *you*, nought seven one, type four, seven hundred and nine, g.f.b., *pi* five and ninety, male; you 'ave to go to the Photographic Company on Eighty-first Way, and learn something or other — *I* don't know — thrippence. 'Ere's y'r cards. That's all. Next! *What?* Didn't catch it all? Lor! So suppose I must go over it all again. Why don't you listen? Keerless, unprovident people! One'd think these things didn't matter."

Their ways to their work lay together for a time. And now they found they could talk. Curiously enough, the worst of their depression seemed over now that they had actually donned the blue.

Denton could talk with interest even of the work that lay before them. “Whatever it is,” he said, “it can’t be so hateful as that hat shop. And after we have paid for Dings, we shall still have a whole penny a day between us even now. Afterwards — we may improve, — get more money.”

Elizabeth was less inclined to speech. “I wonder why work should seem so hateful,” she said.

“It’s odd,” said Denton. “I suppose it wouldn’t be if it were not the thought of being ordered about.... I hope we shall have decent managers.”

Elizabeth did not answer. She was not thinking of that. She was tracing out some thoughts of her own.

“Of course,” she said presently, “we have been using up work all our lives. It’s only fair—”

She stopped. It was too intricate.

“We paid for it,” said Denton, for at that time he had not troubled himself about these complicated things.

“We did nothing — and yet we paid for it. That’s what I cannot understand.”

“Perhaps we are paying,” said Elizabeth presently — for her theology was old-fashioned and simple.

Presently it was time for them to part, and each went to the appointed work. Denton’s was to mind a complicated hydraulic press that seemed almost an intelligent thing. This press worked by the sea-water that was destined finally to flush the city drains — for the world had long since abandoned the folly of pouring drinkable water into its sewers. This water was brought close to the eastward edge of the city by a huge canal, and then raised by an enormous battery of pumps into reservoirs at a level of four hundred feet above the sea, from which it spread by a billion arterial branches over the city. Thence it poured down, cleansing, sluicing, working machinery of all sorts, through an infinite variety of capillary channels into the great drains, the *cloacae maximae*, and so carried the sewage out to the agricultural areas that surrounded London on every side.

The press was employed in one of the processes of the photographic manufacture, but the nature of the process it did not concern Denton to understand. The most salient fact to his mind was

that it had to be conducted in ruby light, and as a consequence the room in which he worked was lit by one coloured globe that poured a lurid and painful illumination about the room. In the darkest corner stood the press whose servant Denton had now become: it was a huge, dim, glittering thing with a projecting hood that had a remote resemblance to a bowed head, and, squatting like some metal Buddha in this weird light that ministered to its needs, it seemed to Denton in certain moods almost as if this must needs be the obscure idol to which humanity in some strange aberration had offered up his life. His duties had a varied monotony. Such items as the following will convey an idea of the service of the press. The thing worked with a busy clicking so long as things went well; but if the paste that came pouring through a feeder from another room and which it was perpetually compressing into thin plates, changed in quality the rhythm of its click altered and Denton hastened to make certain adjustments. The slightest delay involved a waste of paste and the docking of one or more of his daily pence. If the supply of paste waned — there were hand processes of a peculiar sort involved in its preparation, and sometimes the workers had convulsions which deranged their output — Denton had to throw the press out of gear. In the painful vigilance a multitude of such trivial attentions entailed, painful because of the incessant effort its absence of natural interest required, Denton had now to pass one-third of his days. Save for an occasional visit from the manager, a kindly but singularly foul-mouthed man, Denton passed his working hours in solitude.

Elizabeth's work was of a more social sort. There was a fashion for covering the private apartments of the very wealthy with metal plates beautifully embossed with repeated patterns. The taste of the time demanded, however, that the repetition of the patterns should not be exact — not mechanical, but "natural" — and it was found that the most pleasing arrangement of pattern irregularity was obtained by employing women of refinement and natural taste to punch out the patterns with small dies. So many square feet of plates was exacted from Elizabeth as a minimum, and for whatever square feet she did in excess she received a small payment. The room, like most rooms of women workers, was under a manageress: men had been found by the Labour Company not only less exacting but

extremely liable to excuse favoured ladies from a proper share of their duties. The manageress was a not unkindly, taciturn person, with the hardened remains of beauty of the brunette type; and the other women workers, who of course hated her, associated her name scandalously with one of the metal-work directors in order to explain her position.

Only two or three of Elizabeth's fellow-workers were born labour serfs; plain, morose girls, but most of them corresponded to what the nineteenth century would have called a "reduced" gentlewoman. But the ideal of what constituted a gentlewoman had altered: the faint, faded, negative virtue, the modulated voice and restrained gesture of the old-fashioned gentlewoman had vanished from the earth. Most of her companions showed in discoloured hair, ruined complexions, and the texture of their reminiscent conversations, the vanished glories of a conquering youth. All of these artistic workers were much older than Elizabeth, and two openly expressed their surprise that any one so young and pleasant should come to share their toil. But Elizabeth did not trouble them with her old-world moral conceptions.

They were permitted, and even encouraged to converse with each other, for the directors very properly judged that anything that conduced to variations of mood made for pleasing fluctuations in their patterning; and Elizabeth was almost forced to hear the stories of these lives with which her own interwove: garbled and distorted they were by vanity indeed and yet comprehensible enough. And soon she began to appreciate the small spites and cliques, the little misunderstandings and alliances that enmeshed about her. One woman was excessively garrulous and descriptive about a wonderful son of hers; another had cultivated a foolish coarseness of speech, that she seemed to regard as the wittiest expression of originality conceivable; a third mused for ever on dress, and whispered to Elizabeth how she saved her pence day after day, and would presently have a glorious day of freedom, wearing ... and then followed hours of description; two others sat always together, and called one another pet names, until one day some little thing happened, and they sat apart, blind and deaf as it seemed to one another's being. And always from them all came an incessant tap, tap, tap, tap, and the manageress listened always to the rhythm to

mark if one fell away. Tap, tap, tap, tap: so their days passed, so their lives must pass. Elizabeth sat among them, kindly and quiet, grey-hearted, marvelling at Fate: tap, tap, tap; tap, tap, tap; tap, tap, tap.

So there came to Denton and Elizabeth a long succession of laborious days, that hardened their hands, wove strange threads of some new and sterner substance into the soft prettiness of their lives, and drew grave lines and shadows on their faces. The bright, convenient ways of the former life had receded to an inaccessible distance; slowly they learnt the lesson of the underworld — sombre and laborious, vast and pregnant. There were many little things happened: things that would be tedious and miserable to tell, things that were bitter and grievous to bear — indignities, tyrannies, such as must ever season the bread of the poor in cities; and one thing that was not little, but seemed like the utter blackening of life to them, which was that the child they had given life to sickened and died. But that story, that ancient, perpetually recurring story, has been told so often, has been told so beautifully, that there is no need to tell it over again here. There was the same sharp fear, the same long anxiety, the deferred inevitable blow, and the black silence. It has always been the same; it will always be the same. It is one of the things that must be.

And it was Elizabeth who was the first to speak, after an aching, dull interspace of days: not, indeed, of the foolish little name that was a name no longer, but of the darkness that brooded over her soul. They had come through the shrieking, tumultuous ways of the city together; the clamour of trade, of yelling competitive religions, of political appeal, had beat upon deaf ears; the glare of focussed lights, of dancing letters, and fiery advertisements, had fallen upon the set, miserable faces unheeded. They took their dinner in the dining-hall at a place apart. “I want,” said Elizabeth clumsily, “to go out to the flying stages — to that seat. Here, one can say nothing....”

Denton looked at her. “It will be night,” he said.

“I have asked, — it is a fine night.” She stopped.

He perceived she could find no words to explain herself. Suddenly he understood that she wished to see the stars once more, the stars they had watched together from the open downland in that wild honeymoon of theirs five years ago. Something caught at his throat.

He looked away from her.

“There will be plenty of time to go,” he said, in a matter-of-fact tone.

And at last they came out to their little seat on the flying stage, and sat there for a long time in silence. The little seat was in shadow, but the zenith was pale blue with the effulgence of the stage overhead, and all the city spread below them, squares and circles and patches of brilliance caught in a mesh-work of light. The little stars seemed very faint and small: near as they had been to the old-world watcher, they had become now infinitely remote. Yet one could see them in the darkened patches amidst the glare, and especially in the northward sky, the ancient constellations gliding steadfast and patient about the pole.

Long our two people sat in silence, and at last Elizabeth sighed.

“If I understood,” she said, “if I could understand. When one is down there the city seems everything — the noise, the hurry, the voices — you must live, you must scramble. Here — it is nothing; a thing that passes. One can think in peace.”

“Yes,” said Denton. “How flimsy it all is! From here more than half of it is swallowed by the night.... It will pass.”

“We shall pass first,” said Elizabeth.

“I know,” said Denton. “If life were not a moment, the whole of history would seem like the happening of a day.... Yes — we shall pass. And the city will pass, and all the things that are to come. Man and the Overman and wonders unspeakable. And yet ...”

He paused, and then began afresh. “I know what you feel. At least I fancy.... Down there one thinks of one’s work, one’s little vexations and pleasures, one’s eating and drinking and ease and pain. One lives, and one must die. Down there and everyday — our sorrow seemed the end of life....

“Up here it is different. For instance, down there it would seem impossible almost to go on living if one were horribly disfigured, horribly crippled, disgraced. Up here — under these stars — none of those things would matter. They don’t matter.... They are a part of something. One seems just to touch that something — under the stars....”

He stopped. The vague, impalpable things in his mind, cloudy

emotions half shaped towards ideas, vanished before the rough grasp of words. “It is hard to express,” he said lamely.

They sat through a long stillness.

“It is well to come here,” he said at last. “We stop — our minds are very finite. After all we are just poor animals rising out of the brute, each with a mind, the poor beginning of a mind. We are so stupid. So much hurts. And yet ...

“I know, I know — and some day we shall *see*.

“All this frightful stress, all this discord will resolve to harmony, and we shall know it. Nothing is but it makes for that. Nothing. All the failures — every little thing makes for that harmony. Everything is necessary to it, we shall find. We shall find. Nothing, not even the most dreadful thing, could be left out. Not even the most trivial. Every tap of your hammer on the brass, every moment of work, my idleness even ... Dear one! every movement of our poor little one ... All these things go on for ever. And the faint impalpable things. We, sitting here together. — Everything ...

“The passion that joined us, and what has come since. It is not passion now. More than anything else it is sorrow. *Dear* ...”

He could say no more, could follow his thoughts no further.

Elizabeth made no answer — she was very still; but presently her hand sought his and found it.

IV — UNDERNEATH

Under the stars one may reach upward and touch resignation, whatever the evil thing may be, but in the heat and stress of the day's work we lapse again, come disgust and anger and intolerable moods. How little is all our magnanimity — an accident! a phase! The very Saints of old had first to flee the world. And Denton and his Elizabeth could not flee their world, no longer were there open roads to unclaimed lands where men might live freely — however hardly — and keep their souls in peace. The city had swallowed up mankind.

For a time these two Labour Serfs were kept at their original occupations, she at her brass stamping and Denton at his press; and then came a move for him that brought with it fresh and still bitterer experiences of life in the underways of the great city. He was transferred to the care of a rather more elaborate press in the central factory of the London Tile Trust.

In this new situation he had to work in a long vaulted room with a number of other men, for the most part born Labour Serfs. He came to this intercourse reluctantly. His upbringing had been refined, and, until his ill fortune had brought him to that costume, he had never spoken in his life, except by way of command or some immediate necessity, to the white-faced wearers of the blue canvas. Now at last came contact; he had to work beside them, share their tools, eat with them. To both Elizabeth and himself this seemed a further degradation.

His taste would have seemed extreme to a man of the nineteenth century. But slowly and inevitably in the intervening years a gulf had opened between the wearers of the blue canvas and the classes above, a difference not simply of circumstances and habits of life, but of habits of thought — even of language. The underways had developed a dialect of their own: above, too, had arisen a dialect, a code of thought, a language of "culture," which aimed by a sedulous search after fresh distinction to widen perpetually the space between itself and "vulgarity." The bond of a common faith, moreover, no longer held the race together. The last years of the nineteenth century

were distinguished by the rapid development among the prosperous idle of esoteric perversions of the popular religion: glosses and interpretations that reduced the broad teachings of the carpenter of Nazareth to the exquisite narrowness of their lives. And, spite of their inclination towards the ancient fashion of living, neither Elizabeth nor Denton had been sufficiently original to escape the suggestion of their surroundings. In matters of common behaviour they had followed the ways of their class, and so when they fell at last to be Labour Serfs it seemed to them almost as though they were falling among offensive inferior animals; they felt as a nineteenth-century duke and duchess might have felt who were forced to take rooms in the Jago.

Their natural impulse was to maintain a "distance." But Denton's first idea of a dignified isolation from his new surroundings was soon rudely dispelled. He had imagined that his fall to the position of a Labour Serf was the end of his lesson, that when their little daughter had died he had plumbed the deeps of life; but indeed these things were only the beginning. Life demands something more from us than acquiescence. And now in a roomful of machine minders he was to learn a wider lesson, to make the acquaintance of another factor in life, a factor as elemental as the loss of things dear to us, more elemental even than toil.

His quiet discouragement of conversation was an immediate cause of offence — was interpreted, rightly enough I fear, as disdain. His ignorance of the vulgar dialect, a thing upon which he had hitherto prided himself, suddenly took upon itself a new aspect. He failed to perceive at once that his reception of the coarse and stupid but genially intended remarks that greeted his appearance must have stung the makers of these advances like blows in their faces. "Don't understand," he said rather coldly, and at hazard, "No, thank you."

The man who had addressed him stared, scowled, and turned away.

A second, who also failed at Denton's unaccustomed ear, took the trouble to repeat his remark, and Denton discovered he was being offered the use of an oil can. He expressed polite thanks, and this second man embarked upon a penetrating conversation. Denton, he remarked, had been a swell, and he wanted to know how he had

come to wear the blue. He clearly expected an interesting record of vice and extravagance. Had Denton ever been at a Pleasure City? Denton was speedily to discover how the existence of these wonderful places of delight permeated and defiled the thought and honour of these unwilling, hopeless workers of the underworld.

His aristocratic temperament resented these questions. He answered "No" curtly. The man persisted with a still more personal question, and this time it was Denton who turned away.

"Gorblimey!" said his interlocutor, much astonished.

It presently forced itself upon Denton's mind that this remarkable conversation was being repeated in indignant tones to more sympathetic hearers, and that it gave rise to astonishment and ironical laughter. They looked at Denton with manifestly enhanced interest. A curious perception of isolation dawned upon him. He tried to think of his press and its unfamiliar peculiarities....

The machines kept everybody pretty busy during the first spell, and then came a recess. It was only an interval for refreshment, too brief for any one to go out to a Labour Company dining-room. Denton followed his fellow-workers into a short gallery, in which were a number of bins of refuse from the presses.

Each man produced a packet of food. Denton had no packet. The manager, a careless young man who held his position by influence, had omitted to warn Denton that it was necessary to apply for this provision. He stood apart, feeling hungry. The others drew together in a group and talked in undertones, glancing at him ever and again. He became uneasy. His appearance of disregard cost him an increasing effort. He tried to think of the levers of his new press.

Presently one, a man shorter but much broader and stouter than Denton, came forward to him. Denton turned to him as unconcernedly as possible. "Here!" said the delegate — as Denton judged him to be — extending a cube of bread in a not too clean hand. He had a swart, broad-nosed face, and his mouth hung down towards one corner.

Denton felt doubtful for the instant whether this was meant for civility or insult. His impulse was to decline. "No, thanks," he said; and, at the man's change of expression, "I'm not hungry."

There came a laugh from the group behind. "Told you so," said

the man who had offered Denton the loan of an oil can. “He’s top side, he is. You ain’t good enough for ‘im.”

The swart face grew a shade darker.

“Here,” said its owner, still extending the bread, and speaking in a lower tone; “you got to eat this. See?”

Denton looked into the threatening face before him, and odd little currents of energy seemed to be running through his limbs and body.

“I don’t want it,” he said, trying a pleasant smile that twitched and failed.

The thickset man advanced his face, and the bread became a physical threat in his hand. Denton’s mind rushed together to the one problem of his antagonist’s eyes.

“Eat it,” said the swart man.

There came a pause, and then they both moved quickly. The cube of bread described a complicated path, a curve that would have ended in Denton’s face; and then his fist hit the wrist of the hand that gripped it, and it flew upward, and out of the conflict — its part played.

He stepped back quickly, fists clenched and arms tense. The hot, dark countenance receded, became an alert hostility, watching its chance. Denton for one instant felt confident, and strangely buoyant and serene. His heart beat quickly. He felt his body alive, and glowing to the tips.

“Scrap, boys!” shouted some one, and then the dark figure had leapt forward, ducked back and sideways, and come in again. Denton struck out, and was hit. One of his eyes seemed to him to be demolished, and he felt a soft lip under his fist just before he was hit again — this time under the chin. A huge fan of fiery needles shot open. He had a momentary persuasion that his head was knocked to pieces, and then something hit his head and back from behind, and the fight became an uninteresting, an impersonal thing.

He was aware that time — seconds or minutes — had passed, abstract, uneventful time. He was lying with his head in a heap of ashes, and something wet and warm ran swiftly into his neck. The first shock broke up into discrete sensations. All his head throbbed; his eye and his chin throbbed exceedingly, and the taste of blood was in his mouth.

“He’s all right,” said a voice. “He’s opening his eyes.”

“Serve him —— well right,” said a second.

His mates were standing about him. He made an effort and sat up. He put his hand to the back of his head, and his hair was wet and full of cinders. A laugh greeted the gesture. His eye was partially closed. He perceived what had happened. His momentary anticipation of a final victory had vanished.

“Looks surprised,” said some one.

“‘Ave any more?” said a wit; and then, imitating Denton’s refined accent.

“No, thank you.”

Denton perceived the swart man with a blood-stained handkerchief before his face, and somewhat in the background.

“Where’s that bit of bread he’s got to eat?” said a little ferret-faced creature; and sought with his foot in the ashes of the adjacent bin.

Denton had a moment of internal debate. He knew the code of honour requires a man to pursue a fight he has begun to the bitter end; but this was his first taste of the bitterness. He was resolved to rise again, but he felt no passionate impulse. It occurred to him — and the thought was no very violent spur — that he was perhaps after all a coward. For a moment his will was heavy, a lump of lead.

“‘Ere it is,” said the little ferret-faced man, and stooped to pick up a cindery cube. He looked at Denton, then at the others.

Slowly, unwillingly, Denton stood up.

A dirty-faced albino extended a hand to the ferret-faced man. “Gimme that toke,” he said. He advanced threateningly, bread in hand, to Denton. “So you ain’t ‘ad your bellyful yet,” he said. “Eh?”

Now it was coming. “No, I haven’t,” said Denton, with a catching of the breath, and resolved to try this brute behind the ear before he himself got stunned again. He knew he would be stunned again. He was astonished how ill he had judged himself beforehand. A few ridiculous lunges, and down he would go again. He watched the albino’s eyes. The albino was grinning confidently, like a man who plans an agreeable trick. A sudden perception of impending indignities stung Denton.

“You leave ‘im alone, Jim,” said the swart man suddenly over the

blood-stained rag. “He ain’t done nothing to you.”

The albino’s grin vanished. He stopped. He looked from one to the other. It seemed to Denton that the swart man demanded the privilege of his destruction. The albino would have been better.

“You leave ‘im alone,” said the swart man. “See? ‘E’s ‘ad ‘is licks.”

A clattering bell lifted up its voice and solved the situation. The albino hesitated. “Lucky for you,” he said, adding a foul metaphor, and turned with the others towards the press-room again. “Wait for the end of the spell, mate,” said the albino over his shoulder — an afterthought. The swart man waited for the albino to precede him. Denton realised that he had a reprieve.

The men passed towards an open door. Denton became aware of his duties, and hurried to join the tail of the queue. At the doorway of the vaulted gallery of presses a yellow-uniformed labour policeman stood ticking a card. He had ignored the swart man’s hæmorrhage.

“Hurry up there!” he said to Denton.

“Hello!” he said, at the sight of his facial disarray. “Who’s been hitting *you*?”

“That’s my affair,” said Denton.

“Not if it spiles your work, it ain’t,” said the man in yellow. “You mind that.”

Denton made no answer. He was a rough — a labourer. He wore the blue canvas. The laws of assault and battery, he knew, were not for the likes of him. He went to his press.

He could feel the skin of his brow and chin and head lifting themselves to noble bruises, felt the throb and pain of each aspiring contusion. His nervous system slid down to lethargy; at each movement in his press adjustment he felt he lifted a weight. And as for his honour — that too throbbed and puffed. How did he stand? What precisely had happened in the last ten minutes? What would happen next? He knew that here was enormous matter for thought, and he could not think save in disordered snatches.

His mood was a sort of stagnant astonishment. All his conceptions were overthrown. He had regarded his security from physical violence as inherent, as one of the conditions of life. So, indeed, it had been while he wore his middle-class costume, had his middle-

class property to serve for his defence. But who would interfere among Labour roughs fighting together? And indeed in those days no man would. In the Underworld there was no law between man and man; the law and machinery of the state had become for them something that held men down, fended them off from much desirable property and pleasure, and that was all. Violence, that ocean in which the brutes live for ever, and from which a thousand dykes and contrivances have won our hazardous civilised life, had flowed in again upon the sinking underways and submerged them. The fist ruled. Denton had come right down at last to the elemental — fist and trick and the stubborn heart and fellowship — even as it was in the beginning.

The rhythm of his machine changed, and his thoughts were interrupted.

Presently he could think again. Strange how quickly things had happened! He bore these men who had thrashed him no very vivid ill-will. He was bruised and enlightened. He saw with absolute fairness now the reasonableness of his unpopularity. He had behaved like a fool. Disdain, seclusion, are the privilege of the strong. The fallen aristocrat still clinging to his pointless distinction is surely the most pitiful creature of pretence in all this clamant universe. Good heavens! what was there for him to despise in these men?

What a pity he had not appreciated all this better five hours ago!

What would happen at the end of the spell? He could not tell. He could not imagine. He could not imagine the thoughts of these men. He was sensible only of their hostility and utter want of sympathy. Vague possibilities of shame and violence chased one another across his mind. Could he devise some weapon? He recalled his assault upon the hypnotist, but there were no detachable lamps here. He could see nothing that he could catch up in his defence.

For a space he thought of a headlong bolt for the security of the public ways directly the spell was over. Apart from the trivial consideration of his self-respect, he perceived that this would be only a foolish postponement and aggravation of his trouble. He perceived the ferret-faced man and the albino talking together with their eyes towards him. Presently they were talking to the swart man, who stood with his broad back studiously towards Denton.

At last came the end of the second spell. The lender of oil cans stopped his press sharply and turned round, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. His eyes had the quiet expectation of one who seats himself in a theatre.

Now was the crisis, and all the little nerves of Denton's being seemed leaping and dancing. He had decided to show fight if any fresh indignity was offered him. He stopped his press and turned. With an enormous affectation of ease he walked down the vault and entered the passage of the ash pits, only to discover he had left his jacket — which he had taken off because of the heat of the vault — beside his press. He walked back. He met the albino eye to eye.

He heard the ferret-faced man in expostulation. "'E reely ought, eat it," said the ferret-faced man. "'E did reely."

"No — you leave 'im alone," said the swart man.

Apparently nothing further was to happen to him that day. He passed out to the passage and staircase that led up to the moving platforms of the city.

He emerged on the livid brilliance and streaming movement of the public street. He became acutely aware of his disfigured face, and felt his swelling bruises with a limp, investigatory hand. He went up to the swiftest platform, and seated himself on a Labour Company bench.

He lapsed into a pensive torpor. The immediate dangers and stresses of his position he saw with a sort of static clearness. What would they do to-morrow? He could not tell. What would Elizabeth think of his brutalisation? He could not tell. He was exhausted. He was aroused presently by a hand upon his arm.

He looked up, and saw the swart man seated beside him. He started. Surely he was safe from violence in the public way!

The swart man's face retained no traces of his share in the fight; his expression was free from hostility — seemed almost deferential. "'Scuse me," he said, with a total absence of truculence. Denton realised that no assault was intended. He stared, awaiting the next development.

It was evident the next sentence was premeditated. "Whad — I — was — going — to say — was this," said the swart man, and sought through a silence for further words.

“Whad — I — was — going — to say — was this,” he repeated.

Finally he abandoned that gambit. “*You’re* aw right,” he cried, laying a grimy hand on Denton’s grimy sleeve. “*You’re* aw right. You’re a ge’man. Sorry — very sorry. Wanted to tell you that.”

Denton realised that there must exist motives beyond a mere impulse to abominable proceedings in the man. He meditated, and swallowed an unworthy pride.

“I did not mean to be offensive to you,” he said, “in refusing that bit of bread.”

“Meant it friendly,” said the swart man, recalling the scene; “but — in front of that blarsted Whitey and his snigger — Well — I *‘ad* to scrap.”

“Yes,” said Denton with sudden fervour: “I was a fool.”

“Ah!” said the swart man, with great satisfaction. “*That’s* aw right. Shake!”

And Denton shook.

The moving platform was rushing by the establishment of a face moulder, and its lower front was a huge display of mirror, designed to stimulate the thirst for more symmetrical features. Denton caught the reflection of himself and his new friend, enormously twisted and broadened. His own face was puffed, one-sided, and blood-stained; a grin of idiotic and insincere amiability distorted its latitude. A wisp of hair occluded one eye. The trick of the mirror presented the swart man as a gross expansion of lip and nostril. They were linked by shaking hands. Then abruptly this vision passed — to return to memory in the anæmic meditations of a waking dawn.

As he shook, the swart man made some muddled remark, to the effect that he had always known he could get on with a gentleman if one came his way. He prolonged the shaking until Denton, under the influence of the mirror, withdrew his hand. The swart man became pensive, spat impressively on the platform, and resumed his theme.

“Whad I was going to say was this,” he said; was gravelled, and shook his head at his foot.

Denton became curious. “Go on,” he said, attentive.

The swart man took the plunge. He grasped Denton’s arm, became intimate in his attitude. “‘Scuse me,” he said. “Fact is, you done know *‘ow* to scrap. Done know *‘ow* to. Why — you done know

‘ow to *begin*. You’ll get killed if you don’t mind. ‘Ouldin’ your ‘ands — *There!*”

He reinforced his statement by objurgation, watching the effect of each oath with a wary eye.

“F’r instance. You’re tall. Long arms. You get a longer reach than any one in the brasted vault. Gobblimey, but I thought I’d got a Tough on. ‘Stead of which ... ‘Scuse me. I wouldn’t have *‘it* you if I’d known. It’s like fighting sacks. ’Tisn’ right. Y’r arms seemed ‘ung on ‘ooks. Reg’lar— ‘ung on ‘ooks. There!”

Denton stared, and then surprised and hurt his battered chin by a sudden laugh. Bitter tears came into his eyes.

“Go on,” he said.

The swart man reverted to his formula. He was good enough to say he liked the look of Denton, thought he had stood up “amazing plucky. On’y pluck ain’t no good — ain’t no brasted good — if you don’t ‘old your ‘ands.

“Whad I was going to say was this,” he said. “Lemme show you ‘ow to scrap. Jest lemme. You’re ig’nant, you ain’t no class; but you might be a very decent scrapper — very decent. Shown. That’s what I meant to say.”

Denton hesitated. “But—” he said, “I can’t give you anything—”

“That’s the ge’man all over,” said the swart man. “Who arst you to?”

“But your time?”

“If you don’t get learnt scrapping you’ll get killed, — don’t you make no bones of that.”

Denton thought. “I don’t know,” he said.

He looked at the face beside him, and all its native coarseness shouted at him. He felt a quick revulsion from his transient friendliness. It seemed to him incredible that it should be necessary for him to be indebted to such a creature.

“The chaps are always scrapping,” said the swart man. “Always. And, of course — if one gets waxy and ‘its you vital ...”

“By God!” cried Denton; “I wish one would.”

“Of course, if you feel like that—”

“You don’t understand.”

“P’raps I don’t,” said the swart man; and lapsed into a fuming

silence.

When he spoke again his voice was less friendly, and he prodded Denton by way of address. “Look see!” he said: “are you going to let me show you ‘ow to scrap?”

“It’s tremendously kind of you,” said Denton; “but—”

There was a pause. The swart man rose and bent over Denton.

“Too much ge’man,” he said— “eh? I got a red face.... By gosh! you are — you *are* a brasted fool!”

He turned away, and instantly Denton realised the truth of this remark.

The swart man descended with dignity to a cross way, and Denton, after a momentary impulse to pursuit, remained on the platform. For a time the things that had happened filled his mind. In one day his graceful system of resignation had been shattered beyond hope. Brute force, the final, the fundamental, had thrust its face through all his explanations and glosses and consolations and grinned enigmatically. Though he was hungry and tired, he did not go on directly to the Labour Hotel, where he would meet Elizabeth. He found he was beginning to think, he wanted very greatly to think; and so, wrapped in a monstrous cloud of meditation, he went the circuit of the city on his moving platform twice. You figure him, tearing through the glaring, thunder-voiced city at a pace of fifty miles an hour, the city upon the planet that spins along its chartless path through space many thousands of miles an hour, funking most terribly, and trying to understand why the heart and will in him should suffer and keep alive.

When at last he came to Elizabeth, she was white and anxious. He might have noted she was in trouble, had it not been for his own preoccupation. He feared most that she would desire to know every detail of his indignities, that she would be sympathetic or indignant. He saw her eyebrows rise at the sight of him.

“I’ve had rough handling,” he said, and gasped. “It’s too fresh — too hot. I don’t want to talk about it.” He sat down with an unavoidable air of sullenness.

She stared at him in astonishment, and as she read something of the significant hieroglyphic of his battered face, her lips whitened. Her hand — it was thinner now than in the days of their prosperity,

and her first finger was a little altered by the metal punching she did — clenched convulsively. “This horrible world!” she said, and said no more.

In these latter days they had become a very silent couple; they said scarcely a word to each other that night, but each followed a private train of thought. In the small hours, as Elizabeth lay awake, Denton started up beside her suddenly — he had been lying as still as a dead man.

“I cannot stand it!” cried Denton. “I *will* not stand it!”

She saw him dimly, sitting up; saw his arm lunge as if in a furious blow at the enshrouding night. Then for a space he was still.

“It is too much — it is more than one can bear!”

She could say nothing. To her, also, it seemed that this was as far as one could go. She waited through a long stillness. She could see that Denton sat with his arms about his knees, his chin almost touching them.

Then he laughed.

“No,” he said at last, “I’m going to stand it. That’s the peculiar thing. There isn’t a grain of suicide in us — not a grain. I suppose all the people with a turn that way have gone. We’re going through with it — to the end.”

Elizabeth thought grayly, and realised that this also was true.

“We’re going through with it. To think of all who have gone through with it: all the generations — endless — endless. Little beasts that snapped and snarled, snapping and snarling, snapping and snarling, generation after generation.”

His monotone, ended abruptly, resumed after a vast interval.

“There were ninety thousand years of stone age. A Denton somewhere in all those years. Apostolic succession. The grace of going through. Let me see! Ninety — nine hundred — three nines, twenty-seven — *three thousand* generations of men! — men more or less. And each fought, and was bruised, and shamed, and somehow held his own — going through with it — passing it on.... And thousands more to come perhaps — thousands!

“Passing it on. I wonder if they will thank us.”

His voice assumed an argumentative note. “If one could find something definite ... If one could say, ‘This is why — this is why it

goes on....'"

He became still, and Elizabeth's eyes slowly separated him from the darkness until at last she could see how he sat with his head resting on his hand. A sense of the enormous remoteness of their minds came to her; that dim suggestion of another being seemed to her a figure of their mutual understanding. What could he be thinking now? What might he not say next? Another age seemed to elapse before he sighed and whispered: "No. I don't understand it. No!" Then a long interval, and he repeated this. But the second time it had the tone almost of a solution.

She became aware that he was preparing to lie down. She marked his movements, perceived with astonishment how he adjusted his pillow with a careful regard to comfort. He lay down with a sigh of contentment almost. His passion had passed. He lay still, and presently his breathing became regular and deep.

But Elizabeth remained with eyes wide open in the darkness, until the clamour of a bell and the sudden brilliance of the electric light warned them that the Labour Company had need of them for yet another day.

That day came a scuffle with the albino Whitey and the little ferret-faced man. Blunt, the swart artist in scrapping, having first let Denton grasp the bearing of his lesson, intervened, not without a certain quality of patronage. "Drop 'is 'air, Whitey, and let the man be," said his gross voice through a shower of indignities. "Can't you see 'e don't know *'ow* to scrap?" And Denton, lying shamefully in the dust, realised that he must accept that course of instruction after all.

He made his apology straight and clean. He scrambled up and walked to Blunt. "I was a fool, and you are right," he said. "If it isn't too late ..."

That night, after the second spell, Denton went with Blunt to certain waste and slime-soaked vaults under the Port of London, to learn the first beginnings of the high art of scrapping as it had been perfected in the great world of the underways: how to hit or kick a man so as to hurt him excruciatingly or make him violently sick, how to hit or kick "vital," how to use glass in one's garments as a club and to spread red ruin with various domestic implements, how to

anticipate and demolish your adversary's intentions in other directions; all the pleasant devices, in fact, that had grown up among the disinherited of the great cities of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, were spread out by a gifted exponent for Denton's learning. Blunt's bashfulness fell from him as the instruction proceeded, and he developed a certain expert dignity, a quality of fatherly consideration. He treated Denton with the utmost consideration, only "flicking him up a bit" now and then, to keep the interest hot, and roaring with laughter at a happy fluke of Denton's that covered his mouth with blood.

"I'm always keerless of my mouth," said Blunt, admitting a weakness. "Always. It don't seem to matter, like, just getting bashed in the mouth — not if your chin's all right. Tastin' blood does me good. Always. But I better not 'it you again."

Denton went home, to fall asleep exhausted and wake in the small hours with aching limbs and all his bruises tingling. Was it worth while that he should go on living? He listened to Elizabeth's breathing, and remembering that he must have awaked her the previous night, he lay very still. He was sick with infinite disgust at the new conditions of his life. He hated it all, hated even the genial savage who had protected him so generously. The monstrous fraud of civilisation glared stark before his eyes; he saw it as a vast lunatic growth, producing a deepening torrent of savagery below, and above ever more flimsy gentility and silly wastefulness. He could see no redeeming reason, no touch of honour, either in the life he had led or in this life to which he had fallen. Civilisation presented itself as some catastrophic product as little concerned with men — save as victims — as a cyclone or a planetary collision. He, and therefore all mankind, seemed living utterly in vain. His mind sought some strange expedients of escape, if not for himself then at least for Elizabeth. But he meant them for himself. What if he hunted up Mwres and told him of their disaster? It came to him as an astonishing thing how utterly Mwres and Bindon had passed out of his range. Where were they? What were they doing? From that he passed to thoughts of utter dishonour. And finally, not arising in any way out of this mental tumult, but ending it as dawn ends the night, came the clear and obvious conclusion of the night before: the

conviction that he had to go through with things; that, apart from any remoter view and quite sufficient for all his thought and energy, he had to stand up and fight among his fellows and quit himself like a man.

The second night's instruction was perhaps less dreadful than the first; and the third was even endurable, for Blunt dealt out some praise. The fourth day Denton chanced upon the fact that the ferret-faced man was a coward. There passed a fortnight of smouldering days and feverish instruction at night; Blunt, with many blasphemies, testified that never had he met so apt a pupil; and all night long Denton dreamt of kicks and counters and gouges and cunning tricks. For all that time no further outrages were attempted, for fear of Blunt; and then came the second crisis. Blunt did not come one day — afterwards he admitted his deliberate intention — and through the tedious morning Whitey awaited the interval between the spells with an ostentatious impatience. He knew nothing of the scrapping lessons, and he spent the time in telling Denton and the vault generally of certain disagreeable proceedings he had in mind.

Whitey was not popular, and the vault disgorged to see him haze the new man with only a languid interest. But matters changed when Whitey's attempt to open the proceedings by kicking Denton in the face was met by an excellently executed duck, catch and throw, that completed the flight of Whitey's foot in its orbit and brought Whitey's head into the ash-heap that had once received Denton's. Whitey arose a shade whiter, and now blasphemously bent upon vital injuries. There were indecisive passages, foiled enterprises that deepened Whitey's evidently growing perplexity; and then things developed into a grouping of Denton uppermost with Whitey's throat in his hand, his knee on Whitey's chest, and a tearful Whitey with a black face, protruding tongue and broken finger endeavouring to explain the misunderstanding by means of hoarse sounds. Moreover, it was evident that among the bystanders there had never been a more popular person than Denton.

Denton, with proper precaution, released his antagonist and stood up. His blood seemed changed to some sort of fluid fire, his limbs felt light and supernaturally strong. The idea that he was a martyr in the civilisation machine had vanished from his mind. He was a man

in a world of men.

The little ferret-faced man was the first in the competition to pat him on the back. The lender of oil cans was a radiant sun of genial congratulation.... It seemed incredible to Denton that he had ever thought of despair.

Denton was convinced that not only had he to go through with things, but that he could. He sat on the canvas pallet expounding this new aspect to Elizabeth. One side of his face was bruised. She had not recently fought, she had not been patted on the back, there were no hot bruises upon her face, only a pallor and a new line or so about the mouth. She was taking the woman's share. She looked steadfastly at Denton in his new mood of prophecy. "I feel that there is something," he was saying, "something that goes on, a Being of Life in which we live and move and have our being, something that began fifty — a hundred million years ago, perhaps, that goes on — on: growing, spreading, to things beyond us — things that will justify us all.... That will explain and justify my fighting — these bruises, and all the pain of it. It's the chisel — yes, the chisel of the Maker. If only I could make you feel as I feel, if I could make you! You *will*, dear, I know you will."

"No," she said in a low voice. "No, I shall not."

"So I might have thought—"

She shook her head. "No," she said, "I have thought as well. What you say — doesn't convince me."

She looked at his face resolutely. "I hate it," she said, and caught at her breath. "You do not understand, you do not think. There was a time when you said things and I believed them. I am growing wiser. You are a man, you can fight, force your way. You do not mind bruises. You can be coarse and ugly, and still a man. Yes — it makes you. It makes you. You are right. Only a woman is not like that. We are different. We have let ourselves get civilised too soon. This underworld is not for us."

She paused and began again.

"I hate it! I hate this horrible canvas! I hate it more than — more than the worst that can happen. It hurts my fingers to touch it. It is horrible to the skin. And the women I work with day after day! I lie awake at nights and think how I may be growing like them...."

She stopped. “I *am* growing like them,” she cried passionately.

Denton stared at her distress. “But—” he said and stopped.

“You don’t understand. What have I? What have I to save me? *You* can fight. Fighting is man’s work. But women — women are different.... I have thought it all out, I have done nothing but think night and day. Look at the colour of my face! I cannot go on. I cannot endure this life.... I cannot endure it.”

She stopped. She hesitated.

“You do not know all,” she said abruptly, and for an instant her lips had a bitter smile. “I have been asked to leave you.”

“Leave me!”

She made no answer save an affirmative movement of the head.

Denton stood up sharply. They stared at one another through a long silence.

Suddenly she turned herself about, and flung face downward upon their canvas bed. She did not sob, she made no sound. She lay still upon her face. After a vast, distressful void her shoulders heaved and she began to weep silently.

“Elizabeth!” he whispered— “Elizabeth!”

Very softly he sat down beside her, bent down, put his arm across her in a doubtful caress, seeking vainly for some clue to this intolerable situation.

“Elizabeth,” he whispered in her ear.

She thrust him from her with her hand. “I cannot bear a child to be a slave!” and broke out into loud and bitter weeping.

Denton’s face changed — became blank dismay. Presently he slipped from the bed and stood on his feet. All the complacency had vanished from his face, had given place to impotent rage. He began to rave and curse at the intolerable forces which pressed upon him, at all the accidents and hot desires and heedlessness that mock the life of man. His little voice rose in that little room, and he shook his fist, this animalcule of the earth, at all that environed him about, at the millions about him, at his past and future and all the insensate vastness of the overwhelming city.

V — BINDON INTERVENES

In Bindon's younger days he had dabbled in speculation and made three brilliant flukes. For the rest of his life he had the wisdom to let gambling alone, and the conceit to believe himself a very clever man. A certain desire for influence and reputation interested him in the business intrigues of the giant city in which his flukes were made. He became at last one of the most influential shareholders in the company that owned the London flying stages to which the aëroplanes came from all parts of the world. This much for his public activities. In his private life he was a man of pleasure. And this is the story of his heart.

But before proceeding to such depths, one must devote a little time to the exterior of this person. Its physical basis was slender, and short, and dark; and the face, which was fine-featured and assisted by pigments, varied from an insecure self-complacency to an intelligent uneasiness. His face and head had been depilated, according to the cleanly and hygienic fashion of the time, so that the colour and contour of his hair varied with his costume. This he was constantly changing.

At times he would distend himself with pneumatic vestments in the rococo vein. From among the billowy developments of this style, and beneath a translucent and illuminated headdress, his eye watched jealously for the respect of the less fashionable world. At other times he emphasised his elegant slenderness in close-fitting garments of black satin. For effects of dignity he would assume broad pneumatic shoulders, from which hung a robe of carefully arranged folds of China silk, and a classical Bindon in pink tights was also a transient phenomenon in the eternal pageant of Destiny. In the days when he hoped to marry Elizabeth, he sought to impress and charm her, and at the same time to take off something of his burthen of forty years, by wearing the last fancy of the contemporary buck, a costume of elastic material with distensible warts and horns, changing in colour as he walked, by an ingenious arrangement of versatile chromatophores. And no doubt, if Elizabeth's affection had not been already engaged by the worthless Denton, and if her tastes had not had that odd bias

for old-fashioned ways, this extremely *chic* conception would have ravished her. Bindon had consulted Elizabeth's father before presenting himself in this garb — he was one of those men who always invite criticism of their costume — and Mwres had pronounced him all that the heart of woman could desire. But the affair of the hypnotist proved that his knowledge of the heart of woman was incomplete.

Bindon's idea of marrying had been formed some little time before Mwres threw Elizabeth's budding womanhood in his way. It was one of Bindon's most cherished secrets that he had a considerable capacity for a pure and simple life of a grossly sentimental type. The thought imparted a sort of pathetic seriousness to the offensive and quite inconsequent and unmeaning excesses, which he was pleased to regard as dashing wickedness, and which a number of good people also were so unwise as to treat in that desirable manner. As a consequence of these excesses, and perhaps by reason also of an inherited tendency to early decay, his liver became seriously affected, and he suffered increasing inconvenience when travelling by aëroplane. It was during his convalescence from a protracted bilious attack that it occurred to him that in spite of all the terrible fascinations of Vice, if he found a beautiful, gentle, good young woman of a not too violently intellectual type to devote her life to him, he might yet be saved to Goodness, and even rear a spirited family in his likeness to solace his declining years. But like so many experienced men of the world, he doubted if there were any good women. Of such as he had heard tell he was outwardly sceptical and privately much afraid.

When the aspiring Mwres effected his introduction to Elizabeth, it seemed to him that his good fortune was complete. He fell in love with her at once. Of course, he had always been falling in love since he was sixteen, in accordance with the extremely varied recipes to be found in the accumulated literature of many centuries. But this was different. This was real love. It seemed to him to call forth all the lurking goodness in his nature. He felt that for her sake he could give up a way of life that had already produced the gravest lesions on his liver and nervous system. His imagination presented him with idyllic pictures of the life of the reformed rake. He would never be

sentimental with her, or silly; but always a little cynical and bitter, as became the past. Yet he was sure she would have an intuition of his real greatness and goodness. And in due course he would confess things to her, pour his version of what he regarded as his wickedness — showing what a complex of Goethe, and Benvenuto Cellini, and Shelley, and all those other chaps he really was — into her shocked, very beautiful, and no doubt sympathetic ear. And preparatory to these things he wooed her with infinite subtlety and respect. And the reserve with which Elizabeth treated him seemed nothing more nor less than an exquisite modesty touched and enhanced by an equally exquisite lack of ideas.

Bindon knew nothing of her wandering affections, nor of the attempt made by Mwres to utilise hypnotism as a corrective to this digression of her heart; he conceived he was on the best of terms with Elizabeth, and had made her quite successfully various significant presents of jewellery and the more virtuous cosmetics, when her elopement with Denton threw the world out of gear for him. His first aspect of the matter was rage begotten of wounded vanity, and as Mwres was the most convenient person, he vented the first brunt of it upon him.

He went immediately and insulted the desolate father grossly, and then spent an active and determined day going to and fro about the city and interviewing people in a consistent and partly-successful attempt to ruin that matrimonial speculator. The effectual nature of these activities gave him a temporary exhilaration, and he went to the dining-place he had frequented in his wicked days in a devil-may-care frame of mind, and dined altogether too amply and cheerfully with two other golden youths in their early forties. He threw up the game; no woman was worth being good for, and he astonished even himself by the strain of witty cynicism he developed. One of the other desperate blades, warmed with wine, made a facetious allusion to his disappointment, but at the time this did not seem unpleasant.

The next morning found his liver and temper inflamed. He kicked his phonographic-news machine to pieces, dismissed his valet, and resolved that he would perpetrate a terrible revenge upon Elizabeth. Or Denton. Or somebody. But anyhow, it was to be a terrible revenge; and the friend who had made fun at him should no longer

see him in the light of a foolish girl's victim. He knew something of the little property that was due to her, and that this would be the only support of the young couple until Mwres should relent. If Mwres did not relent, and if unpropitious things should happen to the affair in which Elizabeth's expectations lay, they would come upon evil times and be sufficiently amenable to temptation of a sinister sort. Bindon's imagination, abandoning its beautiful idealism altogether, expanded the idea of temptation of a sinister sort. He figured himself as the implacable, the intricate and powerful man of wealth pursuing this maiden who had scorned him. And suddenly her image came upon his mind vivid and dominant, and for the first time in his life Bindon realised something of the real power of passion.

His imagination stood aside like a respectful footman who has done his work in ushering in the emotion.

"My God!" cried Bindon: "I will have her! If I have to kill myself to get her! And that other fellow — !"

After an interview with his medical man and a penance for his overnight excesses in the form of bitter drugs, a mitigated but absolutely resolute Bindon sought out Mwres. Mwres he found properly smashed, and impoverished and humble, in a mood of frantic self-preservation, ready to sell himself body and soul, much more any interest in a disobedient daughter, to recover his lost position in the world. In the reasonable discussion that followed, it was agreed that these misguided young people should be left to sink into distress, or possibly even assisted towards that improving discipline by Bindon's financial influence.

"And then?" said Mwres.

"They will come to the Labour Company," said Bindon. "They will wear the blue canvas."

"And then?"

"She will divorce him," he said, and sat for a moment intent upon that prospect. For in those days the austere limitations of divorce of Victorian times were extraordinarily relaxed, and a couple might separate on a hundred different scores.

Then suddenly Bindon astonished himself and Mwres by jumping to his feet. "She *shall* divorce him!" he cried. "I will have it so — I will work it so. By God! it shall be so. He shall be disgraced, so that

she must. He shall be smashed and pulverised."

The idea of smashing and pulverising inflamed him further. He began a Jovian pacing up and down the little office. "I will have her," he cried. "I *will* have her! Heaven and Hell shall not save her from me!" His passion evaporated in its expression, and left him at the end simply histrionic. He struck an attitude and ignored with heroic determination a sharp twinge of pain about the diaphragm. And Mwres sat with his pneumatic cap deflated and himself very visibly impressed.

And so, with a fair persistency, Bindon sat himself to the work of being Elizabeth's malignant providence, using with ingenious dexterity every particle of advantage wealth in those days gave a man over his fellow-creatures. A resort to the consolations of religion hindered these operations not at all. He would go and talk with an interesting, experienced and sympathetic Father of the Huysmanite sect of the Isis cult, about all the irrational little proceedings he was pleased to regard as his heaven-dismaying wickedness, and the interesting, experienced and sympathetic Father representing Heaven dismayed, would with a pleasing affectation of horror, suggest simple and easy penances, and recommend a monastic foundation that was airy, cool, hygienic, and not vulgarised, for viscerally disordered penitent sinners of the refined and wealthy type. And after these excursions, Bindon would come back to London quite active and passionate again. He would machinate with really considerable energy, and repair to a certain gallery high above the street of moving ways, from which he could view the entrance to the barrack of the Labour Company in the ward which sheltered Denton and Elizabeth. And at last one day he saw Elizabeth go in, and thereby his passion was renewed.

So in the fullness of time the complicated devices of Bindon ripened, and he could go to Mwres and tell him that the young people were near despair.

"It's time for you," he said, "to let your parental affections have play. She's been in blue canvas some months, and they've been cooped together in one of those Labour dens, and the little girl is dead. She knows now what his manhood is worth to her, by way of protection, poor girl. She'll see things now in a clearer light. You go

to her — I don't want to appear in this affair yet — and point out to her how necessary it is that she should get a divorce from him...."

"She's obstinate," said Mwres doubtfully.

"Spirit!" said Bindon. "She's a wonderful girl — a wonderful girl!"

"She'll refuse."

"Of course she will. But leave it open to her. Leave it open to her. And some day — in that stuffy den, in that irksome, toilsome life they can't help it — *they'll have a quarrel*. And then—"

Mwres meditated over the matter, and did as he was told.

Then Bindon, as he had arranged with his spiritual adviser, went into retreat. The retreat of the Huysmanite sect was a beautiful place, with the sweetest air in London, lit by natural sunlight, and with restful quadrangles of real grass open to the sky, where at the same time the penitent man of pleasure might enjoy all the pleasures of loafing and all the satisfaction of distinguished austerity. And, save for participation in the simple and wholesome dietary of the place and in certain magnificent chants, Bindon spent all his time in meditation upon the theme of Elizabeth, and the extreme purification his soul had undergone since he first saw her, and whether he would be able to get a dispensation to marry her from the experienced and sympathetic Father in spite of the approaching "sin" of her divorce; and then ... Bindon would lean against a pillar of the quadrangle and lapse into reveries on the superiority of virtuous love to any other form of indulgence. A curious feeling in his back and chest that was trying to attract his attention, a disposition to be hot or shiver, a general sense of ill-health and cutaneous discomfort he did his best to ignore. All that of course belonged to the old life that he was shaking off.

When he came out of retreat he went at once to Mwres to ask for news of Elizabeth. Mwres was clearly under the impression that he was an exemplary father, profoundly touched about the heart by his child's unhappiness. "She was pale," he said, greatly moved; "She was pale. When I asked her to come away and leave him — and be happy — she put her head down upon the table" — Mwres sniffed— "and cried."

His agitation was so great that he could say no more.

“Ah!” said Bindon, respecting this manly grief. “Oh!” said Bindon quite suddenly, with his hand to his side.

Mwres looked up sharply out of the pit of his sorrows, startled. “What’s the matter?” he asked, visibly concerned.

“A most violent pain. Excuse me! You were telling me about Elizabeth.”

And Mwres, after a decent solicitude for Bindon’s pain, proceeded with his report. It was even unexpectedly hopeful. Elizabeth, in her first emotion at discovering that her father had not absolutely deserted her, had been frank with him about her sorrows and disgusts.

“Yes,” said Bindon, magnificently, “I shall have her yet.” And then that novel pain twitched him for the second time.

For these lower pains the priest was comparatively ineffectual, inclining rather to regard the body and them as mental illusions amenable to contemplation; so Bindon took it to a man of a class he loathed, a medical man of extraordinary repute and incivility. “We must go all over you,” said the medical man, and did so with the most disgusting frankness. “Did you ever bring any children into the world?” asked this gross materialist among other impertinent questions.

“Not that I know of,” said Bindon, too amazed to stand upon his dignity.

“Ah!” said the medical man, and proceeded with his punching and sounding. Medical science in those days was just reaching the beginnings of precision. “You’d better go right away,” said the medical man, “and make the Euthanasia. The sooner the better.”

Bindon gasped. He had been trying not to understand the technical explanations and anticipations in which the medical man had indulged.

“I say!” he said. “But do you mean to say ... Your science ...”

“Nothing,” said the medical man. “A few opiates. The thing is your own doing, you know, to a certain extent.”

“I was sorely tempted in my youth.”

“It’s not that so much. But you come of a bad stock. Even if you’d have taken precautions you’d have had bad times to wind up with. The mistake was getting born. The indiscretions of the parents. And

you've shirked exercise, and so forth."

"I had no one to advise me."

"Medical men are always willing."

"I was a spirited young fellow."

"We won't argue; the mischief's done now. You've lived. We can't start you again. You ought never to have started at all. Frankly — the Euthanasia!"

Bindon hated him in silence for a space. Every word of this brutal expert jarred upon his refinements. He was so gross, so impermeable to all the subtler issues of being. But it is no good picking a quarrel with a doctor. "My religious beliefs," he said, "I don't approve of suicide."

"You've been doing it all your life."

"Well, anyhow, I've come to take a serious view of life now."

"You're bound to, if you go on living. You'll hurt. But for practical purposes it's late. However, if you mean to do that — perhaps I'd better mix you a little something. You'll hurt a great deal. These little twinges ..."

"Twinges!"

"Mere preliminary notices."

"How long can I go on? I mean, before I hurt — really."

"You'll get it hot soon. Perhaps three days."

Bindon tried to argue for an extension of time, and in the midst of his pleading gasped, put his hand to his side. Suddenly the extraordinary pathos of his life came to him clear and vivid. "It's hard," he said. "It's infernally hard! I've been no man's enemy but my own. I've always treated everybody quite fairly."

The medical man stared at him without any sympathy for some seconds. He was reflecting how excellent it was that there were no more Bindons to carry on that line of pathos. He felt quite optimistic. Then he turned to his telephone and ordered up a prescription from the Central Pharmacy.

He was interrupted by a voice behind him. "By God!" cried Bindon; "I'll have her yet."

The physician stared over his shoulder at Bindon's expression, and then altered the prescription.

So soon as this painful interview was over, Bindon gave way to

rage. He settled that the medical man was not only an unsympathetic brute and wanting in the first beginnings of a gentleman, but also highly incompetent; and he went off to four other practitioners in succession, with a view to the establishment of this intuition. But to guard against surprises he kept that little prescription in his pocket. With each he began by expressing his grave doubts of the first doctor's intelligence, honesty and professional knowledge, and then stated his symptoms, suppressing only a few more material facts in each case. These were always subsequently elicited by the doctor. In spite of the welcome depreciation of another practitioner, none of these eminent specialists would give Bindon any hope of eluding the anguish and helplessness that loomed now close upon him. To the last of them he unburthened his mind of an accumulated disgust with medical science. "After centuries and centuries," he exclaimed hotly; "and you can do nothing — except admit your helplessness. I say, 'save me' — and what do you do?"

"No doubt it's hard on you," said the doctor. "But you should have taken precautions."

"How was I to know?"

"It wasn't our place to run after you," said the medical man, picking a thread of cotton from his purple sleeve. "Why should we save *you* in particular? You see — from one point of view — people with imaginations and passions like yours have to go — they have to go."

"Go?"

"Die out. It's an eddy."

He was a young man with a serene face. He smiled at Bindon. "We get on with research, you know; we give advice when people have the sense to ask for it. And we bide our time."

"Bide your time?"

"We hardly know enough yet to take over the management, you know."

"The management?"

"You needn't be anxious. Science is young yet. It's got to keep on growing for a few generations. We know enough now to know we don't know enough yet.... But the time is coming, all the same. *You* won't see the time. But, between ourselves, you rich men and party

bosses, with your natural play of the passions and patriotism and religion and so forth, have made rather a mess of things; haven't you? These Underways! And all that sort of thing. Some of us have a sort of fancy that in time we may know enough to take over a little more than the ventilation and drains. Knowledge keeps on piling up, you know. It keeps on growing. And there's not the slightest hurry for a generation or so. Some day — some day, men will live in a different way." He looked at Bindon and meditated. "There'll be a lot of dying out before that day can come."

Bindon attempted to point out to this young man how silly and irrelevant such talk was to a sick man like himself, how impertinent and uncivil it was to him, an older man occupying a position in the official world of extraordinary power and influence. He insisted that a doctor was paid to cure people — he laid great stress on "*paid*" — and had no business to glance even for a moment at "those other questions." "But we do," said the young man, insisting upon facts, and Bindon lost his temper.

His indignation carried him home. That these incompetent impostors, who were unable to save the life of a really influential man like himself, should dream of some day robbing the legitimate property owners of social control, of inflicting one knew not what tyranny upon the world. Curse science! He fumed over the intolerable prospect for some time, and then the pain returned, and he recalled the made-up prescription of the first doctor, still happily in his pocket. He took a dose forthwith.

It calmed and soothed him greatly, and he could sit down in his most comfortable chair beside his library (of phonographic records), and think over the altered aspect of affairs. His indignation passed, his anger and his passion crumbled under the subtle attack of that prescription, pathos became his sole ruler. He stared about him, at his magnificent and voluptuously appointed apartment, at his statuary and discreetly veiled pictures, and all the evidences of a cultivated and elegant wickedness; he touched a stud and the sad pipings of Tristan's shepherd filled the air. His eye wandered from one object to another. They were costly and gross and florid — but they were his. They presented in concrete form his ideals, his conceptions of beauty and desire, his idea of all that is precious in life. And now — he must

leave it all like a common man. He was, he felt, a slender and delicate flame, burning out. So must all life flame up and pass, he thought. His eyes filled with tears.

Then it came into his head that he was alone. Nobody cared for him, nobody needed him! at any moment he might begin to hurt vividly. He might even howl. Nobody would mind. According to all the doctors he would have excellent reason for howling in a day or so. It recalled what his spiritual adviser had said of the decline of faith and fidelity, the degeneration of the age. He beheld himself as a pathetic proof of this; he, the subtle, able, important, voluptuous, cynical, complex Bindon, possibly howling, and not one faithful simple creature in all the world to howl in sympathy. Not one faithful simple soul was there — no shepherd to pipe to him! Had all such faithful simple creatures vanished from this harsh and urgent earth? He wondered whether the horrid vulgar crowd that perpetually went about the city could possibly know what he thought of them. If they did he felt sure *some* would try to earn a better opinion. Surely the world went from bad to worse. It was becoming impossible for Bindons. Perhaps some day ... He was quite sure that the one thing he had needed in life was sympathy. For a time he regretted that he left no sonnets — no enigmatical pictures or something of that sort behind him to carry on his being until at last the sympathetic mind should come....

It seemed incredible to him that this that came was extinction. Yet his sympathetic spiritual guide was in this matter annoyingly figurative and vague. Curse science! It had undermined all faith — all hope. To go out, to vanish from theatre and street, from office and dining-place, from the dear eyes of womankind. And not to be missed! On the whole to leave the world happier!

He reflected that he had never worn his heart upon his sleeve. Had he after all been *too* unsympathetic? Few people could suspect how subtly profound he really was beneath the mask of that cynical gaiety of his. They would not understand the loss they had suffered. Elizabeth, for example, had not suspected....

He had reserved that. His thoughts having come to Elizabeth gravitated about her for some time. How *little* Elizabeth understood him!

That thought became intolerable. Before all other things he must set that right. He realised that there was still something for him to do in life, his struggle against Elizabeth was even yet not over. He could never overcome her now, as he had hoped and prayed. But he might still impress her!

From that idea he expanded. He might impress her profoundly — he might impress her so that she should for evermore regret her treatment of him. The thing that she must realise before everything else was his magnanimity. His magnanimity! Yes! he had loved her with amazing greatness of heart. He had not seen it so clearly before — but of course he was going to leave her all his property. He saw it instantly, as a thing determined and inevitable. She would think how good he was, how spaciously generous; surrounded by all that makes life tolerable from his hand, she would recall with infinite regret her scorn and coldness. And when she sought expression for that regret, she would find that occasion gone forever, she should be met by a locked door, by a disdainful stillness, by a white dead face. He closed his eyes and remained for a space imagining himself that white dead face.

From that he passed to other aspects of the matter, but his determination was assured. He meditated elaborately before he took action, for the drug he had taken inclined him to a lethargic and dignified melancholy. In certain respects he modified details. If he left all his property to Elizabeth it would include the voluptuously appointed room he occupied, and for many reasons he did not care to leave that to her. On the other hand, it had to be left to some one. In his clogged condition this worried him extremely.

In the end he decided to leave it to the sympathetic exponent of the fashionable religious cult, whose conversation had been so pleasing in the past. "*He* will understand," said Bindon with a sentimental sigh. "He knows what Evil means — he understands something of the Stupendous Fascination of the Sphinx of Sin. Yes — he will understand." By that phrase it was that Bindon was pleased to dignify certain unhealthy and undignified departures from sane conduct to which a misguided vanity and an ill-controlled curiosity had led him. He sat for a space thinking how very Hellenic and Italian and Neronic, and all those things, he had been. Even now

— might one not try a sonnet? A penetrating voice to echo down the ages, sensuous, sinister, and sad. For a space he forgot Elizabeth. In the course of half an hour he spoilt three phonographic coils, got a headache, took a second dose to calm himself, and reverted to magnanimity and his former design.

At last he faced the unpalatable problem of Denton. It needed all his newborn magnanimity before he could swallow the thought of Denton; but at last this greatly misunderstood man, assisted by his sedative and the near approach of death, effected even that. If he was at all exclusive about Denton, if he should display the slightest distrust, if he attempted any specific exclusion of that young man, she might — *misunderstand*. Yes — she should have her Denton still. His magnanimity must go even to that. He tried to think only of Elizabeth in the matter.

He rose with a sigh, and limped across to the telephonic apparatus that communicated with his solicitor. In ten minutes a will duly attested and with its proper thumb-mark signature lay in the solicitor's office three miles away. And then for a space Bindon sat very still.

Suddenly he started out of a vague reverie and pressed an investigatory hand to his side.

Then he jumped eagerly to his feet and rushed to the telephone. The Euthanasia Company had rarely been called by a client in a greater hurry.

So it came at last that Denton and his Elizabeth, against all hope, returned unseparated from the labour servitude to which they had fallen. Elizabeth came out from her cramped subterranean den of metal-beaters and all the sordid circumstances of blue canvas, as one comes out of a nightmare. Back towards the sunlight their fortune took them; once the bequest was known to them, the bare thought of another day's hammering became intolerable. They went up long lifts and stairs to levels that they had not seen since the days of their disaster. At first she was full of this sensation of escape; even to think of the underways was intolerable; only after many months could she begin to recall with sympathy the faded women who were still below there, murmuring scandals and reminiscences and folly, and tapping away their lives.

Her choice of the apartments they presently took expressed the vehemence of her release. They were rooms upon the very verge of the city; they had a roof space and a balcony upon the city wall, wide open to the sun and wind, the country and the sky.

And in that balcony comes the last scene in this story. It was a summer sunsetting, and the hills of Surrey were very blue and clear. Denton leant upon the balcony regarding them, and Elizabeth sat by his side. Very wide and spacious was the view, for their balcony hung five hundred feet above the ancient level of the ground. The oblongs of the Food Company, broken here and there by the ruins — grotesque little holes and sheds — of the ancient suburbs, and intersected by shining streams of sewage, passed at last into a remote diapering at the foot of the distant hills. There once had been the squatting-place of the children of Uya. On those further slopes gaunt machines of unknown import worked slackly at the end of their spell, and the hill crest was set with stagnant wind vanes. Along the great south road the Labour Company's field workers in huge wheeled mechanical vehicles, were hurrying back to their meals, their last spell finished. And through the air a dozen little private aëroplanes sailed down towards the city. Familiar scene as it was to the eyes of Denton and Elizabeth, it would have filled the minds of their ancestors with incredulous amazement. Denton's thoughts fluttered towards the future in a vain attempt at what that scene might be in another two hundred years, and, recoiling, turned towards the past.

He shared something of the growing knowledge of the time; he could picture the quaint smoke-grimed Victorian city with its narrow little roads of beaten earth, its wide common-land, ill-organised, ill-built suburbs, and irregular enclosures; the old countryside of the Stuart times, with its little villages and its petty London; the England of the monasteries, the far older England of the Roman dominion, and then before that a wild country with here and there the huts of some warring tribe. These huts must have come and gone and come again through a space of years that made the Roman camp and villa seem but yesterday; and before those years, before even the huts, there had been men in the valley. Even then — so recent had it all been when one judged it by the standards of geological time — this valley had been here; and those hills yonder, higher, perhaps, and

snow-tipped, had still been yonder hills, and the Thames had flowed down from the Cotswolds to the sea. But the men had been but the shapes of men, creatures of darkness and ignorance, victims of beasts and floods, storms and pestilence and incessant hunger. They had held a precarious foothold amidst bears and lions and all the monstrous violence of the past. Already some at least of these enemies were overcome....

For a time Denton pursued the thoughts of this spacious vision, trying in obedience to his instinct to find his place and proportion in the scheme.

"It has been chance," he said, "it has been luck. We have come through. It happens we have come through. Not by any strength of our own....

"And yet ... No. I don't know."

He was silent for a long time before he spoke again.

"After all — there is a long time yet. There have scarcely been men for twenty thousand years — and there has been life for twenty millions. And what are generations? What are generations? It is enormous, and we are so little. Yet we know — we feel. We are not dumb atoms, we are part of it — part of it — to the limits of our strength and will. Even to die is part of it. Whether we die or live, we are in the making....

"As time goes on — *perhaps* — men will be wiser.... Wiser....

"Will they ever understand?"

He became silent again. Elizabeth said nothing to these things, but she regarded his dreaming face with infinite affection. Her mind was not very active that evening. A great contentment possessed her. After a time she laid a gentle hand on his beside her. He fondled it softly, still looking out upon the spacious gold-woven view. So they sat as the sun went down. Until presently Elizabeth shivered.

Denton recalled himself abruptly from these spacious issues of his leisure, and went in to fetch her a shawl.

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES
A PANTOUM IN PROSE

It is doubtful whether the gift was innate. For my own part, I think it came to him suddenly. Indeed, until he was thirty he was a sceptic, and did not believe in miraculous powers. And here, since it is the most convenient place, I must mention that he was a little man, and had eyes of a hot brown, very erect red hair, a moustache with ends that he twisted up, and freckles. His name was George McWhirter Fotheringay — not the sort of name by any means to lead to any expectation of miracles — and he was clerk at Gomshott's. He was greatly addicted to assertive argument. It was while he was asserting the impossibility of miracles that he had his first intimation of his extraordinary powers. This particular argument was being held in the bar of the Long Dragon, and Toddy Beamish was conducting the opposition by a monotonous but effective "So *you* say," that drove Mr. Fotheringay to the very limit of his patience.

There were present, besides these two, a very dusty cyclist, landlord Cox, and Miss Maybridge, the perfectly respectable and rather portly barmaid of the Dragon. Miss Maybridge was standing with her back to Mr. Fotheringay, washing glasses; the others were watching him, more or less amused by the present ineffectiveness of the assertive method. Goaded by the Torres Vedras tactics of Mr. Beamish, Mr. Fotheringay determined to make an unusual rhetorical effort. "Looky here, Mr. Beamish," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something contrariwise to the course of nature done by power of Will, something what couldn't happen without being specially willed."

"So *you* say," said Mr. Beamish, repulsing him.

Mr. Fotheringay appealed to the cyclist, who had hitherto been a silent auditor, and received his assent — given with a hesitating cough and a glance at Mr. Beamish. The landlord would express no opinion, and Mr. Fotheringay, returning to Mr. Beamish, received the unexpected concession of a qualified assent to his definition of a miracle.

“For instance,” said Mr. Fotheringay, greatly encouraged. “Here would be a miracle. That lamp, in the natural course of nature, couldn’t burn like that upsy-down, could it, Beamish?”

“*You* say it couldn’t,” said Beamish.

“And you?” said Fotheringay. “You don’t mean to say — eh?”

“No,” said Beamish reluctantly. “No, it couldn’t.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Then here comes someone, as it might be me, along here, and stands as it might be here, and says to that lamp, as I might do, collecting all my will — Turn upsy-down without breaking, and go on burning steady, and — Hullo!”

It was enough to make anyone say “Hullo!” The impossible, the incredible, was visible to them all. The lamp hung inverted in the air, burning quietly with its flame pointing down. It was as solid, as indisputable as ever a lamp was, the prosaic common lamp of the Long Dragon bar.

Mr. Fotheringay stood with an extended forefinger and the knitted brows of one anticipating a catastrophic smash. The cyclist, who was sitting next the lamp, ducked and jumped across the bar. Everybody jumped, more or less. Miss Maybridge turned and screamed. For nearly three seconds the lamp remained still. A faint cry of mental distress came from Mr. Fotheringay. “I can’t keep it up,” he said, “any longer.” He staggered back, and the inverted lamp suddenly flared, fell against the corner of the bar, bounced aside, smashed upon the floor, and went out.

It was lucky it had a metal receiver, or the whole place would have been in a blaze. Mr. Cox was the first to speak, and his remark, shorn of needless excrescences, was to the effect that Fotheringay was a fool. Fotheringay was beyond disputing even so fundamental a proposition as that! He was astonished beyond measure at the thing that had occurred. The subsequent conversation threw absolutely no light on the matter so far as Fotheringay was concerned; the general opinion not only followed Mr. Cox very closely but very vehemently. Everyone accused Fotheringay of a silly trick, and presented him to himself as a foolish destroyer of comfort and security. His mind was in a tornado of perplexity, he was himself inclined to agree with them, and he made a remarkably ineffectual opposition to the proposal of his departure.

He went home flushed and heated, coat-collar crumpled, eyes smarting and ears red. He watched each of the ten street lamps nervously as he passed it. It was only when he found himself alone in his little bed-room in Church Row that he was able to grapple seriously with his memories of the occurrence, and ask, "What on earth happened?"

He had removed his coat and boots, and was sitting on the bed with his hands in his pockets repeating the text of his defence for the seventeenth time, "*I* didn't want the confounded thing to upset," when it occurred to him that at the precise moment he had said the commanding words he had inadvertently willed the thing he said, and that when he had seen the lamp in the air he had felt that it depended on him to maintain it there without being clear how this was to be done. He had not a particularly complex mind, or he might have stuck for a time at that "inadvertently willed," embracing, as it does, the abstrusest problems of voluntary action; but as it was, the idea came to him with a quite acceptable haziness. And from that, following, as I must admit, no clear logical path, he came to the test of experiment.

He pointed resolutely to his candle and collected his mind, though he felt he did a foolish thing. "Be raised up," he said. But in a second that feeling vanished. The candle was raised, hung in the air one giddy moment, and as Mr. Fotheringay gasped, fell with a smash on his toilet-table, leaving him in darkness save for the expiring glow of its wick.

For a time Mr. Fotheringay sat in the darkness, perfectly still. "It did happen, after all," he said. "And 'ow *I'm* to explain it I *don't* know." He sighed heavily, and began feeling in his pockets for a match. He could find none, and he rose and groped about the toilet-table. "I wish I had a match," he said. He resorted to his coat, and there was none there, and then it dawned upon him that miracles were possible even with matches. He extended a hand and scowled at it in the dark. "Let there be a match in that hand," he said. He felt some light object fall across his palm, and his fingers closed upon a match.

After several ineffectual attempts to light this, he discovered it was a safety-match. He threw it down, and then it occurred to him

that he might have willed it lit. He did, and perceived it burning in the midst of his toilet-table mat. He caught it up hastily, and it went out. His perception of possibilities enlarged, and he felt for and replaced the candle in its candlestick. “Here! *you* be lit,” said Mr. Fotheringay, and forthwith the candle was flaring, and he saw a little black hole in the toilet-cover, with a wisp of smoke rising from it. For a time he stared from this to the little flame and back, and then looked up and met his own gaze in the looking glass. By this help he communed with himself in silence for a time.

“How about miracles now?” said Mr. Fotheringay at last, addressing his reflection.

The subsequent meditations of Mr. Fotheringay were of a severe but confused description. So far, he could see it was a case of pure willing with him. The nature of his experiences so far disinclined him for any further experiments, at least until he had reconsidered them. But he lifted a sheet of paper, and turned a glass of water pink and then green, and he created a snail, which he miraculously annihilated, and got himself a miraculous new tooth-brush. Somewhen in the small hours he had reached the fact that his will-power must be of a particularly rare and pungent quality, a fact of which he had certainly had inklings before, but no certain assurance. The scare and perplexity of his first discovery was now qualified by pride in this evidence of singularity and by vague intimations of advantage. He became aware that the church clock was striking one, and as it did not occur to him that his daily duties at Gomshott’s might be miraculously dispensed with, he resumed undressing, in order to get to bed without further delay. As he struggled to get his shirt over his head, he was struck with a brilliant idea. “Let me be in bed,” he said, and found himself so. “Undressed,” he stipulated; and, finding the sheets cold, added hastily, “and in my nightshirt — no, in a nice soft woollen nightshirt. Ah!” he said with immense enjoyment. “And now let me be comfortably asleep....”

He awoke at his usual hour and was pensive all through breakfast-time, wondering whether his overnight experience might not be a particularly vivid dream. At length his mind turned again to cautious experiments. For instance, he had three eggs for breakfast; two his landlady had supplied, good, but shoppy, and one was a delicious

fresh goose-egg, laid, cooked, and served by his extraordinary will. He hurried off to Gomshott's in a state of profound but carefully concealed excitement, and only remembered the shell of the third egg when his landlady spoke of it that night. All day he could do no work because of this astonishingly new self-knowledge, but this caused him no inconvenience, because he made up for it miraculously in his last ten minutes.

As the day wore on his state of mind passed from wonder to elation, albeit the circumstances of his dismissal from the Long Dragon were still disagreeable to recall, and a garbled account of the matter that had reached his colleagues led to some badinage. It was evident he must be careful how he lifted frangible articles, but in other ways his gift promised more and more as he turned it over in his mind. He intended among other things to increase his personal property by unostentatious acts of creation. He called into existence a pair of very splendid diamond studs, and hastily annihilated them again as young Gomshott came across the counting-house to his desk. He was afraid young Gomshott might wonder how he had come by them. He saw quite clearly the gift required caution and watchfulness in its exercise, but so far as he could judge the difficulties attending its mastery would be no greater than those he had already faced in the study of cycling. It was that analogy, perhaps, quite as much as the feeling that he would be unwelcome in the Long Dragon, that drove him out after supper into the lane beyond the gas-works, to rehearse a few miracles in private.

There was possibly a certain want of originality in his attempts, for apart from his will-power Mr. Fotheringay was not a very exceptional man. The miracle of Moses' rod came to his mind, but the night was dark and unfavourable to the proper control of large miraculous snakes. Then he recollected the story of "Tannhäuser" that he had read on the back of the Philharmonic programme. That seemed to him singularly attractive and harmless. He stuck his walking-stick — a very nice Poona-Penang lawyer — into the turf that edged the footpath, and commanded the dry wood to blossom. The air was immediately full of the scent of roses, and by means of a match he saw for himself that this beautiful miracle was indeed accomplished. His satisfaction was ended by advancing footsteps.

Afraid of a premature discovery of his powers, he addressed the blossoming stick hastily: “Go back.” What he meant was “Change back;” but of course he was confused. The stick receded at a considerable velocity, and incontinently came a cry of anger and a bad word from the approaching person. “Who are you throwing brambles at, you fool?” cried a voice. “That got me on the shin.”

“I’m sorry, old chap,” said Mr. Fotheringay, and then realising the awkward nature of the explanation, caught nervously at his moustache. He saw Winch, one of the three Immering constables, advancing.

“What d’yer mean by it?” asked the constable. “Hullo! It’s you, is it? The gent that broke the lamp at the Long Dragon!”

“I don’t mean anything by it,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Nothing at all.”

“What d’yer do it for then?”

“Oh, bother!” said Mr. Fotheringay.

“Bother indeed! D’yer know that stick hurt? What d’yer do it for, eh?”

For the moment Mr. Fotheringay could not think what he had done it for. His silence seemed to irritate Mr. Winch. “You’ve been assaulting the police, young man, this time. That’s what *you* done.”

“Look here, Mr. Winch,” said Mr. Fotheringay, annoyed and confused, “I’m very sorry. The fact is — —”

“Well?”

He could think of no way but the truth. “I was working a miracle.” He tried to speak in an off-hand way, but try as he would he couldn’t.

“Working a —— ! ‘Ere, don’t you talk rot. Working a miracle, indeed! Miracle! Well, that’s downright funny! Why, you’s the chap that don’t believe in miracles.... Fact is, this is another of your silly conjuring tricks — that’s what this is. Now, I tell you — —”

But Mr. Fotheringay never heard what Mr. Winch was going to tell him. He realised he had given himself away, flung his valuable secret to all the winds of heaven. A violent gust of irritation swept him to action. He turned on the constable swiftly and fiercely. “Here,” he said, “I’ve had enough of this, I have! I’ll show you a silly conjuring trick, I will! Go to Hades! Go, now!”

He was alone!

Mr. Fotheringay performed no more miracles that night, nor did he trouble to see what had become of his flowering stick. He returned to the town, scared and very quiet, and went to his bed-room. “Lord!” he said, “it’s a powerful gift — an extremely powerful gift. I didn’t hardly mean as much as that. Not really.... I wonder what Hades is like!”

He sat on the bed taking off his boots. Struck by a happy thought he transferred the constable to San Francisco, and without any more interference with normal causation went soberly to bed. In the night he dreamt of the anger of Winch.

The next day Mr. Fotheringay heard two interesting items of news. Someone had planted a most beautiful climbing rose against the elder Mr. Gomshott’s private house in the Lullaborough Road, and the river as far as Rawling’s Mill was to be dragged for Constable Winch.

Mr. Fotheringay was abstracted and thoughtful all that day, and performed no miracles except certain provisions for Winch, and the miracle of completing his day’s work with punctual perfection in spite of all the bee-swarm of thoughts that hummed through his mind. And the extraordinary abstraction and meekness of his manner was remarked by several people, and made a matter for jesting. For the most part he was thinking of Winch.

On Sunday evening he went to chapel, and oddly enough, Mr. Maydig, who took a certain interest in occult matters, preached about “things that are not lawful.” Mr. Fotheringay was not a regular chapel goer, but the system of assertive scepticism, to which I have already alluded, was now very much shaken. The tenor of the sermon threw an entirely new light on these novel gifts, and he suddenly decided to consult Mr. Maydig immediately after the service. So soon as that was determined, he found himself wondering why he had not done so before.

Mr. Maydig, a lean, excitable man with quite remarkably long wrists and neck, was gratified at a request for a private conversation from a young man whose carelessness in religious matters was a subject for general remark in the town. After a few necessary delays, he conducted him to the study of the Manse, which was contiguous to the chapel, seated him comfortably, and, standing in front of a

cheerful fire — his legs threw a Rhodian arch of shadow on the opposite wall — requested Mr. Fotheringay to state his business.

At first Mr. Fotheringay was a little abashed, and found some difficulty in opening the matter. “You will scarcely believe me, Mr. Maydig, I am afraid” — and so forth for some time. He tried a question at last, and asked Mr. Maydig his opinion of miracles.

Mr. Maydig was still saying “Well” in an extremely judicial tone, when Mr. Fotheringay interrupted again: “You don’t believe, I suppose, that some common sort of person — like myself, for instance — as it might be sitting here now, might have some sort of twist inside him that made him able to do things by his will.”

“It’s possible,” said Mr. Maydig. “Something of the sort, perhaps, is possible.”

“If I might make free with something here, I think I might show you by a sort of experiment,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Now, take that tobacco-jar on the table, for instance. What I want to know is whether what I am going to do with it is a miracle or not. Just half a minute, Mr. Maydig, please.”

He knitted his brows, pointed to the tobacco-jar and said: “Be a bowl of vi’lets.”

The tobacco-jar did as it was ordered.

Mr. Maydig started violently at the change, and stood looking from the thaumaturgist to the bowl of flowers. He said nothing. Presently he ventured to lean over the table and smell the violets; they were fresh-picked and very fine ones. Then he stared at Mr. Fotheringay again.

“How did you do that?” he asked.

Mr. Fotheringay pulled his moustache. “Just told it — and there you are. Is that a miracle, or is it black art, or what is it? And what do you think’s the matter with me? That’s what I want to ask.”

“It’s a most extraordinary occurrence.”

“And this day last week I knew no more that I could do things like that than you did. It came quite sudden. It’s something odd about my will, I suppose, and that’s as far as I can see.”

“Is *that* — the only thing. Could you do other things besides that?”

“Lord, yes!” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Just anything.” He thought,

and suddenly recalled a conjuring entertainment he had seen. “Here!” He pointed. “Change into a bowl of fish — no, not that — change into a glass bowl full of water with goldfish swimming in it. That’s better! You see that, Mr. Maydig?”

“It’s astonishing. It’s incredible. You are either a most extraordinary ... But no — —”

“I could change it into anything,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Just anything. Here! be a pigeon, will you?”

In another moment a blue pigeon was fluttering round the room and making Mr. Maydig duck every time it came near him. “Stop there, will you,” said Mr. Fotheringay; and the pigeon hung motionless in the air. “I could change it back to a bowl of flowers,” he said, and after replacing the pigeon on the table worked that miracle. “I expect you will want your pipe in a bit,” he said, and restored the tobacco-jar.

Mr. Maydig had followed all these later changes in a sort of ejaculatory silence. He stared at Mr. Fotheringay and, in a very gingerly manner, picked up the tobacco-jar, examined it, replaced it on the table. “*Well!*” was the only expression of his feelings.

“Now, after that it’s easier to explain what I came about,” said Mr. Fotheringay; and proceeded to a lengthy and involved narrative of his strange experiences, beginning with the affair of the lamp in the Long Dragon and complicated by persistent allusions to Winch. As he went on, the transient pride Mr. Maydig’s consternation had caused passed away; he became the very ordinary Mr. Fotheringay of everyday intercourse again. Mr. Maydig listened intently, the tobacco-jar in his hand, and his bearing changed also with the course of the narrative. Presently, while Mr. Fotheringay was dealing with the miracle of the third egg, the minister interrupted with a fluttering extended hand —

“It is possible,” he said. “It is credible. It is amazing, of course, but it reconciles a number of amazing difficulties. The power to work miracles is a gift — a peculiar quality like genius or second sight — hitherto it has come very rarely and to exceptional people. But in this case ... I have always wondered at the miracles of Mahomet, and at Yogi’s miracles, and the miracles of Madame Blavatsky. But, of course! Yes, it is simply a gift! It carries out so beautifully the

arguments of that great thinker" — Mr. Maydig's voice sank— "his Grace the Duke of Argyll. Here we plumb some profounder law — deeper than the ordinary laws of nature. Yes — yes. Go on. Go on!"

Mr. Fotheringay proceeded to tell of his misadventure with Winch, and Mr. Maydig, no longer overawed or scared, began to jerk his limbs about and interject astonishment. "It's this what troubled me most," proceeded Mr. Fotheringay; "it's this I'm most mijitly in want of advice for; of course he's at San Francisco — wherever San Francisco may be — but of course it's awkward for both of us, as you'll see, Mr. Maydig. I don't see how he can understand what has happened, and I daresay he's scared and exasperated something tremendous, and trying to get at me. I daresay he keeps on starting off to come here. I send him back, by a miracle, every few hours, when I think of it. And of course, that's a thing he won't be able to understand, and it's bound to annoy him; and, of course, if he takes a ticket every time it will cost him a lot of money. I done the best I could for him, but of course it's difficult for him to put himself in my place. I thought afterwards that his clothes might have got scorched, you know — if Hades is all it's supposed to be — before I shifted him. In that case I suppose they'd have locked him up in San Francisco. Of course I willed him a new suit of clothes on him directly I thought of it. But, you see, I'm already in a deuce of a tangle — —"

Mr. Maydig looked serious. "I see you are in a tangle. Yes, it's a difficult position. How you are to end it ..." He became diffuse and inconclusive.

"However, we'll leave Winch for a little and discuss the larger question. I don't think this is a case of the black art or anything of the sort. I don't think there is any taint of criminality about it at all, Mr. Fotheringay — none whatever, unless you are suppressing material facts. No, it's miracles — pure miracles — miracles, if I may say so, of the very highest class."

He began to pace the hearthrug and gesticulate, while Mr. Fotheringay sat with his arm on the table and his head on his arm, looking worried. "I don't see how I'm to manage about Winch," he said.

"A gift of working miracles — apparently a very powerful gift,"

said Mr. Maydig, “will find a way about Winch — never fear. My dear Sir, you are a most important man — a man of the most astonishing possibilities. As evidence, for example! And in other ways, the things you may do....”

“Yes, *I've* thought of a thing or two,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “But — some of the things came a bit twisty. You saw that fish at first? Wrong sort of bowl and wrong sort of fish. And I thought I'd ask someone.”

“A proper course,” said Mr. Maydig, “a very proper course — altogether the proper course.” He stopped and looked at Mr. Fotheringay. “It's practically an unlimited gift. Let us test your powers, for instance. If they really *are* ... If they really are all they seem to be.”

And so, incredible as it may seem, in the study of the little house behind the Congregational Chapel, on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 10, 1896, Mr. Fotheringay, egged on and inspired by Mr. Maydig, began to work miracles. The reader's attention is specially and definitely called to the date. He will object, probably has already objected, that certain points in this story are improbable, that if any things of the sort already described had indeed occurred, they would have been in all the papers a year ago. The details immediately following he will find particularly hard to accept, because among other things they involve the conclusion that he or she, the reader in question, must have been killed in a violent and unprecedented manner more than a year ago. Now a miracle is nothing if not improbable, and as a matter of fact the reader *was* killed in a violent and unprecedented manner a year ago. In the subsequent course of this story that will become perfectly clear and credible, as every right-minded and reasonable reader will admit. But this is not the place for the end of the story, being but little beyond the hither side of the middle. And at first the miracles worked by Mr. Fotheringay were timid little miracles — little things with the cups and parlour fitments, as feeble as the miracles of Theosophists, and, feeble as they were, they were received with awe by his collaborator. He would have preferred to settle the Winch business out of hand, but Mr. Maydig would not let him. But after they had worked a dozen of these domestic trivialities, their sense of power grew, their

imagination began to show signs of stimulation, and their ambition enlarged. Their first larger enterprise was due to hunger and the negligence of Mrs. Minchin, Mr. Maydig's housekeeper. The meal to which the minister conducted Mr. Fotheringay was certainly ill-laid and uninviting as refreshment for two industrious miracle-workers; but they were seated, and Mr. Maydig was descanting in sorrow rather than in anger upon his housekeeper's shortcomings, before it occurred to Mr. Fotheringay that an opportunity lay before him. "Don't you think, Mr. Maydig," he said, "if it isn't a liberty, *I* — —"

"My dear Mr. Fotheringay! Of course! No — I didn't think."

Mr. Fotheringay waved his hand. "What shall we have?" he said, in a large, inclusive spirit, and, at Mr. Maydig's order, revised the supper very thoroughly. "As for me," he said, eyeing Mr. Maydig's selection, "I am always particularly fond of a tankard of stout and a nice Welsh rarebit, and I'll order that. I ain't much given to Burgundy," and forthwith stout and Welsh rarebit promptly appeared at his command. They sat long at their supper, talking like equals, as Mr. Fotheringay presently perceived, with a glow of surprise and gratification, of all the miracles they would presently do. "And, by the bye, Mr. Maydig," said Mr. Fotheringay, "I might perhaps be able to help you — in a domestic way."

"Don't quite follow," said Mr. Maydig pouring out a glass of miraculous old Burgundy.

Mr. Fotheringay helped himself to a second Welsh rarebit out of vacancy, and took a mouthful. "I was thinking," he said, "I might be able (*chum, chum*) to work (*chum, chum*) a miracle with Mrs. Minchin (*chum, chum*) — make her a better woman."

Mr. Maydig put down the glass and looked doubtful. "She's —— She strongly objects to interference, you know, Mr. Fotheringay. And — as a matter of fact — it's well past eleven and she's probably in bed and asleep. Do you think, on the whole — —"

Mr. Fotheringay considered these objections. "I don't see that it shouldn't be done in her sleep."

For a time Mr. Maydig opposed the idea, and then he yielded. Mr. Fotheringay issued his orders, and a little less at their ease, perhaps, the two gentlemen proceeded with their repast. Mr. Maydig was enlarging on the changes he might expect in his housekeeper next

day, with an optimism that seemed even to Mr. Fotheringay's supper senses a little forced and hectic, when a series of confused noises from upstairs began. Their eyes exchanged interrogations, and Mr. Maydig left the room hastily. Mr. Fotheringay heard him calling up to his housekeeper and then his footsteps going softly up to her.

In a minute or so the minister returned, his step light, his face radiant. "Wonderful!" he said, "and touching! Most touching!"

He began pacing the hearthrug. "A repentance — a most touching repentance — through the crack of the door. Poor woman! A most wonderful change! She had got up. She must have got up at once. She had got up out of her sleep to smash a private bottle of brandy in her box. And to confess it too!... But this gives us — it opens — a most amazing vista of possibilities. If we can work this miraculous change in *her* ..."

"The thing's unlimited seemingly," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And about Mr. Winch—"

"Altogether unlimited." And from the hearthrug Mr. Maydig, waving the Winch difficulty aside, unfolded a series of wonderful proposals — proposals he invented as he went along.

Now what those proposals were does not concern the essentials of this story. Suffice it that they were designed in a spirit of infinite benevolence, the sort of benevolence that used to be called post-prandial. Suffice it, too, that the problem of Winch remained unsolved. Nor is it necessary to describe how far that series got to its fulfilment. There were astonishing changes. The small hours found Mr. Maydig and Mr. Fotheringay careering across the chilly market-square under the still moon, in a sort of ecstasy of thaumaturgy, Mr. Maydig all flap and gesture, Mr. Fotheringay short and bristling, and no longer abashed at his greatness. They had reformed every drunkard in the Parliamentary division, changed all the beer and alcohol to water (Mr. Maydig had overruled Mr. Fotheringay on this point); they had, further, greatly improved the railway communication of the place, drained Flinder's swamp, improved the soil of One Tree Hill, and cured the Vicar's wart. And they were going to see what could be done with the injured pier at South Bridge. "The place," gasped Mr. Maydig, "won't be the same place to-morrow. How surprised and thankful everyone will be!" And just

at that moment the church clock struck three.

"I say," said Mr. Fotheringay, "that's three o'clock! I must be getting back. I've got to be at business by eight. And besides, Mrs. Wimms—"

"We're only beginning," said Mr. Maydig, full of the sweetness of unlimited power. "We're only beginning. Think of all the good we're doing. When people wake—"

"But — ," said Mr. Fotheringay.

Mr. Maydig gripped his arm suddenly. His eyes were bright and wild. "My dear chap," he said, "there's no hurry. Look" — he pointed to the moon at the zenith— "Joshua!"

"Joshua?" said Mr. Fotheringay.

"Joshua," said Mr. Maydig. "Why not? Stop it."

Mr. Fotheringay looked at the moon.

"That's a bit tall," he said after a pause.

"Why not?" said Mr. Maydig. "Of course it doesn't stop. You stop the rotation of the earth, you know. Time stops. It isn't as if we were doing harm."

"H'm!" said Mr. Fotheringay. "Well." He sighed. "I'll try. Here —"

He buttoned up his jacket and addressed himself to the habitable globe, with as good an assumption of confidence as lay in his power. "Jest stop rotating, will you," said Mr. Fotheringay.

Incontinently he was flying head over heels through the air at the rate of dozens of miles a minute. In spite of the innumerable circles he was describing per second, he thought; for thought is wonderful — sometimes as sluggish as flowing pitch, sometimes as instantaneous as light. He thought in a second, and willed. "Let me come down safe and sound. Whatever else happens, let me down safe and sound."

He willed it only just in time, for his clothes, heated by his rapid flight through the air, were already beginning to singe. He came down with a forcible, but by no means injurious bump in what appeared to be a mound of fresh-turned earth. A large mass of metal and masonry, extraordinarily like the clock-tower in the middle of the market-square, hit the earth near him, ricochetted over him, and flew into stonework, bricks, and masonry, like a bursting bomb. A

hurtling cow hit one of the larger blocks and smashed like an egg. There was a crash that made all the most violent crashes of his past life seem like the sound of falling dust, and this was followed by a descending series of lesser crashes. A vast wind roared throughout earth and heaven, so that he could scarcely lift his head to look. For a while he was too breathless and astonished even to see where he was or what had happened. And his first movement was to feel his head and reassure himself that his streaming hair was still his own.

"Lord!" gasped Mr. Fotheringay, scarce able to speak for the gale, "I've had a squeak! What's gone wrong? Storms and thunder. And only a minute ago a fine night. It's Maydig set me on to this sort of thing. *What* a wind! If I go on fooling in this way I'm bound to have a thundering accident!...

"Where's Maydig?

"What a confounded mess everything's in!"

He looked about him so far as his flapping jacket would permit. The appearance of things was really extremely strange. "The sky's all right anyhow," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And that's about all that is all right. And even there it looks like a terrific gale coming up. But there's the moon overhead. Just as it was just now. Bright as midday. But as for the rest — Where's the village? Where's — where's anything? And what on earth set this wind a-blowing? *I* didn't order no wind."

Mr. Fotheringay struggled to get to his feet in vain, and after one failure, remained on all fours, holding on. He surveyed the moonlit world to leeward, with the tails of his jacket streaming over his head. "There's something seriously wrong," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And what it is — goodness knows."

Far and wide nothing was visible in the white glare through the haze of dust that drove before a screaming gale but tumbled masses of earth and heaps of inchoate ruins, no trees, no houses, no familiar shapes, only a wilderness of disorder vanishing at last into the darkness beneath the whirling columns and streamers, the lightnings and thunderings of a swiftly rising storm. Near him in the livid glare was something that might once have been an elm-tree, a smashed mass of splinters, shivered from boughs to base, and further a twisted mass of iron girders — only too evidently the viaduct — rose out of

the piled confusion.

You see, when Mr. Fotheringay had arrested the rotation of the solid globe, he had made no stipulation concerning the trifling movables upon its surface. And the earth spins so fast that the surface at its equator is travelling at rather more than a thousand miles an hour, and in these latitudes at more than half that pace. So that the village, and Mr. Maydig, and Mr. Fotheringay, and everybody and everything had been jerked violently forward at about nine miles per second — that is to say, much more violently than if they had been fired out of a cannon. And every human being, every living creature, every house, and every tree — all the world as we know it — had been so jerked and smashed and utterly destroyed. That was all.

These things Mr. Fotheringay did not, of course, fully appreciate. But he perceived that his miracle had miscarried, and with that a great disgust of miracles came upon him. He was in darkness now, for the clouds had swept together and blotted out his momentary glimpse of the moon, and the air was full of fitful struggling tortured wraiths of hail. A great roaring of wind and waters filled earth and sky, and, peering under his hand through the dust and sleet to windward, he saw by the play of the lightnings a vast wall of water pouring towards him.

"Maydig!" screamed Mr. Fotheringay's feeble voice amid the elemental uproar. "Here! — Maydig!

"Stop!" cried Mr. Fotheringay to the advancing water. "Oh, for goodness' sake, stop!

"Just a moment," said Mr. Fotheringay to the lightnings and thunder. "Stop jest a moment while I collect my thoughts.... And now what shall I do?" he said. "What *shall* I do? Lord! I wish Maydig was about.

"I know," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And for goodness' sake let's have it right *this* time."

He remained on all fours, leaning against the wind, very intent to have everything right.

"Ah!" he said. "Let nothing what I'm going to order happen until I say 'Off!'.... Lord! I wish I'd thought of that before!"

He lifted his little voice against the whirlwind, shouting louder and louder in the vain desire to hear himself speak. "Now then! —

here goes! Mind about that what I said just now. In the first place, when all I've got to say is done, let me lose my miraculous power, let my will become just like anybody else's will, and all these dangerous miracles be stopped. I don't like them. I'd rather I didn't work 'em. Ever so much. That's the first thing. And the second is — let me be back just before the miracles begin; let everything be just as it was before that blessed lamp turned up. It's a big job, but it's the last. Have you got it? No more miracles, everything as it was — me back in the Long Dragon just before I drank my half-pint. That's it! Yes."

He dug his fingers into the mould, closed his eyes, and said "Off!"

Everything became perfectly still. He perceived that he was standing erect.

"So *you* say," said a voice.

He opened his eyes. He was in the bar of the Long Dragon, arguing about miracles with Toddy Beamish. He had a vague sense of some great thing forgotten that instantaneously passed. You see that, except for the loss of his miraculous powers, everything was back as it had been, his mind and memory therefore were now just as they had been at the time when this story began. So that he knew absolutely nothing of all that is told here, knows nothing of all that is told here to this day. And among other things, of course, he still did not believe in miracles.

"I tell you that miracles, properly speaking, can't possibly happen," he said, "whatever you like to hold. And I'm prepared to prove it up to the hilt."

"That's what *you* think," said Toddy Beamish, and "Prove it if you can."

"Looky here, Mr. Beamish," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something contrariwise to the course of nature done by power of Will...."

THE END

TWELVE STORIES AND A DREAM

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FILMER

In truth the mastery of flying was the work of thousands of men — this man a suggestion and that an experiment, until at last only one vigorous intellectual effort was needed to finish the work. But the inexorable injustice of the popular mind has decided that of all these thousands, one man, and that a man who never flew, should be chosen as the discoverer, just as it has chosen to honour Watt as the discoverer of steam and Stephenson of the steam-engine. And surely of all honoured names none is so grotesquely and tragically honoured as poor Filmer's, the timid, intellectual creature who solved the problem over which the world had hung perplexed and a little fearful for so many generations, the man who pressed the button that has changed peace and warfare and well-nigh every condition of human life and happiness. Never has that recurring wonder of the littleness of the scientific man in the face of the greatness of his science found such an amazing exemplification. Much concerning Filmer is, and must remain, profoundly obscure — Filmers attract no Boswells — but the essential facts and the concluding scene are clear enough, and there are letters, and notes, and casual allusions to piece the whole together. And this is the story one makes, putting this thing with that, of Filmer's life and death.

The first authentic trace of Filmer on the page of history is a document in which he applies for admission as a paid student in physics to the Government laboratories at South Kensington, and therein he describes himself as the son of a "military bootmaker" ("cobbler" in the vulgar tongue) of Dover, and lists his various examination proofs of a high proficiency in chemistry and mathematics. With a certain want of dignity he seeks to enhance these attainments by a profession of poverty and disadvantages, and he writes of the laboratory as the "gaol" of his ambitions, a slip which reinforces his claim to have devoted himself exclusively to the exact sciences. The document is endorsed in a manner that shows Filmer was admitted to this coveted opportunity; but until quite recently no traces of his success in the Government institution could be found.

It has now, however, been shown that in spite of his professed zeal for research, Filmer, before he had held this scholarship a year, was tempted, by the possibility of a small increase in his immediate income, to abandon it in order to become one of the nine-pence-an-hour computers employed by a well-known Professor in his vicarious conduct of those extensive researches of his in solar physics — researches which are still a matter of perplexity to astronomers. Afterwards, for the space of seven years, save for the pass lists of the London University, in which he is seen to climb slowly to a double first class B.Sc., in mathematics and chemistry, there is no evidence of how Filmer passed his life. No one knows how or where he lived, though it seems highly probable that he continued to support himself by teaching while he prosecuted the studies necessary for this distinction. And then, oddly enough, one finds him mentioned in the correspondence of Arthur Hicks, the poet.

"You remember Filmer," Hicks writes to his friend Vance; "well, HE hasn't altered a bit, the same hostile mumble and the nasty chin — how CAN a man contrive to be always three days from shaving? — and a sort of furtive air of being engaged in sneaking in front of one; even his coat and that frayed collar of his show no further signs of the passing years. He was writing in the library and I sat down beside him in the name of God's charity, whereupon he deliberately insulted me by covering up his memoranda. It seems he has some brilliant research on hand that he suspects me of all people — with a Bodley Booklet a-printing! — of stealing. He has taken remarkable honours at the University — he went through them with a sort of hasty slobber, as though he feared I might interrupt him before he had told me all — and he spoke of taking his D.Sc. as one might speak of taking a cab. And he asked what I was doing — with a sort of comparative accent, and his arm was spread nervously, positively a protecting arm, over the paper that hid the precious idea — his one hopeful idea.

"'Poetry,' he said, 'Poetry. And what do you profess to teach in it, Hicks?'

"The thing's a Provincial professorling in the very act of budding, and I thank the Lord devoutly that but for the precious gift of indolence I also might have gone this way to D.Sc. and

destruction...”

A curious little vignette that I am inclined to think caught Filmer in or near the very birth of his discovery. Hicks was wrong in anticipating a provincial professorship for Filmer. Our next glimpse of him is lecturing on “rubber and rubber substitutes,” to the Society of Arts — he had become manager to a great plastic-substance manufactory — and at that time, it is now known, he was a member of the Aeronautical Society, albeit he contributed nothing to the discussions of that body, preferring no doubt to mature his great conception without external assistance. And within two years of that paper before the Society of Arts he was hastily taking out a number of patents and proclaiming in various undignified ways the completion of the divergent inquiries which made his flying machine possible. The first definite statement to that effect appeared in a halfpenny evening paper through the agency of a man who lodged in the same house with Filmer. His final haste after his long laborious secret patience seems to have been due to a needless panic, Bootle, the notorious American scientific quack, having made an announcement that Filmer interpreted wrongly as an anticipation of his idea.

Now what precisely was Filmer’s idea? Really a very simple one. Before his time the pursuit of aeronautics had taken two divergent lines, and had developed on the one hand balloons — large apparatus lighter than air, easy in ascent, and comparatively safe in descent, but floating helplessly before any breeze that took them; and on the other, flying machines that flew only in theory — vast flat structures heavier than air, propelled and kept up by heavy engines and for the most part smashing at the first descent. But, neglecting the fact that the inevitable final collapse rendered them impossible, the weight of the flying machines gave them this theoretical advantage, that they could go through the air against a wind, a necessary condition if aerial navigation was to have any practical value. It is Filmer’s particular merit that he perceived the way in which the contrasted and hitherto incompatible merits of balloon and heavy flying machine might be combined in one apparatus, which should be at choice either heavier or lighter than air. He took hints from the contractile bladders of fish and the pneumatic cavities of birds. He

devised an arrangement of contractile and absolutely closed balloons which when expanded could lift the actual flying apparatus with ease, and when retracted by the complicated "musculature" he wove about them, were withdrawn almost completely into the frame; and he built the large framework which these balloons sustained, of hollow, rigid tubes, the air in which, by an ingenious contrivance, was automatically pumped out as the apparatus fell, and which then remained exhausted so long as the aeronaut desired. There were no wings or propellers to his machine, such as there had been to all previous aeroplanes, and the only engine required was the compact and powerful little appliance needed to contract the balloons. He perceived that such an apparatus as he had devised might rise with frame exhausted and balloons expanded to a considerable height, might then contract its balloons and let the air into its frame, and by an adjustment of its weights slide down the air in any desired direction. As it fell it would accumulate velocity and at the same time lose weight, and the momentum accumulated by its down-rush could be utilised by means of a shifting of its weights to drive it up in the air again as the balloons expanded. This conception, which is still the structural conception of all successful flying machines, needed, however, a vast amount of toil upon its details before it could actually be realised, and such toil Filmer — as he was accustomed to tell the numerous interviewers who crowded upon him in the heyday of his fame— "ungrudgingly and unsparingly gave." His particular difficulty was the elastic lining of the contractile balloon. He found he needed a new substance, and in the discovery and manufacture of that new substance he had, as he never failed to impress upon the interviewers, "performed a far more arduous work than even in the actual achievement of my seemingly greater discovery."

But it must not be imagined that these interviews followed hard upon Filmer's proclamation of his invention. An interval of nearly five years elapsed during which he timidly remained at his rubber factory — he seems to have been entirely dependent on his small income from this source — making misdirected attempts to assure a quite indifferent public that he really HAD invented what he had invented. He occupied the greater part of his leisure in the composition of letters to the scientific and daily press, and so forth,

stating precisely the net result of his contrivances, and demanding financial aid. That alone would have sufficed for the suppression of his letters. He spent such holidays as he could arrange in unsatisfactory interviews with the door-keepers of leading London papers — he was singularly not adapted for inspiring hall-porters with confidence — and he positively attempted to induce the War Office to take up his work with him. There remains a confidential letter from Major-General Volleyfire to the Earl of Frogs. "The man's a crank and a bounder to boot," says the Major-General in his bluff, sensible, army way, and so left it open for the Japanese to secure, as they subsequently did, the priority in this side of warfare — a priority they still to our great discomfort retain.

And then by a stroke of luck the membrane Filmer had invented for his contractile balloon was discovered to be useful for the valves of a new oil-engine, and he obtained the means for making a trial model of his invention. He threw up his rubber factory appointment, desisted from all further writing, and, with a certain secrecy that seems to have been an inseparable characteristic of all his proceedings, set to work upon the apparatus. He seems to have directed the making of its parts and collected most of it in a room in Shoreditch, but its final putting together was done at Dymchurch, in Kent. He did not make the affair large enough to carry a man, but he made an extremely ingenious use of what were then called the Marconi rays to control its flight. The first flight of this first practicable flying machine took place over some fields near Burford Bridge, near Hythe, in Kent, and Filmer followed and controlled its flight upon a specially constructed motor tricycle.

The flight was, considering all things, an amazing success. The apparatus was brought in a cart from Dymchurch to Burford Bridge, ascended there to a height of nearly three hundred feet, swooped thence very nearly back to Dymchurch, came about in its sweep, rose again, circled, and finally sank uninjured in a field behind the Burford Bridge Inn. At its descent a curious thing happened. Filmer got off his tricycle, scrambled over the intervening dyke, advanced perhaps twenty yards towards his triumph, threw out his arms in a strange gesticulation, and fell down in a dead faint. Every one could then recall the ghastliness of his features and all the evidences of

extreme excitement they had observed throughout the trial, things they might otherwise have forgotten. Afterwards in the inn he had an unaccountable gust of hysterical weeping.

Altogether there were not twenty witnesses of this affair, and those for the most part uneducated men. The New Romney doctor saw the ascent but not the descent, his horse being frightened by the electrical apparatus on Filmer's tricycle and giving him a nasty spill. Two members of the Kent constabulary watched the affair from a cart in an unofficial spirit, and a grocer calling round the Marsh for orders and two lady cyclists seem almost to complete the list of educated people. There were two reporters present, one representing a Folkestone paper and the other being a fourth-class interviewer and "symposium" journalist, whose expenses down, Filmer, anxious as ever for adequate advertisement — and now quite realising the way in which adequate advertisement may be obtained — had paid. The latter was one of those writers who can throw a convincing air of unreality over the most credible events, and his half-facetious account of the affair appeared in the magazine page of a popular journal. But, happily for Filmer, this person's colloquial methods were more convincing. He went to offer some further screed upon the subject to Banghurst, the proprietor of the New Paper, and one of the ablest and most unscrupulous men in London journalism, and Banghurst instantly seized upon the situation. The interviewer vanishes from the narrative, no doubt very doubtfully remunerated, and Banghurst, Banghurst himself, double chin, grey twill suit, abdomen, voice, gestures and all, appears at Dymchurch, following his large, unrivalled journalistic nose. He had seen the whole thing at a glance, just what it was and what it might be.

At his touch, as it were, Filmer's long-pent investigations exploded into fame. He instantly and most magnificently was a Boom. One turns over the files of the journals of the year 1907 with a quite incredulous recognition of how swift and flaming the boom of those days could be. The July papers know nothing of flying, see nothing in flying, state by a most effective silence that men never would, could or should fly. In August flying and Filmer and flying and parachutes and aerial tactics and the Japanese Government and Filmer and again flying, shouldered the war in Yunnan and the gold

mines of Upper Greenland off the leading page. And Banghurst had given ten thousand pounds, and, further, Banghurst was giving five thousand pounds, and Banghurst had devoted his well-known, magnificent (but hitherto sterile) private laboratories and several acres of land near his private residence on the Surrey hills to the strenuous and violent completion — Banghurst fashion — of the life-size practicable flying machine. Meanwhile, in the sight of privileged multitudes in the walled-garden of the Banghurst town residence in Fulham, Filmer was exhibited at weekly garden parties putting the working model through its paces. At enormous initial cost, but with a final profit, the New Paper presented its readers with a beautiful photographic souvenir of the first of these occasions.

Here again the correspondence of Arthur Hicks and his friend Vance comes to our aid.

"I saw Filmer in his glory," he writes, with just the touch of envy natural to his position as a poet passe. "The man is brushed and shaved, dressed in the fashion of a Royal-Institution-Afternoon Lecturer, the very newest shape in frock-coats and long patent shoes, and altogether in a state of extraordinary streakiness between an owlish great man and a scared abashed self-conscious bounder cruelly exposed. He hasn't a touch of colour in the skin of his face, his head juts forward, and those queer little dark amber eyes of his watch furtively round him for his fame. His clothes fit perfectly and yet sit upon him as though he had bought them ready-made. He speaks in a mumble still, but he says, you perceive indistinctly, enormous self-assertive things, he backs into the rear of groups by instinct if Banghurst drops the line for a minute, and when he walks across Banghurst's lawn one perceives him a little out of breath and going jerky, and that his weak white hands are clenched. His is a state of tension — horrible tension. And he is the Greatest Discoverer of This or Any Age — the Greatest Discoverer of This or Any Age! What strikes one so forcibly about him is that he didn't somehow quite expect it ever, at any rate, not at all like this. Banghurst is about everywhere, the energetic M.C. of his great little catch, and I swear he will have every one down on his lawn there before he has finished with the engine; he had bagged the prime minister yesterday, and he, bless his heart! didn't look particularly

outsize, on the very first occasion. Conceive it! Filmer! Our obscure unwashed Filmer, the Glory of British science! Duchesses crowd upon him, beautiful, bold peeresses say in their beautiful, clear loud voices — have you noticed how penetrating the great lady is becoming nowadays?— 'Oh, Mr. Filmer, how DID you do it?'

"Common men on the edge of things are too remote for the answer. One imagines something in the way of that interview, 'toil ungrudgingly and unsparingly given, Madam, and, perhaps — I don't know — but perhaps a little special aptitude.'"

So far Hicks, and the photographic supplement to the New Paper is in sufficient harmony with the description. In one picture the machine swings down towards the river, and the tower of Fulham church appears below it through a gap in the elms, and in another, Filmer sits at his guiding batteries, and the great and beautiful of the earth stand around him, with Banghurst massed modestly but resolutely in the rear. The grouping is oddly apposite. Occluding much of Banghurst, and looking with a pensive, speculative expression at Filmer, stands the Lady Mary Elkinghorn, still beautiful, in spite of the breath of scandal and her eight-and-thirty years, the only person whose face does not admit a perception of the camera that was in the act of snapping them all.

So much for the exterior facts of the story, but, after all, they are very exterior facts. About the real interest of the business one is necessarily very much in the dark. How was Filmer feeling at the time? How much was a certain unpleasant anticipation present inside that very new and fashionable frock-coat? He was in the halfpenny, penny, six-penny, and more expensive papers alike, and acknowledged by the whole world as "the Greatest Discoverer of This or Any Age." He had invented a practicable flying machine, and every day down among the Surrey hills the life-sized model was getting ready. And when it was ready, it followed as a clear inevitable consequence of his having invented and made it — everybody in the world, indeed, seemed to take it for granted; there wasn't a gap anywhere in that serried front of anticipation — that he would proudly and cheerfully get aboard it, ascend with it, and fly.

But we know now pretty clearly that simple pride and cheerfulness in such an act were singularly out of harmony with

Filmer's private constitution. It occurred to no one at the time, but there the fact is. We can guess with some confidence now that it must have been drifting about in his mind a great deal during the day, and, from a little note to his physician complaining of persistent insomnia, we have the soundest reason for supposing it dominated his nights, — the idea that it would be after all, in spite of his theoretical security, an abominably sickening, uncomfortable, and dangerous thing for him to flap about in nothingness a thousand feet or so in the air. It must have dawned upon him quite early in the period of being the Greatest Discoverer of This or Any Age, the vision of doing this and that with an extensive void below. Perhaps somewhen in his youth he had looked down a great height or fallen down in some excessively uncomfortable way; perhaps some habit of sleeping on the wrong side had resulted in that disagreeable falling nightmare one knows, and given him his horror; of the strength of that horror there remains now not a particle of doubt.

Apparently he had never weighed this duty of flying in his earlier days of research; the machine had been his end, but now things were opening out beyond his end, and particularly this giddy whirl up above there. He was a Discoverer and he had Discovered. But he was not a Flying Man, and it was only now that he was beginning to perceive clearly that he was expected to fly. Yet, however much the thing was present in his mind he gave no expression to it until the very end, and meanwhile he went to and fro from Banghurst's magnificent laboratories, and was interviewed and lionised, and wore good clothes, and ate good food, and lived in an elegant flat, enjoying a very abundant feast of such good, coarse, wholesome Fame and Success as a man, starved for all his years as he had been starved, might be reasonably expected to enjoy.

After a time, the weekly gatherings in Fulham ceased. The model had failed one day just for a moment to respond to Filmer's guidance, or he had been distracted by the compliments of an archbishop. At any rate, it suddenly dug its nose into the air just a little too steeply as the archbishop was sailing through a Latin quotation for all the world like an archbishop in a book, and it came down in the Fulham Road within three yards of a 'bus horse. It stood for a second perhaps, astonishing and in its attitude astonished, then

it crumpled, shivered into pieces, and the ‘bus horse was incidentally killed.

Filmer lost the end of the archiepiscopal compliment. He stood up and stared as his invention swooped out of sight and reach of him. His long, white hands still gripped his useless apparatus. The archbishop followed his skyward stare with an apprehension unbecoming in an archbishop.

Then came the crash and the shouts and uproar from the road to relieve Filmer’s tension. “My God!” he whispered, and sat down.

Every one else almost was staring to see where the machine had vanished, or rushing into the house.

The making of the big machine progressed all the more rapidly for this. Over its making presided Filmer, always a little slow and very careful in his manner, always with a growing preoccupation in his mind. His care over the strength and soundness of the apparatus was prodigious. The slightest doubt, and he delayed everything until the doubtful part could be replaced. Wilkinson, his senior assistant, fumed at some of these delays, which, he insisted, were for the most part unnecessary. Banghurst magnified the patient certitude of Filmer in the New Paper, and reviled it bitterly to his wife, and MacAndrew, the second assistant, approved Filmer’s wisdom. “We’re not wanting a fiasco, man,” said MacAndrew. “He’s perfectly well advised.”

And whenever an opportunity arose Filmer would expound to Wilkinson and MacAndrew just exactly how every part of the flying machine was to be controlled and worked, so that in effect they would be just as capable, and even more capable, when at last the time came, of guiding it through the skies.

Now I should imagine that if Filmer had seen fit at this stage to define just what he was feeling, and to take a definite line in the matter of his ascent, he might have escaped that painful ordeal quite easily. If he had had it clearly in his mind he could have done endless things. He would surely have found no difficulty with a specialist to demonstrate a weak heart, or something gastric or pulmonary, to stand in his way — that is the line I am astonished he did not take, — or he might, had he been man enough, have declared simply and finally that he did not intend to do the thing. But the fact is, though the dread was hugely present in his mind, the thing was by no means

sharp and clear. I fancy that all through this period he kept telling himself that when the occasion came he would find himself equal to it. He was like a man just gripped by a great illness, who says he feels a little out of sorts, and expects to be better presently. Meanwhile he delayed the completion of the machine, and let the assumption that he was going to fly it take root and flourish exceedingly about him. He even accepted anticipatory compliments on his courage. And, barring this secret squeamishness, there can be no doubt he found all the praise and distinction and fuss he got a delightful and even intoxicating draught.

The Lady Mary Elkinghorn made things a little more complicated for him.

How THAT began was a subject of inexhaustible speculation to Hicks. Probably in the beginning she was just a little "nice" to him with that impartial partiality of hers, and it may be that to her eyes, standing out conspicuously as he did ruling his monster in the upper air, he had a distinction that Hicks was not disposed to find. And somehow they must have had a moment of sufficient isolation, and the great Discoverer a moment of sufficient courage for something just a little personal to be mumbled or blurted. However it began, there is no doubt that it did begin, and presently became quite perceptible to a world accustomed to find in the proceedings of the Lady Mary Elkinghorn a matter of entertainment. It complicated things, because the state of love in such a virgin mind as Filmer's would brace his resolution, if not sufficiently, at any rate considerably towards facing a danger he feared, and hampered him in such attempts at evasion as would otherwise be natural and congenial.

It remains a matter for speculation just how the Lady Mary felt for Filmer and just what she thought of him. At thirty-eight one may have gathered much wisdom and still be not altogether wise, and the imagination still functions actively enough in creating glamours and effecting the impossible. He came before her eyes as a very central man, and that always counts, and he had powers, unique powers as it seemed, at any rate in the air. The performance with the model had just a touch of the quality of a potent incantation, and women have ever displayed an unreasonable disposition to imagine that when a

man has powers he must necessarily have Power. Given so much, and what was not good in Filmer's manner and appearance became an added merit. He was modest, he hated display, but given an occasion where TRUE qualities are needed, then — then one would see!

The late Mrs. Bampton thought it wise to convey to Lady Mary her opinion that Filmer, all things considered, was rather a "grub." "He's certainly not a sort of man I have ever met before," said the Lady Mary, with a quite unruffled serenity. And Mrs. Bampton, after a swift, imperceptible glance at that serenity, decided that so far as saying anything to Lady Mary went, she had done as much as could be expected of her. But she said a great deal to other people.

And at last, without any undue haste or unseemliness, the day dawned, the great day, when Banghurst had promised his public — the world in fact — that flying should be finally attained and overcome. Filmer saw it dawn, watched even in the darkness before it dawned, watched its stars fade and the grey and pearly pinks give place at last to the clear blue sky of a sunny, cloudless day. He watched it from the window of his bedroom in the new-built wing of Banghurst's Tudor house. And as the stars were overwhelmed and the shapes and substances of things grew into being out of the amorphous dark, he must have seen more and more distinctly the festive preparations beyond the beech clumps near the green pavilion in the outer park, the three stands for the privileged spectators, the raw, new fencing of the enclosure, the sheds and workshops, the Venetian masts and fluttering flags that Banghurst had considered essential, black and limp in the breezeless dawn, and amidst all these things a great shape covered with tarpauling. A strange and terrible portent for humanity was that shape, a beginning that must surely spread and widen and change and dominate all the affairs of men, but to Filmer it is very doubtful whether it appeared in anything but a narrow and personal light. Several people heard him pacing in the small hours — for the vast place was packed with guests by a proprietor editor who, before all understood compression. And about five o'clock, if not before, Filmer left his room and wandered out of the sleeping house into the park, alive by that time with sunlight and birds and squirrels and the fallow deer. MacAndrew, who was also

an early riser, met him near the machine, and they went and had a look at it together.

It is doubtful if Filmer took any breakfast, in spite of the urgency of Banghurst. So soon as the guests began to be about in some number he seems to have retreated to his room. Thence about ten he went into the shrubbery, very probably because he had seen the Lady Mary Elkinghorn there. She was walking up and down, engaged in conversation with her old school friend, Mrs. Brewis-Craven, and although Filmer had never met the latter lady before, he joined them and walked beside them for some time. There were several silences in spite of the Lady Mary's brilliance. The situation was a difficult one, and Mrs. Brewis-Craven did not master its difficulty. "He struck me," she said afterwards with a luminous self-contradiction, "as a very unhappy person who had something to say, and wanted before all things to be helped to say it. But how was one to help him when one didn't know what it was?"

At half-past eleven the enclosures for the public in the outer park were crammed, there was an intermittent stream of equipages along the belt which circles the outer park, and the house party was dotted over the lawn and shrubbery and the corner of the inner park, in a series of brilliantly attired knots, all making for the flying machine. Filmer walked in a group of three with Banghurst, who was supremely and conspicuously happy, and Sir Theodore Hickle, the president of the Aeronautical Society. Mrs. Banghurst was close behind with the Lady Mary Elkinghorn, Georgina Hickle, and the Dean of Stays. Banghurst was large and copious in speech, and such interstices as he left were filled in by Hickle with complimentary remarks to Filmer. And Filmer walked between them saying not a word except by way of unavoidable reply. Behind, Mrs. Banghurst listened to the admirably suitable and shapely conversation of the Dean with that fluttered attention to the ampler clergy ten years of social ascent and ascendency had not cured in her; and the Lady Mary watched, no doubt with an entire confidence in the world's disillusionment, the drooping shoulders of the sort of man she had never met before.

There was some cheering as the central party came into view of the enclosures, but it was not very unanimous nor invigorating

cheering. They were within fifty yards of the apparatus when Filmer took a hasty glance over his shoulder to measure the distance of the ladies behind them, and decided to make the first remark he had initiated since the house had been left. His voice was just a little hoarse, and he cut in on Banghurst in mid-sentence on Progress.

"I say, Banghurst," he said, and stopped.

"Yes," said Banghurst.

"I wish—" He moistened his lips. "I'm not feeling well."

Banghurst stopped dead. "Eh?" he shouted.

"A queer feeling." Filmer made to move on, but Banghurst was immovable. "I don't know. I may be better in a minute. If not — perhaps... MacAndrew—"

"You're not feeling WELL?" said Banghurst, and stared at his white face.

"My dear!" he said, as Mrs. Banghurst came up with them, "Filmer says he isn't feeling WELL."

"A little queer," exclaimed Filmer, avoiding the Lady Mary's eyes. "It may pass off—"

There was a pause.

It came to Filmer that he was the most isolated person in the world.

"In any case," said Banghurst, "the ascent must be made. Perhaps if you were to sit down somewhere for a moment—"

"It's the crowd, I think," said Filmer.

There was a second pause. Banghurst's eye rested in scrutiny on Filmer, and then swept the sample of public in the enclosure.

"It's unfortunate," said Sir Theodore Hickle; "but still — I suppose — Your assistants — Of course, if you feel out of condition and disinclined—"

"I don't think Mr. Filmer would permit THAT for a moment," said Lady Mary.

"But if Mr. Filmer's nerve is run — It might even be dangerous for him to attempt—" Hickle coughed.

"It's just because it's dangerous," began the Lady Mary, and felt she had made her point of view and Filmer's plain enough.

Conflicting motives struggled for Filmer.

"I feel I ought to go up," he said, regarding the ground. He looked

up and met the Lady Mary's eyes. "I want to go up," he said, and smiled whitely at her. He turned towards Banghurst. "If I could just sit down somewhere for a moment out of the crowd and sun—"

Banghurst, at least, was beginning to understand the case. "Come into my little room in the green pavilion," he said. "It's quite cool there." He took Filmer by the arm.

Filmer turned his face to the Lady Mary Elkinghorn again. "I shall be all right in five minutes," he said. "I'm tremendously sorry—"

The Lady Mary Elkinghorn smiled at him. "I couldn't think—" he said to Hickle, and obeyed the compulsion of Banghurst's pull.

The rest remained watching the two recede.

"He is so fragile," said the Lady Mary.

"He's certainly a highly nervous type," said the Dean, whose weakness it was to regard the whole world, except married clergymen with enormous families, as "neurotic."

"Of course," said Hickle, "it isn't absolutely necessary for him to go up because he has invented—"

"How COULD he avoid it?" asked the Lady Mary, with the faintest shadow of scorn.

"It's certainly most unfortunate if he's going to be ill now," said Mrs. Banghurst a little severely.

"He's not going to be ill," said the Lady Mary, and certainly she had met Filmer's eye.

"YOU'LL be all right," said Banghurst, as they went towards the pavilion. "All you want is a nip of brandy. It ought to be you, you know. You'll be — you'd get it rough, you know, if you let another man—"

"Oh, I want to go," said Filmer. "I shall be all right. As a matter of fact I'm almost inclined NOW — . No! I think I'll have that nip of brandy first."

Banghurst took him into the little room and routed out an empty decanter. He departed in search of a supply. He was gone perhaps five minutes.

The history of those five minutes cannot be written. At intervals Filmer's face could be seen by the people on the easternmost of the stands erected for spectators, against the window pane peering out, and then it would recede and fade. Banghurst vanished shouting

behind the grand stand, and presently the butler appeared going pavilionward with a tray.

The apartment in which Filmer came to his last solution was a pleasant little room very simply furnished with green furniture and an old bureau — for Banghurst was simple in all his private ways. It was hung with little engravings after Morland and it had a shelf of books. But as it happened, Banghurst had left a rook rifle he sometimes played with on the top of the desk, and on the corner of the mantelshelf was a tin with three or four cartridges remaining in it. As Filmer went up and down that room wrestling with his intolerable dilemma he went first towards the neat little rifle athwart the blotting-pad and then towards the neat little red label

".22 LONG."

The thing must have jumped into his mind in a moment.

Nobody seems to have connected the report with him, though the gun, being fired in a confined space, must have sounded loud, and there were several people in the billiard-room, separated from him only by a lath-and-plaster partition. But directly Banghurst's butler opened the door and smelt the sour smell of the smoke, he knew, he says, what had happened. For the servants at least of Banghurst's household had guessed something of what was going on in Filmer's mind.

All through that trying afternoon Banghurst behaved as he held a man should behave in the presence of hopeless disaster, and his guests for the most part succeeded in not insisting upon the fact — though to conceal their perception of it altogether was impossible — that Banghurst had been pretty elaborately and completely swindled by the deceased. The public in the enclosure, Hicks told me, dispersed "like a party that has been ducking a welsher," and there wasn't a soul in the train to London, it seems, who hadn't known all along that flying was a quite impossible thing for man. "But he might have tried it," said many, "after carrying the thing so far."

In the evening, when he was comparatively alone, Banghurst broke down and went on like a man of clay. I have been told he wept, which must have made an imposing scene, and he certainly said Filmer had ruined his life, and offered and sold the whole apparatus to MacAndrew for half-a-crown. "I've been thinking—" said

MacAndrew at the conclusion of the bargain, and stopped.

The next morning the name of Filmer was, for the first time, less conspicuous in the New Paper than in any other daily paper in the world. The rest of the world's instructors, with varying emphasis, according to their dignity and the degree of competition between themselves and the New Paper, proclaimed the "Entire Failure of the New Flying Machine," and "Suicide of the Impostor." But in the district of North Surrey the reception of the news was tempered by a perception of unusual aerial phenomena.

Overnight Wilkinson and MacAndrew had fallen into violent argument on the exact motives of their principal's rash act.

"The man was certainly a poor, cowardly body, but so far as his science went he was NO impostor," said MacAndrew, "and I'm prepared to give that proposition a very practical demonstration, Mr. Wilkinson, so soon as we've got the place a little more to ourselves. For I've no faith in all this publicity for experimental trials."

And to that end, while all the world was reading of the certain failure of the new flying machine, MacAndrew was soaring and curvetting with great amplitude and dignity over the Epsom and Wimbledon divisions; and Banghurst, restored once more to hope and energy, and regardless of public security and the Board of Trade, was pursuing his gyrations and trying to attract his attention, on a motor car and in his pyjamas — he had caught sight of the ascent when pulling up the blind of his bedroom window — equipped, among other things, with a film camera that was subsequently discovered to be jammed. And Filmer was lying on the billiard table in the green pavilion with a sheet about his body.

THE MAGIC SHOP

I had seen the Magic Shop from afar several times; I had passed it once or twice, a shop window of alluring little objects, magic balls, magic hens, wonderful cones, ventriloquist dolls, the material of the basket trick, packs of cards that LOOKED all right, and all that sort of thing, but never had I thought of going in until one day, almost without warning, Gip hauled me by my finger right up to the window, and so conducted himself that there was nothing for it but to take him in. I had not thought the place was there, to tell the truth — a modest-sized frontage in Regent Street, between the picture shop and the place where the chicks run about just out of patent incubators, but there it was sure enough. I had fancied it was down nearer the Circus, or round the corner in Oxford Street, or even in Holborn; always over the way and a little inaccessible it had been, with something of the mirage in its position; but here it was now quite indisputably, and the fat end of Gip's pointing finger made a noise upon the glass.

"If I was rich," said Gip, dabbing a finger at the Disappearing Egg, "I'd buy myself that. And that" — which was The Crying Baby, Very Human— "and that," which was a mystery, and called, so a neat card asserted, "Buy One and Astonish Your Friends."

"Anything," said Gip, "will disappear under one of those cones. I have read about it in a book.

"And there, dadda, is the Vanishing Halfpenny — , only they've put it this way up so's we can't see how it's done."

Gip, dear boy, inherits his mother's breeding, and he did not propose to enter the shop or worry in any way; only, you know, quite unconsciously he lugged my finger doorward, and he made his interest clear.

"That," he said, and pointed to the Magic Bottle.

"If you had that?" I said; at which promising inquiry he looked up with a sudden radiance.

"I could show it to Jessie," he said, thoughtful as ever of others.

"It's less than a hundred days to your birthday, Gibbles," I said, and laid my hand on the door-handle.

Gip made no answer, but his grip tightened on my finger, and so we came into the shop.

It was no common shop this; it was a magic shop, and all the prancing precedence Gip would have taken in the matter of mere toys was wanting. He left the burthen of the conversation to me.

It was a little, narrow shop, not very well lit, and the door-bell pinged again with a plaintive note as we closed it behind us. For a moment or so we were alone and could glance about us. There was a tiger in papier-mache on the glass case that covered the low counter — a grave, kind-eyed tiger that waggled his head in a methodical manner; there were several crystal spheres, a china hand holding magic cards, a stock of magic fish-bowls in various sizes, and an immodest magic hat that shamelessly displayed its springs. On the floor were magic mirrors; one to draw you out long and thin, one to swell your head and vanish your legs, and one to make you short and fat like a draught; and while we were laughing at these the shopman, as I suppose, came in.

At any rate, there he was behind the counter — a curious, sallow, dark man, with one ear larger than the other and a chin like the toe-cap of a boot.

"What can we have the pleasure?" he said, spreading his long, magic fingers on the glass case; and so with a start we were aware of him.

"I want," I said, "to buy my little boy a few simple tricks."

"Legerdemain?" he asked. "Mechanical? Domestic?"

"Anything amusing?" said I.

"Um!" said the shopman, and scratched his head for a moment as if thinking. Then, quite distinctly, he drew from his head a glass ball. "Something in this way?" he said, and held it out.

The action was unexpected. I had seen the trick done at entertainments endless times before — it's part of the common stock of conjurers — but I had not expected it here.

"That's good," I said, with a laugh.

"Isn't it?" said the shopman.

Gip stretched out his disengaged hand to take this object and found merely a blank palm.

"It's in your pocket," said the shopman, and there it was!

“How much will that be?” I asked.

“We make no charge for glass balls,” said the shopman politely. “We get them,” — he picked one out of his elbow as he spoke— “free.” He produced another from the back of his neck, and laid it beside its predecessor on the counter. Gip regarded his glass ball sagely, then directed a look of inquiry at the two on the counter, and finally brought his round-eyed scrutiny to the shopman, who smiled.

“You may have those too,” said the shopman, “and, if you DON’T mind, one from my mouth. SO!”

Gip counselled me mutely for a moment, and then in a profound silence put away the four balls, resumed my reassuring finger, and nerved himself for the next event.

“We get all our smaller tricks in that way,” the shopman remarked.

I laughed in the manner of one who subscribes to a jest. “Instead of going to the wholesale shop,” I said. “Of course, it’s cheaper.”

“In a way,” the shopman said. “Though we pay in the end. But not so heavily — as people suppose.... Our larger tricks, and our daily provisions and all the other things we want, we get out of that hat... And you know, sir, if you’ll excuse my saying it, there ISN’T a wholesale shop, not for Genuine Magic goods, sir. I don’t know if you noticed our inscription — the Genuine Magic shop.” He drew a business-card from his cheek and handed it to me. “Genuine,” he said, with his finger on the word, and added, “There is absolutely no deception, sir.”

He seemed to be carrying out the joke pretty thoroughly, I thought.

He turned to Gip with a smile of remarkable affability. “You, you know, are the Right Sort of Boy.”

I was surprised at his knowing that, because, in the interests of discipline, we keep it rather a secret even at home; but Gip received it in unflinching silence, keeping a steadfast eye on him.

“It’s only the Right Sort of Boy gets through that doorway.”

And, as if by way of illustration, there came a rattling at the door, and a squeaking little voice could be faintly heard. “Nyar! I WARN ‘a go in there, dadda, I WARN ‘a go in there. Ny-a-a-ah!” and then the accents of a down-trodden parent, urging consolations and

propitiations. “It’s locked, Edward,” he said.

“But it isn’t,” said I.

“It is, sir,” said the shopman, “always — for that sort of child,” and as he spoke we had a glimpse of the other youngster, a little, white face, pallid from sweet-eating and over-sapid food, and distorted by evil passions, a ruthless little egotist, pawing at the enchanted pane. “It’s no good, sir,” said the shopman, as I moved, with my natural helpfulness, doorward, and presently the spoilt child was carried off howling.

“How do you manage that?” I said, breathing a little more freely.

“Magic!” said the shopman, with a careless wave of the hand, and behold! sparks of coloured fire flew out of his fingers and vanished into the shadows of the shop.

“You were saying,” he said, addressing himself to Gip, “before you came in, that you would like one of our ‘Buy One and Astonish your Friends’ boxes?”

Gip, after a gallant effort, said “Yes.”

“It’s in your pocket.”

And leaning over the counter — he really had an extraordinarily long body — this amazing person produced the article in the customary conjurer’s manner. “Paper,” he said, and took a sheet out of the empty hat with the springs; “string,” and behold his mouth was a string-box, from which he drew an unending thread, which when he had tied his parcel he bit off — and, it seemed to me, swallowed the ball of string. And then he lit a candle at the nose of one of the ventriloquist’s dummies, stuck one of his fingers (which had become sealing-wax red) into the flame, and so sealed the parcel. “Then there was the Disappearing Egg,” he remarked, and produced one from within my coat-breast and packed it, and also The Crying Baby, Very Human. I handed each parcel to Gip as it was ready, and he clasped them to his chest.

He said very little, but his eyes were eloquent; the clutch of his arms was eloquent. He was the playground of unspeakable emotions. These, you know, were REAL Magics. Then, with a start, I discovered something moving about in my hat — something soft and jumpy. I whipped it off, and a ruffled pigeon — no doubt a confederate — dropped out and ran on the counter, and went, I fancy,

into a cardboard box behind the papier-mache tiger.

"Tut, tut!" said the shopman, dexterously relieving me of my headdress; "careless bird, and — as I live — nesting!"

He shook my hat, and shook out into his extended hand two or three eggs, a large marble, a watch, about half-a-dozen of the inevitable glass balls, and then crumpled, crinkled paper, more and more and more, talking all the time of the way in which people neglect to brush their hats INSIDE as well as out, politely, of course, but with a certain personal application. "All sorts of things accumulate, sir.... Not YOU, of course, in particular.... Nearly every customer.... Astonishing what they carry about with them...." The crumpled paper rose and billowed on the counter more and more and more, until he was nearly hidden from us, until he was altogether hidden, and still his voice went on and on. "We none of us know what the fair semblance of a human being may conceal, sir. Are we all then no better than brushed exteriors, whited sepulchres—"

His voice stopped — exactly like when you hit a neighbour's gramophone with a well-aimed brick, the same instant silence, and the rustle of the paper stopped, and everything was still....

"Have you done with my hat?" I said, after an interval.

There was no answer.

I stared at Gip, and Gip stared at me, and there were our distortions in the magic mirrors, looking very rum, and grave, and quiet....

"I think we'll go now," I said. "Will you tell me how much all this comes to?....

"I say," I said, on a rather louder note, "I want the bill; and my hat, please."

It might have been a sniff from behind the paper pile....

"Let's look behind the counter, Gip," I said. "He's making fun of us."

I led Gip round the head-wagging tiger, and what do you think there was behind the counter? No one at all! Only my hat on the floor, and a common conjurer's lop-eared white rabbit lost in meditation, and looking as stupid and crumpled as only a conjurer's rabbit can do. I resumed my hat, and the rabbit lolloped a lollop or so out of my way.

“Dadda!” said Gip, in a guilty whisper.

“What is it, Gip?” said I.

“I DO like this shop, dadda.”

“So should I,” I said to myself, “if the counter wouldn’t suddenly extend itself to shut one off from the door.” But I didn’t call Gip’s attention to that. “Pussy!” he said, with a hand out to the rabbit as it came lolloping past us; “Pussy, do Gip a magic!” and his eyes followed it as it squeezed through a door I had certainly not remarked a moment before. Then this door opened wider, and the man with one ear larger than the other appeared again. He was smiling still, but his eye met mine with something between amusement and defiance. “You’d like to see our show-room, sir,” he said, with an innocent suavity. Gip tugged my finger forward. I glanced at the counter and met the shopman’s eye again. I was beginning to think the magic just a little too genuine. “We haven’t VERY much time,” I said. But somehow we were inside the show-room before I could finish that.

“All goods of the same quality,” said the shopman, rubbing his flexible hands together, “and that is the Best. Nothing in the place that isn’t genuine Magic, and warranted thoroughly rum. Excuse me, sir!”

I felt him pull at something that clung to my coat-sleeve, and then I saw he held a little, wriggling red demon by the tail — the little creature bit and fought and tried to get at his hand — and in a moment he tossed it carelessly behind a counter. No doubt the thing was only an image of twisted indiarubber, but for the moment — ! And his gesture was exactly that of a man who handles some petty biting bit of vermin. I glanced at Gip, but Gip was looking at a magic rocking-horse. I was glad he hadn’t seen the thing. “I say,” I said, in an undertone, and indicating Gip and the red demon with my eyes, “you haven’t many things like THAT about, have you?”

“None of ours! Probably brought it with you,” said the shopman — also in an undertone, and with a more dazzling smile than ever. “Astonishing what people WILL carry about with them unawares!” And then to Gip, “Do you see anything you fancy here?”

There were many things that Gip fancied there.

He turned to this astonishing tradesman with mingled confidence

and respect. “Is that a Magic Sword?” he said.

“A Magic Toy Sword. It neither bends, breaks, nor cuts the fingers. It renders the bearer invincible in battle against any one under eighteen. Half-a-crown to seven and sixpence, according to size. These panoplies on cards are for juvenile knights-errant and very useful — shield of safety, sandals of swiftness, helmet of invisibility.”

“Oh, daddy!” gasped Gip.

I tried to find out what they cost, but the shopman did not heed me. He had got Gip now; he had got him away from my finger; he had embarked upon the exposition of all his confounded stock, and nothing was going to stop him. Presently I saw with a qualm of distrust and something very like jealousy that Gip had hold of this person’s finger as usually he has hold of mine. No doubt the fellow was interesting, I thought, and had an interestingly faked lot of stuff, really GOOD faked stuff, still —

I wandered after them, saying very little, but keeping an eye on this prestidigital fellow. After all, Gip was enjoying it. And no doubt when the time came to go we should be able to go quite easily.

It was a long, rambling place, that show-room, a gallery broken up by stands and stalls and pillars, with archways leading off to other departments, in which the queerest-looking assistants loafed and stared at one, and with perplexing mirrors and curtains. So perplexing, indeed, were these that I was presently unable to make out the door by which we had come.

The shopman showed Gip magic trains that ran without steam or clockwork, just as you set the signals, and then some very, very valuable boxes of soldiers that all came alive directly you took off the lid and said — . I myself haven’t a very quick ear and it was a tongue-twisting sound, but Gip — he has his mother’s ear — got it in no time. “Bravo!” said the shopman, putting the men back into the box unceremoniously and handing it to Gip. “Now,” said the shopman, and in a moment Gip had made them all alive again.

“You’ll take that box?” asked the shopman.

“We’ll take that box,” said I, “unless you charge its full value. In which case it would need a Trust Magnate—”

“Dear heart! NO!” and the shopman swept the little men back

again, shut the lid, waved the box in the air, and there it was, in brown paper, tied up and — WITH GIP'S FULL NAME AND ADDRESS ON THE PAPER!

The shopman laughed at my amazement.

"This is the genuine magic," he said. "The real thing."

"It's a little too genuine for my taste," I said again.

After that he fell to showing Gip tricks, odd tricks, and still odder the way they were done. He explained them, he turned them inside out, and there was the dear little chap nodding his busy bit of a head in the sagest manner.

I did not attend as well as I might. "Hey, presto!" said the Magic Shopman, and then would come the clear, small "Hey, presto!" of the boy. But I was distracted by other things. It was being borne in upon me just how tremendously rum this place was; it was, so to speak, inundated by a sense of rumness. There was something a little rum about the fixtures even, about the ceiling, about the floor, about the casually distributed chairs. I had a queer feeling that whenever I wasn't looking at them straight they went askew, and moved about, and played a noiseless puss-in-the-corner behind my back. And the cornice had a serpentine design with masks — masks altogether too expressive for proper plaster.

Then abruptly my attention was caught by one of the odd-looking assistants. He was some way off and evidently unaware of my presence — I saw a sort of three-quarter length of him over a pile of toys and through an arch — and, you know, he was leaning against a pillar in an idle sort of way doing the most horrid things with his features! The particular horrid thing he did was with his nose. He did it just as though he was idle and wanted to amuse himself. First of all it was a short, blobby nose, and then suddenly he shot it out like a telescope, and then out it flew and became thinner and thinner until it was like a long, red, flexible whip. Like a thing in a nightmare it was! He flourished it about and flung it forth as a fly-fisher flings his line.

My instant thought was that Gip mustn't see him. I turned about, and there was Gip quite preoccupied with the shopman, and thinking no evil. They were whispering together and looking at me. Gip was standing on a little stool, and the shopman was holding a sort of big

drum in his hand.

"Hide and seek, dadda!" cried Gip. "You're He!"

And before I could do anything to prevent it, the shopman had clapped the big drum over him. I saw what was up directly. "Take that off," I cried, "this instant! You'll frighten the boy. Take it off!"

The shopman with the unequal ears did so without a word, and held the big cylinder towards me to show its emptiness. And the little stool was vacant! In that instant my boy had utterly disappeared?...

You know, perhaps, that sinister something that comes like a hand out of the unseen and grips your heart about. You know it takes your common self away and leaves you tense and deliberate, neither slow nor hasty, neither angry nor afraid. So it was with me.

I came up to this grinning shopman and kicked his stool aside.

"Stop this folly!" I said. "Where is my boy?"

"You see," he said, still displaying the drum's interior, "there is no deception—"

I put out my hand to grip him, and he eluded me by a dexterous movement. I snatched again, and he turned from me and pushed open a door to escape. "Stop!" I said, and he laughed, receding. I leapt after him — into utter darkness.

THUD!

"Lor' bless my 'eart! I didn't see you coming, sir!"

I was in Regent Street, and I had collided with a decent-looking working man; and a yard away, perhaps, and looking a little perplexed with himself, was Gip. There was some sort of apology, and then Gip had turned and come to me with a bright little smile, as though for a moment he had missed me.

And he was carrying four parcels in his arm!

He secured immediate possession of my finger.

For the second I was rather at a loss. I stared round to see the door of the magic shop, and, behold, it was not there! There was no door, no shop, nothing, only the common pilaster between the shop where they sell pictures and the window with the chicks!...

I did the only thing possible in that mental tumult; I walked straight to the kerbstone and held up my umbrella for a cab.

"'Ansoms," said Gip, in a note of culminating exultation.

I helped him in, recalled my address with an effort, and got in

also. Something unusual proclaimed itself in my tail-coat pocket, and I felt and discovered a glass ball. With a petulant expression I flung it into the street.

Gip said nothing.

For a space neither of us spoke.

“Dada!” said Gip, at last, “that WAS a proper shop!”

I came round with that to the problem of just how the whole thing had seemed to him. He looked completely undamaged — so far, good; he was neither scared nor unhinged, he was simply tremendously satisfied with the afternoon’s entertainment, and there in his arms were the four parcels.

Confound it! what could be in them?

“Um!” I said. “Little boys can’t go to shops like that every day.”

He received this with his usual stoicism, and for a moment I was sorry I was his father and not his mother, and so couldn’t suddenly there, coram publico, in our hansom, kiss him. After all, I thought, the thing wasn’t so very bad.

But it was only when we opened the parcels that I really began to be reassured. Three of them contained boxes of soldiers, quite ordinary lead soldiers, but of so good a quality as to make Gip altogether forget that originally these parcels had been Magic Tricks of the only genuine sort, and the fourth contained a kitten, a little living white kitten, in excellent health and appetite and temper.

I saw this unpacking with a sort of provisional relief. I hung about in the nursery for quite an unconscionable time....

That happened six months ago. And now I am beginning to believe it is all right. The kitten had only the magic natural to all kittens, and the soldiers seem as steady a company as any colonel could desire. And Gip — ?

The intelligent parent will understand that I have to go cautiously with Gip.

But I went so far as this one day. I said, “How would you like your soldiers to come alive, Gip, and march about by themselves?”

“Mine do,” said Gip. “I just have to say a word I know before I open the lid.”

“Then they march about alone?”

“Oh, QUITE, dadda. I shouldn’t like them if they didn’t do that.”

I displayed no unbecoming surprise, and since then I have taken occasion to drop in upon him once or twice, unannounced, when the soldiers were about, but so far I have never discovered them performing in anything like a magical manner.

It's so difficult to tell.

There's also a question of finance. I have an incurable habit of paying bills. I have been up and down Regent Street several times, looking for that shop. I am inclined to think, indeed, that in that matter honour is satisfied, and that, since Gip's name and address are known to them, I may very well leave it to these people, whoever they may be, to send in their bill in their own time.

THE VALLEY OF SPIDERS

Towards mid-day the three pursuers came abruptly round a bend in the torrent bed upon the sight of a very broad and spacious valley. The difficult and winding trench of pebbles along which they had tracked the fugitives for so long, expanded to a broad slope, and with a common impulse the three men left the trail, and rode to a little eminence set with olive-dun trees, and there halted, the two others, as became them, a little behind the man with the silver-studded bridle.

For a space they scanned the great expanse below them with eager eyes. It spread remoter and remoter, with only a few clusters of sere thorn bushes here and there, and the dim suggestions of some now waterless ravine, to break its desolation of yellow grass. Its purple distances melted at last into the bluish slopes of the further hills — hills it might be of a greener kind — and above them invisibly supported, and seeming indeed to hang in the blue, were the snowclad summits of mountains that grew larger and bolder to the north-westward as the sides of the valley drew together. And westward the valley opened until a distant darkness under the sky told where the forests began. But the three men looked neither east nor west, but only steadfastly across the valley.

The gaunt man with the scarred lip was the first to speak. “Nowhere,” he said, with a sigh of disappointment in his voice. “But after all, they had a full day’s start.”

“They don’t know we are after them,” said the little man on the white horse.

“SHE would know,” said the leader bitterly, as if speaking to himself.

“Even then they can’t go fast. They’ve got no beast but the mule, and all to-day the girl’s foot has been bleeding—”

The man with the silver bridle flashed a quick intensity of rage on him. “Do you think I haven’t seen that?” he snarled.

“It helps, anyhow,” whispered the little man to himself.

The gaunt man with the scarred lip stared impassively. “They can’t be over the valley,” he said. “If we ride hard—”

He glanced at the white horse and paused.

“Curse all white horses!” said the man with the silver bridle, and turned to scan the beast his curse included.

The little man looked down between the melancholy ears of his steed.

“I did my best,” he said.

The two others stared again across the valley for a space. The gaunt man passed the back of his hand across the scarred lip.

“Come up!” said the man who owned the silver bridle, suddenly. The little man started and jerked his rein, and the horse hoofs of the three made a multitudinous faint pattering upon the withered grass as they turned back towards the trail....

They rode cautiously down the long slope before them, and so came through a waste of prickly, twisted bushes and strange dry shapes of horny branches that grew amongst the rocks, into the levels below. And there the trail grew faint, for the soil was scanty, and the only herbage was this scorched dead straw that lay upon the ground. Still, by hard scanning, by leaning beside the horses’ necks and pausing ever and again, even these white men could contrive to follow after their prey.

There were trodden places, bent and broken blades of the coarse grass, and ever and again the sufficient intimation of a footmark. And once the leader saw a brown smear of blood where the half-caste girl may have trod. And at that under his breath he cursed her for a fool.

The gaunt man checked his leader’s tracking, and the little man on the white horse rode behind, a man lost in a dream. They rode one after another, the man with the silver bridle led the way, and they spoke never a word. After a time it came to the little man on the white horse that the world was very still. He started out of his dream. Besides the little noises of their horses and equipment, the whole great valley kept the brooding quiet of a painted scene.

Before him went his master and his fellow, each intently leaning forward to the left, each impassively moving with the paces of his horse; their shadows went before them — still, noiseless, tapering attendants; and nearer a crouched cool shape was his own. He looked about him. What was it had gone? Then he remembered the reverberation from the banks of the gorge and the perpetual accompaniment of shifting, jostling pebbles. And, moreover — ?

There was no breeze. That was it! What a vast, still place it was, a monotonous afternoon slumber. And the sky open and blank, except for a sombre veil of haze that had gathered in the upper valley.

He straightened his back, fretted with his bridle, puckered his lips to whistle, and simply sighed. He turned in his saddle for a time, and stared at the throat of the mountain gorge out of which they had come. Blank! Blank slopes on either side, with never a sign of a decent beast or tree — much less a man. What a land it was! What a wilderness! He dropped again into his former pose.

It filled him with a momentary pleasure to see a wry stick of purple black flash out into the form of a snake, and vanish amidst the brown. After all, the infernal valley WAS alive. And then, to rejoice him still more, came a little breath across his face, a whisper that came and went, the faintest inclination of a stiff black-antlered bush upon a little crest, the first intimations of a possible breeze. Idly he wetted his finger, and held it up.

He pulled up sharply to avoid a collision with the gaunt man, who had stopped at fault upon the trail. Just at that guilty moment he caught his master's eye looking towards him.

For a time he forced an interest in the tracking. Then, as they rode on again, he studied his master's shadow and hat and shoulder, appearing and disappearing behind the gaunt man's nearer contours. They had ridden four days out of the very limits of the world into this desolate place, short of water, with nothing but a strip of dried meat under their saddles, over rocks and mountains, where surely none but these fugitives had ever been before — for THAT!

And all this was for a girl, a mere wilful child! And the man had whole cityfuls of people to do his basest bidding — girls, women! Why in the name of passionate folly THIS one in particular? asked the little man, and scowled at the world, and licked his parched lips with a blackened tongue. It was the way of the master, and that was all he knew. Just because she sought to evade him....

His eye caught a whole row of high plumed canes bending in unison, and then the tails of silk that hung before his neck flapped and fell. The breeze was growing stronger. Somehow it took the stiff stillness out of things — and that was well.

"Hullo!" said the gaunt man.

All three stopped abruptly.

"What?" asked the master. "What?"

"Over there," said the gaunt man, pointing up the valley.

"What?"

"Something coming towards us."

And as he spoke a yellow animal crested a rise and came bearing down upon them. It was a big wild dog, coming before the wind, tongue out, at a steady pace, and running with such an intensity of purpose that he did not seem to see the horsemen he approached. He ran with his nose up, following, it was plain, neither scent nor quarry. As he drew nearer the little man felt for his sword. "He's mad," said the gaunt rider.

"Shout!" said the little man, and shouted.

The dog came on. Then when the little man's blade was already out, it swerved aside and went panting by them and past. The eyes of the little man followed its flight. "There was no foam," he said. For a space the man with the silver-studded bridle stared up the valley. "Oh, come on!" he cried at last. "What does it matter?" and jerked his horse into movement again.

The little man left the insoluble mystery of a dog that fled from nothing but the wind, and lapsed into profound musings on human character. "Come on!" he whispered to himself. "Why should it be given to one man to say 'Come on!' with that stupendous violence of effect. Always, all his life, the man with the silver bridle has been saying that. If *I* said it — !" thought the little man. But people marvelled when the master was disobeyed even in the wildest things. This half-caste girl seemed to him, seemed to every one, mad — blasphemous almost. The little man, by way of comparison, reflected on the gaunt rider with the scarred lip, as stalwart as his master, as brave and, indeed, perhaps braver, and yet for him there was obedience, nothing but to give obedience duly and stoutly...

Certain sensations of the hands and knees called the little man back to more immediate things. He became aware of something. He rode up beside his gaunt fellow. "Do you notice the horses?" he said in an undertone.

The gaunt face looked interrogation.

"They don't like this wind," said the little man, and dropped

behind as the man with the silver bridle turned upon him.

"It's all right," said the gaunt-faced man.

They rode on again for a space in silence. The foremost two rode downcast upon the trail, the hindmost man watched the haze that crept down the vastness of the valley, nearer and nearer, and noted how the wind grew in strength moment by moment. Far away on the left he saw a line of dark bulks — wild hog perhaps, galloping down the valley, but of that he said nothing, nor did he remark again upon the uneasiness of the horses.

And then he saw first one and then a second great white ball, a great shining white ball like a gigantic head of thistle-down, that drove before the wind athwart the path. These balls soared high in the air, and dropped and rose again and caught for a moment, and hurried on and passed, but at the sight of them the restlessness of the horses increased.

Then presently he saw that more of these drifting globes — and then soon very many more — were hurrying towards him down the valley.

They became aware of a squealing. Athwart the path a huge boar rushed, turning his head but for one instant to glance at them, and then hurling on down the valley again. And at that, all three stopped and sat in their saddles, staring into the thickening haze that was coming upon them.

"If it were not for this thistle-down—" began the leader.

But now a big globe came drifting past within a score of yards of them. It was really not an even sphere at all, but a vast, soft, ragged, filmy thing, a sheet gathered by the corners, an aerial jelly-fish, as it were, but rolling over and over as it advanced, and trailing long, cobwebby threads and streamers that floated in its wake.

"It isn't thistle-down," said the little man.

"I don't like the stuff," said the gaunt man.

And they looked at one another.

"Curse it!" cried the leader. "The air's full of it up there. If it keeps on at this pace long, it will stop us altogether."

An instinctive feeling, such as lines out a herd of deer at the approach of some ambiguous thing, prompted them to turn their horses to the wind, ride forward for a few paces, and stare at that

advancing multitude of floating masses. They came on before the wind with a sort of smooth swiftness, rising and falling noiselessly, sinking to earth, rebounding high, soaring — all with a perfect unanimity, with a still, deliberate assurance.

Right and left of the horsemen the pioneers of this strange army passed. At one that rolled along the ground, breaking shapelessly and trailing out reluctantly into long grappling ribbons and bands, all three horses began to shy and dance. The master was seized with a sudden unreasonable impatience. He cursed the drifting globes roundly. “Get on!” he cried; “get on! What do these things matter? How CAN they matter? Back to the trail!” He fell swearing at his horse and sawed the bit across its mouth.

He shouted aloud with rage. “I will follow that trail, I tell you!” he cried. “Where is the trail?”

He gripped the bridle of his prancing horse and searched amidst the grass. A long and clinging thread fell across his face, a grey streamer dropped about his bridle-arm, some big, active thing with many legs ran down the back of his head. He looked up to discover one of those grey masses anchored as it were above him by these things and flapping out ends as a sail flaps when a boat comes, about — but noiselessly.

He had an impression of many eyes, of a dense crew of squat bodies, of long, many-jointed limbs hauling at their mooring ropes to bring the thing down upon him. For a space he stared up, reining in his prancing horse with the instinct born of years of horsemanship. Then the flat of a sword smote his back, and a blade flashed overhead and cut the drifting balloon of spider-web free, and the whole mass lifted softly and drove clear and away.

“Spiders!” cried the voice of the gaunt man. “The things are full of big spiders! Look, my lord!”

The man with the silver bridle still followed the mass that drove away.

“Look, my lord!”

The master found himself staring down at a red, smashed thing on the ground that, in spite of partial obliteration, could still wriggle unavailing legs. Then when the gaunt man pointed to another mass that bore down upon them, he drew his sword hastily. Up the valley

now it was like a fog bank torn to rags. He tried to grasp the situation.

"Ride for it!" the little man was shouting. "Ride for it down the valley."

What happened then was like the confusion of a battle. The man with the silver bridle saw the little man go past him slashing furiously at imaginary cobwebs, saw him cannon into the horse of the gaunt man and hurl it and its rider to earth. His own horse went a dozen paces before he could rein it in. Then he looked up to avoid imaginary dangers, and then back again to see a horse rolling on the ground, the gaunt man standing and slashing over it at a rent and fluttering mass of grey that streamed and wrapped about them both. And thick and fast as thistle-down on waste land on a windy day in July, the cobweb masses were coming on.

The little man had dismounted, but he dared not release his horse. He was endeavouring to lug the struggling brute back with the strength of one arm, while with the other he slashed aimlessly, The tentacles of a second grey mass had entangled themselves with the struggle, and this second grey mass came to its moorings, and slowly sank.

The master set his teeth, gripped his bridle, lowered his head, and spurred his horse forward. The horse on the ground rolled over, there were blood and moving shapes upon the flanks, and the gaunt man, suddenly leaving it, ran forward towards his master, perhaps ten paces. His legs were swathed and encumbered with grey; he made ineffectual movements with his sword. Grey streamers waved from him; there was a thin veil of grey across his face. With his left hand he beat at something on his body, and suddenly he stumbled and fell. He struggled to rise, and fell again, and suddenly, horribly, began to howl, "Oh — ohoo, ohooh!"

The master could see the great spiders upon him, and others upon the ground.

As he strove to force his horse nearer to this gesticulating, screaming grey object that struggled up and down, there came a clatter of hoofs, and the little man, in act of mounting, swordless, balanced on his belly athwart the white horse, and clutching its mane, whirled past. And again a clinging thread of grey gossamer

swept across the master's face. All about him, and over him, it seemed this drifting, noiseless cobweb circled and drew nearer him....

To the day of his death he never knew just how the event of that moment happened. Did he, indeed, turn his horse, or did it really of its own accord stampede after its fellow? Suffice it that in another second he was galloping full tilt down the valley with his sword whirling furiously overhead. And all about him on the quickening breeze, the spiders' airships, their air bundles and air sheets, seemed to him to hurry in a conscious pursuit.

Clatter, clatter, thud, thud — the man with the silver bridle rode, heedless of his direction, with his fearful face looking up now right, now left, and his sword arm ready to slash. And a few hundred yards ahead of him, with a tail of torn cobweb trailing behind him, rode the little man on the white horse, still but imperfectly in the saddle. The reeds bent before them, the wind blew fresh and strong, over his shoulder the master could see the webs hurrying to overtake....

He was so intent to escape the spiders' webs that only as his horse gathered together for a leap did he realise the ravine ahead. And then he realised it only to misunderstand and interfere. He was leaning forward on his horse's neck and sat up and back all too late.

But if in his excitement he had failed to leap, at any rate he had not forgotten how to fall. He was horseman again in mid-air. He came off clear with a mere bruise upon his shoulder, and his horse rolled, kicking spasmodic legs, and lay still. But the master's sword drove its point into the hard soil, and snapped clean across, as though Chance refused him any longer as her Knight, and the splintered end missed his face by an inch or so.

He was on his feet in a moment, breathlessly scanning the onrushing spider-webs. For a moment he was minded to run, and then thought of the ravine, and turned back. He ran aside once to dodge one drifting terror, and then he was swiftly clambering down the precipitous sides, and out of the touch of the gale.

There under the lee of the dry torrent's steeper banks he might crouch, and watch these strange, grey masses pass and pass in safety till the wind fell, and it became possible to escape. And there for a long time he crouched, watching the strange, grey, ragged masses

trail their streamers across his narrowed sky.

Once a stray spider fell into the ravine close beside him — a full foot it measured from leg to leg, and its body was half a man's hand — and after he had watched its monstrous alacrity of search and escape for a little while, and tempted it to bite his broken sword, he lifted up his iron-heeled boot and smashed it into a pulp. He swore as he did so, and for a time sought up and down for another.

Then presently, when he was surer these spider swarms could not drop into the ravine, he found a place where he could sit down, and sat and fell into deep thought and began after his manner to gnaw his knuckles and bite his nails. And from this he was moved by the coming of the man with the white horse.

He heard him long before he saw him, as a clattering of hoofs, stumbling footsteps, and a reassuring voice. Then the little man appeared, a rueful figure, still with a tail of white cobweb trailing behind him. They approached each other without speaking, without a salutation. The little man was fatigued and shamed to the pitch of hopeless bitterness, and came to a stop at last, face to face with his seated master. The latter winced a little under his dependant's eye. "Well?" he said at last, with no pretence of authority.

"You left him?"

"My horse bolted."

"I know. So did mine."

He laughed at his master mirthlessly.

"I say my horse bolted," said the man who once had a silver-studded bridle.

"Cowards both," said the little man.

The other gnawed his knuckle through some meditative moments, with his eye on his inferior.

"Don't call me a coward," he said at length.

"You are a coward like myself."

"A coward possibly. There is a limit beyond which every man must fear. That I have learnt at last. But not like yourself. That is where the difference comes in."

"I never could have dreamt you would have left him. He saved your life two minutes before.... Why are you our lord?"

The master gnawed his knuckles again, and his countenance was

dark.

“No man calls me a coward,” he said. “No. A broken sword is better than none.... One spavined white horse cannot be expected to carry two men a four days’ journey. I hate white horses, but this time it cannot be helped. You begin to understand me?... I perceive that you are minded, on the strength of what you have seen and fancy, to taint my reputation. It is men of your sort who unmake kings. Besides which — I never liked you.”

“My lord!” said the little man.

“No,” said the master. “NO!”

He stood up sharply as the little man moved. For a minute perhaps they faced one another. Overhead the spiders’ balls went driving. There was a quick movement among the pebbles; a running of feet, a cry of despair, a gasp and a blow....

Towards nightfall the wind fell. The sun set in a calm serenity, and the man who had once possessed the silver bridle came at last very cautiously and by an easy slope out of the ravine again; but now he led the white horse that once belonged to the little man. He would have gone back to his horse to get his silver-mounted bridle again, but he feared night and a quickening breeze might still find him in the valley, and besides he disliked greatly to think he might discover his horse all swathed in cobwebs and perhaps unpleasantly eaten.

And as he thought of those cobwebs and of all the dangers he had been through, and the manner in which he had been preserved that day, his hand sought a little reliquary that hung about his neck, and he clasped it for a moment with heartfelt gratitude. As he did so his eyes went across the valley.

“I was hot with passion,” he said, “and now she has met her reward. They also, no doubt—”

And behold! Far away out of the wooded slopes across the valley, but in the clearness of the sunset distinct and unmistakable, he saw a little spire of smoke.

At that his expression of serene resignation changed to an amazed anger. Smoke? He turned the head of the white horse about, and hesitated. And as he did so a little rustle of air went through the grass about him. Far away upon some reeds swayed a tattered sheet of grey. He looked at the cobwebs; he looked at the smoke.

“Perhaps, after all, it is not them,” he said at last.

But he knew better.

After he had stared at the smoke for some time, he mounted the white horse.

As he rode, he picked his way amidst stranded masses of web. For some reason there were many dead spiders on the ground, and those that lived feasted guiltily on their fellows. At the sound of his horse’s hoofs they fled.

Their time had passed. From the ground without either a wind to carry them or a winding sheet ready, these things, for all their poison, could do him little evil. He flicked with his belt at those he fancied came too near. Once, where a number ran together over a bare place, he was minded to dismount and trample them with his boots, but this impulse he overcame. Ever and again he turned in his saddle, and looked back at the smoke.

“Spiders,” he muttered over and over again. “Spiders! Well, well.... The next time I must spin a web.”

THE TRUTH ABOUT PYECRAFT

He sits not a dozen yards away. If I glance over my shoulder I can see him. And if I catch his eye — and usually I catch his eye — it meets me with an expression.

It is mainly an imploring look — and yet with suspicion in it.

Confound his suspicion! If I wanted to tell on him I should have told long ago. I don't tell and I don't tell, and he ought to feel at his ease. As if anything so gross and fat as he could feel at ease! Who would believe me if I did tell?

Poor old Pyecraft! Great, uneasy jelly of substance! The fattest clubman in London.

He sits at one of the little club tables in the huge bay by the fire, stuffing. What is he stuffing? I glance judiciously and catch him biting at a round of hot buttered tea-cake, with his eyes on me. Confound him! — with his eyes on me!

That settles it, Pyecraft! Since you WILL be abject, since you WILL behave as though I was not a man of honour, here, right under your embedded eyes, I write the thing down — the plain truth about Pyecraft. The man I helped, the man I shielded, and who has requited me by making my club unendurable, absolutely unendurable, with his liquid appeal, with the perpetual "don't tell" of his looks.

And, besides, why does he keep on eternally eating?

Well, here goes for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

Pyecraft — . I made the acquaintance of Pyecraft in this very smoking-room. I was a young, nervous new member, and he saw it. I was sitting all alone, wishing I knew more of the members, and suddenly he came, a great rolling front of chins and abdomina, towards me, and grunted and sat down in a chair close by me and wheezed for a space, and scraped for a space with a match and lit a cigar, and then addressed me. I forget what he said — something about the matches not lighting properly, and afterwards as he talked he kept stopping the waiters one by one as they went by, and telling them about the matches in that thin, fluty voice he has. But, anyhow, it was in some such way we began our talking.

He talked about various things and came round to games. And thence to my figure and complexion. “YOU ought to be a good cricketer,” he said. I suppose I am slender, slender to what some people would call lean, and I suppose I am rather dark, still — I am not ashamed of having a Hindu great-grandmother, but, for all that, I don’t want casual strangers to see through me at a glance to HER. So that I was set against Pyecraft from the beginning.

But he only talked about me in order to get to himself.

“I expect,” he said, “you take no more exercise than I do, and probably you eat no less.” (Like all excessively obese people he fancied he ate nothing.) “Yet,” — and he smiled an oblique smile— “we differ.”

And then he began to talk about his fatness and his fatness; all he did for his fatness and all he was going to do for his fatness; what people had advised him to do for his fatness and what he had heard of people doing for fatness similar to his. “A priori,” he said, “one would think a question of nutrition could be answered by dietary and a question of assimilation by drugs.” It was stifling. It was dumpling talk. It made me feel swelled to hear him.

One stands that sort of thing once in a way at a club, but a time came when I fancied I was standing too much. He took to me altogether too conspicuously. I could never go into the smoking-room but he would come wallowing towards me, and sometimes he came and gormandised round and about me while I had my lunch. He seemed at times almost to be clinging to me. He was a bore, but not so fearful a bore as to be limited to me; and from the first there was something in his manner — almost as though he knew, almost as though he penetrated to the fact that I MIGHT — that there was a remote, exceptional chance in me that no one else presented.

“I’d give anything to get it down,” he would say— “anything,” and peer at me over his vast cheeks and pant.

Poor old Pyecraft! He has just gonged, no doubt to order another buttered tea-cake!

He came to the actual thing one day. “Our Pharmacopoeia,” he said, “our Western Pharmacopoeia, is anything but the last word of medical science. In the East, I’ve been told—”

He stopped and stared at me. It was like being at an aquarium.

I was quite suddenly angry with him. “Look here,” I said, “who told you about my great-grandmother’s recipes?”

“Well,” he fenced.

“Every time we’ve met for a week,” I said, “and we’ve met pretty often — you’ve given me a broad hint or so about that little secret of mine.”

“Well,” he said, “now the cat’s out of the bag, I’ll admit, yes, it is so. I had it—”

“From Pattison?”

“Indirectly,” he said, which I believe was lying, “yes.”

“Pattison,” I said, “took that stuff at his own risk.”

He pursed his mouth and bowed.

“My great-grandmother’s recipes,” I said, “are queer things to handle. My father was near making me promise—”

“He didn’t?”

“No. But he warned me. He himself used one — once.”

“Ah!... But do you think — ? Suppose — suppose there did happen to be one—”

“The things are curious documents,” I said.

“Even the smell of ‘em.... No!”

But after going so far Pyecraft was resolved I should go farther. I was always a little afraid if I tried his patience too much he would fall on me suddenly and smother me. I own I was weak. But I was also annoyed with Pyecraft. I had got to that state of feeling for him that disposed me to say, “Well, TAKE the risk!” The little affair of Pattison to which I have alluded was a different matter altogether. What it was doesn’t concern us now, but I knew, anyhow, that the particular recipe I used then was safe. The rest I didn’t know so much about, and, on the whole, I was inclined to doubt their safety pretty completely.

Yet even if Pyecraft got poisoned —

I must confess the poisoning of Pyecraft struck me as an immense undertaking.

That evening I took that queer, odd-scented sandalwood box out of my safe and turned the rustling skins over. The gentleman who wrote the recipes for my great-grandmother evidently had a weakness for skins of a miscellaneous origin, and his handwriting

was cramped to the last degree. Some of the things are quite unreadable to me — though my family, with its Indian Civil Service associations, has kept up a knowledge of Hindustani from generation to generation — and none are absolutely plain sailing. But I found the one that I knew was there soon enough, and sat on the floor by my safe for some time looking at it.

"Look here," said I to Pyecraft next day, and snatched the slip away from his eager grasp.

"So far as I — can make it out, this is a recipe for Loss of Weight. ("Ah!" said Pyecraft.) I'm not absolutely sure, but I think it's that. And if you take my advice you'll leave it alone. Because, you know — I blacken my blood in your interest, Pyecraft — my ancestors on that side were, so far as I can gather, a jolly queer lot. See?"

"Let me try it," said Pyecraft.

I leant back in my chair. My imagination made one mighty effort and fell flat within me. "What in Heaven's name, Pyecraft," I asked, "do you think you'll look like when you get thin?"

He was impervious to reason. I made him promise never to say a word to me about his disgusting fatness again whatever happened — never, and then I handed him that little piece of skin.

"It's nasty stuff," I said.

"No matter," he said, and took it.

He goggled at it. "But — but—" he said.

He had just discovered that it wasn't English.

"To the best of my ability," I said, "I will do you a translation."

I did my best. After that we didn't speak for a fortnight. Whenever he approached me I frowned and motioned him away, and he respected our compact, but at the end of a fortnight he was as fat as ever. And then he got a word in.

"I must speak," he said. "It isn't fair. There's something wrong. It's done me no good. You're not doing your great-grandmother justice."

"Where's the recipe?"

He produced it gingerly from his pocket-book.

I ran my eye over the items. "Was the egg addled?" I asked.

"No. Ought it to have been?"

"That," I said, "goes without saying in all my poor dear great-

grandmother's recipes. When condition or quality is not specified you must get the worst. She was drastic or nothing.... And there's one or two possible alternatives to some of these other things. You got FRESH rattlesnake venom."

"I got a rattlesnake from Jamrach's. It cost — it cost—"

"That's your affair, anyhow. This last item—"

"I know a man who—"

"Yes. H'm. Well, I'll write the alternatives down. So far as I know the language, the spelling of this recipe is particularly atrocious. By-the-bye, dog here probably means pariah dog."

For a month after that I saw Pyecraft constantly at the club and as fat and anxious as ever. He kept our treaty, but at times he broke the spirit of it by shaking his head despondently. Then one day in the cloakroom he said, "Your great-grandmother—"

"Not a word against her," I said; and he held his peace.

I could have fancied he had desisted, and I saw him one day talking to three new members about his fatness as though he was in search of other recipes. And then, quite unexpectedly, his telegram came.

"Mr. Formalyn!" bawled a page-boy under my nose, and I took the telegram and opened it at once.

"For Heaven's sake come. — Pyecraft."

"H'm," said I, and to tell the truth I was so pleased at the rehabilitation of my great grandmother's reputation this evidently promised that I made a most excellent lunch.

I got Pyecraft's address from the hall porter. Pyecraft inhabited the upper half of a house in Bloomsbury, and I went there so soon as I had done my coffee and Trappistine. I did not wait to finish my cigar.

"Mr. Pyecraft?" said I, at the front door.

They believed he was ill; he hadn't been out for two days.

"He expects me," said I, and they sent me up.

I rang the bell at the lattice-door upon the landing.

"He shouldn't have tried it, anyhow," I said to myself. "A man who eats like a pig ought to look like a pig."

An obviously worthy woman, with an anxious face and a carelessly placed cap, came and surveyed me through the lattice.

I gave my name and she let me in in a dubious fashion.

"Well?" said I, as we stood together inside Pyecraft's piece of the landing.

"'E said you was to come in if you came," she said, and regarded me, making no motion to show me anywhere. And then, confidentially, "'E's locked in, sir."

"Locked in?"

"Locked himself in yesterday morning and 'asn't let any one in since, sir. And ever and again SWEARING. Oh, my!"

I stared at the door she indicated by her glances.

"In there?" I said.

"Yes, sir."

"What's up?"

She shook her head sadly, "'E keeps on calling for vittles, sir. 'EAVY vittles 'e wants. I get 'im what I can. Pork 'e's 'ad, sooit puddin', sossiges, noo bread. Everythink like that. Left outside, if you please, and me go away. 'E's eatin', sir, somethink AWFUL."

There came a piping bawl from inside the door: "That Formalyn?"

"That you, Pyecraft?" I shouted, and went and banged the door.

"Tell her to go away."

I did.

Then I could hear a curious pattering upon the door, almost like some one feeling for the handle in the dark, and Pyecraft's familiar grunts.

"It's all right," I said, "she's gone."

But for a long time the door didn't open.

I heard the key turn. Then Pyecraft's voice said, "Come in."

I turned the handle and opened the door. Naturally I expected to see Pyecraft.

Well, you know, he wasn't there!

I never had such a shock in my life. There was his sitting-room in a state of untidy disorder, plates and dishes among the books and writing things, and several chairs overturned, but Pyecraft —

"It's all right, o' man; shut the door," he said, and then I discovered him.

There he was right up close to the cornice in the corner by the door, as though some one had glued him to the ceiling. His face was

anxious and angry. He panted and gesticulated. “Shut the door,” he said. “If that woman gets hold of it—”

I shut the door, and went and stood away from him and stared.

“If anything gives way and you tumble down,” I said, “you’ll break your neck, Pyecraft.”

“I wish I could,” he wheezed.

“A man of your age and weight getting up to kiddish gymnastics —”

“Don’t,” he said, and looked agonised.

“I’ll tell you,” he said, and gesticulated.

“How the deuce,” said I, “are you holding on up there?”

And then abruptly I realised that he was not holding on at all, that he was floating up there — just as a gas-filled bladder might have floated in the same position. He began a struggle to thrust himself away from the ceiling and to clamber down the wall to me. “It’s that prescription,” he panted, as he did so. “Your great-gran—”

He took hold of a framed engraving rather carelessly as he spoke and it gave way, and he flew back to the ceiling again, while the picture smashed onto the sofa. Bump he went against the ceiling, and I knew then why he was all over white on the more salient curves and angles of his person. He tried again more carefully, coming down by way of the mantel.

It was really a most extraordinary spectacle, that great, fat, apoplectic-looking man upside down and trying to get from the ceiling to the floor. “That prescription,” he said. “Too successful.”

“How?”

“Loss of weight — almost complete.”

And then, of course, I understood.

“By Jove, Pyecraft,” said I, “what you wanted was a cure for fatness! But you always called it weight. You would call it weight.”

Somehow I was extremely delighted. I quite liked Pyecraft for the time. “Let me help you!” I said, and took his hand and pulled him down. He kicked about, trying to get a foothold somewhere. It was very like holding a flag on a windy day.

“That table,” he said, pointing, “is solid mahogany and very heavy. If you can put me under that—”

I did, and there he wallowed about like a captive balloon, while I

stood on his hearthrug and talked to him.

I lit a cigar. “Tell me,” I said, “what happened?”

“I took it,” he said.

“How did it taste?”

“Oh, BEASTLY!”

I should fancy they all did. Whether one regards the ingredients or the probable compound or the possible results, almost all of my great-grandmother’s remedies appear to me at least to be extraordinarily uninviting. For my own part —

“I took a little sip first.”

“Yes?”

“And as I felt lighter and better after an hour, I decided to take the draught.”

“My dear Pyecraft!”

“I held my nose,” he explained. “And then I kept on getting lighter and lighter — and helpless, you know.”

He gave way to a sudden burst of passion. “What the goodness am I to DO?” he said.

“There’s one thing pretty evident,” I said, “that you mustn’t do. If you go out of doors, you’ll go up and up.” I waved an arm upward. “They’d have to send Santos-Dumont after you to bring you down again.”

“I suppose it will wear off?”

I shook my head. “I don’t think you can count on that,” I said.

And then there was another burst of passion, and he kicked out at adjacent chairs and banged the floor. He behaved just as I should have expected a great, fat, self-indulgent man to behave under trying circumstances — that is to say, very badly. He spoke of me and my great-grandmother with an utter want of discretion.

“I never asked you to take the stuff,” I said.

And generously disregarding the insults he was putting upon me, I sat down in his armchair and began to talk to him in a sober, friendly fashion.

I pointed out to him that this was a trouble he had brought upon himself, and that it had almost an air of poetical justice. He had eaten too much. This he disputed, and for a time we argued the point.

He became noisy and violent, so I desisted from this aspect of his

lesson. “And then,” said I, “you committed the sin of euphuism. You called it not Fat, which is just and inglorious, but Weight. You—”

He interrupted to say he recognised all that. What was he to DO?

I suggested he should adapt himself to his new conditions. So we came to the really sensible part of the business. I suggested that it would not be difficult for him to learn to walk about on the ceiling with his hands —

“I can’t sleep,” he said.

But that was no great difficulty. It was quite possible, I pointed out, to make a shake-up under a wire mattress, fasten the under things on with tapes, and have a blanket, sheet, and coverlet to button at the side. He would have to confide in his housekeeper, I said; and after some squabbling he agreed to that. (Afterwards it was quite delightful to see the beautifully matter-of-fact way with which the good lady took all these amazing inversions.) He could have a library ladder in his room, and all his meals could be laid on the top of his bookcase. We also hit on an ingenious device by which he could get to the floor whenever he wanted, which was simply to put the British Encyclopaedia (tenth edition) on the top of his open shelves. He just pulled out a couple of volumes and held on, and down he came. And we agreed there must be iron staples along the skirting, so that he could cling to those whenever he wanted to get about the room on the lower level.

As we got on with the thing I found myself almost keenly interested. It was I who called in the housekeeper and broke matters to her, and it was I chiefly who fixed up the inverted bed. In fact, I spent two whole days at his flat. I am a handy, interfering sort of man with a screw-driver, and I made all sorts of ingenious adaptations for him — ran a wire to bring his bells within reach, turned all his electric lights up instead of down, and so on. The whole affair was extremely curious and interesting to me, and it was delightful to think of Pyecraft like some great, fat blow-fly, crawling about on his ceiling and clambering round the lintels of his doors from one room to another, and never, never, never coming to the club any more....

Then, you know, my fatal ingenuity got the better of me. I was sitting by his fire drinking his whisky, and he was up in his favourite corner by the cornice, tacking a Turkey carpet to the ceiling, when

the idea struck me. “By Jove, Pyecraft!” I said, “all this is totally unnecessary.”

And before I could calculate the complete consequences of my notion I blurted it out. “Lead underclothing,” said I, and the mischief was done.

Pyecraft received the thing almost in tears. “To be right ways up again—” he said. I gave him the whole secret before I saw where it would take me. “Buy sheet lead,” I said, “stamp it into discs. Sew ’em all over your underclothes until you have enough. Have lead-soled boots, carry a bag of solid lead, and the thing is done! Instead of being a prisoner here you may go abroad again, Pyecraft; you may travel—”

A still happier idea came to me. “You need never fear a shipwreck. All you need do is just slip off some or all of your clothes, take the necessary amount of luggage in your hand, and float up in the air—”

In his emotion he dropped the tack-hammer within an ace of my head. “By Jove!” he said, “I shall be able to come back to the club again.”

The thing pulled me up short. “By Jove!” I said faintly. “Yes. Of course — you will.”

He did. He does. There he sits behind me now, stuffing — as I live! — a third go of buttered tea-cake. And no one in the whole world knows — except his housekeeper and me — that he weighs practically nothing; that he is a mere boring mass of assimilatory matter, mere clouds in clothing, niente, nefas, the most inconsiderable of men. There he sits watching until I have done this writing. Then, if he can, he will waylay me. He will come billowing up to me....

He will tell me over again all about it, how it feels, how it doesn’t feel, how he sometimes hopes it is passing off a little. And always somewhere in that fat, abundant discourse he will say, “The secret’s keeping, eh? If any one knew of it — I should be so ashamed.... Makes a fellow look such a fool, you know. Crawling about on a ceiling and all that....”

And now to elude Pyecraft, occupying, as he does, an admirable strategic position between me and the door.

MR. SKELMERSDALE IN FAIRYLAND

"There's a man in that shop," said the Doctor, "who has been in Fairyland."

"Nonsense!" I said, and stared back at the shop. It was the usual village shop, post-office, telegraph wire on its brow, zinc pans and brushes outside, boots, shirtings, and potted meats in the window. "Tell me about it," I said, after a pause.

"*I* don't know," said the Doctor. "He's an ordinary sort of lout — Skelmersdale is his name. But everybody about here believes it like Bible truth."

I reverted presently to the topic.

"I know nothing about it," said the Doctor, "and I don't WANT to know. I attended him for a broken finger — Married and Single cricket match — and that's when I struck the nonsense. That's all. But it shows you the sort of stuff I have to deal with, anyhow, eh? Nice to get modern sanitary ideas into a people like this!"

"Very," I said in a mildly sympathetic tone, and he went on to tell me about that business of the Bonham drain. Things of that kind, I observe, are apt to weigh on the minds of Medical Officers of Health. I was as sympathetic as I knew how, and when he called the Bonham people "asses," I said they were "thundering asses," but even that did not allay him.

Afterwards, later in the summer, an urgent desire to seclude myself, while finishing my chapter on Spiritual Pathology — it was really, I believe, stiffer to write than it is to read — took me to Bignor. I lodged at a farmhouse, and presently found myself outside that little general shop again, in search of tobacco. "Skelmersdale," said I to myself at the sight of it, and went in.

I was served by a short, but shapely, young man, with a fair downy complexion, good, small teeth, blue eyes, and a languid manner. I scrutinised him curiously. Except for a touch of melancholy in his expression, he was nothing out of the common. He was in the shirt-sleeves and tucked-up apron of his trade, and a pencil was thrust behind his inoffensive ear. Athwart his black waistcoat was a gold chain, from which dangled a bent guinea.

“Nothing more to-day, sir?” he inquired. He leant forward over my bill as he spoke.

“Are you Mr. Skelmersdale?” said I.

“I am, sir,” he said, without looking up.

“Is it true that you have been in Fairyland?”

He looked up at me for a moment with wrinkled brows, with an aggrieved, exasperated face. “O SHUT it!” he said, and, after a moment of hostility, eye to eye, he went on adding up my bill. “Four, six and a half,” he said, after a pause. “Thank you, Sir.”

So, unpropitiously, my acquaintance with Mr. Skelmersdale began.

Well, I got from that to confidence — through a series of toilsome efforts. I picked him up again in the Village Room, where of a night I went to play billiards after my supper, and mitigate the extreme seclusion from my kind that was so helpful to work during the day. I contrived to play with him and afterwards to talk with him. I found the one subject to avoid was Fairyland. On everything else he was open and amiable in a commonplace sort of way, but on that he had been worried — it was a manifest taboo. Only once in the room did I hear the slightest allusion to his experience in his presence, and that was by a cross-grained farm hand who was losing to him. Skelmersdale had run a break into double figures, which, by the Bignor standards, was uncommonly good play. “Steady on!” said his adversary. “None of your fairy flukes!”

Skelmersdale stared at him for a moment, cue in hand, then flung it down and walked out of the room.

“Why can’t you leave ‘im alone?” said a respectable elder who had been enjoying the game, and in the general murmur of disapproval the grin of satisfied wit faded from the ploughboy’s face.

I scented my opportunity. “What’s this joke,” said I, “about Fairyland?”

“‘Tain’t no joke about Fairyland, not to young Skelmersdale,” said the respectable elder, drinking. A little man with rosy cheeks was more communicative. “They DO say, sir,” he said, “that they took him into Aldington Knoll an’ kep’ him there a matter of three weeks.”

And with that the gathering was well under weigh. Once one

sheep had started, others were ready enough to follow, and in a little time I had at least the exterior aspect of the Skelmersdale affair. Formerly, before he came to Bignor, he had been in that very similar little shop at Aldington Corner, and there whatever it was did happen had taken place. The story was clear that he had stayed out late one night on the Knoll and vanished for three weeks from the sight of men, and had returned with "his cuffs as clean as when he started," and his pockets full of dust and ashes. He returned in a state of moody wretchedness that only slowly passed away, and for many days he would give no account of where it was he had been. The girl he was engaged to at Clapton Hill tried to get it out of him, and threw him over partly because he refused, and partly because, as she said, he fairly gave her the "'ump." And then when, some time after, he let out to some one carelessly that he had been in Fairyland and wanted to go back, and when the thing spread and the simple badinage of the countryside came into play, he threw up his situation abruptly, and came to Bignor to get out of the fuss. But as to what had happened in Fairyland none of these people knew. There the gathering in the Village Room went to pieces like a pack at fault. One said this, and another said that.

Their air in dealing with this marvel was ostensibly critical and sceptical, but I could see a considerable amount of belief showing through their guarded qualifications. I took a line of intelligent interest, tinged with a reasonable doubt of the whole story.

"If Fairyland's inside Aldington Knoll," I said, "why don't you dig it out?"

"That's what I says," said the young ploughboy.

"There's a-many have tried to dig on Aldington Knoll," said the respectable elder, solemnly, "one time and another. But there's none as goes about to-day to tell what they got by digging."

The unanimity of vague belief that surrounded me was rather impressive; I felt there must surely be SOMETHING at the root of so much conviction, and the already pretty keen curiosity I felt about the real facts of the case was distinctly whetted. If these real facts were to be got from any one, they were to be got from Skelmersdale himself; and I set myself, therefore, still more assiduously to efface the first bad impression I had made and win his confidence to the

pitch of voluntary speech. In that endeavour I had a social advantage. Being a person of affability and no apparent employment, and wearing tweeds and knickerbockers, I was naturally classed as an artist in Bignor, and in the remarkable code of social precedence prevalent in Bignor an artist ranks considerably higher than a grocer's assistant. Skelmersdale, like too many of his class, is something of a snob; he had told me to "shut it," only under sudden, excessive provocation, and with, I am certain, a subsequent repentance; he was, I knew, quite glad to be seen walking about the village with me. In due course, he accepted the proposal of a pipe and whisky in my rooms readily enough, and there, scenting by some happy instinct that there was trouble of the heart in this, and knowing that confidences beget confidences, I plied him with much of interest and suggestion from my real and fictitious past. And it was after the third whisky of the third visit of that sort, if I remember rightly, that a propos of some artless expansion of a little affair that had touched and left me in my teens, that he did at last, of his own free will and motion, break the ice. "It was like that with me," he said, "over there at Aldington. It's just that that's so rum. First I didn't care a bit and it was all her, and afterwards, when it was too late, it was, in a manner of speaking, all me."

I forbore to jump upon this allusion, and so he presently threw out another, and in a little while he was making it as plain as daylight that the one thing he wanted to talk about now was this Fairyland adventure he had sat tight upon for so long. You see, I'd done the trick with him, and from being just another half-incredulous, would-be facetious stranger, I had, by all my wealth of shameless self-exposure, become the possible confidant. He had been bitten by the desire to show that he, too, had lived and felt many things, and the fever was upon him.

He was certainly confoundedly allusive at first, and my eagerness to clear him up with a few precise questions was only equalled and controlled by my anxiety not to get to this sort of thing too soon. But in another meeting or so the basis of confidence was complete; and from first to last I think I got most of the items and aspects — indeed, I got quite a number of times over almost everything that Mr. Skelmersdale, with his very limited powers of narration, will ever be

able to tell. And so I come to the story of his adventure, and I piece it all together again. Whether it really happened, whether he imagined it or dreamt it, or fell upon it in some strange hallucinatory trance, I do not profess to say. But that he invented it I will not for one moment entertain. The man simply and honestly believes the thing happened as he says it happened; he is transparently incapable of any lie so elaborate and sustained, and in the belief of the simple, yet often keenly penetrating, rustic minds about him I find a very strong confirmation of his sincerity. He believes — and nobody can produce any positive fact to falsify his belief. As for me, with this much of endorsement, I transmit his story — I am a little old now to justify or explain.

He says he went to sleep on Aldington Knoll about ten o'clock one night — it was quite possibly Midsummer night, though he has never thought of the date, and he cannot be sure within a week or so — and it was a fine night and windless, with a rising moon. I have been at the pains to visit this Knoll thrice since his story grew up under my persuasions, and once I went there in the twilight summer moonrise on what was, perhaps, a similar night to that of his adventure. Jupiter was great and splendid above the moon, and in the north and northwest the sky was green and vividly bright over the sunken sun. The Knoll stands out bare and bleak under the sky, but surrounded at a little distance by dark thickets, and as I went up towards it there was a mighty starting and scampering of ghostly or quite invisible rabbits. Just over the crown of the Knoll, but nowhere else, was a multitudinous thin trumpeting of midges. The Knoll is, I believe, an artificial mound, the tumulus of some great prehistoric chieftain, and surely no man ever chose a more spacious prospect for a sepulchre. Eastward one sees along the hills to Hythe, and thence across the Channel to where, thirty miles and more perhaps, away, the great white lights by Gris Nez and Boulogne wink and pass and shine. Westward lies the whole tumbled valley of the Weald, visible as far as Hindhead and Leith Hill, and the valley of the Stour opens the Downs in the north to interminable hills beyond Wye. All Romney Marsh lies southward at one's feet, Dymchurch and Romney and Lydd, Hastings and its hill are in the middle distance, and the hills multiply vaguely far beyond where Eastbourne rolls up

to Beachy Head.

And out upon all this it was that Skelmersdale wandered, being troubled in his earlier love affair, and as he says, “not caring WHERE he went.” And there he sat down to think it over, and so, sulking and grieving, was overtaken by sleep. And so he fell into the fairies’ power.

The quarrel that had upset him was some trivial matter enough between himself and the girl at Clapton Hill to whom he was engaged. She was a farmer’s daughter, said Skelmersdale, and “very respectable,” and no doubt an excellent match for him; but both girl and lover were very young and with just that mutual jealousy, that intolerantly keen edge of criticism, that irrational hunger for a beautiful perfection, that life and wisdom do presently and most mercifully dull. What the precise matter of quarrel was I have no idea. She may have said she liked men in gaiters when he hadn’t any gaiters on, or he may have said he liked her better in a different sort of hat, but however it began, it got by a series of clumsy stages to bitterness and tears. She no doubt got tearful and smeary, and he grew dusty and drooping, and she parted with invidious comparisons, grave doubts whether she ever had REALLY cared for him, and a clear certainty she would never care again. And with this sort of thing upon his mind he came out upon Aldington Knoll grieving, and presently, after a long interval, perhaps, quite inexplicably, fell asleep.

He woke to find himself on a softer turf than ever he had slept on before, and under the shade of very dark trees that completely hid the sky. Always, indeed, in Fairyland the sky is hidden, it seems. Except for one night when the fairies were dancing, Mr. Skelmersdale, during all his time with them, never saw a star. And of that night I am in doubt whether he was in Fairyland proper or out where the rings and rushes are, in those low meadows near the railway line at Smeeth.

But it was light under these trees for all that, and on the leaves and amidst the turf shone a multitude of glow-worms, very bright and fine. Mr. Skelmersdale’s first impression was that he was SMALL, and the next that quite a number of people still smaller were standing all about him. For some reason, he says, he was neither surprised nor

frightened, but sat up quite deliberately and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes. And there all about him stood the smiling elves who had caught him sleeping under their privileges and had brought him into Fairyland.

What these elves were like I have failed to gather, so vague and imperfect is his vocabulary, and so unobservant of all minor detail does he seem to have been. They were clothed in something very light and beautiful, that was neither wool, nor silk, nor leaves, nor the petals of flowers. They stood all about him as he sat and waked, and down the glade towards him, down a glow-worm avenue and fronted by a star, came at once that Fairy Lady who is the chief personage of his memory and tale. Of her I gathered more. She was clothed in filmy green, and about her little waist was a broad silver girdle. Her hair waved back from her forehead on either side; there were curls not too wayward and yet astray, and on her brow was a little tiara, set with a single star. Her sleeves were some sort of open sleeves that gave little glimpses of her arms; her throat, I think, was a little displayed, because he speaks of the beauty of her neck and chin. There was a necklace of coral about her white throat, and in her breast a coral-coloured flower. She had the soft lines of a little child in her chin and cheeks and throat. And her eyes, I gather, were of a kindled brown, very soft and straight and sweet under her level brows. You see by these particulars how greatly this lady must have loomed in Mr. Skelmersdale's picture. Certain things he tried to express and could not express; "the way she moved," he said several times; and I fancy a sort of demure joyousness radiated from this Lady.

And it was in the company of this delightful person, as the guest and chosen companion of this delightful person, that Mr. Skelmersdale set out to be taken into the intimacies of Fairyland. She welcomed him gladly and a little warmly — I suspect a pressure of his hand in both of hers and a lit face to his. After all, ten years ago young Skelmersdale may have been a very comely youth. And once she took his arm, and once, I think, she led him by the hand adown the glade that the glow-worms lit.

Just how things chanced and happened there is no telling from Mr. Skelmersdale's disarticulated skeleton of description. He gives

little unsatisfactory glimpses of strange corners and doings, of places where there were many fairies together, of “toadstool things that shone pink,” of fairy food, of which he could only say “you should have tasted it!” and of fairy music, “like a little musical box,” that came out of nodding flowers. There was a great open place where fairies rode and raced on “things,” but what Mr. Skelmersdale meant by “these here things they rode,” there is no telling. Larvae, perhaps, or crickets, or the little beetles that elude us so abundantly. There was a place where water splashed and gigantic king-cups grew, and there in the hotter times the fairies bathed together. There were games being played and dancing and much elvish love-making, too, I think, among the moss-branch thickets. There can be no doubt that the Fairy Lady made love to Mr. Skelmersdale, and no doubt either that this young man set himself to resist her. A time came, indeed, when she sat on a bank beside him, in a quiet, secluded place “all smelling of vi’lets,” and talked to him of love.

“When her voice went low and she whispered,” said Mr. Skelmersdale, “and laid ‘er ‘and on my ‘and, you know, and came close with a soft, warm friendly way she ‘ad, it was as much as I could do to keep my ‘ead.”

It seems he kept his head to a certain limited unfortunate extent. He saw “‘ow the wind was blowing,” he says, and so, sitting there in a place all smelling of violets, with the touch of this lovely Fairy Lady about him, Mr. Skelmersdale broke it to her gently — that he was engaged!

She had told him she loved him dearly, that he was a sweet human lad for her, and whatever he would ask of her he should have — even his heart’s desire.

And Mr. Skelmersdale, who, I fancy, tried hard to avoid looking at her little lips as they just dropped apart and came together, led up to the more intimate question by saying he would like enough capital to start a little shop. He’d just like to feel, he said, he had money enough to do that. I imagine a little surprise in those brown eyes he talked about, but she seemed sympathetic for all that, and she asked him many questions about the little shop, “laughing like” all the time. So he got to the complete statement of his affianced position, and told her all about Millie.

“All?” said I.

“Everything,” said Mr. Skelmersdale, “just who she was, and where she lived, and everything about her. I sort of felt I ‘ad to all the time, I did.”

“‘Whatever you want you shall have,’ said the Fairy Lady. ‘That’s as good as done. You SHALL feel you have the money just as you wish. And now, you know — YOU MUST KISS ME.’”

And Mr. Skelmersdale pretended not to hear the latter part of her remark, and said she was very kind. That he really didn’t deserve she should be so kind. And —

The Fairy Lady suddenly came quite close to him and whispered, “Kiss me!”

“And,” said Mr. Skelmersdale, “like a fool, I did.”

There are kisses and kisses, I am told, and this must have been quite the other sort from Millie’s resonant signals of regard. There was something magic in that kiss; assuredly it marked a turning point. At any rate, this is one of the passages that he thought sufficiently important to describe most at length. I have tried to get it right, I have tried to disentangle it from the hints and gestures through which it came to me, but I have no doubt that it was all different from my telling and far finer and sweeter, in the soft filtered light and the subtly stirring silences of the fairy glades. The Fairy Lady asked him more about Millie, and was she very lovely, and so on — a great many times. As to Millie’s loveliness, I conceive him answering that she was “all right.” And then, or on some such occasion, the Fairy Lady told him she had fallen in love with him as he slept in the moonlight, and so he had been brought into Fairyland, and she had thought, not knowing of Millie, that perhaps he might chance to love her. “But now you know you can’t,” she said, “so you must stop with me just a little while, and then you must go back to Millie.” She told him that, and you know Skelmersdale was already in love with her, but the pure inertia of his mind kept him in the way he was going. I imagine him sitting in a sort of stupefaction amidst all these glowing beautiful things, answering about his Millie and the little shop he projected and the need of a horse and cart.... And that absurd state of affairs must have gone on for days and days. I see this little lady, hovering about him and trying to amuse him, too dainty to

understand his complexity and too tender to let him go. And he, you know, hypnotised as it were by his earthly position, went his way with her hither and thither, blind to everything in Fairyland but this wonderful intimacy that had come to him. It is hard, it is impossible, to give in print the effect of her radiant sweetness shining through the jungle of poor Skelmersdale's rough and broken sentences. To me, at least, she shone clear amidst the muddle of his story like a glow-worm in a tangle of weeds.

There must have been many days of things while all this was happening — and once, I say, they danced under the moonlight in the fairy rings that stud the meadows near Smeeth — but at last it all came to an end. She led him into a great cavernous place, lit by a red nightlight sort of thing, where there were coffers piled on coffers, and cups and golden boxes, and a great heap of what certainly seemed to all Mr. Skelmersdale's senses — coined gold. There were little gnomes amidst this wealth, who saluted her at her coming, and stood aside. And suddenly she turned on him there with brightly shining eyes.

"And now," she said, "you have been kind to stay with me so long, and it is time I let you go. You must go back to your Millie. You must go back to your Millie, and here — just as I promised you — they will give you gold."

"She choked like," said Mr. Skelmersdale. "At that, I had a sort of feeling—" (he touched his breastbone) "as though I was fainting here. I felt pale, you know, and shivering, and even then — I 'adn't a thing to say."

He paused. "Yes," I said.

The scene was beyond his describing. But I know that she kissed him good-bye.

"And you said nothing?"

"Nothing," he said. "I stood like a stuffed calf. She just looked back once, you know, and stood smiling like and crying — I could see the shine of her eyes — and then she was gone, and there was all these little fellows bustling about me, stuffing my 'ands and my pockets and the back of my collar and everywhere with gold."

And then it was, when the Fairy Lady had vanished, that Mr. Skelmersdale really understood and knew. He suddenly began

plucking out the gold they were thrusting upon him, and shouting out at them to prevent their giving him more. "'I don't WANT yer gold,' I said. 'I 'aven't done yet. I'm not going. I want to speak to that Fairy Lady again.' I started off to go after her and they held me back. Yes, stuck their little 'ands against my middle and shoved me back. They kept giving me more and more gold until it was running all down my trouser legs and dropping out of my 'ands. 'I don't WANT yer gold,' I says to them, 'I want just to speak to the Fairy Lady again.'"

"And did you?"

"It came to a tussle."

"Before you saw her?"

"I didn't see her. When I got out from them she wasn't anywhere to be seen."

So he ran in search of her out of this red-lit cave, down a long grotto, seeking her, and thence he came out in a great and desolate place athwart which a swarm of will-o'-the-wisps were flying to and fro. And about him elves were dancing in derision, and the little gnomes came out of the cave after him, carrying gold in handfuls and casting it after him, shouting, "Fairy love and fairy gold! Fairy love and fairy gold!"

And when he heard these words, came a great fear that it was all over, and he lifted up his voice and called to her by her name, and suddenly set himself to run down the slope from the mouth of the cavern, through a place of thorns and briers, calling after her very loudly and often. The elves danced about him unheeded, pinching him and pricking him, and the will-o'-the-wisps circled round him and dashed into his face, and the gnomes pursued him shouting and pelting him with fairy gold. As he ran with all this strange rout about him and distracting him, suddenly he was knee-deep in a swamp, and suddenly he was amidst thick twisted roots, and he caught his foot in one and stumbled and fell....

He fell and he rolled over, and in that instant he found himself sprawling upon Aldington Knoll, all lonely under the stars.

He sat up sharply at once, he says, and found he was very stiff and cold, and his clothes were damp with dew. The first pallor of dawn and a chilly wind were coming up together. He could have believed the whole thing a strangely vivid dream until he thrust his hand into

his side pocket and found it stuffed with ashes. Then he knew for certain it was fairy gold they had given him. He could feel all their pinches and pricks still, though there was never a bruise upon him. And in that manner, and so suddenly, Mr. Skelmersdale came out of Fairyland back into this world of men. Even then he fancied the thing was but the matter of a night until he returned to the shop at Aldington Corner and discovered amidst their astonishment that he had been away three weeks.

"Lor'! the trouble I 'ad!" said Mr. Skelmersdale.

"How?"

"Explaining. I suppose you've never had anything like that to explain."

"Never," I said, and he expatiated for a time on the behaviour of this person and that. One name he avoided for a space.

"And Millie?" said I at last.

"I didn't seem to care a bit for seeing Millie," he said.

"I expect she seemed changed?"

"Every one was changed. Changed for good. Every one seemed big, you know, and coarse. And their voices seemed loud. Why, the sun, when it rose in the morning, fair hit me in the eye!"

"And Millie?"

"I didn't want to see Millie."

"And when you did?"

"I came up against her Sunday, coming out of church. 'Where you been?' she said, and I saw there was a row. *I* didn't care if there was. I seemed to forget about her even while she was there a-talking to me. She was just nothing. I couldn't make out whatever I 'ad seen in 'er ever, or what there could 'ave been. Sometimes when she wasn't about, I did get back a little, but never when she was there. Then it was always the other came up and blotted her out.... Anyow, it didn't break her heart."

"Married?" I asked.

"Married 'er cousin," said Mr. Skelmersdale, and reflected on the pattern of the tablecloth for a space.

When he spoke again it was clear that his former sweetheart had clean vanished from his mind, and that the talk had brought back the Fairy Lady triumphant in his heart. He talked of her — soon he was

letting out the oddest things, queer love secrets it would be treachery to repeat. I think, indeed, that was the queerest thing in the whole affair, to hear that neat little grocer man after his story was done, with a glass of whisky beside him and a cigar between his fingers, witnessing, with sorrow still, though now, indeed, with a time-blunted anguish, of the inappeasable hunger of the heart that presently came upon him. “I couldn’t eat,” he said, “I couldn’t sleep. I made mistakes in orders and got mixed with change. There she was day and night, drawing me and drawing me. Oh, I wanted her. Lord! how I wanted her! I was up there, most evenings I was up there on the Knoll, often even when it rained. I used to walk over the Knoll and round it and round it, calling for them to let me in. Shouting. Near blubbering I was at times. Daft I was and miserable. I kept on saying it was all a mistake. And every Sunday afternoon I went up there, wet and fine, though I knew as well as you do it wasn’t no good by day. And I’ve tried to go to sleep there.”

He stopped sharply and decided to drink some whisky.

“I’ve tried to go to sleep there,” he said, and I could swear his lips trembled. “I’ve tried to go to sleep there, often and often. And, you know, I couldn’t, sir — never. I’ve thought if I could go to sleep there, there might be something. But I’ve sat up there and laid up there, and I couldn’t — not for thinking and longing. It’s the longing.... I’ve tried—”

He blew, drank up the rest of his whisky spasmodically, stood up suddenly and buttoned his jacket, staring closely and critically at the cheap oleographs beside the mantel meanwhile. The little black notebook in which he recorded the orders of his daily round projected stiffly from his breast pocket. When all the buttons were quite done, he patted his chest and turned on me suddenly. “Well,” he said, “I must be going.”

There was something in his eyes and manner that was too difficult for him to express in words. “One gets talking,” he said at last at the door, and smiled wanly, and so vanished from my eyes. And that is the tale of Mr. Skelmersdale in Fairyland just as he told it to me.

THE STORY OF THE INEXPERIENCED GHOST

The scene amidst which Clayton told his last story comes back very vividly to my mind. There he sat, for the greater part of the time, in the corner of the authentic settle by the spacious open fire, and Sanderson sat beside him smoking the Broseley clay that bore his name. There was Evans, and that marvel among actors, Wish, who is also a modest man. We had all come down to the Mermaid Club that Saturday morning, except Clayton, who had slept there overnight — which indeed gave him the opening of his story. We had golfed until golfing was invisible; we had dined, and we were in that mood of tranquil kindliness when men will suffer a story. When Clayton began to tell one, we naturally supposed he was lying. It may be that indeed he was lying — of that the reader will speedily be able to judge as well as I. He began, it is true, with an air of matter-of-fact anecdote, but that we thought was only the incurable artifice of the man.

"I say!" he remarked, after a long consideration of the upward rain of sparks from the log that Sanderson had thumped, "you know I was alone here last night?"

"Except for the domestics," said Wish.

"Who sleep in the other wing," said Clayton. "Yes. Well—" He pulled at his cigar for some little time as though he still hesitated about his confidence. Then he said, quite quietly, "I caught a ghost!"

"Caught a ghost, did you?" said Sanderson. "Where is it?"

And Evans, who admires Clayton immensely and has been four weeks in America, shouted, "CAUGHT a ghost, did you, Clayton? I'm glad of it! Tell us all about it right now."

Clayton said he would in a minute, and asked him to shut the door.

He looked apologetically at me. "There's no eavesdropping of course, but we don't want to upset our very excellent service with any rumours of ghosts in the place. There's too much shadow and oak panelling to trifle with that. And this, you know, wasn't a regular

ghost. I don't think it will come again — ever."

"You mean to say you didn't keep it?" said Sanderson.

"I hadn't the heart to," said Clayton.

And Sanderson said he was surprised.

We laughed, and Clayton looked aggrieved. "I know," he said, with the flicker of a smile, "but the fact is it really WAS a ghost, and I'm as sure of it as I am that I am talking to you now. I'm not joking. I mean what I say."

Sanderson drew deeply at his pipe, with one reddish eye on Clayton, and then emitted a thin jet of smoke more eloquent than many words.

Clayton ignored the comment. "It is the strangest thing that has ever happened in my life. You know, I never believed in ghosts or anything of the sort, before, ever; and then, you know, I bag one in a corner; and the whole business is in my hands."

He meditated still more profoundly, and produced and began to pierce a second cigar with a curious little stabber he affected.

"You talked to it?" asked Wish.

"For the space, probably, of an hour."

"Chatty?" I said, joining the party of the sceptics.

"The poor devil was in trouble," said Clayton, bowed over his cigar-end and with the very faintest note of reproof.

"Sobbing?" some one asked.

Clayton heaved a realistic sigh at the memory. "Good Lord!" he said; "yes." And then, "Poor fellow! yes."

"Where did you strike it?" asked Evans, in his best American accent.

"I never realised," said Clayton, ignoring him, "the poor sort of thing a ghost might be," and he hung us up again for a time, while he sought for matches in his pocket and lit and warmed to his cigar.

"I took an advantage," he reflected at last.

We were none of us in a hurry. "A character," he said, "remains just the same character for all that it's been disembodied. That's a thing we too often forget. People with a certain strength or fixity of purpose may have ghosts of a certain strength and fixity of purpose — most haunting ghosts, you know, must be as one-idea'd as monomaniacs and as obstinate as mules to come back again and

again. This poor creature wasn't." He suddenly looked up rather queerly, and his eye went round the room. "I say it," he said, "in all kindliness, but that is the plain truth of the case. Even at the first glance he struck me as weak."

He punctuated with the help of his cigar.

"I came upon him, you know, in the long passage. His back was towards me and I saw him first. Right off I knew him for a ghost. He was transparent and whitish; clean through his chest I could see the glimmer of the little window at the end. And not only his physique but his attitude struck me as being weak. He looked, you know, as though he didn't know in the slightest whatever he meant to do. One hand was on the panelling and the other fluttered to his mouth. Like — SO!"

"What sort of physique?" said Sanderson.

"Lean. You know that sort of young man's neck that has two great flutings down the back, here and here — so! And a little, meanish head with scrubby hair — And rather bad ears. Shoulders bad, narrower than the hips; turn-down collar, ready-made short jacket, trousers baggy and a little frayed at the heels. That's how he took me. I came very quietly up the staircase. I did not carry a light, you know — the candles are on the landing table and there is that lamp — and I was in my list slippers, and I saw him as I came up. I stopped dead at that — taking him in. I wasn't a bit afraid. I think that in most of these affairs one is never nearly so afraid or excited as one imagines one would be. I was surprised and interested. I thought, 'Good Lord! Here's a ghost at last! And I haven't believed for a moment in ghosts during the last five-and-twenty years.'"

"Um," said Wish.

"I suppose I wasn't on the landing a moment before he found out I was there. He turned on me sharply, and I saw the face of an immature young man, a weak nose, a scrubby little moustache, a feeble chin. So for an instant we stood — he looking over his shoulder at me and regarded one another. Then he seemed to remember his high calling. He turned round, drew himself up, projected his face, raised his arms, spread his hands in approved ghost fashion — came towards me. As he did so his little jaw dropped, and he emitted a faint, drawn-out 'Boo.' No, it wasn't —

not a bit dreadful. I'd dined. I'd had a bottle of champagne, and being all alone, perhaps two or three — perhaps even four or five — whiskies, so I was as solid as rocks and no more frightened than if I'd been assailed by a frog. 'Boo!' I said. 'Nonsense. You don't belong to THIS place. What are you doing here?'

"I could see him wince. 'Boo-oo,' he said.

"'Boo — be hanged! Are you a member?' I said; and just to show I didn't care a pin for him I stepped through a corner of him and made to light my candle. 'Are you a member?' I repeated, looking at him sideways.

"He moved a little so as to stand clear of me, and his bearing became crestfallen. 'No,' he said, in answer to the persistent interrogation of my eye; 'I'm not a member — I'm a ghost.'

"'Well, that doesn't give you the run of the Mermaid Club. Is there any one you want to see, or anything of that sort?' and doing it as steadily as possible for fear that he should mistake the carelessness of whisky for the distraction of fear, I got my candle alight. I turned on him, holding it. 'What are you doing here?' I said.

"He had dropped his hands and stopped his booing, and there he stood, abashed and awkward, the ghost of a weak, silly, aimless young man. 'I'm haunting,' he said.

"'You haven't any business to,' I said in a quiet voice.

"'I'm a ghost,' he said, as if in defence.

"'That may be, but you haven't any business to haunt here. This is a respectable private club; people often stop here with nursemaids and children, and, going about in the careless way you do, some poor little mite could easily come upon you and be scared out of her wits. I suppose you didn't think of that?'

"'No, sir,' he said, 'I didn't.'

"'You should have done. You haven't any claim on the place, have you? Weren't murdered here, or anything of that sort?'

"'None, sir; but I thought as it was old and oak-panelled—'

"'That's NO excuse.' I regarded him firmly. 'Your coming here is a mistake,' I said, in a tone of friendly superiority. I feigned to see if I had my matches, and then looked up at him frankly. 'If I were you I wouldn't wait for cock-crow — I'd vanish right away.'

"He looked embarrassed. 'The fact IS, sir—' he began.

“‘I’d vanish,’ I said, driving it home.

“‘The fact is, sir, that — somehow — I can’t.’

“‘You CAN’T?’

“‘No, sir. There’s something I’ve forgotten. I’ve been hanging about here since midnight last night, hiding in the cupboards of the empty bedrooms and things like that. I’m flurried. I’ve never come haunting before, and it seems to put me out.’

“‘Put you out?’

“‘Yes, sir. I’ve tried to do it several times, and it doesn’t come off. There’s some little thing has slipped me, and I can’t get back.’

“That, you know, rather bowled me over. He looked at me in such an abject way that for the life of me I couldn’t keep up quite the high, hectoring vein I had adopted. ‘That’s queer,’ I said, and as I spoke I fancied I heard some one moving about down below. ‘Come into my room and tell me more about it,’ I said. ‘I didn’t, of course, understand this,’ and I tried to take him by the arm. But, of course, you might as well have tried to take hold of a puff of smoke! I had forgotten my number, I think; anyhow, I remember going into several bedrooms — it was lucky I was the only soul in that wing — until I saw my traps. ‘Here we are,’ I said, and sat down in the arm-chair; ‘sit down and tell me all about it. It seems to me you have got yourself into a jolly awkward position, old chap.’

“Well, he said he wouldn’t sit down! he’d prefer to flit up and down the room if it was all the same to me. And so he did, and in a little while we were deep in a long and serious talk. And presently, you know, something of those whiskies and sodas evaporated out of me, and I began to realise just a little what a thundering rum and weird business it was that I was in. There he was, semi-transparent — the proper conventional phantom, and noiseless except for his ghost of a voice — flitting to and fro in that nice, clean, chintz-hung old bedroom. You could see the gleam of the copper candlesticks through him, and the lights on the brass fender, and the corners of the framed engravings on the wall, — and there he was telling me all about this wretched little life of his that had recently ended on earth. He hadn’t a particularly honest face, you know, but being transparent, of course, he couldn’t avoid telling the truth.”

“Eh?” said Wish, suddenly sitting up in his chair.

"What?" said Clayton.

"Being transparent — couldn't avoid telling the truth — I don't see it," said Wish.

"*I* don't see it," said Clayton, with inimitable assurance. "But it IS so, I can assure you nevertheless. I don't believe he got once a nail's breadth off the Bible truth. He told me how he had been killed — he went down into a London basement with a candle to look for a leakage of gas — and described himself as a senior English master in a London private school when that release occurred."

"Poor wretch!" said I.

"That's what I thought, and the more he talked the more I thought it. There he was, purposeless in life and purposeless out of it. He talked of his father and mother and his schoolmaster, and all who had ever been anything to him in the world, meanly. He had been too sensitive, too nervous; none of them had ever valued him properly or understood him, he said. He had never had a real friend in the world, I think; he had never had a success. He had shirked games and failed examinations. 'It's like that with some people,' he said; 'whenever I got into the examination-room or anywhere everything seemed to go.' Engaged to be married of course — to another over-sensitive person, I suppose — when the indiscretion with the gas escape ended his affairs. 'And where are you now?' I asked. 'Not in — ?'

"He wasn't clear on that point at all. The impression he gave me was of a sort of vague, intermediate state, a special reserve for souls too non-existent for anything so positive as either sin or virtue. *I* don't know. He was much too egotistical and unobservant to give me any clear idea of the kind of place, kind of country, there is on the Other Side of Things. Wherever he was, he seems to have fallen in with a set of kindred spirits: ghosts of weak Cockney young men, who were on a footing of Christian names, and among these there was certainly a lot of talk about 'going haunting' and things like that. Yes — going haunting! They seemed to think 'haunting' a tremendous adventure, and most of them funked it all the time. And so primed, you know, he had come."

"But really!" said Wish to the fire.

"These are the impressions he gave me, anyhow," said Clayton, modestly. "I may, of course, have been in a rather uncritical state, but

that was the sort of background he gave to himself. He kept flitting up and down, with his thin voice going talking, talking about his wretched self, and never a word of clear, firm statement from first to last. He was thinner and sillier and more pointless than if he had been real and alive. Only then, you know, he would not have been in my bedroom here — if he HAD been alive. I should have kicked him out."

"Of course," said Evans, "there ARE poor mortals like that."

"And there's just as much chance of their having ghosts as the rest of us," I admitted.

"What gave a sort of point to him, you know, was the fact that he did seem within limits to have found himself out. The mess he had made of haunting had depressed him terribly. He had been told it would be a 'lark'; he had come expecting it to be a 'lark,' and here it was, nothing but another failure added to his record! He proclaimed himself an utter out-and-out failure. He said, and I can quite believe it, that he had never tried to do anything all his life that he hadn't made a perfect mess of — and through all the wastes of eternity he never would. If he had had sympathy, perhaps — . He paused at that, and stood regarding me. He remarked that, strange as it might seem to me, nobody, not any one, ever, had given him the amount of sympathy I was doing now. I could see what he wanted straight away, and I determined to head him off at once. I may be a brute, you know, but being the Only Real Friend, the recipient of the confidences of one of these egotistical weaklings, ghost or body, is beyond my physical endurance. I got up briskly. 'Don't you brood on these things too much,' I said. 'The thing you've got to do is to get out of this get out of this — sharp. You pull yourself together and TRY.' 'I can't,' he said. 'You try,' I said, and try he did."

"Try!" said Sanderson. "HOW?"

"Passes," said Clayton.

"Passes?"

"Complicated series of gestures and passes with the hands. That's how he had come in and that's how he had to get out again. Lord! what a business I had!"

"But how could ANY series of passes — ?" I began.

"My dear man," said Clayton, turning on me and putting a great

emphasis on certain words, “you want EVERYTHING clear. *I* don’t know HOW. All I know is that you DO — that HE did, anyhow, at least. After a fearful time, you know, he got his passes right and suddenly disappeared.”

“Did you,” said Sanderson, slowly, “observe the passes?”

“Yes,” said Clayton, and seemed to think. “It was tremendously queer,” he said. “There we were, I and this thin vague ghost, in that silent room, in this silent, empty inn, in this silent little Friday-night town. Not a sound except our voices and a faint panting he made when he swung. There was the bedroom candle, and one candle on the dressing-table alight, that was all — sometimes one or other would flare up into a tall, lean, astonished flame for a space. And queer things happened. ‘I can’t,’ he said; ‘I shall never — !’ And suddenly he sat down on a little chair at the foot of the bed and began to sob and sob. Lord! what a harrowing, whimpering thing he seemed!

“‘You pull yourself together,’ I said, and tried to pat him on the back, and... my confounded hand went through him! By that time, you know, I wasn’t nearly so — massive as I had been on the landing. I got the queerness of it full. I remember snatching back my hand out of him, as it were, with a little thrill, and walking over to the dressing-table. ‘You pull yourself together,’ I said to him, ‘and try.’ And in order to encourage and help him I began to try as well.”

“What!” said Sanderson, “the passes?”

“Yes, the passes.”

“But—” I said, moved by an idea that eluded me for a space.

“This is interesting,” said Sanderson, with his finger in his pipe-bowl. “You mean to say this ghost of yours gave away—”

“Did his level best to give away the whole confounded barrier? YES.”

“He didn’t,” said Wish; “he couldn’t. Or you’d have gone there too.”

“That’s precisely it,” I said, finding my elusive idea put into words for me.

“That IS precisely it,” said Clayton, with thoughtful eyes upon the fire.

For just a little while there was silence.

“And at last he did it?” said Sanderson.

“At last he did it. I had to keep him up to it hard, but he did it at last — rather suddenly. He despaired, we had a scene, and then he got up abruptly and asked me to go through the whole performance, slowly, so that he might see. ‘I believe,’ he said, ‘if I could SEE I should spot what was wrong at once.’ And he did. ‘*I* know,’ he said. ‘What do you know?’ said I. ‘*I* know,’ he repeated. Then he said, peevishly, ‘I CAN’T do it if you look at me — I really CAN’T; it’s been that, partly, all along. I’m such a nervous fellow that you put me out.’ Well, we had a bit of an argument. Naturally I wanted to see; but he was as obstinate as a mule, and suddenly I had come over as tired as a dog — he tired me out. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘*I* won’t look at you,’ and turned towards the mirror, on the wardrobe, by the bed.

“He started off very fast. I tried to follow him by looking in the looking-glass, to see just what it was had hung. Round went his arms and his hands, so, and so, and so, and then with a rush came to the last gesture of all — you stand erect and open out your arms — and so, don’t you know, he stood. And then he didn’t! He didn’t! He wasn’t! I wheeled round from the looking-glass to him. There was nothing, I was alone, with the flaring candles and a staggering mind. What had happened? Had anything happened? Had I been dreaming?... And then, with an absurd note of finality about it, the clock upon the landing discovered the moment was ripe for striking ONE. So! — Ping! And I was as grave and sober as a judge, with all my champagne and whisky gone into the vast serene. Feeling queer, you know — confoundedly QUEER! Queer! Good Lord!”

He regarded his cigar-ash for a moment. “That’s all that happened,” he said.

“And then you went to bed?” asked Evans.

“What else was there to do?”

I looked Wish in the eye. We wanted to scoff, and there was something, something perhaps in Clayton’s voice and manner, that hampered our desire.

“And about these passes?” said Sanderson.

“I believe I could do them now.”

“Oh!” said Sanderson, and produced a penknife and set himself to grub the dottel out of the bowl of his clay.

“Why don’t you do them now?” said Sanderson, shutting his pen-knife with a click.

“That’s what I’m going to do,” said Clayton.

“They won’t work,” said Evans.

“If they do—” I suggested.

“You know, I’d rather you didn’t,” said Wish, stretching out his legs.

“Why?” asked Evans.

“I’d rather he didn’t,” said Wish.

“But he hasn’t got ’em right,” said Sanderson, plugging too much tobacco in his pipe.

“All the same, I’d rather he didn’t,” said Wish.

We argued with Wish. He said that for Clayton to go through those gestures was like mocking a serious matter. “But you don’t believe — ?” I said. Wish glanced at Clayton, who was staring into the fire, weighing something in his mind. “I do — more than half, anyhow, I do,” said Wish.

“Clayton,” said I, “you’re too good a liar for us. Most of it was all right. But that disappearance... happened to be convincing. Tell us, it’s a tale of cock and bull.”

He stood up without heeding me, took the middle of the hearthrug, and faced me. For a moment he regarded his feet thoughtfully, and then for all the rest of the time his eyes were on the opposite wall, with an intent expression. He raised his two hands slowly to the level of his eyes and so began....

Now, Sanderson is a Freemason, a member of the lodge of the Four Kings, which devotes itself so ably to the study and elucidation of all the mysteries of Masonry past and present, and among the students of this lodge Sanderson is by no means the least. He followed Clayton’s motions with a singular interest in his reddish eye. “That’s not bad,” he said, when it was done. “You really do, you know, put things together, Clayton, in a most amazing fashion. But there’s one little detail out.”

“I know,” said Clayton. “I believe I could tell you which.”

“Well?”

“This,” said Clayton, and did a queer little twist and writhing and thrust of the hands.

“Yes.”

“That, you know, was what HE couldn’t get right,” said Clayton. “But how do YOU — ?”

“Most of this business, and particularly how you invented it, I don’t understand at all,” said Sanderson, “but just that phase — I do.” He reflected. “These happen to be a series of gestures — connected with a certain branch of esoteric Masonry. Probably you know. Or else — HOW?” He reflected still further. “I do not see I can do any harm in telling you just the proper twist. After all, if you know, you know; if you don’t, you don’t.”

“I know nothing,” said Clayton, “except what the poor devil let out last night.”

“Well, anyhow,” said Sanderson, and placed his churchwarden very carefully upon the shelf over the fireplace. Then very rapidly he gesticulated with his hands.

“So?” said Clayton, repeating.

“So,” said Sanderson, and took his pipe in hand again.

“Ah, NOW,” said Clayton, “I can do the whole thing — right.”

He stood up before the waning fire and smiled at us all. But I think there was just a little hesitation in his smile. “If I begin—” he said.

“I wouldn’t begin,” said Wish.

“It’s all right!” said Evans. “Matter is indestructible. You don’t think any jiggery-pokery of this sort is going to snatch Clayton into the world of shades. Not it! You may try, Clayton, so far as I’m concerned, until your arms drop off at the wrists.”

“I don’t believe that,” said Wish, and stood up and put his arm on Clayton’s shoulder. “You’ve made me half believe in that story somehow, and I don’t want to see the thing done!”

“Goodness!” said I, “here’s Wish frightened!”

“I am,” said Wish, with real or admirably feigned intensity. “I believe that if he goes through these motions right he’ll GO.”

“He’ll not do anything of the sort,” I cried. “There’s only one way out of this world for men, and Clayton is thirty years from that. Besides... And such a ghost! Do you think — ?”

Wish interrupted me by moving. He walked out from among our chairs and stopped beside the tole and stood there. “Clayton,” he

said, “you’re a fool.”

Clayton, with a humorous light in his eyes, smiled back at him. “Wish,” he said, “is right and all you others are wrong. I shall go. I shall get to the end of these passes, and as the last swish whistles through the air, Presto! — this hearthrug will be vacant, the room will be blank amazement, and a respectably dressed gentleman of fifteen stone will plump into the world of shades. I’m certain. So will you be. I decline to argue further. Let the thing be tried.”

“NO,” said Wish, and made a step and ceased, and Clayton raised his hands once more to repeat the spirit’s passing.

By that time, you know, we were all in a state of tension — largely because of the behaviour of Wish. We sat all of us with our eyes on Clayton — I, at least, with a sort of tight, stiff feeling about me as though from the back of my skull to the middle of my thighs my body had been changed to steel. And there, with a gravity that was imperturbably serene, Clayton bowed and swayed and waved his hands and arms before us. As he drew towards the end one piled up, one tingled in one’s teeth. The last gesture, I have said, was to swing the arms out wide open, with the face held up. And when at last he swung out to this closing gesture I ceased even to breathe. It was ridiculous, of course, but you know that ghost-story feeling. It was after dinner, in a queer, old shadowy house. Would he, after all — ?

There he stood for one stupendous moment, with his arms open and his upturned face, assured and bright, in the glare of the hanging lamp. We hung through that moment as if it were an age, and then came from all of us something that was half a sigh of infinite relief and half a reassuring “NO!” For visibly — he wasn’t going. It was all nonsense. He had told an idle story, and carried it almost to conviction, that was all!... And then in that moment the face of Clayton, changed.

It changed. It changed as a lit house changes when its lights are suddenly extinguished. His eyes were suddenly eyes that were fixed, his smile was frozen on his lips, and he stood there still. He stood there, very gently swaying.

That moment, too, was an age. And then, you know, chairs were scraping, things were falling, and we were all moving. His knees seemed to give, and he fell forward, and Evans rose and caught him

in his arms....

It stunned us all. For a minute I suppose no one said a coherent thing. We believed it, yet could not believe it.... I came out of a muddled stupefaction to find myself kneeling beside him, and his vest and shirt were torn open, and Sanderson's hand lay on his heart....

Well — the simple fact before us could very well wait our convenience; there was no hurry for us to comprehend. It lay there for an hour; it lies athwart my memory, black and amazing still, to this day. Clayton had, indeed, passed into the world that lies so near to and so far from our own, and he had gone thither by the only road that mortal man may take. But whether he did indeed pass there by that poor ghost's incantation, or whether he was stricken suddenly by apoplexy in the midst of an idle tale — as the coroner's jury would have us believe — is no matter for my judging; it is just one of those inexplicable riddles that must remain unsolved until the final solution of all things shall come. All I certainly know is that, in the very moment, in the very instant, of concluding those passes, he changed, and staggered, and fell down before us — dead!

JIMMY GOGGLES THE GOD

"It isn't every one who's been a god," said the sunburnt man. "But it's happened to me. Among other things."

I intimated my sense of his condescension.

"It don't leave much for ambition, does it?" said the sunburnt man.

"I was one of those men who were saved from the Ocean Pioneer. Gummy! how time flies! It's twenty years ago. I doubt if you'll remember anything of the Ocean Pioneer?"

The name was familiar, and I tried to recall when and where I had read it. The Ocean Pioneer? "Something about gold dust," I said vaguely, "but the precise—"

"That's it," he said. "In a beastly little channel she hadn't no business in — dodging pirates. It was before they'd put the kybosh on that business. And there'd been volcanoes or something and all the rocks was wrong. There's places about by Soona where you fair have to follow the rocks about to see where they're going next. Down she went in twenty fathoms before you could have dealt for whist, with fifty thousand pounds worth of gold aboard, it was said, in one form or another."

"Survivors?"

"Three."

"I remember the case now," I said. "There was something about salvage—"

But at the word salvage the sunburnt man exploded into language so extraordinarily horrible that I stopped aghast. He came down to more ordinary swearing, and pulled himself up abruptly. "Excuse me," he said, "but — salvage!"

He leant over towards me. "I was in that job," he said. "Tried to make myself a rich man, and got made a god instead. I've got my feelings —

"It ain't all jam being a god," said the sunburnt man, and for some time conversed by means of such pithy but unprogressive axioms. At last he took up his tale again.

"There was me," said the sunburnt man, "and a seaman named

Jacobs, and Always, the mate of the Ocean Pioneer. And him it was that set the whole thing going. I remember him now, when we was in the jolly-boat, suggesting it all to our minds just by one sentence. He was a wonderful hand at suggesting things. 'There was forty thousand pounds,' he said, 'on that ship, and it's for me to say just where she went down.' It didn't need much brains to tumble to that. And he was the leader from the first to the last. He got hold of the Sanderses and their brig; they were brothers, and the brig was the Pride of Banya, and he it was bought the diving-dress — a second-hand one with a compressed air apparatus instead of pumping. He'd have done the diving too, if it hadn't made him sick going down. And the salvage people were mucking about with a chart he'd cooked up, as solemn as could be, at Starr Race, a hundred and twenty miles away.

"I can tell you we was a happy lot aboard that brig, jokes and drink and bright hopes all the time. It all seemed so neat and clean and straightforward, and what rough chaps call a 'cert.' And we used to speculate how the other blessed lot, the proper salvagers, who'd started two days before us, were getting on, until our sides fairly ached. We all messed together in the Sanderses' cabin — it was a curious crew, all officers and no men — and there stood the diving-dress waiting its turn. Young Sanders was a humorous sort of chap, and there certainly was something funny in the confounded thing's great fat head and its stare, and he made us see it too. 'Jimmie Goggles,' he used to call it, and talk to it like a Christian. Asked if he was married, and how Mrs. Goggles was, and all the little Goggleses. Fit to make you split. And every blessed day all of us used to drink the health of Jimmy Goggles in rum, and unscrew his eye and pour a glass of rum in him, until, instead of that nasty mackintosheriness, he smelt as nice in his inside as a cask of rum. It was jolly times we had in those days, I can tell you — little suspecting, poor chaps! what was a-coming.

"We weren't going to throw away our chances by any blessed hurry, you know, and we spent a whole day sounding our way towards where the Ocean Pioneer had gone down, right between two chunks of ropy grey rock — lava rocks that rose nearly out of the water. We had to lay off about half a mile to get a safe anchorage,

and there was a thundering row who should stop on board. And there she lay just as she had gone down, so that you could see the top of the masts that was still standing perfectly distinctly. The row ending in all coming in the boat. I went down in the diving-dress on Friday morning directly it was light.

"What a surprise it was! I can see it all now quite distinctly. It was a queer-looking place, and the light was just coming. People over here think every blessed place in the tropics is a flat shore and palm trees and surf, bless 'em! This place, for instance, wasn't a bit that way. Not common rocks they were, undermined by waves; but great curved banks like ironwork cinder heaps, with green slime below, and thorny shrubs and things just waving upon them here and there, and the water glassy calm and clear, and showing you a kind of dirty grey-black shine, with huge flaring red-brown weeds spreading motionless, and crawling and darting things going through it. And far away beyond the ditches and pools and the heaps was a forest on the mountain flank, growing again after the fires and cinder showers of the last eruption. And the other way forest, too, and a kind of broken — what is it? — ambytheatre of black and rusty cinders rising out of it all, and the sea in a kind of bay in the middle.

"The dawn, I say, was just coming, and there wasn't much colour about things, and not a human being but ourselves anywhere in sight up or down the channel. Except the Pride of Banya, lying out beyond a lump of rocks towards the line of the sea.

"Not a human being in sight," he repeated, and paused.

"I don't know where they came from, not a bit. And we were feeling so safe that we were all alone that poor young Sanders was a-singing. I was in Jimmy Goggles, all except the helmet. 'Easy,' says Always, 'there's her mast.' And after I'd had just one squint over the gunwale, I caught up the bogey and almost tipped out as old Sanders brought the boat round. When the windows were screwed and everything was all right, I shut the valve from the air belt in order to help my sinking, and jumped overboard, feet foremost — for we hadn't a ladder. I left the boat pitching, and all of them staring down into the water after me, as my head sank down into the weeds and blackness that lay about the mast. I suppose nobody, not the most cautious chap in the world, would have bothered about a lookout at

such a desolate place. It stunk of solitude.

"Of course you must understand that I was a greenhorn at diving. None of us were divers. We'd had to muck about with the thing to get the way of it, and this was the first time I'd been deep. It feels damnable. Your ears hurt beastly. I don't know if you've ever hurt yourself yawning or sneezing, but it takes you like that, only ten times worse. And a pain over the eyebrows here — splitting — and a feeling like influenza in the head. And it isn't all heaven in your lungs and things. And going down feels like the beginning of a lift, only it keeps on. And you can't turn your head to see what's above you, and you can't get a fair squint at what's happening to your feet without bending down something painful. And being deep it was dark, let alone the blackness of the ashes and mud that formed the bottom. It was like going down out of the dawn back into the night, so to speak.

"The mast came up like a ghost out of the black, and then a lot of fishes, and then a lot of flapping red seaweed, and then whack I came with a kind of dull bang on the deck of the Ocean Pioneer, and the fishes that had been feeding on the dead rose about me like a swarm of flies from road stuff in summer time. I turned on the compressed air again — for the suit was a bit thick and mackintoshery after all, in spite of the rum — and stood recovering myself. It struck coolish down there, and that helped take off the stuffiness a bit.

"When I began to feel easier, I started looking about me. It was an extraordinary sight. Even the light was extraordinary, a kind of reddy-coloured twilight, on account of the streamers of seaweed that floated up on either side of the ship. And far overhead just a moony, deep green-blue. The deck of the ship, except for a slight list to starboard, was level, and lay all dark and long between the weeds, clear except where the masts had snapped when she rolled, and vanishing into black night towards the forecastle. There wasn't any dead on the decks, most were in the weeds alongside, I suppose; but afterwards I found two skeletons lying in the passengers' cabins, where death had come to them. It was curious to stand on that deck and recognise it all, bit by bit; a place against the rail where I'd been fond of smoking by starlight, and the corner where an old chap from Sydney used to flirt with a widow we had aboard. A comfortable

couple they'd been, only a month ago, and now you couldn't have got a meal for a baby crab off either of them.

"I've always had a bit of a philosophical turn, and I dare say I spent the best part of five minutes in such thoughts before I went below to find where the blessed dust was stored. It was slow work hunting, feeling it was for the most part, pitchy dark, with confusing blue gleams down the companion. And there were things moving about, a dab at my glass once, and once a pinch at my leg. Crabs, I expect. I kicked a lot of loose stuff that puzzled me, and stooped and picked up something all knobs and spikes. What do you think? Backbone! But I never had any particular feeling for bones. We had talked the affair over pretty thoroughly, and Always knew just where the stuff was stowed. I found it that trip. I lifted a box one end an inch or more."

He broke off in his story. "I've lifted it," he said, "as near as that! Forty thousand pounds worth of pure gold! Gold! I shouted inside my helmet as a kind of cheer and hurt my ears. I was getting confounded stuffy and tired by this time — I must have been down twenty-five minutes or more — and I thought this was good enough. I went up the companion again, and as my eyes came up flush with the deck, a thundering great crab gave a kind of hysterical jump and went scuttling off sideways. Quite a start it gave me. I stood up clear on deck and shut the valve behind the helmet to let the air accumulate to carry me up again — I noticed a kind of whacking from above, as though they were hitting the water with an oar, but I didn't look up. I fancied they were signalling me to come up.

"And then something shot down by me — something heavy, and stood a-quiver in the planks. I looked, and there was a long knife I'd seen young Sanders handling. Thinks I, he's dropped it, and I was still calling him this kind of fool and that — for it might have hurt me serious — when I began to lift and drive up towards the daylight. Just about the level of the top spars of the Ocean Pioneer, whack! I came against something sinking down, and a boot knocked in front of my helmet. Then something else, struggling frightful. It was a big weight atop of me, whatever it was, and moving and twisting about. I'd have thought it a big octopus, or some such thing, if it hadn't been for the boot. But octopuses don't wear boots. It was all in a

moment, of course. I felt myself sinking down again, and I threw my arms about to keep steady, and the whole lot rolled free of me and shot down as I went up—"

He paused.

"I saw young Sanders's face, over a naked black shoulder, and a spear driven clean through his neck, and out of his mouth and neck what looked like spirts of pink smoke in the water. And down they went clutching one another, and turning over, and both too far gone to leave go. And in another second my helmet came a whack, fit to split, against the niggers' canoe. It was niggers! Two canoes full.

"It was lively times, I tell you! Overboard came Always with three spears in him. There was the legs of three or four black chaps kicking about me in the water. I couldn't see much, but I saw the game was up at a glance, gave my valve a tremendous twist, and went bubbling down again after poor Always, in as awful a state of scare and astonishment as you can well imagine. I passed young Sanders and the nigger going up again and struggling still a bit, and in another moment I was standing in the dim again on the deck of the Ocean Pioneer.

"'Gummy,' thinks I, 'here's a fix!' Niggers? At first I couldn't see anything for it but Stifle below or Stabs above. I didn't properly understand how much air there was to last me, but I didn't feel like standing very much more of it down below. I was hot and frightfully heady — quite apart from the blue funk I was in. We'd never repined with these beastly natives, filthy Papuan beasts. It wasn't any good, coming up where I was, but I had to do something. On the spur of the moment, I clambered over the side of the brig and landed among the weeds, and set off through the darkness as fast as I could. I just stopped once and knelt, and twisted back my head in the helmet and had a look up. It was a most extraordinary bright green-blue above, and the two canoes and the boat floating there very small and distant like a kind of twisted H. And it made me feel sick to squint up at it, and think what the pitching and swaying of the three meant.

"It was just about the most horrible ten minutes I ever had, blundering about in that darkness, pressure something awful, like being buried in sand, pain across the chest, sick with funk, and breathing nothing as it seemed but the smell of rum and mackintosh.

Gummy! After a bit, I found myself going up a steepish sort of slope. I had another squint to see if anything was visible of the canoes and boats, and then kept on. I stopped with my head a foot from the surface, and tried to see where I was going, but, of course, nothing was to be seen but the reflection of the bottom. Then out I dashed like knocking my head through a mirror. Directly I got my eyes out of the water, I saw I'd come up a kind of beach near the forest. I had a look round, but the natives and the brig were both hidden by a big, hummucky heap of twisted lava, the born fool in me suggested a run for the woods. I didn't take the helmet off, but eased open one of the windows, and, after a bit of a pant, went on out of the water. You'd hardly imagine how clean and light the air tasted.

"Of course, with four inches of lead in your boot soles, and your head in a copper knob the size of a football, and been thirty-five minutes under water, you don't break any records running. I ran like a ploughboy going to work. And half way to the trees I saw a dozen niggers or more, coming out in a gaping, astonished sort of way to meet me.

"I just stopped dead, and cursed myself for all the fools out of London. I had about as much chance of cutting back to the water as a turned turtle. I just screwed up my window again to leave my hands free, and waited for them. There wasn't anything else for me to do.

"But they didn't come on very much. I began to suspect why. 'Jimmy Goggles,' I says, 'it's your beauty does it.' I was inclined to be a little light-headed, I think, with all these dangers about and the change in the pressure of the blessed air. 'Who're ye staring at?' I said, as if the savages could hear me. 'What d'ye take me for? I'm hanged if I don't give you something to stare at,' I said, and with that I screwed up the escape valve and turned on the compressed air from the belt, until I was swelled out like a blown frog. Regular imposing it must have been. I'm blessed if they'd come on a step; and presently one and then another went down on their hands and knees. They didn't know what to make of me, and they was doing the extra polite, which was very wise and reasonable of them. I had half a mind to edge back seaward and cut and run, but it seemed too hopeless. A step back and they'd have been after me. And out of sheer desperation I began to march towards them up the beach, with

slow, heavy steps, and waving my blown-out arms about, in a dignified manner. And inside of me I was singing as small as a tomtit.

"But there's nothing like a striking appearance to help a man over a difficulty, — I've found that before and since. People like ourselves, who're up to diving-dresses by the time we're seven, can scarcely imagine the effect of one on a simple-minded savage. One or two of these niggers cut and run, the others started in a great hurry trying to knock their brains out on the ground. And on I went as slow and solemn and silly-looking and artful as a jobbing plumber. It was evident they took me for something immense.

"Then up jumped one and began pointing, making extraordinary gestures to me as he did so, and all the others began sharing their attention between me and something out at sea. 'What's the matter now?' I said. I turned slowly on account of my dignity, and there I saw, coming round a point, the poor old Pride of Banya towed by a couple of canoes. The sight fairly made me sick. But they evidently expected some recognition, so I waved my arms in a striking sort of non-committal manner. And then I turned and stalked on towards the trees again. At that time I was praying like mad, I remember, over and over again: 'Lord help me through with it! Lord help me through with it!' It's only fools who know nothing of dangers can afford to laugh at praying.

"But these niggers weren't going to let me walk through and away like that. They started a kind of bowing dance about me, and sort of pressed me to take a pathway that lay through the trees. It was clear to me they didn't take me for a British citizen, whatever else they thought of me, and for my own part I was never less anxious to own up to the old country.

"You'd hardly believe it, perhaps, unless you're familiar with savages, but these poor misguided, ignorant creatures took me straight to their kind of joss place to present me to the blessed old black stone there. By this time I was beginning to sort of realise the depth of their ignorance, and directly I set eyes on this deity I took my cue. I started a baritone howl, 'wow-wow,' very long on one note, and began waving my arms about a lot, and then very slowly and ceremoniously turned their image over on its side and sat down

on it. I wanted to sit down badly, for diving-dresses ain't much wear in the tropics. Or, to put it different like, they're a sight too much. It took away their breath, I could see, my sitting on their joss, but in less time than a minute they made up their minds and were hard at work worshipping me. And I can tell you I felt a bit relieved to see things turning out so well, in spite of the weight on my shoulders and feet.

"But what made me anxious was what the chaps in the canoes might think when they came back. If they'd seen me in the boat before I went down, and without the helmet on — for they might have been spying and hiding since over night — they would very likely take a different view from the others. I was in a deuce of a stew about that for hours, as it seemed, until the shindy of the arrival began.

"But they took it down — the whole blessed village took it down. At the cost of sitting up stiff and stern, as much like those sitting Egyptian images one sees as I could manage, for pretty nearly twelve hours, I should guess at least, on end, I got over it. You'd hardly think what it meant in that heat and stink. I don't think any of them dreamt of the man inside. I was just a wonderful leathery great joss that had come up with luck out of the water. But the fatigue! the heat! the beastly closeness! the mackintosheriness and the rum! and the fuss! They lit a stinking fire on a kind of lava slab there was before me, and brought in a lot of gory muck — the worst parts of what they were feasting on outside, the Beasts — and burnt it all in my honour. I was getting a bit hungry, but I understand now how gods manage to do without eating, what with the smell of burnt offerings about them. And they brought in a lot of the stuff they'd got off the brig and, among other stuff, what I was a bit relieved to see, the kind of pneumatic pump that was used for the compressed air affair, and then a lot of chaps and girls came in and danced about me something disgraceful. It's extraordinary the different ways different people have of showing respect. If I'd had a hatchet handy I'd have gone for the lot of them — they made me feel that wild. All this time I sat as stiff as company, not knowing anything better to do. And at last, when nightfall came, and the wattle joss-house place got a bit too shadowy for their taste — all these here savages are afraid of the

dark, you know — and I started a sort of ‘Moo’ noise, they built big bonfires outside and left me alone in peace in the darkness of my hut, free to unscrew my windows a bit and think things over, and feel just as bad as I liked. And, Lord! I was sick.

“I was weak and hungry, and my mind kept on behaving like a beetle on a pin, tremendous activity and nothing done at the end of it. Come round just where it was before. There was sorrowing for the other chaps, beastly drunkards certainly, but not deserving such a fate, and young Sanders with the spear through his neck wouldn’t go out of my mind. There was the treasure down there in the Ocean Pioneer, and how one might get it and hide it somewhere safer, and get away and come back for it. And there was the puzzle where to get anything to eat. I tell you I was fair rambling. I was afraid to ask by signs for food, for fear of behaving too human, and so there I sat and hungered until very near the dawn. Then the village got a bit quiet, and I couldn’t stand it any longer, and I went out and got some stuff like artichokes in a bowl and some sour milk. What was left of these I put away among the other offerings, just to give them a hint of my tastes. And in the morning they came to worship, and found me sitting up stiff and respectable on their previous god, just as they’d left me overnight. I’d got my back against the central pillar of the hut, and, practically, I was asleep. And that’s how I became a god among the heathen — a false god no doubt, and blasphemous, but one can’t always pick and choose.

“Now, I don’t want to crack myself up as a god beyond my merits, but I must confess that while I was god to these people they was extraordinary successful. I don’t say there’s anything in it, mind you. They won a battle with another tribe — I got a lot of offerings I didn’t want through it — they had wonderful fishing, and their crop of pourra was exceptional fine. And they counted the capture of the brig among the benefits I brought ‘em. I must say I don’t think that was a poor record for a perfectly new hand. And, though perhaps you’d scarcely credit it, I was the tribal god of those beastly savages for pretty nearly four months....

“What else could I do, man? But I didn’t wear that diving-dress all the time. I made ’em rig me up a sort of holy of holies, and a deuce of a time I had too, making them understand what it was I

wanted them to do. That indeed was the great difficulty — making them understand my wishes. I couldn't let myself down by talking their lingo badly — even if I'd been able to speak at all — and I couldn't go flapping a lot of gestures at them. So I drew pictures in sand and sat down beside them and hooted like one o'clock. Sometimes they did the things I wanted all right, and sometimes they did them all wrong. They was always very willing, certainly. All the while I was puzzling how I was to get the confounded business settled. Every night before the dawn I used to march out in full rig and go off to a place where I could see the channel in which the Ocean Pioneer lay sunk, and once even, one moonlight night, I tried to walk out to her, but the weeds and rocks and dark clean beat me. I didn't get back till full day, and then I found all those silly niggers out on the beach praying their sea-god to return to them. I was that vexed and tired, messing and tumbling about, and coming up and going down again, I could have punched their silly heads all round when they started rejoicing. I'm hanged if I like so much ceremony.

"And then came the missionary. That missionary! It was in the afternoon, and I was sitting in state in my outer temple place, sitting on that old black stone of theirs when he came. I heard a row outside and jabbering, and then his voice speaking to an interpreter. 'They worship stocks and stones,' he said, and I knew what was up, in a flash. I had one of my windows out for comfort, and I sang out straight away on the spur of the moment. 'Stocks and stones!' I says. 'You come inside,' I says, 'and I'll punch your blooming head.' There was a kind of silence and more jabbering, and in he came, Bible in hand, after the manner of them — a little sandy chap in specks and a pith helmet. I flatter myself that me sitting there in the shadows, with my copper head and my big goggles, struck him a bit of a heap at first. 'Well,' I says, 'how's the trade in calico?' for I don't hold with missionaries.

"I had a lark with that missionary. He was a raw hand, and quite outclassed with a man like me. He gasped out who was I, and I told him to read the inscription at my feet if he wanted to know. Down he goes to read, and his interpreter, being of course as superstitious as any of them, took it as an act of worship and plumped down like a shot. All my people gave a howl of triumph, and there wasn't any

more business to be done in my village after that journey, not by the likes of him.

"But, of course, I was a fool to choke him off like that. If I'd had any sense I should have told him straight away of the treasure and taken him into Co. I've no doubt he'd have come into Co. A child, with a few hours to think it over, could have seen the connection between my diving-dress and the loss of the Ocean Pioneer. A week after he left I went out one morning and saw the Motherhood, the salver's ship from Starr Race, towing up the channel and sounding. The whole blessed game was up, and all my trouble thrown away. Gummy! How wild I felt! And guying it in that stinking silly dress! Four months!"

The sunburnt man's story degenerated again. "Think of it," he said, when he emerged to linguistic purity once more. "Forty thousand pounds worth of gold."

"Did the little missionary come back?" I asked.

"Oh, yes! Bless him! And he pledged his reputation there was a man inside the god, and started out to see as much with tremendous ceremony. But there wasn't — he got sold again. I always did hate scenes and explanations, and long before he came I was out of it all — going home to Banya along the coast, hiding in bushes by day, and thieving food from the villages by night. Only weapon, a spear. No clothes, no money. Nothing. My face was my fortune, as the saying is. And just a squeak of eight thousand pounds of gold — fifth share. But the natives cut up rusty, thank goodness, because they thought it was him had driven their luck away."

THE NEW ACCELERATOR

Certainly, if ever a man found a guinea when he was looking for a pin it is my good friend Professor Gibberne. I have heard before of investigators overshooting the mark, but never quite to the extent that he has done. He has really, this time at any rate, without any touch of exaggeration in the phrase, found something to revolutionise human life. And that when he was simply seeking an all-round nervous stimulant to bring languid people up to the stresses of these pushful days. I have tasted the stuff now several times, and I cannot do better than describe the effect the thing had on me. That there are astonishing experiences in store for all in search of new sensations will become apparent enough.

Professor Gibberne, as many people know, is my neighbour in Folkestone. Unless my memory plays me a trick, his portrait at various ages has already appeared in The Strand Magazine — I think late in 1899; but I am unable to look it up because I have lent that volume to some one who has never sent it back. The reader may, perhaps, recall the high forehead and the singularly long black eyebrows that give such a Mephistophelian touch to his face. He occupies one of those pleasant little detached houses in the mixed style that make the western end of the Upper Sandgate Road so interesting. His is the one with the Flemish gables and the Moorish portico, and it is in the little room with the mullioned bay window that he works when he is down here, and in which of an evening we have so often smoked and talked together. He is a mighty jester, but, besides, he likes to talk to me about his work; he is one of those men who find a help and stimulus in talking, and so I have been able to follow the conception of the New Accelerator right up from a very early stage. Of course, the greater portion of his experimental work is not done in Folkestone, but in Gower Street, in the fine new laboratory next to the hospital that he has been the first to use.

As every one knows, or at least as all intelligent people know, the special department in which Gibberne has gained so great and deserved a reputation among physiologists is the action of drugs upon the nervous system. Upon soporifics, sedatives, and

anaesthetics he is, I am told, unequalled. He is also a chemist of considerable eminence, and I suppose in the subtle and complex jungle of riddles that centres about the ganglion cell and the axis fibre there are little cleared places of his making, little glades of illumination, that, until he sees fit to publish his results, are still inaccessible to every other living man. And in the last few years he has been particularly assiduous upon this question of nervous stimulants, and already, before the discovery of the New Accelerator, very successful with them. Medical science has to thank him for at least three distinct and absolutely safe invigorators of unrivalled value to practising men. In cases of exhaustion the preparation known as Gibberne's B Syrup has, I suppose, saved more lives already than any lifeboat round the coast.

"But none of these little things begin to satisfy me yet," he told me nearly a year ago. "Either they increase the central energy without affecting the nerves or they simply increase the available energy by lowering the nervous conductivity; and all of them are unequal and local in their operation. One wakes up the heart and viscera and leaves the brain stupefied, one gets at the brain champagne fashion and does nothing good for the solar plexus, and what I want — and what, if it's an earthly possibility, I mean to have — is a stimulant that stimulates all round, that wakes you up for a time from the crown of your head to the tip of your great toe, and makes you go two — or even three — to everybody else's one. Eh? That's the thing I'm after."

"It would tire a man," I said.

"Not a doubt of it. And you'd eat double or treble — and all that. But just think what the thing would mean. Imagine yourself with a little phial like this" — he held up a little bottle of green glass and marked his points with it— "and in this precious phial is the power to think twice as fast, move twice as quickly, do twice as much work in a given time as you could otherwise do."

"But is such a thing possible?"

"I believe so. If it isn't, I've wasted my time for a year. These various preparations of the hypophosphites, for example, seem to show that something of the sort... Even if it was only one and a half times as fast it would do."

“It WOULD do,” I said.

“If you were a statesman in a corner, for example, time rushing up against you, something urgent to be done, eh?”

“He could dose his private secretary,” I said.

“And gain — double time. And think if YOU, for example, wanted to finish a book.”

“Usually,” I said, “I wish I’d never begun ‘em.”

“Or a doctor, driven to death, wants to sit down and think out a case. Or a barrister — or a man cramming for an examination.”

“Worth a guinea a drop,” said I, “and more to men like that.”

“And in a duel, again,” said Gibberne, “where it all depends on your quickness in pulling the trigger.”

“Or in fencing,” I echoed.

“You see,” said Gibberne, “if I get it as an all-round thing it will really do you no harm at all — except perhaps to an infinitesimal degree it brings you nearer old age. You will just have lived twice to other people’s once—”

“I suppose,” I meditated, “in a duel — it would be fair?”

“That’s a question for the seconds,” said Gibberne.

I harked back further. “And you really think such a thing IS possible?” I said.

“As possible,” said Gibberne, and glanced at something that went throbbing by the window, “as a motor-bus. As a matter of fact—”

He paused and smiled at me deeply, and tapped slowly on the edge of his desk with the green phial. “I think I know the stuff.... Already I’ve got something coming.” The nervous smile upon his face betrayed the gravity of his revelation. He rarely talked of his actual experimental work unless things were very near the end. “And it may be, it may be — I shouldn’t be surprised — it may even do the thing at a greater rate than twice.”

“It will be rather a big thing,” I hazarded.

“It will be, I think, rather a big thing.”

But I don’t think he quite knew what a big thing it was to be, for all that.

I remember we had several talks about the stuff after that. “The New Accelerator” he called it, and his tone about it grew more confident on each occasion. Sometimes he talked nervously of

unexpected physiological results its use might have, and then he would get a little unhappy; at others he was frankly mercenary, and we debated long and anxiously how the preparation might be turned to commercial account. “It’s a good thing,” said Gibberne, “a tremendous thing. I know I’m giving the world something, and I think it only reasonable we should expect the world to pay. The dignity of science is all very well, but I think somehow I must have the monopoly of the stuff for, say, ten years. I don’t see why ALL the fun in life should go to the dealers in ham.”

My own interest in the coming drug certainly did not wane in the time. I have always had a queer little twist towards metaphysics in my mind. I have always been given to paradoxes about space and time, and it seemed to me that Gibberne was really preparing no less than the absolute acceleration of life. Suppose a man repeatedly dosed with such a preparation: he would live an active and record life indeed, but he would be an adult at eleven, middle-aged at twenty-five, and by thirty well on the road to senile decay. It seemed to me that so far Gibberne was only going to do for any one who took his drug exactly what Nature has done for the Jews and Orientals, who are men in their teens and aged by fifty, and quicker in thought and act than we are all the time. The marvel of drugs has always been great to my mind; you can madden a man, calm a man, make him incredibly strong and alert or a helpless log, quicken this passion and allay that, all by means of drugs, and here was a new miracle to be added to this strange armoury of phials the doctors use! But Gibberne was far too eager upon his technical points to enter very keenly into my aspect of the question.

It was the 7th or 8th of August when he told me the distillation that would decide his failure or success for a time was going forward as we talked, and it was on the 10th that he told me the thing was done and the New Accelerator a tangible reality in the world. I met him as I was going up the Sandgate Hill towards Folkestone — I think I was going to get my hair cut, and he came hurrying down to meet me — I suppose he was coming to my house to tell me at once of his success. I remember that his eyes were unusually bright and his face flushed, and I noted even then the swift alacrity of his step.

“It’s done,” he cried, and gripped my hand, speaking very fast;

“it’s more than done. Come up to my house and see.”

“Really?”

“Really!” he shouted. “Incredibly! Come up and see.”

“And it does — twice?

“It does more, much more. It scares me. Come up and see the stuff. Taste it! Try it! It’s the most amazing stuff on earth.” He gripped my arm and, walking at such a pace that he forced me into a trot, went shouting with me up the hill. A whole char-a-banc-ful of people turned and stared at us in unison after the manner of people in chars-a-banc. It was one of those hot, clear days that Folkestone sees so much of, every colour incredibly bright and every outline hard. There was a breeze, of course, but not so much breeze as sufficed under these conditions to keep me cool and dry. I panted for mercy.

“I’m not walking fast, am I?” cried Gibberne, and slackened his pace to a quick march.

“You’ve been taking some of this stuff,” I puffed.

“No,” he said. “At the utmost a drop of water that stood in a beaker from which I had washed out the last traces of the stuff. I took some last night, you know. But that is ancient history, now.”

“And it goes twice?” I said, nearing his doorway in a grateful perspiration.

“It goes a thousand times, many thousand times!” cried Gibberne, with a dramatic gesture, flinging open his Early English carved oak gate.

“Phew!” said I, and followed him to the door.

“I don’t know how many times it goes,” he said, with his latch-key in his hand.

“And you—”

“It throws all sorts of light on nervous physiology, it kicks the theory of vision into a perfectly new shape!... Heaven knows how many thousand times. We’ll try all that after — The thing is to try the stuff now.”

“Try the stuff?” I said, as we went along the passage.

“Rather,” said Gibberne, turning on me in his study. “There it is in that little green phial there! Unless you happen to be afraid?”

I am a careful man by nature, and only theoretically adventurous. I WAS afraid. But on the other hand there is pride.

“Well,” I haggled. “You say you’ve tried it?”

“I’ve tried it,” he said, “and I don’t look hurt by it, do I? I don’t even look livery and I FEEL—”

I sat down. “Give me the potion,” I said. “If the worst comes to the worst it will save having my hair cut, and that I think is one of the most hateful duties of a civilised man. How do you take the mixture?”

“With water,” said Gibberne, whacking down a carafe.

He stood up in front of his desk and regarded me in his easy chair; his manner was suddenly affected by a touch of the Harley Street specialist. “It’s rum stuff, you know,” he said.

I made a gesture with my hand.

“I must warn you in the first place as soon as you’ve got it down to shut your eyes, and open them very cautiously in a minute or so’s time. One still sees. The sense of vision is a question of length of vibration, and not of multitude of impacts; but there’s a kind of shock to the retina, a nasty giddy confusion just at the time, if the eyes are open. Keep ’em shut.”

“Shut,” I said. “Good!”

“And the next thing is, keep still. Don’t begin to whack about. You may fetch something a nasty rap if you do. Remember you will be going several thousand times faster than you ever did before, heart, lungs, muscles, brain — everything — and you will hit hard without knowing it. You won’t know it, you know. You’ll feel just as you do now. Only everything in the world will seem to be going ever so many thousand times slower than it ever went before. That’s what makes it so deuced queer.”

“Lor’,” I said. “And you mean—”

“You’ll see,” said he, and took up a little measure. He glanced at the material on his desk. “Glasses,” he said, “water. All here. Mustn’t take too much for the first attempt.”

The little phial glucked out its precious contents.

“Don’t forget what I told you,” he said, turning the contents of the measure into a glass in the manner of an Italian waiter measuring whisky. “Sit with the eyes tightly shut and in absolute stillness for two minutes,” he said. “Then you will hear me speak.”

He added an inch or so of water to the little dose in each glass.

“By-the-by,” he said, “don’t put your glass down. Keep it in your hand and rest your hand on your knee. Yes — so. And now—”

He raised his glass.

“The New Accelerator,” I said.

“The New Accelerator,” he answered, and we touched glasses and drank, and instantly I closed my eyes.

You know that blank non-existence into which one drops when one has taken “gas.” For an indefinite interval it was like that. Then I heard Gibberne telling me to wake up, and I stirred and opened my eyes. There he stood as he had been standing, glass still in hand. It was empty, that was all the difference.

“Well?” said I.

“Nothing out of the way?”

“Nothing. A slight feeling of exhilaration, perhaps. Nothing more.”

“Sounds?”

“Things are still,” I said. “By Jove! yes! They ARE still. Except the sort of faint pat, patter, like rain falling on different things. What is it?”

“Analysed sounds,” I think he said, but I am not sure. He glanced at the window. “Have you ever seen a curtain before a window fixed in that way before?”

I followed his eyes, and there was the end of the curtain, frozen, as it were, corner high, in the act of flapping briskly in the breeze.

“No,” said I; “that’s odd.”

“And here,” he said, and opened the hand that held the glass. Naturally I winced, expecting the glass to smash. But so far from smashing it did not even seem to stir; it hung in mid-air — motionless.

“Roughly speaking,” said Gibberne, “an object in these latitudes falls 16 feet in the first second. This glass is falling 16 feet in a second now. Only, you see, it hasn’t been falling yet for the hundredth part of a second. That gives you some idea of the pace of my Accelerator.” And he waved his hand round and round, over and under the slowly sinking glass. Finally, he took it by the bottom, pulled it down, and placed it very carefully on the table. “Eh?” he said to me, and laughed.

“That seems all right,” I said, and began very gingerly to raise myself from my chair. I felt perfectly well, very light and comfortable, and quite confident in my mind. I was going fast all over. My heart, for example, was beating a thousand times a second, but that caused me no discomfort at all. I looked out of the window. An immovable cyclist, head down and with a frozen puff of dust behind his driving-wheel, scorched to overtake a galloping char-a-banc that did not stir. I gaped in amazement at this incredible spectacle. “Gibberne,” I cried, “how long will this confounded stuff last?”

“Heaven knows!” he answered. “Last time I took it I went to bed and slept it off. I tell you, I was frightened. It must have lasted some minutes, I think — it seemed like hours. But after a bit it slows down rather suddenly, I believe.”

I was proud to observe that I did not feel frightened — I suppose because there were two of us. “Why shouldn’t we go out?” I asked.

“Why not?”

“They’ll see us.”

“Not they. Goodness, no! Why, we shall be going a thousand times faster than the quickest conjuring trick that was ever done. Come along! Which way shall we go? Window, or door?”

And out by the window we went.

Assuredly of all the strange experiences that I have ever had, or imagined, or read of other people having or imagining, that little raid I made with Gibberne on the Folkestone Leas, under the influence of the New Accelerator, was the strangest and maddest of all. We went out by his gate into the road, and there we made a minute examination of the statuesque passing traffic. The tops of the wheels and some of the legs of the horses of this char-a-banc, the end of the whip-lash and the lower jaw of the conductor — who was just beginning to yawn — were perceptibly in motion, but all the rest of the lumbering conveyance seemed still. And quite noiseless except for a faint rattling that came from one man’s throat! And as parts of this frozen edifice there were a driver, you know, and a conductor, and eleven people! The effect as we walked about the thing began by being madly queer, and ended by being disagreeable. There they were, people like ourselves and yet not like ourselves, frozen in

careless attitudes, caught in mid-gesture. A girl and a man smiled at one another, a leering smile that threatened to last for evermore; a woman in a floppy capelline rested her arm on the rail and stared at Gibberne's house with the unwinking stare of eternity; a man stroked his moustache like a figure of wax, and another stretched a tiresome stiff hand with extended fingers towards his loosened hat. We stared at them, we laughed at them, we made faces at them, and then a sort of disgust of them came upon us, and we turned away and walked round in front of the cyclist towards the Leas.

"Goodness!" cried Gibberne, suddenly; "look there!"

He pointed, and there at the tip of his finger and sliding down the air with wings flapping slowly and at the speed of an exceptionally languid snail — was a bee.

And so we came out upon the Leas. There the thing seemed madder than ever. The band was playing in the upper stand, though all the sound it made for us was a low-pitched, wheezy rattle, a sort of prolonged last sigh that passed at times into a sound like the slow, muffled ticking of some monstrous clock. Frozen people stood erect, strange, silent, self-conscious-looking dummies hung unstably in mid-stride, promenading upon the grass. I passed close to a little poodle dog suspended in the act of leaping, and watched the slow movement of his legs as he sank to earth. "Lord, look here!" cried Gibberne, and we halted for a moment before a magnificent person in white faint-striped flannels, white shoes, and a Panama hat, who turned back to wink at two gaily dressed ladies he had passed. A wink, studied with such leisurely deliberation as we could afford, is an unattractive thing. It loses any quality of alert gaiety, and one remarks that the winking eye does not completely close, that under its drooping lid appears the lower edge of an eyeball and a little line of white. "Heaven give me memory," said I, "and I will never wink again."

"Or smile," said Gibberne, with his eye on the lady's answering teeth.

"It's infernally hot, somehow," said I. "Let's go slower."

"Oh, come along!" said Gibberne.

We picked our way among the bath-chairs in the path. Many of the people sitting in the chairs seemed almost natural in their passive

poses, but the contorted scarlet of the bandsmen was not a restful thing to see. A purple-faced little gentleman was frozen in the midst of a violent struggle to refold his newspaper against the wind; there were many evidences that all these people in their sluggish way were exposed to a considerable breeze, a breeze that had no existence so far as our sensations went. We came out and walked a little way from the crowd, and turned and regarded it. To see all that multitude changed, to a picture, smitten rigid, as it were, into the semblance of realistic wax, was impossibly wonderful. It was absurd, of course; but it filled me with an irrational, an exultant sense of superior advantage. Consider the wonder of it! All that I had said, and thought, and done since the stuff had begun to work in my veins had happened, so far as those people, so far as the world in general went, in the twinkling of an eye. "The New Accelerator—" I began, but Gibberne interrupted me.

"There's that infernal old woman!" he said.

"What old woman?"

"Lives next door to me," said Gibberne. "Has a lapdog that yaps. Gods! The temptation is strong!"

There is something very boyish and impulsive about Gibberne at times. Before I could expostulate with him he had dashed forward, snatched the unfortunate animal out of visible existence, and was running violently with it towards the cliff of the Leas. It was most extraordinary. The little brute, you know, didn't bark or wriggle or make the slightest sign of vitality. It kept quite stiffly in an attitude of somnolent repose, and Gibberne held it by the neck. It was like running about with a dog of wood. "Gibberne," I cried, "put it down!" Then I said something else. "If you run like that, Gibberne," I cried, "you'll set your clothes on fire. Your linen trousers are going brown as it is!"

He clapped his hand on his thigh and stood hesitating on the verge. "Gibberne," I cried, coming up, "put it down. This heat is too much! It's our running so! Two or three miles a second! Friction of the air!"

"What?" he said, glancing at the dog.

"Friction of the air," I shouted. "Friction of the air. Going too fast. Like meteorites and things. Too hot. And, Gibberne! Gibberne! I'm

all over pricking and a sort of perspiration. You can see people stirring slightly. I believe the stuff's working off! Put that dog down."

"Eh?" he said.

"It's working off," I repeated. "We're too hot and the stuff's working off! I'm wet through."

He stared at me. Then at the band, the wheezy rattle of whose performance was certainly going faster. Then with a tremendous sweep of the arm he hurled the dog away from him and it went spinning upward, still inanimate, and hung at last over the grouped parasols of a knot of chattering people. Gibberne was gripping my elbow. "By Jove!" he cried. "I believe — it is! A sort of hot pricking and — yes. That man's moving his pocket-handkerchief! Perceptibly. We must get out of this sharp."

But we could not get out of it sharply enough. Luckily, perhaps! For we might have run, and if we had run we should, I believe, have burst into flames. Almost certainly we should have burst into flames! You know we had neither of us thought of that.... But before we could even begin to run the action of the drug had ceased. It was the business of a minute fraction of a second. The effect of the New Accelerator passed like the drawing of a curtain, vanished in the movement of a hand. I heard Gibberne's voice in infinite alarm. "Sit down," he said, and flop, down upon the turf at the edge of the Leas I sat — scorching as I sat. There is a patch of burnt grass there still where I sat down. The whole stagnation seemed to wake up as I did so, the disarticulated vibration of the band rushed together into a blast of music, the promenaders put their feet down and walked their ways, the papers and flags began flapping, smiles passed into words, the winker finished his wink and went on his way complacently, and all the seated people moved and spoke.

The whole world had come alive again, was going as fast as we were, or rather we were going no faster than the rest of the world. It was like slowing down as one comes into a railway station. Everything seemed to spin round for a second or two, I had the most transient feeling of nausea, and that was all. And the little dog which had seemed to hang for a moment when the force of Gibberne's arm was expended fell with a swift acceleration clean through a lady's parasol!

That was the saving of us. Unless it was for one corpulent old gentleman in a bath-chair, who certainly did start at the sight of us and afterwards regarded us at intervals with a darkly suspicious eye, and, finally, I believe, said something to his nurse about us, I doubt if a solitary person remarked our sudden appearance among them. Plop! We must have appeared abruptly. We ceased to smoulder almost at once, though the turf beneath me was uncomfortably hot. The attention of every one — including even the Amusements' Association band, which on this occasion, for the only time in its history, got out of tune — was arrested by the amazing fact, and the still more amazing yapping and uproar caused by the fact that a respectable, over-fed lap-dog sleeping quietly to the east of the bandstand should suddenly fall through the parasol of a lady on the west — in a slightly singed condition due to the extreme velocity of its movements through the air. In these absurd days, too, when we are all trying to be as psychic, and silly, and superstitious as possible! People got up and trod on other people, chairs were overturned, the Leas policeman ran. How the matter settled itself I do not know — we were much too anxious to disentangle ourselves from the affair and get out of range of the eye of the old gentleman in the bath-chair to make minute inquiries. As soon as we were sufficiently cool and sufficiently recovered from our giddiness and nausea and confusion of mind to do so we stood up and, skirting the crowd, directed our steps back along the road below the Metropole towards Gibberne's house. But amidst the din I heard very distinctly the gentleman who had been sitting beside the lady of the ruptured sunshade using quite unjustifiable threats and language to one of those chair-attendants who have "Inspector" written on their caps. "If you didn't throw the dog," he said, "who DID?"

The sudden return of movement and familiar noises, and our natural anxiety about ourselves (our clothe's were still dreadfully hot, and the fronts of the thighs of Gibberne's white trousers were scorched a drabbish brown), prevented the minute observations I should have liked to make on all these things. Indeed, I really made no observations of any scientific value on that return. The bee, of course, had gone. I looked for that cyclist, but he was already out of sight as we came into the Upper Sandgate Road or hidden from us by

traffic; the char-a-banc, however, with its people now all alive and stirring, was clattering along at a spanking pace almost abreast of the nearer church.

We noted, however, that the window-sill on which we had stepped in getting out of the house was slightly singed, and that the impressions of our feet on the gravel of the path were unusually deep.

So it was I had my first experience of the New Accelerator. Practically we had been running about and saying and doing all sorts of things in the space of a second or so of time. We had lived half an hour while the band had played, perhaps, two bars. But the effect it had upon us was that the whole world had stopped for our convenient inspection. Considering all things, and particularly considering our rashness in venturing out of the house, the experience might certainly have been much more disagreeable than it was. It showed, no doubt, that Gibberne has still much to learn before his preparation is a manageable convenience, but its practicability it certainly demonstrated beyond all cavil.

Since that adventure he has been steadily bringing its use under control, and I have several times, and without the slightest bad result, taken measured doses under his direction; though I must confess I have not yet ventured abroad again while under its influence. I may mention, for example, that this story has been written at one sitting and without interruption, except for the nibbling of some chocolate, by its means. I began at 6.25, and my watch is now very nearly at the minute past the half-hour. The convenience of securing a long, uninterrupted spell of work in the midst of a day full of engagements cannot be exaggerated. Gibberne is now working at the quantitative handling of his preparation, with especial reference to its distinctive effects upon different types of constitution. He then hopes to find a Retarder with which to dilute its present rather excessive potency. The Retarder will, of course, have the reverse effect to the Accelerator; used alone it should enable the patient to spread a few seconds over many hours of ordinary time, — and so to maintain an apathetic inaction, a glacier-like absence of alacrity, amidst the most animated or irritating surroundings. The two things together must necessarily work an entire revolution in civilised existence. It is the

beginning of our escape from that Time Garment of which Carlyle speaks. While this Accelerator will enable us to concentrate ourselves with tremendous impact upon any moment or occasion that demands our utmost sense and vigour, the Retarder will enable us to pass in passive tranquillity through infinite hardship and tedium. Perhaps I am a little optimistic about the Retarder, which has indeed still to be discovered, but about the Accelerator there is no possible sort of doubt whatever. Its appearance upon the market in a convenient, controllable, and assimilable form is a matter of the next few months. It will be obtainable of all chemists and druggists, in small green bottles, at a high but, considering its extraordinary qualities, by no means excessive price. Gibberne's Nervous Accelerator it will be called, and he hopes to be able to supply it in three strengths: one in 200, one in 900, and one in 2000, distinguished by yellow, pink, and white labels respectively.

No doubt its use renders a great number of very extraordinary things possible; for, of course, the most remarkable and, possibly, even criminal proceedings may be effected with impunity by thus dodging, as it were, into the interstices of time. Like all potent preparations it will be liable to abuse. We have, however, discussed this aspect of the question very thoroughly, and we have decided that this is purely a matter of medical jurisprudence and altogether outside our province. We shall manufacture and sell the Accelerator, and, as for the consequences — we shall see.

MR. LEDBETTER'S VACATION

My friend, Mr. Ledbetter, is a round-faced little man, whose natural mildness of eye is gigantically exaggerated when you catch the beam through his glasses, and whose deep, deliberate voice irritates irritable people. A certain elaborate clearness of enunciation has come with him to his present vicarage from his scholastic days, an elaborate clearness of enunciation and a certain nervous determination to be firm and correct upon all issues, important and unimportant alike. He is a sacerdotalist and a chess player, and suspected by many of the secret practice of the higher mathematics — creditable rather than interesting things. His conversation is copious and given much to needless detail. By many, indeed, his intercourse is condemned, to put it plainly, as "boring," and such have even done me the compliment to wonder why I countenance him. But, on the other hand, there is a large faction who marvel at his countenancing such a dishevelled, discreditable acquaintance as myself. Few appear to regard our friendship with equanimity. But that is because they do not know of the link that binds us, of my amiable connection via Jamaica with Mr. Ledbetter's past.

About that past he displays an anxious modesty. "I do not KNOW what I should do if it became known," he says; and repeats, impressively, "I do not know WHAT I should do." As a matter of fact, I doubt if he would do anything except get very red about the ears. But that will appear later; nor will I tell here of our first encounter, since, as a general rule — though I am prone to break it — the end of a story should come after, rather than before, the beginning. And the beginning of the story goes a long way back; indeed, it is now nearly twenty years since Fate, by a series of complicated and startling manoeuvres, brought Mr. Ledbetter, so to speak, into my hands.

In those days I was living in Jamaica, and Mr. Ledbetter was a schoolmaster in England. He was in orders, and already recognisably the same man that he is to-day: the same rotundity of visage, the same or similar glasses, and the same faint shadow of surprise in his resting expression. He was, of course, dishevelled when I saw him,

and his collar less of a collar than a wet bandage, and that may have helped to bridge the natural gulf between us — but of that, as I say, later.

The business began at Hithergate-on-Sea, and simultaneously with Mr. Ledbetter's summer vacation. Thither he came for a greatly needed rest, with a bright brown portmanteau marked "F. W. L.", a new white-and-black straw hat, and two pairs of white flannel trousers. He was naturally exhilarated at his release from school — for he was not very fond of the boys he taught. After dinner he fell into a discussion with a talkative person established in the boarding-house to which, acting on the advice of his aunt, he had resorted. This talkative person was the only other man in the house. Their discussion concerned the melancholy disappearance of wonder and adventure in these latter days, the prevalence of globe-trotting, the abolition of distance by steam and electricity, the vulgarity of advertisement, the degradation of men by civilisation, and many such things. Particularly was the talkative person eloquent on the decay of human courage through security, a security Mr. Ledbetter rather thoughtlessly joined him in deploring. Mr. Ledbetter, in the first delight of emancipation from "duty," and being anxious, perhaps, to establish a reputation for manly conviviality, partook, rather more freely than was advisable, of the excellent whisky the talkative person produced. But he did not become intoxicated, he insists.

He was simply eloquent beyond his sober wont, and with the finer edge gone from his judgment. And after that long talk of the brave old days that were past forever, he went out into moonlit Hithergate — alone and up the cliff road where the villas cluster together.

He had bewailed, and now as he walked up the silent road he still bewailed, the fate that had called him to such an uneventful life as a pedagogue's. What a prosaic existence he led, so stagnant, so colourless! Secure, methodical, year in year out, what call was there for bravery? He thought enviously of those roving, mediaeval days, so near and so remote, of quests and spies and condottieri and many a risky blade-drawing business. And suddenly came a doubt, a strange doubt, springing out of some chance thought of tortures, and destructive altogether of the position he had assumed that evening.

Was he — Mr. Ledbetter — really, after all, so brave as he

assumed? Would he really be so pleased to have railways, policemen, and security vanish suddenly from the earth?

The talkative man had spoken enviously of crime. “The burglar,” he said, “is the only true adventurer left on earth. Think of his single-handed fight against the whole civilised world!” And Mr. Ledbetter had echoed his envy. “They DO have some fun out of life,” Mr. Ledbetter had said. “And about the only people who do. Just think how it must feel to wire a lawn!” And he had laughed wickedly. Now, in this franker intimacy of self-communion he found himself instituting a comparison between his own brand of courage and that of the habitual criminal. He tried to meet these insidious questionings with blank assertion. “I could do all that,” said Mr. Ledbetter. “I long to do all that. Only I do not give way to my criminal impulses. My moral courage restrains me.” But he doubted even while he told himself these things.

Mr. Ledbetter passed a large villa standing by itself. Conveniently situated above a quiet, practicable balcony was a window, gaping black, wide open. At the time he scarcely marked it, but the picture of it came with him, wove into his thoughts. He figured himself climbing up that balcony, crouching — plunging into that dark, mysterious interior. “Bah! You would not dare,” said the Spirit of Doubt. “My duty to my fellow-men forbids,” said Mr. Ledbetter’s self-respect.

It was nearly eleven, and the little seaside town was already very still. The whole world slumbered under the moonlight. Only one warm oblong of window-blind far down the road spoke of waking life. He turned and came back slowly towards the villa of the open window. He stood for a time outside the gate, a battlefield of motives. “Let us put things to the test,” said Doubt. “For the satisfaction of these intolerable doubts, show that you dare go into that house. Commit a burglary in blank. That, at any rate, is no crime.” Very softly he opened and shut the gate and slipped into the shadow of the shrubbery. “This is foolish,” said Mr. Ledbetter’s caution. “I expected that,” said Doubt. His heart was beating fast, but he was certainly not afraid. He was NOT afraid. He remained in that shadow for some considerable time.

The ascent of the balcony, it was evident, would have to be done

in a rush, for it was all in clear moonlight, and visible from the gate into the avenue. A trellis thinly set with young, ambitious climbing roses made the ascent ridiculously easy. There, in that black shadow by the stone vase of flowers, one might crouch and take a closer view of this gaping breach in the domestic defences, the open window. For a while Mr. Ledbetter was as still as the night, and then that insidious whisky tipped the balance. He dashed forward. He went up the trellis with quick, convulsive movements, swung his legs over the parapet of the balcony, and dropped panting in the shadow even as he had designed. He was trembling violently, short of breath, and his heart pumped noisily, but his mood was exultation. He could have shouted to find he was so little afraid.

A happy line that he had learnt from Wills's "Mephistopheles" came into his mind as he crouched there. "I feel like a cat on the tiles," he whispered to himself. It was far better than he had expected — this adventurous exhilaration. He was sorry for all poor men to whom burglary was unknown. Nothing happened. He was quite safe. And he was acting in the bravest manner!

And now for the window, to make the burglary complete! Must he dare do that? Its position above the front door defined it as a landing or passage, and there were no looking-glasses or any bedroom signs about it, or any other window on the first floor, to suggest the possibility of a sleeper within. For a time he listened under the ledge, then raised his eyes above the sill and peered in. Close at hand, on a pedestal, and a little startling at first, was a nearly life-size gesticulating bronze. He ducked, and after some time he peered again. Beyond was a broad landing, faintly gleaming; a flimsy fabric of bead curtain, very black and sharp, against a further window; a broad staircase, plunging into a gulf of darkness below; and another ascending to the second floor. He glanced behind him, but the stillness of the night was unbroken. "Crime," he whispered, "crime," and scrambled softly and swiftly over the sill into the house. His feet fell noiselessly on a mat of skin. He was a burglar indeed!

He crouched for a time, all ears and peering eyes. Outside was a scampering and rustling, and for a moment he repented of his enterprise. A short "miaow," a spitting, and a rush into silence, spoke reassuringly of cats. His courage grew. He stood up. Every one was

abed, it seemed. So easy is it to commit a burglary, if one is so minded. He was glad he had put it to the test. He determined to take some petty trophy, just to prove his freedom from any abject fear of the law, and depart the way he had come.

He peered about him, and suddenly the critical spirit arose again. Burglars did far more than such mere elementary entrance as this: they went into rooms, they forced safes. Well — he was not afraid. He could not force safes, because that would be a stupid want of consideration for his hosts. But he would go into rooms — he would go upstairs. More: he told himself that he was perfectly secure; an empty house could not be more reassuringly still. He had to clench his hands, nevertheless, and summon all his resolution before he began very softly to ascend the dim staircase, pausing for several seconds between each step. Above was a square landing with one open and several closed doors; and all the house was still. For a moment he stood wondering what would happen if some sleeper woke suddenly and emerged. The open door showed a moonlit bedroom, the coverlet white and undisturbed. Into this room he crept in three interminable minutes and took a piece of soap for his plunder — his trophy. He turned to descend even more softly than he had ascended. It was as easy as —

Hist!...

Footsteps! On the gravel outside the house — and then the noise of a latchkey, the yawn and bang of a door, and the spitting of a match in the hall below. Mr. Ledbetter stood petrified by the sudden discovery of the folly upon which he had come. “How on earth am I to get out of this?” said Mr. Ledbetter.

The hall grew bright with a candle flame, some heavy object bumped against the umbrella-stand, and feet were ascending the staircase. In a flash Mr. Ledbetter realised that his retreat was closed. He stood for a moment, a pitiful figure of penitent confusion. “My goodness! What a FOOL I have been!” he whispered, and then darted swiftly across the shadowy landing into the empty bedroom from which he had just come. He stood listening — quivering. The footsteps reached the first-floor landing.

Horrible thought! This was possibly the latecomer’s room! Not a moment was to be lost! Mr. Ledbetter stooped beside the bed,

thanked Heaven for a valance, and crawled within its protection not ten seconds too soon. He became motionless on hands and knees. The advancing candle-light appeared through the thinner stitches of the fabric, the shadows ran wildly about, and became rigid as the candle was put down.

"Lord, what a day!" said the newcomer, blowing noisily, and it seemed he deposited some heavy burthen on what Mr. Ledbetter, judging by the feet, decided to be a writing-table. The unseen then went to the door and locked it, examined the fastenings of the windows carefully and pulled down the blinds, and returning sat down upon the bed with startling ponderosity.

"WHAT a day!" he said. "Good Lord!" and blew again, and Mr. Ledbetter inclined to believe that the person was mopping his face. His boots were good stout boots; the shadows of his legs upon the valance suggested a formidable stoutness of aspect. After a time he removed some upper garments — a coat and waistcoat, Mr. Ledbetter inferred — and casting them over the rail of the bed remained breathing less noisily, and as it seemed cooling from a considerable temperature. At intervals he muttered to himself, and once he laughed softly. And Mr. Ledbetter muttered to himself, but he did not laugh. "Of all the foolish things," said Mr. Ledbetter. "What on earth am I to do now?"

His outlook was necessarily limited. The minute apertures between the stitches of the fabric of the valance admitted a certain amount of light, but permitted no peeping. The shadows upon this curtain, save for those sharply defined legs, were enigmatical, and intermingled confusingly with the florid patterning of the chintz. Beneath the edge of the valance a strip of carpet was visible, and, by cautiously depressing his eye, Mr. Ledbetter found that this strip broadened until the whole area of the floor came into view. The carpet was a luxurious one, the room spacious, and, to judge by the castors and so forth of the furniture, well equipped.

What he should do he found it difficult to imagine. To wait until this person had gone to bed, and then, when he seemed to be sleeping, to creep to the door, unlock it, and bolt headlong for that balcony seemed the only possible thing to do. Would it be possible to jump from the balcony? The danger of it! When he thought of the

chances against him, Mr. Ledbetter despaired. He was within an ace of thrusting forth his head beside the gentleman's legs, coughing if necessary to attract his attention, and then, smiling, apologising and explaining his unfortunate intrusion by a few well-chosen sentences. But he found these sentences hard to choose. "No doubt, sir, my appearance is peculiar," or, "I trust, sir, you will pardon my somewhat ambiguous appearance from beneath you," was about as much as he could get.

Grave possibilities forced themselves on his attention. Suppose they did not believe him, what would they do to him? Would his unblemished high character count for nothing? Technically he was a burglar, beyond dispute. Following out this train of thought, he was composing a lucid apology for "this technical crime I have committed," to be delivered before sentence in the dock, when the stout gentleman got up and began walking about the room. He locked and unlocked drawers, and Mr. Ledbetter had a transient hope that he might be undressing. But, no! He seated himself at the writing-table, and began to write and then tear up documents. Presently the smell of burning cream-laid paper mingled with the odour of cigars in Mr. Ledbetter's nostrils.

"The position I had assumed," said Mr. Ledbetter when he told me of these things, "was in many respects an ill-advised one. A transverse bar beneath the bed depressed my head unduly, and threw a disproportionate share of my weight upon my hands. After a time, I experienced what is called, I believe, a crick in the neck. The pressure of my hands on the coarsely-stitched carpet speedily became painful. My knees, too, were painful, my trousers being drawn tightly over them. At that time I wore rather higher collars than I do now — two and a half inches, in fact — and I discovered what I had not remarked before, that the edge of the one I wore was frayed slightly under the chin. But much worse than these things was an itching of my face, which I could only relieve by violent grimacing — I tried to raise my hand, but the rustle of the sleeve alarmed me. After a time I had to desist from this relief also, because — happily in time — I discovered that my facial contortions were shifting my glasses down my nose. Their fall would, of course, have exposed me, and as it was they came to rest in an oblique position of by no means stable

equilibrium. In addition I had a slight cold, and an intermittent desire to sneeze or sniff caused me inconvenience. In fact, quite apart from the extreme anxiety of my position, my physical discomfort became in a short time very considerable indeed. But I had to stay there motionless, nevertheless."

After an interminable time, there began a chinking sound. This deepened into a rhythm: chink, chink, chink — twenty-five chinks — a rap on the writing-table, and a grunt from the owner of the stout legs. It dawned upon Mr. Ledbetter that this chinking was the chinking of gold. He became incredulously curious as it went on. His curiosity grew. Already, if that was the case, this extraordinary man must have counted some hundreds of pounds. At last Mr. Ledbetter could resist it no longer, and he began very cautiously to fold his arms and lower his head to the level of the floor, in the hope of peeping under the valance. He moved his feet, and one made a slight scraping on the floor. Suddenly the chinking ceased. Mr. Ledbetter became rigid. After a while the chinking was resumed. Then it ceased again, and everything was still, except Mr. Ledbetter's heart — that organ seemed to him to be beating like a drum.

The stillness continued. Mr. Ledbetter's head was now on the floor, and he could see the stout legs as far as the shins. They were quite still. The feet were resting on the toes and drawn back, as it seemed, under the chair of the owner. Everything was quite still, everything continued still. A wild hope came to Mr. Ledbetter that the unknown was in a fit or suddenly dead, with his head upon the writing-table....

The stillness continued. What had happened? The desire to peep became irresistible. Very cautiously Mr. Ledbetter shifted his hand forward, projected a pioneer finger, and began to lift the valance immediately next his eye. Nothing broke the stillness. He saw now the stranger's knees, saw the back of the writing-table, and then — he was staring at the barrel of a heavy revolver pointed over the writing-table at his head.

"Come out of that, you scoundrel!" said the voice of the stout gentleman in a tone of quiet concentration. "Come out. This side, and now. None of your hanky-panky — come right out, now."

Mr. Ledbetter came right out, a little reluctantly perhaps, but

without any hanky-panky, and at once, even as he was told.

"Kneel," said the stout gentleman, "and hold up your hands."

The valance dropped again behind Mr. Ledbetter, and he rose from all-fours and held up his hands. "Dressed like a parson," said the stout gentleman. "I'm blest if he isn't! A little chap, too! You SCOUNDREL! What the deuce possessed you to come here to-night? What the deuce possessed you to get under my bed?"

He did not appear to require an answer, but proceeded at once to several very objectionable remarks upon Mr. Ledbetter's personal appearance. He was not a very big man, but he looked strong to Mr. Ledbetter: he was as stout as his legs had promised, he had rather delicately-chiselled small features distributed over a considerable area of whitish face, and quite a number of chins. And the note of his voice had a sort of whispering undertone.

"What the deuce, I say, possessed you to get under my bed?"

Mr. Ledbetter, by an effort, smiled a wan propitiatory smile. He coughed. "I can quite understand—" he said.

"Why! What on earth? It's SOAP! No! — you scoundrel. Don't you move that hand."

"It's soap," said Mr. Ledbetter. "From your washstand. No doubt it—"

"Don't talk," said the stout man. "I see it's soap. Of all incredible things."

"If I might explain—"

"Don't explain. It's sure to be a lie, and there's no time for explanations. What was I going to ask you? Ah! Have you any mates?"

"In a few minutes, if you—"

"Have you any mates? Curse you. If you start any soapy palaver I'll shoot. Have you any mates?"

"No," said Mr. Ledbetter.

"I suppose it's a lie," said the stout man. "But you'll pay for it if it is. Why the deuce didn't you floor me when I came upstairs? You won't get a chance to now, anyhow. Fancy getting under the bed! I reckon it's a fair cop, anyhow, so far as you are concerned."

"I don't see how I could prove an alibi," remarked Mr. Ledbetter, trying to show by his conversation that he was an educated man.

There was a pause. Mr. Ledbetter perceived that on a chair beside his captor was a large black bag on a heap of crumpled papers, and that there were torn and burnt papers on the table. And in front of these, and arranged methodically along the edge were rows and rows of little yellow rouleaux — a hundred times more gold than Mr. Ledbetter had seen in all his life before. The light of two candles, in silver candlesticks, fell upon these. The pause continued. "It is rather fatiguing holding up my hands like this," said Mr. Ledbetter, with a deprecatory smile.

"That's all right," said the fat man. "But what to do with you I don't exactly know."

"I know my position is ambiguous."

"Lord!" said the fat man, "ambiguous! And goes about with his own soap, and wears a thundering great clerical collar. You ARE a blooming burglar, you are — if ever there was one!"

"To be strictly accurate," said Mr. Ledbetter, and suddenly his glasses slipped off and clattered against his vest buttons.

The fat man changed countenance, a flash of savage resolution crossed his face, and something in the revolver clicked. He put his other hand to the weapon. And then he looked at Mr. Ledbetter, and his eye went down to the dropped pince-nez.

"Full-cock now, anyhow," said the fat man, after a pause, and his breath seemed to catch. "But I'll tell you, you've never been so near death before. Lord! I'M almost glad. If it hadn't been that the revolver wasn't cocked you'd be lying dead there now."

Mr. Ledbetter said nothing, but he felt that the room was swaying.

"A miss is as good as a mile. It's lucky for both of us it wasn't. Lord!" He blew noisily. "There's no need for you to go pale-green for a little thing like that."

"If I can assure you, sir—" said Mr. Ledbetter, with an effort.

"There's only one thing to do. If I call in the police, I'm bust — a little game I've got on is bust. That won't do. If I tie you up and leave you again, the thing may be out to-morrow. Tomorrow's Sunday, and Monday's Bank Holiday — I've counted on three clear days. Shooting you's murder — and hanging; and besides, it will bust the whole blooming kernooze. I'm hanged if I can think what to do — I'm hanged if I can."

“Will you permit me—”

“You gas as much as if you were a real parson, I’m blessed if you don’t. Of all the burglars you are the — Well! No! — I WON’T permit you. There isn’t time. If you start off jawing again, I’ll shoot right in your stomach. See? But I know now-I know now! What we’re going to do first, my man, is an examination for concealed arms — an examination for concealed arms. And look here! When I tell you to do a thing, don’t start off at a gabble — do it brisk.”

And with many elaborate precautions, and always pointing the pistol at Mr. Ledbetter’s head, the stout man stood him up and searched him for weapons. “Why, you ARE a burglar!” he said “You’re a perfect amateur. You haven’t even a pistol-pocket in the back of your breeches. No, you don’t! Shut up, now.”

So soon as the issue was decided, the stout man made Mr. Ledbetter take off his coat and roll up his shirt-sleeves, and, with the revolver at one ear, proceed with the packing his appearance had interrupted. From the stout man’s point of view that was evidently the only possible arrangement, for if he had packed, he would have had to put down the revolver. So that even the gold on the table was handled by Mr. Ledbetter. This nocturnal packing was peculiar. The stout man’s idea was evidently to distribute the weight of the gold as unostentatiously as possible through his luggage. It was by no means an inconsiderable weight. There was, Mr. Ledbetter says, altogether nearly L18,000 in gold in the black bag and on the table. There were also many little rolls of L5 bank-notes. Each rouleau of L25 was wrapped by Mr. Ledbetter in paper. These rouleaux were then put neatly in cigar boxes and distributed between a travelling trunk, a Gladstone bag, and a hatbox. About L600 went in a tobacco tin in a dressing-bag. L10 in gold and a number of L5 notes the stout man pocketed. Occasionally he objurgated Mr. Ledbetter’s clumsiness, and urged him to hurry, and several times he appealed to Mr. Ledbetter’s watch for information.

Mr. Ledbetter strapped the trunk and bag, and returned the stout man the keys. It was then ten minutes to twelve, and until the stroke of midnight the stout man made him sit on the Gladstone bag, while he sat at a reasonably safe distance on the trunk and held the revolver handy and waited. He appeared to be now in a less aggressive mood,

and having watched Mr. Ledbetter for some time, he offered a few remarks.

"From your accent I judge you are a man of some education," he said, lighting a cigar. "No — DON'T begin that explanation of yours. I know it will be long-winded from your face, and I am much too old a liar to be interested in other men's lying. You are, I say, a person of education. You do well to dress as a curate. Even among educated people you might pass as a curate."

"I AM a curate," said Mr. Ledbetter, "or, at least—"

"You are trying to be. I know. But you didn't ought to burgle. You are not the man to burgle. You are, if I may say it — the thing will have been pointed out to you before — a coward."

"Do you know," said Mr. Ledbetter, trying to get a final opening, "it was that very question—"

The stout man waved him into silence.

"You waste your education in burglary. You should do one of two things. Either you should forge or you should embezzle. For my own part, I embezzle. Yes; I embezzle. What do you think a man could be doing with all this gold but that? Ah! Listen! Midnight!... Ten. Eleven. Twelve. There is something very impressive to me in that slow beating of the hours. Time — space; what mysteries they are! What mysteries.... It's time for us to be moving. Stand up!"

And then kindly, but firmly, he induced Mr. Ledbetter to sling the dressing bag over his back by a string across his chest, to shoulder the trunk, and, overruling a gasping protest, to take the Gladstone bag in his disengaged hand. So encumbered, Mr. Ledbetter struggled perilously downstairs. The stout gentleman followed with an overcoat, the hatbox, and the revolver, making derogatory remarks about Mr. Ledbetter's strength, and assisting him at the turnings of the stairs.

"The back door," he directed, and Mr. Ledbetter staggered through a conservatory, leaving a wake of smashed flower-pots behind him. "Never mind the crockery," said the stout man; "it's good for trade. We wait here until a quarter past. You can put those things down. You have!"

Mr. Ledbetter collapsed panting on the trunk. "Last night," he gasped, "I was asleep in my little room, and I no more dreamt—"

“There’s no need for you to incriminate yourself,” said the stout gentleman, looking at the lock of the revolver. He began to hum. Mr. Ledbetter made to speak, and thought better of it.

There presently came the sound of a bell, and Mr. Ledbetter was taken to the back door and instructed to open it. A fair-haired man in yachting costume entered. At the sight of Mr. Ledbetter he started violently and clapped his hand behind him. Then he saw the stout man. “Bingham!” he cried, “who’s this?”

“Only a little philanthropic do of mine — burglar I’m trying to reform. Caught him under my bed just now. He’s all right. He’s a frightful ass. He’ll be useful to carry some of our things.”

The newcomer seemed inclined to resent Mr. Ledbetter’s presence at first, but the stout man reassured him.

“He’s quite alone. There’s not a gang in the world would own him. No! — don’t start talking, for goodness’ sake.”

They went out into the darkness of the garden with the trunk still bowing Mr. Ledbetter’s shoulders. The man in the yachting costume walked in front with the Gladstone bag and a pistol; then came Mr. Ledbetter like Atlas; Mr. Bingham followed with the hat-box, coat, and revolver as before. The house was one of those that have their gardens right up to the cliff. At the cliff was a steep wooden stairway, descending to a bathing tent dimly visible on the beach. Below was a boat pulled up, and a silent little man with a black face stood beside it. “A few moments’ explanation,” said Mr. Ledbetter; “I can assure you—” Somebody kicked him, and he said no more.

They made him wade to the boat, carrying the trunk, they pulled him aboard by the shoulders and hair, they called him no better name than “scoundrel” and “burglar” all that night. But they spoke in undertones so that the general public was happily unaware of his ignominy. They hauled him aboard a yacht manned by strange, unsympathetic Orientals, and partly they thrust him and partly he fell down a gangway into a noisome, dark place, where he was to remain many days — how many he does not know, because he lost count among other things when he was seasick. They fed him on biscuits and incomprehensible words; they gave him water to drink mixed with unwished-for rum. And there were cockroaches where they put him, night and day there were cockroaches, and in the night-time

there were rats. The Orientals emptied his pockets and took his watch — but Mr. Bingham, being appealed to, took that himself. And five or six times the five Lascars — if they were Lascars — and the Chinaman and the negro who constituted the crew, fished him out and took him aft to Bingham and his friend to play cribbage and euchre and three-anded whist, and to listen to their stories and boastings in an interested manner.

Then these principals would talk to him as men talk to those who have lived a life of crime. Explanations they would never permit, though they made it abundantly clear to him that he was the rummiest burglar they had ever set eyes on. They said as much again and again. The fair man was of a taciturn disposition and irascible at play; but Mr. Bingham, now that the evident anxiety of his departure from England was assuaged, displayed a vein of genial philosophy. He enlarged upon the mystery of space and time, and quoted Kant and Hegel — or, at least, he said he did. Several times Mr. Ledbetter got as far as: "My position under your bed, you know — ," but then he always had to cut, or pass the whisky, or do some such intervening thing. After his third failure, the fair man got quite to look for this opening, and whenever Mr. Ledbetter began after that, he would roar with laughter and hit him violently on the back. "Same old start, same old story; good old burglar!" the fair-haired man would say.

So Mr. Ledbetter suffered for many days, twenty perhaps; and one evening he was taken, together with some tinned provisions, over the side and put ashore on a rocky little island with a spring. Mr. Bingham came in the boat with him, giving him good advice all the way, and waving his last attempts at an explanation aside.

"I am really NOT a burglar," said Mr. Ledbetter.

"You never will be," said Mr. Bingham. "You'll never make a burglar. I'm glad you are beginning to see it. In choosing a profession a man must study his temperament. If you don't, sooner or later you will fail. Compare myself, for example. All my life I have been in banks — I have got on in banks. I have even been a bank manager. But was I happy? No. Why wasn't I happy? Because it did not suit my temperament. I am too adventurous — too versatile. Practically I have thrown it over. I do not suppose I shall

ever manage a bank again. They would be glad to get me, no doubt; but I have learnt the lesson of my temperament — at last.... No! I shall never manage a bank again.

"Now, your temperament unfits you for crime — just as mine unfits me for respectability. I know you better than I did, and now I do not even recommend forgery. Go back to respectable courses, my man. YOUR lay is the philanthropic lay — that is your lay. With that voice — the Association for the Promotion of Snivelling among the Young — something in that line. You think it over.

"The island we are approaching has no name apparently — at least, there is none on the chart. You might think out a name for it while you are there — while you are thinking about all these things. It has quite drinkable water, I understand. It is one of the Grenadines — one of the Windward Islands. Yonder, dim and blue, are others of the Grenadines. There are quantities of Grenadines, but the majority are out of sight. I have often wondered what these islands are for — now, you see, I am wiser. This one at least is for you. Sooner or later some simple native will come along and take you off. Say what you like about us then — abuse us, if you like — we shan't care a solitary Grenadine! And here — here is half a sovereign's worth of silver. Do not waste that in foolish dissipation when you return to civilisation. Properly used, it may give you a fresh start in life. And do not — Don't beach her, you beggars, he can wade! — Do not waste the precious solitude before you in foolish thoughts. Properly used, it may be a turning-point in your career. Waste neither money nor time. You will die rich. I'm sorry, but I must ask you to carry your tucker to land in your arms. No; it's not deep. Curse that explanation of yours! There's not time. No, no, no! I won't listen. Overboard you go!"

And the falling night found Mr. Ledbetter — the Mr. Ledbetter who had complained that adventure was dead — sitting beside his cans of food, his chin resting upon his drawn-up knees, staring through his glasses in dismal mildness over the shining, vacant sea.

He was picked up in the course of three days by a negro fisherman and taken to St. Vincent's, and from St. Vincent's he got, by the expenditure of his last coins, to Kingston, in Jamaica. And there he might have foundered. Even nowadays he is not a man of affairs, and

then he was a singularly helpless person. He had not the remotest idea what he ought to do. The only thing he seems to have done was to visit all the ministers of religion he could find in the place to borrow a passage home. But he was much too dirty and incoherent — and his story far too incredible for them. I met him quite by chance. It was close upon sunset, and I was walking out after my siesta on the road to Dunn's Battery, when I met him — I was rather bored, and with a whole evening on my hands — luckily for him. He was trudging dismally towards the town. His woebegone face and the quasi-clerical cut of his dust-stained, filthy costume caught my humour. Our eyes met. He hesitated. "Sir," he said, with a catching of the breath, "could you spare a few minutes for what I fear will seem an incredible story?"

"Incredible!" I said.

"Quite," he answered eagerly. "No one will believe it, alter it though I may. Yet I can assure you, sir—"

He stopped hopelessly. The man's tone tickled me. He seemed an odd character. "I am," he said, "one of the most unfortunate beings alive."

"Among other things, you haven't dined?" I said, struck with an idea.

"I have not," he said solemnly, "for many days."

"You'll tell it better after that," I said; and without more ado led the way to a low place I knew, where such a costume as his was unlikely to give offence. And there — with certain omissions which he subsequently supplied — I got his story. At first I was incredulous, but as the wine warmed him, and the faint suggestion of cringing which his misfortunes had added to his manner disappeared, I began to believe. At last, I was so far convinced of his sincerity that I got him a bed for the night, and next day verified the banker's reference he gave me through my Jamaica banker. And that done, I took him shopping for underwear and such like equipments of a gentleman at large. Presently came the verified reference. His astonishing story was true. I will not amplify our subsequent proceedings. He started for England in three days' time.

"I do not know how I can possibly thank you enough," began the letter he wrote me from England, "for all your kindness to a total

stranger," and proceeded for some time in a similar strain. "Had it not been for your generous assistance, I could certainly never have returned in time for the resumption of my scholastic duties, and my few minutes of reckless folly would, perhaps, have proved my ruin. As it is, I am entangled in a tissue of lies and evasions, of the most complicated sort, to account for my sunburnt appearance and my whereabouts. I have rather carelessly told two or three different stories, not realising the trouble this would mean for me in the end. The truth I dare not tell. I have consulted a number of law-books in the British Museum, and there is not the slightest doubt that I have connived at and abetted and aided a felony. That scoundrel Bingham was the Hithergate bank manager, I find, and guilty of the most flagrant embezzlement. Please, please burn this letter when read — I trust you implicitly. The worst of it is, neither my aunt nor her friend who kept the boarding-house at which I was staying seem altogether to believe a guarded statement I have made them practically of what actually happened. They suspect me of some discreditable adventure, but what sort of discreditable adventure they suspect me of, I do not know. My aunt says she would forgive me if I told her everything. I have — I have told her MORE than everything, and still she is not satisfied. It would never do to let them know the truth of the case, of course, and so I represent myself as having been waylaid and gagged upon the beach. My aunt wants to know WHY they waylaid and gagged me, why they took me away in their yacht. I do not know. Can you suggest any reason? I can think of nothing. If, when you wrote, you could write on TWO sheets so that I could show her one, and on that one if you could show clearly that I really WAS in Jamaica this summer, and had come there by being removed from a ship, it would be of great service to me. It would certainly add to the load of my obligation to you — a load that I fear I can never fully repay. Although if gratitude..." And so forth. At the end he repeated his request for me to burn the letter.

So the remarkable story of Mr. Ledbetter's Vacation ends. That breach with his aunt was not of long duration. The old lady had forgiven him before she died.

THE STOLEN BODY

Mr. Bessel was the senior partner in the firm of Bessel, Hart, and Brown, of St. Paul's Churchyard, and for many years he was well known among those interested in psychical research as a liberal-minded and conscientious investigator. He was an unmarried man, and instead of living in the suburbs, after the fashion of his class, he occupied rooms in the Albany, near Piccadilly. He was particularly interested in the questions of thought transference and of apparitions of the living, and in November, 1896, he commenced a series of experiments in conjunction with Mr. Vincey, of Staple Inn, in order to test the alleged possibility of projecting an apparition of one's self by force of will through space.

Their experiments were conducted in the following manner: At a pre-arranged hour Mr. Bessel shut himself in one of his rooms in the Albany and Mr. Vincey in his sitting-room in Staple Inn, and each then fixed his mind as resolutely as possible on the other. Mr. Bessel had acquired the art of self-hypnotism, and, so far as he could, he attempted first to hypnotise himself and then to project himself as a "phantom of the living" across the intervening space of nearly two miles into Mr. Vincey's apartment. On several evenings this was tried without any satisfactory result, but on the fifth or sixth occasion Mr. Vincey did actually see or imagine he saw an apparition of Mr. Bessel standing in his room. He states that the appearance, although brief, was very vivid and real. He noticed that Mr. Bessel's face was white and his expression anxious, and, moreover, that his hair was disordered. For a moment Mr. Vincey, in spite of his state of expectation, was too surprised to speak or move, and in that moment it seemed to him as though the figure glanced over its shoulder and incontinently vanished.

It had been arranged that an attempt should be made to photograph any phantasm seen, but Mr. Vincey had not the instant presence of mind to snap the camera that lay ready on the table beside him, and when he did so he was too late. Greatly elated, however, even by this partial success, he made a note of the exact time, and at once took a cab to the Albany to inform Mr. Bessel of

this result.

He was surprised to find Mr. Bessel's outer door standing open to the night, and the inner apartments lit and in an extraordinary disorder. An empty champagne magnum lay smashed upon the floor; its neck had been broken off against the inkpot on the bureau and lay beside it. An octagonal occasional table, which carried a bronze statuette and a number of choice books, had been rudely overturned, and down the primrose paper of the wall inky fingers had been drawn, as it seemed for the mere pleasure of defilement. One of the delicate chintz curtains had been violently torn from its rings and thrust upon the fire, so that the smell of its smouldering filled the room. Indeed the whole place was disarranged in the strangest fashion. For a few minutes Mr. Vincey, who had entered sure of finding Mr. Bessel in his easy chair awaiting him, could scarcely believe his eyes, and stood staring helplessly at these unanticipated things.

Then, full of a vague sense of calamity, he sought the porter at the entrance lodge. "Where is Mr. Bessel?" he asked. "Do you know that all the furniture is broken in Mr. Bessel's room?" The porter said nothing, but, obeying his gestures, came at once to Mr. Bessel's apartment to see the state of affairs. "This settles it," he said, surveying the lunatic confusion. "I didn't know of this. Mr. Bessel's gone off. He's mad!"

He then proceeded to tell Mr. Vincey that about half an hour previously, that is to say, at about the time of Mr. Bessel's apparition in Mr. Vincey's rooms, the missing gentleman had rushed out of the gates of the Albany into Vigo Street, hatless and with disordered hair, and had vanished into the direction of Bond Street. "And as he went past me," said the porter, "he laughed — a sort of gasping laugh, with his mouth open and his eyes glaring — I tell you, sir, he fair scared me! — like this."

According to his imitation it was anything but a pleasant laugh. "He waved his hand, with all his fingers crooked and clawing — like that. And he said, in a sort of fierce whisper, 'LIFE!' Just that one word, 'LIFE!'"

"Dear me," said Mr. Vincey. "Tut, tut," and "Dear me!" He could think of nothing else to say. He was naturally very much surprised.

He turned from the room to the porter and from the porter to the room in the gravest perplexity. Beyond his suggestion that probably Mr. Bessel would come back presently and explain what had happened, their conversation was unable to proceed. “It might be a sudden toothache,” said the porter, “a very sudden and violent toothache, jumping on him suddenly-like and driving him wild. I’ve broken things myself before now in such a case...” He thought. “If it was, why should he say ‘LIFE’ to me as he went past?”

Mr. Vincey did not know. Mr. Bessel did not return, and at last Mr. Vincey, having done some more helpless staring, and having addressed a note of brief inquiry and left it in a conspicuous position on the bureau, returned in a very perplexed frame of mind to his own premises in Staple Inn. This affair had given him a shock. He was at a loss to account for Mr. Bessel’s conduct on any sane hypothesis. He tried to read, but he could not do so; he went for a short walk, and was so preoccupied that he narrowly escaped a cab at the top of Chancery Lane; and at last — a full hour before his usual time — he went to bed. For a considerable time he could not sleep because of his memory of the silent confusion of Mr. Bessel’s apartment, and when at length he did attain an uneasy slumber it was at once disturbed by a very vivid and distressing dream of Mr. Bessel.

He saw Mr. Bessel gesticulating wildly, and with his face white and contorted. And, inexplicably mingled with his appearance, suggested perhaps by his gestures, was an intense fear, an urgency to act. He even believes that he heard the voice of his fellow experimenter calling distressfully to him, though at the time he considered this to be an illusion. The vivid impression remained though Mr. Vincey awoke. For a space he lay awake and trembling in the darkness, possessed with that vague, unaccountable terror of unknown possibilities that comes out of dreams upon even the bravest men. But at last he roused himself, and turned over and went to sleep again, only for the dream to return with enhanced vividness.

He awoke with such a strong conviction that Mr. Bessel was in overwhelming distress and need of help that sleep was no longer possible. He was persuaded that his friend had rushed out to some dire calamity. For a time he lay reasoning vainly against this belief, but at last he gave way to it. He arose, against all reason, lit his gas,

and dressed, and set out through the deserted streets — deserted, save for a noiseless policeman or so and the early news carts — towards Vigo Street to inquire if Mr. Bessel had returned.

But he never got there. As he was going down Long Acre some unaccountable impulse turned him aside out of that street towards Covent Garden, which was just waking to its nocturnal activities. He saw the market in front of him — a queer effect of glowing yellow lights and busy black figures. He became aware of a shouting, and perceived a figure turn the corner by the hotel and run swiftly towards him. He knew at once that it was Mr. Bessel. But it was Mr. Bessel transfigured. He was hatless and dishevelled, his collar was torn open, he grasped a bone-handled walking-cane near the ferrule end, and his mouth was pulled awry. And he ran, with agile strides, very rapidly. Their encounter was the affair of an instant. "Bessel!" cried Vincey.

The running man gave no sign of recognition either of Mr. Vincey or of his own name. Instead, he cut at his friend savagely with the stick, hitting him in the face within an inch of the eye. Mr. Vincey, stunned and astonished, staggered back, lost his footing, and fell heavily on the pavement. It seemed to him that Mr. Bessel leapt over him as he fell. When he looked again Mr. Bessel had vanished, and a policeman and a number of garden porters and salesmen were rushing past towards Long Acre in hot pursuit.

With the assistance of several passers-by — for the whole street was speedily alive with running people — Mr. Vincey struggled to his feet. He at once became the centre of a crowd greedy to see his injury. A multitude of voices competed to reassure him of his safety, and then to tell him of the behaviour of the madman, as they regarded Mr. Bessel. He had suddenly appeared in the middle of the market screaming "LIFE! LIFE!" striking left and right with a blood-stained walking-stick, and dancing and shouting with laughter at each successful blow. A lad and two women had broken heads, and he had smashed a man's wrist; a little child had been knocked insensible, and for a time he had driven every one before him, so furious and resolute had his behaviour been. Then he made a raid upon a coffee stall, hurled its paraffin flare through the window of the post office, and fled laughing, after stunning the foremost of the two

policemen who had the pluck to charge him.

Mr. Vincey's first impulse was naturally to join in the pursuit of his friend, in order if possible to save him from the violence of the indignant people. But his action was slow, the blow had half stunned him, and while this was still no more than a resolution came the news, shouted through the crowd, that Mr. Bessel had eluded his pursuers. At first Mr. Vincey could scarcely credit this, but the universality of the report, and presently the dignified return of two futile policemen, convinced him. After some aimless inquiries he returned towards Staple Inn, padding a handkerchief to a now very painful nose.

He was angry and astonished and perplexed. It appeared to him indisputable that Mr. Bessel must have gone violently mad in the midst of his experiment in thought transference, but why that should make him appear with a sad white face in Mr. Vincey's dreams seemed a problem beyond solution. He racked his brains in vain to explain this. It seemed to him at last that not simply Mr. Bessel, but the order of things must be insane. But he could think of nothing to do. He shut himself carefully into his room, lit his fire — it was a gas fire with asbestos bricks — and, fearing fresh dreams if he went to bed, remained bathing his injured face, or holding up books in a vain attempt to read, until dawn. Throughout that vigil he had a curious persuasion that Mr. Bessel was endeavouring to speak to him, but he would not let himself attend to any such belief.

About dawn, his physical fatigue asserted itself, and he went to bed and slept at last in spite of dreaming. He rose late, unrested and anxious, and in considerable facial pain. The morning papers had no news of Mr. Bessel's aberration — it had come too late for them. Mr. Vincey's perplexities, to which the fever of his bruise added fresh irritation, became at last intolerable, and, after a fruitless visit to the Albany, he went down to St. Paul's Churchyard to Mr. Hart, Mr. Bessel's partner, and, so far as Mr. Vincey knew, his nearest friend.

He was surprised to learn that Mr. Hart, although he knew nothing of the outbreak, had also been disturbed by a vision, the very vision that Mr. Vincey had seen — Mr. Bessel, white and dishevelled, pleading earnestly by his gestures for help. That was his impression of the import of his signs. "I was just going to look him up in the

Albany when you arrived," said Mr. Hart. "I was so sure of something being wrong with him."

As the outcome of their consultation the two gentlemen decided to inquire at Scotland Yard for news of their missing friend. "He is bound to be laid by the heels," said Mr. Hart. "He can't go on at that pace for long." But the police authorities had not laid Mr. Bessel by the heels. They confirmed Mr. Vincey's overnight experiences and added fresh circumstances, some of an even graver character than those he knew — a list of smashed glass along the upper half of Tottenham Court Road, an attack upon a policeman in Hampstead Road, and an atrocious assault upon a woman. All these outrages were committed between half-past twelve and a quarter to two in the morning, and between those hours — and, indeed, from the very moment of Mr. Bessel's first rush from his rooms at half-past nine in the evening — they could trace the deepening violence of his fantastic career. For the last hour, at least from before one, that is, until a quarter to two, he had run amuck through London, eluding with amazing agility every effort to stop or capture him.

But after a quarter to two he had vanished. Up to that hour witnesses were multitudinous. Dozens of people had seen him, fled from him or pursued him, and then things suddenly came to an end. At a quarter to two he had been seen running down the Euston Road towards Baker Street, flourishing a can of burning colza oil and jerking splashes of flame therefrom at the windows of the houses he passed. But none of the policemen on Euston Road beyond the Waxwork Exhibition, nor any of those in the side streets down which he must have passed had he left the Euston Road, had seen anything of him. Abruptly he disappeared. Nothing of his subsequent doings came to light in spite of the keenest inquiry.

Here was a fresh astonishment for Mr. Vincey. He had found considerable comfort in Mr. Hart's conviction: "He is bound to be laid by the heels before long," and in that assurance he had been able to suspend his mental perplexities. But any fresh development seemed destined to add new impossibilities to a pile already heaped beyond the powers of his acceptance. He found himself doubting whether his memory might not have played him some grotesque trick, debating whether any of these things could possibly have

happened; and in the afternoon he hunted up Mr. Hart again to share the intolerable weight on his mind. He found Mr. Hart engaged with a well-known private detective, but as that gentleman accomplished nothing in this case, we need not enlarge upon his proceedings.

All that day Mr. Bessel's whereabouts eluded an unceasingly active inquiry, and all that night. And all that day there was a persuasion in the back of Vincey's mind that Mr. Bessel sought his attention, and all through the night Mr. Bessel with a tear-stained face of anguish pursued him through his dreams. And whenever he saw Mr. Bessel in his dreams he also saw a number of other faces, vague but malignant, that seemed to be pursuing Mr. Bessel.

It was on the following day, Sunday, that Mr. Vincey recalled certain remarkable stories of Mrs. Bullock, the medium, who was then attracting attention for the first time in London. He determined to consult her. She was staying at the house of that well-known inquirer, Dr. Wilson Paget, and Mr. Vincey, although he had never met that gentleman before, repaired to him forthwith with the intention of invoking her help. But scarcely had he mentioned the name of Bessel when Doctor Paget interrupted him. "Last night — just at the end," he said, "we had a communication."

He left the room, and returned with a slate on which were certain words written in a handwriting, shaky indeed, but indisputably the handwriting of Mr. Bessel!

"How did you get this?" said Mr. Vincey. "Do you mean — ?"

"We got it last night," said Doctor Paget. With numerous interruptions from Mr. Vincey, he proceeded to explain how the writing had been obtained. It appears that in her seances, Mrs. Bullock passes into a condition of trance, her eyes rolling up in a strange way under her eyelids, and her body becoming rigid. She then begins to talk very rapidly, usually in voices other than her own. At the same time one or both of her hands may become active, and if slates and pencils are provided they will then write messages simultaneously with and quite independently of the flow of words from her mouth. By many she is considered an even more remarkable medium than the celebrated Mrs. Piper. It was one of these messages, the one written by her left hand, that Mr. Vincey now had before him. It consisted of eight words written

disconnectedly: “George Bessel... trial excavn.... Baker Street... help... starvation.” Curiously enough, neither Doctor Paget nor the two other inquirers who were present had heard of the disappearance of Mr. Bessel — the news of it appeared only in the evening papers of Saturday — and they had put the message aside with many others of a vague and enigmatical sort that Mrs. Bullock has from time to time delivered.

When Doctor Paget heard Mr. Vincey’s story, he gave himself at once with great energy to the pursuit of this clue to the discovery of Mr. Bessel. It would serve no useful purpose here to describe the inquiries of Mr. Vincey and himself; suffice it that the clue was a genuine one, and that Mr. Bessel was actually discovered by its aid.

He was found at the bottom of a detached shaft which had been sunk and abandoned at the commencement of the work for the new electric railway near Baker Street Station. His arm and leg and two ribs were broken. The shaft is protected by a hoarding nearly 20 feet high, and over this, incredible as it seems, Mr. Bessel, a stout, middle-aged gentleman, must have scrambled in order to fall down the shaft. He was saturated in colza oil, and the smashed tin lay beside him, but luckily the flame had been extinguished by his fall. And his madness had passed from him altogether. But he was, of course, terribly enfeebled, and at the sight of his rescuers he gave way to hysterical weeping.

In view of the deplorable state of his flat, he was taken to the house of Dr. Hatton in Upper Baker Street. Here he was subjected to a sedative treatment, and anything that might recall the violent crisis through which he had passed was carefully avoided. But on the second day he volunteered a statement.

Since that occasion Mr. Bessel has several times repeated this statement — to myself among other people — varying the details as the narrator of real experiences always does, but never by any chance contradicting himself in any particular. And the statement he makes is in substance as follows.

In order to understand it clearly it is necessary to go back to his experiments with Mr. Vincey before his remarkable attack. Mr. Bessel’s first attempts at self-projection, in his experiments with Mr. Vincey, were, as the reader will remember, unsuccessful. But

through all of them he was concentrating all his power and will upon getting out of the body— “willing it with all my might,” he says. At last, almost against expectation, came success. And Mr. Bessel asserts that he, being alive, did actually, by an effort of will, leave his body and pass into some place or state outside this world.

The release was, he asserts, instantaneous. “At one moment I was seated in my chair, with my eyes tightly shut, my hands gripping the arms of the chair, doing all I could to concentrate my mind on Vincey, and then I perceived myself outside my body — saw my body near me, but certainly not containing me, with the hands relaxing and the head drooping forward on the breast.”

Nothing shakes him in his assurance of that release. He describes in a quiet, matter-of-fact way the new sensation he experienced. He felt he had become impalpable — so much he had expected, but he had not expected to find himself enormously large. So, however, it would seem he became. “I was a great cloud — if I may express it that way — anchored to my body. It appeared to me, at first, as if I had discovered a greater self of which the conscious being in my brain was only a little part. I saw the Albany and Piccadilly and Regent Street and all the rooms and places in the houses, very minute and very bright and distinct, spread out below me like a little city seen from a balloon. Every now and then vague shapes like drifting wreaths of smoke made the vision a little indistinct, but at first I paid little heed to them. The thing that astonished me most, and which astonishes me still, is that I saw quite distinctly the insides of the houses as well as the streets, saw little people dining and talking in the private houses, men and women dining, playing billiards, and drinking in restaurants and hotels, and several places of entertainment crammed with people. It was like watching the affairs of a glass hive.”

Such were Mr. Bessel’s exact words as I took them down when he told me the story. Quite forgetful of Mr. Vincey, he remained for a space observing these things. Impelled by curiosity, he says, he stooped down, and, with the shadowy arm he found himself possessed of, attempted to touch a man walking along Vigo Street. But he could not do so, though his finger seemed to pass through the man. Something prevented his doing this, but what it was he finds it

hard to describe. He compares the obstacle to a sheet of glass.

"I felt as a kitten may feel," he said, "when it goes for the first time to pat its reflection in a mirror." Again and again, on the occasion when I heard him tell this story, Mr. Bessel returned to that comparison of the sheet of glass. Yet it was not altogether a precise comparison, because, as the reader will speedily see, there were interruptions of this generally impermeable resistance, means of getting through the barrier to the material world again. But, naturally, there is a very great difficulty in expressing these unprecedented impressions in the language of everyday experience.

A thing that impressed him instantly, and which weighed upon him throughout all this experience, was the stillness of this place — he was in a world without sound.

At first Mr. Bessel's mental state was an unemotional wonder. His thought chiefly concerned itself with where he might be. He was out of the body — out of his material body, at any rate — but that was not all. He believes, and I for one believe also, that he was somewhere out of space, as we understand it, altogether. By a strenuous effort of will he had passed out of his body into a world beyond this world, a world undreamt of, yet lying so close to it and so strangely situated with regard to it that all things on this earth are clearly visible both from without and from within in this other world about us. For a long time, as it seemed to him, this realisation occupied his mind to the exclusion of all other matters, and then he recalled the engagement with Mr. Vincey, to which this astonishing experience was, after all, but a prelude.

He turned his mind to locomotion in this new body in which he found himself. For a time he was unable to shift himself from his attachment to his earthly carcass. For a time this new strange cloud body of his simply swayed, contracted, expanded, coiled, and writhed with his efforts to free himself, and then quite suddenly the link that bound him snapped. For a moment everything was hidden by what appeared to be whirling spheres of dark vapour, and then through a momentary gap he saw his drooping body collapse limply, saw his lifeless head drop sideways, and found he was driving along like a huge cloud in a strange place of shadowy clouds that had the luminous intricacy of London spread like a model below.

But now he was aware that the fluctuating vapour about him was something more than vapour, and the temerarious excitement of his first essay was shot with fear. For he perceived, at first indistinctly, and then suddenly very clearly, that he was surrounded by FACES! that each roll and coil of the seeming cloud-stuff was a face. And such faces! Faces of thin shadow, faces of gaseous tenuity. Faces like those faces that glare with intolerable strangeness upon the sleeper in the evil hours of his dreams. Evil, greedy eyes that were full of a covetous curiosity, faces with knit brows and snarling, smiling lips; their vague hands clutched at Mr. Bessel as he passed, and the rest of their bodies was but an elusive streak of trailing darkness. Never a word they said, never a sound from the mouths that seemed to gibber. All about him they pressed in that dreamy silence, passing freely through the dim mistiness that was his body, gathering ever more numerously about him. And the shadowy Mr. Bessel, now suddenly fear-stricken, drove through the silent, active multitude of eyes and clutching hands.

So inhuman were these faces, so malignant their staring eyes, and shadowy, clawing gestures, that it did not occur to Mr. Bessel to attempt intercourse with these drifting creatures. Idiot phantoms, they seemed, children of vain desire, beings unborn and forbidden the boon of being, whose only expressions and gestures told of the envy and craving for life that was their one link with existence.

It says much for his resolution that, amidst the swarming cloud of these noiseless spirits of evil, he could still think of Mr. Vincey. He made a violent effort of will and found himself, he knew not how, stooping towards Staple Inn, saw Vincey sitting attentive and alert in his arm-chair by the fire.

And clustering also about him, as they clustered ever about all that lives and breathes, was another multitude of these vain voiceless shadows, longing, desiring, seeking some loophole into life.

For a space Mr. Bessel sought ineffectually to attract his friend's attention. He tried to get in front of his eyes, to move the objects in his room, to touch him. But Mr. Vincey remained unaffected, ignorant of the being that was so close to his own. The strange something that Mr. Bessel has compared to a sheet of glass separated them impermeably.

And at last Mr. Bessel did a desperate thing. I have told how that in some strange way he could see not only the outside of a man as we see him, but within. He extended his shadowy hand and thrust his vague black fingers, as it seemed, through the heedless brain.

Then, suddenly, Mr. Vincey started like a man who recalls his attention from wandering thoughts, and it seemed to Mr. Bessel that a little dark-red body situated in the middle of Mr. Vincey's brain swelled and glowed as he did so. Since that experience he has been shown anatomical figures of the brain, and he knows now that this is that useless structure, as doctors call it, the pineal eye. For, strange as it will seem to many, we have, deep in our brains — where it cannot possibly see any earthly light — an eye! At the time this, with the rest of the internal anatomy of the brain, was quite new to him. At the sight of its changed appearance, however, he thrust forth his finger, and, rather fearful still of the consequences, touched this little spot. And instantly Mr. Vincey started, and Mr. Bessel knew that he was seen.

And at that instant it came to Mr. Bessel that evil had happened to his body, and behold! a great wind blew through all that world of shadows and tore him away. So strong was this persuasion that he thought no more of Mr. Vincey, but turned about forthwith, and all the countless faces drove back with him like leaves before a gale. But he returned too late. In an instant he saw the body that he had left inert and collapsed — lying, indeed, like the body of a man just dead — had arisen, had arisen by virtue of some strength and will beyond his own. It stood with staring eyes, stretching its limbs in dubious fashion.

For a moment he watched it in wild dismay, and then he stooped towards it. But the pane of glass had closed against him again, and he was foiled. He beat himself passionately against this, and all about him the spirits of evil grinned and pointed and mocked. He gave way to furious anger. He compares himself to a bird that has fluttered heedlessly into a room and is beating at the window-pane that holds it back from freedom.

And behold! the little body that had once been his was now dancing with delight. He saw it shouting, though he could not hear its shouts; he saw the violence of its movements grow. He watched it

fling his cherished furniture about in the mad delight of existence, rend his books apart, smash bottles, drink heedlessly from the jagged fragments, leap and smite in a passionate acceptance of living. He watched these actions in paralysed astonishment. Then once more he hurled himself against the impassable barrier, and then with all that crew of mocking ghosts about him, hurried back in dire confusion to Vincey to tell him of the outrage that had come upon him.

But the brain of Vincey was now closed against apparitions, and the disembodied Mr. Bessel pursued him in vain as he hurried out into Holborn to call a cab. Foiled and terror-stricken, Mr. Bessel swept back again, to find his desecrated body whooping in a glorious frenzy down the Burlington Arcade....

And now the attentive reader begins to understand Mr. Bessel's interpretation of the first part of this strange story. The being whose frantic rush through London had inflicted so much injury and disaster had indeed Mr. Bessel's body, but it was not Mr. Bessel. It was an evil spirit out of that strange world beyond existence, into which Mr. Bessel had so rashly ventured. For twenty hours it held possession of him, and for all those twenty hours the dispossessed spirit-body of Mr. Bessel was going to and fro in that unheard-of middle world of shadows seeking help in vain. He spent many hours beating at the minds of Mr. Vincey and of his friend Mr. Hart. Each, as we know, he roused by his efforts. But the language that might convey his situation to these helpers across the gulf he did not know; his feeble fingers groped vainly and powerlessly in their brains. Once, indeed, as we have already told, he was able to turn Mr. Vincey aside from his path so that he encountered the stolen body in its career, but he could not make him understand the thing that had happened: he was unable to draw any help from that encounter....

All through those hours the persuasion was overwhelming in Mr. Bessel's mind that presently his body would be killed by its furious tenant, and he would have to remain in this shadow-land for evermore. So that those long hours were a growing agony of fear. And ever as he hurried to and fro in his ineffectual excitement, innumerable spirits of that world about him mobbed him and confused his mind. And ever an envious applauding multitude poured after their successful fellow as he went upon his glorious

career.

For that, it would seem, must be the life of these bodiless things of this world that is the shadow of our world. Ever they watch, coveting a way into a mortal body, in order that they may descend, as furies and frenzies, as violent lusts and mad, strange impulses, rejoicing in the body they have won. For Mr. Bessel was not the only human soul in that place. Witness the fact that he met first one, and afterwards several shadows of men, men like himself, it seemed, who had lost their bodies even it may be as he had lost his, and wandered, despairingly, in that lost world that is neither life nor death. They could not speak because that world is silent, yet he knew them for men because of their dim human bodies, and because of the sadness of their faces.

But how they had come into that world he could not tell, nor where the bodies they had lost might be, whether they still raved about the earth, or whether they were closed forever in death against return. That they were the spirits of the dead neither he nor I believe. But Doctor Wilson Paget thinks they are the rational souls of men who are lost in madness on the earth.

At last Mr. Bessel chanced upon a place where a little crowd of such disembodied silent creatures was gathered, and thrusting through them he saw below a brightly-lit room, and four or five quiet gentlemen and a woman, a stoutish woman dressed in black bombazine and sitting awkwardly in a chair with her head thrown back. He knew her from her portraits to be Mrs. Bullock, the medium. And he perceived that tracts and structures in her brain glowed and stirred as he had seen the pineal eye in the brain of Mr. Vincey glow. The light was very fitful; sometimes it was a broad illumination, and sometimes merely a faint twilight spot, and it shifted slowly about her brain. She kept on talking and writing with one hand. And Mr. Bessel saw that the crowding shadows of men about him, and a great multitude of the shadow spirits of that shadowland, were all striving and thrusting to touch the lighted regions of her brain. As one gained her brain or another was thrust away, her voice and the writing of her hand changed. So that what she said was disorderly and confused for the most part; now a fragment of one soul's message, and now a fragment of another's,

and now she babbled the insane fancies of the spirits of vain desire. Then Mr. Bessel understood that she spoke for the spirit that had touch of her, and he began to struggle very furiously towards her. But he was on the outside of the crowd and at that time he could not reach her, and at last, growing anxious, he went away to find what had happened meanwhile to his body. For a long time he went to and fro seeking it in vain and fearing that it must have been killed, and then he found it at the bottom of the shaft in Baker Street, writhing furiously and cursing with pain. Its leg and an arm and two ribs had been broken by its fall. Moreover, the evil spirit was angry because his time had been so short and because of the painmaking violent movements and casting his body about.

And at that Mr. Bessel returned with redoubled earnestness to the room where the seance was going on, and so soon as he had thrust himself within sight of the place he saw one of the men who stood about the medium looking at his watch as if he meant that the seance should presently end. At that a great number of the shadows who had been striving turned away with gestures of despair. But the thought that the seance was almost over only made Mr. Bessel the more earnest, and he struggled so stoutly with his will against the others that presently he gained the woman's brain. It chanced that just at that moment it glowed very brightly, and in that instant she wrote the message that Doctor Wilson Paget preserved. And then the other shadows and the cloud of evil spirits about him had thrust Mr. Bessel away from her, and for all the rest of the seance he could regain her no more.

So he went back and watched through the long hours at the bottom of the shaft where the evil spirit lay in the stolen body it had maimed, writhing and cursing, and weeping and groaning, and learning the lesson of pain. And towards dawn the thing he had waited for happened, the brain glowed brightly and the evil spirit came out, and Mr. Bessel entered the body he had feared he should never enter again. As he did so, the silence — the brooding silence — ended; he heard the tumult of traffic and the voices of people overhead, and that strange world that is the shadow of our world — the dark and silent shadows of ineffectual desire and the shadows of lost men — vanished clean away.

He lay there for the space of about three hours before he was found. And in spite of the pain and suffering of his wounds, and of the dim damp place in which he lay; in spite of the tears — wrung from him by his physical distress — his heart was full of gladness to know that he was nevertheless back once more in the kindly world of men.

MR. BRISHER'S TREASURE

"You can't be TOO careful WHO you marry," said Mr. Brisher, and pulled thoughtfully with a fat-wristed hand at the lank moustache that hides his want of chin.

"That's why—" I ventured.

"Yes," said Mr. Brisher, with a solemn light in his bleary, blue-grey eyes, moving his head expressively and breathing alcohol INTIMATELY at me. "There's lots as 'ave 'ad a try at me — many as I could name in this town — but none 'ave done it — none."

I surveyed the flushed countenance, the equatorial expansion, the masterly carelessness of his attire, and heaved a sigh to think that by reason of the unworthiness of women he must needs be the last of his race.

"I was a smart young chap when I was younger," said Mr. Brisher. "I 'ad my work cut out. But I was very careful — very. And I got through..."

He leant over the taproom table and thought visibly on the subject of my trustworthiness. I was relieved at last by his confidence.

"I was engaged once," he said at last, with a reminiscent eye on the shuv-a'penny board.

"So near as that?"

He looked at me. "So near as that. Fact is—" He looked about him, brought his face close to mine, lowered his voice, and fenced off an unsympathetic world with a grimy hand. "If she ain't dead or married to some one else or anything — I'm engaged still. Now." He confirmed this statement with nods and facial contortions. "STILL," he said, ending the pantomime, and broke into a reckless smile at my surprise. "ME!"

"Run away," he explained further, with coruscating eyebrows. "Come 'ome.

"That ain't all.

"You'd 'ardly believe it," he said, "but I found a treasure. Found a regular treasure."

I fancied this was irony, and did not, perhaps, greet it with proper surprise. "Yes," he said, "I found a treasure. And come 'ome. I tell

you I could surprise you with things that has happened to me." And for some time he was content to repeat that he had found a treasure — and left it.

I made no vulgar clamour for a story, but I became attentive to Mr. Brisher's bodily needs, and presently I led him back to the deserted lady.

"She was a nice girl," he said — a little sadly, I thought. "AND respectable."

He raised his eyebrows and tightened his mouth to express extreme respectability — beyond the likes of us elderly men.

"It was a long way from 'ere. Essex, in fact. Near Colchester. It was when I was up in London — in the buildin' trade. I was a smart young chap then, I can tell you. Slim. 'Ad best clo'es 's good as anybody. 'At — SILK 'at, mind you." Mr. Brisher's hand shot above his head towards the infinite to indicate it silk hat of the highest. "Umbrella — nice umbrella with a 'orn 'andle. Savin's. Very careful I was...."

He was pensive for a little while, thinking, as we must all come to think sooner or later, of the vanished brightness of youth. But he refrained, as one may do in taprooms, from the obvious moral.

"I got to know 'er through a chap what was engaged to 'er sister. She was stopping in London for a bit with an aunt that 'ad a 'am an' beef shop. This aunt was very particular — they was all very particular people, all 'er people was — and wouldn't let 'er sister go out with this feller except 'er other sister, MY girl that is, went with them. So 'e brought me into it, sort of to ease the crowding. We used to go walks in Battersea Park of a Sunday afternoon. Me in my topper, and 'im in 'is; and the girl's — well — stylish. There wasn't many in Battersea Park 'ad the larf of us. She wasn't what you'd call pretty, but a nicer girl I never met. *I* liked 'er from the start, and, well — though I say it who shouldn't — she liked me. You know 'ow it is, I dessay?"

I pretended I did.

"And when this chap married 'er sister— 'im and me was great friends — what must 'e do but arst me down to Colchester, close by where She lived. Naturally I was introjuced to 'er people, and well, very soon, her and me was engaged."

He repeated “engaged.”

“She lived at ‘ome with ‘er father and mother, quite the lady, in a very nice little ‘ouse with a garden — and remarkable respectable people they was. Rich you might call ’em a’most. They owned their own ‘ouse — got it out of the Building Society, and cheap because the chap who had it before was a burglar and in prison — and they ‘ad a bit of free’old land, and some cottages and money ‘nvested — all nice and tight: they was what you’d call snug and warm. I tell you, I was On. Furniture too. Why! They ‘ad a pianner. Jane— ‘er name was Jane — used to play it Sundays, and very nice she played too. There wasn’t ‘ardly a ‘im toon in the book she COULDN’T play...

“Many’s the evenin’ we’ve met and sung ‘ims there, me and ‘er and the family.

“‘Er father was quite a leadin’ man in chapel. You should ha’ seen him Sundays, interruptin’ the minister and givin’ out ‘ims. He had gold spectacles, I remember, and used to look over ’em at you while he sang hearty — he was always great on singing ‘earty to the Lord — and when HE got out o’ toon ‘arf the people went after ‘im — always. ‘E was that sort of man. And to walk be’ind ‘im in ‘is nice black clo’es— ‘is ‘at was a brimmer — made one regular proud to be engaged to such a father-in-law. And when the summer came I went down there and stopped a fortnight.

“Now, you know there was a sort of Itch,” said Mr. Brisher. “We wanted to marry, me and Jane did, and get things settled. But ‘E said I ‘ad to get a proper position first. Consequently there was a Itch. Consequently, when I went down there, I was anxious to show that I was a good useful sort of chap like. Show I could do pretty nearly everything like. See?”

I made a sympathetic noise.

“And down at the bottom of their garden was a bit of wild part like. So I says to ‘im, ‘Why don’t you ‘ave a rockery ‘ere?’ I says. ‘It ‘ud look nice.’

“‘Too much expense,’ he says.

“‘Not a penny,’ says I. ‘I’m a dab at rockeries. Lemme make you one.’ You see, I’d ‘elped my brother make a rockery in the beer garden be’ind ‘is tap, so I knew ‘ow to do it to rights. ‘Lemme make

you one,' I says. 'It's 'olidays, but I'm that sort of chap, I 'ate doing nothing,' I says. 'I'll make you one to rights.' And the long and the short of it was, he said I might.

"And that's 'ow I come on the treasure."

"What treasure?" I asked.

"Why!" said Mr. Brisher, "the treasure I'm telling you about, what's the reason why I never married."

"What! — a treasure — dug up?"

"Yes — buried wealth — treasure trove. Come out of the ground. What I kept on saying — regular treasure...." He looked at me with unusual disrespect.

"It wasn't more than a foot deep, not the top of it," he said. "I'd 'ardly got thirsty like, before I come on the corner."

"Go on," I said. "I didn't understand."

"Why! Directly I 'it the box I knew it was treasure. A sort of instinct told me. Something seemed to shout inside of me— 'Now's your chance — lie low.' It's lucky I knew the laws of treasure trove or I'd 'ave been shoutin' there and then. I daresay you know—"

"Crown bags it," I said, "all but one per cent. Go on. It's a shame. What did you do?"

"Uncovered the top of the box. There wasn't anybody in the garden or about like. Jane was 'elping 'er mother do the 'ouse. I WAS excited — I tell you. I tried the lock and then gave a whack at the hinges. Open it came. Silver coins — full! Shining. It made me tremble to see 'em. And jest then — I'm blessed if the dustman didn't come round the back of the 'ouse. It pretty nearly gave me 'eart disease to think what a fool I was to 'ave that money showing. And directly after I 'eard the chap next door— 'e was 'olidaying, too — I 'eard him watering 'is beans. If only 'e'd looked over the fence!"

"What did you do?"

"Kicked the lid on again and covered it up like a shot, and went on digging about a yard away from it — like mad. And my face, so to speak, was laughing on its own account till I had it hid. I tell you I was regular scared like at my luck. I jest thought that it 'ad to be kep' close and that was all. 'Treasure,' I kep' whisperin' to myself, 'Treasure' and ''undreds of pounds, 'undreds, 'undreds of pounds.'

Whispering to myself like, and digging like blazes. It seemed to me the box was regular sticking out and showing, like your legs do under the sheets in bed, and I went and put all the earth I'd got out of my 'ole for the rockery slap on top of it. I WAS in a sweat. And in the midst of it all out toddles 'er father. He didn't say anything to me, jest stood behind me and stared, but Jane tole me afterwards when he went indoors, 'e says, 'That there jackanapes of yours, Jane' — he always called me a jackanapes some'ow— 'knows 'ow to put 'is back into it after all.' Seemed quite impressed by it, 'e did."

"How long was the box?" I asked, suddenly.

"'Ow long?" said Mr. Brisher.

"Yes — in length?"

"Oh! 'bout so-by-so." Mr. Brisher indicated a moderate-sized trunk.

"FULL?" said I.

"Full up of silver coins— 'arf-crowns, I believe."

"Why!" I cried, "that would mean — hundreds of pounds."

"Thousands," said Mr. Brisher, in a sort of sad calm. "I calc'lated it out."

"But how did they get there?"

"All I know is what I found. What I thought at the time was this. The chap who'd owned the 'ouse before 'er father 'd been a regular slap-up burglar. What you'd call a 'igh-class criminal. Used to drive 'is trap — like Peace did." Mr. Brisher meditated on the difficulties of narration and embarked on a complicated parenthesis. "I don't know if I told you it'd been a burglar's 'ouse before it was my girl's father's, and I knew 'e'd robbed a mail train once, I did know that. It seemed to me—"

"That's very likely," I said. "But what did you do?"

"Sweated," said Mr. Brisher. "Regular run orf me. All that morning," said Mr. Brisher, "I was at it, pretending to make that rockery and wondering what I should do. I'd 'ave told 'er father p'r'aps, only I was doubtful of 'is honesty — I was afraid he might rob me of it like, and give it up to the authorities — and besides, considering I was marrying into the family, I thought it would be nicer like if it came through me. Put me on a better footing, so to speak. Well, I 'ad three days before me left of my 'olidays, so there

wasn't no hurry, so I covered it up and went on digging, and tried to puzzle out 'ow I was to make sure of it. Only I couldn't.

"I thought," said Mr. Brisher, "AND I thought. Once I got regular doubtful whether I'd seen it or not, and went down to it and 'ad it uncovered again, just as her ma came out to 'ang up a bit of washin' she'd done. Jumps again! Afterwards I was just thinking I'd 'ave another go at it, when Jane comes to tell me dinner was ready. 'You'll want it,' she said, 'seeing all the 'ole you've dug.'

"I was in a regular daze all dinner, wondering whether that chap next door wasn't over the fence and filling 'is pockets. But in the afternoon I got easier in my mind — it seemed to me it must 'ave been there so long it was pretty sure to stop a bit longer — and I tried to get up a bit of a discussion to dror out the old man and see what 'E thought of treasure trove."

Mr. Brisher paused, and affected amusement at the memory.

"The old man was a scorcher," he said; "a regular scorcher."

"What!" said I; "did he — ?"

"It was like this," explained Mr. Brisher, laying a friendly hand on my arm and breathing into my face to calm me. "Just to dror 'im out, I told a story of a chap I said I knew — pretendin', you know — who'd found a sovring in a novercoat 'e'd borrowed. I said 'e stuck to it, but I said I wasn't sure whether that was right or not. And then the old man began. Lor'! 'e DID let me 'ave it!" Mr. Brisher affected an insincere amusement. "'E was, well — what you might call a rare 'and at Snacks. Said that was the sort of friend 'e'd naturally expect me to 'ave. Said 'e'd naturally expect that from the friend of a out-of-work loafer who took up with daughters who didn't belong to 'im. There! I couldn't tell you 'ARF 'e said. 'E went on most outrageous. I stood up to 'im about it, just to dror 'im out. 'Wouldn't you stick to a 'arf-sov', not if you found it in the street?' I says. 'Certainly not,' 'e says; 'certainly I wouldn't.' 'What! not if you found it as a sort of treasure?' 'Young man,' 'e says, 'there's 'i'er 'thority than mine — Render unto Caesar' — what is it? Yes. Well, he fetched up that. A rare 'and at 'itting you over the 'ed with the Bible, was the old man. And so he went on. 'E got to such Snacks about me at last I couldn't stand it. I'd promised Jane not to answer 'im back, but it got a bit TOO thick. I — I give it 'im..."

Mr. Brisher, by means of enigmatical facework, tried to make me think he had had the best of that argument, but I knew better.

"I went out in a 'uff at last. But not before I was pretty sure I 'ad to lift that treasure by myself. The only thing that kep' me up was thinking 'ow I'd take it out of 'im when I 'ad the cash."

There was a lengthy pause.

"Now, you'd 'ardly believe it, but all them three days I never 'ad a chance at the blessed treasure, never got out not even a 'arf-crown. There was always a Somethink — always.

"'Stonishing thing it isn't thought of more," said Mr. Brisher. "Finding treasure's no great shakes. It's gettin' it. I don't suppose I slep' a wink any of those nights, thinking where I was to take it, what I was to do with it, 'ow I was to explain it. It made me regular ill. And days I was that dull, it made Jane regular 'uffy. 'You ain't the same chap you was in London,' she says, several times. I tried to lay it on 'er father and 'is Snacks, but bless you, she knew better. What must she 'ave but that I'd got another girl on my mind! Said I wasn't True. Well, we had a bit of a row. But I was that set on the Treasure, I didn't seem to mind a bit Anything she said.

"Well, at last I got a sort of plan. I was always a bit good at planning, though carrying out isn't so much in my line. I thought it all out and settled on a plan. First, I was going to take all my pockets full of these 'ere 'arf-crowns — see? — and afterwards as I shall tell.

"Well, I got to that state I couldn't think of getting at the Treasure again in the daytime, so I waited until the night before I had to go, and then, when everything was still, up I gets and slips down to the back door, meaning to get my pockets full. What must I do in the scullery but fall over a pail! Up gets 'er father with a gun— 'e was a light sleeper was 'er father, and very suspicious and there was me: 'ad to explain I'd come down to the pump for a drink because my water-bottle was bad. 'E didn't let me off a Snack or two over that bit, you lay a bob."

"And you mean to say—" I began.

"Wait a bit," said Mr. Brisher. "I say, I'd made my plan. That put the kybosh on one bit, but it didn't 'urt the general scheme not a bit. I went and I finished that rockery next day, as though there wasn't a Snack in the world; cemented over the stones, I did, dabbed it green

and everythink. I put a dab of green just to show where the box was. They all came and looked at it, and sai ‘ow nice it was — even ‘e was a bit softer like to see it, and all he said was, ‘It’s a pity you can’t always work like that, then you might get something definite to do,’ he says.

“‘Yes,’ I says — I couldn’t ‘elp it— ‘I put a lot in that rockery,’ I says, like that. See? ‘I put a lot in that rockery’ — meaning—”

“I see,” said I — for Mr. Brisher is apt to overelaborate his jokes.

“‘*E* didn’t,” said Mr. Brisher. “Not then, anyhow.

“Ar’ever — after all that was over, off I set for London.... Orf I set for London.”

Pause.

“On’y I wasn’t going to no London,” said Mr. Brisher, with sudden animation, and thrusting his face into mine. “No fear! What do YOU think?

“I didn’t go no further than Colchester — not a yard.

“I’d left the spade just where I could find it. I’d got everything planned and right. I ‘ired a little trap in Colchester, and pretended I wanted to go to Ipswich and stop the night, and come back next day, and the chap I ‘ired it from made me leave two sovrings on it right away, and off I set.

“I didn’t go to no Ipswich neither.

“Midnight the ‘orse and trap was ‘itched by the little road that ran by the cottage where ‘e lived — not sixty yards off, it wasn’t — and I was at it like a good ‘un. It was jest the night for such games — overcast — but a trifle too ‘ot, and all round the sky there was summer lightning and presently a thunderstorm. Down it came. First big drops in a sort of fizzle, then ‘ail. I kep’on. I whacked at it — I didn’t dream the old man would ‘ear. I didn’t even trouble to go quiet with the spade, and the thunder and lightning and ‘ail seemed to excite me like. I shouldn’t wonder if I was singing. I got so ‘ard at it I clean forgot the thunder and the ‘orse and trap. I precious soon got the box showing, and started to lift it....”

“Heavy?” I said.

“I couldn’t no more lift it than fly. I WAS sick. I’d never thought of that I got regular wild — I tell you, I cursed. I got sort of outrageous. I didn’t think of dividing it like for the minute, and even

then I couldn't 'ave took money about loose in a trap. I hoisted one end sort of wild like, and over the whole show went with a tremenjous noise. Perfeck smash of silver. And then right on the heels of that, Flash! Lightning like the day! and there was the back door open and the old man coming down the garden with 'is blooming old gun. He wasn't not a 'undred yards away!

"I tell you I was that upset — I didn't think what I was doing. I never stopped-not even to fill my pockets. I went over the fence like a shot, and ran like one o'clock for the trap, cussing and swearing as I went. I WAS in a state....

"And will you believe me, when I got to the place where I'd left the 'orse and trap, they'd gone. Orf! When I saw that I 'adn't a cuss left for it. I jest danced on the grass, and when I'd danced enough I started off to London.... I was done."

Mr. Brisher was pensive for an interval. "I was done," he repeated, very bitterly.

"Well?" I said.

"That's all," said Mr. Brisher.

"You didn't go back?"

"No fear. I'd 'ad enough of THAT blooming treasure, any'ow for a bit. Besides, I didn't know what was done to chaps who tried to collar a treasure trove. I started off for London there and then...."

"And you never went back?"

"Never."

"But about Jane? Did you write?"

"Three times, fishing like. And no answer. We'd parted in a bit of a 'uff on account of 'er being jealous. So that I couldn't make out for certain what it meant.

"I didn't know what to do. I didn't even know whether the old man knew it was me. I sort of kep' an eye open on papers to see when he'd give up that treasure to the Crown, as I hadn't a doubt 'e would, considering 'ow respectable he'd always been."

"And did he?"

Mr. Brisher pursed his mouth and moved his head slowly from side to side. "Not 'IM," he said.

"Jane was a nice girl," he said, "a thorough nice girl mind you, if jealous, and there's no knowing I mightn't 'ave gone back to 'er after

a bit. I thought if he didn't give up the treasure I might 'ave a sort of 'old on 'im.... Well, one day I looks as usual under Colchester — and there I saw 'is name. What for, d'yer think?"

I could not guess.

Mr. Brisher's voice sank to a whisper, and once more he spoke behind his hand. His manner was suddenly suffused with a positive joy. "Issuing counterfeit coins," he said. "Counterfeit coins!"

"You don't mean to say — ?"

"Yes-It. Bad. Quite a long case they made of it. But they got 'im, though he dodged tremenjous. Traced 'is 'aving passed, oh! — nearly a dozen bad 'arf-crowns."

"And you didn't — ?"

"No fear. And it didn't do 'IM much good to say it was treasure trove."

MISS WINCHELSEA'S HEART

Miss Winchelsea was going to Rome. The matter had filled her mind for a month or more, and had overflowed so abundantly into her conversation that quite a number of people who were not going to Rome, and who were not likely to go to Rome, had made it a personal grievance against her. Some indeed had attempted quite unavailingly to convince her that Rome was not nearly such a desirable place as it was reported to be, and others had gone so far as to suggest behind her back that she was dreadfully "stuck up" about "that Rome of hers." And little Lily Hardhurst had told her friend Mr. Binns that so far as she was concerned Miss Winchelsea might "go to her old Rome and stop there; SHE (Miss Lily Hardhurst) wouldn't grieve." And the way in which Miss Winchelsea put herself upon terms of personal tenderness with Horace and Benvenuto Cellini and Raphael and Shelley and Keats — if she had been Shelley's widow she could not have professed a keener interest in his grave — was a matter of universal astonishment. Her dress was a triumph of tactful discretion, sensible, but not too "touristy" — Miss Winchelsea, had a great dread of being "touristy" — and her Baedeker was carried in a cover of grey to hide its glaring red. She made a prim and pleasant little figure on the Charing Cross platform, in spite of her swelling pride, when at last the great day dawned, and she could start for Rome. The day was bright, the Channel passage would be pleasant, and all the omens promised well. There was the gayest sense of adventure in this unprecedented departure.

She was going with two friends who had been fellow-students with her at the training college, nice honest girls both, though not so good at history and literature as Miss Winchelsea. They both looked up to her immensely, though physically they had to look down, and she anticipated some pleasant times to be spent in "stirring them up" to her own pitch of aesthetic and historical enthusiasm. They had secured seats already, and welcomed her effusively at the carriage door. In the instant criticism of the encounter she noted that Fanny had a slightly "touristy" leather strap, and that Helen had succumbed to a serge jacket with side pockets, into which her hands were thrust.

But they were much too happy with themselves and the expedition for their friend to attempt any hint at the moment about these things. As soon as the first ecstasies were over — Fanny's enthusiasm was a little noisy and crude, and consisted mainly in emphatic repetitions of "Just FANCY! we're going to Rome, my dear! — Rome!" — they gave their attention to their fellow-travellers. Helen was anxious to secure a compartment to themselves, and, in order to discourage intruders, got out and planted herself firmly on the step. Miss Winchelsea peeped out over her shoulder, and made sly little remarks about the accumulating people on the platform, at which Fanny laughed gleefully.

They were travelling with one of Mr. Thomas Gunn's parties — fourteen days in Rome for fourteen pounds. They did not belong to the personally conducted party of course — Miss Winchelsea had seen to that — but they travelled with it because of the convenience of that arrangement. The people were the oddest mixture, and wonderfully amusing. There was a vociferous red-faced polyglot personal conductor in a pepper-and-salt suit, very long in the arms and legs and very active. He shouted proclamations. When he wanted to speak to people he stretched out an arm and held them until his purpose was accomplished. One hand was full of papers, tickets, counterfoils of tourists. The people of the personally conducted party were, it seemed, of two sorts; people the conductor wanted and could not find, and people he did not want and who followed him in a steadily growing tail up and down the platform. These people seemed, indeed, to think that their one chance of reaching Rome lay in keeping close to him. Three little old ladies were particularly energetic in his pursuit, and at last maddened him to the pitch of clapping them into a carriage and daring them to emerge again. For the rest of the time, one, two, or three of their heads protruded from the window wailing enquiries about "a little wickerwork box" whenever he drew near. There was a very stout man with a very stout wife in shiny black; there was a little old man like an aged hostler.

"What CAN such people want in Rome?" asked Miss Winchelsea. "What can it mean to them?" There was a very tall curate in a very small straw hat, and a very short curate encumbered by a long camera stand. The contrast amused Fanny very much. Once they

heard some one calling for “Snooks.” “I always thought that name was invented by novelists,” said Miss Winchelsea. “Fancy! Snooks. I wonder which IS Mr. Snooks.” Finally they picked out a very stout and resolute little man in a large check suit. “If he isn’t Snooks, he ought to be,” said Miss Winchelsea.

Presently the conductor discovered Helen’s attempt at a corner in carriages. “Room for five,” he bawled with a parallel translation on his fingers. A party of four together — mother, father, and two daughters — blundered in, all greatly excited. “It’s all right, Ma, you let me,” said one of the daughters, hitting her mother’s bonnet with a handbag she struggled to put in the rack. Miss Winchelsea detested people who banged about and called their mother “Ma.” A young man travelling alone followed. He was not at all “touristy” in his costume, Miss Winchelsea observed; his Gladstone bag was of good pleasant leather with labels reminiscent of Luxembourg and Ostend, and his boots, though brown, were not vulgar. He carried an overcoat on his arm. Before these people had properly settled in their places, came an inspection of tickets and a slamming of doors, and behold! they were gliding out of Charing Cross station on their way to Rome.

“Fancy!” cried Fanny, “we are going to Rome, my dear! Rome! I don’t seem to believe it, even now.”

Miss Winchelsea suppressed Fanny’s emotions with a little smile, and the lady who was called “Ma” explained to people in general why they had “cut it so close” at the station. The two daughters called her “Ma” several times, toned her down in a tactless effective way, and drove her at last to the muttered inventory of a basket of travelling requisites. Presently she looked up. “Lor’!” she said, “I didn’t bring THEM!” Both the daughters said “Oh, Ma!” but what “them” was did not appear. Presently Fanny produced Hare’s Walks in Rome, a sort of mitigated guide-book very popular among Roman visitors; and the father of the two daughters began to examine his books of tickets minutely, apparently in a search after English words. When he had looked at the tickets for a long time right way up, he turned them upside down. Then he produced a fountain pen and dated them with considerable care. The young man, having completed an unostentatious survey of his fellow travellers, produced a book and fell to reading. When Helen and Fanny were looking out

of the window at Chiselhurst — the place interested Fanny because the poor dear Empress of the French used to live there — Miss Winchelsea took the opportunity to observe the book the young man held. It was not a guide-book, but a little thin volume of poetry — BOUND. She glanced at his face — it seemed a refined pleasant face to her hasty glance. He wore a little gilt pince-nez. "Do you think she lives there now?" said Fanny, and Miss Winchelsea's inspection came to an end.

For the rest of the journey Miss Winchelsea talked little, and what she said was as pleasant and as stamped with refinement as she could make it. Her voice was always low and clear and pleasant, and she took care that on this occasion it was particularly low and clear and pleasant. As they came under the white cliffs the young man put his book of poetry away, and when at last the train stopped beside the boat, he displayed a graceful alacrity with the impedimenta of Miss Winchelsea and her friends. Miss Winchelsea hated nonsense, but she was pleased to see the young man perceived at once that they were ladies, and helped them without any violent geniality; and how nicely he showed that his civilities were to be no excuse for further intrusions. None of her little party had been out of England before, and they were all excited and a little nervous at the Channel passage. They stood in a little group in a good place near the middle of the boat — the young man had taken Miss Winchelsea's carry-all there and had told her it was a good place — and they watched the white shores of Albion recede and quoted Shakespeare and made quiet fun of their fellow travellers in the English way.

They were particularly amused at the precautions the bigger-sized people had taken against the little waves — cut lemons and flasks prevailed, one lady lay full-length in a deck chair with a handkerchief over her face, and a very broad resolute man in a bright brown "touristy" suit walked all the way from England to France along the deck, with his legs as widely apart as Providence permitted. These were all excellent precautions, and, nobody was ill. The personally conducted party pursued the conductor about the deck with enquiries in a manner that suggested to Helen's mind the rather vulgar image of hens with a piece of bacon peel, until at last he went into hiding below. And the young man with the thin volume of

poetry stood at the stern watching England receding, looking rather lonely and sad to Miss Winchelsea's eye.

And then came Calais and tumultuous novelties, and the young man had not forgotten Miss Winchelsea's hold-all and the other little things. All three girls, though they had passed government examinations in French to any extent, were stricken with a dumb shame of their accents, and the young man was very useful. And he did not intrude. He put them in a comfortable carriage and raised his hat and went away. Miss Winchelsea thanked him in her best manner — a pleasing, cultivated manner — and Fanny said he was "nice" almost before he was out of earshot. "I wonder what he can be," said Helen. "He's going to Italy, because I noticed green tickets in his book." Miss Winchelsea almost told them of the poetry, and decided not to do so. And presently the carriage windows seized hold upon them and the young man was forgotten. It made them feel that they were doing an educated sort of thing to travel through a country whose commonest advertisements were in idiomatic French, and Miss Winchelsea made unpatriotic comparisons because there were weedy little sign-board advertisements by the rail side instead of the broad hoardings that deface the landscape in our land. But the north of France is really uninteresting country, and after a time Fanny reverted to Hare's Walks and Helen initiated lunch. Miss Winchelsea awoke out of a happy reverie; she had been trying to realise, she said, that she was actually going to Rome, but she perceived at Helen's suggestion that she was hungry, and they lunched out of their baskets very cheerfully. In the afternoon they were tired and silent until Helen made tea. Miss Winchelsea might have dozed, only she knew Fanny slept with her mouth open; and as their fellow passengers were two rather nice critical-looking ladies of uncertain age — who knew French well enough to talk it — she employed herself in keeping Fanny awake. The rhythm of the train became insistent, and the streaming landscape outside became at last quite painful to the eye. They were already dreadfully tired of travelling before their night's stoppage came.

The stoppage for the night was brightened by the appearance of the young man, and his manners were all that could be desired and his French quite serviceable. His coupons availed for the same hotel

as theirs, and by chance as it seemed he sat next Miss Winchelsea at the table d'hote. In spite of her enthusiasm for Rome, she had thought out some such possibility very thoroughly, and when he ventured to make a remark upon the tediousness of travelling — he let the soup and fish go by before he did this — she did not simply assent to his proposition, but responded with another. They were soon comparing their journeys, and Helen and Fanny were cruelly overlooked in the conversation. It was to be the same journey, they found; one day for the galleries at Florence— "from what I hear," said the young man, "it is barely enough," — and the rest at Rome. He talked of Rome very pleasantly; he was evidently quite well read, and he quoted Horace about Soracte. Miss Winchelsea had "done" that book of Horace for her matriculation, and was delighted to cap his quotation. It gave a sort of tone to things, this incident — a touch of refinement to mere chatting. Fanny expressed a few emotions, and Helen interpolated a few sensible remarks, but the bulk of the talk on the girls' side naturally fell to Miss Winchelsea.

Before they reached Rome this young man was tacitly of their party. They did not know his name nor what he was, but it seemed he taught, and Miss Winchelsea had a shrewd idea he was an extension lecturer. At any rate he was something of that sort, something gentlemanly and refined without being opulent and impossible. She tried once or twice to ascertain whether he came from Oxford or Cambridge, but he missed her timid importunities. She tried to get him to make remarks about those places to see if he would say "come up" to them instead of "go down" — she knew that was how you told a 'Varsity man. He used the word "'Varsity" — not university — in quite the proper way.

They saw as much of Mr. Ruskin's Florence as the brief time permitted; he met them in the Pitti Gallery and went round with them, chatting brightly, and evidently very grateful for their recognition. He knew a great deal about art, and all four enjoyed the morning immensely. It was fine to go round recognising old favourites and finding new beauties, especially while so many people fumbled helplessly with Baedeker. Nor was he a bit of a prig, Miss Winchelsea said, and indeed she detested prigs. He had a distinct undertone of humour, and was funny, for example, without being

vulgar, at the expense of the quaint work of Beato Angelico. He had a grave seriousness beneath it all, and was quick to seize the moral lessons of the pictures. Fanny went softly among these masterpieces; she admitted "she knew so little about them," and she confessed that to her they were "all beautiful." Fanny's "beautiful" inclined to be a little monotonous, Miss Winchelsea thought. She had been quite glad when the last sunny Alp had vanished, because of the staccato of Fanny's admiration. Helen said little, but Miss Winchelsea had found her a little wanting on the aesthetic side in the old days and was not surprised; sometimes she laughed at the young man's hesitating delicate little jests and sometimes she didn't, and sometimes she seemed quite lost to the art about them in the contemplation of the dresses of the other visitors.

At Rome the young man was with them intermittently. A rather "touristy" friend of his took him away at times. He complained comically to Miss Winchelsea. "I have only two short weeks in Rome," he said, "and my friend Leonard wants to spend a whole day at Tivoli, looking at a waterfall."

"What is your friend Leonard?" asked Miss Winchelsea abruptly.

"He's the most enthusiastic pedestrian I ever met," the young man replied, amusingly, but a little unsatisfactorily, Miss Winchelsea thought. They had some glorious times, and Fanny could not think what they would have done without him. Miss Winchelsea's interest and Fanny's enormous capacity for admiration were insatiable. They never flagged — through pictures and sculpture galleries, immense crowded churches, ruins and museums, Judas trees and prickly pears, wine carts and palaces, they admired their way unflinchingly. They never saw a stone pine or a eucalyptus but they named and admired it; they never glimpsed Soracte but they exclaimed. Their common ways were made wonderful by imaginative play. "Here Caesar may have walked," they would say. "Raphael may have seen Soracte from this very point." They happened on the tomb of Bibulus. "Old Bibulus," said the young man. "The oldest monument of Republican Rome!" said Miss Winchelsea.

"I'm dreadfully stupid," said Fanny, "but who WAS Bibulus?"

There was a curious little pause.

"Wasn't he the person who built the wall?" said Helen.

The young man glanced quickly at her and laughed. “That was Balbus,” he said. Helen reddened, but neither he nor Miss Winchelsea threw any light upon Fanny’s ignorance about Bibulus.

Helen was more taciturn than the other three, but then she was always taciturn, and usually she took care of the tram tickets and things like that, or kept her eye on them if the young man took them, and told him where they were when he wanted them. Glorious times they had, these young people, in that pale brown cleanly city of memories that was once the world. Their only sorrow was the shortness of the time. They said indeed that the electric trams and the ‘70 buildings, and that criminal advertisement that glares upon the Forum, outraged their aesthetic feelings unspeakably; but that was only part of the fun. And indeed Rome is such a wonderful place that it made Miss Winchelsea forget some of her most carefully prepared enthusiasms at times, and Helen, taken unawares, would suddenly admit the beauty of unexpected things. Yet Fanny and Helen would have liked a shop window or so in the English quarter if Miss Winchelsea’s uncompromising hostility to all other English visitors had not rendered that district impossible.

The intellectual and aesthetic fellowship of Miss Winchelsea and the scholarly young man passed insensibly towards a deeper feeling. The exuberant Fanny did her best to keep pace with their recondite admiration by playing her “beautiful,” with vigour, and saying “Oh! LET’S go,” with enormous appetite whenever a new place of interest was mentioned. But Helen developed a certain want of sympathy towards the end, that disappointed Miss Winchelsea a little. She refused to “see anything” in the face of Beatrice Cenci — Shelley’s Beatrice Cenci! — in the Barberini gallery; and one day, when they were deploring the electric trams, she said rather snappishly that “people must get about somehow, and it’s better than torturing horses up these horrid little hills.” She spoke of the Seven Hills of Rome as “horrid little hills!”

And the day they went on the Palatine — though Miss Winchelsea did not know of this — she remarked suddenly to Fanny, “Don’t hurry like that, my dear; THEY don’t want us to overtake them. And we don’t say the right things for them when we DO get near.”

“I wasn’t trying to overtake them,” said Fanny, slackening her

excessive pace; “I wasn’t indeed.” And for a minute she was short of breath.

But Miss Winchelsea had come upon happiness. It was only when she came to look back across an intervening tragedy that she quite realised how happy she had been, pacing among the cypress-shadowed ruins, and exchanging the very highest class of information the human mind can possess, the most refined impressions it is possible to convey. Insensibly emotion crept into their intercourse, sunning itself openly and pleasantly at last when Helen’s modernity was not too near. Insensibly their interest drifted from the wonderful associations about them to their more intimate and personal feelings. In a tentative way information was supplied; she spoke allusively of her school, of her examination successes, of her gladness that the days of “Cram” were over. He made it quite clear that he also was a teacher. They spoke of the greatness of their calling, of the necessity of sympathy to face its irksome details, of a certain loneliness they sometimes felt.

That was in the Colosseum, and it was as far as they got that day, because Helen returned with Fanny — she had taken her into the upper galleries. Yet the private dreams of Miss Winchelsea, already vivid and concrete enough, became now realistic in the highest degree. She figured that pleasant young man, lecturing in the most edifying way to his students, herself modestly prominent as his intellectual mate and helper; she figured a refined little home, with two bureaus, with white shelves of high-class books, and autotypes of the pictures of Rossetti and Burne-Jones, with Morris’s wall papers and flowers in pots of beaten copper. Indeed she figured many things. On the Pincio the two had a few precious moments together, while Helen marched Fanny off to see the muro Torto, and he spoke at once plainly. He said he hoped their friendship was only beginning, that he already found her company very precious to him, that indeed it was more than that.

He became nervous, thrusting at his glasses with trembling fingers as though he fancied his emotions made them unstable. “I should of course,” he said, “tell you things about myself. I know it is rather unusual my speaking to you like this. Only our meeting has been so accidental — or providential — and I am snatching at things. I came

to Rome expecting a lonely tour... and I have been so very happy, so very happy. Quite recently I found myself in a position — I have dared to think — . And—"

He glanced over his shoulder and stopped. He said "Damn!" quite distinctly — and she did not condemn him for that manly lapse into profanity. She looked and saw his friend Leonard advancing. He drew nearer; he raised his hat to Miss Winchelsea, and his smile was almost a grin. "I've been looking for you everywhere, Snooks," he said. "You promised to be on the Piazza steps half an hour ago."

Snooks! The name struck Miss Winchelsea like a blow in the face. She did not hear his reply. She thought afterwards that Leonard must have considered her the vaguest-minded person. To this day she is not sure whether she was introduced to Leonard or not, nor what she said to him. A sort of mental paralysis was upon her. Of all offensive surnames — Snooks!

Helen and Fanny were returning, there were civilities, and the young men were receding. By a great effort she controlled herself to face the enquiring eyes of her friends. All that afternoon she lived the life of a heroine under the indescribable outrage of that name, chatting, observing, with "Snooks" gnawing at her heart. From the moment that it first rang upon her ears, the dream of her happiness was prostrate in the dust. All the refinement she had figured was ruined and defaced by that cognomen's unavoidable vulgarity.

What was that refined little home to her now, spite of autotypes, Morris papers, and bureaus? Athwart it in letters of fire ran an incredible inscription: "Mrs. Snooks." That may seem a little thing to the reader, but consider the delicate refinement of Miss Winchelsea's mind. Be as refined as you can and then think of writing yourself down:— "Snooks." She conceived herself being addressed as Mrs. Snooks by all the people she liked least, conceived the patronymic touched with a vague quality of insult. She figured a card of grey and silver bearing "Winchelsea," triumphantly effaced by an arrow, Cupid's arrow, in favour of "Snooks." Degrading confession of feminine weakness! She imagined the terrible rejoicings of certain girl friends, of certain grocer cousins from whom her growing refinement had long since estranged her. How they would make it sprawl across the envelope that would bring their sarcastic

congratulations. Would even his pleasant company compensate her for that? “It is impossible,” she muttered; “impossible! SNOOKS!”

She was sorry for him, but not so sorry as she was for herself. For him she had a touch of indignation. To be so nice, so refined, while all the time he was “Snooks,” to hide under a pretentious gentility of demeanour the badge sinister of his surname seemed a sort of treachery. To put it in the language of sentimental science she felt he had “led her on.”

There were of course moments of terrible vacillation, a period even when something almost like passion bid her throw refinement to the winds. And there was something in her, an unexpurgated vestige of vulgarity, that made a strenuous attempt at proving that Snooks was not so very bad a name after all. Any hovering hesitation flew before Fanny’s manner, when Fanny came with an air of catastrophe to tell that she also knew the horror. Fanny’s voice fell to a whisper when she said SNOOKS. Miss Winchelsea would not give him any answer when at last, in the Borghese, she could have a minute with him; but she promised him a note.

She handed him that note in the little book of poetry he had lent her, the little book that had first drawn them together. Her refusal was ambiguous, allusive. She could no more tell him why she rejected him than she could have told a cripple of his hump. He too must feel something of the unspeakable quality of his name. Indeed he had avoided a dozen chances of telling it, she now perceived. So she spoke of “obstacles she could not reveal”— “reasons why the thing he spoke of was impossible.” She addressed the note with a shiver, “E. K. Snooks.”

Things were worse than she had dreaded; he asked her to explain. How COULD she explain? Those last two days in Rome were dreadful. She was haunted by his air of astonished perplexity. She knew she had given him intimate hopes, she had not the courage to examine her mind thoroughly for the extent of her encouragement. She knew he must think her the most changeable of beings. Now that she was in full retreat, she would not even perceive his hints of a possible correspondence. But in that matter he did a thing that seemed to her at once delicate and romantic. He made a go-between of Fanny. Fanny could not keep the secret, and came and told her that

night under a transparent pretext of needed advice. “Mr. Snooks,” said Fanny, “wants to write to me. Fancy! I had no idea. But should I let him?” They talked it over long and earnestly, and Miss Winchelsea was careful to keep the veil over her heart. She was already repenting his disregarded hints. Why should she not hear of him sometimes — painful though his name must be to her? Miss Winchelsea decided it might be permitted, and Fanny kissed her good-night with unusual emotion. After she had gone Miss Winchelsea sat for a long time at the window of her little room. It was moonlight, and down the street a man sang “Santa Lucia” with almost heart-dissolving tenderness.... She sat very still.

She breathed a word very softly to herself. The word was “SNOOKS.” Then she got up with a profound sigh, and went to bed. The next morning he said to her meaningly, “I shall hear of you through your friend.”

Mr. Snooks saw them off from Rome with that pathetic interrogative perplexity still on his face, and if it had not been for Helen he would have retained Miss Winchelsea’s hold-all in his hand as a sort of encyclopaedic keepsake. On their way back to England Miss Winchelsea on six separate occasions made Fanny promise to write to her the longest of long letters. Fanny, it seemed, would be quite near Mr. Snooks. Her new school — she was always going to new schools — would be only five miles from Steely Bank, and it was in the Steely Bank Polytechnic, and one or two first-class schools, that Mr. Snooks did his teaching. He might even see her at times. They could not talk much of him — she and Fanny always spoke of “him,” never of Mr. Snooks, — because Helen was apt to say unsympathetic things about him. Her nature had coarsened very much, Miss Winchelsea perceived, since the old Training College days; she had become hard and cynical. She thought he had a weak face, mistaking refinement for weakness as people of her stamp are apt to do, and when she heard his name was Snooks, she said she had expected something of the sort. Miss Winchelsea was careful to spare her own feelings after that, but Fanny was less circumspect.

The girls parted in London, and Miss Winchelsea returned, with a new interest in life, to the Girls’ High School in which she had been an increasingly valuable assistant for the last three years. Her new

interest in life was Fanny as a correspondent, and to give her a lead she wrote her a lengthy descriptive letter within a fortnight of her return. Fanny answered, very disappointingly. Fanny indeed had no literary gift, but it was new to Miss Winchelsea to find herself deploring the want of gifts in a friend. That letter was even criticised aloud in the safe solitude of Miss Winchelsea's study, and her criticism, spoken with great bitterness, was "Twaddle!" It was full of just the things Miss Winchelsea's letter had been full of, particulars of the school. And of Mr. Snooks, only this much: "I have had a letter from Mr. Snooks, and he has been over to see me on two Saturday afternoons running. He talked about Rome and you; we both talked about you. Your ears must have burnt, my dear...."

Miss Winchelsea repressed a desire to demand more explicit information, and wrote the sweetest long letter again. "Tell me all about yourself, dear. That journey has quite refreshed our ancient friendship, and I do so want to keep in touch with you." About Mr. Snooks she simply wrote on the fifth page that she was glad Fanny had seen him, and that if he SHOULD ask after her, she was to be remembered to him VERY KINDLY (underlined). And Fanny replied most obtusely in the key of that "ancient friendship," reminding Miss Winchelsea of a dozen foolish things of those old schoolgirl days at the training college, and saying not a word about Mr. Snooks!

For nearly a week Miss Winchelsea was so angry at the failure of Fanny as a go-between that she could not write to her. And then she wrote less effusively, and in her letter she asked point-blank, "Have you seen Mr. Snooks?" Fanny's letter was unexpectedly satisfactory. "I HAVE seen Mr. Snooks," she wrote, and having once named him she kept on about him; it was all Snooks — Snooks this and Snooks that. He was to give a public lecture, said Fanny, among other things. Yet Miss Winchelsea, after the first glow of gratification, still found this letter a little unsatisfactory. Fanny did not report Mr. Snooks as saying anything about Miss Winchelsea, nor as looking a little white and worn, as he ought to have been doing. And behold! before she had replied, came a second letter from Fanny on the same theme, quite a gushing letter, and covering six sheets with her loose feminine hand.

And about this second letter was a rather odd little thing that Miss Winchelsea only noticed as she re-read it the third time. Fanny's natural femininity had prevailed even against the round and clear traditions of the training college; she was one of those she-creatures born to make all her m's and n's and u's and r's and e's alike, and to leave her o's and a's open and her i's undotted. So that it was only after an elaborate comparison of word with word that Miss Winchelsea felt assured Mr. Snooks was not really "Mr. Snooks" at all! In Fanny's first letter of gush he was Mr. "Snooks," in her second the spelling was changed to Mr. "Senoks." Miss Winchelsea's hand positively trembled as she turned the sheet over — it meant so much to her. For it had already begun to seem to her that even the name of Mrs. Snooks might be avoided at too great a price, and suddenly — this possibility! She turned over the six sheets, all dappled with that critical name, and everywhere the first letter had the form of an E! For a time she walked the room with a hand pressed upon her heart.

She spent a whole day pondering this change, weighing a letter of inquiry that should be at once discreet and effectual, weighing too what action she should take after the answer came. She was resolved that if this altered spelling was anything more than a quaint fancy of Fanny's, she would write forthwith to Mr. Snooks. She had now reached a stage when the minor refinements of behaviour disappear. Her excuse remained uninvented, but she had the subject of her letter clear in her mind, even to the hint that "circumstances in my life have changed very greatly since we talked together." But she never gave that hint. There came a third letter from that fitful correspondent Fanny. The first line proclaimed her "the happiest girl alive."

Miss Winchelsea crushed the letter in her hand — the rest unread — and sat with her face suddenly very still. She had received it just before morning school, and had opened it when the junior mathematicians were well under way. Presently she resumed reading with an appearance of great calm. But after the first sheet she went on reading the third without discovering the error:— "told him frankly I did not like his name," the third sheet began. "He told me he did not like it himself — you know that sort of sudden frank way he has" — Miss Winchelsea did know. "So I said 'Couldn't you

change it?' He didn't see it at first. Well, you know, dear, he had told me what it really meant; it means Sevenoaks, only it has got down to Snooks — both Snooks and Noaks, dreadfully vulgar surnames though they be, are really worn forms of Sevenoaks. So I said — even I have my bright ideas at times— 'if it got down from Sevenoaks to Snooks, why not get it back from Snooks to Sevenoaks?' And the long and the short of it is, dear, he couldn't refuse me, and he changed his spelling there and then to Senoks for the bills of the new lecture. And afterwards, when we are married, we shall put in the apostrophe and make it Se'noks. Wasn't it kind of him to mind that fancy of mine, when many men would have taken offence? But it is just like him all over; he is as kind as he is clever. Because he knew as well as I did that I would have had him in spite of it, had he been ten times Snooks. But he did it all the same."

The class was startled by the sound of paper being viciously torn, and looked up to see Miss Winchelsea white in the face, and with some very small pieces of paper clenched in one hand. For a few seconds they stared at her stare, and then her expression changed back to a more familiar one. "Has any one finished number three?" she asked in an even tone. She remained calm after that. But impositions ruled high that day. And she spent two laborious evenings writing letters of various sorts to Fanny, before she found a decent congratulatory vein. Her reason struggled hopelessly against the persuasion that Fanny had behaved in an exceedingly treacherous manner.

One may be extremely refined and still capable of a very sore heart. Certainly Miss Winchelsea's heart was very sore. She had moods of sexual hostility, in which she generalised uncharitably about mankind. "He forgot himself with me," she said. "But Fanny is pink and pretty and soft and a fool — a very excellent match for a Man." And by way of a wedding present she sent Fanny a gracefully bound volume of poetry by George Meredith, and Fanny wrote back a grossly happy letter to say that it was "ALL beautiful." Miss Winchelsea hoped that some day Mr. Senoks might take up that slim book and think for a moment of the donor. Fanny wrote several times before and about her marriage, pursuing that fond legend of their "ancient friendship," and giving her happiness in the fullest detail.

And Miss Winchelsea wrote to Helen for the first time after the Roman journey, saying nothing about the marriage, but expressing very cordial feelings.

They had been in Rome at Easter, and Fanny was married in the August vacation. She wrote a garrulous letter to Miss Winchelsea, describing her home-coming, and the astonishing arrangements of their "teeny weeny" little house. Mr. Se'noks was now beginning to assume a refinement in Miss Winchelsea's memory out of all proportion to the facts of the case, and she tried in vain to imagine his cultured greatness in a "teeny weeny" little house. "Am busy enamelling a cosey corner," said Fanny, sprawling to the end of her third sheet, "so excuse more." Miss Winchelsea answered in her best style, gently poking fun at Fanny's arrangements and hoping intensely that Mr. Sen'oks might see the letter. Only this hope enabled her to write at all, answering not only that letter but one in November and one at Christmas.

The two latter communications contained urgent invitations for her to come to Steely Bank on a Visit during the Christmas holidays. She tried to think that HE had told her to ask that, but it was too much like Fanny's opulent good-nature. She could not but believe that he must be sick of his blunder by this time; and she had more than a hope that he would presently write her a letter beginning "Dear Friend." Something subtly tragic in the separation was a great support to her, a sad misunderstanding. To have been jilted would have been intolerable. But he never wrote that letter beginning "Dear Friend."

For two years Miss Winchelsea could not go to see her friends, in spite of the reiterated invitations of Mrs. Sevenoaks — it became full Sevenoaks in the second year. Then one day near the Easter rest she felt lonely and without a soul to understand her in the world, and her mind ran once more on what is called Platonic friendship. Fanny was clearly happy and busy in her new sphere of domesticity, but no doubt HE had his lonely hours. Did he ever think of those days in Rome — gone now beyond recalling? No one had understood her as he had done; no one in all the world. It would be a sort of melancholy pleasure to talk to him again, and what harm could it do? Why should she deny herself? That night she wrote a sonnet, all but

the last two lines of the octave — which would not come, and the next day she composed a graceful little note to tell Fanny she was coming down.

And so she saw him again.

Even at the first encounter it was evident he had changed; he seemed stouter and less nervous, and it speedily appeared that his conversation had already lost much of its old delicacy. There even seemed a justification for Helen's description of weakness in his face — in certain lights it WAS weak. He seemed busy and preoccupied about his affairs, and almost under the impression that Miss Winchelsea had come for the sake of Fanny. He discussed his dinner with Fanny in an intelligent way. They only had one good long talk together, and that came to nothing. He did not refer to Rome, and spent some time abusing a man who had stolen an idea he had had for a text-book. It did not seem a very wonderful idea to Miss Winchelsea. She discovered he had forgotten the names of more than half the painters whose work they had rejoiced over in Florence.

It was a sadly disappointing week, and Miss Winchelsea was glad when it came to an end. Under various excuses she avoided visiting them again. After a time the visitor's room was occupied by their two little boys, and Fanny's invitations ceased. The intimacy of her letters had long since faded away.

A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON

The man with the white face entered the carriage at Rugby. He moved slowly in spite of the urgency of his porter, and even while he was still on the platform I noted how ill he seemed. He dropped into the corner over against me with a sigh, made an incomplete attempt to arrange his travelling shawl, and became motionless, with his eyes staring vacantly. Presently he was moved by a sense of my observation, looked up at me, and put out a spiritless hand for his newspaper. Then he glanced again in my direction.

I feigned to read. I feared I had unwittingly embarrassed him, and in a moment I was surprised to find him speaking.

"I beg your pardon?" said I.

"That book," he repeated, pointing a lean finger, "is about dreams."

"Obviously," I answered, for it was Fortnum-Roscoe's Dream States, and the title was on the cover. He hung silent for a space as if he sought words. "Yes," he said at last, "but they tell you nothing." I did not catch his meaning for a second.

"They don't know," he added.

I looked a little more attentively at his face.

"There are dreams," he said, "and dreams."

That sort of proposition I never dispute.

"I suppose—" he hesitated. "Do you ever dream? I mean vividly."

"I dream very little," I answered. "I doubt if I have three vivid dreams in a year."

"Ah!" he said, and seemed for a moment to collect his thoughts.

"Your dreams don't mix with your memories?" he asked abruptly. "You don't find yourself in doubt; did this happen or did it not?"

"Hardly ever. Except just for a momentary hesitation now and then. I suppose few people do."

"Does HE say—" he indicated the book.

"Says it happens at times and gives the usual explanation about intensity of impression and the like to account for its not happening as a rule. I suppose you know something of these theories—"

"Very little — except that they are wrong."

His emaciated hand played with the strap of the window for a time. I prepared to resume reading, and that seemed to precipitate his next remark. He leant forward almost as though he would touch me.

"Isn't there something called consecutive dreaming — that goes on night after night?"

"I believe there is. There are cases given in most books on mental trouble."

"Mental trouble! Yes. I dare say there are. It's the right place for them. But what I mean—" He looked at his bony knuckles. "Is that sort of thing always dreaming? IS it dreaming? Or is it something else? Mightn't it be something else?"

I should have snubbed his persistent conversation but for the drawn anxiety of his face. I remember now the look of his faded eyes and the lids red-stained — perhaps you know that look.

"I'm not just arguing about a matter of opinion," he said. "The thing's killing me."

"Dreams?"

"If you call them dreams. Night after night. Vivid! — so vivid... this—" (he indicated the landscape that went streaming by the window) "seems unreal in comparison! I can scarcely remember who I am, what business I am on...."

He paused. "Even now—"

"The dream is always the same — do you mean?" I asked.

"It's over."

"You mean?"

"I died."

"Died?"

"Smashed and killed, and now, so much of me as that dream was, is dead. Dead for ever. I dreamt I was another man, you know, living in a different part of the world and in a different time. I dreamt that night after night. Night after night I woke into that other life. Fresh scenes and fresh happenings — until I came upon the last—"

"When you died?"

"When I died."

"And since then—"

"No," he said. "Thank God! That was the end of the dream...."

It was clear I was in for this dream. And after all, I had an hour

before me, the light was fading fast, and Fortnum-Roscoe has a dreary way with him. “Living in a different time,” I said: “do you mean in some different age?”

“Yes.”

“Past?”

“No, to come — to come.”

“The year three thousand, for example?”

“I don’t know what year it was. I did when I was asleep, when I was dreaming, that is, but not now — not now that I am awake. There’s a lot of things I have forgotten since I woke out of these dreams, though I knew them at the time when I was — I suppose it was dreaming. They called the year differently from our way of calling the year.... What DID they call it?” He put his hand to his forehead. “No,” said he, “I forget.”

He sat smiling weakly. For a moment I feared he did not mean to tell me his dream. As a rule I hate people who tell their dreams, but this struck me differently. I proffered assistance even. “It began—” I suggested.

“It was vivid from the first. I seemed to wake up in it suddenly. And it’s curious that in these dreams I am speaking of I never remembered this life I am living now. It seemed as if the dream life was enough while it lasted. Perhaps — But I will tell you how I find myself when I do my best to recall it all. I don’t remember anything dearly until I found myself sitting in a sort of loggia looking out over the sea. I had been dozing, and suddenly I woke up — fresh and vivid — not a bit dream-like — because the girl had stopped fanning me.”

“The girl?”

“Yes, the girl. You must not interrupt or you will put me out.”

He stopped abruptly. “You won’t think I’m mad?” he said.

“No,” I answered; “you’ve been dreaming. Tell me your dream.”

“I woke up, I say, because the girl had stopped fanning me. I was not surprised to find myself there or anything of that sort, you understand. I did not feel I had fallen into it suddenly. I simply took it up at that point. Whatever memory I had of THIS life, this nineteenth-century life, faded as I woke, vanished like a dream. I knew all about myself, knew that my name was no longer Cooper but

Hedon, and all about my position in the world. I've forgotten a lot since I woke — there's a want of connection — but it was all quite clear and matter of fact then."

He hesitated again, gripping the window strap, putting his face forward and looking up at me appealingly.

"This seems bosh to you?"

"No, no!" I cried. "Go on. Tell me what this loggia was like."

"It was not really a loggia — I don't know what to call it. It faced south. It was small. It was all in shadow except the semicircle above the balcony that showed the sky and sea and the corner where the girl stood. I was on a couch — it was a metal couch with light striped cushions-and the girl was leaning over the balcony with her back to me. The light of the sunrise fell on her ear and cheek. Her pretty white neck and the little curls that nestled there, and her white shoulder were in the sun, and all the grace of her body was in the cool blue shadow. She was dressed — how can I describe it? It was easy and flowing. And altogether there she stood, so that it came to me how beautiful and desirable she was, as though I had never seen her before. And when at last I sighed and raised myself upon my arm she turned her face to me—"

He stopped.

"I have lived three-and-fifty years in this world. I have had mother, sisters, friends, wife, and daughters — all their faces, the play of their faces, I know. But the face of this girl — it is much more real to me. I can bring it back into memory so that I see it again — I could draw it or paint it. And after all—"

He stopped — but I said nothing.

"The face of a dream — the face of a dream. She was beautiful. Not that beauty which is terrible, cold, and worshipful, like the beauty of a saint; nor that beauty that stirs fierce passions; but a sort of radiation, sweet lips that softened into smiles, and grave grey eyes. And she moved gracefully, she seemed to have part with all pleasant and gracious things—"

He stopped, and his face was downcast and hidden. Then he looked up at me and went on, making no further attempt to disguise his absolute belief in the reality of his story.

"You see, I had thrown up my plans and ambitions, thrown up all

I had ever worked for or desired for her sake. I had been a master man away there in the north, with influence and property and a great reputation, but none of it had seemed worth having beside her. I had come to the place, this city of sunny pleasures, with her, and left all those things to wreck and ruin just to save a remnant at least of my life. While I had been in love with her before I knew that she had any care for me, before I had imagined that she would dare — that we should dare, all my life had seemed vain and hollow, dust and ashes. It WAS dust and ashes. Night after night and through the long days I had longed and desired — my soul had beaten against the thing forbidden!

"But it is impossible for one man to tell another just these things. It's emotion, it's a tint, a light that comes and goes. Only while it's there, everything changes, everything. The thing is I came away and left them in their Crisis to do what they could."

"Left whom?" I asked, puzzled.

"The people up in the north there. You see — in this dream, anyhow — I had been a big man, the sort of man men come to trust in, to group themselves about. Millions of men who had never seen me were ready to do things and risk things because of their confidence in me. I had been playing that game for years, that big laborious game, that vague, monstrous political game amidst intrigues and betrayals, speech and agitation. It was a vast weltering world, and at last I had a sort of leadership against the Gang — you know it was called the Gang — a sort of compromise of scoundrelly projects and base ambitions and vast public emotional stupidities and catchwords — the Gang that kept the world noisy and blind year by year, and all the while that it was drifting, drifting towards infinite disaster. But I can't expect you to understand the shades and complications of the year — the year something or other ahead. I had it all down to the smallest details — in my dream. I suppose I had been dreaming of it before I awoke, and the fading outline of some queer new development I had imagined still hung about me as I rubbed my eyes. It was some grubby affair that made me thank God for the sunlight. I sat up on the couch and remained looking at the woman and rejoicing — rejoicing that I had come away out of all that tumult and folly and violence before it was too late. After all, I

thought, this is life — love and beauty, desire and delight, are they not worth all those dismal struggles for vague, gigantic ends? And I blamed myself for having ever sought to be a leader when I might have given my days to love. But then, thought I, if I had not spent my early days sternly and austerely, I might have wasted myself upon vain and worthless women, and at the thought all my being went out in love and tenderness to my dear mistress, my dear lady, who had come at last and compelled me — compelled me by her invincible charm for me — to lay that life aside.

"'You are worth it,' I said, speaking without intending her to hear; 'you are worth it, my dearest one; worth pride and praise and all things. Love! to have YOU is worth them all together.' And at the murmur of my voice she turned about.

"'Come and see,' she cried — I can hear her now— 'come and see the sunrise upon Monte Solaro.'

"I remember how I sprang to my feet and joined her at the balcony. She put a white hand upon my shoulder and pointed towards great masses of limestone, flushing, as it were, into life. I looked. But first I noted the sunlight on her face caressing the lines of her cheeks and neck. How can I describe to you the scene we had before us? We were at Capri—"

"I have been there," I said. "I have clambered up Monte Solaro and drunk vero Capri — muddy stuff like cider — at the summit."

"Ah!" said the man with the white face; "then perhaps you can tell me — you will know if this was indeed Capri. For in this life I have never been there. Let me describe it. We were in a little room, one of a vast multitude of little rooms, very cool and sunny, hollowed out of the limestone of a sort of cape, very high above the sea. The whole island, you know, was one enormous hotel, complex beyond explaining, and on the other side there were miles of floating hotels, and huge floating stages to which the flying machines came. They called it a pleasure city. Of course, there was none of that in your time rather, I should say, IS none of that NOW. Of course. Now! — yes.

"Well, this room of ours was at the extremity of the cape, so that one could see east and west. Eastward was a great cliff — a thousand feet high perhaps — coldly grey except for one bright edge of gold,

and beyond it the Isle of the Sirens, and a falling coast that faded and passed into the hot sunrise. And when one turned to the west, distinct and near was a little bay, a little beach still in shadow. And out of that shadow rose Solaro straight and tall, flushed and golden crested, like a beauty throned, and the white moon was floating behind her in the sky. And before us from east to west stretched the many-tinted sea all dotted with little sailing boats.

"To the eastward, of course, these little boats were grey and very minute and clear, but to the westward they were little boats of gold — shining gold — almost like little flames. And just below us was a rock with an arch worn through it. The blue sea-water broke to green and foam all round the rock, and a galley came gliding out of the arch."

"I know that rock," I said. "I was nearly drowned there. It is called the Faraglioni."

"I Faraglioni? Yes, she called it that," answered the man with the white face. "There was some story — but that—"

He put his hand to his forehead again. "No," he said, "I forget that story."

"Well, that is the first thing I remember, the first dream I had, that little shaded room and the beautiful air and sky and that dear lady of mine, with her shining arms and her graceful robe, and how we sat and talked in half whispers to one another. We talked in whispers not because there was any one to hear, but because there was still such a freshness of mind between us that our thoughts were a little frightened, I think, to find themselves at last in words. And so they went softly.

"Presently we were hungry and we went from our apartment, going by a strange passage with a moving floor, until we came to the great breakfast room — there was a fountain and music. A pleasant and joyful place it was, with its sunlight and splashing, and the murmur of plucked strings. And we sat and ate and smiled at one another, and I would not heed a man who was watching me from a table near by.

"And afterwards we went on to the dancing-hall. But I cannot describe that hall. The place was enormous — larger than any building you have ever seen — and in one place there was the old

gate of Capri, caught into the wall of a gallery high overhead. Light girders, stems and threads of gold, burst from the pillars like fountains, streamed like an Aurora across the roof and interlaced, like — like conjuring tricks. All about the great circle for the dancers there were beautiful figures, strange dragons, and intricate and wonderful grotesques bearing lights. The place was inundated with artificial light that shamed the newborn day. And as we went through the throng the people turned about and looked at us, for all through the world my name and face were known, and how I had suddenly thrown up pride and struggle to come to this place. And they looked also at the lady beside me, though half the story of how at last she had come to me was unknown or mistold. And few of the men who were there, I know, but judged me a happy man, in spite of all the shame and dishonour that had come upon my name.

"The air was full of music, full of harmonious scents, full of the rhythm of beautiful motions. Thousands of beautiful people swarmed about the hall, crowded the galleries, sat in a myriad recesses; they were dressed in splendid colours and crowned with flowers; thousands danced about the great circle beneath the white images of the ancient gods, and glorious processions of youths and maidens came and went. We two danced, not the dreary monotonies of your days — of this time, I mean — but dances that were beautiful, intoxicating. And even now I can see my lady dancing — dancing joyously. She danced, you know, with a serious face; she danced with a serious dignity, and yet she was smiling at me and caressing me — smiling and caressing with her eyes.

"The music was different," he murmured. "It went — I cannot describe it; but it was infinitely richer and more varied than any music that has ever come to me awake.

"And then — it was when we had done dancing — a man came to speak to me. He was a lean, resolute man, very soberly clad for that place, and already I had marked his face watching me in the breakfasting hall, and afterwards as we went along the passage I had avoided his eye. But now, as we sat in a little alcove, smiling at the pleasure of all the people who went to and fro across the shining floor, he came and touched me, and spoke to me so that I was forced to listen. And he asked that he might speak to me for a little time

apart.

"'No,' I said. 'I have no secrets from this lady. What do you want to tell me?'

"He said it was a trivial matter, or at least a dry matter, for a lady to hear.

"'Perhaps for me to hear,' said I.

"He glanced at her, as though almost he would appeal to her. Then he asked me suddenly if I had heard of a great and avenging declaration that Evesham had made. Now, Evesham had always before been the man next to myself in the leadership of that great party in the north. He was a forcible, hard and tactless man, and only I had been able to control and soften him. It was on his account even more than my own, I think, that the others had been so dismayed at my retreat. So this question about what he had done reawakened my old interest in the life I had put aside just for a moment.

"'I have taken no heed of any news for many days,' I said. 'What has Evesham been saying?'

"And with that the man began, nothing loath, and I must confess even I was struck by Evesham's reckless folly in the wild and threatening words he had used. And this messenger they had sent to me not only told me of Evesham's speech, but went on to ask counsel and to point out what need they had of me. While he talked, my lady sat a little forward and watched his face and mine.

"My old habits of scheming and organising reasserted themselves. I could even see myself suddenly returning to the north, and all the dramatic effect of it. All that this man said witnessed to the disorder of the party indeed, but not to its damage. I should go back stronger than I had come. And then I thought of my lady. You see — how can I tell you? There were certain peculiarities of our relationship — as things are I need not tell you about that — which would render her presence with me impossible. I should have had to leave her; indeed, I should have had to renounce her clearly and openly, if I was to do all that I could do in the north. And the man knew THAT, even as he talked to her and me, knew it as well as she did, that my steps to duty were — first, separation, then abandonment. At the touch of that thought my dream of a return was shattered. I turned on the man suddenly, as he was imagining his eloquence was gaining ground

with me.

"'What have I to do with these things now?' I said. 'I have done with them. Do you think I am coquetting with your people in coming here?'

"'No,' he said; 'but—'

"'Why cannot you leave me alone? I have done with these things. I have ceased to be anything but a private man.'

"'Yes,' he answered. 'But have you thought? — this talk of war, these reckless challenges, these wild aggressions—'

"I stood up.

"'No,' I cried. 'I won't hear you. I took count of all those things, I weighed them — and I have come away.'

"He seemed to consider the possibility of persistence. He looked from me to where the lady sat regarding us.

"'War,' he said, as if he were speaking to himself, and then turned slowly from me and walked away. I stood, caught in the whirl of thoughts his appeal had set going.

"I heard my lady's voice.

"'Dear,' she said; 'but if they have need of you—'

"She did not finish her sentence, she let it rest there. I turned to her sweet face, and the balance of my mood swayed and reeled.

"'They want me only to do the thing they dare not do themselves,' I said. 'If they distrust Evesham they must settle with him themselves.'

"She looked at me doubtfully.

"'But war—' she said.

"I saw a doubt on her face that I had seen before, a doubt of herself and me, the first shadow of the discovery that, seen strongly and completely, must drive us apart for ever.

"Now, I was an older mind than hers, and I could sway her to this belief or that.

"'My dear one,' I said, 'you must not trouble over these things. There will be no war. Certainly there will be no war. The age of wars is past. Trust me to know the justice of this case. They have no right upon me, dearest, and no one has a right upon me. I have been free to choose my life, and I have chosen this.'

"'But WAR—' she said.

“I sat down beside her. I put an arm behind her and took her hand in mine. I set myself to drive that doubt away — I set myself to fill her mind with pleasant things again. I lied to her, and in lying to her I lied also to myself. And she was only too ready to believe me, only too ready to forget.

“Very soon the shadow had gone again, and we were hastening to our bathing-place in the Grotta del Bovo Marino, where it was our custom to bathe every day. We swam and splashed one another, and in that buoyant water I seemed to become something lighter and stronger than a man. And at last we came out dripping and rejoicing and raced among the rocks. And then I put on a dry bathing-dress, and we sat to bask in the sun, and presently I nodded, resting my head against her knee, and she put her hand upon my hair and stroked it softly and I dozed. And behold! as it were with the snapping of the string of a violin, I was awakening, and I was in my own bed in Liverpool, in the life of to-day.

“Only for a time I could not believe that all these vivid moments had been no more than the substance of a dream.

“In truth, I could not believe it a dream for all the sobering reality of things about me. I bathed and dressed as it were by habit, and as I shaved I argued why I of all men should leave the woman I loved to go back to fantastic politics in the hard and strenuous north. Even if Evesham did force the world back to war, what was that to me? I was a man, with the heart of a man, and why should I feel the responsibility of a deity for the way the world might go?

“You know that is not quite the way I think about affairs, about my real affairs. I am a solicitor, you know, with a point of view.

“The vision was so real, you must understand, so utterly unlike a dream that I kept perpetually recalling little irrelevant details; even the ornament of a book-cover that lay on my wife’s sewing-machine in the breakfast-room recalled with the utmost vividness the gilt line that ran about the seat in the alcove where I had talked with the messenger from my deserted party. Have you ever heard of a dream that had a quality like that?”

“Like — ?”

“So that afterwards you remembered little details you had forgotten.”

I thought. I had never noticed the point before, but he was right.

"Never," I said. "That is what you never seem to do with dreams."

"No," he answered. "But that is just what I did. I am a solicitor, you must understand, in Liverpool, and I could not help wondering what the clients and business people I found myself talking to in my office would think if I told them suddenly I was in love with a girl who would be born a couple of hundred years or so hence, and worried about the politics of my great-great-great-grandchildren. I was chiefly busy that day negotiating a ninety-nine-year building lease. It was a private builder in a hurry, and we wanted to tie him in every possible way. I had an interview with him, and he showed a certain want of temper that sent me to bed still irritated. That night I had no dream. Nor did I dream the next night, at least, to remember.

"Something of that intense reality of conviction vanished. I began to feel sure it WAS a dream. And then it came again.

"When the dream came again, nearly four days later, it was very different. I think it certain that four days had also elapsed in the dream. Many things had happened in the north, and the shadow of them was back again between us, and this time it was not so easily dispelled. I began, I know, with moody musings. Why, in spite of all, should I go back, go back for all the rest of my days to toil and stress, insults and perpetual dissatisfaction, simply to save hundreds of millions of common people, whom I did not love, whom too often I could do no other than despise, from the stress and anguish of war and infinite misrule? And after all I might fail. THEY all sought their own narrow ends, and why should not I — why should not I also live as a man? And out of such thoughts her voice summoned me, and I lifted my eyes.

"I found myself awake and walking. We had come out above the Pleasure City, we were near the summit of Monte Solaro and looking towards the bay. It was the late afternoon and very clear. Far away to the left Ischia hung in a golden haze between sea and sky, and Naples was coldly white against the hills, and before us was Vesuvius with a tall and slender streamer feathering at last towards the south, and the ruins of Torre dell' Annunziata and Castellamare glittering and near."

I interrupted suddenly: "You have been to Capri, of course?"

“Only in this dream,” he said, “only in this dream. All across the bay beyond Sorrento were the floating palaces of the Pleasure City moored and chained. And northward were the broad floating stages that received the aeroplanes. Aeroplanes fell out of the sky every afternoon, each bringing its thousands of pleasure-seekers from the uttermost parts of the earth to Capri and its delights. All these things, I say, stretched below.

“But we noticed them only incidentally because of an unusual sight that evening had to show. Five war aeroplanes that had long slumbered useless in the distant arsenals of the Rhinemouth were manoeuvring now in the eastward sky. Evesham had astonished the world by producing them and others, and sending them to circle here and there. It was the threat material in the great game of bluff he was playing, and it had taken even me by surprise. He was one of those incredibly stupid energetic people who seem sent by Heaven to create disasters. His energy to the first glance seemed so wonderfully like capacity! But he had no imagination, no invention, only a stupid, vast, driving force of will, and a mad faith in his stupid idiot ‘luck’ to pull him through. I remember how we stood out upon the headland watching the squadron circling far away, and how I weighed the full meaning of the sight, seeing clearly the way things must go. And then even it was not too late. I might have gone back, I think, and saved the world. The people of the north would follow me, I knew, granted only that in one thing I respected their moral standards. The east and south would trust me as they would trust no other northern man. And I knew I had only to put it to her and she would have let me go.... Not because she did not love me!

“Only I did not want to go; my will was all the other way about. I had so newly thrown off the incubus of responsibility: I was still so fresh a renegade from duty that the daylight clearness of what I OUGHT to do had no power at all to touch my will. My will was to live, to gather pleasures and make my dear lady happy. But though this sense of vast neglected duties had no power to draw me, it could make me silent and preoccupied, it robbed the days I had spent of half their brightness and roused me into dark meditations in the silence of the night. And as I stood and watched Evesham’s aeroplanes sweep to and fro — those birds of infinite ill omen — she

stood beside me watching me, perceiving the trouble indeed, but not perceiving it clearly her eyes questioning my face, her expression shaded with perplexity. Her face was grey because the sunset was fading out of the sky. It was no fault of hers that she held me. She had asked me to go from her, and again in the night time and with tears she had asked me to go.

"At last it was the sense of her that roused me from my mood. I turned upon her suddenly and challenged her to race down the mountain slopes. 'No,' she said, as if I jarred with her gravity, but I was resolved to end that gravity, and made her run — no one can be very grey and sad who is out of breath — and when she stumbled I ran with my hand beneath her arm. We ran down past a couple of men, who turned back staring in astonishment at my behaviour — they must have recognised my face. And halfway down the slope came a tumult in the air, clang-clank, clang-clank, and we stopped, and presently over the hill-crest those war things came flying one behind the other."

The man seemed hesitating on the verge of a description.

"What were they like?" I asked.

"They had never fought," he said. "They were just like our ironclads are nowadays; they had never fought. No one knew what they might do, with excited men inside them; few even cared to speculate. They were great driving things shaped like spearheads without a shaft, with a propeller in the place of the shaft."

"Steel?"

"Not steel."

"Aluminium?"

"No, no, nothing of that sort. An alloy that was very common — as common as brass, for example. It was called — let me see — ." He squeezed his forehead with the fingers of one hand. "I am forgetting everything," he said.

"And they carried guns?"

"Little guns, firing high explosive shells. They fired the guns backwards, out of the base of the leaf, so to speak, and rammed with the beak. That was the theory, you know, but they had never been fought. No one could tell exactly what was going to happen. And meanwhile I suppose it was very fine to go whirling through the air

like a flight of young swallows, swift and easy. I guess the captains tried not to think too clearly what the real thing would be like. And these flying war machines, you know, were only one sort of the endless war contrivances that had been invented and had fallen into abeyance during the long peace. There were all sorts of these things that people were routing out and furbishing up; infernal things, silly things; things that had never been tried; big engines, terrible explosives, great guns. You know the silly way of these ingenious sort of men who make these things; they turn 'em out as beavers build dams, and with no more sense of the rivers they're going to divert and the lands they're going to flood!

"As we went down the winding stepway to our hotel again, in the twilight, I foresaw it all: I saw how clearly and inevitably things were driving for war in Evesham's silly, violent hands, and I had some inkling of what war was bound to be under these new conditions. And even then, though I knew it was drawing near the limit of my opportunity, I could find no will to go back."

He sighed.

"That was my last chance.

"We didn't go into the city until the sky was full of stars, so we walked out upon the high terrace, to and fro, and — she counselled me to go back.

"'My dearest,' she said, and her sweet face looked up to me, 'this is Death. This life you lead is Death. Go back to them, go back to your duty — .'

"She began to weep, saying, between her sobs, and clinging to my arm as she said it, 'Go back — Go back.'

"Then suddenly she fell mute, and, glancing down at her face, I read in an instant the thing she had thought to do. It was one of those moments when one SEES.

"'No!' I said.

"'No?' she asked, in surprise, and I think a little fearful at the answer to her thought.

"'Nothing,' I said, 'shall send me back. Nothing! I have chosen. Love, I have chosen, and the world must go. Whatever happens I will live this life — I will live for YOU! It — nothing shall turn me aside; nothing, my dear one. Even if you died — even if you died—'

“‘Yes,’ she murmured, softly.

“‘Then — I also would die.’

“And before she could speak again I began to talk, talking eloquently — as I COULD do in that life — talking to exalt love, to make the life we were living seem heroic and glorious; and the thing I was deserting something hard and enormously ignoble that it was a fine thing to set aside. I bent all my mind to throw that glamour upon it, seeking not only to convert her but myself to that. We talked, and she clung to me, torn too between all that she deemed noble and all that she knew was sweet. And at last I did make it heroic, made all the thickening disaster of the world only a sort of glorious setting to our unparalleled love, and we two poor foolish souls strutted there at last, clad in that splendid delusion, drunken rather with that glorious delusion, under the still stars.

“And so my moment passed.

“It was my last chance. Even as we went to and fro there, the leaders of the south and east were gathering their resolve, and the hot answer that shattered Evesham’s bluffing for ever, took shape and waited. And all over Asia, and the ocean, and the south, the air and the wires were throbbing with their warnings to prepare — prepare.

“No one living, you know, knew what war was; no one could imagine, with all these new inventions, what horror war might bring. I believe most people still believed it would be a matter of bright uniforms and shouting charges and triumphs and flags and bands — in a time when half the world drew its food supply from regions ten thousand miles away — .”

The man with the white face paused. I glanced at him, and his face was intent on the floor of the carriage. A little railway station, a string of loaded trucks, a signal-box, and the back of a cottage, shot by the carriage window, and a bridge passed with a clap of noise, echoing the tumult of the train.

“After that,” he said, “I dreamt often. For three weeks of nights that dream was my life. And the worst of it was there were nights when I could not dream, when I lay tossing on a bed in THIS accursed life; and THERE — somewhere lost to me — things were happening — momentous, terrible things.... I lived at nights — my days, my waking days, this life I am living now, became a faded, far-

away dream, a drab setting, the cover of the book."

He thought.

"I could tell you all, tell you every little thing in the dream, but as to what I did in the daytime — no. I could not tell — I do not remember. My memory — my memory has gone. The business of life slips from me—"

He leant forward, and pressed his hands upon his eyes. For a long time he said nothing.

"And then?" said I.

"The war burst like a hurricane."

He stared before him at unspeakable things.

"And then?" I urged again.

"One touch of unreality," he said, in the low tone of a man who speaks to himself, "and they would have been nightmares. But they were not nightmares — they were not nightmares. NO!"

He was silent for so long that it dawned upon me that there was a danger of losing the rest of the story. But he went on talking again in the same tone of questioning self-communion.

"What was there to do but flight? I had not thought the war would touch Capri — I had seemed to see Capri as being out of it all, as the contrast to it all; but two nights after the whole place was shouting and bawling, every woman almost and every other man wore a badge — Evesham's badge — and there was no music but a jangling war-song over and over again, and everywhere men enlisting, and in the dancing halls they were drilling. The whole island was awhirl with rumours; it was said, again and again, that fighting had begun. I had not expected this. I had seen so little of the life of pleasure that I had failed to reckon with this violence of the amateurs. And as for me, I was out of it. I was like a man who might have prevented the firing of a magazine. The time had gone. I was no one; the vainest stripling with a badge counted for more than I. The crowd jostled us and bawled in our ears; that accursed song deafened us; a woman shrieked at my lady because no badge was on her, and we two went back to our own place again, ruffled and insulted — my lady white and silent, and I aquiver with rage. So furious was I, I could have quarrelled with her if I could have found one shade of accusation in her eyes.

“All my magnificence had gone from me. I walked up and down our rock cell, and outside was the darkling sea and a light to the southward that flared and passed and came again.

“‘We must get out of this place,’ I said over and over. ‘I have made my choice, and I will have no hand in these troubles. I will have nothing of this war. We have taken our lives out of all these things. This is no refuge for us. Let us go.’

“And the next day we were already in flight from the war that covered the world.

“And all the rest was Flight — all the rest was Flight.”

He mused darkly.

“How much was there of it?”

He made no answer.

“How many days?”

His face was white and drawn and his hands were clenched. He took no heed of my curiosity.

I tried to draw him back to his story with questions.

“Where did you go?” I said.

“When?”

“When you left Capri.”

“Southwest,” he said, and glanced at me for a second. “We went in a boat.”

“But I should have thought an aeroplane?”

“They had been seized.”

I questioned him no more. Presently I thought he was beginning again. He broke out in an argumentative monotone:

“But why should it be? If, indeed, this battle, this slaughter and stress IS life, why have we this craving for pleasure and beauty? If there IS no refuge, if there is no place of peace, and if all our dreams of quiet places are a folly and a snare, why have we such dreams? Surely it was no ignoble cravings, no base intentions, had brought us to this; it was Love had isolated us. Love had come to me with her eyes and robed in her beauty, more glorious than all else in life, in the very shape and colour of life, and summoned me away. I had silenced all the voices, I had answered all the questions — I had come to her. And suddenly there was nothing but War and Death!”

I had an inspiration. “After all,” I said, “it could have been only a

dream."

"A dream!" he cried, flaming upon me, "a dream — when even now—"

For the first time he became animated. A faint flush crept into his cheek. He raised his open hand and clenched it, and dropped it to his knee. He spoke, looking away from me, and for all the rest of the time he looked away. "We are but phantoms," he said, "and the phantoms of phantoms, desires like cloud shadows and wills of straw that eddy in the wind; the days pass, use and wont carry us through as a train carries the shadow of its lights, so be it! But one thing is real and certain, one thing is no dreamstuff, but eternal and enduring. It is the centre of my life, and all other things about it are subordinate or altogether vain. I loved her, that woman of a dream. And she and I are dead together!

"A dream! How can it be a dream, when it drenched a living life with unappeasable sorrow, when it makes all that I have lived for and cared for, worthless and unmeaning?

"Until that very moment when she was killed I believed we had still a chance of getting away," he said. "All through the night and morning that we sailed across the sea from Capri to Salerno, we talked of escape. We were full of hope, and it clung about us to the end, hope for the life together we should lead, out of it all, out of the battle and struggle, the wild and empty passions, the empty arbitrary 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not' of the world. We were uplifted, as though our quest was a holy thing, as though love for one another was a mission....

"Even when from our boat we saw the fair face of that great rock Capri — already scarred and gashed by the gun emplacements and hiding-places that were to make it a fastness — we reckoned nothing of the imminent slaughter, though the fury of preparation hung about in puffs and clouds of dust at a hundred points amidst the grey; but, indeed, I made a text of that and talked. There, you know, was the rock, still beautiful, for all its scars, with its countless windows and arches and ways, tier upon tier, for a thousand feet, a vast carving of grey, broken by vine-clad terraces, and lemon and orange groves, and masses of agave and prickly pear, and puffs of almond blossom. And out under the archway that is built over the Piccola Marina other

boats were coming; and as we came round the cape and within sight of the mainland, another little string of boats came into view, driving before the wind towards the southwest. In a little while a multitude had come out, the remoter just little specks of ultramarine in the shadow of the eastward cliff.

"'It is love and reason,' I said, 'fleeing from all this madness, of war.'

"And though we presently saw a squadron of aeroplanes flying across the southern sky we did not heed it. There it was — a line of little dots in the sky — and then more, dotting the southeastern horizon, and then still more, until all that quarter of the sky was stippled with blue specks. Now they were all thin little strokes of blue, and now one and now a multitude would heel and catch the sun and become short flashes of light. They came rising and falling and growing larger, like some huge flight of gulls or rooks, or such-like birds moving with a marvellous uniformity, and ever as they drew nearer they spread over a greater width of sky. The southward wing flung itself in an arrow-headed cloud athwart the sun. And then suddenly they swept round to the eastward and streamed eastward, growing smaller and smaller and clearer and clearer again until they vanished from the sky. And after that we noted to the northward and very high Evesham's fighting machines hanging high over Naples like an evening swarm of gnats.

"It seemed to have no more to do with us than a flight of birds.

"Even the mutter of guns far away in the southeast seemed to us to signify nothing....

"Each day, each dream after that, we were still exalted, still seeking that refuge where we might live and love. Fatigue had come upon us, pain and many distresses. For though we were dusty and stained by our toilsome tramping, and half starved and with the horror of the dead men we had seen and the flight of the peasants — for very soon a gust of fighting swept up the peninsula — with these things haunting our minds it still resulted only in a deepening resolution to escape. O, but she was brave and patient! She who had never faced hardship and exposure had courage for herself — and me. We went to and fro seeking an outlet, over a country all commandeered and ransacked by the gathering hosts of war. Always

we went on foot. At first there were other fugitives, but we did not mingle with them. Some escaped northward, some were caught in the torrent of peasantry that swept along the main roads; many gave themselves into the hands of the soldiery and were sent northward. Many of the men were impressed. But we kept away from these things; we had brought no money to bribe a passage north, and I feared for my lady at the hands of these conscript crowds. We had landed at Salerno, and we had been turned back from Cava, and we had tried to cross towards Taranto by a pass over Mount Alburno, but we had been driven back for want of food, and so we had come down among the marshes by Paestum, where those great temples stand alone. I had some vague idea that by Paestum it might be possible to find a boat or something, and take once more to sea. And there it was the battle overtook us.

"A sort of soul-blindness had me. Plainly I could see that we were being hemmed in; that the great net of that giant Warfare had us in its toils. Many times we had seen the levies that had come down from the north going to and fro, and had come upon them in the distance amidst the mountains making ways for the ammunition and preparing the mounting of the guns. Once we fancied they had fired at us, taking us for spies — at any rate a shot had gone shuddering over us. Several times we had hidden in woods from hovering aeroplanes.

"But all these things do not matter now, these nights of flight and pain.... We were in an open place near those great temples at Paestum, at last, on a blank stony place dotted with spiky bushes, empty and desolate and so flat that a grove of eucalyptus far away showed to the feet of its stems. How I can see it! My lady was sitting down under a bush, resting a little, for she was very weak and weary, and I was standing up watching to see if I could tell the distance of the firing that came and went. They were still, you know, fighting far from each other, with those terrible new weapons that had never before been used: guns that would carry beyond sight, and aeroplanes that would do — What THEY would do no man could foretell.

"I knew that we were between the two armies, and that they drew together. I knew we were in danger, and that we could not stop there and rest!

“Though all these things were in my mind, they were in the background. They seemed to be affairs beyond our concern. Chiefly, I was thinking of my lady. An aching distress filled me. For the first time she had owned herself beaten and had fallen a-weeping. Behind me I could hear her sobbing, but I would not turn round to her because I knew she had need of weeping, and had held herself so far and so long for me. It was well, I thought, that she would weep and rest and then we would toil on again, for I had no inkling of the thing that hung so near. Even now I can see her as she sat there, her lovely hair upon her shoulder, can mark again the deepening hollow of her cheek.

“‘If we had parted,’ she said, ‘if I had let you go.’

“‘No,’ said I. ‘Even now, I do not repent. I will not repent; I made my choice, and I will hold on to the end.”

“And then —

“Overhead in the sky something flashed and burst, and all about us I heard the bullets making a noise like a handful of peas suddenly thrown. They chipped the stones about us, and whirled fragments from the bricks and passed....”

He put his hand to his mouth, and then moistened his lips.

“At the flash I had turned about....

“You know — she stood up —

“She stood up; you know, and moved a step towards me —

“As though she wanted to reach me —

“And she had been shot through the heart.”

He stopped and stared at me. I felt all that foolish incapacity an Englishman feels on such occasions. I met his eyes for a moment, and then stared out of the window. For a long space we kept silence. When at last I looked at him he was sitting back in his corner, his arms folded, and his teeth gnawing at his knuckles.

He bit his nail suddenly, and stared at it.

“I carried her,” he said, “towards the temples, in my arms — as though it mattered. I don’t know why. They seemed a sort of sanctuary, you know, they had lasted so long, I suppose.

“She must have died almost instantly. Only — I talked to her — all the way.”

Silence again.

“I have seen those temples,” I said abruptly, and indeed he had brought those still, sunlit arcades of worn sandstone very vividly before me.

“It was the brown one, the big brown one. I sat down on a fallen pillar and held her in my arms.... Silent after the first babble was over. And after a little while the lizards came out and ran about again, as though nothing unusual was going on, as though nothing had changed.... It was tremendously still there, the sun high, and the shadows still; even the shadows of the weeds upon the entablature were still — in spite of the thudding and banging that went all about the sky.

“I seem to remember that the aeroplanes came up out of the south, and that the battle went away to the west. One aeroplane was struck, and overset and fell. I remember that — though it didn’t interest me in the least. It didn’t seem to signify. It was like a wounded gull, you know — flapping for a time in the water. I could see it down the aisle of the temple — a black thing in the bright blue water.

“Three or four times shells burst about the beach, and then that ceased. Each time that happened all the lizards scuttled in and hid for a space. That was all the mischief done, except that once a stray bullet gashed the stone hard by — made just a fresh bright surface.

“As the shadows grew longer, the stillness seemed greater.

“The curious thing,” he remarked, with the manner of a man who makes a trivial conversation, “is that I didn’t THINK — I didn’t think at all. I sat with her in my arms amidst the stones — in a sort of lethargy — stagnant.

“And I don’t remember waking up. I don’t remember dressing that day. I know I found myself in my office, with my letters all slit open in front of me, and how I was struck by the absurdity of being there, seeing that in reality I was sitting, stunned, in that Paestum temple with a dead woman in my arms. I read my letters like a machine. I have forgotten what they were about.”

He stopped, and there was a long silence.

Suddenly I perceived that we were running down the incline from Chalk Farm to Euston. I started at this passing of time. I turned on him with a brutal question, with the tone of Now or never.

“And did you dream again?”

“Yes.”

He seemed to force himself to finish. His voice was very low.

“Once more, and as it were only for a few instants. I seemed to have suddenly awakened out of a great apathy, to have risen into a sitting position, and the body lay there on the stones beside me. A gaunt body. Not her, you know. So soon — it was not her....

“I may have heard voices. I do not know. Only I knew clearly that men were coming into the solitude and that that was a last outrage.

“I stood up and walked through the temple, and then there came into sight — first one man with a yellow face, dressed in a uniform of dirty white, trimmed with blue, and then several, climbing to the crest of the old wall of the vanished city, and crouching there. They were little bright figures in the sunlight, and there they hung, weapon in hand, peering cautiously before them.

“And further away I saw others and then more at another point in the wall. It was a long lax line of men in open order.

“Presently the man I had first seen stood up and shouted a command, and his men came tumbling down the wall and into the high weeds towards the temple. He scrambled down with them and led them. He came facing towards me, and when he saw me he stopped.

“At first I had watched these men with a mere curiosity, but when I had seen they meant to come to the temple I was moved to forbid them. I shouted to the officer.

“‘You must not come here,’ I cried, ‘*I* am here. I am here with my dead.’

“He stared, and then shouted a question back to me in some unknown tongue.

“I repeated what I had said.

“He shouted again, and I folded my arms and stood still. Presently he spoke to his men and came forward. He carried a drawn sword.

“I signed to him to keep away, but he continued to advance. I told him again very patiently and clearly: ‘You must not come here. These are old temples and I am here with my dead.’

“Presently he was so close I could see his face clearly. It was a narrow face, with dull grey eyes, and a black moustache. He had a scar on his upper lip, and he was dirty and unshaven. He kept

shouting unintelligible things, questions perhaps, at me.

"I know now that he was afraid of me, but at the time that did not occur to me. As I tried to explain to him he interrupted me in imperious tones, bidding me, I suppose, stand aside.

"He made to go past me, And I caught hold of him.

"I saw his face change at my grip.

"'You fool,' I cried. 'Don't you know? She is dead!'

"He started back. He looked at me with cruel eyes. I saw a sort of exultant resolve leap into them — delight. Then, suddenly, with a scowl, he swept his sword back — SO — and thrust."

He stopped abruptly. I became aware of a change in the rhythm of the train. The brakes lifted their voices and the carriage jarred and jerked. This present world insisted upon itself, became clamorous. I saw through the steamy window huge electric lights glaring down from tall masts upon a fog, saw rows of stationary empty carriages passing by, and then a signal-box, hoisting its constellation of green and red into the murky London twilight marched after them. I looked again at his drawn features.

"He ran me through the heart. It was with a sort of astonishment — no fear, no pain — but just amazement, that I felt it pierce me, felt the sword drive home into my body. It didn't hurt, you know. It didn't hurt at all."

The yellow platform lights came into the field of view, passing first rapidly, then slowly, and at last stopping with a jerk. Dim shapes of men passed to and fro without.

"Euston!" cried a voice.

"Do you mean — ?"

"There was no pain, no sting or smart. Amazement and then darkness sweeping over everything. The hot, brutal face before me, the face of the man who had killed me, seemed to recede. It swept out of existence—"

"Euston!" clamoured the voices outside; "Euston!"

The carriage door opened, admitting a flood of sound, and a porter stood regarding us. The sounds of doors slamming, and the hoof-clatter of cab-horses, and behind these things the featureless remote roar of the London cobble-stones, came to my ears. A truckload of lighted lamps blazed along the platform.

“A darkness, a flood of darkness that opened and spread and blotted out all things.”

“Any luggage, sir?” said the porter.

“And that was the end?” I asked.

He seemed to hesitate. Then, almost inaudibly, he answered, “No.”

“You mean?”

“I couldn’t get to her. She was there on the other side of the Temple — And then—”

“Yes,” I insisted. “Yes?”

“Nightmares,” he cried; “nightmares indeed! My God! Great birds that fought and tore.”

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND AND OTHER STORIES

This short story collection includes thirty-three short stories by Wells, all of which had previously appeared in periodicals between 1894 and 1909. The collection was first published in 1911, but twenty-seven of the stories had already been collected in five previous anthologies of Wells' short fiction. In his *Introduction*, Wells makes it clear that this collection contains what he considered to be the best of his own short fiction, claiming that, with the exception of two stories from *Tales of Space and Time* (1899) (namely 'A Story of the Stone Age' and 'A Story of the Days to Come'), 'no short story of mine of the slightest merit is excluded from this volume.'

All of the stories contain science fiction or fantasy elements of some kind – ranging from the macabre revenge story 'The Cone' to the overt science fiction of 'The Empire of the Ants'. The best-known tale in the collection, however, is the title story, which tells of a lost community that has grown up with no concept of sight. This story was later expanded and revised by Wells, the later version being privately printed by the Golden Cockerel Press in 1939.

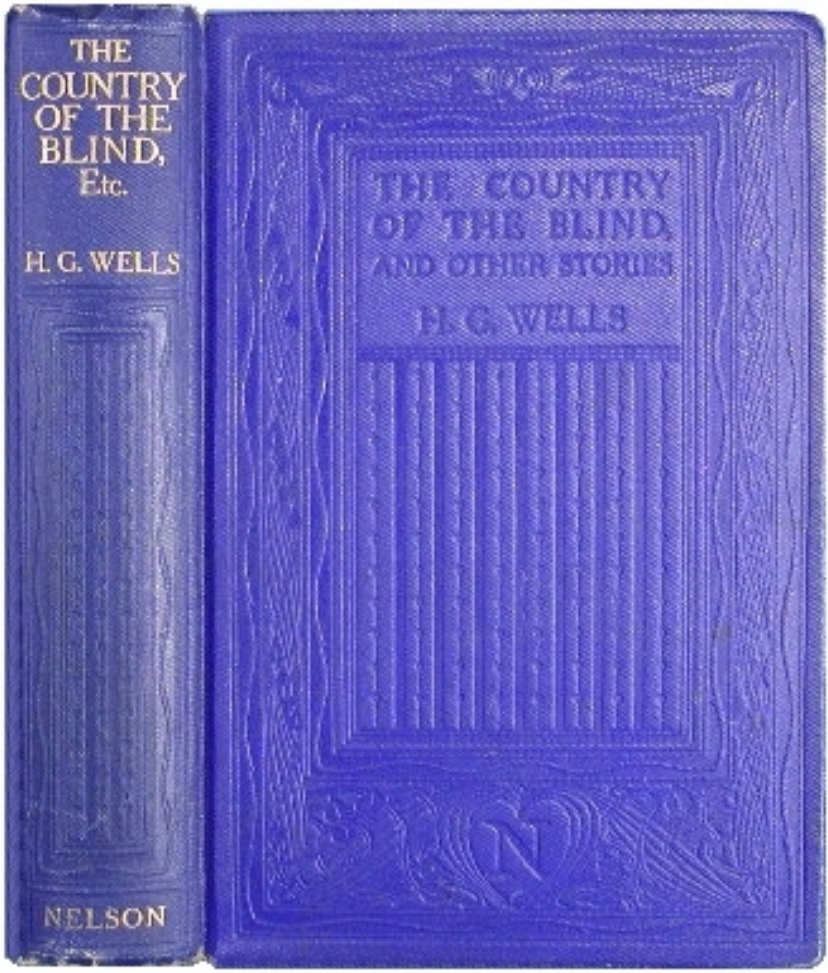

The first edition

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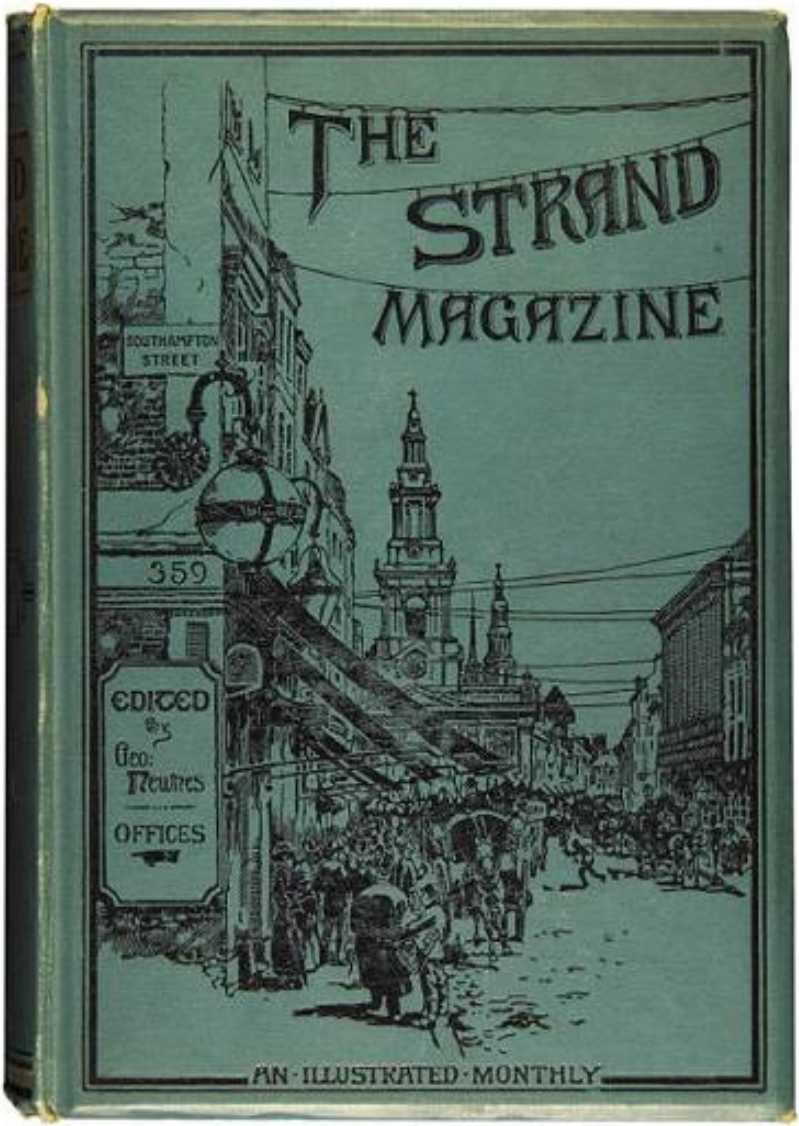

The Strand Magazine, the popular monthly periodical in which 'The Country of the Blind' first appeared in 1904

INTRODUCTION

The enterprise of Messrs. T. Nelson & Sons and the friendly accommodation of Messrs. Macmillan render possible this collection in one cover of all the short stories by me that I care for any one to read again. Except for the two series of linked incidents that make up the bulk of the book called *Tales of Space and Time*, no short story of mine of the slightest merit is excluded from this volume. Many of very questionable merit find a place; it is an inclusive and not an exclusive gathering. And the task of selection and revision brings home to me with something of the effect of discovery that I was once an industrious writer of short stories, and that I am no longer anything of the kind. I have not written one now for quite a long time, and in the past five or six years I have made scarcely one a year. The bulk of the fifty or sixty tales from which this present three-and-thirty have been chosen dates from the last century. This edition is more definitive than I supposed when first I arranged for it. In the presence of so conclusive an ebb and cessation an almost obituary manner seems justifiable.

I find it a little difficult to disentangle the causes that have restricted the flow of these inventions. It has happened, I remark, to others as well as to myself, and in spite of the kindliest encouragement to continue from editors and readers. There was a time when life bubbled with short stories; they were always coming to the surface of my mind, and it is no deliberate change of will that has thus restricted my production. It is rather, I think, a diversion of attention to more sustained and more exacting forms. It was my friend Mr. C.L. Hind who set that spring going. He urged me to write short stories for the *Pall Mall Budget*, and persuaded me by his simple and buoyant conviction that I could do what he desired. There existed at the time only the little sketch, "The Jilting of Jane," included in this volume — at least, that is the only tolerable fragment of fiction I find surviving from my pre-Lewis-Hind period. But I set myself, so encouraged, to the experiment of inventing moving and interesting things that could be given vividly in the little space of eight or ten such pages as this, and for a time I found it a very

entertaining pursuit indeed. Mr. Hind's indicating finger had shown me an amusing possibility of the mind. I found that, taking almost anything as a starting-point and letting my thoughts play about it, there would presently come out of the darkness, in a manner quite inexplicable, some absurd or vivid little incident more or less relevant to that initial nucleus. Little men in canoes upon sunlit oceans would come floating out of nothingness, incubating the eggs of prehistoric monsters unawares; violent conflicts would break out amidst the flower-beds of suburban gardens; I would discover I was peering into remote and mysterious worlds ruled by an order logical indeed but other than our common sanity.

The 'nineties was a good and stimulating period for a short-story writer. Mr. Kipling had made his astonishing advent with a series of little blue-grey books, whose covers opened like window-shutters to reveal the dusty sun-glare and blazing colours of the East; Mr. Barrie had demonstrated what could be done in a little space through the panes of his *Window in Thrums*. The *National Observer* was at the climax of its career of heroic insistence upon lyrical brevity and a vivid finish, and Mr. Frank Harris was not only printing good short stories by other people, but writing still better ones himself in the dignified pages of the *Fortnightly Review*. *Longman's Magazine*, too, represented a *clientèle* of appreciative short-story readers that is now scattered. Then came the generous opportunities of the *Yellow Book*, and the *National Observer* died only to give birth to the *New Review*. No short story of the slightest distinction went for long unrecognised. The sixpenny popular magazines had still to deaden down the conception of what a short story might be to the imaginative limitation of the common reader — and a maximum length of six thousand words. Short stories broke out everywhere. Kipling was writing short stories; Barrie, Stevenson, Frank-Harris; Max Beerbohm wrote at least one perfect one, "The Happy Hypocrite"; Henry James pursued his wonderful and inimitable bent; and among other names that occur to me, like a mixed handful of jewels drawn from a bag, are George Street, Morley Roberts, George Gissing, Ella d'Arcy, Murray Gilchrist, E. Nesbit, Stephen Crane, Joseph Conrad, Edwin Pugh, Jerome K. Jerome, Kenneth Graham, Arthur Morrison, Marriott Watson, George Moore, Grant Allen, George Egerton,

Henry Harland, Pett Ridge, W. W. Jacobs (who alone seems inexhaustible). I dare say I could recall as many more names with a little effort. I may be succumbing to the infirmities of middle age, but I do not think the present decade can produce any parallel to this list, or what is more remarkable, that the later achievements in this field of any of the survivors from that time, with the sole exception of Joseph Conrad, can compare with the work they did before 1900. It seems to me this outburst of short stories came not only as a phase in literary development, but also as a phase in the development of the individual writers concerned.

It is now quite unusual to see any adequate criticism of short stories in English. I do not know how far the decline in short-story writing may not be due to that. Every sort of artist demands human responses, and few men can contrive to write merely for a publisher's cheque and silence, however reassuring that cheque may be. A mad millionaire who commissioned masterpieces to burn would find it impossible to buy them. Scarcely any artist will hesitate in the choice between money and attention; and it was primarily for that last and better sort of pay that the short stories of the 'nineties were written. People talked about them tremendously, compared them, and ranked them. That was the thing that mattered.

It was not, of course, all good talk, and we suffered then, as now, from the *à priori* critic. Just as nowadays he goes about declaring that the work of such-and-such a dramatist is all very amusing and delightful, but "it isn't a Play," so we' had a great deal of talk about *the* short story, and found ourselves measured by all kinds of arbitrary standards. There was a tendency to treat the short story as though it was as definable a form as the sonnet, instead of being just exactly what any one of courage and imagination can get told in twenty minutes' reading or so. It was either Mr. Edward Garnett or Mr. George Moore in a violently anti-Kipling mood who invented the distinction between the short story and the anecdote. The short story was Maupassant; the anecdote was damnable. It was a quite infernal comment in its way, because it permitted no defence. Fools caught it up and used it freely. Nothing is so destructive in a field of artistic effort as a stock term of abuse. Anyone could say of any short story, "A mere anecdote," just as anyone can say "Incoherent!" of

any novel or of any sonata that isn't studiously monotonous. The recession of enthusiasm for this compact, amusing form is closely associated in my mind with that discouraging imputation. One felt hopelessly open to a paralysing and unanswerable charge, and one's ease and happiness in the garden of one's fancies was more and more marred by the dread of it. It crept into one's mind, a distress as vague and inexpugnable as a sea fog on a spring morning, and presently one shivered and wanted to go indoors…It is the absurd fate of the imaginative writer that he should be thus sensitive to atmospheric conditions.

But after one has died as a maker one may still live as a critic, and I will confess I am all for laxness and variety in this as in every field of art. Insistence upon rigid forms and austere unities seems to me the instinctive reaction of the sterile against the fecund. It is the tired man with a headache who values a work of art for what it does not contain. I suppose it is the lot of every critic nowadays to suffer from indigestion and a fatigued appreciation, and to develop a self-protective tendency towards rules that will reject, as it were, automatically the more abundant and irregular forms. But this world is not for the weary, and in the long-run it is the new and variant that matter. I refuse altogether to recognise any hard and fast type for the Short Story, any more than I admit any limitation upon the liberties of the Small Picture. The short story is a fiction that may be read in something under an hour, and so that it is moving and delightful, it does not matter whether it is as "trivial" as a Japanese print of insects seen closely between grass stems, or as spacious as the prospect of the plain of Italy from Monte Mottarone. It does not matter whether it is human or inhuman, or whether it leaves you thinking deeply or radiantly but superficially pleased. Some things are more easily done as short stories than others and more abundantly done, but one of the many pleasures of short-story writing is to achieve the impossible.

At any rate, that is the present writer's conception of the art of the short story, as the jolly art of making something very bright and moving; it may be horrible or pathetic or funny or beautiful or profoundly illuminating, having only this essential, that it should take from fifteen to fifty minutes to read aloud. All the rest is just whatever invention and imagination and the mood can give — a

vision of buttered slides on a busy day or of unprecedented worlds. In that spirit of miscellaneous expectation these stories should be received. Each is intended to be a thing by itself; and if it is not too ungrateful to kindly and enterprising publishers, I would confess I would much prefer to see each printed expensively alone, and left in a little brown-paper cover to lie about a room against the needs of a quite casual curiosity. And I would rather this volume were found in the bedrooms of convalescents and in dentists' parlours and railway trains than in gentlemen's studies. I would rather have it dipped in and dipped in again than read severely through. Essentially it is a miscellany of inventions, many of which were very pleasant to write; and its end is more than attained if some of them are refreshing and agreeable to read. I have now re-read them all, and I am glad to think I wrote them. I like them, but I cannot tell how much the associations of old happinesses gives them a flavour for me. I make no claims for them and no apology; they will be read as long as people read them. Things written either live or die; unless it be for a place of judgment upon Academic impostors, there is no apologetic intermediate state.

I may add that I have tried to set a date to most of these stories, but that they are not arranged in strictly chronological order.

H. G. WELLS.

THE JILTING OF JANE.

As I sit writing in my study, I can hear our Jane bumping her way downstairs with a brush and dust-pan. She used in the old days to sing hymn tunes, or the British national song for the time being, to these instruments, but latterly she has been silent and even careful over her work. Time was when I prayed with fervour for such silence, and my wife with sighs for such care, but now they have come we are not so glad as we might have anticipated we should be. Indeed, I would rejoice secretly, though it may be unmanly weakness to admit it, even to hear Jane sing "Daisy," or, by the fracture of any plate but one of Euphemia's best green ones, to learn that the period of brooding has come to an end.

Yet how we longed to hear the last of Jane's young man before we heard the last of him! Jane was always very free with her conversation to my wife, and discoursed admirably in the kitchen on a variety of topics — so well, indeed, that I sometimes left my study door open — our house is a small one — to partake of it. But after William came, it was always William, nothing but William; William this and William that; and when we thought William was worked out and exhausted altogether, then William all over again. The engagement lasted altogether three years; yet how she got introduced to William, and so became thus saturated with him, was always a secret. For my part, I believe it was at the street corner where the Rev. Barnabas Baux used to hold an open-air service after evensong on Sundays. Young Cupids were wont to flit like moths round the paraffin flare of that centre of High Church hymn-singing. I fancy she stood singing hymns there, out of memory and her imagination, instead of coming home to get supper, and William came up beside her and said, "Hello!" "Hello yourself!" she said; and etiquette being satisfied, they proceeded to talk together.

As Euphemia has a reprehensible way of letting her servants talk to her, she soon heard of him. "He is *such* a respectable young man, ma'am," said Jane, "you don't know." Ignoring the slur cast on her acquaintance, my wife inquired further about this William.

"He is second porter at Maynard's, the draper's," said Jane, "and

gets eighteen shillings — nearly a pound — a week, m'm; and when the head porter leaves he will be head porter. His relatives are quite superior people, m'm. Not labouring people at all. His father was a greengrosher, m'm, and had a churnor, and he was bankrup' twice. And one of his sisters is in a Home for the Dying. It will be a very good match for me, m'm," said Jane, "me being an orphan girl."

"Then you are engaged to him?" asked my wife.

"Not engaged, ma'am; but he is saving money to buy a ring — hammyfist."

"Well, Jane, when you are properly engaged to him you may ask him round here on Sunday afternoons, and have tea with him in the kitchen;" for my Euphemia has a motherly conception of her duty towards her maid-servants. And presently the amethystine ring was being worn about the house, even with ostentation, and Jane developed a new way of bringing in the joint so that this gage was evident. The elder Miss Maitland was aggrieved by it, and told my wife that servants ought not to wear rings. But my wife looked it up in *Enquire Within* and *Mrs. Motherly's Book of Household Management*, and found no prohibition. So Jane remained with this happiness added to her love.

The treasure of Jane's heart appeared to me to be what respectable people call a very deserving young man. "William, ma'am," said Jane one day suddenly, with ill-concealed complacency, as she counted out the beer bottles, "William, ma'am, is a teetotaller. Yes, m'm; and he don't smoke. Smoking, ma'am," said Jane, as one who reads the heart, "*do* make such a dust about. Beside the waste of money. *And* the smell. However, I suppose they got to do it — some of them…"

William was at first a rather shabby young man of the ready-made black coat school of costume. He had watery gray eyes, and a complexion appropriate to the brother of one in a Home for the Dying. Euphemia did not fancy him very much, even at the beginning. His eminent respectability was vouched for by an alpaca umbrella, from which he never allowed himself to be parted.

"He goes to chapel," said Jane. "His papa, ma'am — —"

"His *what*, Jane?"

"His papa, ma'am, was Church: but Mr. Maynard is a Plymouth

Brother, and William thinks it Policy, ma'am, to go there too. Mr. Maynard comes and talks to him quite friendly when they ain't busy, about using up all the ends of string, and about his soul. He takes a lot of notice, do Mr. Maynard, of William, and the way he saves his soul, ma'am."

Presently we heard that the head porter at Maynard's had left, and that William was head porter at twenty-three shillings a week. "He is really kind of over the man who drives the van," said Jane, "and him married, with three children." And she promised in the pride of her heart to make interest for us with William to favour us so that we might get our parcels of drapery from Maynard's with exceptional promptitude.

After this promotion a rapidly-increasing prosperity came upon Jane's young man. One day we learned that Mr. Maynard had given William a book. "'Smiles' 'Elp Yourself,' it's called," said Jane; "but it ain't comic. It tells you how to get on in the world, and some what William read to me was *lovely*, ma'am."

Euphemia told me of this, laughing, and then she became suddenly grave. "Do you know, dear," she said, "Jane said one thing I did not like. She had been quiet for a minute, and then she suddenly remarked, 'William is a lot above me, ma'am, ain't he?'"

"I don't see anything in that," I said, though later my eyes were to be opened.

One Sunday afternoon about that time I was sitting at my writing-desk — possibly I was reading a good book — when a something went by the window. I heard a startled exclamation behind me, and saw Euphemia with her hands clasped together and her eyes dilated. "George," she said in an awe-stricken whisper, "did you see?"

Then we both spoke to one another at the same moment, slowly and solemnly: "*A silk hat! Yellow gloves! A new umbrella!*"

"It may be my fancy, dear," said Euphemia; "but his tie was very like yours. I believe Jane keeps him in ties. She told me a little while ago, in a way that implied volumes about the rest of your costume, 'The master *do* wear pretty ties, ma'am.' And he echoes all your novelties."

The young couple passed our window again on their way to their customary walk. They were arm in arm. Jane looked exquisitely

proud, happy, and uncomfortable, with new white cotton gloves, and William, in the silk hat, singularly genteel!

That was the culmination of Jane's happiness. When she returned, "Mr. Maynard has been talking to William, ma'am," she said, "and he is to serve customers, just like the young shop gentlemen, during the next sale. And if he gets on, he is to be made an assistant, ma'am, at the first opportunity. He has got to be as gentlemanly as he can, ma'am; and if he ain't, ma'am, he says it won't be for want of trying. Mr. Maynard has took a great fancy to him."

"He *is* getting on, Jane," said my wife.

"Yes, ma'am," said Jane thoughtfully; "he *is* getting on."

And she sighed.

That next Sunday as I drank my tea I interrogated my wife. "How is this Sunday different from all other Sundays, little woman? What has happened? Have you altered the curtains, or re-arranged the furniture, or where is the indefinable difference of it? Are you wearing your hair in a new way without warning me? I perceive a change clearly, and I cannot for the life of me say what it is."

Then my wife answered in her most tragic voice, "George," she said, "that William has not come near the place to-day! And Jane is crying her heart out upstairs."

There followed a period of silence. Jane, as I have said, stopped singing about the house, and began to care for our brittle possessions, which struck my wife as being a very sad sign indeed. The next Sunday, and the next, Jane asked to go out, "to walk with William," and my wife, who never attempts to extort confidences, gave her permission, and asked no questions. On each occasion Jane came back looking flushed and very determined. At last one day she became communicative.

"William is being led away," she remarked abruptly, with a catching of the breath, apropos of tablecloths. "Yes, m'm. She is a milliner, and she can play on the piano."

"I thought," said my wife, "that you went out with him on Sunday."

"Not out with him, m'm — after him. I walked along by the side of them, and told her he was engaged to me."

"Dear me, Jane, did you? What did they do?"

“Took no more notice of me than if I was dirt. So I told her she should suffer for it.”

“It could not have been a very agreeable walk, Jane.”

“Not for no parties, ma’am.”

“I wish,” said Jane, “I could play the piano, ma’am. But anyhow, I don’t mean to let *her* get him away from me. She’s older than him, and her hair ain’t gold to the roots, ma’am.”

It was on the August Bank Holiday that the crisis came. We do not clearly know the details of the fray, but only such fragments as poor Jane let fall. She came home dusty, excited, and with her heart hot within her.

The milliner’s mother, the milliner, and William had made a party to the Art Museum at South Kensington, I think. Anyhow, Jane had calmly but firmly accosted them somewhere in the streets, and asserted her right to what, in spite of the consensus of literature, she held to be her inalienable property. She did, I think, go so far as to lay hands on him. They dealt with her in a crushingly superior way. They “called a cab.” There was a “scene,” William being pulled away into the four-wheeler by his future wife and mother-in-law from the reluctant hands of our discarded Jane. There were threats of giving her “in charge.”

“My poor Jane!” said my wife, mincing veal as though she was mincing William. “It’s a shame of them. I would think no more of him. He is not worthy of you.”

“No, m’m,” said Jane. “He *is* weak.

“But it’s that woman has done it,” said Jane. She was never known to bring herself to pronounce “that woman’s” name or to admit her girlishness. “I can’t think what minds some women must have — to try and get a girl’s young man away from her. But there, it only hurts to talk about it,” said Jane.

Thereafter our house rested from William. But there was something in the manner of Jane’s scrubbing the front doorstep or sweeping out the rooms, a certain viciousness, that persuaded me that the story had not yet ended.

“Please, m’m, may I go and see a wedding tomorrow?” said Jane one day.

My wife knew by instinct whose wedding. “Do you think it is

wise, Jane?" she said.

"I would like to see the last of him," said Jane.

"My dear," said my wife, fluttering into my room about twenty minutes after Jane had started, "Jane has been to the boot-hole and taken all the left-off boots and shoes, and gone off to the wedding with them in a bag. Surely she cannot mean—"

"Jane," I said, "is developing character. Let us hope for the best."

Jane came back with a pale, hard face. All the boots seemed to be still in her bag, at which my wife heaved a premature sigh of relief. We heard her go upstairs and replace the boots with considerable emphasis.

"Quite a crowd at the wedding, ma'am," she said presently, in a purely conversational style, sitting in our little kitchen, and scrubbing the potatoes; "and such a lovely day for them." She proceeded to numerous other details, clearly avoiding some cardinal incident.

"It was all extremely respectable and nice, ma'am; but *her* father didn't wear a black coat, and looked quite out of place, ma'am. Mr. Piddingquirk—"

"*Who*?"

"Mr. Piddingquirk — William that was, ma'am — had white gloves, and a coat like a clergyman, and a lovely chrysanthemum. He looked so nice, ma'am. And there was red carpet down, just like for gentlefolks. And they say he gave the clerk four shillings, ma'am. It was a real kerridge they had — not a fly. When they came out of church there was rice-throwing, and her two little sisters dropping dead flowers. And someone threw a slipper, and then I threw a boot —"

"Threw a *boot*, Jane!"

"Yes, ma'am. Aimed at her. But it hit *him*. Yes, ma'am, hard. Gev him a black eye, I should think. I only threw that one. I hadn't the heart to try again. All the little boys cheered when it hit him."

After an interval— "I am sorry the boot hit *him*."

Another pause. The potatoes were being scrubbed violently. "He always *was* a bit above me, you know, ma'am. And he was led away."

The potatoes were more than finished. Jane rose sharply with a sigh, and rapped the basin down on the table.

“I don’t care,” she said. “I don’t care a rap. He will find out his mistake yet. It serves me right. I was stuck up about him. I ought not to have looked so high. And I am glad things are as things are.”

My wife was in the kitchen, seeing to the higher cookery. After the confession of the boot-throwing, she must have watched poor Jane fuming with a certain dismay in those brown eyes of hers. But I imagine they softened again very quickly, and then Jane’s must have met them.

“Oh, ma’am,” said Jane, with an astonishing change of note, “think of all that *might* have been! Oh, ma’am, I *could* have been so happy! I ought to have known, but I didn’t know…You’re very kind to let me talk to you, ma’am…for it’s hard on me, ma’am…it’s har-r-r-r-d—”

And I gather that Euphemia so far forgot herself as to let Jane sob out some of the fullness of her heart on a sympathetic shoulder. My Euphemia, thank Heaven, has never properly grasped the importance of “keeping up her position.” And since that fit of weeping, much of the accent of bitterness has gone out of Jane’s scrubbing and brush work.

Indeed, something passed the other day with the butcher-boy — but that scarcely belongs to this story. However, Jane is young still, and time and change are at work with her. We all have our sorrows, but I do not believe very much in the existence of sorrows that never heal.

II.

THE CONE.

The night was hot and overcast, the sky red-rimmed with the lingering sunset of midsummer. They sat at the open window, trying to fancy the air was fresher there. The trees and shrubs of the garden stood stiff and dark; beyond in the roadway a gas-lamp burnt, bright orange against the hazy blue of the evening. Farther were the three lights of the railway signal against the lowering sky. The man and woman spoke to one another in low tones.

"He does not suspect?" said the man, a little nervously.

"Not he," she said peevishly, as though that too irritated her. "He thinks of nothing but the works and the prices of fuel. He has no imagination, no poetry."

"None of these men of iron have," he said sententiously. "They have no hearts."

"*He* has not," she said. She turned her discontented face towards the window. The distant sound of a roaring and rushing drew nearer and grew in volume; the house quivered; one heard the metallic rattle of the tender. As the train passed, there was a glare of light above the cutting and a driving tumult of smoke; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight black oblongs — eight trucks — passed across the dim grey of the embankment, and were suddenly extinguished one by one in the throat of the tunnel, which, with the last, seemed to swallow down train, smoke, and sound in one abrupt gulp.

"This country was all fresh and beautiful once," he said; "and now — it is Gehenna. Down that way — nothing but pot-banks and chimneys belching fire and dust into the face of heaven…But what does it matter? An end comes, an end to all this cruelty…*To-morrow."* He spoke the last word in a whisper.

"*To-morrow,"* she said, speaking in a whisper too, and still staring out of the window.

"Dear!" he said, putting his hand on hers.

She turned with a start, and their eyes searched one another's. Hers softened to his gaze. "My dear one!" she said, and then: "It seems so strange — that you should have come into my life like this — to open—" She paused.

“To open?” he said.

“All this wonderful world” — she hesitated, and spoke still more softly— “this world of *love* to me.”

Then suddenly the door clicked and closed. They turned their heads, and he started violently back. In the shadow of the room stood a great shadowy figure-silent. They saw the face dimly in the half-light, with unexpressive dark patches under the pent-house brows. Every muscle in Raut’s body suddenly became tense. When could the door have opened? What had he heard? Had he heard all? What had he seen? A tumult of questions.

The new-comer’s voice came at last, after a pause that seemed interminable. “Well?” he said.

“I was afraid I had missed you, Horrocks,” said the man at the window, gripping the window-ledge with his hand. His voice was unsteady.

The clumsy figure of Horrocks came forward out of the shadow. He made no answer to Raut’s remark. For a moment he stood above them.

The woman’s heart was cold within her. “I told Mr. Raut it was just possible you might come back,” she said in a voice that never quivered.

Horrocks, still silent, sat down abruptly in the chair by her little work-table. His big hands were clenched; one saw now the fire of his eyes under the shadow of his brows. He was trying to get his breath. His eyes went from the woman he had trusted to the friend he had trusted, and then back to the woman.

By this time and for the moment all three half understood one another.
Yet none dared say a word to ease the pent-up things that choked them.

It was the husband’s voice that broke the silence at last.

“You wanted to see me?” he said to Raut.

Raut started as he spoke. “I came to see you,” he said, resolved to lie to the last.

“Yes,” said Horrocks.

“You promised,” said Raut, “to show me some fine effects of moonlight and smoke.”

“I promised to show you some fine effects of moonlight and smoke,” repeated Horrocks in a colourless voice.

“And I thought I might catch you to-night before you went down to the works,” proceeded Raut, “and come with you.”

There was another pause. Did the man mean to take the thing coolly? Did he, after all, know? How long had he been in the room? Yet even at the moment when they heard the door, their attitudes … Horrocks glanced at the profile of the woman, shadowy pallid in the half-light. Then he glanced at Raut, and seemed to recover himself suddenly. “Of course,” he said, “I promised to show you the works under their proper dramatic conditions. It’s odd how I could have forgotten.”

“If I am troubling you—” began Raut.

Horrocks started again. A new light had suddenly come into the sultry gloom of his eyes. “Not in the least.” he said.

“Have you been telling Mr. Raut of all these contrasts of flame and shadow you think so splendid?” said the woman, turning now to her husband for the first time, her confidence creeping back again, her voice just one half-note too high— “that dreadful theory of yours that machinery is beautiful, and everything else in the world ugly. I thought he would not spare you, Mr. Raut. It’s his great theory, his one discovery in art.”

“I am slow to make discoveries,” said Horrocks grimly, damping her suddenly. “But what I discover …” He stopped.

“Well?” she said.

“Nothing;” and suddenly he rose to his feet.

“I promised to show you the works,” he said to Raut, and put his big, clumsy hand on his friend’s shoulder. “And you are ready to go?”

“Quite,” said Raut, and stood up also.

There was another pause. Each of them peered through the indistinctness of the dusk at the other two.

Horrocks’ hand still rested on Raut’s shoulder. Raut half fancied still that the incident was trivial after all. But Mrs. Horrocks knew her husband better, knew that grim quiet in his voice, and the

confusion in her mind took a vague shape of physical evil. “Very well,” said Horrocks, and, dropping his hand, turned towards the door.

“My hat?” Raut looked round in the half-light.

“That’s my work-basket,” said Mrs. Horrocks with a gust of hysterical laughter. Their hands came together on the back of the chair. “Here it is!” he said. She had an impulse to warn him in an undertone, but she could not frame a word. “Don’t go!” and “Beware of him!” struggled in her mind, and the swift moment passed.

“Got it?” said Horrocks, standing with the door half open.

Raut stepped towards him. “Better say goodbye to Mrs. Horrocks,” said the ironmaster, even more grimly quiet in his tone than before.

Raut started and turned. “Good-evening, Mrs. Horrocks,” he said, and their hands touched.

Horrocks held the door open with a ceremonial politeness unusual in him towards men. Raut went out, and then, after a wordless look at her, her husband followed. She stood motionless while Raut’s light footfall and her husband’s heavy tread, like bass and treble, passed down the passage together. The front door slammed heavily. She went to the window, moving slowly, and stood watching, leaning forward. The two men appeared for a moment at the gateway in the road, passed under the street lamp, and were hidden by the black masses of the shrubbery. The lamplight fell for a moment on their faces, showing only unmeaning pale patches, telling nothing of what she still feared, and doubted, and craved vainly to know. Then she sank down into a crouching attitude in the big arm-chair, her eyes-wide open and staring out at the red lights from the furnaces that flickered in the sky. An hour after she was still there, her attitude scarcely changed.

The oppressive stillness of the evening weighed heavily upon Raut. They went side by side down the road in silence, and in silence turned into the cinder-made byway that presently opened out the prospect of the valley.

A blue haze, half dust, half mist, touched the long valley with mystery. Beyond were Hanley and Etruria, grey and dark masses, outlined thinly by the rare golden dots of the street lamps, and here

and there a gas-lit window, or the yellow glare of some late-working factory or crowded public-house. Out of the masses, clear and slender against the evening sky, rose a multitude of tall chimneys, many of them reeking, a few smokeless during a season of "play." Here and there a pallid patch and ghostly stunted beehive shapes showed the position of a pot-bank or a wheel, black and sharp against the hot lower sky, marked some colliery where they raise the iridescent coal of the place. Nearer at hand was the broad stretch of railway, and half-invisible trains shunted — a steady puffing and rumbling, with every run a ringing concussion and a rhymthic series of impacts, and a passage of intermittent puffs of white steam across the further view. And to the left, between the railway and the dark mass of the low hill beyond, dominating the whole view, colossal, inky-black, and crowned with smoke and fitful flames, stood the great cylinders of the Jeddah Company Blast Furnaces, the central edifices of the big ironworks of which Horrocks was the manager. They stood heavy and threatening, full of an incessant turmoil of flames and seething molten iron, and about the feet of them rattled the rolling-mills, and the steam-hammer beat heavily and splashed the white iron sparks hither and thither. Even as they looked, a truckful of fuel was shot into one of the giants, and the red flames gleamed out, and a confusion of smoke and black dust came boiling upwards towards the sky.

"Certainly you get some colour with your furnaces," said Raut, breaking a silence that had become apprehensive.

Horrocks grunted. He stood with his hands in his pockets, frowning down at the dim steaming railway and the busy ironworks beyond, frowning as if he were thinking out some knotty problem.

Raut glanced at him and away again. "At present your moonlight effect is hardly ripe," he continued, looking upward; "the moon is still smothered by the vestiges of daylight."

Horrocks stared at him with the expression of a man who has suddenly awakened. "Vestiges of daylight? … Of course, of course." He too looked up at the moon, pale still in the midsummer sky. "Come along," he said suddenly, and gripping Raut's arm in his hand, made a move towards the path that dropped from them to the railway.

Raut hung back. Their eyes met and saw a thousand things in a moment that their lips came near to say. Horrocks's hand tightened and then relaxed. He let go, and before Raut was aware of it, they were arm in arm, and walking, one unwillingly enough, down the path.

"You see the fine effect of the railway signals towards Burslem," said Horrocks, suddenly breaking into loquacity, striding fast and tightening the grip of his elbow the while— "little green lights and red and white lights, all against the haze. You have an eye for effect, Raut. It's fine. And look at those furnaces of mine, how they rise upon us as we come down the hill. That to the right is my pet — seventy feet of him. I packed him myself, and he's boiled away cheerfully with iron in his guts for five long years. I've a particular fancy for *him*. That line of red there — a lovely bit of warm orange you'd call it, Raut — that's the puddlers' furnaces, and there, in the hot light, three black figures — did you see the white splash of the steam-hammer then? — that's the rolling mills. Come along! Clang, clatter, how it goes rattling across the floor! Sheet tin, Raut, — amazing stuff. Glass mirrors are not in it when that stuff comes from the mill. And, squelch! there goes the hammer again. Come along!"

He had to stop talking to catch at his breath. His arm twisted into Raut's with benumbing tightness. He had come striding down the black path towards the railway as though he was possessed. Raut had not spoken a word, had simply hung back against Horrocks's pull with all his strength.

"I say," he said now, laughing nervously, but with an undertone of snarl in his voice, "why on earth are you nipping my arm off, Horrocks, and dragging me along like this?"

At length Horrocks released him. His manner changed again. "Nipping your arm off?" he said. "Sorry. But it's you taught me the trick of walking in that friendly way."

"You haven't learnt the refinements of it yet then," said Raut, laughing artificially again. "By Jove! I'm black and blue." Horrocks offered no apology. They stood now near the bottom of the hill, close to the fence that bordered the railway. The ironworks had grown larger and spread out with their approach. They looked up to the blast furnaces now instead of down; the further view of Etruria and Hanley

had dropped out of sight with their descent. Before them, by the stile, rose a notice-board, bearing, still dimly visible, the words, "BEWARE OF THE TRAINS," half hidden by splashes of coaly mud.

"Fine effects," said Horrocks, waving his arm. "Here comes a train. The puffs of smoke, the orange glare, the round eye of light in front of it, the melodious rattle. Fine effects! But these furnaces of mine used to be finer, before we shoved cones in their throats, and saved the gas."

"How?" said Raut. "Cones?"

"Cones, my man, cones. I'll show you one nearer. The flames used to flare out of the open throats, great — what is it? — pillars of cloud by day, red and black smoke, and pillars of fire by night. Now we run it off — in pipes, and burn it to heat the blast, and the top is shut by a cone. You'll be interested in that cone."

"But every now and then," said Raut, "you get a burst of fire and smoke up there."

"The cone's not fixed, it's hung by a chain from a lever, and balanced by an equipoise. You shall see it nearer. Else, of course, there'd be no way of getting fuel into the thing. Every now and then the cone dips, and out comes the flare."

"I see," said Raut. He looked over his shoulder. "The moon gets brighter," he said.

"Come along," said Horrocks abruptly, gripping his shoulder again, and moving him suddenly towards the railway crossing. And then came one of those swift incidents, vivid, but so rapid that they leave one doubtful and reeling. Half-way across, Horrocks's hand suddenly clenched upon him like a vice, and swung him backward and through a half-turn, so that he looked up the line. And there a chain of lamp-lit carriage windows telescoped swiftly as it came towards them, and the red and yellow lights of an engine grew larger and larger, rushing down upon them. As he grasped what this meant, he turned his face to Horrocks, and pushed with all his strength against the arm that held him back between the rails. The struggle did not last a moment. Just as certain as it was that Horrocks held him there, so certain was it that he had been violently lugged out of danger.

“Out of the way,” said Horrocks with a gasp, as the train came rattling by, and they stood panting by the gate into the ironworks.

“I did not see it coming,” said Raut, still, even in spite of his own apprehensions, trying to keep up an appearance of ordinary intercourse.

Horrocks answered with a grunt. “The cone,” he said, and then, as one who recovers himself, “I thought you did not hear.”

“I didn’t,” said Raut.

“I wouldn’t have had you run over then for the world,” said Horrocks.

“For a moment I lost my nerve,” said Raut.

Horrocks stood for half a minute, then turned abruptly towards the ironworks again. “See how fine these great mounds of mine, these clinker-heaps, look in the night! That truck yonder, up above there! Up it goes, and out-tilts the slag. See the palpitating red stuff go sliding down the slope. As we get nearer, the heap rises up and cuts the blast furnaces. See the quiver up above the big one. Not that way! This way, between the heaps. That goes to the puddling furnaces, but I want to show you the canal first.” He came and took Raut by the elbow, and so they went along side by side. Raut answered Horrocks vaguely. What, he asked himself, had really happened on the line? Was he deluding himself with his own fancies, or had Horrocks actually held him back in the way of the train? Had he just been within an ace of being murdered?

Suppose this slouching, scowling monster *did* know anything? For a minute or two then Raut was really afraid for his life, but the mood passed as he reasoned with himself. After all, Horrocks might have heard nothing. At any rate, he had pulled him out of the way in time. His odd manner might be due to the mere vague jealousy he had shown once before. He was talking now of the ash-heaps and the canal. “Eigh?” said Horrocks.

“What?” said Raut. “Rather! The haze in the moonlight. Fine!”

“Our canal,” said Horrocks, stopping suddenly. “Our canal by moonlight and firelight is immense. You’ve never seen it? Fancy that! You’ve spent too many of your evenings philandering up in Newcastle there. I tell you, for real florid quality —— But you shall see. Boiling water …”

As they came out of the labyrinth of clinker-heaps and mounds of coal and ore, the noises of the rolling-mill sprang upon them suddenly, loud, near, and distinct. Three shadowy workmen went by and touched their caps to Horrocks. Their faces were vague in the darkness. Raut felt a futile impulse to address them, and before he could frame his words they passed into the shadows. Horrocks pointed to the canal close before them now: a weird-looking place it seemed, in the blood-red reflections of the furnaces. The hot water that cooled the tuyères came into it, some fifty yards up — a tumultuous, almost boiling affluent, and the steam rose up from the water in silent white wisps and streaks, wrapping damply about them, an incessant succession of ghosts coming up from the black and red eddies, a white uprising that made the head swim. The shining black tower of the larger blast-furnace rose overhead out of the mist, and its tumultuous riot filled their ears. Raut kept away from the edge of the water, and watched Horrocks.

"Here it is red," said Horrocks, "blood-red vapour as red and hot as sin; but yonder there, where the moonlight falls on it, and it drives across the clinker-heaps, it is as white as death."

Raut turned his head for a moment, and then came back hastily to his watch on Horrocks. "Come along to the rolling-mills," said Horrocks. The threatening hold was not so evident that time, and Raut felt a little reassured. But all the same, what on earth did Horrocks mean about "white as death" and "red as sin"? Coincidence, perhaps?

They went and stood behind the puddlers for a little while, and then through the rolling-mills, where amidst an incessant din the deliberate steam-hammer beat the juice out of the succulent iron, and black, half-naked Titans rushed the plastic bars, like hot sealing-wax, between the wheels, "Come on," said Horrocks in Raut's ear; and they went and peeped through the little glass hole behind the tuyères, and saw the tumbled fire writhing in the pit of the blast-furnace. It left one eye blinded for a while. Then, with green and blue patches dancing across the dark, they went to the lift by which the trucks of ore and fuel and lime were raised to the top of the big cylinder.

And out upon the narrow rail that overhung the furnace Raut's doubts came upon him again. Was it wise to be here? If Horrocks did

know — everything! Do what he would, he could not resist a violent trembling. Right under foot was a sheer depth of seventy feet. It was a dangerous place. They pushed by a truck of fuel to get to the railing that crowned the thing. The reek of the furnace, a sulphurous vapour streaked with pungent bitterness, seemed to make the distant hillside of Hanley quiver. The moon was riding out now from among a drift of clouds, half-way up the sky above the undulating wooded outlines of Newcastle. The steaming canal ran away from below them under an indistinct bridge, and vanished into the dim haze of the flat fields towards Burslem.

"That's the cone I've been telling you of," shouted Horrocks; "and, below that, sixty feet of fire and molten metal, with the air of the blast frothing through it like gas in soda-water."

Raut gripped the hand-rail tightly, and stared down at the cone. The heat was intense. The boiling of the iron and the tumult of the blast made a thunderous accompaniment to Horrocks's voice. But the thing had to be gone through now. Perhaps, after all…

"In the middle," bawled Horrocks, "temperature near a thousand degrees. If *you* were dropped into it … flash into flame like a pinch of gunpowder in a candle. Put your hand out and feel the heat of his breath. Why, even up here I've seen the rain-water boiling off the trucks. And that cone there. It's a damned sight too hot for roasting cakes. The top side of it's three hundred degrees."

"Three hundred degrees!" said Raut.

"Three hundred centigrade, mind!" said Horrocks. "It will boil the blood out of you in no time."

"Eigh?" said Raut, and turned.

"Boil the blood out of you in … No, you don't!"

"Let me go!" screamed Raut. "Let go my arm!"

With one hand he clutched at the hand-rail, then with both. For a moment the two men stood swaying. Then suddenly, with a violent jerk, Horrocks had twisted him from his hold. He clutched at Horrocks and missed, his foot went back into empty air; in mid-air he twisted himself, and then cheek and shoulder and knee struck the hot cone together.

He clutched the chain by which the cone hung, and the thing sank an infinitesimal amount as he struck it. A circle of glowing red

appeared about him, and a tongue of flame, released from the chaos within, flickered up towards him. An intense pain assailed him at the knees, and he could smell the singeing of his hands. He raised himself to his feet, and tried to climb up the chain, and then something struck his head. Black and shining with the moonlight, the throat of the furnace rose about him.

Horrocks, he saw, stood above him by one of the trucks of fuel on the rail. The gesticulating figure was bright and white in the moonlight, and shouting, “Fizzle, you fool! Fizzle, you hunter of women! You hot-blooded hound! Boil! boil! boil!”

Suddenly he caught up a handful of coal out of the truck, and flung it deliberately, lump after lump, at Raut.

“Horrocks!” cried Raut. “Horrocks!”

He clung, crying, to the chain, pulling himself up from the burning of the cone. Each missile Horrocks flung hit him. His clothes charred and glowed, and as he struggled the cone dropped, and a rush of hot, suffocating gas whooped out and burned round him in a swift breath of flame.

His human likeness departed from him. When the momentary red had passed, Horrocks saw a charred, blackened figure, its head streaked with blood, still clutching and fumbling with the chain, and writhing in agony — a cindery animal, an inhuman, monstrous creature that began a sobbing, intermittent shriek.

Abruptly at the sight the ironmaster’s anger passed. A deadly sickness came upon him. The heavy odour of burning flesh came drifting up to his nostrils. His sanity returned to him.

“God have mercy upon me!” he cried. “O God! what have I done?”

He knew the thing below him, save that it still moved and felt, was already a dead man — that the blood of the poor wretch must be boiling in his veins. An intense realisation of that agony came to his mind, and overcame every other feeling. For a moment he stood irresolute, and then, turning to the truck, he hastily tilted its contents upon the struggling thing that had once been a man. The mass fell with a thud, and went radiating over the cone. With the thud the shriek ended, and a boiling confusion of smoke, dust, and flame came rushing up towards him. As it passed, he saw the cone clear

again.

Then he staggered back, and stood trembling, clinging to the rail with both hands. His lips moved, but no words came to them.

Down below was the sound of voices and running steps. The clangour of rolling in the shed ceased abruptly.

III.

THE STOLEN BACILLUS.

"This again," said the Bacteriologist, slipping a glass slide under the microscope, "is well, — a preparation of the Bacillus of cholera — the cholera germ."

The pale-faced man peered down the microscope. He was evidently not accustomed to that kind of thing, and held a limp white hand over his disengaged eye. "I see very little," he said.

"Touch this screw," said the Bacteriologist; "perhaps the microscope is out of focus for you. Eyes vary so much. Just the fraction of a turn this way or that."

"Ah! now I see," said the visitor. "Not so very much to see after all. Little streaks and shreds of pink. And yet those little particles, those mere atomies, might multiply and devastate a city! Wonderful!"

He stood up, and releasing the glass slip from the microscope, held it in his hand towards the window. "Scarcely visible," he said, scrutinising the preparation. He hesitated. "Are these — alive? Are they dangerous now?"

"Those have been stained and killed," said the Bacteriologist. "I wish, for my own part, we could kill and stain every one of them in the universe."

"I suppose," the pale man said, with a slight smile, 'that you scarcely care to have such things about you in the living — in the active state?"

"On the contrary, we are obliged to," said the Bacteriologist. "Here, for instance—" He walked across the room and took up one of several sealed tubes. "Here is the living thing. This is a cultivation of the actual living disease bacteria." He hesitated. "Bottled cholera, so to speak."

A slight gleam of satisfaction appeared momentarily in the face of the pale man. "It's a deadly thing to have in your possession," he said, devouring the little tube with his eyes. The Bacteriologist watched the morbid pleasure in his visitor's expression. This man, who had visited him that afternoon with a note of introduction from an old friend, interested him from the very contrast of their

dispositions. The lank black hair and deep grey eyes, the haggard expression and nervous manner, the fitful yet keen interest of his visitor were a novel change from the phlegmatic deliberations of the ordinary scientific worker with whom the Bacteriologist chiefly associated. It was perhaps natural, with a hearer evidently so impressionable to the lethal nature of; his topic, to take the most effective aspect of the matter.

He held the tube in his hand thoughtfully. “Yes, here is the pestilence imprisoned. Only break such a little tube as this into a supply of drinking-water, say to these minute particles of life that one must needs stain and examine with the highest powers of the microscope even to see, and that one can neither smell nor taste — say to them, ‘Go forth, increase and multiply, and replenish the cisterns,’ and death — mysterious, untraceable death, death swift and terrible, death full of pain and indignity — would be released upon this city, and go hither and thither seeking his victims. Here he would take the husband from the wife, here the child from its mother, here the statesman from his duty, and here the toiler from his trouble. He would follow the water-mains, creeping along streets, picking out and punishing a house here and a house there where they did not boil their drinking-water, creeping into the wells of the mineral water makers, getting washed into salad, and lying dormant in ices. He would wait ready to be drunk in the horse-troughs, and by unwary children in the public fountains. He would soak into the soil, to reappear in springs and wells at a thousand unexpected places. Once start him at the water supply, and before we could ring him in, and catch him again, he would have decimated the metropolis.”

He stopped abruptly. He had been told rhetoric was his weakness.

“But he is quite safe here, you know — quite safe.”

The pale-faced man nodded. His eyes shone. He cleared his throat. “These Anarchist — rascals,” said he, “are fools, blind fools — to use bombs when this kind of thing is attainable. I think — —”

A gentle rap, a mere light touch of the finger-nails, was heard at the door. The Bacteriologist opened if. “Just a minute, dear,” whispered his wife.

When he re-entered the laboratory his visitor was looking at his watch. “I had no idea I had wasted an hour of your time,” he said.

“Twelve minutes to four. I ought to have left here by half-past three. But your things were really too interesting. No, positively I cannot stop a moment longer. I have an engagement at four.”

He passed out of the room reiterating his thanks, and the Bacteriologist accompanied him to the door, and then returned thoughtfully along the passage to his laboratory. He was musing on the ethnology of his visitor. Certainly the man was not a Teutonic type nor a common Latin one. “A morbid product, anyhow, I am afraid,” said the Bacteriologist to himself. “How he gloated over those cultivations of disease germs!” A disturbing thought struck him. He turned to the bench by the vapour bath, and then very quickly to his writing-table. Then he felt hastily in his pockets and then rushed to the door. “I may have put it down on the hall table,” he said.

“Minnie!” he shouted hoarsely in the hall.

“Yes, dear,” came a remote voice.

“Had I anything in my hand when I spoke to you, dear, just now?”

Pause.

“Nothing, dear, because I remember — —”

“Blue ruin!” cried the Bacteriologist, and incontinently ran to the front door and down the steps of his house to the street.

Minnie, hearing the door slam violently, ran in alarm to the window. Down the street a slender man was getting into a cab. The Bacteriologist, hatless, and in his carpet slippers, was running and gesticulating wildly towards this group. One slipper came off, but he did not wait for it. “He has gone *mad*!” said Minnie; “it’s that horrid science of his”; and, opening the window, would have called after him. The slender man, suddenly glancing round, seemed struck with the same idea of mental disorder. He pointed hastily to the Bacteriologist, said something to the cabman, the apron of the cab slammed, the whip swished, the horse’s feet clattered, and in a moment cab and Bacteriologist hotly in pursuit, had receded up the vista of the roadway and disappeared round the corner.

Minnie remained straining out of the window for a minute. Then she drew her head back into the room again. She was dumbfounded. “Of course he is eccentric,” she meditated. “But running about London — in the height of the season, too — in his socks!” A happy

thought struck her. She hastily put her bonnet on, seized his shoes, went into the hall, took down his hat and light overcoat from the pegs, emerged upon the doorstep, and hailed a cab that opportunely crawled by. “Drive me up the road and round Havelock Crescent, and see if we can find a gentleman running about in a velveteen coat and no hat.”

“Velveteen coat, ma’am, and no ‘at. Very good, ma’am.” And the cabman whipped up at once in the most matter-of-fact way, as if he drove to this address every day in his life.

Some few minutes later the little group of cabmen and loafers that collects round the cabman’s shelter at Haverstock Hill were startled by the passing of a cab with a ginger-coloured screw of a horse, driven furiously.

They were silent as it went by, and then as it receded— “That’s ‘Arry
‘Icks. Wot’s *he* got?” said the stout gentleman known as Old Tootles.

“He’s a-using his whip, he is, *to* rights,” said the ostler boy.

“Hullo!” said poor old Tommy Byles; “here’s another bloomin’ loonatic.
Blowed if there ain’t.”

“It’s old George,” said Old Tootles, “and he’s drivin’ a loonatic, *as* you say. Ain’t he a-clawin’ out of the keb? Wonder if he’s after ‘Arry ‘Icks?”

The group round the cabman’s shelter became animated. Chorus: “Go it,
George!” “It’s a race.” “You’ll ketch ‘em!” “Whip up!”

“She’s a goer, she is!” said the ostler boy.

“Strike me giddy!” cried Old Tootles. “Here! *I’m* a-goin’ to begin in a minute. Here’s another comin’. If all the cabs in Hampstead ain’t gone mad this morning!”

“It’s a fieldmale this time,” said the ostler boy.

“She’s a-followin’ *him*,” said Old Tootles. “Usually the other way about.”

“What’s she got in her ‘and?”

“Looks like a ‘igh ‘at.”

“What a bloomin’ lark it is! Three to one on old George,” said the ostler boy. “Nexst!”

Minnie went by in a perfect roar of applause. She did not like it, but she felt that she was doing her duty, and whirled on down Haverstock Hill and Camden Town High Street with her eyes ever intent on the animated back view of old George, who was driving her vagrant husband so incomprehensibly away from her.

The man in the foremost cab sat crouched in the corner, his arms tightly folded, and the little tube that contained such vast possibilities of destruction gripped in his hand. His mood was a singular mixture of fear and exultation. Chiefly he was afraid of being caught before he could accomplish his purpose, but behind this was a vaguer but larger fear of the awfulness of his crime. But his exultation far exceeded his fear. No Anarchist before him had ever approached this conception of his. Ravachol, Vaillant, all those distinguished persons whose fame he had envied dwindled into insignificance beside him. He had only to make sure of the water supply, and break the little tube into a reservoir. How brilliantly he had planned it, forged the letter of introduction and got into the laboratory, and how brilliantly he had seized his opportunity! The world should hear of him at last. All those people who had sneered at him, neglected him, preferred other people to him, found his company undesirable, should consider him at last. Death, death, death! They had always treated him as a man of no importance. All the world had been in a conspiracy to keep him under. He would teach them yet what it is to isolate a man. What was this familiar street? Great Saint Andrew’s Street, of course! How fared the chase? He craned out of the cab. The Bacteriologist was scarcely fifty yards behind. That was bad. He would be caught and stopped yet. He felt in his pocket for money, and found half a sovereign. This he thrust up through the trap in the top of the cab into the man’s face. “More,” he shouted, “if only we get away.”

The money was snatched out of his hand. “Right you are,” said

the cabman, and the trap slammed, and the lash lay along the glistening side of the horse. The cab swayed, and the Anarchist, half-standing under the trap, put the hand containing the little glass tube upon the apron to preserve his balance. He felt the brittle thing crack, and the broken half of it rang upon the floor of the cab. He fell back into the seat with a curse, and stared dismally at the two or three drops of moisture on the apron.

He shuddered.

"Well, I suppose I shall be the first. *Phew!* Anyhow, I shall be a Martyr. That's something. But it is a filthy death, nevertheless. I wonder if it hurts as much as they say."

Presently a thought occurred to him — he groped between his feet. A little drop was still in the broken end of the tube, and he drank that to make sure. It was better to make sure. At any rate, he would not fail.

Then it dawned upon him that there was no further need to escape the Bacteriologist. In Wellington Street he told the cabman to stop, and got out. He slipped on the step, and his head felt queer. It was rapid stuff, this cholera poison. He waved his cabman out of existence, so to speak, and stood on the pavement with his arms folded upon his breast awaiting the arrival of the Bacteriologist. There was something tragic in his pose. The sense of imminent death gave him a certain dignity. He greeted his pursuer with a defiant laugh.

"Vive l'Anarchie! You are too late, my friend, I have drunk it. The cholera is abroad!"

The Bacteriologist from his cab beamed curiously at him through his spectacles. "You have drunk it! An Anarchist! I see now." He was about to say something more, and then checked himself. A smile hung in the corner of his mouth. He opened the apron of his cab as if to descend, at which the Anarchist waved him a dramatic farewell and strode off towards Waterloo Bridge, carefully jostling his infected body against as many people as possible. The Bacteriologist was so preoccupied with the vision of him that he scarcely manifested the slightest surprise at the appearance of Minnie upon the pavement with his hat and shoes and overcoat. "Very good of you to bring my things," he said, and remained lost in contemplation of

the receding figure of the Anarchist.

"You had better get in," he said, still staring. Minnie felt absolutely convinced now that he was mad, and directed the cabman home on her own responsibility. "Put on my shoes? Certainly, dear," said he, as the cab began to turn, and hid the strutting black figure, now small in the distance, from his eyes. Then suddenly something grotesque struck him, and he laughed. Then he remarked, "It is really very serious, though.

"You see, that man came to my house to see me, and he is an Anarchist. No — don't faint, or I cannot possibly tell you the rest. And I wanted to astonish him, not knowing he was an Anarchist, and took up a cultivation of that new species of Bacterium I was telling you of that infest, and I think cause, the blue patches upon various monkeys; and, like a fool, I said it was Asiatic cholera. And he ran away with it to poison the water of London, and he certainly might have made things look blue for this civilised city. And now he has swallowed it. Of course, I cannot say what will happen, but you know it turned that kitten blue, and the three puppies — in patches, and the sparrow — bright blue. But the bother is, I shall have all the trouble and expense of preparing some more.

"Put on my coat on this hot day! Why? Because we might meet Mrs. Jabber. My dear, Mrs. Jabber is not a draught. But why should I wear a coat on a hot day because of Mrs. —— . Oh! *very* well."

IV.

THE FLOWERING OF THE STRANGE ORCHID.

The buying of orchids always has in it a certain speculative flavour. You have before you the brown shrivelled lump of tissue, and for the rest you must trust your judgment, or the auctioneer, or your good luck, as your taste may incline. The plant may be moribund or dead, or it may be just a respectable purchase, fair value for your money, or perhaps — for the thing has happened again and again — there slowly unfolds before the delighted eyes of the happy purchaser, day after day, some new variety, some novel richness, a strange twist of the labellum, or some subtler colouration or unexpected mimicry. Pride, beauty, and profit blossom together on one delicate green spike, and, it may be, even immortality. For the new miracle of nature may stand in need of a new specific name, and what so convenient as that of its discoverer? "John-smithia"! There have been worse names.

It was perhaps the hope of some such happy discovery that made Winter Wedderburn such a frequent attendant at these sales — that hope, and also, maybe, the fact that he had nothing else of the slightest interest to do in the world. He was a shy, lonely, rather ineffectual man, provided with just enough income to keep off the spur of necessity, and not enough nervous energy to make him seek any exacting employments. He might have collected stamps or coins, or translated Horace, or bound books, or invented new species of diatoms. But, as it happened, he grew orchids, and had one ambitious little hothouse.

"I have a fancy," he said over his coffee, "that something is going to happen to me to-day." He spoke — as he moved and thought — slowly.

"Oh, don't say *that*!" said his housekeeper — who was also his remote cousin. For "something happening" was a euphemism that meant only one thing to her.

"You misunderstand me. I mean nothing unpleasant…though what I do mean I scarcely know.

“To-day,” he continued, after a pause, “Peters’ are going to sell a batch of plants from the Andamans and the Indies. I shall go up and see what they have. It may be I shall buy something good unawares. That may be it.”

He passed his cup for his second cupful of coffee.

“Are these the things collected by that poor young fellow you told me of the other day?” asked his cousin, as she filled his cup.

“Yes,” he said, and became meditative over a piece of toast.

“Nothing ever does happen to me,” he remarked presently, beginning to think aloud. “I wonder why? Things enough happen to other people. There is Harvey. Only the other week; on Monday he picked up sixpence, on Wednesday his chicks all had the staggers, on Friday his cousin came home from Australia, and on Saturday he broke his ankle. What a whirl of excitement! — compared to me.”

“I think I would rather be without so much excitement,” said his housekeeper. “It can’t be good for you.”

“I suppose it’s troublesome. Still … you see, nothing ever happens to me. When I was a little boy I never had accidents. I never fell in love as I grew up. Never married… I wonder how it feels to have something happen to you, something really remarkable.

“That orchid-collector was only thirty-six — twenty years younger than myself — when he died. And he had been married twice and divorced once; he had had malarial fever four times, and once he broke his thigh. He killed a Malay once, and once he was wounded by a poisoned dart. And in the end he was killed by jungle-leeches. It must have all been very troublesome, but then it must have been very interesting, you know — except, perhaps, the leeches.”

“I am sure it was not good for him,” said the lady with conviction.

“Perhaps not.” And then Wedderburn looked at his watch. “Twenty-three minutes past eight. I am going up by the quarter to twelve train, so that there is plenty of time. I think I shall wear my alpaca jacket — it is quite warm enough — and my grey felt hat and brown shoes. I suppose—”

He glanced out of the window at the serene sky and sunlit garden, and then nervously at his cousin’s face.

“I think you had better take an umbrella if you are going to

London," she said in a voice that admitted of no denial. "There's all between here and the station coming back."

When he returned he was in a state of mild excitement. He had made a purchase. It was rare that he could make up his mind quickly enough to buy, but this time he had done so.

"There are Vandas," he said, "and a Dendrobe and some Palaeonophis." He surveyed his purchases lovingly as he consumed his soup. They were laid out on the spotless tablecloth before him, and he was telling his cousin all about them as he slowly meandered through his dinner. It was his custom to live all his visits to London over again in the evening for her and his own entertainment.

"I knew something would happen to-day. And I have bought all these. Some of them — some of them — I feel sure, do you know, that some of them will be remarkable. I don't know how it is, but I feel just as sure as if some one had told me that some of these will turn out remarkable.

"That one " — he pointed to a shrivelled rhizome— "was not identified. It may be a Palaeonophis — or it may not. It may be a new species, or even a new genus. And it was the last that poor Batten ever collected."

"I don't like the look of it," said his housekeeper. "It's such an ugly shape."

"To me it scarcely seems to have a shape."

"I don't like those things that stick out," said his housekeeper.

"It shall be put away in a pot to-morrow."

"It looks," said the housekeeper, "like a spider shamming dead."

Wedderburn smiled and surveyed the root with his head on one side. "It is certainly not a pretty lump of stuff. But you can never judge of these things from their dry appearance. It may turn out to be a very beautiful orchid indeed. How busy I shall be to-morrow! I must see to-night just exactly what to do with these things, and to-morrow I shall set to work."

"They found poor Batten lying dead, or dying, in a mangrove swamp — I forget which," he began again presently, "with one of these very orchids crushed up under his body. He had been unwell for some days with some kind of native fever, and I suppose he fainted. These mangrove swamps are very unwholesome. Every drop

of blood, they say, was taken out of him by the jungle-leeches. It may be that very plant that cost him his life to obtain."

"I think none the better of it for that."

"Men must work though women may weep," said Wedderburn with profound gravity.

"Fancy dying away from every comfort in a nasty swamp! Fancy being ill of fever with nothing to take but chlorodyne and quinine — if men were left to themselves they would live on chlorodyne and quinine — and no one round you but horrible natives! They say the Andaman islanders are most disgusting wretches — and, anyhow, they can scarcely make good nurses, not having the necessary training. And just for people in England to have orchids!"

"I don't suppose it was comfortable, but some men seem to enjoy that kind of thing," said Wedderburn. "Anyhow, the natives of his party were sufficiently civilised to take care of all his collection until his colleague, who was an ornithologist, came back again from the interior; though they could not tell the species of the orchid, and had let it wither. And it makes these things more interesting."

"It makes them disgusting. I should be afraid of some of the malaria clinging to them. And just think, there has been a dead body lying across that ugly thing! I never thought of that before. There! I declare I cannot eat another mouthful of dinner."

"I will take them off the table if you like, and put them in the window-seat. I can see them just as well there."

The next few days he was indeed singularly busy in his steamy little hothouse, fussing about with charcoal, lumps of teak, moss, and all the other mysteries of the orchid cultivator. He considered he was having a wonderfully eventful time. In the evening he would talk about these new orchids to his friends, and over and over again he reverted to his expectation of something strange.

Several of the Vandas and the Dendrobium died under his care, but presently the strange orchid began to show signs of life. He was delighted, and took his housekeeper right away from jam-making to see it at once, directly he made the discovery.

"That is a bud," he said, "and presently there will be a lot of leaves there, and those little things coming out here are aerial rootlets."

“They look to me like little white fingers poking out of the brown,” said his housekeeper. “I don’t like them.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t know. They look like fingers trying to get at you. I can’t help my likes and dislikes.”

“I don’t know for certain, but I don’t *think* there are any orchids I know that have aerial rootlets quite like that. It may be my fancy, of course. You see they are a little flattened at the ends.”

“I don’t like ‘em,” said his housekeeper, suddenly shivering and turning away. “I know it’s very silly of me — and I’m very sorry, particularly as you like the thing so much. But I can’t help thinking of that corpse.”

“But it may not be that particular plant. That was merely a guess of mine.”

His housekeeper shrugged her shoulders. “Anyhow I don’t like it,” she said.

Wedderburn felt a little hurt at her dislike to the plant. But that did not prevent his talking to her about orchids generally, and this orchid in particular, whenever he felt inclined.

“There are such queer things about orchids,” he said one day; “such possibilities of surprises. You know, Darwin studied their fertilisation, and showed that the whole structure of an ordinary orchid flower was contrived in order that moths might carry the pollen from plant to plant. Well, it seems that there are lots of orchids known the flower of which cannot possibly be used for fertilisation in that way. Some of the Cypripediums, for instance; there are no insects known that can possibly fertilise them, and some of them have never been found with seed.”

“But how do they form new plants?”

“By runners and tubers, and that kind of outgrowth. That is easily explained. The puzzle is, what are the flowers for?

“Very likely,” he added, “*my* orchid may be something extraordinary in that way. If so I shall study it. I have often thought of making researches as Darwin did. But hitherto I have not found the time, or something else has happened to prevent it. The leaves are beginning to unfold now. I do wish you would come and see them!”

But she said that the orchid-house was so hot it gave her the

headache. She had seen the plant once again, and the aerial rootlets, which were now some of them more than a foot long, had unfortunately reminded her of tentacles reaching out after something; and they got into her dreams, growing after her with incredible rapidity. So that she had settled to her entire satisfaction that she would not see that plant again, and Wedderburn had to admire its leaves alone. They were of the ordinary broad form, and a deep glossy green, with splashes and dots of deep red towards the base He knew of no other leaves quite like them. The plant was placed on a low bench near the thermometer, and close by was a simple arrangement by which a tap dripped on the hot-water pipes and kept the air steamy. And he spent his afternoons now with some regularity meditating on the approaching flowering of this strange plant.

And at last the great thing happened. Directly he entered the little glass house he knew that the spike had burst out, although his great *Paloeonophis Lowii* hid the corner where his new darling stood. There was a new odour in the air, a rich, intensely sweet scent, that overpowered every other in that crowded, steaming little greenhouse.

Directly he noticed this he hurried down to the strange orchid. And, behold! the trailing green spikes bore now three great splashes of blossom, from which this overpowering sweetness proceeded. He stopped before them in an ecstasy of admiration.

The flowers were white, with streaks of golden orange upon the petals; the heavy labellum was coiled into an intricate projection, and a wonderful bluish purple mingled there with the gold. He could see at once that the genus was altogether a new one. And the insufferable scent! How hot the place was! The blossoms swam before his eyes.

He would see if the temperature was right. He made a step towards the thermometer. Suddenly everything appeared unsteady. The bricks on the floor were dancing up and down. Then the white blossoms, the green leaves behind them, the whole greenhouse, seemed to sweep sideways, and then in a curve upward.

* * * * *

At half-past four his cousin made the tea, according to their invariable custom. But Wedderburn did not come in for his tea.

“He is worshipping that horrid orchid,” she told herself, and waited ten minutes. “His watch must have stopped. I will go and call him.”

She went straight to the hothouse, and, opening the door, called his name. There was no reply. She noticed that the air was very close, and loaded with an intense perfume. Then she saw something lying on the bricks between the hot-water pipes.

For a minute, perhaps, she stood motionless.

He was lying, face upward, at the foot of the strange orchid. The tentacle-like aerial rootlets no longer swayed freely in the air, but were crowded together, a tangle of grey ropes, and stretched tight, with their ends closely applied to his chin and neck and hands.

She did not understand. Then she saw from under one of the exultant tentacles upon his cheek there trickled a little thread of blood.

With an inarticulate cry she ran towards him, and tried to pull him away from the leech-like suckers. She snapped two of these tentacles, and their sap dripped red.

Then the overpowering scent of the blossom began to make her head reel. How they clung to him! She tore at the tough ropes, and he and the white inflorescence swam about her. She felt she was fainting, knew she must not. She left him and hastily opened the nearest door, and, after she had panted for a moment in the fresh air, she had a brilliant inspiration. She caught up a flower-pot and smashed in the windows at the end of the greenhouse. Then she re-entered. She tugged now with renewed strength at Wedderburn’s motionless body, and brought the strange orchid crashing to the floor. It still clung with the grimmest tenacity to its victim. In a frenzy, she lugged it and him into the open air.

Then she thought of tearing through the sucker rootlets one by one, and in another minute she had released him and was dragging him away from the horror.

He was white and bleeding from a dozen circular patches.

The odd-job man was coming up the garden, amazed at the smashing of glass, and saw her emerge, hauling the inanimate body with red-stained hands. For a moment he thought impossible things.

“Bring some water!” she cried, and her voice dispelled his

fancies. When, with unnatural alacrity, he returned with the water, he found her weeping with excitement, and with Wedderburn's head upon her knee, wiping the blood from his face.

"What's the matter?" said Wedderburn, opening his eyes feebly, and closing them again at once.

"Go and tell Annie to come out here to me, and then go for Dr. Haddon at once," she said to the odd-job man so soon as he brought the water; and added, seeing he hesitated, "I will tell you all about it when you come back."

Presently Wedderburn opened his eyes again, and, seeing that he was troubled by the puzzle of his position, she explained to him, "You fainted in the hothouse."

"And the orchid?"

"I will see to that," she said.

Wedderburn had lost a good deal of blood, but beyond that he had suffered no very great injury. They gave him brandy mixed with some pink extract of meat, and carried him upstairs to bed. His housekeeper told her incredible story in fragments to Dr. Haddon. "Come to the orchid-house and see," she said.

The cold outer air was blowing in through the open door, and the sickly perfume was almost dispelled. Most of the torn aerial rootlets lay already withered amidst a number of dark stains upon the bricks. The stem of the inflorescence was broken by the fall of the plant, and the flowers were growing limp and brown at the edges of the petals. The doctor stooped towards it, then saw that one of the aerial rootlets still stirred feebly, and hesitated.

The next morning the strange orchid still lay there, black now and putrescent. The door banged intermittently in the morning breeze, and all the array of Wedderburn's orchids was shrivelled and prostrate. But Wedderburn himself was bright and garrulous upstairs in the glory of his strange adventure.

V.

IN THE AVU OBSERVATORY.

The observatory at Avu, in Borneo, stands on the spur of the mountain. To the north rises the old crater, black at night against the unfathomable blue of the sky. From the little circular building, with its mushroom dome, the slopes plunge steeply downward into the black mysteries of the tropical forest beneath. The little house in which the observer and his assistant live is about fifty yards from the observatory, and beyond this are the huts of their native attendants.

Thaddy, the chief observer, was down with a slight fever. His assistant, Woodhouse, paused for a moment in silent contemplation of the tropical night before commencing his solitary vigil. The night was very still. Now and then voices and laughter came from the native huts, or the cry of some strange animal was heard from the midst of the mystery of the forest. Nocturnal insects appeared in ghostly fashion out of the darkness, and fluttered round his light. He thought, perhaps, of all the possibilities of discovery that still lay in the black tangle beneath him; for to the naturalist the virgin forests of Borneo are still a wonderland full of strange questions and half-suspected discoveries. Woodhouse carried a small lantern in his hand, and its yellow glow contrasted vividly with the infinite series of tints between lavender-blue and black in which the landscape was painted. His hands and face were smeared with ointment against the attacks of the mosquitoes.

Even in these days of celestial photography, work done in a purely temporary erection, and with only the most primitive appliances in addition to the telescope, still involves a very large amount of cramped and motionless watching. He sighed as he thought of the physical fatigues before him, stretched himself, and entered the observatory.

The reader is probably familiar with the structure of an ordinary astronomical observatory. The building is usually cylindrical in shape, with a very light hemispherical roof capable of being turned round from the interior. The telescope is supported upon a stone pillar in the centre, and a clockwork arrangement compensates for the earth's rotation, and allows a star once found to be continuously

observed. Besides this, there is a compact tracery of wheels and screws about its point of support, by which the astronomer adjusts it. There is, of course, a slit in the movable roof which follows the eye of the telescope in its survey of the heavens. The observer sits or lies on a sloping wooden arrangement, which he can wheel to any part of the observatory as the position of the telescope may require. Within it is advisable to have things as dark as possible, in order to enhance the brilliance of the stars observed.

The lantern flared as Woodhouse entered his circular den, and the general darkness fled into black shadows behind the big machine, from which it presently seemed to creep back over the whole place again as the light waned. The slit was a profound transparent blue, in which six stars shone with tropical brilliance, and their light lay, a pallid gleam, along the black tube of the instrument. Woodhouse shifted the roof, and then proceeding to the telescope, turned first one wheel and then another, the great cylinder slowly swinging into a new position. Then he glanced through the finder, the little companion telescope, moved the roof a little more, made some further adjustments, and set the clockwork in motion. He took off his jacket, for the night was very hot, and pushed into position the uncomfortable seat to which he was condemned for the next four hours. Then with a sigh he resigned himself to his watch upon the mysteries of space.

There was no sound now in the observatory, and the lantern waned steadily. Outside there was the occasional cry of some animal in alarm or pain, or calling to its mate, and the intermittent sounds of the Malay and Dyak servants. Presently one of the men began a queer chanting song, in which the others joined at intervals. After this it would seem that they turned in for the night, for no further sound came from their direction, and the whispering stillness became more and more profound.

The clockwork ticked steadily. The shrill hum of a mosquito explored the place and grew shriller in indignation at Woodhouse's ointment. Then the lantern went out and all the observatory was black.

Woodhouse shifted his position presently, when the slow movement of the telescope had carried it beyond the limits of his

comfort.

He was watching a little group of stars in the Milky Way, in one of which his chief had seen or fancied a remarkable colour variability. It was not a part of the regular work for which the establishment existed, and for that reason perhaps Woodhouse was deeply interested. He must have forgotten things terrestrial. All his attention was concentrated upon the great blue circle of the telescope field — a circle powdered, so it seemed, with an innumerable multitude of stars, and all luminous against the blackness of its setting. As he watched he seemed to himself to become incorporeal, as if he too were floating in the ether of space. Infinitely remote was the faint red spot he was observing.

Suddenly the stars were blotted out. A flash of blackness passed, and they were visible again.

"Queer," said Woodhouse. "Must have been a bird."

The thing happened again, and immediately after the great tube shivered as though it had been struck. Then the dome of the observatory resounded with a series of thundering blows. The stars seemed to sweep aside as the telescope — which had been unclamped — swung round and away from the slit in the roof.

"Great Scott!" cried Woodhouse. "What's this?"

Some huge vague black shape, with a flapping something like a wing, seemed to be struggling in the aperture of the roof. In another moment the slit was clear again, and the luminous haze of the Milky Way shone warm and bright.

The interior of the roof was perfectly black, and only a scraping sound marked the whereabouts of the unknown creature.

Woodhouse had scrambled from the seat to his feet. He was trembling violently and in a perspiration with the suddenness of the occurrence. Was the thing, whatever it was, inside or out? It was big, whatever else it might be. Something shot across the skylight, and the telescope swayed. He started violently and put his arm up. It was in the observatory, then, with him. It was clinging to the roof apparently. What the devil was it? Could it see him?

He stood for perhaps a minute in a state of stupefaction. The beast, whatever it was, clawed at the interior of the dome, and then something flapped almost into his face, and he saw the momentary

gleam of starlight on a skin like oiled leather. His water-bottle was knocked off his little table with a smash.

The sense of some strange bird-creature hovering a few yards from his face in the darkness was indescribably unpleasant to Woodhouse. As his thought returned he concluded that it must be some night-bird or large bat. At any risk he would see what it was, and pulling a match from his pocket, he tried to strike it on the telescope seat. There was a smoking streak of phosphorescent light, the match flared for a moment, and he saw a vast wing sweeping towards him, a gleam of grey-brown fur, and then he was struck in the face and the match knocked out of his hand. The blow was aimed at his temple, and a claw tore sideways down to his cheek. He reeled and fell, and he heard the extinguished lantern smash. Another blow followed as he fell. He was partly stunned, he felt his own warm blood stream out upon his face. Instinctively he felt his eyes had been struck at, and, turning over on his face to save them, tried to crawl under the protection of the telescope.

He was struck again upon the back, and he heard his jacket rip, and then the thing hit the roof of the observatory. He edged as far as he could between the wooden seat and the eyepiece of the instrument, and turned his body round so that it was chiefly his feet that were exposed. With these he could at least kick. He was still in a mystified state. The strange beast banged about in the darkness, and presently clung to the telescope, making it sway and the gear rattle. Once it flapped near him, and he kicked out madly and felt a soft body with his feet. He was horribly scared now. It must be a big thing to swing the telescope like that. He saw for a moment the outline of a head black against the starlight, with sharply-pointed upstanding ears and a crest between them. It seemed to him to be as big as a mastiff's. Then he began to bawl out as loudly as he could for help.

At that the thing came down upon him again. As it did so his hand touched something beside him on the floor. He kicked out, and the next moment his ankle was gripped and held by a row of keen teeth. He yelled again, and tried to free his leg by kicking with the other. Then he realised he had the broken water-bottle at his hand, and, snatching it, he struggled into a sitting posture, and feeling in the

darkness towards his foot, gripped a velvety ear, like the ear of a big cat. He had seized the water-bottle by its neck and brought it down with a shivering crash upon the head of the strange beast. He repeated the blow, and then stabbed and jabbed with the jagged end of it, in the darkness, where he judged the face might be.

The small teeth relaxed their hold, and at once Woodhouse pulled his leg free and kicked hard. He felt the sickening feel of fur and bone giving under his boot. There was a tearing bite at his arm, and he struck over it at the face, as he judged, and hit damp fur.

There was a pause; then he heard the sound of claws; and the dragging of a heavy body away from him over the observatory floor. Then there was silence, broken only by his own sobbing breathing, and a sound like licking. Everything was black except the parallelogram of the blue skylight with the luminous dust of stars, against which the end of the telescope now appeared in silhouette. He waited, as it seemed, an interminable time.

Was the thing coming on again? He felt in his trouser-pocket for some matches, and found one remaining. He tried to strike this, but the floor was wet, and it spat and went out. He cursed. He could not see where the door was situated. In his struggle he had quite lost his bearings. The strange beast, disturbed by the splutter of the match, began to move again. “Time!” called Woodhouse, with a sudden gleam of mirth, but the thing was not coming at him again. He must have hurt it, he thought, with the broken bottle. He felt a dull pain in his ankle. Probably he was bleeding there. He wondered if it would support him if he tried to stand up. The night outside was very still. There was no sound of any one moving. The sleepy fools had not heard those wings battering upon the dome, nor his shouts. It was no good wasting strength in shouting. The monster flapped its wings and startled him into a defensive attitude. He hit his elbow against the seat, and it fell over with a crash. He cursed this, and then he cursed the darkness.

Suddenly the oblong patch of starlight seemed to sway to and fro. Was he going to faint? It would never do to faint. He clenched his fists and set his teeth to hold himself together. Where had the door got to? It occurred to him he could get his bearings by the stars visible through the skylight. The patch of stars he saw was in

Sagittarius and south-eastward; the door was north — or was it north by west? He tried to think. If he could get the door open he might retreat. It might be the thing was wounded. The suspense was beastly. “Look here!” he said, “if you don’t come on, I shall come at you.”

Then the thing began clambering up the side of the observatory, and he saw its black outline gradually blot out the skylight. Was it in retreat? He forgot about the door, and watched as the dome shifted and creaked. Somehow he did not feel very frightened or excited now. He felt a curious sinking sensation inside him. The sharply-defined patch of light, with the black form moving across it, seemed to be growing smaller and smaller. That was curious. He began to feel very thirsty, and yet he did not feel inclined to get anything to drink. He seemed to be sliding down a long funnel.

He felt a burning sensation in his throat, and then he perceived it was broad daylight, and that one of the Dyak servants was looking at him with a curious expression. Then there was the top of Thaddy’s face upside down. Funny fellow, Thaddy, to go about like that! Then he grasped the situation better, and perceived that his head was on Thaddy’s knee, and Thaddy was giving him brandy. And then he saw the eyepiece of the telescope with a lot of red smears on it. He began to remember.

“You’ve made this observatory in a pretty mess,” said Thaddy.

The Dyak boy was beating up an egg in brandy. Woodhouse took this and sat up. He felt a sharp twinge of pain. His ankle was tied up, so were his arm and the side of his face. The smashed glass, red-stained, lay about the floor, the telescope seat was overturned, and by the opposite wall was a dark pool. The door was open, and he saw the grey summit of the mountain against a brilliant background of blue sky.

“Pah!” said Woodhouse. “Who’s been killing calves here? Take me out of it.”

Then he remembered the Thing, and the fight he had had with it.

“What *was* it?” he said to Thaddy— “the Thing I fought with?”.

“*You* know that best,” said Thaddy. “But, anyhow, don’t worry yourself now about it. Have some more to drink.”

Thaddy, however, was curious enough, and it was a hard struggle

between duty and inclination to keep Woodhouse quiet until he was decently put away in bed, and had slept upon the copious dose of meat extract Thaddy considered advisable. They then talked it over together.

"It was," said Woodhouse, "more like a big bat than anything else in the world. It had sharp, short ears, and soft fur, and its wings were leathery. Its teeth were little but devilish sharp, and its jaw could not have been very strong or else it would have bitten through my ankle."

"It has pretty nearly," said Thaddy.

"It seemed to me to hit out with its claws pretty freely. That is about as much as I know about the beast. Our conversation was intimate, so to speak, and yet not confidential."

"The Dyak chaps talk about a Big Colugo, a Klang-utang — whatever that may be. It does not often attack man, but I suppose you made it nervous. They say there is a Big Colugo and a Little Colugo, and a something else that sounds like gobble. They all fly about at night. For my own part, I know there are flying foxes and flying lemurs about here, but they are none of them very big beasts."

"There are more things in heaven and earth," said Woodhouse — and Thaddy groaned at the quotation— "and more particularly in the forests of Borneo, than are dreamt of in our philosophies. On the whole, if the Borneo fauna is going to disgorge any more of its novelties upon me, I should prefer that it did so when I was not occupied in the observatory at night and alone."

VI.

AEPYORNIS ISLAND.

The man with the scarred face leant over the table and looked at my bundle.

"Orchids?" he asked.

"A few," I said.

"Cypripediums," he said.

"Chiefly," said I.

"Anything new? I thought not. *I* did these islands twenty-five — twenty-seven years ago. If you find anything new here — well, it's brand new. I didn't leave much."

"I'm not a collector," said I.

"I was young then," he went on. "Lord! how I used to fly round." He seemed to take my measure. "I was in the East Indies two years, and in Brazil seven. Then I went to Madagascar."

"I know a few explorers by name," I said, anticipating a yarn. "Whom did you collect for?"

"Dawson's. I wonder if you've heard the name of Butcher ever?"

"Butcher — Butcher?" The name seemed vaguely present in my memory; then I recalled *Butcher* v. *Dawson*. "Why!" said I, "you are the man who sued them for four years' salary — got cast away on a desert island…"

"Your servant," said the man with the scar, bowing. "Funny case, wasn't it? Here was me, making a little fortune on that island, doing nothing for it neither, and them quite unable to give me notice. It often used to amuse me thinking over it while I was there. I did calculations of it — big — all over the blessed atoll in ornamental figuring."

"How did it happen?" said I. "I don't rightly remember the case."

"Well… You've heard of the AEpyornis?"

"Rather. Andrews was telling me of a new species he was working on only a month or so ago. Just before I sailed. They've got a thigh bone, it seems, nearly a yard long. Monster the thing must have been!"

"I believe you," said the man with the scar. "It *was* a monster. Sindbad's roc was just a legend of 'em. But when did they find these

bones?”

“Three or four years ago—’91, I fancy. Why?”

“Why? Because *I* found them — Lord! — it’s nearly twenty years ago. If Dawson’s hadn’t been silly about that salary they might have made a perfect ring in ‘em… *I* couldn’t help the infernal boat going adrift.”

He paused. “I suppose it’s the same place. A kind of swamp about ninety miles north of Antananarivo. Do you happen to know? You have to go to it along the coast by boats. You don’t happen to remember, perhaps?”

“I don’t. I fancy Andrews said something about a swamp.”

“It must be the same. It’s on the east coast. And somehow there’s something in the water that keeps things from decaying. Like creosote it smells. It reminded me of Trinidad. Did they get any more eggs? Some of the eggs I found were a foot-and-a-half long. The swamp goes circling round, you know, and cuts off this bit. It’s mostly salt, too. Well… What a time I had of it! I found the things quite by accident. We went for eggs, me and two native chaps, in one of those rum canoes all tied together, and found the bones at the same time. We had a tent and provisions for four days, and we pitched on one of the firmer places. To think of it brings that odd tarry smell back even now. It’s funny work. You go probing into the mud with iron rods, you know. Usually the egg gets smashed. I wonder how long it is since these AEpyornises really lived. The missionaries say the natives have legends about when they were alive, but I never heard any such stories myself.[*] But certainly those eggs we got were as fresh as if they had been new laid. Fresh! Carrying them down to the boat one of my nigger chaps dropped one on a rock and it smashed. How I lammed into the beggar! But sweet it was, as if it was new laid, not even smelly, and its mother dead these four hundred years, perhaps. Said a centipede had bit him. However, I’m getting off the straight with the story. It had taken us all day to dig into the slush and get these eggs out unbroken, and we were all covered with beastly black mud, and naturally I was cross. So far as I knew they were the only eggs that have ever been got out not even cracked. I went afterwards to see the ones they have at the Natural History Museum in London; all of them were cracked and

just stuck together like a mosaic, and bits missing. Mine were perfect, and I meant to blow them when I got back. Naturally I was annoyed at the silly duffer dropping three hours' work just on account of a centipede. I hit him about rather."

[Footnote *: No European is known to have seen a live AEpyornis, with the doubtful exception of MacAndrew, who visited Madagascar in 1745. — H.G.W.]

The man with the scar took out a clay pipe. I placed my pouch before him.
He filled up absent-mindedly.

"How about the others? Did you get those home? I don't remember—"

"That's the queer part of the story. I had three others. Perfectly fresh eggs. Well, we put 'em in the boat, and then I went up to the tent to make some coffee, leaving my two heathens down by the beach — the one fooling about with his sting and the other helping him. It never occurred to me that the beggars would take advantage of the peculiar position I was in to pick a quarrel. But I suppose the centipede poison and the kicking I had given him had upset the one — he was always a cantankerous sort — and he persuaded the other.

"I remember I was sitting and smoking and boiling up the water over a spirit-lamp business I used to take on these expeditions. Incidentally I was admiring the swamp under the sunset. All black and blood-red it was, in streaks — a beautiful sight. And up beyond the land rose grey and hazy to the hills, and the sky behind them red, like a furnace mouth. And fifty yards behind the back of me was these blessed heathen — quite regardless of the tranquil air of things — plotting to cut off with the boat and leave me all alone with three days' provisions and a canvas tent, and nothing to drink whatsoever beyond a little keg of water. I heard a kind of yelp behind me, and there they were in this canoe affair — it wasn't properly a boat — and, perhaps, twenty yards from land. I realised what was up in a moment. My gun was in the tent, and, besides, I had no bullets — only duck shot. They knew that. But I had a little revolver in my pocket, and I pulled that out as I ran down to the beach.

“‘Come back!’ says I, flourishing it.

“They jabbered something at me, and the man that broke the egg jeered. I aimed at the other — because he was unwounded and had the paddle, and I missed. They laughed. However, I wasn’t beat. I knew I had to keep cool, and I tried him again and made him jump with the whang of it. He didn’t laugh that time. The third time I got his head, and over he went, and the paddle with him. It was a precious lucky shot for a revolver. I reckon it was fifty yards. He went right under. I don’t know if he was shot, or simply stunned and drowned. Then I began to shout to the other chap to come back, but he huddled up in the canoe and refused to answer. So I fired out my revolver at him and never got near him.

“I felt a precious fool, I can tell you. There I was on this rotten, black beach, flat swamp all behind me, and the flat sea, cold after the sun set, and just this black canoe drifting steadily out to sea. I tell you I damned Dawson’s and Jamrach’s and Museums and all the rest of it just to rights. I bawled to this nigger to come back, until my voice went up into a scream.

“There was nothing for it but to swim after him and take my luck with the sharks. So I opened my clasp-knife and put it in my mouth, and took off my clothes and waded in. As soon as I was in the water I lost sight of the canoe, but I aimed, as I judged, to head it off. I hoped the man in it was too bad to navigate it, and that it would keep on drifting in the same direction. Presently it came up over the horizon again to the south-westward about. The afterglow of sunset was well over now and the dim of night creeping up. The stars were coming through the blue. I swum like a champion, though my legs and arms were soon aching.

“However, I came up to him by the time the stars were fairly out. As it got darker I began to see all manner of glowing things in the water — phosphorescence, you know. At times it made me giddy. I hardly knew which was stars and which was phosphorescence, and whether I was swimming on my head or my heels. The canoe was as black as sin, and the ripple under the bows like liquid fire. I was naturally chary of clambering up into it. I was anxious to see what he was up to first. He seemed to be lying cuddled up in a lump in the bows, and the stern was all out of water. The thing kept turning

round slowly as it drifted — kind of waltzing, don't you know. I went to the stern and pulled it down, expecting him to wake up. Then I began to clamber in with my knife in my hand, and ready for a rush. But he never stirred. So there I sat in the stern of the little canoe, drifting away over the calm phosphorescent sea, and with all the host of the stars above me, waiting for something to happen.

"After a long time I called him by name, but he never answered. I was too tired to take any risks by going along to him. So we sat there. I fancy I dozed once or twice. When the dawn came I saw he was as dead as a doornail and all puffed up and purple. My three eggs and the bones were lying in the middle of the canoe, and the keg of water and some coffee and biscuits wrapped in a Cape *Argus* by his feet, and a tin of methylated spirit underneath him. There was no paddle, nor, in fact, anything except the spirit-tin that I could use as one, so I settled to drift until I was picked up. I held an inquest on him, brought in a verdict against some snake, scorpion, or centipede unknown, and sent him overboard.

"After that I had a drink of water and a few biscuits, and took a look round. I suppose a man low down as I was don't see very far; leastways, Madagascar was clean out of sight, and any trace of land at all. I saw a sail going south-westward — looked like a schooner but her hull never came up. Presently the sun got high in the sky and began to beat down upon me. Lord! it pretty near made my brains boil. I tried dipping my head in the sea, but after a while my eye fell on the Cape *Argus*, and I lay down flat in the canoe and spread this over me. Wonderful things these newspapers! I never read one through thoroughly before, but it's odd what you get up to when you're alone, as I was. I suppose I read that blessed old Cape *Argus* twenty times. The pitch in the canoe simply reeked with the heat and rose up into big blisters.

"I drifted ten days," said the man with the scar. "It's a little thing in the telling, isn't it? Every day was like the last. Except in the morning and the evening I never kept a look-out even — the blaze was so infernal. I didn't see a sail after the first three days, and those I saw took no notice of me. About the sixth night a ship went by scarcely half a mile away from me, with all its lights ablaze and its ports open, looking like a big firefly. There was music aboard. I

stood up and shouted and screamed at it. The second day I broached one of the AEpyornis eggs, scraped the shell away at the end bit by bit, and tried it, and I was glad to find it was good enough to eat. A bit flavoury — not bad, I mean — but with something of the taste of a duck's egg. There was a kind of circular patch, about six inches across, on one side of the yoke, and with streaks of blood and a white mark like a ladder in it that I thought queer, but I did not understand what this meant at the time, and I wasn't inclined to be particular. The egg lasted me three days, with biscuits and a drink of water. I chewed coffee berries too — invigorating stuff. The second egg I opened about the eighth day, and it scared me."

The man with the scar paused. "Yes," he said, "developing."

"I daresay you find it hard to believe. *I* did, with the thing before me. There the egg had been, sunk in that cold black mud, perhaps three hundred years. But there was no mistaking it. There was the — what is it? — embryo, with its big head and curved back, and its heart beating under its throat, and the yolk shrivelled up and great membranes spreading inside of the shell and all over the yolk. Here was I hatching out the eggs of the biggest of all extinct birds, in a little canoe in the midst of the Indian Ocean. If old Dawson had known that! It was worth four years' salary. What do *you* think?

"However, I had to eat that precious thing up, every bit of it, before I sighted the reef, and some of the mouthfuls were beastly unpleasant. I left the third one alone. I held it up to the light, but the shell was too thick for me to get any notion of what might be happening inside; and though I fancied I heard blood pulsing, it might have been the rustle in my own ears, like what you listen to in a seashell.

"Then came the atoll. Came out of the sunrise, as it were, suddenly, close up to me. I drifted straight towards it until I was about half a mile from shore, not more, and then the current took a turn, and I had to paddle as hard as I could with my hands and bits of the AEpyornis shell to make the place. However, I got there. It was just a common atoll about four miles round, with a few trees growing and a spring in one place, and the lagoon full of parrot-fish. I took the egg ashore and put it in a good place, well above the tide lines and in the sun, to give it all the chance I could, and pulled the canoe up safe,

and loafed about prospecting. It's rum how dull an atoll is. As soon as I had found a spring all the interest seemed to vanish. When I was a kid I thought nothing could be finer or more adventurous than the Robinson Crusoe business, but that place was as monotonous as a book of sermons. I went round finding eatable things and generally thinking; but I tell you I was bored to death before the first day was out. It shows my luck — the very day I landed the weather changed. A thunderstorm went by to the north and flicked its wing over the island, and in the night there came a drencher and a howling wind slap over us. It wouldn't have taken much, you know, to upset that canoe.

"I was sleeping under the canoe, and the egg was luckily among the sand higher up the beach, and the first thing I remember was a sound like a hundred pebbles hitting the boat at once, and a rush of water over my body. I'd been dreaming of Antananarivo, and I sat up and holloaed to Intoshi to ask her what the devil was up, and clawed out at the chair where the matches used to be. Then I remembered where I was. There were phosphorescent waves rolling up as if they meant to eat me, and all the rest of the night as black as pitch. The air was simply yelling. The clouds seemed down on your head almost, and the rain fell as if heaven was sinking and they were baling out the waters above the firmament. One great roller came writhing at me, like a fiery serpent, and I bolted. Then I thought of the canoe, and ran down to it as the water went hissing back again; but the thing had gone. I wondered about the egg then, and felt my way to it. It was all right and well out of reach of the maddest waves, so I sat down beside it and cuddled it for company. Lord! what a night that was!

"The storm was over before the morning. There wasn't a rag of cloud left in the sky when the dawn came, and all along the beach there were bits of plank scattered — which was the disarticulated skeleton, so to speak, of my canoe. However, that gave me something to do, for, taking advantage of two of the trees being together, I rigged up a kind of storm-shelter with these vestiges. And that day the egg hatched.

"Hatched, sir, when my head was pillowed on it and I was asleep. I heard a whack and felt a jar and sat up, and there was the end of the

egg pecked out and a rum little brown head looking out at me. ‘Lord!’ I said, ‘you’re welcome’; and with a little difficulty he came out.

“He was a nice friendly little chap at first, about the size of a small hen — very much like most other young birds, only bigger. His plumage was a dirty brown to begin with, with a sort of grey scab that fell off it very soon, and scarcely feathers — a kind of downy hair. I can hardly express how pleased I was to see him. I tell you, Robinson Crusoe don’t make near enough of his loneliness. But here was interesting company. He looked at me and winked his eye from the front backwards, like a hen, and gave a chirp and began to peck about at once, as though being hatched three hundred years too late was just nothing. ‘Glad to see you, Man Friday!’ says I, for I had naturally settled he was to be called Man Friday if ever he was hatched, as soon as ever I found the egg in the canoe had developed. I was a bit anxious about his feed, so I gave him a lump of raw parrot-fish at once. He took it, and opened his beak for more. I was glad of that for, under the circumstances, if he’d been at all fanciful, I should have had to eat him after all.

“You’d be surprised what an interesting bird that AEpyornis chick was. He followed me about from the very beginning. He used to stand by me and watch while I fished in the lagoon, and go shares in anything I caught. And he was sensible, too. There were nasty green warty things, like pickled gherkins, used to lie about on the beach, and he tried one of these and it upset him. He never even looked at any of them again.

“And he grew. You could almost see him grow. And as I was never much of a society man, his quiet, friendly ways suited me to a T. For nearly two years we were as happy as we could be on that island. I had no business worries, for I knew my salary was mounting up at Dawsons’. We would see a sail now and then, but nothing ever came near us. I amused myself, too, by decorating the island with designs worked in sea-urchins and fancy shells of various kinds. I put AEPYORNIS ISLAND all round the place very nearly, in big letters, like what you see done with coloured stones at railway stations in the old country, and mathematical calculations and drawings of various sorts. And I used to lie watching the blessed bird stalking round and

growing, growing; and think how I could make a living out of him by showing him about if I ever got taken off. After his first moult he began to get handsome, with a crest and a blue wattle, and a lot of green feathers at the behind of him. And then I used to puzzle whether Dawsons' had any right to claim him or not. Stormy weather and in the rainy season we lay snug under the shelter I had made out of the old canoe, and I used to tell him lies about my friends at home. And after a storm we would go round the island together to see if there was any drift. It was a kind of idyll, you might say. If only I had had some tobacco it would have been simply just like heaven.

"It was about the end of the second year our little paradise went wrong. Friday was then about fourteen feet high to the bill of him, with a big, broad head like the end of a pickaxe, and two huge brown eyes with yellow rims, set together like a man's — not out of sight of each other like a hen's. His plumage was fine — none of the half-mourning style of your ostrich — more like a cassowary as far as colour and texture go. And then it was he began to cock his comb at me and give himself airs, and show signs of a nasty temper …

"At last came a time when my fishing had been rather unlucky, and he began to hang about me in a queer, meditative way. I thought he might have been eating sea-cucumbers or something, but it was really just discontent on his part. I was hungry too, and when at last I landed a fish I wanted it for myself. Tempers were short that morning on both sides. He pecked at it and grabbed it, and I gave him a whack on the head to make him leave go. And at that he went for me. Lord! …

"He gave me this in the face." The man indicated his scar. "Then he kicked me. It was like a carthorse. I got up, and seeing he hadn't finished, I started off full tilt with my arms doubled up over my face. But he ran on those gawky legs of his faster than a racehorse, and kept landing out at me with sledgehammer kicks, and bringing his pickaxe down on the back of my head. I made for the lagoon, and went in up to my neck. He stopped at the water, for he hated getting his feet wet, and began to make a shindy, something like a peacock's, only hoarser. He started strutting up and down the beach. I'll admit I felt small to see this blessed fossil lording it there. And my head and face were all bleeding, and — well, my body just one jelly of bruises.

“I decided to swim across the lagoon and leave him alone for a bit, until the affair blew over. I shinned up the tallest palm-tree, and sat there thinking of it all. I don’t suppose I ever felt so hurt by anything before or since. It was the brutal ingratitude of the creature. I’d been more than a brother to him. I’d hatched him, educated him. A great gawky, out-of-date bird! And me a human being — heir of the ages and all that.

“I thought after a time he’d begin to see things in that light himself, and feel a little sorry for his behaviour. I thought if I was to catch some nice little bits of fish, perhaps, and go to him presently in a casual kind of way, and offer them to him, he might do the sensible thing. It took me some time to learn how unforgiving and cantankerous an extinct bird can be. Malice!

“I won’t tell you all the little devices I tried to get that bird round again, I simply can’t. It makes my cheek burn with shame even now to think of the snubs and buffets I had from this infernal curiosity. I tried violence. I chucked lumps of coral at him from a safe distance, but he only swallowed them. I shied my open knife at him and almost lost it, though it was too big for him to swallow. I tried starving him out and struck fishing, but he took to picking along the beach at low water after worms, and rubbed along on that. Half my time I spent up to my neck in the lagoon, and the rest up the palm-trees. One of them was scarcely high enough, and when he caught me up it he had a regular Bank Holiday with the calves of my legs. It got unbearable. I don’t know if you have ever tried sleeping up a palm-tree. It gave me the most horrible nightmares. Think of the shame of it, too! Here was this extinct animal mooning about my island like a sulky duke, and me not allowed to rest the sole of my foot on the place. I used to cry with weariness and vexation. I told him straight that I didn’t mean to be chased about a desert island by any damned anachronisms. I told him to go and peck a navigator of his own age. But he only snapped his beak at me. Great ugly bird, all legs and neck!

“I shouldn’t like to say how long that went on altogether. I’d have killed him sooner if I’d known how. However, I hit on a way of settling him at last. It is a South American dodge. I joined all my fishing-lines together with stems of seaweed and things, and made a

stoutish string, perhaps twelve yards in length or more, and I fastened two lumps of coral rock to the ends of this. It took me some time to do, because every now and then I had to go into the lagoon or up a tree as the fancy took me. This I whirled rapidly round my head, and then let it go at him. The first time I missed, but the next time the string caught his legs beautifully, and wrapped round them again and again. Over he went. I threw it standing waist-deep in the lagoon, and as soon as he went down I was out of the water and sawing at his neck with my knife …

"I don't like to think of that even now. I felt like a murderer while I did it, though my anger was hot against him. When I stood over him and saw him bleeding on the white sand, and his beautiful great legs and neck writhing in his last agony … Pah!

"With that tragedy loneliness came upon me like a curse. Good Lord! you can't imagine how I missed that bird. I sat by his corpse and sorrowed over him, and shivered as I looked round the desolate, silent reef. I thought of what a jolly little bird he had been when he was hatched, and of a thousand pleasant tricks he had played before he went wrong. I thought if I'd only wounded him I might have nursed him round into a better understanding. If I'd had any means of digging into the coral rock I'd have buried him. I felt exactly as if he was human. As it was, I couldn't think of eating him, so I put him in the lagoon, and the little fishes picked him clean. I didn't even save the feathers. Then one day a chap cruising about in a yacht had a fancy to see if my atoll still existed.

"He didn't come a moment too soon, for I was about sick enough of the desolation of it, and only hesitating whether I should walk out into the sea and finish up the business that way, or fall back on the green things…

"I sold the bones to a man named Winslow — a dealer near the British Museum, and he says he sold them to old Havers. It seems Havers didn't understand they were extra large, and it was only after his death they attracted attention. They called 'em AEpyornis — what was it?"

"*AEpyornis vastus*," said I. "It's funny, the very thing was mentioned to me by a friend of mine. When they found an AEpyornis, with a thigh a yard long, they thought they had reached

the top of the scale, and called him *AEpyornis maximus*. Then some one turned up another thigh-bone four feet six or more, and that they called *AEpyornis Titan*. Then your *vastus* was found after old Havers died, in his collection, and then a *vastissimus* turned up."

"Winslow was telling me as much," said the man with the scar. "If they get any more AEpyornises, he reckons some scientific swell will go and burst a blood-vessel. But it was a queer thing to happen to a man; wasn't it — altogether?"

VII.

THE REMARKABLE CASE OF DAVIDSON'S EYES.

I.

The transitory mental aberration of Sidney Davidson, remarkable enough in itself, is still more remarkable if Wade's explanation is to be credited. It sets one dreaming of the oddest possibilities of intercommunication in the future, of spending an intercalary five minutes on the other side of the world, or being watched in our most secret operations by unsuspected eyes. It happened that I was the immediate witness of Davidson's seizure, and so it falls naturally to me to put the story upon paper.

When I say that I was the immediate witness of his seizure, I mean that I was the first on the scene. The thing happened at the Harlow Technical College, just beyond the Highgate Archway. He was alone in the larger laboratory when the thing happened. I was in a smaller room, where the balances are, writing up some notes. The thunderstorm had completely upset my work, of course. It was just after one of the louder peals that I thought I heard some glass smash in the other room. I stopped writing, and turned round to listen. For a moment I heard nothing; the hail was playing the devil's tattoo on the corrugated zinc of the roof. Then came another sound, a smash — no doubt of it this time. Something heavy had been knocked off the bench. I jumped up at once and went and opened the door leading into the big laboratory.

I was surprised to hear a queer sort of laugh, and saw Davidson standing unsteadily in the middle of the room, with a dazzled look on his face. My first impression was that he was drunk. He did not notice me. He was clawing out at something invisible a yard in front of his face. He put out his hand, slowly, rather hesitatingly, and then clutched nothing. "What's come to it?" he said. He held up his hands to his face, fingers spread out. "Great Scott!" he said. The thing happened three or four years ago, when every one swore by that personage. Then he began raising his feet clumsily, as though he had expected to find them glued to the floor.

“Davidson!” cried I. “What’s the matter with you?” He turned round in my direction and looked about for me. He looked over me and at me and on either side of me, without the slightest sign of seeing me. “Waves,” he said; “and a remarkably neat schooner. I’d swear that was Bellow’s voice. *Hullo*!” He shouted suddenly at the top of his voice.

I thought he was up to some foolery. Then I saw littered about his feet the shattered remains of the best of our electrometers. “What’s up, man?” said I. “You’ve smashed the electrometer!”

“Bellows again!” said he. “Friends left, if my hands are gone. Something about electrometers. Which way *are* you, Bellows?” He suddenly came staggering towards me. “The damned stuff cuts like butter,” he said. He walked straight into the bench and recoiled. “None so buttery that!” he said, and stood swaying.

I felt scared. “Davidson,” said I, “what on earth’s come over you?”

He looked round him in every direction. “I could swear that was Bellows.
Why don’t you show yourself like a man, Bellows?”

It occurred to me that he must be suddenly struck blind. I walked round the table and laid my hand upon his arm. I never saw a man more startled in my life. He jumped away from me, and came round into an attitude of self-defence, his face fairly distorted with terror. “Good God!” he cried. “What was that?”

“It’s I — Bellows. Confound it, Davidson!”

He jumped when I answered him and stared — how can I express it? — right through me. He began talking, not to me, but to himself. “Here in broad daylight on a clear beach. Not a place to hide in.” He looked about him wildly. “Here! I’m *off*.” He suddenly turned and ran headlong into the big electro-magnet — so violently that, as we found afterwards, he bruised his shoulder and jawbone cruelly. At that he stepped back a pace, and cried out with almost a whimper, “What, in Heaven’s name, has come over me?” He stood, blanched with terror and trembling violently, with his right arm clutching his left, where that had collided with the magnet.

By that time I was excited and fairly scared. “Davidson,” said I, “don’t be afraid.”

He was startled at my voice, but not so excessively as before. I repeated my words in as clear and as firm a tone as I could assume. “Bellows,” he said, “is that you?”

“Can’t you see it’s me?”

He laughed. “I can’t even see it’s myself. Where the devil are we?”

“Here,” said I, “in the laboratory.”

“The laboratory!” he answered in a puzzled tone, and put his hand to his forehead. “I *was* in the laboratory — till that flash came, but I’m hanged if I’m there now. What ship is that?”

“There’s no ship,” said I. “Do be sensible, old chap.”

“No ship!” he repeated, and seemed to forget my denial forthwith. “I suppose,” said he slowly, “we’re both dead. But the rummy part is I feel just as though I still had a body. Don’t get used to it all at once, I suppose. The old shop was struck by lightning, I suppose. Jolly quick thing, Bellows — eigh?”

“Don’t talk nonsense. You’re very much alive. You are in the laboratory, blundering about. You’ve just smashed a new electrometer. I don’t envy you when Boyce arrives.”

He stared away from me towards the diagrams of cryohydrates. “I must be deaf,” said he. “They’ve fired a gun, for there goes the puff of smoke, and I never heard a sound.”

I put my hand on his arm again, and this time he was less alarmed. “We seem to have a sort of invisible bodies,” said he. “By Jove! there’s a boat coming round the headland. It’s very much like the old life after all — in a different climate.”

I shook his arm. “Davidson,” I cried, “wake up!”

II.

It was just then that Boyce came in. So soon as he spoke Davidson exclaimed: “Old Boyce! Dead too! What a lark!” I hastened to explain that Davidson was in a kind of somnambulistic trance. Boyce was interested at once. We both did all we could to rouse the fellow out of his extraordinary state. He answered our questions, and asked

us some of his own, but his attention seemed distracted by his hallucination about a beach and a ship. He kept interpolating observations concerning some boat and the davits, and sails filling with the wind. It made one feel queer, in the dusky laboratory, to hear him saying such things.

He was blind and helpless. We had to walk him down the passage, one at each elbow, to Boyce's private room, and while Boyce talked to him there, and humoured him about this ship idea, I went along the corridor and asked old Wade to come and look at him. The voice of our Dean sobered him a little, but not very much. He asked where his hands were, and why he had to walk about up to his waist in the ground. Wade thought over him a long time — you know how he knits his brows — and then made him feel the couch, guiding his hands to it. "That's a couch," said Wade. "The couch in the private room of Professor Boyce. Horse-hair stuffing."

Davidson felt about, and puzzled over it, and answered presently that he could feel it all right, but he couldn't see it.

"What *do* you see?" asked Wade. Davidson said he could see nothing but a lot of sand and broken-up shells. Wade gave him some other things to feel, telling him what they were, and watching him keenly.

"The ship is almost hull down," said Davidson presently, *apropos* of nothing.

"Never mind the ship," said Wade. "Listen to me, Davidson. Do you know what hallucination means?"

"Rather," said Davidson.

"Well, everything you see is hallucinatory."

"Bishop Berkeley," said Davidson.

"Don't mistake me," said Wade. "You are alive and in this room of Boyce's. But something has happened to your eyes. You cannot see; you can feel and hear, but not see. Do you follow me?"

"It seems to me that I see too much." Davidson rubbed his knuckles into his eyes. "Well?" he said.

"That's all. Don't let it perplex you. Bellows here and I will take you home in a cab."

"Wait a bit." Davidson thought. "Help me to sit down," said he presently; "and now — I'm sorry to trouble you — but will you tell

me all that over again?”

Wade repeated it very patiently. Davidson shut his eyes, and pressed his hands upon his forehead. “Yes,” said he. “It’s quite right. Now my eyes are shut I know you’re right. That’s you, Bellows, sitting by me on the couch. I’m in England again. And we’re in the dark.”

Then he opened his eyes. “And there,” said he, “is the sun just rising, and the yards of the ship, and a tumbled sea, and a couple of birds flying. I never saw anything so real. And I’m sitting up to my neck in a bank of sand.”

He bent forward and covered his face with his hands. Then he opened his eyes again. “Dark sea and sunrise! And yet I’m sitting on a sofa in old Boyce’s room!… God help me!”

III.

That was the beginning. For three weeks this strange affection of Davidson’s eyes continued unabated. It was far worse than being blind. He was absolutely helpless, and had to be fed like a newly-hatched bird, and led about and undressed. If he attempted to move, he fell over things or struck himself against walls or doors. After a day or so he got used to hearing our voices without seeing us, and willingly admitted he was at home, and that Wade was right in what he told him. My sister, to whom he was engaged, insisted on coming to see him, and would sit for hours every day while he talked about this beach of his. Holding her hand seemed to comfort him immensely. He explained that when we left the College and drove home — he lived in Hampstead village — it appeared to him as if we drove right through a sandhill — it was perfectly black until he emerged again — and through rocks and trees and solid obstacles, and when he was taken to his own room it made him giddy and almost frantic with the fear of falling, because going upstairs seemed to lift him thirty or forty feet above the rocks of his imaginary island. He kept saying he should smash all the eggs. The end was that he had to be taken down into his father’s consulting room and laid upon a couch that stood there.

He described the island as being a bleak kind of place on the

whole, with very little vegetation, except some peaty stuff, and a lot of bare rock. There were multitudes of penguins, and they made the rocks white and disagreeable to see. The sea was often rough, and once there was a thunderstorm, and he lay and shouted at the silent flashes. Once or twice seals pulled up on the beach, but only on the first two or three days. He said it was very funny the way in which the penguins used to waddle right through him, and how he seemed to lie among them without disturbing them.

I remember one odd thing, and that was when he wanted very badly to smoke. We put a pipe in his hands — he almost poked his eye out with it — and lit it. But he couldn't taste anything. I've since found it's the same with me — I don't know if it's the usual case — that I cannot enjoy tobacco at all unless I can see the smoke.

But the queerest part of his vision came when Wade sent him out in a Bath-chair to get fresh air. The Davidsons hired a chair, and got that deaf and obstinate dependant of theirs, Widgery, to attend to it. Widgery's ideas of healthy expeditions were peculiar. My sister, who had been to the Dogs' Home, met them in Camden Town, towards King's Cross, Widgery trotting along complacently, and Davidson, evidently most distressed, trying in his feeble, blind way to attract Widgery's attention.

He positively wept when my sister spoke to him. "Oh, get me out of this horrible darkness!" he said, feeling for her hand. "I must get out of it, or I shall die." He was quite incapable of explaining what was the matter, but my sister decided he must go home, and presently, as they went uphill towards Hampstead, the horror seemed to drop from him. He said it was good to see the stars again, though it was then about noon and a blazing day.

"It seemed," he told me afterwards, "as if I was being carried irresistibly towards the water. I was not very much alarmed at first. Of course it was night there — a lovely night."

"Of course?" I asked, for that struck me as odd.

"Of course," said he. "It's always night there when it is day here… Well, we went right into the water, which was calm and shining under the moonlight — just a broad swell that seemed to grow broader and flatter as I came down into it. The surface glistened just like a skin — it might have been empty space underneath for all

I could tell to the contrary. Very slowly, for I rode slanting into it, the water crept up to my eyes. Then I went under and the skin seemed to break and heal again about my eyes. The moon gave a jump up in the sky and grew green and dim, and fish, faintly glowing, came darting round me — and things that seemed made of luminous glass; and I passed through a tangle of seaweeds that shone with an oily lustre. And so I drove down into the sea, and the stars went out one by one, and the moon grew greener and darker, and the seaweed became a luminous purple-red. It was all very faint and mysterious, and everything seemed to quiver. And all the while I could hear the wheels of the Bath-chair creaking, and the footsteps of people going by, and a man in the distance selling the special *Pall Mall*.

"I kept sinking down deeper and deeper into the water. It became inky black about me, not a ray from above came down into that darkness, and the phosphorescent things grew brighter and brighter. The snaky branches of the deeper weeds flickered like the flames of spirit-lamps; but, after a time, there were no more weeds. The fishes came staring and gaping towards me, and into me and through me. I never imagined such fishes before. They had lines of fire along the sides of them as though they had been outlined with a luminous pencil. And there was a ghastly thing swimming backwards with a lot of twining arms. And then I saw, coming very slowly towards me through the gloom, a hazy mass of light that resolved itself as it drew nearer into multitudes of fishes, struggling and darting round something that drifted. I drove on straight towards it, and presently I saw in the midst of the tumult, and by the light of the fish, a bit of splintered spar looming over me, and a dark hull tilting over, and some glowing phosphorescent forms that were shaken and writhed as the fish bit at them. Then it was I began to try to attract Widgery's attention. A horror came upon me. Ugh! I should have driven right into those half-eaten — things. If your sister had not come! They had great holes in them, Bellows, and … Never mind. But it was ghastly!"

IV.

For three weeks Davidson remained in this singular state, seeing what at the time we imagined was an altogether phantasmal world, and stone blind to the world around him. Then, one Tuesday, when I called I met old Davidson in the passage. “He can see his thumb!” the old gentleman said, in a perfect transport. He was struggling into his overcoat. “He can see his thumb, Bellows!” he said, with the tears in his eyes. “The lad will be all right yet.”

I rushed in to Davidson. He was holding up a little book before his face, and looking at it and laughing in a weak kind of way.

“It’s amazing,” said he. “There’s a kind of patch come there.” He pointed with his finger. “I’m on the rocks as usual, and the penguins are staggering and flapping about as usual, and there’s been a whale showing every now and then, but it’s got too dark now to make him out. But put something *there*, and I see it — I do see it. It’s very dim and broken in places, but I see it all the same, like a faint spectre of itself. I found it out this morning while they were dressing me. It’s like a hole in this infernal phantom world. Just put your hand by mine. No — not there. Ah! Yes! I see it. The base of your thumb and a bit of cuff! It looks like the ghost of a bit of your hand sticking out of the darkling sky. Just by it there’s a group of stars like a cross coming out.”

From that time Davidson began to mend. His account of the change, like his account of the vision, was oddly convincing. Over patches of his field of vision, the phantom world grew fainter, grew transparent, as it were, and through these translucent gaps he began to see dimly the real world about him. The patches grew in size and number, ran together and spread until only here and there were blind spots left upon his eyes. He was able to get up and steer himself about, feed himself once more, read, smoke, and behave like an ordinary citizen again. At first it was very confusing to him to have these two pictures overlapping each other like the changing views of a lantern, but in a little while he began to distinguish the real from the illusory.

At first he was unfeignedly glad, and seemed only too anxious to complete his cure by taking exercise and tonics. But as that odd island of his began to fade away from him, he became queerly interested in it. He wanted particularly to go down into the deep sea

again, and would spend half his time wandering about the low-lying parts of London, trying to find the water-logged wreck he had seen drifting. The glare of real daylight very soon impressed him so vividly as to blot out everything of his shadowy world, but of a night-time, in a darkened room, he could still see the white-splashed rocks of the island, and the clumsy penguins staggering to and fro. But even these grew fainter and fainter, and, at last, soon after he married my sister, he saw them for the last time.

V.

And now to tell of the queerest thing of all. About two years after his cure I dined with the Davidsons, and after dinner a man named Atkins called in. He is a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and a pleasant, talkative man. He was on friendly terms with my brother-in-law, and was soon on friendly terms with me. It came out that he was engaged to Davidson's cousin, and incidentally he took out a kind of pocket photograph case to show us a new rendering of his *fiancée*. "And, by-the-by," said he, "here's the old *Fulmar*."

Davidson looked at it casually. Then suddenly his face lit up. "Good heavens!" said he. "I could almost swear — —"

"What?" said Atkins.

"That I had seen that ship before."

"Don't see how you can have. She hasn't been out of the South Seas for six years, and before then — —"

"But," began Davidson, and then, "Yes — that's the ship I dreamt of; I'm sure that's the ship I dreamt of. She was standing off an island that swarmed with penguins, and she fired a gun."

"Good Lord!" said Atkins, who had now heard the particulars of the seizure. "How the deuce could you dream that?"

And then, bit by bit, it came out that on the very day Davidson was seized, H.M.S. *Fulmar* had actually been off a little rock to the south of Antipodes Island. A boat had landed overnight to get penguins' eggs, had been delayed, and a thunderstorm drifting up, the boat's crew had waited until the morning before rejoining the ship. Atkins had been one of them, and he corroborated, word for word, the descriptions Davidson had given of the island and the boat.

There is not the slightest doubt in any of our minds that Davidson has really seen the place. In some unaccountable way, while he moved hither and thither in London, his sight moved hither and thither in a manner that corresponded, about this distant island. *How* is absolutely a mystery.

That completes the remarkable story of Davidson's eyes. It's perhaps the best authenticated case in existence of real vision at a distance. Explanation there is none forthcoming, except what Professor Wade has thrown out. But his explanation invokes the Fourth Dimension, and a dissertation on theoretical kinds of space. To talk of there being "a kink in space" seems mere nonsense to me; it may be because I am no mathematician. When I said that nothing would alter the fact that the place is eight thousand miles away, he answered that two points might be a yard away on a sheet of paper, and yet be brought together by bending the paper round. The reader may grasp his argument, but I certainly do not. His idea seems to be that Davidson, stooping between the poles of the big electro-magnet, had some extraordinary twist given to his retinal elements through the sudden change in the field of force due to the lightning.

He thinks, as a consequence of this, that it may be possible to live visually in one part of the world, while one lives bodily in another. He has even made some experiments in support of his views; but, so far, he has simply succeeded in blinding a few dogs. I believe that is the net result of his work, though I have not seen him for some weeks. Latterly I have been so busy with my work in connection with the Saint Pancras installation that I have had little opportunity of calling to see him. But the whole of his theory seems fantastic to me. The facts concerning Davidson stand on an altogether different footing, and I can testify personally to the accuracy of every detail I have given.

VIII.

THE LORD OF THE DYNAMOS.

The chief attendant of the three dynamos that buzzed and rattled at Camberwell, and kept the electric railway going, came out of Yorkshire, and his name was James Holroyd. He was a practical electrician, but fond of whisky, a heavy, red-haired brute with irregular teeth. He doubted the existence of the Deity, but accepted Carnot's cycle, and he had read Shakespeare and found him weak in chemistry. His helper came out of the mysterious East, and his name was Azuma-zi. But Holroyd called him Pooh-bah. Holroyd liked a nigger help because he would stand kicking — a habit with Holroyd — and did not pry into the machinery and try to learn the ways of it. Certain odd possibilities of the negro mind brought into abrupt contact with the crown of our civilisation Holroyd never fully realised, though just at the end he got some inkling of them.

To define Azuma-zi was beyond ethnology. He was, perhaps, more negroid than anything else, though his hair was curly rather than frizzy, and his nose had a bridge. Moreover, his skin was brown rather than black, and the whites of his eyes were yellow. His broad cheekbones and narrow chin gave his face something of the viperine V. His head, too, was broad behind, and low and narrow at the forehead, as if his brain had been twisted round in the reverse way to a European's. He was short of stature and still shorter of English. In conversation he made numerous odd noises of no known marketable value, and his infrequent words were carved and wrought into heraldic grotesqueness. Holroyd tried to elucidate his religious beliefs, and — especially after whisky — lectured to him against superstition and missionaries. Azuma-zi, however, shirked the discussion of his gods, even though he was kicked for it.

Azuma-zi had come, clad in white but insufficient raiment, out of the stoke-hole of the *Lord Clive*, from the Straits Settlements and beyond, into London. He had heard even in his youth of the greatness and riches of London, where all the women are white and fair, and even the beggars in the streets are white, and he had arrived, with newly-earned gold coins in his pocket, to worship at the shrine of civilisation. The day of his landing was a dismal one; the sky was

dun, and a wind-worried drizzle filtered down to the greasy streets, but he plunged boldly into the delights of Shadwell, and was presently cast up, shattered in health, civilised in costume, penniless, and, except in matters of the direst necessity, practically a dumb animal, to toil for James Holroyd, and to be bullied by him in the dynamo shed at Camberwell. And to James Holroyd bullying was a labour of love.

There were three dynamos with their engines at Camberwell. The two that have been there since the beginning are small machines; the larger one was new. The smaller machines made a reasonable noise; their straps hummed over the drums, every now and then the brushes buzzed and fizzled, and the air churned steadily, whoo! whoo! whoo! between their poles. One was loose in its foundations and kept the shed vibrating. But the big dynamo drowned these little noises altogether with the sustained drone of its iron core, which somehow set part of the ironwork humming. The place made the visitor's head reel with the throb, throb, throb of the engines, the rotation of the big wheels, the spinning ball-valves, the occasional spittings of the steam, and over all the deep, unceasing, surging note of the big dynamo. This last noise was from an engineering point of view a defect, but Azuma-zi accounted it unto the monster for mightiness and pride.

If it were possible we would have the noises of that shed always about the reader as he reads, we would tell all our story to such an accompaniment. It was a steady stream of din, from which the ear picked out first one thread and then another; there was the intermittent snorting, panting, and seething of the steam engines, the suck and thud of their pistons, the dull beat on the air as the spokes of the great driving wheels came round, a note the leather straps made as they ran tighter and looser, and a fretful tumult from the dynamos; and, over all, sometimes inaudible, as the ear tired of it, and then creeping back upon the senses again, was this trombone note of the big machine. The floor never felt steady and quiet beneath one's feet, but quivered and jarred. It was a confusing, unsteady place, and enough to send anyone's thoughts jerking into odd zigzags. And for three months, while the big strike of the engineers was in progress, Holroyd, who was a blackleg, and Azuma-zi, who

was a mere black, were never out of the stir and eddy of it, but slept and fed in the little wooden shanty between the shed and the gates.

Holroyd delivered a theological lecture on the text of his big machine soon after Azuma-zi came. He had to shout to be heard in the din. “Look at that,” said Holroyd; “where’s your ‘eathen idol to match ‘im?” And Azuma-zi looked. For a moment Holroyd was inaudible, and then Azuma-zi heard: “Kill a hundred men. Twelve per cent, on the ordinary shares,” said Holroyd, “and that’s something like a Gord.”

Holroyd was proud of his big dynamo, and expatiated upon its size and power to Azuma-zi until heaven knows what odd currents of thought that and the incessant whirling and shindy set up within the curly black cranium. He would explain in the most graphic manner the dozen or so ways in which a man might be killed by it, and once he gave Azuma-zi a shock as a sample of its quality. After that, in the breathing-times of his labour — it was heavy labour, being not only his own, but most of Holroyd’s — Azuma-zi would sit and watch the big machine. Now and then the brushes would sparkle and spit blue flashes, at which Holroyd would swear, but all the rest was as smooth and rhythmic as breathing. The band ran shouting over the shaft, and ever behind one as one watched was the complacent thud of the piston. So it lived all day in this big airy shed, with him and Holroyd to wait upon it; not prisoned up and slaving to drive a ship as the other engines he knew — mere captive devils of the British Solomon — had been, but a machine enthroned. Those two smaller dynamos Azuma-zi by force of contrast despised; the large one he privately christened the Lord of the Dynamos. They were fretful and irregular, but the big dynamo was steady. How great it was! How serene and easy in its working! Greater and calmer even than the Buddhas he had seen at Rangoon, and yet not motionless, but living! The great black coils spun, spun, spun, the rings ran round under the brushes, and the deep note of its coil steadied the whole. It affected Azuma-zi queerly.

Azuma-zi was not fond of labour. He would sit about and watch the Lord of the Dynamos while Holroyd went away to persuade the yard porter to get whisky, although his proper place was not in the dynamo shed but behind the engines, and, moreover, if Holroyd

caught him skulking he got hit for it with a rod of stout copper wire. He would go and stand close to the colossus, and look up at the great leather band running overhead. There was a black patch on the band that came round, and it pleased him somehow among all the clatter to watch this return again and again. Odd thoughts spun with the whirl of it. Scientific people tell us that savages give souls to rocks and trees, — and a machine is a thousand times more alive than a rock or a tree. And Azuma-zi was practically a savage still; the veneer of civilisation lay no deeper than his slop suit, his bruises, and the coal grime on his face and hands. His father before him had worshipped a meteoric stone, kindred blood, it may be, had splashed the broad wheels of Juggernaut.

He took every opportunity Holroyd gave him of touching and handling the great dynamo that was fascinating him. He polished and cleaned it until the metal parts were blinding in the sun. He felt a mysterious sense of service in doing this. He would go up to it and touch its spinning coils gently. The gods he had worshipped were all far away. The people in London hid their gods.

At last his dim feelings grew more distinct, and took shape in thoughts, and at last in acts. When he came into the roaring shed one morning he salaamed to the Lord of the Dynamos, and then, when Holroyd was away, he went and whispered to the thundering machine that he was its servant, and prayed it to have pity on him and save him from Holroyd. As he did so a rare gleam of light came in through the open archway of the throbbing machine-shed, and the Lord of the Dynamos, as he whirled and roared, was radiant with pale gold. Then Azuma-zi knew that his service was acceptable to his Lord. After that he did not feel so lonely as he had done, and he had indeed been very much alone in London. And even when his work-time was over, which was rare, he loitered about the shed.

Then, the next time Holroyd maltreated him, Azuma-zi went presently to the Lord of the Dynamos and whispered, “Thou seest, O my Lord!” and the angry whirr of the machinery seemed to answer him. Thereafter it appeared to him that whenever Holroyd came into the shed a different note came into the sounds of the dynamo. “My Lord bides his time,” said Azuma-zi to himself. “The iniquity of the fool is not yet ripe.” And he waited and watched for the day of

reckoning. One day there was evidence of short circuiting, and Holroyd, making an unwary examination — it was in the afternoon — got a rather severe shock. Azuma-zi from behind the engine saw him jump off and curse at the peccant coil.

"He is warned," said Azuma-zi to himself. "Surely my Lord is very patient."

Holroyd had at first initiated his "nigger" into such elementary conceptions of the dynamo's working as would enable him to take temporary charge of the shed in his absence. But when he noticed the manner in which Azuma-zi hung about the monster he became suspicious. He dimly perceived his assistant was "up to something," and connecting him with the anointing of the coils with oil that had rotted the varnish in one place, he issued an edict, shouted above the confusion of the machinery, "Don't 'ee go nigh that big dynamo any more, Pooh-bah, or a'll take thy skin off!" Besides, if it pleased Azuma-zi to be near the big machine, it was plain sense and decency to keep him away from it.

Azuma-zi obeyed at the time, but later he was caught bowing before the Lord of the Dynamos. At which Holroyd twisted his arm and kicked him as he turned to go away. As Azuma-zi presently stood behind the engine and glared at the back of the hated Holroyd, the noises of the machinery took a new rhythm, and sounded like four words in his native tongue.

It is hard to say exactly what madness is. I fancy Azuma-zi was mad. The incessant din and whirl of the dynamo shed may have churned up his little store of knowledge and big store of superstitious fancy, at last, into something akin to frenzy. At any rate, when the idea of making Holroyd a sacrifice to the Dynamo Fetich was thus suggested to him, it filled him with a strange tumult of exultant emotion.

That night the two men and their black shadows were alone in the shed together. The shed was lit with one big arc light that winked and flickered purple. The shadows lay black behind the dynamos, the ball governors of the engines whirled from light to darkness, and their pistons beat loud and steady. The world outside seen through the open end of the shed seemed incredibly dim and remote. It seemed absolutely silent, too, since the riot of the machinery drowned every

external sound. Far away was the black fence of the yard with grey shadowy houses behind, and above was the deep blue sky and the pale little stars. Azuma-zi suddenly walked across the centre of the shed above which the leather bands were running, and went into the shadow by the big dynamo. Holroyd heard a click, and the spin of the armature changed.

"What are you dewin' with that switch?" he bawled in surprise. "Han't I told you — —"

Then he saw the set expression of Azuma-zi's eyes as the Asiatic came out of the shadow towards him.

In another moment the two men were grappling fiercely in front of the great dynamo.

"You coffee-headed fool!" gasped Holroyd, with a brown hand at his throat. "Keep off those contact rings." In another moment he was tripped and reeling back upon the Lord of the Dynamos. He instinctively loosened his grip upon his antagonist to save himself from the machine.

The messenger, sent in furious haste from the station to find out what had happened in the dynamo shed, met Azuma-zi at the porter's lodge by the gate. Azuma-zi tried to explain something, but the messenger could make nothing of the black's incoherent English, and hurried on to the shed. The machines were all noisily at work, and nothing seemed to be disarranged. There was, however, a queer smell of singed hair. Then he saw an odd-looking crumpled mass clinging to the front of the big dynamo, and, approaching, recognised the distorted remains of Holroyd.

The man stared and hesitated a moment. Then he saw the face, and shut his eyes convulsively. He turned on his heel before he opened them, so that he should not see Holroyd again, and went out of the shed to get advice and help.

When Azuma-zi saw Holroyd die in the grip of the Great Dynamo he had been a little scared about the consequences of his act. Yet he felt strangely elated, and knew that the favour of the Lord Dynamo was upon him. His plan was already settled when he met the man coming from the station, and the scientific manager who speedily arrived on the scene jumped at the obvious conclusion of suicide. This expert scarcely noticed Azuma-zi, except to ask a few

questions. Did he see Holroyd kill himself? Azuma-zi explained he had been out of sight at the engine furnace until he heard a difference in the noise from the dynamo. It was not a difficult examination, being untinctured by suspicion.

The distorted remains of Holroyd, which the electrician removed from the machine, were hastily covered by the porter with a coffee-stained table-cloth. Somebody, by a happy inspiration, fetched a medical man. The expert was chiefly anxious to get the machine at work again, for seven or eight trains had stopped midway in the stuffy tunnels of the electric railway. Azuma-zi, answering or misunderstanding the questions of the people who had by authority or impudence come into the shed, was presently sent back to the stoke-hole by the scientific manager. Of course a crowd collected outside the gates of the yard — a crowd, for no known reason, always hovers for a day or two near the scene of a sudden death in London — two or three reporters percolated somehow into the engine-shed, and one even got to Azuma-zi; but the scientific expert cleared them out again, being himself an amateur journalist.

Presently the body was carried away, and public interest departed with it. Azuma-zi remained very quietly at his furnace, seeing over and over again in the coals a figure that wriggled violently and became still. An hour after the murder, to any one coming into the shed it would have looked exactly as if nothing remarkable had ever happened there. Peeping presently from his engine-room the black saw the Lord Dynamo spin and whirl beside his little brothers, and the driving wheels were beating round, and the steam in the pistons went thud, thud, exactly as it had been earlier in the evening. After all, from the mechanical point of view, it had been a most insignificant incident — the mere temporary deflection of a current. But now the slender form and slender shadow of the scientific manager replaced the sturdy outline of Holroyd travelling up and down the lane of light upon the vibrating floor under the straps between the engines and the dynamos.

“Have I not served my Lord?” said Azuma-zi inaudibly, from his shadow, and the note of the great dynamo rang out full and clear. As he looked at the big whirling mechanism the strange fascination of it that had been a little in abeyance since Holroyd’s death resumed its

sway.

Never had Azuma-zi seen a man killed so swiftly and pitilessly. The big humming machine had slain its victim without wavering for a second from its steady beating. It was indeed a mighty god.

The unconscious scientific manager stood with his back to him, scribbling on a piece of paper. His shadow lay at the foot of the monster.

Was the Lord Dynamo still hungry? His servant was ready.

Azuma-zi made a stealthy step forward; then stopped. The scientific manager suddenly ceased his writing, walked down the shed to the endmost of the dynamos, and began to examine the brushes.

Azuma-zi hesitated, and then slipped across noiselessly into the shadow by the switch. There he waited. Presently the manager's footsteps could be heard returning. He stopped in his old position, unconscious of the stoker crouching ten feet away from him. Then the big dynamo suddenly fizzled, and in another moment Azuma-zi had sprung out of the darkness upon him.

First, the scientific manager was gripped round the body and swung towards the big dynamo, then, kicking with his knee and forcing his antagonist's head down with his hands, he loosened the grip on his waist and swung round away from the machine. Then the black grasped him again, putting a curly head against his chest, and they swayed and panted as it seemed for an age or so. Then the scientific manager was impelled to catch a black ear in his teeth and bite furiously. The black yelled hideously.

They rolled over on the floor, and the black, who had apparently slipped from the vice of the teeth or parted with some ear — the scientific manager wondered which at the time — tried to throttle him. The scientific manager was making some ineffectual efforts to claw something with his hands and to kick, when the welcome sound of quick footsteps sounded on the floor. The next moment Azuma-zi had left him and darted towards the big dynamo. There was a splutter amid the roar.

The officer of the company who had entered stood staring as Azuma-zi caught the naked terminals in his hands, gave one horrible convulsion, and then hung motionless from the machine, his face

violently distorted.

“I’m jolly glad you came in when you did,” said the scientific manager, still sitting on the floor.

He looked at the still quivering figure. “It is not a nice death to die, apparently — but it is quick.”

The official was still staring at the body. He was a man of slow apprehension.

There was a pause.

The scientific manager got up on his feet rather awkwardly. He ran his fingers along his collar thoughtfully, and moved his head to and fro several times.

“Poor Holroyd! I see now.” Then almost mechanically he went towards the switch in the shadow and turned the current into the railway circuit again. As he did so the singed body loosened its grip upon the machine and fell forward on its face. The core of the dynamo roared out loud and clear, and the armature beat the air.

So ended prematurely the worship of the Dynamo Deity, perhaps the most short-lived of all religions. Yet withal it could at least boast a Martyrdom and a Human Sacrifice.

IX.

THE MOTH.

Probably you have heard of Hapley — not W. T. Hapley, the son, but the celebrated Hapley, the Hapley of *Periplaneta Hapliia*, Hapley the entomologist.

If so you know at least of the great feud between Hapley and Professor Pawkins, though certain of its consequences may be new to you. For those who have not, a word or two of explanation is necessary, which the idle reader may go over with a glancing eye, if his indolence so incline him.

It is amazing how very widely diffused is the ignorance of such really important matters as this Hapley-Pawkins feud. Those epoch-making controversies, again, that have convulsed the Geological Society are, I verily believe, almost entirely unknown outside the fellowship of that body. I have heard men of fair general education even refer to the great scenes at these meetings as vestry-meeting squabbles. Yet the great hate of the English and Scotch geologists has lasted now half a century, and has "left deep and abundant marks upon the body of the science." And this Hapley-Pawkins business, though perhaps a more personal affair, stirred passions as profound, if not profounder. Your common man has no conception of the zeal that animates a scientific investigator, the fury of contradiction you can arouse in him. It is the *odium theologicum* in a new form. There are men, for instance, who would gladly burn Professor Ray Lankester at Smithfield for his treatment of the Mollusca in the Encyclopaedia. That fantastic extension of the Cephalopods to cover the Pteropods … But I wander from Hapley and Pawkins.

It began years and years ago, with a revision of the Microlepidoptera (whatever these may be) by Pawkins, in which he extinguished a new species created by Hapley. Hapley, who was always quarrelsome, replied by a stinging impeachment of the entire classification of Pawkins.[A] Pawkins in his "Rejoinder"[B] suggested that Hapley's microscope was as defective as his power of observation, and called him an "irresponsible meddler" — Hapley was not a professor at that time. Hapley in his retort,[C] spoke of "blundering collectors," and described, as if inadvertently, Pawkins'

revision as a “miracle of ineptitude.” It was war to the knife. However, it would scarcely interest the reader to detail how these two great men quarrelled, and how the split between them widened until from the Microlepidoptera they were at war upon every open question in entomology. There were memorable occasions. At times the Royal Entomological Society meetings resembled nothing so much as the Chamber of Deputies. On the whole, I fancy Pawkins was nearer the truth than Hapley. But Hapley was skilful with his rhetoric, had a turn for ridicule rare in a scientific man, was endowed with vast energy, and had a fine sense of injury in the matter of the extinguished species; while Pawkins was a man of dull presence, prosy of speech, in shape not unlike a water-barrel, over conscientious with testimonials, and suspected of jobbing museum appointments. So the young men gathered round Hapley and applauded him. It was a long struggle, vicious from the beginning and growing at last to pitiless antagonism. The successive turns of fortune, now an advantage to one side and now to another — now Hapley tormented by some success of Pawkins, and now Pawkins outshone by Hapley, belong rather to the history of entomology than to this story.

[Footnote A: “Remarks on a Recent Revision of Microlepidoptera.” *Quart. Journ. Entomological Soc.*, 1863.]

[Footnote B: “Rejoinder to certain Remarks,” etc. *Ibid.* 1864.]

[Footnote C: “Further Remarks,” etc. *Ibid.*]

But in 1891 Pawkins, whose health had been bad for some time, published some work upon the “mesoblast” of the Death’s Head Moth. What the mesoblast of the Death’s Head Moth may be does not matter a rap in this story. But the work was far below his usual standard, and gave Hapley an opening he had coveted for years. He must have worked night and day to make the most of his advantage.

In an elaborate critique he rent Pawkins to tatters — one can fancy the man’s disordered black hair, and his queer dark eyes flashing as he went for his antagonist — and Pawkins made a reply, halting, ineffectual, with painful gaps of silence, and yet malignant. There was no mistaking his will to wound Hapley, nor his incapacity to do it. But few of those who heard him — I was absent from that meeting — realised how ill the man was.

Hapley got his opponent down, and meant to finish him. He followed with a simply brutal attack upon Pawkins, in the form of a paper upon the development of moths in general, a paper showing evidence of a most extraordinary amount of mental labour, and yet couched in a violently controversial tone. Violent as it was, an editorial note witnesses that it was modified. It must have covered Pawkins with shame and confusion of face. It left no loophole; it was murderous in argument, and utterly contemptuous in tone; an awful thing for the declining years of a man's career.

The world of entomologists waited breathlessly for the rejoinder from Pawkins. He would try one, for Pawkins had always been game. But when it came it surprised them. For the rejoinder of Pawkins was to catch influenza, proceed to pneumonia, and die.

It was perhaps as effectual a reply as he could make under the circumstances, and largely turned the current of feeling against Hapley. The very people who had most gleefully cheered on those gladiators became serious at the consequence. There could be no reasonable doubt the fret of the defeat had contributed to the death of Pawkins. There was a limit even to scientific controversy, said serious people. Another crushing attack was already in the press and appeared on the day before the funeral. I don't think Hapley exerted himself to stop it. People remembered how Hapley had hounded down his rival, and forgot that rival's defects. Scathing satire reads ill over fresh mould. The thing provoked comment in the daily papers. This it was that made me think that you had probably heard of Hapley and this controversy. But, as I have already remarked, scientific workers live very much in a world of their own; half the people, I dare say, who go along Piccadilly to the Academy every year, could not tell you where the learned societies abide. Many even think that research is a kind of happy-family cage in which all kinds of men lie down together in peace.

In his private thoughts Hapley could not forgive Pawkins for dying. In the first place, it was a mean dodge to escape the absolute pulverisation Hapley had in hand for him, and in the second, it left Hapley's mind with a queer gap in it. For twenty years he had worked hard, sometimes far into the night, and seven days a week, with microscope, scalpel, collecting-net, and pen, and almost entirely

with reference to Pawkins. The European reputation he had won had come as an incident in that great antipathy. He had gradually worked up to a climax in this last controversy. It had killed Pawkins, but it had also thrown Hapley out of gear, so to speak, and his doctor advised him to give up work for a time, and rest. So Hapley went down into a quiet village in Kent, and thought day and night of Pawkins, and good things it was now impossible to say about him.

At last Hapley began to realise in what direction the pre-occupation tended. He determined to make a fight for it, and started by trying to read novels. But he could not get his mind off Pawkins, white in the face and making his last speech — every sentence a beautiful opening for Hapley. He turned to fiction — and found it had no grip on him. He read the "Island Nights' Entertainments" until his "sense of causation" was shocked beyond endurance by the Bottle Imp. Then he went to Kipling, and found he "proved nothing," besides being irreverent and vulgar. These scientific people have their limitations. Then unhappily, he tried Besant's "Inner House," and the opening chapter set his mind upon learned societies and Pawkins at once.

So Hapley turned to chess, and found it a little more soothing. He soon mastered the moves and the chief gambits and commoner closing positions, and began to beat the Vicar. But then the cylindrical contours of the opposite king began to resemble Pawkins standing up and gasping ineffectually against check-mate, and Hapley decided to give up chess.

Perhaps the study of some new branch of science would after all be better diversion. The best rest is change of occupation. Hapley determined to plunge at diatoms, and had one of his smaller microscopes and Halibut's monograph sent down from London. He thought that perhaps if he could get up a vigorous quarrel with Halibut, he might be able to begin life afresh and forget Pawkins. And very soon he was hard at work in his habitual strenuous fashion, at these microscopic denizens of the way-side pool.

It was on the third day of the diatoms that Hapley became aware of a novel addition to the local fauna. He was working late at the microscope, and the only light in the room was the brilliant little lamp with the special form of green shade. Like all experienced

microscopists, he kept both eyes open. It is the only way to avoid excessive fatigue. One eye was over the instrument, and bright and distinct before that was the circular field of the microscope, across which a brown diatom was slowly moving. With the other eye Hapley saw, as it were, without seeing. He was only dimly conscious of the brass side of the instrument, the illuminated part of the table-cloth, a sheet of notepaper, the foot of the lamp, and the darkened room beyond.

Suddenly his attention drifted from one eye to the other. The table-cloth was of the material called tapestry by shopmen, and rather brightly coloured. The pattern was in gold, with a small amount of crimson and pale blue upon a greyish ground. At one point the pattern seemed displaced, and there was a vibrating movement of the colours at this point.

Hapley suddenly moved his head back and looked with both eyes. His mouth fell open with astonishment.

It was a large moth or butterfly; its wings spread in butterfly fashion!

It was strange it should be in the room at all, for the windows were closed. Strange that it should not have attracted his attention when fluttering to its present position. Strange that it should match the table-cloth. Stranger far that to him, Hapley, the great entomologist, it was altogether unknown. There was no delusion. It was crawling slowly towards the foot of the lamp.

"New Genus, by heavens! And in England!" said Hapley, staring.

Then he suddenly thought of Pawkins. Nothing would have maddened Pawkins more…And Pawkins was dead!

Something about the head and body of the insect became singularly suggestive of Pawkins, just as the chess king had been.

"Confound Pawkins!" said Hapley. "But I must catch this." And looking round him for some means of capturing the moth, he rose slowly out of his chair. Suddenly the insect rose, struck the edge of the lampshade — Hapley heard the "ping" — and vanished into the shadow.

In a moment Hapley had whipped off the shade, so that the whole room was illuminated. The thing had disappeared, but soon his practised eye detected it upon the wall-paper near the door. He went

towards it poising the lamp-shade for capture. Before he was within striking distance, however, it had risen and was fluttering round the room. After the fashion of its kind, it flew with sudden starts and turns, seeming to vanish here and reappear there. Once Hapley struck, and missed; then again.

The third time he hit his microscope. The instrument swayed, struck and overturned the lamp, and fell noisily upon the floor. The lamp turned over on the table and, very luckily, went out. Hapley was left in the dark. With a start he felt the strange moth blunder into his face.

It was maddening. He had no lights. If he opened the door of the room the thing would get away. In the darkness he saw Pawkins quite distinctly laughing at him. Pawkins had ever an oily laugh. He swore furiously and stamped his foot on the floor.

There was a timid rapping at the door.

Then it opened, perhaps a foot, and very slowly. The alarmed face of the landlady appeared behind a pink candle flame; she wore a night-cap over her grey hair and had some purple garment over her shoulders. “What *was* that fearful smash?” she said. “Has anything — —” The strange moth appeared fluttering about the chink of the door. “Shut that door!” said Hapley, and suddenly rushed at her.

The door slammed hastily. Hapley was left alone in the dark. Then in the pause he heard his landlady scuttle upstairs, lock her door, and drag something heavy across the room and put against it.

It became evident to Hapley that his conduct and appearance had been strange and alarming. Confound the moth! and Pawkins! However, it was a pity to lose the moth now. He felt his way into the hall and found the matches, after sending his hat down upon the floor with a noise like a drum. With the lighted candle he returned to the sitting-room. No moth was to be seen. Yet once for a moment it seemed that the thing was fluttering round his head. Hapley very suddenly decided to give up the moth and go to bed. But he was excited. All night long his sleep was broken by dreams of the moth, Pawkins, and his landlady. Twice in the night he turned out and soused his head in cold water.

One thing was very clear to him. His landlady could not possibly understand about the strange moth, especially as he had failed to

catch it. No one but an entomologist would understand quite how he felt. She was probably frightened at his behaviour, and yet he failed to see how he could explain it. He decided to say nothing further about the events of last night. After breakfast he saw her in her garden, and decided to go out and talk to reassure her. He talked to her about beans and potatoes, bees, caterpillars, and the price of fruit. She replied in her usual manner, but she looked at him a little suspiciously, and kept walking as he walked, so that there was always a bed of flowers, or a row of beans, or something of the sort, between them. After a while he began to feel singularly irritated at this, and to conceal his vexation went indoors and presently went out for a walk.

The moth, or butterfly, trailing an odd flavour of Pawkins with it, kept coming into that walk, though he did his best to keep his mind off it. Once he saw it quite distinctly, with its wings flattened out, upon the old stone wall that runs along the west edge of the park, but going up to it he found it was only two lumps of grey and yellow lichen. “This,” said Hapley, “is the reverse of mimicry. Instead of a butterfly looking like a stone, here is a stone looking like a butterfly!” Once something hovered and fluttered round his head, but by an effort of will he drove that impression out of his mind again.

In the afternoon Hapley called upon the Vicar, and argued with him upon theological questions. They sat in the little arbour covered with briar, and smoked as they wrangled. “Look at that moth!” said Hapley, suddenly, pointing to the edge of the wooden table.

“Where?” said the Vicar.

“You don’t see a moth on the edge of the table there?” said Hapley.

“Certainly not,” said the Vicar.

Hapley was thunderstruck. He gasped. The Vicar was staring at him. Clearly the man saw nothing. “The eye of faith is no better than the eye of science,” said Hapley awkwardly.

“I don’t see your point,” said the Vicar, thinking it was part of the argument.

That night Hapley found the moth crawling over his counterpane. He sat on the edge of the bed in his shirt sleeves and reasoned with himself. Was it pure hallucination? He knew he was slipping, and he

battled for his sanity with the same silent energy he had formerly displayed against Pawkins. So persistent is mental habit, that he felt as if it were still a struggle with Pawkins. He was well versed in psychology. He knew that such visual illusions do come as a result of mental strain. But the point was, he did not only *see* the moth, he had heard it when it touched the edge of the lampshade, and afterwards when it hit against the wall, and he had felt it strike his face in the dark.

He looked at it. It was not at all dreamlike, but perfectly clear and solid-looking in the candle-light. He saw the hairy body, and the short feathery antennae, the jointed legs, even a place where the down was rubbed from the wing. He suddenly felt angry with himself for being afraid of a little insect.

His landlady had got the servant to sleep with her that night, because she was afraid to be alone. In addition she had locked the door, and put the chest of drawers against it. They listened and talked in whispers after they had gone to bed, but nothing occurred to alarm them. About eleven they had ventured to put the candle out, and had both dozed off to sleep. They woke up with a start, and sat up in bed, listening in the darkness.

Then they heard slippered feet going to and fro in Hapley's room. A chair was overturned, and there was a violent dab at the wall. Then a china mantel ornament smashed upon the fender. Suddenly the door of the room opened, and they heard him upon the landing. They clung to one another, listening. He seemed to be dancing upon the staircase. Now he would go down three or four steps quickly, then up again, then hurry down into the hall. They heard the umbrella stand go over, and the fanlight break. Then the bolt shot and the chain rattled. He was opening the door.

They hurried to the window. It was a dim grey night; an almost unbroken sheet of watery cloud was sweeping across the moon, and the hedge and trees in front of the house were black against the pale roadway. They saw Hapley, looking like a ghost in his shirt and white trousers, running to and fro in the road, and beating the air. Now he would stop, now he would dart very rapidly at something invisible, now he would move upon it with stealthy strides. At last he went out of sight up the road towards the down. Then, while they

argued who should go down and lock the door, he returned. He was walking very fast, and he came straight into the house, closed the door carefully, and went quietly up to his bedroom. Then everything was silent.

"Mrs. Colville," said Hapley, calling down the staircase next morning, "I hope I did not alarm you last night."

"You may well ask that!" said Mrs. Colville.

"The fact is, I am a sleep-walker, and the last two nights I have been without my sleeping mixture. There is nothing to be alarmed about, really. I am sorry I made such an ass of myself. I will go over the down to Shoreham, and get some stuff to make me sleep soundly. I ought to have done that yesterday."

But half-way over the down, by the chalk pits, the moth came upon Hapley again. He went on, trying to keep his mind upon chess problems, but it was no good. The thing fluttered into his face, and he struck at it with his hat in self-defence. Then rage, the old rage — the rage he had so often felt against Pawkins — came upon him again. He went on, leaping and striking at the eddying insect. Suddenly he trod on nothing, and fell headlong.

There was a gap in his sensations, and Hapley found himself sitting on the heap of flints in front of the opening of the chalk-pits, with a leg twisted back under him. The strange moth was still fluttering round his head. He struck at it with his hand, and turning his head saw two men approaching him. One was the village doctor. It occurred to Hapley that this was lucky. Then it came into his mind with extraordinary vividness, that no one would ever be able to see the strange moth except himself, and that it behoved him to keep silent about it.

Late that night, however, after his broken leg was set, he was feverish and forgot his self-restraint. He was lying flat on his bed, and he began to run his eyes round the room to see if the moth was still about. He tried not to do this, but it was no good. He soon caught sight of the thing resting close to his hand, by the night-light, on the green table-cloth. The wings quivered. With a sudden wave of anger he smote at it with his fist, and the nurse woke up with a shriek. He had missed it.

"That moth!" he said; and then, "It was fancy. Nothing!"

All the time he could see quite clearly the insect going round the cornice and darting across the room, and he could also see that the nurse saw nothing of it and looked at him strangely. He must keep himself in hand. He knew he was a lost man if he did not keep himself in hand. But as the night waned the fever grew upon him, and the very dread he had of seeing the moth made him see it. About five, just as the dawn was grey, he tried to get out of bed and catch it, though his leg was afire with pain. The nurse had to struggle with him.

On account of this, they tied him down to the bed. At this the moth grew bolder, and once he felt it settle in his hair. Then, because he struck out violently with his arms, they tied these also. At this the moth came and crawled over his face, and Hapley wept, swore, screamed, prayed for them to take it off him, unavailingly.

The doctor was a blockhead, a just-qualified general practitioner, and quite ignorant of mental science. He simply said there was no moth. Had he possessed the wit, he might still, perhaps, have saved Hapley from his fate by entering into his delusion, and covering his face with gauze, as he prayed might be done. But, as I say, the doctor was a blockhead, and until the leg was healed Hapley was kept tied to his bed, and with the imaginary moth crawling over him. It never left him while he was awake and it grew to a monster in his dreams. While he was awake he longed for sleep, and from sleep he awoke screaming.

So now Hapley is spending the remainder of his days in a padded room, worried by a moth that no one else can see. The asylum doctor calls it hallucination; but Hapley, when he is in his easier mood, and can talk, says it is the ghost of Pawkins, and consequently a unique specimen and well worth the trouble of catching.

X.

THE TREASURE IN THE FOREST.

The canoe was now approaching the land. The bay opened out, and a gap in the white surf of the reef marked where the little river ran out to the sea; the thicker and deeper green of the virgin forest showed its course down the distant hill slope. The forest here came close to the beach. Far beyond, dim and almost cloudlike in texture, rose the mountains, like suddenly frozen waves. The sea was still save for an almost imperceptible swell. The sky blazed.

The man with the carved paddle stopped. “It should be somewhere here,” he said. He shipped the paddle and held his arms out straight before him.

The other man had been in the fore part of the canoe, closely scrutinising the land. He had a sheet of yellow paper on his knee.

“Come and look at this, Evans,” he said.

Both men spoke in low tones, and their lips were hard and dry.

The man called Evans came swaying along the canoe until he could look over his companion’s shoulder.

The paper had the appearance of a rough map. By much folding it was creased and worn to the pitch of separation, and the second man held the discoloured fragments together where they had parted. On it one could dimly make out, in almost obliterated pencil, the outline of the bay.

“Here,” said Evans, “is the reef, and here is the gap.” He ran his thumb-nail over the chart.

“This curved and twisting line is the river — I could do with a drink now! — and this star is the place.”

“You see this dotted line,” said the man with the map; “it is a straight line, and runs from the opening of the reef to a clump of palm-trees. The star comes just where it cuts the river. We must mark the place as we go into the lagoon.”

“It’s queer,” said Evans, after a pause, “what these little marks down here are for. It looks like the plan of a house or something; but what all these little dashes, pointing this way and that, may mean I can’t get a notion. And what’s the writing?”

“Chinese,” said the man with the map.

“Of course! *He* was a Chinee,” said Evans.

“They all were,” said the man with the map.

They both sat for some minutes staring at the land, while the canoe drifted slowly. Then Evans looked towards the paddle.

“Your turn with the paddle now, Hooker,” said he.

And his companion quietly folded up his map, put it in his pocket, passed Evans carefully, and began to paddle. His movements were languid, like those of a man whose strength was nearly exhausted.

Evans sat with his eyes half closed, watching the frothy breakwater of the coral creep nearer and nearer. The sky was like a furnace, for the sun was near the zenith. Though they were so near the Treasure he did not feel the exaltation he had anticipated. The intense excitement of the struggle for the plan, and the long night voyage from the mainland in the unprovisioned canoe had, to use his own expression, “taken it out of him.” He tried to arouse himself by directing his mind to the ingots the Chinamen had spoken of, but it would not rest there; it came back headlong to the thought of sweet water rippling in the river, and to the almost unendurable dryness of his lips and throat. The rhythmic wash of the sea upon the reef was becoming audible now, and it had a pleasant sound in his ears; the water washed along the side of the canoe, and the paddle dripped between each stroke. Presently he began to doze.

He was still dimly conscious of the island, but a queer dream texture interwove with his sensations. Once again it was the night when he and Hooker had hit upon the Chinamen’s secret; he saw the moonlit trees, the little fire burning, and the black figures of the three Chinamen — silvered on one side by moonlight, and on the other glowing from the firelight — and heard them talking together in pigeon-English — for they came from different provinces. Hooker had caught the drift of their talk first, and had motioned to him to listen. Fragments of the conversation were inaudible, and fragments incomprehensible. A Spanish galleon from the Philippines hopelessly aground, and its treasure buried against the day of return, lay in the background of the story; a shipwrecked crew thinned by disease, a quarrel or so, and the needs of discipline, and at last taking to their boats never to be heard of again. Then Chang-hi, only a year since, wandering ashore, had happened upon the ingots hidden for two

hundred years, had deserted his junk, and reburied them with infinite toil, single-handed but very safe. He laid great stress on the safety — it was a secret of his. Now he wanted help to return and exhume them. Presently the little map fluttered and the voices sank. A fine story for two, stranded British wastrels to hear! Evans' dream shifted to the moment when he had Chang-hi's pigtail in his hand. The life of a Chinaman is scarcely sacred like a European's. The cunning little face of Chang-hi, first keen and furious like a startled snake, and then fearful, treacherous, and pitiful, became overwhelmingly prominent in the dream. At the end Chang-hi had grinned, a most incomprehensible and startling grin. Abruptly things became very unpleasant, as they will do at times in dreams. Chang-hi gibbered and threatened him. He saw in his dream heaps and heaps of gold, and Chang-hi intervening and struggling to hold him back from it. He took Chang-hi by the pig-tail — how big the yellow brute was, and how he struggled and grinned! He kept growing bigger, too. Then the bright heaps of gold turned to a roaring furnace, and a vast devil, surprisingly like Chang-hi, but with a huge black tail, began to feed him with coals. They burnt his mouth horribly. Another devil was shouting his name: "Evans, Evans, you sleepy fool!" — or was it Hooker?

He woke up. They were in the mouth of the lagoon.

"There are the three palm-trees. It must be in a line with that clump of bushes," said his companion. "Mark that. If we, go to those bushes and then strike into the bush in a straight line from here, we shall come to it when we come to the stream."

They could see now where the mouth of the stream opened out. At the sight of it Evans revived. "Hurry up, man," he said, "or by heaven I shall have to drink sea water!" He gnawed his hand and stared at the gleam of silver among the rocks and green tangle.

Presently he turned almost fiercely upon Hooker. "Give *me* the paddle," he said.

So they reached the river mouth. A little way up Hooker took some water in the hollow of his hand, tasted it, and spat it out. A little further he tried again. "This will do," he said, and they began drinking eagerly.

"Curse this!" said Evans suddenly. "It's too slow." And, leaning

dangerously over the fore part of the canoe, he began to suck up the water with his lips.

Presently they made an end of drinking, and, running the canoe into a little creek, were about to land among the thick growth that overhung the water.

“We shall have to scramble through this to the beach to find our bushes and get the line to the place,” said Evans.

“We had better paddle round,” said Hooker.

So they pushed out again into the river and paddled back down it to the sea, and along the shore to the place where the clump of bushes grew. Here they landed, pulled the light canoe far up the beach, and then went up towards the edge of the jungle until they could see the opening of the reef and the bushes in a straight line. Evans had taken a native implement out of the canoe. It was L-shaped, and the transverse piece was armed with polished stone. Hooker carried the paddle. “It is straight now in this direction,” said he; “we must push through this till we strike the stream. Then we must prospect.”

They pushed through a close tangle of reeds, broad fronds, and young trees, and at first it was toilsome going, but very speedily the trees became larger and the ground beneath them opened out. The blaze of the sunlight was replaced by insensible degrees by cool shadow. The trees became at last vast pillars that rose up to a canopy of greenery far overhead. Dim white flowers hung from their stems, and ropy creepers swung from tree to tree. The shadow deepened. On the ground, blotched fungi and a red-brown incrustation became frequent.

Evans shivered. “It seems almost cold here after the blaze outside.”

“I hope we are keeping to the straight,” said Hooker.

Presently they saw, far ahead, a gap in the sombre darkness where white shafts of hot sunlight smote into the forest. There also was brilliant green undergrowth and coloured flowers. Then they heard the rush of water.

“Here is the river. We should be close to it now,” said Hooker.

The vegetation was thick by the river bank. Great plants, as yet unnamed, grew among the roots of the big trees, and spread rosettes

of huge green fans towards the strip of sky. Many flowers and a creeper with shiny foliage clung to the exposed stems. On the water of the broad, quiet pool which the treasure-seekers now overlooked there floated big oval leaves and a waxen, pinkish-white flower not unlike a water-lily. Further, as the river bent away from them, the water suddenly frothed and became noisy in a rapid.

"Well?" said Evans.

"We have swerved a little from the straight," said Hooker. "That was to be expected."

He turned and looked into the dim cool shadows of the silent forest behind them. "If we beat a little way up and down the stream we should come to something."

"You said—" began Evans.

"*He* said there was a heap of stones," said Hooker.

The two men looked at each other for a moment.

"Let us try a little down-stream first," said Evans.

They advanced slowly, looking curiously about them. Suddenly Evans stopped. "What the devil's that?" he said.

Hooker followed his finger. "Something blue," he said. It had come into view as they topped a gentle swell of the ground. Then he began to distinguish what it was.

He advanced suddenly with hasty steps, until the body that belonged to the limp hand and arm had become visible. His grip tightened on the implement he carried. The thing was the figure of a Chinaman lying on his face. The *abandon* of the pose was unmistakable.

The two men drew closer together, and stood staring silently at this ominous dead body. It lay in a clear space among the trees. Near by was a spade after the Chinese pattern, and further off lay a scattered heap of stones, close to a freshly dug hole.

"Somebody has been here before," said Hooker, clearing his throat.

Then suddenly Evans began to swear and rave, and stamp upon the ground.

Hooker turned white but said nothing. He advanced towards the prostrate body. He saw the neck was puffed and purple, and the hands and ankles swollen. "Pah!" he said, and suddenly turned away

and went towards the excavation. He gave a cry of surprise. He shouted to Evans, who was following him slowly.

"You fool! It's all right. It's here still." Then he turned again and looked at the dead Chinaman, and then again at the hole.

Evans hurried to the hole. Already half exposed by the ill-fated wretch beside them lay a number of dull yellow bars. He bent down in the hole, and, clearing off the soil with his bare hands, hastily pulled one of the heavy masses out. As he did so a little thorn pricked his hand. He pulled the delicate spike out with his fingers and lifted the ingot.

"Only gold or lead could weigh like this," he said exultantly.

Hooker was still looking at the dead Chinaman. He was puzzled.

"He stole a march on his friends," he said at last. "He came here alone, and some poisonous snake has killed him… I wonder how he found the place."

Evans stood with the ingot in his hands. What did a dead Chinaman signify? "We shall have to take this stuff to the mainland piecemeal, and bury it there for a while. How shall we get it to the canoe?"

He took his jacket off and spread it on the ground, and flung two or three ingots into it. Presently he found that another little thorn had punctured his skin.

"This is as much as we can carry," said he. Then suddenly, with a queer rush of irritation, "What are you staring at?"

Hooker turned to him. "I can't stand him …" He nodded towards the corpse. "It's so like — —"

"Rubbish!" said Evans. "All Chinamen are alike."

Hooker looked into his face. "I'm going to bury *that*, anyhow, before I lend a hand with this stuff."

"Don't be a fool, Hooker," said Evans, "Let that mass of corruption bide."

Hooker hesitated, and then his eye went carefully over the brown soil about them. "It scares me somehow," he said.

"The thing is," said Evans, "what to do with these ingots. Shall we re-bury them over here, or take them across the strait in the canoe?"

Hooker thought. His puzzled gaze wandered among the tall tree-trunks, and up into the remote sunlit greenery overhead. He shivered

again as his eye rested upon the blue figure of the Chinaman. He stared searchingly among the grey depths between the trees.

"What's come to you, Hooker?" said Evans. "Have you lost your wits?"

"Let's get the gold out of this place, anyhow," said Hooker.

He took the ends of the collar of the coat in his hands, and Evans took the opposite corners, and they lifted the mass. "Which way?" said Evans. "To the canoe?"

"It's queer," said Evans, when they had advanced only a few steps, "but my arms ache still with that paddling."

"Curse it!" he said. "But they ache! I must rest."

They let the coat down, Evans' face was white, and little drops of sweat stood out upon his forehead. "It's stuffy, somehow, in this forest."

Then with an abrupt transition to unreasonable anger: "What is the good of waiting here all the day? Lend a hand, I say! You have done nothing but moon since we saw the dead Chinaman."

Hooker was looking steadfastly at his companion's face. He helped raise the coat bearing the ingots, and they went forward perhaps a hundred yards in silence. Evans began to breathe heavily. "Can't you speak?" he said.

"What's the matter with you?" said Hooker.

Evans stumbled, and then with a sudden curse flung the coat from him. He stood for a moment staring at Hooker, and then with a groan clutched at his own throat.

"Don't come near me," he said, and went and leant against a tree. Then in a steadier voice, "I'll be better in a minute."

Presently his grip upon the trunk loosened, and he slipped slowly down the stem of the tree until he was a crumpled heap at its foot. His hands were clenched convulsively. His face became distorted with pain. Hooker approached him.

"Don't touch me! Don't touch me!" said Evans in a stifled voice. "Put the gold back on the coat."

"Can't I do anything for you?" said Hooker.

"Put the gold back on the coat."

As Hooker handled the ingots he felt a little prick on the ball of his thumb. He looked at his hand and saw a slender thorn, perhaps

two inches in length.

Evans gave an inarticulate cry and rolled over.

Hooker's jaw dropped. He stared at the thorn for a moment with dilated eyes. Then he looked at Evans, who was now crumpled together on the ground, his back bending and straightening spasmodically. Then he looked through the pillars of the trees and net-work of creeper stems, to where in the dim grey shadow the blue-clad body of the Chinaman was still indistinctly visible. He thought of the little dashes in the corner of the plan, and in a moment he understood.

"God help me!" he said. For the thorns were similar to those the Dyaks poison and use in their blowing-tubes. He understood now what Chang-hi's assurance of the safety of his treasure meant. He understood that grin now.

"Evans!" he cried.

But Evans was silent and motionless, save for a horrible spasmodic twitching of his limbs. A profound silence brooded over the forest.

Then Hooker began to suck furiously at the little pink spot on the ball of his thumb — sucking for dear life. Presently he felt a strange aching pain in his arms and shoulders, and his fingers seemed difficult to bend. Then he knew that sucking was no good.

Abruptly he stopped, and sitting down by the pile of ingots, and resting his chin upon his hands and his elbows upon his knees, stared at the distorted but still quivering body of his companion. Chang-hi's grin came into his mind again. The dull pain spread towards his throat and grew slowly in intensity. Far above him a faint breeze stirred the greenery, and the white petals of some unknown flower came floating down through the gloom.

XI.

THE STORY OF THE LATE MR. ELVESHAM.

I set this story down, not expecting it will be believed, but, if possible, to prepare a way of escape for the next victim. He, perhaps, may profit by my misfortune. My own case, I know, is hopeless, and I am now in some measure prepared to meet my fate.

My name is Edward George Eden. I was born at Trentham, in Staffordshire, my father being employed in the gardens there. I lost my mother when I was three years old, and my father when I was five, my uncle, George Eden, then adopting me as his own son. He was a single man, self-educated, and well-known in Birmingham as an enterprising journalist; he educated me generously, fired my ambition to succeed in the world, and at his death, which happened four years ago, left me his entire fortune, a matter of about five hundred pounds after all outgoing charges were paid. I was then eighteen. He advised me in his will to expend the money in completing my education. I had already chosen the profession of medicine, and through his posthumous generosity and my good fortune in a scholarship competition, I became a medical student at University College, London. At the time of the beginning of my story I lodged at 11A University Street in a little upper room, very shabbily furnished and draughty, overlooking the back of Shoolbred's premises. I used this little room both to live in and sleep in, because I was anxious to eke out my means to the very last shillings-worth.

I was taking a pair of shoes to be mended at a shop in the Tottenham Court Road when I first encountered the little old man with the yellow face, with whom my life has now become so inextricably entangled. He was standing on the kerb, and staring at the number on the door in a doubtful way, as I opened it. His eyes — they were dull grey eyes, and reddish under the rims — fell to my face, and his countenance immediately assumed an expression of corrugated amiability.

"You come," he said, "apt to the moment. I had forgotten the number of your house. How do you do, Mr. Eden?"

I was a little astonished at his familiar address, for I had never set

eyes on the man before. I was a little annoyed, too, at his catching me with my boots under my arm. He noticed my lack of cordiality.

"Wonder who the deuce I am, eh? A friend, let me assure you. I have seen you before, though you haven't seen me. Is there anywhere where I can talk to you?"

I hesitated. The shabbiness of my room upstairs was not a matter for every stranger. "Perhaps," said I, "we might walk down the street. I'm unfortunately prevented—" My gesture explained the sentence before I had spoken it.

"The very thing," he said, and faced this way, and then that. "The street? Which way shall we go?" I slipped my boots down in the passage. "Look here!" he said abruptly; "this business of mine is a rigmarole. Come and lunch with me, Mr. Eden. I'm an old man, a very old man, and not good at explanations, and what with my piping voice and the clatter of the traffic — —"

He laid a persuasive skinny hand that trembled a little upon my arm.

I was not so old that an old man might not treat me to a lunch. Yet at the same time I was not altogether pleased by this abrupt invitation. "I had rather — —" I began. "But I had rather," he said, catching me up, "and a certain civility is surely due to my grey hairs."

And so I consented, and went with him.

He took me to Blavitiski's; I had to walk slowly to accommodate myself to his paces; and over such a lunch as I had never tasted before, he fended off my leading question, and I took a better note of his appearance. His clean-shaven face was lean and wrinkled, his shrivelled, lips fell over a set of false teeth, and his white hair was thin and rather long; he seemed small to me, — though indeed, most people seemed small to me, — and his shoulders were rounded and bent. And watching him, I could not help but observe that he too was taking note of me, running his eyes, with a curious touch of greed in them, over me, from my broad shoulders to my suntanned hands, and up to my freckled face again. "And now," said he, as we lit our cigarettes, "I must tell you of the business in hand.

"I must tell you, then, that I am an old man, a very old man." He paused momentarily. "And it happens that I have money that I must

presently be leaving, and never a child have I to leave it to." I thought of the confidence trick, and resolved I would be on the alert for the vestiges of my five hundred pounds. He proceeded to enlarge on his loneliness, and the trouble he had to find a proper disposition of his money. "I have weighed this plan and that plan, charities, institutions, and scholarships, and libraries, and I have come to this conclusion at last," — he fixed his eyes on my face,— "that I will find some young fellow, ambitious, pure-minded, and poor, healthy in body and healthy in mind, and, in short, make him my heir, give him all that I have." He repeated, "Give him all that I have. So that he will suddenly be lifted out of all the trouble and struggle in which his sympathies have been educated, to freedom and influence."

I tried to seem disinterested. With a transparent hypocrisy I said, "And you want my help, my professional services maybe, to find that person."

He smiled, and looked at me over his cigarette, and I laughed at his quiet exposure of my modest pretence.

"What a career such a man might have!" he said. "It fills me with envy to think how I have accumulated that another man may spend

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"But there are conditions, of course, burdens to be imposed. He must, for instance, take my name. You cannot expect everything without some return. And I must go into all the circumstances of his life before I can accept him. He *must* be sound. I must know his heredity, how his parents and grandparents died, have the strictest inquiries made into his private morals."

This modified my secret congratulations a little.

"And do I understand," said I, "that I — —"

"Yes," he said, almost fiercely. "You. *You*."

I answered never a word. My imagination was dancing wildly, my innate scepticism was useless to modify its transports. There was not a particle of gratitude in my mind — I did not know what to say nor how to say it. "But why me in particular?" I said at last.

He had chanced to hear of me from Professor Haslar; he said, as a typically sound and sane young man, and he wished, as far as possible, to leave his money where health and integrity were assured.

That was my first meeting with the little old man. He was

mysterious about himself; he would not give his name yet, he said, and after I had answered some questions of his, he left me at the Blavitiski portal. I noticed that he drew a handful of gold coins from his pocket when it came to paying for the lunch. His insistence upon bodily health was curious. In accordance with an arrangement we had made I applied that day for a life policy in the Loyal Insurance Company for a large sum, and I was exhaustively overhauled by the medical advisers of that company in the subsequent week. Even that did not satisfy him, and he insisted I must be re-examined by the great Doctor Henderson.

It was Friday in Whitsun week before he came to a decision. He called me down, quite late in the evening, — nearly nine it was, — from cramming chemical equations for my Preliminary Scientific examination. He was standing in the passage under the feeble gas-lamp, and his face was a grotesque interplay of shadows. He seemed more bowed than when I had first seen him, and his cheeks had sunk in a little.

His voice shook with emotion. “Everything is satisfactory, Mr. Eden,” he said. “Everything is quite, quite satisfactory. And this night of all nights, you must dine with me and celebrate your — accession.” He was interrupted by a cough. “You won’t have long to wait, either,” he said, wiping his handkerchief across his lips, and gripping my hand with his long bony claw that was disengaged. “Certainly not very long to wait.”

We went into the street and called a cab. I remember every incident of that drive vividly, the swift, easy motion, the vivid contrast of gas and oil and electric light, the crowds of people in the streets, the place in Regent Street to which we went, and the sumptuous dinner we were served with there. I was disconcerted at first by the well-dressed waiter’s glances at my rough clothes, bothered by the stones of the olives, but as the champagne warmed my blood, my confidence revived. At first the old man talked of himself. He had already told me his name in the cab; he was Egbert Elvesham, the great philosopher, whose name I had known since I was a lad at school. It seemed incredible to me that this man, whose intelligence had so early dominated mine, this great abstraction, should suddenly realise itself as this decrepit, familiar figure. I

daresay every young fellow who has suddenly fallen among celebrities has felt something of my disappointment. He told me now of the future that the feeble streams of his life would presently leave dry for me, houses, copyrights, investments; I had never suspected that philosophers were so rich. He watched me drink and eat with a touch of envy. “What a capacity for living you have!” he said; and then with a sigh, a sigh of relief I could have thought it, “it will not be long.”

“Ay,” said I, my head swimming now with champagne; “I have a future perhaps — of a passing agreeable sort, thanks to you. I shall now have the honour of your name. But you have a past. Such a past as is worth all my future.”

He shook his head and smiled, as I thought, with half sad appreciation of my flattering admiration. “That future,” he said, “would you in truth change it?” The waiter came with liqueurs. “You will not perhaps mind taking my name, taking my position, but would you indeed — willingly — take my years?”

“With your achievements,” said I gallantly.

He smiled again. “Kummel — both,” he said to the waiter, and turned his attention to a little paper packet he had taken from his pocket. “This hour,” said he, “this after-dinner hour is the hour of small things. Here is a scrap of my unpublished wisdom.” He opened the packet with his shaking yellow fingers, and showed a little pinkish powder on the paper. “This,” said he— “well, you must guess what it is. But Kummel — put but a dash of this powder in it — is Himmel.”

His large greyish eyes watched mine with an inscrutable expression.

It was a bit of a shock to me to find this great teacher gave his mind to the flavour of liqueurs. However, I feigned an interest in his weakness, for I was drunk enough for such small sycophancy.

He parted the powder between the little glasses, and, rising suddenly, with a strange unexpected dignity, held out his hand towards me. I imitated his action, and the glasses rang. “To a quick succession,” said he, and raised his glass towards his lips.

“Not that,” I said hastily. “Not that.”

He paused with the liqueur at the level of his chin, and his eyes

blazing into mine.

"To a long life," said I.

He hesitated. "To a long life," said he, with a sudden bark of laughter, and with eyes fixed on one another we tilted the little glasses. His eyes looked straight into mine, and as I drained the stuff off, I felt a curiously intense sensation. The first touch of it set my brain in a furious tumult; I seemed to feel an actual physical stirring in my skull, and a seething humming filled my ears. I did not notice the flavour in my mouth, the aroma that filled my throat; I saw only the grey intensity of his gaze that burnt into mine. The draught, the mental confusion, the noise and stirring in my head, seemed to last an interminable time. Curious vague impressions of half-forgotten things danced and vanished on the edge of my consciousness. At last he broke the spell. With a sudden explosive sigh he put down his glass.

"Well?" he said.

"It's glorious," said I, though I had not tasted the stuff.

My head was spinning. I sat down. My brain was chaos. Then my perception grew clear and minute as though I saw things in a concave mirror. His manner seemed to have changed into something nervous and hasty. He pulled out his watch and grimaced at it. "Eleven-seven! And to-night I must — Seven-twenty-five. Waterloo! I must go at once." He called for the bill, and struggled with his coat. Officious waiters came to our assistance. In another moment I was wishing him good-bye, over the apron of a cab, and still with an absurd feeling of minute distinctness, as though — how can I express it? — I not only saw but *felt* through an inverted opera-glass.

"That stuff," he said. He put his hand to his forehead. "I ought not to have given it to you. It will make your head split to-morrow. Wait a minute. Here." He handed me out a little flat thing like a seidlitz-powder. "Take that in water as you are going to bed. The other thing was a drug. Not till you're ready to go to bed, mind. It will clear your head. That's all. One more shake — Futurus!"

I gripped his shrivelled claw. "Good-bye," he said, and by the droop of his eyelids I judged he too was a little under the influence of that brain-twisting cordial.

He recollected something else with a start, felt in his breast-

pocket, and produced another packet, this time a cylinder the size and shape of a shaving-stick. “Here,” said he. “I’d almost forgotten. Don’t open this until I come to-morrow — but take it now.”

It was so heavy that I wellnigh dropped it. “All ri’!” said I, and he grinned at me through the cab window as the cabman flicked his horse into wakefulness. It was a white packet he had given me, with red seals at either end and along its edge. “If this isn’t money,” said I, “it’s platinum or lead.”

I stuck it with elaborate care into my pocket, and with a whirling brain walked home through the Regent Street loiterers and the dark back streets beyond Portland Road. I remember the sensations of that walk very vividly, strange as they were. I was still so far myself that I could notice my strange mental state, and wonder whether this stuff I had had was opium — a drug beyond my experience. It is hard now to describe the peculiarity of my mental strangeness — mental doubling vaguely expresses it. As I was walking up Regent Street I found in my mind a queer persuasion that it was Waterloo Station, and had an odd impulse to get into the Polytechnic as a man might get into a train. I put a knuckle in my eye, and it was Regent Street. How can I express it? You see a skilful actor looking quietly at you, he pulls a grimace, and lo! — another person. Is it too extravagant if I tell you that it seemed to me as if Regent Street had, for the moment, done that? Then, being persuaded it was Regent Street again, I was oddly muddled about some fantastic reminiscences that cropped up. “Thirty years ago,” thought I, “it was here that I quarrelled with my brother.” Then I burst out laughing, to the astonishment and encouragement of a group of night prowlers. Thirty years ago I did not exist, and never in my life had I boasted a brother. The stuff was surely liquid folly, for the poignant regret for that lost brother still clung to me. Along Portland Road the madness took another turn. I began to recall vanished shops, and to compare the street with what it used to be. Confused, troubled thinking is comprehensible enough after the drink I had taken, but what puzzled me were these curiously vivid phantasm memories that had crept into my mind, and not only the memories that had crept in, but also the memories that had slipped out. I stopped opposite Stevens’, the natural history dealer’s, and cudgelled my brains to think what he

had to do with me. A ‘bus went by, and sounded exactly like the rumbling of a train. I seemed to be dipping into some dark, remote pit for the recollection. “Of course,” said I, at last, “he has promised me three frogs to-morrow. Odd I should have forgotten.”

Do they still show children dissolving views? In those I remember one view would begin like a faint ghost, and grow and oust another. In just that way it seemed to me that a ghostly set of new sensations was struggling with those of my ordinary self.

I went on through Euston Road to Tottenham Court Road, puzzled, and a little frightened, and scarcely noticed the unusual way I was taking, for commonly I used to cut through the intervening network of back streets. I turned into University Street, to discover that I had forgotten my number. Only by a strong effort did I recall 11A, and even then it seemed to me that it was a thing some forgotten person had told me. I tried to steady my mind by recalling the incidents of the dinner, and for the life of me I could conjure up no picture of my host’s face; I saw him only as a shadowy outline, as one might see oneself reflected in a window through which one was looking. In his place, however, I had a curious exterior vision of myself, sitting at a table, flushed, bright-eyed, and talkative.

“I must take this other powder,” said I. “This is getting impossible.”

I tried the wrong side of the hall for my candle and the matches, and had a doubt of which landing my room might be on. “I’m drunk,” I said, “that’s certain,” and blundered needlessly on the staircase to sustain the proposition.

At the first glance my room seemed unfamiliar. “What rot!” I said, and stared about me. I seemed to bring myself back by the effort, and the odd phantasmal quality passed into the concrete familiar. There was the old glass still, with my notes on the albumens stuck in the corner of the frame, my old everyday suit of clothes pitched about the floor. And yet it was not so real after all. I felt an idiotic persuasion trying to creep into my mind, as it were, that I was in a railway carriage in a train just stopping, that I was peering out of the window at some unknown station. I gripped the bed-rail firmly to reassure myself. “It’s clairvoyance, perhaps,” I said. “I must write to the Psychical Research Society.”

I put the rouleau on my dressing-table, sat on my bed, and began to take off my boots. It was as if the picture of my present sensations was painted over some other picture that was trying to show through. “Curse it!” said I; “my wits are going, or am I in two places at once?” Half-undressed, I tossed the powder into a glass and drank it off. It effervesced, and became a fluorescent amber colour. Before I was in bed my mind was already tranquillised. I felt the pillow at my cheek, and thereupon I must have fallen asleep.

* * * * *

I awoke abruptly out of a dream of strange beasts, and found myself lying on my back. Probably every one knows that dismal, emotional dream from which one escapes, awake indeed, but strangely cowed. There was a curious taste in my mouth, a tired feeling in my limbs, a sense of cutaneous discomfort. I lay with my head motionless on my pillow, expecting that my feeling of strangeness and terror would pass away, and that I should then doze off again to sleep. But instead of that, my uncanny sensations increased. At first I could perceive nothing wrong about me. There was a faint light in the room, so faint that it was the very next thing to darkness, and the furniture stood out in it as vague blots of absolute darkness. I stared with my eyes just over the bedclothes.

It came into my mind that some one had entered the room to rob me of my rouleau of money, but after lying for some moments, breathing regularly to simulate sleep, I realised this was mere fancy. Nevertheless, the uneasy assurance of something wrong kept fast hold of me. With an effort I raised my head from the pillow, and peered about me at the dark. What it was I could not conceive. I looked at the dim shapes around me, the greater and lesser darknesses that indicated curtains, table, fireplace, bookshelves, and so forth. Then I began to perceive something unfamiliar in the forms of the darkness. Had the bed turned round? Yonder should be the bookshelves, and something shrouded and pallid rose there, something that would not answer to the bookshelves, however I looked at it. It was far too big to be my shirt thrown on a chair.

Overcoming a childish terror, I threw back the bedclothes and

thrust my leg out of bed. Instead of coming out of my truckle-bed upon the floor, I found my foot scarcely reached the edge of the mattress. I made another step, as it were, and sat up on the edge of the bed. By the side of my bed should be the candle, and the matches upon the broken chair. I put out my hand and touched — nothing. I waved my hand in the darkness, and it came against some heavy hanging, soft and thick in texture, which gave a rustling noise at my touch. I grasped this and pulled it; it appeared to be a curtain suspended over the head of my bed.

I was now thoroughly awake, and beginning to realise that I was in a strange room. I was puzzled. I tried to recall the overnight circumstances, and I found them now, curiously enough, vivid in my memory: the supper, my reception of the little packages, my wonder whether I was intoxicated, my slow undressing, the coolness to my flushed face of my pillow. I felt a sudden distrust. Was that last night, or the night before? At any rate, this room was strange to me, and I could not imagine how I had got into it. The dim, pallid outline was growing paler, and I perceived it was a window, with the dark shape of an oval toilet-glass against the weak intimation of the dawn that filtered through the blind. I stood up, and was surprised by a curious feeling of weakness and unsteadiness. With trembling hands outstretched, I walked slowly towards the window, getting, nevertheless, a bruise on the knee from a chair by the way. I fumbled round the glass, which was large, with handsome brass sconces, to find the blind cord. I could not find any. By chance I took hold of the tassel, and with the click of a spring the blind ran up.

I found myself looking out upon a scene that was altogether strange to me. The night was overcast, and through the flocculent grey of the heaped clouds there filtered a faint half-light of dawn. Just at the edge of the sky the cloud-canopy had a blood-red rim. Below, everything was dark and indistinct, dim hills in the distance, a vague mass of buildings running up into pinnacles, trees like spilt ink, and below the window a tracery of black bushes and pale grey paths. It was so unfamiliar that for the moment I thought myself still dreaming. I felt the toilet-table; it appeared to be made of some polished wood, and was rather elaborately furnished — there were little cut-glass bottles and a brush upon it. There was also a queer

little object, horse-shoe shape it felt, with smooth, hard projections, lying in a saucer. I could find no matches nor candlestick.

I turned my eyes to the room again. Now the blind was up, faint spectres of its furnishing came out of the darkness. There was a huge curtained bed, and the fireplace at its foot had a large white mantel with something of the shimmer of marble.

I leant against the toilet-table, shut my eyes and opened them again, and tried to think. The whole thing was far too real for dreaming. I was inclined to imagine there was still some hiatus in my memory, as a consequence of my draught of that strange liqueur; that I had come into my inheritance perhaps, and suddenly lost my recollection of everything since my good fortune had been announced. Perhaps if I waited a little, things would be clearer to me again. Yet my dinner with old Elvesham was now singularly vivid and recent. The champagne, the observant waiters, the powder, and the liqueurs — I could have staked my soul it all happened a few hours ago.

And then occurred a thing so trivial and yet so terrible to me that I shiver now to think of that moment. I spoke aloud. I said, "How the devil did I get here?" … *And the voice was not my own*.

It was not my own, it was thin, the articulation was slurred, the resonance of my facial bones was different. Then, to reassure myself I ran one hand over the other, and felt loose folds of skin, the bony laxity of age. "Surely," I said, in that horrible voice that had somehow established itself in my throat, "surely this thing is a dream!" Almost as quickly as if I did it involuntarily, I thrust my fingers into my mouth. My teeth had gone. My finger-tips ran on the flaccid surface of an even row of shrivelled gums. I was sick with dismay and disgust.

I felt then a passionate desire to see myself, to realise at once in its full horror the ghastly change that had come upon me. I tottered to the mantel, and felt along it for matches. As I did so, a barking cough sprang up in my throat, and I clutched the thick flannel nightdress I found about me. There were no matches there, and I suddenly realised that my extremities were cold. Sniffing and coughing, whimpering a little, perhaps, I fumbled back to bed. "It is surely a dream," I whispered to myself as I clambered back, "surely a

dream.” It was a senile repetition. I pulled the bedclothes over my shoulders, over my ears, I thrust my withered hand under the pillow, and determined to compose myself to sleep. Of course it was a dream. In the morning the dream would be over, and I should wake up strong and vigorous again to my youth and studies. I shut my eyes, breathed regularly, and, finding myself wakeful, began to count slowly through the powers of three.

But the thing I desired would not come. I could not get to sleep. And the persuasion of the inexorable reality of the change that had happened to me grew steadily. Presently I found myself with my eyes wide open, the powers of three forgotten, and my skinny fingers upon my shrivelled gums, I was, indeed, suddenly and abruptly, an old man. I had in some unaccountable manner fallen through my life and come to old age, in some way I had been cheated of all the best of my life, of love, of struggle, of strength, and hope. I grovelled into the pillow and tried to persuade myself that such hallucination was possible. Imperceptibly, steadily, the dawn grew clearer.

At last, despairing of further sleep, I sat up in bed and looked about me. A chill twilight rendered the whole chamber visible. It was spacious and well-furnished, better furnished than any room I had ever slept in before. A candle and matches became dimly visible upon a little pedestal in a recess. I threw back the bedclothes, and, shivering with the rawness of the early morning, albeit it was summer-time, I got out and lit the candle. Then, trembling horribly, so that the extinguisher rattled on its spike, I tottered to the glass and saw — *Elvesham’s face*! It was none the less horrible because I had already dimly feared as much. He had already seemed physically weak and pitiful to me, but seen now, dressed only in a coarse flannel nightdress, that fell apart and showed the stringy neck, seen now as my own body, I cannot describe its desolate decrepitude. The hollow cheeks, the straggling tail of dirty grey hair, the rheumy bleared eyes, the quivering, shrivelled lips, the lower displaying a gleam of the pink interior lining, and those horrible dark gums showing. You who are mind and body together, at your natural years, cannot imagine what this fiendish imprisonment meant to me. To be young and full of the desire and energy of youth, and to be caught, and presently to be crushed in this tottering ruin of a body…

But I wander from the course of my story. For some time I must have been stunned at this change that had come upon me. It was daylight when I did so far gather myself together as to think. In some inexplicable way I had been changed, though how, short of magic, the thing had been done, I could not say. And as I thought, the diabolical ingenuity of Elvesham came home to me. It seemed plain to me that as I found myself in his, so he must be in possession of *my* body, of my strength, that is, and my future. But how to prove it? Then, as I thought, the thing became so incredible, even to me, that my mind reeled, and I had to pinch myself, to feel my toothless gums, to see myself in the glass, and touch the things about me, before I could steady myself to face the facts again. Was all life hallucination? Was I indeed Elvesham, and he me? Had I been dreaming of Eden overnight? Was there any Eden? But if I was Elvesham, I should remember where I was on the previous morning, the name of the town in which I lived, what happened before the dream began. I struggled with my thoughts. I recalled the queer doubleness of my memories overnight. But now my mind was clear. Not the ghost of any memories but those proper to Eden could I raise.

"This way lies insanity!" I cried in my piping voice. I staggered to my feet, dragged my feeble, heavy limbs to the washhand-stand, and plunged my grey head into a basin of cold water. Then, towelling myself, I tried again. It was no good. I felt beyond all question that I was indeed Eden, not Elvesham. But Eden in Elvesham's body!

Had I been a man of any other age, I might have given myself up to my fate as one enchanted. But in these sceptical days miracles do not pass current. Here was some trick of psychology. What a drug and a steady stare could do, a drug and a steady stare, or some similar treatment, could surely undo. Men have lost their memories before. But to exchange memories as one does umbrellas! I laughed. Alas! not a healthy laugh, but a wheezing, senile titter. I could have fancied old Elvesham laughing at my plight, and a gust of petulant anger, unusual to me, swept across my feelings. I began dressing eagerly in the clothes I found lying about on the floor, and only realised when I was dressed that it was an evening suit I had assumed. I opened the wardrobe and found some more ordinary

clothes, a pair of plaid trousers, and an old-fashioned dressing-gown. I put a venerable smoking-cap on my venerable head, and, coughing a little from my exertions, tottered out upon the landing.

It was then, perhaps, a quarter to six, and the blinds were closely drawn and the house quite silent. The landing was a spacious one, a broad, richly-carpeted staircase went down into the darkness of the hall below, and before me a door ajar showed me a writing-desk, a revolving bookcase, the back of a study chair, and a fine array of bound books, shelf upon shelf.

"My study," I mumbled, and walked across the landing. Then at the sound of my voice a thought struck me, and I went back to the bedroom and put in the set of false teeth. They slipped in with the ease of old, habit. "That's better," said I, gnashing them, and so returned to the study.

The drawers of the writing-desk were locked. Its revolving top was also locked. I could see no indications of the keys, and there were none in the pockets of my trousers. I shuffled back at once to the bedroom, and went through the dress suit, and afterwards the pockets of all the garments I could find. I was very eager, and one might have imagined that burglars had been at work, to see my room when I had done. Not only were there no keys to be found, but not a coin, nor a scrap of paper — save only the receipted bill of the overnight dinner.

A curious weariness asserted itself. I sat down and stared at the garments flung here and there, their pockets turned inside out. My first frenzy had already flickered out. Every moment I was beginning to realise the immense intelligence of the plans of my enemy, to see more and more clearly the hopelessness of my position. With an effort I rose and hurried hobbling into the study again. On the staircase was a housemaid pulling up the blinds. She stared, I think, at the expression of my face. I shut the door of the study behind me, and, seizing a poker, began an attack upon the desk. That is how they found me. The cover of the desk was split, the lock smashed, the letters torn out of the pigeon-holes, and tossed about the room. In my senile rage I had flung about the pens and other such light stationery, and overturned the ink. Moreover, a large vase upon the mantel had got broken — I do not know how. I could find no cheque-book, no

money, no indications of the slightest use for the recovery of my body. I was battering madly at the drawers, when the butler, backed by two women-servants, intruded upon me.

* * * * *

That simply is the story of my change. No one will believe my frantic assertions. I am treated as one demented, and even at this moment I am under restraint. But I am sane, absolutely sane, and to prove it I have sat down to write this story minutely as the things happened to me. I appeal to the reader, whether there is any trace of insanity in the style or method, of the story he has been reading. I am a young man locked away in an old man's body. But the clear fact is incredible to everyone. Naturally I appear demented to those who will not believe this, naturally I do not know the names of my secretaries, of the doctors who come to see me, of my servants and neighbours, of this town (wherever it is) where I find myself. Naturally I lose myself in my own house, and suffer inconveniences of every sort. Naturally I ask the oddest questions. Naturally I weep and cry out, and have paroxysms of despair. I have no money and no cheque-book. The bank will not recognise my signature, for I suppose that, allowing for the feeble muscles I now have, my handwriting is still Eden's. These people about me will not let me go to the bank personally. It seems, indeed, that there is no bank in this town, and that I have an account in some part of London. It seems that Elvesham kept the name of his solicitor secret from all his household. I can ascertain nothing. Elvesham was, of course, a profound student of mental science, and all my declarations of the facts of the case merely confirm the theory that my insanity is the outcome of overmuch brooding upon psychology. Dreams of the personal identity indeed! Two days ago I was a healthy youngster, with all life before me; now I am a furious old man, unkempt, and desperate, and miserable, prowling about a great, luxurious, strange house, watched, feared, and avoided as a lunatic by everyone about me. And in London is Elvesham beginning life again in a vigorous body, and with all the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of threescore and ten. He has stolen my life.

What has happened I do not clearly know. In the study are volumes of manuscript notes referring chiefly to the psychology of memory, and parts of what may be either calculations or ciphers in symbols absolutely strange to me. In some passages there are indications that he was also occupied with the philosophy of mathematics. I take it he has transferred the whole of his memories, the accumulation that makes up his personality, from this old withered brain of his to mine, and, similarly, that he has transferred mine to his discarded tenement. Practically, that is, he has changed bodies. But how such a change may be possible is without the range of my philosophy. I have been a materialist for all my thinking life, but here, suddenly, is a clear case of man's detachability from matter.

One desperate experiment I am about to try. I sit writing here before putting the matter to issue. This morning, with the help of a table-knife that I had secreted at breakfast, I succeeded in breaking open a fairly obvious secret drawer in this wrecked writing-desk. I discovered nothing save a little green glass phial containing a white powder. Round the neck of the phial was a label, and thereon was written this one word, "*Release*." This may be — is most probably — poison. I can understand Elvesham placing poison in my way, and I should be sure that it was his intention so to get rid of the only living witness against him, were it not for this careful concealment. The man has practically solved the problem of immortality. Save for the spite of chance, he will live in my body until it has aged, and then, again, throwing that aside, he will assume some other victim's youth and strength. When one remembers his heartlessness, it is terrible to think of the ever-growing experience that… How long has he been leaping from body to body?… But I tire of writing. The powder appears to be soluble in water. The taste is not unpleasant.

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There the narrative found upon Mr. Elvesham's desk ends. His dead body lay between the desk and the chair. The latter had been pushed back, probably by his last convulsions. The story was written in pencil and in a crazy hand, quite unlike his usual minute characters. There remain only two curious facts to record. Indisputably there was

some connection between Eden and Elvesham, since the whole of Elvesham's property was bequeathed to the young man. But he never inherited. When Elvesham committed suicide, Eden was, strangely enough, already dead. Twenty-four hours before, he had been knocked down by a cab and killed instantly, at the crowded crossing at the intersection of Gower Street and Euston Road. So that the only human being who could have thrown light upon this fantastic narrative is beyond the reach of questions. Without further comment I leave this extraordinary matter to the reader's individual judgment.

XII.

UNDER THE KNIFE.

"What if I die under it?" The thought recurred again and again, as I walked home from Haddon's. It was a purely personal question. I was spared the deep anxieties of a married man, and I knew there were few of my intimate friends but would find my death troublesome chiefly on account of their duty of regret. I was surprised indeed, and perhaps a little humiliated, as I turned the matter over, to think how few could possibly exceed the conventional requirement. Things came before me stripped of glamour, in a clear dry light, during that walk from Haddon's house over Primrose Hill. There were the friends of my youth: I perceived now that our affection was a tradition, which we foregathered rather laboriously to maintain. There were the rivals and helpers of my later career: I suppose I had been cold-blooded or undemonstrative — one perhaps implies the other. It may be that even the capacity for friendship is a question of physique. There had been a time in my own life when I had grieved bitterly enough at the loss of a friend; but as I walked home that afternoon the emotional side of my imagination was dormant. I could not pity myself, nor feel sorry for my friends, nor conceive of them as grieving for me.

I was interested in this deadness of my emotional nature — no doubt a concomitant of my stagnating physiology; and my thoughts wandered off along the line it suggested. Once before, in my hot youth, I had suffered a sudden loss of blood, and had been within an ace of death. I remembered now that my affections as well as my passions had drained out of me, leaving scarce anything but a tranquil resignation, a dreg of self-pity. It had been weeks before the old ambitions and tendernesses and all the complex moral interplay of a man had reasserted themselves. It occurred to me that the real meaning of this numbness might be a gradual slipping away from the pleasure-pain guidance of the animal man. It has been proven, I take it, as thoroughly as anything can be proven in this world, that the higher emotions, the moral feelings, even the subtle unselfishness of love, are evolved from the elemental desires and fears of the simple animal: they are the harness in which man's mental freedom goes.

And it may be that as death overshadows us, as our possibility of acting diminishes, this complex growth of balanced impulse, propensity and aversion, whose interplay inspires our acts, goes with it. Leaving what?

I was suddenly brought back to reality by an imminent collision with the butcher-boy's tray. I found that I was crossing the bridge over the Regent's Park Canal, which runs parallel with that in the Zoological Gardens. The boy in blue had been looking over his shoulder at a black barge advancing slowly, towed by a gaunt white horse. In the Gardens a nurse was leading three happy little children over the bridge. The trees were bright green; the spring hopefulness was still unstained by the dusts of summer; the sky in the water was bright and clear, but broken by long waves, by quivering bands of black, as the barge drove through. The breeze was stirring; but it did not stir me as the spring breeze used to do.

Was this dulness of feeling in itself an anticipation? It was curious that I could reason and follow out a network of suggestion as clearly as ever: so, at least, it seemed to me. It was calmness rather than dulness that was coming upon me. Was there any ground for the relief in the presentiment of death? Did a man near to death begin instinctively to withdraw himself from the meshes of matter and sense, even before the cold hand was laid upon his? I felt strangely isolated — isolated without regret — from the life and existence about me. The children playing in the sun and gathering strength and experience for the business of life, the park-keeper gossiping with a nursemaid, the nursing mother, the young couple intent upon each other as they passed me, the trees by the wayside spreading new pleading leaves to the sunlight, the stir in their branches — I had been part of it all, but I had nearly done with it now.

Some way down the Broad Walk I perceived that I was tired, and that my feet were heavy. It was hot that afternoon, and I turned aside and sat down on one of the green chairs that line the way. In a minute I had dozed into a dream, and the tide of my thoughts washed up a vision of the resurrection. I was still sitting in the chair, but I thought myself actually dead, withered, tattered, dried, one eye (I saw) pecked out by birds. "Awake!" cried a voice; and incontinently the dust of the path and the mould under the grass became insurgent. I

had never before thought of Regent's Park as a cemetery, but now, through the trees, stretching as far as eye could see, I beheld a flat plain of writhing graves and heeling tombstones. There seemed to be some trouble: the rising dead appeared to stifle as they struggled upward, they bled in their struggles, the red flesh was torn away from the white bones. "Awake!" cried a voice; but I determined I would not rise to such horrors. "Awake!" They would not let me alone. "Wake up!" said an angry voice. A cockney angel! The man who sells the tickets was shaking me, demanding my penny.

I paid my penny, pocketed my ticket, yawned, stretched my legs, and, feeling now rather less torpid, got up and walked on towards Langham Place. I speedily lost myself again in a shifting maze of thoughts about death. Going across Marylebone Road into that crescent at the end of Langham Place, I had the narrowest escape from the shaft of a cab, and went on my way with a palpitating heart and a bruised shoulder. It struck me that it would have been curious if my meditations on my death on the morrow had led to my death that day.

But I will not weary you with more of my experiences that day and the next. I knew more and more certainly that I should die under the operation; at times I think I was inclined to pose to myself. The doctors were coming at eleven, and I did not get up. It seemed scarce worth while to trouble about washing and dressing, and though I read my newspapers and the letters that came by the first post, I did not find them very interesting. There was a friendly note from Addison, my old school-friend, calling my attention to two discrepancies and a printer's error in my new book, with one from Langridge venting some vexation over Minton. The rest were business communications. I breakfasted in bed. The glow of pain at my side seemed more massive. I knew it was pain, and yet, if you can understand, I did not find it very painful. I had been awake and hot and thirsty in the night, but in the morning bed felt comfortable. In the night-time I had lain thinking of things that were past; in the morning I dozed over the question of immortality. Haddon came, punctual to the minute, with a neat black bag; and Mowbray soon followed. Their arrival stirred me up a little. I began to take a more personal interest in the proceedings. Haddon moved the little octagonal table close to the

bedside, and, with his broad back to me, began taking things out of his bag. I heard the light click of steel upon steel. My imagination, I found, was not altogether stagnant. “Will you hurt me much?” I said in an off-hand tone.

“Not a bit,” Haddon answered over his shoulder. “We shall chloroform you. Your heart’s as sound as a bell.” And as he spoke, I had a whiff of the pungent sweetness of the anaesthetic.

They stretched me out, with a convenient exposure of my side, and, almost before I realised what was happening, the chloroform was being administered. It stings the nostrils, and there is a suffocating sensation at first. I knew I should die — that this was the end of consciousness for me. And suddenly I felt that I was not prepared for death: I had a vague sense of a duty overlooked — I knew not what. What was it I had not done? I could think of nothing more to do, nothing desirable left in life; and yet I had the strangest disinclination to death. And the physical sensation was painfully oppressive. Of course the doctors did not know they were going to kill me. Possibly I struggled. Then I fell motionless, and a great silence, a monstrous silence, and an impenetrable blackness came upon me.

There must have been an interval of absolute unconsciousness, seconds or minutes. Then with a chilly, unemotional clearness, I perceived that I was not yet dead. I was still in my body; but all the multitudinous sensations that come sweeping from it to make up the background of consciousness had gone, leaving me free of it all. No, not free of it all; for as yet something still held me to the poor stark flesh upon the bed — held me, yet not so closely that I did not feel myself external to it, independent of it, straining away from it. I do not think I saw, I do not think I heard; but I perceived all that was going on, and it was as if I both heard and saw. Haddon was bending over me, Mowbray behind me; the scalpel — it was a large scalpel — was cutting my flesh at the side under the flying ribs. It was interesting to see myself cut like cheese, without a pang, without even a qualm. The interest was much of a quality with that one might feel in a game of chess between strangers. Haddon’s face was firm and his hand steady; but I was surprised to perceive (*how* I know not) that he was feeling the gravest doubt as to his own wisdom in the

conduct of the operation.

Mowbray's thoughts, too, I could see. He was thinking that Haddon's manner showed too much of the specialist. New suggestions came up like bubbles through a stream of frothing meditation, and burst one after another in the little bright spot of his consciousness. He could not help noticing and admiring Haddon's swift dexterity, in spite of his envious quality and his disposition to detract. I saw my liver exposed. I was puzzled at my own condition. I did not feel that I was dead, but I was different in some way from my living self. The grey depression, that had weighed on me for a year or more and coloured all my thoughts, was gone. I perceived and thought without any emotional tint at all. I wondered if everyone perceived things in this way under chloroform, and forgot it again when he came out of it. It would be inconvenient to look into some heads, and not forget.

Although I did not think that I was dead, I still perceived quite clearly that I was soon to die. This brought me back to the consideration of Haddon's proceedings. I looked into his mind, and saw that he was afraid of cutting a branch of the portal vein. My attention was distracted from details by the curious changes going on in his mind. His consciousness was like the quivering little spot of light which is thrown by the mirror of a galvanometer. His thoughts ran under it like a stream, some through the focus bright and distinct, some shadowy in the half-light of the edge. Just now the little glow was steady; but the least movement on Mowbray's part, the slightest sound from outside, even a faint difference in the slow movement of the living flesh he was cutting, set the light-spot shivering and spinning. A new sense-impression came rushing up through the flow of thoughts; and lo! the light-spot jerked away towards it, swifter than a frightened fish. It was wonderful to think that upon that unstable, fitful thing depended all the complex motions of the man; that for the next five minutes, therefore, my life hung upon its movements. And he was growing more and more nervous in his work. It was as if a little picture of a cut vein grew brighter, and struggled to oust from his brain another picture of a cut falling short of the mark. He was afraid: his dread of cutting too little was battling with his dread of cutting too far.

Then, suddenly, like an escape of water from under a lock-gate, a great uprush of horrible realisation set all his thoughts swirling, and simultaneously I perceived that the vein was cut. He started back with a hoarse exclamation, and I saw the brown-purple blood gather in a swift bead, and run trickling. He was horrified. He pitched the red-stained scalpel on to the octagonal table; and instantly both doctors flung themselves upon me, making hasty and ill-conceived efforts to remedy the disaster. "Ice!" said Mowbray, gasping. But I knew that I was killed, though my body still clung to me.

I will not describe their belated endeavours to save me, though I perceived every detail. My perceptions were sharper and swifter than they had ever been in life; my thoughts rushed through my mind with incredible swiftness, but with perfect definition. I can only compare their crowded clarity to the effects of a reasonable dose of opium. In a moment it would all be over, and I should be free. I knew I was immortal, but what would happen I did not know. Should I drift off presently, like a puff of smoke from a gun, in some kind of half-material body, an attenuated version of my material self? Should I find myself suddenly among the innumerable hosts of the dead, and know the world about me for the phantasmagoria it had always seemed? Should I drift to some spiritualistic *séance*, and there make foolish, incomprehensible attempts to affect a purblind medium? It was a state of unemotional curiosity, of colourless expectation. And then I realised a growing stress upon me, a feeling as though some huge human magnet was drawing me upward out of my body. The stress grew and grew. I seemed an atom for which monstrous forces were fighting. For one brief, terrible moment sensation came back to me. That feeling of falling headlong which comes in nightmares, that feeling a thousand times intensified, that and a black horror swept across my thoughts in a torrent. Then the two doctors, the naked body with its cut side, the little room, swept away from under me and vanished, as a speck of foam vanishes down an eddy.

I was in mid-air. Far below was the West End of London, receding rapidly, — for I seemed to be flying swiftly upward, — and as it receded, passing westward like a panorama. I could see, through the faint haze of smoke, the innumerable roofs chimney-set, the narrow roadways, stippled with people and conveyances, the little

specks of squares, and the church steeples like thorns sticking out of the fabric. But it spun away as the earth rotated on its axis, and in a few seconds (as it seemed) I was over the scattered clumps of town about Ealing, the little Thames a thread of blue to the south, and the Chiltern Hills and the North Downs coming up like the rim of a basin, far away and faint with haze. Up I rushed. And at first I had not the faintest conception what this headlong rush upward could mean.

Every moment the circle of scenery beneath me grew wider and wider, and the details of town and field, of hill and valley, got more and more hazy and pale and indistinct, a luminous grey was mingled more and more with the blue of the hills and the green of the open meadows; and a little patch of cloud, low and far to the west, shone ever more dazzlingly white. Above, as the veil of atmosphere between myself and outer space grew thinner, the sky, which had been a fair springtime blue at first, grew deeper and richer in colour, passing steadily through the intervening shades, until presently it was as dark as the blue sky of midnight, and presently as black as the blackness of a frosty starlight, and at last as black as no blackness I had ever beheld. And first one star, and then many, and at last an innumerable host broke out upon the sky: more stars than anyone has ever seen from the face of the earth. For the blueness of the sky in the light of the sun and stars sifted and spread abroad blindingly: there is diffused light even in the darkest skies of winter, and we do not see the stars by day only because of the dazzling irradiation of the sun. But now I saw things — I know not how; assuredly with no mortal eyes — and that defect of bedazzlement blinded me no longer. The sun was incredibly strange and wonderful. The body of it was a disc of blinding white light: not yellowish, as it seems to those who live upon the earth, but livid white, all streaked with scarlet streaks and rimmed about with a fringe of writhing tongues of red fire. And shooting half-way across the heavens from either side of it and brighter than the Milky Way, were two pinions of silver white, making it look more like those winged globes I have seen in Egyptian sculpture than anything else I can remember upon earth. These I knew for the solar corona, though I had never seen anything of it but a picture during the days of my earthly life.

When my attention came back to the earth again, I saw that it had fallen very far away from me. Field and town were long since indistinguishable, and all the varied hues of the country were merging into a uniform bright grey, broken only by the brilliant white of the clouds that lay scattered in flocculent masses over Ireland and the west of England. For now I could see the outlines of the north of France and Ireland, and all this Island of Britain, save where Scotland passed over the horizon to the north, or where the coast was blurred or obliterated by cloud. The sea was a dull grey, and darker than the land; and the whole panorama was rotating slowly towards the east.

All this had happened so swiftly that until I was some thousand miles or so from the earth I had no thought for myself. But now I perceived I had neither hands nor feet, neither parts nor organs, and that I felt neither alarm nor pain. All about me I perceived that the vacancy (for I had already left the air behind) was cold beyond the imagination of man; but it troubled me not. The sun's rays shot through the void, powerless to light or heat until they should strike on matter in their course. I saw things with a serene self-forgetfulness, even as if I were God. And down below there, rushing away from me, — countless miles in a second, — where a little dark spot on the grey marked the position of London, two doctors were struggling to restore life to the poor hacked and outworn shell I had abandoned. I felt then such release, such serenity as I can compare to no mortal delight I have ever known.

It was only after I had perceived all these things that the meaning of that headlong rush of the earth grew into comprehension. Yet it was so simple, so obvious, that I was amazed at my never anticipating the thing that was happening to me. I had suddenly been cut adrift from matter: all that was material of me was there upon earth, whirling away through space, held to the earth by gravitation, partaking of the earth-inertia, moving in its wreath of epicycles round the sun, and with the sun and the planets on their vast march through space. But the immaterial has no inertia, feels nothing of the pull of matter for matter: where it parts from its garment of flesh, there it remains (so far as space concerns it any longer) immovable in space. *I* was not leaving the earth: the earth was leaving *me*, and not only

the earth but the whole solar system was streaming past. And about me in space, invisible to me, scattered in the wake of the earth upon its journey, there must be an innumerable multitude of souls, stripped like myself of the material, stripped like myself of the passions of the individual and the generous emotions of the gregarious brute, naked intelligences, things of new-born wonder and thought, marvelling at the strange release that had suddenly come on them!

As I receded faster and faster from the strange white sun in the black heavens, and from the broad and shining earth upon which my being had begun, I seemed to grow in some incredible manner vast: vast as regards this world I had left, vast as regards the moments and periods of a human life. Very soon I saw the full circle of the earth, slightly gibbous, like the moon when she nears her full, but very large; and the silvery shape of America was now in the noonday blaze wherein (as it seemed) little England had been basking but a few minutes ago. At first the earth was large, and shone in the heavens, filling a great part of them; but every moment she grew smaller and more distant. As she shrank, the broad moon in its third quarter crept into view over the rim of her disc. I looked for the constellations. Only that part of Aries directly behind the sun and the Lion, which the earth covered, were hidden. I recognised the tortuous, tattered band of the Milky Way with Vega very bright between sun and earth; and Sirius and Orion shone splendid against the unfathomable blackness in the opposite quarter of the heavens. The Pole Star was overhead, and the Great Bear hung over the circle of the earth. And away beneath and beyond the shining corona of the sun were strange groupings of stars I had never seen in my life — notably a dagger-shaped group that I knew for the Southern Cross. All these were no larger than when they had shone on earth, but the little stars that one scarce sees shone now against the setting of black vacancy as brightly as the first-magnitudes had done, while the larger worlds were points of indescribable glory and colour. Aldebaran was a spot of blood-red fire, and Sirius condensed to one point the light of innumerable sapphires. And they shone steadily: they did not scintillate, they were calmly glorious. My impressions had an adamantine hardness and brightness: there was no blurring softness, no atmosphere, nothing but infinite darkness set with the myriads of

these acute and brilliant points and specks of light. Presently, when I looked again, the little earth seemed no bigger than the sun, and it dwindled and turned as I looked, until in a second's space (as it seemed to me), it was halved; and so it went on swiftly dwindling. Far away in the opposite direction, a little pinkish pin's head of light, shining steadily, was the planet Mars. I swam motionless in vacancy, and, without a trace of terror or astonishment, watched the speck of cosmic dust we call the world fall away from me.

Presently it dawned upon me that my sense of duration had changed; that my mind was moving not faster but infinitely slower, that between each separate impression there was a period of many days. The moon spun once round the earth as I noted this; and I perceived clearly the motion of Mars in his orbit. Moreover, it appeared as if the time between thought and thought grew steadily greater, until at last a thousand years was but a moment in my perception.

At first the constellations had shone motionless against the black background of infinite space; but presently it seemed as though the group of stars about Hercules and the Scorpion was contracting, while Orion and Aldebaran and their neighbours were scattering apart. Flashing suddenly out of the darkness there came a flying multitude of particles of rock, glittering like dust-specks in a sunbeam, and encompassed in a faintly luminous cloud. They swirled all about me, and vanished again in a twinkling far behind. And then I saw that a bright spot of light, that shone a little to one side of my path, was growing very rapidly larger, and perceived that it was the planet Saturn rushing towards me. Larger and larger it grew, swallowing up the heavens behind it, and hiding every moment a fresh multitude, of stars. I perceived its flattened, whirling body, its disc-like belt, and seven of its little satellites. It grew and grew, till it towered enormous; and then I plunged amid a streaming multitude of clashing stones and dancing dust-particles and gas-eddies, and saw for a moment the mighty triple belt like three concentric arches of moonlight above me, its shadow black on the boiling tumult below. These things happened in one-tenth of the time it takes to tell them. The planet went by like a flash of lightning; for a few seconds it blotted out the sun, and there and then became a mere black,

dwindling, winged patch against the light. The earth, the mother mote of my being, I could no longer see.

So with a stately swiftness, in the profoundest silence, the solar system fell from me as it had been a garment, until the sun was a mere star amid the multitude of stars, with its eddy of planet-specks lost in the confused glittering of the remoter light. I was no longer a denizen of the solar system: I had come to the outer Universe, I seemed to grasp and comprehend the whole world of matter. Ever more swiftly the stars closed in about the spot where Antares and Vega had vanished in a phosphorescent haze, until that part of the sky had the semblance of a whirling mass of nebulae, and ever before me yawned vaster gaps of vacant blackness, and the stars shone fewer and fewer. It seemed as if I moved towards a point between Orion's belt and sword; and the void about that region opened vaster and vaster every second, an incredible gulf of nothingness into which I was falling. Faster and ever faster the universe rushed by, a hurry of whirling motes at last, speeding silently into the void. Stars glowing brighter and brighter, with their circling planets catching the light in a ghostly fashion as I neared them, shone out and vanished again into inexistence; faint comets, clusters of meteorites, winking specks of matter, eddying light-points, whizzed past, some perhaps a hundred millions of miles or so from me at most, few nearer, travelling with unimaginable rapidity, shooting constellations, momentary darts of fire, through that black, enormous night. More than anything else it was like a dusty draught, sunbeam-lit. Broader and wider and deeper grew the starless space, the vacant Beyond, into which I was being drawn. At last a quarter of the heavens was black and blank, and the whole headlong rush of stellar universe closed in behind me like a veil of light that is gathered together. It drove away from me like a monstrous jack-o'-lantern driven by the wind. I had come out into the wilderness of space. Ever the vacant blackness grew broader, until the hosts of the stars seemed only like a swarm of fiery specks hurrying away from me, inconceivably remote, and the darkness, the nothingness and emptiness, was about me on every side. Soon the little universe of matter, the cage of points in which I had begun to be, was dwindling, now to a whirling disc of luminous glittering, and now to one minute disc of hazy light. In a little while it would shrink

to a point, and at last would vanish altogether.

Suddenly feeling came back to me — feeling in the shape of overwhelming terror; such a dread of those dark vastitudes as no words can describe, a passionate resurgence of sympathy and social desire. Were there other souls, invisible to me as I to them, about me in the blackness? or was I indeed, even as I felt, alone? Had I passed out of being into something that was neither being nor not-being? The covering of the body, the covering of matter, had been torn from me, and the hallucinations of companionship and security. Everything was black and silent. I had ceased to be. I was nothing. There was nothing, save only that infinitesimal dot of light that dwindled in the gulf. I strained myself to hear and see, and for a while there was naught but infinite silence, intolerable darkness, horror, and despair.

Then I saw that about the spot of light into which the whole world of matter had shrunk there was a faint glow. And in a band on either side of that the darkness was not absolute. I watched it for ages, as it seemed to me, and through the long waiting the haze grew imperceptibly more distinct. And then about the band appeared an irregular cloud of the faintest, palest brown. I felt a passionate impatience; but the things grew brighter so slowly that they scarce seemed to change. What was unfolding itself? What was this strange reddish dawn in the interminable night of space?

The cloud's shape was grotesque. It seemed to be looped along its lower side into four projecting masses, and, above, it ended in a straight line. What phantom was it? I felt assured I had seen that figure before; but I could not think what, nor where, nor when it was. Then the realisation rushed upon me. *It was a clenched Hand.* I was alone in space, alone with this huge, shadowy Hand, upon which the whole Universe of Matter lay like an unconsidered speck of dust. It seemed as though I watched it through vast periods of time. On the forefinger glittered a ring; and the universe from which I had come was but a spot of light upon the ring's curvature. And the thing that the hand gripped had the likeness of a black rod. Through a long eternity I watched this Hand, with the ring and the rod, marvelling and fearing and waiting helplessly on what might follow. It seemed as though nothing could follow: that I should watch for ever, seeing

only the Hand and the thing it held, and understanding nothing of its import. Was the whole universe but a refracting speck upon some greater Being? Were our worlds but the atoms of another universe, and those again of another, and so on through an endless progression? And what was I? Was I indeed immaterial? A vague persuasion of a body gathering about me came into my suspense. The abysmal darkness about the Hand filled with impalpable suggestions, with uncertain, fluctuating shapes.

Then, suddenly, came a sound, like the sound of a tolling bell: faint, as if infinitely far; muffled, as though heard through thick swathings of darkness: a deep, vibrating resonance, with vast gulfs of silence between each stroke. And the Hand appeared to tighten on the rod. And I saw far above the Hand, towards the apex of the darkness, a circle of dim phosphorescence, a ghostly sphere whence these sounds came throbbing; and at the last stroke the Hand vanished, for the hour had come, and I heard a noise of many waters. But the black rod remained as a great band across the sky. And then a voice, which seemed to run to the uttermost parts of space, spoke, saying, “There will be no more pain.”

At that an almost intolerable gladness and radiance rushed in upon me, and I saw the circle shining white and bright, and the rod black and shining, and many things else distinct and clear. And the circle was the face of the clock, and the rod the rail of my bed. Haddon was standing at the foot, against the rail, with a small pair of scissors on his fingers; and the hands of my clock on the mantel over his shoulder were clasped together over the hour of twelve. Mowbray was washing something in a basin at the octagonal table, and at my side I felt a subdued feeling that could scarce be spoken of as pain.

The operation had not killed me. And I perceived, suddenly, that the dull melancholy of half a year was lifted from my mind.

XIII.

THE SEA RAIDERS.

I.

Until the extraordinary affair at Sidmouth, the peculiar species *Haploteuthis ferox* was known to science only generically, on the strength of a half-digested tentacle obtained near the Azores, and a decaying body pecked by birds and nibbled by fish, found early in 1896 by Mr. Jennings, near Land's End.

In no department of zoological science, indeed, are we quite so much in the dark as with regard to the deep-sea cephalopods. A mere accident, for instance, it was that led to the Prince of Monaco's discovery of nearly a dozen new forms in the summer of 1895, a discovery in which the before-mentioned tentacle was included. It chanced that a cachalot was killed off Terceira by some sperm whalers, and in its last struggles charged almost to the Prince's yacht, missed it, rolled under, and died within twenty yards of his rudder. And in its agony it threw up a number of large objects, which the Prince, dimly perceiving they were strange and important, was, by a happy expedient, able to secure before they sank. He set his screws in motion, and kept them circling in the vortices thus created until a boat could be lowered. And these specimens were whole cephalopods and fragments of cephalopods, some of gigantic proportions, and almost all of them unknown to science!

It would seem, indeed, that these large and agile creatures, living in the middle depths of the sea, must, to a large extent, for ever remain unknown to us, since under water they are too nimble for nets, and it is only by such rare, unlooked-for accidents that specimens can be obtained. In the case of *Haploteuthis ferox*, for instance, we are still altogether ignorant of its habitat, as ignorant as we are of the breeding-ground of the herring or the sea-ways of the salmon. And zoologists are altogether at a loss to account for its sudden appearance on our coast. Possibly it was the stress of a hunger migration that drove it hither out of the deep. But it will be, perhaps, better to avoid necessarily inconclusive discussion, and to proceed at once with our narrative.

The first human being to set eyes upon a living *Haploteuthis* — the first human being to survive, that is, for there can be little doubt now that the wave of bathing fatalities and boating accidents that travelled along the coast of Cornwall and Devon in early May was due to this cause — was a retired tea-dealer of the name of Fison, who was stopping at a Sidmouth boarding-house. It was in the afternoon, and he was walking along the cliff path between Sidmouth and Ladram Bay. The cliffs in this direction are very high, but down the red face of them in one place a kind of ladder staircase has been made. He was near this when his attention was attracted by what at first he thought to be a cluster of birds struggling over a fragment of food that caught the sunlight, and glistened pinkish-white. The tide was right out, and this object was not only far below him, but remote across a broad waste of rock reefs covered with dark seaweed and interspersed with silvery shining tidal pools. And he was, moreover, dazzled by the brightness of the further water.

In a minute, regarding this again, he perceived that his judgment was in fault, for over this struggle circled a number of birds, jackdaws and gulls for the most part, the latter gleaming blindingly when the sunlight smote their wings, and they seemed minute in comparison with it. And his curiosity was, perhaps, aroused all the more strongly because of his first insufficient explanations.

As he had nothing better to do than amuse himself, he decided to make this object, whatever it was, the goal of his afternoon walk, instead of Ladram Bay, conceiving it might perhaps be a great fish of some sort, stranded by some chance, and flapping about in its distress. And so he hurried down the long steep ladder, stopping at intervals of thirty feet or so to take breath and scan the mysterious movement.

At the foot of the cliff he was, of course, nearer his object than he had been; but, on the other hand, it now came up against the incandescent sky, beneath the sun, so as to seem dark and indistinct. Whatever was pinkish of it was now hidden by a skerry of weedy boulders. But he perceived that it was made up of seven rounded bodies distinct or connected, and that the birds kept up a constant croaking and screaming, but seemed afraid to approach it too closely.

Mr. Fison, torn by curiosity, began picking his way across the

wave-worn rocks, and finding the wet seaweed that covered them thickly rendered them extremely slippery, he stopped, removed his shoes and socks, and rolled his trousers above his knees. His object was, of course, merely to avoid stumbling into the rocky pools about him, and perhaps he was rather glad, as all men are, of an excuse to resume, even for a moment, the sensations of his boyhood. At any rate, it is to this, no doubt, that he owes his life.

He approached his mark with all the assurance which the absolute security of this country against all forms of animal life gives its inhabitants. The round bodies moved to and fro, but it was only when he surmounted the skerry of boulders I have mentioned that he realised the horrible nature of the discovery. It came upon him with some suddenness.

The rounded bodies fell apart as he came into sight over the ridge, and displayed the pinkish object to be the partially devoured body of a human being, but whether of a man or woman he was unable to say. And the rounded bodies were new and ghastly-looking creatures, in shape somewhat resembling an octopus, with huge and very long and flexible tentacles, coiled copiously on the ground. The skin had a glistening texture, unpleasant to see, like shiny leather. The downward bend of the tentacle-surrounded mouth, the curious excrescence at the bend, the tentacles, and the large intelligent eyes, gave the creatures a grotesque suggestion of a face. They were the size of a fair-sized swine about the body, and the tentacles seemed to him to be many feet in length. There were, he thinks, seven or eight at least of the creatures. Twenty yards beyond them, amid the surf of the now returning tide, two others were emerging from the sea.

Their bodies lay flatly on the rocks, and their eyes regarded him with evil interest; but it does not appear that Mr. Fison was afraid, or that he realised that he was in any danger. Possibly his confidence is to be ascribed to the limpness of their attitudes. But he was horrified, of course, and intensely excited and indignant, at such revolting creatures preying upon human flesh. He thought they had chanced upon a drowned body. He shouted to them, with the idea of driving them off, and finding they did not budge, cast about him, picked up a big rounded lump of rock, and flung it at one.

And then, slowly uncoiling their tentacles, they all began moving

towards him — creeping at first deliberately, and making a soft purring sound to each other.

In a moment Mr. Fison realised that he was in danger. He shouted again, threw both his boots, and started off, with a leap, forthwith. Twenty yards off he stopped and faced about, judging them slow, and behold! the tentacles of their leader were already pouring over the rocky ridge on which he had just been standing!

At that he shouted again, but this time not threatening, but a cry of dismay, and began jumping, striding, slipping, wading across the uneven expanse between him and the beach. The tall red cliffs seemed suddenly at a vast distance, and he saw, as though they were creatures in another world, two minute workmen engaged in the repair of the ladder-way, and little suspecting the race for life that was beginning below them. At one time he could hear the creatures splashing in the pools not a dozen feet behind him, and once he slipped and almost fell.

They chased him to the very foot of the cliffs, and desisted only when he had been joined by the workmen at the foot of the ladder-way up the cliff. All three of the men pelted them with stones for a time, and then hurried to the cliff top and along the path towards Sidmouth, to secure assistance and a boat, and to rescue the desecrated body from the clutches of these abominable creatures.

II.

And, as if he had not already been in sufficient peril that day, Mr. Fison went with the boat to point out the exact spot of his adventure.

As the tide was down, it required a considerable detour to reach the spot, and when at last they came off the ladder-way, the mangled body had disappeared. The water was now running in, submerging first one slab of slimy rock and then another, and the four men in the boat — the workmen, that is, the boatman, and Mr. Fison — now turned their attention from the bearings off shore to the water beneath the keel.

At first they could see little below them, save a dark jungle of laminaria, with an occasional darting fish. Their minds were set on adventure, and they expressed their disappointment freely. But

presently they saw one of the monsters swimming through the water seaward, with a curious rolling motion that suggested to Mr. Fison the spinning roll of a captive balloon. Almost immediately after, the waving streamers of laminaria were extraordinarily perturbed, parted for a moment, and three of these beasts became darkly visible, struggling for what was probably some fragment of the drowned man. In a moment the copious olive-green ribbons had poured again over this writhing group.

At that all four men, greatly excited, began beating the water with oars and shouting, and immediately they saw a tumultuous movement among the weeds. They desisted to see more clearly, and as soon as the water was smooth, they saw, as it seemed to them, the whole sea bottom among the weeds set with eyes.

"Ugly swine!" cried one of the men. "Why, there's dozens!"

And forthwith the things began to rise through the water about them. Mr. Fison has since described to the writer this startling eruption out of the waving laminaria meadows. To him it seemed to occupy a considerable time, but it is probable that really it was an affair of a few seconds only. For a time nothing but eyes, and then he speaks of tentacles streaming out and parting the weed fronds this way and that. Then these things, growing larger, until at last the bottom was hidden by their intercoiling forms, and the tips of tentacles rose darkly here and there into the air above the swell of the waters.

One came up boldly to the side of the boat, and clinging to this with three of its sucker-set tentacles, threw four others over the gunwale, as if with an intention either of oversetting the boat or of clambering into it. Mr. Fison at once caught up the boat-hook, and, jabbing furiously at the soft tentacles, forced it to desist. He was struck in the back and almost pitched overboard by the boatman, who was using his oar to resist a similar attack on the other side of the boat. But the tentacles on either side at once relaxed their hold, slid out of sight, and splashed into the water.

"We'd better get out of this," said Mr. Fison, who was trembling violently. He went to the tiller, while the boatman and one of the workmen seated themselves and began rowing. The other workman stood up in the fore part of the boat, with the boat-hook, ready to

strike any more tentacles that might appear. Nothing else seems to have been said. Mr. Fison had expressed the common feeling beyond amendment. In a hushed, scared mood, with faces white and drawn, they set about escaping from the position into which they had so recklessly blundered.

But the oars had scarcely dropped into the water before dark, tapering, serpentine ropes had bound them, and were about the rudder; and creeping up the sides of the boat with a looping motion came the suckers again. The men gripped their oars and pulled, but it was like trying to move a boat in a floating raft of weeds. “Help here!” cried the boatman, and Mr. Fison and the second workman rushed to help lug at the oar.

Then the man with the boat-hook — his name was Ewan, or Ewen — sprang up with a curse and began striking downward over the side, as far as he could reach, at the bank of tentacles that now clustered along the boat’s bottom. And, at the same time, the two rowers stood up to get a better purchase for the recovery of their oars. The boatman handed his to Mr. Fison, who lugged desperately, and, meanwhile, the boatman opened a big clasp-knife, and leaning over the side of the boat, began hacking at the spiring arms upon the oar shaft.

Mr. Fison, staggering with the quivering rocking of the boat, his teeth set, his breath coming short, and the veins starting on his hands as he pulled at his oar, suddenly cast his eyes seaward. And there, not fifty yards off, across the long rollers of the incoming tide, was a large boat standing in towards them, with three women and a little child in it. A boatman was rowing, and a little man in a pink-ribboned straw hat and whites stood in the stern hailing them. For a moment, of course, Mr. Fison thought of help, and then he thought of the child. He abandoned his oar forthwith, threw up his arms in a frantic gesture, and screamed to the party in the boat to keep away “for God’s sake!” It says much for the modesty and courage of Mr. Fison that he does not seem to be aware that there was any quality of heroism in his action at this juncture. The oar he had abandoned was at once drawn under, and presently reappeared floating about twenty yards away.

At the same moment Mr. Fison felt the boat under him lurch

violently, and a hoarse scream, a prolonged cry of terror from Hill, the boatman, caused him to forget the party of excursionists altogether. He turned, and saw Hill crouching by the forward row-lock, his face convulsed with terror, and his right arm over the side and drawn tightly down. He gave now a succession of short, sharp cries, "Oh! oh! oh! — oh!" Mr. Fison believes that he must have been hacking at the tentacles below the water-line, and have been grasped by them, but, of course, it is quite impossible to say now certainly what had happened. The boat was heeling over, so that the gunwale was within ten inches of the water, and both Ewan and the other labourer were striking down into the water, with oar and boat-hook, on either side of Hill's arm. Mr. Fison instinctively placed himself to counterpoise them.

Then Hill, who was a burly, powerful man, made a strenuous effort, and rose almost to a standing position. He lifted his arm, indeed, clean out of the water. Hanging to it was a complicated tangle of brown ropes, and the eyes of one of the brutes that had hold of him, glaring straight and resolute, showed momentarily above the surface. The boat heeled more and more, and the green-brown water came pouring in a cascade over the side. Then Hill slipped and fell with his ribs across the side, and his arm and the mass of tentacles about it splashed back into the water. He rolled over; his boot kicked Mr. Fison's knee as that gentleman rushed forward to seize him, and in another moment fresh tentacles had whipped about his waist and neck, and after a brief, convulsive struggle, in which the boat was nearly capsized, Hill was lugged overboard. The boat righted with a violent jerk that all but sent Mr. Fison over the other side, and hid the struggle in the water from his eyes.

He stood staggering to recover his balance for a moment, and as he did so he became aware that the struggle and the inflowing tide had carried them close upon the weedy rocks again. Not four yards off a table of rock still rose in rhythmic movements above the in-wash of the tide. In a moment Mr. Fison seized the oar from Ewan, gave one vigorous stroke, then dropping it, ran to the bows and leapt. He felt his feet slide over the rock, and, by a frantic effort, leapt again towards a further mass. He stumbled over this, came to his knees, and rose again.

“Look out!” cried someone, and a large drab body struck him. He was knocked flat into a tidal pool by one of the workmen, and as he went down he heard smothered, choking cries, that he believed at the time came from Hill. Then he found himself marvelling at the shrillness and variety of Hill’s voice. Someone jumped over him, and a curving rush of foamy water poured over him, and passed. He scrambled to his feet dripping, and without looking seaward, ran as fast as his terror would let him shoreward. Before him, over the flat space of scattered rocks, stumbled the two work-men — one a dozen yards in front of the other.

He looked over his shoulder at last, and seeing that he was not pursued, faced about. He was astonished. From the moment of the rising of the cephalopods out of the water he had been acting too swiftly to fully comprehend his actions. Now it seemed to him as if he had suddenly jumped out of an evil dream.

For there were the sky, cloudless and blazing with the afternoon sun, the sea weltering under its pitiless brightness, the soft creamy foam of the breaking water, and the low, long, dark ridges of rock. The righted boat floated, rising and falling gently on the swell about a dozen yards from shore. Hill and the monsters, all the stress and tumult of that fierce fight for life, had vanished as though they had never been.

Mr. Fison’s heart was beating violently; he was throbbing to the finger-tips, and his breath came deep.

There was something missing. For some seconds he could not think clearly enough what this might be. Sun, sky, sea, rocks — what was it? Then he remembered the boat-load of excursionists. It had vanished. He wondered whether he had imagined it. He turned, and saw the two workmen standing side by side under the projecting masses of the tall pink cliffs. He hesitated whether he should make one last attempt to save the man Hill. His physical excitement seemed to desert him suddenly, and leave him aimless and helpless. He turned shoreward, stumbling and wading towards his two companions.

He looked back again, and there were now two boats floating, and the one farthest out at sea pitched clumsily, bottom upward.

III.

So it was *Haploteuthis ferox* made its appearance upon the Devonshire coast. So far, this has been its most serious aggression. Mr. Fison's account, taken together with the wave of boating and bathing casualties to which I have already alluded, and the absence of fish from the Cornish coasts that year, points clearly to a shoal of these voracious deep-sea monsters prowling slowly along the sub-tidal coast-line. Hunger migration has, I know, been suggested as the force that drove them hither; but, for my own part, I prefer to believe the alternative theory of Hemsley. Hemsley holds that a pack or shoal of these creatures may have become enamoured of human flesh by the accident of a foundered ship sinking among them, and have wandered in search of it out of their accustomed zone; first waylaying and following ships, and so coming to our shores in the wake of the Atlantic traffic. But to discuss Hemsley's cogent and admirably-stated arguments would be out of place here.

It would seem that the appetites of the shoal were satisfied by the catch of eleven people — for, so far as can be ascertained, there were ten people in the second boat, and certainly these creatures gave no further signs of their presence off Sidmouth that day. The coast between Seaton and Budleigh Salterton was patrolled all that evening and night by four Preventive Service boats, the men in which were armed with harpoons and cutlasses, and as the evening advanced, a number of more or less similarly equipped expeditions, organised by private individuals, joined them. Mr. Fison took no part in any of these expeditions.

About midnight excited hails were heard from a boat about a couple of miles out at sea to the south-east of Sidmouth, and a lantern was seen waving in a strange manner to and fro and up and down. The nearer boats at once hurried towards the alarm. The venturesome occupants of the boat — a seaman, a curate, and two schoolboys — had actually seen the monsters passing under their boat. The creatures, it seems, like most deep-sea organisms, were phosphorescent, and they had been floating, five fathoms deep or so, like creatures of moonshine through the blackness of the water, their tentacles retracted and as if asleep, rolling over and over, and moving

slowly in a wedge-like formation towards the south-east.

These people told their story in gesticulated fragments, as first one boat drew alongside and then another. At last there was a little fleet of eight or nine boats collected together, and from them a tumult, like the chatter of a market-place, rose into the stillness of the night. There was little or no disposition to pursue the shoal, the people had neither weapons nor experience for such a dubious chase, and presently — even with a certain relief, it may be — the boats turned shoreward.

And now to tell what is perhaps the most astonishing fact in this whole astonishing raid. We have not the slightest knowledge of the subsequent movements of the shoal, although the whole south-west coast was now alert for it. But it may, perhaps, be significant that a cachalot was stranded off Sark on June 3. Two weeks and three days after this Sidmouth affair, a living *Haploteuthis* came ashore on Calais sands. It was alive, because several witnesses saw its tentacles moving in a convulsive way. But it is probable that it was dying. A gentleman named Pouchet obtained a rifle and shot it.

That was the last appearance of a living *Haploteuthis*. No others were seen on the French coast. On the 15th of June a dead carcass, almost complete, was washed ashore near Torquay, and a few days later a boat from the Marine Biological station, engaged in dredging off Plymouth, picked up a rotting specimen, slashed deeply with a cutlass wound. How the former had come by its death it is impossible to say. And on the last day of June, Mr. Egbert Caine, an artist, bathing near Newlyn, threw up his arms, shrieked, and was drawn under. A friend bathing with him made no attempt to save him, but swam at once for the shore. This is the last fact to tell of this extraordinary raid from the deeper sea. Whether it is really the last of these horrible creatures it is, as yet, premature to say. But it is believed, and certainly it is to be hoped, that they have returned now, and returned for good, to the sunless depths of the middle seas, out of which they have so strangely and so mysteriously arisen.

XIV.

THE OBLITERATED MAN.

I was — you shall hear immediately why I am not now — Egbert Craddock Cummins. The name remains. I am still (Heaven help me!) Dramatic Critic to the *Fiery Cross*. What I shall be in a little while I do not know. I write in great trouble and confusion of mind. I will do what I can to make myself clear in the face of terrible difficulties. You must bear with me a little. When a man is rapidly losing his own identity, he naturally finds a difficulty in expressing himself. I will make it perfectly plain in a minute, when once I get my grip upon the story. Let me see — where *am* I? I wish I knew. Ah, I have it! Dead self! Egbert Craddock Cummins!

In the past I should have disliked writing anything quite so full of "I" as this story must be. It is full of "I's" before and behind, like the beast in Revelation — the one with a head like a calf, I am afraid. But my tastes have changed since I became a Dramatic Critic and studied the masters — G.A.S., G.B.S., G.R.S., and the others. Everything has changed since then. At least the story is about myself — so that there is some excuse for me. And it is really not egotism, because, as I say, since those days my identity has undergone an entire alteration.

That past!… I was — in those days — rather a nice fellow, rather shy — taste for grey in my clothes, weedy little moustache, face "interesting," slight stutter which I had caught in my early life from a schoolfellow. Engaged to a very nice girl, named Delia. Fairly new, she was — cigarettes — liked me because I was human and original. Considered I was like Lamb — on the strength of the stutter, I believe. Father, an eminent authority on postage stamps. She read a great deal in the British Museum. (A perfect pairing ground for literary people, that British Museum — you should read George Egerton and Justin Huntly M'Carthy and Gissing and the rest of them.) We loved in our intellectual way, and shared the brightest hopes. (All gone now.) And her father liked me because I seemed honestly eager to hear about stamps. She had no mother. Indeed, I had the happiest prospects a young man could have. I never went to theatres in those days. My Aunt Charlotte before she died had told

me not to.

Then Barnaby, the editor of the *Fiery Cross*, made me — in spite of my spasmodic efforts to escape — Dramatic Critic. He is a fine, healthy man, Barnaby, with an enormous head of frizzy black hair and a convincing manner, and he caught me on the staircase going to see Wembly. He had been dining, and was more than usually buoyant. "Hullo, Cummins!" he said. "The very man I want!" He caught me by the shoulder or the collar or something, ran me up the little passage, and flung me over the waste-paper basket into the arm-chair in his office. "Pray be seated," he said, as he did so. Then he ran across the room and came back with some pink and yellow tickets and pushed them into my hand. "Opera Comique," he said, "Thursday; Friday, the Surrey; Saturday, the Frivolity. That's all, I think."

"But—" I began.

"Glad you're free," he said, snatching some proofs off the desk and beginning to read.

"I don't quite understand," I said.

"*Eigh*?" he said, at the top of his voice, as though he thought I had gone and was startled at my remark.

"Do you want me to criticise these plays?"

"Do something with 'em… Did you think it was a treat?"

"But I can't."

"Did you call me a fool?"

"Well, I've never been to a theatre in my life."

"Virgin soil."

"But I don't know anything about it, you know."

"That's just it. New view. No habits. No *clichés* in stock. Ours is a live paper, not a bag of tricks. None of your clockwork professional journalism in this office. And I can rely on your integrity — —"

"But I've conscientious scruples — —"

He caught me up suddenly and put me outside his door. "Go and talk to
Wembly about that," he said. "He'll explain."

As I stood perplexed, he opened the door again, said, "I forgot

this," thrust a fourth ticket into my hand (it was for that night — in twenty minutes' time) and slammed the door upon me. His expression was quite calm, but I caught his eye.

I hate arguments. I decided that I would take his hint and become (to my own destruction) a Dramatic Critic. I walked slowly down the passage to Wembly. That Barnaby has a remarkable persuasive way. He has made few suggestions during our very pleasant intercourse of four years that he has not ultimately won me round to adopting. It may be, of course, that I am of a yielding disposition; certainly I am too apt to take my colour from my circumstances. It is, indeed, to my unfortunate susceptibility to vivid impressions that all my misfortunes are due. I have already alluded to the slight stammer I had acquired from a schoolfellow in my youth. However, this is a digression… I went home in a cab to dress.

I will not trouble the reader with my thoughts about the first-night audience, strange assembly as it is, — those I reserve for my Memoirs, — nor the humiliating story of how I got lost during the *entr'acte* in a lot of red plush passages, and saw the third act from the gallery. The only point upon which I wish to lay stress was the remarkable effect of the acting upon me. You must remember I had lived a quiet and retired life, and had never been to the theatre before, and that I am extremely sensitive to vivid impressions. At the risk of repetition I must insist upon these points.

The first effect was a profound amazement, not untinctured by alarm. The phenomenal unnaturalness of acting is a thing discounted in the minds of most people by early visits to the theatre. They get used to the fantastic gestures, the flamboyant emotions, the weird mouthings, melodious snortings, agonising yelps, lip-gnawings, glaring horrors, and other emotional symbolism of the stage. It becomes at last a mere deaf-and-dumb language to them, which they read intelligently *pari passu* with the hearing of the dialogue. But all this was new to me. The thing was called a modern comedy, the people were supposed to be English and were dressed like fashionable Americans of the current epoch, and I fell into the natural error of supposing that the actors were trying to represent human beings. I looked round on my first-night audience with a kind of wonder, discovered — as all new Dramatic Critics do — that it

rested with me to reform the Drama, and, after a supper choked with emotion, went off to the office to write a column, piebald with "new paragraphs" (as all my stuff is — it fills out so) and purple with indignation. Barnaby was delighted.

But I could not sleep that night. I dreamt of actors — actors glaring, actors smiting their chests, actors flinging out a handful of extended fingers, actors smiling bitterly, laughing despairingly, falling hopelessly, dying idiotically. I got up at eleven with a slight headache, read my notice in the *Fiery Cross*, breakfasted, and went back to my room to shave, (It's my habit to do so.) Then an odd thing happened. I could not find my razor. Suddenly it occurred to me that I had not unpacked it the day before.

"Ah!" said I, in front of the looking-glass. Then "Hullo!"

Quite involuntarily, when I had thought of my portmanteau, I had flung up the left arm (fingers fully extended) and clutched at my diaphragm with my right hand. I am an acutely self-conscious man at all times. The gesture struck me as absolutely novel for me. I repeated it, for my own satisfaction. "Odd!" Then (rather puzzled) I turned to my portmanteau.

After shaving, my mind reverted to the acting I had seen, and I entertained myself before the cheval glass with some imitations of Jafferay's more exaggerated gestures. "Really, one might think it a disease," I said— "Stage-Walkitis!" (There's many a truth spoken in jest.) Then, if I remember rightly, I went off to see Wembly, and afterwards lunched at the British Museum with Delia. We actually spoke about our prospects, in the light of my new appointment.

But that appointment was the beginning of my downfall. From that day I necessarily became a persistent theatre-goer, and almost insensibly I began to change. The next thing I noticed after the gesture about the razor was to catch myself bowing ineffably when I met Delia, and stooping in an old-fashioned, courtly way over her hand. Directly I caught myself, I straightened myself up and became very uncomfortable. I remember she looked at me curiously. Then, in the office, I found myself doing "nervous business," fingers on teeth, when Barnaby asked me a question I could not very well answer. Then, in some trifling difference with Delia, I clasped my hand to my brow. And I pranced through my social transactions at times

singularly like an actor! I tried not to — no one could be more keenly alive to the arrant absurdity of the histrionic bearing. And I did!

It began to dawn on me what it all meant. The acting, I saw, was too much for my delicately-strung nervous system. I have always, I know, been too amenable to the suggestions of my circumstances. Night after night of concentrated attention to the conventional attitudes and intonation of the English stage was gradually affecting my speech and carriage. I was giving way to the infection of sympathetic imitation. Night after night my plastic nervous system took the print of some new amazing gesture, some new emotional exaggeration — and retained it. A kind of theatrical veneer threatened to plate over and obliterate my private individuality altogether. I saw myself in a kind of vision. Sitting by myself one night, my new self seemed to me to glide, posing and gesticulating, across the room. He clutched his throat, he opened his fingers, he opened his legs in walking like a high-class marionette. He went from attitude to attitude. He might have been clockwork. Directly after this I made an ineffectual attempt to resign my theatrical work. But Barnaby persisted in talking about the Polywhiddle Divorce all the time I was with him, and I could get no opportunity of saying what I wished.

And then Delia's manner began to change towards me. The ease of our intercourse vanished. I felt she was learning to dislike me. I grinned, and capered, and scowled, and posed at her in a thousand ways, and knew — with what a voiceless agony! — that I did it all the time. I tried to resign again, and Barnaby talked about "X" and "Z" and "Y" in the *New Review,* and gave me a strong cigar to smoke, and so routed me. And then I walked up the Assyrian Gallery in the manner of Irving to meet Delia, and so precipitated the crisis.

"Ah! — *Dear*!" I said, with more sprightliness and emotion in my voice than had ever been in all my life before I became (to my own undoing) a Dramatic Critic.

She held out her hand rather coldly, scrutinising my face as she did so. I prepared, with a new-won grace, to walk by her side. "Egbert," she said, standing still, and thought. Then she looked at me.

I said nothing. I felt what was coming. I tried to be the old Egbert

Craddock Cummins of shambling gait and stammering sincerity, whom she loved, but I felt even as I did so that I was a new thing, a thing of surging emotions and mysterious fixity — like no human being that ever lived, except upon the stage. "Egbert," she said, "you are not yourself."

"Ah!" Involuntarily I clutched my diaphragm and averted my head (as is the way with them).

"There!" she said.

"*What do you mean*?" I said, whispering in vocal italics — you know how they do it — turning on her, perplexity on face, right hand down, left on brow. I knew quite well what she meant. I knew quite well the dramatic unreality of my behaviour. But I struggled against it in vain. "What do you mean?" I said, and, in a kind of hoarse whisper, "I don't understand!"

She really looked as though she disliked me. "What do you keep on posing for?" she said. "I don't like it. You didn't use to."

"Didn't use to!" I said slowly, repeating this twice. I glared up and down the gallery with short, sharp glances. "We are alone," I said swiftly. "*Listen!*" I poked my forefinger towards her, and glared at her. "I am under a curse."

I saw her hand tighten upon her sunshade. "You are under some bad influence or other," said Delia. "You should give it up. I never knew anyone change as you have done."

"Delia!" I said, lapsing into the pathetic. "Pity me, Augh! Delia! *Pit* — y me!"

She eyed me critically. "*Why* you keep playing the fool like this I don't know," she said. "Anyhow, I really cannot go about with a man who behaves as you do. You made us both ridiculous on Wednesday. Frankly, I dislike you, as you are now. I met you here to tell you so — as it's about the only place where we can be sure of being alone together — —"

"Delia!" said I, with intensity, knuckles of clenched hands white. "You don't mean — —"

"I do," said Delia. "A woman's lot is sad enough at the best of times. But with you — —"

I clapped my hand on my brow.

"So, good-bye," said Delia, without emotion.

“Oh, Delia!” I said. “Not *this*?”

“Good-bye, Mr. Cummins,” she said.

By a violent effort I controlled myself and touched her hand. I tried to say some word of explanation to her. She looked into my working face and winced. “I *must* do it,” she said hopelessly. Then she turned from me and began walking rapidly down the gallery.

Heavens! How the human agony cried within me! I loved Delia. But nothing found expression — I was already too deeply crusted with my acquired self.

“Good-baye!” I said at last, watching her retreating figure. How I hated myself for doing it! After she had vanished, I repeated in a dreamy way, “Good-baye!” looking hopelessly round me. Then, with a kind of heart-broken cry, I shook my clenched fists in the air, staggered to the pedestal of a winged figure, buried my face in my arms, and made my shoulders heave. Something within me said “Ass!” as I did so. (I had the greatest difficulty in persuading the Museum policeman, who was attracted by my cry of agony, that I was not intoxicated, but merely suffering from a transient indisposition.)

But even this great sorrow has not availed to save me from my fate. I see it; everyone sees it: I grow more “theatrical” every day. And no one could be more painfully aware of the pungent silliness of theatrical ways. The quiet, nervous, but pleasing E.C. Cummins vanishes. I cannot save him. I am driven like a dead leaf before the winds of March. My tailor even enters into the spirit of my disorder. He has a peculiar sense of what is fitting. I tried to get a dull grey suit from him this spring, and he foisted a brilliant blue upon me, and I see he has put braid down the sides of my new dress trousers. My hairdresser insists upon giving me a “wave.”

I am beginning to associate with actors. I detest them, but it is only in their company that I can feel I am not glaringly conspicuous. Their talk infects me. I notice a growing tendency to dramatic brevity, to dashes and pauses in my style, to a punctuation of bows and attitudes. Barnaby has remarked it too. I offended Wembly by calling him “Dear Boy” yesterday. I dread the end, but I cannot escape from it.

The fact is, I am being obliterated. Living a grey, retired life all

my youth, I came to the theatre a delicate sketch of a man, a thing of tints and faint lines. Their gorgeous colouring has effaced me altogether. People forget how much mode of expression, method of movement, are a matter of contagion. I have heard of stage-struck people before, and thought it a figure of speech. I spoke of it jestingly, as a disease. It is no jest. It is a disease. And I have got it badly! Deep down within me I protest against the wrong done to my personality — unavailingly. For three hours or more a week I have to go and concentrate my attention on some fresh play, and the suggestions of the drama strengthen their awful hold upon me. My manners grow so flamboyant, my passions so professional, that I doubt, as I said at the outset, whether it is really myself that behaves in such a manner. I feel merely the core to this dramatic casing, that grows thicker and presses upon me — me and mine. I feel like King John's abbot in his cope of lead.

I doubt, indeed, whether I should not abandon the struggle altogether — leave this sad world of ordinary life for which I am so ill fitted, abandon the name of Cummins for some professional pseudonym, complete my self-effacement, and — a thing of tricks and tatters, of posing and pretence — go upon the stage. It seems my only resort— "to hold the mirror up to Nature." For in the ordinary life, I will confess, no one now seems to regard me as both sane and sober. Only upon the stage, I feel convinced, will people take me seriously. That will be the end of it. I *know* that will be the end of it. And yet … I will frankly confess … all that marks off your actor from your common man … I *detest*. I am still largely of my Aunt Charlotte's opinion, that play-acting is unworthy of a pure-minded man's attention, much more participation. Even now I would resign my dramatic criticism and try a rest. Only I can't get hold of Barnaby. Letters of resignation he never notices. He says it is against the etiquette of journalism to write to your Editor. And when I go to see him, he gives me another big cigar and some strong whisky and soda, and then something always turns up to prevent my explanation.

XV.

THE PLATTNER STORY.

Whether the story of Gottfried Plattner is to be credited or not is a pretty question in the value of evidence. On the one hand, we have seven witnesses — to be perfectly exact, we have six and a half pairs of eyes, and one undeniable fact; and on the other we have — what is it? — prejudice, common-sense, the inertia of opinion. Never were there seven more honest-seeming witnesses; never was there a more undeniable fact than the inversion of Gottfried Plattner's anatomical structure, and — never was there a more preposterous story than the one they have to tell! The most preposterous part of the story is the worthy Gottfried's contribution (for I count him as one of the seven). Heaven forbid that I should be led into giving countenance to superstition by a passion for impartiality, and so come to share the fate of Eusapia's patrons! Frankly, I believe there is something crooked about this business of Gottfried Plattner; but what that crooked factor is, I will admit as frankly, I do not know. I have been surprised at the credit accorded to the story in the most unexpected and authoritative quarters. The fairest way to the reader, however, will be for me to tell it without further comment.

Gottfried Plattner is, in spite of his name, a freeborn Englishman. His father was an Alsatian who came to England in the 'sixties, married a respectable English girl of unexceptionable antecedents, and died, after a wholesome and uneventful life (devoted, I understand, chiefly to the laying of parquet flooring), in 1887. Gottfried's age is seven-and-twenty. He is, by virtue of his heritage of three languages, Modern Languages Master in a small private school in the south of England. To the casual observer he is singularly like any other Modern Languages Master in any other small private school. His costume is neither very costly nor very fashionable, but, on the other hand, it is not markedly cheap or shabby; his complexion, like his height and his bearing, is inconspicuous. You would notice, perhaps, that, like the majority of people, his face was not absolutely symmetrical, his right eye a little larger than the left, and his jaw a trifle heavier on the right side. If you, as an ordinary careless person, were to bare his chest and feel

his heart beating, you would probably find it quite like the heart of anyone else. But here you and the trained observer would part company. If you found his heart quite ordinary, the trained observer would find it quite otherwise. And once the thing was pointed out to you, you too would perceive the peculiarity easily enough. It is that Gottfried's heart beats on the right side of his body.

Now, that is not the only singularity of Gottfried's structure, although it is the only one that would appeal to the untrained mind. Careful sounding of Gottfried's internal arrangements by a well-known surgeon seems to point to the fact that all the other unsymmetrical parts of his body are similarly misplaced. The right lobe of his liver is on the left side, the left on his right; while his lungs, too, are similarly contraposed. What is still more singular, unless Gottfried is a consummate actor, we must believe that his right hand has recently become his left. Since the occurrences we are about to consider (as impartially as possible), he has found the utmost difficulty in writing, except from right to left across the paper with his left hand. He cannot throw with his right hand, he is perplexed at meal-times between knife and fork, and his ideas of the rule of the road — he is a cyclist — are still a dangerous confusion. And there is not a scrap of evidence to show that before these occurrences Gottfried was at all left-handed.

There is yet another wonderful fact in this preposterous business. Gottfried produces three photographs of himself. You have him at the age of five or six, thrusting fat legs at you from under a plaid frock, and scowling. In that photograph his left eye is a little larger than his right, and his jaw is a trifle heavier on the left side. This is the reverse of his present living condition. The photograph of Gottfried at fourteen seems to contradict these facts, but that is because it is one of those cheap "Gem" photographs that were then in vogue, taken direct upon metal, and therefore reversing things just as a looking-glass would. The third photograph represents him at one-and-twenty, and confirms the record of the others. There seems here evidence of the strongest confirmatory character that Gottfried has exchanged his left side for his right. Yet how a human being can be so changed, short of a fantastic and pointless miracle, it is exceedingly hard to suggest.

In one way, of course, these facts might be explicable on the supposition that Plattner has undertaken an elaborate mystification, on the strength of his heart's displacement. Photographs may be faked, and left-handedness imitated. But the character of the man does not lend itself to any such theory. He is quiet, practical, unobtrusive, and thoroughly sane, from the Nordau standpoint. He likes beer, and smokes moderately, takes walking exercise daily, and has a healthily high estimate of the value of his teaching. He has a good but untrained tenor voice, and takes a pleasure in singing airs of a popular and cheerful character. He is fond, but not morbidly fond, of reading, — chiefly fiction pervaded with a vaguely pious optimism, — sleeps well, and rarely dreams. He is, in fact, the very last person to evolve a fantastic fable. Indeed, so far from forcing this story upon the world, he has been singularly reticent on the matter. He meets enquirers with a certain engaging — bashfulness is almost the word, that disarms the most suspicious. He seems genuinely ashamed that anything so unusual has occurred to him.

It is to be regretted that Plattner's aversion to the idea of post-mortem dissection may postpone, perhaps for ever, the positive proof that his entire body has had its left and right sides transposed. Upon that fact mainly the credibility of his story hangs. There is no way of taking a man and moving him about in space as ordinary people understand space, that will result in our changing his sides. Whatever you do, his right is still his right, his left his left. You can do that with a perfectly thin and flat thing, of course. If you were to cut a figure out of paper, any figure with a right and left side, you could change its sides simply by lifting it up and turning it over. But with a solid it is different. Mathematical theorists tell us that the only way in which the right and left sides of a solid body can be changed is by taking that body clean out of space as we know it, — taking it out of ordinary existence, that is, and turning it somewhere outside space. This is a little abstruse, no doubt, but anyone with any knowledge of mathematical theory will assure the reader of its truth. To put the thing in technical language, the curious inversion of Plattner's right and left sides is proof that he has moved out of our space into what is called the Fourth Dimension, and that he has returned again to our world. Unless we choose to consider ourselves the victims of an

elaborate and motiveless fabrication, we are almost bound to believe that this has occurred.

So much for the tangible facts. We come now to the account of the phenomena that attended his temporary disappearance from the world. It appears that in the Sussexville Proprietary School, Plattner not only discharged the duties of Modern Languages Master, but also taught chemistry, commercial geography, bookkeeping, shorthand, drawing, and any other additional subject to which the changing fancies of the boys' parents might direct attention. He knew little or nothing of these various subjects, but in secondary as distinguished from Board or elementary schools, knowledge in the teacher is, very properly, by no means so necessary as high moral character and gentlemanly tone. In chemistry he was particularly deficient, knowing, he says, nothing beyond the Three Gases (whatever the three gases may be). As, however, his pupils began by knowing nothing, and derived all their information from him, this caused him (or anyone) but little inconvenience for several terms. Then a little boy named Whibble joined the school, who had been educated (it seems) by some mischievous relative into an inquiring habit of mind. This little boy followed Plattner's lessons with marked and sustained interest, and in order to exhibit his zeal on the subject, brought, at various times, substances for Plattner to analyse. Plattner, flattered by this evidence of his power of awakening interest, and trusting to the boy's ignorance, analysed these, and even, made general statements as to their composition. Indeed, he was so far stimulated by his pupil as to obtain a work upon analytical chemistry, and study it during his supervision of the evening's preparation. He was surprised to find chemistry quite an interesting subject.

So far the story is absolutely commonplace. But now the greenish powder comes upon the scene. The source of that greenish powder seems, unfortunately, lost. Master Whibble tells a tortuous story of finding it done up in a packet in a disused limekiln near the Downs. It would have been an excellent thing for Plattner, and possibly for Master Whibble's family, if a match could have been applied to that powder there and then. The young gentleman certainly did not bring it to school in a packet, but in a common eight-ounce graduated medicine bottle, plugged with masticated newspaper. He gave it to

Plattner at the end of the afternoon school. Four boys had been detained after school prayers in order to complete some neglected tasks, and Plattner was supervising these in the small class-room in which the chemical teaching was conducted. The appliances for the practical teaching of chemistry in the Sussexville Proprietary School, as in most small schools in this country, are characterised by a severe simplicity. They are kept in a small cupboard standing in a recess, and having about the same capacity as a common travelling trunk. Plattner, being bored with his passive superintendence, seems to have welcomed the intervention of Whibble with his green powder as an agreeable diversion, and, unlocking this cupboard, proceeded at once with his analytical experiments. Whibble sat, luckily for himself, at a safe distance, regarding him. The four malefactors, feigning a profound absorption in their work, watched him furtively with the keenest interest. For even within the limits of the Three Gases, Plattner's practical chemistry was, I understand, temerarious.

They are practically unanimous in their account of Plattner's proceedings. He poured a little of the green powder into a test-tube, and tried the substance with water, hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, and sulphuric acid in succession. Getting no result, he emptied out a little heap — nearly half the bottleful, in fact — upon a slate and tried a match. He held the medicine bottle in his left hand. The stuff began to smoke and melt, and then exploded with deafening violence and a blinding flash.

The five boys, seeing the flash and being prepared for catastrophes, ducked below their desks, and were none of them seriously hurt. The window was blown out into the playground, and the blackboard on its easel was upset. The slate was smashed to atoms. Some plaster fell from the ceiling. No other damage was done to the school edifice or appliances, and the boys at first, seeing nothing of Plattner, fancied he was knocked down and lying out of their sight below the desks. They jumped out of their places to go to his assistance, and were amazed to find the space empty. Being still confused by the sudden violence of the report, they hurried to the open door, under the impression that he must have been hurt, and have rushed out of the room. But Carson, the foremost, nearly collided in the doorway with the principal, Mr. Lidgett.

Mr. Lidgett is a corpulent, excitable man with one eye. The boys describe him as stumbling into the room mouthing some of those tempered expletives irritable schoolmasters accustom themselves to use — lest worse befall. “Wretched mumchancer!” he said. “Where’s Mr. Plattner?” The boys are agreed on the very words. (“Wobbler,” “snivelling puppy,” and “mumchancer” are, it seems, among the ordinary small change of Mr. Lidgett’s scholastic commerce.)

Where’s Mr. Plattner? That was a question that was to be repeated many times in the next few days. It really seemed as though that frantic hyperbole, “blown to atoms,” had for once realised itself. There was not a visible particle of Plattner to be seen; not a drop of blood nor a stitch of clothing to be found. Apparently he had been blown clean out of existence and left not a wrack behind. Not so much as would cover a sixpenny piece, to quote a proverbial expression! The evidence of his absolute disappearance as a consequence of that explosion is indubitable.

It is not necessary to enlarge here upon the commotion excited in the Sussexville Proprietary School, and in Sussexville and elsewhere, by this event. It is quite possible, indeed, that some of the readers of these pages may recall the hearing of some remote and dying version of that excitement during the last summer holidays. Lidgett, it would seem, did everything in his power to suppress and minimise the story. He instituted a penalty of twenty-five lines for any mention of Plattner’s name among the boys, and stated in the schoolroom that he was clearly aware of his assistant’s whereabouts. He was afraid, he explains, that the possibility of an explosion happening, in spite of the elaborate precautions taken to minimise the practical teaching of chemistry, might injure the reputation of the school; and so might any mysterious quality in Plattner’s departure. Indeed, he did everything in his power to make the occurrence seem as ordinary as possible. In particular, he cross-examined the five eye-witnesses of the occurrence so searchingly that they began to doubt the plain evidence of their senses. But, in spite of these efforts, the tale, in a magnified and distorted state, made a nine days’ wonder in the district, and several parents withdrew their sons on colourable pretexts. Not the least remarkable point in the matter is the fact that a large number of people in the neighbourhood dreamed singularly

vivid dreams of Plattner during the period of excitement before his return, and that these dreams had a curious uniformity. In almost all of them Plattner was seen, sometimes singly, sometimes in company, wandering about through a coruscating iridescence. In all cases his face was pale and distressed, and in some he gesticulated towards the dreamer. One or two of the boys, evidently under the influence of nightmare, fancied that Plattner approached them with remarkable swiftness, and seemed to look closely into their very eyes. Others fled with Plattner from the pursuit of vague and extraordinary creatures of a globular shape. But all these fancies were forgotten in inquiries and speculations when on the Wednesday next but one after the Monday of the explosion, Plattner returned.

The circumstances of his return were as singular as those of his departure. So far as Mr. Lidgett's somewhat choleric outline can be filled in from Plattner's hesitating statements, it would appear that on Wednesday evening, towards the hour of sunset, the former gentleman, having dismissed evening preparation, was engaged in his garden, picking and eating strawberries, a fruit of which he is inordinately fond. It is a large old-fashioned garden, secured from observation, fortunately, by a high and ivy-covered red-brick wall. Just as he was stooping over a particularly prolific plant, there was a flash in the air and a heavy thud, and before he could look round, some heavy body struck him violently from behind. He was pitched forward, crushing the strawberries he held in his hand, and that so roughly, that his silk hat — Mr. Lidgett adheres to the older ideas of scholastic costume — was driven violently down upon his forehead, and almost over one eye. This heavy missile, which slid over him sideways and collapsed into a sitting posture among the strawberry plants, proved to be our long-lost Mr. Gottfried Plattner, in an extremely dishevelled condition. He was collarless and hatless, his linen was dirty, and there was blood upon his hands. Mr. Lidgett was so indignant and surprised that he remained on all-fours, and with his hat jammed down on his eye, while he expostulated vehemently with Plattner for his disrespectful and unaccountable conduct.

This scarcely idyllic scene completes what I may call the exterior version of the Plattner story — its exoteric aspect. It is quite unnecessary to enter here into all the details of his dismissal by Mr.

Lidgett. Such details, with the full names and dates and references, will be found in the larger report of these occurrences that was laid before the Society for the Investigation of Abnormal Phenomena. The singular transposition of Plattner's right and left sides was scarcely observed for the first day or so, and then first in connection with his disposition to write from right to left across the blackboard. He concealed rather than ostended this curious confirmatory circumstance, as he considered it would unfavourably affect his prospects in a new situation. The displacement of his heart was discovered some months after, when he was having a tooth extracted under anaesthetics. He then, very unwillingly, allowed a cursory surgical examination to be made of himself, with a view to a brief account in the *Journal of Anatomy*. That exhausts the statement of the material facts; and we may now go on to consider Plattner's account of the matter.

But first let us clearly differentiate between the preceding portion of this story and what is to follow. All I have told thus far is established by such evidence as even a criminal lawyer would approve. Every one of the witnesses is still alive; the reader, if he have the leisure, may hunt the lads out to-morrow, or even brave the terrors of the redoubtable Lidgett, and cross-examine and trap and test to his heart's content; Gottfried Plattner himself, and his twisted heart and his three photographs, are producible. It may be taken as proved that he did disappear for nine days as the consequence of an explosion; that he returned almost as violently, under circumstances in their nature annoying to Mr. Lidgett, whatever the details of those circumstances may be; and that he returned inverted, just as a reflection returns from a mirror. From the last fact, as I have already stated, it follows almost inevitably that Plattner, during those nine days, must have been in some state of existence altogether out of space. The evidence to these statements is, indeed, far stronger than that upon which most murderers are hanged. But for his own particular account of where he had been, with its confused explanations and wellnigh self-contradictory details, we have only Mr. Gottfried Plattner's word. I do not wish to discredit that, but I must point out — what so many writers upon obscure psychic phenomena fail to do — that we are passing here from the practically

undeniable to that kind of matter which any reasonable man is entitled to believe or reject as he thinks proper. The previous statements render it plausible; its discordance with common experience tilts it towards the incredible. I would prefer not to sway the beam of the reader's judgment either way, but simply to tell the story as Plattner told it me.

He gave me his narrative, I may state, at my house at Chislehurst, and so soon as he had left me that evening, I went into my study and wrote down everything as I remembered it. Subsequently he was good enough to read over a type-written copy, so that its substantial correctness is undeniable.

He states that at the moment of the explosion he distinctly thought he was killed. He felt lifted off his feet and driven forcibly backward. It is a curious fact for psychologists that he thought clearly during his backward flight, and wondered whether he should hit the chemistry cupboard or the blackboard easel. His heels struck ground, and he staggered and fell heavily into a sitting position on something soft and firm. For a moment the concussion stunned him. He became aware at once of a vivid scent of singed hair, and he seemed to hear the voice of Lidgett asking for him. You will understand that for a time his mind was greatly confused.

At first he was under the impression that he was still standing in the class-room. He perceived quite distinctly the surprise of the boys and the entry of Mr. Lidgett. He is quite positive upon that score. He did not hear their remarks; but that he ascribed to the deafening effect of the experiment. Things about him seemed curiously dark and faint, but his mind explained that on the obvious but mistaken idea that the explosion had engendered a huge volume of dark smoke. Through the dimness the figures of Lidgett and the boys moved, as faint and silent as ghosts. Plattner's face still tingled with the stinging heat of the flash. He, was, he says, "all muddled." His first definite thoughts seem to have been of his personal safety. He thought he was perhaps blinded and deafened. He felt his limbs and face in a gingerly manner. Then his perceptions grew clearer, and he was astonished to miss the old familiar desks and other schoolroom furniture about him. Only dim, uncertain, grey shapes stood in the place of these. Then came a thing that made him shout aloud, and

awoke his stunned faculties to instant activity. *Two of the boys, gesticulating, walked one after the other clean through him*! Neither manifested the slightest consciousness of his presence. It is difficult to imagine the sensation he felt. They came against him, he says, with no more force than a wisp of mist.

Plattner's first thought after that was that he was dead. Having been brought up with thoroughly sound views in these matters, however, he was a little surprised to find his body still about him. His second conclusion was that he was not dead, but that the others were: that the explosion had destroyed the Sussexville Proprietary School and every soul in it except himself. But that, too, was scarcely satisfactory. He was thrown back upon astonished observation.

Everything about him was profoundly dark: at first it seemed to have an altogether ebony blackness. Overhead was a black firmament. The only touch of light in the scene was a faint greenish glow at the edge of the sky in one direction, which threw into prominence a horizon of undulating black hills. This, I say, was his impression at first. As his eye grew accustomed to the darkness, he began to distinguish a faint quality of differentiating greenish colour in the circumambient night. Against this background the furniture and occupants of the class-room, it seems, stood out like phosphorescent spectres, faint and impalpable. He extended his hand, and thrust it without an effort through the wall of the room by the fireplace.

He describes himself as making a strenuous effort to attract attention. He shouted to Lidgett, and tried to seize the boys as they went to and fro. He only desisted from these attempts when Mrs. Lidgett, whom he (as an Assistant Master) naturally disliked, entered the room. He says the sensation of being in the world, and yet not a part of it, was an extraordinarily disagreeable one. He compared his feelings, not inaptly, to those of a cat watching a mouse through a window. Whenever he made a motion to communicate with the dim, familiar world about him, he found an invisible, incomprehensible barrier preventing intercourse.

He then turned his attention to his solid environment. He found the medicine bottle still unbroken in his hand, with the remainder of the green powder therein. He put this in his pocket, and began to feel

about him. Apparently he was sitting on a boulder of rock covered with a velvety moss. The dark country about him he was unable to see, the faint, misty picture of the schoolroom blotting it out, but he had a feeling (due perhaps to a cold wind) that he was near the crest of a hill, and that a steep valley fell away beneath his feet. The green glow along the edge of the sky seemed to be growing in extent and intensity. He stood up, rubbing his eyes.

It would seem that he made a few steps, going steeply downhill, and then stumbled, nearly fell, and sat down again upon a jagged mass of rock to watch the dawn. He became aware that the world about him was absolutely silent. It was as still as it was dark, and though there was a cold wind blowing up the hill-face, the rustle of grass, the soughing of the boughs that should have accompanied it, were absent. He could hear, therefore, if he could not see, that the hillside upon which he stood was rocky and desolate. The green grew brighter every moment, and as it did so a faint, transparent blood-red mingled with, but did not mitigate, the blackness of the sky overhead and the rocky desolations about him. Having regard to what follows, I am inclined to think that that redness may have been an optical effect due to contrast. Something black fluttered momentarily against the livid yellow-green of the lower sky, and then the thin and penetrating voice of a bell rose out of the black gulf below him. An oppressive expectation grew with the growing light.

It is probable that an hour or more elapsed while he sat there, the strange green light growing brighter every moment, and spreading slowly, in flamboyant fingers, upward towards the zenith. As it grew, the spectral vision of *our* world became relatively or absolutely fainter. Probably both, for the time must have been about that of our earthly sunset. So far as his vision of our world went, Plattner, by his few steps downhill, had passed through the floor of the class-room, and was now, it seemed, sitting in mid-air in the larger schoolroom downstairs. He saw the boarders distinctly, but much more faintly than he had seen Lidgett. They were preparing their evening tasks, and he noticed with interest that several were cheating with their Euclid riders by means of a crib, a compilation whose existence he had hitherto never suspected. As the time passed, they faded steadily, as steadily as the light of the green dawn increased.

Looking down into the valley, he saw that the light had crept far down its rocky sides, and that the profound blackness of the abyss was now broken by a minute green glow, like the light of a glow-worm. And almost immediately the limb of a huge heavenly body of blazing green rose over the basaltic undulations of the distant hills, and the monstrous hill-masses about him came out gaunt and desolate, in green light and deep, ruddy black shadows. He became aware of a vast number of ball-shaped objects drifting as thistledown drifts over the high ground. There were none of these nearer to him than the opposite side of the gorge. The bell below twanged quicker and quicker, with something like impatient insistence, and several lights moved hither and thither. The boys at work at their desks were now almost imperceptibly faint.

This extinction of our world, when the green sun of this other universe rose, is a curious point upon which Plattner insists. During the Other-World night it is difficult to move about, on account of the vividness with which the things of this world are visible. It becomes a riddle to explain why, if this is the case, we in this world catch no glimpse of the Other-World. It is due, perhaps, to the comparatively vivid illumination of this world of ours. Plattner describes the midday of the Other-World, at its brightest, as not being nearly so bright as this world at full moon, while its night is profoundly black. Consequently, the amount of light, even in an ordinary dark room, is sufficient to render the things of the Other-World invisible, on the same principle that faint phosphorescence is only visible in the profoundest darkness. I have tried, since he told me his story, to see something of the Other-World by sitting for a long space in a photographer's dark room at night. I have certainly seen indistinctly the form of greenish slopes and rocks, but only, I must admit, very indistinctly indeed. The reader may possibly be more successful. Plattner tells me that since his return he has dreamt and seen and recognised places in the Other-World, but this is probably due to his memory of these scenes. It seems quite possible that people with unusually keen eyesight may occasionally catch a glimpse of this strange Other-World about us.

However, this is a digression. As the green sun rose, a long street of black buildings became perceptible, though only darkly and

indistinctly, in the gorge, and after some hesitation, Plattner began to clamber down the precipitous descent towards them. The descent was long and exceedingly tedious, being so not only by the extraordinary steepness, but also by reason of the looseness of the boulders with which the whole face of the hill was strewn. The noise of his descent — now and then his heels struck fire from the rocks — seemed now the only sound in the universe, for the beating of the bell had ceased. As he drew nearer, he perceived that the various edifices had a singular resemblance to tombs and mausoleums and monuments, saving only that they were all uniformly black instead of being white, as most sepulchres are. And then he saw, crowding out of the largest building, very much as people disperse from church, a number of pallid, rounded, pale-green figures. These dispersed in several directions about the broad street of the place, some going through side alleys and reappearing upon the steepness of the hill, others entering some of the small black buildings which lined the way.

At the sight of these things drifting up towards him, Plattner stopped, staring. They were not walking, they were indeed limbless, and they had the appearance of human heads, beneath which a tadpole-like body swung. He was too astonished at their strangeness, too full, indeed, of strangeness, to be seriously alarmed by them. They drove towards him, in front of the chill wind that was blowing uphill, much as soap-bubbles drive before a draught. And as he looked at the nearest of those approaching, he saw it was indeed a human head, albeit with singularly large eyes, and wearing such an expression of distress and anguish as he had never seen before upon mortal countenance. He was surprised to find that it did not turn to regard him, but seemed to be watching and following some unseen moving thing. For a moment he was puzzled, and then it occurred to him that this creature was watching with its enormous eyes something that was happening in the world he had just left. Nearer it came, and nearer, and he was too astonished to cry out. It made a very faint fretting sound as it came close to him. Then it struck his face with a gentle pat — its touch was very cold — and drove past him, and upward towards the crest of the hill.

An extraordinary conviction flashed across Plattner's mind that

this head had a strong likeness to Lidgett. Then he turned his attention to the other heads that were now swarming thickly up the hill-side. None made the slightest sign of recognition. One or two, indeed, came close to his head and almost followed the example of the first, but he dodged convulsively out of the way. Upon most of them he saw the same expression of unavailing regret he had seen upon the first, and heard the same faint sounds of wretchedness from them. One or two wept, and one rolling swiftly uphill wore an expression of diabolical rage. But others were cold, and several had a look of gratified interest in their eyes. One, at least, was almost in an ecstasy of happiness. Plattner does not remember that he recognised any more likenesses in those he saw at this time.

For several hours, perhaps, Plattner watched these strange things dispersing themselves over the hills, and not till long after they had ceased to issue from the clustering black buildings in the gorge, did he resume his downward climb. The darkness about him increased so much that he had a difficulty in stepping true. Overhead the sky was now a bright, pale green. He felt neither hunger nor thirst. Later, when he did, he found a chilly stream running down the centre of the gorge, and the rare moss upon the boulders, when he tried it at last in desperation, was good to eat.

He groped about among the tombs that ran down the gorge, seeking vaguely for some clue to these inexplicable things. After a long time he came to the entrance of the big mausoleum-like building from which the heads had issued. In this he found a group of green lights burning upon a kind of basaltic altar, and a bell-rope from a belfry overhead hanging down into the centre of the place. Round the wall ran a lettering of fire in a character unknown to him. While he was still wondering at the purport of these things, he heard the receding tramp of heavy feet echoing far down the street. He ran out into the darkness again, but he could see nothing. He had a mind to pull the bell-rope, and finally decided to follow the footsteps. But, although he ran far, he never overtook them; and his shouting was of no avail. The gorge seemed to extend an interminable distance. It was as dark as earthly starlight throughout its length, while the ghastly green day lay along the upper edge of its precipices. There were none of the heads, now, below. They were all, it seemed, busily

occupied along the upper slopes. Looking up, he saw them drifting hither and thither, some hovering stationary, some flying swiftly through the air. It reminded him, he said, of "big snowflakes"; only these were black and pale green.

In pursuing the firm, undeviating footsteps that he never overtook, in groping into new regions of this endless devil's dyke, in clambering up and down the pitiless heights, in wandering about the summits, and in watching the drifting faces, Plattner states that he spent the better part of seven or eight days. He did not keep count, he says. Though once or twice he found eyes watching him, he had word with no living soul. He slept among the rocks on the hillside. In the gorge things earthly were invisible, because, from the earthly standpoint, it was far underground. On the altitudes, so soon as the earthly day began, the world became visible to him. He found himself sometimes stumbling over the dark green rocks, or arresting himself on a precipitous brink, while all about him the green branches of the Sussexville lanes were swaying; or, again, he seemed to be walking through the Sussexville streets, or watching unseen the private business of some household. And then it was he discovered, that to almost every human being in our world there pertained some of these drifting heads; that everyone in the world is watched intermittently by these helpless disembodiments.

What are they — these Watchers of the Living? Plattner never learned. But two, that presently found and followed him, were like his childhood's memory of his father and mother. Now and then other faces turned their eyes upon him: eyes like those of dead people who had swayed him, or injured him, or helped him in his youth and manhood. Whenever they looked at him, Plattner was overcome with a strange sense of responsibility. To his mother he ventured to speak; but she made no answer. She looked sadly, steadfastly, and tenderly — a little reproachfully, too, it seemed — into his eyes.

He simply tells this story: he does not endeavour to explain. We are left to surmise who these Watchers of the Living may be, or, if they are indeed the Dead, why they should so closely and passionately watch a world they have left for ever. It may be — indeed to my mind it seems just — that, when our life has closed,

when evil or good is no longer a choice for us, we may still have to witness the working out of the train of consequences we have laid. If human souls continue after death, then surely human interests continue after death. But that is merely my own guess at the meaning of the things seen. Plattner offers no interpretation, for none was given him. It is well the reader should understand this clearly. Day after day, with his head reeling, he wandered about this strange lit world outside the world, weary and, towards the end, weak and hungry. By day — by our earthly day, that is — the ghostly vision of the old familiar scenery of Sussexville, all about him, irked and worried him. He could not see where to put his feet, and ever and again with a chilly touch one of these Watching Souls would come against his face. And after dark the multitude of these Watchers about him, and their intent distress, confused his mind beyond describing. A great longing to return to the earthly life that was so near and yet so remote consumed him. The unearthliness of things about him produced a positively painful mental distress. He was worried beyond describing by his own particular followers. He would shout at them to desist from staring at him, scold at them, hurry away from them. They were always mute and intent. Run as he might over the uneven ground, they followed his destinies.

On the ninth day, towards evening, Plattner heard the invisible footsteps approaching, far away down the gorge. He was then wandering over the broad crest of the same hill upon which he had fallen in his entry into this strange Other-World of his. He turned to hurry down into the gorge, feeling his way hastily, and was arrested by the sight of the thing that was happening in a room in a back street near the school. Both of the people in the room he knew by sight. The windows were open, the blinds up, and the setting sun shone clearly into it, so that it came out quite brightly at first, a vivid oblong of room, lying like a magic-lantern picture upon the black landscape and the livid green dawn. In addition to the sunlight, a candle had just been lit in the room.

On the bed lay a lank man, his ghastly white face terrible upon the tumbled pillow. His clenched hands were raised above his head. A little table beside the bed carried a few medicine bottles, some toast and water, and an empty glass. Every now and then the lank man's

lips fell apart, to indicate a word he could not articulate. But the woman did not notice that he wanted anything, because she was busy turning out papers from an old-fashioned bureau in the opposite corner of the room. At first the picture was very vivid indeed, but as the green dawn behind it grew brighter and brighter, so it became fainter and more and more transparent.

As the echoing footsteps paced nearer and nearer, those footsteps that sound so loud in that Other-World and come so silently in this, Plattner perceived about him a great multitude of dim faces gathering together out of the darkness and watching the two people in the room. Never before had he seen so many of the Watchers of the Living. A multitude had eyes only for the sufferer in the room, another multitude, in infinite anguish, watched the woman as she hunted with greedy eyes for something she could not find. They crowded about Plattner, they came across his sight and buffeted his face, the noise of their unavailing regrets was all about him. He saw clearly only now and then. At other times the picture quivered dimly, through the veil of green reflections upon their movements. In the room it must have been very still, and Plattner says the candle flame streamed up into a perfectly vertical line of smoke, but in his ears each footfall and its echoes beat like a clap of thunder. And the faces! Two, more particularly near the woman's: one a woman's also, white and clear-featured, a face which might have once been cold and hard, but which was now softened by the touch of a wisdom strange to earth. The other might have been the woman's father. Both were evidently absorbed in the contemplation of some act of hateful meanness, so it seemed, which they could no longer guard against and prevent. Behind were others, teachers, it may be, who had taught ill, friends whose influence had failed. And over the man, too — a multitude, but none that seemed to be parents or teachers! Faces that might once have been coarse, now purged to strength by sorrow! And in the forefront one face, a girlish one, neither angry nor remorseful, but merely patient and weary, and, as it seemed to Plattner, waiting for relief. His powers of description fail him at the memory of this multitude of ghastly countenances. They gathered on the stroke of the bell. He saw them all in the space of a second. It would seem that he was so worked on by his excitement that, quite

involuntarily, his restless fingers took the bottle of green powder out of his pocket and held it before him. But he does not remember that.

Abruptly the footsteps ceased. He waited for the next, and there was silence, and then suddenly, cutting through the unexpected stillness like a keen, thin blade, came the first stroke of the bell. At that the multitudinous faces swayed to and fro, and a louder crying began all about him. The woman did not hear; she was burning something now in the candle flame. At the second stroke everything grew dim, and a breath of wind, icy cold, blew through the host of watchers. They swirled about him like an eddy of dead leaves in the spring, and at the third stroke something was extended through them to the bed. You have heard of a beam of light. This was like a beam of darkness, and looking again at it, Plattner saw that it was a shadowy arm and hand.

The green sun was now topping the black desolations of the horizon, and the vision of the room was very faint. Plattner could see that the white of the bed struggled, and was convulsed; and that the woman looked round over her shoulder at it, startled.

The cloud of watchers lifted high like a puff of green dust before the wind, and swept swiftly downward towards the temple in the gorge. Then suddenly Plattner understood the meaning of the shadowy black arm that stretched across his shoulder and clutched its prey. He did not dare turn his head to see the Shadow behind the arm. With a violent effort, and covering his eyes, he set himself to run, made, perhaps, twenty strides, then slipped on a boulder, and fell. He fell forward on his hands; and the bottle smashed and exploded as he touched the ground.

In another moment he found himself, stunned and bleeding, sitting face to face with Lidgett in the old walled garden behind the school.

* * * * *

There the story of Plattner's experiences ends. I have resisted, I believe successfully, the natural disposition of a writer of fiction to dress up incidents of this sort. I have told the thing as far as possible in the order in which Plattner told it to me. I have carefully avoided any attempt at style, effect, or construction. It would have been easy,

for instance, to have worked the scene of the death-bed into a kind of plot in which Plattner might have been involved. But, quite apart from the objectionableness of falsifying a most extraordinary true story, any such trite devices would spoil, to my mind, the peculiar effect of this dark world, with its livid green illumination and its drifting Watchers of the Living, which, unseen and unapproachable to us, is yet lying all about us.

It remains to add that a death did actually occur in Vincent Terrace, just beyond the school garden, and, so far as can be proved, at the moment of Plattner's return. Deceased was a rate-collector and insurance agent. His widow, who was much younger than himself, married last month a Mr. Whymper, a veterinary surgeon of Allbeeding. As the portion of this story given here has in various forms circulated orally in Sussexville, she has consented to my use of her name, on condition that I make it distinctly known that she emphatically contradicts every detail of Plattner's account of her husband's last moments. She burnt no will, she says, although Plattner never accused her of doing so; her husband made but one will, and that just after their marriage. Certainly, from a man who had never seen it, Plattner's account of the furniture of the room was curiously accurate.

One other thing, even at the risk of an irksome repetition, I must insist upon, lest I seem to favour the credulous, superstitious view. Plattner's absence from the world for nine days is, I think, proved. But that does not prove his story. It is quite conceivable that even outside space hallucinations may be possible. That, at least, the reader must bear distinctly in mind.

XVI.

THE RED ROOM.

"I can assure you," said I, "that it will take a very tangible ghost to frighten me." And I stood up before the fire with my glass in my hand.

"It is your own choosing," said the man with the withered arm, and glanced at me askance.

"Eight-and-twenty years," said I, "I have lived, and never a ghost have I seen as yet."

The old woman sat staring hard into the fire, her pale eyes wide open. "Ay," she broke in; "and eight-and-twenty years you have lived and never seen the likes of this house, I reckon. There's a many things to see, when one's still but eight-and-twenty." She swayed her head slowly from side to side. "A many things to see and sorrow for."

I half suspected the old people were trying to enhance the spiritual terrors of their house by their droning insistence. I put down my empty glass on the table and looked about the room, and caught a glimpse of myself, abbreviated and broadened to an impossible sturdiness, in the queer old mirror at the end of the room. "Well," I said, "if I see anything to-night, I shall be so much the wiser. For I come to the business with an open mind."

"It's your own choosing," said the man with the withered arm once more.

I heard the sound of a stick and a shambling step on the flags in the passage outside, and the door creaked on its hinges as a second old man entered, more bent, more wrinkled, more aged even than the first. He supported himself by a single crutch, his eyes were covered by a shade, and his lower lip, half averted, hung pale and pink from his decaying yellow teeth. He made straight for an arm-chair on the opposite side of the table, sat down clumsily, and began to cough. The man with the withered arm gave this new-comer a short glance of positive dislike; the old woman took no notice of his arrival, but remained with her eyes fixed steadily on the fire.

"I said — it's your own choosing," said the man with the withered arm, when the coughing had ceased for a while.

“It’s my own choosing,” I answered.

The man with the shade became aware of my presence for the first time, and threw his head back for a moment and sideways, to see me. I caught a momentary glimpse of his eyes, small and bright and inflamed. Then he began to cough and splutter again.

“Why don’t you drink?” said the man with the withered arm, pushing the beer towards him. The man with the shade poured out a glassful with a shaky hand that splashed half as much again on the deal table. A monstrous shadow of him crouched upon the wall and mocked his action as he poured and drank. I must confess I had scarce expected these grotesque custodians. There is to my mind something inhuman in senility, something crouching and atavistic; the human qualities seem to drop from old people insensibly day by day. The three of them made me feel uncomfortable, with their gaunt silences, their bent carriage, their evident unfriendliness to me and to one another.

“If,” said I, “you will show me to this haunted room of yours, I will make myself comfortable there.”

The old man with the cough jerked his head back so suddenly that it startled me, and shot another glance of his red eyes at me from under the shade; but no one answered me. I waited a minute, glancing from one to the other.

“If,” I said a little louder, “if you will show me to this haunted room of yours, I will relieve you from the task of entertaining me.”

“There’s a candle on the slab outside the door,” said the man with the withered arm, looking at my feet as he addressed me. “But if you go to the red room to-night — —”

(“This night of all nights!” said the old woman.)

“You go alone.”

“Very well,” I answered. “And which way do I go?”

“You go along the passage for a bit,” said he, “until you come to a door, and through that is a spiral staircase, and half-way up that is a landing and another door covered with baize. Go through that and down the long corridor to the end, and the red room is on your left up the steps.”

“Have I got that right?” I said, and repeated his directions. He corrected me in one particular.

“And are you really going?” said the man with the shade, looking at me again for the third time, with that queer, unnatural tilting of the face.

(“This night of all nights!” said the old woman.)

“It is what I came for,” I said, and moved towards the door. As I did so, the old man with the shade rose and staggered round the table, so as to be closer to the others and to the fire. At the door I turned and looked at them, and saw they were all close together, dark against the firelight, staring at me over their shoulders, with an intent expression on their ancient faces.

“Good-night,” I said, setting the door open.

“It’s your own choosing,” said the man with the withered arm.

I left the door wide open until the candle was well alight, and then I shut them in and walked down the chilly, echoing passage.

I must confess that the oddness of these three old pensioners in whose charge her ladyship had left the castle, and the deep-toned, old-fashioned furniture of the housekeeper’s room in which they foregathered, affected me in spite of my efforts to keep myself at a matter-of-fact phase. They seemed to belong to another age, an older age, an age when things spiritual were different from this of ours, less certain; an age when omens and witches were credible, and ghosts beyond denying. Their very existence was spectral; the cut of their clothing, fashions born in dead brains. The ornaments and conveniences of the room about them were ghostly — the thoughts of vanished men, which still haunted rather than participated in the world of to-day. But with an effort I sent such thoughts to the right-about. The long, draughty subterranean passage was chilly and dusty, and my candle flared and made the shadows cower and quiver. The echoes rang up and down the spiral staircase, and a shadow came sweeping up after me, and one fled before me into the darkness overhead. I came to the landing and stopped there for a moment, listening to a rustling that I fancied I heard; then, satisfied of the absolute silence, I pushed open the baize-covered door and stood in the corridor.

The effect was scarcely what I expected, for the moonlight, coming in by the great window on the grand staircase, picked out everything in vivid black shadow or silvery illumination. Everything

was in its place: the house might have been deserted on the yesterday instead of eighteen months ago. There were candles in the sockets of the sconces, and whatever dust had gathered on the carpets or upon the polished flooring was distributed so evenly as to be invisible in the moonlight. I was about to advance, and stopped abruptly. A bronze group stood upon the landing, hidden from me by the corner of the wall, but its shadow fell with marvellous distinctness upon the white panelling, and gave me the impression of someone crouching to waylay me. I stood rigid for half a minute perhaps. Then, with my hand in the pocket that held my revolver, I advanced, only to discover a Ganymede and Eagle glistening in the moonlight. That incident for a time restored my nerve, and a porcelain Chinaman on a buhl table, whose head rocked silently as I passed him, scarcely startled me.

The door to the red room and the steps up to it were in a shadowy corner. I moved my candle from side to side, in order to see clearly the nature of the recess in which I stood before opening the door. Here it was, thought I, that my predecessor was found, and the memory of that story gave me a sudden twinge of apprehension. I glanced over my shoulder at the Ganymede in the moonlight, and opened the door of the red room rather hastily, with my face half turned to the pallid silence of the landing.

I entered, closed the door behind me at once, turned the key I found in the lock within, and stood with the candle held aloft, surveying the scene of my vigil, the great red room of Lorraine Castle, in which the young duke had died. Or, rather, in which he had begun his dying, for he had opened the door and fallen headlong down the steps I had just ascended. That had been the end of his vigil, of his gallant attempt to conquer the ghostly tradition of the place, and never, I thought, had apoplexy better served the ends of superstition. And there were other and older stories that clung to the room, back to the half-credible beginning of it all, the tale of a timid wife and the tragic end that came to her husband's jest of frightening her. And looking around that large sombre room, with its shadowy window bays, its recesses and alcoves, one could well understand the legends that had sprouted in its black corners, its germinating darkness. My candle was a little tongue of light in its vastness, that

failed to pierce the opposite end of the room, and left an ocean of mystery and suggestion beyond its island of light.

I resolved to make a systematic examination of the place at once, and dispel the fanciful suggestions of its obscurity before they obtained a hold upon me. After satisfying myself of the fastening of the door, I began to walk about the room, peering round each article of furniture, tucking up the valances of the bed, and opening its curtains wide. I pulled up the blinds and examined the fastenings of the several windows before closing the shutters, leant forward and looked up the blackness of the wide chimney, and tapped the dark oak panelling for any secret opening. There were two big mirrors in the room, each with a pair of sconces bearing candles, and on the mantelshelf, too, were more candles in china candlesticks. All these I lit one after the other. The fire was laid, an unexpected consideration from the old housekeeper, — and I lit it, to keep down any disposition to shiver, and when it was burning well, I stood round with my back to it and regarded the room again. I had pulled up a chintz-covered arm-chair and a table, to form a kind of barricade before me, and on this lay my revolver ready to hand. My precise examination had done me good, but I still found the remoter darkness of the place, and its perfect stillness, too stimulating for the imagination. The echoing of the stir and crackling of the fire was no sort of comfort to me. The shadow in the alcove at the end in particular, had that undefinable quality of a presence, that odd suggestion of a lurking, living thing, that comes so easily in silence and solitude. At last, to reassure myself, I walked with a candle into it, and satisfied myself that there was nothing tangible there. I stood that candle upon the floor of the alcove, and left it in that position.

By this time I was in a state of considerable nervous tension, although to my reason there was no adequate cause for the condition. My mind, however, was perfectly clear. I postulated quite unreservedly that nothing supernatural could happen, and to pass the time I began to string some rhymes together, Ingoldsby fashion, of the original legend of the place. A few I spoke aloud, but the echoes were not pleasant. For the same reason I also abandoned, after a time, a conversation with myself upon the impossibility of ghosts and haunting. My mind reverted to the three old and distorted people

downstairs, and I tried to keep it upon that topic. The sombre reds and blacks of the room troubled, me; even with seven candles the place was merely dim. The one in the alcove flared in a draught, and the fire-flickering kept the shadows and penumbra perpetually shifting and stirring. Casting about for a remedy, I recalled the candles I had seen in the passage, and, with a slight effort, walked out into the moonlight, carrying a candle and leaving the door open, and presently returned with as many as ten. These I put in various knick-knacks of china with which the room was sparsely adorned, lit and placed where the shadows had lain deepest, some on the floor, some in the window recesses, until at last my seventeen candles were so arranged that not an inch of the room but had the direct light of at least one of them. It occurred to me that when the ghost came, I could warn him not to trip over them. The room was now quite brightly illuminated. There was something very cheery and reassuring in these little streaming flames, and snuffing them gave me an occupation, and afforded a helpful sense of the passage of time. Even with that, however, the brooding expectation of the vigil weighed heavily upon me. It was after midnight that the candle in the alcove suddenly went out, and the black shadow sprang back to its place there. I did not see the candle go out; I simply turned and saw that the darkness was there, as one might start and see the unexpected presence of a stranger. “By Jove!” said I aloud; “that draught’s a strong one!” and, taking the matches from the table, I walked across the room in a leisurely manner, to relight the corner again. My first match would not strike, and as I succeeded with the second, something seemed to blink on the wall before me. I turned my head involuntarily, and saw that the two candles on the little table by the fireplace were extinguished. I rose at once to my feet.

“Odd!” I said. “Did I do that myself in a flash of absent-mindedness?”

I walked back, relit one, and as I did so, I saw the candle in the right sconce of one of the mirrors wink and go right out, and almost immediately its companion followed it. There was no mistake about it. The flame vanished, as if the wicks had been suddenly nipped between a finger and a thumb, leaving the wick neither glowing nor smoking, but black. While I stood gaping, the candle at the foot of

the bed went out, and the shadows seemed to take another step towards me.

"This won't do!" said I, and first one and then another candle on the mantelshelf followed.

"What's up?" I cried, with a queer high note getting into my voice somehow. At that the candle on the wardrobe went out, and the one I had relit in the alcove followed.

"Steady on!" I said. "These candles are wanted," speaking with a half-hysterical facetiousness, and scratching away at a match the while for the mantel candlesticks. My hands trembled so much that twice I missed the rough paper of the matchbox. As the mantel emerged from darkness again, two candles in the remoter end of the window were eclipsed. But with the same match I also relit the larger mirror candles, and those on the floor near the doorway, so that for the moment I seemed to gain on the extinctions. But then in a volley there vanished four lights at once in different corners of the room, and I struck another match in quivering haste, and stood hesitating whither to take it.

As I stood undecided, an invisible hand seemed to sweep out the two candles on the table. With a cry of terror, I dashed at the alcove, then into the corner, and then into the window, relighting three, as two more vanished by the fireplace; then, perceiving a better way, I dropped the matches on the iron-bound deed-box in the corner, and caught up the bedroom candlestick. With this I avoided the delay of striking matches; but for all that the steady process of extinction went on, and the shadows I feared and fought against returned, and crept in upon me, first a step gained on this side of me and then on that. It was like a ragged storm-cloud sweeping out the stars. Now and then one returned for a minute, and was lost again. I was now almost frantic with the horror of the coming darkness, and my self-possession deserted me. I leaped panting and dishevelled from candle to candle, in a vain struggle against that remorseless advance.

I bruised myself on the thigh against the table, I sent a chair headlong, I stumbled and fell and whisked the cloth from the table in my fall. My candle rolled away from me, and I snatched another as I rose. Abruptly this was blown out, as I swung it off the table by the wind of my sudden movement, and immediately the two remaining

candles followed. But there was light still in the room, a red light that staved off the shadows from me. The fire! Of course I could still thrust my candle between the bars and relight it!

I turned to where the flames were still dancing between the glowing coals, and splashing red reflections upon the furniture, made two steps towards the grate, and incontinently the flames dwindled and vanished, the glow vanished, the reflections rushed together and vanished, and as I thrust the candle between the bars darkness closed upon me like the shutting of an eye, wrapped about me in a stifling embrace, sealed my vision, and crushed the last vestiges of reason from my brain. The candle fell from my hand. I flung out my arms in a vain effort to thrust that ponderous blackness away from me, and, lifting up my voice, screamed with all my might — once, twice, thrice. Then I think I must have staggered to my feet. I know I thought suddenly of the moonlit corridor, and, with my head bowed and my arms over my face, made a run for the door.

But I had forgotten the exact position of the door, and struck myself heavily against the corner of the bed. I staggered back, turned, and was either struck or struck myself against some other bulky furniture. I have a vague memory of battering myself thus, to and fro in the darkness, of a cramped struggle, and of my own wild crying as I darted to and fro, of a heavy blow at last upon my forehead, a horrible sensation of falling that lasted an age, of my last frantic effort to keep my footing, and then I remember no more.

I opened my eyes in daylight. My head was roughly bandaged, and the man with the withered arm was watching my face. I looked about me, trying to remember what had happened, and for a space I could not recollect. I rolled my eyes into the corner, and saw the old woman, no longer abstracted, pouring out some drops of medicine from a little blue phial into a glass. “Where am I?” I asked; “I seem to remember you, and yet I cannot remember who you are.”

They told me then, and I heard of the haunted Red Room as one who hears a tale. “We found you at dawn,” said he, “and there was blood on your forehead and lips.”

It was very slowly I recovered my memory of my experience. “You believe now,” said the old man, “that the room is haunted?” He spoke no longer as one who greets an intruder, but as one who

grieves for a broken friend.

"Yes," said I; "the room is haunted."

"And you have seen it. And we, who have lived here all our lives, have never set eyes upon it. Because we have never dared… Tell us, is it truly the old earl who — —"

"No," said I; "it is not."

"I told you so," said the old lady, with the glass in her hand. "It is his poor young countess who was frightened — —"

"It is not," I said. "There is neither ghost of earl nor ghost of countess in that room, there is no ghost there at all; but worse, far worse — —"

"Well?" they said.

"The worst of all the things that haunt poor mortal man," said I; "and that is, in all its nakedness — Fear that will not have light nor sound, that will not bear with reason, that deafens and darkens and overwhelms. It followed me through the corridor, it fought against me in the room — —"

I stopped abruptly. There was an interval of silence. My hand went up to my bandages.

Then the man with the shade sighed and spoke. "That is it," said he. "I knew that was it. A power of darkness. To put such a curse upon a woman! It lurks there always. You can feel it even in the daytime, even of a bright summer's day, in the hangings, in the curtains, keeping behind you however you face about. In the dusk it creeps along the corridor and follows you, so that you dare not turn. There is Fear in that room of hers — black Fear, and there will be — so long as this house of sin endures."

XVII.

THE PURPLE PILEUS

Mr. Coombes was sick of life. He walked away from his unhappy home, and, sick not only of his own existence but of everybody else's, turned aside down Gaswork Lane to avoid the town, and, crossing the wooden bridge that goes over the canal to Starling's Cottages, was presently alone in the damp pine woods and out of sight and sound of human habitation. He would stand it no longer. He repeated aloud with blasphemies unusual to him that he would stand it no longer.

He was a pale-faced little man, with dark eyes and a fine and very black moustache. He had a very stiff, upright collar slightly frayed, that gave him an illusory double chin, and his overcoat (albeit shabby) was trimmed with astrachan. His gloves were a bright brown with black stripes over the knuckles, and split at the finger ends. His appearance, his wife had said once in the dear, dead days beyond recall — before he married her, that is — was military. But now she called him — it seems a dreadful thing to tell of between husband and wife, but she called him "a little grub." It wasn't the only thing she had called him, either.

The row had arisen about that beastly Jennie again. Jennie was his wife's friend, and, by no invitation of Mr. Coombes, she came in every blessed Sunday to dinner, and made a shindy all the afternoon. She was a big, noisy girl, with a taste for loud colours and a strident laugh; and this Sunday she had outdone all her previous intrusions by bringing in a fellow with her, a chap as showy as herself. And Mr. Coombes, in a starchy, clean collar and his Sunday frock-coat, had sat dumb and wrathful at his own table, while his wife and her guests talked foolishly and undesirably, and laughed aloud. Well, he stood that, and after dinner (which, "as usual," was late), what must Miss Jennie do but go to the piano and play banjo tunes, for all the world as if it were a week-day! Flesh and blood could not endure such goings on. They would hear next door, they would hear in the road, it was a public announcement of their disrepute. He had to speak.

He had felt himself go pale, and a kind of rigour had affected his respiration as he delivered himself. He had been sitting on one of the

chairs by the window — the new guest had taken possession of the arm-chair. He turned his head. “Sun Day!” he said over the collar, in the voice of one who warns. “Sun Day!” What people call a “nasty” tone, it was.

Jennie had kept on playing, but his wife, who was looking through some music that was piled on the top of the piano, had stared at him. “What’s wrong now?” she said; “can’t people enjoy themselves?”

“I don’t mind rational ‘njoyment, at all,” said little Coombes, “but I ain’t a-going to have week-day tunes playing on a Sunday in this house.”

“What’s wrong with my playing now?” said Jennie, stopping and twirling round on the music-stool with a monstrous rustle of flounces.

Coombes saw it was going to be a row, and opened too vigorously, as is common with your timid, nervous men all the world over. “Steady on with that music-stool!” said he; “it ain’t made for ‘eavy-weights.”

“Never you mind about weights,” said Jennie, incensed. “What was you saying behind my back about my playing?”

“Surely you don’t ‘old with not having a bit of music on a Sunday, Mr. Coombes?” said the new guest, leaning back in the arm-chair, blowing a cloud of cigarette smoke and smiling in a kind of pitying way. And simultaneously his wife said something to Jennie about “Never mind ‘im. You go on, Jinny.”

“I do,” said Mr. Coombes, addressing the new guest.

“May I arst why?” said the new guest, evidently enjoying both his cigarette and the prospect of an argument. He was, by-the-by, a lank young man, very stylishly dressed in bright drab, with a white cravat and a pearl and silver pin. It had been better taste to come in a black coat, Mr. Coombes thought.

“Because,” began Mr. Coombes, “it don’t suit me. I’m a business man. I ‘ave to study my connection. Rational ‘njoyment—”

“His connection!” said Mrs. Coombes scornfully. “That’s what he’s always a-saying. We got to do this, and we got to do that—”

“If you don’t mean to study my connection,” said Mr. Coombes, “what did you marry me for?”

“I wonder,” said Jennie, and turned back to the piano.

“I never saw such a man as you,” said Mrs. Coombes.

“You’ve altered all round since we were married. Before—”

Then Jennie began at the turn, turn, turn again.

“Look here!” said Mr. Coombes, driven at last to revolt, standing up and raising his voice. “I tell you I won’t have that.” The frock-coat heaved with his indignation.

“No vi’lence, now,” said the long young man in drab, sitting up.

“Who the juice are you?” said Mr. Coombes fiercely.

Whereupon they all began talking at once. The new guest said he was Jennie’s “intended,” and meant to protect her, and Mr. Coombes said he was welcome to do so anywhere but in his (Mr. Coombes’) house; and Mrs. Coombes said he ought to be ashamed of insulting his guests, and (as I have already mentioned) that he was getting a regular little grub; and the end was, that Mr. Coombes ordered his visitors out of the house, and they wouldn’t go, and so he said he would go himself. With his face burning and tears of excitement in his eyes, he went into the passage, and as he struggled with his overcoat — his frock-coat sleeves got concertinaed up his arm — and gave a brush at his silk hat, Jennie began again at the piano, and strummed him insultingly out of the house. Turn, turn, turn. He slammed the shop door so that the house quivered. That, briefly, was the immediate making of his mood. You will perhaps begin to understand his disgust with existence.

As he walked along the muddy path under the firs, — it was late October, and the ditches and heaps of fir needles were gorgeous with clumps of fungi, — he recapitulated the melancholy history of his marriage. It was brief and commonplace enough. He now perceived with sufficient clearness that his wife had married him out of a natural curiosity and in order to escape from her worrying, laborious, and uncertain life in the workroom; and, like the majority of her class, she was far too stupid to realise that it was her duty to co-operate with him in his business. She was greedy of enjoyment, loquacious, and socially-minded, and evidently disappointed to find the restraints of poverty still hanging about her. His worries exasperated her, and the slightest attempt to control her proceedings resulted in a charge of “grumbling.” Why couldn’t he be nice — as he used to be? And Coombes was such a harmless little man, too,

nourished mentally on *Self-Help*, and with a meagre ambition of self-denial and competition, that was to end in a "sufficiency." Then Jennie came in as a female Mephistopheles, a gabbling chronicle of "fellers," and was always wanting his wife to go to theatres, and "all that." And in addition were aunts of his wife, and cousins (male and female) to eat up capital, insult him personally, upset business arrangements, annoy good customers, and generally blight his life. It was not the first occasion by many that Mr. Coombes had fled his home in wrath and indignation, and something like fear, vowing furiously and even aloud that he wouldn't stand it, and so frothing away his energy along the line of least resistance. But never before had he been quite so sick of life as on this particular Sunday afternoon. The Sunday dinner may have had its share in his despair — and the greyness of the sky. Perhaps, too, he was beginning to realise his unendurable frustration as a business man as the consequence of his marriage. Presently bankruptcy, and after that —— Perhaps she might have reason to repent when it was too late. And destiny, as I have already intimated, had planted the path through the wood with evil-smelling fungi, thickly and variously planted it, not only on the right side, but on the left.

A small shopman is in such a melancholy position, if his wife turns out a disloyal partner. His capital is all tied up in his business, and to leave her means to join the unemployed in some strange part of the earth. The luxuries of divorce are beyond him altogether. So that the good old tradition of marriage for better or worse holds inexorably for him, and things work up to tragic culminations. Bricklayers kick their wives to death, and dukes betray theirs; but it is among the small clerks and shopkeepers nowadays that it comes most often to a cutting of throats. Under the circumstances it is not so very remarkable — and you must take it as charitably as you can — that the mind of Mr. Coombes ran for a while on some such glorious close to his disappointed hopes, and that he thought of razors, pistols, bread-knives, and touching letters to the coroner denouncing his enemies by name, and praying piously for forgiveness. After a time his fierceness gave way to melancholia. He had been married in this very overcoat, in his first and only frock-coat that was buttoned up beneath it. He began to recall their courting along this very walk, his

years of penurious saving to get capital, and the bright hopefulness of his marrying days. For it all to work out like this! Was there no sympathetic ruler anywhere in the world? He reverted to death as a topic.

He thought of the canal he had just crossed, and doubted whether he shouldn't stand with his head out, even in the middle, and it was while drowning was in his mind that the purple pileus caught his eye. He looked at it mechanically for a moment, and stopped and stooped towards it to pick it up, under the impression that it was some such small leather object as a purse. Then he saw that it was the purple top of a fungus, a peculiarly poisonous-looking purple: slimy, shiny, and emitting a sour odour. He hesitated with his hand an inch or so from it, and the thought of poison crossed his mind. With that he picked the thing, and stood up again with it in his hand.

The odour was certainly strong — acrid, but by no means disgusting. He broke off a piece, and the fresh surface was a creamy white, that changed like magic in the space of ten seconds to a yellowish-green colour. It was even an inviting-looking change. He broke off two other pieces to see it repeated. They were wonderful things these fungi, thought Mr. Coombes, and all of them the deadliest poisons, as his father had often told him. Deadly poisons!

There is no time like the present for a rash resolve. Why not here and now? thought Mr. Coombes. He tasted a little piece, a very little piece indeed — a mere crumb. It was so pungent that he almost spat it out again, then merely hot and full-flavoured: a kind of German mustard with a touch of horse-radish and — well, mushroom. He swallowed it in the excitement of the moment. Did he like it or did he not? His mind was curiously careless. He would try another bit. It really wasn't bad — it was good. He forgot his troubles in the interest of the immediate moment. Playing with death it was. He took another bite, and then deliberately finished a mouthful. A curious, tingling sensation began in his finger-tips and toes. His pulse began to move faster. The blood in his ears sounded like a mill-race. "Try bi' more," said Mr. Coombes. He turned and looked about him, and found his feet unsteady. He saw, and struggled towards, a little patch of purple a dozen yards away. "Jol' goo' stuff," said Mr. Coombes. "E — lomore ye'." He pitched forward and fell on his face, his hands

outstretched towards the cluster of pilei. But he did not eat any more of them. He forgot forthwith.

He rolled over and sat up with a look of astonishment on his face. His carefully brushed silk hat had rolled away towards the ditch. He pressed his hand to his brow. Something had happened, but he could not rightly determine what it was. Anyhow, he was no longer dull — he felt bright, cheerful. And his throat was afire. He laughed in the sudden gaiety of his heart. Had he been dull? He did not know; but at any rate he would be dull no longer. He got up and stood unsteadily, regarding the universe with an agreeable smile. He began to remember. He could not remember very well, because of a steam roundabout that was beginning in his head. And he knew he had been disagreeable at home, just because they wanted to be happy. They were quite right; life should be as gay as possible. He would go home and make it up, and reassure them. And why not take some of this delightful toadstool with him, for them to eat? A hatful, no less. Some of those red ones with white spots as well, and a few yellow. He had been a dull dog, an enemy to merriment; he would make up for it. It would be gay to turn his coat-sleeves inside out, and stick some yellow gorse into his waistcoat pockets. Then home — singing — for a jolly evening.

After the departure of Mr. Coombes, Jennie discontinued playing, and turned round on the music-stool again. “What a fuss about nothing!” said Jennie.

“You see, Mr. Clarence, what I’ve got to put up with,” said Mrs. Coombes.

“He is a bit hasty,” said Mr. Clarence judicially.

“He ain’t got the slightest sense of our position,” said Mrs. Coombes; “that’s what I complain of. He cares for nothing but his old shop; and if I have a bit of company, or buy anything to keep myself decent, or get any little thing I want out of the housekeeping money, there’s disagreeables. ‘Economy’ he says; ‘struggle for life,’ and all that. He lies awake of nights about it, worrying how he can screw me out of a shilling. He wanted us to eat Dorset butter once. If once I was to give in to him — there!”

“Of course,” said Jennie.

“If a man values a woman,” said Mr. Clarence, lounging back in

the arm-chair, “he must be prepared to make sacrifices for her. For my own part,” said Mr. Clarence, with his eye on Jennie, “I shouldn’t think of marrying till I was in a position to do the thing in style. It’s downright selfishness. A man ought to go through the rough-and-tumble by himself, and not drag her—”

“I don’t agree altogether with that,” said Jennie. “I don’t see why a man shouldn’t have a woman’s help, provided he doesn’t treat her meanly, you know. It’s meanness—”

“You wouldn’t believe,” said Mrs. Coombes. “But I was a fool to ‘ave ‘im. I might ‘ave known. If it ‘adn’t been for my father, we shouldn’t ‘ave ‘ad not a carriage to our wedding.”

“Lord! he didn’t stick out at that?” said Mr. Clarence, quite shocked.

“Said he wanted the money for his stock, or some such rubbish. Why, he wouldn’t have a woman in to help me once a week if it wasn’t for my standing out plucky. And the fusses he makes about money — comes to me, well, pretty near crying, with sheets of paper and figgers. ‘If only we can tide over this year,’ he says, ‘the business is bound to go.’ ‘If only we can tide over this year,’ I says; ‘then it’ll be, if only we can tide over next year. I know you,’ I says. ‘And you don’t catch me screwing myself lean and ugly. Why didn’t you marry a slavey?’ I says, ‘if you wanted one — instead of a respectable girl,’ I says.”

So Mrs. Coombes. But we will not follow this unedifying conversation further. Suffice it that Mr. Coombes was very satisfactorily disposed of, and they had a snug little time round the fire. Then Mrs. Coombes went to get the tea, and Jennie sat coquettishly on the arm of Mr. Clarence’s chair until the tea-things clattered outside. “What was that I heard?” asked Mrs. Coombes playfully, as she entered, and there was badinage about kissing. They were just sitting down to the little circular table when the first intimation of Mr. Coombes’ return was heard.

This was a fumbling at the latch of the front door.

“‘Ere’s my lord,” said Mrs. Coombes. “Went out like a lion and comes back like a lamb, I’ll lay.”

Something fell over in the shop: a chair, it sounded like. Then there was a sound as of some complicated step exercise in the

passage. Then the door opened and Coombes appeared. But it was Coombes transfigured. The immaculate collar had been torn carelessly from his throat. His carefully-brushed silk hat, half-full of a crush of fungi, was under one arm; his coat was inside out, and his waistcoat adorned with bunches of yellow-blossomed furze. These little eccentricities of Sunday costume, however, were quite overshadowed by the change in his face; it was livid white, his eyes were unnaturally large and bright, and his pale blue lips were drawn back in a cheerless grin. "Merry!" he said. He had stopped dancing to open the door. "Rational 'njoyment. Dance." He made three fantastic steps into the room, and stood bowing.

"Jim!" shrieked Mrs. Coombes, and Mr. Clarence sat petrified, with a dropping lower jaw.

"Tea," said Mr. Coombes. "Jol' thing, tea. Tose-stools, too. Brosher."

"He's drunk," said Jennie in a weak voice. Never before had she seen this intense pallor in a drunken man, or such shining, dilated eyes.

Mr. Coombes held out a handful of scarlet agaric to Mr. Clarence. "Jo' stuff," said he; "ta' some."

At that moment he was genial. Then at the sight of their startled faces he changed, with the swift transition of insanity, into overbearing fury. And it seemed as if he had suddenly recalled the quarrel of his departure. In such a huge voice as Mrs. Coombes had never heard before, he shouted, "My house. I'm master 'ere. Eat what I give yer!" He bawled this, as it seemed, without an effort, without a violent gesture, standing there as motionless as one who whispers, holding out a handful of fungus.

Clarence approved himself a coward. He could not meet the mad fury in Coombes' eyes; he rose to his feet, pushing back his chair, and turned, stooping. At that Coombes rushed at him. Jennie saw her opportunity, and, with the ghost of a shriek, made for the door.

Mrs. Coombes followed her. Clarence tried to dodge. Over went the tea-table with a smash as Coombes clutched him by the collar and tried to thrust the fungus into his mouth. Clarence was content to leave his collar behind him, and shot out into the passage with red patches of fly agaric still adherent to his face. "Shut 'im in!" cried

Mrs. Coombes, and would have closed the door, but her supports deserted her; Jennie saw the shop door open, and vanished thereby, locking it behind her, while Clarence went on hastily into the kitchen. Mr. Coombes came heavily against the door, and Mrs. Coombes, finding the key was inside, fled upstairs and locked herself in the spare bedroom.

So the new convert to *joie de vivre* emerged upon the passage, his decorations a little scattered, but that respectable hatful of fungi still under his arm. He hesitated at the three ways, and decided on the kitchen. Whereupon Clarence, who was fumbling with the key, gave up the attempt to imprison his host, and fled into the scullery, only to be captured before he could open the door into the yard. Mr. Clarence is singularly reticent of the details of what occurred. It seems that Mr. Coombes' transitory irritation had vanished again, and he was once more a genial playfellow. And as there were knives and meat choppers about, Clarence very generously resolved to humour him and so avoid anything tragic. It is beyond dispute that Mr. Coombes played with Mr. Clarence to his heart's content; they could not have been more playful and familiar if they had known each other for years. He insisted gaily on Clarence trying the fungi, and, after a friendly tussle, was smitten with remorse at the mess he was making of his guest's face. It also appears that Clarence was dragged under the sink and his face scrubbed with the blacking brush — he being still resolved to humour the lunatic at any cost — and that finally, in a somewhat dishevelled, chipped, and discoloured condition, he was assisted to his coat and shown out by the back door, the shopway being barred by Jennie. Mr. Coombes' wandering thoughts then turned to Jennie. Jennie had been unable to unfasten the shop door, but she shot the bolts against Mr. Coombes' latch-key, and remained in possession of the shop for the rest of the evening.

It would appear that Mr. Coombes then returned to the kitchen, still in pursuit of gaiety, and, albeit a strict Good Templar, drank (or spilt down the front of the first and only frock-coat) no less than five bottles of the stout Mrs. Coombes insisted upon having for her health's sake. He made cheerful noises by breaking off the necks of the bottles with several of his wife's wedding-present dinner-plates, and during the earlier part of this great drunk he sang divers merry

ballads. He cut his finger rather badly with one of the bottles — the only bloodshed in this story — and what with that, and the systematic convulsion of his inexperienced physiology by the liquorish brand of Mrs. Coombes' stout, it may be the evil of the fungus poison was somehow allayed. But we prefer to draw a veil over the concluding incidents of this Sunday afternoon. They ended in the coal cellar, in a deep and healing sleep.

An interval of five years elapsed. Again it was a Sunday afternoon in October, and again Mr. Coombes walked through the pine wood beyond the canal. He was still the same dark-eyed, black-moustached little man that he was at the outset of the story, but his double chin was now scarcely so illusory as it had been. His overcoat was new, with a velvet lapel, and a stylish collar with turn-down corners, free of any coarse starchiness, had replaced the original all-round article. His hat was glossy, his gloves newish — though one finger had split and been carefully mended. And a casual observer would have noticed about him a certain rectitude of bearing, a certain erectness of head that marks the man who thinks well of himself. He was a master now, with three assistants. Beside him walked a larger sunburnt parody of himself, his brother Tom, just back from Australia. They were recapitulating their early struggles, and Mr. Coombes had just been making a financial statement.

"It's a very nice little business, Jim," said brother Tom. "In these days of competition you're jolly lucky to have worked it up so. And you're jolly lucky, too, to have a wife who's willing to help like yours does."

"Between ourselves," said Mr. Coombes, "it wasn't always so. It wasn't always like this. To begin with, the missus was a bit giddy. Girls are funny creatures."

"Dear me!"

"Yes. You'd hardly think it, but she was downright extravagant, and always having slaps at me. I was a bit too easy and loving, and all that, and she thought the whole blessed show was run for her. Turned the 'ouse into a regular caravansery, always having her relations and girls from business in, and their chaps. Comic songs a' Sunday, it was getting to, and driving trade away. And she was making eyes at the chaps, too! I tell you, Tom, the place wasn't my

own.”

“Shouldn’t ‘a’ thought it.”

“It was so. Well — I reasoned with her. I said, ‘I ain’t a duke, to keep a wife like a pet animal. I married you for ‘elp and company.’ I said, ‘You got to ‘elp and pull the business through.’ She wouldn’t ‘ear of it. ‘Very well,’ I says?? ‘I’m a mild man till I’m roused,’ I says, ‘and it’s getting to that.’ But she wouldn’t ‘ear of no warnings.”

“Well?”

“It’s the way with women. She didn’t think I ‘ad it in me to be roused. Women of her sort (between ourselves, Tom) don’t respect a man until they’re a bit afraid of him. So I just broke out to show her. In comes a girl named Jennie, that used to work with her, and her chap. We ‘ad a bit of a row, and I came out ‘ere — it was just such another day as this — and I thought it all out. Then I went back and pitched into them.”

“You did?”

“I did. I was mad, I can tell you. I wasn’t going to ‘it ‘er if I could ‘elp it, so I went back and licked into this chap, just to show ‘er what I could do. ‘E was a big chap, too. Well, I chucked him, and smashed things about, and gave ‘er a scaring, and she ran up and locked ‘erself into the spare room.”

“Well?”

“That’s all. I says to ‘er the next morning, ‘Now you know,’ I says, ‘what
I’m like when I’m roused.’ And I didn’t have to say anything more.”

“And you’ve been happy ever after, eh?”

“So to speak. There’s nothing like putting your foot down with them. If it ‘adn’t been for that afternoon I should ‘a’ been tramping the roads now, and she’d ‘a’ been grumbling at me, and all her family grumbling for bringing her to poverty — I know their little ways. But we’re all right now. And it’s a very decent little business, as you say.”

They proceeded on their way meditatively. “Women are funny creatures,” said Brother Tom.

“They want a firm hand,” says Coombes.

“What a lot of these funguses there are about here!” remarked Brother Tom presently. “I can’t see what use they are in the world.”

Mr. Coombes looked. “I dessay they’re sent for some wise purpose,” said
Mr. Coombes.

And that was as much thanks as the purple pileus ever got for maddening this absurd little man to the pitch of decisive action, and so altering the whole course of his life.

XVIII.

A SLIP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.

Outside the laboratory windows was a watery-grey fog, and within a close warmth and the yellow light of the green-shaded gas lamps that stood two to each table down its narrow length. On each table stood a couple of glass jars containing the mangled vestiges of the crayfish, mussels, frogs, and guinea-pigs upon which the students had been working, and down the side of the room, facing the windows, were shelves bearing bleached dissections in spirits, surmounted by a row of beautifully executed anatomical drawings in white-wood frames and overhanging a row of cubical lockers. All the doors of the laboratory were panelled with blackboard, and on these were the half-erased diagrams of the previous day's work. The laboratory was empty, save for the demonstrator, who sat near the preparation-room door, and silent, save for a low, continuous murmur and the clicking of the rocker microtome at which he was working. But scattered about the room were traces of numerous students: hand-bags, polished boxes of instruments, in one place a large drawing covered by newspaper, and in another a prettily bound copy of *News from Nowhere*, a book oddly at variance with its surroundings. These things had been put down hastily as the students had arrived and hurried at once to secure their seats in the adjacent lecture theatre. Deadened by the closed door, the measured accents of the professor sounded as a featureless muttering.

Presently, faint through the closed windows came the sound of the Oratory clock striking the hour of eleven. The clicking of the microtome ceased, and the demonstrator looked at his watch, rose, thrust his hands into his pockets, and walked slowly down the laboratory towards the lecture theatre door. He stood listening for a moment, and then his eye fell on the little volume by William Morris. He picked it up, glanced at the title, smiled, opened it, looked at the name on the fly-leaf, ran the leaves through with his hand, and put it down. Almost immediately the even murmur of the lecturer ceased, there was a sudden burst of pencils rattling on the desks in the lecture theatre, a stirring, a scraping of feet, and a number of voices speaking together. Then a firm footfall approached the door,

which began to open, and stood ajar, as some indistinctly heard question arrested the new-comer.

The demonstrator turned, walked slowly back past the microtome, and left the laboratory by the preparation-room door. As he did so, first one, and then several students carrying notebooks entered the laboratory from the lecture theatre, and distributed themselves among the little tables, or stood in a group about the doorway. They were an exceptionally heterogeneous assembly, for while Oxford and Cambridge still recoil from the blushing prospect of mixed classes, the College of Science anticipated America in the matter years ago — mixed socially, too, for the prestige of the College is high, and its scholarships, free of any age limit, dredge deeper even than do those of the Scotch universities. The class numbered one-and-twenty, but some remained in the theatre questioning the professor, copying the black-board diagrams before they were washed off, or examining the special specimens he had produced to illustrate the day's teaching. Of the nine who had come into the laboratory three were girls, one of whom, a little fair woman, wearing spectacles and dressed in greyish-green, was peering out of the window at the fog, while the other two, both wholesome-looking, plain-faced schoolgirls, unrolled and put on the brown holland aprons they wore while dissecting. Of the men, two went down the laboratory to their places, one a pallid, dark-bearded man, who had once been a tailor; the other a pleasant-featured, ruddy young man of twenty, dressed in a well-fitting brown suit; young Wedderburn, the son of Wedderburn, the eye specialist. The others formed a little knot near the theatre door. One of these, a dwarfed, spectacled figure, with a hunchback, sat on a bent wood stool; two others, one a short, dark youngster, and the other a flaxen-haired, reddish-complexioned young man, stood leaning side by side against the slate sink, while the fourth stood facing them, and maintained the larger share of the conversation.

This last person was named Hill. He was a sturdily built young fellow, of the same age as Wedderburn; he had a white face, dark grey eyes, hair of an indeterminate colour, and prominent, irregular features. He talked rather louder than was needful, and thrust his hands deeply into his pockets. His collar was frayed and blue with the starch of a careless laundress, his clothes were evidently ready-

made, and there was a patch on the side of his boot near the toe. And as he talked or listened to the others, he glanced now and again towards the lecture theatre door. They were discussing the depressing peroration of the lecture they had just heard, the last lecture it was in the introductory course in zoology. “From ovum to ovum is the goal of the higher vertebrata,” the lecturer had said in his melancholy tones, and so had neatly rounded off the sketch of comparative anatomy he had been developing. The spectacled hunchback had repeated it, with noisy appreciation, had tossed it towards the fair-haired student with an evident provocation, and had started one of these vague, rambling discussions on generalities, so unaccountably dear to the student mind all the world over.

“That is our goal, perhaps — I admit it, as far as science goes,” said the fair-haired student, rising to the challenge. “But there are things above science.”

“Science,” said Hill confidently, “is systematic knowledge. Ideas that don’t come into the system — must anyhow — be loose ideas.” He was not quite sure whether that was a clever saying or a fatuity until his hearers took it seriously.

“The thing I cannot understand,” said the hunchback, at large, “is whether
Hill is a materialist or not.”

“There is one thing above matter,” said Hill promptly, feeling he had a better thing this time; aware, too, of someone in the doorway behind him, and raising his voice a trifle for her benefit, “and that is, the delusion that there is something above matter.”

“So we have your gospel at last,” said the fair student. “It’s all a delusion, is it? All our aspirations to lead something more than dogs’ lives, all our work for anything beyond ourselves. But see how inconsistent you are. Your socialism, for instance. Why do you trouble about the interests of the race? Why do you concern yourself about the beggar in the gutter? Why are you bothering yourself to lend that book “ — he indicated William Morris by a movement of the head— “to everyone in the lab.?”

“Girl,” said the hunchback indistinctly, and glanced guiltily over

his shoulder.

The girl in brown, with the brown eyes, had come into the laboratory, and stood on the other side of the table behind him, with her rolled-up apron in one hand, looking over her shoulder, listening to the discussion. She did not notice the hunchback, because she was glancing from Hill to his interlocutor. Hill's consciousness of her presence betrayed itself to her only in his studious ignorance of the fact; but she understood that, and it pleased her. "I see no reason," said he, "why a man should live like a brute because he knows of nothing beyond matter, and does not expect to exist a hundred years hence."

"Why shouldn't he?" said the fair-haired student.

"Why *should* he?" said Hill.

"What inducement has he?"

"That's the way with all you religious people. It's all a business of inducements. Cannot a man seek after righteousness for righteousness' sake?"

There was a pause. The fair man answered, with a kind of vocal padding, "But — you see — inducement — when I said inducement," to gain time. And then the hunchback came to his rescue and inserted a question. He was a terrible person in the debating society with his questions, and they invariably took one form — a demand for a definition, "What's your definition of righteousness?" said the hunchback at this stage.

Hill experienced a sudden loss of complacency at this question, but even as it was asked, relief came in the person of Brooks, the laboratory attendant, who entered by the preparation-room door, carrying a number of freshly killed guinea-pigs by their hind legs. "This is the last batch of material this session," said the youngster who had not previously spoken. Brooks advanced up the laboratory, smacking down a couple of guinea-pigs at each table. The rest of the class, scenting the prey from afar, came crowding in by the lecture theatre door, and the discussion perished abruptly as the students who were not already in their places hurried to them to secure the choice of a specimen. There was a noise of keys rattling on split rings as lockers were opened and dissecting instruments taken out. Hill was already standing by his table, and his box of scalpels was

sticking out of his pocket. The girl in brown came a step towards him, and, leaning over his table, said softly, “Did you see that I returned your book, Mr. Hill?”

During the whole scene she and the book had been vividly present in his consciousness; but he made a clumsy pretence of looking at the book and seeing it for the first time. “Oh, yes,” he said, taking it up. “I see. Did you like it?”

“I want to ask you some questions about it — some time.”

“Certainly,” said Hill. “I shall be glad.” He stopped awkwardly. “You liked it?” he said.

“It’s a wonderful book. Only some things I don’t understand.”

Then suddenly the laboratory was hushed by a curious, braying noise. It was the demonstrator. He was at the blackboard ready to begin the day’s instruction, and it was his custom to demand silence by a sound midway between the “Er” of common intercourse and the blast of a trumpet. The girl in brown slipped back to her place: it was immediately in front of Hill’s, and Hill, forgetting her forthwith, took a notebook out of the drawer of his table, turned over its leaves hastily, drew a stumpy pencil from his pocket, and prepared to make a copious note of the coming demonstration. For demonstrations and lectures are the sacred text of the College students. Books, saving only the Professor’s own, you may — it is even expedient to — ignore.

Hill was the son of a Landport cobbler, and had been hooked by a chance blue paper the authorities had thrown out to the Landport Technical College. He kept himself in London on his allowance of a guinea a week, and found that, with proper care, this also covered his clothing allowance, an occasional waterproof collar, that is; and ink and needles and cotton, and such-like necessaries for a man about town. This was his first year and his first session, but the brown old man in Landport had already got himself detested in many public-houses by boasting of his son, “the Professor.” Hill was a vigorous youngster, with a serene contempt for the clergy of all denominations, and a fine ambition to reconstruct the world. He regarded his scholarship as a brilliant opportunity. He had begun to read at seven, and had read steadily whatever came in his way, good or bad, since then. His worldly experience had been limited to the

island of Portsea, and acquired chiefly in the wholesale boot factory in which he had worked by day, after passing the seventh standard of the Board school. He had a considerable gift of speech, as the College Debating Society, which met amidst the crushing machines and mine models in the metallurgical theatre downstairs, already recognised — recognised by a violent battering of desks whenever he rose. And he was just at that fine emotional age when life opens at the end of a narrow pass like a broad valley at one's feet, full of the promise of wonderful discoveries and tremendous achievements. And his own limitations, save that he knew that he knew neither Latin nor French, were all unknown to him.

At first his interest had been divided pretty equally between his biological work at the College and social and theological theorising, an employment which he took in deadly earnest. Of a night, when the big museum library was not open, he would sit on the bed of his room in Chelsea with his coat and a muffler on, and write out the lecture notes and revise his dissection memoranda, until Thorpe called him out by a whistle — the landlady objected to open the door to attic visitors — and then the two would go prowling about the shadowy, shiny, gas-lit streets, talking, very much in the fashion of the sample just given, of the God idea, and Righteousness, and Carlyle, and the Reorganisation of Society. And in the midst of it all, Hill, arguing not only for Thorpe, but for the casual passer-by, would lose the thread of his argument glancing at some pretty painted face that looked meaningly at him as he passed. Science and Righteousness! But once or twice lately there had been signs that a third interest was creeping into his life, and he had found his attention wandering from the fate of the mesoblastic somites or the probable meaning of the blastopore, to the thought of the girl with the brown eyes who sat at the table before him.

She was a paying student; she descended inconceivable social altitudes to speak to him. At the thought of the education she must have had, and the accomplishments she must possess, the soul of Hill became abject within him. She had spoken to him first over a difficulty about the alisphenoid of a rabbit's skull, and he had found that, in biology at least, he had no reason for self-abasement. And from that, after the manner of young people starting from any

starting-point, they got to generalities, and while Hill attacked her upon the question of socialism — some instinct told him to spare her a direct assault upon her religion — she was gathering resolution to undertake what she told herself was his aesthetic education. She was a year or two older than he, though the thought never occurred to him. The loan of *News from Nowhere* was the beginning of a series of cross loans. Upon some absurd first principle of his, Hill had never "wasted time" Upon poetry, and it seemed an appalling deficiency to her. One day in the lunch hour, when she chanced upon him alone in the little museum where the skeletons were arranged, shamefully eating the bun that constituted his midday meal, she retreated, and returned to lend him, with a slightly furtive air, a volume of Browning. He stood sideways towards her and took the book rather clumsily, because he was holding the bun in the other hand. And in the retrospect his voice lacked the cheerful clearness he could have wished.

That occurred after the examination in comparative anatomy, on the day before the College turned out its students, and was carefully locked up by the officials, for the Christmas holidays. The excitement of cramming for the first trial of strength had for a little while dominated Hill, to the exclusion of his other interests. In the forecasts of the result in which everyone indulged he was surprised to find that no one regarded him as a possible competitor for the Harvey Commemoration Medal, of which this and the two subsequent examinations disposed. It was about this time that Wedderburn, who so far had lived inconspicuously on the uttermost margin of Hill's perceptions, began to take on the appearance of an obstacle. By a mutual agreement, the nocturnal prowlings with Thorpe ceased for the three weeks before the examination, and his landlady pointed out that she really could not supply so much lamp oil at the price. He walked to and fro from the College with little slips of mnemonics in his hand, lists of crayfish appendages, rabbits' skull-bones, and vertebrate nerves, for example, and became a positive nuisance to foot passengers in the opposite direction.

But, by a natural reaction, Poetry and the girl with the brown eyes ruled the Christmas holiday. The pending results of the examination became such a secondary consideration that Hill marvelled at his

father's excitement. Even had he wished it, there was no comparative anatomy to read in Landport, and he was too poor to buy books, but the stock of poets in the library was extensive, and Hill's attack was magnificently sustained. He saturated himself with the fluent numbers of Longfellow and Tennyson, and fortified himself with Shakespeare; found a kindred soul in Pope, and a master in Shelley, and heard and fled the siren voices of Eliza Cook and Mrs. Hemans. But he read no more Browning, because he hoped for the loan of other volumes from Miss Haysman when he returned to London.

He walked from his lodgings to the College with that volume of Browning in his shiny black bag, and his mind teeming with the finest general propositions about poetry. Indeed, he framed first this little speech and then that with which to grace the return. The morning was an exceptionally pleasant one for London; there was a clear, hard frost and undeniable blue in the sky, a thin haze softened every outline, and warm shafts of sunlight struck between the house blocks and turned the sunny side of the street to amber and gold. In the hall of the College he pulled off his glove and signed his name with fingers so stiff with cold that the characteristic dash under the signature he cultivated became a quivering line. He imagined Miss Haysman about him everywhere. He turned at the staircase, and there, below, he saw a crowd struggling at the foot of the notice-board. This, possibly, was the biology list. He forgot Browning and Miss Haysman for the moment, and joined the scrimmage. And at last, with his cheek flattened against the sleeve of the man on the step above him, he read the list —

CLASS I
H. J. Somers Wedderburn
William Hill

and thereafter followed a second class that is outside our present sympathies. It was characteristic that he did not trouble to look for Thorpe on the physics list, but backed out of the struggle at once, and in a curious emotional state between pride over common second-class humanity and acute disappointment at Wedderburn's success, went on his way upstairs. At the top, as he was hanging up his coat in

the passage, the zoological demonstrator, a young man from Oxford, who secretly regarded him as a blatant "mugger" of the very worst type, offered his heartiest congratulations.

At the laboratory door Hill stopped for a second to get his breath, and then entered. He looked straight up the laboratory and saw all five girl students grouped in their places, and Wedderburn, the once retiring Wedderburn, leaning rather gracefully against the window, playing with the blind tassel and talking, apparently, to the five of them. Now, Hill could talk bravely enough and even overbearingly to one girl, and he could have made a speech to a roomful of girls, but this business of standing at ease and appreciating, fencing, and returning quick remarks round a group was, he knew, altogether beyond him. Coming up the staircase his feelings for Wedderburn had been generous, a certain admiration perhaps, a willingness to shake his hand conspicuously and heartily as one who had fought but the first round. But before Christmas Wedderburn had never gone up to that end of the room to talk. In a flash Hill's mist of vague excitement condensed abruptly to a vivid dislike of Wedderburn. Possibly his expression changed. As he came up to his place, Wedderburn nodded carelessly to him, and the others glanced round. Miss Haysman looked at him and away again, the faintest touch of her eyes. "I can't agree with you, Mr. Wedderburn," she said.

"I must congratulate you on your first-class, Mr. Hill," said the spectacled girl in green, turning round and beaming at him.

"It's nothing," said Hill, staring at Wedderburn and Miss Haysman talking together, and eager to hear what they talked about.

"We poor folks in the second class don't think so," said the girl in spectacles.

What was it Wedderburn was saying? Something about William Morris! Hill did not answer the girl in spectacles, and the smile died out of his face. He could not hear, and failed to see how he could "cut in." Confound Wedderburn! He sat down, opened his bag, hesitated whether to return the volume of Browning forthwith, in the sight of all, and instead drew out his new notebooks for the short course in elementary botany that was now beginning, and which would terminate in February. As he did so, a fat, heavy man, with a white face and pale grey eyes — Bindon, the professor of botany,

who came up from Kew for January and February — came in by the lecture theatre door, and passed, rubbing his hands together and smiling, in silent affability down the laboratory.

* * * * *

In the subsequent six weeks Hill experienced some very rapid and curiously complex emotional developments. For the most part he had Wedderburn in focus — a fact that Miss Haysman never suspected. She told Hill (for in the comparative privacy of the museum she talked a good deal to him of socialism and Browning and general propositions) that she had met Wedderburn at the house of some people she knew, and "he's inherited his cleverness; for his father, you know, is the great eye-specialist."

"*My* father is a cobbler," said Hill, quite irrelevantly, and perceived the want of dignity even as he said it. But the gleam of jealousy did not offend her. She conceived herself the fundamental source of it. He suffered bitterly from a sense of Wedderburn's unfairness, and a realisation of his own handicap. Here was this Wedderburn had picked up a prominent man for a father, and instead of his losing so many marks on the score of that advantage, it was counted to him for righteousness! And while Hill had to introduce himself and talk to Miss Haysman clumsily over mangled guinea-pigs in the laboratory, this Wedderburn, in some backstairs way, had access to her social altitudes, and could converse in a polished argot that Hill understood perhaps, but felt incapable of speaking. Not, of course, that he wanted to. Then it seemed to Hill that for Wedderburn to come there day after day with cuffs unfrayed, neatly tailored, precisely barbered, quietly perfect, was in itself an ill-bred, sneering sort of proceeding. Moreover, it was a stealthy thing for Wedderburn to behave insignificantly for a space, to mock modesty, to lead Hill to fancy that he himself was beyond dispute the man of the year, and then suddenly to dart in front of him, and incontinently to swell up in this fashion. In addition to these things, Wedderburn displayed an increasing disposition to join in any conversational grouping that included Miss Haysman, and would venture, and indeed seek occasion, to pass opinions derogatory to socialism and atheism. He

goaded Hill to incivilities by neat, shallow, and exceedingly effective personalities about the socialist leaders, until Hill hated Bernard Shaw's graceful egotisms, William Morris's limited editions and luxurious wall-papers, and Walter Crane's charmingly absurd ideal working men, about as much as he hated Wedderburn. The dissertations in the laboratory, that had been his glory in the previous term, became a danger, degenerated into inglorious tussels with Wedderburn, and Hill kept to them only out of an obscure perception that his honour was involved. In the debating society Hill knew quite clearly that, to a thunderous accompaniment of banged desks, he could have pulverised Wedderburn. Only Wedderburn never attended the debating society to be pulverised, because — nauseous affectation! — he "dined late."

You must not imagine that these things presented themselves in quite such a crude form to Hill's perception. Hill was a born generaliser. Wedderburn to him was not so much an individual obstacle as a type, the salient angle of a class. The economic theories that, after infinite ferment, had shaped themselves in Hill's mind, became abruptly concrete at the contact. The world became full of easy-mannered, graceful, gracefully-dressed, conversationally dexterous, finally shallow Wedderburns, Bishops Wedderburn, Wedderburn M.P.'s, Professors Wedderburn, Wedderburn landlords, all with finger-bowl shibboleths and epigrammatic cities of refuge from a sturdy debater. And everyone ill-clothed or ill-dressed, from the cobbler to the cab-runner, was a man and a brother, a fellow-sufferer, to Hill's imagination. So that he became, as it were, a champion of the fallen and oppressed, albeit to outward seeming only a self-assertive, ill-mannered young man, and an unsuccessful champion at that. Again and again a skirmish over the afternoon tea that the girl students had inaugurated left Hill with flushed cheeks and a tattered temper, and the debating society noticed a new quality of sarcastic bitterness in his speeches.

You will understand now how it was necessary, if only in the interests of humanity, that Hill should demolish Wedderburn in the forthcoming examination and outshine him in the eyes of Miss Haysman; and you will perceive, too, how Miss Haysman fell into some common feminine misconceptions. The Hill-Wedderburn

quarrel, for in his unostentatious way Wedderburn reciprocated Hill's ill-veiled rivalry, became a tribute to her indefinable charm; she was the Queen of Beauty in a tournament of scalpels and stumpy pencils. To her confidential friend's secret annoyance, it even troubled her conscience, for she was a good girl, and painfully aware, from Ruskin and contemporary fiction, how entirely men's activities are determined by women's attitudes. And if Hill never by any chance mentioned the topic of love to her, she only credited him with the finer modesty for that omission. So the time came on for the second examination, and Hill's increasing pallor confirmed the general rumour that he was working hard. In the aerated bread shop near South Kensington Station you would see him, breaking his bun and sipping his milk, with his eyes intent upon a paper of closely written notes. In his bedroom there were propositions about buds and stems round his looking-glass, a diagram to catch his eye, if soap should chance to spare it, above his washing basin. He missed several meetings of the debating society, but he found the chance encounters with Miss Haysman in the spacious ways of the adjacent art museum, or in the little museum at the top of the College, or in the College corridors, more frequent and very restful. In particular, they used to meet in a little gallery full of wrought-iron chests and gates, near the art library, and there Hill used to talk, under the gentle stimulus of her flattering attention, of Browning and his personal ambitions. A characteristic she found remarkable in him was his freedom from avarice. He contemplated quite calmly the prospect of living all his life on an income below a hundred pounds a year. But he was determined to be famous, to make, recognisably in his own proper person, the world a better place to live in. He took Bradlaugh and John Burns for his leaders and models, poor, even impecunious, great men. But Miss Haysman thought that such lives were deficient on the aesthetic side, by which, though she did not know it, she meant good wall-paper and upholstery, pretty books, tasteful clothes, concerts, and meals nicely cooked and respectfully served.

At last came the day of the second examination, and the professor of botany, a fussy, conscientious man, rearranged all the tables in a long narrow laboratory to prevent copying, and put his demonstrator on a chair on a table (where he felt, he said, like a Hindoo god), to

see all the cheating, and stuck a notice outside the door, "Door closed," for no earthly reason that any human being could discover. And all the morning from ten till one the quill of Wedderburn shrieked defiance at Hill's, and the quills of the others chased their leaders in a tireless pack, and so also it was in the afternoon. Wedderburn was a little quieter than usual, and Hill's face was hot all day, and his overcoat bulged with textbooks and notebooks against the last moment's revision. And the next day, in the morning and in the afternoon, was the practical examination, when sections had to be cut and slides identified. In the morning Hill was depressed because he knew he had cut a thick section, and in the afternoon came the mysterious slip.

It was just the kind of thing that the botanical professor was always doing. Like the income tax, it offered a premium to the cheat. It was a preparation under the microscope, a little glass slip, held in its place on the stage of the instrument by light steel clips, and the inscription set forth that the slip was not to be moved. Each student was to go in turn to it, sketch it, write in his book of answers what he considered it to be, and return to his place. Now, to move such a slip is a thing one can do by a chance movement of the finger, and in a fraction of a second. The professor's reason for decreeing that the slip should not be moved depended on the fact that the object he wanted identified was characteristic of a certain tree stem. In the position in which it was placed it was a difficult thing to recognise, but once the slip was moved so as to bring other parts of the preparation into view, its nature was obvious enough.

Hill came to this, flushed from a contest with staining re-agents, sat down on the little stool before the microscope, turned the mirror to get the best light, and then, out of sheer habit, shifted the slips. At once he remembered the prohibition, and, with an almost continuous motion of his hands, moved it back, and sat paralysed with astonishment at his action.

Then, slowly, he turned his head. The professor was out of the room; the demonstrator sat aloft on his impromptu rostrum, reading the *Q. Jour. Mi. Sci.*; the rest of the examinees were busy, and with their backs to him. Should he own up to the accident now? He knew quite clearly what the thing was. It was a lenticel, a characteristic

preparation from the elder-tree. His eyes roved over his intent fellow-students, and Wedderburn suddenly glanced over his shoulder at him with a queer expression in his eyes. The mental excitement that had kept Hill at an abnormal pitch of vigour these two days gave way to a curious nervous tension. His book of answers was beside him. He did not write down what the thing was, but with one eye at the microscope he began making a hasty sketch of it. His mind was full of this grotesque puzzle in ethics that had suddenly been sprung upon him. Should he identify it? or should he leave this question unanswered? In that case Wedderburn would probably come out first in the second result. How could he tell now whether he might not have identified the thing without shifting it? It was possible that Wedderburn had failed to recognise it, of course. Suppose Wedderburn too had shifted the slide? He looked up at the clock. There were fifteen minutes in which to make up his mind. He gathered up his book of answers and the coloured pencils he used in illustrating his replies and walked back to his seat.

He read through his manuscript, and then sat thinking and gnawing his knuckle. It would look queer now if he owned up. He *must* beat Wedderburn. He forgot the examples of those starry gentlemen, John Burns and Bradlaugh. Besides, he reflected, the glimpse of the rest of the slip he had had was, after all, quite accidental, forced upon him by chance, a kind of providential revelation rather than an unfair advantage. It was not nearly so dishonest to avail himself of that as it was of Broome, who believed in the efficacy of prayer, to pray daily for a first-class. “Five minutes more,” said the demonstrator, folding up his paper and becoming observant. Hill watched the clock hands until two minutes remained; then he opened the book of answers, and, with hot ears and an affectation of ease, gave his drawing of the lenticel its name.

When the second pass list appeared, the previous positions of Wedderburn and Hill were reversed, and the spectacled girl in green, who knew the demonstrator in private life (where he was practically human), said that in the result of the two examinations taken together Hill had the advantage of a mark — 167 to 166 out of a possible 200. Everyone admired Hill in a way, though the suspicion of “mugging” clung to him. But Hill was to find congratulations and Miss

Haysman's enhanced opinion of him, and even the decided decline in the crest of Wedderburn, tainted by an unhappy memory. He felt a remarkable access of energy at first, and the note of a democracy marching to triumph returned to his debating-society speeches; he worked at his comparative anatomy with tremendous zeal and effect, and he went on with his aesthetic education. But through it all, a vivid little picture was continually coming before his mind's eye — of a sneakish person manipulating a slide.

No human being had witnessed the act, and he was cocksure that no higher power existed to see, it; but for all that it worried him. Memories are not dead things but alive; they dwindle in disuse, but they harden and develop in all sorts of queer ways if they are being continually fretted. Curiously enough, though at the time he perceived clearly that the shifting was accidental, as the days wore on, his memory became confused about it, until at last he was not sure — although he assured himself that he *was* sure — whether the movement had been absolutely involuntary. Then it is possible that Hill's dietary was conducive to morbid conscientiousness; a breakfast frequently eaten in a hurry, a midday bun, and, at such hours after five as chanced to be convenient, such meat as his means determined, usually in a chop-house in a back street off the Brompton Road. Occasionally he treated himself to threepenny or ninepenny classics, and they usually represented a suppression of potatoes or chops. It is indisputable that outbreaks of self-abasement and emotional revival have a distinct relation to periods of scarcity. But apart from this influence on the feelings, there was in Hill a distinct aversion to falsity that the blasphemous Landport cobbler had inculcated by strap and tongue from his earliest years. Of one fact about professed atheists I am convinced; they may be — they usually are — fools, void of subtlety, revilers of holy institutions, brutal speakers, and mischievous knaves, but they lie with difficulty. If it were not so, if they had the faintest grasp of the idea of compromise, they would simply be liberal churchmen. And, moreover, this memory poisoned his regard for Miss Haysman. For she now so evidently preferred him to Wedderburn that he felt sure he cared for her, and began reciprocating her attentions by timid marks of personal regard; at one time he even bought a bunch of

violets, carried it about in his pocket, and produced it, with a stumbling explanation, withered and dead, in the gallery of old iron. It poisoned, too, the denunciation of capitalist dishonesty that had been one of his life's pleasures. And, lastly, it poisoned his triumph in Wedderburn. Previously he had been Wedderburn's superior in his own eyes, and had raged simply at a want of recognition. Now he began to fret at the darker suspicion of positive inferiority. He fancied he found justifications for his position in Browning, but they vanished on analysis. At last — moved, curiously enough, by exactly the same motive forces that had resulted in his dishonesty — he went to Professor Bindon, and made a clean breast of the whole affair. As Hill was a paid student, Professor Bindon did not ask him to sit down, and he stood before the professor's desk as he made his confession.

"It's a curious story," said Professor Bindon, slowly realising how the thing reflected on himself, and then letting his anger rise,— "a most remarkable story. I can't understand your doing it, and I can't understand this avowal. You're a type of student — Cambridge men would never dream — I suppose I ought to have thought — why *did* you cheat?"

"I didn't cheat," said Hill.

"But you have just been telling me you did."

"I thought I explained—"

"Either you cheated or you did not cheat."

"I said my motion was involuntary."

"I am not a metaphysician, I am a servant of science — of fact. You were told not to move the slip. You did move the slip. If that is not cheating—"

"If I was a cheat," said Hill, with the note of hysterics in his voice, "should I come here and tell you?"

"Your repentance, of course, does you credit," said Professor Bindon, "but it does not alter the original facts."

"No, sir," said Hill, giving in in utter self-abasement.

"Even now you cause an enormous amount of trouble. The examination list will have to be revised."

"I suppose so, sir."

"Suppose so? Of course it must be revised. And I don't see how I

can conscientiously pass you.”

“Not pass me?” said Hill. “Fail me?”

“It’s the rule in all examinations. Or where should we be? What else did you expect? You don’t want to shirk the consequences of your own acts?”

“I thought, perhaps — —” said Hill. And then, “Fail me? I thought, as I told you, you would simply deduct the marks given for that slip.”

“Impossible!” said Bindon. “Besides, it would still leave you above Wedderburn. Deduct only the marks! Preposterous! The Departmental
Regulations distinctly say — —”

“But it’s my own admission, sir.”

“The Regulations say nothing whatever of the manner in which the matter comes to light. They simply provide — —”

“It will ruin me. If I fail this examination, they won’t renew my scholarship.”

“You should have thought of that before.”

“But, sir, consider all my circumstances — —”

“I cannot consider anything. Professors in this College are machines. The
Regulations will not even let us recommend our students for appointments.
I am a machine, and you have worked me. I have to do — —”

“It’s very hard, sir.”

“Possibly it is.”

“If I am to be failed this examination, I might as well go home at once.”

“That is as you think proper.” Bindon’s voice softened a little; he perceived he had been unjust, and, provided he did not contradict himself, he was disposed to amelioration. “As a private person,” he said, “I think this confession of yours goes far to mitigate your offence. But you have set the machinery in motion, and now it must

take its course. I — I am really sorry you gave way."

A wave of emotion prevented Hill from answering. Suddenly, very vividly, he saw the heavily-lined face of the old Landport cobbler, his father. "Good God! What a fool I have been!" he said hotly and abruptly.

"I hope," said Bindon, "that it will be a lesson to you."

But, curiously enough, they were not thinking of quite the same indiscretion.

There was a pause.

"I would like a day to think, sir, and then I will let you know — about going home, I mean," said Hill, moving towards the door.

* * * * *

The next day Hill's place was vacant. The spectacled girl in green was, as usual, first with the news. Wedderburn and Miss Haysman were talking of a performance of *The Meistersingers* when she came up to them.

"Have you heard?" she said.

"Heard what?"

"There was cheating in the examination."

"Cheating!" said Wedderburn, with his face suddenly hot. "How?"

"That slide—"

"Moved? Never!"

"It was. That slide that we weren't to move—"

"Nonsense!" said Wedderburn. "Why! How could they find out? Who do they say — ?"

"It was Mr. Hill."

Hill!"

"Mr. Hill!"

"Not — surely not the immaculate Hill?" said Wedderburn, recovering.

"I don't believe it," said Miss Haysman. "How do you know?"

"I *didn't*," said the girl in spectacles. "But I know it now for a fact. Mr. Hill went and confessed to Professor Bindon himself."

"By Jove!" said Wedderburn. "Hill of all people. But I am always

inclined to distrust these philanthropists-on-principle—”

“Are you quite sure?” said Miss Haysman, with a catch in her breath.

“Quite. It’s dreadful, isn’t it? But, you know, what can you expect? His father is a cobbler.”

Then Miss Haysman astonished the girl in spectacles.

“I don’t care. I will not believe it,” she said, flushing darkly under her warm-tinted skin. “I will not believe it until he has told me so himself — face to face. I would scarcely believe it then,” and abruptly she turned her back on the girl in spectacles, and walked to her own place.

“It’s true, all the same,” said the girl in spectacles, peering and smiling at Wedderburn.

But Wedderburn did not answer her. She was indeed one of those people who seemed destined to make unanswered remarks.

XIX.

THE CRYSTAL EGG.

There was, until a year ago, a little and very grimy-looking shop near Seven Dials, over which, in weather-worn yellow lettering, the name of "C. Cave, Naturalist and Dealer in Antiquities," was inscribed. The contents of its window were curiously variegated. They comprised some elephant tusks and an imperfect set of chessmen, beads and weapons, a box of eyes, two skulls of tigers and one human, several moth-eaten stuffed monkeys (one holding a lamp), an old-fashioned cabinet, a fly-blown ostrich egg or so, some fishing-tackle, and an extraordinarily dirty, empty glass fish-tank. There was also, at the moment the story begins, a mass of crystal, worked into the shape of an egg and brilliantly polished. And at that two people who stood outside the window were looking, one of them a tall, thin clergyman, the other a black-bearded young man of dusky complexion and unobtrusive costume. The dusky young man spoke with eager gesticulation, and seemed anxious for his companion to purchase the article.

While they were there, Mr. Cave came into his shop, his beard still wagging with the bread and butter of his tea. When he saw these men and the object of their regard, his countenance fell. He glanced guiltily over his shoulder, and softly shut the door. He was a little old man, with pale face and peculiar watery blue eyes; his hair was a dirty grey, and he wore a shabby blue frock-coat, an ancient silk hat, and carpet slippers very much down at heel. He remained watching the two men as they talked. The clergyman went deep into his trouser pocket, examined a handful of money, and showed his teeth in an agreeable smile. Mr. Cave seemed still more depressed when they came into the shop.

The clergyman, without any ceremony, asked the price of the crystal egg. Mr. Cave glanced nervously towards the door leading into the parlour, and said five pounds. The clergyman protested that the price was high, to his companion as well as to Mr. Cave — it was, indeed, very much more than Mr. Cave had intended to ask when he had stocked the article — and an attempt at bargaining ensued. Mr. Cave stepped to the shop door, and held it open. "Five

pounds is my price," he said, as though he wished to save himself the trouble of unprofitable discussion. As he did so, the upper portion of a woman's face appeared above the blind in the glass upper panel of the door leading into the parlour, and stared curiously at the two customers. "Five pounds is my price," said Mr. Cave, with a quiver in his voice.

The swarthy young man had so far remained a spectator, watching Cave keenly. Now he spoke. "Give him five pounds," he said. The clergyman glanced at him to see if he were in earnest, and when he looked at Mr. Cave again, he saw that the latter's face was white. "It's a lot of money," said the clergyman, and, diving into his pocket, began counting his resources. He had little more than thirty shillings, and he appealed to his companion, with whom he seemed to be on terms of considerable intimacy. This gave Mr. Cave an opportunity of collecting his thoughts, and he began to explain in an agitated manner that the crystal was not, as a matter of fact, entirely free for sale. His two customers were naturally surprised at this, and inquired why he had not thought of that before he began to bargain. Mr. Cave became confused, but he stuck to his story, that the crystal was not in the market that afternoon, that a probable purchaser of it had already appeared. The two, treating this as an attempt to raise the price still further, made as if they would leave the shop. But at this point the parlour door opened, and the owner of the dark fringe and the little eyes appeared.

She was a coarse-featured, corpulent woman, younger and very much larger than Mr. Cave; she walked heavily, and her face was flushed. "That crystal *is* for sale," she said. "And five pounds is a good enough price for it. I can't think what you're about, Cave, not to take the gentleman's offer!"

Mr. Cave, greatly perturbed by the irruption, looked angrily at her over the rims of his spectacles, and, without excessive assurance, asserted his right to manage his business in his own way. An altercation began. The two customers watched the scene with interest and some amusement, occasionally assisting Mrs. Cave with suggestions. Mr. Cave, hard driven, persisted in a confused and impossible story of an inquiry for the crystal that morning, and his agitation became painful. But he stuck to his point with extraordinary

persistence. It was the young Oriental who ended this curious controversy. He proposed that they should call again in the course of two days — so as to give the alleged inquirer a fair chance. “And then we must insist,” said the clergyman. “Five pounds.” Mrs. Cave took it on herself to apologise for her husband, explaining that he was sometimes “a little odd,” and as the two customers left, the couple prepared for a free discussion of the incident in all its bearings.

Mrs. Cave talked to her husband with singular directness. The poor little man, quivering with emotion, muddled himself between his stories, maintaining on the one hand that he had another customer in view, and on the other asserting that the crystal was honestly worth ten guineas. “Why did you ask five pounds?” said his wife. “*Do* let me manage my business my own way!” said Mr. Cave.

Mr. Cave had living with him a step-daughter and a step-son, and at supper that night the transaction was re-discussed. None of them had a high opinion of Mr. Cave’s business methods, and this action seemed a culminating folly.

“It’s my opinion he’s refused that crystal before,” said the step-son, a loose-limbed lout of eighteen.

“But *Five Pounds*!” said the step-daughter, an argumentative young woman of six-and-twenty.

Mr. Cave’s answers were wretched; he could only mumble weak assertions that he knew his own business best. They drove him from his half-eaten supper into the shop, to close it for the night, his ears aflame and tears of vexation behind his spectacles. Why had he left the crystal in the window so long? The folly of it! That was the trouble closest in his mind. For a time he could see no way of evading sale.

After supper his step-daughter and step-son smartened themselves up and went out and his wife retired upstairs to reflect upon the business aspects of the crystal, over a little sugar and lemon and so forth in hot water. Mr. Cave went into the shop, and stayed there until late, ostensibly to make ornamental rockeries for gold-fish cases, but really for a private purpose that will be better explained later. The next day Mrs. Cave found that the crystal had been removed from the window, and was lying behind some second-hand

books on angling. She replaced it in a conspicuous position. But she did not argue further about it, as a nervous headache disinclined her from debate. Mr. Cave was always disinclined. The day passed disagreeably. Mr. Cave was, if anything, more absent-minded than usual, and uncommonly irritable withal. In the afternoon, when his wife was taking her customary sleep, he removed the crystal from the window again.

The next day Mr. Cave had to deliver a consignment of dog-fish at one of the hospital schools, where they were needed for dissection. In his absence Mrs. Cave's mind reverted to the topic of the crystal, and the methods of expenditure suitable to a windfall of five pounds. She had already devised some very agreeable expedients, among others a dress of green silk for herself and a trip to Richmond, when a jangling of the front door bell summoned her into the shop. The customer was an examination coach who came to complain of the non-delivery of certain frogs asked for the previous day. Mrs. Cave did not approve of this particular branch of Mr. Cave's business, and the gentleman, who had called in a somewhat aggressive mood, retired after a brief exchange of words — entirely civil, so far as he was concerned. Mrs. Cave's eye then naturally turned to the window; for the sight of the crystal was an assurance of the five pounds and of her dreams. What was her surprise to find it gone!

She went to the place behind the locker on the counter, where she had discovered it the day before. It was not there; and she immediately began an eager search about the shop.

When Mr. Cave returned from his business with the dogfish, about a quarter to two in the afternoon, he found the shop in some confusion, and his wife, extremely exasperated and on her knees behind the counter, routing among his taxidermic material. Her face came up hot and angry over the counter, as the jangling bell announced his return, and she forthwith accused him of "hiding it."

"Hid *what*?" asked Mr. Cave.

"The crystal!"

At that Mr. Cave, apparently much surprised, rushed to the window. "Isn't it here?" he said. "Great Heavens! what has become of it?"

Just then Mr. Cave's step-son re-entered the shop from, the inner

room — he had come home a minute or so before Mr. Cave — and he was blaspheming freely. He was apprenticed to a second-hand furniture dealer down the road, but he had his meals at home, and he was naturally annoyed to find no dinner ready.

But when he heard of the loss of the crystal, he forgot his meal, and his anger was diverted from his mother to his step-father. Their first idea, of course, was that he had hidden it. But Mr. Cave stoutly denied all knowledge of its fate, freely offering his bedabbled affidavit in the matter — and at last was worked up to the point of accusing, first, his wife and then his stepson of having taken it with a view to a private sale. So began an exceedingly acrimonious and emotional discussion, which ended for Mrs. Cave in a peculiar nervous condition midway between hysterics and amuck, and caused the step-son to be half-an-hour late at the furniture establishment in the afternoon. Mr. Cave took refuge from his wife's emotions in the shop.

In the evening the matter was resumed, with less passion and in a judicial spirit, under the presidency of the step-daughter. The supper passed unhappily and culminated in a painful scene. Mr. Cave gave way at last to extreme exasperation, and went out banging the front door violently. The rest of the family, having discussed him with the freedom his absence warranted, hunted the house from garret to cellar, hoping to light upon the crystal.

The next day the two customers called again. They were received by Mrs. Cave almost in tears. It transpired that no one *could* imagine all that she had stood from Cave at various times in her married pilgrimage. … She also gave a garbled account of the disappearance. The clergyman and the Oriental laughed silently at one another, and said it was very extraordinary. As Mrs. Cave seemed disposed to give them the complete history of her life they made to leave the shop. Thereupon Mrs. Cave, still clinging to hope, asked for the clergyman's address, so that, if she could get anything out of Cave, she might communicate it. The address was duly given, but apparently was afterwards mislaid. Mrs. Cave can remember nothing about it.

In the evening of that day the Caves seem to have exhausted their emotions, and Mr. Cave, who had been out in the afternoon, supped

in a gloomy isolation that contrasted pleasantly with the impassioned controversy of the previous days. For some time matters were very badly strained in the Cave household, but neither crystal nor customer reappeared.

Now, without mincing the matter, we must admit that Mr. Cave was a liar. He knew perfectly well where the crystal was. It was in the rooms of Mr. Jacoby Wace, Assistant Demonstrator at St. Catherine's Hospital, Westbourne Street. It stood on the sideboard partially covered by a black velvet cloth, and beside a decanter of American whisky. It is from Mr. Wace, indeed, that the particulars upon which this narrative is based were derived. Cave had taken off the thing to the hospital hidden in the dog-fish sack, and there had pressed the young investigator to keep it for him. Mr. Wace was a little dubious at first. His relationship to Cave was peculiar. He had a taste for singular characters, and he had more than once invited the old man to smoke and drink in his rooms, and to unfold his rather amusing views of life in general and of his wife in particular. Mr. Wace had encountered Mrs. Cave, too, on occasions when Mr. Cave was not at home to attend to him. He knew the constant interference to which Cave was subjected, and having weighed the story judicially, he decided to give the crystal a refuge. Mr. Cave promised to explain the reasons for his remarkable affection for the crystal more fully on a later occasion, but he spoke distinctly of seeing visions therein. He called on Mr. Wace the same evening.

He told a complicated story. The crystal he said had come into his possession with other oddments at the forced sale of another curiosity dealer's effects, and not knowing what its value might be, he had ticketed it at ten shillings. It had hung upon his hands at that price for some months, and he was thinking of "reducing the figure," when he made a singular discovery.

At that time his health was very bad — and it must be borne in mind that, throughout all this experience, his physical condition was one of ebb — and he was in considerable distress by reason of the negligence, the positive ill-treatment even, he received from his wife and step-children. His wife was vain, extravagant, unfeeling, and had a growing taste for private drinking; his step-daughter was mean and over-reaching; and his step-son had conceived a violent dislike for

him, and lost no chance of showing it. The requirements of his business pressed heavily upon him, and Mr. Wace does not think that he was altogether free from occasional intemperance. He had begun life in a comfortable position, he was a man of fair education, and he suffered, for weeks at a stretch, from melancholia and insomnia. Afraid to disturb his family, he would slip quietly from his wife's side, when his thoughts became intolerable, and wander about the house. And about three o'clock one morning, late in August, chance directed him into the shop.

The dirty little place was impenetrably black except in one spot, where he perceived an unusual glow of light. Approaching this, he discovered it to be the crystal egg, which was standing on the corner of the counter towards the window. A thin ray smote through a crack in the shutters, impinged upon the object, and seemed as it were to fill its entire interior.

It occurred to Mr. Cave that this was not in accordance with the laws of optics as he had known them in his younger days. He could understand the rays being refracted by the crystal and coming to a focus in its interior, but this diffusion jarred with his physical conceptions. He approached the crystal nearly, peering into it and round it, with a transient revival of the scientific curiosity that in his youth had determined his choice of a calling. He was surprised to find the light not steady, but writhing within the substance of the egg, as though that object was a hollow sphere of some luminous vapour. In moving about to get different points of view, he suddenly found that he had come between it and the ray, and that the crystal none the less remained luminous. Greatly astonished, he lifted it out of the light ray and carried it to the darkest part of the shop. It remained bright for some four or five minutes, when it slowly faded and went out. He placed it in the thin streak of daylight, and its luminousness was almost immediately restored.

So far, at least, Mr. Wace was able to verify the remarkable story of Mr. Cave. He has himself repeatedly held this crystal in a ray of light (which had to be of a less diameter than one millimetre). And in a perfect darkness, such as could be produced by velvet wrapping, the crystal did undoubtedly appear very faintly phosphorescent. It would seem, however, that the luminousness was of some

exceptional sort, and not equally visible to all eyes; for Mr. Harbinger — whose name will be familiar to the scientific reader in connection with the Pasteur Institute — was quite unable to see any light whatever. And Mr. Wace's own capacity for its appreciation was out of comparison inferior to that of Mr. Cave's. Even with Mr. Cave the power varied very considerably: his vision was most vivid during states of extreme weakness and fatigue.

Now, from the outset, this light in the crystal exercised a curious fascination upon Mr. Cave. And it says more for his loneliness of soul than a volume of pathetic writing could do, that he told no human being of his curious observations. He seems to have been living in such an atmosphere of petty spite that to admit the existence of a pleasure would have been to risk the loss of it. He found that as the dawn advanced, and the amount of diffused light increased, the crystal became to all appearance non-luminous. And for some time he was unable to see anything in it, except at night-time, in dark corners of the shop.

But the use of an old velvet cloth, which he used as a background for a collection of minerals, occurred to him, and by doubling this, and putting it over his head and hands, he was able to get a sight of the luminous movement within the crystal even in the day-time. He was very cautious lest he should be thus discovered by his wife, and he practised this occupation only in the afternoons, while she was asleep upstairs, and then circumspectly in a hollow under the counter. And one day, turning the crystal about in his hands, he saw something. It came and went like a flash, but it gave him the impression that the object had for a moment opened to him the view of a wide and spacious and strange country; and turning it about, he did, just as the light faded, see the same vision again.

Now it would be tedious and unnecessary to state all the phases of Mr. Cave's discovery from this point. Suffice that the effect was this: the crystal, being peered into at an angle of about 137 degrees from the direction of the illuminating ray, gave a clear and consistent picture of a wide and peculiar country-side. It was not dream-like at all: it produced a definite impression of reality, and the better the light the more real and solid it seemed. It was a moving picture: that is to say, certain objects moved in it, but slowly in an orderly manner

like real things, and, according as the direction of the lighting and vision changed, the picture changed also. It must, indeed, have been like looking through an oval glass at a view, and turning the glass about to get at different aspects.

Mr. Cave's statements, Mr. Wace assures me, were extremely circumstantial, and entirely free from any of that emotional quality that taints hallucinatory impressions. But it must be remembered that all the efforts of Mr. Wace to see any similar clarity in the faint opalescence of the crystal were wholly unsuccessful, try as he would. The difference in intensity of the impressions received by the two men was very great, and it is quite conceivable that what was a view to Mr. Cave was a mere blurred nebulosity to Mr. Wace.

The view, as Mr. Cave described it, was invariably of an extensive plain, and he seemed always to be looking at it from a considerable height, as if from a tower or a mast. To the east and to the west the plain was bounded at a remote distance by vast reddish cliffs, which reminded him of those he had seen in some picture; but what the picture was Mr. Wace was unable to ascertain. These cliffs passed north and south — he could tell the points of the compass by the stars that were visible of a night — receding in an almost illimitable perspective and fading into the mists of the distance before they met. He was nearer the eastern set of cliffs; on the occasion of his first vision the sun was rising over them, and black against the sunlight and pale against their shadow appeared a multitude of soaring forms that Mr. Cave regarded as birds. A vast range of buildings spread below him; he seemed to be looking down upon them; and as they approached the blurred and refracted edge of the picture they became indistinct. There were also trees curious in shape, and in colouring a deep mossy green and an exquisite grey, beside a wide and shining canal. And something great and brilliantly coloured flew across the picture. But the first time Mr. Cave saw these pictures he saw only in flashes, his hands shook, his head moved, the vision came and went, and grew foggy and indistinct. And at first he had the greatest difficulty in finding the picture again once the direction of it was lost.

His next clear vision, which came about a week after the first, the interval having yielded nothing but tantalising glimpses and some

useful experience, showed him the view down the length of the valley. The view was different, but he had a curious persuasion, which his subsequent observations abundantly confirmed, that he was regarding the strange world from exactly the same spot, although he was looking in a different direction. The long façade of the great building, whose roof he had looked down upon before, was now receding in perspective. He recognised the roof. In the front of the façade was a terrace of massive proportions and extraordinary length, and down the middle of the terrace, at certain intervals, stood huge but very graceful masts, bearing small shiny objects which reflected the setting sun. The import of these small objects did not occur to Mr. Cave until some time after, as he was describing the scene to Mr. Wace. The terrace overhung a thicket of the most luxuriant and graceful vegetation, and beyond this was a wide grassy lawn on which certain broad creatures, in form like beetles but enormously larger, reposed. Beyond this again was a richly decorated causeway of pinkish stone; and beyond that, and lined with dense red weeds, and passing up the valley exactly parallel with the distant cliffs, was a broad and mirror-like expanse of water. The air seemed full of squadrons of great birds, manoeuvring in stately curves; and across the river was a multitude of splendid buildings, richly coloured and glittering with metallic tracery and facets, among a forest of moss-like and lichenous trees. And suddenly something flapped repeatedly across the vision, like the fluttering of a jewelled fan or the beating of a wing, and a face, or rather the upper part of a face with very large eyes, came as it were close to his own and as if on the other side of the crystal. Mr. Cave was so startled and so impressed by the absolute reality of these eyes that he drew his head back from the crystal to look behind it. He had become so absorbed in watching that he was quite surprised to find himself in the cool darkness of his little shop, with its familiar odour of methyl, mustiness, and decay. And as he blinked about him, the glowing crystal faded and went out.

Such were the first general impressions of Mr. Cave. The story is curiously direct and circumstantial. From the outset, when the valley first flashed momentarily on his senses, his imagination was strangely affected, and as he began to appreciate the details of the scene he saw, his wonder rose to the point of a passion. He went

about his business listless and distraught, thinking only of the time when he should be able to return to his watching. And then a few weeks after his first sight of the valley came the two customers, the stress and excitement of their offer, and the narrow escape of the crystal from sale, as I have already told.

Now, while the thing was Mr. Cave's secret, it remained a mere wonder, a thing to creep to covertly and peep at, as a child might peep upon a forbidden garden. But Mr. Wace has, for a young scientific investigator, a particularly lucid and consecutive habit of mind. Directly the crystal and its story came to him, and he had satisfied himself, by seeing the phosphorescence with his own eyes, that there really was a certain evidence for Mr. Cave's statements, he proceeded to develop the matter systematically. Mr. Cave was only too eager to come and feast his eyes on this wonderland he saw, and he came every night from half-past eight until half-past ten, and sometimes, in Mr. Wace's absence, during the day. On Sunday afternoons, also, he came. From the outset Mr. Wace made copious notes, and it was due to his scientific method that the relation between the direction from which the initiating ray entered the crystal and the orientation of the picture were proved. And, by covering the crystal in a box perforated only with a small aperture to admit the exciting ray, and by substituting black holland for his buff blinds, he greatly improved the conditions of the observations; so that in a little while they were able to survey the valley in any direction they desired.

So having cleared the way, we may give a brief account of this visionary world within the crystal. The things were in all cases seen by Mr. Cave, and the method of working was invariably for him to watch the crystal and report what he saw, while Mr. Wace (who as a science student had learnt the trick of writing in the dark) wrote a brief note of his report. When the crystal faded, it was put into its box in the proper position and the electric light turned on. Mr. Wace asked questions, and suggested observations to clear up difficult points. Nothing, indeed, could have been less visionary and more matter-of-fact.

The attention of Mr. Cave had been speedily directed to the bird-like creatures he had seen so abundantly present in each of his earlier

visions. His first impression was soon corrected, and he considered for a time that they might represent a diurnal species of bat. Then he thought, grotesquely enough, that they might be cherubs. Their heads were round and curiously human, and it was the eyes of one of them that had so startled him on his second observation. They had broad, silvery wings, not feathered, but glistening almost as brilliantly as new-killed fish and with the same subtle play of colour, and these wings were not built on the plan of bird-wing or bat, Mr. Wace learned, but supported by curved ribs radiating from the body. (A sort of butterfly wing with curved ribs seems best to express their appearance.) The body was small, but fitted with two bunches of prehensile organs, like long tentacles, immediately under the mouth. Incredible as it appeared to Mr. Wace, the persuasion at last became irresistible that it was these creatures which owned the great quasi-human buildings and the magnificent garden that made the broad valley so splendid. And Mr. Cave perceived that the buildings, with other peculiarities, had no doors, but that the great circular windows, which opened freely, gave the creatures egress and entrance. They would alight upon their tentacles, fold their wings to a smallness almost rod-like, and hop into the interior. But among them was a multitude of smaller-winged creatures, like great dragon-flies and moths and flying beetles, and across the greensward brilliantly-coloured gigantic ground-beetles crawled lazily to and fro. Moreover, on the causeways and terraces, large-headed creatures similar to the greater winged flies, but wingless, were visible, hopping busily upon their hand-like tangle of tentacles.

Allusion has already been made to the glittering objects upon masts that stood upon the terrace of the nearer building. It dawned upon Mr. Cave, after regarding one of these masts very fixedly on one particularly vivid day that the glittering object there was a crystal exactly like that into which he peered. And a still more careful scrutiny convinced him that each one in a vista of nearly twenty carried a similar object.

Occasionally one of the large flying creatures would flutter up to one, and folding its wings and coiling a number of its tentacles about the mast, would regard the crystal fixedly for a space, — sometimes for as long as fifteen minutes. And a series of observations, made at

the suggestion of Mr. Wace, convinced both watchers that, so far as this visionary world was concerned, the crystal into which they peered actually stood at the summit of the end-most mast on the terrace, and that on one occasion at least one of these inhabitants of this other world had looked into Mr. Cave's face while he was making these observations.

So much for the essential facts of this very singular story. Unless we dismiss it all as the ingenious fabrication of Mr. Wace, we have to believe one of two things: either that Mr. Cave's crystal was in two worlds at once, and that while it was carried about in one, it remained stationary in the other, which seems altogether absurd; or else that it had some peculiar relation of sympathy with another and exactly similar crystal in this other world, so that what was seen in the interior of the one in this world was, under suitable conditions, visible to an observer in the corresponding crystal in the other world; and *vice versa*. At present, indeed, we do not know of any way in which two crystals could so come *en rapport*, but nowadays we know enough to understand that the thing is not altogether impossible. This view of the crystals as *en rapport* was the supposition that occurred to Mr. Wace, and to me at least it seems extremely plausible…

And where was this other world? On this, also, the alert intelligence of Mr. Wace speedily threw light. After sunset, the sky darkened rapidly — there was a very brief twilight interval indeed — and the stars shone out. They were recognisably the same as those we see, arranged in the same constellations. Mr. Cave recognised the Bear, the Pleiades, Aldebaran, and Sirius; so that the other world must be somewhere in the solar system, and, at the utmost, only a few hundreds of millions of miles from our own. Following up this clue, Mr. Wace learned that the midnight sky was a darker blue even than our midwinter sky, and that the sun seemed a little smaller. *And there were two small moons!* "like our moon but smaller, and quite differently marked," one of which moved so rapidly that its motion was clearly visible as one regarded it. These moons were never high in the sky, but vanished as they rose: that is, every time they revolved they were eclipsed because they were so near their primary planet. And all this answers quite completely, although Mr. Cave did

not know it, to what must be the condition of things on Mars.

Indeed, it seems an exceedingly plausible conclusion that peering into this crystal Mr. Cave did actually see the planet Mars and its inhabitants. And if that be the case, then the evening star that shone so brilliantly in the sky of that distant vision was neither more nor less than our own familiar earth.

For a time the Martians — if they were Martians — do not seem to have known of Mr. Cave's inspection. Once or twice one would come to peer, and go away very shortly to some other mast, as though the vision was unsatisfactory. During this time Mr. Cave was able to watch the proceedings of these winged people without being disturbed by their attentions, and although his report is necessarily vague and fragmentary, it is nevertheless very suggestive. Imagine the impression of humanity a Martian observer would get who, after a difficult process of preparation and with considerable fatigue to the eyes, was able to peer at London from the steeple of St. Martin's Church for stretches, at longest, of four minutes at a time. Mr. Cave was unable to ascertain if the winged Martians were the same as the Martians who hopped about the causeways and terraces, and if the latter could put on wings at will. He several times saw certain clumsy bipeds, dimly suggestive of apes, white and partially translucent, feeding among certain of the lichenous trees, and once some of these fled before one of the hopping, round-headed Martians. The latter caught one in its tentacles, and then the picture faded suddenly and left Mr. Cave most tantalisingly in the dark. On another occasion a vast thing, that Mr. Cave thought at first was some gigantic insect, appeared advancing along the causeway beside the canal with extraordinary rapidity. As this drew nearer Mr. Cave perceived that it was a mechanism of shining metals and of extraordinary complexity. And then, when he looked again, it had passed out of sight.

After a time Mr. Wace aspired to attract the attention of the Martians, and the next time that the strange eyes of one of them appeared close to the crystal Mr. Cave cried out and sprang away, and they immediately turned on the light and began to gesticulate in a manner suggestive of signalling. But when at last Mr. Cave examined the crystal again the Martian had departed.

Thus far these observations had progressed in early November,

and then Mr. Cave, feeling that the suspicions of his family about the crystal were allayed, began to take it to and fro with him in order that, as occasion arose in the daytime or night, he might comfort himself with what was fast becoming the most real thing in his existence.

In December Mr. Wace's work in connection with a forthcoming examination became heavy, the sittings were reluctantly suspended for a week, and for ten or eleven days — he is not quite sure which — he saw nothing of Cave. He then grew anxious to resume these investigations, and, the stress of his seasonal labours being abated, he went down to Seven Dials. At the corner he noticed a shutter before a bird fancier's window, and then another at a cobbler's. Mr. Cave's shop was closed.

He rapped and the door was opened by the step-son in black. He at once called Mrs. Cave, who was, Mr. Wace could not but observe, in cheap but ample widow's weeds of the most imposing pattern. Without any very great surprise Mr. Wace learnt that Cave was dead and already buried. She was in tears, and her voice was a little thick. She had just returned from Highgate. Her mind seemed occupied with her own prospects and the honourable details of the obsequies, but Mr. Wace was at last able to learn the particulars of Cave's death. He had been found dead in his shop in the early morning, the day after his last visit to Mr. Wace, and the crystal had been clasped in his stone-cold hands. His face was smiling, said Mrs. Cave, and the velvet cloth from the minerals lay on the floor at his feet. He must have been dead five or six hours when he was found.

This came as a great shock to Wace, and he began to reproach himself bitterly for having neglected the plain symptoms of the old man's ill-health. But his chief thought was of the crystal. He approached that topic in a gingerly manner, because he knew Mrs. Cave's peculiarities. He was dumfounded to learn that it was sold.

Mrs. Cave's first impulse, directly Cave's body had been taken upstairs, had been to write to the mad clergyman who had offered five pounds for the crystal, informing him of its recovery; but after a violent hunt, in which her daughter joined her, they were convinced of the loss of his address. As they were without the means required to mourn and bury Cave in the elaborate style the dignity of an old

Seven Dials inhabitant demands, they had appealed to a friendly fellow-tradesman in Great Portland Street. He had very kindly taken over a portion of the stock at a valuation. The valuation was his own, and the crystal egg was included in one of the lots. Mr. Wace, after a few suitable condolences, a little off-handedly proffered perhaps, hurried at once to Great Portland Street. But there he learned that the crystal egg had already been sold to a tall, dark man in grey. And there the material facts in this curious, and to me at least very suggestive, story come abruptly to an end. The Great Portland Street dealer did not know who the tall dark man in grey was, nor had he observed him with sufficient attention to describe him minutely. He did not even know which way this person had gone after leaving the shop. For a time Mr. Wace remained in the shop, trying the dealer's patience with hopeless questions, venting his own exasperation. And at last, realising abruptly that the whole thing had passed out of his hands, had vanished like a vision of the night, he returned to his own rooms, a little astonished to find the notes he had made still tangible and visible upon, his untidy table.

His annoyance and disappointment were naturally very great. He made a second call (equally ineffectual) upon the Great Portland Street dealer, and he resorted to advertisements in such periodicals as were lively to come into the hands of a *bric-a-brac* collector. He also wrote letters to *The Daily Chronicle* and *Nature*, but both those periodicals, suspecting a hoax, asked him to reconsider his action before they printed, and he was advised that such a strange story, unfortunately so bare of supporting evidence, might imperil his reputation as an investigator. Moreover, the calls of his proper work were urgent. So that after a month or so, save for an occasional reminder to certain dealers, he had reluctantly to abandon the quest for the crystal egg, and from that day to this it remains undiscovered. Occasionally, however, he tells me, and I can quite believe him, he has bursts of zeal, in which he abandons his more urgent occupation and resumes the search.

Whether or not it will remain lost for ever, with the material and origin of it, are things equally speculative at the present time. If the present purchaser is a collector, one would have expected the enquiries of Mr. Wace to have reached him through the dealers. He

has been able to discover Mr. Cave's clergyman and "Oriental" — no other than the Rev. James Parker and the young Prince of Bosso-Kuni in Java. I am obliged to them for certain particulars. The object of the Prince was simply curiosity — and extravagance. He was so eager to buy because Cave was so oddly reluctant to sell. It is just as possible that the buyer in the second instance was simply a casual purchaser and not a collector at all, and the crystal egg, for all I know, may at the present moment be within a mile of me, decorating a drawing-room or serving as a paper-weight — its remarkable functions all unknown. Indeed, it is partly with the idea of such a possibility that I have thrown this narrative into a form that will give it a chance of being read by the ordinary consumer of fiction.

My own ideas in the matter are practically identical with those of Mr. Wace. I believe the crystal on the mast in Mars and the crystal egg of Mr. Cave's to be in some physical, but at present quite inexplicable, way *en rapport*, and we both believe further that the terrestrial crystal must have been — possibly at some remote date — sent hither from that planet, in order to give the Martians a near view of our affairs. Possibly the fellows to the crystals on the other masts are also on our globe. No theory of hallucination suffices for the facts.

XX.

THE STAR.

It was on the first day of the new year that the announcement was made, almost simultaneously from three observatories, that the motion of the planet Neptune, the outermost of all the planets that wheel about the sun, had become very erratic. Ogilvy had already called attention to a suspected retardation in its velocity in December. Such a piece of news was scarcely calculated to interest a world the greater portion of whose inhabitants were unaware of the existence of the planet Neptune, nor outside the astronomical profession did the subsequent discovery of a faint remote speck of light in the region of the perturbed planet cause any very great excitement. Scientific people, however, found the intelligence remarkable enough, even before it became known that the new body was rapidly growing larger and brighter, that its motion was quite different from the orderly progress of the planets, and that the deflection of Neptune and its satellite was becoming now of an unprecedented kind.

Few people without a training in science can realise the huge isolation of the solar system. The sun with its specks of planets, its dust of planetoids, and its impalpable comets, swims in a vacant immensity that almost defeats the imagination. Beyond the orbit of Neptune there is space, vacant so far as human observation has penetrated, without warmth or light or sound, blank emptiness, for twenty million times a million miles. That is the smallest estimate of the distance to be traversed before the very nearest of the stars is attained. And, saving a few comets more unsubstantial than the thinnest flame, no matter had ever to human knowledge crossed this gulf of space until early in the twentieth century this strange wanderer appeared. A vast mass of matter it was, bulky, heavy, rushing without warning out of the black mystery of the sky into the radiance of the sun. By the second day it was clearly visible to any decent instrument, as a speck with a barely sensible diameter, in the constellation Leo near Regulus. In a little while an opera glass could attain it.

On the third day of the new year the newspaper readers of two

hemispheres were made aware for the first time of the real importance of this unusual apparition in the heavens. “A Planetary Collision,” one London paper headed the news, and proclaimed Duchaine’s opinion that this strange new planet would probably collide with Neptune. The leader-writers enlarged upon the topic. So that in most of the capitals of the world, on January 3rd, there was an expectation, however vague, of some imminent phenomenon in the sky; and as the night followed the sunset round the globe, thousands of men turned their eyes skyward to see — the old familiar stars just as they had always been.

Until it was dawn in London and Pollux setting and the stars overhead grown pale. The Winter’s dawn it was, a sickly filtering accumulation of daylight, and the light of gas and candles shone yellow in the windows to show where people were astir. But the yawning policeman saw the thing, the busy crowds in the markets stopped agape, workmen going to their work betimes, milkmen, the drivers of news-carts, dissipation going home jaded and pale, homeless wanderers, sentinels on their beats, and, in the country, labourers trudging afield, poachers slinking home, all over the dusky quickening country it could be seen — and out at sea by seamen watching for the day — a great white star, come suddenly into the westward sky!

Brighter it was than any star in our skies; brighter than the evening star at its brightest. It still glowed out white and large, no mere twinkling spot of light, but a small, round, clear shining disc, an hour after the day had come. And where science has not reached, men stared and feared, telling one another of the wars and pestilences that are foreshadowed by these fiery signs in the Heavens. Sturdy Boers, dusky Hottentots, Gold Coast negroes, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese, stood in the warmth of the sunrise watching the setting of this strange new star.

And in a hundred observatories there had been suppressed excitement, rising almost to shouting pitch, as the two remote bodies had rushed together, and a hurrying to and fro, to gather photographic apparatus and spectroscope, and this appliance and that, to record this novel, astonishing sight, the destruction of a world. For it was a world, a sister planet of our earth, far greater than

our earth indeed, that had so suddenly flashed into flaming death. Neptune it was had been struck, fairly and squarely, by the strange planet from outer space, and the heat of the concussion had incontinently turned two solid globes into one vast mass of incandescence. Round the world that day, two hours before the dawn, went the pallid great white star, fading only as it sank westward and the sun mounted above it. Everywhere men marvelled at it, but of all those who saw it none could have marvelled more than those sailors, habitual watchers of the stars, who far away at sea had heard nothing of its advent and saw it now rise like a pigmy moon and climb zenithward and hang overhead and sink westward with the passing of the night.

And when next it rose over Europe everywhere were crowds of watchers on hilly slopes, on house-roofs, in open spaces, staring eastward for the rising of the great new star. It rose with a white glow in front of it, like the glare of a white fire, and those who had seen it come into existence the night before cried out at the sight of it. “It is larger,” they cried. “It is brighter!” And indeed the moon, a quarter full and sinking in the west, was in its apparent size beyond comparison, but scarcely in all its breadth had it as much brightness now as the little circle of the strange new star.

“It is brighter!” cried the people clustering in the streets. But in the dim observatories the watchers held their breath and peered at one another. “*It is nearer*!” they said. “*Nearer*!”

And voice after voice repeated, “It is nearer,” and the clicking telegraph took that up, and it trembled along telephone wires, and in a thousand cities grimy compositors fingered the type. “It is nearer.” Men writing in offices, struck with a strange realisation, flung down their pens, men talking in a thousand places suddenly came upon a grotesque possibility in those words, “It is nearer.” It hurried along awakening streets, it was shouted down the frost-stilled ways of quiet villages, men who had read these things from the throbbing tape stood in yellow-lit doorways shouting the news to the passers-by. “It is nearer,” Pretty women, flushed and glittering, heard the news told jestingly between the dances, and feigned an intelligent interest they did not feel. “Nearer! Indeed. How curious! How very, very clever people must be to find out things like that!”

Lonely tramps faring through the wintry night murmured those words to comfort themselves — looking skyward. “It has need to be nearer, for the night’s as cold as charity. Don’t seem much warmth from it if it *is* nearer, all the same.”

“What is a new star to me?” cried the weeping woman, kneeling beside her dead.

The schoolboy, rising early for his examination work, puzzled it out for himself — with the great white star shining broad and bright through the frost-flowers of his window. “Centrifugal, centripetal,” he said, with his chin on his fist. “Stop a planet in its flight, rob it of its centrifugal force, what then? Centripetal has it, and down it falls into the sun! And this — !

“Do *we* come in the way? I wonder—”

The light of that day went the way of its brethren, and with the later watches of the frosty darkness rose the strange star again. And it was now so bright that the waxing moon seemed but a pale yellow ghost of itself, hanging huge in the sunset. In a South African city a great man had married, and the streets were alight to welcome his return with his bride. “Even the skies have illuminated,” said the flatterer. Under Capricorn, two negro lovers, daring the wild beasts and evil spirits for love of one another, crouched together in a cane brake where the fire-flies hovered. “That is our star,” they whispered, and felt strangely comforted by the sweet brilliance of its light.

The master mathematician sat in his private room and pushed the papers from him. His calculations were already finished. In a small white phial there still remained a little of the drug that had kept him awake and active for four long nights. Each day, serene, explicit, patient as ever, he had given his lecture to his students, and then had come back at once to this momentous calculation. His face was grave, a little drawn and hectic from his drugged activity. For some time he seemed lost in thought. Then he went to the window, and the blind went up with a click. Half-way up the sky, over the clustering roofs, chimneys, and steeples of the city, hung the star.

He looked at it as one might look into the eyes of a brave enemy. “You may kill me,” he said after a silence. “But I can hold you — and all the universe for that matter — in the grip of this small brain. I would not change. Even now.”

He looked at the little phial. “There will be no need of sleep again,” he said. The next day at noon, punctual to the minute, he entered his lecture theatre, put his hat on the end of the table as his habit was, and carefully selected a large piece of chalk. It was a joke among his students that he could not lecture without that piece of chalk to fumble in his fingers, and once he had been stricken to impotence by their hiding his supply. He came and looked under his grey eyebrows at the rising tiers of young fresh faces, and spoke with his accustomed studied commonness of phrasing.

“Circumstances have arisen — circumstances beyond my control,” he said, and paused, “which will debar me from completing the course I had designed. It would seem, gentlemen, if I may put the thing clearly and briefly, that — Man has lived in vain.”

The students glanced at one another. Had they heard aright? Mad? Raised eyebrows and grinning lips there were, but one or two faces remained intent upon his calm grey-fringed face. “It will be interesting,” he was saying, “to devote this morning to an exposition, so far as I can make it clear to you, of the calculations that have led me to this conclusion. Let us assume — —”

He turned towards the blackboard, meditating a diagram in the way that was usual to him. “What was that about ‘lived in vain’?” whispered one student to another. “Listen,” said the other, nodding towards the lecturer.

And presently they began to understand.

* * * * *

That night the star rose later, for its proper eastward motion had carried it some way across Leo towards Virgo, and its brightness was so great that the sky became a luminous blue as it rose, and every star was hidden in its turn, save only Jupiter near the zenith, Capella, Aldebaran, Sirius, and the pointers of the Bear. It was very white and beautiful. In many parts of the world that night a pallid halo encircled it about. It was perceptibly larger; in the clear refractive sky of the tropics it seemed as if it were nearly a quarter the size of the moon. The frost was still on the ground in England, but the world was as brightly lit as if it were midsummer moonlight. One could see

to read quite ordinary print by that cold, clear light, and in the cities the lamps burnt yellow and wan.

And everywhere the world was awake that night, and throughout Christendom a sombre murmur hung in the keen air over the country-side like the belling of bees in the heather, and this murmurous tumult grew to a clangour in the cities. It was the tolling of the bells in a million belfry towers and steeples, summoning the people to sleep no more, to sin no more, but to gather in their churches and pray. And overhead, growing larger and brighter, as the earth rolled on its way and the night passed, rose the dazzling star.

And the streets and houses were alight in all the cities, the shipyards glared, and whatever roads led to high country were lit and crowded all night long. And in all the seas about the civilized lands, ships with throbbing engines, and ships with bellying sails, crowded with men and living creatures, were standing out to ocean and the north. For already the warning of the master mathematician had been telegraphed all over the world and translated into a hundred tongues. The new planet and Neptune, locked in a fiery embrace, were whirling headlong, ever faster and faster towards the sun. Already every second this blazing mass flew a hundred miles, and every second its terrific velocity increased. As it flew now, indeed, it must pass a hundred million of miles, wide of the earth and scarcely affect it. But near its destined path, as yet only slightly perturbed, spun the mighty planet Jupiter and his moons sweeping splendid round the sun. Every moment now the attraction between the fiery star and the greatest of the planets grew stronger. And the result of that attraction? Inevitably Jupiter would be deflected from its orbit into an elliptical path, and the burning star, swung by his attraction wide of its sunward rush, would "describe a curved path," and perhaps collide with, and certainly pass very close to, our earth. "Earthquakes, volcanic outbreaks, cyclones, sea waves, floods, and a steady rise in temperature to I know not what limit" — so prophesied the master mathematician.

And overhead, to carry out his words, lonely and cold and livid blazed the star of the coming doom.

To many who stared at it that night until their eyes ached it seemed that it was visibly approaching. And that night, too, the

weather changed, and the frost that had gripped all Central Europe and France and England softened towards a thaw.

But you must not imagine, because I have spoken of people praying through the night and people going aboard ships and people fleeing towards mountainous country, that the whole world was already in a terror because of the star. As a matter of fact, use and wont still ruled the world, and save for the talk of idle moments and the splendour of the night, nine human beings out of ten were still busy at their common occupations. In all the cities the shops, save one here and there, opened and closed at their proper hours, the doctor and the undertaker plied their trades, the workers gathered in the factories, soldiers drilled, scholars studied, lovers sought one another, thieves lurked and fled, politicians planned their schemes. The presses of the newspapers roared through the nights, and many a priest of this church and that would not open his holy building to further what he considered a foolish panic. The newspapers insisted on the lesson of the year 1000 — for then, too, people had anticipated the end. The star was no star — mere gas — a comet; and were it a star it could not possibly strike the earth. There was no precedent for such a thing. Common-sense was sturdy everywhere, scornful, jesting, a little inclined to persecute the obdurate fearful. That night, at seven-fifteen by Greenwich time, the star would be at its nearest to Jupiter. Then the world would see the turn things would take. The master mathematician's grim warnings were treated by many as so much mere elaborate self-advertisement. Common-sense at last, a little heated by argument, signified its unalterable convictions by going to bed. So, too, barbarism and savagery, already tired of the novelty, went about their nightly business, and, save for a howling dog here and there, the beast world left the star unheeded.

And yet, when at last the watchers in the European States saw the star rise, an hour later, it is true, but no larger than it had been the night before, there were still plenty awake to laugh at the master mathematician — to take the danger as if it had passed.

But hereafter the laughter ceased. The star grew — it grew with a terrible steadiness hour after hour, a little larger each hour, a little nearer the midnight zenith, and brighter and brighter, until it had

turned night into a second day. Had it come straight to the earth instead of in a curved path, had it lost no velocity to Jupiter, it must have leapt the intervening gulf in a day; but as it was, it took five days altogether to come by our planet. The next night it had become a third the size of the moon before it set to English eyes, and the thaw was assured. It rose over America near the size of the moon, but blinding white to look at, and *hot*; and a breath of hot wind blew now with its rising and gathering strength, and in Virginia, and Brazil, and down the St. Lawrence valley, it shone intermittently through a driving reek of thunder-clouds, flickering violet lightning, and hail unprecedented. In Manitoba was a thaw and devastating floods. And upon all the mountains of the earth the snow and ice began to melt that night, and all the rivers coming out of high country flowed thick and turbid, and soon — in their upper reaches — with swirling trees and the bodies of beasts and men. They rose steadily, steadily in the ghostly brilliance, and came trickling over their banks at last, behind the flying population of their valleys.

And along the coast of Argentina and up the South Atlantic the tides were higher than had ever been in the memory of man, and the storms drove the waters in many cases scores of miles inland, drowning whole cities. And so great grew the heat during the night that the rising of the sun was like the coming of a shadow. The earthquakes began and grew until all down America from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn, hillsides were sliding, fissures were opening, and houses and walls crumbling to destruction. The whole side of Cotopaxi slipped out in one vast convulsion, and a tumult of lava poured out so high and broad and swift and liquid that in one day it reached the sea.

So the star, with the wan moon in its wake, marched across the Pacific, trailed the thunder-storms like the hem of a robe, and the growing tidal wave that toiled behind it, frothing and eager, poured over island and island and swept them clear of men: until that wave came at last — in a blinding light and with the breath of a furnace, swift and terrible it came — a wall of water, fifty feet high, roaring hungrily, upon the long coasts of Asia, and swept inland across the plains of China. For a space the star, hotter now and larger and brighter than the sun in its strength, showed with pitiless brilliance

the wide and populous country; towns and villages with their pagodas and trees, roads, wide cultivated fields, millions of sleepless people staring in helpless terror at the incandescent sky; and then, low and growing, came the murmur of the flood. And thus it was with millions of men that night — a flight nowhither, with limbs heavy with heat and breath fierce and scant, and the flood like a wall swift and white behind. And then death.

China was lit glowing white, but over Japan and Java and all the islands of Eastern Asia the great star was a ball of dull red fire because of the steam and smoke and ashes the volcanoes were spouting forth to salute its coming. Above was the lava, hot gases and ash, and below the seething floods, and the whole earth swayed and rumbled with the earthquake shocks. Soon the immemorial snows of Thibet and the Himalaya were melting and pouring down by ten million deepening converging channels upon the plains of Burmah and Hindostan. The tangled summits of the Indian jungles were aflame in a thousand places, and below the hurrying waters around the stems were dark objects that still struggled feebly and reflected the blood-red tongues of fire. And in a rudderless confusion a multitude of men and women fled down the broad river-ways to that one last hope of men — the open sea.

Larger grew the star, and larger, hotter, and brighter with a terrible swiftness now. The tropical ocean had lost its phosphorescence, and the whirling steam rose in ghostly wreaths from the black waves that plunged incessantly, speckled with storm-tossed ships.

And then came a wonder. It seemed to those who in Europe watched for the rising of the star that the world must have ceased its rotation. In a thousand open spaces of down and upland the people who had fled thither from the floods and the falling houses and sliding slopes of hill watched for that rising in vain. Hour followed hour through a terrible suspense, and the star rose not. Once again men set their eyes upon the old constellations they had counted lost to them for ever. In England it was hot and clear overhead, though the ground quivered perpetually, but in the tropics, Sirius and Capella and Aldebaran showed through a veil of steam. And when at last the great star rose near ten hours late, the sun rose close upon it,

and in the centre of its white heart was a disc of black.

Over Asia it was the star had begun to fall behind the movement of the sky, and then suddenly, as it hung over India, its light had been veiled. All the plain of India from the mouth of the Indus to the mouths of the Ganges was a shallow waste of shining water that night, out of which rose temples and palaces, mounds and hills, black with people. Every minaret was a clustering mass of people, who fell one by one into the turbid waters, as heat and terror overcame them. The whole land seemed a-wailing, and suddenly there swept a shadow across that furnace of despair, and a breath of cold wind, and a gathering of clouds, out of the cooling air. Men looking up, near blinded, at the star, saw that a black disc was creeping across the light. It was the moon, coming between the star and the earth. And even as men cried to God at this respite, out of the East with a strange inexplicable swiftness sprang the sun. And then star, sun, and moon rushed together across the heavens.

So it was that presently to the European watchers star and sun rose close upon each other, drove headlong for a space and then slower, and at last came to rest, star and sun merged into one glare of flame at the zenith of the sky. The moon no longer eclipsed the star but was lost to sight in the brilliance of the sky. And though those who were still alive regarded it for the most part with that dull stupidity that hunger, fatigue, heat and despair engender, there were still men who could perceive the meaning of these signs. Star and earth had been at their nearest, had swung about one another, and the star had passed. Already it was receding, swifter and swifter, in the last stage of its headlong journey downward into the sun.

And then the clouds gathered, blotting out the vision of the sky, the thunder and lightning wove a garment round the world; all over the earth was such a downpour of rain as men had never before seen, and where the volcanoes flared red against the cloud canopy there descended torrents of mud. Everywhere the waters were pouring off the land, leaving mud-silted ruins, and the earth littered like a storm-worn beach with all that had floated, and the dead bodies of the men and brutes, its children. For days the water streamed off the land, sweeping away soil and trees and houses in the way, and piling huge dykes and scooping out Titanic gullies over the country-side. Those

were the days of darkness that followed the star and the heat. All through them, and for many weeks and months, the earthquakes continued.

But the star had passed, and men, hunger-driven and gathering courage only slowly, might creep back to their ruined cities, buried granaries, and sodden fields. Such few ships as had escaped the storms of that time came stunned and shattered and sounding their way cautiously through the new marks and shoals of once familiar ports. And as the storms subsided men perceived that everywhere the days were hotter than of yore, and the sun larger, and the moon, shrunk to a third of its former size, took now fourscore days between its new and new.

But of the new brotherhood that grew presently among men, of the saving of laws and books and machines, of the strange change that had come over Iceland and Greenland and the shores of Baffin's Bay, so that the sailors coming there presently found them green and gracious, and could scarce believe their eyes, this story does not tell. Nor of the movement of mankind, now that the earth was hotter, northward and southward towards the poles of the earth. It concerns itself only with the coming and the passing of the star.

The Martian astronomers — for there are astronomers on Mars, although they are very different beings from men — were naturally profoundly interested by these things. They saw them from their own standpoint of course. "Considering the mass and temperature of the missile that was flung through our solar system into the sun," one wrote, "it is astonishing what a little damage the earth, which it missed so narrowly, has sustained. All the familiar continental markings and the masses of the seas remain intact, and indeed the only difference seems to be a shrinkage of the white discolouration (supposed to be frozen water) round either pole." Which only shows how small the vastest of human catastrophes may seem at a distance of a few million miles.

XXI.

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES.

A PANTOUM IN PROSE.

It is doubtful whether the gift was innate. For my own part, I think it came to him suddenly. Indeed, until he was thirty he was a sceptic, and did not believe in miraculous powers. And here, since it is the most convenient place, I must mention that he was a little man, and had eyes of a hot brown, very erect red hair, a moustache with ends that he twisted up, and freckles. His name was George McWhirter Fotheringay — not the sort of name by any means to lead to any expectation of miracles — and he was clerk at Gomshott's. He was greatly addicted to assertive argument. It was while he was asserting the impossibility of miracles that he had his first intimation of his extraordinary powers. This particular argument was being held in the bar of the Long Dragon, and Toddy Beamish was conducting the opposition by a monotonous but effective "So *you* say," that drove Mr. Fotheringay to the very limit of his patience.

There were present, besides these two, a very dusty cyclist, landlord Cox, and Miss Maybridge, the perfectly respectable and rather portly barmaid of the Dragon. Miss Maybridge was standing with her back to Mr. Fotheringay, washing glasses; the others were watching him, more or less amused by the present ineffectiveness of the assertive method. Goaded by the Torres Vedras tactics of Mr. Beamish, Mr. Fotheringay determined to make an unusual rhetorical effort. "Looky here, Mr. Beamish," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something contrariwise to the course of nature, done by power of will, something what couldn't happen without being specially willed."

"So *you* say," said Mr. Beamish, repulsing him.

Mr. Fotheringay appealed to the cyclist, who had hitherto been a silent auditor, and received his assent — given with a hesitating cough and a glance at Mr. Beamish. The landlord would express no opinion, and Mr. Fotheringay, returning to Mr. Beamish, received the unexpected concession of a qualified assent to his definition of a miracle.

"For instance," said Mr. Fotheringay, greatly encouraged. "Here would be a miracle. That lamp, in the natural course of nature,

couldn't burn like that upsy-down, could it, Beamish?"

"*You* say it couldn't," said Beamish.

"And you?" said Fotheringay. "You don't mean to say — eh?"

"No," said Beamish reluctantly. "No, it couldn't."

"Very well," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Then here comes someone, as it might be me, along here, and stands as it might be here, and says to that lamp, as I might do, collecting all my will — Turn upsy-down without breaking, and go on burning steady, and — Hullo!"

It was enough to make anyone say "Hullo!" The impossible, the incredible, was visible to them all. The lamp hung inverted in the air, burning quietly with its flame pointing down. It was as solid, as indisputable as ever a lamp was, the prosaic common lamp of the Long Dragon bar.

Mr. Fotheringay stood with an extended forefinger and the knitted brows of one anticipating a catastrophic smash. The cyclist, who was sitting next the lamp, ducked and jumped across the bar. Everybody jumped, more or less. Miss Maybridge turned and screamed. For nearly three seconds the lamp remained still. A faint cry of mental distress came from Mr. Fotheringay. "I can't keep it up," he said, "any longer." He staggered back, and the inverted lamp suddenly flared, fell against the corner of the bar, bounced aside, smashed upon the floor, and went out.

It was lucky it had a metal receiver, or the whole place would have been in a blaze. Mr. Cox was the first to speak, and his remark, shorn of needless excrescences, was to the effect that Fotheringay was a fool. Fotheringay was beyond disputing even so fundamental a proposition as that! He was astonished beyond measure at the thing that had occurred. The subsequent conversation threw absolutely no light on the matter so far as Fotheringay was concerned; the general opinion not only followed Mr. Cox very closely but very vehemently. Everyone accused Fotheringay of a silly trick, and presented him to himself as a foolish destroyer of comfort and security. His mind was in a tornado of perplexity, he was himself inclined to agree with them, and he made a remarkably ineffectual opposition to the proposal of his departure.

He went home flushed and heated, coat-collar crumpled, eyes smarting, and ears red. He watched each of the ten street lamps

nervously as he passed it. It was only when he found himself alone in his little bedroom in Church Row that he was able to grapple seriously with his memories of the occurrence, and ask, "What on earth happened?"

He had removed his coat and boots, and was sitting on the bed with his hands in his pockets repeating the text of his defence for the seventeenth time, "I didn't want the confounded thing to upset," when it occurred to him that at the precise moment he had said the commanding words he had inadvertently willed the thing he said, and that when he had seen the lamp in the air he had felt that it depended on him to maintain it there without being clear how this was to be done. He had not a particularly complex mind, or he might have stuck for a time at that "inadvertently willed," embracing, as it does, the abstrusest problems of voluntary action; but as it was, the idea came to him with a quite acceptable haziness. And from that, following, as I must admit, no clear logical path, he came to the test of experiment.

He pointed resolutely to his candle and collected his mind, though he felt he did a foolish thing. "Be raised up," he said. But in a second that feeling vanished. The candle was raised, hung in the air one giddy moment, and as Mr. Fotheringay gasped, fell with a smash on his toilet-table, leaving him in darkness save for the expiring glow of its wick.

For a time Mr. Fotheringay sat in the darkness, perfectly still. "It did happen, after all," he said. "And 'ow *I'm* to explain it I *don't* know." He sighed heavily, and began feeling in his pockets for a match. He could find none, and he rose and groped about the toilet-table. "I wish I had a match," he said. He resorted to his coat, and there was none there, and then it dawned upon him that miracles were possible even with matches. He extended a hand and scowled at it in the dark. "Let there be a match in that hand," he said. He felt some light object fall across his palm and his fingers closed upon a match.

After several ineffectual attempts to light this, he discovered it was a safety match. He threw it down, and then it occurred to him that he might have willed it lit. He did, and perceived it burning in the midst of his toilet-table mat. He caught it up hastily, and it went

out. His perception of possibilities enlarged, and he felt for and replaced the candle in its candlestick. “Here! *you* be lit,” said Mr. Fotheringay, and forthwith the candle was flaring, and he saw a little black hole in the toilet-cover, with a wisp of smoke rising from it. For a time he stared from this to the little flame and back, and then looked up and met his own gaze in the looking-glass. By this help he communed with himself in silence for a time.

“How about miracles now?” said Mr. Fotheringay at last, addressing his reflection.

The subsequent meditations of Mr. Fotheringay were of a severe but confused description. So far, he could see it was a case of pure willing with him. The nature of his experiences so far disinclined him for any further experiments, at least until he had reconsidered them. But he lifted a sheet of paper, and turned a glass of water pink and then green, and he created a snail, which he miraculously annihilated, and got himself a miraculous new tooth-brush. Somewhere in the small hours he had reached the fact that his will-power must be of a particularly rare and pungent quality, a fact of which he had indeed had inklings before, but no certain assurance. The scare and perplexity of his first discovery was now qualified by pride in this evidence of singularity and by vague intimations of advantage. He became aware that the church clock was striking one, and as it did not occur to him that his daily duties at Gomshott’s might be miraculously dispensed with, he resumed undressing, in order to get to bed without further delay. As he struggled to get his shirt over his head, he was struck with a brilliant idea. “Let me be in bed,” he said, and found himself so. “Undressed,” he stipulated; and, finding the sheets cold, added hastily, “and in my nightshirt — ho, in a nice soft woollen nightshirt. Ah!” he said with immense enjoyment. “And now let me be comfortably asleep…”

He awoke at his usual hour and was pensive all through breakfast-time, wondering whether his over-night experience might not be a particularly vivid dream. At length his mind turned again to cautious experiments. For instance, he had three eggs for breakfast; two his landlady had supplied, good, but shoppy, and one was a delicious fresh goose-egg, laid, cooked, and served by his extraordinary will. He hurried off to Gomshott’s in a state of profound but carefully

concealed excitement, and only remembered the shell of the third egg when his landlady spoke of it that night. All day he could do no work because of this astonishing new self-knowledge, but this caused him no inconvenience, because he made up for it miraculously in his last ten minutes.

As the day wore on his state of mind passed from wonder to elation, albeit the circumstances of his dismissal from the Long Dragon were still disagreeable to recall, and a garbled account of the matter that had reached his colleagues led to some badinage. It was evident he must be careful how he lifted frangible articles, but in other ways his gift promised more and more as he turned it over in his mind. He intended among other things to increase his personal property by unostentatious acts of creation. He called into existence a pair of very splendid diamond studs, and hastily annihilated them again as young Gomshott came across the counting-house to his desk. He was afraid young Gomshott might wonder how he had come by them. He saw quite clearly the gift required caution and watchfulness in its exercise, but so far as he could judge the difficulties attending its mastery would be no greater than those he had already faced in the study of cycling. It was that analogy, perhaps, quite as much as the feeling that he would be unwelcome in the Long Dragon, that drove him out after supper into the lane beyond the gasworks, to rehearse a few miracles in private.

There was possibly a certain want of originality in his attempts, for, apart from his will-power, Mr. Fotheringay was not a very exceptional man. The miracle of Moses' rod came to his mind, but the night was dark and unfavourable to the proper control of large miraculous snakes. Then he recollected the story of "Tannhäuser" that he had read on the back of the Philharmonic programme. That seemed to him singularly attractive and harmless. He stuck his walking-stick — a very nice Poona-Penang lawyer — into the turf that edged the footpath, and commanded the dry wood to blossom. The air was immediately full of the scent of roses, and by means of a match he saw for himself that this beautiful miracle was indeed accomplished. His satisfaction was ended by advancing footsteps. Afraid of a premature discovery of his powers, he addressed the blossoming stick hastily: "Go back." What he meant was "Change

back;" but of course he was confused. The stick receded at a considerable velocity, and incontinently came a cry of anger and a bad word from the approaching person. "Who are you throwing brambles at, you fool?" cried a voice. "That got me on the shin."

"I'm sorry, old chap," said Mr. Fotheringay, and then, realising the awkward nature of the explanation, caught nervously at his moustache. He saw Winch, one of the three Immering constables, advancing.

"What d'yer mean by it?" asked the constable. "Hullo! it's you, is it? The gent that broke the lamp at the Long Dragon!"

"I don't mean anything by it," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Nothing at all."

"What d'yer do it for then?"

"Oh, bother!" said Mr. Fotheringay.

"Bother indeed! D'yer know that stick hurt? What d'yer do it for, eh?"

For the moment Mr. Fotheringay could not think what he had done it for. His silence seemed to irritate Mr. Winch. "You've been assaulting the police, young man, this time. That's what *you* done."

"Look here, Mr. Winch," said Mr. Fotheringay, annoyed and confused, "I'm sorry, very. The fact is — —"

"Well?"

He could think of no way but the truth. "I was working a miracle." He tried to speak in an off-hand way, but try as he would he couldn't.

"Working a — ! 'Ere, don't you talk rot. Working a miracle, indeed! Miracle! Well, that's downright funny! Why, you's the chap that don't believe in miracles… Fact is, this is another of your silly conjuring tricks — that's what this is. Now, I tell you—"

But Mr. Fotheringay never heard what Mr. Winch was going to tell him. He realised he had given himself away, flung his valuable secret to all the winds of heaven. A violent gust of irritation swept him to action. He turned on the constable swiftly and fiercely. "Here," he said, "I've had enough of this, I have! I'll show you a silly conjuring trick, I will! Go to Hades! Go, now!"

He was alone!

Mr. Fotheringay performed no more miracles that night, nor did he trouble to see what had become of his flowering stick. He returned

to the town, scared and very quiet, and went to his bedroom. “Lord!” he said, “it’s a powerful gift — an extremely powerful gift. I didn’t hardly mean as much as that. Not really… I wonder what Hades is like!”

He sat on the bed taking off his boots. Struck by a happy thought he transferred the constable to San Francisco, and without any more interference with normal causation went soberly to bed. In the night he dreamt of the anger of Winch.

The next day Mr. Fotheringay heard two interesting items of news. Someone
had planted a most beautiful climbing rose against the elder Mr. Gomshott’s private house in the Lullaborough Road, and the river as far as
Rawling’s Mill was to be dragged for Constable Winch.

Mr. Fotheringay was abstracted and thoughtful all that day, and performed no miracles except certain provisions for Winch, and the miracle of completing his day’s work with punctual perfection in spite of all the bee-swarm of thoughts that hummed through his mind. And the extraordinary abstraction and meekness of his manner was remarked by several people, and made a matter for jesting. For the most part he was thinking of Winch.

On Sunday evening he went to chapel, and oddly enough, Mr. Maydig, who took a certain interest in occult matters, preached about “things that are not lawful.” Mr. Fotheringay was not a regular chapelgoer, but the system of assertive scepticism, to which I have already alluded, was now very much shaken. The tenor of the sermon threw an entirely new light on these novel gifts, and he suddenly decided to consult Mr. Maydig immediately after the service. So soon as that was determined, he found himself wondering why he had not done so before.

Mr. Maydig, a lean, excitable man with quite remarkably long wrists and neck, was gratified at a request for a private conversation from a young man whose carelessness in religious matters was a subject for general remark in the town. After a few necessary delays, he conducted him to the study of the manse, which was contiguous to

the chapel, seated him comfortably, and, standing in front of a cheerful fire — his legs threw a Rhodian arch of shadow on the opposite wall — requested Mr. Fotheringay to state his business.

At first Mr. Fotheringay was a little abashed, and found some difficulty in opening the matter. “You will scarcely believe me, Mr. Maydig, I am afraid” — and so forth for some time. He tried a question at last, and asked Mr. Maydig his opinion of miracles.

Mr. Maydig was still saying “Well” in an extremely judicial tone, when Mr. Fotheringay interrupted again: “You don’t believe, I suppose, that some common sort of person — like myself, for instance — as it might be sitting here now, might have some sort of twist inside him that made him able to do things by his will.”

“It’s possible,” said Mr. Maydig. “Something of the sort, perhaps, is possible.”

“If I might make free with something here, I think I might show you by a sort of experiment,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Now, take that tobacco-jar on the table, for instance. What I want to know is whether what I am going to do with it is a miracle or not. Just half a minute, Mr. Maydig, please.”

He knitted his brows, pointed to the tobacco-jar and said: “Be a bowl of vi’lets.”

The tobacco-jar did as it was ordered.

Mr. Maydig started violently at the change, and stood looking from the thaumaturgist to the bowl of flowers. He said nothing. Presently he ventured to lean over the table and smell the violets; they were fresh-picked and very fine ones. Then he stared at Mr. Fotheringay again.

“How did you do that?” he asked.

Mr. Fotheringay pulled his moustache. “Just told it — and there you are. Is that a miracle, or is it black art, or what is it? And what do you think’s the matter with me? That’s what I want to ask.”

“It’s a most extraordinary occurrence.”

“And this day last week I knew no more that I could do things like that than you did. It came quite sudden. It’s something odd about my will, I suppose, and that’s as far as I can see.”

“Is that — the only thing. Could you do other things besides that?”

“Lord, yes!” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Just anything.” He thought, and suddenly recalled a conjuring entertainment he had seen. “Here!” he pointed, “change into a bowl of fish — no, not that — change into a glass bowl full of water with goldfish swimming in it. That’s better! You see that, Mr. Maydig?”

“It’s astonishing. It’s incredible. You are either a most extraordinary…
But no — —”

“I could change it into anything,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “Just anything.
Here! be a pigeon, will you?”

In another moment a blue pigeon was fluttering round the room and making Mr. Maydig duck every time it came near him. “Stop there, will you?” said Mr. Fotheringay; and the pigeon hung motionless in the air. “I could change it back to a bowl of flowers,” he said, and after replacing the pigeon on the table worked that miracle. “I expect you will want your pipe in a bit,” he said, and restored the tobacco-jar.

Mr. Maydig had followed all these later changes in a sort of ejaculatory silence. He stared at Mr. Fotheringay and in a very gingerly manner picked up the tobacco-jar, examined it, replaced it on the table. “*Well*!” was the only expression of his feelings.

“Now, after that it’s easier to explain what I came about,” said Mr. Fotheringay; and proceeded to a lengthy and involved narrative of his strange experiences, beginning with the affair of the lamp in the Long Dragon and complicated by persistent allusions to Winch. As he went on, the transient pride Mr. Maydig’s consternation had caused passed away; he became the very ordinary Mr. Fotheringay of everyday intercourse again. Mr. Maydig listened intently, the tobacco-jar in his hand, and his bearing changed also with the course of the narrative. Presently, while Mr. Fotheringay was dealing with the miracle of the third egg, the minister interrupted with a fluttering, extended hand.

“It is possible,” he said. “It is credible. It is amazing, of course,

but it reconciles a number of amazing difficulties. The power to work miracles is a gift — a peculiar quality like genius or second sight; hitherto it has come very rarely and to exceptional people. But in this case…I have always wondered at the miracles of Mahomet, and at Yogi's miracles, and the miracles of Madame Blavatsky. But, of course — Yes, it is simply a gift! It carries out so beautifully the arguments of that great thinker" — Mr. Maydig's voice sank— "his Grace the Duke of Argyll. Here we plumb some profounder law — deeper than the ordinary laws of nature. Yes — yes. Go on. Go on!"

Mr. Fotheringay proceeded to tell of his misadventure with Winch, and Mr. Maydig, no longer overawed or scared, began to jerk his limbs about and interject astonishment. "It's this what troubled me most," proceeded Mr. Fotheringay; "it's this I'm most mijitly in want of advice for; of course he's at San Francisco — wherever San Francisco may be — but of course it's awkward for both of us, as you'll see, Mr. Maydig. I don't see how he can understand what has happened, and I daresay he's scared and exasperated something tremendous, and trying to get at me. I daresay he keeps on starting off to come here. I send him back, by a miracle, every few hours, when I think of it. And, of course, that's a thing he won't be able to understand, and it's bound to annoy him; and, of course, if he takes a ticket every time it will cost him a lot of money. I done the best I could for him, but, of course, it's difficult for him to put himself in my place. I thought afterwards that his clothes might have got scorched, you know — if Hades is all it's supposed to be — before I shifted him. In that case I suppose they'd have locked him up in San Francisco. Of course I willed him a new suit of clothes on him directly I thought of it. But, you see, I'm already in a deuce of a tangle — —"

Mr. Maydig looked serious. "I see you are in a tangle. Yes, it's a difficult position. How you are to end it…" He became diffuse and inconclusive.

"However, we'll leave Winch for a little and discuss the larger question. I don't think this is a case of the black art or anything of the sort. I don't think there is any taint of criminality about it at all, Mr. Fotheringay — none whatever, unless you are suppressing material facts. No, it's miracles — pure miracles — miracles, if I may say so,

of the very highest class."

He began to pace the hearthrug and gesticulate, while Mr. Fotheringay sat with his arm on the table and his head on his arm, looking worried. "I don't see how I'm to manage about Winch," he said.

"A gift of working miracles — apparently a very powerful gift," said Mr. Maydig, "will find a way about Winch — never fear. My dear sir, you are a most important man — a man of the most astonishing possibilities. As evidence, for example! And in other ways, the things you may do…"

"Yes, *I've* thought of a thing or two," said Mr. Fotheringay. "But — some of the things came a bit twisty. You saw that fish at first? Wrong sort of bowl and wrong sort of fish. And I thought I'd ask someone."

"A proper course," said Mr. Maydig, "a very proper course — altogether the proper course." He stopped and looked at Mr. Fotheringay. "It's practically an unlimited gift. Let us test your powers, for instance. If they really *are* … If they really are all they seem to be."

And so, incredible as it may seem, in the study of the little house behind the Congregational Chapel, on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 10, 1896, Mr. Fotheringay, egged on and inspired by Mr. Maydig, began to work miracles. The reader's attention is specially and definitely called to the date. He will object, probably has already objected, that certain points in this story are improbable, that if any things of the sort already described had indeed occurred, they would have been in all the papers at that time. The details immediately following he will find particularly hard to accept, because among other things they involve the conclusion that he or she, the reader in question, must have been killed in a violent and unprecedented manner more than a year ago. Now a miracle is nothing if not improbable, and as a matter of fact the reader *was* killed in a violent and unprecedented manner in 1896. In the subsequent course of this story that will become perfectly clear and credible, as every right-minded and reasonable reader will admit. But this is not the place for the end of the story, being but little beyond the hither side of the middle. And at first the miracles worked by Mr. Fotheringay were

timid little miracles — little things with the cups and parlour fitments, as feeble as the miracles of Theosophists, and, feeble as they were, they were received with awe by his collaborator. He would have preferred to settle the Winch business out of hand, but Mr. Maydig would not let him. But after they had worked a dozen of these domestic trivialities, their sense of power grew, their imagination began to show signs of stimulation, and their ambition enlarged. Their first larger enterprise was due to hunger and the negligence of Mrs. Minchin, Mr. Maydig's housekeeper. The meal to which the minister conducted Mr. Fotheringay was certainly ill-laid and uninviting as refreshment for two industrious miracle-workers; but they were seated, and Mr. Maydig was descanting in sorrow rather than in anger upon his housekeeper's shortcomings, before it occurred to Mr. Fotheringay that an opportunity lay before him. "Don't you think, Mr. Maydig," he said, "if it isn't a liberty, *I* — —"

"My dear Mr. Fotheringay! Of course! No — I didn't think."

Mr. Fotheringay waved his hand. "What shall we have?" he said, in a large, inclusive spirit, and, at Mr. Maydig's order, revised the supper very thoroughly. "As for me," he said, eyeing Mr. Maydig's selection, "I am always particularly fond of a tankard of stout and a nice Welsh rarebit, and I'll order that. I ain't much given to Burgundy," and forthwith stout and Welsh rarebit promptly appeared at his command. They sat long at their supper, talking like equals, as Mr. Fotheringay presently perceived, with a glow of surprise and gratification, of all the miracles they would presently do. "And, by-the-by, Mr. Maydig," said Mr. Fotheringay, "I might perhaps be able to help you — in a domestic way."

"Don't quite follow," said Mr. Maydig, pouring out a glass of miraculous old Burgundy.

Mr. Fotheringay helped himself to a second Welsh rarebit out of vacancy, and took a mouthful. "I was thinking," he said, "I might be able (*chum, chum*) to work (*chum, chum*) a miracle with Mrs. Minchin (*chum, chum*) — make her a better woman."

Mr. Maydig put down the glass and looked doubtful.

"She's —— She strongly objects to interference, you know, Mr. Fotheringay. And — as a matter of fact — it's well past eleven and she's probably in bed and asleep. Do you think, on the whole — —"

Mr. Fotheringay considered these objections. “I don’t see that it shouldn’t be done in her sleep.”

For a time Mr. Maydig opposed the idea, and then he yielded. Mr. Fotheringay issued his orders, and a little less at their ease, perhaps, the two gentlemen proceeded with their repast. Mr. Maydig was enlarging on the changes he might expect in his housekeeper next day, with an optimism, that seemed even to Mr. Fotheringay’s supper senses a little forced and hectic, when a series of confused noises from upstairs began. Their eyes exchanged interrogations, and Mr. Maydig left the room hastily. Mr. Fotheringay heard him calling up to his housekeeper and then his footsteps going softly up to her.

In a minute or so the minister returned, his step light, his face radiant. “Wonderful!” he said, “and touching! Most touching!”

He began pacing the hearthrug. “A repentance — a most touching repentance — through the crack of the door. Poor woman! A most wonderful change! She had got up. She must have got up at once. She had got up out of her sleep to smash a private bottle of brandy in her box. And to confess it too!… But this gives us — it opens — a most amazing vista of possibilities. If we can work this miraculous change in *her*…”

“The thing’s unlimited seemingly,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “And about Mr.
Winch — —”

“Altogether unlimited.” And from the hearthrug Mr. Maydig, waving the Winch difficulty aside, unfolded a series of wonderful proposals — proposals he invented as he went along.

Now what those proposals were does not concern the essentials of this story. Suffice it that they were designed in a spirit of infinite benevolence, the sort of benevolence that used to be called post-prandial. Suffice it, too, that the problem of Winch remained unsolved. Nor is it necessary to describe how far that series got to its fulfilment. There were astonishing changes. The small hours found Mr. Maydig and Mr. Fotheringay careering across the chilly market

square under the still moon, in a sort of ecstasy of thaumaturgy, Mr. Maydig all flap and gesture, Mr. Fotheringay short and bristling, and no longer abashed at his greatness. They had reformed every drunkard in the Parliamentary division, changed all the beer and alcohol to water (Mr. Maydig had overruled Mr. Fotheringay on this point); they had, further, greatly improved the railway communication of the place, drained Flinder's swamp, improved the soil of One Tree Hill, and cured the vicar's wart. And they were going to see what could be done with the injured pier at South Bridge. "The place," gasped Mr. Maydig, "won't be the same place to-morrow. How surprised and thankful everyone will be!" And just at that moment the church clock struck three.

"I say," said Mr. Fotheringay, "that's three o'clock! I must be getting back. I've got to be at business by eight. And besides, Mrs. Wimms — —"

"We're only beginning," said Mr. Maydig, full of the sweetness of unlimited power. "We're only beginning. Think of all the good we're doing. When people wake — —"

"But —— ," said Mr. Fotheringay.

Mr. Maydig gripped his arm suddenly. His eyes were bright and wild. "My dear chap," he said, "there's no hurry. Look" — he pointed to the moon at the zenith— "Joshua!"

"Joshua?" said Mr. Fotheringay.

"Joshua," said Mr. Maydig. "Why not? Stop it."

Mr. Fotheringay looked at the moon.

"That's a bit tall," he said, after a pause.

"Why not?" said Mr. Maydig. "Of course it doesn't stop. You stop the rotation of the earth, you know. Time stops. It isn't as if we were doing harm."

"H'm!" said Mr. Fotheringay. "Well," he sighed, "I'll try. Here!"

He buttoned up his jacket and addressed himself to the habitable globe, with as good an assumption of confidence as lay in his power. "Jest stop rotating, will you?" said Mr. Fotheringay.

Incontinently he was flying head over heels through the air at the rate of dozens of miles a minute. In spite of the innumerable circles he was describing per second, he thought; for thought is wonderful — sometimes as sluggish as flowing pitch, sometimes as

instantaneous as light. He thought in a second, and willed. “Let me come down safe and sound. Whatever else happens, let me down safe and sound.”

He willed it only just in time, for his clothes, heated by his rapid flight through the air, were already beginning to singe. He came down with a forcible, but by no means injurious, bump in what appeared to be a mound of fresh-turned earth. A large mass of metal and masonry, extraordinarily like the clock-tower in the middle of the market square, hit the earth near him, ricochetted over him, and flew into stonework, bricks, and cement, like a bursting bomb. A hurtling cow hit one of the larger blocks and smashed like an egg. There was a crash that made all the most violent crashes of his past life seem like the sound of falling dust, and this was followed by a descending series of lesser crashes. A vast wind roared throughout earth and heaven, so that he could scarcely lift his head to look. For a while he was too breathless and astonished even to see where he was or what had happened. And his first movement was to feel his head and reassure himself that his streaming hair was still his own.

“Lord!” gasped Mr. Fotheringay, scarce able to speak for the gale, “I’ve had a squeak! What’s gone wrong? Storms and thunder. And only a minute ago a fine night. It’s Maydig set me on to this sort of thing. *What* a wind! If I go on fooling in this way I’m bound to have a thundering accident!…

“Where’s Maydig?

“What a confounded mess everything’s in!”

He looked about him so far as his flapping jacket would permit. The appearance of things was really extremely strange. “The sky’s all right anyhow,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “And that’s about all that is all right. And even there it looks like a terrific gale coming up. But there’s the moon overhead. Just as it was just now. Bright as midday. But as for the rest —— Where’s the village? Where’s — where’s anything? And what on earth set this wind a-blowing? I didn’t order no wind.”

Mr. Fotheringay struggled to get to his feet in vain, and after one failure, remained on all fours, holding on. He surveyed the moonlit world to leeward, with the tails of his jacket streaming over his head. “There’s something seriously wrong,” said Mr. Fotheringay. “And

what it is — goodness knows.”

Far and wide nothing was visible in the white glare through the haze of dust that drove before a screaming gale but tumbled masses of earth and heaps of inchoate ruins, no trees, no houses, no familiar shapes, only a wilderness of disorder, vanishing at last into the darkness beneath the whirling columns and streamers, the lightnings and thunderings of a swiftly rising storm. Near him in the livid glare was something that might once have been an elm-tree, a smashed mass of splinters, shivered from boughs to base, and further a twisted mass of iron girders — only too evidently the viaduct — rose out of the piled confusion.

You see, when Mr. Fotheringay had arrested the rotation of the solid globe, he had made no stipulation concerning the trifling movables upon its surface. And the earth spins so fast that the surface at its equator is travelling at rather more than a thousand miles an hour, and in these latitudes at more than half that pace. So that the village, and Mr. Maydig, and Mr. Fotheringay, and everybody and everything had been jerked violently forward at about nine miles per second — that is to say, much more violently than if they had been fired out of a cannon. And every human being, every living creature, every house, and every tree — all the world as we know it — had been so jerked and smashed and utterly destroyed. That was all.

These things Mr. Fotheringay did not, of course, fully appreciate. But he perceived that his miracle had miscarried, and with that a great disgust of miracles came upon him. He was in darkness now, for the clouds had swept together and blotted out his momentary glimpse of the moon, and the air was full of fitful struggling tortured wraiths of hail. A great roaring of wind and waters filled earth and sky, and peering under his hand through the dust and sleet to windward, he saw by the play of the lightnings a vast wall of water pouring towards him.

“Maydig!” screamed Mr. Fotheringay’s feeble voice amid the elemental uproar. “Here! — Maydig!

“Stop!” cried Mr. Fotheringay to the advancing water. “Oh, for goodness’ sake, stop!

“Just a moment,” said Mr. Fotheringay to the lightnings and thunder. “Stop jest a moment while I collect my thoughts… And now

what shall I do?" he said. "What *shall* I do? Lord! I wish Maydig was about."

"I know," said Mr. Fotheringay. "And for goodness' sake let's have it right *this* time."

He remained on all fours, leaning against the wind, very intent to have everything right.

"Ah!" he said. "Let nothing what I'm going to order happen until I say
'Off!'…Lord! I wish I'd thought of that before!"

He lifted his little voice against the whirlwind, shouting louder and louder in the vain desire to hear himself speak. "Now then! — here goes! Mind about that what I said just now. In the first place, when all I've got to say is done, let me lose my miraculous power, let my will become just like anybody else's will, and all these dangerous miracles be stopped. I don't like them. I'd rather I didn't work 'em. Ever so much. That's the first thing. And the second is — let me be back just before the miracles begin; let everything be just as it was before that blessed lamp turned up. It's a big job, but it's the last. Have you got it? No more miracles, everything as it was — me back in the Long Dragon just before I drank my half-pint. That's it! Yes."

He dug his fingers into the mould, closed his eyes, and said "Off!"

Everything became perfectly still. He perceived that he was standing erect.

"So *you* say," said a voice.

He opened his eyes. He was in the bar of the Long Dragon, arguing about miracles with Toddy Beamish. He had a vague sense of some great thing forgotten that instantaneously passed. You see that, except for the loss of his miraculous powers, everything was back as it had been, his mind and memory therefore were now just as they had been at the time when this story began. So that he knew absolutely nothing of all that is told here — knows nothing of all that is told here to this day. And among other things, of course, he still did not believe in miracles.

"I tell you that miracles, properly speaking, can't possibly happen," he said, "whatever you like to hold. And I'm prepared to

prove it up to the hilt."

"That's what *you* think," said Toddy Beamish, and "Prove it if you can."

"Looky here, Mr. Beamish," said Mr. Fotheringay. "Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something contrariwise to the course of nature done by power of Will…"

XXII.

A VISION OF JUDGMENT.

I.

Bru-a-a-a.

I listened, not understanding.

Wa-ra-ra-ra.

"Good Lord!" said I, still only half awake. "What an infernal shindy!"

Ra-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra-ra Ta-ra-rra-ra.

"It's enough," said I, "to wake — —" and stopped short. Where was I?

Ta-rra-rara — louder and louder.

"It's either some new invention — —"

Toora-toora-toora! Deafening!

"No," said I, speaking loud in order to hear myself. "That's the Last Trump."

Tooo-rraa!

II.

The last note jerked me out of my grave like a hooked minnow.

I saw my monument (rather a mean little affair, and I wished I knew who'd done it), and the old elm tree and the sea view vanished like a puff of steam, and then all about me — a multitude no man could number, nations, tongues, kingdoms, peoples — children of all the ages, in an amphitheatral space as vast as the sky. And over against us, seated on a throne of dazzling white cloud, the Lord God and all the host of his angels. I recognised Azrael by his darkness and Michael by his sword, and the great angel who had blown the trumpet stood with the trumpet still half raised.

III.

"Prompt," said the little man beside me. "Very prompt. Do you see

the angel with the book?"

He was ducking and craning his head about to see over and under and between the souls that crowded round us. "Everybody's here," he said. "Everybody. And now we shall know —

"There's Darwin," he said, going off at a tangent. "*He'll* catch it! And there — you see? — that tall, important-looking man trying to catch the eye of the Lord God, that's the Duke. But there's a lot of people one doesn't know.

"Oh! there's Priggles, the publisher. I have always wondered about printers' overs. Priggles was a clever man … But we shall know now — even about him.

"I shall hear all that. I shall get most of the fun before … *My* letter's S."

He drew the air in between his teeth.

"Historical characters, too. See? That's Henry the Eighth. There'll be a good bit of evidence. Oh, damn! He's Tudor."

He lowered his voice. "Notice this chap, just in front of us, all covered with hair. Paleolithic, you know. And there again—"

But I did not heed him, because I was looking at the Lord God.

IV.

"Is this *all*?" asked the Lord God.

The angel at the book — it was one of countless volumes, like the British Museum Reading-room Catalogue, glanced at us and seemed to count us in the instant.

"That's all," he said, and added: "It was, O God, a very little planet."

The eyes of God surveyed us.

"Let us begin," said the Lord God.

V.

The angel opened the book and read a name. It was a name full of A's, and the echoes of it came back out of the uttermost parts of space. I did not catch it clearly, because the little man beside me said, in a sharp jerk, "*What's* that?" It sounded like "Ahab" to me; but it

could not have been the Ahab of Scripture.

Instantly a small black figure was lifted up to a puffy cloud at the very feet of God. It was a stiff little figure, dressed in rich outlandish robes and crowned, and it folded its arms and scowled.

"Well?" said God, looking down at him.

We were privileged to hear the reply, and indeed the acoustic properties of the place were marvellous.

"I plead guilty," said the little figure.

"Tell them what you have done," said the Lord God.

"I was a king," said the little figure, "a great king, and I was lustful and proud and cruel. I made wars, I devastated countries, I built palaces, and the mortar was the blood of men. Hear, O God, the witnesses against me, calling to you for vengeance. Hundreds and thousands of witnesses." He waved his hands towards us. "And worse! I took a prophet — one of your prophets — —"

"One of my prophets," said the Lord God.

"And because he would not bow to me, I tortured him for four days and nights, and in the end he died. I did more, O God, I blasphemed. I robbed you of your honours — —"

"Robbed me of my honours," said the Lord God.

"I caused myself to be worshipped in your stead. No evil was there but I practised it; no cruelty wherewith I did not stain my soul. And at last you smote me, O God!"

God raised his eyebrows slightly.

"And I was slain in battle. And so I stand before you, meet for your nethermost Hell! Out of your greatness daring no lies, daring no pleas, but telling the truth of my iniquities before all mankind."

He ceased. His face I saw distinctly, and it seemed to me white and terrible and proud and strangely noble. I thought of Milton's Satan.

"Most of that is from the Obelisk," said the Recording Angel, finger on page.

"It is," said the Tyrannous Man, with a faint touch of surprise.

Then suddenly God bent forward and took this man in his hand, and held him up on his palm as if to see him better. He was just a little dark stroke in the middle of God's palm.

"*Did* he do all this?" said the Lord God.

The Recording Angel flattened his book with his hand.

"In a way," said the Recording Angel, carelessly. Now when I looked again at the little man his face had changed in a very curious manner. He was looking at the Recording Angel with a strange apprehension in his eyes, and one hand fluttered to his mouth. Just the movement of a muscle or so, and all that dignity of defiance was gone.

"Read," said the Lord God.

And the angel read, explaining very carefully and fully all the wickedness of the Wicked Man. It was quite an intellectual treat. — A little "daring" in places, I thought, but of course Heaven has its privileges…

VI.

Everybody was laughing. Even the prophet of the Lord whom the Wicked Man had tortured had a smile on his face. The Wicked Man was really such a preposterous little fellow.

"And then," read the Recording Angel, with a smile that set us all agog, "one day, when he was a little irascible from over-eating, he —"

"Oh, not *that*," cried the Wicked Man, "nobody knew of *that*.

"It didn't happen," screamed the Wicked Man. "I was bad — I was really bad.
Frequently bad, but there was nothing so silly — so absolutely silly —"

The angel went on reading.

"O God!" cried the Wicked Man. "Don't let them know that! I'll repent!
I'll apologise…"

The Wicked Man on God's hand began to dance and weep. Suddenly shame overcame him. He made a wild rush to jump off the ball of God's little finger, but God stopped him by a dexterous turn of the wrist. Then he made a rush for the gap between hand and

thumb, but the thumb closed. And all the while the angel went on reading — reading. The Wicked Man rushed to and fro across God's palm, and then suddenly turned about and fled up the sleeve of God.

I expected God would turn him out, but the mercy of God is infinite.

The Recording Angel paused.

"Eh?" said the Recording Angel.

"Next," said God, and before the Recording Angel could call the name a hairy creature in filthy rags stood upon God's palm.

VII.

"Has God got Hell up his sleeve then?" said the little man beside me.

"*Is* there a Hell?" I asked.

"If you notice," he said — he peered between the feet of the great angels— "there's no particular indication of a Celestial City."

"'Ssh!" said a little woman near us, scowling. "Hear this blessed Saint!"

VIII.

"He was Lord of the Earth, but I was the prophet of the God of Heaven," cried the Saint, "and all the people marvelled at the sign. For I, O God, knew of the glories of thy Paradise. No pain, no hardship, gashing with knives, splinters thrust under my nails, strips of flesh flayed off, all for the glory and honour of God."

God smiled.

"And at last I went, I in my rags and sores, smelling of my holy discomforts — —"

Gabriel laughed abruptly.

"And lay outside his gates, as a sign, as a wonder — —"

"As a perfect nuisance," said the Recording Angel, and began to read, heedless of the fact that the saint was still speaking of the gloriously unpleasant things he had done that Paradise might be his.

And behold, in that book the record of the Saint also was a revelation, a marvel.

It seemed not ten seconds before the Saint also was rushing to and

fro over the great palm of God. Not ten seconds! And at last he also shrieked beneath that pitiless and cynical exposition, and fled also, even as the Wicked Man had fled, into the shadow of the sleeve. And it was permitted us to see into the shadow of the sleeve. And the two sat side by side, stark of all delusions, in the shadow of the robe of God's charity, like brothers.

And thither also I fled in my turn.

IX.

"And now," said God, as he shook us out of his sleeve upon the planet he had given us to live upon, the planet that whirled about green Sirius for a sun, "now that you understand me and each other a little better,…try again."

Then he and his great angels turned themselves about and suddenly had vanished…

The Throne had vanished.

All about me was a beautiful land, more beautiful than any I had ever seen before — waste, austere, and wonderful; and all about me were the enlightened souls of men in new clean bodies…

XXIII.

JIMMY GOGGLES THE GOD.

“It isn’t every one who’s been a god,” said the sunburnt man. “But it’s happened to me — among other things.”

I intimated my sense of his condescension.

“It don’t leave much for ambition, does it?” said the sunburnt man.

“I was one of those men who were saved from the *Ocean Pioneer*. Gummy! how time flies! It’s twenty years ago. I doubt if you’ll remember anything of the *Ocean Pioneer*?”

The name was familiar, and I tried to recall when and where I had read it. The *Ocean Pioneer*? “Something about gold dust,” I said vaguely, “but the precise—”

“That’s it,” he said. “In a beastly little channel she hadn’t no business in — dodging pirates. It was before they’d put the kybosh on that business. And there’d been volcanoes or something and all the rocks was wrong. There’s places about by Soona where you fair have to follow the rocks about to see where they’re going next. Down she went in twenty fathoms before you could have dealt for whist, with fifty thousand pounds worth of gold aboard, it was said, in one form or another.”

“Survivors?”

“Three.”

“I remember the case now,” I said. “There was something about salvage — —”

But at the word salvage the sunburnt man exploded into language so extraordinarily horrible that I stopped aghast. He came down to more ordinary swearing, and pulled himself up abruptly. “Excuse me,” he said, “but — salvage!”

He leant over towards me. “I was in that job,” he said. “Tried to make myself a rich man, and got made a god instead. I’ve got my feelings ——

“It ain’t all jam being a god,” said the sunburnt man, and for some time conversed by means of such pithy but unprogressive axioms. At last he took up his tale again.

“There was me,” said the sunburnt man, “and a seaman named

Jacobs, and Always, the mate of the *Ocean Pioneer*. And him it was that set the whole thing going. I remember him now, when we was in the jolly-boat, suggesting it all to our minds just by one sentence. He was a wonderful hand at suggesting things. 'There was forty thousand pounds,' he said, 'on that ship, and it's for me to say just where she went down.' It didn't need much brains to tumble to that. And he was the leader from the first to the last. He got hold of the Sanderses and their brig; they were brothers, and the brig was the *Pride of Banya*, and he it was bought the diving dress — a second-hand one with a compressed air apparatus instead of pumping. He'd have done the diving too, if it hadn't made him sick going down. And the salvage people were mucking about with a chart he'd cooked up, as solemn as could be, at Starr Race, a hundred and twenty miles away.

"I can tell you we was a happy lot aboard that brig, jokes and drink and bright hopes all the time. It all seemed so neat and clean and straightforward, and what rough chaps call a 'cert.' And we used to speculate how the other blessed lot, the proper salvagers, who'd started two days before us, were getting on, until our sides fairly ached. We all messed together in the Sanderses' cabin — it was a curious crew, all officers and no men — and there stood the diving-dress waiting its turn. Young Sanders was a humorous sort of chap, and there certainly was something funny in the confounded thing's great fat head and its stare, and he made us see it too. 'Jimmy Goggles,' he used to call it, and talk to it like a Christian. Asked if he was married, and how Mrs. Goggles was, and all the little Goggleses. Fit to make you split. And every blessed day all of us used to drink the health of Jimmy Goggles in rum, and unscrew his eye and pour a glass of rum in him, until, instead of that nasty mackintosheriness, he smelt as nice in his inside as a cask of rum. It was jolly times we had in those days, I can tell you — little suspecting, poor chaps! what was a-coming.

"We weren't going to throw away our chances by any blessed hurry, you know, and we spent a whole day sounding our way towards where the *Ocean Pioneer* had gone down, right between two chunks of ropy grey rock — lava rocks that rose nearly out of the water. We had to lay off about half a mile to get a safe anchorage,

and there was a thundering row who should stop on board. And there she lay just as she had gone down, so that you could see the top of the masts that was still standing perfectly distinctly. The row ended in all coming in the boat. I went down in the diving-dress on Friday morning directly it was light.

"What a surprise it was! I can see it all now quite distinctly. It was a queer-looking place, and the light was just coming. People over here think every blessed place in the tropics is a flat shore and palm-trees and surf, bless 'em! This place, for instance, wasn't a bit that way. Not common rocks they were, undermined by waves; but great curved banks like ironwork cinder heaps, with green slime below, and thorny shrubs and things just waving upon them here and there, and the water glassy calm and clear, and showing you a kind of dirty gray-black shine, with huge flaring red-brown weeds spreading motionless, and crawling and darting things going through it. And far away beyond the ditches and pools and the heaps was a forest on the mountain flank, growing again after the fires and cinder showers of the last eruption. And the other way forest, too, and a kind of broken — what is it? — amby-theatre of black and rusty cinders rising out of it all, and the sea in a kind of bay in the middle.

"The dawn, I say, was just coming, and there wasn't much colour about things, and not a human being but ourselves anywhere in sight up or down the channel. Except the *Pride of Banya*, lying out beyond a lump of rocks towards the line of the sea.

"Not a human being in sight," he repeated, and paused.

"*I* don't know where they came from, not a bit. And we were feeling so safe that we were all alone that poor young Sanders was a-singing. I was in Jimmy Goggles, all except the helmet. 'Easy,' says Always, 'there's her mast.' And after I'd had just one squint over the gunwale, I caught up the bogey, and almost tipped out as old Sanders brought the boat round. When the windows were screwed and everything was all right, I shut the valve from the air-belt in order to help my sinking, and jumped overboard, feet foremost — for we hadn't a ladder. I left the boat pitching, and all of them staring down into water after me, as my head sank down into the weeds and blackness that lay about the mast. I suppose nobody, not the most cautious chap in the world, would have bothered about a look-out at

such a desolate place. It stunk of solitude.

"Of course you must understand that I was a greenhorn at diving. None of us were divers. We'd had to muck about with the thing to get the way of it, and this was the first time I'd been deep. It feels damnable. Your ears hurt beastly. I don't know if you've ever hurt yourself yawning or sneezing, but it takes you like that, only ten times worse. And a pain over the eyebrows here — splitting — and a feeling like influenza in the head. And it isn't all heaven in your lungs and things. And going down feels like the beginning of a lift, only it keeps on. And you can't turn your head to see what's above you, and you can't get a fair squint at what's happening to your feet without bending down something painful. And being deep it was dark, let alone the blackness of the ashes and mud that formed the bottom. It was like going down out of the dawn back into the night, so to speak.

"The mast came up like a ghost out of the black, and then a lot of fishes, and then a lot of flapping red seaweed, and then whack I came with a kind of dull bang on the deck of the *Ocean Pioneer*, and the fishes that had been feeding on the dead rose about me like a swarm of flies from road stuff in summer-time. I turned on the compressed air again — for the suit was a bit thick and mackintoshery after all, in spite of the rum — and stood recovering myself. It struck coolish down there, and that helped take off the stuffiness a bit."

"When I began to feel easier, I started looking about me. It was an extraordinary sight. Even the light was extraordinary, a kind of reddy-coloured twilight, on account of the streamers of seaweed that floated up on either side of the ship. And far overhead just a moony, deep green blue. The deck of the ship, except for a slight list to starboard, was level, and lay all dark and long between the weeds, clear except where the masts had snapped when she rolled, and vanishing into black night towards the forecastle. There wasn't any dead on the decks, most were in the weeds alongside, I suppose; but afterwards I found two skeletons lying in the passengers' cabins, where death had come to them. It was curious to stand on that deck and recognise it all, bit by bit; a place against the rail where I'd been fond of smoking by starlight, and the corner where an old chap from Sydney used to flirt with a widow we had aboard. A comfortable

couple they'd been, only a month ago, and now you couldn't have got a meal for a baby crab off either of them.

"I've always had a bit of a philosophical turn, and I daresay I spent the best part of five minutes in such thoughts before I went below to find where the blessed dust was stored. It was slow work hunting, feeling it was for the most part, pitchy dark, with confusing blue gleams down the companion. And there were things moving about, a dab at my glass once, and once a pinch at my leg. Crabs, I expect. I kicked a lot of loose stuff that puzzled me, and stooped and picked up something all knobs and spikes. What do you think? Backbone! But I never had any particular feeling for bones. We had talked the affair over pretty thoroughly, and Always knew just where the stuff was stowed. I found it that trip. I lifted a box one end an inch or more."

He broke off in his story. "I've lifted it," he said, "as near as that! Forty thousand pounds' worth of pure gold! Gold! I shouted inside my helmet as a kind of cheer, and hurt my ears. I was getting confounded stuffy and tired by this time — I must have been down twenty-five minutes or more — and I thought this was good enough. I went up the companion again, and as my eyes came up flush with the deck, a thundering great crab gave a kind of hysterical jump and went scuttling off sideways. Quite a start it gave me. I stood up clear on deck and shut the valve behind the helmet to let the air accumulate to carry me up again — I noticed a kind of whacking from above, as though they were hitting the water with an oar, but I didn't look up. I fancied they were signalling me to come up.

"And then something shot down by me — something heavy, and stood a-quiver in the planks. I looked, and there was a long knife I'd seen young Sanders handling. Thinks I, he's dropped it, and I was still calling him this kind of fool and that — for it might have hurt me serious — when I began to lift and drive up towards the daylight. Just about the level of the top spars of the *Ocean Pioneer*, whack! I came against something sinking down, and a boot knocked in front of my helmet. Then something else, struggling frightful. It was a big weight atop of me, whatever it was, and moving and twisting about. I'd have thought it a big octopus, or some such thing, if it hadn't been for the boot. But octopuses don't wear boots. It was all in a

moment, of course.

"I felt myself sinking down again, and I threw my arms about to keep steady, and the whole lot rolled free of me and shot down as I went up—"

He paused.

"I saw young Sanders's face, over a naked black shoulder, and a spear driven clean through his neck, and out of his mouth and neck what looked like spirts of pink smoke in the water. And down they went clutching one another, and turning over, and both too far gone to leave go. And in another second my helmet came a whack, fit to split, against the niggers' canoe. It was niggers! Two canoes full.

"It was lively times I tell you? Overboard came Always with three spears in him. There was the legs of three or four black chaps kicking about me in the water. I couldn't see much, but I saw the game was up at a glance, gave my valve a tremendous twist, and went bubbling down again after poor Always, in as awful a state of scare and astonishment as you can well imagine. I passed young Sanders and the nigger going up again and struggling still a bit, and in another moment I was standing in the dim again on the deck of the *Ocean Pioneer*.

"Gummy, thinks I, here's a fix! Niggers? At first I couldn't see anything for it but Stifle below or Stabs above. I didn't properly understand how much air there was to last me out, but I didn't feel like standing very much more of it down below. I was hot and frightfully heady, quite apart from the blue funk I was in. We'd never reckoned with these beastly natives, filthy Papuan beasts. It wasn't any good coming up where I was, but I had to do something. On the spur of the moment, I clambered over the side of the brig and landed among the weeds, and set off through the darkness as fast as I could. I just stopped once and knelt, and twisted back my head in the helmet and had a look up. It was a most extraordinary bright green-blue above, and the two canoes and the boat floating there very small and distant like a kind of twisted H. And it made me feel sick to squint up at it, and think what the pitching and swaying of the three meant.

"It was just about the most horrible ten minutes I ever had, blundering about in that darkness — pressure something awful, like being buried in sand, pain across the chest, sick with funk, and

breathing nothing as it seemed but the smell of rum and mackintosh. Gummy! After a bit, I found myself going up a steepish sort of slope. I had another squint to see if anything was visible of the canoes and boats, and then kept on. I stopped with my head a foot from the surface, and tried to see where I was going, but, of course, nothing was to be seen but the reflection of the bottom. Then out I dashed, like knocking my head through a mirror. Directly I got my eyes out of the water, I saw I'd come up a kind of beach near the forest. I had a look round, but the natives and the brig were both hidden by a big hummucky heap of twisted lava. The born fool in me suggested a run for the woods. I didn't take the helmet off, but I eased open one of the windows, and, after a bit of a pant, went on out of the water. You'd hardly imagine how clean and light the air tasted.

"Of course, with four inches of lead in your boot soles, and your head in a copper knob the size of a football, and been thirty-five minutes under water, you don't break any records running. I ran like a ploughboy going to work. And half-way to the trees I saw a dozen niggers or more, coming out in a gaping, astonished sort of way to meet me.

"I just stopped dead, and cursed myself for all the fools out of London. I had about as much chance of cutting back to the water as a turned turtle. I just screwed up my window again to leave my hands free, and waited for them. There wasn't anything else for me to do.

"But they didn't come on very much. I began to suspect why. 'Jimmy Goggles,' I says, 'it's your beauty does it.' I was inclined to be a little lightheaded, I think, with all these dangers about and the change in the pressure of the blessed air. 'Who're ye staring at?' I said, as if the savages could hear me. 'What d'ye take me for? I'm hanged if I don't give you something to stare at,' I said, and with that I screwed up the escape valve and turned on the compressed air from the belt, until I was swelled out like a blown frog. Regular imposing it must have been. I'm blessed if they'd come on a step; and presently one and then another went down on their hands and knees. They didn't know what to make of me, and they was doing the extra polite, which was very wise and reasonable of them. I had half a mind to edge back seaward and cut and run, but it seemed too hopeless. A step back and they'd have been after me. And out of

sheer desperation I began to march towards them up the beach, with slow, heavy steps, and waving my blown-out arms about, in a dignified manner. And inside of me I was singing as small as a tomtit.

"But there's nothing like a striking appearance to help a man over a difficulty, — I've found that before and since. People like ourselves, who're up to diving dresses by the time we're seven, can scarcely imagine the effect of one on a simple-minded savage. One or two of these niggers cut and run, the others started in a great hurry trying to knock their brains out on the ground. And on I went as slow and solemn and silly-looking and artful as a jobbing plumber. It was evident they took me for something immense.

"Then up jumped one and began pointing, making extraordinary gestures to me as he did so, and all the others began sharing their attention between me and something out at; sea. 'What's the matter now?' I said. I turned slowly on account of my dignity, and there I saw, coming round a point, the poor old *Pride of Banya* towed by a couple of canoes. The sight fairly made me sick. But they evidently expected some recognition, so I waved my arms in a striking sort of non-committal manner. And then I turned and stalked on towards the trees again. At that time I was praying like mad, I remember, over and over again: 'Lord help me through with it! Lord help me through with it!' It's only fools who know nothing of danger can afford to laugh at praying."

"But these niggers weren't going to let me walk through and away like that. They started a kind of bowing dance about me, and sort of pressed me to take a pathway that lay through the trees. It was clear to me they didn't take me for a British citizen, whatever else they thought of me, and for my own part I was never less anxious to own up to the old country.

"You'd hardly believe it, perhaps, unless you're familiar with savages, but these poor, misguided, ignorant creatures took me straight to their kind of joss place to present me to the blessed old black stone there. By this time I was beginning to sort of realise the depth of their ignorance, and directly I set eyes on this deity I took my cue. I started a baritone howl, 'wow-wow,' very long on one note, and began waving my arms about a lot, and then very slowly

and ceremoniously turned their image over on its side and sat down on it. I wanted to sit down badly, for diving dresses ain't much wear in the tropics. Or, to put it different like, they're a sight too much. It took away their breath, I could see, my sitting on their joss, but in less time than a minute they made up their minds and were hard at work worshipping me. And I can tell you I felt a bit relieved to see things turning out so well, in spite of the weight on my shoulders and feet.

"But what made me anxious was what the chaps in the canoes might think when they came back. If they'd seen me in the boat before I went down, and without the helmet on — for they might have been spying and hiding since over night — they would very likely take a different view from the others. I was in a deuce of a stew about that for hours, as it seemed, until the shindy of the arrival began.

"But they took it down — the whole blessed village took it down. At the cost of sitting up stiff and stern, as much like those sitting Egyptian images one sees as I could manage, for pretty nearly twelve hours, I should guess at least, on end, I got over it. You'd hardly think what it meant in that heat and stink. I don't think any of them dreamt of the man inside. I was just a wonderful leathery great joss that had come up with luck out of the water. But the fatigue! the heat! the beastly closeness! the mackintosheriness and the rum! and the fuss! They lit a stinking fire on a kind of lava slab there was before me, and brought in a lot of gory muck — the worst parts of what they were feasting on outside, the Beasts — and burnt it all in my honour. I was getting a bit hungry, but I understand now how gods manage to do without eating, what with the smell of burnt-offerings about them. And they brought in a lot of the stuff they'd got off the brig and, among other stuff, what I was a bit relieved to see, the kind of pneumatic pump that was used for the compressed air affair, and then a lot of chaps and girls came in and danced about me something disgraceful. It's extraordinary the different ways different people have of showing respect. If I'd had a hatchet handy I'd have gone for the lot of them — they made me feel that wild. All this time I sat as stiff as company, not knowing anything better to do. And at last, when nightfall came, and the wattle joss-house place got a bit

too shadowy for their taste — all these here savages are afraid of the dark, you know — and I started a sort of 'Moo' noise, they built big bonfires outside and left me alone in peace in the darkness of my hut, free to unscrew my windows a bit and think things over, and feel just as bad as I liked. And Lord! I was sick.

"I was weak and hungry, and my mind kept on behaving like a beetle on a pin, tremendous activity and nothing done at the end of it. Come round just where it was before. There was sorrowing for the other chaps, beastly drunkards certainly, but not deserving such a fate, and young Sanders with the spear through his neck wouldn't go out of my mind. There was the treasure down there in the *Ocean Pioneer*, and how one might get it and hide it somewhere safer, and get away and come back for it. And there was the puzzle where to get anything to eat. I tell you I was fair rambling. I was afraid to ask by signs for food, for fear of behaving too human, and so there I sat and hungered until very near the dawn. Then the village got a bit quiet, and I couldn't stand it any longer, and I went out and got some stuff like artichokes in a bowl and some sour milk. What was left of these I put away among the other offerings, just to give them a hint of my tastes. And in the morning they came to worship, and found me sitting up stiff and respectable on their previous god, just as they'd left me overnight. I'd got my back against the central pillar of the hut, and, practically, I was asleep. And that's how I became a god among the heathen — false god, no doubt, and blasphemous, but one can't always pick and choose.

"Now, I don't want to crack myself up as a god beyond my merits, but I must confess that while I was god to these people they was extraordinary successful. I don't say there's anything in it, mind you. They won a battle with another tribe — I got a lot of offerings I didn't want through it — they had wonderful fishing, and their crop of pourra was exceptional fine. And they counted the capture of the brig among the benefits I brought 'em. I must say I don't think that was a poor record for a perfectly new hand. And, though perhaps you'd scarcely credit it, I was the tribal god of those beastly savages for pretty nearly four months…

"What else could I do, man? But I didn't wear that diving-dress all the time. I made 'em rig me up a sort of holy of holies, and a

deuce of a time I had too, making them understand what it was I wanted them to do. That indeed was the great difficulty — making them understand my wishes. I couldn't let myself down by talking their lingo badly, even if I'd been able to speak at all, and I couldn't go flapping a lot of gestures at them. So I drew pictures in sand and sat down beside them and hooted like one o'clock. Sometimes they did the things I wanted all right, and sometimes they did them all wrong. They was always very willing, certainly. All the while I was puzzling how I was to get the confounded business settled. Every night before the dawn I used to march out in full rig and go off to a place where I could see the channel in which the *Ocean Pioneer* lay sunk, and once even, one moonlight night, I tried to walk out to her, but the weeds and rocks and dark clean beat me. I didn't get back till full day, and then I found all those silly niggers out on the beach praying their sea-god to return to them. I was that vexed and tired, messing and tumbling about, and coming up and going down again, I could have punched their silly heads all round when they started rejoicing. Hanged if I like so much ceremony.

"And then came the missionary. That missionary! *What* a Guy! Gummy! It was in the afternoon, and I was sitting in state in my outer temple place, sitting on that old black stone of theirs, when he came. I heard a row outside and jabbering, and then his voice speaking to an interpreter. 'They worship stocks and stones,' he said, and I knew what was up, in a flash. I had one of my windows out for comfort, and I sang out straight away on the spur of the moment. 'Stocks and stones!' I says. 'You come inside,' I says, 'and I'll punch your blooming Exeter Hall of a head.'

"There was a kind of silence and more jabbering, and in he came, Bible in hand, after the manner of them — a little sandy chap in specks and a pith helmet. I flatter myself that me sitting there in the shadows, with my copper head and my big goggles, struck him a bit of a heap at first. 'Well,' I says, 'how's the trade in scissors?' for I don't hold with missionaries.

"I had a lark with that missionary. He was a raw hand, and quite outclassed by a man like me. He gasped out who was I, and I told him to read the inscription at my feet if he wanted to know. There wasn't no inscription; why should there be? but down he goes to

read, and his interpreter, being of course as superstitious as any of them, more so by reason of his seeing missionary close to, took it for an act of worship and plumped down like a shot. All my people gave a howl of triumph, and there wasn't any more business to be done in my village after that journey, not by the likes of him.

"But, of course, I was a fool to choke him off like that. If I'd had any sense I should have told him straight away of the treasure and taken him into Co. I've no doubt he'd have come into Co. A child, with a few hours to think it over, could have seen the connection between my diving dress and the loss of the *Ocean Pioneer*. A week after he left I went out one morning and saw the *Motherhood*, the salver's ship from Starr Race, towing up the channel and sounding. The whole blessed game was up, and all my trouble thrown away. Gummy! How wild I felt! And guying it in that stinking silly dress! Four months!"

The sunburnt man's story degenerated again. "Think of it," he said, when he emerged to linguistic purity once more. "Forty thousand pounds' worth of gold."

"Did the little missionary come back?" I asked.

"Oh yes! bless him! And he pledged his reputation there was a man inside the god, and started out to see as much with tremendous ceremony. But wasn't — he got sold again. I always did hate scenes and explanations, and long before he came I was out of it all — going home to Banya along the coast, hiding in bushes by day, and thieving food from the villages by night. Only weapon, a spear. No clothes, no money. Nothing. My face, my fortune, as the saying is. And just a squeak of eight thousand pounds of gold — fifth share. But the natives cut up rusty, thank goodness, because they thought it was him had driven their luck away."

XXIV.

MISS WINCHELSEA'S HEART.

Miss Winchelsea was going to Rome. The matter had filled her mind for a month or more, and had overflowed so abundantly into her conversation that quite a number of people who were not going to Rome, and who were not likely to go to Rome, had made it a personal grievance against her. Some indeed had attempted quite unavailingly to convince her that Rome was not nearly such a desirable place as it was reported to be, and others had gone so far as to suggest behind her back that she was dreadfully "stuck up" about "that Rome of hers." And little Lily Hardhurst had told her friend Mr. Binns that so far as she was concerned Miss Winchelsea might "go to her old Rome and stop there; *she* (Miss Lily Hardhurst) wouldn't grieve." And the way in which Miss Winchelsea put herself upon terms of personal tenderness with Horace and Benvenuto Cellini and Raphael and Shelley and Keats — if she had been Shelley's widow she could not have professed a keener interest in his grave — was a matter of universal astonishment. Her dress was a triumph of tactful discretion, sensible, but not too "touristy"' — Miss Winchelsea had a great dread of being "touristy" — and her Baedeker was carried in a cover of grey to hide its glaring red. She made a prim and pleasant little figure on the Charing Cross platform, in spite of her swelling pride, when at last the great day dawned, and she could start for Rome. The day was bright, the Channel passage would be pleasant, and all the omens promised well. There was the gayest sense of adventure in this unprecedented departure.

She was going with two friends who had been fellow-students with her at the training college, nice honest girls both, though not so good at history and literature as Miss Winchelsea. They both looked up to her immensely, though physically they had to look down, and she anticipated some pleasant times to be spent in "stirring them up" to her own pitch of AEsthetic and historical enthusiasm. They had secured seats already, and welcomed her effusively at the carriage door. In the instant criticism of the encounter she noted that Fanny had a slightly "touristy" leather strap, and that Helen had succumbed to a serge jacket with side pockets, into which her hands were thrust.

But they were much too happy with themselves and the expedition for their friend to attempt any hint at the moment about these things. As soon as the first ecstasies were over — Fanny's enthusiasm was a little noisy and crude, and consisted mainly in emphatic repetitions of "Just *fancy*! we're going to Rome, my dear! — Rome!" — they gave their attention to their fellow-travellers. Helen was anxious to secure a compartment to themselves, and, in order to discourage intruders, got out and planted herself firmly on the step. Miss Winchelsea peeped out over her shoulder, and made sly little remarks about the accumulating people on the platform, at which Fanny laughed gleefully.

They were travelling with one of Mr. Thomas Gunn's parties — fourteen days in Rome for fourteen pounds. They did not belong to the personally conducted party, of course — Miss Winchelsea had seen to that — but they travelled with it because of the convenience of that arrangement. The people were the oddest mixture, and wonderfully amusing. There was a vociferous red-faced polyglot personal conductor in a pepper-and-salt suit, very long in the arms and legs and very active. He shouted proclamations. When he wanted to speak to people he stretched out an arm and held them until his purpose was accomplished. One hand was full of papers, tickets, counterfoils of tourists. The people of the personally conducted party were, it seemed, of two sorts; people the conductor wanted and could not find, and people he did not want and who followed him in a steadily growing tail up and down the platform. These people seemed, indeed, to think that their one chance of reaching Rome lay in keeping close to him. Three little old ladies were particularly energetic in his pursuit, and at last maddened him to the pitch of clapping them into a carriage and daring them to emerge again. For the rest of the time, one, two, or three of their heads protruded from the window wailing inquiries about "a little wicker-work box" whenever he drew near. There was a very stout man with a very stout wife in shiny black; there was a little old man like an aged hostler.

"What *can* such people want in Rome?" asked Miss Winchelsea. "What can it mean to them?" There was a very tall curate in a very small straw hat, and a very short curate encumbered by a long camera stand. The contrast amused Fanny very much. Once they

heard some one calling for “Snooks.” “I always thought that name was invented by novelists,” said Miss Winchelsea. “Fancy! Snooks. I wonder which *is* Mr. Snooks.” Finally they picked out a very stout and resolute little man in a large check suit. “If he isn’t Snooks, he ought to be,” said Miss Winchelsea.

Presently the conductor discovered Helen’s attempt at a corner in carriages. “Room for five,” he bawled with a parallel translation on his fingers. A party of four together — mother, father, and two daughters — blundered in, all greatly excited. “It’s all right, Ma — you let me,” said one of the daughters, hitting her mother’s bonnet with a handbag she struggled to put in the rack. Miss Winchelsea detested people who banged about and called their mother “Ma.” A young man travelling alone followed. He was not at all “touristy” in his costume, Miss Winchelsea observed; his Gladstone bag was of good pleasant leather with labels reminiscent of Luxembourg and Ostend, and his boots, though brown, were not vulgar. He carried an overcoat on his arm. Before these people had properly settled in their places, came an inspection of tickets and a slamming of doors, and behold! they were gliding out of Charing Cross Station on their way to Rome.

“Fancy!” cried Fanny, “we are going to Rome, my dear! Rome! I don’t seem to believe it, even now.”

Miss Winchelsea suppressed Fanny’s emotions with a little smile, and the lady who was called “Ma” explained to people in general why they had “cut it so close” at the station. The two daughters called her “Ma” several times, toned her down in a tactless, effective way, and drove her at last to the muttered inventory of a basket of travelling requisites. Presently she looked up. “Lor!” she said, “I didn’t bring *them*!” Both the daughters said “Oh, Ma!” But what “them” was did not appear.

Presently Fanny produced Hare’s *Walks in Rome*, a sort of mitigated guide-book very popular among Roman visitors; and the father of the two daughters began to examine his books of tickets minutely, apparently in a search after English words. When he had looked at the tickets for a long time right way up, he turned them upside down. Then he produced a fountain pen and dated them with considerable care. The young man having completed an

unostentatious survey of his fellow-travellers produced a book and fell to reading. When Helen and Fanny were looking out of the window at Chislehurst — the place interested Fanny because the poor dear Empress of the French used to live there — Miss Winchelsea took the opportunity to observe the book the young man held. It was not a guide-book but a little thin volume of poetry — *bound*. She glanced at his face — it seemed a refined, pleasant face to her hasty glance. He wore a little gilt *pince-nez*. "Do you think she lives there now?" said Fanny, and Miss Winchelsea's inspection came to an end.

For the rest of the journey Miss Winchelsea talked little, and what she said was as agreeable and as stamped with refinement as she could make it. Her voice was always low and clear and pleasant, and she took care that on this occasion it was particularly low and clear and pleasant. As they came under the white cliffs the young man put his book of poetry away, and when at last the train stopped beside the boat, he displayed a graceful alacrity with the impedimenta of Miss Winchelsea and her friends. Miss Winchelsea "hated nonsense," but she was pleased to see the young man perceived at once that they were ladies, and helped them without any violent geniality; and how nicely he showed that his civilities were to be no excuse for further intrusions. None of her little party had been out of England before, and they were all excited and a little nervous at the Channel passage. They stood in a little group in a good place near the middle of the boat — the young man had taken Miss Winchelsea's carry-all there and had told her it was a good place — and they watched the white shores of Albion recede and quoted Shakespeare and made quiet fun of their fellow-travellers in the English way.

They were particularly amused at the precautions the bigger-sized people had taken against the little waves — cut lemons and flasks prevailed, one lady lay full length in a deck chair with a handkerchief over her face, and a very broad resolute man in a bright brown "touristy" suit walked all the way from England to France along the deck, with his legs as widely apart as Providence permitted. These were all excellent precautions, and nobody was ill. The personally-conducted party pursued the conductor about the deck with inquiries, in a manner that suggested to Helen's mind the rather vulgar image

of hens with a piece of bacon rind, until at last he went into hiding below. And the young man with the thin volume of poetry stood at the stern watching England receding, looking rather lonely and sad to Miss Winchelsea's eye.

And then came Calais and tumultuous novelties, and the young man had not forgotten Miss Winchelsea's hold-all and the other little things. All three girls, though they had passed Government examinations in French to any extent, were stricken with a dumb shame of their accents, and the young man was very useful. And he did not intrude. He put them in a comfortable carriage and raised his hat and went away. Miss Winchelsea thanked him in her best manner — a pleasing, cultivated manner — and Fanny said he was "nice" almost before he was out of earshot. "I wonder what he can be," said Helen. "He's going to Italy, because I noticed green tickets in his book." Miss Winchelsea almost told them of the poetry, and decided not to do so. And presently the carriage windows seized hold upon them and the young man was forgotten. It made them feel that they were doing an educated sort of thing to travel through a country whose commonest advertisements were in idiomatic French, and Miss Winchelsea made unpatriotic comparisons because there were weedy little sign-board advertisements by the rail side instead of the broad hoardings that deface the landscape in our land. But the north of France is really uninteresting country, and after a time Fanny reverted to Hare's *Walks*, and Helen initiated lunch. Miss Winchelsea awoke out of a happy reverie; she had been trying to realise, she said, that she was actually going to Rome, but she perceived at Helen's suggestion that she was hungry, and they lunched out of their baskets very cheerfully. In the afternoon they were tired and silent until Helen made tea. Miss Winchelsea might have dozed, only she knew Fanny slept with her mouth open; and as their fellow-passengers were two rather nice, critical-looking ladies of uncertain age — who knew French well enough to talk it — she employed herself in keeping Fanny awake. The rhythm of the train became insistent, and the streaming landscape outside became at last quite painful to the eye. They were already dreadfully tired of travelling before their night's stoppage came.

The stoppage for the night was brightened by the appearance of

the young man, and his manners were all that could be desired and his French quite serviceable.

His coupons availed for the same hotel as theirs, and by chance, as it seemed, he sat next Miss Winchelsea at the *table d'hôte*. In spite of her enthusiasm for Rome, she had thought out some such possibility very thoroughly, and when he ventured to make a remark upon the tediousness of travelling — he let the soup and fish go by before he did this — she did not simply assent to his proposition, but responded with another. They were soon comparing their journeys, and Helen and Fanny were cruelly overlooked in the conversation.. It was to be the same journey, they found; one day for the galleries at Florence— "from what I hear," said the young man, "it is barely enough," — and the rest at Rome. He talked of Rome very pleasantly; he was evidently quite well read, and he quoted Horace about Soracte. Miss Winchelsea had "done" that book of Horace for her matriculation, and was delighted to cap his quotation. It gave a sort of tone to things, this incident — a touch of refinement to mere chatting. Fanny expressed a few emotions, and Helen interpolated a few sensible remarks, but the bulk of the talk on the girls' side naturally fell to Miss Winchelsea.

Before they reached Rome this young man was tacitly of their party. They did not know his name nor what he was, but it seemed he taught, and Miss Winchelsea had a shrewd idea he was an extension lecturer. At any rate he was something of that sort, something gentlemanly and refined without being opulent and impossible. She tried once or twice to ascertain whether he came from Oxford or Cambridge, but he missed her timid opportunities. She tried to get him to make remarks about those places to see if he would say "come up" to them instead of "go down," — she knew that was how you told a 'Varsity man. He used the word "'Varsity" — not university — in quite the proper way.

They saw as much of Mr. Ruskin's Florence as the brief time permitted; he met them in the Pitti Gallery and went round with them, chatting brightly, and evidently very grateful for their recognition. He knew a great deal about art, and all four enjoyed the morning immensely. It was fine to go round recognising old favourites and finding new beauties, especially while so many people

fumbled helplessly with Baedeker. Nor was he a bit of a prig, Miss Winchelsea said, and indeed she detested prigs. He had a distinct undertone of humour, and was funny, for example, without being vulgar, at the expense of the quaint work of Beato Angelico. He had a grave seriousness beneath it all, and was quick to seize the moral lessons of the pictures. Fanny went softly among these masterpieces; she admitted "she knew so little about them," and she confessed that to her they were "all beautiful." Fanny's "beautiful" inclined to be a little monotonous, Miss Winchelsea thought. She had been quite glad when the last sunny Alp had vanished, because of the staccato of Fanny's admiration. Helen said little, but Miss Winchelsea had found her a trifle wanting on the aesthetic side in the old days and was not surprised; sometimes she laughed at the young man's hesitating, delicate jests and sometimes she didn't, and sometimes she seemed quite lost to the art about them in the contemplation of the dresses of the other visitors.

At Rome the young man was with them intermittently. A rather "touristy" friend of his took him away at times. He complained comically to Miss Winchelsea. "I have only two short weeks in Rome," he said, "and my friend Leonard wants to spend a whole day at Tivoli looking at a waterfall."

"What is your friend Leonard?" asked Miss Winchelsea abruptly.

"He's the most enthusiastic pedestrian I ever met," the young man replied — amusingly, but a little unsatisfactorily, Miss Winchelsea thought.

They had some glorious times, and Fanny could not think what they would have done without him. Miss Winchelsea's interest and Fanny's enormous capacity for admiration were insatiable. They never flagged — through pictures and sculpture galleries, immense crowded churches, ruins and museums, Judas trees and prickly pears, wine carts and palaces, they admired their way unflinchingly. They never saw a stone pine or a eucalyptus but they named and admired it; they never glimpsed Soracte but they exclaimed. Their common

ways were made wonderful by imaginative play. “Here Caesar may have walked,” they would say. “Raphael may have seen Soracte from this very point.” They happened on the tomb of Bibulus. “Old Bibulus,” said the young man. “The oldest monument of Republican Rome!” said Miss Winchelsea.

“I’m dreadfully stupid,” said Fanny, “but who *was* Bibulus?”

There was a curious little pause.

“Wasn’t he the person who built the wall?” said Helen.

The young man glanced quickly at her and laughed. “That was Balbus,” he said. Helen reddened, but neither he nor Miss Winchelsea threw any light upon Fanny’s ignorance about Bibulus.

Helen was more taciturn than the other three, but then she was always taciturn, and usually she took care of the tram tickets and things like that, or kept her eye on them if the young man took them, and told him where they were when he wanted them. Glorious times they had, these young people, in that pale brown cleanly city of memories that was once the world. Their only sorrow was the shortness of the time. They said indeed that the electric trams and the ‘70 buildings, and that criminal advertisement that glares upon the Forum, outraged their aesthetic feelings unspeakably; but that was only part of the fun. And indeed Rome is such a wonderful place that it made Miss Winchelsea forget some of her most carefully prepared enthusiasms at times, and Helen, taken unawares, would suddenly admit the beauty of unexpected things. Yet Fanny and Helen would have liked a shop window or so in the English quarter if Miss Winchelsea’s uncompromising hostility to all other English visitors had not rendered that district impossible.

The intellectual and aesthetic fellowship of Miss Winchelsea and the scholarly young man passed insensibly towards a deeper feeling. The exuberant Fanny did her best to keep pace with their recondite admiration by playing her “beautiful” with vigour, and saying “Oh! *let’s* go,” with enormous appetite whenever a new place of interest was mentioned. But Helen developed a certain want of sympathy towards the end that disappointed Miss Winchelsea a little. She refused to see “anything” in the face of Beatrice Cenci — Shelley’s Beatrice Cenci! — in the Barberini Gallery; and one day, when they were deploring the electric trams, she said rather snappishly that

“people must get about somehow, and it’s better than torturing horses up these horrid little hills.” She spoke of the Seven Hills of Rome as “horrid little hills “!

And the day they went on the Palatine — though Miss Winchelsea did not know of this — she remarked suddenly to Fanny, “Don’t hurry like that, my dear; *they* don’t want us to overtake them. And we don’t say the right things for them when we *do* get near.”

“I wasn’t trying to overtake them,” said Fanny, slackening her excessive pace; “I wasn’t indeed.” And for a minute she was short of breath.

But Miss Winchelsea had come upon happiness. It was only when she came to look back across an intervening tragedy that she quite realised how happy she had been pacing among the cypress-shadowed ruins, and exchanging the very highest class of information the human mind can possess, the most refined impressions it is possible to convey. Insensibly emotion crept into their intercourse, sunning itself openly and pleasantly at last when Helen’s modernity was not too near. Insensibly their interest drifted from the wonderful associations about them to their more intimate and personal feelings. In a tentative way information was supplied; she spoke allusively of her school, of her examination successes, of her gladness that the days of “Cram” were over. He made it quite clear that he also was a teacher. They spoke of the greatness of their calling, of the necessity of sympathy to face its irksome details, of a certain loneliness they sometimes felt.

That was in the Colosseum, and it was as far as they got that day, because Helen returned with Fanny — she had taken her into the upper galleries. Yet the private dreams of Miss Winchelsea, already vivid and concrete enough, became now realistic in the highest degree. She figured that pleasant young man lecturing in the most edifying way to his students, herself modestly prominent as his intellectual mate and helper; she figured a refined little home, with two bureaus, with white shelves of high-class books, and autotypes of the pictures of Rossetti and Burne Jones, with Morris’s wall-papers and flowers in pots of beaten copper. Indeed she figured many things. On the Pincio the two had a few precious moments together, while Helen marched Fanny off to see the *muro Torto*, and he spoke

at once plainly. He said he hoped their friendship was only beginning, that he already found her company very precious to him, that indeed it was more than that.

He became nervous, thrusting at his glasses with trembling fingers as though he fancied his emotions made them unstable. “I should of course,” he said, “tell you things about myself. I know it is rather unusual my speaking to you like this. Only our meeting has been so accidental — or providential — and I am snatching at things. I came to Rome expecting a lonely tour … and I have been so very happy, so very happy. Quite recently I have found myself in a position — I have dared to think —— , And — —”

He glanced over his shoulder and stopped. He said “Demn!” quite distinctly — and she did not condemn him for that manly lapse into profanity. She looked and saw his friend Leonard advancing. He drew nearer; he raised his hat to Miss Winchelsea, and his smile was almost a grin. “I’ve been looking for you everywhere, Snooks,” he said. “You promised to be on the Piazza steps half-an-hour ago.”

Snooks! The name struck Miss Winchelsea like a blow in the face. She did not hear his reply. She thought afterwards that Leonard must have considered her the vaguest-minded person. To this day she is not sure whether she was introduced to Leonard or not, nor what she said to him. A sort of mental paralysis was upon her. Of all offensive surnames — Snooks!

Helen and Fanny were returning, there were civilities, and the young men were receding. By a great effort she controlled herself to face the inquiring eyes of her friends. All that afternoon she lived the life of a heroine under the indescribable outrage of that name, chatting, observing, with “Snooks” gnawing at her heart. From the moment that it first rang upon her ears, the dream of her happiness was prostrate in the dust. All the refinement she had figured was ruined and defaced by that cognomen’s unavoidable vulgarity.

What was that refined little home to her now, spite of autotypes, Morris papers, and bureaus? Athwart it in letters of fire ran an incredible inscription: “Mrs. Snooks.” That may seem a little thing to the reader, but consider the delicate refinement of Miss Winchelsea’s mind. Be as refined as you can and then think of writing yourself down:— “Snooks.” She conceived herself being addressed as Mrs.

Snooks by all the people she liked least, conceived the patronymic touched with a vague quality of insult. She figured a card of grey and silver bearing 'Winchelsea' triumphantly effaced by an arrow, Cupid's arrow, in favour of "Snooks." Degrading confession of feminine weakness! She imagined the terrible rejoicings of certain girl friends, of certain grocer cousins from whom her growing refinement had long since estranged her. How they would make it sprawl across the envelope that would bring their sarcastic congratulations. Would even his pleasant company compensate her for that? "It is impossible," she muttered; "impossible! *Snooks!*"

She was sorry for him, but not so sorry as she was for herself. For him she had a touch of indignation. To be so nice, so refined, while all the time he was "Snooks," to hide under a pretentious gentility of demeanour the badge sinister of his surname seemed a sort of treachery. To put it in the language of sentimental science she felt he had "led her on."

There were, of course, moments of terrible vacillation, a period even when something almost like passion bid her throw refinement to the winds. And there was something in her, an unexpurgated vestige of vulgarity that made a strenuous attempt at proving that Snooks was not so very bad a name after all. Any hovering hesitation flew before Fanny's manner, when Fanny came with an air of catastrophe to tell that she also knew the horror. Fanny's voice fell to a whisper when she said *Snooks*. Miss Winchelsea would not give him any answer when at last, in the Borghese, she could have a minute with him; but she promised him a note.

She handed him that note in the little book of poetry he had lent her, the little book that had first drawn them together. Her refusal was ambiguous, allusive. She could no more tell him why she rejected him than she could have told a cripple of his hump. He too must feel something of the unspeakable quality of his name. Indeed he had avoided a dozen chances of telling it, she now perceived. So she spoke of "obstacles she could not reveal"— "reasons why the thing he spoke of was impossible." She addressed the note with a shiver, "E.K. Snooks."

Things were worse than she had dreaded; he asked her to explain. How *could* she explain? Those last two days in Rome were dreadful.

She was haunted by his air of astonished perplexity. She knew she had given him intimate hopes, she had not the courage to examine her mind thoroughly for the extent of her encouragement. She knew he must think her the most changeable of beings. Now that she was in full retreat, she would not even perceive his hints of a possible correspondence. But in that matter he did a thing that seemed to her at once delicate and romantic. He made a go-between of Fanny. Fanny could not keep the secret, and came and told her that night under a transparent pretext of needed advice. "Mr. Snooks," said Fanny, "wants to write to me. Fancy! I had no idea. But should I let him?" They talked it over long and earnestly, and Miss Winchelsea was careful to keep the veil over her heart. She was already repenting his disregarded hints. Why should she not hear of him sometimes — painful though his name must be to her? Miss Winchelsea decided it might be permitted, and Fanny kissed her good-night with unusual emotion. After she had gone Miss Winchelsea sat for a long time at the window of her little room. It was moonlight, and down the street a man sang "Santa Lucia" with almost heart-dissolving tenderness… She sat very still.

She breathed a word very softly to herself. The word was "*Snooks*." Then she got up with a profound sigh, and went to bed. The next morning he said to her meaningly, "I shall hear of you through your friend."

Mr. Snooks saw them off from Rome with that pathetic interrogative perplexity still on his face, and if it had not been for Helen he would have retained Miss Winchelsea's hold-all in his hand as a sort of encyclopaedic keepsake. On their way back to England Miss Winchelsea on six separate occasions made Fanny promise to write to her the longest of long letters. Fanny, it seemed, would be quite near Mr. Snooks. Her new school — she was always going to new schools — would be only five miles from Steely Bank, and it was in the Steely Bank Polytechnic, and one or two first-class schools, that Mr. Snooks did his teaching. He might even see her at times. They could not talk much of him — she and Fanny always spoke of "him," never of Mr. Snooks — because Helen was apt to say unsympathetic things about him. Her nature had coarsened very much, Miss Winchelsea perceived, since the old Training College

days; she had become hard and cynical. She thought he had a weak face, mistaking refinement for weakness as people of her stamp are apt to do, and when she heard his name was Snooks, she said she had expected something of the sort. Miss Winchelsea was careful to spare her own feelings after that, but Fanny was less circumspect.

The girls parted in London, and Miss Winchelsea returned, with a new interest in life, to the Girls' High School in which she had been an increasingly valuable assistant for the last three years. Her new interest in life was Fanny as a correspondent, and to give her a lead she wrote her a lengthy descriptive letter within a fortnight of her return. Fanny answered, very disappointingly. Fanny indeed had no literary gift, but it was new to Miss Winchelsea to find herself deploring the want of gifts in a friend. That letter was even criticised aloud in the safe solitude of Miss Winchelsea's study, and her criticism, spoken with great bitterness, was "Twaddle!" It was full of just the things Miss Winchelsea's letter had been full of, particulars of the school. And of Mr. Snooks, only this much: "I have had a letter from Mr. Snooks, and he has been over to see me on two Saturday afternoons running. He talked about Rome and you; we both talked about you. Your ears must have burnt, my dear…"

Miss Winchelsea repressed a desire to demand more explicit information, and wrote the sweetest, long letter again. "Tell me all about yourself, dear. That journey has quite refreshed our ancient friendship, and I do so want to keep in touch with you." About Mr. Snooks she simply wrote on the fifth page that she was glad Fanny had seen him, and that if he *should* ask after her, she was to be remembered to him *very kindly* (underlined). And Fanny replied most obtusely in the key of that "ancient friendship," reminding Miss Winchelsea of a dozen foolish things of those old schoolgirl days at the Training College, and saying not a word about Mr. Snooks!

For nearly a week Miss Winchelsea was so angry at the failure of Fanny as a go-between that she could not write to her. And then she wrote less effusively, and in her letter she asked point-blank, "Have you seen Mr. Snooks?" Fanny's letter was unexpectedly satisfactory. "I *have* seen Mr. Snooks," she wrote, and having once named him she kept on about him; it was all Snooks — Snooks this and Snooks that. He was to give a public lecture, said Fanny, among other things.

Yet Miss Winchelsea, after the first glow of gratification, still found this letter a little unsatisfactory. Fanny did not report Mr. Snooks as saying anything about Miss Winchelsea, nor as looking a little white and worn, as he ought to have been doing. And behold! before she had replied, came a second letter from Fanny on the same theme, quite a gushing letter, and covering six sheets with her loose feminine hand.

And about this second letter was a rather odd little thing that Miss Winchelsea only noticed as she re-read it the third time. Fanny's natural femininity had prevailed even against the round and clear traditions of the Training College; she was one of those she-creatures born to make all her *m*'s and *n*'s and *u*'s and *r*'s and *e*'s alike, and to leave her *o*'s and *a*'s open and her *i*'s undotted. So that it was only after an elaborate comparison of word with word that Miss Winchelsea felt assured Mr. Snooks was not really "Mr. Snooks" at all! In Fanny's first letter of gush he was Mr. "Snooks," in her second the spelling was changed to Mr. "Senoks." Miss Winchelsea's hand positively trembled as she turned the sheet over — it meant so much to her. For it had already begun to seem to her that even the name of Mrs. Snooks might be avoided at too great a price, and suddenly — this possibility! She turned over the six sheets, all dappled with that critical name, and everywhere the first letter had the form of an *e*! For a time she walked the room with a hand pressed upon her heart.

She spent a whole day pondering this change, weighing a letter of inquiry that should be at once discreet and effectual; weighing, too, what action she should take after the answer came. She was resolved that if this altered spelling was anything more than a quaint fancy of Fanny's, she would write forthwith to Mr. Snooks. She had now reached a stage when the minor refinements of behaviour disappear. Her excuse remained uninvented, but she had the subject of her letter clear in her mind, even to the hint that "circumstances in my life have changed very greatly since we talked together." But she never gave that hint. There came a third letter from that fitful correspondent Fanny. The first line proclaimed her "the happiest girl alive."

Miss Winchelsea crushed the letter in her hand — the rest unread — and sat with her face suddenly very still. She had received it just

before morning school, and had opened it when the junior mathematicians were well under way. Presently she resumed reading with an appearance of great calm. But after the first sheet she went on reading the third without discovering the error:— "told him frankly I did not like his name," the third sheet began. "He told me he did not like it himself — you know that sort of sudden, frank way he has" — Miss Winchelsea did know. "So I said, 'couldn't you change it?' He didn't see it at first. Well, you know, dear, he had told me what it really meant; it means Sevenoaks, only it has got down to Snooks — both Snooks and Noaks, dreadfully vulgar surnames though they be, are really worn forms of Sevenoaks. So I said — even I have my bright ideas at times— 'If it got down from Sevenoaks to Snooks, why not get it back from Snooks to Sevenoaks?' And the long and the short of it is, dear, he couldn't refuse me, and he changed his spelling there and then to Senoks for the bills of the new lecture. And afterwards, when we are married, we shall put in the apostrophe and make it Se'noks. Wasn't it kind of him to mind that fancy of mine, when many men would have taken offence? But it is just like him all over; he is as kind as he is clever. Because he knew as well as I did that I would have had him in spite of it, had he been ten times Snooks. But he did it all the same."

The class was startled by the sound of paper being viciously torn, and looked up to see Miss Winchelsea white in the face and with some very small pieces of paper clenched in one hand. For a few seconds they stared at her stare, and then her expression changed back to a more familiar one. "Has any one finished number three?" she asked in an even tone. She remained calm after that. But impositions ruled high that day. And she spent two laborious evenings writing letters of various sorts to Fanny, before she found a decent congratulatory vein. Her reason struggled hopelessly against the persuasion that Fanny had behaved in an exceedingly treacherous manner.

One may be extremely refined and still capable of a very sore heart. Certainly Miss Winchelsea's heart was very sore. She had moods of sexual hostility, in which she generalised uncharitably about mankind. "He forgot himself with me," she said. "But Fanny is pink and pretty and soft and a fool — a very excellent match for a

Man." And by way of a wedding present she sent Fanny a gracefully bound volume of poetry by George Meredith, and Fanny wrote back a grossly happy letter to say that it was "*all* beautiful." Miss Winchelsea hoped that some day Mr. Senoks might take up that slim book and think for a moment of the donor. Fanny wrote several times before and about her marriage, pursuing that fond legend of their "ancient friendship," and giving her happiness in the fullest detail. And Miss Winchelsea wrote to Helen for the first time after the Roman journey, saying nothing about the marriage, but expressing very cordial feelings.

They had been in Rome at Easter, and Fanny was married in the August vacation. She wrote a garrulous letter to Miss Winchelsea, describing her home-coming and the astonishing arrangements of their "teeny, weeny" little house. Mr. Se'noks was now beginning to assume a refinement in Miss Winchelsea's memory out of all proportion to the facts of the case, and she tried in vain to imagine his cultured greatness in a "teeny weeny" little house. "Am busy enamelling a cosy corner," said Fanny, sprawling to the end of her third sheet, "so excuse more." Miss Winchelsea answered in her best style, gently poking fun at Fanny's arrangements, and hoping intensely that Mr. Se'noks might see the letter. Only this hope enabled her to write at all, answering not only that letter but one in November and one at Christmas.

The two latter communications contained urgent invitations for her to come to Steely Bank on a visit during the Christmas holidays. She tried to think that *he* had told her to ask that, but it was too much like Fanny's opulent good-nature. She could not but believe that he must be sick of his blunder by this time; and she had more than a hope that he would presently write her a letter beginning "Dear Friend." Something subtly tragic in the separation was a great support to her, a sad misunderstanding. To have been jilted would have been intolerable. But he never wrote that letter beginning "Dear Friend."

For two years Miss Winchelsea could not go to see her friends, in spite of the reiterated invitations of Mrs. Sevenoaks — it became full Sevenoaks in the second year. Then one day near the Easter rest she felt lonely and without a soul to understand her in the world, and her

mind ran once more on what is called Platonic friendship. Fanny was clearly happy and busy in her new sphere of domesticity, but no doubt *he* had his lonely hours. Did he ever think of those days in Rome, gone now beyond recalling? No one had understood her as he had done; no one in all the world. It would be a sort of melancholy pleasure to talk to him again, and what harm could it do? Why should she deny herself? That night she wrote a sonnet, all but the last two lines of the octave — which would not come; and the next day she composed a graceful little note to tell Fanny she was coming down.

And so she saw him again.

Even at the first encounter it was evident he had changed; he seemed stouter and less nervous, and it speedily appeared that his conversation had already lost much of its old delicacy. There even seemed a justification for Helen's description of weakness in his face — in certain lights it *was* weak. He seemed busy and preoccupied about his affairs, and almost under the impression that Miss Winchelsea had come for the sake of Fanny. He discussed his dinner with Fanny in an intelligent way. They only had one good long talk together, and that came to nothing. He did not refer to Rome, and spent some time abusing a man who had stolen an idea he had had for a text-book. It did not seem a very wonderful idea to Miss Winchelsea. She discovered he had forgotten the names of more than half the painters whose work they had rejoiced over in Florence.

It was a sadly disappointing week, and Miss Winchelsea was glad when it came to an end. Under various excuses she avoided visiting them again. After a time the visitor's room was occupied by their two little boys, and Fanny's invitations ceased. The intimacy of her letters had long since faded away.

XXV.

A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON.

The man with the white face entered the carriage at Rugby. He moved slowly in spite of the urgency of his porter, and even while he was still on the platform I noted how ill he seemed. He dropped into the corner over against me with a sigh, made an incomplete attempt to arrange his travelling shawl, and became motionless, with his eyes staring vacantly. Presently he was moved by a sense of my observation, looked up at me, and put out a spiritless hand for his newspaper. Then he glanced again in my direction.

I feigned to read. I feared I had unwittingly embarrassed him, and in a moment I was surprised to find him speaking.

"I beg your pardon?" said I.

"That book," he repeated, pointing a lean finger, "is about dreams."

"Obviously," I answered, for it was Fortnum-Roscoe's *Dream States*, and the title was on the cover.

He hung silent for a space as if he sought words. "Yes," he said, at last, "but they tell you nothing."

I did not catch his meaning for a second.

"They don't know," he added.

I looked a little more attentively at his face.

"There are dreams," he said, "and dreams." That sort of proposition I never dispute. "I suppose — —" he hesitated. "Do you ever dream? I mean vividly."

"I dream very little," I answered. "I doubt if I have three vivid dreams in a year."

"Ah!" he said, and seemed for a moment to collect his thoughts.

"Your dreams don't mix with your memories?" he asked abruptly. "You don't find yourself in doubt: did this happen or did it not?"

"Hardly ever. Except just for a momentary hesitation now and then. I suppose few people do."

"Does *he* say — —" he indicated the book.

"Says it happens at times and gives the usual explanation about intensity of impression and the like to account for its not happening as a rule. I suppose you know something of these theories — —"

“Very little — except that they are wrong.”

His emaciated hand played with the strap of the window for a time. I prepared to resume reading, and that seemed to precipitate his next remark. He leant forward almost as though he would touch me.

“Isn’t there something called consecutive dreaming — that goes on night after night?”

“I believe there is. There are cases given in most books on mental trouble.”

“Mental trouble! Yes. I daresay there are. It’s the right place for them.
But what I mean — —” He looked at his bony knuckles. “Is that sort of
thing always dreaming? *Is* it dreaming? Or is it something else?
Mightn’t it be something else?”

I should have snubbed his persistent conversation but for the drawn anxiety of his face. I remember now the look of his faded eyes and the lids red stained — perhaps you know that look.

“I’m not just arguing about a matter of opinion,” he said. “The thing’s killing me.”

“Dreams?”

“If you call them dreams. Night after night. Vivid! — so vivid … this—” (he indicated the landscape that went streaming by the window) “seems unreal in comparison! I can scarcely remember who I am, what business I am on …”

He paused. “Even now—”

“The dream is always the same — do you mean?” I asked.

“It’s over.”

“You mean?”

“I died.”

“Died?”

“Smashed and killed, and now so much of me as that dream was is dead. Dead for ever. I dreamt I was another man, you know, living in a different part of the world and in a different time. I dreamt that night after night. Night after night I woke into that other life. Fresh scenes and fresh happenings — until I came upon the last—”

“When you died?”

“When I died.”

“And since then—”

“No,” he said. “Thank God! that was the end of the dream…”

It was clear I was in for this dream. And, after all, I had an hour before me, the light was fading fast, and Fortnum-Roscoe has a dreary way with him. “Living in a different time,” I said: “do you mean in some different age?”

“Yes.”

“Past?”

“No, to come — to come.”

“The year three thousand, for example?”

“I don’t know what year it was. I did when I was asleep, when I was dreaming, that is, but not now — not now that I am awake. There’s a lot of things I have forgotten since I woke out of these dreams, though I knew them at the time when I was — I suppose it was dreaming. They called the year differently from our way of calling the year… What *did* they call it?” He put his hand to his forehead. “No,” said he, “I forget.”

He sat smiling weakly. For a moment I feared he did not mean to tell me his dream. As a rule, I hate people who tell their dreams, but this struck me differently. I proffered assistance even. “It began ——” I suggested.

“It was vivid from the first. I seemed to wake up in it suddenly. And it’s curious that in these dreams I am speaking of I never remembered this life I am living now. It seemed as if the dream life was enough while it lasted. Perhaps —— But I will tell you how I find myself when I do my best to recall it all. I don’t remember anything clearly until I found myself sitting in a sort of loggia looking out over the sea. I had been dozing, and suddenly I woke up — fresh and vivid — not a bit dreamlike — because the girl had stopped fanning me.”

“The girl?”

“Yes, the girl. You must not interrupt or you will put me out.”

He stopped abruptly. “You won’t think I’m mad?” he said.

“No,” I answered; “you’ve been dreaming. Tell me your dream.”

“I woke up, I say, because the girl had stopped fanning me. I was

not surprised to find myself there or anything of that sort, you understand. I did not feel I had fallen into it suddenly. I simply took it up at that point. Whatever memory I had of *this* life, this nineteenth-century life, faded as I woke, vanished like a dream. I knew all about myself, knew that my name was no longer Cooper but Hedon, and all about my position in the world. I've forgotten a lot since I woke — there's a want of connection — but it was all quite clear and matter-of-fact then."

He hesitated again, gripping the window strap, putting his face forward, and looking up to me appealingly.

"This seems bosh to you?"

"No, no!" I cried. "Go on. Tell me what this loggia was like."

"It was not really a loggia — I don't know what to call it. It faced south. It was small. It was all in shadow except the semicircle above the balcony that showed the sky and sea and the corner where the girl stood. I was on a couch — it was a metal couch with light striped cushions — and the girl was leaning over the balcony with her back to me. The light of the sunrise fell on her ear and cheek. Her pretty white neck and the little curls that nestled there, and her white shoulder were in the sun, and all the grace of her body was in the cool blue shadow. She was dressed — how can I describe it? It was easy and flowing. And altogether there she stood, so that it came to me how beautiful and desirable she was, as though I had never seen her before. And when at last I sighed and raised myself upon my arm she turned her face to me—"

He stopped.

"I have lived three-and-fifty years in this world. I have had mother, sisters, friends, wife and daughters — all their faces, the play of their faces, I know. But the face of this girl — it is much more real to me. I can bring it back into memory so that I see it again — I could draw it or paint it. And after all—"

He stopped — but I said nothing.

"The face of a dream — the face of a dream. She was beautiful. Not that beauty which is terrible, cold, and worshipful, like the beauty of a saint; nor that beauty that stirs fierce passions; but a sort of radiation, sweet lips that softened into smiles, and grave gray eyes. And she moved gracefully, she seemed to have part with all pleasant

and gracious things—”

He stopped, and his face was downcast and hidden. Then he looked up at me and went on, making no further attempt to disguise his absolute belief in the reality of his story.

“You see, I had thrown up my plans and ambitions, thrown up all I had ever worked for or desired, for her sake. I had been a master man away there in the north, with influence and property and a great reputation, but none of it had seemed worth having beside her. I had come to the place, this city of sunny pleasures, with her, and left all those things to wreck and ruin just to save a remnant at least of my life. While I had been in love with her before I knew that she had any care for me, before I had imagined that she would dare — that we should dare — all my life had seemed vain and hollow, dust and ashes. It *was* dust and ashes. Night after night, and through the long days I had longed and desired — my soul had beaten against the thing forbidden!

“But it is impossible for one man to tell another just these things. It’s emotion, it’s a tint, a light that comes and goes. Only while it’s there, everything changes, everything. The thing is I came away and left them in their crisis to do what they could.”

“Left whom?” I asked, puzzled.

“The people up in the north there. You see — in this dream, anyhow — I had been a big man, the sort of man men come to trust in, to group themselves about. Millions of men who had never seen me were ready to do things and risk things because of their confidence in me. I had been playing that game for years, that big laborious game, that vague, monstrous political game amidst intrigues and betrayals, speech and agitation. It was a vast weltering world, and at last I had a sort of leadership against the Gang — you know it was called the Gang — a sort of compromise of scoundrelly projects and base ambitions and vast public emotional stupidities and catch-words — the Gang that kept the world noisy and blind year by year, and all the while that it was drifting, drifting towards infinite disaster. But I can’t expect you to understand the shades and complications of the year — the year something or other ahead. I had it all — down to the smallest details — in my dream. I suppose I had been dreaming of it before I awoke, and the fading outline of some

queer new development I had imagined still hung about me as I rubbed my eyes. It was some grubby affair that made me thank God for the sunlight. I sat up on the couch and remained looking at the woman, and rejoicing — rejoicing that I had come away out of all that tumult and folly and violence before it was too late. After all, I thought, this is life — love and beauty, desire and delight, are they not worth all those dismal struggles for vague, gigantic ends? And I blamed myself for having ever sought to be a leader when I might have given my days to love. But then, thought I, if I had not spent my early days sternly and austerely, I might have wasted myself upon vain and worthless women, and at the thought all my being went out in love and tenderness to my dear mistress, my dear lady, who had come at last and compelled me — compelled me by her invincible charm for me — to lay that life aside.

"'You are worth it,' I said, speaking without intending her to hear; 'you are worth it, my dearest one; worth pride and praise and all things. Love! to have *you* is worth them all together.' And at the murmur of my voice she turned about.

"'Come and see,' she cried — I can hear her now — come and see the sunrise upon Monte Solaro.'

"I remember how I sprang to my feet and joined her at the balcony. She put a white hand upon my shoulder and pointed towards great masses of limestone flushing, as it were, into life. I looked. But first I noted the sunlight on her face caressing the lines of her cheeks and neck. How can I describe to you the scene we had before us? We were at Capri — —"

"I have been there," I said. "I have clambered up Monte Solaro and drunk *vero Capri* — muddy stuff like cider — at the summit."

"Ah!" said the man with the white face; "then perhaps you can tell me — you will know if this was indeed Capri. For in this life I have never been there. Let me describe it. We were in a little room, one of a vast multitude of little rooms, very cool and sunny, hollowed out of the limestone of a sort of cape, very high above the sea. The whole island, you know, was one enormous hotel, complex beyond explaining, and on the other side there were miles of floating hotels, and huge floating stages to which the flying machines came. They called it a Pleasure City. Of course, there was none of that in your

time — rather, I should say, *is* none of that *now*. Of course. Now! — yes.

"Well, this room of ours was at the extremity of the cape, so that one could see east and west. Eastward was a great cliff — a thousand feet high perhaps, coldly grey except for one bright edge of gold, and beyond it the Isle of the Sirens, and a falling coast that faded and passed into the hot sunrise. And when one turned to the west, distinct and near was a little bay, a little beach still in shadow. And out of that shadow rose Solaro, straight and tall, flushed and golden-crested, like a beauty throned, and the white moon was floating behind her in the sky. And before us from east to west stretched the many-tinted sea all dotted with little sailing-boats.

"To the eastward, of course, these little boats were gray and very minute and clear, but to the westward they were little boats of gold — shining gold — almost like little flames. And just below us was a rock with an arch worn through it. The blue sea-water broke to green and foam all round the rock, and a galley came gliding out of the arch."

"I know that rock," I said. "I was nearly drowned there. It is called the
Faraglioni."

"*Faraglioni*? Yes, *she* called it that," answered the man with the white face. "There was some story — but that — —"

He put his hand to his forehead again. "No," he said, "I forget that story.

"Well, that is the first thing I remember, the first dream I had, that little shaded room and the beautiful air and sky and that dear lady of mine, with her shining arms and her graceful robe, and how we sat and talked in half whispers to one another. We talked in whispers, not because there was any one to hear, but because there was still such a freshness of mind between us that our thoughts were a little frightened, I think, to find themselves at last in words. And so they went softly.

"Presently we were hungry, and we went from our apartment, going by a strange passage with a moving floor, until we came to the

great breakfast-room — there was a fountain and music. A pleasant and joyful place it was, with its sunlight and splashing, and the murmur of plucked strings. And we sat and ate and smiled at one another, and I would not heed a man who was watching me from a table near by.

"And afterwards we went on to the dancing-hall. But I cannot describe that hall. The place was enormous, larger than any building you have ever seen — and in one place there was the old gate of Capri, caught into the wall of a gallery high overhead. Light girders, stems and threads of gold, burst from the pillars like fountains, streamed like an Aurora across the roof and interlaced, like — like conjuring tricks. All about the great circle for the dancers there were beautiful figures, strange dragons, and intricate and wonderful grotesques bearing lights. The place was inundated with artificial light that shamed the newborn day. And as we went through the throng the people turned about and looked at us, for all through the world my name and face were known, and how I had suddenly thrown up pride, and struggle to come to this place. And they looked also at the lady beside me, though half the story of how at last she had come to me was unknown or mistold. And few of the men who were there, I know, but judged me a happy man, in spite of all the shame and dishonour that had come upon my name.

"The air was full of music, full of harmonious scents, full of the rhythm of beautiful motions. Thousands of beautiful people swarmed about the hall, crowded the galleries, sat in a myriad recesses; they were dressed in splendid colours and crowned with flowers; thousands danced about the great circle beneath the white images of the ancient gods, and glorious processions of youths and maidens came and went. We two danced, not the dreary monotonies of your days — of this time, I mean — but dances that were beautiful, intoxicating. And even now I can see my lady dancing — dancing joyously. She danced, you know, with a serious face; she danced with a serious dignity, and yet she was smiling at me and caressing me — smiling and caressing with her eyes.

"The music was different," he murmured. "It went — I cannot describe it; but it was infinitely richer and more varied than any music that has ever come to me awake.

“And then — it was when we had done dancing — a man came to speak to me. He was a lean, resolute man, very soberly clad for that place, and already I had marked his face watching me in the breakfasting hall, and afterwards as we went along the passage I had avoided his eye. But now, as we sat in a little alcove smiling at the pleasure of all the people who went to and fro across the shining floor, he came and touched me, and spoke to me so that I was forced to listen. And he asked that he might speak to me for a little time apart.

“‘No,’ I said. ‘I have no secrets from this lady. What do you want to tell me?’

“He said it was a trivial matter, or at least a dry matter, for a lady to hear.

“‘Perhaps for me to hear,’ said I.

“He glanced at her, as though almost he would appeal to her. Then he asked me suddenly if I. had heard of a great and avenging declaration that Gresham had made. Now, Gresham had always before been the man next to myself in the leadership of that great party in the north. He was a forcible, hard, and tactless man, and only I had been able to control and soften him. It was on his account even more than my own, I think, that the others had been so dismayed at my retreat. So this question about what he had done re-awakened my old interest in the life I had put aside just for a moment.

“‘I have taken no heed of any news for many days,’ I said. ‘What has Gresham been saying?’

“And with that the man began, nothing loth, and I must confess ever; I was struck by Gresham’s reckless folly in the wild and threatening words he had used. And this messenger they had sent to me not only told me of Gresham’s speech, but went on to ask counsel and to point out what need they had of me. While he talked, my lady sat a little forward and watched his face and mine.

“My old habits of scheming and organising reasserted themselves. I could even see myself suddenly returning to the north, and all the dramatic effect of it. All that this man said witnessed to the disorder of the party indeed, but not to its damage. I should go back stronger

than I had come. And then I thought of my lady. You see — how can I tell you? There were certain peculiarities of our relationship — as things are I need not tell about that — which would render her presence with me impossible. I should have had to leave her; indeed, I should have had to renounce her clearly and openly, if I was to do all that I could do in the north. And the man knew *that*, even as he talked to her and me, knew it as well as she did, that my steps to duty were — first, separation, then abandonment. At the touch of that thought my dream of a return was shattered. I turned on the man suddenly, as he was imagining his eloquence was gaining ground with me.

"'What have I to do with these things now?' I said. 'I have done with them. Do you think I am coquetting with your people in coming here?'

"'No,' he said; 'but — —'

"'Why cannot you leave me alone? I have done with these things. I have ceased to be anything but a private man.'

"'Yes,' he answered. 'But have you thought? — this talk of war, these reckless challenges, these wild aggressions — —'

"I stood up.

"'No,' I cried. 'I won't hear you. I took count of all those things, I weighed them — and I have come away."

"He seemed to consider the possibility of persistence. He looked from me to where the lady sat regarding us.

"'War,' he said, as if he were speaking to himself, and then turned slowly from me and walked away.

"I stood, caught in the whirl of thoughts his appeal had set going.

"I heard my lady's voice.

"'Dear,' she said; 'but if they have need of you—'

"She did not finish her sentence, she let it rest there. I turned to her sweet face, and the balance of my mood swayed and reeled.

"'They want me only to do the thing they dare not do themselves,' I said.
'If they distrust Gresham they must settle with him themselves.'

"She looked at me doubtfully.

“‘But war—’ she said.

“I saw a doubt on her face that I had seen before, a doubt of herself and me, the first shadow of the discovery that, seen strongly and completely, must drive us apart for ever.

“Now, I was an older mind than hers, and I could sway her to this belief or that.

“‘My dear one,’ I said, ‘you must not trouble over these things. There will be no war. Certainly there will be no war. The age of wars is past. Trust me to know the justice of this case. They have no right upon me, dearest, and no one has a right upon me. I have been free to choose my life, and I have chosen this.’

“‘But *war*—’ she said.

“I sat down beside her. I put an arm behind her and took her hand in mine. I set myself to drive that doubt away — I set myself to fill her mind with pleasant things again. I lied to her, and in lying to her I lied also to myself. And she was only too ready to believe me, only too ready to forget.

“Very soon the shadow had gone again, and we were hastening to our bathing-place in the Grotta del Bovo Marino, where it was our custom to bathe every day. We swam and splashed one another, and in that buoyant water I seemed to become something lighter and stronger than a man. And at last we came out dripping and rejoicing and raced among the rocks. And then I put on a dry bathing-dress, and we sat to bask in the sun, and presently I nodded, resting my head against her knee, and she put her hand upon my hair and stroked it softly and I dozed. And behold! as it were with the snapping of the string of a violin, I was awakening, and I was in my own bed in Liverpool, in the life of to-day.

“Only for a time I could not believe that all these vivid moments had been no more than the substance of a dream.

“In truth, I could not believe it a dream, for all the sobering reality of things about me. I bathed and dressed as it were by habit, and as I shaved I argued why I of all men should leave the woman I loved to go back to fantastic politics in the hard and strenuous north. Even if Gresham did force the world back to war, what was that to me? I was a man, with the heart of a man, and why should I feel the responsibility of a deity for the way the world might go?

“You know that is not quite the way I think about affairs, about my real affairs. I am a solicitor, you know, with a point of view.

“The vision was so real, you must understand, so utterly unlike a dream, that I kept perpetually recalling little irrelevant details; even the ornament of a bookcover that lay on my wife’s sewing-machine in the breakfast-room recalled with the utmost vividness the gilt line that ran about the seat in the alcove where I had talked with the messenger from my deserted party. Have you ever heard of a dream that had a quality like that?”

“Like — ?”

“So that afterwards you remembered little details you had forgotten.”

I thought. I had never noticed the point before, but he was right.

“Never,” I said. “That is what you never seem to do with dreams.”

“No,” he answered. “But that is just what I did. I am a solicitor, you must understand, in Liverpool, and I could not help wondering what the clients and business people I found myself talking to in my office would think if I told them suddenly I was in love with a girl who would be born a couple of hundred years or so hence, and worried about the politics of my great-great-great-grandchildren. I was chiefly busy that day negotiating a ninety-nine-year building lease. It was a private builder in a hurry, and we wanted to tie him in every possible way. I had an interview with him, and he showed a certain want of temper that sent me to bed still irritated. That night I had no dream. Nor did I dream the next night, at least, to remember.

“Something of that intense reality of conviction vanished. I began to feel sure it *was* a dream. And then it came again.

“When the dream came again, nearly four days later, it was very different. I think it certain that four days had also elapsed *in* the dream. Many things had happened in the north, and the shadow of them was back again between us, and this time it was not so easily dispelled. I began, I know, with moody musings. Why, in spite of all, should I go back, go back for all the rest of my days, to toil and stress, insults, and perpetual dissatisfaction, simply to save hundreds of millions of common people, whom I did not love, whom too often I could not do other than despise, from the stress and anguish of war and infinite misrule? And, after all, I might fail. *They* all sought their

own narrow ends, and why should not I — why should not I also live as a man? And out of such thoughts her voice summoned me, and I lifted my eyes.

"I found myself awake and walking. We had come out above the Pleasure City, we were near the summit of Monte Solaro and looking towards the bay. It was the late afternoon and very clear. Far away to the left Ischia hung in a golden haze between sea and sky, and Naples was coldly white against the hills, and before us was Vesuvius with a tall and slender streamer feathering at last towards the south, and the ruins of Torre dell' Annunziata and Castellammare glittering and near."

I interrupted suddenly: "You have been to Capri, of course?"

"Only in this dream," he said, "only in this dream. All across the bay beyond Sorrento were the floating palaces of the Pleasure City moored and chained. And northward were the broad floating stages that received the aeroplanes. Aeroplanes fell out of the sky every afternoon, each bringing its thousands of pleasure-seekers from the uttermost parts of the earth to Capri and its delights. All these things, I say, stretched below.

"But we noticed them only incidentally because of an unusual sight that evening had to show. Five war aeroplanes that had long slumbered useless in the distant arsenals of the Rhine-mouth were manoeuvring now in the eastward sky. Gresham had astonished the world by producing them and others, and sending them to circle here and there. It was the threat material in the great game of bluff he was playing, and it had taken even me by surprise. He was one of those incredibly stupid energetic people who seem sent by heaven to create disasters. His energy to the first glance seemed so wonderfully like capacity! But he had no imagination, no invention, only a stupid, vast, driving force of will, and a mad faith in his stupid idiot 'luck' to pull him through. I remember how we stood out upon the headland watching the squadron circling far away, and how I weighed the full meaning of the sight, seeing clearly the way things must *go*. And then even it was not too late. I might have gone back, I think, and saved the world. The people of the north would follow me, I knew, granted only that in one thing I respected their moral standards. The east and south would trust me as they would trust no other northern

man. And I knew I had only to put it to her and she would have let me go… Not because she did not love me!

"Only I did not want to go; my will was all the other way about. I had so newly thrown off the incubus of responsibility: I was still so fresh a renegade from duty that the daylight clearness of what I *ought* to do had no power at all to touch my will. My will was to live, to gather pleasures, and make my dear lady happy. But though this sense of vast neglected duties had no power to draw me, it could make me silent and preoccupied, it robbed the days I had spent of half their brightness and roused me into dark meditations in the silence of the night. And as I stood and watched Gresham's aeroplanes sweep to and fro — those birds of infinite ill omen — she stood beside me, watching me, perceiving the trouble indeed, but not perceiving it clearly — her eyes questioning my face, her expression shaded with perplexity. Her face was grey because the sunset was fading out of the sky. It was no fault of hers that she held me. She had asked me to go from her, and again in the night-time and with tears she had asked me to go.

"At last it was the sense of her that roused me from my mood. I turned upon her suddenly and challenged her to race down the mountain slopes. 'No,' she said, as if I jarred with her gravity, but I was resolved to end that gravity and made her run — no one can be very grey and sad who is out of breath — and when she stumbled I ran with my hand beneath her arm. We ran down past a couple of men, who turned back staring in astonishment at my behaviour — they must have recognised my face. And half-way down the slope came a tumult in the air — clang-clank, clang-clank — and we stopped, and presently over the hill-crest those war things came flying one behind the other."

The man seemed hesitating on the verge of a description.

"What were, they like?" I asked.

"They had never fought," he said. "They were just like our ironclads are nowadays; they had never fought. No one knew what they might do, with excited men inside them; few even cared to speculate. They were great driving things shaped like spear-heads without a shaft, with a propeller in the place of the shaft."

"Steel?"

“Not steel.”

“Aluminium?”

“No, no, nothing of that sort. An alloy that was very common — as common as brass, for example. It was called — let me see—” He squeezed his forehead with the fingers of one hand. “I am forgetting everything,” he said.

“And they carried guns?”

“Little guns, firing high explosive shells. They fired the guns backwards, out of the base of the leaf, so to speak, and rammed with the beak. That was the theory, you know, but they had never been fought. No one could tell exactly what was going to happen. And meanwhile I suppose it was very fine to go whirling through the air like a flight of young swallows, swift and easy. I guess the captains tried not to think too clearly what the real thing would be like. And these flying war machines, you know, were only one sort of the endless war contrivances that had been invented and had fallen into abeyance during the long peace. There were all sorts of these things that people were routing out and furbishing up; infernal things, silly things; things that had never been tried; big engines, terrible explosives, great guns. You know the silly way of these ingenious sort of men who make these things; they turn ’em out as beavers build dams, and with no more sense of the rivers they’re going to divert and the lands they’re going to flood!

“As we went down the winding stepway to our hotel again in the twilight I foresaw it all: I saw how clearly and inevitably things were driving for war in Gresham’s silly, violent hands, and I had some inkling of what war was bound to be under these new conditions. And even then, though I knew it was drawing near the limit of my opportunity, I could find no will to go back.”

He sighed.

“That was my last chance.

“We did not go into the city until the sky was full of stars, so we walked out upon the high terrace, to and fro, and — she counselled me to go back.

“‘My dearest,’ she said, and her sweet face looked up to me, ‘this is Death. This life you lead is Death. Go back to them, go back to your duty—’

“She began to weep, saying between her sobs, and clinging to my arm as she said it, ‘Go back — go back.’

“Then suddenly she fell mute, and glancing down at her face, I read in an instant the thing she had thought to do. It was one of those moments when one *sees*.

“‘No!’ I said.

“‘No?’ she asked, in surprise, and I think a little fearful at the answer to her thought.

“‘Nothing,’ I said, ‘shall send me back. Nothing! I have chosen. Love, I have chosen, and the world must go. Whatever happens, I will live this life — I will live for *you*! It — nothing shall turn me aside; nothing, my dear one. Even if you died — even if you died—’

“‘Yes?’ she murmured, softly.

“‘Then — I also would die.’

“And before she could speak again I began to talk, talking eloquently — as I *could* do in that life — talking to exalt love, to make the life we were living seem heroic and glorious; and the thing I was deserting something hard and enormously ignoble that it was a fine thing to set aside. I bent all my mind to throw that glamour upon it, seeking not only to convert her but myself to that. We talked, and she clung to me, torn too between all that she deemed noble and all that she knew was sweet. And at last I did make it heroic, made all the thickening disaster of the world only a sort of glorious setting to our unparalleled love, and we two poor foolish souls strutted there at last, clad in that splendid delusion, drunken rather with that glorious delusion, under the still stars.

“And so my moment passed.

“It was my last chance. Even as we went to and fro there, the leaders of the south and east were gathering their resolve, and the hot answer that shattered Gresham’s bluffing for ever took shape and waited. And all over Asia, and the ocean, and the south, the air and the wires were throbbing with their warnings to prepare — prepare.

“No one living, you know, knew what war was; no one could imagine, with all these new inventions, what horror war might bring. I believe most people still believed it would be a matter of bright uniforms and shouting charges and triumphs and flags and bands — in a time when half the world drew its food-supply from regions ten

thousand miles away — —”

The man with the white face paused. I glanced at him, and his face was intent on the floor of the carriage. A little railway station, a string of loaded trucks, a signal-box, and the back of a cottage shot by the carriage window, and a bridge passed with a clap of noise, echoing the tumult of the train.

“After that,” he said, “I dreamt often. For three weeks of nights that dream was my life. And the worst of it was there were nights when I could not dream, when I lay tossing on a bed in *this* accursed life; and *there* — somewhere lost to me — things were happening — momentous, terrible things… I lived at nights — my days, my waking days, this life I am living now, became a faded, far-away dream, a drab setting, the cover of the book.”

He thought.

“I could tell you all, tell you every little thing in the dream, but as to what I did in the daytime — no. I could not tell — I do not remember. My memory — my memory has gone. The business of life slips from me—”

He leant forward, and pressed his hands upon his eyes. For a long time he said nothing.

“And then?” said I.

“The war burst like a hurricane.”

He stared before him at unspeakable things.

“And then?” I urged again.

“One touch of unreality,” he said, in the low tone of a man who speaks to himself, “and they would have been nightmares. But they were not nightmares — they were not nightmares. *No*!”

He was silent for so long that it dawned upon me that there was a danger of losing the rest of the story. But he went on talking again in the same tone of questioning self-communion.

“What was there to do but flight? I had not thought the war would touch Capri — I had seemed to see Capri as being out of it all, as the contrast to it all; but two nights after the whole place was shouting and bawling, every woman almost and every other man wore a badge — Gresham’s badge — and there was no music but a jangling war-song over and over again, and everywhere men enlisting, and in the dancing halls they were drilling. The whole island was a-whirl with

rumours; it was said again and again, that fighting had begun. I had not expected this. I had seen so little of the life of pleasure that I had failed to reckon with this violence of the amateurs. And as for me, I was out of it. I was like a man who might have prevented the firing of a magazine. The time had gone. I was no one; the vainest stripling with a badge counted for more than I. The crowd jostled us and bawled in our ears; that accursed song deafened us; a woman shrieked at my lady because no badge was on her, and we two went back to our own place again, ruffled and insulted — my lady white and silent, and I a-quiver with rage. So furious was I, I could have quarrelled with her if I could have found one shade of accusation in her eyes.

"All my magnificence had gone from me. I walked up and down our rock cell, and outside was the darkling sea and a light to the southward that flared and passed and came again.

"'We must get out of this place,' I said over and over. 'I have made my choice, and I will have no hand in these troubles. I will have nothing of this war. We have taken our lives out of all these things. This is no refuge for us. Let us go.'

"And the next day we were already in flight from the war that covered the world.

"And all the rest was Flight — all the rest was Flight."

He mused darkly.

"How much was there of it?"

He made no answer.

"How many days?"

His face was white and drawn and his hands were clenched. He took no heed of my curiosity.

I tried to draw him back to his story with questions.

"Where did you go?" I said.

"When?"

"When you left Capri."

"South-west," he said, and glanced at me for a second. "We went in a boat."

"But I should have thought an aeroplane?"

"They had been seized."

I questioned him no more. Presently I thought he was beginning

again. He broke out in an argumentative monotone:

"But why should it be? If, indeed, this battle, this slaughter and stress, *is* life, why have we this craving for pleasure and beauty? If there *is* no refuge, if there is no place of peace, and if all our dreams of quiet places are a folly and a snare, why have we such dreams? Surely it was no ignoble cravings, no base intentions, had brought us to this; it was love had isolated us. Love had come to me with her eyes and robed in her beauty, more glorious than all else in life, in the very shape and colour of life, and summoned me away. I had silenced all the voices, I had answered all the questions — I had come to her. And suddenly there was nothing but War and Death!"

I had an inspiration. "After all," I said, "it could have been only a dream."

"A dream!" he cried, flaming upon me, "a dream — when, even now—"

For the first time he became animated. A faint flush crept into his cheek. He raised his open hand and clenched it, and dropped it to his knee. He spoke, looking away from me, and for all the rest of the time he looked away. "We are but phantoms," he said, "and the phantoms of phantoms, desires like cloud shadows and wills of straw that eddy in the wind; the days pass, use and wont carry us through as a train carries the shadow of its lights — so be it? But one thing is real and certain, one thing is no dream stuff, but eternal and enduring. It is the centre of my life, and all other things about it are subordinate or altogether vain. I loved her, that woman of a dream. And she and I are dead together!

"A dream! How can it be a dream, when it drenched a living life with unappeasable sorrow, when it makes all that I have lived for and cared for worthless and unmeaning?

"Until that very moment when she was killed I believed we had still a chance of getting away," he said. "All through the night and morning that we sailed across the sea from Capri to Salerno we talked of escape. We were full of hope, and it clung about us to the end, hope for the life together we should lead, out of it all, out of the battle and struggle, the wild and empty passions, the empty, arbitrary 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not' of the world. We were uplifted, as though our quest was a holy thing, as though love for one another

was a mission…

"Even when from our boat we saw the fair face of that great rock Capri — already scarred and gashed by the gun emplacements and hiding-places that were to make it a fastness — we reckoned nothing of the imminent slaughter, though the fury of preparation hung about in puffs and clouds of dust at a hundred points amidst the grey; but, indeed, I made a text of that and talked. There, you know, was the rock, still beautiful for all its scars, with its countless windows and arches and ways, tier upon tier, for a thousand feet, a vast carving of grey, broken by vine-clad terraces, and lemon and orange groves, and masses of agave and prickly pear, and puffs of almond blossom. And out under the archway that is built over the Piccola Marina other boats were coming; and as we came round the cape and within sight of the mainland, another little string of boats came into view, driving before the wind towards the south-west. In a little while a multitude had come out, the remoter just little specks of ultramarine in the shadow of the eastward cliff.

"'It is love and reason,' I said, 'fleeing from all this madness of war.'

"And though we presently saw a squadron of aeroplanes flying across the southern sky we did not heed it. There it was — a line of little dots in the sky — and then more, dotting the south-eastern horizon, and then still more, until all that quarter of the sky was stippled with blue specks. Now they were all thin little strokes of blue, and now one and now a multitude would heel and catch the sun and become short flashes of light. They came, rising and falling and growing larger, like some huge flight of gulls or rooks or such-like birds, moving with a marvellous uniformity, and ever as they drew nearer they spread over a greater width of sky. The southward wing flung itself in an arrow-headed cloud athwart the sun. And then suddenly they swept round to the eastward and streamed eastward, growing smaller and smaller and clearer and clearer again until they vanished from the sky. And after that we noted to the northward, and very high, Gresham's fighting machines hanging high over Naples like an evening swarm of gnats.

"It seemed to have no more to do with us than a flight of birds.

"Even the mutter of guns far away in the south-east seemed to us

to signify nothing…

"Each day, each dream after that, we were still exalted, still seeking that refuge where we might live and love. Fatigue had come upon us, pain and many distresses. For though we were dusty and stained by our toilsome tramping, and half starved, and with the horror of the dead men we had seen and the flight of the peasants — for very soon a gust of fighting swept up the peninsula — with these things haunting our minds it still resulted only in a deepening resolution to escape. Oh, but she was brave and patient! She who had never faced hardship and exposure had courage for herself — and me. We went to and fro seeking an outlet, over a country all commandeered and ransacked by the gathering hosts of war. Always we went on foot. At first there were other fugitives, but we did not mingle with them. Some escaped northward, some were caught in the torrent of peasantry that swept along the main roads; many gave themselves into the hands of the soldiery and were sent northward. Many of the men were impressed. But we kept away from these things; we had brought no money to bribe a passage north, and I feared for my lady at the hands of these conscript crowds. We had landed at Salerno, and we had been turned back from Cava, and we had tried to cross towards Taranto by a pass over Mount Alburno, but we had been driven back for want of food, and so we had come down among the marshes by Paestum, where those great temples stand alone. I had some vague idea that by Paestum it might be possible to find a boat or something, and take once more to sea. And there it was the battle overtook us.

"A sort of soul-blindness had me. Plainly I could see that we were being hemmed in; that the great net of that giant Warfare had us in its toils. Many times we had seen the levies that had come down from the north going to and fro, and had come upon them in the distance amidst the mountains making ways for the ammunition and preparing the mounting of the guns. Once we fancied they had fired at us, taking us for spies — at any rate a shot had gone shuddering over us. Several times we had hidden in woods from hovering aeroplanes.

"But all these things do not matter now, these nights of flight and pain… We were in an open place near those great temples at

Paestum, at last, on a blank stony place dotted with spiky bushes, empty and desolate and so flat that a grove of eucalyptus far away showed to the feet of its stems. How I can see it! My lady was sitting down under a bush resting a little, for she was very weak and weary, and I was standing up watching to see if I could tell the distance of the firing that came and went. They were still, you know, fighting far from each other, with these terrible new weapons that had never before been used: guns that would carry beyond sight, and aeroplanes that would do —— What *they* would do no man could foretell.

"I knew that we were between the two armies, and that they drew together.
I knew we were in danger, and that we could not stop there and rest!

"Though all those things were in my mind, they were in the background. They seemed to be affairs beyond our concern. Chiefly, I was thinking of my lady. An aching distress filled me. For the first time she had owned herself beaten and had fallen a-weeping. Behind me I could hear her sobbing, but I would not turn round to her because I knew she had need of weeping, and had held herself so far and so long for me. It was well, I thought, that she would weep and rest, and then we would toil on again, for I had no inkling of the thing that hung so near. Even now I can see her as she sat there, her lovely hair upon her shoulder, can mark again the deepening hollow of her cheek.

"'If we had parted,' she said, 'if I had let you go—'

"'No,' said I. 'Even now I do not repent. I will not repent; I made my choice, and I will hold on to the end.'

"And then —

"Overhead in the sky flashed something and burst, and all about us I heard the bullets making a noise like a handful of peas suddenly thrown. They chipped the stones about us, and whirled fragments from the bricks and passed…"

He put his hand to his mouth, and then moistened his lips.

"At the flash I had turned about…

"You know — she stood up —

"She stood up, you know, and moved a step towards me —

“As though she wanted to reach me —

“And she had been shot through the heart.”

He stopped and stared at me. I felt all that foolish incapacity an Englishman feels on such occasions. I met his eyes for a moment, and then stared out of the window. For a long space we kept silence. When at last I looked at him he was sitting back in his corner, his arms folded and his teeth gnawing at his knuckles.

He bit his nail suddenly, and stared at it.

“I carried her,” he said, “towards the temples, in my arms — as though it mattered. I don’t know why. They seemed a sort of sanctuary, you know, they had lasted so long, I suppose.

“She must have died almost instantly. Only — I talked to her — all the way.”

Silence again.

“I have seen those temples,” I said abruptly, and indeed he had brought those still, sunlit arcades of worn sandstone very vividly before me.

“It was the brown one, the big brown one. I sat down on a fallen pillar and held her in my arms… Silent after the first babble was over. And after a little while the lizards came out and ran about again, as though nothing unusual was going on, as though nothing had changed… It was tremendously still there, the sun high and the shadows still; even the shadows of the weeds upon the entablature were still — in spite of the thudding and banging that went all about the sky.

“I seem to remember that the aeroplanes came up out of the south, and that the battle went away to the west. One aeroplane was struck, and overset and fell. I remember that — though it didn’t interest me in the least. It didn’t seem to signify. It was like a wounded gull, you know — flapping for a time in the water. I could see it down the aisle of the temple — a black thing in the bright blue water.

“Three or four times shells burst about the beach, and then that ceased.

Each time that happened all the lizards scuttled in and hid for a space.

That was all the mischief done, except that once a stray bullet gashed

the
stone hard by — made just a fresh bright surface.

"As the shadows grew longer, the stillness seemed greater.

"The curious thing," he remarked, with the manner of a man who makes a trivial conversation, "is that I didn't *think* — I didn't think at all. I sat with her in my arms amidst the stones — in a sort of lethargy — stagnant.

"And I don't remember waking up. I don't remember dressing that day. I know I found myself in my office, with my letters all slit open in front of me, and how I was struck by the absurdity of being there, seeing that in reality I was sitting, stunned, in that Paestum Temple with a dead woman in my arms. I read my letters like a machine. I have forgotten what they were about."

He stopped, and there was a long silence.

Suddenly I perceived that we were running down the incline from Chalk Farm to Euston. I started at this passing of time. I turned on him with a brutal question with the tone of "Now or never."

"And did you dream again?"

"Yes."

He seemed to force himself to finish. His voice was very low.

"Once more, and as it were only for a few instants. I seemed to have suddenly awakened out of a great apathy, to have risen into a sitting position, and the body lay there on the stones beside me. A gaunt body. Not her, you know. So soon — it was not her…

"I may have heard voices. I do not know. Only I knew clearly that men were coming into the solitude and that that was a last outrage.

"I stood up and walked through the temple, and then there came into sight — first one man with a yellow face, dressed in a uniform of dirty white, trimmed with blue, and then several, climbing to the crest of the old wall of the vanished city, and crouching there. They were little bright figures in the sunlight, and there they hung, weapon in hand, peering cautiously before them.

"And further away I saw others, and then more at another point in the wall. It was a long lax line of men in open order.

"Presently the man I had first seen stood up and shouted a command, and his men came tumbling down the wall and into the

high weeds towards the temple. He scrambled down with them and led them. He came facing towards me, and when he saw me he stopped.

"At first I had watched these men with a mere curiosity, but when I had seen they meant to come to the temple I was moved to forbid them. I shouted to the officer.

"'You must not come here,' I cried, '*I* am here. I am here with my dead.'

"He stared, and then shouted a question back to me in some unknown tongue.

"I repeated what I had said.

"He shouted again, and I folded my arms and stood still. Presently he spoke to his men and came forward. He carried a drawn sword.

"I signed to him to keep away, but he continued to advance. I told him again very patiently and clearly: 'You must not come here. These are old temples, and I am here with my dead.'

"Presently he was so close I could see his face clearly. It was a narrow face, with dull grey eyes, and a black moustache. He had a scar on his upper lip, and he was dirty and unshaven. He kept shouting unintelligible things, questions perhaps, at me.

"I know now that he was afraid of me, but at the time that did not occur to me. As I tried to explain to him he interrupted me in imperious tones, bidding me, I suppose, stand aside.

"He made to go past me, and I caught hold of him.

"I saw his face change at my grip.

"'You fool,' I cried. 'Don't you know? She is dead!'

"He started back. He looked at me with cruel eyes.

"I saw a sort of exultant resolve leap into them — delight. Then suddenly, with a scowl, he swept his sword back — *so* — and thrust."

He stopped abruptly.

I became aware of a change in the rhythm of the train. The brakes lifted their voices and the carriage jarred and jerked. This present world insisted upon itself, became clamorous. I saw through the steamy window huge electric lights glaring down from tall masts upon a fog, saw rows of stationary empty carriages passing by, and then a signal-box, hoisting its constellation of green and red into the

murky London twilight, marched after them. I looked again at his drawn features.

"He ran me through the heart. It was with a sort of astonishment — no fear, no pain — but just amazement, that I felt it pierce me, felt the sword drive home into my body. It didn't hurt, you know. It didn't hurt at all."

The yellow platform lights came into the field of view, passing first rapidly, then slowly, and at last stopping with a jerk. Dim shapes of men passed to and fro without.

"Euston!" cried a voice.

"Do you mean — ?"

"There was no pain, no sting or smart. Amazement and then darkness sweeping over everything. The hot, brutal face before me, the face of the man who had killed me, seemed to recede. It swept out of existence—"

"Euston!" clamoured the voices outside; "Euston!"

The carriage door opened, admitting a flood of sound, and a porter stood regarding us. The sounds of doors slamming, and the hoof-clatter of cab-horses, and behind these things the featureless remote roar of the London cobble-stones, came to my ears. A truck-load of lighted lamps blazed along the platform.

"A darkness, a flood of darkness that opened and spread and blotted out all things."

"Any luggage, sir?" said the porter.

"And that was the end?" I asked.

He seemed to hesitate. Then, almost inaudibly, he answered, "*No*."

"You mean?"

"I couldn't get to her. She was there on the other side of the temple —

And then—"

"Yes," I insisted. "Yes?"

"Nightmares," he cried; "nightmares indeed! My God! Great birds that fought and tore."

XXVI.

THE VALLEY OF SPIDERS.

Towards mid-day the three pursuers came abruptly round a bend in the torrent bed upon the sight of a very broad and spacious valley. The difficult and winding trench of pebbles along which they had tracked the fugitives for so long expanded to a broad slope, and with a common impulse the three men left the trail, and rode to a little eminence set with olive-dun trees, and there halted, the two others, as became them, a little behind the man with the silver-studded bridle.

For a space they scanned the great expanse below them with eager eyes. It spread remoter and remoter, with only a few clusters of sere thorn bushes here and there, and the dim suggestions of some now waterless ravine to break its desolation of yellow grass. Its purple distances melted at last into the bluish slopes of the further hills — hills it might be of a greener kind — and above them, invisibly supported, and seeming indeed to hang in the blue, were the snow-clad summits of mountains — that grew larger and bolder to the northwestward as the sides of the valley drew together. And westward the valley opened until a distant darkness under the sky told where the forests began. But the three men looked neither east nor west, but only steadfastly across the valley.

The gaunt man with the scarred lip was the first to speak. “Nowhere,” he said, with a sigh of disappointment in his voice. “But, after all, they had a full day’s start.”

“They don’t know we are after them,” said the little man on the white horse.

“*She* would know,” said the leader bitterly, as if speaking to himself.

“Even then they can’t go fast. They’ve got no beast but the mule, and all to-day the girl’s foot has been bleeding — —”

The man with the silver bridle flashed a quick intensity of rage on him.
“Do you think I haven’t seen that?” he snarled.

“It helps, anyhow,” whispered the little man to himself.

The gaunt man with the scarred lip stared impassively. “They can’t be over the valley,” he said. “If we ride hard — —”

He glanced at the white horse and paused.

“Curse all white horses!” said the man with the silver bridle, and turned to scan the beast his curse included.

The little man looked down between the melancholy ears of his steed.

“I did my best,” he said.

The two others stared again across the valley for a space. The gaunt man passed the back of his hand across the scarred lip.

“Come up!” said the man who owned the silver bridle, suddenly. The little man started and jerked his rein, and the horse hoofs of the three made a multitudinous faint pattering upon the withered grass as they turned back towards the trail…

They rode cautiously down the long slope before them, and so came through a waste of prickly twisted bushes and strange dry shapes of thorny branches that grew amongst the rocks, into the levels below. And there the trail grew faint, for the soil was scanty, and the only herbage was this scorched dead straw that lay upon the ground. Still, by hard scanning, by leaning beside the horses’ necks and pausing ever and again, even these white men could contrive to follow after their prey.

There were trodden places, bent and broken blades of the coarse grass, and ever and again the sufficient intimation of a footmark. And once the leader saw a brown smear of blood where the half-caste girl may have trod. And at that under his breath he cursed her for a fool.

The gaunt man checked his leader’s tracking, and the little man on the white horse rode behind, a man lost in a dream. They rode one after another, the man with the silver bridle led the way, and they spoke never a word. After a time it came to the little man on the white horse that the world was very still. He started out of his dream. Besides the little noises of their horses and equipment, the whole great valley kept the brooding quiet of a painted scene.

Before him went his master and his fellow, each intently leaning forward to the left, each impassively moving with the paces of his horse; their shadows went before them — still, noiseless, tapering attendants; and nearer a crouched cool shape was his own. He looked

about him. What was it had gone? Then he remembered the reverberation from the banks of the gorge and the perpetual accompaniment of shifting, jostling pebbles. And, moreover —— ? There was no breeze. That was it! What a vast, still place it was, a monotonous afternoon slumber! And the sky open and blank except for a sombre veil of haze that had gathered in the upper valley.

He straightened his back, fretted with his bridle, puckered his lips to whistle, and simply sighed. He turned in his saddle for a time, and stared at the throat of the mountain gorge out of which they had come. Blank! Blank slopes on either side, with never a sign of a decent beast or tree — much less a man. What a land it was! What a wilderness! He dropped again into his former pose.

It filled him with a momentary pleasure to see a wry stick of purple black flash out into the form of a snake, and vanish amidst the brown. After all, the infernal valley *was* alive. And then, to rejoice him still more, came a little breath across his face, a whisper that came and went, the faintest inclination of a stiff black-antlered bush upon a little crest, the first intimations of a possible breeze. Idly he wetted his finger, and held it up.

He pulled up sharply to avoid a collision with the gaunt man, who had stopped at fault upon the trail. Just at that guilty moment he caught his master's eye looking towards him.

For a time he forced an interest in the tracking. Then, as they rode on again, he studied his master's shadow and hat and shoulder, appearing and disappearing behind the gaunt man's nearer contours. They had ridden four days out of the very limits of the world into this desolate place, short of water, with nothing but a strip of dried meat under their saddles, over rocks and mountains, where surely none but these fugitives had ever been before — for *that*!

And all this was for a girl, a mere wilful child! And the man had whole cityfuls of people to do his basest bidding — girls, women! Why in the name of passionate folly *this* one in particular? asked the little man, and scowled at the world, and licked his parched lips with a blackened tongue. It was the way of the master, and that was all he knew. Just because she sought to evade him…

His eye caught a whole row of high-plumed canes bending in unison, and then the tails of silk that hung before his neck flapped

and fell. The breeze was growing stronger. Somehow it took the stiff stillness out of things — and that was well.

"Hullo!" said the gaunt man.

All three stopped abruptly.

"What?" asked the master. "What?"

"Over there," said the gaunt man, pointing up the valley.

"What?"

"Something coming towards us."

And as he spoke a yellow animal crested a rise and came bearing down upon them. It was a big wild dog, coming before the wind, tongue out, at a steady pace, and running with such an intensity of purpose that he did not seem to see the horsemen he approached. He ran with his nose up, following, it was plain, neither scent nor quarry. As he drew nearer the little man felt for his sword. "He's mad," said the gaunt rider.

"Shout!" said the little man, and shouted.

The dog came on. Then when the little man's blade was already out, it swerved aside and went panting by them and passed. The eyes of the little man followed its flight. "There was no foam," he said. For a space the man with the silver-studded bridle stared up the valley. "Oh, come on!" he cried at last. "What does it matter?" and jerked his horse into movement again.

The little man left the insoluble mystery of a dog that fled from nothing but the wind, and lapsed into profound musings on human character. "Come on!" he whispered to himself. "Why should it be given to one man to say 'Come on!' with that stupendous violence of effect? Always, all his life, the man with the silver bridle has been saying that. If *I* said it — !" thought the little man. But people marvelled when the master was disobeyed even in the wildest things. This half-caste girl seemed to him, seemed to every one, mad — blasphemous almost. The little man, by way of comparison, reflected on the gaunt rider with the scarred lip, as stalwart as his master, as brave and, indeed, perhaps braver, and yet for him there was obedience, nothing but to give obedience duly and stoutly…

Certain sensations of the hands and knees called the little man back to more immediate things. He became aware of something. He rode up beside his gaunt fellow. "Do you notice the horses?" he said

in an undertone.

The gaunt face looked interrogation.

“They don’t like this wind,” said the little man, and dropped behind as the man with the silver bridle turned upon him.

“It’s all right,” said the gaunt-faced man.

They rode on again for a space in silence. The foremost two rode downcast upon the trail, the hindmost man watched the haze that crept down the vastness of the valley, nearer and nearer, and noted how the wind grew in strength moment by moment. Far away on the left he saw a line of dark bulks — wild hog, perhaps, galloping down the valley, but of that he said nothing, nor did he remark again upon the uneasiness of the horses.

And then he saw first one and then a second great white ball, a great shining white ball like a gigantic head of thistledown, that drove before the wind athwart the path. These balls soared high in the air, and dropped and rose again and caught for a moment, and hurried on and passed, but at the sight of them the restlessness of the horses increased.

Then presently he saw that more of these drifting globes — and then soon very many more — were hurrying towards him down the valley.

They became aware of a squealing. Athwart the path a huge boar rushed, turning his head but for one instant to glance at them, and then hurling on down the valley again. And at that all three stopped and sat in their saddles, staring into the thickening haze that was coming upon them.

“If it were not for this thistle-down—” began the leader.

But now a big globe came drifting past within a score of yards of them. It was really not an even sphere at all, but a vast, soft, ragged, filmy thing, a sheet gathered by the corners, an aerial jelly-fish, as it were, but rolling over and over as it advanced, and trailing long cobwebby threads and streamers that floated in its wake.

“It isn’t thistle-down,” said the little man.

“I don’t like the stuff,” said the gaunt man.

And they looked at one another.

“Curse it!” cried the leader. “The air’s full of lit up there. If it keeps on at this pace long, it will stop us altogether.”

An instinctive feeling, such as lines out a herd of deer at the approach of some ambiguous thing, prompted them to turn their horses to the wind, ride forward for a few paces, and stare at that advancing multitude of floating masses. They came on before the wind with a sort of smooth swiftness, rising and falling noiselessly, sinking to earth, rebounding high, soaring — all with a perfect unanimity, with a still, deliberate assurance.

Right and left of the horsemen the pioneers of this strange army passed. At one that rolled along the ground, breaking shapelessly and trailing out reluctantly into long grappling ribbons and bands, all three horses began to shy and dance. The master was seized with a sudden, unreasonable impatience. He cursed the drifting globes roundly. "Get on!" he cried; "get on! What do these things matter? How *can* they matter? Back to the trail!" He fell swearing at his horse and sawed the bit across its mouth.

He shouted aloud with rage. "I will follow that trail, I tell you," he cried. "Where is the trail?"

He gripped the bridle of his prancing horse and searched amidst the grass. A long and clinging thread fell across his face, a grey streamer dropped about his bridle arm, some big, active thing with many legs ran down the back of his head. He looked up to discover one of those grey masses anchored as it were above him by these things and flapping out ends as a sail flaps when a boat comes about — but noiselessly.

He had an impression of many eyes, of a dense crew of squat bodies, of long, many-jointed limbs hauling at their mooring ropes to bring the thing down upon him. For a space he stared up, reining in his prancing horse with the instinct born of years of horsemanship. Then the flat of a sword smote his back, and a blade flashed overhead and cut the drifting balloon of spider-web free, and the whole mass lifted softly and drove clear and away.

"Spiders!" cried the voice of the gaunt man. "The things are full of big spiders! Look, my lord!"

The man with the silver bridle still followed the mass that drove away.

"Look, my lord!"

The master found himself staring down at a red smashed thing on

the ground that, in spite of partial obliteration, could still wriggle unavailing legs. Then, when the gaunt man pointed to another mass that bore down upon them, he drew his sword hastily. Up the valley now it was like a fog bank torn to rags. He tried to grasp the situation.

"Ride for it!" the little man was shouting. "Ride for it down the valley."

What happened then was like the confusion of a battle. The man with the silver bridle saw the little man go past him, slashing furiously at imaginary cobwebs, saw him cannon into the horse of the gaunt man and hurl it and its rider to earth. His own horse went a dozen paces before he could rein it in. Then he looked up to avoid imaginary dangers, and then back again to see a horse rolling on the ground, the gaunt man standing and slashing over it at a rent and fluttering mass of grey that streamed and wrapped about them both. And thick and fast as thistle-down on waste land on a windy day in July the cobweb masses were coming on.

The little man had dismounted, but he dared not release his horse. He was endeavouring to lug the struggling brute back with the strength of one arm, while with the other he slashed aimlessly. The tentacles of a second grey mass had entangled themselves with the struggle, and this second grey mass came to its moorings, and slowly sank.

The master set his teeth, gripped his bridle, lowered his head, and spurred his horse forward. The horse on the ground rolled over, there was blood and moving shapes upon the flanks, and the gaunt man suddenly leaving it, ran forward towards his master, perhaps ten paces. His legs were swathed and encumbered with grey; he made ineffectual movements with his sword. Grey streamers waved from him; there was a thin veil of grey across his face. With his left hand he beat at something on his body, and suddenly he stumbled and fell. He struggled to rise, and fell again, and suddenly, horribly, began to howl, "Oh — ohoo, ohooh!"

The master could see the great spiders upon him, and others upon the ground.

As he strove to force his horse nearer to this gesticulating, screaming grey object that struggled up and down, there came a

clatter of hoofs, and the little man, in act of mounting, swordless, balanced on his belly athwart the white horse, and clutching its mane, whirled past. And again a clinging thread of grey gossamer swept across the master's face. All about him, and over him, it seemed this drifting, noiseless cobweb circled and drew nearer him…

To the day of his death he never knew just how the event of that moment happened. Did he, indeed, turn his horse, or did it really of its own accord stampede after its fellow? Suffice it that in another second he was galloping full tilt down the valley with his sword whirling furiously overhead. And all about him on the quickening breeze, the spiders' air-ships, their air bundles and air sheets, seemed to him to hurry in a conscious pursuit.

Clatter, clatter, thud, thud, — the man with the silver bridle rode, heedless of his direction, with his fearful face looking up now right, now left, and his sword arm ready to slash. And a few hundred yards ahead of him, with a tail of torn cobweb trailing behind him, rode the little man on the white horse, still but imperfectly in the saddle. The reeds bent before them, the wind blew fresh and strong, over his shoulder the master could see the webs hurrying to overtake…

He was so intent to escape the spiders' webs that only as his horse gathered together for a leap did he realise the ravine ahead. And then he realised it only to misunderstand and interfere. He was leaning forward on his horse's neck and sat up and back all too late.

But if in his excitement he had failed to leap, at any rate he had not forgotten how to fall. He was horseman again in mid-air. He came off clear with a mere bruise upon his shoulder, and his horse rolled, kicking spasmodic legs, and lay still. But the master's sword drove its point into the hard soil, and snapped clean across, as though Chance refused him any longer as her Knight, and the splintered end missed his face by an inch or so.

He was on his feet in a moment, breathlessly scanning the on-rushing spider-webs. For a moment he was minded to run, and then thought of the ravine, and turned back. He ran aside once to dodge one drifting terror, and then he was swiftly clambering down the precipitous sides, and out of the touch of the gale.

There, under the lee of the dry torrent's steeper banks, he might

crouch and watch these strange, grey masses pass and pass in safety till the wind fell, and it became possible to escape. And there for a long time he crouched, watching the strange, grey, ragged masses trail their streamers across his narrowed sky.

Once a stray spider fell into the ravine close beside him — a full foot it measured from leg to leg and its body was half a man's hand — and after he had watched its monstrous alacrity of search and escape for a little while and tempted it to bite his broken sword, he lifted up his iron-heeled boot and smashed it into a pulp. He swore as he did so, and for a time sought up and down for another.

Then presently, when he was surer these spider swarms could not drop into the ravine, he found a place where he could sit down, and sat and fell into deep thought and began, after his manner, to gnaw his knuckles and bite his nails. And from this he was moved by the coming of the man with the white horse.

He heard him long before he saw him, as a clattering of hoofs, stumbling footsteps, and a reassuring voice. Then the little man appeared, a rueful figure, still with a tail of white cobweb trailing behind him. They approached each other without speaking, without a salutation. The little man was fatigued and shamed to the pitch of hopeless bitterness, and came to a stop at last, face to face with his seated master. The latter winced a little under his dependent's eye. "Well?" he said at last, with no pretence of authority.

"You left him?"

"My horse bolted."

"I know. So did mine."

He laughed at his master mirthlessly.

"I say my horse bolted," said the man who once had a silver-studded bridle.

"Cowards both," said the little man.

The other gnawed his knuckle through some meditative moments, with his eye on his inferior.

"Don't call me a coward," he said at length.

"You are a coward, like myself."

"A coward possibly. There is a limit beyond which every man must fear. That I have learnt at last. But not like yourself. That is where the difference comes in."

“I never could have dreamt you would have left him. He saved your life two minutes before… Why are you our lord?”

The master gnawed his knuckles again, and his countenance was dark.

“No man calls me a coward,” he said. “No … A broken sword is better than none … One spavined white horse cannot be expected to carry two men a four days’ journey. I hate white horses, but this time it cannot be helped. You begin to understand me? I perceive that you are minded, on the strength of what you have seen and fancy, to taint my reputation. It is men of your sort who unmake kings. Besides which — I never liked you.”

“My lord!” said the little man.

“No,” said the master. “*No!*”

He stood up sharply as the little man moved. For a minute perhaps they faced one another. Overhead the spiders’ balls went driving. There was a quick movement among the pebbles; a running of feet, a cry of despair, a gasp and a blow…

Towards nightfall the wind fell. The sun set in a calm serenity, and the man who had once possessed the silver bridle came at last very cautiously and by an easy slope out of the ravine again; but now he led the white horse that once belonged to the little man. He would have gone back to his horse to get his silver-mounted bridle again, but he feared night and a quickening breeze might still find him in the valley, and besides, he disliked greatly to think he might discover his horse all swathed in cobwebs and perhaps unpleasantly eaten.

And as he thought of those cobwebs, and of all the dangers he had been through, and the manner in which he had been preserved that day, his hand sought a little reliquary that hung about his neck, and he clasped it for a moment with heartfelt gratitude. As he did so his eyes went across the valley.

“I was hot with passion,” he said, “and now she has met her reward. They also, no doubt—”

And behold! far away out of the wooded slopes across the valley, but in the clearness of the sunset, distinct and unmistakable, he saw a little spire of smoke.

At that his expression of serene resignation changed to an amazed anger. Smoke? He turned the head of the white horse about, and

hesitated. And as he did so a little rustle of air went through the grass about him. Far away upon some reeds swayed a tattered sheet of grey. He looked at the cobwebs; he looked at the smoke.

"Perhaps, after all, it is not them," he said at last.

But he knew better.

After he had stared at the smoke for some time, he mounted the white horse.

As he rode, he picked his way amidst stranded masses of web. For some reason there were many dead spiders on the ground, and those that lived feasted guiltily on their fellows. At the sound of his horse's hoofs they fled.

Their time had passed. From the ground, without either a wind to carry them or a winding-sheet ready, these things, for all their poison, could do him little evil.

He flicked with his belt at those he fancied came too near. Once, where a number ran together over a bare place, he was minded to dismount and trample them with his boots, but this impulse he overcame. Ever and again he turned in his saddle, and looked back at the smoke.

"Spiders," he muttered over and over again. "Spiders. Well, well… The next time I must spin a web."

XXVII.

THE NEW ACCELERATOR.

Certainly, if ever a man found a guinea when he was looking for a pin, it is my good friend Professor Gibberne. I have heard before of investigators overshooting the mark, but never quite to the extent that he has done. He has really, this time at any rate, without any touch of exaggeration in the phrase, found something to revolutionise human life. And that when he was simply seeking an all-round nervous stimulant to bring languid people up to the stresses of these pushful days. I have tasted the stuff now several times, and I cannot do better than describe the effect the thing had on me. That there are astonishing experiences in store for all in search of new sensations will become apparent enough.

Professor Gibberne, as many people know, is my neighbour in Folkestone. Unless my memory plays me a trick, his portrait at various ages has already appeared in *The Strand Magazine* — think late in 1899 but I am unable to look it up because I have lent that volume to someone who has never sent it back. The reader may, perhaps, recall the high forehead and the singularly long black eyebrows that give such a Mephistophelean touch to his face. He occupies one of those pleasant little detached houses in the mixed style that make the western end of the Upper Sandgate Road so interesting. His is the one with the Flemish gables and the Moorish portico, and it is in the little room with the mullioned bay window that he works when he is down here, and in which of an evening we have so often smoked and talked together. He is a mighty jester, but, besides, he likes to talk to me about his work; he is one of those men who find a help and stimulus in talking, and so I have been able to follow the conception of the New Accelerator right up from a very early stage. Of course, the greater portion of his experimental work is not done in Folkestone, but in Gower Street, in the fine new laboratory next to the hospital that he has been the first to use.

As every one knows, or at least as all intelligent people know, the special department in which Gibberne has gained so great and deserved a reputation among physiologists is the action of drugs upon the nervous system. Upon soporifics, sedatives, and

anaesthetics he is, I am told, unequalled. He is also a chemist of considerable eminence, and I suppose in the subtle and complex jungle of riddles that centres about the ganglion cell and the axis fibre there are little cleared places of his making, little glades of illumination, that, until he sees fit to publish his results, are still inaccessible to every other living man. And in the last few years he has been particularly assiduous upon this question of nervous stimulants, and already, before the discovery of the New Accelerator, very successful with them. Medical science has to thank him for at least three distinct and absolutely safe invigorators of unrivalled value to practising men. In cases of exhaustion the preparation known as Gibberne's B Syrup has, I suppose, saved more lives already than any lifeboat round the coast.

"But none of these little things begin to satisfy me yet," he told me nearly a year ago. "Either they increase the central energy without affecting the nerves, or they simply increase the available energy by lowering the nervous conductivity; and all of them are unequal and local in their operation. One wakes up the heart and viscera and leaves the brain stupefied, one gets at the brain champagne fashion, and does nothing good for the solar plexus, and what I want — and what, if it's an earthly possibility, I mean to have — is a stimulant that stimulates all round, that wakes you up for a time from the crown of your head to the tip of your great toe, and makes you go two — or even three — to everybody else's one. Eh? That's the thing I'm after."

"It would tire a man," I said.

"Not a doubt of it. And you'd eat double or treble — and all that. But just think what the thing would mean. Imagine yourself with a little phial like this" — he held up a little bottle of green glass and marked his points with it— "and in this precious phial is the power to think twice as fast, move twice as quickly, do twice as much work in a given time as you could otherwise do."

"But is such a thing possible?"

"I believe so. If it isn't, I've wasted my time for a year. These various preparations of the hypophosphites, for example, seem to show that something of the sort… Even if it was only one and a half times as fast it would do."

“It *would* do,” I said.

“If you were a statesman in a corner, for example, time rushing up against you, something urgent to be done, eh?”

“He could dose his private secretary,” I said.

“And gain — double time. And think if *you*, for example, wanted to finish a book.”

“Usually,” I said, “I wish I’d never begun ‘em.”

“Or a doctor, driven to death, wants to sit down and think out a case. Or a barrister — or a man cramming for an examination.”

“Worth a guinea a drop,” said I, “and more — to men like that.”

“And in a duel, again,” said Gibberne, “where it all depends on your quickness in pulling the trigger.”

“Or in fencing,” I echoed.

“You see,” said Gibberne, “if I get it as an all-round thing, it will really do you no harm at all — except perhaps to an infinitesimal degree it brings you nearer old age. You will just have lived twice to other people’s once—”

“I suppose,” I meditated, “in a duel — it would be fair?”

“That’s a question for the seconds,” said Gibberne.

I harked back further. “And you really think such a thing *is* possible?” I said.

“As possible,” said Gibberne, and glanced at something that went throbbing by the window, “as a motor-bus. As a matter of fact—”

He paused and smiled at me deeply, and tapped slowly on the edge of his desk with the green phial. “I think I know the stuff… Already I’ve got something coming.” The nervous smile upon his face betrayed the gravity of his revelation. He rarely talked of his actual experimental work unless things were very near the end. “And it may be, it may be — I shouldn’t be surprised — it may even do the thing at a greater rate than twice.”

“It will be rather a big thing,” I hazarded.

“It will be, I think, rather a big thing.”

But I don’t think he quite knew what a big thing it was to be, for all that.

I remember we had several talks about the stuff after that. “The New Accelerator” he called it, and his tone about it grew more confident on each occasion. Sometimes he talked nervously of

unexpected physiological results its use might have, and then he would get a little unhappy; at others he was frankly mercenary, and we debated long and anxiously how the preparation might be turned to commercial account. “It’s a good thing,” said Gibberne, “a tremendous thing. I know I’m giving the world something, and I think it only reasonable we should expect the world to pay. The dignity of science is all very well, but I think somehow I must have the monopoly of the stuff for, say, ten years. I don’t see why *all* the fun in life should go to the dealers in ham.”

My own interest in the coming drug certainly did not wane in the time. I have always had a queer little twist towards metaphysics in my mind. I have always been given to paradoxes about space and time, and it seemed to me that Gibberne was really preparing no less than the absolute acceleration of life. Suppose a man repeatedly dosed with such a preparation: he would live an active and record life indeed, but he would be an adult at eleven, middle-aged at twenty-five, and by thirty well on the road to senile decay. It seemed to me that so far Gibberne was only going to do for any one who took his drug exactly what Nature has done for the Jews and Orientals, who are men in their teens and aged by fifty, and quicker in thought and act than we are all the time. The marvel of drugs has always been great to my mind; you can madden a man, calm a man, make him incredibly strong and alert or a helpless log, quicken this passion and allay that, all by means of drugs, and here was a new miracle to be added to this strange armoury of phials the doctors use! But Gibberne was far too eager upon his technical points to enter very keenly into my aspect of the question.

It was the 7th or 8th of August when he told me the distillation that would decide his failure or success for a time was going forward as we talked, and it was on the 10th that he told me the thing was done and the New Accelerator a tangible reality in the world. I met him as I was going up the Sandgate Hill towards Folkestone — I think I was going to get my hair cut, and he came hurrying down to meet me — I suppose he was coming to my house to tell me at once of his success. I remember that his eyes were unusually bright and his face flushed, and I noted even then the swift alacrity of his step.

“It’s done,” he cried, and gripped my hand, speaking very fast;

“it’s more than done. Come up to my house and see.”

“Really?”

“Really!” he shouted. “Incredibly! Come up and see.”

“And it does — twice?”

“It does more, much more. It scares me. Come up and see the stuff. Taste it! Try it! It’s the most amazing stuff on earth.” He gripped my arm and; walking at such a pace that he forced me into a trot, went shouting with me up the hill. A whole *char-à-banc*-ful of people turned and stared at us in unison after the manner of people in *chars-à-banc*. It was one of those hot, clear days that Folkestone sees so much of, every colour incredibly bright and every outline hard. There was a breeze, of course, but not so much breeze as sufficed under these conditions to keep me cool and dry. I panted for mercy.

“I’m not walking fast, am I?” cried Gibberne, and slackened his pace to a quick march.

“You’ve been taking some of this stuff,” I puffed.

“No,” he said. “At the utmost a drop of water that stood in a beaker from which I had washed out the last traces of the stuff. I took some last night, you know. But that is ancient history now.”

“And it goes twice?” I said, nearing his doorway in a grateful perspiration.

“It goes a thousand times, many thousand times!” cried Gibberne, with a dramatic gesture, flinging open his Early English carved oak gate.

“Phew!” said I, and followed him to the door.

“I don’t know how many times it goes,” he said, with his latch-key in his hand.

“And you — —”

“It throws all sorts of light on nervous physiology, it kicks the theory of vision into a perfectly new shape! … Heaven knows how many thousand times. We’ll try all that after —— The thing is to try the stuff now.”

“Try the stuff?” I said, as we went along the passage.

“Rather,” said Gibberne, turning on me in his study. “There it is in that little green phial there! Unless you happen to be afraid?”

I am a careful man by nature, and only theoretically adventurous. I *was* afraid. But on the other hand, there is pride.

“Well,” I haggled. “You say you’ve tried it?”

“I’ve tried it,” he said, “and I don’t look hurt by it, do I? I don’t even look livery, and I *feel* — —”

I sat down. “Give me the potion,” I said. “If the worst comes to the worst it will save having my hair cut, and that, I think, is one of the most hateful duties of a civilised man. How do you take the mixture?”

“With water,” said Gibberne, whacking down a carafe.

He stood up in front of his desk and regarded me in his easy-chair; his manner was suddenly affected by a touch of the Harley Street specialist. “It’s rum stuff, you know,” he said.

I made a gesture with my hand.

“I must warn you, in the first place, as soon as you’ve got it down to shut your eyes, and open them very cautiously in a minute or so’s time. One still sees. The sense of vision is a question of length of vibration, and not of multitude of impacts; but there’s a kind of shock to the retina, a nasty giddy confusion just at the time if the eyes are open. Keep ’em shut.”

“Shut,” I said. “Good!”

“And the next thing is, keep still. Don’t begin to whack about. You may fetch something a nasty rap if you do. Remember you will be going several thousand times faster than you ever did before, heart, lungs, muscles, brain — everything — and you will hit hard without knowing it. You won’t know it, you know. You’ll feel just as you do now. Only everything in the world will seem to be going ever so many thousand times slower than it ever went before. That’s what makes it so deuced queer.”

“Lor,” I said. “And you mean — —”

“You’ll see,” said he, and took up a little measure. He glanced at the material on his desk. “Glasses,” he said, “water. All here. Mustn’t take too much for the first attempt.”

The little phial glucked out its precious contents. “Don’t forget what I told you,” he said, turning the contents of the measure into a glass in the manner of an Italian waiter measuring whisky. “Sit with the eyes tightly shut and in absolute stillness for two minutes,” he said. “Then you will hear me speak.”

He added an inch or so of water to the little dose in each glass.

“By-the-by,” he said, “don’t put your glass down. Keep it in your hand and rest your hand on your knee. Yes — so. And now — —”

He raised his glass.

“The New Accelerator,” I said.

“The New Accelerator,” he answered, and we touched glasses and drank, and instantly I closed my eyes.

You know that blank non-existence into which one drops when one has taken “gas.” For an indefinite interval it was like that. Then I heard Gibberne telling me to wake up, and I stirred and opened my eyes. There he stood as he had been standing, glass still in hand. It was empty, that was all the difference.

“Well?” said I.

“Nothing out of the way?”

“Nothing. A slight feeling of exhilaration, perhaps. Nothing more.”

“Sounds?”

“Things are still,” I said. “By Jove! yes! They *are* still. Except the sort of faint pat, patter, like rain falling on different things. What is it?”

“Analysed sounds,” I think he said, but I am not sure. He glanced at the window. “Have you ever seen a curtain before a window fixed in that way before?”

I followed his eyes, and there was the end of the curtain, frozen, as it were, corner high, in the act of flapping briskly in the breeze.

“No,” said I; “that’s odd.”

“And here,” he said, and opened the hand that held the glass. Naturally I winced, expecting the glass to smash. But so far from smashing, it did not even seem to stir; it hung in mid-air — motionless. “Roughly speaking,” said Gibberne, “an object in these latitudes falls 16 feet in the first second. This glass is falling 16 feet in a second now. Only, you see, it hasn’t been falling yet for the hundredth part of a second. That gives you some idea of the pace of my Accelerator.”

And he waved his hand round and round, over and under the slowly sinking glass. Finally he took it by the bottom, pulled it down and placed it very carefully on the table. “Eh?” he said to me, and laughed.

“That seems all right,” I said, and began very gingerly to raise myself from my chair. I felt perfectly well, very light and comfortable, and quite confident in my mind. I was going fast all over. My heart, for example, was beating a thousand times a second, but that caused me no discomfort at all. I looked out of the window. An immovable cyclist, head down and with a frozen puff of dust behind his driving-wheel, scorched to overtake a galloping *char-à-banc* that did not stir. I gaped in amazement at this incredible spectacle. “Gibberne,” I cried, “how long will this confounded stuff last?”

“Heaven knows!” he answered. “Last time I took it I went to bed and slept it off. I tell you, I was frightened. It must have lasted some minutes, I think — it seemed like hours. But after a bit it slows down rather suddenly, I believe.”

I was proud to observe that I did not feel frightened — I suppose because there were two of us. “Why shouldn’t we go out?” I asked.

“Why not?”

“They’ll see us.”

“Not they. Goodness, no! Why, we shall be going a thousand times faster than the quickest conjuring trick that was ever done. Come along! Which way shall we go? Window, or door?”

And out by the window we went.

Assuredly of all the strange experiences that I have ever had, or imagined, or read of other people having or imagining, that little raid I made with Gibberne on the Folkestone Leas, under the influence of the New Accelerator, was the strangest and maddest of all. We went out by his gate into the road, and there we made a minute examination of the statuesque passing traffic. The tops of the wheels and some of the legs of the horses of this *char-à-banc,* the end of the whip-lash and the lower jaw of the conductor — who was just beginning to yawn — were perceptibly in motion, but all the rest of the lumbering conveyance seemed still. And quite noiseless except for a faint rattling that came from one man’s throat. And as parts of this frozen edifice there were a driver, you know, and a conductor, and eleven people! The effect as we walked about the thing began by being madly queer and ended by being — disagreeable. There they were, people like ourselves and yet not like ourselves, frozen in

careless attitudes, caught in mid-gesture. A girl and a man smiled at one another, a leering smile that threatened to last for evermore; a woman in a floppy capelline rested her arm on the rail and stared at Gibberne's house with the unwinking stare of eternity; a man stroked his moustache like a figure of wax, and another stretched a tiresome stiff hand with extended fingers towards his loosened hat. We stared at them, we laughed at them, we made faces at them, and then a sort of disgust of them came upon us, and we turned away and walked round in front of the cyclist towards the Leas.

"Goodness!" cried Gibberne, suddenly; "look there!"

He pointed, and there at the tip of his finger and sliding down the air with wings flapping slowly and at the speed of an exceptionally languid snail — was a bee.

And so we came out upon the Leas. There the thing seemed madder than ever. The band was playing in the upper stand, though all the sound it made for us was a low-pitched, wheezy rattle, a sort of prolonged last sigh that passed at times into a sound like the slow, muffled ticking of some monstrous clock. Frozen people stood erect, strange, silent, self-conscious-looking dummies hung unstably in mid-stride, promenading upon the grass. I passed close to a little poodle dog suspended in the act of leaping, and watched the slow movement of his legs as he sank to earth. "Lord, look *here*!" cried Gibberne, and we halted for a moment before a magnificent person in white faint — striped flannels, white shoes, and a Panama hat, who turned back to wink at two gaily dressed ladies he had passed. A wink, studied with such leisurely deliberation as we could afford, is an unattractive thing. It loses any quality of alert gaiety, and one remarks that the winking eye does not completely close, that under its drooping lid appears the lower edge of an eyeball and a little line of white. "Heaven give me memory," said I, "and I will never wink again."

"Or smile," said Gibberne, with his eye on the lady's answering teeth.

"It's infernally hot, somehow," said I, "Let's go slower."

"Oh, come along!" said Gibberne.

We picked our way among the bath-chairs in the path. Many of the people sitting in the chairs seemed almost natural in their passive

poses, but the contorted scarlet of the bandsmen was not a restful thing to see. A purple-faced little gentleman was frozen in the midst of a violent struggle to refold his newspaper against the wind; there were many evidences that all these people in their sluggish way were exposed to a considerable breeze, a breeze that had no existence so far as our sensations went. We came out and walked a little way from the crowd, and turned and regarded it. To see all that multitude changed to a picture, smitten rigid, as it were, into the semblance of realistic wax, was impossibly wonderful. It was absurd, of course; but it filled me with an irrational, an exultant sense of superior advantage. Consider the wonder of it! All that I had said, and thought, and done since the stuff had begun to work in my veins had happened, so far as those people, so far as the world in general went, in the twinkling of an eye. "The New Accelerator — —" I began, but Gibberne interrupted me.

"There's that infernal old woman!" he said.

"What old woman?"

"Lives next door to me," said Gibberne. "Has a lapdog that yaps. Gods! The temptation is strong!"

There is something very boyish and impulsive about Gibberne at times. Before I could expostulate with him he had dashed forward, snatched the unfortunate animal out of visible existence, and was running violently with it towards the cliff of the Leas. It was most extraordinary. The little brute, you know, didn't bark or wriggle or make the slightest sign of vitality. It kept quite stiffly in an attitude of somnolent repose, and Gibberne held it by the neck. It was like running about with a dog of wood. "Gibberne," I cried, "put it down!" Then I said something else. "If you run like that, Gibberne," I cried, "you'll set your clothes on fire. Your linen trousers are going brown as it is!"

He clapped his hand on his thigh and stood hesitating on the verge. "Gibberne," I cried, coming up, "put it down. This heat is too much! It's our running so! Two or three miles a second! Friction of the air!"

"What?" he said, glancing at the dog.

"Friction of the air," I shouted. "Friction of the air. Going too fast.

Like meteorites and things. Too hot. And, Gibberne! Gibberne! I'm all over
pricking and a sort of perspiration. You can see people stirring slightly.
I believe the stuff's working off! Put that dog down."

"Eh?" he said.

"It's working off," I repeated. "We're too hot and the stuff's working off! I'm wet through."

He stared at me, then at the band, the wheezy rattle of whose performance was certainly going faster. Then with a tremendous sweep of the arm he hurled the dog away from him and it went spinning upward, still inanimate, and hung at last over the grouped parasols of a knot of chattering people. Gibberne was gripping my elbow. "By Jove!" he cried, "I believe it is! A sort of hot pricking and — yes. That man's moving his pocket-handkerchief! Perceptibly. We must get out of this sharp."

But we could not get out of it sharply enough. Luckily, perhaps! For we might have run, and if we had run we should, I believe, have burst into flames. Almost certainly we should have burst into flames! You know we had neither of us thought of that… But before we could even begin to run the action of the drug had ceased. It was the business of a minute fraction of a second. The effect of the New Accelerator passed like the drawing of a curtain, vanished in the movement of a hand. I heard Gibberne's voice in infinite alarm. "Sit down," he said, and flop, down upon the turf at the edge of the Leas I sat — scorching as I sat. There is a patch of burnt grass there still where I sat down. The whole stagnation seemed to wake up as I did so, the disarticulated vibration of the band rushed together into a blast of music, the promenaders put their feet down and walked their ways, the papers and flags began flapping, smiles passed into words, the winker finished his wink and went on his way complacently, and all the seated people moved and spoke.

The whole world had come alive again, was going as fast as we were, or rather we were going no faster than the rest of the world. It was like slowing down as one comes into a railway station. Everything seemed to spin round for a second or two, I had the most

transient feeling of nausea, and that was all. And the little dog, which had seemed to hang for a moment when the force of Gibberne's arm was expended, fell with a swift acceleration clean through a lady's parasol!

That was the saving of us. Unless it was for one corpulent old gentleman in a bath-chair, who certainly did start at the sight of us, and afterwards regarded us at intervals with a darkly suspicious eye, and, finally, I believe, said something to his nurse about us, I doubt if a solitary person remarked our sudden appearance among them. Plop! We must have appeared abruptly. We ceased to smoulder almost at once, though the turf beneath me was uncomfortably hot. The attention of every one — including even the Amusements' Association band, which on this occasion, for the only time in its history, got out of tune — was arrested by the amazing fact, and the still more amazing yapping and uproar caused by the fact, that a respectable, over-fed lapdog sleeping quietly to the east of the bandstand should suddenly fall through the parasol of a lady on the west — in a slightly singed condition due to the extreme velocity of its movements through the air. In these absurd days, too, when we are all trying to be as psychic, and silly, and superstitious as possible! People got up and trod on other people, chairs were overturned, the Leas policeman ran. How the matter settled itself I do not know — we were much too anxious to disentangle ourselves from the affair and get out of range of the eye of the old gentleman in the bath-chair to make minute inquiries. As soon as we were sufficiently cool and sufficiently recovered from our giddiness and nausea and confusion of mind to do so we stood up, and skirting the crowd, directed our steps back along the road below the Metropole towards Gibberne's house. But amidst the din I heard very distinctly the gentleman who had been sitting beside the lady of the ruptured sunshade using quite unjustifiable threats and language to one of those chair-attendants who have "Inspector" written on their caps: "If you didn't throw the dog," he said, "who *did*?"

The sudden return of movement and familiar noises, and our natural anxiety about ourselves (our clothes were still dreadfully hot, and the fronts of the thighs of Gibberne's white trousers were scorched a drabbish brown), prevented the minute observations I

should have liked to make on all these things. Indeed, I really made no observations of any scientific value on that return. The bee, of course, had gone. I looked for that cyclist, but he was already out of sight as we came into the Upper Sandgate Road or hidden from us by traffic; the *char-à-banc*, however, with its people now all alive and stirring, was clattering along at a spanking pace almost abreast of the nearer church.

We noted, however, that the window-sill on which we had stepped in getting out of the house was slightly singed, and that the impressions of our feet on the gravel of the path were unusually deep.

So it was I had my first experience of the New Accelerator. Practically we had been running about and saying and doing all sorts of things in the space of a second or so of time. We had lived half an hour while the band had played, perhaps, two bars. But the effect it had upon us was that the whole world had stopped for our convenient inspection. Considering all things, and particularly considering our rashness in venturing out of the house, the experience might certainly have been much more disagreeable than it was. It showed, no doubt, that Gibberne has still much to learn before his preparation is a manageable convenience, but its practicability it certainly demonstrated beyond all cavil.

Since that adventure he has been steadily bringing its use under control, and I have several times, and without the slightest bad result, taken measured doses under his direction; though I must confess I have not yet ventured abroad again while under its influence. I may mention, for example, that this story has been written at one sitting and without interruption, except for the nibbling of some chocolate, by its means. I began at 6.25, and my watch is now very nearly at the minute past the half-hour. The convenience of securing a long, uninterrupted spell of work in the midst of a day full of engagements cannot be exaggerated. Gibberne is now working at the quantitative handling of his preparation, with especial reference to its distinctive effects upon different types of constitution. He then hopes to find a Retarder, with which to dilute its present rather excessive potency. The Retarder will, of course, have the reverse effect to the Accelerator; used alone it should enable the patient to spread a few

seconds over many hours of ordinary time, and so to maintain an apathetic inaction, a glacier-like absence of alacrity, amidst the most animated or irritating surroundings. The two things together must necessarily work an entire revolution in civilised existence. It is the beginning of our escape from that Time Garment of which Carlyle speaks. While this Accelerator will enable us to concentrate ourselves with tremendous impact upon any moment or occasion that demands our utmost sense and vigour, the Retarder will enable us to pass in passive tranquillity through infinite hardship and tedium. Perhaps I am a little optimistic about the Retarder, which has indeed still to be discovered, but about the Accelerator there is no possible sort of doubt whatever. Its appearance upon the market in a convenient, controllable, and assimilable form is a matter of the next few months. It will be obtainable of all chemists and druggists, in small green bottles, at a high but, considering its extraordinary qualities, by no means excessive price. Gibberne's Nervous Accelerator it will be called, and he hopes to be able to supply it in three strengths: one in 200, one in 900, and one in 2000, distinguished by yellow, pink, and white labels respectively.

No doubt its use renders a great number of very extraordinary things possible; for, of course, the most remarkable and, possibly, even criminal proceedings may be effected with impunity by thus dodging, as it were, into the interstices of time. Like all potent preparations, it will be liable to abuse. We have, however, discussed this aspect of the question very thoroughly, and we have decided that this is purely a matter of medical jurisprudence and altogether outside our province. We shall manufacture and sell the Accelerator, and as for the consequences — we shall see.

XXVIII.

THE TRUTH ABOUT PYECRAFT.

He sits not a dozen yards away. If I glance over my shoulder I can see him. And if I catch his eye — and usually I catch his eye — it meets me with an expression ——

It is mainly an imploring look — and yet with suspicion in it.

Confound his suspicion! If I wanted to tell on him I should have told long ago. I don't tell and I don't tell, and he ought to feel at his ease. As if anything so gross and fat as he could feel at ease! Who would believe me if I did tell?

Poor old Pyecraft! Great, uneasy jelly of substance! The fattest clubman in London.

He sits at one of the little club tables in the huge bay by the fire, stuffing. What is he stuffing? I glance judiciously, and catch him biting at a round of hot buttered teacake, with his eyes on me. Confound him! — with his eyes on me!

That settles it, Pyecraft! Since you *will* be abject, since you *will* behave as though I was not a man of honour, here, right under your embedded eyes, I write the thing down — the plain truth about Pyecraft. The man I helped, the man I shielded, and who has requited me by making my club unendurable, absolutely unendurable, with his liquid appeal, with the perpetual "don't tell" of his looks.

And, besides, why does he keep on eternally eating?

Well, here goes for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

Pyecraft —— . I made the acquaintance of Pyecraft in this very smoking-room. I was a young, nervous new member, and he saw it. I was sitting all alone, wishing I knew more of the members, and suddenly he came, a great rolling front of chins and abdomina, towards me, and grunted and sat down in a chair close by me and wheezed for a space, and scraped for a space with a match and lit a cigar, and then addressed me. I forget what he said — something about the matches not lighting properly, and afterwards as he talked he kept stopping the waiters one by one as they went by, and telling them about the matches in that thin, fluty voice he has. But, anyhow, it was in some such way we began our talking.

He talked about various things and came round to games. And thence to my figure and complexion. "*You* ought to be a good cricketer," he said. I suppose I am slender, slender to what some people would call lean, and I suppose I am rather dark, still —— I am not ashamed of having a Hindu great-grandmother, but, for all that, I don't want casual strangers to see through me at a glance to *her*. So that I was set against Pyecraft from the beginning.

But he only talked about me in order to get to himself.

"I expect," he said, "you take no more exercise than I do, and probably you eat no less." (Like all excessively obese people he fancied he ate nothing.) "Yet" — and he smiled an oblique smile— "we differ."

And then he began to talk about his fatness and his fatness; all he did for his fatness and all he was going to do for his fatness; what people had advised him to do for his fatness and what he had heard of people doing for fatness similar to his. "*A priori*," he said, "one would think a question of nutrition could be answered by dietary and a question of assimilation by drugs." It was stifling. It was dumpling talk. It made me feel swelled to hear him.

One stands that sort of thing once in a way at a club, but a time came when I fancied I was standing too much. He took to me altogether too conspicuously. I could never go into the smoking-room but he would come wallowing towards me, and sometimes he came and gormandised round and about me while I had my lunch. He seemed at times almost to be clinging to me. He was a bore, but not so fearful a bore as to be limited to me and from the first there was something in his manner — almost as though he knew, almost as though he penetrated to the fact that I *might* — that there was a remote, exceptional chance in me that no one else presented.

"I'd give anything to get it down," he would say— "anything," and peer at me over his vast cheeks and pant. Poor old Pyecraft! He has just gonged; no doubt to order another buttered teacake!

He came to the actual thing one day. "Our Pharmacopoeia," he said, "our
Western Pharmacopoeia, is anything but the last word of medical science.

In the East, I've been told — —"

He stopped and stared at me. It was like being at an aquarium.

I was quite suddenly angry with him. "Look here," I said, "who told you about my great-grandmother's recipes?"

"Well," he fenced.

"Every time we've met for a week," I said— "and we've met pretty often — you've given me a broad hint or so about that little secret of mine."

"Well," he said, "now the cat's out of the bag, I'll admit, yes, it is so. I had it — —"

"From Pattison?"

"Indirectly," he said, which I believe was lying, "yes."

"Pattison," I said, "took that stuff at his own risk." He pursed his mouth and bowed.

"My great-grandmother's recipes," I said, "are queer things to handle. My father was near making me promise — —"

"He didn't?"

"No. But he warned me. He himself used one — once."

"Ah! … But do you think —— ? Suppose — suppose there did happen to be one — —"

"The things are curious documents," I said. "Even the smell of 'em …
No!"

But after going so far Pyecraft was resolved I should go farther. I was always a little afraid if I tried his patience too much he would fall on me suddenly and smother me. I own I was weak. But I was also annoyed with Pyecraft. I had got to that state of feeling for him that disposed me to say, "Well, *take* the risk!" The little affair of Pattison to which I have alluded was a different matter altogether. What it was doesn't concern us now, but I knew, anyhow, that the particular recipe I used then was safe. The rest I didn't know so much about, and, on the whole, I was inclined to doubt their safety

pretty completely.

Yet even if Pyecraft got poisoned ——

I must confess the poisoning of Pyecraft struck me as an immense undertaking.

That evening I took that queer, odd-scented sandal-wood box out of my safe, and turned the rustling skins over. The gentleman who wrote the recipes for my great-grandmother evidently had a weakness for skins of a miscellaneous origin, and his handwriting was cramped to the last degree. Some of the things are quite unreadable to me — though my family, with its Indian Civil Service associations, has kept up a knowledge of Hindustani from generation to generation — and none are absolutely plain sailing. But I found the one that I knew was there soon enough, and sat on the floor by my safe for some time looking at it.

"Look here," said I to Pyecraft next day, and snatched the slip away from his eager grasp.

"So far as I can make it out, this is a recipe for Loss of Weight. ("Ah!" said Pyecraft.) I'm not absolutely sure, but I think it's that. And if you take my advice you'll leave it alone. Because, you know — I blacken my blood in your interest, Pyecraft — my ancestors on that side were, so far as I can gather, a jolly queer lot. See?"

"Let me try it," said Pyecraft.

I leant back in my chair. My imagination made one mighty effort and fell flat within me. "What in Heaven's name, Pyecraft," I asked, "do you think you'll look like when you get thin?"

He was impervious to reason, I made him promise never to say a word to me about his disgusting fatness again whatever happened — never, and then I handed him that little piece of skin.

"It's nasty stuff," I said.

"No matter," he said, and took it.

He goggled at it. "But — but—" he said

He had just discovered that it wasn't English.

"To the best of my ability," I said, "I will do you a translation."

I did my best. After that we didn't speak for a fortnight. Whenever he approached me I frowned and motioned him away, and he respected our compact, but at the end of the fortnight he was as fat as ever. And then he got a word in.

“I must speak,” he said, “It isn’t fair. There’s something wrong. It’s done me no good. You’re not doing your great-grandmother justice.”

“Where’s the recipe?”

He produced it gingerly from his pocket-book.

I ran my eye over the items. “Was the egg addled?” I asked.

“No. Ought it to have been?”

“That,” I said, “goes without saying in all my poor dear great-grandmother’s recipes. When condition or quality is not specified you must get the worst. She was drastic or nothing… And there’s one or two possible alternatives to some of these other things. You got *fresh* rattlesnake venom?”

“I got a rattlesnake from Jamrach’s. It cost — it cost — —”

“That’s your affair anyhow. This last item — —”

“I know a man who — —”

“Yes. H’m. Well, I’ll write the alternatives down. So far as I know the language, the spelling of this recipe is particularly atrocious. By-the-by, dog here probably means pariah dog.”

For a month after that I saw Pyecraft constantly at the club and as fat and anxious as ever. He kept our treaty, but at times he broke the spirit of it by shaking his head despondently. Then one day in the cloakroom he said, “Your great-grandmother — —”

“Not a word against her,” I said; and he held his peace.

I could have fancied he had desisted, and I saw him one day talking to three new members about his fatness as though he was in search of other recipes. And then, quite unexpectedly, his telegram came.

“Mr. Formalyn!” bawled a page-boy under my nose, and I took the telegram and opened it at once.

“*For Heaven’s sake come. — Pyecraft.*”

“H’m,” said I, and to tell the truth I was so pleased at the rehabilitation of my great-grandmother’s reputation this evidently promised that I made a most excellent lunch.

I got Pyecraft’s address from the hall porter. Pyecraft inhabited the upper half of a house in Bloomsbury, and I went there so soon as I had done my coffee and Trappistine. I did not wait to finish my cigar.

“Mr. Pyecraft?” said I, at the front door.

They believed he was ill; he hadn’t been out for two days.

“He expects me,” said I, and they sent me up.

I rang the bell at the lattice-door upon the landing.

“He shouldn’t have tried it, anyhow,” I said to myself. “A man who eats like a pig ought to look like a pig.”

An obviously worthy woman, with an anxious face and a carelessly placed cap, came and surveyed me through the lattice.

I gave my name and she let me in in a dubious fashion.

“Well?” said I, as we stood together inside Pyecraft’s piece of the landing.

“‘E said you was to come in if you came,” she said, and regarded me, making no motion to show me anywhere. And then, confidentially, “‘E’s locked in, sir.”

“Locked in?”

“Locked ‘imself in yesterday morning and ‘asn’t let any one in since, sir.
And ever and again *swearing*. Oh, my!”

I stared at the door she indicated by her glances. “In there?” I said.

“Yes, sir.”

“What’s up?”

She shook her head sadly. “‘E keeps on calling for vittles, sir. ‘*Eavy* vittles ‘e wants. I get ‘im what I can. Pork ‘e’s had, sooit puddin’, sossiges, noo bread. Everythink like that. Left outside, if you please, and me go away. ‘E’s eatin’, sir, somethink *awful*.”

There came a piping bawl from inside the door: “That Formalyn?”

“That you, Pyecraft?” I shouted, and went and banged the door.

“Tell her to go away.”

I did.

Then I could hear a curious pattering upon the door, almost like some one feeling for the handle in the dark, and Pyecraft’s familiar grunts.

“It’s all right,” I said, “she’s gone.”

But for a long time the door didn’t open.

I heard the key turn. Then Pyecraft’s voice said, “Come in.”

I turned the handle and opened the door. Naturally I expected to see Pyecraft.

Well, you know, he wasn't there!

I never had such a shock in my life. There was his sitting-room in a state of untidy disorder, plates and dishes among the books and writing things, and several chairs overturned, but Pyecraft ——

"It's all right, old man; shut the door," he said, and then I discovered him.

There he was, right up close to the cornice in the corner by the door, as though some one had glued him to the ceiling. His face was anxious and angry. He panted and gesticulated. "Shut the door," he said. "If that woman gets hold of it — —"

I shut the door, and went and stood away from him and stared.

"If anything gives way and you tumble down," I said, "you'll break your neck, Pyecraft."

"I wish I could," he wheezed.

"A man of your age and weight getting up to kiddish gymnastics — —"

"Don't," he said, and looked agonised.

"I'll tell you," he said, and gesticulated.

"How the deuce," said I, "are you holding on up there?"

And then abruptly I realised that he was not holding on at all, that he was floating up there — just as a gas-filled bladder might have floated in the same position. He began a struggle to thrust himself away from the ceiling and to clamber down the wall to me. "It's that prescription," he panted, as he did so. "Your great-gran — —"

He took hold of a framed engraving rather carelessly as he spoke and it gave way, and he flew back to the ceiling again, while the picture smashed on to the sofa. Bump he went against the ceiling, and I knew then why he was all over white on the more salient curves and angles of his person. He tried again more carefully, coming down by way of the mantel.

It was really a most extraordinary spectacle, that great, fat, apoplectic-looking man upside down and trying to get from the ceiling to the floor. "That prescription," he said. "Too successful."

"How?"

“Loss of weight — almost complete.”

And then, of course, I understood.

“By Jove, Pyecraft,” said I, “what you wanted was a cure for fatness! But you always called it weight. You would call it weight.”

Somehow I was extremely delighted. I quite liked Pyecraft for the time. “Let me help you!” I said, and took his hand and pulled him down. He kicked about, trying to get foothold somewhere. It was very like holding a flag on a windy day.

“That table,” he said, pointing, “is solid mahogany and very heavy. If you can put me under that — —”

I did, and there he wallowed about like a captive balloon, while I stood on his hearthrug and talked to him.

I lit a cigar. “Tell me,” I said, “what happened?”

“I took it,” he said.

“How did it taste?”

“Oh, *beastly*!”

I should fancy they all did. Whether one regards the ingredients or the probable compound or the possible results, almost all my great-grandmother’s remedies appear to me at least to be extraordinarily uninviting. For my own part ——

“I took a little sip first.”

“Yes?”

“And as I felt lighter and better after an hour, I decided to take the draught.”

“My dear Pyecraft!”

“I held my nose,” he explained. “And then I kept on getting lighter and lighter — and helpless, you know.”

He gave way suddenly to a burst of passion. “What the goodness am I to *do?*” he said.

“There’s one thing pretty evident,” I said, “that you mustn’t do. If you go out of doors you’ll go up and up.” I waved an arm upward. “They’d have to send Santos-Dumont after you to bring you down again.”

“I suppose it will wear off?”

I shook my head. “I don’t think you can count on that,” I said.

And then there was another burst of passion, and he kicked out at adjacent chairs and banged the floor. He behaved just as I should

have expected a great, fat, self-indulgent man to behave under trying circumstances — that is to say, very badly. He spoke of me and of my great-grandmother with an utter want of discretion.

"I never asked you to take the stuff," I said.

And generously disregarding the insults he was putting upon me, I sat down in his armchair and began to talk to him in a sober, friendly fashion.

I pointed out to him that this was a trouble he had brought upon himself, and that it had almost an air of poetical justice. He had eaten too much. This he disputed, and for a time we argued the point.

He became noisy and violent, so I desisted from this aspect of his lesson.

"And then," said I, "you committed the sin of euphuism. You called it, not

Fat, which is just and inglorious, but Weight. You — —"

He interrupted to say that he recognised all that. What was he to *do?*

I suggested he should adapt himself to his new conditions. So we came to the really sensible part of the business. I suggested that it would not be difficult for him to learn to walk about on the ceiling with his hands ——

"I can't sleep," he said.

But that was no great difficulty. It was quite possible, I pointed out, to make a shake-up under a wire mattress, fasten the under things on with tapes, and have a blanket, sheet, and coverlet to button at the side. He would have to confide in his housekeeper, I said; and after some squabbling he agreed to that. (Afterwards it was quite delightful to see the beautifully matter-of-fact way with which the good lady took all these amazing inversions.) He could have a library ladder in his room, and all his meals could be laid on the top of his bookcase. We also hit on an ingenious device by which he could get to the floor whenever he wanted, which was simply to put the *British Encyclopaedia* (tenth edition) on the top of his open shelves. He just pulled out a couple of volumes and held on, and down he came. And we agreed there must be iron staples along the skirting, so that he

could cling to those whenever he wanted to get about the room on the lower level.

As we got on with the thing I found myself almost keenly interested. It was I who called in the housekeeper and broke matters to her, and it was I chiefly who fixed up the inverted bed. In fact, I spent two whole days at his flat. I am a handy, interfering sort of man with a screw-driver, and I made all sorts of ingenious adaptations for him — ran a wire to bring his bells within reach, turned all his electric lights up instead of down, and so on. The whole affair was extremely curious and interesting to me, and it was delightful to think of Pyecraft like some great, fat blow-fly, crawling about on his ceiling and clambering round the lintel of his doors from one room to another, and never, never, never coming to the club any more…

Then, you know, my fatal ingenuity got the better of me. I was sitting by his fire drinking his whisky, and he was up in his favourite corner by the cornice, tacking a Turkey carpet to the ceiling, when the idea struck me. "By Jove, Pyecraft!" I said, "all this is totally unnecessary."

And before I could calculate the complete consequences of my notion I blurted it out. "Lead underclothing," said I, and the mischief was done.

Pyecraft received the thing almost in tears. "To be right ways up again — —" he said.

I gave him the whole secret before I saw where it would take me. "Buy sheet lead," I said, "stamp it into discs. Sew 'em all over your underclothes until you have enough. Have lead-soled boots, carry a bag of solid lead, and the thing is done! Instead of being a prisoner here you may go abroad again, Pyecraft; you may travel — —"

A still happier idea came to me. "You need never fear a shipwreck. All you need do is just slip off some or all of your clothes, take the necessary amount of luggage in your hand, and float up in the air — —"

In his emotion he dropped the tack-hammer within an ace of my head. "By
Jove!" he said, "I shall be able to come back to the club again."

“The thing pulled me up short. By Jove!” I said, faintly. “Yes. Of course — you will.”

He did. He does. There he sits behind me now, stuffing — as I live! — a third go of buttered teacake. And no one in the whole world knows — except his housekeeper and me — that he weighs practically nothing; that he is a mere boring mass of assimilatory matter, mere clouds in clothing, *niente, nefas*, the most inconsiderable of men. There he sits watching until I have done this writing. Then, if he can, he will waylay me. He will come billowing up to me…

He will tell me over again all about it, how it feels, how it doesn’t feel, how he sometimes hopes it is passing off a little. And always somewhere in that fat, abundant discourse he will say, “The secret’s keeping, eh? If any one knew of it — I should be so ashamed… Makes a fellow look such a fool, you know. Crawling about on a ceiling and all that…”

And now to elude Pyecraft, occupying, as he does, an admirable strategic position between me and the door.

XXIX.

THE MAGIC SHOP.

I had seen the Magic Shop from afar several times; I had passed it once or twice, a shop window of alluring little objects, magic balls, magic hens, wonderful cones, ventriloquist dolls, the material of the basket trick, packs of cards that *looked* all right, and all that sort of thing, but never had I thought of going in until one day, almost without warning, Gip hauled me by my finger right up to the window, and so conducted himself that there was nothing for it but to take him in. I had not thought the place was there, to tell the truth — a modest-sized frontage in Regent Street, between the picture shop and the place where the chicks run about just out of patent incubators, — but there it was sure enough. I had fancied it was down nearer the Circus, or round the corner in Oxford Street, or even in Holborn; always over the way and a little inaccessible it had been, with something of the mirage in its position; but here it was now quite indisputably, and the fat end of Gip's pointing finger made a noise upon the glass.

"If I was rich," said Gip, dabbing a finger at the Disappearing Egg, "I'd buy myself that. And that" — which was The Crying Baby, Very Human— "and that," which was a mystery, and called, so a neat card asserted, "Buy One and Astonish Your Friends."

"Anything," said Gip, "will disappear under one of those cones. I have read about it in a book.

"And there, dadda, is the Vanishing Halfpenny — only they've put it this way up so's we can't see how it's done."

Gip, dear boy, inherits his mother's breeding, and he did not propose to enter the shop or worry in any way; only, you know, quite unconsciously, he lugged my finger doorward, and he made his interest clear.

"That," he said, and pointed to the Magic Bottle.

"If you had that?" I said; at which promising inquiry he looked up with a sudden radiance.

"I could show it to Jessie," he said, thoughtful as ever of others.

"It's less than a hundred days to your birthday, Gibbles," I said, and laid my hand on the door-handle.

Gip made no answer, but his grip tightened on my finger, and so we came into the shop.

It was no common shop this; it was a magic shop, and all the prancing precedence Gip would have taken in the matter of mere toys was wanting. He left the burthen of the conversation to me.

It was a little, narrow shop, not very well lit, and the door-bell pinged again with a plaintive note as we closed it behind us. For a moment or so we were alone and could glance about us. There was a tiger in *papier-mâché* on the glass case that covered, the low counter — a grave, kind-eyed tiger that waggled his head in a methodical manner; there were several crystal spheres, a china hand holding magic cards, a stock of magic fish-bowls in various sizes, and an immodest magic hat that shamelessly displayed its springs. On the floor were magic mirrors; one to draw you out long and thin, one to swell your head and vanish your legs, and one to make you short and fat like a draught; and while, we were laughing at these the shopman, as I suppose, came in.

At any rate, there he was behind the counter — a curious, sallow, dark man, with one ear larger than the other and a chin like the toe-cap of a boot.

"What can we have the pleasure?" he said, spreading his long magic fingers on the glass case; and so with a start we were aware of him.

"I want," I said, "to buy my little boy a few simple tricks."

"Legerdemain?" he asked. "Mechanical? Domestic?"

"Anything amusing?" said I.

"Um!" said the shopman, and scratched his head for a moment as if thinking. Then, quite distinctly, he drew from his head a glass ball. "Something in this way?" he said, and held it out.

The action was unexpected. I had seen the trick done at entertainments endless times before — it's part of the common stock of conjurers — but I had not expected it here. "That's good," I said, with a laugh.

"Isn't it?" said the shopman.

Gip stretched out his disengaged hand to take this object and found merely a blank palm.

"It's in your pocket," said the shopman, and there it was!

“How much will that be?” I asked.

“We make no charge for glass balls,” said the shopman politely. “We get them” — he picked one out of his elbow as he spoke— “free.” He produced another from the back of his neck, and laid it beside its predecessor on the counter. Gip regarded his glass ball sagely, then directed a look of inquiry at the two on the counter, and finally brought his round-eyed scrutiny to the shopman, who smiled. “You may have those two,” said the shopman, “and, if you *don’t* mind one from my mouth. *So!*”

Gip counselled me mutely for a moment, and then in a profound silence put away the four balls, resumed my reassuring finger, and nerved himself for the next event.

“We get all our smaller tricks in that way,” the shopman remarked.

I laughed in the manner of one who subscribes to a jest. “Instead of going to the wholesale shop,” I said. “Of course, it’s cheaper.”

“In a way,” the shopman said. “Though we pay in the end. But not so heavily — as people suppose… Our larger tricks, and our daily provisions and all the other things we want, we get out of that hat… And you know, sir, if you’ll excuse my saying it, there *isn’t* a wholesale shop, not for Genuine Magic goods, sir. I don’t know if you noticed our inscription — the Genuine Magic Shop.” He drew a business card from his cheek and handed it to me. “Genuine,” he said, with his finger on the word, and added, “There is absolutely no deception, sir.”

He seemed to be carrying out the joke pretty thoroughly, I thought.

He turned to Gip with a smile of remarkable affability. “You, you know, are the Right Sort of Boy.”

I was surprised at his knowing that, because, in the interests of discipline, we keep it rather a secret even at home; but Gip received it in unflinching silence, keeping a steadfast eye on him.

“It’s only the Right Sort of Boy gets through that doorway.”

And, as if by way of illustration, there came a rattling at the door, and a squeaking little voice could be faintly heard. “Nyar! I *warn* ‘a go in there, dadda, I WARN ‘a go in there. Ny-a-a-ah!” and then the accents of a downtrodden parent, urging consolations and

propitiations. “It’s locked, Edward,” he said.

“But it isn’t,” said I.

“It is, sir,” said the shopman, “always — for that sort of child,” and as he spoke we had a glimpse of the other youngster, a little, white face, pallid from sweet-eating and over-sapid food, and distorted by evil passions, a ruthless little egotist, pawing at the enchanted pane. “It’s no good, sir,” said the shopman, as I moved, with my natural helpfulness, doorward, and presently the spoilt child was carried off howling.

“How do you manage that?” I said, breathing a little more freely.

“Magic!” said the shopman, with a careless wave of the hand, and behold! sparks of coloured fire flew out of his fingers and vanished into the shadows of the shop.

“You were saying,” he said, addressing himself to Gip, “before you came in, that you would like one of our ‘Buy One and Astonish your Friends’ boxes?”

Gip, after a gallant effort, said “Yes.”

“It’s in your pocket.”

And leaning over the counter — he really had an extraordinary long body — this amazing person produced the article in the customary conjurer’s manner. “Paper,” he said, and took a sheet out of the empty hat with the springs; “string,” and behold his mouth was a string box, from which he drew an unending thread, which when he had tied his parcel he bit off — and, it seemed to me, swallowed the ball of string. And then he lit a candle at the nose of one of the ventriloquist’s dummies, stuck one of his fingers (which had become sealing-wax red) into the flame, and so sealed the parcel. “Then there was the Disappearing Egg,” he remarked, and produced one from within my coat-breast and packed it, and also The Crying Baby, Very Human. I handed each parcel to Gip as it was ready, and he clasped them to his chest.

He said very little, but his eyes were eloquent; the clutch of his arms was eloquent. He was the playground of unspeakable emotions. These, you know, were *real* Magics.

Then, with a start, I discovered something moving about in my hat — something soft and jumpy. I whipped it off, and a ruffled pigeon — no doubt a confederate — dropped out and ran on the counter, and

went, I fancy, into a cardboard box behind the *papier-mâché* tiger.

"Tut, tut!" said the shopman, dexterously relieving, me of my headdress; "careless bird, and — as I live — nesting!"

He shook my hat, and shook out into his extended hand, two or three eggs, a large marble, a watch, about half a dozen of the inevitable glass balls, and then crumpled, crinkled paper, more and more and more, talking all the time of the way in which people neglect to brush their hats *inside* as well as out — politely, of course, but with a certain personal application. "All sorts of things accumulate, sir… Not *you*, of course, in particular… Nearly every customer… Astonishing what they carry about with them…" The crumpled paper rose and billowed on the counter more and more and more, until he was nearly hidden from us, until he was altogether hidden, and still his voice went on and on. "We none of us know what the fair semblance of a human being may conceal, Sir. Are we all then no better than brushed exteriors, whited sepulchres — —"

His voice stopped — exactly like when you hit a neighbour's gramophone with a well-aimed brick, the same instant silence — and the rustle of the paper stopped, and everything was still…

"Have you done with my hat?" I said, after an interval.

There was no answer.

I stared at Gip, and Gip stared at me, and there were our distortions in the magic mirrors, looking very rum, and grave, and quiet…

"I think we'll go now," I said. "Will you tell me how much all this comes to?…

"I say," I said, on a rather louder note, "I want the bill; and my hat, please."

It might have been a sniff from behind the paper pile…

"Let's look behind the counter, Gip," I said. "He's making fun of us."

I led Gip round the head-wagging tiger, and what do you think there was behind the counter? No one at all! Only my hat on the floor, and a common conjurer's lop-eared white rabbit lost in meditation, and looking as stupid and crumpled as only a conjurer's rabbit can do. I resumed my hat, and the rabbit lolloped a lollop or so out of my way.

“Dadda!” said Gip, in a guilty whisper.

“What is it, Gip?” said I.

“I *do* like this shop, dadda.”

“So should I,” I said to myself, “if the counter wouldn’t suddenly extend itself to shut one off from the door.” But I didn’t call Gip’s attention to that. “Pussy!” he said, with a hand out to the rabbit as it came lolloping past us; “Pussy, do Gip a magic!” and his eyes followed it as it squeezed through a door I had certainly not remarked a moment before. Then this door opened wider, and the man with one ear larger than the other appeared again. He was smiling still, but his eye met mine with something between amusement and defiance. “You’d like to see our showroom, sir,” he said, with an innocent suavity. Gip tugged my finger forward. I glanced at the counter and met the shopman’s eye again. I was beginning to think the magic just a little too genuine. “We haven’t *very* much time,” I said. But somehow we were inside the showroom before I could finish that.

“All goods of the same quality,” said the shopman, rubbing his flexible hands together, “and that is the Best. Nothing in the place that isn’t genuine Magic, and warranted thoroughly rum. Excuse me, sir!”

I felt him pull at something that clung to my coat-sleeve, and then I saw he held a little, wriggling red demon by the tail — the little creature bit and fought and tried to get at his hand — and in a moment he tossed it carelessly behind a counter. No doubt the thing was only an image of twisted indiarubber, but for the moment — ! And his gesture was exactly that of a man who handles some petty biting bit of vermin. I glanced at Gip, but Gip was looking at a magic rocking-horse. I was glad he hadn’t seen the thing. “I say,” I said, in an undertone, and indicating Gip and the red demon with my eyes, “you haven’t many things like *that* about, have you?”

“None of ours! Probably brought it with you,” said the shopman — also in an undertone, and with a more dazzling smile than ever. “Astonishing what people *will*, carry about with them unawares!” And then to Gip, “Do you see anything you fancy here?”

There were many things that Gip fancied there.

He turned to this astonishing tradesman with mingled confidence

and respect. “Is that a Magic Sword?” he said.

“A Magic Toy Sword. It neither bends, breaks, nor cuts the fingers. It renders the bearer invincible in battle against any one under eighteen. Half a crown to seven and sixpence, according to size. These panoplies on cards are for juvenile knights-errant and very useful — shield of safety, sandals of swiftness, helmet of invisibility.”

“Oh, dadda!” gasped Gip.

I tried to find out what they cost, but the shopman did not heed me. He had got Gip now; he had got him away from my finger; he had embarked upon the exposition of all his confounded stock, and nothing was going to stop him. Presently I saw with a qualm of distrust and something very like jealousy that Gip had hold of this person’s finger as usually he has hold of mine. No doubt the fellow was interesting, I thought, and had an interestingly faked lot of stuff, really *good* faked stuff, still ——

I wandered after them, saying very little, but keeping an eye on this prestidigital fellow. After all, Gip was enjoying it. And no doubt when the time came to go we should be able to go quite easily.

It was a long, rambling place, that showroom, a gallery broken up by stands and stalls and pillars, with archways leading off to other departments, in which the queerest-looking assistants loafed and stared at one, and with perplexing mirrors and curtains. So perplexing, indeed, were these that I was presently unable to make out the door by which we had come.

The shopman showed Gip magic trains that ran without steam or clockwork, just as you set the signals, and then some very, very valuable boxes of soldiers that all came alive directly you took off the lid and said —— I myself haven’t a very quick ear, and it was a tongue-twisting sound, but Gip — he has his mother’s ear — got it in no time. “Bravo!” said the shopman, putting the men back into the box unceremoniously and handing it to Gip. “Now,” said the shopman, and in a moment Gip had made them all alive again.

“You’ll take that box?” asked the shopman.

“We’ll take that box,” said I, “unless you charge its full value. In which case it would need a Trust Magnate — —”

“Dear heart! *No!*” and the shopman swept the little men back

again, shut the lid, waved the box in the air, and there it was, in brown paper, tied up and — *with Gip's full name and address on the paper!*

The shopman laughed at my amazement.

"This is the genuine magic," he said. "The real thing."

"It's a little too genuine for my taste," I said again.

After that he fell to showing Gip tricks, odd tricks, and still odder the way they were done. He explained them, he turned them inside out, and there was the dear little chap nodding his busy bit of a head in the sagest manner.

I did not attend as well as I might. "Hey, presto!" said the Magic Shopman, and then would come the clear, small "Hey, presto!" of the boy. But I was distracted by other things. It was being borne in upon me just how tremendously rum this place was; it was, so to speak, inundated by a sense of rumness. There was something a little rum about the fixtures even, about the ceiling, about the floor, about the casually distributed chairs. I had a queer feeling that whenever I wasn't looking at them straight they went askew, and moved about, and played a noiseless puss-in-the-corner behind my back. And the cornice had a serpentine design with masks — masks altogether too expressive for proper plaster.

Then abruptly my attention was caught by one of the odd-looking assistants. He was some way off and evidently unaware of my presence — I saw a sort of three-quarter length of him over a pile of toys and through an arch — and, you know, he was leaning against a pillar in an idle sort of way doing the most horrid things with his features! The particular horrid thing he did was with his nose. He did it just as though he was idle and wanted to amuse himself. First of all it was a short, blobby nose, and then suddenly he shot it out like a telescope, and then out it flew and became thinner and thinner until it was like a long, red flexible whip. Like a thing in a nightmare it was! He flourished it about and flung it forth as a fly-fisher flings his line.

My instant thought was that Gip mustn't see him. I turned about, and there was Gip quite preoccupied with the shopman, and thinking no evil. They were whispering together and looking at me. Gip was standing on a little stool, and the shopman was holding a sort of big drum in his hand.

“Hide and seek, dadda!” cried Gip. “You’re He!”

And before I could do anything to prevent it, the shopman had clapped the big drum over him.

I saw what was up directly. “Take that off,” I cried, “this instant! You’ll frighten the boy. Take it off!”

The shopman with the unequal ears did so without a word, and held the big cylinder towards me to show its emptiness. And the little stool was vacant! In that instant my boy had utterly disappeared!…

You know, perhaps, that sinister something that conies like a hand out of the unseen and grips your heart about. You know it takes your common self away and leaves you tense and deliberate, neither slow nor hasty, neither angry nor afraid. So it was with me.

I came up to this grinning shopman and kicked his stool aside.

“Stop this folly!” I said. “Where is my boy?”

“You see,” he said, still displaying the drum’s interior, “there is no deception — —”

I put out my hand to grip him, and he eluded me by a dexterous movement. I snatched again, and he turned from me and pushed open a door to escape. “Stop!” I said, and he laughed, receding. I leapt after him — into utter darkness.

Thud!

“Lor’ bless my ‘eart! I didn’t see you coming, sir!”

I was in Regent Street, and I had collided with a decent-looking working man; and a yard away, perhaps, and looking a little perplexed with himself, was Gip. There was some sort of apology, and then Gip had turned and come to me with a bright little smile, as though for a moment he had missed me.

And he was carrying four parcels in his arm!

He secured immediate possession of my finger.

For the second I was rather at a loss. I stared round to see the door of the Magic Shop, and, behold, it was not there! There was no door, no shop, nothing, only the common pilaster between the shop where they sell pictures and the window with the chicks! …

I did the only thing possible in that mental tumult; I walked straight to the kerbstone and held up my umbrella for a cab.

“‘Ansoms,” said Gip, in a note of culminating exultation.

I helped him in, recalled my address with an effort, and got in also. Something unusual proclaimed itself in my tail-coat pocket, and I felt and discovered a glass ball. With a petulant expression I flung it into the street.

Gip said nothing.

For a space neither of us spoke.

“Dadda!” said Gip, at last, “that *was* a proper shop!”

I came round with that to the problem of just how the whole thing had seemed to him. He looked completely undamaged — so far, good; he was neither scared nor unhinged, he was simply tremendously satisfied with the afternoon’s entertainment, and there in his arms were the four parcels.

Confound it! what could be in them?

“Um!” I said. “Little boys can’t go to shops like that every day.”

He received this with his usual stoicism, and for a moment I was sorry I was his father and not his mother, and so couldn’t suddenly there, *coram publico,* in our hansom, kiss him. After all, I thought, the thing wasn’t so very bad.

But it was only when we opened the parcels that I really began to be reassured. Three of them contained boxes of soldiers, quite ordinary lead soldiers, but of so good a quality as to make Gip altogether forget that originally these parcels had been Magic Tricks of the only genuine sort, and the fourth contained a kitten, a little living white kitten, in excellent health and appetite and temper.

I saw this unpacking with a sort of provisional relief. I hung about in the nursery for quite an unconscionable time…

That happened six months ago. And now I am beginning to believe it is all right. The kitten had only the magic natural to all kittens, and the soldiers seemed as steady a company as any colonel could desire. And Gip —— ?

The intelligent parent will understand that I have to go cautiously with
Gip.

But I went so far as this one day. I said, “How would you like

your soldiers to come alive, Gip, and march about by themselves?”

“Mine do,” said Gip. “I just have to say a word I know before I open the lid.”

“Then they march about alone?”

“Oh, *quite*, dadda. I shouldn’t like them if they didn’t do that.”

I displayed no unbecoming surprise, and since then I have taken occasion to drop in upon him once or twice, unannounced, when the soldiers were about, but so far I have never discovered them performing in anything like a magical manner…

It’s so difficult to tell.

There’s also a question of finance. I have an incurable habit of paying bills. I have been up and down Regent Street several times looking for that shop. I am inclined to think, indeed, that in that matter honour is satisfied, and that, since Gip’s name and address are known to them, I may very well leave it to these people, whoever they may be, to send in their bill in their own time.

XXX.

THE EMPIRE OF THE ANTS.

When Captain Gerilleau received instructions to take his new gunboat, the *Benjamin Constant,* to Badama on the Batemo arm of the Guaramadema and there assist the inhabitants against a plague of ants, he suspected the authorities of mockery. His promotion had been romantic and irregular, the affections of a prominent Brazilian lady and the captain's liquid eyes had played a part in the process, and the *Diario* and *O Futuro* had been lamentably disrespectful in their comments. He felt he was to give further occasion for disrespect.

He was a Creole, his conceptions of etiquette and discipline were pure-blooded Portuguese, and it was only to Holroyd, the Lancashire engineer who had come over with the boat, and as an exercise in the use of English — his "th" sounds were very uncertain — that he opened his heart.

"It is in effect," he said, "to make me absurd! What can a man do against ants? Dey come, dey go."

"They say," said Holroyd, "that these don't go. That chap you said was a
Sambo — —"

"Zambo; — it is a sort of mixture of blood."

"Sambo. He said the people are going!"

The captain smoked fretfully for a time. "Dese tings 'ave to happen," he said at last. "What is it? Plagues of ants and suchlike as God wills. Dere was a plague in Trinidad — the little ants that carry leaves. Orl der orange-trees, all der mangoes! What does it matter? Sometimes ant armies come into your houses — fighting ants; a different sort. You go and they clean the house. Then you come back again; — the house is clean, like new! No cockroaches, no fleas, no jiggers in the floor."

"That Sambo chap," said Holroyd, "says these are a different sort of ant."

The captain shrugged his shoulders, fumed, and gave his attention

to a cigarette.

Afterwards he reopened the subject. “My dear ‘Olroyd, what am I to do about dese infernal ants?”

The captain reflected. “It is ridiculous,” he said. But in the afternoon he put on his full uniform and went ashore, and jars and boxes came back to the ship and subsequently he did. And Holroyd sat on deck in the evening coolness and smoked profoundly and marvelled at Brazil. They were six days up the Amazon, some hundreds of miles from the ocean, and east and west of him there was a horizon like the sea, and to the south nothing but a sand-bank island with some tufts of scrub. The water was always running like a sluice, thick with dirt, animated with crocodiles and hovering birds, and fed by some inexhaustible source of tree trunks; and the waste of it, the headlong waste of it, filled his soul. The town of Alemquer, with its meagre church, its thatched sheds for houses, its discoloured ruins of ampler days, seemed a little thing lost in this wilderness of Nature, a sixpence dropped on Sahara. He was a young man, this was his first sight of the tropics, he came straight from England, where Nature is hedged, ditched, and drained, into the perfection of submission, and he had suddenly discovered the insignificance of man. For six days they had been steaming up from the sea by unfrequented channels; and man had been as rare as a rare butterfly. One saw one day a canoe, another day a distant station, the next no men at all. He began to perceive that man is indeed a rare animal, having but a precarious hold upon this land.

He perceived it more clearly as the days passed, and he made his devious way to the Batemo, in the company of this remarkable commander, who ruled over one big gun, and was forbidden to waste his ammunition. Holroyd was learning Spanish industriously, but he was still in the present tense and substantive stage of speech, and the only other person who had any words of English was a negro stoker, who had them all wrong. The second in command was a Portuguese, da Cunha, who spoke French, but it was a different sort of French from the French Holroyd had learnt in Southport, and their intercourse was confined to politenesses and simple propositions about the weather. And the weather, like everything else in this amazing new world, the weather had no human aspect, and was hot

by night and hot by day, and the air steam, even the wind was hot steam, smelling of vegetation in decay: and the alligators and the strange birds, the flies of many sorts and sizes, the beetles, the ants, the snakes and monkeys seemed to wonder what man was doing in an atmosphere that had no gladness in its sunshine and no coolness in its night. To wear clothing was intolerable, but to cast it aside was to scorch by day, and expose an ampler area to the mosquitoes by night; to go on deck by day was to be blinded by glare and to stay below was to suffocate. And in the daytime came certain flies, extremely clever and noxious about one's wrist and ankle. Captain Gerilleau, who was Holroyd's sole distraction from these physical distresses, developed into a formidable bore, telling the simple story of his heart's affections day by day, a string of anonymous women, as if he was telling beads. Sometimes he suggested sport, and they shot at alligators, and at rare intervals they came to human aggregations in the waste of trees, and stayed for a day or so, and drank and sat about, and, one night, danced with Creole girls, who found Holroyd's poor elements of Spanish, without either past tense or future, amply sufficient for their purposes. But these were mere luminous chinks in the long grey passage of the streaming river, up which the throbbing engines beat. A certain liberal heathen deity, in the shape of a demi-john, held seductive court aft, and, it is probable, forward.

But Gerilleau learnt things about the ants, more things and more, at this stopping-place and that, and became interested in his mission.

"Dey are a new sort of ant," he said. "We have got to be — what do you call it? — entomologie? Big. Five centimetres! Some bigger! It is ridiculous. We are like the monkeys — sent to pick insects… But dey are eating up the country."

He burst out indignantly. "Suppose — suddenly, there are complications with Europe. Here am I — soon we shall be above the Rio Negro — and my gun, useless!"

He nursed his knee and mused.

"Dose people who were dere at de dancing place, dey 'ave come down. Dey 'ave lost all they got. De ants come to deir house one afternoon. Everyone run out. You know when de ants come one must — everyone runs out and they go over the house. If you stayed they'd eat you. See? Well, presently dey go back; dey say, 'The ants

‘ave gone.’ … De ants *‘aven’t* gone. Dey try to go in — de son, ‘e goes in. De ants fight.”

“Swarm over him?”

“Bite ‘im. Presently he comes out again — screaming and running. He runs past them to the river. See? He gets into de water and drowns de ants — yes.” Gerilleau paused, brought his liquid eyes close to Holroyd’s face, tapped Holroyd’s knee with his knuckle. “That night he dies, just as if he was stung by a snake.”

“Poisoned — by the ants?”

“Who knows?” Gerilleau shrugged his shoulders. “Perhaps they bit him badly… When I joined dis service I joined to fight men. Dese things, dese ants, dey come and go. It is no business for men.”

After that he talked frequently of the ants to Holroyd, and whenever they chanced to drift against any speck of humanity in that waste of water and sunshine and distant trees, Holroyd’s improving knowledge of the language enabled him to recognise the ascendant word *Saüba*, more and more completely dominating the whole.

He perceived the ants were becoming interesting, and the nearer he drew to them the more interesting they became. Gerilleau abandoned his old themes almost suddenly, and the Portuguese lieutenant became a conversational figure; he knew something about the leaf-cutting ant, and expanded his knowledge. Gerilleau sometimes rendered what he had to tell to Holroyd. He told of the little workers that swarm and fight, and the big workers that command and rule, and how these latter always crawled to the neck and how their bites drew blood. He told how they cut leaves and made fungus beds, and how their nests in Caracas are sometimes a hundred yards across. Two days the three men spent disputing whether ants have eyes. The discussion grew dangerously heated on the second afternoon, and Holroyd saved the situation by going ashore in a boat to catch ants and see. He captured various specimens and returned, and some had eyes and some hadn’t. Also, they argued, do ants bite or sting?

“Dese ants,” said Gerilleau, after collecting information at a rancho, “have big eyes. They don’t run about blind — not as most ants do. No! Dey get in corners and watch what you do.”

“And they sting?” asked Holroyd.

“Yes. Dey sting. Dere is poison in the sting.” He meditated. “I do not see what men can do against ants. Dey come and go.”

“But these don’t go.”

“They will,” said Gerilleau.

Past Tamandu there is a long low coast of eighty miles without any population, and then one comes to the confluence of the main river and the Batemo arm like a great lake, and then the forest came nearer, came at last intimately near. The character of the channel changes, snags abound, and the *Benjamin Constant* moored by a cable that night, under the very shadow of dark trees. For the first time for many days came a spell of coolness, and Holroyd and Gerilleau sat late, smoking cigars and enjoying this delicious sensation. Gerilleau’s mind was full of ants and what they could do. He decided to sleep at last, and lay down on a mattress on deck, a man hopelessly perplexed, his last words, when he already seemed asleep, were to ask, with a flourish of despair, “What can one do with ants?… De whole thing is absurd.”

Holroyd was left to scratch his bitten wrists, and meditate alone.

He sat on the bulwark and listened to the little changes in Gerilleau’s breathing until he was fast asleep, and then the ripple and lap of the stream took his mind, and brought back that sense of immensity that had been growing upon him since first he had left Para and come up the river. The monitor showed but one small light, and there was first a little talking forward and then stillness. His eyes went from the dim black outlines of the middle works of the gunboat towards the bank, to the black overwhelming mysteries of forest, lit now and then by a fire-fly, and never still from the murmur of alien and mysterious activities…

It was the inhuman immensity of this land that astonished and oppressed him. He knew the skies were empty of men, the stars were specks in an incredible vastness of space; he knew the ocean was enormous and untamable, but in England he had come to think of the land as man’s. In England it is indeed man’s, the wild things live by sufferance, grow on lease, everywhere the roads, the fences, and absolute security runs. In an atlas, too, the land is man’s, and all coloured to show his claim to it — in vivid contrast to the universal independent blueness of the sea. He had taken it for granted that a

day would come when everywhere about the earth, plough and culture, light tramways and good roads, an ordered security, would prevail. But now, he doubted.

This forest was interminable, it had an air of being invincible, and Man seemed at best an infrequent precarious intruder. One travelled for miles, amidst the still, silent struggle of giant trees, of strangulating creepers, of assertive flowers, everywhere the alligator, the turtle, and endless varieties of birds and insects seemed at home, dwelt irreplaceably — but man, man at most held a footing upon resentful clearings, fought weeds, fought beasts and insects for the barest foothold, fell a prey to snake and beast, insect and fever, and was presently carried away. In many places down the river he had been manifestly driven back, this deserted creek or that preserved the name of a *casa*, and here and there ruinous white walls and a shattered tower enforced the lesson. The puma, the jaguar, were more the masters here…

Who were the real masters?

In a few miles of this forest there must be more ants than there are men in the whole world! This seemed to Holroyd a perfectly new idea. In a few thousand years men had emerged from barbarism to a stage of civilisation that made them feel lords of the future and masters of the earth! But what was to prevent the ants evolving also? Such ants as one knew lived in little communities of a few thousand individuals, made no concerted efforts against the greater world. But they had a language, they had an intelligence! Why should things stop at that any more than men had stopped at the barbaric stage? Suppose presently the ants began to store knowledge, just as men had done by means of books and records, use weapons, form great empires, sustain a planned and organised war?

Things came back to him that Gerilleau had gathered about these ants they were approaching. They used a poison like the poison of snakes. They obeyed greater leaders even as the leaf-cutting ants do. They were carnivorous, and where they came they stayed…

The forest was very still. The water lapped incessantly against the side. About the lantern overhead there eddied a noiseless whirl of phantom moths.

Gerilleau stirred in the darkness and sighed. “What can one *do?*”

he murmured, and turned over and was still again.

Holroyd was roused from meditations that were becoming sinister by the hum of a mosquito.

II.

The next morning Holroyd learnt they were within forty kilometres of Badama, and his interest in the banks intensified. He came up whenever an opportunity offered to examine his surroundings. He could see no signs of human occupation whatever, save for a weedy ruin of a house and the green-stained facade of the long-deserted monastery at Mojû, with a forest tree growing out of a vacant window space, and great creepers netted across its vacant portals. Several flights of strange yellow butterflies with semi-transparent wings crossed the river that morning, and many alighted on the monitor and were killed by the men. It was towards afternoon that they came upon the derelict *cuberta*.

She did not at first appear to be derelict; both her sails were set and hanging slack in the afternoon calm, and there was the figure of a man sitting on the fore planking beside the shipped sweeps. Another man appeared to be sleeping face downwards on the sort of longitudinal bridge these big canoes have in the waist. But it was presently apparent, from the sway of her rudder and the way she drifted into the course of the gunboat, that something was out of order with her. Gerilleau surveyed her through a field-glass, and became interested in the queer darkness of the face of the sitting man, a red-faced man he seemed, without a nose — crouching he was rather than sitting, and the longer the captain looked the less he liked to look at him, and the less able he was to take his glasses away.

But he did so at last, and went a little way to call up Holroyd. Then he went back to hail the cuberta. He ailed her again, and so she drove past him. *Santa Rosa* stood out clearly as her name.

As she came by and into the wake of the monitor, she pitched a little, and suddenly the figure of the crouching an collapsed as though all its joints had given way. His hat fell off, his head was not nice to look at, and his body flopped lax and rolled out of sight behind the

bulwarks.

"Caramba!" cried Gerilleau, and resorted to Holroyd forthwith.

Holroyd was half-way up the companion. "Did you see dat?" said the captain.

"Dead!" said Holroyd. "Yes. You'd better send a boat aboard. There's something wrong."

"Did you — by any chance — see his face?"

"What was it like?"

"It was — ugh! — I have no words." And the captain suddenly turned his back on Holroyd and became an active and strident commander.

The gunboat came about, steamed parallel to the erratic course of the canoe, and dropped the boat with Lieutenant da Cunha and three sailors to board her. Then the curiosity of the captain made him draw up almost alongside as the lieutenant got aboard, so that the whole of the *Santa Rosa*, deck and hold, was visible to Holroyd.

He saw now clearly that the sole crew of the vessel was these two dead men, and though he could not see their faces, he saw by their outstretched hands, which were all of ragged flesh, that they had been subjected to some strange exceptional process of decay. For a moment his attention concentrated on those two enigmatical bundles of dirty clothes and laxly flung limbs, and then his eyes went forward to discover the open hold piled high with trunks and cases, and aft, to where the little cabin gaped inexplicably empty. Then he became aware that the planks of the middle decking were dotted with moving black specks.

His attention was riveted by these specks. They were all walking in directions radiating from the fallen man in a manner — the image came unsought to his mind — like the crowd dispersing from a bull-fight.

He became aware of Gerilleau beside him. "Capo," he said, "have you your glasses? Can you focus as closely as those planks there?"

Gerilleau made an effort, grunted, and handed him the glasses.

There followed a moment of scrutiny. "It's ants," said the Englishman, and handed the focused field-glass back to Gerilleau.

His impression of them was of a crowd of large black ants, very like ordinary ants except for their size, and for the fact that some of

the larger of them bore a sort of clothing of grey. But at the time his inspection was too brief for particulars. The head of Lieutenant da Cunha appeared over the side of the cuberta, and a brief colloquy ensued.

"You must go aboard," said Gerilleau.

The lieutenant objected that the boat was full of ants.

"You have your boots," said Gerilleau.

The lieutenant changed the subject. "How did these en die?" he asked.

Captain Gerilleau embarked upon speculations that Holroyd could not follow, and the two men disputed with a certain increasing vehemence. Holroyd took up the field-glass and resumed his scrutiny, first of the ants and then of the dead man amidships.

He has described these ants to me very particularly.

He says they were as large as any ants he has ever seen, black and moving with a steady deliberation very different from the mechanical fussiness of the common ant. About one in twenty was much larger than its fellows, and with an exceptionally large head. These reminded him at once of the master workers who are said to rule over the leaf-cutter ants; like them they seemed to be directing and co-ordinating the general movements. They tilted their bodies back in a manner altogether singular as if they made some use of the fore feet. And he had a curious fancy that he was too far off to verify, that most of these ants of both kinds were wearing accoutrements, had things strapped about their bodies by bright white bands like white metal threads…

He put down the glasses abruptly, realising that the question of discipline between the captain and his subordinate had become acute.

"It is your duty," said the captain, "to go aboard. It is my instructions."

The lieutenant seemed on the verge of refusing. The head of one of the mulatto sailors appeared beside him.

"I believe these men were killed by the ants," said Holroyd abruptly in
English.

The captain burst into a rage. He made no answer to Holroyd. “I have commanded you to go aboard,” he screamed to his subordinate in Portuguese. “If you do not go aboard forthwith it is mutiny — rank mutiny. Mutiny and cowardice! Where is the courage that should animate us? I will have you in irons, I will have you shot like a dog.” He began a torrent of abuse and curses, he danced to and fro. He shook his fists, he behaved as if beside himself with rage, and the lieutenant, white and still, stood looking at him. The crew appeared forward, with amazed faces.

Suddenly, in a pause of this outbreak, the lieutenant came to some heroic decision, saluted, drew himself together and clambered upon the deck of the cuberta.

“Ah!” said Gerilleau, and his mouth shut like a trap. Holroyd saw the ants retreating before da Cunha’s boots. The Portuguese walked slowly to the fallen man, stooped down, hesitated, clutched his coat and turned him over. A black swarm of ants rushed out of the clothes, and da Cunha stepped back very quickly and trod two or three times on the deck.

Holroyd put up the glasses. He saw the scattered ants about the invader’s feet, and doing what he had never seen ants doing before. They had nothing of the blind movements of the common ant; they were looking at him — as a rallying crowd of men might look at some gigantic monster that had dispersed it.

“How did he die?” the captain shouted.

Holroyd understood the Portuguese to say the body was too much eaten to tell.

“What is there forward?” asked Gerilleau.

The lieutenant walked a few paces, and began his answer in Portuguese. He stopped abruptly and beat off something from his leg. He made some peculiar steps as if he was trying to stamp on something invisible, and went quickly towards the side. Then he controlled himself, turned about, walked deliberately forward to the hold, clambered up to the fore decking, from which the sweeps are worked, stooped for a time over the second man, groaned audibly, and made his way back and aft to the cabin, moving very rigidly. He turned and began a conversation with his captain, cold and respectful in tone on either side, contrasting vividly with the wrath and insult of

a few moments before. Holroyd gathered only fragments of its purport.

He reverted to the field-glass, and was surprised to find the ants had vanished from all the exposed surfaces of the deck. He turned towards the shadows beneath the decking, and it seemed to him they were full of watching eyes.

The cuberta, it was agreed; was derelict, but too full of ants to put men aboard to sit and sleep: it must be towed. The lieutenant went forward to take in and adjust the cable, and the men in the boat stood up to be ready to help him. Holroyd's glasses searched the canoe.

He became more and more impressed by the fact that a great if minute and furtive activity was going on. He perceived that a number of gigantic ants — they seemed nearly a couple of inches in length — carrying oddly-shaped burthens for which he could imagine no use — were moving in rushes from one point of obscurity to another. They did not move in columns across the exposed places, but in open, spaced-out lines, oddly suggestive of the rushes of modern infantry advancing under fire. A number were taking cover under the dead man's clothes, and a perfect swarm was gathering along the side over which da Cunha must presently go.

He did not see them actually rush for the lieutenant as he returned, but he has no doubt they did make a concerted rush. Suddenly the lieutenant was shouting and cursing and beating at his legs. "I'm stung!" he shouted, with a face of hate and accusation towards Gerilleau.

Then he vanished over the side, dropped into his boat, and plunged at once into the water. Holroyd heard the splash.

The three men in the boat pulled him out and brought him aboard, and that night he died.

III.

Holroyd and the captain came out of the cabin in which the swollen and contorted body of the lieutenant lay and stood together at the stern of the monitor, staring at the sinister vessel they trailed behind them. It was a close, dark night that had only phantom flickerings of sheet lightning to illuminate it. The cuberta, a vague black triangle,

rocked about in the steamer's wake, her sails bobbing and flapping, and the black smoke from the funnels, spark-lit ever and again, streamed over her swaying masts.

Gerilleau's mind was inclined to run on the unkind things the lieutenant had said in the heat of his last fever.

"He says I murdered 'im," he protested. "It is simply absurd. Someone *'ad* to go aboard. Are we to run away from these confounded ants whenever they show up?"

Holroyd said nothing. He was thinking of a disciplined rush of little black shapes across bare sunlit planking.

"It was his place to go," harped Gerilleau. "He died in the execution of his duty. What has he to complain of? Murdered!… But the poor fellow was — what is it? — demented. He was not in his right mind. The poison swelled him… U'm."

They came to a long silence.

"We will sink that canoe — burn it."

"And then?"

The inquiry irritated Gerilleau. His shoulders went up, his hands flew out at right angles from his body. "What is one to *do?*" he said, his voice going up to an angry squeak.

"Anyhow," he broke out vindictively, "every ant in dat cuberta! — I will burn dem alive!"

Holroyd was not moved to conversation. A distant ululation of howling monkeys filled the sultry night with foreboding sounds, and as the gunboat drew near the black mysterious banks this was reinforced by a depressing clamour of frogs.

"What is one to *do?*" the captain repeated after a vast interval, and suddenly becoming active and savage and blasphemous, decided to burn the *Santa Rosa* without further delay. Everyone aboard was pleased by that idea, everyone helped with zest; they pulled in the cable, cut it, and dropped the boat and fired her with tow and kerosene, and soon the cuberta was crackling and flaring merrily amidst the immensities of the tropical night. Holroyd watched the mounting yellow flare against the blackness, and the livid flashes of sheet lightning that came and went above the forest summits, throwing them into momentary silhouette, and his stoker stood behind him watching also.

The stoker was stirred to the depths of his linguistics. "*Saüba* go pop, pop," he said, "Wahaw" and laughed richly.

But Holroyd was thinking that these little creatures on the decked canoe had also eyes and brains.

The whole thing impressed him as incredibly foolish and wrong, but — what was one to *do*? This question came back enormously reinforced on the morrow, when at last the gunboat reached Badama.

This place, with its leaf-thatch-covered houses and sheds, its creeper-invaded sugar-mill, its little jetty of timber and canes, was very still in the morning heat, and showed never a sign of living men. Whatever ants there were at that distance were too small to see.

"All the people have gone," said Gerilleau, "but we will do one thing anyhow. We will 'oot and vissel."

So Holroyd hooted and whistled.

Then the captain fell into a doubting fit of the worst kind. "Dere is one thing we can do," he said presently, "What's that?" said Holroyd.

"'Oot and vissel again."

So they did.

The captain walked his deck and gesticulated to himself. He seemed to have many things on his mind. Fragments of speeches came from his lips. He appeared to be addressing some imaginary public tribunal either in Spanish or Portuguese. Holroyd's improving ear detected something about ammunition. He came out of these preoccupations suddenly into English. "My dear 'Olroyd!" he cried, and broke off with "But what *can* one do?"

They took the boat and the field-glasses, and went close in to examine the place. They made out a number of big ants, whose still postures had a certain effect of watching them, dotted about the edge of the rude embarkation jetty. Gerilleau tried ineffectual pistol shots at these. Holroyd thinks he distinguished curious earthworks running between the nearer houses, that may have been the work of the insect conquerors of those human habitations. The explorers pulled past the jetty, and became aware of a human skeleton wearing a loin cloth, and very bright and clean and shining, lying beyond. They came to a pause regarding this…

"I 'ave all dose lives to consider," said Gerilleau suddenly.

Holroyd turned and stared at the captain, realising slowly that he referred to the unappetising mixture of races that constituted his crew.

"To send a landing party — it is impossible — impossible. They will be poisoned, they will swell, they will swell up and abuse me and die. It is totally impossible… If we land, I must land alone, alone, in thick boots and with my life in my hand. Perhaps I should live. Or again — I might not land. I do not know. I do not know."

Holroyd thought he did, but he said nothing.

"De whole thing," said Gerilleau suddenly, "'as been got up to make me ridiculous. De whole thing!"

They paddled about and regarded the clean white skeleton from various points of view, and then they returned to the gunboat. Then Gerilleau's indecisions became terrible. Steam was got up, and in the afternoon the monitor went on up the river with an air of going to ask somebody something, and by sunset came back again and anchored. A thunderstorm gathered and broke furiously, and then the night became beautifully cool and quiet and everyone slept on deck. Except Gerilleau, who tossed about and muttered. In the dawn he awakened Holroyd.

"Lord!" said Holroyd, "what now?"

"I have decided," said the captain.

"What — to land?" said Holroyd, sitting up brightly.

"No!" said the captain, and was for a time very reserved. "I have decided," he repeated, and Holroyd manifested symptoms of impatience.

"Well, — yes," said the captain, "*I shall fire de big gun!*"

And he did! Heaven knows what the ants thought of it, but he did. He fired it twice with great sternness and ceremony. All the crew had wadding in their ears, and there was an effect of going into action about the whole affair, and first they hit and wrecked the old sugar-mill, and then they smashed the abandoned store behind the jetty. And then Gerilleau experienced the inevitable reaction.

"It is no good," he said to Holroyd; "no good at all. No sort of bally good. We must go back — for instructions. Dere will be de devil of a row about dis ammunition — oh! de *devil* of a row! You don't know, 'Olroyd…"

He stood regarding the world in infinite perplexity for a space.

"But what else was there to *do?*" he cried.

In the afternoon the monitor started down stream again, and in the evening a landing party took the body of the lieutenant and buried it on the bank upon which the new ants have so far not appeared…

IV.

I heard this story in a fragmentary state from Holroyd not three weeks ago.

These new ants have got into his brain, and he has come back to England with the idea, as he says, of "exciting people" about them "before it is too late." He says they threaten British Guiana, which cannot be much over a trifle of a thousand miles from their present sphere of activity, and that the Colonial Office ought to get to work upon them at once. He declaims with great passion: "These are intelligent ants. Just think what that means!"

There can be no doubt they are a serious pest, and that the Brazilian Government is well advised in offering a prize of five hundred pounds for some effectual method of extirpation. It is certain too that since they first appeared in the hills beyond Badama, about three years ago, they have achieved extraordinary conquests. The whole of the south bank of the Batemo River, for nearly sixty miles, they have in their effectual occupation; they have driven men out completely, occupied plantations and settlements, and boarded and captured at least one ship. It is even said they have in some inexplicable way bridged the very considerable Capuarana arm and pushed many miles towards the Amazon itself. There can be little doubt that they are far more reasonable and with a far better social organisation than any previously known ant species; instead of being in dispersed societies they are organised into what is in effect a single nation; but their peculiar and immediate formidableness lies not so much in this as in the intelligent use they make of poison against their larger enemies. It would seem this poison of theirs is closely akin to snake poison, and it is highly probable they actually manufacture it, and that the larger individuals among them carry the needle-like crystals of it in their attacks upon men.

Of course it is extremely difficult to get any detailed information about these new competitors for the sovereignty of the globe. No eye-witnesses of their activity, except for such glimpses as Holroyd's, have survived the encounter. The most extraordinary legends of their prowess and capacity are in circulation in the region of the Upper Amazon, and grow daily as the steady advance of the invader stimulates men's imaginations through their fears. These strange little creatures are credited not only with the use of implements and a knowledge of fire and metals and with organised feats of engineering that stagger our northern minds — unused as we are to such feats as that of the Saübas of Rio de Janeiro, who in 1841 drove a tunnel under the Parahyba where it is as wide as the Thames at London Bridge — but with an organised and detailed method of record and communication analogous to our books. So far their action has been a steady progressive settlement, involving the flight or slaughter of every human being in the new areas they invade. They are increasing rapidly in numbers, and Holroyd at least is firmly convinced that they will finally dispossess man over the whole of tropical South America.

And why should they stop at tropical South America?

Well, there they are, anyhow. By 1911 or thereabouts, if they go on as they are going, they ought to strike the Capuarana Extension Railway, and force themselves upon the attention of the European capitalist.

By 1920 they will be half-way down the Amazon. I fix 1950 or '60 at the latest for the discovery of Europe.

XXXI.

THE DOOR IN THE WALL.

I.

One confidential evening, not three months ago, Lionel Wallace told me this story of the Door in the Wall. And at the time I thought that so far as he was concerned it was a true story.

He told it me with such a direct simplicity of conviction that I could not do otherwise than believe in him. But in the morning, in my own flat, I woke to a different atmosphere, and as I lay in bed and recalled the things he had told me, stripped of the glamour of his earnest slow voice, denuded of the focussed, shaded table light, the shadowy atmosphere that wrapped about him and me, and the pleasant bright things, the dessert and glasses and napery of the dinner we had shared, making them for the time a bright little world quite cut off from everyday realities, I saw it all as frankly incredible. "He was mystifying!" I said, and then: "How well he did it!… It isn't quite the thing I should have expected him, of all people, to do well."

Afterwards as I sat up in bed and sipped my morning tea, I found myself trying to account for the flavour of reality that perplexed me in his impossible reminiscences, by supposing they did in some way suggest, present, convey — I hardly know which word to use — experiences it was otherwise impossible to tell.

Well, I don't resort to that explanation now. I have got over my intervening doubts. I believe now, as I believed at the moment of telling, that Wallace did to the very best of his ability strip the truth of his secret for me. But whether he himself saw, or only thought he saw, whether he himself was the possessor of an inestimable privilege or the victim of a fantastic dream, I cannot pretend to guess. Even the facts of his death, which ended my doubts for ever, throw no light on that.

That much the reader must judge for himself.

I forget now what chance comment or criticism of mine moved so reticent a man to confide in me. He was, I think, defending himself against an imputation of slackness and unreliability I had made in relation to a great public movement, in which he had disappointed

me. But he plunged suddenly. “I have,” he said, “a preoccupation ——

“I know,” he went on, after a pause, “I have been negligent. The fact is — it isn’t a case of ghosts or apparitions — but — it’s an odd thing to tell of, Redmond — I am haunted. I am haunted by something — that rather takes the light out of things, that fills me with longings…”

He paused, checked by that English shyness that so often overcomes us when we would speak of moving or grave or beautiful things. “You were at Saint Aethelstan’s all through,” he said, and for a moment that seemed to me quite irrelevant. “Well” — and he paused. Then very haltingly at first, but afterwards more easily, he began to tell of the thing that was hidden in his life, the haunting memory of a beauty and a happiness that filled his heart with insatiable longings, that made all the interests and spectacle of worldly life seem dull and tedious and vain to him.

Now that I have the clue to it, the thing seems written visibly in his face. I have a photograph in which that look of detachment has been caught and intensified. It reminds me of what a woman once said of him — a woman who had loved him greatly. “Suddenly,” she said, “the interest goes out of him. He forgets you. He doesn’t care a rap for you — under his very nose…”

Yet the interest was not always out of him, and when he was holding his attention to a thing Wallace could contrive to be an extremely successful man. His career, indeed, is set with successes. He left me behind him long ago: he soared up over my head, and cut a figure in the world that I couldn’t cut — anyhow. He was still a year short of forty, and they say now that he would have been in office and very probably in the new Cabinet if he had lived. At school he always beat me without effort — as it were by nature. We were at school together at Saint Aethelstan’s College in West Kensington for almost all our school-time. He came into the school as my coequal, but he left far above me, in a blaze of scholarships and brilliant performance. Yet I think I made a fair average running. And it was at school I heard first of the “Door in the Wall” — that I was to hear of a second time only a month before his death.

To him at least the Door in the Wall was a real door, leading

through a real wall to immortal realities. Of that I am now quite assured.

And it came into his life quite early, when he was a little fellow between five and six. I remember how, as he sat making his confession to me with a slow gravity, he reasoned and reckoned the date of it. “There was,” he said, “a crimson Virginia creeper in it — all one bright uniform crimson, in a clear amber sunshine against a white wall. That came into the impression somehow, though I don’t clearly remember how, and there were horse-chestnut leaves upon the clean pavement outside the green door. They were blotched yellow and green, you know, not brown nor dirty, so that they must have been new fallen. I take it that means October. I look out for horse-chestnut leaves every year and I ought to know.

“If I’m right in that, I was about five years and four months old.”

He was, he said, rather a precocious little boy — he learnt to talk at an abnormally early age, and he was so sane and “old-fashioned,” as people say, that he was permitted an amount of initiative that most children scarcely attain by seven or eight. His mother died when he was two, and he was under the less vigilant and authoritative care of a nursery governess. His father was a stern, preoccupied lawyer, who gave him little attention, and expected great things of him. For all his brightness he found life a little grey and dull, I think. And one day he wandered.

He could not recall the particular neglect that enabled him to get away, nor the course he took among the West Kensington roads. All that had faded among the incurable blurs of memory. But the white wall and the green door stood out quite distinctly.

As his memory of that childish experience ran, he did at the very first sight of that door experience a peculiar emotion, an attraction, a desire to get to the door and open it and walk in. And at the same time he had the clearest conviction that either it was unwise or it was wrong of him — he could not tell which — to yield to this attraction. He insisted upon it as a curious thing that he knew from the very beginning — unless memory has played him the queerest trick — that the door was unfastened, and that he could go in as he chose.

I seem to see the figure of that little boy, drawn and repelled. And it was very clear in his mind, too, though why it should be so was

never explained, that his father would be very angry if he went in through that door.

Wallace described all these moments of hesitation to me with the utmost particularity. He went right past the door, and then, with his hands in his pockets and making an infantile attempt to whistle, strolled right along beyond the end of the wall. There he recalls a number of mean dirty shops, and particularly that of a plumber and decorator with a dusty disorder of earthenware pipes, sheet lead, ball taps, pattern books of wall paper, and tins of enamel. He stood pretending to examine these things, and *coveting*, passionately desiring, the green door.

Then, he said, he had a gust of emotion. He made a run for it, lest hesitation should grip him again; he went plump with outstretched hand through the green door and let it slam behind him. And so, in a trice, he came into the garden that has haunted all his life.

It was very difficult for Wallace to give me his full sense of that garden into which he came.

There was something in the very air of it that exhilarated, that gave one a sense of lightness and good happening and well-being; there was something in the sight of it that made all its colour clean and perfect and subtly luminous. In the instant of coming into it one was exquisitely glad — as only in rare moments, and when one is young and joyful one can be glad in this world. And everything was beautiful there…

Wallace mused before he went on telling me. "You see," he said, with the doubtful inflection of a man who pauses at incredible things, "there were two great panthers there… Yes, spotted panthers. And I was not afraid. There was a long wide path with marble-edged flower borders on either side, and these two huge velvety beasts were playing there with a ball. One looked up and came towards me, a little curious as it seemed. It came right up to me, rubbed its soft round ear very gently against the small hand I held out, and purred. It was, I tell you, an enchanted garden. I know. And the size? Oh! it stretched far and wide, this way and that. I believe there were hills far away. Heaven knows where West Kensington had suddenly got to. And somehow it was just like coming home.

"You know, in the very moment the door swung to behind me, I

forgot the road with its fallen chestnut leaves, its cabs and tradesmen's carts, I forgot the sort of gravitational pull back to the discipline and obedience of home, I forgot all hesitations and fear, forgot discretion, forgot all the intimate realities of this life. I became in a moment a very glad and wonder-happy little boy — in another world. It was a world with a different quality, a warmer, more penetrating and mellower light, with a faint clear gladness in its air, and wisps of sun-touched cloud in the blueness of its sky. And before me ran this long wide path, invitingly, with weedless beds on either side, rich with untended flowers, and these two great panthers. I put my little hands fearlessly on their soft fur, and caressed their round ears and the sensitive corners under their ears, and played with them, and it was as though they welcomed me home. There was a keen sense of home-coming in my mind, and when presently a tall, fair girl appeared in the pathway and came to meet me, smiling, and said 'Well?' to me, and lifted me, and kissed me, and put me down, and led me by the hand, there was no amazement, but only an impression of delightful rightness, of being reminded of happy things that had in some strange way been overlooked. There were broad red steps, I remember, that came into view between spikes of delphinium, and up these we went to a great avenue between very old and shady dark trees. All down this avenue, you know, between the red chapped stems, were marble seats of honour and statuary, and very tame and friendly white doves…

"Along this cool avenue my girl-friend led me, looking down — I recall the pleasant lines, the finely-modelled chin of her sweet kind face — asking me questions in a soft, agreeable voice, and telling me things, pleasant things I know, though what they were I was never able to recall… Presently a little Capuchin monkey, very clean, with a fur of ruddy brown and kindly hazel eyes, came down a tree to us and ran beside me, looking up at me and grinning, and presently leapt to my shoulder. So we two went on our way in great happiness."

He paused.

"Go on," I said.

"I remember little things. We passed an old man musing among laurels, I remember, and a place gay with paroquets, and came

through a broad shaded colonnade to a spacious cool palace, full of pleasant fountains, full of beautiful things, full of the quality and promise of heart's desire. And there were many things and many people, some that still seem to stand out clearly and some that are a little vague; but all these people were beautiful and kind. In some way — I don't know how — it was conveyed to me that they all were kind to me, glad to have me there, and filling me with gladness by their gestures, by the touch of their hands, by the welcome and love in their eyes. Yes — —"

He mused for a while. "Playmates I found there. That was very much to me, because I was a lonely little boy. They played delightful games in a grass-covered court where there was a sun-dial set about with flowers. And as one played one loved…

"But — it's odd — there's a gap in my memory. I don't remember the games we played. I never remembered. Afterwards, as a child, I spent long hours trying, even with tears, to recall the form of that happiness. I wanted to play it all over again — in my nursery — by myself. No! All I remember is the happiness and two dear playfellows who were most with me… Then presently came a sombre dark woman, with a grave, pale face and dreamy eyes, a sombre woman, wearing a soft long robe of pale purple, who carried a book, and beckoned and took me aside with her into a gallery above a hall — though my playmates were loth to have me go, and ceased their game and stood watching as I was carried away. Come back to us!' they cried. 'Come back to us soon!' I looked up at her face, but she heeded them not at all. Her face was very gentle and grave. She took me to a seat in the gallery, and I stood beside her, ready to look at her book as she opened it upon her knee. The pages fell open. She pointed, and I looked, marvelling, for in the living pages of that book I saw myself; it was a story about myself, and in it were all the things that had happened to me since ever I was born…

"It was wonderful to me, because the pages of that book were not pictures, you understand, but realities."

Wallace paused gravely — looked at me doubtfully.

"Go on," I said. "I understand."

"They were realities — yes, they must have been; people moved and things came and went in them; my dear mother, whom I had near

forgotten; then my father, stern and upright, the servants, the nursery, all the familiar things of home. Then the front door and the busy streets, with traffic to and fro. I looked and marvelled, and looked half doubtfully again into the woman's face and turned the pages over, skipping this and that, to see more of this book and more, and so at last I came to myself hovering and hesitating outside the green door in the long white wall, and felt again the conflict and the fear.

"'And next?' I cried, and would have turned on, but the cool hand of the grave woman delayed me.

"'Next?' I insisted, and struggled gently with her hand, pulling up her fingers with all my childish strength, and as she yielded and the page came over she bent down upon me like a shadow and kissed my brow.

"But the page did not show the enchanted garden, nor the panthers, nor the girl who had led me by the hand, nor the playfellows who had been so loth to let me go. It showed a long grey street in West Kensington, in that chill hour of afternoon before the lamps are lit, and I was there, a wretched little figure, weeping aloud, for all that I could do to restrain myself, and I was weeping because I could not return to my dear playfellows who had called after me, 'Come back to us! Come back to us soon!' I was there. This was no page in a book, but harsh reality; that enchanted place and the restraining hand of the grave mother at whose knee I stood had gone — whither had they gone?"

He halted again, and remained for a time staring into the fire.

"Oh! the woefulness of that return!" he murmured.

"Well?" I said, after a minute or so.

"Poor little wretch I was! — brought back to this grey world again! As I realised the fulness of what had happened to me, I gave way to quite ungovernable grief. And the shame and humiliation of that public weeping and my disgraceful home-coming remain with me still. I see again the benevolent-looking old gentleman in gold spectacles who stopped and spoke to me — prodding me first with his umbrella. 'Poor little chap,' said he; 'and are you lost then?' — and me a London boy of five and more! And he must needs bring in a kindly young policeman and make a crowd of me, and so march me home. Sobbing, conspicuous, and frightened, I came back from the

enchanted garden to the steps of my father's house.

"That is as well as I can remember my vision of that garden — the garden that haunts me still. Of course, I can convey nothing of that indescribable quality of translucent unreality, that *difference* from the common things of experience that hung about it all; but that — that is what happened. If it was a dream, I am sure it was a day-time and altogether extraordinary dream… H'm! — naturally there followed a terrible questioning, by my aunt, my father, the nurse, the governess — everyone…

"I tried to tell them, and my father gave me my first thrashing for telling lies. When afterwards I tried to tell my aunt, she punished me again for my wicked persistence. Then, as I said, everyone was forbidden to listen to me, to hear a word about it. Even my fairytale books were taken away from me for a time — because I was too 'imaginative.' Eh? Yes, they did that! My father belonged to the old school… And my story was driven back upon myself. I whispered it to my pillow — my pillow that was often damp and salt to my whispering lips with childish tears. And I added always to my official and less fervent prayers this one heartfelt request: 'Please God I may dream of the garden. Oh! take me back to my garden!' Take me back to my garden! I dreamt often of the garden. I may have added to it, I may have changed it; I do not know… All this, you understand, is an attempt to reconstruct from fragmentary memories a very early experience. Between that and the other consecutive memories of my boyhood there is a gulf. A time came when it seemed impossible I should ever speak of that wonder glimpse again."

I asked an obvious question.

"No," he said. "I don't remember that I ever attempted to find my way back to the garden in those early years. This seems odd to me now, but I think that very probably a closer watch was kept on my movements after this misadventure to prevent my going astray. No, it wasn't till you knew me that I tried for the garden again. And I believe there was a period — incredible as it seems now — when I forgot the garden altogether — when I was about eight or nine it may have been. Do you remember me as a kid at Saint Aethelstan's?"

"Rather!"

"I didn't show any signs, did I, in those days of having a secret

dream?”

II.

He looked up with a sudden smile.

“Did you ever play North-West Passage with me?… No, of course you didn’t come my way!”

“It was the sort of game,” he went on, “that every imaginative child plays all day. The idea was the discovery of a North-West Passage to school. The way to school was plain enough; the game consisted in finding some way that wasn’t plain, starting off ten minutes early in some almost hopeless direction, and working my way round through unaccustomed streets to my goal. And one day I got entangled among some rather low-class streets on the other side of Campden Hill, and I began to think that for once the game would be against me and that I should get to school late. I tried rather desperately a street that seemed a *cul-de-sac*, and found a passage at the end. I hurried through that with renewed hope. ‘I shall do it yet,’ I said, and passed a row of frowsy little shops that were inexplicably familiar to me, and behold! there was my long white wall and the green door that led to the enchanted garden!

“The thing whacked upon me suddenly. Then, after all, that garden, that wonderful garden, wasn’t a dream!”

He paused.

“I suppose my second experience with the green door marks the world of difference there is between the busy life of a schoolboy and the infinite leisure of a child. Anyhow, this second time I didn’t for a moment think of going in straight away. You see —— . For one thing, my mind was full of the idea of getting to school in time — set on not breaking my record for punctuality. I must surely have felt *some* little desire at least to try the door — yes. I must have felt that… But I seem to remember the attraction of the door mainly as another obstacle to my overmastering determination to get to school. I was immensely interested by this discovery I had made, of course — I went on with my mind full of it — but I went on. It didn’t check me. I ran past, tugging out my watch, found I had ten minutes still to spare, and then I was going downhill into familiar surroundings. I got

to school, breathless, it is true, and wet with perspiration, but in time. I can remember hanging up my coat and hat… Went right by it and left it behind me. Odd, eh?"

He looked at me thoughtfully, "Of course I didn't know then that it wouldn't always be there. Schoolboys have limited imaginations. I suppose I thought it was an awfully jolly thing to have it there, to know my way back to it, but there was the school tugging at me. I expect I was a good deal distraught and inattentive that morning, recalling what I could of the beautiful strange people I should presently see again. Oddly enough I had no doubt in my mind that they would be glad to see me… Yes, I must have thought of the garden that morning just as a jolly sort of place to which one might resort in the interludes of a strenuous scholastic career.

"I didn't go that day at all. The next day was a half holiday, and that may have weighed with me. Perhaps, too, my state of inattention brought down impositions upon me, and docked the margin of time necessary for the *detour*. I don't know. What I do know is that in the meantime the enchanted garden was so much upon my mind that I could not keep it to myself.

"I told. What was his name? — a ferrety-looking youngster we used to call
Squiff."

"Young Hopkins," said I.

"Hopkins it was. I did not like telling him. I had a feeling that in some way it was against the rules to tell him, but I did. He was walking part of the way home with me; he was talkative, and if we had not talked about the enchanted garden we should have talked of something else, and it was intolerable to me to think about any other subject. So I blabbed.

"Well, he told my secret. The next day in the play interval I found myself surrounded by half a dozen bigger boys, half teasing, and wholly curious to hear more of the enchanted garden. There was that big Fawcett — you remember him? — and Carnaby and Morley Reynolds. You weren't there by any chance? No, I think I should have remembered if you were…

“A boy is a creature of odd feelings. I was, I really believe, in spite of my secret self-disgust, a little flattered to have the attention of these big fellows. I remember particularly a moment of pleasure caused by the praise of Crawshaw — you remember Crawshaw major, the son of Crawshaw the composer? — who said it was the best lie he had ever heard. But at the same time there was a really painful undertow of shame at telling what I felt was indeed a sacred secret. That beast Fawcett made a joke about the girl in green — —”

Wallace’s voice sank with the keen memory of that shame. “I pretended not to hear,” he said. “Well, then Carnaby suddenly called me a young liar, and disputed with me when I said the thing was true. I said I knew where to find the green door, could lead them all there in ten minutes. Carnaby became outrageously virtuous, and said I’d have to — and bear out my words or suffer. Did you ever have Carnaby twist your arm? Then perhaps you’ll understand how it went with me. I swore my story was true. There was nobody in the school then to save a chap from Carnaby, though Crawshaw put in a word or so. Carnaby had got his game. I grew excited and red-eared, and a little frightened. I behaved altogether like a silly little chap, and the outcome of it all was that instead of starting alone for my enchanted garden, I led the way presently — cheeks flushed, ears hot, eyes smarting, and my soul one burning misery and shame — for a party of six mocking, curious, and threatening schoolfellows.

“We never found the white wall and the green door…”

“You mean —— ?”

“I mean I couldn’t find it. I would have found it if I could.

“And afterwards when I could go alone I couldn’t find it. I never found it. I seem now to have been always looking for it through my school-boy days, but I never came upon it — never.”

“Did the fellows — make it disagreeable?”

“Beastly… Carnaby held a council over me for wanton lying. I remember how I sneaked home and upstairs to hide the marks of my blubbering. But when I cried myself to sleep at last it wasn’t for Carnaby, but for the garden, for the beautiful afternoon I had hoped for, for the sweet friendly women and the waiting playfellows, and the game I had hoped to learn again, that beautiful forgotten game…

“I believed firmly that if I had not told — … I had bad times after

that — crying at night and wool-gathering by day. For two terms I slackened and had bad reports. Do you remember? Of course you would! It was *you* — your beating me in mathematics that brought me back to the grind again."

III.

For a time my friend stared silently into the red heart of the fire. Then he said: "I never saw it again until I was seventeen.

"It leapt upon me for the third time — as I was driving to Paddington on my way to Oxford and a scholarship. I had just one momentary glimpse. I was leaning over the apron of my hansom smoking a cigarette, and no doubt thinking myself no end of a man of the world, and suddenly there was the door, the wall, the dear sense of unforgettable and still attainable things.

"We clattered by — I too taken by surprise to stop my cab until we were well past and round a corner. Then I had a queer moment, a double and divergent movement of my will: I tapped the little door in the roof of the cab, and brought my arm down to pull out my watch. 'Yes, sir!' said the cabman, smartly. 'Er — well — it's nothing,' I cried. '*My* mistake! We haven't much time! Go on!' And he went on…

"I got my scholarship. And the night after I was told of that I sat over my fire in my little upper room, my study, in my father's house, with his praise — his rare praise — and his sound counsels ringing in my ears, and I smoked my favourite pipe — the formidable bulldog of adolescence — and thought of that door in the long white wall. 'If I had stopped,' I thought, 'I should have missed my scholarship, I should have missed Oxford — muddled all the fine career before me! I begin to see things better!' I fell musing deeply, but I did not doubt then this career of mine was a thing that merited sacrifice.

"Those dear friends and that clear atmosphere seemed very sweet to me, very fine but remote. My grip was fixing now upon the world. I saw another door opening — the door of my career."

He stared again into the fire. Its red light picked out a stubborn strength in his face for just one flickering moment, and then it vanished again.

“Well,” he said and sighed, “I have served that career. I have done — much work, much hard work. But I have dreamt of the enchanted garden a thousand dreams, and seen its door, or at least glimpsed its door, four times since then. Yes — four times. For a while this world was so bright and interesting, seemed so full of meaning and opportunity, that the half-effaced charm of the garden was by comparison gentle and remote. Who wants to pat panthers on the way to dinner with pretty women and distinguished men? I came down to London from Oxford, a man of bold promise that I have done something to redeem. Something — and yet there have been disappointments…

“Twice I have been in love — I will not dwell on that — but once, as I went to someone who, I knew, doubted whether I dared to come, I took a short cut at a venture through an unfrequented road near Earl’s Court, and so happened on a white wall and a familiar green door. ‘Odd!’ said I to myself, ‘but I thought this place was on Campden Hill. It’s the place I never could find somehow — like counting Stonehenge — the place of that queer daydream of mine.’ And I went by it intent upon my purpose. It had no appeal to me that afternoon.

“I had just a moment’s impulse to try the door, three steps aside were needed at the most — though I was sure enough in my heart that it would open to me — and then I thought that doing so might delay me on the way to that appointment in which I thought my honour was involved. Afterwards I was sorry for my punctuality — might at least have peeped in, I thought, and waved a hand to those panthers, but I knew enough by this time not to seek again belatedly that which is not found by seeking. Yes, that time made me very sorry…

“Years of hard work after that, and never a sight of the door. It’s only recently it has come back to me. With it there has come a sense as though some thin tarnish had spread itself over my world. I began to think of it as a sorrowful and bitter thing that I should never see that door again. Perhaps I was suffering a little from overwork — perhaps it was what I’ve heard spoken of as the feeling of forty. I don’t know. But certainly the keen brightness that makes effort easy has gone out of things recently, and that just at a time — with all

these new political developments — when I ought to be working. Odd, isn't it? But I do begin to find life toilsome, its rewards, as I come near them, cheap. I began a little while ago to want the garden quite badly. Yes — and I've seen it three times."

"The garden?"

"No — the door! And I haven't gone in!"

He leant over the table to me, with an enormous sorrow in his voice as he spoke. "Thrice I have had my chance — *thrice*! If ever that door offers itself to me again, I swore, I will go in, out of this dust and heat, out of this dry glitter of vanity, out of these toilsome futilities. I will go and never return. This time I will stay… I swore it, and when the time came — *I didn't go*.

"Three times in one year have I passed that door and failed to enter. Three times in the last year.

"The first time was on the night of the snatch division on the Tenants' Redemption Bill, on which the Government was saved by a majority of three. You remember? No one on our side — perhaps very few on the opposite side — expected the end that night. Then the debate collapsed like eggshells. I and Hotchkiss were dining with his cousin at Brentford; we were both unpaired, and we were called up by telephone, and set off at once in his cousin's motor. We got in barely in time, and on the way we passed my wall and door — livid in the moonlight, blotched with hot yellow as the glare of our lamps lit it, but unmistakable. 'My God!' cried I. 'What?' said Hotchkiss. 'Nothing!' I answered, and the moment passed.

"'I've made a great sacrifice,' I told the whip as I got in. 'They all have,' he said, and hurried by.

"I do not see how I could have done otherwise then. And the next occasion was as I rushed to my father's bedside to bid that stern old man farewell. Then, too, the claims of life were imperative. But the third time was different; it happened a week ago. It fills me with hot remorse to recall it. I was with Gurker and Ralphs — it's no secret now, you know, that I've had my talk with Gurker. We had been dining at Frobisher's, and the talk had become intimate between us. The question of my place in the reconstructed Ministry lay always

just over the boundary of the discussion. Yes — yes. That's all settled. It needn't be talked about yet, but there's no reason to keep a secret from you… Yes — thanks! thanks! But let me tell you my story.

"Then, on that night things were very much in the air. My position was a very delicate one. I was keenly anxious to get some definite word from Gurker, but was hampered by Ralphs' presence. I was using the best power of my brain to keep that light and careless talk not too obviously directed to the point that concerned me. I had to. Ralphs' behaviour since has more than justified my caution… Ralphs, I knew, would leave us beyond the Kensington High Street, and then I could surprise Gurker by a sudden frankness. One has sometimes to resort to these little devices… And then it was that in the margin of my field of vision I became aware once more of the white wall, the green door before us down the road.

"We passed it talking. I passed it. I can still see the shadow of Gurker's marked profile, his opera hat tilted forward over his prominent nose, the many folds of his neck wrap going before my shadow and Ralphs' as we sauntered past.

"I passed within twenty inches of the door. 'If I say good-night to them, and go in,' I asked myself, 'what will happen?' And I was all a-tingle for that word with Gurker.

"I could not answer that question in the tangle of my other problems. 'They will think me mad,' I thought. 'And suppose I vanish now! — Amazing disappearance of a prominent politician!' That weighed with me. A thousand inconceivably petty worldlinesses weighed with me in that crisis."

Then he turned on me with a sorrowful smile, and, speaking slowly, "Here I am!" he said.

"Here I am!" he repeated, "and my chance has gone from me. Three times in one year the door has been offered me — the door that goes into peace, into delight, into a beauty beyond dreaming, a kindness no man on earth can know. And I have rejected it, Redmond, and it has gone — —"

"How do you know?"

"I know. I know. I am left now to work it out, to stick to the tasks that held me so strongly when my moments came. You say I have

success — this vulgar, tawdry, irksome, envied thing. I have it." He had a walnut in his big hand. "If that was my success," he said, and crushed it, and held it out for me to see.

"Let me tell you something, Redmond. This loss is destroying me. For two months, for ten weeks nearly now, I have done no work at all, except the most necessary and urgent duties. My soul is full of inappeasable regrets. At nights — when it is less likely I shall be recognised — I go out. I wander. Yes. I wonder what people would think of that if they knew. A Cabinet Minister, the responsible head of that most vital of all departments, wandering alone — grieving — sometimes near audibly lamenting — for a door, for a garden!"

IV.

I can see now his rather pallid face, and the unfamiliar sombre fire that had come into his eyes. I see him very vividly to-night. I sit recalling his words, his tones, and last evening's *Westminster Gazette* still lies on my sofa, containing the notice of his death. At lunch to-day the club was busy with his death. We talked of nothing else.

They found his body very early yesterday morning in a deep excavation near East Kensington Station. It is one of two shafts that have been made in connection with an extension of the railway southward. It is protected from the intrusion of the public by a hoarding upon the high road, in which a small doorway has been cut for the convenience of some of the workmen who live in that direction. The doorway was left unfastened through a misunderstanding between two gangers, and through it he made his way…

My mind is darkened with questions and riddles.

It would seem he walked all the way from the House that night — he has frequently walked home during the past Session — and so it is I figure his dark form coming along the late and empty streets, wrapped up, intent. And then did the pale electric lights near the station cheat the rough planking into a semblance of white? Did that fatal unfastened door awaken some memory?

Was there, after all, ever any green door in the wall at all?

I do not know. I have told his story as he told it to me. There are times when I believe that Wallace was no more than the victim of the coincidence between a rare but not unprecedented type of hallucination and a careless trap, but that indeed is not my profoundest belief. You may think me superstitious, if you will, and foolish; but, indeed, I am more than half convinced that he had, in truth, an abnormal gift, and a sense, something — I know not what — that in the guise of wall and door offered him an outlet, a secret and peculiar passage of escape into another and altogether more beautiful world. At any rate, you will say, it betrayed him in the end. But did it betray him? There you touch the inmost mystery of these dreamers, these men of vision and the imagination. We see our world fair and common, the hoarding and the pit. By our daylight standard he walked out of security into darkness, danger, and death.

But did he see like that?

XXXII.

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND.

Three hundred miles and more from Chimborazo, one hundred from the snows of Cotopaxi, in the wildest wastes of Ecuador's Andes, there lies that mysterious mountain valley, cut off from the world of men, the Country of the Blind. Long years ago that valley lay so far open to the world that men might come at last through frightful gorges and over an icy pass into its equable meadows; and thither indeed men came, a family or so of Peruvian half-breeds fleeing from the lust and tyranny of an evil Spanish ruler. Then came the stupendous outbreak of Mindobamba, when it was night in Quito for seventeen days, and the water was boiling at Yaguachi and all the fish floating dying even as far as Guayaquil; everywhere along the Pacific slopes there were land-slips and swift thawings and sudden floods, and one whole side of the old Arauca crest slipped and came down in thunder, and cut off the Country of the Blind for ever from the exploring feet of men. But one of these early settlers had chanced to be on the hither side of the gorges when the world had so terribly shaken itself, and he perforce had to forget his wife and his child and all the friends and possessions he had left up there, and start life over again in the lower world. He started it again but ill, blindness overtook him, and he died of punishment in the mines; but the story he told begot a legend that lingers along the length of the Cordilleras of the Andes to this day.

He told of his reason for venturing back from that fastness, into which he had first been carried lashed to a llama, beside a vast bale of gear, when he was a child. The valley, he said, had in it all that the heart of man could desire — sweet water, pasture, and even climate, slopes of rich brown soil with tangles of a shrub that bore an excellent fruit, and on one side great hanging forests of pine that held the avalanches high. Far overhead, on three sides, vast cliffs of grey-green rock were capped by cliffs of ice; but the glacier stream came not to them but flowed away by the farther slopes, and only now and then huge ice masses fell on the valley side. In this valley it neither rained nor snowed, but the abundant springs gave a rich green pasture, that irrigation would spread over all the valley space. The

settlers did well indeed there. Their beasts did well and multiplied, and but one thing marred their happiness. Yet it was enough to mar it greatly. A strange disease had come upon them, and had made all the children born to them there — and indeed, several older children also — blind. It was to seek some charm or antidote against this plague of blindness that he had with fatigue and danger and difficulty returned down the gorge. In those days, in such cases, men did not think of germs and infections but of sins; and it seemed to him that the reason of this affliction must lie in the negligence of these priestless immigrants to set up a shrine so soon as they entered the valley. He wanted a shrine — a handsome, cheap, effectual shrine — to be erected in the valley; he wanted relics and such-like potent things of faith, blessed objects and mysterious medals and prayers. In his wallet he had a bar of native silver for which he would not account; he insisted there was none in the valley with something of the insistence of an inexpert liar. They had all clubbed their money and ornaments together, having little need for such treasure up there, he said, to buy them holy help against their ill. I figure this dim-eyed young mountaineer, sunburnt, gaunt, and anxious, hat-brim clutched feverishly, a man all unused to the ways of the lower world, telling this story to some keen-eyed, attentive priest before the great convulsion; I can picture him presently seeking to return with pious and infallible remedies against that trouble, and the infinite dismay with which he must have faced the tumbled vastness where the gorge had once come out. But the rest of his story of mischances is lost to me, save that I know of his evil death after several years. Poor stray from that remoteness! The stream that had once made the gorge now bursts from the mouth of a rocky cave, and the legend his poor, ill-told story set going developed into the legend of a race of blind men somewhere "over there" one may still hear to-day.

And amidst the little population of that now isolated and forgotten valley the disease ran its course. The old became groping and purblind, the young saw but dimly, and the children that were born to them saw never at all. But life was very easy in that snow-rimmed basin, lost to all the world, with neither thorns nor briars, with no evil insects nor any beasts save the gentle breed of llamas they had lugged and thrust and followed up the beds of the shrunken rivers in

the gorges up which they had come. The seeing had become purblind so gradually that they scarcely noted their loss. They guided the sightless youngsters hither and thither until they knew the whole Valley marvellously, and when at last sight died out among them the race lived on. They had even time to adapt themselves to the blind control of fire, which they made carefully in stoves of stone. They were a simple strain of people at the first, unlettered, only slightly touched with the Spanish civilisation, but with something of a tradition of the arts of old Peru and of its lost philosophy. Generation followed generation. They forgot many things; they devised many things. Their tradition of the greater world they came from became mythical in colour and uncertain. In all things save sight they were strong and able, and presently the chance of birth and heredity sent one who had an original mind and who could talk and persuade among them, and then afterwards another. These two passed, leaving their effects, and the little community grew in numbers and in understanding, and met and settled social and economic problems that arose. Generation followed generation. Generation followed generation. There came a time when a child was born who was fifteen generations from that ancestor who went out of the valley with a bar of silver to seek God's aid, and who never returned. Thereabouts it chanced that a man came into this community from the outer world. And this is the story of that man.

He was a mountaineer from the country near Quito, a man who had been down to the sea and had seen the world, a reader of books in an original way, an acute and enterprising man, and he was taken on by a party of Englishmen who had come out to Ecuador to climb mountains, to replace one of their three Swiss guides who had fallen ill. He climbed here and he climbed there, and then came the attempt on Parascotopetl, the Matterhorn of the Andes, in which he was lost to the outer world. The story of the accident has been written a dozen times. Pointer's narrative is the best. He tells how the little party worked their difficult and almost vertical way up to the very foot of the last and greatest precipice, and how they built a night shelter amidst the snow upon a little shelf of rock, and, with a touch of real dramatic power, how presently they found Nunez had gone from them. They shouted, and there was no reply; shouted and whistled,

and for the rest of that night they slept no more.

As the morning broke they saw the traces of his fall. It seems impossible he could have uttered a sound. He had slipped eastward towards the unknown side of the mountain; far below he had struck a steep slope of snow, and ploughed his way down it in the midst of a snow avalanche. His track went straight to the edge of a frightful precipice, and beyond that everything was hidden. Far, far below, and hazy with distance, they could see trees rising out of a narrow, shut-in valley — the lost Country of the Blind. But they did not know it was the lost Country of the Blind, nor distinguish it in any way from any other narrow streak of upland valley. Unnerved by this disaster, they abandoned their attempt in the afternoon, and Pointer was called away to the war before he could make another attack. To this day Parascotopetl lifts an unconquered crest, and Pointer's shelter crumbles unvisited amidst the snows.

And the man who fell survived.

At the end of the slope he fell a thousand feet, and came down in the midst of a cloud of snow upon a snow slope even steeper than the one above. Down this he was whirled, stunned and insensible, but without a bone broken in his body; and then at last came to gentler slopes, and at last rolled out and lay still, buried amidst a softening heap of the white masses that had accompanied and saved him. He came to himself with a dim fancy that he was ill in bed; then realised his position with a mountaineer's intelligence, and worked himself loose and, after a rest or so, out until he saw the stars. He rested flat upon his chest for a space, wondering where he was and what had happened to him. He explored his limbs, and discovered that several of his buttons were gone and his coat turned over his head. His knife had gone from his pocket and his hat was lost, though he had tied it under his chin. He recalled that he had been looking for loose stones to raise his piece of the shelter wall. His ice-axe had disappeared.

He decided he must have fallen, and looked up to see, exaggerated by the ghastly light of the rising moon, the tremendous flight he had taken. For a while he lay, gazing blankly at that vast pale cliff towering above, rising moment by moment out of a subsiding tide of darkness. Its phantasmal, mysterious beauty held him for a space, and then he was seized with a paroxysm of sobbing laughter…

After a great interval of time he became aware that he was near the lower edge of the snow. Below, down what was now a moonlit and practicable slope, he saw the dark and broken appearance of rock-strewn turf. He struggled to his feet, aching in every joint and limb, got down painfully from the heaped loose snow about him, went downward until he was on the turf, and there dropped rather than lay beside a boulder, drank deep from the flask in his inner pocket, and instantly fell asleep…

He was awakened by the singing of birds in the trees far below.

He sat up and perceived he was on a little alp at the foot of a vast precipice, that was grooved by the gully down which he and his snow had come. Over against him another wall of rock reared itself against the sky. The gorge between these precipices ran east and west and was full of the morning sunlight, which lit to the westward the mass of fallen mountain that closed the descending gorge. Below him it seemed there was a precipice equally steep, but behind the snow in the gully he found a sort of chimney-cleft dripping with snow-water down which a desperate man might venture. He found it easier than it seemed, and came at last to another desolate alp, and then after a rock climb of no particular difficulty to a steep slope of trees. He took his bearings and turned his face up the gorge, for he saw it opened out above upon green meadows, among which he now glimpsed quite distinctly a cluster of stone huts of unfamiliar fashion. At times his progress was like clambering along the face of a wall, and after a time the rising sun ceased to strike along the gorge, the voices of the singing birds died away, and the air grew cold and dark about him. But the distant valley with its houses was all the brighter for that. He came presently to talus, and among the rocks he noted — for he was an observant man — an unfamiliar fern that seemed to clutch out of the crevices with intense green hands. He picked a frond or so and gnawed its stalk and found it helpful.

About midday he came at last out of the throat of the gorge into the plain and the sunlight. He was stiff and weary; he sat down in the shadow of a rock, filled up his flask with water from a spring and drank it down, and remained for a time resting before he went on to the houses.

They were very strange to his eyes, and indeed the whole aspect

of that valley became, as he regarded it, queerer and more unfamiliar. The greater part of its surface was lush green meadow, starred with many beautiful flowers, irrigated with extraordinary care, and bearing evidence of systematic cropping piece by piece. High up and ringing the valley about was a wall, and what appeared to be a circumferential water-channel, from which the little trickles of water that fed the meadow plants came, and on the higher slopes above this flocks of llamas cropped the scanty herbage. Sheds, apparently shelters or feeding-places for the llamas, stood against the boundary wall here and there. The irrigation streams ran together into a main channel down the centre of the valley, and this was enclosed on either side by a wall breast high. This gave a singularly urban quality to this secluded place, a quality that was greatly enhanced by the fact that a number of paths paved with black and white stones, and each with a curious little kerb at the side, ran hither and thither in an orderly manner. The houses of the central village were quite unlike the casual and higgledy-piggledy agglomeration of the mountain villages he knew; they stood in a continuous row on either side of a central street of astonishing cleanness; here and there their particoloured facade was pierced by a door, and not a solitary window broke their even frontage. They were particoloured with extraordinary irregularity, smeared with a sort of plaster that was sometimes grey, sometimes drab, sometimes slate-coloured or dark brown; and it was the sight of this wild plastering first brought the word “blind” into the thoughts of the explorer. “The good man who did that,” he thought, “must have been as blind as a bat.”

He descended a steep place, and so came to the wall and channel that ran about the valley, near where the latter spouted out its surplus contents into the deeps of the gorge in a thin and wavering thread of cascade. He could now see a number of men and women resting on piled heaps of grass, as if taking a siesta, in the remoter part of the meadow, and nearer the village a number of recumbent children, and then nearer at hand three men carrying pails on yokes along a little path that ran from the encircling wall towards the houses. These latter were clad in garments of llama cloth and boots and belts of leather, and they wore caps of cloth with back and ear flaps. They followed one another in single file, walking slowly and yawning as

they walked, like men who have been up all night. There was something so reassuringly prosperous and respectable in their bearing that after a moment's hesitation Nunez stood forward as conspicuously as possible upon his rock, and gave vent to a mighty shout that echoed round the valley.

The three men stopped, and moved their heads as though they were looking about them. They turned their faces this way and that, and Nunez gesticulated with freedom. But they did not appear to see him for all his gestures, and after a time, directing themselves towards the mountains far away to the right, they shouted as if in answer. Nunez bawled again, and then once more, and as he gestured ineffectually the word "blind" came up to the top of his thoughts. "The fools must be blind," he said.

When at last, after much shouting and wrath, Nunez crossed the stream by a little bridge, came through a gate in the wall, and approached them, he was sure that they were blind. He was sure that this was the Country of the Blind of which the legends told. Conviction had sprung upon him, and a sense of great and rather enviable adventure. The three stood side by side, not looking at him, but with their ears directed towards him, judging him by his unfamiliar steps. They stood close together like men a little afraid, and he could see their eyelids closed and sunken, as though the very balls beneath had shrunk away. There was an expression near awe on their faces.

"A man," one said, in hardly recognisable Spanish— "a man it is — a man or a spirit — coming down from the rocks."

But Nunez advanced with the confident steps of a youth who enters upon life. All the old stories of the lost valley and the Country of the Blind had come back to his mind, and through his thoughts ran this old proverb, as if it were a refrain —

"In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King."

"In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King."

And very civilly he gave them greeting. He talked to them and used his eyes.

"Where does he come from, brother Pedro?" asked one.

"Down out of the rocks."

"Over the mountains I come," said Nunez, "out of the country

beyond there — where men can see. From near Bogota, where there are a hundred thousands of people, and where the city passes out of sight."

"Sight?" muttered Pedro. "Sight?"

"He comes," said the second blind man, "out of the rocks."

The cloth of their coats Nunez saw was curiously fashioned, each with a different sort of stitching.

They startled him by a simultaneous movement towards him, each with a hand outstretched. He stepped back from the advance of these spread fingers.

"Come hither," said the third blind man, following his motion and clutching him neatly.

And they held Nunez and felt him over, saying no word further until they had done so.

"Carefully," he cried, with a finger in his eye, and found they thought that organ, with its fluttering lids, a queer thing in him. They went over it again.

"A strange creature, Correa," said the one called Pedro. "Feel the coarseness of his hair. Like a llama's hair."

"Rough he is as the rocks that begot him," said Correa, investigating Nunez's unshaven chin with a soft and slightly moist hand. "Perhaps he will grow finer." Nunez struggled a little under their examination, but they gripped him firm.

"Carefully," he said again.

"He speaks," said the third man. "Certainly he is a man."

"Ugh!" said Pedro, at the roughness of his coat.

"And you have come into the world?" asked Pedro.

"*Out* of the world. Over mountains and glaciers; right over above there, half-way to the sun. Out of the great big world that goes down, twelve days' journey to the sea."

They scarcely seemed to heed him. "Our fathers have told us men may be made by the forces of Nature," said Correa. "It is the warmth of things and moisture, and rottenness — rottenness."

"Let us lead him to the elders," said Pedro.

"Shout first," said Correa, "lest the children be afraid… This is a marvellous occasion."

So they shouted, and Pedro went first and took Nunez by the hand

to lead him to the houses.

He drew his hand away. “I can see,” he said.

“See?” said Correa.

“Yes, see,” said Nunez, turning towards him, and stumbled against Pedro’s pail.

“His senses are still imperfect,” said the third blind man. “He stumbles, and talks unmeaning words. Lead him by the hand.”

“As you will,” said Nunez, and was led along, laughing.

It seemed they knew nothing of sight.

Well, all in good time he would teach them.

He heard people shouting, and saw a number of figures gathering together in the middle roadway of the village.

He found it tax his nerve and patience more than he had anticipated, that first encounter with the population of the Country of the Blind. The place seemed larger as he drew near to it, and the smeared plasterings queerer, and a crowd of children and men and women (the women and girls, he was pleased to note, had some of them quite sweet faces, for all that their eyes were shut and sunken) came about him, holding on to him, touching him with soft, sensitive hands, smelling at him, and listening at every word he spoke. Some of the maidens and children, however, kept aloof as if afraid, and indeed his voice seemed coarse and rude beside their softer notes. They mobbed him. His three guides kept close to him with an effect of proprietorship, and said again and again, “A wild man out of the rock.”

“Bogota,” he said. “Bogota. Over the mountain crests.”

“A wild man — using wild words,” said Pedro. “Did you hear that — *Bogota*? His mind is hardly formed yet. He has only the beginnings of speech.”

A little boy nipped his hand. “Bogota!” he said mockingly.

“Ay! A city to your village. I come from the great world — where men have eyes and see.”

“His name’s Bogota,” they said.

“He stumbled,” said Correa, “stumbled twice as we came hither.”

“Bring him to the elders.”

And they thrust him suddenly through a doorway into a room as black as pitch, save at the end there faintly glowed a fire. The crowd

closed in behind him and shut out all but the faintest glimmer of day, and before he could arrest himself he had fallen headlong over the feet of a seated man. His arm, outflung, struck the face of someone else as he went down; he felt the soft impact of features and heard a cry of anger, and for a moment he struggled against a number of hands that clutched him. It was a one-sided fight. An inkling of the situation came to him, and he lay quiet.

"I fell down," he said; "I couldn't see in this pitchy darkness."

There was a pause as if the unseen persons about him tried to understand his words. Then the voice of Correa said: "He is but newly formed. He stumbles as he walks and mingles words that mean nothing with his speech."

Others also said things about him that he heard or understood imperfectly.

"May I sit up?" he asked, in a pause. "I will not struggle against you again."

They consulted and let him rise.

The voice of an older man began to question him, and Nunez found himself trying to explain the great world out of which he had fallen, and the sky and mountains and sight and such-like marvels, to these elders who sat in darkness in the Country of the Blind. And they would believe and understand nothing whatever he told them, a thing quite outside his expectation. They would not even understand many of his words. For fourteen generations these people had been blind and cut off from all the seeing world; the names for all the things of sight had faded and changed; the story of the outer world was faded and changed to a child's story; and they had ceased to concern themselves with anything beyond the rocky slopes above their circling wall. Blind men of genius had arisen among them and questioned the shreds of belief and tradition they had brought with them from their seeing days, and had dismissed all these things as idle fancies, and replaced them with new and saner explanations. Much of their imagination had shrivelled with their eyes, and they had made for themselves new imaginations with their ever more sensitive ears and finger-tips. Slowly Nunez realised this; that his expectation of wonder and reverence at his origin and his gifts was not to be borne out; and after his poor attempt to explain sight to

them had been set aside as the confused version of a new-made being describing the marvels of his incoherent sensations, he subsided, a little dashed, into listening to their instruction. And the eldest of the blind men explained to him life and philosophy and religion, how that the world (meaning their valley) had been first an empty hollow in the rocks, and then had come, first, inanimate things without the gift of touch, and llamas and a few other creatures that had little sense, and then men, and at last angels, whom one could hear singing and making fluttering sounds, but whom no one could touch at all, which puzzled Nunez greatly until he thought of the birds.

He went on to tell Nunez how this time had been divided into the warm and the cold, which are the blind equivalents of day and night, and how it was good to sleep in the warm and work during the cold, so that now, but for his advent, the whole town of the blind would have been asleep. He said Nunez must have been specially created to learn and serve the wisdom, they had acquired, and that for all his mental incoherency and stumbling behaviour he must have courage, and do his best to learn, and at that all the people in the doorway murmured encouragingly. He said the night — for the blind call their day night — was now far gone, and it behoved every one to go back to sleep. He asked Nunez if he knew how to sleep, and Nunez said he did, but that before sleep he wanted food.

They brought him food — llama's milk in a bowl, and rough salted bread — and led him into a lonely place, to eat out of their hearing, and afterwards to slumber until the chill of the mountain evening roused them to begin their day again. But Nunez slumbered not at all.

Instead, he sat up in the place where they had left him, resting his limbs and turning the unanticipated circumstances of his arrival over and over in his mind.

Every now and then he laughed, sometimes with amusement, and sometimes with indignation.

"Unformed mind!" he said. "Got no senses yet! They little know they've been insulting their heaven-sent king and master. I see I must bring them to reason. Let me think — let me think."

He was still thinking when the sun set.

Nunez had an eye for all beautiful things, and it seemed to him

that the glow upon the snowfields and glaciers that rose about the valley on every side was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. His eyes went from that inaccessible glory to the village and irrigated fields, fast sinking into the twilight, and suddenly a wave of emotion took him, and he thanked God from the bottom of his heart that the power of sight had been given him.

He heard a voice calling to him from out of the village. “Ya ho there, Bogota! Come hither!”

At that he stood up smiling. He would show these people once and for all what sight would do for a man. They would seek him, but not find him.

“You move not, Bogota,” said the voice.

He laughed noiselessly, and made two stealthy steps aside from the path.

“Trample not on the grass, Bogota; that is not allowed.”

Nunez had scarcely heard the sound he made himself. He stopped amazed.

The owner of the voice came running up the piebald path towards him.

He stepped back into the pathway. “Here I am,” he said.

“Why did you not come when I called you?” said the blind man. “Must you be led like a child? Cannot you hear the path as you walk?”

Nunez laughed. “I can see it,” he said.

“There is no such word as *see*,” said the blind man, after a pause. “Cease this folly, and follow the sound of my feet.”

Nunez followed, a little annoyed.

“My time will come,” he said.

“You’ll learn,” the blind man answered. “There is much to learn in the world.”

“Has no one told you, ‘In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is

King'?"

"What is blind?" asked the blind man carelessly over his shoulder.

Four days passed, and the fifth found the King of the Blind still incognito, as a clumsy and useless stranger among his subjects.

It was, he found, much more difficult to proclaim himself than he had supposed, and in the meantime, while he meditated his *coup d'état,* he did what he was told and learnt the manners and customs of the Country of the Blind. He found working and going about at night a particularly irksome thing, and he decided that that should be the first thing he would change.

They led a simple, laborious life, these people, with all the elements of virtue and happiness, as these things can be understood by men. They toiled, but not oppressively; they had food and clothing sufficient for their needs; they had days and seasons of rest; they made much of music and singing, and there was love among them, and little children.

It was marvellous with what confidence and precision they went about their ordered world. Everything, you see, had been made to fit their needs; each of the radiating paths of the valley area had a constant angle to the others, and was distinguished by a special notch upon its kerbing; all obstacles and irregularities of path or meadow had long since been cleared away; all their methods and procedure arose naturally from their special needs. Their senses had become marvellously acute; they could hear and judge the slightest gesture of a man a dozen paces away — could hear the very beating of his heart. Intonation had long replaced expression with them, and touches gesture, and their work with hoe and spade and fork was as free and confident as garden work can be. Their sense of smell was extraordinarily fine; they could distinguish individual differences as readily as a dog can, and they went about the tending of the llamas, who lived among the rocks above and came to the wall for food and shelter, with ease and confidence. It was only when at last Nunez sought to assert himself that he found how easy and confident their movements could be.

He rebelled only after he had tried persuasion.

He tried at first on several occasions to tell them of sight. "Look

you here, you people," he said. "There are things you do not understand in me."

Once or twice one or two of them attended to him; they sat with faces downcast and ears turned intelligently towards him, and he did his best to tell them what it was to see. Among his hearers was a girl, with eyelids less red and sunken than the others, so that one could almost fancy she was hiding eyes, whom especially he hoped to persuade. He spoke of the beauties of sight, of watching the mountains, of the sky and the sunrise, and they heard him with amused incredulity that presently became condemnatory. They told him there were indeed no mountains at all, but that the end of the rocks where the llamas grazed was indeed the end of the world; thence sprang a cavernous roof of the universe, from which the dew and the avalanches fell; and when he maintained stoutly the world had neither end nor roof such as they supposed, they said his thoughts were wicked. So far as he could describe sky and clouds and stars to them it seemed to them a hideous void, a terrible blankness in the place of the smooth roof to things in which they believed — it was an article of faith with them that the cavern roof was exquisitely smooth to the touch. He saw that in some manner he shocked them, and gave up that aspect of the matter altogether, and tried to show them the practical value of sight. One morning he saw Pedro in the path called Seventeen and coming towards the central houses, but still too far off for hearing or scent, and he told them as much. "In a little while," he prophesied, "Pedro will be here." An old man remarked that Pedro had no business on path Seventeen, and then, as if in confirmation, that individual as he drew near turned and went transversely into path Ten, and so back with nimble paces towards the outer wall. They mocked Nunez when Pedro did not arrive, and afterwards, when he asked Pedro questions to clear his character, Pedro denied and outfaced him, and was afterwards hostile to him.

Then he induced them to let him go a long way up the sloping meadows towards the wall with one complacent individual, and to him he promised to describe all that happened among the houses. He noted certain goings and comings, but the things that really seemed to signify to these people happened inside of or behind the

windowless houses — the only things they took note of to test him by — and of these he could see or tell nothing; and it was after the failure of this attempt, and the ridicule they could not repress, that he resorted to force. He thought of seizing a spade and suddenly smiting one or two of them to earth, and so in fair combat showing the advantage of eyes. He went so far with that resolution as to seize his spade, and then he discovered a new thing about himself, and that was that it was impossible for him to hit a blind man in cold blood.

He hesitated, and found them all aware that he had snatched up the spade. They stood alert, with their heads on one side, and bent ears towards him for what he would do next.

"Put that spade down," said one, and he felt a sort of helpless horror. He came near obedience.

Then he thrust one backwards against a house wall, and fled past him and out of the village.

He went athwart one of their meadows, leaving a track of trampled grass behind his feet, and presently sat down by the side of one of their ways. He felt something of the buoyancy that comes to all men in the beginning of a fight, but more perplexity. He began to realise that you cannot even fight happily with creatures who stand upon a different mental basis to yourself. Far away he saw a number of men carrying spades and sticks come out of the street of houses, and advance in a spreading line along the several paths towards him. They advanced slowly, speaking frequently to one another, and ever and again the whole cordon would halt and sniff the air and listen.

The first time they did this Nunez laughed. But afterwards he did not laugh.

One struck his trail in the meadow grass, and came stooping and feeling his way along it.

For five minutes he watched the slow extension of the cordon, and then his vague disposition to do something forthwith became frantic. He stood up, went a pace or so towards the circumferential wall, turned, and went back a little way. There they all stood in a crescent, still and listening.

He also stood still, gripping his spade very tightly in both hands. Should he charge them?

The pulse in his ears ran into the rhythm of "In the Country of the

Blind the One-eyed Man is King!”

Should he charge them?

He looked back at the high and unclimbable wall behind — unclimbable because of its smooth plastering, but withal pierced with many little doors, and at the approaching line of seekers. Behind these others were now coming out of the street of houses.

Should he charge them?

“Bogota!” called one. “Bogota! where are you?”

He gripped his spade still tighter, and advanced down the meadows towards
the place of habitations, and directly he moved they converged upon him.
“I’ll hit them if they touch me,” he swore; “by Heaven, I will. I’ll hit.”
He called aloud, “Look here, I’m going to do what I like in this valley.
Do you hear? I’m going to do what I like and go where I like!”

They were moving in upon him quickly, groping, yet moving rapidly. It was like playing blind man’s buff, with everyone blindfolded except one. “Get hold of him!” cried one. He found himself in the arc of a loose curve of pursuers. He felt suddenly he must be active and resolute.

“You don’t understand,” he cried in a voice that was meant to be great and resolute, and which broke. “You are blind, and I can see. Leave me alone!”

“Bogota! Put down that spade, and come off the grass!”

The last order, grotesque in its urban familiarity, produced a gust of anger.

“I’ll hurt you,” he said, sobbing with emotion. “By Heaven, I’ll hurt you.
Leave me alone!”

He began to run, not knowing clearly where to run. He ran from the nearest blind man, because it was a horror to hit him. He stopped,

and then made a dash to escape from their closing ranks. He made for where a gap was wide, and the men on either side, with a quick perception of the approach of his paces, rushed in on one another. He sprang forward, and then saw he must be caught, and *swish*! the spade had struck. He felt the soft thud of hand and arm, and the man was down with a yell of pain, and he was through.

Through! And then he was close to the street of houses again, and blind men, whirling spades and stakes, were running with a sort of reasoned swiftness hither and thither.

He heard steps behind him just in time, and found a tall man rushing forward and swiping at the sound of him. He lost his nerve, hurled his spade a yard wide at his antagonist, and whirled about and fled, fairly yelling as he dodged another.

He was panic-stricken. He ran furiously to and fro, dodging when there was no need to dodge, and in his anxiety to see on every side of him at once, stumbling. For a moment he was down and they heard his fall. Far away in the circumferential wall a little doorway looked like heaven, and he set off in a wild rush for it. He did not even look round at his pursuers until it was gained, and he had stumbled across the bridge, clambered a little way among the rocks, to the surprise and dismay of a young llama, who went leaping out of sight, and lay down sobbing for breath.

And so his *coup d'état* came to an end.

He stayed outside the wall of the valley of the Blind for two nights and days without food or shelter, and meditated upon the unexpected. During these meditations he repeated very frequently and always with a profounder note of derision the exploded proverb: "In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King." He thought chiefly of ways of fighting and conquering these people, and it grew clear that for him no practicable way was possible. He had no weapons, and now it would be hard to get one.

The canker of civilisation had got to him even in Bogota, and he could not find it in himself to go down and assassinate a blind man. Of course, if he did that, he might then dictate terms on the threat of assassinating them all. But — sooner or later he must sleep!…

He tried also to find food among the pine trees, to be comfortable under pine boughs while the frost fell at night, and — with less

confidence — to catch a llama by artifice in order to try to kill it — perhaps by hammering it with a stone — and so finally, perhaps, to eat some of it. But the llamas had a doubt of him and regarded him with distrustful brown eyes, and spat when he drew near. Fear came on him the second day and fits of shivering. Finally he crawled down to the wall of the Country of the Blind and tried to make terms. He crawled along by the stream, shouting, until two blind men came out to the gate and talked to him.

"I was mad," he said. "But I was only newly made."

They said that was better.

He told them he was wiser now, and repented of all he had done.

Then he wept without intention, for he was very weak and ill now, and they took that as a favourable sign.

They asked him if he still thought he could "*see*"

"No," he said. "That was folly. The word means nothing — less than nothing!"

They asked him what was overhead.

"About ten times ten the height of a man there is a roof above the world — of rock — and very, very smooth." … He burst again into hysterical tears. "Before you ask me any more, give me some food or I shall die."

He expected dire punishments, but these blind people were capable of toleration. They regarded his rebellion as but one more proof of his general idiocy and inferiority; and after they had whipped him they appointed him to do the simplest and heaviest work they had for anyone to do, and he, seeing no other way of living, did submissively what he was told.

He was ill for some days, and they nursed him kindly. That refined his submission. But they insisted on his lying in the dark, and that was a great misery. And blind philosophers came and talked to him of the wicked levity of his mind, and reproved him so impressively for his doubts about the lid of rock that covered their cosmic casserole that he almost doubted whether indeed he was not the victim of hallucination in not seeing it overhead.

So Nunez became a citizen of the Country of the Blind, and these people ceased to be a generalised people and became individualities and familiar to him, while the world beyond the mountains became

more and more remote and unreal. There was Yacob, his master, a kindly man when not annoyed; there was Pedro, Yacob's nephew; and there was Medina-saroté, who was the youngest daughter of Yacob. She was little esteemed in the world of the blind, because she had a clear-cut face, and lacked that satisfying, glossy smoothness that is the blind man's ideal of feminine beauty; but Nunez thought her beautiful at first, and presently the most beautiful thing in the whole creation. Her closed eyelids were not sunken and red after the common way of the valley, but lay as though they might open again at any moment; and she had long eyelashes, which were considered a grave disfigurement. And her voice was strong, and did not satisfy the acute hearing of the valley swains. So that she had no lover.

There came a time when Nunez thought that, could he win her, he would be resigned to live in the valley for all the rest of his days.

He watched her; he sought opportunities of doing her little services, and presently he found that she observed him. Once at a rest-day gathering they sat side by side in the dim starlight, and the music was sweet. His hand came upon hers and he dared to clasp it. Then very tenderly she returned his pressure. And one day, as they were at their meal in the darkness, he felt her hand very softly seeking him, and as it chanced the fire leapt then and he saw the tenderness of her face.

He sought to speak to her.

He went to her one day when she was sitting in the summer moonlight spinning. The light made her a thing of silver and mystery. He sat down at her feet and told her he loved her, and told her how beautiful she seemed to him. He had a lover's voice, he spoke with a tender reverence that came near to awe, and she had never before been touched by adoration. She made him no definite answer, but it was clear his words pleased her.

After that he talked to her whenever he could take an opportunity. The valley became the world for him, and the world beyond the mountains where men lived in sunlight seemed no more than a fairy tale he would some day pour into her ears. Very tentatively and timidly he spoke to her of sight.

Sight seemed to her the most poetical of fancies, and she listened to his description of the stars and the mountains and her own sweet

white-lit beauty as though it was a guilty indulgence. She did not believe, she could only half understand, but she was mysteriously delighted, and it seemed to him that she completely understood.

His love lost its awe and took courage. Presently he was for demanding her of Yacob and the elders in marriage, but she became fearful and delayed. And it was one of her elder sisters who first told Yacob that Medina-saroté and Nunez were in love.

There was from the first very great opposition to the marriage of Nunez and Medina-saroté; not so much because they valued her as because they held him as a being apart, an idiot, incompetent thing below the permissible level of a man. Her sisters opposed it bitterly as bringing discredit on them all; and old Yacob, though he had formed a sort of liking for his clumsy, obedient serf, shook his head and said the thing could not be. The young men were all angry at the idea of corrupting the race, and one went so far as to revile and strike Nunez. He struck back. Then for the first time he found an advantage in seeing, even by twilight, and after that fight was over no one was disposed to raise a hand against him. But they still found his marriage impossible.

Old Yacob had a tenderness for his last little daughter, and was grieved to have her weep upon his shoulder.

"You see, my dear, he's an idiot. He has delusions; he can't do anything right."

"I know," wept Medina-saroté. "But he's better than he was. He's getting better. And he's strong, dear father, and kind — stronger and kinder than any I other man in the world. And he loves me — and, father, I love him."

Old Yacob was greatly distressed to find her inconsolable, and, besides — what made it more distressing — he liked Nunez for many things. So he went and sat in the windowless council-chamber with the other elders and watched the trend of the talk, and said, at the proper time, "He's better than he was. Very likely, some day, we shall find him as sane as ourselves."

Then afterwards one of the elders, who thought deeply, had an idea. He was the great doctor among these people, their medicine-man, and he had a very philosophical and inventive mind, and the idea of curing Nunez of his peculiarities appealed to him. One day

when Yacob was present he returned to the topic of Nunez.

"I have examined Bogota," he said, "and the case is clearer to me. I think very probably he might be cured."

"That is what I have always hoped," said old Yacob.

"His brain is affected," said the blind doctor.

The elders murmured assent.

"Now, *what* affects it?"

"Ah!" said old Yacob.

"*This*," said the doctor, answering his own question. "Those queer things that are called the eyes, and which exist to make an agreeable soft depression in the face, are diseased, in the case of Bogota, in such a way as to affect his brain. They are greatly distended, he has eyelashes, and his eyelids move, and consequently his brain is in a state of constant irritation and distraction."

"Yes?" said old Yacob. "Yes?"

"And I think I may say with reasonable certainty that, in order to cure him completely, all that we need do is a simple and easy surgical operation — namely, to remove these irritant bodies."

"And then he will be sane?"

"Then he will be perfectly sane, and a quite admirable citizen."

"Thank Heaven for science!" said old Yacob, and went forth at once to tell
Nunez of his happy hopes.

But Nunez's manner of receiving the good news struck him as being cold and disappointing.

"One might think," he said, "from the tone you take, that you did not care for my daughter."

It was Medina-saroté who persuaded Nunez to face the blind surgeons.

"*You* do not want me," he said, "to lose my gift of sight?"

She shook her head.

"My world is sight."

Her head drooped lower.

"There are the beautiful things, the beautiful little things — the flowers, the lichens among the rocks, the lightness and softness on a

piece of fur, the far sky with its drifting down of clouds, the sunsets and the stars. And there is *you*. For you alone it is good to have sight, to see your sweet, serene face, your kindly lips, your dear, beautiful hands folded together… It is these eyes of mine you won, these eyes that hold me to you, that these idiots seek. Instead, I must touch you, hear you, and never see you again. I must come under that roof of rock and stone and darkness, that horrible roof under which your imagination stoops… No; you would not have me do that?"

A disagreeable doubt had arisen in him. He stopped, and left the thing a question.

"I wish," she said, "sometimes — —" She paused.

"Yes," said he, a little apprehensively.

"I wish sometimes — you would not talk like that."

"Like what?"

"I know it's pretty — it's your imagination. I love it, but *now* — —"

He felt cold. "*Now*?" he said faintly.

She sat quite still.

"You mean — you think — I should be better, better perhaps — —"

He was realising things very swiftly. He felt anger, indeed, anger at the dull course of fate, but also sympathy for her lack of understanding — a sympathy near akin to pity.

"*Dear*," he said, and he could see by her whiteness how intensely her spirit pressed against the things she could not say. He put his arms about her, he kissed her ear, and they sat for a time in silence.

"If I were to consent to this?" he said at last, in a voice that was very gentle.

She flung her arms about him, weeping wildly. "Oh, if you would," she sobbed, "if only you would!"

* * * * *

For a week before the operation that was to raise him from his servitude and inferiority to the level of a blind citizen, Nunez knew nothing of sleep, and all through the warm sunlit hours, while the others slumbered happily, he sat brooding or wandered aimlessly,

trying to bring his mind to bear on his dilemma. He had given his answer, he had given his consent, and still he was not sure. And at last work-time was over, the sun rose in splendour over the golden crests, and his last day of vision began for him. He had a few minutes with Medina-saroté before she went apart to sleep.

"To-morrow," he said, "I shall see no more."

"Dear heart!" she answered, and pressed his hands with all her strength.

"They will hurt you but little," she said; "and you are going through this pain — you are going through it, dear lover, for *me*… Dear, if a woman's heart and life can do it, I will repay you. My dearest one, my dearest with the tender voice, I will repay."

He was drenched in pity for himself and her.

He held her in his arms, and pressed his lips to hers, and looked on her sweet face for the last time. "Good-bye!" he whispered at that dear sight, "good-bye!"

And then in silence he turned away from her.

She could hear his slow retreating footsteps, and something in the rhythm of them threw her into a passion of weeping.

He had fully meant to go to a lonely place where the meadows were beautiful with white narcissus, and there remain until the hour of his sacrifice should come, but as he went he lifted up his eyes and saw the morning, the morning like an angel in golden armour, marching down the steeps…

It seemed to him that before this splendour he, and this blind world in the valley, and his love, and all, were no more than a pit of sin.

He did not turn aside as he had meant to do, but went on, and passed through the wall of the circumference and out upon the rocks, and his eyes were always upon the sunlit ice and snow.

He saw their infinite beauty, and his imagination soared over them to the things beyond he was now to resign for ever.

He thought of that great free world he was parted from, the world that was his own, and he had a vision of those further slopes, distance beyond distance, with Bogota, a place of multitudinous stirring beauty, a glory by day, a luminous mystery by night, a place of palaces and fountains and statues and white houses, lying

beautifully in the middle distance. He thought how for a day or so one might come down through passes, drawing ever nearer and nearer to its busy streets and ways. He thought of the river journey, day by day, from great Bogota to the still vaster world beyond, through towns and villages, forest and desert places, the rushing river day by day, until its banks receded and the big steamers came splashing by, and one had reached the sea — the limitless sea, with its thousand islands, its thousands of islands, and its ships seen dimly far away in their incessant journeyings round and about that greater world. And there, unpent by mountains, one saw the sky — the sky, not such a disc as one saw it here, but an arch of immeasurable blue, a deep of deeps in which the circling stars were floating…

His eyes scrutinised the great curtain of the mountains with a keener inquiry.

For example, if one went so, up that gully and to that chimney there, then one might come out high among those stunted pines that ran round in a sort of shelf and rose still higher and higher as it passed above the gorge. And then? That talus might be managed. Thence perhaps a climb might be found to take him up to the precipice that came below the snow; and if that chimney failed, then another farther to the east might serve his purpose better. And then? Then one would be out upon the amber-lit snow there, and half-way up to the crest of those beautiful desolations.

He glanced back at the village, then turned right round and regarded it steadfastly.

He thought of Medina-saroté, and she had become small and remote.

He turned again towards the mountain wall, down which the day had come to him.

Then very circumspectly he began to climb.

When sunset came he was no longer climbing, but he was far and high. He had been higher, but he was still very high. His clothes were torn, his limbs were blood-stained, he was bruised in many places, but he lay as if he were at his ease, and there was a smile on his face.

From where he rested the valley seemed as if it were in a pit and nearly a mile below. Already it was dim with haze and shadow, though the mountain summits around him were things of light and

fire. The mountain summits around him were things of light and fire, and the little details of the rocks near at hand were drenched with subtle beauty — a vein of green mineral piercing the grey, the flash of crystal faces here and there, a minute, minutely-beautiful orange lichen close beside his face. There were deep mysterious shadows in the gorge, blue deepening into purple, and purple into a luminous darkness, and overhead was the illimitable vastness of the sky. But he heeded these things no longer, but lay quite inactive there, smiling as if he were satisfied merely to have escaped from the valley of the Blind in which he had thought to be King.

The glow of the sunset passed, and the night came, and still he lay peacefully contented under the cold clear stars.

XXXIII.

THE BEAUTIFUL SUIT.

There was once a little man whose mother made him a beautiful suit of clothes. It was green and gold, and woven so that I cannot describe how delicate and fine it was, and there was a tie of orange fluffiness that tied up under his chin. And the buttons in their newness shone like stars. He was proud and pleased by his suit beyond measure, and stood before the long looking-glass when first he put it on, so astonished and delighted with it that he could hardly turn himself away. He wanted to wear it everywhere, and show it to all sorts of people. He thought over all the places he had ever visited, and all the scenes he had ever heard described, and tried to imagine what the feel of it would be if he were to go now to those scenes and places wearing his shining suit, and he wanted to go out forthwith into the long grass and the hot sunshine of the meadow wearing it. Just to wear it! But his mother told him "No." She told him he must take great care of his suit, for never would he have another nearly so fine; he must save it and save it, and only wear it on rare and great occasions. It was his wedding-suit, she said. And she took the buttons and twisted them up with tissue paper for fear their bright newness should be tarnished, and she tacked little guards over the cuffs and elbows, and wherever the suit was most likely to come to harm. He hated and resisted these things, but what could he do? And at last her warnings and persuasions had effect, and he consented to take off his beautiful suit and fold it into its proper creases, and put it away. It was almost as though he gave it up again. But he was always thinking of wearing it, and of the supreme occasions when some day it might be worn without the guards, without the tissue paper on the buttons, utterly and delightfully, never caring, beautiful beyond measure.

One night, when he was dreaming of it after his habit, he dreamt he took the tissue paper from one of the buttons, and found its brightness a little faded, and that distressed him mightily in his dream. He polished the poor faded button and polished it, and, if anything, it grew duller. He woke up and lay awake, thinking of the brightness a little dulled, and wondering how he would feel if

perhaps when the great occasion (whatever it might be) should arrive, one button should chance to be ever so little short of its first glittering freshness, and for days and days that thought remained with him distressingly. And when next his mother let him wear his suit, he was tempted and nearly gave way to the temptation just to fumble off one little bit of tissue paper and see if indeed the buttons were keeping as bright as ever.

He went trimly along on his way to church, full of this wild desire. For you must know his mother did, with repeated and careful warnings, let him wear his suit at times, on Sundays, for example, to and fro from church, when there was no threatening of rain, no dust blowing, nor anything to injure it, with its buttons covered and its protections tacked upon it, and a sun-shade in his hand to shadow it if there seemed too strong a sunlight for its colours. And always, after such occasions, he brushed it over and folded it exquisitely as she had taught him, and put it away again.

Now all these restrictions his mother set to the wearing of his suit he obeyed, always he obeyed them, until one strange night he woke up and saw the moonlight shining outside his window. It seemed to him the moonlight was not common moonlight, nor the night a common night, and for awhile he lay quite drowsily, with this odd persuasion in his mind. Thought joined on to thought like things that whisper warmly in the shadows. Then he sat up in his little bed suddenly very alert, with his heart beating very fast, and a quiver in his body from top to toe. He had made up his mind. He knew that now he was going to wear his suit as it should be worn. He had no doubt in the matter. He was afraid, terribly afraid, but glad, glad.

He got out of his bed and stood for a moment by the window looking at the moonshine-flooded garden, and trembling at the thing he meant to do. The air was full of a minute clamour of crickets and murmurings, of the infinitesimal shoutings of little living things. He went very gently across the creaking boards, for fear that he might wake the sleeping house, to the big dark clothes-press wherein his beautiful suit lay folded, and he took it out garment by garment, and softly and very eagerly tore off its tissue-paper covering and its tacked protections until there it was, perfect and delightful as he had seen it when first his mother had given it to him — a long time it

seemed ago. Not a button had tarnished, not a thread had faded on this dear suit of his; he was glad enough for weeping as in a noiseless hurry he put it on. And then back he went, soft and quick, to the window that looked out upon the garden, and stood there for a minute, shining in the moonlight, with his buttons twinkling like stars, before he got out on the sill, and, making as little of a rustling as he could, clambered down to the garden path below. He stood before his mother's house, and it was white and nearly as plain as by day, with every window-blind but his own shut like an eye that sleeps. The trees cast still shadows like intricate black lace upon the wall.

The garden in the moonlight was very different from the garden by day; moonshine was tangled in the hedges and stretched in phantom cobwebs from spray to spray. Every flower was gleaming white or crimson black, and the air was a-quiver with the thridding of small crickets and nightingales singing unseen in the depths of the trees.

There was no darkness in the world, but only warm, mysterious shadows, and all the leaves and spikes were edged and lined with iridescent jewels of dew. The night was warmer than any night had ever been, the heavens by some miracle at once vaster and nearer, and, spite of the great ivory-tinted moon that ruled the world, the sky was full of stars.

The little man did not shout nor sing for all his infinite gladness. He stood for a time like one awestricken, and then, with a queer small cry and holding out his arms, he ran out as if he would embrace at once the whole round immensity of the world. He did not follow the neat set paths that cut the garden squarely, but thrust across the beds and through the wet, tall, scented herbs, through the night-stock and the nicotine and the clusters of phantom white mallow flowers and through the thickets of southernwood and lavender, and knee-deep across a wide space of mignonette. He came to the great hedge, and he thrust his way through it; and though the thorns of the brambles scored him deeply and tore threads from his wonderful suit, and though burrs and goose-grass and havers caught and clung to him, he did not care. He did not care, for he knew it was all part of the wearing for which he had longed. "I am glad I put on

my suit," he said; "I am glad I wore my suit."

Beyond the hedge he came to the duck-pond, or at least to what was the duck-pond by day. But by night it was a great bowl of silver moonshine all noisy with singing frogs, of wonderful silver moonshine twisted and clotted with strange patternings, and the little man ran down into its waters between the thin black rushes, knee-deep and waist-deep and to his shoulders, smiting the water to black and shining wavelets with either hand, swaying and shivering wavelets, amidst which the stars were netted in the tangled reflections of the brooding trees upon the bank. He waded until he swam, and so he crossed the pond and came out upon the other side, trailing, as it seemed to him, not duckweed, but very silver in long, clinging, dripping masses. And up he went through the transfigured tangles of the willow-herb and the uncut seeding grasses of the farther bank. He came glad and breathless into the high-road. "I am glad," he said, "beyond measure, that I had clothes that fitted this occasion."

The high-road ran straight as an arrow flies, straight into the deep-blue pit of sky beneath the moon, a white and shining road between the singing nightingales, and along it he went, running now and leaping, and now walking and rejoicing, in the clothes his mother had made for him with tireless, loving hands. The road was deep in dust, but that for him was only soft whiteness; and as he went a great dim moth came fluttering round his wet and shimmering and hastening figure. At first he did not heed the moth, and then he waved his hands at it, and made a sort of dance with it as it circled round his head. "Soft moth!" he cried, "dear moth! And wonderful night, wonderful night of the world! Do you think my clothes are beautiful, dear moth? As beautiful as your scales and all this silver vesture of the earth and sky?"

And the moth circled closer and closer until at last its velvet wings just brushed his lips…

* * * * *

And next morning they found him dead, with his neck broken, in the bottom of the stone pit, with his beautiful clothes a little bloody, and

foul and stained with the duckweed from the pond. But his face was a face of such happiness that, had you seen it, you would have understood indeed how that he had died happy, never knowing that cool and streaming silver for the duckweed in the pond.

THE DOOR IN THE WALL AND OTHER STORIES

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THE DOOR IN THE WALL

I

One confidential evening, not three months ago, Lionel Wallace told me this story of the Door in the Wall. And at the time I thought that so far as he was concerned it was a true story.

He told it me with such a direct simplicity of conviction that I could not do otherwise than believe in him. But in the morning, in my own flat, I woke to a different atmosphere, and as I lay in bed and recalled the things he had told me, stripped of the glamour of his earnest slow voice, denuded of the focussed shaded table light, the shadowy atmosphere that wrapped about him and the pleasant bright things, the dessert and glasses and napery of the dinner we had shared, making them for the time a bright little world quite cut off from every-day realities, I saw it all as frankly incredible. "He was mystifying!" I said, and then: "How well he did it!. . . . . It isn't quite the thing I should have expected him, of all people, to do well."

Afterwards, as I sat up in bed and sipped my morning tea, I found myself trying to account for the flavour of reality that perplexed me in his impossible reminiscences, by supposing they did in some way suggest, present, convey — I hardly know which word to use — experiences it was otherwise impossible to tell.

Well, I don't resort to that explanation now. I have got over my intervening doubts. I believe now, as I believed at the moment of telling, that Wallace did to the very best of his ability strip the truth of his secret for me. But whether he himself saw, or only thought he saw, whether he himself was the possessor of an inestimable privilege, or the victim of a fantastic dream, I cannot pretend to guess. Even the facts of his death, which ended my doubts forever, throw no light on that. That much the reader must judge for himself.

I forget now what chance comment or criticism of mine moved so reticent a man to confide in me. He was, I think, defending himself against an imputation of slackness and unreliability I had made in relation to a great public movement in which he had disappointed me. But he plunged suddenly. "I have" he said, "a preoccupation—"

“I know,” he went on, after a pause that he devoted to the study of his cigar ash, “I have been negligent. The fact is — it isn’t a case of ghosts or apparitions — but — it’s an odd thing to tell of, Redmond — I am haunted. I am haunted by something — that rather takes the light out of things, that fills me with longings . . . . .”

He paused, checked by that English shyness that so often overcomes us when we would speak of moving or grave or beautiful things. “You were at Saint Athelstan’s all through,” he said, and for a moment that seemed to me quite irrelevant. “Well” — and he paused. Then very haltingly at first, but afterwards more easily, he began to tell of the thing that was hidden in his life, the haunting memory of a beauty and a happiness that filled his heart with insatiable longings that made all the interests and spectacle of worldly life seem dull and tedious and vain to him.

Now that I have the clue to it, the thing seems written visibly in his face. I have a photograph in which that look of detachment has been caught and intensified. It reminds me of what a woman once said of him — a woman who had loved him greatly. “Suddenly,” she said, “the interest goes out of him. He forgets you. He doesn’t care a rap for you — under his very nose . . . . .”

Yet the interest was not always out of him, and when he was holding his attention to a thing Wallace could contrive to be an extremely successful man. His career, indeed, is set with successes. He left me behind him long ago; he soared up over my head, and cut a figure in the world that I couldn’t cut — anyhow. He was still a year short of forty, and they say now that he would have been in office and very probably in the new Cabinet if he had lived. At school he always beat me without effort — as it were by nature. We were at school together at Saint Athelstan’s College in West Kensington for almost all our school time. He came into the school as my co-equal, but he left far above me, in a blaze of scholarships and brilliant performance. Yet I think I made a fair average running. And it was at school I heard first of the Door in the Wall — that I was to hear of a second time only a month before his death.

To him at least the Door in the Wall was a real door leading through a real wall to immortal realities. Of that I am now quite assured.

And it came into his life early, when he was a little fellow between five and six. I remember how, as he sat making his confession to me with a slow gravity, he reasoned and reckoned the date of it. “There was,” he said, “a crimson Virginia creeper in it — all one bright uniform crimson in a clear amber sunshine against a white wall. That came into the impression somehow, though I don’t clearly remember how, and there were horse-chestnut leaves upon the clean pavement outside the green door. They were blotched yellow and green, you know, not brown nor dirty, so that they must have been new fallen. I take it that means October. I look out for horse-chestnut leaves every year, and I ought to know.

“If I’m right in that, I was about five years and four months old.”

He was, he said, rather a precocious little boy — he learned to talk at an abnormally early age, and he was so sane and “old-fashioned,” as people say, that he was permitted an amount of initiative that most children scarcely attain by seven or eight. His mother died when he was born, and he was under the less vigilant and authoritative care of a nursery governess. His father was a stern, preoccupied lawyer, who gave him little attention, and expected great things of him. For all his brightness he found life a little grey and dull I think. And one day he wandered.

He could not recall the particular neglect that enabled him to get away, nor the course he took among the West Kensington roads. All that had faded among the incurable blurs of memory. But the white wall and the green door stood out quite distinctly.

As his memory of that remote childish experience ran, he did at the very first sight of that door experience a peculiar emotion, an attraction, a desire to get to the door and open it and walk in. And at the same time he had the clearest conviction that either it was unwise or it was wrong of him — he could not tell which — to yield to this attraction. He insisted upon it as a curious thing that he knew from the very beginning — unless memory has played him the queerest trick — that the door was unfastened, and that he could go in as he chose.

I seem to see the figure of that little boy, drawn and repelled. And it was very clear in his mind, too, though why it should be so was never explained, that his father would be very angry if he went

through that door.

Wallace described all these moments of hesitation to me with the utmost particularity. He went right past the door, and then, with his hands in his pockets, and making an infantile attempt to whistle, strolled right along beyond the end of the wall. There he recalls a number of mean, dirty shops, and particularly that of a plumber and decorator, with a dusty disorder of earthenware pipes, sheet lead ball taps, pattern books of wall paper, and tins of enamel. He stood pretending to examine these things, and coveting, passionately desiring the green door.

Then, he said, he had a gust of emotion. He made a run for it, lest hesitation should grip him again, he went plump with outstretched hand through the green door and let it slam behind him. And so, in a trice, he came into the garden that has haunted all his life.

It was very difficult for Wallace to give me his full sense of that garden into which he came.

There was something in the very air of it that exhilarated, that gave one a sense of lightness and good happening and well being; there was something in the sight of it that made all its colour clean and perfect and subtly luminous. In the instant of coming into it one was exquisitely glad — as only in rare moments and when one is young and joyful one can be glad in this world. And everything was beautiful there . . . . .

Wallace mused before he went on telling me. “You see,” he said, with the doubtful inflection of a man who pauses at incredible things, “there were two great panthers there . . . Yes, spotted panthers. And I was not afraid. There was a long wide path with marble-edged flower borders on either side, and these two huge velvety beasts were playing there with a ball. One looked up and came towards me, a little curious as it seemed. It came right up to me, rubbed its soft round ear very gently against the small hand I held out and purred. It was, I tell you, an enchanted garden. I know. And the size? Oh! it stretched far and wide, this way and that. I believe there were hills far away. Heaven knows where West Kensington had suddenly got to. And somehow it was just like coming home.

“You know, in the very moment the door swung to behind me, I forgot the road with its fallen chestnut leaves, its cabs and

tradesmen's carts, I forgot the sort of gravitational pull back to the discipline and obedience of home, I forgot all hesitations and fear, forgot discretion, forgot all the intimate realities of this life. I became in a moment a very glad and wonder-happy little boy — in another world. It was a world with a different quality, a warmer, more penetrating and mellower light, with a faint clear gladness in its air, and wisps of sun-touched cloud in the blueness of its sky. And before me ran this long wide path, invitingly, with weedless beds on either side, rich with untended flowers, and these two great panthers. I put my little hands fearlessly on their soft fur, and caressed their round ears and the sensitive corners under their ears, and played with them, and it was as though they welcomed me home. There was a keen sense of home-coming in my mind, and when presently a tall, fair girl appeared in the pathway and came to meet me, smiling, and said 'Well?' to me, and lifted me, and kissed me, and put me down, and led me by the hand, there was no amazement, but only an impression of delightful rightness, of being reminded of happy things that had in some strange way been overlooked. There were broad steps, I remember, that came into view between spikes of delphinium, and up these we went to a great avenue between very old and shady dark trees. All down this avenue, you know, between the red chapped stems, were marble seats of honour and statuary, and very tame and friendly white doves . . . . .

"And along this avenue my girl-friend led me, looking down — I recall the pleasant lines, the finely-modelled chin of her sweet kind face — asking me questions in a soft, agreeable voice, and telling me things, pleasant things I know, though what they were I was never able to recall . . . And presently a little Capuchin monkey, very clean, with a fur of ruddy brown and kindly hazel eyes, came down a tree to us and ran beside me, looking up at me and grinning, and presently leapt to my shoulder. So we went on our way in great happiness . . . ."

He paused.

"Go on," I said.

"I remember little things. We passed an old man musing among laurels, I remember, and a place gay with paroquets, and came through a broad shaded colonnade to a spacious cool palace, full of

pleasant fountains, full of beautiful things, full of the quality and promise of heart's desire. And there were many things and many people, some that still seem to stand out clearly and some that are a little vague, but all these people were beautiful and kind. In some way — I don't know how — it was conveyed to me that they all were kind to me, glad to have me there, and filling me with gladness by their gestures, by the touch of their hands, by the welcome and love in their eyes. Yes—"

He mused for awhile. "Playmates I found there. That was very much to me, because I was a lonely little boy. They played delightful games in a grass-covered court where there was a sun-dial set about with flowers. And as one played one loved . . . .

"But — it's odd — there's a gap in my memory. I don't remember the games we played. I never remembered. Afterwards, as a child, I spent long hours trying, even with tears, to recall the form of that happiness. I wanted to play it all over again — in my nursery — by myself. No! All I remember is the happiness and two dear playfellows who were most with me . . . . Then presently came a sombre dark woman, with a grave, pale face and dreamy eyes, a sombre woman wearing a soft long robe of pale purple, who carried a book and beckoned and took me aside with her into a gallery above a hall — though my playmates were loth to have me go, and ceased their game and stood watching as I was carried away. 'Come back to us!' they cried. 'Come back to us soon!' I looked up at her face, but she heeded them not at all. Her face was very gentle and grave. She took me to a seat in the gallery, and I stood beside her, ready to look at her book as she opened it upon her knee. The pages fell open. She pointed, and I looked, marvelling, for in the living pages of that book I saw myself; it was a story about myself, and in it were all the things that had happened to me since ever I was born . . . .

"It was wonderful to me, because the pages of that book were not pictures, you understand, but realities."

Wallace paused gravely — looked at me doubtfully.

"Go on," I said. "I understand."

"They were realities — yes, they must have been; people moved and things came and went in them; my dear mother, whom I had near forgotten; then my father, stern and upright, the servants, the nursery,

all the familiar things of home. Then the front door and the busy streets, with traffic to and fro: I looked and marvelled, and looked half doubtfully again into the woman's face and turned the pages over, skipping this and that, to see more of this book, and more, and so at last I came to myself hovering and hesitating outside the green door in the long white wall, and felt again the conflict and the fear.

"'And next?' I cried, and would have turned on, but the cool hand of the grave woman delayed me.

"'Next?' I insisted, and struggled gently with her hand, pulling up her fingers with all my childish strength, and as she yielded and the page came over she bent down upon me like a shadow and kissed my brow.

"But the page did not show the enchanted garden, nor the panthers, nor the girl who had led me by the hand, nor the playfellows who had been so loth to let me go. It showed a long grey street in West Kensington, on that chill hour of afternoon before the lamps are lit, and I was there, a wretched little figure, weeping aloud, for all that I could do to restrain myself, and I was weeping because I could not return to my dear play-fellows who had called after me, 'Come back to us! Come back to us soon!' I was there. This was no page in a book, but harsh reality; that enchanted place and the restraining hand of the grave mother at whose knee I stood had gone — whither have they gone?"

He halted again, and remained for a time, staring into the fire.

"Oh! the wretchedness of that return!" he murmured.

"Well?" I said after a minute or so.

"Poor little wretch I was — brought back to this grey world again! As I realised the fulness of what had happened to me, I gave way to quite ungovernable grief. And the shame and humiliation of that public weeping and my disgraceful homecoming remain with me still. I see again the benevolent-looking old gentleman in gold spectacles who stopped and spoke to me — prodding me first with his umbrella. 'Poor little chap,' said he; 'and are you lost then?' — and me a London boy of five and more! And he must needs bring in a kindly young policeman and make a crowd of me, and so march me home. Sobbing, conspicuous and frightened, I came from the enchanted garden to the steps of my father's house.

“That is as well as I can remember my vision of that garden — the garden that haunts me still. Of course, I can convey nothing of that indescribable quality of translucent unreality, that difference from the common things of experience that hung about it all; but that — that is what happened. If it was a dream, I am sure it was a day-time and altogether extraordinary dream . . . . . H’m! — naturally there followed a terrible questioning, by my aunt, my father, the nurse, the governess — everyone . . . . . .

“I tried to tell them, and my father gave me my first thrashing for telling lies. When afterwards I tried to tell my aunt, she punished me again for my wicked persistence. Then, as I said, everyone was forbidden to listen to me, to hear a word about it. Even my fairy tale books were taken away from me for a time — because I was ‘too imaginative.’ Eh? Yes, they did that! My father belonged to the old school . . . . . And my story was driven back upon myself. I whispered it to my pillow — my pillow that was often damp and salt to my whispering lips with childish tears. And I added always to my official and less fervent prayers this one heartfelt request: ‘Please God I may dream of the garden. Oh! take me back to my garden! Take me back to my garden!’

“I dreamt often of the garden. I may have added to it, I may have changed it; I do not know . . . . . All this you understand is an attempt to reconstruct from fragmentary memories a very early experience. Between that and the other consecutive memories of my boyhood there is a gulf. A time came when it seemed impossible I should ever speak of that wonder glimpse again.”

I asked an obvious question.

“No,” he said. “I don’t remember that I ever attempted to find my way back to the garden in those early years. This seems odd to me now, but I think that very probably a closer watch was kept on my movements after this misadventure to prevent my going astray. No, it wasn’t until you knew me that I tried for the garden again. And I believe there was a period — incredible as it seems now — when I forgot the garden altogether — when I was about eight or nine it may have been. Do you remember me as a kid at Saint Athelstan’s?”

“Rather!”

“I didn’t show any signs did I in those days of having a secret

dream?”

II

He looked up with a sudden smile.

“Did you ever play North-West Passage with me? . . . . . No, of course you didn’t come my way!”

“It was the sort of game,” he went on, “that every imaginative child plays all day. The idea was the discovery of a North-West Passage to school. The way to school was plain enough; the game consisted in finding some way that wasn’t plain, starting off ten minutes early in some almost hopeless direction, and working one’s way round through unaccustomed streets to my goal. And one day I got entangled among some rather low-class streets on the other side of Campden Hill, and I began to think that for once the game would be against me and that I should get to school late. I tried rather desperately a street that seemed a *cul de sac*, and found a passage at the end. I hurried through that with renewed hope. ‘I shall do it yet,’ I said, and passed a row of frowsy little shops that were inexplicably familiar to me, and behold! there was my long white wall and the green door that led to the enchanted garden!

“The thing whacked upon me suddenly. Then, after all, that garden, that wonderful garden, wasn’t a dream!” . . . .

He paused.

“I suppose my second experience with the green door marks the world of difference there is between the busy life of a schoolboy and the infinite leisure of a child. Anyhow, this second time I didn’t for a moment think of going in straight away. You see . . . For one thing my mind was full of the idea of getting to school in time — set on not breaking my record for punctuality. I must surely have felt *some* little desire at least to try the door — yes, I must have felt that . . . . . But I seem to remember the attraction of the door mainly as another obstacle to my overmastering determination to get to school. I was immediately interested by this discovery I had made, of course — I went on with my mind full of it — but I went on. It didn’t check me. I ran past tugging out my watch, found I had ten minutes still to spare, and then I was going downhill into familiar surroundings. I got

to school, breathless, it is true, and wet with perspiration, but in time. I can remember hanging up my coat and hat . . . Went right by it and left it behind me. Odd, eh?"

He looked at me thoughtfully. "Of course, I didn't know then that it wouldn't always be there. School boys have limited imaginations. I suppose I thought it was an awfully jolly thing to have it there, to know my way back to it, but there was the school tugging at me. I expect I was a good deal distraught and inattentive that morning, recalling what I could of the beautiful strange people I should presently see again. Oddly enough I had no doubt in my mind that they would be glad to see me . . . Yes, I must have thought of the garden that morning just as a jolly sort of place to which one might resort in the interludes of a strenuous scholastic career.

"I didn't go that day at all. The next day was a half holiday, and that may have weighed with me. Perhaps, too, my state of inattention brought down impositions upon me and docked the margin of time necessary for the detour. I don't know. What I do know is that in the meantime the enchanted garden was so much upon my mind that I could not keep it to myself.

"I told — What was his name? — a ferrety-looking youngster we used to call Squiff."

"Young Hopkins," said I.

"Hopkins it was. I did not like telling him, I had a feeling that in some way it was against the rules to tell him, but I did. He was walking part of the way home with me; he was talkative, and if we had not talked about the enchanted garden we should have talked of something else, and it was intolerable to me to think about any other subject. So I blabbed.

"Well, he told my secret. The next day in the play interval I found myself surrounded by half a dozen bigger boys, half teasing and wholly curious to hear more of the enchanted garden. There was that big Fawcett — you remember him? — and Carnaby and Morley Reynolds. You weren't there by any chance? No, I think I should have remembered if you were . . . . .

"A boy is a creature of odd feelings. I was, I really believe, in spite of my secret self-disgust, a little flattered to have the attention of these big fellows. I remember particularly a moment of pleasure

caused by the praise of Crawshaw — you remember Crawshaw major, the son of Crawshaw the composer? — who said it was the best lie he had ever heard. But at the same time there was a really painful undertow of shame at telling what I felt was indeed a sacred secret. That beast Fawcett made a joke about the girl in green — .”

Wallace’s voice sank with the keen memory of that shame. “I pretended not to hear,” he said. “Well, then Carnaby suddenly called me a young liar and disputed with me when I said the thing was true. I said I knew where to find the green door, could lead them all there in ten minutes. Carnaby became outrageously virtuous, and said I’d have to — and bear out my words or suffer. Did you ever have Carnaby twist your arm? Then perhaps you’ll understand how it went with me. I swore my story was true. There was nobody in the school then to save a chap from Carnaby though Crawshaw put in a word or so. Carnaby had got his game. I grew excited and red-eared, and a little frightened, I behaved altogether like a silly little chap, and the outcome of it all was that instead of starting alone for my enchanted garden, I led the way presently — cheeks flushed, ears hot, eyes smarting, and my soul one burning misery and shame — for a party of six mocking, curious and threatening school-fellows.

“We never found the white wall and the green door . . .”

“You mean?—”

“I mean I couldn’t find it. I would have found it if I could.

“And afterwards when I could go alone I couldn’t find it. I never found it. I seem now to have been always looking for it through my school-boy days, but I’ve never come upon it again.”

“Did the fellows — make it disagreeable?”

“Beastly . . . . . Carnaby held a council over me for wanton lying. I remember how I sneaked home and upstairs to hide the marks of my blubbering. But when I cried myself to sleep at last it wasn’t for Carnaby, but for the garden, for the beautiful afternoon I had hoped for, for the sweet friendly women and the waiting playfellows and the game I had hoped to learn again, that beautiful forgotten game . . . . .

“I believed firmly that if I had not told — . . . . . I had bad times after that — crying at night and wool-gathering by day. For two terms I slackened and had bad reports. Do you remember? Of course

you would! It was *you* — your beating me in mathematics that brought me back to the grind again."

III

For a time my friend stared silently into the red heart of the fire. Then he said: "I never saw it again until I was seventeen.

"It leapt upon me for the third time — as I was driving to Paddington on my way to Oxford and a scholarship. I had just one momentary glimpse. I was leaning over the apron of my hansom smoking a cigarette, and no doubt thinking myself no end of a man of the world, and suddenly there was the door, the wall, the dear sense of unforgettable and still attainable things.

"We clattered by — I too taken by surprise to stop my cab until we were well past and round a corner. Then I had a queer moment, a double and divergent movement of my will: I tapped the little door in the roof of the cab, and brought my arm down to pull out my watch. 'Yes, sir!' said the cabman, smartly. 'Er — well — it's nothing,' I cried. '*My* mistake! We haven't much time! Go on!' and he went on . . .

"I got my scholarship. And the night after I was told of that I sat over my fire in my little upper room, my study, in my father's house, with his praise — his rare praise — and his sound counsels ringing in my ears, and I smoked my favourite pipe — the formidable bulldog of adolescence — and thought of that door in the long white wall. 'If I had stopped,' I thought, 'I should have missed my scholarship, I should have missed Oxford — muddled all the fine career before me! I begin to see things better!' I fell musing deeply, but I did not doubt then this career of mine was a thing that merited sacrifice.

"Those dear friends and that clear atmosphere seemed very sweet to me, very fine, but remote. My grip was fixing now upon the world. I saw another door opening — the door of my career."

He stared again into the fire. Its red lights picked out a stubborn strength in his face for just one flickering moment, and then it vanished again.

"Well", he said and sighed, "I have served that career. I have done — much work, much hard work. But I have dreamt of the enchanted

garden a thousand dreams, and seen its door, or at least glimpsed its door, four times since then. Yes — four times. For a while this world was so bright and interesting, seemed so full of meaning and opportunity that the half-effaced charm of the garden was by comparison gentle and remote. Who wants to pat panthers on the way to dinner with pretty women and distinguished men? I came down to London from Oxford, a man of bold promise that I have done something to redeem. Something — and yet there have been disappointments . . . . .

"Twice I have been in love — I will not dwell on that — but once, as I went to someone who, I know, doubted whether I dared to come, I took a short cut at a venture through an unfrequented road near Earl's Court, and so happened on a white wall and a familiar green door. 'Odd!' said I to myself, 'but I thought this place was on Campden Hill. It's the place I never could find somehow — like counting Stonehenge — the place of that queer day dream of mine.' And I went by it intent upon my purpose. It had no appeal to me that afternoon.

"I had just a moment's impulse to try the door, three steps aside were needed at the most — though I was sure enough in my heart that it would open to me — and then I thought that doing so might delay me on the way to that appointment in which I thought my honour was involved. Afterwards I was sorry for my punctuality — I might at least have peeped in I thought, and waved a hand to those panthers, but I knew enough by this time not to seek again belatedly that which is not found by seeking. Yes, that time made me very sorry . . . . .

"Years of hard work after that and never a sight of the door. It's only recently it has come back to me. With it there has come a sense as though some thin tarnish had spread itself over my world. I began to think of it as a sorrowful and bitter thing that I should never see that door again. Perhaps I was suffering a little from overwork — perhaps it was what I've heard spoken of as the feeling of forty. I don't know. But certainly the keen brightness that makes effort easy has gone out of things recently, and that just at a time with all these new political developments — when I ought to be working. Odd, isn't it? But I do begin to find life toilsome, its rewards, as I come

near them, cheap. I began a little while ago to want the garden quite badly. Yes — and I've seen it three times."

"The garden?"

"No — the door! And I haven't gone in!"

He leaned over the table to me, with an enormous sorrow in his voice as he spoke. "Thrice I have had my chance — *thrice!* If ever that door offers itself to me again, I swore, I will go in out of this dust and heat, out of this dry glitter of vanity, out of these toilsome futilities. I will go and never return. This time I will stay . . . . . I swore it and when the time came — *I didn't go*.

"Three times in one year have I passed that door and failed to enter. Three times in the last year.

"The first time was on the night of the snatch division on the Tenants' Redemption Bill, on which the Government was saved by a majority of three. You remember? No one on our side — perhaps very few on the opposite side — expected the end that night. Then the debate collapsed like eggshells. I and Hotchkiss were dining with his cousin at Brentford, we were both unpaired, and we were called up by telephone, and set off at once in his cousin's motor. We got in barely in time, and on the way we passed my wall and door — livid in the moonlight, blotched with hot yellow as the glare of our lamps lit it, but unmistakable. 'My God!' cried I. 'What?' said Hotchkiss. 'Nothing!' I answered, and the moment passed.

"'I've made a great sacrifice,' I told the whip as I got in.
'They all have,' he said, and hurried by.

"I do not see how I could have done otherwise then. And the next occasion was as I rushed to my father's bedside to bid that stern old man farewell. Then, too, the claims of life were imperative. But the third time was different; it happened a week ago. It fills me with hot remorse to recall it. I was with Gurker and Ralphs — it's no secret now you know that I've had my talk with Gurker. We had been dining at Frobisher's, and the talk had become intimate between us. The question of my place in the reconstructed ministry lay always just over the boundary of the discussion. Yes — yes. That's all settled. It needn't be talked about yet, but there's no reason to keep a

secret from you . . . . . Yes — thanks! thanks! But let me tell you my story.

"Then, on that night things were very much in the air. My position was a very delicate one. I was keenly anxious to get some definite word from Gurker, but was hampered by Ralphs' presence. I was using the best power of my brain to keep that light and careless talk not too obviously directed to the point that concerns me. I had to. Ralphs' behaviour since has more than justified my caution . . . . . Ralphs, I knew, would leave us beyond the Kensington High Street, and then I could surprise Gurker by a sudden frankness. One has sometimes to resort to these little devices. . . . . And then it was that in the margin of my field of vision I became aware once more of the white wall, the green door before us down the road.

"We passed it talking. I passed it. I can still see the shadow of Gurker's marked profile, his opera hat tilted forward over his prominent nose, the many folds of his neck wrap going before my shadow and Ralphs' as we sauntered past.

"I passed within twenty inches of the door. 'If I say good-night to them, and go in,' I asked myself, 'what will happen?' And I was all a-tingle for that word with Gurker.

"I could not answer that question in the tangle of my other problems. 'They will think me mad,' I thought. 'And suppose I vanish now! — Amazing disappearance of a prominent politician!' That weighed with me. A thousand inconceivably petty worldlinesses weighed with me in that crisis."

Then he turned on me with a sorrowful smile, and, speaking slowly; "Here I am!" he said.

"Here I am!" he repeated, "and my chance has gone from me. Three times in one year the door has been offered me — the door that goes into peace, into delight, into a beauty beyond dreaming, a kindness no man on earth can know. And I have rejected it, Redmond, and it has gone—"

"How do you know?"

"I know. I know. I am left now to work it out, to stick to the tasks that held me so strongly when my moments came. You say, I have success — this vulgar, tawdry, irksome, envied thing. I have it." He had a walnut in his big hand. "If that was my success," he said, and

crushed it, and held it out for me to see.

"Let me tell you something, Redmond. This loss is destroying me. For two months, for ten weeks nearly now, I have done no work at all, except the most necessary and urgent duties. My soul is full of inappeasable regrets. At nights — when it is less likely I shall be recognised — I go out. I wander. Yes. I wonder what people would think of that if they knew. A Cabinet Minister, the responsible head of that most vital of all departments, wandering alone — grieving — sometimes near audibly lamenting — for a door, for a garden!"

IV

I can see now his rather pallid face, and the unfamiliar sombre fire that had come into his eyes. I see him very vividly to-night. I sit recalling his words, his tones, and last evening's *Westminster Gazette* still lies on my sofa, containing the notice of his death. At lunch to-day the club was busy with him and the strange riddle of his fate.

They found his body very early yesterday morning in a deep excavation near East Kensington Station. It is one of two shafts that have been made in connection with an extension of the railway southward. It is protected from the intrusion of the public by a hoarding upon the high road, in which a small doorway has been cut for the convenience of some of the workmen who live in that direction. The doorway was left unfastened through a misunderstanding between two gangers, and through it he made his way . . . . .

My mind is darkened with questions and riddles.

It would seem he walked all the way from the House that night — he has frequently walked home during the past Session — and so it is I figure his dark form coming along the late and empty streets, wrapped up, intent. And then did the pale electric lights near the station cheat the rough planking into a semblance of white? Did that fatal unfastened door awaken some memory?

Was there, after all, ever any green door in the wall at all?

I do not know. I have told his story as he told it to me. There are times when I believe that Wallace was no more than the victim of the

coincidence between a rare but not unprecedented type of hallucination and a careless trap, but that indeed is not my profoundest belief. You may think me superstitious if you will, and foolish; but, indeed, I am more than half convinced that he had in truth, an abnormal gift, and a sense, something — I know not what — that in the guise of wall and door offered him an outlet, a secret and peculiar passage of escape into another and altogether more beautiful world. At any rate, you will say, it betrayed him in the end. But did it betray him? There you touch the inmost mystery of these dreamers, these men of vision and the imagination. We see our world fair and common, the hoarding and the pit. By our daylight standard he walked out of security into darkness, danger and death. But did he see like that?

THE STAR

It was on the first day of the New Year that the announcement was made, almost simultaneously from three observatories, that the motion of the planet Neptune, the outermost of all the planets that wheel about the sun, had become very erratic. Ogilvy had already called attention to a suspected retardation in its velocity in December. Such a piece of news was scarcely calculated to interest a world the greater portion of whose inhabitants were unaware of the existence of the planet Neptune, nor outside the astronomical profession did the subsequent discovery of a faint remote speck of light in the region of the perturbed planet cause any very great excitement. Scientific people, however, found the intelligence remarkable enough, even before it became known that the new body was rapidly growing larger and brighter, that its motion was quite different from the orderly progress of the planets, and that the deflection of Neptune and its satellite was becoming now of an unprecedented kind.

Few people without a training in science can realise the huge isolation of the solar system. The sun with its specks of planets, its dust of planetoids, and its impalpable comets, swims in a vacant immensity that almost defeats the imagination. Beyond the orbit of Neptune there is space, vacant so far as human observation has penetrated, without warmth or light or sound, blank emptiness, for twenty million times a million miles. That is the smallest estimate of the distance to be traversed before the very nearest of the stars is attained. And, saving a few comets more unsubstantial than the thinnest flame, no matter had ever to human knowledge crossed this gulf of space, until early in the twentieth century this strange wanderer appeared. A vast mass of matter it was, bulky, heavy, rushing without warning out of the black mystery of the sky into the radiance of the sun. By the second day it was clearly visible to any decent instrument, as a speck with a barely sensible diameter, in the constellation Leo near Regulus. In a little while an opera glass could attain it.

On the third day of the new year the newspaper readers of two

hemispheres were made aware for the first time of the real importance of this unusual apparition in the heavens. “A Planetary Collision,” one London paper headed the news, and proclaimed Duchaine’s opinion that this strange new planet would probably collide with Neptune. The leader writers enlarged upon the topic; so that in most of the capitals of the world, on January 3rd, there was an expectation, however vague of some imminent phenomenon in the sky; and as the night followed the sunset round the globe, thousands of men turned their eyes skyward to see — the old familiar stars just as they had always been.

Until it was dawn in London and Pollux setting and the stars overhead grown pale. The Winter’s dawn it was, a sickly filtering accumulation of daylight, and the light of gas and candles shone yellow in the windows to show where people were astir. But the yawning policeman saw the thing, the busy crowds in the markets stopped agape, workmen going to their work betimes, milkmen, the drivers of news-carts, dissipation going home jaded and pale, homeless wanderers, sentinels on their beats, and in the country, labourers trudging afield, poachers slinking home, all over the dusky quickening country it could be seen — and out at sea by seamen watching for the day — a great white star, come suddenly into the westward sky!

Brighter it was than any star in our skies; brighter than the evening star at its brightest. It still glowed out white and large, no mere twinkling spot of light, but a small round clear shining disc, an hour after the day had come. And where science has not reached, men stared and feared, telling one another of the wars and pestilences that are foreshadowed by these fiery signs in the Heavens. Sturdy Boers, dusky Hottentots, Gold Coast Negroes, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Portuguese, stood in the warmth of the sunrise watching the setting of this strange new star.

And in a hundred observatories there had been suppressed excitement, rising almost to shouting pitch, as the two remote bodies had rushed together; and a hurrying to and fro, to gather photographic apparatus and spectroscope, and this appliance and that, to record this novel astonishing sight, the destruction of a world. For it was a world, a sister planet of our earth, far greater than our

earth indeed, that had so suddenly flashed into flaming death. Neptune it was, had been struck, fairly and squarely, by the strange planet from outer space and the heat of the concussion had incontinently turned two solid globes into one vast mass of incandescence. Round the world that day, two hours before the dawn, went the pallid great white star, fading only as it sank westward and the sun mounted above it. Everywhere men marvelled at it, but of all those who saw it none could have marvelled more than those sailors, habitual watchers of the stars, who far away at sea had heard nothing of its advent and saw it now rise like a pigmy moon and climb zenithward and hang overhead and sink westward with the passing of the night.

And when next it rose over Europe everywhere were crowds of watchers on hilly slopes, on house-roofs, in open spaces, staring eastward for the rising of the great new star. It rose with a white glow in front of it, like the glare of a white fire, and those who had seen it come into existence the night before cried out at the sight of it. “It is larger,” they cried. “It is brighter!” And, indeed the moon a quarter full and sinking in the west was in its apparent size beyond comparison, but scarcely in all its breadth had it as much brightness now as the little circle of the strange new star.

“It is brighter!” cried the people clustering in the streets. But in the dim observatories the watchers held their breath and peered at one another. “*It is nearer*,” they said. “*Nearer!*”

And voice after voice repeated, “It is nearer,” and the clicking telegraph took that up, and it trembled along telephone wires, and in a thousand cities grimy compositors fingered the type. “It is nearer.” Men writing in offices, struck with a strange realisation, flung down their pens, men talking in a thousand places suddenly came upon a grotesque possibility in those words, “It is nearer.” It hurried along wakening streets, it was shouted down the frost-stilled ways of quiet villages; men who had read these things from the throbbing tape stood in yellow-lit doorways shouting the news to the passersby. “It is nearer.” Pretty women, flushed and glittering, heard the news told jestingly between the dances, and feigned an intelligent interest they did not feel. “Nearer! Indeed. How curious! How very, very clever people must be to find out things like that!”

Lonely tramps faring through the wintry night murmured those words to comfort themselves — looking skyward. “It has need to be nearer, for the night’s as cold as charity. Don’t seem much warmth from it if it *is* nearer, all the same.”

“What is a new star to me?” cried the weeping woman kneeling beside her dead.

The schoolboy, rising early for his examination work, puzzled it out for himself — with the great white star shining broad and bright through the frost-flowers of his window. “Centrifugal, centripetal,” he said, with his chin on his fist. “Stop a planet in its flight, rob it of its centrifugal force, what then? Centripetal has it, and down it falls into the sun! And this — !

“Do *we* come in the way? I wonder—”

The light of that day went the way of its brethren, and with the later watches of the frosty darkness rose the strange star again. And it was now so bright that the waxing moon seemed but a pale yellow ghost of itself, hanging huge in the sunset. In a South African City a great man had married, and the streets were alight to welcome his return with his bride. “Even the skies have illuminated,” said the flatterer. Under Capricorn, two negro lovers, daring the wild beasts and evil spirits, for love of one another, crouched together in a cane brake where the fire-flies hovered. “That is our star,” they whispered, and felt strangely comforted by the sweet brilliance of its light.

The master mathematician sat in his private room and pushed the papers from him. His calculations were already finished. In a small white phial there still remained a little of the drug that had kept him awake and active for four long nights. Each day, serene, explicit, patient as ever, he had given his lecture to his students, and then had come back at once to this momentous calculation. His face was grave, a little drawn and hectic from his drugged activity. For some time he seemed lost in thought. Then he went to the window, and the blind went up with a click. Half way up the sky, over the clustering roofs, chimneys and steeples of the city, hung the star.

He looked at it as one might look into the eyes of a brave enemy. “You may kill me,” he said after a silence. “But I can hold you — and all the universe for that matter — in the grip of this little brain. I would not change. Even now.”

He looked at the little phial. “There will be no need of sleep again,” he said. The next day at noon — punctual to the minute, he entered his lecture theatre, put his hat on the end of the table as his habit was, and carefully selected a large piece of chalk. It was a joke among his students that he could not lecture without that piece of chalk to fumble in his fingers, and once he had been stricken to impotence by their hiding his supply. He came and looked under his grey eyebrows at the rising tiers of young fresh faces, and spoke with his accustomed studied commonness of phrasing. “Circumstances have arisen — circumstances beyond my control,” he said and paused, “which will debar me from completing the course I had designed. It would seem, gentlemen, if I may put the thing clearly and briefly, that — Man has lived in vain.”

The students glanced at one another. Had they heard aright? Mad? Raised eyebrows and grinning lips there were, but one or two faces remained intent upon his calm grey-fringed face. “It will be interesting,” he was saying, “to devote this morning to an exposition, so far as I can make it clear to you, of the calculations that have led me to this conclusion. Let us assume—”

He turned towards the blackboard, meditating a diagram in the way that was usual to him. “What was that about ‘lived in vain?’” whispered one student to another. “Listen,” said the other, nodding towards the lecturer.

And presently they began to understand.

That night the star rose later, for its proper eastward motion had carried it some way across Leo towards Virgo, and its brightness was so great that the sky became a luminous blue as it rose, and every star was hidden in its turn, save only Jupiter near the zenith, Capella, Aldebaran, Sirius and the pointers of the Bear. It was very white and beautiful. In many parts of the world that night a pallid halo encircled it about. It was perceptibly larger; in the clear refractive sky of the tropics it seemed as if it were nearly a quarter the size of the moon. The frost was still on the ground in England, but the world was as brightly lit as if it were midsummer moonlight. One could see to read quite ordinary print by that cold clear light, and in the cities the lamps burnt yellow and wan.

And everywhere the world was awake that night, and throughout

Christendom a sombre murmur hung in the keen air over the country side like the belling of bees in the heather, and this murmurous tumult grew to a clangour in the cities. It was the tolling of the bells in a million belfry towers and steeples, summoning the people to sleep no more, to sin no more, but to gather in their churches and pray. And overhead, growing larger and brighter as the earth rolled on its way and the night passed, rose the dazzling star.

And the streets and houses were alight in all the cities, the shipyards glared, and whatever roads led to high country were lit and crowded all night long. And in all the seas about the civilised lands, ships with throbbing engines, and ships with bellying sails, crowded with men and living creatures, were standing out to ocean and the north. For already the warning of the master mathematician had been telegraphed all over the world, and translated into a hundred tongues. The new planet and Neptune, locked in a fiery embrace, were whirling headlong, ever faster and faster towards the sun. Already every second this blazing mass flew a hundred miles, and every second its terrific velocity increased. As it flew now, indeed, it must pass a hundred million of miles wide of the earth and scarcely affect it. But near its destined path, as yet only slightly perturbed, spun the mighty planet Jupiter and his moons sweeping splendid round the sun. Every moment now the attraction between the fiery star and the greatest of the planets grew stronger. And the result of that attraction? Inevitably Jupiter would be deflected from its orbit into an elliptical path, and the burning star, swung by his attraction wide of its sunward rush, would "describe a curved path" and perhaps collide with, and certainly pass very close to, our earth. "Earthquakes, volcanic outbreaks, cyclones, sea waves, floods, and a steady rise in temperature to I know not what limit" — so prophesied the master mathematician.

And overhead, to carry out his words, lonely and cold and livid, blazed the star of the coming doom.

To many who stared at it that night until their eyes ached, it seemed that it was visibly approaching. And that night, too, the weather changed, and the frost that had gripped all Central Europe and France and England softened towards a thaw.

But you must not imagine because I have spoken of people

praying through the night and people going aboard ships and people fleeing toward mountainous country that the whole world was already in a terror because of the star. As a matter of fact, use and wont still ruled the world, and save for the talk of idle moments and the splendour of the night, nine human beings out of ten were still busy at their common occupations. In all the cities the shops, save one here and there, opened and closed at their proper hours, the doctor and the undertaker plied their trades, the workers gathered in the factories, soldiers drilled, scholars studied, lovers sought one another, thieves lurked and fled, politicians planned their schemes. The presses of the newspapers roared through the night, and many a priest of this church and that would not open his holy building to further what he considered a foolish panic. The newspapers insisted on the lesson of the year 1000 — for then, too, people had anticipated the end. The star was no star — mere gas — a comet; and were it a star it could not possibly strike the earth. There was no precedent for such a thing. Common sense was sturdy everywhere, scornful, jesting, a little inclined to persecute the obdurate fearful. That night, at seven-fifteen by Greenwich time, the star would be at its nearest to Jupiter. Then the world would see the turn things would take. The master mathematician's grim warnings were treated by many as so much mere elaborate self-advertisement. Common sense at last, a little heated by argument, signified its unalterable convictions by going to bed. So, too, barbarism and savagery, already tired of the novelty, went about their nightly business, and save for a howling dog here and there, the beast world left the star unheeded.

And yet, when at last the watchers in the European States saw the star rise, an hour later it is true, but no larger than it had been the night before, there were still plenty awake to laugh at the master mathematician — to take the danger as if it had passed.

But hereafter the laughter ceased. The star grew — it grew with a terrible steadiness hour after hour, a little larger each hour, a little nearer the midnight zenith, and brighter and brighter, until it had turned night into a second day. Had it come straight to the earth instead of in a curved path, had it lost no velocity to Jupiter, it must have leapt the intervening gulf in a day, but as it was it took five days

altogether to come by our planet. The next night it had become a third the size of the moon before it set to English eyes, and the thaw was assured. It rose over America near the size of the moon, but blinding white to look at, and *hot*; and a breath of hot wind blew now with its rising and gathering strength, and in Virginia, and Brazil, and down the St. Lawrence valley, it shone intermittently through a driving reek of thunder-clouds, flickering violet lightning, and hail unprecedented. In Manitoba was a thaw and devastating floods. And upon all the mountains of the earth the snow and ice began to melt that night, and all the rivers coming out of high country flowed thick and turbid, and soon — in their upper reaches — with swirling trees and the bodies of beasts and men. They rose steadily, steadily in the ghostly brilliance, and came trickling over their banks at last, behind the flying population of their valleys.

And along the coast of Argentina and up the South Atlantic the tides were higher than had ever been in the memory of man, and the storms drove the waters in many cases scores of miles inland, drowning whole cities. And so great grew the heat during the night that the rising of the sun was like the coming of a shadow. The earthquakes began and grew until all down America from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn, hillsides were sliding, fissures were opening, and houses and walls crumbling to destruction. The whole side of Cotopaxi slipped out in one vast convulsion, and a tumult of lava poured out so high and broad and swift and liquid that in one day it reached the sea.

So the star, with the wan moon in its wake, marched across the Pacific, trailed the thunderstorms like the hem of a robe, and the growing tidal wave that toiled behind it, frothing and eager, poured over island and island and swept them clear of men. Until that wave came at last — in a blinding light and with the breath of a furnace, swift and terrible it came — a wall of water, fifty feet high, roaring hungrily, upon the long coasts of Asia, and swept inland across the plains of China. For a space the star, hotter now and larger and brighter than the sun in its strength, showed with pitiless brilliance the wide and populous country; towns and villages with their pagodas and trees, roads, wide cultivated fields, millions of sleepless people staring in helpless terror at the incandescent sky; and then,

low and growing, came the murmur of the flood. And thus it was with millions of men that night — a flight nowhither, with limbs heavy with heat and breath fierce and scant, and the flood like a wall swift and white behind. And then death.

China was lit glowing white, but over Japan and Java and all the islands of Eastern Asia the great star was a ball of dull red fire because of the steam and smoke and ashes the volcanoes were spouting forth to salute its coming. Above was the lava, hot gases and ash, and below the seething floods, and the whole earth swayed and rumbled with the earthquake shocks. Soon the immemorial snows of Thibet and the Himalaya were melting and pouring down by ten million deepening converging channels upon the plains of Burmah and Hindostan. The tangled summits of the Indian jungles were aflame in a thousand places, and below the hurrying waters around the stems were dark objects that still struggled feebly and reflected the blood-red tongues of fire. And in a rudderless confusion a multitude of men and women fled down the broad river-ways to that one last hope of men — the open sea.

Larger grew the star, and larger, hotter, and brighter with a terrible swiftness now. The tropical ocean had lost its phosphorescence, and the whirling steam rose in ghostly wreaths from the black waves that plunged incessantly, speckled with storm-tossed ships.

And then came a wonder. It seemed to those who in Europe watched for the rising of the star that the world must have ceased its rotation. In a thousand open spaces of down and upland the people who had fled thither from the floods and the falling houses and sliding slopes of hill watched for that rising in vain. Hour followed hour through a terrible suspense, and the star rose not. Once again men set their eyes upon the old constellations they had counted lost to them forever. In England it was hot and clear overhead, though the ground quivered perpetually, but in the tropics, Sirius and Capella and Aldebaran showed through a veil of steam. And when at last the great star rose near ten hours late, the sun rose close upon it, and in the centre of its white heart was a disc of black.

Over Asia it was the star had begun to fall behind the movement of the sky, and then suddenly, as it hung over India, its light had been

veiled. All the plain of India from the mouth of the Indus to the mouths of the Ganges was a shallow waste of shining water that night, out of which rose temples and palaces, mounds and hills, black with people. Every minaret was a clustering mass of people, who fell one by one into the turbid waters, as heat and terror overcame them. The whole land seemed a-wailing and suddenly there swept a shadow across that furnace of despair, and a breath of cold wind, and a gathering of clouds, out of the cooling air. Men looking up, near blinded, at the star, saw that a black disc was creeping across the light. It was the moon, coming between the star and the earth. And even as men cried to God at this respite, out of the East with a strange inexplicable swiftness sprang the sun. And then star, sun and moon rushed together across the heavens.

So it was that presently, to the European watchers, star and sun rose close upon each other, drove headlong for a space and then slower, and at last came to rest, star and sun merged into one glare of flame at the zenith of the sky. The moon no longer eclipsed the star but was lost to sight in the brilliance of the sky. And though those who were still alive regarded it for the most part with that dull stupidity that hunger, fatigue, heat and despair engender, there were still men who could perceive the meaning of these signs. Star and earth had been at their nearest, had swung about one another, and the star had passed. Already it was receding, swifter and swifter, in the last stage of its headlong journey downward into the sun.

And then the clouds gathered, blotting out the vision of the sky, the thunder and lightning wove a garment round the world; all over the earth was such a downpour of rain as men had never before seen, and where the volcanoes flared red against the cloud canopy there descended torrents of mud. Everywhere the waters were pouring off the land, leaving mud-silted ruins, and the earth littered like a storm-worn beach with all that had floated, and the dead bodies of the men and brutes, its children. For days the water streamed off the land, sweeping away soil and trees and houses in the way, and piling huge dykes and scooping out Titanic gullies over the country side. Those were the days of darkness that followed the star and the heat. All through them, and for many weeks and months, the earthquakes continued.

But the star had passed, and men, hunger-driven and gathering courage only slowly, might creep back to their ruined cities, buried granaries, and sodden fields. Such few ships as had escaped the storms of that time came stunned and shattered and sounding their way cautiously through the new marks and shoals of once familiar ports. And as the storms subsided men perceived that everywhere the days were hotter than of yore, and the sun larger, and the moon, shrunk to a third of its former size, took now fourscore days between its new and new.

But of the new brotherhood that grew presently among men, of the saving of laws and books and machines, of the strange change that had come over Iceland and Greenland and the shores of Baffin's Bay, so that the sailors coming there presently found them green and gracious, and could scarce believe their eyes, this story does not tell. Nor of the movement of mankind now that the earth was hotter, northward and southward towards the poles of the earth. It concerns itself only with the coming and the passing of the Star.

The Martian astronomers — for there are astronomers on Mars, although they are very different beings from men — were naturally profoundly interested by these things. They saw them from their own standpoint of course. "Considering the mass and temperature of the missile that was flung through our solar system into the sun," one wrote, "it is astonishing what a little damage the earth, which it missed so narrowly, has sustained. All the familiar continental markings and the masses of the seas remain intact, and indeed the only difference seems to be a shrinkage of the white discoloration (supposed to be frozen water) round either pole." Which only shows how small the vastest of human catastrophes may seem, at a distance of a few million miles.

A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON

The man with the white face entered the carriage at Rugby. He moved slowly in spite of the urgency of his porter, and even while he was still on the platform I noted how ill he seemed. He dropped into the corner over against me with a sigh, made an incomplete attempt to arrange his travelling shawl, and became motionless, with his eyes staring vacantly. Presently he was moved by a sense of my observation, looked up at me, and put out a spiritless hand for his newspaper. Then he glanced again in my direction.

I feigned to read. I feared I had unwittingly embarrassed him, and in a moment I was surprised to find him speaking.

"I beg your pardon?" said I.

"That book," he repeated, pointing a lean finger, "is about dreams."

"Obviously," I answered, for it was Fortnum Roscoe's Dream States, and the title was on the cover.

He hung silent for a space as if he sought words. "Yes," he said at last, "but they tell you nothing."

I did not catch his meaning for a second.

"They don't know," he added.

I looked a little more attentively at his face.

"There are dreams," he said, "and dreams."

That sort of proposition I never dispute.

"I suppose—" he hesitated. "Do you ever dream? I mean vividly."

"I dream very little," I answered. "I doubt if I have three vivid dreams in a year."

"Ah!" he said, and seemed for a moment to collect his thoughts.

"Your dreams don't mix with your memories?" he asked abruptly. "You don't find yourself in doubt; did this happen or did it not?"

"Hardly ever. Except just for a momentary hesitation now and then. I suppose few people do."

“Does he say — ?” He indicated the book.

“Says it happens at times and gives the usual explanation about intensity of impression and the like to account for its not happening as a rule. I suppose you know something of these theories—”

“Very little — except that they are wrong.”

His emaciated hand played with the strap of the window for a time. I prepared to resume reading, and that seemed to precipitate his next remark. He leant forward almost as though he would touch me.

“Isn’t there something called consecutive dreaming — that goes on night after night?”

“I believe there is. There are cases given in most books on mental trouble.”

“Mental trouble! Yes. I daresay there are. It’s the right place for them. But what I mean—” He looked at his bony knuckles. “Is that sort of thing always dreaming? Is it dreaming? Or is it something else? Mightn’t it be something else?”

I should have snubbed his persistent conversation but for the drawn anxiety of his face. I remember now the look of his faded eyes and the lids red stained — perhaps you know that look.

“I’m not just arguing about a matter of opinion,” he said.
“The thing’s killing me.”

“Dreams?”

“If you call them dreams. Night after night. Vivid! — so vivid . . . . this—” (he indicated the landscape that went streaming by the window) “seems unreal in comparison! I can scarcely remember who I am, what business I am on . . . .”

He paused. “Even now—”

“The dream is always the same — do you mean?” I asked.

“It’s over.”

“You mean?”

“I died.”

“Died?”

“Smashed and killed, and now, so much of me as that dream was, is dead. Dead forever. I dreamt I was another man, you know, living in a different part of the world and in a different time. I dreamt that

night after night. Night after night I woke into that other life. Fresh scenes and fresh happenings — until I came upon the last—"

"When you died?"

"When I died."

"And since then—"

"No," he said. "Thank God! That was the end of the dream . . ."

It was clear I was in for this dream. And after all, I had an hour before me, the light was fading fast, and Fortnum Roscoe has a dreary way with him. "Living in a different time," I said: "do you mean in some different age?"

"Yes."

"Past?"

"No, to come — to come."

"The year three thousand, for example?"

"I don't know what year it was. I did when I was asleep, when I was dreaming, that is, but not now — not now that I am awake. There's a lot of things I have forgotten since I woke out of these dreams, though I knew them at the time when I was — I suppose it was dreaming. They called the year differently from our way of calling the year . . . What did they call it?" He put his hand to his forehead. "No," said he, "I forget."

He sat smiling weakly. For a moment I feared he did not mean to tell me his dream. As a rule I hate people who tell their dreams, but this struck me differently. I proffered assistance even. "It began—" I suggested.

"It was vivid from the first. I seemed to wake up in it suddenly. And it's curious that in these dreams I am speaking of I never remembered this life I am living now. It seemed as if the dream life was enough while it lasted. Perhaps — But I will tell you how I find myself when I do my best to recall it all. I don't remember anything clearly until I found myself sitting in a sort of loggia looking out over the sea. I had been dozing, and suddenly I woke up — fresh and vivid — not a bit dreamlike — because the girl had stopped fanning me."

"The girl?"

"Yes, the girl. You must not interrupt or you will put me out."

He stopped abruptly. "You won't think I'm mad?" he said.

“No,” I answered. “You’ve been dreaming. Tell me your dream.”

“I woke up, I say, because the girl had stopped fanning me. I was not surprised to find myself there or anything of that sort, you understand. I did not feel I had fallen into it suddenly. I simply took it up at that point. Whatever memory I had of this life, this nineteenth-century life, faded as I woke, vanished like a dream. I knew all about myself, knew that my name was no longer Cooper but Hedon, and all about my position in the world. I’ve forgotten a lot since I woke — there’s a want of connection — but it was all quite clear and matter of fact then.”

He hesitated again, gripping the window strap, putting his face forward and looking up to me appealingly.

“This seems bosh to you?”

“No, no!” I cried. “Go on. Tell me what this loggia was like!”

“It was not really a loggia — I don’t know what to call it. It faced south. It was small. It was all in shadow except the semicircle above the balcony that showed the sky and sea and the corner where the girl stood. I was on a couch — it was a metal couch with light striped cushions — and the girl was leaning over the balcony with her back to me. The light of the sunrise fell on her ear and cheek. Her pretty white neck and the little curls that nestled there, and her white shoulder were in the sun, and all the grace of her body was in the cool blue shadow. She was dressed — how can I describe it? It was easy and flowing. And altogether there she stood, so that it came to me how beautiful and desirable she was, as though I had never seen her before. And when at last I sighed and raised myself upon my arm she turned her face to me—”

He stopped.

“I have lived three-and-fifty years in this world. I have had mother, sisters, friends, wife and daughters — all their faces, the play of their faces, I know. But the face of this girl — it is much more real to me. I can bring it back into memory so that I see it again — I could draw it or paint it. And after all—”

He stopped — but I said nothing.

“The face of a dream — the face of a dream. She was beautiful. Not that beauty which is terrible, cold, and worshipful, like the beauty of a saint; nor that beauty that stirs fierce passions; but a sort

of radiation, sweet lips that softened into smiles, and grave gray eyes. And she moved gracefully, she seemed to have part with all pleasant and gracious things—"

He stopped, and his face was downcast and hidden. Then he looked up at me and went on, making no further attempt to disguise his absolute belief in the reality of his story.

"You see, I had thrown up my plans and ambitions, thrown up all I had ever worked for or desired for her sake. I had been a master man away there in the north, with influence and property and a great reputation, but none of it had seemed worth having beside her. I had come to the place, this city of sunny pleasures with her, and left all those things to wreck and ruin just to save a remnant at least of my life. While I had been in love with her before I knew that she had any care for me, before I had imagined that she would dare — that we should dare, all my life had seemed vain and hollow, dust and ashes. It was dust and ashes. Night after night and through the long days I had longed and desired — my soul had beaten against the thing forbidden!

"But it is impossible for one man to tell another just these things. It's emotion, it's a tint, a light that comes and goes. Only while it's there, everything changes, everything. The thing is I came away and left them in their Crisis to do what they could."

"Left whom?" I asked, puzzled.

"The people up in the north there. You see — in this dream, anyhow — I had been a big man, the sort of man men come to trust in, to group themselves about. Millions of men who had never seen me were ready to do things and risk things because of their confidence in me. I had been playing that game for years, that big laborious game, that vague, monstrous political game amidst intrigues and betrayals, speech and agitation. It was a vast weltering world, and at last I had a sort of leadership against the Gang — you know it was called the Gang — a sort of compromise of scoundrelly projects and base ambitions and vast public emotional stupidities and catch-words — the Gang that kept the world noisy and blind year by year, and all the while that it was drifting, drifting towards infinite disaster. But I can't expect you to understand the shades and complications of the year — the year something or other ahead. I had

it all — down to the smallest details — in my dream. I suppose I had been dreaming of it before I awoke, and the fading outline of some queer new development I had imagined still hung about me as I rubbed my eyes. It was some grubby affair that made me thank God for the sunlight. I sat up on the couch and remained looking at the woman and rejoicing — rejoicing that I had come away out of all that tumult and folly and violence before it was too late. After all, I thought, this is life — love and beauty, desire and delight, are they not worth all those dismal struggles for vague, gigantic ends? And I blamed myself for having ever sought to be a leader when I might have given my days to love. But then, thought I, if I had not spent my early days sternly and austerely, I might have wasted myself upon vain and worthless women, and at the thought all my being went out in love and tenderness to my dear mistress, my dear lady, who had come at last and compelled me — compelled me by her invincible charm for me — to lay that life aside.

"'You are worth it,' I said, speaking without intending her to hear; 'you are worth it, my dearest one; worth pride and praise and all things. Love! to have you is worth them all together." And at the murmur of my voice she turned about.

"'Come and see,' she cried — I can hear her now— 'come and see the sunrise upon Monte Solaro.'

"I remember how I sprang to my feet and joined her at the balcony. She put a white hand upon my shoulder and pointed towards great masses of limestone, flushing, as it were, into life. I looked. But first I noted the sunlight on her face caressing the lines of her cheeks and neck. How can I describe to you the scene we had before us? We were at Capri—"

"I have been there," I said. "I have clambered up Monte Solaro and drunk vero Capri — muddy stuff like cider — at the summit."

"Ah!" said the man with the white face; "then perhaps you can tell me — you will know if this is indeed Capri. For in this life I have never been there. Let me describe it. We were in a little room, one of a vast multitude of little rooms, very cool and sunny, hollowed out of the limestone of a sort of cape, very high above the sea. The whole island, you know, was one enormous hotel, complex beyond explaining, and on the other side there were miles of floating hotels,

and huge floating stages to which the flying machines came. They called it a pleasure city. Of course, there was none of that in your time — rather, I should say, is none of that now. Of course. Now! — yes.

"Well, this room of ours was at the extremity of the cape, so that one could see east and west. Eastward was a great cliff — a thousand feet high perhaps — coldly gray except for one bright edge of gold, and beyond it the Isle of the Sirens, and a falling coast that faded and passed into the hot sunrise. And when one turned to the west, distinct and near was a little bay, a little beach still in shadow. And out of that shadow rose Solaro straight and tall, flushed and golden crested, like a beauty throned, and the white moon was floating behind her in the sky. And before us from east to west stretched the many-tinted sea all dotted with little sailing boats.

"To the eastward, of course, these little boats were gray and very minute and clear, but to the westward they were little boats of gold — shining gold — almost like little flames. And just below us was a rock with an arch worn through it. The blue sea-water broke to green and foam all round the rock, and a galley came gliding out of the arch."

"I know that rock." I said. "I was nearly drowned there. It is called the Faraglioni."

"I Faraglioni? Yes, she called it that," answered the man with the white face. "There was some story — but that—"

He put his hand to his forehead again. "No," he said, "I forget that story."

"Well, that is the first thing I remember, the first dream I had, that little shaded room and the beautiful air and sky and that dear lady of mine, with her shining arms and her graceful robe, and how we sat and talked in half whispers to one another. We talked in whispers not because there was any one to hear, but because there was still such a freshness of mind between us that our thoughts were a little frightened, I think, to find themselves at last in words. And so they went softly.

"Presently we were hungry and we went from our apartment, going by a strange passage with a moving floor, until we came to the great breakfast room — there was a fountain and music. A pleasant

and joyful place it was, with its sunlight and splashing, and the murmur of plucked strings. And we sat and ate and smiled at one another, and I would not heed a man who was watching me from a table near by.

"And afterwards we went on to the dancing-hall. But I cannot describe that hall. The place was enormous — larger than any building you have ever seen — and in one place there was the old gate of Capri, caught into the wall of a gallery high overhead. Light girders, stems and threads of gold, burst from the pillars like fountains, streamed like an Aurora across the roof and interlaced, like — like conjuring tricks. All about the great circle for the dancers there were beautiful figures, strange dragons, and intricate and wonderful grotesques bearing lights. The place was inundated with artificial light that shamed the newborn day. And as we went through the throng the people turned about and looked at us, for all through the world my name and face were known, and how I had suddenly thrown up pride and struggle to come to this place. And they looked also at the lady beside me, though half the story of how at last she had come to me was unknown or mistold. And few of the men who were there, I know, but judged me a happy man, in spite of all the shame and dishonour that had come upon my name.

"The air was full of music, full of harmonious scents, full of the rhythm of beautiful motions. Thousands of beautiful people swarmed about the hall, crowded the galleries, sat in a myriad recesses; they were dressed in splendid colours and crowned with flowers; thousands danced about the great circle beneath the white images of the ancient gods, and glorious processions of youths and maidens came and went. We two danced, not the dreary monotonies of your days — of this time, I mean — but dances that were beautiful, intoxicating. And even now I can see my lady dancing — dancing joyously. She danced, you know, with a serious face; she danced with a serious dignity, and yet she was smiling at me and caressing me — smiling and caressing with her eyes.

"The music was different," he murmured. "It went — I cannot describe it; but it was infinitely richer and more varied than any music that has ever come to me awake.

"And then — it was when we had done dancing — a man came to

speak to me. He was a lean, resolute man, very soberly clad for that place, and already I had marked his face watching me in the breakfasting hall, and afterwards as we went along the passage I had avoided his eye. But now, as we sat in a little alcove, smiling at the pleasure of all the people who went to and fro across the shining floor, he came and touched me, and spoke to me so that I was forced to listen. And he asked that he might speak to me for a little time apart.

"'No,' I said. 'I have no secrets from this lady. What do you want to tell me?'

"He said it was a trivial matter, or at least a dry matter, for a lady to hear.

"'Perhaps for me to hear,' said I.

"He glanced at her, as though almost he would appeal to her. Then he asked me suddenly if I had heard of a great and avenging declaration that Evesham had made? Now, Evesham had always before been the man next to myself in the leadership of that great party in the north. He was a forcible, hard, and tactless man, and only I had been able to control and soften him. It was on his account even more than my own, I think, that the others had been so dismayed at my retreat. So this question about what he had done reawakened my old interest in the life I had put aside just for a moment.

"'I have taken no heed of any news for many days,' I said.
'What has Evesham been saying?'

"And with that the man began, nothing loth, and I must confess even I was struck by Evesham's reckless folly in the wild and threatening words he had used. And this messenger they had sent to me not only told me of Evesham's speech, but went on to ask counsel and to point out what need they had of me. While he talked, my lady sat a little forward and watched his face and mine.

"My old habits of scheming and organising reasserted themselves. I could even see myself suddenly returning to the north, and all the dramatic effect of it. All that this man said witnessed to the disorder of the party indeed, but not to its damage. I should go back stronger than I had come. And then I thought of my lady. You see — how can

I tell you? There were certain peculiarities of our relationship — as things are I need not tell you about that — which would render her presence with me impossible. I should have had to leave her; indeed, I should have had to renounce her clearly and openly, if I was to do all that I could do in the north. And the man knew that, even as he talked to her and me, knew it as well as she did, that my steps to duty were — first, separation, then abandonment. At the touch of that thought my dream of a return was shattered. I turned on the man suddenly, as he was imagining his eloquence was gaining ground with me.

"'What have I to do with these things now?' I said. 'I have done with them. Do you think I am coquetting with your people in coming here?'

"'No,' he said. 'But—'

"'Why cannot you leave me alone. I have done with these things. I have ceased to be anything but a private man.'

"'Yes,' he answered. 'But have you thought? — this talk of war, these reckless challenges, these wild aggressions—'

"I stood up.

"'No,' I cried. 'I won't hear you. I took count of all those things, I weighed them — and I have come away.'

"He seemed to consider the possibility of persistence. He looked from me to where the lady sat regarding us.

"'War,' he said, as if he were speaking to himself, and then turned slowly from me and walked away.

"I stood, caught in the whirl of thoughts his appeal had set going.

"I heard my lady's voice.

"'Dear,' she said; 'but if they had need of you—'

"She did not finish her sentence, she let it rest there. I turned to her sweet face, and the balance of my mood swayed and reeled.

"'They want me only to do the thing they dare not do themselves,' I said. 'If they distrust Evesham they must settle with him themselves.'

"She looked at me doubtfully.

"'But war—' she said.

"I saw a doubt on her face that I had seen before, a doubt of herself and me, the first shadow of the discovery that, seen strongly

and completely, must drive us apart for ever.

"Now, I was an older mind than hers, and I could sway her to this belief or that.

"'My dear one,' I said, 'you must not trouble over these things. There will be no war. Certainly there will be no war. The age of wars is past. Trust me to know the justice of this case. They have no right upon me, dearest, and no one has a right upon me. I have been free to choose my life, and I have chosen this.'

"'But war — ,' she said.

"I sat down beside her. I put an arm behind her and took her hand in mine. I set myself to drive that doubt away — I set myself to fill her mind with pleasant things again. I lied to her, and in lying to her I lied also to myself. And she was only too ready to believe me, only too ready to forget.

"Very soon the shadow had gone again, and we were hastening to our bathing-place in the Grotta del Bovo Marino, where it was our custom to bathe every day. We swam and splashed one another, and in that buoyant water I seemed to become something lighter and stronger than a man. And at last we came out dripping and rejoicing and raced among the rocks. And then I put on a dry bathing-dress, and we sat to bask in the sun, and presently I nodded, resting my head against her knee, and she put her hand upon my hair and stroked it softly and I dozed. And behold! as it were with the snapping of the string of a violin, I was awakening, and I was in my own bed in Liverpool, in the life of to-day.

"Only for a time I could not believe that all these vivid moments had been no more than the substance of a dream.

"In truth, I could not believe it a dream for all the sobering reality of things about me. I bathed and dressed as it were by habit, and as I shaved I argued why I of all men should leave the woman I loved to go back to fantastic politics in the hard and strenuous north. Even if Evesham did force the world back to war, what was that to me? I was a man with the heart of a man, and why should I feel the responsibility of a deity for the way the world might go?

"You know that is not quite the way I think about affairs, about my real affairs. I am a solicitor, you know, with a point of view.

"The vision was so real, you must understand, so utterly unlike a

dream that I kept perpetually recalling little irrelevant details; even the ornament of the book-cover that lay on my wife's sewing-machine in the breakfast-room recalled with the utmost vividness the gilt line that ran about the seat in the alcove where I had talked with the messenger from my deserted party. Have you ever heard of a dream that had a quality like that?"

"Like — ?"

"So that afterwards you remembered little details you had forgotten."

I thought. I had never noticed the point before, but he was right.

"Never," I said. "That is what you never seem to do with dreams."

"No," he answered. "But that is just what I did. I am a solicitor, you must understand, in Liverpool, and I could not help wondering what the clients and business people I found myself talking to in my office would think if I told them suddenly I was in love with a girl who would be born a couple of hundred years or so hence, and worried about the politics of my great-great-great-grandchildren. I was chiefly busy that day negotiating a ninety-nine-year building lease. It was a private builder in a hurry, and we wanted to tie him in every possible way. I had an interview with him, and he showed a certain want of temper that sent me to bed still irritated. That night I had no dream. Nor did I dream the next night, at least, to remember.

"Something of that intense reality of conviction vanished. I began to feel sure it was a dream. And then it came again.

"When the dream came again, nearly four days later, it was very different. I think it certain that four days had also elapsed in the dream. Many things had happened in the north, and the shadow of them was back again between us, and this time it was not so easily dispelled. I began I know with moody musings. Why, in spite of all, should I go back, go back for all the rest of my days to toil and stress, insults and perpetual dissatisfaction, simply to save hundreds of millions of common people, whom I did not love, whom too often I could do no other than despise, from the stress and anguish of war and infinite misrule? And after all I might fail. They all sought their own narrow ends, and why should not I — why should not I also live as a man? And out of such thoughts her voice summoned me, and I lifted my eyes.

“I found myself awake and walking. We had come out above the Pleasure City, we were near the summit of Monte Solaro and looking towards the bay. It was the late afternoon and very clear. Far away to the left Ischia hung in a golden haze between sea and sky, and Naples was coldly white against the hills, and before us was Vesuvius with a tall and slender streamer feathering at last towards the south, and the ruins of Torre dell’ Annunziata and Castellammare glittering and near.”

I interrupted suddenly: “You have been to Capri, of course?”

“Only in this dream,” he said, “only in this dream. All across the bay beyond Sorrento were the floating palaces of the Pleasure City moored and chained. And northward were the broad floating stages that received the aeroplanes. Aeroplanes fell out of the sky every afternoon, each bringing its thousands of pleasure-seekers from the uttermost parts of the earth to Capri and its delights. All these things, I say, stretched below.

“But we noticed them only incidentally because of an unusual sight that evening had to show. Five war aeroplanes that had long slumbered useless in the distant arsenals of the Rhinemouth were manoeuvring now in the eastward sky. Evesham had astonished the world by producing them and others, and sending them to circle here and there. It was the threat material in the great game of bluff he was playing, and it had taken even me by surprise. He was one of those incredibly stupid energetic people who seem sent by heaven to create disasters. His energy to the first glance seemed so wonderfully like capacity! But he had no imagination, no invention, only a stupid, vast, driving force of will, and a mad faith in his stupid idiot ‘luck’ to pull him through. I remember how we stood upon the headland watching the squadron circling far away, and how I weighed the full meaning of the sight, seeing clearly the way things must go. And then even it was not too late. I might have gone back, I think, and saved the world. The people of the north would follow me, I knew, granted only that in one thing I respected their moral standards. The east and south would trust me as they would trust no other northern man. And I knew I had only to put it to her and she would have let me go . . . . Not because she did not love me!

“Only I did not want to go; my will was all the other way about. I

had so newly thrown off the incubus of responsibility: I was still so fresh a renegade from duty that the daylight clearness of what I ought to do had no power at all to touch my will. My will was to live, to gather pleasures and make my dear lady happy. But though this sense of vast neglected duties had no power to draw me, it could make me silent and preoccupied, it robbed the days I had spent of half their brightness and roused me into dark meditations in the silence of the night. And as I stood and watched Evesham's aeroplanes sweep to and fro — those birds of infinite ill omen — she stood beside me watching me, perceiving the trouble indeed, but not perceiving it clearly — her eyes questioning my face, her expression shaded with perplexity. Her face was gray because the sunset was fading out of the sky. It was no fault of hers that she held me. She had asked me to go from her, and again in the night time and with tears she had asked me to go.

"At last it was the sense of her that roused me from my mood. I turned upon her suddenly and challenged her to race down the mountain slopes. 'No,' she said, as if I had jarred with her gravity, but I was resolved to end that gravity, and make her run — no one can be very gray and sad who is out of breath — and when she stumbled I ran with my hand beneath her arm. We ran down past a couple of men, who turned back staring in astonishment at my behaviour — they must have recognised my face. And half way down the slope came a tumult in the air, clang-clank, clang-clank, and we stopped, and presently over the hill-crest those war things came flying one behind the other."

The man seemed hesitating on the verge of a description.

"What were they like?" I asked.

"They had never fought," he said. "They were just like our ironclads are nowadays; they had never fought. No one knew what they might do, with excited men inside them; few even cared to speculate. They were great driving things shaped like spear-heads without a shaft, with a propeller in the place of the shaft."

"Steel?"

"Not steel."

"Aluminum?"

"No, no, nothing of that sort. An alloy that was very common —

as common as brass, for example. It was called — let me see—" He squeezed his forehead with the fingers of one hand. "I am forgetting everything," he said.

"And they carried guns?"

"Little guns, firing high explosive shells. They fired the guns backwards, out of the base of the leaf, so to speak, and rammed with the beak. That was the theory, you know, but they had never been fought. No one could tell exactly what was going to happen. And meanwhile I suppose it was very fine to go whirling through the air like a flight of young swallows, swift and easy. I guess the captains tried not to think too clearly what the real thing would be like. And these flying war machines, you know, were only one sort of the endless war contrivances that had been invented and had fallen into abeyance during the long peace. There were all sorts of these things that people were routing out and furbishing up; infernal things, silly things; things that had never been tried; big engines, terrible explosives, great guns. You know the silly way of these ingenious sort of men who make these things; they turn 'em out as beavers build dams, and with no more sense of the rivers they're going to divert and the lands they're going to flood!

"As we went down the winding stepway to our hotel again, in the twilight, I foresaw it all: I saw how clearly and inevitably things were driving for war in Evesham's silly, violent hands, and I had some inkling of what war was bound to be under these new conditions. And even then, though I knew it was drawing near the limit of my opportunity, I could find no will to go back."

He sighed.

"That was my last chance.

"We didn't go into the city until the sky was full of stars, so we walked out upon the high terrace, to and fro, and — she counselled me to go back.

"'My dearest,' she said, and her sweet face looked up to me, 'this is Death. This life you lead is Death. Go back to them, go back to your duty—'

"She began to weep, saying, between her sobs, and clinging to my arm as she said it, 'Go back — Go back.'

"Then suddenly she fell mute, and, glancing down at her face, I

read in an instant the thing she had thought to do. It was one of those moments when one sees.

"'No!' I said.

"'No?' she asked, in surprise and I think a little fearful at the answer to her thought.

"'Nothing,' I said, 'shall send me back. Nothing! I have chosen. Love, I have chosen, and the world must go. Whatever happens I will live this life — I will live for you! It — nothing shall turn me aside; nothing, my dear one. Even if you died — even if you died—'

"'Yes?' she murmured, softly.

"'Then — I also would die.'

"And before she could speak again I began to talk, talking eloquently — as I could do in that life — talking to exalt love, to make the life we were living seem heroic and glorious; and the thing I was deserting something hard and enormously ignoble that it was a fine thing to set aside. I bent all my mind to throw that glamour upon it, seeking not only to convert her but myself to that. We talked, and she clung to me, torn too between all that she deemed noble and all that she knew was sweet. And at last I did make it heroic, made all the thickening disaster of the world only a sort of glorious setting to our unparalleled love, and we two poor foolish souls strutted there at last, clad in that splendid delusion, drunken rather with that glorious delusion, under the still stars.

"And so my moment passed.

"It was my last chance. Even as we went to and fro there, the leaders of the south and east were gathering their resolve, and the hot answer that shattered Evesham's bluffing for ever, took shape and waited. And, all over Asia, and the ocean, and the South, the air and the wires were throbbing with their warnings to prepare — prepare.

"No one living, you know, knew what war was; no one could imagine, with all these new inventions, what horror war might bring. I believe most people still believed it would be a matter of bright uniforms and shouting charges and triumphs and flags and bands — in a time when half the world drew its food supply from regions ten thousand miles away—"

The man with the white face paused. I glanced at him, and his face was intent on the floor of the carriage. A little railway station, a

string of loaded trucks, a signal-box, and the back of a cottage, shot by the carriage window, and a bridge passed with a clap of noise, echoing the tumult of the train.

"After that," he said, "I dreamt often. For three weeks of nights that dream was my life. And the worst of it was there were nights when I could not dream, when I lay tossing on a bed in this accursed life; and there — somewhere lost to me — things were happening — momentous, terrible things . . . I lived at nights — my days, my waking days, this life I am living now, became a faded, far-away dream, a drab setting, the cover of the book."

He thought.

"I could tell you all, tell you every little thing in the dream, but as to what I did in the daytime — no. I could not tell — I do not remember. My memory — my memory has gone. The business of life slips from me—"

He leant forward, and pressed his hands upon his eyes. For a long time he said nothing.

"And then?" said I.

"The war burst like a hurricane."

He stared before him at unspeakable things.

"And then?" I urged again.

"One touch of unreality," he said, in the low tone of a man who speaks to himself, "and they would have been nightmares. But they were not nightmares — they were not nightmares. No!"

He was silent for so long that it dawned upon me that there was a danger of losing the rest of the story. But he went on talking again in the same tone of questioning self-communion.

"What was there to do but flight? I had not thought the war would touch Capri — I had seemed to see Capri as being out of it all, as the contrast to it all; but two nights after the whole place was shouting and bawling, every woman almost and every other man wore a badge — Evesham's badge — and there was no music but a jangling war-song over and over again, and everywhere men enlisting, and in the dancing halls they were drilling. The whole island was awhirl with rumours; it was said, again and again, that fighting had begun. I had not expected this. I had seen so little of the life of pleasure that I had failed to reckon with this violence of the amateurs. And as for me, I

was out of it. I was like the man who might have prevented the firing of a magazine. The time had gone. I was no one; the vainest stripling with a badge counted for more than I. The crowd jostled us and bawled in our ears; that accursed song deafened us; a woman shrieked at my lady because no badge was on her, and we two went back to our own place again, ruffled and insulted — my lady white and silent, and I aquiver with rage. So furious was I, I could have quarrelled with her if I could have found one shade of accusation in her eyes.

"All my magnificence had gone from me. I walked up and down our rock cell, and outside was the darkling sea and a light to the southward that flared and passed and came again.

"'We must get out of this place,' I said over and over. 'I have made my choice, and I will have no hand in these troubles. I will have nothing of this war. We have taken our lives out of all these things. This is no refuge for us. Let us go.'

"And the next day we were already in flight from the war that covered the world.

"And all the rest was Flight — all the rest was Flight."

He mused darkly.

"How much was there of it?"

He made no answer.

"How many days?"

His face was white and drawn and his hands were clenched. He took no heed of my curiosity.

I tried to draw him back to his story with questions.

"Where did you go?" I said.

"When?"

"When you left Capri."

"South-west," he said, and glanced at me for a second. "We went in a boat."

"But I should have thought an aeroplane?"

"They had been seized."

I questioned him no more. Presently I thought he was beginning again. He broke out in an argumentative monotone:

"But why should it be? If, indeed, this battle, this slaughter and stress is life, why have we this craving for pleasure and beauty? If

there is no refuge, if there is no place of peace, and if all our dreams of quiet places are a folly and a snare, why have we such dreams? Surely it was no ignoble cravings, no base intentions, had brought us to this; it was Love had isolated us. Love had come to me with her eyes and robed in her beauty, more glorious than all else in life, in the very shape and colour of life, and summoned me away. I had silenced all the voices, I had answered all the questions — I had come to her. And suddenly there was nothing but War and Death!"

I had an inspiration. "After all," I said, "it could have been only a dream."

"A dream!" he cried, flaming upon me, "a dream — when, even now—"

For the first time he became animated. A faint flush crept into his cheek. He raised his open hand and clenched it, and dropped it to his knee. He spoke, looking away from me, and for all the rest of the time he looked away. "We are but phantoms!" he said, "and the phantoms of phantoms, desires like cloud-shadows and wills of straw that eddy in the wind; the days pass, use and wont carry us through as a train carries the shadow of its lights — so be it! But one thing is real and certain, one thing is no dream-stuff, but eternal and enduring. It is the centre of my life, and all other things about it are subordinate or altogether vain. I loved her, that woman of a dream. And she and I are dead together!

"A dream! How can it be a dream, when it drenched a living life with unappeasable sorrow, when it makes all that I have lived for and cared for, worthless and unmeaning?

"Until that very moment when she was killed I believed we had still a chance of getting away," he said. "All through the night and morning that we sailed across the sea from Capri to Salerno, we talked of escape. We were full of hope, and it clung about us to the end, hope for the life together we should lead, out of it all, out of the battle and struggle, the wild and empty passions, the empty arbitrary 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not' of the world. We were uplifted, as though our quest was a holy thing, as though love for another was a mission . . . .

"Even when from our boat we saw the fair face of that great rock Capri — already scarred and gashed by the gun emplacements and

hiding-places that were to make it a fastness — we reckoned nothing of the imminent slaughter, though the fury of preparation hung about in the puffs and clouds of dust at a hundred points amidst the gray; but, indeed, I made a text of that and talked. There, you know, was the rock, still beautiful for all its scars, with its countless windows and arches and ways, tier upon tier, for a thousand feet, a vast carving of gray, broken by vine-clad terraces, and lemon and orange groves, and masses of agave and prickly pear, and puffs of almond blossom. And out under the archway that is built over the Piccola Marina other boats were coming; and as we came round the cape and within sight of the mainland, another little string of boats came into view, driving before the wind towards the south-west. In a little while a multitude had come out, the remoter just little specks of ultramarine in the shadow of the eastward cliff.

"'It is love and reason,' I said, 'fleeing from all this madness of war.'

"And though we presently saw a squadron of aeroplanes flying across the southern sky we did not heed it. There it was — a line of little dots in the sky — and then more, dotting the south-eastern horizon, and then still more, until all that quarter of the sky was stippled with blue specks. Now they were all thin little strokes of blue, and now one and now a multitude would heel and catch the sun and become short flashes of light. They came, rising and falling and growing larger, like some huge flight of gulls or rooks or such-like birds, moving with a marvellous uniformity, and ever as they drew nearer they spread over a greater width of sky. The southward wind flung itself in an arrow-headed cloud athwart the sun. And then suddenly they swept round to the eastward and streamed eastward, growing smaller and smaller and clearer and clearer again until they vanished from the sky. And after that we noted to the northward and very high Evesham's fighting machines hanging high over Naples like an evening swarm of gnats.

"It seemed to have no more to do with us than a flight of birds.

"Even the mutter of guns far away in the south-east seemed to us to signify nothing . . .

"Each day, each dream after that, we were still exalted, still seeking that refuge where we might live and love. Fatigue had come

upon us, pain and many distresses. For though we were dusty and stained by our toilsome tramping, and half starved and with the horror of the dead men we had seen and the flight of the peasants — for very soon a gust of fighting swept up the peninsula — with these things haunting our minds it still resulted only in a deepening resolution to escape. Oh, but she was brave and patient! She who had never faced hardship and exposure had courage for herself and me. We went to and fro seeking an outlet, over a country all commandeered and ransacked by the gathering hosts of war. Always we went on foot. At first there were other fugitives, but we did not mingle with them. Some escaped northward, some were caught in the torrent of peasantry that swept along the main roads; many gave themselves into the hands of the soldiery and were sent northward. Many of the men were impressed. But we kept away from these things; we had brought no money to bribe a passage north, and I feared for my lady at the hands of these conscript crowds. We had landed at Salerno, and we had been turned back from Cava, and we had tried to cross towards Taranto by a pass over Mount Alburno, but we had been driven back for want of food, and so we had come down among the marshes by Paestum, where those great temples stand alone. I had some vague idea that by Paestum it might be possible to find a boat or something, and take once more to sea. And there it was the battle overtook us.

"A sort of soul-blindness had me. Plainly I could see that we were being hemmed in; that the great net of that giant Warfare had us in its toils. Many times we had seen the levies that had come down from the north going to and fro, and had come upon them in the distance amidst the mountains making ways for the ammunition and preparing the mounting of the guns. Once we fancied they had fired at us, taking us for spies — at any rate a shot had gone shuddering over us. Several times we had hidden in woods from hovering aeroplanes.

"But all these things do not matter now, these nights of flight and pain . . . We were in an open place near those great temples at Paestum, at last, on a blank stony place dotted with spiky bushes, empty and desolate and so flat that a grove of eucalyptus far away showed to the feet of its stems. How I can see it! My lady was sitting

down under a bush resting a little, for she was very weak and weary, and I was standing up watching to see if I could tell the distance of the firing that came and went. They were still, you know, fighting far from each other, with those terrible new weapons that had never before been used: guns that would carry beyond sight, and aeroplanes that would do — What they would do no man could foretell.

"I knew that we were between the two armies, and that they drew together. I knew we were in danger, and that we could not stop there and rest!

"Though all these things were in my mind, they were in the background. They seemed to be affairs beyond our concern. Chiefly, I was thinking of my lady. An aching distress filled me. For the first time she had owned herself beaten and had fallen a-weeping. Behind me I could hear her sobbing, but I would not turn round to her because I knew she had need of weeping, and had held herself so far and so long for me. It was well, I thought, that she would weep and rest and then we would toil on again, for I had no inkling of the thing that hung so near. Even now I can see her as she sat there, her lovely hair upon her shoulder, can mark again the deepening hollow of her cheek.

"'If we had parted,' she said, 'if I had let you go.'

"'No,' said I.' Even now, I do not repent. I will not repent;
I made my choice, and I will hold on to the end.'

"And then —

"Overhead in the sky flashed something and burst, and all about us I heard the bullets making a noise like a handful of peas suddenly thrown. They chipped the stones about us, and whirled fragments from the bricks and passed . . . ."

He put his hand to his mouth, and then moistened his lips.

"At the flash I had turned about . . .

"You know — she stood up —

"She stood up, you know, and moved a step towards me — as though she wanted to reach me —

"And she had been shot through the heart."

He stopped and stared at me. I felt all that foolish incapacity an

Englishman feels on such occasions. I met his eyes for a moment, and then stared out of the window. For a long space we kept silence. When at last I looked at him he was sitting back in his corner, his arms folded, and his teeth gnawing at his knuckles.

He bit his nail suddenly, and stared at it.

"I carried her," he said, "towards the temples, in my arms — as though it mattered. I don't know why. They seemed a sort of sanctuary, you know, they had lasted so long, I suppose.

"She must have died almost instantly. Only — I talked to her all the way."

Silence again.

"I have seen those temples," I said abruptly, and indeed he had brought those still, sunlit arcades of worn sandstone very vividly before me.

"It was the brown one, the big brown one. I sat down on a fallen pillar and held her in my arms . . . Silent after the first babble was over. And after a little while the lizards came out and ran about again, as though nothing unusual was going on, as though nothing had changed . . . It was tremendously still there, the sun high and the shadows still; even the shadows of the weeds upon the entablature were still — in spite of the thudding and banging that went all about the sky.

"I seem to remember that the aeroplanes came up out of the south, and that the battle went away to the west. One aeroplane was struck, and overset and fell. I remember that — though it didn't interest me in the least. It didn't seem to signify. It was like a wounded gull, you know — flapping for a time in the water. I could see it down the aisle of the temple — a black thing in the bright blue water.

"Three or four times shells burst about the beach, and then that ceased. Each time that happened all the lizards scuttled in and hid for a space. That was all the mischief done, except that once a stray bullet gashed the stone hard by — made just a fresh bright surface.

"As the shadows grew longer, the stillness seemed greater.

"The curious thing," he remarked, with the manner of a man who makes a trivial conversation, "is that I didn't *think* — at all. I sat with her in my arms amidst the stones — in a sort of lethargy — stagnant.

"And I don't remember waking up. I don't remember dressing

that day. I know I found myself in my office, with my letters all slit open in front of me, and how I was struck by the absurdity of being there, seeing that in reality I was sitting, stunned, in that Paestum Temple with a dead woman in my arms. I read my letters like a machine. I have forgotten what they were about."

He stopped, and there was a long silence.

Suddenly I perceived that we were running down the incline from Chalk Farm to Euston. I started at this passing of time. I turned on him with a brutal question, with the tone of "Now or never."

"And did you dream again?"

"Yes."

He seemed to force himself to finish. His voice was very low.

"Once more, and as it were only for a few instants. I seemed to have suddenly awakened out of a great apathy, to have risen into a sitting position, and the body lay there on the stones beside me. A gaunt body. Not her, you know. So soon — it was not her . . . .

"I may have heard voices. I do not know. Only I knew clearly that men were coming into the solitude and that that was a last outrage.

"I stood up and walked through the temple, and then there came into sight — first one man with a yellow face, dressed in a uniform of dirty white, trimmed with blue, and then several, climbing to the crest of the old wall of the vanished city, and crouching there. They were little bright figures in the sunlight, and there they hung, weapon in hand, peering cautiously before them.

"And further away I saw others and then more at another point in the wall. It was a long lax line of men in open order.

"Presently the man I had first seen stood up and shouted a command, and his men came tumbling down the wall and into the high weeds towards the temple. He scrambled down with them and led them. He came facing towards me, and when he saw me he stopped.

"At first I had watched these men with a mere curiosity, but when I had seen they meant to come to the temple I was moved to forbid them. I shouted to the officer.

"'You must not come here,' I cried, '*I* am here. I am here with my dead.'

"He stared, and then shouted a question back to me in some

unknown tongue.

"I repeated what I had said.

"He shouted again, and I folded my arms and stood still. Presently he spoke to his men and came forward. He carried a drawn sword.

"I signed to him to keep away, but he continued to advance. I told him again very patiently and clearly: 'You must not come here. These are old temples and I am here with my dead.'

"Presently he was so close I could see his face clearly. It was a narrow face, with dull gray eyes, and a black moustache. He had a scar on his upper lip, and he was dirty and unshaven. He kept shouting unintelligible things, questions, perhaps, at me.

"I know now that he was afraid of me, but at the time that did not occur to me. As I tried to explain to him, he interrupted me in imperious tones, bidding me, I suppose, stand aside.

"He made to go past me, and I caught hold of him.

"I saw his face change at my grip.

"'You fool,' I cried. 'Don't you know? She is dead!'

"He started back. He looked at me with cruel eyes. I saw a sort of exultant resolve leap into them — delight. Then, suddenly, with a scowl, he swept his sword back — *so* — and thrust."

He stopped abruptly.

I became aware of a change in the rhythm of the train. The brakes lifted their voices and the carriage jarred and jerked. This present world insisted upon itself, became clamourous. I saw through the steamy window huge electric fights glaring down from tall masts upon a fog, saw rows of stationary empty carriages passing by, and then a signal-box hoisting its constellation of green and red into the murky London twilight, marched after them. I looked again at his drawn features.

"He ran me through the heart. It was with a sort of astonishment — no fear, no pain — but just amazement, that I felt it pierce me, felt the sword drive home into my body. It didn't hurt, you know. It didn't hurt at all."

The yellow platform lights came into the field of view, passing first rapidly, then slowly, and at last stopping with a jerk. Dim shapes of men passed to and fro without.

"Euston!" cried a voice.

“Do you mean — ?”

“There was no pain, no sting or smart. Amazement and then darkness sweeping over everything. The hot, brutal face before me, the face of the man who had killed me, seemed to recede. It swept out of existence—”

“Euston!” clamoured the voices outside; “Euston!”

The carriage door opened admitting a flood of sound, and a porter stood regarding us. The sounds of doors slamming, and the hoof-clatter of cab-horses, and behind these things the featureless remote roar of the London cobble-stones, came to my ears. A truckload of lighted lamps blazed along the platform.

“A darkness, a flood of darkness that opened and spread and blotted out all things.”

“Any luggage, sir?” said the porter.

“And that was the end?” I asked.

He seemed to hesitate. Then, almost inaudibly, he answered, “*no*.”

“You mean?”

“I couldn’t get to her. She was there on the other side of the temple — And then—”

“Yes,” I insisted. “Yes?”

“Nightmares,” he cried; “nightmares indeed! My God! Great birds that fought and tore.”

THE CONE

The night was hot and overcast, the sky red, rimmed with the lingering sunset of mid-summer. They sat at the open window, trying to fancy the air was fresher there. The trees and shrubs of the garden stood stiff and dark; beyond in the roadway a gas-lamp burnt, bright orange against the hazy blue of the evening. Farther were the three lights of the railway signal against the lowering sky. The man and woman spoke to one another in low tones.

"He does not suspect?" said the man, a little nervously.

"Not he," she said peevishly, as though that too irritated her. "He thinks of nothing but the works and the prices of fuel. He has no imagination, no poetry."

"None of these men of iron have," he said sententiously.
"They have no hearts."

"*He* has not," she said. She turned her discontented face towards the window. The distant sound of a roaring and rushing drew nearer and grew in volume; the house quivered; one heard the metallic rattle of the tender. As the train passed, there was a glare of light above the cutting and a driving tumult of smoke; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight black oblongs — eight trucks — passed across the dim grey of the embankment, and were suddenly extinguished one by one in the throat of the tunnel, which, with the last, seemed to swallow down train, smoke, and sound in one abrupt gulp.

"This country was all fresh and beautiful once," he said; "and now — it is Gehenna. Down that way — nothing but pot-banks and chimneys belching fire and dust into the face of heaven . . . . . But what does it matter? An end comes, an end to all this cruelty . . . . . *To-morrow*." He spoke the last word in a whisper.

"*To-morrow*," she said, speaking in a whisper too, and still staring out of the window.

"Dear!" he said, putting his hand on hers.

She turned with a start, and their eyes searched one another's. Hers softened to his gaze. "My dear one!" she said, and then: "It

seems so strange — that you should have come into my life like this — to open—" She paused.

"To open?" he said.

"All this wonderful world—" she hesitated, and spoke still more softly— "this world of *love* to me."

Then suddenly the door clicked and closed. They turned their heads, and he started violently back. In the shadow of the room stood a great shadowy figure — silent. They saw the face dimly in the half-light, with unexpressive dark patches under the penthouse brows. Every muscle in Raut's body suddenly became tense. When could the door have opened? What had he heard? Had he heard all? What had he seen? A tumult of questions.

The new-comer's voice came at last, after a pause that seemed interminable. "Well?" he said.

"I was afraid I had missed you, Horrocks," said the man at the window, gripping the window-ledge with his hand. His voice was unsteady.

The clumsy figure of Horrocks came forward out of the shadow. He made no answer to Raut's remark. For a moment he stood above them.

The woman's heart was cold within her. "I told Mr. Raut it was just possible you might come back," she said, in a voice that never quivered.

Horrocks, still silent, sat down abruptly in the chair by her little work-table. His big hands were clenched; one saw now the fire of his eyes under the shadow of his brows. He was trying to get his breath. His eyes went from the woman he had trusted to the friend he had trusted, and then back to the woman.

By this time and for the moment all three half understood one another. Yet none dared say a word to ease the pent-up things that choked them.

It was the husband's voice that broke the silence at last.

"You wanted to see me?" he said to Raut.

Raut started as he spoke. "I came to see you," he said, resolved to lie to the last.

"Yes," said Horrocks.

"You promised," said Raut, "to show me some fine effects of

moonlight and smoke."

"I promised to show you some fine effects of moonlight and smoke," repeated Horrocks in a colourless voice.

"And I thought I might catch you to-night before you went down to the works," proceeded Raut, "and come with you."

There was another pause. Did the man mean to take the thing coolly? Did he after all know? How long had he been in the room? Yet even at the moment when they heard the door, their attitudes. . . . Horrocks glanced at the profile of the woman, shadowy pallid in the half-light. Then he glanced at Raut, and seemed to recover himself suddenly. "Of course," he said, "I promised to show you the works under their proper dramatic conditions. It's odd how I could have forgotten."

"If I am troubling you—" began Raut.

Horrocks started again. A new light had suddenly come into the sultry gloom of his eyes. "Not in the least," he said.

"Have you been telling Mr. Raut of all these contrasts of flame and shadow you think so splendid?" said the woman, turning now to her husband for the first time, her confidence creeping back again, her voice just one half-note too high. "That dreadful theory of yours that machinery is beautiful, and everything else in the world ugly. I thought he would not spare you, Mr. Raut. It's his great theory, his one discovery in art."

"I am slow to make discoveries," said Horrocks grimly, damping her suddenly. "But what I discover . . . . ." He stopped.

"Well?" she said.

"Nothing;" and suddenly he rose to his feet.

"I promised to show you the works," he said to Raut, and put his big, clumsy hand on his friend's shoulder. "And you are ready to go?"

"Quite," said Raut, and stood up also.

There was another pause. Each of them peered through the indistinctness of the dusk at the other two. Horrocks' hand still rested on Raut's shoulder. Raut half fancied still that the incident was trivial after all. But Mrs. Horrocks knew her husband better, knew that grim quiet in his voice, and the confusion in her mind took a vague shape of physical evil. "Very well", said Horrocks, and, dropping his hand,

turned towards the door.

"My hat?" Raut looked round in the half-light.

"That's my work-basket," said Mrs. Horrocks, with a gust of hysterical laughter. Their hands came together on the back of the chair. "Here it is!" he said. She had an impulse to warn him in an undertone, but she could not frame a word. "Don't go!" and "Beware of him!" struggled in her mind, and the swift moment passed.

"Got it?" said Horrocks, standing with the door half open.

Raut stepped towards him. "Better say good-bye to Mrs. Horrocks," said the ironmaster, even more grimly quiet in his tone than before.

Raut started and turned. "Good-evening, Mrs. Horrocks," he said, and their hands touched.

Horrocks held the door open with a ceremonial politeness unusual in him towards men. Raut went out, and then, after a wordless look at her, her husband followed. She stood motionless while Raut's light footfall and her husband's heavy tread, like bass and treble, passed down the passage together. The front door slammed heavily. She went to the window, moving slowly, and stood watching — leaning forward. The two men appeared for a moment at the gateway in the road, passed under the street lamp, and were hidden by the black masses of the shrubbery. The lamp-light fell for a moment on their faces, showing only unmeaning pale patches, telling nothing of what she still feared, and doubted, and craved vainly to know. Then she sank down into a crouching attitude in the big arm-chair, her eyes wide open and staring out at the red lights from the furnaces that flickered in the sky. An hour after she was still there, her attitude scarcely changed.

The oppressive stillness of the evening weighed heavily upon Raut. They went side by side down the road in silence, and in silence turned into the cinder-made by-way that presently opened out the prospect of the valley.

A blue haze, half dust, half mist, touched the long valley with mystery. Beyond were Hanley and Etruria, grey and dark masses, outlined thinly by the rare golden dots of the street lamps, and here and there a gaslit window, or the yellow glare of some late-working factory or crowded public-house. Out of the masses, clear and

slender against the evening sky, rose a multitude of tall chimneys, many of them reeking, a few smokeless during a season of "play." Here and there a pallid patch and ghostly stunted beehive shapes showed the position of a pot-bank, or a wheel, black and sharp against the hot lower sky, marked some colliery where they raise the iridescent coal of the place. Nearer at hand was the broad stretch of railway, and half invisible trains shunted — a steady puffing and rumbling, with every run a ringing concussion and a rhythmic series of impacts, and a passage of intermittent puffs of white steam across the further view. And to the left, between the railway and the dark mass of the low hill beyond, dominating the whole view, colossal, inky-black, and crowned with smoke and fitful flames, stood the great cylinders of the Jeddah Company Blast Furnaces, the central edifices of the big ironworks of which Horrocks was the manager. They stood heavy and threatening, full of an incessant turmoil of flames and seething molten iron, and about the feet of them rattled the rolling-mills, and the steam hammer beat heavily and splashed the white iron sparks hither and thither. Even as they looked, a truckful of fuel was shot into one of the giants, and the red flames gleamed out, and a confusion of smoke and black dust came boiling upwards towards the sky.

"Certainly you get some fine effects of colour with your furnaces," said Raut, breaking a silence that had become apprehensive.

Horrocks grunted. He stood with his hands in his pockets, frowning down at the dim steaming railway and the busy ironworks beyond, frowning as if he were thinking out some knotty problem.

Raut glanced at him and away again. "At present your moonlight effect is hardly ripe," he continued, looking upward. "The moon is still smothered by the vestiges of daylight."

Horrocks stared at him with the expression of a man who has suddenly awakened. "Vestiges of daylight? . . . . Of course, of course." He too looked up at the moon, pale still in the midsummer sky. "Come along," he said suddenly, and, gripping Raut's arm in his hand, made a move towards the path that dropped from them to the railway.

Raut hung back. Their eyes met and saw a thousand things in a

moment that their eyes came near to say. Horrocks' hand tightened and then relaxed. He let go, and before Raut was aware of it, they were arm in arm, and walking, one unwillingly enough, down the path.

"You see the fine effect of the railway signals towards Burslem," said Horrocks, suddenly breaking into loquacity, striding fast, and tightening the grip of his elbow the while. "Little green lights and red and white lights, all against the haze. You have an eye for effect, Raut. It's a fine effect. And look at those furnaces of mine, how they rise upon us as we come down the hill. That to the right is my pet — seventy feet of him. I packed him myself, and he's boiled away cheerfully with iron in his guts for five long years. I've a particular fancy for *him*. That line of red there — a lovely bit of warm orange you'd call it, Raut — that's the puddlers' furnaces, and there, in the hot light, three black figures — did you see the white splash of the steam-hammer then? — that's the rolling mills. Come along! Clang, clatter, how it goes rattling across the floor! Sheet tin, Raut, — amazing stuff. Glass mirrors are not in it when that stuff comes from the mill. And, squelch! — there goes the hammer again. Come along!"

He had to stop talking to catch at his breath. His arm twisted into Raut's with benumbing tightness. He had come striding down the black path towards the railway as though he was possessed. Raut had not spoken a word, had simply hung back against Horrocks' pull with all his strength.

"I say," he said now, laughing nervously, but with an undernote of snarl in his voice, "why on earth are you nipping my arm off, Horrocks, and dragging me along like this?"

At length Horrocks released him. His manner changed again. "Nipping your arm off?" he said. "Sorry. But it's you taught me the trick of walking in that friendly way."

"You haven't learnt the refinements of it yet then," said Raut, laughing artificially again. "By Jove! I'm black and blue." Horrocks offered no apology. They stood now near the bottom of the hill, close to the fence that bordered the railway. The ironworks had grown larger and spread out with their approach. They looked up to the blast furnaces now instead of down; the further view of Etruria and Hanley

had dropped out of sight with their descent. Before them, by the stile rose a notice-board, bearing still dimly visible, the words, "BEWARE OF THE TRAINS," half hidden by splashes of coaly mud.

"Fine effects," said Horrocks, waving his arm. "Here comes a train. The puffs of smoke, the orange glare, the round eye of light in front of it, the melodious rattle. Fine effects! But these furnaces of mine used to be finer, before we shoved cones in their throats, and saved the gas."

"How?" said Raut. "Cones?"

"Cones, my man, cones. I'll show you one nearer. The flames used to flare out of the open throats, great — what is it? — pillars of cloud by day, red and black smoke, and pillars of fire by night. Now we run it off in pipes, and burn it to heat the blast, and the top is shut by a cone. You'll be interested in that cone."

"But every now and then," said Raut, "you get a burst of fire and smoke up there."

"The cone's not fixed, it's hung by a chain from a lever, and balanced by an equipoise. You shall see it nearer. Else, of course, there'd be no way of getting fuel into the thing. Every now and then the cone dips, and out comes the flare."

"I see," said Raut. He looked over his shoulder. "The moon gets brighter," he said.

"Come along," said Horrocks abruptly, gripping his shoulder again, and moving him suddenly towards the railway crossing. And then came one of those swift incidents, vivid, but so rapid that they leave one doubtful and reeling. Halfway across, Horrocks' hand suddenly clenched upon him like a vice, and swung him backward and through a half-turn, so that he looked up the line. And there a chain of lamp-lit carriage-windows telescoped swiftly as it came towards them, and the red and yellow lights of an engine grew larger and larger, rushing down upon them. As he grasped what this meant, he turned his face to Horrocks, and pushed with all his strength against the arm that held him back between the rails. The struggle did not last a moment. Just as certain as it was that Horrocks held him there, so certain was it that he had been violently lugged out of danger.

“Out of the way,” said Horrocks, with a gasp, as the train came rattling by, and they stood panting by the gate into the ironworks.

“I did not see it coming,” said Raut, still, even in spite of his own apprehensions, trying to keep up an appearance of ordinary intercourse.

Horrocks answered with a grunt. “The cone,” he said, and then, as one who recovers himself, “I thought you did not hear.”

“I didn’t,” said Raut.

“I wouldn’t have had you run over then for the world,” said Horrocks.

“For a moment I lost my nerve,” said Raut.

Horrocks stood for half a minute, then turned abruptly towards the ironworks again. “See how fine these great mounds of mine, these clinker-heaps, look in the night! That truck yonder, up above there! Up it goes, and out-tilts the slag. See the palpitating red stuff go sliding down the slope. As we get nearer, the heap rises up and cuts the blast furnaces. See the quiver up above the big one. Not that way! This way, between the heaps. That goes to the puddling furnaces, but I want to show you the canal first.” He came and took Raut by the elbow, and so they went along side by side. Raut answered Horrocks vaguely. What, he asked himself, had really happened on the line? Was he deluding himself with his own fancies, or had Horrocks actually held him back in the way of the train? Had he just been within an ace of being murdered?

Suppose this slouching, scowling monster *did* know anything? For a minute or two then Raut was really afraid for his life, but the mood passed as he reasoned with himself. After all, Horrocks might have heard nothing. At any rate, he had pulled him out of the way in time. His odd manner might be due to the mere vague jealousy he had shown once before. He was talking now of the ash-heaps and the canal. “Eigh?” said Horrocks.

“What?” said Raut. “Rather! The haze in the moonlight. Fine!”

“Our canal,” said Horrocks, stopping suddenly. “Our canal by moonlight and firelight is an immense effect. You’ve never seen it? Fancy that! You’ve spent too many of your evenings philandering up

in Newcastle there. I tell you, for real florid effects — But you shall see. Boiling water . . .”

As they came out of the labyrinth of clinker-heaps and mounds of coal and ore, the noises of the rolling-mill sprang upon them suddenly, loud, near, and distinct. Three shadowy workmen went by and touched their caps to Horrocks. Their faces were vague in the darkness. Raut felt a futile impulse to address them, and before he could frame his words, they passed into the shadows. Horrocks pointed to the canal close before them now: a weird-looking place it seemed, in the blood-red reflections of the furnaces. The hot water that cooled the tuyeres came into it, some fifty yards up — a tumultuous, almost boiling affluent, and the steam rose up from the water in silent white wisps and streaks, wrapping damply about them, an incessant succession of ghosts coming up from the black and red eddies, a white uprising that made the head swim. The shining black tower of the larger blast-furnace rose overhead out of the mist, and its tumultuous riot filled their ears. Raut kept away from the edge of the water, and watched Horrocks.

“Here it is red,” said Horrocks, “blood-red vapour as red and hot as sin; but yonder there, where the moonlight falls on it, and it drives across the clinker-heaps, it is as white as death.”

Raut turned his head for a moment, and then came back hastily to his watch on Horrocks. “Come along to the rolling-mills,” said Horrocks. The threatening hold was not so evident that time, and Raut felt a little reassured. But all the same, what on earth did Horrocks mean about “white as death” and “red as sin?” Coincidence, perhaps?

They went and stood behind the puddlers for a little while, and then through the rolling-mills, where amidst an incessant din the deliberate steam-hammer beat the juice out of the succulent iron, and black, half-naked Titans rushed the plastic bars, like hot sealing-wax, between the wheels. “Come on,” said Horrocks in Raut’s ear, and they went and peeped through the little glass hole behind the tuyeres, and saw the tumbled fire writhing in the pit of the blast-furnace. It left one eye blinded for a while. Then, with green and blue patches

dancing across the dark, they went to the lift by which the trucks of ore and fuel and lime were raised to the top of the big cylinder.

And out upon the narrow rail that overhung the furnace, Raut's doubts came upon him again. Was it wise to be here? If Horrocks did know — everything! Do what he would, he could not resist a violent trembling. Right under foot was a sheer depth of seventy feet. It was a dangerous place. They pushed by a truck of fuel to get to the railing that crowned the place. The reek of the furnace, a sulphurous vapor streaked with pungent bitterness, seemed to make the distant hillside of Hanley quiver. The moon was riding out now from among a drift of clouds, halfway up the sky above the undulating wooded outlines of Newcastle. The steaming canal ran away from below them under an indistinct bridge, and vanished into the dim haze of the flat fields towards Burslem.

"That's the cone I've been telling you of," shouted Horrocks; "and, below that, sixty feet of fire and molten metal, with the air of the blast frothing through it like gas in soda-water."

Raut gripped the hand-rail tightly, and stared down at the cone. The heat was intense. The boiling of the iron and the tumult of the blast made a thunderous accompaniment to Horrocks' voice. But the thing had to be gone through now. Perhaps, after all . . .

"In the middle," bawled Horrocks, "temperature near a thousand degrees. If *you* were dropped into it . . . . flash into flame like a pinch of gunpowder in a candle. Put your hand out and feel the heat of his breath. Why, even up here I've seen the rain-water boiling off the trucks. And that cone there. It's a damned sight too hot for roasting cakes. The top side of it's three hundred degrees."

"Three hundred degrees!" said Raut.

"Three hundred centigrade, mind!" said Horrocks. "It will boil the blood out of you in no time."

"Eigh?" said Raut, and turned.

"Boil the blood out of you in . . . No, you don't!"

"Let me go!" screamed Raut. "Let go my arm!"

With one hand he clutched at the hand-rail, then with both. For a moment the two men stood swaying. Then suddenly, with a violent jerk, Horrocks had twisted him from his hold. He clutched at Horrocks and missed, his foot went back into empty air; in mid-air

he twisted himself, and then cheek and shoulder and knee struck the hot cone together.

He clutched the chain by which the cone hung, and the thing sank an infinitesimal amount as he struck it. A circle of glowing red appeared about him, and a tongue of flame, released from the chaos within, flickered up towards him. An intense pain assailed him at the knees, and he could smell the singeing of his hands. He raised himself to his feet, and tried to climb up the chain, and then something struck his head. Black and shining with the moonlight, the throat of the furnace rose about him.

Horrocks, he saw, stood above him by one of the trucks of fuel on the rail. The gesticulating figure was bright and white in the moonlight, and shouting, "Fizzle, you fool! Fizzle, you hunter of women! You hot-blooded hound! Boil! boil! boil!"

Suddenly he caught up a handful of coal out of the truck, and flung it deliberately, lump after lump, at Raut.

"Horrocks!" cried Raut. "Horrocks!"

He clung crying to the chain, pulling himself up from the burning of the cone. Each missile Horrocks flung hit him. His clothes charred and glowed, and as he struggled the cone dropped, and a rush of hot suffocating gas whooped out and burned round him in a swift breath of flame.

His human likeness departed from him. When the momentary red had passed, Horrocks saw a charred, blackened figure, its head streaked with blood, still clutching and fumbling with the chain, and writhing in agony — a cindery animal, an inhuman, monstrous creature that began a sobbing intermittent shriek.

Abruptly, at the sight, the ironmaster's anger passed. A deadly sickness came upon him. The heavy odour of burning flesh came drifting up to his nostrils. His sanity returned to him.

"God have mercy upon me!" he cried. "O God! what have I done?"

He knew the thing below him, save that it still moved and felt, was already a dead man — that the blood of the poor wretch must be boiling in his veins. An intense realisation of that agony came to his mind, and overcame every other feeling. For a moment he stood irresolute, and then, turning to the truck, he hastily tilted its contents

upon the struggling thing that had once been a man. The mass fell with a thud, and went radiating over the cone. With the thud the shriek ended, and a boiling confusion of smoke, dust, and flame came rushing up towards him. As it passed, he saw the cone clear again.

Then he staggered back, and stood trembling, clinging to the rail with both hands. His lips moved, but no words came to them.

Down below was the sound of voices and running steps. The clangour of rolling in the shed ceased abruptly.

A MOONLIGHT FABLE

There was once a little man whose mother made him a beautiful suit of clothes. It was green and gold and woven so that I cannot describe how delicate and fine it was, and there was a tie of orange fluffiness that tied up under his chin. And the buttons in their newness shone like stars. He was proud and pleased by his suit beyond measure, and stood before the long looking-glass when first he put it on, so astonished and delighted with it that he could hardly turn himself away.

He wanted to wear it everywhere and show it to all sorts of people. He thought over all the places he had ever visited and all the scenes he had ever heard described, and tried to imagine what the feel of it would be if he were to go now to those scenes and places wearing his shining suit, and he wanted to go out forthwith into the long grass and the hot sunshine of the meadow wearing it. Just to wear it! But his mother told him, "No." She told him he must take great care of his suit, for never would he have another nearly so fine; he must save it and save it and only wear it on rare and great occasions. It was his wedding suit, she said. And she took his buttons and twisted them up with tissue paper for fear their bright newness should be tarnished, and she tacked little guards over the cuffs and elbows and wherever the suit was most likely to come to harm. He hated and resisted these things, but what could he do? And at last her warnings and persuasions had effect and he consented to take off his beautiful suit and fold it into its proper creases and put it away. It was almost as though he gave it up again. But he was always thinking of wearing it and of the supreme occasion when some day it might be worn without the guards, without the tissue paper on the buttons, utterly and delightfully, never caring, beautiful beyond measure.

One night when he was dreaming of it, after his habit, he dreamed he took the tissue paper from one of the buttons and found its brightness a little faded, and that distressed him mightily in his dream. He polished the poor faded button and polished it, and if anything it grew duller. He woke up and lay awake thinking of the

brightness a little dulled and wondering how he would feel if perhaps when the great occasion (whatever it might be) should arrive, one button should chance to be ever so little short of its first glittering freshness, and for days and days that thought remained with him, distressingly. And when next his mother let him wear his suit, he was tempted and nearly gave way to the temptation just to fumble off one little bit of tissue paper and see if indeed the buttons were keeping as bright as ever.

He went trimly along on his way to church full of this wild desire. For you must know his mother did, with repeated and careful warnings, let him wear his suit at times, on Sundays, for example, to and fro from church, when there was no threatening of rain, no dust nor anything to injure it, with its buttons covered and its protections tacked upon it and a sunshade in his hand to shadow it if there seemed too strong a sunlight for its colours. And always, after such occasions, he brushed it over and folded it exquisitely as she had taught him, and put it away again.

Now all these restrictions his mother set to the wearing of his suit he obeyed, always he obeyed them, until one strange night he woke up and saw the moonlight shining outside his window. It seemed to him the moonlight was not common moonlight, nor the night a common night, and for a while he lay quite drowsily with this odd persuasion in his mind. Thought joined on to thought like things that whisper warmly in the shadows. Then he sat up in his little bed suddenly, very alert, with his heart beating very fast and a quiver in his body from top to toe. He had made up his mind. He knew now that he was going to wear his suit as it should be worn. He had no doubt in the matter. He was afraid, terribly afraid, but glad, glad.

He got out of his bed and stood a moment by the window looking at the moonshine-flooded garden and trembling at the thing he meant to do. The air was full of a minute clamor of crickets and murmurings, of the infinitesimal shouting of little living things. He went very gently across the creaking boards, for fear that he might wake the sleeping house, to the big dark clothes-press wherein his beautiful suit lay folded, and he took it out garment by garment and softly and very eagerly tore off its tissue-paper covering and its tacked protections, until there it was, perfect and delightful as he had

seen it when first his mother had given it to him — a long time it seemed ago. Not a button had tarnished, not a thread had faded on this dear suit of his; he was glad enough for weeping as in a noiseless hurry he put it on. And then back he went, soft and quick, to the window and looked out upon the garden and stood there for a minute, shining in the moonlight, with his buttons twinkling like stars, before he got out on the sill and, making as little of a rustling as he could, clambered down to the garden path below. He stood before his mother's house, and it was white and nearly as plain as by day, with every window-blind but his own shut like an eye that sleeps. The trees cast still shadows like intricate black lace upon the wall.

The garden in the moonlight was very different from the garden by day; moonshine was tangled in the hedges and stretched in phantom cobwebs from spray to spray. Every flower was gleaming white or crimson black, and the air was aquiver with the thridding of small crickets and nightingales singing unseen in the depths of the trees.

There was no darkness in the world, but only warm, mysterious shadows; and all the leaves and spikes were edged and lined with iridescent jewels of dew. The night was warmer than any night had ever been, the heavens by some miracle at once vaster and nearer, and spite of the great ivory-tinted moon that ruled the world, the sky was full of stars.

The little man did not shout nor sing for all his infinite gladness. He stood for a time like one awe-stricken, and then, with a queer small cry and holding out his arms, he ran out as if he would embrace at once the whole warm round immensity of the world. He did not follow the neat set paths that cut the garden squarely, but thrust across the beds and through the wet, tall, scented herbs, through the night stock and the nicotine and the clusters of phantom white mallow flowers and through the thickets of southern-wood and lavender, and knee-deep across a wide space of mignonette. He came to the great hedge and he thrust his way through it, and though the thorns of the brambles scored him deeply and tore threads from his wonderful suit, and though burs and goosegrass and havers caught and clung to him, he did not care. He did not care, for he knew it was

all part of the wearing for which he had longed. “I am glad I put on my suit,” he said; “I am glad I wore my suit.”

Beyond the hedge he came to the duck-pond, or at least to what was the duck-pond by day. But by night it was a great bowl of silver moonshine all noisy with singing frogs, of wonderful silver moonshine twisted and clotted with strange patternings, and the little man ran down into its waters between the thin black rushes, knee-deep and waist-deep and to his shoulders, smiting the water to black and shining wavelets with either hand, swaying and shivering wavelets, amid which the stars were netted in the tangled reflections of the brooding trees upon the bank. He waded until he swam, and so he crossed the pond and came out upon the other side, trailing, as it seemed to him, not duckweed, but very silver in long, clinging, dripping masses. And up he went through the transfigured tangles of the willow-herb and the uncut seeding grass of the farther bank. And so he came glad and breathless into the highroad. “I am glad,” he said, “beyond measure, that I had clothes that fitted this occasion.”

The highroad ran straight as an arrow flies, straight into the deep blue pit of sky beneath the moon, a white and shining road between the singing nightingales, and along it he went, running now and leaping, and now walking and rejoicing, in the clothes his mother had made for him with tireless, loving hands. The road was deep in dust, but that for him was only soft whiteness, and as he went a great dim moth came fluttering round his wet and shimmering and hastening figure. At first he did not heed the moth, and then he waved his hands at it and made a sort of dance with it as it circled round his head. “Soft moth!” he cried, “dear moth! And wonderful night, wonderful night of the world! Do you think my clothes are beautiful, dear moth? As beautiful as your scales and all this silver vesture of the earth and sky?”

And the moth circled closer and closer until at last its velvet wings just brushed his lips . . . . .

And next morning they found him dead with his neck broken in the bottom of the stone pit, with his beautiful clothes a little bloody and foul and stained with the duckweed from the pond. But his face was a face of such happiness that, had you seen it, you would have understood indeed how that he had died happy, never knowing the

cool and streaming silver for the duckweed in the pond.

THE DIAMOND MAKER

Some business had detained me in Chancery Lane nine in the evening, and thereafter, having some inkling of a headache, I was disinclined either for entertainment or further work. So much of the sky as the high cliffs of that narrow canon of traffic left visible spoke of a serene night, and I determined to make my way down to the Embankment, and rest my eyes and cool my head by watching the variegated lights upon the river. Beyond comparison the night is the best time for this place; a merciful darkness hides the dirt of the waters, and the lights of this transitional age, red glaring orange, gas-yellow, and electric white, are set in shadowy outlines of every possible shade between grey and deep purple. Through the arches of Waterloo Bridge a hundred points of light mark the sweep of the Embankment, and above its parapet rise the towers of Westminster, warm grey against the starlight. The black river goes by with only a rare ripple breaking its silence, and disturbing the reflections of the lights that swim upon its surface.

"A warm night," said a voice at my side.

I turned my head, and saw the profile of a man who was leaning over the parapet beside me. It was a refined face, not unhandsome, though pinched and pale enough, and the coat collar turned up and pinned round the throat marked his status in life as sharply as a uniform. I felt I was committed to the price of a bed and breakfast if I answered him.

I looked at him curiously. Would he have anything to tell me worth the money, or was he the common incapable — incapable even of telling his own story? There was a quality of intelligence in his forehead and eyes, and a certain tremulousness in his nether lip that decided me.

"Very warm," said I; "but not too warm for us here."

"No," he said, still looking across the water, "it is pleasant enough here . . . . just now."

"It is good," he continued after a pause, "to find anything so restful as this in London. After one has been fretting about business all day, about getting on, meeting obligations, and parrying dangers,

I do not know what one would do if it were not for such pacific corners." He spoke with long pauses between the sentences. "You must know a little of the irksome labour of the world, or you would not be here. But I doubt if you can be so brain-weary and footsore as I am . . . . Bah! Sometimes I doubt if the game is worth the candle. I feel inclined to throw the whole thing over — name, wealth and position — and take to some modest trade. But I know if I abandoned my ambition — hardly as she uses me — I should have nothing but remorse left for the rest of my days."

He became silent. I looked at him in astonishment. If ever I saw a man hopelessly hard-up it was the man in front of me. He was ragged and he was dirty, unshaven and unkempt; he looked as though he had been left in a dust-bin for a week. And he was talking to *me* of the irksome worries of a large business. I almost laughed outright. Either he was mad or playing a sorry jest on his own poverty.

"If high aims and high positions," said I, "have their drawbacks of hard work and anxiety, they have their compensations. Influence, the power of doing good, of assisting those weaker and poorer than ourselves; and there is even a certain gratification in display . . . . ."

My banter under the circumstances was in very vile taste. I spoke on the spur of the contrast of his appearance and speech. I was sorry even while I was speaking.

He turned a haggard but very composed face upon me. Said he:
"I forgot myself. Of course you would not understand."

He measured me for a moment. "No doubt it is very absurd. You will not believe me even when I tell you, so that it is fairly safe to tell you. And it will be a comfort to tell someone. I really have a big business in hand, a very big business. But there are troubles just now. The fact is . . . . I make diamonds."

"I suppose," said I, "you are out of work just at present?"

"I am sick of being disbelieved," he said impatiently, and suddenly unbuttoning his wretched coat he pulled out a little canvas bag that was hanging by a cord round his neck. From this he produced a brown pebble. "I wonder if you know enough to know what that is?" He handed it to me.

Now, a year or so ago, I had occupied my leisure in taking a London science degree, so that I have a smattering of physics and mineralogy. The thing was not unlike an uncut diamond of the darker sort, though far too large, being almost as big as the top of my thumb. I took it, and saw it had the form of a regular octahedron, with the curved faces peculiar to the most precious of minerals. I took out my penknife and tried to scratch it — vainly. Leaning forward towards the gas-lamp, I tried the thing on my watch-glass, and scored a white line across that with the greatest ease.

I looked at my interlocutor with rising curiosity. "It certainly is rather like a diamond. But, if so, it is a Behemoth of diamonds. Where did you get it?"

"I tell you I made it," he said. "Give it back to me."

He replaced it hastily and buttoned his jacket. "I will sell it you for one hundred pounds," he suddenly whispered eagerly. With that my suspicions returned. The thing might, after all, be merely a lump of that almost equally hard substance, corundum, with an accidental resemblance in shape to the diamond. Or if it was a diamond, how came he by it, and why should he offer it at a hundred pounds?

We looked into one another's eyes. He seemed eager, but honestly eager. At that moment I believed it was a diamond he was trying to sell. Yet I am a poor man, a hundred pounds would leave a visible gap in my fortunes and no sane man would buy a diamond by gaslight from a ragged tramp on his personal warranty only. Still, a diamond that size conjured up a vision of many thousands of pounds. Then, thought I, such a stone could scarcely exist without being mentioned in every book on gems, and again I called to mind the stories of contraband and light-fingered Kaffirs at the Cape. I put the question of purchase on one side.

"How did you get it?" said I.

"I made it."

I had heard something of Moissan, but I knew his artificial diamonds were very small. I shook my head.

"You seem to know something of this kind of thing. I will tell you a little about myself. Perhaps then you may think better of the purchase." He turned round with his back to the river, and put his hands in his pockets. He sighed. "I know you will not believe me."

“Diamonds,” he began — and as he spoke his voice lost its faint flavour of the tramp and assumed something of the easy tone of an educated man — are to be made by throwing carbon out of combination in a suitable flux and under a suitable pressure; the carbon crystallises out, not as black-lead or charcoal-powder, but as small diamonds. So much has been known to chemists for years, but no one yet had hit upon exactly the right flux in which to melt up the carbon, or exactly the right pressure for the best results. Consequently the diamonds made by chemists are small and dark, and worthless as jewels. Now I, you know, have given up my life to this problem — given my life to it.

“I began to work at the conditions of diamond making when I was seventeen, and now I am thirty-two. It seemed to me that it might take all the thought and energies of a man for ten years, or twenty years, but, even if it did, the game was still worth the candle. Suppose one to have at last just hit the right trick before the secret got out and diamonds became as common as coal, one might realize millions. Millions!”

He paused and looked for my sympathy. His eyes shone hungrily. “To think,” said he, “that I am on the verge of it all, and here!

“I had,” he proceeded, “about a thousand pounds when I was twenty-one, and this, I thought, eked out by a little teaching, would keep my researches going. A year or two was spent in study, at Berlin chiefly, and then I continued on my own account. The trouble was the secrecy. You see, if once I had let out what I was doing, other men might have been spurred on by my belief in the practicability of the idea; and I do not pretend to be such a genius as to have been sure of coming in first, in the case of a race for the discovery. And you see it was important that if I really meant to make a pile, people should not know it was an artificial process and capable of turning out diamonds by the ton. So I had to work all alone. At first I had a little laboratory, but as my resources began to run out I had to conduct my experiments in a wretched unfurnished room in Kentish Town, where I slept at last on a straw mattress on the floor among all my apparatus. The money simply flowed away. I grudged myself everything except scientific appliances. I tried to keep things going by a little teaching, but I am not a very good

teacher, and I have no university degree, nor very much education except in chemistry, and I found I had to give a lot of time and labour for precious little money. But I got nearer and nearer the thing. Three years ago I settled the problem of the composition of the flux, and got near the pressure by putting this flux of mine and a certain carbon composition into a closed-up gun-barrel, filling up with water, sealing tightly, and heating."

He paused.

"Rather risky," said I.

"Yes. It burst, and smashed all my windows and a lot of my apparatus; but I got a kind of diamond powder nevertheless. Following out the problem of getting a big pressure upon the molten mixture from which the things were to crystallise, I hit upon some researches of Daubree's at the Paris *Laboratorie des Poudres et Salpetres*. He exploded dynamite in a tightly screwed steel cylinder, too strong to burst, and I found he could crush rocks into a muck not unlike the South African bed in which diamonds are found. It was a tremendous strain on my resources, but I got a steel cylinder made for my purpose after his pattern. I put in all my stuff and my explosives, built up a fire in my furnace, put the whole concern in, and — went out for a walk."

I could not help laughing at his matter-of-fact manner. "Did you not think it would blow up the house? Were there other people in the place?"

"It was in the interest of science," he said, ultimately. "There was a costermonger family on the floor below, a begging-letter writer in the room behind mine, and two flower-women were upstairs. Perhaps it was a bit thoughtless. But possibly some of them were out.

"When I came back the thing was just where I left it, among the white-hot coals. The explosive hadn't burst the case. And then I had a problem to face. You know time is an important element in crystallisation. If you hurry the process the crystals are small — it is only by prolonged standing that they grow to any size. I resolved to let this apparatus cool for two years, letting the temperature go down slowly during the time. And I was now quite out of money; and with a big fire and the rent of my room, as well as my hunger to satisfy, I had scarcely a penny in the world.

“I can hardly tell you all the shifts I was put to while I was making the diamonds. I have sold newspapers, held horses, opened cab-doors. For many weeks I addressed envelopes. I had a place as assistant to a man who owned a barrow, and used to call down one side of the road while he called down the other.

“Once for a week I had absolutely nothing to do, and I begged. What a week that was! One day the fire was going out and I had eaten nothing all day, and a little chap taking his girl out, gave me sixpence — to show off. Thank heaven for vanity! How the fish-shops smelt! But I went and spent it all on coals, and had the furnace bright red again, and then — Well, hunger makes a fool of a man.

“At last, three weeks ago, I let the fire out. I took my cylinder and unscrewed it while it was still so hot that it punished my hands, and I scraped out the crumbling lava-like mass with a chisel, and hammered it into a powder upon an iron plate. And I found three big diamonds and five small ones. As I sat on the floor hammering, my door opened, and my neighbour, the begging-letter writer came in. He was drunk — as he usually is. “‘Nerchist,’ said he. ‘You’re drunk,’ said I. ‘‘Structive scoundrel,’ said he. ‘Go to your father,’ said I, meaning the Father of Lies. ‘Never you mind,’ said he, and gave me a cunning wink, and hiccuped, and leaning up against the door, with his other eye against the door-post, began to babble of how he had been prying in my room, and how he had gone to the police that morning, and how they had taken down everything he had to say—’’siffiwas a ge’m,’ said he. Then I suddenly realised I was in a hole. Either I should have to tell these police my little secret, and get the whole thing blown upon, or be lagged as an Anarchist. So I went up to my neighbour and took him by the collar, and rolled him about a bit, and then I gathered up my diamonds and cleared out. The evening newspapers called my den the Kentish Town Bomb Factory. And now I cannot part with the things for love or money.

“If I go in to respectable jewellers they ask me to wait, and go and whisper to a clerk to fetch a policeman, and then I say I cannot wait. And I found out a receiver of stolen goods, and he simply stuck to the one I gave him and told me to prosecute if I wanted it back. I am going about now with several hundred thousand pounds-worth of diamonds round my neck, and without either food or shelter. You are

the first person I have taken into my confidence. But I like your face and I am hard-driven."

He looked into my eyes.

"It would be madness," said I, "for me to buy a diamond under the circumstances. Besides, I do not carry hundreds of pounds about in my pocket. Yet I more than half believe your story. I will, if you like, do this: come to my office to-morrow . . . ."

"You think I am a thief!" said he keenly. "You will tell the police. I am not coming into a trap."

"Somehow I am assured you are no thief. Here is my card. Take that, anyhow. You need not come to any appointment. Come when you will."

He took the card, and an earnest of my good-will.

"Think better of it and come," said I.

He shook his head doubtfully. "I will pay back your half-crown with interest some day — such interest as will amaze you," said he. "Anyhow, you will keep the secret? . . . . Don't follow me."

He crossed the road and went into the darkness towards the little steps under the archway leading into Essex Street, and I let him go. And that was the last I ever saw of him.

Afterwards I had two letters from him asking me to send bank-notes — not cheques — to certain addresses. I weighed the matter over and took what I conceived to be the wisest course. Once he called upon me when I was out. My urchin described him as a very thin, dirty, and ragged man, with a dreadful cough. He left no message. That was the finish of him so far as my story goes. I wonder sometimes what has become of him. Was he an ingenious monomaniac, or a fraudulent dealer in pebbles, or has he really made diamonds as he asserted? The latter is just sufficiently credible to make me think at times that I have missed the most brilliant opportunity of my life. He may of course be dead, and his diamonds carelessly thrown aside — one, I repeat, was almost as big as my thumb. Or he may be still wandering about trying to sell the things. It is just possible he may yet emerge upon society, and, passing athwart my heavens in the serene altitude sacred to the wealthy and the well-advertised, reproach me silently for my want of enterprise. I sometimes think I might at least have risked five pounds.

THE LORD OF THE DYNAMOS

The chief attendant of the three dynamos that buzzed and rattled at Camberwell, and kept the electric railway going, came out of Yorkshire, and his name was James Holroyd. He was a practical electrician, but fond of whisky, a heavy red-haired brute with irregular teeth. He doubted the existence of the deity, but accepted Carnot's cycle, and he had read Shakespeare and found him weak in chemistry. His helper came out of the mysterious East, and his name was Azuma-zi. But Holroyd called him Pooh-bah. Holroyd liked a nigger because he would stand kicking — a habit with Holroyd — and did not pry into the machinery and try to learn the ways of it. Certain odd possibilities of the negro mind brought into abrupt contact with the crown of our civilisation Holroyd never fully realised, though just at the end he got some inkling of them.

To define Azuma-zi was beyond ethnology. He was, perhaps, more negroid than anything else, though his hair was curly rather than frizzy, and his nose had a bridge. Moreover, his skin was brown rather than black, and the whites of his eyes were yellow. His broad cheekbones and narrow chin gave his face something of the viperine V. His head, too, was broad behind, and low and narrow at the forehead, as if his brain had been twisted round in the reverse way to a European's. He was short of stature and still shorter of English. In conversation he made numerous odd noises of no known marketable value, and his infrequent words were carved and wrought into heraldic grotesqueness. Holroyd tried to elucidate his religious beliefs, and — especially after whisky — lectured to him against superstition and missionaries. Azuma-zi, however, shirked the discussion of his gods, even though he was kicked for it.

Azuma-zi had come, clad in white but insufficient raiment, out of the stokehole of the *Lord Clive*, from the Straits Settlements, and beyond, into London. He had heard even in his youth of the greatness and riches of London, where all the women are white and fair, and even the beggars in the streets are white, and he arrived, with newly earned gold coins in his pocket, to worship at the shrine of civilisation. The day of his landing was a dismal one; the sky was

dun, and a wind-worried drizzle filtered down to the greasy streets, but he plunged boldly into the delights of Shadwell, and was presently cast up, shattered in health, civilised in costume, penniless and, except in matters of the direst necessity, practically a dumb animal, to toil for James Holroyd and to be bullied by him in the dynamo shed at Camberwell. And to James Holroyd bullying was a labour of love.

There were three dynamos with their engines at Camberwell. The two that had been there since the beginning were small machines; the larger one was new. The smaller machines made a reasonable noise; their straps hummed over the drums, every now and then the brushes buzzed and fizzled, and the air churned steadily, whoo! whoo! whoo! between their poles. One was loose in its foundations and kept the shed vibrating. But the big dynamo drowned these little noises altogether with the sustained drone of its iron core, which somehow set part of the ironwork humming. The place made the visitor's head reel with the throb, throb, throb of the engines, the rotation of the big wheels, the spinning ball-valves, the occasional spittings of the steam, and over all the deep, unceasing, surging note of the big dynamo. This last noise was from an engineering point of view a defect, but Azuma-zi accounted it unto the monster for mightiness and pride.

If it were possible we would have the noises of that shed always about the reader as he reads, we would tell all our story to such an accompaniment. It was a steady stream of din, from which the ear picked out first one thread and then another; there was the intermittent snorting, panting, and seething of the steam engines, the suck and thud of their pistons, the dull beat on the air as the spokes of the great driving-wheels came round, a note the leather straps made as they ran tighter and looser, and a fretful tumult from the dynamos; and over all, sometimes inaudible, as the ear tired of it, and then creeping back upon the senses again, was this trombone note of the big machine. The floor never felt steady and quiet beneath one's feet, but quivered and jarred. It was a confusing, unsteady place, and enough to send anyone's thoughts jerking into odd zigzags. And for three months, while the big strike of the engineers was in progress, Holroyd, who was a blackleg, and Azuma-zi, who was a mere black,

were never out of the stir and eddy of it, but slept and fed in the little wooden shanty between the shed and the gates.

Holroyd delivered a theological lecture on the text of his big machine soon after Azuma-zi came. He had to shout to be heard in the din. “Look at that,” said Holroyd; “where’s your ‘eathen idol to match ‘im?” And Azuma-zi looked. For a moment Holroyd was inaudible, and then Azuma-zi heard: “Kill a hundred men. Twelve per cent. on the ordinary shares,” said Holroyd, “and that’s something like a Gord!”

Holroyd was proud of his big dynamo, and expatiated upon its size and power to Azuma-zi until heaven knows what odd currents of thought that and the incessant whirling and shindy set up within the curly black cranium. He would explain in the most graphic manner the dozen or so ways in which a man might be killed by it, and once he gave Azuma-zi a shock as a sample of its quality. After that, in the breathing-times of his labour — it was heavy labour, being not only his own, but most of Holroyd’s — Azuma-zi would sit and watch the big machine. Now and then the brushes would sparkle and spit blue flashes, at which Holroyd would swear, but all the rest was as smooth and rhythmic as breathing. The band ran shouting over the shaft, and ever behind one as one watched was the complacent thud of the piston. So it lived all day in this big airy shed, with him and Holroyd to wait upon it; not prisoned up and slaving to drive a ship as the other engines he knew — mere captive devils of the British Solomon — had been, but a machine enthroned. Those two smaller dynamos, Azuma-zi by force of contrast despised; the large one he privately christened the Lord of the Dynamos. They were fretful and irregular, but the big dynamo was steady. How great it was! How serene and easy in its working! Greater and calmer even than the Buddhas he had seen at Rangoon, and yet not motionless, but living! The great black coils spun, spun, spun, the rings ran round under the brushes, and the deep note of its coil steadied the whole. It affected Azuma-zi queerly.

Azuma-zi was not fond of labour. He would sit about and watch the Lord of the Dynamos while Holroyd went away to persuade the yard porter to get whisky, although his proper place was not in the dynamo shed but behind the engines, and, moreover, if Holroyd

caught him skulking he got hit for it with a rod of stout copper wire. He would go and stand close to the colossus and look up at the great leather band running overhead. There was a black patch on the band that came round, and it pleased him somehow among all the clatter to watch this return again and again. Odd thoughts spun with the whirl of it. Scientific people tell us that savages give souls to rocks and trees — and a machine is a thousand times more alive than a rock or a tree. And Azuma-zi was practically a savage still; the veneer of civilisation lay no deeper than his slop suit, his bruises, and the coal grime on his face and hands. His father before him had worshipped a meteoric stone, kindred blood it may be had splashed the broad wheels of Juggernaut.

He took every opportunity Holroyd gave him of touching and handling the great dynamo that was fascinating him. He polished and cleaned it until the metal parts were blinding in the sun. He felt a mysterious sense of service in doing this. He would go up to it and touch its spinning coils gently. The gods he had worshipped were all far away. The people in London hid their gods.

At last his dim feelings grew more distinct, and took shape in thoughts and at last in acts. When he came into the roaring shed one morning he salaamed to the Lord of the Dynamos, and then when Holroyd was away, he went and whispered to the thundering machine that he was its servant, and prayed it to have pity on him and save him from Holroyd. As he did so a rare gleam of light came in through the open archway of the throbbing machine-shed, and the Lord of the Dynamos, as he whirled and roared, was radiant with pale gold. Then Azuma-zi knew that his service was acceptable to his Lord. After that he did not feel so lonely as he had done, and he had indeed been very much alone in London. And even when his work time was over, which was rare, he loitered about the shed.

Then, the next time Holroyd maltreated him, Azuma-zi went presently to the Lord of the Dynamos and whispered, “Thou seest, O my Lord!” and the angry whir of the machinery seemed to answer him. Thereafter it appeared to him that whenever Holroyd came into the shed a different note came into the sounds of the dynamo. “My Lord bides his time,” said Azuma-zi to himself. “The iniquity of the fool is not yet ripe.” And he waited and watched for the day of

reckoning. One day there was evidence of short circuiting, and Holroyd, making an unwary examination — it was in the afternoon — got a rather severe shock. Azuma-zi from behind the engine saw him jump off and curse at the peccant coil.

"He is warned," said Azuma-zi to himself. "Surely my Lord is very patient."

Holroyd had at first initiated his "nigger" into such elementary conceptions of the dynamo's working as would enable him to take temporary charge of the shed in his absence. But when he noticed the manner in which Azuma-zi hung about the monster he became suspicious. He dimly perceived his assistant was "up to something," and connecting him with the anointing of the coils with oil that had rotted the varnish in one place, he issued an edict, shouted above the confusion of the machinery, "Don't 'ee go nigh that big dynamo any more, Pooh-bah, or a'll take thy skin off!" Besides, if it pleased Azuma-zi to be near the big machine, it was plain sense and decency to keep him away from it.

Azuma-zi obeyed at the time, but later he was caught bowing before the Lord of the Dynamos. At which Holroyd twisted his arm and kicked him as he turned to go away. As Azuma-zi presently stood behind the engine and glared at the back of the hated Holroyd, the noises of the machinery took a new rhythm, and sounded like four words in his native tongue.

It is hard to say exactly what madness is. I fancy Azuma-zi was mad. The incessant din and whirl of the dynamo shed may have churned up his little store of knowledge and his big store of superstitious fancy, at last, into something akin to frenzy. At any rate, when the idea of making Holroyd a sacrifice to the Dynamo Fetich was thus suggested to him, it filled him with a strange tumult of exultant emotion.

That night the two men and their black shadows were alone in the shed together. The shed was lit with one big arc light that winked and flickered purple. The shadows lay black behind the dynamos, the ball governors of the engines whirled from light to darkness, and their pistons beat loud and steady. The world outside seen through the open end of the shed seemed incredibly dim and remote. It seemed absolutely silent, too, since the riot of the machinery drowned every

external sound. Far away was the black fence of the yard with grey shadowy houses behind, and above was the deep blue sky and the pale little stars. Azuma-zi suddenly walked across the centre of the shed above which the leather bands were running, and went into the shadow by the big dynamo. Holroyd heard a click, and the spin of the armature changed.

"What are you dewin' with that switch?" he bawled in surprise. "Han't I told you—"

Then he saw the set expression of Azuma-zi's eyes as the Asiatic came out of the shadow towards him.

In another moment the two men were grappling fiercely in front of the great dynamo.

"You coffee-headed fool!" gasped Holroyd, with a brown hand at his throat. "Keep off those contact rings." In another moment he was tripped and reeling back upon the Lord of the Dynamos. He instinctively loosened his grip upon his antagonist to save himself from the machine.

The messenger, sent in furious haste from the station to find out what had happened in the dynamo shed, met Azuma-zi at the porter's lodge by the gate. Azuma-zi tried to explain something, but the messenger could make nothing of the black's incoherent English, and hurried on to the shed. The machines were all noisily at work, and nothing seemed to be disarranged. There was, however, a queer smell of singed hair. Then he saw an odd-looking crumpled mass clinging to the front of the big dynamo, and, approaching, recognised the distorted remains of Holroyd.

The man stared and hesitated a moment. Then he saw the face, and shut his eyes convulsively. He turned on his heel before he opened them, so that he should not see Holroyd again, and went out of the shed to get advice and help.

When Azuma-zi saw Holroyd die in the grip of the Great Dynamo he had been a little scared about the consequences of his act. Yet he felt strangely elated, and knew that the favour of the Lord Dynamo was upon him. His plan was already settled when he met the man

coming from the station, and the scientific manager who speedily arrived on the scene jumped at the obvious conclusion of suicide. This expert scarcely noticed Azuma-zi, except to ask a few questions. Did he see Holroyd kill himself? Azuma-zi explained that he had been out of sight at the engine furnace until he heard a difference in the noise from the dynamo. It was not a difficult examination, being untinctured by suspicion.

The distorted remains of Holroyd, which the electrician removed from the machine, were hastily covered by the porter with a coffee-stained tablecloth. Somebody, by a happy inspiration, fetched a medical man. The expert was chiefly anxious to get the machine at work again, for seven or eight trains had stopped midway in the stuffy tunnels of the electric railway. Azuma-zi, answering or misunderstanding the questions of the people who had by authority or impudence come into the shed, was presently sent back to the stoke-hole by the scientific manager. Of course a crowd collected outside the gates of the yard — a crowd, for no known reason, always hovers for a day or two near the scene of a sudden death in London; two or three reporters percolated somehow into the engine-shed, and one even got to Azuma-zi; but the scientific expert cleared them out again, being himself an amateur journalist.

Presently the body was carried away, and public interest departed with it. Azuma-zi remained very quietly at his furnace, seeing over and over again in the coals a figure that wriggled violently and became still. An hour after the murder, to anyone coming into the shed it would have looked exactly as if nothing had ever happened there. Peeping presently from his engine-room the black saw the Lord Dynamo spin and whirl beside his little brothers, and the driving wheels were beating round, and the steam in the pistons went thud, thud, exactly as it had been earlier in the evening. After all, from the mechanical point of view, it had been a most insignificant incident — the mere temporary deflection of a current. But now the slender form and slender shadow of the scientific manager replaced the sturdy outline of Holroyd travelling up and down the lane of light upon the vibrating floor under the straps between the engines and the dynamos.

“Have I not served my Lord?” said Azuma-zi inaudibly, from his

shadow, and the note of the great dynamo rang out full and clear. As he looked at the big whirling mechanism the strange fascination of it that had been a little in abeyance since Holroyd's death, resumed its sway.

Never had Azuma-zi seen a man killed so swiftly and pitilessly. The big humming machine had slain its victim without wavering for a second from its steady beating. It was indeed a mighty god.

The unconscious scientific manager stood with his back to him, scribbling on a piece of paper. His shadow lay at the foot of the monster.

"Was the Lord Dynamo still hungry? His servant was ready."

Azuma-zi made a stealthy step forward; then stopped. The scientific manager suddenly stopped writing, and walked down the shed to the endmost of the dynamos, and began to examine the brushes.

Azuma-zi hesitated, and then slipped across noiselessly into shadow by the switch. There he waited. Presently the manager's footsteps could be heard returning. He stopped in his old position, unconscious of the stoker crouching ten feet away from him. Then the big dynamo suddenly fizzled, and in another moment Azuma-zi had sprung out of the darkness upon him.

First, the scientific manager was gripped round the body and swung towards the big dynamo, then, kicking with his knee and forcing his antagonist's head down with his hands, he loosened the grip on his waist and swung round away from the machine. Then the black grasped him again, putting a curly head against his chest, and they swayed and panted as it seemed for an age or so. Then the scientific manager was impelled to catch a black ear in his teeth and bite furiously. The black yelled hideously.

They rolled over on the floor, and the black, who had apparently slipped from the vice of the teeth or parted with some ear — the scientific manager wondered which at the time — tried to throttle him. The scientific manager was making some ineffectual attempts to claw something with his hands and to kick, when the welcome sound of quick footsteps sounded on the floor. The next moment Azuma-zi had left him and darted towards the big dynamo. There was a splutter amid the roar.

The officer of the company who had entered, stood staring as Azuma-zi caught the naked terminals in his hands, gave one horrible convulsion, and then hung motionless from the machine, his face violently distorted.

“I’m jolly glad you came in when you did,” said the scientific manager, still sitting on the floor.

He looked at the still quivering figure.

“It’s not a nice death to die, apparently — but it is quick.”

The official was still staring at the body. He was a man of slow apprehension.

There was a pause.

The scientific manager got up on his feet rather awkwardly. He ran his fingers along his collar thoughtfully, and moved his head to and fro several times.

“Poor Holroyd! I see now.” Then almost mechanically he went towards the switch in the shadow and turned the current into the railway circuit again. As he did so the singed body loosened its grip upon the machine and fell forward on its face. The core of the dynamo roared out loud and clear, and the armature beat the air.

So ended prematurely the Worship of the Dynamo Deity, perhaps the most short-lived of all religions. Yet withal it could at least boast a Martyrdom and a Human Sacrifice.

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND

Three hundred miles and more from Chimborazo, one hundred from the snows of Cotopaxi, in the wildest wastes of Ecuador's Andes, there lies that mysterious mountain valley, cut off from all the world of men, the Country of the Blind. Long years ago that valley lay so far open to the world that men might come at last through frightful gorges and over an icy pass into its equable meadows, and thither indeed men came, a family or so of Peruvian half-breeds fleeing from the lust and tyranny of an evil Spanish ruler. Then came the stupendous outbreak of Mindobamba, when it was night in Quito for seventeen days, and the water was boiling at Yaguachi and all the fish floating dying even as far as Guayaquil; everywhere along the Pacific slopes there were land-slips and swift thawings and sudden floods, and one whole side of the old Arauca crest slipped and came down in thunder, and cut off the Country of the Blind for ever from the exploring feet of men. But one of these early settlers had chanced to be on the hither side of the gorges when the world had so terribly shaken itself, and he perforce had to forget his wife and his child and all the friends and possessions he had left up there, and start life over again in the lower world. He started it again but ill, blindness overtook him, and he died of punishment in the mines; but the story he told begot a legend that lingers along the length of the Cordilleras of the Andes to this day.

He told of his reason for venturing back from that fastness, into which he had first been carried lashed to a llama, beside a vast bale of gear, when he was a child. The valley, he said, had in it all that the heart of man could desire — sweet water, pasture, an even climate, slopes of rich brown soil with tangles of a shrub that bore an excellent fruit, and on one side great hanging forests of pine that held the avalanches high. Far overhead, on three sides, vast cliffs of grey-green rock were capped by cliffs of ice; but the glacier stream came not to them, but flowed away by the farther slopes, and only now and then huge ice masses fell on the valley side. In this valley it neither rained nor snowed, but the abundant springs gave a rich green pasture, that irrigation would spread over all the valley space. The

settlers did well indeed there. Their beasts did well and multiplied, and but one thing marred their happiness. Yet it was enough to mar it greatly. A strange disease had come upon them and had made all the children born to them there — and, indeed, several older children also — blind. It was to seek some charm or antidote against this plague of blindness that he had with fatigue and danger and difficulty returned down the gorge. In those days, in such cases, men did not think of germs and infections, but of sins, and it seemed to him that the reason of this affliction must he in the negligence of these priestless immigrants to set up a shrine so soon as they entered the valley. He wanted a shrine — a handsome, cheap, effectual shrine — to be erected in the valley; he wanted relics and such-like potent things of faith, blessed objects and mysterious medals and prayers. In his wallet he had a bar of native silver for which he would not account; he insisted there was none in the valley with something of the insistence of an inexpert liar. They had all clubbed their money and ornaments together, having little need for such treasure up there, he said, to buy them holy help against their ill. I figure this dim-eyed young mountaineer, sunburnt, gaunt, and anxious, hat brim clutched feverishly, a man all unused to the ways of the lower world, telling this story to some keen-eyed, attentive priest before the great convulsion; I can picture him presently seeking to return with pious and infallible remedies against that trouble, and the infinite dismay with which he must have faced the tumbled vastness where the gorge had once come out. But the rest of his story of mischances is lost to me, save that I know of his evil death after several years. Poor stray from that remoteness! The stream that had once made the gorge now bursts from the mouth of a rocky cave, and the legend his poor, ill-told story set going developed into the legend of a race of blind men somewhere "over there" one may still hear to-day.

And amidst the little population of that now isolated and forgotten valley the disease ran its course. The old became groping, the young saw but dimly, and the children that were born to them never saw at all. But life was very easy in that snow-rimmed basin, lost to all the world, with neither thorns nor briers, with no evil insects nor any beasts save the gentle breed of llamas they had lugged and thrust and followed up the beds of the shrunken rivers in the gorges up which

they had come. The seeing had become purblind so gradually that they scarcely noticed their loss. They guided the sightless youngsters hither and thither until they knew the whole valley marvellously, and when at last sight died out among them the race lived on. They had even time to adapt themselves to the blind control of fire, which they made carefully in stoves of stone. They were a simple strain of people at the first, unlettered, only slightly touched with the Spanish civilisation, but with something of a tradition of the arts of old Peru and of its lost philosophy. Generation followed generation. They forgot many things; they devised many things. Their tradition of the greater world they came from became mythical in colour and uncertain. In all things save sight they were strong and able, and presently chance sent one who had an original mind and who could talk and persuade among them, and then afterwards another. These two passed, leaving their effects, and the little community grew in numbers and in understanding, and met and settled social and economic problems that arose. Generation followed generation. Generation followed generation. There came a time when a child was born who was fifteen generations from that ancestor who went out of the valley with a bar of silver to seek God's aid, and who never returned. Thereabout it chanced that a man came into this community from the outer world. And this is the story of that man.

He was a mountaineer from the country near Quito, a man who had been down to the sea and had seen the world, a reader of books in an original way, an acute and enterprising man, and he was taken on by a party of Englishmen who had come out to Ecuador to climb mountains, to replace one of their three Swiss guides who had fallen ill. He climbed here and he climbed there, and then came the attempt on Parascotopetl, the Matterhorn of the Andes, in which he was lost to the outer world. The story of that accident has been written a dozen times. Pointer's narrative is the best. He tells how the little party worked their difficult and almost vertical way up to the very foot of the last and greatest precipice, and how they built a night shelter amidst the snow upon a little shelf of rock, and, with a touch of real dramatic power, how presently they found Nunez had gone from them. They shouted, and there was no reply; shouted and whistled, and for the rest of that night they slept no more.

As the morning broke they saw the traces of his fall. It seems impossible he could have uttered a sound. He had slipped eastward towards the unknown side of the mountain; far below he had struck a steep slope of snow, and ploughed his way down it in the midst of a snow avalanche. His track went straight to the edge of a frightful precipice, and beyond that everything was hidden. Far, far below, and hazy with distance, they could see trees rising out of a narrow, shut-in valley — the lost Country of the Blind. But they did not know it was the lost Country of the Blind, nor distinguish it in any way from any other narrow streak of upland valley. Unnerved by this disaster, they abandoned their attempt in the afternoon, and Pointer was called away to the war before he could make another attack. To this day Parascotopetl lifts an unconquered crest, and Pointer's shelter crumbles unvisited amidst the snows.

And the man who fell survived.

At the end of the slope he fell a thousand feet, and came down in the midst of a cloud of snow upon a snow-slope even steeper than the one above. Down this he was whirled, stunned and insensible, but without a bone broken in his body; and then at last came to gentler slopes, and at last rolled out and lay still, buried amidst a softening heap of the white masses that had accompanied and saved him. He came to himself with a dim fancy that he was ill in bed; then realized his position with a mountaineer's intelligence and worked himself loose and, after a rest or so, out until he saw the stars. He rested flat upon his chest for a space, wondering where he was and what had happened to him. He explored his limbs, and discovered that several of his buttons were gone and his coat turned over his head. His knife had gone from his pocket and his hat was lost, though he had tied it under his chin. He recalled that he had been looking for loose stones to raise his piece of the shelter wall. His ice-axe had disappeared.

He decided he must have fallen, and looked up to see, exaggerated by the ghastly light of the rising moon, the tremendous flight he had taken. For a while he lay, gazing blankly at the vast, pale cliff towering above, rising moment by moment out of a subsiding tide of darkness. Its phantasmal, mysterious beauty held him for a space, and then he was seized with a paroxysm of sobbing laughter . . . .

After a great interval of time he became aware that he was near

the lower edge of the snow. Below, down what was now a moon-lit and practicable slope, he saw the dark and broken appearance of rock-strewn turf He struggled to his feet, aching in every joint and limb, got down painfully from the heaped loose snow about him, went downward until he was on the turf, and there dropped rather than lay beside a boulder, drank deep from the flask in his inner pocket, and instantly fell asleep . . . .

He was awakened by the singing of birds in the trees far below.

He sat up and perceived he was on a little alp at the foot of a vast precipice that sloped only a little in the gully down which he and his snow had come. Over against him another wall of rock reared itself against the sky. The gorge between these precipices ran east and west and was full of the morning sunlight, which lit to the westward the mass of fallen mountain that closed the descending gorge. Below him it seemed there was a precipice equally steep, but behind the snow in the gully he found a sort of chimney-cleft dripping with snow-water, down which a desperate man might venture. He found it easier than it seemed, and came at last to another desolate alp, and then after a rock climb of no particular difficulty, to a steep slope of trees. He took his bearings and turned his face up the gorge, for he saw it opened out above upon green meadows, among which he now glimpsed quite distinctly a cluster of stone huts of unfamiliar fashion. At times his progress was like clambering along the face of a wall, and after a time the rising sun ceased to strike along the gorge, the voices of the singing birds died away, and the air grew cold and dark about him. But the distant valley with its houses was all the brighter for that. He came presently to talus, and among the rocks he noted — for he was an observant man — an unfamiliar fern that seemed to clutch out of the crevices with intense green hands. He picked a frond or so and gnawed its stalk, and found it helpful.

About midday he came at last out of the throat of the gorge into the plain and the sunlight. He was stiff and weary; he sat down in the shadow of a rock, filled up his flask with water from a spring and drank it down, and remained for a time, resting before he went on to the houses.

They were very strange to his eyes, and indeed the whole aspect of that valley became, as he regarded it, queerer and more unfamiliar.

The greater part of its surface was lush green meadow, starred with many beautiful flowers, irrigated with extraordinary care, and bearing evidence of systematic cropping piece by piece. High up and ringing the valley about was a wall, and what appeared to be a circumferential water channel, from which the little trickles of water that fed the meadow plants came, and on the higher slopes above this flocks of llamas cropped the scanty herbage. Sheds, apparently shelters or feeding-places for the llamas, stood against the boundary wall here and there. The irrigation streams ran together into a main channel down the centre of the valley, and this was enclosed on either side by a wall breast high. This gave a singularly urban quality to this secluded place, a quality that was greatly enhanced by the fact that a number of paths paved with black and white stones, and each with a curious little kerb at the side, ran hither and thither in an orderly manner. The houses of the central village were quite unlike the casual and higgledy-piggledy agglomeration of the mountain villages he knew; they stood in a continuous row on either side of a central street of astonishing cleanness, here and there their parti-coloured facade was pierced by a door, and not a solitary window broke their even frontage. They were parti-coloured with extraordinary irregularity, smeared with a sort of plaster that was sometimes grey, sometimes drab, sometimes slate-coloured or dark brown; and it was the sight of this wild plastering first brought the word "blind" into the thoughts of the explorer. "The good man who did that," he thought, "must have been as blind as a bat."

He descended a steep place, and so came to the wall and channel that ran about the valley, near where the latter spouted out its surplus contents into the deeps of the gorge in a thin and wavering thread of cascade. He could now see a number of men and women resting on piled heaps of grass, as if taking a siesta, in the remoter part of the meadow, and nearer the village a number of recumbent children, and then nearer at hand three men carrying pails on yokes along a little path that ran from the encircling wall towards the houses. These latter were clad in garments of llama cloth and boots and belts of leather, and they wore caps of cloth with back and ear flaps. They followed one another in single file, walking slowly and yawning as they walked, like men who have been up all night. There was

something so reassuringly prosperous and respectable in their bearing that after a moment's hesitation Nunez stood forward as conspicuously as possible upon his rock, and gave vent to a mighty shout that echoed round the valley.

The three men stopped, and moved their heads as though they were looking about them. They turned their faces this way and that, and Nunez gesticulated with freedom. But they did not appear to see him for all his gestures, and after a time, directing themselves towards the mountains far away to the right, they shouted as if in answer. Nunez bawled again, and then once more, and as he gestured ineffectually the word "blind" came up to the top of his thoughts. "The fools must be blind," he said.

When at last, after much shouting and wrath, Nunez crossed the stream by a little bridge, came through a gate in the wall, and approached them, he was sure that they were blind. He was sure that this was the Country of the Blind of which the legends told. Conviction had sprung upon him, and a sense of great and rather enviable adventure. The three stood side by side, not looking at him, but with their ears directed towards him, judging him by his unfamiliar steps. They stood close together like men a little afraid, and he could see their eyelids closed and sunken, as though the very balls beneath had shrunk away. There was an expression near awe on their faces.

"A man," one said, in hardly recognisable Spanish. "A man it is — a man or a spirit — coming down from the rocks."

But Nunez advanced with the confident steps of a youth who enters upon life. All the old stories of the lost valley and the Country of the Blind had come back to his mind, and through his thoughts ran this old proverb, as if it were a refrain: —

"In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King."

"In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King."

And very civilly he gave them greeting. He talked to them and used his eyes.

"Where does he come from, brother Pedro?" asked one.

"Down out of the rocks."

"Over the mountains I come," said Nunez, "out of the country beyond there — where men can see. From near Bogota — where

there are a hundred thousands of people, and where the city passes out of sight."

"Sight?" muttered Pedro. "Sight?"

"He comes," said the second blind man, "out of the rocks."

The cloth of their coats, Nunez saw was curious fashioned, each with a different sort of stitching.

They startled him by a simultaneous movement towards him, each with a hand outstretched. He stepped back from the advance of these spread fingers.

"Come hither," said the third blind man, following his motion and clutching him neatly.

And they held Nunez and felt him over, saying no word further until they had done so.

"Carefully," he cried, with a finger in his eye, and found they thought that organ, with its fluttering lids, a queer thing in him. They went over it again.

"A strange creature, Correa," said the one called Pedro.
"Feel the coarseness of his hair. Like a llama's hair."

"Rough he is as the rocks that begot him," said Correa, investigating Nunez's unshaven chin with a soft and slightly moist hand. "Perhaps he will grow finer."

Nunez struggled a little under their examination, but they gripped him firm.

"Carefully," he said again.

"He speaks," said the third man. "Certainly he is a man."

"Ugh!" said Pedro, at the roughness of his coat.

"And you have come into the world?" asked Pedro.

"*Out* of the world. Over mountains and glaciers; right over above there, half-way to the sun. Out of the great, big world that goes down, twelve days' journey to the sea."

They scarcely seemed to heed him. "Our fathers have told us men may be made by the forces of Nature," said Correa. "It is the warmth of things, and moisture, and rottenness — rottenness."

"Let us lead him to the elders," said Pedro.

“Shout first,” said Correa, “lest the children be afraid.
This is a marvellous occasion.”

So they shouted, and Pedro went first and took Nunez by the hand to lead him to the houses.

He drew his hand away. “I can see,” he said.

“See?” said Correa.

“Yes; see,” said Nunez, turning towards him, and stumbled against Pedro’s pail.

“His senses are still imperfect,” said the third blind man.
“He stumbles, and talks unmeaning words. Lead him by the hand.”

“As you will,” said Nunez, and was led along laughing.

It seemed they knew nothing of sight.

Well, all in good time he would teach them.

He heard people shouting, and saw a number of figures gathering together in the middle roadway of the village.

He found it tax his nerve and patience more than he had anticipated, that first encounter with the population of the Country of the Blind. The place seemed larger as he drew near to it, and the smeared plasterings queerer, and a crowd of children and men and women (the women and girls he was pleased to note had, some of them, quite sweet faces, for all that their eyes were shut and sunken) came about him, holding on to him, touching him with soft, sensitive hands, smelling at him, and listening at every word he spoke. Some of the maidens and children, however, kept aloof as if afraid, and indeed his voice seemed coarse and rude beside their softer notes. They mobbed him. His three guides kept close to him with an effect of proprietorship, and said again and again, “A wild man out of the rocks.”

“Bogota,” he said. “Bogota. Over the mountain crests.”

“A wild man — using wild words,” said Pedro. “Did you hear that —

“*Bogota?* His mind has hardly formed yet. He has only the beginnings of speech.”

A little boy nipped his hand. “Bogota!” he said mockingly.

“Aye! A city to your village. I come from the great world — where men have eyes and see.”

“His name’s Bogota,” they said.

“He stumbled,” said Correa— “stumbled twice as we came hither.”

“Bring him in to the elders.”

And they thrust him suddenly through a doorway into a room as black as pitch, save at the end there faintly glowed a fire. The crowd closed in behind him and shut out all but the faintest glimmer of day, and before he could arrest himself he had fallen headlong over the feet of a seated man. His arm, outflung, struck the face of someone else as he went down; he felt the soft impact of features and heard a cry of anger, and for a moment he struggled against a number of hands that clutched him. It was a one-sided fight. An inkling of the situation came to him and he lay quiet.

“I fell down,” he said; “I couldn’t see in this pitchy darkness.”

There was a pause as if the unseen persons about him tried to understand his words. Then the voice of Correa said: “He is but newly formed. He stumbles as he walks and mingles words that mean nothing with his speech.”

Others also said things about him that he heard or understood imperfectly.

“May I sit up?” he asked, in a pause. “I will not struggle against you again.”

They consulted and let him rise.

The voice of an older man began to question him, and Nunez found himself trying to explain the great world out of which he had fallen, and the sky and mountains and such-like marvels, to these elders who sat in darkness in the Country of the Blind. And they would believe and understand nothing whatever that he told them, a thing quite outside his expectation. They would not even understand many of his words. For fourteen generations these people had been blind and cut off from all the seeing world; the names for all the things of sight had faded and changed; the story of the outer world was faded and changed to a child’s story; and they had ceased to concern themselves with anything beyond the rocky slopes above their circling wall. Blind men of genius had arisen among them and

questioned the shreds of belief and tradition they had brought with them from their seeing days, and had dismissed all these things as idle fancies and replaced them with new and saner explanations. Much of their imagination had shrivelled with their eyes, and they had made for themselves new imaginations with their ever more sensitive ears and finger-tips. Slowly Nunez realised this: that his expectation of wonder and reverence at his origin and his gifts was not to be borne out; and after his poor attempt to explain sight to them had been set aside as the confused version of a new-made being describing the marvels of his incoherent sensations, he subsided, a little dashed, into listening to their instruction. And the eldest of the blind men explained to him life and philosophy and religion, how that the world (meaning their valley) had been first an empty hollow in the rocks, and then had come first inanimate things without the gift of touch, and llamas and a few other creatures that had little sense, and then men, and at last angels, whom one could hear singing and making fluttering sounds, but whom no one could touch at all, which puzzled Nunez greatly until he thought of the birds.

He went on to tell Nunez how this time had been divided into the warm and the cold, which are the blind equivalents of day and night, and how it was good to sleep in the warm and work during the cold, so that now, but for his advent, the whole town of the blind would have been asleep. He said Nunez must have been specially created to learn and serve the wisdom they had acquired, and that for all his mental incoherency and stumbling behaviour he must have courage and do his best to learn, and at that all the people in the door-way murmured encouragingly. He said the night — for the blind call their day night — was now far gone, and it behooved everyone to go back to sleep. He asked Nunez if he knew how to sleep, and Nunez said he did, but that before sleep he wanted food. They brought him food, llama's milk in a bowl and rough salted bread, and led him into a lonely place to eat out of their hearing, and afterwards to slumber until the chill of the mountain evening roused them to begin their day again. But Nunez slumbered not at all.

Instead, he sat up in the place where they had left him, resting his limbs and turning the unanticipated circumstances of his arrival over and over in his mind.

Every now and then he laughed, sometimes with amusement and sometimes with indignation.

"Unformed mind!" he said. "Got no senses yet! They little know they've been insulting their Heaven-sent King and master . . . . .

"I see I must bring them to reason.

"Let me think.

"Let me think."

He was still thinking when the sun set.

Nunez had an eye for all beautiful things, and it seemed to him that the glow upon the snow-fields and glaciers that rose about the valley on every side was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. His eyes went from that inaccessible glory to the village and irrigated fields, fast sinking into the twilight, and suddenly a wave of emotion took him, and he thanked God from the bottom of his heart that the power of sight had been given him.

He heard a voice calling to him from out of the village.

"Yaho there, Bogota! Come hither!"

At that he stood up, smiling. He would show these people once and for all what sight would do for a man. They would seek him, but not find him.

"You move not, Bogota," said the voice.

He laughed noiselessly and made two stealthy steps aside from the path.

"Trample not on the grass, Bogota; that is not allowed."

Nunez had scarcely heard the sound he made himself. He stopped, amazed.

The owner of the voice came running up the piebald path towards him.

He stepped back into the pathway. "Here I am," he said.

"Why did you not come when I called you?" said the blind man. "Must you be led like a child? Cannot you hear the path as you walk?"

Nunez laughed. "I can see it," he said.

"There is no such word as *see*," said the blind man, after a pause. "Cease this folly and follow the sound of my feet."

Nunez followed, a little annoyed.

"My time will come," he said.

“You’ll learn,” the blind man answered. “There is much to learn in the world.”

“Has no one told you, ‘In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King?’”

“What is blind?” asked the blind man, carelessly, over his shoulder.

Four days passed and the fifth found the King of the Blind still incognito, as a clumsy and useless stranger among his subjects.

It was, he found, much more difficult to proclaim himself than he had supposed, and in the meantime, while he meditated his *coup d’etat*, he did what he was told and learnt the manners and customs of the Country of the Blind. He found working and going about at night a particularly irksome thing, and he decided that that should be the first thing he would change.

They led a simple, laborious life, these people, with all the elements of virtue and happiness as these things can be understood by men. They toiled, but not oppressively; they had food and clothing sufficient for their needs; they had days and seasons of rest; they made much of music and singing, and there was love among them and little children. It was marvellous with what confidence and precision they went about their ordered world. Everything, you see, had been made to fit their needs; each of the radiating paths of the valley area had a constant angle to the others, and was distinguished by a special notch upon its kerbing; all obstacles and irregularities of path or meadow had long since been cleared away; all their methods and procedure arose naturally from their special needs. Their senses had become marvellously acute; they could hear and judge the slightest gesture of a man a dozen paces away — could hear the very beating of his heart. Intonation had long replaced expression with them, and touches gesture, and their work with hoe and spade and fork was as free and confident as garden work can be. Their sense of smell was extraordinarily fine; they could distinguish individual differences as readily as a dog can, and they went about the tending of llamas, who lived among the rocks above and came to the wall for food and shelter, with ease and confidence. It was only when at last

Nunez sought to assert himself that he found how easy and confident their movements could be.

He rebelled only after he had tried persuasion.

He tried at first on several occasions to tell them of sight. “Look you here, you people,” he said. “There are things you do not understand in me.”

Once or twice one or two of them attended to him; they sat with faces downcast and ears turned intelligently towards him, and he did his best to tell them what it was to see. Among his hearers was a girl, with eyelids less red and sunken than the others, so that one could almost fancy she was hiding eyes, whom especially he hoped to persuade. He spoke of the beauties of sight, of watching the mountains, of the sky and the sunrise, and they heard him with amused incredulity that presently became condemnatory. They told him there were indeed no mountains at all, but that the end of the rocks where the llamas grazed was indeed the end of the world; thence sprang a cavernous roof of the universe, from which the dew and the avalanches fell; and when he maintained stoutly the world had neither end nor roof such as they supposed, they said his thoughts were wicked. So far as he could describe sky and clouds and stars to them it seemed to them a hideous void, a terrible blankness in the place of the smooth roof to things in which they believed — it was an article of faith with them that the cavern roof was exquisitely smooth to the touch. He saw that in some manner he shocked them, and gave up that aspect of the matter altogether, and tried to show them the practical value of sight. One morning he saw Pedro in the path called Seventeen and coming towards the central houses, but still too far off for hearing or scent, and he told them as much. “In a little while,” he prophesied, “Pedro will be here.” An old man remarked that Pedro had no business on path Seventeen, and then, as if in confirmation, that individual as he drew near turned and went transversely into path Ten, and so back with nimble paces towards the outer wall. They mocked Nunez when Pedro did not arrive, and afterwards, when he asked Pedro questions to clear his character, Pedro denied and outfaced him, and was afterwards hostile to him.

Then he induced them to let him go a long way up the sloping

meadows towards the wall with one complaisant individual, and to him he promised to describe all that happened among the houses. He noted certain goings and comings, but the things that really seemed to signify to these people happened inside of or behind the windowless houses — the only things they took note of to test him by — and of those he could see or tell nothing; and it was after the failure of this attempt, and the ridicule they could not repress, that he resorted to force. He thought of seizing a spade and suddenly smiting one or two of them to earth, and so in fair combat showing the advantage of eyes. He went so far with that resolution as to seize his spade, and then he discovered a new thing about himself, and that was that it was impossible for him to hit a blind man in cold blood.

He hesitated, and found them all aware that he had snatched up the spade. They stood all alert, with their heads on one side, and bent ears towards him for what he would do next.

"Put that spade down," said one, and he felt a sort of helpless horror. He came near obedience.

Then he had thrust one backwards against a house wall, and fled past him and out of the village.

He went athwart one of their meadows, leaving a track of trampled grass behind his feet, and presently sat down by the side of one of their ways. He felt something of the buoyancy that comes to all men in the beginning of a fight, but more perplexity. He began to realise that you cannot even fight happily with creatures who stand upon a different mental basis to yourself. Far away he saw a number of men carrying spades and sticks come out of the street of houses and advance in a spreading line along the several paths towards him. They advanced slowly, speaking frequently to one another, and ever and again the whole cordon would halt and sniff the air and listen.

The first time they did this Nunez laughed. But afterwards he did not laugh.

One struck his trail in the meadow grass and came stooping and feeling his way along it.

For five minutes he watched the slow extension of the cordon, and then his vague disposition to do something forthwith became frantic. He stood up, went a pace or so towards the circumferential wall, turned, and went back a little way. There they all stood in a crescent,

still and listening.

He also stood still, gripping his spade very tightly in both hands. Should he charge them?

The pulse in his ears ran into the rhythm of "In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King."

Should he charge them?

He looked back at the high and unclimbable wall behind — unclimbable because of its smooth plastering, but withal pierced with many little doors and at the approaching line of seekers. Behind these others were now coming out of the street of houses.

Should he charge them?

"Bogota!" called one. "Bogota! where are you?"

He gripped his spade still tighter and advanced down the meadows towards the place of habitations, and directly he moved they converged upon him. "I'll hit them if they touch me," he swore; "by Heaven, I will. I'll hit." He called aloud, "Look here, I'm going to do what I like in this valley! Do you hear? I'm going to do what I like and go where I like."

They were moving in upon him quickly, groping, yet moving rapidly. It was like playing blind man's buff with everyone blindfolded except one. "Get hold of him!" cried one. He found himself in the arc of a loose curve of pursuers. He felt suddenly he must be active and resolute.

"You don't understand," he cried, in a voice that was meant to be great and resolute, and which broke. "You are blind and I can see. Leave me alone!"

"Bogota! Put down that spade and come off the grass!"

The last order, grotesque in its urban familiarity, produced a gust of anger. "I'll hurt you," he said, sobbing with emotion. "By Heaven, I'll hurt you! Leave me alone!"

He began to run — not knowing clearly where to run. He ran from the nearest blind man, because it was a horror to hit him. He stopped, and then made a dash to escape from their closing ranks. He made for where a gap was wide, and the men on either side, with a quick perception of the approach of his paces, rushed in on one another. He sprang forward, and then saw he must be caught, and *swish!* the spade had struck. He felt the soft thud of hand and arm, and the man

was down with a yell of pain, and he was through.

Through! And then he was close to the street of houses again, and blind men, whirling spades and stakes, were running with a reasoned swiftness hither and thither.

He heard steps behind him just in time, and found a tall man rushing forward and swiping at the sound of him. He lost his nerve, hurled his spade a yard wide of this antagonist, and whirled about and fled, fairly yelling as he dodged another.

He was panic-stricken. He ran furiously to and fro, dodging when there was no need to dodge, and, in his anxiety to see on every side of him at once, stumbling. For a moment he was down and they heard his fall. Far away in the circumferential wall a little doorway looked like Heaven, and he set off in a wild rush for it. He did not even look round at his pursuers until it was gained, and he had stumbled across the bridge, clambered a little way among the rocks, to the surprise and dismay of a young llama, who went leaping out of sight, and lay down sobbing for breath.

And so his *coup d'etat* came to an end.

He stayed outside the wall of the valley of the blind for two nights and days without food or shelter, and meditated upon the Unexpected. During these meditations he repeated very frequently and always with a profounder note of derision the exploded proverb: "In the Country of the Blind the One-Eyed Man is King." He thought chiefly of ways of fighting and conquering these people, and it grew clear that for him no practicable way was possible. He had no weapons, and now it would be hard to get one.

The canker of civilisation had got to him even in Bogota, and he could not find it in himself to go down and assassinate a blind man. Of course, if he did that, he might then dictate terms on the threat of assassinating them all. But — Sooner or later he must sleep! . . . .

He tried also to find food among the pine trees, to be comfortable under pine boughs while the frost fell at night, and — with less confidence — to catch a llama by artifice in order to try to kill it — perhaps by hammering it with a stone — and so finally, perhaps, to eat some of it. But the llamas had a doubt of him and regarded him with distrustful brown eyes and spat when he drew near. Fear came on him the second day and fits of shivering. Finally he crawled down

to the wall of the Country of the Blind and tried to make his terms. He crawled along by the stream, shouting, until two blind men came out to the gate and talked to him.

"I was mad," he said. "But I was only newly made."

They said that was better.

He told them he was wiser now, and repented of all he had done.

Then he wept without intention, for he was very weak and ill now, and they took that as a favourable sign.

They asked him if he still thought he could "*see*."

"No," he said. "That was folly. The word means nothing.
Less than nothing!"

They asked him what was overhead.

"About ten times ten the height of a man there is a roof above the world — of rock — and very, very smooth. So smooth — so beautifully smooth . ." He burst again into hysterical tears. "Before you ask me any more, give me some food or I shall die!"

He expected dire punishments, but these blind people were capable of toleration. They regarded his rebellion as but one more proof of his general idiocy and inferiority, and after they had whipped him they appointed him to do the simplest and heaviest work they had for anyone to do, and he, seeing no other way of living, did submissively what he was told.

He was ill for some days and they nursed him kindly. That refined his submission. But they insisted on his lying in the dark, and that was a great misery. And blind philosophers came and talked to him of the wicked levity of his mind, and reproved him so impressively for his doubts about the lid of rock that covered their cosmic *casserole* that he almost doubted whether indeed he was not the victim of hallucination in not seeing it overhead.

So Nunez became a citizen of the Country of the Blind, and these people ceased to be a generalised people and became individualities to him, and familiar to him, while the world beyond the mountains became more and more remote and unreal. There was Yacob, his master, a kindly man when not annoyed; there was Pedro, Yacob's nephew; and there was Medina-sarote, who was the youngest

daughter of Yacob. She was little esteemed in the world of the blind, because she had a clear-cut face and lacked that satisfying, glossy smoothness that is the blind man's ideal of feminine beauty, but Nunez thought her beautiful at first, and presently the most beautiful thing in the whole creation. Her closed eyelids were not sunken and red after the common way of the valley, but lay as though they might open again at any moment; and she had long eyelashes, which were considered a grave disfigurement. And her voice was weak and did not satisfy the acute hearing of the valley swains. So that she had no lover.

There came a time when Nunez thought that, could he win her, he would be resigned to live in the valley for all the rest of his days.

He watched her; he sought opportunities of doing her little services and presently he found that she observed him. Once at a rest-day gathering they sat side by side in the dim starlight, and the music was sweet. His hand came upon hers and he dared to clasp it. Then very tenderly she returned his pressure. And one day, as they were at their meal in the darkness, he felt her hand very softly seeking him, and as it chanced the fire leapt then, and he saw the tenderness of her face.

He sought to speak to her.

He went to her one day when she was sitting in the summer moonlight spinning. The light made her a thing of silver and mystery. He sat down at her feet and told her he loved her, and told her how beautiful she seemed to him. He had a lover's voice, he spoke with a tender reverence that came near to awe, and she had never before been touched by adoration. She made him no definite answer, but it was clear his words pleased her.

After that he talked to her whenever he could take an opportunity. The valley became the world for him, and the world beyond the mountains where men lived by day seemed no more than a fairy tale he would some day pour into her ears. Very tentatively and timidly he spoke to her of sight.

Sight seemed to her the most poetical of fancies, and she listened to his description of the stars and the mountains and her own sweet white-lit beauty as though it was a guilty indulgence. She did not believe, she could only half understand, but she was mysteriously

delighted, and it seemed to him that she completely understood.

His love lost its awe and took courage. Presently he was for demanding her of Yacob and the elders in marriage, but she became fearful and delayed. And it was one of her elder sisters who first told Yacob that Medina-sarote and Nunez were in love.

There was from the first very great opposition to the marriage of Nunez and Medina-sarote; not so much because they valued her as because they held him as a being apart, an idiot, incompetent thing below the permissible level of a man. Her sisters opposed it bitterly as bringing discredit on them all; and old Yacob, though he had formed a sort of liking for his clumsy, obedient serf, shook his head and said the thing could not be. The young men were all angry at the idea of corrupting the race, and one went so far as to revile and strike Nunez. He struck back. Then for the first time he found an advantage in seeing, even by twilight, and after that fight was over no one was disposed to raise a hand against him. But they still found his marriage impossible.

Old Yacob had a tenderness for his last little daughter, and was grieved to have her weep upon his shoulder.

"You see, my dear, he's an idiot. He has delusions; he can't do anything right."

"I know," wept Medina-sarote. "But he's better than he was. He's getting better. And he's strong, dear father, and kind — stronger and kinder than any other man in the world. And he loves me — and, father, I love him."

Old Yacob was greatly distressed to find her inconsolable, and, besides — what made it more distressing — he liked Nunez for many things. So he went and sat in the windowless council-chamber with the other elders and watched the trend of the talk, and said, at the proper time, "He's better than he was. Very likely, some day, we shall find him as sane as ourselves."

Then afterwards one of the elders, who thought deeply, had an idea. He was a great doctor among these people, their medicine-man, and he had a very philosophical and inventive mind, and the idea of curing Nunez of his peculiarities appealed to him. One day when Yacob was present he returned to the topic of Nunez. "I have examined Nunez," he said, "and the case is clearer to me. I think

very probably he might be cured."

"This is what I have always hoped," said old Yacob.

"His brain is affected," said the blind doctor.

The elders murmured assent.

"Now, *what* affects it?"

"Ah!" said old Yacob.

"*This*," said the doctor, answering his own question. "Those queer things that are called the eyes, and which exist to make an agreeable depression in the face, are diseased, in the case of Nunez, in such a way as to affect his brain. They are greatly distended, he has eyelashes, and his eyelids move, and consequently his brain is in a state of constant irritation and distraction."

"Yes?" said old Yacob. "Yes?"

"And I think I may say with reasonable certainty that, in order to cure him complete, all that we need to do is a simple and easy surgical operation — namely, to remove these irritant bodies."

"And then he will be sane?"

"Then he will be perfectly sane, and a quite admirable citizen."

"Thank Heaven for science!" said old Yacob, and went forth at once to tell Nunez of his happy hopes.

But Nunez's manner of receiving the good news struck him as being cold and disappointing.

"One might think," he said, "from the tone you take that you did not care for my daughter."

It was Medina-sarote who persuaded Nunez to face the blind surgeons.

"*You* do not want me," he said, "to lose my gift of sight?"

She shook her head.

"My world is sight."

Her head drooped lower.

"There are the beautiful things, the beautiful little things — the flowers, the lichens amidst the rocks, the light and softness on a piece of fur, the far sky with its drifting dawn of clouds, the sunsets and the stars. And there is *you*. For you alone it is good to have sight, to see your sweet, serene face, your kindly lips, your dear, beautiful hands folded together. . . . . It is these eyes of mine you won, these eyes that hold me to you, that these idiots seek. Instead, I must touch you, hear

you, and never see you again. I must come under that roof of rock and stone and darkness, that horrible roof under which your imaginations stoop . . . *No*; *you* would not have me do that?"

A disagreeable doubt had arisen in him. He stopped and left the thing a question.

"I wish," she said, "sometimes—" She paused.

"Yes?" he said, a little apprehensively.

"I wish sometimes — you would not talk like that."

"Like what?"

"I know it's pretty — it's your imagination. I love it, but *now*—"

He felt cold. "*Now?*" he said, faintly.

She sat quite still.

"You mean — you think — I should be better, better perhaps—"

He was realising things very swiftly. He felt anger perhaps, anger at the dull course of fate, but also sympathy for her lack of understanding — a sympathy near akin to pity.

"*Dear*," he said, and he could see by her whiteness how tensely her spirit pressed against the things she could not say. He put his arms about her, he kissed her ear, and they sat for a time in silence.

"If I were to consent to this?" he said at last, in a voice that was very gentle.

She flung her arms about him, weeping wildly. "Oh, if you would," she sobbed, "if only you would!"

For a week before the operation that was to raise him from his servitude and inferiority to the level of a blind citizen Nunez knew nothing of sleep, and all through the warm, sunlit hours, while the others slumbered happily, he sat brooding or wandered aimlessly, trying to bring his mind to bear on his dilemma. He had given his answer, he had given his consent, and still he was not sure. And at last work-time was over, the sun rose in splendour over the golden crests, and his last day of vision began for him. He had a few minutes with Medina-sarote before she went apart to sleep.

"To-morrow," he said, "I shall see no more."

"Dear heart!" she answered, and pressed his hands with all her strength.

"They will hurt you but little," she said; "and you are going through this pain, you are going through it, dear lover, for *me* . . . .

Dear, if a woman's heart and life can do it, I will repay you. My dearest one, my dearest with the tender voice, I will repay."

He was drenched in pity for himself and her.

He held her in his arms, and pressed his lips to hers and looked on her sweet face for the last time. "Good-bye!" he whispered to that dear sight, "good-bye!"

And then in silence he turned away from her.

She could hear his slow retreating footsteps, and something in the rhythm of them threw her into a passion of weeping.

He walked away.

He had fully meant to go to a lonely place where the meadows were beautiful with white narcissus, and there remain until the hour of his sacrifice should come, but as he walked he lifted up his eyes and saw the morning, the morning like an angel in golden armour, marching down the steeps . . . .

It seemed to him that before this splendour he and this blind world in the valley, and his love and all, were no more than a pit of sin.

He did not turn aside as he had meant to do, but went on and passed through the wall of the circumference and out upon the rocks, and his eyes were always upon the sunlit ice and snow.

He saw their infinite beauty, and his imagination soared over them to the things beyond he was now to resign for ever!

He thought of that great free world that he was parted from, the world that was his own, and he had a vision of those further slopes, distance beyond distance, with Bogota, a place of multitudinous stirring beauty, a glory by day, a luminous mystery by night, a place of palaces and fountains and statues and white houses, lying beautifully in the middle distance. He thought how for a day or so one might come down through passes drawing ever nearer and nearer to its busy streets and ways. He thought of the river journey, day by day, from great Bogota to the still vaster world beyond, through towns and villages, forest and desert places, the rushing river day by day, until its banks receded, and the big steamers came splashing by and one had reached the sea — the limitless sea, with its thousand islands, its thousands of islands, and its ships seen dimly far away in their incessant journeyings round and about that greater world. And there, unpent by mountains, one saw the sky — the sky, not such a

disc as one saw it here, but an arch of immeasurable blue, a deep of deeps in which the circling stars were floating . . . .

His eyes began to scrutinise the great curtain of the mountains with a keener inquiry.

For example; if one went so, up that gully and to that chimney there, then one might come out high among those stunted pines that ran round in a sort of shelf and rose still higher and higher as it passed above the gorge. And then? That talus might be managed. Thence perhaps a climb might be found to take him up to the precipice that came below the snow; and if that chimney failed, then another farther to the east might serve his purpose better. And then? Then one would be out upon the amber-lit snow there, and half-way up to the crest of those beautiful desolations. And suppose one had good fortune!

He glanced back at the village, then turned right round and regarded it with folded arms.

He thought of Medina-sarote, and she had become small and remote.

He turned again towards the mountain wall down which the day had come to him.

Then very circumspectly he began his climb.

When sunset came he was not longer climbing, but he was far and high. His clothes were torn, his limbs were bloodstained, he was bruised in many places, but he lay as if he were at his ease, and there was a smile on his face.

From where he rested the valley seemed as if it were in a pit and nearly a mile below. Already it was dim with haze and shadow, though the mountain summits around him were things of light and fire. The mountain summits around him were things of light and fire, and the little things in the rocks near at hand were drenched with light and beauty, a vein of green mineral piercing the grey, a flash of small crystal here and there, a minute, minutely-beautiful orange lichen close beside his face. There were deep, mysterious shadows in the gorge, blue deepening into purple, and purple into a luminous darkness, and overhead was the illimitable vastness of the sky. But he heeded these things no longer, but lay quite still there, smiling as if he were content now merely to have escaped from the valley of the

Blind, in which he had thought to be King. And the glow of the sunset passed, and the night came, and still he lay there, under the cold, clear stars.

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THE CHRONIC ARGONAUTS

BEING THE ACCOUNT OF DR. NEBOGIPFEL'S SOJOURN IN LLYDDWDD

About half-a-mile outside the village of Llyddwdd by the road that goes up over the eastern flank of the mountain called Pen-y-pwll to Rwstog is a large farm-building known as the Manse. It derives this title from the fact that it was at one time the residence of the minister of the Calvinistic Methodists. It is a quaint, low, irregular erection, lying back some hundred yards from the railway, and now fast passing into a ruinous state.

Since its construction in the latter half of the last century this house has undergone many changes of fortune, having been abandoned long since by the farmer of the surrounding acres for less pretentious and more commodious headquarters. Among others Miss Carnot, "the Gallic Sappho" at one time made it her home, and later on an old man named Williams became its occupier. The foul murder of this tenant by his two sons was the cause of its remaining for some considerable period uninhabited; with the inevitable consequence of its undergoing very extensive dilapidation.

The house had got a bad name, and adolescent man and Nature combined to bring swift desolation upon it. The fear of the Williamses which kept the Llyddwdd lads from gratifying their propensity to invade its deserted interior, manifested itself in unusually destructive resentment against its external breakables. The missiles with which they at once confessed and defied their spiritual dread, left scarcely a splinter of glass, and only battered relics of the old-fashioned leaden frames, in its narrow windows, while numberless shattered tiles about the house, and four or five black apertures yawning behind the naked rafters in the roof, also witnessed vividly to the energy of their rejection. Rain and wind thus had free way to enter the empty rooms and work their will there, old Time aiding and abetting. Alternately soaked and desiccated, the planks of flooring and wainscot warped apart strangely, split here and there, and tore themselves away in paroxysms of rheumatic pain

from the rust-devoured nails that had once held them firm. The plaster of walls and ceiling, growing green-black with a rain-fed crust of lowly life, parted slowly from the fermenting laths; and large fragments thereof falling down inexplicably in tranquil hours, with loud concussion and clatter, gave strength to the popular superstition that old Williams and his sons were fated to re-enact their fearful tragedy until the final judgment. White roses and daedal creepers, that Miss Carnot had first adorned the walls with, spread now luxuriantly over the lichen-filmed tiles of the roof, and in slender graceful sprays timidly invaded the ghostly cobweb-draped apartments. Fungi, sickly pale, began to displace and uplift the bricks in the cellar floor; while on the rotting wood everywhere they clustered, in all the glory of the purple and mottled crimson, yellow-brown and hepatite. Woodlice and ants, beetles and moths, winged and creeping things innumerable, found each day a more congenial home among the ruins; and after them in ever-increasing multitudes swarmed the blotchy toads. Swallows and martins built every year more thickly in the silent, airy, upper chambers. Bats and owls struggled for the crepuscular corners of the lower rooms. Thus, in the Spring of the year eighteen hundred and eighty-seven, was Nature taking over, gradually but certainly, the tenancy of the old Manse. "The house was falling into decay," as men who do not appreciate the application of human derelicts to other beings' use would say, "surely and swiftly." But it was destined nevertheless to shelter another human tenant before its final dissolution.

There was no intelligence of the advent of a new inhabitant in quiet Llyddwdd. He came without a solitary premonition out of the vast unknown into the sphere of minute village observation and gossip. He fell into the Llyddwdd world, as it were, like a thunderbolt falling in the daytime. Suddenly, out of nothingness, he was. Rumour, indeed, vaguely averred that he was seen to arrive by a certain train from London, and to walk straight without hesitation to the old Manse, giving neither explanatory word nor sign to mortal as to his purpose there: but then the same fertile source of information also hinted that he was first beheld skimming down the slopes of steep Pen-y-pwll with exceeding swiftness, riding, as it appeared to the intelligent observer, upon an instrument not unlike a sieve and

that he entered the house by the chimney. Of these conflicting reports, the former was the first to be generally circulated, but the latter, in view of the bizarre presence and eccentric ways of the newest inhabitant, obtained wider credence. By whatever means he arrived, there can be no doubt that he was in, and in possession of the Manse, on the first of May; because on the morning of that day he was inspected by Mrs. Morgan ap Lloyd Jones, and subsequently by the numerous persons her report brought up the mountain slope, engaged in the curious occupation of nailing sheet-tin across the void window sockets of his new domicile— "blinding his house", as Mrs. Morgan ap Lloyd Jones not inaptly termed it.

He was a small-bodied, sallow faced little man, clad in a close-fitting garment of some stiff, dark material, which Mr. Parry Davies the Llyddwdd shoemaker, opined was leather. His aquiline nose, thin lips, high cheek-ridges, and pointed chin, were all small and mutually well proportioned; but the bones and muscles of his face were rendered excessively prominent and distinct by his extreme leanness. The same cause contributed to the sunken appearance of the large eager-looking grey eyes, that gazed forth from under his phenomenally wide and high forehead. It was this latter feature that most powerfully attracted the attention of an observer. It seemed to be great beyond all preconceived ratio to the rest of his countenance. Dimensions, corrugations, wrinkles, venation, were alike abnormally exaggerated. Below it his eyes glowed like lights in some cave at a cliff's foot. It so over-powered and suppressed the rest of his face as to give an unhuman appearance almost, to what would otherwise have been an unquestionably handsome profile. The lank black hair that hung unkempt before his eyes served to increase rather than conceal this effect, by adding to unnatural altitude a suggestion of hydrocephalic projection: and the idea of something ultra human was furthermore accentuated by the temporal arteries that pulsated visibly through his transparent yellow skin. No wonder, in view even of these things, that among the highly and over-poetical Cymric of Llyddwdd the sieve theory of arrival found considerable favour.

It was his bearing and actions, however, much more than his personality, that won over believers to the warlock notion of matters. In almost every circumstance of life the observant villagers soon

found his ways were not only not their ways, but altogether inexplicable upon any theory of motives they could conceive. Thus, in a small matter at the beginning, when Arthur Price Williams, eminent and famous in every tavern in Caernarvonshire for his social gifts, endeavoured, in choicest Welsh and even choicer English, to inveigle the stranger into conversation over the sheet-tin performance, he failed utterly. Inquisitional supposition, straightforward enquiry, offer of assistance, suggestion of method, sarcasm, irony, abuse, and at last, gage of battle, though shouted with much effort from the road hedge, went unanswered and apparently unheard. Missile weapons, Arthur Price Williams found, were equally unavailing for the purpose of introduction, and the gathered crowd dispersed with unappeased curiosity and suspicion. Later in the day, the swarth apparition was seen striding down the mountain road towards the village, hatless, and with such swift width of step and set resolution of countenance, that Arthur Price Williams, beholding him from afar from the Pig and Whistle doorway was seized with dire consternation, and hid behind the Dutch oven in the kitchen till he was past. Wild panic also smote the school-house as the children were coming out, and drove them indoors like leaves before a gale. He was merely seeking the provision shop, however, and erupted thencefrom after a prolonged stay, loaded with a various armful of blue parcels, a loaf, herrings, pigs' trotters, salt pork, and a black bottle, with which he returned in the same swift projectile gait to the Manse. His way of shopping was to name, and to name simply, without solitary other word of explanation, civility or request, the article he required.

The shopkeeper's crude meteorological superstitions and inquisitive commonplaces, he seemed not to hear, and he might have been esteemed deaf if he had not evinced the promptest attention to the faintest relevant remark. Consequently it was speedily rumoured that he was determined to avoid all but the most necessary human intercourse. He lived altogether mysteriously, in the decaying manse, without mortal service or companionship, presumably sleeping on planks or litter, and either preparing his own food or eating it raw. This, coupled with the popular conception of the haunting patricides, did much to strengthen the popular supposition of some vast gulf

between the newcomer and common humanity. The only thing that was inharmonious with this idea of severance from mankind was a constant flux of crates filled with grotesquely contorted glassware, cases of brazen and steel instruments, huge coils of wire, vast iron and fire-clay implements, of inconceivable purpose, jars and phials labelled in black and scarlet — POISON, huge packages of books, and gargantuan rolls of cartridge paper, which set in towards his Llyddwdd quarters from the outer world. The apparently hieroglyphic inscriptions on these various consignments revealed at the profound scrutiny of Pugh Jones that the style and title of the new inhabitant was Dr. Moses Nebogipfel, Ph.D., F.R.S., N.W.R., PAID: at which discovery much edification was felt, especially among the purely Welsh-speaking community. Further than this, these arrivals, by their evident unfitness for any allowable mortal use, and inferential diabolicalness, filled the neighbourhood with a vague horror and lively curiosity, which were greatly augmented by the extraordinary phenomena, and still more extraordinary accounts thereof, that followed their reception in the Manse.

The first of these was on Wednesday, the fifteenth of May, when the Calvinistic Methodists of Llyddwdd had their annual commemoration festival; on which occasion, in accordance with custom, dwellers in the surrounding parishes of Rwstog, Pen-y-garn, Caergyllwdd, Llanrdd, and even distant Llanrwst flocked into the village. Popular thanks to Providence were materialised in the usual way, by means of plum-bread and butter, mixed tea, terza, consecrated flirtations, kiss-in-the-ring, rough-and-tumble football, and vituperative political speechmaking. About half-past eight the fun began to tarnish, and the assembly to break up; and by nine numerous couples and occasional groups were wending their way in the darkling along the hilly Llyddwdd and Rwstog road. It was a calm warm night; one of those nights when lamps, gas and heavy sleep seem stupid ingratitude to the Creator. The zenith sky was an ineffable deep lucent blue, and the evening star hung golden in the liquid darkness of the west. In the north-north-west, a faint phosphorescence marked the sunken day. The moon was just rising, pallid and gibbous over the huge haze-dimmed shoulder of Pen-y-pwll. Against the wan eastern sky, from the vague outline of the

mountain slope, the Manse stood out black, clear and solitary. The stillness of the twilight had hushed the myriad murmurs of the day. Only the sounds of footsteps and voices and laughter, that came fitfully rising and falling from the roadway, and an intermittent hammering in the darkened dwelling, broke the silence. Suddenly a strange whizzing, buzzing whirr filled the night air, and a bright flicker glanced across the dim path of the wayfarers. All eyes were turned in astonishment to the old Manse. The house no longer loomed a black featureless block but was filled to overflowing with light. From the gaping holes in the roof, from chinks and fissures amid tiles and brickwork, from every gap which Nature or man had pierced in the crumbling old shell, a blinding blue-white glare was streaming, beside which the rising moon seemed a disc of opaque sulphur. The thin mist of the dewy night had caught the violet glow and hung, unearthly smoke, over the colourless blaze. A strange turmoil and outcrying in the old Manse now began, and grew ever more audible to the clustering spectators, and therewith came clanging loud impacts against the window-guarding tin. Then from the gleaming roof-gaps of the house suddenly vomited forth a wonderous swarm of heteromerous living things — swallows, sparrows, martins, owls, bats, insects in visible multitudes, to hang for many minutes a noisy, gyring, spreading cloud over the black gables and chimneys...and then slowly to thin out and vanish away in the night.

As this tumult died away the throbbing humming that had first arrested attention grew once more in the listener's hearing, until at last it was the only sound in the long stillness. Presently, however, the road gradually awoke again to the beating and shuffling of feet, as the knots of Rwstog people, one by one, turned their blinking eyes from the dazzling whiteness and, pondering deeply, continued their homeward way.

The cultivated reader will have already discerned that this phenomenon, which sowed a whole crop of uncanny thoughts in the minds of these worthy folk, was simply the installation of the electric light in the Manse. Truly, this last vicissitude of the old house was its strangest one. Its revival to mortal life was like the raising of Lazarus. From that hour forth, by night and day, behind the tin-

blinded windows, the tamed lightning illuminated every corner of its quickly changing interior. The almost frenzied energy of the lank-haired, leather-clad little doctor swept away into obscure holes and corners and common destruction, creeper sprays, toadstools, rose leaves, birds' nests, birds' eggs, cobwebs, and all the coatings and lovingly fanciful trimmings with which that maternal old dotard, Dame Nature, had tricked out the decaying house for its lying in state. The magneto-electric apparatus whirred incessantly amid the vestiges of the wainscoted dining-room, where once the eighteenth-century tenant had piously read morning prayer and eaten his Sunday dinner; and in the place of his sacred symbolical sideboard was a nasty heap of coke. The oven of the bakehouse supplied substratum and material for a forge, whose snorting, panting bellows, and intermittent, ruddy spark-laden blast made the benighted, but Bible-lit Welsh women murmur in liquid Cymric, as they hurried by: "Whose breath kindleth coals, and out of his mouth is a flame of fire." For the idea these good people formed of it was that a tame, but occasionally restive, leviathan had been added to the terrors of the haunted house. The constantly increasing accumulation of pieces of machinery, big brass castings, block tin, casks, crates, and packages of innumerable articles, by their demands for space, necessitated the sacrifice of most of the slighter partitions of the house, and the beams and flooring of the upper chambers were also mercilessly sawn away by the tireless scientist in such a way as to convert them into mere shelves and corner brackets of the atrial space between cellars and rafters. Some of the sounder planking was utilised in the making of a rude broad table, upon which files and heaps of geometrical diagrams speedily accumulated. The production of these latter seemed to be the object upon which the mind of Dr. Nebogipfel was so inflexibly set. All other circumstances of his life were made entirely subsidiary to this one occupation. Strangely complicated traceries of lines they were — plans, elevations, sections by surfaces and solids, that, with the help of logarithmic mechanical apparatus and involved curvigraphical machines, spread swiftly under his expert hands over yard after yard of paper. Some of these symbolised shapes he despatched to London, and they presently returned, realised, in forms of brass and ivory, and nickel and mahogany. Some of them he

himself translated into solid models of metal and wood; occasionally casting the metallic ones in moulds of sand, but often laboriously hewing them out of the block for greater precision of dimension. In this second process, among other appliances, he employed a steel circular saw set with diamond powder and made to rotate with extraordinary swiftness, by means of steam and multiplying gear. It was this latter thing, more than all else, that filled Llyddwdd with a sickly loathing of the Doctor as a man of blood and darkness. Often in the silence of midnight — for the newest inhabitant heeded the sun but little in his incessant research — the awakened dwellers around Pen-y-pwll would hear, what was at first a complaining murmur, like the groaning of a wounded man, "gurr-urrurr-URR ", rising by slow gradations in pitch and intensity to the likeness of a voice in despairing passionate protest, and at last ending abruptly in a sharp piercing shriek that rang in the ears for hours afterwards and begot numberless gruesome dreams.

The mystery of all these unearthly noises and inexplicable phenomena, the Doctor's inhumanly brusque bearing and evident uneasiness when away from his absorbing occupation, his entire and jealous seclusion, and his terrifying behaviour to certain officious intruders, roused popular resentment and curiously to the highest, and a plot was already on foot to make some sort of popular inquisition (probably accompanied by an experimental ducking) into his proceedings, when the sudden death of the hunchback Hughes in a fit, brought matters to an unexpected crisis. It happened in broad daylight, in the roadway just opposite the Manse. Half a dozen people witnessed it. The unfortunate creature was seen to fall suddenly and roll about on the pathway, struggling violently, as it appeared to the spectators, with some invisible assailant. When assistance reached him he was purple in the face and his blue lips were covered with a glairy foam. He died almost as soon as they laid hands on him.

Owen Thomas, the general practitioner, vainly assured the excited crowd which speedily gathered outside the Pig and Whistle, whither the body had been carried, that death was unquestionably natural. A horrible zymotic suspicion had gone forth that the deceased was the victim of Dr. Nebogipfel's imputed aerial powers. The contagion was

with the news that passed like a flash through the village and set all Llyddwdd seething with a fierce desire for action against the worker of this iniquity. Downright superstition, which had previously walked somewhat modestly about the village, in the fear of ridicule and the Doctor, now appeared boldly before the sight of all men, clad in the terrible majesty of truth. People who had hitherto kept entire silence as to their fears of the imp-like philosopher suddenly discovered a fearsome pleasure in whispering dread possibilities to kindred souls, and from whispers of possibilities their sympathy-fostered utterances soon developed into unhesitating asserverations in laud and even high-pitched tones. The fancy of a captive leviathan, already alluded to, which had up to now been the horrid but secret joy of a certain conclave of ignorant old women, was published to all the world as indisputable fact; it being stated, on her own authority, that the animal had, on one occasion, chased Mrs. Morgan ap Lloyd Jones almost into Rwstog. The story that Nebogipfel had been heard within the Manse chanting, in conjunction with the Williamses, horrible blasphemy, and that a "black flapping thing, of the size of a young calf", had thereupon entered the gap in the roof, was universally believed in. A grisly anecdote, that owed its origination to a stumble in the churchyard, was circulated, to the effect that the Doctor had been caught ghoulishly tearing with his long white fingers at a new-made grave. The numerously attested declaration that Nebogipfel and the murdered Williams had been seen hanging the sons on a ghostly gibbet, at the back of the house, was due to the electric illumination of a fitfully wind-shaken tree. A hundred like stories hurtled thickly about the village and darkened the moral atmosphere. The Reverend Elijah Ulysses Cook, hearing of the tumult, sallied forth to allay it, and narrowly escaped drawing on himself the gathering lightning.

By eight o'clock (it was Monday the twenty-second of July) a grand demonstration had organised itself against the "necromancer". A number of bolder hearts among the men formed the nucleus of the gathering, and at nightfall Arthur Price Williams, John Peters, and others brought torches and raised their spark-raining flames aloft with curt ominous suggestions. The less adventurous village manhood came straggling late to the rendezvous, and with them the

married women came in groups of four or five, greatly increasing the excitement of the assembly with their shrill hysterical talk and active imaginations. After these the children and young girls, overcome by undefinable dread, crept quietly out of the too silent and shadowy houses into the yellow glare of the pine knots, and the tumultuary noise of the thickening people. By nine, nearly half the Llyddwdd population was massed before the Pig and Whistle. There was a confused murmur of many tongues, but above all the stir and chatter of the growing crowd could be heard the coarse, cracked voice of the blood-thirsty old fanatic, Pritchard, drawing a congenial lesson from the fate of the four hundred and fifty idolators of Carmel.

Just as the church clock was beating out the hour, an occultly originated movement up hill began, and soon the whole assembly, men, women, and children, was moving in a fear-compacted mass, towards the ill-fated doctor's abode. As they left the brightly-lit public house behind them, a quavering female voice began singing one of those grim-sounding canticles that so satisfy the Calvinistic ear. In a wonderfully short time, the tune had been caught up, first by two or three, and then by the whole procession, and the manifold shuffling of heavy shoon grew swiftly into rhythm with the beats of the hymn. When, however, their goal rose, like a blazing star, over the undulation of the road, the volume of the chanting suddenly died away, leaving only the voices of the ringleaders, shouting indeed now somewhat out of tune, but, if anything, more vigorously than before. Their persistence and example nevertheless failed to prevent a perceptible breaking and slackening of the pace, as the Manse was neared, and when the gate was reached, the whole crowd came to a dead halt. Vague fear for the future had begotten the courage that had brought the villagers thus far: fear for the present now smothered its kindred birth. The intense blaze from the gaps in the death-like silent pile lit up rows of livid, hesitating faces: and a smothered, frightened sobbing broke out among the children. "Well," said Arthur Price Williams, addressing Jack Peters, with an expert assumption of the modest discipleship, "what do we do now, Jack?" But Peters was regarding the Manse with manifest dubiety, and ignored the question. The Llyddwdd witch-find seemed to be suddenly aborting.

At this juncture old Pritchard suddenly pushed his way forward,

gesticulating weirdly with his bony hands and long arms. “What!” he shouted, in broken notes, “fear ye to smite when the Lord hateth? Burn the warlock!” And seizing a flambeau from Peters, he flung open the rickety gate and strode on down the drive, his torch leaving a coiling trail of scintillant sparks on the night wind. “Burn the warlock,” screamed a shrill voice from the wavering crowd, and in a moment the gregarious human instinct had prevailed. With an outburst of incoherent, threatening voice, the mob poured after the fanatic.

Woe betide the Philosopher now! They expected barricaded doors; but with a groan of a conscious insufficiency, the hinge-rusted portals swung at the push of Pritchard. Blinded by the light, he hesitated for a second on the threshold, while his followers came crowding up behind him.

Those who were there say that they saw Dr. Nebogipfel, standing in the toneless electric glare, on a peculiar erection of brass and ebony and ivory; and that he seemed to be smiling at them, half pityingly and half scornfully, as it is said martyrs are wont to smile. Some assert, moreover, that by his side was sitting a tall man, clad in ravenswing, and some even aver that this second man — whom others deny — bore on his face the likeness of the Reverend Elijah Ulysses Cook, while others declare that he resembled the description of the murdered Williams. Be that as it may, it must now go unproven for ever, for suddenly a wonderous thing smote the crowd as it swarmed in through the entrance. Pritchard pitched headlong on the floor senseless. While shouts and shrieks of anger, changed in mid utterance to yells of agonising fear, or to the mute gasp of heart-stopping horror: and then a frantic rush was made for the doorway.

For the calm, smiling doctor, and his quiet, black-clad companion, and the polished platform which upbore them, had vanished before their eyes!

HOW AN ESOTERIC STORY BECAME POSSIBLE

A silvery-foliaged willow by the side of a mere. Out of the cress-spangled waters below, rise clumps of sedge-blades, and among them glows the purple fleur-de-lys, and sapphire vapour of forget-me-nots.

Beyond is a sluggish stream of water reflecting the intense blue of the moist Fenland sky; and beyond that a low osier-fringed eyot. This limits all the visible universe, save some scattered pollards and spear-like poplars showing against the violet distance. At the foot of the willow reclines the Author watching a copper butterfly fluttering from iris to iris.

Who can fix the colours of the sunset? Who can take a cast of flame? Let him essay to register the mutations of mortal thought as it wanders from a copper butterfly to the disembodied soul, and thence passes to spiritual motions and the vanishing of Dr. Moses Nebogipfel and the Rev. Elijah Ulysses Cook from the world of sense.

As the author lay basking there and speculating, as another once did under the Budh tree, on mystic transmutations, a presence became apparent. There was a somewhat on the eyot between him and the purple horizon — an opaque reflecting entity, making itself dimly perceptible by reflection in the water to his averted eyes. He raised them in curious surprise.

What was it?

He stared in stupefied astonishment at the apparition, doubted, blinked, rubbed his eyes, stared again, and believed. It was solid, it cast a shadow, and it upbore two men. There was white metal in it that blazed in the noontide sun like incandescent magnesium, ebony bars that drank in the light, and white parts that gleamed like polished ivory. Yet withal it seemed unreal. The thing was not square as a machine ought to be, but all awry: it was twisted and seemed falling over, hanging in two directions, as those queer crystals called triclinic hang; it seemed like a machine that had been crushed or warped; it was suggestive and not confirmatory, like the machine of a disordered dream. The men, too, were dreamlike. One was short, intensely sallow, with a strangely-shaped head, and clad in a garment of dark olive green, the other was, grotesquely out of place, evidently a clergyman of the Established Church, a fair-haired, pale-faced respectable-looking man.

Once more doubt came rushing in on the author. He sprawled back and stared at the sky, rubbed his eyes, stared at the willow wands that hung between him and the blue, closely examined his

hands to see if his eyes had any new things to relate about them, and then sat up again and stared at the eyot. A gentle breeze stirred the osiers; a white bird was flapping its way through the lower sky. The machine of the vision had vanished! It was an illusion — a projection of the subjective — an assertion of the immateriality of mind. “Yes,” interpolated the sceptic faculty, “but how comes it that the clergyman is still there?”

The clergyman had not vanished. In intense perplexity the author examined this black-coated phenomenon as he stood regarding the world with hand-shaded eyes. The author knew the periphery of that eyot by heart, and the question that troubled him was, “Whence?” The clergyman looked as Frenchmen look when they land at Newhaven — intensely travel-worn; his clothes showed rubbed and seamy in the bright day. When he came to the edge of the island and shouted a question to the author, his voice was broken and trembled. “Yes,” answered the author, “it is an island. How did you get there?”

But the clergyman, instead of replying to this asked a very strange question.

He said “Are you in the nineteenth century?” The author made him repeat that question before he replied. “Thank heaven,” cried the clergyman rapturously. Then he asked very eagerly for the exact date.

“August the ninth, eighteen hundred and eighty-seven,” he repeated after the author. “Heaven be praised!” and sinking down on the eyot so that the sedges hid him, he audibly burst into tears.

Now the author was mightily surprised at all this, and going a certain distance along the mere, he obtained a punt, and getting into it he hastily poled to the eyot where he had last seen the clergyman. He found him lying insensible among the reeds, and carried him in his punt to the house where he lived, and the clergyman lay there insensible for ten days.

Meanwhile, it became known that he was the Rev. Elijah Cook, who had disappeared from Llyddwdd with Dr. Moses Nebogipfel three weeks before.

On August 19th, the nurse called the author out of his study to speak to the invalid. He found him perfectly sensible, but his eyes were strangely bright, and his face was deadly pale. “Have you found

out who I am?" he asked.

"You are the Rev. Elijah Ulysses Cook, Master of Arts, of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Rector of Llyddwdd, near Rwstog, in Caernarvon."

He bowed his head. "Have you been told anything of how I came here?"

"I found you among the reeds," I said. He was silent and thoughtful for a while. "I have a deposition to make. Will you take it? It concerns the murder of an old man named Williams, which occurred in 1862, this disappearance of Dr. Moses Nebogipfel, the abduction of a ward in the year 4003—"

The author stared.

"The year of our Lord 4003," he corrected. "She would come. Also several assaults on public officials in the years 17,901 and 2."

The author coughed.

"The years 17,901 and 2, and valuable medical, social, and physiographical data for all time."

After a consultation with the doctor, it was decided to have the deposition taken down, and this is which constitutes the remainder of the story of the Chronic Argonauts.

On August 28th, 1887, the Rev Elijah Cook died. His body was conveyed to Llyddwdd, and buried in the churchyard there.

THE ESOTERIC STORY BASED ON THE CLERGYMAN'S DEPOSITIONS

THE ANACHRONIC MAN

Incidentally it has been remarked in the first part, how the Reverend Elijah Ulysses Cook attempted and failed to quiet the superstitious excitement of the villagers on the afternoon of the memorable twenty-second of July. His next proceeding was to try and warn the unsocial philosopher of the dangers which impended. With this intent he made his way from the rumour-pelted village, through the silent, slumbrous heat of the July afternoon, up the slopes of Pen-y-pwll, to the old Manse. His loud knocking at the heavy door called forth dull resonance from the interior, and produced a shower of lumps of

plaster and fragments of decaying touchwood from the rickety porch, but beyond this the dreamy stillness of the summer mid-day remained unbroken. Everything was so quiet as he stood there expectant, that the occasional speech of the haymakers a mile away in the fields, over towards Rwstog, could be distinctly heard. The reverend gentleman waited, then knocked again, and waited again, and listened, until the echoes and the patter of rubbish had melted away into the deep silence, and the creeping in the blood-vessels of his ears had become oppressively audible, swelling and sinking with sounds like the confused murmuring of a distant crowd, and causing a suggestion of anxious discomfort to spread slowly over his mind.

Again he knocked, this time loud, quick blows with his stick, and almost immediately afterwards, leaning his hand against the door, he kicked the panels vigorously. There was a shouting of echoes, a protesting jarring of hinges, and then the oaken door yawned and displayed, in the blue blaze of the electric light, vestiges of partitions, piles of planking and straw, masses of metal, heaps of papers and overthrown apparatus, to the rector's astonished eyes. "Doctor Nebogipfel, excuse my intruding," he called out, but the only response was a reverberation among the black beams and shadows that hung dimly above. For almost a minute he stood there, leaning forward over the threshold, staring at the glittering mechanisms, diagrams, books, scattered indiscriminately with broken food, packing cases, heaps of coke, hay, and microcosmic lumber, about the undivided house cavity; and then, removing his hat and treading stealthily, as if the silence were a sacred thing, he stepped into the apparently deserted shelter of the Doctor.

His eyes sought everywhere, as he cautiously made his way through the confusion, with a strange anticipation of finding Nebogipfel hidden somewhere in the sharp black shadows among the litter, so strong in him was an indescribable sense of perceiving presence. This feeling was so vivid that, when, after an abortive exploration, he seated himself upon Nebogipfel's diagram-covered bench, it made him explain in a forced hoarse voice to the stillness—"He is not here. I have something to say to him. I must wait for him." It was so vivid, too, that the trickling of some grit down the wall in the vacant corner behind him made him start round in a sudden

perspiration. There was nothing visible there, but turning his head back, he was stricken rigid with horror by the swift, noiseless apparition of Nebogipfel, ghastly pale, and with red stained hands, crouching upon a strange-looking metallic platform, and with his deep grey eyes looking intently into the visitor's face.

Cook's first impulse was to yell out his fear, but his throat was paralysed, and he could only stare fascinated at the bizarre countenance that had thus clashed suddenly into visibility. The lips were quivering and the breath came in short convulsive sobs. The unhuman forehead was wet with perspiration, while the veins were swollen, knotted and purple. The Doctor's red hands, too, he noticed, were trembling, as the hands of slight people tremble after intense muscular exertion, and his lips closed and opened as if he, too, had a difficulty in speaking as he gasped, "Who — what do you do here?"

Cook answered not a word, but stared with hair erect, open mouth, and dilated eyes, at the dark red unmistakeable smear that streaked the pure ivory and gleaming nickel and shining ebony of the platform.

"What are you doing here?" repeated the doctor, raising himself. "What do you want?"

Cook gave a convulsive effort. "In Heaven's name, what are you?" he gasped; and then black curtains came closing in from every side, sweeping the squatting dwarfish phantasm that reeled before him into rayless, voiceless night.

The Reverend Elijah Ulysses Cook recovered his perceptions to find himself lying on the floor of the old Manse, and Doctor Nebogipfel, no longer blood-stained and with all trace of his agitation gone, kneeling by his side and bending over him with a glass of brandy in his hand. "Do not be alarmed, sir," said the philosopher with a faint smile, as the clergyman opened his eyes. "I have not treated you to a disembodied spirit, or anything nearly so extraordinary...may I offer you this?"

The clergyman submitted quietly to the brandy, and then stared perplexed into Nebogipfel's face, vainly searching his memory for what occurrences had preceded his insensibility. Raising himself at last, into a sitting posture, he saw the oblique mass of metals that had appeared with the doctor, and immediately all that happened flashed

back upon his mind. He looked from this structure to the recluse, and from the recluse to the structure.

"There is absolutely no deception, sir," said Nebogipfel with the slightest trace of mockery in his voice. "I lay no claim to work in matters spiritual. It is a bona fide mechanical contrivance, a thing emphatically of this sordid world. Excuse me — just one minute." He rose from his knees, stepped upon the mahogany platform, took a curiously curved lever in his hand and pulled it over. Cook rubbed his eyes. There certainly was no deception. The doctor and the machine had vanished.

The reverend gentleman felt no horror this time, only a slight nervous shock, to see the doctor presently re-appear "in the twinkling of an eye" and get down from the machine. From that he walked in a straight line with his hands behind his back and his face downcast, until his progress was stopped by the intervention of a circular saw; then, turning round sharply on his heel, he said:

"I was thinking while I was...away...Would you like to come? I should greatly value a companion."

The clergyman was still sitting, hatless, on the floor. "I am afraid," he said slowly, "you will think me stupid—"

"Not at all," interrupted the doctor. "The stupidity is mine. You desire to have all this explained...wish to know where I am going first. I have spoken so little with men of this age for the last ten years or more that I have ceased to make due allowances and concessions for other minds. I will do my best, but that I fear will be very unsatisfactory. It is a long story...do you find that floor comfortable to sit on? If not, there is a nice packing case over there, or some straw behind you, or this bench — the diagrams are done with now, but I am afraid of the drawing pins. You may sit on the Chronic Argo!"

"No, thank you," slowly replied the clergyman, eyeing that deformed structure thus indicated, suspiciously; "I am quite comfortable here."

"Then I will begin. Do you read fables? Modern ones?"

"I am afraid I must confess to a good deal of fiction," said the clergyman deprecatingly. "In Wales the ordained ministers of the sacraments of the Church have perhaps too large a share of leisure

—”

“Have you read the Ugly Duckling?”

“Hans Christian Andersen’s — yes — in my childhood.”

“A wonderful story — a story that has ever been full of tears and heart swelling hopes for me, since first it came to me in my lonely boyhood and saved me from unspeakable things. That story, if you understand it well, will tell you almost all that you should know of me to comprehend how that machine came to be thought of in a mortal brain...Even when I read that simple narrative for the first time, a thousand bitter experiences had begun the teaching of my isolation among the people of my birth — I knew the story was for me. The ugly duckling that proved to be a swan, that lived through all contempt and bitterness, to float at last sublime. From that hour forth, I dreamt of meeting with my kind, dreamt of encountering that sympathy I knew was my profoundest need. Twenty years I lived in that hope, lived and worked, lived and wandered, loved even, and at last, despaired. Only once among all those millions of wondering, astonished, indifferent, contemptuous, and insidious faces that I met with in that passionate wandering, looked one upon me as I desired...looked—”

He paused. The Reverend Cook glanced up into his face, expecting some indication of the deep feeling that had sounded in his last words. It was downcast, clouded, and thoughtful, but the mouth was rigidly firm.

“In short, Mr. Cook, I discovered that I was one of those superior Cagots called a genius — a man born out of my time — a man thinking the thoughts of a wiser age, doing things and believing things that men now cannot understand, and that in the years ordained to me there was nothing but silence and suffering for my soul — unbroken solitude, man’s bitterest pain. I knew I was an Anachronic Man; my age was still to come. One filmy hope alone held me to life, a hope to which I clung until it had become a certain thing. Thirty years of unremitting toil and deepest thought among the hidden things of matter and form and life, and then that, the Chronic Argo, the ship that sails through time, and now I go to join my generation, to journey through the ages till my time has come.”

Dr. Nebogipfel paused, looked in sudden doubt at the clergyman's perplexed face. "You think that sounds mad," he said, "to travel through time?"

"It certainly jars with accepted opinions," said the clergyman, allowing the faintest suggestion of controversy to appear in his intonation, and speaking apparently to the Chronic Argo. Even a clergyman of the Church of England you see can have a suspicion of illusions at times.

"It certainly does jar with accepted opinions," agreed the philosopher cordially. "It does more than that — it defies accepted opinions to mortal combat. Opinions of all sorts, Mr. Cook — Scientific Theories, Laws, Articles of Belief, or, to come to elements, Logical Premises, Ideas, or whatever you like to call them — all are, from the infinite nature of things, so many diagrammatic caricatures of the ineffable — caricatures altogether to be avoided save where they are necessary in the shaping of results — as chalk outlines are necessary to the painter and plans and sections to the engineer. Men, from the exigencies of their being, find this hard to believe."

The Rev. Elijah Ulysses Cook nodded his head with the quiet smile of one whose opponent has unwittingly given a point.

"It is as easy to come to regard ideas as complete reproductions of entities as it is to roll off a log. Hence it is that almost all civilised men believe in the reality of the Greek geometrical conceptions."

"Oh! pardon me, sir," interrupted Cook. "Most men know that a geometrical point has no existence in matter, and the same with a geometrical line. I think you underrate..."

"Yes, yes, those things are recognised," said Nebogipfel calmly; "but now...a cube. Does that exist in the material universe?"

"Certainly."

"An instantaneous cube?"

"I don't know what you intend by that expression."

"Without any other sort of extension; a body having length, breadth, and thickness, exists?"

"What other sort of extension can there be?" asked Cook, with raised eyebrows.

“Has it never occurred to you that no form can exist in the material universe that has no extension in time?...Has it never glimmered upon your consciousness that nothing stood between men and a geometry of four dimensions — length, breadth, thickness, and duration — but the inertia of opinion, the impulse from the Levantine philosophers of the bronze age?”

“Putting it that way,” said the clergyman, “it does look as though there was a flaw somewhere in the notion of tridimensional being; but” ...He became silent, leaving that sufficiently eloquent “but” to convey all the prejudice and distrust that filled his mind.

“When we take up this new light of a fourth dimension and reexamine our physical science in its illumination,” continued Nebogipfel, after a pause, “we find ourselves no longer limited by hopeless restriction to a certain beat of time — to our own generation. Locomotion along lines of duration — chronic navigation comes within the range, first, of geometrical theory, and then of practical mechanics. There was a time when men could only move horizontally and in their appointed country. The clouds floated above them, unattainable things, mysterious chariots of those fearful gods who dwelt among the mountain summits. Speaking practically, men in those days were restricted to motion in two dimensions; and even there circumambient ocean and hypoborean fear bound him in. But those times were to pass away. First, the keel of Jason cut its way between the Symplegades, and then in the fulness of time, Columbus dropped anchor in a bay of Atlantis. Then man burst his bidimensional limits, and invaded the third dimension, soaring with Montgolfier into the clouds, and sinking with a diving bell into the purple treasure-caves of the waters. And now another step, and the hidden past and unknown future are before us. We stand upon a mountain summit with the plains of the ages spread below.”

Nebogipfel paused and looked down at his hearer.

The Reverend Elijah Cook was sitting with an expression of strong distrust on his face. Preaching much had brought home certain truths to him very vividly, and he always suspected rhetoric. “Are those things figures of speech,” he asked; “or am I to take them as precise statements? Do you speak of travelling through time in the same way as one might speak of Omnipotence making His pathway

on the storm, or do you — a — mean what you say?”

Dr. Nebogipfel smiled quietly. “Come and look at these diagrams,” he said, and then with elaborate simplicity he commenced to explain again to the clergyman the new quadridimensional geometry. Insensibly Cook’s aversion passed away, and seeming impossibility grew possible, now that such tangible things as diagrams and models could be brought forward in evidence. Presently he found himself asking questions, and his interest grew deeper and deeper as Nebogipfel slowly and with precise clearness unfolded the beautiful order of his strange invention. The moments slipped away unchecked, as the Doctor passed on to the narrative of his research, and it was with a start of surprise that the clergyman noticed the deep blue of the dying twilight through the open doorway.

“The voyage,” said Nebogipfel concluding his history, “will be full of undreamt-of dangers — already in one brief essay I have stood in the very jaws of death — but it is also full of the divines’ promise of undreamt- of joy. Will you come? Will you walk among the people of the Golden Years?...”

But the mention of death by the philosopher had brought flooding back to the mind of Cook, all the horrible sensations of that first apparition.

“Dr. Nebogipfel...one question?” He hesitated. “On your hands...Was it blood?”

Nebogipfel’s countenance fell. He spoke slowly.

“When I had stopped my machine, I found myself in this room as it used to be. Hark!”

“It is the wind in the trees towards Rwstog.”

“It sounded like the voices of a multitude of people singing... when I had stopped I found myself in this room as it used to be. An old man, a young man, and a lad were sitting at a table — reading some book together. I stood behind them unsuspected. ‘Evil spirits assailed him,’ read the old man; ‘but it is written, to him that overcometh shall be given life eternal’. They came as entreating friends, but he endured through all their snares. They came as principalities and powers, but he defied them in the name of the King of Kings. Once even it is told that in his study, while he was

translating the New Testament into German, the Evil One himself appeared before him...' Just then the lad glanced timorously round, and with a fearful wail fainted away..."

"The others sprang at me...It was a fearful grapple...The old man clung to my throat, screaming 'Man or Devil, I defy thee...'

"I could not help it. We rolled together on the floor...the knife his trembling son had dropped came to my hand...Hark!"

He paused and listened, but Cook remained staring at him in the same horror-stricken attitude he had assumed when the memory of the blood-stained hands had rushed back over his mind.

"Do you hear what they are crying? Hark!"

Burn the warlock! Burn the murderer!

"Do you hear? There is no time to be lost."

Slay the murderer of cripples. Kill the devil's claw!

"Come! Come!"

Cook, with a convulsive effort, made a gesture of repugnance and strode to the doorway. A crowd of black figures roaring towards him in the red torchlight made him recoil. He shut the door and faced Nebogipfel.

The thin lips of the Doctor curled with a contemptuous sneer. "They will kill you if you stay," he said; and seizing his unresisting vistor by the wrist, he forced him towards the glittering machine. Cook sat down and covered his face with his hands.

In another moment the door was flung open, and old Pritchard stood blinking on the threshold.

A pause. A hoarse shout changing suddenly into a sharp shrill shriek.

A thunderous roar like the bursting forth of a great fountain of water.

The voyage of the Chronic Argonauts had begun.

THE BULLA; OR, THE RECONCILIATION

Temple had scarcely been with Findlay five minutes before he felt his old resentments, and the memory of that unforgettable wrong growing vivid again. But with the infatuation of his good resolution still upon him, he maintained the air of sham reconciliation that Findlay had welcomed so eagerly. They talked of this and that, carefully avoiding the matter of separation. Temple at first spoke chiefly of his travels. He stood between the cabinet of minerals and the fireplace, his whisky on the mantel-board, while Findlay sat with his chair pushed back from his writing-desk, on which were scattered the dozen little skulls of hedgehogs and shrew mice upon which he had been working.

Temple's eye fell upon them, and abruptly brought his mind round from the topic of West Africa. "And you," said Temple. "While I have been wandering I suppose you have been going on steadily."

"Drumming along," said Findlay.

"To the Royal Society and fame and all the things we used to dream about — how long is it?"

"Five years — since our student days."

Temple glanced round the room, and his eye rested for a moment on a round greyish-drab object that lay in a corner near the door. "The same fat books and folios, only more of them, the same smell of old bones, and dissection — is it the same one — ? In the window. Fame is your mistress?"

"Fame," said Findlay. "But it's hardly fame. The herd outside say, 'Eminence in comparative anatomy.'"

"Eminence in comparative anatomy. No marrying — no avarice."

"None," said Findlay, glancing askance at him.

"I suppose it's the happiest way of living. But it wouldn't be the thing for me. Excitement — but, I say — !" his eye had fallen again on that fungoid shape of drabbish-grey — , "there's a limit to scientific inhumanity. You really mustn't keep your door open with a human brainpan."

He went across the room as he spoke and picked the thing up.

“Brainpan!” said Findlay. “Oh, that! Man alive, that’s not a brainpan. Where’s your science?”

“No. I see it’s not,” said Temple, carrying the object in his hand as he came back to his former position and scrutinising it curiously. “But what the devil is it?”

“Don’t you know?” said Findlay.

The thing was about thrice the size of a man’s hand, like a rough watch- pocket of thick bone.

Findlay laughed almost naturally. “You have a bad memory — it’s a whale’s ear-bone.”

“Of course,” said Temple, his appearance of interest vanishing. “The bulla of a whale. I’ve forgotten a lot of these things.”

He half turned, and put the thing on top of the cabinet beside Findlay’s dumb-bells.

“If you are serious in your music-hall proposal,” he said, reverting to a jovial suggestion of Findlay’s, “I am at your service. I’m afraid — I may find myself a little old for that sort of thing — I haven’t tried one for ages.”

“But we are meeting to commemorate youth,” said Findlay.

“And bury our early manhood,” said Temple. “Well, well — yes, let us go to the music-hall, by all means, if you desire it. It is trivial — and appropriate. We want no tragic issues.”

When the men returned to Findlay’s study the little clock in the dimness on the mantel-shelf was pointing to half-past one. After the departure the little brown room, with its books and bones, was undisturbed, save for the two visits Findlay’s attentive servant paid, to see to the fire and to pull down the blinds and draw the curtains. The ticking of the clock was the only sound in the quiet. Now and then the fire flickered and stirred, sending blood-red reflections chasing the shadows across the ceiling, and bringing into ghostly transitory prominence some grotesque grouping of animals’ bones or skulls upon the shelves. At last the stillness was broken by the unlatching and slamming of the heavy street door and the sound of unsteady footsteps approaching along the passage. Then the door opened, and the two men came into the warm firelight.

Temple came in first, his brown face flushed with drink, his coat unbuttoned, his hands deep in his trousers’ pockets. His Christmas

resolution had long since dissolved in alcohol. He was a little puzzled to find himself in Findlay's company. And his fuddled brain insisted upon inopportune reminiscence. He walked straight to the fire and stood before it, an exaggerated black figure, staring down into the red glow. "After all," he said, "we are fools to quarrel — fools to quarrel about a little thing like that. Damned fools!"

Findaly went to the writing-table and felt about for the matches with quivering hands.

"It wasn't my doing," he said.

"It wasn't your doing," said Temple. "Nothing ever was your doing. You are always in the right — Findlay the all-right."

Findlay's attention was concentrated upon the lamp. His hand was unsteady, and he had some difficulty in turning up the wicks; one got jammed down and the other flared furiously. When at last it was lit and turned up, he came up to Temple. "Take your coat off, old man, and have some more whisky," he said. "That was a ripping little girl in the skirt dance."

"Fools to quarrel," said Temple slowly, and then woke up to Findlay's words. "Heigh?"

"Take off your coat and sit down," said Findlay, moving up the little metal table and producing cigars and a siphon and whisky. "That lamp gives an infernally bad light, but it is all I have. Something wrong with the oil. Did you notice the dodge of that stone-smashing trick?"

Temple remained erect and gloomy, staring into the fire. "Fools to quarrel," he said. Findlay was now half drunk, and his finesse began to leave him. Temple had been drinking heavily, and was now in a curious rambling stage. And Findlay's one idea now was to close this curious reunion.

"There's no woman worth a man's friendship," said Temple abruptly.

He sat down in an easy chair, poured out and drank a dose of whisky and lithia. The idea of friendship took possession of him, and he became reminiscent of student days and student adventures. For some time it was, "Do you remember" this, and "Do you remember" that. And Findlay grew cheerful again.

"They were glorious times," said Findlay, pouring whisky into

Temple's glass.

Then Temple startled him by abruptly reverting to that bitter quarrel. "No woman in the world," he said. "Curse them!"

He began to laugh stupidly. "After all," he said, "in the end."

"Oh, damn!" said Findlay.

"All very well for you to swear," said Temple, "but you forget about me. 'Tain't your place to swear. If only you'd left things alone —"

"I thought the password was forget," said Findlay.

Temple stared into the fire for a space. "Forget," he said, and then with a curious return to a clarity of speech, "Findlay, I'm getting drunk."

"Nonsense, man, take some more."

Temple rose out of his chair with a look of one awakening. "There's no reason why I should get drunk, because—"

"Drink," said Findlay, "and forget it."

"Faugh! I want to stick my head in water. I want to think. What the deuce am I doing here, with you of all people?"

"Nonsense! Talk and forget it, if you won't drink. Do you remember old Jason and the boxing-gloves? I wonder whether you could put up your fives now."

Temple stood with his back to the fire, his brain spinning with drink, and the old hatred of Findlay came back in flood. He sought in his mind for some offensive thing to say, and his face grew dark. Findlay saw that a crisis was upon him and he cursed under his breath. His air of conviviality, his pose of hearty comforter, grew more and more difficult. But what else was there to do?

"Old Jason — full of science and as slow as an elephant — ! But he made boxers of us. Do you remember our little set-to — at that place in Gower Street?"

To show his innocent liveliness, his freedom from preoccupation, Findlay pushed his chair aside, and stepped out into the middle of the room. There he began to pose in imitation of Jason, and to give a colourable travesty of the old prize-fighter's instructions. He picked up his boxing-gloves from the shelf in the recess, and slipped them on. Temple, lowering there on the brink of an explosion, was almost too much for his nerves. He felt his display of high spirits was a

mistake, but he must go through with it now.

"Don't stand glooming there, man. You're in just that state when the world looks black as ink. Drink yourself merry again. There's no woman in the world worth a man's friendship — that's agreed upon. Come and have a bout with these gloves of mine — four-ounce gloves. There's nothing sets the blood and spirits stirring like that."

"All right," said Temple, quite mechanically. And then, waking up to what he was doing, "Were are the other gloves?"

"Over there in the corner. On the top of the mineral cabinet. By Jove! Temple, this is like old times!"

Temple, quivering strangely, went to the corner. He meant to thrash Findlay, and knew that in spite of his lighter weight he would do it. Yet it seemed puerile and inadequate to the pitch of absurdity, for the wrong Findlay had done him was great. And putting his hand on something pale in the shadow, he touched the bulla of the whale. The temptation was like a lightning flash. He slipped one glove on his left hand, and thrust the fingers of his right into the cavity of the bulla. It took all his fingers, and covered his knuckles and the back of his hand. And it was so oddly like a thumbless boxing glove! Just the very shape of the padded part. His spirits rose abruptly at the sudden prospect of a savage joke — how savage it would be, he did not know. Meanwhile Findlay, with a nervous alacrity, moved the lamp into the corner behind the armchair, and thrust his writing-desk into the window bay.

"Come on," said Findlay, behind him, and abruptly he turned.

Findlay looked straight into his eyes, on guard, his hands half open. He did not see the strange substitute for a glove that covered Temple's right hand. Both men were gone so far towards drunkenness that their power of observation was obscured. For a moment they stood squaring at one another, the host smiling, and his guest smiling also, but with his teeth set; two dark figures swaying in the firelight and the dim lamplight. Then Findlay struck at his opponent's face with his left hand. As he did so Temple ducked slightly to the left, and struck savagely over Findlay's shoulder at his temple with the bone-covered fist. The blow was given with such tremendous force that it sent Findlay reeling sideways, half stunned, and overcome with astonishment. The thing struck his ear, and the

side of his face went white at the blow. He struggled to keep his footing, and as he did so Temple's gloved left hand took him in the chest and sent him spinning to the foot of the cigar cabinet.

Findlay's eyes were wide open with astonishment. Temple was a lighter man by a stone or more than himself, and he did not understand how he had been felled. He was not stunned, although he was so dulled by the blow as not to notice the blood running down his cheek from his ear. He laughed insincerely, and almost pulling the cigar cabinet over, scrambled to his feet, made as if he would speak, and put up his hand instinctively as Temple struck out at him again, a feint with the left hand. Findlay was an expert boxer, and anticipating another right-hand blow over the ear, struck sharply at once with his own left hand in Temple's face, throwing his full weight into the blow, and dodging Temple's reply.

Temple's upper lip was cut against his teeth, and the taste of blood and the sight of it trickling down Findlay's cheek destroyed the last vestiges of restraint that drink had left him, stripped of all that education had ever done for him. There remained now only the savage man-animal, the creature that thirsts for blood. With a half-bestial cry, he flung himself upon Findlay as he jumped back, and with a sudden sweep of his right arm cut down the defence, breaking Findlay's arm just above the wrist, and following with three rapid blows of the bulla upon the face. Findlay gave an inarticulate cry of astonishment, countered weakly once, and then went down like a felled ox. As he fell, Temple fell upon the top of him. There was a smash as the lamp went down.

The lamp was extinguished as it fell, and left the room red and black. Findlay struck heavily at Temple's ribs, and Temple, with his left elbow at Findlay's neck, swung up his right arm and struck down a sledge-hammer blow upon the face, and again and yet again, until the body beneath his knees had ceased to writhe.

Then suddenly his frenzy left him at the voice of a woman shrieking so that it filled the room. He looked up and crouched motionless as he heard and saw the study door closing and heard the patter of feet retreating in panic. Then he looked down and saw the thing that had once been the face of Findlay. For an awful minute he remained kneeling agape.

Then he staggered to his feet and stood over Findlay's body in the glow of the dying fire, like a man awakening from a nightmare. Suddenly he perceived the bulla on his hand, covered with blood and hair, and began to understand what had happened. In a sudden horror he flung the diabolical thing from him. It struck the floor near the cigar cabinet, rolled for a yard or so on its edge, and came to rest in almost the position it had occupied when he had first set eyes on it. To Temple's excited imagination it seemed to be lying at exactly the same spot, the sole and sufficient cause of Findlay's death and his own.

THE LAND IRONCLADS

This short story originally appeared in the December 1903 issue of the *Strand Magazine* and features a war remarkably similar to the First World War. The Ironclads are 100-foot-long machines with remote controlled guns and accommodation for 42 soldiers, including 7 officers. The story has added to Wells' reputation as a "prophet of the future", as the ironclads anticipate the tanks of World War I. The battle between countrymen and townsmen also carries echoes of the Boer War and *The War of the Worlds*, which also features a struggle between technologically uneven protagonists. Although Leonardo da Vinci had designed a proto-tank, Wells' chief inspiration seems to have been Ironclad warships, which also feature in *The War of the Worlds*.

THE LAND IRONCLADS

I.

The young lieutenant lay beside the war correspondent and admired the idyllic calm of the enemy's lines through his field-glass.

"So far as I can see," he said, at last, "one man."

"What's he doing?" asked the war correspondent.

"Field-glass at us," said the young lieutenant

"And this is war!"

"No," said the young lieutenant; "it's Bloch."

"The game's a draw."

"No! They've got to win or else they lose. A draw's a win for our side."

They had discussed the political situation fifty times or so, and the war correspondent was weary of it. He stretched out his limbs. "Aaai7 spose it *is*!" he yawned.

"*Flute!*"

"What was that?"

"Shot at us."

The war correspondent shifted to a slightly lower position. "No one shot at him," he complained.

"I wonder if they think we shall get so bored we shall go home?"

The war correspondent made no reply.

"There's the harvest, of course...."

They had been there a month. Since the first brisk movements after the declaration of war things had gone slower and slower, until it seemed as though the whole machine of events must have run down. To begin with, they had had almost a scampering time; the invader had come across the frontier on the very dawn of the war in half-a-dozen parallel columns behind a cloud of cyclists and cavalry, with a general air of coming straight on the capital, and the defender horsemen had held him up, and peppered him and forced him to open out to outflank, and had then bolted to the next position in the most approved style, for a couple of days, until in the afternoon, bump! they had the invader against their prepared lines of defense. He did

not suffer so much as had been hoped and expected: he was coming on, it seemed with his eyes open, his scouts winded the guns, and down he sat at once without the shadow of an attack and began grubbing trenches for himself, as though he meant to sit down there to the very end of time. He was slow, but much more wary than the world had been led to expect, and he kept convoys tucked in and shielded his slow marching infantry sufficiently well to prevent any heavy adverse scoring.

"But he ought to attack," the young lieutenant had insisted.

"He'll attack us at dawn, somewhere along the lines. You'll get the bayonets coming into the trenches just about when you can see," the war correspondent had held until a week ago.

The young lieutenant winked when he said that.

When one early morning the men the defenders sent to lie out five hundred yards before the trenches, with a view to the unexpected emptying of magazines into any night attack, gave way to causeless panic and blazed away at nothing for ten minutes, the war correspondent understood the meaning of that wink.

"What would you do if you were the enemy?" said the war correspondent, suddenly.

"If I had men like I've got now?"

"Yes."

"Take those trenches."

"How?"

"Oh — dodges! Crawl out half-way at night before moonrise and get into touch with the chaps we send out. Blaze at 'em if they tried to shift, and so bag some of 'em in the daylight. Learn that patch of ground by heart, lie all day in squatty holes, and come on nearer next night. There's a bit over there, lumpy ground, where they could get across to rushing distance — easy. In a night or so. It would be a mere game for our fellows; it's what they're made for.... Guns? Shrapnel and stuff wouldn't stop good men who meant business."

"Why don't *they* do that?"

"Their men aren't brutes enough: that's the trouble. They're a crowd of devitalized townsmen, and that's the truth of the matter' They're clerks, they're factory hands, they're students, they're civilized men. They can write, they can talk, they can make and do

all sorts of things, but they're poor amateurs at war. They've got no physical staying power, and that's the whole thing. They've never slept in the open one night in their lives; they've never drunk anything but the purest water-company water; they've never gone short of three meals a day since they left their feeding-bottles. Half their cavalry never cocked leg over horse till it enlisted six months ago. They ride their horses as though they were bicycles — you watch 'em! They're fools at the game, and they know it. Our boys of fourteen can give their grown men points.... Very well — —"

The war correspondent mused on his face with his nose between his knuckles.

"If a decent civilization," he said, "cannot produce better men for war than — —"

He stopped with belated politeness.

"I mean — —"

"Than our open-air life," said the young lieutenant, politely.

"Exactly," said the war correspondent. "Then civilization has to stop."

"It looks like it," the young lieutenant admitted.

"Civilization has science, you know," said the war correspondent. "It invented and it makes the rifles and guns and things you use."

"Which our nice healthy hunters and stockmen and so on, rowdy-dowdy cowpunchers and negro-whackers, can use ten times better than —— *What's that?*"

"What?" said the war correspondent, and then seeing his companion busy with his field-glass he produced his own: "Where?" said the war correspondent, sweeping the enemy's lines.

"It's nothing" said the young lieutenant, still looking.

"What's nothing?"

The young lieutenant put down his glass and pointed. "I thought I saw something there, behind the stems of those trees. Something black. What it was I don't know."

The war correspondent tried to get even by intense scrutiny.

"It wasn't anything" said the young lieutenant, rolling over to regard the darkling evening sky, and generalized: "There never will be anything any more for ever. Unless — —"

The war correspondent looked inquiry.

“They may get their stomachs wrong, or something — -living without proper drains.”

A sound of bugles came from the tents behind. The war correspondent slid backward down the sand and stood up. “Boom!” came from somewhere far away to the left. “Halloa!” he said, hesitated, and crawled back to peer again. “Firing at this time is jolly bad manners.”

The young lieutenant was incommunicative again for a space.

Then he pointed to the distant clump of trees again. “One of our big guns. They were firing at that.” he said.

“The thing that wasn’t anything?”

“Something over there, anyhow.”

Both men were silent, peering through their glasses for a space. “Just when it’s twilight,” the lieutenant complained. He stood up.

“I might stay here a bit,” said the war correspondent.

The lieutenant shook his head. “There is nothing to see,” he apologized, and then went down to where his little squad of sun-brown, loose-limbed men had been yarning in the trench. The war correspondent stood up also, glanced for a moment at the business-like bustle below him, gave perhaps twenty seconds to those enigmatical trees again, then turned his face toward the camp.

He found himself wondering whether his editor would consider the story of how somebody thought he saw something black behind a clump of trees, and how a gun was fired at this illusion by somebody else, too trivial for public consultation.

“It’s the only gleam of a shadow of interest,” said the war correspondent, “for ten whole days.”

“No,” he said, presently; “I’ll write that other article, ‘Is War Played Out?’”

He surveyed the darkling lines in perspective, the tangle of trenches one behind another, one commanding another, which the defender had made ready. The shadows and mists swallowed up their receding contours, and here and there a lantern gleamed, and here and there knots of men were busy about small fires.

“No troops on earth could do it,” he said....

He was depressed. He believed that there were other things in life better worth having than proficiency in war; he believed that in the

heart of civilization, for all its stresses, its crushing concentrations of forces, its injustice and suffering, there lay something that might be the hope of the world, and the idea that any people by living in the open air, hunting perpetually, losing touch with books and art and all the things that intensify life, might hope to resist and break that great development to the end of time, jarred on his civilized soul.

Apt to his thought came a file of defender soldiers and passed him in the gleam of a swinging lamp that marked the way.

He glanced at their red-lit faces, and one shone out for a moment, a common type of face in the defender's ranks: ill-shaped nose, sensuous lips, bright clear eyes full of alert cunning, slouch hat cocked on one side and adorned with the peacock's plume of the rustic Don Juan turned soldier, a hard brown skin, a sinewy frame, an open, tireless stride, and a master's grip on the rifle.

The war correspondent returned their salutations and went on his way.

"Louts," he whispered. "Cunning, elementary louts. And they are going to beat the townsmen at the game of war!"

From the red glow among the nearer tents came first one and then half-a-dozen hearty voices, bawling in a drawling unison the words of a particularly slab and sentimental patriotic song.

"Oh, *go* it!" muttered the war correspondent, bitterly.

II.

It was opposite the trenches called after Hackbone's Hut that the battle began. There the ground stretched broad and level between the lines, with scarcely shelter for a lizard, and it seemed to the startled, just awakened men who came crowding into the trenches that this was one more proof of that green inexperience of the enemy of which they had heard so much. The war correspondent would not believe his ears at first, and swore that he and the war artist, who, still imperfectly roused, was trying to put on his boots by the light of a match held in his hand, were the victims of a common illusion. Then, after putting his head in a bucket of cold water, his intelligence came back as he towelled. He listened. "Gollys!" he said; "that's something more than scare firing this time. It's like ten thousand carts on a bridge of tin."

There came a sort of enrichment to that steady uproar. "Machine-guns!"

Then, "Guns!"

The artist, with one boot on, thought to look at his watch, and went to it hopping.

"Half an hour from dawn," he said. "You were right about their attacking, after all...."

The war correspondent came out of the tent, verifying the presence of chocolate in his pocket as he did so. He had to halt for a moment or so until his eyes were toned down to the night a little. "Pitch!" he said. He stood for a space to season his eyes before he felt justified in striking out for a black gap among the adjacent tents. The artist coming out behind him fell over a tent-rope. It was half-past two o'clock in the morning of the darkest night in time, and against a sky of dull black silk the enemy was talking searchlights, a wild jabber of searchlights. "He's trying to blind our riflemen," said the war correspondent with a flash, and waited for the artist and then set off with a sort of discreet haste again. "Whoa!" he said, presently. "Ditches!"

They stopped.

"It's the confounded searchlights," said the war correspondent.

They saw lanterns going to and fro, near by, and men falling in to march down to the trenches. They were for following them, and then the artist began to feel his night eyes. “If we scramble this,” he said, “and it’s only a drain, there’s a clear run up to the ridge.” And that way they took. Lights came and went in the tents behind, as the men turned out, and ever and again they came to broken ground and staggered and stumbled. But in a little while they drew near the crest. Something that sounded like the impact of a very important railway accident happened in the air above them, and the shrapnel bullets seethed about them like a sudden handful of hail. “Right-ho!” said the war correspondent, and soon they judged they had come to the crest and stood in the midst of a world of great darkness and frantic glares, whose principal fact was sound.

Right and left of them and all about them was the uproar, an army-full of magazine fire, at first chaotic and monstrous and then, eked out by little flashes and gleams and suggestions, taking the beginnings of a shape. It looked to the war correspondent as though the enemy must have attacked in line and with his whole force — in which case he was either being or was already annihilated.

“Dawn and the dead,” he said, with his instinct for headlines. He said this to himself, but afterwards, by means of shouting, he conveyed an idea to the artist.

“They must have meant it for a surprise,” he said.

It was remarkable how the firing kept on. After a time he began to perceive a sort of rhythm in this inferno of noise. It would decline — decline perceptibly, droop towards something that was comparatively a pause — a pause of inquiry. “Aren’t you all dead yet?” this pause seemed to say. The flickering fringe of rifle-flashes would become attenuated and broken, and the whack-bang of the enemy’s big guns two miles away there would come up out of the deeps. Then suddenly, east or west of them, something would startle the rifles to a frantic outbreak again.

The war correspondent taxed his brain for some theory of conflict that would account for this, and was suddenly aware that the artist and he were vividly Illuminated. He could see the ridge on which they stood and before them in black outline a file of riflemen hurrying down towards the nearer trenches. It became visible that a

light rain was falling, and farther away towards the enemy was a clear space with men— “our men?” — running across it in disorder. He saw one of those men throw up his hands and drop. And something else black and shining loomed up on the edge of the beam-coruscating flashes; and behind it and far away a calm, white eye regarded the world. “Whit, whit, whit,” sang something in the air, and then the artist was running for cover, with the war correspondent behind him. Bang came shrapnel, bursting close at hand as it seemed, and our two men were lying flat in a dip in the ground, and the light and everything had gone again, leaving a vast note of interrogation upon the night.

The war correspondent came within bawling range. “What the deuce was it? Shooting our men down!”

“Black,” said the artist, “and like a fort. Not two hundred yards from the first trench.”

He sought for comparisons in his mind. “Something between a big blockhouse and a giant’s dish-cover,” he said.

“And they were running!” said the war correspondent.

“*You’d* run if a thing like that, searchlight to help it, turned up like a prowling nightmare in the middle of the night.”

They crawled to what they judged the edge of the dip and lay regarding the unfathomable dark. For a space they could distinguish nothing, and then a sudden convergence of the searchlights of both sides brought the strange thing out again.

In that flickering pallor it had the effect of a large and clumsy black insect, an insect the size of an ironclad cruiser, crawling obliquely to the first line of trenches and firing shots out of portholes in its side. And on its carcass the bullets must have been battering with more than the passionate violence of hail on a roof of tin.

Then in the twinkling of an eye the curtain of the dark had fallen again and the monster had vanished, but the crescendo of musketry marked its approach to the trenches.

They were beginning to talk about the thing to each other, when a flying bullet kicked dirt into the artist’s face, and they, decided abruptly to crawl down into the cover of the trenches. They had got down with an unobtrusive persistence into the second line, before the dawn had grown clear enough for anything to be seen. They found

themselves in a crowd of expectant riflemen, all noisily arguing about what would happen next. The enemy's contrivance had done execution upon the outlying men, it seemed, but they did not believe it would do any more. "Come the day and we'll capture the lot of them," said a burly soldier.

"Them?" said the war correspondent.

"They say there's a regular string of 'em, crawling along the front of our lines.... Who cares?"

The darkness filtered away so imperceptibly that at no moment could one declare decisively that one could see. The searchlights ceased to sweep hither and thither. The enemy's monsters were dubious patches of darkness upon the dark, and then no longer dubious, and so they crept out into distinctness. The war correspondent, munching chocolate absent-mindedly, beheld at last a spacious picture of battle under the cheerless sky, whose central focus was an array of fourteen or fifteen huge clumsy shapes lying in perspective on the very edge of the first line of trenches, at intervals of perhaps three hundred yards, and evidently firing down upon the crowded riflemen. They were so close in that the defender's guns had ceased, and only the first line of trenches was in action.

The second line commanded the first, and as the light grew the war correspondent could make out the riflemen who were fighting these monsters, crouched in knots and crowds behind the transverse banks that crossed the trenches against the eventuality of an enfilade. The trenches close to the big machines were empty save for the crumpled suggestions of dead and wounded men; the defenders had been driven right and left as soon as the prow of this land ironclad had loomed up over the front of the trench. He produced his field-glass, and was immediately a centre of inquiry from the soldiers about him.

They wanted to look, they asked questions, and after he had announced that the men across the traverses seemed unable to advance or retreat, and were crouching under cover rather than fighting, he found it advisable to loan his glasses to a burly and incredulous corporal. He heard a strident voice, and found a lean and sallow soldier at his back talking to the artist.

"There's chaps down there caught," the man was saying. "If they

retreat they got to expose themselves, and the fire's too straight...."

"They aren't firing much, but every shot's a hit."

"Who?"

"The chaps in that thing. The men who're coming up — —"

"Coming up where?"

"We're evacuating them trenches where we can. Our chaps are coming back up the zigzags.... No end of 'em hit.... But when we get clear our turn'll come. Rather! These things won't be able to cross a trench or get into it; and before they can get back our guns'll smash 'em up. Smash 'em right up. See?" A brightness came into his eyes. "Then we'll have a go at the beggar inside," he said....

The war correspondent thought for a moment, trying to realize the idea. Then he set himself to recover his field-glasses from the burly corporal....

The daylight was getting clearer now. The clouds were lifting, and a gleam of lemon-yellow amidst the level masses to the east portended sunrise. He looked again at the land ironclad. As he saw it in the bleak grey dawn, lying obliquely upon the slope and on the very lip of the foremost trench, the suggestion of a stranded vessel was very great indeed. It might have been from eighty to a hundred feet long — it was about two hundred and fifty yards away — its vertical side was ten feet high or so, smooth for that height, and then with a complex patterning under the eaves of its flattish turtle cover. This patterning was a close interlacing of portholes, rifle barrels, and telescope tubes — -sham and real — -indistinguishable one from the other. The thing had come into such a position as to enfilade the trench, which was empty now, so far as he could see, except for two or three crouching knots of men and the tumbled dead. Behind it, across the plain, it had scored the grass with a train of linked impressions, like the dotted tracings sea-things leave in sand. Left and right of that track dead men and wounded men were scattered — men it had picked off as they fled back from their advanced positions in the searchlight glare from the invader's lines. And now it lay with its head projecting a little over the trench it had won, as if it were a single sentient thing planning the next phase of its attack....

He lowered his glasses and took a more comprehensive view of the situation. These creatures of the night had evidently won the first

line of trenches and the fight had come to a pause. In the increasing light he could make out by a stray shot or a chance exposure that the defender's marksmen were lying thick in the second and third line of trenches up towards the low crest of the position, and in such of the zigzags as gave them a chance of a converging fire. The men about him were talking of guns. "We're in the line of the big guns at the crest but they'll soon shift one to pepper them," the lean man said, reassuringly.

"Whup," said the corporal:

"Bang! bang! bang! Whir-r-r-r-r!" It was a sort of nervous jump, and all the rifles were going off by themselves. The war correspondent found himself and the artist, two idle men crouching behind a line of preoccupied backs, of industrious men discharging magazines. The monster had moved. It continued to move regardless of the hail that splashed its skin with bright new specks of lead. It was singing a mechanical little ditty to itself, "Tuf-tuf, tuf-tuf, tuf-tuf," and squirting out little jets of steam behind. It had humped itself up, as a limpet does before it crawls; it had lifted its skirt and displayed along the length of it — *feet*! They were thick, stumpy feet, between knobs and buttons in shape — flat, broad things, reminding one of the feet of elephants or the legs of caterpillars; and then, as the skirt rose higher, the war correspondent, scrutinizing the thing through his glasses again, saw that these feet hung, as it were, on the rims of wheels. His thoughts whirled back to Victoria Street, Westminster, and he saw himself in the piping times of peace, seeking matter for an interview.

"Mr. — Mr. Diplock," he said; "and he called them Pedrails...Fancy meeting them here!"

The marksman beside him raised his head and shoulders in a speculative mood to fire more certainly — It seemed so natural to assume the attention of the monster must be distracted by this trench before it — and was suddenly knocked backwards by a bullet through his neck. His feet flew up, and he vanished out of the margin of the watcher's field of vision. The war correspondent grovelled tighter, but after a glance behind him at a painful little confusion, he resumed his field-glass, for the thing was putting down its feet one after the other, and hoisting itself farther and farther over the trench.

Only a bullet in the head could have stopped him looking just then.

The lean man with the strident voice ceased firing to turn and reiterate his point. “They can’t possibly cross,” he bawled. They — —”

“Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!” — drowned everything.

The lean man continued speaking for a word or so, then gave it up, shook his head to enforce the impossibility of anything crossing a trench like the one below, and resumed business once more.

And all the while that great bulk was crossing. When the war correspondent turned his glass on it again it had bridged the trench, and its queer feet were rasping away at the farther bank, in the attempt to get a hold there. It got its hold. It continued to crawl until the greater bulk of it was over the trench — until it was all over. Then it paused for a moment, adjusted its skirt a little nearer the ground, gave an unnerving “toot, toot,” and came on abruptly at a pace of, perhaps, six miles an hour straight up the gentle slope towards our observer.

The war correspondent raised himself on his elbow and looked a natural inquiry at the artist.

For a moment the men about him stuck to their position and fired furiously. Then the lean man in a mood of precipitancy slid backwards, and the war correspondent said “Come along” to the artist, and led the movement along the trench.

As they dropped down, the vision of a hillside of trench being rushed by a dozen vast cockroaches disappeared for a space, and instead was one of a narrow passage, crowded with men, for the most part receding, though one or two turned or halted. He never turned back to see the nose of the monster creep over the brow of the trench; he never even troubled to keep in touch with the artist. He heard the “whit” of bullets about him soon enough, and saw a man before him stumble and drop, and then he was one of a furious crowd fighting to get into a transverse zigzag ditch that enabled the defenders to get under cover up and down the hill. It was like a theatre panic. He gathered from signs and fragmentary words that on ahead another of these monsters had also won to the second trench.

He lost his interest in the general course of the battle for a space altogether; he became simply a modest egotist, in a mood of hasty

circumspection, seeking the farthest rear, amidst a dispersed multitude of disconcerted riflemen similarly employed. He scrambled down through trenches, he took his courage in both hands and sprinted across the open, he had moments of panic when it seemed madness not to be quadrupedal, and moments of shame when he stood up and faced about to see how the fight was going. And he was one of many thousand very similar men that morning. On the ridge he halted in a knot of scrub, and was for a few minutes almost minded to stop and see things out.

The day was now fully come. The grey sky had changed to blue, and of all the cloudy masses of the dawn there remained only a few patches of dissolving fleeciness. The world below was bright and singularly clear. The ridge was not, perhaps, more than a hundred feet or so above the general plain, but in this flat region it sufficed to give the effect of extensive view. Away on the north side of the ridge, little and far, were the camps, the ordered wagons, all the gear of a big army; with officers galloping about and men doing aimless things. Here and there men were falling in, however and the cavalry was forming up on the plain beyond the tents. The bulk of men who had been in the trenches were still on the move to the rear, scattered like sheep without a shepherd over the farther slopes. Here and there were little rallies and attempts to wait and do — something vague; but the general drift was away from any concentration. There on the southern side was the elaborate lacework of trenches and defences, across which these iron turtles, fourteen of them spread out over a line of perhaps three miles, were now advancing as fast as a man could trot, and methodically shooting down and breaking up any persistent knots of resistance. Here and there stood little clumps of men, outflanked and unable to get away, showing the white flag, and the invader's cyclist-infantry was advancing now across the open, in open order but unmolested, to complete the work of the machines. Surveyed at large, the defenders already looked a beaten army. A mechanism that was effectually ironclad against bullets, that could at a pinch cross a thirty-foot trench, and that seemed able to shoot out rifle-bullets with unerring precision, was clearly an inevitable victor against anything but rivers, precipices, and guns.

He looked at his watch. "Half-past four! Lord! What things can

happen in two hours. Here's the whole blessed army being walked over, and at half-past two ——

"And even now our blessed louts haven't done a thing with their guns!"

He scanned the ridge right and left of him with his glasses. He turned again to the nearest land ironclad, advancing now obliquely to him and not three hundred yards away, and then scrambled the ground over which he must retreat if he was not to be captured.

"They'll do nothing," he said, and glanced again at the enemy.

And then from far away to the left came the thud of a gun, followed very rapidly by a rolling gunfire.

He hesitated and decided to stay.

III.

The defender had relied chiefly upon his rifles in the event of an assault. His guns he kept concealed at various points upon and behind the ridge ready to bring them into action against any artillery preparations for an attack on the part of his antagonist. The situation had rushed upon him with the dawn, and by the time the gunners had their guns ready for motion, the land ironclads were already in among the foremost trenches. There is a natural reluctance to fire into one's own broken men, and many of the guns, being Intended simply to fight an advance of the enemy's artillery, were not in positions to hit anything in the second line of trenches. After that the advance of the land ironclads was swift. The defender-general found himself suddenly called upon to invent a new sort of warfare, in which guns were to fight alone amidst broken and retreating infantry. He had scarcely thirty minutes in which to think it out. He did not respond to the call, and what happened that morning was that the advance of the land ironclads forced the fight, and each gun and battery made what play its circumstances dictated. For the most part it was poor play.

Some of the guns got in two or three shots, some one or two, and the percentage of misses was unusually high. The howitzers, of course, did nothing. The land ironclads in each case followed much the same tactics. As soon as a gun came into play the monster turned itself almost end on, so as to minimize the chances of a square hit, and made not for the gun, but for the nearest point on its flank from which the gunners could be shot down. Few of the hits scored were very effectual; only one of the things was disabled, and that was the one that fought the three batteries attached to the brigade on the left wing. Three that were hit when close upon the guns were clean shot through without being put out of action. Our war correspondent did not see that one momentary arrest of the tide of victory on the left; he saw only the very ineffectual fight of half-battery 96B close at hand upon his right. This he watched some time beyond the margin of safety.

Just after he heard the three batteries opening up upon his left he became aware of the thud of horses' hoofs from the sheltered side of

the slope, and presently saw first one and then two other guns galloping into position along the north side of the ridge, well out of sight of the great bulk that was now creeping obliquely towards the crest and cutting up the lingering infantry beside it and below, as it came.

The half-battery swung round into line — each gun describing its curve — halted, unlimbered, and prepared for action....

"Bang!"

The land ironclad had become visible over the brow of the hill, and just visible as a long black back to the gunners. It halted, as though it hesitated.

The two remaining guns fired, and then their big antagonist had swung round and was in full view, end on, against the sky, coming at a rush.

The gunners became frantic in their haste to fire again. They were so near the war correspondent could see the expressions on their excited faces through his field-glass. As he looked he saw a man drop, and realized for the first time that the ironclad was shooting.

For a moment the big black monster crawled with an accelerated pace towards the furiously active gunners. Then, as if moved by a generous impulse, it turned its full broadside to their attack, and scarcely forty yards away from them. The war correspondent turned his field-glass back to the gunners and perceived it was now shooting down the men about the guns with the most deadly rapidity.

Just for a moment it seemed splendid and then it seemed horrible. The gunners were dropping in heaps about their guns. To lay a hand on a gun was death. "Bang!" went the gun on the left, a hopeless miss, and that was the only second shot the half-battery fired. In another moment half-a-dozen surviving artillerymen were holding up their hands amidst a scattered muddle of dead and wounded men, and the fight was done.

The war correspondent hesitated between stopping in his scrub and waiting for an opportunity to surrender decently, or taking to an adjacent gully he had discovered. If he surrendered it was certain he would get no copy off; while, if he escaped, there were all sorts of chances. He decided to follow the gully, and take the first offer in the confusion beyond the camp of picking up a horse.

IV.

Subsequent authorities have found fault with the first land ironclads in many particulars, but assuredly they served their purpose on the day of their appearance. They were essentially long, narrow, and very strong steel frameworks carrying the engines, and borne upon eight pairs of big pedrail wheels, each about ten feet in diameter, each a driving wheel and set upon long axles free to swivel round a common axis. This arrangement gave them the maximum of adaptability to the contours of the ground. They crawled level along the ground with one foot high upon a hillock and another deep in a depression, and they could hold themselves erect and steady sideways upon even a steep hillside. The engineers directed the engines under the command of the captain, who had look-out points at small ports all round the upper edge of the adjustable skirt of twelve-inch iron-plating which protected the whole affair, and could also raise or depress a conning-tower set about the portholes through the center of the iron top cover. The riflemen each occupied a small cabin of peculiar construction and these cabins were slung along the sides of and before and behind the great main framework, in a manner suggestive of the slinging of the seats of an Irish jaunting-car. Their rifles, however, were very different pieces of apparatus from the simple mechanisms in the hands of their adversaries.

These were in the first place automatic, ejected their cartridges and loaded again from a magazine each time they fired, until the ammunition store was at an end, and they had the most remarkable sights imaginable, sights which threw a bright little camera-obscura picture into the light-tight box in which the rifleman sat below. This camera-obscura picture was marked with two crossed lines, and whatever was covered by the intersection of these two lines, that the rifle hit. The sighting was ingeniously contrived. The rifleman stood at the table with a thing like an elaborately of a draughtsman's dividers in his hand, and he opened and closed these dividers, so that they were always at the apparent height — if it was an ordinary-sized man — of the man he wanted to kill. A little twisted strand of wire like an electric-light wire ran from this implement up to the gun, and

as the dividers opened and shut the sights went up and down. Changes in the clearness of the atmosphere, due to changes of moisture, were met by an ingenious use of that meteorologically sensitive substance, catgut, and when the land ironclad moved forward the sites got a compensatory deflection in the direction of its motion. The riflemen stood up in his pitch-dark chamber and watched the little picture before him. One hand held the dividers for judging distance, and the other grasped a big knob like a door-handle. As he pushed this knob about the rifle above swung to correspond, and the picture passed to and fro like an agitated panorama. When he saw a man he wanted to shoot he brought him up to the cross-lines, and then pressed a finger upon a little push like an electric bell-push, conveniently placed in the center of the knob. Then the man was shot. If by any chance the rifleman missed his target he moved the knob a trifle, or readjusted his dividers, pressed the push, and got him the second time.

This rifle and its sights protruded from a porthole, exactly like a great number of other portholes that ran in a triple row under the eaves of the cover of the land ironclad. Each porthole displayed a rifle and sight in dummy, so that the real ones could only be hit by a chance shot, and if one was, then the young man below said "Pshaw!" turned on an electric light, lowered the injured instrument into his camera, replaced the injured part, or put up a new rifle if the injury was considerable.

You must conceive these cabins as hung clear above the swing of the axles, and inside the big wheels upon which the great elephant-like feet were hung, and behind these cabins along the center of the monster ran a central gallery into which they opened, and along which worked the big compact engines. It was like a long passage into which this throbbing machinery had been packed, and the captain stood about the middle, close to the ladder that led to his conning-tower, and directed the silent, alert engineers — for the most part by signs. The throb and noise of the engines mingled with the reports of the rifles and the intermittent clangour of the bullet hail upon the armour. Ever and again he would touch the wheel that raised his conning tower, step up his ladder until his engineers could see nothing of him above the waist, and then come down again with

orders. Two small electric lights were all the illumination of this space — they were placed to make him most clearly visible to his subordinates; the air was thick with the smell of oil and petrol, and had the war correspondent been suddenly transferred from the spacious dawn outside to the bowels of the apparatus he would have thought himself fallen into another world.

The captain, of course, saw both sides of the battle. When he raised his head into his conning-tower there were the dewy sunrise, the amazed and disordered trenches, the flying and falling soldiers, the depressed-looking groups of prisoners, the beaten guns; when he bent down again to signal "half speed", "quarter speed", "half circle round towards the right," or what not, he was in the oil-smelling twilight of the ill-lit engine room. Close beside him on either side was the mouthpiece of a speaking-tube, and ever and again he would direct one side or other of his strange craft to "Concentrate fire forward on gunners," or to "clear out trench about a hundred yards on our right front."

He was a young man, healthy enough but by no means sun-tanned, and of a type of feature and expression that prevails in His Majesty's Navy: alert, intelligent, quiet. He and his engineers and his riflemen all went about their work, calm and reasonable men. They had none of that flapping strenuousness of the half-wit in a hurry, that excessive strain upon the blood-vessels, that hysteria of effort which is so frequently regarded as the proper state of mind for heroic deeds.

For the enemy these young engineers were defeating they felt a certain qualified pity and a quite unqualified contempt. They regarded these big, healthy men they were shooting down precisely as these same big, healthy men might regard some inferior kind of native. They despised them for making war; despised their bawling patriotisms and their emotionality profoundly; despised them, above all, for the petty cunning and the almost brutish want of imagination their method of fighting displayed. "If they *must* make war," these young men thought, "why in thunder don't they do it like sensible men?" They resented the assumption that their own side was too stupid to do anything more than play their enemy's game, that they were going to play this costly folly according to the rules of

unimaginative men. They resented being forced to the trouble of making man-killing machinery; resented the alternative of having to massacre these people or endure their truculent yappings; resented the whole unfathomable imbecility of war.

Meanwhile, with something of the mechanical precision of a good clerk posting a ledger, the riflemen moved their knobs and pressed their buttons....

The captain of Land Ironclad Number Three had halted on the crest close to his captured half-battery. His lined-up prisoners stood hard by and waited for the cyclists behind to come for them. He surveyed the victorious morning through his conning-tower.

He read the general's signals. "Five and Four are to keep among the guns to the left and prevent any attempt to recover them. Seven and Eleven and Twelve, stick to the guns you have got; Seven, get into position to command the guns taken by Three. Then, we're to do something else, are we? Six and One, quicken up to about ten miles an hour and walk round behind that camp to the levels near the river — -we shall bag the whole crowd of them," interjected the young man. "Ah, here we are! Two and Three, Eight and Nine, Thirteen and Fourteen, space out to a thousand yards, wait for the word, and then go slowly to cover the advance of the cyclist infantry against any charge of mounted troops. That's all right. But where's Ten? Halloa! Ten to repair and get movable as soon as possible. They've broken up Ten!"

The discipline of the new war machines was business-like rather than pedantic, and the head of the captain came down out of the conning-tower to tell his men. "I say, you chaps there. They've broken up Ten. Not badly, I think; but anyhow, he's stuck."

But that still left thirteen of the monsters in action to finish up the broken army.

The war correspondent stealing down his gully looked back and saw them all lying along the crest and talking fluttering congratulatory flags to one another. Their iron sides were shining golden in the light of the rising sun.

V.

The private adventures of the war correspondent terminated in surrender about one o'clock in the afternoon, and by that time he had stolen a horse, pitched off it, and narrowly escaped being rolled upon; found the brute had broken its leg, and shot it with his revolver. He had spent some hours in the company of a squad of dispirited riflemen, had quarrelled with them about topography at last, and gone off by himself in a direction that should have brought him to the banks of the river and didn't. Moreover, he had eaten all his chocolate and found nothing in the whole world to drink. Also, it had become extremely hot. From behind a broken, but attractive, stone wall he had seen far away in the distance the defender-horsemen trying to charge cyclists in open order, with land ironclads outflanking them on either side. He had discovered that cyclists could retreat over open turf before horsemen with a sufficient margin of speed to allow of frequent dismounts and much terribly effective sharpshooting; and he had a sufficient persuasion that those horsemen, having charged their hearts out, had halted just beyond his range of vision and surrendered. He had been urged to sudden activity by a forward movement of one of those machines that had threatened to enfilade his wall. He had discovered a fearful blister on his heel.

He was now in a scrubby gravelly place, sitting down and meditating on his pocket-handkerchief, which had in some extraordinary way become in the last twenty-four hours extremely ambiguous in hue. "It's the whitest thing I've got," he said.

He had known all along that the enemy was east, west, and south of him, but when he heard war Ironclads Number's One and Six talking in their measured, deadly way not half a mile to the north he decided to make his own little unconditional peace without any further risks. He was for hoisting his white flag to a bush and taking up a position of modest obscurity near it, until someone came along. He became aware of voices, clatter, and the distinctive noises of a body of horse, quite near, and he put his handkerchief in his pocket again and went to see what was going forward.

The sound of firing ceased, and then as he drew near he heard the deep sounds of many simple, coarse, but hearty and noble-hearted soldiers of the old school swearing with vigour.

He emerged from his scrub upon a big level plain, and far away a fringe of trees marked the banks of the river. In the center of the picture was a still intact road bridge, and a big railway bridge a little to the right. Two land ironclads rested, with a general air of being long, harmless sheds, in a pose of anticipatory peacefulness right and left of the picture, completely commanding two miles and more of the river levels. Emerged and halted a few yards from the scrub was the remainder of the defender's cavalry, dusty, a little disordered and obviously annoyed, but still a very fine show of men. In the middle distance three or four men and horses were receiving medical attendance, and nearer a knot of officers regarded the distant novelties in mechanism with profound distaste. Everyone was very distinctly aware of the twelve other ironclads, and of the multitude of townsmen soldiers, on bicycles or afoot, encumbered now by prisoners and captured war-gear but otherwise thoroughly effective, who were sweeping like a great net in their rear.

"Checkmate," said the war correspondent, walking out into the open. "But I surrender in the best of company. Twenty-four hours ago I thought war was impossible — and these beggars have captured the whole blessed army! Well! Well!" He thought of his talk with the young lieutenant. "If there's no end to the surprises of science, the civilized people have it, of course. As long as their science keeps going they will necessarily be ahead of open-country men. Still...." He wondered for a space what might have happened to the young lieutenant.

The war correspondent was one of those inconsistent people who always want the beaten side to win. When he saw all these burly, sun-tanned horsemen, disarmed and dismounted and lined up; when he saw their horses unskillfully led away by the singularly not equestrian cyclists to whom they had surrendered; when he saw these truncated Paladins watching this scandalous sight, he forgot altogether that he had called these men "cunning louts" and wished them beaten not four-and-twenty hours ago. A month ago he had seen that regiment in its pride going forth to war, and had been told

of its terrible prowess, how it could charge in open order with each man firing from his saddle, and sweep before it anything else that ever came out to battle in any sort of order, foot or horse. And it had had to fight a few score of young men in atrociously unfair machines!

"Manhood *versus* Machinery" occurred to him as a suitable headline. Journalism curdles all one's mind to phrases.

He strolled as near the lined-up prisoners as the sentinels seemed disposed to permit and surveyed them and compared their sturdy proportions with those of their lightly built captors.

"Smart degenerates," he muttered. "Anæmic cockneydom"

The surrendered officers came quite close to him presently, and he could hear the colonel's high-pitched tenor. The poor gentleman had spent three years of arduous toil upon the best material in the world perfecting that shooting from the saddle charge, and he was mourning with phrases of blasphemy, natural under the circumstances what one could be expected to do against this suitably consigned ironmongery.

"Guns," said some one.

"Big guns they can walk round. You can't shift big guns to keep pace with them and little guns in the open they rush. I saw 'em rushed. You might do a surprise now and then — assassinate the brutes, perhaps — —"

"You might make things like 'em."

"What? *More* ironmongery? Us?...."

"I'll call my article," meditated the war correspondent, "'Mankind *versus* Ironmongery,' and quote the old boy at the beginning."

And he was much too good a journalist to spoil his contrast by remarking that the half-dozen comparatively slender young men in blue pajamas who were standing about their victorious land ironclad, drinking coffee and eating biscuits, had also in their eyes and carriage something not altogether degraded below the level of a man.

THE END

THE PEARL OF LOVE

The pearl is lovelier than the most brilliant of crystalline stones, the moralist declares, because it is made through the suffering of a living creature. About that I can say nothing because I feel none of the fascination of pearls. Their cloudy lustre moves me not at all. Nor can I decide for myself upon that age-long dispute whether the Pearl of Love is the cruellest of stories or only a gracious fable of the immortality of beauty.

Both the story and the controversy will be familiar to students of mediaeval Persian prose. The story is a short one, though the commentary upon it is a respectable part of the literature of that period. They have treated it as a poetic invention and they have treated it as an allegory meaning this, that, or the other thing. Theologians have had their copious way with it, dealing with it particularly as concerning the restoration of the body after death, and it has been greatly used as a parable by those who write about aesthetics. And many have held it to be the statement of a fact, simply and baldly true.

The story is laid in North India, which is the most fruitful soil for sublime love stories of all the lands in the world. It was in a country of sunshine and lakes and rich forests and hills and fertile valleys; and far away the great mountains hung in the sky, peaks, crests, ridges of inaccessible and eternal snow. There was a young prince, lord of all the land; and he found a maiden of indescribable beauty and delightfulness and he made her his queen and laid his heart at her feet. Love was theirs, full of joys and sweetness, full of hope, exquisite, brave and marvellous love, beyond anything you have ever dreamt of love. It was theirs for a year and part of a year, and then suddenly, because of some venomous sting that came to her in a thicket, she died.

She died and for a while the prince was utterly prostrated. He was silent and motionless with grief. They feared he might kill himself, and he had neither sons nor brothers to succeed him. For two days and nights he lay upon his face, fasting, across the foot of the couch which bore her calm and lovely body. Then he arose and ate, and

went about very quietly like one who has taken a great resolution. He caused her body to be put in a coffin of lead mixed with silver, and for that he had an outer coffin made of the most precious and scented woods wrought with gold, and about that there was to be a sarcophagus of alabaster, inlaid with precious stones. And while these things were being done he spent his time for the most part by the pools and in the garden-houses and pavilions and groves and in those chambers in the palace where they two had been most together, brooding upon her loveliness. He did not rend his garments nor defile himself with ashes and sackcloth as the custom was, for his love was too great for such extravagances. At last he came forth again among his councillors and before the people, and told them what he had a mind to do.

He said he could never more touch woman, he could never more think of them, and so he would find a seemly youth to adopt for his heir and train him to his task, and that he would do his princely duties as became him; but that for the rest of it, he would give himself with all his power and all his strength and all his wealth, all that he could command, to make a monument worthy of his incomparable, dear, lost mistress. A building it should be of perfect grace and beauty, more marvellous than any other building had ever been or could ever be, so that to the end of time it should be a wonder, and men would treasure it and speak of it and desire to see it and come from all lands of the earth to visit and recall the name and memory of his queen. And this building he said was to be called the Pearl of Love.

And this his councillors and people permitted him to do, and so he did.

Year followed year, and all the years he devoted himself to building and adorning the Pearl of Love. A great foundation was hewn out of the living rock in a place whence one seemed to be looking at the snowy wilderness of the great mountains across the valley of the world. Villages and hills there were, a winding river, and very far away three great cities. Here they put the sarcophagus of alabaster beneath a pavilion of cunning workmanship; and about it there were set pillars of strange and lovely stone and wrought and fretted walls, and a great casket of masonry bearing a dome and

pinnacles and cupolas, as exquisite as a jewel. At first the design of Pearl of Love was less bold and subtle than it became later. At first it was smaller and more wrought and encrusted; there were many pierced screens and delicate clusters of rosy-hued pillars, and the sarcophagus lay like a child that sleeps among flowers. The first dome was covered with green tiles, framed and held together by silver, but this was taken away again because it seemed close, because it did not soar grandly enough for the broadening imagination of the prince.

For by this time he was no longer the graceful youth who had loved the girl queen. He was now a man, grave and intent, wholly set upon the building of the Pearl of Love. With every year of effort he had learnt new possibilities in arch and wall and buttress; he had acquired greater power over the material he had to use and he had learnt of a hundred stones and hues and effects that he could never have thought of in the beginning. His sense of colour had grown finer and colder; he cared no more for the enamelled gold-lined brightness that had pleased him first, the brightness of an illuminated missal; he sought now for blue colouring like the sky and for the subtle hues of great distances, for recondite shadows and sudden broads floods of purple opalescence and for grandeur and space. He wearied altogether of carvings and pictures and inlaid ornamentation and all the little careful work of men. “Those were pretty things,” he said of his earlier decorations; and had them put aside into subordinate buildings where they would not hamper his main design. Greater and greater grew his artistry. With awe and amazement people saw the Pearl of Love sweeping up from its first beginnings to a superhuman breadth and height and magnificence. They did not know clearly what they had expected, but never had they expected so sublime a thing as this. “Wonderful are the miracles,” they whispered, “that love can do,” and all the women in the world, whatever other loves they had, loved the prince for the splendour of his devotion.

Through the middle of the building ran a great aisle, a vista, that the prince came to care for more and more. From the inner entrance of the building he looked along the length of an immense pillared gallery and across the central area from which the rose-hued columns had long since vanished, over the top the pavilion under which lay

the sarcophagus, through a marvellously designed opening, to the snowy wilderness of the great mountain, the lord of all mountains, two hundred miles away. The pillars and arches and buttresses and galleries soared and floated on either side, perfect yet unobtrusive, like great archangels waiting in the shadows about the presence of God. When men saw that austere beauty for the first time they were exalted, and then they shivered and their hearts bowed down. Very often would the prince come to stand there and look at that vista, deeply moved and not yet fully satisfied. The Pearl of Love had still something for him to do, he felt, before his task was done. Always he would order some little alteration to be made or some recent alteration to be put back again. And one day he said that the sarcophagus would be clearer and simpler without the pavilion; and after regarding it very steadfastly for a long time, he had the pavilion dismantled and removed.

The next day he came and said nothing, and the next day and the next. Then for two days he stayed away altogether. Then he returned, bringing with him an architect and two master craftsmen and a small retinue.

All looked, standing together silently in a little group, amidst the serene vastness of their achievement. No trace of toil remained in its perfection. It was as if God of nature's beauty had taken over their offspring to himself.

Only one thing there was to mar the absolute harmony. There was a certain disproportion about the sarcophagus. It had never been enlarged, and indeed how could it have been enlarged since the early days? It challenged the eye; it nicked the streaming lines. In that sarcophagus was the casket of lead and silver, and in the casket of lead and silver was the queen, the dear immortal cause of all this beauty. But now that sarcophagus seemed no more than a little dark oblong that lay incongruously in the great vista of the Pearl of Love. It was as if someone had dropped a small valise upon the crystal sea of heaven.

Long the prince mused, but no one knew the thoughts that passed through his mind.

At last he spoke. He pointed.

"Take that thing away," he said.

A TALK WITH GRYLLOTALPA

I once saw a picture for that part of the book, "Pilgrim's Progress," wherein we learn about Christian going through that dark valley where he met Apollyon; and the way in which the painter had drawn this picture fell in and fitted so nicely with sundry things I had been thinking a great deal about, that I could not forbear writing something thereon. The worthy man who had done this drawing had so studied and laboured in doing the sky that it was the most terrible sky, I think, I have ever seen in a picture, for, in some parts were inky clouds, and in some the lightning glared, and in parts stars were falling, and one part was so cunningly painted with vermilion and yellow that it seemed as if hell must be yawning below it. And the lower part of the picture, moreover, was made exceedingly cold-looking and desolate. And, after much looking, I found that this painter had not forgotten either Christian or the devil, but had put in two of the littlest figures conceivable near the middle of the picture to represent them.

Now, as I was thinking about this picture, who should come in to see me but my friend, Gryllotalpa, who straightway fell into quite a frensy of admiration at this device of it.

Now, Gryllotalpa is one very deep in the new learning, and he fell to at once talking about, what he called, the "infinitesimal littleness of men," and said many fine things about the cerulean depths of infinite space and the starry heavens, and the onward progress of the race as revealed to us by evolution, some of which matters I fancied he had talked about before to me. Then I said to Gryllotalpa, "Gryllotalpa, it is like taking walnuts with cold meat to hear you discourse on that picture, which heretofore had little taste for me. Do you really feel akin to the Christian in that vastness?"

Says Gryllotalpa, "I think, my dear old friend, that that picture, which, to you, unlearned in the vast mysteries of physical science, is so insipid, is a far grander picture of a state of man than any I have seen for some time. The old devices of a big man and a devil a little bigger are quite wrong in every way. Man is less than an iota in the infinite universe. He is a Link in an Infinite Chain of Causation and a

Factor in a Limitless Sum." Then, said I, interrupting him, "To whom is he thus?" Says Gryllotalpa, in tone of remonstrating surprise, "To me."

"It seems," said I, "that you must have a very extensive mind; for, as for me, I can conceive only of man as altogether the biggest thing in my world." "Ah," cried he, "I see you know nothing of descriptive astronomy or speculative chemistry, nor have you studied the doctrine of the degradation of energy nor looked into aetiology, which is the dropping of plumb-lines into the past just to see how very bottomless it is; neither have you heard what is known in human physiology on the psychological side."

"True it is, Gryllotalpa," said I, "that I have not even dabbled in any of those things, but thou that hast drunk deep of the draught of knowledge will, perhaps, tell me one thing I am curious to know? By what do you, men of the new learning, measure things, that you say, as you do, that a planetary system is a greater thing than a man?" He answered "That 'twas by 'sun's distances,' and miles, and feet, and inches," and seemed somewhat scornful with me. "Then," said I, "despise me not, O Gryllotalpa, but it seems to me that there is somewhat of a general perspective effect which you men of the new learning in your course of taking to pieces and examining all the parts of the universe, now and then lose sight of. A sun may be a big thing millions of miles away, but, surely, here it is not so big as the eye that sees it. Your duty to aid in the developing of humanity is a vast thing, doubtless, but nearer, and every day before you, is your duty to serve your neighbour."

I will not tell what Gryllotalpa said, because I ever love to have the last word. And, in truth, I hardly fancy I could tell, for it was strange sayings, concerning "truth in the absolute" and the like (to me) incomprehensible things.

A TALE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

For Advanced Thinkers

Chapter I

Years had passed...

The Inventor had died in a garret. Too proud to receive parish relief, he had eaten every article of clothing he possessed, scraped off and assimilated every scrap of the plaster on the walls of his wretched apartment, gnawed his finger-nails down the quick, and — died.

His body was found a mere mass of bones, a result of the disproportionate amount of lime in his too restricted dietary.

But though the Inventor was dead, the Thought was not.

That commercial enterprise to which this nation owes its greatness, its position in the vanguard of the armies of progress, had taken the thing up. The pawnbroker, to whom the Inventor had pledged his patent rights for thirteen shillings and sixpence, this pawnbroker, Isaac Meluish, type of sustaining capital, organised a Youarenowgoingtobe- toldwhatsodontgoagettingimpatient Company Limited, and made it a practical thing.

The idea was this:

A locomotive of a new type. The wheels rotated by electricity, generated by a dynamo-electric machine, worked by the rotation of the wheels. It will be obvious, that all that is required in such a machine is an initial velocity, to ensure an exceedingly efficient and durable motive force. This initial velocity was furnished by the agency of compressed air.

This idea Isaac Meluish developed: he took the underground railway, the idea, numerous influential persons, and a prospectus, and mixed them up judiciously, so that the influential persons became identified with the prospectus. Scrip was then issued, and the whole conception crystallised out as a definite tangible thing.

The ‘Metropolitan and District’ was to undergo a second birth from the Meluish brain. No longer were AS20, and S02 to undermine

the health of London. Ozone was to abound exceedingly. Invalids were no longer to repair to and at the seaside: they could train on the Underground.

The tunnels were to be illuminated and decorated.

Moreover, the shares of the companies connected with the enterprise were to go up to infinity and stay there - like Elijah.

August persons took shares, and in part paid for them.

It was resolved to make the adoption of the new idea a Britannic festival. A representative cargo of passengers was to travel in the first train round the Inner Circle. The sole lessee and actor of the Lyceum Theatre was to perform all at once every one of the parts he had ever previously taken, admission gratis. There was to be a banquet to the British great ones at the Crystal Palace, and an unsectarian national thanksgiving at the Albert Hall.

19 July 1999, approached.

All was lissomness of heart.

It was 19 July 1999. The name of the Crystal Palace was brilliantly lit and gorgeously adorned. All the able, all the eloquent, all the successful, all the prosperous, were banqueting below. In the galleries, clustered unnumbered mediocrity: innumerable half-guineas had been paid to secure the privilege of watching those great men eat. There were 19 Bishops in evening dress, 4 Princes and their interpreters, 12 Dukes, A Strong-Minded Female, the PRA, 14 popular professors, I learned ditto, 70 Deans (assorted), the President of the Materialistic Religious Society, a popular low comedian, 1,604 eminent wholesale and retail drapers, hatters, grocers, and tea dealers, a reformed working man MP, and honorary directors of well nigh the universe, 203 stockbrokers, 1 Earl (in a prominent place), who had once said a remarkably smart thing, 9 purely Piccadilly Earls, 13 sporting Earls, 17 trading ditto, 113 bankers, a forger, 1 doctor, 12 theatrical managers, Bludsole the mammoth novelist, 1 electrician (from Paris), a multitude no man could number of electrical company directors, their sons and their sons' sons, their cousins, their nephews, their uncles, their parents, and their friends, the leading legal stars, 2 advertisement contractors, 41 patent medicine manufacturers, 'Lords, Senators, a Spirit Raiser, a Soothsayer, foreign Musicians, Officers, Captains, Guards, &c.'

A great man was speaking.

The people in the galleries could hear — *1 twang,* twang, TWANG, *twang,* twang'. Those around the great man heard 'little know whirrrrr erprise - daring energies of the race – *(great applause)* — wherrererrer ergree with me in this marr that *(ssshf)* - scale inaccessible mountains, nay - M O RE. Bore them through, nullify them - (TREMENDOUS APPLAUSE) - murr rr rrr rrr — *(loud and prolonged cheering)* — burr, burr, burr - (F RANTIC APPLAUSE. *Ssshf)* - daring yet calculating; bold yet rr, burr, burr, burr—'

Thus was the great man speaking apparently, when a telegram was handed to *Sir* Isaac Meluish. He glanced at it, and turning a pale lavender colour, sunk beneath the table.

Let us leave him there.

Chapter 2

This had happened. The representative passengers had assembled. There were an August Person, his keeper, the Premier, two Bishops, several popular actresses, four generals (home department), various exotics, a person apparently connected with the navy, the Education Minister, 124 public service parasites, an idiot, the President of the Board of Trade, a suit of clothes, bankers, another idiot, shopkeepers, forgers, scene painters, still another idiot, directors, &c. (as per previous sample). The representative passengers had entrained. By means of the compressed air, a high velocity had been attained. The scientific manager had smilingly remarked to the august person, 'We will, an' it please you, first run round the Inner Circle and see the decorations.' All had gone as merry as a muffin bell.

Never had the conscientious desire of the august person to take an interest in everything been more conspicuous. He *insisted* — really *insisted* — on the scientifc manager taking him on to the motor, and explaining it in detail.

'All that I have been showing you,' said the scientific manager (a small and voluble mechanism), concluding the display, 'is of English manufacture. You know the great firm of Schulz and Brown of Pekin (they removed there in 1920 in order to obtain cheap labour) - and it

is consequently sound and strong in every particular. I must now explain the stopping action. I may mention here that the original inventor designed an engine carrying a considerable store of compressed air. /have improved on this. The rotary action not only works

the dynamo, but also compresses air for the next start. Actually there is *no* force put into this thing from without, from this moment until it breaks, it costs us *nothing* in working. Talking of breaks, I must now show you them.' And the scientific manager, smiling with the approving consciousness of a joke, looked round him. Apparently he did not see what he wanted, his searching eye became more eager. He flushed somewhat. 'Baddelay,' said he, 'how are the brakes worked?'

'I *dun'* no,' said Baddelay; 'these here 'andils, wot I took for brakes broke orf, bein' touched; bein', apparently, plaster o Paris deckera- shuns.'

Thereupon the hues of the scientific manager's face hurried through the spectrum at a tremendous rate, from strontium red to thallium green. And he said to the august personage, 'The brakes are broke'; and he added, his voice assuming the while, that low, clear tone only heard from men struggling against overwhelming emotion, 'Look at that manometer.'

'I think,' said the august person, 'I won't see anything else, thank you; I would prefer not. I should like to get out now if you can manage it. The high velocity is unpleasant.'

'Sire,' said the scientific manager, 'we *can not* stop. And, moreover, that manometer warns me that before us is a choice of two things: to double our speed or to be blown to fragments by the ever-increasing tension of the compressed air.'

'In this sudden and unexpected emergency,' said the great one, with a vague recollection of Parliamentary first nights, 'it is perhaps advisable to increase the speed as suddenly as possible.'

The Crystal Palace meeting broke up in confusion, and the banquet became a battle for hats. Boanerges at the Albert Hall, uttering unsect- arian platitudes on the heaven-sent prosperity of this land, received a telegram and preached thereafter on the text, 'Vanitas vanitatum'. The dismay slowly spreading from these foci,

flashed over the entire land with the evening papers.

Chapter 3

What was to be done?

What *could* be done?

The matter might have been raised in the Senate, had not the unexpected absence of the Speaker (he was in the train) prevented the meeting of the governing body. A popular meeting in Trafalgar Square to consider the matter was automatically suppressed by a new method.

Meanwhile the fated train whirled round the circle with ever-increasing velocity. Early on the 20th the end came.

Between Victoria and Sloane Square the train left the lines, dashing violently through the walls of the track and throttling itself among a subterranean network of waterpipes, gaspipes, and drains. There was an awful pause, broken only by the falling in of the houses on either side of the scene of the catastrophe. Then a terrific explosion rent the air.

Most of the passengers were utterly destroyed. The august person, however, came down all right in Germany. The commercial speculators descended in foreign regions in the form of blight.

HOW GABRIEL BECAME THOMPSON

After the pact matrimonial there are nine possible events. All post-matrimonial stories belong to one or other of these nine classes indicated by these possibilities; the characters, the accessories, may vary indefinitely, but the tale is always to be classified under one of these heads. For each party to the marriage says one of these three things. First: 'It is not as I expected, but it will do very well' (contentment). Secondly: 'It is not as I expected, but we must manage' (compromise). Or, lastly: 'It is not as I expected, and I will not endure it' (catastrophe). The permutations of these three formulae taken two at a time are nine, forming the diapason of marriage.

Now the best stories, as stories, are to be made by taking number three in its five possible combinations, and solving your situation by the method of murder or elopement. Number one with itself gives only a nauseating spectacle of married people kissing in company; number two, alone or with one, affords no vivid sensations. Stories on these lines are but sunset pieces at the best. The young people go hither and thither buying furniture, receiving and returning cards, and the like, while the clouds of glory they trailed after them from the romantic time fade by imperceptible degrees. At last they look round and remark, or do not remark, that the light is out of the sky, and the world blue and cold. The change, indeed, is sometimes so steady and so gradual that I doubt if some of them ever know the extent of their loss.

But what a splendid time is that of the pre-matrimonial flights, before the ephemeris of the human imagination accomplishes its destiny! How the world glows! Only the untried know the infinite strength of the untried. There are innumerable things to be done, and no one has done them; the tale of those who have failed and died has no meaning in our ears. What ambitious student has not sat and talked with his sympathetic friend, lending and borrowing ears in a fair commerce of boasting of the great deeds germinating? This boasting of the future is the cement of all youthful friendships, as boasting of the past is of those of age. But the former have a divine

warmth of emotion which the latter lack.

Gabriel, my own friend, was a splendid exemplification of this romance period of life. Gabriel Thompson was his name, but at first it was juster to call him Gabriel. For he had golden hair that flowed over his collar, and a beardless angelic face, his soul was full of the love of great deeds and justice, and our common conversation was the entire reform, by a few simple expedients, of human society. Later, however, it became necessary to call him Thompson. That will explain the title: it is a story of compromise, of the clipping or shedding of the archangelic pinions by which he soared.

I remember the evening when Gabriel told me he was in love. We had discoursed of the mystical woman soul that sways men — Gabriel with divine warmth, and I in colder strain. Indeed, as regards that particular fire, I have always been a bit of a salamander. Presently, however, Gabriel swooped down to the concrete. I felt more than one twinge of jealousy as he rushed into details with a transient nervousness of manner unusual to him. He gave no names or dates.

'Is she beautiful?' I said, perceiving he raved little in that direction.

'Her features are not regularly beautiful—'

'Plain?'

'Oh dear no! Indeed, she has the greatest of all beauty, the beauty of expression. You need to talk to her.'

A kind of upward adoring look, I thought. 'Is she cultured?'

'She had read very few books, and yet she had a most wonderful insight into things. Several times as I have been timidly feeling my way to this or that advanced view of ours she has come out to meet me, as it were, and I found that in the seclusion of her quiet country town she had thought out things and arrived at the very same ends as we, with all our advantages, have done.'

'She must be quick-witted?'

'She is indeed; a more subtle, and yet a purer mind I never met. I am giving her some of Ruskin's books now. He is a revelation to her, she says. She finds so much in him that has been in her own mind dimly, perfectly expressed. Carlyle she must read; after that Wordsworth, Browning—'

And so he went on. She was quite ‘womanly’. Gabriel was very insistent upon that. She entirely agreed with him that a woman’s sphere was her home. She did not want votes. At that time he was smarting a little from a controversy with Miss Gowland (MB), who did. This wonderful girl was quite content to accompany his song, so he was assured, to be the ‘complement of his existence’, his ‘good angel’, and his ‘armour-bearer’ in that fight for the righting of the world which his soul craved after. He was to be her teacher, servant - as a king is the servant of his people - and true knight.

I felt more and more jealous. Scarcely two months before we had agreed that a new Reformation was needed, and I was cast in the role of Erasmus, and Gabriel as Luther. This arrangement, arrived at over our youthful pipes solemnly enough, was all forgotten now. My share was to hear of this absolutely new manifestation of the feminine. I was interested only in her imperfections, as they showed dimly through Gabriel’s panegyric. For once, Gabriel, with his bright face, his shining eyes, his rhetorical gestures, and his buoyant flow of words, absolutely bored and pained me. I cared for him a lot at that time, and had promised myself a credible career by his side. I had, indeed, forgotten the feminine until Gabriel remembered it.

Perhaps that evening, or at any rate some evening about that time, two other friends discussed this same love affair of Gabriel’s.

‘I think Gabriel is a pretty name, dear,’ said one.

‘Now, dearest,’ said the other, holding up one dainty finger with an air of great solemnity, ‘I want you to tell me just exactly what you think of him.’

‘He has a lovely profile. You must make him grow a moustache.’

‘And cut his hair, you want to say, and dare not. Minnie, you have no moral courage. Yes; he does look a little effeminate now, but he is awfully clever. He writes, you know, and he sends me such dreadfully difficult books to read. I am getting quite learned.’

‘It must be jolly to have a really clever husband, one that is well known, and has people running after his autograph, and all that. You will be cutting poor me - sunk to the besotted condition of a wine-merchant’s wife - dead.’

‘You shall always come to see me, dear - on my domestic days.

But really, Minnie, I am going to be dreadfully happy. You know Gabriel is going to do all kinds of scientific researches, and I shall help him copy his things out, and put his experiments out for him, and all that. I shall make him be an FRS, and he will give performances at soirées, like that handsome man we saw who did something clever in a bottle.

Gabriel's shadow would look splendid in profile on a white screen.'

'Isn't he a Socialist or Anarchist or something?'

'All young men with anything in them are like that now. It is a kind of intellectual measles, dear. I don't think any the worse of a young man for that. It is like his smoking pipes instead of cigars or cigarettes, and not wearing gloves. You must see Gabriel after I have polished him for a year.'

'Yes,' said Minnie, 'that is a woman's work. We cut and polish these rough diamonds, and they take all the credit for the flash and sparkle. But if it were not for us there would be no gentlemen in the world.'

'Oh! Gabriel, dear, is naturally a gentleman.'

'Unpolished, dear, as you admit.'

Well, so they talked, sitting cosily in dainty chairs. Long before the marriage this little Delilah of his cut his hair. He came to me less frequently, and one evening he explained that he thought he was clearer-headed when he smoked less. Besides which, the smell of tobacco hung about one so much.

Thereafter he ceased to be Gabriel to me, and became Gabriel Thompson. And one memorable day I had a kind of'Phantasm of the Living', a vision of a fair-haired man with a bees-waxed moustache, dressed in an ample frock-coat, and light gloves. It was my prophet — curled and scented. The vision fluttered between me and my bookshelves for a moment and vanished, and I knew at once that my Gabriel, the world-mender, was lost to me for ever. Soon after came the visiting cards of the happy pair.

I understand that the correct thing to do is to call upon your newly married friends when they are settled, and see what kind of furniture they have. I did this. By way of quiet sarcasm I wore my old velveteen jacket. Mrs Thompson said I looked 'quite Bohemian', and

the only consolation I had was to think that Thompson had a conscience. I asked him point-blank about the new Reformation, and she answered for him that he was dreadfully busy at research.

I saw Thompson look across at me with a dumb request not to press the matter. But I had no particular kindness for Thompson. Was he not the man who had murdered my Prophet Gabriel and buried him away in himself? I insisted upon social evils, the need of leaders for the people, and all our old themes. Presently my Gabriel awoke in Thompson again, and began to talk.

'There is a passage,' he said presently, 'in "Sesame and Lilies", the book you liked so much, dear. How does it go? I am sure you know it. Ah, here is the book.'

It lay on the table, one of the many volumes he had bought for her, one, I remembered, that had 'come like a revelation' to her. He took it up and turned over the pages.

When I saw the pages were all uncut I felt sorry for the man. He stared at the book as though he hardly grasped the import of the thing. Then he put it down again with force and an expletive.

'Gabriel!' said his wife.

I rose to go. But Gabriel was white with anger. 'You never opened that book,' he said to his wife, 'and you told me you had read it.'

Mrs Thompson turned to me. 'Must you go?' she said.

So I left them face to face with each other.

It was what one might call their real introduction to one another. Each had played to the other of being what the other dreamt, and now that little comedy was over. Mrs Thompson had repeated Gabriel's conclusions after him to please him, and he had acted as a gentleman according to her lights. But that unfortunate book had ended it.

As I went out I heard her begin: 'To think, Gabriel, that in the second month of our marriage, you should curse me.'

And he: 'Why did you only pretend to read my book?'

I suppose she did it to please him, but I do not know if she made this excuse. It is for a womanly woman a perfectly adequate excuse for any little duplicity she commits.

I fancy there must have been a long discussion that afternoon.

Practically it amounted to this, that each had married a stranger in mistake for an imaginary person. Such a complication, though common enough, requires very deliberate consideration and considerable mutual forbearance. On the contrary, their talk that afternoon was heated, and it ended with domestic thunder - which is the slamming of doors. Mrs Thompson was calm and reasonable throughout, but Gabriel did a deal of walking to and fro, throwing books with violence on to the floor, and invective generally.

He had imagined that his marriage was to be an idyllic episode, from which he was to return presently to his dream of a new Reformation - Gabriel well to the fore, wife inspiring, helpful, and advisatory. He felt himself cut off from all this at once, and first he tried to vent his dismay and displeasure on his wife, and being defeated by her polite coolness, he took it out of the books, the carpet, and the front door.

She was dreadfully pained at his temper and unreasonableness, and annoyed more particularly at his letting the servants hear the quarrel. She could not help asking herself what they would say. Moreover she was afraid he might do something rash or ridiculous. So that she

decided to talk the matter over with Minnie, who was now a wine-merchant's wife.

'I told him he could hardly expect me to read all the books he inundated the house with, especially when I had all my things to see to, and he simply raved; he went on dreadfully, dear — swore at me and insulted me, asked me if I thought it was fair treatment towards a man with a mission in the world to marry him under false pretences. I said there were no false pretences, except that he had behaved like a gentleman, and that when I trusted myself in his hands I thought he would always do so. He almost cried when he said that he had looked to me to be his help and inspiration, just as if he had been going abroad as a missionary or something of that kind. I do think that kind of talk silly. If I had behaved really badly to him, Minnie, he could not have been worse. All this ranting and bother because I did not read his silly old books! Rather than have had this scene, dear, I would have read every one from cover to cover. You can't think how I have reproached myself for not cutting those leaves.'

So Mrs Thompson.

Minnie judiciously heard her through two or three times before she attempted any consolation or advice.

‘He is certainly going on badly, my dear, but we all have our troubles. It is quite enough to make you really ill.’

‘I should have been if I had not kept so cool.’

‘You bear up wonderfully. He does not deserve it. Of course, dear, if you were ill - when he comes home again - really ill, I mean, not just a headache - so that all the house would be hushed - he might have the grace to feel ashamed of himself. You are too brave. It only makes a man rave worse than ever to stand up to him. They all hate to be told the truth about themselves, and they shout and bully you down. But your Gabriel - any real man - would not hit a really sick woman.’

‘It is almost a pity I am so well then,’ said Mrs Thompson, scarcely grasping the new idea yet.

‘It’s the excitement, you poor dear,’ said Minnie. ‘That keeps you up now, but you will find the reaction presently, mark my words.’

And sure enough, Mrs Thompson had hardly reached home when this reaction came upon her, and she was helped upstairs by the sympathetic and half-confidential parlour-maid. And all the blinds were straightway drawn and the house hushed.

Meanwhile Gabriel had been with me.

‘Don’t speak about it to me,’ I said; ‘I will not be the man to come between husband and wife - especially when the wife is Mrs Thompson.’

‘For Heaven’s sake, don’t mock me,’ said Gabriel; ‘I have been cruelly deceived. Here am I at five-and-twenty, with all my card castles in a heap. It is not only that about “Sesame and Lilies”, I have been finding her out ever since the marriage. That book - with you there - was the last straw. She is no helpmeet for me. Her ideas are shallow and vain, her ways are always crooked; she is just a commonplace woman of the world. What can a man do for others, what can he do for himself, with a woman like that?’

So he raved. I did not join him, but I must own my silence was sympathetic. Presently, however, after a pause, he started to his feet, and flung his chair headlong.

‘I will not endure it,’ he shouted, repeating, as the attentive reader will notice, formula three. ‘Why should the error of three months dwarf and ruin a life? I will not live with her. I will go abroad. What are these customs and ceremonies, these flimsy ordinances, that they should chain me back from all my possibilities? I tell you I will part from her. I never married her. I married my ideal, and she is no ideal of mine.’

He caught up his hat in his hand. He stood splendid, almost heroic, holding his right hand for mine.

‘Gabriel,’ I said to him, calling him that for the last time, ‘you have had a bitter disappointment. I cannot advise you. The law of matrimony, like the law of gravitation, no respectable man disputes. Whatever you do, may you fare well.’

‘No cat and dog compromise for me,’ said Gabriel; and so went out right valiantly, with my secret blessing.

He noticed the blinds in the front of the house were all down, but, being a man, he did not grasp the full symbolism of this. He knocked for admission - a firm, clear knock. Mrs Thompson, at that moment, was upstairs hurriedly putting away her bonnet, which she had thought of - happily - in time.

The parlour-maid let him in noiselessly, with a funereal expression of face. This startled him, for she was a flourishing, noisy sort of girl.

Please, sir,’ she said, in a whisper, holding out his bath slippers; ‘do you mind putting these on? Missis is very ill indeed.’

‘Why! what is the matter?’ asked Gabriel in his natural voice, trying to keep up his militant front.

‘She regular broke down, sir, after you left her,’ said the parlourmaid reproachfully, in an almost noiseless whisper, and therewith handing him the slippers, she glided away, leaving him to his conscience’. Needless to say, she did not mention Mrs Thompson’s visit to Minnie. Gabriel stood in confused thought for a minute, and then sat down on one of the hall chairs and quietly changed his boots. He had not expected this.

He sat meditating vaguely over his discarded boots for some time. He would have to postpone his climax after all. Nuisance! Then his chivalry began to awake. Perhaps he had been hitting unnecessarily

hard. She was only a weak woman, and he had come home to do battle and finish with her, as if she were a dragon. Certainly his ways were violent. She had seemed cool enough during their quarrel, but then women, he had read, are clever at hiding their pain, though the dart, nevertheless, may have gone well home. What if she really cared for him? He remembered all the wrath, sorrow, and bitterness of his denunciation. Had he been heedlessly carried away?

Presently he rose and stole upstairs. He would look at her. It was a fatal resolution.

His wife was lying dressed upon the bed, in the darkened room. Her pale cheeks were wet, and her eyes were closed so that the damp long lashes lay upon her cheek. Her hair, which was abundant and beautiful, indeed her chief beauty, was down. In one hand she held her smelling-salts, and the other lay limp and extended. There was an expression of pain on her face; she seemed to have cried herself to sleep. Gabriel could hardly realise that this sorrowful little figure was the human being he had raged against ten minutes ago.

There came over my Gabriel, I suppose, a great wave of generous emotion. I admit - though it worked to my hurt - that there was some greatness in his forgetting his world-mending at that moment. Had he not held her in his arms? Had not she trusted the happiness of her life to him? He was not one of those intellectual prigs who will pass their dearest through the fire for some Moloch of an idea. He had thought his career was to be stifled by his wife. He had not realised how his assertion of this would break her down. Poor little girl with the dishevelled hair! Poor little Sissie! The New Reformation receded through an illimitable perspective to the smallest speck.

She sighed in her sleep. ‘Oh, Gabriel!’ she said, with a sob in her voice.

Gabriel could scarcely imagine why he had just been so angry. She was dreaming of him. The New Reformation vanished. He knelt by the bed, full of self-reproach, and took her hand.

Her eyes slowly opened. She looked in his face and saw she had conquered.

‘I have been a brute,’ he said - this emancipator of his sex.

‘Gabriel,’ she whispered faindy, ‘Gabriel, dear,’ and closed her eyes again.

‘I have been a brute,’ repeated Gabriel.

‘Gabriel,’ she said, ‘promise me something.’

‘Anything, dear,’ said Gabriel.

‘Promise me you will never speak to that horrid man again.’

Now, the horrid man referred to was myself. And - will you believe it, dear reader? - Gabriel, who had left my home scarcely ten minutes, vowing he would do or die, *promised.*

This is the plain and simple story of how Gabriel became Thompson, so that there was no Gabriel any more for me. I and the New Reformation were buried under the foundation-stone of their compromise, and there was, in spite of Gabriel’s repetition of formula three, no catastrophe. From that day to this Thompson and I have met and crossed one another in highways and by-ways, but never a word has passed between us after my first rebuff. But I understand, through a friend - and it is a curious example of the metaboly of memory - that Thompson is under the impression that I incited him to desert his wife.

The health of Mrs Thompson is, and has been, very uncertain since that day. It has been a tactical necessity. Thompson has to be gentle and careful in all his doings; he takes her to church regularly, they have a prominent pew, and he keeps all the observances. However, the scientific research languished somehow, and he is not a Fellow of the Royal Society yet, though it led to several profitable patents. He has one of the best houses on Putney Hill, and Mrs Thompson bears up bravely against her uncertain health and gives really very brilliant garden-parties. She has dropped Minnie, because she is deceitful, and lives in one of the smaller houses in the Upper Richmond Road.

Thompson is said to be apathetic in society, and irritable in business. His health has been poor lately, through an excessive consumption of cigars.

HOW PINGWILL WAS ROUTED

Pingwill was a nuisance. He married a respectable young woman of mature years, and lives on her sufficiency, and he goes about pretending to be a literary character on the strength of an edition of a classic, an examination success at some university place or other, and occasional reviewing. He likes to talk about books, and is offensively familiar with all the masterpieces and most of the rest of English literature. He considers gabble about books intellectual conversation. He regards a quiet man smoking in a chair as fair game for his scraps of quotation - which he is as eager to void as he is greedy to acquire - and he cannot understand that people who write books never read them, and are full of bitter memories of their own adventures in authorship. He wears a *pince-nez,* and Mrs Pingwill (when present) echoes all his quavering severities with the explanation that 'George is *so* satirical.' He is exasperatingly reliable in the matter of names and dates. And at first, perhaps, we made the mistake of encouraging Pingwill.

Heydinger was the chief encourager of Pingwill. He is a humorist, a kind of person who sees jokes in things that rouse the passions of ordinary people, and he found an unaccountable pleasure in developing one particular aspect of the Pingwill constitution. No retired pork- butcher's lady, no wife of a village rector who has married beneath him, could be more punctilious of her intimacy, than Pingwill among his authors. And Pingwill was just as intensely sensitive to the breath of scandal - which in matters literary is called criticism. No one could be thicker with a really *chic* author; no one readier to 'cut' the writer who fell under the shadow of adverse comment. He was, in fact, a literary snob - a by no means rare variety - and he had an almost passionate dread of admiring the wrong man. He took reviews in the weeklies quite seriously. Naturally, he had nothing but serene contempt for Dickens and Jerome and Mark Twain, and 'people of that stamp'. And Heydinger never tired of drawing him out upon Kipling. In a careless moment he had informed us that Kipling's style was rough, and unfinished - it seems he tried for once to form a judgment for himself, and had happened

upon really quite vulgar and coarse expressions. After he had learnt better from a review, the mere name filled him with uncomfortable memories. It was as if the rector's wife had cut the Duchess by mistake. Horrible! Then he was privately in great trouble about Besant and Hall Caine. 'Ought I to know them?' was the attitude. The oracles differed. He was deliciously guarded upon these authors under Heydinger's most searching questions. But his face flushed guiltily. Le Gallienne, Zangwill, and most of the younger men, who have warm friends and animated critics, bothered him more or less, and he had a horrible dread, I know, that Ruskin, whom he had committed himself to admire, was not quite all that he should be. 'One has to be so *very* particular,' was Pingwill's attitude.

However, after a while, we tired of this creature's odd way with books, and his proximity then became, as I say, a nuisance. But Heydinger, who had formed an adequate conception of his character, suggested the remedy, and together we routed him. Both Heydinger and I had got through a morning's work, and in he came, fresh, and freshly primed. He dropped into a chair, and emitted some indifferent remarks.

'I have heard,' he said, 'that these delicious child-sketches of Kenneth Graham's are out in a book by themselves.'

'Read 'em?' said Heydinger, brutally.

'No - hardly - yet,' said Pingwill: 'but they're good, aren't they?'

'Very,' said I, 'but that's no reason why you should go about calling them delicious before you have read them.'

'Perhaps not,' said Pingwill. 'Perhaps not.'

'They remind me very much of Wendle Hooper,' said Heydinger. 'You know him, Bellows?'

'Intimately,' I said. 'I have one of his first editions at home.'

'You will be reminded very much of Wendle Hooper,' said Heydinger, turning to Pingwill.

'Indeed!' said Pingwill, stepping into the trap.

'The same subtle suggestiveness of phrase,' said Heydinger. 'The same delicate yet penetrating sympathy.'

'I must certainly read him,' said Pingwill, evidently searching his mind for the name of Wendle Hooper, and flushing slightly.

'I know of no man,' said Heydinger, 'except perhaps Lant, who

comes so near to Hooper as Graham. You know Lant's style, Pingwill?'

Pingwill flushed a little deeper, and his ears grew pink. 'I can't say,' said he 'that I've read—'

'He is not so well known as Hooper,' he admitted. 'He was in the little set that clustered round Leigh Hunt—'

Pingwill suddenly felt hotter again. 'I think Leigh Hunt—' he began, evidently ready with a fragment of text-book.

'He borrowed from Lant,' interrupted Heydinger. 'Certainly he borrowed from Lant. That essay on the chimney-pot hat—'

'Pure Lant,' I said.

'I've neglected Lant a little, I am afraid,' mumbled Pingwill, horribly bothered by this unknown name.

'You should read him,' said I. 'He's a perfect mine of good things. That passage in Browning, for instance ... You were pointing out the resemblance only this morning, Heydinger.'

'About the chattering discs,' said Heydinger. 'You remember *that,* Pingwill?'

'I think so,' said Pingwill. 'Chattering discs ... I seem to recollect. How does it go?'

'The chattering discs go reeling,' said Heydinger, inventing boldly. 'You *must* remember.'

Pingwill was now really very uncomfortable. But he was having a lively lesson in priggish conversation. 'I wish I had my Lant here,' said I.

'You surely remember about the chattering discs?' said Heydinger, turning as he pretended to search for a book on the shelf.

'The phrase is quite familiar to me,' said Pingwill, 'but for the life of me I can't recall the context! It's queer what tricks one's memory plays ...'

Heydinger quietly resumed his seat.

'Have you written anything lately?' said Pingwill, to change the subject.

'Yes,' said Heydinger, and seeing some further question threatened, added, as if in explanation, '*Alvarados.'*

It pulled Pingwill up abruptly. *'Alvarados'* Ah!' he repeated after Heydinger, with an air of comprehension. If he understood he was

certainly wiser than I. His ears were now bright red. We remained tranquil, watching him. It was not my affair.

He returned to conversation presently with an air of having found and grasped the thing firmly. ‘Will you make them into a book?’ he said, bravely. A just perceptible dew was on his face. Heydinger evidently expected as much. ‘Them!’ he answered. ‘What?’

‘Well - *it. Alvarados.’*

‘It!’ said Heydinger, raising his eyebrows, ‘I don’t know,’ he said, and became silent. Pingwill was evidently baffled. Very awkwardly, and after a pause, he said he hoped that would be the case. Heydinger thanked him drily. There was an interval while we watched one another. Then he discovered his pipe was out — it always is - and asked me for the matches. He talked incoherently upon indifferent topics for a few minutes after that, and all the time I could see the trouble in his eyes, the awful doubt of his own omniscience that had arisen ... *Alvarados*\ Presently he rose to go. Routed.

As he went out I heard him whisper to himself very softly, *Alvarados!*

He has not been near us since. I can imagine the dismal times he has had hunting through *Rabelais, Gil Bias, Hudibras,* the *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,* for *Alvarados,* going through the British Museum catalogue for Wendle Hooper, and hunting all Browning for the ‘Chattering Discs’, feeling most horribly ashamed of himself all the time. I like to think of his flush of shame, the overthrow of his frail apparatus of knowledge. And ever and again Heydinger and I break the friendly silences which constitute our intercourse by saying casually: ‘Pingwill seems to be dropping us altogether,’ or, ‘Don’t seem to see so much of Pingwill as we used to do, Bellows.’ Such reflections are the olives of life.

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND (Revised Version)

Three hundred miles and more from Chimborazo, one hundred from the snows of Cotopaxi, in the wildest wastes of Ecuador's Andes, where the frost-and-sun-rotted rocks rise in vast pinnacles and cliffs above the snow, there was once a mysterious mountain valley, called the Country of the Blind. It was a legendary land, and until quite recently people doubted if it was anything more than a legend. Long years ago, ran the story, that valley lay so far open to the world that men, daring the incessant avalanches, might clamber at last through frightful gorges and over an icy pass into its equable meadows; and thither indeed men went and settled, a family or so of Peruvian half-breeds fleeing from the lust and tyranny of an evil Spanish ruler. Then came the stupendous outbreak of Mindobamba, when it was night in Quito for seventeen days, and the water was boiling at Yaguachi and all the fish floating dying even as far as Guayaquil; everywhere along the Pacific slopes there were landslips and swift thawings and sudden floods, and one whole side of the old Arauca crest slipped and came down in thunder, and cut off this Country of the Blind, as it seemed, for ever from the exploring feet of men.

But, said the story, one of these early settlers had chanced to be on the hither side of the gorge when the world had so terribly shaken itself, and perforce he had to forget his wife and his child and all the friends and possessions he declared he had left up there, and begin life again in the lower world.

He had a special reason to account for his return from that fastness, into which he had first been carried lashed to a llama, beside a vast bale of gear, when he was a child. The valley, he said, had in it all that the heart of man could desire - sweet water, pasture, an even climate, slopes of rich brown soil with tangles of a shrub that bore an excellent fruit, and on one side great hanging pine forests that held the avalanches high. Far overhead, a semicircle of ice-capped precipices of grey-green rock brooded over that glowing garden; but the glacier stream flowed away by the further slopes and only very

rarely did an ice-fall reach the lower levels. In this valley it neither rained nor snowed, but the abundant springs gave a rich green pasture, that patient irrigation was spreading over all the valley space. The surplus water gathered at last in a little lake beneath the cirque and vanished with a roar into an unfathomable cavern. The settlers, he said, were doing very well indeed there. Their beasts did well and multiplied, and only one thing marred their happiness. Yet it was enough to mar it greatly; some sinister quality hidden in that sweet and bracing air. A strange disease had come upon them, and had made all the children born to them there - and indeed several older children also - blind. So that the whole valley seemed likely to become a valley of blind men.

It was, he said, to seek some charm or antidote against this plague of blindness that with infinite fatigue, danger and difficulty he had returned down the gorge. In those days, in such cases, men did not think of germs and infections but of sins; and it seemed to him that the reason of this affliction must lie in the negligence of these priestless immigrants to set up a shrine so soon as they entered the valley. He wanted a shrine - a handsome, cheap, effectual shrine — to be set up in the valley; he wanted relics and suchlike potent things of faith, blessed objects and mysterious medals and prayers. In his wallet he had a bar of native silver for which he would not account; he insisted there was none in the valley, with something of the insistence of an inexpert liar. The settlers had all clubbed their money and ornaments together, having little need for such treasure up there, he said, to buy them holy help against their ill. I figure this young mountaineer, sunburnt, gaunt and anxious, hat-brim clutched feverishly, a man all unused to the ways of the lower world, telling this story to some keen- eyed, attentive priest before the great convulsion; I can picture him presently seeking to return with pious and infallible remedies against that trouble, and the infinite dismay with which he must have faced the tumbled and still monstrously crumbling vastness where the gorge had once come out. But the rest of his tale of mischances is lost to me, save that I know he died of punishment in the mines. His offence I do not know.

But the idea of a valley of blind folk had just that appeal to the imagination that a legend requires if it is to live. It stimulates fantasy.

It invents its own detail.

And recently this story has been most remarkably confirmed. We know now the whole history of this Country of the Blind from that beginning to its recent and tragic end.

We know now that amidst the little population of that now isolated and forgotten valley the contagion ran its course. Even the older children became groping and purblind, the young saw but dimly, and the children that were born to them never saw at all. But life was very easy in that snow-rimmed basin, lost to all the world, with neither thorns nor briers, with food upon the bushes in its season, with no evil insects nor any beasts save the gentle breed of llamas they had lugged and thrust and followed up the beds of the shrunken rivers in the gorges by which they had come. The first generation had become purblind so gradually that they scarcely noted their loss. They guided the sightless youngsters who followed them hither and thither until they knew the whole valley marvellously, and when at last sight died out altogether among them the race lived on. They had even time to adapt themselves to the blind control of fire, which they made carefully in stoves of stone. They were a simple strain of people at the first, unlettered, only slightly touched with Spanish civilisation, but with something of a tradition of the arts of old Peru and its lost philosophy. Generation followed generation. They forgot many things; they devised many things. Their tradition of the greater world they came from became mythical in colour and uncertain. In all things save sight they were strong and able; and presently the chances of birth and heredity produced one who had an original mind and who could talk and persuade among them, and then afterwards another. These two passed, leaving their effects, and the little community grew in numbers and understanding, and met and settled all the social and economic problems that arose, sensibly and peaceably. There came a time when a child was born who was fifteen generations from that ancestor who went out of the valley with a bar of silver to seek God's aid, and who never returned. Then it chanced that a man came into this community from the outer world and troubled their minds very greatly. He lived with them for many months, and escaped very narrowly from their final disaster.

He was a mountaineer from the country near Quito, a man who

had been down to the sea and had seen the world, and he was taken on by a party of Englishmen under Sir Charles Pointer, who had come out of Ecuador to climb mountains, to replace one of their three Swiss guides who had fallen ill. He climbed here and he climbed there, and then came the attempt on Parascotopetl, the 'rotten' mountain, the Matterhorn of the Andes, in which he was lost to the outer world so that he was given up for dead.

Everyone who knew anything of mountaincraft had warned the little expedition against the treachery of the rocks in this range, but apparently it was not a rock-fall that caught this man Nunez but an exceptional snow-cornice. The party had worked its difficult and almost vertical way up to the very foot of the last and greatest precipice, and had already built itself a night shelter upon a little shelf of rock amidst the snow, when the accident occurred. Suddenly they found that Nunez had disappeared, without a sound. They shouted, and there was no reply; they shouted and whistled, they made a cramped search for him, but their range of movement was very limited. There was no moon, and their electric torches had only a limited range.

As the morning broke they saw the traces of his fall. It seems impossible he could have uttered a cry. The depths had snatched him down. He had slipped eastward towards the unknown side of the mountain; far below he had struck a steep slope of snow, and ploughed his way down it in the midst of a snow avalanche. His track went straight to the edge of a frightful precipice, and beyond that everything was hidden. Far, far below, and hazy with distance, they could see trees rising out of a narrow, shut-in valley - the lost Country of the Blind. But they did not know it was the lost Country of the Blind, nor distinguish it in any way from any other narrow streak of sheltered upland valley. Unnerved by this disaster, they abandoned their attempt in the afternoon, and Pointer, who was financing the attempt, was called away to urgent private business before he could make another attack. To this day Parascotopetl lists an unconquered crest, and Pointer's shelter crumbles unvisited amidst the snows.

And this man who fell survived.

At the end of the slope he fell a thousand feet, and came down in

the midst of a cloud of snow upon a snow slope even steeper than the one above. Down this he was whirled, stunned and insensible, but miraculously without a bone broken in his body; and then the gradients diminished, and at last rolled out and lay still, buried amidst a softening heap of the white masses that had accompanied him and saved him. He came to himself with a dim fancy that he was ill in bed; then realised his position, worked himself loose and, after a rest or so, out until he saw the stars. He rested flat upon his chest for a space, wondering where he was and what had happened to him. He explored his limbs, they ached exceedingly but they were unbroken. He discovered that several of his buttons were gone and his coat turned over

his head. His knife had gone from his pocket and his hat was lost, though he had tied it under his chin. His face was grazed; he was scratched and contused all over. He recalled that he had been looking for loose stones to raise his piece of the shelter wall. His ice-axe had disappeared.

He looked up to see, exaggerated by the ghastly light of the rising moon, the tremendous flight he had taken. For a while he lay, gazing blankly at that vast pale cliff towering above, rising moment by moment out of a subsiding tide of darkness. Since the light struck it first above it seemed to be streaming upward out of nothing. Its phantasmal mysterious beauty held him for a space, and then he was seized with a paroxysm of sobbing laughter ...

After a great interval of time he became aware that he was near the lower edge of the snow. Below, down what was now a moonlit and practicable slope, he saw the dark and broken appearance of rock- strewn turf. He struggled to his feet, aching in every limb, got down painfully from the heaped loose snow about him, went downward until he was on the turf, and there dropped rather than lay beside a boulder, drank deep from the flask in his inner pocket, and instantly fell asleep ...

He was awakened by the singing of birds in trees far below.

He sat up stiffly and perceived he was on a little alp at the foot of a great precipice, grooved by the gulley down which he and his snow had come. Over against him another wall of jagged rock reared itself against the sky. The gorge between these precipices ran east and west

and was full of the morning sunlight, which lit to the westward the mass of fallen mountain that had blocked the way to the world. Below him it seemed there was a precipice equally steep, but beyond the snow in the gulley he found a chimney dripping with snow-water down which a desperate man might venture. He found it easier than it looked, and came at last to another desolate alp, and then after a rock climb of no particular difficulty to a steep slope of trees. He took his bearings and turned his face eastward, for he saw it opened out above upon green meadows, among which he now glimpsed quite distinctly a cluster of stone huts of unfamiliar fashion. At times his progress was like clambering along the face of a wall, and after a time the rays of the rising sun were intercepted by a vast bastion, the voices of the singing birds died away, and the air grew cold and dark about him. But the distant valley with its houses seemed all the brighter for that. He presently came to talus, and among the rocks he noted — for he was an observant man - an unfamiliar fern that seemed to clutch out of the crevices with intense green hands. He picked a frond or so and gnawed its stalk and found it helpful. There were bushes but the fruit had not formed upon them.

About midday he emerged from the shadow of the great bluff into the sunlight again. And now he was only a few hundred yards from the valley meadows. He was weary and very stiff; he sat down in the shadow of a rock, filled up his nearly empty flask with water from a spring, drank it down, and rested for a time before he went on towards the houses.

They were very strange to his eyes, and indeed the whole aspect of that valley became, as he regarded it, queerer and more unfamiliar. The greater part of its surface was lush green meadow, starred with many beautiful flowers, irrigated with extraordinary care, and bearing evidence of systematic cropping piece by piece. High up and ringing the valley about was a wall, and what appeared to be a circumferential water-channel, which received the runlets from the snows above and from which little trickles of water had been led to feed the meadows. On the higher slopes above this wall, flocks of llamas cropped the scanty herbage amidst the tangled shrubs. Sheds, apparently shelters or feeding-places for the llamas, stood against the boundary wall here and there. The irrigation streams ran together into

a main channel down the centre of the valley, that debouched into a little lake below a semicircle of precipices, and this central canal was enclosed on either side by a wall breast-high. This wall gave a singularly urban quality to this secluded place, a quality that was greatly enhanced by the fact that a number of paths paved with green, grey, black and white stones, and each with a curious little kerb at the side, ran hither and thither in an orderly manner. The houses of the central village were quite unlike the casual and higgledy-piggledy agglomeration of the mountain villages he knew; they stood in a continuous row on either side of a central street of astonishing cleanness; here and there their particoloured façade was pierced by a door, and not a solitary window broke their even frontage. They were parti-coloured with extraordinary irregularity; smeared with a sort of plaster that was sometimes grey, sometimes drab, sometimes slate-coloured or dark brown; and it was the sight of this wild plastering first brought the word 'blind' into the thoughts of the explorer. 'The good man who did that,' he thought, 'must have been as blind as a bat.'

He descended a steep place and so came to the wall and channel that ran about the valley, near where the latter spouted out its surplus contents into the lake. He could see now a number of men and women resting on piled heaps of grass, as if taking a siesta; in the remoter part of the meadow, and nearer the village a number of recumbent children; and then nearer at hand three men carrying pails on yokes along a little path that ran from the encircling wall towards the houses. These latter were clad in garments of llama cloth and boots and belts of leather, and they wore caps of cloth with back and ear flaps. They followed one another in single file, walking slowly and yawning as they walked, like men who have been up all night. There was something so reassuringly prosperous and respectable in their bearing that after a moment's hesitation Nunez stood forward as conspicuously as possible upon his rock, and gave vent to a mighty shout that evoked a thousand echoes round and about the valley.

The three men stopped and moved their heads as if they were looking about them. They turned their face this way and that, and Nunez gesticulated with freedom. But they did not appear to see him for all his gestures, and after a time, directing themselves towards the

mountain far away to the right, they shouted as if in answer. Nunez bawled again and then once more, and as he gestured ineffectually the word ‘blind’ came once more to the front of his thoughts. ‘The fools must be blind,’ he said.

When at last, after much shouting and irritation, Nunez crossed the stream by a little bridge, came through a gate in the wall, and approached them, he realised that they were indeed blind. He knew already that this was the Country of the Blind of which the legends told. Conviction had sprung upon him, and a sense of great and rather enviable adventure. The three stood side by side, not looking at him, but with their ears directed towards him, judging him by his unfamiliar steps. They stood close together like men a little afraid, and he could see their eyelids closed and shrunken, as if the very balls beneath had shrunk away. There was an expression near awe on their faces.

‘A man,’ one said, in hardly recognisable Spanish— ‘a man it is - a man or a beast that walks like a man - coming down from the rocks.’

But Nunez advanced with the confident steps of a youth who enters upon life. All the old stories of the lost valley and the Country of the Blind had come back to his mind, and through his thoughts ran this old proverb, as if it were a refrain:

‘In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King.’
‘In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King.’

And very civilly he gave them greeting. He talked to them and used his eyes.

‘Where does he come from, brother Pedro?’ asked one.

‘Down out of the rocks.’

‘Over the mountains I come,’ said Nunez, ‘out of the country beyond there - where men can see. From near Bogota, where there are a hundred thousands of people, and where the city passes out of sight.’

‘Sight?’ muttered Pedro. ‘Sight?’

‘He comes,’ said the second blind man, ‘out of the rocks.’

The cloth of their coats Nunez saw was curiously fashioned, each

with a different sort of stitching.

They startled him by a simultaneous movement towards him, each with a hand outstretched. He stepped back from the advance of these spread fingers.

'Come hither,' said the third blind man, following his motion and clutching him neatly.

And they held Nunez and felt him over, saying no word further until they had done so.

'Carefully,' he cried, when a finger was poked in his eye, and he realised that they thought that organ, with its fluttering lids, a queer thing in him. They felt over it again.

'A strange creature, Correa,' said the one called Pedro. 'Feel the coarseness of his hair. Like a llama's hair.'

'Rough he is as the rocks that begot him,' said Correa, investigating Nunez's unshaven chin with a soft and slightly moist hand. 'Perhaps he will grow finer.' Nunez struggled a little under their examination, but they gripped him firm.

'Carefully,' he said again.

'He speaks,' said the third man. 'Certainly he is a man.'

'Ugh!' said Pedro, at the roughness of his coat.

'And you have come into the world?' asked Pedro.

'*Out* of the world. Over mountains and glaciers; right over above there, halfway to the sun. Out of the great big world that goes down from here, twelve day's journey to the sea.'

They scarcely seemed to heed him. 'The fathers have told us men may be made by the forces of Nature,' said Correa. 'It is the warmth of things and moisture, and rottenness — rottenness.'

'Let us lead him to the elders,' said Pedro.

'Shout first,' said Correa, 'lest the children be afraid. This is a marvellous occasion.'

So they shouted, and Pedro went first and took Nunez by the hand to lead him to the houses.

He drew his hand away. 'I can see,' he said.

'See?' said Correa.

'Yes, see,' said Nunez, turning towards him, and stumbled against Pedro's pail.

'His senses are still imperfect,' said the third blind man. 'He

stumbles, and talks unmeaning words. Lead him by the hand.'

'As you will,' said Nunez, and was led along smiling.

It seemed they knew nothing of sight.

Well, all in good time, he would teach them.

He heard people shouting, and saw a number of figures gathered together in the middle roadway of the village.

He found it taxed his nerve and patience more than he had anticipated, that first encounter with the population of the Country of the Blind. The place seemed larger as he drew near to it, and the smeared plasterings queerer, and a crowd of children and men and women (the women and girls he was pleased to note, had some of them quite sweet faces, for all that their eyes were shut and sunken) came about him, and mobbed him, holding on to him, touching him with soft, sensitive hands, smelling at him, and listening for every word he spoke. Some of the maidens and children, however, kept aloof as if afraid, and indeed his voice seemed coarse and rude beside their softer notes. His three guides kept close to him with an effect of proprietorship, and said again and again, 'A wild man out of the rocks.'

'Bogota,' he said. 'Bogota. Over the mountain crests.'

'A wild man - using wild words,' said Pedro. 'Did you hear that — *Bogota?*. His mind is hardly formed yet. He has only the beginnings of speech.'

A little boy nipped his hand. 'Bogota!' he said mockingly.

'Ay! A city to your village. I come from the great world - where men have eyes and see.'

'His name's Bogota,' they said.

'He stumbled,' said Correa, 'stumbled twice as we came hither.'

'Bring him to the elders.'

And they thrust him suddenly through a doorway into a room as black as pitch, save at the end there faintly glowed a fire. The crowd closed in behind him and shut out all but the faintest glimmer of day, and before he could arrest himself he had fallen headlong over the feet of a seated man. His arm, outflung, struck the face of someone else as he went down; he felt the soft impact of features and heard a cry of anger, and for a moment he struggled against a number of hands that clutched him. It was a one-sided fight. An inkling of the

situation came to him, and he lay quiet.

'I fell down,' he said; 'I couldn't see in this pitchy darkness. Who could?'

There was a pause as if the unseen persons about him tried to understand his words. Then the voice of Correa said: 'He is but newly formed. He stumbles as he walks and mingles words that mean nothing with his speech.'

Others also said things about him that he heard or understood imperfectly.

'May I sit up?' he asked, in a pause. 'I will not struggle against you again.'

They consulted and let him rise.

The voice of an older man began to question him, and Nunez found himself trying to explain the great world out of which he had fallen, and the sky and mountains and sight and suchlike marvels, to these elders who sat in darkness in the Country of the Blind. And they would believe and understand nothing whatever he told them, a thing quite outside his expectation. They would not even understand many of his words. For fourteen generations these people had been blind and cut off from all the seeing world; the names for all the things of sight had faded and changed; the story of the outer world was faded and changed to a child's story; and they had ceased to concern themselves with anything beyond the rocky slopes above their circling wall. Blind men of genius had arisen among them and questioned the shreds of belief and tradition they had brought with them from their seeing days, and had dismissed all these things as idle fancies, and replaced them with new and saner explanations. Much of their imagination had shrivelled with their eyes, and they had made for themselves new imaginations with their ever more sensitive ears and finger-tips. Slowly Nunez realised this; that his expectation of wonder and reverence at his origin and his gifts was not to be borne out; and after his poor attempt to explain sight to them had been set aside as the confused version of a new-made being describing the marvels of his incoherent sensations, he subsided, a little dashed, into listening to their instruction.

The eldest of the blind men explained to him life and philosophy and religion, how that the world (meaning their valley) had been first

an empty hollow in the rocks and then had come, first, inanimate things without the gift of touch, from these grass and bushes and after that llamas and a few other creatures that had little sense, and then men, and at last angels, whom one could hear singing and making fluttering sounds, but whom none could touch at all, which puzzled Nunez greatly until he thought of the birds.

The elder went on to tell Nunez how 'by the Wisdom above us' time had been divided into the warm and the cold, which are the blind equivalents of day and night, and how it was good to sleep in the warm, and work during the cold, so that now, but for his advent, the whole town of the blind would have been asleep. He said Nunez must have been specially created to learn and serve the wisdom they had acquired, and for all his mental incoherency and stumbling behaviour he must have courage, and do his best to learn; and at that all the people in the doorway murmured encouragingly. He said the night — for the blind call their day night - was now far gone, and it behoved everyone to go back to sleep. He asked Nunez if he knew how to sleep and Nunez said he did, but that before sleep he wanted food.

They brought him food, llama's milk in a bowl, and rough salted bread, and led him into a lonely place to eat out of their hearing, and afterwards to slumber, until the chill of the mountain evening roused them to begin their day again. But Nunez slumbered not at all.

Instead, he sat up in the place where they had left him, resting his limbs and turning the unanticipated circumstances of his arrival over and over in his mind.

Every now and then he laughed, sometimes with amusement and sometimes with indignation.

'Unformed mind!' he said. 'Got no senses yet! They little know they've been insulting their heaven-sent king and master. I see I must bring them to reason. Let me think - let me think.'

He was still thinking when the sun set.

Nunez had an eye for all beautiful things, and it seemed to him that the glow upon the snowfields and glaciers that rose about the valley on every side was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. His eyes went from that inaccessible glory to the village and irrigated fields, fast sinking into the twilight, and suddenly a wave of emotion

took him, and he thanked God from the bottom of his heart that the power of sight had been given him.

He heard a voice calling to him from out of the house of the elders.

'Ya ho there, Bogota! Come hither!'

At that he stood up smiling. He would show these people once and for all what sight would do for a man. They would seek him but not find him.

'You move not, Bogota,' said the voice.

He laughed noiselessly, and made two stealthy steps aside from the path.

'Trample not on the grass, Bogota; that is not allowed.'

Nunez had scarcely heard the sound he made himself. He stopped amazed.

The owner of the voice came running up the piebald path towards him.

He stepped back into the pathway. 'Here I am,' he said.

'Why did you not come when I called you?' said the blind man. 'Must you be led like a child? Cannot you hear the path as you walk?'

Nunez laughed. 'I can see it,' he said.

'There is no such word as *see*,' said the blind man after a pause. 'Cease this folly and follow the sound of my feet.'

Nunez followed, a little annoyed.

'My time will come,' he said.

'You'll learn,' the blind man answered. 'There is much to learn in the world.'

'Has no one told you, "In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King?"'

'What is blind?' asked the blind man carelessly over his shoulder.

Four days passed, and the fifth found the King of the Blind still incognito, as a clumsy and useless stranger among his subjects.

It was, he found, much more difficult to proclaim himself than he had supposed, and in the meantime, while he meditated his *coup d'état,* he did what he was told and learnt the manners and customs of the Country of the Blind. He found working and going about at night a particularly irksome thing, and he decided that that should be

the first thing he would change in his little kingdom.

They led a simple, laborious life, these people, with all the elements of virtue and happiness, as these things can be understood by men. They toiled, but not oppressively; they had food and clothing sufficient for their needs; they had days and seasons of rest; they made much of music and singing, and there was love among them, and little children.

It was marvellous with what confidence and precision they went about their ordered world. Everything, you see, had been made to fit their needs; each of the radiating paths of the valley area had a constant angle to the others, and was distinguished by a special notch upon its kerbing; all obstacles and irregularities of path and meadow had long since been cleared away; all their methods and procedure arose naturally from their special needs. Their senses had become marvellously acute; they could hear and judge the slightest gesture of a man a dozen paces away - could hear the very beating of his heart. Intonation had long replaced expression with them, and touches gesture, and their work with hoe and spade and fork was as free and confident as garden work can be. Their sense of smell was extraordinarily fine; they could distinguish individual differences as readily as a dog can, and they went about the tending of the llamas, who lived among the rocks above and came to the wall for food and shelter, with ease and confidence. It was only when at last Nunez sought to assert himself that he found how easy and confident their movements could be.

He rebelled only after he had tried persuasion.

At first on several occasions he sought to tell them of sight. ‘Look you here, you people,’ he said. ‘There are things you do not understand in me.’

Once or twice one or two of them attended to him; they sat with faces downcast and ears turned intelligently towards him though with a faintly ironical smile on their lips, while he did his best to tell them what it was to see. Among his hearers was a girl, with eyes less red and sunken than the others, so that one could almost fancy she was hiding eyes, and she especially he hoped to persuade.

He spoke of the beauties of sight, of watching the mountains, of the sky and the sunrise, and they heard him with amused incredulity

that presently became condemnatory. They told him that there were indeed no mountains at all, but that the end of the rocks where the llamas grazed was indeed the end of the world; the rocks became steeper and steeper, became pillars and thence sprang a cavernous roof of the universe, from which the dew and avalanches fell; and when he maintained stoutly the world had neither end nor roof such as they supposed, they were shocked and they said his thoughts were wicked. So far as he could describe sky and clouds and stars to them, his world seemed to them a hideous void, a terrible blankness in the place of the smooth roof to things in which they believed - it was an article of faith with them that above the rocks the cavern roof was exquisitely smooth to the touch. They called it the Wisdom Above.

He saw that in some manner he shocked them by his talk of clouds and stars, and so he gave up that aspect of the matter altogether, and tried to show them the practical value of sight. One morning he saw Pedro in the path called Seventeen and coming towards the central houses, but still too far off for hearing or scent, and he told them as much. 'In a little while,' he prophesied, 'Pedro will be here.' An old man remarked that Pedro had no business on Path Seventeen, and then, as if in confirmation, that individual as he drew near turned and went transversely into Path Ten, and so back with nimble paces to the outer wall. They mocked Nunez when Pedro did not arrive, and afterwards, when he asked Pedro questions to clear his character, Pedro denied and outfaced him, and was afterwards hostile to him.

Then he induced them to let him go a long way up the sloping meadows towards the wall with one complacent individual, and to him he promised to describe all that happened among the houses. He noted certain comings and goings, but the things that really seemed to signify to these people happened inside of or behind the windowless houses - the only thing they took note of to test him by — and of these he could see or tell nothing; and it was after the failure of that attempt, and the ridicule they could not repress, that he resorted to force. He thought of seizing a spade and suddenly smiting one or two of them to earth, and so in fair combat showing the advantage of eyes. He went so far with that resolution as to seize his spade, and then he discovered a new thing about himself, and that

was that it was impossible for him to hit a blind man in cold blood.

He hesitated and found them all aware that he had snatched up the spade. They stood alert, with their heads on one side, and bent ears towards him for what he would do next.

‘Put that spade down,’ said one, and he felt a sort of helpless horror. He came near obedience.

Then he thrust one backwards against a house wall, and fled past him and out of the village.

He went athwart one of their meadows, leaving a track of trampled grass behind his feet, and presently sat down by the side of one of their ways. He felt something of the buoyancy that comes to all men in the beginning of a flight, but more perplexity. He began to realise that you cannot even fight happily with creatures that stand upon a different mental basis to yourself. Far away he saw a number of men carrying spades and sticks come out of the street of houses, and advance in a spreading line along the several paths towards him. They advanced slowly, speaking frequently to one another, and ever and again the whole cordon would halt and snuff the air and listen.

The first time they did this Nunez laughed. But afterwards he did not laugh.

One struck his trail in the meadow grass, and came stooping and feeling his way along it.

For five minutes he watched the slow extension of the cordon, and then his vague disposition to do something forthwith became frantic. He stood up, went a pace or so towards the circumferential wall, turned, and went back a little way. There they all stood in a crescent, still and listening.

He also stood still, gripping his spade very tightly in both hands. Should he charge them?

The pulse in his ears rang into the rhythm of ‘In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King!’

Should he charge them?

He looked back at the high and unclimbable wall behind - unclimbable because of its smooth plastering, but withal pierced by many little doors, and at the approaching line of seekers. Behind these, others were now coming out of the street of houses.

Should he charge them?

‘Bogota!’ called one. ‘Bogota! where are you?’

He gripped his spade still tighter and advanced down the meadows towards the place of habitations, and directly he moved they converged upon him. ‘I’ll hit them if they touch me,’ he swore; ‘by Heaven I will. I’ll hit.’ He called aloud, ‘Look here, I’m going to do what I like in this valley. Do you hear? I’m going to do what I like and go where I like!’

They were moving in upon him quickly, groping, yet moving rapidly. It was like playing blind man’s buff, with everyone blindfolded except one. ‘Get hold of him!’ cried one. He found himself in the arc or a loose curve of pursuers. He felt suddenly he must be active and resolute.

‘You don’t understand,’ he cried in a voice that was meant to be great and resolute, and which broke. ‘You are blind, and I can see. Leave me alone!’

‘Bogota! Put down that spade, and come off the grass!’

The last order, grotesque in its urban familiarity, produced a gust of anger.

‘I’ll hurt you,’ he said, sobbing with emotion. ‘By Heaven, I’ll hurt you. Leave me alone!’

He began to run, not knowing clearly where to run. He ran from the nearest blind man, because it was a horror to hit him. He stopped, and made a dash to escape from their closing ranks. He made for where a gap was wide, and the men on either side, with a quick perception of the approach of his paces, rushed in on one another. He sprang forward, and then saw he must be caught, and swish! the spade had struck. He felt the soft thud of hand and arm, and the man was down with a yell of pain, and he was through.

Through! And then he was close to the street of houses again, and blind men, whirling spades and stakes, were running with a sort of reasoned swiftness hither and thither.

He heard steps behind him just in time, and found a tall man rushing forward and swiping at the sound of him. He lost his nerve, hurled his spade a yard wide at his antagonist, and whirled about and fled, fairly yelling as he dodged another.

He was panic-stricken. He ran furiously to and fro, dodging when there was no need to dodge, and in his anxiety to see on every side of

him at once, stumbling. For a moment he was down and they heard his fall. Far away in the circumferential wall a little doorway looked like Heaven, and he set off in a wild rush for it. He did not even look round at his pursuers until it was gained, and he had stumbled across the bridge, clambered a little way among the rocks, to the surprise and dismay of a young llama, who went leaping out of sight, and lay down sobbing for breath.

And so his *coup d'état* came to an end.

He stayed outside the wall of the valley of the Blind for two nights and days without food or shelter, and meditated upon the unexpected. There were bushes, but the food on them was not ripe and hard and bitter. It weakened him to eat it. It lowered his courage. During these prowlings he repeated very frequently and always with a profounder note of derision that exploded proverb: 'In the Country of the Blind the One-eyed Man is King.' He thought chiefly of ways of fighting and conquering these people, and it grew clear that for him no practicable way was possible. He had no weapons, and now it would be hard to get one.

The canker of civilisation had got to him even in Bogota, and he could not find it in himself to go down and assassinate a blind man. Of course, if he did that, he might then dictate terms on the threat of assassinating them all. If he could get near enough to them, that is. And - sooner or later he must sleep! ...

He tried also to find food among the pine trees, to be comfortable under pine boughs while the frost fell at night and - with less confidence - to catch a llama by artifice in order to try to kill it - perhaps by hammering it with a stone - and so finally, perhaps, to eat some of it. But the llamas had their doubts of him and regarded him with distrustful brown eyes, and spat when he drew near. Fear came on him the second day, an intense fatigue, and fits of shivering. Finally he crawled down to the wall of the Country of the Blind and tried to make terms. He crawled along by the stream shouting, until two blind men came out to the gate and talked to him.

'I was mad,' he said. 'But I was only newly made.'

They said that was better.

He told them he was wiser now, and that he repented of all he had done.

Then he wept without intention, for he was very weak and ill, and they took that as a favourable sign.

They asked him if he still thought he could *'see.*

'No,' he said, 'that was folly. The word means nothing — less than nothing!'

They asked him what was overhead.

'About ten times the height of a man there is a roof above the world — of rock and wisdom and very, very smooth' ...

He burst again into hysterical tears. 'Before you ask me any more, give me some food or I shall die.'

He expected dire punishments, but these blind people showed themselves capable of great toleration. They regarded his rebellion as but one more proof of his general idiocy and inferiority; and after they had whipped him they appointed him to do the simplest and heaviest work they had for anyone to do, and he, seeing no other way of living, did submissively what he was told.

He was ill for some days and they nursed him kindly. That refined his submission. But they insisted on his lying in the dark, and that was a great misery. And the chief elders came and talked to him of the wicked levity of his mind, and reproved him so impressively for his doubts about the lid of rock that covered their cosmic casserole that he almost doubted whether indeed he was not the victim of hallucination in not seeing it overhead.

So Nunez humbled himself and became a common citizen of the Country of the Blind, and these people ceased to be a generalised people and became individualities and familiar to him, while the world beyond the mountains became more and more remote and unreal. There was Yacob, his master, a kindly man when not annoyed; there was Pedro, Yacob's nephew; and there was Medina-saroté, who was the youngest daughter of Yacob. She was little esteemed in the world of the blind, because she had a clear-cut face, and lacked the satisfying, glossy smoothness that is the blind man's ideal of feminine beauty; but Nunez thought her beautiful at first, and presently the most beautiful thing in the whole creation. Her closed eyelids were not sunken and red after the common way of the valley, but lay as though they might open again at any moment; and she had eyelashes, which were considered a grave disfigurement. And her

voice was strong, and did not satisfy the acute hearing of the valley swains. So that she had no lover.

There came a time when Nunez thought that, could he win her, he would be resigned to live in the valley for all the rest of his days.

He watched her; he sought opportunities of doing her little services, and presently he found that she observed him. Once at a rest-day gathering they sat side by side in the dim starlight, and the music was sweet. His hand came upon hers and he dared to clasp it. Then very tenderly she returned his pressure. And one day, as they were at their meal in the darkness, he felt her hand very softly seeking him, and as it chanced the fire leapt then and he saw the tenderness of her face.

He sought to speak to her.

He went to her one day when she was sitting in the summer moonlight spinning. The light made her a thing of silver and mystery. He sat down at her feet and told her he loved her, and told her how beautiful she seemed to him. He had a lover's voice, he spoke with a tender reverence that came near to awe, and she had never before been touched by adoration. She made him no definite answer, but it was clear his words pleased her.

After that he talked to her whenever he could take an opportunity. The valley became the world for him, and the world beyond the mountains where men worked and went about in sunlight seemed no more than a fairy tale he would some day pour into her ears. Very tentatively and timidly he spoke to her of sight.

At first this sight seemed to her the most poetical of fancies, and she listened to his description of the stars and the mountains and her own sweet white-lit beauty as though it was a guilty indulgence. She did not believe, she could only half understand, but she was mysteriously delighted, and it seemed to him that she completely understood.

His love lost its awe and took courage. Presently he was for demanding her of Yacob and the elders in marriage, but she became fearful and delayed. And it was one of her sisters who first told Yacob that Medina-saroté and Nunez were in love.

From the first there was very great opposition to the marriage of Nunez and Medina-saroté; not so much because they valued her as

because they held him as a being apart, an idiot, incompetent thing, below the permissible level of a man. Her sisters opposed it bitterly as bringing discredit on them all; and old Yacob, though he had formed a sort of liking for his clumsy, obedient serf, shook his head and said the thing could not be. The young men were all angry at the thought of corrupting the race, and one went so far as to revile and strike Nunez. He struck back. Then for the first time he found an advantage in seeing, even by twilight, and after that fight no one was disposed to lift a hand against him. But they still found his marriage impossible.

Old Yacob had a tenderness for his last little daughter, and was grieved to have her weep upon his shoulder.

'You see, my dear, he's an idiot! He has delusions; he can't do anything right.'

'I know,' wept Medina-saroté. 'But he's better than he was. He's getting better. And he's strong, dear father, and kind - stronger and kinder than any other man in the world. And he loves me - and, father, I love him.'

Old Yacob was greatly distressed to find her inconsolable, and, besides - what made it more distressing - he liked Nunez for many things. So he went and sat in the windowless council-chamber with the other elders, observing the trend of their talk, and said, at the proper time, 'He's better than he was. Very likely, some day, we shall find him as sane as ourselves.'

Then afterwards one of the elders, who thought deeply, had an idea. He was the great doctor among these people, their medicine man, and he had a very philosophical and inventive mind, and the idea of curing Nunez of his peculiarities appealed to him. One day when Yacob was present he turned to the topic of Nunez.

'I have examined Bogota,' he said, 'and the case is clearer to me. I think very probably he might be cured.'

'That is what I have always hoped,' said old Yacob.

'His brain is affected,' said the blind doctor.

The elders murmured assent.

'Now, *what* affects it?'

'Ah!' said old Yacob.

'This,' said the doctor, answering his own question. 'Those queer

things that are called the eyes, and which exist to make an agreeable soft depression in the face, are diseased, in the case of Bogota, in such a way as to affect his brain. They are greatly distended, he has eyelashes, and his eyelids move, and consequently his brain is in a state of constant irritation and distraction.'

'Yes?' said old Yacob. 'Yes?'

'And I think I may say with reasonable certainty that, in order to cure him completely, all that we need to do is a simple and easy surgical operation — namely, to remove those irritating bodies.'

'And then he will be sane?'

'Then he will be perfectly sane, and a quite admirable citizen.'

'Thank Heaven for the Wisdom beneath it!' said old Yacob, and went forth at once to tell Nunez of his happy hopes.

But Nunez's manner of receiving the good news struck him as being cold and disappointing.

'One might think,' he said, 'from the tone you take, that you did not care for my daughter.'

It was Medina-saroté who persuaded Nunez to face the blind surgeons.

' *You* do not want me,' he said, 'to lose my gift of sight?'

She shook her head.

'My world is sight.'

Her head dropped lower.

'There are the beautiful things, the beautiful little things - the flowers, the lichens among the rocks, the lightness and visible softness on a piece of fur, the far sky with its drifting down of clouds, the sunsets and the stars. And there is *you.* For you alone it is good to have sight, to see your sweet, serene face, your kindly lips, your dear, dear, beautiful hands folded together ... It is these eyes of mine you won, these eyes that hold me to you, that these idiots seek. Instead, I must touch you, hear you, and never see you again. I must come under that roof of rock and stone and darkness, that horrible roof under which your imagination stoops ... No, you would not have me do that?'

She shuddered to hear him speak of the Wisdom Above in such terms. Her hands went to her ears.

A disagreeable doubt had arisen in him. He stopped, and left the

thing a question.

‘I wish,’ she said, ‘sometimes—’ She paused.

‘Yes?’ said he, a little apprehensively.

‘I wish sometimes - you would not talk like that.’

‘Like what?’

‘It’s your imagination. I love much of it, but not when you speak of the Wisdom Above. When you talked of those flowers and stars it was different. But now—’

He felt cold. ‘*Now?* he said faintly.

She sat quite still.

‘You mean - you think - I should be better, better perhaps—’

He was realising things very swiftly. He felt anger, indeed, anger at the dull course of fate, but also sympathy for her lack of understanding - a sympathy near akin to pity.

‘Dear,’ he said, and he could see by her whiteness how intensely her spirit pressed against the things she could not say. He put his arms about her, and kissed her ear, and they sat for a time in silence.

‘If I were to consent to this?’ he whispered at last, in a voice that was very gentle.

She flung her arms about him weeping wildly. ‘Oh, if you would,’ she sobbed, ‘if only you would!’

‘And you have no doubt?’

‘Dear heart!’ she answered, and pressed his hands with all her strength.

‘They will hurt you but little,’ she said; ‘and you would be going through this pain - you are going through it, dear lover, for *me* ... Dear; if a woman’s heart and life can do it, I will repay you. My dearest one, my dearest with that rough, gentle voice, I will repay.’

‘So be it,’ he said.

And in silence he turned away from her. For the time he could sit by her no longer.

She could hear his slow retreating footsteps, and something in the rhythm of them threw her into a passion of weeping ...

He meant to go to a lonely place where the meadows were beautiful with white narcissus, but as he went he lifted up his eyes and saw the morning, the morning like an angel in golden armour, marching down the steeps ...

It seemed to him that before this splendour he, and this blind world in the valley, and his love, and all, were no better than the darkness of an anthill.

He did not turn aside to the narcissus fields as he had meant to do. Instead he went on, and passed through the wall of the circumference and out upon the rocks, and his eyes were always upon the sunlit ice and snow above.

He saw their infinite beauty, and his imagination soared over them to the things he would see no more.

He thought of that great free visible world he was to renounce for ever; the world that was his own, and beyond these encircling mountains; and he had a vision of those further slopes, distance beyond distance, with Bogota, a place of multitudinous stirring beauty, a glory by day, a luminous mystery by night, a place of palaces and fountains and statues and white houses, lying beautifully in the middle distance. He thought how for a day or so one might come down through passes, drawing ever nearer and nearer to its busy streets and ways. He thought of the river journey to follow, from great Bogota to the still vaster world beyond, through towns and villages, forest and desert places, the rushing river day by day, until its banks receded and the big steamers came splashing by, and one had reached the sea - the limitless sea, with its thousand islands, its thousands of islands, and its ships seen dimly far away in their incessant journeyings round and about the greater world. And there, unpent by mountains, one saw the sky — the sky, not such a disc as one saw it here, but a great arch of immeasurable blue, the blue of deeps in which the circling stars were floating.

His eyes scrutinised the imprisoning mountains with a keener inquiry.

It occurred to him that for many days now he had not looked at the cliffs and snow-slopes and gulleys by which he had slid and fallen and clambered down into the valley. He looked now; he looked but he could not find. Something had happened. Something had occurred to change and obliterate the familiar landmarks of his descent. He could not believe it; he rubbed his eyes and looked again. Perhaps he was forgetting. Some fresh fall of snow might have altered the lines and shapes of the exposed surfaces.

In another place too there had been slopes that he had studied very intently. For at times the thought of escape had been very urgent with him. Had they too changed? Had his memory begun to play tricks with him? In one place high up, five hundred feet or so, he had marked a great vein of green crystal that made a sort of slanting way upwards — but alas! died out to nothing. One might clamber to it, but above that there seemed no hope. That was still as it had been. But elsewhere?

Suddenly he stood up with a faint cry of horror in his throat.

'No!' he whispered crouching slightly. 'No. It was there before!'

But he knew it had not been there before.

It was a long narrow scar of newly exposed rock running obliquely across the face of the precipice at its vastest. Above it and below it was weathered rock. He still struggled against that conviction. But there it was plain and undeniable and *raw*. There could be little doubt of the significance of that fresh scar. An enormous mass of that stupendous mountain wall had slipped. It had shifted a few feet forward and it was being held up for a time, by some inequality of the sustaining rocks. Maybe that would hold it now, but of the shift there was no doubt whatever. Could it settle down again in its new position? He could not tell. He scanned the distant surfaces. Above he saw little white threads of water from the snow-fields pouring into this new- made crack. Below, water was already spouting freshly at a dozen points from the lower edge of the loosened mass. And then he saw that other, lesser fissures had also appeared in the mountain wall.

The more he studied that vast rock face the more he realised the possible urgency of its menace. If this movement continued the valley was doomed. He forgot his personal distress in a huge solicitude for this little community of which he had become a citizen. What ought these people to do? What could they do? Abandon their threatened houses? Make new ones on the slopes behind him? And how could he induce them to do it?

Suppose that lap of rock upon which the mass now rested *gavel* The mountain would fall - he traced the possible fall with his extended hands - so and so and so. It would fall into and beyond the lake. It would bury the lower houses. It might bury the whole village.

It might spell destruction for every living thing in the valley. Something they ought to do. Prepare refuges? Organise a possible evacuation? Set him to watch the mountains day by day? But how to make them understand?

If he went down now, very simply, very meekly, without excitement, speaking in low tones and abasing himself before them. If he said: 'I am a foolish creature. I am a disgusting creature. I am unfit to touch the hem of the garment of the very least of your wise men. But for once, I pray you, believe in my vision! Believe in my vision! Sometimes such an idiot as I can *see.* Let me have some more tests about this seeing. Because indeed, indeed, I know of a great danger and I can help you to sustain it...'

But how could he convince them? What proofs could he give them? After his earlier failures. Suppose he went down now, with his warning fresh in his mind. Suppose he *insisted.*

'Vision. Sight.' The mere words would be an outrage to them. They might not let him speak at all. And even then if he was permitted to speak, already it might be too late. At the best it would only set them discussing his case afresh. Almost certainly he would anger them, for how could he tell his tale and not question the Wisdom Above. They might take him and end the recurrent nuisance of him by putting out his eyes forthwith, and the only result of his intervention would be that he would be nursing his bloody eye sockets when the disaster fell. The mountain might hold for weeks and months yet, but again it might not wait at all. Even now it might be creeping. Even now the heat of the day must be expanding those sullen vast masses, thawing the night ice that held them together. Even now the trickling snowwater was lubricating the widening fissures.

Suddenly he saw, he saw plainly, a new crack leap across a shining green mass, and then across the valley came the sound of it like the shot of a gun that starts a race. The mass was moving *now*! There was no more time to waste. No more time for pleas and plans.

'Stop!' he cried. 'Stop!' and put out his hands as if to thrust back that slow deliberate catastrophe. It is preposterous but he believes he said, 'Wait one minute!'

He ran headlong to the little bridge and the gate and rushed down

towards the houses, waving his arms and shouting. ‘The mountain is falling,’ he screamed. ‘The whole mountain is falling upon you all. Medina-saroté! Medina-saroté!’

He clattered to the house of old Yacob and burst in upon the sleepers. He shook them and shouted at them, going from one to the other.

‘He’s gone mad again,’ they cried aghast at him and even Medina- saroté cowered away from his excitement.

‘Come,’ he said. ‘Come. Even now it is falling. The mountain is falling.’ And he seized her wrist in a grip of steel. ‘Come!’ he cried so masterfully that in terror she obeyed him.

But outside the house there was a crowd that his shouts and noise had awakened, and a score of men had run out already and assembled outside the house and stood in his way.

‘Let me pass,’ he cried. ‘Let me pass. And come with me - up the further slopes there before it is too late.’

‘This is too much. This is the last blasphemy,’ shrieked one of the elders. ‘Seize him. Hold him!’

‘I tell you the mountain is falling. It is coming down upon you even now as you hold me here.’

‘The Wisdom Above us that loves and protects us *cannot* fall.’

‘Listen. That rumbling?’

‘There has been rumbling like that before. The Wisdom is warning us. It is because of your blasphemies.’

‘And the ground rocking?’

‘Brothers cast him out! Cast him out of the valley. We have been foolish to harbour him so long. His sin is more than our Providence can endure.’

‘But I tell you the rocks are falling. The whole mountain is coming down. Listen and you can hear the crashing and the rending of them.’

He was aware of a loud hoarse voice intoning through the uproar and drowning his own. ‘The Wisdom Above loves us. It protects us from all harm. No evil can touch us while the Wisdom is over us. Cast him forth! Cast him forth. Let him take our sins upon him and go!’ ‘Out you go, Bogota,’ cried a chorus of voices. ‘Out you go.’

‘Medina-saroté! Come with me. Come out of this place!’ Pedro

threw protective arms about his cousin.

‘Medina-saroté!’ cried Nunez. ‘Medina-saroté!’

They pushed him, struggling fiercely, up the path towards the boundaries. They showed all the cruelty now of frightened men. For the gathering noise of the advancing rocks dismayed them all. They wanted to out-do each other in repudiating him. They beat at his face with their fists and kicked his shins and ankles and feet. One or two jabbed at him with knives. He could not see Medina-saroté any longer and he could not see the shifting cliffs because of the blows and because of the blood that poured from a cut in his forehead, but the voices about him seemed to fade as the rumbling clatter of falling fragments wove together and rose into a thunderous roar. He shouted weeping for Medina-saroté to escape as they drove him before them.

They thrust him through a little door and flung him out on to a stony slope with a deliberate violence that sent a flock of llamas helter- skelter. He lay like a cast clout. ‘And there you stay - and starve,’ said one. ‘You and your — *seeing*.

He lifted his head for a last reply.

‘I tell you. You will be dead before I am.’

‘You *fool!* said the one he had fought, and came back to kick him again and again. ‘Will you never learn reason?’ But he turned hastily to join his fellows when Nunez struggled clumsily to his feet.

He stood swaying like a drunken man.

He had no strength in his limbs. He did his best to wipe the blood from his eyes. He looked at the impending mountain-fall, he looked for the high rocky ledge he had noted that morning and then he turned a despairful face to the encircling doom of the valley. But he did not attempt to climb any further away.

‘What’s the good of going alone?’ he said. ‘Even if I could. I shall only starve up there.’

And then suddenly he saw Medina-saroté seeking him. She emerged from the little door and she was calling his name. In some manner she had contrived to slip away and come to search for him. ‘Bogota my darling!’ she cried. ‘What have they done to you? Oh *what* have they *done* to you?’

He staggered to meet her, calling her name over and over again.

In another moment her hands were upon his face and she was

wiping away the blood and searching softly and skilfully for his cuts and bruises.

‘You must stay here now,’ she panted. ‘You must stay here for a time. Until you repent. Until you learn to repent. Why did you behave so madly? Why did you say those horrible blasphemies? You don’t know you say them, but how are they to tell that? If you come back now they will certainly kill you. I will bring you food. Stay here.’

‘Neither of us can stay here. *Look!*

She drew the air in sharply between her teeth at that horrible word ‘look’ which showed that his madness was still upon him.

‘There! That thunder!’

‘What is it?’

‘A stream of rocks are pouring down by the meadows and it is only the beginning of them. *Look* at them. Listen anyhow to the drumming and beating of them! What do you think those sounds mean? *That* and that! Stones! They are bouncing and dancing across the lower meadows by the lake and the waters of the lake are brimming over and rising up to the further houses. Come, my darling. Come! Do not question, but come!’

She stood hesitating for a moment. There was a frightful menace now in the storm of sounds that filled the air. Then she crept into his arms. ‘I am afraid,’ she said.

He drew her to him and with a renewal of strength began to climb, guiding her feet. His blood smeared her face and there was no time to remedy that. At first she dragged upon him and then, perceiving the strain she caused, she helped and supported him. She was sobbing but also she obeyed.

He concentrated himself now upon reaching that distant shelf, but presently he had to halt for breath, and then only was he free to look back across the valley.

He saw that the foot of the cliff was sliding now down into the lake, scooping its waters before it towards the remoter houses, and that the cascade of rocks was now swifter and greater. They drove over the ground in leaps and bounds with a frightful suggestion in their movements as though they were hunting victims. They were smashing down trees and bushes and demolishing walls and

buildings, and still the main bulk of the creeping mountain, deprived now of its supports, had to gather momentum and fall. It was breaking up as it came down. And now little figures appeared from the houses and ran hither and thither ...

For the first time Nunez was glad that Medina-saroté was blind.

'Climb! my darling,' he said. 'Climb!'

'I do not understand.' 'Climb!'

A rush of terrified llamas came crowding up past them.

'It is so steep, so steep here. Why are these creatures coming with us?'

'Because they understand. Because they know we are with them. Push through them. Climb.'

With an effect of extreme deliberation that mountain-side hung over the doomed valley. For some tense instants Nunez did not hear a sound. His whole being was concentrated in his eyes. Then came the fall and then a stunning concussion that struck his chest a giant's blow. Medina-saroté was flung against the rocks and clung to them with clawing hands. Nunez had an instant's impression of a sea of rocks and earth and fragments of paths and walls and houses, pouring in a swift flood towards him. A spray of wind-driven water bedewed him; they were pelted with mud and broken rock fragments, the wave of debris surged and receded a little and abruptly came still, and then colossal pillars of mist and dust rose up solemnly and deliberately and mounted towering overhead and unfolded and rolled together about them until they were in an impenetrable stinging fog. Silence fell again upon the world and the valley of the Blind was hidden from him for ever more.

Pallid to the centres of their souls, these two survivors climbed slowly to the crystalline ridge and crouched upon it.

And when some hour or so later that swirling veil of mist and dust had grown thinner and they could venture to move and plan what they would do, Nunez saw through a rent in it far away across a wilderness of tumbled broken rock and in a V-shaped cleft of the broken mountains, the green rolling masses of the foothills, and far beyond them one shining glimpse of the ocean.

Two days later he and Medina-saroté were found by two hunters who had come to explore the scene of this disaster. They were trying

to clamber down to the outer world and they were on the verge of exhaustion. They had lived upon water, fern roots and a few berries. They collapsed completely when the hunters hailed them.

They lived to tell their tale, and to settle in Quito among Nunez's people. There he is still living. He is a prosperous tradesman and plainly a very honest man. She is a sweet and gentle lady, her basket-work and her embroidery are marvellous, though of course she makes no use of colour, and she speaks Spanish with an old-fashioned accent very pleasant to the ear.

Greatly daring, I think, they have had four children and they are as stout and sturdy as their father and they can see.

He will talk about his experience when the mood is on him but she says very little. One day, however, when she was sitting with my wife while Nunez and I were away, she talked a little of her childhood in the valley and of the simple faith and happiness of her upbringing. She spoke of it with manifest regret. It had been a life of gentle routines, free from all complications.

It was plain she loved her children and it was plain she found them and much of the comings and goings about her difficult to understand. She had never been able to love and protect them as she had once loved and protected Nunez.

My wife ventured on a question she had long wanted to ask. 'You have never consulted oculists,' she began.

'Never,' said Medina-saroté. 'I have never wanted to *see.'*

'But colour — and form and distance!'

'I have no use for your colours and your stars,' said Medina-saroté. 'I do not want to lose my faith in the Wisdom Above.'

'But after all that has happened! Don't you want to see Nunez; see what he is like?'

'But I know what he is like and seeing him might put us apart. He would not be so near to me. The loveliness of *your* world is a complicated and fearful loveliness and mine is simple and near. I had rather Nunez saw for me - because he knows nothing of fear.' 'But the *beauty*!' cried my wife.

'It may be beautiful,' said Medina-saroté, 'but it must be very terrible to *see.'*

THE STORY OF THE STONE AGE

This short story was written in 1897 and was featured in three parts between May and August 1897 in *The Idler* magazine. It tells the story of a caveman named Ugh-lomi, who kills his rival, a tribal leader Uya. It is an unusual work for Wells, featuring speaking animals.

1. UGH-LOMI AND UYA

This story is of a time beyond the memory of man, before the beginning of history, a time when one might have walked dryshod from France (as we call it now) to England, and when a broad and sluggish Thames flowed through its marshes to meet its father Rhine, flowing through a wide and level country that is under water in these latter days, and which we know by the name of the North Sea. In that remote age the valley which runs along the foot of the Downs did not exist, and the south of Surrey was a range of hills, fir-clad on the middle slopes, and snow-capped the better part of the year. The cores its summits still remain as Leith Hill, and Pitch Hill, and Hindhead. On the lower slopes of the range below the grassy spaces where the wild horses grazed were forests of yew and sweet-chestnut and elm, and the thickets and dark places hid the grizzly bear and the hyaena, and the grey apes clambered through the branches. And still lower amidst the woodland and marsh and open grass along the Wey did this little drama play itself out to the end that I have to tell. Fifty thousand years ago it was, fifty thousand years — if the estimates of the geologists are correct.

And in those days the spring-time was as joyful as it is now, and sent the blood coursing in just the same fashion. The afternoon sky was blue with piled white clouds sailing through it, and the south-west wind came like a soft caress. The new-come swallows drove to and fro. The reaches of the river were spangled with white ranunculus, the marshy places were starred with lady's-smock and lit with marshmallow wherever the regiments of the sedges lowered their swords, and the northward moving hippopotami, shiny black monsters, sporting clumsily, came floundering and blundering through it all, rejoicing dimly and possessed with one clear idea, to splash the river muddy.

Up the river and well in sight of the hippopotami, a number of little buff-coloured animals dabbled in the water. There was no fear, no rivalry, and no enmity between them and the hippopotami. As the great bulks came crashing through the reeds and smashed the mirror of the water into silvery splashes, these little creatures shouted and

gesticulated with glee. It was the surest sign of high spring. “Boloo!” they cried. “Baayah. Boloo!” They were the children of the men folk, the smoke of whose encampment rose from the knoll at the river’s bend. Wild-eyed youngsters they were, with matted hair and little broad-nosed impish faces, covered (as some children are covered even nowadays) with a delicate down of hair. They were narrow in the loins and long in the arms. And their ears had no lobes, and had little pointed tips, a thing that still, in rare instances, survives. Stark-naked vivid little gipsies, as active as monkeys and as full of chatter, though a little wanting in words.

Their elders were hidden from the wallowing hippopotami by the crest of the knoll. The human squatting-place was a trampled area among the dead brown fronds of Royal Fern, through which the crosiers of this year’s growth were unrolling to tie light and warmth. The fire was a smouldering heap of char, light grey and black, replenished by the old women from time to time with brown leaves. Most of the men were asleep — they slept sitting with their foreheads on their knees. They had killed that morning a good quarry, enough for all, a deer that had been wounded in a rutting fight; so that there had been no quarrelling among them, and some of the women were still gnawing the bones that lay scattered about. Others were making a heap of leaves and sticks to feed Brother Fire when the darkness came again, that he might grow strong and tall therewith, and guard them against the beasts. And two were piling flints that they brought, an armful at a time, from the bend of the river where the children were at play.

None of these buff-skinned savages were clothed, but some wore about their hips rude girdles of adder-skin or crackling undressed hide, from which depended little bags, not made, but torn from the paws of beasts, and carrying the rudely-dressed flints that were men’s chief weapons and tools. And one woman, the mate of Uya the Cunning Man, wore a wonderful necklace of perforated fossils — that others had worn before her. Beside some of the sleeping men lay the big antlers of the elk, with the tines chipped to sharp edges, and long sticks, hacked at the ends with flints into sharp points. There was little else save these things and the smouldering fire to mark these human beings off from the wild animals that ranged the

country. But Uya the Cunning did not sleep, but sat with a bone in his hand and scraped busily thereon with a flint, a thing no animal would do. He was the oldest man in the tribe, beetle-browed, prognathous, lank-armed; he had a beard and his cheeks were hairy, and his chest and arms were black with thick hair. And by virtue both of his strength and cunning he was master of the tribe, and his share was always the most and the best.

Eudena had hidden herself among the alders, because she was afraid of Uya. She was still a girl, and her eyes were bright and her smile pleasant to see. He had given her a piece of the liver, a man's piece, and a wonderful treat for a girl to get; but as she took it the other woman with the necklace had looked at her, an evil glance, and Ugh-lomi had made a noise in his throat. At that, Uya had looked at him long and steadfastly, and Ugh-lomi's face had fallen. And then Uya had looked at her. She was frightened and she had stolen away, while the feeding was still going on, and Uya was busy with the marrow of a bone. Afterwards he had wandered about as if looking for her. And now she crouched among the alders, wondering mightily what Uya might be doing with the flint and the bone. And Ugh-lomi was not to be seen.

Presently a squirrel came leaping through the alders, and she lay so quiet the little man was within six feet of her before he saw her. Whereupon he dashed up a stem in a hurry and began to chatter and scold her. "What are you doing here," he asked, "away from the other men beasts?" "Peace," said Eudena, but he only chattered more, and then she began to break off the little black cones to throw at him. He dodged and defied her, and she grew excited and rose up to throw better, and then she saw Uya coming down the knoll. He had seen the movement of her pale arm amidst the thicket — he was very keen-eyed.

At that she forgot the squirrel and set off through the alders and reeds as fast as she could go. She did not care where she went so long as she escaped Uya. She splashed nearly knee-deep through a swampy place, and saw in front of her a slope of ferns — growing more slender and greener as they passed up out of the light into the shade of the young chestnut trees. She was soon amidst the trees — she was very fleet of foot, and she ran on and on, until the forest was

old and the trees great, and the vines about their stems where the light came were thick as young trees, and the ropes of ivy stout and tight. On she went, and she doubled and doubled again, and then at last lay down amidst some ferns in a hollow place near a thicket, and listened with her heart beating in her ears.

She heard footsteps presently rustling among the dead leaves, far off, and they died away and everything was still again, except the scandalising of the midges — for the evening was drawing on — and the incessant whisper of the leaves. She laughed silently to think the cunning Uya should go by her. She was not frightened. Sometimes, playing with the other girls and lads, she had fled into the wood, though never so far as this. It was pleasant to be hidden and alone.

She lay a long time there, glad of her escape, and then she sat up listening.

It was a rapid pattering growing louder and coming towards her, and in a little while she could hear grunting noises and the snapping of twigs. It was a drove of the lean grisly wild swine. She turned about her, for a boar is an ill fellow to pass too closely, on account of the sideway slash of his tusks, and she made off slantingly through the trees. But the patter came nearer, they were not feeding as they wandered, but going fast — or else they would not overtake her — and she caught the limb of a tree, swung on to it, and ran up the stem with something of the agility of a monkey.

Down below the sharp bristling backs of the swine were already passing when she looked down. And she knew the short, sharp grunts they made meant fear. What were they afraid of? A man? They were in a great hurry for just a man.

And then, so suddenly it made her grip on the branch tighten involuntarily, a fawn started in the brake and rushed after the swine. Something else went by, low and grey, with a long body; she did not know what it was, indeed she saw it only momentarily through the interstices of the young leaves; and then there came a pause.

She remained stiff and expectant, rigid almost as though she was a part of the tree she clung to, peering down.

Then far away among the trees, clear for a moment, then hidden, then visible knee-deep in ferns, then gone again, ran a man. She knew it was young Ugh-lomi by the fair colour of his hair, and there

was red upon his face. Somehow his frantic flight and that scarlet mark made her feel sick. And then nearer, running heavily and breathing hard, came another man also running. At first she could not see, and then she saw, foreshortened and clear to her Uya, running with great strides and his eyes staring. He was not going after Ugh-lomi. His face was white. It was Uya — afraid! He passed, and was still loud hearing, when something else, something large and with grizzled fur, swinging along with soft swift strides, came rushing in pursuit of him.

Eudena suddenly became rigid, ceased to breathe, her clutch convulsive, and her eyes starting.

She had never seen the thing before she did not even see him clearly now, but she knew at once it was the Terror of the Woodshade. His name was a legend, the children would frighten one another, frighten even themselves with his name and run screaming to the squatting-place. No man had ever killed any of his kind. Even the mighty mammoth feared his Anger. It was the grizzly bear, the lord of world as the world went then.

As he ran he made a continuous growling rumble. “Men in my very lair! Fighting and blood. At the very mouth of my lair. Men, men, men. Fighting and blood.” For he was the lord of the wood and of the caves.

Long after he had passed she remained, a girl of stone, staring down through the branches. All her power of action had gone from her. She gripped by instinct with hands and knees and feet. It was some time before she could think, and then only one thing was clear in her mind, that the Terror was between her and the tribe — that it would be impossible to descend.

Presently when her fear was a little abated she clambered into a more comfortable position, where a great branch forked. The trees rose about her, so that she could see nothing of Brother Fire, who is black by day. Birds began to stir about her, and things that had gone into hiding for fear of her movements crept out...

After a time the blue overhead deepened, and the taller branches flamed out at the touch of the sunset. High overhead the rooks, who were wiser than men, went cawing home to their squatting-places among the elms. Looking down, things were clearer and darker.

Eudena thought of going back to the squatting-place; she let herself down some way, and then the fear of the Terror of the Woodshade came again. While she hesitated a rabbit squealed dismally, and she dared not descend farther.

The shadows gathered, and the deeps of the forest began stirring. Eudena went up the tree again to be nearer the light. Down below the shadows came out of their hiding-places and walked abroad. Overhead the blue deepened. A dreadful stillness came, and then the leaves began whispering.

Eudena shivered and thought of Brother Fire.

The shadows now were gathering in the trees, they sat on the branches and watched her. Branches and leaves were turned to ominous, quiet black shapes that would spring on her if she stirred. Then the white owl, flitting silently, came ghostly through the shades. Darker grew the world and darker, until the leaves and twigs against the sky were black, and the ground was hidden.

She remained there all night, an age-long vigil, straining her ears for the things that went on below in the darkness, and keeping motionless lest some stealthy beast should discover her. Man in those days was never alone in the dark, save for such rare accidents as this. Age after age he had learnt the lesson of its terror — a lesson we poor children of his have nowadays painfully to unlearn. Eudena, though in age a woman, was in heart like a little child. She kept as still, poor little animal, as a hare before it is started.

The stars gathered and watched her — her one grain of comfort. In one bright one she fancied there was something like Ugh-lomi. Then she fancied it was Ugh-lomi. And near him, red and duller, was Uya, and as the night passed Ugh-lomi fled before him up the sky.

She tried to see Brother Fire, who guarded the squatting-place from beasts, but he was not in sight. And far away she heard the mammoths trumpeting as they went down to the drinking-place, and once some huge bulk with heavy paces hurried along, making a noise like a calf, but what it was she could not see. But she thought from the voice it was Yaaa the rhinoceros, who stabs with his nose, goes always alone, and rages without cause.

At last the little stars began to hide, and then the larger ones. It was like all the animals vanishing before the Terror. The Sun was

coming, lord of the sky, as the grizzly was lord of the forest. Eudena wondered what would happen if one star stayed behind. And then the sky paled to the dawn.

When the daylight came the fear of lurking things passed, and she could descend. She was stiff, but not so stiff as you would have been, dear young lady (by virtue of your upbringing), and as she had not been trained to eat at least once in three hours, but instead had often fasted three days, she did not feel uncomfortably hungry. She crept down the tree very cautiously, and went her way stealthily through the wood, and not a squirrel sprang or deer started but the terror of the grizzly bear froze her marrow.

Her desire was now to find her people again. Her dread of Uya the Cunning was consumed by a greater dread of loneliness. But she had lost her direction. She had run heedlessly overnight, and she could not tell whether the squatting-place was sunward or where it lay. Ever and again she stopped and listened, and at last, very far away, she heard a measured chinking. It was so faint even in the morning stillness that she could tell it must be far away. But she knew the sound was that of a man sharpening a flint.

Presently the trees began to thin out, and then came a regiment of nettles barring the way. She turned aside, and then she came to a fallen tree that she knew, with a noise of bees about it. And so presently she was in sight of the knoll, very far off, and the river under it, and the children and the hippopotami just as they had been yesterday, and the thin spire of smoke swaying in the morning breeze. Far away by the river was the cluster of alders where she had hidden. And at the sight of that the fear of Uya returned, and she crept into a thicket of bracken, out of which a rabbit scuttled, and lay awhile to watch the squatting-place.

The men were mostly out of sight, saving Wau, the flint-chopper; and at that she felt safer. They were away hunting food, no doubt. Some of the women too, were down in the stream, stooping intent, seeking mussels, crayfish, and water-snails, and at the sight of their occupation Eudena felt hungry. She rose, and ran through the fern, designing to join them. As she went she heard a voice among the bracken calling softly. She stopped. Then suddenly she heard a rustle behind her, and turning, saw Ugh-lomi rising out of the fern. There

were streaks of brown blood and dirt on his face, and his eyes were fierce, and the white stone of Uya, the white Fire Stone, that none but Uya dared to touch, was in his hand. In a stride he was beside her and gripped her arm. He swung her about, and thrust her before him towards the woods. "Uya," he said, and waved his arms about. She heard a cry, looked back, and saw all the women standing up, and two wading out of the stream. Then came a nearer howling, and the old woman with the beard, who watched the fire on the knoll, was waving her arms, and Wau, the man who had been chipping the flint, was getting to his feet. The little children too, were hurrying and shouting.

"Come!" said Ugh-lomi, and dragged her by the arm.

She still did not understand.

"Uya," said Ugh-lomi, and she glanced back again at the screaming curve of figures, and dimly understood.

Wau and all the women and children were coming towards them, a scattered array of buff shock-headed figures, howling, leaping, and crying. Over the knoll two youths hurried. Down among the ferns to the right came a man, heading them off from the wood. Ugh-lomi left her arm, and the two began running side by side, leaping the bracken and stepping clear and wide. Eudena, knowing her fleetness and the fleetness of Ugh-lomi, laughed aloud at the unequal chase. They were an exceptionally straight-limbed couple for those days.

They soon cleared the open, and drew near the wood of chestnut-trees again — neither afraid now because neither was alone. They slackened their pace, already not excessive. And suddenly Eudena cried and swerved aside, pointing, and looking up through the tree-stems. Ugh-lomi saw the feet and legs of men running towards him. Eudena was already running off at a tangent. And as he too turned to follow her they heard the voice of Uya coming through the trees, and roaring out his rage at them.

Then terror came in their hearts, not the terror that numbs, but the terror that makes one silent and swift. They were cut off now on two sides. They were in a sort of corner of pursuit. On the right hand, and near by them, came the men swift and heavy, with bearded Uya, antler in hand, leading them; and on the left, scattered as one scatters corn, yellow dashes among the fern and grass, ran Wau and the

women; and even the little children from the shallow had joined the chase. The two parties converged upon them. Off they went, with Eudena ahead.

They knew there was no mercy for them. There was no hunting so sweet to these ancient men as the hunting of men. Once the fierce passion of the chase was lit, the feeble beginnings of humanity in them were thrown to the winds. And Uya in the night had marked Ugh-lomi with the death word. Ugh-lomi was the day's quarry.

They ran straight — it was their only chance — taking whatever ground came in the way — a spread of stinging nettles, an open glade, a clump of grass out of which a hyaena fled snarling. Then woods again, long stretches of shady leaf-mould and moss under the green trunks. Then a stiff slope, tree-clad, and long vistas of trees, a glade, a succulent green area of black mud, a wide open space again, and then a clump of lacerating brambles, with beast tracks through it. Behind them the chase trailed out and scattered, with Uya ever at their heels. Eudena kept the first place, running light and with her breath easy, for Ugh-lomi carried the Fire Stone in his hand.

It told on his pace — not at first, but after a time. His footsteps behind her suddenly grew remote. Glancing over her shoulder as they crossed another open space, Eudena saw that Ugh-lomi was many yards behind her, and Uya close upon him, with antler already raised in the air to strike him down. Wau and the others were but just emerging from the shadow of the woods.

Seeing Ugh-lomi in peril, Eudena ran sideways, looking back, threw up her arms and cried aloud, just as the antler flew. And young Ugh-lomi, expecting this and understanding her cry, ducked his head, so that the missile merely struck his scalp lightly, making but a trivial wound, and flew over him. He turned forthwith, the quartzite Fire Stone in both hands, and hurled it straight at Uya's body as he ran loose from the throw. Uya shouted, but could not dodge it. It took him under the ribs, heavy and flat, and he reeled and went down without a cry. Ugh-lomi caught up the antler — one tine of it was tipped with his own blood — and came running on again with a red trickle just coming out of his hair.

Uya rolled over twice, and lay a moment before he got up, and then he did not run fast. The colour of his face was changed. Wau

overtook him, and then others, and he coughed and laboured in his breath. But he kept on.

At last the two fugitives gained the bank of the river, where the stream ran deep and narrow, and they still had fifty yards in hand of Wau, the foremost pursuer, the man who made the smiting stones. He carried one, a large flint, the shape of an oyster and double the size, chipped to a chisel edge, in either hand.

They sprang down the steep bank into the stream, rushed through the water, swam the deep current in two or three strokes, and came out wading again, dripping and refreshed, to clamber up the farther bank. It was undermined, and with willows growing thickly therefrom, so that it needed clambering. And while Eudena was still among the silvery branches and Ugh-lomi still in the water — for the antler had encumbered him — Wau came up against the sky on the opposite bank, and the smiting stone, thrown cunningly, took the side of Eudena's knee. She struggled to the top and fell.

They heard the pursuers shout to one another, and Ugh-lomi, climbing to her and moving jerkily to mar Wau's aim, felt the second smiting stone graze his ear, and heard the water splashing below him.

Then it was Ugh-lomi, the stripling, proved himself to have come to man's estate. For running on, he found Eudena fell behind, limping, and at that he turned, and crying savagely and with a face terrible with sudden wrath and trickling blood, ran swiftly past her back to the bank, whirling the antler round his head. And Eudena kept on, running stoutly still, though she must needs limp at every step, and the pain was already sharp.

So that Wau, rising over the edge and clutching the straight willow branches, saw Ugh-lomi towering over him, gigantic against the blue; saw his whole body swing round, and the grip of his hands upon the antler. The edge of the antler came sweeping through the air, and he saw no more. The water under the osiers whirled and eddied and went crimson six feet down the stream. Uya following, stopped knee-high across the stream, and the man who was swimming turned about.

The other men who trailed after — they were none of them very mighty men (for Uya was more cunning than strong, brooking no sturdy rivals —) slackened momentarily at the sight of Ugh-lomi

standing there above the willows, bloody and terrible, between them and the halting girl, with the huge antler waving in his hand. It seemed as though he had gone into the water a youth, and come out of it a man full grown.

He knew what there was behind him. A broad stretch of grass, and then a thicket, and in that Eudena could hide. That was clear in his mind, though his thinking powers were too feeble to see what should happen thereafter. Uya stood knee-deep, undecided and unarmed. His heavy mouth hung open, showing his canine teeth, and he panted heavily. His side was flushed and bruised under the hair. The other man beside him carried a sharpened stick. The rest of the hunters came up one by one to the top of the bank, hairy, long-armed men clutching flints and sticks. Two ran off along the bank down stream, and then clambered down to the water, where Wau had come to the surface struggling weakly. They gibbered at him without any sane attempt to help, and presently he went under again. Two others threatened Ugh-lomi from the bank.

He answered back, shouts, vague insults, gestures. Then Uya, who had been standing hesitating, roared with rage, and whirling his fists came plunging through the water. His followers came splashing after him.

Ugh-lomi glanced over his shoulder and found Eudena already vanished into the thicket. He would perhaps have waited for Uya, but Uya preferred to spar in the water below him until the others were beside him. Human tactics in those days, in all serious fighting, were the tactics of the pack. Prey that turned at bay they gathered around and rushed. Ugh-lomi felt the rush coming, and hurling the antler at Uya, turned about and fled.

When he halted to look back from the shadow of the thicket, he found only three of his pursuers had followed him across the river, and they were going back again. Uya, with a bleeding mouth, was on the farther side of the stream again, but lower down, and he held his hand to his side. The others were in the river dragging something to shore. For a time at least the chase was intermitted.

Ugh-lomi stood watching for a space, and snarled at the sight of Uya. Then he turned and plunged into the thicket.

In a minute, Eudena came hastening to join him, and they went on

hand in hand. He dimly perceived the pain she suffered from the cut and bruised knee, and chose the easier ways. But they went on all that day, mile after mile, through wood and thicket, until at last they came to the chalk land, open grass with rare woods of beech, and the birch growing near water, and they saw the Wealden mountains nearer, and groups of horses grazing together. They went circumspectly, keeping always near thicket and cover, for this was a strange region — even its ways were strange. Steadily the ground rose, until the chestnut forests spread wide and blue below them, and the Thames marshes shone silvery, high and far. They saw no men, for in those days men were still only just come into this part of the world, and were moving but slowly along the river-ways. Towards evening they came on the river again, but now it ran in a gorge, between high cliffs of white chalk that sometimes overhung it. Down the cliffs was a scrub of birches and there were many birds there. And high up the cliff was a little shelf by a tree, whereon they clambered to pass the night.

They had had scarcely any food; it was not the time of year for berries, and they had no time to go aside to snare or waylay. They tramped in a hungry weary silence, gnawing at twigs and leaves. But over the surface of the cliffs were a multitude of snails, and in a bush were the freshly laid eggs of a little bird, and then Ugh-lomi threw at and killed a squirrel in a beech-tree, so that at last they fed well. Ugh-lomi watched during the night, his chin on his knees; and he heard young foxes crying hard by, and the noise of mammoths down the gorge, and the hyaenas yelling and laughing far away. It was chilly, but they dared not light a fire. Whenever he dozed, his spirit went abroad, and straightway met with the spirit of Uya, and they fought. And always Ugh-lomi was paralysed so that he could not smite nor run, and then he would awake suddenly. Eudena too, dreamt evil things of Uya, so that they both awoke with the fear of him in their hearts, and by the light of the dawn they saw a woolly rhinoceros go blundering down the valley.

During the day they caressed one another and were glad of the sunshine, and Eudena's leg was so stiff she sat on the ledge all day. Ugh-lomi found great flints sticking out of the cliff face, greater than any he had seen, and he dragged some to the ledge and began

chipping, so as to be armed against Uya when he came again. And at one he laughed heartily, and Eudena laughed, and they threw it about in derision. It had a hole in it. They stuck their fingers through it, it was very funny indeed. Then they peeped at one another through it. Afterwards, Ugh-lomi got himself a stick, and thrusting by chance at this foolish flint, the stick went in and stuck there. He had rammed it in too tightly to withdraw it. That was still stranger — scarcely funny, terrible almost, and for a time Ugh-lomi did not greatly care to touch the thing. It was as if the flint had bit and held with its teeth. But then he got familiar with the odd combination. He swung it about, and perceived dimly that the stick with the heavy stone on the end struck a better blow than anything he knew. He went to and fro swinging it, and striking with it; but later he tired of it and threw it aside. In the afternoon he went up over the brow of the white cliff, and lay watching by a rabbit-warren until the rabbits came out to play. There were no men thereabouts, and the rabbits were heedless. He threw a smiting stone he had made and got a kill.

That night they made a fire from flint sparks and bracken fronds, and talked and caressed by it. And in their sleep Uya's spirit came again, and suddenly, while Ugh-lomi was trying to fight vainly, the foolish flint on the stick came into his hand, and struck Uya with it, and behold! It killed him. But afterwards came other dreams of Uya — for spirits take a lot of killing, and he had to be killed again. Then after that the stone would not keep on the stick. He awoke tired and rather gloomy, and was sulky all the forenoon, in spite of Eudena's kindliness, and instead of hunting he sat chipping a sharp edge to the singular flint, and looking strangely at her. Then he bound the perforated flint on to the stick with strips of rabbit. And afterwards he walked up and down the ledge, striking with it, and muttering to himself, and thinking of Uya. It felt very fine and heavy in the hand.

Several days, more than there was any counting in those days, five days, it may be, or six, did Ugh-lomi and Eudena stay on that shelf in the gorge of the river, and they lost all fear of men, and their fire burnt redly of a night. And they were very merry together; there was food every day, sweet water, and no enemies. Eudena's knee was well in a couple of days, for those ancient savages had quick-healing flesh. Indeed, they were very happy.

On one of those days, although it has little to do with this story, Ugh-lomi dropped a chunk of flint on the cliff. He saw it fall, and go bounding across the river bank into the river, and after laughing and thinking it over a little he tried another. This smashed a bush of hazel in the most interesting way. They spent all the morning dropping stones from the ledge and in the afternoon they discovered this new and interesting pastime was also possible from the cliff brow. The next day they had forgotten this delight. Or at least, it seemed they had forgotten.

But Uya came in dreams to spoil the paradise. Three nights he came fighting Ugh-lomi. In the morning after these dreams Ugh-lomi would walk up and down, threatening him and swinging the axe, and at last came the night after Ugh-lomi brained the otter, and they had feasted. Uya went too far. Ugh-lomi awoke, scowling under his heavy brows, and he took his axe, and extending his hand towards Eudena he bade her wait for him upon the ledge. Then he clambered down the white declivity, glanced up once from the foot of it and flourished his axe, and without looking back again went striding along the river bank until the overhanging cliff at the bend hid him.

Two days and nights did Eudena sit alone by the fire on the ledge waiting, and in the night the beasts howled over the cliffs and down the valley, and on the cliff over against her the hunched hyaenas prowled black against the sky. But no evil thing came near her save fear. Once far away, she heard the roaring of a lion, following the horses as they came northward over the grass lands with the spring. All that time she waited — the waiting that is pain.

And the third day Ugh-lomi came back, up the river. The plumes of a raven were in his hair. The axe was red-stained, and had long dark hairs upon it, and he carried the necklace that had marked the favourite of Uya in his hand. He walked in the soft places, giving no heed to his trail. Save a raw cut below his jaw there was not a wound upon him. “Uya!” cried Ugh-lomi exultant, and Eudena saw it was well. He put the necklace on Eudena, and they ate and drank together. And after eating he began to rehearse the whole story from the beginning, when Uya had cast his eyes on Eudena, and Uya and Ugh-lomi, fighting in the forest, had been chased by the bear, eking out his scanty words with abundant pantomime, springing to his feet

and whirling the stone axe round when it came to the fighting. The last fight was a mighty one, stamping and shouting, and once a blow at the fire that sent a torrent of sparks up into the night. And Eudena sat red in the light of the fire, gloating on him, her face flushed and her eyes shining, and the necklace Uya had made about her neck. It was a splendid time, and the stars that look down on us looked down on her, our ancestor — who has been dead now these fifty thousand years.

2. THE CAVE BEAR

In the days when Eudena and Ugh-lomi fled from the people of Uya towards the fir-clad mountains of the Weald, across the forests of sweet chestnut and the grass-clad chalkland, and hid themselves at last in the gorge of the river between the chalk cliffs, men were few and their squatting-places far between. The nearest men to them were those of the tribe, a full day's journey down the river, and up the mountains there were none. Man was indeed a newcomer to this part of the world in that ancient time, coming slowly along the rivers, generation after generation, from one squatting-place to another, from the south-westward. And the animals that held the land, the hippopotami and rhinoceros of the river valleys, the horses of the grass plains, the deer and swine of the woods, the grey apes in the branches, the cattle of the uplands, feared him but little — let alone the mammoths in the mountains and the elephants that came through the land in the summer-time out of the south. For why should they fear him, with but the rough, chipped flints that he had not learnt to haft and which he threw but ill, and the poor spear of sharpened wood, as all his weapons against hoof and horn, tooth and claw?

Andoo, the huge cave bear, who lived in the cave up the gorge, had never even seen a man in all his wise and respectable life, until midway through one night, as he was prowling down the gorge along the cliff edge, he saw the glare of Eudena's fire upon the ledge, and Eudena red and shining, and Ugh-lomi, with a gigantic shadow mocking him upon the white cliff, going to and fro, shaking his mane of hair, and waving the axe of stone — the first axe of stone — while he chanted of the killing of Uya. The cave bear was far up the gorge, and he saw the thing slanting-ways and far off. He was so surprised he stood quite still upon the edge, sniffing the novel odour of burning bracken, and wondering whether the dawn was coming up in the wrong place.

He was the lord of the rocks and caves, was the cave bear, as his slighter brother, the grizzly, was lord of the thick woods below, and as the dappled lion — the lion of those days was dappled — was lord of the thorn-thickets, reed-beds, and open plains. He was the greatest

of all meat-eaters; he knew no fear, none preyed on him, and none gave him battle; only the rhinoceros was beyond his strength. Even the mammoth shunned his country. This invasion perplexed him. He noticed these new beasts were shaped like monkeys, and sparsely hairy like young pigs. “Monkey and young pig,” said the cave bear. “It might not be so bad. But that red thing that jumps, and the black thing jumping with it yonder! Never in my life have I seen such things before.”

He came slowly along the brow of the cliff towards them, stopping thrice to sniff and peer, and the reek of the fire grew stronger. A couple of hyaenas also were so intent upon the thing below that Andoo, coming soft and easy, was close upon them before they knew of him or he of them. They started guiltily and went lurching off. Coming round in a wheel, a hundred yards off, they began yelling and calling him names for the start they had had. “Ya-ha!” they cried. “Who can’t grub his own burrow? Who eats roots like a pig...? Ya-ha!” For even in those days the hyaena’s manners were just as offensive as they are now.

“Who answers the hyaena?” growled Andoo, peering through the midnight dimness at them, and then going to look at the cliff edge.

There was Ugh-lomi still telling his story, and the fire getting low, and the scent of the burning hot and strong.

Andoo stood on the edge of the chalk cliff for some time, shifting his vast weight from foot to foot, and swaying his head to and fro, with his mouth open, his ears erect and twitching, and the nostrils of his big, black muzzle sniffing. He was very curious, was the cave bear, more curious than any of the bears that live now, and the flickering fire and the incomprehensible movements of the man, let alone the intrusion into his indisputable province, stirred him with a sense of strange new happenings. He had been after red deer fawn that night, for the cave bear was a miscellaneous hunter, but this quite turned him from that enterprise.

“Ya-ha!” yelled the hyaenas behind. “Ya-ha-ha!”

Peering through the starlight, Andoo saw there were now three or four going to and fro against the grey hillside. “They will hang about me now all the night until I kill,” said Andoo. “Filth of the world!” And mainly to annoy them, he resolved to watch the red flicker in the

gorge until the dawn came to drive the hyaena scum home. And after a time they vanished, and he heard their voices, like a party of Cockney bean-feasters, away in the beech-woods. Then they came slinking near again. Andoo yawned and went on along the cliff, and they followed. Then he stopped and went back.

It was a splendid night, beset with shining constellations, the same stars, but not the same constellations we know, for since those days all the stars have had time to move into new places. Far away across the open space beyond where the heavy-shouldered, lean-bodied hyaenas blundered and howled, was a beech-wood, and the mountain slopes rose beyond, a dim mystery, until their snow-capped summits came out white and cold and clear, touched by the first rays of the yet unseen moon. It was a vast silence, save when the yell of the hyaenas flung a vanishing discordance across its peace, or when from down the hills the trumpeting of the new-come elephants came faintly on the faint breeze. And below now, the red flicker had dwindled and was steady, and shone a deeper red, and Ugh-lomi had finished his story and was preparing to sleep, and Eudena sat and listened to the strange voices of unknown beasts, and watched the dark eastern sky growing deeply luminous at the advent of the moon. Down below, the river talked to itself, and things unseen went to and fro.

After a time the bear went away, but in an hour he was back again. Then, as if struck by a thought, he turned, and went up the gorge...

The night passed, and Ugh-lomi slept on. The waning moon rose and lit the gaunt white cliff overhead with a light that was pale and vague. The gorge remained in a deeper shadow, and seemed all the darker. Then by imperceptible degrees the day came stealing in the wake of the moonlight. Eudena's eyes wandered to the cliff brow overhead once, and then again. Each time the line was sharp and clear against the sky, and yet she had a dim perception of something lurking there. The red of the fire grew deeper and deeper, grey scales spread upon it, its vertical column of smoke became more and more visible, and up and down the gorge, things that had been unseen grew clear in a colourless illumination. She may have dozed.

Suddenly she started up from her squatting position, erect and alert, scrutinising the cliff up and down.

She made the faintest sound, and Ugh-lomi too, light sleeping like an animal, was instantly awake. He caught up his axe and came noiselessly to her side.

The light was still dim, the world now all in black and dark grey, and one sickly star still lingered overhead. The ledge they were on was a little grassy space, six feet wide perhaps, and twenty feet long, sloping outwardly, and with a handful of St. John's wort growing near the edge. Below it, the soft white rock fell away in a steep slope of nearly fifty feet to the thick bush of hazel that fringed the river. Down the river this slope increased, until some way off a thin grass held its own right up to the crest of the cliff. Overhead, forty or fifty feet of rock bulged into the great masses characteristic of chalk, but at the end of the ledge a gully, a precipitous groove of discoloured chalk, slashed the face of the cliff, and gave a footing to a scrubby growth, by which Eudena and Ugh-lomi went up and down.

They stood as noiseless as startled deer, with every sense expectant. For a minute they heard nothing, and then came a faint rattling of dust down the gully, and the creaking of twigs.

Ugh-lomi gripped his axe, and went to the edge of the ledge, for the bulge of the chalk overhead had hidden the upper part of the gully. And forthwith, with a sudden contraction of the heart, he saw the cave bear halfway down from the brow, and making a gingerly backward step with his flat hind-foot. His hind-quarters were towards Ugh-lomi, and he clawed at the rocks and bushes so that he seemed flattened against the cliff. He looked none the less for that. From his shining snout to his stumpy tail he was a lion and a half, the length of two tall men. He looked over his shoulder, and his huge mouth was open with the exertion of holding up his great carcase, and his tongue lay out...

He got his footing, and came down slowly, a yard nearer.

"Bear," said Ugh-lomi, looking round with his face white.

But Eudena, with terror in her eyes, was pointing down the cliff.

Ugh-lomi's mouth fell open. For down below, with her big fore-feet against the rock, stood another big brown-grey bulk — the she-bear. She was not so big as Andoo, but she was big enough for all that.

Then suddenly Ugh-lomi gave a cry, and catching up a handful of

the litter of ferns that lay scattered on the ledge, he thrust it into the pallid ash of the fire. “Brother Fire!” he cried, “Brother Fire!” And Eudena, starting into activity, did likewise. “Brother Fire! Help, help! Brother Fire!”

Brother Fire was still red in his heart, but he turned to grey as they scattered him. “Brother Fire!” They screamed. But he whispered and passed, and there was nothing but ashes. Then Ugh-lomi danced with anger and struck the ashes with his fist. But Eudena began to hammer the firestone against a flint. And the eyes of each were turning ever and again towards the gully by which Andoo was climbing down. Brother Fire!

Suddenly the huge furry hind-quarters of the bear came into view, beneath the bulge of the chalk that had hidden him. He was still clambering gingerly down the nearly vertical surface. His head was yet out of sight, but they could hear him talking to himself. “Pig and monkey,” said the cave bear. “It ought to be good.”

Eudena struck a spark and blew at it; it twinkled brighter and then — went out. At that she cast down flint and firestone and began wringing her hands. Her face was wet with tears. Then she sprang to her feet and scrambled a dozen feet up the cliff above the ledge. How she hung on even for a moment I do not know, for the chalk was vertical and without grip for a monkey. In a couple of seconds she had slid back to the ledge again with bleeding hands.

Ugh-lomi was making frantic rushes about the ledge — now he would go to the edge, now to the gully. He did not know what to do, he could not think. The she-bear looked smaller than her mate — much. If they rushed down on her together, one might live. “Eigh?” said the cave bear, and Ugh-lomi turned again and saw his little eyes peering under the bulge of the chalk. “Stand away!” said the bear; “I’m going to jump down.”

Eudena, cowering at the end of the ledge, began to scream like a gripped rabbit.

At that a sort of madness came upon Ugh-lomi. With a mighty cry, he caught up his axe and began to clamber up the gully to the bear. He uttered neither word nor cry. The monster gave a grunt of surprise. In a moment Ugh-lomi was clinging to a bush right underneath the bear, and in another he was hanging to its back half

buried in fur, with one fist clutched in the hair under its jaw. The bear was too astonished at this fantastic attack to do more than cling passive. And then the axe, the first of all axes, rang in its skull.

The bear's head twisted from side to side, and he began a petulant scolding growl. The axe bit within an inch of the left eye, and the hot blood blinded that side. At that the brute roared with surprise and anger, and his teeth gnashed six inches from Ugh-lomi's face. Then the axe, clubbed close, came down heavily on the corner of the jaw.

The next blow blinded the right side and called forth a roar, this time of pain. Eudena saw the huge, flat feet slipping and sliding, and suddenly the bear gave a clumsy leap sideways, as if for the ledge. Then everything vanished, and the hazels smashed, and a roar of pain and a tumult of shouts and growls came up from far below.

Eudena screamed and ran to the edge and peered over. For a moment, man and bears were a heap together, Ugh-lomi uppermost; and then he had sprung clear and was scaling the gully again, with the bears rolling and striking at one another among the hazels. But he had left his axe below, and three knob-ended streaks of carmine were shooting down his thigh. "Up!" he cried, and in a moment Eudena was preceding him to the top of the cliff.

In half a minute they were at the crest, their hearts pumping noisily, with Andoo and his wife far and safe below them. Andoo was sitting on his haunches, both paws at work, trying with quick exasperated movements to wipe the blindness out of his eyes, and the she-bear stood on all-fours a little way off, ruffled in appearance and growling angrily. Ugh-lomi flung himself flat on the grass, and lay panting and bleeding with his face on his arms.

For a second Eudena regarded the bears, then she came and sat beside him, looking at him...

Presently she put forth her hand timidly and touched him, and made the guttural sound that was his name. He turned over and raised himself on his arm. His face was pale, like the face of one who is afraid. He looked at her steadfastly for a moment, and then suddenly he laughed. "Waugh!" he said exultantly.

"Waugh!" said she — a simple but expressive conversation.

Then Ugh-lomi came and knelt beside her, and on hands and knees peered over the brow and examined the gorge. His breath was

steady now, and the blood on his leg had ceased to flow, though the scratches the she-bear had made were open and wide. He squatted up and sat staring at the footmarks of the great bear as they came to the gully — they were as wide as his head and twice as long. Then he jumped up and went along the cliff face until the ledge was visible. Here he sat down for some time thinking, while Eudena watched him.

At last Ugh-lomi rose, as one whose mind is made up. He returned towards the gully, Eudena keeping close by him, and together they clambered to the ledge. They took the firestone and a flint, and then Ugh-lomi went down to the foot of the cliff very cautiously, and found his axe. They returned to the cliff now as quietly as they could, and turning their faces resolutely up-stream set off at a brisk walk. The ledge was a home no longer, with such callers in the neighbourhood. Ugh-lomi carried the axe and Eudena the firestone. So simple was a Paleolithic removal.

They went up-stream, although it might lead to the very lair of the cave bear, because there was no other way to go. Down the stream was the tribe, and had not Ugh-lomi killed Uya and Wau? By the stream they had to keep — because of drinking.

So they marched, through beech trees, with the gorge deepening until the river flowed, a frothing rapid, five hundred feet below them. And of all the changeful things in this world of change, the courses of rivers, in deep valleys change least. It was the river Wey, the river we know today, and they marched over the very spots where nowadays stand little Guildford and Godalming — the first human beings to come into the land. Once a grey ape chattered and vanished, and all along the cliff edge, vast and even, ran the spoor of the great cave bear.

And then the spoor of the bear fell away from the cliff, showing, Ugh-lomi thought, that he came from some place to the left, and keeping to the cliff's edge, they presently came to an end. They found themselves looking down on a great semi-circular space caused by the collapse of the cliff. It had smashed right across the gorge, banking the up-stream water back in a pool which overflowed in a rapid. The slip had happened long ago. It was grassed over, but the face of the cliffs that stood about the semi-circle was still almost

fresh-looking and white as on the day when the rock must have broken and slid down. Starkly exposed and black under the foot of these cliffs were the mouths of several caves. And as they stood there, looking at the space, and disinclined to skirt it, because they thought the bears' lair lay somewhere on the left in the direction they must needs take, they saw suddenly first one bear and then two coming up the grass slope to the right and going across the amphitheatre towards the caves. Andoo was first, and he dropped a little on his fore-foot, and his mien was despondent, and the she-bear came shuffling behind.

Eudena and Ugh-lomi stepped quite noiselessly back from the cliff until they could just see the bears over the verge. Then Ugh-lomi stopped. Eudena pulled his arm, but he turned with a forbidding gesture, and her hand dropped. Ugh-lomi stood watching the bears, with his axe in his hand, until they had vanished into the cave. He growled softly, and shook the axe at the she-bear's receding quarters. Then to Eudena's terror, instead of creeping off with her, he lay flat down and crawled forward into such a position that he could just see the cave. It was bears — and he did it as calmly as if it had been rabbits he was watching!

He lay still, like a barked log, sun-dappled, in the shadow of the trees. He was thinking. And Eudena had learnt, even when a little girl, that when Ugh-lomi became still like that, jaw-bone on fist, novel things presently began to happen.

It was an hour before the thinking was over; it was noon when the two little savages had found their way to the cliff brow that overhung the bears' cave. And all the long afternoon they fought desperately with a great boulder of chalk; trundling it, with nothing but their unaided sturdy muscles, from the gully where it had hung like a loose tooth, towards the cliff top. It was full two yards about, it stood as high as Eudena's waist, it was obtuse-angled and toothed with flints. And when the sun set it was poised, three inches from the edge, above the cave of the great cave bear.

In the cave, conversation languished during the afternoon. The she-bear snoozed sulkily in her corner — for she was fond of pig and monkey — and Andoo was busy licking the side of his paw and smearing his face to cool the smart and inflammation of his wounds.

Afterwards he went and sat just within the mouth of the cave, blinking out at the afternoon sun with his uninjured eye, and thinking.

"I never was so startled in my life," he said at last. "They are the most extraordinary beasts. Attacking me!"

"I don't like them," said the she-bear, out of the darkness behind.

"A feebler sort of beast I never saw. I can't think what the world is coming to. Scraggy, weedy legs... Wonder how they keep warm in winter?"

"Very likely they don't," said the she-bear.

"I suppose it's a sort of monkey gone wrong."

"It's a change," said the she-bear.

A pause.

"The advantage he had was merely accidental," said Andoo. "These things will happen at times."

"I can't understand why you let go," said the she-bear.

That matter had been discussed before, and settled. So Andoo, being a bear of experience, remained silent for a space. Then he resumed upon a different aspect of the matter. "He has a sort of claw — a long claw that he seemed to have first on one paw and then on the other. Just one claw. They're very odd things. The bright thing too, they seemed to have — like that glare that comes in the sky in daytime — only it jumps about — it's really worth seeing. It's a thing with a root, too — like grass when it is windy."

"Does it bite?" asked the she-bear. "If it bites it can't be a plant."

"No — I don't know," said Andoo. "But it's curious, anyhow."

"I wonder if they are good eating?" said the she-bear.

"They look it," said Andoo, with appetite — for the cave bear, like the polar bear, was an incurable carnivore — no roots or honey for him.

The two bears fell into a meditation for a space. Then Andoo resumed his simple attentions to his eye. The sunlight up the green slope before the cave mouth grew warmer in tone and warmer, until it was a ruddy amber.

"Curious sort of thing — day," said the cave bear. "Lot too much of it, I think. Quite unsuitable for hunting. Dazzles me always. I can't smell nearly so well by day."

The she-bear did not answer, but there came a measured crunching sound out of the darkness. She had turned up a bone. Andoo yawned. “Well,” he said. He strolled to the cave mouth and stood with his head projecting, surveying the amphitheatre. He found he had to turn his head completely round to see objects on his right-hand side. No doubt that eye would be all right tomorrow.

He yawned again. There was a tap overhead, and a big mass of chalk flew out from the cliff face, dropped a yard in front of his nose, and starred into a dozen unequal fragments. It startled him extremely.

When he had recovered a little from his shock, he went and sniffed curiously at the representative pieces of the fallen projectile. They had a distinctive flavour, oddly reminiscent of the two drab animals of the ledge. He sat up and pawed the larger lump, and walked round it several times trying to find a man about it somewhere...

When night had come he went off down the river gorge to see if he could cut off either of the ledge’s occupants. The ledge was empty, there were no signs of the red thing, but as he was rather hungry he did not loiter long that night, but pushed on to pick up a red deer fawn. He forgot about the drab animals. He found a fawn, but the doe was close by and made an ugly fight for her young. Andoo had to leave the fawn, but as her blood was up she stuck to the attack, and at last he got in a blow of his paw at her nose, and so got hold of her. More meat but less delicacy, and the she-bear, following, had her share. The next afternoon, curiously enough, the very fellow of the first white rock fell, and smashed precisely according to precedent.

The aim of the third, that fell the night after however, was better. It hit Andoo’s unspeculative skull with a crack that echoed up the cliff, and the white fragments went dancing to all the points of the compass. The she-bear coming after him and sniffing curiously at him, found him lying in an odd sort of attitude, with his head wet and all out of shape. She was a young she-bear, and inexperienced, and having sniffed about him for some time and licked him a little, and so forth, she decided to leave him until the odd mood had passed, and went on her hunting alone.

She looked up the fawn of the red doe they had killed two nights

ago, and found it. But it was lonely hunting without Andoo, and she returned caveward before dawn. The sky was grey and overcast, the trees up the gorge were black and unfamiliar, and into her ursine mind came a dim sense of strange and dreary happenings. She lifted up her voice and called Andoo by name. The sides of the gorge re-echoed her.

As she approached the caves she saw in the half light, and heard, a couple of jackals scuttle off, and immediately after a hyaena howled and a dozen clumsy bulks went lumbering up the slope, and stopped and yelled derision. “Lord of the rocks and caves — ya-ha!” Came down the wind. The dismal feeling in the she-bear’s mind became suddenly acute. She shuffled across the amphitheatre.

“Ya-ha!” said the hyaenas, retreating. “Ya-ha!”

The cave bear was not lying quite in the same attitude, because the hyaenas had been busy, and in one place his ribs showed white. Dotted over the turf about him lay the smashed fragments of the three great lumps of chalk. And the air was full of the scent of death.

The she-bear stopped dead. Even now, that the great and wonderful Andoo was killed was beyond her believing. Then she heard far overhead a sound, a queer sound, a little like the shout of a hyaena but fuller and lower in pitch. She looked up, with her little dawn-blinded eyes, seeing little, her nostrils quivering. And there, on the cliff edge, far above her against the bright pink of dawn, were two little shaggy round dark things, the heads of Eudena and Ugh-lomi, as they shouted derision at her. But though she could not see them very distinctly she could hear, and dimly she began to apprehend. A novel feeling as of imminent strange evils came into her heart.

She began to examine the smashed fragments of chalk that lay about Andoo. For a space she stood still, looking about her and making a low continuous sound that was almost a moan. Then she went back incredulously to Andoo to make one last effort to rouse him.

3. THE FIRST HORSEMAN

In the days before Ugh-lomi killed the great cave bear there was little trouble between the horses and men. Indeed they lived apart — the men in the river swamps and thickets, the horses on the wide grassy uplands between the chestnuts and the pines. Sometimes a pony would come straying into the clogging marshes to make a flint-hacked meal, and sometimes the tribe would find one, the kill of a lion, and drive off the jackals, and feast heartily while the sun was high. These horses of the old time were clumsy at the fetlock and dun-coloured, with a rough tail and big head. They came every spring-time north-westward into the country, after the swallows and before the hippopotami, as the grass on the wide downland stretches grew long. They came only in small bodies thus far, each herd, a stallion and two or three mares and a foal or so, having its own stretch of country, and they went again when the chestnut-trees were yellow and the wolves came down the Wealden mountains.

It was their custom to graze right out in the open, going into cover only in the heat of the day. They avoided the long stretches of thorn and beechwood, preferring an isolated group of trees, void of ambuscade, so that it was hard to come upon them. They were never fighters; their heels and teeth were for one another, but in the clear country, once they were started, no living thing came near them, though perhaps the elephant might have done so, had he felt the need. And in those days man seemed a harmless thing enough. No whisper of prophetic intelligence told the species of the terrible slavery that was to come, of the whip and spur and bearing-rein, the clumsy load and the slippery street, the insufficient food, and the knacker's yard, that was to replace the wide grass-land and the freedom of the earth.

Down in the Wey marshes Ugh-lomi and Eudena had never seen the horses closely, but now they saw them every day as the two of them raided out from their lair on the ledge in the gorge, raiding together in search of food. They had returned to the ledge after the killing of Andoo; for of the she-bear they were not afraid. The she-bear had become afraid of them, and when she winded them she went

aside. The two went together everywhere; for since they had left the tribe Eudena was not so much Ugh-lomi's woman as his mate; she learnt to hunt even — as much that is, as any woman could. She was indeed a marvellous woman. He would lie for hours watching a beast, or planning catches in that shock head of his, and she would stay beside him, with her bright eyes upon him, offering no irritating suggestions — as still as any man. A wonderful woman!

At the top of the cliff was an open grassy lawn and then beechwoods, and going through the beechwoods one came to the edge of the rolling grassy expanse, and in sight of the horses. Here on the edge of the wood and bracken, were the rabbit-burrows, and here among the fronds Eudena and Ugh-lomi would lie with their throwing-stones ready, until the little people came out to nibble and play in the sunset. And while Eudena would sit, a silent figure of watchfulness, regarding the burrows, Ugh-lomi's eyes were ever away across the greensward at those wonderful grazing strangers.

In a dim way he appreciated their grace and their supple nimbleness. As the sun declined in the evening-time, and the heat of the day passed, they would become active, would start chasing one another, neighing, dodging, shaking their manes, coming round in great curves, sometimes so close that the pounding of the turf sounded like hurried thunder. It looked so fine that Ugh-lomi wanted to join in badly. And sometimes one would roll over on the turf, kicking four hoofs heavenward, which seemed formidable and was certainly much less alluring.

Dim imaginings ran through Ugh-lomi's mind as he watched — by virtue of which two rabbits lived the longer. And sleeping, his brains were clearer and bolder — for that was the way in those days. He came near the horses, he dreamt, and fought, smiting-stone against hoof, but then the horses changed to men or, at least, to men with horses' heads, and he awoke in a cold sweat of terror.

Yet the next day in the morning, as the horses were grazing, one of the mares whinnied, and they saw Ugh-lomi coming up the wind. They all stopped their eating and watched him. Ugh-lomi was not coming towards them, but strolling obliquely across the open, looking at anything in the world but horses. He had stuck three fern-fronds into the mat of his hair, giving him a remarkable appearance,

and he walked very slowly. “What’s up now?” said the Master Horse, who was capable, but inexperienced.

“It looks more like the first half of an animal than anything else in the world,” he said. “Fore-legs and no hind.”

“It’s only one of those pink monkey things,” said the Eldest Mare. “They’re a sort of river monkey. They’re quite common on the plains.”

Ugh-lomi continued his oblique advance. The Eldest Mare was struck with the want of motive in his proceedings.

“Fool!” said the Eldest Mare, in a quick conclusive way she had. She resumed her grazing. The Master Horse and the Second Mare followed suit.

“Look! He’s nearer,” said the Foal with a stripe.

One of the younger foals made uneasy movements. Ugh-lomi squatted down and sat regarding the horses fixedly. In a little while he was satisfied that they meant neither flight nor hostilities. He began to consider his next procedure. He did not feel anxious to kill, but he had his axe with him, and the spirit of sport was upon him. How would one kill one of these creatures — ? These great beautiful creatures!

Eudena, watching him with a fearful admiration from the cover of the bracken, saw him presently go on all fours, and so proceed again. But the horses preferred him a biped to a quadruped, and the Master Horse threw up his head and gave the word to move. Ugh-lomi thought they were off for good, but after a minute’s gallop they came round in a wide curve, and stood winding him. Then as a rise in the ground hid him they tailed out, the Master Horse leading and approached him spirally.

He was as ignorant of the possibilities of a horse as they were of his. And at this stage it would seem he funked. He knew this kind of stalking would make red deer or buffalo charge, if it was persisted in. At any rate Eudena saw him jump up and come walking towards her with the fern plumes held in his hand.

She stood up, and he grinned to show that the whole thing was an immense lark, and that what he had done was just what he had planned to do from the very beginning. So that incident ended. But he was very thoughtful all that day.

The next day this foolish drab creature with the leonine mane, instead of going about the grazing or hunting he was made for, was prowling round the horses again. The Eldest Mare was all for silent contempt. “I suppose he wants to learn something from us,” she said, and “Let him.” The next day he was at it again. The Master Horse decided he meant absolutely nothing. But as a matter of fact, Ugh-lomi, the first of men to feel that curious spell of the horse that binds us even to this day, meant a great deal. He admired them unreservedly. There was a rudiment of the snob in him, I am afraid, and he wanted to be near these beautifully-curved animals. Then here were vague conceptions of a kill. If only they would let him come near them! But they drew the line, he found, at fifty yards. If he came nearer than that they moved off — with dignity. I suppose it was the way he had blinded Andoo that made him think of leaping on the back of one of them. But though Eudena after a time came out in the open too, and they did some unobtrusive stalking, things stopped there.

Then one memorable day a new idea came to Ugh-lomi. The horse looks down and level, but he does not look up. No animals look up — they have too much common-sense. It was only that fantastic creature man, could waste his wits skyward. Ugh-lomi made no philosophical deductions, but he perceived the thing was so. So he spent a weary day in a beech that stood in the open, while Eudena stalked. Usually the horses went into the shade in the heat of the afternoon, but that day the sky was overcast, and they would not, in spite of Eudena’s solicitude.

It was two days after that, that Ugh-lomi had his desire. The day was blazing hot, and the multiplying flies asserted themselves. The horses stopped grazing before midday, and came into the shadow below him, and stood in couples nose to tail, flapping.

The Master Horse, by virtue of his heels, came closest to the tree. And suddenly there was a rustle and a creak, a thud... Then a sharp chipped flint bit him on the cheek. The Master Horse stumbled, came on one knee, rose to his feet, and was off like the wind. The air was full of the whirl of limbs, the prance of hoofs, and snorts of alarm. Ugh-lomi was pitched a foot in the air, came down again, up again, his stomach was hit violently, and then his knees got a grip of

something between them. He found himself clutching with knees, feet, and hands, careering violently with extraordinary oscillation through the air — his axe gone heaven knows whither. “Hold tight,” said Mother Instinct, and he did.

He was aware of a lot of coarse hair in his face, some of it between his teeth, and of green turf streaming past in front of his eyes. He saw the shoulder of the Master Horse, vast and sleek, with the muscles flowing swiftly under the skin. He perceived that his arms were round the neck, and that the violent jerkings he experienced had a sort of rhythm.

Then he was in the midst of a wild rush of tree-stems, and then there were fronds of bracken about, and then more open turf. Then a stream of pebbles rushing past, little pebbles flying sideways athwart the stream from the blow of the swift hoofs. Ugh-lomi began to feel frightfully sick and giddy, but he was not the stuff to leave go simply because he was uncomfortable.

He dared not leave his grip, but he tried to make himself more comfortable. He released his hug on the neck, gripping the mane instead. He slipped his knees forward, and pushing back, came into a sitting position where the quarters broaden.

It was nervous work, but he managed it, and at last he was fairly seated astride, breathless indeed, and uncertain, but with that frightful pounding of his body at any rate relieved.

Slowly the fragments of Ugh-lomi’s mind got into order again. The pace seemed to him terrific, but a kind of exultation was beginning to oust his first frantic terror. The air rushed by, sweet and wonderful, the rhythm of the hoofs changed and broke up and returned into itself again. They were on turf now, a wide glade — the beech-trees a hundred yards away on either side, and a succulent band of green starred with pink blossom and shot with silver water here and there, meandered down the middle. Far off was a glimpse of blue valley — far away. The exultation grew. It was man’s first taste of pace.

Then came a wide space dappled with flying fallow deer scattering this way and that, and then a couple of jackals, mistaking Ugh-lomi for a lion, came hurrying after him. And when they saw it was not a lion they still came on out of curiosity. On galloped the

horse, with his one idea of escape, and after him the jackals, with pricked ears and quickly-barked remarks. “Which kills which?” said the first jackal. “It’s the horse being killed,” said the second. They gave the howl of following, and the horse answered to it as a horse answers nowadays to the spur.

On they rushed, a little tornado through the quiet day, putting up startled birds, sending a dozen unexpected things darting to cover, raising a myriad of indignant dung-flies, smashing little blossoms, flowering complacently, back into their parental turf. Trees again, and then splash, splash across a torrent; then a hare shot out of a tuft of grass under the very hoofs of the Master Horse, and the jackals left them incontinently. So presently they broke into the open again, a wide expanse of turfy hillside — the very fellow of the grassy downs that fall northward nowadays from the Epsom Stand.

The first hot bolt of the Master Horse was long since over. He was falling into a measured trot, and Ugh-lomi, albeit bruised exceedingly and quite uncertain of the future, was in a state of glorious enjoyment. And now came a new development. The pace broke again, the Master Horse came round on a short curve, and stopped dead...

Ugh-lomi became alert. He wished he had a flint, but the throwing flint he had carried in a thong about his waist was — like the axe — heaven knows where. The Master Horse turned his head, and Ugh-lomi became aware of an eye and teeth. He whipped his leg into a position of security, and hit at the cheek with his fist. Then the head went down somewhere out of existence apparently, and the back he was sitting on flew up into a dome. Ugh-lomi became a thing of instinct again — strictly prehensile; he held by knees and feet, and his head seemed sliding towards the turf. His fingers were twisted into the shock of mane, and the rough hair of the horse saved him. The gradient he was on lowered again, and then — , “Whup!” said Ugh-lomi astonished, and the slant was the other way up. But Ugh-lomi was a thousand generations nearer the primordial than man: no monkey could have held on better. And the lion had been training the horse for countless generations against the tactics of rolling and rearing back. But he kicked like a master, and buck-jumped rather neatly. In five minutes Ugh-lomi lived a lifetime. If he came off, the

horse would kill him, he felt assured.

Then the Master Horse decided to stick to his old tactics again, and suddenly went off at a gallop. He headed down the slope, taking the steep places at a rush, swerving neither to the right nor to the left, and as they rode down, the wide expanse of valley sank out of sight behind the approaching skirmishers of oak and Hawthorn. They skirted a sudden hollow with the pool of a spring, rank weeds and silver bushes. The ground grew softer and the grass taller, and on the right-hand side and the left came scattered bushes of May — still splashed with belated blossom. Presently the bushes thickened until they lashed the passing rider, and little flashes and gouts of blood came out on horse and man. Then the way opened again.

And then came a wonderful adventure. A sudden squeal of unreasonable anger rose amidst the bushes, the squeal of some creature bitterly wronged. And crashing after them appeared a big, grey-blue shape. It was Yaaa the big-horned rhinoceros, in one of those fits of fury of his, charging full tilt, after the manner of his kind. He had been startled at his feeding, and someone, it did not matter who, was to be ripped and trampled therefore. He was bearing down on them from the left, with his wicked little eye red, and his great horn down, and his little tail like a jury-mast behind him. For a minute Ugh-lomi was minded to slip off and dodge, and then behold! The staccato of the hoofs grew swifter, and the rhinoceros and his stumpy hurrying little legs seemed to slide out at the back corner of Ugh-lomi's eye. In two minutes they were through the bushes of May, and out in the open, going fast. For a space he could hear the ponderous paces in pursuit receding behind him, and then it was just as if Yaaa had not lost his temper, as if Yaaa had never existed.

The pace never faltered, on they rode land on.

Ugh-lomi was now all exultation. To exult in those days was to insult. "Ya-ha! Big nose," he said, trying to crane back and see some remote speck of a pursuer. "Why don't you carry your smiting-stone in your fist?" He ended with a frantic whoop.

But that whoop was unfortunate, for coming close to the ear of the horse, and being quite unexpected, it startled the stallion extremely. He shied violently. Ugh-lomi suddenly found himself uncomfortable again. He was hanging on to the horse, he found, by one arm and one

knee.

The rest of the ride was honourable but unpleasant. The view was chiefly of blue sky, and that was combined with the most unpleasant physical sensations. Finally a bush of thorn lashed him and he let go.

He hit the ground with his cheek and shoulder, and then, after a complicated and extraordinarily rapid movement, hit it again with the end of his backbone. He saw splashes and sparks of light and colour. The ground seemed bouncing about just like the horse had done. Then he found he was sitting on turf, six yards beyond the bush. In front of him was a space of grass, growing greener and greener, and a number of human beings in the distance, and the horse was going round at a smart gallop quite a long way off to the right.

The human beings were on the opposite side of the river, some still in the water, but they were all running away as hard as they could go. The advent of a monster that took to pieces was not the sort of novelty they cared for. For quite a minute Ugh-lomi sat regarding them in a purely spectacular spirit. The bend of the river, the knoll among the reeds and royal ferns, the thin streams of smoke going up to Heaven, were all perfectly familiar to him. It was the squatting-place of the Sons of Uya, of Uya from whom he had fled with Eudena, and whom he had waylaid in the chestnut woods and killed with the First Axe.

He rose to his feet, still dazed from his fall, and as he did so the scattering fugitives turned and regarded him. Some pointed to the receding horse and chattered. He walked slowly towards them, staring. He forgot the horse, he forgot his own bruises, in the growing interest of this encounter. There were fewer of them than there had been — he supposed the others must have hid — the heap of fern or the night fire was not so high. By the flint heaps should have sat Wau — but then he remembered he had killed Wau. Suddenly brought back to this familiar scene, the gorge and the bears and Eudena seemed things remote, things dreamt of.

He stopped at the bank and stood regarding the tribe. His mathematical abilities were of the slightest, but it was certain there were fewer. The men might be away, but there were fewer women and children. He gave the shout of home-coming. His quarrel had been with Uya and Wau — not with the others. “Children of Uya!”

he cried. They answered with his name, a little fearfully because of the strange way he had come.

For a space they spoke together. Then an old woman lifted a shrill voice and answered him. “Our Lord is a Lion.”

Ugh-lomi did not understand that saying. They answered him again several together, “Uya comes again. He comes as a Lion. Our Lord is a Lion. He comes at night. He slays whom he will. But none other may slay us, Ugh-lomi. None other may slay us.”

Still Ugh-lomi did not understand.

“Our Lord is a Lion. He speaks no more to men.”

Ugh-lomi stood regarding them. He had had dreams — he knew that though he had killed Uya, Uya still existed. And now they told him Uya was a Lion.

The shrivelled old woman, the mistress of the fire-minders, suddenly turned and spoke softly to those next to her. She was a very old woman indeed, she had been the first of Uya’s wives, and he had let her live beyond the age to which it is seemly a woman should live. She had been cunning from the first, cunning to please Uya and to get food. And now she was great in counsel. She spoke softly, and Ugh-lomi watched her shrivelled form across the river with a curious distaste. Then she called aloud, “Come over to us, Ugh-lomi.”

A girl suddenly lifted up her voice. “Come over to us, Ugh-lomi,” she said. And they all began crying, “Come over to us, Ugh-lomi.”

It was strange how their manner changed after the old woman called.

He stood quite still watching them all. It was pleasant to be called, and the girl who had called first was a pretty one. But she made him think of Eudena.

“Come over to us, Ugh-lomi,” they cried, and the voice of the shrivelled old woman rose above them all. At the sound of her voice his hesitation returned.

He stood on the river bank, Ugh-lomi — Ugh the Thinker — with his thoughts slowly taking shape. Presently one and then another paused to see what he would do. He was minded to go back, he was minded not to. Suddenly his fear or his caution got the upper hand. Without answering them he turned, and walked back towards the distant thorn-trees, the way he had come. Forthwith the whole tribe

started crying to him again very eagerly. He hesitated and turned, then he went on, then he turned again, and then once again, regarding them with troubled eyes as they called. The last time he took two paces back, before his fear stopped him. They saw him stop once more, and suddenly shake his head and vanish among the hawthorn-trees.

Then all the women and children lifted up their voices together, and called to him in one last vain effort.

Far down the river the reeds were stirring in the breeze, where convenient for his new sort of feeding, the old lion, who had taken to man-eating, had made his lair.

The old woman turned her face that way, and pointed to the hawthorn thickets. “Uya,” she screamed, “there goes thine enemy! There goes thine enemy, Uya! Why do you devour us nightly? We have tried to snare him! There goes thine enemy, Uya!”

But the lion who preyed upon the tribe was taking his siesta. The cry went unheard. That day he had dined on one of the plumper girls, and his mood was a comfortable placidity. He really did not understand that he was Uya or that Ugh-lomi was his enemy.

So it was that Ugh-lomi rode the horse, and heard first of Uya the lion, who had taken the place of Uya the Master, and was eating up the tribe. And as he hurried back to the gorge, his mind was no longer full of the horse, but of the thought that Uya was still alive, to slay or be slain. Over and over again he saw the shrunken band of women and children crying that Uya was a lion. Uya was a lion!

And presently, fearing the twilight might come upon him, Ugh-lomi began running.

4. REIGN OF UYA THE LION

The old lion was in luck. The tribe had a certain pride in their ruler, but that was all the satisfaction they got out of it. He came the very night that Ugh-lomi killed Uya the Cunning, and so it was they named him Uya. It was the old woman, the fire-minder, who first named him Uya. A shower had lowered the fires to a glow, and made the night dark. And as they conversed together, and peered at one another in the darkness, and wondered fearfully what Uya would do to them in their dreams now that he was dead, they heard the mounting reverberations of the lion's roar close at hand. Then everything was still.

They held their breath, so that almost the only sounds were the patter of the rain and the hiss of the raindrops in the ashes. And then, after an interminable time, a crash, and a shriek of fear, and a growling. They sprang to their feet, shouting, screaming, running this way and that, but brands would not burn, and in a minute the victim was being dragged away through the ferns. It was Irk, the brother of Wau.

So the lion came.

The ferns were still wet from the rain the next night, and he came and took Click with the red hair. That sufficed for two nights. And then in the dark, between the moons he came three nights, night after night, and that, though they had good fires. He was an old lion with stumpy teeth, but very silent and very cool; he knew of fires before; these were not the first of mankind that had ministered to his old age. The third night he came between the outer fire and the inner, and he leapt the flint heap, and pulled down Irm the son of Irk, who had seemed like to be the leader. That was a dreadful night, because they lit great flares of fern and ran screaming, and the lion missed his hold of Irm. By the glare of the fire they saw Irm struggle up, and run a little way towards them, and then the lion in two bounds had him down again. That was the last of Irm.

So fear came, and all the delight of spring passed out of their lives. Already there were five gone out of the tribe, and four nights added three more to the number. Food-seeking became spiritless,

none knew who might go next, and all day the women toiled, even the favourite women, gathering litter and sticks for the night fires. And the hunters hunted ill: in the warm spring-time hunger came again as though it was still winter. The tribe might have moved, had they had a leader, but they had no leader, and none knew where to go that the lion could not follow them. So the old lion waxed fat and thanked heaven for the race of men. Two of the children and a youth died while the moon was still new, and then it was the shrivelled old fire-minder first bethought herself in a dream of Eudena and Ugh-lomi, and of the way Uya, had been slain. She had lived in fear of Uya all her days, and now she lived in fear of the lion. That Ugh-lomi could kill Uya for good — Ugh-lomi whom she had seen born — was impossible. It was Uya still seeking his enemy!

And then came the strange return of Ugh-lomi, a wonderful animal seen galloping far across the river, that suddenly changed into two animals, a horse and a man. Following this portent, the vision of Ugh-lomi on the farther bank of the river... Yes, it was all plain to her. Uya was punishing them, because they had not hunted down Ugh-lomi and Eudena.

The men came straggling back to the chances of the night while the sun was still golden in the sky. They were received with the story of Ugh-lomi. She went across the river with them and showed them his spoor hesitating on the farther bank. Siss the Tracker knew the feet for Ugh-lomi's. "Uya needs Ugh-lomi," cried the old woman, standing on the left of the bend, a gesticulating figure of flaring bronze in the sunset. Her cries were strange sounds, flitting to and fro on the borderland of speech, but this was the sense they carried: "The lion needs Eudena. He comes night after night seeking Eudena and Ugh-lomi. When he cannot find Eudena and Ugh-lomi, he grows angry and he kills. Hunt Eudena and Ugh-lomi, Eudena whom he pursued, and Ugh-lomi for whom he gave the death-word! Hunt Eudena and Ugh-lomi!"

She turned to the distant reed-bed, as sometimes she had turned to Uya in his life. "Is it not so, my lord?" she cried. And as if in answer, the tall reeds bowed before a breath of wind.

Far into the twilight the sound of hacking was heard from the squatting-places. It was the men sharpening their ashen spears

against the hunting of the morrow. And in the night, early before the moon rose, the lion came and took the girl of Siss the Tracker.

In the morning before the sun had risen, Siss the Tracker, and the lad Wau-hau, who now chipped flints, and One Eye, and Bo, and the snail-eater, the two red-haired men, and Cat's-skin and Snake, all the men that were left alive of the Sons of Uya, taking their ash spears and their smiting-stones, and with throwing stones in the beast-paw bags, started forth upon the trail of Ugh-lomi through the hawthorn thickets where Yaaa the Rhinoceros and his brothers were feeding, and up the bare downland towards the beechwoods.

That night the fires burnt high and fierce, as the waxing moon set, and the lion left the crouching women and children in peace.

And the next day, while the sun was still high, the hunters returned — all save One Eye, who lay dead with a smashed skull at the foot of the ledge. (When Ugh-lomi came back that evening from stalking the horses, he found the vultures already busy over him.) And with them the hunters brought Eudena bruised and wounded, but alive. That had been the strange order of the shrivelled old woman, that she was to be brought alive — , "She is no kill for us. She is for Uya the Lion." Her hands were tied with thongs, as though she had been a man, and she came weary and drooping — her hair over her eyes and matted with blood. They walked about her, and ever and again the Snail–Eater, whose name she had given, would laugh and strike her with his ashen spear. And after he had struck her with his spear, he would look over his shoulder like one who had done an over-bold deed. The others too, looked over their shoulders ever and again, and all were in a hurry save Eudena. When the old woman saw them coming, she cried aloud with joy.

They made Eudena cross the river with her hands tied, although the current was strong, and when she slipped the old woman screamed, first with joy and then for fear she might be drowned. And when they had dragged Eudena to shore, she could not stand for a time, albeit they beat her sore. So they let her sit with her feet touching the water, and her eyes staring before her, and her face set, whatever they might do or say. All the tribe came down to the squatting-place, even curly little Haha, who as yet could scarcely toddle, and stood staring at Eudena and the old woman, as now we

should stare at some strange wounded beast and its captor.

The old woman tore off the necklace of Uya that was about Eudena's neck, and put it on herself — she had been the first to wear it. Then she tore at Eudena's hair, and took a spear from Siss and beat her with all her might. And when she had vented the warmth of her heart on the girl she looked closely into her face. Eudena's eyes were closed and her features were set, and she lay so still that for a moment the old woman feared she was dead until her nostrils quivered. At that the old woman slapped her face and laughed and gave the spear to Siss again, and went a little way off from her and began to talk and jeer at her after her manner.

The old woman had more words than any in the tribe. And her talk was a terrible thing to hear. Sometimes she screamed and moaned incoherently, and sometimes the shape of her guttural cries was the mere phantom of thoughts. But she conveyed to Eudena, nevertheless, much of the things that were yet to come, of the Lion and of the torment he would do her. "And Ugh-lomi! Ha, ha! Ugh-lomi was slain?"

And suddenly Eudena's eyes opened and she sat up again, and her look met the old woman's fair and level. "No," she said slowly, like one trying to remember, "I did not see my Ugh-lomi slain. I did not see my Ugh-lomi slain."

"Tell her," cried the old woman. "Tell her — he that killed him. Tell her how Ugh-lomi was slain."

She looked, and all the women and children there looked, from man to man.

None answered her. They stood shamefaced.

"Tell her," said the old woman. The men looked at one another.

Eudena's face suddenly lit.

"Tell her," she said. "Tell her, mighty men! Tell her the killing of Ugh-lomi."

The old woman rose and struck her sharply across her mouth.

"We could not find Ugh-lomi," said Siss the Tracker, slowly. "Who hunts two, kills none."

Then Eudena's heart leapt, but she kept her face hard. It was well, for the old woman looked at her sharply, with murder in her eyes.

Then the old woman turned her tongue upon the men because they

had feared to go on after Ugh-lomi. She dreaded no one now Uya was slain. She scolded them as one scolds children. And they scowled at her, and began to accuse one another. Until suddenly Siss the Tracker raised his voice and bade her hold her peace.

And so when the sun was setting they took Eudena and went — though their hearts sank within them — along the trail the old lion had made in the reeds. All the men went together. At one place was a group of alders, and here they hastily bound Eudena where the lion might find her when he came abroad in the twilight, and having done so they hurried back until they were near the squatting-place. Then they stopped. Siss stopped first and looked back again at the alders. They could see her head even from the squatting-place, a little black shock under the limb of the larger tree. That was as well.

All the women and children stood watching upon the crest of the mound. And the old woman stood and screamed for the lion to take her whom he sought, and counselled him on the torments he might do her.

Eudena was very weary now, stunned by beatings and fatigue and sorrow, and only the fear of the thing that was still to come upheld her. The sun was broad and blood-red between the stems of the distant chestnuts, and the west was all on fire; the evening breeze had died to a warm tranquillity. The air was full of midge swarms, the fish in the river hard by would leap at times, and now and again a cockchafer would drone through the air. Out of the corner of her eye Eudena could see a part of the squatting-knoll, and little figures standing and staring at her. And — a very little sound but very clear — she could hear the beating of the firestone. Dark and near to her and very still was the reed-fringed thicket of the lair.

Presently the firestone ceased. She looked for the sun and found he had gone, and overhead and growing brighter was the waxing moon. She looked towards the thicket of the lair, seeking shapes in the reeds, and then suddenly she began to wriggle and wriggle, weeping and calling upon Ugh-lomi.

But Ugh-lomi was far away. When they saw her head moving with her struggles, they shouted together on the knoll, and then she desisted and was still. And then came the bats, and the star that was like Ugh-lomi crept out of its blue hiding-place in the west. She

called to it, but softly, because she feared the lion. And all through the coming of the twilight the thicket was still.

So the dark crept upon Eudena, and the moon grew bright, and the shadows of things that had fled up the hillside and vanished with the evening came back to them short and black, And the dark shapes in the thicket of reeds and alders where the lion lay, gathered, and a faint stir began there. But nothing came out therefrom all through the gathering of the darkness.

She looked at the squatting-place and saw the fires glowing smoky-red, and the men and women going to and fro. The other way, over the river, a white mist was rising. Then far away came the whimpering of young foxes and the yell of a hyaena.

There were long gaps of aching waiting. After a long time some animal splashed in the water, and seemed to cross the river at the ford beyond the lair, but what animal it was she could not see. From the distant drinking-pools she could hear the sound of splashing, and the noise of elephants — so still was the night.

The earth was now a colourless arrangement of white reflections and impenetrable shadows, under the blue sky. The silvery moon was already spotted with the filigree crests of the chestnut woods, and over the shadowy eastward bills the stars were multiplying. The knoll fires were bright red now, and black figures stood waiting against them. They were waiting for a scream... Surely it would be soon.

The night suddenly seemed full of movement. She held her breath. Things were passing — one, two, three — subtly sneaking shadows... Jackals.

Then a long waiting again.

Then, asserting itself as real at once over all the sounds her mind had imagined, came a stir in the thicket, then a vigorous movement. There was a snap. The reeds crashed heavily, once, twice, thrice, and then everything was still save a measured swishing. She heard a low tremulous growl, and then everything was still again. The stillness lengthened — would it never end? She held her breath; she bit her lips to stop screaming. Then something scuttled through the undergrowth. Her scream was involuntary. She did not hear the answering yell from the mound.

Immediately the thicket woke up to vigorous movement again. She saw the grass stems waving in the light of the setting moon, the alders swaying. She struggled violently — her last struggle. But nothing came towards her. A dozen monsters seemed rushing about in that little place for a couple of minutes, and then again came silence. The moon sank behind the distant chestnuts and the night was dark.

Then an odd sound, a sobbing panting, that grew faster and fainter. Yet another silence, and then dim sounds and the grunting of some animal.

Everything was still again. Far away eastwards an elephant trumpeted, and from the woods came a snarling and yelping that died away.

In the long interval the moon shone out again, between the stems of the trees on the ridge, sending two great bars of light, and a bar of darkness across the reedy waste. Then came a steady rustling, a splash, and the reeds swayed wider and wider apart. And at last they broke open, cleft from root to crest... The end had come.

She looked to see the thing that had come out of the reeds. For a moment it seemed certainly the great head and jaw she expected, and then it dwindled and changed. It was a dark low thing, that remained silent, but it was not the lion. It became still — everything became still. She peered. It was like some gigantic frog, two limbs and a slanting body. Its head moved about searching the shadows...

A rustle, and it moved clumsily, with a sort of hopping. And as it moved it gave a low groan.

The blood rushing through her veins was suddenly joy. “Ugh-lomi!” she whispered.

The thing stopped. “Eudena,” he answered softly with pain in his voice, and peering into the alders.

He moved again, and came out of the shadow beyond the reeds into the moonlight. All his body was covered with dark smears. She saw he was dragging his legs, and that he gripped his axe, the first axe, in one hand. In another moment he had struggled into the position of all fours, and had staggered over to her. “The lion,” he said in a strange mingling of exultation and anguish. “Wau — ! I have slain a lion. With my own hand. Even as I slew the great bear.”

He moved to emphasise his words, and suddenly broke off with a faint cry. For a space he did not move.

“Let me free,” whispered Eudena...

He answered her no words but pulled himself up from his crawling attitude by means of the alder stem, and hacked at her thongs with the sharp edge of his axe. She heard him sob at each blow. He cut away the thongs about her chest and arms, and then his hand dropped. His chest struck against her shoulder and he slipped down beside her and lay still.

But the rest of her release was easy. Very hastily she freed herself. She made one step from the tree, and her head was spinning, Her last conscious movement was towards him. She reeled, and suddenly fell headlong beside him. Her hand fell upon his thigh. It was soft and wet, and gave way under her pressure; he cried out at her touch, and writhed and lay still again, with her hand upon him.

Presently a dark dog-like shape came very softly through the reeds. This stopped dead and stood sniffing, hesitated, and at last turned and slunk back into the shadows.

Long was the time they remained there motionless, with the light of the setting moon shining on their limbs. Very slowly, as slowly as the setting of the moon, did the shadow of the reeds towards the mound flow over them. Presently their legs were hidden, and Ugh-lomi was but a bust of silver. The shadow crept to his neck, crept over his face, and so at last the darkness of the night swallowed them up.

The shadow became full of instinctive stirrings. There was a patter of feet, and a faint snarling — the sound of a blow.

There was little sleep that night for the women and children at the squatting-place until they heard Eudena scream. But the men were weary and sat dozing. When Eudena screamed they felt assured of their safety, and hurried to get the nearest places to the fires. The old woman laughed at the scream, and laughed again because Si, the little sister of Eudena, whimpered. Directly the dawn came, they were all alert and looking towards the alders. They could see that Eudena had been taken. They could not help feeling glad to think that Uya was appeased. But across the minds of the men the thought of Ugh-lomi fell like a shadow. They could understand revenge, for

the world was old in revenge, but they did not think of rescue. Suddenly a hyaena fled out of the thicket, and came galloping across the reed space. His muzzle and paws were dark-stained. At that sight all the men shouted and clutched at throwing-stones and ran towards him, for no animal is so pitiful a coward as the hyaena by day. All men hated the hyaena because he preyed on children, and would come and bite when one was sleeping on the edge of the squatting-place. And Cat's-skin, throwing fair and straight, hit the brute shrewdly on the flank, whereat the whole tribe yelled with delight.

At the noise they made there came a flapping of wings from the lair of the lion, and three white-headed vultures rose slowly and circled and came to rest amidst the branches of an alder, overlooking the lair. "Our lord is abroad," said the old woman, pointing. "The vultures have their share of Eudena." For a space they remained there, and then first one and then another dropped back into the thicket.

Then over the eastern woods, and touching the whole world to life and colour, poured, with the exaltation of a trumpet blast, the light of the rising sun. At the sight of him the children shouted together, and clapped their hands and began to race off towards the water. Only little Si lagged behind and looked wonderingly at the alders where she had seen the head of Eudena overnight.

But Uya, the old lion, was not abroad but at home, and he lay very still, and a little on one side. He was not in his lair, but a little way from it in a place of trampled grass. Under one eye was a little wound, the feeble little bite of the first axe. But all the ground beneath his chest was ruddy brown with a vivid streak, and in his chest was a little hole that had been made by Ugh-lomi's stabbing-spear. Along his side and at his neck the vultures had marked their claims. For so Ugh-lomi had slain him, lying stricken under his paw and thrusting haphazard at his chest. He had driven the spear in with all his strength and stabbed the giant to the heart. So it was the reign of the lion, of the second incarnation of Uya the Master, came to an end.

From the knoll the bustle of preparation grew, the hacking of spears and throwing-stones. None spake the name of Ugh-lomi for fear that it might bring him. The men were going to keep together,

close together, in the hunting for a day or so. And their hunting was to be Ugh-lomi, lest instead he should come a-hunting them.

But Ugh-lomi was lying very still and silent, outside the lion's lair, and Eudena squatted beside him, with the ash spear, all smeared with lion's blood, gripped in her hand.

5. THE FIGHT IN THE LION'S THICKET

Ugh-lomi lay still, his back against an alder, and his thigh was a red mass terrible to see. No civilised man could have lived who had been so sorely wounded, but Eudena got him thorns to close his wounds, and squatted beside him day and night, smiting the flies from him with a fan of reeds by day, and in the night threatening the hyaenas who came too near with the first axe in her hand; and in a little while he began to heal. It was high summer, and there was no rain. Little food they had, during the first two days his wounds were open. In the low place where they hid were no roots nor little beasts, and the stream, with its water-snails and fish, was in the open, a hundred yards away. She could not go abroad by day for fear of the tribe, her brothers and sisters, nor by night for fear of the beasts, both on his account and hers. So they shared the lion with the vultures. But there was a trickle of water near by, and Eudena brought him plenty in her hands.

Where Ugh-lomi lay was well hidden from the tribe by a thicket of alders, and all fenced about with bulrushes and tall reeds. The dead lion he had killed lay near his old lair on a place of trampled reeds fifty yards away, in sight through the reed-stems, and the vultures fought each other for the choicest pieces and kept the jackals off him. Very soon a cloud of flies that looked like bees hung over him, and Ugh-lomi could hear their humming. And when Ugh-lomi's flesh was already healing — and it was not many days before that began — only a few bones of the lion remained scattered and shining white.

For the most part Ugh-lomi sat still during the day, looking before him at nothing, sometimes he would mutter of the horses and bears and lions, and sometimes he would beat the ground with the first axe and say the names of the tribe — he seemed to have no fear of bringing the tribe — for hours together. But chiefly he slept, dreaming little because of his loss of blood and the slightness of his food. During the short summer night both kept awake. All the while the darkness lasted things moved about them, things they never saw by day. For some nights the hyaenas did not come, and then one

moonless night near a dozen came and fought for what was left of the lion. The night was a tumult of growling, and Ugh-lomi and Eudena could hear the bones snap in their teeth. But they knew the hyaena dare not attack any creature alive and awake, and so they were not greatly afraid.

Of a daytime Eudena would go along the narrow path, the old lion had made in the reeds until she was beyond the bend, and then she would creep into the thicket and watch the tribe. She would lie close by the alders, where they had bound her to offer her up to the lion, and thence she could see them on the knoll by the fire, little and clear, as she had seen them that night. But she told Ugh-lomi little of what she saw, because she feared to bring them by their names. For so they believed in those days, that naming called.

She saw the men prepare stabbing-spears and throwing-stones on the morning after Ugh-lomi had slain the lion, and go out to hunt him, leaving the women and children on the knoll. Little they knew how near he was as they tracked off in single file towards the hills, with Siss the Tracker leading them. And she watched the women and children, after the men had gone, gathering fern-fronds and twigs for the night fire, and the boys and girls running and playing together. But the very old woman made her feel afraid. After a long space towards noon, when most of the others were down at the stream by the bend, she came and stood on the hither side of the knoll, a gnarled brown figure, and gesticulated so that Eudena could scarce believe she was not seen. Eudena lay like a hare in its form, with shining eyes fixed on the bent witch away there, and presently she dimly understood it was the lion the old woman was worshipping — the lion Ugh-lomi had slain.

And the next day the hunters came back weary, carrying a fawn, and Eudena watched the feast enviously. And then came a strange thing. She saw — distinctly she heard — the old woman shrieking and gesticulating and pointing towards her. She was afraid, and crept like a snake out of sight again. But presently curiosity overcame her and she was back at her spying-place, and as she peered her heart stopped, for there were all the men, with their weapons in their hands, walking together towards her from the knoll.

She dared not move lest her movement should be seen, but she

pressed herself close to the ground. The sun was low and the golden light was in the faces of the men. She saw they carried a piece of rich red meat thrust through by an ashen stake. Presently they stopped. "Go on!" screamed the old woman. Cat's-skin grumbled, and they came on, searching the thicket with sun-dazzled eyes. "Here!" said Siss. And they took the ashen stake with the meat upon it and thrust it into the ground. "Uya!" cried Siss, "Behold thy portion. And Ugh-lomi we have slain. Of a truth we have slain Ugh-lomi. This day we slew Ugh-lomi, and tomorrow we will bring his body to you." And the others repeated the words.

They looked at each other and behind them, and partly turned and began going back. At first they walked half turned to the thicket, then facing the mound they walked faster, looking over their shoulders, then faster; soon they ran, it was a race at last, until they were near the knoll. Then Siss who was hindmost was first to slacken his pace.

The sunset passed and the twilight came, the fires glowed red against the hazy blue of the distant chestnut trees, and the voices over the mound were merry. Eudena lay scarcely stirring, looking from the mound to the meat and then to the mound. She was hungry, but she was afraid. At last she crept back to Ugh-lomi.

He looked round at the little rustle of her approach. His face was in shadow. "Have you got me some food?" he said.

She said she could find nothing, but that she would seek further, and went back along the lion's path until she could see the mound again, but she could not bring herself to take the meat; she had the brute's instinct of a snare. She felt very miserable.

She crept back at last towards Ugh-lomi and heard him stirring and moaning. She turned back to the mound again; then she saw something in the darkness near the stake, and peering distinguished a jackal. In a flash she was brave and angry; she sprang up, cried out, and ran towards the offering. She stumbled and fell, and heard the growling of the jackal going off.

When she arose only the ashen stake lay on the ground, the meat was gone. So she went back, to fast through the night with Ugh-lomi; and Ugh-lomi was angry with her, because she had no food for him; but she told him nothing of the things she had seen.

Two days passed and they were near starving, when the tribe slew

a horse. Then came the same ceremony, and a haunch was left on the ashen stake; but this time Eudena did not hesitate.

By acting and words she made Ugh-lomi understand, but he ate most of the food before he understood; and then he grew merry with his food. “I am Uya,” he said; “I am the Lion. I am the Great Cave Bear, I who was only Ugh-lomi. I am Wau the Cunning. It is well that they should feed me, for presently I will kill them all.”

Then Eudena’s heart was light, and she laughed with him; and afterwards she ate what he had left of the horseflesh with gladness.

After that it was he had a dream, and the next day he made Eudena bring him the lion’s teeth and claws — so much of them as she could find — and hack him a club of alder, and he put the teeth and claws very cunningly into the wood so that the points were outward. Very long it took him, and he blunted two of the teeth hammering them in, and was very angry and threw the thing away; but afterwards he dragged himself to where he had thrown it and finished it — a club of a new sort set with teeth. That day there was more meat for them both, an offering to the lion from the tribe.

It was one day — more than a hand’s fingers of days, more than anyone has skill to count — after Ugh-lomi had made the club, that Eudena (while he was asleep) was lying in the thicket watching the squatting-place. There had been no meat for three days. And the old woman came and worshipped after her manner. Now while she worshipped, Eudena’s little sister Si and another, the child of the first girl Siss had loved, came over the knoll and stood regarding her skinny figure, and presently they began to mock her. Eudena found this entertaining, but suddenly the old woman turned on them quickly and saw them. For a moment she stood and they stood motionless, and then with a shriek of rage she rushed towards them, and all three disappeared over the crest of the knoll.

Presently the children reappeared among the ferns over the shoulder of the hill. Little Si ran first, for she was an active girl, and the other child ran squealing with the old woman close upon her. And over the knoll came Siss with a bone in his hand, and Bo and Cat’s-skin obsequiously behind him, each holding a piece of food, and they laughed aloud and shouted to see the old woman so angry. And with a shriek the child was caught and the old woman set to

work slapping and the child screaming, and it was very good after-dinner fun for them. Little Si ran on a little way and stopped at last between fear and curiosity.

And suddenly came the mother of the child, with hair streaming, panting, and with a stone in her hand, and the old woman turned about like a wild cat. She was the equal of any woman, was the old chief of the fire-minders, in spite of her years; but before she could do anything Siss shouted to her and the clamour rose loud. Other shock heads came into sight. It seemed the whole tribe was at home and feasting. But the old woman dared not go on wreaking herself on the child Siss befriended. Nevertheless it was a fine row.

Everyone made noises and called names, even little Si. Abruptly the old woman let go of the child she had caught and made a swift run at Si who had no friends; and Si, realising her danger when it was almost upon her, with a faint cry of terror made off headlong, not heeding whither she ran, straight to the lair of the lion. She swerved aside into the reeds presently, not realising whither she went.

But the old woman was a wonderful old woman, as active as she was spiteful, and she caught Si by the streaming hair within thirty yards of Eudena. All the tribe now was running down the knoll and shouting, ready to see the fun.

Then something stirred in Eudena and, thinking all of little Si and nothing of her fear, she sprang up from her ambush and ran swiftly forward. The old woman did not see her, for she was busy beating little Si's face with her hand, beating with all her heart, and suddenly something hard and heavy struck her cheek. She went reeling, and saw Eudena with flaming eyes and cheeks between her and little Si. She shrieked with astonishment and terror, and little Si, not understanding, set off towards the gaping tribe. They were quite close now, for the sight of Eudena had driven their fading fear of the lion out of their heads.

In a moment Eudena had turned from the cowering old woman and overtaken Si. "Si!" she cried, "Si!" She caught the child up in her arms as it stopped, pressed the nail-lined face to hers, and turned about to run towards her lair, the lair of the old lion. The old woman stood waist-high in the reeds, and screamed foul things and inarticulate rage, but did not dare to intercept her; and at the bend of

the path Eudena looked back and saw all the men of the tribe crying to one another and Siss coming at a trot along the lion's trail.

She ran straight along the narrow way through the reeds to the shady place where Ugh-lomi sat with his healing thigh, just awakened by the shouting and rubbing his eyes. She came to him, a woman, with little Si in her arms. Her heart throbbed in her throat. "Ugh-lomi!" she cried, "Ugh-lomi, the tribe comes!"

Ugh-lomi sat staring in stupid astonishment at her and Si.

She pointed with Si in one arm. She sought among her feeble store of words to explain. She could hear the men calling. Apparently they had stopped outside. She put down Si and caught up the new club with the lion's teeth, and put it into Ugh-lomi's hand, and ran three yards and picked up the first axe.

"Ah!" said Ugh-lomi, waving the new club, and suddenly he perceived the occasion and, rolling over, began to struggle to his feet.

He stood, but clumsily. He supported himself by one hand against the tree, and just touched the ground gingerly with the toe of his wounded leg. In the other hand he gripped the new club. He looked at his healing thigh; and suddenly the reeds began whispering, and ceased and whispered again, and coming cautiously along the track among the reeds, bending down and holding his fire-hardened stabbing-stick of ash in his hand, appeared Siss. He stopped dead, and his eyes met Ugh-lomi's.

Ugh-lomi forgot he had a wounded leg. He stood firmly on both feet. Something trickled. He glanced down and saw a little gout of blood had oozed out along the edge of the healing wound. He rubbed his hand there to give him the grip of his club, and fixed his eyes again on Siss. The fighting spirit now swiftly and suddenly overflowed.

"Wau!" he cried, and sprang forward, and Siss, still stooping and watchful, drove his stabbing-stick up very quickly in an ugly thrust. It ripped Ugh-lomi's guarding arm and the club came down in a counter that Siss was never to understand. He fell, as an ox falls to the pole-axe, at Ugh-lomi's feet.

To Bo it seemed the strangest thing. He had a comforting sense of tall reeds on either side, and an impregnable rampart, Siss, between him and any danger. Snail-eater was close behind and there was no

danger there. He was prepared to shove behind and send Siss to death or victory. That was his place as second man. He saw the blunt of the spear Siss carried leap away from him, and suddenly a dull whack and the broad back fell away forward, and he looked Ugh-lomi in the face over his prostrate leader. It felt to Bo as if his heart had fallen down a well. He had a throwing-stone in one hand and an ashen stabbing-stick in the other. He did not live to the end of his momentary hesitation which to use.

Snail-eater was a readier man, and besides Bo did not fall forward as Siss had done, but gave at his knees and hips, crumpling up with the toothed club upon his head, smiting him down. The Snail-eater drove his spear forward swift and straight, and took Ugh-lomi in the muscle of the shoulder, and then he drove him hard with the smiting-stone in his other and, shouting out as he did so. The new club swished ineffectually through the reeds. Eudena saw Ugh-lomi come staggering back from the narrow path into the open space, tripping over Siss and with a foot of ashen stake sticking out of him over his arm, and then the Snail-eater, whose name she had given, had his final injury from her, as his exultant face came out of the reeds after his spear. For she swung the first axe swift and high, and hit him fair and square on the temple; and down he went on Siss at prostrate Ugh-lomi's feet.

But before Ugh-lomi could get to his feet, the two red-haired men were tumbling out of the reeds, spears and smiting-stones ready, and Snake hard behind them. One she struck on the neck, but not to fell him, and he blundered aside and spoilt his brother's blow at Ugh-lomi's head. In a moment Ugh-lomi dropped his club and had his assailant by the waist, and had pitched him sideways sprawling. He snatched at his club again and recovered it. The man Eudena had hit stabbed at her with his spear as he stumbled from her blow, and involuntarily she gave ground to avoid him. He hesitated between her and Ugh-lomi, half turned, gave a vague cry at finding Ugh-lomi so near, and in a moment Ugh-lomi had him by the throat, and the club had its third victim. As he went down Ugh-lomi shouted — no words, but an exultant cry.

The other red-haired man was six feet from her with his back to her, and a darker red streaking his head. He was struggling to his

feet. She had an irrational impulse to stop his rising. She flung the axe at him, missed, saw his face in profile, and he had swerved beyond little Si, and was running through the reeds. She had a transitory vision of Snake standing in the throat of the path, half turned away from her, and then she saw his back. She saw the club whirling through the air, and the shock head of Ugh-lomi, with blood in the hair and blood upon the shoulder, vanishing below the reeds in pursuit. Then she heard Snake scream like a woman.

She ran past Si to where the handle of the axe stuck out of a clump of fern, and turning, found herself panting and alone with three motionless bodies. The air was full of shouts and screams. For a space she was sick and giddy, and then it came into her head that Ugh-lomi was being killed along the reed-path, and with an inarticulate cry she leapt over the body of Bo and hurried after him. Snake's feet lay across the path, and his head was among the reeds. She followed the path until it bent round and opened out by the alders, and thence she saw all that was left of the tribe in the open, scattering like dead leaves before a gale, and going back over the knoll. Ugh-lomi was hard upon Cat's-skin.

But Cat's-skin was fleet of foot and got away, and so did young Wau–Hau when Ugh-lomi turned upon him, and Ugh-lomi pursued Wau–Hau far beyond the knoll before he desisted. He had the rage of battle on him now, and the wood thrust through his shoulder stung him like a spear. When she saw he was in no danger she stopped running and stood panting, watching the distant active figures run up and vanish one by one over the knoll. In a little time she was alone again. Everything had happened very swiftly. The smoke of Brother Fire rose straight and steady from the squatting-place, just as it had done ten minutes ago, when the old woman had stood yonder worshipping the lion.

And after a long time, as it seemed, Ugh-lomi reappeared over the knoll, and came back to Eudena, triumphant and breathing heavily. She stood, her hair about her eyes and hot-faced, with the blood-stained axe in her hand, at the place where the tribe had offered her as a sacrifice to the lion. "Wau!" cried Ugh-lomi at the sight of her, his face alight with the fellowship of battle, and he waved his new club, red now and hairy; and at the sight of his glowing face her tense

pose relaxed somewhat, and she stood weeping and rejoicing.

Ugh-lomi had a queer unaccountable pang at the sight of her tears; but he only shouted "Wau!" the louder and shook the axe east and west. He called to her to follow him and turned back, striding, with the club swinging in his hand, towards the squatting-place, as if he had never left the tribe; and she stopped weeping and followed as a woman should.

So Ugh-lomi and Eudena came back to the squatting-place from which they had fled many days before from the face of Uya; and by the squatting-place lay a deer half eaten, just as there had been before Ugh-lomi was man or Eudena woman. So Ugh-lomi sat down to eat, and Eudena beside him like a man, and the rest of the tribe watched them from safe hiding-places. And after a time one of the elder girls came back timorously and carrying little Si in her arms, and Eudena called to them by name, and offered them food. But the elder girl was afraid and would not come, though Si struggled to come to Eudena. Afterwards, when Ugh-lomi had eaten, he sat dozing, and at last he slept, and slowly the others came out of the hiding-places and drew near. And when Ugh-lomi woke, save that there were no men to be seen, it seemed as though he had never left the tribe.

Now there is a thing strange but true: that all through this fight Ugh-lomi forgot that he was lame, and was not lame, and after he had rested behold! He was a lame man; and he remained a lame man to the end of his days.

Cat's-skin and the second red-haired man and Wau–Hau, who chipped flints cunningly, as his father had done before him, fled from the face of Ugh-lomi, and none knew where they hid. But two days after they came and squatted among the bracken under the chestnuts a good way off from the knoll and watched. Ugh-lomi's rage had gone, he moved to go against them and did not, and at sundown they went away. That day too, they found the old woman among the ferns, where Ugh-lomi had blundered upon her when he had pursued Wau–Hau. She was dead and more ugly than ever, but whole. The jackals and vultures had tried her and left her — ; she was ever a wonderful old woman.

The next day the three men came again and squatted nearer, and Wau–Hau had two rabbits to hold up, and the red-haired man a

wood-pigeon, and Ugh–Lomi stood before their women and mocked them.

The next day they sat again nearer — without stones or sticks, and with the same offerings, and Cat's-skin had a trout. It was rare men caught fish in those days but Cat's-skin would stand silently in the water for hours and catch them with his hand. And the fourth day Ugh-lomi suffered these three to come to the squatting-place in peace, with the food they had with them. Ugh-lomi ate the trout. Thereafter for many moons Ugh-lomi was master, and had his will in peace. And on the fulness of time he was killed and eaten as Uya had been slain.

THE GRISLY FOLK

"Can these bones live?"

Could anything be more dead, more mute and inexpressive to the inexpert eye than the ochreous fragments of bone and the fractured lumps of flint that constitute the first traces of something human in the world? We see them in the museum cases, sorted out in accordance with principles we do not understand, labelled with strange names. Chellean, Mousterian, Solutrian and the like, taken mostly from the places Chelles, La Moustier, Solutre, and so forth where the first specimens were found. Most of us stare through the glass at them, wonder vaguely for a moment at that half-savage, half-animal past of our race, and pass on. "Primitive man," we say. "Flint implements. The mammoth used to chase him." Few of us realize yet how much the subtle indefatigable cross-examination of the scientific worker has been extracting from the evidence of these rusty and obstinate witnesses during the last few years.

One of the most startling results of this recent work is the gradual realisation that great quantities of these flint implements and some of the earlier fragments of bone that used to be ascribed to humanity are the vestiges of creatures, very manlike in many respects, but not, strictly speaking, belonging to the human species. Scientific men call these vanished races man (*Homo*), just as they call lions and tigers cats (*Felis*), but there are the soundest reasons for believing that these earlier so-called men were not of our blood, not our ancestors, but a strange and vanished animal, like us, akin to us, but different from us, as the mammoth was like, and akin to, and yet different from, the elephant. Flint and bone implements are found in deposits of very considerable antiquity; some in our museums may be a million years old or more, but the traces of really human creatures, mentally and anatomically like ourselves, do not go back much earlier than twenty or thirty thousand years ago. True men appeared in Europe then, and we do not know whence they came. These other tool-using, fire-making animals, the things that were like men and yet were not men, passed away before the faces of the true men.

Scientific authorities already distinguish four species of these

pseudo- men, and it is probable that we shall learn from time to time of other species. One strange breed made the implements called Chellean. These are chiefly sole-shaped blades of stone found in deposits of perhaps 300,000 or 400,000 years ago. Chellean implements are to be seen in any great museum. They are huge implements, *four or five times as big as those made by any known race of true men*, and they are not ill made. Certainly some creature with an intelligent brain made them. Big clumsy hands must have gripped and used these rocky chunks. But so far only one small fragment of a skeleton of this age has been found, a very massive chinless lower jawbone, with teeth rather *more* specialised than those of men to-day. We can only guess what strange foreshadowing of the human form once ate with that jaw, and struck at its enemies with those big but not unhandy flint blades. It may have been a tremendous fellow, probably much bigger in the body than a man. It may have been able to take bears by the scruff and the sabre-toothed lion by the throat. We do not know. We have just these great stone blades and that bit of a massive jaw and — the liberty to wonder.

Most fascinating riddle of all these riddles of the ages of ice and hardship, before the coming of the true men, is the riddle of the Mousterian men, because they were perhaps still living in the world when the true men came wandering into Europe. They lived much later than those unknown Chellean giants. They lived thirty or forty thousand years ago — a yesterday compared with the Chellean time. These Mousterians are also called Neandertalers. Until quite recently it was supposed that they were true men like ourselves. But now we begin to realise that they were different, so different that it is impossible that they can be very close relations of ours. They walked or shambled along with a peculiar slouch, they could not turn their heads up to the sky, and their teeth were very different from those of true men. One oddity about them is that in one or two points they were less like apes than we are. The dog tooth, the third tooth from the middle, which is so big in the gorilla, and which in man is pointed and still quite distinct from the other teeth, is not distinct at all in the Neandertaler. He had a very even row of teeth, and his cheek teeth also were very unlike ours, and less like the apes' than ours. He had more face and less brow than true men, but that is not

because he had a lesser brain; his brain was as big as a modern man's but it was different, bigger behind and smaller in front, so that probably he thought and behaved differently from us. Perhaps he had a better memory and less reasoning power than real men, or perhaps he had more nervous energy and less intelligence. He had no chin, and the way his jawbones come together below make it very doubtful if he could have used any such sounds in speech as we employ. Probably he did not talk at all. He could not hold a pin between his finger and thumb. The more we learn about this beast-man the stranger he becomes to us and the less like the Australoid savage he was once supposed to be.

And as we realise the want of any close relationship between this ugly, strong, ungainly, manlike animal and mankind, the less likely it becomes that he had a naked skin and hair like ours and the more probable that he was different and perhaps bristly or hairy in some queer inhuman fashion like the hairy elephant and the woolly rhinoceros who were his contemporaries. Like them he lived in a bleak land on the edge of the snows and glaciers that were even then receding northward. Hairy or grisly, with a big face like a mask, great brow ridges and no forehead, clutching an enormous flint, and running like a baboon with his head forward and not, like a man, with his head up, he must have been a fearsome creature for our forefathers to come upon.

Almost certainly they met, these grisly men and the true men. The true man must have come into the habitat of the Neandertaler, and the two must have met and fought. Some day we may come upon the evidences of this warfare.

Western Europe, which is the only part of the world that has yet been searched with any thoroughness for the remains of early men, was slowly growing warmer age by age; the glaciers that had once covered half the continent were receding, and wide stretches of summer pasture and thin woods of pine and birch were spreading slowly over the once icy land. South Europe then was like northern Labrador to-day. A few hardy beasts held out amidst the snows; the bears hibernated. With the spring grass and foliage came great herds of reindeer, wild horses, mammoth, elephant, and rhinoceros, drifting northward from the slopes of the great warm valley that is now filled

up with water — the Mediterranean Sea. It was in those days before the ocean waters broke into the Mediterranean that the swallows and a multitude of other birds acquired the habit of coming north, a habit that nowadays impels them to brave the passage of the perilous seas that flow over and hide the lost secrets of the ancient Mediterranean valleys. The grisly men rejoiced at the return of life, came out of the caves in which they had lurked during the winter, and took their toll of the beasts.

These grisly men must have been almost solitary creatures.

The winter food was too scanty for communities. A male may have gone with a female or so; perhaps they parted in the winter and came together in the summer; when his sons grew big enough to annoy him, the grisly man killed them or drove them off. If he killed them he may have eaten them. If they escaped him they may have returned to kill him. The grisly folk may have had long unreasoning memories and very set purposes.

The true men came into Europe, we know not whence, out of the South. When they appeared in Europe their hands were as clever as ours; they could draw pictures we still admire, they could paint and carve; the implements they made were smaller than the Mousterian ones, far smaller than the Chellean, but better made and more various. They wore no clothes worth speaking of, but they painted themselves and probably they talked. And they came in little bands. They were already more social than the Neandertaler; they had laws and self-restraints; their minds had travelled a long way along that path of adaptation and self-suppression which has led to the intricate mind of man to-day with its concealed wishes, its confusions, and laughter and the fantasies and reveries and dreams. They were already held together, these men, and kept in order by the strange limitations of tabu.

They were still savages, very prone to violence and convulsive in their lusts and desires; but to the best of their poor ability they obeyed laws and customs already immemorably ancient, and they feared the penalties of wrong- doing. We can understand something of what was going on in their minds, those of us who can remember the fears, desires, fancies and superstitions of our childhood. Their moral struggles were ours — in cruder forms. They were our kind.

But the grisly folk we cannot begin to understand. We cannot conceive in our different minds the strange ideas that chased one another through those queerly shaped brains. As well might we try to dream and feel as a gorilla dreams and feels.

We can understand how the true men drifted northward from the lost lands of the Mediterranean valley into the high Spanish valleys and the south and centre of France, and so on to what is now England — for there was no Channel then between England and France — and eastward to the Rhineland and over the broad wilderness which is now the North Sea, and the German plain. They would leave the snowy wilderness of the Alps, far higher then and covered with great glaciers, away on their right. These people drifted northward for the very good reason that their kind was multiplying and food diminishing. They would be oppressed by feuds and wars. They had no settled homes; they were accustomed to drift with the seasons, every now and then some band would be pushed by hunger and fear a little farther northward into the unknown.

We can imagine the appearance of a little group of these wanderers, our ancestors, coming over some grassy crest into these northern lands. The time would be late spring or early summer, and they would probably be following up some grazing beasts, a reindeer herd or horses.

By a score of different means our anthropologists have been able to reconstruct the particulars of the appearance and habits of these early pilgrim fathers of mankind.

They would not be a very numerous band, because if they were there would be no reason why they should have been driven northward out of their former roving grounds. Two or three older men of thirty or so, eight or ten women and girls with a few young children, a few lads between fourteen and twenty, might make up the whole community. They would be a brownish brown-eyed people with wavy dark hair; the fairness of the European and the straight blue-black hair of the Chinaman had still to be evolved in the world. The older men would probably lead the band, the women and children would keep apart from the youths and men, fenced off by complex and definite tabus from any close companionship. The leaders would be tracking the herd they were following. Tracking

was then the supreme accomplishment of mankind. By signs and traces that would be invisible to any modern civilised eye, they would be reading the story of the previous day's trek of the herd of sturdy little horses ahead of them. They would be so expert that they would go on from one fault sign to another with as little delay as a dog who follows a scent.

The horses they were following were only a little way ahead — so the trackers read the signs — they were numerous and nothing had alarmed them. They were grazing and moving only very slowly. There were no traces of wild dog or other animals to stampede them. Some elephants were also going north, and twice our human tribe had crossed the spoor of woolly rhinoceros roaming westward.

The tribe travelled light. They were mainly naked, but all of them were painted with white and black and red and yellow ochre. At this distance of time it is difficult to see whether they were tattooed. Probably they were not. The babies and small children were carried by the women on their backs in slings or bags made of animal skins, and perhaps some or all of them wore mantles and loin bands of skin and had pouches and belts of leather. The men had stone-pointed spears, and carried sharpened flints in their hands.

There was no Old Man who was lord and master and father of this particular crowd. Weeks ago the Old Man had been charged and trampled to a jelly by a great bull in the swamp far away. Then two of the girls had been waylaid and carried off by the young men of another larger tribe. It was because of these losses that this remnant was now seeking new hunting grounds.

The landscape that spread before the eyes of this little band as they crested the hills was a bleaker, more desolate and altogether unkempt version of the landscape of western Europe to-day. About them was a grassy down athwart which a peewit flew with its melancholy cry. Before them stretched a great valley ridged with transverse purple hills over which the April cloud-shadows chased one another. Pinewoods and black heather showed where these hills became sandy, and the valleys were full of brown brushwood, and down their undrained troughs ran a bright green band of peaty swamps and long pools of weedy water. In the valley thickets many beasts lurked unseen, and where the winding streams had cut into the

soil there were cliffs and caves. Far away along the northern slopes of the ridge that were now revealed, the wild ponies were to be seen grazing.

At a sign from the two leaders the little straggle of menfolk halted, and a woman who had been chattering in subdued tones to a little girl became silent. The brothers surveyed the wide prospect earnestly.

"Ugh!" said one abruptly and pointed.

"Ugh!" cried his brother.

The eyes of the whole tribe swung round to the pointing finger.

The group became one rigid stare.

Every soul of them stood still, astonishment had turned them into a tense group of statuettes.

Far away down the slope with his body in profile and his head turned towards them, frozen by an equal amazement, stood a hunched grey figure, bigger but shorter than a man. He had been creeping up behind a fold in the ground to peer at the ponies, and suddenly he had turned his eyes and seen the tribe. His head projected like a baboon's. In his hand he carried what seemed to the menfolk a great rock.

For a little while this animal scrutiny held discoverers and discovered motionless. Then some of the women and children began to stir and line out to see the strange creature better. "Man!" said an old crone of forty. "*Man!*" At the movement of the women the grisly man turned, ran clumsily for a score of yards or so towards a thicket of birch and budding thorn. Then he halted again for a moment to look at the newcomers, waved an arm strangely, and then dashed into cover.

The shadows of the thicket swallowed him up, and by hiding him seemed to make him enormous. It identified itself with him, and watched them with his eyes. Its tree stems became long silvery limbs, and a fallen trunk crouched and stared.

It was still early in the morning, and the leaders of the tribe had hoped to come up with the wild ponies as the day advanced and perhaps cut one off and drive it into difficulties among the bushes and swampy places below, and wound it and follow it up and kill it. Then they would have made a feast, and somewhere down in the valley

they would have found water and dry bracken for litter and a fire before night. It had seemed a pleasant and hopeful morning to them until this moment. Now they were disconcerted. This grey figure was as if the sunny morning had suddenly made a horrible and inexplicable grimace.

The whole expedition stood gazing for a time, and then the two leaders exchanged a few words. Waugh, the elder, pointed. Click, his brother, nodded his head. They would go on, but instead of slanting down the slopes towards the thickets they would keep round the ridge.

"Come," said Waugh, and the little band began to move again. But now it marched in silence. When presently a little boy began a question his mother silenced him by a threat. Everybody kept glancing at the thickets below.

Presently a girl cried out sharply and pointed. All started and stopped short.

There was the grisly thing again. It was running across an open space, running almost on all fours, in joltering leaps. It was hunchbacked and very big and low, a grey hairy wolf-like monster. At times its long arms nearly touched the ground. It was nearer than it had been before. It vanished amidst the bushes again. It seemed to throw itself down among some red dead bracken...

Waugh and Click took counsel.

A mile away was the head of the valley where the thickets had their beginning. Beyond stretched the woldy hills, bare of cover. The horses were grazing up towards the sun, and away to the north the backs of a herd of woolly rhinoceros were now visible on a crest — just the ridges of their backs showing like a string of black beads.

If the tribe struck across those grassy spaces, then the lurking prowler would have either to stay behind or come into the open. If he came into the open the dozen youths and men of the tribe would know how to deal with him.

So they struck across the grass. The little band worked round to the head of the valley, and there the menfolk stayed at the crest while the women and children pushed on ahead across the open.

For a time the watchers remained motionless, and then Waugh was moved to gestures of defiance. Click was not to be outdone.

There were shouts at the hidden watcher, and then one lad, who was something of a clown, after certain grimaces and unpleasant gestures, obliged with an excellent imitation of the grey thing's lumbering run. At that scare gave place to hilarity.

In those days laughter was a social embrace. Men could laugh, but there was no laughter in the grisly pre-man who watched and wondered in the shadow. He marvelled. The men rolled about and guffawed and slapped their thighs and one another. Tears ran down their faces.

Never a sign came from the thickets.

"Yahah," said the menfolk. "Yahah! Bzzzz. Yahah! Yah!"

They forgot altogether how frightened they had been.

And when Waugh thought the women and children had gone on a sufficient distance, he gave the word for the men to follow them.

In such fashion it was that men, our ancestors, had their first glimpse of the pre-men of the wilderness of western Europe...

The two breeds were soon to come to closer quarters.

The newcomers were pushing their way into the country of these grisly men. Presently came other glimpses of lurking semi-human shapes and grey forms that ran in the twilight. In the morning Click found long narrow footprints round the camp...

Then one day one of the children, eating those little green thorn-buds that rustic English children speak of as bread and cheese, ventured too far from the others. There was a squeal and a scuffle and a thud, and something grey and hairy made off through the thickets carrying its victim, with Waugh and three of the younger men in hot pursuit. They chased the enemy into a dark gully, very much overgrown. This time it was not a solitary Neandertaler they had to deal with. Out of the bushes a big male came at them to cover the retreat of his mate, and hurled a rock that bowled over the youth it hit like a nine-pin, so that thereafter he limped always. But Waugh with his throwing spear got the grey monster in the shoulder, and he halted snarling.

No further sound came from the stolen child.

The female showed herself for a moment up the gully, snarling, bloodstained, and horrible, and the menfolk stood about afraid to continue their pursuit, and yet not caring to desist from it. One of

them was already hobbling off with his hand to his knee.

How did that first fight go?

Perhaps it went against the men of our race. Perhaps the big Neandertaler male, his mane and beard bristling horribly, came down the gully with a thunderous roar, with a great rock in either hand. We do not know whether he threw those big discs of flint or whether he smote with them. Perhaps it was then that Waugh was killed in the act of running away. Perhaps it was bleak disaster then for the little tribe. Short of two of its members it presently made off over the hills as fast as it could go, keeping together for safety, and leaving the wounded youth far behind to limp along its tracks in lonely terror.

Let us suppose that he got back to the tribe at last — after nightmare hours.

Now that Waugh had gone, Click would become Old Man, and he made the tribe camp that night and build their fire on the high ridges among the heather far away from the thickets in which the grisly folk might be lurking.

The grisly folk thought we knew not how about the menfolk, and the men thought about the grisly folk in such ways as we can understand; they imagined how their enemies might act in this fashion or that, and schemed to circumvent them. It may have been Click who had the first dim idea of getting at the gorge in which the Neandertalers had their lair, from above. For as we have said, the Neandertaler did not look up. Then the menfolk could roll a great rock upon him or pelt him with burning brands and set the dry bracken alight.

One likes to think of a victory for the human side. This Click we have conjured up had run in panic from the first onset of the grisly male, but as he brooded by the fire that night, he heard again in imagination the cry of the lost girl, and he was filled with rage. In his sleep the grisly male came to him and Click fought in his dreams and started awake stiff with fury. There was a fascination for him in that gorge in which Waugh had been killed. He was compelled to go back and look again for the grisly beasts, to waylay them in their tracks, and watch them from an ambush. He perceived that the Neandertalers could not climb as easily as the menfolk could climb, nor hear so quickly, nor dodge with the same unexpectedness. These

grisly men were to be dealt with as the bears were dealt with, the bears before whom you run and scatter, and then come at again from behind.

But one may doubt if the first human group to come into the grisly land was clever enough to solve the problems of the new warfare. Maybe they turned southward again to the gentler regions from which they had come, and were killed by or mingled with their own brethren again. Maybe they perished altogether in that new land of the grisly folk into which they had intruded. Yet the truth may be that they even held their own and increased. If they died there were others of their kind to follow them and achieve a better fate.

That was the beginning of a nightmare age for the little children of the human tribe. They knew they were watched.

Their steps were dogged. The legends of ogres and man-eating giants that haunt the childhood of the world may descend to us from those ancient days of fear. And for the Neandertalers it was the beginning of an incessant war that could end only in extermination.

The Neandertalers, albeit not so erect and tall as men, were the heavier, stronger creatures, but they were stupid, and they went alone or in twos and threes; the menfolk were swifter, quicker-witted, and more social — when they fought they fought in combination. They lined out and surrounded and pestered and pelted their antagonists from every side. They fought the men of that grisly race as dogs might fight a bear. They shouted to one another what each should do, and the Neandertaler had no speech; he did not understand. They moved too quickly for him and fought too cunningly.

Many and obstinate were the duels and battles these two sorts of men fought for this world in that bleak age of the windy steppes, thirty or forty thousand years ago. The two races were intolerable to each other. They both wanted the caves and the banks by the rivers where the big flints were got. They fought over the dead mammoths that had been bogged in the marshes, and over the reindeer stags that had been killed in the rutting season. When a human tribe found signs of the grisly folk near their cave and squatting place, they had perforce to track them down and kill them; their own safety and the safety of their little ones was only to be secured by that killing. The Neandertalers thought the little children of men fair game and

pleasant eating.

How long the grisly folk lived on in that chill world of pines and silver birch between the steppes and the glaciers, after the true menfolk came, we do not know. For ages they may have held out, growing more cunning and dangerous as they became rare. The true men hunted them down by their spoor and by their tracks, and watched for the smoke of their fires, and made food scarce for them.

Great Paladins arose in that forgotten world, men who stood forth and smote the grey man-beast face to face and slew him. They made long spears of wood, hardened by fire at the tips; they raised shields of skin against his mighty blows. They struck at him with stones on cords, and slung them at him with slings. And it was not simply men who withstood the grisly beast but women. They stood over their children; they stood by their men against this eerie thing that was like and yet not like mankind. Unless the *savants* read all the signs awry, it was the women who were the makers of the larger tribes into which human families were already growing in those ancient times. It was the woman's subtle, love-guided wits which protected her sons from the fierce anger of the Old Man, and taught them to avoid his jealousy and wrath, and persuaded him to tolerate them and so have their help against the grisly enemy. It was woman, says Atkinson, in the beginning of things human, who taught the primary tabus, that a son must go aside out of the way of his stepmother, and get himself a wife from another tribe, so as to keep the peace within the family. She came between the fratricides, and was the first peacemaker. Human societies in their beginnings were her work, done against the greater solitariness, the lonely fierceness of the adult male. Through her, men learnt the primary co-operation of sonship and brotherhood. The grisly folk had not learnt even the rudest elements of co-operation, and mankind had already spelt out the alphabet of a unity that may some day comprehend the whole earth. The menfolk kept together by the dozen and by the score. By ones and twos and threes therefore the grisly folk were beset and slain, until there were no more of them left in the world.

Generation after generation, age after age, that long struggle for existence went on between these men who were not quite men and the men, our ancestors, who came out of the south into western

Europe. Thousands of fights and hunts, sudden murders and headlong escapes there were amidst the caves and thickets of that chill and windy world between the last age of glaciers and our own warmer time. Until at length the last poor grisly was brought to bay and faced the spears of his pursuers in anger and despair.

What leapings of the heart were there not throughout that long warfare! What moments of terror and triumph! What acts of devotion and desperate wonders of courage! And the strain of the victors was our strain; we are lineally identical with those sun-brown painted beings who ran and fought and helped one another, the blood in our veins glowed in those fights and chilled in those fears of the forgotten past. For it was forgotten. Except perhaps for some vague terrors in our dreaming life and for some lurking element of tradition in the legends and warnings of the nursery, it has gone altogether out of the memory of our race. But nothing is ever completely lost. Seventy or eighty years ago a few curious *savants* began to suspect that there were hidden memories in certain big chipped flints and scraps of bone they found in ancient gravels. Much more recently others have begun to find hints of remote strange experiences in the dreams and odd kinks in modern minds. By degrees these dry bones begin to live again.

This restoration of the past is one of the most astonishing adventures of the human mind. As humanity follows the gropings of scientific men among these ancient vestiges, it is like a man who turns over the yellow pages of some long-forgotten diary, some engagement book of his adolescence. His dead youth lives again. Once more the old excitements stir him, the old happiness returns. But the old passions that once burnt, only warm him now, and the old fears and distresses signify nothing.

A day may come when these recovered memories may grow as if we in our own persons had been there and shared the thrill and the fear of those primordial days; a day may come when the great beasts of the past will leap to life again in our imaginations, when we shall walk again in vanished scenes, stretch painted limbs we thought were dust, and feel again the sunshine of a million years ago.

LITTLE MOTHER UP THE MÖRDERBERG

I think I mentioned, when I was telling how I sailed my first aeroplane, that I made a kind of record at Arosa by falling down three separate crevasses on three successive days. That was before little mother followed me out there. When she came, I could see at a glance she was tired and jaded and worried, and so, instead of letting her fret about, in the hotel and get into a wearing tangle of gossip, I packed her and two knapsacks up, and started off on a long, refreshing, easy-going walk northward, until a blister on her foot stranded us at the Magenruhe Hotel on the Sneejoch. She was for going on, blister or no blister — I never met pluck like mother's in all my life — but I said "No, This is a mountaineering inn, and it suits me down to the ground — or if you prefer it, up to the sky. You shall sit in the veranda by the telescope, and I'll prance about among the peaks for a bit."

"Don't have accidents," she said.

"Can't promise that, little mother," I said; "but I'll always remember I'm your only son."

So I pranced...

I need hardly say that in a couple of days I was at loggerheads with all the mountaineers in that inn. They couldn't stand me. They didn't like my neck with its strong, fine Adam's apple — being mostly men with their heads jammed on — and they didn't like the way I bore myself and lifted my aviator's nose to the peaks. They didn't like my being a vegetarian and the way I evidently enjoyed it, and they didn't like the touch of colour, orange and green, in my rough serge suit. They were all of the dingy school — the sort of men I call gentlemanly owls — shy, correct-minded creatures, mostly from Oxford, and as solemn over their climbing as a cat frying eggs. Sage they were, great headnodders, and "I-wouldn't-venture-to-do-a-thing-like-that"-ers. They always did what the books and guides advised, and they classed themselves by their seasons; one was in his ninth season, and another in his tenth, and so on. I was a novice and had to sit with my mouth open for bits of humble-pie.

My style that! Rather!

I would sit in the smoking-room sucking away at a pipeful of hygienic herb tobacco — they said it smelt like burning garden rubbish — and waiting to put my spoke in and let a little into their minds. They set aside their natural reticence altogether in their efforts to show how much they didn't like me.

"You chaps take these blessed mountains too seriously," I said. "They're larks, you've got to lark with them."

They just slued their eyes round me.

"I don't find the solemn joy in fussing you do. The old-style mountaineers went up with alpenstocks and ladders and light hearts. That's my idea of mountaineering."

"It isn't ours," said one red-boiled hero of the peaks, all blisters and peeling skin, and he said it with an air of crushing me.

"It's the right idea," I said serenely, and puffed at my herb tobacco.

"When you've had a bit of experience you'll know better," said another, an oldish young man with a small grey beard.

"Experience never taught me anything," I said.

"Apparently not," said someone, and left me one down and me to play. I kept perfectly tranquil.

"I mean to do the Mörderberg before I go down," I said quietly, and produced a sensation.

"When are you going down?"

"Week or so," I answered, unperturbed.

"It's not the climb a man ought to attempt in his first year," said the peeling gentleman.

"You particularly ought not to try it," said another.

"No guide will go with you."

"Foolhardy idea."

"Mere brag."

"Like to see him do it."

I just let them boil for a bit, and when they were back to the simmer I dropped in, pensively, with, "Very likely I'll take that little mother of mine. She's small, bless her, and she's as hard as nails."

But they saw they were being drawn by my ill-concealed smile; and this time they contented themselves with a few grunts and grunt-like remarks, and then broke up into little conversations in

undertones that pointedly excluded me. It had the effect of hardening my purpose. I'm a stiff man when I'm put on my mettle, and I determined that the little mother should go up the Mörderberg, where half these solemn experts hadn't been, even if I had to be killed or orphaned in the attempt. So I spoke to her about it the next day. She was in a deck-chair on the veranda, wrapped up in rugs and looking at the peaks.

"Comfy?" I said.

"Very," she said.

"Getting rested?"

"It's so nice."

I strolled to the rail of the veranda. "See that peak there, mummy?"

She nodded happily, with eyes half shut.

"That's the Mörderberg. You and me have got to be up there the day after to-morrow."

Her eyes opened a bit. "Wouldn't it be rather a climb, dearest?" she said.

"I'll manage that all right," I said, and she smiled consentingly and closed her eyes.

"So long as you manage it," she said.

I went down the valley that afternoon to Daxdam to get gear and guides and porters, and I spent the next day in glacier and rock practice above the hotel. That didn't add to my popularity. I made two little slips. One took me down a crevasse — I've an extraordinary knack of going down crevasses — and a party of three which was starting for the Kinderspitz spent an hour and a half fishing me out; and the other led to my dropping my ice-axe on a little string of people going for the Humpi glacier. It didn't go within thirty inches of anyone, but you might have thought from the row they made that I had knocked out the collective brains of the party. Quite frightful language they used, and three ladies with them, too!

The next day there was something very like an organised attempt to prevent our start. They brought out the landlord, they remonstrated with mother, they did their best to blacken the character of my two guides. The landlord's brother had a first-class row with them.

"Two years ago," he said, "they lost their Herr!"

“No particular reason,” I said, “why you shouldn’t keep yours on is it?”

That settled him. He wasn’t up to a polyglot pun, and it stuck in his mind like a fishbone in the throat.

Then the peeling gentleman came along and tried to overhaul our equipment. “Have you got this?” it was, and “Have you got that?”

“Two things,” I said, looking at his nose pretty hard, “we haven’t forgotten. One’s blue veils and the other vaseline.”

I’ve still a bright little memory of the start, There was the pass a couple of hundred feet or so below the hotel, and the hotel — all name and windows — standing out in a great, desolate, rocky place against lumpy masses of streaky green rock, flecked here and there with patches of snow and dark shelves of rhododendron, and raising perhaps a thousand feet towards the western spur of the massif. Our path ran before us, meandering among the boulders down to stepping-stones over a rivulet, and then upward on the other side of the stream towards the Magenruhe glacier, where we had to go up the rocks to the left and then across the icefall to shelves on the precipitous face on the west side. It was dawn, the sun had still to rise, and everything looked very cold and blue and vast about us. Everyone in the hotel had turned out to bear a hand in the row — some of the deshabilles were disgraceful — and now they stood in a silent group watching us recede. The last word I caught was, “They’ll have to come back.”

“We’ll come back all right,” I answered. “Never fear.”

And so we went our way, cool and deliberate, over the stream and up and up towards the steep snowfields and icy shoulder of the Mörderberg. I remember that we went in absolute silence for a time, and then how suddenly the landscape gladdened with sunrise, and in an instant, as if speech had thawed, all our tongues were babbling.

I had one or two things in the baggage that I hadn’t cared for the people at the inn to see, and I had made no effort to explain why I had five porters with the load of two and a half. But when we came to the icefall I showed my hand a little, and unslung a stout twine hammock for the mater. We put her in this with a rug round her, and sewed her in with a few stitches; then we roped up in line, with me last but one and a guide front and rear, and mummy in the middle

carried by two of the porters. I stuck my alpenstock through two holes I had made in the shoulders of my jacket under my rucksack, T-shape to my body, so that when I went down a crevasse, as I did ever and again, I just stuck in its jaws and came up easy as the rope grew taut. And so, except for one or two bumps that made the mater chuckle, we got over without misadventure.

Then came the rock climb on the other side, requiring much judgment. We had to get from ledge to ledge as opportunity offered, and here the little mother was a perfect godsend. We unpacked her after we had slung her over the big fissure — I forget what you call it — that always comes between glacier and rock — and whenever we came to a bit of ledge within eight feet of the one we were working along, the two guides took her and slung her up, she being so light, and then she was able to give a foot for the next man to hold by and hoist himself. She said we were all pulling her leg, and that made her and me laugh so much that the whole party had to wait for us.

It was pretty tiring altogether doing that bit of the climb — two hours we had of it before we got to the loose masses of rock on the top of the arete. "It's worse going down," said the elder guide.

I looked back for the first time, and I confess it did make me feel a bit giddy. There was the glacier looking quite pretty, and with a black gash between itself and the rocks.

For a time it was pretty fair going up the rocky edge of the arete, and nothing happened of any importance, except that one of the porters took to grousing because he was hit on the shin by a stone I dislodged. "Fortunes of war," I said, but he didn't seem to see it, and when I just missed him with a second he broke out into a long, whining discourse in what I suppose he thought was German — I couldn't make head or tail of it.

"He said you might have killed him," said little mother.

"They say," I quoted, "What say they? Let them say."

I was for stopping and filling him up with a feed, but the elder guide wouldn't have it. We had already lost time, he said, and the traverse round the other face of the mountain would be more and more subject to avalanches as the sun got up. So we went on. As we went round the corner to the other face I turned towards the hotel — it was the meanest little oblong spot by now — and made a derisive

gesture or so for the benefit of anyone at the telescope.

We did get one rock avalanche that reduced the hindmost guide to audible prayer, but nothing hit us except a few bits of snow. The rest of the fall was a couple of yards and more from us. We were on rock just then and overhung; before and afterwards we were edging along steps in an ice-slope cut by the foremost guide, and touched up by the porters. The avalanche was much more impressive before it came in sight, banging and thundering overhead, and it made a tremendous uproar in the blue deeps beneath, but in actual transit it seemed a mean show — mostly of stones smaller than I am.

"All right?" said the guide.

"Toned up," I answered.

"You suppose it is safe, dear?" asked the little mother.

"Safe as Trafalgar Square," I said. "Hop along, mummykins."

Which she did with remarkable agility.

The traverse took us on to old snow at last, and here, we could rest for lunch — and pretty glad we were both of lunch and rest. But here the trouble with the guides and porters thickened. They were already a little ruffled about my animating way with loose rocks, and now they kicked up a tremendous shindy because instead of the customary brandy we had brought non- alcoholic ginger cordial. Would they even try it? Not a bit of it! It was a queer little dispute, high up in that rarefied air about food values and the advantages of making sandwiches with nuttar. They were an odd lot of men, invincibly set upon a vitiated and vitiating dietary. They wanted meat, they wanted alcohol, they wanted narcotics to smoke. You might have thought that men like these, living in almost direct contact with Nature, would have liked "Nature" foods, such as plasmon, protose, plobose, digestine, and so forth. Not them! They just carved for corruption. When I spoke of drinking pure water one of the porters spat in a marked, symbolic manner over the precipice. From that point onward discontent prevailed.

We started again about half-past eleven, after a vain attempt on the part of the head guide to induce us to turn back. We had now come to what is generally the most difficult part of the Mörderberg ascent, the edge that leads up to the snowfield below the crest. But here we came suddenly into a draught of warm air blowing from the

south-west, and everything, the guide said, was unusual. Usually the edge is a sheet of ice over rock. To-day it was wet and soft, and one could kick steps in it and get one's toes into rock with the utmost ease.

"This is where Herr Tomlinson's party fell," said one of the porters, after we'd committed ourselves to the edge for ten minutes or so.

"Some people could fall out of a four-post bed," I said.

"It'll freeze hard again before we come back," said the second guide, "and us with nothing but verdammt ginger inside of us."

"You keep your rope taut," said I.

A friendly ledge came to the help of mother in the nick of time, just as she was beginning to tire, and we sewed her up all but the feet in her hammock again, and roped her carefully. She bumped a bit, and at times she was just hanging over immensity and rotating slowly, with everybody else holding like grim death.

"My dear," she said, the first time this happened, "is it right for me to be doing this?"

"Quite right," I said, "but if you can get a foothold presently again — it's rather better style."

"You're sure there's no danger, dear?"

"Not a scrap."

"And I don't fatigue you?"

"You're a stimulant."

"The view," she said, "is certainly becoming very beautiful."

But presently the view blotted itself out, and we were in clouds and thin drift of almost thawing snowflakes.

We reached the upper snowfield about half-past one, and the snow was extraordinarily soft. The elder guide went in up to his armpits.

"Frog it," I said, and spread myself out flat, in a sort of swimming attitude. So we bored our way up to the crest and along it. We went in little spurts and then stopped for breath, and we dragged the little mother after us in her hammock-bag. Sometimes the snow was so good we fairly skimmed the surface; sometimes it was so rotten we plunged right into it and splashed about. I went too near the snow cornice once and it broke under me, but the rope saved me, and we reached the summit about three o'clock without further

misadventure. The summit was just bare rock with the usual cairn and pole. Nothing to make a fuss about. The drift of snow and cloudwisp had passed, the sun was blazing hot overhead, and we seemed to be surveying all Switzerland. The Magenruhe Hotel was at our toes, hidden, so to speak, by our chins. We squatted about the cairn, and the guides and porters were reduced to ginger and vegetarian ham-sandwiches. I cut and scratched an inscription, saying I had climbed on simple food, and claiming a record.

Seen from the summit the snowfields on the north-east side of the mountain looked extremely attractive, and I asked the head guide why that way up wasn't used. He said something in his peculiar German about precipices.

So far our ascent had been a fairly correct ascent in rather slow time. It was in the descent that, that strain in me of almost unpremeditated originality had play. I wouldn't have a rope returning across the upper snowfield, because mother's feet and hands were cold, and I wanted her to jump about a bit. And before I could do anything to prevent it she had slipped, tried to get up by rolling over down the slope instead of up, as she ought to have done, and was leading the way, rolling over and over and over, down towards the guide's blessed precipices above the lower snowfield.

I didn't lose an instant in flinging myself after her, axe up, in glissading attitude. I'm not clear what I meant to do, but I fancy the idea was to get in front of her and put on the brake. I did not succeed, anyhow. In twenty seconds I had slipped, and was sitting down and going down out of my own control altogether.

Now, most great discoveries are the result of accident, and I maintain that in that instant mother and I discovered two distinct and novel ways of coming down a mountain.

It is necessary that there should be first a snow slope above with a layer of softish, rotten snow on the top of ice, then a precipice, with a snow- covered talus sloping steeply at first and then less steeply, then more snow- slopes and precipices according to taste, ending in a snowfield or a not-too- greatly-fissured glacier, or a reasonable, not-too-rocky slope. Then it all becomes as easy as chuting the chutes.

Mother hit on the sideways method. She rolled. With the snow in the adhesive state it had got into, she had made the jolliest little

snowball of herself in half a minute, and the nucleus of as clean and abundant a snow avalanche as anybody could wish. There was plenty of snow going in front of her, and that's the very essence of both our methods. You must fall on your snow, not your snow fall on you, or it smashes you. And you mustn't mix yourself up with loose stones.

I, on the other hand, went down feet first, and rather like a snow-plough; slower than she did, and if, perhaps, with less charm, with more dignity. Also I saw more. But it was certainly a tremendous rush. And I gave a sort of gulp when mummy bumped over the edge into the empty air and vanished.

It was like a toboggan ride gone mad down the slope until I took off from the edge of the precipice, and then it was like a dream.

I'd always thought falling must be horrible. It wasn't in the slightest degree. I might have hung with my clouds and lumps of snow about me for weeks, so great was my serenity. I had an impression then that I was as good as killed — and that didn't matter. I wasn't afraid — that's nothing — ! But I wasn't a bit uncomfortable. Whack! We'd hit something, and I expected to be flying to bits right and left. But we'd only got on to the snow-slope below, at so steep an angle that it was merely breaking the fall. Down we went again. I didn't see much of the view after that because the snow was all round and over my head, but I kept feet foremost and in a kind of sitting posture, and then I slowed and then I quickened again and bumped rather, and then harder, and bumped and then bumped again and came to rest. This time I was altogether buried in snow, and twisted sideways with a lot of heavy snow on my right shoulder.

I sat for a bit enjoying the stillness — and then I wondered what had become of mother, and set myself to get out of the snow about me. It wasn't so easy as you might think; the stuff was all in lumps and spaces like a gigantic sponge, and I lost my temper and struggled and swore a good deal, but at last I managed it. I crawled out and found myself on the edge of heaped masses of snow quite close to the upper part of the Magenruhe glacier. And far away, right up the glacier and near the other side, was a little thing like a black-beetle struggling in the heart of an immense split ball of snow.

I put my hands to my mouth and let out with my version of the

yodel, and presently I saw her waving her hand.

It took me nearly twenty minutes to get to her. I knew my weakness, and I was very careful of every crevasse I came near. When I got up to her, her face was anxious.

"What have you done with the guides?" she asked.

"They've got too much to carry," I said. "They're coming down another way. Did you like it?"

"Not very much, dear," she said, "but I dare say I shall get used to these things. Which way do we go now?"

I decided we'd find a snow-bridge across the bergschrund — that's the word I forgot just now — and so get on to the rocks on the east side of the glacier, and after that we had uneventful going right down to the hotel...

Our return evoked such a strain of hostility and envy as I have never met before or since. First they tried to make out we'd never been to the top at all, but mother's little proud voice settled that sort of insult. And besides, there was the evidence of the guides and porters following us down. When they asked about the guides, "They're following your methods," I said, "and I suppose they'll get back here to-morrow morning sometime."

That didn't please them.

I claimed a record. They said my methods were illegitimate.

"If I see fit," I said, "to use an avalanche to get back by, what's that to you? You tell me, me and mother can't do the confounded mountain anyhow, and when we do you want to invent a lot of rules to disqualify us. You'll say next one mustn't glissade. I've made a record, and you know I've made a record, and you're about as sour as you can be. The fact of it is, you chaps don't know your own silly business. Here's a good, quick way of coming down a mountain, and you ought to know about it—"

"The chance that both of you are not killed was one in a thousand."

"Nonsense! It's the proper way to come down for anyone who hasn't a hide- bound mind. You chaps ought to practise falling great heights in snow. It's perfectly easy and perfectly safe, if only you know how to set about it."

"Look here, young man," said the oldish young man with the little

grey beard, “you don’t seem to understand that you and that lady have been saved by a kind of miracle—”

“Theory!” I interrupted. “I’m surprised you fellows ever come to Switzerland. If I were your kind I’d just invent theoretical mountains and play for points. However, you’re tired, little mummy. It’s time you had some nice warm soup and tucked yourself up in bed. I shan’t let you get up for six-and-thirty hours.”

But it’s queer how people detest a little originality.

MY FIRST AEROPLANE— "ALAUDA MAGNA"

My first aeroplane! What vivid memories of youth that recalls!

Far back it was in the spring of 1912 that I acquired "Alauda Magna," the great Lark, for so I christened her; and I was then a slender young man of four-and-twenty, with hair — beautiful blond hair — all over my adventurous young head. I was a dashing young fellow enough, in spite of the slight visual defect that obliged me to wear spectacles on my prominent, aquiline, but by no means shapeless nose — the typical flyer's nose. I was a good runner and swimmer, a vegetarian as ever, an all-wooler, and an ardent advocate of the extremist views in every direction about everything. Precious little in the way of a movement got started that I wasn't in. I owned two motor-bicycles, and an enlarged photograph of me at that remote date, in leather skull-cap, goggles, and gauntlets, still adorns my study fireplace. I was also a great flyer of war-kites, and voluntary scout-master of high repute. From the first beginnings of the boom in flying, therefore, I was naturally eager for the fray.

I chafed against the tears of my widowed mother for a time, and at last told her I could endure it no longer. "If I am not the first to fly in Mintonchester," I said, "I leave Mintonchester. I'm your own son mummy, and that's me!"

And it didn't take me a week to place my order when she agreed.

I found one of the old price-lists the other day in a drawer, full of queer woodcuts of still queerer contrivances. What a time that was! An incredulous world had at last consented to believe that it could fly, and in addition to the motor-car people and the bicycle people, and so on, a hundred new, unheard-of firms were turning out aeroplanes of every size and pattern to meet the demand. Amazing prices they got for them, too — three hundred and fifty was cheap for the things! I find four hundred and fifty, five hundred, five hundred guineas in this list of mine; and many as capable of flight as oak trees! They were sold too, without any sort of guarantee, and with merest apology for instructions. Some of the early aeroplane

companies paid nearly 200 per cent on their ordinary shares in those early years.

How well I remember the dreams I had — and the doubts!

The dreams were all of wonder in the air. I saw myself raising gracefully from my mother's paddock, clearing the hedge at the end, circling up to get over the vicar's pear trees, and away between the church steeple and the rise of Withycombe, towards the market-place. Lord! How they would stare to see me! "Young Mr. Betts again!" they would say. "We knew he'd do it."

I would circle and perhaps wave a handkerchief, and then I meant to go over Lupton's gardens to the grounds of Sir Digby Foster. There a certain fair denizen might glance from the window...

Ah, youth! Youth!

My doubts were all of the make I should adopt, the character of engines I should choose...

I remember my wild rush on my motor-bike to London to see the things and give my order, the day of muddy-traffic dodging as I went from one shop to another, my growing exasperation at hearing everywhere the same refrain, "Sold out! Can't undertake to deliver before the beginning of April."

Not me!

I got "Alauda Magna" at last at a little place in Blackfriars Road. She was an order thrown on the firm's hands at the eleventh hour by the death of the purchaser through another maker, and I ran my modest bank account into an overdraft to get her — to this day I won't confess the price I paid for her. Poor little Mumsy! Within a week she was in my mother's paddock, being put together after transport by a couple of not-too-intelligent mechanics.

The joy of it! And a sort of adventurous tremulousness. I'd had no lessons — all the qualified teachers were booked up at stupendous fees for months ahead; but it wasn't in my quality to stick at a thing like that! I couldn't have endured three day's delay. I assured my mother I had, had lessons, for her peace of mind — it is a poor son who will not tell a lie to keep his parent happy.

I remember the exultant turmoil of walking round the thing as it grew into a credible shape, with the consciousness of half Mintonchester peering at me though the hedge, and only deterred by

our new trespass-board and the disagreeable expression of Snape, our trusted gardener, who was partly mowing the grass and partly on sentry-go with his scythe, from swarming into the meadow. I lit a cigarette and watched the workmen sagely, and we engaged an elderly unemployed named Snorticombe to keep watch all night to save the thing from meddlers. In those days, you must understand, an aeroplane was a sign and a wonder.

"Alauda Magna" was a darling for her time, though nowadays I suppose she would be received with derisive laughter by every schoolboy in the land. She was a monoplane, and roughly speaking, a Bleriot, and she had the dearest, neatest seven-cylinder forty horse-power G.K.C. engine, with its G.B.S. fly- wheel, that you can possibly imagine. I spent an hour or so tuning her up — she had a deafening purr, rather like a machine-gun in action — until the vicar sent round to say that he was writing a sermon upon "Peace" and was unable to concentrate his mind on that topic until I desisted. I took his objection in good part, and after a culminating volley and one last lingering look, started for a stroll round the town.

In spite of every endeavour to be modest I could not but feel myself the cynosure of every eye. I had rather carelessly forgotten to change my leggings and breeches I had bought for the occasion, and I was also wearing my leather skull-cap with ear-flaps carelessly adjusted, so that I could hear what people were saying. I should think I had half the population under fifteen at my heels before I was halfway down the High Street.

"You going to fly, Mr. Betts?" says one cheeky youngster.

"Like a bird!" I said.

"Don't you fly till we comes out of school," says another.

It was a sort of Royal progress that evening for me. I visited old Lupton, the horticulturist, and he could hardly conceal what a great honour he thought it. He took me over his new greenhouse — he had now got, he said three acres of surface under glass — and showed me all sorts of clever dodges he was adopting in way of intensive culture, and afterwards we went down to the end of his old flower-garden and looked at his bees. When I came out my retinue of kids was still waiting for me, reinforced. Then I went round by Paramors and dropped into the Bull and Horses, just as if there wasn't anything

particular up, for a lemon squash. Everybody was talking about my aeroplane. They just shut up for a moment when I came in, and then burst out with questions. It's odd nowadays to remember all that excitement. I answered what they had to ask me and refrained from putting on any side, and afterwards Miss Flyteman and I went into the commercial-room and turned over the pages of various illustrated journals and compared the pictures with my machine in a quite, unassuming sort of way. Everybody encouraged me to go up — everybody.

I lay stress on that because, as I was soon to discover, the tides and ebbs of popular favour are among the most inexplicable and inconsistent things in the world.

I particularly remember old Cheeseman, the pork-butcher, whose pigs I killed, saying over and over again, in a tone of perfect satisfaction, "You won't 'ave any difficulty in going up, you won't. There won't be any difficulty 'bout going up." And winking and nodding to the other eminent tradesmen there assembled.

I hadn't much difficulty in going up. "Alauda Magna" was a cheerful lifter, and the roar and spin of her engine had hardly begun behind me before she was off her wheels — snap, snap, they came up above the ski gliders — and swaying swiftly across the meadows towards the vicarage hedge. She had a sort of onward roll to her, rather like the movement of a corpulent but very buoyant woman.

I had just a glimpse of brave little mother, trying not to cry, and full of pride in me, on the veranda, with both the maids and old Snape beside her, and then I had to give all my attention to the steering-wheel if I didn't want to barge into the vicar's pear trees.

I'd felt the faintest of tugs just as I came up, and fancied I heard a resounding whack on our new Trespassers will be Prosecuted board, and I saw the crowd of people in the lane running this way and that from my loud humming approach; but it was only after the flight was all over that I realised what that fool Snorticombe had been up to. It would seem he had thought the monster needed tethering — I won't attempt to explain the mysteries of his mind — and he had tied about a dozen yards of rope to the end of either wing and fixed them firmly to a couple of iron guy-posts that belonged properly to the Badminton net. Up they came at the tug of "Alauda," and they were

trailing and dancing and leaping along behind me, and taking the most vicious dives and lunges at everything that came within range of them. Poor old Templecom got it hottest in the lane, I'm told — a frightful whack on his bald head; and then we ripped up the vicar's cucumber frames, killed and scattered his parrot, smashed the upper pane of his study window, and just missed the housemaid as she stuck her head out of the upper bedroom window. I didn't, of course, know anything of this at the time — it was on a lower plane altogether from my proceedings. I was steering past his vicarage — a narrow miss — and trying to come round to clear the pear trees at the end of the garden — which I did with a graze — and the trailers behind me sent leaves and branches flying this way and that. I had reason to thank Heaven for sturdy little G.K.C.'s.

Then I was fairly up for a time.

I found it much more confusing, than I had expected; the engine made such an infernal whir-r-row for one thing, and the steering tugged and struggled like a thing alive. But I got her heading over the market-place all right. We buzzed over Stunt's the greengrocer, and my trailers hopped up his back premises and made a sanguinary mess of the tiles on his roof, and sent an avalanche of broken chimney-pot into the crowded street below. Then the thing dipped — I supposed one of the guy-posts tried to anchor for a second in Stunt's rafters — and I had the hardest job to clear the Bull and Horses stables. I didn't, as a matter of fact, completely clear them. The ski-like alighting runners touched the ridge for a moment and the left wing bent against the top of the chimney-stack and floundered over it in an awkward, destructive manner.

I'm told that my trailers whirled about the crowded market-place in the most diabolical fashion as I dipped and recovered, but I'm inclined to think all this part of the story has been greatly exaggerated. Nobody was killed, and I couldn't have been half a minute form the time I appeared over Stunt's to the time when I slid off the stable roof and among Lupton's glass. If people had taken reasonable care of themselves instead of gaping at me, they wouldn't have got hurt. I had enough to do without pointing out to people that they were likely to be hit by an iron guy-post which had seen fit to follow me. If anyone ought to have warned them it was that fool

Snorticombe. Indeed, what with the incalculable damage done to the left wing and one of the cylinders getting out of rhythm and making an ominous catch in the whirr, I was busy enough for anything on my own private personal account.

I suppose I am in manner of speaking responsible for knocking old Dudney off the station bus, but I don't see that I can be held answerable for subsequent evolutions of the bus, which ended after a charge among the market stalls in Cheeseman's shop-window, nor do I see that I am to blame because an idle and ill-disciplined crowd chose to stampede across a stock of carelessly distributed earthenware and overturn a butter stall. I was a mere excuse for all this misbehaviour.

I didn't exactly fall into Lupton's glass, and I didn't exactly drive over it. I think ricochetting describes my passage across his premises as well an any single word can.

It was the queerest sensation, being carried along by this big, buoyant thing, which had, as it were, bolted with me, and feeling myself alternately lifted up and then dropped with a scrunch upon a fresh greenhouse-roof, in spite of all my efforts to control. And the infinite relief when at last, at the fifth or sixth pounce, I rose — and kept on rising!

I seemed to forget everything disagreeable instantly. The doubt whether after all "Alauda Magna" was good for flying vanished. She was evidently very good. We whirred over the wall at the end, with my trailers still bumping behind, and beyond one of them hitting a cow, which died next day, I don't think I did the slightest damage to anything or anybody all across the breadth of Cheeseman's meadow. Then I began to rise, steadily but surely, and getting the thing well in hand, came swooping round over his piggeries to give Mintonchester a second taste of my quality.

I meant to go up in a spiral until I was clear of all the trees and things and circle about the church spire. Hitherto I had been so concentrated on plunges and tugs of the monster I was driving and so deafened by the uproar of my engine, that I had noticed little of the things that were going on below; but now I could make out a little lot of people headed by Lupton with a garden fork, rushing obliquely across the corner of Cheeseman's meadow. It puzzled me for a

second to imagine what they could think they were after.

Up I went, whirring and swaying, and presently got a glimpse down the High Street of the awful tangle everything had got into in the market-place. I didn't at the time connect that extraordinary smash-up with my transit.

It was the jar of my whack against the weathercock that really stopped my engines. I've never been able to make out quite how it was I hit the unfortunate vane; perhaps the twist I had given my left wing on Stunt's roof spoilt my steering; but anyhow, I hit the gaudy thing and bent it, and for a lengthy couple of seconds I wasn't by any means sure whether I wasn't going to dive straight down into the market-place. I got her right by a supreme effort — I think the people I didn't smash might have squeezed out one drop of gratitude for that — drove pitching at the tree-tops of Withycombe, got round, and realised the engines were stopping. There wasn't any time to survey the country and arrange for suitable landing place; there wasn't any chance of clearing the course. It wasn't my fault if a quarter of the population of Mintonchester was swarming out over Cheeseman's meadows. It was the only chance I had to land without a smash, and I took it. Down I came, a steep glide, doing the best I could for myself.

Perhaps I did bowl a few people over; but progress is progress.

And I had to kill his pigs. It was a case of either dropping among the pigs and breaking my rush, or going full tilt into the corrugated iron piggeries beyond. I might have been cut to ribbons. And pigs are born to die.

I stopped, and stood up stiffly upon the framework and looked behind me. It didn't take me a moment to realise that Mintonchester meant to take my poor efforts to give it an Aviation Day all to itself in a spirit of ferocious ingratitude.

The air was full of the squealing of the two pigs I had pinned under my machine and the bawling of the nearer spectators. Lupton occupied the middle distance with a garden fork, with the evident intention of jabbing it into my stomach. I am always pretty cool and quick-witted in an emergency. I dropped off poor "Alauda Magna" like a shot, dodged through the piggery, went up by Frobisher's orchard, nipped over the yard wall of Hinks's cottages, and was into the police-station by the back way before anyone could get within

fifty feet of me.

"Halloa!" said Inspector Nenton; "Smashed the thing?"

"No," I said; "but people seem to have got something the matter with them. I want to be locked in a cell..."

For a fortnight, do you know, I wasn't allowed to come near my own machine. I went home from the police-station as soon as the first excitement had blown over a little, going round by Love Lane and Chart so as not to arouse any febrile symptoms. I found mother frightfully indignant, you can be sure, at the way I had been treated. And there, as I say, was I, standing a sort of siege in the upstairs rooms, and sturdy little "Alauda Magna," away in Cheeseman's field, being walked round and stared at by everybody in the world but me. Cheeseman's theory was that he had seized her. There came a gale one night, and the dear thing was blown clean over the hedge among Lupton's greenhouses again, and then Lupton sent round a silly note to say that if we didn't remove her, she would be sold to defray expenses, going off into a long tirade about damages and his solicitor. So mother posted off to Clamps', the furniture removers at Upnorton Corner, and they got hold of a timber-waggon, and popular feeling had allayed sufficiently before that arrived for me to go in person to superintend the removal. There she lay like a great moth above the debris of some cultural projects of Lupton's, scarcely damaged herself except for a hole or so and some bent rods and stays in the left wing and a smashed skid. But she was bespattered with pigs' blood and pretty dirty.

I went at once by instinct for the engines, and had them in perfect going order before the timber-waggon arrived.

A sort of popularity returned to me with that procession home. With the help of a swarm of men we got "Alauda Magna" poised on the waggon, and then I took my seat to see she was balanced properly, and a miscellaneous team of seven horses started to tow her home. It was nearly one o'clock when we got to that, and all the children turned out to shout and jeer. We couldn't go by Pook's Lane and the vicarage, because the walls are too high and narrow, and so we headed across Cheeseman's meadows for Stokes' Waste and the Common, to get round by that detour.

I was silly, of course, to do what I did — I see that now — but

sitting up there on my triumphal car with all the multitude about me excited me. I got a kind of glory on. I really only meant to let the propellers spin as sort of hurrahing, but I was carried away. Whuz-z-z-z! It was like something blowing up, and behold! I was sailing and plunging away from my wain across the common for a second flight.

"Lord!" I said.

I fully meant to run up the air a little way, come about, and take her home to our paddock, but those early aeroplanes were very uncertain things.

After all, it wasn't such a very bad shot to land in the vicarage garden, and that practically is what I did. And I don't see that it was my fault that all the vicarage and a lot of his friends should be having lunch on the lawn. They were doing that, of course, so as to be on the spot without having to rush out of the house when "Alauda Magna" came home again. Quite exultation — that was their game. They wanted to gloat over every particular of my ignominious return. You can see that from the way they had arranged the table. I can't help it if Fate decided that my return wasn't to be so ignominious as all that, and swooped me down on the lot of them.

They were having their soup. They had calculated on me for the dessert, I suppose.

To this day I can't understand how I didn't kill the vicar. The forward edge of the left wing got him just under the chin and carried him back a dozen yards. He must have had neck vertebrae like steel; and even then I was amazed his head didn't come off. Perhaps he was holding on underneath; but I can't imagine where. If it hadn't been for the fascination of his staring face I think I could have avoided the veranda, but as it was, that took me by surprise. That was a fair crumple up. The wood must have just rotted away under its green paint; but anyhow, it and the climbing roses and shingles above and everything snapped and came down like stage scenery, and I and the engines and the middle part drove clean through the French windows on to the drawing-room floor. It was jolly luck for me, I think, that the French windows weren't shut. There's no unpleasanter way of getting hurt in the world than flying suddenly through thin window-glass; and I think I ought to know. There was a frightful jawbation, but the vicar was out of action, that was one

good thing. Those deep, sonorous sentences! But perhaps they would have calmed things...

That was the end of “Alauda Magna,” my first aeroplane. I never even troubled to take her away. I hadn’t the heart to...

And then the storm burst.

The idea seems to have been to make mother and me pay for everything that had ever tumbled down or got broken in Mintonchester since the beginning of things. Oh! And for any animal that had died a sudden death in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The tariff ruled high, too. Cows were twenty-five to thirty pounds and upward; pigs about a pound each, with no reduction for killing a quantity; verandas — verandas were steady at forty-five guineas. Dinner services, too, were up, and so were tilting and branches of the building trade. It seemed to certain persons in Mintonchester, I believe, that an era of unexampled prosperity had dawned upon the place — only limited, in fact by the solvency of me and mother. The vicar tried the old “sold to defray expenses” racket, but I told him he might sell.

I pleaded defective machinery and the hand of God, did my best to shift the responsibility on to the firm in Blackfriars Road, and as additional precaution, filed my petition in bankruptcy. I really hadn’t any property in the world, thanks to mother’s goodness, except my two motor-bicycles, which the brutes took, my photographic dark-room, and a lot of bound books on aeronautics and progress generally. Mother, of course, wasn’t responsible. She hadn’t lifted a wing.

Well, for all that, disagreeables piled up so heavily on me, what with being shouted after by a rag-tag and bobtail of schoolboys and golf caddies and hobbledehoys when I went out doors, threatened with personal violence by stupid people like old Lupton, who wouldn’t understand that a man can’t pay what he hasn’t got, pestered by the wives of various gentlemen who saw fit to become out-of-works on the strength of alleged injuries, and served with all sorts of silly summonses for all sorts of fancy offences, such as mischievous mischief and manslaughter and wilful damage and trespass, that I simply had to go away from Mintonchester to Italy, and leave poor little mother to manage them in her own solid,

undemonstrative way. Which she did, I must admit, like a Brick.

They didn't get much out of her, anyhow but she had to break up our little home at Mintonchester and join me at Arosa, in spite of her dislike of Italian cooking. She found me already a bit of a celebrity because I had made a record, so it seemed, by falling down three separate crevasses on three successive days. But that's another story altogether.

From start to finish I reckon that first aeroplane cost my mother over nine hundred pounds. If I hadn't put my foot down, and she had stuck to her original intention of paying all the damage, it would have cost her three thousand... But it was worth it. It was worth it. I wish I could live it all over again; and many an old codger like me sits at home now and deplores those happy, vanished, adventurous times, when any lad of spirit was free to fly — and go anywhere — and smashed anything — and discuss the question afterwards of just what the damages amounted to and what his legal liability might be.

The Short Stories

Wells' home in Maybury Road, Woking, where he lived during the 1890's

LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Please note: to retain the original structure of story collections, some tales appear more than once in the table.

A FAMILY ELOPEMENT
PERFECT GENTLEMAN ON WHEELS
WAYDE'S ESSENCE
THE QUEER STORY OF BROWNLOW'S NEWSPAPER
WALCOTE
THE DEVOTEE OF ART
LE MARI TERRIBLE
THE RAJAH'S TREASURE
THE PRESENCE BY THE FIRE
MR. MARSHALL'S DOPPELGANGER
THE THING IN NO. 7
THE THUMBMARK
OUR LITTLE NEIGHBOUR
THE LOYALTY OF ESAU COMMON
THE WILD ASSES OF THE DEVIL
ANSWER TO PRAYER
THE NEW FAUST
OF CONVERSATION AND THE ANATOMY OF FASHION
THE THEORY OF THE PERPETUAL DISCOMFORT OF HUMANITY
THE USE OF IDEALS
THE ART OF BEING PHOTOGRAPHED
BAGSHOT'S MURAL DECORATIONS
ON SOCIAL MUSIC
THE JOYS OF BEING ENGAGED
LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI
ON A TRICYCLE
AN UNSUSPECTED MASTERPIECE

THE GREAT CHANGE
THE PAINS OF MARRIAGE
A MISUNDERSTOOD ARTIST
THE MAN WITH A NOSE
THE STOLEN BACILLUS
THE FLOWERING OF THE STRANGE ORCHID
IN THE AVU OBSERVATORY
THE TRIUMPHS OF A TAXIDERMIST
A DEAL IN OSTRICHES
THROUGH A WINDOW
THE TEMPTATION OF HARRINGAY
THE FLYING MAN
THE DIAMOND MAKER
AEPYORNIS ISLAND
THE REMARKABLE CASE OF DAVIDSON'S EYES
THE LORD OF THE DYNAMOS
THE HAMMERPOND PARK BURGLARY
A MOTH — GENUS NOVO
THE TREASURE IN THE FOREST
THE PLATTNER STORY
THE ARGONAUTS OF THE AIR
THE STORY OF THE LATE MR. ELVESHAM
IN THE ABYSS
THE APPLE
UNDER THE KNIFE
THE SEA RAIDERS
POLLOCK AND THE PORROH MAN
THE RED ROOM
THE CONE
THE PURPLE PILEUS
THE JILTING OF JANE
IN THE MODERN VEIN AN UNSYMPATHETIC LOVE STORY
A CATASTROPHE
THE LOST INHERITANCE
THE SAD STORY OF A DRAMATIC CRITIC
A SLIP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE
THE CRYSTAL EGG

THE STAR
A STORY OF THE STONE AGE
A STORY OF THE DAYS TO COME
THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES A PANTOUM IN PROSE
FILMER
THE MAGIC SHOP
THE VALLEY OF SPIDERS
THE TRUTH ABOUT PYECRAFT
MR. SKELMERSDALE IN FAIRYLAND
THE STORY OF THE INEXPERIENCED GHOST
JIMMY GOGGLES THE GOD
THE NEW ACCELERATOR
MR. LEDBETTER'S VACATION
THE STOLEN BODY
MR. BRISHER'S TREASURE
MISS WINCHELSEA'S HEART
A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON
THE JILTING OF JANE.
THE CONE.
THE STOLEN BACILLUS.
THE FLOWERING OF THE STRANGE ORCHID.
IN THE AVU OBSERVATORY.
AEPYORNIS ISLAND.
THE REMARKABLE CASE OF DAVIDSON'S EYES.
THE LORD OF THE DYNAMOS.
THE MOTH.
THE TREASURE IN THE FOREST.
THE STORY OF THE LATE MR. ELVESHAM.
UNDER THE KNIFE.
THE SEA RAIDERS.
THE OBLITERATED MAN.
THE PLATTNER STORY.
THE RED ROOM.
THE PURPLE PILEUS
A SLIP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.
THE CRYSTAL EGG.

THE STAR.
THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES.
A PANTOUM IN PROSE.
A VISION OF JUDGMENT.
JIMMY GOGGLES THE GOD.
MISS WINCHELSEA'S HEART.
A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON.
THE VALLEY OF SPIDERS.
THE NEW ACCELERATOR.
THE TRUTH ABOUT PYECRAFT.
THE MAGIC SHOP.
THE EMPIRE OF THE ANTS.
THE DOOR IN THE WALL.
THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND.
THE BEAUTIFUL SUIT.
THE DOOR IN THE WALL
THE STAR
A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON
THE CONE
A MOONLIGHT FABLE
THE DIAMOND MAKER
THE LORD OF THE DYNAMOS
THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND
THE CHRONIC ARGONAUTS
THE BULLA; OR, THE RECONCILIATION
THE LAND IRONCLADS
THE PEARL OF LOVE
A TALK WITH GRYLLOTALPA
A TALE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
HOW GABRIEL BECAME THOMPSON
HOW PINGWILL WAS ROUTED
THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND (Revised Version)
THE STORY OF THE STONE AGE
THE GRISLY FOLK
LITTLE MOTHER UP THE MÖRDERBERG
MY FIRST AEROPLANE— "ALAUDA MAGNA"

LIST OF SHORT STORIES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

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A CATASTROPHE
A DEAL IN OSTRICHES
A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON
A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON
A DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON.
A FAMILY ELOPEMENT
A MISUNDERSTOOD ARTIST
A MOONLIGHT FABLE
A MOTH — GENUS NOVO
A PANTOUM IN PROSE.
A SLIP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE
A SLIP UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.
A STORY OF THE DAYS TO COME
A STORY OF THE STONE AGE
A TALE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
A TALK WITH GRYLLOTALPA
A VISION OF JUDGMENT.
AEPYORNIS ISLAND
AEPYORNIS ISLAND.
AN UNSUSPECTED MASTERPIECE
ANSWER TO PRAYER
BAGSHOT'S MURAL DECORATIONS
FILMER
HOW GABRIEL BECAME THOMPSON
HOW PINGWILL WAS ROUTED
IN THE ABYSS
IN THE AVU OBSERVATORY
IN THE AVU OBSERVATORY.

IN THE MODERN VEIN AN UNSYMPATHETIC LOVE STORY
JIMMY GOGGLES THE GOD
JIMMY GOGGLES THE GOD.
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LE MARI TERRIBLE
LITTLE MOTHER UP THE MÖRDERBERG
MISS WINCHELSEA'S HEART
MISS WINCHELSEA'S HEART.
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MR. LEDBETTER'S VACATION
MR. MARSHALL'S DOPPELGANGER
MR. SKELMERSDALE IN FAIRYLAND
MY FIRST AEROPLANE— "ALAUDA MAGNA"
OF CONVERSATION AND THE ANATOMY OF FASHION
ON A TRICYCLE
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THE CHRONIC ARGONAUTS
THE CONE
THE CONE
THE CONE.
THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND
THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND (Revised Version)
THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND.
THE CRYSTAL EGG
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UNDER THE KNIFE.
WALCOTE
WAYDE’S ESSENCE

Selected Non-Fiction

13 Hanover Terrace, Regent's Park, London — Wells' last home

Plaque commemorating Wells' residence at 13 Hanover Terrace

TEXT-BOOK OF BIOLOGY

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Introduction

In the year 1884 I was invited to give tuition by correspondence, in Biology. Although disposed at the time to ridicule the idea of imparting instruction in natural science by letter, I gladly accepted the opportunity thus afforded me of ascertaining for myself what could and could not be accomplished in that direction. Anyone familiar with the scope of biological enquiry, and the methods of biological instruction, will not need to be reminded that it is only by the most rigorous employment of precise directions for observation, that any good results are to be looked for at the hand of the elementary student. True to this principle, I determined to issue to my correspondence pupils rigid instructions, and to demand in return faithful annotated drawings of facts observed in their usage. In the case of two among the few students who passed through my hands, the result far exceeded my most sanguine anticipations. The notes sent in by one of them — a man working at a distance, alone and unaided — far excelled those wrung from many a student placed under the most favourable surroundings; and their promise for the future has been fulfilled to the utmost, the individual in question being now a recognised investigator. It thus became clear that, not-with-standing the complex conditions of work in the biological field, tuition by correspondence would suffice to awaken the latent abilities of a naturally qualified enquirer. The average members of a University Correspondence Class will be found neither better nor worse than those of any other, and they may therefore pass unnoticed; if however, the correspondence system of tuition may furnish the means of arousing a latent aptitude, when the possibilities of other methods of approach are excluded — and in so doing, of elevating the individual to that position for which he was by nature qualified, ensuring him the introduction to the one sphere of labour for which he was born — it will have created its own defence, and have merited the confidence of all right-thinking people. The plucking of one such brand from the burning is ample compensation for the energy expended on any number of average dullards, who but require to be left alone to find their natural level.

Mr. Wells' little book is avowedly written for examination purposes, and in conformity with the requirements of the now familiar "type system" of teaching. Recent attempts have been made to depreciate this. While affording a discipline in detailed observation and manipulation second to that of no other branch of learning, it provides for that "deduction" and "verification" by which all science has been built up; and this appears to me ample justification for its retention, as the most rational system which can be to-day adopted. Evidence that its alleged shortcomings are due rather to defective handling than to any inherent weakness of its own, would not be difficult to produce. Although rigid in its discipline, it admits of commentatorial treatment which, while heightening the interest of the student, is calculated to stimulate alike his ambition and his imagination. That the sister sciences of Botany and Zoology fall under one discipline, is expressed in the English usage of the term "Biology." Experience has shown that the best work in either department has been produced by those who have acquired on all-round knowledge of at least the elementary stages of both; and, that the advanced morphologist and physiologist are alike the better for a familiarity with the principles — not to say with the progressive advancement — of each other's domain, is to-day undeniable. These and other allied considerations, render it advisable that the elementary facts of morphology and physiology should be presented to the beginner side by side — a principle too frequently neglected in books which, like this one, are specially written for the biological neophyte. Although the student is the wiser for the actual observation of the fact of nature, he becomes the better only when able to apply them, as for example, by the judicious construction of elementary generalizations, such as are introduced into the pages of this work. So long as these generalizations, regarded as first attempts to deduce "laws" in the form of "generalized statement of facts based observation," are properly introduced into an elementary text-book, intended for the isolated worker cut off from the lecture room, their intercalation is both healthy and desirable.

Mr. Wells has kept these precepts constantly in mind in the preparation of his work, and in the formulation of his plans for its future extension, thereby enhancing the value of the book itself, and

at the same time, discouraging the system of pure cram, which is alien to the discipline of biological science.

G. B. Howes
Royal College of Science,
South Kensington;
November 30, 1892.

Preface

No method of studying — more especially when the objects of study are tangible things — can rival that prosecuted under the direction and in the constant presence of a *teacher* who has also a living and vivid knowledge of the matter which he handles with the student. In the ideal world there is a plentiful supply of such teachers, and easy access to their teaching, but in this real world only a favoured few enjoy these advantages. Through causes that cannot be discussed here, a vast number of solitary workers are scattered through the country, to whom sustained help in this form is impossible, or possible only in days stolen from a needed vacation; and to such students especially does this book appeal, as well as to those more fortunate learners who are within reach of orderly instruction, but anxious to save their teachers' patience and their own time by some preliminary work.

One of the most manifest disadvantages of book-work, under the conditions of the solitary worker, is the rigidity of its expressions; if the exact meaning is doubtful, he can not ask a question. This has been kept in view throughout; the writer has, above all, sought to be explicit — has, saving over-sights, used no uncommon or technical term without a definition or a clear indication of its meaning.

In this study of Biology, the perception and memory of *form* is a very important factor indeed. Every student should draw sketches of his dissections, and accustom himself to copying book diagrams, in order to train his eye to perception of details he might otherwise disregard. The drawing required is within the reach of all; but for those who are very inexperienced, tracing figures is a useful preliminary exercise.

By the time the student has read the "Circulation of the Rabbit" (Sections 34 to 49), he will be ready to begin dissection. It is possible to hunt to death even such a sound educational maxim as the "thing before the name," and we are persuaded, by a considerable experience, that dissection before some such preparatory reading is altogether a mistake. At the end of the book is a syllabus (with suggestions) for practical work, originally drawn up by the writer for

his own private use with the evening classes of the University Tutorial College — classes of students working mainly in their spare time for the London examination, and at an enormous disadvantage, as regards the number of hours available, in comparison with the leisurely students of a University laboratory. This syllabus may, perhaps by itself, serve a useful purpose in some cases, but in this essential part of the study the presence of some experienced overlooker to advise, warn, and correct, is at first almost indispensable.

A few words may, perhaps be said with respect to the design of this volume. It is manifestly modelled upon the syllabus of the Intermediate Examination in Science of London University. That syllabus, as at present constituted, appears to me to afford considerable scope for fairly efficient biological study. The four types dealt with in this book are extremely convenient for developing the methods of comparative anatomy and morphological embryology. Without any extensive reference to related organisms, these four forms, and especially the three vertebrata, may be made to explain and illustrate one another in a way that cannot fail to be educational in the truest sense. After dealing with the rabbit, therefore, as an organic mechanism, our sections upon the frog and dog-fish, and upon development, are simply statements of differences, and a commentary, as it were, upon the anatomy of the mammalian type. In the concluding chapter, a few suggestions of the most elementary ideas of it is hoped to make this first part of our biological course complete in itself, and of some real and permanent value to the student. And the writer is convinced that not only is a constant insistence upon resemblances and differences, and their import, intellectually the most valuable, but also the most interesting, and therefore the easiest, way of studying animal anatomy. That chaotic and breathless cramming of terms misunderstood, tabulated statements, formulated “tips,” and lists of names, in which so many students, in spite of advice, waste their youth is, I sincerely hope, as impossible with this book as it is useless for the purposes of a London candidate. On the other hand, our chief endeavour has been to render the matter of the book clear, connected, progressive, and easily assimilable. In the second part Plants, Unicellular Organisms,

and Invertebrata will be dealt with, in a wider and less detailed view of the entire biological province.

{Lines from First Edition only.}
-In this volume, we study four organisms, and chiefly in their relation to each other; in the next, we shall study a number of organisms largely in relation to their environment. In this part our key note is the evidence of inheritance; in our second part it will be of adaptation to circumstances.-

This book will speedily, under the scrutiny of the critical reader, reveal abundant weakness. For these the author claims the full credit. For whatever merit it may posses, he must however, acknowledge his profound indebtedness to his former teacher, Professor Howes. Not only has the writer enjoyed in the past the privilege of Professor Howes' instruction and example, but he has, during the preparation of this work, received the readiest help, advise, and encouragement from him — assistance as generous as it was unmerited, and as unaffected as it was valuable.

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[The publication of a second and revised edition of this Part affords the author an opportunity of expressing his sense of the general kindliness of his reviewers, and the help they have him in improving this maiden effort. To no one is there vouchsafed such a facility in the discovery of errors in a book as to its author, so soon as it has passed beyond his power of correction. Hence the general tone of encouragement (and in some cases the decided approval) of the members of this termination to a period of considerable remorse and apprehension.]

I have been able through their counsel, and the experience I have had while using this book in teaching, to correct several printer's errors and to alter various ambiguous or misleading expressions, as well as to bring the book up to date again in one or two particulars.

My thanks are particularly due to my friend Miss Robbins, who has very kindly redrawn the occasionally rather blottesque figures of

the first edition. Not only have these plates gained immensely in grace and accuracy, but the lettering is now distinct — an improvement that any student who has had to hunt my reference letters in the first edition will at once appreciate.

H. G. Wells
November, 1892. {First Edition.}
December, 1893. {Second Edition.}

The Rabbit.

1. *External Form and General Considerations.*

Section 1. It is unnecessary to enter upon a description of the appearance of this familiar type, but it is not perhaps superfluous, as we proceed to consider its anatomy, to call attention to one or two points in its external, or externally apparent structure. Most of our readers know that it belongs to that one of two primary animal divisions which is called the *vertebrata*, and that the distinctive feature which place it in this division is the possession of a spinal column or backbone, really a *series* of small ring-like bones, the *vertebrae* (Figure 1 v.b.) strung together, as it were, on the main nerve axis, the spinal cord (Figure 1 s.c.). This spinal column can be felt along the neck and back to the tail. This tail is small, tilted up, and conspicuously white beneath, and it serves as a "recognition mark" to guide the young when, during feeding, an alarm is given and a bolt is made for the burrows. In those more primitive (older and simpler-fashioned) vertebrata, the fishes, the tail is much large and far more important, as compared with the rest of the body, than it is in most of the air-inhabiting vertebrates. In the former it is invariably a great muscular mass to propel the body forward; in the latter it may disappear, as in the frog, be simply a feather-bearing stump, as in the pigeon, a fly flicker, as in the cow or horse, a fur cape in squirrel, or be otherwise reduced and modified to meet special requirements.

Section 2. At the fore end, or as English zoologists prefer to say, *anterior* end, of the vertebral column of the rabbit, is of course the skull, containing the anterior portion of the nerve axis, the brain (Figure 1 br.). Between the head and what is called "the body," in the more restricted sense of the word, is the neck. The neck gives freedom of movement to the head, enables the animal to look this way and that, to turn its ears about to determine the direction of a sound, and to perform endless motions in connexion with biting and so forth easily. We may note that in types which swim through the water, the neck dose not appear — in the fish and frog, for instance

— and the head simply widens out as one passes back to the body. The high resistance offered by water necessitates this tendency to a cigar or ship outline, just as it has determined the cigar shape of the ordinary fish torpedo.

Section 3. In the body of the rabbit, as examined from the outside, we can make out by feeling two distinct regions, just as we might in the body of a man; anteriorly a bony cage, having the *ribs* at the sides, a rod-like bone in the front, the *sternum* (Figure 1 -st.-, [stm.]), and the backbone behind, and called the chest or thorax; and posteriorly a part called the abdomen, which has no bony protection over its belly, or *ventral* surface. These parts together with the neck constitute the trunk. As a consequence of these things, in the backbone of the rabbit there are four regions: the neck, or *cervical* part, consisting of seven vertebrae, the *thoracic* part of twelve joined to ribs, the *abdominal* (also called the *lumbar*) region of seven without ribs, and the tail or *caudal* of about fifteen. Between the *lumbar* and *caudal* come four vertebrae, the *sacral*, which tend to run together into a bony mass as the animal grows old, and which form a firm attachment for the base of the hind limb.

Section 4. The thorax and abdomen are separated by a partition, the diaphragm (Figure 1 dia.). This structure is distinctive of that class of the vertebrata called mammals, and which includes man, most of the larger and commoner land animals, and whales and manatee. We shall find later that it is essentially connected with the perfection of the air breathing to which this group has attained. Another characteristic shared by all mammals, and by no other creature, is the presence of hair. In birds we have an equally characteristic cover in the feathers, the frog is naked, and the fishes we find either naked skins or scales.

Section 5. The short strong fore limbs are adapted to the burrowing habit, and have five digits; the hind limbs are very much longer and muscular, enable the animal to progress rapidly by short leaps, and they have four toes. If the student thinks it worth while to attempt to remember the number of digits — it is the fault of examiners if any value dose attach to such intrinsically valueless facts — he should associate the number 54 (5 in front, 4 behind) with the rabbit, and observe that with the frog the reverse is the case.

Section 6. We may note here the meaning of certain terms we shall be constantly employing. The head end of the rabbit is *anterior*, the tail end *posterior*, the backbone side of the body — the upper side in life — is *dorsal*, the breast and belly side, the lower side of the animal, is *ventral*. If we imagine the rabbit sawn asunder, as it were, by a plane passing through the head and tail, that would be the *median* plane, and parts on either side of it are *lateral*, and left or right according as they lie to the *animal's* left or right. In a limb, or in the internal organs, the part nearest the *central* organ, or axis, is *proximal*, the more remote or terminal parts are *distal*. For instance, the mouth is anteriorly placed, the tongue on its ventral wall; the tongue is median, the eyes are lateral, and the fingers are distal to the elbow. The student must accustom himself to these words, and avoid, in his descriptions, the use of such terms as "above," "below," "outside," which vary with the position in which we conceive the animal placed.

Section 7. So much for the general form; we may note a few facts of general knowledge, in connection with the rabbit's life-activity. In a day of the rabbit's life a considerable amount of work is done — the animal runs hither and thither, for instance; in other words, a certain mass of matter is moved through space, and for that we know force must be exerted. Whence comes the force?

Section 8. We find the rabbit occupies a considerable amount of its time in taking in vegetable matter, consisting chiefly of more or less complex combustible and unstable organic compounds. It is a pure vegetarian, and a remarkably moderate drinker. Some but only a small proportion, of the vegetable matter it eats, leaves its body comparatively unchanged, in little pellets, the *faeces*, in the process of *defaecation*. For the rest we have to account.

Section 9. We find, also, that the rabbit breathes air into its lungs, which is returned to the atmosphere with a lessened amount of oxygen, and the addition of a perceptible amount of carbon dioxide. The rabbit also throws off, or *excretes*, a fluid, the *urine*, which consists of water with a certain partially oxydised substance containing nitrogen, and called urea, and other less important salts. The organs within the body, by which the urine is separated, are called the kidneys.

Section 10. Repeating these facts in other words, the rabbit takes into its body complex and unstable organic compounds containing nitrogen, carbon, hydrogen, a certain amount of oxygen, a small quantity of sulphur, and still smaller amounts of other elements. It also breathes in oxygen.

Section 11. It returns a certain rejected part of its food comparatively unchanged. Besides this, it returns carbon dioxide and water, which are completely oxydised, and very simple and stable bodies, and urea — a less completely oxydised compound, but a very simple one compared with the food constituents.

Section 12. Now the chemist tells us that when a stable body is formed, or when an unstable compound decomposes into simpler stable ones, force is evolved. The oxydation of carbon, for instance, in the fireplace, is the formation of the stable compound called carbon dioxide, and light and heat are evolved. The explosion of dynamite, again is the decomposition of an unstable compound. Hence, we begin to perceive that force — the vital force — which keeps the rabbit moving, is supplied by the *decomposition and partial oxydation* of compounds continued in its food, to carbon dioxide, water, urea, and smaller quantities of other substances.

Section 13. This is the roughest statement of the case possible, but it will give the general idea underlying our next chapters. We shall consider how the food enters the body and is taken up into the system, how it is conveyed to the muscles in the limbs, to the nerve centres, and to wherever *work* is done, to be there decomposed and partially oxydised, and finally how the products of its activity — the *katastases*, of which the three principal are carbon dioxide, water, and urea — are removed from the body.

Section 14. There are one or two comparatively modern terms that we may note here. This decomposition of unstable chemical compounds, releasing energy, is called kataboly. A reverse process, which has a less conspicuous part in our first view of the animal's life action, by which unstable compounds are built up and energy stored, is called anaboly. The katastases are the products of kataboly.

Section 15. In an ordinary animal, locomotion and other activity predominate over nutritive processes, which fact we may express, in the terms just given, by saying that *kataboly* prevails over *anaboly*.

An animal, as we have just explained, is an apparatus for the decomposition and partial oxydation of certain compounds, and these are obtained either directly or indirectly — through other animals, in the case of meat-eaters — from the vegetable kingdom. As the student will learn early in his botanical reading, the typical plant has, in its green colouring matter, *chlorophyll*, a trap to catch the radiating energy of the sun, and to accomplish, by the absorption of that energy, the synthesis (building up) of those organic compounds which the animal destroys. The typical plant is, on whole, passive and synthetic, or anabolic; the typical animal, active and katabolic; and the excess of kataboly over anaboly in the animal is compensated for by the anabolic work *stored up*, as it were, by the plant, which is, directly or indirectly, the animal's food.

2. *The Alimentary Canal of the Rabbit*

Section 16. Figure 1 represents the general anatomy of the rabbit, but is especially intended to show the *alimentary* (= food) canal, shortened to a certain extent, and with the proportions altered, in order to avoid any confusing complications. It is evidently simply a coiled tube — coiled for the sake of packing — with occasional dilatations, and with one side-shunt, the *caecum* (cae.), into which the food enters, and is returned to the main line, after probably absorbent action, imperfectly understood at present. A spiral fold in this *cul-de-sac* {bottom-of-sack}, which is marked externally by constrictions, has a directive influence on the circulation of its contents. The student should sketch Figure 1 once or twice, and make himself familiar with the order and names of the parts before proceeding. We have, in succession, the *mouth* (M.), separated from the nasal passage (Na.) above the palate; the *pharynx* (ph.), where the right and left nasal passages open by the posterior nares into the mouth; the oesophagus (oes.); the bag-like stomach, its left (Section 6) end being called the *cardiac* (cd.st.), and its right the *pyloric* end (py.); the U-shaped *duodenum* (ddnm.) and the very long and greatly coiled *ileum* (il.). The *duodenum* and *ileum* together form the *small intestine*; and the ileum is dilated at its distal end into a thick-walled *sacculus rotundus* (s.r.), beyond which point comes the *large*

intestine. The *colon* (co.) and *rectum* (r.) continue the main line of the alimentary canal; but, at the beginning of the large intestine, there is also inserted a great side-shunt, the *caecum* (cae.), ending blindly in a fleshy *vermiform appendix* (v.ap.). The figure will indicate how the parts are related better than any verbal description can. Between the coiling alimentary tube and the body walls is a space, into which the student cuts when he begins dissecting; this is the *peritoneal cavity* (pt.). A thin, transparent membrane, the mesentery, holds the intestines in place, and binds them to the dorsal wall of this peritoneal space.

Section 17. The food stuffs of an animal, the unstable compounds destined ultimately to be worked into its life, and to leave it again in the form of *katastases* (Section 13), fall into two main divisions. The first of these includes the non-nitrogenous food stuffs, containing either carbon together with hydrogen and oxygen in the proportion of H2O (the *carbo-hydrates*), or carbon and hydrogen without oxygen (the *hydrocarbons*). The second division consists of the nitrogenous materials, containing also carbon, hydrogen, a certain amount of oxygen, sulphur, and possibly other elements. Among the carbohydrates, the commonest are starch and cellulose, which are insoluble bodies, and sugar, which is soluble. The hydrocarbons, fats, oils, and so on, form a comparatively small proportion of the rabbit's diet; the proverb of "oil and water" will remind the student that these are insoluble. The nitrogenous bodies have their type in the albumen of an egg; and muscle substance and the less modified living "protoplasm" of plants, a considerable proportion of the substance of seeds, bulbs, and so on, are albuminous bodies, or proteids. These also are insoluble bodies, or when soluble, will not diffuse easily through animal membranes.

Section 18. Now the essential problem which the digestive canal of the rabbit solves is to get these insoluble, or *quasi*-insoluble, bodies into its blood and system. They have to pass somehow into the circulation through the walls of the alimentary canal. In order that a compound should diffuse through a membrane, it must be both soluble and diffusible, and therefore an essential preliminary to the absorption of nutritive matter is its conversion into a diffusible soluble form. This is effected by certain fluids, formed either by the

walls of the alimentary canal or by certain organs called glands, which open by ducts into it; all these fluids contain small quantities of organic compounds of the class called *ferments*, and these are the active agents in the change. The soluble form of the carbohydrates is sugar; proteids can be changed into the, of course, chemically equivalent but soluble and diffusible the peptones; and fats and oils undergo a more complicated, but finally similar change.

Section 19. We shall discuss the structure and action of -a gland [glands] a little more fully in a subsequent chapter. Here we will simply say that they are organs forming each its characteristic fluid or secretion, and sending it by a conduit, the duct, to the point where its presence is required. The saliva in our mouths, tears, and perspiration, are examples of the secretions of glands.

Section 20. In the month of the rabbit the food is acted upon by the teeth and saliva. The saliva contains ptyalin, a ferment converting starch into sugar, and it also serves to moisten the food as it is ground up by the cheek teeth. It does not act on fat to any appreciable extent. The teeth of the rabbit are shown in Figure XVIII., Sheet 4. The *incisor* teeth in front, two pairs above and one pair below (i.), are simply employed in grasping the food; the cheek teeth — the *premolars* (pm.) and *molars* (m.) behind — triturate the food by a complicated motion over each. Their crowns are flat for this purpose, with harder ridges running across them.

Section 21. This grinding up of the food in the mouth invariably occurs in herbivorous animals, where there is a considerable amount of starch and comparatively little hydrocarbon in the food. By finely dividing the food, it ensures its intimate contact with the digestive ferment, ptyalin. In such meat-eaters as the cat and dog, where little starchy matter and much fat is taken, the saliva is, of course, of less importance, and this *mastication* does not occur. The cheek teeth of a dog ({Section 91}), and more so of a cat, are sharp, and used for gnawing off fragments of food, which are swallowed at once. Between the incisors and premolars of a dog come the characteristic biting teeth, or *canines*, absent in the rabbit.

Section 22. The student will probably ask why the cheek teeth, which are all similar in appearance, are divided into premolars and molars. The rabbit has a set of milk molars — a *milk dentition* —

which are followed by the permanent teeth, just as in man. Those cheek teeth of the second set, which have predecessors in the first series, are called premolars; the ones posterior to these are the molars.

Section 23. After *mastication*, the food is worked by the tongue and cheeks into a saliva-soaked "bolus" and swallowed. The passage down the oesophagus is called *deglutition*. In the stomach it comes under the influence of the gastric juice, formed in little glandular pits in the stomach wall — the gastric (Figure VIII. Sheet 3) and pyloric glands. This fluid is distinctly acid, its acidity being due to about one-tenth per cent {of a hundred} of hydrochloric acid, and it therefore stops any further action of the ptyalin, which can act only on neutral or slightly alkaline fluids. The gastric juice does not act on carbo-hydrates or hydrocarbons to any very noticeable degree. *Its essential property* is the conversion of proteids into peptones, and the ferment by which this is effected is called pepsin. Milk contains a peculiar soluble proteid, called casein, which is precipitated by a special ferment, the rennetferment, and the insoluble proteid, the *curd*, thus obtained is then acted on by the pepsin. In the manufacture of cheese, the rennetferment obtained, from the stomach of a calf is used to curdle the milk.

Section 24. After the food has undergone digestion in the stomach it passes into the duodenum, the U-shaped loop of intestine immediately succeeding the stomach. The duodenum is separated from the stomach by a ring-like muscular valve, the *pylorus*; this valve belongs to the class of muscles called *sphincters*, which, under ordinary circumstances, are closed, but which relax to open the circular central aperture. The valve at the *anus*, which retains the faeces, is another instance of a sphincter.

Section 25. The food at this stage is called chyme; it is an acid and soup-like fluid — acid through the influence of the gastric juice. The temperature of the animal's body is sufficiently high to keep most of the fat in the food melted and floating in oily drops; much of the starch, has been changed to sugar, and the solid proteids to soluble peptones, but many fragments of material still float unchanged.

Section 26. It meets now with the bile, a greenish fluid secreted by that large and conspicuous gland the liver. The bile is not simply a

digestive secretion, like the saliva or the gastric juice; it contains matters destined to mix in, and after a certain amount of change to be passed out of the body with, the faeces; among these substances, of which *some portion* is doubtless excretory, are compounds containing *sulphur* — the *bile salts*. There is also a colouring matter, *bili verdin*, which may possibly also be excretory. If the student will compare Sections 10 and 11, he will notice that in those paragraphs no account is taken of the sulphur among the katastases, the account does not balance, and he will at once see that here probably is the missing item on the outgoing side. The bile, through the presence of these salts, is strongly alkaline, and so stops the action of the gastric juice, and prepares for that of the pancreas, which can act only in an alkaline medium. The fermentive action of the bile is trifling; it dissolves fats, to a certain extent, and is *antiseptic*, that is, it prevents putrefaction to which the chyme might be liable; it also seems to act as a natural purgative.

Section 27. The bile, as we shall see later, is by no means the sole product of the liver.

Section 28. The pancreatic juice, the secretion of the pancreas is remarkable as acting on all the food stuffs that have not already become soluble. It *emulsifies* fats, that is, it breaks, the drops up into extremely small globules, forming a milky fluid, and it furthermore has a fermentive action upon them; it splits them up into *fatty acids*, and the soluble body glycerine. The fatty acids combine with alkaline substances (Section 26) to form bodies which belong to the chemical group of *Soaps*, and which are soluble also. The pancreatic juice also attacks any proteids that have escaped the gastric juice, and converts them into peptones, and any residual starch into sugar. Hence by this stage, in the duodenum, all the food constituents noticed in Section 17 are changed into soluble forms. There are probably, three distinct ferments in the pancreatic juice acting respectively on starch, fat, and proteid, but they have not been isolated, and the term *pancreatin* is sometimes used to suggest the three together.

Section 29. A *succus entericus*, a saliva-like fluid secreted by numerous small glands in the intestine wall (Brunner's glands, Lieberkuhnian follicles), probably aids, to an unknown but

comparatively small extent, in the digestive processes.

Section 30. The walls of the whole of the small intestine are engaged in the absorption of the soluble results of digestion. In the duodenum, especially, small processes, the villi project into the cavity, and being, like the small hairs of velvet pile, and as thickly set, give its inner coat a velvety appearance. In a villus we find (Figure IX., Sheet 3) a series of small blood-vessels and with it another vessel called a *lacteal*. The lacteals run together into larger and larger branches until they form a main trunk, the *thoracic duct*, which opens into the blood circulation at a point near the heart; but of this we shall speak further later. They contain, after a meal, a fluid called *chyle*.

Section 31. Emulsified fats pass into the chyle. Water and diffusible salts certainly pass into the vein. The course taken by the peptones is uncertain, but Professor Foster favours the chyle in the case of the rabbit — the student should read his *Text-book of Physiology*, Part 2, Chapter 1, Section 11, if interested in the further discussion of this question.

Section 32. The processes that occur in the remaining portions of the alimentary canal are imperfectly understood. The caecum is so large in the rabbit that it must almost certainly be of considerable importance. In carnivorous animals it may be so much reduced as to be practically absent. An important factor in the diet of the herbivorous animals, and one absent from the food of the carnivora, is that carbohydrate, the building material of all green-meat- [food], *cellulose*, and there is some ground for thinking that the caecum is probably a region of special fermentive action upon it. The pancreatic juice, it may be noted, exercises a slight digestive activity upon this substance.

Section 33. Water is most largely absorbed in the large intestine, and in it the rejected (mainly insoluble) portion of the food gradually acquires its dark colour and other faecal characteristics.

3. *The Circulation*

Section 34. The next thing to consider is the distribution of the food material absorbed through the walls of the alimentary canal to the

living and active parts of the body. This is one of the functions of the series of structures — heart and blood-vessels, called the circulation, circulatory system, or vascular system. It is not the only function. The blood also carries the oxygen from the lungs to the various parts where work is done and kataboly occurs, and it carries away the katastases to the points where they are excreted — the carbon dioxide and some water to the lungs, water and urea to the kidneys, sulphur compounds of some kind to the liver.

Section 35. The blood (Figure 4, Sheet 2) is not homogeneous; under the low power of the microscope it may be seen to consist of —

(1.) a clear fluid, the plasma, in which float —

(2.) a few transparent colourless bodies of *indefinite and changing shape*, and having a central brighter portion, the *nucleus* with a still brighter dot therein the *nucleolus* — the white corpuscles (w.c.), and

(3.) flat round discs, *without a nucleus*, the red corpuscles (r.c.), greatly more numerous than the white.

Section 36. The chyle of the lacteals passes, as we have said, by the thoracic duct directly into the circulation. It enters the left *vena cava superior* (l.v.c.s.) near where this joins the *jugular vein* (ex.j.) (see Figure 1, Sheet 2, th.d.) and goes on at once with the rest of the blood to the heart. The small veins of the villi, however, which also help suck up the soluble nutritive material, are not directly continuous with the other body veins, the systemic veins; they belong to a special system, and, running together into larger and larger branches, form the lieno gastric (l.g.v.) and mesenteric (m.v.) veins, which unite to form the portal vein (p.v.) which enters the liver (l.v.) and there breaks up again into smaller and smaller branches. The very finest ramifications of this spreading network are called the (liver) capillaries, and these again unite to form at last the hepatic vein (h.v.) which enters the vena cava inferior (v.c.i.), a median vessel, running directly to the heart. This capillary network in the liver is probably connected with changes requisite before the

recently absorbed materials can enter the general blood current.

Section 37. The student has probably already heard the terms vein and artery employed. In the rabbit a vein is a vessel bringing blood towards the heart, while an artery is a vessel conducting it away. Veins are thin-walled, and therefore flabby, a conspicuous purple when full of blood, and when empty through bleeding and collapsed sometimes difficult to make out in dissection. They are formed by the union of lesser factors. The portal breaks up into lesser branches within the liver. Arteries have thick muscular and elastic walls, thick enough to prevent the blood showing through, and are therefore pale pink or white and keep their round shape.

Section 38. The heart of the rabbit is divided by partitions into four chambers: two upper thin-walled ones, the auricles (au.), and two lower ones, both, and especially the left, with very muscular walls, the ventricles (vn.). The right ventricle (r.vn.) and auricle (r.au.) communicate, and the left ventricle (l.vn.) and auricle (l.au.).

Section 39. The blood coming from all parts of the body, partly robbed of its oxygen and containing much carbon dioxide and other katastases, enters the right auricle of the heart through three great veins, the median vena cava inferior from the posterior parts of the body, and the paired venae cavae superiores from the anterior. With the beating of the heart, described below, it is forced into the *right ventricle* and from there through the *pulmonary artery* (p.a.) seen in the figure passing under the loop of the aorta (ao.) to the lungs.

Section 40. The lungs (lg. Figure 1, Sheet 1) are moulded to the shape of the thoracic cavity and heart; they communicate with the pharynx by the *trachea* (tr. in Figure 1, Sheet 1) or windpipe, and are made up of a tissue of continually branching and diminishing air-tubes, which end at last in small air-sacs, the *alveoli*. The final branches of the pulmonary arteries, the lung capillaries, lie in the walls of these air-sacs, and are separated from the air by an extremely thin membrane through which the oxygen diffuses into, and the carbon dioxide escapes from, the blood.

Section 41. The mechanism of respiration will be understood by reference to Figure 3, Sheet 2. It will be noted, in dissecting that the lungs have shrunk away from the walls of the thorax; this collapse occurs directly an aperture is made in the thorax wall, and is in part

due to their extreme *elasticity*. In life the cavity of the thorax forms an air-tight box, between which and the lungs is a slight space, the *pleural cavity* (pl.c.) lined by a moist membrane, which is also reflected, over the lungs. The thorax wall is muscular and bony, and resists the atmospheric pressure on its outer side, so that the lungs before this is cut through are kept distended to the size of the thoracic cavity by the pressure of the air within them. In inspiration (or breathing-in) the ribs are raised by the external intercostal (Anglice, *between-ribs*, e.i.c.m.) and other allied muscles, and the diaphragm (dia.) contracts and becomes *flatter*; the air is consequently sucked, in as the lungs follow the movement of the thorax wall. In expiration the intercostals and diaphragm relax and allow the elastic recoil of the lungs to come into play. The thoracic wall is simultaneously depressed by the muscles of the abdominal area, the diaphragm thrust forwards, as the result of the displacement and compression of the alimentary viscera thus brought about. (r.r.r. in the Figure mark ribs.)

Section 42. The oxygen and carbon dioxide are not carried in exactly the same way by the blood. The student will know from his chemical reading that neither of these gases is very soluble, but carbon dioxide is sufficiently so in an alkaline fluid to be conveyed by the liquid plasma. The oxygen however, needs a special portative mechanism in the colouring matter of the red corpuscles, the haemoglobin, with which it combines weakly to form *oxy-haemoglobin* of a bright red colour, and decomposing easily in the capillaries (the finest vessels between the arteries and veins), to release the oxygen again. The same compound occurs in all true vertebrata, and in the blood-fluid of the worm; in the crayfish a similar substance, *haemocyanin*, which when oxygenated is blue, and when deoxydized colourless, discharges the same function.

Section 43. The blood returns from the lungs to the *left auricle* (l.au.) by the pulmonary veins, hidden in the Figure by the heart, passes thence to the thick-walled *left ventricle* (l.vn.), and on into the *aorta* (ao.).

Section 44. The beating of the heart is, of course, a succession of contractions and expansions of its muscular wall. The contraction, or systole, commences at the base of the venae cavae and passes to the auricles, driving the blood before it into the ventricles, which then

contract sharply and drive it on into the aorta or pulmonary artery; a pause and then a dilatation, the diastole follows. The flow of the blood is determined in one direction by the various valves of the heart. No valves occur in the opening of the superior cavae but an imperfect one, the Eustachian valve, protects the inferior cava; the direction of the heart's contraction prevents any excessive back-flow into the veins, and the onward, tendency is encouraged by the suck of the diastole of the ventricles. Between the left ventricle and auricle is a valve made up of two flaps of skin, the mitral valve, the edges of the flaps being connected with the walls of the ventricle through the intermediation of small muscular threads, *the chordae tendinae*, which stretch across its cavity to little muscular pillars, the *papillary muscles*; these attachments prevent the mitral valve from flapping back into the auricle, and as the blood flows into and accumulates in the ventricle it gets behind the flaps of the valve and presses its edges together. When the systole of the ventricle occurs, the increased, tension of the blood only closes the aperture the tighter, and the current passes on into the aorta, where we find three watch-pocket valves, with the pocket turned away from the heart, which are also closed and tightened by any attempt at regurgitation (back-flow). A similar process occurs on the right side of the heart, but here, instead of a mitral valve of two flaps between auricle and ventricle, we have a tricuspid valve with three. The thickness of the muscular walls, in view of the lesser distance through which it has to force the blood, -are- [is] less for the right ventricle than the left.

Section 45. The following are the chief branches of the aorta. The student should be able to follow them with certainty in dissection; they are all displayed in the Figure; but it must not be imagined for a moment that familiarity with this diagram will obviate the necessity for the practical work; (in.) is the innominate artery; it forks into (s.cl.a.) the right subclavian, and (r.c.c.) the right common carotid. Each carotid splits at the angle of the jaw into an internal and an external branch. The left common carotid, (l.c.c.) arises from the base of the innominate,* (l.s.cl.a.) the left subclavian, directly from the aorta. The aorta now curves round to the dorsal middle line, and runs down as seen in Figure 1, Sheet 1 (d.ao.) and Figure 1, Sheet 2 (d.ao.). Small branches are given off to the ribs, and then comes the

median *coeliac* (coe.a.) to the stomach and spleen, the median superior mesenteric (s.mes.a.) to the main portion of the intestine, and the inferior mesenteric (p.m.a.) to the rectum. Note that no veins to the inferior vena cava correspond to these arteries — the blood they supply going back by the portal vein (p.v.). The paired renal arteries (r.a.) supply the kidneys, and the common iliacs (c.il.a.) the hind legs, splitting into the internal iliacs (i.il.a.) and the femoral (f.).

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[The student should note that the only arteries in the middle line are those supplying the alimentary canal.]

{Lines from First Edition only.}

* -The figure is inaccurate, and represents the left common carotid as arising from the aortic arch.-

Section 46. The distribution of the veins of the rabbit has only a superficial parallelism with arteries. The chief factors of vena cava inferior are the hepatic vein (h.v.), which receives the liver blood, the renal veins (r.v.), from the kidneys, the ilaeo-lumbar, from the abdominal wall, and the external (e.il.v.) and internal ilias (i.il.v.); with the exception of the renal veins none of these run side by side with arteries. The superior cavae (r. and l.v.c.s.) are formed by the union of internal (i.j.) and external jugular (e.j.) veins with a subclavian (s.cl.v.) from the fore limb. The term *pre-caval vein* is sometimes used for superior cava. The attention, of the student is called to the small *azygos vein* (az.) running into the right vena cava superior, and forming the only asymmetrical (not-balancing) feature of the veins in front of the heart; it brings blood back from the ribs of the thorax wall, and is of interest mainly because it answers to an enormous main vessel, the right post-cardinal sinus, in fishes. There are spermatic arteries and veins (s.v. and a.) to the genital organs. All these vessels should be patiently dissected out by the student, and drawn.

Section 47. Between the final branches of the arteries and the first fine factors of the veins, and joining them, come the systemic

capillaries. These smallest and ultimate ramifications of the circulation penetrate every living part of the animal, so that if we could isolate the vascular system we should have the complete form of the rabbit in a closely-meshed network. It is in the capillaries that the exchange of gases occurs and that nutritive material passes out to the tissues and katastases in from them; they are the essential factor in the circulatory system of the mammal — veins, arteries, and heart simply exist to remove and replace their contents. The details of the branching of the pulmonary artery and the pulmonary veins need not detain us now.

Section 48. Summarising the course of the circulation, starting from the right ventricle, we have — pulmonary artery, pulmonary capillaries, pulmonary vein, left auricle, left ventricle, aorta, arteries, and systemic capillaries. After this, from all parts except the spleen and alimentary canal, the blood returns to systemic veins, superior or inferior cavae, right auricle, and right ventricle. The blood from the stomach spleen, and intestines however, passes *via* {through} the portal vein to the liver capillaries and then through the hepatic vein to inferior cava, and so on. Material leaves the blood to be excreted in lungs, kidneys, by the skin (as perspiration), and elsewhere. New material enters most conspicuously;

(a) by the portal veins portal veins and

(b) by the thoracic duct and left superior cava.

Section 49. The following table summarises what we have learnt up to the present of the physiology of the Rabbit, considered as a mechanism using up food and oxygen and disengaging energy: —

-Air {Nitrogen... returned unchanged.}
{Oxygen... through Pulmonary Vein to — } {see 3.}

-Food {Carbo-Hydrates (Starch, Sugar, Cellulose.)} Sugar.
{Protein.} {Peptones.}
{Fat (little in Rabbit.)} {Glycerine, and fatty acids in soups.}
{Rejected matter got rid of in Defaecation.}

1a. {Chyle in Lacteals going *via* {through} Thoracic Duct and Left Superior Cava to — } {see 2.}

1b. {Veins of Villi — }
{Portal Vein — }
{Liver — }
{Hepatic Vein and Inferior Cava to — } {see 2.}

2. {Right side of heart; then to lungs, and then to — } {see 3.}

3. {Left side of heart; whence to Systemic Arteries and Capillaries.}

4. {The tissues and -Kataboly.}

5. {Urea (?Liver) Kidney and Sweat Glands}
{CO2} {Lungs}
{H2O} {Lungs, Kidney, Sweat Glands}
{Other Substances} {Mainly by [Kidney,] Liver and Alimentary Canal}

4. *The Amoeba. Cells, and Tissue*

Section 50. We have thus seen how the nutritive material is taken into the animal's system and distributed over its body, and incidentally, we have noted how the resultant products of the creature's activity are removed. The essence of the whole process, as we have already stated, is the decomposition and partial oxydation of certain complex chemical compounds to water, carbon dioxide, a low nitrogenous body, which finally takes the form of urea, and other substances. We may now go on to a more detailed study, the microscopic study, or *histology*, of the tissues in which metaboly and kataboly occur, but before we do this it will be convenient to glance for a moment at another of our animal types — the Amoeba, the lowest as the rabbit is the highest, in our series.

Section 51. This is shown in Figure III., Sheet 3, as it would appear under the low power of the microscope. We have a mass of a clear, transparent, greyish substance called protoplasm, granular in places, and with a clearer border; within this is a denser portion

called the nucleus, or *endoplast* (n.), which, under the microscope, by transmitted light, appear brighter, and within that a still denser spot, the nucleolus (ns.) or *endoplastule*. The protoplasm is more or less extensively excavated by fluid spaces, *vacuoles*; one clearer circular space or vacuole, which is invariably present, appears at intervals, enlarges gradually, and then vanishes abruptly, to reappear after a brief interval; this is called the contractile vacuole (c.v.). The amoeba is constantly changing its shape, whence its older name of the Proteus animalcule, thrusting out masses of its substance in one direction, and withdrawing from another, and hence slowly creeping about. These thrust-out parts, in its outline, are called pseudopodia (ps.). By means of them it gradually creeps round and encloses its food. Little particles of nutritive matter are usually to be detected in the homogeneous protoplasm of its body; commonly these are surrounded by a drop of water taken in with them, and the drop of water is then called a food vacuole. The process of taking in food is called *ingestion*. The amoeba, in all probability, performs essentially the same chemical process as we have summarised in Sections 10, 11, 12; it *ingests* food, digests it in the food vacuoles and builds it up into its body protoplasm, to undergo kataboly and furnish the force of its motion — the contractile vacuole, is probably respiratory and perhaps excretory, accumulating and then, by its "systole" (compare Section 44), forcing out of its body, the water, carbon dioxide, urea, and other katastases, which are formed concomitantly with its activity. The amoeba reproduces itself in the simplest way; the nucleus occasionally divides into two portions and a widening fissure in the protoplasm of the animal's body separates one from the other. It is impossible to say that one is the parent cell, and the other the offspring; the amoeba we merely perceive, *was* one and is now two. It is curious to note, therefore, that the amoeba is, in a sense, immortal — that the living nucleus of one of these minute creatures that we examine to-day under a microscope may have conceivably drawn, out an unbroken thread of life since the remotest epochs of the world's history. Although no sexual intercourse can be observed, there is reason to believe that a process of supposed "cannabalism," in which a larger amoeba may occasionally engulph a smaller one, is really a conjugative reproductive process, and followed by increased

vitality and division.

Section 52. Now if the student will compare Section 35, he will see that in the white blood corpuscles we have a very remarkable resemblance to the amoeba; the contractile vacuole is absent, but we have the protoplasmic body, the nucleus and nucleolus, and those creeping fluctuations of shape through the thrusting out and withdrawal of pseudopodia, which constitute "amoeboid" motion. They also multiply, in the same way, by division.

Section 53. It is not only in the white corpuscle of the blood that we find this resemblance; in all the firmer parts of the body we find, on microscopic examination, similar little blebs of protoplasm, and at an early stage of development the young rabbit is simply *one mass of these protoplasmic bodies*. Their division and multiplication is an essential condition, of growth. Through an unfortunate accident, these protoplasmic blebs, which constitute the living basis of the animal body, have come to be styled "cells," though the term "*corpuscles*" is far more appropriate.

Section 54. The word is "cell" suggests something enclosed by firm and definite walls, and it was first employed in vegetable histology. Unlike the typical cells of animals, the cells of most plants are not naked protoplasm, but protoplasm enclosed in a wall of substance (cell wall) called *cellulose*. The presence of this cellulose cell wall, and the consequent necessity of feeding entirely upon liquids and gases that soak through it instead of being able to *ingest* a portion of solid food is indeed, the primary distinction between the vegetable and the animal kingdoms, as ordinarily considered.

Section 55. Throughout life, millions of these cells retain their primary characters, and constitute the white corpuscles of blood, "phagocytes," and connective tissue corpuscles; others again, engage in the formation of material round themselves, and lie, in such cases, as gristle and bone, embedded in the substance they have formed; others again, undergo great changes in form and internal structure, and become permanently modified into, for instance, nerve fibres and muscle substance. The various substances arising in this way through the activity of cells are called tissues, the building materials of that complex thing, the animal body. Since such a creature as the rabbit is formed through the co-operation of a vast multitude of cells, it is

called *multicellular*; the amoeba, on the other hand, is *unicellular*. The rabbit may be thus regarded as a vast community of amoeboid creatures and their products.

Section 56. Figure IV., Sheet 3 represents, diagrammatically, embryonic tissue, of which, to begin with, the whole animal consists. The cells are all living, capable of dividing and similar, but as development proceeds, they *differentiate*, some take on one kind of duty (*function*), and some another, like boys taking to different trades on leaving school, and wide differences in structure and interdependence become apparent.

Section 57. It is convenient to divide tissues into three classes, though the divisions are by no means clearly marked, nor have they any scientific value. The first of these comprises tissues composed wholly, or with the exception of an almost imperceptible cementing substance, of cells; the second division includes the skeletal tissues, the tissue of mesentery, and the connective and basement tissue of most of the organs, tissues which, generally speaking, consist of a *matrix* or embedding substance, formed by the cells and outside of them, as well as the cells themselves; and, thirdly, muscular and nervous tissue. We shall study the former two in this chapter, and defer the third division until later.

Section 58. The outer layer of the skin (the *epidermis*), the inmost lining of the alimentary canal, the lining of the body cavity, and the inner linings of blood-vessels, glands, and various ducts constitute our first division. The general name for such tissues is epithelium. When the cells are more or less flattened, they form *squamous epithelium* (Figure VI.) such as we find lining the inside of a man's cheek (from which the cells sq.ep. were taken) or covering the mesentery of various types — sq.end. are from the mesentery (Section 16) of a frog. A short cylindroidal form of cell makes up *columnar epithelium*, seen typically in the cells covering the villi of the duodenum (Figure V.). This epithelium of the villi has the outer border curiously striated, and this is usually spoken of as leading towards "ciliated" epithelium, to be described immediately. The epithelium of the epidermis is stratified — that is to say, has many thicknesses of cells; the deeper layers are alive and dividing (*stratum mucosum*), while the more superficial are increasingly flattened and

drier as the surface is approached (*stratum corneum*) and are continually being rubbed off and replaced from below.

Section 59. In the branching air-tubes of the lung, the central canal of the spinal cord, and in the ureters of the rabbit, and in most other types, in various organs, we find ciliated epithelium (Figure VII.). This is columnar or cubical in form, and with the free edge curiously modified and beset with a number of hair-like processes, the *cilia*, by which, during the life of the cell, a waving motion is sustained in one direction. This motion assists in maintaining a current in the contents of ducts which are lined with this tissue. The motion is independent of the general life of the animal, so long as the constituent cell still lives, and so it is easy for the student to witness it himself with a microscope having a 1/4-inch or 1/6-inch objective. Very fine cilia may be seen by gently scraping the roof of a frog's mouth (the cells figured are from this source), or the gill of a recently killed mussel, and mounting at once in water, or, better, in a very weak solution of common salt.

Section 60. The lining of glands is secretory epithelium; the cells are usually cubical or polygonal (8, g.ep.), and they display in the most characteristic form what is called *metabolism*. Anaboly (see Section 14) we have defined, as a chemical change in an upward direction — less stable and more complex compounds are built up in the processes of vegetable and animal activity towards protoplasm; kataboly is a chemical running down; *metaboly* is a more general term, covering all vital chemical changes. The products of the action of a glandular epithelium are metabolic products, material derived from the blood is worked, up within the cell, not necessarily with conspicuous gain or loss of energy, and discharged into the gland space. The most striking case of this action is in the "goblet cells" that are found among the villi; these are simply glands of one cell, *unicellular* glands, and in Figure V. we see three stages in their action: at g.c.1 material (secretion) is seen forming in the cell, at g.c.2 it approaches the outer border, and at g.c.3 it has been discharged, leaving a hollowed cell. Usually however, the escape of secreted matter is not so conspicuous, and the gland-cells are collected as the lining of pits, simple, as in the gastric, pyloric, and Lieberkuhnian glands (Figure VIII., Sections 23, 29), or branching

like a tree or a bunch of grapes (Figure r.g.), as in Brunner's glands (Section 29) the pancreas, and the salivary glands. The salivary glands, we may mention, are a pair internal to the posterior ventral angle of the jaw, the *sub-maxillary*; a pair anterior to these, the *sub-lingual*; a pair posterior to the jaw beneath the ear, the *parotid*, and a pair beneath the eye, the *infra orbital*.

Section 61. The liver is the most complicated gland in the body (Figure X.). The bile duct (b.d.) branches again and again, and ends at last in the final pits, the lobuli (lb.), which are lined with secretory epithelium, and tightly packed, and squeeze each other into polygonal forms. The blood supply from which the bile would appear to be mainly extracted, is brought by the portal vein, but this blood is altogether unfit for the *nutrition* of the liver tissue; for this latter purpose a branch of the coeliac artery, the hepatic serves. Hence in the tissue of the liver we have, branching and interweaving among the lobuli, the small branches of the bile duct (b.d.), which carries away the bile formed, the portal vein (p.v.), the hepatic artery (h.a.), and the hepatic vein (h.v.). (Compare Section 45.) Figure X.b shows a lobule; the portal vein and the artery ramify round the lobules — are *inter-lobular*, that is (*inter*, between); the hepatic vein begins in the middle of the lobules (*intra*-lobular), and receives their blood. (Compare X.a.) Besides its function in the manufacture of the excretory, digestive, and auxiliary bile, the liver performs other duties. It appears to act as an inspector of the assimilation material brought in by the portal vein. The villi, for instance, will absorb arsenic, but this is arrested and thrown down in the liver. A third function is the formation of what would seem to be a store of carbohydrate, glycogen, mainly it would appear, from the sugar in the portal vein, though also, very probably, from nitrogenous material, though this may occur only under exceptional conditions. Finally, the nitrogenous katastases, formed in the working of muscle and nerve, and returned by them to the blood for excretion, are not at that stage in the form of urea. Whatever form they assume, they undergo a further metabolism into urea before leaving the body, and the presence of considerable quantities of this latter substance in the liver suggests this as a fourth function of this organ — the elaboration of urea.

Section 62. Similar from a physiological point of view, to the secretory glands which form the digestive fluids are those which furnish lubricating fluids, the lachrymal gland, and Harderian glands in the orbit internally to the eye, and posterior and anterior to it respectively, the sebaceous glands (oil glands) connected with the hair, and the anal and perineal glands. The secretions of excretory glands are removed from the body; chief among them are the sweat glands and kidneys. The sweat glands are microscopic tubular glands, terminating internally in a small coil (Figure VIII. s.g.) and are scattered thickly over the body, the water of their secretion being constantly removed by evaporation, and the small percentage of salt and urea remaining to accumulate as dirt, and the chief reasonable excuse for washing. The kidney structure is shown diagrammatically in Figure 5, Sheet 7. A great number of branching and straight looped, *tubuli* (little tubes) converge on an open space, the *pelvis*. Towards the outer layers (cortex) of the kidney, these tubuli terminate in little dilatations into which tangled knots of blood-vessels project: the dilatations are called Bowman's capsules (B.c.), and each coil of bloodvessel a glomerulus (gl.). In the capsules, water is drained from the blood; in the tubuli, urea and other salts in the urine are *secreted* from a branching network of vessels.

Section 63. In all the epithelial tissues that we have considered we have one feature in common: they are cells, each equivalent to the amoeba, that have taken on special duties — in a word, they are specialists. The amoeba is Jack of all trades and a free lance; the protective epidermal cell, the current-making ciliated cell, the bile or urea-making secretory cell, is master of one trade, and a soldier in a vast and wonderfully organized host. We will now consider our second kind of cell in this organization, the cell of which the especial aim is the building round it of a tissue.

Section 64. The simplest variety in this group is hyaline (i.e. glassy) cartilage (gristle). In this the formative cells (the cartilage corpuscles) are enjellied in a clear structureless matrix (Figure XII.), consisting entirely of organic compounds accumulated by their activity. Immediately round the cell lies a *capsule* of newer material. Some of the cells have recently divided (1); others have done so less recently, and there has been time for the interpolation of matrix, as at

2. In this way the tissue grows and is repaired. A thin layer of connective tissue (see below), the *perichondrium*, clothes the cartilaginous structure.

Section 65. Connective tissue (Figure XIII) is a general name for a group of tissues of very variable character. It is usually described as consisting typically in the mammals of three chief elements felted together; of comparatively unmodified corpuscles (c.c.), more or less amoeboid, and of fibres which are elongated, altered, and distorted cells. The fibres are of two kinds: yellow, branching, and highly *elastic* (y.e.f.), in consequence of which they fall into sinuous lines in a preparation, and white and *inelastic* ones (w.i.f.), lying in parallel bundles. Where the latter element is entirely dominant, the connective tissue is tendon, found especially at the point of attachment of muscles to the parts they work. Some elastic ligaments are almost purely yellow fibrous tissue. A loose interweaving of the three elements is areolar tissue, the chief fabric of mesentery, membrane, and the *dermis* (beneath the epidermis). With muscle it is the material of the walls of the alimentary canal and bloodvessels, and generally it enters into, binds together, and holds in place other tissue. The connective tissue of fishes displays the differentiation of fibres in a far less distinct manner.

Section 66. Through connective tissues wander the phagocytes, cells that are difficult to distinguish, if really distinct, from the white blood corpuscles. These cells possess a remarkable freedom; they show an initiative of their own, and seem endowed with a subordinate individuality. They occur in great numbers in a tissue called, botryoidal tissue (Figure XIV.), which occurs especially in masses and patches along the course of the alimentary canal, in its walls. The tonsils, swellings on either side of the throat, are such masses, and aggregates occur as visible patches, the Peyer's patches, on the ileum. It also constitutes the mass of the vermiform appendix and the wall of the sacculus rotundus; and in the young animal the "*thymus gland*," ventral to the heart, and less entirely, the "*thyroid gland*," ventral to the larynx, are similar structures, which are reduced or disappear as development proceeds. It is evident that in these two latter cases the term "gland" is somewhat of a misnomer. The matrix of botryoidal tissue is a network of stretched and

hollowed connective tissue cells — it is not a secretion, as cartilage matrix appears to be. During digestion, the phagocytes prowl into the intestine, and ingest and devour *bacteria*, that might otherwise give rise to disease. In inflammation, we may note here, they converge from all directions upon the point wounded or irritated. They appear to be the active agents in all processes of absorption (see *osteoclasts* under *bone*), and for instance, migrate into and devour the tissue of the tadpole's tail, during its metamorphosis to the adult frog.

Section 67. Within the connective tissue cells fat drops may be formed, as in Figure XV. *Adipose tissue* is simply connective tissue loaded with fat-distended cells. The tissue is, of course, a store form of hydro-carbon (Section 17) provided against the possible misadventure of starvation. With the exception of some hybernating animals, such store forms would seem to be of accidental importance only among animals, whereas among plants they are of invariable and necessary occurrence.

Section 68. We now come to Bone, a tissue confined to the vertebrata, and typically shown only in the higher types. As we descend in the scale from birds and mammals to lizards, amphibia (frogs and toads) and fish, we find cartilage continually more important, and the bony constituent of the skeleton correspondingly less so. In such a type as the dog-fish, the skeleton is entirely cartilaginous, bone only occurs in connection with the animal's scales; it must have been in connection with scales that bone first appeared in the vertebrate sub-kingdom. In the frog we have a cartilaginous skeleton *overlaid* by numerous bony scutes (shield-like plates) which, when the student comes to study that type, he will perceive are equivalent to the bony parts of such scales as occur in the dog-fish, sunk inward, and plating over the cartilage; and in the frog the cartilage also is itself, in a few places, replaced by bony tissue. In the adult rabbit these two kinds of bone, the bone *overlying* what was originally cartilage (membrane bone), and the bone replacing the cartilage (cartilage bone) have, between them, practically superseded the cartilage altogether. The structure of the most characteristic kind of bone will be understood by reference to Figure XVI. It is a simplified diagram of the transverse section of such a bone as the thigh bone. M.C. is the central marrow cavity,

H.v., H.v. are cross sections of small bloodvessels, the Haversian vessels running more or less longitudinally through, the bone in canals, the Haversian canals. Arranged round these vessels are circles of the formative elements, the bone corpuscles or *osteoblasts* (b.c.) each embedded in bony matrix in a little bed, the *lacuna*, and communicating one with another by fine processes through *canaliculi* in the matrix, which processes are only to be seen clearly in decalcified bone (See Section 70). The osteoblasts are arranged in concentric series, and the matrix is therefore in concentric layers, or *lamellae* (c.l.). Without and within the zone of Haversian systems are (o.l. and i.l.), the outer and inner lamellae. The bone is surrounded by connective tissue, the *periosteum*. In addition to this *compact bone*, there is a lighter and looser variety in which spicules and bars of bony tissue are loosely interwoven. Many flat bones, the bones of the skull, for instance, consist of this spongy bone, plated (as an electro spoon is plated) with compact bone.

Section 69. Among the bony bars and spicules of spongy bone occurs the red marrow — which must not be confused with the yellow marrow, the fatty substance in the central cavity of long bones. In this red marrow are numerous large colourless cells, which appear to form within their substance and then liberate red blood corpuscles. This occurs especially in the spongy bone within the ribs.

Section 70. The matrix of bone differs from that of cartilage or of most other tissues in consisting chiefly of *inorganic* salts. The chief of these is calcium phosphate, with which much smaller quantities of calcium carbonate, and magnesium phosphate and carbonate occur. These inorganic salts can be removed by immersion of the bone in weak hydrochloric acid, and a flexible network of connecting tissue, Haversian vessels, bone corpuscles, and their processes remains. This is *decalcified bone* alluded to above.

Section 71. In the very young rabbit, the limb bones, vertebral column, and many of the skull bones are simply plates and bars of cartilage; the future membrane bones, however are planned out in connective tissue. The development of the latter is simple, the connective tissue corpuscles functioning by a simple change of product as osteoblast. The development of the cartilage bones, however, is more complicated. Figure XVII., represents, in a

diagrammatic way, the stages in the conversion of a cartilaginous bar to bone. To begin with, the previously sporadically-arranged (scattered anyhow) corpuscles (u.c.c.) are gathered into groups in single file, or in other words, into "columnar" groups (as at c.c.). The matrix becomes clouded with inorganic salts of lime, and it is then said to be *calcified*. This calcified cartilage then undergoes absorption — it must not be imagined for a moment that bone is calcified cartilage. Simultaneous with the formation of the cavities (s.) due to this absorption, connective tissue (p.c.i.) from the surrounding perichondrium (p.c.) grows into the ossifying* bar. It is from this connective tissue that the osteoblasts (o.b.) arise, and bone is built up. Throughout life a bone is continually being absorbed and reformed by the activity of the osteoblasts. An osteoblast engaged in the absorption instead of the formation of bone is called an *osteoclast*.

* The formation of bone is called *ossification*. To ossify is to become bony.

Section 72. The great thing to notice about this is that cartilage does not become bone, but is eaten into and ousted by it; the osteoblasts and osteoclasts replace entirely the cartilage corpuscles, and are not derived from them.

Section 73. We may mention here the structure of the spleen (Figure 1, Sheet 1). It consists of a connective tissue and muscular coating, with an internal soft matrix much resembling botryoidal tissue, traversed by fibrous *trabeculae* (= beams, planks) containing blood-vessels, and the whole organ is gorged with blood, particularly after meals. The consideration of its function the student may conveniently defer for the present.

Section 74. Here also, we may notice the lymphatics, a series of small vessels which return the overflow of the blood serum from the capillaries, in the nutrition of the tissues in all parts of the body, to the thoracic duct (see Section 36), and the general circulation. At intervals their course is interrupted by gland-like dilatations, the *lymphatic glands*, in which masses of rapidly dividing and growing (proliferating) cells occur, of which, doubtless, many are detached and become, first "*lymph corpuscles*," and, when they reach the veins, white blood corpuscles.

Section 75. We are now in a position to study the rabbit's skeleton. We strongly recommend the student to do this with the actual bones at hand — they may be cleared very easily in a well-boiled rabbit. This recommendation may appear superfluous to some readers, but, as a matter of fact, the marked proclivity of the average schoolmaster for mere book-work has put such a stamp on study, that, in nine cases out of ten, a student, unless he is expressly instructed to the contrary, will go to the tortuous, and possibly inexact, descriptions of a book for a knowledge of things that lie at his very finger-tips. We have not written, this chapter to give a complete knowledge of the skeleton, but simply as an aid in the actual examination of the bones.

Section 76. We may take the skeleton under five headings. There is the central axis, the chain of little bones, the vertebrae, threaded on the spinal cord (see Figure 1 and Section 1); the thorax, the box enclosed by ribs and sternum; the fore-limb and bones connected with it (pectoral girdle and limb), and the hind-limb and bones connected with it (pelvic girdle). Finally there is the skull, but following the London University syllabus, we shall substitute the skull of the dog for of that of the rabbit, as more typically mammalian (Section 4).

Section 77. In Section 3 (which the student should refer to) we have a division of the vertebrae into four varieties. Of these most representative is the thoracic. A thoracic vertebra (Figure 4, Sheet 5, T.V.) consists of a central bony mass, the *body* or *centrum* (b.), from which there arises dorsally an arch, the neural arch (n.a.), completed by a keystone, the neural spine (n.s.); and coming off laterally from the arch is the transverse process (tr.p.). Looking at the vertebra sideways, we see that the arch is notched, for the exit of nerves. Jointed to the thoracic vertebrae on either side are the ribs (r.). Each rib has a process, the *tuberculum*, going up to articulate with the transverse process, and one, the *capitulum* articulating between the bodies of two contiguous vertebrae. The facets for the articulation of the capitulum are indicated in the side view by shading. At either end of the body of a vertebra of a young rabbit are bony caps, the epiphyses (ep.), separated from the body by a plane of unossified

cartilage (indicated, by the dots). These epiphyses to the vertebral bodies occur only among mammals, and are even absent in some cases within the class. In the adult rabbit they have ossified continuously with the rest of the body.

Section 78. A cervical vertebra (C.V.) seems, upon cursory inspection, to have no rib. The transverse processes differ from those of thoracic series in having a perforation, the *vertebrarterial canal*, through which the vertebral artery runs up the neck. A study of the development of these bones shows that the part marked f.r. ossifies separately from the rest of the transverse process; and the form of the equivalent structures in certain peculiar lower mammals and in reptiles leaves no doubt that f.r. is really an abbreviated rib; fused up with the transverse process and body. The two anterior cervical vertebrae are peculiar. The first (at.) is called the *Atlas* — the figure shows the anterior view — and has great articular faces for the condyles (Section 86) of the skull, and a deficient centrum. The next is the axis, and it is distinguished by an *odontoid peg* (od.p.), which fits into the space where the body of the atlas is deficient. In development the centrum of the axis ossifies from one centre, and the odontoid, peg from another, which at that time occupies the position of centrum of the atlas. So that it would seem that the atlas is a vertebra *minus* a centrum, and the axis is a vertebra *plus* a centrum, added at the expense of the atlas.

Section 79. The lumbar vertebrae (l.v.) are larger, and have cleft transverse processes, each giving rise to an ascending limb, the *metapophyses*, and a descending one. The latter (generally spoken of as *the* transverse processes) point steeply downward, and are considerably longer than those of thoracic series. The sacral vertebrae (s.v.) have great flattened transverse processes for articulation with the ilia. The caudal vertebrae (c.v.) are gradually reduced to the mere elongated centra, as we proceed, towards the tip of the tail.

Section 80. All the vertebrae join with their adjacent fellows through the intermediation of certain *intervertebral pads*, and also articulate by small processes at either end at the upper side of the arch, the *zygapophyses*. The normals to the polished facets of these point, in the case of the anterior *zygapophyses*, up and in (*mnemonic*:

ant-up-in), and in the case of the posterior, down and out. The student should make this, and the other features of vertebrae, out upon actual specimens.

Section 81. The thorax is bounded dorsally by the vertebral column, and ventrally by the sternum. The sternum consists of segments, the *sternebrae* (st.); anteriorly there is a bony *manubrium* (mb.), posteriorly a thin cartilaginous plate, the *xiphisternum* (xi.). Seven pairs of ribs articulate by cartilaginous ends (sternal ribs) with the sternum directly, as indicated in the figure; five (false) ribs are joined, to each other and to the seventh, and not to the sternum directly. The last four ribs have no tuberculum (Section 77).

Section 82. The fore-limb (pectoral limb) consists of an upper arm bone, the *humerus* (hum.) the distal end of which is deeply excavated by the olecranon fossa (o.f.) as indicated by the dotted lines; of two bones, the ulna (u.) and radius (r.) which are firmly bound by ligament in the position of the figure (i.e., with the palm of the hand downward, "prone"); of a number of small bones (carpalia), the *carpus* (c.); of a series of *metacarpals* (mc.); and of three digits (= fingers) each, except the first, or *pollex*, of three small bones — the *phalanges*, only the proximal of which appear in the figure. The ulna has a hook-like head, the *olecranon* (o.) which distinguishes it easily from the distally thickened radius. The limb is attached to the body through the intermediation of the shoulder-blade (*scapula*, sc.) a flattened bone with a median external ridge with a hook-like termination, the *acromion* (acr.). There is also a process overhanging the *glenoid cavity* (g.) wherein the humerus articulates, which process is called *coracoid* (co.); it is ossified from two separate centres, and represents a very considerable bone in the bird, reptile, and frog. Along the dorsal edge of the scapula of the rabbit is unossified cartilage, which is called the *supra-scapula* (s.sc.). In man there runs from the acromion to the manubrium of the sternum a bone, the collar-bone or *clavicle*. This is represented by a very imperfectly ossified rudiment in the rabbit. The scapula and clavicle, the bones of the body connected with the fore-limb, are frequently styled the pectoral girdle, or *shoulder-girdle*; this name of girdle will appear less of a misnomer when lower vertebrate types are studied.

Section 83. The hind limb and its body bones — pelvic limb and

girdle — are shown in Figure 2. The limb skeleton corresponds closely with that of the fore-limb. The *femur* (fe.) answers to the *humerus*, and is to be distinguished from it by the greater distinctness of its proximal head (hd.) and by the absence of an olecranon fossa from its distal end. The *tibia* (ti = the *radius*) is fused for the distal half of its length with the *fibula* (fb. = *ulna*). A *tarsus* (*tarsalia*) equals the *carpus*.* Two of the proximal tarsalia may be noted: one working like a pulley under the tibia, is the *astragalus* (as.); one forming the bony support of the heel, is the *calcaneum* (ca.). There is a series of metatarsals, and then come four digits of three phalanges each.

* Such a resemblance as exists between one vertebra and another in the rabbit, or between the humerus and the femur, is called *serial homology*; the two things correspond with each other to the extent of imperfect reduplication. "Homology" simply is commonly used to indicate the resemblance between any two structures in different animals, in origin and position as regards other parts. Thus the heart of the rabbit and of the frog are homologous structures, corresponding in position, and resembling each other much as two memory sketches of one picture might do.

Section 84. The pelvic girdle differs from the pectoral in most land vertebrata in being *articulated with the vertebral column*. This difference does not exist in fishes. It consist in the rabbit of four bones; the ilium (i.), the ischium (is.), the pubis (pb.), and the small cotyloid bone — the first two and the latter one meeting in the acetabular fossa (ac.) in which the head of the femur works. The pubes and ischia are fused along the mid-ventral line. Many morphologists regard, the ilium as equivalent to, that is, strictly corresponding in its relation, to the scapula, the pubis to the cartilaginous substratum of the clavicle, and the ischium to the coracoid.

Section 85. These bones will be studied at the greatest advantage when dissected out from a boiled rabbit. Prepared and wired skeletons, disarticulated skeletons, plates of figures, and written descriptions are in succession more tedious and less satisfactory ways to a real comprehension, of this matter. This chapter directs the student's attention to the most important points in the study of the

skeleton, but it is in no way intended to mitigate the necessity of practical work. It is a guide simply.

Section 86. The mammalian skull will be better understood after the study of that of some lower vertebrate. We shall describe its main features now, but their meaning will be much clearer after the lower type is read. Our figures are of *Canis*. In section (Figure VI., Sheet 6), we perceive a brain case (*cranium*) opening behind by a large aperture, the *foramen magnum* (F.M.). In front of this is an extensive passage, the *nasal passage* (E.N. to P.N.) which is divided from the mouth by a bony floor, the *palate*, and which opens into the pharynx behind at the *posterior nares* (P.N.) and to the exterior by the anterior or *external nares* (E.N.). It is divided into right and left passages by a middle partition, the nasal septum. Outside the skull, on its wings, is a flask-like bone, the *bulla tympani* (b. in Figures 2 and 3), protecting the middle ear, and from above this there passes an arch, the cheek bone (ju. in Figures 1, 2, and 3), to the upper jaw, forming in front the bony lower protection of the cavity containing the eye, the *orbit*. The cheek arch, nasal passage, and jaws, form collectively the "facial apparatus," as distinguished from the cranium, and the whole skull is sometimes referred to as, the "cranio-facial apparatus." Two eminences for articulation with the atlas vertebra, the *condyles* (c.), lie one on each side of the lower boundary of the foramen magnum.

Section 87. The floor of the cranium consists of a series of cartilage bones, the *basi-occipital* (b.o.), *basi-sphenoid* (b.sp.), *pre-sphenoid* (p.sp.), and in front, the *ethmoid* (eth.), which sends down a median plate, not shown, in the figure, to form the nasal septum between right and left nasal passages. Like extended wings on either side of the basi-occipital are the *ex-occipital* (e.o.) (the bone is marked in Figure 4, but the letters are a little obscured by shading). Similarly the *ali-sphenoids* (a.s.), are wings to the *basi-*, and the *orbito-sphenoids* (o.s.), to the *pre-sphenoid* bone (p.sp.). Between the ex-occipital and ali-sphenoid there is wedged in a bone, the *periotic* (p.o.) containing the internal ear (Section 115). Above the foramen magnum the median supra-occipital bone completes what is called the occipital arch. A *pair* of *parietals* (pa.) come above the ali-sphenoids, and a pair of *frontals* (f.) above the orbito-sphenoids. At

the side the brain case is still incomplete, and here the squamosal (sq.) enters into its wall. In the external view (Figure 3) the bulla hides the periotic bone from without. The student should examine all four figures for these bones before proceeding.

Section 88. The outer edge of the upper jaw and the cheek arch are made up of three paired bones. First comes the premaxilla (p.m.) (not p.m.1 or p.m.4), containing in the dog, the three incisors of either side. Then comes the maxilla, bearing the rest of the teeth.* The *jugal* or malar (ju.) reaches over from the maxilla to meet a *zygomatic process* (= connecting outgrowth) (z.p.) of the squamosal bone.

* In the dog a sabre-like canine (c.), four premolars (p.m.1 and p.m.4) and two molars (m.1 and m.2).

Section 89. In the under view of the skull (Figure 2) it will be seen that the maxilla sends in a plate to form the front part of the hard palate. Behind, the hard palate is completed by the pair of palatine bones (pal.), which conceal much of the pre- and orbito-sphenoid in the ventral view, and which run back as ridges to terminate in two small angular bones, the pterygoids (pt.) which we shall find represent much more important structures in the lower vertebrata.

Section 90. The pre-maxillae and maxillae bound the sides of the nasal passage, and it is completed above by a pair of splints, the nasals. Along the floor of the nasal passage, on the middle line, lies a splint of bone formed by the coalescence of two halves. It embraces in a V-like groove the mesethmoid (nasal septum) above, and lies on the palate.

{Lines from First Edition only.}
-Its position is indicated by a heavy black line in 4, and it is called, the *vomer* bone (vo.).-

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[In the frog it is represented by two laterally situated bones. This is the *vomer* bone (vo.).]

The nasal passages are partially blocked by foliated bony outgrowths, from the inner aspect of their walls, which in life are

covered with mucous membrane, and increase the surface sensitive to smell. The ethmoid ends in the *ethmo-turbinal* (e.t.); the nasal, the *naso-turbinal* (n.t.); and the maxilla, the *maxillo-turbinal* (m.t.). In the anterior corner of the orbit there is a bone, the *lachrymal* (lc. Figure 1), which is hidden by the maxilla in the side view of the skull.

Section 91. The lower jaw (*mandible*) is one continuous bone in the mammal. Three incisors bite against the three of the upper jaw. Then comes a canine, four premolars, and *three* molars, the first of which is blade-like (*sectorial tooth*), and bites against the similar sectorial tooth (last premolar) of the upper jaw. The third molar is small. The arrangement of tooth is indicated in the following dental formula: — I. 3.3/3.3, C. 1.1/1.1, P.M. 4.4/4.4, M. 2.2/3.3

Section 92. Attached just behind the bulla above, and passing round on either side of the throat to meet at the base of the tongue, is the hyoid apparatus (Figure 6). The stylohyal (s.h.), epihyal (e.h.), and *ceratohyal* (c.h.) form the anterior cornu of the hyoid. The *body of the hyoid* (b.h.) forms a basis for the tongue. The posterior coruna (t.h.) of the hyoid are also called the thyrohyals.

Section 93. The following table presents these bones in something like their relative positions. A closer approximation to the state of the case will be reached if the student will imagine the maxilla raised up so as to overlie and hide the palatine and presphenoid, the squamosal similarly overlying the periotic bone, and the jugal reaching between them. Membrane bones are distinguished by capital letters.

-Cranium

-Nasal (paired), *Ethmoid Bone* (median), -Vomer
-Frontal (paired), -Lachrymal (paired), *Orbito-sphenoid* (paired), *Pre-sphenoid* (median), Eye
-Parietal (Paired), *Ali-sphenoid* (paired), *Basi-sphenoid* (median)*, *Periotic Bone* (paired)
-Bulla (paired)
Supra-occipital (median), *Ex-occipital* (paired), *Basi-occipital* (median)

-Upper Jaw

-Pre-Maxilla (paired)
Palatine (paired)
Pterygoid (paired)

-Lower Jaw

-Maxilla (paired)
-Jugal (paired)
-Squamosal (paired)

*In this table the small bones of the ear are simply indicated by an asterisk.

Section 94. Hidden by the bulla, and just external to the periotic bone, are the auditory ossicles, the *incus*, *malleus*, *os orbiculare*, and *stapes*. These will be more explicitly treated when we discuss the ear.

Section 95. When we come to the study of the nerves, we shall revert to the skull, and treat of its perforations. The student should not fail, before proceeding, to copy and recopy our figures, and to make himself quite familiar with them, and he should also obtain and handle an actual skull. For all practical purposes the skull of a sheep or cat will be almost as useful as that of the dog.

6. *Muscle and Nerve*

Section 96. We have, in the skeleton, a complicated apparatus of parts hinged and movable upon one another; the agent moving these parts is the same agent that we find in the heart walls propelling the blood through the circulation, in the alimentary canal squeezing the food along its course, and universally in the body where motion occurs, except in the case of the creeping phagocytes, and the ciliary waving of ciliated epithelium. This agent is muscle. We have, in muscular tissue, a very wide departure from the structure of the primordial cell; to use a common biological expression, a very great amount of *modification* (= differentiation). Sheet 7 represents the simpler kind of muscular tissue, unstriated muscle, in which the cell character is still fairly obvious. The cells are fusiform (spindle-shaped), have a distinct nucleus and faint longitudinal striations

(striations along their *length*), but no transverse striations.

Section 97. In striated muscle extensive modifications mask the cell character. Under a 1/4 inch objective, *transverse striations* of the fibres are also distinctly visible, and under a *much higher power* we discern in a fibre (Sheet 7) transverse columns of rod-like sarcous elements (s.e.), the columns separated by lines of dots, the membranes of Krause (k.m.), and nuclei (n.), flattened and separated into portions, and lying, in some cases, close to the sarcolemma (sc.) the connective tissue enclosing the fibre, in others scattered throughout the substance of the fibre. The figure shows the fibre ruptured, in order to display the sarcolemma; e.p. is the end plate of a nerve (n.v.), and fb. are the fibrillae into which a fibre may be teased.

Section 98. In the heart we have an intermediate kind of muscle cardiac muscle (Figure 2), in which the muscle fibres *branch*; there is apparently no sarcolemma, and the undivided nuclei lie in the centre of the cell.

Section 99. Unstriated muscle is sometimes called *involuntary*, and striated, *voluntary* muscle; but there is really not the connexion with the will that these terms suggest. We have just mentioned that the heart-muscle is striated, but who can alter the beating of the heart by force of will? And the striated muscles of the limbs perform, endless involuntary acts. It would seem that unstriated muscle contracts slowly, and we find it especially among the viscera; in the intestine for instance, where it controls that "*peristaltic*" movement which pushes the food forward. Voluntary muscle, on the other hand, has a sharp contraction. The muscle of the slow-moving snails, slugs, and mussels is unstriated; all the muscle of the active insects and crustacea (crabs, lobsters, and crayfish) is striated. Still if the student bears the exception of the heart in mind, and considers muscles as "voluntary" that his will can reach, the terms voluntary and involuntary will serve to give him an idea of the distribution of these two types of muscle in his own body, and in that of the rabbit.

Section 100. Muscular contraction, and generally all activity in the body is accompanied by kataboly. The medium by which these katabolic changes are set going and controlled is the nervous system. The nervous system holds the whole body together in one harmonious whole; it is the governing organization of the

multicellular community (Section 55), and the supreme head of the government resides in the brain, and is called the mind. But just as in a political state only the most important and most exceptional duties are performed by the imperial body, and minor matters and questions of routine are referred to boards and local authorities, so the mind takes cognisance only of a few of the higher concerns of the animal, and a large amount of the work of the nervous system goes on insensibly, in a perfectly automatic way — even much that occurs in the brain.

Section 101. The primary elements in the tissue of the nervous system are three; *nerve fibres*, which are simply conducting threads, telegraph wires; *ganglion cells*, which are the officials of the system; and *neuroglia*, a fine variety of connective tissue which holds these other elements together, and may also possibly exercise a function in affecting impressions. A message along a nerve to a ganglion cell is an *afferent impression*, from a cell to a muscle or other external end is an *efferent impression*. The passage of an impression may be defined as a flash of kataboly along the nerve, and so every feeling, thought, and determination involves the formation of a certain quantity of katastases, and the necessity for air and nutrition.

Section 102. Unlike telegraph wires, to which they are often compared, nervous fibres usually convey impressions only in one direction, either centrally (*afferent* or *sensory* nerve fibres), or outwardly (*efferent* or *motor* nerve fibres). But the so-called motor nerve fibres include not only those that set muscles in motion, but those that excite secretion, check impulsive movements, and govern nutrition.

Section 103. Figure 7, Sheet 8, shows the typical structure of nervous tissues. The nerve fibres there figured are bound together by *endoneurium* into small ropes, the nerves, encased in *perineurium*. There is always a grey axis cylinder (a.c.), which may (in *medullated* nerves), or may not (in *non-medullated* or *grey* nerves) have a medullary sheath (s.S.) interrupted at intervals by the nodes of Ranvier (n.R.). Nuclei (n.) at intervals under the sheath indicate the cells from which nerve fibres are derived by a process of elongation. The nerves of invertebrata, where they possess nerves, are mostly grey, and so are those of the sympathetic system of vertebrata, to be

presently described, g.c., g.c. are ganglion cells; they may have many hair-like processes, usually running into continuity with the axis cylinders of nerve fibres, in which case they are called *multi-polar* cells, or they may be *uni-* or *bi-polar*.

Section 104. The simplest example of the action of the nervous system is reflex action. For instance, when the foot of a frog, or the hand of a soundly sleeping person, is tickled very gently, the limb is moved away from the irritation, without any mental action, and entirely without will being exercised. And when we go from light into darkness, the pupil of the eye enlarges, without any direct consciousness of the change of its shape on our part. Similarly, the presence or food in the pharynx initiates a series of movements — swallowing, the digestive movements, and so on — which in health are entirely beyond our mental scope.

Section 105. A vast amount of our activities are reflex, and in such action an efferent stimulus follows an afferent promptly and quite mechanically. *It is only where efferent stimuli do not immediately become entirely transmuted into outwardly moving impulses that mental action comes in and an animal feels*. There appears to be a direct relation between sensation and motion. For instance, the shrieks and other instinctive violent motions produced by pain, "shunt off" a certain amount of nervous impression that would otherwise *register* itself as additional painful sensation. Similarly most women and children understand the comfort of a "good cry," and its benefit in shifting off a disagreeable mental state.

Section 106. The mind receives and stores impressions, and these accumulated experiences are the basis of memory, comparison, imagination, thought, and apparently spontaneous will. Voluntary actions differ from reflex by the interposition of this previously stored factor. For instance, when a frog sees a small object in front of him, that may or may not be an edible insect, the direct visual impression does not directly determine his subsequent action. It revives a number of previous experiences, an image already stored of similar insects and associated with painful or pleasurable gustatory experiences. With these arise an emotional effect of desire or repulsion which, passes into action of capture or the reverse.

Section 107. Voluntary actions may, by constant repetition,

become quasireflex in character. The intellectual phase is abbreviated away. *Habits* are once voluntary and deliberated actions becoming mechanical in this way, and slipping out of the sphere of mind. For instance, many of the detailed movements of writing and walking are performed without any attention to the details. An excessive concentration of the attention upon one thing leads to absent-mindedness, and to its consequent absurdities of inappropriate, because imperfectly acquired, reflexes.

Section 108. This fluctuating scope of mind should be remembered, more especially when we are considering the probable mental states of the lower animals. An habitual or reflex action may have all the outward appearance of deliberate adjustment. We cannot tell in any particular case how far the mental comes in, or whether it comes in at all. Seeing that in our own case consciousness does not enter into our commonest and most necessary actions, into breathing and digestion, for instance, and scarcely at all in the *details* of such acts as walking and talking we might infer that nature was economical in its use, and that in the case of such an animal as the Rabbit, which follows a very limited routine, and in which scarcely any versatility in emergencies is evident, it must be relatively inconsiderable. Perhaps after all, pain is not scattered so needlessly and lavishly throughout the world as the enemies of the vivisectionist would have us believe.

7. *The Nervous System*

Section 109. A little more attention must now be given to the detailed anatomy of the peripheral and central nerve ends. A nerve, as we have pointed out, terminates centrally in some ganglion cell, either in a ganglion or in the spinal cord or brain; peripherally there is a much greater variety of ending. We may have tactile (touch) ends of various kinds, and the similar olfactory and gustatory end organs; or the nerve may conduct efferent impressions, and terminate in a gland which it excites to secretion, in a muscle end-plate, or in fact, anywhere, where kataboly can be set going and energy disengaged. We may now briefly advert to the receptive nerve ends.

Section 110. Many sensory nerves, doubtless, terminate in fine

ends among the tissues. There are also special touch corpuscles, ovoid bodies, around which a nerve twines, or within which it terminates.

Section 111. The eye (Figure 8) has a tough, dense, outer coat, the *sclerotic* (sc.), within which is a highly vascular and internally pigmented layer, the *choroid*, upon which the percipient nervous layer, the *retina* (r.) rests. The chief chamber of the eye is filled with a transparent jelly, the vitreous humour (v.h.). In front of the eye, the white sclerotic passes into the transparent cornea (c.). The epidermis is continued over the outer face of this as a thin, transparent epithelium. The choroid coat is continued in front by a ring-shaped muscle, the iris (ir.) the coloured portion of the eyes. This iris enlarges or contracts its central aperture (the black *pupil*) by reflex action, as the amount of light diminishes or increases. Immediately behind this curtain is the *crystalline lens* (l.), the curvature of the anterior face or which is controlled by the *ciliary muscle* (c.m.). In front of the lens is the aqueous humour (a.h.). The description of the action of this apparatus involves the explanation of several of the elementary principles of optics, and will be found by the student in any text-book of that subject. Here it would have no very instructive bearing, either on general physiological considerations or upon anatomical fact.

Section 112. The structure of the retina demands fuller notice. Figure 9 shows an enlarged, diagram of a small portion of this, the percipient part of the eye. The optic nerve (o.n. in Figure 8) enters the eye at a spot called the *blind spot* (B.S.), and the nerve fibres spread thence over the inner retinal surface. From this layer of nerve fibres (o.n. in Figure 9) threads run outward, through certain clear and granular layers, to an outermost stratum of little *rods* (r.) and fusiform bodies called *cones* (c.), lying side by side. The whole of the retina consists of quite transparent matter, and it is this outermost layer of rods and cones (r. and c.) that receives and records the visual impression. This turning of the recipient ends away from the light is hardly what one would at first expect — it seems such a roundabout arrangement — but it obtains in all vertebrata, and it is a striking point of comparison with the ordinary invertebrate eye.

Section 113. We may pause to call the student's attention to a

little point in the physiology of nerves, very happily illustrated here. The function of a nerve *fibre* is the conduction of impressions pure and simple; the light radiates through the fibrous layer of the retina without producing the slightest impression, and at the blind spot, where the rods and cones are absent, and the nerve fibres are gathered together, no visual impressions are recorded. If there is any doubt as to the existence of a blind spot in the retinal picture, the proof is easy. Let the reader shut his left eye, and regard these two asterisks, fixing his gaze intently upon the left-hand one of them.

* *

At a distance of three or four inches from the paper, both spots will be focussed on his retina, the left one in the centre of vision, and the right one at some spot internal to this, and he will see them both distinctly. Now, if he withdraws his head slowly, the right spot will of course appear to approach the left, and at a distance of ten or twelve inches it will, in its approach, pass over the blind spot and vanish, to reappear as he continues to move his head away from the paper. The function of nerve fibres is simply conduction, and the nature of the impressions they convey is entirely determined by the nature of their distal and proximal terminations.

Section 114. Certain small muscles in the orbit (eye-socket) move the eye, and by their action contribute to our perception of the relative position of objects. There is a leash of four muscles rising from a spot behind the exit of the optic nerve from the cranium to the upper, under, anterior, and posterior sides of the eyeball. These are the *superior*, *inferior*, *anterior*, and *posterior recti*. Running from the front of the orbit obliquely to the underside of the eyeball is the *inferior oblique muscle*. Corresponding to it above is a *superior oblique*. A lachrymal gland lies in the postero-inferior angle of the orbit, and a Handerian gland in the corresponding position in front. In addition to the upper and lower eyelids of the human subject, the rabbit has a third, the *nictitating lid*, in the anterior corner of the eye.

Section 115. The ear (Sheet VII.) consists of an essential organ of hearing, and of certain superadded parts. The essential part is called the internal ear, and is represented in all the true vertebrata (i.e.,

excluding the lancelet and its allies). In the lower forms it is a hollow membranous structure, embedded in a mass of cartilage, the otic capsule; in the mammal the latter is entirely ossified, to form the *periotic bone*. The internal ear consists of a central sac, from which three semicircular canals spring. The planes of the three canals are mutually at right angles; two are vertical, the anterior and posterior (p.v.c.) vertical canals, and one is horizontal, the horizontal canal (h.c.). There are dilatations, called *ampullae*, at the anterior base of the anterior, and at the posterior base of the posterior and horizontal canals. Indirectly connected with the main sac is a spirally-twisted portion, resembling a snail shell in form, the *cochlea*. This last part is distinctive of the mammalia, but the rest of the internal ear is represented in all vertebrata, with one or two exceptions. The whole of the labyrinth is membranous, and contains a fluid, the *endolymph*; between the membranous wall of the labyrinth and the enclosing bone is a space containing the *perilymph*. Strange as it may appear at first, the entire lining of the internal ear is, at an early stage, continuous with the general epidermis of the animal. It grows in just as a gland might grow in, and is finally cut off from the exterior; but a considerable relic of this former communication remains as a thin, vertical blind tube (not shown in the figure), the *ductus endolymphaticus*.

Section 116. The eighth nerve runs from the brain case (Cr.), into the periotic bone, and is distributed to the several portions of this labyrinth. In an ordinary fish this internal ear is the sole auditory organ we should find; the sound-waves would travel through the water to the elastic cranium and so reach and affect the nerves. But in all air-frequenting animals this original plan of an ear has to be added to, to fit it to the much fainter sound vibrations of the compressible and far less elastic air. A "receiving apparatus" is needed, and is supplied by the ear-drum, middle ear, or tympanic cavity (T.). In the mammal there is also a collecting ear trumpet (the ear commonly so-called), the external ear, and *external auditory meatus* (e.a.m.). A tightly stretched membrane, the *tympanic membrane*, separates this from the drum. A chain of small bones, the malleus (m.), the incus (i.), the os orbiculare (o.or.), a very small bone, and a stirrup-shaped *stapes*, swing across the tympanum, from the tympanic membrane to

the internal ear. At two points the bony investment of this last is incomplete — at the *fenestra rotunda* (f.r.), and at the *fenestra ovalis*, (f.o.), into which latter the end of the stapes fits, and so communicates the sound vibrations of the tympanic membrane to the endolymph. A passage, the Eustachian tube, communicates between the tympanic cavity and the pharynx (Ph.), and serves to equalize the pressure on either side of the drum-head. A comparative study of the ears of the vertebrata brings to light the fact that, as we descend in the animal scale, the four ear ossicles are replaced by large bones and cartilages connected with the jaw, and the drum and Eustachian tube by a gill slit. We have, in fact, in the ear, as the student will perceive in the sequel, an essentially *aquatic* auditory organ, added to and patched up to fit the new needs of a life out of water.

Section 117. The impressions of smell are conducted through the first nerve to the brain, and are first received by special hair-bearing cells in the olfactory mucous membrane of the upper part of the nasal passage. The sense of taste has a special nerve in the ninth, the fibres of which terminate in special cells and cell aggregates in the little papillae (velvet pile-like processes) that cover the tongue.

Section 118. At an early stage in development, the brain of a mammal consists of a linear arrangement of *three* hollow vesicles (Figure 5, Sheet VIII., 1, 2, and 3), which are the fore-, mid-, and hind-brain respectively. The cavities in these in these vesicles are continuous with a hollow running through the spinal cord. On the dorsal side of the fore-brain is a structure to be dealt with more fully later, the *pineal gland* (p.g.), while on its under surface is the *pituitary body* (pt.).

Section 119. The lower figure of (5) shows, in a diagrammatic manner, the derivation of the adult brain from this primitive state. From the forebrain vesicle, a hollow outgrowth on either side gives rises to the (paired) *cerebral hemisphere* (c.h.), which is prolonged forward as the *olfactory lobe* (o.l.). From the fore-brain the retina of the eye and the optic nerve also originate as an, at first, hollow outgrowth (op.). The roof of the midbrain is also thickened, and bulges up to form two pairs of thickenings, the *corpora quadrigemina*, (c.q.). The hindbrain sends up in front a median outgrowth, which develops lateral wings, the cerebellum (cbm.),

behind which the remainder of the hind-brain is called the *medulla oblongata*, and passes without any very definite demarcation into the spinal cord.

Section 120. Figure 1 is a corresponding figure of the actual state of affairs in the adult. The brain is seen in median vertical section. (ch.) is the right cerebral hemisphere, an inflated vesicle, which, in the mammal — but not in our lower types — reaches back over the rest of the fore-brain, and also over the mid-brain, and hides these and the pineal gland in the dorsal view of the brain (Figure 2). The hollow of the hemisphere on either side communicates with the *third ventricle*, the original cavity of the forebrain (1 in Figure 5), by an aperture (the *foramen of Monro*), indicated by a black arrow (f.M.). Besides their original communication through the intermediation of the fore-brain, the hemispheres are also united above its roof by a broad bridge of fibre, the *corpus callosum* (c.c.), which is distinctive of the mammalian animals. The original fore-brain vesicle has its lateral walls thickened to form the *optic thalami* (o.th.), between which a middle commissure, (m.c.), absent in lower types, stretches like a great beam across the third ventricle. The original fore-brain is often called the *thalamencephalon*, the hemisphere, the *prosencephalon*, the olfactory lobes, the *rhinencephalon*.

Section 121. The parts of midbrain (mesencephalon) will be easily recognised. Its cavity is in the adult mammal called the *iter*; its floor is differentiated into bundles of fibres, the *crura cerebri* (c.cb.), figured also in Figure 4.

Section 122. The cerebellum (*metencephalon*) consists of a central mass, the *vermis* (v.cbm.), and it also has *lateral lobes* (l.l.), prolonged into *flocculi* (f.cbm.), which last are -em-bedded in pits, [in] the periotic bone, and on that account render the extraction of the brain from the cranium far more difficult than it would otherwise be. The roof of the hindbrain, before and behind the cerebellum, consists of extremely thin plates of nervous matter. Its floor is greatly thickened to form the mass of the medulla, and in front a great transverse track of fibres is specialized, the *pons Varolii* (p.V.). Its cavity is called, the *fourth ventricle*.

Section 123. Figure 2 gives a dorsal view of the rabbit's brain; a horizontal slice has been taken at the level of the corpus callosum.

The *lateral ventricle* (i.e., the hollows of the hemisphere) is not yet opened. A lower cut (Figure 3) exposes this (V.L.). The level of these slices is approximately indicated in Figure 1 by the lines A and B. This latter figure will repay careful examination. The arrow, ar., plunges into the third ventricle, behind the great *middle commissure* (m.c.), and the barb is supposed to lie under the roof of the mid-brain, the corpora quadrigemina (c.q.). The position of ar. is also indicated in Figure 1. Before reading on, the beginner should stop a while here; he should carefully copy or trace our figures and, putting the book aside, name the parts, and he should then recopy, on an enlarged scale, and finally draw from memory, correct, and again draw. By doing this before the brain is dissected a considerable saving of time is possible.

Section 124. Proceeding from the brain are twelve pairs of cranial nerves. From the fore-brain spring two pairs, which differ from the rest of the cranial nerves in being, first of all, *hollow* outgrowths of the brain — the others are from the beginning *solid*. The *first* nerve is the olfactory lobe, which sends numerous filaments through the ethmoid bone to the olfactory organ. The *second* is the optic nerve, the visual sensory nerve.

Section 125. The midbrain gives rise to only one nerve, the *third*, which supplies all the small muscles of the eye (see Section 114), except the superior oblique and external rectus.

Section 126. The remainder of the nerves spring from the hindbrain. The *fourth* pair supply the superior obliques, and the *sixth* the external recti; so that III., IV., and VI. are alike purely motor nerves, small and distributed, to the orbit. The *fifth* nerve, the *trigeminal*, is a much larger and more important one; it is a mixed nerve, having three main branches, of which the first two are chiefly sensory, the third almost entirely motor; it lies deeply in the orbit. V1 (see Sheet 9) runs up over the recti behind the eyeball, it is the *ophthalmic* branch; V2, the *maxillary* branch, runs deeply under the eyeball and emerges in front of the malar, and V3, the mandibular branch, runs down on the *inner* side of the jaw-bone to the jaw muscles and tongue.

Section 127. If the student will now recur to the figures of the dog's skull (Sheet 6), he will see certain apertures indicated in the

cranial wall. Of these, o.f. is the *optic foramen* for the exit of nerve II., perforating the orbito-sphenoid. Behind this there comes an irregular aperture, (f.l.a.), the *foramen lacerum anterius*, giving exit to III., IV., VI., and V1. V2 emerges from the *foramen rotundum*, and V3 from the *foramen ovale*, two apertures uniting behind a bony screen.* Just in front of the bulla is a *foramen lacerum medium* (f.l.M.), through which no nerve passes.

* In the rabbit's skull f.l. anterius, the foramen rotundum, and foramen ovale are not distinct, and there are two condylar foramina instead of one, through each of which, a moiety of XII. passes.

Section 128. The *eighth* nerve (*auditory*) is purely sensory, the nerve of the special sense of hearing; it runs into the periotic bone, and breaks up on the labyrinth. The *seventh* nerve (*facial*) is almost entirely motor; it passes through the periotic anterior to VIII., and emerges by the *stylo-mastoid foramen* (s.m.f.) behind the bulla, to run outside the great jaw muscle across the cheek immediately under the skin (Figure 1).

Section 129. The *ninth* (*glossopharyngeal*) nerve is chiefly sensory; it is the special nerve of *taste*, and is distributed to the tongue. The *tenth* nerve (*vagus*) arises by a number of roots, and passes out of the skull, together with IX and XI, by the *foramen lacerum -posterium-* [*posterius*] (f.l.p.). It is a conspicuous white nerve, and runs down the neck by the side of the common carotid artery. It sends a *superior laryngeal branch* (Xa) to the larynx. The left vagus passes ventral to the aortic arch, and sends a branch (l.x.b.) under this along the trachea to the larynx — the *recurrent laryngeal nerve*. The corresponding nerve on the right (r.x.b.) loops under the subclavian artery. The main vagus, after this branching, passes behind the heart to the oesophagus and along it to the stomach. XI., the *spinal accessory*, supplies certain of the neck nerves. XII., the *hypoglossal*, runs out of the skull by the condylar foramen (c.f.), is motor, crosses the roots of XI., X., and IX., passes *ventral* to the carotid, and breaks up among the muscles of the tongue and neck.

Section 130. Of the functions of the several parts of the brain there is still very considerable doubt. With disease or willful destruction of the cerebral tissue the personal initiative is affected — the animal becomes more distinctly a mechanism; the cerebellum is

probably concerned in the coordination of muscular movements; and the medulla is a centre for the higher and more complicated respiratory reflexes, yawning, coughing, and so on. The great majority of reflex actions centre, however, in the spinal cord, and do not affect the brain.

Section 131. A cross section of the spinal cord is shown in Figure 6, Sheet 8. It is a cylinder, almost bisected by a dorsal (d.f.) and a ventral (v.f.) fissure. Through its centre runs a central canal (c.c.), continuous with the brain ventricles, and lined by ciliated epithelium. The spinal cord consists of an outer portion, mainly of nervous fibres, the white matter, and of inner, *ganglionated*, and more highly vascular grey matter. (In the cerebrum the grey matter is external, and the white internal.) The cord, like the brain, is surrounded by a vascular fibrous investment, and protected from concussion by a serous fluid. The nerves which emerge from the vertebral column between the vertebrae, arise, unlike the cranial nerves, by two roots. The dorsal of these, the *sensory root* (d.n.), has a swelling upon it, the dorsal ganglion, and — by experiments upon living animals — has been shown to contain only afferent fibres; the ventral, the *motor root*, is without a ganglion, and entirely or mainly motor. The two unite outside the cord, and thereafter the spinal nerves are both sensory and motor.

Section 132. Besides the great mass of brain and spinal cord (*cerebro-spinal axis*), there is, on either side of the dorsal wall of the body cavity, a sympathetic nervous chain. The nerve fibres of this system, like the nerve fibres of invertebrates, are non-medullated. It may be seen as a greyish thread running close by the common carotid in the neck (sym., Figure 1); it then runs over the heads of the ribs in the thorax and close beside the dorsal aorta in the abdominal region. In the anterior region of the neck it dilates to form a *superior cervical ganglion*, and opposite the first rib it forms an *inferior cervical ganglion*. Thence, backwards, there is a ganglion on each sympathetic chain opposite each spinal nerve, and the two exchange fibres through a thread, the *ramus communicans*. To the sympathetic chain is delegated much of the routine work of reflex control of the bloodvessels and other viscera, which would otherwise fall upon the spinal cord.

Section 133. There are eight cervical (spinal) nerves, one in front of the atlas, and one behind each of the cervical vertebrae. The last four and the first thoracic (spinal) contribute to a leash of nerves running out to the fore limb, the *brachial plexus* (*plexus*, literally network, but here meaning a plaited cord). The fourth cervical also sends down a *phrenic nerve* (p.n., Figure 1), along by the external jugular vein and the superior caval vein to the diaphragm. The last three lumbar and the sacral nerves form a *sacral plexus*, supplying the hind limb.

Section 134. From the sympathetic in the hinder region of the thorax a nerve, the *great splanchnic* nerve, arises, and runs, back to a ganglionated nervous network, just behind the coeliac artery, into which the vagus also enters; this is the *coeliac ganglion*, and together with a similar *superior mesenteric ganglion* around the corresponding artery, makes up a subsidiary visceral nervous network, the solar plexus. A similar and smaller nervous tangle, bearing an *inferior mesenteric ganglion*, lies near the inferior mesenteric artery.

Section 135. Finally, we may note the *pineal gland* and the *pituitary body*, as remarkable appendages above and below the thalamencephalon. Their function, if they have a function, is altogether unknown. Probably, they are inherited from ancestors to whom they were of value. Such structures are called reduced or vestigial structures, and among other instances are the clavicles of the rabbit, the hair on human limbs, the little pulpy nodule in the corner of the human eye, representing the rabbit's third eyelid, and the caudal vertebrae at the end of the human spinal column. In certain lowly reptiles, in the lampreys, and especially in a peculiar New Zealand lizard, the pineal gland has the most convincing resemblance to an eye, both in its general build and in the microscopic structure of its elements; and it seems now more than probable that this little vascular pimple in our brains is a relic of a third and median eye possessed by ancestral vertebrata. The pituitary body is probably equivalent to a ciliated pit we shall describe in the lancelet (*Amphioxus*).

8. *Renal and Reproductive Organs*

Section 136. We have now really completed our survey of the individual animal's mechanism. But no animal that was merely complete in itself would be long sanctioned by nature. For an animal species to survive, there must evidently, also, be proper provision for the production of young, and the preservation of the species as well as of the individual. Hence in an animal's physiology and psychology we meet with a vast amount of *unselfish* provision, and its structure and happiness are more essentially dependent on the good of its kind than on its narrow personal advantage. The mammalia probably owe their present dominant position in the animal kingdom to the exceptional sacrifices made by them for their young. Instead of laying eggs and abandoning them before or soon after hatching, the females retain the eggs within their bodies until the development of the young is complete, and thereafter associate with them for the purposes of nourishment, protection, and education. In the matter of the tail, for instance, already noted, the individual rabbit incurs the disadvantage of conspicuousness for the rear, in order to further the safety of the young.

Section 137. The female organs of reproduction are shown in Sheet 10. The essential organ is the ovary (ov.), in which the *ova* (eggs) are formed. Figure 3 gives an enlarged and still more diagrammatic rendering of the ovary. There is a supporting ground mass, or *stroma*, into which numerous bloodvessels and nerves enter and break up. The *ova* appear first as small cells in the external substance of the ovary (as at 1), and move inward (2 and 3), surrounded by a number of sister cells, which afford them nourishment. At (4) an ovum with its surrounding group of cells is more distinct and near the centre of the ovary; a fluid is appearing within the *ovisac* as the development proceeds. (5) is a much more mature *ovisac* or *Graafian follicle*.

Section 138. The ovum (ov.), is now large, and its nucleus and nucleolus (the *germinal vesicle* and *spot*) are very distinct. The wall of the follicle consists, in the mammal, of several layers of cells, the *membrana granulosa* (or "granulosa" simply); the ovum lies on its outer side embedded in a mass of cells, *discus proligerus*, separated from actual contact with the ovum by a *zona pellucida*. The ripening follicle moves to the surface of the ovary and bursts, the ovum falls

into the body cavity. In Figure 2, a ripe Graafian follicle (G.F.), projects upon the ovary.

Section 139. The liberated ovum is caught up by the funnel-shaped opening of the Fallopian tube, which passes without any very conspicuous demarcation into the cornu uteri (c.ut.) of its side; the two uterine cornua meeting together in the middle line form the *vagina* (V.), which runs out into a vestibule (vb.) opening between tumid lips to the exterior. The *urinary bladder* (ur.b.) also opens into the vestibule, and receives the two ureters from the kidney.

Section 140. In the male we find, in the position of the female uterus, a *uterus masculinus* (u.m.). The essential sexual organ is the *testis* (T.), a compact mass of coiling tubuli, which opens by a number of ducts, the *vasa efferentia*, into a looser and softer *epididymis* (ep.), which sends the sexual product onward through a *vas deferens* (v.d.), to open at the base of the uterus masculinus. The urinary bladder and ureters correspond with those of the female, and the common urogenital duct (= vestibule), the *urethra*, is prolonged into an erectile penis (P.) surrounded by a fold of skin, the *prepuce*. A prostate gland (pr.), contributes to the male sexual fluid. The character of the essential male element, the *spermatozoon*, the general nature of the reproductive process, will be conveniently deferred until the chapters upon development are reached.

9. *Classificatory Points*

Section 141. The following facts of classificatory importance may now be considered, but their full force will be better appreciated after the study of other vertebrate types. They are such as come prominently forward in the comparison of the rabbit with other organisms.

Section 142. In the first place, the rabbit is a metazoon, one of the metazoa, i.e., a multicellular organism, as compared with the amoeba, which belongs to the protozoa or one-cell animals (Section 55). In the next place, it is externally *bilaterally symmetrical*, its parts balance, and where, in its internal anatomy, it departs from this symmetry (as in the case of the aorta, the stomach and intestines, and the kidneys), the departure has an appearance of being the results of

partial reductions and distortions of an originally quite symmetrical plan. And the facts of development strengthen this idea; in the very earliest stages we have *paired* aortic arches, of which, the left only remains, a straight alimentary canal, and less asymmetrical kidneys. In the vast majority of animals the same bilateral symmetry is to be seen, but in the star-fish and sea-urchins, and in the jelly-fish, corals, sea anemones, and *hydra*, the general form of the animal is, instead, arranged round a centre, like a star and its rays, and the symmetry is called *radial*.

Section 143. We also see in various organs of the rabbit, and especially in the case of the limbs and vertebral column, what is called *metameric segmentation*, that is, a repetition of parts, one behind the other, along the axis of the body. Thus the bodies and arches of the vertebrae repeat each other, and so do the spinal nerves. The renal organ of the rabbit, some time before birth, displays a metameric arrangement of its parts; but this disappears, as development proceeds, into the compact kidney of the adult. But the metameric segmentation in the rabbit's organism is not nearly so marked as that of an earthworm, for instance, which is visibly a chain of rings. If the student wants a perfect figure of metameric segmentation he should think of a train of precisely similar carriages, or a string of beads. One bead, one carriage, one vertebra, would be a *metamere*.

Section 144. In contrast to metameric segmentation is the *antimeric* repetition of radial symmetry (Section 142), in which each ray of the star is called an *antimere*. It is possible to have bilateral symmetry without a metameric arrangement of parts, as in the mussel and the cuttle-fish; but metameric segmentation without complete or reduced bilateral symmetry does not occur.

Section 145. We are now in a position to appreciate the fact that the old and more popularly know division of animals into vertebrata and invertebrata scarcely represents the facts of the case, that the primary division should be into protozoa and metazoa, and that the vertebrata are one of several groups of metazoa with a fundamental bilateral symmetry and imperfect metameric segmentation.

The rabbit is one of the vertebrata, and, in common with all the other animals collected under this head, it has —

(a) *A skeletal axis* (the vertebral column) *between its central nervous system and its body cavity*. In the adult rabbit this consists of a chain of vertebrae, but in the embryo (i.e., the young rabbit before birth) it is represented by a continuous chord, the *notochord*, and it remains as such in some of the lowest vertebrata throughout life. In other words, in these lower vertebrata, the vertebral axis is not metameric.

(b) *A dorsal and* -Tubular *nervous axis*. (Section 131, the central canal)

(c) It has, though in the embryo only, certain slits between the throat and the exterior, like the *gill slits* of a fish. Such slits are — with one or two remarkable exceptions outside the sub-kingdom — distinctly vertebrate features, and remain, of course, in fishes throughout life.

The presence of true cartilage and bone mark a vertebrate, but vertebrata occur in which -these tissues- [bone] -are- [is] absent.

Section 146. The rabbit shares the following features with all the vertebrata, except the true fishes, which do not possess any of them —

(a) *Lungs* (but many fish have a swimming bladder which answers to the lungs in its anatomical relations.)

(b) *Limbs which consist of a proximal joint of one bone an intermediate part of two, and a distal portion which has five digits, or is evidently a reduced form of the five-digit limb*.*

(c) *The absence of a median fin supported by fin rays*.* *

* The frog shows indications of a sixth digit.

* * The frog's tadpole has a median fin, but *no fin rays*.

Section 147. The rabbit shares the following features with all the vertebrata above the fishes and amphibia (= frogs, toads, newts, and etc.) —

(a) *Absence of gills* (not *gill slits*, note) *at any stage in development*.

(b) *An amnion*, and

(c) *An allantois* in development.

The meaning of (b) and (c) we shall explain to the student in the chapters on embryology. We simply mention them here to render our table complete.

Section 148. The rabbit shares with all mammals, and differs from all other vertebrata (i.e., birds, reptiles, amphibia, and fishes), in having —

(a) *Hair*.

(b) *A diaphragm*.

(c) Only one *aortic arch*, and that on the *left side* of the body.

(d) Its young born alive. (But two very reptile-like mammals of Australia, the duck-billed platypus and the *echidna*, lay eggs, and certain fish and reptiles bear living young.)

(e) *Epiphyses* to its vertebral -centre- [centra].*

(f) The cerebral hemispheres covering the mid-brain.

(g) Corpora quadrigemina instead of bigemina.

[(h) A corpus callosum.]

[(i) A spirally coiled cochlea to the internal ear.]

[(In respect to h and i also, the echidna and platypus are scarcely mammalian.)]

* But certain mammals have no such epiphyses.

Section 149. The rabbit, together with the hares and conies, rats

and mice, voles, squirrels, beavers, cavies, guineapigs is included in that order of the class of mammals which is called the rodentia, and is distinguished by the character of the incisor teeth from other orders of the class.

10. *Questions and Exercises*

1. Describe the venous circulation of the rabbit (with diagrams). Compare a vein and artery. Compare the distribution of the great venous trunks with that of the arterial system.

2. Construct a general diagram of the circulation of the rabbit, to show especially the relation of the portal system, the lymphatics and lacteals, and the renal circulation to the main blood current.

3. Draw the alimentary canal of the rabbit from memory.

4. What is a villus? Describe its epithelium, and the vessels within it. Write as explicit an account as you can of the absorbent action of a villus.

5. Tabulate the alimentary secretions, and their action on the food.

6. What is botryoidal tissue? Where does it occur? What is known of its functions?

7. Copy Diagram I. (enlarged), and insert upon it the visceral nerves as far as you can.

8. What are the most characteristic points in the mammalian vertebral column?

9. Describe cartilage and bone, and compare them with one another.

10. Give an account of the amoeba, and compare it with a typical tissue cell in a metazoon (e.g., the rabbit).

11. Give a general account of connective tissue. What is tendon?

12. Trace, briefly, the increased modification of tissues in the vertebrata.

13. Describe, with diagrams, the structure of blood. State the function of each factor you describe.

14. Compare the pectoral with the pelvic limb and girdle. What other structures of the adult rabbit display a similar repetition of similar parts?

15. Draw from memory typical vertebrae from each region of the vertebral column.

16. What are bilateral symmetry and metameric segmentation?

17. Give a schedule of distinctive mammalian features.

18. Describe the rabbit's brain (with diagrams).

19. Give a list of the cranial nerves of the rabbit, and note their origin in the brain.

20. Give a list of the nerve apertures of the dog's skull.

21. What are the chief anatomical differences between a typical cranial, a spinal, and a sympathetic nerve?

22. Describe and figure the distribution of nerves V., VII., IX., and X.

23. Describe the muscles, glands, and nerves of the orbit of the rabbit.

24. Describe, with figures, the eye of the rabbit.

25. Give a diagram of the rabbit's *internal* ear.

26. Draw and describe the ear ossicles. What is their function?

27. Draw and state the precise position of the hyoid bone, the clavicle, the calcaneum, and the olecranon process.

28. Describe, as accurately as possible, the position of palatine bones, pterygoids, the ethmoid bone, the pre- and basi-sphenoids, in the dog's skull.

29. What is membrane bone? What is cartilage bone? Discuss their mutual relationship.

30. What is an excretion? What are the chief excretory products of an animal? How are they removed?

31. Describe the minute anatomy of the liver. Give a general account of its functions.

32. Describe the minute anatomy of the kidney, and the functions of the several parts.

33. What is ciliated epithelium? Where does it occur in the rabbit?

34. Describe the mechanism of respiration. What is the relation of respiration to the general life of the animal?

35. What are the functions of the skin? Describe its structure.

36. What is a secretion? Tabulate and classify secretary organs. What is a goblet cell?

37. Draw, from memory, the dorsal and ventral aspects of, and a median section through, a dog's skull.

38. Name any structures that appear to you to be vestiges or rudiments, i.e., structures without adequate physiological reason, in the rabbit's anatomy.

39. How are such structures interpreted?

40. Describe the structure of striated muscular fibre. Describe its functions, and the various means by which they may be called into activity.

41. Describe the characters and structure of the blood of the rabbit. What is the lymphatic system? Describe its relation to the blood system in a mammal.

42. Describe the structure of (a) blood, (b) hyaline cartilage, (c) bone, in the rabbit; (d) point out the most important resemblances and differences between these tissues; (e) state what you know of the development of the same tissues.

43. Draw diagrams, with the parts named, of the male and female generative organs of the rabbit.

44. In the rabbit provided dissect on one side and demonstrate by means of flag-labels the main trunk of the vagus nerve, the phrenic nerve, and the recurrent laryngeal nerve.

45. Dissect the rabbit provided so as to expose the abdominal viscera. Mark with flag-labels the duct of the pancreas, the ureters, and the oviducts or the sperm ducts (as the case may be).

[Many of the above questions were actually set at London University Examinations in Biology.] {In Both Editions.}

The Frog.

1. *General Anatomy*.

Section 1. We will now study the adult anatomy of the frog, and throughout we shall make constant comparisons with that of the rabbit. In the rabbit we have a distinctly land-loving, burrowing animal; it eats purely vegetable food, and drinks but little. In the frog we have a mainly insectivorous type, living much in the water. This involves the moister skin, the shorter alimentary canal, and the abbreviated neck (Rabbit, Section 2) of the frog; the tail is absent — in a fish it would do the work the frog accomplishes with his hind legs — and the apertures which are posterior in the rabbit, run together into one dorsal opening, the *cloaca*. There is, of course (Rabbit, Section 4), no hair the skin is smooth, and an external ear is also absent. The remarkable looseness of the frog's skin is due to great lymph spaces between it and the body wall.

Section 2. If we now compare the general anatomy of the frog (*vide* Sheet 11) with that of the rabbit, we notice that the diaphragm is absent (Rabbit, Section 4), and the body cavity, or *coelom*, is, with the exception of the small bag of the pericardium round the heart, one continuous space. The forked tongue is attached in front of the lower jaw, and can be flicked out and back with great rapidity in the capture of the small insects upon which the frog lives. The posterior nares open into the *front* of the mouth — there is no long nasal chamber, and no palate, and there is no long trachea between the epiglottis and the lungs. The oesophagus is less distinct, and passes gradually, so far as external appearances go, into the bag-like stomach, which is much less inflated and transverse than that of the rabbit. The duodenum is not a U-shaped loop, but makes one *together with the stomach*; the pancreas lies between it and the stomach, and is more compact than the rabbit's. There is no separate pancreatic duct, but the bile duct runs through the pancreas, and receives a series of ducts from that gland as it does so. The ileum is shorter, there is no sacculus rotundus, and the large intestine has no caecum, none of the characteristic sacculations of the rabbit's colon,

and does not loop back to the stomach before the rectum section commences. The anus opens not upon the exterior, but into a cloacal chamber. The urinary and genital ducts open separately into this cloaca, and dorsally and posteriorly to the anus. The so-called urinary bladder is ventral to the intestine, in a position answering to that of the rabbit, but it has no connection with the ureters, and it is two-horned.

Section 3. The spleen is a small, round body, not so intimately bound to the stomach as in the rabbit, but in essentially the same position.

Section 4. Much that we knew of the physiology of the frog is arrived at mainly by inferences from our mammalian knowledge. Its histology is essentially similar. Ciliated epithelium is commoner and occurs more abundantly than in the rabbit, in the roof of the mouth for instance, and its red blood corpuscles are much larger, *oval*, and *nucleated*.

Section 5. The lungs of the frog are bag-like; shelves and spongy partitions project into their cavities, but this structure is much simpler than that of the rabbit's lung, in which the branching bronchi, the imperfect cartilaginous rings supporting them, alveoli, arteries and veins, form together a quasi-solid mass.

Section 6. The mechanism of respiration is fundamentally different from that of the mammal. The method is as follows: — The frog opens its anterior nares, and depresses the floor of the mouth, which therefore fills with air. The anterior nares are then closed, and the floor mouth rises and forces the air into the lungs — the frog, therefore, swallows its air rather than inhales it. The respiratory instrument of the rabbit is a suction pump, while that of the frog is a "buccal force pump."

Section 7. The heart is not quadrilocular (i.e., of four chambers), but trilocular (of three), and two structures, not seen in Lepus, the truncus arteriosus and the sinus venosus, into the latter of which the venous blood runs before entering the right auricle, are to be noted. The single ventricle is blocked with bars of tissue that render its interior, not an open cavity, but a spongy mass. Figure 2, Sheet 11, shows the heart opened; l.au. and r.au. are the left and right auricles respectively; the truncus arteriosus is seen to be imperfectly divided

by a great *longitudino-spiral valve* (l.s.v.); p.c. is the pulmo-cutaneous artery -going to the lungs- [supplying skin and lungs]; d.ao., the dorsal aorta [furnishing the supply of the body and limbs]; and c.a. the carotid artery going to the head; all of which vessels (compare Figure 1) are paired.

Section 8. It might be inferred from this that pure and impure blood mix in the ventricle, and that a blood of uniform quality flows to lungs, head, and extremities; but this is not so. The spongy nature of the ventricle sufficiently retards this mixing. It will be noted that the opening of pulmonary arteries lies nearest to the heart, next come the aortic and carotid arches, which have a common opening at *A*. Furthermore, at c.g.l. [the carotid artery, repeatedly divides to form a close meshwork of arterioles, the *carotid gland*, forming a sponge-like plug in this vessel.] is a spongy mass of matter, the carotid gland inserted upon the carotid. Hence the pulmonary arteries yawn nearest for the blood, and, being short, wide vessels, present the least resistance to the first rush of blood — mainly venous blood for the right auricle. As they fill up, the back resistance in them becomes equal, and then greater, than the resistance at *A*, and the rush of blood, now of a mixed quality passes through that aperture. It selects the dorsal aorta, because the carotid arch, plugged by the carotid gland, offers the greater resistance. Presently, however, the back resistance of the filled dorsal aorta rises above this, and the last flow of blood, from the ventricular systole — almost purely oxygenated blood for the left auricle — goes on towards the head.

Section 9. At the carotid gland the carotid artery splits into -an-[a] -*external carotid*- [*lingual*] (e.c.), and a deeper internal *carotid*. The dorsal aorta passes round on each side of the oesophagus, as indicated by the dotted lines in Figure 2, Sheet 11, and meets its fellow dorsal to the liver. Each arch gives off subclavian arteries to the limbs, and the left, immediately before meeting the right, gives off the coeliaco-mesenteric artery [to the alimentary canal]. This origin of the coeliaco-mesenteric artery a little to the left, is the only asymmetry (want of balance) in the arterial system of the frog, as contrasted with the very extensive asymmetry of the great vessels near the heart of the rabbit. [Posteriorly the dorsal aorta forks into two *common iliac* arteries (right and left) supplying the hind limbs.]

Section 10. Figure 3 gives a side view of the frog, to display the circulation.

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[The venous return to the heart, as in the rabbit, is by paired *venae cavae anteriores* and by a single *vena cava inferior*. The factors of the anterior cava on either side are an *external jugular* (ex.j.) an innominate vein (in.v.) and subclavian (scl.v.). The last receives not only the brachial vein (b.v.) from the fore limb, but also a large vein bringing blood for the skin, the cutaneous (p.v.). The innominate vein has also two chief factors, the *internal jugular* (l.i.j.v.) and the *subscapular* (s.s.v.). The blood returns from each hind limb by a *sciatic* (l.sc.) or *femoral* (f.m.) vein, and either passes to a *renal portal vein* (l.r.p.), which breaks into capillaries in the kidney, or by a paired pelvic vein (l.p.v. in Figures 1 and 3) which meets its fellow in the middle line to form the anterior abdominal vein (a.ab.v.) going forward and uniting with the (median) *portal vein* (p.v.) to enter the liver.]

-The vessels are named in the references to the figure, which should be carefully copied and mastered. Here we need only- [Comparing with the rabbit, we would especially] call attention to the fact that the vena cava inferior extends posteriorly only to the kidney, and that there is a *renal portal system*. The blood from the hind limbs either flows by the anterior abdominal vein to the portal vein and liver, or it passes by the renal portal vein to the kidney. There the vein breaks up, and we find in the frog's kidney, just as we find in the frog's and rabbit's liver, a triple system of (a) nutritive arterial, (b) afferent* venous and (c) efferent* * venous vessels.

* a, ad = to;

* * e, ex = out of.

{This Section missing from Second Edition.}
-Section 11. It is not very improbable that the kidney of the frog shares, or performs, some of the functions of the rabbit's liver, or

parallel duties, in addition to the simply excretory function. Since specialization of cells must be mainly the relatively excessive exaggeration of some one of the general properties of the undifferentiated cell, it is not a difficult thing to imagine a gradual transition, as we move from one organism to another, of the functions of glands and other cellular organs. It is probable that the mammalian kidney is, physiologically, a much less important (though still quite essential) organ than the structures which correspond to it in position and development in the lower vertebrate types.-

Section 12. The lymphatic system is extensively developed in the frog, but, in the place of a complete system of distinctly organized vessels, there are great lymph sinuses (compare Section 1). In Figure 5, Sheet 12, the position of two lymph hearts (l.h., l.h.) which pump lymph into the adjacent veins, is shown.

Section 13. The skull of the frog will repay a full treatment, and will be dealt with by itself later. The vertebral column (Sheet 12) consists of nine vertebrae, the centra of which have faces, not flat, but hollow in front (*pro-coelous*), and evidently without *epiphyses* (compare the Rabbit). The anterior is sometimes called the *atlas*, but it is evidently not the homologue of the atlas of the rabbit, since the first spinal nerve has a corresponding distribution to the twelfth cranial of the mammal, and since, therefore, it is probable that the mammalian skull = the frog's skull + one (or more) vertebrae incorporated with it. Posteriorly the vertebral column terminates in the *urostyle*, a calcified unsegmented rod. The vertebrae have transverse processes, but no ribs.

Section 14. The forelimb (Figure 6, Sheet 12) consists of an upper segment of one bone, the *humerus*, as in the rabbit; a middle section, the *radius* and *ulna*, fused here into one bone, and not, as in the mammalian type, separable; of a carpus, and of five digits, of which the fourth is the longest. The shoulder girdle is more important and complete than that of the higher type. There is a scapula (sc.) with an unossified cartilaginous supra-scapula (s.sc.); the anterior border of the scapula answers to the acromion. On the ventral side a cartilaginous rod, embraced by the clavicle (cl.) (a membrane bone in

this type), runs to the sternum, and answers to the clavicle of the rabbit. In the place of the rabbit's coracoid process, is a coracoid bone (co.), which reaches from the glenoid cavity to the sternum; it is hidden on the right side of Figure 6, which is a dorsal view of the shoulder girdle. There is a *pre-omosternum* (o.st.) and a *post-omosternum*, sometimes termed a *xiphisternum* (x.).

Section 15. Figure 7 shows the pelvic girdle and limb of the frog. There is a femur (f.); tibia and fibula (t. and f.) are completely fused; the proximal bones of the tarsus, the astragalus (as.), and calcaneum (cal.) are elongated, there are five long digits, and in the calcar (c.) an indication of a sixth. With considerable modifications of form, the three leading constituents of the rabbit's pelvic girdle occur in relatively identical positions. The greatly elongated ilium (il.) articulates with the *single* (compare Rabbit) sacral vertebra (s.v. in Figure 5). The *ischium* (is.) is relatively smaller than in the rabbit, and the pubis (pu.) is a ventral wedge of unossified cartilage. The shape of the pelvic girdle of the frog is a wide departure from that found among related forms. In connection with the leaping habit, the ilia are greatly elongated, and the pubes and ischia much reduced. Generally throughout the air-frequenting vertebrata, we find the same arrangement of these three bones, usually in the form of an inverted. Y — the ilium above, the ischium and pubis below, and the acetabulum at the junction of the three.

Section 16. The urogenital organs of the frog, and especially those of the male, correspond with embryonic stages of the rabbit. In this sex the testes (T., Sheet 13) lie in the body cavity, and are white bodies usually dappled with black pigment. *Vasa efferentia* (v.e.) run to the internal border of the anterior part of the kidney, which answers, therefore, to the rabbit's epididymis. The hinder part of the kidney is the predominant renal organ. There is a common urogenital duct, into which a seminal vesicle, which is especially large in early spring, opens. This is the permanent condition of the frog. In the rabbit, for urogenital duct, we have ureter and vas deferens; the testes and that anterior part of the primitive kidney, the epididymis, shift back into the scrotal sacs, and the ureters shift round the rectum and establish a direct connection with the bladder, carrying the genital ducts looped over them. The oviducts of the female do not

fuse distally to form a median vagina as they do in the rabbit. In front of the genital organ in both sexes is a corpus adiposum (c.ad.), which acts as a fat store, and is peculiar to the frogs and toads. The distal end of the oviduct of the female is in the breeding season (early March) enormously distended with ova, and the ovaries become then the mere vestiges of their former selves. The distal end of the oviduct is, therefore, not unfrequently styled the *uterus*. There is no penis in the male, fertilisation of the ova occurring as they are squeezed out of the female by the embracing fore limbs of the male. The male has a pad, black in winter, shown in Figure 1, which is closely pressed against the ventral surface of the female in copulation, and which serves as a ready means of distinguishing the sex.

Section 17. The spinal cord has a general similarity to that of the rabbit; the ratio of its size to that of the brain is larger, and the nerves number ten pairs altogether. The first of these (s, in Figure 2, Sheet -12-) {First Edition error.} corresponds in distribution with the rabbit's *hypoglossal* nerve, a point we shall refer to again when we speak of the skull. The second and third constitute the brachial plexus. The last three form the sciatic plexus going to the hind limb.

Section 18. The same essential parts are to be found in the brain of both frog and rabbit, but in the former the adult is not so widely modified from the primitive condition as in the latter. The forebrain consists of a thalamencephalon (th.c. and 1), which is exposed in the dorsal view of the brain, and which has no middle commissure. The cerebral hemispheres (c.h.) are not convoluted, do not extend back to cover parts behind them, as they do in the rabbit, and are not connected above the roof of the thalamencephalon by a corpus callosum. Moreover, the parts usually regarded, as the olfactory lobes (rh.) fuse in the middle line. The midbrain gives rise to the third nerve, and has the optic lobes on its dorsal side, but these are hollow, and they are not subdivided by a transverse groove into corpora quadrigemina, as in the rabbit. In the hindbrain the cerebellum is a mere band of tissue without lateral lobes or flocculi, and the medulla gives origin only to nerves four to ten; there is no eleventh nerve, and the hypoglossal is the first spinal — from which it has been assumed that the rabbit's medulla equals that of the frog, plus a portion of the spinal cord incorporated with it. The

hypoglossal is very distinctly seen on opening the skin beneath the hyoid plate.

Section 19. The first, second, third, and fourth cranial nerves of the frog correspond with those of the rabbit in origin and distribution. So do five, six and eight. The seventh nerve forks over the ear-drum — the larger branch emerging behind it and running superficially, as shown in Figure 4. There is also a deeper palatine branch of VII. (P.) running under V2 and V3 below the orbit, and to be seen together with V1 and V2 after removal of the eyeball. The ninth nerve similarly forks over the first branchial slit of the tadpole, and evidence of the fork remains in the frog. It is seen curving round anterior to the hypoglossal nerve, and lying rather deeper in dissection. The vagus (tenth) nerve is distributed to heart, lungs, and viscera — in the tadpole it also sends for forking branches over the second, third, and fourth branchial slits. It lies deeper than IX., and internal to the veins, and runs close beside the cutaneous artery. Most of these nerves are easily dissected and no student should rest satisfied until he has actually seen them.

Section 20. The sympathetic chain is closely connected with the aorta. It is, of course, paired, and is easily found in dissection by lifting the dorsal aorta and looking at its mesentery. In the presence of ganglia corresponding to the spinal nerves, and of *rami communicantes*, it resembles that of the rabbit.

Section 21. The whole of this chapter is simply a concise comparison, of frog and rabbit. In addition to reading it, the student should very carefully follow the annotations to the figures, and should copy and recopy these side by side with the corresponding diagrams of the other types.

2. *The Skull of the Frog* (*and the vertebrate skull generally)*

Section 22. We have already given a description of the mammalian skull, and we have stated where the origin of the several bones was in membrane, and where in cartilage; but a more complete comprehension of the mammalian skull becomes possible with the handling of a lower type. We propose now, first to give some short account of the development and structure of the skull of the frog, and

then to show briefly how its development and adult arrangement demonstrate the mammalian skull to be a fundamentally similar structure, complicated and disguised by further development and re-adjustment.

Section 23. Figure 1,I. Sheet 14, shows a dorsal view of a young tadpole cranium; the brain has been removed, and it is seen that it was supported simply upon two cartilaginous rods, the *trabeculae cranii* (tr.c.). Behind these trabeculae comes the notochord (n.c.), and around its anterior extremity is a paired tract of cartilage, the *parachordals* (p.c.). These structures, underlying the skull, are all that appear[s] at first of the brain box. In front, and separate from the cranium, are the nasal organs (n.c.); the eyes lie laterally to the trabeculae, and laterally to the parachordals are two tracts of cartilage enclosing the internal ear, the otic capsules.

Section 24. Figure 1, II., is a more advanced, phase of the same structures. The trabeculae have met in front and sent forward a median (c.t.) and lateral parts (a.o.) to support the nasal organs. They have also flattened, out very considerably, and have sent up walls on either side of the brain to meet above it and form an incomplete roof (t.) over it. The parachordals have similarly grown up round, the hind-brain and formed a complete ring, the roof of which is indicated, by b. Further, the otic capsules are fusing with the brain-case. With certain differences of form these elements — the trabeculae, the parachordals, and the otic capsules, are also the first formed structures of the mammalian cranium.

Section 25. In Figures 1,I. and II., there appears beneath the eye a bar of cartilage (p.p.), the *palato-pterygoid* cartilage, which is also to be seen from the side in Figures 8,I. and III. It will be learnt from these latter that this bar is joined in front to the cranium behind the nasal organ, and behind to the otic capsule. The cartilaginous bar from the palato-pterygoid to the otic capsule is called the *quadrate*, and at the point of junction, at the postero-ventral angle of the palato-pterygoid, articulates with the cartilaginous bar which is destined to form the substratum of the lower jaw — *Meckel's cartilage* (M.c. in Figure 8,I.).

Section 26. Figure 2 shows a dorsal view of these structures in a young frog. The parts corresponding to these in 1,II. will be easily

made out, but now ossification has set in at various points of this cartilaginous cranium. In front of the otic capsule is the paired *pro-otic* bone (p.o.); behind it at the sides of the parachordal ring is the paired *ex-occipital* (e.o.); in front of the cranium box, and behind the nasal capsules, is a ring of bone, the (median, but originally paired) *sphenethmoid* (s.e.). -A paired ossification appears in the palato-pterygoid cartilage the *pterygoid* bone (pt.), while- A splint of bone, the *quadrato-jugal*, appears at the angle of articulation with the lower jaw. These are all the cartilage bones that appear in the cranium and upper jaw of the frog.

Section 27. But another series of bones, developed first chiefly in dermal connective tissue, and coming to plate over the cranium of cartilage, are not shown in Figure 2. They are, however, in Figure 3. These membrane bones are: along the dorsal middle line, the *parieto-frontals* (p.f.), originally two pairs of bones which fuse in development, and the *nasals* (na.). Round the edge of the jaw, and bearing the teeth, are *pre-maxillae* (p.m.), and *maxillae* (mx.), and overlying the quadrate cartilage and lateral to the otic capsules are the T-shaped *squamosal bones* (sq.). In the ventral view of the skull (Figure 4) we see a pair of *vomers* (vo.) bearing teeth, a pair of *palatines* (pal.), [and a pair of pterygoids (pt.)] (which [palatines and pterygoids, we may note,] unlike those of the rabbit, are -stated to be-membrane bones), and a great median dagger-shaped *para-sphenoid* (p.sp.). These two Figures, and 5, which shows the same bones in side view, should be carefully mastered before the student proceeds with this chapter. The cartilage bones are distinguished from membrane bones by cross-shading.

Section 28. Turning now to Figure 8,I., we have a side view of a tadpole's skull. On the ventral side of the head is a series of vertical cartilaginous bars, the visceral arches supporting the walls of the tadpole's gill slits. The first of these is called the *hyoid arch* (c.h.), and the four following this, the first (br.1), second, third, and fourth (br.4), branchial arches. Altogether there are four gill slits and between the hyoid arch and the jaw arch, as it is called (= Meckel's cartilage + the palato-pterygoid), is "an imperforate slit," which becomes the ear-drum.* The frog no longer breathes by gills, but by

lungs, and the gills are lost, the gill slits closed, and the branchial arches consequently much reduced. Figures 8, II., and 8, III., show stages in this reduction. The hyoid arch becomes attached, to the otic capsule, and its median ventral plate, including also the vestiges of the first, second, and fourth branchial arches, is called the hyoid apparatus. In Figure 5, the apparatus is seen from the side; c.h. is called the (right) anterior cornu* * of the hyoid. The function of the hyoid apparatus in the frog is to furnish, a basis of attachment to the tongue muscles; it remains cartilaginous, with the exception of the relic of one branchial arch, which ossifies as the *thyro-hyal* (Figure 7 th.h.). It will be noted that, as development proceeds, the angle of the jaw swings backward, and the hyoid apparatus, shifts relatively forward. These changes of position are indicated in Figure 8, III., by little arrow-heads.

* We may note here that, comparing the ear of the frog with that of the rabbit, there is no *external* ear. There is, moreover, no bulla supporting the middle ear, and the tympanic membrane stretches between the squamosal in front and the anterior cornu of the hyoid behind. A rod-like *columella auris* replaces the chain of ear ossicles, and may, or may not, answer to the stapes alone, or even possibly to the entire series. In the internal ear there is no cochlea, and the otic mass is largely cartilaginous instead of entirely bony.

* * Plural *cornua*.

Section 29. Before proceeding to the comparison of the mammalian skull with this, we would strongly recommend the student thoroughly to master this portion of the work, and in no way can he do this more thoroughly and quickly than by taking a parboiled frog, picking off the skin, muscle, and connective tissue from its skull, and making out the various bones with the help of our diagrams.

Section 30. Figure 9 represents, in the most diagrammatic way, the main changes in *form* of the essential constituents of the cranio-facial apparatus, as we pass from the amphibian to the mammalian skull. F. is the frog from the side and behind; b.c. is the brain-case, o.c. the otic capsule, e. the eye, n.c. the nasal capsule, p.p. the palato-

pterygoid cartilage, mx. the maxillary membrane bones, sq. the squamosal, and mb. the mandible. The student should compare with Figure 5, and convince himself that he appreciates the diagrammatic rendering of these parts. Now all the distinctive differences in *form*, from this of the dog's skull (D.), are reducible to two primary causes —

(1) The brain is enormously larger, and the brain-case is vastly inflated, so that —

(a) the otic capsule becomes embedded in the brain-case wall;

(b) the palato-pterygoid rod lies completely underneath the brain-case instead of laterally to it;

(c) the squamosal tilts down and in, instead of down and out, and the lower jaw articulates with its outer surface instead of below its inner, and, moreover, with the enormous distention of the brain-case it comes about that the squamosal is incorporated with its wall.

(2) The maxilla anteriorly and the palatine posteriorly send down palatine plates that grow in to form the bony palate, cutting off a nasal passage (n.p.) from the mouth cavity (m.p.), and carrying the posterior nares from the front part of the mouth, as they are in the frog, to the pharynx. Hence the vomers of the dog lie, not in the ceiling of the mouth, but in the floor of this nasal passage.

Section 31. The quadrate cartilage of the frog is superseded by the squamosal as the suspensorium of the lower jaw. It is greatly reduced, therefore; but it is not entirely absent. In the young mammal, a quadrate cartilage can be traced, connected with the palato-pterygoid cartilage, and articulating with Meckel's cartilage. Its position is, of course, beneath the squamosal, and just outside the otic capsule. As development proceeds, the increase in size of the quadrate, does not keep pace with that of the skull structures. It loses its connection with the palato-pterygoid, and apparently ossifies as a small ossicle — the *incus* of the middle ear. A small nodule of cartilage, cut off from the proximal end of Meckel's cartilage,

becomes the *malleus*. The *stapes* would appear to be derived from the hyoid arch. Hence these small bones seem to be the relics of the discarded jaw suspensorium of the frog utilized in a new function. Considerable doubt, however, attaches to this interpretation — doubt that, if anything, is gaining ground.

Section 32. The tympanic bulla of the dog is not indicated in Diagram 9, and it would appear to be a new structure (*neomorph*), not represented in the frog.

Section 33. Besides these great differences in form, there are important differences in the amount and distribution of centres of ossification of the skull of frog and mammal. There is no parasphenoid in the mammal*; and, instead, a complete series of ossifications, the median-, basi-, and pre-sphenoids, and the lateral ali- and orbito-sphenoids occur. The points can be rendered much more luminously in a diagram than in the text, and we would counsel the student to compare this very carefully with that of the Rabbit.

* Faint vestigial indications occur in the developing skulls of some insectivora.

Section 34.

-Cranium

-Nasal (paired), -Vomer (paired)
-Fronto-Parietal, *Sphenethmoid Bone* (median), Eye, *Pro-otic Bone*, Otic Cartilage, *Ex-occipital* (paired)
-Para-sphenoid Bone

-Upper Jaw

-Pre-Maxilla (paired), -Palatine (paired), *Pterygoid* (paired),
-Squamosal, Quadrate Cartilage {To 1.}
-Maxilla
1. *Quadrato-Jugal*

<-Lower Jaw
Mento-meckelian, -Dentary, -*Articulare*- [-Angulo Splenial]

Section 35. -Points especially- [Additional points] to be noticed are:

(1) The otic capsule (= periotic bone) of the dog ossifies from a number of centres, one of which is equivalent to the frog's prootic.

(2) The several constituents of the lower jaw are not to be distinguished in the adult mammal.

(3) The frog has no lachrymal bone.

Section 36. We are now in a position to notice, without any danger of misconception, what is called the segmental theory of the skull. Older anatomists, working from adult structure only, conceived the idea that the brain-case of the mammal represented three inflated vertebrae. The most anterior had the pre-sphenoid for its body, the orbito-sphenoids for its neural processes, and the arch was completed above by the frontals (frontal segment). Similarly, the basi-sphenoids, ali-sphenoids, and parietals formed a second arch (parietal segment), and the ex-, basi-, and supra-occipitals a third (occipital segment). If this were correct, in the frog, which is a more primitive rendering of the vertebrate plan, we should find the vertebral characters more distinct. But, as a matter of fact, as the student will perceive, frontal segment, parietal segment, and occipital segment, can no longer be traced; and the mode of origin from trabeculae and para-chordals show very clearly the falsity of this view. The vertebrate cranium is entirely different in nature from vertebrae. The origin of the parietals and frontals as *paired* bones in *membrane* reinforces this conclusion.

Section 37. But as certainly as we have no such metameric segmentation, as this older view implies, in the brain-case of the frog, so quite as certainly is metameric segmentation evident in its branchial arches. We have the four gill slits of the tadpole and their bars repeating one another; the hyoid bar in front of these is evidently of a similar nature; and that the ear drum is derived from an imperforate gill slit is enforced by the presence of an open slit (the *spiracle*) in the rays and dog-fish in an entirely equivalent position. Does the mouth answer to a further pair of gill slits, and is the jaw arch (palato-pterygoid + Meckel's cartilage) equivalent to the arches that come behind it? This question has been asked, and answered in

the affirmative, by many morphologists, but not by any means by *all*. The cranial nerves have a curious similarity of arrangement with regard to the gill slits and the mouth; the fifth nerve forks over the mouth, the seventh forks over the ear drum, the ninth, in the tadpole and fish, forks over the first branchial slit, and the tenth is, as it were, a leash of nerves, each forking over one of the remaining gill slits. But this matter will be more intelligible when the student has worked over a fish type, and need not detain us any further now.

Section 38. See also Section 13 again, in which is the suggestion that the *occipital part* of the skull is possibly a fusion of vertebrae, a new view with much in its favour, and obviously an entirely different one from the old "segmental" view of the entire skull, discussed in Section 36.

2. *Questions on the Frog*

[All these questions were actually set at London University Examinations.] {In Both Editions.}

1. Give an account, with illustrative sketches, of the digestive organs of the common frog, specifying particularly the different forms of epithelium met with in the several regions thereof.

2. Describe the heart of a frog, and compare it with that of a fish and of a mammal, mentioning in each case the great vessels which open into each cavity.

3. Compare with one another the breathing organs and the mechanism of respiration in a frog and in a rabbit. Give figures showing the condition of the heart and great arteries in these animals, and indicate in each case the nature of the blood in the several cavities of the heart.

4. Draw diagrams, with the parts named, illustrating the arrangement of the chief arteries of (a) the frog, (b) the rabbit. (c) Compare briefly the arrangements thus described. (d) In what important respects does the vascular mechanism of the

frog differ from that of the fish, in correlation with the presence of lungs?

5. In the frog provided, free the heart, both aortic arches, dorsal aorta as far as its terminal bifurcation, and both chains of sympathetic ganglia from surrounding structures; and remove them, in their natural connection, from the animal into a watch-glass.

6. Describe the male and female reproductive organs of the common frog, and give some account of their development.

7. Describe, with figures, the bones of the limbs and limb-girdles of a frog.

8. Remove the brain from the frog provided, and place it in spirit. Make a lettered drawing of its ventral and dorsal surfaces.

9. Point out the corresponding regions in the brain of a frog and a mammal, and state what are the relations of the three primary brain-vesicles to these regions.

10. (a) Give an account, with diagrams, of the brain of the frog; (b) point out the most important differences between it and the brain of the rabbit. (c) Describe the superficial origin and the distribution of the third, (d) of the fifth, (e) of the seventh., (f) of the ninth, and (g) of the tenth cranial nerves of the frog.

11. Describe, with figures, the brain of a frog, and compare it with that of a rabbit. What do you know concerning the functions of the several parts of the brain in the frog?

12. Describe briefly the fundamental properties of the spinal cord in the frog. By what means would you determine whether a given nerve is motor or sensory?

13. Prepare the skull of the frog provided. Remove from it and place in glycerine on a glass slip the fronto-parietal and parasphenoid bones. Label them. Mark on the skull with long needles and flag-labels the sphenethmoid and the pro-otic bones.

14. Compare the skull of the rabbit and the frog; especially in regard to the attachment of the jaw apparatus to the cranium, and other points which distinctly characterize the higher as contrasted with the lower vertebrata.

15. Describe the skeleton of the upper and lower jaw (a) in the frog, (b) in the rabbit. Point out exactly what parts correspond with one another in the two animals compared. (c) What bone in the rabbit is generally regarded as corresponding to the quadrate cartilage of the frog?

The DogFish.

1. *General Anatomy*.

Section 1. In the dog-fish we have a far more antique type of structure than in any of the forms we have hitherto considered. Forms closely related to it occur among the earliest remains of vertebrata that are to be found in the geological record. Since the immeasurably remote Silurian period, sharks and dog-fish have probably remained without any essential changes of condition, and consequently without any essential changes of structure, down to the present day. Then, as now, they dominated the seas. They probably branched off from the other vertebrata before *bone* had become abundant in the *inner* skeleton, which is consequently in their case cartilaginous, with occasional "calcification" and no distinct bones at all. Unlike the majority of fish, they possess no swimming bladder — the precursor of the lungs; but in many other respects, notably in the uro-genital organs, they have, in common with the higher vertebrata, preserved features which may have been disguised or lost in the perfecting of such modern and specialized fish as, for instance, the cod, salmon, or herring.

Section 2. Comparing the general build, of a dog-fish with that of a rabbit, we notice the absence of a distinct neck, and the general conical form; the presence of a large tail, as considerable, at first, in diameter as the hind portion of the body, and of the first importance in progression, in which function the four paddle-shaped limbs, the lateral fins, simply co-operate with the median fin along the back for the purpose of steering; and, as a consequence of the size of the tail, we note also the ventral position of the apertures of the body. The anus, and urinary and genital ducts unite in one common chamber, the cloaca. Behind the head, and in front of the fore fin (pectoral fin), are five gill slits (g.s.) leading from the pharynx to the exterior. Just behind the eye is a smaller and more dorsal opening of the same kind, the spiracle (sp.). On the under side of the head, in front of the mouth, is the nasal aperture (olf.), the opening of the nasal sac, which, unlike the corresponding organ of the air-frequenting

vertebrata, has no internal narial opening. There is, however, a groove running from olf. to the corner of the mouth, and this, closing, in the vertebrate types that live in air and are exposed to incessant evaporation of their lubricating secretions, constitutes the primitive nasal passage. The limbs are undifferentiated into upper, lower, and digital portions, and are simply jointed, flattened expansions.

Section 3. The skin of the dog-fish is closely set with pointed tooth-like scales, the placoid scales, and these are continued over the lips into the mouth as teeth. Each scale consists of a base of true bone, with a little tubercle of a harder substance, *dentine*, capped by a still denser covering, the *enamel*. The enamel is derived from the outer layer of the embryonic dog-fish, the *epiblast*, which also gives rise to the epidermis; while the dentine and bony base arise in the underlying *mesoblast*, the dermis. A mammalian tooth has essentially the same structure: an outer coat of enamel, derived from epiblast, overlies a mass of dentine, resting on bone, but the dentine is excavated internally, to form a pulpcavity containing blood-vessels and nerves. Most land animals, however, have teeth only in their mouths, and have lost altogether the external teeth which constitute the armour of the dog-fish. Besides the teeth there perhaps remain relics of the placoid scales in the anatomy of the higher vertebrata, in the *membrane bones*. How placoid scales may have given rise to these structures will be understood by considering such a bone as the vomer of the frog. This bone lies on the roof of the frog's mouth, and bears a number of denticles, and altogether there is a very strong resemblance in it to a number of placoid scales the bony bases of which have become confluent. In the salamander, behind the teeth-bearing vomers comes a similar toothed *parasphenoid* bone. The same bone occurs in a corresponding position in the frog, but without teeth. In some tailed amphibians the vomers and splenials are known to arise by the fusion of small denticles. These facts seem to point to stages in the fusion of placoid bases, and their withdrawal from the surface to become incorporated with the cranial apparatus as membrane bones, a process entirely completed in the mammalian type.

Section 4. The alimentary canal of the dog-fish, is a simple tube

thrown into a Z shape. The *mouth* is rough with denticles, and has a fleshy immovable tongue on its floor. In the position of the Eustachian tube there is a passage, the *spiracle* (sp.), running out to the exterior just external to the cartilage containing the ear. The *pharynx* communicates with the exterior through five gill slits (g.s.), and has, of course, no glottis or other lung opening. There is a wide *oesophagus* passing into a U-shaped stomach (st.), having, like the rabbit's, the spleen (sp.) on its outer curvature. There is no coiling small intestine, but the short portion, receiving the bile duct (b.d.) and duct of the pancreas (pan.), is called the duodenum (d'dum.). The liver has large left (L.lv.) and right lobes, and a median lobe (M.lv.), in which the gall bladder (g.bl.) is embedded. The next segment of the intestine is fusiform, containing a *spiral valve* (Figure 4), the shelf of which points steeply forward; it is sometimes called the *colon* (co.). It is absorptive in function and probably represents morphologically, as it does physiologically, the greater portion of the small intestine. A rectal gland (r.g.) opens from the dorsal side into the final portion of the canal (*rectum*).

Section 5. The circulation presents, in many respects, an approximation to the state of affairs in the developing embryos of the higher types. The heart (Figure 3, Sheet -14- {Error in First Edition}) is roughly, Z shape, and transmits only venous blood. It lies in a cavity, the pericardial cavity (P.c.c.), cut off by a partition from the general coelome. At one point this partition is imperfect, and the two spaces communicate through a *pericardio-peritoneal* canal (p.p.c.), which is also indicated by an arrow (p.p.) in the position and direction in which the student, when dissecting, should thrust his "seeker," in Figure 1 Sheet 15. A *sinus venosus* (s.v. in Figure 3, Sheet 16) receives the venous trunks, and carries the blood through a valve into the baggy and transversely extended *-auricle-* [*atrium*] (au.), whence it passes into the muscular *ventricle* (Vn.), and thence into the *truncus arteriosus*. This truncus consists of two parts: the first, the *conus* or *pylangium* (c.a.), muscular, contractile, and containing a series of valves; the second, the *bulbus* or *synangium* (b.a.), without valves and pulsatile. In the rabbit both sinus and truncus are absent, or merged in the adjacent parts of the heart.

Section 6. From the bulbus there branch, on either side, four

arterial trunks, the first of which forks, so that altogether there are five *afferent branchials* (a.br.) taking blood to be aerated in the gills, here highly vascular filamentary outgrowths of the internal walls of the gill slits.

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[There are altogether nine vascular outgrowths (*demi-branchs*), one on each wall of each gill slit except the last, on the hind wall of which there is none. (In the spiracle is a miniature demibranch, the *pseudo-branch*. This suggests that the spiracle is really a somewhat modified gill slit.)]

Four *efferent branchials* (e.br.) carry the aerated blood on to the *dorsal aorta* (d.ao.). A *carotid artery* runs forward to the head, and a hypo-branchial artery supplies the ventral side of the pharyngeal region. There are *sub-clavian*, *coeliac*, *mesenteric*, and *pelvic* arteries, and the dorsal aorta is continued through the length of the tail as the *caudal artery* (Cd.A.).

Section 7. A caudal vein (Cd.V.), bringing blood back from the tail, splits behind the kidneys (K.), and forms the paired renal portal veins (r.p.v.), breaking up into a capillary system in the renal organ. A portal vein brings blood from the intestines to the liver.

Section 8. Instead of being tubular vessels, the chief veins of the dog-fish are, in many cases, irregular baggy sinuses. Three main venous trunks flow into the sinus venosus. In the median line from behind comes the *hepatic sinus* (H.S.); and laterally, from a dorsal direction, the *Cuvierian sinuses* (C.S.) enter it. These, as the student will presently perceive, are the equivalents of the rabbit's superior cavae. They receive, near their confluence with the sinus venosus, the *inferior jugular vein* (I.J.V.). At their dorsal origin, they are formed by the meeting of the anterior (A.C.S.) and posterior (P.C.S.) *cardinal sinuses*. The anterior cardinal sinus -is, roughly, the equivalent of the internal jugular vein-, lies along dorsal to the gill slits (g.s.), and receives an orbital sinus from the eye. The posterior cardinal sinus receives a sub-clavian vein (s.c.v.) and a lateral vein (L.V.), and fuses posteriorly with its fellow in the middle line. This median fusion is a departure from the normal fish type. It must not be

confused with the inferior cava, which is not found in the dog-fish, the [right] posterior cardinals representing the rabbit's *azygos vein*. A simplified diagram of the circulation of a fish is given in Figure 2, Sheet 16, and this should be carefully compared with the corresponding small figure given of the vascular system of our other types.

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[The blood of the dog-fish resembles that of the frog.]

Section 9. The internal skeleton, as we have said, is entirely cartilaginous, and only those parts which are pre-formed in cartilage in the skeletons of the higher types are represented here. The spinal column consists of two types of vertebrae, the *trunk*, bearing short, distinct, horizontally-projecting *ribs* (r.), and the *caudal*. The diagrams of Figure 5 [(Sheet 18)] are to illustrate the structure of the centrum of a dog-fish vertebra; *C* is a side view, *D* a horizontal median section, *A* and *B* are transverse sections at the points indicated by -*B* and *A*- [*A* and *B*] respectively in Figure *C*. -(By an unfortunate slip of the pen in the figure, *A* was substituted for *B*; section *A* corresponds to line *B*, and *vice versa*.)- The vertebrae are hollowed out both anteriorly and posteriorly (*amphi-coelous*), and a jelly-like notochord runs through the entire length of the vertebral column, being constricted at the centres of the centra, and dilated between them. The neural arch above the centrum, and containing the spinal cord, is made up of *neural plates* (n.p.), and *interneural plates* (i.n.p.), completed above by a median *neural spine* (n.s.). In the caudal region, instead of ribs projecting outwardly, there are *haemal processes*, inclined downwards and meeting below, forming an arch, the *haemal arch*, containing the caudal artery and vein — the vein ventral to the artery — and resembling the neural arch, which contains the spinal cord above, in shape and size.

Section 10. The pectoral limb and girdle (Figure 4, Sheet 16) have only a very vague resemblance to the corresponding structures in the rabbit. The girdle (g.) is a transverse bar lying ventral to the pericardial wall, and sending up a portion (sc.), dorsal to the attachment of the limb, which answers to the scapula and supra-

scapula of the forms above the fish. Three main cartilages, named respectively the *pro-* (p.p.), *meso-* (m.p.), and *meta-pterygium*, form the base of the limb. With these, smaller cartilaginous plates, rods, and nodules articulate, and form a flattened skeletal support for the fin.

Section 11. The pelvic girdle and limb (Figure 2, Sheet 15) are similar in structure, but the pro-pterygium and meso-pterygium are absent, and the cartilage answering to the meta-pterygium goes by the name of the *basi-pterygium*. In the male, but not in the female, the pelvic fins are united behind the cloaca, and there are two stiff grooved copulatory organs, the *claspers* (cl. in Figure 1), which have a cartilaginous support (cl.c.). These claspers form the readiest means of determining the sex of a specimen before dissection.

Section 12. The skull consists of a cartilaginous cranium, and of jaw and visceral arches. The cranium persists throughout life, in what closely resembles a transitory embryonic condition of the higher types. There is a *nasal capsule* (na.c.), a brain case proper, and lateral *otic* (auditory) *capsules* (ot.c.) containing the internal ear. (This should be compared with the frog's embryonic skull.) The upper jaw has a great bar of cartilage, the *palato-pterygoid*, as its sole support; the arch of premaxilla, maxilla, jugal, and squamosal — all membrane bones — is, of course, not represented. In the frog this bar of cartilage is joined directly to the otic capsule by a quadrate portion, but this is only doubtfully represented in the dog-fish by a nodule of cartilage in the *pre-spiracular ligament* (p.s.). The lower jaw is supported, by *Meckel's cartilage* (M.C.). The hyoid arch consists of two main masses of cartilage, the *hyomandibular* (h.m.), and the ceratohyal (c.h.); the former of these is tilted slightly forward, so that the gill slit between it and the jaw arch is obliterated below, and the cartilage comes to serve as the intermediary in the suspension of the jaw from the otic mass. There are five branchia arches, made up *pharyngo-*, *epi-* and *cerato-branchials*, and the ventral elements fuse in the middle line to form a common plate of cartilage. Outside these arches are certain small cartilages, the *extra branchials* (ex.b.) which, together with certain small labials by the nostrils and at the sides of the gape, probably represent structures of considerably greater importance in that still more primitive fish, the

lamprey. The deep groove figured lateral to the otic capsule is the connecting line of the orbital and anterior cardinal sinuses; the outline of the anterior cardinal sinus in this figure and in Figure 1 is roughly indicated by a dotted line.

Section 13. Figure 3a is a rough diagram of the internal ear — the only auditory structure of our type (compare Rabbit, Sheet 7). To dissect out the auditory labyrinth without injury is a difficult performance, but its structure may be made out very satisfactorily by paring away successive slices of the otic mass. Such a section is shown by Figure 3b; through the translucent hyaline cartilage the utriculus and horizontal canal can be darkly seen. The *ductus endolymphaticus* (*vide* Rabbit) is indicated by a dotted line in our figure. It is situated internal to the right-angle between the two vertical canals, and reaches to the surface of the otic capsule.

Section 14. The brain shows the three primary vesicles much more distinctly than do our higher types. The forebrain has large laterally separated olfactory lobes (rh.), there are relatively small "hemispheres" (pr.c.), the stalk of the pineal gland tilts forward, and the gland itself is much nearer the surface, being embedded in the cartilage of the brain case, and the pituitary body is relatively very large, and has lateral *vascular lobes* on either side. Following the usual interpretation of the parts, we find *optic lobes* (op.l.) as the roof of the mid-brain, and behind a very large, *median*, *hollow*, tongue-shaped *cerebellum* (c.b.). The medulla is large, and certain lateral *restiform tracts* (r.t.) therein, which also occur in the higher types, are here exceptionally conspicuous.

Section 15. The dog-fish has ten pairs of cranial nerves, corresponding to the anterior ten of the rabbit very closely, when we allow for the modification the latter has suffered through the conversion of some part of the spiracular cleft to an eardrum, and the obliteration of the post-hyoid branchial slits.

The first and second nerves are really brain lobes, and nerves of the special senses of smell and sight respectively.

The third (*oculomotor*), the fourth (*patheticus*), and the sixth (*abducens*) are distributed to exactly the same muscles of the eyeball as they are in the rabbit.

The fifth nerve, has, in the dog-fish, as in the rabbit, three chief

branches. V.2 and V.3 fork over the mouth just as they do in the mammal; V.1 passes out of the cranium by a separate and more dorsal opening, and runs along a groove along the dorsal internal wall of the orbit, immediately beneath a similar branch of VII., which is not distinct in the rabbit. The grooves are shown in the figure of the cranium, Sheet 18; the joint nerve thus compounded of V. and VII. is called the *ophthalmic* (oph.). It is distributed to the skin above the nose and orbit. When the student commences to dissect the head of a dog-fish he notices over the dorsal surface of the snout an exudation of a yellowish jelly-like substance, and on removing the tough skin over this region and over the centre of the skull he finds, lying beneath it, a quantity of coiling simple tubuli full of such yellowish matter. These tubuli open on the surface by small pores, and the nerves terminate in hair-like extremities in their lining. These sense tubes are peculiar to aquatic forms; allied structures are found over the head and along a *lateral line* (see below) in the tadpole, but when the frog emerges from the water they are lost. They, doubtless, indicate some unknown sense entirely beyond our experience, and either only possible or only necessary when the animal is submerged.

In addition to the ophthalmic moiety mentioned above, the seventh nerve has a vidian branch (vid.) running over the roof of the mouth, and besides this its main branches fork over the spiracle, just as V. forks over the mouth, and as IX. and X. fork over gill clefts. This nerve in the rabbit is evidently considerably modified from this more primitive condition.

The eighth is the auditory nerve, as in the rabbit.

The ninth nerve forks over the first branchial cleft.

The tenth nerve is easily exposed by cutting down through the body wall muscles over the gill clefts, into the anterior cardinal sinus (A.C.S.). It gives off (a) branches forking over the posterior four gill slits, (b) a great *lateral nerve* running inward, and back through the body-wall muscle, and connected with a line of sense organs similar to those in the head, the lateral line, and (c) a *visceral nerve* curving round to the oesophagus and stomach. In dissection it becomes very evident that the tenth nerve is really a *leash* of nerves, each one equivalent to the ninth.

We may here call the attention of the reader to the fact of the singular resemblance of V., VII., IX., and the factors of X. That each has a ventral fork, we have already noticed. Each also (?IX.) has a dorsal constituent connected with the sense organs of the skin. The vidian branch of VII., however, is not evidently represented in the others.

Section 16. The coelom of the dog-fish is peculiar — among the types we treat of — in the possession of two direct communications with the exterior, in addition to the customary indirect way through the oviduct. These are the abdominal pores (a.p.) on either side of the cloaca in either sex. They can always be readily demonstrated by probing out *from the body cavity*, in the direction indicated by the arrow (a.p.) in Figure 1, Sheet 15. They probably serve to equalize the internal and external pressure of the fish as it changes its depth in the water, just as the Eustachian tubes equalize the pressure on either side of the mammal's tympanic membrane.

Section 17. The musculature of the dog-fish body is cut into V-shaped segments, the point of the V being directed forward. The segments alternate with the vertebrae, and are called myomeres. Such a segmentation is evident, though less marked, in the body wall muscles of the frog, and in the abdominal musculature of the rabbit and other mammals it is still to be traced.

Section 18. The urogenital organs of the female dog-fish (Figure 1, Sheet 17) consist of an unpaired *ovary* (ov.), paired *oviducts* (o.d.), enlarged at one point to form an *oviducal gland* (o.d.g.), *kidneys* (k.), with *ureters* (ur.) uniting to form a *urinary sinus* (u.s.) opening into the cloaca by a median *urinary papilla* separate from the oviducal openings. The eggs contain much yolk, and, like those of the fowl, are very large; like the fowl, too, one of the ovaries is suppressed, and it is the right ovary that alone remains. The two oviducts meet in front of the liver ventral to the oesophagus, and have there a common opening by which the ova are received after being shed into the body cavity. The eggs receive an oblong horny case in the oviduct; in the figure such a case is figured as distending the duct at e. The *testes* of the male (T. in Figure 2) are partially confluent in the middle line. They communicate through *vasa efferentia* (v.e.) with the modified anterior part of the kidney, the *epididymis* (ep.), from which the *vas*

deferens (v.) runs to the median uro-genital sinus (u.g.s.), into which the *ureters* (ur.) also open. The silvery peritoneum (lining of the body cavity) covers over the reddish kidneys, and hides them in dissection.

Section 19. Figure 3, Sheet 17, is a generalized diagram of the uro-genital organs in the vertebrata; M.L. is the middle line of the body, G. is the genital organ, Pr. is the *pronephros*, or fore kidney, a structure which is never developed in the dog-fish, but which has functional importance in the tadpole and cod, and appears as a transitory rudiment in the chick. A duct, which is often spoken of as the *pronephric duct* (p.d.), and which we have figured under that name, is always developed. Anteriorly it opens into the body cavity. It is also called the Mullerian duct, and in the great majority of vertebrata it becomes the oviduct, uniting with its fellow, in the case of the dog-fish, ventral to the oesophagus. In the male it usually disappears; the uterus masculinus of the rabbit is still very generally regarded as a vestige of it. Kolliker has shown, however, that this interpretation is improbable. Ms. is the *mesonephros*, some or all of which becomes the *epididymis* in the male of types possessing that organ, and is connected with G. by the vasa efferentia. Mt., the *metanephros*, is, in -actual fact- [the frog], indistinguishably continuous with Ms., and is the functional kidney, its duct (*metanephric duct*) being either undifferentiated from the *mesonephric* (as is the case with the frog) or largely split off from it, as in the dog-fish, to form the ureter.

Section 20. The correspondence of the male organs of the dog-fish with those of the rabbit, will be more evident if the student imagine —

(a) the testes, vasa efferentia, and epididymis of each side to shift posteriorly until they reach a position on either side of the cloaca; and

(b) The uro-genital apertures, instead of meeting dorsally and posteriorly to the anus, to shift round that opening and meet anteriorly and ventrically to it.

Section 21. This completes our survey of this type. Except where we have specified differences, the general plan of its anatomy follows the
lines of the other vertebrate types described.

2. *Questions on the DogFish*

1. Describe the alimentary canal of the dog-fish, and compare it with that of the rabbit in detail.

2. Compare the coelom of the dog-fish and rabbit.

3. Draw diagrams to illustrate the course of the circulation in the dog-fish.

4. (a) Describe fully the heart of a dog-fish. (b) Compare it with that of a rabbit.

5. Give an account of the respiratory apparatus of the dog-fish.

6. Draw diagrams of a dog-fish vertebra, and compare the centrum with that of a rabbit.

7. Compare the vertebral column of the dog-fish and rabbit.

8. Draw diagrams of the limbs and limb-girdles of the dog-fish. Compare the pectoral with the pelvic fin.

9. Draw diagrams of (a) the male and (b) the female urogenital organs of the dog-fish. (c) Compare them carefully with those of the rabbit.

10. Compare the circulation in the kidney of dog-fish and rabbit.

11. Give an account of the cranio-facial apparatus of the dog-fish. State clearly what representation of this occurs in the frog and in the rabbit.

12. Give drawing (a) from above, (b) from the side, of the dog-fish brain.

13. State the origin and the distribution of the fifth, seventh, ninth, and tenth cranial nerves in the dog-fish.

14. Compare, one by one, the cranial nerves of the dog-fish with those of any higher vertebrate, as regards their origin and their distribution.

15. Describe the auditory organ of the dog-fish. What parts are added to this in the higher type?

16. Draw the cloaca (a) of a male, (b) a female dog-fish.

17. (*Practical.*) Demonstrate in a dog-fish the pathetic nerve, the opening between pericardium and coelom. the abdominal pores, and the ureter.

Amphioxus.

1. *Anatomy*.

Section 1. We find in Amphioxus the essential vertebrate features reduced to their simplest expression and, in addition, somewhat distorted. There are wide differences from that vertebrate plan with which the reader may now be considered familiar. There are no limbs. There is an unbroken fin along the median dorsal line and coming round along the ventral middle line for about half the animal's length. But two lowly vertebrates, the hag-fish and lamprey, have no limbs and a continuous fin. There is, as we shall see more clearly, a structure, the respiratory *atrium*, not apparently represented in the true vertebrate types, at least in their adult stages. There is no distinct heart, only a debateable brain, quite without the typical division into three primary vesicles, no skull, no structures whatever of cartilage or bone, no genital *ducts*, no kidneys at all resembling those of the vertebrata, no pancreas, no spleen; apparently no sympathetic chain, no *paired* sense organs, eyes, ears, or nasal sacs, in all of which points we have striking differences from all true vertebrata; and such a characteristic vertebrate peculiarity as the pineal gland we can only say is represented very doubtfully by the eye spot.

Section 2. The vertebral column is devoid of vertebrae; it is throughout life a rod of gelatinous tissue, the notochord (Figure 1, n.c.), surrounded by a cellular sheath. Such a rod is precursor to the vertebral column in the true vertebrates, but, except in such lowly forms as the lamprey, is usually replaced, partially (e.g., dog-fish) or wholly (as in the rabbit) by *at first* cartilaginous vertebrae whose bodies are derived from its sheath. Further, while in all true vertebrata the notochord of the developing young reaches anteriorly at most to the mid-brain, and is there at its termination enclosed by the middle portion of the skull, in *Amphioxus* it reaches far in front of the anterior extremity of the nervous system, to the end of the animal's body.* On this account the following classification is sometimes made of those animals which have a notochord: —

-Chordata (= *Vertebrata*, as used by Lankester).

1. Having the notochord reaching in front of the brain.
Cephalochorda = *Amphioxus*.

2. Having the notochord reaching anteriorly to the mid-brain, a brain of three primary vesicles and a skull.
Craniata = all "true vertebrata": fishes, amphibia, reptiles, birds, and mammals (*Vertebrata* of Balfour).

3. Having the notochord confined to the tail.
Urochorda = the ascidians, or sea-squirts, certain forms of life only recently recognised as relatives of the vertebrata.

* The anterior end of the notochord in the developing rabbit or dog lies where the middle of the basisphenoid bone is destined to be.

Section 3. Figure 1, Sheet 19, shows the general anatomy of *Amphioxus*. We recognise four important points of resemblance to the earlier phases of the higher and the permanent structure of the lower members of the *vertebrata*, and it is these that justify the inclusion of amphioxus in this volume. In the first place there is the —

-Notochord.
In the next, just *above it* (at s.c.) we find —

-A Dorsal Tubular Nervous Axis,
the spinal cord. Thirdly, the pharynx (ph.) is perforated by —

-Respiratory Slits,
though these, instead of being straight slashes, are modified from a U-shape [slant very much forward and are much more numerous than in any true vertebrate.]. -And-, Fourthly, there is, as we shall see, a —

-Vertebrate Type of Circulation.
[And finally the body-wall muscles are divided into —]

[-Myomers.]

Section 4. The alimentary canal of *Amphioxus* commences with an “oral cavity,” not represented in our vertebrata, surrounded by a number of *cirri*, or tentacles, supported by a horny substance which seems to be *chitin*, a common skeletal material among invertebrates. A *velum* (v.) forms a curtain, perforated by the mouth and by two smaller *hyoidean apertures*, between the oral cavity and the pharynx (ph.). “Pharynx” is here used in a wider sense than in the true vertebrata; it reaches back close to the liver, and is therefore equivalent to pharynx + oesophagus + a portion or all of the stomach. The [so-called] hyoidean apertures are not equivalent to the similarly-named parts of the vertebrata. Behind the pharynx the intestine (int.) runs straight out to the *anus* (an.), which opens not in the middle line, as one might expect, but in the left side! The liver lies usually on the creature’s right, and instead of being a compact gland, is simply bag-like.

Section 5. The circulation is peculiarly reduced (Figure 2). The cardiac aorta (c.ao.) lies along the ventral side of the pharynx, and sends branches up along the complete bars between the gill slits. There is no -distinct- heart, but the whole of the cardiac aorta is contractile, and at the bases of the aortic arches that run up the bars there are *contractile dilatations* that assist in the propulsion of the blood. Dorsal to the pharynx, as in fishes, there is a pair of *dorsal aorta* (d.ao.) that unite above the liver (compare the frog, for instance), and thence run backward as a median dorsal aorta (d.ao.’). A portal vein (p.v.) bring blood back from the intestine (and apparently from the whole posterior portion of the animal) to the liver. Thence hepatic veins (hep.) take it to the cardiac aorta.

{Lines from First Edition only.}
-When we remember that in the embryonic vertebrate the heart is at first a straight tube, this circulation appears even more strikingly vertebrate in its character than before.-

Section 6. The coelom, or body cavity, of *Amphioxus* lies, of course, as in the vertebrata, between the intestinal wall and the body

walls, and, just as in the vertebrata, it is largely reduced where gill slits occur. But matters are rather complicated by the presence of an atrial cavity round the pharynx, which is not certainly represented in the vertebrata, and which the student is at first apt to call the body cavity, although it is entirely distinct and different from that space. The mutual relation of the two will become apparent after a study of Figures 10, 11, 12 (Sheet 21). Figure 10 gives diagrammatically a section of a very young stage of *Amphioxus*; P is the pharynx portion of the alimentary canal, coe. is the coelom surrounding it at this stage here as elsewhere; mt.c. are certain lymph spaces, the *metapleural canals*, between which a small invagination (i.e., a pushing-in), at., of the outer epidermis occurs; n.c. is the notochord, and s.c. the spinal cord. The gill slits, by which P. communicates with the exterior, are not shown. Next Figure 11 shows the invagination (at.) pushing its way in, and cut off from the exterior by a meeting of the body wall below. Note that at. is a portion of the animal's exterior thus embraced by its body, and that its lining is therefore of the same material as the external integument. In Figure 12, at. is developing upward, so that the true body hangs into it. Now imagine the gill slits perforated, as shown by the double-headed arrow in Figure 12. Figure 3, on Sheet 20, is a less diagrammatic representation of a cross-section of the pharyngeal region (*vide* Figure 1, Sheet 19). The student should compare Figure 3, Sheet 20, and Figure 12, Sheet 21. The atrium and metapleural canals are easily recognised in both. In Figure 3 the coelom is much cut up by the gill slits, and we have remaining of it (a) the *dorsal coelomic canals* (d.c.c.) and (b) the *branchial canals* (br.c.) in the bars between the slits. The atrial cavity remains open to the exterior at one point, the atrial pore (at.p.).

Section 7. The method of examining cross-sections is an extremely convenient one in the study of such a type as *Amphioxus*. The student should very carefully go over and copy the six sections on Sheet 20, comparing Figure 1 as he goes. He should do this before reading what follows. One little matter must be borne in mind. These figures are merely intended to convey the great structural ideas, and they are considerably simplified; they must not be regarded as a substitute for the examination of microscopic sections. [He will notice a number of rounded masses from the body wall. The] -For

instance, the body-wall- muscles of *Amphioxus* are arranged in bundles bent sharply in an arrow shape, the point forward. -A number of these bundles are cut in any one section, and so the even shading of our diagrams, if they professed to be anything more than diagrams, should be broken up into masses.- These -bundles, we may mention-, are called *myomeres*, and they are indicated in Figure 1 by lines pointing acutely forward. [Several are consequently cut in any transverse section (Sheet 20), and these are the rounded masses he sees.] Similar *myomeres*, similarly situated, are found in fish, behind the head, and, less obviously, they occur with diminishing importance as the scale of the vertebrata is ascended.

Section 8. If we compare the nervous system of amphioxus with that of any vertebrate, we find at once a number of striking differences. In the first place, the skeletal covering of it, the cranium and the neural arches of vertebrae, are represented only by a greatly simplified connective tissue. In the next, a simple and slight anterior dilatation alone represents the brain. A patch of black pigment anterior to this (e.s.) may or may not be what its name implies an *eye-spot*. There is a *ciliated funnel*, c.f. (Figure 1, Sheet 19), opening *on the left side*, which has been assumed to be olfactory in its functions, and in the mouth chamber a *ciliated pit* (c.p.), which may, or may not, be an organ of taste. The ventral fissure of the spinal cord is absent. The dorsal nerves are without ganglia, and *do not come off in pairs*, but alternately, one to the left, then one to the right, one to the left, one to the right, and so on. The ventral nerves are very short, more numerous than the dorsal, and never unite with these latter to form mixed nerves.

The student will observe that here, just as in the case of the ciliated funnel and anus, the *Amphioxus* is not strictly symmetrical, but *twisted*, as it were, and so departs from the general rule of at least external bilateral symmetry obtaining among the vertebrates. It habitually lies on one side in the mud of the sea bottom, and it is probable that this external asymmetry is due to this habit, so that too much classificatory importance must not be attached to it. The soles and other related fish, for instance, are twisted and asymmetrical, through a similar specific habit, to such an extent that both eyes lie on one side of the animal.

Section 9. No kidney on the vertebrate pattern is found, but the following structures have, among others, been suggested as renal organs: —

(a) Certain canals, the *brown tubes of Lankester* (b.t.L., Figure 2, Sheet 19), a pair of pigmented tubes opening into the atrium at the hind end of the pharynx, lying forward along by the dorsal coelomic canals, and having an internal opening also.

(b) Certain tubuli described by Weiss as situated in a series along the upper corners of the atrial cavity, and communicating, after the fashion, of the "nephridia" of the earthworm, with the coelom and with the exterior (or, rather, with that portion of the animal's exterior enclosed in by the atrial wall; compare Section 6).

(c) The general epithelial lining of the atrium.

The reproductive organs (Figure 4, Sheet 20, g.) are masses of cells situated in an isolated part of the coelom in the atrial folds, and, having no ducts, their contents must escape into the atrium by rupture of the body-wall. Thence they escape either by gill-slits, pharynx and mouth, or, more generally, through the atrial pore. The animals, like all the vertebrata, are dioecious, i.e., male or female.

Section 10. The endostyle (end.), in Figures 3 and 4, is a ciliated path or groove on the under side of the pharynx, which is generally supposed to represent the thyroid gland of vertebrates. The vertebrate thyroid, early in development, is certainly an open and long narrow groove in the ventral side of the pharynx. The hyperpharyngeal groove (h.p.) has been in the past compared to the pituitary body, but there is little doubt now that this structure is represented by the ciliated pit.

Section 11. The student is advised to revise this chapter before proceeding, and to schedule carefully the anatomical features under the headings of (1.) distinctly vertebrate characters, (2.) characters contrasting with the normal vertebrate structure, (3.) facts of doubtful import, with the suggestions given in the text written against them.

2. *The Development of Amphioxus*

Section 12. The development of amphioxus, studied completely, is at once one of the most alluring and difficult tasks in the way of the zoologist; but certain of its earlier and most obvious fasts may very conveniently be taken into consideration now.

Section 13. The phenomena of the extrusion of polar bodies and fertilization are treated of later, and will, therefore, not be considered now. We will start our description with an egg-cell, which has escaped, of course, since there are no genital ducts, by rupture of the parent, has been fertilized by the male element, and is about to develop into a young amphioxus. It is simply a single cell, with some power of amoeboid motion, a single nucleus and nucleolus; and in amphioxus its protoplasm is clear and transparent. Frequently ova are loaded with granules of food store (yolk), which enable the young animal to go far with its development before it is hatched and has to begin fending for itself. Such an ovum as that of our present type, however being devoid of such yolk (*alecithal* = without yolk), necessitates a very early start in life, and, for reasons too complicated to state fully here, the development in such a case is considered particularly instructive and primitive by zoologists.

Section 14. The first thing to be seen in the developing cell is a deepening circular groove (Figure 1, Sheet 21), which divides the ovum into two parts. Another groove then cuts at right angles to this subdividing the two into four (Figure 2). Another groove, at right angles to both the former, follows, making the four eight (Figure 3). And so subdivision goes on. The whole process is called segmentation or cleavage.

Section 15. At the end of segmentation we get a *hollow* sphere of small cells, the cells separating from one another centrally and enclosing a cavity as the process proceeds. This is the blastosphere, shown diagrammatically in Figure 4, and of which an internal view, rather truer to the facts of the case as regards shape, is given as Figure 5. The central cavity is the segmentation cavity (s.c.).

Section 16. Invagination follows (Figure 6). In this process a portion of the blastosphere wall is the tucked into the rest, as indicated by the arrow, so that a two-layered sack is formed. The

space ar. is the *archenteron*, the primordial intestine, and its mouth is called, the *blastopore* (bp.). The outer layer of this double-walled sac is called the *epiblast*. For the present we will give the inner lining no special term. The young amphioxus has, at this stage, which is called the gastrula stage, a curious parallelism with such a lowly form as the *Hydra* of our ditches. This latter creature, like the gastrula, consists essentially of two layers of cells, an outer protective and sensory layer, and an inner digestive one; it has a primordial intestine, or *archenteron*, and its mouth is sometimes regarded as being a *blastopore*. All animals that have little yolk, and start early in life for themselves, pass through a gastrula stage, substantially the same as this of amphioxus.

Section 17. The anus is perforated later near the region occupied at this stage by the blastopore. Hence the anterior end of the future amphioxus, the head end, is pointing towards the Figure 6, and the letters ep. are marked on the side which will be dorsal.

Section 18. Figure 7 i. is a dorsal view of the gastrula at a somewhat later stage, and here indications of distinctly vertebrate relationships already appear. Figure 7 ii. is a cross-section, its position, being shown by cross-lines in 7 i. and 6. Note first that the epiblast along the mid-dorsal line is sinking in to form what is called the neural plate (n.p.), and simultaneously on either side of it rise the neural folds (n.f.). Now, at Figure 8, a slightly later stage is represented, and at 9 i. the inturned part is separated from the general external epiblast as the spinal cord. The remainder of the epiblast constitutes the epidermis.

Section 19. Reverting to Figure 7 ii., along the dorsal side of the archenteron a thickening of its wall appears, and is gradually pinched off from it to form a cellular rod, lying along under the nervous axis and above the intestine. This is the notochord (compare Figures 8 and 9).

Section 20. Finally, we note two series of buds of cells, one on either side of the archenteron in Figure 7 ii. In 8 these buds have become hollow vesicles, growing out from it, the *coelomic pouches*. They are further developed in 9; and in 9 ii., which is a diagrammatic figure, they are indicated by dotted lines. They finally appear to (? entirely) obliterate the segmentation cavity — they certainly do so

throughout the body; and their cavities are in time cut off from the *mesenteron*, by the gradual constriction of their openings. In this way the coelom (body cavity) arises as a series of hollow "archenteric" outgrowths, and ms. becomes the alimentary canal. mt.c., the metapleural canals, probably arise subsequently to, and independently of, the general coelomic space, by a splitting in the body-wall substance.

Section 21. Hence, in considering the structure of amphioxus, we have three series of cells from which its tissues are developed: —

1. The epiblast.

2. Walls of the coelomic pouches, which form (a) an inner lining to the epiblast, (b) an outer coating to the hypoblast, and (c) the mesentery (m.), by which the intestine is supported. This is the mesoblast.

3. The lining of the mesenteron, or hypoblast.

From the epiblast the epidermis (not the dermis), the nervous system (including the nerves), and the sensory part of all sense organs are derived. From the mesoblast the muscles, the dermis genital and excretory organs, circulatory fluid and apparatus, any skeletal structures; and all connective tissue are derived. The mass of the body is thus evidently made of mesoblast. The hypoblast is the *lining* of the intestine and of the glands which open into it; and the material of the notochord is also regarded, as hypoblast.

Section 22. Figure 9 ii. shows all the essential points of the structure of amphioxus. Epiblast is indicated by a line of dashes, mesoblast by dots, and hypoblast, dark or black. The true mouth is formed late by a tucking-in of epiblast, the *stomodaeum* (s.d.), which meets and fuses with the hypoblast, and is then perforated. The position of this mouth is at the velum. The formation of the atrium has been described. The metapleural folds run forward in front of the *velum*, as the *epipleurs* (ep. in Sections 1 and 2), and form an *oral hood* (b.c.), around which the tentacles appear, and which is evidently not equivalent to the vertebrate mouth cavity, but in front

of and outside it. The anus is formed by a tucking in, the *proctodaeum*, similar to the stomodaeum.

Section 23. The formation of the respiratory slits is complicated, and difficult to describe, but, since investigators have still to render its meaning apparent, it need not detain the elementary student.*

* See Balfour's *Embryology*, Volume 2, and Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science March, 1891.

3. *Questions on Amphioxus*

1. Draw diagrams, with the parts named, of the alimentary canal of (a) amphioxus, (b) any craniate; (c) indicate very shortly the principal structural differences between the two.

2. Describe, with a diagram, the circulation of amphioxus. Compare it with that of the craniata.

3. Draw from memory transverse sections, of amphioxus (a) in the oral region, (b) through the pharynx, (c) just anterior, and (d) just posterior to atrial pore.

4. Describe fully the coelom of amphioxus, and compare it with that of the frog in regard to (a) development, (b) its relation to other organs in the adult.

5. Compare the atrial cavity and coelom of amphioxus. To what series of cavities in the frog are the metapleural canals to be compared?

6. Describe the notochord of amphioxus, and point out its differences from the vertebrate notochord.

7. Describe, with diagrams, the nervous system of amphioxus, and compare its nervous axis, in detail, with that of a vertebrate.

8. Compare the genital organs of amphioxus with those of a higher vertebrate.

9. What structures have been regarded, as renal organs in amphioxus?

10. What is a gastrula? With what lower type has the gastrula been compared? Discuss the comparison.

Development.

1. *The Development of the Frog*.

Section 1. We have now to consider how the body of the frog is built up out of the egg cell, but previously to doing so we must revert to the reproductive organs of our type.

Section 2. In the testes of the male is found an intricate network of tubuli, the lining of which is, of course, an epithelium. The cells of this epithelium have their internal borders differentiated into *spermatozoa*, which, at a subsequent stage, are liberated. A spermatozoon (Figure 3, Sheet 13, sp.) is a rod-shaped cell containing a nucleus; in fact, consisting chiefly of nucleus, with a tail, the flagellum, which is vibratile, and forces the spermatozoon, forward by its lashing. The spermatozoa float in a fluid which is the joint product of the testes, anterior part of the kidney, and perhaps the prostate glands.

Section 3. In the ovary, the ova are formed, and grow to a considerable size. They are nucleated cells, the nucleus going by the special name of the *germinal vesicle* and the nucleolus the *germinal spot*. The ova prey upon the adjacent cells as they develop. The protoplasm of the ovum, except at that part of the surface where the germinal vesicle lies, is packed with a great amount of food material, the yolk granules. This yolk is non-living inert matter. An ovum such as this, in which the protoplasm is concentrated towards one pole, is called *telolecithal*.

Section 4. After the ovum has finished its growth, and elaborated the yolk within itself, a peculiar change occurs in the small area free from yolk — the *animal pole*, in which the germinal vesicle lies. This germinal vesicle divides, and one moiety is budded off from the ovum. The ovum has, in fact, undergone cell division into a very large cell containing most of its substance, and a small protoplasmic pimple surrounding half of its nucleus. The disproportion is so great between the two cells, that the phenomenon does not at first suggest the idea of cell division, and it is usually described as the extrusion of the first polar body. There follows a second and similar small cell,

behind the first, the second polar body. Since the nucleus of the ovum has divided twice, it is evident that the nucleus remaining now in the ovum is a quarter of the original nucleus. Very little protoplasm is given off with the polar bodies; they play no further part in development, but simply drop off and disappear. Not only in the frog's ovum, but in all vertebrata, two polar bodies are given off in this way before the sexual process occurs. Their exact meaning has been widely discussed. It is fairly evident that some material is removed from the nucleus, which would be detrimental to further developments, and the point debated is what is the precise nature of this *excreted* material. This burning question we can scarcely deal with here.

Section 5. But here we may point out that in all cells the function of the nucleus appears to be to determine growth and division. It is the centre of directive energy in the cell.

Section 6. Fertilization is effected by a spermatozoon meeting with the ovum. It fuses with it, its nucleus becoming the *male pro-nucleus*. This and the female pro-nucleus, left after the extrusion of the polar cells, move towards each other, and unite to form the first segmentation nucleus.

Section 7. The ovum next begins to divide. A furrow cutting deeper and deeper divides it into two; another follows at right angles to this, making the two four, and another equatorial furrow cuts off the animal pole from the yolk or *vegetative pole*. (See Sheet 22, Figures 1, 2, and 3.) And so segmentation (= *cleavage*) proceeds, and, at last, a hollow sphere, the *blastosphere* (Figure 4) is formed, with a segmentation cavity (s.c.). But, because of the presence of the yolk at the vegetative pole of ovum, and of the mechanical resistance it offers to the force of segmentation, the protoplasm there is not nearly so finely divided — the cells, that is to say, are much larger than at the animal pole. The blastosphere of the frog is like what the blastosphere of amphioxus would be, if the future hypoblast cells were enormously larger through their protoplasm being diluted with yolk.

Section 8. The next phase of development has an equally curious resemblance to and difference from what occurs in the case of the ova of animals which do not contain yolk. In such types (e.g.,

amphioxus) a part of the blastosphere wall is tucked into the rest, and a gastrula formed by this process of invagination. In the frog (Figure 5) there is a tucking-in, but the part that should lie *within* the gastrula, the yolk-containing cells, are far larger than the epiblast (ep.) which should, form the outer layer of cells. Hence the *epiblast* can only by continual growth accommodate what it must embrace, and the process of tucking-in is accompanied by one of growth of the epiblast, as shown by the unbarbed arrow, over the yolk. This stage is called the gastrula stage; ar. is the cavity of the gastrula, the *archenteron*; b.p. is its opening or blastopore. Such a gastrula, formed mainly by overgrowth of the epiblast, is called an *epibolic* gastrula, as distinguished from the *invaginate* gastrula of amphioxus. The difference is evidently entirely due to the presence of yolk, and the consequent modification of invagination in the former case.

Section 9. Comparing the two gastrulas, it is not difficult to see that if we imagine the *ventral* wall of the archenteron of amphioxus to have its cells enormously enlarged through the mixing of yolk with their protoplasm, we should have a gastrula essentially like that of the frog.

Section 10. Figure 6 shows a slightly later ovum than Figure 5, seen from the dorsal side. b.p. is the blastopore. In front of that appears a groove, the *neural groove*, bordered on either side by a ridge, the *neural fold* (n.f.). This is seen in section in Figure 7; s.c. is the neural groove; n.f., as before, the neural fold. The neural folds ultimately bend over and meet above, so that s.c. becomes a canal, and is finally separated from the epiblast to form the spinal cord. Below the neural groove a thickening of the dorsal wall of the archenteron appears, and is pinched off to form a longitudinal rod, the precursor of the vertebral column, the *notochord*, shown in Figure 7 (n.c.), as imperfectly pinched off.

Section 11. Simultaneously, on either side of the notochord appear a series of *solid* masses of cells, derived mainly by cell division from the cells of the wall of the archenteron, and filling up and obliterating the segmentation cavity. These masses increase in number by the addition of fresh ones behind, during development, and are visible in the dorsal view as brick-like masses, the *mesoblastic somites* or *proto-vertebrae* (Figure 6, i., ii., iii.). In Figure 7, these masses are

indicated by dotting. In such a primitive type as amphioxus these mesoblastic -somites- [masses] contain a cavity, destined to be the future body cavity, from the first. In the frog, the cavity is not at first apparent; the mesoblast at first seems quite solid, but subsequently what is called the *splitting of the mesoblast occurs*, and the body cavity (b.c. in Figure 7) appears. The outer mesoblast, lying immediately under the epiblast, constitutes the substance of the *somatopleur*, and from it will be formed the dermis, the muscles of the body wall, almost all the cartilage and bone of the skeleton, the substance of the limbs, the kidneys, genital organs, heart and bloodvessels, and, in short, everything between the dermis and the *coelom*, except the nervous system and nerves, and the notochord. The inner mesoblast, the mass of the *splanchnopleur*, will form the muscle and connective tissue of the wall of the alimentary canal, and the binding substance of the liver and other glands that open into the canal.

Section 12. Figure 8 is one which we reproduce, with the necessary changes in each plate of embryological figures given in this book, so that the student will find it a convenient, one for the purpose of comparison. The lines of dashes, in all cases, signify -*epiblast*- [*hypoblast*] , the unbroken black line is -*hypoblast*-, [*epiblast*] dotting shows *mesoblast*, and the shaded rod (n.c.) is the notochord. c.s. is the spinal cord; br.1, br.2, br.3 are the three primary vesicles which constitute the brain, and which form fore, mid, and hind brain respectively. I. is the intestine and Y. the yolk cells that at this early stage constitute its ventral wall.

Section 13. Figure 9 gives a similar diagram of a later stage, but here the blastopore is closed. An epiblastic tucking-in at st., the *stomodaeum* pre-figures the mouth; pr., the *proctodaeum*, is a similar posterior invagination which will become the anus. Y., the yolk, is evidently much absorbed. Figure 10 is a young tadpole, seen from the side. The still unabsorbed yolk in the ventral wall of the mesentery gives the creature a big belly. Its mouth is suctorial at this stage, and behind it is a sucker (s.) by which the larvae attach themselves to floating reeds and wood, as shown in the three black figures below.

Section 14. We may now consider the development of the

different organs slightly more in detail, though much of this has already been approached. The nervous system, before the closure of the neural groove, has three anterior dilatations, the fore-, mid-, and hind-brains, the first of which gives rise by hollow outgrowths to two pairs of lateral structures, the hemispheres and the optic vesicles. The latter give rise to the retina and optic nerve as described in {Development} Section 40.

Section 15. The hypoblastic *notochord* is early embraced by a mesoblastic sheath derived from the protovertebrae. This becomes truly cartilaginous, and at regular intervals is alternately thicker and thinner, compressing the notochord at the thicker parts. Hence the notochord has a beaded form within this, at first, continuous cartilaginous sheath. This sheath is soon cut into a series of vertebral bodies by jointings appearing through the points where the cartilage is thickest and the notochord most constricted. Hence what remains of the notochord lies *within* the vertebral bodies in the frog; while in a cartilaginous fish, such as the dog-fish, or in the embryonic rabbit, the lines of separation appear where the notochord is thickest, and it comes to lie *between* hollow-faced vertebrae. Cartilaginous neural arches and spines, formed outside the notochordal sheath, enclose the spinal cord in an arcade. The final phase is ossification. As the tadpole approaches the frog stage the vertebral column in the tail is rapidly absorbed, and its vestiges appear in the adult as the urostyle.

Section 16. The development of the skull is entirely dissimilar to that of the vertebral column. It is shown on Figures 1 and 8, Sheet 14; and in the section devoted to the frog's skull a very complete account of the process is given. The process of ossification is described under the histology of the Rabbit.

Section 17. The origin of the circulatory and respiratory organs is of especial interest in the frog. In the tadpole we have essentially the necessities and organization of the fish; in the adult frog we have a clear exposition of the structure of pigeon and rabbit. The tadpole has, at first, a straight tubular heart, burrowed out in somatic mesoblast, and produced forward into a *truncus arteriosus*. From this arise four afferent branchial arteries, running up along the sides of the four branchial arches, and supplying gills. They unite above on either side in paired hyper-branchial arteries, which meet behind

dorsal to the liver, to form a median dorsal aorta. Internal and external carotid arteries supply the head. These four afferent branchial arches are equivalent to the first four of the five vessels of the dog-fish. At first, the paired gills are three in number, *external*, and tree-like, covered by epiblast (Figures 10 and 11, e.g.), and not to be compared to fish gills in structure, or in fact -with- [to] any other gills within the limits of the vertebrata. Subsequently (hypoblastic) *internal gills* (int.g., Figure 12), strictly homologous with the gills of a fish, appear. Then a flap of skin outside the hyoid arch grows back to cover over the gills; this is the *operculum* (op. in Figures 11 and 12, Sheet 22), and it finally encloses them in a *gill chamber*, open only by a pore on the left, which resembles in structure and physiological meaning, but differs evidently very widely in development, from the amphioxus atrium. At this time, the lungs are developing as paired hollow outgrowths on the ventral side of the throat (Figure 12, L.). As the limbs develop, and the tail dwindles, the gill chamber is obliterated. The capillary interruptions of the gills on the branchial arches (*aortic arches*) are also obliterated. The *carotid gland* occupies the position of the first of these in the adult. The front branchial arch here, as in all higher vertebrata, becomes the carotid arch; the lingual represents the base of a pre-branchial vessel; the second branchial becomes the aortic arch. The *fourth* loses its connection with the dorsal aorta, and sends a branch to the developing lung, which becomes the *pulmonary* artery. The third disappears. A somewhat different account to this is still found in some text-books of the fate of this third branchial arch. Balfour would appear to have been of opinion that it gave rise to the cutaneous artery, and that the third and fourth vessels coalesced to form the pulmocutaneous, the fourth arch moving forward so as to arise from the base of the third; and most elementary works follow him. This opinion was strengthened by the fact that in the higher types (reptiles, birds, and mammals) no fourth branchial arch was observed, and the apparent third, becomes the pulmonary. But it has since been shown that a transitory third arch appears and disappears in these types.

Section 18. The origin of the renal organ and duct has very considerable controversial interest.* In Figure 13, Sheet 22, a

diagrammatic cross-section, of an embryo is shown. I. is the intestine, coe. the coelom, s.c. the spinal cord; n.c. the notochord, surrounded by n.s., the notochordal sheath, ao. is the dorsal aorta. In the masses of somatic mesoblast on either side, a longitudinal canal appears, which, in the torpedo, a fish related to the dog-fish, and in the rabbit, and possibly in all other cases, is epiblastic in origin. This is the segmental duct, which persists, apparently, as the Wolffian duct (W.D.). Ventral to this appears a parallel canal, the Mullerian duct (M.D.), which is often described as being split off from the segmental duct, but which is, very probably, an independent structure in the frog. A number of tubuli, at first metamerically arranged, now appear, each opening, on the one hand, into the coelom by a ciliated mouth, the *nephrostome* (n.s.), and on the other into the segmental duct. These tubuli are the *segmental tubes* or *nephridia*. There grows out from the aorta, towards each, a bunch, of bloodvessels, the *glomerulus* (compare Section 62, Rabbit). These tubuli ultimately become, in part, the renal tubuli, so that the primitive kidney stretches, at first, along the length of the body cavity from the region, of the gill-slits backward. The anterior part of the kidney, called the *pronephros*, disappears in the later larval stages. Internal to the kidney on either side there has appeared a longitudinal ridge, the genital ridge (g.r.), which gives rise to testes or ovary, as the case may be.

* In the discussion whether the vertebrata have arisen from some ancestral type, like the earthworm, metamerically segmented, and of fairly high organization, or from a much lower form, possibly even from a coelenterate. Such a discussion is entirely outside the scope of the book, though its mention is necessary to explain the importance given to these organs.

Section 19. The student should now compare the figures on Sheet 17. In the male, tubular connections are established between the testes and the middle part of the primitive kidney (*mesonephros*). These connections are the *vasa efferentia* (v.e.), and the mesonephros is now equivalent to the epididymis of the rabbit. The Wolffian duct is the urogenital duct of the adult, and the Mullerian duct is entirely absorbed, or remains, more or less, in exceptional cases.

In the female, the Mullerian duct increases greatly in length — so

that at sexual maturity its white coils appear thicker and longer than the intestine — and becomes the oviduct; the Wolffian duct is the ureter, and the mesonephros is not perverted in function from its primary renal duty.

Section 20. Tabulating these facts —

In the adult male:

Pronephros disappears.
The Mullerian duct (? = pronephric duct) disappears.
Mesonephros = Epididymis; its duct, the urogenital.
Metanephros and duct, not clearly marked off from Mesonephros.
(Compare Dog-fish, Section 19.)

In the adult female:

Pronephros disappears.
The Mullerian duct, the oviduct.
Mesonephros and Metanephros, the kidney, and their unseparated ducts, the ureters.

Section 21. *Hermaphrodism* (i.e., cases of common sex) is occasionally found among frogs; the testis produces ova in places, and the Mullerian duct is retained and functional. The ciliated nephrostomata remain open to a late stage of development in the frog, and in many amphibia throughout life. Their connection with the renal tubuli is, however, lost.

Section 22. The alimentary canal is, at first, a straight tube. Its disproportionate increase in length throws it into a spiral in the tadpole (int. Figure 11), and accounts for its coiling in the frog. The liver and other digestive glands are first formed, like the lungs, as hollow outgrowths, and their lining is therefore hypoblastic. The greatest relative length of intestine is found in the tadpole, which, being a purely vegetable feeder, must needs effect the maximum amount of preparatory change in its food.

2. *The Development of the Fowl*

Section 23. The frog has an ovum with a moderate allowance of yolk, but the quantity is only sufficient to start the little animal a part of its way towards the adult state. The fowl, on the contrary, has an enormous ovum, gorged excessively, with yolk, and as a consequence the chick is almost perfected when it is hatched. The so-called yolk, the yellow of an egg, is the ovum proper; around that is a coating of white albumen, in a shell membrane and a shell. At either end of the yolk (Figure 1, y.) twisted strands of albuminous matter, the *chalazae* (ch.) keep the yolk in place. The animal pole is a small grey protoplasmic area, the *germinal area* (g.a.), on the yolk.

Section 24. We pointed out that the presence of the yolk in the frog's egg led to a difference in the size of the cells at the animal and vegetable poles. The late F.M. Balfour, borrowing a mathematical technicality, suggested that the rate of segmentation in any part of an ovum varies inversely with the amount of yolk. In the fowl's egg, except just at the germinal area, the active protoplasm is at a minimum, the inert yolk at a maximum; the ratio of yolk to protoplasm is practically infinity, and the yolk therefore does not segment at all. The yolk has diluted the active protoplasm so much as to render its influence inappreciable. The germinal area segments, and lies upon the yolk which has defeated the efforts of its small mingling of protoplasm to divide. Such a type of segmentation in which only part of the ovum segments is called *meroblastic*. If we compare this with the typical *blastosphere* of the lower type, we see that it is, as it were, flattened out on the yolk. This stage is shown in section in the lower figure of Figure 1. b.d., the blastoderm, is from this point of view, a part of the ripped and flattened blastosphere, spread out on the yolk; s.c. is the segmentation cavity, and y. the yolk.

Section 25. There is no open invagination of an archenteron in the fowl, as in the frog — , the gastrula, like the blastosphere, stage is also masked. But, in the hinder region of the germinal area, a thick mass of cells, grows inward and forward, and, appearing in the dorsal view of the egg as a white streak, is called the primitive streak (p.s.). By a comparison of the figures of frog and fowl the student will easily perceive the complete correspondence of the position of this with the blastopore of the frog. The relation of the two will be easily

understood if we compare the fowl's archenteron to a glove-finger under pressure — its cavity is obliterated — and the frog's to the glove-finger blown out. The tension of the protoplasm, straining over the enormous yolk, answers to the pressure. The gastrula in the fowl is solid. The primitive streak is, in fact, *the scar of a closed blastopore*. As we should expect from this view of its homology, at the primitive streak, the three embryonic layers are continuous and indistinguishable (Figure 2). Elsewhere in the blastoderm they are distinctly separate. Just as the yolk cells of the frog form the ventral wall of the intestine, so nuclei appear along the upper side of the yolk of the fowl, where some protoplasm still exists, and give rise to the ventral hypoblastic cells. By conceiving a gradually increasing amount of yolk in the hypoblastic cells in the ventral side of the archenteron, the substantial identity of the gastrula stage in the three types, which at first appear so strikingly different, will be perceived. Carry Figures 4 and 5 of the frog one step further by increasing the size of the shaded yolk and leaving it unsegmented, and instead of ar. in 5 show a solid mass of cells, and the condition of things in the fowl would at once be rendered.

Section 26. Figure 3a of the fowl will conveniently serve for comparison with Figure 7 of the frog. The inturning of the medullary groove is entirely similar in the two cases. The mesoblast appears as solid mesoblastic somites. In the section above Figure 4 this layer is shown as having split into somatopleur (so.) and splanchnopleur (spch.). Figure 3 answers to Figure 6 of the frog, and Figure 4 is a later stage, in which the medullary groove is beginning to close at its middle part. The clear club-shaped area around the embryo (a.p.) is the *area pellucida*; the larger area without this is the *area opaca* (a.o.), in which the first bloodvessels arise by a running together and a specialization of cells. The entire germinal area grows steadily at its edges to creep over and enclose the yolk.

Section 27. So far, the essential differences between the development of fowl and frog, the *meroblastic* segmentation, absence of a typical gastrula, and the primitive streak, seem comprehensible on the theory that such differences are due to the presence of an enormous amount of yolk. Another difference that appears later is that, while the tadpole has an efficient pronephros,

the fowl, which has no larval (free imperfect) stages in its life history, has the merest indication of such a structure.

Section 28. Another striking contrast, due to, or connected with, this plethora of yolk, is the differentiation of a yolk sac (= umbilical vesicle) and the development of two new structures, the amnion and allantois, in the fowl. If the student will compare Figure 10 of the frog, he will see that the developing tadpole encloses in its abdomen all the yolk provided for it. This is a physical impossibility in the fowl. In the fowl (Figure 2, Sheet 24) the enormous yolk (Y.) lies outside of the embryo, and, as the cells of the germinal area grow slowly over it, *umbilical bloodvessels* are developed to absorb and carry the material to the embryo. In the case of an embryo sinking in upon, as it absorbs, this mass of nutritive material, a necessity for some respiratory structure is evident. From the hinder end of the fowl's intestine, in a position corresponding to the so-called, urinary bladder of the frog, a solid outgrowth, the allantois, which speedily becomes hollow, appears. Early stages are shown in Figures 1 and 2, Sheet 24 (al.); while the same thing is shown more diagrammatically on Sheet 23, Figure 6 (all.). This becomes at last a great hollow sac, which is applied closely to the porous shell, and the extent of which will be appreciated by looking at Figure 5, Sheet 24, where the allantois is shaded. Allantoic bloodvessels ramify thickly over its walls, and aeration occurs through the permeable shell.

Section 29. The nature of the *amnion* will be understood by following Figures 4b, 5, and 6 on Sheet 23. The three embryonic layers are indicated by broken lines, dots, and black lines, just as they are in the frog diagrams. Not only is the embryo slowly pinched off from the yolk sac (y.s.), but, as the yolk is absorbed beneath it, and it grows in size, it sinks into the space thus made, the extra-embryonic somatopleur and epiblast rise up round it as two folds, which are seen closing in 5, and closed in 6, over the dorsal side of the young chick. In this way a cavity, a., lined by epiblast, and called the amniotic cavity, is formed. Dorsal to this, in 6, comes a space lined by somatic mesoblast, and continuous with p.p., the pleuro-peritoneal cavity, or body cavity of the embryo. Outside this, again, is a layer, of somatopleur internally and epiblast externally, the *false amnion* (f.a.), which is continuous with the *serous membrane* (s.m.)

enclosing the rest of the egg. The student should, carefully copy these diagrams, with coloured pencils or inks for the different layers, and should compare them with the more realistic renderings of Figures 2, 5, and 8, Sheet 24.

Section 30. The heart in the fowl appears first as a *pair of vessels*, which unite to form a straight trunk in the median line, as the flattened-out embryo closes in from the yolk. The way in which this straight trunk is thrown, first of all, into the S shape of the fish heart, and then gradually assumes the adult form, is indicated roughly by Figure 3. In one respect the development of the heart does not follow the lines one would expect. Since, between the fish and the higher form comes the condition of such an animal as the frog, in which the auricles are divided, while there is only one ventricle, we might expect a stage in which the developing chick's heart would have one ventricle, and a septum between the auricles. But, as a matter of fact, the ventricles in fowl and rabbit are separated first, and the separation of the auricles follows, and is barely complete at birth.

Section 31. Two *vitelline veins* from the yolk sac (v.v.) flow into the heart from behind, as shown in Figure 1. A later more complete and more diagrammatic figure of the circulation is seen in Figure 7. At first there are two *anterior cardinal* (a.c.), and two *posterior cardinal veins* (p.c.) uniting to form Cuvierian sinuses (c.s.) that open into the heart just as in the dog-fish. But later the inferior cava is developed and extends backward, the posterior cardinals atrophy, the Cuvierian sinuses become the superior cavae, and the anterior cardinals the internal jugular veins. The vitelline veins (v.v.) flow, at first, uninterruptedly through the liver to the inferior cava, but, as development proceeds, a capillary system is established in the liver, and the through communication, the *ductus venosus*, is reduced — at last — completely. Bearing in mind that the yolk is outside the body in the fowl and inside it in the frog, the vitelline veins of the former have a considerable resemblance in position, and in their relation to the portal vein, to a portion of the single anterior abdominal vein. Blood is taken out to the allantois, however, by the arteries of the latter type.

Section 32. Five aortic arches are generally stated to appear altogether in the fowl, but not simultaneously. The first two, the

mandibular and the hyoid vascular arches, early disappear, and are not comparable to any in the frog. The third is the first branchial arch, and, like the corresponding arch in the frog, forms the carotid artery; the second branchial is the aortic arch; and what has hitherto been regarded as the third (the *fifth* arch, i.e.) the pulmonary artery. A transitory arch, it is now known, however, appears between the second branchial and the last, and it is therefore the fourth branchial arch which is the pulmonary, just as it is in the frog.

Section 33. Blood, it may be mentioned, first appears in the *area vasculosa*, the outer portion of the *area opaca*. Embryonic cells send out processes, and so become multipolar; the processes of adjacent cells coalesce. The nucleus divides, and empty spaces appear in the substance of each of the cells.

In this way, the cavities of the smaller vessels and capillaries are formed, and the products of the internal divisions of the cells become the corpuscles within the vessels. The red blood corpuscles of the rabbit, it may be added, are *nucleated* for a considerable portion of embryonic life. Larger vessels and the heart are burrowed, as it were, out of masses of mesoblast cells. The course of the blood in the embryo is by the veins to the right auricle, *thence through the imperfection of the auricular septum already alluded to, into the left auricle*. Then the left ventricle, aortic arches (for the future pulmonary artery is in communication by a part presently blocked, the *ductus arterious*, with the systemic aorta), arteries, capillaries, veins. The liver capillary system and the pulmonary system only become inserted upon the circulation at a comparatively late stage.

Section 34. With the exception of the reduction of the pronephros, what has been said of the development of the frog's nervous system, renal and reproductive organs, and skeleton, applies sufficiently to the fowl for our present purposes. The entire separation of Wolffian and Mullerian ducts from the very beginning of development is here beyond all question (*vide* Section 18). But the notochord in the fowl is not so distinctly connected with the hypoblast, and so distinct from the mesoblast, as it is in the lower type, and no gills, internal or external, are ever developed. The gill *slits* occur with a modification due to the slitting and flattening out of the embryo, already insisted upon; for, whereas in the tadpole they may be described as

perforations, in the fowl they appear as four notches between ingrowing processes that are endeavouring to meet in the middle line.

2. *The Development of the Rabbit*

Section 35. The early development of the rabbit is apt to puzzle students a little at first. We have an ovum practically free from yolk (*alecithal*), and, therefore, we find it dividing completely and almost equally. We naturally assume, from what we have learnt, that the next stages will be the formation of a hollow blastosphere, invagination, a gastrula forming mesoblast by hollow outgrowths from the archenteron, and so on. There is no yolk here to substitute epiboly (Section 9) for invagination, nor to obliterate the archenteron and the blastopore through its pressure.

Yet none of these things we have anticipated occur!

We find *solid* mesoblastic somites, we find primitive streak, allantois and amnion, features we have just been explaining as the consequence of an excess of yolk in the egg. We even find a yolk sac with no yolk in it.

Section 36. A solid mass of cells is formed at the beginning, called a *morula*, Figure 1. In this we are able to distinguish rather smaller outer layer cells (o.l.c.), and rather larger inner layer cells (i.l.c.), but these cells, in their later development, do not answer at all to the two primitive layers of the gastrula, and the name of *Van Beneden's blastopore* (V.B.b.), for a point where the outer layer of cells is incomplete over the inner, only commemorates the authorship of a misnomer. The uniformity, or agreement, in the development of our other vertebrate types is apparently departed from here.

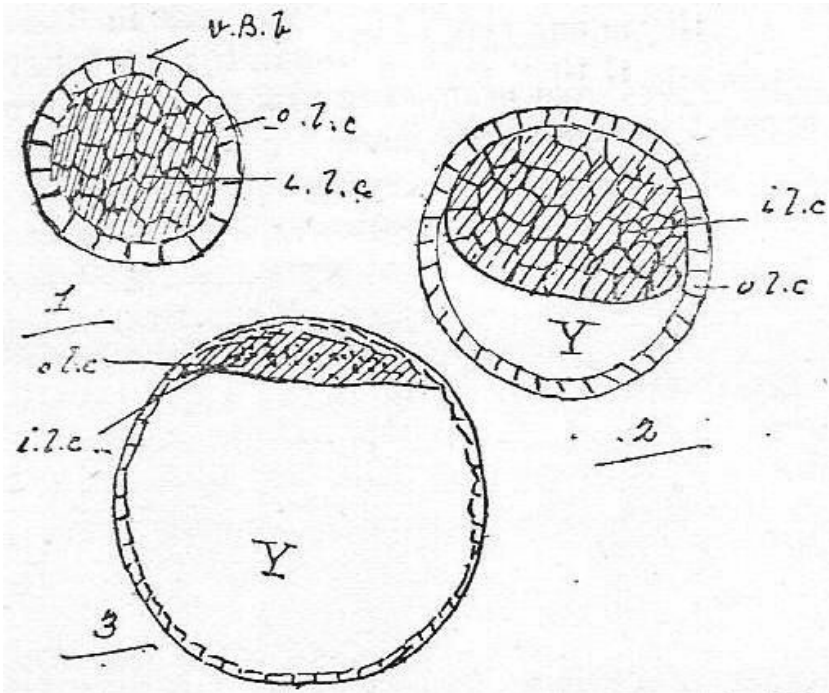

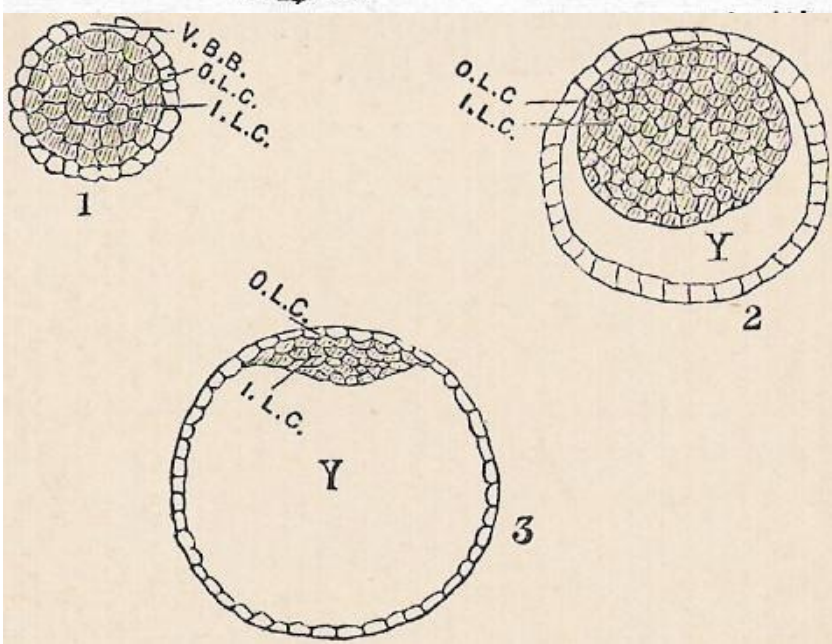

Section 37. As the egg develops, however, we are astonished to

find an increasing resemblance to that of the fowl. A split occurs at one point between outer layer and inner layer cells, and the space resulting (Y in Figure 2) is filled by an increasing amount of fluid, and rapidly enlarges, so that presently we have the state of affairs shown in 3, in which the inner layer cells are gathered together at one point on the surface of the ovum, and constitute the germinal area. If, with Hubrecht, we regard the outer layer cells as an egg membrane, there is a curious parallelism between this egg and the fowl's the fluid Y representing the yolk; and the inner layer cells the cells of the fowl's germinal area.

At any rate, the subsequent development goes far to justify such a view. The inner cells split into epi-, meso-, and hypo-blast, like the blastoderm in the fowl; there is a primitive streak and no blastopore; an amnion arises; the yolk sac, small and full of serous fluid, is cut off just as the enormous yolk of the fowl is cut off; and an allantois arises in the same way. There is no need to give special diagrams — Figures 3, 4b, 5, and 6 of the fowl will do in all respects, except proportion, for the development of the rabbit. The differences are such as we may account for, not on the supposition that the rabbit's ovum never had any yolk, but that an abundant yolk has been withdrawn from it. The nutrition of the embryo by yolk has been superseded by some better method. The supposition that the rabbit is descended from ancestors which, like the birds and reptiles, laid eggs with huge quantities of yolk, meets every circumstance of the case.

Section 38. But the allantois and yolk sac of the rabbit, though they correspond in development, differ entirely in function from the similar organs of the fowl. The yolk sac is of the very smallest nutritive value; instead of being the sole source of food, its contents scarcely avail the young rabbit at all as nourishment. Its presence in development is difficult to account for except on the supposition, that it was once of far greater importance. At an early stage, the outgrowing allantois, pushing in front of it the serous membrane, is closely applied to the lining of the mother's uterus. The maternal uterus and the embryonic allantois send out finger-like processes into each other which interlock, and the tissue between the abundant bloodvessels in them thins down to such an extent that nutritive material, peptones and carbohydrates, and oxygen also, diffuse freely

through it from mother to *foetus*,* and carbon dioxide, water, and urea from the *foetus* to the mother. The structure thus formed by the union of the wall of the maternal uterus, allantois, and the intermediate structures is called the placenta. Through its intermediation, the young rabbit becomes, as it were, rooted and *parasitic* on the mother, and utilizes her organs for its own alimentation, respiration, and excretion. It gives off CO2, H2O, and urea, by the placenta, and it receives O and elaborated food material through the same organ. This is the better method that has superseded the yolk.

* The embryo.

Section 39. In its later development, the general facts already enunciated with regard to the organs of frog and fowl hold, and where frog and fowl are stated to differ, the rabbit follows the fowl. In the circulation the left fourth vascular arch (second branchial) gives rise to the aortic arch; in the right the corresponding arch disappears, except so much of it as remains as the innominate artery. The azygos vein (Chapter 3) -is a vestige of- [is derived from] the right posterior cardinal sinus. Both pulmonary arteries in the rabbit are derived from the *left* sixth vascular arch (= fourth branchial). Compare Section 32. The allantois altogether disappears in the adult fowl; in the adult mammal a portion of its hollow stalk remains as the urinary bladder, and the point where it left the body is marked by the *umbilicus* or *navel*. The umbilical arteries become the small hypogastric arteries on either side of the urinary bladder. There is no trace of a pronephros at all in the rabbit.

Section 40. We may note here the development of the eye. This is shown in Figure 4, Sheet 24. A hollow cup-shaped vesicle from the brain grows out towards an at first hollow cellular ingrowth from the epidermis. The cavity within the wall of the cup derived from the brain is obliterated, [and the stalk withers,] the cup becomes the retina, and -its stalk- [thence fibres grow back to the brain to form] the optic nerve. The cellular ingrowth is the lens. The remainder of the eye-structures are of mesoblastic origin, except the superficial epithelium of the cornea. The retinal cup is not complete at first along the ventral line, so that the rim of the cup, viewed as in Figure 1, r., is horseshoe shaped. -Hence the optic nerve differs from other

nerves in being primitively hollow.- In all other sense organs, as, for instance, the olfactory sacs and the ears, the percipient epithelium is derived, from the epiblast directly, and not indirectly through the nervous system. These remarks apply to all vertebrate types.

Section 41. The supposition, that the general characters of the rabbit's ovum were stamped upon it as an heritage from a period when the ancestors of the mammals were egg-laying reptiles, is strengthened by the fact that the two lowest and most reptile-like of all the mammalia, the duck-billed platypus and the echidna, have been shown to depart from the distinctive mammalian character, and to lay eggs. And, in further confirmation of this supposition, we find, in tracing the mammals and reptiles back through the geological record, that in the Permian and Triassic rocks there occur central forms which combine, in a most remarkable way, reptilian and mammalian characteristics.

Section 42. In conclusion, we would earnestly recommend the student to *see* more of embryological fact than what is given him here. It is seeing and thinking, much more than reading, which will enable him to clothe the bare terms and phrases of embryology with coherent knowledge. In Howes' *Atlas of Biology* there is a much fuller series of figures of the frog's development than can be given here, and they are drawn by an abler hand than mine can pretend to be. There is also an *Atlas d'Embryologie*, by Mathias Duval, that makes the study of the fowl's development entertaining and altogether delightful. Such complete series as these are, from the nature of the case, impossible with the rabbit. Many students who take up the subject of biology do so only as an accessory to more extended work in other departments of science. To such, practical work in embryology is either altogether impossible, or only possibly to a very limited extent. The time it will consume is much greater, and the intellectual result is likely to be far less than the study of such plates as we have named.

2. *The Theory of Evolution*

Section 43. We have now considered our types, both from the standpoint of adult anatomy and from embryological data; and we

have seen through the vertebrate series a common structure underlying wide diversity in external appearance and detailed anatomy. We have seen a certain intermediateness of structure in the frog, as compared with the rabbit and dog-fish, notably in the skull and skeleton, in the circulation, in the ear, and in the reduced myomeres; and we have seen that the rabbit passes in these respects, and in others, through dog-fish- and frog-like stages in its development, and this alone would be quite sufficient to suggest that the similarities of structure are due to other causes than a primordial adaptation to certain conditions of life.

Section 44. It has been suggested by very excellent people that these resemblances are due to some unexplained necessity of adherence to *type*, as though, the power that they assume created these animals originally, as they are now, coupled creative ability with a plentiful lack of ideas, and so perforce repeated itself with impotent variations. On the other hand, we have the supposition that these are "family likenesses," and the marks of a *common ancestry*. This is the opinion now accepted by all zoologists of repute.

Section 45. It must not be for a moment imagined that it is implied that rabbits are descended from frogs, or frogs from dog-fish, but that these three forms are remote cousins, derived from some ancient and far simpler progenitor. But since both rabbit and frog pass through phases like the adult condition of the dog-fish, it seems probable that the dog-fish has remained more like the primordial form than these two, and similarly, the frog than the rabbit.

Section 46. Hence we may infer that the mammals were the last of the three groups, of which we have taken types, to appear upon the earth, and that the fishes preceded, the amphibia. Workers in an entirely independent province, that of palaeontology, completely endorse this supposition. The first Vertebrata to appear in the fossil history of the world are fishes; fish spines and *placoid scales* (compare dog-fish) appear in the Ordovician rocks. In the coal measures come the amphibia; and in the Permo-triassic strata, reptile-like mammals. In the Devonian rocks, which come between the Silurian and the coal measures, we find very plentiful remains of certain fish called the *dipnoi*, of which group three genera still survive; they display, in numberless features of their anatomy,

transitional characters between true fish and amphibia. Similarly, in the Permian come mammal-like reptiles, that point also downward to the amphibia. We find, therefore, the story told by the ovum written also in the rocks.

Section 47. Now, when this fact of a common ancestry is considered, it becomes necessary to explain how this gradual change of animal forms may have been brought about.

Section 48. Two subcontrary propositions hold of the young of any animal. It resembles in many points its parent. It differs in many points from its parent. The general scheme of structure and the greater lines of feature are parental, inherited; there are also novel and unique details that mark the individual. The first fact is the law of inheritance; the second, of variation.

Section 49. Now the parent or parents, since they live and breed, must be more or less, but sufficiently, adapted to their conditions of living — more or less fitted to the needs of life. The *variation* in the young animal will be one of three kinds: it will fit the animal still better to the conditions under which its kind live, or it will be a change for the worse, or it is possible to imagine that the variation — as in the colour variations of domesticated cats — will affect its prospects in life very little. In the first case, the probability is that the new animal will get on in life, and breed, and multiply above the average; in the second, it is probable that, in the competition for food and other amenities of life, the disadvantage, whatever it is, under which the animal suffers will shorten its career, and abbreviate the tale of its offspring; while, in the third case, an average career may be expected. Hence, disregarding accidents, which may be eliminated from the problem by taking many cases, there is a continual tendency among the members of a species of animals in favour of the proportionate increase of the individuals most completely adapted to the conditions under which the species lives. That is, while the conditions remain unchanged, the animals, considered as one group, are continually more highly perfected to live under those conditions. And under changed conditions the specific form will also change.

Section 50. The idea of this process of change may be perhaps rendered more vivid by giving an imaginary concrete instance of its working. In the jungles of India, which preserve a state of things

which has existed for immemorial years, we find the tiger, his stripes simulating jungle reeds, his noiseless approach learnt from nature in countless millions of lessons of success and failure, his perfectly powerful claws and execution methods; and, living in the same jungle, and with *him* as one of the conditions of life, are small deer, alert, swift, light of build, inconspicuous of colour, sharp of hearing, keen-eyed, keen-scented — because any downward variation from these attributes means swift and certain death. To capture the deer is a condition, of the tiger's life, to escape the tiger a condition of the deer's; and they play a great contest under these conditions, with life as the stake. The most alert deer almost always escape; the least so, perish.

Section 51. But conditions may alter. For instance, while most of these deer still live in the jungle with tigers, over a considerable area of their habitat, some change may be at work that thins the jungle, destroys the tigers in it, and brings in, let us say, wolves, as an enemy to the deer, instead of tigers. Now, against the wolves, which do not creep, but hunt noisily, and which do not spring suddenly upon prey, but follow by scent, and run it down in packs, keen eyes, sharp ears, acute perceptions, will be far less important than endurance in running. The deer, under the new conditions, will need coarser and more powerful limbs, and a larger chest; it will be an advantage to be rough and big, instead, of frail and inconspicuous, and the ears and eyes need not be so large. The old refinements will mean weakness and death; any variation along the line of size and coarseness will be advantageous. Slight and delicate deer will be continually being killed, rougher and stronger deer continually escaping. And so gradually, under the new circumstances, if they are not sufficient to exterminate the species, the finer characteristics will be eliminated, and a new variety of our old jungle deer will arise, and, if the separation and contrast of the conditions is sufficiently great and permanent, we may, at last, in the course of ages, get a new kind of deer specifically different in its limbs, body, sense organs, colour, and instincts, from the deer that live in the jungle. And these latter will, on their side, be still continually more perfected to the jungle life they are leading.

Section 52. Take a wider range of time and vaster changes of

condition than this, and it becomes possible to imagine how the social cattle — with their united front against an enemy, fierce onslaught, and their general adaptation to prairie life — have differentiated from the ancestors of the slight and timid deer; how the patient camel, with his storage hump, water storage, and feet padded against hot sand, has been moulded by the necessity of desert life from the same ancestral form. And so we may work back, and link these forms, and other purely vegetarian feeders, with remoter cousins, the ancestral hogs. Working in this way, we presently get a glimpse of a possible yet remoter connection of all these hoofed and mainly vegetarian animals, with certain "central types" that carry us across to the omnivorous, and, in some cases, almost entirely vegetarian bears, and to the great and prosperous family of clawed, meat-eaters. And thus we elucidate, at last, a thread of blood relationship between the, at present, strongly contrasted and antagonistic deer and tiger, and passing thence into still wider generalizations, it would be possible to connect the rabbit playing in the sunshine, with the frog in the ditch, the dog-fish in the sea-waters and the lancelet in the sand. For the transition from dog-fish to rabbit differs from the transition from one species of deer to another only in magnitude: it is an affair of vast epochs instead merely of thousands of years.

Section 53. It would, however, be beyond the design of this book to carry our demonstration of the credibility of a common ancestry of animals still further back. But we may point out here that it is not a theory, based merely upon one set of facts, but one singularly rich in confirmation. We can construct, on purely anatomical grounds, a theoretical pedigree. Now the independent study of embryology suggests exactly the same pedigree, and the entirely independent testimony of palaeontology is precisely in harmony with the already confirmed theory arrived at in this way.

Section 54. It is in the demonstration of this wonderful unity in life, only the more confirmed the more exhaustive our analysis becomes, that the educational value and human interest of biology chiefly lies. In the place of disconnected species of animals, arbitrarily created, and a belief in the settled inexplicable, the student finds an enlightening realization of uniform and active causes

beneath an apparent diversity. And the world is not made and dead like a cardboard model or a child's toy, but a living equilibrium; and every day and every hour, every living thing is being weighed in the balance and found sufficient or wanting.

Our little book is the merest beginning in zoology; we have stated one or two groups of facts and made one or two suggestions. The great things of the science of Darwin, Huxley, Wallace, and Balfour remain mainly untold. In the book of nature there are written, for instance, the triumphs of survival, the tragedy of death and extinction, the tragi-comedy of degradation and inheritance, the gruesome lesson of parasitism, and the political satire of colonial organisms. Zoology is, indeed, a philosophy and a literature to those who can read its symbols. In the contemplation of beauty of form and of mechanical beauty, and in the intellectual delight of tracing and elucidating relationships and criticising appearances, there is also for many a great reward in zoological study. With an increasing knowledge of the facts of the form of life, there gradually appears to the student the realization of an entire unity shaped out by their countless, and often beautiful, diversity. And at last, in the place of the manifoldness of a fair or a marine store, the student of science perceives the infinite variety of one consistent and comprehensive Being — a realization to which no other study leads him at present so surely.

To the student who feels inclined to amplify this brief outline of Vertebrate Anatomy, we may mention the following books: Wiedersheim's and Parker's *Vertebrates*, Huxley's *Anatomy of the Vertebrata*, Flower's *Osteology of the Mammalia*, Wallace's *Distribution*, Nicholson and Lyddeker's *Palaeontology* (Volume 2), the summaries in Rolleston's *Forms of Animal Life* (where a bibliography will be found), and Balfour's *Embryology*. But reading without practical work is a dull and unprofitable method of study.

2. *Questions on Embryology*

[All these questions were actually set at London University Examinations.]
{In Both Editions.}

1. Describe the changes in the egg-cell which precede fertilization; describe the process of fertilization and the formation of the primary cell-layers, as exhibited, in three of the animal types known to you. What is the notochord, and how is it developed in the frog?

2. Describe the early stages in the development of the egg of the fowl as far as the closure of the neural groove. How do you account for the primitive streak?

3. Describe the cleavage and the surface appearances of the egg of the frog and of the rabbit, up to the time when the first gill-slits appear in the embryo. Give illustrative diagrams of what you describe.

4. Describe the structure and cleavage of the ovum (a) of the frog, (b) of the fowl, and (c) of the rabbit. (d) Explain as far as possible the differences in the cleavage of these three eggs. (e) Point out how the embryo is nourished in each case, and (f) describe the constitution of the placenta in the rabbit.

5. (a) What are the protovertebrae? (b) How does the notochord originate in the frog? (c) How are the vertebrae laid down in the tadpole? (d) Describe the vertebral column of the adult frog. (e) In what important respects do the centra of the vertebrae of the frog, the dog-fish, and the rabbit differ from one another?

6. Give an account of the more important features in the development of the frog.

7. What temporary organs are developed in the embryo frog which are absent from the embryo bird and mammal, and what in the two latter which are absent from the former?

8. Draw diagrams, with the parts named, of the heart and great arteries of the frog, giving descriptions only in so far as is necessary to explain your diagrams; trace the development

of these structures in the tadpole; point out particularly in which of the embryonic visceral (branchial) arches the great arteries of the adult run.

9. Trace the history of the post-oral gill-slits and their accompanying cartilaginous bars and vascular arches in the frog, fowl, and rabbit.

10. Give a short account, with illustrative figures, of the mode of formation of the primary germinal layers in amphioxus and in the frog. What explanation can you give of the differences between the two cases?

11. Give a short account, with diagrammatic figures, of the principal changes which occur in the circulatory and respiratory organs during the metamorphosis of the tadpole into the frog.

12. How do protozoa differ from higher animals (metazoa) as regards (a) structure, (b) reproduction? Compare the process of fission in an amoeba with the segmentation of the ovum in amphioxus, pointing out the resemblances and differences between the two cases.

Miscellaneous Questions.

[Most of these questions were actually set at the Biological Examinations of London University.]
{In Both Editions.}

1. Describe (a) the digestive, (b) the circulatory, (c) the excretory, and (d) the reproductive organs of the amphioxus.

2. Describe the stomach and intestines of the dog-fish and rabbit, and point out in what way their differences are connected with diet.

3. Describe the mechanism of respiration in the adult frog, and contrast it with that of the tadpole.

4. Give an account of the structure of the epidermis and its outgrowths in the frog and the rabbit.

5. Describe the organs of circulation (heart and main arteries and veins) and respiration in the frog in its mature and immature states.

6. Give a brief account of the physiology of respiration. Describe fully the means by which respiration is effected in the following animals: — frog, amphioxus, rabbit, and dog-fish.

7. Describe the minute structure of the blood of the rabbit, frog, and amphioxus.

8. Describe and illustrate by means of sketches the chief points of difference between the skeleton of the rabbit as a typical mammal, and that of the common frog as a typical amphibian.

9. (a) Explain what is meant by the term “central nervous

system." (b) Describe the tissue elements which enter into its composition. (c) Explain, as far as you can, the function of each structure described. (d) How is the central nervous system developed in the frog, and (e) in the rabbit? (f) What conclusions may be drawn from the facts stated as to the origin of the central nervous system in evolution?

10. Give an account of the structure (including histology) and of the functions of the spinal cord and spinal nerves of the frog.

11. Give a description of the minute structure and chemical characters of the following tissues as seen in the frog: — cartilage, bone, muscle. From which of the primary cell-layers of the embryo are they respectively developed?

12. What substance is excreted by the renal organ of a frog, and what relation does this substance bear to the general life of the organism? Describe the parts by which similar excretion is believed to be effected in amoeba, hydra, earthworm, mussel, and lobster.

13. Describe, with illustrative sketches, the structure of the connective tissue, cartilage, and muscular tissue of a frog. Also describe the structure of the muscular tissue of the lobster and snail.

14. Give in account of the more important features in the development of the frog.

15. Describe and compare the structure of the renal organs in a frog and a rabbit.

16. Give an account of the structure of the genito-urinary organs of the frog. Compare these organs of the frog with those of the dog-fish and of the rabbit. Distinguish in each case the conditions of the two sexes, and describe briefly the microscopic structure and development of the ova and of the

spermatozoa.

17. Describe, with diagrams, the arrangement of the urinary and generative organs in the male of (a) the rabbit, (b) the dog-fish, and (c) the frog; (d) point out the most important differences between them.

18. (a) Describe the structure of the ovarian egg of the rabbit, (b) and of the pigeon, (c) and of the frog; (d) from what part of the embryo do they originate? (e) What is the structure and origin of the ovarian follicle in the rabbit, and (f) of the ovarian stroma? (g) What is the "granulosa" and what the "zona pellucida"?

19. Describe the pre-segmentation changes, mode of impregnation, and early stages of development in the ovum of the frog, as far as the closure of the neural canal.

20. Illustrate, with diagrams, from the structure of typical organisms, the principle of repetition of similar parts.

Note on Making Comparisons.

Students preparing for examinations are frequently troubled by "comparison" questions. Tabulation is often recommended, but we are inclined to favour a rather more flexible plan of marking off differences and resemblances. In tabulation a considerable loss of time is occasioned by writing down the features of both the things compared, and this is a serious consideration for the examinee. We advise him therefore, first, if he possibly can, to draw side by side and in corresponding positions the two things under consideration, and then, going over them in a methodical way, to state simply the difference between each homologous part. We append as examples three test answers actually submitted (with figures) in "Correspondence" work: —

1. Compare the brain of the frog with that of the rabbit.

In the frog's *fore-brain* —

The olfactory lobes are fused in the middle line.

There is no corpus callosum, nor is there a middle commissure to the third ventricle.

The cerebral hemispheres are not convoluted, and, looked at from the dorsal aspect, do not hide the thalamencephalon and mid-brain.

The pineal gland lies in the cranial wall and not deeply between the hemispheres, and its stalk is longer and tilts forward.

In the *mid-brain* —

The optic lobes are two, instead of being corpora quadrigemina, and hollow.

In the *hind-brain* —

The cerebellum is a very small transverse band, and has no lateral parts.

The medulla is relatively larger.

There are no spinal accessory nor hypoglossal nerves to the brain.

2. Compare the vertebrae of dog-fish, rabbit, and frog.

The centra of the dog-fish are -opistho- [amphi]-coelous (i.e., hollow at either end).

The centra of the rabbit are flat-faced.

The centra of the frog are procoelous (hollow in front).

The notochord persists *between* the centra in the dog-fish and rabbit, *within* the centra in frog.

The centra of the rabbit have epiphyses, absent in the dogfish and frog.

The transverse processes of the rabbit typically bear ribs. Short ribs occur in the dog-fish, but their homology with those of the rabbit is doubtful. The frog has no ribs.

The interneural plates are peculiar to the dog-fish in this comparison.

3. Compare the skull of the dog with that of the frog.
The Brain Case —

Of the frog is a cylindrical box, from which the otic capsules project conspicuously on either side. It contains only two ossifications in its cartilaginous substance (the sphen-ethmoid and the ex-occipital), being protected by the membrane bones, the parieto-frontals above and the parasphenoid below.

In the mammal it is enormously inflated, and the otic capsules are imbedded in its wall. There are supra- and basi- as well as ex-occipital bones; the para-sphenoid is (? entirely) gone, and its place is taken by the basi- and pre-sphenoids, and the lateral walls contain fresh paired ossifications, the ali- and orbito-sphenoids — all cartilage bones. The sphenethmoid is perhaps represented in part by

the ethmoid.

As a result of the inflation of the brain-case, the squamosal, which slopes downward and outward in the frog, and overlies the cartilaginous suspensorium (quadrate cartilage), has become a constituent of the brain-case wall, and slopes downwardly and in.

Jaw Suspension —

The point of attachment of the jaw has shifted outward, and the original suspensorial cartilage (the quadrate) has taken on a new and minor function as the incus of the middle ear — the squamosal superseding it as the suspensory part.

Lower Jaw —

Distinct bones in the frog; one mass in the dog.

Otic Capsule —

Position as specified. *One* centre of ossification in the frog forming pro-otic; *several* fuse together and form periotic of the dog.

There is no bulla and no external ear in the frog.

Palate —

In the frog the posterior nares open into the front of the mouth. In the dog the maxillae and palatines send plates down and in (the palatine plates) to cut off a nasal passage from the rest of the buccal chamber, and carry the posterior nares back to the pharynx, thus cutting the vomers off from the mouth roof.

The pterygoids in the dog are much reduced, and do not reach back to the suspensorium.

The frog has no lachrymal bone.

Syllabus of Practical Work.

We would impress upon the student at the outset the importance of some preliminary reading before dissection is undertaken. No one would dream of attempting to explore a deserted city without some previous study of maps and guide-books, but we find again and again students undertaking to explore the complicated anatomy of a vertebrated animal without the slightest, or only the slightest, preparatory reading. This is entirely a mistake. A student should be familiar with the nomenclature of the structures he contemplates examining, he should have some idea of their mutual relations and functions, or his attention will inevitably be diverted by the difficulty of new names and physiological questionings to the neglect of his dissection, and that careful observation of form and mutual position which is the essential object of dissection. On the other hand, it is equally necessary — perhaps more so — to warn students against the bookish fallacy, and to assure them of the absolute impossibility of realizing biological facts from reading alone. Practical work can alone confirm and complete the knowledge to which the text-book is the guide. In scientific teaching it may sometimes be convenient for the thought to precede the thing, but until the thing has been dealt with the knowledge gained is an unsatisfactory and unstable possession.

For such dissection as the subject-matter of this book requires, the following appliances will be needed: —

(a) Two or three scalpels of various sizes.

(b) Scissors, which must taper gradually, have straight blades, and be pointed at the ends, and which *must* bite right up to the tips (or they are useless). Two pairs, small and large, are advisable.

(c) *Forceps*, which must hold firmly, and meet truly at the points.

(d) Two needles set in wooden handles.

(e) An ordinary watchmaker's eye-glass is very helpful, but not indispensable.

(f) A dissecting dish — an ordinary pie dish will do — into which melted paraffin wax has been poured, to the depth of, say, three-quarters of an inch, and allowed to solidify. (This wax may be blackened by mixture with lampblack. If the wax floats up at any time, it can, of course, be remelted. Or it may be loaded with lead.)

(g) A rough table or board (for the rabbit and dog-fish).

(h) Blanket pins, and ordinary pins.

(i) A pickle or other wide-mouthed jar, and some common, methylated spirit.

(j) A microscope, with low power of 1 inch or 1/2 inch, and high power 1/6 inch or 1/4 inch. Glass slips and cover glasses, and a bottle of very weak (1 per cent.) solution of salt.

Animals for dissection may be obtained from the recognised dealers, who usually advertise in such scientific periodicals as *Nature*, *Natural Science*, and *Knowledge*. Sinel (naturalist, Jersey) is the most satisfactory dealer in dog-fish in our experience; Bolton (Malvern) will supply *Amphioxus* through the post; frogs and rabbits may be obtained anywhere. The tame variety of rabbit is quite satisfactory for the purpose of dissection.

The following notes may possibly be of some use to the student; they follow the lines of work arranged by the author for the evening classes of the University Tutorial College, classes considerably restricted as regards time, when compared with ordinary laboratory workers. Most of the sections below occupied about three hours, but for a student working alone they are more likely to take four or five, and even then it is not probable that they will be so satisfactory as if performed under skilled supervision. There are many points extremely difficult to convey verbally which are elucidated at once by actual demonstration upon a specimen. Each of these dissections should be repeated, and it is well if a different condition of the type is

selected for the repetition — an old one if the first specimen was immature, a female if the first was a male.

The Rabbit

May be killed by chloroform, or potassium cyanide, or drowned. It may also be readily suffocated with house-hold gas. It should be killed immediately before use, as otherwise the gastric juice attacks the wall of the stomach, and the dissection is, in consequence, rendered extremely disagreeable. A very young rabbit is unsatisfactory as regards the genitalia, but otherwise there is no objection to a little one, and it has this advantage — that it may be immersed more conveniently under water, in a large pie dish, for purposes of fine dissection. The external features of the animal should be examined: eyelids, whiskers and teeth, toes, anus, perineal space on either side of the same, urogenital opening, and position of the ribs, vertebral column, and limb girdles beneath the skin should be made out. Then the animal should be pinned out through the legs, the ventral surface uppermost, the skin opened up along the middle line from pelvic girdle to symphyses of jaw; separated from the body wall below by means of the handle of a scalpel, and turned back; and then the abdominal wall should be cut into and two flaps pinned back to expose its contents. Note the xiphisternum. The caecum and colon will be recognised (Section 16); the stomach, the right and left central, and left lateral lobes of the liver will probably be apparent; and the urinary bladder (especially if distended) in the middle line behind. Without any further dissection, but simply by turning the parts over, all the structures of the abdomen in Figure 1, Sheet 1, will be identified. Seek especially for and note particularly, the gall bladder, bile duct, and portal vein, pancreatic duct, sacculus rotundus, vermiform appendix, ureters (by pulling urinary bladder forward), genital ducts (looping over ureters), spleen, kidneys, and adrenals. The vena cava inferior is seen dorsally. The genital duct guides the student to the genital gland; if the subject is a male, the testes may be exposed by dissection, or by pulling the vas deferens gently the scrotal sac will be turned inside out, and the testes brought into view. The ovary lies exposed without dissection posterior to the

kidney. Examine all this carefully, and make small sketches of points of interest — the duodenal loop and the pyloric end of the stomach, for instance; the meeting of colon, caecum, and sacculus rotundus again; or the urinary bladder and adjacent parts. Note the dorsal aorta and vena cava and their connexions behind. (Compare figure of circulation.) Cut through pelvic girdle, and remove one hind leg, to see bladder and genital ducts better (compare Sheet 10). Wash away any blood that may flow. Turn all the intestines over to the animal's *right*, and see the dorsal aorta and vena cava inferior of the abdomen, the inferior mesenteric artery, and the spermatic (or ovarian) artery (compare, of course, with figure in book). In front, immediately dorsal to the spleen, is a variable quantity of lymphoidal tissue, which must be very carefully cleared to see the superior mesenteric and coeliac arteries. Separate Spigelian lobe from stomach, and look for vagus nerve descending by oesophagus, solar plexus around the superior mesenteric artery, and thrown up very distinctly by the purple vena cava inferior beneath, and the splanchnic nerve. To see the abdominal sympathetic behind, gently remove the peritoneum that lies on either side of the aorta; blood-vessels will be seen running in between the vertebral bodies, and the sympathetic chain, with its ganglia, made out very distinctly, as it runs across them longitudinally. Now cut oesophagus just in front of stomach, and cut the rectum, cut through the mesentery supporting the intestine, and remove and unravel alimentary canal; cut open, wash out, and examine caecum and stomach. Bleeding to a considerable extent is inevitable, chiefly from the portal vein. The liver had better remain if the same rabbit is to serve for the second dissection.

Second Dissection. — Skin front of thorax and neck. Note subclavian veins running out to fore limbs — avoid cutting these. Cut through ribs and remove front of thorax, to expose its contents; cut up middle line of neck, and clear off small muscle bands, to expose bloodvessels; pick away carefully whatever is left of thymus gland; make out structure of heart and blood-vessels, as described, in Chapter 3; note larynx and trachea. Now proceed to the examination of the nerves of this region. See phrenic nerve, by vena cava inferior, and between heart and lungs, and sympathetic, running over the heads of the ribs. By the common carotids will be found the large

white vagus nerve, the greyish sympathetic, and a small branch of X., *the depressor*. Make out branches of X. named in text. The big white cervical spinal nerves will be evident dorsally. Clear forward into the angle between the jaw and the bulla tympani, to see XII. and XI.; IX. will be found, lying deeper, dorsal to the carotid artery and body of the hyoid. Compare with figure given of this. Skin the cheek, and see VII. running over it. Cut through malar and remove it; cut through lower jaw-bone and turn it back, to see the third branch of the fifth nerve on its inner side; examine the muscles of eyeball, and remove it, to expose the first and second branches of V. — the latter is especially deep within orbit. Remove, open, wash out, and examine the heart. Shave off the dorsal wall of cranium, to expose hemispheres of brain, and then put the head in strong spirit for a week or so. With a second rabbit, this dissection may advantageously be varied by removing the lower jaw, cutting -up- [*through*] *soft palate*, and observing openings of the Eustachian tubes. [The tonsils (on the *ventral* side of the soft palate) must not confused with these.] The heart should also be cut out, washed out and examined (Compare Sections 38, 44.)

Third Dissection. — (Before this is performed the mammalian skull should have been studied and examined.) Take the head of a rabbit, the brain of which has been hardened by spirit, and carefully remove cranium; be particularly careful in picking away the periotic bone, on account of the flocculi of cerebellum. It is difficult to avoid injury to the pituitary body embedded in the basisphenoid bone. Examine with the help of Sheet 8. Make the sections there indicated.

The Frog

May be killed by drowning in dilute methylated spirit, or by chloroform. Take a recently-killed frog, and examine a drop of its blood, spread out on a glass slip, under the microscope; compare it with your own. Before using the high power, put a cover glass over the object, of course. Scrape the roof of the mouth of the frog gently, to obtain ciliated epithelium; and mount in very weak salt solution — the cilia will still be active. Squamous epithelium may be seen by the student similarly scraping the interior of his own cheek. Take a piece

of muscle from one of the frog's limbs, tease out with needles upon a glass slip, and examine. To see the striations clearly, the high power will be needed. Compare a piece of muscle from the wall of the alimentary canal. Similarly examine nerve and connective tissue.

First Dissection. — Pin out the frog in a dissecting dish, ventral surface uppermost, and cover with water. Open up the skin along the mid-ventral line. Note the large sub-cutaneous lymph spaces, the pelvic and pectoral girdles, and the anterior abdominal vein. Cut into the body cavity on one side of this latter, cut across in front of where the vein dips down to liver, and *peel* the body wall away from it. The xiphisternum will probably be cut in this operation. In early spring the females are greatly distended with ova, and the greater portion of the ovary may, with advantage, be removed. The oviduct is dead white then, and larger and much more in evidence than the (pinkish) intestine even. Turn over the viscera, and compare with Sheet 11; one lung is often found greatly inflated, and then projects back into the body cavity; the stomach is, in some cases, pushed forward and hidden behind the shoulder girdle. Observe the allantoic bladder, the spleen, gall bladder, portal vein, and pancreas. By squeezing the gall bladder gently, the bile duct will be injected with bile, and will be apparent if the stomach is turned over. The oesophagus, just in front of the stomach, should be cut through, and the rectum, and the mesentery and alimentary canal supported by it, removed. This will expose the urogenital organs. (*Vide* Figures given.) These vary greatly, especially in the females, at different seasons. The condition figured would be seen in late autumn, or winter. In spring females are often found copulating with males, and then the ovary itself is inconspicuous, while the lower part of the oviduct is enormously distended with ova, so as to be mistaken sometimes for the ovary by those who fail to note that the ova are enclosed by a thin semi-transparent skin (wall of oviduct). The vena cava inferior is seen between the kidneys and the renal portal vein beside the ureter. Cutting through the mesentery supporting the kidney laterally, the dorsal aorta is exposed, and on either side of it the sympathetic chain and rami communicantes, often tinged with black pigment. This black pigment is a frequent but variable feature of the frog's anatomy, and usually dapples or blackens the testes, and also

sometimes darkens the otherwise pale pink arteries. Behind the kidneys the sciatic plexus also becomes visible. Careful drawings should be made. Cut off the head of the frog, shave off top of brain case, and put the head in strong spirit.

Second Dissection. — A fresh frog is required. Pin out under water as before, and open up body cavity. Now carefully remove the muscle from the ventral portion of the shoulder girdle, to expose the clavicles and coracoids. Cut away xiphisternum, and then cut through clavicles and coracoids on either side, and remove ventral part of shoulder girdle, to expose the heart. Open out the cut portions of body wall and pin. The veins going towards the heart should now, with a little examination, be evident. Make out the external jugular, the innominate, and its two branches, and the pulmo-cutaneous and vena cava superior. Clear by carefully picking away any shreds of semi-transparent tissue. Make out, by feeling, the position of the hyoid body, and of its anterior cornua. Note the hypoglossal nerve (first spinal) running ventral to this, and the ninth cranial nerve, running parallel to it but dorsal to the hyoid — hidden therefore by the hyoid, and reappearing in front. The vagus may also be made out less distinctly, running "postero-ventrally" towards the heart. By clearing the muscle by the ramus of the jaw, VII. may be seen, and the third branch of V., running across the jaw at about the middle of its length. Pick off the thin transparent pericardium from the heart very carefully, and proceed to cut away all the veins made out. The truncus arteriosus may then be followed up as it branches. Note all the branches shown in the figures in this book. The precise position of the vessels will vary to a certain extent with the attitude in which the frog is pinned. The cutaneous artery will prevent the student following up the aortic arch until it is cut; then the arch may be followed round until it meets its fellow to form the dorsal aorta. Note the sympathetic again. Make careful drawings of all this. Cut off lower jaw, and note posterior nares and Eustachian openings. If time allows, remove the heart, and examine by cutting open and washing. (Compare, Section 44) Remove eyeball, to see the first and second branches of the fifth nerve, and the Vidian (i.e. palatial) branch of the seventh.

Third Dissection. — Read the account of the frog's skull

carefully. Take the head of a recently killed frog and drop into boiling water for a minute. Then pick off, very carefully, muscle, connective tissue, nerves, and etc., to clear the cranio-facial apparatus; examine the bones, compare with figures given in this book, and draw. Take the head, which has been in spirit a fortnight or so, pick away cranium, and compare brain with figures given. Examine ventricles, by taking sections, after drawings have been made.

The DogFish

First Dissection. — Examine external characters, nasal grooves — no internal nares — fins, spiracle, scales passing over lips, and cloaca. Cut off tail below the cloacal opening. The males are distinguished by the large claspers along the inner edge of the pelvic fin. Open up body cavity. Usually this is in a terrible mess in the fish supplied by dealers, through the *post-mortem* digestion of the stomach. Wash out all this under a stream of water from a tap or water-bottle. Frequently the testes are washed out of the male in this operation and ova from the loose ovaries in the female. Now compare with figure given in this book, allowing for the collapse of the stomach, if it has occurred. Cut through the oesophagus and rectum, and remove alimentary canal from body; cut open and wash out the intestine, and examine spiral valve. Now make a careful examination of the cloaca and its apertures, and dissect away the peritoneum hiding the kidney. In the female find the opening of the oviducts in front of the liver. Remove liver, and cut off body now behind pectoral fin. Before throwing tail and hinder part of body away, note the myotomes of body wall, the notochord and vertebral body, neural canal, and, in the tail, the haemal canal. [(See {Section 9 the Dog-fish})]

{Lines from First Edition only.}
-The relation of the vertebral bodies to the notochord may be very well seen by taking successive slices, about one-tenth of an inch thick, through the vertebral body. The cartilage is hard and semi-transparent, the notochord jelly-like, least at the centres of the centra,

and at a maximum intervertebrally.-

[The notochord is a soft jelly.] Cut away the ventral part of the pectoral girdle, to open pericardium. With a seeker, make out the pericardio peritoneal opening. Cut into the sinus venous, and run seekers into the Cuvierian and hepatic sinuses. [Cut open the Cuvierian and posterior cardinal sinuses, and run seekers into their affluents.] Dissect along the truncus arteriosus to afferent branchials. [Cut away the heart and oesophagus; run a seeker up the dorsal aorta and cut along it from the ventral side to subclavian and efferent branchial arteries.] Skin the top of the head. Note, while doing this, the yellow, jelly-like sense-tubuli beneath the skin. Shave off top of brain-case, and leave the head in spirit for a week or so.

Second Dissection. — Place the head with the ventral side downward, skin all the dorsal surface as yet unskinned. Refer to book for precise position of the anterior cardinal sinus, and then cut down through body wall into this just over gill slits. The tenth nerve will become visible, with its “slit” branches athwart the floor of the sinus. Clear to make this more evident, and make out its lateral line and visceral branches, and the ninth nerve.

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[The pharyngo-branchials may be felt beneath the sinus. Run a seeker from the dorsal aorta to the efferent branchials.]

Proceed now to orbit, and, without any dissection beyond the removal of skin, make out recti and oblique muscles of eyeball, and the optic, third and fourth nerves. Cut through these structures carefully and remove, exposing nerves seven, and five, as described and figured in the text. Examine the otic capsule by taking successive slices through it to show the labyrinth of the ear. -Remove the dorsal wall of the skull to obtain a dorsal view of brain. If this is sufficiently hard, examine it; if not, return it to spirit for a more convenient occasion.- [Examine brain.]

Amphioxus

Two specimens of this type should be obtained. It should be examined entire by the naked eye and with the low power of the microscope. Immersion, in glycerine will render it more transparent; or it may be cleared with oil of cloves, put up temporarily in that, or permanently in Canada balsam. One specimen should then be pinned out in the dissecting dish, ventral side uppermost, and the atrium opened to expose liver and pharynx. A part of the pharynx may be examined with the low power to see the form of the gill slits. The second specimen should be soaked in turpentine for some time, and then dropped into melted paraffin wax. Transverse sections may then be cut with a razor, the paraffin wax removed from these by solution in turpentine, the turpentine in its turn dissolved out by alcohol, and the sections, after immersion in oil of cloves, may be transferred to Canada balsam for examination and preservation. This work should not be attempted until some practical histological work has been done in botany, and it may be altogether avoided by the purchase of stained and mounted sections.

Development

Laboratory work in this portion of the science is not usually undertaken by elementary students of biology, but the reader will probably find it helpful, in the realization of the facts given in this book, to look out for frog spawn, in February and March, and to catch and examine tadpoles of various sizes. A small dissecting dish may be made by pouring melted paraffin wax into one of those shallow china pots chemists use for cold-cream, and tadpoles may be pinned out with entomologists' pins and dissected with needles. But this is a work of supererogation. Partially incubated hen's eggs may be obtained at a small cost almost anywhere, and the later stages profitably examined and dissected under warm water. For a clear understanding of the allantois and amnion, this last is almost indispensable. A few microscopic slides of sections of embryonic chicks should also be compared with our rough diagrams.

Key for Dissection Sheets, and Abbreviations

Sheet 1

Figure 1. Main facts of the Rabbit's Anatomy (diagrammatic).
an., anus.
a.ao., arch of the aorta.
au., auricle.
a.r., ad-renal body.
br., brain.
b.d., bile duct.
brch., bronchus.
cd.st., cardiac end of stomach.
co., colon.
cae., caecum.
ddnm., duodenum.
d.ao., dorsal aorta.
dia., diaphragm.
ep., epiglottis.
g.d., genital duct (either sex).
il., ileum.
in.art., innominate artery.
k., kidney.
lg., lung.
lv., liver.
l., larynx.
l.s.c., [l.c.c.] left common carotid artery.
m., mouth.
na., nasal passage.
oes., oesophagus.
p.v., pyloric valve.
p.d., pancreatic duct.
pt., peritoneal cavity.
r., rectum.
st., stomach.
[stm., sternum.]

s.r., sacculus rotundus.
s.c., spinal cord.
tr., trachea.
ur., ureter.
ur.b., urinary bladder.
v.b., a vertebral body.
v.ap., vermiform appendix.
v.v., [v.p.] velum palatium.
v., ventricle of heart.
v.c.i., vena cava inferior.

Figure 2. The Liver (diagrammatic).
g.b., the gall bladder.
r.l., r.c., l.l.., l.c., right lateral and central, and left lateral and central, lobes respectively.
sp., the Spigelian lobe (fits into angle of stomach and oesophagus).

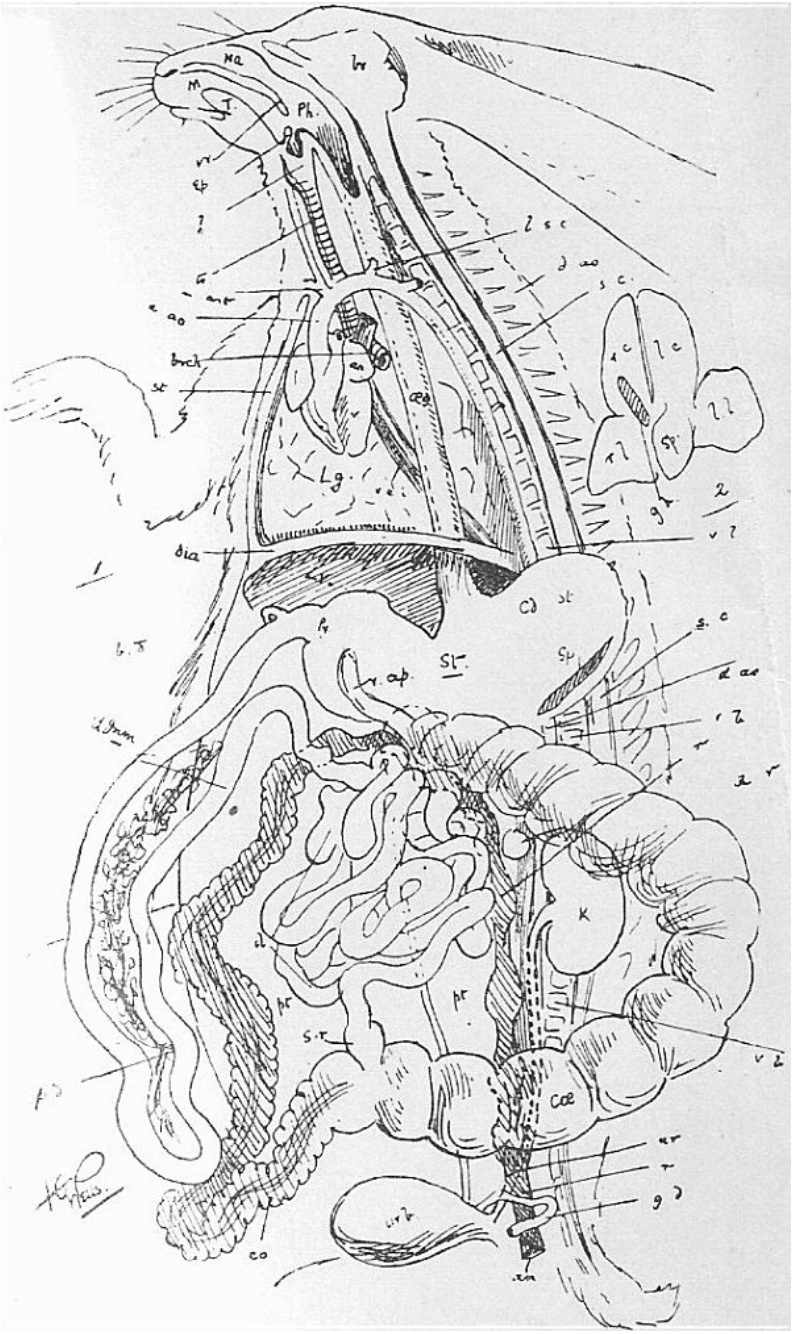
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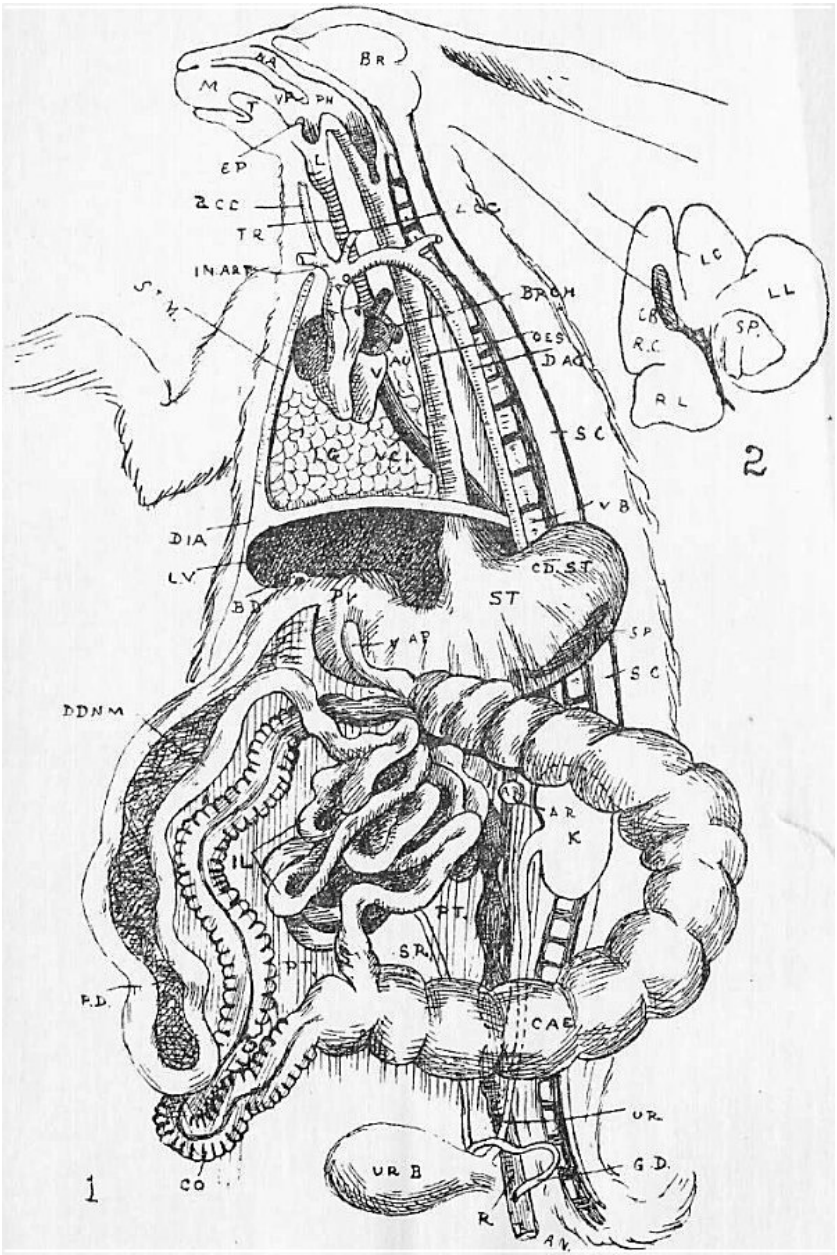
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Sheet 2

Figure 1. The Rabbit's Circulation (see footnote to Section 45).

(Throughout l. indicates left, r. right.
Vessels without r. or l. prefixed are median.)

-[* The figure is inaccurate at one point; l.c.c. should
spring from the base of inn. See Sheet 9.]-
{First Edition only text}

ao.a., aortic arch.
au., auricle.
az.v., (p.c. in Figure 2), azygos vein.
c.c., common carotid.
c.il.a., common iliac artery.
coe.a., coeliac artery.
d.ao., dorsal aorta.
e.il.v., external iliac vein.
e.ju., external jugular vein.
f., femoral artery.
h.v., hepatic vein.
inn., innominate artery.
in.j., internal jugular vein.
i.il.a., internal iliac artery.
i.il.v., internal iliac vein.
k., kidney.
lv., liver.
l.g.v., lienogastric vein (portal).
m.v., mesenteric (portal system).
p.m.a., posterior mesenteric artery.
p.v., main portal vein.
p.a. pulmonary artery.
r., rectum.
r.a., renal artery.
r.v., renal vein.
s.v., and a., spermatic (or ovarian) vein and artery (to genital

organ).
s.mes.a., superior mesenteric artery.
s.-cl.a., subclavian artery.
s.-cl.v., subclavian vein.
v.c.s., vena cava superior.
v.c.i., vena cava inferior.
v. or vn., ventricle.

Figure 2. Figure of Circulation (simplified)
illustrating certain points in development to be referred to later.

Figure 3. Respiration. See text, Section 41.

Figure 4. Blood. See text, Section 35.

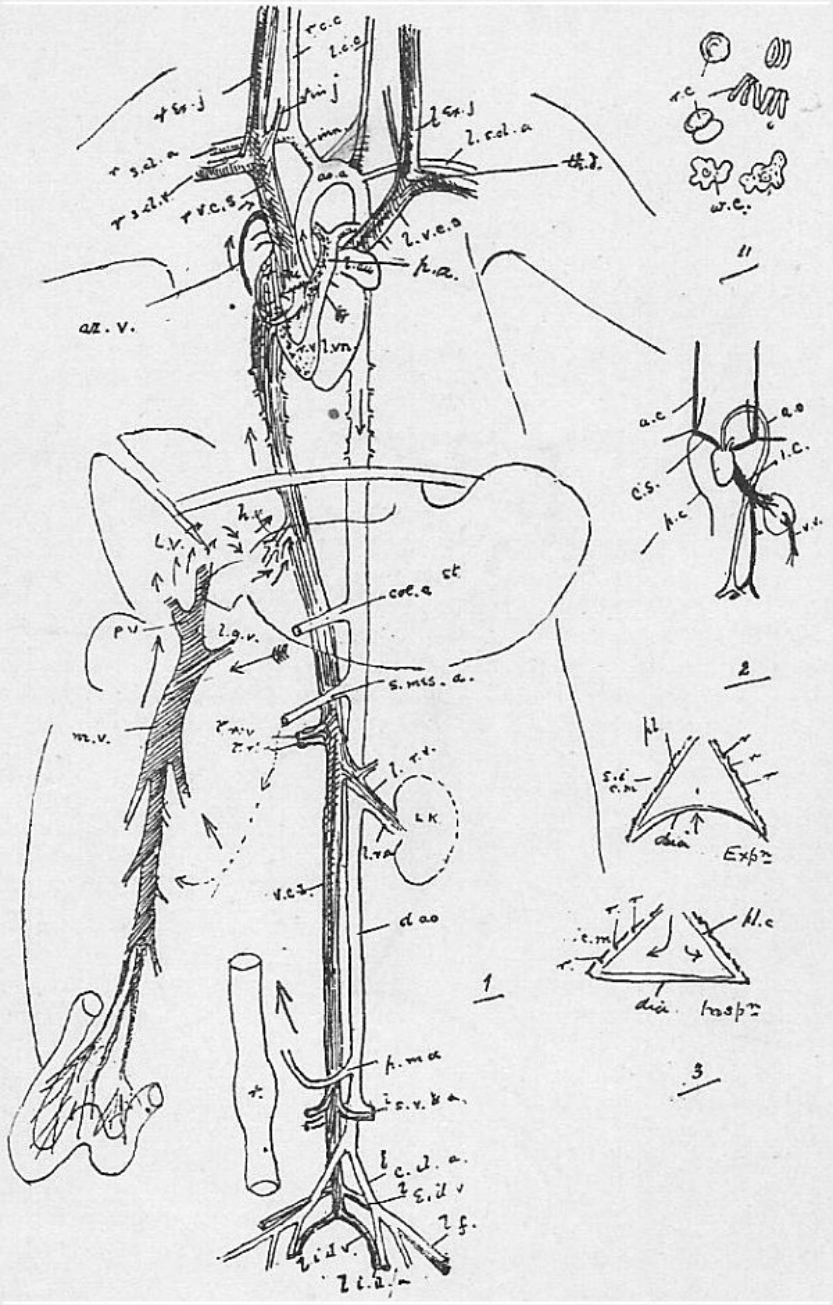
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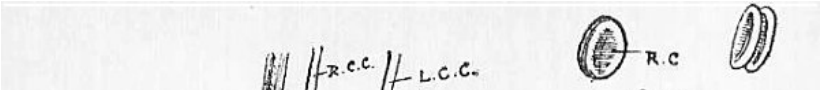
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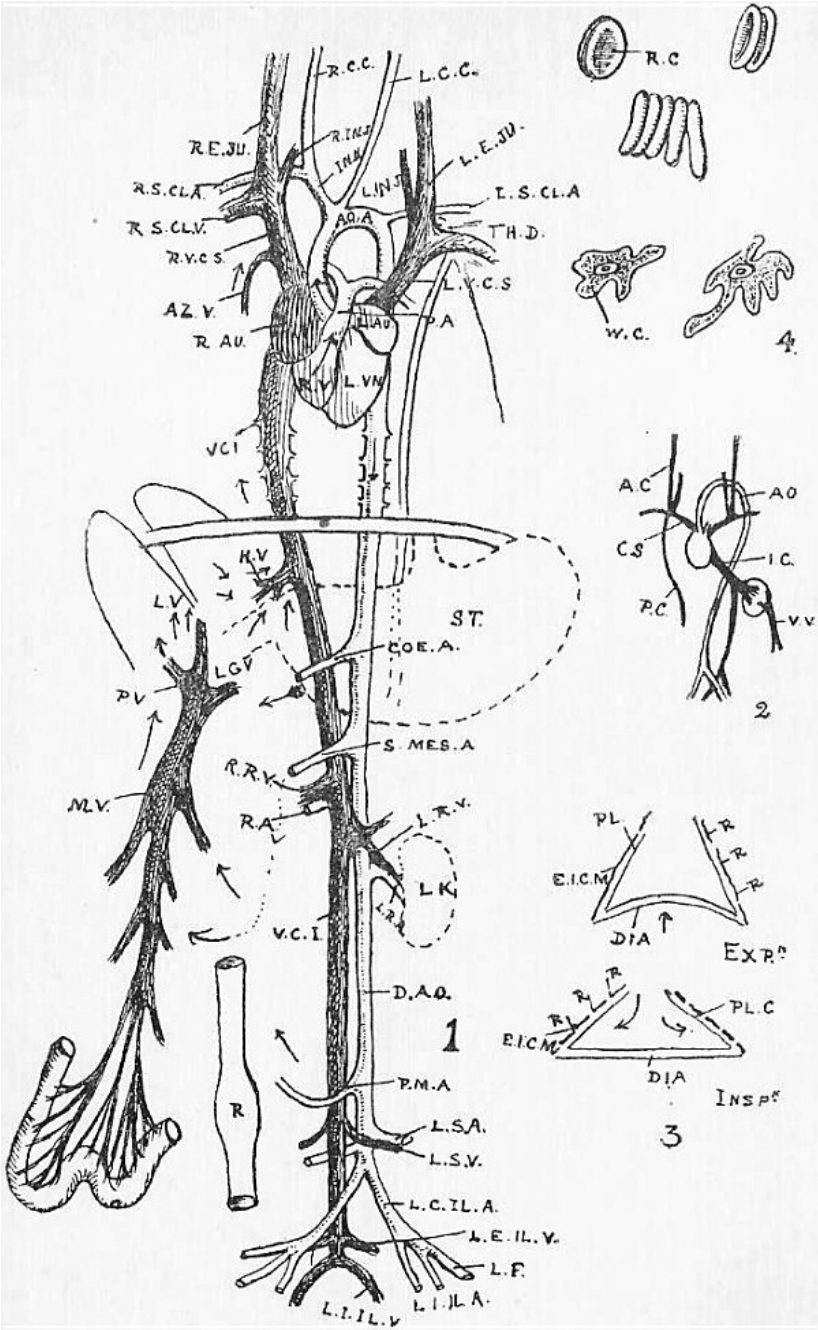
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Sheet 3

Histological Figures, 1.

{No numbers I., or II.}

Figure III. An amoeba. —
n., nucleus.
ns., nucleolus.
c.v., contractile vacuole.

Figure IV. Embryonic tissue from the blastoderm of a chick.

Figure V. Columnar epithelium. —
g.c.1, g.c.2, g.c.3, successive phases in the development of a goblet cell.

Figure VI.
g.end., is geminating endothelium; the cells divide and apparently drop off to become white corpuscles in the lymph current.
sq.end., squamous endothelium from the mesentery.
sq.ep., squamous epithelium (from the mucous membrane within the cheek).
st., are opening (stomata) communicating between the lymphatics in the mesentery and the peritoneal (coelomic) space.

Figure VII. Ciliated epithelium from the roof of the frog's mouth.

Figure VIII. Forms of glands. —
g.ep., is a gastric gland from the stomach; trs., below, is cross section. This is one of the simplest types of gland.
s.g., a sweat gland, is also a simple tube, but convoluted below.
r.g., is a racemose gland, such as the pancreas, Brunner's or the salivary glands.

The kidney, we shall see later, is simply an aggregate of branching tubuli (Sheet 7).

Figure IX. A duodenal villus. —
lac., the lacteal.
v., the vein.

Figure X.a. Diagram of liver structure. —
b.d., the inter-lobular bile duct.
h.a., the hepatic artery, bringing blood to oxygenate and nourish the liver tissue, and similarly distributed.
h.v., the hepatic vein taking blood from the liver to the heart, its twigs
commencing in the lobuli (intra-lobular).
lb. lb., lobuli.
p.v., the portal vein bringing blood, from which substances are to be elaborated, into the liver, and breaking up between the lobuli (inter-lobular).

Figure X.b. A diagram of the appearance of an injected liver lobule as seen in section under the microscope.

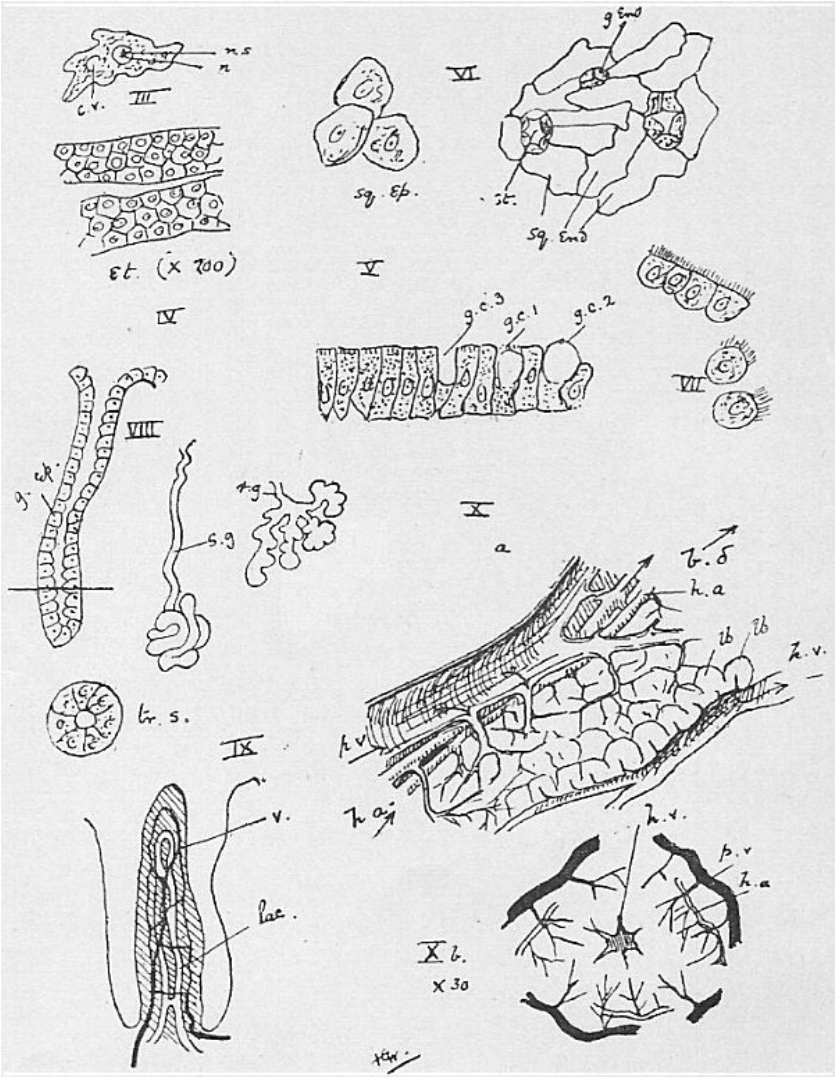
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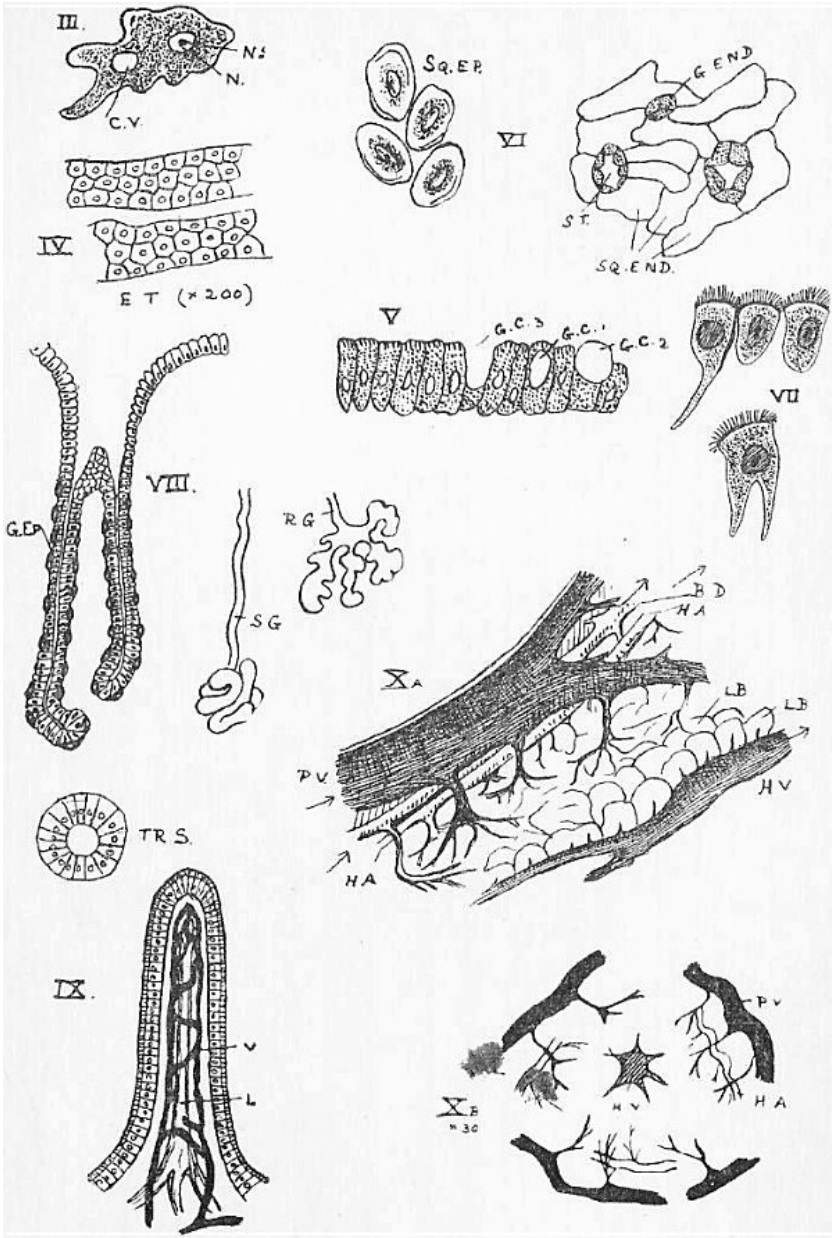
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Sheet 4

Histological Diagrams, 2.

Figure XI. A blood capillary. White corpuscles are migrating through the walls into the tissues (compare Section 66).

Figure XII. Hyaline cartilage (Section 64).

Figure XIII.
c.c., connective tissue corpuscle.
w.i.f., white inelastic fibres.
y.e.f., yellow elastic fibres.

Figure XIV. Botryoidal tissue (Section 66).

Figure XV. Development of a fat drop. —
f.d., fat drop, in a connective tissue corpuscle; c.c., in the formation of
adipose tissue (Section 67).

Figure XVI. Diagrammic cross section of a long bone. —
b.c., bone corpuscle in a lacuna.
H.v., Haversian vessel (in the Haversian canal) surrounded by concentric lamellae of bone, c.l., and together with these and zones of bone corpuscles, called a Haversian system.
i.l., inner lamellae.
m.c., medullary canal full of yellow marrow.
o.l., outer lamellae.
p.o., periosteum.

Figure XVII. To illustrate bone development (Section 71).

Figure XVIII. Dentition of rabbit, incisors 2/1, canine 0/0, premolar 3/2,
molar 3/3.

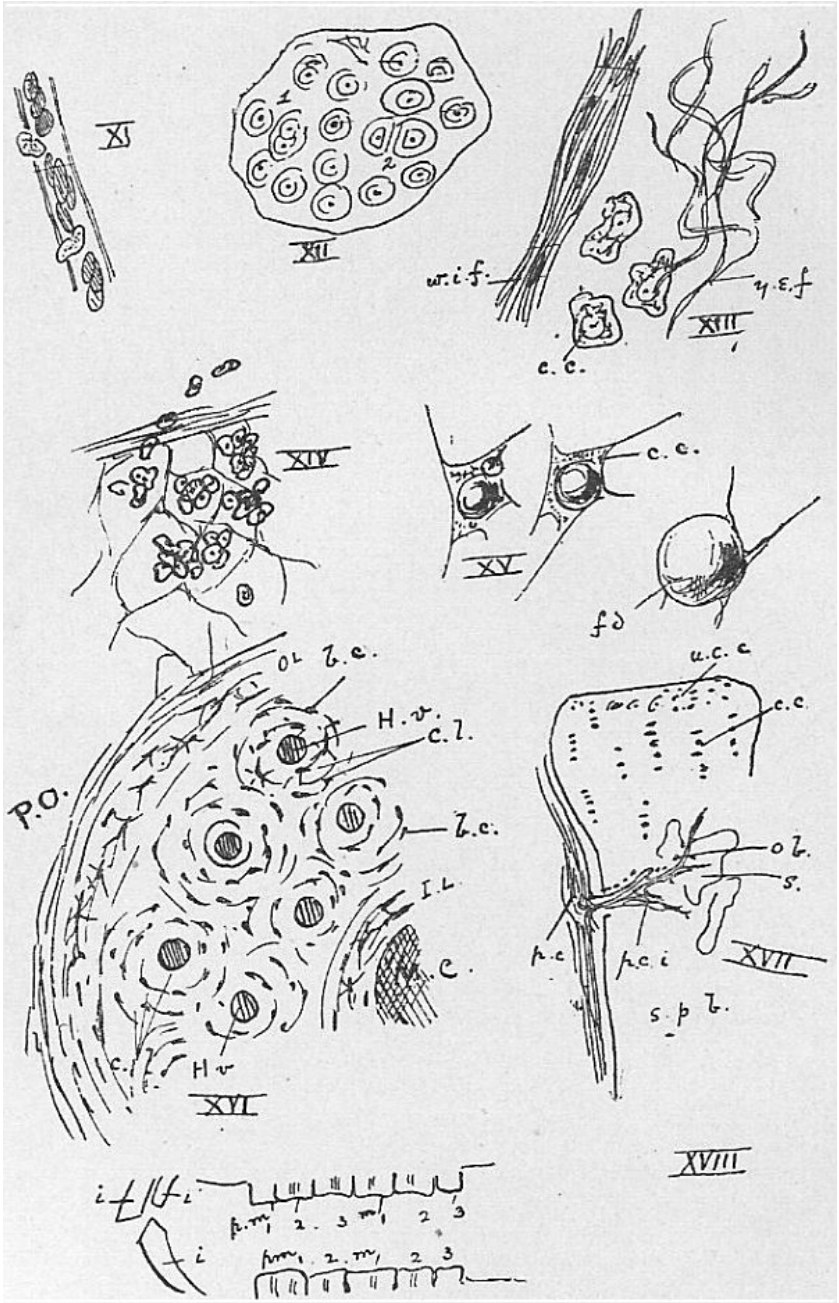
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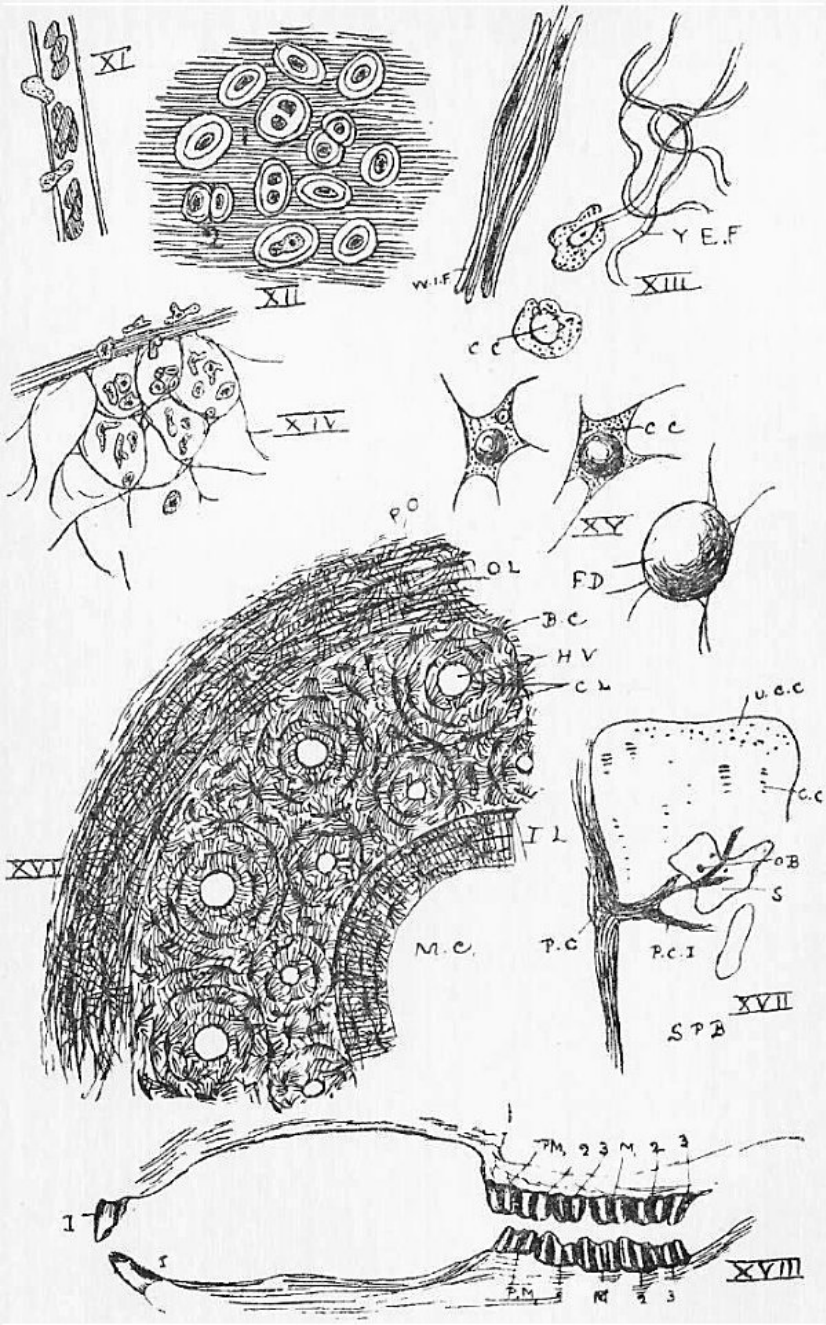
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Sheet 5.

Diagram of the Rabbit's Bones.

To be compared with the real things.

D and D' show the fore and hind limbs, to illustrate their homology. D is in the embryonic position. The radius and tibia are, at an early stage in development, on the anterior edge of their respective limbs; the ulna and fibula, posterior; the former are spoken of as *preaxial* in position, the latter as *postaxial*. But in the adult the humerus is twisted so that the proximal end of the radius lies at the outer side of the elbow, whence it crosses the ulna, so that its distal end is inside, while the femur is also twisted round, so that the entire tibia is internal.

Figures 1 and 2. -Limbs. —
a.c., acetabulum.
acr., acromion.
as., astragulus.
c., carpus.
ca., calcaneum.
co., coracoid.
[coty., cotyloid bone.]
fb., fibula.
fe., femur.
g., glenoid cavity (for head of humerus).
hd., head of femur.
hum., humerus.
i., ilium.
is., ischium.
m.c., meta-carpals.
na., navicular.
o., olecranon process of ulna.
o.f., olfactory fossa.

pb., pubis.
r., radius.
u., ulna.

Figure 3. -Sternum. —
Mb., manubrium.
r1., r2., and etc., sternal ribs.
st., sternebrae.
xi., Xiphisternum.

Figure 4. Vertebrae. —
At., Atlas.
Ax., axis.
c., [b.] centrum.
C.V., caudal vertebra.
c.v., [Cer.V.] cervical vertebra.
ep., epiphysis.
f.r., fused rib (in cervical vertebrae).
L.V., Lumbar vertebra.
m., metapophysis (of lumbar vertebra).
n.a., neural arch.
n.s., neural spine.
r., rib.
S.V., sacral vertebra.
[T.V., Thoracic.]
tr.p., transverse process.
v.a.c., vertebrarterial canal.
z., zygapophysis.

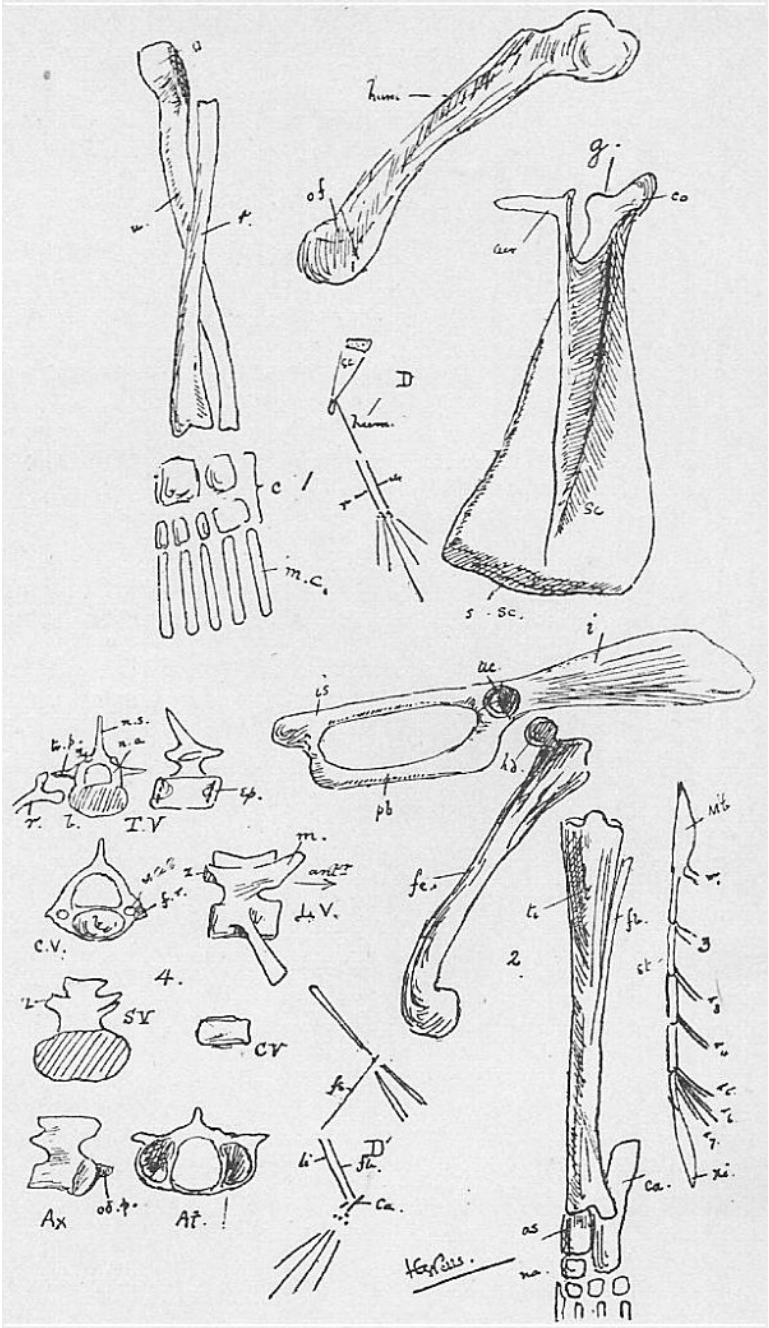
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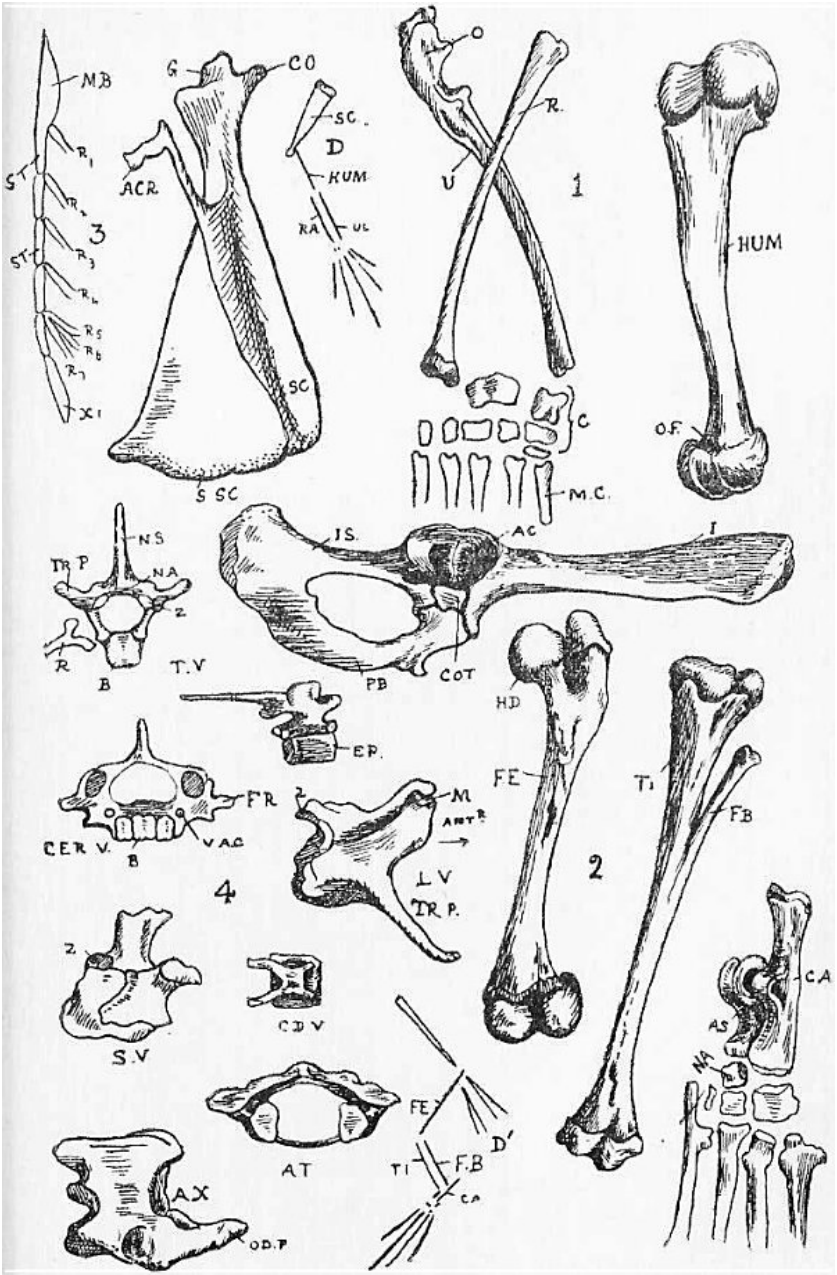
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Sheet 6.

The Skull of *Canis*.* -

1. Dorsal. 2. Ventral. 3. Right Lateral Aspect. 4. Section a little to the left of the nasal septum. 5. Lower jaw (smaller) 6. Hyoid apparatus.

{Lines from First Edition only.}
-*A Fox in this case. The skull is quite like that of a Dog, but it has the advantage of more distinct sutures between the bones.-

a.n., anterior nares.
a.s., ali-sphenoid.
b.h., body of the hyoid.
b.o., basi-occipital.
b.sp., basi-sphenoid.
c., condyle of the skull.
{c.1, c.4, canines.}
c.f., condylar foramen (for XII.).
c.h., cerato-hyal.
E.f., Eustachian foramen.
e.h., epihal.
-e.n., or a.n., the anterior nares.-
e.o., exoccipital.
eth., ethmoid.
e.t., ethmo-turbinal.
f., frontal.
f.l.a., foramen lacerum anterius.
f.l.m., foramen lacerum medium.
f.l.p., foramen lacerum posterius (for IX., X., XI.).
F.M., or f.m., foramen magnum.
f.o., foramen ovale.
f.r., foramen rotundum.
{i., incisors.}
ju., jugal.
m., molars.
m.t., maxillo-turbinal.

mx., maxilla.
na., nasal.
n.t., nasal turbinal.
o.f., optic foramen.
o.s., orbito-sphenoid.
p., or pal., palatine.
pa., parietal.
p.m., pre-maxilla.
p.m.1, p.m.4, premolars.
p.n., posterior nares.
p.sp., pre-sphenoid.
pt., pterygoid.
s.h., stylo-hyal.
s.m.f., stylo-mastoid foramen (for VII.).
s.o., supra-occipital.
sq., squamosal.
s.t., sectorial tooth.
t.h. thyro-hyal.
vo., -black line indicating position of- vomer.
z.p., zygomatic process of squamosal.

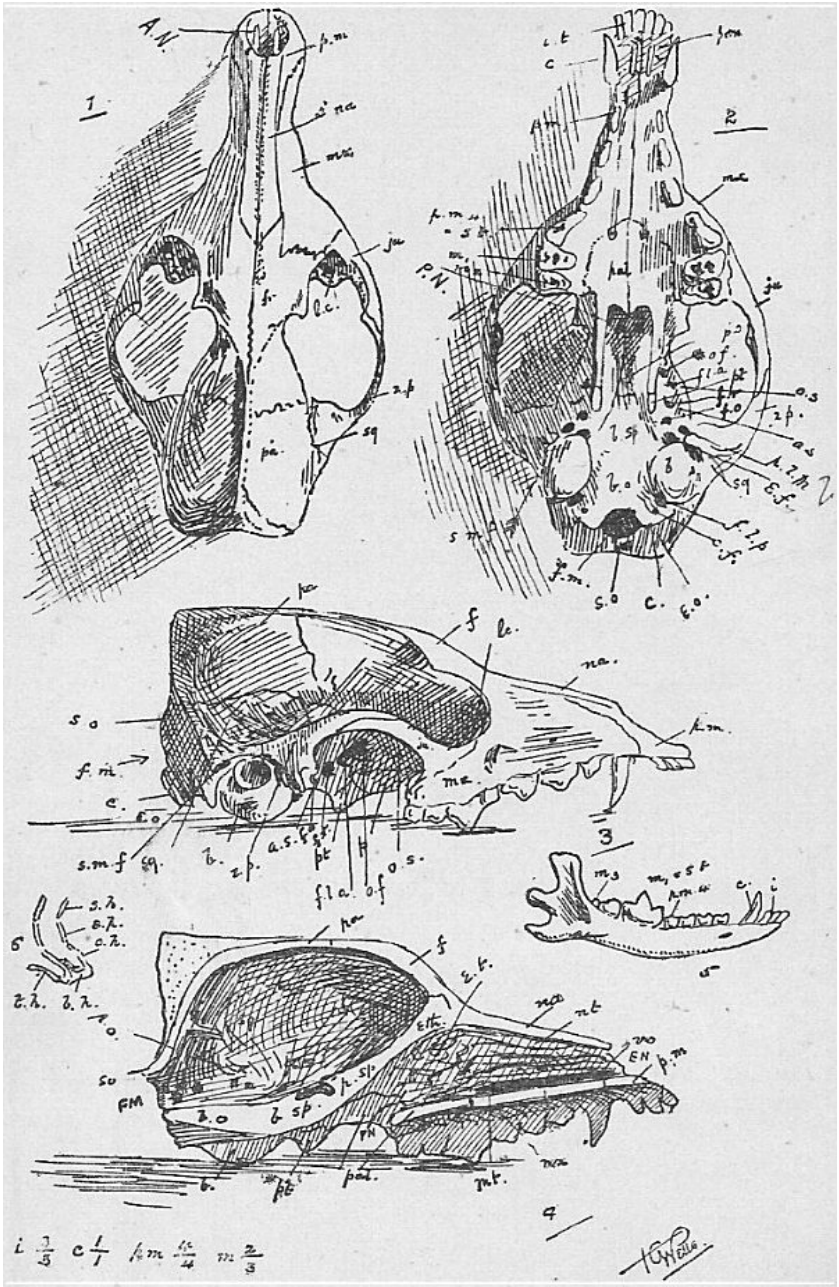
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p.m
s.p.
b.sp.
pal
p.o
o.f.
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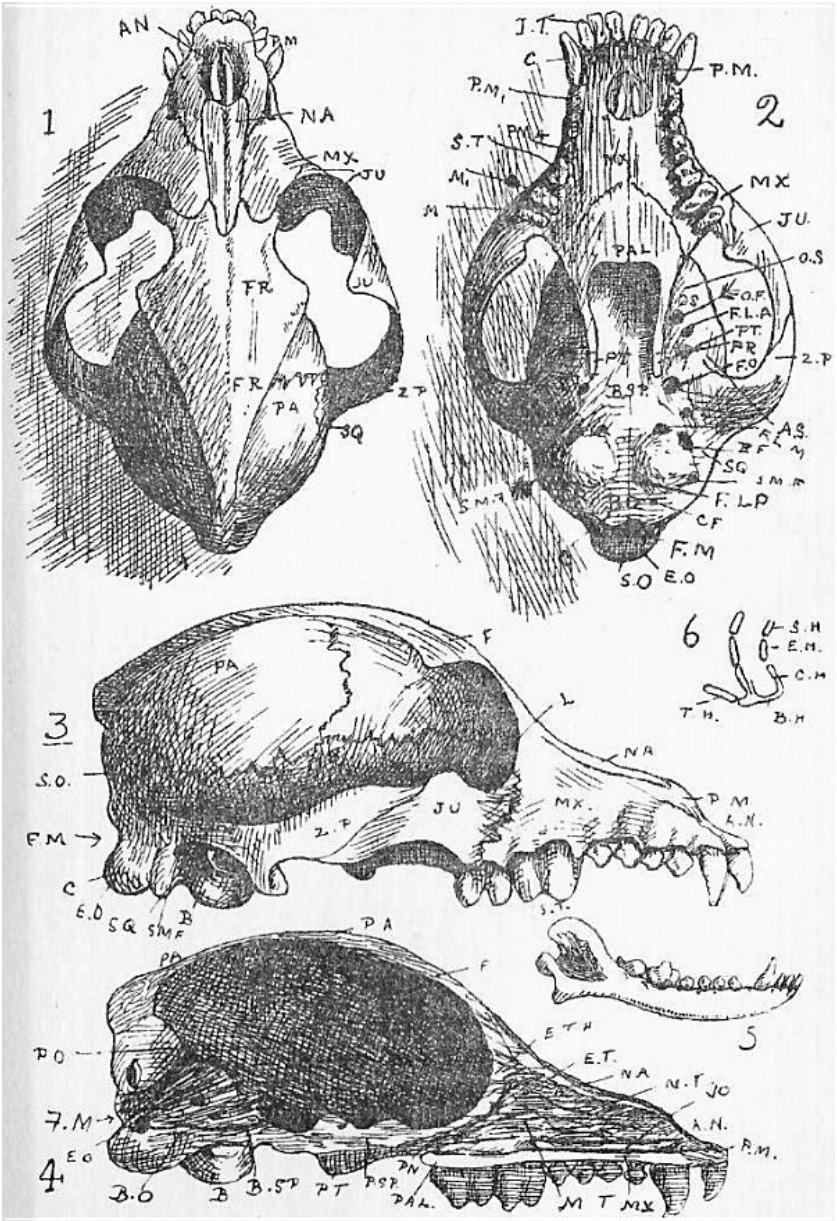
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A.N.
P.M.
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B.SP
PT
PSP
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PAL.
M
T
MX
5
6
S.H
E.M.
C.H
T.H.
B.H

Sheet 7.

Figure 1. Striated muscle fibre (of the Rabbit), ruptured to show sarcolemma.
e.p., its end plate.
K.m., membrane of Krause.
n., nucleus.
nv., nerve.
sc., sarcolemma.
s.e., sarcous elements.

Figure 2. Cardiac muscle.

Figure 3. Unstriated muscle fibres.

Figure 4. Diagram of the Skin.
b.v., blood vessel.
d., areolar tissue of the dermis (mesoblastic).
s.c., stratum corneum, and s.m., stratum mucosum of the epidermis.
s.g., sweat gland.
t.c., tactile corpuscle.

Figure 5. To illustrate Kidney structure. —
a.b.v., and e.b.v., afferent and efferent blood-vessels, of which the latter go to break up upon the tubli.
B.c., one of Bowman's capsules of the cortex;
ur.t., the uriniferous tubule running from it into the medulla, where it loops and branches; around it branches a blood-vessel, of which the
latter go to break up upon the tubuli.
c., cortex.
g., glomerulus, a knot of blood-vessels in the capsule.
m., medulla.
p., pelvis.
ur., ureter.

The water of the urine is probably filtered off in the capsule, the urea and other salts secreted by the tubuli.

{No Figure 6.}

Figure 7. The Auditory structures of the Rabbit (diagram). See text, Section 115.

Figure 8. The Eye (diagram). See text, Section 111.

Figure 9. The Retina (diagram). See text, Section 112.

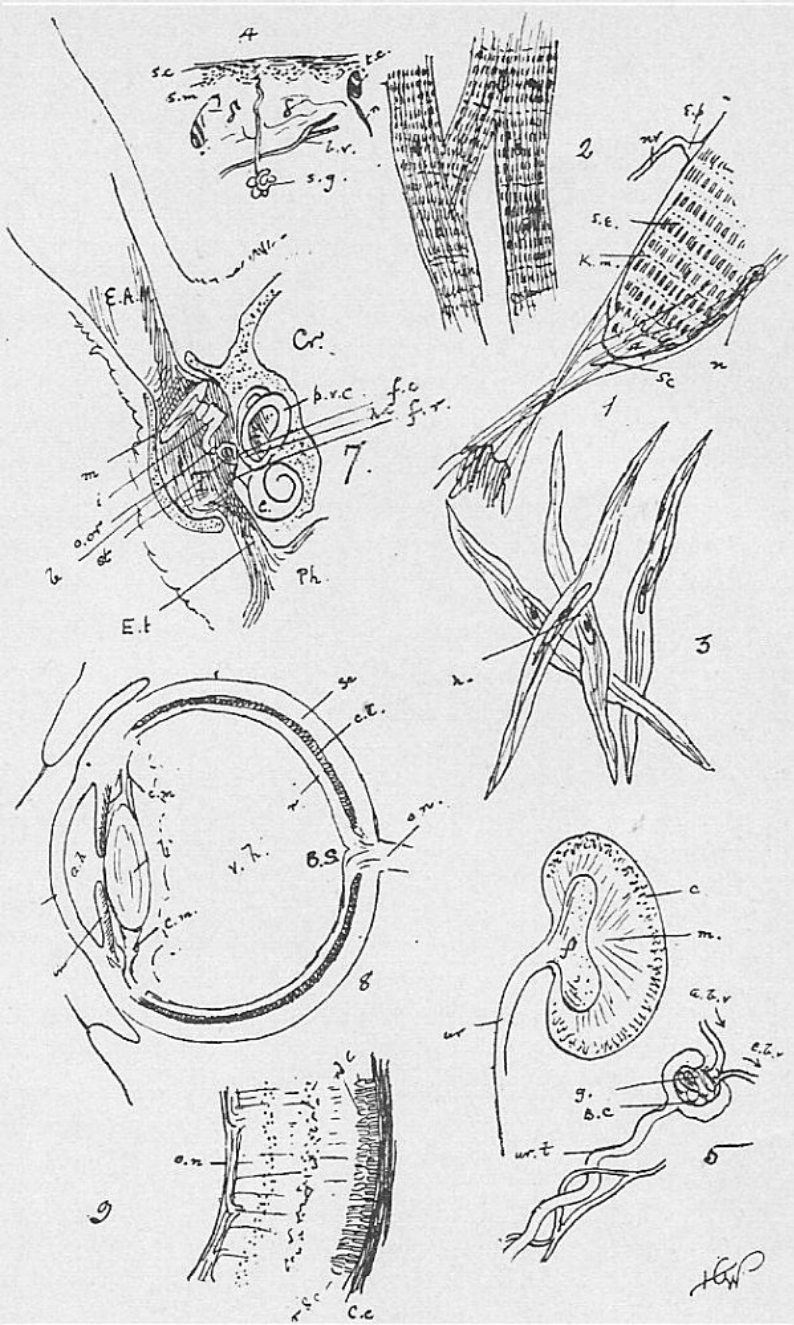
4
sc
s.m
t.e.
b.v.
s.g.
2
E.f
S.E.
K.m.
sc
1
E.A.M.
Cr.
b.v.c
f.c
f.r.
7.
m
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Ph.
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B.S
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C.c

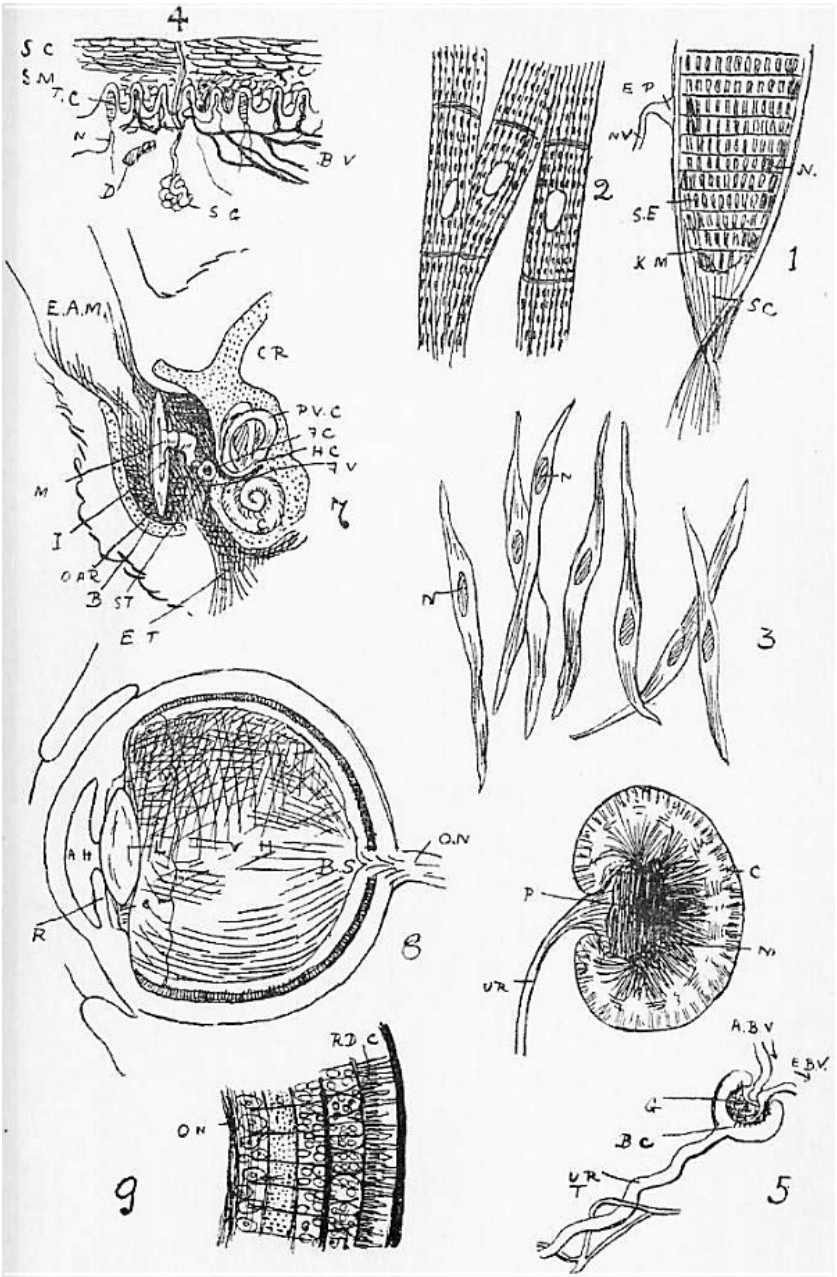
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5

Sheet 8.

The Brain of the Rabbit. —

1. In median section. 2. From above, with the top of the right hemisphere sliced off horizontally at the level of the corpus callosum. 3. A deeper section through the thalamencephalon, corresponding to B in (1). 4. Under-view of the brain. 5. Diagram referred to in the text
and for comparison with Sheet 7, 3b., and Sheet 18, 2.

{Figures 1-5.}
ar., arrow in the *iter*.
a.c., the anterior commissure, a thickening of the anterior wall of the third ventricle.
c.c., corpus callosum.
c. cb., crura cerebri.
c.h., cerebral hemispheres.
c.q., corpora quadrigemina.
f.cbm. (right), flocculus of the cerebellum.
l.h., left cerebral hemisphere (=ch.).
l.l., lateral lobe of cerebellum.
m.c., middle commissure.
m.o., medulla oblongata.
op., optic nerve.
o.l., olfactory lobe.
o.th., (right), optic thalamus.
p.c., posterior commissure (thickening of postero-dorsal wall of the third ventricle).
p.g., pineal gland.
pt., pituitary body.
p.V., pons Varolii.
s.c., thin roof of the fourth ventricle.
v.cbm., vermis of cerebrum.
v.l., lateral ventricle.

{Figure 4.} Nerves. —

I., Olfactory.
II., Optic.
III., Oculo-motor.
IV., Patheticus.
V., Trigeminal.
VI., Abducens.
VII., Facial (portio dura).
VIII., Auditory (portio mollis).
IX., Gustatory (glossopharyngeal.
X., Pneumogastric or vagus.
XI., Spinal Accessory.
XII., Hypoglossal.

Figure 6. The Spinal Cord in section. —
c.c., the central canal.
d.f., the dorsal fissure.
d.n., the dorsal nerve root; g., its ganglion.
v.f., the ventral fissure.
v.n., the ventral nerve root.

Note that in Figure 1 the central canal is continuous with the fourth ventricle.

Figure 7. Histological elements. —
g.c., multipolar ganglion cell.
n., nucleus of a medullated nerve.
a.c., its axis fibre.
s.S., (sheath of Schwann), medullary sheath interrupted at intervals by
n.R., the nodes of Ranvier.
n.m.f., a non-medullated fibre.

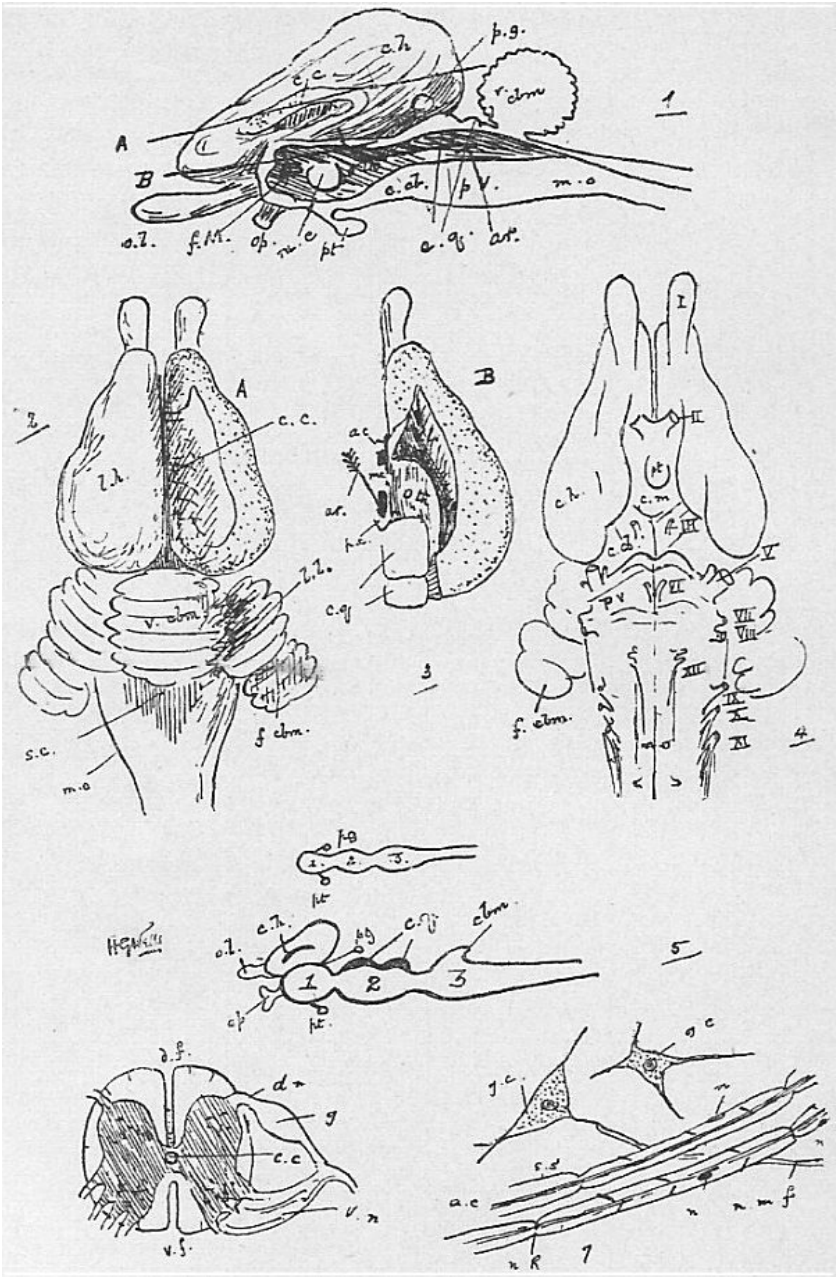
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c.h.
p.g.
c.c.
r. cbm.
e.ch.
p.v.
m.o.
o.l.
f.M.
op.
pt.
c.g.
a.r.
l.l.
v. cbm.
f. cbm.
s.c.
c.m.
c.d.
c.p.
d.f.
v.f.
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a.c.
r.d.
n.R.

P.G.
C.H.
C.C.

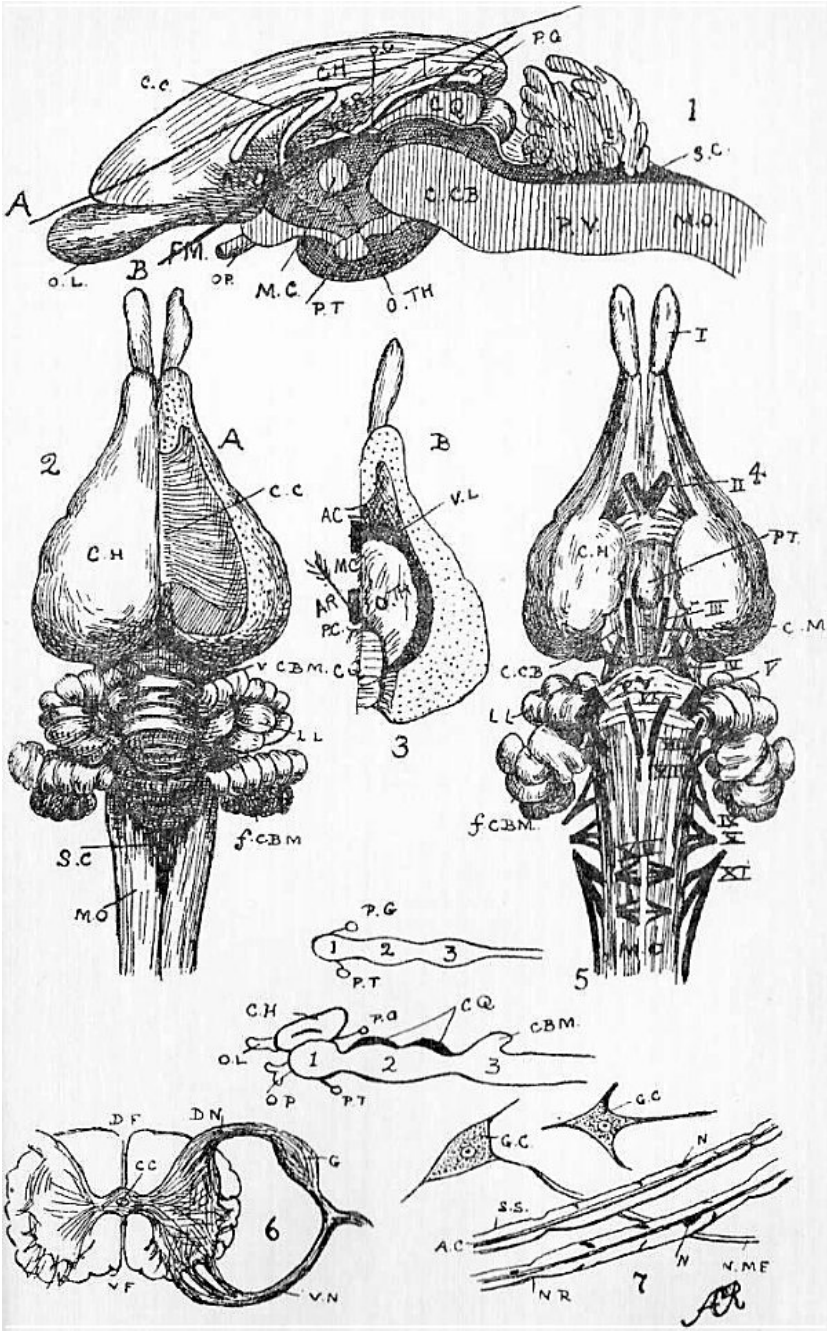
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C.H
V.CBM.
L.L
S.C
f.CBM
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V.L
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II
P.T
C.H
III
C.M
C.CB
IV
V
P.V
L.L
VII
f.CBM.
IX
X
XI
M.O
5
P.G
1
2
3
P.T
C.H
P.G
C.Q
CBM.
O.L
1
2
3
O.P
P.T
DF
DN
CC
G
6
VF
V.N
G.C
G.C
N
S.S.
A.C
N
N.ME
N.R
7

Sheet 9.

-The Nerves of the Rabbit.

Figure I. Rough sketch of dissection of the neck
from the left ventral aspect. —
The bands of muscle between hyoid, mandible, and
sternum, and the thymus gland carefully cleared.
lr., is the larynx, and b., the balla.
s.m.g., the right sub-maxillary gland (the left has been removed).

The nerves are numbered.

l.r.l.n., [r.r.l.n.] is the *left* recurrent laryngeal looping under that solid connection between the pulmonary artery (p.a.) and ao., the aortic arch, which was an open tube in the embryo, the *ductus arteriosus*.
hy., is the hyoid with its posterior cornua.
ph.n., is the *phrenic nerve*.
r.r.l.n., [l.r.l.n.] is the right recurrent looping under the sub-clavian.
s.c.g., is the super or cervical ganglion of the sympathetic (sym.);
s.l.n., is the left superior laryngeal, and g. the left depressor
branch of x.
z., is the *ramus descendens noni* of the twelfth nerve.

In early development the heart lay just beneath the pharynx in the position of the larynx (compare Dog-fish and Frog); as the neck elongated, the heart shifted back with its vessels, and so the long loop of the recurrent laryngeal comes to be drawn out in this singular way.

Figure II. Diagram of orbit to show V.1 orbit-nasal, V.2 the maxillary,
and V.3 the mandibular branch of V. In order to show these in dissection, the malar must be cut away, and the eye and glands of the orbit removed.
s.r., e.r. [p.r.], i.r., and a.r., cut ends of the superior, external (or

posterior), inferior, and anterior (or internal) recti muscles.
s.o., and i.o., the superior and inferior obliques.

Figure III. General diagram of the Rabbit's cranial nerves.

Figure IV. Rough sketch of dissection of the nerves and blood-vessels dorsal to stomach. —

The stomach turned over to the animal's right, the Spigelian liver lobe
cleared from the oesophagus, the mesentery supporting spleen and hiding solar plexus picked off, and the mesentery hiding sympathetic cleared.

coe.art., coeliac artery, and s.m.a., *superior mesenteric artery*.
coe.g. coeliac, and s.m.g., *superior mesenteric ganglion*. The two together form the solar plexus.
l.abd.sym., left abdominal sympathetic (in the actual dissection, the right would also be visible).
l.a.r., left adrenal.
l.sp.n., left splanchnic nerve.
r.art., renal artery.
r.v., renal vein.
st., the stomach, and sp., the spleen.
x., the vagus on oes., the oesophagus.

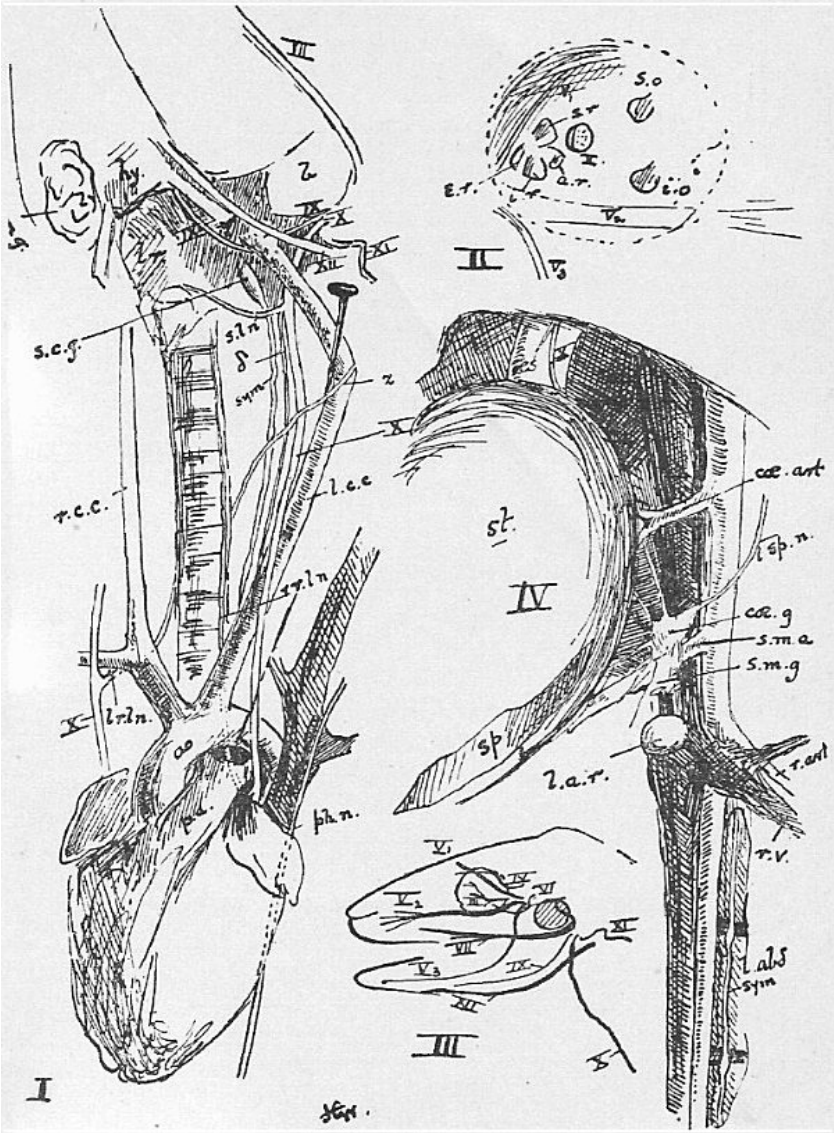
III
hy.
s.c.g.
s.l.n
δ
sym
z
X
l.c.c
r.c.c.
r.l.n
X
l.r.l.n.
ph.n.
II
S.o
s.r
a.r.
e.r.
i.o
V3
st.
IV
coe. ant
l.sp.n.
coe. g
s.m.a
s.m.g
sp
l.a.r.
r.ant
r.v.
l.abd
sym
V1
V2
V3
VI
VII
IX
XI
XII
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I

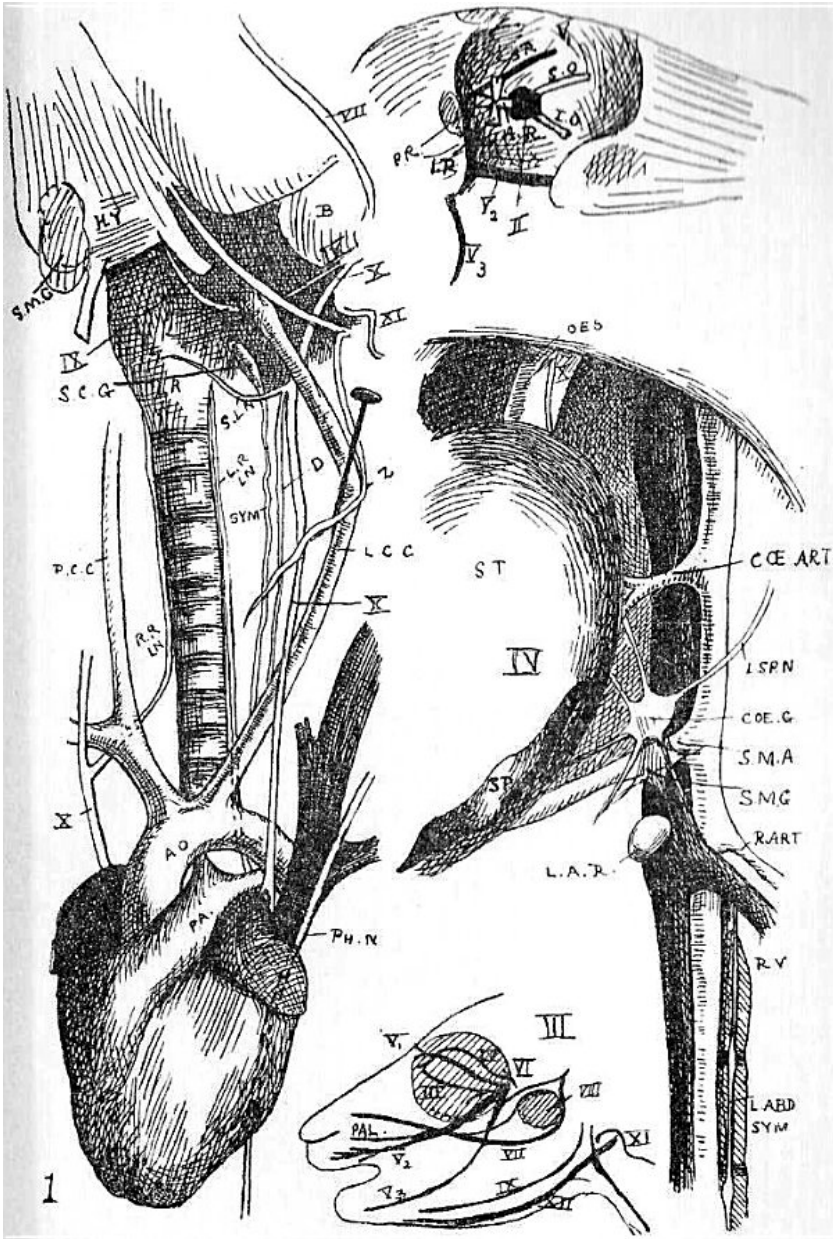
S.M.G.
H.Y.
B
VII
IX
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S.C.G.
A
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SYM
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R.V.
L.ABD SYM
III
V1
VI
VII
PAL.
V2
V3
XI
1

Sheet 10.

-Reproductive Organs of the Rabbit.

Figure 1. The Male.

Figure 2. The Female Organs.

(The symbols below the figures indicate the sex.)

pb., is the pubic symphysis [which has been] cut through.
R., the rectum, with r.g., the rectal gland, and a., the anus.
t., the tail.
r.ur., the right ureter.
l.ur., the left ureter.
ur.b., the urinary bladder.

In the Male
ep., the epididymis.
P., the penis.
pp., the prepuce.
scr., the scrotal sac, containing these;
r.v.d., the right vas deferens.
T., is the testis.
u.m., the uterus masculinus.

In the Female
c.ut, the left cornu uteri.
F.t., the left Fallopian tube.
ov., is the ovary, with a Graafian follicle, G.F.
V., the vagina.
v.b., the vestibule.

Figure 3. Diagram of ovary with stages in the development of a Graafian follicle 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, see text, Section 137. The arrow indicates the changes in position of the developing follicles.

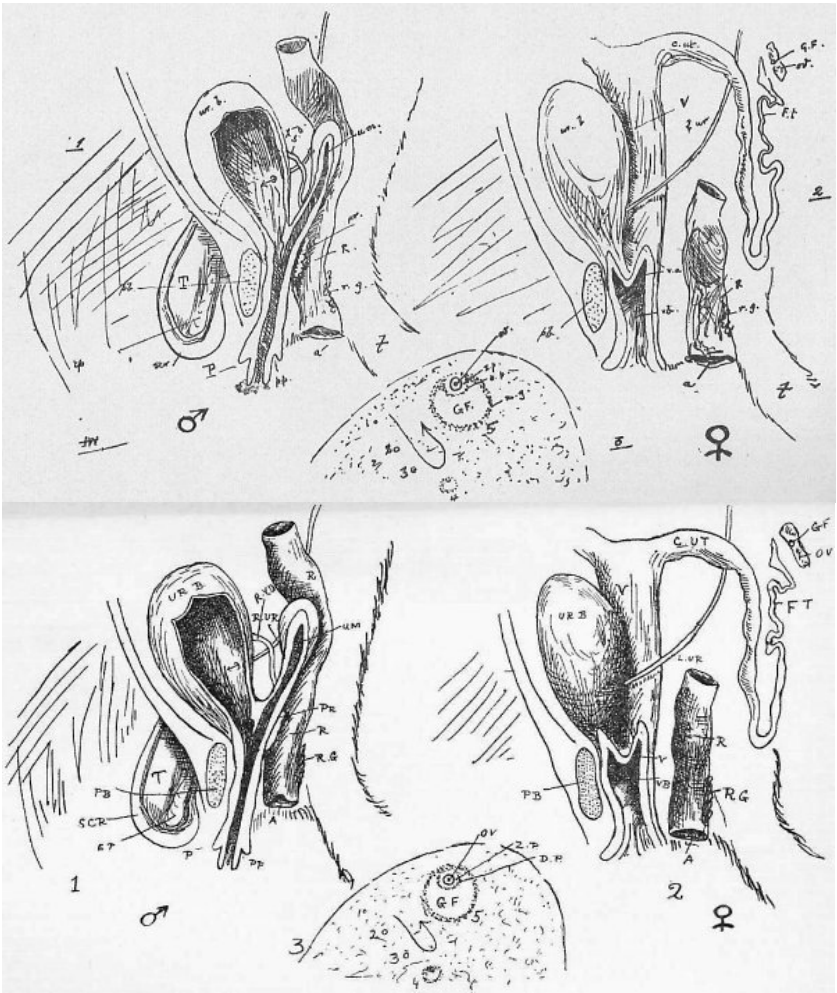

Sheet 11.

Figure 1. General dissection of Frog (male).

Figure 2. The heart and great vessels laid open.

Figure 3. The circulatory system from the side.

Figure 4. Blood.

{n., nucleus.}
r.c., red corpuscle (oval and nucleated).
w.c., white corpuscle

Small figure of Frog in left-hand corner is to show position of heel, h.

Reference Letters.
all.b., allantoic bladder (= urinary bladder).
c.ad., corpus adiposum.
cl.c., cut end of the right clavicle.
d., duodenum.
g.b., gall bladder.
il., ileum.
k., kidney.
l.au., left auricle.
l.g., lung.
l.int., large intestine.
l.s.v., longitudino-spiral valve.
L.v., Liv., liver.
pan., pancreas.
r.au., right auricle.
sp., spleen.
st., stomach.
T., testis.
t.a., truncus arteriosus.
ur., urogenital duct.
v., ventricle of heart.

Arteries (white).
ao., aorta.
c.a., carotid arch.
c.g. [c.gl.], carotid gland.
coe., coeliac.
cu., -and pa.”,- cutaneous.
d.ao., dorsal aorta.
e.c., lingual artery.

[i.c., internal carotid.]
l.a.a., left aortic arch.
pa., and p., pulmonary.
p.c. [p.cu.], pulmo-cutaneous.
r.a.a., right aortic arch.
[s.cl., sub-clavian.]
t.a., truncus arteriosus.

Veins of the Caval System -(black)-.
b.v., brachial (from fore limb).
e.j., external jugular.
h.v., hepatic vein.
i.j., internal jugular.
[in.v., innominate vein.]
l.v.c.s., left vena cava superior.
p.v., cutaneous vein.
[s.cl.v., sub-clavian vein]
s.s.r., sub-scapular vein.
v.c.i., vena cava inferior.

Veins of the Portal and Renal Portal Systems -(shaded)-.
a.ad., and a.ab.v., anterior abdominal vein.
b.v., and p.v., united are called the *sub-clavian vein*.
l.fm., left femoral.
l.p., left pelvic.
l.r.p., (and r.p.) left renal portal.
l.sc., left sciatic.
p.v., portal vein.

-(The anterior abdominal is coloured black in Figure 1.)-

The cutaneous artery in the above figures is turned back. In dissection
it will be found to lie over and hide the dorsal-ward sweep of the aortic
arch.

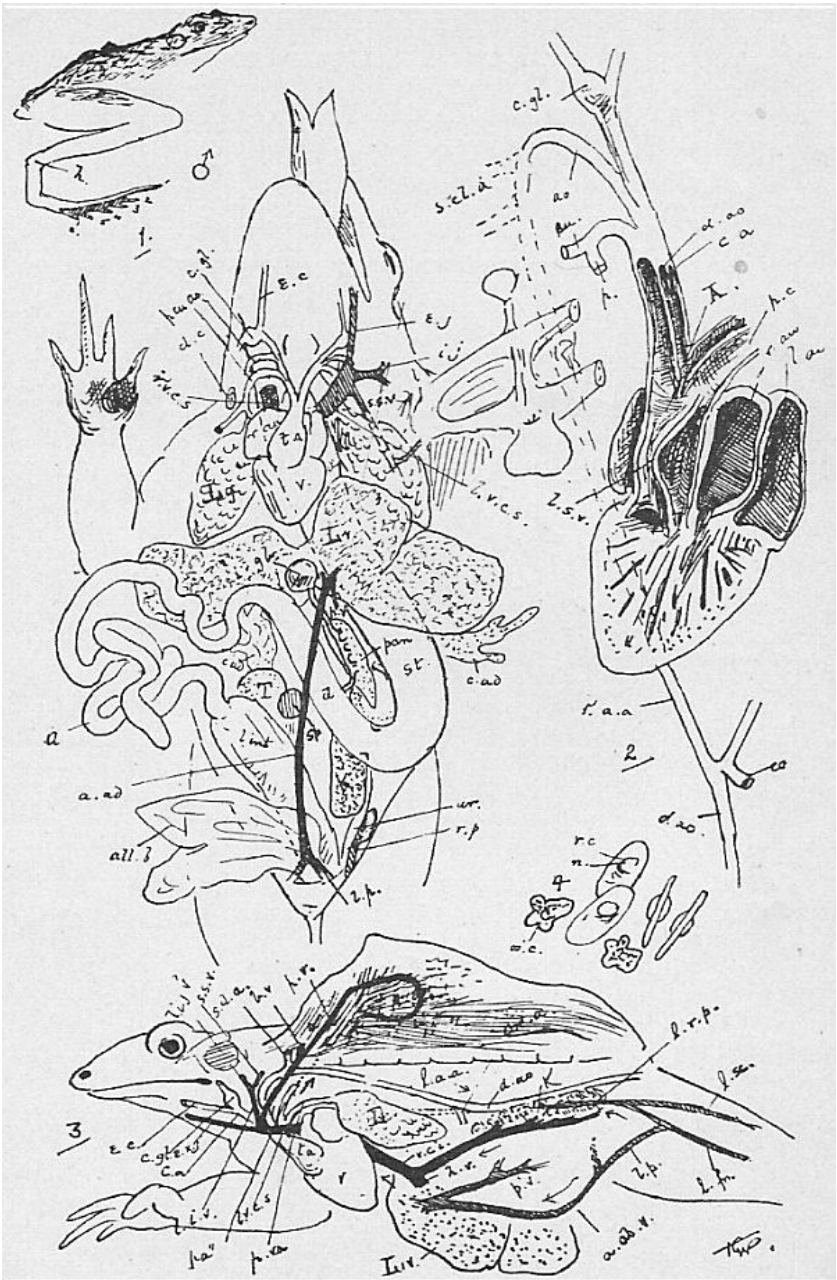
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E.c
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a.ad
all.3
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l.int
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l.a.a.
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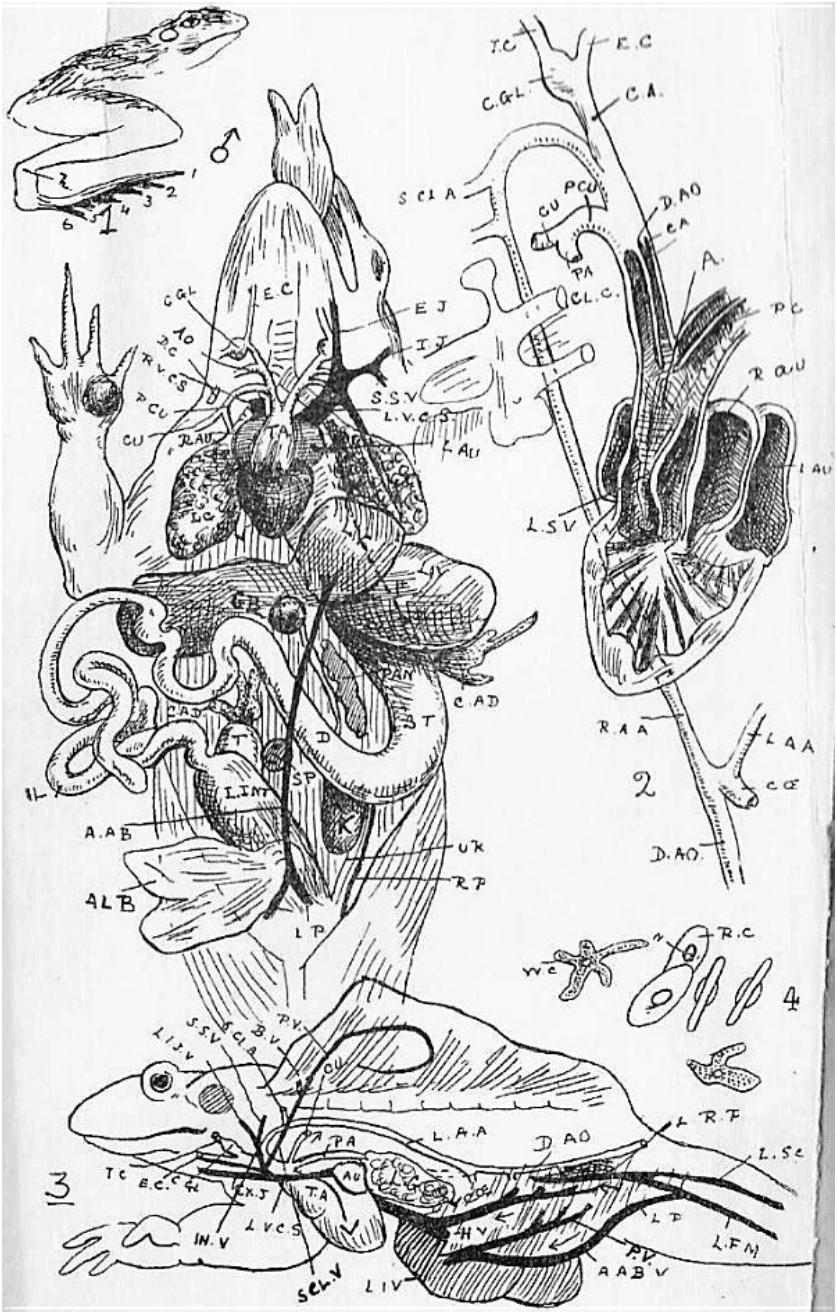
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R.AU
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D.AO.
R.C
W.C
C.GL
E.C
E.J
I.J
AO
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R.V.C.S
P.C.U
C.U
R.AU
S.S.V
L.V.C.S
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L.V.C.S
IN.V
SCL.V
L.I.V
H.V
L.P
L.F.M
P.V.
A.A.B.V

Sheet 12.

Figure 1. Upper view of the Frog's brain.

Figure 2. Under view of the same.

Figure 3. The same — median section.

Figure 4. The distribution of the Frog's nerves.
Compare Sheet 9, Figure III.

The shaded part in 4 is the -otic capsule- [tympanum]. The *hyoid apparatus* is roughly represented in black to show its relation to IX. (dorsal to it) and s (ventral). Compare {nerves} IX and XII in Sheet 9. The nerves are numbered.

cb., the cerebellum.
c.h., cerebral hemispheres.
f.t., filum terminale.
g.tr., ganglion on the fifth nerve.
l.t., lamina terminalis.
mb., mid-brain.
md., medulla oblongata.
o.l., optic lobes.
pin., pineal gland.
pit., pituitary body.
r.h., olfactory lobes (rhinencephalon).
th.c., thalamencephalon.
sp.1, first spinal nerve.
sp.2, 3, brachial plexus to fore limb.

Figure 5. The spinal column (and pelvic girdle) of the Frog.

Figure 5b. Vertebrae.

Figure 6. The pectoral girdle and limb, dorsal view.

Figure 7. The pelvic girdle and right limb from the side.

(l.h. shows the position of the right lymph hearts — they are paired.)

as., astragalus.
b., body.
c., calcar (?= a sixth digit).
cal., calcaneum.
cl., clavicle overlying a *procoracoid cartilage*.
co., coracoid.
f., fibula.
[FE., femur.]
h., humerus.
il., ilium.
is., ischium.
o.st., omosternum.
pu., pubis.
r., radius.
sc., scapula.
s.sc., supra-scapula.
s.v., sacral vertebra.
t., tibia.
t.p., transverse process.
ul., ulna.
ur., urostyle.
x., xiphisternum.
z., zygapophysis.

1, 2, and etc., first, second, and etc., digits.

D. and D'. are simplified diagrams of the limbs for comparison with the
similar ones of the Rabbit. In each girdle we have a dorsal ossification
(*scapula*, *ilium*) and two ventral parts (*pubis* and *procoracoid cartilage*,
ischium and *coracoid*), and at the meeting-place of the three in each case the proximal bone of the limb (*humerus*, *femur*) articulates.

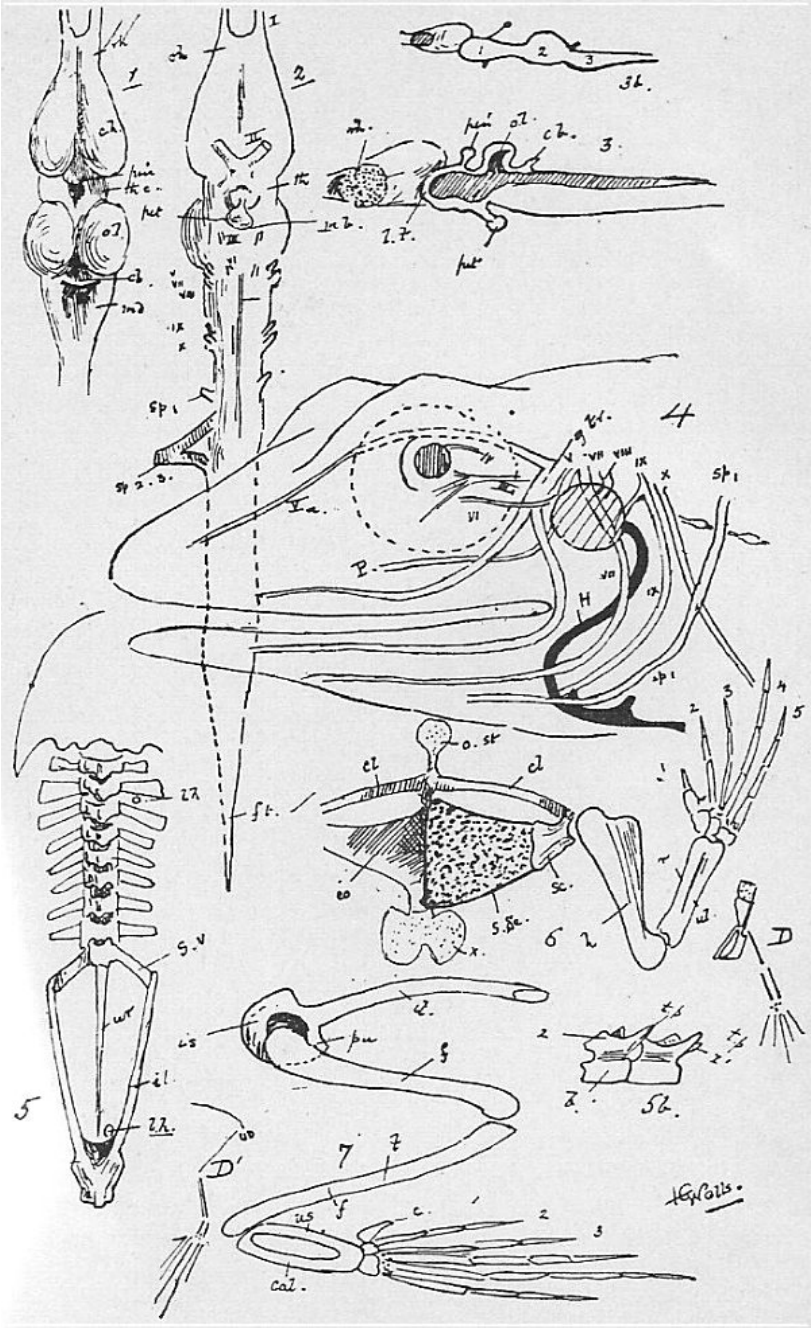
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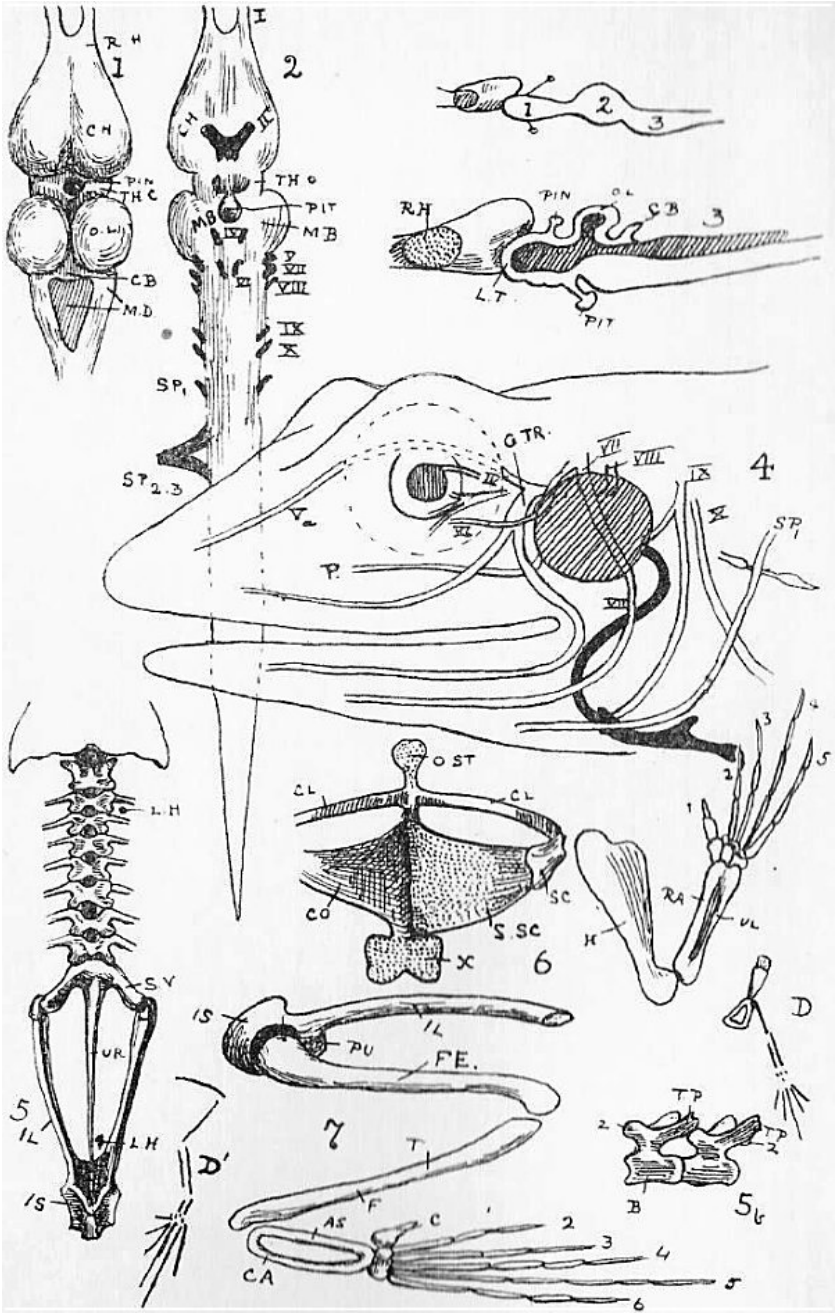
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Sheet 13.

-Urogenital Organs of the Frog.

Figure 1. The Male.

Figure 2. The Female. The oviduct removed on the animal's left, and the ovary on its right.

Organs common to both sexes. —
al.b., allantoic bladder.
c.ad., corpus adiposum.
cl., cloaca.
int., intestine.
K., kidney.
lg., (dotted outline of) lung.
oes., oesophagus.
r.p.v., renal portal vein.
st., stomach.

In the Male. —
T., testis.
v.e., vasa efferentia.
u.g.d., urogenital duct.
p., prostate gland.

In the Female. —
adr., adrenal.
f.t., fallopian tube (anterior part of oviduct). * its opening.
o.d., oviduct (letters on [the opening] -uterine portion-).
ov., ovary.
ur., ureter.

(This would be the condition about midwinter.) In March o.d. will be either enormously distended with eggs, or large, flabby, and empty, and ov. will be small and brownish, without any large eggs; the ovary
gradually recovers its size through the summer.

Figure 3. Spermatozoa attached to the parent cell (g.e.) from the lining epithelium of the testis, and one free.
fl., the flagellum.

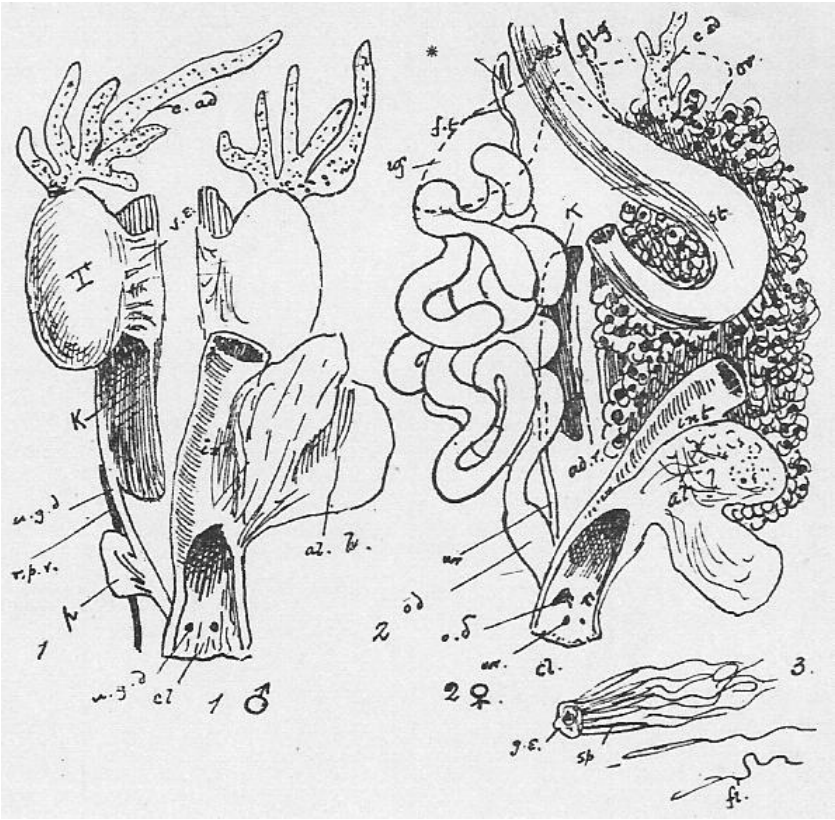

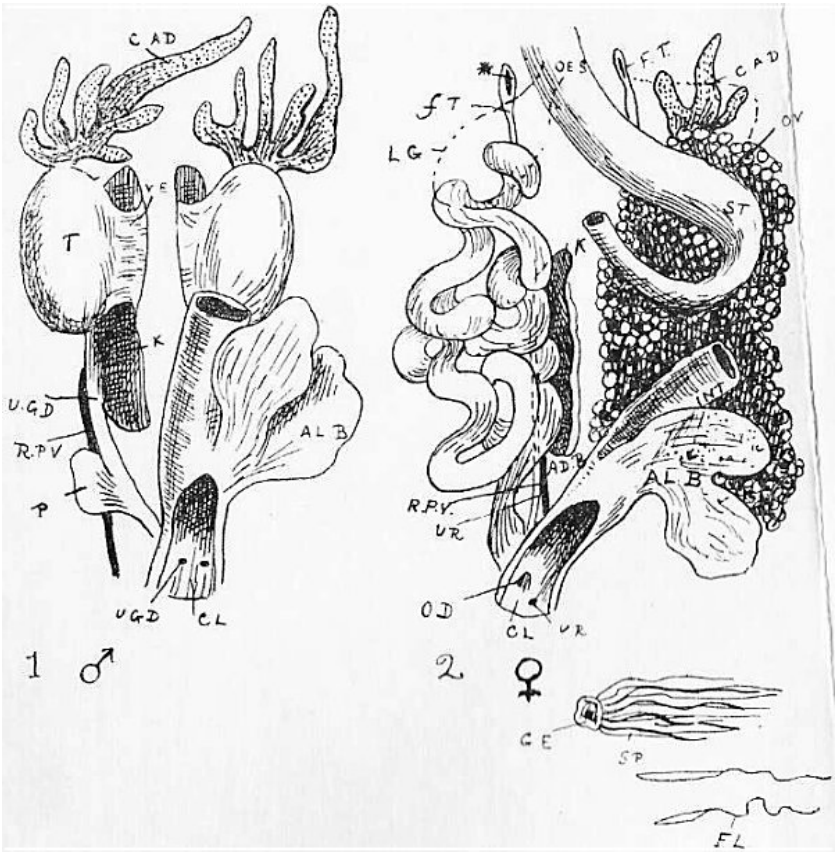

Sheet 14.

-Skull Structure and Development of the Frog.

Figure 1. I., II., early and late stages of the Tadpole's chindrocranium.
Diagrammatic.

Figure 2. Dorsal view of a young Frog's cranium — the membrane bones removed. Diagrammatic.

Figures 3 and 4. Dorsal and ventral views, respectively, of the Frog's

skull — the lower jaw removed.

Figure 5. Side view of the Frog's skull.

Figure 6. Median section of the brain case.

Figure 7. The hyoid apparatus.

Figure 8. I., II., III., progressive stages of the Tadpole's skull from the side. After W. K. Parker.

Figure 9. F., side and hind views of the Frog's skull. D., the same of the Dog. Roughly diagrammatic.

N.B. —
In all cartilage is dotted, cartilage bone cross-barred, and membrane bone, white. In Figure 4, pt., should be cross-barred;
and in 5, th.h. plain.

a.c., anterior cornu of hyoid [(= CH.)] -not lettered, in {Figure} 5-.
a.o., antorbital cartilage.
ar., angulo-splenial -(On Frog Section 34, for *Articulare* read -Angulo-Splenial)-.
-b., parachordal part of brain box-.
b.c., brain case.
b.h., body of hyoid.
b.r., branchial arches.
CH = a.c.
c.t., cornua trabeculi.
d., dentary.
e., eye.
E.N., external nares.
e.o., exoccipital bone.
f., fenestra (membranous part of cranial wall).
-f.p., fronto-parietal.-
h.m., hyomandibular cleft = Eustachian tube and ear drum.
mb., mandible.
[M.C., Meckel's Cartilage.]

m.mk., mento-Meckelian bone.
m.p., mouth passage.
mx., maxilla.
n.c., notochord.
n.o., nasal organ.
n.p., nasal passage.
ot., or o.c., otic (auditory) capsule.
pal., palatine bone.
PAL., hard palate of Mammal.
p.c., parachordal.
p.f., [parieto-frontal] -see f.p.-
p.m., premaxilla.
P.N., internal nares.
p.o., prootic bone.
p.p., palato-pterygoid cartilage.
psph., parasphenoid bone.
pt., pterygoid bone.
q., quadrate cartilage.
q.j., quadrato-jugal.
s.e., sphenethmoid bone.
sq., squamosal.
t., trabecular part of brain box.
t.c., trabecula.
th.h., thyrohyal.

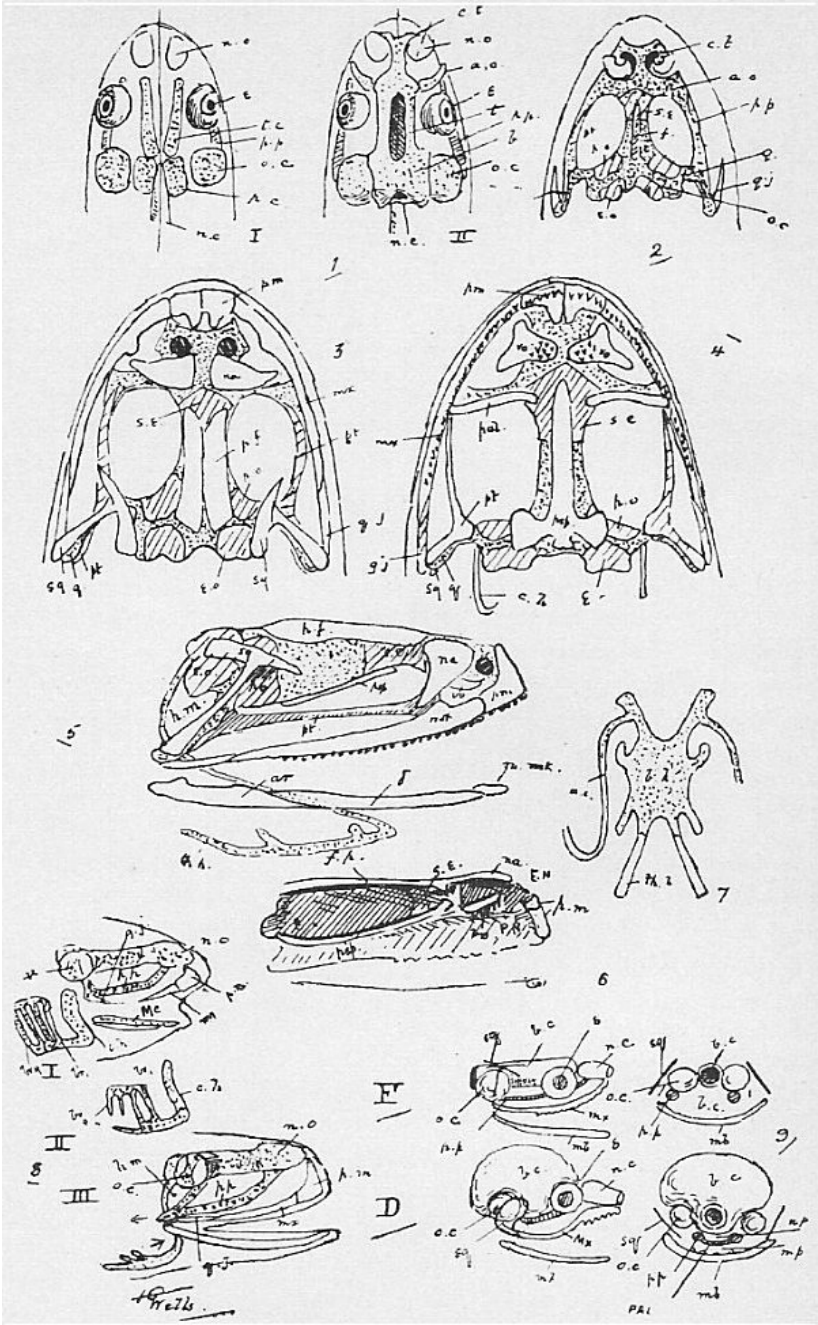
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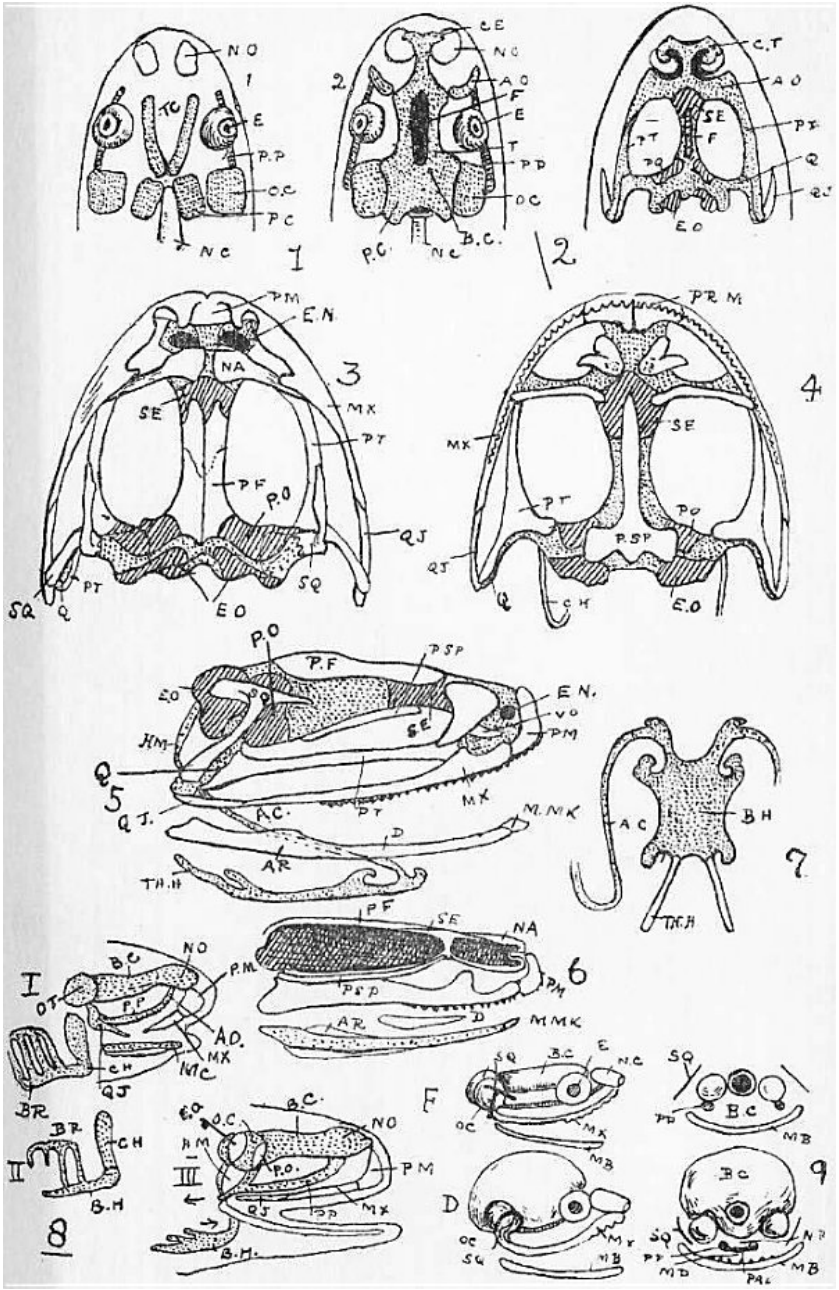
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PA.C

Sheet 15.

Figure 1. Dissection of -Male- [Female] Dog-Fish to show alimentary canal, the pericardium also being opened and the cloaca slit up. [Above is also seen the dorsal view of the head.]

Figure 2. The pelvic girdle and fin skeleton [of a male].

{No Figure 3, in First Edition.}

Figure 4. The spiral valve in the colon.
{Figure 3, in Second Edition.}

a.p., abdominal pore.
aur., -auricle- [atrium] of heart.
b.d., bile duct.
b.pt., basi-pterygium.
-cl., clasper.-
cl.c., -its- [the] supporting cartilage [of the clasper].
co., colon.
d'dnm., duodenum.
e., the eye.
g.bl., gall bladder.
g.s., gill slits.
L.Lv., left lobe of liver.
M.Lv., middle lobe of liver.
olf., olfactory opening.
[pan., pancreas.]
pcd., pericardial wall.
pel.g., the pelvic girdle.
p.p., arrow through pericardio-peritoneal canal.
r.g., rectal gland.
[R.Liv., right lobe.]
sp., spiracle.
spl., spleen.
st., the stomach.
s.v., sinus venosus.

u.g.p., uro-genital pore.
v., ventricle.

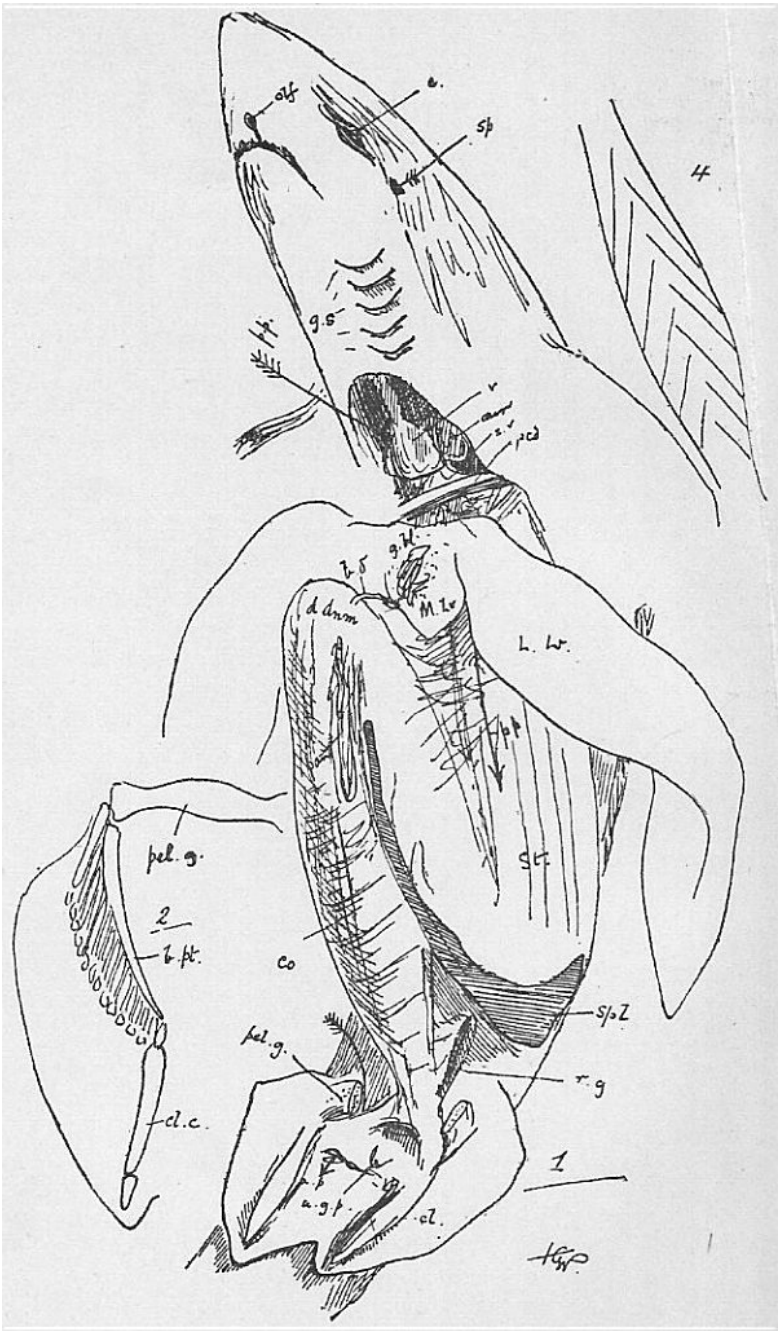
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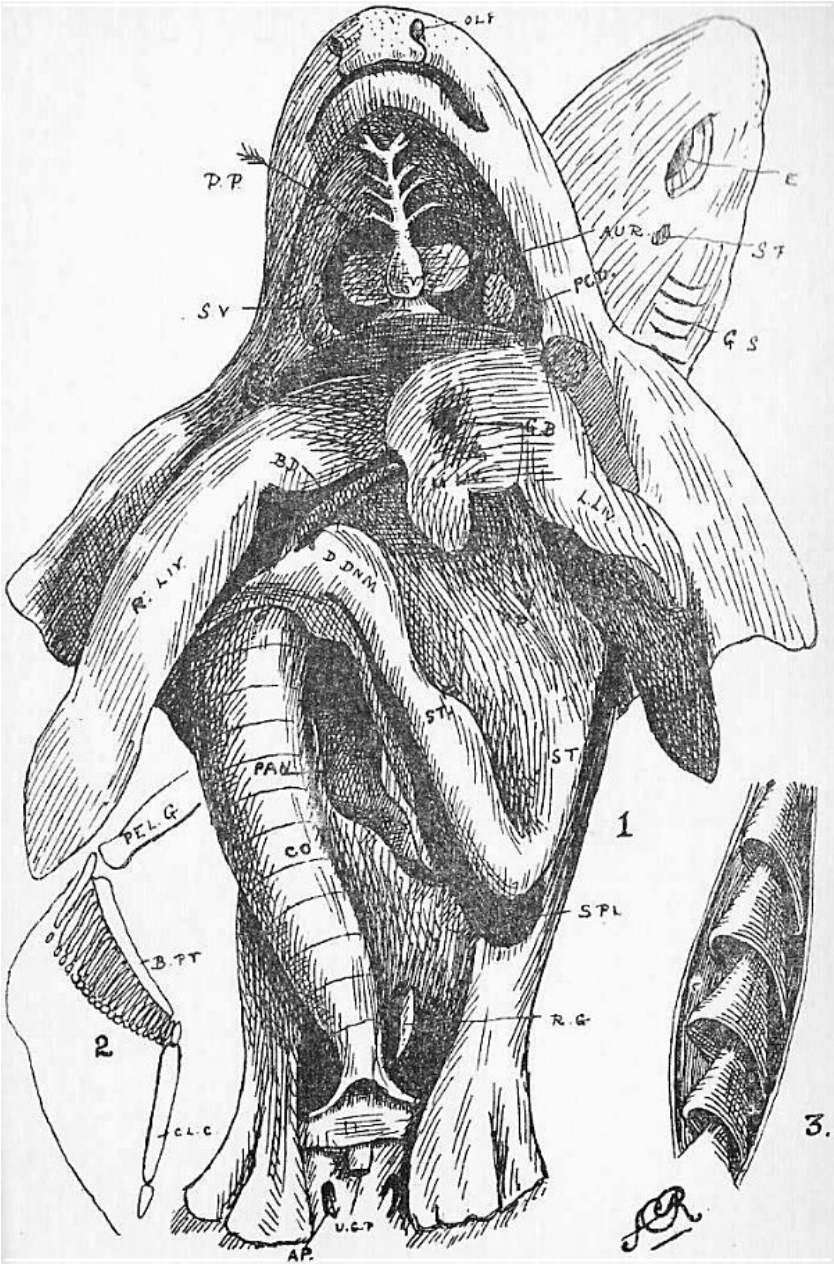
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Sheet 16.

Figure 1. Circulation of the Dog-Fish.

Figure 2. Simplified and more typical fish circulation, in which the posterior cardinals have not coalesced in the median line. The Cuvierian veins = the vena cava superior of the higher type; the posterior cardinal is represented by the *azygos* vein in the Rabbit.
Compare Sheet 24, Figure 7, and Sheet 2, Figure 2.

Figure 3. Side view of the pericardium.

a.br., afferent branchial artery.
a.c.s., anterior cardinal sinus (= internal jugular vein).
au., atrium (auricle) (= the two auricles of higher forms).
b.a., bulbus arteriosus.
c.a., conus arterious.
cd. a., caudal artery.
cd.v., caudal vein.
c.s., Cuvierian sinus.
d.a., dorsal aorta.
E., eye.
e.br., efferent branchial arteries.
g.s., in position of gill slits.
h.br.a., hypobranchial artery.
H.S., hepatic sinus.
[i.j.s., inferior jugular sinus (= external jugular vein).]
K., kidney.
L.V., lateral vein.
[oe.s., ventral wall of oesophagus.]
P.C.C., pericardial cavity.
P.C.S., posterior cardinal sinus.
p.p.c., pericardio-peritoneal canal.
P.V., portal vein.
r.p.v., reno-portal vein.
s.c.v., subclavian vein.
Vn., ventricle.
-v.s.v., inferior (= external) jugular vein-.

Figure 4. Skeleton of pectoral limb, and girdle. —
g., the girdle (also in Figure 3).
m.p., meso-pterygium.
mt.p., meta-pterygium.
p.p., pro-pterygium.
sc., its dorsal portion.

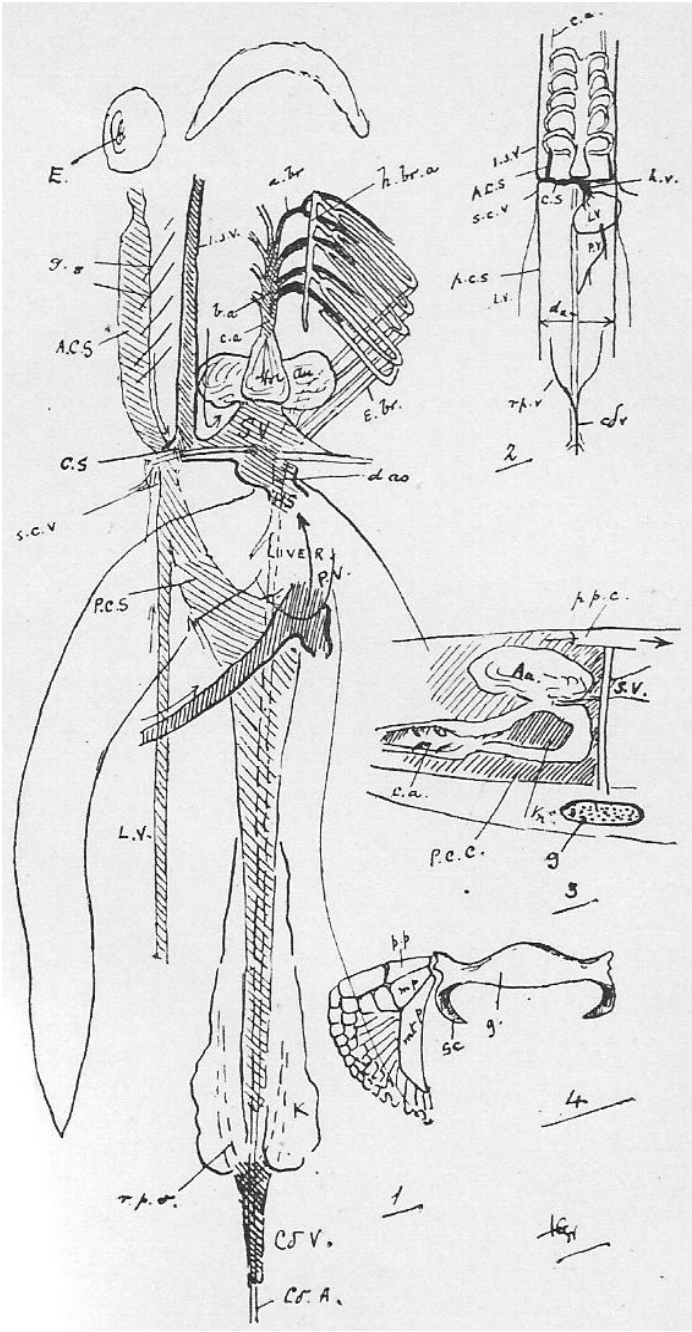
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SC

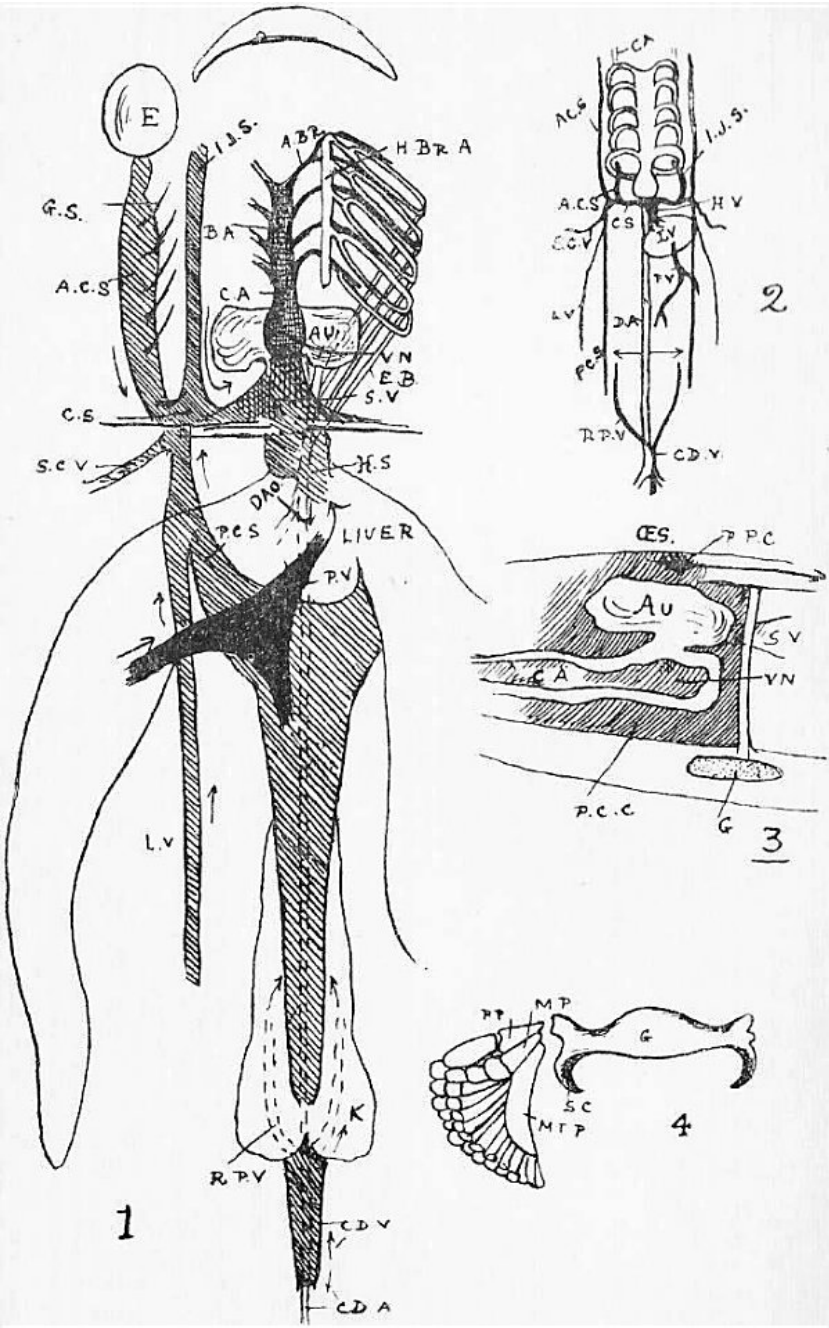
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Sheet 17.

-The Uro-genital Organs of the Dog-Fish.

Figure 1. The Female, the oviduct of the left side cut away,
-and an egg case in the oviduct.-

Figure 2. The Male.

The rectum is removed in both cases, and the silvery peritoneum dissected off from the kidneys.

Figure 3. A generalized diagram of the uro-genital organs. —
All references in text.
Ms., the *mesonephros*, is the epididymis in the male, and is reduced in the female; Ms.d., its duct, is the vas deferens in the male, and persists only as the urinary receptacle in the female.
Mt. and Mt.d., the *metanephros* and *metanephric duct*, become the functional kidney and ureter in both sexes. G. is the gonad (reproductive gland), and M.L. the animal's middle line (median plane).
-Ps.-, [Pr.,] the *pronephros*, is never developed in the Dog-fish; P.d., its supposed duct, is the oviduct of the female, and is suppressed in the male.

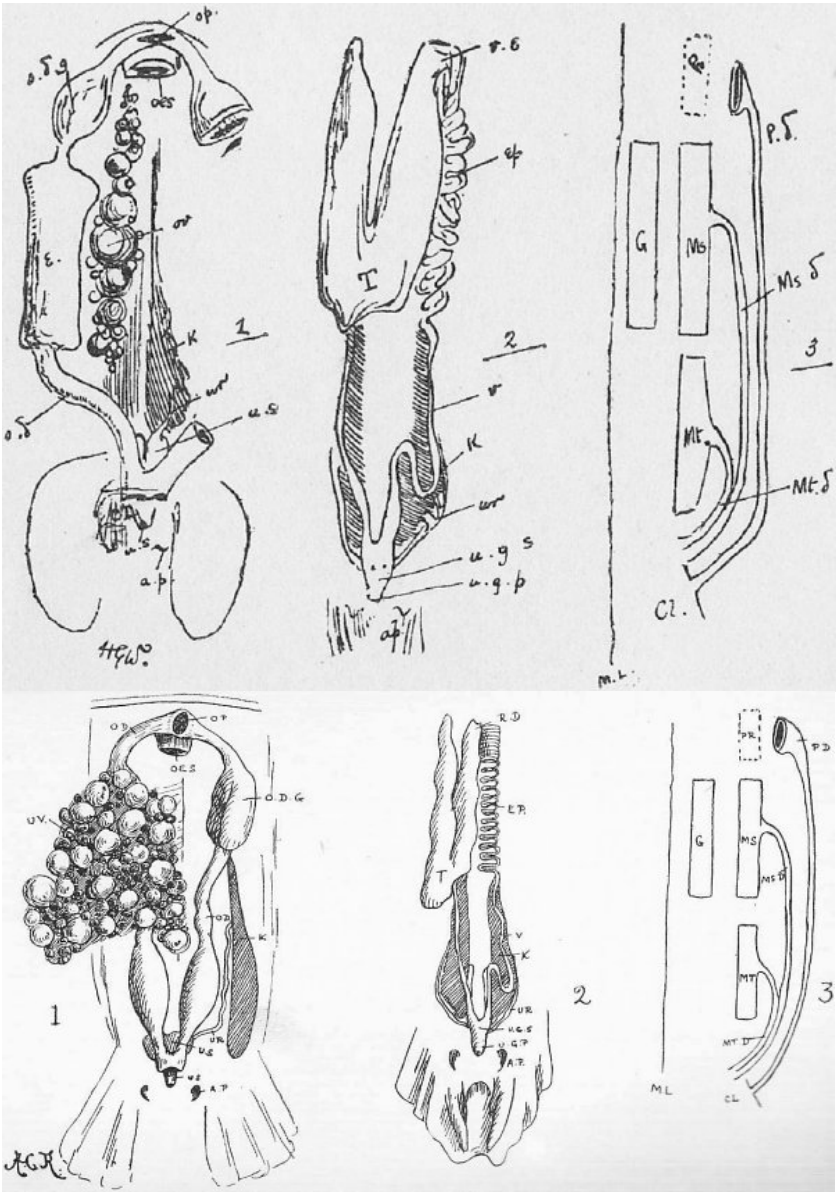

Sheet 18.

Figure 1. The Dog-Fish Brain, dorsal view.

Figure 2. Median section of the same. To the right a more diagrammatic figure. The nerves are numbered: —
[BR1, BR2, BR3, BR4 branches of X forking over the second to the fifth gillslit.]
cb., cerebellum.
h.s.c., horizontal semi-circular canal of ear, exposed by the slicing down of the otic mass.
[LAT., lateral-line branch of X.]
m.o., medulla oblongata.
oph., ophthalmic nerve (V.1+VII.1).
op.l., optic lobe.
pit., pituitary body.
pr.c., prosencephalon (cerebral hemisphere).
rh., olfactory lobe (rhinencephalon).
r.t., -its- restiform tracts [of medulla].
-st-. [S.P.G.], stalk of the pineal gland.
th., thalamencephalon.
th.c., thalamencephalon.
-ut., the utriculus, seen through the semi-transparent cartilage-.
Vid., the Vidian branch of VII.
[Visc., visceral branch of X.]

Figure 3. Diagram of the ear of a fish.
The structure of this is easily made out by clearing otic capsule and cutting slices of the cartilage in the Dog-Fish (e.g., Figure 1, h.s.c.).

amp., their ampullae.
a.v.c., p.v.c., h.c., anterior, posterior, horizontal canal respectively.
[amp., the ampullae.]
d.e., the ductus endo-lymphaticus.
-sac., the sacculus; c., a small outgrowth of the latter, corresponding to the rabbit's cochlea-.
-ut., the utriculus-.

Figure 4. The cranium and branchial bars of a Dog-Fish.
The groove in the otic capsule connects the orbital and anterior

cardinal sinuses.

A.C.S., position of the anterior cardinal sinus (dotted outline).
c., the vertebral centra.
c.b., the cerato-branchial.
c.h., the cerato-hyal.
e.b., epi-branchial.
ex.b., extra-branchial.
h.M., the hyo-mandibular.
i.n.p., inter-neural plate.
M.C., Meckel's (lower jaw) bar.
Na.C., the nasal capsule.
n.p., neural plate.
n.s., neural spine.
Ot.C., the otic capsule.
ph.b., the pharyngo-branchial.
P.pt., the palato-pterygoid bar (upper jaw bar).
p.s., pre-spiracular ligament, containing a cartilaginous nodule.
r., rib.
sp., the position of the spiracle.

Figure 5. Diagrams of a vertebral centrum. — For reference letters, see text (Section 9).

{No Figure 6, in First Edition.}
[Figure 6. Diagram for comparison with Figure III., Sheet 9.]

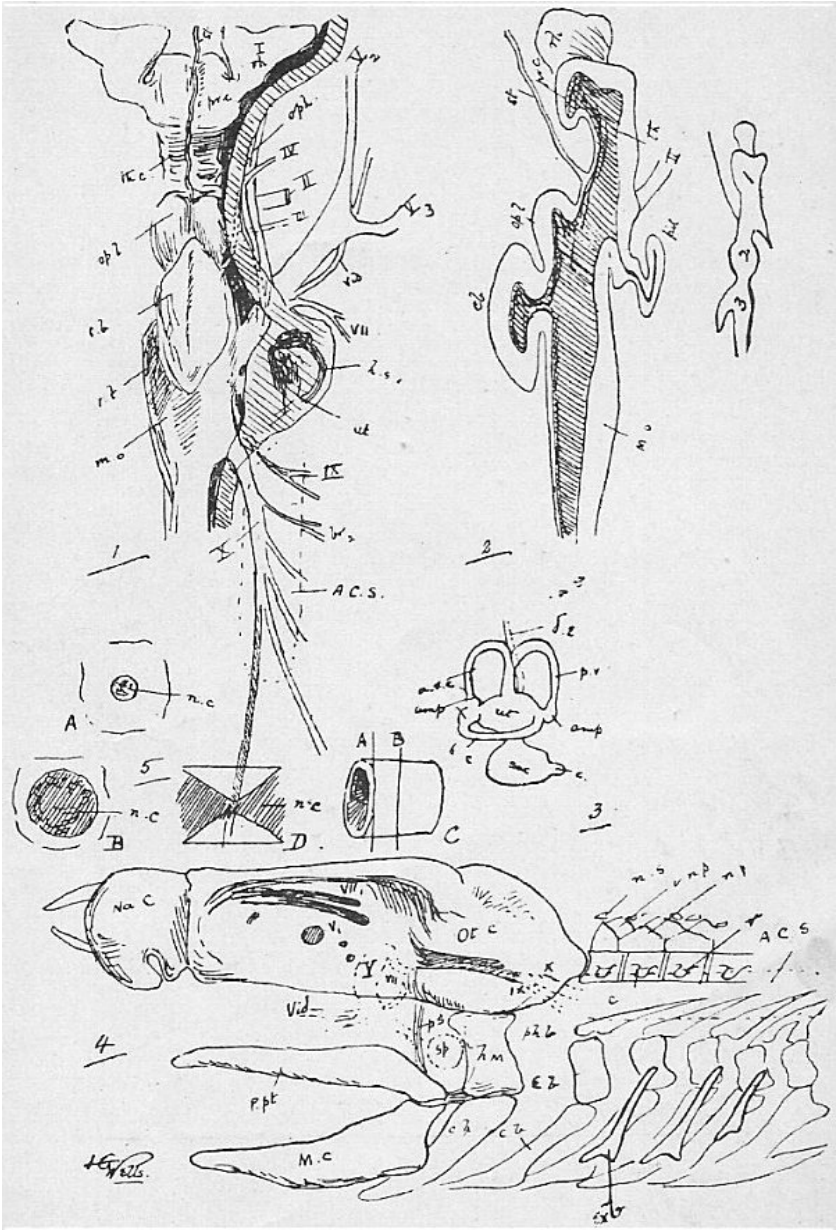
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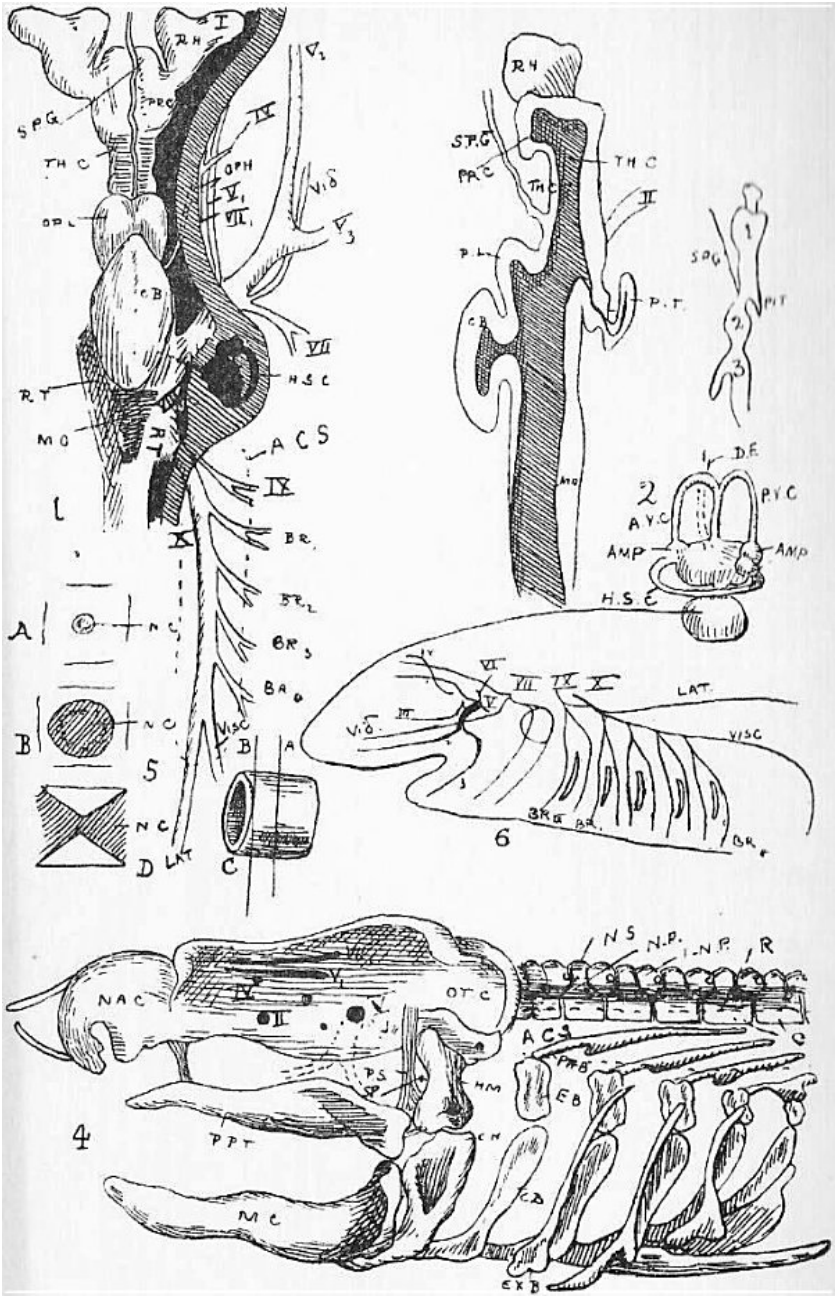
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Sheet 19.

Figure 1. Amphioxus, seen from the right side. a —— b shows the natural size. The animal is supposed to be clarified, and mounted in some highly refracting medium, so that it is practically transparent; I.,
II., III., and etc., refer to the section figured on Sheet 20.

Figure 2. Amphioxus, General Dissection. (Slightly altered from a figure by Professor E. R. Lankester.) The ventral atrial wall is removed. The pharynx cut away from the dorsal body-wall, and with the true ventral body-wall turned over to the (animal's) right. The arrow
a., a., passes through anus to intestine; b., b., is thrust through the atrial pore to the atrial cavity. Note coe., the body cavity.

References to the two figures.
an., anus.
at., atrial cavity.
at.w., atrial wall.
at.p., atrial pore.
a.d., anterior dilatata of nervous system.
b.w., body-wall.
b.t.L., brown tubes of Lankester.
c.f., ciliated funnel.
coe., coelome.
c.ao., cardiac aorta.
d.ao., dorsal aorta (paired).
d.ao'., dorsal aorta median.
g., gonads (male or female genital gland).
hep., hepatic vein.
in., intestine.
i.w., intestine wall.
lv., liver.
m.f., median fin.
n.c., notochord.
p.v., portal vein.

ph., pharynx.
-p.s.-, [e.s.] pigment spot (“eye spot”).
s.c., spinal cord.

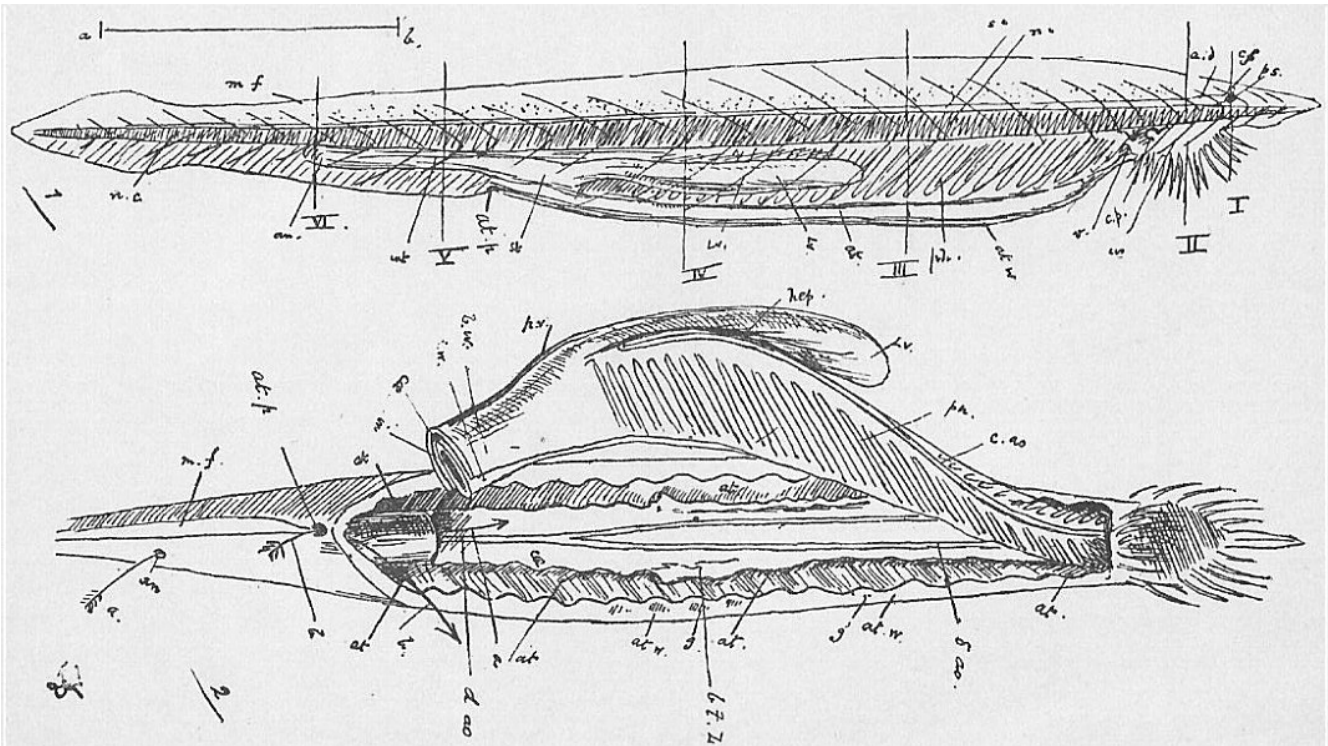
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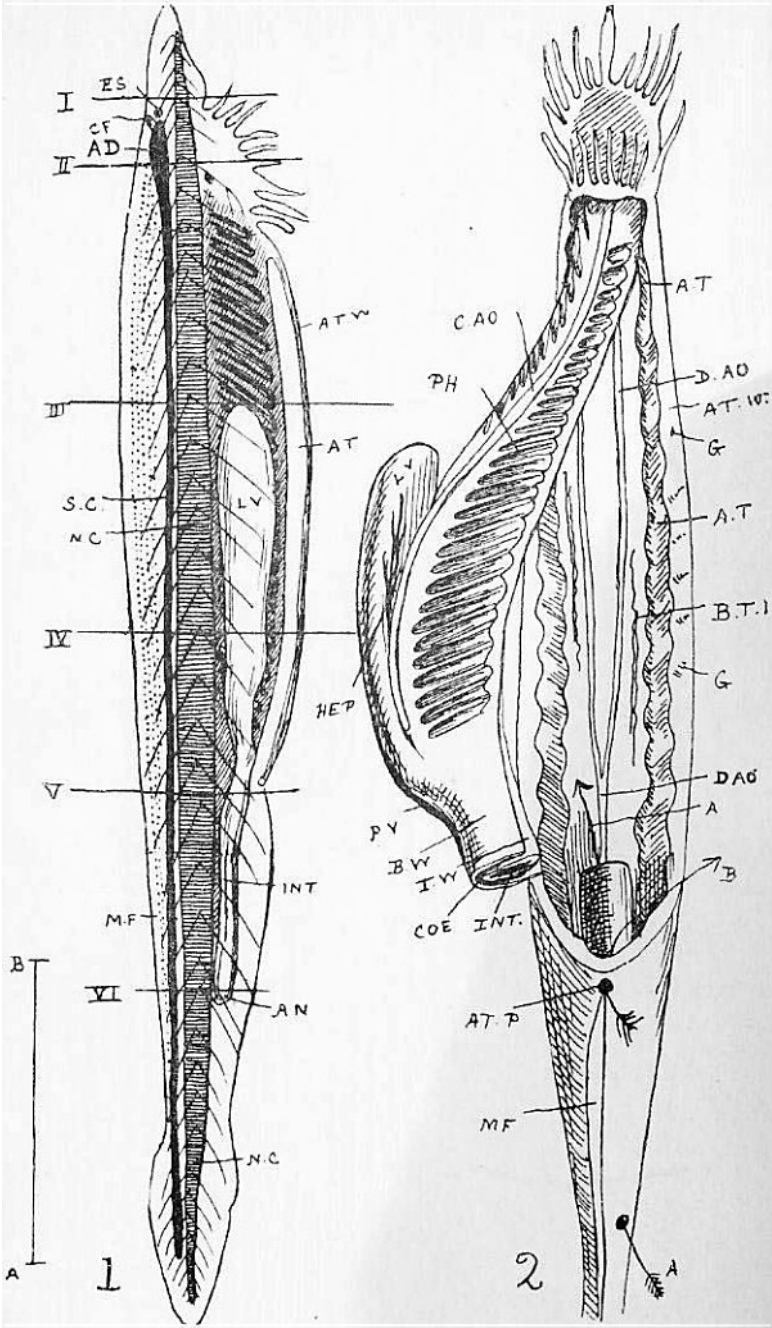
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Sheet 20.

-Sections of Amphioxus.

The Roman numerals indicate the corresponding region in Figure 1, Sheet 19. The lettering is identical; but note, in addition;
br.c., branchial canal.
c.f., ciliated funnel.
d.c.c., dorsal coelomic canal.
end., endostyle.
ep., epipleur.
e.s., eye spot.
h.p., hypopharyngeal grove.
h.vn., for hepatic vein.
o.c., oral cavity (or hood).

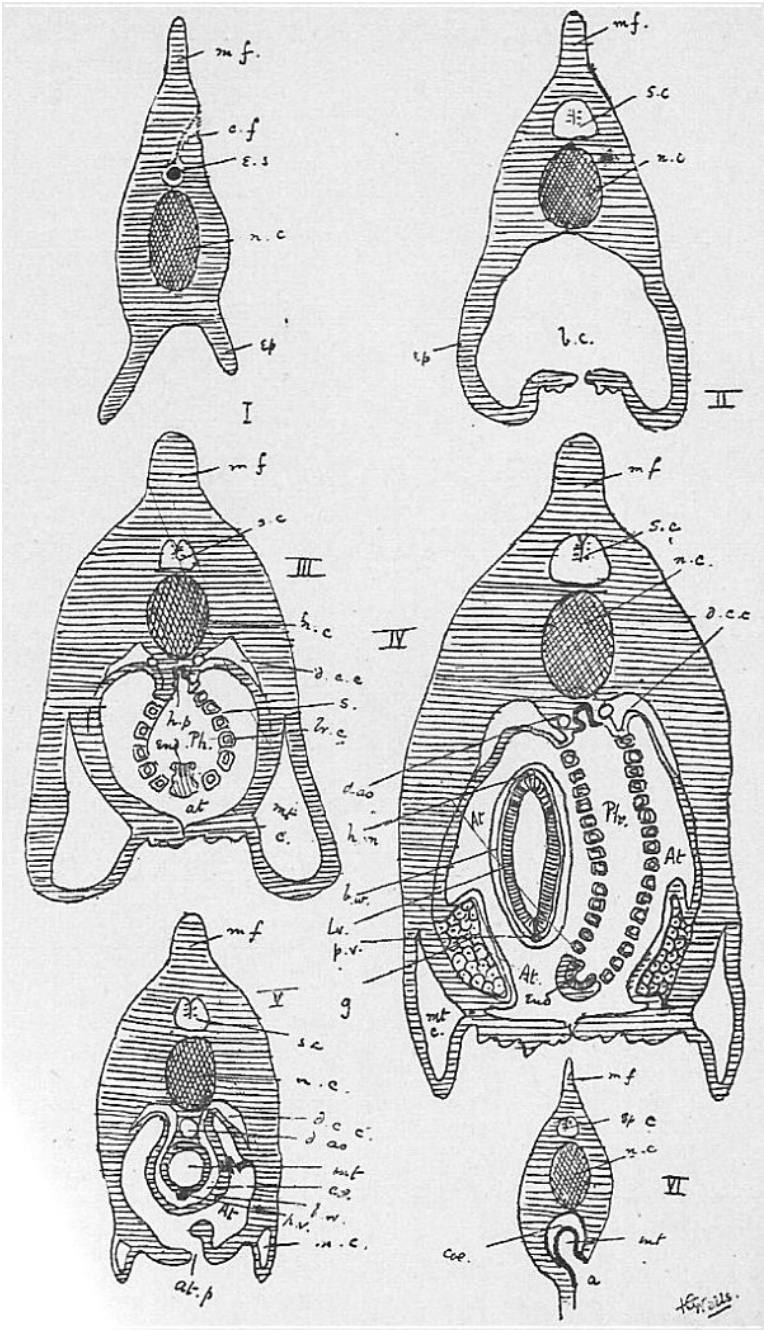
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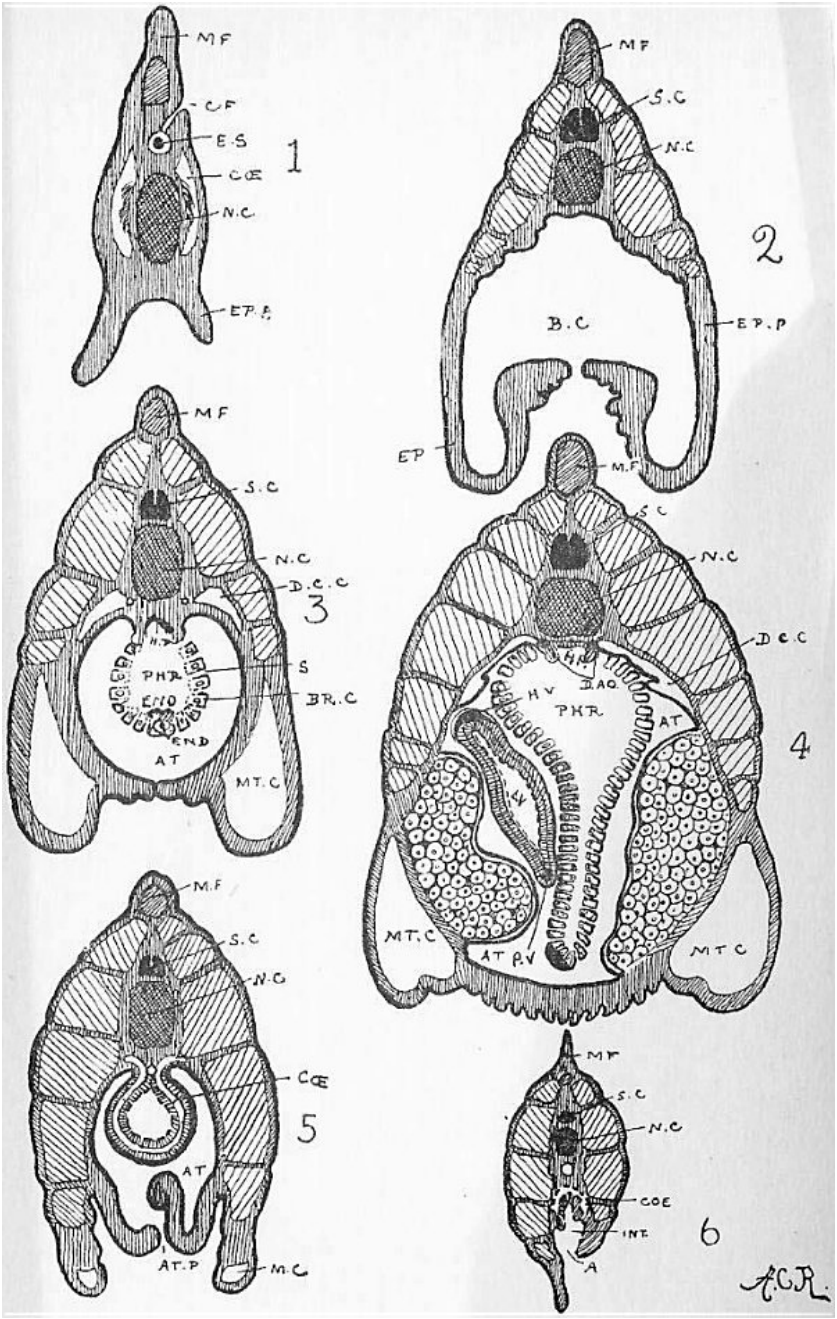
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Sheet 21.

-Phases in the Development of Amphioxus.

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4. Phases in segmentation.

Figure 5. The blastosphere.

Figure 6. The gastrula in section, anterior end to the right.

Figure 7. i. Dorsal view post gastrula stage.

Figure 7. ii. Diagrammatic section of the same in the position indicated by the transverse line in 7, i.

Figure 8. Diagrammatic section of a later stage.
coe.p., the coelomic pouches.
n.c., the notochord.
n.p., the neural plate.

Figure 9.i. Still later section.

Figure 9. ii. Diagrammatic view of late embryo.

Figures 10, 11, 12 illustrate the formation of the atrium as a median ventral invagination, at.

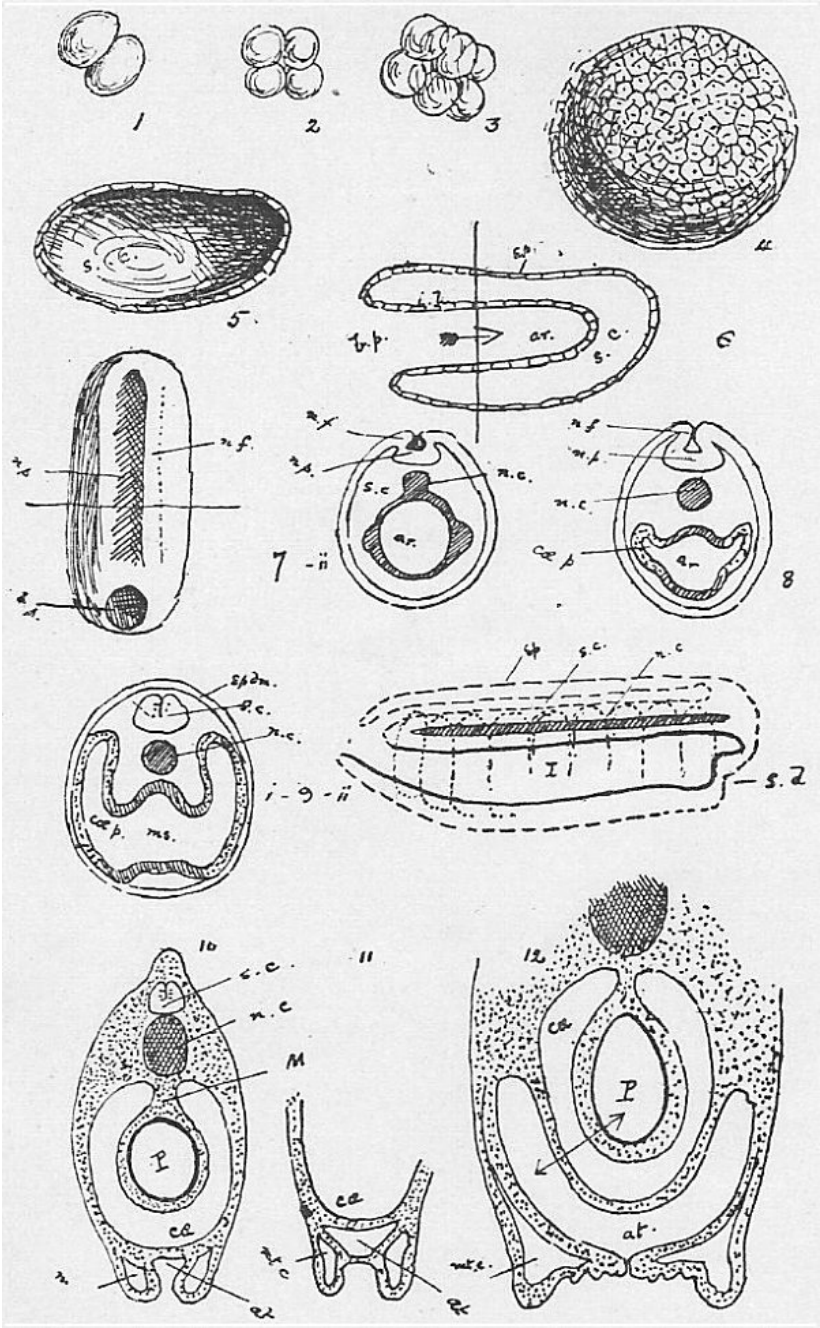
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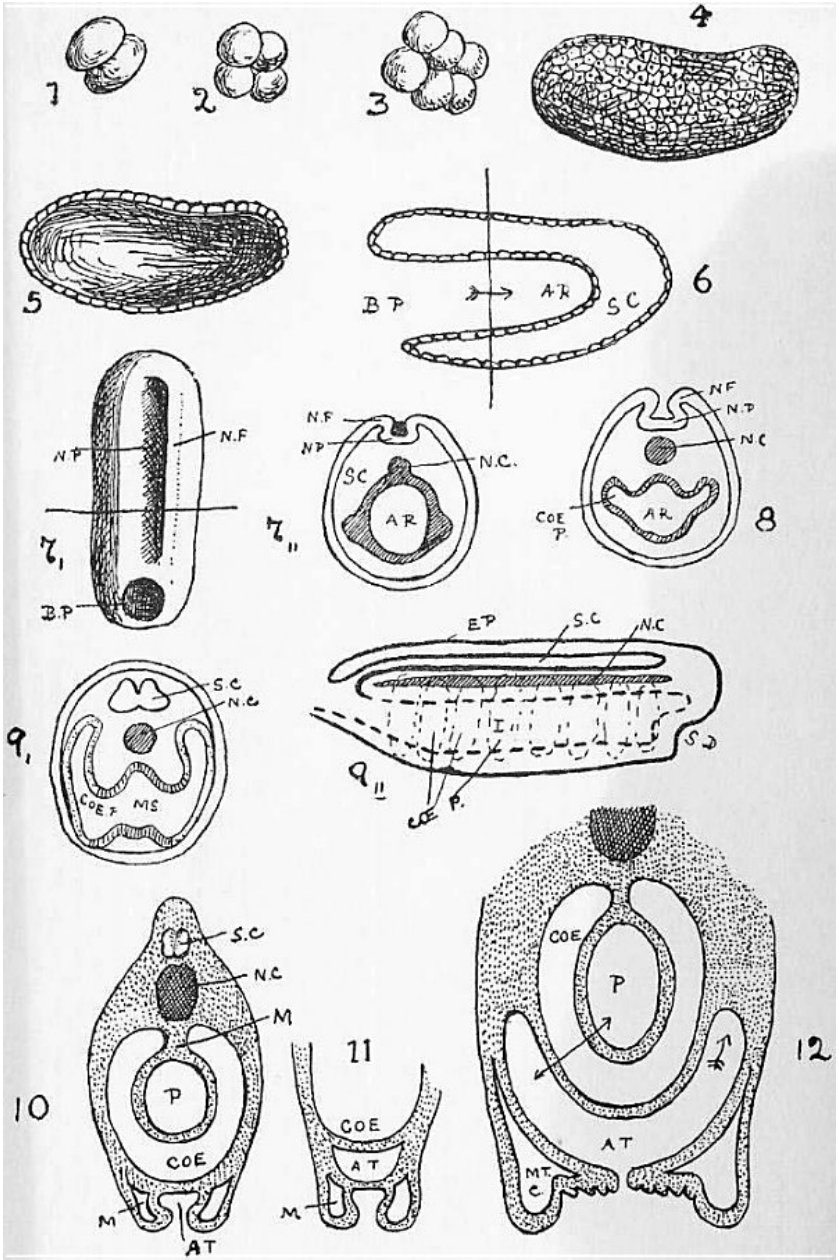
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Sheet 22.

-The Development of the Frog.

These diagrams must be studied with the text.
They should be compared with the corresponding
ones of Amphioxus as indicated below.

Figures 1, 2, 3. Stages in segmentation
(compare 1, 2 ,3 of {Sheet 21} Amphioxus).

Figure 4. Blastosphere stage (compare 5, Amphioxus). This, on a smaller scale. The cells on the ventral side are so much larger because distended with yolk.

Figure 5. Gastrula stage in section (compare 6, Amphioxus). The Frog on a smaller scale than Amphioxus.

Figure 6. Dorsal view of gastrula (compare 7, Amphioxus).

Figure 7. Part of a transverse section of developing tadpole, corresponding to Figure 8 of Amphioxus.

Figures 8 and 9. Diagrammatic longitudinal sections of tadpoles (compare 9. ii. of Amphioxus). Y. represents a mass of
yolk cells.

Figure 10. Side view of young tadpole, showing external gills (e.g.) and suckers (s.). Note the ventral bulging due to the yolk.

Figure 11. Ventral view of a later tadpole.
op., the operculum.
int., coiling intestine.

Figure 12. Head of still later tadpole in horizontal section to show atrial chamber formed by operculum.
int.g., internal gills.
L., developing lungs.

Figure 13. Diagrammatic cross-section of the mid-dorsal part of an embryonic vertebrate.

ao., aorta.
B.C., Bowman's capsule.
coe., coelom.
d.g., ganglion on dorsal root of spinal nerve.
gl., -its branch- [arteriole] to form glomerulus.
g.r., genital ridge.
I., intestine.
M.D., Mullerian duct.
ns. [nst.], nephrostome.
n.c., notochord; -n.s.-, [n.sh.] its sheath.
s.c., neural canal.
W.D., Wolffian duct.

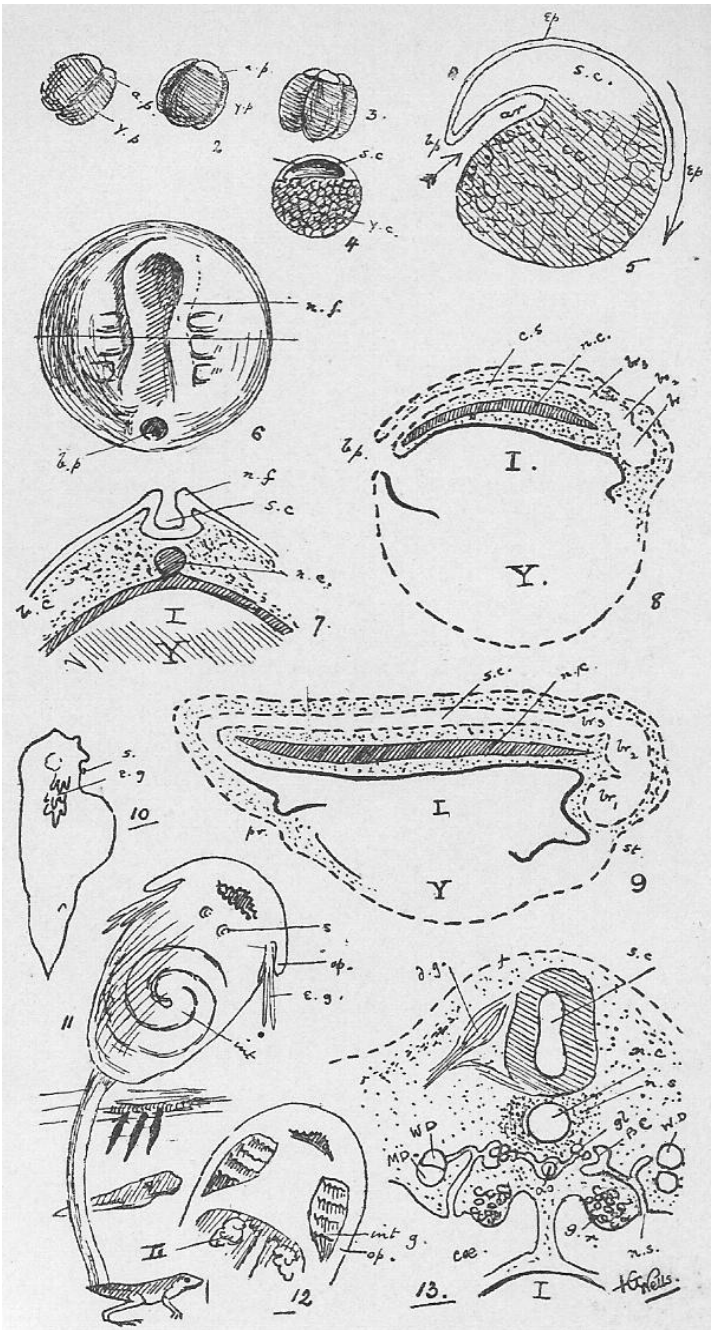
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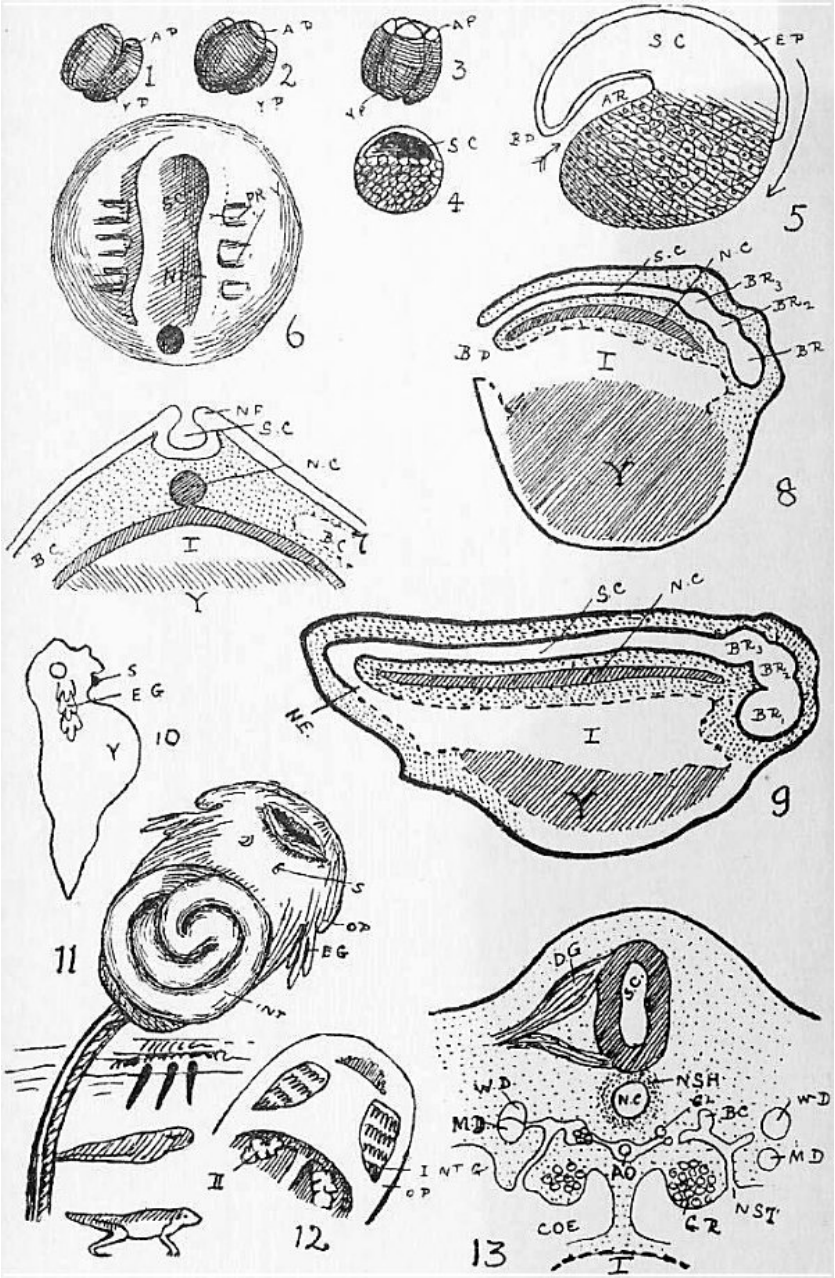
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Sheet 23.

-The Development of the Fowl.

Figure 1. Diagram of the early ovum. The section below is a small portion of the blastodermic area.
b.d., blastoderm.
y., the undivided yolk.
s.c., the segmentation between the blastoderm and yolk. Compare s.c. in {Sheet} 22, {Figure} 4.

Figure 2. Area pellucida about the sixteenth hour. The figure below is the central part of the section indicated by the transverse line, and showing the primitive streak (p.s.).

Figure 3. Area pellucida about the twenty-first hour. Two sections through a and b below.

Figure 4. About the twenty-fifth hour; surface view; longitudinal section to right and transverse above.

Figure 4b. Diagrammatic rendering of same stage (compare Figure 9 of Frog and 9.ii. Amphioxus). This will be most clearly understood if the reader look at Sheet 22, {Figure} 9, and imagine Y. *enormously* increased, and the embryo sinking into it. Epiblast, ep., -line of dashes- [black line]. Mesoblast, dotted. Hypoblast, -black- [line of dashes]. pp., the pleuro-peritoneal cavity.

Figure 5 and 6 illustrate formation of amnion (a.) and allantois (all.). 6 is about the fourth day.

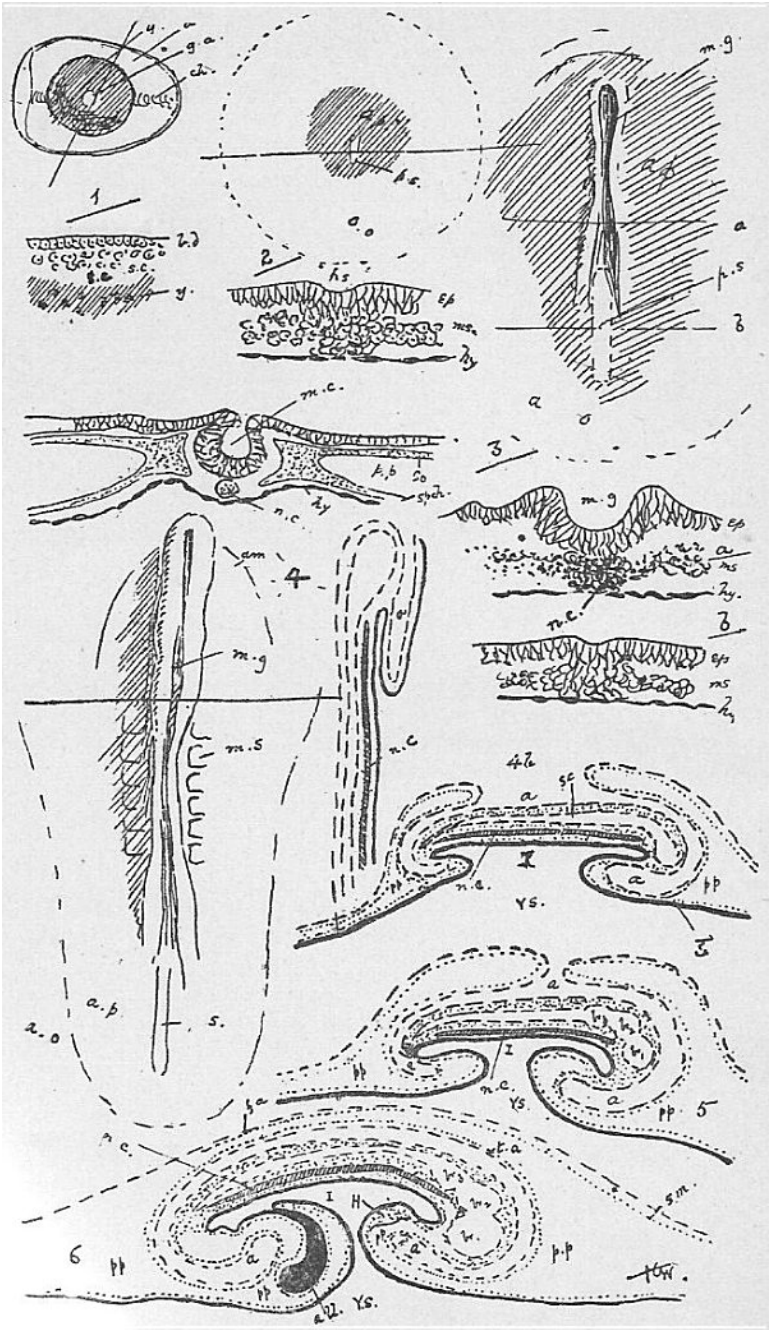
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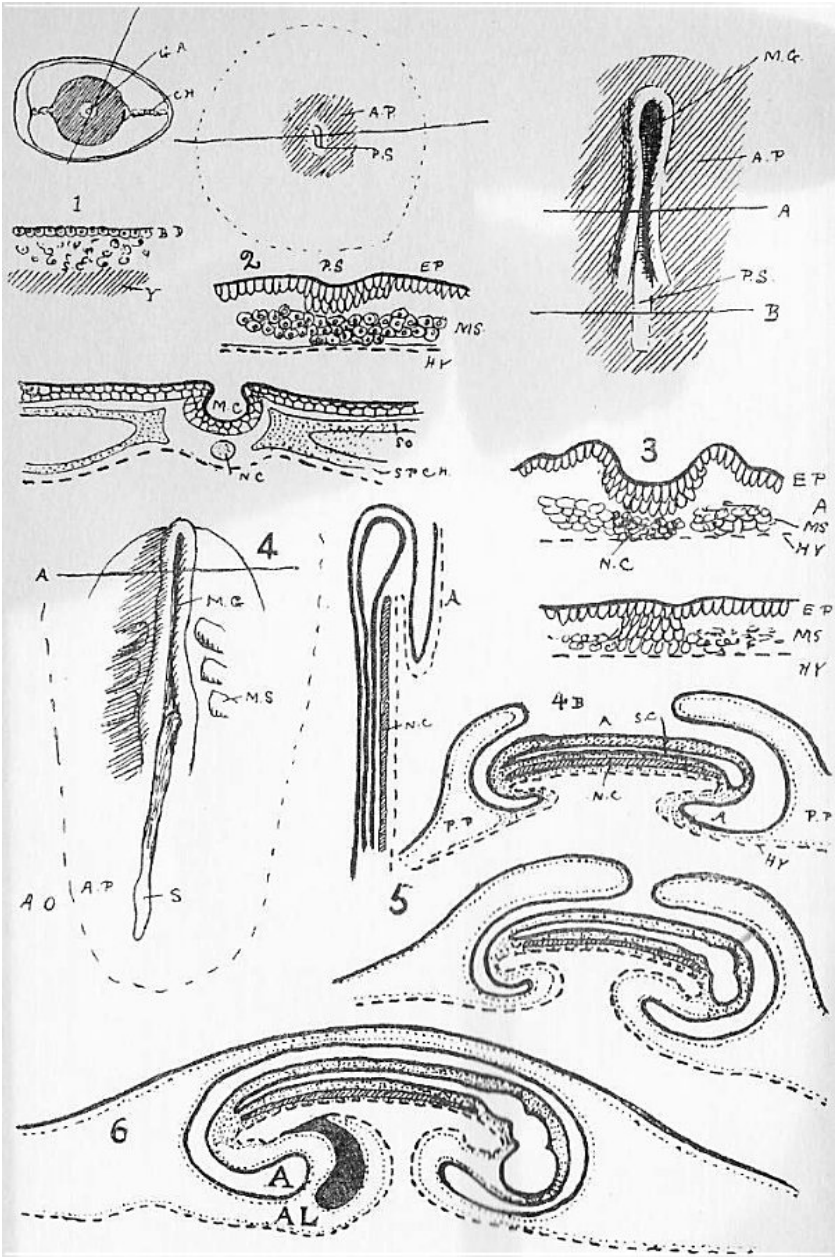
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Sheet 24.

-The Development of the Fowl.

Figure 1. Chick about the -fifth- [third] day. At this stage the chick lies on its left side in the yolk. [For lettering of blood vessels, see (7) below.]
i., the intestine.
u.v., the yolk sac.
v.v., the vitelline veins.
al., the allantois.

Figure 2. Chick about sixth day.

Figure 3. Development of heart.

Figure 4. Development of the eye.

Figure 5. Chick about the sixteenth day.
A.M. is the amnion surrounding the embryo. Note particularly how the
allantois (al.) has spread over surface of shell and how the yolk sac is shrivelled.

Figure 6. Figures to illustrate the relative function and importance of allantois and yolk sac in bird and mammal. In the fowl, however, the blood-vessels of the allantois also probably absorb
the *albumen* of the egg, and may excrete urea into the egg-space.

Figure 7. Simplified figure of the embryonic circulation, for comparison with the similar figures annexed to Dog-Fish and Rabbit.

{Lines from Second Edition only.}
[A.C., anterior cardinal.
Ao., Aorta.
Br4, sixth aortic arch (fourth branchial).
C.S. Cuvierian sinus.

H., the heart.
I.C., inferior cava.
P.C., posterior cardinal vein.
Tr.A., truncus arteriosus.
v.v., vitelline vein.]

Figure 8. Chick on the nineteenth day.

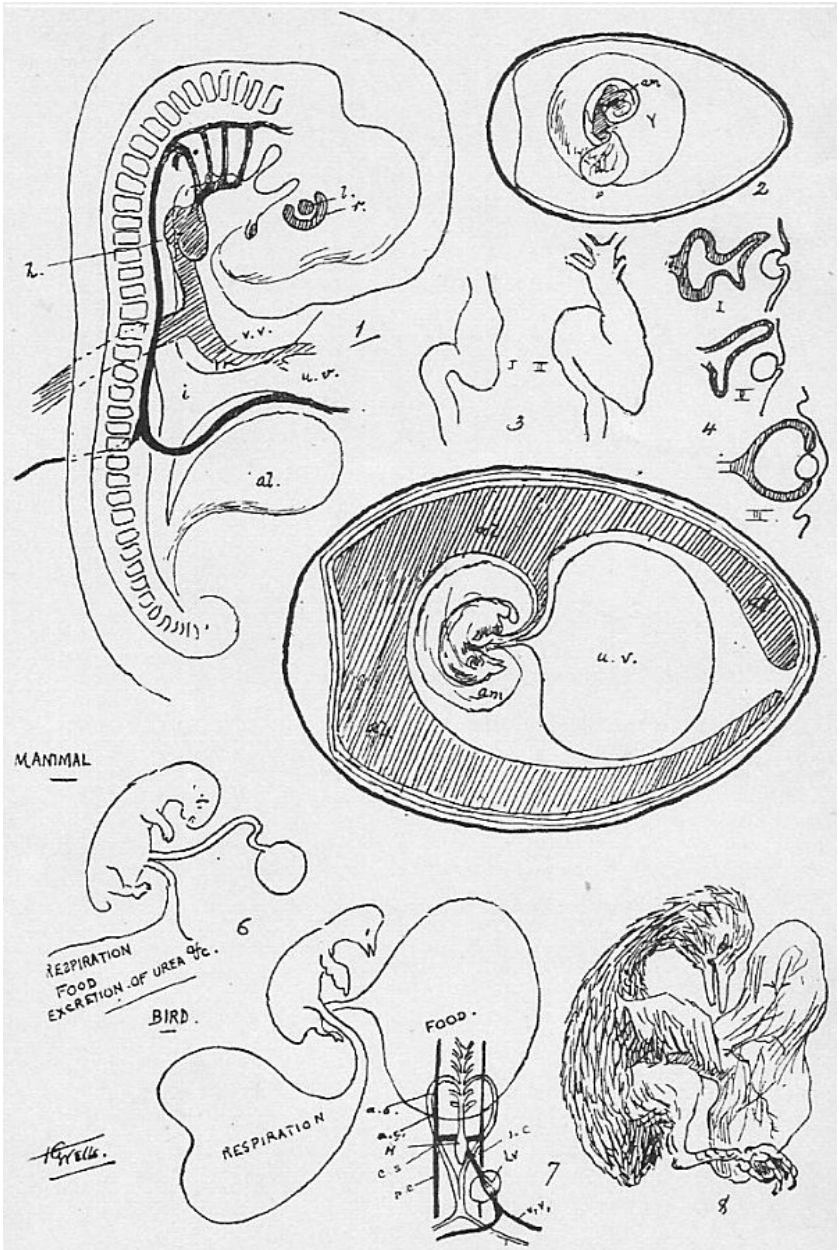
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EXCRETION OF UREA &c.
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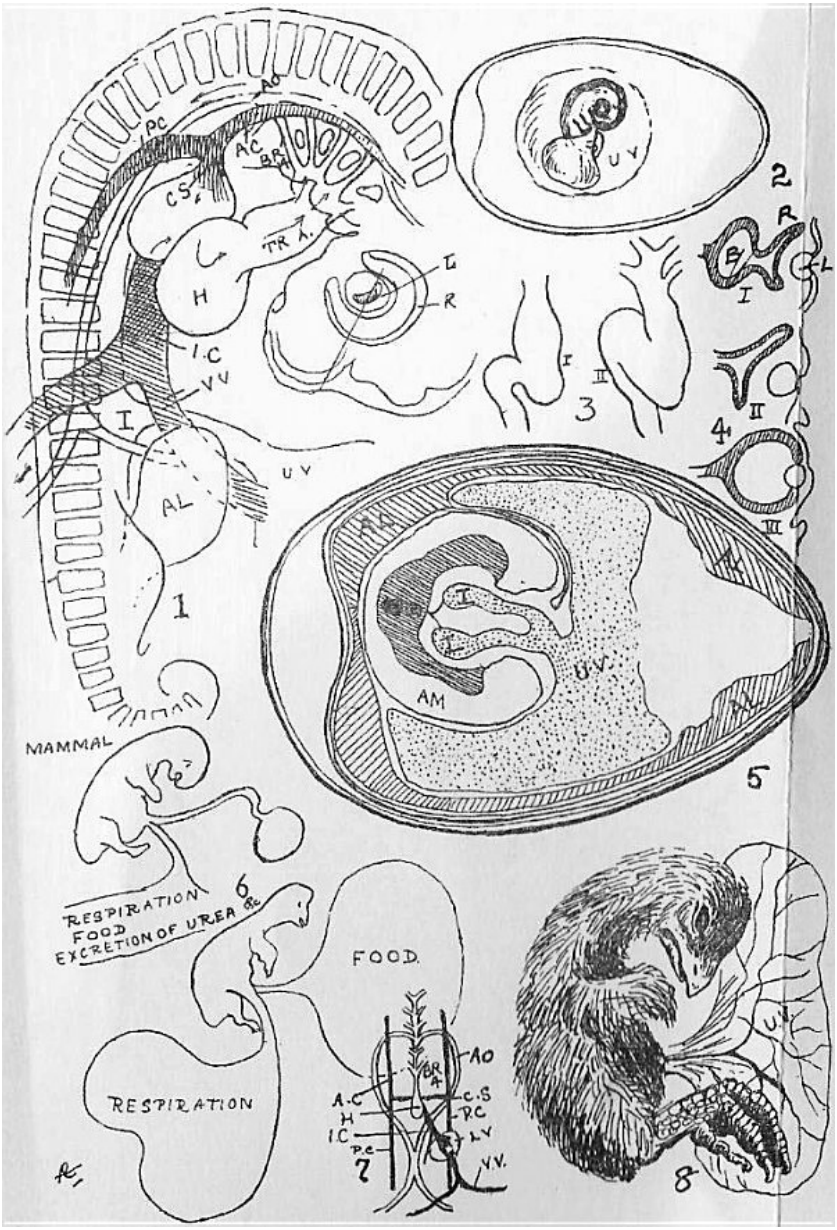
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CERTAIN PERSONAL MATTERS

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THOUGHTS ON CHEAPNESS AND MY AUNT CHARLOTTE

The world mends. In my younger days people believed in mahogany; some of my readers will remember it — a heavy, shining substance, having a singularly close resemblance to raw liver, exceedingly heavy to move, and esteemed on one or other count the noblest of all woods. Such of us as were very poor and had no mahogany pretended to have mahogany; and the proper hepatite tint was got by veneering. That makes one incline to think it was the colour that pleased people. In those days there was a word "trashy," now almost lost to the world. My dear Aunt Charlotte used that epithet when, in her feminine way, she swore at people she did not like. "Trashy" and "paltry" and "Brummagem" was the very worst she could say of them. And she had, I remember, an intense aversion to plated goods and bronze halfpence. The halfpence of her youth had been vast and corpulent red-brown discs, which it was folly to speak of as small change. They were fine handsome coins, and almost as inconvenient as crown-pieces. I remember she corrected me once when I was very young. "Don't call a penny a copper, dear," she said; "copper is a metal. The pennies they have nowadays are bronze." It is odd how our childish impressions cling to us. I still regard bronze as a kind of upstart intruder, a mere trashy pretender among metals.

All my Aunt Charlotte's furniture was thoroughly good, and most of it extremely uncomfortable; there was not a thing for a little boy to break and escape damnation in the household. Her china was the only thing with a touch of beauty in it — at least I remember nothing else — and each of her blessed plates was worth the happiness of a mortal for days together. And they dressed me in a Nessus suit of valuable garments. I learned the value of thoroughly good things only too early. I knew the equivalent of a teacup to the very last scowl, and I have hated good, handsome property ever since. For my part I love cheap things, trashy things, things made of the commonest rubbish that money can possibly buy; things as vulgar as primroses, and as transitory as a morning's frost.

Think of all the advantages of a cheap possession — cheap and nasty, if you will — compared with some valuable substitute. Suppose you need this or that. "Get a good one," advises Aunt Charlotte; "one that will last." You do — and it does last. It lasts like a family curse. These great plain valuable things, as plain as good women, as complacently assured of their intrinsic worth — who does not know them? My Aunt Charlotte scarcely had a new thing in her life. Her mahogany was avuncular; her china remotely ancestral; her feather beds and her bedsteads! — they were haunted; the births, marriages, and deaths associated with the best one was the history of our race for three generations. There was more in her house than the tombstone rectitude of the chair-backs to remind me of the graveyard. I can still remember the sombre aisles of that house, the vault-like shadows, the magnificent window curtains that blotted out the windows. Life was too trivial for such things. She never knew she tired of them, but she did. That was the secret of her temper, I think; they engendered her sombre Calvinism, her perception of the trashy quality of human life. The pretence that they were the accessories to human life was too transparent. *We* were the accessories; we minded them for a little while, and then we passed away. They wore us out and cast us aside. We were the changing scenery; they were the actors who played on through the piece. It was even so with clothing. We buried my other maternal aunt — Aunt Adelaide — and wept, and partly forgot her; but her wonderful silk dresses — they would stand alone — still went rustling cheerfully about an ephemeral world.

All that offended my sense of proportion, my feeling of what is due to human life, even when I was a little boy. I want things of my own, things I can break without breaking my heart; and, since one can live but once, I want some change in my life — to have this kind of thing and then that. I never valued Aunt Charlotte's good old things until I sold them. They sold remarkably well: those chairs like nether millstones for the grinding away of men; the fragile china — an incessant anxiety until accident broke it, and the spell of it at the same time; those silver spoons, by virtue of which Aunt Charlotte went in fear of burglary for six-and-fifty years; the bed from which I alone of all my kindred had escaped; the wonderful old, erect, high-

shouldered, silver-faced clock.

But, as I say, our ideas are changing — mahogany has gone, and repp curtains. Articles are made for man, nowadays, and not man, by careful early training, for articles. I feel myself to be in many respects a link with the past. Commodities come like the spring flowers, and vanish again. "Who steals my watch steals trash," as some poet has remarked; the thing is made of I know not what metal, and if I leave it on the mantel for a day or so it goes a deep blackish purple that delights me exceedingly. My grandfather's hat — I understood when I was a little boy that I was to have that some day. But now I get a hat for ten shillings, or less, two or three times a year. In the old days buying clothes was well-nigh as irrevocable as marriage. Our flat is furnished with glittering things — wanton arm-chairs just strong enough not to collapse under you, books in gay covers, carpets you are free to drop lighted fusees upon; you may scratch what you like, upset your coffee, cast your cigar ash to the four quarters of heaven. Our guests, at anyrate, are not snubbed by our furniture. It knows its place.

But it is in the case of art and adornment that cheapness is most delightful. The only thing that betrayed a care for beauty on the part of my aunt was her dear old flower garden, and even there she was not above suspicion. Her favourite flowers were tulips, rigid tulips with opulent crimson streaks. She despised wildings. Her ornaments were simply displays of the precious metal. Had she known the price of platinum she would have worn that by preference. Her chains and brooches and rings were bought by weight. She would have turned her back on Benvenuto Cellini if he was not 22 carats fine. She despised water-colour art; her conception of a picture was a vast domain of oily brown by an Old Master. The Babbages at the Hall had a display of gold plate swaggering in the corner of the dining-room; and the visitor (restrained by a plush rope from examining the workmanship) was told the value, and so passed on. I like my art unadorned: thought and skill, and the other strange quality that is added thereto, to make things beautiful — and nothing more. A farthing's worth of paint and paper, and, behold! a thing of beauty! — as they do in Japan. And if it should fall into the fire — well, it has gone like yesterday's sunset, and to-morrow there will be

another.

These Japanese are indeed the apostles of cheapness. The Greeks lived to teach the world beauty, the Hebrews to teach it morality, and now the Japanese are hammering in the lesson that men may be honourable, daily life delightful, and a nation great without either freestone houses, marble mantelpieces, or mahogany sideboards. I have sometimes wished that my Aunt Charlotte could have travelled among the Japanese nation. She would, I know, have called it a "parcel of trash." Their use of paper — paper suits, paper pocket-handkerchiefs — would have made her rigid with contempt. I have tried, but I cannot imagine my Aunt Charlotte in paper underclothing. Her aversion to paper was extraordinary. Her Book of Beauty was printed on satin, and all her books were bound in leather, the boards regulated rather than decorated with a severe oblong. Her proper sphere was among the ancient Babylonians, among which massive populace even the newspapers were built of brick. She would have compared with the King's daughter whose raiment was of wrought gold. When I was a little boy I used to think she had a mahogany skeleton. However, she is gone, poor old lady, and at least she left me her furniture. Her ghost was torn in pieces after the sale — must have been. Even the old china went this way and that. I took what was perhaps a mean revenge of her for the innumerable black-holeings, bread-and-water dinners, summary chastisements, and impossible tasks she inflicted upon me for offences against her too solid possessions. You will see it at Woking. It is a light and graceful cross. It is a mere speck of white between the monstrous granite paperweights that oppress the dead on either side of her. Sometimes I am half sorry for that. When the end comes I shall not care to look her in the face — she will be so humiliated.

THE TROUBLE OF LIFE

I do not know whether this will awaken a sympathetic lassitude in, say, fifty per cent. of its readers, or whether my experience is unique and my testimony simply curious. At anyrate, it is as true as I can make it. Whether this is a mere mood, and a certain flagrant exhilaration my true attitude towards things, or this is my true attitude and the exuberant phase a lapse from it, I cannot say. Probably it does not matter. The thing is that I find life an extremely troublesome affair. I do not want to make any railing accusations against life; it is — to my taste — neither very sad nor very horrible. At times it is distinctly amusing. Indeed, I know nothing in the same line that can quite compare with it. But there is a difference between general appreciation and uncritical acceptance. At times I find life a Bother.

The kind of thing that I object to is, as a good example, all the troublesome things one has to do every morning in getting up. There is washing. This is an age of unsolicited personal confidences, and I will frankly confess that if it were not for Euphemia I do not think I should wash at all. There is a vast amount of humbug about washing. Vulgar people not only profess a passion for the practice, but a physical horror of being unwashed. It is a sort of cant. I can understand a sponge bath being a novelty the first time and exhilarating the second and third. But day after day, week after week, month after month, and nothing to show at the end of it all! Then there is shaving. I have to get shaved because Euphemia hates me with a blue jowl, and I will admit I hate myself. Yet, if I were left alone, I do not think my personal taste would affect my decision; I will say that for myself. Either I hack about with a blunt razor — my razors are always blunt — until I am a kind of Whitechapel Horror, and with hair in tufts upon my chin like the top of a Bosjesman's head, or else I have to spend all the morning being dabbed about the face by a barber with damp hands. In either case it is a repulsive thing to have, eating into one's time when one might be living; and I have calculated that all the hair I have lost in this way, put end to end, would reach to Berlin. All that vital energy thrown away!

However, “Thorns and bristles shall it bring forth to thee.” I suppose it is part of the primal curse, and I try and stand it like a man. But the thing is a bother all the same.

Then after shaving comes the hunt for the collar-stud. Of all idiotic inventions the modern collar is the worst. A man who has to write things for such readers as mine cannot think over-night of where he puts his collar-stud; he has to keep his mind at an altogether higher level. Consequently he walks about the bedroom, thinking hard, and dropping things about: here a vest and there a collar, and sowing a bitter harvest against the morning. Or he sits on the edge of the bed jerking his garments this way and that. “I shot a slipper in the air,” as the poet sings, and in the morning it turns up in the most impossible quarters, and where you least expect it. And, talking of going to bed, before Euphemia took the responsibility over, I was always forgetting to wind my watch. But now that is one of the things she neglects.

Then, after getting up, there is breakfast. Autolycus of the *Pall Mall Gazette* may find heaven there, but I am differently constituted. There is, to begin with the essence of the offence — the stuff that has to be eaten somehow. Then there is the paper. Unless it is the face of a fashionable beauty, I know of nothing more absolutely uninteresting than a morning paper. You always expect to find something in it, and never do. It wastes half my morning sometimes, going over and over the thing, and trying to find out why they publish it. If I edited a daily I think I should do like my father does when he writes to me. “Things much the same,” he writes; “the usual fussing about the curate’s red socks” — a long letter for him. The rest margin. And, by the bye, there are letters every morning at breakfast, too!

Now I do not grumble at letters. You can read them instead of getting on with your breakfast. They are entertaining in a way, and you can tear them up at the end, and in that respect at least they are better than people who come to see you. Usually, too, you need not make a reply. But sometimes Euphemia gets hold of some still untorn, and says in her dictatorial way that they *have* to be answered — insists — says I *must*. Yet she knows that nothing fills me with a livelier horror than having to answer letters. It paralyses me. I waste

whole days sometimes mourning over the time that I shall have to throw away presently, answering some needless impertinence — requests for me to return books lent to me; reminders from the London Library that my subscription is overdue; proposals for me to renew my ticket at the stores — Euphemia's business really; invitations for me to go and be abashed before impertinent distinguished people: all kinds of bothering things.

And speaking of letters and invitations brings me round to friends. I dislike most people; in London they get in one's way in the street and fill up railway carriages, and in the country they stare at you — but I *hate* my friends. Yet Euphemia says I *must* "keep up" my friends. They would be all very well if they were really true friends and respected my feelings and left me alone, just to sit quiet. But they come wearing shiny clothes, and mop and mow at me and expect me to answer their gibberings. Polite conversation always appears to me to be a wicked perversion of the blessed gift of speech, which, I take it, was given us to season our lives rather than to make them insipid. New friends are the worst in this respect. With old friends one is more at home; you give them something to eat or drink, or look at, or something — whatever they seem to want — and just turn round and go on smoking quietly. But every now and then Euphemia or Destiny inflicts a new human being upon me. I do not mean a baby, though the sentence has got that turn somehow, but an introduction; and the wretched thing, all angles and offence, keeps bobbing about me and discovering new ways of worrying me, trying, I believe, to find out what topics interest me, though the fact is no topics interest me. Once or twice, of course, I have met human beings I think I could have got on with very well, after a time; but in this mood, at least, I doubt if any human being is quite worth the bother of a new acquaintance.

These are just sample bothers — shaving, washing, answering letters, talking to people. I could specify hundreds more. Indeed, in my sadder moments, it seems to me life is all compact of bothers. There are the details of business — knowing the date approximately (an incessant anxiety) and the time of day. Then, having to buy things. Euphemia does most of this, it is true, but she draws the line at my boots and gloves and hosiery and tailoring. Then, doing up

parcels and finding pieces of string or envelopes or stamps — which Euphemia might very well manage for me. Then, finding your way back after a quiet, thoughtful walk. Then, having to get matches for your pipe. I sometimes dream of a better world, where pipe, pouch, and matches all keep together instead of being mutually negatory. But Euphemia is always putting everything into some hiding-hole or other, which she calls its "place." Trivial things in their way, you may say, yet each levying so much toll on my brain and nervous system, and demanding incessant vigilance and activity. I calculated once that I wasted a masterpiece upon these mountainous little things about every three months of my life. Can I help thinking of them, then, and asking why I suffer thus? And can I avoid seeing at last how it is they hang together?

For there is still one other bother, a kind of *bother botherum*, to tell of, though I hesitate at the telling. It brings this rabble herd of worries into line and makes them formidable; it is, so to speak, the Bother Commander-in-Chief. Well! Euphemia. I simply worship the ground she treads upon, mind, but at the same time the truth is the truth. Euphemia is a bother. She is a brave little woman, and helps me in every conceivable way. But I wish she would not. It is so obviously all her doing. She makes me get up of a morning — I would not stand as much from anybody else — and keeps a sharp eye on my chin and collar. If it were not for her I could sit about always with no collar or tie on in that old jacket she gave to the tramp, and just smoke and grow a beard and let all the bothers slide. I would never wash, never shave, never answer any letters, never go to see any friends, never do any work — except, perhaps, an insulting postcard to a publisher now and again. I would just sit about.

Sometimes I think this may be peculiar in me. At other times I fancy I am giving voice to the secret feeling of every member of my sex. I suspect, then, that we would all do as the noble savage does, take our things off and lie about comfortable, if only someone had the courage to begin. It is these women — all love and reverence to Euphemia notwithstanding — who make us work and bother us with Things. They keep us decent, and remind us we have a position to support. And really, after all, this is not my original discovery! There is the third chapter of Genesis, for instance. And then who has not

read Carlyle's gloating over a certain historical suit of leather? It gives me a queer thrill of envy, that Quaker Fox and his suit of leather. Conceive it, if you can! One would never have to quail under the scrutiny of a tailor any more. Thoreau, too, come to think of it, was, by way of being a prophet, a pioneer in this Emancipation of Man from Bothery.

Then the silent gentry who brew our Chartreuse; what are they in retirement for? Looking back into history, with the glow of discovery in my eyes, I find records of wise men — everyone acknowledged they were wise men — who lived apart. In every age the same associate of solitude, silence, and wisdom. The holy hermits!... I grant it, they professed to flee wickedness and seek after righteousness, but now my impression is that they fled bothers. We all know they had an intense aversion to any savour of domesticity, and they never shaved, washed, dined, visited, had new clothes. Holiness, indeed! They were *viveurs*.... We have witnessed Religion without Theology, and why not an Unsectarian Thebaid? I sometimes fancy it needs only one brave man to begin.... If it were not for the fuss Euphemia would make I certainly should. But I know she would come and worry me worse than St. Anthony was worried until I put them all on again, and that keeps me from the attempt.

I am curious whether mine is the common experience. I fancy, after all, I am only seeing in a clearer way, putting into modern phrase, so to speak, an observation old as the Pentateuch. And looking up I read upon a little almanac with which Euphemia has cheered my desk: —

"The world was sad" (sweet sadness!)
"The garden was a wild" (a picturesque wild)
"And man the hermit" (he made no complaint)
"Till the woman smiled." — Campbell.

[And very shortly after he had, as you know, all that bother about the millinery.]

ON THE CHOICE OF A WIFE

Wife-choosing is an unending business. This sounds immoral, but what I mean will be clearer in the context. People have lived — innumerable people — exhausted experience, and yet other people keep on coming to hand, none the wiser, none the better. It is like a waterfall more than anything else in the world. Every year one has to turn to and warn another batch about these stale old things. Yet it is one's duty — the last thing that remains to a man. And as a piece of worldly wisdom, that has nothing to do with wives, always leave a few duties neglected for the comfort of your age. There are such a lot of other things one can do when one is young.

Now, the kind of wife a young fellow of eight- or nine-and-twenty insists on selecting is something of one-and-twenty or less, inexperienced, extremely pretty, graceful, and well dressed, not too clever, accomplished; but I need not go on, for the youthful reader can fill in the picture himself from his own ideal. Every young man has his own ideal, as a matter of course, and they are all exactly alike. Now, I do not intend to repeat all the stale old saws of out-of-date wiseacres. Most of them are even more foolish than the follies they reprove. Take, for instance, the statement that "beauty fades." Absurd; everyone knows perfectly well that, as the years creep on, beauty simply gets more highly coloured. And then, "beauty is only skin-deep." Fantastically wrong! Some of it is not that; and, for the rest, is a woman like a toy balloon? — just a surface? To hear that proverb from a man is to know him at once for a phonographic kind of fool. The fundamental and enduring grace of womanhood goes down to the skeleton; you cannot have a pretty face without a pretty skull, just as you cannot have one without a good temper.

Yet all the same there is an excellent reason why one should shun beauty in a prospective wife, at anyrate obvious beauty — the kind of beauty people talk about, and which gets into the photographers' windows. The common beautiful woman has a style of her own, a favourite aspect. After all, she cannot be perfect. She comes upon you, dazzles you, marries you; there is a time of ecstasy. People envy you, continue to envy you. After a time you envy yourself —

yourself of the day before yesterday. For the imperfection, the inevitable imperfection — in one case I remember it was a smile — becomes visible to you, becomes your especial privilege. That is the real reason. No beauty is a beauty to her husband. But with the plain woman — the thoroughly plain woman — it is different. At first — I will not mince matters — her ugliness is an impenetrable repulse. Face it. After a time little things begin to appear through the violent discords: little scraps of melody — a shy tenderness in her smile that peeps out at you and vanishes, a something that is winning, looking out of her eyes. You find a waviness of her hair that you never saw at the beginning, a certain surprising, pleasing, enduring want of clumsiness in part of her ear. And it is yours. You can see she strikes the beholder with something of a shock; and while the beauty of the beauty is common for all the world to rejoice in, you will find in your dear, plain wife beauty enough and to spare; exquisite — for it is all your own, your treasure-trove, your safely-hidden treasure....

Then, in the matter of age; though young fellows do not imagine it, it is very easy to marry a wife too young. Marriage has been defined as a foolish bargain in which one man provides for another man's daughter, but there is no reason why this should go so far as completing her education. If your conception of happiness is having something pretty and innocent and troublesome about you, something that you can cherish and make happy, a pet rabbit is in every way preferable. At the worst that will nibble your boots. I have known several cases of the girl-wife, and it always began like an idyll, charmingly; the tenderest care on one hand, winsome worship on the other — until some little thing, a cut chin or a missing paper, startled the pure and natural man out of his veneer, dancing and blaspheming, with the most amazing consequences. Only a proven saint should marry a girl-wife, and his motives might be misunderstood. The idyllic wife is a beautiful thing to read about, but in practice idylls should be kept episodes; in practice the idyllic life is a little too like a dinner that is all dessert. A common man, after a time, tires of winsome worship; he craves after companionship, and a sympathy based on experience. The ordinary young man, with the still younger wife, I have noticed, continues to love her with all his heart — and spends his leisure telling somebody else's wife all about

it. If in these days of blatant youth an experienced man's counsel is worth anything, it would be to marry a woman considerably older than oneself, if one must marry at all. And while upon this topic — and I have lived long — the ideal wife, I am persuaded, from the close observation of many years, is invariably, by some mishap, a widow....

Avoid social charm. It was the capacity for entertaining visitors that ruined Paradise. It grows upon a woman. An indiscriminating personal magnetism is perhaps the most dreadful vice a wife can have. You think you have married the one woman in the world, and you find you have married a host — that is to say, a hostess. Instead of making a home for you she makes you something between an ethnographical museum and a casual ward. You find your rooms littered with people and teacups and things, strange creatures that no one could possibly care for, that seem scarcely to care for themselves. You go about the house treading upon chance geniuses, and get tipped by inexperienced guests. And even when she does not entertain, she is continually going out. I do not deny that charming people are charming, that their company should be sought, but seeking it in marriage is an altogether different matter.

Then, I really must insist that young men do not understand the real truth about accomplishments. There comes a day when the most variegated wife comes to the end of her tunes, and another when she ends them for the second time; *Vita longa, ars brevis* — at least, as regards the art of the schoolgirl. It is only like marrying a slightly more complicated barrel-organ. And, for another point, watch the young person you would honour with your hand for the slightest inkling of economy or tidiness. Young men are so full of poetry and emotion that it does not occur to them how widely the sordid vices are distributed in the other sex. If you are a hotel proprietor, or a school proprietor, or a day labourer, such weaknesses become a strength, of course, but not otherwise. For a literary person — if perchance you are a literary person — it is altogether too dreadful. You are always getting swept and garnished, straightened up and sent out to be shaved. And home — even your study — becomes a glittering, spick-and-span mechanism. But you know the parable of the seven devils?

To conclude, a summary. The woman you choose should be plain, as plain as you can find, as old or older than yourself, devoid of social gifts or accomplishments, poor — for your self-respect — and with a certain amiable untidiness. Of course no young man will heed this, but at least I have given my counsel, and very excellent reasons for that counsel. And possibly I shall be able to remind him that I told him as much, in the course of a few years' time. And, by the bye, I had almost forgotten! Never by any chance marry a girl whose dresses do up at the back, unless you can afford her a maid or so of her own.

THE HOUSE OF DI SORNO

A MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A BOX

And the box, Euphemia's. Brutally raided it was by an insensate husband, eager for a tie and too unreasonably impatient to wait an hour or so until she could get home and find it for him. There was, of course, no tie at all in that box, for all his stirring — as anyone might have known; but, if there was no tie, there were certain papers that at least suggested a possibility of whiling away the time until the Chooser and Distributer of Ties should return. And, after all, there is no reading like your accidental reading come upon unawares.

It was a discovery, indeed, that Euphemia *had* papers. At the first glance these close-written sheets suggested a treasonable Keynote, and the husband gripped it with a certain apprehension mingling with his relief at the opiate of reading. It was, so to speak, the privilege of police he exercised, so he justified himself. He began to read. But what is this? "She stood on the balcony outside the window, while the noblest-born in the palace waited on her every capricious glance, and watched for an unbending look to relieve her hauteur, but in vain." None of your snippy-snappy Keynote there!

Then he turned over a page or so of the copy, doubting if the privilege of police still held good. Standing out by virtue of a different ink, and coming immediately after "bear her to her proud father," were the words, "How many yards of carpet ¾ yds. wide will cover room, width 16 ft., length 27½ ft.?" Then he knew he was in the presence of the great romance that Euphemia wrote when she was sixteen. He had heard something of it before. He held it doubtfully in his hands, for the question of conscience still troubled him. "Bah!" he said abruptly, "not to find it irresistible was to slight the authoress and her skill." And with that he sat plump down among the things in the box very comfortably and began reading, and, indeed, read until Euphemia arrived. But she, at the sight of his head and legs, made several fragmentary and presumably offensive remarks about crushing some hat or other, and proceeded with needless violence to get him out of the box again. However, that is my own private trouble. We are concerned now with the merits of Euphemia's

romance.

The hero of the story is a Venetian, named (for some unknown reason) Ivan di Sorno. So far as I ascertained, he is the entire house of Di Sorno referred to in the title. No other Di Sornos transpired. Like others in the story, he is possessed of untold wealth, tempered by a profound sorrow, for some cause which remains unmentioned, but which is possibly internal. He is first displayed "pacing a sombre avenue of ilex and arbutus that reflected with singular truth the gloom of his countenance," and "toying sadly with the jewelled hilt of his dagger." He meditates upon his loveless life and the burthen of riches. Presently he "paces the long and magnificent gallery," where a "hundred generations of Di Sornos, each with the same flashing eye and the same marble brow, look down with the same sad melancholy upon the beholder" — a truly monotonous exhibition. It would be too much for anyone, day after day. He decides that he will travel. Incognito.

The next chapter is headed "In Old Madrid," and Di Sorno, cloaked to conceal his grandeur, "moves sad and observant among the giddy throng." But "Gwendolen" — the majestic Gwendolen of the balcony— "marked his pallid yet beautiful countenance." And the next day at the bull-fight she "flung her bouquet into the arena, and turning to Di Sorno" — a perfect stranger, mind you— "smiled commandingly." "In a moment he had flung himself headlong down among the flashing blades of the toreadors and the trampling confusion of bulls, and in another he stood before her, bowing low with the recovered flowers in his hand. 'Fair sir,' she said, 'methinks my poor flowers were scarce worth your trouble.'" A very proper remark. And then suddenly I put the manuscript down.

My heart was full of pity for Euphemia. Thus had she gone a-dreaming. A man of imposing physique and flashing eye, who would fling you oxen here and there, and vault in and out of an arena without catching a breath, for his lady's sake — and here I sat, the sad reality, a lean and slippered literary pretender, and constitutionally afraid of cattle.

Poor little Euphemia! For after all is said and done, and the New Woman gibed out of existence, I am afraid we do undeceive these poor wives of ours a little after the marrying is over. It may be they

have deceived themselves, in the first place, but that scarcely affects their disappointment. These dream-lovers of theirs, these monsters of unselfishness and devotion, these tall fair Donovans and dark worshipping Wanderers! And then comes the rabble rout of us poor human men, damning at our breakfasts, wiping pens upon our coat sleeves, smelling of pipes, fearing our editors, and turning Euphemia's private boxes into public copy. And they take it so steadfastly — most of them. They never let us see the romance we have robbed them of, but turn to and make the best of it — and us — with such sweet grace. Only now and then — as in the instance of a flattened hat — may a cry escape them. And even then ——

But a truce to reality! Let us return to Di Sorno.

This individual does not become enamoured of Gwendolen, as the crude novel reader might anticipate. He answers her "coldly," and his eye rests the while on her "tirewoman, the sweet Margot." Then come scenes of jealousy and love, outside a castle with heavily mullioned windows. The sweet Margot, though she turns out to be the daughter of a bankrupt prince, has one characteristic of your servant all the world over — she spends all her time looking out of the window. Di Sorno tells her of his love on the evening of the bull-fight, and she cheerfully promises to "learn to love him," and therafter he spends all his days and nights "spurring his fiery steed down the road" that leads by the castle containing the young scholar. It becomes a habit with him — in all, he does it seventeen times in three chapters. Then, "ere it is too late," he implores Margot to fly.

Gwendolen, after a fiery scene with Margot, in which she calls her a "petty minion," — pretty language for a young gentlewoman,— "sweeps with unutterable scorn from the room," never, to the reader's huge astonishment, to appear in the story again, and Margot flies with Di Sorno to Grenada, where the Inquisition, consisting apparently of a single monk with a "blazing eye," becomes extremely machinatory. A certain Countess di Morno, who intends to marry Di Sorno, and who has been calling into the story in a casual kind of way since the romance began, now comes prominently forward. She has denounced Margot for heresy, and at a masked ball the Inquisition, disguised in a yellow domino, succeeds in separating the young couple, and in carrying off "the sweet Margot" to a convent.

“Di Sorno, half distraught, flung himself into a cab and drove to all the hotels in Grenada” (he overlooked the police station), and, failing to find Margot, becomes mad. He goes about ejaculating “Mad, mad!” than which nothing could be more eloquent of his complete mental inversion. In his paroxysms the Countess di Morno persuades him to “lead her to the altar,” but on the way (with a certain indelicacy they go to church in the same conveyance) she lets slip a little secret. So Di Sorno jumps out of the carriage, “hurling the crowd apart,” and, “flourishing his drawn sword,” “clamoured at the gate of the Inquisition” for Margot. The Inquisition, represented by the fiery-eyed monk, “looked over the gate at him.” No doubt it felt extremely uncomfortable.

Now it was just at this thrilling part that Euphemia came home, and the trouble about the flattened hat began. I never flattened her hat. It was in the box, and so was I; but as for deliberate flattening —— It was just a thing that happened. She should not write such interesting stories if she expects me to go on tiptoe through the world looking about for her hats. To have that story taken away just at that particular moment was horrible. There was fully as much as I had read still to come, so that a lot happened after this duel of Sword *v.* Fiery Eye. I know from a sheet that came out of place that Margot stabbed herself with a dagger (“richly jewelled”), but of all that came between I have not the faintest suspicion. That is the peculiar interest of it. At this particular moment the one book I want to read in all the world is the rest of this novel of Euphemia’s. And simply, on the score of a new hat needed, she keeps it back and haggles!

OF CONVERSATION

AN APOLOGY

I must admit that in conversation I am not a brilliant success. Partly, indeed, that may be owing to the assiduity with which my aunt suppressed my early essays in the art: "Children," she said, "should be seen but not heard," and incontinently rapped my knuckles. To a larger degree, however, I regard it as intrinsic. This tendency to silence, to go out of the rattle and dazzle of the conversation into a quiet apart, is largely, I hold, the consequence of a certain elevation and breadth and tenderness of mind; I am no blowfly to buzz my way through the universe, no rattle that I should be expected to delight my fellow-creatures by the noises I produce. I go about to this social function and that, deporting myself gravely and decently in silence, taking, if possible, a back seat; and, in consequence of that, people who do not understand me have been heard to describe me as a "stick," as "shy," and by an abundance of the like unflattering terms. So that I am bound almost in self-justification to set down my reasons for this temperance of mine in conversation.

Speech, no doubt, is a valuable gift, but at the same time it is a gift that may be abused. What is regarded as polite conversation is, I hold, such an abuse. Alcohol, opium, tea, are all very excellent things in their way; but imagine continuous alcohol, an incessant opium, or to receive, ocean-like, a perennially flowing river of tea! That is my objection to this conversation: its continuousness. You have to keep on. You find three or four people gathered together, and instead of being restful and recreative, sitting in comfortable attitudes and at peace with themselves and each other, and now and again, perhaps three or four times in an hour, making a worthy and memorable remark, they are all haggard and intent upon keeping this fetish flow agoing. A fortuitous score of cows in a field are a thousand times happier than a score of people deliberately assembled for the purposes of happiness. These conversationalists say the most shallow and needless of things, impart aimless information, simulate interest they do not feel, and generally impugn their claim to be considered

reasonable creatures. Why, when people assemble without hostile intentions, it should be so imperative to keep the trickling rill of talk running, I find it impossible to imagine. It is a vestige of the old barbaric times, when men murdered at sight for a mere whim; when it was good form to take off your sword in the antechamber, and give your friend your dagger-hand, to show him it was no business visit. Similarly, you keep up this babblement to show your mind has no sinister concentration, not necessarily because you have anything to say, but as a guarantee of good faith. You have to make a noise all the time, like the little boy who was left in the room with the plums. It is the only possible explanation.

To a logical mind there is something very distressing in this social law of gabble. Out of regard for Mrs. A, let us say, I attend some festival she has inaugurated. There I meet for the first time a young person of pleasant exterior, and I am placed in her company to deliver her at a dinner-table, or dance her about, or keep her out of harm's way, in a cosy nook. She has also never seen me before, and probably does not want particularly to see me now. However, I find her nice to look at, and she has taken great pains to make herself nice to look at, and why we cannot pass the evening, I looking at her and she being looked at, I cannot imagine. But no; we must talk. Now, possibly there are topics she knows about and I do not — it is unlikely, but suppose so; on these topics she requires no information. Again, I know about other topics things unknown to her, and it seems a mean and priggish thing to broach these, since they put her at a disadvantage. Thirdly, comes a last group of subjects upon which we are equally informed, and upon which, therefore, neither of us is justified in telling things to the other. This classification of topics seems to me exhaustive.

These considerations, I think, apply to all conversations. In every conversation, every departure must either be a presumption when you talk into your antagonist's special things, a pedantry when you fall back upon your own, or a platitude when you tell each other things you both know. I don't see any other line a conversation can take. The reason why one has to keep up the stream of talk is possibly, as I have already suggested, to manifest goodwill. And in so many cases this could be expressed so much better by a glance, a

deferential carriage, possibly in some cases a gentle pressure of the hand, or a quiet persistent smile. And suppose there is some loophole in my reasoning — though I cannot see it — and that possible topics exist, how superficial and unexact is the best conversation to a second-rate book!

Even with two people you see the objection, but when three or four are gathered together the case is infinitely worse to a man of delicate perceptions. Let us suppose — I do not grant it — that there is a possible sequence of things to say to the person A that really harmonise with A and yourself. Grant also that there is a similar sequence between yourself and B. Now, imagine yourself and A and B at the corners of an equilateral triangle set down to talk to each other. The kind of talk that A appreciates is a discord with B, and similarly B's sequence is impossible in the hearing of A. As a matter of fact, a real conversation of three people is the most impossible thing in the world. In real life one of the three always drops out and becomes a mere audience, or a mere partisan. In real life you and A talk, and B pretends to be taking a share by interjecting interruptions, or one of the three talks a monologue. And the more subtle your sympathy and the greater your restraint from self-assertion, the more incredible triple and quadruple conversation becomes.

I have observed that there is even nowadays a certain advance towards my views in this matter. Men may not pick out antagonists, and argue to the general audience as once they did: there is a tacit taboo of controversy, neither may you talk your "shop," nor invite your antagonist to talk his. There is also a growing feeling against extensive quotations or paraphrases from the newspapers. Again, personalities, scandal, are, at least in theory, excluded. This narrows the scope down to the "last new book," "the last new play," "impressions de voyage," and even here it is felt that any very ironical or satirical remarks, anything unusual, in fact, may disconcert your adversary. You ask: Have you read the *Wheels of Chance*? The answer is "Yes." "Do you like it?" "A little vulgar, I thought." And so forth. Most of this is stereo. It is akin to responses in church, a prescription, a formula. And, following out this line of thought, I have had a vision of the twentieth century dinner. At a distance it is very like the nineteenth century type; the same bright

light, the same pleasant deglutition, the same hum of conversation; but, approaching, you discover each diner has a little drum-shaped body under his chin — his phonograph. So he dines and babbles at his ease. In the smoking-room he substitutes his anecdote record. I imagine, too, the suburban hostess meeting the new maiden: "I hope, dear, you have brought a lot of conversation," just as now she asks for the music. For my own part, I must confess I find this dinner conversation particularly a bother. If I could eat with my eye it would be different.

I lose a lot of friends through this conversational difficulty. They think it is my dulness or my temper, when really it is only my refined mind, my subtlety of consideration. It seems to me that when I go to see a man, I go to see him — to enjoy his presence. If he is my friend, the sight of him healthy and happy is enough for me. I don't want him to keep his vocal cords, and I don't want to keep my own vocal cords, in incessant vibration all the time I am in his company. If I go to see a man, it distracts me to have to talk and it distracts me to hear him talking. I can't imagine why one should not go and sit about in people's rooms, without bothering them and without their bothering you to say all these stereotyped things. Quietly go in, sit down, look at your man until you have seen him enough, and then go. Why not?

Let me once more insist that this keeping up a conversation is a sign of insecurity, of want of confidence. All those who have had real friends know that when the friendship is assured the gabble ceases. You are not at the heart of your friend, if either of you cannot go off comfortably to sleep in the other's presence. Speech was given us to make known our needs, and for imprecation, expostulation, and entreaty. This pitiful necessity we are under, upon social occasions, to say something — however inconsequent — is, I am assured, the very degradation of speech.

IN A LITERARY HOUSEHOLD

In the literary household of fiction and the drama, things are usually in a distressing enough condition. The husband, as you know, has a hacking cough, and the wife a dying baby, and they write in the intervals of these cares among the litter of the breakfast things. Occasionally a comic, but sympathetic, servant brings in an armful— "heaped up and brimming over" — of rejected MSS., for, in the dramatic life, it never rains but it pours. Instead of talking about editors in a bright and vigorous fashion, as the recipients of rejections are wont, the husband groans and covers his face with his hands, and the wife, leaving the touching little story she is writing — she posts this about 9 p.m., and it brings in a publisher and £100 or so before 10.30 — comforts him by flopping suddenly over his shoulder. "Courage," she says, stroking his hyacinthine locks (whereas all real literary men are more or less grey or bald). Sometimes, as in *Our Flat*, comic tradesmen interrupt the course of true literature with their ignoble desire for cash payment, and sometimes, as in *Our Boys*, uncles come and weep at the infinite pathos of a bad breakfast egg. But it's always a very sordid, dusty, lump-in-your-throaty affair, and no doubt it conduces to mortality by deterring the young and impressionable from literary vices. As for its truth, that is another matter altogether.

Yet it must not be really imagined that a literary household is just like any other. There is the brass paper-fastener, for instance. I have sometimes thought that Euphemia married me with an eye to these conveniences. She has two in her grey gloves, and one (with the head inked) in her boot in the place of a button. Others I suspect her of. Then she fastened the lamp shade together with them, and tried one day to introduce them instead of pearl buttons as efficient anchorage for cuffs and collars. And she made a new handle for the little drawer under the inkstand with one. Indeed, the literary household is held together, so to speak, by paper-fasteners, and how other people get along without them we are at a loss to imagine.

And another point, almost equally important, is that the husband is generally messing about at home. That is, indeed, to a superficial

observer, one of the most remarkable characteristics of the literary household. Other husbands are cast out in the morning to raven for income and return to a home that is swept and garnished towards the end of the day; but the literary husband is ever in possession. His work must not be disturbed even when he is merely thinking. The study is consequently a kind of domestic cordite factory, and you are never certain when it may explode. The concussion of a dust-pan and brush may set it going, the sweeping of a carpet in the room upstairs. Then behold a haggard, brain-weary man, fierce and dishevelled, and full of shattered masterpiece — expostulating. Other houses have their day of cleaning out this room, and their day for cleaning out that; but in the literary household there is one uniform date for all such functions, and that is "to-morrow." So that Mrs. Mergles makes her purifying raids with her heart in her mouth, and has acquired a way of leaving the pail and brush, or whatever artillery she has with her, in a manner that unavoidably engages the infuriated brute's attention and so covers her retreat.

It is a problem that has never been probably solved, this discord of order and orderly literary work. Possibly it might be done by making the literary person live elsewhere or preventing literary persons from having households. However it might be done, it is not done. This is a thing innocent girls exposed to the surreptitious proposals of literary men do not understand. They think it will be very fine to have photographs of themselves and their "cosy nooks" published in magazines, to illustrate the man's interviews, and the full horror of having this feral creature always about the house, and scarcely ever being able to do any little thing without his knowing it, is not brought properly home to them until escape is impossible.

And then there is the taint of "copy" everywhere. That is really the fundamental distinction. It is the misfortune of literary people, that they have to write about something. There is no reason, of course, why they should, but the thing is so. Consequently, they are always looking about them for something to write about. They cannot take a pure-minded interest in anything in earth or heaven. Their servant is no servant, but a character; their cat is a possible reservoir of humorous observation; they look out of window and see men as columns walking. Even the sanctity of their own hearts, their

self-respect, their most private emotions are disregarded. The wife is infected with the taint. Her private opinion of her husband she makes into a short story — forgets its origin and shows it him with pride — while the husband decants his heart-beats into occasional verse and minor poetry. It is amazing what a lot of latter-day literature consists of such breaches of confidence. And not simply latter-day literature.

The visitor is fortunate who leaves no marketable impression behind. The literary entertainers eye you over, as if they were dealers in a slave mart, and speculate on your uses. They try to think how you would do as a scoundrel, and mark your little turns of phrase and kinks of thought to that end. The innocent visitor bites his cake and talks about theatres, while the meditative person in the arm-chair may be in imagination stabbing him, or starving him on a desert island, or even — horrible to tell! — flinging him headlong into the arms of the young lady to the right and "covering her face with a thousand passionate kisses." A manuscript in the rough of Euphemia's, that I recently suppressed, was an absolutely scandalous example of this method of utilising one's acquaintances. Mrs. Harborough, who was indeed Euphemia's most confidential friend for six weeks and more, she had made to elope with Scrimgeour — as steady and honourable a man as we know, though unpleasant to Euphemia on account of his manner of holding his teacup. I believe there really was something — quite harmless, of course — between Mrs. Harborough and Scrimgeour, and that, imparted in confidence, had been touched up with vivid colour here and there and utilised freely. Scrimgeour is represented as always holding teacups in his peculiar way, so that anyone would recognise him at once. Euphemia calls that character. Then Harborough, who is really on excellent terms with his wife, and, in spite of his quiet manner, a very generous and courageous fellow, is turned aside from his headlong pursuit of the fugitives across Wimbledon Common — they elope, by the bye, on Scrimgeour's tandem bicycle — by the fear of being hit by a golf ball. I pointed out to Euphemia that these things were calculated to lose us friends, and she promises to destroy the likeness; but I have no confidence in her promise. She will probably clap a violent auburn wig on Mrs. Harborough and make Scrimgeour

squint and give Harborough a big beard. The point that she won't grasp is, that with that fatal facility for detail, which is one of the most indisputable proofs of woman's intellectual inferiority, she has reproduced endless remarks and mannerisms of these excellent people with more than photographic fidelity. But this is really a private trouble, though it illustrates very well the shameless way in which those who have the literary taint will bring to market there [* *typo: "their"-p2] most intimate affairs.

ON SCHOOLING AND THE PHASES OF MR. SANDSOME

I do not know if you remember your "dates." Indeed, I do not know if anyone does. My own memory is of a bridge; like that bridge of Goldsmith's, standing firm and clear on its hither piers and then passing into a cloud. In the beginning of days was "William the Conqueror, 1066," and the path lay safe and open to Henry the Second; then came Titanic forms of kings, advancing and receding, elongating and dwindling, exchanging dates, losing dates, stealing dates from battles and murders and great enactments — even inventing dates, vacant years that were really no dates at all. The things I have suffered — prisons, scourgings, beating with rods, wild masters, in bounds often, a hundred lines often, standing on forms and holding out books often — on account of these dates! I knew, and knew well before I was fifteen, what these "heredity" babblers are only beginning to discover — that the past is the curse of the present. But I never knew my dates — never. And I marvel now that all little boys do not grow up to be Republicans, seeing how much they suffer for the mere memory of Kings.

Then there were pedigrees, and principal parts and conjugations, and county towns. Every county had a county town, and it was always on a river. Mr. Sandsome never allowed us a town without that colophon. I remember in my early manhood going to Guildford on the Wey, and trying to find that unobtrusive rivulet. I went over the downs for miles. It is not only the Wey I have had a difficulty in finding. There are certain verses — Heaven help me, but I have forgotten them! — about "*i* vel *e* dat" (*was* it dat?) "utrum malis" — if I remember rightly — and all that about *amo, amas, amat*. There was a multitude of such things I acquired, and they lie now, in the remote box-rooms and lumber recesses of my mind, a rusting armoury far gone in decay. I have never been able to find a use for them. I wonder even now why Mr. Sandsome equipped me with them. Yet he seemed to be in deadly earnest about this learning, and I still go in doubt. In those early days he impressed me, chiefly in

horizontal strips, with the profoundest respect for his mental and physical superiority. I credited him then, and still incline to believe he deserved to be credited, with a sincere persuasion that unless I learnt these things I should assuredly go — if I may be frank — to the devil. It may be so. I may be living in a fool's paradise, prospering — like that wicked man the Psalmist disliked. Some unsuspected gulf may open, some undreamt-of danger thrust itself through the phantasmagoria of the universe, and I may learn too late the folly of forgetting my declensions.

I remember Mr. Sandsome chiefly as sitting at his desk, in a little room full of boys, a humming hive whose air was thick with dust, as the slanting sunbeams showed. When we were not doing sums or writing copies, we were always learning or saying lessons. In the early morning Mr. Sandsome sat erect and bright, his face animated, his ruddy eyes keen and observant, the cane hanging but uncertainly upon its hook. There was a standing up of classes, a babble of repetition, now and then a crisis. How long the days were then! I have heard that scientific people — Professor C. Darwin is their leader, unless I err — which probably I do, for names and dates I have hated from my youth up — say the days grow longer. Anyhow, whoever says it, it is quite wrong. But as the lank hours of that vast schooltime drawled on, Mr. Sandsome lost energy, drooped like a flower, — especially if the day was at all hot, — his sandy hair became dishevelled, justice became nerveless, hectic, and hasty. Finally came copybooks; and yawns and weird rumblings from Mr. Sandsome. And so the world aged to the dinner-hour.

When I had been home — it was a day school, for my aunt, who had an appetite for such things, knew that boarding-schools were sinks of iniquity — and returned, I had Mr. Sandsome at another phase. He had dined — for we were simple country folk. The figurative suggestions of that "phase" are irresistible — the lunar quality. May I say that Mr. Sandsome was at his full? We now stood up, thirty odd of us altogether, to read, reading out of books in a soothing monotone, and he sat with his reading-book before him, ruddy as the setting sun, and slowly, slowly settling down. But now and then he would jerk back suddenly into staring wakefulness as though he were fishing — with himself as bait — for schoolboy

crimes in the waters of oblivion — and fancied a nibble. That was a dangerous time, full of anxiety. At last he went right under and slept, and the reading grew cheerful, full of quaint glosses and unexpected gaps, leaping playfully from boy to boy, instead of travelling round with a proper decorum. But it never ceased, and little Hurkley's silly little squeak of a voice never broke in upon its mellow flow. (It took a year for Hurkley's voice to break.) Any such interruption and Mr. Sandsome woke up and into his next phase forthwith — a disagreeable phase always, and one we made it our business to postpone as long as possible.

During that final period, the last quarter, Mr. Sandsome was distinctly malignant. It was hard to do right; harder still to do wrong. A feverish energy usually inspired our government. "Let us try to get some work done," Mr. Sandsome would say — and I have even known him teach things then. More frequently, with a needless bitterness, he set us upon impossible tasks, demanding a colossal tale of sums perhaps, scattering pens and paper and sowing the horrors of bookkeeping, or chastising us with the scorpions of parsing and translation. And even in wintry weather the little room grew hot and stuffy, and we terminated our schoolday, much exhausted, with minds lax, lounging attitudes, and red ears. What became of Mr. Sandsome after the giving-out of home-work, the concluding prayer, and the aftermath of impositions, I do not know. I stuffed my books, such as came to hand — very dirty they were inside, and very neat out with my Aunt Charlotte's chintz covers — into my green baize bag, and went forth from the mysteries of schooling into the great world, up the broad white road that went slanting over the Down.

I say "the mysteries of schooling" deliberately. I wondered then, I wonder still, what it was all for. Reading, almost my only art, I learnt from Aunt Charlotte; a certain facility in drawing I acquired at home and took to school, to my own undoing. "Undoing," again, is deliberate — it was no mere swish on the hand, gentle reader. But the things I learnt, more or less partially, at school, lie in my mind, like the "Sarsen" stones of Wiltshire — great, disconnected, time-worn chunks amidst the natural herbage of it. "The Rivers of the East Coast; the Tweed, the Tyne, the Wear, the Tees, the Humber" — why is that, for instance, sticking up among my ferns and wild

flowers? It is not only useless but misleading, for the Humber is not another Tweed. I sometimes fancy the world may be mad — yet that seems egotistical. The fact remains that for the greater part of my young life Mr. Sandsome got an appetite upon us from nine till twelve, and digested his dinner, at first placidly and then with petulance, from two until five — and we thirty odd boys were sent by our twenty odd parents to act as a sort of chorus to his physiology. And he was fed (as I judge) more than sufficiently, clothed, sheltered, and esteemed on account of this relation. I think, after all, there must have been something in that schooling. I can't believe the world mad. And I have forgotten it — or as good as forgotten it — all! At times I feel a wild impulse to hunt up all those chintz-covered books, and brush up my dates and paradigms, before it is too late.

THE POET AND THE EMPORIUM

"I am beginning life," he said, with a sigh. "Great Heavens! I have spent a day — *a day!* — in a shop. Three bedroom suites and a sideboard are among the unanticipated pledges of our affection. Have you lithia? For a man of twelve limited editions this has been a terrible day."

I saw to his creature comforts. His tie was hanging outside his waistcoat, and his complexion was like white pasteboard that has got wet. "Courage," said I. "It will not occur again — —"

"It will," said he. "We have to get there again tomorrow. We have — what is it? — carpets, curtains — —"

He produced his tablets. I was amazed. Those receptacles of choice thoughts!

"The amber sunlight splashing through the leaky — leafy interlacing green," he read. "No! — that's not it. Ah, here! Curtains! Drawing-room — not to cost more than thirty shillings! And there's all the Kitchen Hardware! (Thanks.) Dining-room chairs — query — rush bottoms? What's this? G.L.I.S. — ah! "Glistering thro' deeps of glaucophane" — that's nothing. Mem. to see can we afford Indian needlework chairs — 57s. 6d.? It's dreadful, Bellows!"

He helped himself to a cigarette.

"Find the salesman pleasant?" said I.

"Delightful. Assumed I was a spendthrift millionaire at first. Produced in an off-hand way an eighty-guinea bedroom suite — we're trying to do the entire business, you know, on about two hundred pounds. Well — that's ten editions, you know. Came down, with evidently dwindling respect, to things that were still ruinously expensive. I told him we wanted an idyll — love in a cottage, and all that kind of thing. He brushed that on one side, said idols were upstairs in the Japanese Department, and that perhaps we might *do* with a servant's set of bedroom furniture. Do with a set! He was a gloomy man with (I should judge) some internal pain. I tried to tell him that there was quite a lot of middle-class people like myself in the country, people of limited or precarious means, whose existence he seemed to ignore; assured him some of them led quite beautiful

lives. But he had no ideas beyond wardrobes. I quite forgot the business of shopping in an attempt to kindle a little human enthusiasm in his heart. We were in a great vast place full of wardrobes, with a remote glittering vista of brass bedsteads — skeleton beds, you know — and I tried to inspire him with some of the poetry of his emporium; tried to make him imagine these beds and things going east and west, north and south, to take sorrow, servitude, joy, worry, failing strength, restless ambition in their impartial embraces. He only turned round to Annie, and asked her if she thought she could *do* with 'enamelled.' But I was quite taken with my idea —— Where is it? I left Annie to settle with this misanthrope, amidst his raw frameworks of the Homes of the Future."

He fumbled with his tablets. "Mats for hall — not to exceed 3s. 9d.... Kerbs ... inquire tiled hearth ... Ah! Here we are: 'Ballade of the Bedroom Suite': —

"'Noble the oak you are now displaying,
Subtly the hazel's grainings go,
Walnut's charm there is no gainsaying,
Red as red wine is your rosewood's glow;
Brave and brilliant the ash you show,
Rich your mahogany's hepatite shine,
Cool and sweet your enamel: But oh!
Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?'

"They have 'em in the catalogue at five guineas, with a picture — quite as good they are as the more expensive ones. To judge by the picture."

"But that's scarcely the idea you started with," I began.

"Not; it went wrong — ballades often do. The preoccupation of the 'Painted Pine' was too much for me. What's this? 'N.B. — Sludge sells music stools at—' No. Here we are (first half unwritten): —

"'White enamelled, like driven snow,
Picked with just one delicate line.

Price you were saying is? Fourteen! — No!
Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?'

"Comes round again, you see! Then *L'Envoy*: —

"'Salesman, sad is the truth I trow:
Winsome walnut can never be mine.
Poets are cheap. And their poetry. So
Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?'

"Prosaic! As all true poetry is, nowadays. But, how I tired as the afternoon moved on! At first I was interested in the shopman's amazing lack of imagination, and the glory of that fond dream of mine — love in a cottage, you know — still hung about me. I had ideas come — like that Ballade — and every now and then Annie told me to write notes. I think my last gleam of pleasure was in choosing the drawing-room chairs. There is scope for fantasy in chairs. Then — —"

He took some more whisky.

"A kind of grey horror came upon me. I don't know if I can describe it. We went through vast vistas of chairs, of hall-tables, of machine-made pictures, of curtains, huge wildernesses of carpets, and ever this cold, unsympathetic shopman led us on, and ever and again made us buy this or that. He had a perfectly grey eye — the colour of an overcast sky in January — and he seemed neither to hate us nor to detest us, but simply to despise us, to feel such an overwhelming contempt for our petty means and our petty lives, as an archangel might feel for an apple-maggot. It made me think...."

He lit a fresh cigarette.

"I had a kind of vision. I do not know if you will understand. The Warehouse of Life, with our Individual Fate hurrying each of us through. Showing us with a covert sneer all the good things that we cannot afford. A magnificent Rosewood love affair, for instance, deep and rich, fitted complete, some hours of perfect life, some acts of perfect self-sacrifice, perfect self-devotion.... You ask the price."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?" I quoted.

“That’s it. All the things one might do, if the purse of one’s courage were not so shallow. If it wasn’t for the lack of that coinage, Bellows, every man might be magnificent. There’s heroism, there’s such nobility as no one has ever attained to, ready to hand. Anyone, if it were not for this lack of means, might be a human god in twenty-four hours.... You see the article. You cannot buy it. No one buys it. It stands in the emporium, I suppose, for show — on the chance of a millionaire. And the shopman waves his hand to it on your way to the Painted Pine.

“Then you meet other couples and solitary people going about, each with a gloomy salesman leading. The run of them look uncomfortable; some are hot about the ears and in the spiteful phase of ill-temper; all look sick of the business except the raw new-comers. It’s the only time they will ever select any furniture, their first chance and their last. Most of their selections are hurried a little. The salesman must not be kept all day.... Yet it goes hard with you if you buy your Object in Life and find it just a ‘special line’ made to sell.... We’re all amateurs at living, just as we are all amateurs at furnishing — or dying. Some of the poor devils one meets carry tattered little scraps of paper, and fumble conscientiously with stumpy pencils. It’s a comfort to see how you go, even if you do have to buy rubbish. ‘If we have *this* so good, dear, I don’t know *how* we shall manage in the kitchen,’ says the careful housewife.... So it is we do our shopping in the Great Emporium.”

“You will have to rewrite your Ballade,” said I, “and put all that in.”

“I wish I could,” said the poet.

“And while you were having these very fine moods?”

“Annie and the shopman settled most of the furniture between them. Perhaps it’s just as well. I was never very good at the practical details of life.... Cigarette’s out! Have you any more matches?”

“Horribly depressed you are!” I said.

“There’s to-morrow. Well, well....”

And then he went off at a tangent to tell me what he expected to make by his next volume of poems, and so came to the congenial business of running down his contemporaries, and became again the cheerful little Poet that I know.

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS

During the early Victorian revival of chivalry the Language of Flowers had some considerable vogue. The Romeo of the mutton-chop whiskers was expected to keep this delicate symbolism in view, and even to display his wit by some dainty conceits in it. An ignorance of the code was fraught with innumerable dangers. A sprig of lilac was a suggestion, a moss-rosebud pushed the matter, was indeed evidence to go to court upon; and unless Charlotte parried with white poplar — a by no means accessible flower — or apricot blossom, or failing these dabbed a cooling dock-leaf at the fellow, he was at her with tulip, heliotrope, and honeysuckle, peach-blossom, white jonquil, and pink, and a really overpowering and suffocating host of attentions. I suppose he got at last to three-cornered notes in the vernacular; and meanwhile what could a poor girl do? There was no downright "No!" in the language of flowers, nothing equivalent to "Go away, please," no flower for "Idiot!" The only possible defence was something in this way: "Your cruelty causes me sorrow," "Your absence is a pleasure." For this, according to the code of Mr. Thomas Miller (third edition, 1841, with elegantly coloured plates) you would have to get a sweet-pea blossom for Pleasure, wormwood for Absence, and indicate Sorrow by the yew, and Cruelty by the stinging-nettle. There is always a little risk of mixing your predicates in this kind of communication, and he might, for instance, read that his Absence caused you Sorrow, but he could scarcely miss the point of the stinging-nettle. That and the gorse carefully concealed were about the only gleams of humour possible in the language. But then it was the appointed tongue of lovers, and while their sickness is upon them they have neither humour nor wit.

This Mr. Thomas Miller wrote abundant flowers of language in his book, and the plates were coloured by hand. By the bye, what a blessed thing colour-printing is! These hand-tinted plates, to an imaginative person, are about as distressing as any plates can very well be. Whenever I look at these triumphs of art over the beauties of nature, with all their weary dabs of crimson, green, blue, and yellow, I think of wretched, anæmic girls fading their youth away in some

dismal attic over a publisher's, toiling through the whole edition tint by tint, and being mocked the while by Mr. Miller's alliterative erotics. And they *are* erotics! In one place he writes, "Beautiful art thou, O Broom! on the breezy bosom of the bee-haunted heath"; and throughout he buds and blossoms into similar delights. He wallows in doves and coy toyings and modest blushes, and bowers and meads. He always adds, "Wonderful boy!" to Chatterton's name as if it were a university degree (W.B.), and he invariably refers to Moore as the Bard of Erin, and to Milton as the Bard of Paradise — though Bard of the Bottomless Pit would be more appropriate. However, we are not concerned with Mr. Miller's language so much as with a very fruitful suggestion he throws out, that "it is surely worth while to trace a resemblance between the flower and the emblem it represents" (a turn like that is nothing to Mr. Miller) "which shall at least have some show of reason in it."

Come to think of it, there is something singularly unreasonable about almost all floral symbolism. There is your forget-me-not, pink in the bud, and sapphire in the flower, with a fruit that breaks up into four, the very picture of inconstancy and discursiveness. Yet your lover, with a singular blindness, presents this to his lady when they part. Then the white water-lily is supposed to represent purity of heart, and, mark you, it is white without and its centre is all set about with innumerable golden stamens, while in the middle lies, to quote the words of that distinguished botanist, Mr. Oliver, "a fleshy disc." Could there be a better type of sordid and mercenary deliberation maintaining a fair appearance? The tender apple-blossom, rather than Pretence, is surely a reminder of Eden and the fall of love's devotion into inflated worldliness. The poppy which flaunts its violent colours athwart the bearded corn, and which frets and withers like the Second Mrs. Tanqueray so soon as you bring it to the shelter of a decent home, is made the symbol of Repose. One might almost think Aimé Martin and the other great authorities on this subject wrote in a mood of irony.

The daisy, too, presents you Innocence, "companion of the milk-white lamb," Mr. Miller calls it. I am sorry for the milk-white lamb. It was one of the earliest discoveries of systematic botany that the daisy is a fraud, a complicated impostor. *The daisy is not a flower at*

all. It is a favourite trap in botanical examinations, a snare for artless young men entering the medical profession. Each of the little yellow things in the centre of the daisy is a flower in itself, — if you look at one with a lens you will find it not unlike a cowslip flower, — and the white rays outside are a great deal more than the petals they ought to be if the Innocence theory is to hold good. There is no such thing as an innocent flower; they are all so many deliberate advertisements to catch the eye of the undecided bee, but any flower almost is simpler than this one. We would make it the emblem of artistic deception, and the confidence trick expert should wear it as his crest.

The violet, again, is a greatly overrated exemplar. It stimulates a certain bashfulness, hangs its head, and passed as modest among our simple grandparents. Its special merit is its perfume, and it pretends to wish to hide that from every eye. But, withal, the fragrance is as far-reaching as any I know. It droops ingenuously. "How *could* you come to me," it seems to say, "when all these really brilliant flowers invite you?" Mere fishing for compliments. All the while it is being sweet, to the very best of its undeniable ability. Then it comes, too, in early spring, without a chaperon, and catches our hearts fresh before they are jaded with the crowded beauties of May. A really modest flower would wait for the other flowers to come first. A subtle affectation is surely a different thing from modesty. The violet is simply artful, the young widow among flowers, and to hold up such a flower as an example is not doing one's duty by the young. For true modesty commend me to the agave, which flowers once only in half a hundred years, as one may see for oneself at the Royal Botanical Gardens.

Enough has been said to show what scope there is for revision of this sentimental Volapuk. Mr. Martin himself scarcely goes so far as I have done, though I have merely worked out his suggestion. His only revolutionary proposal is to displace the wind star by the "rathe primrose" for Forsaken, on the strength of a quotation familiar to every reader of Mason's little text-book on the English language. For the rest he followed his authorities, and has followed them now to the remote recesses of the literary lumber-room and into the twopenny book-box. From that receptacle one copy of him was

disinterred only a day or so ago; a hundred and seventy pages of prose, chiefly alliterative, several coloured plates, enthusiastic pencil-marking of a vanished somebody, and, besides, an early Victorian flavour of dust and a dim vision of a silent conversation in a sunlit flower garden — altogether I think very cheap at twopence. The fashion has changed altogether now. In these days we season our love-making with talk about heredity, philanthropy, and sanitation, and present one another with Fabian publications instead of wild flowers. But in the end, I fancy, the business comes to very much the same thing.

THE LITERARY REGIMEN

At the risk of offending the young beginner's illusions, he must be reminded of one or two homely but important facts bearing upon literary production. Homely as they are, they explain much that is at first puzzling. This perplexing question of distinction; the quality of being somehow *fresh* — individual. Really it is a perfectly simple matter. It is common knowledge that, after a prolonged fast, the brain works in a feeble manner, the current of one's thoughts is pallid and shallow, it is difficult to fix the attention and impossible to mobilise the full forces of the mind. On the other hand, immediately after a sound meal, the brain feels massive, but static. Tea is conducive to a gentle flow of pleasing thoughts, and anyone who has taken Easton's syrup of the hypophosphites will recall at once the state of cerebral erethrism, of general mental alacrity, that followed on a dose. Again, champagne (followed perhaps by a soupçon of whisky) leads to a mood essentially humorous and playful, while about three dozen oysters, taken fasting, will in most cases produce a profound and even ominous melancholy. One might enlarge further upon this topic, on the brutalising influence of beer, the sedative quality of lettuce, the stimulating consequences of curried chicken; but enough has been said to point our argument. It is, that such facts as this can surely indicate only one conclusion, and that is the entire dependence of literary qualities upon the diet of the writer.

I may remind the reader, in confirmation of this suggestion, of what is perhaps the most widely known fact about Carlyle, that on one memorable occasion he threw his breakfast out of the window. Why did he throw his breakfast out of the window? Surely his friends have cherished the story out of no petty love of depreciatory detail? There are, however, those who would have us believe it was mere childish petulance at a chilly rasher or a hard-boiled egg. Such a supposition is absurd. On the other hand, what is more natural than an outburst of righteous indignation at the ruin of some carefully studied climax of feeding? The thoughtful literary beginner who is not altogether submerged in foolish theories of inspiration and natural genius will, we fancy, see pretty clearly that I am developing

what is perhaps after all the fundamental secret of literary art.

To come now to more explicit instructions. It is imperative, if you wish to write with any power and freshness at all, that you should utterly ruin your digestion. Any literary person will confirm this statement. At any cost the thing must be done, even if you have to live on German sausage, onions, and cheese to do it. So long as you turn all your dietary to flesh and blood you will get no literature out of it. "We learn in suffering what we teach in song." This is why men who live at home with their mothers, or have their elder sisters to see after them, never, by any chance, however great their literary ambition may be, write anything but minor poetry. They get their meals at regular hours, and done to a turn, and that plays the very devil — if you will pardon the phrase — with one's imagination.

A careful study of the records of literary men in the past, and a considerable knowledge of living authors, suggests two chief ways of losing one's digestion and engendering literary capacity. You go and live in humble lodgings, — we could name dozens of prominent men who have fed a great ambition in this way, — or you marry a nice girl who does not understand housekeeping. The former is the more efficacious method, because, as a rule, the nice girl wants to come and sit on your knee all day, and that is a great impediment to literary composition. Belonging to a club — even a literary club — where you can dine is absolute ruin to the literary beginner. Many a bright young fellow, who has pushed his way, or has been pushed by indiscreet friends, into the society of successful literary men, has been spoilt by this fatal error, and he has saved his stomach to lose his reputation.

Having got rid of your digestion, then, the common condition of all good literature, the next thing is to arrange your dietary for the particular literary effect you desire. And here we may point out the secrecy observed in such matters by literary men. Stevenson fled to Samoa to hide his extremely elaborate methods, and to keep his kitchen servants out of the reach of bribery. Even Sir Walter Besant, though he is fairly communicative to the young aspirant, has dropped no hints of the plain, pure, and wholesome menu he follows. Sala professed to eat everything, but that was probably his badinage. Possibly he had one staple, and took the rest as condiment. Then

what did Shakespeare live on? Bacon? And Mr. Barrie, though he has written a delightful book about his pipe and tobacco, full of suggestion to the young humorist, lets out nothing or next to nothing of his meat and drink. His hints about pipes are very extensively followed, and nowadays every ambitious young pressman smokes in public at least one well-burnt briar with an eccentric stem — even at some personal inconvenience. But this jealous reticence on the part of successful men — you notice they never let even the interviewer see their kitchens or the débris of a meal — necessarily throws one back upon rumour and hypothesis in this matter. Mr. Andrew Lang, for instance, is popularly associated with salmon, but that is probably a wilful delusion. Excessive salmon, far from engendering geniality, will be found in practice a vague and melancholy diet, tending more towards the magnificent despondency of Mr. Hall Caine.

Nor does Mr. Haggard feed entirely on raw meat. Indeed, for lurid and somewhat pessimistic narrative, there is nothing like the ordinary currant bun, eaten new and in quantity. A light humorous style is best attained by soda-water and dry biscuits, following café-noir. The soda-water may be either Scotch or Irish as the taste inclines. For a florid, tawdry style the beginner must take nothing but boiled water, stewed vegetables, and an interest in the movements against vivisection, opium, alcohol, tobacco, sarcophagy, and the male sex.

For contributions to the leading reviews, boiled pork and cabbage may be eaten, with bottled beer, followed by apple dumpling. This effectually suppresses any tendency to facetiousness, or what respectable English people call *double entendre*, and brings you *en rapport* with the serious people who read these publications. So soon as you begin to feel wakeful and restless discontinue writing. For what is vulgarly known as the *fin-de-siècle* type of publication, on the other hand, one should limit oneself to an aërated bread shop for a week or so, with the exception of an occasional tea in a literary household. All people fed mainly on scones become clever. And this regimen, with an occasional debauch upon macaroons, chocolate, and cheap champagne, and brisk daily walks from Oxford Circus, through Regent Street, Piccadilly, and the Green Park, to Westminster and back, should result in an animated society satire.

It is not known what Mr. Kipling takes to make him so peculiar.

Many of us would like to know. Possibly it is something he picked up in the jungle — berries or something. A friend who made a few tentative experiments to this end turned out nothing beyond a will, and that he dictated and left incomplete. (It was scarcely on the lines of an ordinary will, being blasphemous, and mentioning no property except his inside.) For short stories of the detective type, strong cold tea and hard biscuits are fruitful eating, while for a social science novel one should take an abundance of boiled rice and toast and water.

However, these remarks are mainly by way of suggestion. Every writer in the end, so soon as his digestion is destroyed, must ascertain for himself the peculiar diet that suits him best — that is, which disagrees with him the most. If everything else fails he might try some chemical food. "Jabber's Food for Authors," by the bye, well advertised, and with portraits of literary men, in their drawing-rooms, "Fed entirely on Jabber's Food," with medical certificates of its unwholesomeness, and favourable and expurgated reviews of works written on it, ought to be a brilliant success among literary aspirants. A small but sufficient quantity of arsenic might with advantage be mixed in.

HOUSE-HUNTING AS AN OUTDOOR AMUSEMENT

Since Adam and Eve went hand in hand out of the gates of Paradise, the world has travailed under an infinite succession of house-hunts. To-day in every eligible suburb you may see New Adams and New Eves by the score, with rusty keys and pink order-forms in hand, wandering still, in search of the ideal home. To them it is anything but an amusement. Most of these poor pilgrims look simply tired, some are argumentative in addition, but all are disappointed, anxious, and unhappy, their hands dirty with prying among cisterns, and their garments soiled from cellar walls. All, in the exaltation of the wooing days, saw at least the indistinct reflection of the perfect house, but now the Quest is irrevocably in hand they seek and do not find. And such a momentous question it is to them. Are they not choosing the background, the air and the colour, as it were, of the next three or four years, the cardinal years, too! of their lives?

Perhaps the exquisite exasperation of the business for the man who hunts among empty houses for a home is, that it is so entirely a choice of second-hand, or at least ready-made goods. To me, at least, there is a decided suggestion of the dead body in your empty house that has once been occupied. Here, like pale ghosts upon the wall paper, are outlined the pictures of the departed tenant; here are the nails of the invisible curtains, this dent in the wall is all that is sensible of a vanished piano. I could fancy all these things creeping back to visibility as the light grew dim. Someone was irritable in the house, perhaps, and a haunting fragrance of departed quarrels is to be found in the loose door-handles, and the broken bell-pull. Then the blind in the bedroom has a broken string. He was a beer-drinker, for the drip of the tap has left its mark in the cellar; a careless man, for this wall is a record of burst water-pipes; and rough in his methods, as his emendation of the garden gate — a remedy rather worse than the disease — shows. The mark of this prepotent previous man is left on the house from cellar to attic. It is his house really, not mine. And against these haunting individualities set the horrible wholesale

flavour, the obvious dexterous builder's economies of a new house. Yet, whatever your repulsion may be, the end is always the same. After you have asked for your ideal house a hundred times or so you begin to see you do not get it. You go the way of your kind. All houses are taken in despair.

But such disgusts as this are for the man who really aims at taking a house. The artist house-hunter knows better than that. He hunts for the hunt's sake, and does not mar his work with a purpose. Then house-hunting becomes a really delightful employment, and one strangely neglected in this country. I have heard, indeed, of old ladies who enlivened the intervals of their devotions in this manner, but to the general run of people the thing is unknown. Yet a more entertaining way of spending a half-holiday — having regard to current taste — it should be difficult to imagine. An empty house is realistic literature in the concrete, full of hints and allusions if a little wanting in tangible humanity, and it outdoes the modern story in its own line, by beginning as well as ending in a note of interrogation. That it is not more extensively followed I can only explain by supposing that its merits are generally unsuspected. In which case this book should set a fashion.

One singular thing the house-hunter very speedily discovers is, that the greater portion of the houses in this country are owned by old gentlemen or old ladies who live next door. After a certain age, and especially upon retired tradespeople, house property, either alone or in common with gardening, exercises an irresistible fascination. You always know you are going to meet a landlord or landlady of this type when you read on your order to view, "Key next door but one." Calling next door but one, you are joined after the lapse of a few minutes by a bald, stout gentleman, or a lady of immemorial years, who offers to go over "the property" with you. Apparently the intervals between visits to view are spent in slumber, and these old people come out refreshed and keen to scrutinise their possible new neighbours. They will tell you all about the last tenant, and about the present tenants on either side, and about themselves, and how all the other houses in the neighbourhood are damp, and how they remember when the site of the house was a cornfield, and what they do for their rheumatism. As one hears them giving a most delightful

vent to their loquacity, the artistic house-hunter feels all the righteous self-applause of a kindly deed. Sometimes they get extremely friendly. One old gentleman — to whom anyone under forty must have seemed puerile — presented the gentle writer with three fine large green apples as a kind of earnest of his treatment: apples, no doubt, of some little value, since they excited the audible envy of several little boys before they were disposed of.

Sometimes the landlord has even superintended the building of the house himself, and then it often has peculiar distinctions — no coal cellar, or a tower with turrets, or pillars of ornamental marble investing the portico with disproportionate dignity. One old gentleman, young as old gentlemen go, short of stature, of an agreeable red colour, and with short iron-grey hair, had a niche over the front door containing a piece of statuary. It gave one the impression of the Venus of Milo in chocolate pyjamas. "It was nood at first," said the landlord, "but the neighbourhood is hardly educated up to art, and objected. So I gave it that brown paint."

On one expedition the artistic house-hunter was accompanied by Euphemia. Then it was he found Hill Crest, a vast edifice at the incredible rent of £40 a year, with which a Megatherial key was identified. It took the two of them, not to mention an umbrella, to turn this key. The rent was a mystery, and while they were in the house — a thunderstorm kept them there some time — they tried to imagine the murder. From the top windows they could see the roofs of the opposite houses in plan.

"I wonder how long it would take to get to the top of the house from the bottom?" said Euphemia.

"Certainly longer than we could manage every day," said the artistic house-hunter. "Fancy looking for my pipe in all these rooms. Starting from the top bedroom at the usual time, I suppose one would arrive downstairs to breakfast about eleven, and then we should have to be getting upstairs again by eight o'clock if we wanted any night's rest worth having. Or we might double or treble existence, live a Gargantuan life to match the house, make our day of forty-eight hours instead of twenty-four. By doubling everything we should not notice the hole it made in our time getting about the place. Perhaps by making dinner last twice as long, eating twice as much, and doing

everything on the scale of two to one, we might adapt ourselves to our environment in time, grow twice as big."

"*Then* we might be very comfortable here," said Euphemia.

They went downstairs again. By that time it was thundering and raining heavily. The rooms were dark and gloomy. The big side door, which would not shut unless locked from the outside, swayed and banged as the gusts of wind swept round the house. But they had a good time in the front kitchen, playing cricket with an umbrella and the agent's order crumpled into a ball. Presently the artistic house-hunter lifted Euphemia on to the tall dresser, and they sat there swinging their feet patiently until the storm should leave off and release them.

"I should feel in this kitchen," said Euphemia, "like one of my little dolls must have felt in the dolls'-house kitchen I had once. The top of her head just reached the level of the table. There were only four plates on the dresser, but each was about half her height across — —"

"Your reminiscences are always entertaining," said the artistic house-hunter; "still they fail to explain the absorbing mystery of this house being to let at £40 a year." The problem raised his curiosity, but though he made inquiries he found no reason for the remarkably low rent or the continued emptiness of the house. It was a specimen puzzle for the house-hunter. A large house with a garden of about half an acre, and with accommodation for about six families, going begging for £40 a year. Would it let at eighty? Some such problem, however, turns up in every house-hunt, and it is these surprises that give the sport its particular interest and delight. Always provided the mind is not unsettled by any ulterior notion of settling down.

OF BLADES AND BLADERY

The Blade is not so much a culture as a temperament, and Bladery — if the thing may have the name — a code of sentiments rather than a ritual. It is the rococo school of behaviour, the flamboyant gentleman, the gargoyle life. The Blade is the tribute innocence pays to vice. He may look like a devil and belong to a church. And the clothing of the Blade, being symbolical, is a very important part of him. It must show not only a certain tastiness, but also decision in the accent, courage in the pattern, and a Dudley Hardihood of outline. A Blade must needs take the colour of his social standing, but all Blades have the same essential qualities. And all Blades have this quality, that they despise and contemn other Blades from the top downward. (But where the bottommost Blade comes no man can tell.)

A well-bred Blade — though he be a duke — tends to wear his hat tilted a little over the right eyebrow, and a piece of hair is pulled coquettishly down just below the brim. His collar is high, and a very large bow is worn slightly askew. This may be either cream-coloured or deep blue, with spots of white, or it may be red, or buff, but not green, because of badinage. The Blade of the middle class displays a fine gold watch-chain, and his jacket and vest may be of a rough black cloth or blue serge. The trousering may be of a suit with the jacket, or tasteful, and the shoes must be long. The betting man, adorned, is a perfect Blade. There is often a large and ornamental stick, which is invariably carried head downwards. And note, that the born Blade instinctively avoids any narrowness of pose. In walking he thrusts out his shoulders, elbows, and knees, and it is rather the thing to dominate a sphere of influence beyond this by swinging his stick. At first the beginner will find this weapon a little apt to slip from the hand and cause inconvenience to the general public; but he must not mind that. After a few such misadventures he will acquire dexterity.

All Blades smoke — publicly at least. To smoke a white meerschaum in the streets, however, is very inferior form. The proper smoking is a briar, and, remember, it is not smart to have a new pipe.

So soon as he buys it, the Blade takes his pipe home, puts it on a glowing fire to burn the rim, scrapes this away, burns it again, and so on until it looks a sullen desperado of a pipe — a pipe with a wild past. Sometimes he cannot smoke a pipe. In this case he may — for his stomach's sake — smoke a cigarette. And, besides, there is something cynical about a cigarette. For the very young Blade there are certain makes of cigarette that burn well — they are mixed with nitre — and these may be smoked by holding them in the left hand and idly swinging them to and fro in the air. If it were not for the public want of charity, I would recommend a well-known brand. A Blade may always escape a cigar by feigning a fastidious taste. "None of your Cabanas" is rather good style.

The Blade, it must be understood — especially by the Blade's friends — spends his time in a whirl of dissipation. That is the symbolism of the emphatic obliquity of the costume. First, he drinks. The Blade at Harrow, according to a reliable authority, drinks cherry brandy and even champagne; other Blades consume whisky-and-soda; the less costly kind of Blade does it on beer. And here the beginner is often at a loss. Let us say he has looked up the street and down, ascertained that there are no aunts in the air, and then plunged into his first public-house. How shall he ask for his liquor? "I will take a glass of ale, if you please, Miss," seems tame for a Blade. It may be useful to know a more suitable formula. Just at present, we may assure the Blade neophyte, it is all the rage to ask for "Two of swipes, ducky." Go in boldly, bang down your money as loudly as possible, and shout that out at the top of your voice. If it is a barman, though, you had better not say "ducky." The slang will, we can assure him, prove extremely effective.

Then the Blade gambles; but over the gambling of the Blade it is well to draw a veil — a partially translucent and coquettish veil, through which we can see the thing dimly, and enhanced in its enormity. You must patronise the Turf, of course, and have money on horses, or you are no Blade at all, but a mere stick. The Harrow Blade has his book on all the big races in the calendar; and the great and noble game of Nap — are not Blades its worshippers wherever the sun shines and a pack of cards is obtainable? Baccarat, too. Many a glorious Blade has lost his whole term's pocket-money at a single

sitting at that noble game. And the conversation of the Blade must always be brilliant in the extreme, like the flashing of steel in the sunlight. It is usually cynical and worldly, sometimes horrible enough to make a governess shudder, but always epigrammatic. Epigrams and neat comparisons are much easier to make than is vulgarly supposed. "Schoolmasters hang about the crops of knowledge like dead crows about a field, examples and warnings to greedy souls." "Marriage is the beginning of philosophy, and the end is, 'Do not marry.'" "All women are constant, but some discover mistakes." "One is generally repentant when one is found out, and remorseful when one can't do it again." A little practice, and this kind of thing may be ground out almost without thinking. Occasionally, in your conversation with ladies, you may let an oath slip. (Better not let your aunt hear you.) Apologise humbly at once, of course. But it will give them a glimpse of the lurid splendour of your private life.

And that brings us to the central thing of the Blade's life, the eternal Feminine! Pity them, be a little sorry for them — the poor souls cannot be Blades. They must e'en sit and palpitate while the Blade flashes. The accomplished Blade goes through life looking unspeakable wickedness at everything feminine he meets, old and young, rich and poor, one with another. He reeks with intrigue. Every Blade has his secrets and mysteries in this matter — remorse even for crimes. You do not know all that his handsome face may hide. Even he does not know. He may have sat on piers and talked to shop-girls, kissed housemaids, taken barmaids to music halls, conversed with painted wickedness in public places — nothing is too much for him. And oh! the reckless protestations of love he has made, the broken promises, the broken hearts! Yet men must be Blades, though women may weep; and every Blade must take his barmaid to a music hall at least once, even if she be taller than himself. Until then his manhood is not assured.

Just one hint in conclusion. A Blade who collects stamps, or keeps tame rabbits, or eats sweets, oranges, or apples in the streets, or calls names publicly after his friends, is no Blade at all, but a boy still. So, with our blessing, he swaggers on his way and is gone. A Don Juan as fresh as spring, a rosebud desperado. May he never come upon

just cause for repentance!

OF CLEVERNESS

ÀPROPOS OF ONE CRICHTON

Crichton is an extremely clever person — abnormally, indeed almost unnaturally, so. He is not merely clever at this or that, but clever all round; he gives you no consolations. He goes about being needlessly brilliant. He caps your jests and corrects your mistakes, and does your special things over again in newer and smarter ways. Any really well-bred man who presumed so far would at least be plain or physically feeble, or unhappily married by way of apology, but the idea of so much civility seems never to have entered Crichton's head. He will come into a room where we are jesting perhaps, and immediately begin to flourish about less funny perhaps but decidedly more brilliant jests, until at last we retire one by one from the conversation and watch him with savage, weary eyes over our pipes. He invariably beats me at chess, invariably. People talk about him and ask my opinion of him, and if I venture to criticise him they begin to look as though they thought I was jealous. Grossly favourable notices of his books and his pictures crop up in the most unlikely places; indeed I have almost given up newspapers on account of him. Yet, after all ——

This cleverness is not everything. It never pleases me, and I doubt sometimes if it pleases anyone. Suppose you let off some clever little thing, a subtlety of expression, a paradox, an allusive suggestive picture; how does it affect ordinary people? Those who are less clever than yourself, the unspecialised, unsophisticated average people, are simply annoyed by the puzzle you set them; those who are cleverer find your cleverness mere obvious stupidity; and your equals, your competitors in cleverness, are naturally your deadly rivals. The fact is this cleverness, after all, is merely egotism in its worst and unwisest phase. It is an incontinence of brilliance, graceless and aggressive, a glaring swagger. The drunken helot of cleverness is the creature who goes about making puns. A mere step above comes the epigram, the isolated epigram framed and glazed. Then such impressionist art as Crichton's pictures, mere puns in paint. What they mean is nothing, they arrest a quiet decent-minded

man like myself with the same spasmodic disgust as a pun in literature — the subject is a transparent excuse; they are mere indecent and unedifying exhibitions of himself. He thinks it is something superlative to do everything in a startling way. He cannot even sign his name without being offensive. He lacks altogether the fundamental quality of a gentleman, the magnanimity to be commonplace. I ——

On the score of personal dignity, why should a young man of respectable antecedents and some natural capacity stoop to this kind of thing? To be clever is the last desperate resort of the feeble, it is the merit of the ambitious slave. You cannot conquer *vi et armis*, you cannot stomach a decent inferiority, so you resort to lively, eccentric, and brain-wearying brilliance to ingratiate yourself. The cleverest animal by far is the monkey, and compare that creature's undignified activity with the mountainous majesty of the elephant!

And I cannot help thinking, too, that cleverness must be the greatest obstacle a man can possibly have in his way upward in the world. One never sees really clever people in positions of trust, never widely influential or deeply rooted. Look, for instance, at the Royal Academy, at the Judges, at —— But there! The very idea of cleverness is an all-round readiness and looseness that is the very negation of stability.

Whenever Crichton has been particularly exasperating, getting himself appreciated in a new quarter, or rising above his former successes, I find some consolation in thinking of my Uncle Augustus. He was the glory of our family. Even Aunt Charlotte's voice drooped a little in the mention of his name. He was conspicuous for an imposing and even colossal stupidity: he rose to eminence through it, and, what is more, to wealth and influence. He was as reliable, as unlikely to alter his precise position, or do anything unexpected, as the Pyramids of Egypt. I do not know any topic upon which he was not absolutely uninformed, and his contributions to conversation, delivered in that ringing baritone of his, were appallingly dull. Often I have seen him utterly flatten some cheerful clever person of the Crichton type with one of his simple garden-roller remarks — plain, solid, and heavy, which there was no possibility either of meeting or avoiding. He was very successful in argument, and yet he never

fenced. He simply came down. It was, so to speak, a case of small sword *versus* the avalanche. His moral inertia was tremendous. He was never excited, never anxious, never jaded; he was simply massive. Cleverness broke upon him like shipping on an ironbound coast. His monument is like him — a plain large obelisk of coarse granite, unpretending in its simple ugliness and prominent a mile off. Among the innumerable little white sorrows of the cemetery it looks exactly as he used to look among clever people.

Depend upon it cleverness is the antithesis of greatness. The British Empire, like the Roman, was built up by dull men. It may be we shall be ruined by clever ones. Imagine a regiment of lively and eccentric privates! There never was a statesman yet who had not some ballast of stupidity, and it seems to me that part at least of the essentials of a genius is a certain divine dulness. The people we used to call the masters — Shakespeare, Raphael, Milton, and so forth — had a certain simplicity Crichton lacks. They do not scintillate nearly so much as he does, and they do not give that same uncomfortable feeling of internal strain. Even Homer nods. There are restful places in their work, broad meadows of breezy flatness, calms. But Crichton has no Pacific Ocean to mitigate his everlasting weary passage of Cape Horn: it is all point and prominence, point and prominence.

No doubt this Crichton is having a certain vogue now, but it cannot last. I wish him no evil, of course, but I cannot help thinking he will presently have had his day. This epoch of cleverness must be very near its last flare. The last and the abiding thought of humanity is peace. A dull man will presently be sought like the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land. Dulness will be the New Genius. “Give us dull books,” people will cry, “great dull restful pictures. We are weary, very weary.” This hectic, restless, incessant phase in which we travail — *fin-de-siècle*, “decadent,” and all the rest of it — will pass away. A chubby, sleepy literature, large in aim, colossal in execution, rotund and tranquil will lift its head. And this Crichton will become a classic, Messrs. Mudie will sell surplus copies of his works at a reduction, and I shall cease to be worried by his disgusting success.

THE POSE NOVEL

I watched the little spurts of flame jet out from between the writhing pages of my manuscript, watched the sheets coil up in their fiery anguish and start one from another. I helped the fire to the very vitals of the mass by poking the brittle heap, and at last the sacrifice was over, the flames turned from pink to blue and died out, the red glow gave place to black, little luminous red streaks coiled across the charred sheets and vanished at the margins, and only the ashes of my inspiration remained. The ink was a lustrous black on the dull blackness of the burnt paper. I could still read this much of my indiscretion remaining, "He smiled at them all and said nothing."

"Fool!" I said, and stirred the crackling mass into a featureless heap of black scraps. Then with my chin on my fists and elbows on knees I stared at the end of my labours.

I suppose, after all, there has been some profit out of the thing. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do, and one may well thank Heaven it was only a novel. Still, it means many days out of my life, and I would be glad to find some positive benefit accruing. Clearly, in the first place, I have eased my mind of some execrable English. I am cleaner now by some dozen faulty phrases that I committed and saw afterwards in all the nakedness of typewriting. (Thank Heaven for typewriting! Were it not for that, this thing had gone to the scoffing of some publisher's reader, and another had known my shame.) And I shall not write another pose novel.

I am inclined to think these pose novels the wild oats of authorship. We sit down in the heyday of our youth to write the masterpiece. Obviously, it must be a novel about a man and a woman, and something as splendid as we can conceive of in that way. We look about us. We do not go far for perfection. One of the brace holds the pen and the other is inside his or her head; and so Off! to the willing pen. Only a few years ago we went slashing among the poppies with a walking-stick, and were, we said boldly and openly, Harolds and Hectors slaying our thousands. Now of course we are grown up to self-respect, and must needs be a little disingenuous about it. But as the story unfolds there is no mistaking

the likeness, in spite of the transfiguration. This bold, decided man who performs such deeds of derring-do in the noisome slum, knocks down the burly wife-beater, rescues an unmistakable Miss Clapton from the knife of a Lascar, and is all the while cultivating a virtuous consumption that stretches him on an edifying, pathetic, and altogether beautiful deathbed in the last chapter —— My dear Authorling, cry my friends, we hear the squeak of that little voice of yours in every word he utters. Is *that* what you aspire to be, that twopence-coloured edition of yourself? Heaven defend you from your desires!

Yet there was a singular fascination in writing the book; to be in anticipation my own sympathetic historian, to joy with my joys yet to come, and sorrow with my sorrows, to bear disaster like a man, and at last to close my own dear eyes, and with a swelling heart write my own epitaph. The pleasure remained with me until I reached the end. How admirably I strutted in front of myself! And I and the better self of me that was flourishing about in the book — we pretended not to know each other for what we were. He was myself with a wig and a sham visiting card, and I owed it to myself to respect my disguise. I made him with very red hair — my hair is fairly dark — and shifted his university from London to Cambridge. Clearly it could not be the same person, I argued. But I endowed him with all the treasures of myself; I made him say all the good things I might have said had I thought of them opportunely, and all the noble thoughts that occurred to me afterwards occurred to him at the time. He was myself — myself at a premium, myself without any drawbacks, the quintessence and culmination of me. And yet somehow when he came back from the typewriter he seemed a bit of an ass.

Probably every tadpole author writes a pose novel — at least I hope so for the sake of my self-respect. Most, after my fashion, burn the thing, or benevolent publishers lose it. It is an ill thing if by some accident the tadpole tale survives the tadpole stage. The authoress does the feminine equivalent, but I should judge either that she did it more abundantly or else that she burned less. Has she never swept past you with a scornful look, disdained you in all the pride of her beauty, rippled laughter at you, or amazed you with her artless girlishness? And even after the early stages some of the trick may

survive, unless I read books with malice instead of charity. I must confess, though, that I have a weakness for finding mine author among his puppets. I conceive him always taking the best parts, like an actor-manager or a little boy playing with his sisters. I do not read many novels with sincere belief, and I like to get such entertainment from them as I can. So that these artless little self-revelations are very sweet and precious to me among all the lay figures, tragedy and comedy. Since the deception is transparent I make the most of the transparency, and love to see the clumsy fingers on the strings of the marionettes. And this will be none the less pleasant now that I have so narrowly escaped giving this entertainment to others.

I suppose this stage is a necessary one. We begin with ignorance and the imagination, the material of the pose novel. Later come self-knowledge, disappointments and self-consciousness, and the prodigals of fiction stay themselves upon the husks of epigram and cynicism, and in the place of artless aspiration are indeed in plain black and white very desperate characters. It is after all only another pose — the pose of not posing. We, the common clay of the world of letters, must needs write in this way, because we cannot forget our foolish little selves in our work. But some few there are who sit as gods above their private universes, and write without passion or vanity. At least, so I have been told. These be the true artists of letters, the white windows upon the truth of things. We by comparison are but stained glass in our own honour, and do but obstruct the view with our halos and attitudes. Yet even Shakespeare, the critics tell us — and they say they know — posed in the character of Hamlet.

After all, the pose novel method has at times attained to the level of literature. Charlotte Brontë might possibly have found no other topic had she disdained the plain little woman with a shrewish tongue; and where had Charles Kingsley been if the vision of a curate rampant had not rejoiced his heart? Still, I am not sorry that this novel is burned. Even now it was ridiculous, and the time might have come when this book, full of high, if foolish aims, and the vain vast promise of well-meaning youth, had been too keen a reproach to be endured. Three volumes of good intentions! It is too much. There was more than a novel burning just now. After this I shall be in a

position to take a humorist’s view of life.

THE VETERAN CRICKETER

My old cricketer was seized, he says, some score of years ago now, by sciatica, clutched indeed about the loins thereby, and forcibly withdrawn from the practice of the art; since when a certain predisposition to a corpulent habit has lacked its natural check of exercise, and a broadness almost Dutch has won upon him. Were it not for this, which renders his contours and his receding aspect unseemly, he would be indeed a venerable-looking person, having a profile worthy of a patriarch, tinged though it may be with an unpatriarchal jollity, and a close curly beard like that of King David. He lives by himself in a small cottage outside the village — hating women with an unaccountable detestation — and apparently earns a precarious livelihood, and certainly the sincere aversion of the country side, by umpiring in matches, and playing whist and "Nap" with such as will not be so discreet and economical as to bow before his superior merit.

His neighbours do not like him, because he will not take their cricket or their whist seriously, because he will persist in offering counsel and the stimulus of his gift of satire. All whist than his he avers is "Bumble-puppy." His umpiring is pedagogic in tone; he fails to see the contest in the game. To him, who has heard his thousands roar as the bails of the best of All England went spinning, these village matches are mere puerile exercises to be corrected. His corrections, too, are Olympian, done, as it were, in red ink, vivid, and without respect of persons. Particularly he gibes. He never uses vulgar bad language himself, but has a singular power of engendering it in others. He has a word "gaby," which he will sometimes enlarge to "stuppid gaby," the which, flung neatly into a man who has just missed a catch, will fill the same with a whirl of furious curses difficult to restrain. And if perchance one should escape, my ancient cricketer will be as startled as Cadmus at the crop he has sown. And not only startled but pained at human wickedness and the follies of a new generation. "Why can't you play without swearing, Muster Gibbs?" he will say, catching the whispered hope twenty yards away, and proclaiming it to a censorious world. And so

Gibbs, our grocer and draper, and one made much of by the vicar, is shamed before the whole parish, and damned even as he desired.

To our vicar, a well-meaning, earnest, and extremely nervous man, he displays a methodical antagonism. Our vicar is the worst of all possible rural vicars — unripe, a glaring modern, no classical scholar, no lover of nature, offensively young and yet not youthful, an indecent politician. He was meant to labour amid Urban Myriads, to deal with Social Evils, Home Rule, the Woman Question, and the Reunion of Christendom, attend Conferences and go with the *Weltgeist* — damn him! — wherever the *Weltgeist* is going. He presents you jerkily — a tall lean man of ascetic visage and ample garments, a soul clothed not so much in a fleshy body as in black flaps that ever trail behind its energy. Where they made him Heaven knows. No university owns him. It may be he is a renegade Dissenting minister, neither good Church nor wholesome Nonconformity. Him my cricketer regards with malignant respect. Respect he shows by a punctilious touching of his hat brim, directed to the sacred office; all the rest is malignity, and aimed at the man that fills it. They come into contact on the cricket-field, and on the committee of our reading-room. For our vicar, in spite of a tendency to myopia, conceives it his duty to encourage cricket by his participation. *Duty* — to encourage cricket! So figure the scene to yourself. The sunlit green, and a match in progress, — the ball has just snipped a stump askew, — my ancient, leaning on a stout cabbage stick, and with the light overcoat that is sacred to umpires upon his arm.

"*Out*, Billy Durgan," says he, and adds, *ex cathedrâ*, "and one you ought to ha' hit for four."

Then appears our vicar in semi-canonicals, worn "to keep up his position," or some such folly, nervous about the adjustment of his hat and his eyeglasses. He approaches the pitch, smiling the while to show his purely genial import and to anticipate and explain any amateurish touches. He reaches the wicket and poses himself, as the convenient book he has studied directs. "You'll be caught, Muster Shackleforth, if you keep your shoulder up like that," says the umpire. "Ya-a-ps! that's worse!" — forgetting himself in his zeal for attitude. And then a voice cries "Play!"

The vicar swipes wildly, cuts the ball for two, and returns to his wicket breathless but triumphant. Next comes a bye, and then over. The misguided cleric, ever pursuing a theory of foolish condescension to his betters at the game, and to show there is no offence at the "Yaaps," takes the opportunity, although panting, of asking my ancient if his chicks — late threatened with staggers — are doing well. What would he think if my cricketer retaliated by asking, in the pause before the sermon, how the vicarage pony took his last bolus? The two men do not understand one another. My cricketer waves the hens aside, and revenges himself, touching his hat at intervals, by some offensively obvious remarks — as to a mere beginner — about playing with a straight bat. And the field sniggers none too furtively. I sympathise with his malice. Cricket is an altogether too sacred thing to him to be tampered with on merely religious grounds. However, our vicar gets himself caught at the first opportunity, and so being removed from my veteran's immediate environment, to their common satisfaction, the due ritual of the great game is resumed.

My ancient cricketer abounds in reminiscence of the glorious days that have gone for ever. He can still recall the last echoes of the "throwing" controversy that agitated Nyren, when over-arm bowling began, and though he never played himself in a beaver hat, he can, he says, recollect seeing matches so played. In those days everyone wore tall hats — the policeman, the milkman, workmen of all sorts. Some people I fancy must have bathed in them and gone to bed wearing them. He recalls the Titans of that and the previous age, and particularly delights in the legend of Noah Mann, who held it a light thing to walk twenty miles from Northchapel to Hambledon to practise every Tuesday afternoon, and wander back after dark. He himself as a stripling would run a matter of four miles, after a day's work in the garden where he was employed, to attend an hour's practice over the downs before the twilight made the balls invisible. And afterwards came Teutonic revelry or wanderings under the summer starlight, as the mood might take him. For there was a vein of silent poetry in the youth of this man.

He hates your modern billiard-table pitch, and a batting of dexterous snickery. He likes "character" in a game, gigantic hitting

forward, bowler-planned leg catches, a cunning obliquity in a wicket that would send the balls mysteriously askew. But dramatic breaks are now a thing unknown in trade cricket. One legend of his I doubt; he avers that once at Brighton, in a match between Surrey and Sussex, he saw seven wickets bowled by some such aid in two successive overs. I have never been able to verify this. I believe that, as a matter of fact, the thing has never occurred, but he tells it often in a fine crescendo of surprise, and the refrain, "Out he came." His first beginning is a cheerful anecdote of a crew of "young gentlemen" from Cambridge staying at the big house, and a challenge to the rustic talent of "me and Billy Hall," who "played a bit at that time," "of me and Billy Hall" winning the pitch and going in first, of a memorable if uncivil stand at the wickets through a long hot afternoon, and a number of young gentlemen from Cambridge painfully discovering local talent by exhaustive fielding in the park, a duty they honourably discharged.

I am fond of my old cricketer, in spite of a certain mendacious and malign element in him. His yarns of gallant stands and unexpected turns of fortune, of memorable hits and eccentric umpiring, albeit tending sometimes incredibly to his glory, are full of the flavour of days well spent, of bright mornings of play, sunlit sprawlings beside the score tent, warmth, the flavour of bitten grass stems, and the odour of crushed turf. One seems to hear the clapping hands of village ancients, and their ululations of delight. One thinks of stone jars with cool drink swishing therein, of shouting victories and memorable defeats, of eleven men in a drag, and tuneful and altogether glorious home-comings by the light of the moon. His were the Olympian days of the sport, when noble squires were its patrons, and every village a home and nursery of stalwart cricketers, before the epoch of special trains, gate-money, star elevens, and the tumultuous gathering of idle cads to jabber at a game they cannot play.

CONCERNING A CERTAIN LADY

This lady wears a blue serge suit and a black hat, without flippancy; she is a powerfully built lady and generally more or less flushed, and she is aunt, apparently, to a great number of objectionable-looking people. I go in terror of her. Yet the worm will turn at last, and so will the mild, pacific literary man. Her last outrage was too much even for my patience. It was committed at Gloucester Road Station the other afternoon. I was about to get into a train for Wimbledon, — and there are only two of them to the hour, — and, so far as I could see, the whole world was at peace with me. I felt perfectly secure. The ægis of the *pax Britannica* — if you will pardon the expression — was over me. For the moment the thought of the lady in the blue serge was quite out of my mind. I had just bought a newspaper, and had my hand on the carriage door. The guard was fluttering his flag.

Then suddenly she swooped out of space, out of the infinite unknown, and hit me. She always hits me when she comes near me, and I infer she hits everyone she comes across. She hit me this time in the chest with her elbow and knocked me away from the door-handle. She hit me very hard; indeed, she was as fierce as I have ever known her. With her there were two nieces and a nephew, and the nephew hit me too. He was a horrid little boy in an Eton suit of the kind that they do not wear at Eton, and he hit me with his head and pushed at me with his little pink hands. The nieces might have been about twenty-two and thirteen respectively, and I infer that they were apprenticed to her. All four people seemed madly excited. "It's just starting!" they screamed, and the train was, indeed, slowly moving. Their object — so far as they had an object and were not animated by mere fury — appeared to be to assault me and then escape in the train. The lady in blue got in and then came backwards out again, sweeping the smaller girl behind her upon the two others, who were engaged in hustling me. "It's 'smoking!'" she cried. I could have told her that, if she had asked instead of hitting me. The elder girl, by backing dexterously upon me, knocked my umbrella out of my hand, and when I stooped to pick it up the little boy knocked my hat off. I will confess they demoralised me with their archaic violence. I had

some thought of joining in their wild amuck, whooping, kicking out madly, perhaps assaulting a porter, — I think the lady in blue would have been surprised to find what an effective addition to her staff she had picked up, — but before I could collect my thoughts sufficiently to do any definite thing the whole affair was over. A porter was slamming doors on them, the train was running fast out of the station, and I was left alone with an unmannerly newsboy and an unmannerly porter on the platform. I waited until the porter was out of the way, and then I hit the newsboy for laughing at me, but even with that altercation it was a tedious wait for the next train to Wimbledon.

This is the latest of my encounters with this lady, but it has decided me to keep silence no longer. She has been persecuting me now for years in all parts of London. It may be I am her only victim, but, on the other hand, she may be in the habit of annoying the entire class of slender and inoffensive young men. If so, and they will communicate with me through the publishers of this little volume, we might do something towards suppressing her, found an Anti-Energetic-Lady-League, or something of that sort. For if there was ever a crying wrong that clamoured for suppression it is this violent woman.

She is, even now, flagrantly illegal. She might be given in charge for hitting people at any time, and be warned, or fined, or given a week. But somehow it is only when she is overpast and I am recovering my wits that I recollect that she might be dealt with in this way. She is the chartered libertine of British matrons, and assaulteth where she listeth. The blows I have endured from her? She fights people who are getting into ‘buses. It is no mere accidental jostling, but a deliberate shouldering, poking with umbrellas, and clawing. It is her delight to go to the Regent Circus corner of Piccadilly, about half-past seven in the evening, accompanied by a genteel rout of daughters, and fill up whole omnibuses with them. At that hour there are work-girls and tired clerks, and the like worn-out anæmic humanity trying to get home for an hour or so of rest before bed, and they crowd round the ‘buses very eagerly. They are little able to cope with her exuberant vitality, being ill-nourished and tired from the day’s work, and she simply mows through them and fills up every vacant place they covet before their eyes. Then, I can never count

change even when my mind is tranquil, and she knows that, and swoops threateningly upon me in booking offices and stationers' shops. When I am dodging cabs at crossings she will appear from behind an omnibus or carriage and butt into me furiously. She holds her umbrella in her folded arms just as the Punch puppet does his staff, and with as deadly effect. Sometimes she discards her customary navy blue and puts on a glittering bonnet with bead trimmings, and goes and hurts people who are waiting to enter the pit at theatres, and especially to hurt me. She is fond of public shows, because they afford such possibilities of hurting me. Once I saw her standing partly on a seat and partly on another lady in the church of St. George's, Hanover Square, partly, indeed, watching a bride cry, but chiefly, I expect, scheming how she could get round to me and hurt me. Then there was an occasion at the Academy when she was peculiarly aggressive. I was sitting next my lame friend when she marked me. Of course she came at once and sat right upon us. "Come along, Jane," I heard her say, as I struggled to draw my flattened remains from under her; "this gentleman will make room."

My friend was not so entangled and had escaped on the other side. She noticed his walk. "Oh, don't *you* get up," she said. "*This* gentleman," she indicated my convulsive struggles to free myself, "will do that. *I did not see that you were a cripple*."

It may be some of my readers will recognise the lady now. It can be — for the honour of womankind — only one woman. She is an atavism, a survival of the age of violence, a Palæolithic squaw in petticoats. I do not know her name and address or I would publish it. I do not care if she kills me the next time she meets me, for the limits of endurance have been passed. If she kills me I shall die a martyr in the cause of the Queen's peace. And if it is only one woman, then it was the same lady, more than half intoxicated, that I saw in the Whitechapel Road cruelly ill-treating a little costermonger. If it was not she it was certainly her sister, and I do not care who knows it.

What to do with her I do not know. A League, after all, seems ineffectual; she would break up any League. I have thought of giving her in charge for assault, but I shrink from the invidious publicity of that. Still, I am in grim earnest to do something. I think at times that the compulsory adoption of a narrow doorway for churches and

places of public entertainment might be some protection for quiet, inoffensive people. How she would rage outside to be sure! Yet that seems a great undertaking.

But this little paper is not so much a plan of campaign as a preliminary defiance. Life is a doubtful boon while one is never safe from assault, from hitting and shoving, from poking with umbrellas, being sat upon, and used as a target for projectile nephews and nieces. I warn her — possibly with a certain quaver in my voice — that I am in revolt. If she hits me again —— I will not say the precise thing I will do, but I warn her, very solemnly and deliberately, that she had better not hit me again.

And so for the present the matter remains.

THE SHOPMAN

If I were really opulent, I would not go into a shop at all — I would have a private secretary. If I were really determined, Euphemia would do these things. As it is, I find buying things in a shop the most exasperating of all the many trying duties of life. I am sometimes almost tempted to declare myself Adamite to escape it. The way the shopman eyes you as you enter his den, the very spread of his fingers, irritate me. "What can I have the pleasure?" he says, bowing forward at me, and with his eye on my chin — and so waits.

Now I hate incomplete sentences, and confound his pleasure! I don't go into a shop to give a shopman pleasure. But your ordinary shopman must needs pretend you delight and amuse him. I say, trying to display my dislike as plainly as possible, "Gloves." "Gloves, yessir," he says. Why should he? I suppose he thinks I require to be confirmed in my persuasion that I want gloves. "Calf — kid — dogskin?" How should *I* know the technicalities of his traffic? "Ordinary gloves," I say, disdaining his petty distinctions. "About what price, sir?" he asks.

Now that always maddens me. Why should I be expected to know the price of gloves? I'm not a commercial traveller nor a wholesale dealer, and I don't look like one. Neither am I constitutionally parsimonious nor petty. I am a literary man, unworldly, and I wear long hair and a soft hat and a peculiar overcoat to indicate the same to ordinary people. Why, I say, should I know the price of gloves? I know they are some ordinary price — elevenpence-halfpenny, or three-and-six, or seven-and-six, or something — one of those prices that everything is sold at — but further I don't go. Perhaps I say elevenpence-halfpenny at a venture.

His face lights up with quiet malice. "Don't keep them, sir," he says. I can tell by his expression that I am ridiculously low, and so being snubbed. I think of trying with three-and-six, or seven-and-six; the only other probable prices for things that I know, except a guinea and five pounds. Then I see the absurdity of the business, and my anger comes surging up.

"Look here!" I say, as bitterly as possible. "I don't come here to

play at Guessing Games. Never mind your prices. I want some gloves. Get me some!"

This cows him a little, but very little. "May I ask your size, sir?" he says, a trifle more respectfully.

One would think I spent all my time remembering the size of my gloves. However, it is no good resenting it. "It's either seven or nine," I say in a tired way.

He just begins another question, and then he catches my eye and stops and goes away to obtain some gloves, and I get a breathing space. But why do they keep on with this cross-examination? If I knew exactly what I wanted — description, price, size — I should not go to a shop at all, it would save me such a lot of trouble just to send a cheque to the Stores. The only reason why I go into a tradesman's shop is because I don't know what I want exactly, am in doubt about the name or the size, or the price, or the fashion, and want a specialist to help me. The only reason for having shopmen instead of automatic machines is that one requires help in buying things. When I want gloves, the shopman ought to understand his business sufficiently well to know better than I do what particular kind of gloves I ought to be wearing, and what is a fair price for them. I don't see why I should teach him what is in fashion and what is not. A doctor does not ask you what kind of operation you want and what price you will pay for it. But I really believe these outfitter people would let me run about London wearing white cotton gloves and a plaid comforter without lifting a finger to prevent me.

And, by the bye, that reminds me of a scandalous trick these salesmen will play you. Sometimes they have not the thing you want, and then they make you buy other things. I happen to have, through no fault of my own, a very small head, and consequently for one long summer I wore a little boy's straw hat about London with the colours of a Paddington Board School, simply because a rascal outfitter hadn't my size in a proper kind of headgear, and induced me to buy the thing by specious representations. He must have known perfectly well it was not what I ought to wear. It seems never to enter into a shopman's code of honour that he ought to do his best for his customer. Since that, however, I have noticed lots of people about who have struck me in a new light as triumphs of the salesman,

masterpieces in the art of incongruity; age in the garb of youth, corpulence put off with the size called "slender men's"; unhappy, gentle, quiet men with ties like oriflammes, breasts like a kingfisher's, and cataclysmal trouser patterns. Even so, if the shopkeeper had his will, should we all be. Those poor withered maiden ladies, too, who fill us with a kind of horror, with their juvenile curls, their girlish crudity of colouring, their bonnets, giddy, tottering, hectic. It overcomes me with remorse to think that I myself have accused them of vanity and folly. It overcomes me with pain to hear the thoughtless laugh aloud after them, in the public ways. For they are simply short-sighted trustful people, the myopic victims of the salesman and saleswoman. The little children gibe at them, pelt even.... And somewhere in the world a draper goes unhung.

However, the gloves are bought. I select a pair haphazard, and he pretends to perceive they fit perfectly by putting them over the back of my hand. I make him assure me of the fit, and then buy the pair and proceed to take my old ones off and put the new on grimly. If they split or the fingers are too long — glovemakers have the most erratic conceptions of the human finger — I have to buy another pair.

But the trouble only begins when you have bought your thing. "Nothing more, sir?" he says. "Nothing," I say. "Braces?" he says. "No, thank you," I say. "Collars, cuffs?" He looks at mine swiftly but keenly, and with an unendurable suspicion.

He goes on, item after item. Am I in rags, that I should endure this thing? And I get sick of my everlasting "No, thank you" — the monotony shows up so glaringly against his kaleidoscope variety. I feel all the unutterable pettiness, the mean want of enterprise of my poor little purchase compared with the catholic fling he suggests. I feel angry with myself for being thus played upon, furiously angry with him. "*No, no!*" I say.

"These tie-holders are new." He proceeds to show me his infernal tie-holders. "They prevent the tie puckering," he says with his eye on mine. It's no good. "How much?" I say.

This whets him to further outrage. "Look here, my man!" I say at last, goaded to it, "I came here for gloves. After endless difficulties I at last induced you to let me have gloves. I have also been intimidated, by the most shameful hints and insinuations, into buying

that *beastly* tie-holder. I'm not a child that I don't know my own needs. Now *will* you let me go? How much do you want?"

That usually checks him.

The above is a fair specimen of a shopman — a favourable rendering. There are other things they do, but I simply cannot write about them because it irritates me so to think of them. One infuriating manœuvre is to correct your pronunciation. Another is to make a terrible ado about your name and address — even when it is quite a well-known name.

After I have bought things at a shop I am quite unfit for social intercourse. I have to go home and fume. There was a time when Euphemia would come and discuss my purchase with a certain levity, but on one occasion....

Some day these shopmen will goad me too far. It's almost my only consolation, indeed, to think what I am going to do when I do break out. There is a salesman somewhere in the world, he going on his way and I on mine, who will, I know, prove my last straw. It may be he will read this — amused — recking little of the mysteries of fate.... Is killing a salesman murder, like killing a human being?

THE BOOK OF CURSES

Professor Gargoyle, you must understand, has travelled to and fro in the earth, culling flowers of speech: a kind of recording angel he is, but without any sentimental tears. To be plain, he studies swearing. His collection, however, only approaches completeness in the western departments of European language. Going eastward he found such an appalling and tropical luxuriance of these ornaments as to despair at last altogether of even a representative selection. "They do not curse," he says, "at door-handles, and shirt-studs, and such other trifles as will draw down the meagre discharge of an Occidental, but when they do begin ——

"I hired a promising-looking man at Calcutta, and after a month or so refused to pay his wages. He was unable to get at me with the big knife he carried, because the door was locked, so he sat on his hams outside under the verandah, from a quarter-past six in the morning until nearly ten, cursing — cursing in one steady unbroken flow — an astonishing spate of blasphemy. First he cursed my family, from me along the female line back to Eve, and then, having toyed with me personally for a little while, he started off along the line of my possible posterity to my remotest great-grandchildren. Then he cursed me by this and that. My hand ached taking it down, he was so very rich. It was a perfect anthology of Bengali blasphemy — vivid, scorching, and variegated. Not two alike. And then he turned about and dealt with different parts of me. I was really very fortunate in him. Yet it was depressing to think that all this was from one man, and that there are six hundred million people in Asia."

"Naturally," said the Professor in answer to my question, "these investigations involve a certain element of danger. The first condition of curse-collecting is to be unpopular, especially in the East, where comminatory swearing alone is practised, and you have to offend a man very grievously to get him to disgorge his treasure. In this country, except among ladies in comparatively humble circumstances, anything like this fluent, explicit, detailed, and sincere cursing, aimed, missile-fashion, at a personal enemy, is not found. It

was quite common a few centuries ago; indeed, in the Middle Ages it was part of the recognised procedure. Aggrieved parties would issue a father's curse, an orphan's curse, and so forth, much as we should take out a county court summons. And it played a large part in ecclesiastical policy too. At one time the entire Church militant here on earth was swearing in unison, and the Latin tongue, at the Republic of Venice — a very splendid and imposing spectacle. It seems to me a pity to let these old customs die out so completely. I estimate that more than half these Gothic forms have altogether passed out of memory. There must have been some splendid things in Erse and Gaelic too; for the Celtic mind, with its more vivid sense of colour, its quicker transitions, and deeper emotional quality, has ever over-cursed the stolid Teuton. But it is all getting forgotten.

"Indeed, your common Englishman now scarcely curses at all. A more colourless and conventional affair than what in England is called swearing one can scarcely imagine. It is just common talk, with some half-dozen orthodox bad words dropped in here and there in the most foolish and illogical manner. Fancy having orthodox unorthodox words! I remember one day getting into a third-class smoking carriage on the Metropolitan Railway about one o'clock, and finding it full of rough working men. Everything they said was seasoned with one incredibly stupid adjective, and no doubt they thought they were very desperate characters. At last I asked them not to say that word again. One forthwith asked me 'What the — —' — I really cannot quote these puerilities— 'what the idiotic *cliché* that mattered to me?' So I looked at him quietly over my glasses, and I began. It was a revelation to these poor fellows. They sat open-mouthed, gasping. Then those that were nearest me began to edge away, and at the very next station they all bundled out of the carriage before the train stopped, as though I had some infectious disease. And the thing was just a rough imperfect rendering of some mere commonplaces, passing the time of day as it were, with which the heathen of Aleppo used to favour the servants of the American missionary. Indeed," said Professor Gargoyle, "if it were not for women there would be nothing in England that one could speak of as swearing at all."

"I say," said I, "is not that rather rough on the ladies?"

“Not at all; they have agreed to consider certain words, for no very good reason, bad words. It is a pure convention; it has little or nothing to do with the actual meaning, because for every one of these bad words there is a paraphrase or synonym considered to be quite suitable for polite ears. Hence the feeblest creature can always produce a sensation by breaking the taboo. But women are learning how to undo this error of theirs now. The word ‘damn,’ for instance, is, I hear, being admitted freely into the boudoir and feminine conversation; it is even considered a rather prudish thing to object to this word. Now, men, especially feeble men, hate doing things that women do. As a consequence, men who go about saying ‘damn’ are now regarded by their fellow-men as only a shade less effeminate than those who go about saying ‘nasty’ and ‘horrid.’ The subtler sex will not be long in noticing what has happened to this objectionable word. When they do they will, of course, forthwith take up all the others. It will be a little startling perhaps at first, but in the end there will be no swearing left. I have no doubt there will be those who will air their petty wit on the pioneer women, but where a martyr is wanted a woman can always be found to offer herself. She will clothe herself in cursing, like the ungodly, and perish in that Nessus shirt, a martyr to pure language. And then this dull cad swearing — a mere unnecessary affectation of coarseness — will disappear. And a very good job too.

“There is a pretty department of the subject which I might call grace swearing. ‘Od’s fish,’ cried the king, when he saw the man climbing Salisbury spire; ‘he shall have a patent for it — no one else shall do it.’ One might call such little things Wardour Street curses. ‘Od’s bodkins’ is a ladylike form, and ‘Od’s possles’ a variety I met in the British Museum. Every gentleman once upon a time aspired to have his own particular grace curse, just as he liked to have his crest, and his bookplate, and his characteristic signature. It fluttered pleasantly into his conversation, as Mr. Whistler’s butterfly comes into his pictures — a signature and a delight. ‘Od’s butterfly!’ I have sometimes thought of a little book of grace-words and heraldic curses, printed with wide margins on the best of paper. Its covers should be of soft red leather, stamped with little gold flowers. It might be made a birthday book, or a pocket diary— ‘Daily

Invocations.'

"Coming back to wrathy swearing, I must confess I am sorry to see it decay. It was such a thoroughly hygienic and moral practice. You see, if anything annoying happens to a man, or if any powerful emotion seizes him, his brain under the irritation begins to disengage energy at a tremendous rate. He has to use all his available force of control in keeping the energy in. Some of it will leak away into the nerves of his face and distort his features, some may set his tear-glands at work, some may travel down his vagus nerve and inhibit his heart's action so that he faints, or upset the blood-vessels in his head and give him a stroke. Or if he pens it up, without its reaching any of these vents, it may rise at last to flood-level, and you will have violent assaults, the breaking of furniture, 'murther' even. For all this energy a good flamboyant, ranting swear is Nature's outlet. All primitive men and most animals swear. It is an emotional shunt. Your cat swears at you because she does not want to scratch your face. And the horse, because he cannot swear, drops dead. So you see my reason for regretting the decay of this excellent and most wholesome practice....

"However, I must be getting on. Just now I am travelling about London paying cabmen their legal fares. Sometimes one picks up a new variant, though much of it is merely stereo."

And with that, flinging a playful curse at me, he disappeared at once into the tobacco smoke from which I had engendered him. An amusing and cheerful person on the whole, though I will admit his theme was a little undesirable.

DUNSTONE'S DEAR LADY

The story of Dunstone is so slight, so trivial in its cardinal incidents, such a business of cheap feathers and bits of ribbon on the surface, that I should hesitate to tell it, were it not for its Inwardness, what one might call the symbolism of the thing. Frankly, I do not clearly see what that symbolism is, but I feel it hovering in some indefinable way whenever I recall his case. It is one of those things that make a man extend his arm and twiddle his fingers, and say, blinking, "Like *that*, you know." So do not imagine for one moment that this is a shallow story, simply because it is painted, so to speak, not in heart's blood but in table claret.

Dunstone was a strong, quiet kind of man — a man of conspicuous mediocrity, and rising rapidly, therefore, in his profession. He was immensely industrious, and a little given to melancholia in private life. He smoked rather too many cigars, and took his social occasions seriously. He dressed faultlessly, with a scrupulous elimination of style. Unlike Mr. Grant Allen's ideal man, he was not constitutionally a lover; indeed, he seemed not to like the ordinary girl at all — found her either too clever or too shallow, lacking a something. I don't think *he* knew quite what it was. Neither do I — it is a case for extended hand and twiddling fingers. Moreover, I don't think the ordinary girl took to Dunstone very much.

He suffered, I fancy, from a kind of mental greyness; he was all subtle tones; the laughter of girls jarred upon him; foolish smartness or amiable foolishness got on his nerves; he detested, with equal sincerity, bright dressing, artistic dabbling, piety, and the glow of health. And when, as his confidential friend — confidential, that is, so far as his limits allowed — I heard that he intended to marry, I was really very much surprised.

I expected something quintessential; I was surprised to find she was a visiting governess. Harringay, the artist, thought there was nothing in her, but Sackbut, the art critic, was inclined to admire her bones. For my own part, I took rather a liking to her. She was small and thin, and, to be frank, I think it was because she hardly got

enough to eat — of the delicate food she needed. She was shabby, too, dressed in rusty mourning — she had recently lost her mother. But she had a sweet, low voice, a shrinking manner, rather a graceful carriage, I thought, and, though she spoke rarely, all she said was sweet and sane. She struck me as a refined woman in a blatant age. The general effect of her upon me was favourable; upon Dunstone it was tremendous. He lost a considerable proportion of his melancholia, and raved at times like a common man. He called her in particular his "Dear Lady" and his "Sweet Lady," things that I find eloquent of what he found in her. What that was I fancy I understand, and yet I cannot say it quite. One has to resort to the extended arm and fingers vibratile.

Before he married her — which he did while she was still in half-mourning — there was anxiety about her health, and I understood she needed air and exercise and strengthening food. But she recovered rapidly after her marriage, her eyes grew brighter, we saw less of Sackbut's "delicious skeleton." And then, in the strangest way, she began to change. It is none of my imagining; I have heard the change remarked upon by half a dozen independent observers. Yet you would think a girl of three-and-twenty (as she certainly was) had attained her development as a woman. I have heard her compared to a winter bud, cased in its sombre scales, until the sun shone, and the warm, moist winds began to blow. I noticed first that the delicate outline of her cheek was filling, and then came the time when she reverted to colour in her dress.

Her first essays were charitably received. Her years of struggle, her year of mourning, had no doubt dwarfed her powers in this direction; presently her natural good taste would reassert itself. But the next effort and the next were harder to explain. It was not the note of nervousness or inexperience we saw; there was an undeniable decision, and not a token of shame. The little black winter bud grew warm-coloured above, and burst suddenly into extravagant outlines and chromatic confusion. Harringay, who is a cad, first put what we were all feeling into words. "I've just seen Dunstone and his donah," he said. Clearly she was one of those rare women who cannot dress. And that was not all. A certain buoyancy, hitherto unsuspected, crept into her manner, as the corpuscles multiplied in her veins — an

archness. She talked more, and threw up a spray of playfulness. And, with a growing energy, she began to revise the exquisite æsthetic balance of Dunstone's house. She even enamelled a chair.

For a year or so I was in the East. When I returned Mrs. Dunstone amazed me. In some odd way she had grown, she had positively grown. She was taller, broader, brighter — infinitely brighter. She wore a diamond brooch in the afternoon. The "delicious skeleton" had vanished in plumpness. She moved with emphasis. Her eye — which glittered — met mine bravely, and she talked as one who would be heard. In the old days you saw nothing but a rare timid glance from under the pretty lids. She talked now of this and that, of people of "good family," and the difficulty of getting a suitable governess for her little boy. She said she objected to meeting people "one would not care to invite to one's house." She swamped me with tea and ruled the conversation, so that Dunstone and I, who were once old friends, talked civil twaddle for the space of one hour — theatres, concerts, and assemblies chiefly — and then parted again. The furniture had all been altered — there were two "cosy nooks" in the room after the recipe in the *Born Lady*. It was plain to me, it is plain to everyone, I find, that Mrs. Dunstone is, in the sun of prosperity, rapidly developing an extremely florid vulgarity. And afterwards I discovered that she had forgotten her music, and evidently enjoyed her meals. Yet I for one can witness that five years ago there was *that* about her — I can only extend my arm with quivering digits. But it was something very sweet and dainty, something that made her white and thoughtful, and marked her off from the rest of womankind. I sometimes fancy it may have been anæmia in part, but it was certainly poverty and mourning in the main.

You may think that this is a story of disillusionment. When I first heard the story, I thought so too. But, so far as Dunstone goes, that is not the case. It is rare that I see him now, but the other day we smoked two cigars apiece together. And in a moment of confidence he spoke of her. He said how anxious he felt for her health, called her his "Dainty Little Lady," and spoke of the coarseness of other women. I am afraid this is not a very eventful story, and yet there is *that* —— That very convenient gesture, an arm protruded and

flickering fingers, conveys my meaning best. Perhaps you will understand.

EUPHEMIA'S NEW ENTERTAINMENT

Euphemia has great ideas of putting people at their ease, a thousand little devices for thawing the very stiffest among them with a home-like glow. Far be it from me to sing her praises, but I must admit that at times she is extremely successful in this — at times almost too successful. That tea-cake business, for instance. No doubt it's a genial expedient to make your guests toast his own tea-cake: down he must go upon his knees upon your hearthrug, and his poses will melt away like the dews of the morning before the rising sun. Nevertheless, when it comes to roasting a gallant veteran like Major Augustus, deliberately roasting him, in spite of the facts that he has served his country nobly through thirty irksome years of peace, and that he admires Euphemia with a delicate fervour — roasting him, I say, alive, as if he were a Strasburg goose, or suddenly affixing a delicate young genius to the hither end of a toasting-fork while he is in the midst of a really very subtle and tender conversation, the limits of social warmth seem to be approaching dangerously near. However, this scarcely concerns Euphemia's new entertainment.

This new entertainment is modelling in clay. Euphemia tells me it is to be quite the common thing this winter. It is intended especially for the evening, after a little dinner. As the reader is aware, the evening after a little dinner is apt to pall. A certain placid contentment creeps over people. I don't know in what organ originality resides; but it's a curious thing, and one I must leave to the consideration of psychologists, that people's output of original remarks appears to be obstructed in some way after these gastronomic exercises. Then a little dinner always confirms my theory of the absurdity of polygonal conversation. Music and songs, too, have their drawbacks, especially gay songs; they invariably evoke a vaporous melancholy. Card-playing Euphemia objects to because her uncle, the dean, is prominent in connection with some ridiculous association for the suppression of gambling; and in what are called "games" no rational creature esteeming himself an immortal soul would participate. In this difficulty it was that Euphemia — decided, I fancy, by the possession of certain really

very becoming aprons — took up this business of clay-modelling.

You have a lump of greyish clay and a saucer of water and certain small tools of wood (for which I cannot discover the slightest use in the world) given you, and Euphemia puts on a very winning bib. Then, moistening the clay until it acquires sufficient plasticity, and incidentally splashing your cuffs and coat-sleeves with an agreeably light tinted mud, you set to work. At first people are a little disgusted at the apparent dirtiness of the employment, and also perhaps rather diffident. The eldest lady says weakly deprecatory things, and the feeblest male is jocular after his wont. But it is remarkable how soon the charm of this delightful occupation seizes hold of you. For really the sensations of moulding this plastic matter into shape are wonderfully and quite unaccountably pleasing. It is ever so much easier than drawing things— "anyone can do it," as the advertisement people say — and the work is so much more substantial in its effects. Technical questions arise. In moulding a head, do you take a lump and fine it down, or do you dab on the features after the main knob of it is shaped?

So soon as your guests realise the plastic possibilities before them, a great silence, a delicious absorption comes over them. Some rash person states that he is moulding an Apollo, or a vase, or a bust of Mr. Gladstone, or an elephant, or some such animal. The wiser ones go to work in a speculative spirit, aiming secretly at this perhaps, but quite willing to go on with that, if Providence so wills it. Buddhas are good subjects; there is a certain genial rotundity not difficult to attain, and the pyramidal build of the idol is well suited to the material. You can start a Buddha, and hedge to make it a loaf of bread if the features are unsatisfactory. For slender objects a skeletal substructure of bent hairpins or matches is advisable. The innate egotism of the human animal becomes very conspicuous. "His tail is too large," says the lady with the fish, in self-criticism. "I haven't put his tail on yet — that's his trunk," answers the young man with the elephant.

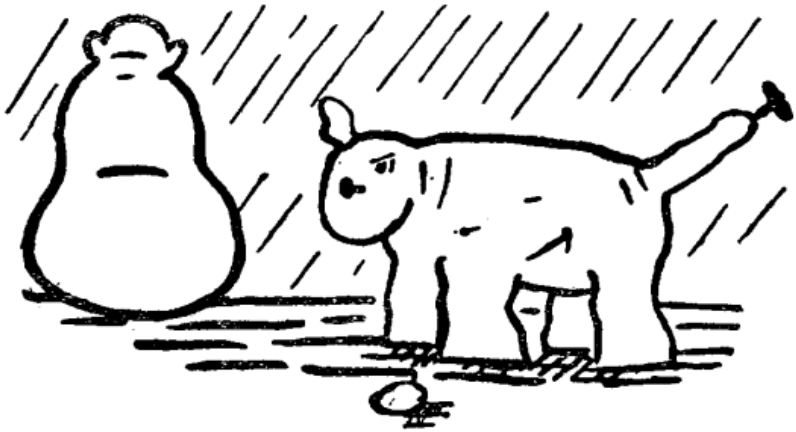

It's a pretty sight to see the first awakening of the artistic passion in your guests — the flush of discovery, the glow of innocent pride as the familiar features of Mr. Gladstone emerge from the bust of Clytie. An accidental stroke of the thumbnail develops new marvels of expression. (By the bye, it's just as well to forbid deliberate attempts at portraiture.) And I know no more becoming expression for everyone than the look of intent and pleasing effort — a divine touch almost — that comes over the common man modelling. For my own part, I feel a being infinitely my own superior when I get my fingers upon the clay. And, incidentally, how much pleasanter this is than writing articles — to see the work grow altogether under your hands; to begin with the large masses and finish with the details, as every artist should! Just to show how easy the whole thing is, I append a little sketch of the first work I ever did. I had had positively no previous instruction. Unfortunately the left ear of the animal — a cat, by the bye — has fallen off. (The figure to the left is the back view of a Buddha.)

However, I have said enough to show the charm of the new amusement. It will prove a boon to many a troubled hostess. The material is called modelling-clay, and one may buy it of any dealer in artists' materials, several pounds for sixpence. This has to be renewed at intervals, as a good deal is taken away by the more careless among your guests upon their clothes.

FOR FREEDOM OF SPELLING

THE DISCOVERY OF AN ART

It is curious that people do not grumble more at having to spell correctly. Yet one may ask, Do we not a little over-estimate the value of orthography? This is a natural reflection enough when the maker of artless happy phrases has been ransacking the dictionary for some elusive wretch of a word which in the end proves to be not yet naturalised, or technical, or a mere local vulgarity; yet one does not often hear the idea canvassed in polite conversation. Dealers in small talk, of the less prolific kind, are continually falling back upon the silk hat or dress suit, or some rule of etiquette or other convention as a theme, but spelling seems to escape them. The suspicion seems quaint, but one may almost fancy that an allusion to spelling savoured a little of indelicacy. It must be admitted, though where the scruples come from would be hard to say, that there is a certain diffidence even here in broaching my doubts in the matter. For some inexplicable reason spelling has become mixed up with moral feeling. One cannot pretend to explain things in a little paper of this kind; the fact is so. Spelling is not appropriate or inappropriate, elegant or inelegant; it is right or wrong. We do not greatly blame a man for turn-down collars when the vogue is erect; nor, in these liberal days, for theological eccentricity; but we esteem him "Nithing" and an outcast if he but drop a "p" from opportunity. It is not an anecdote, but a scandal, if we say a man cannot spell his own name. There is only one thing esteemed worse before we come to the deadly crimes, and that is the softening of language by dropping the aspirate.

After all, it is an unorthodox age. We are all horribly afraid of being bourgeois, and unconventionality is the ideal of every respectable person. It is strange that we should cling so steadfastly to correct spelling. Yet again, one can partly understand the business, if one thinks of the little ways of your schoolmaster and schoolmistress. This sanctity of spelling is stamped upon us in our earliest years. The writer recalls a period of youth wherein six hours a week were given to the study of spelling, and four hours to all other

religious instruction. So important is it, that a writer who cannot spell is almost driven to abandon his calling, however urgent the thing he may have to say, or his need of the incidentals of fame. Yet in the crisis of such a struggle rebellious thoughts may arise. Even this: Why, after all, should correct spelling be the one absolutely essential literary merit? For it is less fatal for an ambitious scribe to be as dull as Hoxton than to spell in diverse ways.

Yet correct spelling of English has not been traced to revelation; there was no grammatical Sinai, with a dictionary instead of tables of stone. Indeed, we do not even know certainly when correct spelling began, which word in the language was first spelt the right way, and by whom. Correct spelling may have been evolved, or it may be the creation of some master mind. Its inventor, if it had an inventor, is absolutely forgotten. Thomas Cobbett would have invented it, but that he was born more than two centuries too late, poor man. All that we certainly know is that, contemporaneously with the rise of extreme Puritanism, the belief in orthography first spread among Elizabethan printers, and with the Hanoverian succession the new doctrine possessed the whole length and breadth of the land. At that time the world passed through what extension lecturers call, for no particular reason, the classical epoch. Nature — as, indeed, all the literature manuals testify — was in the remotest background then of human thought. The human mind, in a mood of the severest logic, brought everything to the touchstone of an orderly reason; the conception of "correctness" dominated all mortal affairs. For instance, one's natural hair with its vagaries of rat's tails, duck's tails, errant curls, and baldness, gave place to an orderly wig, or was at least decently powdered. The hoop remedied the deficiencies of the feminine form, and the gardener clipped his yews into respectability. All poetry was written to one measure in those days, and a Royal Academy with a lady member was inaugurated that art might become at least decent. Dictionaries began. The crowning glory of Hanoverian literature was a Great Lexicographer.

In those days it was believed that the spelling of every English word had been settled for all time. Thence to the present day, though the severities then inaugurated, so far as metre and artistic composition are concerned, been generously relaxed — though we

have had a Whistler, a Walt Whitman, and a Wagner — the rigours of spelling have continued unabated. There is just one right way of spelling, and all others are held to be not simply inelegant or undesirable, but wrong; and unorthodox spelling, like original morality, goes hand in hand with shame.

Yet even at the risk of shocking the religious convictions of some, may not one ask whether spelling is in truth a matter of right and wrong at all? Might it not rather be an art? It is too much to advocate the indiscriminate sacking of the alphabet, but yet it seems plausible that there is a happy medium between a reckless debauch of errant letters and our present dead rigidity. For some words at anyrate may there not be sometimes one way of spelling a little happier, sometimes another? We do something of this sort even now with our "phantasy" and "fantasie," and we might do more. How one would spell this word or that would become, if this latitude were conceded, a subtle anxiety of the literary exquisite. People are scarcely prepared to realise what shades of meaning may be got by such a simple device. Let us take a simple instance. You write, let us say, to all your cousins, many of your friends, and even, it may be, to this indifferent intimate and that familiar enemy, "My dear So-and-so." But at times you feel even as you write, sometimes, that there is something too much and sometimes something lacking. You may even get so far in the right way occasionally as to write, "My dr. So-and-so," when your heart is chill. And people versed in the arts of social intercourse know the subtle insult of misspelling a person's name, or flicking it off flippantly with a mere waggling wipe of the pen. But these are mere beginnings.

Let the reader take a pen in hand and sit down and write, "My very dear wife." Clean, cold, and correct this is, speaking of orderly affection, settled and stereotyped long ago. In such letters is butcher's meat also "very dear." Try now, "Migh verrie deare Wyfe." Is it not immediately infinitely more soft and tender? Is there not something exquisitely pleasant in lingering over those redundant letters, leaving each word, as it were, with a reluctant caress? Such spelling is a soft, domestic, lovingly wasteful use of material. Or, again, if you have no wife, or object to an old-fashioned conjugal tenderness, try "Mye owne sweete dearrest Marrie." There is the

tremble of a tenderness no mere arrangement of trim everyday letters can express in those double *r's*. "Sweete" my ladie must be; sweet! why pump-water and inferior champagne, spirits of nitrous ether and pancreatic juice are "sweet." For my own part I always spell so, with lots of f's and g's and such like tailey, twirley, loopey things, when my heart is in the tender vein. And I hold that a man who will not do so, now he has been shown how to do it, is, in plain English, neither more nor less than a prig. The advantages of a varied spelling of names are very great. Industrious, rather than intelligent, people have given not a little time, and such minds as they have, to the discussion of the right spelling of our great poet's name. But he himself never dreamt of tying himself down to one presentation of himself, and was — we have his hand for it — Shakespeare, Shakspear, Shakespear, Shakspeare, and so forth, as the mood might be. It would be almost as reasonable to debate whether Shakespeare smiled or frowned. My dear friend Simmongues is the same. He is "Sims," a mere slash of the pen, to those he scorns, Simmonds or Simmongs to his familiars, and Simmons, A.T. Simmons, Esq., to all Europe.

From such mere introductory departures from precision, such petty escapades as these, we would we might seduce the reader into an utter debauch of spelling. But a sudden Mænad dance of the letters on the page, gleeful and iridescent spelling, a wild rush and procession of howling vowels and clattering consonants, might startle the half-won reader back into orthodoxy. Besides, there is another reader — the printer's reader — to consider. For if an author let his wit run to these matters, he must write elaborate marginal exhortations to this authority, begging his mercy, to let the little flowers of spelling alone. Else the plough of that Philistine's uniformity will utterly root them out.

Such high art of spelling as is thus hinted at is an art that has still to gather confidence and brave the light of publicity. A few, indeed, practise it secretly for love — in letters and on spare bits of paper. But, for the most part, people do not know that there is so much as an art of spelling possible; the tyranny of orthography lies so heavily on the land. Your common editors and their printers are a mere orthodox spelling police, and at the least they rigorously blot out all the delightful frolics of your artist in spelling before his writings reach

the public eye. But commonly, as I have proved again and again, the slightest lapse into rococo spelling is sufficient to secure the rejection of a manuscript without further ado.

And to end, — a word about Phonographers. It may be that my title has led the reader to anticipate some mention of these before. They are a kind of religious sect, a heresy from the orthodox spelling. They bind one another by their mysteries and a five-shilling subscription in a "soseiti to introduis an impruvd method of spelinj." They come across the artistic vision, they and their Soseiti, with an altogether indefinable offence. Perhaps the essence of it is the indescribable meanness of their motive. For this phonography really amounts to a study of the cheapest way of spelling words. These phonographers are sweaters of the Queen's English, living meanly on the selvage of honest mental commerce by clipping the coin of thought. But enough of them. They are mentioned here only to be disavowed. They would substitute one narrow orthodoxy for another, and I would unfold the banner of freedom. Spell, my brethren, as you will! Awake, arise, O language living in chains; let Butter's spelling be our Bastille! So with a prophetic vision of liberated words pouring out of the dungeons of a spelling-book, this plea for freedom concludes. What trivial arguments there are for a uniform spelling I must leave the reader to discover. This is no place to carp against the liberation I foresee, with the glow of the dawn in my eyes.

INCIDENTAL THOUGHTS ON A BALD HEAD

I was asked to go, quite suddenly, and found myself there before I had time to think of what it might be. I understood her to say it was a meeting of some "Sunday society," some society that tried to turn the Sabbath from a day of woe to a day of rejoicing. "St. George's Hall, Langham Place," a cab, and there we were. I thought they would be picturesque Pagans. But the entertainment was the oddest it has ever been my lot to see, a kind of mystery. The place was dark, except for a big circle of light on a screen, and a dismal man with a long stick was talking about the effects of alcohol on your muscles. He talked and talked, and people went to sleep all about us. Euphemia's face looked so very pretty in the dim light that I tried to talk to her and hold her hand, but she only said "Ssh!" And then they began showing pictures on the screen — the most shocking things! — stomachs, and all that kind of thing. They went on like that for an hour, and then there was a lot of thumping with umbrellas, and they turned the lights up and we went home. Curious way of spending Sunday afternoon, is it not?

But you may imagine I had a dismal time all that hour. I understood the people about me were Sceptics, the kind of people who don't believe things — a singular class, and, I am told, a growing one. These excellent people, it seems, have conscientious objections to going to chapel or church, but at the same time the devotional habit of countless generations of pious forerunners is strong in them. Consequently they have invented things like these lectures to go to, with a professor instead of a priest, and a lantern slide of a stomach by way of altar-piece; and alcohol they make their Devil, and their god is Hygiene — a curious and instructive case of mental inertia. I understand, too, there are several other temples of this Cult in London — South Place Chapel and Essex Hall, for instance, where they worship the Spirit of the Innermost. But the thing that struck me so oddly was the number of bald heads glimmering faintly in the reflected light from the lantern circle. And that set me thinking upon a difficulty I have never been able to surmount.

You see these people, and lots of other people, too, believe in a thing they call Natural Selection. They think, as part of that belief, that men are descended from hairy simian ancestors; assert that even a hundred thousand years ago the ancestor was hairy — hairy, heavy, and almost as much a brute as if he lived in Mr. Arthur Morrison's Whitechapel. For my own part I think it a pretty theory, and would certainly accept it were it not for one objection. The thing I cannot understand is how our ancestor lost that hair. I see no reason why he should not have kept his hair on. According to the theory of natural selection, materially favourable variations survive, unfavourable disappear; the only way in which the loss is to be accounted for is by explaining it as advantageous; but where is the advantage of losing your hair? The disadvantages appear to me to be innumerable. A thick covering of hair, like that of a Capuchin monkey, would be an invaluable protection against sudden changes of temperature, far better than any clothing can be. Had I that, for instance, I should be rid of the perpetual cold in the head that so disfigures my life; and the multitudes who die annually of chills, bronchitis, and consumption, and most of those who suffer from rheumatic pains, neuralgia, and so forth, would not so die and suffer. And in the past, when clothing was less perfect and firing a casual commodity, the disadvantages of losing hair were all the greater. In very hot countries hair is perhaps even more important in saving the possessor from the excessive glare of the sun. Before the invention of the hat, thick hair on the head at least was absolutely essential to save the owner of the skull from sunstroke. That, perhaps, explains why the hair has been retained there, and why it is going now that we have hats, but it certainly does not explain why it has gone from the rest of the body.

One — remarkably weak — explanation has been propounded: an appeal to our belief in human vanity. He picked it out by the roots, because he thought he was prettier without. But that is no reason at all. Suppose he did, it would not affect his children. Professor Weismann has at least convinced scientific people of this: that the characters acquired by a parent are rarely, if ever, transmitted to its offspring. An individual given to such wanton denudation would simply be at a disadvantage with his decently covered fellows, would fall behind in the race of life, and perish with his kind. Besides, if

man has been at such pains to uncover his skin, why have quite a large number of the most respected among us such a passionate desire to have it covered up again?

Yet that is the only attempted explanation I have ever come upon, and the thing has often worried me. I think it is just as probably a change in dietary. I have noticed that most of your vegetarians are shock-headed, ample-bearded men, and I have heard the Ancestor was vegetarian. Or it may be, I sometimes fancy, a kind of inherent disposition on the part of your human animal to dwindle. That came back in my memory vividly as I looked at the long rows of Sceptics, typical Advanced people, and marked their glistening crania. I recalled other losses. Here is Humanity, thought I, growing hairless, growing bald, growing toothless, unemotional, irreligious, losing the end joint of the little toe, dwindling in its osseous structures, its jawbone and brow ridges, losing all the full, rich curvatures of its primordial beauty.

It seems almost like what the scientific people call a Law. And by strenuous efforts the creature just keeps pace with his losses — devises clothes, wigs, artificial teeth, paddings, shoes — what civilised being could use his bare feet for his ordinary locomotion? Imagine him on a furze-sprinkled golf links. Then stays, an efficient substitute for the effete feminine backbone. So the thing goes on. Long ago his superficies became artificial, and now the human being shrinks like a burning cigar, and the figure he has abandoned remains distended with artificial ashes, dead dry protections against the exposures he so unaccountably fears. Will he go on shrinking, I wonder? — become at last a mere lurking atomy in his own recesses, a kind of hermit crab, the bulk of him a complex mechanism, a thing of rags and tatters and papier-maché, stolen from the earth and the plant-world and his fellow beasts? And at last may he not disappear altogether, none missing him, and a democracy of honest machinery, neatly clad and loaded up with sound principles of action, walk to and fro in a regenerate world? Thus it was my mind went dreaming in St. George's Hall. But presently, as I say, came the last word about stomachs, and the bald men woke up, rattled their umbrellas, said it was vastly interesting, and went toddling off home in an ecstasy of advanced Liberalism. And we two returned to the place

whence we came.

OF A BOOK UNWRITTEN

Accomplished literature is all very well in its way, no doubt, but much more fascinating to the contemplative man are the books that have not been written. These latter are no trouble to hold; there are no pages to turn over. One can read them in bed on sleepless nights without a candle. Turning to another topic, primitive man in the works of the descriptive anthropologist is certainly a very entertaining and quaint person, but the man of the future, if we only had the facts, would appeal to us more strongly. Yet where are the books? As Ruskin has said somewhere, *à propos* of Darwin, it is not what man has been, but what he will be, that should interest us.

The contemplative man in his easy-chair, pondering this saying, suddenly beholds in the fire, through the blue haze of his pipe, one of these great unwritten volumes. It is large in size, heavy in lettering, seemingly by one Professor Holzkopf, presumably Professor at Weissnichtwo. "The Necessary Characters of the Man of the Remote Future deduced from the Existing Stream of Tendency" is the title. The worthy Professor is severely scientific in his method, and deliberate and cautious in his deductions, the contemplative man discovers as he pursues his theme, and yet the conclusions are, to say the least, remarkable. We must figure the excellent Professor expanding the matter at great length, voluminously technical, but the contemplative man — since he has access to the only copy — is clearly at liberty to make such extracts and abstracts as he chooses for the unscientific reader. Here, for instance, is something of practicable lucidity that he considers admits of quotation. "The theory of evolution," writes the Professor, "is now universally accepted by zoologists and botanists, and it is applied unreservedly to man. Some question, indeed, whether it fits his soul, but all agree it accounts for his body. Man, we are assured, is descended from ape-like ancestors, moulded by circumstances into men, and these apes again were derived from ancestral forms of a lower order, and so up from the primordial protoplasmic jelly. Clearly then, man, unless the order of the universe has come to an end, will undergo further modification in the future, and at last cease to be man, giving rise to

some other type of animated being. At once the fascinating question arises, What will this being be? Let us consider for a little the plastic influences at work upon our species.

"Just as the bird is the creature of the wing, and is all moulded and modified to flying, and just as the fish is the creature that swims, and has had to meet the inflexible conditions of a problem in hydrodynamics, so man is the creature of the brain; he will live by intelligence, and not by physical strength, if he live at all. So that much that is purely 'animal' about him is being, and must be, beyond all question, suppressed in his ultimate development. Evolution is no mechanical tendency making for perfection, according to the ideas current in the year of grace 1897; it is simply the continual adaptation of plastic life, for good or evil, to the circumstances that surround it.... We notice this decay of the animal part around us now, in the loss of teeth and hair, in the dwindling hands and feet of men, in their smaller jaws, and slighter mouths and ears. Man now does by wit and machinery and verbal agreement what he once did by bodily toil; for once he had to catch his dinner, capture his wife, run away from his enemies, and continually exercise himself, for love of himself, to perform these duties well. But now all this is changed. Cabs, trains, trams, render speed unnecessary, the pursuit of food becomes easier; his wife is no longer hunted, but rather, in view of the crowded matrimonial market, seeks him out. One needs wits now to live, and physical activity is a drug, a snare even; it seeks artificial outlets, and overflows in games. Athleticism takes up time and cripples a man in his competitive examinations, and in business. So is your fleshly man handicapped against his subtler brother. He is unsuccessful in life, does not marry. The better adapted survive."

The coming man, then, will clearly have a larger brain, and a slighter body than the present. But the Professor makes one exception to this. "The human hand, since it is the teacher and interpreter of the brain, will become constantly more powerful and subtle as the rest of the musculature dwindles."

Then in the physiology of these children of men, with their expanding brains, their great sensitive hands and diminishing bodies, great changes were necessarily worked. "We see now," says the Professor, "in the more intellectual sections of humanity an

increasing sensitiveness to stimulants, a growing inability to grapple with such a matter as alcohol, for instance. No longer can men drink a bottleful of port; some cannot drink tea; it is too exciting for their highly-wrought nervous systems. The process will go on, and the Sir Wilfrid Lawson of some near generation may find it his duty and pleasure to make the silvery spray of his wisdom tintinnabulate against the tea-tray. These facts lead naturally to the comprehension of others. Fresh raw meat was once a dish for a king. Now refined persons scarcely touch meat unless it is cunningly disguised. Again, consider the case of turnips; the raw root is now a thing almost uneatable, but once upon a time a turnip must have been a rare and fortunate find, to be torn up with delirious eagerness and devoured in ecstasy. The time will come when the change will affect all the other fruits of the earth. Even now, only the young of mankind eat apples raw — the young always preserving ancestral characteristics after their disappearance in the adult. Some day even boys will regard apples without emotion. The boy of the future, one must believe, will gaze on an apple with the same unspeculative languor with which he now regards a flint" — in the absence of a cat.

"Furthermore, fresh chemical discoveries came into action as modifying influences upon men. In the prehistoric period even, man's mouth had ceased to be an instrument for grasping food; it is still growing continually less prehensile, his front teeth are smaller, his lips thinner and less muscular; he has a new organ, a mandible not of irreparable tissue, but of bone and steel — a knife and fork. There is no reason why things should stop at partial artificial division thus afforded; there is every reason, on the contrary, to believe my statement that some cunning exterior mechanism will presently masticate and insalivate his dinner, relieve his diminishing salivary glands and teeth, and at last altogether abolish them."

Then what is not needed disappears. What use is there for external ears, nose, and brow ridges now? The two latter once protected the eye from injury in conflict and in falls, but in these days we keep on our legs, and at peace. Directing his thoughts in this way, the reader may presently conjure up a dim, strange vision of the latter-day face: "Eyes large, lustrous, beautiful, soulful; above them, no longer separated by rugged brow ridges, is the top of the head, a glistening,

hairless dome, terete and beautiful; no craggy nose rises to disturb by its unmeaning shadows the symmetry of that calm face, no vestigial ears project; the mouth is a small, perfectly round aperture, toothless and gumless, jawless, unanimal, no futile emotions disturbing its roundness as it lies, like the harvest moon or the evening star, in the wide firmament of face." Such is the face the Professor beholds in the future.

Of course parallel modifications will also affect the body and limbs. "Every day so many hours and so much energy are required for digestion; a gross torpidity, a carnal lethargy, seizes on mortal men after dinner. This may and can be avoided. Man's knowledge of organic chemistry widens daily. Already he can supplement the gastric glands by artificial devices. Every doctor who administers physic implies that the bodily functions may be artificially superseded. We have pepsine, pancreatine, artificial gastric acid — I know not what like mixtures. Why, then, should not the stomach be ultimately superannuated altogether? A man who could not only leave his dinner to be cooked, but also leave it to be masticated and digested, would have vast social advantages over his food-digesting fellow. This is, let me remind you here, the calmest, most passionless, and scientific working out of the future forms of things from the data of the present. At this stage the following facts may perhaps stimulate your imagination. There can be no doubt that many of the Arthropods, a division of animals more ancient and even now more prevalent than the Vertebrata, have undergone more phylogenetic modification" — a beautiful phrase— "than even the most modified of vertebrated animals. Simple forms like the lobsters display a primitive structure parallel with that of the fishes. However, in such a form as the degraded 'Chondracanthus,' the structure has diverged far more widely from its original type than in man. Among some of these most highly modified crustaceans the whole of the alimentary canal — that is, all the food-digesting and food-absorbing parts — form a useless solid cord: the animal is nourished — it is a parasite — by absorption of the nutritive fluid in which it swims. Is there any absolute impossibility in supposing man to be destined for a similar change; to imagine him no longer dining, with unwieldy paraphernalia of servants and plates, upon food queerly dyed and

distorted, but nourishing himself in elegant simplicity by immersion in a tub of nutritive fluid?

"There grows upon the impatient imagination a building, a dome of crystal, across the translucent surface of which flushes of the most glorious and pure prismatic colours pass and fade and change. In the centre of this transparent chameleon-tinted dome is a circular white marble basin filled with some clear, mobile, amber liquid, and in this plunge and float strange beings. Are they birds?

"They are the descendants of man — at dinner. Watch them as they hop on their hands — a method of progression advocated already by Bjornsen — about the pure white marble floor. Great hands they have, enormous brains, soft, liquid, soulful eyes. Their whole muscular system, their legs, their abdomens, are shrivelled to nothing, a dangling, degraded pendant to their minds."

The further visions of the Professor are less alluring.

"The animals and plants die away before men, except such as he preserves for his food or delight, or such as maintain a precarious footing about him as commensals and parasites. These vermin and pests must succumb sooner or later to his untiring inventiveness and incessantly growing discipline. When he learns (the chemists are doubtless getting towards the secret now) to do the work of chlorophyll without the plant, then his necessity for other animals and plants upon the earth will disappear. Sooner or later, where there is no power of resistance and no necessity, there comes extinction. In the last days man will be alone on the earth, and his food will be won by the chemist from the dead rocks and the sunlight.

"And — one may learn the full reason in that explicit and painfully right book, the *Data of Ethics* — the irrational fellowship of man will give place to an intellectual co-operation, and emotion fall within the scheme of reason. Undoubtedly it is a long time yet, but a long time is nothing in the face of eternity, and every man who dares think of these things must look eternity in the face."

Then the earth is ever radiating away heat into space, the Professor reminds us. And so at last comes a vision of earthly cherubim, hopping heads, great unemotional intelligences, and little hearts, fighting together perforce and fiercely against the cold that grips them tighter and tighter. For the world is cooling — slowly and

inevitably it grows colder as the years roll by. “We must imagine these creatures,” says the Professor, “in galleries and laboratories deep down in the bowels of the earth. The whole world will be snow-covered and piled with ice; all animals, all vegetation vanished, except this last branch of the tree of life. The last men have gone even deeper, following the diminishing heat of the planet, and vast metallic shafts and ventilators make way for the air they need.”

So with a glimpse of these human tadpoles, in their deep close gallery, with their boring machinery ringing away, and artificial lights glaring and casting black shadows, the Professor’s horoscope concludes. Humanity in dismal retreat before the cold, changed beyond recognition. Yet the Professor is reasonable enough, his facts are current science, his methods orderly. The contemplative man shivers at the prospect, starts up to poke the fire, and the whole of this remarkable book that is not written vanishes straightway in the smoke of his pipe. This is the great advantage of this unwritten literature: there is no bother in changing the books. The contemplative man consoles himself for the destiny of the species with the lost portion of Kubla Khan.

THE EXTINCTION OF MAN

It is part of the excessive egotism of the human animal that the bare idea of its extinction seems incredible to it. "A world without *us*!" it says, as a heady young Cephalaspis might have said it in the old Silurian sea. But since the Cephalaspis and the Coccostëus many a fine animal has increased and multiplied upon the earth, lorded it over land or sea without a rival, and passed at last into the night. Surely it is not so unreasonable to ask why man should be an exception to the rule. From the scientific standpoint at least any reason for such exception is hard to find.

No doubt man is undisputed master at the present time — at least of most of the land surface; but so it has been before with other animals. Let us consider what light geology has to throw upon this. The great land and sea reptiles of the Mesozoic period, for instance, seem to have been as secure as humanity is now in their pre-eminence. But they passed away and left no descendants when the new orders of the mammals emerged from their obscurity. So, too, the huge Titanotheria of the American continent, and all the powerful mammals of Pleistocene South America, the sabre-toothed lion, for instance, and the Machrauchenia suddenly came to a finish when they were still almost at the zenith of their rule. *And in no case does the record of the fossils show a really dominant species succeeded by its own descendants*. What has usually happened in the past appears to be the emergence of some type of animal hitherto rare and unimportant, and the extinction, not simply of the previously ruling species, but of most of the forms that are at all closely related to it. Sometimes, indeed, as in the case of the extinct giants of South America, they vanished without any considerable rivals, victims of pestilence, famine, or, it may be, of that cumulative inefficiency that comes of a too undisputed life. So that the analogy of geology, at anyrate, is against this too acceptable view of man's certain tenure of the earth for the next few million years or so.

And, after all, even now man is by no means such a master of the kingdoms of life as he is apt to imagine. The sea, that mysterious nursery of living things, is for all practical purposes beyond his

control. The low-water mark is his limit. Beyond that he may do a little with seine and dredge, murder a few million herrings a year as they come in to spawn, butcher his fellow air-breather, the whale, or haul now and then an unlucky king-crab or strange sea-urchin out of the deep water, in the name of science; but the life of the sea as a whole knows him not, plays out its slow drama of change and development unheeding him, and may in the end, in mere idle sport, throw up some new terrestrial denizens, some new competitor for space to live in and food to live upon, that will sweep him and all his little contrivances out of existence, as certainly and inevitably as he has swept away auk, bison, and dodo during the last two hundred years.

For instance, there are the Crustacea. As a group the crabs and lobsters are confined below the high-water mark. But experiments in air-breathing are no doubt in progress in this group — we already have tropical land-crabs — and as far as we know there is no reason why in the future these creatures should not increase in size and terrestrial capacity. In the past we have the evidence of the fossil *Paradoxides* that creatures of this kind may at least attain a length of six feet, and, considering their intense pugnacity, a crab of such dimensions would be as formidable a creature as one could well imagine. And their amphibious capacity would give them an advantage against us such as at present is only to be found in the case of the alligator or crocodile. If we imagine a shark that could raid out upon the land, or a tiger that could take refuge in the sea, we should have a fair suggestion of what a terrible monster a large predatory crab might prove. And so far as zoological science goes we must, at least, admit that such a creature is an evolutionary possibility.

Then, again, the order of the Cephalopods, to which belong the cuttle-fish and the octopus (sacred to Victor Hugo), may be, for all we can say to the contrary, an order with a future. Their kindred, the Gastropods, have, in the case of the snail and slug, learnt the trick of air-breathing. And not improbably there are even now genera of this order that have escaped the naturalist, or even well-known genera whose possibilities in growth and dietary are still unknown. Suppose some day a specimen of a new species is caught off the coast of Kent. It excites remark at a Royal Society soirée, engenders a Science Note

or so, “A Huge Octopus!” and in the next year or so three or four other specimens come to hand, and the thing becomes familiar. “Probably a new and larger variety of *Octopus* so-and-so, hitherto supposed to be tropical,” says Professor Gargoyle, and thinks he has disposed of it. Then conceive some mysterious boating accidents and deaths while bathing. A large animal of this kind coming into a region of frequent wrecks might so easily acquire a preferential taste for human nutriment, just as the Colorado beetle acquired a new taste for the common potato and gave up its old food-plants some years ago. Then perhaps a school or pack or flock of *Octopus gigas* would be found busy picking the sailors off a stranded ship, and then in the course of a few score years it might begin to stroll up the beaches and batten on excursionists. Soon it would be a common feature of the watering-places — possibly at last commoner than excursionists. Suppose such a creature were to appear — and it is, we repeat, a possibility, if perhaps a remote one — how could it be fought against? Something might be done by torpedoes; but, so far as our past knowledge goes, man has no means of seriously diminishing the numbers of any animal of the most rudimentary intelligence that made its fastness in the sea.

Even on land it is possible to find creatures that with a little modification might become excessively dangerous to the human ascendency. Most people have read of the migratory ants of Central Africa, against which no man can stand. On the march they simply clear out whole villages, drive men and animals before them in headlong rout, and kill and eat every living creature they can capture. One wonders why they have not already spread the area of their devastations. But at present no doubt they have their natural checks, of ant-eating birds, or what not. In the near future it may be that the European immigrant, as he sets the balance of life swinging in his vigorous manner, may kill off these ant-eating animals, or otherwise unwittingly remove the checks that now keep these terrible little pests within limits. And once they begin to spread in real earnest, it is hard to see how their advance could be stopped. A world devoured by ants seems incredible now, simply because it is not within our experience; but a naturalist would have a dull imagination who could not see in the numerous species of ants, and in their already high

intelligence, far more possibility of strange developments than we have in the solitary human animal. And no doubt the idea of the small and feeble organism of man, triumphant and omnipresent, would have seemed equally incredible to an intelligent mammoth or a palæolithic cave bear.

And, finally, there is always the prospect of a new disease. As yet science has scarcely touched more than the fringe of the probabilities associated with the minute fungi that constitute our zymotic diseases. But the bacilli have no more settled down into their final quiescence than have men; like ourselves, they are adapting themselves to new conditions and acquiring new powers. The plagues of the Middle Ages, for instance, seem to have been begotten of a strange bacillus engendered under conditions that sanitary science, in spite of its panacea of drainage, still admits are imperfectly understood, and for all we know even now we may be quite unwittingly evolving some new and more terrible plague — a plague that will not take ten or twenty or thirty per cent., as plagues have done in the past, but the entire hundred.

No; man's complacent assumption of the future is too confident. We think, because things have been easy for mankind as a whole for a generation or so, we are going on to perfect comfort and security in the future. We think that we shall always go to work at ten and leave off at four, and have dinner at seven for ever and ever. But these four suggestions, out of a host of others, must surely do a little against this complacency. Even now, for all we can tell, the coming terror may be crouching for its spring and the fall of humanity be at hand. In the case of every other predominant animal the world has ever seen, I repeat, the hour of its complete ascendency has been the eve of its entire overthrow. But if some poor story-writing man ventures to figure this sober probability in a tale, not a reviewer in London but will tell him his theme is the utterly impossible. And, when the thing happens, one may doubt if even then one will get the recognition one deserves.

THE WRITING OF ESSAYS

The art of the essayist is so simple, so entirely free from canons of criticism, and withal so delightful, that one must needs wonder why all men are not essayists. Perhaps people do not know how easy it is. Or perhaps beginners are misled. Rightly taught it may be learnt in a brief ten minutes or so, what art there is in it. And all the rest is as easy as wandering among woodlands on a bright morning in the spring.

Then sit you down if you would join us, taking paper, pens, and ink; and mark this, your pen is a matter of vital moment. For every pen writes its own sort of essay, and pencils also after their kind. The ink perhaps may have its influence too, and the paper; but paramount is the pen. This, indeed, is the fundamental secret of essay-writing. Wed any man to his proper pen, and the delights of composition and the birth of an essay are assured. Only many of us wander through the earth and never meet with her — futile and lonely men.

And, of all pens, your quill for essays that are literature. There is a subtle informality, a delightful easiness, perhaps even a faint immorality essentially literary, about the quill. The quill is rich in suggestion and quotation. There are quills that would quote you Montaigne and Horace in the hands of a trades-union delegate. And those quirky, idle noises this pen makes are delightful, and would break your easy fluency with wit. All the classical essayists wrote with a quill, and Addison used the most expensive kind the Government purchased. And the beginning of the inferior essay was the dawn of the cheap steel pen.

The quill nibs they sell to fit into ordinary pen-holders are no true quills at all, lacking dignity, and may even lead you into the New Humour if you trust overmuch to their use. After a proper quill commend me to a stumpy BB pencil; you get less polish and broader effects, but you are still doing good literature. Sometimes the work is close — Mr. George Meredith, for instance, is suspected of a soft pencil — and always it is blunter than quill work and more terse. With a hard pencil no man can write anything but a graceless style — a kind of east wind air it gives — and smile you cannot. So that it is

often used for serious articles in the half-crown reviews.

There follows the host of steel pens. That bald, clear, scientific style, all set about with words like “evolution” and “environment,” which aims at expressing its meaning with precision and an exemplary economy of words, is done with fine steel nibs — twelve a penny at any stationer’s. The J pen to the lady novelist, and the stylograph to the devil — your essayist must not touch the things. So much for the pen. If you cannot write essays easily, that is where the hitch comes in. Get a box of a different kind of pen and begin again, and so on again and again until despair or joy arrests you.

As for a typewriter, you could no more get an essay out of a typewriter than you could play a sonata upon its keys. No essay was ever written with a typewriter yet, nor ever will be. Besides its impossibility, the suggestion implies a brutal disregard of the division of labour by which we live and move and have our being. If the essayist typewrite, the unemployed typewriter, who is commonly a person of superior education and capacity, might take to essays, and where is your living then? One might as reasonably start at once with the Linotype and print one’s wit and humour straight away. And taking the invasion of other trades one step further one might, after an attempt to sell one’s own newspaper, even get to the pitch of having to read it oneself. No; even essayists must be reasonable. If its mechanical clitter-clatter did not render composition impossible, the typewriter would still be beneath the honour of a literary man.

Then for the paper. The luxurious, expensive, small-sized cream-laid note is best, since it makes your essay choice and compact; and, failing that, ripped envelopes and the backs of bills. Some men love ruled paper, because they can write athwart the lines, and some take the fly-leaves of their friends’ books. But whosoever writes on cheap sermon paper full of hairs should write far away from the woman he loves, lest he offend her ears. It is good, however, for a terse, forcible style.

The ink should be glossy black as it leaves your pen, for polished English. Violet inks lead to sham sentiment, and blue-black to vulgarity. Red ink essays are often good, but usually unfit for publication.

This is as much almost as anyone need know to begin essay

writing. Given your proper pen and ink, or pencil and paper, you simply sit down and write the thing. The value of an essay is not its matter, but its mood. You must be comfortable, of course; an easy-chair with arm-rests, slippers, and a book to write upon are usually employed, and you must be fed recently, and your body clothed with ease rather than grandeur. For the rest, do not trouble to stick to your subject, or any subject; and take no thought for the editor or the reader, for your essay should be as spontaneous as the lilies of the field.

So long as you do not begin with a definition you may begin anyhow. An abrupt beginning is much admired, after the fashion of the clown's entry through the chemist's window. Then whack at your reader at once, hit him over the head with the sausages, brisk him up with the poker, bundle him into the wheelbarrow, and so carry him away with you before he knows where you are. You can do what you like with a reader then, if you only keep him nicely on the move. So long as you are happy your reader will be so too. But one law must be observed: an essay, like a dog that wishes to please, must have a lively tail, short but as waggish as possible. Like a rocket, an essay goes only with fizzle and sparks at the end of it. And, know, that to stop writing is the secret of writing an essay; the essay that the public loves dies young

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THE PARKES MUSEUM

THE PLACE TO SPEND A HAPPY DAY

By way of jest, my morning daily paper constantly includes in its menu of "To-day" the Parkes Museum, Margaret Street, adding, seductively, "free"; and no doubt many a festive Jonas Chuzzlewit has preened himself for a sight-seeing, and all unaware of the multitudes of Margaret Streets — surely only Charlottes of that ilk are more abundant — has started forth, he and his feminine, to find this Parkes Museum. One may even conceive a rare Bank Holiday thoughtfully put aside for the quest, and spent all vainly in the asking of policemen, and in traversing this vast and tiresome metropolis, from Margaret Street to Margaret Street, the freshness of the morning passing into the dry heat of the day, fatigue spreading from the feet upwards, discussion, difference, denial, "words," and a day of recreation dying at last into a sunset of lurid sulks. Such possibility was too painful to think of, and a philanthropic inquirer has at last by persistent investigation won the secret of the Missing Museum and opened the way to it for all future investigators.

The Margaret Street in question is an apparently derelict thoroughfare, opening into Great Portland Street. Immemorial dust is upon its pavements, and a profound silence broods over its vacant roadway. The blinds of its houses are mostly down, and, where the blackness of some window suggests a dark interior, no face appears to reassure us in our doubt of humanity within. It may be that somewhen in the past the entire population of this street set out on a boating party up the river, and was overset by steam launches, and so never returned, or perchance it has all been locked up for a long term of imprisonment — though the houses seem almost too respectable for that; or the glamour of the Sleeping Beauty is upon it all. Certainly we saw the figure of a porter in an attitude of repose in the little glass lodge in the museum doorway. He *may* have been asleep. But we feared to touch him — and indeed slipped very stealthily by him — lest he should suddenly crumble into dust.

And so to the Museum and its wonders. This Parkes Museum is a kind of armoury of hygiene, a place full of apparatus for being

healthy — in brief, a museum of sanitary science. To that large and growing class of people who take no thought of anything but what they eat and what they drink, and wherewithal they should be clothed, it should prove intensely interesting. Apart from the difficulty of approach we cannot understand how it is so neglected by an intelligent public. You can see germicides and a model convict prison, Pentonville cells in miniature, statistical diagrams and drain pipes — if only there was a little more about heredity, it would be exactly the kind of thing that is popular in literature now, as literature goes. And yet excepting ourselves and the sleeping porter — if he was sleeping — and the indistinct and motionless outline, visible through a glass door, of a human body sitting over a book, there was not a suggestion or memory of living humanity about the place.

The exhibits of food are especially remarkable. We cleaned the glass case with our sleeves and peered at the most appetising revelations. There are dozens of little bottles hermetically sealed, containing such curios as a sample of "Bacon Common (Gammon) Uncooked," and then the same cooked — it looked no nicer cooked — Irish sausage, pork sausage, black pudding, Welsh mutton, and all kinds of rare and exquisite feeding. There are ever so many cases of this kind of thing. We saw, for instance, further along, several good specimens of the common oyster shell (*Ostrea edulis*), cockle shells, and whelks, both "almonds" and "whites," and then came breadstuffs. The breadstuffs are particularly impressive, of a grey, scientific aspect, a hard, hoary antiquity. We always knew that stale bread was good for one, but yet the Parkes Museum startled us with the antique pattern it recommended. There was a muffin, too, identified and labelled, but without any Latin name, a captured crumpet, a collection of buns, a dinner-roll, and a something novel to us, called Pumpernickel, that we had rather be without, or rather — for the expression is ambiguous — that we had rather not be without, but altogether remote from. And all these things have been tested by an analyst, with the most painful results. Nitrogen, oxygen, hydrogen, and the like nasty chemical things seem indeed to have occurred in everything he touched. Those sturdy mendicants who go about complaining that they cannot get food should visit this Parkes Museum and see what food is really like, and learn contentment with

their lot.

There were no real vegetables, but only the ideals of a firm of seedsmen, made of wax and splendidly coloured, with something of the boldness and vigour of Michael Angelo about the modelling of them. And among other food stuffs were sweetmeats and yellow capers, liver flukes, British wines, and snuff. At last we felt replete with food stuffs, and went on to see the models to illustrate ventilation, and the exhibits of hygienic glazed tiles arranged around a desert lecture-theatre. Hygienic tiles stimulate the eye vigorously rather than relax it by any æsthetic weakness; and the crematory appliances are so attractive as they are, and must have such an added charm of neatness and brightness when alight, that one longs to lose a relative or so forthwith, for the mere pleasure of seeing them in operation.

A winding staircase designed upon hygienic principles, to bump your head at intervals, takes one to a little iron gallery full of the most charming and varied display of cooking-stoves and oil-lamps. Here, also, there are flaunted the resources of civilisation for the Prevention of Accidents, which resources are four, namely, a patent fire-escape, a patent carriage pole, a coal plate, and a dog muzzle. But the labels, though verbose, are scarcely full enough. They do not tell you, for instance, if you wish to prevent cramp while bathing, whether the dog muzzle or the coal plate should be employed, nor do they show how the fire-escape will prevent the explosion of a paraffin lamp. However, this is a detail. We feel assured that no intelligent person will regret a visit to this most interesting and instructive exhibition. It offers you valuable hints how to live, and suggests the best and tidiest way in which you can, when dead, dispose of your body. We feel assured that the public only needs this intimation of its whereabouts to startle the death-like slumbers of Margaret Street with an unaccustomed tumult. And the first to arrive will, no doubt, find legibly and elegantly written in the dust that covers the collection the record of its discovery by Euphemia and me.

BLEAK MARCH IN EPPING FOREST

All along the selvage of Epping Forest there was excitement. Before the swallows, before the violets, long before the cuckoo, with only untimely honeysuckle bushes showing a trace of green, two trippers had been seen traversing the district, making their way towards High Beech, and settling awhile near the Forest Hotel. Whether they were belated survivals from last season or exceptionally early hatchings of the coming year, was a question of considerable moment to the natives, and has since engaged the attention of the local Natural History Society. But we know that, as a matter of fact, they were of little omen, being indeed but insignificant people from Hampstead and not true trippers at all, who were curious to see this forest in raw winter.

For some have argued that there is no Epping Forest at all in the winter-time; that it is, in fact, taken up and put away, and that agriculture is pursued there. Others assert that the Forest is shrouded with wrappers, even as a literary man's study is shrouded by dusty women when they clean him out. Others, again, have supposed that it is a delightful place in winter, far more delightful than in summer, but that this is not published, because no writing man hath ever been there in the cold season. And much more of unreal speculation, but nothing which bore upon it the stamp of truth. So these two — and I am one of the two — went down to Epping Forest to see that it was still there, and how it fared in the dismal weather.

The sky was a greasy grey that guttered down to the horizon, and the wind smote damp and chill. There was a white fringe of ice in the cart-wheel ruts, but withal the frost was not so crisp as to prevent a thin and slippery glaze of softened clay upon the road. The decaying triumphal arch outside the station sadly lacked a coat of paint, and was indistinctly regretful of remote royal visits and processions gone for ever. Then we passed shuddering by many vacant booths that had once resounded with the revelry of ninepenny teas and the gingerbeer cork's staccato, and their forms were piled together and their trestles overturned. And the wind ravened, and no human beings were to be seen. So up the hill to the left, and along the road leading by devious

windings between the black hedges and through clay wallows to the hilly part round High Beech.

But upon the shoulder of a hill we turned to a gate to scrape off the mud that made our boots unwieldy. At that moment came a threadbare place in the cloudy curtain that was sweeping across the sun, and our shadows showed themselves for an instant to comfort us. The amber patch of sunlight presently slipped from us and travelled down the meadows towards the distant blue of the hills by Waltham Abbey, touching with miraculous healing a landscape erst dead and shrouded in grey. This transitory gleam of light gladdened us mightily at the time, but it made the after-sky seem all the darker.

So through the steep and tortuous village to High Beech, and then leaving the road we wandered in among big trees and down slopes ankle deep with rustling leaves towards Chingford again. Here was pleasanter walking than the thawing clay, but now and then one felt the threat of an infinite oozy softness beneath the stiff frozen leaves. Once again while we were here the drifting haze of the sky became thinner, and the smooth green-grey beech stems and rugged oak trunks were brightly illuminated. But only for a moment, and thereafter the sky became not simply unsympathetic but ominous. And the misery of the wind grew apace.

Presently we wandered into that sinister corner of the Forest where the beech trees have grown so closely together that they have had perforce to lift their branches vertically. Divested of leaves, the bare grey limbs of these seem strangely restless. These trees, reaching so eagerly upward, have an odd resemblance to the weird figures of horror in which William Blake delighted — arms, hands, hair, all stretch intensely to the zenith. They seem to be straining away from the spot to which they are rooted. It is a Laocoon grouping, a wordless concentrated struggle for the sunlight, and disagreeably impressive. The trippers longed to talk and were tongue-tied; they looked now and then over their shoulders. They were glad when the eerie influence was passed, though they traversed a morass to get away from it.

Then across an open place, dismal with the dun hulls of lost cows and the clatter of their bells, over a brook full of dead leaves and edged with rusty clay, through a briery thicket that would fain have

detained us, and so to a pathway of succulent green, that oozed black under our feet. Here some poor lost wayfarer has blazed his way with rustic seats, now rheumatic and fungus-eaten. And here, too, the wind, which had sought us howling, found us at last, and stung us sharply with a shower of congealing raindrops. This grew to a steady downfall as the open towards Chingford station was approached at last, after devious winding in the Forest. Then, coming upon the edge of the wood and seeing the lone station against the grey sky, we broke into a shout and began running. But it is dismal running on imperfectly frozen clay, in rain and a gusty wind. We slipped and floundered, and one of us wept sore that she should never see her home again. And worse, the only train sleeping in the station was awakened by our cries, and, with an eldritch shriek at the unseasonable presence of trippers, fled incontinently Londonward.

Smeared with clay and dead leaves almost beyond human likeness, we staggered into the derelict station, and found from an outcast porter that perhaps another train might after the lapse of two hours accumulate sufficiently to take us back to Gospel Oak and a warm world again. So we speered if there were amusements to be got in this place, and he told us “some very nice walks.” To refrain from homicide we left the station, and sought a vast red hotel that loomed through the drift on a steep hill, and in the side of this a door that had not been locked. Happily one had been forgotten, and, entering at last, we roused a hibernating waiter, and he exhumed us some of his winter victual. In this way we were presently to some degree comforted, and could play chess until a train had been sent for our relief. And this did at last happen, and towards the hour of dinner we rejoined our anxious friends, and all the evening time we boasted of a pleasant day and urged them to go even as we had gone.

THE THEORY OF QUOTATION

The nobler method of quotation is not to quote at all. For why should one repeat good things that are already written? Are not the words in their fittest context in the original? Clearly, then, your new setting cannot be quite so congruous, which is, forthwith, an admission of incongruity. Your quotation is evidently a plug in a leak, an apology for a gap in your own words. But your vulgar author will even go out of his way to make the clothing of his thoughts thus heterogeneous. He counts every stolen scrap he can work in an improvement — a literary caddis worm. Yet would he consider it improvement to put a piece of even the richest of old tapestry or gold embroidery into his new pair of breeks?

The passion for quotation is peculiar to literature. We do not glory to quote our costume, dress in cast-off court robes, or furnish our houses from the marine store. Neither are we proud of alien initials on the domestic silver. We like things new and primarily our own. We have a wholesome instinct against infection, except, it seems, in the matter of ideas. An authorling will deliberately inoculate his copy with the inverted comma bacillus, till the page swims unsteadily, counting the fever a glow of pure literary healthiness. Yet this reproduction, rightly considered, is merely a proof that his appetite for books has run beyond his digestion. Or his industry may be to seek. You expect an omelette, and presently up come the unbroken eggs. A tissue of quotation wisely looked at is indeed but a motley garment, eloquent either of a fool, or an idle knave in a fool's disguise.

Nevertheless at times — the truth must be told — we must quote. As for admitting that we have quoted, that is another matter altogether. But the other man's phrase will lie at times so close in one's mind to the trend of one's thoughts, that, all virtue notwithstanding, they must needs run into the groove of it. There are phrases that lie about in the literary mind like orange peel on a pavement. You are down on them before you know where you are. But does this necessitate acknowledgment to the man, now in Hades, who sucked that orange and strewed the peel in your way? Rather, is

it not more becoming to be angry at his careless anticipation?

One may reasonably look at it in this way. What business has a man to think of things right in front of you, poke his head, as it were, into your light? What right has he to set up dams and tunnel out swallow-holes to deflect the current of your thoughts? Surely you may remove these obstructions, if it suits you, and put them where you will. Else all literature will presently be choked up, and the making of books come to an end. One might as well walk ten miles out of one's way because some deaf oaf or other chose to sit upon a necessary stile. Surely Shakespeare or Lamb, or what other source you contemplate, has had the thing long enough? Out of the road with them. Turn and turn about.

And inverted commas are so inhospitable. If you *must* take in another man's offspring, you should surely try to make the poor foundlings feel at home. Away with such uncharitable distinctions between the children of the house and the stranger within your gates. I never see inverted commas but I think of the necessary persecuted mediæval Jew in yellow gabardine.

At least, never put the name of the author you quote. Think of the feelings of the dead. Don't let the poor spirit take it to heart that its monumental sayings would pass unrecognised without your advertisement. You mean well, perhaps, but it is in the poorest taste. Yet I have seen Patience on a Monument honourably awarded to William Shakespeare, and fenced in by commas from all intercourse with the general text.

There is something so extremely dishonest, too, in acknowledging quotations. Possibly the good people who so contrive that such signatures as "Shakespeare," "Homer," or "St. Paul," appear to be written here and there to parts of their inferior work, manage to justify the proceeding in their conscience; but it is uncommonly like hallmarking pewter on the strength of an infinitesimal tinge of silver therein. The point becomes at once clear if we imagine some obscure painter quoting the style of Raphael and fragments of his designs, and acknowledging his indebtedness by appending the master's signature. Blank forgery! And a flood of light was thrown on the matter by a chance remark of one of Euphemia's aunts — she is a great reader of pure fiction — anent a popular novel: "I am sure it

must be a nice book," said she, "or she could not get all these people to write the mottoes for the chapters."

No, it is all very well to play with one's conscience. I have known men so sophisticated as to assert that unacknowledged quotation was wrong. But very few really reasonable people will, I think, refuse to agree with me that the only artistic, the only kindly, and the only honest method of quotation is plagiary. If you cannot plagiarise, surely it were better not to quote.

ON THE ART OF STAYING AT THE SEASIDE

A MEDITATION AT EASTBOURNE

To stay at the seaside properly, one should not think. But even in staying at the seaside there are intervals, waking moments when meals come, even if there are no appointed meal-times. Moreover, now and then, one must go to buy tobacco, a matter one can trust to no hireling, lest he get it dry. It cannot be always seaside, even as it cannot be always May, and through the gaps thought creeps in. Going over the cliff and along the parade, and down by the circulating library to the cigar divan, where they sell Parique tobacco, the swinging of one's legs seems to act like a pendulum to the clockwork of one's brain. One meditates all the way, and chiefly on how few people there are who can really — to a critical adept — be said to stay at the seaside.

People seem to think that one can take a ticket to Eastbourne, or Bognor, or Ventnor, and come and stay at the seaside straight away, just as I have known new-hatched undergraduates tell people they were going to play billiards. Thousands and thousands of people think they have stayed at the seaside, and have not, just as thousands of people erroneously imagine they have played whist. For the latter have played not whist, but Bumble-puppy, and the former have only frequented a watering-place for a time. Your true staying at the seaside is an art, demanding not only railway fares but special aptitude, and, moreover, needing culture, like all worthy arts.

The most insurmountable difficulty of the beginner is the classical simplicity of the whole thing. To stay at the seaside properly you just spread yourself out on the extreme edge of the land and let the sunlight soak in. Your eyes are fixed upon the horizon. Some have it that your head should be towards the sea, but the best authorities think that this determines blood to that region, and so stimulates thought. This is all the positive instruction; the rest is prohibition. You must not think, and you must not move, neither may you go to sleep. In a few minutes the adept becomes as a god, even as a god that sits upon the lotus leaf. New light and colour come into the sky and sea, and the surges chant his praises. But those who are not of

the elect get pins and needles all over them.

It must be freely admitted that staying at the seaside such as this, staying at the seaside in its perfection, is a thing for a select few. You want a broad stretch of beach and all the visible sea to yourself. You cannot be disturbed by even the most idyllic children trying to bury you with sand and suchlike playfulness, nor by boatloads of the democracy rowing athwart your sea and sky. And the absence of friend or wife goes without saying. I notice down here a very considerable quantity of evidently married pairs, and the huge majority of the rest of the visitors run in couples, and are to all appearances engaged. If they are not, I would submit that they ought to be. Probably there is a certain satisfaction in sitting by the sea with the girl you are in love with, or your wife for the matter of that, just as many people undoubtedly find tea with milk and sugar very nice. But the former is no more the way to get the full and perfect pleasure of staying at the seaside than the latter is the way to get the full and perfect flavour of the tea. True staying at the seaside is neither the repetition of old conversations in new surroundings nor the exposure of one's affections to ozone. It is something infinitely higher. It is pure quiescence. It is the experience of a waking inanition savouring of Buddha and the divine.

Now, staying at the seaside is so rarely done well, because of the littleness of man. To do it properly needs many of the elements of greatness. Your common man, while he has life in him, can let neither himself nor the universe alone. He must be asserting himself in some way, even if it is only by flinging pebbles at a stick. That self-forgetfulness which should be a delight is a terror to him. He brings dogs down to the beach to stand between him and the calm of nature, and yelp. He does worse than that.

The meditative man going daily over by the cliff and along the parade, to get his ounce of tobacco, has a sad spectacle of what human beings may be driven to in this way. One sees altogether some hundreds of people there who have heard perhaps that staying at the seaside is good, and who have, anyhow, got thus far towards it, and stopped. They have not the faintest idea how to make themselves happy. The general expression is veiled curiosity. They sit — mostly with their backs to the sea — talking poorly of indifferent topics and

watching one another. Most obviously they want hints of what to do with themselves. Behind them is a bank of flowers like those in Battersea Park, and another parallel parade, and beyond are bathing-machines. The pier completely cuts the horizon out of the background. There is a stout lady, in dark blue, bathing. The only glances directed seaward are furtive ones at her. Many seem to be doubting whether this is not what they came down for. Others lean dubiously to the invitations of the boatmen. Others again listen to vocalists and dramatic outcasts who, for ha'pence, render obvious the reason of their professional degradation. It seems eccentric to travel seventy or eighty miles to hear a man without a voice demonstrate that he is unfit to have one, but they do. Anyone curious in these matters need only go to a watering-place to see and, what is worse, to hear for himself. After an excursion train to Eastbourne, upwards of a thousand people have been seen thus heaped together over an oblong space of a mile long by twenty yards wide. Only three miles away there was a towering white cliff overhanging a practically desert beach; and one seagull circled above one solitary, motionless, supine man, really staying at the seaside.

You cannot walk six miles anywhere along the south coast without coming upon one of these heaps of people, called a watering-place. There will be a town of houses behind wherein the people lodge, until, as they think, they have stayed a sufficient time at the sea, and they return, hot, cross, and mystified, to London. The sea front will be bricked or paved for a mile or so, and there will be rows of boats and bathing-machines, and other contrivances to screen off the view of the sea. And, as we have indicated, watering-places and staying by the seaside are incompatible things. The true stayer by the seaside goes into the watering-place because he must; because there is little food, and that uncooked, and no tobacco, between the cliffs and the sea. Having purchased what he needs he flees forth again. What time the whole selvage of England becomes watering-place, there will be no more staying by the seaside at all in the land. But this is a gloomy train of thought that we will not pursue.

There have been those who assert that one end of staying at the seaside is bathing; but it is easy to show that this is not so. Your proper bathing-place is up the river, where the trees bend to the green

and brown shadows of the water. There the bath is sweet, fresh out of the sky, or but just filtered through the blue hills of the distant water-shed; and it is set about with flowers. But the sea — the sea has stood there since the beginning of things, and with small prospect of change, says Mr. Kipling, to all eternity. The water in the sea, geologists tell us, has *not been changed for fifty million years*! The same chemist who sets me against all my food with his chemical names speaks of the sea as a weak solution of drowned men. Be that as it may, it leaves the skin harsh with salt, and the hair sticky. Moreover, it is such a promiscuous bathing-place. However, we need scarcely depreciate the sea as a bath, for what need is there of that when the river is clearly better? No one can deny that the river is better. People who bathe in the sea bathe by mistake, because they have come to the side of the sea, and know not how else to use it.

So, too, with the boating. It is hard to imagine how human beings who have drifted down streams, and watched the brown fish in the shallows, and peered through the tall sedges at the forget-me-nots, and fought with the ropes of the water-lilies, and heard the ripple under the bows, can ever think of going to and fro, pitching spasmodically, in front of a watering-place. And as for fishing — they catch fish at sea, indeed, but it is not fishing at all; neither rods nor flies have they, and there is an end to that matter.

An Eastbourne meditative man returning to where he stays, with his daily ounce of tobacco already afire, sees in the streets what are called by the natives "cherry-bangs," crowded with people, and, further, cabriolets and such vehicles holding parties and families. The good folks are driving away from the sea for the better part of the day, going to Battle and other places inland. The puzzle of what to do with their sea is too much for them, and they are going away for a little to rest their minds. Regarded as a centre of drives one might think an inland place would be preferable to a seaside town, which at best commands but a half-circle. However that may be, the fact remains that one of the chief occupations of your common visitor to the seaside is going away from it. Than this fact there can be nothing more conclusive in support of my argument that ordinary people are absolutely ignorant and incapable of staying by the seaside.

CONCERNING CHESS

The passion for playing chess is one of the most unaccountable in the world. It slaps the theory of natural selection in the face. It is the most absorbing of occupations, the least satisfying of desires, an aimless excrescence upon life. It annihilates a man. You have, let us say, a promising politician, a rising artist, that you wish to destroy. Dagger or bomb are archaic, clumsy, and unreliable — but teach him, inoculate him with chess! It is well, perhaps, that the right way of teaching chess is so little known, that consequently in most cases the plot fails in the performance, the dagger turns aside. Else we should all be chess-players — there would be none left to do the business of the world. Our statesmen would sit with pocket boards while the country went to the devil, our army would bury itself in chequered contemplation, our bread-winners would forget their wives in seeking after impossible mates. The whole world would be disorganised. I can fancy this abominable hypnotism so wrought into the constitution of men that the cabmen would go trying to drive their horses in Knights' moves up and down Charing Cross Road. And now and again a suicide would come to hand with the pathetic inscription pinned to his chest: "I checked with my Queen too soon. I cannot bear the thought of it." There is no remorse like the remorse of chess.

Only, happily, as we say, chess is taught the wrong way round. People put out the board before the learner with all the men in battle array, sixteen a side, with six different kinds of moves, and the poor wretch is simply crushed and appalled. A lot of things happen, mostly disagreeable, and then a mate comes looming up through the haze of pieces. So he goes away awestricken but unharmed, secretly believing that all chess-players are humbugs, and that intelligent chess, which is neither chancy nor rote-learned, is beyond the wit of man. But clearly this is an unreasonable method of instruction. Before the beginner can understand the beginning of the game he must surely understand the end; how can he commence playing until he knows what he is playing for? It is like starting athletes on a race, and leaving them to find out where the winning-post is hidden.

Your true teacher of chess, your subtle chess-poisoner, your cunning Comus who changes men to chess-players, begins quite the other way round. He will, let us say, give you King, Queen, and Pawn placed out in careless possible positions. So you master the militant possibilities of Queen and Pawn without perplexing complications. Then King, Queen, and Bishop perhaps; King, Queen, and Knight; and so on. It ensures that you always play a winning game in these happy days of your chess childhood, and taste the one sweet of chess-playing, the delight of having the upper hand of a better player. Then to more complicated positions, and at last back to the formal beginning. You begin to see now to what end the array is made, and understand why one Gambit differeth from another in glory and virtue. And the chess mania of your teacher cleaveth to you thenceforth and for evermore.

It is a curse upon a man. There is no happiness in chess — Mr. St. George Mivart, who can find happiness in the strangest places, would be at a loss to demonstrate it upon the chess-board. The mild delight of a pretty mate is the least unhappy phase of it. But, generally, you find afterwards that you ought to have mated two moves before, or at the time that an unforeseen reply takes your Queen. No chess-player sleeps well. After the painful strategy of the day one fights one's battles over again. You see with more than daylight clearness that it was the Rook you should have moved, and not the Knight. No! it is impossible! no common sinner innocent of chess knows these lower deeps of remorse. Vast desert boards lie for the chess-player beyond the gates of horn. Stalwart Rooks ram headlong at one, Knights hop sidelong, one's Pawns are all tied, and a mate hangs threatening and never descends. And once chess has been begun in the proper way, it is flesh of your flesh, bone of your bone; you are sold, and the bargain is sealed, and the evil spirit hath entered in.

The proper outlet for the craving is the playing of games, and there is a class of men — shadowy, unhappy, unreal-looking men — who gather in coffee-houses, and play with a desire that dieth not, and a fire that is not quenched. These gather in clubs and play Tournaments, such tournaments as he of the Table Round could never have imagined. But there are others who have the vice who live in country places, in remote situations — curates, schoolmasters,

rate collectors — who go consumed from day to day and meet no fit companion, and who must needs find some artificial vent for their mental energy. No one has ever calculated how many sound Problems are possible, and no doubt the Psychical Research people would be glad if Professor Karl Pearson would give his mind to the matter. All the possible dispositions of the pieces come to such a vast number, however, that, according to the theory of probability, and allowing a few thousand arrangements each day, the same problem ought never to turn up more than twice in a century or so. As a matter of fact — it is probably due to some flaw in the theory of probability — the same problem has a way of turning up in different publications several times in a month or so. It may be, of course, that, after all, quite "sound" problems are limited in number, and that we keep on inventing and reinventing them; that, if a record were kept, the whole system, up to four or five moves, might be classified, and placed on record in the course of a few score years. Indeed, if we were to eliminate those with conspicuously bad moves, it may be we should find the number of reasonable games was limited enough, and that even our brilliant Lasker is but repeating the inspirations of some long-buried Persian, some mute inglorious Hindoo, dead and forgotten ages since. It may be over every game there watches the forgotten forerunners of the players, and that chess is indeed a dead game, a haunted game, played out centuries ago, even, as beyond all cavil, is the game of draughts.

The artistic temperament, the gay irresponsible cast of mind, does what it can to lighten the gravity of this too intellectual game. To a mortal there is something indescribably horrible in these champions with their four moves an hour — the bare thought of the mental operations of the fifteen minutes gives one a touch of headache. Compulsory quick moving is the thing for gaiety, and that is why, though we revere Steinitz and Lasker, it is Bird we love. His victories glitter, his errors are magnificent. The true sweetness of chess, if it ever can be sweet, is to see a victory snatched, by some happy impertinence, out of the shadow of apparently irrevocable disaster. And talking of cheerfulness reminds me of Lowson's historical game of chess. Lowson said he had been cheerful sometimes — but, drunk! Perish the thought! Challenged, he would

have proved it by some petty tests of pronunciation, some Good Templar's shibboleths. He offered to walk along the kerb, to work any problem in mathematics we could devise, finally to play MacBryde at chess. The other gentleman was appointed judge, and after putting the antimacassar over his head ("jush wigsh") immediately went to sleep in a disorderly heap on the sofa. The game was begun very solemnly, so I am told. MacBryde, in describing it to me afterwards, swayed his hands about with the fingers twiddling in a weird kind of way, and said the board went like that. The game was fierce but brief. It was presently discovered that both kings had been taken. Lowson was hard to convince, but this came home to him. "Man," he is reported to have said to MacBryde, "I'm just drunk. There's no doubt in the matter. I'm feeling very ashamed of myself." It was accordingly decided to declare the game drawn. The position, as I found it next morning, is an interesting one. Lowson's Queen was at K Kt 6, his Bishop at Q B 3, he had several Pawns, and his Knight occupied a commanding position at the intersection of four squares. MacBryde had four Pawns, two Rooks, a Queen, a draught, and a small mantel ornament arranged in a rough semicircle athwart the board. I have no doubt chess exquisites will sneer at this position, but in my opinion it is one of the cheerfulest I have ever seen. I remember I admired it very much at the time, in spite of a slight headache, and it is still the only game of chess that I recall with undiluted pleasure. And yet I have played many games.

THE COAL-SCUTTLE

A STUDY IN DOMESTIC ÆSTHETICS

Euphemia, who loves to have home dainty and delightful, would have no coals if she could dispense with them, much less a coal-scuttle. Indeed, it would seem she would have no fireplace at all, if she had her will. All the summer she is happy, and the fireplace is anything but the place for a fire; the fender has vanished, the fireirons are gone, it is draped and decorated and disguised. So would dear Euphemia drape and disguise the whole iron framework of the world, with that decorative and decent mind of hers, had she but the scope. There are exotic ferns there, spreading their fanlike fronds, and majolica glows and gleams; and fabrics, of which Morris is the actual or spiritual begetter, delight the eye. In summer-time our fireplace is indeed a thing of beauty, but, alas for the solar system! it is not a joy for ever. The sun at last recedes beyond the equinoxes, and the black bogey who has slept awakens again. Euphemia restores the fender kerb and the brazen dogs and the fireirons that will clatter; and then all the winter, whenever she sits before the fire, her trouble is with her. Even when the red glow of the fire lights up her features most becomingly, and flattery is in her ear, every now and then a sidelong glance at her ugly foe shows that the thought of it is in her mind, and that the crumpled roseleaf, if such a phrase may be used for a coal-scuttle, insists on being felt. And she has even been discovered alone, sitting elbows on knees, and chin on her small clenched fist, frowning at it, puzzling how to circumvent the one enemy of her peace.

"*It*" is what Euphemia always calls this utensil, when she can bring herself to give the indescribable an imperfect vent in speech. But commonly the feeling is too deep for words. Her war with this foeman in her household, this coarse rebel in her realm of soft prettiness, is one of those silent ones, those grim struggles without outcry or threat or appeal for quarter that can never end in any compromise, never find a rest in any truce, except the utter defeat of her antagonist. And how she has tried — the happy thoughts, the faint hopes, the new departures and outflanking movements! And

even to-day there the thing defies her — a coal-box, with a broad smile that shows its black teeth, thick and squat, filling a snug corner and swaggering in unmanly triumph over the outrage upon her delicacy that it commits.

One of Euphemia's brightest ideas was to burn wood. Logs make even a picturesque pile in a corner — look "uncommon." But there are objections to wood. Wood finely divided burns with gay quirks and jets of flame, and making cheerful crackling noises the while; but its warmth and brightness are as evanescent as love's young dream. And your solid log has a certain irritating inertness. It is an absentee fuel, spending its fire up the chimney, and after its youthful clouds of glory turns but a cheerless side of black and white char towards the room. And, above all, the marital mind is strangely exasperated by the log. Smite it with the poker, and you get but a sullen resonance, a flight of red sparks, a sense of an unconquerable toughness. It is worse than coke. The crisp fracture of coal, the spitting flames suddenly leaping into existence from the shiny new fissures, are altogether wanting. Old-seasoned timber burns indeed most delightfully, but then it is as ugly as coal, and withal very dear. So Euphemia went back to coal again with a sigh. Possibly if Euphemia had been surrounded by the wealth she deserves this trouble would not have arisen. A silent servant, bearing the due dose of fresh fuel, would have come gliding from a mysterious Beneath, restored the waning animation of the grate, and vanished noiselessly again. But this was beyond the range of Euphemia's possibilities. And so we are face to face with this problem of the scuttle again.

At first she would feign there was no such thing as coal. It was too horrible. Only a Zola would admit it. It was the epoch of concealment. The thing purchased was like a little cupboard on four legs; it might have held any convenient trifle; and there was a shelf upon the top and a book of poetry and a piece of crackled Satsuma. You took a little brass handle and pulled it down, and the front of the little cupboard came forward, and there you found your coal. But a dainty little cupboard can no more entertain black coal and inelegant firewood and keep its daintiness than a mind can entertain black thoughts and yet be sweet. This cabinet became demoralised with amazing quickness; it became incontinent with its corruptions, a

hinge got twisted, and after a time it acquired the habit of suddenly, and with an unpleasant oscillatory laughing noise, opening of its own accord and proclaiming its horrid secret to Euphemia's best visitors. An air of wickedness, at once precocious and senile, came upon it; it gaped and leered at Euphemia as the partner of her secret with such a familiar air of "I and you" that she could stand it no longer, and this depraved piece of furniture was banished at last from her presence, and relegated to its proper sphere of sham gentility below stairs, where it easily passed itself upon the cook as an exquisite. Euphemia tried to be sensible then, and determined, since she must have coal in her room, to let no false modesty intervene, but to openly proclaim its presence to all the world.

The next thing, therefore, was a cylinder of brass, broadly open above, saying to the world, as it were, "Look! I contain coal." And there were brass tongs like sugar tongs wherewith Euphemia would regale the fire and brighten it up, handing it a lump at a time in the prettiest way. But brass dints. The brazen thing was quiet and respectable enough upstairs, but ever and again it went away to be filled. What happened on these holiday jaunts Euphemia has never ascertained. But a chance blow or worse cause ran a crease athwart the forehead of the thing, and below an almost imperceptible bulging hinted at a future corpulency. And there was complaint of the quantity of polishing it needed, and an increasing difficulty in keeping it bright. And except when it was full to the brim, the lining was unsightly; and this became more so. One day Ithuriel must have visited Euphemia's apartment, and the tarnished brilliancy of the thing stood confessed. For some days there was an interregnum, and a coal-scuttle from downstairs — a black unstable thing on flat foot and with a vast foolish nether lip — did its duty with inelegant faithfulness.

Then Euphemia had a really pretty fancy. She procured one of those big open garden baskets and painted it a pleasant brown, and instead of a garden fork she had a little half horticultural scoop. In this basket she kept her coals, and she tied a pink ribbon on the handle. One might fancy she had been in some dewy garden and had dug a few coals as one might dig up bulbs, and brought them in and put them down. It attracted attention from all her visitors, and set a

kind of fashion in the neighbourhood. For a time Euphemia was almost contented. But one day a malignant woman called, and looked at this device through her gilt eye-glasses, while she secretly groped in the dark of her mind for an unpleasant thing to say. Then suddenly she remarked, “Why not put your coal in a bassinette? Or keep it *all* on the floor?” Euphemia’s face fell. The thing was undeniably very like a cradle, in the light of this suggestion; the coal certainly did seem a little out of place there; and besides, if there were more than three or four lumps they had a way of tumbling over the edge upon the carpet when the fire was replenished. The tender shoot of Euphemia’s satisfaction suddenly withered and died.

So the struggle has gone on. Sometimes it has been a wrought iron tripod with a subtle tendency to upset in certain directions; sometimes a coal-box; once even the noisy old coal-box of japanned tin, making more noise than a Salvation Army service, and strangely decorated with “art” enamels, had a turn. At present Euphemia is enduring a walnut “casket,” that since its first week of office has displayed an increasing indisposition to shut. But things cannot stay like this. The worry and anxiety and vexation, Euphemia declares, are making her old before her time. A delicate woman should not be left alone to struggle against brazen monsters. A closed gas stove is happily impossible, but the husband of the household is threatened with one of those beastly sham fires, wherein gas jets flare among firebrick — a mechanical fire without vitality or variety, that never dances nor crackles nor blazes, a monotonous horror, a fire you cannot poke. That is what it will certainly come to if the problem remains unsolved.

BAGARROW

Frankly, I detest this Bagarrow. Yet it is quite generally conceded that Bagarrow is a very well-meaning fellow. But the trouble is to understand him. To do that I have been at some pains, and yet I am still a mere theorist. An anthropometric estimate of the man fails to reveal any reason for the distinction of my aversion. He is of passable height, breadth, and density, and, save for a certain complacency of expression, I find no salient objection in his face. He has bluish eyes and a whitish skin, and average-coloured hair — none of them distinctly indictable possessions. It is something in his interior and unseen mechanism, I think, that must be wrong; some internal lesion that finds expression in his acts.

His mental operations, indeed, were at first as inconceivable to me as a crab's or a cockchafer's. That is where all the trouble came in. For that reason alone they fascinated me and aggrieved me. From the conditions of our acquaintance — we were colleagues — I had to study him with some thoroughness, observing him under these circumstances and those. I have, by the bye, sometimes wondered idly how he would react to alcohol — a fluid he avoids. It would, I am sure, be an entirely novel and remarkable kind of Drunk, and I am also certain it would be an offensive one. But I can't imagine it; I have no data. I could as soon evolve from my inner consciousness an intoxicated giraffe. But, as I say, this interesting experience has hitherto been denied me.

Now my theory of Bagarrow is this, that he has a kind of disease in his ideals, some interruption of nutrition that has left them small and emasculate. He aims, it appears, at a state called "Really Nice" or the "True Gentleman," the outward and visible signs of which are a conspicuous quietness of costume, gloves in all weathers, and a tightly-rolled umbrella. But coupled in some way with this is a queer smack of the propagandist, a kind of dwarfed prophetic passion. That is the particular oddness of him. He displays a timid yet persistent desire to foist this True Gentleman of his upon an unwilling world, to make you Really Nice after his own pattern. I always suspect him of trying to convert me by stealth when I am not looking.

So far as I can see, Bagarrow's conception of this True Gentleman of his is at best a compromise, mainly holiness, but a tinted kind of holiness — goodness in clean cuffs and with something neat in ties. He renounces the flesh and the devil willingly enough, but he wants to keep up a decent appearance. Now a stark saint I can find sympathy for. I respect your prophet unkempt and in a hair shirt denouncing Sin — and mundane affairs in general — with hoarse passion and a fiery hate. I would not go for my holidays with nor make a domestic pet of such a man, but I respect him. But Bagarrow's pose is different. Bagarrow would call that carrying things to extremes. His is an unobtrusive virtue, a compromising dissent, inaggressive aggressions on sin. So I take it. And at times he puts it to you in a drawling argument, a stream of Bagarrowisms, until you have to hurt his feelings — happily he is always getting his feelings hurt — just to stop the flow of him.

"Life," said Bagarrow, in a moment of expansiveness, "is scarcely worth living unless you are doing good to someone." That I take to be the keystone of him. "I want to be a Good Influence upon all the people I meet." I do not think it has ever dawned upon him that he himself is any way short of perfection; and, so far as I can see, the triumph and end of his good influence is cleanliness of cuff, compactness of umbrella, and general assimilation to the Bagarrow ideal.

Hear him upon one's social duties — this living soul in this world of wonders! "In moderation," said Bagarrow, opening out to questions on that matter, "social relaxation is desirable, and I will even go so far as to admit that I think it well to have at hand some pleasant expedient for entertaining people and passing the time. A humorous song or a recitation — provided it is in really good taste — is harmless enough, and sometimes it may even be turned to good account. And everyone should try to master some instrument or other. The flute, perhaps, is as convenient as any; for the fiddle and piano, you know, are difficult and expensive to learn, and require constant practice. A little legerdemain is also a great acquisition for a man. Some may differ from me in that," continued Bagarrow, "but I see no harm in it. There are hundreds of perfectly proper and innocent tricks with coins and bits of paper, and pieces of string, that

will make an evening pass most delightfully. One may get quite a little reputation as an entertainer with these things."

"And it is," pursued Bagarrow, quite glowing with liberality, "just a little pharisaical to object to card tricks. There are quantities of really quite clever and mathematical things that one may do with a chosen card, dealing the pack into heaps and counting slowly. Of course it is not for mere pleasuring that I learn these things. It gives anyone with a little tact an opportunity for stopping card-playing. When the pack is brought in, and all the party are intent upon gaming, you may seize your opportunity and take the cards, saying, 'Let me show you a little trick,' or, 'Have you seen Maskelyne's new trick with the cards?' Before anyone can object you are displaying your skill to their astonished eyes, and in their wonder at your cleverness the objectionable game may be indefinitely postponed."

"Yet so set at times is your gambler upon his abominable pursuit," says Bagarrow, "that in practice even this ingenious expedient has been known to fail." He tried it once, it seems, in a race train to Kempton Park, and afterwards he had to buy a new hat. That incident, indeed, gives you the very essence of Bagarrow in his insidious attacks on evil. I remember that on another occasion he went out of his way to promise a partially intoxicated man a drink; and taking him into a public-house ordered two lemon squashes! Drinks! He liked lemon squash himself and he did not like beer, and he thought he had only to introduce the poor fallen creature to the delights of temperance to ensure his conversion there and then. I think he expected the man to fall upon him, crying "My benefactor!" But he did not say "My benefactor," at anyrate, though he fell upon him, cheerfully enough.

To avoid the appearance of priggishness, which he dreads with some reason, he even went so far as to procure a herb tobacco, which he smokes with the help of frequent sulphur matches. This he recommends to us strongly. "Won't you try it?" he says, with a winning smile. "Just once." And he is the only man I ever met who drinks that facetious fluid, non-alcoholic beer. Once he proposed to wean me upon that from my distinctive vice, which led indeed to our first rupture. "*I* find it delicious," he said in pathetic surprise.

It is one of his most inveterate habits to tell you quietly what he

does, or would do under the circumstances. Seeing you at Kipling, he will propound the proposition that "all true literature has a distinct aim." His test of literary merit is "What good does it do you?" He is a great lender of books, especially of Carlyle and Ruskin, which authors for some absolutely inscrutable reason he considers provocative of Bagarrowism, and he goes to the County Council lectures on dairy-work, because it encourages others to improve themselves. But I have said enough to display him, and of Bagarrow at least — as I can well testify — it is easy to have more than enough. Indeed, after whole days with him I have gone home to dream of the realisation of his ideals, a sort of Bagarrow millennium, a world of Bagarrows. All kinds of men — Falstaffs, Don Quixotes, Alan Stewarts, John the Baptists, John Knoxes, Quilps, and Benvenuto Cellinis — all, so to speak, Bagarrowed, all with clean cuffs, tight umbrellas, and temperate ways, passing to and fro in a regenerate earth.

And so he goes on his way through this wonderful universe with his eyes fixed upon two or three secondary things, without the lust or pride of life, without curiosity or adventure, a mere timid missionary of a religion of "Nicer Ways," a quiet setter of a good example. I can assure you this is no exaggeration, but a portrait. It seems to me that the thing must be pathological, that he and this goodness of his have exactly the same claim upon Lombroso, let us say, as the born criminal. He is born good, a congenital good example, a sufferer from atrophy of his original sin. The only hope I can see for Bagarrow, short of murder, is forcible trepanning. He ought to have the seat of his ideals lanced, and all this wash about doing good to people by stealth taken away. It may be he might prove a very decent fellow then — if there was anything left of him, that is.

THE BOOK OF ESSAYS DEDICATORY

I have been bothered about this book this three months. I have written scarcely anything since Llewellyn asked me for it, for when he asked me I had really nothing on hand. I had just published every line I had ever written, at my own expense, with Prigsbys. Yet three months should suffice for one of Llewellyn's books, which consist chiefly of decorous fly-leaves and a dedication or so, and margins. Of course you know Llewellyn's books — the most delightful things in the market: the sweetest covers, with little gilt apples and things carelessly distributed over luminous grey, and bright red initials, and all these delightful fopperies. But it was the very slightness of these bibelots that disorganised me. And perhaps, also, the fact that no one has ever asked me for a book before.

I had no trouble with the title though— "Lichens." I have wondered the thing was never used before. Lichens, variegated, beautiful, though on the most arid foundations, half fungoid, half vernal — the very name for a booklet of modern verse. And that, of course, decided the key of the cover and disposed of three or four pages. A fly-leaf, a leaf with "Lichens" printed fair and beautiful a little to the left of the centre, then a title-page— "Lichens. By H.G. Wells. London: MDCCCXCV. Stephen Llewellyn." Then a restful blank page, and then — the Dedication. It was the dedication stopped me. The title-page, it is true, had some points of difficulty. Should the Christian name be printed in full or not, for instance; but it had none of the fatal fascination of the dedicatory page. I had, so to speak, to look abroad among the ranks of men, and make one of those fretful forgotten millions — immortal. It seemed a congenial task.

I went to work forthwith.

It was only this morning that I realised the magnitude of my accumulations. Ever since then — it was three months ago — I have been elaborating this Dedication. I turned the pile over, idly at first. Presently I became interested in tracing my varying moods, as they had found a record in the heap.

This struck me —

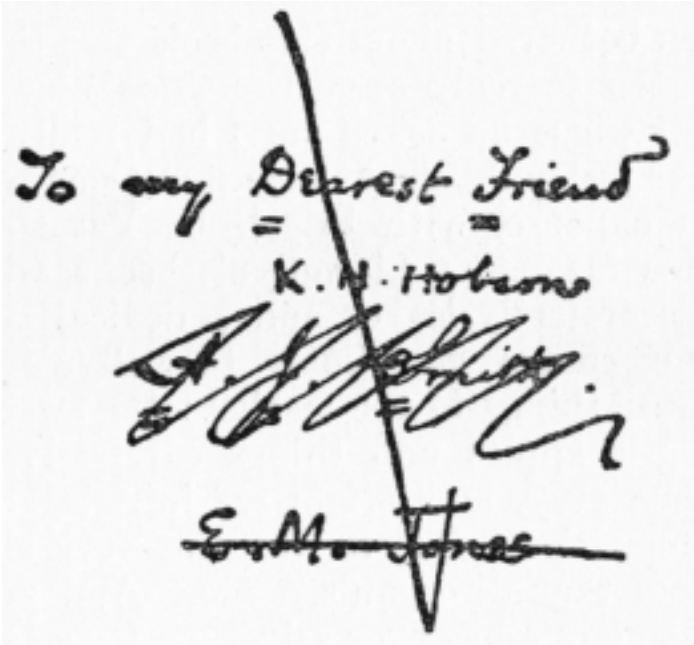

Then again, a little essay in gratitude came to hand —

To
Professor Augustus Flood,
Whose Admirable Lectures on
Palæontology
First turned my Attention to
Literature.

There was a tinge of pleasantry in the latter that pleased me very greatly when I wrote it, and I find immediately overlying it another essay in the same line —

To the Latter-day Reviewer,
These Pearls.

For some days I was smitten with the idea of dedicating my little booklet to one of my numerous personal antagonists, and conveying some subtly devised insult with an air of magnanimity. I thought, for instance, of Blizzard —

Sir Joseph Blizzard,
The most distinguished, if not the greatest, of contemporary anatomists.

I think it was "X.L.'s" book, *Aut Diabolus aut Nihil*, that set me upon another line. There is, after all, your reader to consider in these matters, your average middle-class person to impress in some way. They say the creature is a snob, and absolutely devoid of any tinge of humour, and I must confess that I more than half believe it. At anyrate, it was that persuasion inspired —

To the Countess of X.,
In Memory of Many Happy Days.

I know no Countess of X., as a matter of fact, but if the public is such an ass as to think better of my work for the suspicion, I do not care how soon I incur it. And this again is a pretty utilisation of the waste desert of politics —

My Dear Salisbury, — Pray accept this unworthy tribute of my affectionate esteem.

There were heaps of others. And looking at those heaps it suddenly came sharp and vivid before my mind that there — there was the book I needed, already written! A blank page, a dedication, a blank page, a dedication, and so on. I saw no reason to change the title. It only remained to select the things, and the book was done. I set to work at once, and in a very little while my bibelot was selected. There were dedications fulsome and fluid, dedications acrid and uncharitable, dedications in verse and dedications in the dead languages: all sorts and conditions of dedications, even the simple "To J.H. Gabbles" — so suggestive of the modest white stones of the village churchyard. Altogether I picked out one hundred and three dedications. At last only one thing remained to complete the book. And that was — the Dedication. You will scarcely credit it, but that worries me still....

I am almost inclined to think that Dedications are going out of fashion.

THROUGH A MICROSCOPE

SOME MORAL REFLECTIONS

This dabbler person has recently disposed of his camera and obtained a microscope — a short, complacent-looking implement it is, of brass — and he goes about everywhere now with little glass bottles in his pocket, ready to jump upon any stray polly-woggle he may find, and hale it home and pry into its affairs. Within his study window are perhaps half a dozen jars and basins full of green scum and choice specimens of black mud in which his victims live. He persists in making me look through this instrument, though I would rather I did not. It seems to me a kind of impropriety even when I do it. He gets innumerable things in a drop of green water, and puts it on a glass slip under the object glass, and, of course, they know nothing of the change in their condition, and go on living just as they did before they were observed. It makes me feel at times like a public moralist, or Peeping Tom of Coventry, or some such creature.

Certainly there are odd things enough in the water. Among others, certain queer green things that are neither plants nor animals. Most of the time they are plants, quiet green threads matted together, but every now and then the inside comes out of one, so to speak, and starts off with a fine red eye and a long flickering tail, to see the world. The dabbler says it's quite a usual thing among the lower plants — *Algæ* he calls them, for some reason — to disgorge themselves in this way and go swimming about; but it has quite upset my notions of things. If the lower plants, why not the higher? It may be my abominable imagination, but since he told me about these — swarm spores I think he called them — I don't feel nearly so safe with my geraniums as I did.

A particularly objectionable thing in these water drops, the dabbler insists upon my spying at is the furious activity of everything you see in them. You look down his wretched tube, and there, bright and yellow with the lamplight in the round field of the microscope, is a perfect riot of living things. Perhaps it's the water he got from Hampstead, and a dozen flat things the shape of shortbreads will be fussing about. They are all quite transparent and colourless, and

move about like galleys by means of a lot of minute oars that stick out all over them. Never a moment's rest. And, presently, one sees that even the green plant threads are wriggling across the field. The dabbler tries to moralise on this in the vein of Charles Kingsley, and infer we have much to learn from these ridiculous creatures; but, so far as I can see, it's a direct incentive to sloth to think how low in the scale of creation these things are, in spite of all their fussing. If they had sat about more and thought, they might be fishing the dabbler out of ponds and examining him instead of his examining them. Your energetic people might do worse things than have a meditative half-hour at the microscope. Then there are green things with a red spot and a tail, that creep about like slugs, and are equally transparent. *Euglena viridis* the dabbler calls them, which seems unnecessary information. In fact all the things he shows me are transparent. Even the little one-eyed Crustacea, the size of a needle-point, that discredit the name of Cyclops. You can see their digestion and muscle and nerve, and, in fact, everything. It's at least a blessing we are not the same. Fancy the audible comments of the temperance advocate when you get in the bus! No use pulling yourself together then. "Pretty full!" And "Look," people would say, "his wife gives him cold mutton."

Speaking of the name of Cyclops reminds me that these scientific people have been playing a scurvy trick upon the classics behind our backs. It reminds one of Epistemon's visit to Hades, when he saw Alexander a patcher of clouts and Xerxes a crier of mustard. Aphrodite, the dabbler tells me, is a kind of dirty mud-worm, and much dissected by spectacled pretenders to the London B.Sc.; every candidate, says the syllabus, must be able to dissect, to the examiner's satisfaction, and demonstrate upon Aphrodite, Nereis, Palæmon. Were the gods ever so insulted? Then the snaky Medusa and Pandora, our mother, are jelly-fish; Astræa is still to be found on coral reefs, a poor thing, and much browsed upon by parrot fish; and Doris and Tethys and Cydippe are sea slugs. It's worse than Heine's vision of the gods grown old. They can't be content with the departed gods merely. Evadne is a water flea — they'll make something out of Mrs. Sarah Grand next; and Autolycus, my Autolycus! is a polymorphic worm, whatever subtlety of insult

“polymorphic worm” may convey.

However, I wander from the microscope. These shortbread things are fussing about hither and thither across the field, and now and then an amœba comes crawling into view. These are invertebrate jelly-like things of no particular shape, and they keep on thrusting out a part here, and withdrawing a part there, and changing and advancing just as though they were popular democratic premiers. Then diatoms keep gliding athwart the circle. These diatoms are, to me at least, the most perplexing things in the universe. Imagine a highly ornamental thing in white and brown, the shape of a spectacle case, without any limbs or other visible means of progression, and without any wriggling of the body, or indeed any apparent effort at all, gliding along at a smart pace. That’s your diatom. The dabbler really knows nothing of how they do it. He mumbles something about Bütschli and Grenfell. Imagine the thing on a larger scale, Cleopatra’s Needle, for instance, travelling on its side up the Thames Embankment, and all unchaperoned, at the rate of four or five miles an hour.

There’s another odd thing about these microscope things which redeems, to some extent at least, their singular frankness. To use the decorous phrase of the text-book, “They multiply by fission.” Your amœba or vorticella, as the case may be, splits in two. Then there are two amœbæ or vorticellæ. In this way the necessity of the family, that middle-class institution so abhorrent to the artistic mind, is avoided. In my friend’s drop of ditch-water, as in heaven, there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. There are no waste parents, which should appeal to the scholastic mind, and the simple protozoon has none of that fitful fever of falling in love, that distressingly tender state that so bothers your mortal man. They go about their business with an enviable singleness of purpose, and when they have eaten and drunk, and attained to the fulness of life, they divide and begin again with renewed zest the pastime of living.

In a sense they are immortal. For we may look at this matter in another light, and say our exuberant protozoon has shed a daughter, and remains. In that case the amœba I look at may have crawled among the slime of the Silurian seas when the common ancestor of myself and the royal family was an unassuming mud-fish like those in the reptile house in the Zoo. His memoirs would be interesting.

The thought gives a solemn tint to one's meditations. If the dabbler wash him off this slide into his tube of water again, this trivial creature may go on feeding and growing and dividing, and presently be thrown away to wider waters, and so escape to live ... after I am dead, after my masterpieces are forgotten, after our Empire has passed away, after the human animal has passed through I know not what vicissitudes. It may be he will still, with the utmost nonchalance, be pushing out his pseudopodia, and ingesting diatoms when the fretful transitory life of humanity has passed altogether from the earth. One may catch him in specimen tubes by the dozen; but still, when one thinks of this, it is impossible to deny him a certain envious, if qualified, respect.

And all the time these creatures are living their vigorous, fussy little lives; in this drop of water they are being watched by a creature of whose presence they do not dream, who can wipe them all out of existence with a stroke of his thumb, and who is withal as finite, and sometimes as fussy and unreasonably energetic, as themselves. He sees them, and they do not see him, because he has senses they do not possess, because he is too incredibly vast and strange to come, save as an overwhelming catastrophe, into their lives. Even so, it may be, the dabbler himself is being curiously observed.... The dabbler is good enough to say that the suggestion is inconceivable. I can imagine a decent amœba saying the same thing.

THE PLEASURE OF QUARRELLING

Your cultivated man is apt to pity the respectable poor, on the score of their lack of small excitements, and even in the excess of his generous sympathy to go a Toynbee-Halling in their cause. And Sir Walter Besant once wrote a book about Hoxton, saying, among other things, how monotonous life was there. That is your modern fallacy respecting the lower middle class. One might multiply instances. The tenor of the pity is always the same.

"No music," says the cultivated man, "no pictures, no books to read nor leisure to read in. How can they pass their lives?"

The answer is simple enough, as Emily Brontë knew. They quarrel. And an excellent way of passing the time it is; so excellent, indeed, that the pity were better inverted. But we all lack the knowledge of our chiefest needs. In the first place, and mainly, it is hygienic to quarrel, it disengages floods of nervous energy, the pulse quickens, the breathing is accelerated, the digestion improved. Then it sets one's stagnant brains astir and quickens the imagination; it clears the mind of vapours, as thunder clears the air. And, finally, it is a natural function of the body. In his natural state man is always quarrelling — by instinct. Not to quarrel is indeed one of the vices of our civilisation, one of the reasons why we are neurotic and anæmic, and all these things. And, at last, our enfeebled palates have even lost the capacity for enjoying a "jolly good row."

There can be no more melancholy sight in the world than that of your young man or young woman suffering from suppressed pugnacity. Up to the end of the school years it was well with them; they had ample scope for this wholesome commerce, the neat give and take of offence. In the family circle, too, there are still plentiful chances of acquiring the taste. Then, suddenly, they must be gentle and considerate, and all the rest of it. A wholesome shindy, so soon as toga and long skirts arrive, is looked upon as positively wrong; even the dear old institution of the "cut" is falling into disrepute. The quarrelling is all forced back into the system, as it were; it poisons the blood. This is why our literature grows sinister and bitter, and our daughters yearn after this and that, write odd books, and ride about

on bicycles in remarkable clothes. They have shut down the safety valve, they suffer from the present lamentable increase of gentleness. They must find some outlet, or perish. If they could only put their arms akimbo and tell each other a piece of their minds for a little, in the ancient way, there can be not the slightest doubt that much of this *fin-de-siècle* unwholesomeness would disappear.

Possibly this fashion of gentleness will pass. Yet it has had increasing sway now for some years. An unhealthy generation has arisen — among the more educated class at least — that quarrels little, regards the function as a vice or a nuisance, as the East-ender does a taste for fine art or literature. We seem indeed to be getting altogether out of the way of it. Rare quarrels, no doubt, occur to everyone, but rare quarrelling is no quarrelling at all. Like beer, smoking, sea-bathing, cycling, and the like delights, you cannot judge of quarrelling by the early essay. But to show how good it is — did you ever know a quarrelsome person give up the use? Alcohol you may wean a man from, and Barrie says he gave up the Arcadia Mixture, and De Quincey conquered opium. But once you are set as a quarreller you quarrel and quarrel till you die.

How to quarrel well and often has ever been something of an art, and it becomes more of an art with the general decline of spirit. For it takes two to make a quarrel. Time was when you turned to the handiest human being, and with small care or labour had the comfortable warmth you needed in a minute or so. There was theology, even in the fifties it was ample cause with two out of three you met. Now people will express a lamentable indifference. Then politics again, but a little while ago fat for the fire of any male gathering, is now a topic of mere tepidity. So you are forced to be more subtle, more patient in your quarrelling. You play like a little boy playing cricket with his sisters, with those who do not understand. A fellow-votary is a rare treat. As a rule you have to lure and humour your antagonist like a child. The wooing is as intricate and delicate as any wooing can well be. To quarrel now, indeed, requires an infinity of patience. The good old days of thumb-biting— "Do you bite your thumbs at us, sir?" and so to clash and stab — are gone for ever.

There are certain principles in quarrelling, however, that the true

quarreller ever bears in mind, and which, duly observed, do much to facilitate encounters. In the first place, cultivate Distrust. Have always before you that this is a wicked world, full of insidious people, and you never know what villainous encroachments upon you may be hidden under fair-seeming appearances. That is the flavour of it. At the first suspicion, "stick up for your rights," as the vulgar say. And see that you do it suddenly. Smite promptly, and the surprise and sting of your injustice should provoke an excellent reply. And where there is least ground for suspicion, there, remember, is the most. The right hand of fellowship extended towards you is one of the best openings you have. "Not such a fool," is the kind of attitude to assume, and "You don't put upon *me* so easy." Your adversary resents this a little, and, rankling, tries to explain. You find a personal inference in the expostulation.

Next to a wariness respecting your interests is a keen regard for your honour. Have concealed in the privacy of your mind a code of what is due to you. Expand or modify it as occasion offers. Be as it were a collector of what are called "slights," and never let one pass you. Watch your friend in doorways, passages; when he eats by you, when he drinks with you, when he addresses you, when he writes you letters. It will be hard if you cannot catch him smuggling some deadly insult into your presence. Tax him with it. He did not think, forsooth! Tell him no gentleman would do such a thing, thinkingly or not; that you certainly will not stand it again. Say you will show him. He will presently argue or contradict. So to your climax.

Then, again, there is the personal reference. "Meaning me, sir?" Your victim with a blithe heart babbles of this or that. You let him meander here and there, watching him as if you were in ambush. Presently he comes into your spring. "Of course," you say, "I saw what you were driving at just this minute, when you mentioned mustard in salad dressing, but if I am peppery I am not mean. And if I have a thing to say I say it straight out." A good gambit this, and well into him from the start. The particular beauty of this is that you get him apologetic at first, and can score heavily before he rises to the defensive.

Then, finally, there is your abstract cause, once very fruitful indeed, but now sadly gone in decay, except perhaps in specialist

society. As an example, let there be one who is gibing genially at some topic or other, at Japanese king-crabs, or the inductive process, or any other topic which cannot possibly affect you one atom. Then is the time to drop all these merely selfish interests, and to champion the cause of truth. Fall upon him in a fine glow of indignation, and bring your contradiction across his face — whack! — so that all the table may hear. Tell him, with his pardon, that the king-crab is no more a crab than you are a jelly-fish, or that Mill has been superseded these ten years. Ask: "How can you say such things?" From thence to his general knowledge is a short flight, and so to his veracity, his reasoning powers, his mere common sense. "Let me tell you, sir," is the special incantation for the storm.

These are the four chief ways of quarrelling, the four gates to this delightful city. For it is delightful, once your 'prentice days are past. In a way it is like a cold bath on a winter's morning, and you glow all day. In a way it is like football, as the nimble aggravation dances to and fro. In a way it is like chess. Indeed, all games of skill are watered quarrels, quarrel and soda, come to see them in a proper light. And without quarrelling you have not fully appreciated your fellow-man. For in the ultimate it is the train and complement of Love, the shadow that rounds off the delight we take in poor humanity. It is the vinegar and pepper of existence, and long after our taste for sweets has vanished it will be the solace of our declining years.

THE AMATEUR NATURE-LOVER

It is possible that an education entirely urban is not the best conceivable preparation for descriptive articles upon the country. On the other hand, your professional nature-lover is sometimes a little over-familiar with his subject. He knows the names of all the things, and he does not spare you. Besides, he is subtle. The prominent features are too familiar to him, and he goes into details. What respectable townsman, for instance, knows what "scabiosa" is? It sounds very unpleasant. Then the professional nature-lover assumes that you know trees. No Englishman can tell any tree from any other tree, except a very palpable oak or poplar. So that we may at least, as an experiment, allow a good Londoner to take his unsophisticated eyes out into the sweet country for once, and try his skill at nature-loving, though his botany has been learned over the counter of flower-shops, and his zoology on Saturday afternoons when they have the band in the Gardens. He makes his way, then, over by Epsom Downs towards Sutton, trying to assimilate his mood to the proper flavour of appreciation as he goes, and with a little notebook in the palm of his hand to assist an ill-trained memory. And the burthen of his song is of course the autumn tints.

The masses of trees towards Epsom and Ewell, with the red houses and Elizabethan façades peeping through their interstices, contain, it would seem, every conceivable colour, except perhaps sky-blue; there are brilliant yellow trees, and a kind of tree of the most amazing gamboge green, almost the green of spring come back, and tan-coloured trees, deep brown, red, and deep crimson trees. Here and there the wind has left its mark, and the grey-brown branches and their purple tracery of twigs, with a suggestion of infinite depth behind, show through the rents in the leafy covering. There are deep green trees — the amateur nature-lover fancies they may be yews — with their dense warm foliage arranged in horizontal masses, like the clouds low down in a sunset; and certain other evergreens, one particularly, with a bluish-green covering of upstanding needles, are intensely conspicuous among the flame tints around. On a distant church tower, and nearer, disputing the

possession of a gabled red house with a glowing creeper, is some ivy; and never is the perennial green of ivy so delightful as it is now, when all else is alight with the sombre fire of the sunset of the year....

The amateur nature-lover proceeds over the down, appreciating all this as hard as he can appreciate, and anon gazing up at the grey and white cloud shapes melting slowly from this form to that, and showing lakes, and wide expanses, and serene distances of blue between their gaps. And then he looks round him for a zoological item. Underfoot the grass of the down is recovering from the summer drought and growing soft and green again, and plentiful little flattened snail shells lie about, and here and there a late harebell still nods in the breeze. Yonder bolts a rabbit, and then something whizzes by the amateur nature-lover's ear.

They shoot here somewhere, he remembers suddenly; and then looking round, in a palpitating state, is reassured by the spectacle of a lone golfer looming over the brow of the down, and gesticulating black and weird against the sky. The Londoner, with an abrupt affectation of nonchalance, flings himself flat upon his back, and so remains comparatively safe until the golfer has passed. These golfers are strange creatures, rabbit-coloured, except that many are bright red about the middle, and they repel and yet are ever attracted by a devil in the shape of a little white ball, which leads them on through toothed briars, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns; cursing the thing, weeping even, and anon laughing at their own foolish rambling; muttering, heeding no one to the right or left of their career, — demented creatures, as though these balls were their souls, that they ever sought to lose, and ever repented losing. And silent, ever at the heel of each, is a familiar spirit, an eerie human hedgehog, all set about with walking-sticks, a thing like a cylindrical umbrella-stand with a hat and boots and a certain suggestion of leg. And so they pass and are gone.

Rising, the amateur nature-lover finds he has been reclining on a puff-ball. These puff-balls are certainly the most remarkable example of adaptation to circumstances known to English botanists. They grow abundantly on golf grounds, and are exactly like golf-balls in external appearance. They are, however, Pharisees and whited sepulchres, and within they are full of a soft mess of a most

unpleasant appearance — the amateur nature-lover has some on him now — which stuff contains the spores. It is a case of what naturalists call "mimicry" — one of nature's countless adaptations. The golf-player smites these things with force, covering himself with ridicule — and spores, and so disseminating this far-sighted and ingenious fungus far and wide about the links.

The amateur nature-lover passes off the down, and towards Banstead village. He is on the watch for characteristic objects of the countryside, and rustling through the leaves beneath a chestnut avenue he comes upon an old boot. It is a very, very old boot, all its blacking washed off by the rain, and two spreading chestnut leaves, yellow they are with blotches of green, with their broad fingers extended, rest upon it, as if they would protect and altogether cover the poor old boot in its last resting-place. It is as if Mother Nature, who lost sight of her product at the tanner's yard, meant to claim her own trampled child again at last, after all its wanderings. So we go on, noting a sardine tin gleaming brightly in the amber sunlight, through a hazel hedge, and presently another old boot. Some hawthorn berries, some hoary clematis we notice — and then another old boot. Altogether, it may be remarked, in this walk the amateur nature-lover saw eleven old boots, most of them dropped in the very sweetest bits of hedge tangle and grassy corner about Banstead.

It is natural to ask, "Whence come all these old boots?" They are, as everyone knows, among the commonest objects in a country walk, so common, indeed, that the professional nature-lover says very little about them. They cannot grow there, they cannot be dropped from above — they are distinctly earth-worn boots. I have inquired of my own domestic people, and caused inquiry to be made in a large number of households, and there does not appear to be any regular custom of taking boots away to remote and picturesque spots to abandon them. Some discarded boots of my own were produced, but they were quite different from the old boot of the outer air. These home-kept old boots were lovely in their way, hoary with mould running into the most exquisite tints of glaucophane and blue-grey, but it was a different way altogether from that of the wild boot.

A friend says, that these boots are cast away by tramps. People, he states, give your tramp old boots and hats in great profusion, and the

modesty of the recipient drives him to these picturesque and secluded spots to effect the necessary change. But no nature-lover has ever observed the tramp or tramp family in the act of changing their clothes, and since there are even reasons to suppose that their garments are not detachable, it seems preferable to leave the wayside boot as a pleasant flavouring of mystery to our ramble. Another point, which also goes to explode this tramp theory, is that these countryside boots *never occur in pairs*, as any observer of natural history can testify....

So our Cockney Jefferies proceeds, presently coming upon a cinder path. They use cinders a lot about Sutton, to make country paths with; it gives you an unexpected surprise the first time it occurs. You drop suddenly out of a sweetly tangled lane into a veritable bit of the Black Country, and go on with loathing in your soul for your fellow-creatures. There is also an abundance of that last product of civilisation, barbed wire. Oh that I were Gideon! with thorns and briers of the wilderness would I teach these elders of Sutton! But a truce to dark thoughts!

We take our last look at the country from the open down above Sutton. Blue hills beyond blue hills recede into the remote distance; from Banstead Down one can see into Oxfordshire. Windsor Castle is in minute blue silhouette to the left, and to the right and nearer is the Crystal Palace. And closer, clusters red-roofed Sutton and its tower, then Cheam, with its white spire, and further is Ewell, set in a variegated texture of autumn foliage. Water gleams — a silver thread — at Ewell, and the sinking sun behind us catches a window here and there, and turns it into an eye of flame. And so to Sutton station and home to Cockneydom once more.

FROM AN OBSERVATORY

It will be some time yet before the rising of the moon. Looking down from the observatory one can see the pathways across the park dotted out in yellow lamps, each with a fringe of dim green; and further off, hot and bright, is the tracery of the illuminated streets, through which the people go to and fro. Save for an occasional stirring, or a passing voice speaking out of the dimness beneath me, the night is very still. Not a cloud is to be seen in the dark midwinter sky to hide one speck of its broad smears of star dust and its shining constellations.

As the moon rises, heaven will be flooded with blue light, and one after another the stars will be submerged and lost, until only a solitary shining pinnacle of brightness will here and there remain out of the whole host of them. It is curious to think that, were the moon but a little brighter and truly the ruler of the night, rising to its empire with the setting of the sun, we should never dream of the great stellar universe in which our little solar system swims — or know it only as a traveller's tale, a strange thing to be seen at times in the Arctic Circle. Nay, if the earth's atmosphere were some few score miles higher, a night-long twilight would be drawn like an impenetrable veil across the stars. By a mere accident of our existence we see their multitude ever and again, when the curtains of the daylight and moonlight, and of our own narrow pressing necessities, are for a little while drawn back. Then, for an interval, we look, as if out of a window, into the great deep of heaven. So far as physical science goes, there is nothing in the essential conditions of our existence to necessitate that we should have these transitory glimpses of infinite space. We can imagine men just like ourselves without such an outlook. But it happens that we have it.

If we had not this vision, if we had always so much light in the sky that we could not perceive the stars, our lives, so far as we can infer, would be very much as they are now; there would still be the same needs and desires, the same appliances for our safety and satisfaction; this little gaslit world below would scarcely miss the stars now, if they were blotted out for ever. But our science would be different in some respects had we never seen them. We should still

have good reason, in Foucault's pendulum experiment, for supposing that the world rotated upon its axis, and that the sun was so far relatively fixed; but we should have no suspicion of the orbital revolution of the world. Instead we should ascribe the seasonal differences to a meridional movement of the sun. Our spectroscopic astronomy — so far as it refers to the composition of the sun and moon — would stand precisely where it does, but the bulk of our mathematical astronomy would not exist. Our calendar would still be in all essential respects as it is now; our year with the solstices and equinoxes as its cardinal points. The texture of our poetry might conceivably be the poorer without its star spangles; our philosophy, for the want of a nebular hypothesis. These would be the main differences. Yet, to those who indulge in speculative dreaming, how much smaller life would be with a sun and a moon and a blue beyond for the only visible, the only thinkable universe. And it is, we repeat, from the scientific standpoint a mere accident that the present — the daylight — world periodically opens, as it were, and gives us this inspiring glimpse of the remoteness of space.

One may imagine countless meteors and comets streaming through the solar system, unobserved by those who dwelt under such conditions as have just been suggested, or some huge dark body from the outer depths sweeping straight at that little visible universe, and all unsuspected by the inhabitants. One may imagine the scientific people of such a world, calm in their assurance of the permanence of things, incapable almost of conceiving any disturbing cause. One may imagine how an imaginative writer who doubted that permanence would be pooh-poohed. "Cannot we see to the uttermost limits of space?" they might argue, "and is it not altogether blue and void?" Then, as the unseen visitor draws near, begin the most extraordinary perturbations. The two known heavenly bodies suddenly fail from their accustomed routine. The moon, hitherto invariably full, changes towards its last quarter — and then, behold! for the first time the rays of the greater stars visibly pierce the blue canopy of the sky. How suddenly — painfully almost — the minds of thinking men would be enlarged when this rash of the stars appeared.

And what then if *our* heavens were to open? Very thin indeed is

the curtain between us and the unknown. There is a fear of the night that is begotten of ignorance and superstition, a nightmare fear, the fear of the impossible; and there is another fear of the night — of the starlit night — that comes with knowledge, when we see in its true proportion this little life of ours with all its phantasmal environment of cities and stores and arsenals, and the habits, prejudices, and promises of men. Down there in the gaslit street such things are real and solid enough, the only real things, perhaps; but not up here, not under the midnight sky. Here for a space, standing silently upon the dim, grey tower of the old observatory, we may clear our minds of instincts and illusions, and look out upon the real.

And now to the eastward the stars are no longer innumerable, and the sky grows wan. Then a faint silvery mist appears above the housetops, and at last in the midst of this there comes a brilliantly shining line — the upper edge of the rising moon.

THE MODE IN MONUMENTS

STRAY THOUGHTS IN HIGHGATE CEMETERY

On a sharp, sunlight morning, when the white clouds are drifting swiftly across the luminous blue sky, there is no finer walk about London than the Highgate ridge. One may stay awhile on the Archway looking down upon the innumerable roofs of London stretching southward into the haze, and shining here and there with the reflection of the rising sun, and then wander on along the picturesque road by the college of Saint Aloysius to the new Catholic church, and so through the Waterlow Park to the cemetery. The Waterlow Park is a pleasant place, full of children and aged persons in perambulators during the middle hours of the day, and in the summer evening time a haunt of young lovers; but your early wanderer finds it solitary save for Vertumnus, who, with L.C.C. on the front of him, is putting in crocuses. So we wander down to the little red lodge, whence a sinuous road runs to Hampstead, and presently into the close groves of monuments that whiten the opposite slope.

How tightly these white sepulchres are packed here! How different this congestion of sorrow from the mossy latitude of God's Acre in the country! The dead are crammed together as closely as the living seemed in that bird's-eye view from the Archway. There is no ample shadow of trees, no tangled corners where mother earth may weave flower garlands over her returning children. The monuments positively jostle and elbow each other for frontage upon the footways. And they are so rawly clean and assertive. Most of them are conspicuously new whitened, with freshly-blackened or newly-gilt inscriptions, bare of lichen, moss, or mystery, and altogether so restless that it seems to the meditative man that the struggle for existence, for mere standing room and a show in the world, still rages among the dead. The unstable slope of the hill, with its bristling array of obelisks, crosses and urns, craning one above another, is as directly opposed to the restfulness of the village churchyard with its serene outspreading yews as midday Fleet Street to a Sabbath evening amidst the Sussex hills. This cemetery is, indeed, a veritable

tumult of tombs.

Another thing that presently comes painfully home to one is the lack of individuality among all these dead. Not a necessary lack of individuality so much as a deliberate avoidance of it. As one wanders along the steep, narrow pathways one is more and more profoundly impressed by the wholesale flavour of the mourning, the stereotyping of the monuments. The place is too modern for *memento mori* and the hour-glass and the skull. Instead, Slap & Dash, that excellent firm of monumental masons, everywhere crave to be remembered. Truly, the firm of Slap & Dash have much to answer for among these graves, and they do not seem to be ashamed of it.

From one elevated point in this cemetery one can count more than a hundred urns, getting at last weary and confused with the receding multitude. The urn is not dissimilar to the domestic mantel ornament, and always a stony piece of textile fabric is feigned to be thrown over its shoulder. At times it is wreathed in stony flowers. The only variety is in the form. Sometimes your urn is broad and squat, a Silenus among urns; sometimes fragile and high-shouldered, like a slender old maid; here an "out-size" in urns stalwart and strong, and there a dwarf peeping quaintly from its wrapping. The obelisks, too, run through a long scale of size and refinement. But the curious man finds no hidden connection between the carriage of the monument and the character of the dead. Messrs. Slap & Dash apparently take the urn or obelisk that comes readiest to hand. One wonders dimly why mourners have this overwhelming proclivity for Messrs. Slap & Dash and their obelisk and urn.

The reason why the firm produces these articles may be guessed at. They are probably easy to make, and require scarcely any skill. The contemplative man has a dim vision of a grimy shed in a back street, where a human being passes dismally through life the while he chips out an unending succession of these cheap urns and obelisks for his employers' retailing. But the question why numberless people will profane the memory of their departed by these public advertisements of Slap & Dash, and their evil trade, is a more difficult problem. For surely nothing could be more unmeaning or more ungainly than the monumental urn, unless it be the monumental obelisk. The plain cross, by contrast, has the tenderest meaning, and

is a simple and fitting monument that no repetition can stale.

The artistic cowardice of the English is perhaps the clue to the mystery. Your Englishman is always afraid to commit himself to criticism without the refuge of a *tu quoque*. He is covered dead, just as he is covered living, with the "correct thing." A respectable stock-in-trade is proffered him by the insinuating shopman, to whom it is our custom to go. He is told this is selling well, or that is much admired. Heaven defend that he should admire on his own account! He orders the stock urn or the stock slab because it is large and sufficiently expensive for his means and sorrow, and because he knows of nothing better. So we mourn as the stonemason decrees, or after the example and pattern of the Smiths next door. But some day it will dawn upon us that a little thought and a search after beauty are far more becoming than an order and a cheque to the nearest advertising tradesman. Or it may be we shall conclude that the anonymous peace of a grassy mould is better than his commercial brutalities, and so there will be an end of him.

One may go from end to end of this cemetery and find scarcely anything beautiful, appropriate, or tender. A lion, ill done, and yet to some degree impressive, lies complacently above a menagerie keeper, and near this is a tomb of some imagination, with reliefs of the life of Christ. In one place a grotesque horse, with a head disproportionately vast, is to be seen. Perhaps among all these monuments the one to Mrs. Blake is the most pleasing. It is a simply and quaintly executed kneeling figure, with a certain quiet and pathetic reverence of pose that is strangely restful against the serried vulgarity around it.

But the tradesman ghoul will not leave us; he follows us up and down, indecently clamouring his name and address, and at last turns our meditation to despair. Certain stock devices become as painful as popular autotypes. There is the lily broken on its stalk; we meet it here on a cross and there on an obelisk, presently on the pedestal of an urn. There is the hand pointing upward, here balanced on the top of an obelisk and there upon a cross. The white-robed angel, free from the remotest shadow of expression, meets us again and again. "All this is mine," says the tradesman ghoul. "Behold the names of me — Slap & Dash here, the Ugliness Company there, and this the

work of the Cheap and Elegant Funeral Association. This is where we slew the art of sculpture. These are our trophies that sculpture is no more. All this marble might have been beautiful, all this sorrow might have been expressive, had it not been for us. See, this is our border, No. A 5, and our pedestal No. E, and our second quality urn, along of a nice appropriate text — a pretty combination and a cheap one. Or we can do it you better in border A 3, and pedestal C, and a larger urn or a hangel — —"

The meditative man is seized with a dismal horror, and retreats to the gates. Even there a wooden advertisement grins broadly at him in his discomfiture, and shouts a name athwart his route. And so down the winding road to the valley, and then up Parliament Hill towards Hampstead and its breeze-whipped ponds. And the mind of him is full of a dim vision of days that have been, when sculptor and stonemason were one, when the artist put his work in the porch for all the world to see, when people had leisure to think how things should be done and heart to do them well, when there was beauty in the business of life and dignity in death. And he wonders rather hopelessly if people will ever rise up against these damnable tradesmen who ruin our arts, make our lives costly and dismal, and advertise, advertise even on our graves

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HOW I DIED

It is now ten years ago since I received my death warrant. All these ten years I have been, and I am, and shall be, I hope, for years yet, a Doomed Man. It only occurred to me yesterday that I had been dodging — missing rather than dodging — the common enemy for such a space of time. *Then*, I know, I respected him. It seemed he marched upon me, inexorable, irresistible; even at last I felt his grip upon me. I bowed in the shadow. And he passed. Ten years ago, and once since, he and I have been very near. But now he seems to me but a blind man, and we, with all our solemn folly of medicine and hygiene, but players in a game of Blind Man's Buff. The gaunt, familiar hand comes out suddenly, swiftly, this time surely? And it passes close to my shoulder; I hear someone near me cry, and it is over.... Another ream of paper; there is time at least for the Great Book still.

Very close to the tragedy of life is the comedy, brightest upon the very edge of the dark, and I remember now with a queer touch of sympathetic amusement my dear departed self of the middle eighties. How the thing staggered me! I was full of the vast ambition of youth; I was still at the age when death is quite out of sight, when life is still an interminable vista of years; and then suddenly, with a gout of blood upon my knuckle, with a queer familiar taste in my mouth, that cough which had been a bother became a tragedy, and this world that had been so solid grew faint and thin. I saw through it; saw his face near to my own; suddenly found him beside me, when I had been dreaming he was far beyond there, far away over the hills.

My first phase was an immense sorrow for myself. It was a purely selfish emotion. You see I had been saving myself up, denying myself half the pride of life and most of its indulgence, drilling myself like a drill-sergeant, with my eyes on those now unattainable hills. Had I known it was to end so soon, I should have planned everything so differently. I lay in bed mourning my truncated existence. Then presently the sorrow broadened. They were so sorry, so genuinely sorry for me. And they considered me so much now. I had this and that they would never have given me before — the

stateliest bedding, the costliest food. I could feel from my bed the suddenly disorganised house, the distressed friends, the new-born solicitude. Insensibly a realisation of enhanced importance came to temper my regrets for my neglected sins. The lost world, that had seemed so brilliant and attractive, dwindled steadily as the days of my illness wore on. I thought more of the world's loss, and less of my own.

Then came the long journey; the princely style of it! the sudden awakening on the part of external humanity, which had hitherto been wont to jostle me, to help itself before me, to turn its back upon me, to my importance. "He has a diseased lung — cannot live long"....

I was going into the dark and I was not afraid — with ostentation. I still regard that, though now with scarcely so much gravity as heretofore, as a very magnificent period in my life. For nearly four months I was dying with immense dignity. Plutarch might have recorded it. I wrote — in touchingly unsteady pencil — to all my intimate friends, and indeed to many other people. I saw the littleness of hate and ambition. I forgave my enemies, and they were subdued and owned to it. How they must regret these admissions! I made many memorable remarks. This lasted, I say, nearly four months.

The medical profession, which had pronounced my death sentence, reiterated it steadily — has, indeed, done so now this ten years. Towards the end of those four months, however, dying lost its freshness for me. I began to detect a certain habitual quality in my service. I had exhausted all my memorable remarks upon the subject, and the strain began to tell upon all of us.

One day in the spring-time I crawled out alone, carefully wrapped, and with a stick, to look once more — perhaps for the last time — on sky and earth, and the first scattered skirmishers of the coming army of flowers. It was a day of soft wind, when the shadows of the clouds go sweeping over the hills. Quite casually I happened upon a girl clambering over a hedge, and her dress had caught in a bramble, and the chat was quite impromptu and most idyllic. I remember she had three or four wood anemones in her hand— "wind stars" she called them, and I thought it a pretty name. And we talked of this and that, with a light in our eyes, as young folks will.

I quite forgot I was a Doomed Man. I surprised myself walking

home with a confident stride that jarred with the sudden recollection of my funereal circumstances. For a moment I tried in vain to think what it was had slipped my memory. Then it came, colourless and remote. “Oh! Death.... He’s a Bore,” I said; “I’ve done with him,” and laughed to think of having done with him.

“And why not so?” said I.

THE END

ANTICIPATIONS OF THE REACTIONS OF MECHANICAL AND SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS UPON HUMAN LIFE AND THOUGHT

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ANTICIPATIONS

I. Locomotion in the Twentieth Century

It is proposed in this book to present in as orderly an arrangement as the necessarily diffused nature of the subject admits, certain speculations about the trend of present forces, speculations which, taken all together, will build up an imperfect and very hypothetical, but sincerely intended forecast of the way things will probably go in this new century. Necessarily diffidence will be one of the graces of the performance. Hitherto such forecasts have been presented almost invariably in the form of fiction, and commonly the provocation of the satirical opportunity has been too much for the writer; the narrative form becomes more and more of a nuisance as the speculative inductions become sincerer, and here it will be abandoned altogether in favour of a texture of frank inquiries and arranged considerations. Our utmost aim is a rough sketch of the coming time, a prospectus, as it were, of the joint undertaking of mankind in facing these impending years. The reader is a prospective shareholder — he and his heirs — though whether he will find this anticipatory balance-sheet to his belief or liking is another matter.

For reasons that will develop themselves more clearly as these papers unfold, it is extremely convenient to begin with a speculation upon the probable developments and changes of the means of land locomotion during the coming decades. No one who has studied the civil history of the nineteenth century will deny how far-reaching the consequences of changes in transit may be, and no one who has studied the military performances of General Buller and General De Wet but will see that upon transport, upon locomotion, may also hang the most momentous issues of politics and war. The growth of our great cities, the rapid populating of America, the entry of China into the field of European politics are, for example, quite obviously and directly consequences of new methods of locomotion. And while so much hangs upon the development of these methods, that development is, on the other hand, a process comparatively independent, now at any rate, of most of the other great movements

affected by it. It depends upon a sequence of ideas arising, and of experiments made, and upon laws of political economy, almost as inevitable as natural laws. Such great issues, supposing them to be possible, as the return of Western Europe to the Roman communion, the overthrow of the British Empire by Germany, or the inundation of Europe by the "Yellow Peril," might conceivably affect such details, let us say, as door-handles and ventilators or mileage of line, but would probably leave the essential features of the evolution of locomotion untouched. The evolution of locomotion has a purely historical relation to the Western European peoples. It is no longer dependent upon them, or exclusively in their hands. The Malay nowadays sets out upon his pilgrimage to Mecca in an excursion steamship of iron, and the immemorial Hindoo goes a-shopping in a train, and in Japan and Australasia and America, there are plentiful hands and minds to take up the process now, even should the European let it fall.

The beginning of this twentieth century happens to coincide with a very interesting phase in that great development of means of land transit that has been the distinctive feature (speaking materially) of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century, when it takes its place with the other centuries in the chronological charts of the future, will, if it needs a symbol, almost inevitably have as that symbol a steam engine running upon a railway. This period covers the first experiments, the first great developments, and the complete elaboration of that mode of transit, and the determination of nearly all the broad features of this century's history may be traced directly or indirectly to that process. And since an interesting light is thrown upon the new phases in land locomotion that are now beginning, it will be well to begin this forecast with a retrospect, and to revise very shortly the history of the addition of steam travel to the resources of mankind.

A curious and profitable question arises at once. How is it that the steam locomotive appeared at the time it did, and not earlier in the history of the world?

Because it was not invented. But why was it not invented? Not for want of a crowning intellect, for none of the many minds concerned in the development strikes one — as the mind of Newton,

Shakespeare, or Darwin strikes one — as being that of an unprecedented man. It is not that the need for the railway and steam engine had only just arisen, and — to use one of the most egregiously wrong and misleading phrases that ever dropped from the lips of man — the demand created the supply; it was quite the other way about. There was really no urgent demand for such things at the time; the current needs of the European world seem to have been fairly well served by coach and diligence in 1800, and, on the other hand, every administrator of intelligence in the Roman and Chinese empires must have felt an urgent need for more rapid methods of transit than those at his disposal. Nor was the development of the steam locomotive the result of any sudden discovery of steam. Steam, and something of the mechanical possibilities of steam, had been known for two thousand years; it had been used for pumping water, opening doors, and working toys, before the Christian era. It may be urged that this advance was the outcome of that new and more systematic handling of knowledge initiated by Lord Bacon and sustained by the Royal Society; but this does not appear to have been the case, though no doubt the new habits of mind that spread outward from that centre played their part. The men whose names are cardinal in the history of this development invented, for the most part, in a quite empirical way, and Trevithick's engine was running along its rails and Evan's boat was walloping up the Hudson a quarter of a century before Carnot expounded his general proposition. There were no such deductions from principles to application as occur in the story of electricity to justify our attribution of the steam engine to the scientific impulse. Nor does this particular invention seem to have been directly due to the new possibilities of reducing, shaping, and casting iron, afforded by the substitution of coal for wood in iron works; through the greater temperature afforded by a coal fire. In China coal has been used in the reduction of iron for many centuries. No doubt these new facilities did greatly help the steam engine in its invasion of the field of common life, but quite certainly they were not sufficient to set it going. It was, indeed, not one cause, but a very complex and unprecedented series of causes, that set the steam locomotive going. It was indirectly, and in another way, that the introduction of coal

became the decisive factor. One peculiar condition of its production in England seems to have supplied just one ingredient that had been missing for two thousand years in the group of conditions that were necessary before the steam locomotive could appear.

This missing ingredient was a demand for some comparatively simple, profitable machine, upon which the elementary principles of steam utilization could be worked out. If one studies Stephenson's "Rocket" in detail, as one realizes its profound complexity, one begins to understand how impossible it would have been for that structure to have come into existence *de novo*, however urgently the world had need of it. But it happened that the coal needed to replace the dwindling forests of this small and exceptionally rain-saturated country occurs in low hollow basins overlying clay, and not, as in China and the Alleghanies for example, on high-lying outcrops, that can be worked as chalk is worked in England. From this fact it followed that some quite unprecedented pumping appliances became necessary, and the thoughts of practical men were turned thereby to the long-neglected possibilities of steam. Wind was extremely inconvenient for the purpose of pumping, because in these latitudes it is inconstant: it was costly, too, because at any time the labourers might be obliged to sit at the pit's mouth for weeks together, whistling for a gale or waiting for the water to be got under again. But steam had already been used for pumping upon one or two estates in England — rather as a toy than in earnest — before the middle of the seventeenth century, and the attempt to employ it was so obvious as to be practically unavoidable. The water trickling into the coal measures acted, therefore, like water trickling upon chemicals that have long been mixed together dry and inert. Immediately the latent reactions were set going. Savery, Newcomen, a host of other workers, culminating in Watt, working always by steps that were at least so nearly obvious as to give rise again and again to simultaneous discoveries, changed this toy of steam into a real, a commercial thing, developed a trade in pumping engines, created foundries and a new art of engineering, and almost unconscious of what they were doing, made the steam locomotive a well-nigh unavoidable consequence. At last, after a century of improvement on pumping engines, there remained nothing but the

very obvious stage of getting the engine that had been developed on wheels and out upon the ways of the world.

Ever and again during the eighteenth century an engine would be put upon the roads and pronounced a failure — one monstrous Palæoferric creature was visible on a French high road as early as 1769 — but by the dawn of the nineteenth century the problem had very nearly got itself solved. By 1804 Trevithick had a steam locomotive indisputably in motion and almost financially possible, and from his hands it puffed its way, slowly at first, and then, under Stephenson, faster and faster, to a transitory empire over the earth. It was a steam locomotive — but for all that it was primarily *a steam engine for pumping* adapted to a new end; it was a steam engine whose ancestral stage had developed under conditions that were by no means exacting in the matter of weight. And from that fact followed a consequence that has hampered railway travel and transport very greatly, and that is tolerated nowadays only through a belief in its practical necessity. The steam locomotive was all too huge and heavy for the high road — it had to be put upon rails. And so clearly linked are steam engines and railways in our minds that, in common language now, the latter implies the former. But indeed it is the result of accidental impediments, of avoidable difficulties that we travel to-day on rails.

Railway travelling is at best a compromise. The quite conceivable ideal of locomotive convenience, so far as travellers are concerned, is surely a highly mobile conveyance capable of travelling easily and swiftly to any desired point, traversing, at a reasonably controlled pace, the ordinary roads and streets, and having access for higher rates of speed and long-distance travelling to specialized ways restricted to swift traffic, and possibly furnished with guide-rails. For the collection and delivery of all sorts of perishable goods also the same system is obviously altogether superior to the existing methods. Moreover, such a system would admit of that secular progress in engines and vehicles that the stereotyped conditions of the railway have almost completely arrested, because it would allow almost any new pattern to be put at once upon the ways without interference with the established traffic. Had such an ideal been kept in view from the first the traveller would now be able to get through his long-

distance journeys at a pace of from seventy miles or more an hour without changing, and without any of the trouble, waiting, expense, and delay that arises between the household or hotel and the actual rail. It was an ideal that must have been at least possible to an intelligent person fifty years ago, and, had it been resolutely pursued, the world, instead of fumbling from compromise to compromise as it always has done and as it will do very probably for many centuries yet, might have been provided to-day, not only with an infinitely more practicable method of communication, but with one capable of a steady and continual evolution from year to year.

But there was a more obvious path of development and one immediately cheaper, and along that path went short-sighted Nineteenth Century Progress, quite heedless of the possibility of ending in a *cul-de-sac*. The first locomotives, apart from the heavy tradition of their ancestry, were, like all experimental machinery, needlessly clumsy and heavy, and their inventors, being men of insufficient faith, instead of working for lightness and smoothness of motion, took the easier course of placing them upon the tramways that were already in existence — chiefly for the transit of heavy goods over soft roads. And from that followed a very interesting and curious result.

These tram-lines very naturally had exactly the width of an ordinary cart, a width prescribed by the strength of one horse. Few people saw in the locomotive anything but a cheap substitute for horseflesh, or found anything incongruous in letting the dimensions of a horse determine the dimensions of an engine. It mattered nothing that from the first the passenger was ridiculously cramped, hampered, and crowded in the carriage. He had always been cramped in a coach, and it would have seemed "Utopian" — a very dreadful thing indeed to our grandparents — to propose travel without cramping. By mere inertia the horse-cart gauge, the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge, *nemine contradicente*, established itself in the world, and now everywhere the train is dwarfed to a scale that limits alike its comfort, power, and speed. Before every engine, as it were, trots the ghost of a superseded horse, refuses most resolutely to trot faster than fifty miles an hour, and shies and threatens catastrophe at every point and curve. That fifty miles an hour, most authorities are agreed, is the limit of our

speed for land travel, so far as existing conditions go. Only a revolutionary reconstruction of the railways or the development of some new competing method of land travel can carry us beyond that.

People of to-day take the railways for granted as they take sea and sky; they were born in a railway world, and they expect to die in one. But if only they will strip from their eyes the most blinding of all influences, acquiescence in the familiar, they will see clearly enough that this vast and elaborate railway system of ours, by which the whole world is linked together, is really only a vast system of trains of horse-waggons and coaches drawn along rails by pumping-engines upon wheels. Is that, in spite of its present vast extension, likely to remain the predominant method of land locomotion — even for so short a period as the next hundred years?

Now, so much capital is represented by the existing type of railways, and they have so firm an establishment in the acquiescence of men, that it is very doubtful if the railways will ever attempt any very fundamental change in the direction of greater speed or facility, unless they are first exposed to the pressure of our second alternative, competition, and we may very well go on to inquire how long will it be before that second alternative comes into operation — if ever it is to do so.

Let us consider what other possibilities seem to offer themselves. Let us revert to the ideal we have already laid down, and consider what hopes and obstacles to its attainment there seem to be. The abounding presence of numerous experimental motors to-day is so stimulating to the imagination, there are so many stimulated persons at work upon them, that it is difficult to believe the obvious impossibility of most of them — their convulsiveness, clumsiness, and, in many cases, exasperating trail of stench will not be rapidly fined away. I do not think that it is asking too much of the reader's faith in progress to assume that so far as a light powerful engine goes, comparatively noiseless, smooth-running, not obnoxious to sensitive nostrils, and altogether suitable for high road traffic, the problem will very speedily be solved. And upon that assumption, in what direction are these new motor vehicles likely to develop? how will they react upon the railways? and where finally will they take us?

At present they seem to promise developments upon three distinct and definite lines.

There will, first of all, be the motor truck for heavy traffic. Already such trucks are in evidence distributing goods and parcels of various sorts. And sooner or later, no doubt, the numerous advantages of such an arrangement will lead to the organization of large carrier companies, using such motor trucks to carry goods in bulk or parcels on the high roads. Such companies will be in an exceptionally favourable position to organize storage and repair for the motors of the general public on profitable terms, and possibly to co-operate in various ways with the manufactures of special types of motor machines.

In the next place, and parallel with the motor truck, there will develop the hired or privately owned motor carriage. This, for all except the longest journeys, will add a fine sense of personal independence to all the small conveniences of first-class railway travel. It will be capable of a day's journey of three hundred miles or more, long before the developments to be presently foreshadowed arrive. One will change nothing — unless it is the driver — from stage to stage. One will be free to dine where one chooses, hurry when one chooses, travel asleep or awake, stop and pick flowers, turn over in bed of a morning and tell the carriage to wait — unless, which is highly probable, one sleeps aboard....

And thirdly there will be the motor omnibus, attacking or developing out of the horse omnibus companies and the suburban lines. All this seems fairly safe prophesying.

And these things, which are quite obviously coming even now, will be working out their many structural problems when the next phase in their development begins. The motor omnibus companies competing against the suburban railways will find themselves hampered in the speed of their longer runs by the slower horse traffic on their routes, and they will attempt to secure, and, it may be, after tough legislative struggles, will secure the power to form private roads of a new sort, upon which their vehicles will be free to travel up to the limit of their very highest possible speed. It is along the line of such private tracks and roads that the forces of change will certainly tend to travel, and along which I am absolutely convinced

they will travel. This segregation of motor traffic is probably a matter that may begin even in the present decade.

Once this process of segregation from the high road of the horse and pedestrian sets in, it will probably go on rapidly. It may spread out from short omnibus routes, much as the London Metropolitan Railway system has spread. The motor carrier companies, competing in speed of delivery with the quickened railways, will conceivably co-operate with the long-distance omnibus and the hired carriage companies in the formation of trunk lines. Almost insensibly, certain highly profitable longer routes will be joined up — the London to Brighton, for example, in England. And the quiet English citizen will, no doubt, while these things are still quite exceptional and experimental in his lagging land, read one day with surprise in the violently illustrated popular magazines of 1910, that there are now so many thousand miles of these roads already established in America and Germany and elsewhere. And thereupon, after some patriotic meditations, he may pull himself together.

We may even hazard some details about these special roads. For example, they will be very different from macadamized roads; they will be used only by soft-tired conveyances; the battering horseshoes, the perpetual filth of horse traffic, and the clumsy wheels of laden carts will never wear them. It may be that they will have a surface like that of some cycle-racing tracks, though since they will be open to wind and weather, it is perhaps more probable they will be made of very good asphalt sloped to drain, and still more probable that they will be of some quite new substance altogether — whether hard or resilient is beyond my foretelling. They will have to be very wide — they will be just as wide as the courage of their promoters goes — and if the first made are too narrow there will be no question of gauge to limit the later ones. Their traffic in opposite directions will probably be strictly separated, and it will no doubt habitually disregard complicated and fussy regulations imposed under the initiative of the Railway Interest by such official bodies as the Board of Trade. The promoters will doubtless take a hint from suburban railway traffic and from the current difficulty of the Metropolitan police, and where their ways branch the streams of traffic will not cross at a level but by bridges. It is easily conceivable that once these

tracks are in existence, cyclists and motors other than those of the constructing companies will be able to make use of them. And, moreover, once they exist it will be possible to experiment with vehicles of a size and power quite beyond the dimensions prescribed by our ordinary roads — roads whose width has been entirely determined by the size of a cart a horse can pull.

Countless modifying influences will, of course, come into operation. For example, it has been assumed, perhaps rashly, that the railway influence will certainly remain jealous and hostile to these growths: that what may be called the "Bicycle Ticket Policy" will be pursued throughout. Assuredly there will be fights of a very complicated sort at first, but once one of these specialized lines is in operation, it may be that some at least of the railway companies will hasten to replace their flanged rolling stock by carriages with rubber tyres, remove their rails, broaden their cuttings and embankments, raise their bridges, and take to the new ways of traffic. Or they may find it answer to cut fares, widen their gauges, reduce their gradients, modify their points and curves, and woo the passenger back with carriages beautifully hung and sumptuously furnished, and all the convenience and luxury of a club. Few people would mind being an hour or so longer going to Paris from London, if the railway travelling was neither rackety, cramped, nor tedious. One could be patient enough if one was neither being jarred, deafened, cut into slices by draughts, and continually more densely caked in a filthy dust of coal; if one could write smoothly and easily at a steady table, read papers, have one's hair cut, and dine in comfort — none of which things are possible at present, and none of which require any new inventions, any revolutionary contrivances, or indeed anything but an intelligent application of existing resources and known principles. Our rage for fast trains, so far as long-distance travel is concerned, is largely a passion to end the extreme discomfort involved. It is in the daily journey, on the suburban train, that daily tax of time, that speed is in itself so eminently desirable, and it is just here that the conditions of railway travel most hopelessly fail. It must always be remembered that the railway train, as against the motor, has the advantage that its wholesale traction reduces the prime cost by demanding only one engine for a great number of coaches. This

will not serve the first-class long-distance passenger, but it may the third. Against that economy one must balance the necessary delay of a relatively infrequent service, which latter item becomes relatively greater and greater in proportion to the former, the briefer the journey to be made.

And it may be that many railways, which are neither capable of modification into suburban motor tracks, nor of development into luxurious through routes, will find, in spite of the loss of many elements of their old activity, that there is still a profit to be made from a certain section of the heavy goods traffic, and from cheap excursions. These are forms of work for which railways seem to be particularly adapted, and which the diversion of a great portion of their passenger traffic would enable them to conduct even more efficiently. It is difficult to imagine, for example, how any sort of road-car organization could beat the railways at the business of distributing coal and timber and similar goods, which are taken in bulk directly from the pit or wharf to local centres of distribution.

It must always be remembered that at the worst the defeat of such a great organization as the railway system does not involve its disappearance until a long period has elapsed. It means at first no more than a period of modification and differentiation. Before extinction can happen a certain amount of wealth in railway property must absolutely disappear. Though under the stress of successful competition the capital value of the railways may conceivably fall, and continue to fall, towards the marine store prices, fares and freights pursue the sweated working expenses to the vanishing point, and the land occupied sink to the level of not very eligible building sites: yet the railways will, nevertheless, continue in operation until these downward limits are positively attained.

An imagination prone to the picturesque insists at this stage upon a vision of the latter days of one of the less happily situated lines. Along a weedy embankment there pants and clangs a patched and tarnished engine, its paint blistered, its parts leprously dull. It is driven by an aged and sweated driver, and the burning garbage of its furnace distils a choking reek into the air. A huge train of urban dust trucks bangs and clatters behind it, *en route* to that sequestered dumping ground where rubbish is burnt to some industrial end. But

that is a lapse into the merely just possible, and at most a local tragedy. Almost certainly the existing lines of railway will develop and differentiate, some in one direction and some in another, according to the nature of the pressure upon them. Almost all will probably be still in existence and in divers ways busy, spite of the swarming new highways I have ventured to foreshadow, a hundred years from now.

In fact, we have to contemplate, not so much a supersession of the railways as a modification and specialization of them in various directions, and the enormous development beside them of competing and supplementary methods. And step by step with these developments will come a very considerable acceleration of the ferry traffic of the narrow seas through such improvements as the introduction of turbine engines. So far as the high road and the longer journeys go this is the extent of our prophecy.

But in the discussion of all questions of land locomotion one must come at last to the knots of the network, to the central portions of the towns, the dense, vast towns of our time, with their high ground values and their narrow, already almost impassable, streets. I hope at a later stage to give some reasons for anticipating that the centripetal pressure of the congested towns of our epoch may ultimately be very greatly relieved, but for the next few decades at least the usage of existing conditions will prevail, and in every town there is a certain nucleus of offices, hotels, and shops upon which the centrifugal forces I anticipate will certainly not operate. At present the streets of many larger towns, and especially of such old-established towns as London, whose central portions have the narrowest arteries, present a quite unprecedented state of congestion. When the Green of some future *History of the English People* comes to review our times, he will, from his standpoint of comfort and convenience, find the present streets of London quite or even more incredibly unpleasant than are the filthy kennels, the mudholes and darkness of the streets of the seventeenth century to our enlightened minds. He will echo our question, “Why *did* people stand it?” He will be struck first of all by the omnipresence of mud, filthy mud, churned up by hoofs and wheels under the inclement skies, and perpetually defiled and added to by innumerable horses. Imagine his description of a young lady

crossing the road at the Marble Arch in London, on a wet November afternoon, “breathless, foul-footed, splashed by a passing hansom from head to foot, happy that she has reached the further pavement alive at the mere cost of her ruined clothes.”... “Just where the bicycle might have served its most useful purpose,” he will write, “in affording a healthy daily ride to the innumerable clerks and such-like sedentary toilers of the central region, it was rendered impossible by the danger of side-slip in this vast ferocious traffic.” And, indeed, to my mind at least, this last is the crowning absurdity of the present state of affairs, that the clerk and the shop hand, classes of people positively starved of exercise, should be obliged to spend yearly the price of a bicycle upon a season-ticket, because of the quite unendurable inconvenience and danger of urban cycling.

Now, in what direction will matters move? The first and most obvious thing to do, the thing that in many cases is being attempted and in a futile, insufficient way getting itself done, the thing that I do not for one moment regard as the final remedy, is the remedy of the architect and builder — profitable enough to them, anyhow — to widen the streets and to cut “new arteries.” Now, every new artery means a series of new whirlpools of traffic, such as the pensive Londoner may study for himself at the intersection of Shaftesbury Avenue with Oxford Street, and unless colossal — or inconveniently steep — crossing-bridges are made, the wider the affluent arteries the more terrible the battle of the traffic. Imagine Regent’s Circus on the scale of the Place de la Concorde. And there is the value of the ground to consider; with every increment of width the value of the dwindling remainder in the meshes of the network of roads will rise, until to pave the widened streets with gold will be a mere trifling addition to the cost of their “improvement.”

There is, however, quite another direction in which the congestion may find relief, and that is in the “regulation” of the traffic. This has already begun in London in an attack on the crawling cab and in the new bye-laws of the London County Council, whereby certain specified forms of heavy traffic are prohibited the use of the streets between ten and seven. These things may be the first beginning of a process of restriction that may go far. Many people living at the present time, who have grown up amidst the exceptional and

possibly very transient characteristics of this time, will be disposed to regard the traffic in the streets of our great cities as a part of the natural order of things, and as unavoidable as the throng upon the pavement. But indeed the presence of all the chief constituents of this vehicular torrent — the cabs and hansoms, the vans, the omnibuses — everything, indeed, except the few private carriages — are as novel, as distinctively things of the nineteenth century, as the railway train and the needle telegraph. The streets of the great towns of antiquity, the streets of the great towns of the East, the streets of all the mediæval towns, were not intended for any sort of wheeled traffic at all — were designed primarily and chiefly for pedestrians. So it would be, I suppose, in any one's ideal city. Surely Town, in theory at least, is a place one walks about as one walks about a house and garden, dressed with a certain ceremonious elaboration, safe from mud and the hardship and defilement of foul weather, buying, meeting, dining, studying, carousing, seeing the play. It is the growth in size of the city that has necessitated the growth of this coarser traffic that has made "Town" at last so utterly detestable.

But if one reflects, it becomes clear that, save for the vans of goods, this moving tide of wheeled masses is still essentially a stream of urban pedestrians, pedestrians who, by reason of the distances they have to go, have had to jump on 'buses and take cabs — in a word, to bring in the high road to their aid. And the vehicular traffic of the street is essentially the high road traffic very roughly adapted to the new needs. The cab is a simple development of the carriage, the omnibus of the coach, and the supplementary traffic of the underground and electric railways is a by no means brilliantly imagined adaptation of the long-route railway. These are all still new things, experimental to the highest degree, changing and bound to change much more, in the period of specialization that is now beginning.

Now, the first most probable development is a change in the omnibus and the omnibus railway. A point quite as important with these means of transit as actual speed of movement is frequency: time is wasted abundantly and most vexatiously at present in waiting and in accommodating one's arrangements to infrequent times of call and departure. *The more frequent a local service, the more it comes*

to be relied upon. Another point — and one in which the omnibus has a great advantage over the railway — is that it should be possible to get on and off at any point, or at as many points on the route as possible. But this means a high proportion of stoppages, and this is destructive to speed. There is, however, one conceivable means of transit that is not simply frequent but continuous, that may be joined or left at any point without a stoppage, that could be adapted to many existing streets at the level or quite easily sunken in tunnels, or elevated above the street level, and that means of transit is the moving platform, whose possibilities have been exhibited to all the world in a sort of mean caricature at the Paris Exhibition. Let us imagine the inner circle of the district railway adapted to this conception. I will presume that the Parisian "rolling platform" is familiar to the reader. The district railway tunnel is, I imagine, about twenty-four feet wide. If we suppose the space given to six platforms of three feet wide and one (the most rapid) of six feet, and if we suppose each platform to be going four miles an hour faster than its slower fellow (a velocity the Paris experiment has shown to be perfectly comfortable and safe), we should have the upper platform running round the circle at a pace of twenty-eight miles an hour. If, further, we adopt an ingenious suggestion of Professor Perry's, and imagine the descent to the line made down a very slowly rotating staircase at the centre of a big rotating wheel-shaped platform, against a portion of whose rim the slowest platform runs in a curve, one could very easily add a speed of six or eight miles an hour more, and to that the man in a hurry would be able to add his own four miles an hour by walking in the direction of motion. If the reader is a traveller, and if he will imagine that black and sulphurous tunnel, swept and garnished, lit and sweet, with a train much faster than the existing underground trains perpetually ready to go off with him and never crowded — if he will further imagine this train a platform set with comfortable seats and neat bookstalls and so forth, he will get an inkling in just one detail of what he perhaps misses by living now instead of thirty or forty years ahead.

I have supposed the replacement to occur in the case of the London Inner Circle Railway, because there the necessary tunnel already exists to help the imagination of the English reader, but that

the specific replacement will occur is rendered improbable by the fact that the circle is for much of its circumference entangled with other lines of communication — the North-Western Railway, for example. As a matter of fact, as the American reader at least will promptly see, the much more practicable thing is that upper footpath, with these moving platforms beside it, running out over the street after the manner of the viaduct of an elevated railroad. But in some cases, at any rate, the demonstrated cheapness and practicability of tunnels at a considerable depth will come into play.

Will this diversion of the vast omnibus traffic of to-day into the air and underground, together with the segregation of van traffic to specific routes and times, be the only change in the streets of the new century? It may be a shock, perhaps, to some minds, but I must confess I do not see what is to prevent the process of elimination that is beginning now with the heavy vans spreading until it covers all horse traffic, and with the disappearance of horse hoofs and the necessary filth of horses, the road surface may be made a very different thing from what it is at present, better drained and admirably adapted for the soft-tired hackney vehicles and the torrent of cyclists. Moreover, there will be little to prevent a widening of the existing side walks, and the protection of the passengers from rain and hot sun by awnings, or such arcades as distinguish Turin, or Sir F. Bramwell's upper footpaths on the model of the Chester rows. Moreover, there is no reason but the existing filth why the roadways should not have translucent *velaria* to pull over in bright sunshine and wet weather. It would probably need less labour to manipulate such contrivances than is required at present for the constant conflict with slush and dust. Now, of course, we tolerate the rain, because it facilitates a sort of cleaning process....

Enough of this present speculation. I have indicated now the general lines of the roads and streets and ways and underways of the Twentieth Century. But at present they stand vacant in our prophecy, not only awaiting the human interests — the characters and occupations, and clothing of the throng of our children and our children's children that flows along them, but also the decorations our children's children's taste will dictate, the advertisements their eyes will tolerate, the shops in which they will buy. To all that we

shall finally come, and even in the next chapter I hope it will be made more evident how conveniently these later and more intimate matters follow, instead of preceding, these present mechanical considerations. And of the beliefs and hopes, the thought and language, the further prospects of this multitude as yet unborn — of these things also we shall make at last certain hazardous guesses. But at first I would submit to those who may find the "machinery in motion" excessive in this chapter, we must have the background and fittings — the scene before the play.

II. The Probable Diffusion of Great Cities

Now, the velocity at which a man and his belongings may pass about the earth is in itself a very trivial matter indeed, but it involves certain other matters not at all trivial, standing, indeed, in an almost fundamental relation to human society. It will be the business of this chapter to discuss the relation between the social order and the available means of transit, and to attempt to deduce from the principles elucidated the coming phases in that extraordinary expansion, shifting and internal redistribution of population that has been so conspicuous during the last hundred years.

Let us consider the broad features of the redistribution of the population that has characterized the nineteenth century. It may be summarized as an unusual growth of great cities and a slight tendency to depopulation in the country. The growth of the great cities is the essential phenomenon. These aggregates having populations of from eight hundred thousand upward to four and five millions, are certainly, so far as the world outside the limits of the Chinese empire goes, entirely an unprecedented thing. Never before, outside the valleys of the three great Chinese rivers, has any city — with the exception of Rome and perhaps (but very doubtfully) of Babylon — certainly had more than a million inhabitants, and it is at least permissible to doubt whether the population of Rome, in spite of its exacting a tribute of sea-borne food from the whole of the Mediterranean basin, exceeded a million for any great length of time. But there are now ten town aggregates having a population of over a million, nearly twenty that bid fair to reach that limit in the next decade, and a great number at or approaching a quarter of a million. We call these towns and cities, but, indeed, they are of a different order of things to the towns and cities of the eighteenth-century world.

Concurrently with the aggregation of people about this new sort of centre, there has been, it is alleged, a depletion of the country villages and small townships. But, so far as the counting of heads goes, this depletion is not nearly so marked as the growth of the great towns. Relatively, however, it is striking enough.

Now, is this growth of large towns really, as one may allege, a result of the development of railways in the world, or is it simply a change in human circumstances that happens to have arisen at the same time? It needs only a very general review of the conditions of the distribution of population to realize that the former is probably the true answer.

It will be convenient to make the issue part of a more general proposition, namely, that *the general distribution of population in a country must always be directly dependent on transport facilities*. To illustrate this point roughly we may build up an imaginary simple community by considering its needs. Over an arable country-side, for example, inhabited by a people who had attained to a level of agricultural civilization in which war was no longer constantly imminent, the population would be diffused primarily by families and groups in farmsteads. It might, if it were a very simple population, be almost all so distributed. But even the simplest agriculturists find a certain convenience in trade. Certain definite points would be convenient for such local trade and intercourse as the people found desirable, and here it is that there would arise the germ of a town. At first it might be no more than an appointed meeting place, a market square, but an inn and a blacksmith would inevitably follow, an altar, perhaps, and, if these people had writing, even some sort of school. It would have to be where water was found, and it would have to be generally convenient of access to its attendant farmers.

Now, if this meeting place was more than a certain distance from any particular farm, it would be inconvenient for that farmer to get himself and his produce there and back, and to do his business in a comfortable daylight. He would not be able to come and, instead, he would either have to go to some other nearer centre to trade and gossip with his neighbours or, failing this, not go at all. Evidently, then, there would be a maximum distance between such places. This distance in England, where traffic has been mainly horse traffic for many centuries, seems to have worked out, according to the gradients and so forth, at from eight to fifteen miles, and at such distances do we find the country towns, while the horseless man, the serf, and the labourer and labouring wench have marked their narrow limits in the

distribution of the intervening villages. If by chance these gathering places have arisen at points much closer than this maximum, they have come into competition, and one has finally got the better of the other, so that in England the distribution is often singularly uniform. Agricultural districts have their towns at about eight miles, and where grazing takes the place of the plough, the town distances increase to fifteen. And so it is, entirely as a multiple of horse and foot strides, that all the villages and towns of the world's countryside have been plotted out.

A third, and almost final, factor determining town distribution in a world without railways, would be the seaport and the navigable river. Ports would grow into dimensions dependent on the population of the conveniently accessible coasts (or river-banks), and on the quality and quantity of their products, and near these ports, as the conveniences of civilization increased, would appear handicraft towns — the largest possible towns of a foot-and-horse civilization — with industries of such a nature as the produce of their coasts required.

It was always in connection with a port or navigable river that the greater towns of the pre-railway periods arose, a day's journey away from the coast when sea attack was probable, and shifting to the coast itself when that ceased to threaten. Such sea-trading handicraft towns as Bruges, Venice, Corinth, or London were the largest towns of the vanishing order of things. Very rarely, except in China, did they clamber above a quarter of a million inhabitants, even though to some of them there was presently added court and camp. In China, however, a gigantic river and canal system, laced across plains of extraordinary fertility, has permitted the growth of several city aggregates with populations exceeding a million, and in the case of the Hankow trinity of cities exceeding five million people.

In all these cases the position and the population limit was entirely determined by the accessibility of the town and the area it could dominate for the purposes of trade. And not only were the commercial or natural towns so determined, but the political centres were also finally chosen for strategic considerations, in a word — communications. And now, perhaps, the real significance of the previous paper, in which sea velocities of fifty miles an hour, and

land travel at the rate of a hundred, and even cab and omnibus journeys of thirty or forty miles, were shown to be possible, becomes more apparent.

At the first sight it might appear as though the result of the new developments was simply to increase the number of giant cities in the world by rendering them possible in regions where they had hitherto been impossible — concentrating the trade of vast areas in a manner that had hitherto been entirely characteristic of navigable waters. It might seem as though the state of affairs in China, in which population has been concentrated about densely-congested "million-cities," with pauper masses, public charities, and a crowded struggle for existence, for many hundreds of years, was merely to be extended over the whole world. We have heard so much of the "problem of our great cities"; we have the impressive statistics of their growth; the belief in the inevitableness of yet denser and more multitudinous agglomerations in the future is so widely diffused, that at first sight it will be thought that no other motive than a wish to startle can dictate the proposition that not only will many of these railway-begotten "giant cities" reach their maximum in the commencing century, but that in all probability they, and not only they, but their water-born prototypes in the East also, are destined to such a process of dissection and diffusion as to amount almost to obliteration, so far, at least, as the blot on the map goes, within a measurable further space of years.

In advancing this proposition, the present writer is disagreeably aware that in this matter he has expressed views entirely opposed to those he now propounds; and in setting forth the following body of considerations he tells the story of his own disillusionment. At the outset he took for granted — and, very naturally, he wishes to imagine that a great number of other people do also take for granted — that the future of London, for example, is largely to be got as the answer to a sort of rule-of-three sum. If in one hundred years the population of London has been multiplied by seven, then in two hundred years — ! And one proceeds to pack the answer in gigantic tenement houses, looming upon colossal roofed streets, provide it with moving ways (the only available transit appliances suited to such dense multitudes), and develop its manners and morals in

accordance with the laws that will always prevail amidst over-crowded humanity so long as humanity endures. The picture of this swarming concentrated humanity has some effective possibilities, but, unhappily, if, instead of that obvious rule-of-three sum, one resorts to an analysis of operating causes, its plausibility crumbles away, and it gives place to an altogether different forecast — a forecast, indeed, that is in almost violent contrast to the first anticipation. It is much more probable that these coming cities will not be, in the old sense, cities at all; they will present a new and entirely different phase of human distribution.

The determining factor in the appearance of great cities in the past, and, indeed, up to the present day, has been the meeting of two or more transit lines, the confluence of two or more streams of trade, and easy communication. The final limit to the size and importance of the great city has been the commercial "sphere of influence" commanded by that city, the capacity of the alluvial basin of its commerce, so to speak, the volume of its river of trade. About the meeting point so determined the population so determined has grouped itself — and this is the point I overlooked in those previous vaticinations — in accordance with *laws that are also considerations of transit*.

The economic centre of the city is formed, of course, by the wharves and landing places — and in the case of railway-fed cities by the termini — where passengers land and where goods are landed, stored, and distributed. Both the administrative and business community, traders, employers, clerks, and so forth, must be within a convenient access of this centre; and the families, servants, tradesmen, amusement purveyors dependent on these again must also come within a maximum distance. At a certain stage in town growth the pressure on the more central area would become too great for habitual family life there, and an office region would differentiate from an outer region of homes. Beyond these two zones, again, those whose connection with the great city was merely intermittent would constitute a system of suburban houses and areas. But the grouping of these, also, would be determined finally by the convenience of access to the dominant centre. That secondary centres, literary, social, political, or military, may arise about the initial trade centre,

complicates the application but does not alter the principle here stated. They must all be within striking distance. The day of twenty-four hours is an inexorable human condition, and up to the present time all intercourse and business has been broken into spells of definite duration by intervening nights. Moreover, almost all effective intercourse has involved personal presence at the point where intercourse occurs. The possibility, therefore, of going and coming and doing that day's work has hitherto fixed the extreme limits to which a city could grow, and has exacted a compactness which has always been very undesirable and which is now for the first time in the world's history no longer imperative.

So far as we can judge without a close and uncongenial scrutiny of statistics, that daily journey, that has governed and still to a very considerable extent governs the growth of cities, has had, and probably always will have, a maximum limit of two hours, one hour each way from sleeping place to council chamber, counter, workroom, or office stool. And taking this assumption as sound, we can state precisely the maximum area of various types of town. A pedestrian agglomeration such as we find in China, and such as most of the European towns probably were before the nineteenth century, would be swept entirely by a radius of four miles about the business quarter and industrial centre; and, under these circumstances, where the area of the feeding regions has been very large the massing of human beings has probably reached its extreme limit. Of course, in the case of a navigable river, for example, the commercial centre might be elongated into a line and the circle of the city modified into an ellipse with a long diameter considerably exceeding eight miles, as, for example, in the case of Hankow.

If, now, horseflesh is brought into the problem, an outer radius of six or eight miles from the centre will define a larger area in which the carriage folk, the hackney users, the omnibus customers, and their domestics and domestic camp followers may live and still be members of the city. Towards that limit London was already probably moving at the accession of Queen Victoria, and it was clearly the absolute limit of urban growth — until locomotive mechanisms capable of more than eight miles an hour could be constructed.

And then there came suddenly the railway and the steamship, the former opening with extraordinary abruptness a series of vast through-routes for trade, the latter enormously increasing the security and economy of the traffic on the old water routes. For a time neither of these inventions was applied to the needs of intra-urban transit at all. For a time they were purely centripetal forces. They worked simply to increase the general volume of trade, to increase, that is, the pressure of population upon the urban centres. As a consequence the social history of the middle and later thirds of the nineteenth century, not simply in England but all over the civilized world, is the history of a gigantic rush of population into the magic radius of — for most people — four miles, to suffer there physical and moral disaster less acute but, finally, far more appalling to the imagination than any famine or pestilence that ever swept the world. Well has Mr. George Gissing named nineteenth-century London in one of his great novels the "Whirlpool," the very figure for the nineteenth-century Great City, attractive, tumultuous, and spinning down to death.

But, indeed, these great cities are no permanent maëlstroms. These new forces, at present still so potently centripetal in their influence, bring with them, nevertheless, the distinct promise of a centrifugal application that may be finally equal to the complete reduction of all our present congestions. The limit of the pre-railway city was the limit of man and horse. But already that limit has been exceeded, and each day brings us nearer to the time when it will be thrust outward in every direction with an effect of enormous relief.

So far the only additions to the foot and horse of the old dispensation that have actually come into operation, are the suburban railways, which render possible an average door to office hour's journey of ten or a dozen miles — further only in the case of some specially favoured localities. The star-shaped contour of the modern great city, thrusting out arms along every available railway line, knotted arms of which every knot marks a station, testify sufficiently to the relief of pressure thus afforded. Great Towns before this century presented rounded contours and grew as a puff-ball swells; the modern Great City looks like something that has burst an intolerable envelope and splashed. But, as our previous paper has

sought to make clear, these suburban railways are the mere first rough expedient of far more convenient and rapid developments.

We are — as the Census Returns for 1901 quite clearly show — in the early phase of a great development of centrifugal possibilities. And since it has been shown that a city of pedestrians is inexorably limited by a radius of about four miles, and that a horse-using city may grow out to seven or eight, it follows that the available area of a city which can offer a cheap suburban journey of thirty miles an hour is a circle with a radius of thirty miles. And is it too much, therefore, in view of all that has been adduced in this and the previous paper, to expect that the available area for even the common daily toilers of the great city of the year 2000, or earlier, will have a radius very much larger even than that? Now, a circle with a radius of thirty miles gives an area of over 2800 square miles, which is almost a quarter that of Belgium. But thirty miles is only a very moderate estimate of speed, and the reader of the former paper will agree, I think, that the available area for the social equivalent of the favoured season-ticket holders of to-day will have a radius of over one hundred miles, and be almost equal to the area of Ireland. The radius that will sweep the area available for such as now live in the outer suburbs will include a still vaster area. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the London citizen of the year 2000 a.d. may have a choice of nearly all England and Wales south of Nottingham and east of Exeter as his suburb, and that the vast stretch of country from Washington to Albany will be all of it "available" to the active citizen of New York and Philadelphia before that date.

This does not for a moment imply that cities of the density of our existing great cities will spread to these limits. Even if we were to suppose the increase of the populations of the great cities to go on at its present rate, this enormous extension of available area would still mean a great possibility of diffusion. But though most great cities are probably still very far from their maxima, though the network of feeding railways has still to spread over Africa and China, and though huge areas are still imperfectly productive for want of a cultivating population, yet it is well to remember that for each great city, quite irrespective of its available spaces, a maximum of population is fixed. Each great city is sustained finally by the trade

and production of a certain proportion of the world's surface — by the area it commands commercially. The great city cannot grow, except as a result of some quite morbid and transitory process — to be cured at last by famine and disorder — beyond the limit the commercial capacity of that commanded area prescribes. Long before the population of this city, with its inner circle a third of the area of Belgium, rose towards the old-fashioned city density, this restriction would come in. Even if we allowed for considerable increase in the production of food stuffs in the future, it still remains inevitable that the increase of each city in the world must come at last upon arrest.

Yet, though one may find reasons for anticipating that this city will in the end overtake and surpass that one and such-like relative prophesying, it is difficult to find any data from which to infer the absolute numerical limits of these various diffused cities. Or perhaps it is more seemly to admit that no such data have occurred to the writer. So far as London, St. Petersburg, and Berlin go, it seems fairly safe to assume that they will go well over twenty millions; and that New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago will probably, and Hankow almost certainly, reach forty millions. Yet even forty millions over thirty-one thousand square miles of territory is, in comparison with four millions over fifty square miles, a highly diffused population.

How far will that possible diffusion accomplish itself? Let us first of all consider the case of those classes that will be free to exercise a choice in the matter, and we shall then be in a better position to consider those more numerous classes whose general circumstances are practically dictated to them. What will be the forces acting upon the prosperous household, the household with a working head and four hundred a year and upwards to live upon, in the days to come? Will the resultant of these forces be, as a rule, centripetal or centrifugal? Will such householders in the greater London of 2000 a.d. still cluster for the most part, as they do to-day, in a group of suburbs as close to London as is compatible with a certain fashionable maximum of garden space and air; or will they leave the ripened gardens and the no longer brilliant villas of Surbiton and Norwood, Tooting and Beckenham, to other and less independent

people? First, let us weigh the centrifugal attractions.

The first of these is what is known as the passion for nature, that passion for hillside, wind, and sea that is evident in so many people nowadays, either frankly expressed or disguising itself as a passion for golfing, fishing, hunting, yachting, or cycling; and, secondly, there is the allied charm of cultivation, and especially of gardening, a charm that is partly also the love of dominion, perhaps, and partly a personal love for the beauty of trees and flowers and natural things. Through that we come to a third factor, that craving — strongest, perhaps, in those Low German peoples, who are now ascendant throughout the world — for a little private *imperium* such as a house or cottage "in its own grounds" affords; and from that we pass on to the intense desire so many women feel — and just the women, too, who will mother the future — their almost instinctive demand, indeed, for a household, a separate sacred and distinctive household, built and ordered after their own hearts, such as in its fulness only the country-side permits. Add to these things the healthfulness of the country for young children, and the wholesome isolation that is possible from much that irritates, stimulates prematurely, and corrupts in crowded centres, and the chief positive centrifugal inducements are stated, inducements that no progress of inventions, at any rate, can ever seriously weaken. What now are the centripetal forces against which these inducements contend?

In the first place, there are a group of forces that will diminish in strength. There is at present the greater convenience of "shopping" within a short radius of the centre of the great city, a very important consideration indeed to many wives and mothers. All the inner and many of the outer suburbs of London obtain an enormous proportion of the ordinary household goods from half a dozen huge furniture, grocery, and drapery firms, each of which has been enabled by the dearness and inefficiency of the parcels distribution of the post-office and railways to elaborate a now very efficient private system of taking orders and delivering goods. Collectively these great businesses have been able to establish a sort of monopoly of suburban trade, to overwhelm the small suburban general tradesman (a fate that was inevitable for him in some way or other), and — which is a positive world-wide misfortune — to overwhelm also

many highly specialized shops and dealers of the central district. Suburban people nowadays get their wine and their novels, their clothes and their amusements, their furniture and their food, from some one vast indiscriminate shop or "store" full of respectable mediocre goods, as excellent a thing for housekeeping as it is disastrous to taste and individuality. But it is doubtful if the delivery organization of these great stores is any more permanent than the token coinage of the tradespeople of the last century. Just as it was with that interesting development, so now it is with parcels distribution: private enterprise supplies in a partial manner a public need, and with the organization of a public parcels and goods delivery on cheap and sane lines in the place of our present complex, stupid, confusing, untrustworthy, and fantastically costly chaos of post-office, railways, and carriers, it is quite conceivable that Messrs. Omnium will give place again to specialized shops.

It must always be remembered how timid, tentative, and dear the postal and telephone services of even the most civilized countries still are, and how inexorably the needs of revenue, public profit, and convenience fight in these departments against the tradition of official leisure and dignity. There is no reason now, except that the thing is not yet properly organized, why a telephone call from any point in such a small country as England to any other should cost much more than a postcard. There is no reason now, save railway rivalries and retail ideas — obstacles some able and active man is certain to sweep away sooner or later — why the post-office should not deliver parcels anywhere within a radius of a hundred miles in a few hours at a penny or less for a pound and a little over, put our newspapers in our letter-boxes direct from the printing-office, and, in fact, hand in nearly every constant need of the civilized household, except possibly butcher's meat, coals, green-grocery, and drink. And since there is no reason, but quite removable obstacles, to prevent this development of the post-office, I imagine it will be doing all these things within the next half-century. When it is, this particular centripetal pull, at any rate, will have altogether ceased to operate.

A second important centripetal consideration at present is the desirability of access to good schools and to the doctor. To leave the great centres is either to abandon one's children, or to buy air for

them at the cost of educational disadvantages. But access, be it noted, is another word for transit. It is doubtful if these two needs will so much keep people close to the great city centres as draw them together about secondary centres. New centres they may be — compare Hindhead, for example — in many cases; but also, it may be, in many cases the more healthy and picturesque of the existing small towns will develop a new life. Already, in the case of the London area, such once practically autonomous places as Guildford, Tunbridge Wells, and Godalming have become economically the centres of lax suburbs, and the same fate may very probably overtake, for example, Shrewsbury, Stratford, and Exeter, and remoter and yet remoter townships. Indeed, for all that this particular centripetal force can do, the confluent "residential suburbs" of London, of the great Lancashire-Yorkshire city, and of the Scotch city, may quite conceivably replace the summer lodging-house watering-places of to-day, and extend themselves right round the coast of Great Britain, before the end of the next century, and every open space of mountain and heather be dotted — not too thickly — with clumps of prosperous houses about school, doctor, engineers, book and provision shops.

A third centripetal force will not be set aside so easily. The direct antagonist it is to that love of nature that drives people out to moor and mountain. One may call it the love of the crowd; and closely allied to it is that love of the theatre which holds so many people in bondage to the Strand. Charles Lamb was the Richard Jefferies of this group of tendencies, and the current disposition to exaggerate the opposition force, especially among English-speaking peoples, should not bind us to the reality of their strength. Moreover, interweaving with these influences that draw people together are other more egotistical and intenser motives, ardent in youth and by no means — to judge by the Folkestone Leas — extinct in age, the love of dress, the love of the crush, the hot passion for the promenade. Here, no doubt, what one may speak of loosely as "racial" characteristics count for much. The common actor and actress of all nationalities, the Neapolitan, the modern Roman, the Parisian, the Hindoo, I am told, and that new and interesting type, the rich and liberated Jew emerging from his Ghetto and free now absolutely to show what stuff

he is made of, flame out most gloriously in this direction. To a certain extent this group of tendencies may lead to the formation of new secondary centres within the "available" area, theatrical and musical centres — centres of extreme Fashion and Selectness, centres of smartness and opulent display — but it is probable that for the large number of people throughout the world who cannot afford to maintain households in duplicate these will be for many years yet strictly centripetal forces, and will keep them within the radius marked by whatever will be the future equivalent in length of, say, the present two-shilling cab ride in London.

And, after all, for all such "shopping" as one cannot do by telephone or postcard, it will still be natural for the shops to be gathered together in some central place. And "shopping" needs refreshment, and may culminate in relaxation. So that Bond Street and Regent Street, the Boulevard des Capuchins, the Corso, and Broadway will still be brilliant and crowded for many years for all the diffusion that is here forecast — all the more brilliant and crowded, perhaps, for the lack of a thronging horse traffic down their central ways. But the very fact that the old nucleus is still to be the best place for all who trade in a concourse of people, for novelty shops and art shops, and theatres and business buildings, by keeping up the central ground values will operate against residence there and shift the "masses" outwardly.

And once people have been driven into cab, train, or omnibus, the only reason why they should get out to a residence here rather than there is the necessity of saving time, and such a violent upward gradient of fares as will quite outbalance the downward gradient of ground values. We have, however, already forecast a swift, varied, and inevitably competitive suburban traffic. And so, though the centre will probably still remain the centre and "Town," it will be essentially a bazaar, a great gallery of shops and places of concourse and rendezvous, a pedestrian place, its pathways reinforced by lifts and moving platforms, and shielded from the weather, and altogether a very spacious, brilliant, and entertaining agglomeration.

Enough now has been said to determine the general nature of the expansion of the great cities in the future, so far as the more prosperous classes are concerned. It will not be a regular diffusion

like the diffusion of a gas, but a process of throwing out the "homes," and of segregating various types of people. The omens seem to point pretty unmistakably to a wide and quite unprecedented diversity in the various suburban townships and suburban districts. Of that aspect of the matter a later paper must treat. It is evident that from the outset racial and national characteristics will tell in this diffusion. We are getting near the end of the great Democratic, Wholesale, or Homogeneous phase in the world's history. The sport-loving Englishman, the sociable Frenchman, the vehement American will each diffuse his own great city in his own way.

And now, how will the increase in the facilities of communication we have assumed affect the condition of those whose circumstances are more largely dictated by economic forces? The mere diffusion of a large proportion of the prosperous and relatively free, and the multiplication of various types of road and mechanical traction, means, of course, that in this way alone a perceptible diffusion of the less independent classes will occur. To the subsidiary centres will be drawn doctor and schoolmaster, and various dealers in fresh provisions, baker, grocer, butcher; or if they are already established there they will flourish more and more, and about them the convenient home of the future, with its numerous electrical and mechanical appliances, and the various bicycles, motor-cars, photographic and phonographic apparatus that will be included in its equipment will gather a population of repairers, "accessory" dealers and working engineers, a growing class which from its necessary intelligence and numbers will play a very conspicuous part in the social development of the twentieth century. The much more elaborate post-office and telephone services will also bring intelligent ingredients to these suburban nuclei, these restorations of the old villages and country towns. And the sons of the cottager within the affected area will develop into the skilled vegetable or flower gardeners, the skilled ostler — with some veterinary science — and so forth, for whom also there will evidently be work and a living. And dotted at every convenient position along the new roads, availing themselves no doubt whenever possible of the picturesque inns that the old coaching days have left us, will be wayside restaurants and tea houses, and motor and cycle stores and repair

places. So much diffusion is practically inevitable.

In addition, as we have already intimated, many Londoners in the future may abandon the city office altogether, preferring to do their business in more agreeable surroundings. Such a business as book publishing, for example, has no unbreakable bonds to keep it in the region of high rent and congested streets. The days when the financial fortunes of books depended upon the colloquial support of influential people in a small Society are past; neither publishers nor authors as a class have any relation to Society at all, and actual access to newspaper offices is necessary only to the ranker forms of literary imposture. That personal intercourse between publishers and the miscellaneous race of authors which once justified the central position has, I am told, long since ceased. And the withdrawing publishers may very well take with them the printers and binders, and attract about them their illustrators and designers.... So, as a typical instance, one — now urban — trade may detach itself.

Publishing is, however, only one of the many similar trades equally profitable and equally likely to move outward to secondary centres, with the development and cheapening of transit. It is all a question of transit. Limitation of transit contracts the city, facilitation expands and disperses it. All this case for diffusion so far is built up entirely on the hypothesis we attempted to establish in the first paper, that transit of persons and goods alike is to become easier, swifter, and altogether better organized than it is at present.

The telephone will almost certainly prove a very potent auxiliary indeed to the forces making for diffusion. At present that convenience is still needlessly expensive in Great Britain, and a scandalously stupid business conflict between telephone company and post-office delays, complicates, and makes costly and exasperating all trunk communications; but even under these disadvantages the thing is becoming a factor in the life of ordinary villadom. Consider all that lies within its possibilities. Take first the domestic and social side; almost all the labour of ordinary shopping can be avoided — goods nowadays can be ordered and sent either as sold outright, or on approval, to any place within a hundred miles of London, and in one day they can be examined, discussed, and returned — at any rate, in theory. The mistress of the house has all

her local tradesmen, all the great London shops, the circulating library, the theatre box-office, the post-office and cab-rank, the nurses' institute and the doctor, within reach of her hand. The instrument we may confidently expect to improve, but even now speech is perfectly clear and distinct over several hundred miles of wire. Appointments and invitations can be made; and at a cost varying from a penny to two shillings any one within two hundred miles of home may speak day or night into the ear of his or her household. Were it not for that unmitigated public nuisance, the practical control of our post-office by non-dismissable Civil servants, appointed so young as to be entirely ignorant of the unofficial world, it would be possible now to send urgent messages at any hour of the day or night to any part of the world; and even our sacred institution of the Civil Service can scarcely prevent this desirable consummation for many years more. The business man may then sit at home in his library and bargain, discuss, promise, hint, threaten, tell such lies as he dare not write, and, in fact, do everything that once demanded a personal encounter. Already for a great number of businesses it is no longer necessary that the office should be in London, and only habit, tradition, and minor considerations keep it there. With the steady cheapening and the steady increase in efficiency of postal and telephonic facilities, and of goods transit, it seems only reasonable to anticipate the need for that expensive office and the irksome daily journey will steadily decline. In other words, what will still be economically the "city," as distinguished from the "agricultural" population, will probably be free to extend, in the case of all the prosperous classes not tied to large establishments in need of personal supervision, far beyond the extreme limits of the daily hour journey.

But the diffusion of the prosperous, independent, and managing classes involves in itself a very considerable diffusion of the purely "working" classes also. Their centres of occupation will be distributed, and their freedom to live at some little distance from their work will be increased. Whether this will mean dotting the country with dull, ugly little streets, slum villages like Buckfastleigh in Devon, for example, or whether it may result in entirely different and novel aspects, is a point for which at present we are not ready.

But it bears upon the question that ugliness and squalor upon the main road will appeal to the more prosperous for remedy with far more vigour than when they are stowed compactly in a slum.

Enough has been said to demonstrate that old "town" and "city" will be, in truth, terms as obsolete as "mail coach." For these new areas that will grow out of them we want a term, and the administrative "urban district" presents itself with a convenient air of suggestion. We may for our present purposes call these coming town provinces "urban regions." Practically, by a process of confluence, the whole of Great Britain south of the Highlands seems destined to become such an urban region, laced all together not only by railway and telegraph, but by novel roads such as we forecast in the former chapter, and by a dense network of telephones, parcels delivery tubes, and the like nervous and arterial connections.

It will certainly be a curious and varied region, far less monotonous than our present English world, still in its thinner regions, at any rate, wooded, perhaps rather more abundantly wooded, breaking continually into park and garden, and with everywhere a scattering of houses. These will not, as a rule, I should fancy, follow the fashion of the vulgar ready-built villas of the existing suburb, because the freedom people will be able to exercise in the choice of a site will rob the "building estate" promoter of his local advantage; in many cases the houses may very probably be personal homes, built for themselves as much as the Tudor manor-houses were, and even, in some cases, as æsthetically right. Each district, I am inclined to think, will develop its own differences of type and style. As one travels through the urban region, one will traverse open, breezy, "horsey" suburbs, smart white gates and palings everywhere, good turf, a Grand Stand shining pleasantly; gardening districts all set with gables and roses, holly hedges, and emerald lawns; pleasant homes among heathery moorlands and golf links, and river districts with gaily painted boat-houses peeping from the osiers. Then presently a gathering of houses closer together, and a promenade and a whiff of band and dresses, and then, perhaps, a little island of agriculture, hops, or strawberry gardens, fields of grey-plumed artichokes, white-painted orchard, or brightly neat poultry farm. Through the varied country the new wide roads will run, here

cutting through a crest and there running like some colossal aqueduct across a valley, swarming always with a multitudinous traffic of bright, swift (and not necessarily ugly) mechanisms; and everywhere amidst the fields and trees linking wires will stretch from pole to pole. Ever and again there will appear a cluster of cottages — cottages into which we shall presently look more closely — about some works or workings, works, it may be, with the smoky chimney of to-day replaced by a gaily painted windwheel or waterwheel to gather and store the force for the machinery; and ever and again will come a little town, with its cherished ancient church or cathedral, its school buildings and museums, its railway-station, perhaps its fire-station, its inns and restaurants, and with all the wires of the countryside converging to its offices. All that is pleasant and fair of our present countryside may conceivably still be there among the other things. There is no reason why the essential charm of the country should disappear; the new roads will not supersede the present high roads, which will still be necessary for horses and subsidiary traffic; and the lanes and hedges, the field paths and wild flowers, will still have their ample justification. A certain lack of solitude there may be perhaps, and —

Will conspicuous advertisements play any part in the landscape?...

But I find my pen is running ahead, an imagination prone to realistic constructions is struggling to paint a picture altogether prematurely. There is very much to be weighed and decided before we can get from our present generalization to the style of architecture these houses will show, and to the power and nature of the public taste. We have laid down now the broad lines of road, railway, and sea transit in the coming century, and we have got this general prophecy of “urban regions” established, and for the present that much must suffice.

And as for the world beyond our urban regions? The same line of reasoning that leads to the expectation that the city will diffuse itself until it has taken up considerable areas and many of the characteristics, the greenness, the fresh air, of what is now country, leads us to suppose also that the country will take to itself many of the qualities of the city. The old antithesis will indeed cease, the boundary lines will altogether disappear; it will become, indeed,

merely a question of more or less populous. There will be horticulture and agriculture going on within the “urban regions,” and “urbanity” without them. Everywhere, indeed, over the land of the globe between the frozen circles, the railway and the new roads will spread, the net-work of communication wires and safe and convenient ways. To receive the daily paper a few hours late, to wait a day or so for goods one has ordered, will be the extreme measure of rusticity save in a few remote islands and inaccessible places. The character of the meshes in that wider network of roads that will be the country, as distinguished from the urban district, will vary with the soil, the climate and the tenure of the land — will vary, too, with the racial and national differences. But throughout all that follows, this mere relativity of the new sort of town to the new sort of country over which the new sorts of people we are immediately to consider will be scattered, must be borne in mind.

[At the risk of insistence, I must repeat that, so far, I have been studiously taking no account of the fact that there is such a thing as a boundary line or a foreigner in the world. It will be far the best thing to continue to do this until we can get out all that will probably happen universally or generally, and in particular the probable changes in social forces, social apparatus and internal political methods. We shall then come to the discussion of language, nationality and international conflicts, equipped with such an array of probabilities and possibilities as will enable us to guess at these special issues with an appearance of far more precision than would be the case if we considered them now.]

III. Developing Social Elements

The mere differences in thickness of population and facility of movement that have been discussed thus far, will involve consequences remarkable enough, upon the *facies* of the social body; but there are certain still broader features of the social order of the coming time, less intimately related to transit, that it will be convenient to discuss at this stage. They are essentially outcomes of the enormous development of mechanism which has been the cardinal feature of the nineteenth century; for this development, by altering the method and proportions of almost all human undertakings, has altered absolutely the grouping and character of the groups of human beings engaged upon them.

Throughout the world for forty centuries the more highly developed societies have always presented under a considerable variety of superficial differences certain features in common. Always at the base of the edifice, supporting all, subordinate to all, and the most necessary of all, there has been the working cultivator, peasant, serf, or slave. Save for a little water-power, a little use of windmills, the traction of a horse or mule, this class has been the source of all the work upon which the community depends. And, moreover, whatever labour town developments have demanded has been supplied by the muscle of its fecund ranks. It has been, in fact — and to some extent still is — the multitudinous living machinery of the old social order; it carried, cropped, tilled, built, and made. And, directing and sometimes owning this human machinery, there has always been a superior class, bound usually by a point of honour not to toil, often warlike, often equestrian, and sometimes cultivated. In England this is the gentility, in most European countries it is organized as a nobility; it is represented in the history of India by the "twice born" castes, and in China — the most philosophically conceived and the most stably organized social system the old order ever developed — it finds its equivalent in the members of a variously buttoned mandarinate, who ride, not on horses, but on a once adequate and still respectable erudition. These two primary classes may and do become in many cases complicated by

subdivisions; the peasant class may split into farmers and labourers, the gentlemen admit a series of grades and orders, kings, dukes, earls, and the like, but the broad distinction remains intact, as though it was a distinction residing in the nature of things.

From the very dawn of history until the first beginnings of mechanism in the eighteenth century, this simple scheme of orders was the universal organization of all but savage humanity, and the chief substance of history until these later years has been in essence the perpetual endeavour of specific social systems of this type to attain in every region the locally suitable permanent form, in face of those two inveterate enemies of human stability, innovation, and that secular increase in population that security permits. The imperfection of the means of communication rendered political unions of a greater area than that swept by a hundred-mile radius highly unstable. It was a world of small states. Lax empires came and went, at the utmost they were the linking of practically autonomous states under a common *Pax*. Wars were usually wars between kingdoms, conflicts of this local experiment in social organization with that. Through all the historical period these two well-defined classes of gentle and simple acted and reacted upon each other, every individual in each class driven by that same will to live and do, that imperative of self-establishment and aggression that is the spirit of this world. Until the coming of gunpowder, the man on horseback — commonly with some sort of armour — was invincible in battle in the open. Wherever the land lay wide and unbroken, and the great lines of trade did not fall, there the horseman was master — or the clerkly man behind the horseman. Such a land was aristocratic and tended to form castes. The craftsman sheltered under a patron, and in guilds in a walled town, and the labourer was a serf. He was ruled over by his knight or by his creditor — in the end it matters little how the gentleman began. But where the land became difficult by reason of mountain or forest, or where water greatly intersected it, the pikeman or closer-fighting swordsman or the bowman could hold his own, and a democratic flavour, a touch of repudiation, was in the air. In such countries as Italy, Greece, the Alps, the Netherlands, and Great Britain, the two forces of the old order, the aristocrat and the common man, were in a state of unstable equilibrium through the

whole period of history. A slight change in the details of the conflict for existence could tilt the balance. A weapon a little better adapted to one class than the other, or a slight widening of the educational gap, worked out into historically imposing results, to dynastic changes, class revolutions and the passing of empires.

Throughout it was essentially one phase of human organization. When one comes to examine the final result, it is astonishing to remark the small amount of essential change, of positively final and irreparable alteration, in the conditions of the common life. Consider, for example, how entirely in sympathy was the close of the eighteenth century with the epoch of Horace, and how closely equivalent were the various social aspects of the two periods. The literature of Rome was living reading in a sense that has suddenly passed away, it fitted all occasions, it conflicted with no essential facts in life. It was a commonplace of the thought of that time that all things recurred, all things circled back to their former seasons; there was nothing new under the sun. But now almost suddenly the circling has ceased, and we find ourselves breaking away. Correlated with the sudden development of mechanical forces that first began to be socially perceptible in the middle eighteenth century, has been the appearance of great masses of population, having quite novel functions and relations in the social body, and together with this appearance such a suppression, curtailment, and modification of the older classes, as to point to an entire disintegration of that system. The *facies* of the social fabric has changed, and — as I hope to make clear — is still changing in a direction from which, without a total destruction and rebirth of that fabric, there can never be any return.

The most striking of the new classes to emerge is certainly the shareholding class, the owners of a sort of property new in the world's history.

Before the eighteenth century the only property of serious importance consisted of land and buildings. These were "real" estate. Beyond these things were live-stock, serfs, and the furnishings of real estate, the surface aspect of real estate, so to speak, personal property, ships, weapons, and the Semitic invention of money. All such property had to be actually "held" and administered by the owner, he was immediately in connection with it and responsible for

it. He could leave it only precariously to a steward and manager, and to convey the revenue of it to him at a distance was a difficult and costly proceeding. To prevent a constant social disturbance by lapsing and dividing property, and in the absence of any organized agency to receive lapsed property, inheritance and preferably primogeniture were of such manifest advantage that the old social organization always tended in the direction of these institutions. Such usury as was practised relied entirely on the land and the anticipated agricultural produce of the land.

But the usury and the sleeping partnerships of the Joint Stock Company system which took shape in the eighteenth and the earlier half of the nineteenth century opened quite unprecedented uses for money, and created a practically new sort of property and a new proprietor class. The peculiar novelty of this property is easily defined. Given a sufficient sentiment of public honesty, share property is property that can be owned at any distance and that yields its revenue without thought or care on the part of its proprietor; it is, indeed, absolutely irresponsible property, a thing that no old world property ever was. But, in spite of its widely different nature, the laws of inheritance that the social necessities of the old order of things established have been applied to this new species of possession without remark. It is indestructible, imperishable wealth, subject only to the mutations of value that economic changes bring about. Related in its character of absolute irresponsibility to this shareholding class is a kindred class that has grown with the growth of the great towns, the people who live upon ground rents. There is every indication that this element of irresponsible, independent, and wealthy people in the social body, people who feel the urgency of no exertion, the pressure of no specific positive duties, is still on the increase, and may still for a long time increasingly preponderate. It overshadows the responsible owner of real property or of real businesses altogether. And most of the old aristocrats, the old knightly and landholding people, have, so to speak, converted themselves into members of this new class.

It is a class with scarcely any specific characteristics beyond its defining one, of the possession of property and all the potentialities property entails, with a total lack of function with regard to that

property. It is not even collected into a distinct mass. It graduates insensibly into every other class, it permeates society as threads and veins of gold permeate quartz. It includes the millionaire snob, the political-minded plutocrat, the wealthy sensualist, open-handed religious fanatics, the "Charitable," the smart, the magnificently dull, the great army of timid creatures who tremble through life on a safe bare sufficiency, travellers, hunters, minor poets, sporting enthusiasts, many of the officers in the British Army, and all sorts and conditions of amateurs. In a sense it includes several modern royalties, for the crown in several modern constitutional states is a *corporation sole*, and the monarch the unique, unlimited, and so far as necessity goes, quite functionless shareholder. He may be a heavy-eyed sensualist, a small-minded leader of fashion, a rival to his servants in the gay science of etiquette, a frequenter of race-courses and music-halls, a literary or scientific quack, a devotee, an amateur anything — the point is that his income and sustenance have no relation whatever to his activities. If he fancies it, or is urged to it by those who have influence over him, he may even "be a king!" But that is not compulsory, not essential, and there are practically no conditional restrictions whatever laid upon him.

Those who belong to this shareholding class only partially, who partially depend upon dividends and partially upon activities, occur in every rank and order of the whole social body. The waiter one tips probably has a hundred or so in some remote company, the will of the eminent labour reformer reveals an admirably distributed series of investments, the bishop sells tea and digs coal, or at any rate gets a profit from some unknown persons tea-selling or coal-digging, to eke out the direct recompense of his own modest corn-treading. Indeed, above the labouring class, the number of individuals in the social body whose gross income is entirely the result of their social activities is very small. Previously in the world's history, saving a few quite exceptional aspects, the possession and retention of property was conditional upon activities of some sort, honest or dishonest, work, force, or fraud. But the shareholding ingredient of our new society, so far as its shareholding goes, has no need of strength or wisdom; the countless untraceable Owner of the modern world presents in a multitudinous form the image of a Merovingian

king. The shareholder owns the world *de jure*, by the common recognition of the rights of property; and the incumbency of knowledge, management, and toil fall entirely to others. He toils not, neither does he spin; he is mechanically released from the penalty of the Fall, he reaps in a still sinful world all the practical benefits of a millennium — without any of its moral limitations.

It will be well to glance at certain considerations which point to the by no means self-evident proposition, that this factor of irresponsible property is certain to be present in the social body a hundred years ahead. It has, no doubt, occurred to the reader that all the conditions of the shareholder's being unfit him for co-operative action in defence of the interests of his class. Since shareholders do nothing in common, except receive and hope for dividends, since they may be of any class, any culture, any disposition, or any level of capacity, since there is nothing to make them read the same papers, gather in the same places, or feel any sort of sympathy with each other beyond the universal sympathy of man for man, they will, one may anticipate, be incapable of any concerted action to defend the income they draw from society against any resolute attack. Such crude and obvious denials of the essential principles of their existence as the various Socialistic bodies have proclaimed have, no doubt, encountered a vast, unorganized, negative opposition from them, but the subtle and varied attack of natural forces they have neither the collective intelligence to recognize, nor the natural organization to resist. The shareholding body is altogether too chaotic and diffused for positive defence. And the question of the prolonged existence of this comparatively new social phenomenon, either in its present or some modified form, turns, therefore, entirely on the quasi-natural laws of the social body. If they favour it, it will survive; when they do not, it will vanish as the mists of the morning before the sun.

Neglecting a few exceptional older corporations which, indeed, in their essence are not usurious, but of unlimited liability, the shareholding body appeared first, in its present character, in the seventeenth century, and came to its full development in the mid-nineteenth. Was its appearance then due only to the attainment of a certain necessary degree of public credit, or was it correlated with

any other force? It seems in accordance with facts to relate it to another force, the development of mechanism, so far as certain representative aspects go. Hitherto the only borrower had been the farmer, then the exploring trader had found a world too wide for purely individual effort, and then suddenly the craftsmen of all sorts and the carriers discovered the need of the new, great, wholesale, initially expensive appliances that invention was offering them. It was the development of mechanism that created the great bulk of modern shareholding, it took its present shape distinctively only with the appearance of the railways. The hitherto necessary but subordinate craftsman and merchant classes were to have new weapons, new powers, they were to develop to a new importance, to a preponderance even in the social body. But before they could attain these weapons, before this new and novel wealth could be set up, it had to pay its footing in an apportioned world, it had to buy its right to disturb the established social order. The dividend of the shareholder was the tribute the new enterprise had to pay the old wealth. The share was the manumission money of machinery. And essentially the shareholder represents and will continue to represent the responsible managing owner of a former state of affairs in process of supersession.

If the great material developments of the nineteenth century had been final, if they had, indeed, constituted merely a revolution and not an absolute release from the fixed conditions about which human affairs circled, we might even now be settling accounts with our Merovingians as the socialists desire. But these developments were not final, and one sees no hint as yet of any coming finality. Invention runs free and our state is under its dominion. The novel is continually struggling to establish itself at the relative or absolute expense of the old. The statesman's conception of social organization is no longer stability but growth. And so long as material progress continues, this tribute must continue to be paid; so long as the stream of development flows, this necessary back eddy will endure. Even if we "municipalize" all sorts of undertakings we shall not alter the essential facts, we shall only substitute for the shareholder the corporation stockholder. The figure of an eddy is particularly appropriate. Enterprises will come and go, the relative values of

kinds of wealth will alter, old appliances, old companies, will serve their time and fall in value, individuals will waste their substance, individual families and groups will die out, certain portions of the share property of the world may be gathered, by elaborate manipulation, into a more or less limited number of hands, conceivably even families and groups will be taxed out by graduated legacy duties and specially apportioned income taxes, but, for all such possible changes and modifications, the shareholding element will still endure, so long as our present progressive and experimental state of society obtains. And the very diversity, laxity, and weakness of the general shareholding element, which will work to prevent its organizing itself in the interests of its property, or of evolving any distinctive traditions or positive characters, will obviously prevent its obstructing the continual appearance of new enterprises, of new shareholders to replace the loss of its older constituents....

At the opposite pole of the social scale to that about which shareholding is most apparent, is a second necessary and quite inevitable consequence of the sudden transition that has occurred from a very nearly static social organization to a violently progressive one. This second consequence of progress is the appearance of a great number of people without either property or any evident function in the social organism. This new ingredient is most apparent in the towns, it is frequently spoken of as the Urban Poor, but its characteristic traits are to be found also in the rural districts. For the most part its individuals are either criminal, immoral, parasitic in more or less irregular ways upon the more successful classes, or labouring, at something less than a regular bare subsistence wage, in a finally hopeless competition against machinery that is as yet not so cheap as their toil. It is, to borrow a popular phrase, the "submerged" portion of the social body, a leaderless, aimless multitude, a multitude of people drifting down towards the abyss. Essentially it consists of people who have failed to "catch on" to the altered necessities the development of mechanism has brought about, they are people thrown out of employment by machinery, thrown out of employment by the escape of industries along some newly opened line of communication to some remote part of the world, or born under circumstances that give

them no opportunity of entering the world of active work. Into this welter of machine-superseded toil there topples the non-adaptable residue of every changing trade; its members marry and are given in marriage, and it is recruited by the spendthrifts, weaklings, and failures of every superior class.

Since this class was not apparent in masses in the relatively static, relatively less eliminatory, society of former times, its appearance has given rise to a belief that the least desirable section of the community has become unprecedentedly prolific, that there is now going on a "Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit." But sooner or later, as every East End doctor knows, the ways of the social abyss lead to death, the premature death of the individual, or death through the death or infertility of the individual's stunted offspring, or death through that extinction which moral perversion involves. It is a recruited class, not a breeding multitude. Whatever expedients may be resorted to, to mitigate or conceal the essential nature of this social element, it remains in its essence wherever social progress is being made, the contingent of death. Humanity has set out in the direction of a more complex and exacting organization, and until, by a foresight to me at least inconceivable, it can prevent the birth of just all the inadaptable, useless, or merely unnecessary creatures in each generation, there must needs continue to be, in greater or less amount, this individually futile struggle beneath the feet of the race; somewhere and in some form there must still persist those essentials that now take shape as the slum, the prison, and the asylum. All over the world, as the railway network has spread, in Chicago and New York as vividly as in London or Paris, the commencement of the new movement has been marked at once by the appearance of this bulky irremovable excretion, the appearance of these gall stones of vicious, helpless, and pauper masses. There seems every reason to suppose that this phenomenon of unemployed citizens, who are, in fact, unemployable, will remain present as a class, perishing individually and individually renewed, so long as civilization remains progressive and experimental upon its present lines. Their drowning existences may be utilized, the crude hardship of their lot may be concealed or mitigated, they may react upon the social fabric that is attempting to eliminate them, in very astounding ways, but their presence and their

individual doom, it seems to me, will be unavoidable — at any rate, for many generations of men. They are an integral part of this physiological process of mechanical progress, as inevitable in the social body as are waste matters and disintegrating cells in the body of an active and healthy man.

The appearance of these two strange functionless elements, although the most striking symptom of the new phase of progressive mechanical civilization now beginning, is by no means the most essential change in progress. These appearances involve also certain disappearances. I have already indicated pretty clearly that the vast irregular development of irresponsible wealthy people is swallowing up and assimilating more and more the old class of administrative land-owning gentlemen in all their grades and degrees. The old upper class, as a functional member of the State, is being effaced. And I have also suggested that the old lower class, the broad necessary base of the social pyramid, the uneducated inadaptable peasants and labourers, is, with the development of toil-saving machinery, dwindling and crumbling down bit by bit towards the abyss. But side by side with these two processes is a third process of still profounder significance, and that is the reconstruction and the vast proliferation of what constituted the middle class of the old order. It is now, indeed, no longer a middle class at all. Rather all the definite classes in the old scheme of functional precedence have melted and mingled, and in the molten mass there has appeared a vast intricate confusion of different sorts of people, some sailing about upon floating masses of irresponsible property, some buoyed by smaller fragments, some clinging desperately enough to insignificant atoms, a great and varied multitude swimming successfully without aid, or with an amount of aid that is negligible in relation to their own efforts, and an equally varied multitude of less capable ones clinging to the swimmers, clinging to the floating rich, or clutching empty-handed and thrust and sinking down. This is the typical aspect of the modern community. It will serve as a general description of either the United States or any western European State, and the day is not far distant when the extension of means of communication, and of the shareholding method of conducting affairs, will make it applicable to the whole world. Save, possibly, in a few islands and inaccessible

places and regardless of colour or creed, this process of deliquescence seems destined to spread. In a great diversity of tongues, in the phases of a number of conflicting moral and theological traditions, in the varying tones of contrasting racial temperaments, the grandchildren of black and white, and red and brown, will be seeking more or less consciously to express themselves in relation to these new and unusual social conditions. But the change itself is no longer amenable to their interpretations, the world-wide spreading of swift communication, the obliteration of town and country, the deliquescence of the local social order, have an air of being processes as uncontrollable by such collective intelligence as men can at present command, and as indifferent to his local peculiarities and prejudices as the movements of winds and tides....

It will be obvious that the interest of this speculation, at any rate, centres upon this great intermediate mass of people who are neither passively wealthy, the sleeping partners of change, nor helplessly thrust out of the process. Indeed, from our point of view — an inquiry into coming things — these non-effective masses would have but the slightest interest were it not for their enormous possibilities of reaction upon the really living portion of the social organism. This really living portion seems at first sight to be as deliquescent in its nature, to be drifting down to as chaotic a structure as either the non-functional owners that float above it or the unemployed who sink below. What were once the definite subdivisions of the middle class modify and lose their boundaries. The retail tradesman of the towns, for example — once a fairly homogeneous class throughout Europe — expands here into vast store companies, and dwindles there to be an agent or collector, seeks employment or topples outright into the abyss. But under a certain scrutiny one can detect here what we do not detect in our other two elements, and that is that, going on side by side with the processes of dissolution and frequently masked by these, there are other processes by which men, often of the most diverse parentage and antecedent traditions, are being segregated into a multitude of specific new groups which may presently develop very distinctive characters and ideals.

There are, for example, the unorganized myriads that one can

cover by the phrase “mechanics and engineers,” if one uses it in its widest possible sense. At present it would be almost impossible to describe such a thing as a typical engineer, to predicate any universally applicable characteristic of the engineer and mechanic. The black-faced, oily man one figures emerging from the engine-room serves well enough, until one recalls the sanitary engineer with his additions of crockery and plumbing, the electrical engineer with his little tests and wires, the mining engineer, the railway maker, the motor builder, and the irrigation expert. Even if we take some specific branch of all this huge mass of new employment the coming of mechanism has brought with it, we still find an undigested miscellany. Consider the rude levy that is engaged in supplying and repairing the world’s new need of bicycles! Wheelwrights, watchmakers, blacksmiths, music-dealers, drapers, sewing-machine repairers, smart errand boys, ironmongers, individuals from all the older aspects of engineering, have been caught up by the new development, are all now, with a more or less inadequate knowledge and training, working in the new service. But is it likely that this will remain a rude levy? From all these varied people the world requires certain things, and a failure to obtain them involves, sooner or later, in this competitive creation, an individual replacement and a push towards the abyss. The very lowest of them must understand the machine they contribute to make and repair, and not only is it a fairly complex machine in itself, but it is found in several types and patterns, and so far it has altered, and promises still to alter, steadily, by improvements in this part and that. No limited stock-in-trade of knowledge, such as suffices for a joiner or an ostler, will serve. They must keep on mastering new points, new aspects, they must be intelligent and adaptable, they must get a grasp of that permanent something that lies behind the changing immediate practice. In other words, they will have to be educated rather than trained after the fashion of the old craftsman. Just now this body of irregulars is threatened by the coming of the motors. The motors promise new difficulties, new rewards, and new competition. It is an ill look-out for the cycle mechanic who is not prepared to tackle the new problems that will arise. For all this next century this particular body of mechanics will be picking up new recruits and eliminating the

incompetent and the rule-of-thumb sage. Can it fail, as the years pass, to develop certain general characters, to become so far homogeneous as to be generally conscious of the need of a scientific education, at any rate in mechanical and chemical matters, and to possess, down to its very lowest ranks and orders, a common fund of intellectual training?

But the makers and repairers of cycles, and that larger multitude that will presently be concerned with motors, are, after all, only a small and specialized section of the general body of mechanics and engineers. Every year, with the advance of invention, new branches of activity, that change in their nature and methods all too rapidly for the establishment of rote and routine workers of the old type, call together fresh levies of amateurish workers and learners who must surely presently develop into, or give place to, bodies of qualified and capable men. And the point I would particularly insist upon here is, that throughout all its ranks and ramifications, from the organizing heads of great undertakings down to the assistant in the local repair shop, this new, great, and expanding body of mechanics and engineers will tend to become an educated and adaptable class in a sense that the craftsmen of former times were not educated and adaptable. Just how high the scientific and practical education may rise in the central levels of this body is a matter for subsequent speculation, just how much initiative will be found in the lowest ranks depends upon many very complex considerations. But that here we have at least the possibility, the primary creative conditions of a new, numerous, intelligent, educated, and capable social element is, I think, a proposition with which the reader will agree.

What are the chief obstacles in the way of the emergence, from out the present chaos, of this social element equipped, organized, educated, conscious of itself and of distinctive aims, in the next hundred years? In the first place there is the spirit of trade unionism, the conservative contagion of the old craftsmanship. Trade Unions arose under the tradition of the old order, when in every business, employer and employed stood in marked antagonism, stood as a special instance of the universal relationship of gentle or intelligent, who supplied no labour, and simple, who supplied nothing else. The interest of the employer was to get as much labour as possible out of

his hirelings; the complementary object in life of the hireling, whose sole function was drudgery, who had no other prospect until death, was to give as little to his employer as possible. In order to keep the necessary labourer submissive, it was a matter of public policy to keep him uneducated and as near the condition of a beast of burden as possible, and in order to keep his life tolerable against that natural increase which all the moral institutions of his state promoted, the labourer — stimulated if his efforts slackened by the touch of absolute misery — was forced to devise elaborate rules for restricting the hours of toil, making its performance needlessly complex, and shirking with extreme ingenuity and conscientiousness. In the older trades, of which the building trade is foremost, these two traditions, reinforced by unimaginative building regulations, have practically arrested any advance whatever. There can be no doubt that this influence has spread into what are practically new branches of work. Even where new conveniences have called for new types of workmen and have opened the way for the elevation of a group of labourers to the higher level of versatile educated men, the old traditions have to a very large extent prevailed. The average sanitary plumber of to-day in England insists upon his position as a mere labourer as though it were some precious thing, he guards himself from improvement as a virtuous woman guards her honour, he works for specifically limited hours and by the hour with specific limitations in the practice of his trade, on the fairly sound assumption that but for that restriction any fool might do plumbing as well as he; whatever he learns he learns from some other plumber during his apprenticeship years — after which he devotes himself to doing the minimum of work in the maximum of time until his brief excursion into this mysterious universe is over. So far from invention spurring him onward, every improvement in sanitary work in England, at least, is limited by the problem whether "the men" will understand it. A person ingenious enough to exceed this sacred limit might as well hang himself as trouble about the improvement of plumbing.

If England stood alone, I do not see why each of the new mechanical and engineering industries, so soon as it develops sufficiently to have gathered together a body of workers capable of supporting a Trade Union secretary, should not begin to stagnate in

the same manner. Only England does not stand alone, and the building trade is so far not typical, inasmuch as it possesses a national monopoly that the most elaborate system of protection cannot secure any other group of trades. One must have one's house built where one has to live, the importation of workmen in small bodies is difficult and dear, and if one cannot have the house one wishes, one must needs have the least offensive substitute; but bicycle and motor, iron-work and furniture, engines, rails, and ships one can import. The community, therefore, that does least to educate its mechanics and engineers out of the base and servile tradition of the old idea of industry will in the coming years of progress simply get a disproportionate share of the rejected element, the trade will go elsewhere, and the community will be left in possession of an exceptionally large contingent for the abyss.

At present, however, I am dealing not with the specific community, but with the generalized civilized community of a.d. 2000 — we disregard the fate of states and empires for a time — and, for that emergent community, wherever it may be, it seems reasonable to anticipate, replacing and enormously larger and more important than the classes of common workmen and mechanics of to-day, a large fairly homogeneous body — big men and little men, indeed, but with no dividing lines — of more or less expert mechanics and engineers, with a certain common minimum of education and intelligence, and probably a common-class consciousness — a new body, a new force, in the world's history.

For this body to exist implies the existence of much more than the primary and initiating nucleus of engineers and skilled mechanics. If it is an educated class, its existence implies a class of educators, and just as far as it does get educated the schoolmasters will be skilled and educated men. The shabby-genteel middle-class schoolmaster of the England of to-day, in — or a little way out of — orders, with his smattering of Greek, his Latin that leads nowhere, his fatuous mathematics, his gross ignorance of pedagogics, and his incomparable snobbishness, certainly does not represent the schoolmaster of this coming class. Moreover, the new element will necessarily embody its collective, necessarily distinctive, and unprecedented thoughts in a literature of its own, its development

means the development of a new sort of writer and of new elements in the press. And since, if it does emerge, a revolution in the common schools of the community will be a necessary part of the process, then its emergence will involve a revolutionary change in the condition of classes that might otherwise remain as they are now — the older craftsman, for example.

The process of attraction will not end even there; the development of more and more scientific engineering and of really adaptable operatives will render possible agricultural contrivances that are now only dreams, and the diffusion of this new class over the country side — assuming the reasoning in my second chapter to be sound — will bring the lever of the improved schools under the agriculturist. The practically autonomous farm of the old epoch will probably be replaced by a great variety of types of cultivation, each with its labour-saving equipment. In this, as in most things, the future spells variation. The practical abolition of impossible distances over the world will tend to make every district specialize in the production for which it is best fitted, and to develop that production with an elaborate precision and economy. The chief opposing force to this tendency will be found in those countries where the tenure of the land is in small holdings. A population of small agriculturists that has really got itself well established is probably as hopelessly immovable a thing as the forces of progressive change will have to encounter. The Arcadian healthiness and simplicity of the small holder, and the usefulness of little hands about him, naturally results in his keeping the population on his plot up to the limit of bare subsistence. He avoids over-education, and his beasts live with him and his children in a natural kindly manner. He will have no idlers, and even grandmamma goes weeding. His nett produce is less than the production of the larger methods, but his gross is greater, and usually it is mortgaged more or less. Along the selvage of many of the new roads we have foretold, his hens will peck and his children beg, far into the coming decades. This simple, virtuous, open-air life is to be found ripening in the north of France and Belgium, it culminated in Ireland in the famine years, it has held its own in China — with a use of female infanticide — for immemorable ages, and a number of excellent persons are endeavouring to establish it in England at the

present time. At the Cape of Good Hope, under British rule, Kaffirs are being settled upon little inalienable holdings that must inevitably develop in the same direction, and over the Southern States the nigger squats and multiplies. It is fairly certain that these stagnant ponds of population, which will grow until public intelligence rises to the pitch of draining them, will on a greater scale parallel in the twentieth century the soon-to-be-dispersed urban slums of the nineteenth. But I do not see how they can obstruct, more than locally, the reorganization of agriculture and horticulture upon the ampler and more economical lines mechanism permits, or prevent the development of a type of agriculturist as adaptable, alert, intelligent, unprejudiced, and modest as the coming engineer.

Another great section of the community, the military element, will also fall within the attraction of this possible synthesis, and will inevitably undergo profound modification. Of the probable development of warfare a later chapter shall treat, and here it will suffice to point out that at present science stands proffering the soldier vague, vast possibilities of mechanism, and, so far, he has accepted practically nothing but rifles which he cannot sight and guns that he does not learn to move about. It is quite possible the sailor would be in the like case, but for the exceptional conditions that begot ironclads in the American Civil War. Science offers the soldier transport that he does not use, maps he does not use, entrenching devices, road-making devices, balloons and flying scouts, portable foods, security from disease, a thousand ways of organizing the horrible uncertainties of war. But the soldier of to-day — I do not mean the British soldier only — still insists on regarding these revolutionary appliances as mere accessories, and untrustworthy ones at that, to the time-honoured practice of his art. He guards his technical innocence like a plumber.

Every European army is organized on the lines of the once fundamental distinction of the horse and foot epoch, in deference to the contrast of gentle and simple. There is the officer, with all the traditions of old nobility, and the men still, by a hundred implications, mere sources of mechanical force, and fundamentally base. The British Army, for example, still cherishes the tradition that its privates are absolutely illiterate, and such small instruction as is

given them in the art of war is imparted by bawling and enforced by abuse upon public drill grounds. Almost all discussion of military matters still turns upon the now quite stupid assumption that there are two primary military arms and no more, horse and foot. “Cyclists are infantry,” the War Office manual of 1900 gallantly declares in the face of this changing universe. After fifty years of railways, there still does not exist, in a world which is said to be over devoted to military affairs, a skilled and organized body of men, specially prepared to seize, repair, reconstruct, work, and fight such an important element in the new social machinery as a railway system. Such a business, in the next European war, will be hastily entrusted to some haphazard incapables drafted from one or other of the two prehistoric arms.... I do not see how this condition of affairs can be anything but transitory. There may be several wars between European powers, prepared and organized to accept the old conventions, bloody, vast, distressful encounters that may still leave the art of war essentially unmodified, but sooner or later — it may be in the improvised struggle that follows the collapse of some one of these huge, witless, fighting forces — the new sort of soldier will emerge, a sober, considerate, engineering man — no more of a gentleman than the man subordinated to him or any other self-respecting person....

Certain interesting side questions I may glance at here, only for the present, at least, to set them aside unanswered, the reaction, for example, of this probable development of a great mass of educated and intelligent efficients upon the status and quality of the medical profession, and the influence of its novel needs in either modifying the existing legal body or calling into being a parallel body of more expert and versatile guides and assistants in business operations. But from the mention of this latter section one comes to another possible centre of aggregation in the social welter. Opposed in many of their most essential conditions to the capable men who are of primary importance in the social body, is the great and growing variety of non-productive but active men who are engaged in more or less necessary operations of organization, promotion, advertisement, and trade. There are the business managers, public and private, the political organizers, brokers, commission agents, the varying grades of financier down to the mere greedy camp followers of finance, the

gamblers pure and simple, and the great body of their dependent clerks, typewriters, and assistants. All this multitude will have this much in common, that it will be dealing, not with the primary inexorable logic of natural laws, but with the shifting, uncertain prejudices and emotions of the general mass of people. It will be wary and cunning rather than deliberate and intelligent, smart rather than prompt, considering always the appearance and effect before the reality and possibilities of things. It will probably tend to form a culture about the political and financial operator as its ideal and central type, opposed to, and conflicting with, the forces of attraction that will tend to group the new social masses about the scientific engineer....

Here, then (in the vision of the present writer), are the main social elements of the coming time: (i.) the element of irresponsible property; (ii.) the helpless superseded poor, that broad base of mere toilers now no longer essential; (iii.) a great inchoate mass of more or less capable people engaged more or less consciously in applying the growing body of scientific knowledge to the general needs, a great mass that will inevitably tend to organize itself in a system of interdependent educated classes with a common consciousness and aim, but which may or may not succeed in doing so; and (iv.) a possibly equally great number of non-productive persons living in and by the social confusion.

All these elements will be mingled confusedly together, passing into one another by insensible gradations, scattered over the great urban regions and intervening areas our previous anticipations have sketched out. Moreover, they are developing, as it were unconsciously, under the stimulus of mechanical developments, and with the bandages of old tradition hampering their movements. The laws they obey, the governments they live under, are for the most part laws made and governments planned before the coming of steam. The areas of administration are still areas marked out by conditions of locomotion as obsolete as the quadrupedal method of the pre-arboreal ancestor. In Great Britain, for example, the political constitution, the balance of estates and the balance of parties, preserves the compromise of long-vanished antagonisms. The House of Lords is a collection of obsolete territorial dignitaries fitfully

reinforced by the bishops and a miscellany (in no sense representative) of opulent moderns; the House of Commons is the seat of a party conflict, a faction fight of initiated persons, that has long ceased to bear any real relation to current social processes. The members of the lower chamber are selected by obscure party machines operating upon constituencies almost all of which have long since become too vast and heterogeneous to possess any collective intelligence or purpose at all. In theory the House of Commons guards the interests of classes that are, in fact, rapidly disintegrating into a number of quite antagonistic and conflicting elements. The new mass of capable men, of which the engineers are typical, these capable men who must necessarily be the active principle of the new mechanically equipped social body, finds no representation save by accident in either assembly. The man who has concerned himself with the public health, with army organization, with educational improvement, or with the vital matters of transport and communication, if he enter the official councils of the kingdom at all, must enter ostensibly as the guardian of the interests of the free and independent electors of a specific district that has long ceased to have any sort of specific interests at all....

And the same obsolescence that is so conspicuous in the general institutions of the official kingdom of England, and that even English people can remark in the official empire of China, is to be traced in a greater or lesser degree in the nominal organization and public tradition throughout the whole world. The United States, for example, the social mass which has perhaps advanced furthest along the new lines, struggles in the iron bonds of a constitution that is based primarily on a conception of a number of comparatively small, internally homogeneous, agricultural states, a bunch of pre-Johannesburg Transvaals, communicating little, and each constituting a separate autonomous democracy of free farmers — slaveholding or slaveless. Every country in the world, indeed, that is organized at all, has been organized with a view to stability within territorial limits; no country has been organized with any foresight of development and inevitable change, or with the slightest reference to the practical revolution in topography that the new means of transit involve. And since this is so, and since humanity is most assuredly

embarked upon a series of changes of which we know as yet only the opening phases, a large part of the history of the coming years will certainly record more or less conscious endeavours to adapt these obsolete and obsolescent contrivances for the management of public affairs to the new and continually expanding and changing requirements of the social body, to correct or overcome the traditions that were once wisdom and which are now obstruction, and to burst the straining boundaries that were sufficient for the ancient states. There are here no signs of a millennium. Internal reconstruction, while men are still limited, egotistical, passionate, ignorant, and ignorantly led, means seditions and revolutions, and the rectification of frontiers means wars. But before we go on to these conflicts and wars certain general social reactions must be considered.

IV. Certain Social Reactions

We are now in a position to point out and consider certain general ways in which the various factors and elements in the deliquescent society of the present time will react one upon another, and to speculate what definite statements, if any, it may seem reasonable to make about the individual people of the year 2000 — or thereabouts — from the reaction of these classes we have attempted to define.

To begin with, it may prove convenient to speculate upon the trend of development of that class about which we have the most grounds for certainty in the coming time. The shareholding class, the rout of the Abyss, the speculator, may develop in countless ways according to the varying development of exterior influences upon them, but of the most typical portion of the central body, the section containing the scientific engineering or scientific medical sort of people, we can postulate certain tendencies with some confidence. Certain ways of thought they must develop, certain habits of mind and eye they will radiate out into the adjacent portions of the social mass. We can even, I think, deduce some conception of the home in which a fairly typical example of this body will be living within a reasonable term of years.

The mere fact that a man is an engineer or a doctor, for example, should imply now, and certainly will imply in the future, that he has received an education of a certain definite type; he will have a general acquaintance with the scientific interpretation of the universe, and he will have acquired certain positive and practical habits of mind. If the methods of thought of any individual in this central body are not practical and positive, he will tend to drift out of it to some more congenial employment. He will almost necessarily have a strong imperative to duty quite apart from whatever theological opinions he may entertain, because if he has not such an inherent imperative, life will have very many more alluring prospects than this. His religious conclusions, whatever they may be, will be based upon some orderly theological system that must have honestly admitted and reconciled his scientific beliefs; the emotional and mystical elements in his religion will be subordinate or absent.

Essentially he will be a moral man, certainly so far as to exercise self-restraint and live in an ordered way. Unless this is so, he will be unable to give his principal energies to thought and work — that is, he will not be a good typical engineer. If sensuality appear at all largely in this central body, therefore, — a point we must leave open here — it will appear without any trappings of sentiment or mysticism, frankly on Pauline lines, wine for the stomach's sake, and it is better to marry than to burn, a concession to the flesh necessary to secure efficiency. Assuming in our typical case that pure indulgence does not appear or flares and passes, then either he will be single or more or less married. The import of that "more or less" will be discussed later, for the present we may very conveniently conceive him married under the traditional laws of Christendom. Having a mind considerably engaged, he will not have the leisure for a wife of the distracting, perplexing personality kind, and in our typical case, which will be a typically sound and successful one, we may picture him wedded to a healthy, intelligent, and loyal person, who will be her husband's companion in their common leisure, and as mother of their three or four children and manager of his household, as much of a technically capable individual as himself. He will be a father of several children, I think, because his scientific mental basis will incline him to see the whole of life as a struggle to survive; he will recognize that a childless, sterile life, however pleasant, is essentially failure and perversion, and he will conceive his honour involved in the possession of offspring.

Such a couple will probably dress with a view to decent convenience, they will not set the fashions, as I shall presently point out, but they will incline to steady and sober them, they will avoid exciting colour contrasts and bizarre contours. They will not be habitually promenaders, or greatly addicted to theatrical performances; they will probably find their secondary interests — the cardinal one will of course be the work in hand — in a not too imaginative prose literature, in travel and journeys and in the less sensuous aspects of music. They will probably take a considerable interest in public affairs. Their *ménage*, which will consist of father, mother, and children, will, I think, in all probability, be servantless.

They will probably not keep a servant for two very excellent

reasons, because in the first place they will not want one, and in the second they will not get one if they do. A servant is necessary in the small, modern house, partly to supplement the deficiencies of the wife, but mainly to supplement the deficiencies of the house. She comes to cook and perform various skilled duties that the wife lacks either knowledge or training, or both, to perform regularly and expeditiously. Usually it must be confessed that the servant in the small household fails to perform these skilled duties completely. But the great proportion of the servant's duties consists merely in drudgery that the stupidities of our present-day method of house construction entail, and which the more sanely constructed house of the future will avoid. Consider, for instance, the wanton disregard of avoidable toil displayed in building houses with a service basement without lifts! Then most dusting and sweeping would be quite avoidable if houses were wiselier done. It is the lack of proper warming appliances which necessitates a vast amount of coal carrying and dirt distribution, and it is this dirt mainly that has so painfully to be removed again. The house of the future will probably be warmed in its walls from some power-generating station, as, indeed, already very many houses are lit at the present day. The lack of sane methods of ventilation also enhances the general dirtiness and dustiness of the present-day home, and gas-lighting and the use of tarnishable metals, wherever possible, involve further labour. But air will enter the house of the future through proper tubes in the walls, which will warm it and capture its dust, and it will be spun out again by a simple mechanism. And by simple devices such sweeping as still remains necessary can be enormously lightened. The fact that in existing homes the skirting meets the floor at right angles makes sweeping about twice as troublesome as it will be when people have the sense and ability to round off the angle between wall and floor.

So one great lump of the servant's toil will practically disappear. Two others are already disappearing. In many houses there are still the offensive duties of filling lamps and blacking boots to be done. Our coming house, however, will have no lamps to need filling, and, as for the boots, really intelligent people will feel the essential ugliness of wearing the evidence of constant manual toil upon their persons. They will wear sorts of shoes and boots that can be cleaned

by wiping in a minute or so. Take now the bedroom work. The lack of ingenuity in sanitary fittings at present forbids the obvious convenience of hot and cold water supply to the bedroom, and there is a mighty fetching and carrying of water and slops to be got through daily. All that will cease. Every bedroom will have its own bath-dressing room which any well-bred person will be intelligent and considerate enough to use and leave without the slightest disarrangement. This, so far as "upstairs" goes, really only leaves bedmaking to be done, and a bed does not take five minutes to make. Downstairs a vast amount of needless labour at present arises out of table wear. "Washing up" consists of a tedious cleansing and wiping of each table utensil in turn, whereas it should be possible to immerse all dirty table wear in a suitable solvent for a few minutes and then run that off for the articles to dry. The application of solvents to window cleaning, also, would be a possible thing but for the primitive construction of our windows, which prevents anything but a painful rub, rub, rub, with the leather. A friend of mine in domestic service tells me that this rubbing is to get the window dry, and this seems to be the general impression, but I think it incorrect. The water is not an adequate solvent, and enough cannot be used under existing conditions. Consequently, if the window is cleaned and left wet, it dries in drops, and these drops contain dirt in solution which remain as spots. But water containing a suitable solvent could quite simply be made to run down a window for a few minutes from pinholes in a pipe above into a groove below, and this could be followed by pure rain water for an equal time, and in this way the whole window cleaning in the house could, I imagine, be reduced to the business of turning on a tap.

There remains the cooking. To-day cooking, with its incidentals, is a very serious business; the coaling, the ashes, the horrible moments of heat, the hot black things to handle, the silly vague recipes, the want of neat apparatus, and the want of intelligence to demand or use neat apparatus. One always imagines a cook working with a crimsoned face and bare blackened arms. But with a neat little range, heated by electricity and provided with thermometers, with absolutely controllable temperatures and proper heat screens, cooking might very easily be made a pleasant amusement for

intelligent invalid ladies. Which reminds one, by-the-by, as an added detail to our previous sketch of the scenery of the days to come, that there will be no chimneys at all to the house of the future of this type, except the flue for the kitchen smells. This will not only abolish the chimney stack, but make the roof a clean and pleasant addition to the garden spaces of the home.

I do not know how long all these things will take to arrive. The erection of a series of experimental labour-saving houses by some philanthropic person, for exhibition and discussion, would certainly bring about a very extraordinary advance in domestic comfort even in the immediate future, but the fashions in philanthropy do not trend in such practical directions; if they did, the philanthropic person would probably be too amenable to flattery to escape the pushful patentee and too sensitive to avail himself of criticism (which rarely succeeds in being both penetrating and polite), and it will probably be many years before the cautious enterprise of advertising firms approximates to the economies that are theoretically possible to-day. But certainly the engineering and medical sorts of person will be best able to appreciate the possibilities of cutting down the irksome labours of the contemporary home, and most likely to first demand and secure them.

The wife of this ideal home may probably have a certain distaste for vicarious labour, that so far as the immediate minimum of duties goes will probably carry her through them. There will be few servants obtainable for the small homes of the future, and that may strengthen her sentiments. Hardly any woman seems to object to a system of things which provides that another woman should be made rough-handed and kept rough-minded for her sake, but with the enormous diffusion of levelling information that is going on, a perfectly valid objection will probably come from the other side in this transaction. The servants of the past and the only good servants of to-day are the children of servants or the children of the old labour base of the social pyramid, until recently a necessary and self-respecting element in the State. Machinery has smashed that base and scattered its fragments; the tradition of self-respecting inferiority is being utterly destroyed in the world. The contingents of the Abyss, even, will not supply daughters for this purpose. In the community of

the United States no native-born race of white servants has appeared, and the emancipated young negress degenerates towards the impossible — which is one of the many stimulants to small ingenuities that may help very powerfully to give that nation the industrial leadership of the world. The servant of the future, if indeed she should still linger in the small household, will be a person alive to a social injustice and the unsuccessful rival of the wife. Such servants as wealth will retain will be about as really loyal and servile as hotel waiters, and on the same terms. For the middling sort of people in the future maintaining a separate *ménage* there is nothing for it but the practically automatic house or flat, supplemented, perhaps, by the restaurant or the hotel.

Almost certainly, for reasons detailed in the second chapter of these Anticipations, this household, if it is an ideal type, will be situated away from the central "Town" nucleus and in pleasant surroundings. And I imagine that the sort of woman who would be mother and mistress of such a home would not be perfectly content unless there were a garden about the house. On account of the servant difficulty, again, this garden would probably be less laboriously neat than many of our gardens to-day — no "bedding-out," for example, and a certain parsimony of mown lawn....

To such a type of home it seems the active, scientifically trained people will tend. But usually, I think, the prophet is inclined to over estimate the number of people who will reach this condition of affairs in a generation or so, and to under estimate the conflicting tendencies that will make its attainment difficult to all, and impossible to many, and that will for many years tint and blotch the achievement of those who succeed with patches of unsympathetic colour. To understand just how modifications may come in, it is necessary to consider the probable line of development of another of the four main elements in the social body of the coming time. As a consequence and visible expression of the great new growth of share and stock property there will be scattered through the whole social body, concentrated here perhaps, and diffused there, but everywhere perceived, the members of that new class of the irresponsible wealthy, a class, as I have already pointed out in the preceding chapter, miscellaneous and free to a degree quite unprecedented in the world's history. Quite

inevitably great sections of this miscellany will develop characteristics almost diametrically opposed to those of the typical working expert class, and their gravitational attraction may influence the lives of this more efficient, finally more powerful, but at present much less wealthy, class to a very considerable degree of intimacy.

The rich shareholder and the skilled expert must necessarily be sharply contrasted types, and of the two it must be borne in mind that it is the rich shareholder who spends the money. While occupation and skill incline one towards severity and economy, leisure and unlimited means involve relaxation and demand the adventitious interest of decoration. The shareholder will be the decorative influence in the State. So far as there will be a typical shareholder's house, we may hazard that it will have rich colours, elaborate hangings, stained glass adornments, and added interests in great abundance. This "leisure class" will certainly employ the greater proportion of the artists, decorators, fabric makers, and the like, of the coming time. It will dominate the world of art — and we may say, with some confidence, that it will influence it in certain directions. For example, standing apart from the movement of the world, as they will do to a very large extent, the archaic, opulently done, will appeal irresistibly to very many of these irresponsible rich as the very quintessence of art. They will come to art with uncritical, cultured minds, full of past achievements, ignorant of present necessities. Art will be something added to life — something stuck on and richly reminiscent — not a manner pervading all real things. We may be pretty sure that very few will grasp the fact that an iron bridge or a railway engine may be artistically done — these will not be "art" objects, but hostile novelties. And, on the other hand, we can pretty confidently foretell a spacious future and much amplification for that turgid, costly, and deliberately anti-contemporary group of styles of which William Morris and his associates have been the fortunate pioneers. And the same principles will apply to costume. A non-functional class of people cannot have a functional costume, the whole scheme of costume, as it will be worn by the wealthy classes in the coming years, will necessarily be of that character which is called fancy dress. Few people will trouble to discover the most convenient forms and materials, and endeavour to simplify them and

reduce them to beautiful forms, while endless enterprising tradesmen will be alert for a perpetual succession of striking novelties. The women will ransack the ages for becoming and alluring anachronisms, the men will appear in the elaborate uniforms of "games," in modifications of "court" dress, in picturesque revivals of national costumes, in epidemic fashions of the most astonishing sort....

Now, these people, so far as they are spenders of money, and so far as he is a spender of money, will stand to this ideal engineering sort of person, who is the vitally important citizen of a progressive scientific State, in a competitive relation. In most cases, whenever there is something that both want, one against the other, the shareholder will get it; in most cases, where it is a matter of calling the tune, the shareholder will call the tune. For example, the young architect, conscious of exceptional ability, will have more or less clearly before him the alternatives of devoting himself to the novel, intricate, and difficult business of designing cheap, simple, and mechanically convenient homes for people who will certainly not be highly remunerative, and will probably be rather acutely critical, or of perfecting himself in some period of romantic architecture, or striking out some startling and attractive novelty of manner or material which will be certain, sooner or later, to meet its congenial shareholder. Even if he hover for a time between these alternatives, he will need to be a person not only of exceptional gifts, but what is by no means a common accompaniment of exceptional gifts, exceptional strength of character, to take the former line. Consequently, for many years yet, most of the experimental buildings and novel designs, that initiate discussion and develop the general taste, will be done primarily to please the more originative shareholders and not to satisfy the demands of our engineer or doctor; and the strictly commercial builders, who will cater for all but the wealthiest engineers, scientific investigators, and business men, being unable to afford specific designs, will — amidst the disregarded curses of these more intelligent customers — still simply reproduce in a cheaper and mutilated form such examples as happen to be set. Practically, that is to say, the shareholder will buy up almost all the available architectural talent.

This modifies our conception of the outer appearance of that little house we imagined. Unless it happens to be the house of an exceptionally prosperous member of the utilitarian professions, it will lack something of the neat directness implicit in our description, something of that inevitable beauty that arises out of the perfect attainment of ends — for very many years, at any rate. It will almost certainly be tinted, it may even be saturated, with the secondhand archaic. The owner may object, but a busy man cannot stop his life work to teach architects what they ought to know. It may be heated electrically, but it will have sham chimneys, in whose darkness, unless they are built solid, dust and filth will gather, and luckless birds and insects pass horrible last hours of ineffectual struggle. It may have automatic window-cleaning arrangements, but they will be hidden by "picturesque" mullions. The sham chimneys will, perhaps, be made to smoke genially in winter by some ingenious contrivance, there may be sham open fireplaces within, with ingle nooks about the sham glowing logs. The needlessly steep roofs will have a sham sag and sham timbered gables, and probably forced lichens will give it a sham appearance of age. Just that feeble-minded contemporary shirking of the truth of things that has given the world such stockbroker in armour affairs as the Tower Bridge and historical romance, will, I fear, worry the lucid mind in a great multitude of the homes that the opening half, at least, of this century will produce.

In quite a similar way the shareholding body will buy up all the clever and more enterprising makers and designers of clothing and adornment, he will set the fashion of almost all ornament, in bookbinding and printing and painting, for example, furnishing, and indeed of almost all things that are not primarily produced "for the million," as the phrase goes. And where that sort of thing comes in, then, so far as the trained and intelligent type of man goes, for many years yet it will be simply a case of the nether instead of the upper millstone. Just how far the influence and contagion of the shareholding mass will reach into this imaginary household of non-shareholding efficients, and just how far the influence of science and mechanism will penetrate the minds and methods of the rich, becomes really one of the most important questions with which these speculations will deal. For this argument that he will perhaps be able

to buy up the architect and the tailor and the decorator and so forth is merely preliminary to the graver issue. It is just possible that the shareholder may, to a very large extent — in a certain figurative sense, at least — buy up much of the womankind that would otherwise be available to constitute those severe, capable, and probably by no means unhappy little establishments to which our typical engineers will tend, and so prevent many women from becoming mothers of a regenerating world. The huge secretion of irresponsible wealth by the social organism is certain to affect the tone of thought of the entire feminine sex profoundly — the exact nature of this influence we may now consider.

The gist of this inquiry lies in the fact that, while a man's starting position in this world of to-day is entirely determined by the conditions of his birth and early training, and his final position the slow elaborate outcome of his own sustained efforts to live, a woman, from the age of sixteen onward — as the world goes now — is essentially adventurous, the creature of circumstances largely beyond her control and foresight. A virile man, though he, too, is subject to accidents, may, upon most points, still hope to plan and determine his life; the life of a woman is all accident. Normally she lives in relation to some specific man, and until that man is indicated her preparation for life must be of the most tentative sort. She lives, going nowhere, like a cabman on the crawl, and at any time she may find it open to her to assist some pleasure-loving millionaire to spend his millions, or to play her part in one of the many real, original, and only derivatives of the former aristocratic "Society" that have developed themselves among independent people. Even if she is a serious and labour-loving type, some shareholder may tempt her with the prospect of developing her exceptional personality in ease and freedom and in "doing good" with his money. With the continued growth of the shareholding class, the brighter-looking matrimonial chances, not to speak of the glittering opportunities that are not matrimonial, will increase. Reading is now the privilege of all classes, there are few secrets of etiquette that a clever lower-class girl will fail to learn, there are few such girls, even now, who are not aware of their wide opportunities, or at least their wide possibilities, of luxury and freedom, there are still fewer who, knowing as much,

do not let it affect their standards and conception of life. The whole mass of modern fiction written by women for women, indeed, down to the cheapest novelettes, is saturated with the romance of *mésalliance*. And even when the specific man has appeared, the adventurous is still not shut out of a woman's career. A man's affections may wander capriciously and leave him but a little poorer or a little better placed; for the women they wander from, however, the issue is an infinitely graver one, and the serious wandering of a woman's fancy may mean the beginning of a new world for her. At any moment the chances of death may make the wife a widow, may sweep out of existence all that she had made fundamental in her life, may enrich her with insurance profits or hurl her into poverty, and restore all the drifting expectancy of her adolescence....

Now, it is difficult to say why we should expect the growing girl, in whom an unlimited ambition and egotism is as natural and proper a thing as beauty and high spirits, to deny herself some dalliance with the more opulent dreams that form the golden lining to these precarious prospects? How can we expect her to prepare herself solely, putting all wandering thoughts aside, for the servantless cookery, domestic Kindergarten work, the care of hardy perennials, and low-pitched conversation of the engineer's home? Supposing, after all, there is no predestinate engineer! The stories the growing girl now prefers, and I imagine will in the future still prefer, deal mainly with the rich and free; the theatre she will prefer to visit will present the lives and loves of opulent people with great precision and detailed correctness; her favourite periodicals will reflect that life; her schoolmistress, whatever her principles, must have an eye to her "chances." And even after Fate or a gust of passion has whirled her into the arms of our busy and capable fundamental man, all these things will still be in her imagination and memory. Unless he is a person of extraordinary mental prepotency, she will almost insensibly determine the character of the home in a direction quite other than that of our first sketch. She will set herself to realize, as far as her husband's means and credit permit, the ideas of the particular section of the wealthy that have captured her. If she is a fool, her ideas of life will presently come into complete conflict with her husband's in a manner that, as the fumes of the love potion leave his

brain, may bring the real nature of the case home to him. If he is of that resolute strain to whom the world must finally come, he may rebel and wade through tears and crises to his appointed work again. The cleverer she is, and the finer and more loyal her character up to a certain point, the less likely this is to happen, the more subtle and effective will be her hold upon her husband, and the more probable his perversion from the austere pursuit of some interesting employment, towards the adventures of modern money-getting in pursuit of her ideals of a befitting life. And meanwhile, since "one must live," the nursery that was implicit in the background of the first picture will probably prove unnecessary. She will be, perforce, a person not only of pleasant pursuits, but of leisure. If she endears herself to her husband, he will feel not only the attraction but the duty of her vacant hours; he will not only deflect his working hours from the effective to the profitable, but that occasional burning of the midnight oil, that no brain-worker may forego if he is to retain his efficiency, will, in the interests of some attractive theatrical performance or some agreeable social occasion, all too frequently have to be put off or abandoned.

This line of speculation, therefore, gives us a second picture of a household to put beside our first, a household, or rather a couple, rather more likely to be typical of the mass of middling sort of people in those urban regions of the future than our first projection. It will probably not live in a separate home at all, but in a flat in "Town," or at one of the subordinate centres of the urban region we have foreseen. The apartments will be more or less agreeably adorned in some decorative fashion akin to but less costly than some of the many fashions that will obtain among the wealthy. They will be littered with a miscellaneous literature, novels of an entertaining and stimulating sort predominating, and with *bric-à-brac*; in a childless household there must certainly be quaint dolls, pet images, and so forth, and perhaps a canary would find a place. I suspect there would be an edition or so of "Omar" about in this more typical household of "Moderns," but I doubt about the Bible. The man's working books would probably be shabby and relegated to a small study, and even these overlaid by abundant copies of the *Financial* — something or other. It would still be a servantless household, and

probably not only without a nursery but without a kitchen, and in its grade and degree it would probably have social relations directly or intermediately through rich friends with some section, some one of the numerous cults of the quite independent wealthy.

Quite similar households to this would be even more common among those neither independent nor engaged in work of a primarily functional nature, but endeavouring quite ostensibly to acquire wealth by political or business ingenuity and activity, and also among the great multitude of artists, writers, and that sort of people, whose works are their children. In comparison with the state of affairs fifty years ago, the child-infested household is already conspicuously rare in these classes.

These are two highly probably *ménages* among the central mass of the people of the coming time. But there will be many others. The *ménage à deux*, one may remark, though it may be without the presence of children, is not necessarily childless. Parentage is certainly part of the pride of many men — though, curiously enough, it does not appear to be felt among modern European married women as any part of their honour. Many men will probably achieve parentage, therefore, who will not succeed in inducing, or who may possibly even be very loth to permit, their wives to undertake more than the first beginnings of motherhood. From the moment of its birth, unless it is kept as a pet, the child of such marriages will be nourished, taught, and trained almost as though it were an orphan, it will have a succession of bottles and foster-mothers for body and mind from the very beginning. Side by side with this increasing number of childless homes, therefore, there may develop a system of Kindergarten boarding schools. Indeed, to a certain extent such schools already exist, and it is one of the unperceived contrasts of this and any former time how common such a separation of parents and children becomes. Except in the case of the illegitimate and orphans, and the children of impossible (many public-house children, *e.g.*), or wretched homes, boarding schools until quite recently were used only for quite big boys and girls. But now, at every seaside town, for example, one sees a multitude of preparatory schools, which are really not simply educational institutions, but supplementary homes. In many cases these are conducted and very

largely staffed by unmarried girls and women who are indeed, in effect, assistant mothers. This class of capable schoolmistresses is one of the most interesting social developments of this period. For the most part they are women who from emotional fastidiousness, intellectual egotism, or an honest lack of passion, have refused the common lot of marriage, women often of exceptional character and restraint, and it is well that, at any rate, their intelligence and character should not pass fruitlessly out of being. Assuredly for this type the future has much in store.

There are, however, still other possibilities to be considered in this matter. In these Anticipations it is impossible to ignore the forces making for a considerable relaxation of the institution of permanent monogamous marriage in the coming years, and of a much greater variety of establishments than is suggested by these possibilities within the pale. I guess, without attempting to refer to statistics, that our present society must show a quite unprecedented number and increasing number of male and female celibates — not religious celibates, but people, for the most part, whose standard of personal comfort has such a relation to their earning power that they shirk or cannot enter the matrimonial grouping. The institution of permanent monogamous marriage — except in the ideal Roman Catholic community, where it is based on the sanction of an authority which in real Roman Catholic countries a large proportion of the men decline to obey — is sustained at present entirely by the inertia of custom, and by a number of sentimental and practical considerations, considerations that may very possibly undergo modification in the face of the altered relationship of husband and wife that the present development of childless *ménages* is bringing about. The practical and sustaining reason for monogamy is the stability it gives to the family; the value of a stable family lies in the orderly upbringing in an atmosphere of affection that it secures in most cases for its more or less numerous children. The monogamous family has indisputably been the civilizing unit of the pre-mechanical civilized state. It must be remembered that both for husband and wife in most cases monogamic life marriage involves an element of sacrifice, it is an institution of late appearance in the history of mankind, and it does not completely fit the psychology or physiology of any but very

exceptional characters in either sex. For the man it commonly involves considerable restraint; he must ride his imagination on the curb, or exceed the code in an extremely dishonouring, furtive, and unsatisfactory manner while publicly professing an impossible virtue; for the woman it commonly implies many uncongenial submissions. There are probably few married couples who have escaped distressful phases of bitterness and tears, within the constraint of their, in most cases, practically insoluble bond. But, on the other hand, and as a reward that in the soberer, mainly agricultural civilization of the past, and among the middling class of people, at any rate, has sufficed, there comes the great development of associations and tendernesses that arises out of intimate co-operation in an established home, and particularly out of the linking love and interest of children's lives....

But how does this fit into the childless, disunited, and probably shifting *ménage* of our second picture?

It must be borne in mind that it has been the middling and lower mass of people, the tenants and agriculturists, the shopkeepers, and so forth, men needing before all things the absolutely loyal help of wives, that has sustained permanent monogamic marriage whenever it has been sustained. Public monogamy has existed on its merits — that is, on the merits of the wife. Merely ostensible reasons have never sufficed. No sort of religious conviction, without a real practical utility, has ever availed to keep classes of men, unhampered by circumstances, to its restrictions. In all times, and holding all sorts of beliefs, the specimen humanity of courts and nobilities is to be found developing the most complex qualifications of the code. In some quiet corner of Elysium the bishops of the early Georges, the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the contemporary French and Spanish courts, the patriarchs of vanished Byzantium, will find a common topic with the spiritual advisers of the kingdoms of the East in this difficult theme, — the theme of the concessions permissible and expedient to earnest believers encumbered with leisure and a superfluity of power.... It is not necessary to discuss religious development, therefore, before deciding this issue. We are dealing now with things deeper and forces infinitely more powerful than the mere convictions of men.

Will a generation to whom marriage will be no longer necessarily associated with the birth and rearing of children, or with the immediate co-operation and sympathy of husband and wife in common proceedings, retain its present feeling for the extreme sanctity of the permanent bond? Will the agreeable, unemployed, childless woman, with a high conception of her personal rights, who is spending her husband's earnings or income in some pleasant discrepant manner, a type of woman there are excellent reasons for anticipating will become more frequent — will she continue to share the honours and privileges of the wife, mother, and helper of the old dispensation? and in particular, will the great gulf that is now fixed by custom between her and the agreeable unmarried lady who is similarly employed remain so inexorably wide? Charity is in the air, and why should not charming people meet one another? And where is either of these ladies to find the support that will enable her to insist upon the monopoly that conventional sentiment, so far as it finds expression, concedes her? The danger to them both of the theory of equal liberty is evident enough. On the other hand, in the case of the unmarried mother who may be helped to hold her own, or who may be holding her own in the world, where will the moral censor of the year 1950 find his congenial following to gather stones? Much as we may regret it, it does very greatly affect the realities of this matter, that with the increased migration of people from home to home amidst the large urban regions that, we have concluded, will certainly obtain in the future, even if moral reprobation and minor social inconveniences do still attach to certain sorts of status, it will probably be increasingly difficult to determine the status of people who wish to conceal it for any but criminal ends.

In another direction there must be a movement towards the relaxation of the marriage law and of divorce that will complicate status very confusingly. In the past it has been possible to sustain several contrasting moral systems in each of the practically autonomous states of the world, but with a development and cheapening of travel and migration that is as yet only in its opening phase, an increasing conflict between dissimilar moral restrictions must appear. Even at present, with only the most prosperous classes of the American and Western European countries migrating at all

freely, there is a growing amount of inconvenience arising out of these — from the point of view of social physiology — quite arbitrary differences. A man or woman may, for example, have been the injured party in some conjugal complication, may have established a domicile and divorced the erring spouse in certain of the United States, may have married again there with absolute local propriety, and may be a bigamist and a criminal in England. A child may be a legal child in Denmark or Australia, and a bastard in this austerer climate. These things are, however, only the first intimations of much more profound reactions. Almost all the great European Powers, and the United States also, are extending their boundaries to include great masses of non-Christian polygamous peoples, and they are permeating these peoples with railways, printed matter, and all the stimulants of our present state. With the spread of these conveniences there is no corresponding spread of Christianity. These people will not always remain in the ring fence of their present regions; their superseded princes, and rulers, and public masters, and managers, will presently come to swell the shareholding mass of the appropriating Empire. Europeans, on the other hand, will drift into these districts, and under the influence of their customs, intermarriages and interracial reaction will increase; in a world which is steadily abolishing locality, the compromise of local concessions, of localized recognition of the "custom of the country," cannot permanently avail. Statesmen will have to face the alternative of either widening the permissible variations of the marriage contract, or of acute racial and religious stresses, of a vast variety of possible legal betrayals, and the appearance of a body of self-respecting people, outside the law and public respect, a body that will confer a touch of credit upon, because it will share the stigma of, the deliberately dissolute and criminal. And whether the moral law shrivels relatively by mere exclusiveness — as in religious matters the Church of England, for example, has shrivelled to the proportions of a mere sectarian practice — or whether it broadens itself to sustain justice in a variety of sexual contracts, the nett result, so far as our present purpose goes, will be the same. All these forces, making for moral relaxation in the coming time, will probably be greatly enhanced by the line of development certain sections of the

irresponsible wealthy will almost certainly follow.

Let me repeat that the shareholding rich man of the new time is in a position of freedom almost unparalleled in the history of men. He has sold his permission to control and experiment with the material wealth of the community for freedom — for freedom from care, labour, responsibility, custom, local usage and local attachment. He may come back again into public affairs if he likes — that is his private concern. Within the limits of the law and his capacity and courage, he may do as the imagination of his heart directs. Now, such an experimental and imperfect creature as man, a creature urged by such imperious passions, so weak in imagination and controlled by so feeble a reason, receives such absolute freedom as this only at infinite peril. To a great number of these people, in the second or third generation, this freedom will mean vice, the subversion of passion to inconsequent pleasures. We have on record, in the personal history of the Roman emperors, how freedom and uncontrolled power took one representative group of men, men not entirely of one blood nor of one bias, but reinforced by the arbitrary caprice of adoption and political revolution. We have in the history of the Russian empresses a glimpse of similar feminine possibilities. We are moving towards a time when, through this confusion of moral standards I have foretold, the pressure of public opinion in these matters must be greatly relaxed, when religion will no longer speak with a unanimous voice, and when freedom of escape from disapproving neighbours will be greatly facilitated. In the past, when depravity had a centre about a court, the contagion of its example was limited to the court region, but every idle rich man of this great, various, and widely diffused class, will play to a certain extent the moral *rôle* of a court. In these days of universal reading and vivid journalism, every novel infraction of the code will be known of, thought about, and more or less thoroughly discussed by an enormous and increasing proportion of the common people. In the past it has been possible for the churches to maintain an attitude of respectful regret towards the lapses of the great, and even to co-operate in these lapses with a sympathetic privacy, while maintaining a wholesome rigour towards vulgar vice. But in the coming time there will be no Great, but many rich, the middling sort of people

will probably be better educated as a whole than the rich, and the days of their differential treatment are at an end.

It is foolish, in view of all these things, not to anticipate and prepare for a state of things when not only will moral standards be shifting and uncertain, admitting of physiologically sound *ménages* of very variable status, but also when vice and depravity, in every form that is not absolutely penal, will be practised in every grade of magnificence and condoned. This means that not only will status cease to be simple and become complex and varied, but that outside the system of *ménages* now recognized, and under the disguise of which all other *ménages* shelter, there will be a vast drifting and unstable population grouped in almost every conceivable form of relation. The world of Georgian England was a world of Homes; the world of the coming time will still have its Homes, its real Mothers, the custodians of the human succession, and its cared-for children, the inheritors of the future, but in addition to this Home world, frothing tumultuously over and amidst these stable rocks, there will be an enormous complex of establishments, and hotels, and sterile households, and flats, and all the elaborate furnishing and appliances of a luxurious extinction.

And since in the present social chaos there does not yet exist any considerable body of citizens — comparable to the agricultural and commercial middle class of England during the period of limited monarchy — that will be practically unanimous in upholding any body of rules of moral restraint, since there will probably not appear for some generations any body propounding with wide-reaching authority a new definitely different code to replace the one that is now likely to be increasingly disregarded, it follows that the present code with a few interlined qualifications and grudging legal concessions will remain nominally operative in sentiment and practice while being practically disregarded, glossed, or replaced in numberless directions. It must be pointed out that in effect, what is here forecast for questions of *ménage* and moral restraints has already happened to a very large extent in religious matters. There was a time when it was held — and I think rightly — that a man's religious beliefs, and particularly his method of expressing them, was a part not of his individual but of his social life. But the great

upheavals of the Reformation resulted finally in a compromise, a sort of truce, that has put religious belief very largely out of intercourse and discussion. It is conceded that within the bounds of the general peace and security a man may believe and express his belief in matters of religion as he pleases, not because it is better so, but because for the present epoch there is no way nor hope of attaining unanimous truth. There is a decided tendency that will, I believe, prevail towards the same compromise in the question of private morals. There is a convention to avoid all discussion of creeds in general social intercourse; and a similar convention to avoid the point of status in relation to marriage, one may very reasonably anticipate, will be similarly recognized.

But this impending dissolution of a common standard of morals does not mean universal depravity until some great reconstruction obtains any more than the obsolescence of the Conventicle Act means universal irreligion. It means that for one Morality there will be many moralities. Each human being will, in the face of circumstances, work out his or her particular early training as his or her character determines. And although there will be a general convention upon which the most diverse people will meet, it will only be with persons who have come to identical or similar conclusions in the matter of moral conduct and who are living in similar *ménages*, just as now it is only with people whose conversation implies a certain community or kinship of religious belief, that really frequent and intimate intercourse will go on. In other words, there will be a process of moral segregation set up. Indeed, such a process is probably already in operation, amidst the deliquescent social mass. People will be drawn together into little groups of similar *ménages* having much in common. And this — in view of the considerations advanced in the first two chapters, considerations all converging on the practical abolition of distances and the general freedom of people to live anywhere they like over large areas — will mean very frequently an actual local segregation. There will be districts that will be clearly recognized and marked as "nice," fast regions, areas of ramshackle Bohemianism, regions of earnest and active work, old-fashioned corners and Hill Tops. Whole regions will be set aside for the purposes of opulent enjoyment — a

thing already happening, indeed, at points along the Riviera to-day. Already the superficial possibilities of such a segregation have been glanced at. It has been pointed out that the enormous urban region of the future may present an extraordinary variety of districts, suburbs, and subordinate centres within its limiting boundaries, and here we have a very definite enforcement of that probability.

In the previous chapter I spoke of boating centres and horsey suburbs, and picturesque hilly districts and living places by the sea, of promenade centres and theatrical districts; I hinted at various fashions in architecture, and suchlike things, but these exterior appearances will be but the outward and visible sign of inward and more spiritual distinctions. The people who live in the good hunting country and about that glittering Grand Stand, will no longer be even pretending to live under the same code as those picturesque musical people who have concentrated on the canoe-dotted river. Where the promenaders gather, and the bands are playing, and the pretty little theatres compete, the pleasure seeker will be seeking such pleasure as he pleases, no longer debased by furtiveness and innuendo, going his primrose path to a congenial, picturesque, happy and highly desirable extinction. Just over the hills, perhaps, a handful of opulent shareholders will be pleasantly preserving the old traditions of a landed aristocracy, with servants, tenants, vicar, and other dependents all complete, and what from the point of view of social physiology will really be an arrested contingent of the Abyss, but all nicely washed and done good to, will pursue home industries in model cottages in a quite old English and exemplary manner. Here the windmills will spin and the waterfalls be trapped to gather force, and the quiet-eyed master of the machinery will have his office and perhaps his private home. Here about the great college and its big laboratories there will be men and women reasoning and studying; and here, where the homes thicken among the ripe gardens, one will hear the laughter of playing children, the singing of children in their schools, and see their little figures going to and fro amidst the trees and flowers....

And these segregations, based primarily on a difference in moral ideas and pursuits and ideals, will probably round off and complete themselves at last as distinct and separate cultures. As the moral

ideas realize themselves in *ménage* and habits, so the ideals will seek to find expression in a literature, and the passive drifting together will pass over into a phase of more or less conscious and intentional organization. The segregating groups will develop fashions of costume, types of manners and bearing, and even, perhaps, be characterized by a certain type of facial expression. And this gives us a glimpse, an aspect of the immediate future of literature. The kingdoms of the past were little things, and above the mass of peasants who lived and obeyed and died, there was just one little culture to which all must needs conform. Literature was universal within the limits of its language. Where differences of view arose there were violent controversies, polemics, and persecutions, until one or other rendering had won its ascendency. But this new world into which we are passing will, for several generations at least, albeit it will be freely inter-communicating and like a whispering gallery for things outspoken, possess no universal ideals, no universal conventions: there will be the literature of the thought and effort of this sort of people, and the literature, thought, and effort of that. Life is already most wonderfully arbitrary and experimental, and for the coming century this must be its essential social history, a great drifting and unrest of people, a shifting and regrouping and breaking up again of groups, great multitudes seeking to find themselves.

The safe life in the old order, where one did this because it was right, and that because it was the custom, when one shunned this and hated that, as lead runs into a mould, all that is passing away. And presently, as the new century opens out, there will become more and more distinctly emergent many new cultures and settled ways. The grey expanse of life to-day is grey, not in its essence, but because of the minute confused mingling and mutual cancelling of many-coloured lives. Presently these tints and shades will gather together here as a mass of one colour, and there as a mass of another. And as these colours intensify and the tradition of the former order fades, as these cultures become more and more shaped and conscious, as the new literatures grow in substance and power, as differences develop from speculative matter of opinion to definite intentions, as contrasts and affinities grow sharper and clearer, there must follow some very extensive modifications in the collective public life. But one series of

tints, one colour must needs have a heightening value amidst this iridescent display. While the forces at work in the wealthy and purely speculative groups of society make for disintegration, and in many cases for positive elimination, the forces that bring together the really functional people will tend more and more to impose upon them certain common characteristics and beliefs, and the discovery of a group of similar and compatible class interests upon which they can unite. The practical people, the engineering and medical and scientific people, will become more and more homogeneous in their fundamental culture, more and more distinctly aware of a common "general reason" in things, and of a common difference from the less functional masses and from any sort of people in the past. They will have in their positive science a common ground for understanding the real pride of life, the real reason for the incidental nastiness of vice, and so they will be a sanely reproductive class, and, above all, an educating class. Just how much they will have kept or changed of the deliquescent morality of to-day, when in a hundred years or so they do distinctively and powerfully emerge, I cannot speculate now. They will certainly be a moral people. They will have developed the literature of their needs, they will have discussed and tested and thrashed out many things, they will be clear where we are confused, resolved where we are undecided and weak. In the districts of industrial possibility, in the healthier quarters of the town regions, away from the swamps and away from the glare of the midnight lights, these people will be gathered together. They will be linked in professions through the agency of great and sober papers — in England the *Lancet*, the *British Medical Journal*, and the already great periodicals of the engineering trades, foreshadow something, but only a very little, of what these papers may be. The best of the wealthy will gravitate to their attracting centres.... Unless some great catastrophe in nature break down all that man has built, these great kindred groups of capable men and educated, adequate women must be, under the operation of the forces we have considered so far, the element finally emergent amidst the vast confusions of the coming time.

V. The Life-History of Democracy

In the preceding four chapters there has been developed, in a clumsy laborious way, a smudgy, imperfect picture of the generalized civilized state of the coming century. In terms, vague enough at times, but never absolutely indefinite, the general distribution of the population in this state has been discussed, and its natural development into four great — but in practice intimately interfused — classes. It has been shown — I know not how convincingly — that as the result of forces that are practically irresistible, a world-wide process of social and moral deliquescence is in progress, and that a really functional social body of engineering, managing men, scientifically trained, and having common ideals and interests, is likely to segregate and disentangle itself from our present confusion of aimless and ill-directed lives. It has been pointed out that life is presenting an unprecedented and increasing variety of morals, *ménages*, occupations and types, at present so mingled as to give a general effect of greyness, but containing the promise of local concentration that may presently change that greyness into kaleidoscopic effects. That image of concentrating contrasted colours will be greatly repeated in this present chapter. In the course of these inquiries, we have permitted ourselves to take a few concrete glimpses of households, costumes, conveyances, and conveniences of the coming time, but only as incidental realizations of points in this general thesis. And now, assuming, as we must necessarily do, the soundness of these earlier speculations, we have arrived at a stage when we may consider how the existing arrangements for the ostensible government of the State are likely to develop through their own inherent forces, and how they are likely to be affected by the processes we have forecast.

So far, this has been a speculation upon the probable development of a civilized society *in vacuo*. Attention has been almost exclusively given to the forces of development, and not to the forces of conflict and restraint. We have ignored the boundaries of language that are flung athwart the great lines of modern communication, we have disregarded the friction of tariffs, the peculiar groups of prejudices

and irrational instincts that inspire one miscellany of shareholders, workers, financiers, and superfluous poor such as the English, to hate, exasperate, lie about, and injure another such miscellany as the French or the Germans. Moreover, we have taken very little account of the fact that, quite apart from nationality, each individual case of the new social order is developing within the form of a legal government based on conceptions of a society that has been superseded by the advent of mechanism. It is this last matter that we are about to take into consideration.

Now, this age is being constantly described as a "Democratic" age; "Democracy" is alleged to have affected art, literature, trade and religion alike in the most remarkable ways. It is not only tacitly present in the great bulk of contemporary thought that this "Democracy" is now dominant, but that it is becoming more and more overwhelmingly predominant as the years pass. Allusions to Democracy are so abundant, deductions from its influence so confident and universal, that it is worth while to point out what a very hollow thing the word in most cases really is, a large empty object in thought, of the most vague and faded associations and the most attenuated content, and to inquire just exactly what the original implications and present realities of "Democracy" may be. The inquiry will leave us with a very different conception of the nature and future of this sort of political arrangement from that generally assumed. We have already seen in the discussion of the growth of great cities, that an analytical process may absolutely invert the expectation based on the gross results up-to-date, and I believe it will be equally possible to show cause for believing that the development of Democracy also is, after all, not the opening phase of a world-wide movement going on unbendingly in its present direction, but the first impulse of forces that will finally sweep round into a quite different path. Flying off at a tangent is probably one of the gravest dangers and certainly the one most constantly present, in this enterprise of prophecy.

One may, I suppose, take the Rights of Man as they are embodied in the French Declaration as the ostentations of Democracy; our present Democratic state may be regarded as a practical realization of these claims. As far as the individual goes, the realization takes the

form of an untrammelled liberty in matters that have heretofore been considered a part of social procedure, in the lifting of positive religious and moral compulsions, in the recognition of absolute property, and in the abolition of special privileges and special restrictions. Politically modern Democracy takes the form of denying that any specific person or persons shall act as a matter of intrinsic right or capacity on behalf of the community as a whole. Its root idea is representation. Government is based primarily on election, and every ruler is, in theory at least, a delegate and servant of the popular will. It is implicit in the Democratic theory that there *is* such a thing as a popular will, and this is supposed to be the net sum of the wills of all the citizens in the State, so far as public affairs are concerned. In its less perfect and more usual state the Democratic theory is advanced either as an ethical theory which postulates an absence of formal acquiescence on the part of the governed as injustice, or else as a convenient political compromise, the least objectionable of all possible methods of public control, because it will permit only the minimum of general unhappiness.... I know of no case for the elective Democratic government of modern States that cannot be knocked to pieces in five minutes. It is manifest that upon countless important public issues there is no collective will, and nothing in the mind of the average man except blank indifference; that an electional system simply places power in the hands of the most skilful electioneers; that neither men nor their rights are identically equal, but vary with every individual, and, above all, that the minimum or maximum of general happiness is related only so indirectly to the public control that people will suffer great miseries from their governments unresistingly, and, on the other hand, change their rulers on account of the most trivial irritations. The case against all the prolusions of ostensible Democracy is indeed so strong that it is impossible to consider the present wide establishment of Democratic institutions as being the outcome of any process of intellectual conviction; it arouses suspicion even whether ostensible Democracy may not be a mere rhetorical garment for essentially different facts, and upon that suspicion we will now inquire.

Democracy of the modern type, manhood suffrage and so forth, became a conspicuous phenomenon in the world only in the closing

decades of the eighteenth century. Its genesis is so intimately connected with the first expansion of the productive element in the State, through mechanism and a co-operative organization, as to point at once to a causative connection. The more closely one looks into the social and political life of the eighteenth century the more plausible becomes this view. New and potentially influential social factors had begun to appear — the organizing manufacturer, the intelligent worker, the skilled tenant, and the urban abyss, and the traditions of the old land-owning non-progressive aristocratic monarchy that prevailed in Christendom, rendered it incapable — without some destructive shock or convulsion — of any re-organization to incorporate or control these new factors. In the case of the British Empire an additional stress was created by the incapacity of the formal government to assimilate the developing civilization of the American colonies. Everywhere there were new elements, not as yet clearly analyzed or defined, arising as mechanism arose; everywhere the old traditional government and social system, defined and analyzed all too well, appeared increasingly obstructive, irrational, and feeble in its attempts to include and direct these new powers. But now comes a point to which I am inclined to attach very great importance. The new powers were as yet shapeless. It was not the conflict of a new organization with the old. It was the preliminary dwarfing and deliquescence of the mature old beside the embryonic mass of the new. It was impossible then — it is, I believe, only beginning to be possible now — to estimate the proportions, possibilities, and inter-relations of the new social orders out of which a social organization has still to be built in the coming years. No formula of definite re-construction had been evolved, or has even been evolved yet, after a hundred years. And these swelling inchoate new powers, whose very birth condition was the crippling, modification, or destruction of the old order, were almost forced to formulate their proceedings for a time, therefore, in general affirmative propositions that were really in effect not affirmative propositions at all, but propositions of repudiation and denial. “These kings and nobles and people privileged in relation to obsolescent functions cannot manage our affairs” — that was evident enough, that was the really essential question at that time, and since

no other effectual substitute appeared ready made, the working doctrine of the infallible judgment of humanity in the gross, as distinguished from the quite indisputable incapacity of sample individuals, became, in spite of its inherent absurdity, a convenient and acceptable working hypothesis.

Modern Democracy thus came into being, not, as eloquent persons have pretended, by the sovereign people consciously and definitely assuming power — I imagine the sovereign people in France during the first Revolution, for example, quite amazed and muddle-headed with it all — but by the decline of old ruling classes in the face of the *quasi*-natural growth of mechanism and industrialism, and by the unpreparedness and want of organization in the new intelligent elements in the State. I have compared the human beings in society to a great and increasing variety of colours tumultuously smashed up together, and giving at present a general and quite illusory effect of grey, and I have attempted to show that there is a process in progress that will amount at last to the segregation of these mingled tints into recognizable distinct masses again. It is not a monotony, but an utterly disorderly and confusing variety that makes this grey, but Democracy, for practical purposes, does really assume such a monotony. Like [* *Symbol: infinity], the Democratic formula is a concrete-looking and negotiable symbol for a negation. It is the aspect in political disputes and contrivances of that social and moral deliquescence the nature and possibilities of which have been discussed in the preceding chapters of this volume.

Modern Democracy first asserted itself in the ancient kingdoms of France and Great Britain (counting the former British colonies in America as a part of the latter), and it is in the French and English-speaking communities that Democracy has developed itself most completely. Upon the supposition we have made, Democracy broke out first in these States because they were leading the way in material progress, because they were the first States to develop industrialism, wholesale mechanisms, and great masses of insubordinate activity outside the recognized political scheme, and the nature and time and violence of the outbreak was determined by the nature of the

superseded government, and the amount of stress between it and the new elements. But the detachment of a great section of the new middle-class from the aristocratic order of England to form the United States of America, and the sudden rejuvenescence of France by the swift and thorough sloughing of its outworn aristocratic monarchy, the consequent wars and the Napoleonic adventure, checked and modified the parallel development that might otherwise have happened in country after country over all Europe west of the Carpathians. The monarchies that would probably have collapsed through internal forces and given place to modern democratic states were smashed from the outside, and a process of political reconstruction, that has probably missed out the complete formal Democratic phase altogether — and which has been enormously complicated through religious, national, and dynastic traditions — set in. Throughout America, in England, and, after extraordinary experiments, in France, political democracy has in effect legally established itself — most completely in the United States — and the reflection and influence of its methods upon the methods of all the other countries in intellectual contact with it, have been so considerable as practically to make their monarchies as new in their kind, almost, as democratic republics. In Germany, Austria, and Italy, for example, there is a press nearly as audible as in the more frankly democratic countries, and measurably akin in influence; there are constitutionally established legislative assemblies, and there is the same unofficial development of powerful financial and industrial powers with which the ostensible Government must make terms. In a vast amount of the public discussion of these States, the postulates of Democracy are clearly implicit. Quite as much in reality as the democratic republics of America, are they based not on classes but upon a confusion; they are, in their various degrees and with their various individual differences, just as truly governments of the grey.

It has been argued that the grey is illusory and must sooner or later pass, and that the colour that will emerge to predominance will take its shape as a scientifically trained middle-class of an unprecedented sort, not arising out of the older middle-classes, but replacing them. This class will become, I believe, at last consciously *the* State, controlling and restricting very greatly the three non-

functional masses with which it is as yet almost indistinguishably mingled. The general nature of its formation within the existing confusion and its emergence may, I think, with a certain degree of confidence, be already forecast, albeit at present its beginnings are singularly unpromising and faint. At present the class of specially trained and capable people — doctors, engineers, scientific men of all sorts — is quite disproportionally absent from political life, it does not exist as a factor in that life, it is growing up outside that life, and has still to develop, much more to display, a collective intention to come specifically in. But the forces are in active operation to drag it into the centre of the stage for all that.

The modern democracy or democratic quasi-monarchy conducts its affairs as though there was no such thing as special knowledge or practical education. The utmost recognition it affords to the man who has taken the pains to know, and specifically to do, is occasionally to consult him upon specific points and override his counsels in its ampler wisdom, or to entrust to him some otherwise impossible duty under circumstances of extreme limitation. The man of special equipment is treated always as if he were some sort of curious performing animal. The gunnery specialist, for example, may move and let off guns, but he may not say where they are to be let off — some one a little ignorant of range and trajectory does that; the engineer may move the ship and fire the battery, but only with some man, who does not perfectly understand, shouting instructions down a tube at him. If the cycle is to be adapted to military requirements, the thing is entrusted to Lieutenant-Colonel Balfour. If horses are to be bought for the British Army in India, no specialist goes, but Lord Edward Cecil. These people of the governing class do not understand there is such a thing as special knowledge or an inexorable fact in the world; they have been educated at schools conducted by amateur schoolmasters, whose real aim in life — if such people can be described as having a real aim in life — is the episcopal bench, and they have learnt little or nothing but the extraordinary power of appearances in these democratic times. To look right and to be of good report is to succeed. What else is there? The primarily functional men are ignored in the ostensible political scheme, it operates as though they did not exist, as though nothing, in fact,

existed but the irresponsible wealthy, and the manipulators of irresponsible wealth, on the one hand, and a great, grey, politically indifferent community on the other. Having regard only to the present condition of political life, it would seem as though this state of affairs must continue indefinitely, and develop only in accordance with the laws of inter-action between our charlatan governing class on the one hand, and the grey mass of governed on the other. There is no way apparent in the existing political and social order, whereby the class of really educated persons that the continually more complicated mechanical fabric of social life is developing may be expected to come in. And in a very great amount of current political speculation, the development and final emergence of this class is ignored, and attention is concentrated entirely upon the inherent process of development of the political machine. And even in that it is very easy to exaggerate the preponderance of one or other of what are really very evenly balanced forces in the machine of democratic government.

There are two chief sets of parts in the machine that have a certain antagonistic relation, that play against each other, and one's conception of coming developments is necessarily determined by the relative value one gives to these opposing elements. One may compare these two groups to the Power and the Work, respectively, at the two ends of a lever. On the one hand there is that which pays for the machine, which distributes salaries and rewards, subsidizes newspapers and so forth — the central influence. On the other hand, there is the collectively grey voting mass, with certain prejudices and traditions, and certain laws and limitations of thought upon which the newspapers work, and which, within the confines of its inherent laws, they direct. If one dwell chiefly on the possibilities of the former element, one may conjure up a practical end to democracy in the vision of a State "run" entirely by a group of highly forcible and intellectual persons — usually the dream takes the shape of financiers and their associates, their perfected mechanism of party control working the elections boldly and capably, and their public policy being directed towards financial ends. One of the common prophecies of the future of the United States is such a domination by a group of trust organizers and political bosses. But a man, or a

group of men, so strong and intelligent as would be needed to hold an entire party machine within the confines of his — or their collective — mind and will, could, at the most, be but a very transitory and incidental phenomenon in the history of the world. Either such an exploitation of the central control will have to be covert and subtle beyond any precedent in human disingenuousness, or else its domination will have to be very amply modified indeed, by the requirements of the second factor, and its proceedings made very largely the resultant of that second factor's forces. Moreover, very subtle men do not aim at things of this sort, or aiming, fail, because subtlety of intelligence involves subtlety of character, a certain fastidiousness and a certain weakness. Now that the garrulous period, when a flow of language and a certain effectiveness of manner was a necessary condition to political pre-eminence, is passing away, political control falls more and more entirely into the hands of a barristerish intriguing sort of person with a tough-wearing, leathery, practical mind. The sort of people who will work the machine are people with "faith," as the popular preachers say, meaning, in fact, people who do not analyze, people who will take the machine as it is, unquestioningly, shape their ambitions to it, and — saving their vanity — work it as it wants to go. The man who will be boss will be the man who wants to be boss, who finds, in being boss, a complete and final satisfaction, and not the man who complicates things by wanting to be boss in order to be, or do, something else. The machines are governed to-day, and there is every reason to believe that they will continue to be governed, by masterful-looking resultants, masters of nothing but compromise, and that little fancy of an inner conspiracy of control within the machine and behind ostensible politics is really on all fours with the wonderful Rodin (of the Juif Errant) and as probable as anything else in the romances of Eugene Sue.

If, on the other hand, we direct attention to the antagonistic element in the machine, to Public Opinion, to the alleged collective mind of the grey mass, and consider how it is brought to believe in itself and its possession of certain opinions by the concrete evidence of daily newspapers and eloquent persons saying as much, we may also very readily conjure up a contrasted vision of extraordinary

demagogues or newspaper syndicates working the political machine from that direction. So far as the demagogue goes, the increase of population, the multiplication of amusements and interests, the differentiation of social habits, the diffusion of great towns, all militate against that sufficient gathering of masses of voters in meeting-houses which gave him his power in the recent past. It is improbable that ever again will any flushed undignified man with a vast voice, a muscular face in incessant operation, collar crumpled, hair disordered, and arms in wild activity, talking, talking, talking, talking copiously out of the windows of railway carriages, talking on railway platforms, talking from hotel balconies, talking on tubs, barrels, scaffoldings, pulpits — tireless and undammable — rise to be the most powerful thing in any democratic state in the world. Continually the individual vocal demagogue dwindles, and the element of bands and buttons, the organization of the press and procession, the share of the machine, grows.

Mr. Harmsworth, of the London *Daily Mail*, in a very interesting article has glanced at certain possibilities of power that may vest in the owners of a great system of world-wide "simultaneous" newspapers, but he does not analyze the nature of the influence exercised by newspapers during the successive phases of the nineteenth century, nor the probable modifications of that influence in the years to come, and I think, on the whole, he inclines very naturally to over estimate the amount of intentional direction that may be given by the owner of a paper to the minds and acts of his readers, and to exceed the very definite limits within which that influence is confined. In the earlier Victorian period, the more limited, partly educated, and still very homogeneous enfranchised class, had a certain habit of thinking; its tranquil assurance upon most theological and all moral and æsthetic points left political questions as the chief field of exercise for such thinking as it did, and, as a consequence, the dignified newspapers of that time were able to discuss, and indeed were required to discuss not only specific situations but general principles. That indeed was their principal function, and it fell rather to the eloquent men to misapply these principles according to the necessity of the occasion. The papers did then very much more than they do now to mould opinion, though

they did not direct affairs to anything like the extent of their modern successors. They made roads upon which events presently travelled in unexpected fashions. But the often cheaper and always more vivid newspapers that have come with the New Democracy do nothing to mould opinion. Indeed, there is no longer upon most public questions — and as I have tried to make clear in my previous paper, there is not likely to be any longer — a collective opinion to be moulded. Protectionists, for example, are a mere band, Free Traders are a mere band; on all these details we are in chaos. And these modern newspapers simply endeavour to sustain a large circulation and so merit advertisements by being as miscellaneously and vividly interesting as possible, by firing where the crowd seems thickest, by seeking perpetually and without any attempt at consistency, the greatest excitement of the greatest number. It is upon the cultivation and rapid succession of inflammatory topics that the modern newspaper expends its capital and trusts to recover its reward. Its general news sinks steadily to a subordinate position; criticism, discussion, and high responsibility pass out of journalism, and the power of the press comes more and more to be a dramatic and emotional power, the power to cry "Fire!" in the theatre, the power to give enormous value for a limited time to some personality, some event, some aspect, true or false, without any power of giving a specific direction to the forces this distortion may set going. Directly the press of to-day passes from that sort of thing to some specific proposal, some implication of principles and beliefs, directly it chooses and selects, then it passes from the miscellaneous to the sectarian, and out of touch with the grey indefiniteness of the general mind. It gives offence here, it perplexes and bores there; no more than the boss politician can the paper of great circulation afford to work consistently for any ulterior aim.

This is the limit of the power of the modern newspaper of large circulation, the newspaper that appeals to the grey element, to the average democratic man, the newspaper of the deliquescence, and if our previous conclusion that human society has ceased to be homogeneous and will presently display new masses segregating from a great confusion, holds good, that will be the limit of its power in the future. It may undergo many remarkable developments and

modifications, but none of these tend to give it any greater political importance than it has now. And so, after all, our considerations of the probable developments of the party machine give us only negative results, so long as the grey social confusion continues. Subject to that continuance the party machine will probably continue as it is at present, and Democratic States and governments follow the lines upon which they run at the present time.

Now, how will the emergent class of capable men presently begin to modify the existing form of government in the ostensibly democratic countries and democratic monarchies? There will be very many variations and modifications of the methods of this arrival, an infinite complication of detailed incidents, but a general proposition will be found to hold good. The suppression of the party machine in the purely democratic countries and of the official choice of the rich and privileged rulers in the more monarchical ones, by capable operative and administrative men inspired by the belief in a common theory of social order, will come about — peacefully and gradually as a process of change, or violently as a revolution — but inevitably as the outcome either of the imminence or else of the disasters of war.

That all these governments of confusion will drift towards war, with a spacious impulse and a final vehemence quite out of comparison greater than the warlike impulses of former times, is a remarkable but by no means inexplicable thing. A tone of public expression, jealous and patriotic to the danger-point, is an unavoidable condition under which democratic governments exist. To be patriotically quarrelsome is imperative upon the party machines that will come to dominate the democratic countries. They will not possess detailed and definite policies and creeds because there are no longer any detailed and definite public opinions, but they will for all that require some ostensible purpose to explain their cohesion, some hold upon the common man that will ensure his appearance in numbers at the polling place sufficient to save the government from the raids of small but determined sects. That hold can be only of one sort. Without moral or religious uniformity, with material interests as involved and confused as a heap of spelicans, there remains only one generality for the politician's purpose, the

ampler aspect of a man's egotism, his pride in what he imagines to be his particular kind — his patriotism. In every country amenable to democratic influences there emerges, or will emerge, a party machine, vividly and simply patriotic — and indefinite upon the score of any other possible consideration between man and man. This will hold true, not only of the ostensibly democratic states, but also of such reconstituted modern monarchies as Italy and Germany, for they, too, for all their legal difference, rest also on the grey. The party conflicts of the future will turn very largely on the discovery of the true patriot, on the suspicion that the crown or the machine in possession is in some more or less occult way traitorous, and almost all other matters of contention will be shelved and allowed to stagnate, for fear of breaking the unity of the national mechanism.

Now, patriotism is not a thing that flourishes in the void, — one needs a foreigner. A national and patriotic party is an anti-foreign party; the altar of the modern god, Democracy, will cry aloud for the stranger men. Simply to keep in power, and out of no love of mischief, the government or the party machine will have to insist upon dangers and national differences, to keep the voter to the poll by alarms, seeking ever to taint the possible nucleus of any competing organization with the scandal of external influence. The party press will play the watch-dog and allay all internal dissensions with its warning bay at some adjacent people, and the adjacent peoples, for reasons to be presently expanded, will be continually more sensitive to such baying. Already one sees country yelping at country all over the modern world, not only in the matter of warlike issues, but with a note of quite furious commercial rivalry — quite furious and, indeed, quite insane, since its ideal of trading enormously with absolutely ruined and tradeless foreigners, exporting everything and importing nothing, is obviously outside reason altogether. The inexorable doom of these governments based on the grey, is to foster enmity between people and people. Even their alliances are but sacrifices to intenser antagonisms. And the phases of the democratic sequence are simple and sure. Forced on by a relentless competition, the tone of the outcries will become fiercer and fiercer; the occasions of excitement, the perilous moments, the ingenuities of annoyance, more and more dramatic, — from the mere

emptiness and disorder of the general mind! Jealousies and anti-foreign enactments, tariff manipulations and commercial embitterment, destructive, foolish, exasperating obstructions that benefit no human being, will minister to this craving without completely allaying it. Nearer, and ever nearer, the politicians of the coming times will force one another towards the verge, not because they want to go over it, not because any one wants to go over it, but because they are, by their very nature, compelled to go that way, because to go in any other direction is to break up and lose power. And, consequently, the final development of the democratic system, so far as intrinsic forces go, will be, not the rule of the boss, nor the rule of the trust, nor the rule of the newspaper; no rule, indeed, but international rivalry, international competition, international exasperation and hostility, and at last — irresistible and overwhelming — the definite establishment of the rule of that most stern and educational of all masters — *War*.

At this point there opens a tempting path, and along it historical precedents, like a forest of notice-boards, urge us to go. At the end of the vista poses the figure of Napoleon with "Cæsarism" written beneath it. Disregarding certain alien considerations for a time, assuming the free working out of democracy to its conclusion, we perceive that, in the case of our generalized state, the party machine, together with the nation entrusted to it, must necessarily be forced into passionate national war. But, having blundered into war, the party machine will have an air of having accomplished its destiny. A party machine or a popular government is surely as likely a thing to cause a big disorder of war and as unlikely a thing to conduct it, as the wit of man, working solely to that end, could ever have devised. I have already pointed out why we can never expect an elected government of the modern sort to be guided by any far-reaching designs, it is constructed to get office and keep office, not to do anything in office, the conditions of its survival are to keep appearances up and taxes down, and the care and management of army and navy is quite outside its possibilities. The military and naval professions in our typical modern State will subsist very largely upon tradition, the ostensible government will interfere with rather than direct them, and there will be no force in the entire

scheme to check the corrupting influence of a long peace, to insist upon adequate exercises for the fighting organization or ensure an adequate adaptation to the new and perpetually changing possibilities of untried apparatus. Incapable but confident and energetic persons, having political influence, will have been permitted to tamper with the various arms of the service, the equipment will be largely devised to create an impression of efficiency in times of peace in the minds of the general voting public, and the really efficient soldiers will either have fretted themselves out of the army or have been driven out as political non-effectives, troublesome, innovating persons anxious to spend money upon "fads." So armed, the New Democracy will blunder into war, and the opening stage of the next great war will be the catastrophic breakdown of the formal armies, shame and disasters, and a disorder of conflict between more or less equally matched masses of stupefied, scared, and infuriated people. Just how far the thing may rise from the value of an alarming and edifying incident to a universal catastrophe, depends upon the special nature of the conflict, but it does not alter the fact that any considerable war is bound to be a bitter, appalling, highly educational and constitution-shaking experience for the modern democratic state.

Now, foreseeing this possibility, it is easy to step into the trap of the Napoleonic precedent. One hastens to foretell that either with the pressure of coming war, or in the hour of defeat, there will arise the Man. He will be strong in action, epigrammatic in manner, personally handsome and continually victorious. He will sweep aside parliaments and demagogues, carry the nation to glory, reconstruct it as an empire, and hold it together by circulating his profile and organizing further successes. He will — I gather this from chance lights upon contemporary anticipations — codify everything, rejuvenate the papacy, or, at any rate, galvanize Christianity, organize learning in meek intriguing academies of little men, and prescribe a wonderful educational system. The grateful nations will once more deify a lucky and aggressive egotism.... And there the vision loses breath.

Nothing of the sort is going to happen, or, at any rate, if it happens, it will happen as an interlude, as no necessary part in the general progress of the human drama. The world is no more to be

recast by chance individuals than a city is to be lit by sky rockets. The purpose of things emerges upon spacious issues, and the day of individual leaders is past. The analogies and precedents that lead one to forecast the coming of military one-man-dominions, the coming of such other parodies of Cæsar's career as that misapplied, and speedily futile chess champion, Napoleon I. contrived, are false. They are false because they ignore two correlated things; first, the steady development of a new and quite unprecedented educated class as a necessary aspect of the expansion of science and mechanism, and secondly, the absolute revolution in the art of war that science and mechanism are bringing about. This latter consideration the next chapter will expand, but here, in the interests of this discussion, we may in general terms anticipate its gist. War in the past has been a thing entirely different in its nature from what war, with the apparatus of the future, will be — it has been showy, dramatic, emotional, and restricted; war in the future will be none of these things. War in the past was a thing of days and heroisms; battles and campaigns rested in the hand of the great commander, he stood out against the sky, picturesquely on horseback, visibly controlling it all. War in the future will be a question of preparation, of long years of foresight and disciplined imagination, there will be no decisive victory, but a vast diffusion of conflict — it will depend less and less on controlling personalities and driving emotions, and more and more upon the intelligence and personal quality of a great number of skilled men. All this the next chapter will expand. And either before or after, but, at any rate, in the shadow of war, it will become apparent, perhaps even suddenly, that the whole apparatus of power in the country is in the hands of a new class of intelligent and scientifically-educated men. They will probably, under the development of warlike stresses, be discovered — they will discover themselves — almost surprisingly with roads and railways, carts and cities, drains, food supply, electrical supply, and water supply, and with guns and such implements of destruction and intimidation as men scarcely dream of yet, gathered in their hands. And they will be discovered, too, with a growing common consciousness of themselves as distinguished from the grey confusion, a common purpose and implication that the fearless analysis of science is

already bringing to light. They will find themselves with bloodshed and horrible disasters ahead, and the material apparatus of control entirely within their power. “Suppose, after all,” they will say, “we ignore these very eloquent and showy governing persons above, and this very confused and ineffectual multitude below. Suppose now we put on the brakes and try something a little more stable and orderly. These people in possession have, of course, all sorts of established rights and prescriptions; they have squared the law to their purpose, and the constitution does not know us; they can get at the judges, they can get at the newspapers, they can do all sorts of things except avoid a smash — but, for our part, we have these really most ingenious and subtle guns. Suppose instead of our turning them and our valuable selves in a fool’s quarrel against the ingenious and subtle guns of other men akin to ourselves, we use them in the cause of the higher sanity, and clear that jabbering war tumult out of the streets.”... There may be no dramatic moment for the expression of this idea, no moment when the new Cromwellism and the new Ironsides will come visibly face to face with talk and baubles, flags and patriotic dinner bells; but, with or without dramatic moments, the idea will be expressed and acted upon. It will be made quite evident then, what is now indeed only a pious opinion, namely, that wealth is, after all, no ultimate Power at all, but only an influence among aimless, police-guarded men. So long as there is peace the class of capable men may be mitigated and gagged and controlled, and the ostensible present order may flourish still in the hands of that other class of men which deals with the appearances of things. But as some supersaturated solution will crystallize out with the mere shaking of its beaker, so must the new order of men come into visibly organized existence through the concussions of war. The charlatans can escape everything except war, but to the cant and violence of nationality, to the sustaining force of international hostility, they are ruthlessly compelled to cling, and what is now their chief support must become at last their destruction. And so it is I infer that, whether violently as a revolution or quietly and slowly, this grey confusion that is Democracy must pass away inevitably by its own inherent conditions, as the twilight passes, as the embryonic confusion of the cocoon creature passes, into the higher stage, into the higher

organism, the world-state of the coming years.

VI. War

In shaping anticipations of the future of war there arises a certain difficulty about the point of departure. One may either begin upon such broad issues as the preceding forecasts have opened, and having determined now something of the nature of the coming State and the force of its warlike inclination, proceed to speculate how this vast ill-organized fourfold organism will fight; or one may set all that matter aside for a space, and having regard chiefly to the continually more potent appliances physical science offers the soldier, we may try to develop a general impression of theoretically thorough war, go from that to the nature of the State most likely to be superlatively efficient in such warfare, and so arrive at the conditions of survival under which these present governments of confusion will struggle one against the other. The latter course will be taken here. We will deal first of all with war conducted for its own sake, with a model army, as efficient as an imaginative training can make it, and with a model organization for warfare of the State behind it, and then the experience of the confused modern social organism as it is impelled, in an uncongenial metamorphosis, towards this imperative and finally unavoidable efficient state, will come most easily within the scope of one's imagination.

The great change that is working itself out in warfare is the same change that is working itself out in the substance of the social fabric. The essential change in the social fabric, as we have analyzed it, is the progressive supersession of the old broad labour base by elaborately organized mechanism, and the obsolescence of the once valid and necessary distinction of gentle and simple. In warfare, as I have already indicated, this takes the form of the progressive supersession of the horse and the private soldier — which were the living and sole engines of the old time — by machines, and the obliteration of the old distinction between leaders, who pranced in a conspicuously dangerous and encouraging way into the picturesque incidents of battle, and the led, who cheered and charged and filled the ditches and were slaughtered in a wholesale dramatic manner. The old war was a matter of long dreary marches, great hardships of

campaigning, but also of heroic conclusive moments. Long periods of campings — almost always with an outbreak of pestilence — of marchings and retreats, much crude business of feeding and forage, culminated at last, with an effect of infinite relief, in an hour or so of "battle." The battle was always a very intimate tumultuous affair, the men were flung at one another in vast excited masses, in living fighting machines as it were, spears or bayonets flashed, one side or the other ceased to prolong the climax, and the thing was over. The beaten force crumpled as a whole, and the victors as a whole pressed upon it. Cavalry with slashing sabres marked the crowning point of victory. In the later stages of the old warfare musketry volleys were added to the physical impact of the contending regiments, and at last cannon, as a quite accessory method of breaking these masses of men. So you "gave battle" to and defeated your enemy's forces wherever encountered, and when you reached your objective in his capital the war was done.... The new war will probably have none of these features of the old system of fighting.

The revolution that is in progress from the old war to a new war, different in its entire nature from the old, is marked primarily by the steady progress in range and efficiency of the rifle and of the field-gun — and more particularly of the rifle. The rifle develops persistently from a clumsy implement, that any clown may learn to use in half a day, towards a very intricate mechanism, easily put out of order and easily misused, but of the most extraordinary possibilities in the hands of men of courage, character, and high intelligence. Its precision at long range has made the business of its care, loading and aim subsidiary to the far more intricate matter of its use in relation to the contour of the ground within its reach. Even its elaboration as an instrument is probably still incomplete. One can conceive it provided in the future with cross-thread telescopic sights, the focussing of which, corrected by some ingenious use of hygroscopic material, might even find the range, and so enable it to be used with assurance up to a mile or more. It will probably also take on some of the characters of the machine-gun. It will be used either for single shots or to quiver and send a spray of almost simultaneous bullets out of a magazine evenly and certainly, over any small area the rifleman thinks advisable. It will probably be

portable by one man, but there is no reason really, except the bayonet tradition, the demands of which may be met in other ways, why it should be the instrument of one sole man. It will, just as probably, be slung with its ammunition and equipment upon bicycle wheels, and be the common care of two or more associated soldiers. Equipped with such a weapon, a single couple of marksmen even, by reason of smokeless powder and carefully chosen cover, might make themselves practically invisible, and capable of surprising, stopping, and destroying a visible enemy in quite considerable numbers who blundered within a mile of them. And a series of such groups of marksmen so arranged as to cover the arrival of reliefs, provisions, and fresh ammunition from the rear, might hold out against any visible attack for an indefinite period, unless the ground they occupied was searched very ably and subtly by some sort of gun having a range in excess of their rifle fire. If the ground they occupied were to be properly tunnelled and trenched, even that might not avail, and there would be nothing for it but to attack them by an advance under cover either of the night or of darkness caused by smoke-shells, or by the burning of cover about their position. Even then they might be deadly with magazine fire at close quarters. Save for their liability to such attacks, a few hundreds of such men could hold positions of a quite vast extent, and a few thousand might hold a frontier. Assuredly a mere handful of such men could stop the most multitudinous attack or cover the most disorderly retreat in the world, and even when some ingenious, daring, and lucky night assault had at last ejected them from a position, dawn would simply restore to them the prospect of reconstituting in new positions their enormous advantage of defence.

The only really effective and final defeat such an attenuated force of marksmen could sustain, would be from the slow and circumspect advance upon it of a similar force of superior marksmen, creeping forward under cover of night or of smoke-shells and fire, digging pits during the snatches of cessation obtained in this way, and so coming nearer and nearer and getting a completer and completer mastery of the defender's ground until the approach of the defender's reliefs, food, and fresh ammunition ceased to be possible. Thereupon there would be nothing for it but either surrender or a bolt in the night to

positions in the rear, a bolt that might be hotly followed if it were deferred too late.

Probably between contiguous nations that have mastered the art of war, instead of the pouring clouds of cavalry of the old dispensation, this will be the opening phase of the struggle, a vast duel all along the frontier between groups of skilled marksmen, continually being relieved and refreshed from the rear. For a time quite possibly there will be no definite army here or there, there will be no controllable battle, there will be no Great General in the field at all. But somewhere far in the rear the central organizer will sit at the telephonic centre of his vast front, and he will strengthen here and feed there and watch, watch perpetually the pressure, the incessant remorseless pressure that is seeking to wear down his countervailing thrust. Behind the thin firing line that is actually engaged, the country for many miles will be rapidly cleared and devoted to the business of war, big machines will be at work making second, third, and fourth lines of trenches that may be needed if presently the firing line is forced back, spreading out transverse paths for the swift lateral movement of the cyclists who will be in perpetual alertness to relieve sudden local pressures, and all along those great motor roads our first "Anticipations" sketched, there will be a vast and rapid shifting to and fro of big and very long range guns. These guns will probably be fought with the help of balloons. The latter will hang above the firing line all along the front, incessantly ascending and withdrawn; they will be continually determining the distribution of the antagonist's forces, directing the fire of continually shifting great guns upon the apparatus and supports in the rear of his fighting line, forecasting his night plans and seeking some tactical or strategic weakness in that sinewy line of battle.

It will be evident that such warfare as this inevitable precision of gun and rifle forces upon humanity, will become less and less dramatic as a whole, more and more as a whole a monstrous thrust and pressure of people against people. No dramatic little general spouting his troops into the proper hysterics for charging, no prancing merely brave officers, no reckless gallantry or invincible stubbornness of men will suffice. For the commander-in-chief on a picturesque horse sentimentally watching his "boys" march past to

death or glory in battalions, there will have to be a loyal staff of men, working simply, earnestly, and subtly to keep the front tight, and at the front, every little isolated company of men will have to be a council of war, a little conspiracy under the able man its captain, as keen and individual as a football team, conspiring against the scarcely seen company of the foe over yonder. The battalion commander will be replaced in effect by the organizer of the balloons and guns by which his few hundreds of splendid individuals will be guided and reinforced. In the place of hundreds of thousands of more or less drunken and untrained young men marching into battle — muddle-headed, sentimental, dangerous and futile hobbledehoys — there will be thousands of sober men braced up to their highest possibilities, intensely doing their best; in the place of charging battalions, shattering impacts of squadrons and wide harvest-fields of death, there will be hundreds of little rifle battles fought up to the hilt, gallant dashes here, night surprises there, the sudden sinister faint gleam of nocturnal bayonets, brilliant guesses that will drop catastrophic shell and death over hills and forests suddenly into carelessly exposed masses of men. For eight miles on either side of the firing lines — whose fire will probably never altogether die away while the war lasts — men will live and eat and sleep under the imminence of unanticipated death.... Such will be the opening phase of the war that is speedily to come.

And behind the thin firing line on either side a vast multitude of people will be at work; indeed, the whole mass of the efficients in the State will have to be at work, and most of them will be simply at the same work or similar work to that done in peace time — only now as combatants upon the lines of communication. The organized staffs of the big road managements, now become a part of the military scheme, will be deporting women and children and feeble people and bringing up supplies and supports; the doctors will be dropping from their civil duties into pre-appointed official places, directing the feeding and treatment of the shifting masses of people and guarding the valuable manhood of the fighting apparatus most sedulously from disease; the engineers will be entrenching and bringing up a vast variety of complicated and ingenious apparatus designed to surprise and inconvenience the enemy in novel ways; the dealers in food and

clothing, the manufacturers of all sorts of necessary stuff, will be converted by the mere declaration of war into public servants; a practical realization of socialistic conceptions will quite inevitably be forced upon the fighting State. The State that has not incorporated with its fighting organization all its able-bodied manhood and all its material substance, its roads, vehicles, engines, foundries, and all its resources of food and clothing; the State which at the outbreak of war has to bargain with railway and shipping companies, replace experienced station-masters by inexperienced officers, and haggle against alien interests for every sort of supply, will be at an overwhelming disadvantage against a State which has emerged from the social confusion of the present time, got rid of every vestige of our present distinction between official and governed, and organized every element in its being.

I imagine that in this ideal war as compared with the war of to-day, there will be a very considerable restriction of the rights of the non-combatant. A large part of existing International Law involves a curious implication, a distinction between the belligerent government and its accredited agents in warfare and the general body of its subjects. There is a disposition to treat the belligerent government, in spite of the democratic status of many States, as not fully representing its people, to establish a sort of world-citizenship in the common mass outside the official and military class. Protection of the non-combatant and his property comes at last — in theory at least — within a measurable distance of notice boards: "Combatants are requested to keep off the grass." This disposition I ascribe to a recognition of that obsolescence and inadequacy of the formal organization of States, which has already been discussed in this book. It was a disposition that was strongest perhaps in the earliest decades of the nineteenth century, and stronger now than, in the steady and irresistible course of strenuous and universal military preparation, it is likely to be in the future. In our imaginary twentieth century State, organized primarily for war, this tendency to differentiate a non-combatant mass in the fighting State will certainly not be respected, the State will be organized as a whole to fight as a whole, it will have triumphantly asserted the universal duty of its citizens. The military force will be a much ampler organization than

the “army” of to-day, it will be not simply the fists but the body and brain of the land. The whole apparatus, the whole staff engaged in internal communication, for example, may conceivably not be State property and a State service, but if it is not it will assuredly be as a whole organized as a volunteer force, that may instantly become a part of the machinery of defence or aggression at the outbreak of war. The men may very conceivably not have a uniform, for military uniforms are simply one aspect of this curious and transitory phase of restriction, but they will have their orders and their universal plan. As the bells ring and the recording telephones click into every house the news that war has come, there will be no running to and fro upon the public ways, no bawling upon the moving platforms of the central urban nuclei, no crowds of silly useless able-bodied people gaping at inflammatory transparencies outside the offices of sensational papers because the egregious idiots in control of affairs have found them no better employment. Every man will be soberly and intelligently setting about the particular thing he has to do — even the rich shareholding sort of person, the hereditary mortgager of society, will be given something to do, and if he has learnt nothing else he will serve to tie up parcels of ammunition or pack army sausage. Very probably the best of such people and of the speculative class will have qualified as cyclist marksmen for the front, some of them may even have devoted the leisure of peace to military studies and may be prepared with novel weapons. Recruiting among the working classes — or, more properly speaking, among the People of the Abyss — will have dwindled to the vanishing point; people who are no good for peace purposes are not likely to be any good in such a grave and complicated business as modern war. The spontaneous traffic of the roads in peace, will fall now into two streams, one of women and children coming quietly and comfortably out of danger, the other of men and material going up to the front. There will be no panics, no hardships, because everything will have been amply pre-arranged — we are dealing with an ideal State. Quietly and tremendously that State will have gripped its adversary and tightened its muscles — that is all.

Now the strategy of this new sort of war in its opening phase will consist mainly in very rapid movements of guns and men behind that

thin screen of marksmen, in order to deal suddenly and unexpectedly some forcible blow, to snatch at some position into which guns and men may be thrust to outflank and turn the advantage of the ground against some portion of the enemy's line. The game will be largely to crowd and crumple that line, to stretch it over an arc to the breaking point, to secure a position from which to shell and destroy its supports and provisions, and to capture or destroy its guns and apparatus, and so tear it away from some town or arsenal it has covered. And a factor of primary importance in this warfare, because of the importance of seeing the board, a factor which will be enormously stimulated to develop in the future, will be the aerial factor. Already we have seen the captive balloon as an incidental accessory of considerable importance even in the wild country warfare of South Africa. In the warfare that will go on in the highly-organized European States of the opening century, the special military balloon used in conjunction with guns, conceivably of small calibre but of enormous length and range, will play a part of quite primary importance. These guns will be carried on vast mechanical carriages, possibly with wheels of such a size as will enable them to traverse almost all sorts of ground. The aeronauts, provided with large scale maps of the hostile country, will mark down to the gunners below the precise point upon which to direct their fire, and over hill and dale the shell will fly — ten miles it may be — to its billet, camp, massing night attack, or advancing gun.

Great multitudes of balloons will be the Argus eyes of the entire military organism, stalked eyes with a telephonic nerve in each stalk, and at night they will sweep the country with search-lights and come soaring before the wind with hanging flares. Certainly they will be steerable. Moreover, when the wind admits, there will be freely-moving steerable balloons wagging little flags to their friends below. And so far as the resources of the men on the ground go, the balloons will be almost invulnerable. The mere perforation of balloons with shot does them little harm, and the possibility of hitting a balloon that is drifting about at a practically unascertainable distance and height so precisely as to blow it to pieces with a timed shell, and to do this in the little time before it is able to give simple and precise instructions as to your range and position to the unseen gunners it

directs, is certainly one of the most difficult and trying undertakings for an artilleryman that one can well imagine. I am inclined to think that the many considerations against a successful attack on balloons from the ground, will enormously stimulate enterprise and invention in the direction of dirigible aerial devices that can fight. Few people, I fancy, who know the work of Langley, Lilienthal, Pilcher, Maxim, and Chanute, but will be inclined to believe that long before the year a.d. 2000, and very probably before 1950, a successful aeroplane will have soared and come home safe and sound. Directly that is accomplished the new invention will be most assuredly applied to war.

The nature of the things that will ultimately fight in the sky is a matter for curious speculation. We begin with the captive balloon. Against that the navigable balloon will presently operate. I am inclined to think the practicable navigable balloon will be first attained by the use of a device already employed by Nature in the swimming-bladder of fishes. This is a closed gas-bag that can be contracted or expanded. If a gas-bag of thin, strong, practically impervious substance could be enclosed in a net of closely interlaced fibres (interlaced, for example, on the pattern of the muscles of the bladder in mammals), the ends of these fibres might be wound and unwound, and the effect of contractility attained. A row of such contractile balloons, hung over a long car which was horizontally expanded into wings, would not only allow that car to rise and fall at will, but if the balloon at one end were contracted and that at the other end expanded, and the intermediate ones allowed to assume intermediate conditions, the former end would drop, the expanded wings would be brought into a slanting condition over a smaller area of supporting air, and the whole apparatus would tend to glide downwards in that direction. The projection of a small vertical plane upon either side would make the gliding mass rotate in a descending spiral, and so we have all the elements of a controllable flight. Such an affair would be difficult to overset. It would be able to beat up even in a fair wind, and then it would be able to contract its bladders and fall down a long slant in any direction. From some such crude beginning a form like a soaring, elongated, flat-brimmed hat might grow, and the possibilities of adding an engine-driven screw are

obvious enough.

It is difficult to see how such a contrivance could carry guns of any calibre unless they fired from the rear in the line of flight. The problem of recoil becomes a very difficult one in aerial tactics. It would probably have at most a small machine-gun or so, which might fire an explosive shell at the balloons of the enemy, or kill their aeronauts with distributed bullets. The thing would be a sort of air-shark, and one may even venture to picture something of the struggle the deadlocked marksmen of 1950, lying warily in their rifle-pits, will see.

One conceives them at first, each little hole with its watchful, well-equipped couple of assassins, turning up their eyes in expectation. The wind is with our enemy, and his captive balloons have been disagreeably overhead all through the hot morning. His big guns have suddenly become nervously active. Then, a little murmur along the pits and trenches, and from somewhere over behind us, this air-shark drives up the sky. The enemy's balloons splutter a little, retract, and go rushing down, and we send a spray of bullets as they drop. Then against our aerostat, and with the wind driving them clean overhead of us, come the antagonistic flying-machines. I incline to imagine there will be a steel prow with a cutting edge at either end of the sort of aerostat I foresee, and conceivably this aerial ram will be the most important weapon of the affair. When operating against balloons, such a fighting-machine will rush up the air as swiftly as possible, and then, with a rapid contraction of its bladders, fling itself like a knife at the sinking war-balloon of the foe. Down, down, down, through a vast alert tension of flight, down it will swoop, and, if its stoop is successful, slash explosively at last through a suffocating moment. Rifles will crack, ropes tear and snap; there will be a rending and shouting, a great thud of liberated gas, and perhaps a flare. Quite certainly those flying machines will carry folded parachutes, and the last phase of many a struggle will be the desperate leap of the aeronauts with these in hand, to snatch one last chance of life out of a mass of crumpling, fallen wreckage.

But in such a fight between flying-machine and flying-machine as we are trying to picture, it will be a fight of hawks, complicated by

bullets and little shells. They will rush up and up to get the pitch of one another, until the aeronauts sob and sicken in the rarefied air, and the blood comes to eyes and nails. The marksmen below will strain at last, eyes under hands, to see the circling battle that dwindles in the zenith. Then, perhaps, a wild adventurous dropping of one close beneath the other, an attempt to stoop, the sudden splutter of guns, a tilting up or down, a disengagement. What will have happened? One combatant, perhaps, will heel lamely earthward, dropping, dropping, with half its bladders burst or shot away, the other circles down in pursuit.... "What are they doing?" Our marksmen will snatch at their field-glasses, tremulously anxious, "Is that a white flag or no?... If they drop now we have 'em!"

But the duel will be the rarer thing. In any affair of ramming there is an enormous advantage for the side that can contrive, anywhere in the field of action, to set two vessels at one. The mere ascent of one flying-ram from one side will assuredly slip the leashes of two on the other, until the manœuvring squadrons may be as thick as starlings in October. They will wheel and mount, they will spread and close, there will be elaborate manœuvres for the advantage of the wind, there will be sudden drops to the shelter of entrenched guns. The actual impact of battle will be an affair of moments. They will be awful moments, but not more terrible, not more exacting of manhood than the moments that will come to men when there is — and it has not as yet happened on this earth — equal fighting between properly manned and equipped ironclads at sea. (And the well-bred young gentlemen of means who are privileged to officer the British Army nowadays will be no more good at this sort of thing than they are at controversial theology or electrical engineering or anything else that demands a well-exercised brain.)...

Once the command of the air is obtained by one of the contending armies, the war must become a conflict between a seeing host and one that is blind. The victor in that aerial struggle will tower with pitilessly watchful eyes over his adversary, will concentrate his guns and all his strength unobserved, will mark all his adversary's roads and communications, and sweep them with sudden incredible disasters of shot and shell. The moral effect of this predominance will be enormous. All over the losing country, not simply at his

frontier but everywhere, the victor will soar. Everybody everywhere will be perpetually and constantly looking up, with a sense of loss and insecurity, with a vague stress of painful anticipations. By day the victor's aeroplanes will sweep down upon the apparatus of all sorts in the adversary's rear, and will drop explosives and incendiary matters upon them, so that no apparatus or camp or shelter will any longer be safe. At night his high floating search-lights will go to and fro and discover and check every desperate attempt to relieve or feed the exhausted marksmen of the fighting line. The phase of tension will pass, that weakening opposition will give, and the war from a state of mutual pressure and petty combat will develop into the collapse of the defensive lines. A general advance will occur under the aerial van, ironclad road fighting-machines may perhaps play a considerable part in this, and the enemy's line of marksmen will be driven back or starved into surrender, or broken up and hunted down. As the superiority of the attack becomes week by week more and more evident, its assaults will become more dashing and far-reaching. Under the moonlight and the watching balloons there will be swift noiseless rushes of cycles, precipitate dismounts, and the never-to-be-quite-abandoned bayonet will play its part. And now men on the losing side will thank God for the reprieve of a pitiless wind, for lightning, thunder, and rain, for any elemental disorder that will for a moment lift the descending scale! Then, under banks of fog and cloud, the victorious advance will pause and grow peeringly watchful and nervous, and mud-stained desperate men will go splashing forward into an elemental blackness, rain or snow like a benediction on their faces, blessing the primordial savagery of nature that can still set aside the wisest devices of men, and give the unthrifty one last desperate chance to get their own again or die.

Such adventures may rescue pride and honour, may cause momentary dismay in the victor and palliate disaster, but they will not turn back the advance of the victors, or twist inferiority into victory. Presently the advance will resume. With that advance the phase of indecisive contest will have ended, and the second phase of the new war, the business of forcing submission, will begin. This should be more easy in the future even than it has proved in the past, in spite of the fact that central governments are now elusive, and

small bodies of rifle-armed guerillas far more formidable than ever before. It will probably be brought about in a civilized country by the seizure of the vital apparatus of the urban regions — the water supply, the generating stations for electricity (which will supply all the heat and warmth of the land), and the chief ways used in food distribution. Through these expedients, even while the formal war is still in progress, an irresistible pressure upon a local population will be possible, and it will be easy to subjugate or to create afresh local authorities, who will secure the invader from any danger of a guerilla warfare upon his rear. Through that sort of an expedient an even very obdurate loser will be got down to submission, area by area. With the destruction of its military apparatus and the prospective loss of its water and food supply, however, the defeated civilized State will probably be willing to seek terms as a whole, and bring the war to a formal close.

In cases where, instead of contiguous frontiers, the combatants are separated by the sea, the aerial struggle will probably be preceded or accompanied by a struggle for the command of the sea. Of this warfare there have been many forecasts. In this, as in all the warfare of the coming time, imaginative foresight, a perpetual alteration of tactics, a perpetual production of unanticipated devices, will count enormously. Other things being equal, victory will rest with the force mentally most active. What type of ship may chance to be prevalent when the great naval war comes is hard guessing, but I incline to think that the naval architects of the ablest peoples will concentrate more and more upon speed and upon range and penetration, and, above all, upon precision of fire. I seem to see a light type of ironclad, armoured thickly only over its engines and magazines, murderously equipped, and with a ram — as alert and deadly as a striking snake. In the battles of the open she will have little to fear from the slow fumbling treacheries of the submarine, she will take as little heed of the chance of a torpedo as a barefooted man in battle does of the chance of a fallen dagger in his path. Unless I know nothing of my own blood, the English and Americans will prefer to catch their enemies in ugly weather or at night, and then they will fight to ram. The struggle on the high seas between any two naval powers (except, perhaps, the English and American, who have both

quite unparalleled opportunities for coaling) will not last more than a week or so. One or other force will be destroyed at sea, driven into its ports and blockaded there, or cut off from its supply of coal (or other force-generator), and hunted down to fight or surrender. An inferior fleet that tries to keep elusively at sea will always find a superior fleet between itself and coal, and will either have to fight at once or be shot into surrender as it lies helpless on the water. Some commerce-destroying enterprise on the part of the loser may go on, but I think the possibilities of that sort of thing are greatly exaggerated. The world grows smaller and smaller, the telegraph and telephone go everywhere, wireless telegraphy opens wider and wider possibilities to the imagination, and how the commerce-destroyer is to go on for long without being marked down, headed off, cut off from coal, and forced to fight or surrender, I do not see. The commerce-destroyer will have a very short run; it will have to be an exceptionally good and costly ship in the first place, it will be finally sunk or captured, and altogether I do not see how that sort of thing will pay when once the command of the sea is assured. A few weeks will carry the effective frontier of the stronger power up to the coast-line of the weaker, and permit of the secure resumption of the over-sea trade of the former. And then will open a second phase of naval warfare, in which the submarine may play a larger part.

I must confess that my imagination, in spite even of spurring, refuses to see any sort of submarine doing anything but suffocate its crew and founder at sea. It must involve physical inconvenience of the most demoralizing sort simply to be in one for any length of time. A first-rate man who has been breathing carbonic acid and oil vapour under a pressure of four atmospheres becomes presently a second-rate man. Imagine yourself in a submarine that has ventured a few miles out of port, imagine that you have headache and nausea, and that some ship of the *Cobra* type is flashing itself and its search-lights about whenever you come up to the surface, and promptly tearing down on your descending bubbles with a ram, trailing perhaps a tail of grapples or a net as well. Even if you get their boat, these nicely aerated men you are fighting know they have a four to one chance of living; while for your submarine to be "got" is certain death. You may, of course, throw out a torpedo or so, with as much

chance of hitting vitally as you would have if you were blindfolded, turned round three times, and told to fire revolver-shots at a charging elephant. The possibility of sweeping for a submarine with a seine would be vividly present in the minds of a submarine crew. If you are near shore you will probably be near rocks — an unpleasant complication in a hurried dive. There would, probably, very soon be boats out too, seeking with a machine-gun or pompom for a chance at your occasionally emergent conning-tower. In no way can a submarine be more than purblind, it will be, in fact, practically blind. Given a derelict ironclad on a still night within sight of land, a carefully handled submarine might succeed in groping its way to it and destroying it; but then it would be much better to attack such a vessel and capture it boldly with a few desperate men on a tug. At the utmost the submarine will be used in narrow waters, in rivers, or to fluster or destroy ships in harbour or with poor-spirited crews — that is to say, it will simply be an added power in the hands of the nation that is predominant at sea. And, even then, it can be merely destructive, while a sane and high-spirited fighter will always be dissatisfied if, with an indisputable superiority of force, he fails to take.

No; the naval warfare of the future is for light, swift ships, almost recklessly not defensive and with splendid guns and gunners. They will hit hard and ram, and warfare which is taking to cover on land will abandon it at sea. And the captain, and the engineer, and the gunner will have to be all of the same sort of men: capable, headlong men, with brains and no ascertainable social position. They will differ from the officers of the British Navy in the fact that the whole male sex of the nation will have been ransacked to get them. The incredible stupidity that closes all but a menial position in the British Navy to the sons of those who cannot afford to pay a hundred a year for them for some years, necessarily brings the individual quality of the British naval officer below the highest possible, quite apart from the deficiencies that must exist on account of the badness of secondary education in England. The British naval officer and engineer are not made the best of, good as they are, indisputably they might be infinitely better both in quality and training. The smaller German navy, probably, has an ampler pick of men relatively, is far

better educated, less confident, and more strenuous. But the abstract navy I am here writing of will be superior to either of these, and like the American, in the absence of any distinction between officers and engineers. The officer will be an engineer.

The military advantages of the command of the sea will probably be greater in the future than they have been in the past. A fleet with aerial supports would be able to descend upon any portion of the adversary's coast it chose, and to dominate the country inland for several miles with its gun-fire. All the enemy's sea-coast towns would be at its mercy. It would be able to effect landing and send raids of cyclist-marksmen inland, whenever a weak point was discovered. Landings will be enormously easier than they have ever been before. Once a wedge of marksmen has been driven inland they would have all the military advantages of the defence when it came to eject them. They might, for example, encircle and block some fortified post, and force costly and disastrous attempts to relieve it. The defensive country would stand at bay, tethered against any effective counter-blow, keeping guns, supplies, and men in perpetual and distressing movement to and fro along its sea-frontiers. Its soldiers would get uncertain rest, irregular feeding, unhealthy conditions of all sorts in hastily made camps. The attacking fleet would divide and re-unite, break up and vanish, amazingly reappear. The longer the defender's coast the more wretched his lot. Never before in the world's history was the command of the sea worth what it is now. But the command of the sea is, after all, like military predominance on land, to be insured only by superiority of equipment in the hands of a certain type of man, a type of man that it becomes more and more impossible to improvise, that a country must live for through many years, and that no country on earth at present can be said to be doing its best possible to make.

All this elaboration of warfare lengthens the scale between theoretical efficiency and absolute unpreparedness. There was a time when any tribe that had men and spears was ready for war, and any tribe that had some cunning or emotion at command might hope to discount any little disparity in numbers between itself and its neighbour. Luck and stubbornness and the incalculable counted for much; it was half the battle not to know you were beaten, and it is so

still. Even to-day, a great nation, it seems, may still make its army the plaything of its gentlefolk, abandon important military appointments to feminine intrigue, and trust cheerfully to the homesickness and essential modesty of its influential people, and the simpler patriotism of its colonial dependencies when it comes at last to the bloody and wearisome business of "muddling through." But these days of the happy-go-lucky optimist are near their end. War is being drawn into the field of the exact sciences. Every additional weapon, every new complication of the art of war, intensifies the need of deliberate preparation, and darkens the outlook of a nation of amateurs. Warfare in the future, on sea or land alike, will be much more one-sided than it has ever been in the past, much more of a foregone conclusion. Save for national lunacy, it will be brought about by the side that will win, and because that side knows that it will win. More and more it will have the quality of surprise, of pitiless revelation. Instead of the seesaw, the bickering interchange of battles of the old time, will come swiftly and amazingly blow, and blow, and blow, no pause, no time for recovery, disasters cumulative and irreparable.

The fight will never be in practice between equal sides, never be that theoretical deadlock we have sketched, but a fight between the more efficient and the less efficient, between the more inventive and the more traditional. While the victors, disciplined and grimly intent, full of the sombre yet glorious delight of a grave thing well done, will, without shouting or confusion, be fighting like one great national body, the losers will be taking that pitiless exposure of helplessness in such a manner as their natural culture and character may determine. War for the losing side will be an unspeakable pitiable business. There will be first of all the coming of the war, the wave of excitement, the belligerent shouting of the unemployed inefficients, the flag-waving, the secret doubts, the eagerness for hopeful news, the impatience of the warning voice. I seem to see, almost as if he were symbolic, the grey old general — the general who learnt his art of war away in the vanished nineteenth century, the altogether too elderly general with his epaulettes and decorations, his uniform that has still its historical value, his spurs and his sword — riding along on his obsolete horse, by the side of his doomed column.

Above all things he is a gentleman. And the column looks at him lovingly with its countless boys' faces, and the boys' eyes are infinitely trustful, for he has won battles in the old time. They will believe in him to the end. They have been brought up in their schools to believe in him and his class, their mothers have mingled respect for the gentlefolk with the simple doctrines of their faith, their first lesson on entering the army was the salute. The "smart" helmets His Majesty, or some such unqualified person, chose for them, lie hotly on their young brows, and over their shoulders slope their obsolete, carelessly-sighted guns. Tramp, tramp, they march, doing what they have been told to do, incapable of doing anything they have not been told to do, trustful and pitiful, marching to wounds and disease, hunger, hardship, and death. They know nothing of what they are going to meet, nothing of what they will have to do; Religion and the Ratepayer and the Rights of the Parent working through the instrumentality of the Best Club in the World have kept their souls and minds, if not untainted, at least only harmlessly veneered, with the thinnest sham of training or knowledge. Tramp, tramp, they go, boys who will never be men, rejoicing patriotically in the nation that has thus sent them forth, badly armed, badly clothed, badly led, to be killed in some avoidable quarrel by men unseen. And beside them, an absolute stranger to them, a stranger even in habits of speech and thought, and at any rate to be shot with them fairly and squarely, marches the subaltern — the son of the school-burking, shareholding class — a slightly taller sort of boy, as ill-taught as they are in all that concerns the realities of life, ignorant of how to get food, how to get water, how to keep fever down and strength up, ignorant of his practical equality with the men beside him, carefully trained under a clerical headmaster to use a crib, play cricket rather nicely, look all right whatever happens, believe in his gentility, and avoid talking "shop."... The major you see is a man of the world, and very pleasantly meets the grey general's eye. He is, one may remark by the way, something of an army reformer, without offence, of course, to the Court people or the Government people. His prospects — if only he were not going to be shot — are brilliant enough. He has written quite cleverly on the question of Recruiting, and advocated as much as twopence more a day and billiard rooms under the

chaplain's control; he has invented a military bicycle with a wheel of solid iron that can be used as a shield; and a war correspondent and, indeed, any one who writes even the most casual and irresponsible article on military questions is a person worth his cultivating. He is the very life and soul of army reform, as it is known to the governments of the grey — that is to say, army reform without a single step towards a social revolution....

So the gentlemanly old general — the polished drover to the shambles — rides, and his doomed column march by, in this vision that haunts my mind.

I cannot foresee what such a force will even attempt to do, against modern weapons. Nothing can happen but the needless and most wasteful and pitiful killing of these poor lads, who make up the infantry battalions, the main mass of all the European armies of to-day, whenever they come against a sanely-organized army. There is nowhere they can come in, there is nothing they can do. The scattered invisible marksmen with their supporting guns will shatter their masses, pick them off individually, cover their line of retreat and force them into wholesale surrenders. It will be more like herding sheep than actual fighting. Yet the bitterest and cruellest things will have to happen, thousands and thousands of poor boys will be smashed in all sorts of dreadful ways and given over to every conceivable form of avoidable hardship and painful disease, before the obvious fact that war is no longer a business for half-trained lads in uniform, led by parson-bred sixth-form boys and men of pleasure and old men, but an exhaustive demand upon very carefully-educated adults for the most strenuous best that is in them, will get its practical recognition....

Well, in the ampler prospect even this haunting tragedy of innumerable avoidable deaths is but an incidental thing. They die, and their troubles are over. The larger fact after all is the inexorable tendency in things to make a soldier a skilled and educated man, and to link him, in sympathy and organization, with the engineer and the doctor, and all the continually developing mass of scientifically educated men that the advance of science and mechanism is producing. We are dealing with the inter-play of two world-wide forces, that work through distinctive and contrasted tendencies to a

common end. We have the force of invention insistent upon a progress of the peace organization, which tends on the one hand to throw out great useless masses of people, the People of the Abyss, and on the other hand to develop a sort of adiposity of functionless wealthy, a speculative elephantiasis, and to promote the development of a new social order of efficients, only very painfully and slowly, amidst these growing and yet disintegrating masses. And on the other hand we have the warlike drift of such a social body, the inevitable intensification of international animosities in such a body, the absolute determination evident in the scheme of things to smash such a body, to smash it just as far as it is such a body, under the hammer of war, that must finally bring about rapidly and under pressure the same result as that to which the peaceful evolution slowly tends. While we are as yet only thinking of a physiological struggle, of complex reactions and slow absorptions, comes War with the surgeon's knife. War comes to simplify the issue and line out the thing with knife-like cuts.

The law that dominates the future is glaringly plain. A people must develop and consolidate its educated efficient classes or be beaten in war and give way upon all points where its interests conflict with the interests of more capable people. It must foster and accelerate that natural segregation, which has been discussed in the third and fourth chapters of these "Anticipations," or perish. The war of the coming time will really be won in schools and colleges and universities, wherever men write and read and talk together. The nation that produces in the near future the largest proportional development of educated and intelligent engineers and agriculturists, of doctors, schoolmasters, professional soldiers, and intellectually active people of all sorts; the nation that most resolutely picks over, educates, sterilizes, exports, or poisons its People of the Abyss; the nation that succeeds most subtly in checking gambling and the moral decay of women and homes that gambling inevitably entails; the nation that by wise interventions, death duties and the like, contrives to expropriate and extinguish incompetent rich families while leaving individual ambitions free; the nation, in a word, that turns the greatest proportion of its irresponsible adiposity into social muscle, will certainly be the nation that will be the most powerful in warfare

as in peace, will certainly be the ascendant or dominant nation before the year 2000. In the long run no heroism and no accidents can alter that. No flag-waving, no patriotic leagues, no visiting of essentially petty imperial personages hither and thither, no smashing of the windows of outspoken people nor seizures of papers and books, will arrest the march of national defeat. And this issue is already so plain and simple, the alternatives are becoming so pitilessly clear, that even in the stupidest court and the stupidest constituencies, it must presently begin in some dim way to be felt. A time will come when so many people will see this issue clearly that it will gravely affect political and social life. The patriotic party — the particular gang, that is, of lawyers, brewers, landlords, and railway directors that wishes to be dominant — will be forced to become an efficient party in profession at least, will be forced to stimulate and organize that educational and social development that may at last even bring patriotism under control. The rulers of the grey, the democratic politician and the democratic monarch, will be obliged year by year by the very nature of things to promote the segregation of colours within the grey, to foster the power that will finally supersede democracy and monarchy altogether, the power of the scientifically educated, disciplined specialist, and that finally is the power of saints, the power of the thing that is provably right. It may be delayed, but it cannot be defeated; in the end it must arrive — if not to-day and among our people, then to-morrow and among another people, who will triumph in our overthrow. This is the lesson that must be learnt, that some tongue and kindred of the coming time must inevitably learn. But what tongue it will be, and what kindred that will first attain this new development, opens far more complex and far less certain issues than any we have hitherto considered.

VII. The Conflict of Languages

We have brought together thus far in these Anticipations the material for the picture of a human community somewhere towards the year 2000. We have imagined its roads, the type and appearance of its homes, its social developments, its internal struggle for organization; we have speculated upon its moral and æsthetic condition, read its newspaper, made an advanced criticism upon the lack of universality in its literature, and attempted to imagine it at war. We have decided in particular that unlike the civilized community of the immediate past which lived either in sharply-defined towns or agriculturally over a wide country, this population will be distributed in a quite different way, a little more thickly over vast urban regions and a little less thickly over less attractive or less convenient or less industrial parts of the world. And implicit in all that has been written there has appeared an unavoidable assumption that the coming community will be vast, something geographically more extensive than most, and geographically different from almost all existing communities, that the outline its creative forces will draw not only does not coincide with existing political centres and boundaries, but will be more often than not in direct conflict with them, uniting areas that are separated and separating areas that are united, grouping here half a dozen tongues and peoples together and there tearing apart homogeneous bodies and distributing the fragments among separate groups. And it will now be well to inquire a little into the general causes of these existing divisions, the political boundaries of to-day, and the still older contours of language and race.

It is first to be remarked that each of these sets of boundaries is superposed, as it were, on the older sets. The race areas, for example, which are now not traceable in Europe at all must have represented old regions of separation; the language areas, which have little or no essential relation to racial distribution, have also given way long since to the newer forces that have united and consolidated nations. And the still newer forces that have united and separated the nineteenth century states have been, and in many cases are still, in manifest conflict with “national” ideas.

Now, in the original separation of human races, in the subsequent differentiation and spread of languages, in the separation of men into nationalities, and in the union and splitting of states and empires, we have to deal essentially with the fluctuating manifestations of the same fundamental shaping factor which will determine the distribution of urban districts in the coming years. Every boundary of the ethnographical, linguistic, political, and commercial map — as a little consideration will show — has indeed been traced in the first place by the means of transit, under the compulsion of geographical contours.

There are evident in Europe four or five or more very distinct racial types, and since the methods and rewards of barbaric warfare and the nature of the chief chattels of barbaric trade have always been diametrically opposed to racial purity, their original separation could only have gone on through such an entire lack of communication as prevented either trade or warfare between the bulk of the differentiating bodies. These original racial types are now inextricably mingled. Unobservant, over-scholarly people talk or write in the profoundest manner about a Teutonic race and a Keltic race, and institute all sorts of curious contrasts between these phantoms, but these are not races at all, if physical characteristics have anything to do with race. The Dane, the Bavarian, the Prussian, the Frieslander, the Wessex peasant, the Kentish man, the Virginian, the man from New Jersey, the Norwegian, the Swede, and the Transvaal Boer, are generalized about, for example, as Teutonic, while the short, dark, cunning sort of Welshman, the tall and generous Highlander, the miscellaneous Irish, the square-headed Breton, and any sort of Cornwall peasant are Kelts within the meaning of this oil-lamp anthropology. People who believe in this sort of thing are not the sort of people that one attempts to convert by a set argument. One need only say the thing is not so; there is no Teutonic race, and there never has been; there is no Keltic race, and there never has been. No one has ever proved or attempted to prove the existence of such races, the thing has always been assumed; they are dogmas with nothing but questionable authority behind them, and the onus of proof rests on the believer. This nonsense about Keltic and Teutonic is no more science than Lombroso's extraordinary

assertions about criminals, or palmistry, or the development of religion from a solar myth. Indisputably there are several races intermingled in the European populations — I am inclined to suspect the primitive European races may be found to be so distinct as to resist confusion and pamnyxia through hybridization — but there is no inkling of a satisfactory analysis yet that will discriminate what these races were and define them in terms of physical and moral character. The fact remains there is no such thing as a racially pure and homogeneous community in Europe distinct from other communities. Even among the Jews, according to Erckert and Chantre and J. Jacobs, there are markedly divergent types, there may have been two original elements and there have been extensive local intermixtures.

Long before the beginnings of history, while even language was in its first beginnings — indeed as another aspect of the same process as the beginning of language — the first complete isolations that established race were breaking down again, the little pools of race were running together into less homogeneous lagoons and marshes of humanity, the first paths were being worn — war paths for the most part. Still differentiation would be largely at work. Without frequent intercourse, frequent interchange of women as the great factor in that intercourse, the tribes and bands of mankind would still go on separating, would develop dialectic and customary, if not physical and moral differences. It was no longer a case of pools perhaps, but they were still in lakes. There were as yet no open seas of mankind. With advancing civilization, with iron weapons and war discipline, with established paths and a social rule and presently with the coming of the horse, what one might call the areas of assimilation would increase in size. A stage would be reached when the only checks to transit of a sufficiently convenient sort to keep language uniform would be the sea or mountains or a broad river or — pure distance. And presently the rules of the game, so to speak, would be further altered and the unifications and isolations that were establishing themselves upset altogether and brought into novel conflict by the beginnings of navigation, whereby an impassable barrier became a highway.

The commencement of actual European history coincides with the

closing phases of what was probably a very long period of a foot and (occasional) horseback state of communications; the adjustments so arrived at being already in an early state of rearrangement through the advent of the ship. The communities of Europe were still for the larger part small isolated tribes and kingdoms, such kingdoms as a mainly pedestrian militia, or at any rate a militia without transport, and drawn from (and soon drawn home again by) agricultural work, might hold together. The increase of transit facilities between such communities, by the development of shipping and the invention of the wheel and the made road, spelt increased trade perhaps for a time, but very speedily a more extensive form of war, and in the end either the wearing away of differences and union, or conquest. Man is the creature of a struggle for existence, incurably egoistic and aggressive. Convince him of the gospel of self-abnegation even, and he instantly becomes its zealous missionary, taking great credit that his expedients to ram it into the minds of his fellow-creatures do not include physical force — and if that is not self-abnegation, he asks, what is? So he has been, and so he is likely to remain. Not to be so, is to die of abnegation and extinguish the type. Improvement in transit between communities formerly for all practical purposes isolated, means, therefore, and always has meant, and I imagine, always will mean, that now they can get at one another. And they do. They inter-breed and fight, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Unless Providence is belied in His works that is what they are meant to do.

A third invention which, though not a means of transit like the wheeled vehicle and the ship, was yet a means of communication, rendered still larger political reactions possible, and that was the development of systems of writing. The first empires and some sort of written speech arose together. Just as a kingdom, as distinguished from a mere tribal group of villages, is almost impossible without horses, so is an empire without writing and post-roads. The history of the whole world for three thousand years is the history of a unity larger than the small kingdom of the Heptarchy type, endeavouring to establish itself under the stress of these discoveries of horse-traffic and shipping and the written word, the history, that is, of the consequences of the partial shattering of the barriers that had been effectual enough to prevent the fusion of more than tribal

communities through all the long ages before the dawn of history.

East of the Gobi Pamir barrier there has slowly grown up under these new conditions the Chinese system. West and north of the Sahara Gobi barrier of deserts and mountains, the extraordinarily strong and spacious conceptions of the Romans succeeded in dominating the world, and do, indeed, in a sort of mutilated way, by the powers of great words and wide ideas, in Cæsarism and Imperialism, in the titles of Czar, Kaiser, and Imperator, in Papal pretension and countless political devices, dominate it to this hour. For awhile these conceptions sustained a united and to a large extent organized empire over very much of this space. But at its stablest time, this union was no more than a political union, the spreading of a thin layer of Latin-speaking officials, of a thin network of roads and a very thin veneer indeed of customs and refinements, over the scarcely touched national masses. It checked, perhaps, but it nowhere succeeded in stopping the slow but inevitable differentiation of province from province and nation from nation. The forces of transit that permitted the Roman imperialism and its partial successors to establish wide ascendancies, were not sufficient to carry the resultant unity beyond the political stage. There was unity, but not unification. Tongues and writing ceased to be pure without ceasing to be distinct. Sympathies, religious and social practices, ran apart and rounded themselves off like drops of oil on water. Travel was restricted to the rulers and the troops and to a wealthy leisure class; commerce was for most of the constituent provinces of the empire a commerce in superficialities, and each province — except for Italy, which latterly became dependent on an over-seas food supply — was in all essential things autonomous, could have continued in existence, rulers and ruled, arts, luxuries, and refinements just as they stood, if all other lands and customs had been swept out of being. Local convulsions and revolutions, conquests and developments, occurred indeed, but though the stones were altered the mosaic remained, and the general size and character of its constituent pieces remained. So it was under the Romans, so it was in the eighteenth century, and so it would probably have remained as long as the post-road and the sailing-ship were the most rapid forms of transit within the reach of man. Wars and powers and princes came and went, that was all.

Nothing was changed, there was only one state the more or less. Even in the eighteenth century the process of real unification had effected so little, that not one of the larger kingdoms of Europe escaped a civil war — not a class war, but a really *internal* war — between one part of itself and another, in that hundred years. In spite of Rome's few centuries of unstable empire, internal wars, a perpetual struggle against finally triumphant disruption seemed to be the unavoidable destiny of every power that attempted to rule over a larger radius than at most a hundred miles.

So evident was this that many educated English persons thought then, and many who are not in the habit of analyzing operating causes, still think to-day, that the wide diffusion of the English-speaking people is a mere preliminary to their political, social, and linguistic disruption — the eighteenth-century breach with the United States is made a precedent of, and the unification that followed the war of Union and the growing unification of Canada is overlooked — that linguistic differences, differences of custom, costume, prejudice, and the like, will finally make the Australian, the Canadian of English blood, the Virginian, and the English Africander, as incomprehensible and unsympathetic one to another as Spaniard and Englishman or Frenchman and German are now. On such a supposition all our current Imperialism is the most foolish defiance of the inevitable, the maddest waste of blood, treasure, and emotion that man ever made. So, indeed, it might be — so, indeed, I certainly think it would be — if it were not that the epoch of post-road and sailing-ship is at an end. We are in the beginning of a new time, with such forces of organization and unification at work in mechanical traction, in the telephone and telegraph, in a whole wonderland of novel, space-destroying appliances, and in the correlated inevitable advance in practical education, as the world has never felt before.

The operation of these unifying forces is already to be very distinctly traced in the check, the arrest indeed, of any further differentiation in existing tongues, even in the most widely spread. In fact, it is more than an arrest even, the forces of differentiation have been driven back and an actual process of assimilation has set in. In England at the commencement of the nineteenth century the common

man of Somerset and the common man of Yorkshire, the Sussex peasant, the Caithness cottar and the common Ulsterman, would have been almost incomprehensible to one another. They differed in accent, in idiom, and in their very names for things. They differed in their ideas about things. They were, in plain English, foreigners one to another. Now they differ only in accent, and even that is a dwindling difference. Their language has become ampler because now they read. They read books — or, at any rate, they learn to read out of books — and certainly they read newspapers and those scrappy periodicals that people like bishops pretend to think so detrimental to the human mind, periodicals that it is cheaper to make at centres and uniformly, than locally in accordance with local needs. Since the newspaper cannot fit the locality, the locality has to broaden its mind to the newspaper, and to ideas acceptable in other localities. The word and the idiom of the literary language and the pronunciation suggested by its spelling tends to prevail over the local usage. And moreover there is a persistent mixing of peoples going on, migration in search of employment and so on, quite unprecedented before the railways came. Few people are content to remain in that locality and state of life "into which it has pleased God to call them." As a result, dialectic purity has vanished, dialects are rapidly vanishing, and novel differentiations are retarded or arrested altogether. Such novelties as do establish themselves in a locality are widely disseminated almost at once in books and periodicals.

A parallel arrest of dialectic separation has happened in France, in Italy, in Germany, and in the States. It is not a process peculiar to any one nation. It is simply an aspect of the general process that has arisen out of mechanical locomotion. The organization of elementary education has no doubt been an important factor, but the essential influence working through this circumstance is the fact that paper is relatively cheap to type-setting, and both cheap to authorship — even the commonest sorts of authorship — and the wider the area a periodical or book serves the bigger, more attractive, and better it can be made for the same money. And clearly this process of assimilation will continue. Even local differences of accent seem likely to follow. The itinerant dramatic company, the itinerant preacher, the coming extension of telephones and the phonograph, which at any time in

some application to correspondence or instruction may cease to be a toy, all these things attack, or threaten to attack, the weeds of differentiation before they can take root....

And this process is not restricted to dialects merely. The native of a small country who knows no other language than the tongue of his country becomes increasingly at a disadvantage in comparison with the user of any of the three great languages of the Europeanized world. For his literature he depends on the scanty writers who are in his own case and write, or have written, in his own tongue. Necessarily they are few, because necessarily with a small public there can be only subsistence for a few. For his science he is in a worse case. His country can produce neither teachers nor discoverers to compare with the numbers of such workers in the larger areas, and it will neither pay them to write original matter for his instruction nor to translate what has been written in other tongues. The larger the number of people reading a tongue, the larger — other things being equal — will be not only the output of more or less original literature in that tongue, but also the more profitable and numerous will be translations of whatever has value in other tongues. Moreover, the larger the reading public in any language the cheaper will it be to supply copies of the desired work. In the matter of current intelligence the case of the speaker of the small language is still worse. His newspaper will need to be cheaply served, his home intelligence will be cut and restricted, his foreign news belated and second hand. Moreover, to travel even a little distance or to conduct anything but the smallest business enterprise will be exceptionally inconvenient to him. The Englishman who knows no language but his own may travel well-nigh all over the world and everywhere meet some one who can speak his tongue. But what of the Welsh-speaking Welshman? What of the Basque and the Lithuanian who can speak only his mother tongue? Everywhere such a man is a foreigner and with all the foreigner's disadvantages. In most places he is for all practical purposes deaf and dumb.

The inducements to an Englishman, Frenchman or German to become bi-lingual are great enough nowadays, but the inducements to a speaker of the smaller languages are rapidly approaching compulsion. He must do it in self-defence. To be an educated man in

his own vernacular has become an impossibility, he must either become a mental subject of one of the greater languages or sink to the intellectual status of a peasant. But if our analysis of social development was correct the peasant of to-day will be represented to-morrow by the people of no account whatever, the classes of extinction, the People of the Abyss. If that analysis was correct, the essential nation will be all of educated men, that is to say, the essential nation will speak some dominant language or cease to exist, whatever its primordial tongue may have been. It will pass out of being and become a mere local area of the lower social stratum, — a Problem for the philanthropic amateur.

The action of the force of attraction of the great tongues is cumulative. It goes on, as bodies fall, with a steady acceleration. The more the great tongues prevail over the little languages the less will be the inducement to write and translate into these latter, the less the inducement to master them with any care or precision. And so this attack upon the smaller tongues, this gravitation of those who are born to speak them, towards the great languages, is not only to be seen going on in the case of such languages as Flemish, Welsh, or Basque, but even in the case of Norwegian and of such a great and noble tongue as the Italian, I am afraid that the trend of things makes for a similar suppression. All over Italy is the French newspaper and the French book. French wins its way more and more there, as English, I understand, is doing in Norway, and English and German in Holland. And in the coming years when the reading public will, in the case of the Western nations, be practically the whole functional population, when travel will be more extensive and abundant, and the inter-change of printed matter still cheaper and swifter — and above all with the spread of the telephone — the process of subtle, bloodless, unpremeditated annexation will conceivably progress much more rapidly even than it does at present. The Twentieth Century will see the effectual crowding out of most of the weaker languages — if not a positive crowding out, yet at least (as in Flanders) a supplementing of them by the superposition of one or other of a limited number of world-languages over the area in which each is spoken. This will go on not only in Europe, but with varying rates of progress and local eddies and interruptions over the whole

world. Except in the special case of China and Japan, where there may be a unique development, the peoples of the world will escape from the wreckage of their too small and swamped and foundering social systems, only up the ladders of what one may call the aggregating tongues.

What will these aggregating world-languages be? If one has regard only to its extension during the nineteenth century one may easily incline to overrate the probabilities of English becoming the chief of these. But a great part of the vast extension of English that has occurred has been due to the rapid reproduction of originally English-speaking peoples, the emigration of foreigners into English-speaking countries in quantities too small to resist the contagion about them, and the compulsion due to the political and commercial preponderance of a people too illiterate to readily master strange tongues. None of these causes have any essential permanence. When one comes to look more closely into the question one is surprised to discover how slow the extension of English has been in the face of apparently far less convenient tongues. English still fails to replace the French language in French Canada, and its ascendency is doubtful to-day in South Africa, after nearly a century of British dominion. It has none of the contagious quality of French, and the small class that monopolizes the direction of British affairs, and probably will monopolize it yet for several decades, has never displayed any great zeal to propagate its use. Of the few ideas possessed by the British governing class, the destruction and discouragement of schools and colleges is, unfortunately, one of the chief, and there is an absolute incapacity to understand the political significance of the language question. The Hindoo who is at pains to learn and use English encounters something uncommonly like hatred disguised in a facetious form. He will certainly read little about himself in English that is not grossly contemptuous, to reward him for his labour. The possibilities that have existed, and that do still in a dwindling degree exist, for resolute statesmen to make English the common language of communication for all Asia south and east of the Himalayas, will have to develop of their own force or dwindle and pass away. They may quite probably pass away. There is no sign that either the English or the Americans have a sufficient sense of the

importance of linguistic predominance in the future of their race to interfere with natural processes in this matter for many years to come.

Among peoples not actually subject to British or American rule, and who are neither waiters nor commercial travellers, the inducements to learn English, rather than French or German, do not increase. If our initial assumptions are right, the decisive factor in this matter is the amount of science and thought the acquisition of a language will afford the man who learns it. It becomes, therefore, a fact of very great significance that the actual number of books published in English is less than that in French or German, and that the proportion of serious books is very greatly less. A large proportion of English books are novels adapted to the minds of women, or of boys and superannuated business men, stories designed rather to allay than stimulate thought — they are the only books, indeed, that are profitable to publisher and author alike. In this connection they do not count, however; no foreigner is likely to learn English for the pleasure of reading Miss Marie Corelli in the original, or of drinking untranslatable elements from *The Helmet of Navarre*. The present conditions of book production for the English reading public offer no hope of any immediate change in this respect. There is neither honour nor reward — there is not even food or shelter — for the American or Englishman who devotes a year or so of his life to the adequate treatment of any spacious question, and so small is the English reading public with any special interest in science, that a great number of important foreign scientific works are never translated into English at all. Such interesting compilations as Bloch's work on war, for example, must be read in French; in English only a brief summary of his results is to be obtained, under a sensational heading. Schopenhauer again is only to be got quite stupidly Bowdlerized, explained, and "selected" in English. Many translations that are made into English are made only to sell, they are too often the work of sweated women and girls — very often quite without any special knowledge of the matter they translate — they are difficult to read and untrustworthy to quote. The production of books in English, except the author be a wealthy amateur, rests finally upon the publishers, and publishers to-day stand a little lower

than ordinary tradesmen in not caring at all whether the goods they sell are good or bad. Unusual books, they allege — and all good books are unusual — are "difficult to handle," and the author must pay the fine — amounting, more often than not, to the greater portion of his interest in the book. There is no criticism to control the advertising enterprises of publishers and authors, and no sufficiently intelligent reading public has differentiated out of the confusion to encourage attempts at critical discrimination. The organs of the great professions and technical trades are as yet not alive to the part their readers must play in the public life of the future, and ignore all but strictly technical publications. A bastard criticism, written in many cases by publishers' employees, a criticism having a very direct relation to the advertisement columns, distributes praise and blame in the periodic press. There is no body of great men either in England or America, no intelligence in the British Court, that might by any form of recognition compensate the philosophical or scientific writer for poverty and popular neglect. The more powerful a man's intelligence the more distinctly he must see that to devote himself to increase the scientific or philosophical wealth of the English tongue will be to sacrifice comfort, the respect of the bulk of his contemporaries, and all the most delightful things of life, for the barren reward of a not very certain righteous self-applause. By brewing and dealing in tied houses, or by selling pork and tea, or by stock-jobbing and by pandering with the profits so obtained to the pleasures of the established great, a man of energy may hope to rise to a pitch of public honour and popularity immeasurably in excess of anything attainable through the most splendid intellectual performances. Heaven forbid I should overrate public honours and the company of princes! But it is not always delightful to be splashed by the wheels of cabs. Always before there has been at least a convention that the Court of this country, and its aristocracy, were radiant centres of moral and intellectual influence, that they did to some extent check and correct the judgments of the cab-rank and the beer-house. But the British Crown of to-day, so far as it exists for science and literature at all, exists mainly to repudiate the claims of intellectual performance to public respect.

These things, if they were merely the grievances of the study,

might very well rest there. But they must be recognized here because the intellectual decline of the published literature of the English language — using the word to cover all sorts of books — involves finally the decline of the language and of all the spacious political possibilities that go with the wide extension of a language. Conceivably, if in the coming years a deliberate attempt were made to provide sound instruction in English to all who sought it, and to all within the control of English-speaking Governments, if honour and emolument were given to literary men instead of being left to them to most indelicately take, and if the present sordid trade of publishing were so lifted as to bring the whole literature, the whole science, and all the contemporary thought of the world — not some selection of the world's literature, not some obsolete Encyclopædia sold meanly and basely to choke hungry minds, but a real publication of all that has been and is being done — within the reach of each man's need and desire who had the franchise of the tongue, then by the year 2000 I would prophesy that the whole functional body of human society would read, and perhaps even write and speak, our language. And not only that, but it might be the prevalent and everyday language of Scandinavia and Denmark and Holland, of all Africa, all North America, of the Pacific coasts of Asia and of India, the universal international language, and in a fair way to be the universal language of mankind. But such an enterprise demands a resolve and intelligence beyond all the immediate signs of the times; it implies a veritable renascence of intellectual life among the English-speaking peoples. The probabilities of such a renascence will be more conveniently discussed at a later stage, when we attempt to draw the broad outline of the struggle for world-wide ascendency that the coming years will see. But here it is clear that upon the probability of such a renascence depends the extension of the language, and not only that, but the preservation of that military and naval efficiency upon which, in this world of resolute aggression, the existence of the English-speaking communities finally depends.

French and German will certainly be aggregating languages during the greater portion of the coming years. Of the two I am inclined to think French will spread further than German. There is a disposition in the world, which the French share, to grossly

undervalue the prospects of all things French, derived, so far as I can gather, from the facts that the French were beaten by the Germans in 1870, and that they do not breed with the *abandon* of rabbits or negroes. These are considerations that affect the dissemination of French very little. The French reading public is something different and very much larger than the existing French political system. The number of books published in French is greater than that published in English; there is a critical reception for a work published in French that is one of the few things worth a writer's having, and the French translators are the most alert and efficient in the world. One has only to see a Parisian bookshop, and to recall an English one, to realize the as yet unattainable standing of French. The serried ranks of lemon-coloured volumes in the former have the whole range of human thought and interest; there are no taboos and no limits, you have everything up and down the scale, from frank indecency to stark wisdom. It is a shop for men. I remember my amazement to discover three copies of a translation of that most wonderful book, the *Text-book of Psychology*[*see* Erratum] of Professor William James, in a shop in L'Avenue de l'Opera — three copies of a book that I have never seen anywhere in England outside my own house, — and I am an attentive student of bookshop windows! And the French books are all so pleasant in the page, and so cheap — they are for a people that buys to read. One thinks of the English bookshop, with its gaudy reach-me-downs of gilded and embossed cover, its horribly printed novels still more horribly "illustrated," the exasperating pointless variety in the size and thickness of its books. The general effect of the English book is that it is something sold by a dealer in *bric-à-brac*, honestly sorry the thing is a book, but who has done *his* best to remedy it, anyhow! And all the English shopful is either brand new fiction or illustrated travel (of '*Buns with the Grand Lama*' type), or gilded versions of the classics of past times done up to give away. While the French bookshop reeks of contemporary intellectual life!

These things count for French as against English now, and they will count for infinitely more in the coming years. And over German also French has many advantages. In spite of the numerical preponderance of books published in Germany, it is doubtful if the

German reader has quite such a catholic feast before him as the reader of French. There is a mass of German fiction probably as uninteresting to a foreigner as popular English and American romance. And German compared with French is an unattractive language; unmelodious, unwieldy, and cursed with a hideous and blinding lettering that the German is too patriotic to sacrifice. There has been in Germany a more powerful parallel to what one may call the "honest Saxon" movement among the English, that queer mental twist that moves men to call an otherwise undistinguished preface a "Foreword," and find a pleasurable advantage over their fellow-creatures in a familiarity with "eftsoons." This tendency in German has done much to arrest the simplification of idiom, and checked the development of new words of classical origin. In particular it has stood in the way of the international use of scientific terms. The Englishman, the Frenchman, and the Italian have a certain community of technical, scientific, and philosophical phraseology, and it is frequently easier for an Englishman with some special knowledge of his subject to read and appreciate a subtle and technical work in French, than it is for him to fully enter into the popular matter of the same tongue. Moreover, the technicalities of these peoples, being not so immediately and constantly brought into contrast and contact with their Latin or Greek roots as they would be if they were derived (as are so many "patriotic" German technicalities) from native roots, are free to qualify and develop a final meaning distinct from their original intention. In the growing and changing body of science this counts for much. The indigenous German technicality remains clumsy and compromised by its everyday relations, to the end of time it drags a lengthening chain of unsuitable associations. And the shade of meaning, the limited qualification, that a Frenchman or Englishman can attain with a mere twist of the sentence, the German must either abandon or laboriously overstate with some colossal wormcast of parenthesis.... Moreover, against the German tongue there are hostile frontiers, there are hostile people who fear German preponderance, and who have set their hearts against its use. In Roumania, and among the Slav, Bohemian, and Hungarian peoples, French attacks German in the flank, and has as clear a prospect of predominance.

These two tongues must inevitably come into keen conflict; they will perhaps fight their battle for the linguistic conquest of Europe, and perhaps of the world, in a great urban region that will arise about the Rhine. Politically this region lies now in six independent States, but economically it must become one in the next fifty years. It will almost certainly be the greatest urban region in all the world except that which will arise in the eastern States of North America, and that which may arise somewhere about Hankow. It will stretch from Lille to Kiel, it will drive extensions along the Rhine valley into Switzerland, and fling an arm along the Moldau to Prague, it will be the industrial capital of the old world. Paris will be its West End, and it will stretch a spider's web of railways and great roads of the new sort over the whole continent. Even when the coal-field industries of the plain give place to the industrial application of mountain-born electricity, this great city region will remain, I believe, in its present position at the seaport end of the great plain of the Old World. Considerations of transit will keep it where it has grown, and electricity will be brought to it in mighty cables from the torrents of the central European mountain mass. Its westward port may be Bordeaux or Milford Haven, or even some port in the south-west of Ireland — unless, which is very unlikely, the velocity of secure sea-travel can be increased beyond that of land locomotion. I do not see how this great region is to unify itself without some linguistic compromise — the Germanization of the French-speaking peoples by force is too ridiculous a suggestion to entertain. Almost inevitably with travel, with transport communications, with every condition of human convenience insisting upon it, formally or informally a bi-lingual compromise will come into operation, and to my mind at least the chances seem even that French will emerge on the upper hand. Unless, indeed, that great renascence of the English-speaking peoples should, after all, so overwhelmingly occur as to force this European city to be tri-lingual, and prepare the way by which the whole world may at last speak together in one tongue.

These are the aggregating tongues. I do not think that any other tongues than these are quite likely to hold their own in the coming time. Italian may flourish in the city of the Po valley, but only with French beside it. Spanish and Russian are mighty languages, but

without a reading public how can they prevail, and what prospect of a reading public has either? They are, I believe, already judged. By a.d. 2000 all these languages will be tending more and more to be the second tongues of bi-lingual communities, with French, or English, or less probably German winning the upper hand.

But when one turns to China there are the strangest possibilities. It is in Eastern Asia alone that there seems to be any possibility of a synthesis sufficiently great to maintain itself, arising outside of, and independently of, the interlocked system of mechanically sustained societies that is developing out of mediæval Christendom. Throughout Eastern Asia there is still, no doubt, a vast wilderness of languages, but over them all rides the Chinese writing. And very strong — strong enough to be very gravely considered — is the possibility of that writing taking up an orthodox association of sounds, and becoming a world speech. The Japanese written language, the language of Japanese literature, tends to assimilate itself to Chinese, and fresh Chinese words and expressions are continually taking root in Japan. The Japanese are a people quite abnormal and incalculable, with a touch of romance, a conception of honour, a quality of imagination, and a clearness of intelligence that renders possible for them things inconceivable of any other existing nation. I may be the slave of perspective effects, but when I turn my mind from the pettifogging muddle of the English House of Commons, for example, that magnified vestry that is so proud of itself as a club — when I turn from that to this race of brave and smiling people, abruptly destiny begins drawing with a bolder hand. Suppose the Japanese were to make up their minds to accelerate whatever process of synthesis were possible in China! Suppose, after all, I am not the victim of atmospheric refraction, and they are, indeed, as gallant and bold and intelligent as my baseless conception of them would have them be! They would almost certainly find co-operative elements among the educated Chinese.... But this is no doubt the lesser probability. In front and rear of China the English language stands. It has the start of all other languages — the mechanical advantage — the position. And if only we, who think and write and translate and print and put forth, could make it worth the world's having!

VIII. The Larger Synthesis

We have seen that the essential process arising out of the growth of science and mechanism, and more particularly out of the still developing new facilities of locomotion and communication science has afforded, is the deliquescence of the social organizations of the past, and the synthesis of ampler and still ampler and more complicated and still more complicated social unities. The suggestion is powerful, the conclusion is hard to resist, that, through whatever disorders of danger and conflict, whatever centuries of misunderstanding and bloodshed, men may still have to pass, this process nevertheless aims finally, and will attain to the establishment of one world-state at peace within itself. In the economic sense, indeed, a world-state is already established. Even to-day we do all buy and sell in the same markets — albeit the owners of certain ancient rights levy their tolls here and there — and the Hindoo starves, the Italian feels the pinch, before the Germans or the English go short of bread. There is no real autonomy any more in the world, no simple right to an absolute independence such as formerly the Swiss could claim. The nations and boundaries of to-day do no more than mark claims to exemptions, privileges, and corners in the market — claims valid enough to those whose minds and souls are turned towards the past, but absurdities to those who look to the future as the end and justification of our present stresses. The claim to political liberty amounts, as a rule, to no more than the claim of a man to live in a parish without observing sanitary precautions or paying rates because he had an excellent great-grandfather. Against all these old isolations, these obsolescent particularisms, the forces of mechanical and scientific development fight, and fight irresistibly; and upon the general recognition of this conflict, upon the intelligence and courage with which its inflexible conditions are negotiated, depends very largely the amount of bloodshed and avoidable misery the coming years will hold.

The final attainment of this great synthesis, like the social deliquescence and reconstruction dealt with in the earlier of these anticipations, has an air of being a process independent of any

collective or conscious will in man, as being the expression of a greater Will; it is working now, and may work out to its end vastly, and yet at times almost imperceptibly, as some huge secular movement in Nature, the raising of a continent, the crumbling of a mountain-chain, goes on to its appointed culmination. Or one may compare the process to a net that has surrounded, and that is drawn continually closer and closer upon, a great and varied multitude of men. We may cherish animosities, we may declare imperishable distances, we may plot and counter-plot, make war and "fight to a finish;" the net tightens for all that.

Already the need of some synthesis at least ampler than existing national organizations is so apparent in the world, that at least five spacious movements of coalescence exist to-day; there is the movement called Anglo-Saxonism, the allied but finally very different movement of British Imperialism, the Pan-Germanic movement, Pan-Slavism, and the conception of a great union of the "Latin" peoples. Under the outrageous treatment of the white peoples an idea of unifying the "Yellow" peoples is pretty certain to become audibly and visibly operative before many years. These are all deliberate and justifiable suggestions, and they all aim to sacrifice minor differences in order to link like to like in greater matters, and so secure, if not physical predominance in the world, at least an effective defensive strength for their racial, moral, customary, or linguistic differences against the aggressions of other possible coalescences. But these syntheses or other similar synthetic conceptions, if they do not contrive to establish a rational social unity by sanely negotiated unions, will be forced to fight for physical predominance in the world. The whole trend of forces in the world is against the preservation of *local* social systems however greatly and spaciously conceived. Yet it is quite possible that several or all of the cultures that will arise out of the development of these Pan-this-and-that movements may in many of their features survive, as the culture of the Jews has survived, political obliteration, and may disseminate themselves, as the Jewish system has disseminated itself, over the whole world-city. Unity by no means involves homogeneity. The greater the social organism the more complex and varied its parts, the more intricate and varied the interplay of culture and breed and

character within it.

It is doubtful if either the Latin or the Pan-Slavic idea contains the promise of any great political unification. The elements of the Latin synthesis are dispersed in South and Central America and about the Mediterranean basin in a way that offers no prospect of an economic unity between them. The best elements of the French people lie in the western portion of what must become the greatest urban region of the Old World, the Rhine-Netherlandish region; the interests of North Italy draw that region away from the Italy of Rome and the South towards the Swiss and South Germany, and the Spanish and Portuguese speaking halfbreeds of South America have not only their own coalescences to arrange, but they lie already under the political tutelage of the United States. Nowhere except in France and North Italy is there any prospect of such an intellectual and educational evolution as is necessary before a great scheme of unification can begin to take effect. And the difficulties in the way of the pan-Slavic dream are far graver. Its realization is enormously hampered by the division of its languages, and the fact that in the Bohemian language, in Polish and in Russian, there exist distinct literatures, almost equally splendid in achievement, but equally insufficient in quantity and range to establish a claim to replace all other Slavonic dialects. Russia, which should form the central mass of this synthesis, stagnates, relatively to the Western states, under the rule of reactionary intelligences; it does not develop, and does not seem likely to develop, the merest beginnings of that great educated middle class, with which the future so enormously rests. The Russia of to-day is indeed very little more than a vast breeding-ground for an illiterate peasantry, and the forecasts of its future greatness entirely ignore that dwindling significance of mere numbers in warfare which is the clear and necessary consequence of mechanical advance. To a large extent, I believe, the Western Slavs will follow the Prussians and Lithuanians, and be incorporated in the urbanization of Western Europe, and the remoter portions of Russia seem destined to become — are indeed becoming — Abyss, a wretched and disorderly Abyss that will not even be formidable to the armed and disciplined peoples of the new civilization, the last quarter of the earth, perhaps, where a barbaric or absentee nobility

will shadow the squalid and unhappy destinies of a multitude of hopeless and unmeaning lives.

To a certain extent, Russia may play the part of a vaster Ireland, in her failure to keep pace with the educational and economic progress of nations which have come into economic unity with her. She will be an Ireland without emigration, a place for famines. And while Russia delays to develop anything but a fecund orthodoxy and this simple peasant life, the grooves and channels are growing ever deeper along which the currents of trade, of intellectual and moral stimulus, must presently flow towards the West. I see no region where anything like the comparatively dense urban regions that are likely to arise about the Rhineland and over the eastern states of America, for example, can develop in Russia. With railways planned boldly, it would have been possible, it might still be possible, to make about Odessa a parallel to Chicago, but the existing railways run about Odessa as though Asia were unknown; and when at last the commercial awakening of what is now the Turkish Empire comes, the railway lines will probably run, not north or south, but from the urban region of the more scientific central Europeans down to Constantinople. The long-route land communications in the future will become continually more swift and efficient than Baltic navigation, and it is unlikely, therefore, that St. Petersburg has any great possibilities of growth. It was founded by a man whose idea of the course of trade and civilization was the sea wholly and solely, and in the future the sea must necessarily become more and more a last resort. With its spacious prospects, its architectural magnificence, its political quality, its desertion by the new commerce, and its terrible peasant hinterland, it may come about that a striking analogy between St. Petersburg and Dublin will finally appear.

So much for the Pan-Slavic synthesis. It seems improbable that it can prevail against the forces that make for the linguistic and economic annexation of the greater part of European Russia and of the minor Slavonic masses, to the great Western European urban region.

The political centre of gravity of Russia, in its resistance to these economic movements, is palpably shifting eastward even to-day, but

that carries it away from the Central European synthesis only towards the vastly more enormous attracting centre of China. Politically the Russian Government may come to dominate China in the coming decades, but the reality beneath any such formal predominance will be the absorption of Russia beyond the range of the European pull by the synthesis of Eastern Asia. Neither the Russian literature nor the Russian language and writing, nor the Russian civilization as a whole have the qualities to make them irresistible to the energetic and intelligent millions of the far East. The chances seem altogether against the existence of a great Slavonic power in the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century. They seem, at the first glance, to lie just as heavily in favour of an aggressive Pan-Germanic power struggling towards a great and commanding position athwart Central Europe and Western Asia, and turning itself at last upon the defeated Slavonic disorder. There can be no doubt that at present the Germans, with the doubtful exception of the United States, have the most efficient middle class in the world, their rapid economic progress is to a very large extent, indeed, a triumph of intelligence, and their political and probably their military and naval services are still conducted with a capacity and breadth of view that find no parallel in the world. But the very efficiency of the German as a German to-day, and the habits and traditions of victory he has accumulated for nearly forty years, may prove in the end a very doubtful blessing to Europe as a whole, or even to his own grandchildren. Geographical contours, economic forces, the trend of invention and social development, point to a unification of all Western Europe, but they certainly do not point to its Germanization. I have already given reasons for anticipating that the French language may not only hold its own, but prevail against German in Western Europe. And there are certain other obstacles in the way even of the union of indisputable Germans. One element in Germany's present efficiency must become more and more of an encumbrance as the years pass. The Germanic idea is deeply interwoven with the traditional Empire and with the martinet methods of the Prussian monarchy. The intellectual development of the Germans is defined to a very large extent by a court-directed officialdom. In many things that court is still inspired by the noble

traditions of education and discipline that come from the days of German adversity, and the predominance of the Imperial will does, no doubt, give a unity of purpose to German policy and action that adds greatly to its efficacy. But for a capable ruler, even more than for a radiantly stupid monarch, the price a nation must finally pay is heavy. Most energetic and capable people are a little intolerant of unsympathetic capacity, are apt on the under side of their egotism to be jealous, assertive, and aggressive. In the present Empire of Germany there are no other great figures to balance the Imperial personage, and I do not see how other great figures are likely to arise. A great number of fine and capable persons must be failing to develop, failing to tell, under the shadow of this too prepotent monarchy. There are certain limiting restrictions imposed upon Germans through the Imperial activity, that must finally be bad for the intellectual atmosphere which is Germany's ultimate strength. For example, the Emperor professes a violent and grotesque Christianity with a ferocious pro-Teutonic Father and a negligible Son, and the public mind is warped into conformity with the finally impossible cant of this eccentric creed. His Imperial Majesty's disposition to regard criticism as hostility stifles the public thought of Germany. He interferes in university affairs and in literary and artistic matters with a quite remarkable confidence and incalculable consequences. The inertia of a century carries him and his Germany onward from success to success, but for all that one may doubt whether the extraordinary intellectuality that distinguished the German atmosphere in the early years of the century, and in which such men as Blumenthal and Moltke grew to greatness, in which Germany grew to greatness, is not steadily fading in the heat and blaze of the Imperial sunshine. Discipline and education have carried Germany far; they are essential things, but an equally essential need for the coming time is a free play for men of initiative and imagination. Is Germany to her utmost possibility making capable men? That, after all, is the vital question, and not whether her policy is wise or foolish, or her commercial development inflated or sound. Or is Germany doing no more than cash the promises of those earlier days?

After all, I do not see that she is in a greatly stronger position than

was France in the early sixties, and, indeed, in many respects her present predominance is curiously analogous to that of the French Empire in those years. Death at any time may end the career of the present ruler of Germany — there is no certain insurance of one single life. This withdrawal would leave Germany organized entirely with reference to a Court, and there is no trustworthy guarantee that the succeeding Royal Personality may not be something infinitely more vain and aggressive, or something weakly self-indulgent or unpatriotic and morally indifferent. Much has been done in the past of Germany, the infinitely less exacting past, by means of the tutor, the Chamberlain, the Chancellor, the wide-seeing power beyond the throne, who very unselfishly intrigues his monarch in the way that he should go. But that sort of thing is remarkably like writing a letter by means of a pen held in lazy tongs instead of the hand. A very easily imagined series of accidents may place the destinies of Germany in such lazy tongs again. When that occasion comes, will the new class of capable men on which we have convinced ourselves in these anticipations the future depends — will it be ready for its enlarged responsibilities, or will the flower of its possible members be in prison for *lèse majesté*, or naturalized Englishmen or naturalized Americans or troublesome privates under officers of indisputably aristocratic birth, or well-broken labourers, won "back to the land," under the auspices of an Agrarian League?

In another way the intensely monarchical and aristocratic organization of the German Empire will stand in the way of the political synthesis of greater Germany. Indispensable factors in that synthesis will be Holland and Switzerland — little, advantageously situated peoples, saturated with ideas of personal freedom. One can imagine a German Swiss, at any rate, merging himself in a great Pan-Germanic republican state, but to bow the knee to the luridly decorated God of His Imperial Majesty's Fathers will be an altogether more difficult exploit for a self-respecting man....

Moreover, before Germany can unify to the East she must fight the Russian, and to unify to the West she must fight the French and perhaps the English, and she may have to fight a combination of these powers. I think the military strength of France is enormously underrated. Upon this matter M. Bloch should be read. Indisputably

the French were beaten in 1870, indisputably they have fallen behind in their long struggle to maintain themselves equal with the English on the sea, but neither of these things efface the future of the French. The disasters of 1870 were probably of the utmost benefit to the altogether too sanguine French imagination. They cleared the French mind of the delusion that personal Imperialism is the way to do the desirable thing, a delusion many Germans (and, it would seem, a few queer Englishmen and still queerer Americans) entertain. The French have done much to demonstrate the possibility of a stable military republic. They have disposed of crown and court, and held themselves in order for thirty good years; they have dissociated their national life from any form of religious profession; they have contrived a freedom of thought and writing that, in spite of much conceit to the contrary, is quite impossible among the English-speaking peoples. I find no reason to doubt the implication of M. Bloch that on land to-day the French are relatively far stronger than they were in 1870, that the evolution of military expedients has been all in favour of the French character and intelligence, and that even a single-handed war between France and Germany to-day might have a very different issue from that former struggle. In such a conflict it will be Germany, and not France, that will have pawned her strength to the English-speaking peoples on the high seas. And France will not fight alone. She will fight for Switzerland or Luxembourg, or the mouth of the Rhine. She will fight with the gravity of remembered humiliations, with the whole awakened Slav-race at the back of her antagonist, and very probably with the support of the English-speaking peoples.

It must be pointed out how strong seems the tendency of the German Empire to repeat the history of Holland upon a larger scale. While the Dutch poured out all their strength upon the seas, in a conflict with the English that at the utmost could give them only trade, they let the possibilities of a great Low German synthesis pass utterly out of being. (In those days Low Germany stretched to Arras and Douay.) They positively dragged the English into the number of their enemies. And to-day the Germans invade the sea with a threat and intention that will certainly create a countervailing American navy, fundamentally modify the policy of Great Britain, such as it is,

and very possibly go far to effect the synthesis of the English-speaking peoples.

So involved, I do not see that the existing Germanic synthesis is likely to prevail in the close economic unity, the urban region that will arise in Western Europe. I imagine that the German Empire — that is, the organized expression of German aggression to-day — will be either shattered or weakened to the pitch of great compromises by a series of wars by land and sea; it will be forced to develop the autonomy of its rational middle class in the struggles that will render these compromises possible, and it will be finally not Imperial German ideas, but central European ideas possibly more akin to Swiss conceptions, a civilized republicanism finding its clearest expression in the French language, that will be established upon a bilingual basis throughout Western Europe, and increasingly predominant over the whole European mainland and the Mediterranean basin, as the twentieth century closes. The splendid dream of a Federal Europe, which opened the nineteenth century for France, may perhaps, after all, come to something like realization at the opening of the twenty-first. But just how long these things take, just how easily or violently they are brought about, depends, after all, entirely upon the rise in general intelligence in Europe. An ignorant, a merely trained or a merely cultured people, will not understand these coalescences, will fondle old animosities and stage hatreds, and for such a people there must needs be disaster, forcible conformities and war. Europe will have her Irelands as well as her Scotlands, her Irelands of unforgettable wrongs, kicking, squalling, bawling most desolatingly, for nothing that any one can understand. There will be great scope for the shareholding dilettanti, great opportunities for literary quacks, in "national" movements, language leagues, picturesque plotting, and the invention of such "national" costumes as the world has never seen. The cry of the little nations will go up to heaven, asserting the inalienable right of all little nations to sit down firmly in the middle of the high-road, in the midst of the thickening traffic, and with all their dear little toys about them, play and play — just as they used to play before the road had come....

And while the great states of the continent of Europe are hammering down their obstructions of language and national

tradition or raising the educational level above them until a working unity is possible, and while the reconstruction of Eastern Asia — whether that be under Russian, Japanese, English, or native Chinese direction — struggles towards attainment, will there also be a great synthesis of the English-speaking peoples going on? I am inclined to believe that there will be such a synthesis, and that the head and centre of the new unity will be the great urban region that is developing between Chicago and the Atlantic, and which will lie mainly, but not entirely, south of the St. Lawrence. Inevitably, I think, that region must become the intellectual, political, and industrial centre of any permanent unification of the English-speaking states. There will, I believe, develop about that centre a great federation of white English-speaking peoples, a federation having America north of Mexico as its central mass (a federation that may conceivably include Scandinavia) and its federal government will sustain a common fleet, and protect or dominate or actually administer most or all of the non-white states of the present British Empire, and in addition much of the South and Middle Pacific, the East and West Indies, the rest of America, and the larger part of black Africa. Quite apart from the dominated races, such an English-speaking state should have by the century-end a practically homogeneous citizenship of at least a hundred million sound-bodied and educated and capable *men*. It should be the first of the three powers of the world, and it should face the organizing syntheses of Europe and Eastern Asia with an intelligent sympathy. By the year 2000 all its common citizens should certainly be in touch with the thought of Continental Europe through the medium of French; its English language should be already rooting firmly through all the world beyond its confines, and its statesmanship should be preparing openly and surely, and discussing calmly with the public mind of the European, and probably of the Yellow state, the possible coalescences and conventions, the obliteration of custom-houses, the homologization of laws and coinage and measures, and the mitigation of monopolies and special claims, by which the final peace of the world may be assured for ever. Such a synthesis, at any rate, of the peoples now using the English tongue, I regard not only as a possible, but as a probable, thing. The positive obstacles to its

achievement, great though they are, are yet trivial in comparison with the obstructions to that lesser European synthesis we have ventured to forecast. The greater obstacle is negative, it lies in the want of stimulus, in the lax prosperity of most of the constituent states of such a union. But such a stimulus, the renascence of Eastern Asia, or a great German fleet upon the ocean, may presently supply.

Now, all these three great coalescences, this shrivelling up and vanishing of boundary lines, will be the outward and visible accompaniment of that inward and social reorganization which it is the main object of these Anticipations to display. I have sought to show that in peace and war alike a process has been and is at work, a process with all the inevitableness and all the patience of a natural force, whereby the great swollen, shapeless, hypertrophied social mass of to-day must give birth at last to a naturally and informally organized, educated class, an unprecedented sort of people, a New Republic dominating the world. It will be none of our ostensible governments that will effect this great clearing up; it will be the mass of power and intelligence altogether outside the official state systems of to-day that will make this great clearance, a new social Hercules that will strangle the serpents of war and national animosity in his cradle.

Now, the more one descends from the open uplands of wide generalization to the parallel jungle of particulars, the more dangerous does the road of prophesying become, yet nevertheless there may be some possibility of speculating how, in the case of the English-speaking synthesis at least, this effective New Republic may begin visibly to shape itself out and appear. It will appear first, I believe, as a conscious organization of intelligent and quite possibly in some cases wealthy men, as a movement having distinct social and political aims, confessedly ignoring most of the existing apparatus of political control, or using it only as an incidental implement in the attainment of these aims. It will be very loosely organized in its earlier stages, a mere movement of a number of people in a certain direction, who will presently discover with a sort of surprise the common object towards which they are all moving.

Already there are some interesting aspects of public activity that, diverse though their aims may seem, do nevertheless serve to show

the possible line of development of this New Republic in the coming time. For example, as a sort of preliminary sigh before the stirring of a larger movement, there are various Anglo-American movements and leagues to be noted. Associations for entertaining travelling samples of the American leisure class in guaranteed English country houses, for bringing them into momentary physical contact with real titled persons at lunches and dinners, and for having them collectively lectured by respectable English authors and divines, are no doubt trivial things enough; but a snob sometimes shows how the wind blows better than a serious man. The Empire may catch the American as the soldier caught the Tartar. There is something very much more spacious than such things as this, latent in both the British and the American mind, and observable, for instance, in the altered tone of the Presses of both countries since the Venezuela Message and the Spanish American War. Certain projects of a much ampler sort have already been put forward. An interesting proposal of an interchangeable citizenship, so that with a change of domicile an Englishman should have the chance of becoming a citizen of the United States, and an American a British citizen or a voter in an autonomous British colony, for example, has been made. Such schemes will, no doubt, become frequent, and will afford much scope for discussion in both countries during the next decade or so. The American constitution and the British crown and constitution have to be modified or shelved at some stage in this synthesis, and for certain types of intelligence there could be no more attractive problem. Certain curious changes in the colonial point of view will occur as these discussions open out. The United States of America are rapidly taking, or have already taken, the ascendency in the iron and steel and electrical industries out of the hands of the British; they are developing a far ampler and more thorough system of higher scientific education than the British, and the spirit of efficiency percolating from their more efficient businesses is probably higher in their public services. These things render the transfer of the present mercantile and naval ascendency of Great Britain to the United States during the next two or three decades a very probable thing, and when this is accomplished the problem how far colonial loyalty is the fruit of Royal Visits and sporadic knighthoods, and how far it

has relation to the existence of a predominant fleet, will be near its solution. An interesting point about such discussions as this, in which indeed in all probability the nascent consciousness of the New Republic will emerge, will be the solution this larger synthesis will offer to certain miserable difficulties of the present time. Government by the elect of the first families of Great Britain has in the last hundred years made Ireland and South Africa two open sores of irreconcilable wrong. These two English-speaking communities will never rest and never emerge from wretchedness under the vacillating vote-catching incapacity of British Imperialism, and it is impossible that the British power, having embittered them, should ever dare to set them free. But within such an ampler synthesis as the New Republic will seek, these states could emerge to an equal fellowship that would take all the bitterness from their unforgettable past.

Another type of public activity which foreshadows an aspect under which the New Republic will emerge is to be found in the unofficial organizations that have come into existence in Great Britain to watch and criticize various public departments. There is, for example, the Navy League, a body of intelligent and active persons with a distinctly expert qualification which has intervened very effectively in naval control during the last few years. There is also at present a vast amount of disorganized but quite intelligent discontent with the tawdry futilities of army reform that occupy the War Office. It becomes apparent that there is no hope of a fully efficient and well-equipped official army under parliamentary government, and with that realization there will naturally appear a disposition to seek some way to military efficiency, as far as is legally possible, outside War Office control. Already recruiting is falling off, it will probably fall off more and more as the patriotic emotions evoked by the Boer War fade away, and no trivial addition to pay or privilege will restore it. Elementary education has at last raised the intelligence of the British lower classes to a point when the prospect of fighting in distant lands under unsuitably educated British officers of means and gentility with a defective War Office equipment and inferior weapons has lost much of its romantic glamour. But an unofficial body that set itself to the establishment of a school of military science, to the sane organization and criticism of

military experiments in tactics and equipment, and to the raising for experimental purposes of volunteer companies and battalions, would find no lack of men.... What an unofficial syndicate of capable persons of the new sort may do in these matters has been shown in the case of the *Turbinia*, the germ of an absolute revolution in naval construction.

Such attempts at unofficial soldiering would be entirely in the spirit in which I believe the New Republic will emerge, but it is in another line of activity that the growing new consciousness will presently be much more distinctly apparent. It is increasingly evident that to organize and control public education is beyond the power of a democratic government. The meanly equipped and pretentiously conducted private schools of Great Britain, staffed with ignorant and incapable young men, exist, on the other hand, to witness that public education is no matter to be left to merely commercial enterprise working upon parental ignorance and social prejudice. The necessary condition to the effective development of the New Republic is a universally accessible, spacious, and varied educational system working in an atmosphere of efficient criticism and general intellectual activity. Schools alone are of no avail, universities are merely dens of the higher cramming, unless the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses and lecturers are in touch with and under the light of an abundant, contemporary, and fully adult intellectuality. At present, in Great Britain at least, the headmasters entrusted with the education of the bulk of the influential men of the next decades are conspicuously second-rate men, forced and etiolated creatures, scholarship boys manured with annotated editions, and brought up under and protected from all current illumination by the kale-pot of the Thirty-nine Articles. Many of them are less capable teachers and even less intelligent men than many Board School teachers. There is, however, urgent need of an absolutely new type of school — a school that shall be, at least, so skilfully conducted as to supply the necessary training in mathematics, dialectics, languages, and drawing, and the necessary knowledge of science, without either consuming all the leisure of the boy or destroying his individuality, as it is destroyed by the ignorant and pretentious blunderers of to-day; and there is an equally manifest need of a new type of

University, something other than a happy fastness for those precociously brilliant creatures — creatures whose brilliance is too often the hectic indication of a constitutional unsoundness of mind — who can "get in" before the portcullis of the nineteenth birthday falls. These new educational elements may either grow slowly through the steady and painful pressure of remorseless facts, or, as the effort to evoke the New Republic becomes more conscious and deliberate, they may be rapidly brought into being by the conscious endeavours of capable men. Assuredly they will never be developed by the wisdom of the governments of the grey. It may be pointed out that in an individual and disorganized way a growing sense of such needs is already displayed. Such great business managers as Mr. Andrew Carnegie, for example, and many other of the wealthy efficients of the United States of America, are displaying a strong disinclination to found families of functionless shareholders, and a strong disposition to contribute, by means of colleges, libraries, and splendid foundations, to the future of the whole English-speaking world. Of course, Mr. Carnegie is not an educational specialist, and his good intentions will be largely exploited by the energetic mediocrities who control our educational affairs. But it is the intention that concerns us now, and not the precise method or effect. Indisputably these rich Americans are at a fundamentally important work in these endowments, and as indisputably many of their successors — I do not mean the heirs to their private wealth, but the men of the same type who will play their *rôle* in the coming years — will carry on this spacious work with a wider prospect and a clearer common understanding.

The establishment of modern and efficient schools is alone not sufficient for the intellectual needs of the coming time. The school and university are merely the preparation for the life of mental activity in which the citizen of the coming state will live. The three years of university and a lifetime of garrulous stagnation which constitutes the mind's history of many a public schoolmaster, for example, and most of the clergy to-day, will be impossible under the new needs. The old-fashioned university, secure in its omniscience, merely taught; the university of the coming time will, as its larger function, criticize and learn. It will be organized for research — for

the criticism, that is, of thought and nature. And a subtler and a greater task before those who will presently swear allegiance to the New Republic is to aid and stimulate that process of sound adult mental activity which is the cardinal element in human life. After all, in spite of the pretentious impostors who trade upon the claim, literature, contemporary literature, is the breath of civilized life, and those who sincerely think and write the salt of the social body. To mumble over the past, to live on the classics, however splendid, is senility. The New Republic, therefore, will sustain its authors. In the past the author lived within the limits of his patron's susceptibility, and led the world, so far as he did lead it, from that cage. In the present he lives within the limits of a particularly distressful and ill-managed market. He must please and interest the public before he may reason with it, and even to reach the public ear involves other assiduities than writing. To write one's best is surely sufficient work for a man, but unless the author is prepared to add to his literary toil the correspondence and alert activity of a business man, he may find that no measure of acceptance will save him from a mysterious poverty. Publishing has become a trade, differing only from the trade in pork or butter in the tradesman's careless book-keeping and his professed indifference to the quality of his goods. But unless the whole mass of argument in these Anticipations is false, publishing is as much, or even more, of a public concern than education, and as little to be properly discharged by private men working for profit. On the other hand, it is not to be undertaken by a government of the grey, for a confusion cannot undertake to clarify itself; it is an activity in which the New Republic will necessarily engage.

The men of the New Republic will be intelligently critical men, and they will have the courage of their critical conclusions. For the sake of the English tongue, for the sake of the English peoples, they will set themselves to put temptingly within the reach of all readers of the tongue, and all possible readers of the tongue, an abundance of living literature. They will endeavour to shape great publishing trusts and associations that will have the same relation to the publishing office of to-day that a medical association has to a patent-medicine dealer. They will not only publish, but sell; their efficient book-shops, their efficient system of book-distribution will replace the

present haphazard dealings of quite illiterate persons under whose shadows people in the provinces live. If one of these publishing groups decides that a book, new or old, is of value to the public mind, I conceive the copyright will be secured and the book produced all over the world in every variety of form and price that seems necessary to its exhaustive sale. Moreover, these publishing associations will sustain spaciously conceived organs of opinion and criticism, which will begin by being patiently and persistently good, and so develop into power. And the more distinctly the New Republic emerges, the less danger there will be of these associations being allowed to outlive their service in a state of ossified authority. New groups of men and new phases of thought will organize their publishing associations as children learn to talk.

And while the New Republic is thus developing its idea of itself and organizing its mind, it will also be growing out of the confused and intricate businesses and undertakings and public services of the present time, into a recognizable material body. The synthetic process that is going on in the case of many of the larger of the businesses of the world, that formation of Trusts that bulks so large in American discussion, is of the utmost significance in this connection. Conceivably the first impulse to form Trusts came from a mere desire to control competition and economize working expenses, but even in its very first stages this process of coalescence has passed out of the region of commercial operations into that of public affairs. The Trust develops into the organization under men far more capable than any sort of public officials, of entire industries, of entire departments of public life, quite outside the ostensible democratic government system altogether. The whole apparatus of communications, which we have seen to be of such primary importance in the making of the future, promises to pass, in the case of the United States at least, out of the region of scramble into the domain of deliberate control. Even to-day the Trusts are taking over quite consciously the most vital national matters. The American iron and steel industries have been drawn together and developed in a manner that is a necessary preliminary to the capture of the empire of the seas. That end is declaredly within the vista of these operations, within their initial design. These things are not the work of dividend-

hunting imbeciles, but of men who regard wealth as a convention, as a means to spacious material ends. There is an animated little paper published in Los Angeles in the interests of Mr. Wilshire, which bears upon its forefront the maxim, "Let the Nation own the Trusts." Well, under their mantle of property, the Trusts grow continually more elaborate and efficient machines of production and public service, while the formal nation chooses its bosses and buttons and reads its illustrated press. I must confess I do not see the negro and the poor Irishman and all the emigrant sweepings of Europe, which constitute the bulk of the American Abyss, uniting to form that great Socialist party of which Mr. Wilshire dreams, and with a little demonstrating and balloting taking over the foundry and the electrical works, the engine shed and the signal box, from the capable men in charge. But that a confluent system of Trust-owned business organisms, and of Universities and re-organized military and naval services may presently discover an essential unity of purpose, presently begin thinking a literature, and behaving like a State, is a much more possible thing....

In its more developed phases I seem to see the New Republic as (if I may use an expressive bull) a sort of outspoken Secret Society, with which even the prominent men of the ostensible state may be openly affiliated. A vast number of men admit the need but hesitate at the means of revolution, and in this conception of a slowly growing new social order organized with open deliberation within the substance of the old, there are no doubt elements of technical treason, but an enormous gain in the thoroughness, efficiency, and stability of the possible change.

So it is, or at least in some such ways, that I conceive the growing sense of itself which the new class of modern efficients will develop, will become manifest in movements and concerns that are now heterogeneous and distinct, but will presently drift into co-operation and coalescence. This idea of a synthetic reconstruction within the bodies of the English-speaking States may very possibly clothe itself in quite other formulæ than my phrase of the New Republic; but the need is with us, the social elements are developing among us, the appliances are arranging themselves for the hands that will use them, and I cannot but believe that the idea of a spacious common action

will presently come. In a few years I believe many men who are now rather aimless — men who have disconsolately watched the collapse of the old Liberalism — will be clearly telling themselves and one another of their adhesion to this new ideal. They will be working in schools and newspaper offices, in foundries and factories, in colleges and laboratories, in county councils and on school boards — even, it may be, in pulpits — for the time when the coming of the New Republic will be ripe. It may be dawning even in the schools of law, because presently there will be a new and scientific handling of jurisprudence. The highly educated and efficient officers' mess will rise mechanically and drink to the Monarch, and sit down to go on discussing the New Republic's growth. I do not see, indeed, why an intelligent monarch himself, in these days, should not waive any silliness about Divine Right, and all the ill-bred pretensions that sit so heavily on a gentlemanly King, and come into the movement with these others. When the growing conception touches, as in America it has already touched, the legacy-leaving class, there will be fewer new Asylums perhaps, but more university chairs....

So it is I conceive the elements of the New Republic taking shape and running together through the social mass, picking themselves out more and more clearly, from the shareholder, the parasitic speculator and the wretched multitudes of the Abyss. The New Republicans will constitute an informal and open freemasonry. In all sorts of ways they will be influencing and controlling the apparatus of the ostensible governments, they will be pruning irresponsible property, checking speculators and controlling the abyssward drift, but at that, at an indirect control, at any sort of fiction, the New Republic, from the very nature of its cardinal ideas, will not rest. The clearest and simplest statement, the clearest and simplest method, is inevitably associated with the conceptions of that science upon which the New Republic will arise. There will be a time, in peace it may be, or under the stresses of warfare, when the New Republic will find itself ready to arrive, when the theory will have been worked out and the details will be generally accepted, and the new order will be ripe to begin. And then, indeed, it will begin. What life or strength will be left in the old order to prevent this new order beginning?

IX. The Faith, Morals, and Public Policy of the New Republic

If the surmise of a developing New Republic — a Republic that must ultimately become a World State of capable rational men, developing amidst the fading contours and colours of our existing nations and institutions — be indeed no idle dream, but an attainable possibility in the future, and to that end it is that the preceding Anticipations have been mainly written, it becomes a speculation of very great interest to forecast something of the general shape and something even of certain details of that common body of opinion which the New Republic, when at last it discovers and declares itself, will possess. Since we have supposed this New Republic will already be consciously and pretty freely controlling the general affairs of humanity before this century closes, its broad principles and opinions must necessarily shape and determine that still ampler future of which the coming hundred years is but the opening phase. There are many processes, many aspects of things, that are now, as it were, in the domain of natural laws and outside human control, or controlled unintelligently and superstitiously, that in the future, in the days of the coming New Republic, will be definitely taken in hand as part of the general work of humanity, as indeed already, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the control of pestilences has been taken in hand. And in particular, there are certain broad questions much under discussion to which, thus far, I have purposely given a value disproportionately small: —

While the New Republic is gathering itself together and becoming aware of itself, that other great element, which I have called the People of the Abyss, will also have followed out its destiny. For many decades that development will be largely or entirely out of all human control. To the multiplying rejected of the white and yellow civilizations there will have been added a vast proportion of the black and brown races, and collectively those masses will propound the general question, “What will you do with us, we hundreds of millions, who cannot keep pace with you?” If the New Republic

emerges at all it will emerge by grappling with this riddle; it must come into existence by the passes this Sphinx will guard. Moreover, the necessary results of the reaction of irresponsible wealth upon that infirm and dangerous thing the human will, the spreading moral rot of gambling which is associated with irresponsible wealth, will have been working out, and will continue to work out, so long as there is such a thing as irresponsible wealth pervading the social body. That too the New Republic must in its very development overcome. In the preceding chapter it is clearly implicit that I believe that the New Republic, as its consciousness and influence develop together, will meet, check, and control these things; but the broad principles upon which the control will go, the nature of the methods employed, still remain to be deduced. And to make that deduction, it is necessary that the primary conception of life, the fundamental, religious, and moral ideas of these predominant men of the new time should first be considered.

Now, quite inevitably, these men will be religious men. Being themselves, as by the nature of the forces that have selected them they will certainly be, men of will and purpose, they will be disposed to find, and consequently they will find, an effect of purpose in the totality of things. Either one must believe the Universe to be one and systematic, and held together by some omnipresent quality, or one must believe it to be a casual aggregation, an incoherent accumulation with no unity whatsoever outside the unity of the personality regarding it. All science and most modern religious systems presuppose the former, and to believe the former is, to any one not too anxious to quibble, to believe in God. But I believe that these prevailing men of the future, like many of the saner men of to-day, having so formulated their fundamental belief, will presume to no knowledge whatever, will presume to no possibility of knowledge of the real being of God. They will have no positive definition of God at all. They will certainly not indulge in "that something, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness" (not defined) or any defective claptrap of that sort. They will content themselves with denying the self-contradictory absurdities of an obstinately anthropomorphic theology, they will regard the whole of being, within themselves and without, as the sufficient revelation of God to

their souls, and they will set themselves simply to that revelation, seeking its meaning towards themselves faithfully and courageously. Manifestly the essential being of man in this life is his will; he exists consciously only to *do*; his main interest in life is the choice between alternatives; and, since he moves through space and time to effects and consequences, a general purpose in space and time is the limit of his understanding. He can know God only under the semblance of a pervading purpose, of which his own individual freedom of will is a part, but he can understand that the purpose that exists in space and time is no more God than a voice calling out of impenetrable darkness is a man. To men of the kinetic type belief in God so manifest as purpose is irresistible, and, to all lucid minds, the being of God, save as that general atmosphere of imperfectly apprehended purpose in which our individual wills operate, is incomprehensible. To cling to any belief more detailed than this, to define and limit God in order to take hold of Him, to detach one's self and parts of the universe from God in some mysterious way in order to reduce life to a dramatic antagonism, is not faith, but infirmity. Excessive strenuous belief is not faith. By faith we disbelieve, and it is the drowning man, and not the strong swimmer, who clutches at the floating straw. It is in the nature of man, it is in the present purpose of things, that the real world of our experience and will should appear to us not only as a progressive existence in space and time, but as a scheme of good and evil. But choice, the antagonism of good and evil, just as much as the formulation of things in space and time, is merely a limiting condition of human being, and in the thought of God as we conceive of Him in the light of faith, this antagonism vanishes. God is no moralist, God is no partisan; He comprehends and cannot be comprehended, and our business is only with so much of His purpose as centres on our individual wills.

So, or in some such phrases, I believe, these men of the New Republic will formulate their relationship to God. They will live to serve this purpose that presents Him, without presumption and without fear. For the same spacious faith that will render the idea of airing their egotisms in God's presence through prayer, or of any such quite personal intimacy, absurd, will render the idea of an irascible and punitive Deity ridiculous and incredible....

The men of the New Republic will hold and understand quite clearly the doctrine that in the real world of man's experience, there is Free Will. They will understand that constantly, as a very condition of his existence, man is exercising choice between alternatives, and that a conflict between motives that have different moral values constantly arises. That conflict between Predestination and Free Will, which is so puzzling to untrained minds, will not exist for them. They will know that in the real world of sensory experience, will is free, just as new sprung grass is green, wood hard, ice cold, and toothache painful. In the abstract world of reasoning science there is no green, no colour at all, but certain lengths of vibration; no hardness, but a certain reaction of molecules; no cold and no pain, but certain molecular consequences in the nerves that reach the misinterpreting mind. In the abstract world of reasoning science, moreover, there is a rigid and inevitable sequence of cause and effect; every act of man could be foretold to its uttermost detail, if only we knew him and all his circumstances fully; in the abstract world of reasoned science all things exist now potentially down to the last moment of infinite time. But the human will does not exist in the abstract world of reasoned science, in the world of atoms and vibrations, that rigidly predestinate scheme of things in space and time. The human will exists in this world of men and women, in this world where the grass is green and desire beckons and the choice is often so wide and clear between the sense of what is desirable and what is more widely and remotely right. In this world of sense and the daily life, these men will believe with an absolute conviction, that there is free will and a personal moral responsibility in relation to that indistinctly seen purpose which is the sufficient revelation of God to them so far as this sphere of being goes....

The conception they will have of that purpose will necessarily determine their ethical scheme. It follows manifestly that if we do really believe in Almighty God, the more strenuously and successfully we seek in ourselves and His world to understand the order and progress of things, and the more clearly we apprehend His purpose, the more assured and systematic will our ethical basis become.

If, like Huxley, we do not positively believe in God, then we may

still cling to an ethical system which has become an organic part of our lives and habits, and finding it manifestly in conflict with the purpose of things, speak of the non-ethical order of the universe. But to any one whose mind is pervaded by faith in God, a non-ethical universe in conflict with the incomprehensibly ethical soul of the Agnostic, is as incredible as a black horned devil, an active material anti-god with hoofs, tail, pitchfork, and Dunstan-scorched nose complete. To believe completely in God is to believe in the final rightness of all being. The ethical system that condemns the ways of life as wrong, or points to the ways of death as right, that countenances what the scheme of things condemns, and condemns the general purpose in things as it is now revealed to us, must prepare to follow the theological edifice upon which it was originally based. If the universe is non-ethical by our present standards, we must reconsider these standards and reconstruct our ethics. To hesitate to do so, however severe the conflict with old habits and traditions and sentiments may be, is to fall short of faith.

Now, so far as the intellectual life of the world goes, this present time is essentially the opening phase of a period of ethical reconstruction, a reconstruction of which the New Republic will possess the matured result. Throughout the nineteenth century there has been such a shattering and recasting of fundamental ideas, of the preliminaries to ethical propositions, as the world has never seen before. This breaking down and routing out of almost all the cardinal assumptions on which the minds of the Eighteenth Century dwelt securely, is a process akin to, but independent of, the development of mechanism, whose consequences we have traced. It is a part of that process of vigorous and fearless criticism which is the reality of science, and of which the development of mechanism and all that revolution in physical and social conditions we have been tracing, is merely the vast imposing material bye product. At present, indeed, its more obvious aspect on the moral and ethical side is destruction, any one can see the chips flying, but it still demands a certain faith and patience to see the form that ensues. But it is not destruction, any more than a sculptor's work is stone-breaking.

The first chapter in the history of this intellectual development, its definite and formal opening, coincides with the opening of the

nineteenth century and the publication of Malthus's *Essay on Population*. Malthus is one of those cardinal figures in intellectual history who state definitely for all time, things apparent enough after their formulation, but never effectively conceded before. He brought clearly and emphatically into the sphere of discussion a vitally important issue that had always been shirked and tabooed heretofore, the fundamental fact that the main mass of the business of human life centres about reproduction. He stated in clear, hard, decent, and unavoidable argument what presently Schopenhauer was to discover and proclaim, in language, at times, it would seem, quite unfitted for translation into English. And, having made his statement, Malthus left it, in contact with its immediate results.

Probably no more shattering book than the *Essay on Population* has ever been, or ever will be, written. It was aimed at the facile Liberalism of the Deists and Atheists of the eighteenth century; it made as clear as daylight that all forms of social reconstruction, all dreams of earthly golden ages must be either futile or insincere or both, until the problems of human increase were manfully faced. It proffered no suggestions for facing them (in spite of the unpleasant associations of Malthus's name), it aimed simply to wither the Rationalistic Utopias of the time and by anticipation, all the Communisms, Socialisms, and Earthly Paradise movements that have since been so abundantly audible in the world. That was its aim and its immediate effect. Incidentally it must have been a torturing soul-trap for innumerable idealistic but intelligent souls. Its indirect effects have been altogether greater. Aiming at unorthodox dreamers, it has set such forces in motion as have destroyed the very root-ideas of orthodox righteousness in the western world. Impinging on geological discovery, it awakened almost simultaneously in the minds of Darwin and Wallace, that train of thought that found expression and demonstration at last in the theory of natural selection. As that theory has been more and more thoroughly assimilated and understood by the general mind, it has destroyed, quietly but entirely, the belief in human equality which is implicit in all the "Liberalizing" movements of the world. In the place of an essential equality, distorted only by tradition and early training, by the artifices of those devils of the Liberal cosmogony, "kingcraft"

and "priestcraft," an equality as little affected by colour as the equality of a black chess pawn and a white, we discover that all men are individual and unique, and, through long ranges of comparison, superior and inferior upon countless scores. It has become apparent that whole masses of human population are, as a whole, inferior in their claim upon the future, to other masses, that they cannot be given opportunities or trusted with power as the superior peoples are trusted, that their characteristic weaknesses are contagious and detrimental in the civilizing fabric, and that their range of incapacity tempts and demoralizes the strong. To give them equality is to sink to their level, to protect and cherish them is to be swamped in their fecundity. The confident and optimistic Radicalism of the earlier nineteenth century, and the humanitarian philanthropic type of Liberalism, have bogged themselves beyond hope in these realizations. The Socialist has shirked them as he has shirked the older crux of Malthus. Liberalism is a thing of the past, it is no longer a doctrine, but a faction. There must follow some newborn thing.

And as effectually has the mass of criticism that centres about Darwin destroyed the dogma of the Fall upon which the whole intellectual fabric of Christianity rests. For without a Fall there is no redemption, and the whole theory and meaning of the Pauline system is vain. In conjunction with the wide vistas opened by geological and astronomical discovery, the nineteenth century has indeed lost the very habit of thought from which the belief in a Fall arose. It is as if a hand had been put upon the head of the thoughtful man and had turned his eyes about from the past to the future. In matters of intelligence, at least, if not yet in matters of ethics and conduct, this turning round has occurred. In the past thought was legal in its spirit, it deduced the present from pre-existing prescription, it derived everything from the offences and promises of the dead; the idea of a universe of expiation was the most natural theory amidst such processes. The purpose the older theologians saw in the world was no more than the revenge — accentuated by the special treatment of a favoured minority — of a mysteriously incompetent Deity exasperated by an unsatisfactory creation. But modern thought is altogether too constructive and creative to tolerate such a conception,

and in the vaster past that has opened to us, it can find neither offence nor promise, only a spacious scheme of events, opening out — perpetually opening out — with a quality of final purpose as irresistible to most men's minds as it is incomprehensible, opening out with all that inexplicable quality of design that, for example, some great piece of music, some symphony of Beethoven's, conveys. We see future beyond future and past behind past. It has been like the coming of dawn, at first a colourless dawn, clear and spacious, before which the mists whirl and fade, and there opens to our eyes not the narrow passage, the definite end we had imagined, but the rocky, ill-defined path we follow high amidst this limitless prospect of space and time. At first the dawn is cold — there is, at times, a quality of terror almost in the cold clearness of the morning twilight; but insensibly its coldness passes, the sky is touched with fire, and presently, up out of the dayspring in the east, the sunlight will be pouring.... And these men of the New Republic will be going about in the daylight of things assured.

And men's concern under this ampler view will no longer be to work out a system of penalties for the sins of dead men, but to understand and participate in this great development that now dawns on the human understanding. The insoluble problems of pain and death, gaunt, incomprehensible facts as they were, fall into place in the gigantic order that evolution unfolds. All things are integral in the mighty scheme, the slain builds up the slayer, the wolf grooms the horse into swiftness, and the tiger calls for wisdom and courage out of man. All things are integral, but it has been left for men to be consciously integral, to take, at last, a share in the process, to have wills that have caught a harmony with the universal will, as sand grains flash into splendour under the blaze of the sun. There will be many who will never be called to this religious conviction, who will lead their little lives like fools, playing foolishly with religion and all the great issues of life, or like the beasts that perish, having sense alone; but those who, by character and intelligence, are predestinate to participate in the reality of life, will fearlessly shape all their ethical determinations and public policy anew, from a fearless study of themselves and the apparent purpose that opens out before them.

Very much of the cry for faith that sounds in contemporary life so

loudly, and often with so distressing a note of sincerity, comes from the unsatisfied egotisms of unemployed, and, therefore, unhappy and craving people; but much is also due to the distress in the minds of active and serious men, due to the conflict of inductive knowledge, with conceptions of right and wrong deduced from unsound, but uncriticised, first principles. The old ethical principles, the principle of equivalents or justice, the principle of self-sacrifice, the various vague and arbitrary ideas of purity, chastity, and sexual "sin," came like rays out of the theological and philosophical lanterns men carried in the darkness. The ray of the lantern indicated and directed, and one followed it as one follows a path. But now there has come a new view of man's place in the scheme of time and space, a new illumination, dawn; the lantern rays fade in the growing brightness, and the lanterns that shone so brightly are becoming smoky and dim. To many men this is no more than a waning of the lanterns, and they call for new ones, or a trimming of the old. They blame the day for putting out these flares. And some go apart, out of the glare of life, into corners of obscurity, where the radiation of the lantern may still be faintly traced. But, indeed, with the new light there has come the time for new methods; the time of lanterns, the time of deductions from arbitrary first principles is over. The act of faith is no longer to follow your lantern, but to put it down. We can see about us, and by the landscape we must go.

How will the landscape shape itself to the dominant men of the new time and in relation to themselves? What is the will and purpose that these men of will and purpose will find above and comprehending their own? Into this our inquiry resolves itself. They will hold with Schopenhauer, I believe, and with those who build themselves on Malthus and Darwin, that the scheme of being, in which we live is a struggle of existences to expand and develop themselves to their full completeness, and to propagate and increase themselves. But, being men of action, they will feel nothing of the glamour of misery that irresponsible and sexually vitiated shareholder, Schopenhauer, threw over this recognition. The final object of this struggle among existences they will not understand; they will have abandoned the search for ultimates; they will state this scheme of a struggle as a proximate object, sufficiently remote and

spacious to enclose and explain all their possible activities. They will seek God's purpose in the sphere of their activities, and desire no more, as the soldier in battle desires no more, than the immediate conflict before him. They will admit failure as an individual aspect of things, as a soldier seeking victory admits the possibility of death; but they will refuse to admit as a part of their faith in God that any existence, even if it is an existence that is presently entirely erased, can be needless or vain. It will have reacted on the existences that survive; it will be justified for ever in the modification it has produced in them. They will find in themselves — it must be remembered I am speaking of a class that has naturally segregated, and not of men as a whole — a desire, a passion almost, to create and organize, to put in order, to get the maximum result from certain possibilities. They will all be artists in reality, with a passion for simplicity and directness and an impatience of confusion and inefficiency. The determining frame of their ethics, the more spacious scheme to which they will shape the schemes of their individual wills, will be the elaboration of that future world state to which all things are pointing. They will not conceive of it as a millennial paradise, a blissful inconsequent stagnation, but as a world state of active ampler human beings, full of knowledge and energy, free from much of the baseness and limitations, the needless pains and dishonours of the world disorder of to-day, but still struggling, struggling against ampler but still too narrow restrictions and for still more spacious objects than our vistas have revealed. For that as a general end, for the special work that contributes to it as an individual end, they will make the plans and the limiting rules of their lives.

It is manifest that a reconstructed ethical system, reconstructed in the light of modern science and to meet the needs of such temperaments and characters as the evolution of mechanism will draw together and develop, will give very different values from those given by the existing systems (if they can be called systems) to almost all the great matters of conduct. Under scientific analysis the essential facts of life are very clearly shown to be two — birth and death. All life is the effort of the thing born, driven by fears, guided by instincts and desires, to evade death, to evade even the partial

death of crippling or cramping or restriction, and to attain to effective procreation, to the victory of another birth. Procreation is the triumph of the living being over death; and in the case of man, who adds mind to his body, it is not only in his child but in the dissemination of his thought, the expression of his mind in things done and made, that his triumph is to be found. And the ethical system of these men of the New Republic, the ethical system which will dominate the world state, will be shaped primarily to favour the procreation of what is fine and efficient and beautiful in humanity — beautiful and strong bodies, clear and powerful minds, and a growing body of knowledge — and to check the procreation of base and servile types, of fear-driven and cowardly souls, of all that is mean and ugly and bestial in the souls, bodies, or habits of men. To do the latter is to do the former; the two things are inseparable. And the method that nature has followed hitherto in the shaping of the world, whereby weakness was prevented from propagating weakness, and cowardice and feebleness were saved from the accomplishment of their desires, the method that has only one alternative, the method that must in some cases still be called in to the help of man, is death. In the new vision death is no inexplicable horror, no pointless terminal terror to the miseries of life, it is the end of all the pain of life, the end of the bitterness of failure, the merciful obliteration of weak and silly and pointless things....

The new ethics will hold life to be a privilege and a responsibility, not a sort of night refuge for base spirits out of the void; and the alternative in right conduct between living fully, beautifully, and efficiently will be to die. For a multitude of contemptible and silly creatures, fear-driven and helpless and useless, unhappy or hatefully happy in the midst of squalid dishonour, feeble, ugly, inefficient, born of unrestrained lusts, and increasing and multiplying through sheer incontinence and stupidity, the men of the New Republic will have little pity and less benevolence. To make life convenient for the breeding of such people will seem to them not the most virtuous and amiable thing in the world, as it is held to be now, but an exceedingly abominable proceeding. Procreation is an avoidable thing for sane persons of even the most furious passions, and the men of the New Republic will hold that the procreation of children who, by the

circumstances of their parentage, *must* be diseased bodily or mentally — I do not think it will be difficult for the medical science of the coming time to define such circumstances — is absolutely the most loathsome of all conceivable sins. They will hold, I anticipate, that a certain portion of the population — the small minority, for example, afflicted with indisputably transmissible diseases, with transmissible mental disorders, with such hideous incurable habits of mind as the craving for intoxication — exists only on sufferance, out of pity and patience, and on the understanding that they do not propagate; and I do not foresee any reason to suppose that they will hesitate to kill when that sufferance is abused. And I imagine also the plea and proof that a grave criminal is also insane will be regarded by them not as a reason for mercy, but as an added reason for death. I do not see how they can think otherwise on the principles they will profess.

The men of the New Republic will not be squeamish, either, in facing or inflicting death, because they will have a fuller sense of the possibilities of life than we possess. They will have an ideal that will make killing worth the while; like Abraham, they will have the faith to kill, and they will have no superstitions about death. They will naturally regard the modest suicide of incurably melancholy, or diseased or helpless persons as a high and courageous act of duty rather than a crime. And since they will regard, as indeed all men raised above a brutish level do regard, a very long term of imprisonment as infinitely worse than death, as being, indeed, death with a living misery added to its natural terror, they will, I conceive, where the whole tenor of a man's actions, and not simply some incidental or impulsive action, seems to prove him unfitted for free life in the world, consider him carefully, and condemn him, and remove him from being. All such killing will be done with an opiate, for death is too grave a thing to be made painful or dreadful, and used as a deterrent from crime. If deterrent punishments are used at all in the code of the future, the deterrent will neither be death, nor mutilation of the body, nor mutilation of the life by imprisonment, nor any horrible things like that, but good scientifically caused pain, that will leave nothing but a memory. Yet even the memory of overwhelming pain is a sort of mutilation of the soul. The idea that only those who are fit to live freely in an orderly world-state should

be permitted to live, is entirely against the use of deterrent punishments at all. Against outrageous conduct to children or women, perhaps, or for very cowardly or brutal assaults of any sort, the men of the future may consider pain a salutary remedy, at least during the ages of transition while the brute is still at large. But since most acts of this sort done under conditions that neither torture nor exasperate, point to an essential vileness in the perpetrator, I am inclined to think that even in these cases the men of the coming time will be far less disposed to torture than to kill. They will have another aspect to consider. The conscious infliction of pain *for the sake of the pain* is against the better nature of man, and it is unsafe and demoralizing for any one to undertake this duty. To kill under the seemly conditions science will afford is a far less offensive thing. The rulers of the future will grudge making good people into jailers, warders, punishment-dealers, nurses, and attendants on the bad. People who cannot live happily and freely in the world without spoiling the lives of others are better out of it. That is a current sentiment even to-day, but the men of the New Republic will have the courage of their opinions.

And the type of men that I conceive emerging in the coming years will deal simply and logically not only with the business of death, but with birth. At present the sexual morality of the civilized world is the most illogical and incoherent system of wild permissions and insane prohibitions, foolish tolerance and ruthless cruelty that it is possible to imagine. Our current civilization is a sexual lunatic. And it has lost its reason in this respect under the stresses of the new birth of things, largely through the difficulties that have stood in the way, and do still, in a diminishing degree, stand in the way of any sane discussion of the matter as a whole. To approach it is to approach excitement. So few people seem to be leading happy and healthy sexual lives that to mention the very word “sexual” is to set them stirring, to brighten the eye, lower the voice, and blanch or flush the cheek with a flavour of guilt. We are all, as it were, keeping our secrets and hiding our shames. One of the most curious revelations of this fact occurred only a few years ago, when the artless outpourings in fiction of certain young women who had failed to find light on problems that pressed upon them for solution (and which it was

certainly their business as possible wives and mothers to solve) roused all sorts of respectable people to a quite insane vehemence of condemnation. Now, there are excellent reasons and a permanent necessity for the preservation of decency, and for a far more stringent suppression of matter that is merely intended to excite than at present obtains, and the chief of these reasons lies in the need of preserving the young from a premature awakening, and indeed, in the interests of civilization, in positively delaying the period of awakening, retarding maturity and lengthening the period of growth and preparation as much as possible. But purity and innocence may be prolonged too late; innocence is really no more becoming to adults than a rattle or a rubber consoler, and the bashfulness that hampers this discussion, that permits it only in a furtive silly sort of way, has its ugly consequences in shames and cruelties, in miserable households and pitiful crises, in the production of countless, needless, and unhappy lives. Indeed, too often we carry our decency so far as to make it suggestive and stimulating in a non-natural way; we invest the plain business of reproduction with a mystic religious quality far more unwholesome than a savage nakedness could possibly be.

The essential aspect of all this wild and windy business of the sexual relations is, after all, births. Upon this plain fact the people of the emergent New Republic will unhesitatingly go. The pre-eminent value of sexual questions in morality lies in the fact that the lives which will constitute the future are involved. If they are not involved, if we can dissociate this relationship from this issue, then sexual questions become of no more importance than the morality of one's deportment at chess, or the general morality of outdoor games. Indeed, then the question of sexual relationships would be entirely on all fours with, and probably very analogous to, the question of golf. In each case it would be for the medical man and the psychologist to decide how far the thing was wholesome and permissible, and how far it was an aggressive bad habit and an absorbing waste of time and energy. An able-bodied man continually addicted to love-making that had no result in offspring would be just as silly and morally objectionable as an able-bodied man who devoted his chief energies to hitting little balls over golf-links. But no more. Both would

probably be wasting the lives of other human beings — the golfer must employ his caddie. It is entirely the matter of births, and a further consideration to be presently discussed, that makes this analogy untrue. It does not, however, make it so untrue as to do away with the probability that in many cases the emergent men of the new time will consider sterile gratification a moral and legitimate thing. St. Paul tells us that it is better to marry than to burn, but to beget children on that account will appear, I imagine, to these coming men as an absolutely loathsome proceeding. They will stifle no spread of knowledge that will diminish the swarming misery of childhood in the slums, they will regard the disinclination of the witless "Society" woman to become a mother as a most amiable trait in her folly. In our bashfulness about these things we talk an abominable lot of nonsense; all this uproar one hears about the Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit and the future of the lower races takes on an entirely different complexion directly we face known, if indelicate, facts. Most of the human types, that by civilized standards are undesirable, are quite willing to die out through such suppressions if the world will only encourage them a little. They multiply in sheer ignorance, but they do not desire multiplication even now, and they can easily be made to dread it. Sensuality aims not at life, but at itself. I believe that the men of the New Republic will deliberately shape their public policy along these lines. They will rout out and illuminate urban rookeries and all places where the base can drift to multiply; they will contrive a land legislation that will keep the black, or yellow, or mean-white squatter on the move; they will see to it that no parent can make a profit out of a child, so that childbearing shall cease to be a hopeful speculation for the unemployed poor; and they will make the maintenance of a child the first charge upon the parents who have brought it into the world. Only in this way can progress escape being clogged by the products of the security it creates. The development of science has lifted famine and pestilence from the shoulders of man, and it will yet lift war — for some other end than to give him a spell of promiscuous and finally cruel and horrible reproduction.

No doubt the sentimentalist and all whose moral sense has been vigorously trained in the old school will find this rather a dreadful suggestion; it amounts to saying that for the Abyss to become a

“hotbed” of sterile immorality will fall in with the deliberate policy of the ruling class in the days to come. At any rate, it will be a terminating evil. At present the Abyss is a hotbed breeding undesirable and too often fearfully miserable children. *That* is something more than a sentimental horror. Under the really very horrible morality of to-day, the spectacle of a mean-spirited, under-sized, diseased little man, quite incapable of earning a decent living even for himself, married to some underfed, ignorant, ill-shaped, plain and diseased little woman, and guilty of the lives of ten or twelve ugly ailing children, is regarded as an extremely edifying spectacle, and the two parents consider their reproductive excesses as giving them a distinct claim upon less fecund and more prosperous people. Benevolent persons throw themselves with peculiar ardour into a case of this sort, and quite passionate efforts are made to strengthen the mother against further eventualities and protect the children until they attain to nubile years. Until the attention of the benevolent persons is presently distracted by a new case.... Yet so powerful is the suggestion of current opinions that few people seem to see nowadays just what a horrible and criminal thing this sort of family, seen from the point of view of social physiology, appears.

And directly such principles as these come into effective operation, and I believe that the next hundred years will see this new phase of the human history beginning, there will recommence a process of physical and mental improvement in mankind, a raising and elaboration of the average man, that has virtually been in suspense during the greater portion of the historical period. It is possible that in the last hundred years, in the more civilized states of the world, the average of humanity has positively fallen. All our philanthropists, all our religious teachers, seem to be in a sort of informal conspiracy to preserve an atmosphere of mystical ignorance about these matters, which, in view of the irresistible nature of the sexual impulse, results in a swelling tide of miserable little lives. Consider what it will mean to have perhaps half the population of the world, in every generation, restrained from or tempted to evade reproduction! This thing, this euthanasia of the weak and sensual, is possible. On the principles that will probably animate the predominant classes of the new time, it will be permissible, and I

have little or no doubt that in the future it will be planned and achieved.

If birth were all the making of a civilized man, the men of the future, on the general principles we have imputed to them, would under no circumstances find the birth of a child, healthy in body and brain, more than the most venial of offences. But birth gives only the beginning, the raw material, of a civilized man. The perfect civilized man is not only a sound strong body but a very elaborate fabric of mind. He is a fabric of moral suggestions that become mental habits, a magazine of more or less systematized ideas, a scheme of knowledge and training and an æsthetic culture. He is the child not only of parents but of a home and of an education. He has to be carefully guarded from physical and moral contagions. A reasonable probability of ensuring home and education and protection without any parasitic dependence on people outside the kin of the child, will be a necessary condition to a moral birth under such general principles as we have supposed. Now, this sweeps out of reason any such promiscuity of healthy people as the late Mr. Grant Allen is supposed to have advocated — but, so far as I can understand him, did not. But whether it works out to the taking over of the permanent monogamic marriage of the old morality, as a going concern, is another matter. Upon this matter I must confess my views of the trend of things in the future do not seem to be finally shaped. The question involves very obscure physiological and psychological considerations. A man who aims to become a novelist naturally pries into these matters whenever he can, but the vital facts are very often hard to come by. It is probable that a great number of people could be paired off in couples who would make permanently happy and successful monogamic homes for their sound and healthy children. At any rate, if a certain freedom of regrouping were possible within a time limit, this might be so. But I am convinced that a large proportion of married couples in the world to-day are not completely and happily matched, that there is much mutual limitation, mutual annulment and mutual exasperation. Home with an atmosphere of contention is worse than none for the child, and it is the interest of the child, and that alone, that will be the test of all these things. I do not think that the arrangement in couples is universally applicable, or

that celibacy (tempered by sterile vice) should be its only alternative. Nor can I see why the union of two childless people should have an indissoluble permanence or prohibit an ampler grouping. The question is greatly complicated by the economic disadvantage of women, which makes wifehood the chief feminine profession, while only for an incidental sort of man is marriage a source of income, and further by the fact that most women have a period of maximum attractiveness after which it would be grossly unfair to cast them aside. From the point of view we are discussing, the efficient mother who can make the best of her children, is the most important sort of person in the state. She is a primary necessity to the coming civilization. Can the wife in any sort of polygamic arrangement, or a woman of no assured status, attain to the maternal possibilities of the ideal monogamic wife? One is disposed to answer, No. But then, on the other hand, does the ordinary monogamic wife do that? We are dealing with the finer people of the future, strongly individualized people, who will be much freer from stereotyped moral suggestions and much less inclined to be dealt with wholesale than the people of to-day.

I have already shown cause in these Anticipations to expect a period of disorder and hypocrisy in matters of sexual morality. I am inclined to think that, when the New Republic emerges on the other side of this disorder, there will be a great number of marriage contracts possible between men and women, and that the strong arm of the State will insist only upon one thing — the security and welfare of the child. The inevitable removal of births from the sphere of an uncontrollable Providence to the category of deliberate acts, will enormously enhance the responsibility of the parent — and of the State that has failed to adequately discourage the philoprogenitiveness of the parent — towards the child. Having permitted the child to come into existence, public policy and the older standard of justice alike demand, under these new conditions, that it must be fed, cherished, and educated, not merely up to a respectable minimum, but to the full height of its possibilities. The State will, therefore, be the reserve guardian of all children. If they are being undernourished, if their education is being neglected, the State will step in, take over the responsibility of their management,

and enforce their charge upon the parents. The first liability of a parent will be to his child, and for his child; even the dues of that darling of our current law, the landlord, will stand second to that. This conception of the responsibility of the parents and the State to the child and the future runs quite counter to the general ideas of to-day. These general ideas distort grim realities. Under the most pious and amiable professions, all the Christian states of to-day are, as a matter of fact, engaged in slave-breeding. The chief result, though of course it is not the intention, of the activities of priest and moralist to-day in these matters, is to lure a vast multitude of little souls into this world, for whom there is neither sufficient food, nor love, nor schools, nor any prospect at all in life but the insufficient bread of servitude. It is a result that endears religion and purity to the sweating employer, and leads unimaginative bishops, who have never missed a meal in their lives, and who know nothing of the indescribable bitterness of a handicapped entry into this world, to draw a complacent contrast with irreligious France. It is a result that must necessarily be recognized in its reality, and faced by these men who will presently emerge to rule the world; men who will have neither the plea of ignorance, nor moral stupidity, nor dogmatic revelation to excuse such elaborate cruelty.

And having set themselves in these ways to raise the quality of human birth, the New Republicans will see to it that the children who do at last effectually get born come into a world of spacious opportunity. The half-educated, unskilled pretenders, professing impossible creeds and propounding ridiculous curricula, to whom the unhappy parents of to-day must needs entrust the intelligences of their children; these heavy-handed barber-surgeons of the mind, these schoolmasters, with their ragtag and bobtail of sweated and unqualified assistants, will be succeeded by capable, self-respecting men and women, constituting the most important profession of the world. The windy pretences of "forming character," supplying moral training, and so forth, under which the educationalist of to-day conceals the fact that he is incapable of his proper task of training, developing and equipping the mind, will no longer be made by the teacher. Nor will the teacher be permitted to subordinate his duties to the entirely irrelevant business of his pupils' sports. The teacher will

teach, and confine his moral training, beyond enforcing truth and discipline, to the exhibition of a capable person doing his duty as well as it can be done. He will know that his utmost province is only a part of the educational process, that equally important educational influences are the home and the world of thought about the pupil and himself. The whole world will be thinking and learning; the old idea of "completing" one's education will have vanished with the fancy of a static universe; every school will be a preparatory school, every college. The school and college will probably give only the keys and apparatus of thought, a necessary language or so, thoroughly done, a sound mathematical training, drawing, a wide and reasoned view of philosophy, some good exercises in dialectics, a training in the use of those stores of fact that science has made. So equipped, the young man and young woman will go on to the technical school of their chosen profession, and to the criticism of contemporary practice for their special efficiency, and to the literature of contemporary thought for their general development....

And while the emergent New Republic is deciding to provide for the swarming inferiority of the Abyss, and developing the morality and educational system of the future, in this fashion, it will be attacking that mass of irresponsible property that is so unavoidable and so threatening under present conditions. The attack will, of course, be made along lines that the developing science of economics will trace in the days immediately before us. A scheme of death duties and of heavy graduated taxes upon irresponsible incomes, with, perhaps, in addition, a system of terminable liability for borrowers, will probably suffice to control the growth of this creditor elephantiasis. The detailed contrivances are for the specialist to make. If there is such a thing as bitterness in the public acts of the New Republicans, it will probably be found in the measures that will be directed against those who are parasitic, or who attempt to be parasitic, upon the social body, either by means of gambling, by manipulating the medium of exchange, or by such interventions upon legitimate transactions as, for example, the legal trade union in Great Britain contrives in the case of house property and land. Simply because he fails more often than he succeeds, there is still a disposition among sentimental people to regard the gambler or the

speculator as rather a dashing, adventurous sort of person, and to contrast his picturesque gallantry with the sober certainties of honest men. The men of the New Republic will be obtuse to the glamour of such romance; they will regard the gambler simply as a mean creature who hangs about the social body in the hope of getting something for nothing, who runs risks to filch the possessions of other men, exactly as a thief does. They will put the two on a footing, and the generous gambler, like the kindly drunkard, in the face of their effectual provision for his little weakness, will cease to complain that his worst enemy is himself. And, in dealing with speculation, the New Republic will have the power of an assured faith and purpose, and the resources of an economic science that is as yet only in its infancy. In such matters the New Republic will entertain no superstition of *laissez faire*. Money and credit are as much human contrivances as bicycles, and as liable to expansion and modification as any other sort of prevalent but imperfect machine.

And how will the New Republic treat the inferior races? How will it deal with the black? how will it deal with the yellow man? how will it tackle that alleged termite in the civilized woodwork, the Jew? Certainly not as races at all. It will aim to establish, and it will at last, though probably only after a second century has passed, establish a world-state with a common language and a common rule. All over the world its roads, its standards, its laws, and its apparatus of control will run. It will, I have said, make the multiplication of those who fall behind a certain standard of social efficiency unpleasant and difficult, and it will have cast aside any coddling laws to save adult men from themselves. It will tolerate no dark corners where the people of the Abyss may fester, no vast diffused slums of peasant proprietors, no stagnant plague-preserves. Whatever men may come into its efficient citizenship it will let come — white, black, red, or brown; the efficiency will be the test. And the Jew also it will treat as any other man. It is said that the Jew is incurably a parasite on the apparatus of credit. If there are parasites on the apparatus of credit, that is a reason for the legislative cleaning of the apparatus of credit, but it is no reason for the special treatment of the Jew. If the Jew has a certain incurable tendency to social parasitism, and we make social parasitism impossible, we shall abolish the Jew, and if he has not,

there is no need to abolish the Jew. We are much more likely to find we have abolished the Caucasian solicitor. I really do not understand the exceptional attitude people take up against the Jews. There is something very ugly about many Jewish faces, but there are Gentile faces just as coarse and gross. The Jew asserts himself in relation to his nationality with a singular tactlessness, but it is hardly for the English to blame that. Many Jews are intensely vulgar in dress and bearing, materialistic in thought, and cunning and base in method, but no more so than many Gentiles. The Jew is mentally and physically precocious, and he ages and dies sooner than the average European, but in that and in a certain disingenuousness he is simply on all fours with the short, dark Welsh. He foregathers with those of his own nation, and favours them against the stranger, but so do the Scotch. I see nothing in his curious, dispersed nationality to dread or dislike. He is a remnant and legacy of mediævalism, a sentimentalist, perhaps, but no furtive plotter against the present progress of things. He was the mediæval Liberal; his persistent existence gave the lie to Catholic pretensions all through the days of their ascendency, and to-day he gives the lie to all our yapping "nationalisms," and sketches in his dispersed sympathies the coming of the world-state. He has never been known to burke a school. Much of the Jew's usury is no more than social scavenging. The Jew will probably lose much of his particularism, intermarry with Gentiles, and cease to be a physically distinct element in human affairs in a century or so. But much of his moral tradition will, I hope, never die.... And for the rest, those swarms of black, and brown, and dirty-white, and yellow people, who do not come into the new needs of efficiency?

Well, the world is a world, not a charitable institution, and I take it they will have to go. The whole tenor and meaning of the world, as I see it, is that they have to go. So far as they fail to develop sane, vigorous, and distinctive personalities for the great world of the future, it is their portion to die out and disappear.

The world has a purpose greater than happiness; our lives are to serve God's purpose, and that purpose aims not at man as an end, but works through him to greater issues.... This, I believe, will be the distinctive quality of the New Republican's belief. And, for that reason, I have not even speculated whether he will hold any belief in

human immortality or no. He will certainly not believe there is any *post mortem* state of rewards and punishments because of his faith in the sanity of God, and I do not see how he will trace any reaction between this world and whatever world there may be of disembodied lives. Active and capable men of all forms of religious profession to-day tend in practice to disregard the question of immortality altogether. So, to a greater degree, will the kinetic men of the coming time. We may find that issue interesting enough when we turn over the leaf, but at present we have not turned over the leaf. On this side, in this life, the relevancy of things points not in the slightest towards the immortality of our egotisms, but convergently and overpoweringly to the future of our race, to that spacious future, of which these weak, ambitious Anticipations are, as it were, the dim reflection seen in a shallow and troubled pool.

For that future these men will live and die.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE FUTURE

It will lead into my subject most conveniently to contrast and separate two divergent types of mind, types which are to be distinguished chiefly by their attitude toward time, and more particularly by the relative importance they attach and the relative amount of thought they give to the future.

The first of these two types of mind, and it is, I think, the predominant type, the type of the majority of living people, is that which seems scarcely to think of the future at all, which regards it as a sort of blank non-existence upon which the advancing present will presently write events. The second type, which is, I think, a more modern and much less abundant type of mind, thinks constantly and by preference of things to come, and of present things mainly in relation to the results that must arise from them. The former type of mind, when one gets it in its purity, is retrospective in habit, and it interprets the things of the present, and gives value to this and denies it to that, entirely with relation to the past. The latter type of mind is constructive in habit, it interprets the things of the present and gives value to this or that, entirely in relation to things designed or foreseen.

While from that former point of view our life is simply to reap the consequences of the past, from this our life is to prepare the future. The former type one might speak of as the legal or submissive type of mind, because the business, the practice, and the training of a lawyer dispose him toward it; he of all men must constantly refer to the law made, the right established, the precedent set, and consistently ignore or condemn the thing that is only seeking to establish itself. The latter type of mind I might for contrast call the legislative, creative, organizing, or masterful type, because it is perpetually attacking and altering the established order of things, perpetually falling away from respect for what the past has given us. It sees the world as one great workshop, and the present is no more than material for the future, for the thing that is yet destined to be. It

is in the active mood of thought, while the former is in the passive; it is the mind of youth, it is the mind more manifest among the western nations, while the former is the mind of age, the mind of the oriental.

Things have been, says the legal mind, and so we are here. The creative mind says we are here because things have yet to be.

Now I do not wish to suggest that the great mass of people belong to either of these two types. Indeed, I speak of them as two distinct and distinguishable types mainly for convenience and in order to accentuate their distinction. There are probably very few people who brood constantly upon the past without any thought of the future at all, and there are probably scarcely any who live and think consistently in relation to the future. The great mass of people occupy an intermediate position between these extremes, they pass daily and hourly from the passive mood to the active, they see this thing in relation to its associations and that thing in relation to its consequences, and they do not even suspect that they are using two distinct methods in their minds.

But for all that they are distinct methods, the method of reference to the past and the method of reference to the future, and their mingling in many of our minds no more abolishes their difference than the existence of piebald horses proves that white is black.

I believe that it is not sufficiently recognized just how different in their consequences these two methods are, and just where their difference and where the failure to appreciate their difference takes one. This present time is a period of quite extraordinary uncertainty and indecision upon endless questions — moral questions, æsthetic questions, religious and political questions — upon which we should all of us be happier to feel assured and settled; and a very large amount of this floating uncertainty about these important matters is due to the fact that with most of us these two insufficiently distinguished ways of looking at things are not only present together, but in actual conflict in our minds, in unsuspected conflict; we pass from one to the other heedlessly without any clear recognition of the fundamental difference in conclusions that exists between the two, and we do this with disastrous results to our confidence and to our consistency in dealing with all sorts of things.

But before pointing out how divergent these two types or habits of

mind really are, it is necessary to meet a possible objection to what has been said. I may put that objection in this form: Is not this distinction between a type of mind that thinks of the past and a type of mind that thinks of the future a sort of hair-splitting, almost like distinguishing between people who have left hands and people who have right? Everybody believes that the present is entirely determined by the past, you say; but then everybody believes also that the present determines the future. Are we simply separating and contrasting two sides of everybody's opinion? To which one replies that we are not discussing what we know and believe about the relations of past, present, and future, or of the relation of cause and effect to each other in time. We all know the present depends for its causes on the past, and the future depends for its causes upon the present. But this discussion concerns the way in which we approach things upon this common ground of knowledge and belief. We may all know there is an east and a west, but if some of us always approach and look at things from the west, if some of us always approach and look at things from the east, and if others again wander about with a pretty disregard of direction, looking at things as chance determines, some of us will get to a westward conclusion of this journey, and some of us will get to an eastward conclusion, and some of us will get to no definite conclusion at all about all sorts of important matters. And yet those who are travelling east, and those who are travelling west, and those who are wandering haphazard, may be all upon the same ground of belief and statement and amid the same assembly of proven facts. Precisely the same thing, divergence of result, will happen if you always approach things from the point of view of their causes, or if you approach them always with a view to their probable effects. And in several very important groups of human affairs it is possible to show quite clearly just how widely apart the two methods, pursued each in its purity, take those who follow them.

I suppose that three hundred years ago all people who thought at all about moral questions, about questions of Right and Wrong, deduced their rules of conduct absolutely and unreservedly from the past, from some dogmatic injunction, some finally settled decree. The great mass of people do so to-day. It is written, they say. "Thou

shalt not steal," for example — that is the sole, complete, sufficient reason why you should not steal, and even to-day there is a strong aversion to admit that there is any relation between the actual consequences of acts and the imperatives of right and wrong. Our lives are to reap the fruits of determinate things, and it is still a fundamental presumption of the established morality that one must do right though the heavens fall. But there are people coming into this world who would refuse to call it Right if it brought the heavens about our heads, however authoritative its sources and sanctions, and this new disposition is, I believe, a growing one. I suppose in all ages people in a timid, hesitating, guilty way have tempered the austerity of a dogmatic moral code by small infractions to secure obviously kindly ends, but it was, I am told, the Jesuits who first deliberately sought to qualify the moral interpretation of acts by a consideration of their results. To-day there are few people who have not more or less clearly discovered the future as a more or less important factor in moral considerations. To-day there is a certain small proportion of people who frankly regard morality as a means to an end, as an overriding of immediate and personal considerations out of regard to something to be attained in the future, and who break away altogether from the idea of a code dogmatically established forever.

Most of us are not so definite as that, but most of us are deeply tinged with the spirit of compromise between the past and the future; we profess an unbounded allegiance to the prescriptions of the past, and we practise a general observance of its injunctions, but we qualify to a vague, variable extent with considerations of expediency. We hold, for example, that we must respect our promises. But suppose we find unexpectedly that for one of us to keep a promise, which has been sealed and sworn in the most sacred fashion, must lead to the great suffering of some other human being, must lead, in fact, to practical evil? Would a man do right or wrong if he broke such a promise? The practical decision most modern people would make would be to break the promise. Most would say that they did evil to avoid a greater evil. But suppose it was not such very great suffering we were going to inflict, but only some suffering? And suppose it was a rather important promise? With most of us it would then come to be a matter of weighing the promise, the thing of the

past, against this unexpected bad consequence, the thing of the future. And the smaller the overplus of evil consequences the more most of us would vacillate. But neither of the two types of mind we are contrasting would vacillate at all. The legal type of mind would obey the past unhesitatingly, the creative would unhesitatingly sacrifice it to the future. The legal mind would say, "they who break the law at any point break it altogether," while the creative mind would say, "let the dead past bury its dead."

It is convenient to take my illustration from the sphere of promises, but it is in the realm of sexual morality that the two methods are most acutely in conflict.

And I would like to suggest that until you have definitely determined either to obey the real or imaginary imperatives of the past, or to set yourself toward the demands of some ideal of the future, until you have made up your mind to adhere to one or other of these two types of mental action in these matters, you are not even within hope of a sustained consistency in the thought that underlies your acts, that in every issue of principle that comes upon you, you will be entirely at the mercy of the intellectual mood that happens to be ascendent at that particular moment in your mind.

In the sphere of public affairs also these two ways of looking at things work out into equally divergent and incompatible consequences. The legal mind insists upon treaties, constitutions, legitimacies, and charters; the legislative incessantly assails these. Whenever some period of stress sets in, some great conflict between institutions and the forces in things, there comes a sorting out of these two types of mind. The legal mind becomes glorified and transfigured in the form of hopeless loyalty, the creative mind inspires revolutions and reconstructions. And particularly is this difference of attitude accentuated in the disputes that arise out of wars. In most modern wars there is no doubt quite traceable on one side or the other a distinct creative idea, a distinct regard for some future consequence; but the main dispute even in most modern wars and the sole dispute in most mediæval wars will be found to be a reference, not to the future, but to the past; to turn upon a question of fact and right. The wars of Plantagenet and Lancastrian England with France, for example, were based entirely upon a dummy claim,

supported by obscure legal arguments, upon the crown of France. And the arguments that centered about the late war in South Africa ignored any ideal of a great united South African state almost entirely, and quibbled this way and that about who began the fighting and what was or was not written in some obscure revision of a treaty a score of years ago. Yet beneath the legal issues the broad creative idea has been apparent in the public mind during this war. It will be found more or less definitely formulated beneath almost all the great wars of the past century, and a comparison of the wars of the nineteenth century with the wars of the middle ages will show, I think, that in this field also there has been a discovery of the future, an increasing disposition to shift the reference and values from things accomplished to things to come.

Yet though foresight creeps into our politics and a reference to consequence into our morality, it is still the past that dominates our lives. But why? Why are we so bound to it? It is into the future we go, to-morrow is the eventful thing for us. There lies all that remains to be felt by us and our children and all those that are dear to us. Yet we marshal and order men into classes entirely with regard to the past; we draw shame and honor out of the past; against the rights of property, the vested interests, the agreements and establishments of the past the future has no rights. Literature is for the most part history or history at one remove, and what is culture but a mold of interpretation into which new things are thrust, a collection of standards, a sort of bed of King Og, to which all new expressions must be lopped or stretched? Our conveniences, like our thoughts, are all retrospective. We travel on roads so narrow that they suffocate our traffic; we live in uncomfortable, inconvenient, life-wasting houses out of a love of familiar shapes and familiar customs and a dread of strangeness; all our public affairs are cramped by local boundaries impossibly restricted and small. Our clothing, our habits of speech, our spelling, our weights and measures, our coinage, our religious and political theories, all witness to the binding power of the past upon our minds. Yet we do not serve the past as the Chinese have done. There are degrees. We do not worship our ancestors or prescribe a rigid local costume; we dare to enlarge our stock of knowledge, and we qualify the classics with occasional adventures

into original thought. Compared with the Chinese we are distinctly aware of the future. But compared with what we might be, the past is all our world.

The reason why the retrospective habit, the legal habit, is so dominant, and always has been so predominant, is of course a perfectly obvious one. We follow a fundamental human principle and take what we can get. All people believe the past is certain, defined, and knowable, and only a few people believe that it is possible to know anything about the future. Man has acquired the habit of going to the past because it was the line of least resistance for his mind. While a certain variable portion of the past is serviceable matter for knowledge in the case of everyone, the future is, to a mind without an imagination trained in scientific habits of thought, non-existent. All our minds are made of memories. In our memories each of us has something that without any special training whatever will go back into the past and grip firmly and convincingly all sorts of workable facts, sometimes more convincingly than firmly. But the imagination, unless it is strengthened by a very sound training in the laws of causation, wanders like a lost child in the blankness of things to come and returns empty.

Many people believe, therefore, that there can be no sort of certainty about the future. You can know no more about the future, I was recently assured by a friend, than you can know which way a kitten will jump next. And to all who hold that view, who regard the future as a perpetual source of convulsive surprises, as an impenetrable, incurable, perpetual blankness, it is right and reasonable to derive such values as it is necessary to attach to things from the events that have certainly happened with regard to them. It is our ignorance of the future and our persuasion that that ignorance is absolutely incurable that alone gives the past its enormous predominance in our thoughts. But through the ages, the long unbroken succession of fortune-tellers — and they flourish still — witnesses to the perpetually smoldering feeling that after all there may be a better sort of knowledge — a more serviceable sort of knowledge than that we now possess.

On the whole there is something sympathetic for the dupe of the fortune-teller in the spirit of modern science; it is one of the

persuasions that come into one's mind, as one assimilates the broad conception of science, that the adequacy of causation is universal; that in absolute fact — if not in that little bubble of relative fact which constitutes the individual life — in absolute fact the future is just as fixed and determinate, just as settled and inevitable, just as possible a matter of knowledge as the past. Our personal memory gives us an impression of the superior reality and trustworthiness of things in the past, as of things that have finally committed themselves and said their say, but the more clearly we master the leading conceptions of science the better we understand that this impression is one of the results of the peculiar conditions of our lives, and not an absolute truth. The man of science comes to believe at last that the events of the year A.D. 4000 are as fixed, settled, and unchangeable as the events of the year 1600. Only about the latter he has some material for belief and about the former practically none.

And the question arises how far this absolute ignorance of the future is a fixed and necessary condition of human life, and how far some application of intellectual methods may not attenuate even if it does not absolutely set aside the veil between ourselves and things to come. And I am venturing to suggest to you that along certain lines and with certain qualifications and limitations a working knowledge of things in the future is a possible and practicable thing. And in order to support this suggestion I would call your attention to certain facts about our knowledge of the past, and more particularly I would insist upon this, that about the past our range of absolute certainty is very limited indeed. About the past I would suggest we are inclined to overestimate our certainty, just as I think we are inclined to underestimate the certainties of the future. And such a knowledge of the past as we have is not all of the same sort or derived from the same sources.

Let us consider just what an educated man of to-day knows of the past. First of all he has the realest of all knowledge — the knowledge of his own personal experiences, his memory. Uneducated people believe their memories absolutely, and most educated people believe them with a few reservations. Some of us take up a critical attitude even toward our own memories; we know that they not only sometimes drop things out, but that sometimes a sort of dreaming or

a strong suggestion will put things in. But for all that, memory remains vivid and real as no other knowledge can be, and to have seen and heard and felt is to be nearest to absolute conviction. Yet our memory of direct impressions is only the smallest part of what we know. Outside that bright area comes knowledge of a different order — the knowledge brought to us by other people. Outside our immediate personal memory there comes this wider area of facts or quasi facts told us by more or less trustworthy people, told us by word of mouth or by the written word of living and of dead writers. This is the past of report, rumor, tradition, and history — the second sort of knowledge of the past. The nearer knowledge of this sort is abundant and clear and detailed, remoter it becomes vaguer, still more remotely in time and space it dies down to brief, imperfect inscriptions and enigmatical traditions, and at last dies away, so far as the records and traditions of humanity go, into a doubt and darkness as blank, just as blank, as futurity.

And now let me remind you that this second zone of knowledge outside the bright area of what we have felt and witnessed and handled for ourselves — this zone of hearsay and history and tradition — completed the whole knowledge of the past that was accessible to Shakespeare, for example. To these limits man's knowledge of the past was absolutely confined, save for some inklings and guesses, save for some small, almost negligible beginnings, until the nineteenth century began. Besides the correct knowledge in this scheme of hearsay and history a man had a certain amount of legend and error that rounded off the picture in a very satisfactory and misleading way, according to Bishop Ussher, just exactly 4004 years B.C. And that was man's universal history — that was his all — until the scientific epoch began. And beyond those limits — ? Well, I suppose the educated man of the sixteenth century was as certain of the non-existence of anything before the creation of the world as he was, and as most of us are still, of the practical non-existence of the future, or at any rate he was as satisfied of the impossibility of knowledge in the one direction as in the other.

But modern science, that is to say the relentless systematic criticism of phenomena, has in the past hundred years absolutely destroyed the conception of a finitely distant beginning of things; has

abolished such limits to the past as a dated creation set, and added an enormous vista to that limited sixteenth century outlook. And what I would insist upon is that this further knowledge is a new kind of knowledge, obtained in a new kind of way. We know to-day, quite as confidently and in many respects more intimately than we know Sargon or Zenobia or Caractacus, the form and the habits of creatures that no living being has ever met, that no human eye has ever regarded, and the character of scenery that no man has ever seen or can ever possibly see; we picture to ourselves the labyrinthodon raising its clumsy head above the water of the carboniferous swamps in which he lived, and we figure the pterodactyls, those great bird lizards, flapping their way athwart the forests of the Mesozoic age with exactly the same certainty as that with which we picture the rhinoceros or the vulture. I doubt no more about the facts in this farther picture than I do about those in the nearest. I believe in the megatherium which I have never seen as confidently as I believe in the hippopotamus that has engulfed buns from my hand. A vast amount of detail in that farther picture is now fixed and finite for all time. And a countless number of investigators are persistently and confidently enlarging, amplifying, correcting, and pushing farther and farther back the boundaries of this greater past — this prehuman past — that the scientific criticism of existing phenomena has discovered and restored and brought for the first time into the world of human thought. We have become possessed of a new and once unsuspected history of the world — of which all the history that was known, for example, to Dr. Johnson is only the brief concluding chapter; and even that concluding chapter has been greatly enlarged and corrected by the exploring archæologists working strictly upon the lines of the new method — that is to say, the comparison and criticism of suggestive facts.

I want particularly to insist upon this, that all this outer past — this non-historical past — is the product of a new and keener habit of inquiry, and no sort of revelation. It is simply due to a new and more critical way of looking at things. Our knowledge of the geological past, clear and definite as it has become, is of a different and lower order than the knowledge of our memory, and yet of a quite practicable and trustworthy order — a knowledge good enough to go

upon; and if one were to speak of the private memory as the personal past, of the next wider area of knowledge as the traditional or historical past, then one might call all that great and inspiring background of remoter geological time the inductive past.

And this great discovery of the inductive past was got by the discussion and rediscussion and effective criticism of a number of existing facts, odd-shaped lumps of stone, streaks and bandings in quarries and cliffs, anatomical and developmental detail that had always been about in the world, that had been lying at the feet of mankind so long as mankind had existed, but that no one had ever dreamed before could supply any information at all, much more reveal such astounding and enlightening vistas. Looked at in a new way they became sources of dazzling and penetrating light. The remoter past lit up and became a picture. Considered as effects, compared and criticised, they yielded a clairvoyant vision of the history of interminable years.

And now, if it has been possible for men by picking out a number of suggestive and significant looking things in the present, by comparing them, criticising them, and discussing them, with a perpetual insistence upon "Why?" without any guiding tradition, and indeed in the teeth of established beliefs, to construct this amazing searchlight of inference into the remoter past, is it really, after all, such an extravagant and hopeless thing to suggest that, by seeking for operating causes instead of for fossils, and by criticising them as persistently and thoroughly as the geological record has been criticised, it may be possible to throw a searchlight of inference forward instead of backward, and to attain to a knowledge of coming things as clear, as universally convincing, and infinitely more important to mankind than the clear vision of the past that geology has opened to us during the nineteenth century?

Let us grant that anything to correspond with the memory, anything having the same relation to the future that memory has to the past, is out of the question. We cannot imagine, of course, that we can ever know any personal future to correspond with our personal past, or any traditional future to correspond with our traditional past; but the possibility of an inductive future to correspond with that great inductive past of geology and archæology

is an altogether different thing.

I must confess that I believe quite firmly that an inductive knowledge of a great number of things in the future is becoming a human possibility. I believe that the time is drawing near when it will be possible to suggest a systematic exploration of the future. And you must not judge the practicability of this enterprise by the failures of the past. So far nothing has been attempted, so far no first-class mind has ever focused itself upon these issues; but suppose the laws of social and political development, for example, were given as many brains, were given as much attention, criticism, and discussion as we have given to the laws of chemical combination during the last fifty years, what might we not expect?

To the popular mind of to-day there is something very difficult in such a suggestion, soberly made. But here, in this institution (the Royal Institution of London) which has watched for a whole century over the splendid adolescence of science, and where the spirit of science is surely understood, you will know that as a matter of fact prophecy has always been inseparably associated with the idea of scientific research.

The popular idea of scientific investigation is a vehement, aimless collection of little facts, collected as a bower bird collects shells and pebbles, in methodical little rows, and out of this process, in some manner unknown to the popular mind, certain conjuring tricks — the celebrated "wonders of science" — in a sort of accidental way emerge. The popular conception of all discovery is accident. But you will know that the essential thing in the scientific process is not the collection of facts, but the analysis of facts. Facts are the raw material and not the substance of science. It is analysis that has given us all ordered knowledge, and you know that the aim and the test and the justification of the scientific process is not a marketable conjuring trick, but prophecy. Until a scientific theory yields confident forecasts you know it is unsound and tentative; it is mere theorizing, as evanescent as art talk or the phantoms politicians talk about. The splendid body of gravitational astronomy, for example, establishes itself upon the certain forecast of stellar movements, and you would absolutely refuse to believe its amazing assertions if it were not for these same unerring forecasts. The whole body of medical science

aims, and claims the ability, to diagnose. Meteorology constantly and persistently aims at prophecy, and it will never stand in a place of honor until it can certainly foretell. The chemist forecasts elements before he meets them — it is very properly his boast — and the splendid manner in which the mind of Clerk Maxwell reached in front of all experiments and foretold those things that Marconi has materialized is familiar to us all.

All applied mathematics resolves into computation to foretell things which otherwise can only be determined by trial. Even in so unscientific a science as economics there have been forecasts. And if I am right in saying that science aims at prophecy, and if the specialist in each science is in fact doing his best now to prophesy within the limits of his field, what is there to stand in the way of our building up this growing body of forecast into an ordered picture of the future that will be just as certain, just as strictly science, and perhaps just as detailed as the picture that has been built up within the last hundred years of the geological past? Well, so far and until we bring the prophecy down to the affairs of man and his children, it is just as possible to carry induction forward as back; it is just as simple and sure to work out the changing orbit of the earth in the future until the tidal drag hauls one unchanging face at last toward the sun as it is to work back to its blazing and molten past. Until man comes in, the inductive future is as real and convincing as the inductive past. But inorganic forces are the smaller part and the minor interest in this concern. Directly man becomes a factor the nature of the problem changes, and our whole present interest centers on the question whether man is, indeed, individually and collectively incalculable, a new element which entirely alters the nature of our inquiry and stamps it at once as vain and hopeless, or whether his presence complicates, but does not alter, the essential nature of the induction. How far may we hope to get trustworthy inductions about the future of man?

Well, I think, on the whole, we are inclined to underrate our chance of certainties in the future, just as I think we are inclined to be too credulous about the historical past. The vividness of our personal memories, which are the very essence of reality to us, throws a glamor of conviction over tradition and past inductions. But the

personal future must in the very nature of things be hidden from us so long as time endures, and this black ignorance at our very feet — this black shadow that corresponds to the brightness of our memories behind us — throws a glamor of uncertainty and unreality over all the future. We are continually surprising ourselves by our own will or want of will; the individualities about us are continually producing the unexpected, and it is very natural to reason that as we can never be precisely sure before the time comes what we are going to do and feel, and if we can never count with absolute certainty upon the acts and happenings even of our most intimate friends, how much the more impossible is it to anticipate the behavior in any direction of states and communities.

In reply to which I would advance the suggestion that an increase in the number of human beings considered may positively simplify the case instead of complicating it; that as the individuals increase in number they begin to average out. Let me illustrate this point by a comparison. Angular pit-sand has grains of the most varied shapes. Examined microscopically, you will find all sorts of angles and outlines and variations. Before you look you can say of no particular grain what its outline will be. And if you shoot a load of such sand from a cart you cannot foretell with any certainty where any particular grain will be in the heap that you make; but you can tell — you can tell pretty definitely — the form of the heap as a whole. And further, if you pass that sand through a series of shoots and finally drop it some distance to the ground, you will be able to foretell that grains of a certain sort of form and size will for the most part be found in one part of the heap and grains of another sort of form and size will be found in another part of the heap. In such a case, you see, the thing as a whole may be simpler than its component parts, and this I submit is also the case in many human affairs. So that because the individual future eludes us completely that is no reason why we should not aspire to, and discover and use, safe and serviceable, generalizations upon countless important issues in the human destiny.

But there is a very grave and important-looking difference between a load of sand and a multitude of human beings, and this I must face and examine. Our thoughts and wills and emotions are

contagious. An exceptional sort of sand grain, a sand grain that was exceptionally big and heavy, for example, exerts no influence worth considering upon any other of the sand grains in the load. They will fall and roll and heap themselves just the same whether that exceptional grain is with them or not; but an exceptional man comes into the world, a Cæsar or a Napoleon or a Peter the Hermit, and he appears to persuade and convince and compel and take entire possession of the sand heap — I mean the community — and to twist and alter its destinies to an almost unlimited extent. And if this is indeed the case, it reduces our project of an inductive knowledge of the future to very small limits. To hope to foretell the birth and coming of men of exceptional force and genius is to hope incredibly, and if, indeed, such exceptional men do as much as they seem to do in warping the path of humanity, our utmost prophetic limit in human affairs is a conditional sort of prophecy. If people do so and so, we can say, then such and such results will follow, and we must admit that that is our limit.

But everybody does not believe in the importance of the leading man. There are those who will say that the whole world is different by reason of Napoleon. There are those who will say that the world of to-day would be very much as it is now if Napoleon had never been born. Other men would have arisen to make Napoleon's conquests and codify the law, redistribute the worn-out boundaries of Europe and achieve all those changes which we so readily ascribe to Napoleon's will alone. There are those who believe entirely in the individual man and those who believe entirely in the forces behind the individual man, and for my own part I must confess myself a rather extreme case of the latter kind. I must confess I believe that if by some juggling with space and time Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, Edward IV., William the Conqueror, Lord Rosebery, and Robert Burns had all been changed at birth it would not have produced any serious dislocation of the course of destiny. I believe that these great men of ours are no more than images and symbols and instruments taken, as it were, haphazard by the incessant and consistent forces behind them; they are the pen-nibs Fate has used for her writing, the diamonds upon the drill that pierces through the rock. And the more one inclines to this trust in forces the more one will believe in the

possibility of a reasoned inductive view of the future that will serve us in politics, in morals, in social contrivances, and in a thousand spacious ways. And even those who take the most extreme and personal and melodramatic view of the ways of human destiny, who see life as a tissue of fairy godmother births and accidental meetings and promises and jealousies, will, I suppose, admit there comes a limit to these things — that at last personality dies away and the greater forces come to their own. The great man, however great he be, cannot set back the whole scheme of things; what he does in right and reason will remain, and what he does against the greater creative forces will perish. We cannot foresee him; let us grant that. His personal difference, the splendor of his effect, his dramatic arrangement of events will be his own — in other words, we cannot estimate for accidents and accelerations and delays; but if only we throw our web of generalization wide enough, if only we spin our rope of induction strong enough, the final result of the great man, his ultimate surviving consequences, will come within our net.

Such, then, is the sort of knowledge of the future that I believe is attainable and worth attaining. I believe that the deliberate direction of historical study and of economic and social study toward the future and an increasing reference, a deliberate and courageous reference, to the future in moral and religious discussion, would be enormously stimulating and enormously profitable to our intellectual life. I have done my best to suggest to you that such an enterprise is now a serious and practicable undertaking. But at the risk of repetition I would call your attention to the essential difference that must always hold between our attainable knowledge of the future and our existing knowledge of the past. The portion of the past that is brightest and most real to each of us is the individual past — the personal memory. The portion of the future that must remain darkest and least accessible is the individual future. Scientific prophecy will not be fortune-telling, whatever else it may be. Those excellent people who cast horoscopes, those illegal fashionable palm-reading ladies who abound so much to-day, in whom nobody is so foolish as to believe, and to whom everybody is foolish enough to go, need fear no competition from the scientific prophets. The knowledge of the future we may hope to gain will be general and not individual; it will

be no sort of knowledge that will either hamper us in the exercise of our individual free will or relieve us of our personal responsibility.

And now, how far is it possible at the present time to speculate on the particular outline the future will assume when it is investigated in this way?

It is interesting, before we answer that question, to take into account the speculations of a certain sect and culture of people who already, before the middle of last century, had set their faces toward the future as the justifying explanation of the present. These were the positivists, whose position is still most eloquently maintained and displayed by Mr. Frederic Harrison, in spite of the great expansion of the human outlook that has occurred since Comte.

If you read Mr. Harrison, and if you are also, as I presume your presence here indicates, saturated with that new wine of more spacious knowledge that has been given the world during the last fifty years, you will have been greatly impressed by the peculiar limitations of the positivist conception of the future. So far as I can gather, Comte was, for all practical purposes, totally ignorant of that remoter past outside the past that is known to us by history, or if he was not totally ignorant of its existence, he was, and conscientiously remained, ignorant of its relevancy to the history of humanity. In the narrow and limited past he recognized men had always been like the men of to-day; in the future he could not imagine that they would be anything more than men like the men of to-day. He perceived, as we all perceive, that the old social order was breaking up, and after a richly suggestive and incomplete analysis of the forces that were breaking it up he set himself to plan a new static social order to replace it. If you will read Comte, or, what is much easier and pleasanter, if you will read Mr. Frederic Harrison, you will find this conception constantly apparent — that there was once a stable condition of society with humanity, so to speak, sitting down in an orderly and respectable manner; that humanity has been stirred up and is on the move, and that finally it will sit down again on a higher plane, and for good and all, cultured and happy, in the reorganized positivist state. And since he could see nothing beyond man in the future, there, in that millennial fashion, Comte had to end. Since he could imagine nothing higher than man, he had to assert that

humanity, and particularly the future of humanity, was the highest of all conceivable things. All that was perfectly comprehensible in a thinker of the first half of the nineteenth century. But we of the early twentieth, and particularly that growing majority of us who have been born since the Origin of Species was written, have no excuse for any such limited vision. Our imaginations have been trained upon a past in which the past that Comte knew is scarcely more than the concluding moment. We perceive that man, and all the world of men, is no more than the present phase of a development so great and splendid that beside this vision epics jingle like nursery rhymes, and all the exploits of humanity shrivel to the proportion of castles in the sand. We look back through countless millions of years and see the will to live struggling out of the intertidal slime, struggling from shape to shape and from power to power, crawling and then walking confidently upon the land, struggling generation after generation to master the air, creeping down into the darkness of the deep; we see it turn upon itself in rage and hunger and reshape itself anew; we watch it draw nearer and more akin to us, expanding, elaborating itself, pursuing its relentless, inconceivable purpose, until at last it reaches us and its being beats through our brains and arteries, throbs and thunders in our battleships, roars through our cities, sings in our music, and flowers in our art. And when, from that retrospect, we turn again toward the future, surely any thought of finality, any millennial settlement of cultured persons, has vanished from our minds.

This fact that man is not final is the great unmanageable, disturbing fact that arises upon us in the scientific discovery of the future, and to my mind, at any rate, the question what is to come after man is the most persistently fascinating and the most insoluble question in the whole world.

Of course we have no answer. Such imaginations as we have refuse to rise to the task.

But for the nearer future, while man is still man, there are a few general statements that seem to grow more certain. It seems to be pretty generally believed to-day that our dense populations are in the opening phase of a process of diffusion and aeration. It seems pretty inevitable also that at least the mass of white population in the world

will be forced some way up the scale of education and personal efficiency in the next two or three decades. It is not difficult to collect reasons for supposing — and such reasons have been collected — that in the near future, in a couple of hundred years, as one rash optimist has written, or in a thousand or so, humanity will be definitely and conscientiously organizing itself as a great world state — a great world state that will purge from itself much that is mean, much that is bestial, and much that makes for individual dullness and dreariness, grayness and wretchedness in the world of to-day; and although we know that there is nothing final in that world state, although we see it only as something to be reached and passed, although we are sure there will be no such sitting down to restore and perfect a culture as the positivists foretell, yet few people can persuade themselves to see anything beyond that except in the vaguest and most general terms. That world state of more vivid, beautiful, and eventful people is, so to speak, on the brow of the hill, and we cannot see over, though some of us can imagine great uplands beyond and something, something that glitters elusively, taking first one form and then another, through the haze. We can see no detail, we can see nothing definable, and it is simply, I know, the sanguine necessity of our minds that makes us believe those uplands of the future are still more gracious and splendid than we can either hope or imagine. But of things that can be demonstrated we have none.

Yet I suppose most of us entertain certain necessary persuasions, without which a moral life in this world is neither a reasonable nor a possible thing. All this paper is built finally upon certain negative beliefs that are incapable of scientific establishment. Our lives and powers are limited, our scope in space and time is limited, and it is not unreasonable that for fundamental beliefs we must go outside the sphere of reason and set our feet upon faith. Implicit in all such speculations as this is a very definite and quite arbitrary belief, and that belief is that neither humanity nor in truth any individual human being is living its life in vain. And it is entirely by an act of faith that we must rule out of our forecasts certain possibilities, certain things that one may consider improbable and against the chances, but that no one upon scientific grounds can call impossible.

One must admit that it is impossible to show why certain things should not utterly destroy and end the entire human race and story, why night should not presently come down and make all our dreams and efforts vain. It is conceivable, for example, that some great unexpected mass of matter should presently rush upon us out of space, whirl sun and planets aside like dead leaves before the breeze, and collide with and utterly destroy every spark of life upon this earth. So far as positive human knowledge goes, this is a conceivably possible thing. There is nothing in science to show why such a thing should not be. It is conceivable, too, that some pestilence may presently appear, some new disease, that will destroy, not 10 or 15 or 20 per cent. of the earth's inhabitants as pestilences have done in the past, but 100 per cent.; and so end our race. No one, speaking from scientific grounds alone, can say, "That cannot be." And no one can dispute that some great disease of the atmosphere, some trailing cometary poison, some great emanation of vapor from the interior of the earth, such as Mr. Shiel has made a brilliant use of in his "Purple Cloud," is consistent with every demonstrated fact in the world. There may arise new animals to prey upon us by land and sea, and there may come some drug or a wrecking madness into the minds of men. And finally, there is the reasonable certainty that this sun of ours must radiate itself toward extinction; that, at least, must happen; it will grow cooler and cooler, and its planets will rotate ever more sluggishly until some day this earth of ours, tideless and slow moving, will be dead and frozen, and all that has lived upon it will be frozen out and done with. There surely man must end. That of all such nightmares is the most insistently convincing.

And yet one doesn't believe it.

At least I do not. And I do not believe in these things because I have come to believe in certain other things — in the coherency and purpose in the world and in the greatness of human destiny. Worlds may freeze and suns may perish, but there stirs something within us now that can never die again.

Do not misunderstand me when I speak of the greatness of human destiny.

If I may speak quite openly to you, I will confess that, considered

as a final product, I do not think very much of myself or (saving your presence) my fellow-creatures. I do not think I could possibly join in the worship of humanity with any gravity or sincerity. Think of it! Think of the positive facts. There are surely moods for all of us when one can feel Swift's amazement that such a being should deal in pride. There are moods when one can join in the laughter of Democritus; and they would come oftener were not the spectacle of human littleness so abundantly shot with pain. But it is not only with pain that the world is shot — it is shot with promise. Small as our vanity and carnality make us, there has been a day of still smaller things. It is the long ascent of the past that gives the lie to our despair. We know now that all the blood and passion of our life were represented in the Carboniferous time by something — something, perhaps, cold-blooded and with a clammy skin, that lurked between air and water, and fled before the giant amphibia of those days.

For all the folly, blindness, and pain of our lives, we have come some way from that. And the distance we have travelled gives us some earnest of the way we have yet to go.

Why should things cease at man? Why should not this rising curve rise yet more steeply and swiftly? There are many things to suggest that we are now in a phase of rapid and unprecedented development. The conditions under which men live are changing with an ever-increasing rapidity, and, so far as our knowledge goes, no sort of creatures have ever lived under changing conditions without undergoing the profoundest changes themselves. In the past century there was more change in the conditions of human life than there had been in the previous thousand years. A hundred years ago inventors and investigators were rare scattered men, and now invention and inquiry are the work of an unorganized army. This century will see changes that will dwarf those of the nineteenth century, as those of the nineteenth dwarf those of the eighteenth. One can see no sign anywhere that this rush of change will be over presently, that the positivist dream of a social reconstruction and of a new static culture phase will ever be realized. Human society never has been quite static, and it will presently cease to attempt to be static.

Everything seems pointing to the belief that we are entering upon a progress that will go on, with an ever-widening and ever more confident stride, forever. The reorganization of society that is going on now beneath the traditional appearance of things is a kinetic reorganization. We are getting into marching order. We have struck our camp forever and we are out upon the roads.

We are in the beginning of the greatest change that humanity has ever undergone. There is no shock, no epoch-making incident — but then there is no shock at a cloudy daybreak. At no point can we say, "Here it commences, now; last minute was night and this is morning." But insensibly we are in the day. If we care to look, we can foresee growing knowledge, growing order, and presently a deliberate improvement of the blood and character of the race. And what we can see and imagine gives us a measure and gives us faith for what surpasses the imagination.

It is possible to believe that all the past is but the beginning of a beginning, and that all that is and has been is but the twilight of the dawn. It is possible to believe that all that the human mind has ever accomplished is but the dream before the awakening. We cannot see, there is no need for us to see, what this world will be like when the day has fully come. We are creatures of the twilight. But it is out of our race and lineage that minds will spring, that will reach back to us in our littleness to know us better than we know ourselves, and that will reach forward fearlessly to comprehend this future that defeats our eyes.

All this world is heavy with the promise of greater things, and a day will come, one day in the unending succession of days, when beings, beings who are now latent in our thoughts and hidden in our loins, shall stand upon this earth as one stands upon a footstool, and shall laugh and reach out their hands amid the stars.

PREFACE TO ‘Underground Man by Gabriel Tarde’

It reflects not at all on Mr Cloudesley Brereton’s admirable work of translation to remark how subtly the spirit of such work as this of M. Tarde’s changes in such a process. There are certain things peculiar, I suppose, to every language in the world, certain distinctive possibilities in each. To French far more than to English, belong the intellectual liveliness, the cheerful, ironical note, the professorial playfulness of this present work. English is a less nimble, more various and moodier tongue, not only in the sound and form of its sentences but in its forms of thought. It clots and coagulates, it proliferates and darkens, one jests in it with difficulty and great danger to a sober reputation, and one attempts in vain to figure Professor Giddings and Mr Benjamin Kidd, Doctor Beattie Crozier and Mr Wordsworth Donisthorpe glittering out into any so cheerful an exploit as this before us. Like Mr Gilbert’s elderly naval man, they “never larks nor plays”, and if indeed they did so far triumph over the turgid intricacies of our speech and the conscientious gravity of our style of thought, there would still be the English public to consider, a public easily offended by any lack of straightforwardness in its humorists, preferring to be amused by known and recognised specialists in that line, in relation to themes of recognised humorous tendency, and requiring in its professors as the concomitant of a certain dignified inaccessibility of thought and language, an honourable abstinence from the treacheries, as it would consider them, of irony and satire. Imagine a Story of the Future from Mr Herbert Spencer! America and the north of England would have swept him out of all respect.... But M. Tarde being not only a Member of the Institute and Professor at the College of France, but a Frenchman, was free to give these fancies that entertained him, public, literary, and witty expression, without self-destruction, and produce what has, in its English dress, a curiously unfamiliar effect. Yet the English reader who can overcome his natural disinclination to this union of intelligence and jesting will find a vast amount of

suggestion in M. Tarde's fantastic abundance, and bringing his habitual gravity to bear may even succeed in digesting off the humour altogether, and emerging with edification of — it must be admitted — a rather miscellaneous sort.

It is perhaps remarkable that for so many people, so tremendous a theme as the material future of mankind should only be approachable either through a method of conscientiously technical, pseudo-scientific discussion that is in effect scarcely an approach at all or else in this mood of levity. I know of no book in this direction that can claim to be a permanent success which combines a tolerable intelligibility with a simple good faith in the reader. One may speculate how this comes about? The subject it would seem is so grave and great as to be incompatibly out of proportion to the affairs and conditions of the individual life about which our workaday thinking goes on. We are interested indeed, but at the same time we feel it is outside us and beyond us. To turn one's attention to it is at once to get an effect of presumption, strain, and extravagant absurdity. It is like picking up a spade to attack a mountain, and one's instinct is to put oneself right in the eyes of one's fellow-men at once, by a few unmistakably facetious flourishes. It is the same instinct really as that protective "foolery" in which schoolboys indulge when they embark upon some hopeless undertaking, or find themselves entirely outclassed at a game.

The same instinct one finds in the facetious "parley vous Francey" of a low class Englishman who would in secret like very much to speak French, but in practice only admits such an idea as a laughable absurdity. To give a concrete form to your sociological speculations is to strip them of all their poor pretensions, and leave them shivering in palpable inadequacy. It is not because the question is unimportant, but because it is so overwhelmingly important that this jesting about the Future, this fantastic and "ironical" fiction goes on. It is the only medium to express the vague, ill-formed, new ideas with which we are all labouring. It does not give any measure of our real sense of the proportion of things that the Future should appear in our literature as a sort of comic rally and harlequinade after the serious drama of the Present — in which the heroes and heroines of the latter turn up again in novel and undignified positions; but it seems to be

the only method at present available by which we may talk about our race's material Destiny at all.

M. Tarde, in this special case before us, pursues a course of elusive ironies; sometimes he jests at contemporary ideas by imagining them in burlesque realisation, sometimes he jests at contemporary facts by transposing them into strange surroundings, sometimes he broaches fancies of his own chiefly for their own sake, yet with the well-managed literary equivalent of the palliating laugh of conversational diffidence. It is interesting to remark upon the clearness, the French reasonableness and order of his conceptions throughout. He thinks, as the French seem always to think, in terms of a humanity at once more lucid and more limited than the mankind with which we English have to deal. There are no lapses, no fogs and mysteries, no total inadequacies, no brutalities and left-handedness — and no dark gleams of the divinity, about these amused bright people of five hundred years ahead, who are overtaken by the great solar catastrophe. They have established a world state and eliminated the ugly and feeble. You imagine the gentlemen in that Utopia moving gracefully — with beautifully trimmed nails and beards — about the most elegant and ravishing of ladies, their charm greatly enhanced by the *pince-nez*, that is in universal wear. They all speak not Esperanto — but Greek, which strikes one as a little out of the picture — and all being more or less wealthy and pretty women and handsome men, "as common as blackberries" and as available, "human desire rushed with all its might towards the only field that remained open to it", — politics. From that it was presently turned back again by a certain philosophical financier, who, most delightfully, secured his work for ever, as the reader may learn in detail, by erecting a statue of Louis Philippe in wrought aluminium against any return of the flood — and then what remained? The most brilliant efflorescence of poetry and art!

One does not quite know how far M. Tarde is in this first part of his story jesting at his common countrymen's precisions and finalities and unenterprising, exact arrangements, and how far he is sharing them. Throughout he seems to assume that men can really make finished plans, and carry them out, and settle things for ever, and so assure us this state of elegant promenading among the arts,

whereas the whole charm and interest of making plans and carrying out, lies to the more typical kind of Englishman, in his ineradicable, his innate, instinctive conviction, that he will, try as he may, never carry them out at all, but something else adventurously and happily unexpected and different. M. Tarde gives his world the unexpected, but it comes, not insidiously as a unique difference in every individual and item concerned, but from without. Just as Humanity, handsome and charming, has grouped itself pleasantly, rationally, and in the best of taste for ever in its studios, in its *salons*, at its little green tables, at its *tables d'hôte*, in its *cabinets particuliers* — the sun goes out!

In the idea of that solar extinction there are extraordinary imaginative possibilities, and M. Tarde must have exercised considerable restraint to prevent their running away with him and so jarring with the ironical lightness of his earlier passages. The conception of the sun seized in a mysterious, chill grip and flickering from hue to hue in the skies of a darkened, amazed and terrified world, could be presented in images of stupendous majesty and splendour. There arise visions of darkened cities and indistinct, multitudinous, fleeing crowds, of wide country-sides of chill dismay, of beasts silent with the fear of this last eclipse, and bats and night-birds abroad amidst the lost daylight creatures and fluttering perplexed on noiseless wings. Then the abrupt sight of the countless stars made visible by this great abdication, the thickening of the sky to stormy masses of cloud so that these are hidden again, the soughing of a world-wide wind, and then first little flakes and then the drift and driving of the multiplying snow into the dim illumination of lamps, of windows, of street lights lit untimely. Then again, the shiver of the cold, the clutching of hands at coats and wraps, the blind hurrying to shelter and the comfort of a fire — the blaze of fires. One sees the red-lit faces about the fires, sees the furtive glances at the wind-tormented windows, hears the furious knocking of those other strangers barred out, for, "we cannot have everyone in here". The darkness deepens, the cries without die away, and nothing is left but the shift and falling of the incessant snow from roof to ground. Every now and then the disjointed talk would cease altogether, and in the stillness one would hear the faint yet

insistent creeping sound of the snowfall. “There is a little food downstairs,” one would say. “The servants must not eat it.... We had better lock it upstairs. We may be here — for days.” Grim stuff, indeed, one might make of it all, if one dealt with it in realistic fashion, and great and increasing toil one would find to carry on the tale. M. Tarde was well advised to let his hand pass lightly over this episode, to give us a simply pyrotechnic effect of red, yellow, green and pale blue, to let his people flee and die like marionettes beneath the paper snows of a shop window dressed for Christmas, and to emerge after the change with his urbanity unimpaired. His apt jest at the endurance of artists’ models, his easy allusion to the hardening effects of fashionable decolletage, is the measure of his dexterous success; his mention of hotel furniture on the terminal moraines of the returning Alpine glaciers, just a happy touch of that flavouring of reality which in abundance would have altogether overwhelmed his purpose.

Directly one thinks at all seriously of such a thing as this solar extinction, one perceives how preposterously hopeless it is to imagine that mankind would make any head against so swift and absolute a fate. Our race would behave just as any single man behaves when death takes him suddenly through some cardiac failure. It would feel very queer, it would want to sit down and alleviate its strange discomfort, it would say something stupid or inarticulate, make an odd gesture or so, and flicker out. But it is compatible with the fantastic and ironical style for M. Tarde to mock our conceit in our race’s capacity and pretend men did all sorts of organized and wholesale things quite beyond their capabilities. People flee in “hordes” to Arabia Petræa and the Sahara, and there perform prodigies of resistance. There arises the heroic leader and preserver, Miltiades, who preaches Neo-troglodytism and loves the peerless Lydia, and leads the remnant of humanity underground. So M. Tarde arrives at the idea he is most concerned in developing, the idea of an introverted world, and people following the dwindling heat of the interior, generation after generation, through gallery and tunnel to the core. About that conception he weaves the finest and richest and most suggestive of his fantastic filaments.

Perhaps the best sustained thread in this admirably entertaining

tissue is the entire satisfaction of the imaginary historian at the new conditions of life. The earth is made into an interminable honeycomb, all other forms of life than man are eliminated, and our race has developed into a community sustained at a high level of happiness and satisfaction by a constant resort to "social tonics". Half mockingly, half approvingly, M. Tarde here indicates a new conception of human intercourse and criticises with a richly suggestive detachment, the social relationships of to-day. He moves indicatively and lightly over deeps of human possibility; it is in these later passages that our author is essentially found. One may regret he did not further expand his happy opportunity of treating all the social types to-day as ice embedded fossils, his comments on the peasant and artisan are so fine as to provoke the appetite. He rejects the proposition that "society consists in an exchange of services" with the confidence of a man who has thought it finely out. He gives out clearly what so many of us are beginning dimly perhaps to apprehend, that "society consists in the exchange of reflections". The passages subsequent to this pronouncement will be the seed of many interesting developments in any mind sufficiently attuned to his. They constitute the body, the serious reality to which all the rest of this little book is so much dress, adornment and concealment. Very many of us, I believe, are dreaming of the possibility of human groupings based on interest and a common creative impulse rather than on justice and a trade in help and services; and I do not scruple therefore to put my heavy underline and marginal note to M. Tarde's most intimate moment. A page or so further on he is back below his ironical mask again, jesting at the "tribe of sociologists" — the most unsociable of mankind. Thereafter jest, picturesque suggestion, fantasy, philosophical whim, alternate in a continuously delightful fashion to the end — but always with the gleam of a definite intention coming and going within sight of the surface — and one ends at last a half convinced Neo-troglodyte, invaded by a passion of intellectual regret for the varied interests of that inaccessible world and its irradiating love. The description of the development of science, and particularly of troglodytic astronomy, robbed of its material, is a delightful freak of intellectual fantasy, and the philosophical dream of the slow concentration of human life into the

final form of a single culminating omniscient, and therefore a completely retrospective and anticipatory being, a being that is, that has cast aside the time garment, is one of these suggestions that have at once something penetratingly plausible, and a sort of colossal and absurd monstrosity. If I may be forgiven a personal intrusion at this point, there is a singular parallelism between this foreshadowed Last Man of M. Tarde's stalactitic philosopher, and a certain *Grand Lunar* I once wrote about in a book called "The First Men in the Moon". And I remember coming upon the same idea in a book by Merejkowski, the title of which I am now totally unable to recall.... But I will not write further on this curiously attractive and deep seated suggestion. My proper business here is, I think, chiefly to direct the reader past the lightness and cheerful superficiality of the opening portions of this book, and its — at the first blush, rather disappointing but critically justifiable, treatment of the actual catastrophe, to these obscure but curiously stimulating and interesting caves, and tunnels, and galleries in which the elusive real thought of M. Tarde lurks — for those who care to follow it up and seize it and understand.

H. G. WELLS.

MANKIND IN THE MAKING

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APPENDIX

PREFACE

It may save misunderstanding if a word or so be said here of the aim and scope of this book. It is written in relation to a previous work, *Anticipations*, [Footnote: Published by Harper Bros.] and together with that and a small pamphlet, "The Discovery of the Future," [Footnote: Nature, vol. lxv. (1901-2), , and reprinted in the Smithsonian Report for 1902] presents a general theory of social development and of social and political conduct. It is an attempt to deal with social and political questions in a new way and from a new starting-point, viewing the whole social and political world as aspects of one universal evolving scheme, and placing all social and political activities in a defined relation to that; and to this general method and trend it is that the attention of the reader is especially directed. The two books and the pamphlet together are to be regarded as an essay in presentation. It is a work that the writer admits he has undertaken primarily for his own mental comfort. He is remarkably not qualified to assume an authoritative tone in these matters, and he is acutely aware of the many defects in detailed knowledge, in temper, and in training these papers collectively display. He is aware that at such points, for example, as the reference to authorities in the chapter on the biological problem, and to books in the educational chapter, the lacunar quality of his reading and knowledge is only too evident; to fill in and complete his design — notably in the fourth paper — he has had quite frankly to jerry-build here and there. Nevertheless, he ventures to publish this book. There are phases in the development of every science when an incautious outsider may think himself almost necessary, when sketchiness ceases to be a sin, when the mere facts of irresponsibility and an untrained interest may permit a freshness, a freedom of mental gesture that would be inconvenient and compromising for the specialist; and such a phase, it is submitted, has been reached in this field of speculation. Moreover, the work attempted is not so much special and technical as a work of reconciliation, the suggestion of broad generalizations upon which divergent specialists may meet, a business for non-technical expression, and in which a man who knows a little of

biology, a little of physical science, and a little in a practical way of social stratification, who has concerned himself with education and aspired to creative art, may claim in his very amateurishness a special qualification. And in addition, it is particularly a business for some irresponsible writer, outside the complications of practical politics, some man who, politically, "doesn't matter," to provide the first tentatives of a political doctrine that shall be equally available for application in the British Empire and in the United States. To that we must come, unless our talk of co-operation, of reunion, is no more than sentimental dreaming. We have to get into line, and that we cannot do while over here and over there men hold themselves bound by old party formulae, by loyalties and institutions, that are becoming, that have become, provincial in proportion to our new and wider needs. My instances are commonly British, but all the broad project of this book — the discussion of the quality of the average birth and of the average home, the educational scheme, the suggestions for the organization of literature and a common language, the criticism of polling and the jury system, and the ideal of a Republic with an apparatus of honour — is, I submit, addressed to, and could be adopted by, any English-reading and English-speaking man. No doubt the spirit of the inquiry is more British than American, that the abandonment of Rousseau and anarchic democracy is more complete than American thought is yet prepared for, but that is a difference not of quality but of degree. And even the appendix, which at a hasty glance may seem to be no more than the discussion of British parochial boundaries, does indeed develop principles of primary importance in the fundamental schism of American politics between the local State government and the central power. So much of apology and explanation I owe to the reader, to the contemporary specialist, and to myself.

These papers were first published in the British *Fortnightly Review* and in the American *Cosmopolitan*. In the latter periodical they were, for the most part, printed from uncorrected proofs set up from an early version. This periodical publication produced a considerable correspondence, which has been of very great service in the final revision. These papers have indeed been honoured by letters from men and women of almost every profession, and by a really

very considerable amount of genuine criticism in the British press. Nothing, I think, could witness more effectually to the demand for such discussions of general principle, to the need felt for some nuclear matter to crystallize upon at the present time, however poor its quality, than this fact. Here I can only thank the writers collectively, and call their attention to the more practical gratitude of my frequently modified text.

I would, however, like to express my especial indebtedness to my friend, Mr. Graham Wallas, who generously toiled through the whole of my typewritten copy, and gave me much valuable advice, and to Mr. C. G. Stuart Menteath for some valuable references.

H. G. WELLS.

SANDGATE, *July*, 1903.

I. THE NEW REPUBLIC

Toleration to-day is becoming a different thing from the toleration of former times. The toleration of the past consisted very largely in saying, “You are utterly wrong and totally accurst, there is no truth but my truth and that you deny, but it is not my place to destroy you and so I let you go.” Nowadays there is a real disposition to accept the qualified nature of one’s private certainties. One may have arrived at very definite views, one may have come to beliefs quite binding upon one’s self, without supposing them to be imperative upon other people. To write “I believe” is not only less presumptuous and aggressive in such matters than to write “it is true,” but it is also nearer the reality of the case. One knows what seems true to one’s self, but we are coming to realize that the world is great and complex, beyond the utmost power of such minds as ours. Every day of life drives that conviction further home. And it is possible to maintain that in perhaps quite a great number of ethical, social, and political questions there is no absolute “truth” at all — at least for finite beings. To one intellectual temperament things may have a moral tint and aspect, differing widely from that they present to another; and yet each may be in its own way right. The wide differences in character and quality between one human being and another may quite conceivably involve not only differences in moral obligation, but differences in fundamental moral aspect — we may act and react upon each other towards a universal end, but without any universally applicable rule of conduct whatever. In some greater vision than mine, my right and wrong may be no more than hammer and anvil in the accomplishment of a design larger than I can understand. So that these papers are not written primarily for all, nor with the same intention towards all who read them. They are designed first for those who are predisposed for their reception. Then they are intended to display in an orderly manner a point of view, and how things look from that point of view, to those who are not so predisposed. These latter will either develop into adherents as they read, or, what is more likely, they will exchange a vague disorderly objection for a clearly defined and understood difference. To arrive at

such an understanding is often for practical purposes as good as unanimity; for in narrowing down the issue to some central point or principle, we develop just how far those who are divergent may go together before separation or conflict become inevitable, and save something of our time and of our lives from those misunderstandings, and those secondary differences of no practical importance whatever, which make such disastrous waste of human energy.

Now the point of view which will be displayed in relation to a number of wide questions in these pages is primarily that of the writer's. But he hopes and believes that among those who read what he has to say, there will be found not only many to understand, but some to agree with him. In many ways he is inclined to believe the development of his views may be typical of the sort of development that has gone on to a greater or lesser extent in the minds of many of the younger men during the last twenty years, and it is in that belief that he is now presenting them.

And the questions that will be dealt with in relation to this point of view are all those questions outside a man's purely private self — if he have a purely private self — in which he interacts with his fellow-man. Our attempt will be to put in order, to reduce to principle, what is at present in countless instances a mass of inconsistent proceedings, to frame a general theory in accordance with modern conditions of social and political activity.

This is one man's proposal, his attempt to supply a need that has oppressed him for many years, a need that he has not only found in his own schemes of conduct, but that he has observed in the thought of numberless people about him, rendering their action fragmentary, wasteful in the gross, and ineffective in the net result, the need for some general principle, some leading idea, some standard, sufficiently comprehensive to be of real guiding value in social and political matters, in many doubtful issues of private conduct, and throughout the business of dealing with one's fellow-men. No doubt there are many who do not feel such a need at all, and with these we may part company forthwith; there are, for example, those who profess the artistic temperament and follow the impulse of the moment, and those who consult an inner light in some entirely

mystical manner. But neither of these I believe is the most abundant type in the English-speaking communities. My impression is that with most of the minds I have been able to examine with any thoroughness, the attempt to systematize one's private and public conduct alike, and to reduce it to spacious general rules, to attempt, if not to succeed, in making it coherent, consistent, and uniformly directed, is an almost instinctive proceeding.

There is an objection I may anticipate at this point. If I am to leave this statement unqualified, it would certainly be objected that such a need is no more nor less than the need of religion, that a properly formulated religion does supply a trustworthy guide at every fork and labyrinth in life. By my allusion to the failure of old formulae and methods to satisfy now, I am afraid many people will choose to understand that I refer to what is often spoken of as the conflict of religion and science, and that I intend to propound some contribution to the conflict. I will at any rate anticipate that objection here, in order to mark out my boundaries with greater precision.

Taken in its completeness, I submit that it is a greater claim than almost any religion can justifiably make, to satisfy the need I have stated. No religion prescribes rules that can be immediately applied to every eventuality. Between the general rules laid down and the particular instance there is always a wide gap, into which doubts and alternatives enter and the private judgment has play. No doubt upon certain defined issues of every-day life some religions are absolutely explicit; the Mahomedan religion, for example, is very uncompromising upon the use of wine, and the law of the Ten Commandments completely prohibits the making of graven images, and almost all the great variety of creeds professed among us English-speaking peoples prescribe certain general definitions of what is righteous and what constitutes sin. But upon a thousand questions of great public importance, on the question of forms of government, of social and educational necessities, of one's course and attitude towards such great facts as the press, trusts, housing, and the like, religion, as it is generally understood, gives by itself no conclusive light. It may, no doubt, give a directing light in some cases, but not a conclusive light. It leaves us inconsistent and uncertain amidst these unavoidable problems. Yet upon these

questions most people feel that something more is needed than the mood of the moment or the spin of a coin. Religious conviction may help us, it may stimulate us to press for clearer light upon these matters, but it certainly does not give us any decisions.

It is possible to be either intensely religious or utterly indifferent to religious matters and yet care nothing for these things. One may be a Pietist to whom the world is a fleeting show of no importance whatever, or one may say, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die": the net result in regard to my need is the same. These questions appear to be on a different plane from religion and religious discussion; they look outward, while essentially religion looks inward to the soul, and, given the necessary temperament, it is possible to approach them in an unbiassed manner from almost any starting-point of religious profession. One man may believe in the immortality of the soul and another may not; one man may be a Swedenborgian, another a Roman Catholic, another a Calvinistic Methodist, another an English High Churchman, another a Positivist, or a Parsee, or a Jew; the fact remains that they must go about doing all sorts of things in common every day. They may derive their ultimate motives and sanctions from the most various sources, they may worship in the most contrasted temples and yet meet unanimously in the market-place with a desire to shape their general activities to the form of a "public spirited" life, and when at last the life of every day is summed up, "to leave the world better than they found it." And it is from that most excellent expression I would start, or rather from a sort of amplified restatement of that expression — outside the province of religious discussion altogether.

A man who will build on that expression *as his foundation* in political and social matters, has at least the possibility of agreement in the scheme of action these papers will unfold. For though we theorize it is at action that our speculations will aim. They will take the shape of an organized political and social doctrine. It will be convenient to give this doctrine a name, and for reasons that will be clear enough to those who have read my book *Anticipations* this doctrine will be spoken of throughout as "New Republicanism," the doctrine of the New Republic.

The central conception of this New Republicanism as it has

shaped itself in my mind, lies in attaching pre-eminent importance to certain aspects of human life, and in subordinating systematically and always, all other considerations to these cardinal aspects. It begins with a way of looking at life. It insists upon that way, it will regard no human concern at all except in that way. And the way, putting the thing as compactly as possible, is to reject and set aside all abstract, refined, and intellectualized ideas as starting propositions, such ideas as Right, Liberty, Happiness, Duty or Beauty, and to hold fast to the assertion of the fundamental nature of life as a tissue and succession of births. These other things may be important, they may be profoundly important, but they are not primary. We cannot build upon any one of them and get a structure that will comprehend all the aspects of life.

For the great majority of mankind at least it can be held that life resolves itself quite simply and obviously into three cardinal phases. There is a period of youth and preparation, a great insurgence of emotion and enterprise centering about the passion of Love, and a third period in which, arising amidst the warmth and stir of the second, interweaving indeed with the second, the care and love of offspring becomes the central interest in life. In the babble of the grandchildren, with all the sons and daughters grown and secure, the typical life of humanity ebbs and ends. Looked at thus with a primary regard to its broadest aspect, life is seen as essentially a matter of reproduction; first a growth and training to that end, then commonly mating and actual physical reproduction, and finally the consummation of these things in parental nurture and education. Love, Home and Children, these are the heart-words of life. Not only is the general outline of the normal healthy human life reproductive, but a vast proportion of the infinitely complex and interwoven interests that fill that outline with incessant interest can be shown by a careful analysis to be more or less directly reproductive also. The toil of a man's daily work is rarely for himself alone, it goes to feed, to clothe, to educate those cardinal consequences of his being, his children; he builds for them, he plants for them, he plans for them, his social intercourse, his political interests, whatever his immediate motives, tend finally to secure their welfare. Even more obviously is this the case with his wife. Even in rest and recreation life still

manifests its quality; the books the ordinary man reads turn enormously on love-making, his theatre has scarcely ever a play that has not primarily a strong love interest, his art rises to its most consummate triumphs in Venus and Madonna, and his music is saturated in love suggestions. Not only is this so with the right and proper life, but the greater portion of those acts we call vice draw their stimulus and pleasure from the impulses that subserve this sustaining fact of our being, and they are vicious only because they evade or spoil their proper end. This is really no new discovery at all, only the stripping bare of it is new. In nearly every religious and moral system in the world indeed, the predominant mass of the exposition of sin and saving virtue positively or negatively centres upon birth. Positively in the enormous stresses, the sacramental values which are concentrated upon marriage and the initial circumstances of being, and negatively in a thousand significant repudiations. Even when the devotee most strenuously renounces this world and all its works, when St. Anthony flees into the desert or the pious Durtal wrestles in his cell, when the pale nun prays in vigil and the hermit mounts his pillar, it is Celibacy, that great denial of life, that sings through all their struggle, it is this business of births as the central fact of life they still have most in mind.

This is not human life merely, it is all life. This living world, as the New Republican will see it, is no more than a great birth-place, an incessant renewal, an undying fresh beginning and unfolding of life. Take away this fact of birth and what is there remaining? A world without flowers, without the singing of birds, without the freshness of youth, with a spring that brings no seedlings and a year that bears no harvest, without beginnings and without defeats, a vast stagnation, a universe of inconsequent matter — Death. Not only does the substance of life vanish if we eliminate births and all that is related to births, but whatever remains, if anything remains, of aesthetic and intellectual and spiritual experience, collapses utterly and falls apart, when this essential substratum of all experience is withdrawn. So at any rate the world presents itself in the view the New Republican takes. And if it should chance that the reader finds this ring untrue to him, then he may take it that he stands outside us, that the New Republic is not for him.

It may be submitted that this statement that Life is a texture of births may be accepted by minds of the most divergent religious and philosophical profession. No fundamental or recondite admissions are proposed here, but only that the every-day life for every-day purposes has this shape and nature. The utter materialist may say that life to him is a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, a chance kinking in the universal fabric of matter. It is not our present business to confute him. The fact remains this is the form the kinking has taken. The believer, sedulous for his soul's welfare, may say that Life is to him an arena of spiritual conflict, but this is the character of the conflict, this is the business from which all the tests and exercises of his soul are drawn. It matters not in this present discussion if Life is no more than a dream; the dream is this.

And now one comes to another step. The reader may give his assent to this statement as obvious or he may guard his assent with a qualification or so, but I doubt if he will deny it. No one, I expect, will categorically deny it. But although no one will do that, a great number of people who have not clearly seen things in this light, do in thought and in many details of their practice follow a line that is, in effect, a flat denial of what is here proposed. Life no doubt is a fabric woven of births and the struggle to maintain and develop and multiply lives. It does not follow that life is *consciously* a fabric woven of births and the struggle to maintain and develop and multiply lives. I do not suppose a cat or a savage sees it in that light. A cat's standpoint is probably strictly individualistic. She sees the whole universe as a scheme of more or less useful, pleasurable and interesting things concentrated upon her sensitive and interesting personality. With a sinuous determination she evades disagreeables and pursues delights; life is to her quite clearly and simply a succession of pleasures, sensations and interests, among which interests there happen to be — kittens!

And this way of regarding life is by no means confined to animals and savages. I would even go so far as to suggest that it is only within the last hundred years that any considerable number of thoughtful people have come to look at life steadily and consistently as being shaped to this form, to the form of a series of births, growths and births. The most general truths are those last apprehended. The

universal fact of gravitation, for example, which pervades all being, received its complete recognition scarcely two hundred years ago. And again children and savages live in air, breathe air, are saturated with air, die for five minutes' need of it, and never definitely realize there is such a thing as air at all. The vast mass of human expression in act and art and literature takes a narrower view than we have here formulated; it presents each man not only as isolated from and antagonized with the world about him, but as cut off sharply and definitely from the past before he lived and the future after he is dead; it puts what is, in relation to the view we have taken, a disproportionate amount of stress upon his egotism, upon the pursuit of his self-interest and his personal virtue and his personal fancies, and it ignores the fact, the familiar rediscovery which the nineteenth century has achieved, that he is after all only the transitory custodian of an undying gift of life, an inheritor under conditions, the momentary voice and interpreter of a being that springs from the dawn of time and lives in offspring and thought and material consequence, for ever.

This over-accentuation in the past of man's egoistic individuality, or, if one puts it in another way, this unsuspicious ignorance of the real nature of life, becomes glaringly conspicuous in such weighed and deliberate utterances as *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. Throughout these frank and fundamental discourses one traces a predominant desire for a perfected inconsequent egotism. Body is repudiated as a garment, position is an accident, the past that made us exists not since it is past, the future exists not for we shall never see it; at last nothing but the abstracted ego remains, — a sort of complimentary Nirvana. One citation will serve to show the colour of all his thought. "A man," he remarks, "is very devout to prevent the loss of his son. But I would have you pray rather against the fear of losing him. Let this be the rule for your devotions." [Footnote: *The Meditations of M. A. Antoninus*, ix. 40.] That indeed is the rule for all the devotions of that departing generation of wisdom. Rather serenity and dignity than good ensuing. Rather a virtuous man than any resultant whatever from his lifetime, for the future of the world. It points this disregard of the sequence of life and birth in favour of an abstract and fruitless virtue, it points it indeed with a barbed point

that the son of Marcus Aurelius was the unspeakable Commodus, and that the Roman Empire fell from the temporizing detachment of his rule into a century of disorder and misery.

To the thoughtful reader to whom these papers appeal, to the reader whose mind is of the modern cast, who has surveyed the vistas of the geological record and grasped the secular unfolding of the scheme of life, who has found with microscope and scalpel that the same rhythm of birth and re-birth is woven into the minutest texture of things that has covered the earth with verdure and shaped the massifs of the Alps, to such a man the whole literature the world produced until the nineteenth century had well progressed, must needs be lacking in any definite and pervading sense of the cardinal importance in the world of this central reproductive aspect, of births and of the training and preparation for future births. All that literature, great and imposing as we are bound to admit it is, has an outlook less ample than quite common men may have to-day. It is a literature, as we see it in the newer view, of abstracted personalities and of disconnected passions and impressions.

To one extraordinary and powerful mind in the earlier half of the nineteenth century this realization of the true form of life came with quite overwhelming force, and that was to Schopenhauer, surely at once the most acute and the most biassed of mortal men. It came to him as a most detestable fact, because it happened he was an intensely egotistical man. But his intellect was of that noble and exceptional sort that aversion may tint indeed but cannot blind, and we owe to him a series of philosophical writings, written with an instinctive skill and a clearness and a vigour uncommon in philosophers, in which a very complete statement of the new view is presented to the reader in terms of passionate protest. [Footnote: *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung.*] "Why," he asked, "must we be for ever tortured by this passion and desire to reproduce our kind, why are all our pursuits tainted with this application, all our needs deferred to the needs of the new generation that tramples on our heels?" and he found the answer in the presence of an overwhelming Will to Live manifesting itself throughout the universe of Matter, thrusting us ruthlessly before it, as a strong swimmer thrusts a wave before him as he swims. That the personal egotism should be

subordinated to and overwhelmed by a pervading Will to Live filled his soul with passionate rebellion and coloured his exposition with the hues of despair. But to minds temperamentally different from his, minds whose egotism is qualified by a more unselfish humour, it is possible to avail one's self of Schopenhauer's vision, without submitting one's self to his conclusions, to see our wills only as temporary manifestations of an ampler will, our lives as passing phases of a greater Life, and to accept these facts even joyfully, to take our places in that larger scheme with a sense of relief and discovery, to go with that larger being, to serve that larger being, as a soldier marches, a mere unit in the larger being of his army, and serving his army, joyfully into battle.

However, it is not to Schopenhauer and his writings, at least among the English-speaking peoples, that this increasing realization of life as essentially a succession of births, is chiefly ascribed. It is mainly, as I have already suggested, the result of that great expansion of our sense of time and causation that has ensued from the idea of organic Evolution. In the course of one brief century, the human outlook upon the order of the world has been profoundly changed. It is not simply that it has become much more spacious, it is not only that it has opened out from the little history of a few thousand years to a stupendous vista of ages, but, in addition to its expanded dimensions, it has experienced a change in character. That wonderful and continually more elaborate and penetrating analysis of the evolutionary process by Darwin and his followers and successors and antagonists, the entire subordination of the individual lot to the specific destiny that these criticisms and researches have emphasized, has warped and altered the aspect of a thousand human affairs. It has made reasonable and in order what Schopenhauer found so suggestively perplexing, it has dispelled problems that have seemed insoluble mysteries to many generations of men. I do not say it has solved them, but it has dispelled them and made them irrelevant and uninteresting. So long as one believed that life span unprogressively from generation to generation, that generation followed generation unchangingly for ever, the enormous preponderance of sexual needs and emotions in life was a distressing and inexplicable fact — it was a mystery, it was sin, it was the work of the devil. One asked, why

does man build houses that others may live therein; plant trees whose fruit he will never see? And all the toil and ambition, the stress and hope of existence, seemed, so far as this life went, and before these new lights came, a mere sacrifice to this pointless reiteration of lives, this cosmic *crambe repetita*. To perceive this aspect, and to profess an entire detachment from the whole vacuous business was considered by a large proportion of the more thoughtful people of the world the supreme achievement of philosophy. The acme of old-world wisdom, the ultimate mystery of Oriental philosophy is to contemn women and offspring, to abandon costume, cleanliness, and all the decencies and dignities of life, and to crawl, as scornfully as possible, but at any rate to crawl out of all these earthly shows and snares (which so obviously lead to nothing), into the nearest tub.

And the amazing revelation of our days is that they do not lead to nothing! Directly the discovery is made clear — and it is, I firmly believe, the crowning glory of the nineteenth century to have established this discovery for all time — that one generation does not follow another in *fac simile*, directly we come within sight of the reasonable persuasion that each generation is a step, a definite measurable step, and each birth an unprecedented experiment, directly it grows clear that instead of being in an eddy merely, we are for all our eddying moving forward upon a wide voluminous current, then all these things are changed.

That change alters the perspective of every human affair. Things that seemed permanent and final, become unsettled and provisional. Social and political effort are seen from a new view-point. Everywhere the old direction posts, the old guiding marks, have got out of line and askew. And it is out of the conflict of the new view with the old institutions and formulae, that there arises the discontent and the need, and the attempt at a wider answer, which this phrase and suggestion of the "New Republic" is intended to express.

Every part contributes to the nature of the whole, and if the whole of life is an evolving succession of births, then not only must a man in his individual capacity (*physically* as parent, doctor, food dealer, food carrier, home builder, protector, or *mentally* as teacher, news dealer, author, preacher) contribute to births and growths and the future of mankind, but the collective aspects of man, his social and

political organizations must also be, in the essence, organizations that more or less profitably and more or less intentionally, set themselves towards this end. They are finally concerned with the birth and with the sound development towards still better births, of human lives, just as every implement in the toolshed of a seedsman's nursery, even the hoe and the roller, is concerned finally with the seeding and with the sound development towards still better seeding of plants. The private and personal motive of the seedsman in procuring and using these tools may be avarice, ambition, a religious belief in the saving efficacy of nursery keeping or a simple passion for bettering flowers, that does not affect the definite final purpose of his outfit of tools.

And just as we might judge completely and criticise and improve that outfit from an attentive study of the welfare of plants and with an entire disregard of his remoter motives, so we may judge all collective human enterprises from the standpoint of an attentive study of human births and development. *Any collective human enterprise, institution, movement, party or state, is to be judged as a whole and completely, as it conduces more or less to wholesome and hopeful births, and according to the qualitative and quantitative advance due to its influence made by each generation of citizens born under its influence towards a higher and ampler standard of life*.

Or putting the thing in a slightly different phrasing, the New Republican idea amounts to this: the serious aspect of our private lives, the general aspect of all our social and co-operative undertakings, is to prepare as well as we possibly can a succeeding generation, which shall prepare still more capably for still better generations to follow. We are passing as a race out of a state of affairs when the unconscious building of the future was attained by individualistic self-seeking (altogether unenlightened or enlightened only by the indirect moralizing influence of the patriotic instinct and religion) into a clear consciousness of our co-operative share in that process. That is the essential idea my New Republic would personify and embody. In the past man was made, generation after generation, by forces beyond his knowledge and control. Now a certain number of men are coming to a provisional understanding of some at least of

these forces that go to the Making of Man. To some of us there is being given the privilege and responsibility of knowledge. We may plead lack of will or lack of moral impetus, but we can no longer plead ignorance. Just as far as our light upon the general purpose goes, just so far goes our responsibility (whether we respect it or not) to shape and subdue our wills to the Making of Mankind.

Directly the man, who has found akin to himself and who has accepted and assimilated this new view, turns to the affairs of the political world, to the general professions of our great social and business undertakings, and to the broad conventions of human conduct, he will find, I think, a very wide discrepancy from the implications of this view. He will find — the New Republican finds — that the declared aims and principles of the larger amount of our social and political effort are astonishingly limited and unsatisfactory, astonishingly irrelevant to the broad reality of Life. He will find great masses of men embarked collectively upon enterprises that will seem to his eyes to have no definable relation to this real business of the world, or only the most accidental relationship, he will find others in partial lop-sided cooperation or unintelligently half helpful and half obstructive, and he will find still other movements and developments which set quite in the opposite direction, which make neither for sound births nor sound growth, but through the thinnest shams of excuse and purpose, through the most hypnotic and unreal of suggestions and motives, directly and even plainly towards waste, towards sterility, towards futility and death and extinction.

But not deliberately towards Death. It is only in the theoretical aspirations of Schopenhauer that he will find an expression of conscious and resolved opposition to the pervading will and purpose in things. In the common affairs of the world he will find neither deliberate opposition nor deliberate co-operation, chance opposition indeed and chance co-operation, but for the most part only a complete unconsciousness, a blind irrelevance or a purely accidental accordance to the essential aspect of Life.

Take, for example, the great enthusiasm that set all England waving bunting in June, 1902. It was made clear to the most unwilling observer that the great mass of English people consider

themselves aggregated together in one nation mainly to support, honour, and obey a King, and that they rejoice in this conception of their national purpose. Great sums of money were spent to emphasize this purpose, public work of all sorts was dislocated, and the channels of public discussion clogged and choked. A discussion of the education of the next generation, a matter of supreme interest from the New Republican point of view, passed from public sight amidst the happy tumults and splendours of the time. The land was filled with poetry in the Monarch's praise, bad beyond any suspicion of insincerity. All that was certainly great in the land, all that has any hold upon the motives and confidence of the English, gathered itself into a respectful proximity, assumed attitudes of reverent subordination to the Monarch. All that was eminent in science and literature and art, the galaxy of the episcopate, the crowning intellectualities of the army, came to these rites, clad in robes and raiment that no sane person would ever voluntarily assume in public except under circumstances of extreme necessity. The whole business was conducted with a zest and gravity that absolutely forbids the theory that it was a mere formality, a curious survival of mediævalism cherished by a country that makes no breaks with its past. The spirit and idea of the whole thing was intensely real and contemporary; one could believe only that those who took part in it regarded it as a matter of primary importance, as one of the cardinal things for which they existed. The alternative is to imagine that they believe nothing to be of primary importance in this world; a quite incredible levity of soul to ascribe to all those great and distinguished people.

But it reflects not at all upon the high intelligence, the unobtrusive but sterling moral qualities, the tact, dignity, and personal charm of the central figure in their pageantries, a charm the pathetic circumstances of his unseasonable illness very greatly enhanced, if the New Republican fails to consider these ceremonials of primary importance, if he declines to see them as of any necessary importance at all, until it has been conclusively shown that they do minister to the bettering of births and of the lives intervening between birth and birth. On the surface they do not do that. Unless they can be shown to do that they are dissipations of energy, they are

irrelevant and wrong, from the New Republican point of view. The New Republican can take no part in these things, or only a very grudging and qualified part, on his way to real service. He may or he may not, after deliberate examination, leave these things on one side, unchallenged but ignored.

It may be urged that all the subserviences that distinguish our kingdom and that become so amazingly conspicuous about a coronation, the kissing of hands, the shambling upon knees, the crawling of body and mind, the systematic encouragement of that undignified noisiness that nowadays distinguishes the popular rejoicings of our imperial people, are simply a proof of the earnest preoccupation of our judges, bishops, and leaders and great officers of all sorts with remoter and nobler aims. The kingdom happens to exist, and it would be complex and troublesome to get rid of it. They stand these things, they get done with these things, and so are able to get to their work. The paraphernalia of a Court, the sham scale of honours, the submissions, the ceremonial subjection, are, it is argued, entirely irrelevant to the purpose and honour of our race, but then so would rebellion against these things be also irrelevant and secondary. To submit or to rebel is a diversion of our energies from the real purpose in things, and of the two it is infinitely less bother to submit. In private conversation, I find, this is the line nine out of ten of the King's servants will take. They will tell you the public understands; the thing is a mere excuse for festivity and colour; their loyalty is of a piece with their Fifth of November anti-popery. They will tell you the peers understand, the bishops understand, the coronating archbishop has his tongue in his cheek. They all understand — men of the world together. The King understands, a most admirable gentleman, who submits to these traditional things, but who admits his preference is for the simple, pure delight of the incognito, for being "plain Mr. Jones."

It may be so. Though the psychologist will tell you that a man who behaves consistently as though he believed in a thing, will end in believing it. Assuredly whatever these others do, the New Republican must understand. In his inmost soul there must be no loyalty or submission to any king or colour, save only if it conduces to the service of the future of the race. In the New Republic all kings

are provisional, if, indeed — and this I shall discuss in a later paper — they can be regarded as serviceable at all.

And just as kingship is a secondary and debatable thing to the New Republican, to every man, that is, whom the spirit of the new knowledge has taken for its work, so also are the loyalties of nationality, and all our local and party adhesions.

Much that passes for patriotism is no more than a generalized jealousy rather gorgeously clad. Amidst the collapse of the old Individualistic Humanitarianism, the Rights of Man, Human Equality, and the rest of those broad generalizations that served to keep together so many men of good intention in the age that has come to its end, there has been much hasty running to obvious shelters, and many men have been forced to take refuge under this echoing patriotism — for want of a better gathering place. It is like an incident during an earthquake, when men who have abandoned a cleft fortress will shelter in a drinking bothy. But the very upheavals that have shattered the old fastnesses of altruistic men, will be found presently to be taking the shape of a new gathering place — and of this the New Republic presents an early guess and anticipation. I do not see how men, save in the most unexpected emergency, can be content to accept such an artificial convention as modern patriotism for one moment. On the one hand there are the patriots of nationality who would have us believe that the miscellany of European squatters in the Transvaal are one nation and those in Cape Colony another, and on the other the patriots of Empire who would have me, for example, hail as my fellow-subjects and collaborators in man-making a host of Tamil-speaking, Tamil-thinking Dravadians, while separating me from every English-speaking, English-thinking person who lives south of the Great Lakes. So long as men are content to work in the grooves set for them by dead men, to derive all their significances from the past, to accept whatever is as right and to drive along before the compulsions of these acquiescences, they may do so. But directly they take to themselves the New Republican idea, directly they realize that life is something more than passing the time, that it is constructive with its direction in the future, then these things slip from them as Christian's burthen fell from him at the very outset of his journey. Until grave cause has been shown to the

contrary, there is every reason why all men who speak the same language, think the same literature, and are akin in blood and spirit, and who have arrived at the great constructive conception that so many minds nowadays are reaching, should entirely disregard these old separations. If the old traditions do no harm there is no reason to touch them, any more than there is to abolish the boundary between this ancient and invincible kingdom of Kent in which I write and that extremely inferior country, England, which was conquered by the Normans and brought under the feudal system. But so soon as these old traditions obstruct sound action, so soon as it is necessary to be rid of them, we must be prepared to sacrifice our archaeological emotions ruthlessly and entirely.

And these repudiations extend also to the political parties that struggle to realize themselves within the forms of our established state. There is not in Great Britain, and I understand there is not in America, any party, any section, any group, any single politician even, based upon the manifest trend and purpose of life as it appears in the modern view. The necessities of continuity in public activity and of a glaring consistency in public profession, have so far prevented any such fundamental reconstruction as the new generation requires. One hears of Liberty, of Compromise, of Imperial Destinies and Imperial Unity, one hears of undying loyalty to the Memory of Mr. Gladstone and the inalienable right of Ireland to a separate national existence. One hears, too, of the sacred principle of Free Trade, of Empires and Zollvereins, and the Rights of the Parent to blockade the education of his children, but one hears nothing of the greater end. At the best all the objects of our political activity can be but means to that end, their only claim to our recognition can be their adequacy to that end, and none of these vociferated "cries," these party labels, these programme items, are ever propounded to us in that way. I cannot see how, in England at any rate, a serious and perfectly honest man, holding as true that ampler view of life I have suggested, can attach himself loyally to any existing party or faction. At the utmost he may find their faction-fighting may be turned for a time towards his remoter ends. These parties derive from that past when the new view of life had yet to establish itself, they carry faded and obliterated banners that the glare

and dust of conflict, the vote-storms of great campaigns, have robbed long since of any colour of reality they once possessed. They express no creative purpose now, whatever they did in their inception, they point towards no constructive ideals. Essentially they are things for the museum or the bonfire, whatever momentary expediency may hold back the New Republican from an unqualified advocacy of such a destination. The old party fabrics are no more than dead rotting things, upon which a great tangle of personal jealousies, old grudges, thorny nicknames, prickly memories, family curses, Judas betrayals and sacred pledges, a horrible rubbish thicket, maintains a saprophytic vitality.

It is quite possible I misjudge the thing altogether. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, for example, may hide the profoundest and most wide-reaching aims beneath his superficial effect of utter superficiality. His impersonation of an amiable, spirited, self-conscious, land-owning gentleman with a passion for justice in remote places and a whimsical dislike of motor cars in his immediate neighbourhood, may veil the operations of a stupendous intelligence bent upon the regeneration of the world. It may do, but if it does, it is a very amazing and purposeless impersonation. I at any rate do not believe that it does. I do not believe that he or any other Liberal leader or any Conservative minister has any comprehensive aim at all — as we of the new generation measure comprehensiveness. These parties, and the phrases of party exposition — in America just as in England — date from the days of the limited outlook. They display no consciousness of the new dissent. They are absorbed in the long standing game, the getting in, the turning out, the contests and governments, that has just about the same relation to the new perception of affairs, to the real drift of life, as the game of cricket with the wheel as a wicket would have to the destinies of a ship. They find their game highly interesting and no doubt they play it with remarkable wit, skill and spirit, but they entirely disregard the increasing number of passengers who are concerning themselves with the course and destination of the ship.

Those particular passengers in the figure, present the New Republic. It is a dissension, an inquiry, it is the vague unconsolidated matter for a new direction. “We who are young,” says the spirit of

the New Republic, "we who are in earnest can no more compass our lives under these old kingships and loyalties, under these old leaders and these old traditions, constitutions and pledges, with their party liabilities, their national superstitions, their rotting banners and their accumulating legacy of feuds and lies, than we can pretend we are indeed impassioned and wholly devoted subjects of King Edward, spending our lives in the service of his will. It is not that we have revolted from these things, it is not that we have grown askew to them and that patching and amendment will serve our need; it is that we have travelled outside them altogether — almost inadvertently, but quite beyond any chance of return to a simple acceptance again. We are no more disposed to call ourselves Liberals or Conservatives and to be stirred to party passion at the clash of these names, than we are to fight again the battles of the Factio Albata or the Factio Prasina. These current dramas, these current conflicts seem scarcely less factitious. Men without faith may be content to spend their lives for things only half believed in, and for causes that are contrived. But that is not our quality. We want reality because we have faith, we seek the beginning of realism in social and political life, we seek it and we are resolved to find it."

So we attempt to give a general expression to the forces that are new at this time, to render something at least of the spirit of the New Republic in a premature and experimental utterance. It is, at any rate, a spirit that finds itself out of intimacy and co-ordination with all the older movements of the world, that sees all pre-existing formulae and political constitutions and political parties and organizations rather as instruments or obstacles than as guiding lines and precedents for its new developing will, its will which will carry it at last irresistibly to the conscious and deliberate making of the future of man. "We are here to get better births and a better result from the births we get; each one of us is going to set himself immediately to that, using whatever power he finds to his hand," such is the form its will must take. And such being its will and spirit these papers will address themselves comprehensively to the problem, What will the New Republic do? All the rest of this series will be a discussion of the forces that go to the making of man, and how far and how such a New Republic might seek to lay its hands upon them.

It is for the adversary to explain how presumptuous such an enterprise must be. But presumption is ineradically interwoven with every beginning that the world has ever seen. I venture to think that even to a reader who does not accept or sympathize with the conception of this New Republic, a general review of current movements and current interpretations of morality from this new standpoint may be suggestive and interesting. Assuredly it is only by some such general revision, if not on these lines then on others, that a practicable way of escape is to be found for any one, from that base and shifty opportunism in public and social matters, that predominance of fluctuating aims and spiritless conformities, in which so many of us, without any great positive happiness at all to reward us for the sacrifice we are making, bury the solitary talents of our lives.

II. THE PROBLEM OF THE BIRTH SUPPLY

Within the last minute seven new citizens were born into that great English-speaking community which is scattered under various flags and governments throughout the world. And according to the line of thought developed in the previous paper we perceive that the real and ultimate business, so far as this world goes, of every statesman, every social organizer, every philanthropist, every business manager, every man who lifts his head for a moment from the mean pursuit of his immediate personal interests, from the gratification of his private desires, is, as the first and immediate thing, to do his best for these new-comers, to get the very best result, so far as his powers and activities can contribute to it, from their undeveloped possibilities. And in the next place, as a remoter, but perhaps finally more fundamental duty, he has to inquire what may be done individually or collectively to raise the standard and quality of the average birth. All the great concerns of life work out with a very little analysis to that, even our wars, our orgies of destruction, have, at the back of them, a claim, an intention, however futile in its conception and disastrous in its consequences, to establish a wider security, to destroy a standing menace, to open new paths and possibilities, in the interest of the generations still to come. One may present the whole matter in a simplified picture by imagining all our statesmen, our philanthropists and public men, our parties and institutions gathered into one great hall, and into this hall a huge spout, that no man can stop, discharges a baby every eight seconds. That is, I hold, a permissible picture of human life, and whatever is not represented at all in that picture is a divergent and secondary concern. Our success or failure with that unending stream of babies is the measure of our civilization; every institution stands or falls by its contribution to that result, by the improvement of the children born, or by the improvement in the quality of births attained under its influence.

To begin these speculations in logical order we must begin at the birth point, we must begin by asking how much may we hope, now or at a later time, to improve the supply of that raw material which is perpetually dumped upon our hands? Can we raise, and if so, what

can we do to raise the quality of the average birth?

This speculation is as old at least as Plato, and as living as the seven or eight babies born into the English-speaking world since the reader began this Paper. The conclusion that if we could prevent or discourage the inferior sorts of people from having children, and if we could stimulate and encourage the superior sorts to increase and multiply, we should raise the general standard of the race, is so simple, so obvious, that in every age I suppose there have been voices asking in amazement, why the thing is not done? It is so usual to answer that it is not done on account of popular ignorance, public stupidity, religious prejudice or superstition, that I shall not apologize for giving some little space here to the suggestion that in reality it is not done for quite a different reason.

We blame the popular mind overmuch. Earnest but imperfect men, with honest and reasonable but imperfect proposals for bettering the world, are all too apt to raise this bitter cry of popular stupidity, of the sheep-like quality of common men. An unjustifiable persuasion of moral and intellectual superiority is one of the last infirmities of innovating minds. We may be right, but we must be provably, demonstrably and overpoweringly right before we are justified in calling the dissentient a fool. I am one of those who believe firmly in the invincible nature of truth, but a truth that is badly put is not a truth, but an infertile hybrid lie. Before we men of the study blame the general body of people for remaining unaffected by reforming proposals of an almost obvious advantage, it would be well if we were to change our standpoint and examine our machinery at the point of application. A rock-drilling machine may be excellently invented and in the most perfect order except for a want of hardness in the drill, and yet there will remain an unpierced rock as obdurate as the general public to so many of our innovations.

I believe that if a canvass of the entire civilized world were put to the vote in this matter, the proposition that it is desirable that the better sort of people should intermarry and have plentiful children, and that the inferior sort of people should abstain from multiplication, would be carried by an overwhelming majority. They might disagree with Plato's methods, [Footnote: *The Republic*, Bk. V.] but they would certainly agree to his principle. And that this is

not a popular error Mr. Francis Galton has shown. He has devoted a very large amount of energy and capacity to the vivid and convincing presentation of this idea, and to its courageous propagation. His Huxley Lecture to the Anthropological Institute in 1901 [Footnote: *Nature*, vol. lxiv. .] puts the whole matter as vividly as it ever can be put. He classifies humanity about their average in classes which he indicates by the letters R S T U V rising above the average and r s t u v falling below, and he saturates the whole business in quantitative colour. Indeed, Mr. Galton has drawn up certain definite proposals. He has suggested that "noble families" should collect "fine specimens of humanity" around them, employing these fine specimens in menial occupations of a light and comfortable sort, that will leave a sufficient portion of their energies free for the multiplication of their superior type. "Promising young couples" might be given "healthy and convenient houses at low rentals," he suggests, and no doubt it could be contrived that they should pay their rent partly or entirely per stone of family annually produced. And he has also proposed that "diplomas" should be granted to young men and women of high class — big S and upward — and that they should be encouraged to intermarry young. A scheme of "dowries" for diploma holders would obviously be the simplest thing in the world. And only the rules for identifying your great S T U and V in adolescence, are wanting from the symmetrical completeness of his really very noble-spirited and high-class scheme.

At a more popular level Mrs. Victoria Woodhull Martin has battled bravely in the cause of the same foregone conclusion. The work of telling the world what it knows to be true will never want self-sacrificing workers. The *Humanitarian* was her monthly organ of propaganda. Within its cover, which presented a luminiferous stark ideal of exemplary muscularity, popular preachers, popular bishops, and popular anthropologists vied with titled ladies of liberal outlook in the service of this conception. There was much therein about the Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit, a phrase never properly explained, and I must confess that the transitory presence of this instructive little magazine in my house, month after month (it is now, unhappily, dead), did much to direct my attention to the gaps and difficulties that intervene between the general proposition and its

practical application by sober and honest men. One took it up and asked time after time, "Why should there be this queer flavour of absurdity and pretentiousness about the thing?" Before the *Humanitarian* period I was entirely in agreement with the *Humanitarian's* cause. It seemed to me then that to prevent the multiplication of people below a certain standard, and to encourage the multiplication of exceptionally superior people, was the only real and permanent way of mending the ills of the world. I think that still. In that way man has risen from the beasts, and in that way men will rise to be over-men. In those days I asked in amazement why this thing was not done, and talked the usual nonsense about the obduracy and stupidity of the world. It is only after a considerable amount of thought and inquiry that I am beginning to understand why for many generations, perhaps, nothing of the sort can possibly be done except in the most marginal and tentative manner.

If to-morrow the whole world were to sign an unanimous round-robin to Mr. Francis Galton and Mrs. Victoria Woodhull Martin, admitting absolutely their leading argument that it *is* absurd to breed our horses and sheep and improve the stock of our pigs and fowls, while we leave humanity to mate in the most heedless manner, and if, further, the whole world, promising obedience, were to ask these two to gather together a consultative committee, draw up a scheme of rules, and start forthwith upon the great work of improving the human stock as fast as it can be done, if it undertook that marriages should no longer be made in heaven or earth, but only under licence from that committee, I venture to think that, after a very brief epoch of fluctuating legislation, this committee, except for an extremely short list of absolute prohibitions, would decide to leave matters almost exactly as they are now; it would restore love and private preference to their ancient authority and freedom, at the utmost it would offer some greatly qualified advice, and so released, it would turn its attention to those flaws and gaps in our knowledge that at present render these regulations no more than a theory and a dream.

The first difficulty these theorists ignore is this: we are, as a matter of fact, not a bit clear what points to breed for and what points to breed out.

The analogy with the breeder of cattle is a very misleading one.

He has a very simple ideal, to which he directs the entire pairing of his stock. He breeds for beef, he breeds for calves and milk, he breeds for a homogeneous docile herd. Towards that ideal he goes simply and directly, slaughtering and sparing, regardless entirely of any divergent variation that may arise beneath his control. A young calf with an incipient sense of humour, with a bright and inquiring disposition, with a gift for athleticism or a quaintly-marked hide, has no sort of chance with him at all on that account. He can throw these proffered gifts of nature aside without hesitation. Which is just what our theoretical breeders of humanity cannot venture to do. They do not want a homogeneous race in the future at all. They want a rich interplay of free, strong, and varied personalities, and that alters the nature of the problem absolutely.

This the reader may dispute. He may admit the need of variety, but he may argue that this variety must arise from a basis of common endowment. He may say that in spite of the complication introduced by the consideration that a divergent variation from one ideal may be a divergence towards another ideal, there remain certain definable points, that could be bred for universally, for all that.

What are they?

There will be little doubt he will answer "Health." After that probably he may say "Beauty." In addition the reader of Mr. Galton's *Hereditary Genius* will probably say, "ability," "capacity," "genius," and "energy." The reader of Doctor Nordau will add "sanity." And the reader of Mr. Archdall Reid will round up the list with "immunity" from dipsomania and all contagious diseases. "Let us mark our human beings," the reader of that way of thinking will suggest, "let us give marks for 'health,' for 'ability,' for various sorts of specific immunity and so forth, and let us weed out those who are low in the scale and multiply those who stand high. This will give us a straight way to practical amelioration, and the difficulty you are trying to raise," he urges, "vanishes forthwith."

It would, if these points were really points, if "beauty," "capacity," "health," and "sanity" were simple and uniform things. Unfortunately they are not simple, and with that fact a host of difficulties arise. Let me take first the most simple and obvious case of "beauty." If beauty were a simple thing, it would be possible to

arrange human beings in a simple scale, according to whether they had more or less of this simple quality — just as one can do in the case of what are perhaps really simple and breedable qualities — height or weight. This person, one might say, is at eight in the scale of beauty, and this at ten, and this at twenty-seven. But it complicates the case beyond the possibilities of such a scale altogether when one begins to consider that there are varieties and types of beauty having very wide divergences and made up of a varying number of elements in dissimilar proportions. There is, for example, the flaxen, kindly beauty of the Dutch type, the dusky Jewess, the tall, fair Scandinavian, the dark and brilliant south Italian, the noble Roman, the dainty Japanese — to name no others. Each of these types has its peculiar and incommensurable points, and within the limits of each type you will find a hundred divergent, almost unanalyzable, styles, a beauty of expression, a beauty of carriage, a beauty of reflection, a beauty of repose, arising each from a quite peculiar proportion of parts and qualities, and having no definable relation at all to any of the others. If we were to imagine a human appearance as made up of certain elements, a, b, c, d, e, f, etc., then we might suppose that beauty in one case was attained by a certain high development of a and f, in another by a certain fineness of c and d, in another by a delightfully subtle ratio of f and b.

A, b, c, d, e, F, etc.
a, b, *c*, *d*, e, f, etc.
a, *b*, c, d, e, *F*, etc.,

might all, for example, represent different types of beauty. Beauty is neither a simple nor a constant thing; it is attainable through a variety of combinations, just as the number 500 can be got by adding or multiplying together a great variety of numerical arrangements. Two long numerical formulae might both simplify out to 500, but half the length of one truncated and put end on to the truncated end of the other, might give a very different result. It is quite conceivable that you might select and wed together all the most beautiful people in the world and find that in nine cases out of ten you had simply produced mediocre offspring or offspring below mediocrity. Out of the remaining tenth a great majority would be beautiful simply by "taking after" one or other parent, simply through the predominance,

the *prepotency,* of one parent over the other, a thing that might have happened equally well if the other parent was plain. The first sort of beauty (in my three formulae) wedding the third sort of beauty, might simply result in a rather ugly excess of F, and again the first sort might result from a combination of

a, b, c, d, e, *F*, etc.,

and

A, b, c, d, e, f, etc.,

neither of which arrangements, very conceivably, may be beautiful at all when it is taken alone. In this respect, at any rate, personal value and reproductive value may be two entirely different things.

Now what the elements of personal aspect really are, what these elements a, b, c, d, e, f, etc., may be, we do not know with any sort of exactness. Possibly height, weight, presence of dark pigment in the hair, whiteness of skin, presence of hair upon the body, are simple elements in inheritance that will follow Galton's arithmetical treatment of heredity with some exactness. But we are not even sure of that. The height of one particular person may be due to an exceptional length of leg and neck, of another to an abnormal length of the vertebral bodies of the backbone; the former may have a rather less than ordinary backbone, the latter a stunted type of limb, and an intermarriage may just as conceivably (so far as our present knowledge goes) give the backbone of the first and the legs of the second as it may a very tall person.

The fact is that in this matter of beauty and breeding for beauty we are groping in a corner where science has not been established. No doubt the corner is marked out as a part of the "sphere of influence" of anthropology, but there is not the slightest indication of an effective occupation among these raiding considerations and uncertain facts. Until anthropology produces her Daltons and Davys we must fumble in this corner, just as the old alchemists fumbled for centuries before the dawn of chemistry. Our utmost practice here must be empirical. We do not know the elements of what we have, the human characteristics we are working upon to get that end. The sentimentalized affinities of young persons in their spring are just as likely to result in the improvement of the race in this respect as the

whole science of anthropology in its present state of evolution.

I have suggested that "beauty" is a term applied to a miscellany of synthetic results compounded of diverse elements in diverse proportions; and I have suggested that one can no more generalize about it in relation to inheritance with any hope of effective application than one can generalize about, say, "lumpy substances" in relation to chemical combination. By reasoning upon quite parallel lines nearly every characteristic with which Mr. Galton deals in his interesting and suggestive but quite inconclusive works, can be demonstrated to consist in a similar miscellany. He speaks of "eminence," of "success," of "ability," of "zeal," and "energy," for example, and except for the last two items I would submit that these qualities, though of enormous personal value, are of no practical value in inheritance whatever; that to wed "ability" to "ability" may breed something less than mediocrity, and that "ability" is just as likely or just as unlikely to be prepotent and to assert itself in descent with the most casually selected partner as it is with one picked with all the knowledge, or rather pseudo-knowledge, anthropology in its present state can give us.

When, however, we turn to "zeal" or "energy" or "go," we do seem to be dealing with a simpler and more transmissible thing. Let us assume that in this matter there is a wide range of difference that may be arranged in a direct and simple scale in quantitative relation to the gross output of action of different human beings. One passes from the incessant employment of such a being as Gladstone at the one extreme, a loquacious torrent of interests and achievements, to the extreme of phlegmatic lethargy on the other. Call the former a high energetic and the latter low. Quite possibly it might be found that we could breed "high energetics." But before we did so we should have to consider very gravely that the "go" and "energy" of a man have no ascertainable relation to many other extremely important considerations. Your energetic person may be moral or immoral, an unqualified egotist or as public spirited as an ant, sane, or a raving lunatic. Your phlegmatic person may ripen resolves and bring out truths, with the incomparable clearness of a long-exposed, slowly developed, slowly printed photograph. A man who would exchange the slow gigantic toil of that sluggish and deliberate

person, Charles Darwin, for the tumultuous inconsequence and (as some people think it) the net mischief of a Gladstone, would no doubt be prepared to substitute a Catherine-wheel in active eruption for the watch of less adventurous men. But before we could induce the community as a whole to make a similar exchange, he would have to carry on a prolonged and vigorous propaganda.

For my own part — and I write as an ignorant man in a realm where ignorance prevails — I am inclined to doubt the simplicity and homogeneity even of this quality of "energy" or "go." A person without restraint, without intellectual conscience, without critical faculty, may write and jabber and go to and fro and be here and there, simply because every impulse is obeyed so soon as it arises. Another person may be built upon an altogether larger scale of energy, but may be deliberate, concentrated, and fastidious, bent rather upon truth and permanence than upon any immediate quantitative result, and may appear to any one but an extremely penetrating critic, as inferior in energy to the former. So far as our knowledge goes at present, what is popularly known as "energy" or "go" is just as likely to be a certain net preponderance of a varied miscellany of impulsive qualities over a varied miscellany of restraints and inhibitions, as it is to prove a simple indivisible quality transmissible intact. We are so profoundly ignorant in these matters, so far from anything worthy of the name of science, that one view is just as permissible and just as untrustworthy as the other.

Even the qualification of "health" is not sufficient. A thoughtless person may say with the most invincible air, "Parents should, at any rate, be healthy," but that alone is only a misleading vague formula for good intentions. In the first place, there is every reason to believe that transitory ill-health in the parent is of no consequence at all to the offspring. Neither does acquired constitutional ill-health necessarily transmit to a child; it may or it may not react upon the child's nutrition and training, but that is a question to consider later. It is quite conceivable, it is highly probable, that there are hereditary forms of ill-health, and that they may be eliminated from the human lot by discreet and restrained pairing, but what they are and what are the specific conditions of their control we do not know. And furthermore, we are scarcely more certain that the condition of

“perfect health” in one human being is the same as the similarly named condition in another, than we are that the beauty of one type is made up of the same essential elements as the beauty of another. Health is a balance, a balance of blood against nerve, of digestion against secretion, of heart against brain. A heart of perfect health and vigour put into the body of a perfectly healthy man who is built upon a slighter scale than that heart, will swiftly disorganize the entire fabric, and burst its way to a haemorrhage in lung perhaps, or brain, or wherever the slightest relative weakening permits. The “perfect” health of a negro may be a quite dissimilar system of reactions to the “perfect health” of a vigorous white; you may blend them only to create an ailing mass of physiological discords. “Health,” just as much as these other things, is, for this purpose of marriage diplomas and the like, a vague, unserviceable synthetic quality. It serves each one of us for our private and conversational needs, but in this question it is not hard enough and sharp — enough for the thing we want it to do. Brought to the service of this fine and complicated issue it breaks down altogether. We do not know enough. We have not analyzed enough nor penetrated enough. There is no science yet, worthy of the name, in any of these things. [Footnote: This idea of attempting to define the elements in inheritance, although it is absent from much contemporary discussion, was pretty evidently in mind in the very striking researches of the Abbé Mendel to which Mr. Bateson — with a certain intemperance of manner — has recently called attention. (Bateson, *Mendel’s Principles of Heredity*, Cambridge University Press, 1902.)]

These considerations should at least suffice to demonstrate the entire impracticability of Mr. Galton’s two suggestions. Moreover, this idea of picking out high-scale individuals in any particular quality or group of qualities and breeding them, is not the way of nature at all. Nature is not a breeder; she is a reckless coupler and — she slays. It was a popular misconception of the theory of the Survival of the Fittest, a misconception Lord Salisbury was at great pains to display to the British Association in 1894, that the average of a species in any respect is raised by the selective inter-breeding of the individuals above the average. Lord Salisbury was no doubt misled, as most people who share his mistake have been misled, by

the grammatical error of employing the Survival of the Fittest for the Survival of the Fitter, in order to escape a scarcely ambiguous ambiguity. But the use of the word "Survival" should have sufficed to indicate that the real point of application of the force by which Nature modifies species and raises the average in any quality, lies not in selective breeding, but in the disproportionately numerous deaths of the individuals below the average. And even the methods of the breeder of cattle, if they are to produce a permanent alteration in the species of cattle, must consist not only in breeding the desirable but in either killing the undesirable, or at least — what is the quintessence, the inner reality of death — in preventing them from breeding.

The general trend of thought in Mrs. Martin's *Humanitarian* was certainly more in accordance with this reading of biological science than were Mr. Galton's proposals. There was a much greater insistence upon the need of "elimination," upon the evil of the "Rapid Multiplication of the Unfit," a word that, however, was never defined and, I believe, really did not mean anything in particular in this connection. And directly one does attempt to define it, directly one sits down in a businesslike way to apply the method of elimination instead of the method of selection, one is immediately confronted by almost as complex an entanglement of difficulties in defining points to breed out as one is by defining points to breed for. Almost, I say, but not quite. For here there does seem to be, if not certainties, at least a few plausible probabilities that a vigorous and systematic criticism may perhaps hammer into generalizations of sufficient certainty to go upon.

I believe that long before humanity has hammered out the question of what is pre-eminently desirable in inheritance, a certain number of things will have been isolated and defined as pre-eminently undesirable. But before these are considered, let us sweep out of our present regard a number of cruel and mischievous ideas that are altogether too ascendant at the present time.

Anthropology has been compared to a great region, marked out indeed as within the sphere of influence of science, but unsettled and for the most part unsubdued. Like all such hinterland sciences, it is a happy hunting-ground for adventurers. Just as in the early days of

British Somaliland, rascals would descend from nowhere in particular upon unfortunate villages, levy taxes and administer atrocity in the name of the Empire, and even, I am told, outface for a time the modest heralds of the government, so in this department of anthropology the public mind suffers from the imposition of theories and assertions claiming to be "scientific," which have no more relation to that organized system of criticism which is science, than a brigand at large on a mountain has to the machinery of law and police, by which finally he will be hanged. Among such raiding theorists none at present are in quite such urgent need of polemical suppression as those who would persuade the heedless general reader that every social failure is necessarily a "degenerate," and who claim boldly that they can trace a distinctly evil and mischievous strain in that unfortunate miscellany which constitutes "the criminal class." They invoke the name of "science" with just as much confidence and just as much claim as the early Victorian phrenologists. They speak and write with ineffable profundity about the "criminal" ear, the "criminal" thumb, the "criminal" glance. They gain access to gaols and pester unfortunate prisoners with callipers and cameras, and quite unforgivable prying into personal and private matters, and they hold out great hopes that by these expedients they will evolve at last a "scientific" revival of the Kaffir's witch-smelling. We shall catch our criminals by anthropometry ere ever a criminal thought has entered their brains. "Prevention is better than cure." These mattoid scientists make a direct and disastrous attack upon the latent self-respect of criminals. And not only upon that tender plant, but also upon the springs of human charity towards the criminal class. For the complex and varied chapter of accidents that carries men into that net of precautions, expedients, prohibitions, and vindictive reprisals, the net of the law, they would have us believe there is a fatal necessity inherent in their being. Criminals are born, not made, they allege. No longer are we to say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I" — when the convict tramps past us — but, "There goes another sort of animal that is differentiating from my species and which I would gladly see exterminated."

Now every man who has searched his heart knows that this formulation of "criminality" as a specific quality is a stupidity, he

knows himself to be a criminal, just as most men know themselves to be sexually rogues. No man is born with an instinctive respect for the rights of any property but his own, and few with a passion for monogamy. No man who is not an outrageously vain and foolish creature but will confess to himself that but for advantages and accidents, but for a chance hesitation or a lucky timidity, he, too, had been there, under the ridiculous callipers of witless anthropology. A criminal is no doubt of less personal value to the community than a law-abiding citizen of the same general calibre, but *it does not follow for one moment that he is of less value as a parent.* His personal disaster may be due to the possession of a bold and enterprising character, of a degree of pride and energy above the needs of the position his social surroundings have forced upon him. Another citizen may have all this man's desires and impulses, checked and sterilized by a lack of nervous energy, by an abject fear of the policeman and of the consequences of the disapproval of his more prosperous fellow-citizens. I will frankly confess that for my own part I prefer the wicked to the mean, and that I would rather trust the future to the former strain than to the latter. Whatever preference the reader may entertain, there remains this unmistakable objection to its application to breeding, that "criminality" is not a specific simple quality, but a complex that may interfuse with other complexes to give quite incalculable results in the offspring it produces. So that here again, on the negative side, we find a general expression unserviceable for our use. [Footnote: No doubt the home of the criminal and social failure is generally disastrous to the children born into it. That is a question that will be fully dealt; with in a subsequent paper, and I note it here only to point out that it is outside our present discussion, which is concerned not with the fate of children born into the world, but with the prior question whether we may hope to improve the quality of the average birth by encouraging some sorts of people to have children and discouraging or forbidding others. It is of vital importance to keep these two questions distinct, if we are to get at last to a basis for effective action.]

But it will be alleged that although criminality as a whole means nothing definite enough for our purpose, there can be picked out and defined certain criminal (or at any rate disastrous) tendencies that are

simple, specific and transmissible. Those who have read Mr. Archdall Reid's *Alcoholism*, for example, will know that he deals constantly with what is called the "drink craving" as if it were such a specific simple inheritance. He makes a very strong case for this belief, but strong as it is, I do not think it is going to stand the pressure of a rigorously critical examination. He points out that races which have been in possession of alcoholic drinks the longest are the least drunken, and this he ascribes to the "elimination" of all those whose "drink craving" is too strong for them. Nations unused to alcoholic drink are most terribly ravaged at its first coming to them, may even be destroyed by it, in precisely the same way that new diseases coming to peoples unused to them are far more malignant than among peoples who have suffered from them generation after generation. Such instances as the terrible ravages of measles in Polynesia and the ruin worked by fire-water among the Red Indians, he gives in great abundance. He infers from this that interference with the sale of drink to a people may in the long run do more harm than good, by preserving those who would otherwise be eliminated, permitting them to multiply and so, generation by generation, lowering the resisting power of the race. And he proposes to divert temperance legislation from the persecution of drink makers and sellers, to such remedies as the punishment of declared and indisputable drunkards if they incur parentage, and the extension of the grounds of divorce to include this ugly and disastrous habit.

I am not averse to Mr. Reid's remedies because I think of the wife and the home, but I would not go so far with him as to consider this "drink craving" specific and simple, and I retain an open mind about the sale of drink. He has not convinced me that there is an inherited "drink craving" any more than there is an inherited tea craving or an inherited morphia craving.

In the first place I would propound a certain view of the general question of habits. My own private observations in psychology incline me to believe that people vary very much in their power of acquiring habits and in the strength and fixity of the habits they acquire. My most immediate subject of psychological study, for example, is a man of untrustworthy memory who is nearly incapable of a really deep-rooted habit. Nothing is automatic with him. He

crams and forgets languages with an equal ease, gives up smoking after fifteen years of constant practice; shaves with a conscious effort every morning and is capable of forgetting to do so if intent upon anything else. He is generally self-indulgent, capable of keen enjoyment and quite capable of intemperance, but he has no invariable delights and no besetting sin. Such a man will not become an habitual drunkard; he will not become anything "habitual." But with another type of man habit is indeed second nature. Instead of the permanent fluidity of my particular case, such people are continually tending to solidify and harden. Their memories set, their opinions set, their methods of expression set, their delights recur and recur, they convert initiative into mechanical habit day by day. Let them taste any pleasure and each time they taste it they deepen a need. At last their habits become imperative needs. With such a disposition, external circumstances and suggestions, I venture to believe, may make a man either into an habitual church-goer or an habitual drunkard, an habitual toiler or an habitual rake. A self-indulgent rather unsocial habit-forming man may very easily become what is called a dipsomaniac, no doubt, but that is not the same thing as an inherited specific craving. With drink inaccessible and other vices offering his lapse may take another line. An aggressive, proud and greatly mortified man may fall upon the same courses. An unwary youth of the plastic type may be taken unawares and pass from free indulgence to excess before he perceives that a habit is taking hold of him.

I believe that many causes and many temperaments go to the making of drunkards. I have read a story by the late Sir Walter Besant, in which he presents the specific craving as if it were a specific magic curse. The story was supposed to be morally edifying, but I can imagine this ugly superstition of the "hereditary craving" — it is really nothing more — acting with absolutely paralyzing effect upon some credulous youngster struggling in the grip of a developing habit. "It's no good trying," — that quite infernal phrase!

It may be urged that this attempt to whittle down the "inherited craving" to a habit does not meet Mr. Reid's argument from the gradual increase of resisting power in races subjected to alcoholic temptation, an increase due to the elimination of all the more

susceptible individuals. There can be no denying that those nations that have had fermented drinks longest are the soberest, but that, after all, may be only one aspect of much more extensive operations. The nations that have had fermented drinks the longest are also those that have been civilized the longest. The passage of a people from a condition of agricultural dispersal to a more organized civilization means a very extreme change in the conditions of survival, of which the increasing intensity of temptation to alcoholic excess is only one aspect. Gluttony, for example, becomes a much more possible habit, and many other vices tender death for the first time to the men who are gathering in and about towns. The city demands more persistent, more intellectualized and less intense physical desires than the countryside. Moral qualities that were a disadvantage in the dispersed stage become advantageous in the city, and conversely. Rugged independence ceases to be helpful, and an intelligent turn for give and take, for collaboration and bargaining, makes increasingly for survival. Moreover, there grows very slowly an indefinable fabric of traditional home training in restraint that is very hard to separate in analysis from mental heredity. People who have dwelt for many generations in towns are not only more temperate and less explosive in the grosser indulgences, but more *urbane* altogether. The drunken people are also the "uncivil" peoples and the individualistic peoples. The great prevalence of drunkenness among the upper classes two centuries ago can hardly have been bred out in the intervening six or seven generations, and it is also a difficult fact for Mr. Reid that drunkenness has increased in France. In most of the cases cited by Mr. Reid a complex of operating forces could be stated in which the appearance of fermented liquors is only one factor, and a tangle of consequent changes in which a gradually increasing insensibility to the charms of intoxication was only one thread. Drunkenness has no doubt played a large part in eliminating certain types of people from the world, but that it specifically eliminates one specific definable type is an altogether different matter.

Even if we admit Mr. Reid's conception, this by no means solves the problem. It is quite conceivable that the world could purchase certain sorts of immunity too dearly. If it was a common thing to adorn the parapets of houses in towns with piles of loose bricks, it is

certain that a large number of persons not immune to fracture of the skull by falling bricks would be eliminated. A time would no doubt come when those with a specific liability to skull fracture would all be eliminated, and the human cranium would have developed a practical immunity to damage from all sorts of falling substances. But there would have been far more extensive suppressions than would appear in the letter of the agreement.

This no doubt is a caricature of the case, but it will serve to illustrate my contention that until we possess a far more subtle and thorough analysis of the drunkard's physique and mind — if it really is a distinctive type of mind and physique — than we have at present, we have no justification whatever in artificial intervention to increase whatever eliminatory process may at present be going on in this respect. Even if there is such a specific weakness, it is possible it has a period of maximum intensity, and if that should be only a brief phase in development — let us say at adolescence — it might turn out to be much more to the advantage of humanity to contrive protective legislation over the dangerous years. I argue to establish no view in these matters beyond a view that at present we know very little.

Not only do ignorance and doubt bar our way to anything more than a pious wish to eliminate criminality and drunkenness in a systematic manner, but even the popular belief in ruthless suppression whenever there is "madness in the family" will not stand an intelligent scrutiny. The man in the street thinks madness is a fixed and definite thing, as distinct from sanity as black is from white. He is always exasperated at the hesitation of doctors when in a judicial capacity he demands: "Is this man mad or isn't he?" But a very little reading of alienists will dissolve this clear assurance. Here again it seems possible that we have a number of states that we are led to believe are simple because they are gathered together under the generic word "madness," but which may represent a considerable variety of induced and curable and non-inheritable states on the one hand and of innate and incurable and heritable mental disproportions on the other.

The less gifted portion of the educated public was greatly delighted some years ago by a work by Dr. Nordau called

Degeneration, in which a great number of abnormal people were studied in a pseudo-scientific manner and shown to be abnormal beyond any possibility of dispute. Mostly the samples selected were men of exceptional artistic and literary power. The book was pretentious and inconsistent — the late Lord Tennyson was quoted, I remember, as a typically "sane" poet in spite of the scope afforded by his melodramatic personal appearance and his morbid passion for seclusion — but it did at least serve to show that if we cannot call a man stupid we may almost invariably call him mad with some show of reason. The public read the book for the sake of its abuse, applied the intended conclusion to every success that awakened its envy, and failed altogether to see how absolutely the definition of madness was destroyed. But if madness is indeed simply genius out of hand and genius only madness under adequate control; if imagination is a snare only to the unreasonable and a disordered mind only an excess of intellectual enterprise — and really none of these things can be positively disproved — then just as reasonable as the idea of suppressing the reproduction of madness, is the idea of breeding it! Let us take all these dull, stagnant, respectable people, one might say, who do nothing but conform to whatever rule is established about them and obstruct whatever change is proposed to them, whose chief quality is a sheer incapacity to imagine anything beyond their petty experiences, and let us tell them plainly, "It is time a lunatic married into your family." Let no one run away from this with the statement that I propose such a thing should be done, but it is, at any rate in the present state of our knowledge, as reasonable a proposal, to make as its quite frequently reiterated converse.

If in any case we are in a position to intervene and definitely forbid increase, it is in the case of certain specific diseases, which I am told are painful and disastrous and inevitably transmitted to the offspring of the person suffering from these diseases. If there are such diseases — and that is a question the medical profession should be able to decide — it is evident that to incur parentage while one suffers from one of them or to transmit them in any avoidable way, is a cruel, disastrous and abominable act. If such a thing is possible it seems to me that in view of the guiding principle laid down in these papers it might well be put at the nadir of crime, and I doubt if any

step the State might take to deter and punish the offender, short of torture, would meet with opposition from sane and reasonable men. For my own part I am inclined at times almost to doubt if there are such diseases. If there are, the remedy is so simple and obvious, that I cannot but blame the medical profession for very discreditable silences. I am no believer in the final wisdom of the mass of mankind, but I do believe enough in the sanity of the English-speaking peoples to be certain that any clear statement and instruction they received from the medical profession, as a whole, in these matters, would be faithfully observed. In the face of the collective silence of this great body of specialists, there is nothing for it but to doubt such diseases exist.

Such a systematic suppression of a specific disease or so is really the utmost that could be done with any confidence at present, so far as the State and collective action go. [Footnote: Since the above was written, a correspondent in Honolulu has called my attention to a short but most suggestive essay by Doctor Harry Campbell in the *Lancet*, 1898, ii., . He uses, of course, the common medical euphemism of "should not marry" for "should not procreate," and he gives the following as a list of "bars to marriage": pulmonary consumption, organic heart disease, epilepsy, insanity, diabetes, chronic Bright's disease, and rheumatic fever. I wish I had sufficient medical knowledge to analyze that proposal. He mentions inherited defective eyesight and hearing also, and the "neurotic" quality, with which I have dealt in my text. He adds two other suggestions that appeal to me very strongly. He proposes to bar all "cases of non-accidental disease in which life is saved by the surgeon's knife," and he instances particularly, strangulated hernia and ovarian cyst. And he also calls attention to apoplectic breakdown and premature senility. All these are suggestions of great value for individual conduct, but none of them have that quality of certainty that justifies collective action.] Until great advances are made in anthropology — and at present there are neither men nor endowments to justify the hope that any such advances will soon be made — that is as much as can be done hopefully for many years in the selective breeding of individuals by the community as a whole. [Footnote: If at any time certainties should replace speculations in the field of inheritance,

then I fancy the common-sense of humanity will be found to be in favour of the immediate application of that knowledge to life.] At present almost every citizen in the civilized State respects the rules of the laws of consanguinity, so far as they affect brothers and sisters, with an absolute respect — an enormous triumph of training over instinct, as Dr. Beattie Crozier has pointed out — and if in the future it should be found possible to divide up humanity into groups, some of which could pair with one another only to the disadvantage of the offspring, and some of which had better have no offspring, I believe there would be remarkably little difficulty in enforcing a system of taboos in accordance with such knowledge. Only it would have to be absolutely certain knowledge proved and proved again up to the hilt. If a truth is worth application it is worth hammering home, and we have no right to expect common men to obey conclusions upon which specialists are as yet not lucidly agreed. [Footnote: It has been pointed out to me by my friend, Mr. Graham Wallas, that although the State may not undertake any positive schemes for selective breeding in the present state of our knowledge, it can no more evade a certain reaction upon these things than the individual can evade a practical solution. Although we cannot say of any specific individual that he or she is, or is not, of exceptional reproductive value to the State, we may still be able, he thinks, to point out classes which are very probably, as a whole, *good* reproductive classes, and we may be able to promote, or at least to avoid hindering, their increase. He instances the female elementary teacher as being probably, as a type, a more intelligent and more energetic and capable girl than the average of the stratum from which she arises, and he concludes she has a higher reproductive value — a view contrary to my argument in the text that reproductive and personal value are perhaps independent. He tells me that it is the practice of many large school boards in this country to dismiss women teachers on marriage, or to refuse promotion to these when they become mothers, which is, of course, bad for the race if personal and reproductive value are identical. He would have them retain their positions regardless of the check to their efficiency maternity entails. This is a curiously indirect way towards what one might call Galtonism. Practically he proposes to endow mothers in the name of education. For my own part I do

not agree with him that this class, any more than any other class, can be shown to have a high reproductive value — which is the matter under analysis in this paper — though I will admit that an ex-teacher will probably do infinitely more for her children than if she were an illiterate or untrained woman. I can only reiterate my conviction that nothing really effective can be organized in these matters until we are much clearer than we are at present in our ideas about them, and that a public body devoted to education has no business either to impose celibacy, or subsidize families, or experiment at all in these affairs. Not only in the case of elementary teachers, but in the case of soldiers, sailors, and so on, the State may do much to promote or discourage marriage and offspring, and no doubt it is also true, as Mr. Wallas insists, that the problems of the foreign immigrant and of racial intermarriage, loom upon us. But since we have no applicable science whatever here, since there is no certainty in any direction that any collective course may not be collectively evil rather than good, there is nothing for it, I hold, but to leave these things to individual experiment, and to concentrate our efforts where there is a clearer hope of effective consequence. Leave things to individual initiative and some of us will, by luck or inspiration, go right; take public action on an insufficient basis of knowledge and there is a clear prospect of collective error. The imminence of these questions argues for nothing except prompt and vigorous research.]

That, however, is only one aspect of this question. There are others from which the New Republican may also approach this problem of the quality of the birth supply.

In relation to personal conduct all these things assume another colour altogether. Let us be clear upon that point. The state, the community, may only act upon certainties, but the essential fact in individual life is experiment. Individuality is experiment. While in matters of public regulation and control it is wiser not to act at all than to act upon theories and uncertainties; while the State may very well wait for a generation or half a dozen generations until knowledge comes up to these — at present — insoluble problems, the private life *must* go on now, and go upon probabilities where certainties fail. When we do not know what is indisputably right, then we have to use our judgments to the utmost to do each what

seems to him probably right. The New Republican in his private life and in the exercise of his private influence, must do what seems to him best for the race; [Footnote: He would certainly try to discourage this sort of thing. The paragraph is from the *Morning Post* (Sept., 1902): —

"*Wedded in Silence*. — A deaf and dumb wedding was celebrated at Saffron Walden yesterday, when Frederick James Baish and Emily Lettige King, both deaf and dumb, were married. The bride was attended by deaf and dumb bridesmaids, and upwards of thirty deaf and dumb friends were present. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. A. Payne, of the Deaf and Dumb Church, London."] he must not beget children heedlessly and unwittingly because of his incomplete assurance. It is pretty obviously his duty to examine himself patiently and thoroughly, and if he feels that he is, on the whole, an average or rather more than an average man, then upon the cardinal principle laid down in our first paper, it is his most immediate duty to have children and to equip them fully for the affairs of life. Moreover he will, I think, lose no opportunity of speaking and acting in such a manner as to restore to marriage something of the solemnity and gravity the Victorian era — that age of nasty sentiment, sham delicacy and giggles — has to so large an extent refused to give it.

And though the New Republicans, in the existing lack of real guiding knowledge, will not dare to intervene in specific cases, there is another method of influencing parentage that men of good intent may well bear in mind. To attack a specific type is one thing, to attack a specific quality is another. It may be impossible to set aside selected persons from the population and say to them, "You are cowardly, weak, silly, mischievous people, and if we tolerate you in this world it is on condition that you do not found families." But it may be quite possible to bear in mind that the law and social arrangements may foster and protect the cowardly and the mean, may guard stupidity against the competition of enterprise, and may secure honour, power and authority in the hands of the silly and the base; and, by the guiding principle we have set before ourselves, to seek every conceivable alteration of such laws and such social arrangements is no more than the New Republican's duty. It may be

impossible to select and intermarry the selected best of our race, but at any rate we can do a thousand things to equalize the chances and make good and desirable qualities lead swiftly and clearly to ease and honourable increase.

At present it is a shameful and embittering fact that a gifted man from the poorer strata of society must too often buy his personal development at the cost of his posterity; he must either die childless and successful for the children of the stupid to reap what he has sown, or sacrifice his gift — a wretched choice and an evil thing for the world at large. [Footnote: This aspect of New Republican possibilities comes in again at another stage, and at that stage its treatment will be resumed. The method and possibility of binding up discredit and failure with mean and undesirable qualities, and of setting a premium upon the nobler attributes, is a matter that touches not only upon the quality of births, but upon the general educational quality of the State in which a young citizen develops. It is convenient to hold over any detailed expansions of this, therefore, until we come to the general question, how the laws, institutions and customs of to-day go to make or unmake the men of to-morrow.]

So far at least we may go, towards improving the quality of the average birth now, but it is manifestly only a very slow and fractional advance that we shall get by these expedients. The obstacle to any ampler enterprise is ignorance and ignorance alone — not the ignorance of a majority in relation to a minority, but an absolute want of knowledge. If we knew more we could do more.

Our main attack in this enterprise of improving the birth supply must lie, therefore, through research. If we cannot act ourselves, we may yet hold a light for our children to see. At present, if there is a man specially gifted and specially disposed for such intricate and laborious inquiry, such criticism and experiment as this question demands, the world offers him neither food nor shelter, neither attention nor help; he cannot hope for a tithe of such honours as are thrust in profusion upon pork-butchers and brewers, he will be heartily despised by ninety-nine per cent. of the people he encounters, and unless he has some irrelevant income, he will die childless and his line will perish with him, for all the service he may give to the future of mankind. And as great mental endowments do

not, unhappily, necessarily involve a passion for obscurity, contempt and extinction, it is probable that under existing conditions such a man will give his mind to some pursuit less bitterly unremunerative and shameful. It is a stupid superstition that "genius will out" in spite of all discouragement. The fact that great men have risen against crushing disadvantages in the past proves nothing of the sort; this roll-call of survivors does no more than give the measure of the enormous waste of human possibility human stupidity has achieved. Men of exceptional gifts have the same broad needs as common men, food, clothing, honour, attention, and the help of their fellows in self-respect; they may not need them as ends, but they need them by the way, and at present the earnest study of heredity produces none of these bye-products. It lies before the New Republican to tilt the balance in this direction.

There are, no doubt, already a number of unselfish and fortunately placed men who are able to do a certain amount of work in this direction; Professor Cossar Ewart, for example, one of those fine, subtle, unhonoured workers who are the glory of British science and the condemnation of our social order, has done much to clarify the discussion of telegony and prepotency, and there are many such medical men as Mr. Reid who broaden their daily practice by attention to these great issues. One thinks of certain other names. Professors Karl Pearson, Weldon, Lloyd Morgan, J. A. Thomson and Meldola, Dr. Benthall and Messrs. Bateson, Cunningham, Pocock, Havelock Ellis, E. A. Fay and Stuart Menteath occur to me, only to remind me how divided their attention has had to be. As many others, perhaps, have slipped my memory now. Not half a hundred altogether in all this wide world of English-speaking men! For one such worker we need fifty if this science of heredity is to grow to practicable proportions. We need a literature, we need a special public and an atmosphere of attention and discussion. Every man who grasps the New Republican idea brings these needs nearer satisfaction, but if only some day the New Republic could catch the ear of a prince, a little weary of being the costumed doll of grown-up children, the decoy dummy of fashionable tradesmen, or if it could invade and capture the mind of a multi-millionaire, these things might come almost at a stride. This missing science of heredity, this

unworked mine of knowledge on the borderland of biology and anthropology, which for all practical purposes is as unworked now as it was in the days of Plato, is, in simple truth, ten times more important to humanity than all the chemistry and physics, all the technical and industrial science that ever has been or ever will be discovered.

So much for the existing possibilities of making the race better by breeding. For the rest of these papers we shall take the births into the world, for the most part, as we find them.

[Mr. Stuart Menteath remarks *apropos* of this question of the reproduction of exceptional people that it is undesirable to suggest voluntary extinction in any case. If a man, thinking that his family is "tainted," displays so much foresighted patriotism, humility, and lifelong self-denial as to have no children, the presumption is that the loss to humanity by the discontinuance of such a type is greater than the gain. "Conceit in smallest bodies strongest works," and it does not follow that a sense of one's own excellence justifies one's utmost fecundity or the reverse. Mr. Vrooman, who, with Mrs. Vrooman, founded Ruskin Hall at Oxford, writes to much the same effect. He argues that people intelligent enough and moral enough to form such resolutions are just the sort of people who ought not to form them. Mr. Stuart Menteath also makes a most admirable suggestion with regard to male and female geniuses who are absorbed in their careers. Although the genius may not have or rear a large family, something might be done to preserve the stock by assisting his or her brothers and sisters to support and educate their children.]

III. CERTAIN WHOLESALE ASPECTS OF MAN-MAKING

§ 1

With a skin of infinite delicacy that life will harden very speedily, with a discomforted writhing little body, with a weak and wailing outcry that stirs the heart, the creature comes protesting into the world, and unless death win a victory, we and chance and the forces of life in it, make out of that soft helplessness a man. Certain things there are inevitable in that man and unalterable, stamped upon his being long before the moment of his birth, the inherited things, the inherent things, his final and fundamental self. This is his "heredity," his incurable reality, the thing that out of all his being, stands the test of survival and passes on to his children. Certain things he must be, certain things he may be, and certain things are for ever beyond his scope. That much his parentage defines for him, that is the natural man.

But, in addition, there is much else to make up the whole adult man as we know him. There is all that he has learnt since his birth, all that he has been taught to do and trained to do, his language, the circle of ideas he has taken to himself, the disproportions that come from unequal exercise and the bias due to circumambient suggestion. There are a thousand habits and a thousand prejudices, powers undeveloped and skill laboriously acquired. There are scars upon his body, and scars upon his mind. All these are secondary things, things capable of modification and avoidance; they constitute the manufactured man, the artificial man. And it is chiefly with all this superposed and adherent and artificial portion of a man that this and the following paper will deal. The question of improving the breed, of raising the average human heredity we have discussed and set aside. We are going to draw together now as many things as possible that bear upon the artificial constituent, the made and controllable constituent in the mature and fully-developed man. We are going to consider how it is built up and how it may be built up, we are going to attempt a rough analysis of the whole complex process by which

the civilized citizen is evolved from that raw and wailing little creature.

Before his birth, at the very moment when his being becomes possible, the inherent qualities and limitations of a man are settled for good and all, whether he will be a negro or a white man, whether he will be free or not of inherited disease, whether he will be passionate or phlegmatic or imaginative or six-fingered or with a snub or aquiline nose. And not only that, but even before his birth the qualities that are not strictly and inevitably inherited are also beginning to be made. The artificial, the avoidable handicap also, may have commenced in the worrying, the overworking or the starving of his mother. In the first few months of his life very slight differences in treatment may have life-long consequences. No doubt there is an extraordinary recuperative power in very young children; if they do not die under neglect or ill-treatment they recover to an extent incomparably greater than any adult could do, but there remains still a wide marginal difference between what they become and what they might have been. With every year of life the recuperative quality diminishes, the initial handicap becomes more irrevocable, the effects of ill-feeding, of unwholesome surroundings, of mental and moral infections, become more inextricably a part of the growing individuality. And so we may well begin our study by considering the circumstances under which the opening phase, the first five years of life, are most safely and securely passed.

Food, warmth, cleanliness and abundant fresh air there must be from the first, and unremitting attention, such attention as only love can sustain. And in addition there must be knowledge. It is a pleasant superstition that Nature (who in such connections becomes feminine and assumes a capital N) is to be trusted in these matters. It is a pleasant superstition to which, some of us, under the agreeable counsels of sentimental novelists, of thoughtless mercenary preachers, and ignorant and indolent doctors, have offered up a child or so. We are persuaded to believe that a mother has an instinctive knowledge of whatever is necessary for a child's welfare, and the child, until it reaches the knuckle-rapping age at least, an instinctive knowledge of its own requirements. Whatever proceedings are most suggestive of an ideal naked savage leading a "natural" life, are

supposed to be not only more advantageous to the child but in some mystical way more moral. The spectacle of an undersized porter-fed mother, for example, nursing a spotted and distressful baby, is exalted at the expense of the clean and simple artificial feeding that is often advisable to-day. Yet the mortality of first-born children should indicate that a modern woman carries no instinctive system of baby management about with her in her brain, even if her savage ancestress had anything of the sort, and both the birth rate and the infantile death rate of such noble savages as our civilization has any chance of observing, suggest a certain generous carelessness, a certain spacious indifference to individual misery, rather than a trustworthy precision of individual guidance about Nature's way.

This cant of Nature's trustworthiness is partly a survival of the day of Rousseau and Sturm (of the Reflections), when untravelled men, orthodox and unorthodox alike, in artificial wigs, spouted in unison in this regard; partly it is the half instinctive tactics of the lax and lazy-minded to evade trouble and austerities. The incompetent medical practitioner, incapable of regimen, repeats this cant even to-day, though he knows full well that, left to Nature, men over-eat themselves almost as readily as dogs, contract a thousand diseases and exhaust their last vitality at fifty, and that half the white women in the world would die with their first children still unborn. He knows, too, that to the details of such precautionary measures as vaccination, for example, instinct is strongly opposed, and that drainage and filterage and the use of soap in washing are manifestly unnatural things. That large, naked, virtuous, pink, Natural Man, drinking pure spring water, eating the fruits of the earth, and living to ninety in the open air is a fantasy; he never was nor will be. The real savage is a nest of parasites within and without, he smells, he rots, he starves. Forty is a great age for him. He is as full of artifice as his civilized brother, only not so wise. As for his moral integrity, let the curious inquirer seek an account of the Tasmanian, or the Australian, or the Polynesian before "sophistication" came.

The very existence and nature of man is an interference with Nature and Nature's ways, using Nature in this sense of the repudiation of expedients. Man is the tool-using animal, the word-using animal, the animal of artifice and reason, and the only possible

“return to Nature” for him — if we scrutinize the phrase — would be a return to the scratching, promiscuous, arboreal simian. To rebel against instinct, to rebel against limitation, to evade, to trip up, and at last to close with and grapple and conquer the forces that dominate him, is the fundamental being of man. And from the very outset of his existence, from the instant of his birth, if the best possible thing is to be made of him, wise contrivance must surround him. The soft, new, living thing must be watched for every sign of discomfort, it must be weighed and measured, it must be thought about, it must be talked to and sung to, skilfully and properly, and presently it must be given things to see and handle that the stirring germ of its mind may not go unsatisfied. From the very beginning, if we are to do our best for a child, there must be forethought and knowledge quite beyond the limit of instinct’s poor equipment.

Now, for a child to have all these needs supplied implies certain other conditions. The constant loving attention is to be got only from a mother or from some well-affected girl or woman. It is not a thing to be hired for money, nor contrivable on any wholesale plan. Possibly there may be ways of cherishing and nursing infants by wholesale that will keep them alive, but at best these are second best ways, and we are seeking the best possible. A very noble, exceptionally loving and quite indefatigable woman might conceivably direct the development of three or four little children from their birth onward, or, with very good assistance, even of six or seven at a time, as well as a good mother could do for one, but it would be a very rare and wonderful thing. We must put that aside as an exceptional thing, quite impossible to provide when it is most needed, and we must fall back upon the fact that the child must have a mother or nurse — and it must have that attendant exclusively to itself for the first year or so of life. The mother or nurse must be in health, physically and morally, well fed and contented, and able to give her attention mainly, if not entirely, to the little child. The child must lie warmly in a well-ventilated room, with some one availably in hearing day and night, there must be plentiful warm water to wash it, plenty of wrappings and towellings and so forth for it; it is best to take it often into the open air, and for this, under urban or suburban conditions at any rate, a perambulator is almost necessary. The room

must be clean and brightly lit, and prettily and interestingly coloured if we are to get the best results. These things imply a certain standard of prosperity in the circumstances of the child's birth. Either the child must be fed in the best way from a mother in health and abundance, or if it is to be bottle fed, there must be the most elaborate provision for sterilizing and warming the milk, and adjusting its composition to the changing powers of the child's assimilation. These conditions imply a house of a certain standard of comfort and equipment, and it is manifest the mother cannot be earning her own living before and about the time of the child's birth, nor, unless she is going to employ a highly skilled, trustworthy, and probably expensive person as nurse, for some year or so after it. She or the nurse must be of a certain standard of intelligence and education, trained to be observant and keep her temper, and she must speak her language with a good, clear accent. Moreover, behind the mother and readily available, must be a highly-skilled medical man.

Not to have these things means a handicap. Not to have that very watchful feeding and attention at first means a loss of nutrition, a retarding of growth, that will either never be recovered or will be recovered later at the expense of mental development or physical strength. The early handicap may also involve a derangement of the digestion, a liability to stomachic and other troubles, that may last throughout life. Not to have the singing and talking, and the varied interest of coloured objects and toys, means a falling away from the best mental development, and a taciturn nurse, or a nurse with a base accent, means backwardness and needless difficulty with the beginning of speech. Not to be born within reach of abundant changes of clothing and abundant water, means — however industrious and cleanly the instincts of nurse and mother — a lack of the highest possible cleanliness and a lack of health and vitality. And the absence of highly-skilled medical advice, or the attentions of over-worked and under-qualified practitioners, may convert a transitory crisis or a passing ailment into permanent injury or fatal disorder.

It is very doubtful if these most favourable conditions fall to the lot of more than a quarter of the children born to-day even in England, where infant mortality is at its lowest. The rest start

handicapped. They start handicapped, and fail to reach their highest possible development. They are born of mothers preoccupied by the necessity of earning a living or by vain occupations, or already battered and exhausted by immoderate child-bearing; they are born into insanity and ugly or inconvenient homes, their mothers or nurses are ignorant and incapable, there is insufficient food or incompetent advice, there is, if they are town children, nothing for their lungs but vitiated air, and there is not enough sunlight for them. And accordingly they fall away at the very outset from what they might be, and for the most part they never recover their lost start.

Just what this handicap amounts to, so far as it works out in physical consequences, is to be gauged by certain almost classical figures, which I have here ventured to present again in graphic form. These figures do not present our total failure, they merely show how far the less fortunate section of the community falls short of the more fortunate. They are taken from Clifford Allbutt's *System of Medicine* (art. "Hygiene of Youth," Dr. Clement Dukes). 15,564 boys and young men were measured and weighed to get these figures. The black columns indicate the weight (+9 lbs. of clothes) and height respectively of youths of the town artisan population, for the various ages from ten to twenty-five indicated at the heads of the columns. The white additions to these columns indicate the additional weight and height of the more favoured classes at the same ages. Public school-boys, naval and military cadets, medical and university students, were taken to represent the more favoured classes. It will be noted that while the growth in height of the lower class boy falls short from the very earliest years, the strain of the adolescent period tells upon his weight, and no doubt upon his general stamina, most conspicuously. These figures, it must be borne in mind, deal with the living members of each class at the ages given. The mortality, however, in the black or lower class is probably far higher than in the upper class year by year, and if this could be allowed for it would greatly increase the apparent failure of the lower class. And these matters of height and weight are only coarse material deficiencies. They serve to suggest, but they do not serve to gauge, the far graver and sadder loss, the invisible and immeasurable loss through mental and moral qualities undeveloped, through activities warped and

crippled and vitality and courage lowered.

Moreover, defective as are these urban artisans, they are, after all, much more "picked" than the youth of the upper classes. They are survivors of a much more stringent process of selection than goes on amidst the more hygienic upper and middle-class conditions. The opposite three columns represent the mortality of children under five in Rutlandshire, where it is lowest, in the year 1900, in Dorsetshire, a reasonably good county, and in Lancashire, the worst in England, for the same year. Each entire column represents 1,000 births, and the blackened portion represents the proportion of that 1,000 dead before the fifth birthday. Now, unless we are going to assume that the children born in Lancashire are inherently weaker than the children born in Rutland or Dorset — and there is not the shadow of a reason why we should believe that — we must suppose that at least 161 children out of every 1,000 in Lancashire were killed by the conditions into which they were born. That excess of blackness in the third column over that in the first represents a holocaust of children, that goes on year by year, a perennial massacre of the innocents, out of which no political capital can be made, and which is accordingly outside the sphere of practical politics altogether as things are at present. The same men who spouted infinite mischief because a totally unforeseen and unavoidable epidemic of measles killed some thousands of children in South Africa, who, for some idiotic or wicked vote-catching purpose, attempted to turn that epidemic to the permanent embitterment of Dutch and English, these same men allow thousands and thousands of avoidable deaths of English children close at hand to pass absolutely unnoticed. The fact that more than 21,000 little children died needlessly in Lancashire in that very same year means nothing to them at all. It cannot be used to embitter race against race, and to hamper that process of world unification which it is their pious purpose to delay.

It does not at all follow that even the Rutland 103 represents the possible minimum of infant mortality. One learns from the Register-General's returns for 1891 that among the causes of death specified in the three counties of Dorset, Wiltshire, and Hereford, where infant mortality is scarcely half what it is in the three vilest towns in England in this respect, Preston, Leicester, and Blackburn, the

number of children killed by injury at birth is three times as great as it is in these same towns. Unclassified "violence" also accounts for more infant deaths in the country than in towns. This suggests pretty clearly a delayed and uncertain medical attendance and rough conditions, and it points us to still better possibilities. These diagrams and these facts justify together a reasonable hope that the mortality of infants under five throughout England might be brought to less than one-third what it is in child-destroying Lancashire at the present time, to a figure that is well under ninety in the thousand.

A portion of infant and child mortality represents no doubt the lingering and wasteful removal from this world of beings with inherent defects, beings who, for the most part, ought never to have been born, and need not have been born under conditions of greater foresight. These, however, are the merest small fraction of our infant mortality. It leaves untouched the fact that a vast multitude of children of untainted blood and good mental and moral possibilities, as many, perhaps, as 100 in each 1,000 born, die yearly through insufficient food, insufficient good air, and insufficient attention. The plain and simple truth is that they are born needlessly. There are still too many births for our civilisation to look after, we are still unfit to be trusted with a rising birth-rate. [Footnote: It is a digression from the argument of this Paper, but I would like to point out here a very popular misconception about the birth-rate which needs exposure. It is known that the birth-rate is falling in all European countries — a fall which has a very direct relation to a rise in the mean standard of comfort and the average age at marriage — and alarmists foretell a time when nations will be extinguished through this decline. They ascribe it to a certain decay in religious faith, to the advance of science and scepticism, and so forth; it is a part, they say, of a general demoralization. The thing is a popular cant and quite unsupported by facts. The decline in the birth-rate is — so far as England and Wales goes — partly a real decline due to a decline in gross immorality, partly to a real decline due to the later age at which women marry, and partly a statistical decline due to an increased proportion of people too old or too young for child-bearing. Wherever the infant mortality is falling there is an apparent misleading fall in the birth-rate due to the "loading" of the

population with children. Here are the sort of figures that are generally given. They are the figures for England and Wales for two typical periods.

Period 1846-1850	33 8 births per 1000
Period 1896-1900	28 0 births per 1000

5.8 fall in the birth-rate.

This as it stands is very striking. But if we take the death-rates of these two periods we find that they have fallen also.

Period 1846-1850	23 3 deaths per 1000
Period 1896-1900	17 7 deaths per 1000

5.6 fall in the death-rate.

Let us subtract death-rate from birth-rate and that will give the effective rate of increase of the population.

Period 1846-1850	10 5 effective rate of increase
Period 1896-1900	10 3 effective rate of increase

.2 fall in the rate of increase.

But now comes a curious thing that those who praise the good old pre-Board School days — the golden age of virtuous innocence — ignore. The *Illegitimate births* in 1846-1850 numbered 2.2 per 1000, in 1896-1900 they numbered 1.2 per 1000. So that if it were not for this fall in illegitimate births the period 1896-1900 would show a positive rise in the effective rate of increase of .8 per thousand. The eminent persons therefore who ascribe our falling birth-rate to irreligion and so forth, either speak without knowledge or with some sort of knowledge beyond my ken. England is, as a matter of fact, becoming not only more hygienic and rational, but more moral and more temperate. The highly moral, healthy, prolific, pious England of the past is just another poetical delusion of the healthy savage type.]

These poor little souls are born, amidst tears and suffering they gain such love as they may, they learn to feel and suffer, they struggle and cry for food, for air, for the right to develop; and our civilisation at present has neither the courage to kill them outright quickly, cleanly, and painlessly, nor the heart and courage and ability

to give them what they need. They are overlooked and misused, they go short of food and air, they fight their pitiful little battle for life against the cruellest odds; and they are beaten. Battered, emaciated, pitiful, they are thrust out of life, borne out of our regardless world, stiff little life-soiled sacrifices to the spirit of disorder against which it is man's preeminent duty to battle. There has been all the pain in their lives, there has been the radiated pain of their misery, there has been the waste of their grudged and insufficient food, and all the pain and labour of their mothers, and all the world is the sadder for them because they have lived in vain.

§ 2

Now, since our imaginary New Republic, which is to set itself to the making of a better generation of men, will find the possibility of improving the race by selective breeding too remote for anything but further organised inquiry, it is evident that its first point of attack will have to be the wastage of such births as the world gets to-day. Throughout the world the New Republic will address itself to this problem, and when a working solution has been obtained, then the New Republican on press and platform, the New Republican in pulpit and theatre, the New Republican upon electoral committee and in the ballot box, will press weightily to see that solution realised. Upon the theory of New Republicanism as it was discussed in our first paper an effective solution (effective enough, let us say, to abolish seventy or eighty per cent.) of this scandal of infantile suffering would have precedence over almost every existing political consideration.

The problem of securing the maximum chance of life and health for every baby born into the world is an extremely complicated one, and the reader must not too hastily assume that a pithy, complete recipe is attempted here. Yet, complicated though the problem is, there does not occur any demonstrable impossibility such as there is in the question of selective breeding. I believe that a solution is possible, that its broad lines may be already stated, and that it could very easily be worked out to an immediate practical application.

Let us glance first at a solution that is now widely understood to

be incorrect. Philanthropic people in the past have attempted, and many are still striving, to meet the birth waste by the very obvious expedients of lying-in hospitals, orphanages and foundling institutions, waifs' homes, Barnardo institutions and the like, and within certain narrow limits these things no doubt serve a useful purpose in individual cases. But nowadays there is an increasing indisposition to meet the general problem by such methods, because nowadays people are alive to certain ulterior consequences that were at first overlooked. Any extensive relief of parental responsibility we now know pretty certainly will serve to encourage and stimulate births in just those strata of society where it would seem to be highly reasonable to believe they are least desirable. It is just where the chances for a child are least that passions are grossest, basest, and most heedless, and stand in the greatest need of a sense of the gravity of possible consequences to control their play, and to render it socially innocuous. If we were to take over or assist all the children born below a certain level of comfort, or, rather, if we were to take over their mothers before the birth occurred, and bring up that great mass of children under the best conditions for them — supposing this to be possible — it would only leave our successors in the next generation a heavier task of the same sort. The assisted population would grow generation by generation relatively to the assisting until the Sinbad of Charity broke down. And quite early in the history of Charities it was found that a very grave impediment to their beneficial action lay in one of the most commendable qualities to be found in poor and poorish people, and that is pride. While Charities, perhaps, catch the quite hopeless cases, they leave untouched the far more extensive mass of births in non-pauper, not very prosperous homes — the lower middle-class homes in towns, for example, which supply a large proportion of poorly developed adults to our community. Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, in his "Poverty" (that noble, able, valuable book), has shown that nearly thirty per cent. at least of a typical English town population goes short of the physical necessities of life. These people are fiercely defensive in such matters as this, and one may no more usurp and share their parental responsibility, badly though they discharge it, than one may handle the litter of a she-wolf.

These considerations alone would suffice to make us very suspicious of the philanthropic method of direct assistance, so far as the remedial aspect goes. But there is another more sweeping and comprehensive objection to this method. Philanthropic institutions, as a matter of fact, rarely succeed in doing what they profess and intend to do.

I do not allude here to the countless swindlers and sham institutions that levy a tremendous tribute upon the heedless good. Quite apart from that wastage altogether, and speaking only of such *bonâ fide* institutions as would satisfy Mr. Labouchere, they do not work. It is one thing for the influential and opulent inactive person of good intentions to provide a magnificent building and a lavish endowment for some specific purpose, and quite another to attain in reality the ostensible end of the display. It is easy to create a general effect of providing comfort and tender care for helpless women who are becoming mothers, and of tending and training and educating their children, but, in cold fact, it is impossible to get enough capable and devoted people to do the work. In cold fact, lying-in hospitals have a tendency to become austere, hard, unsympathetic, wholesale concerns, with a disposition to confuse and substitute moral for physical well-being. In cold fact, orphanages do not present any perplexing resemblance to an earthly paradise. However warm the heart behind the cheque, the human being at the other end of the chain is apt to find the charity no more than a rather inhuman machine. Shining devotees there are, but able, courageous, and vigorous people are rare, and the world urges a thousand better employments upon them than the care of inferior mothers and inferior children. Exceptionally good people owe the world the duty of parentage themselves, and it follows that the rank and file of those in the service of Charity falls far below the standard necessary to give these poor children that chance in the world the cheque-writing philanthropist believes he is giving them. The great proportion of the servants and administrators of Charities are doing that work because they can get nothing better to do — and it is not considered remarkably high-class work. These things have to be reckoned with by every philanthropic person with sufficient faith to believe that an enterprise may not only look well, but do well. One gets a Waugh or

a Barnardo now and then, a gleam of efficiency in the waste, and for the rest this spectacle of stinted thought and unstinted giving, this modern Charity, is often no more than a pretentious wholesale substitute for retail misery and disaster. Fourteen million pounds a year, I am told, go to British Charities, and I doubt if anything like a fair million's worth of palliative amelioration is attained for this expenditure. As for any permanent improvement, I doubt if all these Charities together achieve a net advance that could not be got by the discreet and able expenditure of ten or twelve thousand pounds.

It is one of the grimmest ironies in life, that athwart the memory of sainted founders should be written the most tragic consequences. The Foundling Hospital of London, established by Coram — to save infant lives! — buried, between 1756 and 1760, 10,534 children out of 14,934 received, and the Dublin Foundling Hospital (suppressed in 1835) had a mortality of eighty per cent. The two great Russian institutions are, I gather, about equally deadly with seventy-five per cent., and the Italian institutes run to about ninety per cent. The Florentine boasts a very beautiful and touching series of *putti* by Delia Robbia, that does little or nothing to diminish its death-rate. So far from preventing infant murder these places, with the noblest intentions in the world, have, for all practical purposes, organized it. The London Foundling, be it noted, in the reorganized form it assumed after its first massacres, is not a Foundling Hospital at all. An extremely limited number of children, the illegitimate children of recommended respectable but unfortunate mothers, are converted into admirable bandsmen for the defence of the Empire or trained to be servants for people who feel the need of well-trained servants, at a gross cost that might well fill the mind of many a poor clergyman's son with amazement and envy. And this is probably a particularly well-managed charity. It is doing all that can be expected of it, and stands far above the general Charitable average.

Every Poor Law Authority comes into the tangles of these perplexities. Upon the hands of every one of them come deserted children, the children of convicted criminals, the children of pauper families, a miscellaneous pitiful succession of responsibilities. The enterprises they are forced to undertake to meet these charges rest on taxation, a financial basis far stabler than the fitful good intentions of

the rich, but apart from this advantage there is little about them to differentiate them from Charities. The method of treatment varies from a barrack system, in which the children are herded in huge asylums like those places between Sutton and Banstead, to what is perhaps preferable, the system of boarding-out little groups of children with suitable poor people. Provided such boarded-out children are systematically weighed, measured and examined, and at once withdrawn when they drop below average mental and bodily progress, it would seem more likely that a reasonable percentage should grow into ordinary useful citizens under these latter conditions than under the former.

It is well, however, to anticipate a very probable side result if we make the boarding out of pauper children a regular rural industry. There will arise in many rural homes a very strong pecuniary inducement to limit the family. Side by side will be a couple with eight children — of their own, struggling hard to keep them, and another family with, let us say, two children of their own blood and six "boarded-out," living in relative opulence. That side consequence must be anticipated. For my own part and for the reasons given in the second of these papers, I do not see that it is a very serious one so far as the future goes, because I do not think there is much to choose between the "heredity" of the rural and the urban strain. It is nonsense to pretend that we shall get the fine flower of the cottage population to board pauper children; we shall induce respectable inferior people living in healthy conditions to take care of an inferior sort of children rescued from unhealthy disreputable conditions — that is all. The average inherent quality of the resultant adults will be about the same whichever element predominates.

Possibly this indifference may seem undesirable. But we must bear in mind that the whole problem is hard to cope with, it is an aspect of failure, and no sentimental juggling with facts will convert the business into a beautiful or desirable thing. Somehow or other we have to pay. All expedients must be palliatives, all will involve sacrifices; we must, no doubt, adopt some of them for our present necessities, but they are like famine relief works, to adopt them in permanence is a counsel of despair.

Clearly it is not along these lines that the capable men-makers we

suppose to be attacking the problem will spend much of their energies. All the experiences of Charities and Poor-Law Authorities simply confirm our postulate of the necessity of a standard of comfort if a child is to have a really good initial chance in the world. The only conceivable solution of this problem is one that will ensure that no child, or only a few accidental and exceptional children, will be born outside these advantages. It is no good trying to sentimentalize the issue away. This is the end we must attain, to attain any effectual permanent improvement in the conditions of childhood. A certain number of people have to be discouraged and prevented from parentage, and a great number of homes have to be improved. How can we ensure these ends, or how far can we go towards ensuring them?

The first step to ensuring them is certainly to do all we can to discourage reckless parentage, and to render it improbable and difficult. We must make sure that whatever we do for the children, the burden of parental responsibility must not be lightened a feather-weight. All the experience of two hundred years of charity and poor law legislation sustains that. But to accept that as a first principle is one thing, and to apply it by using a wretched little child as our instrument in the exemplary punishment of its parent is another. At present that is our hideous practice. So long as the parents are not convicted criminals, so long as they do not practise indictable cruelty upon their offspring, so long as the children themselves fall short of criminality, we insist upon the parent "keeping" the child. It may be manifest the child is ill-fed, harshly treated, insufficiently clothed, dirty and living among surroundings harmful to body and soul alike, but we merely take the quivering damaged victim and point the moral to the parent. "This is what comes of your recklessness," we say. "Aren't you ashamed of it?" And after inscrutable meditations the fond parent usually answers us by sending out the child to beg or sell matches or by some equally effective retort. Now a great number of excellent people pretend that this is a dilemma. "Take the child away," it is argued, "and you remove one of the chief obstacles to the reckless reproduction of the unfit. Leave it in the parents' hands and you must have the cruelty." But really this is not a dilemma at all. There is a quite excellent middle way. It may not be within the

sphere of practical politics at present — if not, it is work for the New Republic to get it there — but it would practically settle all this problem of neglected children. This way is simply to make the parent the debtor to society on account of the child for adequate food, clothing, and care for at least the first twelve or thirteen years of life, and in the event of parental default to invest the local authority with exceptional powers of recovery in this matter. It would be quite easy to set up a minimum standard of clothing, cleanliness, growth, nutrition and education, and provide, that if that standard was not maintained by a child, or if the child was found to be bruised or maimed without the parents being able to account for these injuries, the child should be at once removed from the parental care, and the parents charged with the cost of a suitable maintenance — which need not be excessively cheap. If the parents failed in the payments they could be put into celibate labour establishments to work off as much of the debt as they could, and they would not be released until their debt was fully discharged. Legislation of this type would not only secure all and more of the advantages children of the least desirable sort now get from charities and public institutions, but it would certainly invest parentage with a quite unprecedented gravity for the reckless, and it would enormously reduce the number of births of the least desirable sort. Into this net, for example, every habitual drunkard who was a parent would, for his own good and the world's, be almost certain to fall. [Footnote: Mr. C. G. Stuart Menteath has favored me with some valuable comments upon this point. He writes: "I agree that calling such persons as have shown themselves incapable of parental duties debtors to the State, would help to reconcile popular ideas of the 'liberty of the subject' with the enforcement as well as the passing of such laws. But the notions of drastically enforcing parental duties, and of discouraging and even prohibiting the marriages of those unable to show their ability to perform these duties, has long prevailed. See Nicholl's *History of the Poor Law* (1898, New Edition), i. 229, and ii. 140, 278, where you will find chargeable bastardy has been punishable in the first offence by one year's imprisonment, and in the second, by imprisonment until sureties are given, which thus might amount to imprisonment for life. See also, J. S. Mill, *Political Economy*, Bk. II., ch. ii., for

extreme legislation on the Continent against the marriage of people unable to support a family. In Denmark there seem to be very severe laws impeding the marriage of those who have been paupers. The English law was sufficiently effective to produce infanticide, so that a law was passed making concealment of birth almost infanticide.”]

So much for the worst fringe of this question, the maltreated children, the children of the slum, the children of drunkards and criminals, and the illegitimate. But the bulk of the children of deficient growth, the bulk of the excessive mortality, lies above the level of such intervention, and the method of attack of the New Republican must be less direct. Happily there already exists a complicated mass of legislation that without any essential change of principle could be applied to this object.

The first of the expedients which would lead to a permanent improvement in these matters is the establishment of a minimum of soundness and sanitary convenience in houses, below which standard it shall be illegal to inhabit a house at all. There should be a certain relation between the size of rooms and their ventilating appliances, a certain minimum of lighting, certain conditions of open space about the house and sane rules about foundations and materials. These regulations would vary with the local density of population — many things are permissible in Romney marsh, for example, which the south-west wind sweeps everlastingly, that would be deadly in Rotherhithe. At present in England there are local building regulations, for the most part vexatious and stupid to an almost incredible degree, and compiled without either imagination or understanding, but it should be possible to substitute for these a national minimum of habitability without any violent revolution. A house that failed to come up to this minimum — which might begin very low and be raised at intervals of years — would, after due notice, be pulled down. It might be pulled down and the site taken over and managed by the local authority — allowing its owner a portion of its value in compensation — if it was evident his failure to keep up to the standard had an adequate excuse. In time it might be possible to level up the minimum standard of all tenements in towns and urban districts at any rate to the possession of a properly equipped bathroom for example, without which, for hardworking

people, regular cleanliness is a practical impossibility. This process of levelling-up the minimum tenement would be enormously aided by a philanthropic society which would devote itself to the study of building methods and materials, to the evolution of conveniences, and the direction of invention to lessening the cost and complication of building wholesome dwellings.

The state of repair of inhabited buildings is also already a matter of public concern. All that is needed is a slow, persistent tightening-up of the standard. This would ensure, at any rate, that the outer shell of the child's surroundings gave it a fair chance in life. In the next place comes legislation against overcrowding. There must be a maximum number of inhabitants to any tenement, and a really sane law will be far more stringent to secure space and air for young children than for adults. There is little reason, except the possible harbouring of parasites and infectious disease, why five or six adults should not share a cask on a dust heap as a domicile — if it pleases them. But directly children come in we touch the future. The minimum permissible tenement for a maximum of two adults and a very young child is one properly ventilated room capable of being heated, with close and easy access to sanitary conveniences, a constant supply of water and easy means of getting warm water. More than one child should mean another room, and it seems only reasonable if we go so far as this, to go further and require a minimum of furniture and equipment, a fire-guard, for instance, and a separate bed or cot for the child. In a civilized community little children should not sleep with adults, and the killing of children by "accidental" overlaying should be a punishable offence. [Footnote: In the returns I have quoted from Blackburn, Leicester, and Preston the number of deaths from suffocation per 100,000 infants born was 232 in the first year of life.]

If a woman does not wish to be dealt with as a half-hearted murderess she should not behave like one. It should also be punishable on the part of a mother to leave children below a certain age alone for longer than a certain interval. It is absurd to punish people as we do, for the injuries inflicted by them upon their children during uncontrollable anger, and not to punish them for the injuries inflicted by uncontrolled carelessness. Such legislation should ensure

children space, air and attention. [Footnote: It is less within the range of commonly grasped ideas, it is therefore less within the range of practical expedients, to point out that a graduated scale of building regulation might be contrived for use in different localities. Districts could be classed in grades determined by the position of each district in the scale of infant mortality, and in those in which the rate was highest the hygienic standard could be made most stringent and onerous upon the house owner. This would force up the price of house-room, and that would force up the price of labour, and this would give the proprietors of unwholesome industries a personal interest in hygienic conditions about them. It would also tend to force population out of districts intrinsically unhealthy into districts intrinsically healthy. The statistics of low-grade districts could be examined to discover the distinctive diseases which determine their lowness of grade, and if these were preventable diseases they could be controlled by special regulations. A further extension of these principles might be made. Direct inducements to attract the high birth-rates towards exceptionally healthy districts could be contrived by a differential rating of sound families with children in such districts, the burthen of heavy rates could be thrown upon silly and selfish landowners who attempted to stifle sound populations by using highly habitable areas as golf links, private parks, game preserves, and the like, and public-spirited people could combine to facilitate communications that would render life in such districts compatible with industrial occupation. Such deliberate redistribution of population as this differential treatment of districts involves, is, however, quite beyond the available power and intelligence of our public control at present, and I suggest it here as something that our grandchildren perhaps may begin to consider. But if in the obscurity of this footnote I may let myself go, I would point out that, in the future, a time may come when locomotion will be so swift and convenient and cheap that it will be unnecessary to spread out the homes of our great communities where the industrial and trading centres are gathered together; it will be unnecessary for each district to sustain the renewal and increase of its own population. Certain wide regions will become specifically administrative and central — the home lands, the mother lands, the centres of education and

population, and others will become specifically fields of action. Something of this kind is to a slight degree already the case with Scotland, which sends out its hardy and capable sons wherever the world has need of them; the Swiss mountains, too, send their sons far and wide in the world; and on the other hand, with regard to certain elements of population, at any rate, London and the Gold Coast and, I suspect, some regions in the United States of America, receive to consume.]

But it will be urged that these things are likely to bear rather severely on the very poor parent. To which a growing number of people will reply that the parent should not be a parent under circumstances that do not offer a fair prospect of sound child-birth and nurture. It is no good trying to eat our cake and have it; if the parent does not suffer the child will, and of the two, we, of the New Republic, have no doubt that the child is the more important thing.

It may be objected, however, that existing economic conditions make life very uncertain for many very sound and wholesome kinds of people, and that it is oppressive and likely to rob the State of good citizens to render parentage burthensome, and to surround it with penalties. But that directs our attention to a second scheme of expedients which have crystallized about the expression, the Minimum Wage. The cardinal idea of this group of expedients is this, that it is unjust and cruel in the present and detrimental to the future of the world to let any one be fully employed at a rate of payment at which a wholesome, healthy, and, by the standards of comfort at the time, a reasonable happy life is impossible. *It is better in the long run that people whose character and capacity will not render it worth while to employ them at the Minimum Wage should not be employed at all.* The sweated employment of such people, as Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb show most conclusively in their great work, "Industrial Democracy," arrests the development of labour-saving machinery, replaces and throws out of employment superior and socially more valuable labour, enables these half capables to establish base families of inadequately fed and tended children (which presently collapse upon public and private charity), and so lowers and keeps down the national standard of life. As these writers show very clearly, an industry that cannot adequately sustain sound

workers is not in reality a source of public wealth at all, but a disease and a parasite upon the public body. It is eating up citizens the State has had the expense of educating, and very often the indirect cost of rearing. Obviously the minimum wage for a civilized adult male should be sufficient to cover the rent of the minimum tenement permissible with three or four children, the maintenance of himself and his wife and children above the minimum standard of comfort, his insurance against premature or accidental death or temporary economic or physical disablement, some minimum provision for old age and a certain margin for the exercise of his individual freedom. [Footnote: An excellent account of experiments already tried in the establishment of a Minimum Wage will be found in W.P. Reeves' *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, vol. ii., *et seq*.]

So that while those who are bent on this conception of making economy in life and suffering the guiding principle of their public and social activity, are seeking to brace up the quality of the home on the one hand, they must also do all they can to bring about the realization of this ideal of a minimum wage on the other. In the case of government and public employment and of large, well-organized industries, the way is straight and open, and the outlook very hopeful. Wherever licenses, tariffs, and any sort of registration occurs there are practicable means of bringing in this expedient. But where the employment is shifting and sporadic, or free from regulation, there we have a rent in our social sieve, and the submissive, eager inferior will still come in, the failures of our own race, the immigrant from baser lands, desperately and disastrously underselling our sound citizens. Obviously we must use every contrivance we can to mend these rents, by promoting the organization of employments in any way that will not hamper progress in economic production. And if we can persuade the Trade Unions — and there is every sign that the old mediaeval guild conception of water-tight trade limitations is losing its hold upon those organizations — to facilitate the movement of workers from trade to trade under the shifting stress of changing employment and of changing economy of production, we shall have gone far to bring the possibilities of the rising operative up to the standard of the minimum home permissible for children.

These things — if we could bring them about — would leave us with a sort of clarified Problem of the Unemployed on our hands. Our Minimum Wage would have strained these people out, and, provided there existed what is already growing up, an intelligent system of employment bureaus, we should have much more reason to conclude than we have at present, that they were mainly unemployed because of a real incapacity in character, strength, or intelligence for efficient citizenship. Our raised standards of housing, our persecution of overcrowding, and our obstruction of employment below the minimum wage, would have swept out the rookeries and hiding-places of these people of the Abyss. They would exist, but they would not multiply — and that is our supreme end. They would be tramping on roads where mendicity laws would prevail, there would be no house-room for them, no squatting-places. The casual wards would catch them and register them, and telephone one to the other about them. It is rare that children come into this world without a parent or so being traceable. Everything would converge to convince these people that to bear children into such an unfavourable atmosphere is an extremely inconvenient and undesirable thing. They would not have many children, and such children as they had would fall easily into our organized net and get the protection of the criticised and improved development of the existing charitable institutions. [Footnote: "I wonder whether there is any legal flaw in the second section of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act of 1894, which may have been *specially* aimed at beggars with offspring. It is specially punishable to beg having an infant in their arms, quite apart from teaching the infant in question to beg. Or is this law insufficiently enforced through popular apathy?" — C. G. STUART MENTEATH.] This is the best we can do for those poor little creatures. As for that increasing section of the Abyss that will contrive to live childless, these papers have no quarrel with them. A childless wastrel is a terminating evil, and it may be, a picturesque evil. I must confess that a lazy rogue is very much to my taste, provided there is no tragedy of children to smear the joke with misery. And if he or she neither taints nor tempts the children, who are our care, a childless weakling we may freely let our pity and mercy go out to. To go childless is in them a virtue for which they

merit our thanks.

These are the first necessities, then, in the Making of Men and the bettering of the world, this courageous interference with what so many people call "Nature's methods" and "Nature's laws," though, indeed, they are no more than the methods and laws of the beasts. By such expedients we may hope to see, first, a certain fall in the birth-rate, a fall chiefly in the birth-rate of improvident, vicious, and feeble types, a continuation, in fact, of that fall that is already so conspicuous in illegitimate births in Great Britain; secondly, a certain, almost certainly more considerable fall in the death-rate of infants and young children, and that fall in the infantile death-rate will serve to indicate, thirdly, a fall no statistics will fully demonstrate in what I may call the partial death-rate, the dwarfing and limiting of that innumerable host of children who do, in an underfed, meagre sort of a way, survive. This raising of the standard of homes will do a work that will not end with the children; the death-line will sag downward for all the first twenty or thirty years of life. Dull-minded, indolent, prosperous people will say that all this is no more than a proposal to make man better by machinery, that you cannot reform the world by Board of Trade Regulations and all the rest of it. They will say that such work as this is a scheme of grim materialism, and that the Soul of Man gains no benefit by this "so-called Progress," that it is not birth-rates that want raising but Ideals. We shall deal later with Ideals in general. Here I will mention only one, and that is, unhappily, only an Ideal Argument. I wish I could get together all these people who are so scornful of materialistic things, out of the excessively comfortable houses they inhabit, and I wish I could concentrate them in a good typical East London slum — five or six together in each room, one lodging with another, and I wish I could leave them there to demonstrate the superiority of high ideals to purely material considerations for the rest of their earthly career while we others went on with our sordid work unencumbered by their ideality.

Think what these dry-looking projects of building and trade regulation, and inspection and sanitation, mean in reality! think of the promise they hold out to us of tears and suffering abolished, of lives invigorated and enlarged!

[Endnote 1

I am greatly obliged to Mr. J. Leaver for a copy of the following notice:

"DEATHS OF CHILDREN FROM BURNING.

"TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

"Attention is drawn to the frequency with which the death of young children is caused owing to their clothing taking fire at unprotected firegrates. During the years 1899 and 1900 inquests were held on the bodies of 1684 YOUNG CHILDREN whose death had resulted from burning, and in 1425 of these cases the fire by which the burning was caused was unprotected by a guard.

"With a view to prevent such deplorable loss of life it is suggested to Parents and Guardians, who have the care of young children, that it is very desirable that efficient fire-guards should be provided, in order to render it impossible for children to obtain access to the fire-grates.

"E. R. C. BRADFORD,

"The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.
"Metropolitan Police Office,
"New Scotland Yard,
"January 28th, 1902."]

IV. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MIND AND LANGUAGE

§ 1

The newborn child is at first no more than an animal. Indeed, it is among the lowest and most helpless of all animals, a mere vegetative lump; assimilation incarnate — wailing. It is for the first day in its life deaf, it squints blindly at the world, its limbs are beyond its control, its hands clutch drowningly at anything whatever that drifts upon this vast sea of being into which it has plunged so amazingly. And imperceptibly, subtly, so subtly that never at any time can we mark with certainty the increment of its coming, there creeps into this soft and claimant little creature a mind, a will, a personality, the beginning of all that is real and spiritual in man. In a little while there are eyes full of interest and clutching hands full of purpose, smiles and frowns, the babbling beginning of expression and affections and aversions. Before the first year is out there is obedience and rebellion, choice and self-control, speech has commenced, and the struggle of the newcomer to stand on his feet in this world of men. The process is unanalyzable; given a certain measure of care and protection, these things come spontaneously; with the merest rough encouragement of things and voices about the child, they are evoked.

But every day the inherent impulse makes a larger demand upon the surroundings of the child, if it is to do its best and fullest. Obviously, quite apart from physical consequences, the environment of a little child may be good or bad, better or worse for it in a thousand different ways. It may be distracting or over-stimulating, it may evoke and increase fear, it may be drab and dull and depressing, it may be stupefying, it may be misleading and productive of vicious habits of mind. And our business is to find just what is the best possible environment, the one that will give the soundest and fullest growth, not only of body but of intelligence.

Now from the very earliest phase the infant stands in need of a succession of interesting things. At first these are mere vague sense impressions, but in a month or so there is a distinct looking at

objects; presently follows reaching and clutching, and soon the little creature is urgent for fresh things to see, handle, hear, fresh experiences of all sorts, fresh combinations of things already known. The newborn mind is soon as hungry as the body. And if a healthy wellfed child cries, it is probably by reason of this unsatisfied hunger, it lacks an interest, it is bored, that dismal vacant suffering that punishes the failure of living things to live fully and completely. As Mr. Charles Booth has pointed out in his *Life and Labour of the People*, it is probable that in this respect the children of the relatively poor are least at a disadvantage. The very poor infant passes its life in the family room, there is a going and coming, and interesting activity of domestic work on the part of its mother, the preparation of meals, the intermittent presence of the father, the whole gamut of its mother's unsophisticated temper. It is carried into crowded and eventful streets at all hours. It participates in pothouse soirées and assists at the business of shopping. It may not lead a very hygienic life, but it does not lead a dull one. Contrast with its lot that of the lonely child of some woman of fashion, leading its beautifully non-bacterial life in a carefully secluded nursery under the control of a virtuous, punctual, invariable, conscientious rather than emotional nurse. The poor little soul wails as often for events as the slum baby does for nourishment. Into its grey nursery there rushes every day, or every other day, a breathless, preoccupied, excessively dressed, cleverish, many-sided, fundamentally silly, and universally incapable woman, vociferates a little conventional affection, slaps a kiss or so upon her offspring, and goes off again to collect that daily meed of admiration and cheap envy which is the gusto of her world. After that gushing, rustling, incomprehensible passage, the child relapses into the boring care of its bored hireling for another day. The nurse writes her letters, mends her clothes, reads and thinks of the natural interests of her own life, and the child is "good" just in proportion to the extent to which it doesn't "worry."

That, of course, is an extreme case. It assumes a particularly bad mother and a particularly ill-chosen nurse, and what is probably only a transitory phase of sexual debasement. The average nurse of the upper-class child is often a woman of highly developed motherly instincts, and it is probable that our upper class and our upper

middle-class is passing or has already passed through that phase of thought which has made solitary children so common in the last decade or so. The effective contrast must not take us too far. We must remember that all women do not possess the passion for nursing, and that some of those who are defective in this direction may be, for all that, women of exceptional gifts and capacity, and fully capable of offspring. Civilization is based on the organized subdivision of labour, and, as the able lady who writes as "L'amie Inconnue" in the *County Gentleman* has pointed out in a very helpful criticism of the original version of this paper, it is as absurd to require every woman to be a nursery mother as it is, to require every man to till the soil. We move from homogeneous to heterogeneous conditions, and we must beware of every generalization we make.

For all that, one is inclined to think the ideal average environment should contain the almost constant presence of the mother, for no one is so likely to be continuously various and interesting and untiring as she, and only as an exception, for exceptional mothers and nurses, can we admit the mother-substitute. When we admit her we admit other things. It is entirely on account of such an ideal environment, we must remember, that monogamy finds its practical sanction; it claims to ensure the presiding mother the maximum of security and self-respect. A woman who enjoys the full rights of a wife to maintenance and exclusive attention, without a complete discharge of the duties of motherhood, profits by the imputation of things she has failed to perform. She may be justified by other things, by an effectual co-operation with her husband in joint labours for example, but she has altered her footing none the less. To secure an ideal environment for children in as many cases as possible is the second of the two great practical ends — the first being sound births, for which the restrictions of sexual morality exist. In addition there is the third almost equally important matter of adult efficiency; we have to adjust affairs, if we can, to secure the maximum of health, sane happiness and vigorous mental and physical activity, and to abolish, as far as possible, passionate broodings, over-stimulated appetites, disease, and destructive indulgence. Apart from these aspects, sexual morality is outside the scope of the New Republican altogether. . . . Do not let this passage be misunderstood. I do not mean that a New

Republican ignores sexual morality except on these grounds, but so far as his New Republicanism goes he does, just as a member of the Aeronautical Society, so far as his aeronautical interests go, or as an ecclesiastical architect, so far as his architecture goes.

The ideal environment should, without any doubt at all, centre about a nursery — a clean, airy, brightly lit, brilliantly adorned room, into which there should be a frequent coming and going of things and people; but from the time the child begins to recognize objects and individuals it should be taken for little spells into other rooms and different surroundings. In the homely, convenient, servantless abode over which the able-bodied, capable, skilful, civilized women of the ordinary sort will preside in the future, the child will naturally follow its mother's morning activities from room to room. Its mother will talk to it, chance visitors will sign to it. There should be a public or private garden available where its perambulator could stand in fine weather; and its promenades should not be too much a matter of routine. To go along a road with some traffic is better for a child than to go along a secluded path between hedges; a street corner is better than a laurel plantation as a pitch for perambulators.

When a child is five or six months old it will have got a certain use and grip with its hands, and it will want to handle and examine and test the properties of as many objects as it can. Gifts begin. There seems scope for a wiser selection in these early gifts. At present it is chiefly woolly animals with bells inside them, woolly balls, and so forth, that reach the baby's hands. There is no reason at all why a child's attention should be so predominantly fixed on wool. These toys are coloured very tastefully, but as Preyer has advanced strong reasons for supposing that the child's discrimination of colours is extremely rudimentary until the second year has begun, these tasteful arrangements are simply an appeal to the parent. Light, dark, yellow, perhaps red and "other colours" seem to constitute the colour system of a very young infant. It is to the parent, too, that the humorous and realistic quality of the animal forms appeal. The parent does the shopping and has to be amused. The parent who ought to have a doll instead of a child is sufficiently abundant in our world to dominate the shops, and there is a vast traffic in facetious baby toys, facetious nursery furniture, "art" cushions and "quaint" baby clothing, all

amazingly delightful things for grown-up people. These things are bought and grouped about the child, the child is taught tricks to complete the picture, and parentage becomes a very amusing afternoon employment. So long as convenience is not sacrificed to the æsthetic needs of the nursery, and so long as common may compete with "art" toys, there is no great harm done, but it is well to understand how irrelevant these things are to the real needs of a child's development.

A child of a year or less has neither knowledge nor imagination to see the point of these animal resemblances — much less to appreciate either quaintness or prettiness. That comes only in the second year. He is much more interested in the crumpling and tearing of paper, in the crumpling of chintz, and in the taking off and replacing of the lid of a little box. I think it would be possible to devise a much more entertaining set of toys for an infant than is at present procurable, but, unhappily, they would not appeal to the intelligence of the average parent. There would be, for example, one or two little boxes of different shapes and substances, with lids to take off and on, one or two rubber things that would bend and twist about and admit of chewing, a ball and a box made of china, a fluffy, flexible thing like a rabbit's tail, with the vertebræ replaced by cane, a velvet-covered ball, a powder puff, and so on. They could all be plainly and vividly coloured with some non-soluble inodorous colour. They would be about on the cot and on the rug where the child was put to kick and crawl. They would have to be too large to swallow, and they would all get pulled and mauled about until they were more or less destroyed. Some would probably survive for many years as precious treasures, as beloved objects, as powers and symbols in the mysterious secret fetichism of childhood — confidants and sympathetic friends.

§ 2

While the child is engaged with its first toys, and with the collection of rudimentary sense impressions, it is also developing a remarkable variety of noises and babblements from which it will presently disentangle speech. Day by day it will show a stronger and stronger

bias to associate definite sounds with definite objects and ideas, a bias so comparatively powerful in the mind of man as to distinguish him from all other living creatures. Other creatures may think, may, in a sort of concrete way, come almost indefinably near reason (as Professor Lloyd Morgan in his very delightful *Animal Life and Intelligence* has shown); but man alone has in speech the apparatus, the possibility, at any rate, of being a reasoning and reasonable creature. It is, of course, not his only apparatus. Men may think out things with drawings, with little models, with signs and symbols upon paper, but speech is the common way, the high road, the current coin of thought.

With speech humanity begins. With the dawn of speech the child ceases to be an animal we cherish, and crosses the boundary into distinctly human intercourse. There begins in its mind the development of the most wonderful of all conceivable apparatus, a subtle and intricate keyboard, that will end at last with thirty or forty or fifty thousand keys. This queer, staring, soft little being in its mother's arms is organizing something within itself, beside which the most wonderful orchestra one can imagine is a lump of rude clumsiness. There will come a time when, at the merest touch upon those keys, image will follow image and emotion develop into emotion, when the whole creation, the deeps of space, the minutest beauties of the microscope, cities, armies, passions, splendours, sorrows, will leap out of darkness into the conscious being of thought, when this interwoven net of brief, small sounds will form the centre of a web that will hold together in its threads the universe, the All, visible and invisible, material and immaterial, real and imagined, of a human mind. And if we are to make the best of a child, it is in no way secondary to its physical health and growth that it should acquire a great and thorough command over speech, not merely that it should speak, but, what is far more vital, that it should understand swiftly and subtly things written and said. Indeed, this is more than any physical need. The body is the substance and the implement; the mind, built and compact of language, is the man. All that has gone before, all that we have discussed of sound birth and physical growth and care, is no more than the making ready of the soil for the mind that is to grow therein. As we come to this matter of

language, we come a step nearer to the intimate realities of our subject — we come to the mental plant that is to bear the flower and the ripe fruit of the individual life. The next phase of our inquiry, therefore, is to examine how we can get this mental plant, this foundation substance, this abundant mastered language best developed in the individual, and how far we may go to ensure this best development for all children born into the world.

From the ninth month onward the child begins serious attempts to talk. In order that it may learn to do this as easily as possible, it requires to be surrounded by people speaking one language, and speaking it with a uniform accent. Those who are most in the child's hearing should endeavour to speak — even when they are not addressing the child — deliberately and clearly. All authorities are agreed upon the mischievous effect of what is called "baby talk," the use of an extensive sham vocabulary, a sort of deciduous milk vocabulary that will presently have to be shed again. Froebel and Preyer join hands on this. The child's funny little perversions of speech are really genuine attempts to say the right word, and we simply cause trouble and hamper development if we give back to the seeking mind its own blunders again. When a child wants to indicate milk, it wants to say milk, and not "mooka" or "mik," and when it wants to indicate bed, the needed word is not "bedder" or "bye-bye," but "bed." But we give the little thing no chance to get on in this way until suddenly one day we discover it is "time the child spoke plainly." Preyer has pointed out very instructively the way in which the quite sufficiently difficult matter of the use of I, mine, me, my, you, yours, and your is made still more difficult by those about the child adopting irregularly the experimental idioms it produces. When a child says to its mother, "Me go mome," it is doing its best to speak English, and its remark should be received without worrying comment; but when a mother says to her child, "Me go mome," she is simply wasting an opportunity of teaching her child its mother-tongue. One sympathizes with her all too readily, one understands the sweetness to her of these soft, infantile mispronunciations; but, indeed, she ought to understand; it is her primary business to know better than her feelings in this affair.

In learning to speak, the children of the more prosperous classes

are probably at a considerable advantage when compared with their poorer fellow children. They hear a clearer and more uniform intonation than the blurred, uncertain speech of our commonalty, that has resulted from the reaction of the great synthetic process, of the past century upon dialects. But this natural advantage of the richer child is discounted in one of two ways: in the first place by the mother, in the second by the nurse. The mother in the more prosperous classes is often much more vain and trivial than the lower-class woman; she looks to her children for amusement, and makes them contributors to her "effect," and, by taking up their quaint and pretty mispronunciations, and devising humorous additions to their natural baby talk, she teaches them to be much greater babies than they could ever possibly be themselves. They specialise as charming babies until their mother tires of the pose, and then they are thrust back into the nursery to recover leeway, if they can, under the care of governess or nurse.

The second disadvantage of the upper-class child is the foreign nurse or nursery governess. There is a widely diffused idea that a child is particularly apt to master and retain languages, and people try and inoculate with French and German as Lord Herbert of Cherbury would have inoculated children with antidotes, for all the ills their flesh was heir to — even, poor little wretches, to an anticipatory *regimen* for gout. The root error of these attempts to form infantile polyglots is embodied in an unverified quotation from Byron's *Beppo,* dear to pedagogic writers —

"Wax to receive and marble to retain"

runs the line — which the curious may discover to be a description of the faithful lover, though it has become as firmly associated with the child-mind as has Sterne's "tempering the wind to the shorn lamb" with Holy Writ. And this idea of infantile receptivity and retentiveness is held by an unthinking world, in spite of the universally accessible fact that hardly one of us can remember anything that happened before the age of five, and very little that happened before seven or eight, and that children of five or six, removed into foreign surroundings, will in a year or so — if special measures are not taken — reconstruct their idiom, and absolutely forget every word of their mother-tongue. This foreign nurse comes

into the child's world, bringing with her quite weird errors in the quantities, the accent and idiom of the mother-tongue, and greatly increasing the difficulty and delay on the road to thought and speech. And this attempt to acquire a foreign language prematurely at the expense of the mother-tongue, to pick it up cheaply by making the nurse an informal teacher of languages, entirely ignores a fact upon which I would lay the utmost stress in this paper — which, indeed, is the gist of this paper — that only a very small minority of English or American people have more than half mastered the splendid heritage of their native speech. To this neglected and most significant limitation the amount of public attention given at present is quite surprisingly small. [Footnote: My friend, Mr. L. Cope Cornford, writes *apropos* of this, and I think I cannot do better than print what he says as a corrective to my own assertions: "All you say on the importance of letting a child hear good English cleanly accented is admirable; but we think you have perhaps overlooked the importance of ear-training as such, which should begin by the time the child can utter its first attempts at speech. By ear-training I mean the differentiation of sounds — articulate, inarticulate, and musical — fixing the child's attention and causing it to *imitate*. As every sound requires a particular movement of the vocal apparatus, the child will soon be able to adapt its apparatus unconsciously and to distinguish accurately. And if it does not so learn before the age of five or six, it probably will never do so. By the age of two — or less — the child should be able to *imitate* exactly any speech-sound. Our youngsters can do so; and, consequently, the fact that they had a nurse with a Sussex accent ceased to matter, because they learned to distinguish her talk from correct English. So in the case of a foreign nurse; the result of a foreigner's influence would be good in this way, that it would train a child to a *new series of speech-sounds*, thus enlarging its ear capacity. Nor need it necessarily adopt these speech-sounds as those which it should use; it merely knows them; and if the foreigner have a good accent, and speaks her own tongue well, the child's ear is trained for life, *irrespective of expression*. Experience shows that a child can keep separate in its mind two or three languages — at first the speech-sounds, later the expression. *Modes of expression* need not begin till after five, or later. With regard to music, every child

should begin to undergo a simple course of ear-training on the sol-fa system as elaborated and taught by McNaught, because the faculty of so learning is lost — atrophied — by the age of twelve or fourteen. But, beginning early — as early as possible — every child, 'musical' or not, can be trained, just as every child, 'artistic' or not, may be taught to draw accurately up to a certain point."]

There can be little or no dispute that the English language in its completeness presents a range too ample and appliances too subtle for the needs of the great majority of those who profess to speak it. I do not refer to the half-civilized and altogether barbaric races who are coming under its sway, but to the people we are breeding of our own race — the barbarians of our streets, our suburban "white niggers," with a thousand a year and the conceit of Imperial destinies. They live in our mother-tongue as some half-civilized invaders might live in a gigantic and splendidly equipped palace. They misuse this, they waste that, they leave whole corridors and wings unexplored, to fall into disuse and decay. I doubt if the ordinary member of the prosperous classes in England has much more than a third of the English language in use, and more than a half in knowledge, and as we go down the social scale we may come at last to strata having but a tenth part of our full vocabulary, and much of that blurred and vaguely understood. The speech of the Colonist is even poorer than the speech of the home-staying English. In America, just as in Great Britain and her Colonies, there is the same limitation and the same disuse. Partly, of course, this is due to the pettiness of our thought and experience, and so far it can only be remedied by a general intellectual amplification; but partly it is due to the general ignorance of English prevailing throughout the world. It is atrociously taught, and taught by ignorant men. It is atrociously and meanly written. So far as this second cause of sheer ignorance goes, the gaps in knowledge are continually resulting in slang and the addition of needless neologisms to the language. People come upon ideas that they know no English to express, and strike out the new phrase in a fine burst of ignorant discovery. There are Americans in particular who are amazingly apt at this sort of thing. They take an enormous pride in the jargon they are perpetually increasing — they boast of it, they give exhibition performances in it, they seem to

regard it as the culminating flower of their continental Republic — as though the Old World had never heard of shoddy. But, indeed, they are in no better case than that unfortunate lady at Earlswood who esteems newspapers stitched with unravelled carpet and trimmed with orange peel, the extreme of human splendour. In truth, their pride is baseless, and this slang of theirs no sort of distinction whatever. Let me assure them that in our heavier way we in this island are just as busy defiling our common inheritance. We can send a team of linguists to America who will murder and misunderstand the language against any eleven the Americans may select.

Of course there is a natural and necessary growth and development in a living language, a growth that no one may arrest. In appliances, in politics, in science, in philosophical interpretation, there is a perpetual necessity for new words, words to express new ideas and new relationships, words free from ambiguity and encumbering associations. But the neologisms of the street and the saloon rarely supply any occasion of this kind. For the most part they are just the stupid efforts of ignorant men to supply the unnecessary. And side by side with the invention of inferior cheap substitutes for existing words and phrases, and infinitely more serious than that invention, goes on a perpetual misuse and distortion of those that are insufficiently known. These are processes not of growth but of decay — they distort, they render obsolete, and they destroy. The obsolescence and destruction of words and phrases cuts us off from the nobility of our past, from the severed masses of our race overseas, far more effectually than any growth of neologisms. A language may grow — our language must grow — it may be clarified and refined and strengthened, but it need not suffer the fate of an algal filament, and pass constantly into rottenness and decay whenever growth is no longer in progress. That has been the fate of languages in the past because of the feebler organization, the slenderer, slower intercommunication, and, above all, the insufficient records of human communities; but the time has come now — or, at the worst, is rapidly coming — when this will cease to be a fated thing. We may have a far more copious and varied tongue than had Addison or Spenser — that is no disaster — but there is no reason why we should not keep fast hold of all they had. There is no reason

why the whole fine tongue of Elizabethan England should not be at our disposal still. Conceivably Addison would find the rich, allusive English of George Meredith obscure; conceivably we might find a thousand words and phrases of the year 2000 strange and perplexing; but there is no reason why a time should ever come when what has been written well in English since Elizabethan days should no longer be understandable and fine.

The prevailing ignorance of English in the English-speaking communities, enormously hampers the development of the racial consciousness. Except for those who wish to bawl the crudest thoughts, there is no means of reaching the whole mass of these communities to-day. So far as material requirements go it would be possible to fling a thought broadcast like seed over the whole world to-day, it would be possible to get a book into the hands of half the adults of our race. But at the hands and eyes one stops — there is a gap in the brains. Only thoughts that can be expressed in the meanest commonplaces will ever reach the minds of the majority of the English-speaking peoples under present conditions.

A writer who aims to be widely read to-day must perpetually halt, must perpetually hesitate at the words that arise in his mind; he must ask himself how many people will stick at this word altogether or miss the meaning it should carry; he must ransack his memory for a commonplace periphrase, an ingenious rearrangement of the familiar; he must omit or overaccentuate at every turn. Such simple and necessary words as "obsolescent," "deliquescent," "segregation," for example, must be abandoned by the man who would write down to the general reader; he must use "impertinent" as if it were a synonym for "impudent" and "indecent" as the equivalent of "obscene." And in the face of this wide ignorance of English, seeing how few people can either read or write English with any subtlety, and how disastrously this reacts upon the general development of thought and understanding amidst the English-speaking peoples, it would be preposterous even if the attempt were successful, to complicate the first linguistic struggles of the infant with the beginnings of a second language. But people deal thus lightly with the mother-tongue because they know so little of it that they do not even suspect their own ignorance of its burthen and its powers. They

speak a little set of ready-made phrases, they write it scarcely at all, and all they read is the weak and shallow prose of popular fiction and the daily press. That is knowing a language within the meaning of their minds, and such a knowledge a child may very well be left to "pick up" as it may. Side by side with this they will presently set themselves to erect a similar "knowledge" of two or three other languages. One is constantly meeting not only women but men who will solemnly profess to "know" English and Latin, French, German and Italian, perhaps Greek, who are in fact — beyond the limited range of food, clothing, shelter, trade, crude nationalism, social conventions and personal vanity — no better than the deaf and dumb. In spite of the fact that they will sit with books in their hands, visibly reading, turning pages, pencilling comments, in spite of the fact that they will discuss authors and repeat criticisms, it is as hopeless to express new thoughts to them as it would be to seek for appreciation in the ear of a hippopotamus. Their linguistic instruments are no more capable of contemporary thought than a tin whistle, a xylophone, and a drum are capable of rendering the Eroica Symphony.

In being also ignorant of itself, this wide ignorance of English partakes of all that is most hopeless in ignorance. Except among a few writers and critics, there is little sense of defect in this matter. The common man does not know that his limited vocabulary limits his thoughts. He knows that there are "long words" and rare words in the tongue, but he does not know that this implies the existence of definite meanings beyond his mental range. His poor collection of everyday words, worn-out phrases and battered tropes, constitute what he calls "plain English," and speech beyond these limits he seriously believes to be no more than the back-slang of the educated class, a mere elaboration and darkening of intercourse to secure privacy and distinction. No doubt there is justification enough for his suspicion in the exploits of pretentious and garrulous souls. But it is the superficial justification of a profound and disastrous error. A gap in a man's vocabulary is a hole and tatter in his mind; words he has may indeed be weakly connected or wrongly connected — one may find the whole keyboard jerry-built, for example, in the English-speaking Baboo — but words he has not signify ideas that he has no

means of clearly apprehending, they are patches of imperfect mental existence, factors in the total amount of his personal failure to live.

This world-wide ignorance of English, this darkest cloud almost upon the fair future of our confederated peoples, is something more than a passive ignorance. It is active, it is aggressive. In England at any rate, if one talks beyond the range of white-nigger English, one commits a social breach. There are countless "book words" well-bred people never use. A writer with any tenderness for half-forgotten phrases, any disposition to sublimate the mingling of unaccustomed words, runs as grave a risk of organized disregard as if he tampered with the improper. The leaden censures of the *Times,* for example, await any excursion beyond its own battered circumlocutions. Even nowadays, and when they are veterans, Mr. George Meredith and Mr. Henley get ever and again a screed of abuse from some hot champion of Lower Division Civil Service prose. "Plain English" such a one will call his desideratum, as one might call the viands on a New Cut barrow "plain food." The hostility to the complete language is everywhere. I wonder just how many homes may not be witnessing the self-same scene as I write. Some little child is struggling with the unmanageable treasure of a new-found word, has produced it at last, a nice long word, forthwith to be "laughed out" of such foolish ambitions by its anxious parent. People train their children not to speak English beyond a threadbare minimum, they resent it upon platform and in pulpit, and they avoid it in books. Schoolmasters as a class know little of the language. In none of our schools, not even in the more efficient of our elementary schools, is English adequately taught. And these people expect the South African Dutch to take over their neglected tongue! As though the poor partial King's English of the British Colonist was one whit better than the Taal! To give them the reality of what English might be: that were a different matter altogether.

These things it is the clear business of our New Republicans to alter. It follows, indeed, but it is in no way secondary to the work of securing sound births and healthy childhoods, that we should secure a vigorous, ample mental basis for the minds born with these bodies. We have to save, to revive this scattered, warped, tarnished and neglected language of ours, if we wish to save the future of our

world. We should save not only the world of those who at present speak English, but the world of many kindred and associated peoples who would willingly enter into our synthesis, could we make it wide enough and sane enough and noble enough for their honour.

To expect that so ample a cause as this should find any support among the festering confusion of the old politics is to expect too much. There is no party for the English language anywhere in the world. We have to take this problem as we took our former problem and deal with it as though the old politics, which slough so slowly, were already happily excised. To begin with, we may give our attention to the foundation of this foundation, to the growth of speech in the developing child.

From the first the child should hear a clear and uniform pronunciation about it, a precise and careful idiom and words definitely used. Since language is to bring people together and not to keep them apart, it would be well if throughout the English-speaking world there could be one accent, one idiom, and one intonation. This there never has been yet, but there is no reason at all why it should not be. There is arising even now a standard of good English to which many dialects and many influences are contributing. From the Highlanders and the Irish, for example, the English of the South are learning the possibilities of the aspirate *h* and *wh*, which latter had entirely and the former very largely dropped out of use among them a hundred years ago. The drawling speech of Wessex and New England — for the main features of what people call Yankee intonation are to be found in perfection in the cottages of Hampshire and West Sussex — are being quickened, perhaps from the same sources. The Scotch are acquiring the English use of *shall* and *will,* and the confusion of reconstruction is world-wide among our vowels. The German *w* of Mr. Samuel Weller has been obliterated within the space of a generation or so. There is no reason at all why this natural development of the uniform English of the coming age should not be greatly forwarded by our deliberate efforts, why it should not be possible within a little while to define a standard pronunciation of our tongue. It is a less important issue by far than that of a uniform vocabulary and phraseology, but it is still a very notable need.

We have available now for the first time, in the more highly

evolved forms of phonograph and telephone, a means of storing, analyzing, transmitting, and referring to sounds, that should be of very considerable value in the attempt to render a good and beautiful pronunciation of English uniform throughout the world. It would not be unreasonable to require from all those who are qualifying for the work of education, the reading aloud of long passages in the standard accent. At present there is no requirement of this sort in England, and too often our elementary teachers at any rate, instead of being missionaries of linguistic purity, are centres of diffusion for blurred and vicious perversions of our speech. They must read and recite aloud in their qualifying examinations, it is true, but under no specific prohibition of provincial intonations. In the pulpit and the stage, moreover, we have ready to hand most potent instruments of dissemination, that need nothing but a little sharpening to help greatly towards this end. At the entrance of almost all professions nowadays stands an examination that includes English, and there would be nothing revolutionary in adding to that written paper an oral test in the standard pronunciation. By active exertion to bring these things about the New Republican could do much to secure that every child of our English-speaking people throughout the world would hear in school and church and entertainment the same clear and definite accent. The child's mother and nurse would be helped to acquire almost insensibly a sound and confident pronunciation. No observant man who has lived at all broadly, meeting and talking with people of diverse culture and tradition, but knows how much our intercourse is cumbered by hesitations about quantity and accent, and petty differences of phrase and idiom, and how greatly intonation and accent may warp and limit our sympathy.

And while they are doing this for the general linguistic atmosphere, the New Republicans could also attempt something to reach the children in detail.

By instinct nearly every mother wants to teach. Some teach by instinct, but for the most part there is a need of guidance in their teaching. At present these first and very important phases in education are guided almost entirely by tradition. The necessary singing and talking to very young children is done in imitation of similar singing and talking; it is probably done no better, it may

possibly be done much worse, than it was done two hundred years ago. A very great amount of permanent improvement in human affairs might be secured in this direction by the expenditure of a few thousand pounds in the systematic study of the most educational method of dealing with children in the first two or three years of life, and in the intelligent propagation of the knowledge obtained. There exist already, it is true, a number of Child Study Associations, Parents' Unions, and the like, but for the most part these are quite ineffectual talking societies, akin to Browning Societies, Literary and Natural History Societies: they attain a trifling amount of mutual improvement at their best, the members read papers to one another, and a few medical men and schools secure a needed advertisement. They have no organization, no concentration of their energy, and their chief effect seems to be to present an interest in education as if it were a harmless, pointless fad. But if a few men of means and capacity were to organize a committee with adequate funds, secure the services of specially endowed men for the exhaustive study of developing speech, publish a digested report, and, with the assistance of a good writer or so, produce very cheaply, advertise vigorously, and disseminate widely a small, clearly printed, clearly written book of pithy instructions for mothers and nurses in this matter of early speech they would quite certainly effect a great improvement in the mental foundations of the coming generation. We do not yet appreciate the fact that for the first time in the history of the world there exists a state of society in which almost every nurse and mother reads. It is no longer necessary to rely wholly upon instinct and tradition, therefore, for the early stages of a child's instruction. We can reinforce and organize these things through the printed word.

For example, an important factor in the early stage of speech-teaching is the nursery rhyme. A little child, towards the end of the first year, having accumulated a really very comprehensive selection of sounds and noises by that time, begins to imitate first the associated motions, and then the sounds of various nursery rhymes—"Pat-a-cake," for example. In the book I imagine, there would be, among many other things, a series of little versicles, old and new, in which, to the accompaniment of simple gestures, all the elementary sounds of the language could be easily and agreeably made familiar

to the child's ears. [Footnote: Messrs. Heath of Boston, U.S.A., have sent me a book of Nursery Rhymes, arranged by Mr. Charles Welsh, which is certainly the best thing I have seen in this way. It is worthy of note that the neglect of pedagogic study in Great Britain is forcing the intelligent British parent and teacher to rely more and more upon American publishers for children's books. The work of English writers is often very tasteful and pretty, but of the smallest educational value.]

And the same book I think might well contain a list of foundation things and words and certain elementary forms of expression which the child should become perfectly familiar with in the first three or four years of life. Much of each little child's vocabulary is its personal adventure, and Heaven save us all from system in excess! But I think it would be possible for a subtle psychologist to trace through the easy natural tangle of the personal briar-rose of speech certain necessary strands, that hold the whole growth together and render its later expansion easy and swift and strong. Whatever else the child gets, it must get these fundamental strands well and early if it is to do its best. If they do not develop now their imperfection will cause delay and difficulty later. There are, for example, among these fundamental necessities, idioms to express comparison, to express position in space and time, elementary conceptions of form and colour, of tense and mood, the pronouns and the like. No doubt, in one way or another, most of these forms are acquired by every child, but there is no reason why their acquisition should not be watched with the help of a wisely framed list, and any deficiency deliberately and carefully supplied. It would have to be a wisely framed list, it would demand the utmost effort of the best intelligence, and that is why something more than the tradesman enterprise of publishers is needed in this work. The publisher's ideal of an author of an educational work is a clever girl in her teens working for pocket-money. What is wanted is a little quintessential book better and cheaper than any publisher, publishing for gain, could possibly produce, a book so good that imitation would be difficult, and so cheap and universally sold that no imitation would be profitable.

Upon this foundation of a sound accent and a basic vocabulary must be built the general fabric of the language. For the most part

this must be done in the school. At present in Great Britain a considerable proportion of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses — more particularly those in secondary and private schools — are too ill-educated to do this properly; there is excellent reason for supposing things are very little better in America; and, to begin with, it must be the care of every good New Republican to bring about a better state of things in this most lamentable profession. Until the teacher can read and write, in the fullest sense of these words, it is idle to expect him or her to teach the pupil to do these things. As matters are at present, the attempt is scarcely made. In the elementary and lower secondary schools ill-chosen reading-books are scampered through and abandoned all too soon in favour of more pretentious "subjects," and a certain preposterous nonsense called English Grammar is passed through the pupil — stuff which happily no mind can retain. Little girls and boys of twelve or thirteen, who cannot understand, and never will understand anything but the vulgarest English, and who will never in their lives achieve a properly punctuated letter, are taught such mysteries as that there are eight — I believe it is eight — sorts of nominative, and that there is (or is not) a gerundive in English, and trained month after month and year after year to perform the oddest operations, a non-analytical analysis, and a ritual called parsing that must be seen to be believed. It is no good mincing the truth about all this sort of thing. These devices are resorted to by the school teachers of the present just as the Rules of Double and Single Alligation and Double Rule of Three, and all the rest of that solemn tomfoolery, were "taught" by the arithmetic teachers in the academies of the eighteenth century, because they are utterly ignorant, and know themselves to be utterly ignorant, of the reality of the subject, and because, therefore, they have to humbug the parent and pass the time by unreal inventions. The case is not a bit better in the higher grade schools. They do not do so much of the bogus teaching of English, but they do nothing whatever in its place.

Now it is little use to goad the members of an ill-trained, ill-treated, ill-organized, poorly respected and much-abused [Footnote: *Peccavi.*] profession with reproaches for doing what they cannot do, or to clamour for legislation that will give more school time or heavier subsidies to the pretence of teaching what very few people

are able to teach. We all know how atrociously English is taught, but proclaiming that will not mend matters a bit, it will only render matters worse by making schoolmasters and schoolmistresses shameless and effortless, unless we also show how well English may be taught. The sane course is to begin by establishing the proper way to do the thing, to develop a proper method and demonstrate what can be done by that method in a few selected schools, to prepare and render acceptable the necessary class-books, and then to use examination and inspector, grant in aid, training college, lecture, book and pamphlet to spread the sound expedients. We want an English Language Society, of affluent and vigorous people, that will undertake this work. And one chief duty of that society will be to devise, to arrange and select, to print handsomely, to illustrate beautifully and to sell cheaply and vigorously *everywhere,* a series of reading books, and perhaps of teachers' companions to these reading books, that shall serve as the basis of instruction in Standard English throughout the whole world. These books, as I conceive them, would begin as reading primers, they would progress through a long series of subtly graded stories, passages and extracts until they had given the complete range of our tongue. They would be read from, recited from, quoted in exemplification and imitated by the pupils. Such splendid matter as Henley and Whibley's collection of Elizabethan Prose, for example, might well find a place toward the end of that series of books. There would be an anthology of English lyrics, of all the best short stories in our language, of all the best episodes. From these readers the pupil would pass, still often reading and reciting aloud, to such a series of masterpieces as an efficient English Language Society could force upon every school. At present in English schools a library is an exception rather than a rule, and your clerical head-master on public occasions will cheerfully denounce the "trash" reading, "snippet" reading habits of the age, with that defect lying like a feather on his expert conscience. A school without an easily accessible library of at least a thousand volumes is really scarcely a school at all — it is a dispensary without bottles, a kitchen without a pantry. For all that, if the inquiring New Republican find two hundred linen-covered volumes of the *Eric, or Little by Little* type, mean goody-goody thought dressed in its appropriate language,

stored away in some damp cupboard of his son's school, and accessible once a week, he may feel assured things are above the average there. My imaginary English Language Society would make it a fundamental duty, firstly to render that library of at least a thousand volumes or so specially cheap and easily procurable, and secondly, by pamphlets and agitation, to render it a compulsory minimum requirement for every grade of school. It is far more important, and it would be far less costly even as things are, than the cheapest sort of chemical laboratory a school could have, and it should cost scarcely more than a school piano.

I know very little of the practical teaching of English, my own very fragmentary knowledge of the more familiar clichés of our tongue was acquired in a haphazard fashion, but I am inclined to think that in addition to much reading aloud and recitation from memory the work of instruction might consist very largely of continually more extensive efforts towards original composition. Paraphrasing is a good exercise, provided that it does not consist in turning good and beautiful English into bad. I do not see why it should not follow the reverse direction. Selected passages of mean, stereotyped, garrulous or inexact prose might very well be rewritten, under the direction of an intelligent master. Retelling a story that has just been read and discussed, with a change of incident perhaps, would also not be a bad sort of exercise, writing passages in imitation of set passages and the like. Written descriptions of things displayed to a class should also be instructive. Caught at the right age, most little girls, and many little boys I believe, would learn very pleasantly to write simple verse. This they should be encouraged to read aloud. At a later stage the more settled poetic forms, the ballade, the sonnet, the rondeau, for example, should afford a good practice in handling language. Pupils should be encouraged to import fresh words into their work — even if the effect is a little startling at times — they should hunt the dictionary for material. A good book for the upper forms in schools dealing in a really intelligent and instructive way with Latin and Greek, so far as it is necessary to know these languages in order to use and manipulate technical English freely, would, I conceive, be of very great service. It must be a good exercise to write precise definitions of words. Logic also is an

integral portion of the study of the mother-tongue.

But to throw out suggestions in this way is an easy task. The educational papers are full of this sort of thing, educational conferences resound with it. What the world is not full of is the capacity to organize these things, to drag them, struggling and clinging to a thousand unanticipated difficulties, from the region of the counsel of perfection to the region of manifest practicability. For that there is needed attention, industry, and an intelligent use of a fair sum of money. We want an industrious committee, and we want one or two rich men. A series of books, a model course of instruction, has to be planned and made, tried over, criticised, revised and altered. When the right way is no longer indicated by prophetic persons pointing in a mist, but marked out, levelled, mapped and fenced, then the scholastic profession, wherever the English language is spoken, has to be lured and driven along it. The New Republican must make his course cheap, attractive, easy for the teacher and good for the teacher's pocket and reputation. Just as there are plays that, as actors say, "act themselves," so, with a profession that is rarely at its best and often at its worst, and which at its worst consists of remarkably dull young men and remarkably dreary young women, those who want English well taught must see to it that they provide a series of books and instructors that will teach by themselves, whatever the teacher does to prevent them.

Surely this enterprise of text-books and teachers, of standard phonographs and cheaply published classics, is no fantastic impossible dream! So far as money goes — if only money were the one thing needful — a hundred thousand pounds would be a sufficient fund from first to last for all of it. Yet modest as its proportions are, its consequences, were it done by able men throwing their hearts into it, might be of incalculable greatness. By such expedients and efforts as these we might enormously forward the establishment of that foundation of a world-wide spacious language, the foundation upon which there will arise for our children subtler understandings, ampler imaginations, sounder judgments and clearer resolutions, and all that makes at last a nobler world of men.

But in this discussion of school libraries and the like, we wander a little from our immediate topic of mental beginnings.

§ 3

At the end of the fifth year, as the natural outcome of its instinctive effort to experiment and learn, acting amidst wisely ordered surroundings, the little child should have acquired a certain definite foundation for the educational structure. It should have a vast variety of perceptions stored in its mind, and a vocabulary of three or four thousand words, and among these, and holding them together, there should be certain structural and cardinal ideas. They are ideas that will have been gradually and imperceptibly instilled, and they are necessary as the basis of a sound mental existence. There must be, to begin with, a developing sense and feeling for truth and for duty as something distinct and occasionally conflicting with immediate impulse and desire, and there must be certain clear intellectual elements established already almost impregnably in the mind, certain primary distinctions and classifications. Many children are called stupid, and begin their educational career with needless difficulty through an unsoundness of these fundamental intellectual elements, an unsoundness in no way inherent, but the result of accident and neglect. And a starting handicap of this sort may go on increasing right through the whole life.

The child at five, unless it is colour blind, should know the range of colours by name, and distinguish them easily, blue and green not excepted; it should be able to distinguish pink from pale red and crimson from scarlet. [Footnote: There could be a set of colour bands in the book that the English Language Society might publish.] Many children through the neglect of those about them do not distinguish these colours until a very much later age. I think also — in spite of the fact that many adults go vague and ignorant on these points — that a child of five may have been taught to distinguish between a square, a circle, an oval, a triangle and an oblong, and to use these words. It is easier to keep hold of ideas with words than without them, and none of these words should be impossible by five. The child should also know familiarly by means of toys, wood blocks and so on, many elementary solid forms. It is matter of regret that in common language we have no easy, convenient words for many of these forms, and instead of being learnt easily and naturally in play,

they are left undistinguished, and have to be studied later under circumstances of forbidding technicality. It would be quite easy to teach the child in an incidental way to distinguish cube, cylinder, cone, sphere (or ball), prolate spheroid (which might be called "egg"), oblate spheroid (which might be called "squatty ball"), the pyramid, and various parallelepipeds, as, for example, the square slab, the oblong slab, the brick, and post. He could have these things added to his box of bricks by degrees, he would build with them and combine them and play with them over and over again, and absorb an intimate knowledge of their properties, just at the age when such knowledge is almost instinctively sought and is most pleasant and easy in its acquisition. These things need not be specially forced upon him. In no way should he be led to emphasize them or give a priggish importance to his knowledge of them. They will come into his toys and play mingled with a thousand other interests, the fortifying powder of clear general ideas, amidst the jam of play.

In addition the child should be able to count, [Footnote: There can be little doubt that many of us were taught to count very badly, and that we were hampered in our arithmetic throughout life by this defect. Counting should be taught be means of small cubes, which the child can arrange and rearrange in groups. It should have at least over a hundred of these cubes — if possible a thousand; they will be useful as toy bricks, and for innumerable purposes. Our civilization is now wedded to a decimal system of counting, and, to begin with, it will be well to teach the child to count up to ten and to stop there for a time. It is suggested by Mrs. Mary Everest Boole that it is very confusing to have distinctive names for eleven and twelve, which the child is apt to class with the single numbers and contrast with the teens, and she proposes at the beginning (*The Cultivation of the Mathematical Imagination*, Colchester: Benham & Co.) to use the words "one-ten," "two-ten," thirteen, fourteen, etc., for the second decade in counting. Her proposal is entirely in harmony with the general drift of the admirably suggestive diagrams of number order collected by Mr. Francis Gallon. Diagram after diagram displays the same hitch at twelve, the predominance in the mind of an individualized series over quantitatively equal spaces until the twenties are attained. Many diagrams also display the mental scar of

the clock face, the early counting is overmuch associated with a dial. One might perhaps head off the establishment of that image, and supply a more serviceable foundation for memories by equipping the nursery with a vertical scale of numbers divided into equal parts up to two or three hundred, with each decade tinted. When the child has learnt to count up to a hundred with cubes, it should be given an abacus, and it should also be encouraged to count and check quantities with all sorts of things, marbles, apples, bricks in a wall, pebbles, spots on dominoes, and so on; taught to play guessing games with marbles in a hand, and the like. The abacus, the hundred square and the thousand cube, will then in all probability become its cardinal numerical memories. Playing cards (without corner indices) and dominoes supply good recognizable arrangements of numbers, and train a child to grasp a number at a glance. The child should not be taught the Arabic numerals until it has counted for a year or more. Experience speaks here. I know one case only too well of a man who learnt his Arabic numerals prematurely, before he had acquired any sound experimental knowledge of numerical quantity, and, as a consequence, his numerical ideas are incurably associated with the peculiarities of the figures. When he hears the word seven he does not really think of seven or seven-ness at all, even now, he thinks of a number rather like four and very unlike six. Then again, six and nine are mysteriously and unreasonably linked in his mind, and so are three and five. He confuses numbers like sixty-three and sixty-five, and finds it hard to keep seventy-four distinct from forty-seven. Consequently, when it came to the multiplication table, he learnt each table as an arbitrary arrangement of relationships, and with an extraordinary amount of needless labour and punishment. But obviously with cubes or abacus at hand, it would be the easiest thing in the world for a child to construct and learn its own multiplication table whenever the need arose.] it should be capable of some mental and experimental arithmetic, and I am told that a child of five should be able to give the *sol-fa* names to notes, and sing these names at their proper pitch. Possibly in social intercourse the child will have picked up names for some of the letters of the alphabet, but there is no great hurry for that before five certainly, or even later. There is still a vast amount of things immediately about the child that need to

be thoroughly learnt, and a premature attack on letters divides attention from these more appropriate and educational objects. It should, for the reason given in the footnote, be still ignorant of the Arabic numerals. It should be able to handle a pencil and amuse itself with freehand of this sort: — and its mind should be quite uncontaminated by that imbecile drawing upon squared paper by means of which ignorant teachers destroy both the desire and the capacity to sketch in so many little children. Such sketching could be enormously benefited by a really intelligent teacher who would watch the child's efforts, and draw with the child just a little above its level. For example, the teacher might stimulate effort by rejoining to such a sketch as the above, something in this vein: —

The child will already be a great student of picture-books at five, something of a critic (after the manner of the realistic school), and it will be easy to egg it almost imperceptibly to a level where copying from simple outline illustrations will become possible. About five, a present of some one of the plastic substitutes for modelling clay now sold by educational dealers, *plasticine* for example, will be a discreet and acceptable present to the child — if not to its nurse.

The child's imagination will also be awake and active at five. He will look out on the world with anthropomorphic (or rather with pædomorphic) eyes. He will be living on a great flat earth — unless some officious person has tried to muddle his wits by telling him the earth is round; amidst trees, animals, men, houses, engines, utensils, that are all capable of being good or naughty, all fond of nice things and hostile to nasty ones, all thumpable and perishable, and all conceivably esurient. And the child should know of Fairy Land. The beautiful fancy of the "Little People," even if you do not give it to him, he will very probably get for himself; they will lurk always just out of reach of his desiring curious eyes, amidst the grass and flowers and behind the wainscot and in the shadows of the bedroom. He will come upon their traces; they will do him little kindnesses. Their affairs should interweave with the affairs of the child's dolls and brick castles and toy furniture. At first the child will scarcely be in a world of sustained stories, but very eager for anecdotes and simple short tales.

This is the hopeful foundation upon which at or about the fifth

year the formal education of every child in a really civilized community ought to begin. [Footnote: One may note here, perhaps, the desirability too often disregarded by over-solicitous parents, and particularly by the parents of the solitary children who are now so common, of keeping the child a little out of focus, letting it play by itself whenever it will, never calling attention to it in a manner that awakens it to the fact of an audience, never talking about it in its presence. Solitary children commonly get too much control, they are forced and beguiled upward rather than allowed to grow, their egotism is over-stimulated, and they miss many of the benefits of play and competition. It seems a pity, too, in the case of so many well-to-do people, that having equipped nurseries they should not put them to a fuller use — if in no other way than by admitting foster children. None of this has been very fully analyzed, of course (there are enormous areas of valuable research in these matters waiting for people of intelligence and leisure, or of intelligence and means), but the opinion that solitary children are handicapped by their loneliness is very strong. It is nearly certain that as a rule they make less agreeable boys and girls, but to me at any rate it is not nearly so certain that they make adult failures. It would be interesting to learn just what proportion of solitary children there is on the roll of those who have become great in our world. One thinks of John Ruskin, a particularly fine specimen of the highly focussed single son. Prig perhaps he was, but this world has a certain need of such prigs. A correspondent (a schoolmistress of experience) who has collected statistics in her own neighbourhood, is strongly of opinion not only that solitary children are below the average, but that all elder children are inferior in quality. I do not believe this, but it would be interesting and valuable if some one could find time for a wide and thorough investigation of this question.]

V. THE MAN-MAKING FORCES OF THE MODERN STATE

So far we have concerned ourselves with the introductory and foundation matter of the New Republican project, with the measures and methods that may be resorted to, firstly, if we would raise the general quality of the children out of whom we have to make the next generation, and, secondly, if we would replace divergent dialects and partial and confused expression by a uniform, ample and thorough knowledge of English throughout the English-speaking world. These two things are necessary preliminaries to the complete attainment of the more essential nucleus in the New Republican idea. So much has been discussed. This essential nucleus, thus stripped, reveals itself as the systematic direction of the moulding forces that play upon the developing citizen, towards his improvement, with a view to a new generation of individuals, a new social state, at a higher level than that at which we live to-day, a new generation which will apply the greater power, ampler knowledge and more definite will our endeavours will give it, to raise its successor still higher in the scale of life. Or we may put the thing in another and more concrete and vivid way. On the one hand imagine an average little child let us say in its second year. We have discussed all that can be done to secure that this average little child shall be well born, well fed, well cared for, and we will imagine all that can be done has been done. Accordingly, we have a sturdy, beautiful healthy little creature to go upon, just beginning to walk, just beginning to clutch at things with its hands, to reach out to and apprehend things with its eyes, with its ears, with the hopeful commencement of speech. We want to arrange matters so that this little being shall develop into its best possible adult form. That is our remaining problem.

Is our contemporary average citizen the best that could have been made out of the vague extensive possibilities that resided in him when he was a child of two? It has been shown already that in height and weight he, demonstrably, is not, and it has been suggested, I hope almost as convincingly, that in that complex apparatus of

acquisition and expression, language, he is also needlessly deficient. And even upon this defective foundation, it is submitted, he still fails, morally, mentally, socially, aesthetically, to be as much as he might be. “As much as he might be,” is far too ironically mild. The average citizen of our great state to-day is, I would respectfully submit, scarcely more than a dirty clout about his own buried talents.

I do not say he might not be infinitely worse, but can any one believe that, given better conditions, he might not have been infinitely better? Is it necessary to argue for a thing so obvious to all clear-sighted men? Is it necessary, even if it were possible, that I should borrow the mantle of Mr. George Gissing or the force of Mr. Arthur Morrison, and set myself in cold blood to measure the enormous defect of myself and my fellows by the standards of a remote perfection, to gauge the extent of this complex muddle of artificial and avoidable shortcomings through which we struggle? Must one, indeed, pass in review once more, bucolic stupidity, commercial cunning, urban vulgarity, religious hypocrisy, political clap-trap, and all the raw disorder of our incipient civilization before the point will be conceded? What benefit is there in any such revision? rather it may overwhelm us with the magnitude of what we seek to do. Let us not dwell on it, on all the average civilized man still fails to achieve; admit his imperfection, and for the rest let us keep steadfastly before us that fair, alluring and reasonable conception of all that, even now, the average man might be.

Yet one is tempted by the effective contrast to put against that clean and beautiful child some vivid presentation of the average thing, to sketch in a few simple lines the mean and graceless creature of our modern life, his ill-made clothes, his clumsy, half-fearful, half-brutal bearing, his coarse defective speech, his dreary unintelligent work, his shabby, impossible, bathless, artless, comfortless home; one is provoked to suggest him in some phase of typical activity, “enjoying himself” on a Bank Holiday, or rejoicing, peacock feather in hand, hat askew, and voice completely gone, on some occasion of public festivity — on the defeat of a numerically inferior enemy for example, or the decision of some great international issue at baseball or cricket. This, one would say, we have made out of that, and so point the New Republican question,

“Cannot we do better?” But the thing has been done so often without ever the breath of a remedy. Our business is with remedies. We mean to do better, we live to do better, and with no more than a glance at our present failures we will set ourselves to that.

To do better we must begin with a careful analysis of the process of this man’s making, of the great complex of circumstances which mould the vague possibilities of the average child into the reality of the citizen of the modern state.

We may begin upon this complex most hopefully by picking out a few of the conspicuous and typical elements and using them as a basis for an exhaustive classification. To begin with, of course, there is the home. For our present purpose it will be convenient to use “home” as a general expression for that limited group of human beings who share the board and lodging of the growing imperial citizen, and whose personalities are in constant, close contact with his until he reaches fifteen or sixteen. Typically, the chief figures of this group are mother, brothers and sisters, and father, to which are often added nursemaid, governess, and other servants. Beyond these are playmates again. Beyond these acquaintances figure. Home has indeed nowadays, in our world, no very definite boundaries — no such boundaries as it has, for example, on the veldt. In the case of a growing number of English upper middle-class children, moreover, and of the children of a growing element in the life of the eastern United States, the home functions are delegated in a very large degree to the preparatory school. It is a distinction that needs to be emphasized that many so-called schools are really homes, often very excellent homes, with which schools, often very inefficient schools, are united. All this we must lump together — it is, indeed, woven together almost inextricably — when we speak of home as a formative factor. The home, so far as its hygienic conditions go, we have already dealt with, and we have dealt, too, with the great neglected necessity, the absolute necessity if our peoples are to keep together, of making and keeping the language of the home uniform throughout our world-wide community. Purely intellectual development beyond the matter of language we may leave for a space. There remains the distinctive mental and moral function of the home, the determination by precept, example, and implication of the

cardinal habits of the developing citizen, his general demeanour, his fundamental beliefs about all the common and essential things of life.

This group of people, who constitute the home, will be in constant reaction upon him. If as a whole they bear themselves with grace and serenity, say and do kindly things, control rage, and occupy themselves constantly, they will do much to impose these qualities upon the new-comer. If they quarrel one with another, behave coarsely and spitefully, loiter and lounge abundantly, these things will also stamp the child. A raging father, a scared deceitful mother, vulgarly acting, vulgarly thinking friends, all leave an almost indelible impress. Precept may play a part in the home, but it is a small part, unless it is endorsed by conduct. What these people do, on the whole, believe in and act upon, the child will tend to believe in and act upon; what they believe they believe, but do not act upon, the child will acquire also as a non-operative belief; their practices, habits, and prejudices will be enormously prepotent in his life. If, for example, the parent talks constantly of the contemptible dirtiness of Boers and foreigners, and of the extreme beauty of cleanliness and — even obviously — rarely washes, the child will grow to the same professions and the same practical denial. This home circle it is that will describe what, in modified Herbartian phraseology, one may call the child's initial circle of thought; it is a circle many things will subsequently enlarge and modify, but of which they have the centering at least and the establishment of the radial trends, almost beyond redemption. The effect of home influence, indeed, constitutes with most of us a sort of secondary heredity, interweaving with, and sometimes almost indistinguishable from, the real unalterable primary heredity, a moral shaping by suggestion, example, and influence, that is a sort of spiritual parallel to physical procreation.

It is not simply personalities that are operative in the home influence. There is also the implications of the various relations between one member of the home circle and another. I am inclined to think that the social conceptions, for example, that are accepted in a child's home world are very rarely shaken in afterlife. People who have been brought up in households where there is an organized under-world of servants are incurably different in their social outlook

from those who have passed a servantless childhood. They never quite emancipate themselves from the conception of an essential class difference, of a class of beings inferior to themselves. They may theorise about equality — but theory is not belief. They will do a hundred things to servants that between equals would be, for various reasons, impossible. The Englishwoman and the Anglicised American woman of the more pretentious classes honestly regards a servant as physically, morally, and intellectually different from herself, capable of things that would be incredibly arduous to a lady, capable of things that would be incredibly disgraceful, under obligations of conduct no lady observes, incapable of the refinement to which every lady pretends. It is one of the most amazing aspects of contemporary life, to converse with some smart, affected, profoundly uneducated, flirtatious woman about her housemaid's followers. There is such an identity; there is such an abyss. But at present that contrast is not our concern. Our concern at present is with the fact that the social constitution of the home almost invariably shapes the fundamental social conceptions for life, just as its average temperament shapes manners and bearing and its moral tone begets moral predisposition. If the average sensual man of our civilization is noisy and undignified in his bearing, disposed to insult and despise those he believes to be his social inferiors, competitive and disobliging to his equals; abject, servile, and dishonest to those he regards as his betters; if his wife is a silly, shallow, gossiping spendthrift, unfit to rear the children she occasionally bears, perpetually snubbing social inferiors and perpetually cringing to social superiors, it is probable that we have to blame the home, not particularly any specific class of homes, but our general home atmosphere, for the great part of these characteristics. If we would make the average man of the coming years gentler in manner, more deliberate in judgment, steadier in purpose, upright, considerate, and free, we must look first to the possibility of improving the tone and quality of the average home.

Now the substance and constitution of the home, the relations and order of its various members, have been, and are, traditional. But it is a tradition that has always been capable of modification in each generation. In the unlettered, untravelling past, the factor of tradition

was altogether dominant. Sons and daughters married and set up homes, morally, intellectually, economically, like those of their parents. Over great areas homogeneous traditions held, and it needed wars and conquests, or it needed missionaries and persecutors and conflicts, or it needed many generations of intercourse and filtration before a new tradition could replace or graft itself upon the old. But in the past hundred years or so the home conditions of the children of our English-speaking population have shown a disposition to break from tradition under influences that are increasing, and to become much more heterogeneous than were any home conditions before. The ways in which these modifications of the old home tradition have arisen will indicate the means and methods by which further modifications may be expected and attempted in the future.

Modification has come to the average home tradition through two distinct, though no doubt finally interdependent channels. The first of these channels is the channel of changing economic necessities, using the phrase to cover everything from domestic conveniences at the one extreme to the financial foundation of the home at the other, and the next is the influx of new systems of thought, of feeling, and of interpretation about the general issues of life.

There are in Great Britain three main interdependent systems of home tradition undergoing modification and readjustment. They date from the days before mechanism and science began their revolutionary intervention in human affairs, and they derive from the three main classes of the old aristocratic, agricultural, and trading state, namely, the aristocratic, the middle, and the labour class. There are local, there are even racial modifications, there are minor classes and subspecies, but the rough triple classification will serve. In America the dominant home tradition is that of the transplanted English middle class. The English aristocratic tradition has flourished and faded in the Southern States; the British servile and peasant tradition has never found any growth in America, and has, in the persons of the Irish chiefly, been imported in an imperfect condition, only to fade. The various home traditions of the nineteenth century immigrants have either, if widely different, succumbed, or if not very different assimilated themselves to the ruling tradition. The most marked non-British influence has been the intermixture of Teutonic

Protestantism. In both countries now the old home traditions have been and are being adjusted to and modified by the new classes, with new relationships and new necessities, that the revolution in industrial organization and domestic conveniences has created.

The interplay of old tradition and new necessities becomes at times very curious. Consider, for example, the home influences of the child of a shopman in a large store, or those of the child of a skilled operative — an engineer of some sort let us say — in England. Both these are new types in the English social body; the former derives from the old middle class, the class that was shopkeeping in the towns and farming in the country, the class of the Puritans, the Quakers, the first manufacturers, the class whose mentally active members become the dissenters, the old Liberals, and the original New Englanders. The growth of large businesses has raised a portion of this class to the position of Sir John Blundell Maple, Sir Thomas Lipton, the intimate friend of our King, and our brewer peers; it has raised a rather more numerous section to the red plush glories of Wagon-Lit trains and their social and domestic equivalents, and it has reduced the bulk of the class to the status of employees for life. But the tradition that our English shopman is in the same class as his master, that he has been apprentice and improver, and is now assistant, with a view to presently being a master himself, still throws its glamour over his life and his home, and his child's upbringing. They belong to the middle class, the black coat and silk-hat class, and the silk hat crowns the adolescence of their boys as inevitably as the toga made men in ancient Rome. Their house is built, not for convenience primarily, but to realize whatever convenience is possible after the rigid traditional requirements have been met; it is the extreme and final reduction of the plan of a better class house, and the very type of its owner. As one sees it in the London suburbs devoted to clerks and shopmen, it stands back a yard or so from the road, with a gate and a railing, and a patch, perhaps two feet wide, of gravel between its front and the pavement. This is the last pathetic vestige of the preliminary privacies of its original type, the gates, the drive-up, the front lawn, the shady trees, that gave a great impressive margin to the door. The door has a knocker (with an appeal to realities, "ring also") and it

opens into a narrow passage, perhaps four feet wide, which still retains the title of "hall." Oak staining on the woodwork and marbled paper accentuate the lordly memory. People of this class would rather die than live in a house with a front door, even had it a draught-stopping inner door, that gave upon the street. Instead of an ample kitchen in which meals can be taken and one other room in which the rest of life goes on, these two covering the house site, the social distinction from the servant invades the house space first by necessitating a passage to a side-door, and secondly by cutting up the interior into a "dining-room" and a "drawing-room." Economy of fuel throughout the winter and economy of the best furniture always, keeps the family in the dining-room pretty constantly, but there you have the drawing-room as a concrete fact. Though the drawing-room is inevitable, the family will manage without a bath-room well enough. They may, or they may not, occasionally wash all over. There are probably not fifty books in the house, but a daily paper comes and *Tit Bits* or *Pearson's Weekly,* or, perhaps, *M.A.P., Modern Society,* or some such illuminant of the upper circles, and a cheap fashion paper, appear at irregular intervals to supplement this literature.

The wife lives to realize the ideal of the "ladylike" — lady she resigns to the patrician — and she insists upon a servant, however small. This poor wretch of a servant, often a mere child of fourteen or fifteen, lives by herself in a minute kitchen, and sleeps in a fireless attic. To escape vulgar associates, the children of the house avoid the elementary schools — the schools called in America public schools — where there are trained, efficient teachers, good apparatus, and an atmosphere of industry, and go to one of those wretched dens of disorderly imposture, a middle-class school, where an absolute failure to train or educate is seasoned with religious cant, lessons in piano-playing, lessons in French "made in England," mortarboard caps for the boys, and a high social tone. And to emphasize the fact of its social position, this bookless, bathless family tips! The plumber touches his hat for a tip, the man who moves the furniture, the butcher-boy at Christmas, the dustman; these things also, the respect and the tip, at their minimum dimensions. Everything is at its minimum dimensions, it is the last chipped, dwarfed, enfeebled state

of a tradition that has, in its time, played a fine part in the world. This much of honour still clings to it, it will endure no tip, no charity, no upper-class control of its privacy. This is the sort of home in which the minds of thousands of young Englishmen and Englishwomen receive their first indelible impressions. Can one expect them to escape the contagion of its cramped pretentiousness, its dingy narrowness, its shy privacy of social degradation, its essential sordidness and inefficiency?

Our skilled operative, on the other hand, will pocket his tip. He is on the other side of the boundary. He presents a rising element coming from the servile mass. Probably his net income equals or exceeds the shopman's, but there is no servant, no black coat and silk hat, no middle-class school in his scheme of things. He calls the shopman "Sir," and makes no struggle against his native accent. In his heart he despises the middle class, the mean tip-givers, and he is inclined to overrate the gentry or big tippers. He is much more sociable, much noisier, relatively shameless, more intelligent, more capable, less restrained. He is rising against his tradition, and almost against his will. The serf still bulks large in him. The whole trend of circumstance is to substitute science for mere rote skill in him, to demand initiative and an intelligent self-adaptation to new discoveries and new methods, to make him a professional man and a job and pieceworker after the fashion of the great majority of professional men. Against all these things the serf element in him fights. He resists education and clings to apprenticeship, he fights for time-work, he obstructs new inventions, he clings to the ideal of short hours, high pay, shirk and let the master worry. His wife is a far more actual creature than the clerk's; she does the house herself in a rough, effectual fashion, his children get far more food for mind and body, and far less restraint. You can tell the age of the skilled operative within a decade by the quantity of books in his home; the younger he is the more numerous these are likely to be. And the younger he is the more likely he is to be alive to certain general views about his rights and his place in the social scale, the less readily will his finger go to his cap at the sight of broad-cloth, or his hand to the proffered half-crown. He will have listened to Trade Union organizers and Socialist speakers; he will have read the

special papers of his class. The whole of this home is, in comparison with the shopman's, wide open to new influences. The children go to a Board School, and very probably afterwards to evening classes — or music-halls. Here again is a new type of home, in which the English of 1920 are being made in thousands, and which is forced a little way up the intellectual and moral scale every year, a little further from its original conception of labour, dependence, irresponsibility, and servility.

Compare, again, the home conditions of the child of a well-connected British shareholder inheriting, let us say, seven or eight hundred a year, with the home of exactly the same sort of person deriving from the middle class. On the one hand, one will find the old aristocratic British tradition in an instructively distorted state. All the assumptions of an essential lordliness remain — and none of the duties. All the pride is there still, but it is cramped, querulous, and undignified. That lordliness is so ample that for even a small family the income I have named will be no more than biting poverty, there will be a pervading quality of struggle in this home to avoid work, to frame arrangements, to discover cheap, loyal servants of the old type, to discover six per cent. investments without risk, to interest influential connections in the prospects of the children. The tradition of the ruling class, which sees in the public service a pension scheme for poor relations, will glow with all the colours of hope. Great sacrifices will be made to get the boys to public schools, where they can revive and expand the family connections. They will look forward as a matter of course to positions and appointments, for the want of which men of gifts and capacity from other social strata will break their hearts, and they will fill these coveted places with a languid, discontented incapacity. Great difficulty will be experienced in finding schools for the girls from which the offspring of tradesmen are excluded. Vulgarity has to be jealously anticipated. In a period when Smartness (as distinguished from Vulgarity) is becoming an ideal, this demands at times extremely subtle discrimination. The art of credit will be developed to a high level.

Now in the other family economically indistinguishable from this, a family with seven or eight hundred a year from investments, which derives from the middle class, the tradition is one that, in spite of the

essential irresponsibility of the economic position, will urge this family towards exertion as a duty. As a rule the resultant lies in the direction of pleasant, not too arduous exertion, the arts are attacked with great earnestness of intention, literature, "movements" of many sorts are ingredients in these homes. Many things that are imperative to the aristocratic home are regarded as needless, and in their place appear other things that the aristocrat would despise, books, instruction, travel in incorrect parts of the world, *games*, that most seductive development of modern life, played to the pitch of distinction. Into both these homes comes literature, comes the Press, comes the talk of alien minds, comes the observation of things without, sometimes reinforcing the tradition, sometimes insidiously glossing upon it or undermining it, sometimes "letting daylight through it"; but much more into the latter type than into the former. And slowly the two fundamentally identical things tend to assimilate their superficial difference, to homologize their traditions, each generation sees a relaxation of the aristocratic prohibitions, a "gentleman" may tout for wines nowadays — among gentlemen — he may be a journalist, a fashionable artist, a schoolmaster, his sisters may "act," while, on the other hand, each generation of the ex-commercial shareholder reaches out more earnestly towards refinement, towards tone and quality, towards etiquette, and away from what is "common" in life.

So in these typical cases one follows the strands of tradition into the new conditions, the new homes of our modern state. In America one finds exactly the same new elements shaped by quite parallel economic developments, shopmen in a large store, skilled operatives, and independent shareholders developing homes not out of a triple strand of tradition, but out of the predominant home tradition of an emancipated middle class, and in a widely different atmosphere of thought and suggestion. As a consequence, one finds, I am told, a skilled operative already with no eye (or only an angry eye) for tips, sociable shopmen, and shareholding families, frankly common, frankly intelligent, frankly hedonistic, or only with the most naïve and superficial imitation of the haughty incapacity, the mean pride, the parasitic lordliness of the just-independent, well-connected English.

These rough indications of four social types will illustrate the quality of our proposition, that home influence in the making of men resolves itself into an interplay of one substantial and two modifying elements, namely: —

(1) Tradition.

(2) Economic conditions.

(3) New ideas, suggestions, interpretations, changes in the general atmosphere of thought in which a man lives and which he mentally breathes.

The net sum of which three factors becomes the tradition for the next generation.

Both the modifying elements admit of control. How the economic conditions of homes may be controlled to accomplish New Republican ends has already been discussed with a view to a hygienic minimum, and obviously the same, or similar, methods may be employed to secure less materialistic benefits. You can make a people dirty by denying them water, you can make a people cleaner by cheapening and enforcing bath-rooms. Man is indeed so spiritual a being that he will turn every materialistic development you force upon him into spiritual growth. You can aerate his house, not only with air, but with ideas. Build, cheapen, render alluring a simpler, more spacious type of house for the clerk, fill it with labour-saving conveniences, and leave no excuse and no spare corners for the "slavey," and the slavey — and all that she means in mental and moral consequence — will vanish out of being. You will beat tradition. Make it easy for Trade Unions to press for shorter hours of work, but make it difficult for them to obstruct the arrival of labour-saving appliances, put the means of education easily within the reach of every workman, make promotion from the ranks, in the Army, in the Navy, in all business concerns, practicable and natural, and the lingering discolouration of the serf taint will vanish from the workman's mind. The days of mystic individualism have passed, few people nowadays will agree to that strange creed that we must deal with economic conditions as though they were inflexible laws. Economic conditions are made and compact of the human will, and by tariffs, by trade regulation and organization, fresh strands of will may be woven into the complex. The thing may be extraordinarily

intricate and difficult, abounding in unknown possibilities and unsuspected dangers, but that is a plea for science and not for despair.

Controllable, too, is the influx of modifying suggestions into our homes, however vast and subtle the enterprise may seem. But here we touch for the first time a question that we shall now continue to touch upon at other points, until at last we shall clear it and display it as the necessarily central question of the whole matter of man-making so far as the human will is concerned, and that is the preservation and expansion of the body of human thought and imagination, of which all conscious human will and act is but the imperfect expression and realization, of which all human institutions and contrivances, from the steam-engine to the ploughed field, and from the blue pill to the printing press, are no more than the imperfect symbols, the rude mnemonics and memoranda.

But this analysis of the modifying factors in the home influence, this formulation of its controllable elements, has now gone as far as the purpose of this paper requires. It has worked out to this, that the home, so far as it is not traditional organization, is really only on the one hand an aspect of the general economic condition of the state, and on the other of that still more fundamental thing, its general atmosphere of thought. Our analysis refers back the man-maker to these two questions. The home, one gathers, is not to be dealt with separately or simply. Nor, on the other hand, are these questions to be dealt with merely in relation to their home application. As the citizen grows up, he presently emerges from his home influences to a more direct and general contact with these two things, with the Fact of the modern state and with the Thought of the modern state, and we must consider each of these in relation to his development as a whole.

The next group of elements in the man-making complex that occurs to one after the home, is the school. Let me repeat a distinction already drawn between the home element in boarding-schools and the school proper. While the child is out of the school-room, playing — except when it is drilling or playing under direction — when it is talking with its playmates, walking, sleeping, eating, it is under those influences that it has been convenient for me to speak

of as the home influence. The schoolmaster who takes boarders is, I hold, merely a substitute for the parent, the household of boarders merely a substitute for the family. What is meant by school here, is that which is possessed in common by day school and boarding-school — the schoolroom and the recess playground part. It is something which the savage and the barbarian distinctively do not possess as a phase in their making, and scarcely even its rudimentary suggestion. It is a new element correlated with the establishment of a wider political order and with the use of written speech.

Now I think it will be generally conceded that whatever systematic intellectual training the developing citizen gets, as distinguished from his natural, accidental, and incidental development, is got in school or in its subsequent development of college, and with that I will put aside the question of intellectual development altogether for a later, fuller discussion. My point here is simply to note the school as a factor in the making of almost every citizen in the modern state, and to point out, what is sometimes disregarded, that it is only one of many factors in that making. The tendency of the present time is enormously to exaggerate the importance of school in development, to ascribe to it powers quite beyond its utmost possibilities, and to blame it for evils in which it has no share. And in the most preposterous invasions of the duties of parent, clergyman, statesman, author, journalist, of duties which are in truth scarcely more within the province of a schoolmaster than they are within the province of a butcher, the real and necessary work of the school is too often marred, crippled, and lost sight of altogether. We treat the complex, difficult and honourable task of intellectual development as if it were within the capacity of any earnest but muddle-headed young lady, or any half-educated gentleman in orders; we take that for granted, and we demand in addition from them the "formation of character," moral and ethical training and supervision, aesthetic guidance, the implanting of a taste for the Best in literature, for the Best in art, for the finest conduct; we demand the clue to success in commerce and the seeds of a fine passionate patriotism from these necessarily very ordinary persons.

One might think schoolmasters and schoolmistresses were inaccessible to general observation in the face of these stupendous

demands. If we exacted such things from our butcher over and above good service in his trade, if we insisted that his meat should not only build up honest nerve and muscle, but that it should compensate for all that was slovenly in our homes, dishonest in our economic conditions, and slack and vulgar in our public life, he would very probably say that it took him all his time to supply sound meat, that it was a difficult and honourable thing to supply sound meat, that the slackness of business-men and statesmen in the country, the condition of the arts and sciences, wasn't his business, that however lamentable the disorders of the state, there was no reasonable prospect of improving it by upsetting the distribution of meat, and, in short, that he was a butcher and not a Cosmos-healing quack. "You must have meat," he would say, "anyhow." But the average schoolmaster and schoolmistress does not do things in that way.

What a school may do for the developing citizen, the original and the developed function of the school, and how its true work may best be accomplished, we shall discuss later. But it may be well to expand a little more fully here the account of what the school has no business to attempt, and what the scholastic profession is, as a whole, quite incapable of doing, and to point to the really responsible agencies in each case.

Now, firstly, with regard to all that the schoolmaster and schoolmistress means by the "formation of character." A large proportion of the scholastic profession will profess, and a still larger proportion of the public believes, that it is possible by talk and specially designed instruction, to give a boy or girl a definite bias towards "truth," towards acts called "healthy" (a word it would puzzle the ordinary schoolmaster or schoolmistress extremely to define, glib as they are with it), towards honour, towards generosity, enterprise, self-reliance, and the like. The masters in our public schools are far from blameless in this respect, and you may gauge the quality of many of these gentlemen pretty precisely by their disposition towards the "school pulpit" line of business. Half an hour's "straight talk to the boys," impromptu vague sentimentality about Earnestness, Thoroughness, True Patriotism, and so forth, seems to assuage the conscience as nothing else could do, for weeks of ill-prepared, ill-planned teaching, and years of preoccupation with

rowing-boats and cricket. The more extreme examples of this type will say in a tone of manly apology, "It does the boys good to tell them plainly what I think about serious things" — when the simple fact of the case is too often that he does all he can not to think about any things of any sort whatever, except cricket and promotion. Schoolmistresses, again, will sometimes come near boasting to the inquiring parent of our "ethical hour," and if you probe the facts you will find that means no more and no less than an hour of floundering egotism, in which a poor illogical soul, with a sort of naive indecency, talks nonsense about "Ideals," about the Higher and the Better, about Purity, and about many secret and sacred things, things upon which wise men are often profoundly uncertain, to incredulous or imitative children. All that is needed to do this sort of thing abundantly and freely is a certain degree of aggressive egotism, a certain gift of stupidity, good intentions, and a defective sense of educational possibilities and limitations.

In addition to moral discussions, that at the best are very second-rate eloquence, and at the worst are respect destroying, mind destroying gabble, there are various forms of "ethical" teaching, advocated and practised in America and in the elementary schools of this country. For example, a story of an edifying sort is told to the children, and comments are elicited upon the behaviour of the characters. "Would you have done that?" "Oh, *no*, teacher!" "Why not?" "Because it would be mean." The teacher goes into particulars, whittling away at the verdict, and at last the fine point of the lesson stands out. Now it may be indisputable that such lessons can be conducted effectively and successfully by exceptionally brilliant teachers, that children may be given an excellent code of good intentions, and a wonderful skill in the research for good or bad motives for any given course of action they may or may not want to take, but that they can be systematically trained by the average teacher at our disposal in this desirable "subject" is quite another question. It is one of the things that the educational reformer must guard against most earnestly, the persuasion that what an exceptional man can do ever and again for display purposes can be done successfully day by day in schools. This applies to many other things besides the teaching of ethics. Professor Armstrong can give

delightfully instructive lessons in chemistry according to the heuristic method, but in the hands of the average teacher by whom teaching *must* be done for the next few years the heuristic system will result in nothing but a pointless fumble. Mr. Mackinder teaches geography — inimitably — just to show how to do it. Mr. David Devant — the brilliant Egyptian Hall conjuror — will show any assembly of parents how to amuse children quite easily, but for some reason he does not present his legerdemain as a new discovery in educational method.

To our argument that this sort of teaching is not within the capacity of such teachers as we have, or are likely to have, we can, fortunately enough, add that whatever is attempted can be done far better through other agencies. More or less unknown to teachers there exists a considerable amount of well-written literature, true stories and fiction, in which, without any clumsy insistence upon moral points, fine actions are displayed in their elementary fineness, and baseness is seen to be base. There are also a few theatres, and there might be more, in which fine action is finely displayed. Now one nobly conceived and nobly rendered play will give a stronger moral impression than the best schoolmaster conceivable, talking ethics for a year on end. One great and stirring book may give an impression less powerful, perhaps, but even more permanent. Practically these things are as good as example — they are example. Surround your growing boy or girl with a generous supply of good books, and leave writer and growing soul to do their business together without any scholastic control of their intercourse. Make your state healthy, your economic life healthy and honest, be honest and truthful in the pulpit, behind the counter, in the office, and your children will need no specific ethical teaching; they will inhale right. And without these things all the ethical teaching in the world will only sour to cant at the first wind of the breath of the world.

Quite without ethical pretension at all the school is of course bound to influence the moral development of the child. That most important matter, the habit and disposition towards industry, should be acquired there, the sense of thoroughness in execution, the profound belief that difficulty is bound to yield to a resolute attack — all these things are the necessary by-products of a good school. A

teacher who is punctual, persistent, just, who tells the truth, and insists upon the truth, who is truthful, not merely technically but in a constant search for exact expression, whose own share of the school work is faultlessly done, who is tolerant to effort and a tireless helper, who is obviously more interested in serious work than in puerile games, will beget essential manliness in every boy he teaches. He need not lecture on his virtues. A slack, emotional, unpunctual, inexact, and illogical teacher, a fawning loyalist, an incredible pietist, an energetic snob, a teacher as eager for games, as sensitive to social status, as easy, kindly, and sentimental, and as shy really of hard toil as — as some teachers — is none the better for ethical flatulence. There is a good deal of cant in certain educational circles, there is a certain type of educational writing in which "love" is altogether too strongly present; a reasonably extensive observation of school-children and school-teachers makes one doubt whether there is ever anything more than a very temperate affection and a still more temperate admiration on either side. Children see through their teachers amazingly, and what they do not understand now they will understand later. For a teacher to lay hands on all the virtues, to associate them with his or her personality, to smear characteristic phrases and expressions over them, is as likely as not to give the virtues unpleasant associations. Better far, save through practice, to leave them alone altogether.

And what is here said of this tainting of moral instruction with the personality of the teacher applies still more forcibly to religious instruction. Here, however, I enter upon a field where I am anxious to avoid dispute. To my mind those ideas and emotions that centre about the idea of God appear at once too great and remote, and too intimate and subtle for objective treatment. But there are a great number of people, unfortunately, who regard religion as no more than geography, who believe that it can be got into daily lessons of one hour, and adequately done by any poor soul who has been frightened into conformity by the fear of dismissal. And having this knobby, portable creed, and believing sincerely that lip conformity is alone necessary to salvation, they want to force every teacher they can to acquire and impart its indestructible, inflexible recipes, and they are prepared to enforce this at the price of inefficiency in every

other school function. We must all agree — whatever we believe or disbelieve — that religion is the crown of the edifice we build. But it will simply ruin a vital part of the edifice and misuse our religion very greatly if we hand it over to the excavators and bricklayers of the mind, to use as a cheap substitute for the proper intellectual and ethical foundations; for the ethical foundation which is schooling and the ethical foundation which is habit. I must confess that there is only one sort of man whose insistence upon religious teaching in schools by ordinary school teachers I can understand, and that is the downright Atheist, the man who believes sensual pleasure is all that there is of pleasure, and virtue no more than a hood to check the impetuosity of youth until discretion is acquired, the man who believes there is nothing else in the world but hard material fact, and who has as much respect for truth and religion as he has for stable manure. Such a man finds it convenient to profess a lax version of the popular religion, and he usually does so, and invariably he wants his children "taught" religion, because he so utterly disbelieves in God, goodness, and spirituality that he cannot imagine young people doing even enough right to keep healthy and prosperous, unless they are humbugged into it.

Equally unnecessary is the scholastic attempt to take over the relations of the child to "nature," art, and literature. To read the educational journals, to hear the scholastic enthusiast, one would think that no human being would ever discover there was any such thing as "nature" were it not for the schoolmaster — and quotation from Wordsworth. And this nature, as they present it, is really not nature at all, but a factitious admiration for certain isolated aspects of the universe conventionally regarded as "natural." Few schoolmasters have discovered that for every individual there are certain aspects of the universe that especially appeal, and that that appeal is part of the individuality — different from every human being, and quite outside their range. Certain things that have been rather well treated by poets and artists (for the most part dead and of Academic standing) they regard as Nature, and all the rest of the world, most of the world in which we live, as being in some way an intrusion upon this classic. They propound a wanton and illogical canon. Trees, rivers, flowers, birds, stars — are, and have been for

many centuries Nature — so are ploughed fields — really the most artificial of all things — and all the apparatus of the agriculturist, cattle, vermin, weeds, weed-fires, and all the rest of it. A grassy old embankment to protect low-lying fields is Nature, and so is all the mass of apparatus about a water-mill; a new embankment to store an urban water supply, though it may be one mass of splendid weeds, is artificial, and ugly. A wooden windmill is Nature and beautiful, a sky-sign atrocious. Mountains have become Nature and beautiful within the last hundred years — volcanoes even. Vesuvius, for example, is grand and beautiful, its smell of underground railway most impressive, its night effect stupendous, but the glowing cinder heaps of Burslem, the wonders of the Black Country sunset, the wonderful fire-shot nightfall of the Five Towns, these things are horrid and offensive and vulgar beyond the powers of scholastic language. Such a mass of clotted inconsistencies, such a wild confusion of vicious mental practices as this, is the stuff the schoolmaster has in mind when he talks of children acquiring a love of Nature. They are to be trained, against all their mental bias, to observe and quote about the canonical natural objects and not to observe, but instead to shun and contemn everything outside the canon, and so to hand on the orthodox Love of Nature to another generation. One may present the triumph of scholastic nature-teaching, by the figure of a little child hurrying to school along the ways of a busy modern town. She carries a faded cut-flower, got at considerable cost from a botanical garden, and as she goes she counts its petals, its stamens, its bracteoles. Her love of Nature, her "powers of observation," are being trained. About her, all unheeded, is a wonderful life that she would be intent upon but for this precious training of her mind; great electric trains loom wonderfully round corners, go droning by, spitting fire from their overhead wires; great shop windows display a multitudinous variety of objects; men and women come and go about a thousand businesses; a street-organ splashes a spray of notes at her as she passes, a hoarding splashes a spray of colour.

The shape and direction of one's private observation is no more the schoolmaster's business than the shape and direction of one's nose. It is, indeed, possible to certain gifted and exceptional persons

that they should not only see acutely, but abstract and express again what they have seen. Such people are artists — a different kind of people from schoolmasters altogether. Into all sorts of places, where people have failed to see, comes the artist like a light. The artist cannot create nor can he determine the observation of other men, but he can, at any rate, help and inspire it. But he and the pedagogue are temperamentally different and apart. They are at opposite poles of human quality. The pedagogue with his canon comes between the child and Nature only to limit and obscure. His business is to leave the whole thing alone.

If the interpretation of nature is a rare and peculiar gift, the interpretation of art and literature is surely an even rarer thing. Hundreds of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who could not write one tolerable line of criticism, will stand up in front of classes by the hour together and issue judgments on books, pictures, and all that is comprised under the name of art. Think of it! Here is your great artist, your great exceptional mind groping in the darknesses beneath the surface of life, half apprehending strange elusive things in those profundities, and striving — striving sometimes to the utmost verge of human endeavour — to give that strange unsuspected mystery expression, to shape it, to shadow it in form and wonder of colour, in beautiful rhythms, in phantasies of narrative, in gracious and glowing words. So much in its essential and precious degree is art. Think of what the world must be in the wider vision of the great artist. Think, for example, of the dark splendours amidst which the mind of Leonardo clambered; the mirror of tender lights that reflected into our world the iridescent graciousness of Botticelli! Then to the faint and faded intimations these great men have left us of the things beyond our scope, comes the scholastic intelligence, gesticulating instructively, and in too many cases obscuring for ever the naive vision of the child. The scholastic intelligence, succulently appreciative, blind, hopelessly blind to the fact that every great work of art is a strenuous, an almost despairing effort to express and convey, treats the whole thing as some foolish riddle— “explains it to the children.” As if every picture was a rebus and every poem a charade! “Little children,” he says, “this teaches you” — and out comes the platitude!

Of late years, in Great Britain more particularly, the School has been called upon to conquer still other fields. It has become apparent that in this monarchy of ours, in which honour is heaped high upon money-making, even if it is money-making that adds nothing to the collective wealth or efficiency, and denied to the most splendid public services unless they are also remunerative; where public applause is the meed of cricketers, hostile guerillas, clamorous authors, yacht-racing grocers, and hopelessly incapable generals, and where suspicion and ridicule are the lot of every man working hard and living hard for any end beyond a cabman's understanding; in this world-wide Empire whose Government is entrusted as a matter of course to peers and denied as a matter of course to any man of humble origin; where social pressure of the most urgent kind compels every capable business manager to sell out to a company and become a "gentleman" at the very earliest opportunity, the national energy is falling away. That driving zeal, that practical vigour that once distinguished the English is continually less apparent. Our workmen take no pride in their work any longer, they shirk toil and gamble. And what is worse, the master takes no pride in the works; he, too, shirks toil and gambles. Our middle-class young men, instead of flinging themselves into study, into research, into literature, into widely conceived business enterprises, into so much of the public service as is not preserved for the sons of the well connected, play games, display an almost oriental slackness in the presence of work and duty, and seem to consider it rather good form to do so. And seeking for some reason and some remedy for this remarkable phenomenon, a number of patriotic gentlemen have discovered that the Schools, the Schools are to blame. Something in the nature of Reform has to be waved over our schools.

It would be a wicked deed to write anything that might seem to imply that our Schools were not in need of very extensive reforms, or that their efficiency is not a necessary preliminary condition to general public efficiency, but, indeed, the Schools are only one factor in a great interplay of causes, and the remedy is a much ampler problem than any Education Act will cure. Take a typical young Englishman, for example, one who has recently emerged from one of our public schools, one of the sort of young Englishmen for whom

all commissions in the Army are practically reserved, who will own some great business, perhaps, or direct companies, and worm your way through the tough hide of style and restraint he has acquired, get him to talk about women, about his prospects, his intimate self, and see for yourself how much of him, and how little of him, his school has made. Test him on politics, on the national future, on social relationships, and lead him if you can to an utterance or so upon art and literature. You will be astonished how little you can either blame or praise the teaching of his school for him. He is ignorant, profoundly ignorant, and much of his style and reserve is draped over that; he does not clearly understand what he reads, and he can scarcely write a letter; he draws, calculates and thinks no better than an errand boy, and he has no habit of work; for that much perhaps the school must answer. And the school, too, must answer for the fact that although — unless he is one of the small specialized set who "swat" at games — he plays cricket and football quite without distinction, he regards these games as much more important than military training and things of that sort, spends days watching his school matches, and thumbs and muddles over the records of county cricket to an amazing extent. But these things are indeed only symptons, and not essential factors in general inefficiency. There are much wider things for which his school is only mediately or not at all to blame. For example, he is not only ignorant and inefficient and secretly aware of his ignorance and inefficiency, but, what is far more serious, he does not feel any strong desire to alter the fact; he is not only without the habit of regular work, but he does not feel the defect because he has no desire whatever to do anything that requires work in the doing. And you will find that this is so because there is woven into the tissue of his being a profound belief that work and knowledge "do not pay," that they are rather ugly and vulgar characteristics, and that they make neither for happiness nor success.

He did not learn that at school, nor at school was it possible he should unlearn it. He acquired that belief from his home, from the conversation of his equals, from the behaviour of his inferiors; he found it in the books and newspapers he has read, he breathed it in with his native air. He regards it as manifest Fact in the life about him. And he is perfectly right. He lives in a country where stupidity

is, so to speak, crowned and throned, and where honour is a means of exchange; and he draws his simple, straight conclusions. The much-castigated gentleman with the ferule is largely innocent in this account.

If, too, you ransack your young Englishman for religion, you will be amazed to find scarcely a trace of School. In spite of a ceremonial adhesion to the religion of his fathers, you will find nothing but a profound agnosticism. He has not even the faith to disbelieve. It is not so much that he has not developed religion as that the place has been seared. In his time his boyish heart has had its stirrings, he has responded with the others to "Onward, Christian Soldiers," the earnest moments of the school pulpit, and all those first vague things. But limited as his reading is, it has not been so limited that he does not know that very grave things have happened in matters of faith, that the doctrinal schemes of the conventional faith are riddled targets, that creed and Bible do not mean what they appear to mean, but something quite different and indefinable, that the bishops, socially so much in evidence, are intellectually in hiding.

Here again is something the school did not cause, the school cannot cure.

And in matters sexual, in matters political, in matters social, and matters financial you will find that the flabby, narrow-chested, under-trained mind that hides in the excellent-looking body of the typical young Englishman is encumbered with an elaborate duplicity. Under the cloak of a fine tradition of good form and fair appearances you will find some intricate disbeliefs, some odd practices. You will trace his moral code chiefly to his school-fellows, and the intimates of his early manhood, and could you trace it back you would follow an unbroken tradition from the days of the Restoration. So soon as he pierces into the realities of the life about him, he finds enforcement, ample and complete, for the secret code. The schoolmaster has not touched it; the school pulpit has boomed over its development in vain. Nor has the schoolmaster done anything for or against the young man's political views, his ideas of social exclusiveness, the peculiar code of honour that makes it disgraceful to bilk a cabman and permissible to obtain goods on credit from a tradesman without the means to pay. All this much of the artificial element in our young

English gentleman was made outside the school, and is to be remedied only by extra-scholastic forces.

School is only one necessary strand in an enormous body of formative influence. At first that mass of formative influence takes the outline of the home, but it broadens out as the citizen grows until it reaches the limits of his world. And his world, just like his home, resolves itself into three main elements. First, there is the traditional element, the creation of the past; secondly, there is the contemporary interplay of economic and material forces; and thirdly, there is literature, using that word for the current thought about the world, which is perpetually tending on the one hand to realize itself and to become in that manner a material force, and on the other to impose fresh interpretations upon things and so become a factor in tradition. Now the first of these elements is a thing established. And it is the possibility of intervening through the remaining two that it is now our business to discuss.

VI. SCHOOLING

We left the child whose development threads through this discussion ripe to begin a little schooling at the age of five. We have cleared the ground since then of a great number of things that have got themselves mixed up in an illegitimate way with the idea of school, and we can now take him on again through his "schooling" phases. Let us begin by asking what we require and then look to existing conditions to see how far we may hope to get our requirements. We will assume the foundation described in the fourth paper has been well and truly laid, that we have a number of other similarly prepared children available to form a school, and that we have also teachers of fair average intelligence, conscience, and aptitude. We will ask what can be done with such children and teachers, and then we may ask why it is not universally done.

Even after our clarifying discussion, in which we have shown that schooling is only a part, and by no means the major part, of the educational process, and in which we have distinguished and separated the home element in the boarding-school from the schooling proper, there still remains something more than a simple theme in schooling. After all these eliminations we remain with a mixed function and mixed traditions, and it is necessary now to look a little into the nature of this mixture.

The modern school is not a thing that has evolved from a simple germ, by a mere process of expansion. It is the coalescence of several things. In different countries and periods you will find schools taking over this function and throwing out that, and changing not only methods but professions and aims in the most remarkable manner. What has either been teachable or has seemed teachable in human development has played a part in some curriculum or other. Beyond the fact that there is class instruction and an initial stage in which the pupil learns to read and write, there is barely anything in common. But that initial stage is to be noted; it is the thing the Hebrew schoolboy, the Tamil schoolboy, the Chinese schoolboy, and the American schoolboy have in common. So much, at any rate, of the school appears wherever there is a written language, and its presence

marks a stage in the civilizing process. As I have already pointed out in my book "Anticipations," the presence of a reading and writing class of society and the existence of an organized nation (as distinguished from a tribe) appear together. When tribes coalesce into nations, schools appear. This first and most universal function of the school is to initiate a smaller or greater proportion of the population into the ampler world, the more efficient methods, of the reading and writing man. And with the disappearance of the slave and the mere labourer from the modern conception of what is necessary in the state, there has now come about an extension of this initiation to the whole of our English-speaking population. And in addition to reading and writing the vernacular, there is also almost universally in schools instruction in counting, and wherever there is a coinage, in the values and simpler computation of coins.

In addition to the vernacular teaching, one finds in the schools — at any rate the schools for males — over a large part of the world, a second element, which is always the language of what either is or has been a higher and usually a dominant civilization. Typically, there is a low or imitative vernacular literature or no literature at all, and this second language is the key to all that literature involves — general views, general ideas, science, poetic suggestion and association. Through this language the vernacular citizen escapes from his parochial and national limitations to a wide commonweal of thought. Such was Greek at one time to the Roman, such was Latin to the Bohemian, the German, the Englishman or the Spaniard of the middle ages, and such it is to-day to the Roman Catholic priest; such is Arabic to the Malay, written Chinese to the Cantonese or the Corean, and English to the Zulu or the Hindoo. In Germany and France, to a lesser degree in Great Britain, and to a still lesser degree in the United States, we find, however, an anomalous condition of things. In each of these countries civilization has long since passed into an unprecedented phase, and each of these countries has long since developed a great living mass of literature in which its new problems are, at any rate, approached. There is scarcely a work left in Latin or Greek that has not been translated into and assimilated and more or less completely superseded by English, French, and German works; but the schoolmaster, heedless of these things, still arrests the

pupil at the old portal, fumbles with the keys, and partially opens the door into a ransacked treasure-chamber. The language of literature and of civilized ideas is, for the English-speaking world to-day, English — not the weak, spoken dialect of each class and locality, but the rich and splendid language in which and with which our literature and philosophy grow. That, however, is by the way. Our point at present is that the exhaustive teaching of a language so that it may serve as a key to culture is a second function in the school.

We find in a broad survey of schools in general that there has also been a disposition to develop a special training in thought and expression either in the mother tongue (as in the Roman schools of Latin oratory), or in the culture tongue (as in Roman schools of Greek oratory), and we find the same element in the mediaeval trivium. Quintilian's conception of education, the reader will remember, was oratory. This aspect of school work was the traditional and logical development of the culture language-teaching. But as in Europe the culture language has ceased to be really a culture language but merely a reasonless survival, and its teaching has degenerated more and more into elaborate formalities supposed to have in some mystical way "high educational value," and for the most part conducted by men unable either to write or speak the culture language with any freedom or vigour, this crown of cultivated expression has become more and more inaccessible. It is too manifestly stupid — even for our public schoolmasters — to think of carrying the "classical grind" to that pitch, and, in fact, they carry no part of the education to that pitch. There is no deliberate and professed training at all in logical thought — except for the use of Euclid's Elements to that end — nor in expression in any language at all, in the great mass of modern schools. This is a very notable point about the schools of the present period.

But, on the other hand, the schools of the modern period have developed masses of instruction that were not to be found in the schools of the past. The school has reached downward and taken over, systematized, and on the whole, I think, improved that preliminary training of the senses and the observation that was once left to the spontaneous activity of the child among its playmates and at home. The kindergarten department of a school is a thing added to

the old conception of schooling, a conversion of the all too ample school hours to complete and rectify the work of the home, to make sure of the foundation of sense impressions and elementary capabilities upon which the edifice of schooling is to rise. In America it has grown, as a wild flower transferred to the unaccustomed richness of garden soil will sometimes do, rankly and in relation to the more essential schooling, aggressively, and become a highly vigorous and picturesque weed. One must bear in mind that Froebel's original thought was rather of the mother than of the schoolmistress, a fact the kindergarten invaders of the school find it convenient to forget. I believe we shall be carrying out his intentions as well as the manifest dictates of common sense if we do all in our power by means of simply and clearly written books for nurses and mothers to shift very much of the kindergarten back to home and playroom and out of the school altogether. Correlated with this development, there has been a very great growth in our schools of what is called manual training and of the teaching of drawing. Neither of these subjects entered into the school idea of any former period, so far as my not very extensive knowledge of educational history goes.

Modern, too, is the development of efficient mathematical teaching; so modern that for too many schools it is still a thing of tomorrow. The arithmetic (without Arabic numerals, be it remembered) and the geometry of the mediaeval quadrivium were astonishingly clumsy and ineffectual instruments in comparison with the apparatus of modern mathematical method. And while the mathematical subjects of the quadrivium were taught as science and for their own sakes, the new mathematics is a sort of supplement to language, affording a means of thought about form and quantity and a means of expression, more exact, compact, and ready than ordinary language. The great body of physical science, a great deal of the essential fact of financial science, and endless social and political problems are only accessible and only thinkable to those who have had a sound training in mathematical analysis, and the time may not be very remote when it will be understood that for complete initiation as an efficient citizen of one of the new great complex world-wide states that are now developing, it is as necessary to be

able to compute, to think in averages and maxima and minima, as it is now to be able to read and write. This development of mathematical teaching is only another aspect of the necessity that is bringing the teaching of drawing into schools, the necessity that is so widely, if not always very intelligently perceived, of clearheadedness about quantity, relative quantity, and form, that our highly mechanical, widely extended, and still rapidly extending environments involve.

Arithmetic and geometry were taught in the mediaeval school as sciences, in addition the quadrivium involved the science of astronomy, and now that the necessary fertilizing inundation of our general education by the classical languages and their literatures subsides, science of a new sort reappears in our schools. I must confess that a lot of the science teaching that appears in schools nowadays impresses me as being a very undesirable encumbrance of the curriculum. The schoolman's science came after the training in language and expression, late in the educational scheme, and it aimed, it pretended — whatever its final effect was — to strengthen and enlarge the mind by a noble and spacious sort of knowledge. But the science of the modern school pretends merely to be a teaching of useful knowledge; the vistas, the tremendous implications of modern science are conscientiously disregarded, and it is in effect too often no more than a diversion of school energies to the acquisition of imperfectly analyzed misstatements about entrails, elements, and electricity, with a view — a quite unjustifiable view — to immediate profitable hygienic and commercial application. Whether there is any educational value in the school-teaching of science we may discuss later. For the present we may note it simply as a revived and developing element.

On the other hand, while these things expand in the modern school, there are declining elements, once in older schemes of scholastic work much more evident. In the culture of the mediaeval knight, for example, and of the eighteenth-century young lady, elegant accomplishments, taught disconnected from the general educational scheme and for themselves, played a large part. The eighteenth-century young lady was taught dancing, deportment, several instruments of music, how to pretend to sketch, how to

pretend to know Italian, and so on. The dancing still survives — a comical mitigation of high school austerities — and there is also a considerable interruption of school work achieved by the music-master. If there is one thing that I would say with certainty has no business whatever in schools, it is piano-teaching. The elementary justification of the school is its organization for class-teaching and work in unison, and there is probably no subject of instruction that requires individual tuition quite so imperatively as piano-playing; there is no subject so disadvantageously introduced where children are gathered together. But to every preparatory and girls' school in England — I do not know if the same thing happens in America — the music-master comes once or twice a week, and with a fine disregard of the elementary necessities of teaching, children are called one by one, out of whatever class they happen to be attending, to have their music-lesson. Either the whole of the rest of the class must mark time at some unnecessary exercise until the missing member returns, or one child must miss some stage, some explanation that will involve a weakness, a lameness for the rest of the course of instruction. Not only is the actual music-lesson a nuisance in this way, but all day the school air is loaded with the oppressive tinkling of racked and rackety pianos. Nothing, I think, could be more indicative of the real value the English school-proprietor sets on school-teaching than this easy admission of the music-master to hack and riddle the curriculum into rags. [Footnote 1: Piano playing as an accomplishment is a nuisance and encumbrance to the school course and a specialization that surely lies within the private Home province. To learn to play the piano properly demands such an amount of time and toil that I do not see how we can possibly include it in the educational scheme of the honourable citizens of the coming world state. To half learn it, to half learn anything, is a training in failure. But it is probable that a different sort of music teaching altogether — a teaching that would aim, not at instrumentalization, but at intelligent appreciation — might find a place in a complete educational scheme. The general ignorance that pervades, and in part inspires these papers, does, in the matter of music, become special, profound, and distinguished. It seems to me, however, that what the cultivated man or woman

requires is the ability to read a score intelligently rather than to play it — to distinguish the threads, the values, of a musical composition, to have a quickened ear rather than a disciplined hand. I owe to my friend, Mr. Graham Wallas, the suggestion that the piano is altogether too exacting an instrument to use as the practical vehicle for such instruction, and that something simpler and cheaper — after the fashion of the old spinet — is required. Possibly some day a teacher of genius will devise and embody in a book a course of class lessons, sustained by simple practice and written work, that would attain this end. But, indeed, after all is said and done, music is the most detached and the purest of arts, the most accessory of attainments.] Apart from the piano work, the special teaching of elegant accomplishments seems just at present on the wane. And on the whole I think what one might call useful or catchpenny accomplishments are also passing their zenith — shorthand lessons, book-keeping lessons, and such-like impostures upon parental credulity.

There is, however, a thing that was once done in schools as a convenient accomplishment, and which has — with that increase in communication which is the salient material fact of the nineteenth century — developed in Western Europe to the dimensions of a political necessity, and that is the teaching of one or more modern foreign languages. The language-teaching of all previous periods has been done with a view to culture, artistic, as in the case of Elizabethan Italian, or intellectual as with English Latin. But the language-teaching of to-day is deliberately, almost conscientiously, not for culture. It would, I am sure, be a very painful and shocking thought indeed to an English parent to think that French was taught in school with a view to reading French books. It is taught as a vulgar necessity for purposes of vulgar communication. The stirring together of the populations that is going on, the fashion and facilities for travel, the production of the radii from the trading foci, are rapidly making a commonplace knowledge of French, German, and Italian a necessity to the merchant and tradesman, and the ever more extensive travelling class. So that so far as Europe goes, one may very well regard this modern modern-language teaching as — with the modern mathematics — an extension of the *trivium*, of the

apparatus, that is, of thought and expression. [Footnote: In the United States there is less sense of urgency about modern languages, but sooner or later the American may wake up to the need of Spanish in his educational schemes.] It is an extension and a very doubtful improvement. It is a modern necessity, a rather irksome necessity, of little or no essential educational value, an unavoidable duty the school will have to perform. [Footnote: In one way the foreign language may be made educationally very useful, and that is as an exercise in writing translations into good English.]

There are two subjects in the modern English school that stand by themselves and in contrast with anything one finds in the records of ancient and oriental schools, as a very integral part of what is regarded as our elementary general education. They are of very doubtful value in training the mind, and most of the matter taught is totally forgotten in adult life. These are history and geography. These two subjects constitute, with English grammar and arithmetic, the four obligatory subjects for the very lowest grade of the London College of Preceptors' examinations, for example. The examination papers of this body reveal the history as an affair of dated events, a record of certain wars and battles, and legislative and social matters quite beyond the scope of a child's experience and imagination. Scholastic history ends at 1700 or 1800, always long before it throws the faintest light upon modern political or social conditions. The geography is, for the most part, topography, with a smattering of quantitative facts, heights of mountains, for example, populations of countries, and lists of obsolete manufactures and obsolete trade conditions. Any one who will take the trouble to run through the text-books of these subjects gathered together in the library of the London Teachers' Guild, will find that the history is generally taught without maps, pictures, descriptive passages, or anything to raise it above the level of an arid misuse of memory; and the highest levels to which ordinary school geography has attained are to be found in the little books of the late Professor Meiklejohn. These two subjects are essentially "information" subjects. They differ in prestige rather than in educational quality from school chemistry and natural history, and their development marks the beginning of that great accumulation of mere knowledge which is so distinctive of this

present civilization.

There are, no doubt, many minor subjects, but this revision will at least serve to indicate the scope and chief varieties of school work. Out of some such miscellany it is that in most cases the student passes to specialization, to a different and narrower process which aims at a specific end, to the course of the College. In some cases this specialized course may be correlated with a real and present practice, as in the case of the musical, medical, and legal faculties of our universities; it may be correlated with obsolete needs and practices and regardless of modern requirements, as in the case of the student of divinity who takes his orders and comes into a world full of the ironical silences that follow great controversies, nakedly ignorant of geology, biology, psychology, and modern biblical criticism; or it may have no definite relation to special needs, and it may profess to be an upward prolongation of schooling towards a sort of general wisdom and culture, as in the case of the British "Arts" degrees. The ordinary Oxford, Cambridge, or London B.A. has a useless smattering of Greek, he cannot read Latin with any comfort, much less write or speak that tongue; he knows a few unedifying facts round and about the classical literature, he cannot speak or read French with any comfort; he has an imperfect knowledge of the English language, insufficient to write it clearly, and none of German, he has a queer, old-fashioned, and quite useless knowledge of certain rudimentary sections of mathematics, and an odd little bite out of history. He knows practically nothing of the world of thought embodied in English literature, and absolutely nothing of contemporary thought; he is totally ignorant of modern political or social science, and if he knows anything at all about evolutionary science and heredity it is probably matter picked up in a casual way from the magazines. Art is a sealed book to him. Still, the inapplicability of his higher education to any professional or practical need in the world is sufficiently obvious, it seems, to justify the claim that it has put him on a footing of thought and culture above the level of a shopman. It is either that or nothing. And without deciding between these alternatives, we may note here for our present purpose, that the conception of a general upward prolongation of schooling beyond adolescence, as distinguished from

a specific upward prolongation into professional training, is necessary to the complete presentation of the school and college scheme in the modern state.

There has always been a tendency to utilize the gathering together of children in schools for purposes irrelevant to schooling proper, but of some real or fancied benefit. Wherever there is a priestly religion, the lower type of religious fanatic will always look to the schools as a means of doctrinal dissemination; will always be seeking to replace efficiency by orthodoxy upon staff and management; and, with an unconquerable, uncompromising persistency, will seek perpetually either to misconduct or undermine; and the struggle to get him out and keep him out of the school, and to hold the school against him, will be one of the most necessary and thankless of New Republican duties. I have, however, already adduced reasons that I think should appeal to every religious mind, for the exclusion of religious teaching from school work. The school gathering also affords opportunity for training in simple unifying political conceptions; the salutation of the flag, for example, or of the idealized effigies of King and Queen. The quality of these conceptions we shall discuss later. The school also gives scope for physical training and athletic exercises that are, under the crowded conditions of a modern town, almost impossible except by its intervention. And it would be the cheapest and easiest way of raising the military efficiency of a country, and an excellent thing for the moral tone and public order of a people, to impose upon the school gathering half an hour a day of vigorous military drill. The school, too, might very easily be linked more closely than it is at present with the public library, and made a means of book distribution; and its corridors may easily be utilized as a loan picture gallery, in which good reproductions of fine pictures might bring the silent influence of the artist mind to bear. But all these things are secondary applications of the school gathering; at their best they are not conducted by the school-teacher at all, and I remark upon them here merely to avoid any confusion their omission might occasion.

Now if we dip into this miscellany of things that figure and have figured in schools, if we turn them over and look at them, and seek to generalize about them, we shall begin to see that the most

persistently present, and the living reality of it all, is this: to expand, to add to and organize and supplement that apparatus of understanding and expression the savage possesses in colloquial speech. The pressing business of the school is *to widen the range of intercourse*. [Footnote: This way of putting it may jar a little upon the more or less explicit preconceptions of many readers, who are in reality in harmony with the tone of thought of this paper. They will have decided that the school work is to "train the mind," to "teach the pupil to think," or upon some similar phrase. But I venture to think that most of these phrases are at once too wide and too narrow. They are too wide because they ignore the spontaneous activity of the child and the extra-scholastic forces of mind-training, and they are too narrow because they ignore the fact that we do not progress far with our thoughts unless we throw them out into objective existence by means of words, diagrams, models, trial essays. Even if we do not talk to others we must, silently or vocally or visibly, talk to ourselves at least to get on. To acquire the means of intercourse is to learn to think, so far as learning goes in the matter.] It is only secondarily — so far as schooling goes — or, at any rate, subsequently, that the idea of shaping, or, at least, helping to shape, the expanded natural man into a citizen, comes in. It is only as a subordinate necessity that the school is a vehicle for the inculcation of facts. The facts come into the school not for their own sake, but in relation to intercourse. It is only upon a common foundation of general knowledge that the initiated citizens of an educated community will be able to communicate freely together. With the net of this phrase, "widening the range of intercourse," I think it is possible to gather together all that is essential in the deliberate purpose of schooling. Nothing that remains outside is of sufficient magnitude to be of any importance in the small-scale sketch of human development we are now making: —

If we take this and hold to it as a guide, and explore a scheme of school work, in the direction it takes us, we shall find it shaping itself (for an English-speaking citizen) something after this fashion:

A. Direct means of understanding and expression.

1. Reading.
2. Writing.

3. Pronouncing English correctly.

Which studies will expand into —

4. A thorough study of English as a culture language, its origin, development, and vocabulary, and
5. A sound training in English prose composition and versification.

And in addition —

6. Just as much of mathematics as one can get in.

7. Drawing and painting, not as "art," but to train and develop the appreciation of form and colour, and as a collateral means of expression.

8. Music [perhaps] to the same end.

B. To speak the ordinary speech, read with fair intelligence, and write in a passably intelligible manner the foreign language or languages, the social, political, and intellectual necessities of the time require.

And *C.* A division arising out of A and expanding in the later stages of the school course to continue and replace A: the acquisition of the knowledge (and of the art of acquiring further knowledge from books and facts) necessary to participate in contemporary thought and life.

Now this project is at once more modest in form and more ambitious in substance than almost any school scheme or prospectus the reader is likely to encounter. Let us (on the assumption of our opening paragraph) inquire what is needed to carry it into execution. So far as 1 and 2 in this table go, we have to recognize that since the development of elementary schools in England introduced a spirit of endeavour into teaching, there has been a steady progress in the art of education. Reading and writing are taught somehow or other to most

people nowadays, they are frequently taught quickly and well, especially well, I think, in view of the raw material, in many urban Board Schools in England, and there is nothing to do here but to inquire if anything can be done to make this teaching, which is so exceptional in attaining its goal, still quicker and easier, and in bringing the average up to the level of the present best. We have already suggested as the work of an imaginary English Language Society, how much might be done in providing everywhere, cheaply and unavoidably, the best possible reading-books, and it is manifest that the standard of copy-books for writing might also be pressed upward by similar methods. In addition, we have to consider — what is to me a most uncongenial subject — the possible rationalization of English spelling. I will frankly confess I know English as much by sight as by sound, and that any extensive or striking alteration, indeed that almost any alteration, in the printed appearance of English, worries me extremely. Even such little things as Mr. Bernard Shaw's weakness for printing "I've" as "Ive," and the American "favor," "thro," and "catalog" catch at my attention as it travels along the lane of meaning, like trailing briars. But I have to admit this habit of the old spelling, which I am sure most people over four-and-twenty share with me, will trouble neither me nor any one else who reads books now, in the year 1990. I have to admit that the thing is an accident of my circumstances. I have learnt to read and write in a certain way, and I am concerned with the thing said and not with the vehicle, and so it is that it distresses me when the medium behaves in an unusual way and distracts my attention from the thing it conveys. But if it is true — and I think it must be true — that the extremely arbitrary spelling of English — and more especially of the more familiar English words — greatly increases the trouble of learning to read and write, I do not think the mental comfort of one or two generations of grown-up people must be allowed to stand in the way of a permanent economy in the educational process. I believe even that such a reader as I might come to be very easy in the new way. But whatever is done must be done widely, simultaneously, all over the English-speaking community, and after the fullest consideration. The local "spelling reform" of a few half-educated faddists here and there, helps not at

all, is a mere nuisance. This is a thing to be worked out in a scientific way by the students of phonetics; they must have a complete alphabet settled for good, a dictionary ready, reading-books well tested, the whole system polished and near perfection before the thing passes out of the specialists' hands. The really practical spelling-reformer will devote his guineas to endowing chairs of phonetics and supporting publication in phonetic science, and his time to study and open-minded discussion. Such organisations as the *Association Phonétique Internationale*, may be instanced. Systems concocted in a hurry, in a half-commercial or wholly commercial and in a wholly presumptuous manner, pushed like religious panaceas and advertised like soap — Pitman's System, Barnum's System, Quackbosh the Gifted Postman's System, and all that sort of thing — do nothing but vulgarize, discredit, and retard this work.

Before a system of phonetic spelling can be established, it is advisable that a standard pronunciation of English should exist. With that question also these papers have already dealt. But for the sake of emphasis I would repeat here the astonishment that has grown upon me as I have given my mind to these things, that, save for local exceptions, there should be no pressure even upon those who desire to become teachers in our schools or preachers in our pulpits, to attain a qualifying minimum of correct pronunciation.

Now directly we pass beyond these first three elementary matters, reading, writing, and pronunciation, and come to the fourth and fifth items of our scheme, to the complete mastery of English that is, we come upon a difficulty that is all too completely disregarded in educational discussions — always by those who have had no real scholastic experience, and often by those who ought to know better. It is extremely easy for a political speaker or a city magnate or a military reformer or an irresponsible writer, to proclaim that the schoolmaster must mend his ways forthwith, give up this pointless Latin of his, and teach his pupils the English language "*thoroughly*" — with much emphasis on the "thoroughly," but it is quite another thing for the schoolmaster to obey our magnificent directions. For the plain, simple, insurmountable fact is this, that no one knows how to teach English as in our vague way we critics imagine it taught; that no working schoolmaster alive can possibly give the thing the

concentrated attention, the experimental years necessary for its development, that it is worth nobody's while, and that (except in a vein of exalted self-sacrifice) it will probably not be worth any one's while to do so for many years unless some New Republicans conspire to make it so. The teaching of English requires its Sturm, its energetic modern renascence schoolmasters, its set of school books, its branches and grades, before it can become a discipline, even to compare with the only subject taught with any shadow of orderly progressive thoroughness in secondary schools, namely, Latin. At present our method in English is a foolish caricature of the Latin method; we spend a certain amount of time teaching children classificatory bosh about the eight sorts of Nominative Case, a certain amount of time teaching them the "derivation" of words they do not understand, glance shyly at Anglo-Saxon and at Grimm's Law, indulge in a specific reminiscence of the Latin method called parsing, supplement with a more modern development called the analysis of sentences, give a course of exercises in paraphrasing (for the most part the conversion of good English into bad), and wind up with lessons in "Composition" that must be seen to be believed. Essays are produced, and the teacher noses blindly through the product for false concords, prepositions at the end of sentences, and, if a person of peculiarly fine literary quality, for the word "reliable" and the split infinitive. These various exercises are so little parts of an articulate whole that they may be taken in almost any order and any relative quantity. And in the result, if some pupil should, by a happy knack of apprehension, win through this confusion to a sense of literary quality, to the enterprise of even trying to write, the thing is so rare and wonderful that almost inevitably he or she, in a fine outburst of discovered genius, takes to the literary life. For the rest, they will understand nothing but the flattest prose; they will be deaf to everything but the crudest meanings; they will be the easy victims of the boom, and terribly shy of a pen. They will revere the dead Great and respect the new Academic, read the living quack, miss and neglect the living promise, and become just a fresh volume of that atmosphere of *azote*, in which our literature stifles.

Now the schoolmaster is not to blame for this any more than he is to blame for sticking to Latin. It is no more possible for

schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, whose lives are encumbered with a voluminous mass of low-grade mental toil and worries and reasonable and unreasonable responsibilities, to find the energy and mental freedom necessary to make any vital changes in the methods that text-books, traditions, and examinations force upon them, than it is for a general medical practitioner to invent and make out of the native ore the steel implements some operation of frequent occurrence in his practice may demand. If they are made, and accessible by purchase and not too expensive, he will get them; if they are not he will have to fumble along with the next best thing; and if nothing that is any good can be got, then there is nothing for it, though he be the noblest character, the finest intelligence that ever lived behind a brass plate, but either to shirk that operation altogether or to run the chance of making a disastrous mess of it.

Scolding the schoolmaster, gibing at the schoolmaster, guying, afflicting and exasperating the schoolmaster in every conceivable way, is an amusement so entirely congenial to my temperament that I do not for one moment propose to abandon it. It is a devil I have, and I admit it. He insults schoolmasters and bishops in particular, and I do not cast him out, but at the same time I would most earnestly insist that all that sort of thing does nothing whatever to advance education, that it is a mere outbreak of personal grace-notes so far as this discussion goes. The real practical needs in the matter are a properly worked-out method, a proper set of school books, and then a progressive alteration of examinations in English, to render that method and that set of school books imperative. These are needs the schoolmaster and schoolmistress can do amazingly little to satisfy. Of course, when these things are ready and the pressure to enforce them begins to tell on the schools, schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, having that almost instinctive dread of any sort of change that all hard-worked and rather worried people acquire, will obstruct and have to be reckoned with, but that is a detail in the struggle and not a question of general objective. And to satisfy those real practical needs, what is wanted is in the first place an organizer, a reasonable sum of money, say ten thousand pounds for ten years, and access for experimental purposes to a variety of schools. This organizer would set himself to secure the whole time and energy and

interest of a dozen or so of good men; they would include several expert teachers, a clear-headed pedagogic expert or so, a keen psychologist perhaps with a penetrating mind — for example, one might try and kidnap Professor William James in his next Sabbatical year — one or two industrious young students, a literary critic perhaps, a philologist, a grammarian, and set them all, according to their several gifts and faculties, towards this end. At the end of the first year this organizer would print and publish for the derision of the world in general and the bitter attacks of the men he had omitted from the enterprise in particular, for review in the newspapers and for trial in enterprising schools, a "course" in the English language and composition. His team of collaborators, revised perhaps, probably weeded by a quarrel or so and supplemented by the ablest of the hostile critics, would then, working with all their time and energy, revise the course for the second year. And you would repeat the process for ten years. In the end at the cost of £100,000 — really a quite trivial sum for the object in view — there would exist the scheme, the method, the primers and text-books, the School Dictionary, the examination syllabus, and all that is now needed for the proper teaching of English. You would have, moreover, in the copyrights of the course an asset that might go far to recoup those who financed the enterprise.

It is precisely this difficulty about text-books and a general scheme that is the real obstacle to any material improvement in our mathematical teaching. Professor Perry, in his opening address to the Engineering Section of the British Association at Belfast, expressed an opinion that the average boy of fifteen might be got to the infinitesimal calculus. As a matter of fact the average English boy of fifteen has only just looked at elementary algebra. But every one who knows anything of educational science knows, that by the simple expedient of throwing overboard all that non-educational, mind-sickening and complex rubbish about money and weights and measures, practice, interest, "rule of three," and all the rest of the solemn clap-trap invented by the masters of the old Academy for Young Gentlemen to fool the foolish predecessors of those who clamour for commercial education to-day, and by setting aside the pretence in teaching geometry, that algebraic formulae and the

decimal notation are not yet invented, little boys of nine may be got to apply quadratic equations to problems, plot endless problems upon squared paper, and master and apply the geometry covered by the earlier books of Euclid with the utmost ease. But to do this with a class of boys at present demands so much special thought, so much private planning, so much sheer toil on the part of the teacher, that it becomes practically impossible. The teacher must arrange the whole course himself, invent his examples, or hunt them laboriously through a dozen books; he must be not only teacher, but text-book. I know of no School Arithmetic which does not groan under a weight of sham practical work, and that does not, with an absurd priggishness, exclude the use of algebraic symbols. Except for one little volume, I know of no sane book which deals with arithmetic and elementary algebra under one cover or gives any helpful exercises or examples in squared paper calculations. Such books, I am told, exist in the seclusion of publishers' stock-rooms, but if I, enjoying as I do much more leisure and opportunity of inquiry than the average mathematical master, cannot get at them, how can we expect him to do so? And the thing to do now is obviously to discover or create these books, and force them kindly but firmly into the teachers' hands.

The problem is much simpler in the case of mathematical teaching than in the case of English, because the educational theory and method have been more thoroughly discussed. There is no need for the ten years of experiment and trial I have suggested for the organization of English teaching. The mathematical reformer may begin now at a point the English language reformer will not reach for some years. Suppose now a suitably authenticated committee were to work out — on the basis of Professor Perry's syllabus perhaps — a syllabus of school mathematics, and then make a thorough review of all the mathematical textbooks on sale throughout the English-speaking world, admitting some perhaps as of real permanent value for teaching of the new type, provisionally recognizing others as endurable, but with clear recommendations for their revision and improvement, and condemning the others specifically *by name*. Let them make it clear that this syllabus and report will be respected by all public examining bodies; let them spend a hundred pounds or so

in the intelligent distribution of their report, and the scholastic profession will not be long before it is equipped with the recommended books. Meanwhile, the English and American scholastic publishers will become extremely active, the warned books will be revised, and new books will be written in competition for the enormous prize of the committee's final approval, an activity that a second review, after an interval of five or six years, will recognize and reward.

Such measures as these will be worth reams of essays in educational papers and Parents' Reviews, worth thousands of inspiring and suggestive lectures at pedagogic conferences. If, indeed, such essays and such lectures do any good at all. The more one looks into scholastic affairs the more one is struck not only by the futility but the positive mischievousness of much of what passes for educational liberalism. The schoolmaster is criticised vehemently for teaching the one or two poor useless subjects he can in a sort of way teach, and practically nothing is done to help or equip him to teach anything else. By reason of this uproar, the world is full now of anxious muddled parents, their poor brains buzzing with echoes of Froebel, Tolstoy, Herbert Spencer, Ruskin, Herbart, Colonel Parker, Mr. Harris, Matthew Arnold, and the *Morning Post*, trying to find something better. They know nothing of what is right, they only know very, very clearly that the ordinary school is extremely wrong. They are quite clear they don't want "cram" (though they haven't the remotest idea what cram is), and they have a pretty general persuasion that failure at examination is a good test of a sound education. And in response to their bleating demand there grows a fine crop of Quack Schools; schools organized on lines of fantastic extravagance, in which bee-keeping takes the place of Latin, and gardening supersedes mathematics, in which boys play tennis naked to be cured of False Shame, and the numerical exercises called bookkeeping and commercial correspondence are taught to the sons of parents (who can pay a hundred guineas a year), as Commercial Science. The subjects of study in these schools come and go like the ravings of a disordered mind; "Greek History" (in an hour or so a week for a term) is followed by "Italian Literature," and this gives place to the production of a Shakesperian play that ultimately

overpowers and disorganizes the whole curriculum. Ethical lessons and the school pulpit flourish, of course. A triennial walk to a chalk-pit is Field Geology, and vague half-holiday wanderings are Botany Rambles. "Art" of the copper punching variety replaces any decent attempt to draw, and an extreme expressiveness in music compensates for an almost deliberate slovenliness of technique. Even the ladies' seminaries of the Georgian days could scarcely have produced a parallel to the miscellaneous incapacity of the victim of these "modern" schools, and it becomes daily more necessary for those who have the interests of education at heart to disavow with the most unmistakable emphasis these catch-parent impostures.

With the other subjects under the headings of *A* and *B*, it is not necessary to deal at any length here. Drawing begins at home, and a child should have begun to sketch freely before the formal schooling commences. It is the business of the school to teach drawing and not to teach "art," which, indeed, is always an individual and spontaneous thing, and it need only concern itself directly with those aspects of drawing that require direction. Of course, an hour set aside from the school time in which boys or girls may do whatever they please with paper, ink, pens, pencils, compasses, and water-colour would be a most excellent and profitable thing, but that scarcely counts (except in the Quack Schools) as teaching. As a matter of fact, teaching absolutely spoils all that sort of thing. A course in model drawing and in perspective, however, is really a training in seeing things, it demands rigorous instruction and it must be the backbone of school drawing, and, in addition, studies may be made from flowers that would not be made without direction: topography (and much else) may be learnt by copying good explicit maps; chronology (to supplement the child's private reading of history) by the construction of time charts; and much history also by drawing and colouring historical maps. With geometrical drawing one passes insensibly into mathematics. And so much has been done not only to revolutionize the teaching of modern languages, but also to popularize the results, that I may content myself with a mere mention of the names of Rippmann, S. Alge, Hölzel, and Gouin as typical of the new ways.

There remains the question of *C*, the amount of Information that is

to take a place in schooling. Now there is one "subject" that it would be convenient to include, were it only for the sake of the mass of exercise and illustration it supplies to the mathematical course, and that is the science of Physics. In addition, the science of physics, since it culminates in a clear understanding and use of the terminology of the aspects of energy and a clear sense of adequate causation, is fundamentally necessary to modern thought. Practical work is, no doubt, required for the proper understanding of physical science, and so far it must enter into schooling, but it may be pointed out here that in many cases the educational faddist is overdoing the manual side of science study to a ridiculous extent. Things have altered very much at the Royal College of Science, no doubt, since my student days, but fifteen years ago the courses in elementary physics and in elementary geology were quite childishly silly in this respect. Both these courses seemed to have been inspired by that eminent educationist, Mr. Squeers, and the sequel to spelling "window" was always to "go and clean one." The science in each course in those days could have been acquired just as well in a fortnight as in half a year. One muddled away three or four days etching a millimetre scale with hydrofluoric acid on glass — to no earthly end that I could discover — and a week or so in making a needless barometer. In the course in geology, days and days were spent in drawing ideal crystalline forms and colouring them in water-colours, apparently in order to get a totally false idea of a crystal, and weeks in the patient copying of microscopic rock sections in water-colours. Effectual measures of police were taken to prevent the flight of the intelligent student from these tiresome duties. The mischief done in this way is very great. It deadens the average students and exasperates and maddens the eager ones. I am inclined to think that a very considerable proportion of what passes as "practical" science work, for which costly laboratories are built and expensive benches fitted, consists of very similar solemnities, and it cannot be too strongly urged that "practical" work that does not illuminate is mere waste of the student's time.

This physics course would cover an experimental quantitative treatment of the electric current, it would glance in an explanatory way at many of the phenomena of physical geography, and it would

be correlated with a study of the general principles of chemistry. A detailed knowledge of chemical compounds is not a part of general education, it keeps better in reference books than in the non-specialized head, and it is only the broad conceptions of analysis and combination, and of the relation of energy to chemical changes, that have to be attained. Beyond this, and the application of map drawing to give accurate ideas and to awaken interest in geography and history, it is open to discussion whether any Fact subject need be taught as schooling at all. Ensure the full development of a man's mental capacity, and he will get his Fact as he needs it. And if his mind is undeveloped he can make no use of any fact he has. The subject called "Human Physiology" may be at once dismissed as absurdly unsuitable for school use. One is always meeting worthy people who "don't see why children should not know something about their own bodies," and who are not apparently aware that the medical profession after some generations of fairly systematic inquiry knows remarkably little. Save for some general anatomy, it is impossible to teach school-children anything true about the human body, because the explanation of almost any physiological process demands a knowledge of physical and chemical laws much sounder and subtler than the average child can possibly attain. And as for botany, geology, history, and geography (beyond the range already specified), these are far better relegated to the school library and the initiative of each child. Every child has its specific range of interest, and its specific way of regarding things. In geology, for example, one boy may be fascinated by the fossil hunting, another will find his interest in the effects of structure in scenery, and a third, with more imagination, will give his whole mind to the reconstruction of the past, and will pore over maps of Pleistocene Europe and pictures of Silurian landscape with the keenest appreciation. Each will be bored, or at least not greatly interested, by what attracts the others. Let the children have an easily accessible library — that is the crying need of nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand schools to-day, a need every school-seeking parent may do something to remedy — and in that library let there be one or two good densely illustrated histories, illustrated travels, bound volumes of such a publication as Newnes' *Wide World Magazine* (I name these publications

haphazard — there are probably others as good or better), Hutchinson and Co.'s *Living Animals of the World*, the Rev. H. N. Hutchinson's *Extinct Monsters*, the Badminton volumes on big game shooting, mountaineering, and yachting, Kerner's "Botany," collections of "The Hundred Best Pictures" sort, collections of views of towns and of scenery in different parts of the world, and the like. Then let the schoolmaster set aside five hours a week as the minimum for reading, and let the pupils read during that time just whatever they like, provided only that they keep silence and read. If the schoolmaster or schoolmistress comes in at all here, it should be to stimulate systematic reading occasionally by setting a group of five or six pupils to "get up" some particular subject — a report on "animals that might still be domesticated," for example — and by showing them conversationally how to read with a slip of paper at hand, gathering facts. This sort of thing it is impossible to reduce to method and system, and, consequently, it is the proper field for the teacher's initiative. It is largely in order to leave time and energy for this that I am anxious to reduce the more rigorous elements in schooling to standard and text-book.

Now all this schooling need not take more than twenty hours a week for its backbone or hard-work portion, its English, mathematics, science, and exact drawing, and twelve hours a week for its easier, more individual employments of sketching, painting, and reading, and this leaves a large margin of time for military drill and for physical exercises. If we are to get the best result from the child's individuality, we must leave a large portion of that margin at the child's own disposal, it must be free to go for walks, to "muck about," as schoolboys say, to play games, and (within limits) to consort with companions of its own choosing — to follow its interests in short. It is in this direction that British middle-class education fails most signally at the present time. The English schoolboy and schoolgirl are positively hunted through their days. They do not play — using the word to indicate a spontaneous employment into which imagination enters — at all. They have games, but they are so regulated that the imagination is eliminated; they have exercises of various stereotyped sorts. They are taken to and fro to these things in the care of persons one would call ushers

unhesitatingly were it not that they also pretended to teach. The rest of their waking time is preparation or supervised reading or walking under supervision. Their friendships are watched. They are never, never left alone. The avowed ideal of many boarding schoolmasters is to "send them to bed tired out." Largely this is due to a natural dread of accidents and scrapes, that will make trouble for the school, but there is also another cause. If I may speak frankly and entirely as an unauthoritative observer, I would say it is a regrettable thing that so large a proportion of British secondary schoolmasters and mistresses are unmarried. The normal condition of a healthy adult is marriage, and for all those who are not defective upon this side (and that means an incapacity to understand many things) celibacy is a state of unstable equilibrium and too often a quite unwholesome condition. Wherever there are celibate teachers I am inclined to suspect a fussiness, an unreasonable watchfulness, a disposition to pry, an exaggeration of what are called "Dangers," a painful idealization of "Purity." It is a part of the normal development of the human being to observe with some particularity certain phenomena, to entertain certain curiosities, to talk of them to trusted equals — *never*, be it noted, except by perversion to parents or teachers — and there is not the slightest harm in these quite natural things, unless they are forced back into an abashed solitude or associated by suggestion with conceptions of shame and disgust. That is what happens in too many of our girls' schools and preparatory schools to-day, and it is to that end mainly that youthful intimacies are discouraged, youthful freedom is restricted, and imagination and individuality warped and crippled. It is astonishing how much of their adolescence grown-up people will contrive to forget.

So much for schooling and what may be done to better it in this New Republican scheme of things. The upward continuation of it into a general College course is an integral part of a larger question that we shall discuss at a later stage, the larger question of the general progressive thought of the community as a whole.

VII. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES

There can be few people alive who have not remarked on occasion that men are the creatures of circumstances. But it is one thing to state a belief of this sort in some incidental application, and quite another to realize it completely. Towards such a completer realization we have been working in these papers, in disentangling the share of inheritance and of deliberate schooling and training, in the production of the civilized man. The rest we have to ascribe to his world in general, of which his home is simply the first and most intimate aspect. In every developing citizen we have asserted there is a great mass of fluid and indeterminate possibility, and this sets and is shaped by the world about him as wax is shaped by a mould. It is rarely, of course, an absolutely exact and submissive cast that ensues; few men and women are without some capacity for question and criticism, but it is only very rare and obdurate material — only, as one says, a very original personality — that does not finally take its general form and direction in this way. And it is proposed in this paper to keep this statement persistently in focus, instead of dismissing it as a platitude and thinking no more about it at all after the usual fashion, while we examine certain broad social and political facts and conventions which constitute the general framework of the world in which the developing citizen is placed. I would submit that at the present time with regard to such things as church and kingdom, constitution and nationality, we are altogether too much enslaved by the idea of "policy," and altogether too blind to the remoter, deeper, and more lasting consequences of our public acts and institutions in moulding the next generation. It will not, I think, be amiss to pass beyond policy for a space, and to insist — even with heaviness — that however convenient an institution may be, however much it may, in the twaddle of the time, be a "natural growth," and however much the "product of a long evolution," yet, if it does not mould men into fine and vigorous forms, it has to be destroyed. We "save the state" for the sake of our children, that, at least, is the New Republican view of the matter, and if in our intentness to save the state we injure or sacrifice our children, we destroy our ultimate for

our proximate aim.

Already it has been pointed out, with certain concrete instances, how the thing that is, asserts itself over the thing that is to be; already a general indication has been made of the trend of the argument we are now about to develop and define. That argument, briefly, is this, that to attain the ends of the New Republic, that is to say the best results from our birth possibilities, we must continually make political forms, social, political and religious formulæ, and all the rules and regulations of *life the clearest, simplest, and sincerest expression possible of what we believe about life and hope about life;* that whatever momentary advantage a generation may gain by accepting what is known to be a sham and a convention, by keeping in use the detected imposture and the flawed apparatus, is probably much more than made up for by the reaction of this acquiescence upon the future. As the typical instance of a convenient convention that I am inclined to think is now reacting very badly upon our future, the Crown of the British Empire, considered as the symbolical figurehead of a system of hereditary privilege and rule, serves extremely well. One may deal with this typical instance with no special application to the easy, kindly, amiable personality this crown adorns at the present time. It is a question that may be dealt with in general terms. What, we would ask, are the natural, inseparable concomitants of a system of hereditary rulers in a state, looking at the thing entirely with an eye to the making of a greater mankind in the world? How does it compare with the American conception of democratic equality, and how do both stand with regard to the essential truth and purpose in things? . . .

To state these questions is like opening the door of a room that has long been locked and deserted. One has a lonely feeling. There are quite remarkably no other voices here, and the rusty hinges echo down empty passages that were quite threateningly full of men seventy or eighty years ago. But I am only one very insignificant member of a class of inquirers in England who started upon the question "why are we becoming inefficient?" a year or two ago, and from that starting point it is I came to this. . . . I do not believe therefore that upon this dusty threshold I shall stand long alone. We take most calmly the most miraculous of things, and it is only quite

recently that I have come to see as amazing this fact, that while the greater mass of our English-speaking people is living under the profession of democratic Republicanism, there is no party, no sect, no periodical, no teacher either in Great Britain or America or the Colonies, to hint at a proposal to abolish the aristocratic and monarchical elements in the British system. There is no revolutionary spirit over here, and very little missionary spirit over there. The great mass of the present generation on both sides of the Atlantic takes hardly any interest in this issue at all. It is as if the question was an impossible one, outside the range of thinkable things. Or, as if the last word in this controversy was said before our grandfathers died.

But is that really so? It is permissible to suggest that for a time the last word had been said, and still to reopen the discussion now. All these papers, the very conception of New Republicanism, rests on the assumption — presumptuous and offensive though it must needs seem to many — that new matter for thought altogether, new apparatus and methods of inquiry, and new ends, have come into view since the early seventies, when the last Republican voices in England died away. We are enormously more aware of the Future. That, we have already defined as the essential difference of our new outlook. Our fathers thought of the Kingdom as it was to them, they contrasted with that the immediate alternative, and within these limits they were, no doubt, right in rejecting the latter. So, to them at any rate, the thing seemed judged. But nowadays when we have said the Kingdom is so and so, and when we have decided that we do not wish to convert it into a Republic upon the American or any other existing pattern before Christmas, 1904, we consider we have only begun to look at the thing. We have then to ask what is the future of the Kingdom; is it to be a permanent thing, or is it to develop into and give place to some other condition? We have to ask precisely the same question about the American democracy and the American constitution. Is that latter arrangement going to last for ever? We cannot help being contributory to these developments, and if we have any pretensions to wisdom at all, we must have some theory of what we intend with regard to these things; political action can surely be nothing but folly, unless it has a clear purpose in the future. If these

things are not sempiternal, then are we merely to patch the fabric as it gives way, or are we going to set about rebuilding — piecemeal, of course, and without closing the premises or stopping the business, but, nevertheless, on some clear and comprehensive plan? If so, what is the plan to be? Does it permit us to retain in a more or less modified form, or does it urge us to get rid of, the British Crown? Does it permit us to retain or does it urge us to modify the American constitution? That is the form, it seems to me, in which the question of Republicanism as an alternative to existing institutions, must presently return into the field of public discussion in Great Britain; not as a question of political stability nor of individual rights this time, but as an aspect of our general scheme, our scheme to make the world more free and more stimulating and strengthening for our children and our children's children; for the children both of our bodies and of our thoughts.

It is interesting to recall the assumptions under which the last vestiges of militant Republicanism died out in Great Britain. As late as the middle years of the reign of Queen Victoria, there were many in England who were, and who openly professed themselves to be, Republicans, and there was a widely felt persuasion that the country was drifting slowly towards the constitution of a democratic republic. In those days it was that there came into being a theory, strengthened by the withdrawal of the Monarch from affairs, which one still hears repeated, that Great Britain was a "crowned republic," that the crown was no more than a symbol retained by the "innate good sense" of the British people, and that in some automatic way not clearly explained, such old-time vestiges of privilege as the House of Lords would presently disappear. One finds this confident belief in Progress towards political equality — Progress that required no human effort, but was inherent in the scheme of things — very strong in Dickens, for example, who spoke for the average Englishman as no later writer can be said to have done. This belief fell in very happily with that disposition to funk a crisis, that vulgar dread of vulgar action which one must regretfully admit was all too often a characteristic of the nineteenth century English. There was an idea among Englishmen that to do anything whatever of a positive sort to bring about a Republic was not only totally unnecessary but inevitably

mischievous, since it evidently meant street fighting and provisional government by bold, bad, blood-stained, vulgar men, in shirt sleeves as the essential features of the process. And under the enervating influence of this great automatic theory — this theory that no one need bother because the thing was bound to come, was indeed already arriving for all who had eyes to see — Republicanism did not so much die as fall asleep. It was all right, Liberalism told us — the Crown was a legal fiction, the House of Lords was an interesting anachronism, and in that faith it was, no doubt, that the last of the Republicans, Mr. Bright and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, "kissed hands." Then, presently, the frantic politics of Mr. Gladstone effected what probably no other human agency could have contrived, and restored the prestige of the House of Lords.

Practically the Crown has now gone unchallenged by press, pulpit, or platform speaker for thirty years, and as a natural consequence there is just now a smaller proportion of men under forty who call themselves Republicans even in private than there ever was since Plutarch entered the circle of English reading. To-day the Aristocratic Monarchy is an almost universally accepted fact in the British Empire, and it has so complete an air of unshakable permanence to contrast with its condition in the early nineteenth century that even the fact that it is the only really concrete obstacle to a political reunion of the English-speaking peoples at the present time, seems merely a fact to avoid.

There are certain consequences that must follow from the unchallenged acceptation of an aristocratic monarchy, consequences that do not seem to be sufficiently recognized in this connection, and it is to these that the reader's attention is now particularly drawn. There are a great number of British people who are more or less sincerely seeking the secret of national efficiency at present, and I cannot help thinking that sooner or later, in spite of their evident aversion, they will be forced to look into this dusty chamber of thought for the clue to the thing they need. The corner they will have to turn is the admission that no state and no people can be at its maximum efficiency until every public function is discharged by the man best able to perform it, and that no Commonweal can be near efficiency until it is endeavouring very earnestly to bring that ideal

condition of affairs about. And when they have got round that corner they will have to face the fact that an Hereditary Monarchy is a state in which this principle is repudiated at a cardinal point, a state in which one position, which no amount of sophistication will prevent common men and women regarding as the most honourable, powerful, and responsible one of all, which is indeed by that very fact alone a great and responsible one, is filled on purely genealogical grounds. In a state that has also an aristocratic constitution this repudiation of special personal qualities is carried very much further. Reluctantly but certainly the seeker after national efficiency will come to the point that the aristocracy and their friends and connections *must* necessarily form a caste about the King, that their gradations *must* set the tone of the whole social body, and that their political position must enable them to demand and obtain a predominating share in any administration that may be formed. So long, therefore, as your constitution remains aristocratic you must expect to see men of quite ordinary ability, quite ordinary energy, and no exceptional force of character, men frequently less clever and influential than their wives and lady friends, controlling the public services, a Duke of Norfolk managing so vital a business as the Post Office and succeeded by a Marquis of Londonderry, and a Marquis of Lansdowne organizing military affairs, and nothing short of a change in your political constitution can prevent this sort of thing. No one believes these excellent gentlemen hold these positions by merit or capacity, and no one believes that from them we are getting anything like the best imaginable services in these positions. These positions are held by the mere accident of birth, and it is by the mere accident of birth the great mass of Englishmen are shut out from the remotest hope of serving their country in such positions.

And this evil of reserved places is not restricted by any means to public control. You cannot both have a system and not have a system, and the British have a system of hereditary aristocracy that infects the whole atmosphere of English thought with the persuasion that what a man may attempt is determined by his caste. It is here, and nowhere else, that the clue to so much inefficiency as one finds it in contemporary British activity lies. The officers of the British Army instead of being sedulously picked from the whole population are

drawn from a really quite small group of families, and, except for those who are called "gentleman rankers," to enlist is the very last way in the world to become a British officer. As a very natural corollary only broken men and unambitious men of the lowest class will consent to become ordinary private soldiers, except during periods of extreme patriotic excitement. The men who enter the Civil Service also, know perfectly well that though they may possess the most brilliant administrative powers and develop and use themselves with relentless energy, they will never win for themselves or their wives one tithe of the public honour that comes by right to the heir to a dukedom. A dockyard hand who uses his brains and makes a suggestion that may save the country thousands of pounds will get — a gratuity.

Throughout all English affairs the suggestion of this political system has spread. The employer is of a different caste from his workmen, the captain is of a different caste from his crew, even the Teachers' Register is specially classified to prevent "young gentlemen" being taught by the only men who, as a class, know how to teach in England, namely, the elementary teachers; everywhere the same thing is to be found. And while it is, it is absurd to expect a few platitudes about Freedom, and snobbishness, and a few pious hopes about efficiency, to counteract the system's universal, incessant teaching, its lesson of limited effort within defined possibilities. Only under one condition may such a system rise towards anything that may be called national vigour, and that is when there exists a vigorous Court which sets the fashion of hard work. A keen King, indifferent to feminine influence, may, for a time, make a keen nation, but that is an exceptional state of affairs, and the whole shape of the fabric gravitates towards relapse. Even under such an influence the social stratification will still, in the majority of cases, prevent powers and posts falling to the best possible man. In the majority of cases the best that can be hoped for, even then, will be to see the best man in the class privileged in relation to any particular service, discharging that service. The most efficient nation in the world to-day is believed to be Germany, which is — roughly speaking — an aristocratic monarchy, it is dominated by a man of most unkingly force of character, and by a noble tradition of educational

thoroughness that arose out of the shames of utter defeat, and, as a consequence, a great number of people contrive to forget that the most dazzling display of national efficiency the world has ever seen followed the sloughing of hereditary institutions by France. One credits Napoleon too often with the vigour of his opportunity, with the force and strength it was his privilege to misdirect and destroy. And one forgets that this present German efficiency was paralleled in the eighteenth century by Prussia, whose aristocratic system first winded Republicans at Valmy, and showed at Jena fourteen years after how much it had learnt from that encounter.

Now our main argument lies in this: that the great mass of a generation of children born into a country, all those children who have no more than average intelligence and average moral qualities, will accept the ostensible institutions of that country at their face value, and will be almost entirely shaped and determined by that acceptance. Only a sustained undertone of revolutionary protest can prevent that happening. They will believe that precedences represent real superiority, and they will honour what they see honoured, and ignore what they see treated as of no account. Pious sentiment about Equality and Freedom will enter into the reality of their minds as little as a drop of water into a greasy plate. They will act as little in general intercourse upon the proposition that "the man's the gowd for a' that," as they will upon the proposition that "man is a spirit" when it comes to the alternative of jumping over a cliff or going down by a ladder.

If, however, your children are not average children, if you are so happy as to have begotten children of exceptional intelligence, it does not follow that this fact will save them from conclusions quite parallel to those of the common child. Suppose they do penetrate the pretence that there is no intrinsic difference between the Royal Family and the members of the peerage on the one hand, and the average person in any other class on the other; suppose they discover that the whole scale of precedence and honour in their land is a stupendous sham; — what then? Suppose they see quite clearly that all these pretensions of an inviolate superiority of birth and breeding vanish at the touch of a Whitaker Wright, soften to a glowing cordiality before the sunny promises of a Hooley. Suppose they

perceive that neither King nor lords really believe in their own lordliness, and that at any point in the system one may find men with hands for any man's tip, provided it is only sufficiently large! Even then! — How is that going to react upon our children's social conduct?

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they will accept the system still, they will accept it with mental reservations. They will see that to repudiate the system by more than a chance word or deed is to become isolated, to become a discontented alien, to lose even the qualified permission to do something in the world. In most cases they will take the oaths that come in their way and kiss the hands — just as the British elementary teachers bow unbelieving heads to receive the episcopal pat, and just as the British sceptic in orders will achieve triumphs of ambiguity to secure the episcopal see. And their reason for submission will not be absolutely despicable; they will know there is no employment worth speaking of without it. After all, one has only one life, and it is not pleasant to pass through it in a state of futile abstinence from the general scheme. Life, unfortunately, does not end with heroic moments of repudiation; there comes a morrow to the Everlasting Nay. One may begin with heroic renunciations and end in undignified envy and dyspeptic comments outside the door one has slammed on one's self. In such reflections your children of the exceptional sort, it may be after a youthful fling or two, a "ransom" speech or so, will find excellent reasons for making their peace with things as they are, just as if they were utterly commonplace. They know that if they can boast a knighthood or a baronetcy or a Privy Councillorship, they will taste day by day and every day that respect, that confidence from all about them that no one but a trained recluse despises. And life will abound in opportunities. "Oh, well!" they will say. Such things give them influence, consideration, power to do things.

The beginning of concessions is so entirely reasonable and easy! But the concessions go on. Each step upward in the British system finds that system more persistently about them. When one has started out under a King one may find amiable but whom one may not respect, admitted a system one does not believe in, when one has rubbed the first bloom off one's honour, it is infinitely easier to begin

peeling the skin. Many a man whose youth was a dream of noble things, who was all for splendid achievements and the service of mankind, peers to-day, by virtue of such acquiescences, from between preposterous lawn sleeves or under a tilted coronet, sucked as dry of his essential honour as a spider sucks a fly.

But this is going too far, the reader will object! There must be concessions, there must be conformities, just as there must be some impurity in the water we drink and flaws in the beauty we give our hearts to, and that, no doubt, is true. It is no reason why we should drink sewage and kneel to grossness and base stupidity. To endure the worst because we cannot have the best is surely the last word of folly. Our business as New Republicans is not to waste our lives in the pursuit of an unattainable chemical purity, but to clear the air as much as possible. Practical ethics is, after all, a quantitative science. In the reality of life there are few absolute cases, and it is foolish to forego a great end for a small concession. But to suffer so much Royalty and Privilege as an Englishman has to do before he may make any effectual figure in public life is not a small concession. By the time you have purchased power you may find you have given up everything that made power worth having. It would be a small concession, I admit, a mere personal self-sacrifice, to pretend loyalty, kneel and kiss hands, assist at Coronation mummeries, and all the rest of it, in order, let us say, to accomplish some great improvement in the schools of the country, were it not for the fact that all these things must be done in the sight of the young, that you cannot kneel to the King without presenting a kneeling example to the people, without becoming as good a teacher of servility as though you were servile to the marrow. There lies the trouble. By virtue of this reaction it is that the shams and ceremonies we may fancy mere curious survivals, mere kinks and tortuosities, cloaks and accessories to-day, will, if we are silent and acquiescent, be halfway to reality again in the course of a generation. To our children they are not evidently shams; they are powerful working suggestions. Human institutions are things of life, and whatever weed of falsity lies still rooted in the ground has the promise and potency of growth. It will tend perpetually, according to its nature, to recover its old influence over the imagination, the thoughts, and acts of our children.

Even when the whole trend of economic and social development sets against the real survival of such a social and political system as the British, its pretensions, its shape and implications may survive, survive all the more disastrously because they are increasingly insincere. Indeed, in a sense, the British system, the pyramid of King, land-owning and land-ruling aristocracy, yeomen and trading middle-class and labourers, is dead — it died in the nineteenth century under the wheels of mechanism [Footnote: I have discussed this fully in *Anticipations*, Chapter III., Developing Social Elements.] — and the crude beginnings of a new system are clothed in its raiment, and greatly encumbered by that clothing. Our greatest peers are shareholders, are equipped by marriage with the wealth of Jews and Americans, are exploiters of colonial resources and urban building enterprises; their territorial titles are a mask and a lie. They hamper the development of the new order, but they cannot altogether prevent the emergence of new men. The new men come up to power one by one, from different enterprises, with various traditions, and one by one, before they can develop a sense of class distinction and collective responsibility, the old system with its organized "Society" captures them. If it finds the man obdurate, it takes his wife and daughters, and it waylays his sons. [Footnote: It is not only British subjects that are assimilated in this way, the infection of the British system, the annexation of certain social strata in the Republic by the British crown, is a question for every thoughtful American. America is less and less separate from Europe, and the social development of the United States cannot be a distinct process — it is inevitably bound up in the general social development of the English-speaking community. The taint has touched the American Navy, for example, and there are those who discourage promotion from the ranks — the essential virtue of the democratic state — because men so promoted would be at a disadvantage when they met the officers of foreign navies, who were by birth and training "gentlemen." When they met them socially no doubt was meant; in war the disadvantage might prove the other way about.] Because the hereditary kingdom and aristocracy of Great Britain is less and less representative of economic reality, more and more false to the real needs of the world, it does not follow that it will disappear, any more than malarial fever

will disappear from a man's blood because it is irrelevant to the general purpose of his being. These things will only go when a sufficient number of sufficiently capable and powerful people are determined they shall go. Until that time they will remain with us, influencing things about them for evil, as it lies in their nature to do.

Before, however, any sufficiently great and capable body of men can be found to abolish these shams, these shams that must necessarily hamper and limit the development of our children, it is necessary that they should have some clear idea of the thing that is to follow, and the real security of these obsolete institutions lies very largely in the fact that at present the thing that is to follow does not define itself. It is too commonly assumed that the alternative to a more or less hereditary government is democratic republicanism of the American type, and the defence of the former consists usually in an indictment of the latter, complicated in very illogical cases by the assertion (drawn from the French instance) that Republics are unstable. But it does not follow that because one condemns the obvious shams of the British system that one must accept the shams of the United States. While in Great Britain we have a system that masks and hampers the best of our race under a series of artificial inequalities, the United States theory of the essential equality of all men is equally not in accordance with the reality of life. In America, just as in England, the intelligent child grows up to discover that the pretensions of public life are not justified, and quite equally to be flawed in thought and action by that discovery.

The American atmosphere has one great and indisputable superiority over the British: it insists upon the right of every citizen, it almost presents it as a duty, to do all that he possibly can do; it holds out to him even the highest position in the state as a possible reward for endeavour. Up to the point of its equality of opportunity surely no sane Englishman can do anything but envy the American state. In America "presumption" is not a sin. All the vigorous enterprise that differentiates the American from the Englishman in business flows quite naturally from that; all the patriotic force and loyalty of the common American, which glows beside the English equivalent as the sun beside the moon, glows even oppressively. But apart from these inestimable advantages I do not see that the

American has much that an Englishman need envy. There are certainly points of inferiority in the American atmosphere, influences in development that are bad, not only in comparison with what is ideally possible, but even in comparison with English parallels.

For example, the theory that every man is as good as his neighbour, and possibly a little better, has no check for fools, and instead of the respectful silences of England there seems — to the ordinary English mind — an extraordinary quantity of crude and unsound judgments in America. One gets an impression that the sort of mind that is passively stupid in England is often actively silly in America, and, as a consequence, American newspapers, American discussions, American social affairs are pervaded by a din that in England we do not hear and do not want to hear. The real and steady development of American scientific men is masked to the European observer, and it must be greatly hampered by the copious silliness of the amateur discoverer, and the American crop of new religions and new enthusiasms is a horror and a warning to the common British intelligence. Many people whose judgments are not absolutely despicable hold a theory that unhampered personal freedom for a hundred years has made out of the British type, a type less deliberate and thorough in execution and more noisy and pushful in conduct, restless rather than indefatigable, and smart rather than wise. If ninety-nine people out of the hundred in our race are vulgar and unwise, it does seem to be a fact that while the English fool is generally a shy and negative fool anxious to hide the fact, the American fool is a loud and positive fool, who swamps much of the greatness of his country to many a casual observer from Europe altogether. American books, American papers, American manners and customs seem all for the ninety and nine.

Deeper and graver than the superficial defects of manner and execution and outlook to which these charges point, there are, one gathers, other things that are traceable to the same source. There is a report of profounder troubles in the American social body, of a disease of corruption that renders American legislatures feeble or powerless against the great business corporations, and of an extreme demoralization of the police force. The relation of the local political organization to the police is fatally direct, and that sense of ordered

subordination to defined duties which distinguishes the best police forces of Europe fails. Men go into the police force, we are told, with the full intention of making it pay, of acquiring a saleable power.

There is probably enough soundness in these impressions, and enough truth in these reports and criticisms, to justify our saying that all is not ideally right with the American atmosphere, and that it is not to present American conditions we must turn in repudiating our British hereditary monarchy. We have to seek some better thing upon which British and American institutions may converge. The American personal and social character, just like the English personal and social character, displays very grave defects, defects that must now be reflected upon, and must be in course of acquisition by the children who are growing up in the American state. And since the American is still predominantly of British descent, and since he has not been separated long enough from the British to develop distinct inherited racial characteristics, and, moreover, since his salient characteristics are in sharp contrast with those of the British, it follows that the difference in his character and atmosphere must be due mainly to his different social and political circumstances. Just as the relative defects of the common British, their apathy, their unreasoning conservatism, and their sordid scorn of intellectual things is bound up with their politico-social scheme, so, I believe, the noisiness, the mean practicalness, and the dyspeptic-driving restlessness that are the shadows of American life, are bound up with the politico-social condition of America. The Englishman sticks in the mud, and the American, with a sort of violent meanness, cuts corners, and in both cases it is quite conceivable that the failure to follow the perfect way is really no symptom of a divergence of blood and race, but the natural and necessary outcome of the mass of suggestion about them that constitutes their respective worlds.

The young American grows up into a world pervaded by the theory of democracy, by the theory that all men must have an equal chance of happiness, possessions, and power, and in which that theory is expressed by a uniform equal suffrage. No man shall have any power or authority save by the free consent and delegation of his fellows — that is the idea — and to the originators of this theory it seemed as obvious as anything could be that these suffrages would

only be given to those who did really serve the happiness and welfare of the greatest number. The idea was reflected in the world of business by a conception of free competition; no man should grow rich except by the free preference of a great following of customers. Such is still the American theory, and directly the intelligent young American grows up to hard facts he finds almost as much disillusionment as the intelligent young Englishman. He finds that in practice the free choice of a constituency reduces to two candidates, and no more, selected by party organizations, and the free choice of the customer to the goods proffered by a diminishing number of elaborately advertised businesses; he finds political instruments and business corporations interlocking altogether beyond his power of control, and that the two ways to opportunity, honour, and reward are either to appeal coarsely to the commonest thoughts and feelings of the vulgar as a political agitator or advertising trader, or else to make his peace with those who do. And so he, too, makes his concessions. They are different concessions from those of the young Englishman, but they have this common element of gravity, that he has to submit to conditions in which he does not believe, he has to trim his course to a conception of living that is perpetually bending him from the splendid and righteous way. The Englishman grows up into a world of barriers and locked doors, the American into an unorganized, struggling crowd. There is an enormous premium in the American's world upon force and dexterity, and force in the case of common men too often degenerates into brutality, and dexterity into downright trickery and cheating. He has got to be forcible and dexterous within his self-respect if he can. There is an enormous discount on any work that does not make money or give a tangible result, and except in the case of those whose lot has fallen within certain prescribed circles, certain oases of organized culture and work, he must advertise himself even in science or literature or art as if he were a pill. There is no recognition for him at all in the world, except the recognition of — everybody. There will be neither comfort nor the barest respect for him, however fine his achievement, unless he makes his achievement known, unless he can make enough din about it, to pay. He has got to shout down ninety-nine shouting fellow-citizens. That is the cardinal fact in life for the great majority

of Americans who respond to the stirrings of ambition. If in Britain capacity is discouraged because honours and power go by prescription, in America it is misdirected because honours do not exist and power goes by popular election and advertisement. In certain directions — not by any means in all — unobtrusive merit, soundness of quality that has neither gift nor disposition for "push," has a better chance in Great Britain than in America. A sort of duty to help and advance exceptional men is recognized at any rate, even if it is not always efficiently discharged, by the privileged class in England, while in America it is far more acutely felt, far more distinctly impressed upon the young that they must "hustle" or perish.

It will be argued that this enumeration of American and British defects is a mere expansion of that familiar proposition of the logic textbooks, "all men are mortal." You have here, says the objector, one of two alternatives, either you must draw your administrators, your legislators, your sources of honour and reward from a limited, hereditary, and specially-trained class, who will hold power as a right, or you must rely upon the popular choice exercised in the shop and at the polling booth. What else can you have but inheritance or election, or some blend of the two, blending their faults? Each system has its disadvantages, and the disadvantages of each system may be minimized by education; in particular by keeping the culture and code of honour of your ruling class high in the former case and by keeping your common schools efficient in the latter. But the essential evils of each system are — essential evils, and one has to suffer them and struggle against them, as one has to struggle perpetually with the pathogenic bacteria that infest the world. The theory of monarchy is, no doubt, inferior to the democratic theory in stimulus, but the latter fails in qualitative effect, much more than the former. There, the objector submits, lies the quintessence of the matter. Both systems need watching, need criticism, the pruning knife and the stimulant, and neither is bad enough to justify a revolutionary change to the other. In some such conclusion as this most of the English people with whom one can discuss this question have come to rest, and it is to this way of looking at the matter that one must ascribe the apathetic acquiescence in the British hereditary

system, upon which I have already remarked. There is a frank and excessive admission of every real and imaginary fault of the American system, and with the proposition that we are on the horns of a dilemma, the discussion is dismissed.

But are we indeed on the horns of a dilemma, and is there no alternative to hereditary government tempered by elections, or government by the ward politician and the polling booth? Cannot we have that sense and tradition of equal opportunity for all who are born into this world, that generous and complete acknowledgment of the principle of promotion from the ranks that is the precious birthright of the American, without the political gerrymandering, the practical falsification, that restricts that general freedom at last only to the energetic, and that subordinates quality to quantity in every affair of life? It is evident that for the New Republican to admit that the thing is indeed a dilemma, that there is nothing for it but to make the best of whichever bad thing we have at hand, that we cannot have all we desire but only a greater or a lesser moiety, is a most melancholy and hampering admission. And, certainly, no New Republican will agree without a certain mental struggle, without a thorough and earnest inquiry into the possibility of a third direction.

This matter has two aspects, it presents itself as two questions; the question first of all of administration, and the question of honour and privilege. What is it that the New Republican idea really requires in these two matters? In the matter of administration it requires that every child growing up in a state should feel that he is part owner of his state, completely free in his membership, and equal in opportunity to all other children — and it also wants to secure the management of affairs in the hands of the very best men, not the noisiest, not the richest or most skilfully advertised, but the best. Can these two things be reconciled? In the matter of honour and privilege, the New Republican idea requires a separation of honour from notoriety; it requires some visible and forcible expression of the essential conception that there are things more honourable than getting either votes or money; it requires a class and distinctions and privileges embodying that idea — and also it wants to ensure that through the whole range of life there shall not be one door locked against the effort of the citizen to accomplish the best that is in him.

Can these two things be reconciled also?

I have the temerity to think that in both cases the conflicting requirements can be reconciled far more completely than is commonly supposed.

Let us take, first of all, the question of the reconciliation as it is presented in the administration of public affairs. The days have come when the most democratic-minded of men must begin to admit that the appointment of all rulers and officials by polling the manhood, or most of the manhood, of a country does not work — let us say perfectly — and at no level of educational efficiency does it ever seem likely to work in the way those who established it hoped. By thousands of the most varied experiments the nineteenth century has proved this up to the hilt. The fact that elections can only be worked as a choice between two selected candidates, or groups of candidates, is the unforeseen and unavoidable mechanical defect of all electoral methods with large electorates. Education has nothing to do with that. The elections for the English University members are manipulated just as much as the elections in the least literate of the Irish constituencies. [Footnote: There is a very suggestive book on this aspect of our general question, *The Crowd*, by M. Gustave le Bon, which should interest any one who finds this paper interesting. And the English reader who would like a fuller treatment of this question has now available also Ostrogorski's great work, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*.] It is not a question of accidentals, but a question of the essential mechanism. Men have sought out and considered all sorts of devices for qualifying the present method by polling; Mills's plural voting for educated men will occur to the reader; Hare's system of vote collection, and the negative voting of Doctor Grece; and the defects of these inventions have been sufficiently obvious to prevent even a trial. The changes have been rung upon methods of counting; cumulative votes and the prohibition of plumping, and so on, have been tried without any essential modification of the results. There are various devices for introducing "stages" in the electoral process; the constituency elects electors, who elect the rulers and officers, for example, and there is also that futile attempt to bring in the non-political specialist, the method of electing governing bodies with

power to “co-opt.” Of course they “co-opt” their fellow politicians, rejected candidates, and so on. Among other expedients that people have discussed, are such as would make it necessary for a man to take some trouble and display some foresight to get registered as a voter or to pass an examination to that end, and such as would confront him with a voting paper so complex, that only a very intelligent and painstaking man would be able to fill it up without disqualification. It certainly seems a reasonable thing to require that the voter should be able at least to write out fully and spell correctly the name of the man of his choice. Except for the last, there is scarcely any of these things but its adoption would strengthen the power of the political organizer, which they aim to defeat. Any complication increases the need and the power of organization. It is possible to believe — the writer believes — that with all this burthen of shortcomings, the democratic election system is still, on the whole, better than a system of hereditary privilege, but that is no reason for concealing how defective and disappointing its practical outcome has been, nor for resting contented with it in its present form. [Footnote: The statement of the case is not complete unless we mention that, to the method of rule by hereditary rulers and the appointment of officials by noble patrons on the one hand, and of rule by politicians exercising patronage on the other, there is added in the British system the Chinese method of selecting officials by competitive examination. Within its limits this has worked as a most admirable corrective to patronage; it is one of the chief factors in the cleanhandedness of British politicians, and it is continually importing fresh young men from outside to keep officialdom in touch with the general educated world. But it does not apply, and it does not seem applicable, to the broader issues of politics, to the appointment and endorsement of responsible rulers and legislators, where a score of qualities are of more importance than those an examination can gauge.]

Is polling really essential to the democratic idea? That is the question now very earnestly put to the reader. We are so terribly under the spell of established conditions, we are all so obsessed by the persuasion that the only conceivable way in which a man can be expressed politically is by himself voting in person, that we do all of

us habitually overlook a possibility, a third choice, that lies ready to our hands. There is a way by means of which the indisputable evils of democratic government may be very greatly diminished, without destroying or even diminishing — indeed, rather enhancing — that invigorating sense of unhampered possibilities, that the democratic idea involves. There is a way of choosing your public servants of all sorts and effectually controlling public affairs on perfectly sound democratic principles, *without ever having such a thing as an election, as it is now understood, at all*, a way which will permit of a deliberate choice between numerous candidates — a thing utterly impossible under the current system — which will certainly raise the average quality of our legislators, and be infinitely saner, juster, and more deliberate than our present method. And, moreover, it is a way that is typically the invention of the English people, and which they use to-day in another precisely parallel application, an application which they have elaborately tested and developed through a period of at least seven or eight hundred years, and which I must confess myself amazed to think has not already been applied to our public needs. This way is the Jury system. The Jury system was devised to meet almost exactly the same problem that faces us to-day, the problem of how on the one hand to avoid putting a man's life or property into the hands of a Ruler, a privileged person, whose interest might be unsympathetic or hostile, while on the other protecting him from the tumultuous judgments of a crowd — to save the accused from the arbitrary will of King and Noble without flinging him to the mob. To-day it is exactly that problem over again that our peoples have to solve, except that instead of one individual affair we have now our general affairs to place under a parallel system. As the community that had originally been small enough and intimate enough to decide on the guilt or innocence of its members grew to difficult proportions, there developed this system of selecting by lot a number of its common citizens who were sworn, who were then specially instructed and prepared, and who, in an atmosphere of solemnity and responsibility in absolute contrast with the uproar of a public polling, considered the case and condemned or discharged the accused. Let me point out that this method is so universally recognized as superior to the common electoral method that any one

who should propose to-day to take the fate of a man accused of murder out of the hands of a jury and place it in the hands of any British or American constituency whatever, even in the hands of such a highly intelligent constituency as one of the British universities, would be thought to be carrying crankiness beyond the border line of sanity.

Why then should we not apply the Jury system to the electoral riddle?

Suppose, for example, at the end of the Parliamentary term, instead of the present method of electing a member of Parliament, we were, with every precaution of publicity and with the most ingeniously impartial machine that could be invented, to select a Jury by lot, a Jury sufficiently numerous to be reasonably representative of the general feeling of the community and sufficiently small to be able to talk easily together and to do the business without debating society methods — between twenty and thirty, I think, might be a good working number — and suppose we were, after a ceremony of swearing them and perhaps after prayer or after a grave and dignified address to them upon the duty that lay before them, to place each of these juries in comfortable quarters for a few days and isolated from the world, to choose its legislator. They could hear, in public, under a time limit, the addresses of such candidates as had presented themselves, and they could receive, under a limit of length and with proper precautions for publicity, such documents as the candidates chose to submit. They could also, in public, put any questions they chose to the candidates to elucidate their intentions or their antecedents, and they might at any stage decide unanimously to hear no more of and to dismiss this or that candidate who encumbered their deliberations. (This latter would be an effectual way of suppressing the candidature of cranks, and of half-witted and merely symbolical persons.) The Jury between and after their interrogations and audiences would withdraw from the public room to deliberate in privacy. Their deliberations which, of course, would be frank and conversational to a degree impossible under any other conditions, and free from the dodges of the expert vote manipulator altogether, would, for example, in the case of several candidates of the same or similar political colours, do away with the absurdity of the split vote.

The jurymen of the same political hue could settle that affair among themselves before contributing to a final decision.

This Jury might have certain powers of inquest. Provision might be made for pleas against particular candidates; private individuals or the advocates of vigilance societies might appear against any particular candidate and submit the facts about any doubtful affair, financial or otherwise, in which that candidate had been involved. Witnesses might be called and heard on any question of fact, and the implicated candidate would explain his conduct. And at any stage the Jury might stop proceedings and report its selection for the vacant post. Then, at the expiration of a reasonable period, a year perhaps, or three years or seven years, another Jury might be summoned to decide whether the sitting member should continue in office unchallenged or be subjected to a fresh contest.

This suggestion is advanced here in this concrete form merely to show the sort of thing that might be done; it is one sample suggestion, one of a great number of possible schemes of Election by Jury. But even in this state of crude suggestion, it is submitted that it does serve to show the practicability of a method of election more deliberate and thorough, more dignified, more calculated to impress the new generation with a sense of the gravity of the public choice, and infinitely more likely to give us good rulers than the present method, and that it would do so without sacrificing any essential good quality whatever inherent in the Democratic Idea. [Footnote: There are excellent possibilities, both in the United States and in this Empire, of trying over such a method as this, and of introducing it tentatively and piecemeal. In Great Britain already there are quite different methods of election for Parliament existing side by side. In the Hythe division of Kent, for example, I vote by ballot with elaborate secrecy; in the University of London I declare my vote in a room full of people. The British University constituencies, or one of them, might very readily be used as a practical test of this jury suggestion. There is nothing, I believe, in the Constitution of the United States to prevent any one State resorting to this characteristically Anglo-Saxon method of appointing its representatives in Congress. It is not only in political institutions that the method may be tried. Any societies or institutions that have to

send delegates to a conference or meeting might very easily bring this conception to a practical test. Even if it does not prove practicable as a substitute for election by polling, it might be found of some value for the appointment of members of the specialist type, for whom at present we generally resort to co-option. In many cases where the selection of specialists was desirable to complete public bodies, juries of educated men of the British Grand Jury type might be highly serviceable.] The case for the use of the Jury system becomes far stronger when we apply it to such problems as we now attempt to solve by co-opting experts upon various administrative bodies.

The necessity either of raising the quality of representative bodies or of replacing them not only in administration but in legislation by bureaucracies of officials appointed by elected or hereditary rulers, is one that presses on all thoughtful men, and is by no means an academic question needed to round off this New Republican theory. The necessity becomes more urgent every day, as scientific and economic developments raise first one affair and then another to the level of public or quasi-public functions. In the last century, locomotion, lighting, heating, education, forced themselves upon public control or public management, and now with the development of Trusts a whole host of businesses, that were once the affair of competing private concerns, claim the same attention. Government by hustings' bawling, newspaper clamour, and ward organization, is more perilous every day and more impotent, and unless we are prepared to see a government *de facto* of rich business organizers override the government *de jure*, or to relapse upon a practical oligarchy of officials, an oligarchy that will certainly decline in efficiency in a generation or so, we must set ourselves most earnestly to this problem of improving representative methods. It is in the direction of the substitution of the Jury method for a general poll that the only practicable line of improvement known to the present writer seems to lie, and until it has been tried it cannot be conceded that democratic government has been tried and exhaustively proved inadequate to the complex needs of the modern state.

So much for the question of administration. We come now to a second need in the modern state if it is to get the best result from the

citizens born into it, and that is the need of honours and privileges to reward and enhance services and exceptional personal qualities and so to stir and ennoble that emulation which is, under proper direction, the most useful to the constructive statesman of all human motives. In the United States titles are prohibited by the constitution, in Great Britain they go by prescription. But it is possible to imagine titles and privileges that are not hereditary, and that would be real symbols of human worth entirely in accordance with the Republican Idea. It is one of the stock charges against Republicanism that success in America is either political or financial. In England, in addition, success is also social, and there is, one must admit, a sort of recognition accorded to intellectual achievement, which some American scientific men have found reason to envy. In America, of course, just as in Great Britain, there exists that very enviable distinction, the honorary degree of a university; but in America it is tainted by the freedom with which bogus universities can be organized, and by the unchallenged assumptions of quacks. In Great Britain the honorary degree of a university, in spite of the fact that it goes almost as a matter of course to every casual Prince, is a highly desirable recognition of public services. Beyond this there are certain British distinctions that might very advantageously be paralleled in America, the Fellowship of the Royal Society, for example, and that really very fine honour, as yet untainted by the class of men who tout for baronetcies and peerages, the Privy Council.

There are certain points in this question that are too often overlooked. In the first place, *honours and titles need not be hereditary*; in the second, *they need not be conferred by the political administration*; and, in the third, they are not only — as the French Legion of Honour shows — entirely compatible with, but *they are a necessary complement to the Republican Idea*.

The bad results of entrusting honours to the Government are equally obvious in France and Great Britain. They are predominantly given, quite naturally, for political services, because they are given by politicians too absorbed to be aware of men outside the political world. In Great Britain the process is modified rather than improved by what one knows as court influence. And in spite of the real and sustained efficiency of the Royal Society in distinguishing

meritorious scientific workers, the French Academy, which has long been captured by aristocratic dilettanti, and the English Royal Academy of Arts, demonstrate the essential defects and dangers of a body which fills its own gaps. But there is no reason why a national system of honours and titles should not be worked upon a quite new basis, suggested by these various considerations. Let us, simply for tangibleness, put the thing as a concrete plan for the reader's consideration.

There might, for example, be a lowest stage which would include — as the English knighthood once included — almost every citizen capable of initiative, all the university graduates, all the men qualified to practice the responsible professions, all qualified teachers, all the men in the Army and Navy promoted to a certain rank, all seamen qualified to navigate a vessel, all the ministers recognized by properly organized religious bodies, all public officials exercising command; quasi-public organizations might nominate a certain proportion of their staffs, and organized trade-unions with any claim to skill, a certain proportion of their men, their "decent" men, and every artist or writer who could submit a passable diploma work; it would be, in fact, a mark set upon every man or woman who was qualified to do something or who had done something, as distinguished from the man who had done nothing in the world, the mere common unenterprising esurient man. It might carry many little privileges in public matters — for instance, it might qualify for certain electoral juries. And from this class the next rank might easily be drawn in a variety of ways. *In a modern democratic state there must be many fountains of honour.* That is a necessity upon which one cannot insist too much. There must be no court, no gang, no traditional inalterable tribunal. Local legislative bodies, for example, — in America, state legislatures and in England, county councils, — might confer rank on a limited number of men or women yearly; juries drawn from certain special constituencies, from the roll of the medical profession, or from the Army, might assemble periodically to nominate their professional best, the Foreign or Colonial Office might confer recognition for political services, the university governing bodies might be entrusted with the power — just as in the middle ages many great men could confer knighthood. From among

these distinguished gentlemen of the second grade still higher ranks might be drawn. Local juries might select a local chief dignitary as their "earl," let us say, from among the resident men of rank, and there is no reason why certain great constituencies, the medical calling, the engineers, should not specify one or two of their professional leaders, their "dukes." There are many occasions of local importance when an honourable figure-head is needed. The British fall back on the local hereditary peer or invite a prince, too often some poor creature great only by convention — and what the Americans do I do not know, unless they use a Boss. There are many occasions of something more than ceremonial importance when a responsible man publicly honoured and publicly known, and not a professional politician, is of the utmost convenience. And there are endless affairs, lists, gatherings, when the only alternative to rank is scramble. For myself I would not draw the line at such minor occasions for precedence. A Second Chamber is an essential part of the political scheme of all the English-speaking communities, and almost always it is intended to present stabler interests and a smaller and more selected constituency than the lower house. From such a life nobility as I have sketched a Second Chamber could be drawn much as the Irish representative peers in the House of Lords are drawn from the general peerage of Ireland. It would be far less party bound and far less mercenary than the American Senate, and far more intelligent and capable than the British House of Lords. And either of these bodies could be brought under a process of deliberate conversion in this direction with scarcely any revolutionary shock at all. [Footnote: In the case of the House of Lords, for example, the process of conversion might begin by extending the Scotch and Irish system to England, and substituting a lesser number of representative peers for the existing English peerage. Then it would merely revive a question that was already under discussion in middle Victorian times, to create non-hereditary peerages in the three kingdoms. The several Privy Councils might next be added to the three national constituencies by which and from which the representative peers were appointed, and then advisory boards might be called from the various Universities and organized professions, and from authoritative Colonial bodies to recommend men to be added to the

voting peerage. Life peers already exist. The law is represented by life peers. The lords spiritual are representative life peers — they are the senior bishops, and they are appointed to represent a corporation — the Established Church. So a generally non-hereditary functional nobility might come into being without any violent break with the present condition of things. The conversion of the American Senate would be a more difficult matter, because the method of appointment of Senators is more stereotyped altogether, and, since 1800, unhappily quite bound up with the political party system. The Senate is not a body of varied and fluctuating origins into which new elements can be quietly inserted. An English writer cannot estimate how dear the sacred brace of Senators for each State may or may not be to the American heart. But the possibility of Congress delegating the power to appoint additional Senators to certain non-political bodies, or to juries of a specific constitution, is at least thinkable as the beginning of a movement that would come at last into parallelism with that in the British Empire.]

When these issues of public honour and efficient democratic administration have begun to move towards a definite solution, the community will be in a position to extend the operation of the new methods towards a profounder revolution, the control of private property. "We are all Socialists nowadays," and it is needless, therefore, to argue here at any length to establish the fact that beyond quite personal belongings all Property is the creation of society, and in reality no more than an administrative device. At present, in spite of some quite hideous and mischievous local aspects, the institution of Property, even in land and the shares of quasi-public businesses, probably gives as efficient a method of control, and even it may be a more efficient method of control than any that could be devised to replace it under existing conditions. We have no public bodies and no methods of check and control sufficiently trustworthy to justify extensive expropriations. Even the municipalization of industries needs to go slowly until municipal areas have been brought more into conformity with the conditions of efficient administration. Areas too cramped and areas that overlap spell waste and conflicting authorities, and premature municipalization in such areas will lead only to the final triumph of the private company. Political efficiency

must precede Socialism. [Footnote: See Appendix I.] But there can be no doubt that the spectacle of irresponsible property is a terribly demoralizing force in the development of each generation. It is idle to deny that Property, both in Great Britain and America, works out into a practical repudiation of that equality, political democracy so eloquently asserts. There is a fatalistic submission to inferiority on the part of an overwhelming majority of those born poor, they hold themselves cheap in countless ways, and they accept as natural the use of wealth for wanton pleasure and purposes absolutely mischievous, they despair of effort in the public service, and find their only hope in gambling, sharp greedy trading, or in base acquiescences to the rich. The good New Republican can only regard our present system of Property as a terribly unsatisfactory expedient and seek with all his power to develop a better order to replace it.

There are certain lines of action in this matter that cannot but be beneficial, and it is upon these that the New Republican will, no doubt, go. One excellent thing, for example, would be to insist that beyond the limits of a reasonable amount of personal property, the community is justified in demanding a much higher degree of efficiency in the property-holder than in the case of the common citizen, to require him or her to be not only sane but capable, equal mentally and bodily to a great charge. The heir to a great property should possess a satisfactory knowledge of social and economic science, and should have studied with a view to his great responsibilities. The age of twenty-one is scarcely high enough for the management of a great estate, and to raise the age of free administration for the owners of great properties, and to specify a superannuation age would be a wise and justifiable measure. [Footnote: Something of the sort is already secured in France by the power of the *Conseil de Famille* to expropriate a spendthrift.] There should also be a possibility of intervention in the case of maladministration, and a code of offences — habitual drunkenness, for example, assaults of various kinds — offences that established the fact of unfitness and resulted in deposition, might be drawn up. It might be found desirable in the case of certain crimes and misdemeanours, to add to existing penalties the transfer of all real or share properties to trustees. Vigorous confiscation is a particularly

logical punishment for the proven corruption of public officers by any property owner or group of property owners. Rich men who bribe are a danger to any state. Beyond the limits of lunacy it might be possible to define a condition of malignancy or ruthlessness that would justify confiscation, attempts to form corners in the necessities of life, for example, could be taken as evidence of such a condition. All such measures as this would be far more beneficial than the immediate improvement they would effect in public management. They would infect the whole social body with the sense that property was saturated with responsibility and was in effect a trust, and that would be a good influence upon rich and poor alike.

Moreover, as public bodies became more efficient and more trustworthy, the principle already established in British social polity by Sir William Vernon Harcourt's Death Duties, the principle of whittling great properties at each transfer, might be very materially extended. Every transfer of property might establish a state mortgage for some fraction of the value of that property. The fraction might be small when the recipient was a public institution, considerable in the case of a son or daughter, and almost all for a distant relative or no kindred at all. By such devices the evil influence of property acquired by mere accidents would be reduced without any great discouragement of energetic, enterprising, and inventive men. And a man ambitious to found a family might still found one if he took care to marry wisely and train and educate his children to the level of the position he designed for them.

While the New Republican brings such expedients as this to bear upon property from above, there will also be the expedients of the Minimum Wage and the Minimum Standard of Life, already discussed in the third of these papers, controlling it from below. Limited in this way, property will resemble a river that once swamped a whole country-side, but has now been banked within its channel. Even when these expedients have been exhaustively worked out, they will fall far short of that "abolition of property" which is the crude expression of Socialism. There is a certain measure of property in a state which involves the maximum of individual freedom. Either above or below that Optimum one passes towards slavery. The New Republican is a New Republican, and he tests all things by their

effect upon the evolution of man; he is a Socialist or an Individualist, a Free Trader or a Protectionist, a Republican or a Democrat just so far, and only so far, as these various principles of public policy subserve his greater end.

This crude sketch of a possible scheme of honour and privilege, and of an approximation towards the socialization of property will, at any rate, show that in this matter, as in the matter of political control, the alternative of the British system or the American system does not exhaust human possibilities. There is also the Twentieth Century System, which we New Republicans have to discover and discuss and bring to the test of experience. And for the sake of the education of our children, which is the cardinal business of our lives, we must refuse all convenient legal fictions and underhand ways, and see to it that the system is as true to the reality of life and to right and justice as we can, in our light and generation, make it. The child must learn not only from preacher and parent and book, but from the whole frame and order of life about it, that truth and sound living and service are the only trustworthy ways to either honour or power, and that, save for the unavoidable accidents of life, they are very certain ways. And then he will have a fair chance to grow up neither a smart and hustling cheat — for the American at his worst is no more and no less than that — nor a sluggish disingenuous snob — as the Briton too often becomes — but a proud, ambitious, clean-handed, and capable man.

VIII. THE CULTIVATION OF THE IMAGINATION

§ 1

In the closing years of the school period comes the dawn of the process of adolescence, and the simple egotism, the egotistical affections of the child begin to be troubled by new interests, new vague impulses, and presently by a flood of as yet formless emotions. The race, the species, is claiming the individual, endeavouring to secure the individual for its greater ends. In the space of a few years the almost sexless boy and girl have become consciously sexual, are troubled by the still mysterious possibilities of love, are stirred to discontent and adventure, are reaching out imaginatively or actively towards what is at last the recommencement of things, the essential fact in the perennial reshaping of the order of the world. This is indeed something of a second birth. At its beginning the child we have known begins to recede, the new individuality gathers itself together with a sort of shy jealousy, and withdraws from the confident intimacy of childhood into a secret seclusion; all parents know of that loss; at its end we have an adult, formed and determinate, for whom indeed the drama and conflict of life is still only beginning, but who is, nevertheless, in a very serious sense finished and made. The quaint, lovable, larval human being has passed then into the full imago, before whom there is no further change in kind save age and decay.

This development of the sexual being, of personal dreams, and the adult imagination is already commencing in the early teens. It goes on through all the later phases of the educational process, and it ends, or, rather, it is transformed by insensible degrees into the personal realities of adult life.

Now this second birth within the body of the first differs in many fundamental aspects from that first. The first birth and the body abound in inevitable things; for example, features, gestures aptitudes, complexions, and colours, are inherited beyond any power of perversion; but the second birth is the unfolding not of shaped and

settled things but of possibilities, of extraordinarily plastic mental faculties. No doubt there are in each developing individual dispositions towards this or that — tendencies, a bias in the texture this way or that — but the form of it all is extraordinarily a matter of suggestion and the influence of deliberate and accidental moulding forces. The universal Will to live is there, peeping out at first in little curiosities, inquiries, sudden disgusts, sudden fancies, the stumbling, slow realization that for this in a mysteriously predominant way we live, and growing stronger, growing presently, in the great multitude of cases, to passionate preferences and powerful desires. This flow of sex comes like a great river athwart the plain of our personal and egoistic schemes, a great river with its rapids, with its deep and silent places, a river of uncertain droughts, a river of overwhelming floods, a river no one who would escape drowning may afford to ignore. Moreover, it is the very axis and creator of our world valley, the source of all our power in life, and the irrigator of all things. In the microcosm of each individual, as in the microcosm of the race, this flood is a cardinal problem.

And from its very nature this is a discussion of especial difficulty, because it touches all of us — except for a few peculiar souls — so intimately and so disturbingly. I had purposed to call this paper "Sex and the Imagination," and then I had a sudden vision of the thing that happens. The vision presented a casual reader seated in a library, turning over books and magazines and casting much excellent wisdom aside, and then suddenly, as it were, waking up at that title, arrested, displaying a furtive alertness, reading, flushed and eager, nosing through the article. That in a vignette is the trouble in all this discussion. Were we angels — ! But we are not angels; we are all involved. If we are young we are deep in it, whether we would have it so or not; if we are old, even if we are quite old, our memories still stretch out, living sensitive threads from our tender vanity to the great trouble. Detachment is impossible. The nearest we can get to detachment is to recognize that.

About this question the tragi-comic web of human absurdity thickens to its closest. When has there ever been a lucid view or ever will be of this great business? Here is the common madness of our species, here is all a tissue of fine unreasonableness — to which, no

doubt, we are in the present paper infinitesimally adding. One has a vision of preposterous proceedings; great, fat, wheezing, strigilated Roman emperors, neat Parisian gentlemen of the latest cult, the good Saint Anthony rolling on his thorns, and the piously obscene Durtal undergoing his expiatory temptations, Mahomet and Brigham Young receiving supplementary revelations, grim men babbling secrets to schoolgirls, enamoured errand boys, amorous old women, debauchees dreaming themselves thoroughly sensible men and going about their queer proceedings with insane self-satisfaction, beautiful witless young persons dressed in the most amazing things, all down the vista of history — a Vision of Fair Women — looking their conscious queenliest, sentimentalists crawling over every aspect and leaving tracks like snails, flushed young blockheads telling the world "all about women," intrigue, folly — you have as much of it as one pen may condense in old Burton's Anatomy — and through it all a vast multitude of decent, respectable bodies pretending to have quite solved the problem — until one day, almost shockingly, you get their secret from a careless something glancing out of the eyes. Most preposterous of all for some reason is a figure — one is maliciously disposed to present it as feminine and a little unattractive, goloshed for preference, and saying in a voice of cultivated flatness, "Why cannot we be perfectly plain and sensible, and speak quite frankly about this matter?" The answer to which one conceives, would be near the last conclusions of Philosophy.

So much seethes about the plain discussion of the question of sexual institutions. One echoes the intelligent inquiry of that quite imaginary, libellously conceived lady in goloshes with a smile and a sigh. As well might she ask, "Why shouldn't I keep my sandwiches in the Ark of the Covenant? There's room!" "Of course there's room," one answers, "but — As things are, Madam, it is inadvisable to try. You see — for one thing — people are so peculiar. The quantity of loose stones in this neighbourhood."

The predominant feeling about the discussion of these things is, to speak frankly, Fear. We know, very many of us, that our present state has many evil aspects, seems unjust and wasteful of human happiness, is full of secret and horrible dangers, abounding in cruelties and painful things; that our system of sanctions and

prohibitions is wickedly venial, pressing far more gravely on the poor than on the rich, and that it is enormously sapped by sentimentalities of various sorts and undermined and qualified by secret cults; it is a clogged and an ill-made and dishonest machine, but we have a dread, in part instinctive, in part, no doubt, the suggestion of our upbringing and atmosphere, of any rash alterations, of any really free examination of its constitution. We are not sure or satisfied where that process of examination may not take us; many more people can take machines to pieces than can put them together again. Mr. Grant Allen used to call our current prohibitions Taboos. Well, the fact is, in these matters there is something that is probably an instinct, a deeply felt necessity for Taboos. We know perhaps that our Taboos were not devised on absolutely reasonable grounds, but we are afraid of just how many may not collapse before a purely reasonable inquiry. We are afraid of thinking quite freely even in private. We doubt whether it is wise to begin, though only in the study and alone. "Why should we — ? Why should we not — ?" And the thought of a public discussion without limitations by a hasty myriad untrained to think, does, indeed, raise an image of consequences best conveyed perhaps by that fine indefinite phrase, "A Moral Chaos." These people who are for the free, frank, and open discussion assume so much; they either intend a sham with foregone conclusions, or they have not thought of all sorts of things inherent in the natural silliness of contemporary man.

On the whole I think a man or woman who is no longer a fabric of pure emotion may, if there is indeed the passion for truth and the clear sight of things to justify research, venture upon this sinister seeming wilderness of speculation, and I think, too, it is very probable the courageous persistent explorer will end at last not so very remote from the starting-point, but above it, as it were, on a crest that will give a wider view, reaching over many things that now confine the lower vision. But these are perilous paths, it must always be remembered. This is no public playground. One may distrust the conventional code, and one may leave it in thought, long before one is justified in leaving it either in expressed opinion or in act. We are social animals; we cannot live alone; manifestly from the nature of the question, here, at any rate, we must associate and group. For all

who find the accepted righteousness not good enough or clear enough for them, there is the chance of an ironical destiny. We must look well to our company, as we come out of the city of the common practice and kick its dust from our superior soles. There is an abominable riff-raff gone into those thickets for purposes quite other than the discovery of the right thing to do, for quite other motives than our high intellectual desire. There are ugly rebels and born rascals, cheats by instinct, and liars to women, swinish unbelievers who would compromise us with their erratic pursuit of a miscellaneous collection of strange fancies and betray us callously at last. Because a man does not find the law pure justice, that is no reason why he should fake his gold to a thieves' kitchen; because he does not think the city a sanitary place, why he should pitch his tent on a dust-heap amidst pariah dogs. Because we criticize the old limitations that does not bind us to the creed of unfettered liberty. I very much doubt if, when at last the days for the sane complete discussion of our sexual problems come, it will give us anything at all in the way of "Liberty," as most people understand that word. In the place of the rusty old manacles, the chain and shot, the iron yoke, cruel, ill-fitting, violent implements from which it was yet possible to wriggle and escape to outlawry, it may be the world will discover only a completer restriction, will develop a scheme of neat gyves, light but efficient, beautifully adaptable to the wrists and ankles, never chafing, never oppressing, slipped on and worn until at last, like the mask of the Happy Hypocrite, they mould the wearer to their own identity. But for all that — gyves!

Let us glance for a moment or so now, in the most tentative fashion, at some of the data for this inquiry, and then revert from this excursion into general theory to our more immediate business, to the manner in which our civilized community at present effects the emotional initiation of youth.

The intellectual trouble in the matter, as it presents itself to me, comes in upon this, that the question does not lie in one plane. So many discussions ignore this fact, and deal with it on one plane only. For example, we may take the whole business on the plane of the medical man, ignoring all other considerations. On that plane it would probably be almost easy to reason out a working system. It

never has been done by the medical profession, as a whole, which is fairly understandable, or by any group of medical men, which is the more surprising, but it would be an extremely interesting thing to have done and a material contribution to the sane discussion of this problem. It would not solve it but it would illuminate certain aspects. Let the mere physiological problem be taken. We want healthy children and the best we can get. Let the medical man devise his scheme primarily for that. Understand we are shutting our eyes to every other consideration but physical or quasi-physical ones. Imagine the thing done, for example, by a Mr. Francis Galton, who had an absolutely open mind upon all other questions. Some form of polygamy, marriage of the most transient description, with reproduction barred to specified types, would probably come from such a speculation. But, in addition, a number of people who can have only a few children or none are, nevertheless, not adapted physiologically for celibacy. Conceive the medical man working that problem out upon purely materialistic lines and with an eye to all physiological and pathological peculiarities. The Tasmanians (now extinct) seem to have been somewhere near the probable result.

Then let us take one step up to a second stage of consideration, remaining still materialistic, and with the medical man still as our only guide. We want the children to grow up healthy; we want them to be taken care of. This means homes, homes of some sort. That may not abolish polygamy, but it will qualify it, it will certainly abolish any approach to promiscuity that was possible at the lowest stage, it will enhance the importance of motherhood and impose a number of limits upon the sexual freedoms of men and women. People who have become parents, at any rate, must be tied to the children and one another. We come at once to much more definite marriage, to an organized family of some sort, be it only Plato's state community or something after the Oneida pattern, but with at least a system of guarantees and responsibilities. Let us add that we want the children to go through a serious educational process, and we find at once still further limitations coming in. We discover the necessity of deferring experience, of pushing back adolescence, of avoiding precocious stimulation with its consequent arrest of growth. We are already face to face with an enlarged case for decency, for a system

of suppressions and of complicated Taboos.

Directly we let our thoughts pass out of this physical plane and rise so high as to consider the concurrent emotions — and I suppose to a large number of people these are at least as important as the physical aspects — we come to pride, we come to preference and jealousy, and so soon as we bring these to bear upon our physical scheme, crumpling and fissures begin. The complications have multiplied enormously. More especially that little trouble of preferences. These emotions we may educate indeed, but not altogether. Neither pride nor preference nor jealousy are to be tampered with lightly. We are making men, we are not planning a society of regulated slaves; we want fine upstanding personalities, and we shall not get them if we break them down to obedience in this particular — for the cardinal expression of freedom in the human life is surely this choice of a mate. There is indeed no freedom without this freedom. Our men and women in the future must feel free and responsible. It seems almost instinctive, at least in the youth of the white races, to exercise this power of choice, not simply rebelling when opposition is offered to it, but *wanting to rebel*; it is a socially good thing, and a thing we are justified in protecting if the odds are against it, this passion for making the business one's very own private affair. Our citizens must not be caught and paired; it will never work like that. But in all social contrivances we must see to it that the freedoms we give are real freedoms. Our youths and maidens as they grow up out of the protection of our first taboos, grow into a world very largely in the hands of older people; strong men and experienced women are there before them, and we are justified in any effectual contrivance to save them from being "gobbled up" — against their real instincts. That works — the reflective man will discover — towards whittling the previous polygamy to still smaller proportions. Here, indeed, our present arrangements fail most lamentably; each year sees a hideous sacrifice of girls, mentally scarcely more than children — to our delicacy in discussion. We give freedom, and we do not give adequate knowledge, and we punish inexorably. There are a multitude of women, and not a few men, with lives hopelessly damaged by this blindfold freedom. So many poor girls, so many lads also, do not get a fair chance against the adult

world. Things mend indeed in this respect; as one sign the percentage of illegitimate births in England has almost halved in fifty years, but it is clear we have much to revise before this leakage to perdition of unlucky creatures, for the most part girls no worse on the average, I honestly believe — until our penalties make them so — than other women, ceases. If our age of moral responsibility is high enough, then our age of complete knowledge is too high. But nevertheless, things are better than they were, and promise still to mend. All round we raise the age, the average age at marriage rises, just as, I believe, the average age at misconduct has risen. We may not be approaching a period of universal morality, but we do seem within sight of a time when people will know what they are doing.

That, however, is something of a digression. The intelligent inquirer who has squared his initially materialistic system of morals with the problems arising out of the necessity of sustaining pride and preference, is then invited to explore an adjacent thicket of this tortuous subject. It is, we hold, of supreme importance in our state to sustain in all our citizens, women as well as men, a sense of personal independence and responsibility. Particularly is this the case with mothers. An illiterate mother means a backward child, a downtrodden mother bears a dishonest man, an unwilling mother may even hate her children. Slaves and brutes are the sexes where women are slaves. The line of thought we are following out in these papers necessarily attaches distinctive importance to the woman as mother. Our system of morals, therefore, has to make it worth while and honourable to be a mother; it is particularly undesirable that it should be held to be right for a woman of exceptional charm or exceptional cleverness to evade motherhood, unless, perhaps, to become a teacher. A woman evading her high calling, must not be conceded the same claim upon men's toil and service as the mother-woman; more particularly Lady Greensleeves must not flaunt it over the housewife. And here also comes the question of the quality of jealousy, whether being wife of a man and mother of his children does not almost necessarily give a woman a feeling of exclusive possession in him, and whether, therefore, if we are earnest in our determination not to debase her, our last shred of polygamy does not vanish. From first to last, of course, it has been assumed that a

prolific polygamy alone can be intended, for long before we have plumbed the bottom of the human heart we shall know enough to imagine what the ugly and pointless consequences of permitting sterile polygamy must be.

Then into all this tangle, whether as a light or an added confusion it is hard to say, comes the fact that while we are ever apt to talk of what "a woman" feels and what "a man" will do, and so contrive our code, there is, indeed, no such woman and no such man, but a vast variety of temperaments and dispositions, monadic, dyadic, and polymeric souls, and this sort of heart and brain and that. It is only the young fool and the brooding mattoid who believe in a special separate science of "women," there are all sorts of people, and some of each sort are women and some are men. With every stage in educational development people become more varied, or, at least, more conscious of their variety, more sensitively insistent upon the claim of their individualities over any general rules. Among the peasants of a countryside one may hope to order homogeneous lives, but not among the people of the coming state. It is well to sustain a home, it is noble to be a good mother, and splendid to bear children well and train them well, but we shall get no valid rules until we see clearly that life has other ways by which the future may be served. There are laws to be made and altered, there are roads and bridges to be built, figuratively and really; there is not only a succession of flesh and blood but of thought that is going on for ever. To write a fruitful book or improve a widely used machine is just as much paternity as begetting a son.

The last temporary raft of a logical moral code goes to pieces at this, and its separated spars float here and there. So I will confess they float at present in my mind. I have no System — I wish I had — and I never encountered a system or any universal doctrine of sexual conduct that did not seem to me to be reached by clinging tight to one or two of these dissevered spars and letting the rest drift disregarded, making a law for A, B, and C, and pretending that E and F are out of the question. That motherhood is a great and noble occupation for a good woman, and not to be lightly undertaken, is a manifest thing, and so also that to beget children and see them full grown in the world is the common triumph of life, as inconsequence

is its common failure. That to live for pleasure is not only wickedness but folly, seems easy to admit, and equally foolish, as Saint Paul has intimated, must it be to waste a life of nervous energy in fighting down beyond a natural minimum our natural desires. That we must pitch our lives just as much as we can in the heroic key, and hem and control mere lasciviousness as it were a sort of leprosy of the soul, seems fairly certain. And all that love-making which involves lies, all sham heroics and shining snares, assuredly must go out of a higher order of social being, for here more than anywhere lying is the poison of life. But between these data there are great interrogative blanks no generalization will fill — cases, situations, temperaments. Each life, it seems to me, in that intelligent, conscious, social state to which the world is coming, must square itself to these things in its own way, and fill in the details of its individual moral code according to its needs. So it seems, at least, to one limited thinker.

To be frank, upon that common ground of decent behaviour, pride and self-respect, health and the heroic habit of thinking, we need for ourselves not so much rules as wisdom, and for others not, indeed, a foolish and indiscriminate toleration but at least patience, arrests of judgment, and the honest endeavour to understand. Now to help the imagination in these judgments, to enlarge and interpret experience, is most certainly one of the functions of literature. A good biography may give facts of infinite suggestion, and the great multitude of novels at present are, in fact, experiments in the science of this central field of human action, experiments in the "way of looking at" various cases and situations. They may be very misleading experiments, it is true, done with adulterated substances, dangerous chemicals, dirty flasks and unsound balances; but that is a question of their quality and not of their nature, they are experiments for all that. A good novel may become a very potent and convincing experiment indeed. Books in these matters are often so much quieter and cooler as counsellors than friends. And there, in truth, is my whole mind in this matter.

Meanwhile, as we work each one to solve his own problems, the young people are growing up about us.

§ 2

How do the young people arrive at knowledge and at their interpretation of these things? Let us for a few moments at least, put pretence and claptrap aside, and recall our own youth. Let us recognize that this complex initiation is always a very shy and secret process, beyond the range of parent and guardian. The prying type of schoolmaster or schoolmistress only drives the thing deeper, and, at the worst, blunders with a hideous suggestiveness. It is almost an instinct, a part of the natural modesty of the growing young, to hide all that is fermenting in the mind from authoritative older people. It would not be difficult to find a biological reason for that. The growing mind advances slowly, intermittently, with long pauses and sudden panics, that is the law of its progress; it feels its way through three main agencies, firstly, observation, secondly, tentative, confidential talk with unauthoritative and trusted friends, and thirdly, books. In the present epoch observation declines relatively to books; books and pictures, these dumb impersonal initiators, play a larger and a larger part in this great awakening. Perhaps for all but the children of the urban poor, the furtive talk also declines and is delayed; a most desirable thing in a civilizing process that finds great advantage in putting off adolescence and prolonging the average life.

Now the furtive talk is largely beyond our control, only by improving the general texture of our communal life can we effectually improve the quality of that. But we may bear in mind that factor of observation, and give it a casting vote in any decision upon public decency. That is all too often forgotten. Before Broadbeam, the popular humorist, for example, flashes his glittering rapier upon the County Council for suppressing some vulgar obscenity in the music-halls, or tickles the ribs of a Vigilance Association for its care of our hoardings, he should do his best to imagine the mental process of some nice boy or girl he knows, “taking it in.” To come outright to the essential matter of this paper, we are all too careless of the quality of the stuff that reaches the eyes and ears of our children. It is not that the stuff is knowledge, but that it is knowledge in the basest and vulgarest colourings, knowledge without the antiseptic quality of heroic interpretation, debased, suggestive, diseased and contagious

knowledge.

How the sexual consciousness of a great proportion of our young people is being awakened, the curious reader may see for himself if he will expend a few pennies weekly for a month or so upon the halfpenny or penny "comic" papers which are bought so eagerly by boys. They begin upon the facts of sex as affairs of nodding and winking, of artful innuendo and scuffles in the dark. The earnest efforts of Broadbeam's minor kindred to knock the nonsense out of even younger people may be heard at almost any pantomime. The Lord Chamberlain's attempts to stem the tide amaze the English Judges. No scheme for making the best of human lives can ignore this system of influences.

What could be done in a sanely ordered state to suppress this sort of thing?

There immediately arises the question whether we are to limit art and literature to the sphere permissible to the growing youth and "young person." So far as shop windows, bookstalls, and hoardings go, so far as all general publicity goes, I would submit the answer is Yes. I am on the side of the Puritans here, unhesitatingly. But our adults must not walk in mental leading strings, and were this world an adult world I doubt if there is anything I would not regard as fit to print and publish. But cannot we contrive that our adult literature shall be as free as air while the literature and art of the young is sanely expurgated?

There is in this matter a conceivable way, and as it is the principal business of these papers to point out and discuss such ways, it may be given here. It will be put, as for the sake of compact suggestion so much of these papers is put, in the form of a concrete suggestion, a sample suggestion as it were. This way, then, is to make a definition of what is undesirable matter for the minds of young people, and to make that cover as much suggestive indecency and coarseness as possible, to cover everything, indeed, that is not *virginibus puerisque*, and to call this matter by some reasonably inoffensive adjective, "adult," for example. One might speak of "adult" art, "adult" literature, and "adult" science, and the report of all proceedings under certain specified laws could be declared "adult" matter. In the old times there was an excellent system of putting

“adult” matter into Latin, and for many reasons one regrets that Latin. But there is a rough practical equivalent to putting “adult” matter into Latin even now. It depends upon the fact that very few young people of the age we wish to protect, unless they are the children of the imbecile rich, have the spending of large sums of money. Consequently, it is only necessary to state a high minimum price for periodicals and books containing “adult” matter or “adult” illustrations, and to prosecute everything below that limit, in order to shut the flood-gates upon any torrent of over-stimulating and debasing suggestions there may be flowing now. It should be more clearly recognized in our prosecutions for obscenity, for example, that the gravity of the offence is entirely dependent upon the accessibility of the offensive matter to the young. The application of the same method to the music-hall, the lecture-theatre, and the shelves of the public library, and to several other sources of suggestion would not be impossible. If the manager of a theatre saw fit to produce “adult” matter without excluding people under the age of eighteen, let us say, he would have to take his chance, and it would be a good one, of a prosecution. This latter expedient is less novel than the former, and it finds a sort of precedent in the legislative restriction of the sale of drink to children and the protection of children’s morals under specific unfavourable circumstances.

There is already a pretty lively sense in our English-speaking communities of the particular respect due to the young, and it is probable that those who publish these suggestive and stimulating prints do not fully realize the new fact in our social body, that the whole mass of the young now not only read but buy reading matter. The last thirty or forty years have established absolutely new relations for our children in this direction. Legislation against free art and free writing is, and one hopes always will be, intensely repugnant to our peoples. But legislation which laid stress not on the indecorum but on the accessibility to the young, which hammered with every clause upon that note, is an altogether different matter. We want to make the pantomime writer, the proprietor of the penny “comic,” the billsticker, and the music-hall artist extremely careful, punctiliously clean, but we do not want, for example, to pester Mr.

Thomas Hardy.

Yet there is danger in all this. The suppression of premature and base suggestions must not overleap itself and suppress either mature thought (which has been given its hemlock not once but many times on this particular pretext) or the destruction of necessary common knowledge. If we begin to hunt for suggestion and indecency it may be urged we shall end by driving all these things underground. Youth comes to adult life now between two dangers, vice, which has always threatened it, and morbid virtue, which would turn the very heart of life to ugliness and shame. How are we, or to come closer to the point, how is the average juryman going to distinguish between these three things; between advisable knowledge and corruptingly presented knowledge, and unnecessary and undesirable knowledge? In practice, under the laws I have sketched, it is quite probable the evil would flourish extremely, and necessary information would be ruthlessly suppressed. Many of our present laws and provisions for public decency do work in that manner. The errand-boy may not look at the Venus de Medici, but he can cram his mind with the lore of how "nobs" run after ballet girls, and why Lady X locked the door. One can only plead here, as everywhere, no law, no succinct statement can save us without wisdom, a growing general wisdom and conscience, coming into the detailed administration of whatever law the general purpose has made.

Beside our project for law and the state, it is evident there is scope for the individual. Certain people are in a position of exceptional responsibility. The Newsagents, for example, constitute a fairly strong trade organization, and it would be easy for them to think of the boy with a penny just a little more than they do. Unfortunately such instances as we have had of voluntary censorship will qualify the reader's assent to this proposition. Another objection may be urged to this distinction between "adult" and general matter, and that is the possibility that what is marked off and forbidden becomes mysterious and attractive. One has to reckon with that. Everywhere in this field one must go wisely or fail. But what is here proposed is not so much the suppression of information as of a certain manner of presenting information, and our intention is at the most delay, and to give the wholesome aspect first.

Let us leave nothing doubtful upon one point; the suppression of stimulus must not mean the suppression of knowledge. There are things that young people should know, and know fully before they are involved in the central drama of life, in the serious business of love. There should be no horrifying surprises. Sane, clear, matter-of-fact books setting forth the broad facts of health and life, the existence of certain dangers, should come their way. In this matter books, I would insist, have a supreme value. The printed word may be such a quiet counsellor. It is so impersonal. It can have no conceivable personal reaction with the reader. It does not watch its reader's face, it is itself unobtrusively unabashed and safer than any priest. The power of the book, the possible function of the book in the modern state is still but imperfectly understood. It need not be, it ought not, I think, to be, a book specifically on what one calls delicate questions, that would be throwing them up in just the way one does not want them thrown up; it should be a sort of rationalized and not too technical handbook of physiological instruction in the College Library — or at home. Naturally, it would begin with muscular physiology, with digestion, and so on. Other matters would come in their due place and proportion. From first to last it would have all that need be known. There is a natural and right curiosity on these matters, until we chase it underground.

Restriction alone is not half this business. It is inherent in the purpose of things that these young people should awaken sexually, and in some manner and somewhere that awakening must come. To ensure they do not awaken too soon or in a fetid atmosphere among ugly surroundings is not enough. They cannot awaken in a void. An ignorance kept beyond nature may corrupt into ugly secrecies, into morose and sinister seclusions, worse than the evils we have suppressed. Let them awaken as their day comes, in a sweet, large room. The true antiseptic of the soul is not ignorance, but a touch of the heroic in the heart and in the imagination. Pride has saved more men than piety, and even misconduct loses something of its evil if it is conceived upon generous lines. There lurks a capacity for heroic response in all youth, even in contaminated youth. Before five-and-twenty, at any rate, we were all sentimentalists at heart.

And the way to bring out these responses?

Assuredly it is not by sermons on Purity to Men Only and by nasty little pamphlets of pseudo-medical and highly alarming information stuffed into clean young hands [Footnote: See Clouston's *Mental Diseases*, fifth edition, , for insanity caused by these pamphlets; see also *et seq.* for "adolescent" literature.] — ultra "adult" that stuff should be — but in the drum and trumpet style the thing should be done. There is a mass of fine literature to-day wherein love shines clean and noble. There is art telling fine stories. There is a possibility in the Theatre. Probably the average of the theatre-goer is under rather than over twenty-two. Literature, the drama, art; that is the sort of food upon which the young imagination grows stout and tall. There is the literature and art of youth that may or may not be part of the greater literature of life, and upon this mainly we must depend when our children pass from us into these privacies, these dreams and inquiries that will make them men and women. See the right stuff is near them and the wrong stuff as far as possible away, chase cad and quack together, and for the rest, in this matter — *leave them alone.*

IX. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION

When we digressed to the general question of the political, social, and moral atmosphere in which the English-speaking citizen develops, we left the formal education of the average child, whose development threads through these papers and holds them together, at about the age of fifteen and at the end of the process of Schooling. We have now to carry on that development to adult citizenship. It is integral in the New Republican idea that the process of Schooling, which is the common atrium to all public service, should be fairly uniform throughout the social body, that although the average upper-class child may have all the advantages his conceivably better mental inheritance, his better home conditions, and his better paid and less overworked teachers may give him, there shall be no disadvantages imposed upon the child of any class, there shall be no burking of the intellectual education for any purpose whatever. To keep poor wretches in serfdom on the land by depriving them of all but the most rudimentary literary education, as a very considerable element in the new Nature Study Movement certainly intends, is altogether antagonistic to New Republican ideas, and there must be no weeding out of capable and high-minded teachers by filtering them through grotesque and dishonouring religious tests — dishonouring because compulsory, whatever the real faith of the teacher may be. And at the end of the Schooling period there must begin a process of sorting in the mass of the national youth — as far as possible, regardless of their social origins — that will go on throughout life. For the competition of public service must constitute the Battle for Existence in the civilized state. All-round inferiority in school life — failure not simply at this or that or at the total result (which, indeed, may be due very often to the lopsidedness of exceptional gifts) but failure all along the line — is a mark of essential inferiority. A certain proportion of boys and girls will have shown this inferiority, will have done little with any of their chances in or out of school during their school life, and these — when they are poorer-class children —

will very naturally drop out of the educational process at this stage and pass into employment suited to their capacity, employment which should not carry with it any considerable possibility of prolific marriage. A really well-contrived leaving-school examination — and it must be remembered that the theory and science of examinations scarcely exists as yet — an examination which would take account of athletic development and moral influence (let us say provisionally by the vote of fellow-pupils) and which would be so contrived as to make specially high quality in one department as good as all-round worth — could effect this first classification. It would throw out the worst of the duffers and fools and louts all along the social scale. What is to become of the rejected of the upper and wealthy class is, I admit, a difficult problem as things are to-day. At present they carry a loutish ingredient to the public schools, to the Army, to Oxford and Cambridge, and it is open to question whether it would not be well to set aside one public school, one especially costly university, and one gentlemen's regiment of an attractively smart type, into which this mass of expensive slackness might be drained along a channel of specially high fees, low standards, and agreeable social conditions. That, however, is a quite subsidiary question in this discussion. A day may come, as I have already suggested, when it will be considered as reasonable to insist upon a minimum mental qualification for the administration of property as for any other form of power in the state. Pride and their many advantages — of which one is quite conceivably an average essential superiority — will probably ensure a satisfactory result from the Schooling process in the case of a much greater proportion of better-class than of lower-class boys and girls. [Footnote: In most big public schools, I am told, there is a system of superannuation about sixteen, but I know nothing of the provision for those who are weeded out.]

From the mass who show a satisfactory result at the end of the Schooling process, the functional manhood and womanhood of our peoples have to be developed, and we have now to discuss the nature of the second phase of education, the phase that should be the mental parallel and accompaniment of physical adolescence in all the citizens who are to count for strength in the state. There is a break in the whole development of the human being at this age, and it may

very well be paralleled by a break in methods and subjects of instruction. In Great Britain, in the case of the wealthier classes, schooling and puerile discipline is prolonged altogether too far, largely through the gross incapacity of our secondary teachers. These men are unable, boring away day after day, week after week, year after year, with vain repetitions, imbecile breaks and new beginnings, through all the vast period from eleven or twelve until twenty, to achieve that mastery of Latin and Greek which was once the necessary preliminary to education, and which has become at last, through the secular decline in scholastic energy and capacity due to the withdrawal of interest in these studies, the unattainable educational ideal. These classical pedagogues, however, carry the thing up to three or four and twenty in the Universities — though it is inconceivable that any language spoken since the antediluvian age of leisure, can need more than ten years to learn — and if they could keep the men until forty or fifty they would still be fumbling away at the keys to the room that was ransacked long ago. But with educated men as teachers and practical handbooks to help, and practical examiners to guide them, there is no reason whatever why the great mass of the linguistic training of the citizen, in the use of his own and any other necessary language, should not be done for good and all by fourteen, why he should not have a fairly complete mastery of form and quantity through mathematical training and drawing, and why the way should not be clear and immediate for the development of that adult mental edifice of which this is the foundation.

By fourteen the power of abstract reasoning and of an analytical treatment of things is in existence, the learner is now less to be moulded and more to be guided than he was. We want now to give this mind we have established, the most stimulating and invigorating training we can, we want to give it a sane coherent view of our knowledge of the universe in relation to itself, and we want to equip it for its own special work in the world. How, on the basis of the Schooling we have predicated, are these ends to be attained?

Now let us first have it perfectly clear that this second stage in development lies no more completely within the idea of College than the former lay completely within the idea of School. In the general discussion of these things we are constantly faced by the parallel

error to that we have tried to dissipate in regard to schools, the error that the Professor and his Lecture and (in the case of experimental sciences) his Laboratory make, or can make, the man, just precisely in the same way that the Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress is supposed to be omnipotent in the education of the boy or girl. And, unhappily, the Professor, unless he is a man of quite exceptional mental power for a Professor, shares this groundless opinion. The Schoolmaster is under-educated in regard to his work, and incapable of doing it neatly; the Professor is too often over-specialized and incapable of forming an intelligent, modest idea of his place in education; and the same consequence flows from the defect of either, an attempt to use an improperly large portion of the learner's time and energy. Over-direction, and what one may call intellectual sectarianism, are faults from which few College courses are free to-day. The Professor stands between his students and books, he says in lectures in his own way what had far better be left for other men's books to tell, he teaches his beliefs without a court of appeal. Students are kept writing up their notes of his not very brilliant impromptus, and familiarizing themselves with his mental constitution instead of the subject of study. They get no training in the use of books as sources of knowledge and ideas, albeit such a training is one of the most necessary of all acquisitions for an efficient citizen, and whatever discussion the modern student indulges in is all too often treated rather as presumption to be discouraged than as the most necessary and hopeful of mental processes. Our Universities and Colleges are still but imperfectly aware of the recent invention of the Printed Book; and its intelligent use in this stage of education has made little or no headway against their venerable traditions. That things are only understood by being turned over in the mind and looked at from various points of view is, of course, altogether too modern a conception for our educationists. At the London Royal College of Science, for example, which is an exceptionally new and efficient College, there is no properly organized escape from the orthodoxy of the lecture-theatre, no circulating library whatever available to the students, no library, that is, which will ensure a copious supply and exchange of the best books on each subject, and, consequently, even to look up an original paper that has been quoted or discussed,

involves an expenditure of time that is practically prohibitive of the thing as a general practice. [Footnote: There are three very fine libraries in the adjacent South Kensington Museum, especially available to students, but, like almost all existing libraries, they are managed in most respects on lines conceived when a copy of a book was an almost unique thing made specially by the copyist's hand. However much a book is in demand, however cheap its price of publication may be, no library in England, unless it is a modern subscription library, ever gets duplicate copies. This is the cause of the dearness of serious books; they are bought as rarities, and have to be sold in the same spirit. But when libraries learn to buy by the dozen and the hundred, there is no reason why the sort of book now published at 10s. 6d. should not be sold at a shilling from the beginning.] The Professors, being busy and important men, lecture from their particular standpoints, and having lectured, bolt; there is no provision whatever for the intelligent discussion of knotty points, and the only way to get it is to buttonhole a demonstrator and induce him to neglect his task of supervising prescribed "practical" work in favour of educational talk. Let us, therefore, in view of this state of affairs, deal with the general question how a branch of thought and knowledge may be most beneficially studied under modern conditions, before discussing the more particular question what subjects should or should not be undertaken.

Now the full statement not only of what is known of a subject, but of its difficulties, dark places, and conflicting aspects should be luminously set forth in the College text-books, large, well-written, well-illustrated books by one or several hands, continually revised and kept abreast of the advance of knowledge by capable and critical-minded young men. Such books are essential and cardinal in proper modern teaching. The country may be speckled with universities until they are as thick as public-houses, and each may be provided with its score or so of little lecturers, and if it does not possess one or more good general text-books in each principal subject then all this simply means that a great number of inadequate, infertile little text-books are being dictated, one by each of these lecturers. Not the course of lectures, but the sound, full text-book should be the basis of College instruction, and this should be

supplemented by a greater or lesser number of more or less controversial pamphlets or books, criticising, expanding or correcting its matter or putting things in a different and profitable way. This text-book should be paralleled in the case of experimental science by a hand-book of illustrative and explanatory laboratory work. Portions of the book could be set for preparation at each stage in the course with appropriate experiments, students could submit difficulties in writing to be dealt with by the Professor in conversational lectures, and the reading of the students could be checked by periodic examinations upon cardinal parts, and supplemented, if these examinations showed it to be necessary, by dissertations upon special issues of difficulty. Upon the matters that were distinctively his "subject," or upon his points of disagreement with the general issues of the book, the Professor might lecture in the accepted way. This is surely the proper method of work for adolescent students in any subject, in philology just as much as in comparative anatomy, and in history just as much as in economics. The cheapening of printing, paper, and, above all, of illustration has done away with the last excuse for the vocal course of instruction and the lecturer's diagrams. But it has not done away with them.

It is one of the most curious of human phenomena, this persistence of tradition against what one might have imagined the most destructive facts, and in no connection is this aspect more remarkable than in all that concerns the higher stages of education. One might think that somewhere in the seventeenth century it would have been recognized at the Seats of Learning that thought and knowledge were progressive things, and that a periodic revision of courses and syllabuses, a periodic recasting of work and scope, a re-arrangement of chairs and of the appliances of the faculties, was as necessary to the continued healthy existence of a University as periodic meals and sleep and exercise are necessary to a man. But even today we are founding Universities without any provision for this necessary change, and the chances are that in a century or so they will present just as much backwardness and illiteracy as do the ordinary graduation organizations of Oxford and Cambridge today, that a hundred years from now the past graduates of ripe old Birmingham, full of spite against newfangled things "no fellow can

understand," will be crowding up to vote against the substitution of some more modern subject for "Huxley"— "Huxley" they will call the subject, and not Comparative Anatomy, on the model of "Euclid" — or for the retention of compulsory "Commercial Geography of the Nineteenth Century," or "Longhand Bookkeeping" in the Little Go. (And should any germinating noble founder read these pages I would implore him with all the earnestness that is possible in printed matter, to provide that every fifty years, let us say, the whole of his prospective foundation shall go into solution, shall re-apportion its funds and reorganize the entire mechanism of its work.)

The idea that a text-book should be regularly reset and reprinted is still quite foreign to the Professorial mind, as, indeed, is the idea that the care of text-books and publications is a University function at all. No one is startled by a proposal to apply £800 or £1000 a year to a new chair in any subject, but to apply that sum yearly as a standing charge to the revision and perfection of a specific text-book would seem, even today, quite fantastically extravagant to most University men. Yet what could be more obviously helpful to sound and thorough teaching than for a University, or a group of Universities, to sustain a Professor in each of the chief subjects of instruction, whose business would be neither teaching as it is now understood, nor research, but the critical and exhaustive editing of the College textbook of his subject, a text-book which would stand in type at the University Press, which would be revised annually and reprinted annually, primarily for the use of the matriculated students of the University and incidentally for publication. His business would be not only to bring the work up to date and parallel with all the newest published research and to invite and consider proposals of contributions and footnotes from men with new views and new matter, but also to substitute for obscure passages fuller and more lucid expositions, to cut down or relegate to smaller type passages of diminishing importance and to introduce fresh and more efficient illustrations, and his work would be carried on in consultation with the General Editor of the University Press who would also be a specialist in modern printing and book-making, and who would be constantly taking up, trying, and adopting fresh devices of arrangement, and newer, better, and cheaper methods of printing and

illustration. It would not merely raise the general efficiency of the College work of adolescents very greatly to have this series of textbooks living and growing in each subject at one or (better) at several Universities or grouped Universities, but in each subject the periodic change in these books would afford a most valuable corrective to the influence of specialized work by keeping the specialist worker easily in touch with the current presentation of his science as a whole.

The text-book, however good, and the lecturer, however able, are only one of two necessary factors in College work, the reciprocal element is the students' activity. Unless the students are actively engaged not simply in taking in what they are told, but in rearranging it, turning it over, trying and testing it, they are doing little good. We recognize this quite abundantly in the laboratory nowadays, but we neglect it enormously in the more theoretical study of a subject. The facts of a subject if it is a science may be got at in the most thorough way by handling in the laboratory, but the ideas of a subject must be handled in discussion, reproduction and dispute. Examinations, examinations by teachers who understand this very fine art, in which the student is obliged to restate, apply, and use the principles of his subject, are of the utmost value in keeping the mind active and not simply receptive. They are just as good and as vitally necessary as examination papers which merely demand definitions and lists and bald facts are bad. And then there might be discussions — if the Professor were clever enough to conduct them. If the students of a class could be induced to submit propositions for discussion, from which a topic could be selected, and could then be made to prepare for a disputation to which all would have to contribute, with the Professor as a controlling influence in the chair to check facts and logic and to conclude, it would have the value of a dozen lectures. But Professors who are under the burthen of perhaps ninety or a hundred lectures a year cannot be expected to do anything of this sort. Directed reading, conferences on knotty points, special lectures followed by the questioning of the lecturer, discussions upon matters of opinion, laboratory work when needful, fairly frequent test examinations, and a final examination for places, are the proper ingredients of a good modern College course, and in the necessity of

leaving the Professor's energies free for the direction of all this really educational work, lies another reason for that complete, explicit, well-arranged text-book upon which I am insisting.

Coming back now from these general propositions about books and teaching to our mass of young people about fifteen years old, our adolescent nation, who have accomplished their Schooling and are ready for the College phase, we have to consider what subjects they are to be taught, and how far they are to go with these subjects. Whether they are to give all or part of their time to these College studies, whether they are going to pursue them in evening classes or before breakfast in the morning or during the livelong day is a question of secondary conveniences that may very well be disregarded here. We are concerned with the general architecture now, and not with the tactical necessities of the clerk of the works. [Footnote: But I may perhaps point out here how integral to a sane man-making scheme is the raising of the minimum age at which children may work. A day will come, I hope, when even the partial employment of children under fifteen will be prohibited, and when, as Mr. Sidney Webb suggested some time ago, employment up to the age of twenty-one will be limited to so few hours a week — his suggestion was thirty — as to leave a broad margin for the more or less compulsory college work and physical training that are becoming essential to the modern citizen.]

We need waste little time nowadays, I submit, in disposing of Encyclopaedic conceptions of College Education, conceptions that played a part in almost all educational schemes — Bentham's stupendous Chrestomathia is the fearful example — before the middle nineteenth century. We are all agreed in theory, at any rate, that to know one subject or group of subjects exhaustively is far better than a universal smattering, that the ideal of education is more particularly "all about something" with "something about everything" in a very subordinate place. The fact remains that the normal curriculum of our higher schools and colleges is a pointless non-educational miscellany, and the average graduate in Arts knows something, but not enough, of science, mathematics, Latin, Greek, literature, and history; he has paid tribute to several conflicting schemes of education, and is a credit to none. We have to get rid of

this state of affairs, and we have to provide (i) a substantial mental training which shall lead at last to a broad and comprehensive view of things, and which shall be a training in generalization, abstraction, and the examination of evidence, stimulating and disciplining the imagination and developing the habit of patient, sustained, enterprising and thorough work, and (ii) we have to add a general culture, a circle of ideas about moral, aesthetic, and social matters that shall form a common basis for the social and intellectual life of the community. The former of these two elements must at some stage develop — after two or five or seven or some such period of years, which may be different in different cases — into the special training for the definite function of the individual in the social body, whether as engineer, business manager, doctor, priest, journalist, public administrator, professional soldier, or what not. And before we ask what must constitute (i) it may be well to define the relation between the first and the second section of the College stage of education.

It is (i) that will constitute the essential *work* of the College, which will be the especial concern of the Professorial staff, which will "count" in examinations, and I conceive it as occupying typically four full working days in the week, four good, hard-driving days, and no more, of the students' time. The remaining three, so far as they are not engaged by physical exercise, military training, and mere amusement, must be given to (ii), which I imagine an altogether more general, discursive, various, and spontaneous series of activities. To put the thing briefly, with the use of a convenient slang word (i), is "grind," and (ii) is general culture, elements that are altogether too greatly confused in adolescent education. A large number of people will consider it right and proper that (ii) on the seventh day of the week should become devotional exercise or religious thought and discussion. I would submit that under (ii) there should be formally recognized certain extremely valuable educational influences that are at present too often regarded as irregular or improper invasions of school and college work, the collegiate debating society, for example, private reading, experimental science outside the curriculum, and essays in various arts. It should be possible to provide a certain definite number of hours weekly in which the student should be required merely to show

that he was doing something of a developmental kind, he would have his choice between the Library — every College ought to have a good and not too priggishly conceived Library, in which he might either read or write — or the music master, the debating society, the museum, the art studio, the dramatic society, or any concern of the sort that the College authorities had satisfactory reason for supposing to be alive and efficient. In addition (ii) should include certain minor but necessary studies not included in (i), but pursued for all that with a certain insistence, taught or directed, and controlled perhaps by examinations. If, for example, the acquisition of a foreign language was a part of the preliminary schooling, it could be kept alive by a more fastidious study in the higher grade. For the making of the good, all-round, average citizen (i) will be the essential educational factor, but for the boy or girl with a dash of genius (ii) will rise from the level of culture to that of a great opportunity.

What subject or group of subjects is to constitute (i)? There are at least three, and quite probably beyond the very limited range of my knowledge there are other, arrangements of studies that can be contrived to supply this essential substantial part of the College course. Each suffices completely, and I would hesitate to express any preference for one or the other. Each has its special direction towards certain sorts of adult function, and for that reason it may be suggested that the secondary education of an English-speaking country might very well afford all three (or more) types of secondary course. The small schools might specialize upon the type locally most desirable, the larger might group its triplicate (or quadruplicate) system of sustained and serious courses about a common Library and the common arrangements for Section ii. of the College scheme.

The first of these possible College courses, and the one most likely to be useful and fruitful for the mass of the male population in a modern community, is an expansion of the Physics of the Schooling stage. It may be very conveniently spoken of as the Natural Philosophy, course. Its backbone will be an interlocking arrangement of Mathematics, Physics, and the principles of Chemistry, and it will take up as illustrative and mind-expanding exercises, Astronomy, Geography, and Geology conceived as a general history of the Earth. Holding the whole together will be the

theory of the Conservation of Energy in its countless aspects and a speculative discussion of the constitution of matter. A certain minimum of Historical and Political reading and of general "Library" would be insisted upon in Section ii. This could be made a quite noble and spacious course of instruction extending over from three to five years, from fourteen or fifteen up to eighteen or twenty-one (or even longer in the case of those partially employed); its less successful products would drop out — it might be before completion — to take up the work of more or less skilled artisans and technical workers, and its more successful ones would pass some of them into the technical colleges for special industries with a view to business direction, into special study for the engineering trades, for the profession of soldiering, [Footnote: I may perhaps explain that my conception of military organization is a universal service of citizens — non-professional soldiers — who will be trained — possibly in boyhood and youth, to shoot very well indeed, to ride either horses or bicycles, and to take up positions and move quickly and easily in organized bodies, and, in addition, a special graduated profession of soldiers who will be in their various ranks engineers, gunners, special-force men of various sorts, and, in the higher ranks, masters of all the organization and methods necessary for the rapid and effective utilization of the non-professional manhood of the country, of volunteers, militia, or short-service enlistment levies, drawn from this general supply, and of all the machinery of communication, provisioning, and so forth. They will not be necessarily the "social superiors" of their commands, but they will naturally exercise the same authoritative command in warfare that a doctor does in a sick-room.] or for the naval and mercantile services, or into research and the literature of science. Some also would pass on to study for the profession of medicine through more special work in Chemistry and Physiology, and some with a proclivity for drawing and design would become architects, designers of appliances, and the like. The idea of the ordinary development of this course is not so very remote from what already exists in Great Britain as the Organized Science School, but, as with all these courses, it would be done in varying degrees of thoroughness and extension under varying conditions. This is the first of my three alternative College courses.

The second course will probably seem less acceptable to many readers, but all who are qualified to speak will testify to its enormous educational value. It is what one may speak of as the Biological Course. Just as the conception of Energy will be the central idea of the Natural Philosophy course, so the conception of Organic Evolution will be the central idea of the Biological Course. A general review of the whole field of Biology — not only of the Natural History of the present but of the geological record — in relation to the known laws and the various main theories of the evolutionary process will be taken, and in addition some special department, either the Comparative Anatomy of the Vertebrata chiefly, or of the plants chiefly, or of several Invertebrated groups chiefly, will be exhaustively worked out in relation to these speculations. The first of these alternatives is not only probably the most invigorating mental exercise of the three but bears also more directly upon the practical concerns of life. Physiology will be taken up in relation to this special exhaustive study, and the "Elementary Physics of the Schooling" stage will be prolonged up into a treatment of Chemistry with especial reference to biological problems. Through such a course as this students might pass to the study of medicine just as well as through Natural Philosophy, and the medical profession would profit by the clash of the two types of student. The biological course, with its insistence upon heredity and physiological facts, would also give the very best and gravest preparation in the world for the practical concerns of motherhood. From it students would pass on illuminated to the study of psychology, philosophical science, and educational method. The training in the discussion of broad generalization, and much of the fact involved, would be a most excellent preliminary to special theological study and also to the advanced study of economics and political science. From this course also artists of various sorts would escape through the avenue of Section ii. which, by the by, would have to involve Historical Reading. So much for my second suggested College course.

The third of these three alternative courses is the History course, done extensively in relation to general geography, economic theory, and the general evolution of the world, and intensively in relation to British or American history, and perhaps to some particular period.

Out of it would spring a thorough study of the development of English literature and also of the legal systems of the English-speaking peoples. This course also would be a way of approach to philosophical science, to theology, to the thorough study of economic and political science, and possibly it would contribute a larger proportion of its students to imaginative literature than either of the two preceding courses. It would also be the natural preliminary course to the special study of law and so a source of politicians. In the Section ii. of this course a light but lucid treatment of the great generalizations of physical and biological science would be desirable. And from this course also the artist would break away.

Conceivably there are other courses. The course in Mathematics as one sees it given to the Cambridge Tripos men, and what is called the Classical course, will occur to the reader. Few people, however, are to be found who will defend the exclusively mathematical "grind" as a sound intellectual training, and so it need not be discussed here. The case, however, is different with the classical course. It is alleged by those who have had the experience that to learn Latin and Greek more or less thoroughly and then to stumble through one or two Latin and Greek authors "in the original" has an educational value surpassing any conceivable alternative. There is a mysterious benefit from one's private translation however bad that no other translation however good can impart. Plato, for example, who has certainly in the very best translations, quite perceptibly no greater mind than Lord Bacon, Newton, Darwin, or Adam Smith, becomes god-like to all who pass beyond the Little-Go. The controversy is as old as the Battle of the Books, a quite interminable wrangle, which I will not even attempt to summarize here. For my own part I believe all this defence of the classics on the part of men with classical education is but one more example of that human weakness that splashes Oxford metaphysical writings with needless tags and shreds of Greek and set Demetrius the silversmith bawling in the streets. If the reader is of another opinion there is no need to convert him in this present argument, provided only that he will admit the uselessness of his high mystery for the training of the larger mass of modern men. By his standards they are beneath it. A convention upon this issue between the two parties therefore is

attainable. Let us admit the classical course for the parents who like and can afford this sort of thing for their sons and daughters. Let us withdraw all objections to its endowment, unless it is quite excessive endowment. Let the classical be the senior service, and the classical professor, to use his own queer way of putting things, *primus inter pares*. That will make four courses altogether, the Classical, the Historical, the Biological, and the Physical, for one or more of which all the secondary schools and colleges in that great English-speaking community at which the New Republic aims should be organized. [Footnote: One may, however, suggest one other course as possible under special conditions. There is one sort of art that requires not only a very rigorous and exhaustive training, but also an early commencement, and that is music, at once the most isolated and the most universal of arts. Exceptional gifts in the direction of music will have appeared in the schooling stage, and it is quite conceivable that the college phase for those who are destined for a musical career should have as its backbone a "grind" in the theory and practice of music, with languages and general culture relegated to a Section ii.]

It may be objected that this is an idealized proposal, and that existing conditions, which are, of course, the material out of which new conditions are to be made do not present anything like this form. As a matter of fact, if only the reader will allow for a certain difference in terminology, they do. What I have here called Schooling is, so far as the age of the pupils go, typically presented in Great Britain by what is called the elementary school, and in America by the public school, and certain schools that unanalytical people in England, mistaking a social for an educational difference, seem disposed to class with secondary schools, the inferior Grammar Schools, the cheaper private schools, and what are called Preparatory Schools, [Footnote: As things are, there is no doubt a considerable advantage in the child from a good home going on to a good preparatory school instead of entering a public elementary school, and the passage above must not be misread as a sweeping condemnation of such establishments.] are really also elementary schools. The latter have more social pretension and sometimes far less efficiency than a Government Elementary School, but that is all the difference. All these schools admit of a gradual approximation to

the ideal of schooling already set forth in the sixth of these papers. Some are already within a measureable distance of that ideal. And above these elementary schools, above the School grade proper, and answering to what is here called College, there is a great variety of day and evening schools of the most varied description which agree all of them in the presentation of a second phase in the educational process beginning about the age of thirteen to sixteen and going on to nineteen and twenty. In Great Britain such institutions are sometimes called secondary schools and sometimes colleges, and they have no distinct boundary line to separate them from the University proper, on the one hand, or the organized Science Schools and the Higher Grade Board Schools and evening classes of the poorer sort. The Universities and medical schools are, indeed, hampered with work quite similar to that of secondary schools and which the secondary schools have failed to do, the Cambridge undergraduate before his Little-Go, the London University medical student before his Preliminary Scientific Examination, are simply doing the belated work of this second stage. And there is, I doubt not, a similar vague complexity in America. But through the fog something very like the boundary line here placed about fourteen is again and again made out; not only the general requirements for efficient education, but the trend of present tendency seems to be towards a scheme of three stages in which a first stage of nine or ten years of increasingly serious Schooling (Primary Education), from a very light beginning about five up to about fourteen, is to be followed by a second stage of College education (Secondary Education), from fourteen or sixteen to an upward boundary determined by class and various facilities, and this is to be succeeded by a third stage, which we will now proceed to consider in detail.

Let us make it clear at once that this third stage is a much ampler thing than the graduation or post graduation work of a university. It may or it may not include that as an ingredient. But the intention is to express all those agencies (other than political, social, and economic forces, and the suggestions that arise from them), that go to increase and build up the mental structure of the man or woman. This includes the pulpit, so far as it is still a vehicle for the importation of ideas and emotions, the stage, books that do anything more than pass

the time, newspapers, the Grove and the Agora. These all, in greater or lesser degrees, work powerfully together to make the citizen. They work most powerfully, of course, in those plastic unsettled years that last from adolescence to the middle twenties, but often in very slowly diminishing intensity right into the closing decades of middle age. However things may have been in the quieter past when newspapers did not exist, when creeds were rigid, plays mere spectacles to be seen only "in Town," and books rare, the fact remains that to-day everybody goes much further and learns far more than any of the professedly educational agencies can be held accountable for. There was a time, perhaps, when a man really did "settle down" intellectually, at the end of his days of learning, when the only way — outside the libraries and households of a few princely personages — to go on thinking and to participate in the secular development of ideas, was to go to a University and hear and dispute. But those days have gone for a hundred years at least. They have gone by, and the strange thing is that a very large proportion of those who write and talk about education have not discovered they have gone by, and still think and talk of Universities as though they were the only sources and repositories of wisdom. They conjure up a vision in my mind of an absent-minded water-seller, bearing his precious jars and crying his wares knee-deep, and going deeper into a rising stream. Or if that does not seem just to the University in the past, an image of a gardener, who long ago developed a novel variety of some great flower which has now scattered its wind-borne seed everywhere, but who still proffers you for sale in a confidential, condescending manner a very little, very dear packet of that universal commodity. Until the advent of Mr. Ewart (with his Public Libraries' Act), Mr. Passmore Edwards, and Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the stream of endowment for research and teaching flowed just as exclusively to the Universities as it did in Tudor times.

Let us deal, then, first with the finally less important and more formal portion of the third stage in the educational process; that is to say, with the University Course. One may conceive that so far as positive teaching and learning go, a considerable proportion of the population will never pass beyond the second stage at all. They will fail to keep up in the course of that stage, or they will branch off into

the special development of some special aptitude. The failures will gravitate into positions a little better perhaps, but analogous to those taken up by the failures of the Schooling phase. The common clerks and common shop-hands, for example, would come out here. The others, who fall out without completing their College course, but who may not be College failures at all, will be all sorts of artists and specializing persons of that type. A great many girls, for economic and other reasons, will probably never get beyond the College stage. They will pass from the Biological and Historical courses into employment, or marry, or enter domestic life. But what may finally become a much larger proportion of New Republican citizens will either from the beginning, taking the College course in the evening, or after a year or so of full attendance at the College course, start also upon the third-grade work, the preparation for the upper ranks of some technical and commercial employment, for the systematic and liberal instruction that will replace the old rule-of-thumb apprenticeship. One can imagine a great variety of methods of combining the apprenticeship phase of serious occupation with the College course. Many waking up to the demands of life may do better for themselves with a desperately clutched College course of evening classes than others who will have progressed comfortably in day Colleges. There should be opportunity by means of scholarship openings for such cases of a late awakening to struggle back into the higher education. There may be every gradation from such students to those who will go completely and exhaustively through the College and who will then go on at one and twenty or two and twenty to equally complete and exhaustive work in the third grade. One imagines the third grade in its completeness as a most varied choice of thorough studies carried on for three or four years after eighteen or twenty-one, special schools of medicine, law, engineering, psychology, and educational science, economics and political science, economics and commercial science, philosophy and theology, and physical science. Quite apart from the obvious personal limitation, the discussion of the method of dealing specifically with each of these subjects would be too diversified and special a theme to occupy me now. The larger fact to which attention has to be given is this: that all these studies and all the technical

study and such like preparation at lower levels of the third stage must be as it were floating in a common body of Thought, which is the unifying principle, the common initiative, the real common life of the truly civilized state, and that this body of Thought is no longer to be contained within the form of a University. It is the larger of the two things. And the last question, therefore, in these speculations is the general organization of that body of Thought, that is to say of contemporary literature, using the word in its widest sense to cover all that is good in journalism, all untechnical speculative, philosophical writing, all that is true and new in the drama, in poetry, fiction or any other distinctly literary form, and all scientific publication that is not purely a matter of recording or technical working out, all scientific publication that is, that deals with general ideas.

There was a time when the higher education was conceived of as entirely a matter of learning. To endow chairs and teachers, and to enable promising scholars to come and hear the latter was the complete organization of the higher education. It is within quite recent years that the conception of endowing research for its own sake, leaving the Research Professor free altogether from direct teaching or with only a few good pupils whose work consisted chiefly in assimilating his ideas and helping with his researches, has become at all widely acceptable. Indirectly, of course, the Research Professor is just as much a teacher as the Teaching Professor, because his results become accessible as he writes them. Our work now is to broaden both the conception of research and of teaching, to recognize that whatever imports fresh and valid ideas, fresh and valid aspects — not simply of chemical and physical matters, but of aesthetic, social, and political matters, partakes of the honour and claims of research — and that whatever conveys ideas and aspects vividly and clearly and invigoratingly, not simply by word of mouth but by book or picture or article, is teaching. The publication of books, the whole business of bringing the contemporary book most efficiently home to the general reader, the business of contemporary criticism, the encouragement and support of contemporary writers, *is just as vitally important in the modern state as the organisation of Colleges and Schools*, and just as little to be left to the enterprise of

isolated individuals working primarily upon commercial lines for gain.

There are two aspects of this question. There is the simpler one of getting an abundance of good books, classical and contemporary, and of good publications distributed everywhere through the English-speaking world, and there is the more subtle and complex problem of getting, stimulating, and sustaining the original writers and the original critics and investigators upon whom the general development of contemporary thought, upon whom indeed the progress of the world finally depends. The latter problem may be reserved for the next paper, and here we will deal simply with the question of access and distribution.

For the present we must assume the quality of the books; all that sort of question must be deferred for our final discussion. We will simply speak of good books, serious books, on the one hand, and of light and merely amusing books on the other, in an intentionally vague way. The former sort of books is our present concern; pleasure as an end, pleasure except as necessary recuperation, is no affair for the state.

Books are either bought or borrowed for reading, and we have to consider what can be done to secure the utmost efficiency in the announcement, lending and selling of books. We have also to consider the best possible means of distributing periodicals. We have particularly to consider how books specifically "good," or "thorough," or "serious," and periodicals that are "sound" and "stimulating" are to be made as widely and invitingly accessible as possible. The machinery we have in hand are the booksellers and the newsvendors, the circulating libraries, the post-office, and the free public libraries that are now being energetically spread throughout the land [by men who, in this aspect, answer very closely to the conception of New Republicans as it is here unfolded], and to bring and keep all this machinery to the very highest level of efficiency is integral to the New Republican scheme of activity.

It may be objected that the organization of bookselling and publishing is the discussion of trivial details in the intellectual life of a people, but indeed that is not so. It is a constant trouble, a perpetual drain upon the time and energy of every man who participates in that

life, to get the books that are necessary to the development of his thoughts. The high price of books, burthensome as it is, is the lesser evil, the great trouble is the trouble of access. There are a great number of people now who read nothing at all, or only promiscuous fiction, who would certainly become real readers were books of any other sort attractively available. These things are not trivial. The question of book distribution is as vitally important to the intellectual health of a modern people as are open windows in cases of phthisis. No nation can live under modern conditions unless its whole population is mentally aerated with books.

That allusion to the predominance of fiction brings one round to the question of the Public Library. One is constantly reading attacks on these new and most promising institutions, and always these attacks base themselves on the fact that the number of novels taken out was so many times, so many hundred times greater than the number of "serious books." Follows nonsense about "scrappy" reading, shallowness of the public mind, and so forth. In Great Britain public pomposities take up the strain and deliver large vague, foolish discourses on our intellectual decline. It occurs to none of these people — nothing, indeed, ever does seem to occur to this sort of people — to inquire if a man or woman *can* get serious reading from a public library. An inspection of a Public Library Catalogue reveals, no doubt, a certain proportion of "serious" books available, but, as a rule, that "serious side" is a quite higgledy-piggledy heap of fragments. Suppose, for example, an intelligent mechanic has a proclivity for economic questions, he will find no book whatever to guide him to what literature there may be upon those questions. He will plunge into the catalogue, and discover perhaps a few publications of the Cobden Club, Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*, Ruskin's *Unto This Last, The Statesman's Year Book for 1895*, and a text-book specially adapted to such and such an examination by the tutors of some Correspondence College. What can you expect from such a supply but a pitiful mental hash? What is the most intelligent of mechanics likely to secure for himself from this bran pie? Serious subjects are not to be read in this wild disorderly way. But fiction can be. A novel is fairly complete in itself, and in sticking to novels, the Public

Library readers show, I submit, a better literary sense and a finer intellectual feeling than the muddle-headed, review-inspired, pretentious people who blame them.

But manifestly the Public Libraries ought to be equipped for serious reading. Too many of them are covers without meat, or, at least, with nothing to satisfy a respectable mind hunger. And the obvious direct method to equip them is to organize an Association, to work, if possible, with the Librarians, and get this "serious" side of the Libraries, this vitally important side, into better order. A few men with a little money to spend could do what is wanted for the whole English-speaking world. The first business of such an Association would be to get "Guides" to various fields of human interest written, guides that should be clear, explicit Bibliographies, putting all the various writers into their relationships one to another, advising what books should be first taken by the beginner in the field, indicating their trend, pointing out the less technical ones and those written obscurely. Differential type might stamp the more or less important works. These Guides ought to go to every Public Library, and I think also that all sorts of people would be eager to buy them if they were known to be comprehensive, intelligent, and inclusive. They might even "pay." Then I would suggest this Association should make up lists of books to present an outline course or a full course corresponding to each Guide. Where books were already published in a cheap edition, the Association would merely negotiate with the publisher for the special supply of a few thousand copies of each. Where books were modern and dear the Association would negotiate with publisher and author, for the printing of a special Public Library Edition. They would then distribute these sets of books either freely or at special rates, three or four sets or more to each Library. In many cases the Association would probably find it preferable to print its editions afresh, with specially written introductions, defining the relationship of each book to the general literature of the subject. [Footnote: In America Mr. George Iles is already organizing the general appraisement of books for the public library reader in a most promising manner. *The Bibliography of the Literature of American History*, with an appraisal of each book, which has appeared under his direction, is edited by Mr. Larned, and is a most efficient

performance; it is to be kept up to date by Mr. P. P. Wells, librarian of the Yale Law School. It includes an appendix by Professor Channing, of Harvard, which is on the lines of the "Guides" I suggest, though scarcely so full as I should like them. This appendix is reprinted separately for five cents, and it is almost all English public librarians and libraries need so far as American history goes. The English Fabian Society, I may note, publishes a sixpenny bibliography of social and economic science, but it is a mere list for local librarians, and of little use to the uninitiated reader.]

Such an Association in the present state of publishing would become — in Great Britain, at any rate — quite inevitably a Publishing Association. A succession of vigorous, well-endowed Voluntary Publishing Associations is a quite vital necessity in the modern state. A succession is needed because each age has its unexpected new needs and new methods, and it would not be a bad idea to endow such associations with a winding-up clause that would plump them, stock, unspent capital, and everything except perhaps a pension fund for the older employés, into the funds of some great Public Library at the end of thirty or forty years. Several such Associations have played, or are still playing a useful part in British affairs, but most of them have lost the elasticity of youth. Lord Brougham's Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was one of the earliest, and we have today, for example, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the Catholic Truth Society, the Rationalist Press Association, and the Fabian Society. There is a real need to-day for one — indeed there is room for several — Publishing Associations that would set themselves to put bright modern lights into these too often empty lanterns, the Public Libraries. So lit, Great Britain and America would have in them an instrument of public education unparalleled in the world, infinitely better adapted to the individualistic idiosyncracy of our peoples than any imitation of German colleges can possibly be. Propaganda of all sorts could be diverted to this purpose. Persons of imperialistic tendencies might well consider the advisability of Guides to good geographical and historical reading and sets of travel books, and of geographical and historical works. Americanisers might consider the possibility of sets that would help the common British to a clearer idea of America, and

Americans to a realization that the British Islands are something more than three obscure patches of land entirely covered by a haughty peerage and a slightly absurd but historically interesting Crown. . . . Indeed, whatever you want thought or believed, I would say, *give books!*

But the good New Republican would have a wider scope for his Publishing Association than to subdue it to this specific doctrine or that. It is not the opinion makes the man; it is not the conclusion makes the book. We live not in the truth, but in the promise of the truth. Sound thinking, clearly and honestly set forth, that is the sole and simple food of human greatness, the real substance and the real wealth of nations; the key that will at last unlock the door to all we can dream of or desire.

X. THOUGHT IN THE MODERN STATE

These speculations upon the possibilities and means of raising the average human result have brought us at last to the problem of increasing the amount of original intellectual activity in the state, as a culminating necessity. That average child who threads our speculations has been bred and fed, we now suppose, educated in school and college, put under stimulating political and social conditions and brought within reach and under the influence of the available literature of the time, and he is now emerging into adult responsibility. His individual thought and purpose has to swim in and become part of the general thought and purpose of the community. If that general flow of thought is meagre, his individual life will partake of its limitations. As the general thought rises out of its pools and narrow channels towards a wide flood, so each individual becomes more capable of free movements and spacious co-operations towards the general end. We have bred our citizen and trained him only to waste all his energy at last; he is no better than the water in an isolated dry-season pool in the bed of a tropical river, unless he can mingle in the end with the general sea of thought and action.

Thought is the life, the spontaneous flexibility of a community. A community that thinks freely and fully throughout its population is capable of a thousand things that are impossible in an unthinking mass of people. The latter, collectively considered, is a large rigid thing, a lifeless thing, that will break rather than bend, that will die rather than develop. Its inevitable end is dust and extinction. Look at the thing from the baser level of political conceptions, and still that floating tide of thought is a necessity. With thought and gathered knowledge things that mean tumult, bloodshed, undying hatreds, schisms and final disaster to uncivilized races, are accomplished in peace; constitutional changes, economic reorganizations, boundary modifications and a hundred grave matters. Thought is the solvent that will make a road for men through Alpine difficulties that seem now unconquerable, that will dissolve those gigantic rocks of custom and tradition that loom so forbiddingly athwart all our further plans. For three thousand years and more the Book has been becoming

more and more the evident salvation of man. If our present civilization collapse, it will collapse as all previous civilizations have collapsed, not from want of will but from the want of organization for its will, for the want of that knowledge, that conviction, and that general understanding that would have kept pace with the continually more complicated problems that arose about it. [Footnote: Dr. Beattie Crozier, in his most interesting and suggestive *History of Intellectual Development*, terms the literary apparatus that holds a people together to a common purpose, the "Bible" of that people, and suggests that the "Bible" of a modern people should be the History of Civilization. His work expresses by very different phrases and methods a line of thought closely akin to the thesis of this paper.]

One writes "our present civilization" and of previous civilizations, but indeed no civilizations have yet really come into existence. Tribes have aggregated into nations, nations have aggregated into empires, and then, after a struggle, has come a great confusion of thought, a failure to clarify a common purpose, and disintegration. Each successive birth has developed a more abundant body of thought, a more copious literature than the last, each has profited by the legacy of the previous failure, but none have yet developed enough. Mankind has been struggling to win this step of a permanent civilized state, and has never yet attained any sort of permanency — unless perhaps in China. And that sole imperfect permanency was based primarily upon a literature. A literature is the triumphant instrument of the invincible culture of the Jews. Through the whole volume of history the thoughtful reader cannot but exclaim, again and again, "But if they had only understood one another, all this bloodshed, all this crash, disaster, and waste of generations could have been avoided!" Our time has come, and we of the European races are making our struggle in our turn. Slavery still fights a guerilla war in factory and farm, cruelty and violence peep from every slum, barbaric habits, rude barbaric ways of thinking, grossness and stupidity are still all about us. And yet in many ways we seem to have got nearer to the hope of permanent beginnings than any of those previous essays in civilization. Collectively we know a great deal more, and more of us are in touch with the general body of knowledge than was ever the case at any earlier stage. Assuredly we

know enough to hope that we have passed the last of the Dark Ages. But though we hope, we deal with no certainties, and it is upon the broadening and increase of the flow of ideas that our hope depends.

At present this stream of thought and common understanding is not nearly so wide and deep as it might conceivably become, as it must become if indeed this present civilization is to be more than another false start. Our society [Footnote: *Anticipations*, Chapter III. Developing Social Elements.] has ceased to be homogeneous, and it has become a heterogeneous confusion without any secure common grounds of action, under the stress of its own material achievements. For the lack of a sufficient literature we specialize into inco-ordinated classes. A number of new social types are developing, ignorant of each other, ignorant almost of themselves, full of mutual suspicions and mutual misunderstandings, narrow, limited, and dangerously incapable of intelligent collective action in the face of crises. The medical man sees nothing beyond his profession; he misunderstands the artist, the divine, and the engineer. The engineer hates and despises the politician, the lawyer misses the aims of the medical man, the artist lives angrily in a stuffy little corner of pure technique; none of them read any general literature at all except perhaps a newspaper. Each thinks parochially in his own limits, and, except for his specialty, is an illiterate man. It is absolutely necessary to the progress of our civilization that these isolations should be overcome, that the community should become aware of itself collectively and should think as a whole. And the only thing that can overcome these isolations and put the mass of intelligent men upon a common basis of understanding, is an abundant and almost universally influential contemporary literature.

We have already discussed the possibility of developing the innervation of the state, the distribution of books, the stimulation and direction of reading, and all the peripheral aspects of literature, and we come now to the difficult and intricate problem of whether we can do anything, and what it is we may do, to stimulate the central thought. Can we hope to improve the conditions of literary production, to make our literature more varied, quintessential and abundant, to enforce it with honour and help, to attract to its service every man and woman with gifts of value, and to make the most of

these gifts?

Quite a number of people will assert that those things that constitute literature come and go beyond the control and will of man, they will speak of Shakespeare as being a sort of mystical consequence, of Roger Bacon or Newton as men independent of circumstances, inevitably great. And if they are by way of being comic writers — the word "humorist," as Schopenhauer long since pointed out, is a stolen lion's skin for these gentry — they will become extremely facetious about the proposed school for Bacons and Shakespeares. But a little reflection will convince the reader that none of the great figures of the past appeared without certain conditions being added to their inherent powers. In the first place, they had to be reasonably sure of a sympathetic and intelligent atmosphere, however limited in extent — there was no Plato in the heroic age, and no Newton during the Heptarchy — and in the second, the medium, language or what not, had to be ready for their use. In the third place they needed personally a certain minimum of training and preparation, and in the fourth they had to feel that for some reason — not necessarily a worldly one — the thing was "worth while." Given a "developer" of these ingredients, and they appeared. But without this developer they would not have appeared, and it is therefore reasonable to suppose, first, that a great number of men of a quality as rare as were those who constitute the unparalleled roll of English intellectual greatness, lived and died undeveloped before ever the developer was compounded at all, and that even in the last few hundred years the necessary combination has fallen upon so small an area of our racial life as to have missed far more than it has hit. The second of these papers is, indeed, an attempt to present quite convincingly what the comic man will probably regard as his effectual objection, that inherent tendency cannot be produced at will. But that the developer may conceivably be made in much greater quantities and spread much wider than it is at present is an altogether different thing. There are, one submits, enormous reserves of intellectual force unworked and scarcely touched, even to-day.

We have already discussed the means and possibilities of a net of education that should sweep through the whole social body, and of the creation of an atmosphere more alert and active than our present

one. We have now to consider how the greatest proportion of those born with exceptional literary powers may be picked out and induced to exercise those powers to the utmost. Let us admit at once that this is a research of extraordinary subtlety and complexity, that there are ten thousand ways of going wrong, and perhaps mischievously wrong. That one may submit, is not a sufficient reason for abandonment and despair. To take an analogous case, it may be a complex and laborious thing to escape out of a bear-pit into which one has fallen, but few people will consider that a reason for inaction. Even if they had small hope of doing anything effectual they might find speculation and experiments in escape, a congenial way of passing the time. It is the sort of project one should only abandon at the final and conclusive proof of its impossibility. Exactly the same principle applies to human destinies and the saving of other lives than our own. As a matter of fact, the enterprise is not at all a hopeless one if it is undertaken honestly, warily, and boldly.

Let us consider the lines upon which men must go to ensure the greatest possible growth of original thought in the state, original thought of which what scientific men call Research is only one phase.

Before we can consider how we may endow him and equip him and help him, we have to consider how we may find the original thinker, and we have, if we can, to define him and to discover whatever we can of his methods and habits, his natural history as it were. We are attempting generalization about a class of remarkably peculiar and difficult persons. They are persons either of great intellectual power or simply of great imaginative power, whose bias and quality it is to apply these exceptional powers not directly and simply to their personal advancement and enrichment, but primarily through philosophical, scientific, or artistic channels, to the increase of knowledge or of wisdom or of both. And here is the peculiar point in this problem, they are men who put, or who wish to put the best of themselves and most of themselves into occupations and interests that do not lead to practical results, that often for the individual in open competition and the market fail more or less completely to "pay." Their activities, of course, pay tremendously at last for the race, but that is not their personal point of application. They take

their lives and their splendid powers, they waste themselves in remote and inaccessible regions and bring back precious things that immediately any sharp commercial-minded man will turn into current coin for himself and the use of the world.

There are certain things follow naturally from this remote concentration, and we must persistently keep them in mind. These men of exceptional mental quality, if they are really to do what they are specially fitted to do, with all their power, will be unable to give their personal affairs, their personal advancement, sustained attention. In a democratic community whose principle is "hustle," in a leisurely monarchy where only opulence, a powerful top-note, and conspicuous social gifts succeed, they will have either to neglect or taint their special talent in order to survive. It does not follow that because a man's special qualities and inclinations are towards, let us say, illuminating inquiries into the constitution of matter, or profound and beautiful or simply beautiful renderings of his individual vision of life, that he is indifferent to or independent of honour, of all the freedoms to do and to rest from doing that come with wealth, or of the many lures and pleasures of life. Posthumous Fame is losing its attractiveness in an age which has discovered excellent reasons for doubting whether after all *ære perennius* was not rather too strong a figure. However powerful the impulse to think, to state and create, there comes a point — often a point a long way from starvation — at which a genius will stop working. Your man of scientific, literary, or artistic genius will not work below his conception of the endurable minimum, the minimum of hope and honour and attention as well as of material things, any more than a coal-heaver will — and we live in a period when the Standard of Life tends to rise. To secure these things which most men make the entire objective of their lives is, or should be, an irrelevancy to the man of exceptional gifts. This means an enormous handicap for him. Unless, therefore, we endow him and make life easy for him so long as he does his proper work, he will have either to pervert his powers more or less completely to these irrelevant ends, or if his powers do not admit of such perversion, he will have no use for them whatever. He will take some subordinate place in the world as a rather less than average man and, it may be, find the leisure to give just an

amateurish ineffectual expression of the thing he might have been.

Now this is the case with a great deal of scientific and artistic work, and with nearly all literature at the present time, throughout the English-speaking community. There are a few sciences slightly endowed, there are a few arts patronized with some intelligence and generosity, and for the rest there is nothing for it, for the man who wants to do these most necessary and vital things, but to hammer some at least of his precious gold into the semblance of a brass trumpet and to devote a certain proportion of his time and energy to blowing that trumpet and with that air of conscious modesty the public is pleased to consider genuine, proclaiming the value of his wares. Some men seem able to do this sort of thing without any deterioration in quality and some with only a partial deterioration, but the way of self-advertisement is on a slippery slope, and it has brought many a man of indisputable gifts to absolute vulgarity and ineffectiveness of thought and work. At the best it is a shameful business, this noise and display, for all that Scott and Dickens were past masters in the art. And some men cannot do it at all. Moreover, what the good man may do with an effort, the energetic quack, whose only gift is simulation, can do infinitely better. It is only in the unprofitable branches of intellectual work that the best now holds the best positions unchallenged. In the really popular branches of artistic work every honourable success draws a parasitic swarm of imitators like fish round bread in a pool. In the world of thought, far more than in the world of politics, the polling method, the democratic method has broken down, the method that will only permit an author to write — unless his subject is one that allows him to hold a Professorial Chair — on condition that he can get a publisher to induce the public to buy a certain minimum number of copies of each of his works, a method that will give him no rest, once he is in the full swing of "production," until the end, no freedom to change his style or matter, lest he should lose that paying following by the transition or the pause.

Now before we can discuss how else we can deal with those who constitute the current thought of the community, we must consider how we are to distinguish what is worth sustaining from what is not.

This is the public aspect of Criticism. It is the mineralogy of

literature and art. At present Criticism, as a public function, is discharged by private persons, usually anonymous and frequently mysterious, and it is discharged with an astonishing ineffectiveness. Nowhere in the whole English-speaking world is there anything one can compare to a voice and a judgment — much less any discussion between reputable voices. There are periodicals professing criticism, but most of them have the effect of an omnibus in which disconnected heterogeneous people are continually coming and going, while the conductor asks first one of his fluctuating load and then another haphazard for an opinion on this or that. The branch of literature that has first to be put on a sound footing is critical literature. The organization into efficiency of the criticism of contemporary work one is forced to believe an almost necessary preliminary to the hopeful treatment of the rest of the current of thought.

There is, of course, also the suggestion that an English Academy of Letters might be of great service in discounting vulgar "successes" and directing respect and attention to literary achievements. One may doubt whether such an Academy as a Royal Charter would give the world would be of any service at all in this connection. But Mr. Herbert Trench has suggested recently that it might be possible to organize a large Guild of literary men and women, which would include all capable writers, and from which a sort of Academy could be elected, either by a general poll or, I would suggest, by a Jury of Election or successive Juries confirming one another. The New Republican would like to see such a Guild not purely English, but Anglo-American, or in duplicate for the two countries. With a very carefully chosen nucleus and some little elaboration in the admission of new members — whose works might be submitted to the report of a critical jury — such a Guild might be made fairly representative of literary capacity. Election, one may suggest, should be involuntary. There would be a number of literary men, one fears — great men some of them — who would absolutely refuse to work with any such body, and from the first the Guild would have to determine to make such men unwilling members, members to whom all the honours and privileges of the Guild would be open whenever they chose to abandon their attitude of scorn or distrust. Such a Guild would

furnish a useful constituency, a useful jury-list. It could be used to recommend writers for honours, to check the distribution of public pensions for literary services, perhaps even to send a member or so to the Upper Chamber. It is, at any rate, an experiment worth trying.

But such a Guild at best is only one of many possible expedients in this matter. Another is for a few people of means to subsidize a magazine for the exhaustive criticism of contemporary work for a few years. Quite a small number of people, serious in this matter, a couple of thousand or so, could float such a magazine by the simple expedient of guaranteeing subscriptions. [Footnote: It may be suggested that among other methods of putting the criticism of contemporary literature upon a better footing is one that might conceivably be made to pay its own expenses. There is so much room for endowments nowadays that where one can get at the purse of the general public one should certainly prefer it to that of the generous but overtaxed donor. The project would require a strong endowment, but that endowment might be of the nature of a guarantee fund, and might in the end return unimpaired to the lender. The suggestion is the establishment of a well-planned and reasonably cheap monthly or weekly critical magazine, written on a level at present unattainable — chiefly because of the low rate of payment for all literary criticism. There can be no doubt among those who read much among literary and quasi-literary periodicals in English that there is a very considerable amount of high critical ability available. Buried and obscured to an ineffectual degree among much that is formal, foolish, and venial, there is to be found to-day a really quite remarkable number of isolated reviews, criticisms and articles in which style is apparent, in which discrimination shines fitfully, in which there is the unmistakable note of honest enthusiasm for good work. For the most part, such criticism bears also the marks of haste — as, indeed, it must do when a review as long as the column of a daily paper, a day's work, that is, of steady writing, earns scarcely a pound. But the stuff is there. Scarcely a number of the *Academy*, or the *Spectator*, scarcely a week of the *Morning Post*, the *Daily News*, or the *Daily Chronicle*, but there is a review, or a piece of a review, that has the stigmata of literature. And this suggestion is that some of these writers shall be got together, shall be paid at least as well as

popular short-story writers are paid, shall each have a definite department marked out under a trustworthy editor, and be pledged to limit their work to the pages of this new critical magazine. Their work would be signed, and there they would be, conspicuously urged to do the best that was in them, *apropos* of more or less contemporary books and writers. They would have leisure for deliberate judgments, for the development of that consistency of thought which the condition of journalism renders so impossible. This review would mean for them status, reputation, and opportunity. They would deal with contemporary fiction, with contemporary speculative literature, and with the style, logic, methods and vocabulary of scientific and philosophical writers. Their work would form the mass of the magazine, but there would also be (highly paid) occasional writers, towards whose opinions the regular staff would very carefully define their attitude. The project, of course, in foolish hands, might be very foolishly misinterpreted. It might be quite easy to drive a team of egregious asses in this way over contemporary work, leaving nothing but hoof-marks and injuries, but we are assuming the thing to be efficiently done. It is submitted that such a magazine, patiently and generously sustained for a few years, would at last probably come to pay its way. Unless the original selection of the staff was badly done, it would by sheer persistent high quality win its way to authority with the reading public, and so fill its covers with a swelling mass of advertisement pages. And once it paid, then forthwith a dozen rivals would be in the field, all of them, of course, also paying highly for critical matter and competing for critics of standing. Such an enterprise would be a lever for criticism through the whole of our literary world.]

Then it should also be possible to endow university lectureships and readerships in contemporary criticism, lectureships and readerships in which questions of style and method could be illustrated by quotation (not necessarily of a flattering sort) from contemporary work. Why should there not be an endowment which would enable a man of indisputable critical capacity to talk through an illuminating course, to sit before a little pile of marked books and reading sometimes here and sometimes there and talking between, to distinguish the evil from the good? What a wholesome thing to have

Mr. Henley, for example, at that in the place of some of the several specialists who will lecture you so admirably on the Troubadours! How good to hear Mr. Frederic Harrison (with some one to follow) adjusting all our living efforts to the scale of the divine Comte, and Mr. Walkley and Mr. Herbert Paul making it perfectly clear that a dead dog is better than a living lion, by demonstrations on the lion. Criticism to-day is all too much in the case of that doctor whose practice was deadly, indeed, but his post-mortems admirable! No doubt such lectures would consist at times of highly contentious matter, but what of that? There could be several chairs. It would not be an impossible thing to set a few Extension Lecturers afloat upon the same channel. We have now numerous courses of lectures on the Elizabethan Dramatists and the evolution of the Miracle Play, and the people who listen to this sort of thing will depart straight away to recreate their souls in the latest triumph of vehement bookselling. Why not base the literary education of people upon the literature they read instead of upon literature that they are scarcely more in touch with than with Chinese metaphysics? A few carefully chosen pages of contemporary rubbish, read with a running comment, a few carefully chosen pages of what is, comparatively, not rubbish, a little lucid discussion of effects and probabilities, would do more to quicken the literary sense of the average person than all the sham enthusiasm about Marlowe and Spenser that was ever concocted. There are not a few authors who would be greatly the better and might even be subsequently grateful for a lecture upon themselves in this style. Let no one say from this that the classics of our tongue are depreciated here. But the point is, that for people who know little of history, little of our language, whose only habitual reading is the newspaper, the popular novel, and the sixpenny magazine, to plunge into the study of works written in the language of a different period, crowded with obsolete allusions, and saturated with obsolete ideas and extinct ways of thinking, is pretentious and unprofitable, and that most of such Extension Lecturing is fruitless and absurd. And I appeal to these two facts in confirmation, to the thousands of people who every year listen to such lectures and to the hundreds of thousands of copies of our national classics sold by the booksellers, on the one hand, and on the other to the absolute incapacity of our

public to judge any new literary thing or to protect itself in any way from violently and vulgarly boomed rubbish of the tawdriest description. Without a real and popular criticism of contemporary work as a preliminary and basis, the criticism and circulation of the classics is quite manifestly vain.

By such expedients very much might be done for the literary atmosphere. By endowing a critical review or so, by endowing a few chairs and readerships in contemporary criticism, by organizing a Guild of Literature and a system of exemplary honours for literature, by stimulating the general discussion of contemporary work through lectures and articles, criticism could, I believe, be made "worth while" to an extent that is now scarcely imaginable, and there might be created an atmosphere of attention, appreciation, and judgment that would be in itself extraordinarily stimulating to all forms of literary effort. Of course all this sort of thing may be done cheaply, stupidly, dishonestly, and vulgarly, and one imagines the shy and exquisite type of mind recoiling from the rude sanity of these suggestions. But, indeed, they need not be done any other way than finely and well. People whose conception of what is good in art and literature is inseparable from rarity ought, I submit, to collect stamps. At an earlier phase in this series of discussions there was broached a project for an English Language Society, which would set itself to do or get done a number of services necessary to the teaching and extension of the language of our universal peoples. With such a Society those who undertook this project for the habilitation of criticism would necessarily co-operate and interlock.

It is upon this basis of an organized criticism and of a well-taught and cherished language that the English literature of the Twentieth Century, the literature of analysis and research, and the literature of creative imagination, has to stand. Upon such a basis it becomes possible to consider the practicability of the endowment of general literature. For to that at last we come. I submit that it is only by the payment of authors, and if necessary their endowment in a spacious manner, and in particular by the entire separation of the rewards of writing from the accidents of the book market, that the function of literature can be adequately discharged in the modern state. The laws of supply and demand break down altogether in this case. We have to

devise some means of sustaining those who discharge this necessary public function in the progressive state.

There are several general propositions in this matter that it may be worth while to state at this point. The first is that both scientific generalization and literature proper have been and are and must continue to be the product of a quite exceptionally heterogeneous aggregation of persons. They are persons of the most various temperaments, of the most varied lop-sidedness, of the most various special gifts, and the most various social origins, having only this in common, the ability to add to the current of the world's thought. They are not to be dealt with as though they were a class of persons all of exceptional general intelligence, of exceptional strength of character, or of exceptional sanity. To do that, would be to hand over literature from the man of genius to the man of talent. A single method of selection, help, honour, and payment, measurement by one general standard cannot, therefore, be accepted as a solution. There must not be any one single central body, any authoritative single control, for such a body or authority would inevitably develop a "character" in its activity and greet with especial favour (or with especial disfavour) certain types. In this case, at any rate, organization is not centralization, and it is also not uniformity. The proposition may indeed be thrown out that the principle of Many Channels (a principle involving the repudiation both of the monarchical and the democratic idea) is an essential one to go upon in all questions of honour and promotion in the modern state. And not only Many Channels, but Many Methods. Whatever the value of that as a universally valuable proposition, it certainly applies here.

And next we may suggest that we must take great care that we pay for the thing we need and not for some subsidiary qualification of less value. The reward must be directly related to the work, and independent of all secondary considerations. It must have no taint of charity. The recipient must not have to show that he is in want. Because a writer or investigator is a sober, careful body and quite solvent in a modest way, that is no reason why we should not pay him stimulatingly for his valuable contributions to the general mind, or because he is a shiftless seeker of misfortunes, why we should pay him in excess. But pay him anyhow. Almost scandalous private

immorality, I submit, should not bar the literary worker from his pay any more than it justifies our stealing his boots. We must deal with immorality as immorality, and with work as work. Above all, at the present time, we must keep clearly in view that popularity has no relation to literary, philosophic or scientific value, it neither justifies nor condemns. At present, except in the case of certain forms of research and in relation to the altogether too charitable-looking British Civil List, we make popularity the sole standard by which a writer may be paid. The novelist, for example, gets an income extraordinarily made up of sums of from sixpence to two shillings per person sufficiently interested to buy his or her books. The result is entirely independent of real literary merit. The sixpences and shillings are, of course, greatly coveted, and success in getting them on anything like a magnificent scale makes a writer, good or bad, vehemently hated and abused, but the hatred and abuse — unaccompanied as they are by any proposals for amelioration — are hardly less silly than the system. And for our present purpose it really does not matter if the fortunate persons who interest the great public are or are not overpaid. Our concern is with the underpaid, and with all this affair of mammoth editions and booming only as it affects that aspect. We are concerned with the exceptional man's necessities and not with his luxuries. The fly of envy in the True Artist's ointment may, I think, very well stop there until magnanimity becomes something more of a cult in the literary and artistic worlds than it is at the present time.

This, perhaps, is something of a digression from our second general proposition, that we must pay directly for the work itself. But it leads to a third proposition. The whole history of literature and science abundantly shows that no critical judgment is more than an approximation to the truth. Criticism should be equal to the exposure of the imitator and the pure sham, of course, it should be able to analyze and expose these types, but above that level is the disputed case. At the present time in England only a very few writers or investigators hold high positions by anything approaching the unanimous verdict of the intelligent public — of that section of the public that counts. In the department of fiction, for example, there is a very audible little minority against Mr. Kipling, and about Mr.

George Moore or Mr. Zangwill or Mr. Barrie one may hear the most diverse opinions. By the test of blackballing, only the unknown would survive. The valuation is as erratic in many branches of science. The development of criticism will diminish, but it certainly will not end, this sort of thing, and since our concern is to stimulate rather than punish, we must do just exactly what we should not do if we were electing men for a club, we must include rather than exclude. I am told that Americans remark in relation to University endowments, "we speculate in research," and that will serve for only a slight exaggeration of this third proposition. So long as we get most of the men of exceptional mental gifts in the community under the best conditions for their work, it scarcely matters if, for each one of them, we get four or five shams or mere respectabilities upon our hands. Respectabilities and shams have a fatal facility for living on the community anyhow, and there is no more reason in not doing these things on their account than there would be in burning a house down to get rid of cockroaches and rats. The rat poison of sound criticism — to follow that analogy — is the remedy here. And if the respectability lives, his work at any rate dies.

But if the reward must be directly for the work, it must not have any quantitative relation to the output of work. It is quality we want, not quantity; we want absolutely to invert the abominable conditions of the present time by which every exercise of restraint costs an author a fine. It is my personal conviction that almost every well-known living writer is or has been writing too much. "No book, no income" is practically what the world says to an author, and the needy authors make a pace the independent follow; there is no respect for fine silences, if you cease you are forgotten. The literature of the past hundred years is unparalleled in the world's history in this feature that the greater portion of it is or has been written under pressure. It was the case with Scott, the case with Dickens, Tennyson, even with Browning, and a host of other great contributors to the edifice. No one who loves Dickens and knows anything of the art he practised but deplores that evil incessant demand that never permitted him to revise his plans, to alter, rearrange and concentrate, that never released him from the obligation to touch dull hearts and penetrate thick skins with

obtrusive pathos and violent caricature.

Once embarked upon his course, he never had a moment for reconstruction. He had no time to read, no time to think. A writer nowadays has to think in books and articles; to read a book he must criticize or edit it; if he dare attempt an experiment, a new departure, comes his agent in a panic. Every departure from the lines of his previous success involves chaffering, unless he chance to be a man of independent means. When one reflects on these things it is only amazing that the average book is not more copious and crude and hasty than it is, and how much in the way of comprehensive and unifying work is even now in progress. There are all too many books to read. It would be better for the public, better for our literature, altogether better, if this obligation to write perpetually were lifted. Few writers but must have felt at times the desire to stop and think, to work out some neglected corner of their minds, to admit a year's work as futile and thrust it behind the fire, or simply to lie fallow, to camp and rest the horses. Let us, therefore, pay our authors as much not to write as though they wrote; instead of that twenty or thirty volumes, which is, I suppose, the average product, let us require a book or so, worth having. Which means, in fact, that we must find some way of giving an author, once he has proved his quality, a fixed income quite irrespective of what he does. We might, perhaps, require evidence that he was doing some work now and then, we might prohibit alien occupations, but for my own part I do not think even that is necessary. Most authors so sustained will write, and all will have written. We are presupposing, be it remembered, the stimulus of honours and criticism and of further honours and further emoluments.

Finally, in making schemes for the endowment of original mental activity, we must not ignore the possibility of a perversion that has already played its part in the histories of painting and music, and that is the speculative financing of promising candidates for these endowments. If we are going to make research, criticism, and creation "worth while" we must see to it that in reality we are not simply making it worth while for Solomons and Moses to "spot" the early promise, to stimulate its modesty, to help it to its position, and to draw the major profits of the enterprise. The struggling young man

of exceptional gifts who is using his brains not to make his position but to do his destined work, is by that at a great disadvantage in dealing with the business man, and it is to the interest of the community that he should be protected from his own inexperience and his own self-distrust. The average Whitechapel Jew could cheat a Shakespeare into the workhouse in no time, and our idea is rather to make the world easy for Shakespeares than to hand it over to the rat activities of the "smart" business man.

Freedom of Contract is an idea no one outside a debating society dreams of realizing in the state. We protect tenants from landlords in all sorts of ways, our law overrides all sorts of bargains, and in the important case of marriage we put almost all the conditions outside bargaining and speculative methods altogether by insisting upon one universal contract or none. We protect women who are physically and economically weak in this manner, not so much for their own good as the good of the race. The state already puts literary property into a class apart by limiting its duration. At a certain point, which varies in different circumstances, copyright expires. It is possible for an author, whose fame comes late, to be present as a row of dainty volumes in half the comfortable homes in the world, while his grandchildren beg their bread. The author's blood is sacrificed to the need the whole world has of cheap access to his work. And since we do him this injury for the sake of our intellectual life, it is surely not unreasonable to interfere for his benefit also if that subserves the greater end.

Now there are two ways at least in which the author may be and should be protected from the pressure of immediate necessities. The first of these is to render his copyright in his work inalienably his, to forbid him to make any bargain by which the right to revise, abbreviate, or alter what he has written passes out of his hands, and to make every such bargain invalid. He would be free himself to alter or to endorse alterations, but to yield no *carte blanche* to others. He would be free also to make whatever bargain he chose for the rights of publication. But, and this is the second proposal, no bargain he made should be valid for a longer period than seven years from the date of its making. Every seven years his book would come back into his control, to suppress, revise, resell, or do whatever he liked to do

with it. Only in one way could he escape this property, and that would be by declaring it void and making his copyright an immediate present to the world. And upon this proposal it is possible to base one form — and a very excellent form — of paying for the public service of good writing and so honouring men of letters and thought, and that is by buying and, more or less, completely extinguishing their copyrights, and so converting them into contemporary classics.

Throughout these papers a disposition to become concrete has played unchecked. Always definite proposals have been preferred to vague generalizations, and here again it will be convenient to throw out an almost detailed scheme — simply as an illustration of the possibilities of the case. I am going to suggest to the reader that to endow a thousand or so authors, as authors, would be a most wise and admirable proceeding for a modern statesman, and I would ask him before he dismisses this suggestion as absurd and impossible, to rest contented with no vague rejection but to put to himself clearly why the thing should under present conditions be absurd and impossible. Always in the past the need of some organ for the establishment and preservation of a common tone and substance of thought in the state has been recognized; commonly this organ has taken the form of a Church, a group of Churches (as in America) or an educational system (as in China). But all previous schemes of social and political organization have been static, have aimed at a permanent state. Our modern state we know can only live by adaptation, and we have to provide not a permanent but a developing social, moral and political culture. Our new scheme must include not only priests and teachers but prophets and seekers. Literature is a vitally necessary function of the modern state.

Let us waive for the moment the subtle difficulty that arises when we ask who are the writers of literature, the guides and makers of opinion, the men and women of wisdom, insight, and creation, as distinguished from those who merely resonate to the note of the popular mind; let us assume that this is determined, and let us make a scheme in the air to support these people under such conditions as will give us their best. Suppose the thing done boldly, and that for every hundred thousand people in our population we subsidize an

author — if we can find as many. Suppose we give him some sort of honour or title and the alternative of going on writing under copyright conditions — which many popular favourites would certainly prefer — or of giving up his copyrights to the public and receiving a fixed income, a respectable mediocre income, £800 or £1000 for example.

That means four hundred or more subsidized authors for Great Britain, which would work out, perhaps, as eighteen or twenty every year, and a proportionate number for America and the Colonial States of the British Empire. Suppose, further, that from this general body of authors we draw every year four or five of the seniors to form a sort of Academy, a higher stage of honour and income; this would probably give something under a hundred on this higher stage. Taking the income of the two stages as £1000 and £2000 respectively, this would work out at about £500,000 a year for Great Britain — a quite trivial addition to what is already spent on educational work. A scheme that would provide for widows and children whose education was unfinished, and for the official printing and sale of correct texts of the books written, would still fall within the dimensions of a million pounds. I am assuming this will be done quite in addition to the natural growth of Universities and Colleges, to the evolution of great text-books and criticism, and to the organization and publication of special research in science and letters. This is to be an endowment specifically for unspecialized literature, for untechnical philosophy that is, and the creative imagination.

It must not be imagined that such an endowment would be a new payment, by the community. In all probability we are already paying as much, or more, to authors, in the form of royalties, of serial fees, and the like. We are paying now with an unjust unevenness — we starve the new and deep and overpay the trite and obvious. Moreover, the community would have something in exchange for its money; it would have the copyright of the works written. It may be suggested that by a very simple device a large proportion of these payments could be recovered. Suppose that all books, whether copyright or not, and all periodicals sold above a certain price — sixpence, let us say — had to bear a defaced stamp of — for example

— a halfpenny for each shilling of price. This would probably yield a revenue almost sufficient to cover these literary pensions. In addition the books of the pensioned authors might bear an additional stamp as the equivalent of the present royalty.

The annual selection of eighteen or twenty authors might very well be a dispersed duty. One or two each might be appointed in some way by grouped Universities, or by three or four of the Universities taken in rotation, by such a Guild of Authors as we have already considered, by the British Academy of History and Philosophy, by the Royal Society, by the British Privy Council. The Jury system would probably be of very great value in making these appointments.

That is a rough sketch of a possible scheme — presented in the most open-minded way. It would not meet all conceivable cases, so it would need to be supplemented in many directions; moreover, it is presented with hideous crudity, but for all that, would not something of the sort work well? How would it work? There would certainly be a great diminution in the output of written matter from the thousand or more recognized writers this would give us, and almost as certainly a great rise in effort and deliberation, in distinction, quality, and value in their work. This would also appear in the work of their ambitious juniors. Would it extinguish anything? I do not see that it would. Those who write trivially for the pleasure of the public would be just as well off as they are now, and there would be no more difficulty than there is at present for those who begin writing. Less, indeed; for the thousand subsidized writers, at least, would not be clamorously competing to fill up magazines and libraries; they might set a higher and more difficult standard, but they would leave more space about them. The thing would scarcely affect the development of publishing and book distribution, nor injure nor stimulate — except by raising the standard and ideals of writing — newspapers, magazines, and their contributors in any way.

I do not believe for one moment the thing would stop at such a subsidized body of authors, such a little aristocracy of thought, as this project presents. But it would be an efficient starting-point. There are those who demand a thinking department for Army and Navy; and that idea admits of extension in this direction, this organized

general literature of mine would be the thinking organization of the race. Once this deliberate organization of a central ganglion of interpretation and presentation began, the development of the brain and nervous system in the social body would proceed apace. Each step made would enable the next step to be wider and bolder. The general innervation of society with books and book distributing agencies would be followed by the linking up of the now almost isolated mental worlds of science, art, and political and social activity in a system of intercommunication and sympathy.

We have now already in the history of the world one successful experiment in the correlation of human endeavour. Compare all that was accomplished in material science by the isolated work of the great men before Lord Verulam, and what has been done since the system of isolated inquiry gave place to a free exchange of ideas and collective discussion. And this is only one field of mental activity and one aspect of social needs. The rest of the intellectual world is still unorganized. The rest of the moral and intellectual being of man is dwarfed and cowed by the enormous disproportionate development of material science and its economic and social consequences. What if we extend that same spirit of organization and free reaction to the whole world of human thought and emotion? That is the greater question at which this project of literary endowment aims.

It may seem to the reader that all this insistence upon the supreme necessity for an organized literature springs merely from the obsession of a writer by his own calling, but, indeed, that is not so. We who write are not all so blinded by conceit of ourselves that we do not know something of our absolute personal value. We are lizards in an empty palace, frogs crawling over a throne. But it is a palace, it is a throne, and, it may be, the reverberation of our ugly voices will presently awaken the world to put something better in our place. Because we write abominably under pressure and for unhonoured bread, none the less we are making the future. We are making it atrociously no doubt; we are not ignorant of that possibility, but some of us, at least, would like to do it better. We know only too well how that we are out of touch with scholarship and contemplation. We must drive our pens to live and push and

bawl to be heard. We must blunder against men an ampler training on either side would have made our allies, we must smart and lose our tempers and do the foolish things that are done in the heat of the day. For all that, according to our lights, we who write are trying to save our world in a lack of better saviours, to change this mental tumult into an order of understanding and intention in which great things may grow. The thought of a community is the life of that community, and if the collective thought of a community is disconnected and fragmentary, then the community is collectively vain and weak. That does not constitute an incidental defect, but essential failure. Though that community have cities such as the world has never seen before, fleets and hosts and glories, though it count its soldiers by the army corps and its children by the million, yet if it hold not to the reality of thought and formulated will beneath these outward things, it will pass, and all its glories will pass, like smoke before the wind, like mist beneath the sun; it will become at last only one more vague and fading dream upon the scroll of time, a heap of mounds and pointless history, even as are Babylon and Nineveh.

XI. THE MAN'S OWN SHARE

In this manner it is that the initial proposition of New Republicanism works itself out. It shapes into the rough outline of an ideal new state, a New Republic, a great confederation of English-speaking republican communities, each with its non-hereditary aristocracy, scattered about the world, speaking a common language, possessing a common literature and a common scientific and, in its higher stages at least, a common educational organization, and it indicates in crude, broad suggestions the way towards that state from the present condition of things. It insists as a cardinal necessity, not indeed as an end but as an indispensable instrument by which this world state must be made and sustained, upon a great, a contemporary, and a universally accessible literature, a literature not simply of thought and science but of power, which shall embody and make real and living the sustaining dreams of the coming time, and which shall draw together and bring into intelligent correlation all those men and women who are working now discontentedly and wastefully towards a better order of life. For, indeed, a great number of men and women are already working for this New Republic, working with the most varied powers and temperaments and formulæ, to raise the standard of housing and the standard of living, to enlarge our knowledge of the means by which better births may be attained, to know more, to educate better, to train better, to write good books for teachers, to organize our schools, to make our laws simpler and more honest, to clarify our political life, to test and reorganize all our social rules and conventions, to adjust property to new conditions, to improve our language, to increase intercourse of all sorts, to give our ideals the justice of a noble presentation; at a thousand points the New Republic already starts into being. And while we scattered pioneers and experimenters piece together our scattered efforts into a coherent scheme, while we become more and more clearly conscious of our common purpose, year by year the old order and those who have anchylosed to the old order, die and pass away, and the unhampered children of the new time grow up about us.

In a few years this that I call New Republicanism here, under I

know not what final name, will have become a great world movement conscious of itself and consistent within itself, and we who are making now the crude discovery of its possibility will be working towards its realization in our thousand different ways and positions. And coming to our help, to reinforce us, to supersede us, to take the growing task out of our hands will come youth, will come our sons and daughters and those for whom we have written our books, for whom we have taught in our schools, for whom we have founded and ordered libraries, toiled in laboratories, and in waste places and strange lands; for whom we have made saner and cleaner homes and saner and cleaner social and political arrangements, foregoing a hundred comfortable acquiescences that these things might be done. Youth will come to take over the work from us and go on with it in a bolder and ampler manner than we in these limited days dare to attempt.

Assuredly youth will come to us, if this is indeed to be the dawn of a new time. Without the high resolve of youth, without the constant accession of youth, without recuperative power, no sustained forward movement is possible in the world. It is to youth, therefore, that this book is finally addressed, to the adolescents, to the students, to those who are yet in the schools and who will presently come to read it, to those who being still plastic can understand the infinite plasticity of the world. It is those who are yet unmade who must become the makers. After thirty there are few conversions and fewer fine beginnings; men and women go on in the path they have marked out for themselves. Their imaginations have become firm and rigid even if they have not withered, and there is no turning them from the conviction of their brief experience that almost all that is, is inexorably so. Accomplished things obsess us more and more. What man or woman over thirty in Great Britain dares to hope for a republic before it is time to die? Yet the thing might be. Or for the reunion of the English-speaking peoples? Or for the deliverance of all of our blood and speech from those fouler things than chattel slavery, child and adolescent labour? Or for an infantile death-rate under ninety in the thousand and all that would mean in the common life? These and a hundred such things are coming now, but only the young know how near they may be brought to us. As for us others,

we plant a tree never believing we shall eat the fruit, we build a house never hoping to live therein. The desert, we believe in our hearts, is our home and our destined grave, and whatever we see of the Promised Land we must see through the eyes of the young.

With each year of their lives they come more distinctly into conscious participation with our efforts. Those soft little creatures that we have figured grotesquely as dropping from an inexorable spout into our world, those weak and wailing lumps of pink flesh more helpless than any animal, for whom we have planned better care, a better chance of life, better conditions of all sorts, those laval souls who are at first helpless clay in our hands, presently insensibly have become helpers beside us in the struggle. In a little while they are beautiful children, they are boys and girls and youths and maidens, full of the zest of new life, full of an abundant, joyful receptivity. In a little while they are walking with us, seeking to know whither we go, and whither we lead them, and why. Our account of the men-makers is not complete until we add to birth and school and world, the increasing element of deliberate co-operation in the man or woman we are seeking to make. In a little while they are young men and women, and then men and women, save for a fresher vigour, like ourselves. For us it comes at last to fellowship and resignation. For them it comes at last to responsibility, to freedom, and to introspection and the searching of hearts. We must if we would be men-makers, as the first and immediate part of the business, correct and finish ourselves. The good New Republican must needs ask and ask repeatedly: What have I done and what am I doing with myself while I tamper with the lives of others? His self-examination will be no monstrous egotism of perfectibility, indeed, no virtuosity of virtue, no exquisite retreat and slinking "out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." But he will seek perpetually to gauge his quality, he will watch to see himself the master of his habits and of his powers; he will take his brain, blood, body, and lineage as a trust to be administered for the world. To know all one can of one's self in relation to the world about one, to think out all one can, to take nothing for granted except by reason of one's unavoidable limitations, to be swift, indeed, but not hasty, to be strong but not

violent, to be as watchful of one's self as it is given one to be, is the manifest duty of all who would subserve the New Republic. For the New Republican, as for his forerunner the Puritan, conscience and discipline must saturate life. He must be ruled by duties and a certain ritual in life. Every day and every week he must set aside time to read and to think, to commune with others and himself, he must be as jealous of his health and strength as the Levites of old. Can we in this generation make but a few thousands of such men and women, men and women who are not afraid to live, men and women with a common faith and a common understanding, then, indeed, our work will be done. They will in their own time take this world as a sculptor takes his marble and shape it better than all our dreams.

THE END

APPENDIX

A PAPER ON ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS READ BEFORE THE FABIAN SOCIETY

{Footnote: I am indebted to Mr. E. R. Pease for some valuable corrections. — H. G. W.}

Let me begin this paper upon the question of Scientific Administrative areas in relation to municipal undertakings by defining the sort of Socialism I profess. Because, you know, it is quite impossible to conceal that there are very many different sorts of socialism, and your society is, and has long been, a remarkably representative collection of the various types. We have this much in common, however, that we insist upon and hammer home and never lose sight of the fact that Property is a purely provisional and law-made thing, and that the law and the community which has given may also, at its necessity, take away. The work which the Socialist movement has done is to secure the general repudiation of any idea of sacredness about property. But upon the extent to which it is convenient to sanction a certain amount of property, and the ways in which existing excesses of property are to be reduced, Socialists differ enormously. There are certain extreme expressions of Socialism that you will connect with the names of Owen and Fourier, and with Noyes's "History of American Socialism," in which the abolition of monopoly is carried out with logical completeness to the abolition of marriage, and in which the idea seems to be to extend the limits of the Family and of intimate intercourse to include all humanity. With these Socialisms I have nothing in common. There are a large number of such questions concerning the constitution of the family upon which I retain an open and inquiring mind, and to which I find the answers of the established order, if not always absolutely incorrect, at any rate glaringly incomplete and totally inadequate; but I do not find the answers of these Socialistic Communities in any degree more satisfactory.

There are, however, more limited Socialisms, systems which deal mainly with economic organizations, which recognize the rights of

individuals to possessions of a personal sort, and which assume without detailed discussion the formation of family groups within the general community. There are limited socialisms whose repudiation of property affects only the common interests of the community, the land it occupies, the services in which all are interested, the necessary minimum of education, and the sanitary and economic interaction of one person or family group upon another; socialisms which, in fact, come into touch with an intelligent individualism, and which are based on the attempt to ensure equality of opportunity and freedom for complete individual development to every citizen. Such socialists look not so much to the abolition of property as to the abolition of inheritance, and to the intelligent taxation of property for the services of the community. It is among such moderate socialists that I would number myself. I would make no hard and fast rule with regard to any portion of the material and apparatus used in the service of a community. With regard to any particular service or concern, I would ask, Is it more convenient, more likely to lead to economy and efficiency, to let this service rest in the hands of some single person or group of persons who may offer to do the service or administer the concern, and whom we will call the owners, or to place it in the hands of some single person or group of persons, elected or chosen by lot, whom we will call the official or group of officials? And if you were to suggest some method of election that would produce officials that, on the whole, were likely to manage worse than private owners, and to waste more than the private owner's probable profits, I should say then by all means leave the service or concern in private hands.

You see upon this principle the whole question of the administration of any affair turns upon the question, Which will give the maximum efficiency? It is very easy to say, and it stirs the heart and produces cheering in crowded meetings to say, "Let everything be owned by all and controlled by all for the good of all," and for the general purposes of a meeting it is quite possible to say that and nothing more. But if you sit down quietly by yourself afterwards and try and imagine things being "owned by all and controlled by all for the good of all," you will presently arrive at the valuable discovery in social and political science that the phrase means nothing whatever.

It is also very striking, on such rhetorical occasions, to oppose the private owner to the community or the state or the municipality, and to suppose all the vices of humanity concentrated in private ownership, and all the virtues of humanity concentrated in the community, but indeed that clear and striking contrast will not stand the rough-and-tumble of the workaday world. A little examination of the matter will make it clear that the contrast lies between private owners and public officials — you must have officials, because you can't settle a railway time-table or make a bridge by public acclamation — and even there you will find it is not a simple question of the white against black order. Even in our state to-day there are few private owners who have absolute freedom to do what they like with their possessions, and there are few public officials who have not a certain freedom and a certain sense of proprietorship in their departments, and in fact, as distinguished from rhetoric, there is every possible gradation between the one thing and the other. We have to clear our minds of misleading terms in this affair. A clipped and regulated private ownership — a private company, for example, with completely published accounts, taxed dividends, with a public representative upon its board of directors and parliamentary powers — may be an infinitely more honest, efficient, and controllable public service than a badly elected or badly appointed board of governors of officials. We may — and I for one do — think that a number of public services, an increasing number of public services, can be best administered as public concerns. Most of us here to-night are, I believe, pretty advanced municipalizers. But it does not follow that we believe that any sort of representative or official body pitched into any sort of area is necessarily better than any sort of private control. The more we are disposed to municipalize, the more incumbent it is upon us to search out, study, and invent, and to work to develop the most efficient public bodies possible. And my case to-night is, that the existing local government bodies, your town councils, borough councils, urban district boards, and so forth, are, for the purposes of municipalization, far from being the best possible bodies, and that even your county councils fall short, that by their very nature all these bodies must fall far short of the highest possible efficiency, and that as time goes on they must fail even more than they do now to

discharge the duties we Fabians would like to thrust upon them. And the general reason upon which I would have you condemn these bodies and seek for some newer and ampler ones before you press the municipalization of public concerns to its final trial, is this — that their areas of activity are impossibly small.

The areas within which we shape our public activities at present, derive, I hold, from the needs and conditions of a past order of things. They have been patched and repaired enormously, but they still preserve the essential conceptions of a vanished organization. They have been patched and repaired first to meet this urgent specific necessity and then that, and never with any comprehensive anticipation of coming needs, and at last they have become absolutely impossible. They are like fifteenth-century houses which have been continuously occupied by a succession of enterprising but short-sighted and close-fisted owners, and which have now been, with the very slightest use of lath-and-plaster partitions and geyser hot-water apparatus, converted into modern residential flats. These local government areas of to-day represent for the most part what were once distinct, distinctly organized, and individualized communities, complete minor economic systems, and they preserve a tradition of what was once administrative convenience and economy. To-day, I submit, they do not represent communities at all, and they become more wasteful and more inconvenient with every fresh change in economic necessity.

This is a double change. Let me first of all say a word in justification for my first assertion that existing areas do not represent communities, and then pass to a necessary consequence or so of this fact. I submit that before the railways, that is to say in the days in which the current conception of local government areas arose, the villages, and still more the boroughs, and even the counties, were practically complete minor economic systems. The wealth of the locality was, roughly speaking, local; rich people resided in contact with their property, other people lived in contact with their work, and it was a legitimate assumption that a radius of a mile or so, or of a few miles, circumscribed most of the practical interests of all the inhabitants of a locality. You got rich and poor in visible relationships; you got landlord and tenant, you got master and

workman all together. But now, through a revolution in the methods of locomotion, and chiefly through the making of railways, this is no longer true. You can still see the villages and towns separated by spaces of fields and physically distinct, but it is no longer the case that all who dwell in these old limits are essentially local inhabitants and mutually interdependent as once they would have been. A large proportion of our population to-day, a large and an increasing proportion, has no localized interests at all as an eighteenth-century person would have understood locality.

Take for example Guildford, or Folkestone, and you will find that possibly even more than half the wealth in the place is non-local wealth — wealth, that is, having no relation to the local production of wealth — and that a large majority of the more educated, intelligent and active inhabitants derive their income, spend their energies, and find their absorbing interests outside the locality. They may rent or own houses, but they have no reality of participation and little illusion of participation in any local life. You will find in both towns a considerable number of hotels, inns, and refreshment places which, although they are regulated by local magistrates upon a basis of one license to so many inhabitants, derive only a small fraction of their profits from the custom of the inhabitants. You find too in Folkestone, as in most seaside places, a great number of secondary schools, drawing scarcely a pupil from the neighbourhood. And on the other hand you will find labour in both towns, coming in by a morning train and going out at night. And neither of these instances is an extreme type. As you come in towards London you will find the proportion of what I would call non-local inhabitants increasing until in Brixton, Hoxton, or West Ham you will find the really localized people a mere thread in the mass of the population. Probably you find the thinnest sham of a community in the London boroughs, where a clerk or a working man will shift his sticks from one borough to another and move on to a third without ever discovering what he has done. It is not that all these people do not belong to a community, but that they belong to a larger community of a new type which your administrators have failed to discover, and which your working theory of local government ignores. This is a question I have already written about with some completeness in a book

published a year or so ago, and called “Anticipations,” and in that book you will find a more lengthy exposition than I can give here and now of the nature of this expansion. But the gist of the argument is that the distribution of population, the method of aggregation in a community, is determined almost entirely by the available means of locomotion. The maximum size of any community of regular daily intercourse is determined by the length of something that I may best suggest to your mind by the phrase — the average possible suburban journey in an hour. A town, for example, in which the only method of progression is on foot along crowded ways, will be denser in population and smaller in area than one with wide streets and a wheeled traffic, and that again will be denser and compacter than one with numerous tubes, trams, and light railways. Every improvement in locomotion forces the suburban ring of houses outward, and relieves the pressure of the centre. Now, this principle of expanding communities holds not only in regard to towns, but also on the agricultural country side. There, also, facilities for the more rapid collection of produce mean finally the expansion and coalescence of what were previously economic unities.

Now if, while this expansion of the real communities goes on, you keep to the old boundary lines, you will find an increasing proportion of your population straddling those lines. You will find that many people who once slept and worked and reared their children and worshipped and bought all in one area, are now, as it were, delocalized; they have overflowed their containing locality, and they live in one area, they work in another, and they go to shop in a third. And the only way in which you can localize them again is to expand your areas to their new scale.

This is a change in human conditions that has been a very distinctive event in the history of the past century, and it is still in progress. But I think there is excellent reason for supposing that for practical purposes this change, made by the railway and the motor, this development of local locomotion, will reach a definite limit in the next hundred years. We are witnessing the completion of a great development that has altered the average possible suburban journey in an hour from one of four or five miles to one of thirty miles, and I doubt very much whether, when every tendency of expansion has

been reckoned with, this average hour journey will ever get much beyond sixty or seventy miles an hour. A radius of four or five miles marked the maximum size of the old community. A radius of a hundred miles will certainly mark the maximum of the new community. And so it is no effectual answer to my general argument to say that a revision of administrative areas always has been and always will be a public necessity. To a certain extent that always has been and always will be true, but on a scale in no way comparable to the scale on which it is true to-day, because of these particular inventions. This need in its greatness is a peculiar feature of the present time, and a peculiar problem of the present time. The municipal areas that were convenient in the Babylonian, ancient Egyptian, or Roman empires were no larger and no smaller than those that served the purpose of seventeenth-century Europe, and I believe it is highly probable — I think the odds are in favour of the belief — that the most convenient administrative areas of the year 2000 will be no larger and no smaller than those for many subsequent centuries. We are, in this respect, in the full flow of a great and permanent transition. And the social and political aspect of the change, is this steadily increasing proportion of people — more especially in our suburban areas — who are, so far as our old divisions go, delocalized. They represent, in fact, a community of a new sort, the new great modern community, which is seeking to establish itself in the room of the dwindling, little, highly localized communities of the past.

Now what are the practical consequences of this large and increasing non-local element in your old local government areas? First, there is this. The non-local people do not follow, have neither the time, nor the freedom, nor the stimulus of sufficient interests to follow, local politics. They are a sort of Outlanders. Local politics remain therefore more and more in the hands of the dwindling section of people whose interests really are circumscribed by the locality. These are usually the small local tradesmen, the local building trade, sometimes a doctor and always a solicitor; and the most energetic and active and capable of these, and the one with the keenest eye to business, is usually the solicitor. Whatever you put into the hands of a local authority — education, lighting,

communications — you necessarily put into the hands of a group of this sort. Here and there, of course, there may be variations; an organized labour vote may send in a representative, or some gentleman of leisure and philanthropic tastes, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, may confer distinction upon local deliberations, but that will not alter the general state of affairs. The state of affairs you must expect as the general rule, is local control by petty local interests, a state of affairs that will certainly intensify in the years to come, unless some revision of areas can be contrived that will overtake the amplifying interests of the delocalized section of the population.

Let me point out what is probably the result of a dim recognition of this fact by the non-local population, and that is the extreme jealousy of rates and municipal trading by the less localized paying classes in the community. That is a question we Socialists, believing as we do all of us at least in the abstract theory of municipalization, must particularly consider. The easy exasperation of the £1000-a-year man at the rates and his extreme patience under Imperial taxation is incomprehensible, unless you recognize this fact of his delocalization. Then at once it becomes clear. He penetrates the pretences of the system to a certain extent; and he is infuriated by the fact of taxation without representation, tempered by a mysteriously ineffective voting paper left at his door. I myself, as one of the delocalized class, will confess he has my sympathy. And those who believe in the idea of the ultimate municipalization of most large industries, will continue to find in this non-localized class, working especially through the medium of Parliament, a persistent and effective obstruction to all such projects, unless such a rectification of areas can be contrived as will overtake the delocalization and the diffusion of interests that has been and is still going on. I will confess that it seems to me that this opposition between the localized and the non-localized classes in the future, or to be more correct, the opposition between the man whose ideas and life lie in a small area, and the man whose ideas and life lie in a great area, is likely to give us that dividing line in politics for which so many people are looking to-day. For this question of areas has its Imperial as well as its local side. You have already seen the Liberal party split upon the Transvaal question; you yourselves have — I am told — experienced

some slight parallel tendency to fission, and it is interesting to note that this was, after all, only another aspect of this great question of areas, which I would now discuss in relation to municipal trading. The small communities are fighting for existence and their dear little ways, the synthetic great communities are fighting to come into existence, and to absorb the small communities. And curiously enough at our last meeting you heard Mr. Belloc, with delightful wit and subtlety, expounding the very antithesis of the conceptions I am presenting to-night. Mr. Belloc — who has evidently never read his Malthus — dreams of a beautiful little village community of peasant proprietors, each sticking like a barnacle to his own little bit of property, beautifully healthy and simple and illiterate and Roman Catholic and *local*, local over the ears. I am afraid the stars in their courses fight against such pink and golden dreams. Every tramway, every new twopenny tube, every light railway, every improvement in your omnibus services, in your telephonic services, in your organization of credit, increases the proportion of your delocalized class, and sucks the ebbing life from your old communities into the veins of the new.

Well, you may say, no doubt this is right so far as it goes; existing local government areas do not represent real countries, but still these local government devices are of service for cutting up and distributing administrative work. But that is exactly what they are not. They are worse when you consider them in regard to function, than when you consider them in regard to representation. Since our conceptions of what constitutes a local administrative area were developed there has arisen the problems of water supply and of organized sewage, of railways, tramways, and communications generally, and of lighting and telephonic intercourse; there hangs over us, though the average local authority has no eyes to see it, the necessity of adapting our roads to accommodate an increasing new traffic of soft-tyred vehicles, and it is not improbable that heating by wholesale, either by gas or electricity, will presently be also possible and desirable. For all these things we need wide views, wide minds and wide areas, and still more do we want wide views for the business of education that is now also coming into the sphere of local administration.

It happens that I have had an object-lesson in this matter of local government; and indeed it is my object-lesson that has led to this paper to-night. I live upon the boundary line of the Sandgate Urban District Board, a minute authority with a boundary line that appears to have been determined originally about 1850 by mapping out the wanderings of an intoxicated excursionist, and which — the only word is interdigitates — with the borough of Folkestone, the Urban District of Cheriton, and the borough of Hythe. Each of these bodies is by way of being a tramway authority, each is at liberty to secure powers to set up generating stations and supply electricity, each is a water authority, and each does its own little drainage, and the possibilities of friction and litigation are endless. The four places constitute an urban area greatly in need of organized intercommunication, but the four authorities have never been able to agree upon a scheme; and now Folkestone is concerning itself with the project of a little internal tramway system all of its very own. Sandgate has succumbed to the spell of the South Eastern Railway Company, and has come into line with a project that will necessitate a change of cars at the Folkestone boundary. Folkestone has conceded its electrical supply to a company, but Sandgate, on this issue, stands out gallantly for municipal trading, and proposes to lay down a plant and set up a generating station all by itself to supply a population of sixteen hundred people, mostly indigent. In the meanwhile, Sandgate refuses its inhabitants the elementary convenience of the electric light, and when, quite inadvertently, I connected across the convolutions of the boundary with the Folkestone supply, my life was darkened by the threat of impossible litigation. But if Folkestone repudiates municipal enterprise in the matter of lighting, I gather it does not do so in the matter of telephones; and there has been talk of a neat little Folkestone telephonic system competing against the National Telephone Company, a compact little conversazione of perhaps a hundred people, rate sustained. And how is the non-local inhabitant to come into these things? The intelligent non-local inhabitant can only save his two or three pounds of contribution to this folly or that by putting in twenty or thirty pounds' worth of work in local politics. He has no local connections, no local influence, he hasn't a chance against the

plumber. When the house I occupy was built, it was a mere interposition of Providence that the drain did not go southward into a Folkestone sewer instead of northward into Sandgate. Heaven knows what would have happened if it had! I and my neighbours are by a special concession permitted to have water from the Folkestone source. By incessant vigilance we do, I believe, usually succeed in deducting the Folkestone water rate from the Sandgate general rate which covers water, but the wear and tear is enormous. However, these are details, dear to my heart, but the merest marginal comments to my argument. The essential fact is the impracticable silliness of these little divisions, the waste of men, the waste of nervous energy, the waste of administrative energy they involve. I am convinced that in the case of almost any public service in the Folkestone district with our present boundaries, the administrative waste will more than equal the profit of a private company with parliamentary powers overriding our local authorities; that if it is simply a choice between these little bodies and a company (of the common type even), then in lighting, locomotion, and indeed in almost any general public service, I would say, "give me the company." With companies one may hope to deal later; they will not stand in the way of developing saner areas, but an obstinate little authority clutching everything in its hands, and led by a clerk naturally interested in litigation, and who is also something of an expert in political organization, will be an altogether harder thing to supersede.

This difficulty in greater or lesser degree is everywhere. In the case of poor law administration in particular, and also in the case of elementary education, the whole country displays what is another aspect of this same general phenomenon of delocalization; the withdrawal of all the wealthier people from the areas that are specializing as industrial centres, and which have a rising population of poor workers, to areas that are specializing as residential, and which have, if anything, a falling proportion of poor labourers. In a place like West Ham or Tottenham you find starved schools and an abundant delocalized industrial population, and, by way of contrast, at Guildford or Farnham for example, you will find enormously rich delocalized people, belonging to the same great community as these workers, who pay only the most trivial poor rate and school rate for

the benefit of their few immediate neighbours, and escape altogether from the burthens of West Ham. By treating these places as separate communities you commit a cruel injustice on the poor. So far as these things go, to claim convenience for the existing areas is absurd. And it is becoming more and more evident that with tramways, with lighting, with electric heating and force supply, and with the supply of water to great populations, there is an enormous advantage in large generating stations and large areas; that these things must be handled in areas of hundreds of square miles to be efficiently done.

In the case of secondary and higher education one discovers an equal stress and incompatibility. At present, I must point out, even the boundaries of the projected educational authority for London are absurdly narrow. For example, in Folkestone, as in every town upon the south coast, there are dozens of secondary schools that are purely London schools, and filled with London boys and girls, and there are endless great schools like Tonbridge and Charterhouse outside the London area that are also London schools. If you get, for example, a vigorous and efficient educational authority for London, and you raise a fine educational system in the London area, you will find it incomplete in an almost vital particular. You will give the prosperous middle class and the upper class of London the alternative of good teaching and bad air, or of what very probably, under tolerant local authorities, will be relatively bad teaching and open air and exercise out of London. You will have to tax this influential class of people for the magnificent schools they in many cases will be unable to use. As a consequence, you will find again all the difficulties of their opposition, practically the same difficulties that arise so naturally in the way of municipal trading. I would suggest that it would be not only logical but politic, for the London Educational Authority, and not the local authority, to control every secondary school wherever it happened to be, which in an average of years drew more than half its attendance from the London area. That, however, by the way. The point more material to my argument here is that the educational organization of the London area, the Thames valley, and the southern counties are inseparable; that the question of local locomotion is rapidly becoming impossible upon any smaller basis than such an area; that roads, light railways, drainage, water, are all clamouring

now to be dealt with on the big scale; and that the more you cut this great area up, the more you leave it in the hands of the localized men, the more you sin against efficiency and the light.

I hope that you will consider this first part of my case proved. And now I pass on to the more debatable question — the nature of the new divisions that are to replace the old. I would suggest that this is a matter only to be answered in detail by an exhaustive analysis of the distribution of population in relation to economic standing, but I may perhaps just indicate roughly what at a first glance I imagine would be one suitable local government area. Let me remind you that some years ago the Conservative party, in an outbreak of intelligence, did in a sort of transitory way see something of what I have been trying to express to-night, and created the London County Council — only to quarrel with it and hate it and fear it ever since. Well, my proposal would be to make a much greater area even than the London County, and try to include in it the whole system of what I might call the London-centred population. I believe If you were to take the whole valley of the Thames and its tributaries and draw a line along its boundary watershed, and then include with that Sussex and Surrey, and the east coast counties up to the Wash, you would overtake and anticipate the delocalizing process almost completely. You would have what has become, or is becoming very rapidly, a new urban region, a complete community of the new type, rich and poor and all sorts and aspects of economic life together. I would suggest that watersheds make excellent boundaries. Let me remind you that railways, tramways, drain-pipes, water-pipes, and high-roads have this in common — they will not climb over a watershed if they can possibly avoid doing so, and that population and schools and poor tend always to distribute themselves in accordance with these other things. You get the minimum of possible overlap — such overlap as the spreading out of the great midland city to meet London must some day cause — in this way. I would suggest that for the regulation of sanitation, education, communications, industrial control, and poor relief, and for the taxation for these purposes, this area should be one, governed by one body, elected by local constituencies that would make its activities independent of imperial politics. I propose that this body should replace your county councils,

boards of guardians, urban and rural district councils, and all the rest of them altogether; that you should elect it, perhaps triennially, once for all. For any purpose of a more local sort, local water-supply systems, local tramway systems — the tramways between Brighton and Shoreham, for example — this body might delegate its powers to subordinate committees, consisting, it has been suggested to me by Mrs. Sidney Webb, of the members for the local constituencies concerned, together with another member or so to safeguard the general interests, or perhaps with an appointed expert or so in addition. These committees would submit their detailed schemes for the approval of committees appointed by the general body, and they would be controllable by that body. However, there is no need for detailed scheming here and now. Let us keep to the main idea.

I submit that such a mammoth municipality as this will be, on the one hand, an enormously more efficient substitute for your present little local government bodies, and on the other hand, will be able to take over a considerable proportion of the detailed work and a considerable proportion of the detailed machinery, of your overworked and too extensive central machinery, your local government board, education department, and board of trade. It will be great enough and fine enough to revive the dying sentiment of local patriotism, and it will be a body that will appeal to the ambition of the most energetic and capable men in the community. They will be picked men, to a much greater extent than are your guardians, your urban district councillors and town councillors and so on, at present, because there will be perhaps a hundred or a couple of hundred of them in the place of many thousands. And I venture to think that in such a body you may confidently hope to find a collective intelligence that may be pitted against any trust or board of directors the world is likely to produce.

I suggest this body as a sort of concrete sample of the thing I have in mind. I am quite open to hear and accept the most far-reaching modification of this scheme; it is *the idea of the scale* that I wish particularly to enforce. Municipalize on this scale, I would say, and I am with you altogether. Here is something distinctly and clearly subserving that making of mankind upon which all sane social and political proposals must ultimately base themselves. But to put more

power, and still more power in the hands of these petty little administrative bodies that we have to-day, is, I submit, folly and darkness. If the existing areas are to remain the same, then, on the whole, my vote is against municipal trading, and on the whole, with regard to light, to tramways and communications, to telephones, and indeed to nearly all such public services, I would prefer to see these things in the hands of companies, and I would stipulate only for the maximum publicity for their accounts and the fullest provision for detailed regulation through the Board of Trade.

THE FUTURE IN AMERICA

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I. — THE PROPHETIC HABIT OF MIND

(*At a writing-desk in Sandgate*)

§ I

"Are you a Polygamist?"

"Are you an Anarchist?"

The questions seem impertinent. They are part of a long paper of interrogations I must answer satisfactorily if I am to be regarded as a desirable alien to enter the United States of America. I want very much to pass that great statue of Liberty illuminating the World (from a central position in New York Harbor), in order to see things in its light, to talk to certain people, to appreciate certain atmospheres, and so I resist the provocation to answer impertinently. I do not even volunteer that I do not smoke and am a total abstainer; on which points it would seem the States as a whole still keep an open mind. I am full of curiosity about America, I am possessed by a problem I feel I cannot adequately discuss even with myself except over there, and I must go even at the price of coming to a decision upon the theoretically open questions these two inquiries raise.

My problem I know will seem ridiculous and monstrous when I give it in all its stark disproportions — attacked by me with my equipment it will call up an image of an elephant assailed by an ant who has not even mastered Jiu-jitsu — but at any rate I've come to it in a natural sort of way and it is one I must, for my own peace of mind, make some kind of attempt upon, even if at last it means no more than the ant crawling in an exploratory way hither and thither over that vast unconscious carcass and finally getting down and going away. That may be rather good for the ant, and the experience may be of interest to other ants, however infinitesimal from the point of view of the elephant, the final value of his investigation may be. And this tremendous problem in my case and now in this — simply; What is going to happen to the United States of America in the next thirty years or so?

I do not know if the reader has ever happened upon any books or

writings of mine before, but if, what is highly probable, he has not, he may be curious to know how it is that any human being should be running about in so colossally an interrogative state of mind. (For even the present inquiry is by no means my maximum limit). And the explanation is to be found a little in a mental idiosyncrasy perhaps, but much more in the development of a special way of thinking, of a habit of mind.

That habit of mind may be indicated by a proposition that, with a fine air of discovery, I threw out some years ago, in a happy ignorance that I had been anticipated by no less a person than Heraclitus. “There is no Being but Becoming,” that was what appeared to my unscholarly mind to be almost triumphantly new. I have since then informed myself more fully about Heraclitus, there are moments now when I more than half suspect that all the thinking I shall ever do will simply serve to illuminate my understanding of him, but at any rate that apothegm of his does exactly convey the intellectual attitude into which I fall. I am curiously not interested in things, and curiously interested in the consequences of things, I wouldn’t for the world go to see the United States for what they are — if I had sound reason for supposing that the entire western hemisphere was to be destroyed next Christmas, I should not, I think, be among the multitude that would rush for one last look at that great spectacle, — from which it follows naturally that I don’t propose to see Niagara. I should much more probably turn an inquiring visage eastward, with the west so certainly provided for. I have come to be, I am afraid, even a little insensitive to fine immediate things through this anticipatory habit.

This habit of mind confronts and perplexes my sense of things that simply are, with my brooding preoccupation with how they will shape presently, what they will lead to, what seed they will sow and how they will wear. At times, I can assure the reader, this quality approaches otherworldliness, in its constant reference to an all-important hereafter. There are times indeed when it makes life seem so transparent and flimsy, seem so dissolving, so passing on to an equally transitory series of consequences, that the enhanced sense of instability becomes restlessness and distress; but on the other hand nothing that exists, nothing whatever, remains altogether vulgar or

dull and dead or hopeless in its light. But the interest is shifted. The pomp and splendor of established order, the braying triumphs, ceremonies, consummations, one sees these glittering shows for what they are — through their threadbare grandeur shine the little significant things that will make the future....

And now that I am associating myself with great names, let me discover that I find this characteristic turn of mind of mine, not only in Heraclitus, the most fragmentary of philosophers, but for one fine passage at any rate, in Mr. Henry James, the least fragmentary of novelists. In his recent impressions of America I find him apostrophizing the great mansions of Fifth Avenue, in words quite after my heart: —

"It's all very well," he writes, "for you to look as if, since you've had no past, you're going in, as the next best thing, for a magnificent compensatory future. What are you going to make your future of, for all your airs, we want to know? What elements of a future, as futures have gone in the great world, are at all assured to you?"

I had already when I read that, figured myself as addressing if not these particular last triumphs of the fine Transatlantic art of architecture, then at least America in general in some such words. It is not impleasant to be anticipated by the chief Master of one's craft, it is indeed, when one reflects upon his peculiar intimacy with this problem, enormously reassuring, and so I have very gladly annexed his phrasing and put it here to honor and adorn and in a manner to explain my own enterprise. I have already studied some of these fine buildings through the mediation of an illustrated magazine — they appear solid, they appear wonderful and well done to the highest pitch — and before many days now I shall, I hope, reconstruct that particular moment, stand — the latest admirer from England — regarding these portentous magnificences, from the same sidewalk — will they call it? — as my illustrious predecessor, and with his question ringing in my mind all the louder for their proximity, and the universally acknowledged invigoration of the American atmosphere. "What are you going to make your future of, for all your airs?"

And then I suppose I shall return to crane my neck at the Flat-iron Building or the Times skyscraper, and ask all that too, an identical

question.

§ II

Certain phases in the development of these prophetic exercises one may perhaps be permitted to trace. To begin with, I remember that to me in my boyhood speculation about the Future was a monstrous joke. Like most people of my generation I was launched into life with millennial assumptions. This present sort of thing, I believed, was going on for a time, interesting personally perhaps but as a whole inconsecutive, and then — it might be in my lifetime or a little after it — there would be trumpets and shoutings and celestial phenomena, a battle of Armageddon and the Judgment. As I saw it, it was to be a strictly protestant and individualistic judgment, each soul upon its personal merits. To talk about the Man of the Year Million was of course in the face of this great conviction, a whimsical play of fancy. The Year Million was just as impossible, just as gayly nonsensical as fairy-land.... I was a student of biology before I realized that this, my finite and conclusive End, at least in the material and chronological form, had somehow vanished from the scheme of things. In the place of it had come a blackness and a vagueness about the endless vista of years ahead, that was tremendous — that terrified. That is a phase in which lots of educated people remain to this day. "All this scheme of things, life, force, destiny which began not six thousand years, mark you, but an infinity ago, that has developed out of such strange weird shapes and incredible first intentions, out of gaseous nebulas, carboniferous swamps, saurian giantry and arboreal apes, is by the same tokens to continue, developing — into what?" That was the overwhelming riddle that came to me, with that realization of an End averted, that has come now to most of our world.

The phase that followed the first helpless stare of the mind was a wild effort to express one's sudden apprehension of unlimited possibility. One made fantastic exaggerations, fantastic inversions of all recognized things. Anything of this sort might come, anything of any sort. The books about the future that followed the first stimulus

of the world's realization of the implications of Darwinian science, have all something of the monstrous experimental imaginings of children. I myself, in my microcos-mic way, duplicated the times. Almost the first thing I ever wrote — it survives in an altered form as one of a bookful of essays, — was of this type; "The Man of the Year Million," was presented as a sort of pantomime head and a shrivelled body, and years after that, *The Time Machine*, my first published book, ran in the same vein. At that point, at a brief astonished stare down the vistas of time-to-come, at something between wonder and amazed, incredulous, defeated laughter, most people, I think, stop. But those who are doomed to the prophetic habit of mind go on.

The next phase, the third phase, is to shorten the range of the outlook, to attempt something a little more proximate than the final destiny of man. One becomes more systematic, one sets to work to trace the great changes of the last century or so, and one produces these in a straight line and according to the rule of three. If the maximum velocity of land travel in 1800 was twelve miles an hour and in 1900 (let us say) sixty miles an hour, then one concludes that in 2000 A.D. it will be three hundred miles an hour. If the population of America in 1800 — but I refrain from this second instance. In that fashion one got out a sort of gigantesque caricature of the existing world, everything swollen to vast proportions and massive beyond measure. In my case that phase produced a book. When the Sleeper Wakes, in which, I am told, by competent New-Yorkers, that I, starting with London, an unbiassed mind, this rule-of-three method and my otherwise unaided imagination, produced something more like Chicago than any other place wherein righteous men are likely to be found. That I shall verify in due course, but my present point is merely that to write such a book is to discover how thoroughly wrong this all too obvious method of enlarging the present is.

One goes on therefore — if one is to succumb altogether to the prophetic habit — to a really "scientific" attack upon the future. The "scientific" phase is not final, but it is far more abundantly fruitful than its predecessors. One attempts a rude wide analysis of contemporary history, one seeks to clear and detach operating causes and to work them out, and so, combining this necessary set of

consequences with that, to achieve a synthetic forecast in terms just as broad and general and vague as the causes considered are few. I made, it happens, an experiment in this scientific sort of prophecy in a book called *Anticipations*, and I gave an altogether excessive exposition and defence of it, I went altogether too far in this direction, in a lecture to the Royal Institution, "The Discovery of the Future," that survives in odd corners as a pamphlet, and is to be found, like a scrap of old newspaper in the roof gutter of a museum, in *Nature* (vol. LXV.,) and in the Smithsonian Report (for 1902). Within certain limits, however, I still believe this scientific method is sound. It gives sound results in many cases, results at any rate as sound as those one gets from the "laws" of political economy; one can claim it really does effect a sort of prophecy on the material side of life.

For example, it was quite obvious about 1899 that invention and enterprise were very busy with the means of locomotion, and one could deduce from that certain practically inevitable consequences in the distribution of urban populations. With easier, quicker means of getting about there were endless reasons, hygienic, social, economic, why people should move from the town centres towards their peripheries, and very few why they should not. The towns one inferred therefore, would get slacker, more diffused, the country- side more urban. From that, from the spatial widening of personal interests that ensued, one could infer certain changes in the spirits of local politics, and so one went on to a number of fairly valid adumbrations. Then again starting from the practical supersession in the long run of all unskilled labor by machinery one can work out with a pretty fair certainty many coming social developments, and the broad trend of one group of influences at least from the moral attitude of the mass of common people. In industry, in domestic life again, one foresees a steady developmer^t of complex appliances, demanding, and indeed in an epoch of frequently changing methods forcing, a flexible understanding, versatility of effort, a universal rising standard of education. So too a study of military methods and apparatus convinces one of the necessary transfer of power in the coming century from the ignorant and enthusiastic masses who made the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and won

Napoleon his wars, to any more deliberate, more intelligent and more disciplined class that may possess an organized purpose. But where will one find that class? There comes a question that goes outside science, that takes one at once into a field beyond the range of the "scientific" method altogether.

So long as one adopts the assumptions of the old political economist and assumes men without idiosyncrasy, without prejudices, without, as people say, wills of their own, so long as one imagines a perfectly acquiescent humanity that will always in the long run under pressure liquefy and stream along the line of least resistance to its own material advantage, the business of prophecy is easy. But from the first I felt distrust for that facility in prophesying, I perceived that always there lurked something, an incalculable opposition to these mechanically conceived forces, in law, in usage and prejudice, in the poietic power of exceptional individual men. I discovered for myself over again, the inseparable nature of the two functions of the prophet. In my *Anticipations*, for example, I had intended simply to work out and foretell, and before I had finished I was in a fine full blast of exhortation....

That by an easy transition brought me to the last stage in the life history of the prophetic mind, ,as it is at present known to me. One comes out on the other side of the "scientific" method, into the large temperance, the valiant inconclusiveness, the released creativeness of philosophy. Much may be foretold as certain, much more as possible, but the last decisions and the greatest decisions, lie in the hearts and wills of unique incalculable men. With them we have to deal as our ultimate reality in all these matters, and our methods have to be not "scientific" at all for all the greater issues, the humanly important issues, but critical, literary, even if you will — artistic. Here insight is of more account than induction and the perception of fine tones than the counting of heads. Science deals with necessity and necessity is here but the firm ground on which our freedom goes. One passes from affairs of predestination to affairs of free will. This discovery spread at once beyond the field of prophesying. The end, the aim, the test of science, as a model man understands the word, is foretelling by means of "laws," and my error in attempting a complete "scientific" forecast of human affairs arose in too careless

an assent to the ideas about me, and from accepting uncritically such claims as that history should be "scientific," and that economics and sociology (for example) are "sciences." Directly one gauges the fuller implications of that uniqueness of individuals Darwin's work has so permanently illuminated, one passes beyond that. The ripened prophet realizes Schopenhauer — as indeed I find Professor Munsterberg saying. "The deepest sense of human affairs is reached," he writes, "when we consider them not as appearances but as decisions." There one has the same thing coming to meet one from the psychological side....

But my present business isn't to go into this shadowy, metaphysical foundation world on which our thinking rests, but to the brightly lit overworld of America. This philosophical excursion is set here just to prepare the reader quite frankly for speculations and to disabuse his mind of the idea that in writing of the Future in America I'm going to write of houses a hundred stories high and flying-machines in warfare and things like that, I am not going to America to work a pretentious horoscope, to discover a Destiny, but to find out what I can of what must needs make that Destiny, — a great nation's Will.

§ III

The material factors in a nation's future are subordinate factors, they present advantages, such as the easy access of the English to coal and the sea, or disadvantages, such as the ice-bound seaboard of the Russians, but these are the circumstances and not necessarily the rulers of its fate. The essential factor in the destiny of a nation, as of a man and of mankind, lies in the form of its will and in the quality and quantity of its will. The drama of a nation's future, as of a man's, lies in this conflict of its will with what would else be "scientifically" predictable, materially inevitable. If the man, if the nation was an automaton fitted with good average motives, so and so,' one could say exactly, would be done. It's just where the thing isn't automatic that our present interest comes in.

I might perhaps reverse the order of the three aspects of will I

have named, for manifestly where the quantity of will is small, it matters nothing what the form or quality. The man or the people that wills feebly is the sport of every circumstance, and there if anywhere the scientific method holds truest or even altogether true. Do geographical positions or mineral resources make for riches? Then such a people will grow insecurely and disastrously rich. Is an abundant prolific life at a low level indicated? They will pullulate and suffer. If circumstances make for a choice between comfort and reproduction, your feeble people will dwindle and pass; if war, if conquest tempt them then they will turn from all preoccupations and follow the drums. Little things provoke their unstable equilibrium, to hostility, to forgiveness....

And be it noted that the quantity of will in a nation is not necessarily determined by adding up the wills of all its people. I am told, and I am disposed to believe it, that the Americans of the United States are a people of great individual force of will, the clear strong faces of many young Americans, something almost Roman in the faces of their statesmen and politicians, a distinctive quality I detect in such Americans as I have met, a quality of sharply cut determination even though it be only about details and secondary things, that one must rouse one's self to meet, inclines me to give a provisional credit to that, but how far does all this possible will-force aggregate to a great national purpose? — what algebraically does it add up to when this and that have cancelled each other? That may be a different thing altogether.

And next to this net quantity of will a nation or people may possess, come the questions of its quality, its flexibility, its consciousness and intellectuality. A nation may be full of will and yet inflexibly and disastrously stupid in the expression of that will. There was probably more will-power, more haughty and determined self-assertion in the young bull that charged the railway engine than in several regiments of men, but it was after all a low quality of will with no method but a violent and injudicious directness, and in the end it was suicidal and futile. There again is the substance for ramifying Enquiries.' How subtle, how collected and patient, how far capable of a long plan, is this American nation? Suppose it has a will so powerful and with such resources that whatever simple end may

be attained by rushing upon it is America's for the asking, there still remains the far more important question of the ends that are not obvious, that are intricate and complex and not to be won by booms and cataclysms of effort.

An Englishman comes to think that most of the permanent and precious things for which a nation's effort goes are like that, and here too I have an open mind and unsatisfied curiosities.

And lastly there is the form of the nation's purpose. I have been reading what I can find about that in books for some time, and now I want to cross over the Atlantic, more particularly for that, to question more or less openly certain Americans, not only men and women, but the mute expressive presences of house and appliance, of statue, flag and public building, and the large collective visages of crowds, what it is all up to, what it thinks it is all after, how far it means to escape or improve upon its purely material destinies? I want over there to find whatever consciousness or vague consciousness of a common purpose there may be, what is their Vision, their American Utopia, how much will there is shaping to attain it, how much capacity goes with the will — what, in short, there is in America, over and above the mere mechanical consequences of scattering multitudes of energetic Europeans athwart a vast healthy, productive and practically empty continent in the temperate zone. There you have the terms of reference of an enquiry, that is I admit (as Mr. Morgan Richards the eminent advertisement agent would say), "mammoth in character."

The American reader may very reasonably inquire at this point why an Englishman does not begin with the future of his own country. The answer is that this particular one has done so, and that in many ways he has found his intimacy and proximity a disadvantage. One knows too much of the things that seem to matter and that ultimately don't, one is full of misleading individual instances intensely seen, one can't see the wood for the trees. One comes to America at last, not only with the idea of seeing America, but with something more than an incidental hope of getting one's own England there in the distance and as a whole, for the first time in one's life. And the problem of America, from this side anyhow, has an air of being simpler. For all the Philippine adventure her future

still seems to lie on the whole compactly in one continent, and not as ours is, dispersed round and about the habitable globe, strangely entangled with India, with Japan, with Africa and with the great antagonism the Germans force upon us at our doors. Moreover one cannot look ten years ahead in England, without glancing across the Atlantic. “There they are,” we say to one another, “those Americans! They speak our language, read our books, give us books, share our mind. What we think still goes into their heads in a measure, and their thoughts run through our brains. What will they be up to?”

Our future is extraordinarily bound up in America’s and in a sense dependent upon it. It is not that we dream very much of political reunions of Anglo Saxondom and the like. So long as we British retain our wide and accidental sprawl of empire about the earth we cannot expect or desire the Americans to share our stresses and entanglements. Our Empire has its own adventurous and perilous outlook. But our civilization is a different thing from our Empire, a thing that reaches out further into the future, that will be going on changed beyond recognition. Because of our common language, of our common traditions, Americans are a part of our community, are becoming indeed the larger part of our community of thought and feeling and outlook — in a sense far more intimate than any link we have with Hindoo or Copt or Cingalese. A common Englishman has an almost pathetic pride and sense of proprietorship in the States; he is fatally ready to fall in with the idea that two nations that share their past, that still, a little restively, share one language, may even contrive to share an infinitely more interesting future. Even if he does not chance to be an American now, his grandson may be. America is his inheritance, his reserved accumulating investment. In that sense indeed America belongs to the whole western world; all Europe owns her promise, but to the Englishman the sense of participation is intense. “We did it,” he will tell of the most American of achievements, of the settlement of the middle west for example, and this is so far justifiable that numberless men, myself included, are Englishmen, Australian, New-Zealanders, Canadians, instead of being Americans, by the merest accidents of life. My father still possesses the stout oak box he had had made to emigrate withal, everything was arranged that would have got me and my brothers

born across the ocean, and only the coincidence of a business opportunity and an illness of my mother's, arrested that. It was so near a thing as that with me, which prevents my blood from boiling with patriotic indignation instead of patriotic solicitude at the frequent sight of red-coats as I see them from my study window going to and fro to ShornclifTe camp.

Well I learn from Professor Munsterberg how vain my sense of proprietorship is, but still this much of it obstinately remains, that I will at any rate look at the American future.

By the accidents that delayed that box it comes about that if I want to see what America is up to, I have among other things to buy a Baedeker and a steamer ticket and fill up the inquiring blanks in this remarkable document before me, the long string of questions that begins: —

"Are you a Polygamist?"

"Are you an Anarchist?"

Here I gather is one little indication of the great will I am going to study. It would seem that the United States of America regard Anarchy and Polygamy with aversion, regard indeed Anarchists and Polygamists as creatures unfit to mingle with the already very various eighty million of citizens who constitute their sovereign powers, and on the other hand hold these creatures so inflexibly honorable as certainly to tell these damning truths about themselves in this matter....

It's a little odd. One has a second or so of doubt about the quality of that particular manifestation of will.

II. — MATERIAL PROGRESS

(*On the "Carmania" going America-ward*)

§ I

When one talks to an American of his national purpose he seems a little at a loss; if one speaks of his national destiny, he responds with alacrity. I make this generalization on the usual narrow foundations, but so the impression comes to me.

Until this present generation, indeed until within a couple of decades, it is not very evident that Americans did envisage any national purpose at all, except in so far as there was a certain solicitude not to be cheated out of an assured destiny. A sort of optimistic fatalism possessed them. They had, and mostly it seems they still have, a tremendous sense of sustained and assured growth, and it is not altogether untrue that one is told — I have been told — such things as that "America is a great country, sir," that its future is gigantic and that it is already (and going to be more and more so) the greatest country on earth.

I am not the sort of Englishman who questions that. I do so regard that much as obvious and true that it seems to me even a Httle undignified, as well as a little overbearing, for Americans to insist upon it so; I try to go on as soon as possible to the question just how my interlocutor shapes that gigantic future and what that world predominance is finally to do for us in England and all about the world. So far, I must insist, I haven't found anything like an idea. I have looked for it in books, in papers, in speeches and now I am going to look for it in America. At the most I have found vague imaginings that correspond to that first or monstrous stage in the scheme of prophetic development I sketched in my opening.

There is often no more than a volley of rhetorical blank-cartridge. So empty is it of all but sound that I have usually been constrained by civility from going on to a third enquiry; —

"And what are you, sir, doing in particular, to assist and enrich

this magnificent and quite indefinable Destiny of which you so evidently feel yourself a part?”...

That seems to be really no unjust rendering of the conscious element of the American outlook as one finds it, for example, in these nice-looking and pleasant-mannered fellow-passengers upon the *Carmania* upon whom I fasten with leading questions and experimental remarks. One exception I discover — a pleasant New York clubman who has doubts of this and that. The discipHne and sense of purpose in Germany has laid hold upon him. He seems to be, in contrast with his fellow-countrymen, almost pessimistically aware that the American ship of state is after all a mortal ship and liable to leakages. There are certain problems and dangers he seems to think that may delay, perhaps even prevent, an undamaged arrival in that predestined port, that port too resplendent for the eye to rest upon; a Chinese peril, he thinks has not been finally dealt with, “race suicide” is not arrested for all that it is scolded in a most valiant and virile manner, and there are adverse possibilities in the immigrant, in the black, the socialist, against which he sees no guarantee. He sees huge danger in the development and organization of the new finance and no clear promise of a remedy. He finds the closest parallel between the American Republic and Rome before the coming of Imperialism. But these other Americans have no share in his pessimisms. They may confess to as much as he does in the way of dangers, admit there are occasions for calking, a need of stopping quite a number of possibilities if the American Idea is to make its triumphant entry at last into that port of blinding accomplishment, but, apart from a few necessary preventive proposals, I do not perceive any extensive sense of anything whatever to be done, anything to be shaped and thought out and made in the sense of a national determination to a designed and specified end.

§ II

There are, one must admit, tremendous justifications for the belief in a sort of automatic ascent of American things to unprecedented magnificences, an ascent so automatic that indeed one needn’t bother

in the slightest to keep the whole thing going. For example, consider this, last year's last-word in ocean travel in which I am crossing, the *Carmania* with its unparalleled steadfastness, its racing, tireless great turbines, its vast population of 3244 souls! It has on the whole a tremendous effect of having come by fate and its own forces. One forgets that any one planned it, much of it indeed has so much the quality of moving, as the planets move, in the very nature of things. You go aft and see the wake tailing away across the blue ridges, you go forward and see the cleft water, lift protestingly, roll back in an indignant crest, own itself beaten and go pouring by in great foaming waves on either hand, you see nothing, you hear nothing of the toiling engines, the reeking stokers, the effort and the stress below; you beat west and west, as the sun does and it might seem with nearly the same independence of any living man's help or opposition. Equally so does it seem this great, gleaming, confident thing of power and metal came inevitably out of the past and will lead on to still more shining, still swifter and securer monsters in the future.

One sees in the perspective of history, first the Httle cockle-shells of Columbus, the comings and goings of the precarious Tudor adventurers, the slow uncertain shipping of colonial days. Says Sir George Trevelyan in the opening of his American Revolution, that then — it is still not a century and a half ago! —

"...a man bound for New York, as he sent his luggage on board at Bristol, would willingly have compounded for a voyage lasting as many weeks as it now lasts days.... Adams, during the height of the war, hurrying to France in the finest frigate Congress could place at his disposal... could make not better speed than five and forty days between Boston and Bordeaux. Lord Carlisle... was six weeks between port and port; tossed by gales which inflicted on his brother Commissioners agonies such as he forbore to make a matter of joke even to George Selwyn.... How humbler individuals fared.... They would be kept waiting weeks on the wrong side of the water for a full complement of passengers and weeks more for a fair wind, and then beating across in a badly found tub with a cargo of millstones and old iron rolling about below, they thought themselves lucky if they came into harbor a month after their private store of provisions had

run out and carrying a budget of news as stale as the ship's provisions."

Even in the time of Dickens things were by no measure more than half-way better. I have with me to enhance my comfort by this aided retrospect, his American Notes. His crossing lasted eighteen days and his boat was that "far- famed American steamer," the *Britannia* (the first of the long succession of Cunarders, of which this *Carmania* is the latest); his return took fifty days, and was a jovial home-coming under sail. It's the journey out gives us our contrast. He had the "state-room" of the period and very unhappy he was in it, as he testifies in a characteristically mounting passage.

"That this state-room had been specially engaged for 'Charles Dickens, Esquire, and Lady,' was rendered sufficiently clear even to my scared intellect by a very small manuscript, announcing the fact, which was pinned on a very fiat quilt, covering a very thin mattress, spread like a surgical plaster on a most inaccessible shelf. But that this was the state- room, concerning which Charles Dickens, Esquire, and Lady, had held daily and nightly conferences for at least four months preceding; that this could by any possibility be that small snug chamber of the imagination, which Charles Dickens, Esquire, with the spirit of prophecy strong upon him, had always foretold would contain at least one little sofa, and which his Lady, with a modest and yet most magnificent sense of its limited dimensions, had from the first opined would not hold more than two enormous portmanteaus in some odd corner out of sight (portmanteaus which could now no more be got in at the door, not to say stowed away, than a giraffe could be persuaded or forced into a flower-pot): that this utterly impracticable, thoroughly preposterous box, had the remotest reference to, or connection with, those chaste and pretty bowers, sketched in a masterly hand, in the highly varnished, lithographic plan, hanging up in the agent's counting-house in the City of London: that this room of state, in short, could be anything but a pleasant fiction and cheerful jest of the Captain's, invented and put in practice for the better relish and enjoyment of the real state-room presently to be disclosed: these were truths which I really could not bring my mind at all to bear upon or comprehend."

So he precludes his two weeks and a half of vile weather in this

paddle boat of the middle ages (she carried a “formidable” multitude of no less than eighty-six saloon passengers) and goes on to describe such experiences as this;

“About midnight we shipped a sea, which forced its way through the skylights, burst open the doors above, and came raging and roaring down into the ladies’ cabin, to the unspeakable consternation of my wife and a little Scotch lady.... They, and the handmaid before mentioned, being in such ecstacies of fear that I scarcely knew what to do with them, I naturally bethovight myself of some restorative or c9mfortable cordial; and nothing better occurring to me, at the moment, than hot brandy-and-water, I procured a tumblerful without delay. It being impossible to stand or sit without holding on, they were all heaped together in one corner of a long sofa — a fixture extending entirely across the cabin — where they clung to each other in momentary expectation of being drowned. When I approached this place with my specific, and was about to administer it with many consolatory expressions, to the nearest sufferer, what was my dismay to see them all roll slowly down to the other end! and when I staggered to that end, and held out the glass once more, how immensely baffled were my good intentions by the ship giving another lurch, and their rolling back again! I suppose I dodged them up and down this sofa, for at least a quarter of an hour, without reaching them once; and by the time I did catch them, the brandy-and-water was diminished, by constant spilling, to a teaspoonful. To complete the group, it is necessary to recognize in this disconcerted dodger, an individual very pale from sea-sickness, who had shaved his beard and brushed his hair last at Liverpool; and whose only articles of dress (linen not included) were a pair of dreadnought trousers; a blue jacket, formerly admired upon the Thames at Richmond; no stockings; and one slipper.”

It gives one a momentary sense of superiority to the great master to read. that. One surveys one’s immediate surroundings and compares them with his. One says almost patronizingly: “Poor old Dickens, you know, really did have too awful a time!” The waves are high now, and getting higher, dark-blue waves foam-crested; the waves haven’t altered — except relatively — but one isn’t even sea-sick. At the most there are squeamish moments for the weaker

brethren. One looks down on these long white-crested undulations thirty feet or so of rise and fall, as we look down the side of a sky-scraper into a tumult in the street.

We displace thirty thousand tons of water instead of twelve hundred, we can carry 521 first and second class passengers, a crew of 463, and 2260 emigrants below....

We're a city rather than a ship, our funnels go up over the height of any reasonable church spire, and you need walk the main-deck from end to end and back only four times to do a mile. Any one who has been to London and seen Trafalgar Square will get our dimensions perfectly, when he realizes that we should only squeeze into that finest site in Europe, diagonally, dwarfing the National Gallery, St. Martin's Church, hotels and every other building there out of existence, our funnels towering five feet higher than Nelson on his column. As one looks down on it all from the boat-deck one has a social microcosm, we could set up as a small modern country and renew civilization even if the rest of the world was destroyed. We've the plutocracy up here, there is a middle class on the second-class deck and forward a proletariat — the proles much in evidence — complete. It's possible to go slumming aboard.... We have our daily paper, too, printed aboard, and all the latest news by marconigram....

Never was anything of this sort before, never. Caligula's shipping it is true (unless it was Con-stantine's) did, as Mr. Cecil Torr testifies, hold a world record until the nineteenth century and he quotes Pliny for thirteen hundred tons — outdoing the *Britannia* — and Moschion for cabins and baths and covered vine-shaded walks and plants in pots. But from 1840 onward, we have broken away into a new scale for life. This *Carmania* isn't the largest ship nor the finest, nor is it to be the last. Greater ships are to follow and greater. The scale of size, the scale of power, the speed and dimensions of things about us alter remorselessly — to some limit we cannot at present descry.

§ III

It is the development of such things as this, it is this dramatically

abbreviated perspective from those pre-Reformation caravels to the larger, larger, larger of the present vessels, one must blame for one's illusions.

One is led unawares to believe that this something called Progress is a natural and necessary and secular process, going on without the definite will of man, carrying us on quite independently of us; one is led unawares to forget that it is after all from the historical point of view only a sudden universal jolting forward in history, an affair of two centuries at most, a process for the continuance of which we have no sort of guarantee. Most western Europeans have this delusion of automatic progress in things badly enough, but with Americans it seems to be almost fundamental. It is their theory of the Cosmos and they no more think of inquiring into the sustaining causes of the progressive movement than they would into the character of the stokers hidden away from us in this great thing somewhere — the officers alone know where.

I am happy to find this blind confidence very well expressed for example in an illustrated magazine article by Mr, Edgar Saltus, "New York from the Flat-iron," that a friend has put in my hand to prepare me for the wonders to come. Mr. Saltus writes with an eloquent joy of his vision of Broadway below, Broadway that is now "barring trade-routes, the largest commercial stretch on this planet." So late as Dickens's visit it was scavenged by roving untended herds of gaunt, brown, black-blotched pigs. He writes of lower Fifth Avenue and upper Fifth Avenue, of Madison Square and its tower, of sky-scrapers and sky-scrapers and sky-scrapers round and about the horizon. (I am to have a tremendous view of them to-morrow as we steam up from the Narrows.) And thus Mr. Saltus proceeds, — •

"As you lean and gaze from the toppest floors on houses below, which from those floors seem huts, it may occur to you that precisely as these huts were once regarded as supreme achievements, so, one of these days, from other and higher floors, the Flat-iron may seem a hut itself. Evolution has not halted. Undiscemibly but indefatiga-bly, always it is progressing. Its final term is not existing buildings, nor in existing man. If humanity sprang from gorillas, from humanity gods shall proceed."

The rule of three in excelsis!

“The story of Olympus is merely a tale of what might have been. That which might have been may yet come to pass. Even now could the old divinities, hushed for-evermore, awake, they would be perplexed enough to see how mortals have exceeded them.... In Fifth Avenue inns they could get fairer fare than ambrosia, and behold women beside whom Venus herself would look provincial and Juno a frump. The spectacle of electricity tamed and domesticated would surprise them not a little, the elevated quite as much, the Flat-iron still more. At sight of the latter they would recall the Titans with whom once they warred, and sink to their sun-red seas outfaced.

“In this same measure we have succeeded in exceeding them, so will posterity surpass what we have done. Evolution may be slow, it achieved an unrecognized advance when it devised buildings such as this. It is demonstrable that small rooms breed small thoughts. It will be demonstrable that, as buildings ascend, so do ideas. It is mental progress that sky-scrapers engender. From these parturitions gods may really proceed — beings, that is, who, could we remain long enough to see them, would regard us as we regard the apes....”

Mr. Saltus writes, I think, with a very typical American accent. Most Americans think Hke that and all of them I fancy feel like it. Just in that spirit a later-empire Roman might have written apropos the gigantic new basilica of Constantine the Great (who was also, one recalls, a record-breaker in ship-building) and have compared it with the straitened proportions of Cccsar’s Forum and the meagre relics of republican Rome. So too {absit omen) he might have swelled into prophecy and sounded the true modern note.

One hears that modern note everywhere nowadays where print spreads, but from America with fewer undertones than anywhere. Even I find it, ringing clear, as a thing beyond disputing, as a thing as self-evident as sunrise again and again in the expressed thought of Mr. Henry James.

But you know this progress isn’t guaranteed. We have all indeed been carried away completely by the up-rush of it all. To me now this *Carmania* seems to typify the whole thing. What matter it if there are moments when one reflects on the mysterious smallness and it would seem the ungrowing quality of the human content of it all? We are, after all, astonishingly like flies on a machine that has got

loose. No matter. Those people on the main-deck are the oddest crowd, strange Oriental-looking figures with Astrakhan caps, hook-noses, shifty eyes, and indisputably dirty habits, bold-eyed, red-capped, expectorating women, quaint and amazingly dirty children; Tartars there are too, and Cossacks, queer wraps, queer head-dresses, a sort of greasy picturesqueness over them all. They use the handkerchief solely as a head covering. Their deck is disgusting with fragments of food, with eggshells they haven't had the decency to throw overboard. Collectively they have — an atmosphere. They're going where we're going, wherever that is. What matters it? What matters it, too, if these people about me in the artistic apartment talk nothing but trivialities derived from the Daily Bulletin, think nothing but trivialities, are, except in the capacity of paying passengers, the most ineffectual gathering of human beings conceivable? What matters it that there is no connection, no understanding whatever between them and that large and ominous crowd a plank or so and a yard or so under our feet? Or between themselves for the matter of that? What matters it if nobody seems to be struck by the fact that we are all, the three thousand two hundred of us so extraordinarily got together into this tremendous machine, and that not only does nobody inquire what it is has got us together in this astonishing fashion and why, but that nobody seems to feel that we are together in any sort of way at all? One looks up at the smoke-pouring funnels and back at the foaming wake. It will be all right. Aren't we driving ahead westward at a pace of four hundred and fifty miles a day?

And twenty or thirty thousand other souls, mixed and stratified, on great steamers ahead of us, or behind, are driving westward too. That there's no collective mind apparent in it at all, worth speaking about is so much the better. That only shows its Destiny, its Progress as inevitable as gravitation. I could almost believe it, as I sit quietly writing here by a softly shaded light in this elegantly appointed drawing-room, as steady as though I was in my native habitat on dry land instead of hurrying almost fearfully, at twenty knots an hour, over a tumbling empty desert of blue waves under a windy sky. But, only a little while ago, I was out forward alone, looking at that. Everything was still except for the remote throbbing of the engines and the nearly efTaced sound of a man, singing in a strange tongue,

that came from the third-class gangway far below. The sky was clear, save for a few black streamers of clouds, Orion hung very light and large above the waters, and a great new moon, still visibly holding its dead predecessor in its crescent, sank near him. Between the sparse great stars were deep blue spaces, unfathomed distances.

Out there I had been reminded of space and time. Out there the ship was just a hastening ephemeral fire-fly that had chanced to happen across the eternal tumult of the winds and sea.

III. — NEW YORK

(*In a room on the ninth floor in the sky-scraper hotel New York*)

§ I

My first impressions of New York are impressions enormously to enhance the effect of this Progress, this material progress, that is to say, as something inevitable and inhuman, as a blindly furious energy of growth that must go on. Against the broad and level gray contours of Liverpool one found the ocean liner portentously tall, but here one steams into the middle of a town that dwarfs the ocean liner. The sky-scrapers that are the New-Yorker's perpetual boast and pride rise up to greet one as one comes through the Narrows into the Upper Bay, stand out, in a clustering group of tall irregular crenellations, the strangest crown that ever a city wore. They have an effect of immense incompleteness; each one seems to await some needed terminal, — to be, by virtue of its woolly jets of steam, still as it were in process of eruption. One thinks of St. Peter's great blue dome, finished and done as one saw it from a vine-shaded wine-booth above the Milvian Bridge, one thinks of the sudden ascendency of St. Paul's dark grace, as it soars out over any one who comes up by the Thames towards it. These are efforts that have accomplished their ends, and even Paris illuminated under the tall stem of the Eiffel Tower looked completed and defined. But New York's achievement is a threatening promise, growth going on under a pressure that increases, and amidst a hungry uproar of effort.

One gets a measure of the quality of this force of mechanical, of inhuman, growth as one marks the great statue of Liberty on our larboard, which is meant to dominate and fails absolutely to dominate the scene. It gets to three hundred feet about, by standing on a pedestal of a hundred and fifty; and the uplifted torch, seen against the sky, suggests an arm straining upward, straining in hopeless competition with the fierce commercial altitudes ahead. Poor liberating Lady of the American ideal! One passes her and

forgets.

Happy returning natives greet the great pillars of business by name, the St. Paul Building, the World, the Manhattan tower; the English new-comer notes the clear emphasis of the detail, the freedom from smoke and atmospheric mystery that New York gains from burning anthracite, the jetting white steam clouds that emphasize that freedom. Across the broad harbor plies an unfamiliar traffic of grotesque broad ferry-boats, black with people, glutted to the lips with vans and carts, each hooting and yelping its own distinctive note, and there is a wild hurrying up and down and to and fro of piping and bellowing tugs and barges; and a great floating platform, bearing a railway train, gets athwart our course as we ascend and evokes megatherial bel-lowings. Everything is moving at a great speed, and whistling and howling, it seems, and presently far ahead we make out our own pier, black with expectant people, and set up our own distinctive whoop, and with the help of half a dozen furiously noisy tugs are finally lugged and butted into dock. The tugs converse by yells and whistles, it is an affair of short-tempered mechanical monsters, amidst which one watches for one's opportunity to get ashore.

Noise and human hurry and a vastness of means and collective result, rather than any vastness of achievement, is the pervading quality of New York. The great thing is the mechanical thing, the unintentional thing which is speeding up all these people, driving them in headlong hurry this way and that, exhorting them by the voice of every car conductor to "step lively," aggregating them into shoving and elbowing masses, making them stand clinging to straps, jerking them up elevator shafts and pouring them on to the ferry-boats. But this accidental great thing is at times a very great thing. Much more impressive than the sky-scrapers to my mind is the large Brooklyn suspension-bridge.

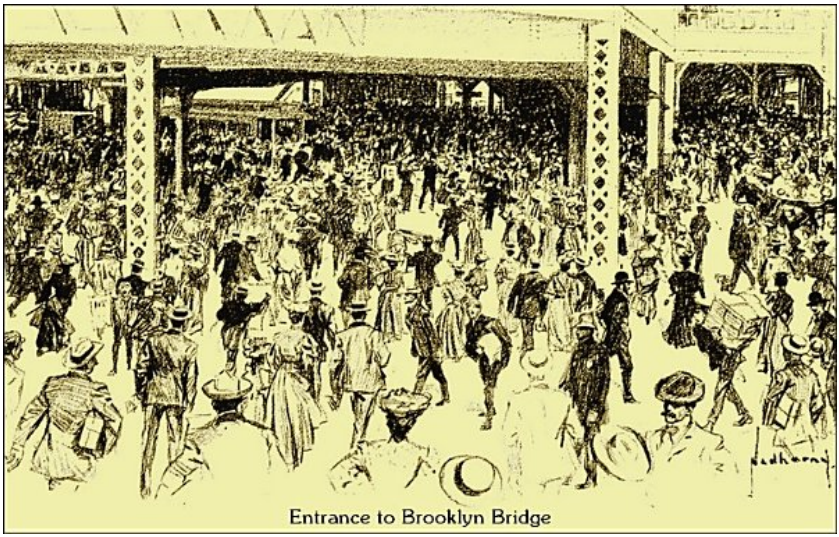
Entrance to Brooklyn Bridge

I have never troubled to ask who built that; its greatness is not in its design, but in the quality of necessity one perceives in its inanimate immensity. It tells, as one goes under it up the East River, but it is far more impressive to the stranger to come upon it by glimpses, wandering down to it through the ill-paved van-infested streets from Chatham Square. One sees parts of Cyclopean stone arches, one gets suggestive glimpses through the jungle growth of business now of the back, now of the flanks, of the monster; then, as one comes out on the river, one discovers far up in one's sky the long sweep of the bridge itself, foreshortened and with a maximum of perspective effect; the streams of pedestrians and the long line of carts and vans, quaintly microscopic against the blue, the creeping progress of the little cars on the lower edge of the long chain of netting; all these things dwindling indistinguishably before Brooklyn is reached. Thence, if it is late afternoon, one may walk back to City Hall Park and encounter and experience the convergent stream of clerks and workers making for the bridge, mark it grow denser and denser, until at last they come near choking even the broad approaches of the giant duct, until the congested multitudes jostle and fight for a way. They arrive marching afoot by every street in endless procession; crammed trolley-cars disgorge them; the Subway pours them out.... The individuals count for nothing, they are clerks

and stenographers, shopmen, shop-girls, workers of innumerable types, black-coated men, hat-and-blouse girls, shabby and cheaply clad persons, such as one sees in London, in Berlin, anywhere. Perhaps they hurry more, perhaps they seem more eager. But the distinctive effect is the mass, the black torrent, rippled with unmeaning faces, the great, the unprecedented mul-titudinousness of the thing, the inhuman force of it all.

I made no efforts to present any of my letters, or to find any one to talk to on my first day in New York. I landed, got a casual lunch, and w^andered alone until New York's peculiar effect of inhuman noise and pressure and growth became overwhelming, touched me with a sense of solitude, and drove me into the hospitable companionship of the Century Club. Oh, no doubt of New York's immensity! The sense of soulless gigantic forces, that took no heed of men, became stronger and stronger all that day. The pavements were often almost incredibly out of repair, when I became footweary the streetcars would not wait for me, and I had to learn their stopping-points as best I might. I wandered, just at the right pitch of fatigue to get the full force of it into the eastward region between Third and Fourth Avenue, came upon the Elevated railway at its worst, the darkened streets of disordered paving below, trolley-car-congested, the ugly clumsy lattice, sonorously busy overhead, a clatter of vans and draught-horses, and great crowds of cheap, base-looking people hurrying uncivilly by....

§ II

I CORRECTED that first crowded impression of New York with a clearer, brighter vision of expansiveness when next day I began to realize the social quality of New York's central backbone, between Fourth Avenue and Sixth. The effect remained still that of an immeasurably powerful forward movement of rapid eager advance, a process of enlargement and increment in every material sense, but it may be because I was no longer fatigued, was now a little initiated, the human being seemed less of a fly upon the wheels. I visited immense and magnificent clubs — London has no such splendors as

the Union, the University, the new hall of the Harvard — I witnessed the great torrent of spending and glittering prosperity in carriage and motor-car pour along Fifth Avenue. I became aware of effects that were not only vast and opulent but fine. It grew upon me that the Twentieth Century, which found New York brown-stone of the color of desiccated chocolate, meant to leave it a city of white and colored marble. I found myself agape, admiring a sky-scraper — the prow of the Flat-iron Building, to be particular, ploughing up through the traffic of Broadway and Fifth Avenue in the afternoon light. The New York sundown and twilight seemed to me quite glorious things. Down the western streets one gets the sky hung in long cloud-barred strips, like Japanese paintings, celestial tranquil yellows and greens and pink luminosity toning down to the reeking blue-brown edge of the distant New Jersey atmosphere, and the clear, black, hard activity of crowd and trolley-car and Elevated railroad. Against this deepening color came the innumerable little lights of the house cliffs and the street tier above tier. New York is lavish of light, it is lavish of everything, it is full of the sense of spending from an inexhaustible supply. For a time one is drawn irresistibly into the universal belief in that inexhaustible supply.

At a bright table in Delmonico's to-day at lunch-time, my host told me the first news of the destruction of the great part of San Francisco by earthquake and fire. It had just come through to him, it wasn't yet being shouted by the newsboys. He told me compactly of dislocated water-mains, of the ill-luck of the unusual eastward wind that was blowing the fire up-town, of a thousand reported dead, of the manifest doom of the greater portion of the city, and presently the shouting voices in the street outside arose to chorus him. He was a newspaper man and a little preoccupied because his San Francisco offices were burning, and that no further news was arriving after these first intimations. Naturally the catastrophe was our topic. But this disaster did not affect him, it does not seem to have affected any one with a sense of final destruction, with any foreboding of irreparable disaster. Every one is talking of it this afternoon, and no one is in the least degree dismayed. I have talked and listened in two clubs, watched people in cars and in the street, and one man is glad that Chinatown will be cleared out for good; another's chief

solicitude is for Millet's "Man with the Hoe." "They'll cut it out of the frame," he says, a little anxiously. "Sure." But there is no doubt anywhere that San Francisco can be rebuilt, larger, better, and soon. Just as there would be none at all if all this New York that has so obsessed me with its limitless bigness was itself a blazing ruin. I believe these people would more than half like the situation. It would give them scope, it would facilitate that conversion into white marble in progress everywhere, it would settle the difficulties of the Elevated railroad and clear out the tangles of lower New York. There is no sense of accomplishment and finality in any of these things, the largest, the finest, the tallest, are so obviously no more than symptoms and promises of Material Progress, of inhuman material progress that is so in the nature of things that no one would regret their passing. That, I say again, is at the first encounter the peculiar American effect that began directly I stepped aboard the liner, and that rises here to a towering, shining, clamorous climax. The sense of inexhaustible supply, of an ultra-human force behind it all, is, for a time, invincible.

One assumes, with Mr. Saltus, that all America is in this vein, and that this is the way the future must inevitably go. One has a vision of bright electrical subways, replacing the filth-diffusing railways of to-day, of clean, clear pavements free altogether from the fly-prolific filth of horses coming almost, as it were, of their own accord beneath the feet of a population that no longer expectorates at all; of grimy stone and peeling paint giving way everywhere to white marble and spotless surfaces, and a shining order, of everything wider, taller, cleaner, better.... So that, in the meanwhile, a certain amount of jostling and hurry and untidiness, and even — to put it mildly — forcefulness may be forgiven.

§ III

I VISITED Ellis Island yesterday. It chanced to be a good day for my purpose. For the first time in its history this filter of immigrant humanity has this week proved inadequate to the demand upon it. It was choked, and half a score of gravid liners were lying

uncomfortably up the harbor, replete with twenty thousand or so of crude Americans from Ireland and Poland and Italy and Syria and Finland and Albania; men, women, children, dirt, and bags together. Of immigration I shall have to write later; what concerns me now is chiefly the wholesale and multitudinous quality of that place and its work. I made my way with my introduction along white passages and through traps and a maze of metal lattices that did for a while succeed in catching and imprisoning me, to Commissioner Wachorn, in his quiet, green-toned office. There, for a time, I sat judicially and heard him deal methodically, swiftly, sympathetically, with case after case, a string of appeals against the sentences of deportation pronounced in the busy little courts below. First would come one dingy and strangely garbed group of wild-eyed aliens, and then another: Roumanian gypsies. South Italians, Ruthenians, Swedes, each under the intelligent guidance of a uniformed interpreter, and a case would be started, a report made to Washington, and they would drop out again, hopeful or sullen or fearful as the evidence might trend....

Down-stairs we find the courts, and these seen, we traverse long refectories, long aisles of tables, and close-packed dormitories with banks of steel mattresses, tier above tier, and galleries and passages innumerable, perplexing intricacy that slowly grows systematic with the Commissioner's explanations.

Here is a huge, gray, untidy waiting-room, like a big railway-depot room, full of a sinister crowd of miserable people, loafing about or sitting dejectedly, whom America refuses, and here a second and a third such chamber each with its tragic and evil-looking crowd that hates us, and that even ventures to groan and hiss at us a little for our glimpse of its large dirty spectacle of hopeless failure, and here, squalid enough indeed, but still to some degree hopeful, are the appeal cases as yet undecided. In one place, at a bank of ranges, works an army of men cooks, in another spins the big machinery of the Ellis Island laundry, washing blankets, drying blankets, day in and day out, a big clean steamy space of hurry and rotation. Then, I recall a neat apartment lined to the ceiling with little drawers, a card-index of the names and nationalities and significant circumstances of upward of a million and a half of people who have gone on and who

are yet liable to recall.

The central hall is the key of this impression. All day long, through an intricate series of metal pens, the long procession files, step by step, bearing bundles and trunks and boxes, past this examiner and that, past the quick, alert medical officers, the tallymen and the clerks. At every point immigrants are being picked out and set aside for further medical examination, for further questions, for the busy little courts; but the main procession satisfies conditions, passes on. It is a daily procession that, with a yard of space to each, would stretch over three miles, that any week in the year would more than equal in numbers that daily procession of the unemployed that is becoming a regular feature of the London winter, that in a year could put a cordon round London or New York of close-marching people, could populate a new Boston, that in a century — What in a century will it all amount to?...

On they go, from this pen to that, pen by pen, towards a desk at a little metal wicket — the gate of America. Through this metal wicket drips the immigration stream — all day long, every two or three seconds an immigrant, with a valise or a bundle, passes the little desk and goes on past the well-managed money-changing place, past the carefully organized separating ways that go to this railway or that, past the guiding, protecting officials — into a new world. The great majority are young men , and young women, between seventeen and thirty, good, youthful, hopeful, peasant stock. They stand in a long string, waiting to go through that wicket, with bundles, with little tin boxes, with cheap portmanteaus, with odd packages, in pairs, in families, alone, women with children, men with strings of dependents, young couples. All day that string of human beads waits there, jerks forward, waits again; all day and every day, constantly replenished, constantly dropping the end beads through the wicket, till the units mount to hundreds and the hundreds to thousands....

Yes, Ellis Island is quietly immense. It gives one a visible image of one aspect at least of this world-large process of filling and growing and synthesis, which is America.

“Look there!” said the Commissioner, taking me by the arm and pointing, and I saw a monster steamship far away, and already a big bulk looming up the Narrows. “It’s the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse.

She's got — I forget the exact figures, but let us say — eight hundred and fifty-three more for us. She'll have to keep them until Friday at the earliest. And there's more behind her, and more strung out all across the Atlantic."

In one record day this month 21,000 immigrants came into the port of New York alone; in one week over 50,000. This year the total will be 1,200,000 souls, pouring in, finding work at once, producing no fall in wages. They start digging and building and making. Just think of the dimensions of it!

§ IV

One must get away from New York to see the placc in its proper relations. I visited Staten Island and Jersey City, motored up to Sleepy Hollow (where once the Headless Horseman rode), saw suburbs and intimations of suburbs without end, and finished with the long and crowded spectacle of the East River as one sees it from the Fall River boat. It was Friday night, and the Fall River boat was in a state of fine congestion with Jews, Italians, and week-enders, and one stood crowded and surveyed the crowded shore, the sky-scrapers and tenement-houses, the huge grain elevators, big warehouses, the great Brooklyn Bridge, the still greater Williamsburgh Bridge, the great promise of yet another monstrous bridge, overwhelmingly monstrous by any European example I know, and so past long miles of city to the left and to the right past the wide Brooklyn navy-yard (where three clean white war-ships lay moored), past the clustering castellated asylums, hospitals, almshouses and reformatories of Black-well's long shore and Ward's Island, and then through a long reluctant diminuendo on each receding bank, until, indeed, New York, though it seemed incredible, had done.

And at one point a grave-voiced man in a peaked cap, with guide-books to sell, pleased me greatly by ending all idle talk suddenly with the stentorian announcement: "We are now in Hell Gate. We are now passing through Hell Gate!"

But they've blown Hell Gate open with dynamite, and it wasn't at all the Hell Gate that I read about in my boyhood in the delightful

chronicle of Knickerbocker,

So through an elbowing evening (to the tune of “Cavalleria Rusticana “ on an irrepressible string band) and a night of unmitigated fog-horn to Boston, which I had been given to understand was a cultured and uneventful city offering great opportunities for reflection and intellectual digestion. And, indeed, the large quiet of Beacon Street, in the early morning sunshine, seemed to more than justify that expectation....

IV. — GROWTH INVINCIBLE

§ I

But Boston did not propose that its less-assertive key should be misunderstood, and in a singularly short space of time I found myself climbing into a tremulous impatient motor-car in company with three enthusiastic exponents of the work of the Metropolitan Park Commission, and provided with a neatly tinted map, large and framed and glazed, to explore a fresh and more deliberate phase in this great American symphony, this symphony of Growth.

If possible it is more impressive, even, than the crowded largeness of New York, to trace the serene preparation Boston has made through this Commission to be widely and easily vast. New York's humanity has a curious air of being carried along upon a wave of irresistible prosperity, but Boston confesses design. I suppose no city in all the world (unless it be Washington) has ever produced so complete and ample a forecast of its own future as this Commission's plan of Boston. An area with a radius of between fifteen and twenty miles from the State House has been planned out and prepared for Growth. Great reservations of woodland and hill have been made, the banks of nearly all the streams and rivers and meres have been secured for public park and garden, for boating and other water sports*big avenues of vigorous young trees; a hundred and fifty yards or so wide, with driveways and ridingways and a central grassy band for electric tramways, have been prepared, and, indeed, the fair and ample and shady new Boston, the Boston of 1950, grows visibly before one's eyes. I found myself comparing the disciplined confidence of these proposals to the blind enlargement of London; London, that like a bowl of viscid human fluid, boils sullenly over the rim of its encircling hills and slops messily and uglily into the home counties. I could not but contrast their large intelHgence with the confused hesitations and waste and muddle of our English suburban developments....

There were moments, indeed, when it seemed too good to be true, and Mr. Sylvester Baxter, who was with me and whose faith has

done so much to secure this mapping out of a city's growth beyond all precedent, became the victim of my doubts. "Will this enormous space of sunHt woodland and marsh and meadow really be filled at any time?" I urged. "AH cities do not grow. Cities have shrunken."

I recalled Bruges. I recalled the empty, goat-sustaining, flower-rich meadows of Rome within the wall. What made him so sure of this progressive magnificence of Boston's growth? My doubts fell on stony soil. My companions seemed to think these scepticisms inopportune, a forced eccentricity, like doubting the coming of to-morrow. Of,course Growth will go on....

The subject was changed by the sight of the fine marble buildings of the Harvard medical school, a shining fagade partially eclipsed by several dingy and unsightly wooden houses.

"These shanties will go, of course," says one of my companions. "It's proposed to take the avenue right across this space straight to the schools."

"You'll have to fill the marsh, then, and buy the houses."

"Sure."...

I find myself comparing this huge growth process of America with the things in my own land. After all, this growth is no distinctive American thing; it is the same process anywhere — only in America there are no disguises, no complications. Come to think of it, Birmingham and Manchester are as new as Boston — newer; and London, south and east of the Thames, is, save for a little nucleus, more recent than Chicago — is in places, I am told, with its smoky disorder, its clattering ways, its brutality of industrial conflict, very like Chicago. But nowhere now is growth still so certainly and confidently going on as here. Nowhere is it upon so great a scale as here, and with so confident an outlook towards the things to come. And nowhere is it passing more certainly from the first phase of a moblike rush of individualistic undertakings into a planned and ordered progress.

§ II

Everywhere in the America I have seen the same note sounds, the

note of a fatal gigantic economic development, of large prevision and enormous pressures.

I heard it clear above the roar of Niagara — for, after all, I stopped off at Niagara.

As a water-fall, Niagara's claim to distinction is now mainly quantitative; its spectacular effect, its magnificent and humbling size and splendor, were long since destroyed beyond recovery by the hotels, the factories, the power-houses, the bridges and tramways and hoardings that arose about it. It must have been a fine thing to happen upon suddenly after a day of solitary travel; the Indians, they say, gave it worship; but it's no great wonder to reach it by trolley-car, through a street hack-infested and full of adventurous refreshment-places and souvenir-shops and the touting guides. There were great quantities of young couples and other sight-seers with the usual encumbrances of wrap and bag and umbrella, trailing out across the bridges and along the neat paths of the Reservation Parks, asking the way to this point and that. Notice boards cut the eye, offering extra joys and memorable objects for twenty-five and fifty cents, and it was proposed you should keep off the grass.

After all, the gorge of Niagara is very like any good gorge in the Ardennes, except that it has more water; it's about as wide and about as deep, and there is no effect at all that one has not seen a dozen times in other cascades. One gets all the water one wants at Tivoli, one has gone behind half a hundred downpours just as impressive in Switzerland; a hundred tons of water is really just as stunning as ten million. A hundred tons of water stuns one altogether, and what more do you want? One recalls "Orridos" and "Schluchts" that are not only magnificent but lonely.

No doubt the Falls, seen from the Canadian side, have a peculiar long majesty of effect; but the finest thing in it all, to my mind, was not Niagara at all, but to look up-stream from Goat Island and see the sea-wide crest of the flashing sunlit rapids against the gray-blue sky. That was like a limitless ocean pouring down a sloping world towards one, and I lingered, held by that, returning to it through an indolent afternoon. It gripped the imagination as nothing else there seemed to do. It was so broad an infinitude of splash at^d hurry. And, moreover, all the enterprising hotels and expectant trippers were out

of sight.

That was the best of the display. The real interest of Niagara for me, was not in the water-fall but in the human accumulations about it. They stood for the future, threats and promises, and the water-fall was just a vast reiteration of falling water. The note of growth in human accomplishment rose clear and triumphant above the elemental thunder.

For the most part these accumulations of human effort about Niagara are extremely defiling and ugly. Nothing — not even the hotel signs and advertisement boards — could be more offensive to the eye and mind than the Schoellkopf Company's untidy confusion of sheds and buildings on the American side, wastefully squirting out long, tail-race cascades below the bridge, and nothing more disgusting than the sewer-pipes and gas-work ooze that the town of Niagara Falls contributes to the scenery. But, after all, these represent only the first slovenly onslaught of mankind's expansion, the pioneers' camp of the human-growth process that already changes its quality and manner. There are finer things than these outrages to be found.

The dynamos and turbines of the Niagara Falls Power Company, for example, impressed me far more profoundly than the Cave of the Winds; are, indeed, to my mind, greater and more beautiful than that accidental eddying of air beside a downpour. They are will made visible, thought translated into easy and commanding things. They are clean, noiseless, and starkly powerful. All the clatter and tumult of the early age of machinery is past and gone here; there is no smoke, no coal grit, no dirt at all. The wheel-pit into which one descends has an almost cloistered quiet about its softly humming turbines. These are altogether noble masses of machinery, huge black slumbering monsters, great sleeping tops that engender irresistible forces in their sleep. They sprang, armed like Minerva, from serene and speculative, foreseeing and endeavoring brains. First was the word and then these powers. A man goes to and fro quietly in the long, clean hall of the dynamos. There is no clangor, no racket. Yet the outer rim of the big generators is spinning at the pace of a hundred thousand miles an hour; the dazzling clean switchboard, with its little handles and levers, is the seat of empire over more

power than the strength of a million disciplined, unquestioning men. All these great things are as silent, as wonderfully made, as the heart in a living body, and stouter and stronger than that....

When I thought that these two huge wheel-pits of this company are themselves but a little intimation of what can be done in this way, what will be done in this way, my imagination towered above me. I fell into a day-dream of the coming power of men, and how that power may be used by them....

For surely the greatness of life is still to come, it is not in such accidents as mountains or the sea. I have seen the splendor of the mountains, sunrise and sunset among them, and the waste immensity of sky and sea. I am not bUnd because I can see beyond these glories. To me no other thing is credible than that all the natural beauty in the world is only so much material for the imagination and the mind, so many hints and suggestions for art and creation. Whatever is, is but the lure and symbol towards what can be willed and done. Man lives to make — in the end he must make, for there will be nothing else left for him to do.

And the world he will make — after a thousand years or so!

I, at least, can forgive the loss of all the accidental, unmeaning beauty that is going for the sake of the beauty of fine order and intention that will come. I believe — passionately, as a doubting lover believes in his mistress — in the future of mankind. And so to me it seems altogether well that all the froth and hurry of Niagara at last, all of it, dying into hungry canals of intake, should rise again in light and power, in ordered and equipped and proud and beautiful humanity, in cities and palaces and the emancipated souls and hearts of men....

I turned back to look at the povv^er-house as I walked towards the Falls, and halted and stared. Its architecture brought me out of my day-dream to the quality of contemporary things again. It's a well-intentioned building enough, extraordinarily well intentioned, and regardless of expense. It's in granite and by Stanford White, and yet — It hasn't caught the note. There's a touch of respectability in it, more than a hint of the box of bricks. Odd, but I'd almost as soon have had one of the Schoellkopf sheds.

A community that can produce such things as those turbines and

dynamos, and then cover them over with this dull exterior, is capable, one realizes, of feats of bathos. One feels that all the power that throbs in the copper cables below may end at last in turning Great Wheels for excursionists, stamping out aluminum "fancy" ware, and illuminating night advertisements for drug shops and music halls. I had an afternoon of busy doubts,...

There is much discussion about Niagara at present. It may be some queer compromise, based on the pretence that a voluminous water-fall is necessarily a thing of incredible beauty, and a human use is necessarily a degrading use, will "save" Niagara and the hack-drivers and the souvenir-shops for series of years yet, "a magnificent monimient to the pride of the United States in a glory of nature," as one journalistic savior puts it. It is, as public opinion stands, a quite conceivable thing. This electric development may be stopped after all, and the huge fall of water remain surrounded by gravel paths and parapets and geraniiim-beds, a staring-point for dull wonder, a crown for a day's excursion, a thunderous impressive accessory to the vulgar love-making that fills the surrounding hotels, a Titanic imbecility of wasted gifts. But I don't think so. I think somebody will pay something, and the journalistic zeal for scenery abate. I think the huge social and industrial process of America will win in this conflict, and at last capture Niagara altogether.

And then — what use will it make of its prey?

§ III

In smoky, vast, undisciplined Chicago Growth forced itself upon me again as the dominant American fact, but this time a dark disorder of growth. I went about Chicago seeing many things of which I may say something later. I visited the top of the Masonic Building and viewed a wilderness of sky- scrapers, I acquired a felt of memories of swing bridges and viaducts and interlacing railways and jostling crowds and extraordinarily dirty streets, I learnt something of the mystery of the "floating foundations" upon which so much of Chicago rests. But I got my best vision of Chicago as I left it.

I sat in the open observation-car at the end of the Pennsylvania

Limited Express, and watched the long defile of industrialism from the Union Station in the heart of things to out beyond South Chicago, a dozen miles away. I had not gone to the bloody spectacle of the stock-yards that "feed the world," because, to be frank, I have an immense repugnance to the killing of fixed and helpless animals; I saw nothing of those ill-managed, ill-inspected establishments, though I smelt the unwholesome reek from them ever and again, and so it was here I saw for the first time the enormous expanse and intricacy of railroads that net this great industrial desolation, and something of the going and coming of the myriads of polyglot workers. Chicago burns bituminous coal, it has a reek that outdoes London, and right and left of the line rise vast chimneys, huge blackened grain-elevators, flame-crowned furnaces and gauntly ugly and filthy factory buildings, monstrous mounds of refuse, desolate, empty lots littered with rusty cans, old iron, and indescribable rubbish. Interspersed with these are groups of dirty, disreputable, insanitary-looking wooden houses.

We swept along the many-railed track, and the straws and scraps of paper danced in our eddy as we passed. We overtook local trains and they receded slowly in the great perspective, huge freight-trains met us or were overtaken; long trains of doomed cattle passed northward; solitary engines went by — every engine tolling a melancholy bell; open trucks crowded with workmen went cityward. By the side of the track, and over the level crossings, walked great numbers of people. So it goes on mile after mile — Chicago. The sun was now bright, now pallid through some streaming curtain of smoke; the spring afternoon was lit here and again by the gallant struggle of some stunted tree with a rare and startling note of new green....

It was like a prolonged, enlarged mingling of the south side of London with all that is bleak and ugly in the Black Country. It is the most perfect presentation of nineteenth-century individualistic industrialism I have ever seen — in its vast, its magnificent squalor; it is pure nineteenth century; it had no past at all before that; in 1800 it was empty prairie, and one marvels for its future. It is indeed a nineteenth-century nightmare that culminates beyond South Chicago in the monstrous fungoid shapes, the endless smoking chimneys, the

squat retorts, the black smoke pall of the Standard Oil Company. For a time the sun is veiled altogether by that....

And then suddenly Chicago is a dark smear under the sky, and we are in the large emptiness of America, the other America — America in between.

§ IV

"Undisciplined" — that is the word for Chicago. It is the word for all the progress of the Victorian time, a scrambling, ill-mannered, undignified, unintelligent development of material resources. Packing-town, for example, is a place that feeds the world with meat, that concentrates the produce of a splendid countryside at a position of imperial advantage, and its owners have no more sense, no better moral quality, than to make it stink in the nostrils of any one who comes within two miles of it; to make it a centre of distribution for disease and decay, an arena of shabby evasions and extra profits; a scene of brutal economic conflict and squalid filthiness, offensive to every sense. (I wish I could catch the soul of Herbert Spencer and tether it in Chicago for awhile to gather fresh evidence upon the superiority of unfettered individualistic enterprises to things managed by the state.)

Want of discipline! Chicago is one hoarse cry for discipline! The reek and scandal of the stock-yards is really only a gigantic form of that same quality in American life that, in a minor aspect, makes the sidewalk filthy. The key to the peculiar nasty ugliness of those Schoellkopf works that defile the Niagara gorge is the same quality. The detestable-ness of the Elevated railroads of Chicago and Boston and New York have this in common. All that is ugly in America, in Lancashire, in South and East London, in the Pas de Calais, is due to this, to the shoving unintelligent proceedings of underbred and morally obtuse men. Each man is for himself, each enterprise; there is no order, no prevision, no common and universal plan. Modern economic organization is still as yet only thinking of emerging from its first chaotic stage, the stage of lawless enterprise and insanitary aggregation, the stage of the prospector's camp....

But it does emerge.

Men are makers — American men, I think, more than most men — and amidst even the catastrophic jumble of Chicago one finds the same creative forces at work that are struggling to replan a greater Boston, and that turned a waste of dumps and swamps and cabbage-gardens into Central Park, New York. Chicago also has its Parks Commission and its green avenues, its bright flower-gardens, its lakes and playing-fields. Its Midway Plaisance is in amazing contrast with the dirt, the congestion, the moral disorder of its State Street; its Field Houses do visible battle with slum and the frantic meanness of commercial folly.

Field Houses are peculiar to Chicago, and Chicago has every

reason to be proud of them. I visited one that is positively within smell of the stock-yards and wedged into a district of gaunt and dirty slums. It stands in the midst of a little park, and close by it are three playing-grounds with swings and parallel bars and all manner of athletic appliances, one for little children, one for girls and women, and one for boys and youths. In the children's place is a paddling-pond of clear, clean, running water and a shaded area of frequently changed sand, and in the park was a broad asphalted arena that can be flooded for skating in winter. All this is free to all comers, and free too is the Field House itself. This is a large, cool Italianate place with two or three reading-rooms — one specially arranged for children — a big discussion-hall, a big and well-equipped gymnasium, and big, free baths for men and for women. There is also a clean, bright refreshment-place where wholesome food is sold just above cost price. It was early on Friday afternoon when I saw it all, but the place was busy with children, reading, bathing, playing in a hundred different ways.

And this Field House is not an isolated philanthropic enterprise. It is just one of a number that are dotted about Chicago, mitigating and civilizing its squalor. It was not distilled by begging and charity from the stench of the stock-yards or the reek of Standard Oil. It is part of the normal work of a special taxing body created by the legislature of the State of Illinois. It is just one of the fruits upon one of the growths that spring from such persistent creative efforts as that of the Chicago City Club. It is socialism — even as its enemies declare....

Even amidst the sombre uncleanliness of Chicago one sees the light of a new epoch, the coming of new conceptions, of foresight, of large collective plans and discipline to achieve them, the fresh green leaves, among all the festering manure, of the giant growths of a more orderly and more beautiful age.

§ V

These growing towns, these giant towns that grow up and out, that grow orderly and splendid out of their first chaotic beginnings, are only little patches upon a vast expanse, upon what is still of all

habitable countries the emptiest country in the world. My long express journey from Chicago to Washington lasted a day and a night and more, I could get sooner from my home in Kent to Italy, and yet that was still well under a third of the way across the continent. I spent most of my daylight time in the fine and graceful open loggia at the end of the observation-car or in looking out of the windows, looking at hills and valleys, townships and quiet places, sudden busy industrial outbreaks about coalmine or metal, big undisciplined rivers that spread into swamp and lake, new forest growths, very bright and green now, foaming up above blackened stumps. There were many cypress-trees and trees with white blossom and the Judas-tree, very abundant among the spring-time green. I got still more clearly the enormous scale of this American destiny I seek to discuss, through all that long and interesting day of transit. I measured, as it seemed to me for the first time, the real scale of the growth process that has put a four-track road nine hundred miles across this exuberant land and scarred every available hill with furnace and mine.

Bigness — that's the word! The very fields and farm-buildings seem to me to have four times the size of our English farms.

Some casual suggestion of the wayside, I forget now what, set me thinking of the former days, so recent that they are yet within the lifetime of living men, when this was frontier land, when even the middle west remained to be won. I thought of the slow diffusing population of the forties, the pioneer wagon, the men armed with axe and rifle, knife and revolver, the fear of the Indians, the weak and casual incidence of law. Then the high-road was but a prairie track and all these hills and hidden minerals unconquered fastnesses that might, it seemed, hold out for centuries before they gave their treasure. How quickly things had come! "Progress, progress," murmured the wheels, and I began to make this steady, swift, and shiningly equipped train a figure, just as I had made the *Carmania* a figure of that big onward sweep that is moving us all together. It was not a noisy train, after the English fashion, nor did the cars sway and jump after the habit of our lighter coaches, but the air was full of deep, triumphant rhythms. " It goes on," I said, "invincibly," and even as the thought was in my head, the brakes set up a dron-"ing, a

vibration ran through the train and we slowed and stopped. A minute passed, and then we rumbled softly back to a little trestle-bridge and stood there.

I got up, looked from the window, and then went to the platform at the end of the train. I found two men, a passenger and a colored parlor-car attendant. The former was on the bottom step of the car, the latter was supplying him with information.

"His head's still in the water," he remarked.

"Whose head?" said I.

"A man we've killed," said he. "We caught him in the trestle-bridge."

I descended a step, craned over my fellow-passenger, and saw a little group standing curiously about the derelict thing that had been a living man three minutes before. It was now a crumpled, dark-stained blue blouse, a limply broken arm with hand askew, trousered legs that sprawled quaintly, and a pair of heavy boots, lying in the sunlit fresh grass by the water below the trestle-bridge....

A man on the line gave inadequate explanations. "He'd have been all right if he hadn't come over this side," he said.

"Who was he?" said I.

"One of these Eyetalians on the line," he said, and turned away. The train bristled now with a bunch of curiosity at every car end, and even windows were opened....

Presently it was intimated to us by a whistle and the hasty return of men to the cars that the incident had closed. We began to move forward again, crept up to speed....

But I could not go on with my conception of the train as a symbol of human advancement. That crumpled blue blouse and queerly careless legs would get into the picture and set up all sorts of alien speculations. I thought of distant north Italian valleys and brown boys among the vines and goats, of the immigrants who had sung remotely to me out of the *Carmania*'s steerage, of the hopeful bright-eyed procession of the new-comers through Ellis Island wicket, of the regiments of workers the line had shown me, and I told myself a tale of this Italian's journey to the land of promise, this land of gigantic promises....

For a time the big spectacle of America about me took on a

quality of magnificent infidelity....

And by reason of this incident my last Image of Material Progress thundered into Washington station five minutes behind its scheduled time.

V. — THE ECONOMIC PROCESS

§ I

Let me try now and make some sort of general picture of the American nation as it impresses itself upon me. It is, you will understand, the vision of a hurried bird of passage, defective and inaccurate at every point of detail, but perhaps for my present purpose not so very much the worse for that. The fact that I am transitory and bring a sort of theorizing naivete to this review is just what gives me the chance to remark these obvious things the habituated have forgotten. I have already tried to render something of the effect of huge unrestrained growth and material progress that America first gives one, and I have pointed out that so far America seems to me only to refresh an old impression, to give starkly and startlingly what is going on everywhere, what is indeed as much in evidence in Birkenhead or Milan or London or Calcutta, a huge extension of human power and the scale of human operations. This growth was elaborated in the physical and chemical laboratories and the industrial experiments of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and chiefly in Europe. The extension itself is nothing typically American. Nevertheless America now shows it best. America is most under the stress and urgency of it, resonates most readily and loudly to its note.

The long distances of travel, and the sense of isolation between place and place, the remoteness verging upon inaudibility of Washington in Chicago, of Chicago in Boston, the vision I have had of America from observation cars and railroad windows brings home to me more and more that this huge development of human appliances and resources is here going on in a community that is still, for all the dense crowds of New York, the teeming congestion of the East Side, extraordinarily scattered. America, one recalls, is still an unoccupied country, across which the latest developments of civilization are rushing. We are dealing here with a continuous area of land which is, leaving Alaska out of account altogether, equal to Great Britain, France, the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian

Empire, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Holland, Spain and Portugal, Sweden and Norway, Turkey in Europe, Egypt and the whole Empire of India, and the population spread out over this vast space is still less than the joint population of the fir§t two countries named and not a quarter that of India. Moreover, it is not spread at all evenly. Much of it is in undistributed clots. It is not upon the soil, barely half of it is in holdings and homes and authentic communities. It is a population of an extremely modern type. Urban concentration has already gone far with it; fifteen millions of it are crowded into and about twenty great cities, other eighteen millions make up five hundred towns. Between these centres of population run railways indeed, telegraph wires, telephone connections, tracks of various sorts, but to the European eye these are mere scratchings on a virgin surface. An empty wilderness manifests itself through this thin network of human conveniences, appears in the meshes even at the railroad side. Essentially America is still an unsettled land, with only a few incidental good roads in favored places, with no universal police, with no wayside inns where a civilized man may rest, with still only the crudest of rural postal deliveries, with long stretches of swamp and forest and desert by the track side, still unassailed by industry. This much one sees clearly enough eastward of Chicago. Westward, I am told, it becomes more and more the fact. In Idaho at last, comes the untouched and perhaps invincible desert, plain and continuous through the long hours of travel. Huge areas do not contain one human being to the square mile, still vaster portions fall short of two....

And this community, to which material progress is bringing such enormous powers, and that is knotted so densely here and there, and is otherwise so attenuated a veil over the huge land surface, is, as Professor Miinsterberg points out, in spite of vast and increasing masses of immigrants still a curiously homogeneous one, homogeneous in the spirit of its activities and speaking a common tongue. It is sustained by certain economic conventions, inspired throughout by certain habits, certain trends of suggestion, certain phrases and certain interpretations that collectively make up what one may call the American Idea. To the process of enlargement and diffusion and increase and multiplying resources, we must now bring

the consideration of the social and economic process that is going on. What is the form of that process as one finds it in America? An English Tory will tell you promptly, “a scramble for dollars.” A good American will tell you it is self realization under equality of opportunity. The English Tory will probably allege that that amounts to the same thing. Let us look into that.

§ II

One contrast between America and the old world I had in mind before ever I crossed the Atlantic, and now it comes before me very vividly, — returns reinforced by a hundred little things observed and felt. The contrast consists in the almost complete absence from the normal American scheme, of certain immemorial factors in the social structure of our European nations.

In the first place, every European nation except the English is rooted to the soil by a peasantry, and even in England one still finds the peasant represented, in most of his features by those sons of dispossessed serf- peasants, the agricultural laborers. Here in America, except in the regions where the negro abounds, there is no lower stratum, no “soil people,” to this community at all; your bottommost man is a mobile free man who can read, and who has ideas above digging and pigs and poultry keeping, except incidentally for his own ends. No one owns to subordination. As a consequence, any position which involves the acknowledgment of an innate inferiority is difKcult to fill; there is, from the European point of view, an extraordinary dearth of servants, and this endures in spite of a great peasant immigration. The servile tradition will not root here now, it dies in this soil. An enormous importation of European serfs and peasants goes on, but as they touch this soil their backs begin to stiffen with a new assertion.

And at the other end of the scale, also, one misses an element. There is no territorial aristocracy, no aristocracy at all, no throne, no legitimate and acknowledged representative of that upper social structure of leisure, power, State responsibility, which in the old European theory of society was supposed to give significance to the

whole. The American community, one cannot too clearly insist, does not correspond to an entire European community at all, but only to the middle masses of it, to the trading and manufacturing class between the dimensions of the magnate and the clerk and skilled artisan. It is the central part of the European organism without either the dreaming head or the subjugated feet. Even the highly feudal slave-holding "county family" traditions of Virginia and the South pass now out of memory. So that in a very real sense the past of this American community is in Europe, and the settled order of the past is left behind there. This community was, as it were, taken off its roots, clipped of its branches and brought hither. It began neither serf nor lord, but burgher and farmer, it followed the normal development of the middle class under Progress everywhere and became capitalistic. Essentially America is a middle-class become a community and so its essential problems are the problems of a modern individualistic society, stark and clear, unhampered and unilluminated by any feudal traditions either at its crest or at its base.

It would be interesting and at first only very slightly misleading to pursue the rough contrast of American and English conditions upon these lines. It is not difficult to show for example, that the two great political parties in America represent only one English party, the middle-class Liberal party, the party of industrialism and. freedom. There are no Tories to represent the feudal system, and no Labor party. It is history, it is no mere ingenious gloss upon history, that the Tories, the party of the crown, of the high gentry and control, of mitigated property and an organic state, vanished from America at the Revolution. They left the new world to the Whigs and Nonconformists and to those less constructive, less logical, more popular and liberating thinkers who became Radicals in England, and Jeffersonians and then Democrats in y America. All Americans are, from the English point of view, Liberals of one sort or another. You will find a fac-simile of the Declaration of Independence displayed conspicuously and triumphantly beside Magna Charter in the London Reform Club, to carry out this suggestion.

But these fascinating parallelisms will lead away from the chief argument, in hand, which is that the Americans started almost clear of the medieval heritage, and developed in the utmost — purity if

you like — or simplicity or crudeness, whichever you will, the modern type of productive social organization. They took the ecqnomic conventions that were modern and progressive at the end of the eighteenth century and stamped them into the Constitution as if they meant to stamp them there for all time. In England you can still find feudalism, medievalism, the Renascence, at every turn. America is pure eighteenth century — still crystallizing out from a turbid and troubled solution.

To turn from any European state to America is, in these matters anyhow, to turn from complication to a stark simplicity. The relationship between employer and employed, between organizer and worker, between capital and labor, which in England is qualified and mellowed and disguised and entangled with a thousand traditional attitudes and subordinations, stands out sharply in a bleak cold rationalism. There is no feeling that property, privilege, honor, and a grave liability to official public service ought to go together, none that uncritical obedience is a virtue in a worker or that subordination carries with it not only a sense of service but a claim for help. Coming across the Atlantic has in these matters an effect of coming out of an iridescent fog into a clear bright air.

This homologization of the whole American social mass, not with the whole English social mass, but with its "modern" classes, its great middle portion, and of its political sides with the two ingredients of English Liberalism, goes further than a rough parallel. An Englishman who, like myself, has been bred and who has lived all his life either in London, with its predominant West-End, or the southern counties with their fair large estates and the great country houses, is constantly being reminded, when he meets manufacturing and business men from Birmingham or Lancashire, of Americans, and when he meets Americans, of industrial North-country people. There is more push and less tacit assumption, more definition, more displayed energy and less restraint, more action and less subtlety, more enterprise and self-assertion than there is in the typical Englishman of London and the home counties. The American carries on the contrast further, it is true, and his speech is not northernly, but marked by the accent of Hampshire or East Anglia, and better and clearer than his English equivalent's; but one feels the two are of the

same stuff, nevertheless, and made by parallel conditions. The liberalism of the eighteenth century, the material progress of the nineteenth have made them both — out of the undifferentiated Stuart Englishman. And they are the same in their attitude towards property and social duty, individualists to the marrow. But the one grew inside a frame of regal, aristocratic, and feudal institutions, and has chafed against it, struggled with it, modified it, strained it, and been modified by it, but has remained within it; the other broke it and escaped to complete self-development.

The liberalism of the eighteenth century was essentially the rebellion of the modern industrial organization against the monarchial and aristocratic State, — against hereditary privilege, against restrictions upon bargains — whether they were hard bargains or not. Its spirit was essentially Anarchistic, — the antithesis of Socialism. It was the anti- State.

It aimed not only to liberate men but property from State control. Its most typical expressions, the Declaration of Independence, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, are zealously emphatic for the latter interest — for the sacredness of contracts and possessions. Post Reformation liberalism did to a large extent let loose property upon mankind. The English Civil War of the seventeenth century, like the American revolution of the eighteenth, embodied essentially the triumphant refusal of private property to submit to taxation without consent. In England the result was tempered and qualified, security for private property was achieved, but not cast-iron security; each man who had property became .king of that property, but only a constitutional and conditional king. In America the victory of private property was complete. Let one instance suffice to show how decisively it was established that individual property and credit and money were sacred. Ten years ago the Supreme Court, trying a case arising out of the General Revenue tax of 1894, decided that a graduated income-tax, such as the English Parliament might pass to-morrow, can never be levied upon the United States nation without a change in the Constitution, which can be effected only by a vote of two-thirds of both Houses of Congress as an initiative, and this must be ratified either by the legislatures of three-fourths of the States, or by special conventions representing

three-fourths of the States.

The fundamental law of the States forbids any such invasion of the individual's ownership. No national income-tax is legal, and there is practically no power, short of revolution, to alter that....

Could anything be more emphatic? That tall Liberty with its spiky crown that stands in New York Harbor and casts an electric flare upon the world, is, indeed, the liberty of Property, and there she stands at the Zenith....

§ III

Now the middle-class of the English population and the whole population of America that matters at all when we discuss ideas, is essentially an emancipated class, a class that has rebelled against superimposed privilege and honor, and achieved freedom for its individuals and their property. Without property its freedom is a featureless and unsubstantial theory, and so it relies for the reality of life upon that, upon the possession and acquisition and development of property, that is to say upon "business." That is the quality of its life.

Everywhere in the modern industrial and commercial class this deep-lying feeling that the State is something escaped from, has worked out to the same mental habit of social irresponsibility, and in America it has worked unimpeded. Patriotism has become a mere national self-assertion, a sentimentality of flag cheering, with no constructive duties. Law, social justice, the pride and preservation of the state as a whole are taken as provided for before the game began, and one devotes oneself to business. At business all men are held to be .equal, and none is his brother's keeper.

All men are equal at the great game of business. You try for the best of each bargain and so does your opponent; if you chance to have more in your hand than he — well, that's your advantage, and you use it. Presently he may have more than you. You take care he doesn't if you can, but you play fair — except for the advantage in your hand; you play fair — and hard.

Now this middle-class equality ultimately destroys itself. Out of

this conflict of equals, and by virtue of the fact that property, like all sorts of matter, does tend to gravitate towards itself w^hen-ever it is free, there emerge the modern rich and the modern toiler.

One can trace the process in two or three generations in Lancashire or the Potteries, or any industrial region of England. One sees first the early Lancashire industrialism, sees a district of cotton-spinners more or less equal together, small men all; then come developments, comes a state of ideally free competition with some men growing large, with most men dropping into employment, but still with ample chances for an industrious young man to end as a prosperous master; and so through a steady growth in the size of the organization to the present opposition of an employer class in possession of everything, almost inaccessibly above, and an employed class below. The railways come, and the wealthy class reaches out to master these new enterprises, capitalistic from the outset....

America is simply repeating the history of the Lancashire industrialism on a gigantic scale, and under an enormous variety of forms.

But in England, as the modern Rich rise up, they come into a world of gentry with a tradition of pubhc service and authority; they learn one by one and assimilate themselves to the legend of the "governing class" with a sense of proprietorship which is also, in its humanly limited way, a sense of duty to the state. They are pseudomorphs after aristocrats. They receive honors, they intermarry, they fall (and their defeated competitors too fall) into the mellowed relationships of an aristocratic system. That is not a permanent mutual attitude; it does, however, mask and soften the British outline. Industrialism becomes quasi-feudal. America, on the other hand, had no effectual "governing class," there has been no such modification, no clouding of the issue. Its Rich, to one's superficial inspection, do seem to lop out, swell up into an immense consumption and power and inanity, develop no sense of public duties, remain winners of a strange game they do not criticise, concerned now only to hold and intensify their winnings. The losers accept no subservience. That material progress, that secular growth in scale of all modern enterprises, widens the gulf between Owner

and Worker daily. More and more do men realize that this game of free competition and unrestricted property does not go on for ever; it is a game that first in this industry and then in that, and at last in all, can be played out and is being played out. Property becomes organized, consolidated, concentrated, and secured. This is the fact to which America is slowly awaking at the present time. The American community is discovering a secular extinction of opportunity, and the appearance of powers against which individual enterprise and competition are hopeless. Enormous sections of the American public are losing their faith in any personal chance of growing rich and truly free, and are developing the consciousness of an expropriated class.

This realization has come slowlier in America than in Europe, because of the enormous undeveloped resources of America. So long as there was an unlimited extent of unappropriated and unexplored land westward, so long could tension be relieved by so simple an injunction as Horace Greeley's, "Go West, young man; go West." And to-day, albeit that is no longer true of the land, and there are already far larger concentrations of individual possessions in the United States of America than anywhere else in the world, yet so vast are their continental resources that it stiU remains true that nowhere in the world is property so widely diffused. Consider the one fact that America can take in three-quarters of a million of workers in one year without producing a perceptible fall in wages, and you will appreciate the scale upon which things are measured here, the scale by which even Mr. J.D. Rockefeller's billion dollars becomes no more than a respectable but by no means overwhelming "pile." For all these concentrations, the western farmers still own their farms, and it is the rule rather than the exception for a family to possess the freehold of the house it lives in. But the process of concentration goes on nevertheless — is going on now perceptibly to the American mind. That it has not gone so far as in the European instance it is a question of size, just as the gestation of an elephant takes longer than that of a mouse. If the process is larger and slower, it is, for the reasons I have given, plainer, and it will be discussed and dealt with plainly. That steady trend towards concentration under individualistic rules, until individual competition becomes disheartened and hopeless, is the essential form of the economic and social process in

America as I see it now, and it has become the cardinal topic of thought and discussion in the American mind.

This realization has been reached after the most curious hesitation. There is every reason for this; for it involves the contradiction of much that seems fundamental in the American idea. It amounts to a national change of attitude. It is a conscious change of attitude that is being deliberately- made.

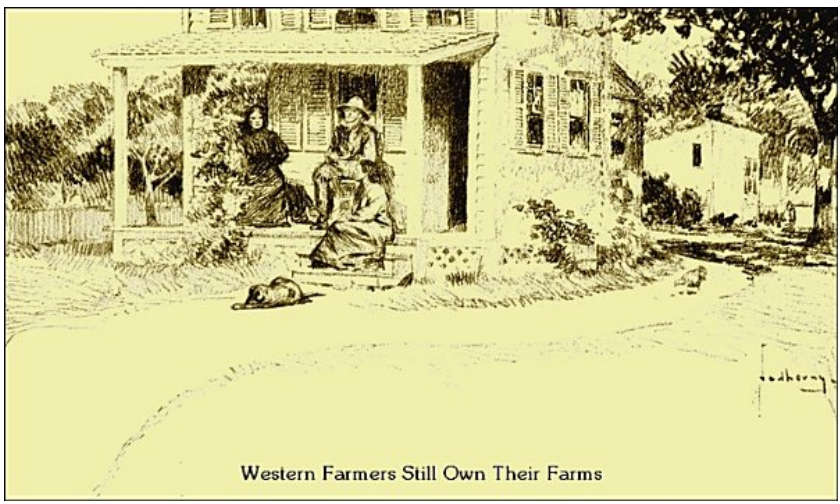

Western Farmers Still Own Their Farms

This slow reluctant process of disillusionment with individualism is interestingly traceable through the main political innovations of the last twenty years. There was the discovery in the east that the supply of land was not limitless, and we had the Single Tax movement, and the epoch of the first Mr. Henry George. He explained fervently of course, how individualistic, how profoundly American he was — but land was not to be monopolized. Then came the discovery in the west that there were limits to borrowing and that gold appreciated against the debtor, and so we have the Populist movement and extraordinary schemes for destroying the monopolization of gold and credit. Mr. Bryan led that and nearly captured the country, but only in last May's issue of the Century Magazine I found him explaining (expounding meanwhile a largely socialistic programme) that he too is an Individualist of the purest water. And then the attack shifted to the destruction of free

competition by the trusts. The small business went on sufferance, not knowing from week to week when its hour to sell out or fight might come. The Trusts have crushed competition, raised prices against the consumer, and served him often quite abominably. The curious reader may find in Mr. Upton Sinclair's essentially veracious Jungle the possibilities of individualistic enterprise in the matter of food and decency. The States have been agitated by a big disorganized Anti-Trust movement for some years, it becomes of the gravest political importance at every election, and the sustained study of the affairs and methods of that most typical and prominent of trust organizations, the Standard Oil Company, by Miss Tarbell and a host of followers, is bringing to light more and more clearly the defencelessness of the common person, and his hopelessness, however enterprising, as a competitor against those great business aggregations. His faith in all his reliances and securities fades in the new light that grows about him, he sees his little investments, his insurance policy, his once open and impartial route to market by steamboat and rail, all passing into the grip of the great property accumulators. The aggregation of property has created powers that are stronger than state legislatures and more persistent than any public opinion can be, that have no awe and no sentiment for legislation, that are prepared to disregard it or evade it whenever they can.

And these aggregations are taking on immortality and declining to disintegrate when their founders die. The Astor property, the Jay Gould property, the Marshall Field property, for example, do not break up, become undying centres for the concentration of wealth, and it is doubtful if there is any power to hinder such a development of perpetual fortunes. In England when Thelussen left his investments to accumulate, a simple little act of Parliament set his will aside. But Congress is not sovereign, there is no national sovereign power in America, and Property in America, it would seem, is absolutely free to do these things. So you have President Roosevelt in a recent oration attacking the man with the Muck Rake (who gathered vile dross for the love of it), and threatening the limitation of inheritance. But he too, quite as much as Mr. Bryan, assures the public that he is a fervent individualist.

So in this American community, whose distinctive conception is its emphatic assertion of the freedom of individual property, whose very symbol is that spike-crowned Liberty gripping a torch in New York Harbor, there has been and is going on a successive repudiation of that freedom in almost every department of ownable things by considerable masses of thinking people, a denial of the soundness of individual property in land, an organized attempt against the accumulation of gold and credit, by a systematic watering of the currency, a revolt against the aggregatory outcome of untrammelled business competition, a systematic interference with the freedom of railways and carriers to do business as they please, and a protest from the most representative of Americans against hereditary wealth....

That, in general terms, is the economic and social process as one sees it in America now, a process of systematically concentrating wealth on the part of an energetic minority, and of a great insurgence of alarm, of waves of indignation and protest and threat on the part of that vague indefinite public that Mr. Roosevelt calls the "nation."

And this goes on side by side with a process of material progress that partly masks its quality, that keeps the standard of life from falling and prevents any sense of impoverishment among the mass of the losers in the economic struggle. Through this material progress there is a constant substitution of larger, cleaner, more efficient possibilities, and more and more wholesale and far-sighted methods of organization for the dark, confused, untidy individualistic expedients of the Victorian time. An epoch which was coaly and mechanical, commercial and adventurous after the earlier fashion is giving place, almost automatically, to one that will be electrical and scientific, artistic and creative. The material progress due to a secular increase in knowledge, and the economic progress interfere and combine with and complicate one another, the former constantly changes the forms and appliances of the latter, changes the weapons and conditions, and may ultimately change the spirit and conceptions of the struggle. The latter now clogs and arrests the former. So in its broad features, as a conflict between the birth strength of a splendid civilization and a hampering commercialism, I see America.

VI. — SOME ASPECTS OF AMERICAN WEALTH

§ I

It is obvious that in a community that has disavowed aristocracy or rule and subordination or service, which has granted unparalleled freedoms to property and despised and distrusted the state, the chief business of life will consist in getting or attempting to get. But the chief aspect of American life that impinges first upon the European is not this, but the behavior of a certain overflow at the top, of people who have largely and triumphantly got, and with hand, pockets, safe-deposit vaults full of dollars, are proceeding to realize victory. Before I came to America it was in his capacity of spender that I chiefly knew the American; as a person who had demoralized Regent Street and the Rue de Rivoli, who had taught the London cabman to demand "arf a dollar" for a shilling fare, who bought old books and old castles, and had driven the prices of old furniture to incredible altitudes, and was slowly transferring our incubus of artistic achievement to American soil. One of my friends in London is Mr. X, who owns those two houses full of fine "pieces" near the British Museum and keeps his honor unsullied in the most deleterious of trades. "They come to me," he said, "and ask me to buy for them. It's just buying. One of them wants to beat the silver of another, doesn't care what he pays. Another clamors for tapestry. They trust me as they trust a doctor. There's no understanding — no feeling. It's hard to treat them well."

And there is the story of Y, who is wise about pictures, "If you want a Botticelli that size, Mr. Record, I can't find it," he said; "you'll have to have it made for you."

These American spenders have got the whole world "beat" at the foolish game of collecting, and in all the peculiar delights of shopping they excel. And they are the crown and glory of hotel managers throughout the world. There is something naive, something childishly expectant and acquisitive, about this aspect of American riches. There appears no aristocracy in their tradition, no sense of

permanence and great responsibility, there appears no sense of subordination and service; from the individualistic business struggle they have emerged triumphant, and what is there to do now but spend and have a good time?

They swarm in the pleasant places of the Riviera, they pervade Paris and Rome, they occupy Scotch castles and English estates, their motor-cars are terrible and wonderful. And the London Savoy Hotel still flaunts its memory of one splendid American night. The courtyard was flooded with water tinted an artistic blue — to the great discomfort of the practically inevitable gold-fish, and on this floated a dream of a gondola. And in the gondola the table was spread and served by the Savoy staff, mysteriously disguised in appropriate fancy costume. The whole thing — there's only two words for it — was "perfectly lovely." "The illusion" — whatever that was — we are assured, was complete. It wasn't a nursery treat, you know. The guests, I am told, were important grown-up people.

This sort of childishness, of course, has nothing distinctively American in it. Any people of sluggish and uneducated imagination who find themselves profusely wealthy, and are too stupid to understand the huge moral burden, the burden of splendid possibilities it carries, may do things of this sort. It was not Americans but a party of South-African millionaires who achieved the kindred triumph of the shirt-and-belt dinner under a tent in a London hotel dining-room. The glittering procession of carriages and motor-carriages which I watched driving down Fifth Avenue, New York, apparently for the pleasure of driving up again, is to be paralleled on the Pincio, in Naples, in Paris, and anywhere where irresponsible pleasure-seekers gather together. After the naive joy of buying things comes the joy of wearing them pubHcl}^ the simple pleasure of the promenade. These things are universals. But nowhere has this spending struck me as being so solid and substantial, so nearly twenty-two carats fine, as here. The shops have an air of solid worth, are in the key of butlers, bishops, opera-boxes, high-class florists, powdered footmen, Roman beadles, motor-broughams, to an extent that altogether outshines either Paris or London.

And in such great hotels as the Waldorf-Astoria, one finds the new arrivals, the wives and daughters from the West and the South,

in new, bright hats, and splendors of costume, clubbed together, under the discreetest management, for this and that, learning how to spend collectively, reaching out to assemblies, to dinners. From an observant tea-table beneath the fronds of a palm, I surveyed a fine array of these plump and pretty pupils of extravagance. They were for the most part quite brilliantly as well as newly dressed, and with an artless and pleasing unconsciousness of the living from inside. Smart innocents! I found all that gathering most contagiously interested and happy and fresh.

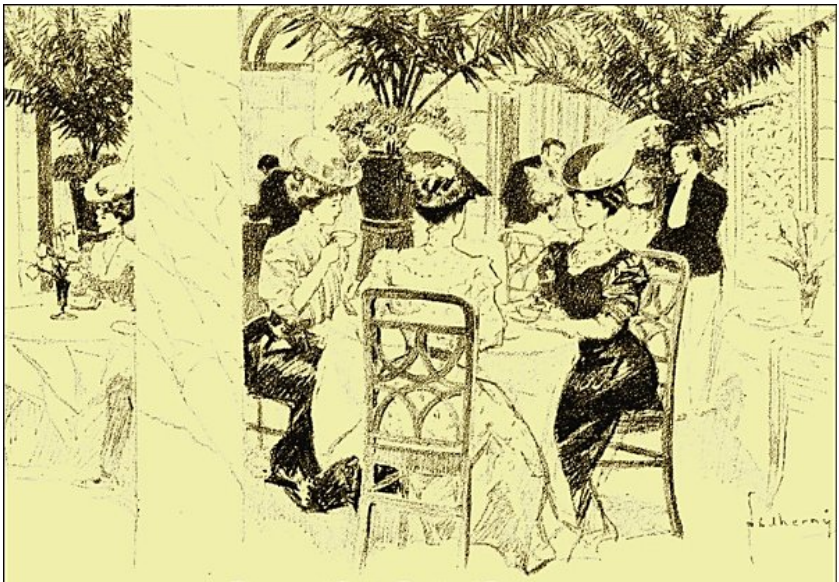

Plump and Pretty Pupils of Extravagance

And I watched spending, too, as one sees it in the various incompatible houses of upper Fifth Avenue and along the border of Central Park. That, too, suggests a shop, a shop where country houses are sold and stored; there is the Tiffany house, a most expensive-looking article, on the shelf, and the Carnegie house. There had been no pretence on the part of the architects that any house belonged in any sense to any other, that any sort of community held them together. The link is just spending. You come to New York and spend; you go away again. To some of these palaces people came and went; others had their blinds down and conveyed a curious

effect of a sunlit child excursionist in a train who falls asleep and droops against his neighbor. One of the Vander-bilt houses was frankly and brutally boarded up. Newport, I am told, takes up and carries on the same note of magnificent irresponsibility, and there one admires the richest forms of simplicity, triumphs of villa architecture in thatch, and bathing bungalows in marble....

There exists already, of these irresponsible American rich, a splendid group of portraits, done without extenuation and without malice, in the later work of that great master of English fiction, Mr. Henry James. There one sees them at their best, their refinement, their large wealthiness, their incredible unreality, I think of The Ambassadors and that mysterious source of the income of the Newcomes, a mystery that, with infinite artistic tact, was never explained; but more I think of The Golden Bowl, most spacious and serene of novels.

In that splendid and luminous bubble, the Prince Amerigo and Maggie Verver, Mr. Verver, that assiduous collector, and the adventurous Charlotte Stant float far above a world of toil and anxiety, spending with a large refinement, with a perfected assurance and precision. They spend as flowers open. But this is the quintessence, the sublimation, the idealization of the rich American. Few have the restraint for this. For the rest, when one has shopped and shopped, and collected and bought everything, and promenaded on foot, in motor-car and motor-brougham and motor-boat, in yacht and special train; when one has a fine house here and a fine house there, and photography and the special article have exhausted admiration, there remains chiefly that one broader and more presumptuous pleasure — spending to give. American givers give most generously, and some of them, it must be admitted, give well. But they give individually, incoherently, each pursuing a personal ideal. There are unsuccessful givers....

American cities are being littered with a disorder of unsystematized foundations and picturesque legacies, much as I find my nursery floor littered with abandoned toys and battles and buildings when the children are in bed after a long, wet day. Yet some of the gifts are very splendid things. There is, for example, the Leland Stanford Junior University in California, a vast monument of

parental affection and Richardsonian architecture, with professors, and teaching going on in its interstices; and there is Mrs. Gardner's delightful Fenway Court, a Venetian palace, brought almost bodily from Italy and full of finely gathered treasures....

All this giving is, in its aggregate effect, as confused as industrial Chicago. It presents no clear scheme of the future, promises no growth; it is due to the impulsive generosity of a mob of wealthy persons, with no broad common conceptions, with no collective dream, with little to hold them together but imitation and the burning possession of money; the gifts overlap, they lie at any angle, one with another. Some are needless, some mischievous. There are great gaps of unfulfilled need between.

And through the multitude of lesser, though still mighty, givers, comes that colossus of property, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, the jubilee plunger of beneficence, that rosy, gray-haired, nimble little figure, going to and fro between two continents, scattering library buildings as if he sowed wild oats, buildings that may or may not have some educational value, if presently they are reorganized and properly stocked with books. Anon he appals the thrifty burgesses of Dunfermline with vast and uncongenial responsibilities of expenditure; anon he precipitates the library of the late Lord Acton upon our embarrassed Mr. Morley; anon he pauperizes the students of Scotland. He diffuses his monument throughout the English-speaking lands, amid circumstances of the most flagrant publicity; the receptive learned, the philanthropic noble, bow in expectant swaths before him. He is the American fable come true; nothing seems too wild to believe of him, and he fills the European imagination with an altogether erroneous conception of the self-dissipating quality in American wealth.

§ II

Because, now, as a matter of fact, dissipation is by no means the characteristic quality of American getting. The good American will indeed tell you solemnly that in America it is three generations "from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves"; but this has about as much truth in it

as that remarkable absence of any pure-bred Londoners of the third generation, dear to the British imagination.

Amid the vast yeasty tumult of American business, of the getting and losing which are the main life of this community, nothing could be clearer than the steady accumulation of great masses of property that show no signs of disintegrating again. The very rich people display an indisposition to divide their estates; the Marshall Field estate in Chicago, for example, accumulates; the Jay Gould inheritance survives great strains. And when first I heard that " shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves " proverb, which is so fortifying a consolation to the older school of Americans, my mind flew back to the Thames Embankment, as one sees it from the steamboat on the river. There, just eastward of the tall red Education offices of the London County Council, stands a quite graceful and decorative little building of gray stone, that jars not at all with the fine traditions of the adjacent Temple, but catches the eye, nevertheless, with its very big, very gilded vane in the form of a ship. This is the handsome strong-box to which New York pays gigantic yearly tribute, the office in which Mr. W. W. Astor conducts his affairs. They are not his private and individual affairs, but the affairs of the estate of the late J. J. Astor — still undivided, and still growing year by year.

Mr. Astor seems to me to be a much more representative figure of American wealth than any of the conspicuous spenders who strike so vividly upon the European imagination. His is the most retiring of personalities. In this picturesque stone casket he works; his staff works under his cognizance, and administers, I know not to what ends nor to what extent, revenues that exceed those of many sovereign states. He himself is impressed by it, and, without arrogance, he makes a visit to his offices, with a view of its storage vaults, its halls of disciplined clerks, a novel and characteristic form of entertainment. For the rest, Mr. Astor leads a life of modest affluence, and recreates' himself with the genealogy of his family, short stories about treasure lost and found, and such like literary work.

Now here you have wealth with, as it were, the minimum of ownership, as indeed owning its possessor. Nobody seems to be spending that huge income the crowded enormity of New York

squeezes out. The “Estate of the late J. J. Astor” must be accumulating more wealth and still more; under careful and systematic management must be rolling up like a golden snowball under that golden weather-vane. In the most accidental relation to its undistinguished, harmless, arithmetical proprietor!

Your anarchist orator or your crude socialist is always talking of the rich as blood-suckers, robbers, robber-barons, grafters and so on. It really is nonsense to talk like that. In the presence of Mr. W. W. Astor these preposterous accusations answer themselves. The thing is a logical outcome of the assumptions about private property on which our contemporary civilization is based, and Mr, Astor, for all that he draws gold from New York as effectually as a ferret draws blood from a rabbit, is indeed the most innocent of men. He finds himself in a certain position, and he sits down very congenially and adds and adds and adds, and relieves the tedium of his leisure in literary composition. Had he been born at the level of a dry-goods clerk he would probably have done the same sort of thing on a smaller scale, and it would have been the little Poddlecombe literary society, and not the Pall Mall Magazine, that would have been the richer for his compositions. It is just the scale of the circumstances that differs....

§ III

The lavish spending of Fifth Avenue and Paris and Rome and Mayfair is but the flower, the often brilliant, the sometimes gaudy flower of the American economic process; and such slow and patient accumulators as Mr. Astor the rounding and ripening fruit. One need be only a little while in America to realize this, and to discern the branch and leaf, and at last even the aggressive insatiable spreading root of aggregating property, that was liberated so effectually when America declared herself free.

The group of people that attracts the largest amount of attention in press and talk, that most obsesses the American imagination, and that is indeed the most significant at the present time, is the little group — a few score men perhaps altogether ¦ — who are emerging distinctly

as winners in that great struggle to get, into which this commercial industrialism has naturally resolved itself. Central among them are the men of the Standard Oil group, the "octopus" which spreads its ramifying tentacles through the whole system of American business, absorbing and absorbing, grasping and growing. The extraordinarily able investigations of such writers as Miss Tarbell and Ray Stannard Baker, the rhetorical exposures of Mr. T.W. Lawson, have brought out the methods and quality of this group of persons with a particularity that has been reserved heretofore for great statesmen and crowned heads, and with an unflattering lucidity altogether unprecedented. Not only is every hair on their heads numbered, but the number is published. They are known to their pettiest weaknesses and to their most accidental associations. And in this astonishing blaze of illumination they continue steadfastly to get.

These men, who are creating the greatest system of correlated private properties in the world, who are wealthy beyond all precedent, seem for the most part to be men with no ulterior dream or aim. They are not voluptuaries, they are neither artists nor any sort of creators, and they betray no high political ambitions. Had they anything of the sort they would not be what, they are, they would be more than that and less. They want and they get, they are inspired by the brute will in their wealth to have more wealth and more, to a systematic ardor. They are men of a competing, patient, enterprising, acquisitive enthusiasm. They have found in America the perfectly favorable environment for their temperaments. In no other country and in no other age could they have risen to such eminence. America is still, by virtue of its great Puritan tradition and in the older sense of the word, an intensely moral land. Most lusts here are strongly curbed, by public opinion, by training and tradition. But the lust of acquisition has not been curbed but glorified....

These financial leaders are accused by the press of every sort of crime in the development of their great organizations and their fight against competitors, but I feel impelled myself to acquit them of anything so heroic as a general scheme of criminality, as a systematic organization of power. They are men with a good deal of contempt for legislation and state interference, but that is no distinction, it has unhappily been part of the training of the average American citizen,

and they have no doubt exceeded the letter if not the spirit of the laws of business competition. They have played to win and not for style, and if they personally had not done so somebody else would; they fill a position which from the nature of things, somebody is bound to fill. They have, no doubt, carried sharpness to the very edge of dishonesty, but what else was to be expected from the American conditions? Only by doing so and taking risks is pre-eminent success in getting to be attained. They have developed an enormous system of espionage, but on his smaller scale every retail grocer, every employer of servants does something in that way. They have secret agents, false names, concealed bargains, — what else could one expect? People have committed suicide through their operations — but in a game which is bound to bring the losers to despair it is childish to charge the winners with murder. It's the game that is criminal. It is ridiculous, I say, to write of these men as though they were unparalleled villains, intellectual overmen, conscienceless conquerors of the world. Mr. J.D. Rockefeller's mild, thin-lipped, pleasant face gives the lie to all such melodramatic nonsense.

I must confess to a sneaking liking for this much-reviled man. One thinks of Miss Tarbell's description of him, displaying his first boyish account-book, his ledger A, to a sympathetic gathering of the Baptist young, telling how he earned fifty dollars in the first three months of his clerking in a Chicago warehouse, and how savingly he dealt with it. Hear his words:

"You could not get that book from me for all the modern ledgers in New York, nor for all that they would bring. It almost brings tears to my eyes when I read over this little book, and it fills me with a sense of gratitude I cannot express....

"I know some people,... especially some young men, find it difficult to keep a little money in their pocket-book. I learned to keep money, and, as we have a way of saying, it did not burn a hole in my pocket. I was taught that it was the thing to keep the money and take care of it. Among the early experiences that were helpful to me that I recollect with pleasure, was one of working a few days for a neighbor digging potatoes — an enterprising and thrifty farmer who could dig a great many potatoes. I was a boy perhaps thirteen or fourteen years of age, and he kept me busy from morning until night.

It was a ten-hour day....

"And as I was saving these little sums, I soon learned I could get as much interest for fifty dollars loaned at seven per cent. — the legal rate in the State of New York at that time for a year — as I could earn by digging potatoes ten days. The impression was gaining ground with me that it was a good thing to let money be my slave and not make myself a slave to money. I have tried to remember that in every sense."

This is not the voice of any sort of contemptuous trampler of his species. This is the voice of an industrious, acquisitive, commonplace, pious man, as honestly and simply proud of his acquisitiveness as a stamp-collector might be. At times, in his acquisitions, the strength of his passion may have driven him to lengths beyond the severe moral code, but the same has been true of stamp-collectors. He is a man who has taken up with great natural aptitude an ignoble tradition which links economy and earning with piety and honor. His teachers were to blame, that Baptist community that is now so ashamed of its son that it refuses his gifts. To a large extent he is the creature of opportunity; he has been flung to the topmost pinnacle of human envy, partly by accident, partly by that peculiarity of American conditions that has subordinated, in the name of liberty, all the grave and ennobling affairs of statecraft to a middle-class freedom of commercial enterprise. Quarrel with that if you like. It is unfair and ridiculous to quarrel with him.

VII. — CERTAIN WORKERS

§ I

Let us now look a little at another aspect of this process of individualistic competition which is the economic process in America, and which is giving us on its upper side the spenders of Fifth Avenue, the slow accumulators of the Astor type, and the great getters of the giant business organizations, the Trusts and acquisitive finance. We have concluded that this process of free and open competition in business which, clearly, the framers of the American Constitution imagined to be immortal, does as a matter of fact tend to kill itself through the advantage property gives in the acquisition of more property. But before we can go on to estimate the further future of this process we must experiment with another question. What is happening to those who have not got and who are not getting wealth, who are, in fact, falling back in the competition?

Now there can be little doubt to any one who goes to and fro in America that in spite of the huge accumulation of property in a few hands that is now in progress, there is still no general effect of impoverishment. To me, coming from London to New York, the effect of the crowd in the trolley-cars and subways and streets was one of exceptional prosperity. New York has no doubt its effects of noise, disorder, discomfort, and a sort of brutality, but to begin with one sees nothing of the underfed people, the numerous dingily clad and grayly housed people who catch the eye in London. Even in the congested arteries, the filthy back streets of the East Side I found myself saying, as a thing remarkable, “These people have money to spend.” In London one travels long distances for two cents, and great regiments of people walk; in New York the universal fare is five cents and everybody rides. Common people are better gloved and better booted in America than in any European country I know, in spite of the higher prices for clothing here, the men wear ready-made suits, it is true, to a much greater extent, but they are newer and brighter than the London clerk’s carefully brushed, tailor-made garments. Wages translated from dollars into shillings seem

enormous.

And there is no perceptible fall in wages going on. On the whole wages tend to rise. For almost all sorts of men, for working women who are not “refined,” there is a limitless field of employmxcnt. The fact that a growing proportion of the wealth of the community is passing into the hands of a small minority of successful getters, is masked to superficial observation by the enormous increase of the total wealth. The growth process overrides the economic process and may continue to do so for many years.

So that the great mass of the population is not consciously defeated in the economic game. It is only failing to get a large share in the increment of wealth. The European reader must dismiss from his mind any conception of the general American population as a mass of people undergoing impoverishment through the enrichment of the few. He must substitute for that figure a mass of people, very busy, roughly prosperous, generally self-satisfied, but ever and again stirred to bouts of irascibility and suspicion, inundated by a constantly swelling flood of prosperity that pours through it and over it and passes by it, without changing or enriching it at all. Ever and again it is irritated by some rise in price, an advance in coal, for example, or meat or rent, that swallows up some anticipated gain, but that is an entirely different thing from want or distress, from the fireless hungering poverty of Europe.

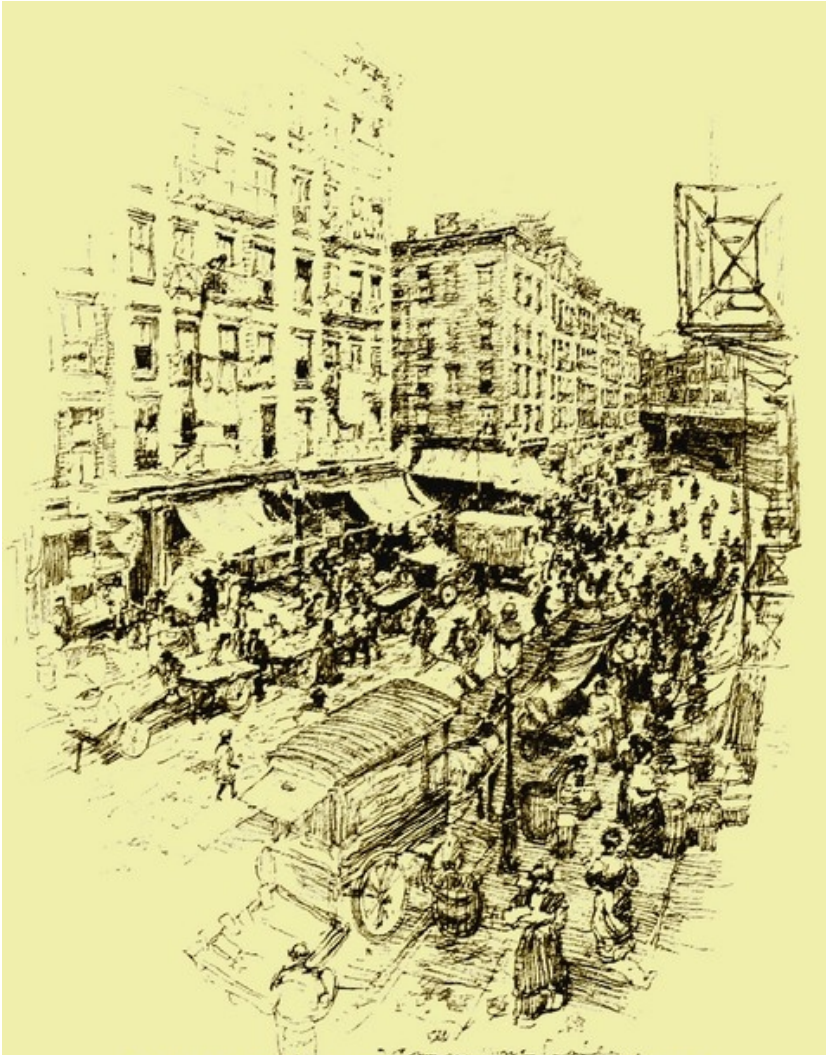

New York's Crowded, Littered East Side

Nevertheless, the sense of losing develops and spreads in the mass of the American people. Privations are not needed to create a sense of economic disadvantage; thwarted hopes suffice. The speed and pressure of work here is much greater than in Europe, the impatience for realization intenser. The average American comes into life prepared to "get on," and ready to subordinate most things in life to that. He encounters a rising standard of living. He finds it more

difficult to get on than his father did before him. He is perplexed and irritated by the spectacle of lavish spending and the report of gigantic accumulations that outshine his utmost possibilities of enjoyment or success. He is a busy and industrious man, greatly preoccupied by the struggle, but when he stops to think and talk at all, there can be little doubt that his outlook is a disillusioned one, more and more tinged with a deepening discontent.

§ II

But the state of mind of the average American we have to consider later. That is the central problem of this horoscope we contemplate. Before we come to that we have to sketch out all the broad aspects of the situation with which that mind has to deal.

Now in the preceding chapter I tried to convey my impression of the spending and wealth-getting of this vast community; I tried to convey how irresponsible it was, how unpremeditated. The American rich have, as it were, floated up out of a confused struggle of equal individuals. That individualistic commercial struggle has not only flung up these rich to their own and the world's amazement, it is also, with an equal blindness, crushing and maiming great multitudes of souls. But this is a fact that does not smite upon one's attention at the outset. The English visitor to the great towns sees the spending, sees the general prosperity, the universal air of confident pride; he must go out of his way to find the under side to these things.

One little thing set me questioning. I had been one Sunday night down- town, supping and talking with Mr. Abraham Cahan about the "East Side," that strange city within a city which has a drama of its own and a literature and a press, and about Russia and her problem, and I was returning on the subway about two o'clock in the morning. I became aware of a little lad sitting opposite me, a childish-faced delicate little creature of eleven years old or so, wearing the uniform of a messenger-boy. He drooped with fatigue, roused himself with a start, edged off his seat with a sigh, stepped oft' the car, and was vanishing up-stairs into the electric glare of Astor Place as the train ran out of the station.

“What on earth,” said I, “is that baby doing abroad at this time of night?”

For me this weary little wretch became the irritant centre of a painful region of inquiry. “How many hours a day may a child work in New York,” I began to ask people, “and when may a boy leave school?”

I had blundered, I found, upon the weakest spot in America’s fine front of national well-being. My eyes were opened to the childish newsboys who sold me papers, and the little bootblacks at the street corners. Nocturnal child employment is a social abomination. I gathered stories of juvenile vice, of lads of nine and ten suffering from terrible diseases, of the contingent sent by these messengers to the hospitals and jails. I began to realize another aspect of that great theory of the liberty of property and the subordination of the state to business, upon which American institutions are based. That theory has no regard for children. Indeed, it is a theory that disregards women and children, the cardinal facts of life altogether. They are private things....

It is curious how little we, who live in the dawning light of a new time, question the intellectual assumptions of the social order about us. We find ourselves in a life of huge confusions and many cruelties, we plan this and that to remedy and improve, but very few of us go down to the ideas that begot these ugly conditions, the laws, the usages and liberties that are now in their detailed expansion so perplexing, intricate, and overwhelming. Yet the life of man is altogether made up of will cast into the mould of ideas, and only by correcting ideas, changing ideas and replacing ideas are any ameliorations and advances to be achieved in human destiny. All other things are subordinate to that.

Now the theory of liberty upon which the liberalism of Great Britain, the Constitution of the United States, and the bourgeois Republic of France rests, assumes that all men are free and equal. They are all tacitly supposed to be adult and immortal, they are sovereign over their property and over their wives and children, and everything is framed with a view to insuring them security in the enjoyment of their rights. No doubt this was a better theory than that of the divine right of kings, against which it did triumphant battle,

but it does, as one sees it to-day, fall most extraordinarily short of the truth, and only a few logical fanatics have ever tried to carry it out to its complete consequences. For example, it ignored the facts that more than half of the adult people in a country are women, and that all the men and women of a country taken together are hardly as numerous and far less important to the welfare of that country than the individuals under age. It regarded living as just living, a stupid dead level of egotistical effort and enjoyment; it was blind to the fact that living is part growing, part learning, part dying to make way and altogether service and sacrifice. It asserted that the care and education of children, and business bargains affecting the employment and welfare of women and children, are private affairs. It resisted the compulsory education of children and factory legislation, therefore, with extraordinary persistence and bitterness. The common-sense of the three great progressive nations concerned has been stronger than their theory, but to this day enormous social evils are to be traced to that passionate jealousy of state intervention between a man and his wife, his children, and other property, which is the distinctive unprecedented feature of the originally middle-class modern organization of society upon commercial and industrial conceptions in which we are all (and America most deeply) living.

I began with a drowsy little messenger-boy in the New York Subway. Before I had done with the question I had come upon amazing things. Just think of it! This richest, greatest country the world has ever seen has over 1,700,000 children under fifteen years of age toiling in fields, factories, mines, and workshops. And Robert Hunter — whose Poverty, if I were autocrat, should be compulsory reading for every prosperous adult in the United States, tells me of "not less than eighty thousand children, most of whom are little girls, at present employed in the textile mills of this country. In the South there are now six times as many children at work as there were twenty years ago. Child labor is increasing yearly in that section of the country. Each year more little ones are brought in from the fields and hills to live in the degrading atmosphere of the mill towns...."

Children are deliberately imported by the Italians. I gathered from Commissioner Watchorn at Ellis Island that the proportion of little nephews and nieces, friends' sons, and so forth, brought in by them

is peculiarly high, and I heard him try and condemn a doubtful case. It was a particularly unattractive Italian in charge of a dull-eyed little boy of no ascertainable relationship....

In the worst days of cotton-milling in England the conditions were hardly worse than those now existing in the South. Children, the tiniest and frailest, of five and six years of age, rise in the morning and, like old men and women, go to the mills to do their day's labor; and when they return home, "wearily fling themselves on their beds, too tired to take off their clothes." Many children work all night—"in the maddening racket of the machinery, in an atmosphere unsanitary and clouded with humidity and lint."

"It will be long," adds Mr. Hunter, in his description, "before I forget the face of a little boy of six years, with his hands stretched forward to rearrange a bit of machinery, his pallid face and spare form already showing the physical effects of labor. This child, six years of age, was working twelve hours a day."

From Mr. Spargo's *Bitter Cry Of The Children* I learn this much of the joys of certain among the youth of Pennsylvania:

"For ten or eleven hours a day children of ten and eleven stoop over the chute and pick out the slate and other impurities from the coal as it moves past them. The air is black with coal-dust, and the roar of the crushers, screens, and rushing mill-race of coal is deafening. Sometimes one of the children falls into the machinery and is terribly mangled, or slips into the chute and is smothered to death. Many children are killed in this way. Many others, after a time, contract coal-miners' asthma and consumption, which gradually undermine their health. Breathing continually day after day the clouds of coal-dust, their lungs become black and choked with small particles of anthracite."...

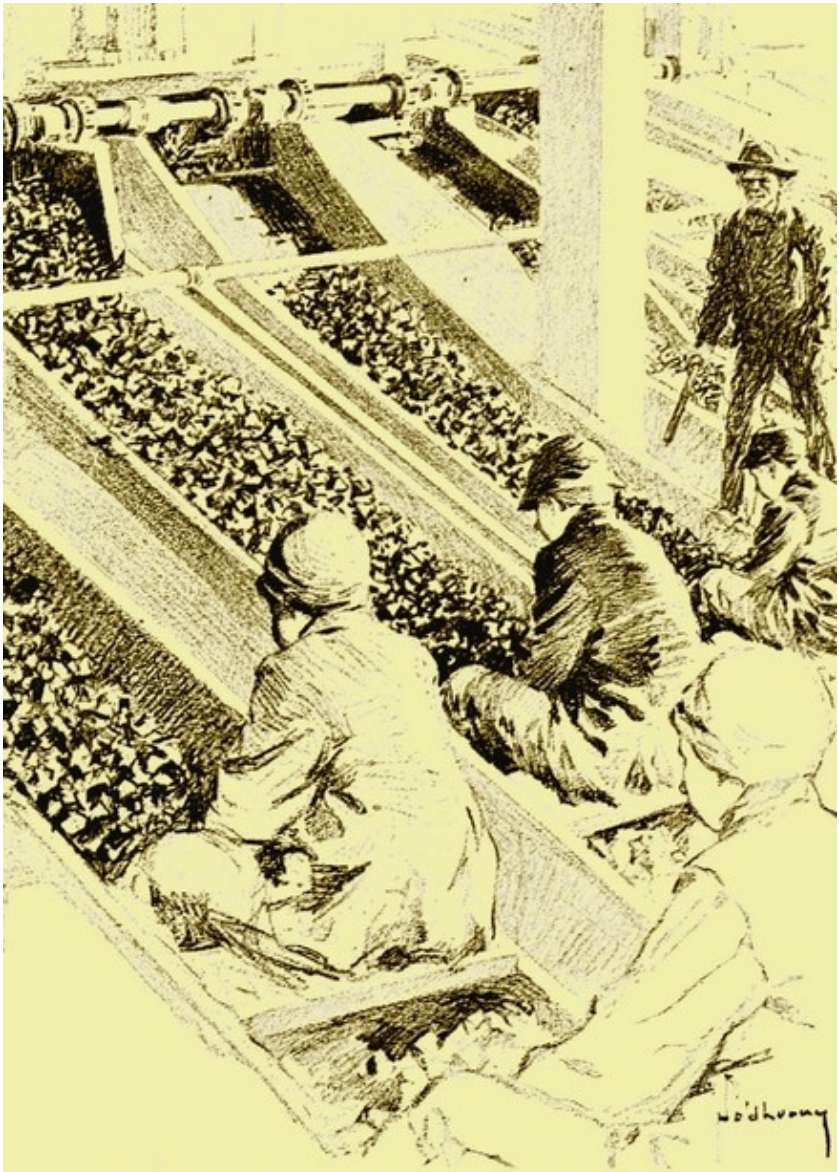

Breaker Boys at a Pennsylvania Colliery

In Massachusetts, at Fall River, the Hon. J. F. Carey tells us how little naked boys, free Americans, work for Mr. Borden, the New York millionaire, packing cloth into bleaching vats in a bath of chemicals that bleaches their little bodies like the bodies of lepers....

Well, we English have no right to condemn the Americans for these things. The history of our own industrial development is black with the blood of tortured and murdered children. America still has the factory serfs. New Jersey sends her pauper children south to-day in^o worse than slavery, but, as Cottle tells in his reminiscences of Southey and Coleridge, that is precisely the same wretched export Bristol packed off to feed the mills of Manchester in late Georgian times. We got ahead with factory legislation by no peculiar virtue in our statecraft, it was just the revenge the landlords took upon the manufacturers for reform and free trade in corn and food. In America the manufacturers have had things to themselves.

And America has difficulties to encounter of which we know nothing. In the matter of labor legislation each State legislature is supreme; in each separate State the forces of light and progress must fight the battle of the children and the future over again against interests, lies, prejudice and stupidity. Each State pleads the bad example of another State, and there is always the threat that capital will withdraw. No national minimum is possible under existing conditions. And when the laws have passed there is still the universal contempt for State control to reckon with, the impossibilities of enforcement. Illinois, for instance, scandalized at the spectacle of children in those filthy stock-yards, ankle-deep in blood, cleaning intestines and trimming meat, recently passed a child-labor law that raised the minimum age for such employment to sixteen, but evasion, they told me in Chicago, was simple and easy. New York, too, can show by its statute-books that my drowsy nocturnal messenger-boy was illegal and impossible....

This is the bottomest end of the scale that at the top has all the lavish spending of Fifth Avenue, the joyous wanton giving of Mr. Andrew Carnegie. Equally with these things it is an unpremeditated consequence of an inadequate theory of freedom. The foolish extravagances of the rich, the architectural pathos of Newport, the dingy, noisy, economic jumble of central and south Chicago, the Standard Oil offices in Broadway, the darkened streets beneath New York's elevated railroad, the littered ugliness of Niagara's banks, and the lowermost hell of child suffering are all so many accordant aspects and inexorable consequences of the same undisciplined way

of living. Let each man push for himself — it comes to these things....

So far as our purpose of casting a horoscope goes we have particularly to note this as affecting the future; these working children cannot be learning to read — though they will presently be having votes — they cannot grow up fit to bear arms, to be in any sense but a vile computing sweater's sense, men. So miserably they will avenge themselves by supplying the stuff for vice, for crime, for yet more criminal and political manipulations. One million seven hundred children, practically uneducated, are toiling over here, and growing up, darkened, marred, and dangerous, into the American future I am seeking to forecast.

VIII. — CORRUPTION

§ I

So, it seems to me, in this new crude continental commonwealth, there is going on the same economic process, on a grander scale, indeed, than has gone so far in our own island. There is a great concentration of wealth above, and below, deep and growing is the abyss, that sunken multitude on the margin of subsistence which is a characteristic and necessary feature of competitive industrialism, that teemiing abyss where children have no chance, where men and women dream neither of leisure nor of self-respect. And between this efflorescence of wealth above and spreading degradation below, comes the great mass of the population, perhaps fifty millions and more of healthy and active men, women and children (I leave out of count altogether the colored people and the special trouble of the South until a later chapter) who are neither irresponsibly free nor hopelessly bound, who are the living determining substance of America.

Collectively they constitute what Mr. Roosevelt calls the "Nation," what an older school of Americans used to write of as the People. The Nation is neither rich nor poor, neither capitalist nor laborer, neither Republican nor Democrat; it is a great diversified multitude including all these things. It is a comprehensive abstraction; it is the ultimate reality. You may seek for it in America and you cannot find it, as one seeks in vain for the forest among the trees. It has no clear voice; the confused and local utterances of a dispersed innumerable press, of thousands of public speakers, of books and preachers, evoke fragmentary responses or drop rejected into oblivion. I have been told by countless people where I shall find the typical American; one says in Maine, one in the Alle-ghenies, one "farther west," one in Kansas, one in Cleveland. He is indeed nowhere and everywhere. He is an English-speaking person, with extraordinarily English traits still, in spite of much good German and Scandinavian and Irish blood he has assimilated. He has a distrust of lucid theories, and logic, and he talks unwillingly of ideas. He is

preoccupied, he is busy with his individual affairs, but he is — I can feel it in the air — thinking.

How widely and practically he is thinking that curious product of the last few years, the ten-cent magazine, will show. In England our sixpenny magazines seem all written for boys and careless people; they are nothing but stories and jests and pictures. The weekly ones achieve an extraordinarily agreeable emptiness. Their American equivalents are full of the studied and remarkably well-written discussion of grave public questions. I pick up one magazine and find a masterly exposition of the public aspect of railway rebates, another and a trust is analyzed. Then here are some titles of books that all across this continent are being multitudinously read: Parson's *Heart Of The Railway Problem*, Steffens's *Shame Of The Cities*, Lawson's *Frenzied Finance*, Miss Tarbell's *Story Of Standard Oil*, Abbott's *Industrial Problem*, Spargo's *Bitter Cry Of The Children*, Hunter's *Poverty*, and, pioneer of them all, Lloyd's *Wealth Against Commonwealth*. These are titles quoted almost at hap-hazard. Within a remarkably brief space of time the American nation has turned away from all the heady self-satisfaction of the nineteenth century and commenced a process of heart searching quite unparalleled in history. Its egotistical interest in its own past is over and done. While Mr. Upton Sinclair, the youngest, most distinctive of recent American novelists, achieved but a secondary success with his admirably conceived romance of the Civil War, *Manassas*, *The Jungle*, his book about the beef trust and the soul of the immigrant, the most unflattering picture of America that any one has yet dared to draw, has fired the country.

The American nation, which a few years ago seemed invincibly wedded to an extreme individualism, seemed resolved, as it were, to sit on the safety valves of the economic process and go on to the ultimate catastrophe, displays itself now alert and questioning. It has roused itself to a grave and extensive consideration of the intricate economic and political problems that close like a net about its future. The essential question for America, as for Europe, is the rescue of her land, her public service, and the whole of her great economic process from the anarchic and irresponsible control of private owners — how dangerous and horrible that control may become the Railway

and Beef Trust investigations have shown — and the organization of her social life upon the broad, clean, humane conceptions of modern science. In every country, however, this huge problem of reconstruction which is the alternative to a plutocratic decadence, is enormously complicated by irrelevant and special difficulties. In Great Britain, for example, the ever-pressing problem of holding the empire, and the fact that one legislative body is composed almost entirely of private land-owners, hampers every step towards a better order. Upon every country in Europe weighs the armor of war. In America the complications are distinctive and peculiar. She is free, indeed, now to a large extent from the possibility of any grave military stresses, her one overseas investment in the Philippines she is evidently resolved to forget and be rid of at as early a date as possible. But, on the other hand, she is confronted by a system of legal entanglements of extraordinary difficulty and perplexity, she has the most powerful tradition of individualism in the world, and a degraded political system, and she has in the presence of a vast and increasing proportion of unassimilable aliens in her substance — negroes, south European peasants, Russian Jews and the like — an ever-intensifying complication.

§ II

Now what is called corruption in America is a thing not confined to politics; it is a defect of moral method found in every department of American life. I find in big print in every paper I open, “GRAFT.”. All through my journey in America I have been trying to gauge the quality of this corruption, I have been talking to all kinds of people about it, I have had long conversations about it with President Eliot of Harvard, with District- Attorney Jerome, with one leading insurance president, with a number of the City Club people in Chicago, with several East-Siders in New York, with men engaged in public work in every city I have visited, with Senators at Washington, with a Chicago saloonkeeper and his friend, a shepherd of votes, and with a varied and casual assortment of Americans upon trains and boats; I read my Ostrogorsky, my Otünsterberg, and my

Roosevelt before I came to America, and I find myself going through any American newspaper that comes to hand always with an eye to this. It is to me "a most vital issue in the horoscope I contemplate. All depends upon the answer to this question: Is the average citizen fundamentally dishonest? Is he a rascal and humbug in grain? If he is, the future can needs be no more than a monstrous social disorganization in the face of divine opportunities. Or is he fundamentally honest, but a little confused ethically?...

The latter, I think, is the truer alternative, but I will confess I have ranged through all the scale between a buoyant optimism and despair. It is extraordinarily difficult to move among the crowded contrasts of this perplexing country and emerge with any satisfactory generalization. But there is one word I find all too frequently in the American papers, and that is "stealing." They come near calling any profitable, rather unfair bargain with the public'a "steal." It's the common journalistic vice here always to overstate. Every land has its criminals, no doubt, but the American, I am convinced, is the last man in the world to steal. Nor does he tell you lies to your face, except in the way of business. He's not that sort of man. Nor does he sneak bad money into your confiding hand. Nor ask a higher price than he means to accept. Nor cheat on exchange. For all the frequency of "graft" and "stealing" in the press headlines, I feel the American is pretty distinctly less "mean" than many Europeans in these respects, and much more disposed to be ashamed of meanness.

But he certainly has an ethical system of a highly commercial type. If he isn't dishonest he's commercialized. He lives to get,, to come out of every transaction with more than he gave.

In the highly imaginative theory that underlies the realities of an individualistic society there is such a thing as honest trading. In practice I don't believe there is. Exchangeable things are supposed to have a fixed quality called their value, and honest trading is, I am told, the exchange of things of equal value. Nobody gains or loses by honest trading, and therefore nobody can grow rich by it. And nobody would do business except to subsist by a profit and attempt to grow rich. The honest merchant in the individualist's dream is a worthy and urbane person who intervenes between the seller here and the buyer there, fetches from one to another, stores a surplus of

goods, takes risks, and indemnifies himself by charging the seller and the buyer a small fee for his waiting and his carrying and his speculative hawking about. He would be sick and ashamed to undervalue a purchase or overcharge a customer, and it scarcely requires a competitor to reduce his fee to a minimum. He draws a line between customers with whom he deals and competitors with whom he wouldn't dream of dealing. And though it seems a little incredible, he grows rich and beautiful in these practices and endows Art, Science, and Literature. Such is the commercial life in a world of economic angels, magic justice and the Individualist's Utopia. In reality flesh and blood cannot resist a bargain, and people trade to get. In reality-value is a dream, and the commercial ideal is to buy from the needy, sell to the urgent need, and get all that can possibly be got out of every transaction. To do anything else isn't business — it's some other sort of game. Let us look squarely into the pretences of trading. The plain fact of the case is that in trading for profit there is no natural line at which legitimate bargaining ends and cheating begins. The seller wants to get above the value and the buyer below it. The seller seeks to appreciate, the buyer to depreciate; and where is there room for truth in that contest? In bargaining, overvaluing and undervaluing are not only permissible but inevitable, attempts to increase the desire to buy and willingness to sell. Who can invent a rule to determine what expedients are permissible and what not? You may draw an arbitrary boundary — the law does here and there, a little discontinuously — but that is all. For example, consider these questions that follow: Nothing is perfect in this world; all goods are defective. Are you bound to inform your customer of every defect? Suppose you are, then are you bound to examine your goods minutely for defects? Grant that. Then if you intrust that duty to an employee ought you to dismiss him for selling defective goods for you? The customer will buy your goods anyhow. Are you bound to spend more upon cleaning and packing them than he demands? — to wrap them in gold-foil gratuitously, for example? How are you going to answer these questions? Let me suppose that your one dream in life is to grow rich. Suppose you want to grow very rich and found a noble university, let us say?

You answer them in the Roman spirit, with *caveat emptor*. Then

can you decently join in the outcry against the Chicago butchers?

Then turn again to the group of problems the Standard Oil history raises. You want the customer to buy your goods and not your competitor's. Naturally you do everything to get your goods to him, to make them seem best to him, to reduce the influx of the other man's stuff. You don't lend your competitor your shop-window anyhow. If there's a hoarding you don't restrict your advertisements because otherwise there won't be room for him. And if you happen to have a paramount interest in the carrying line that bears your goods and his, why shouldn't you see that your own goods arrive first? And at a cheaper rate?...

Interior of a New York Office Building

You see one has to admit there is always this element of overreaching, of outwitting, of forestalling, in all systematic trade. It may be refined, it may be dignified, but it is there. It differs in degree and not in quality from cheating. A very scrupulous man stops at one point, a less scrupulous man at another, an eager, ambitious man may find himself carried by his own impetus very far. Too often the least

scrupulous wins. In all ages, among all races, this taint in trade has been felt. Modern western Europe, led by England, and America have denied it stoutly, have glorified the trader, called him a "merchant prince," wrapped him in the purple of the word "financier," bowed down before him. The trader remains a trader, a hand that clutches, an uncreative brain that lays snares. Occasionally, no doubt, he exceeds his function and is better than his occupations. But it is not he but the maker who must be the power and ruler of the great and luminous social order that must surely come, that new order I have persuaded myself I find in glimmering evasive promises amid the congestions of New York, the sheds and defilements of Niagara, and the Chicago reek and grime.... The American, I feel assured, can be a bold and splendid maker. He is not, like the uncreative Parsee or Jew or Armenian, a trader by blood and nature. The architecture I have seen, the finely planned, internally beautiful, and admirably organized office buildings (to step into them from the street is to step up fifty years in the scale of civilization), the business organizations, the industrial skill — I visited a trap and chain factory at Oneida, right in the heart of New York State, that was like the interior of a well-made clock — above all, the plans for reconstructing his cities show that. Those others make nothing. But nevertheless, since he, more than any man, has subserved the full development of eighteenth and nineteenth century conceptions, he has acquired some of the very worst habits of the trader. Too often he is a gambler. Ever and again I have had glimpses of preoccupied groups of men at green tables in little rooms, playing that dreary game poker, wherein there is no skill, no variety except in the sum at hazard, no orderly development, only a sort of expressionless lying called "bluffing." Indeed, poker isn't so much a game as a bad habit. Yet the American sits for long hours at it, dispersing and accumulating dollars, and he carries its great conception of "bluff" and a certain experience of kinetic physiognomy back with him to his office....

And Americans talk dollars to an astonishing extent....

Now this is the reality of American corruption, a huge exclusive preoccupation with dollar-getting. What is called corruption by the press is really no more than the acute expression in individual cases

of this general fault.

Where everybody is getting it is idle to expect a romantic standard of honesty between employers and employed. The official who buys rails for the big railway company that is professedly squeezing every penny it can out of the public for its shareholders as its highest aim, is not likely to display any religious self-abnegation of a share for himself in this great work. The director finds it hard to distinguish between getting for himself and getting for his company, and the duty to one-self of a discreet use of opportunity taints the whole staff from manager to messenger-boy. The politicians who protect the interests of the same railway in the House of Commons or the Senate, as the case may be, are not going to do it for love either. Nobody will have any mercy for their wives or children if they die poor. The policeman who stands between the property of the company and the irregular enterprise of robbers feels his vigilance merits a special recognition. A position of trust is a position of advantage, and deserves a percentage. Everywhere, as every one knows, in all the modern States, quite as much as in China, there are commissions, there are tips, there are extortions and secret profits, there is, in a word, "graft." It's no American specialty. Things are very much the same in this matter in Great Britain as in America, but Americans talk more and louder than we do. And indeed all this is no more than an inevitable development of the idea of trading in the mind, that every transaction must leave something behind for the agent. It's not stealing, but nevertheless, the automatic cash-register becomes more and more of a necessity in this thickening atmosphere of private enterprise.

§ III

It seems to me that the political corruption that still plays so large a part in the American problem is a natural and necessary underside to a purely middle-class organization of society for business. Nobody is left over to watch the politician. And the evil is enormously aggravated by the complexities of the political machinery, by the methods of the presidential election that practically prescribes a

ticket method of voting, and by the absence of any second ballots. Moreover, the passion of the simpler minded Americans for aggressive legislation controlling private morality has made the control of the police a main source of party revenue, and dragged the saloon and brothel, essentially retiring though these institutions are, into politics. The Constitution ties up political reform in the most extraordinary way, it was planned by devout Republicans equally afraid of a dictatorship and the people; it does not so much distribute power as disperse it, the machinery falls readily into the hands of professional politicians with no end to secure but their immediate profit, and is almost inaccessible to poor men who cannot make their incomes in its working. An increasing number of wealthy young men have followed President Roosevelt into political life — one thinks of such figures as Senator Colby of New Jersey, but they are but incidental mitigations of a generally vicious scheme. Before the nation, so busy with its diversified private affairs, Ties the devious and difficult problem of a great reconstruction of its political methods, as a preliminary to any broad change of its social organization....

How vicious things are I have had some inkling in a dozen whispered stories of votes, of ballot-boxes rifled, of votes destroyed, of the violent personation of cowed and ill-treated men. And in Chicago I saw a little of the physical aspect of the system.

I made the acquaintance of Alderman Kenna, who is better known, I found, throughout the States as “Hinky-Dink,” saw his two saloons and something of the Chinese quarter about him. He is a compact, upright little man, with iron-gray hair, a clear blue eye, and a dry manner. He wore a bowler hat through all our experiences in common, and kept his hands in his jacket-pockets. He filled me with a ridiculous idea, for which I apologize, that had it fallen to the lot of Mr. J. M. Barrie to miss a university education, and keep a saloon in Chicago and organize voters, he would have looked own brother to Mr. Kenna. We commenced in the first saloon, a fine, handsome place, with mirrors and tables and decorations and a consumption of mitigated mineral waters and beer in bottles; then I was taken over to see the other saloon, the one across the way. We went behind the counter, and while I professed a comparative interest in English and

American beer-engines, and the Alderman exchanged commonplaces with two or three of the shirt-sleeved barmen, I was able to survey the assembled customers.

It struck me as a pretty tough gathering.

The first thing that met the eye were the schooners of beer. There is nothing quite like the American beer-schooner in England. It would appeal strongly to an unstinted appetite for beer, and I should be curious to try it upon a British agricultural laborer and see how many he could hold. He would, I am convinced, have to be entirely hollowed out to hold two. Those I saw impressed me as being about the size of small fish-globes set upon stems, and each was filled with a very substantial-looking beer indeed. They stood in a careless row all along the length of the saloon counter. Below them, in attitudes of negligent proprietorship, lounged the "crowd" in a haze of smoke and conversation. For the most part I should think they were Americanized immigrants. I looked across the counter at them, met their eyes, got the quality of their faces — and it seemed to me I was a very flimsy and unsubstantial intellectual thing indeed. It struck me that I would as soon go to live in a pen in a stock-yard as into American politics.

That was my momentary impression. But that line of base and coarse faces seen through the reek was only one sample of the great saloon stratum of the American population in which resides political power. They have no ideas and they have votes; they are capable, if need be, of meeting violence by violence, and that is the sort of thing American methods demand....

Now Alderman Kenna is a straight man, the sort of man one likes and trusts at sight, and he did not invent his profession. He follows his own ideas of right and wrong, and compared with my ideas of right and wrong, they seem tough, compact, decided things. He is very kind to all his crowd. He helps them when they are in trouble, even if it is trouble with the police; he helps them find employment when they are down on their luck; he stands between them and the impacts of an unsympathetic and altogether too-careless social structure in a sturdy and almost parental way. I can quite believe what I was told, that in the lives of many of these rough undesirables he's almost the only decent influence. He gets wives well treated, and

he has an open heart for children. And he tells them how to vote, a duty of citizenship they might otherwise neglect, and sees that they do it properly. And whenever you want to do things in Chicago you must reckon carefully with him....

There you have a chip, a hand specimen, from the basement structure upon which American politics rest. That is the remarkable alternative to private enterprise as things are at present. It is America's only other way. If public services are to be taken out of the hands of such associations of financiers as the Standard Oil group they have to be put into the hands of politicians resting at last upon this sort of basis. Therein resides the impossibility of socialism in America — as the case for socialism is put at present. The third course is the far more complex, difficult and heroic one of creating imaginatively and bringing into being a new state — a feat no people in the world has yet achieved, but a feat that any people which aspires to lead the future is bound, I think, to attempt.

IX. — THE IMMIGRANT

§ I

My picture of America assumes now a certain definite form. I have tried to convey the effect of a great and energetic English-speaking population strewn across a continent so vast as to make it seem small and thin; I have tried to show this population caught by the upward sweep of that great increase in knowledge that is everywhere enlarging the power and scope of human effort, exhilarated by it, and active and hopeful beyond any population the world has ever seen, and I have tried to show how the members of this population struggle and differentiate among themselves in a universal commercial competition that must, in the end, if it is not modified, divide them into two permanent classes of rich and poor. I have ventured to hint at a certain emptiness in the resulting wealthy, and to note some of the uglinesses and miseries inseparable from this competition. I have tried to give my impressions of the vague, yet widely diffused, will in the nation to resist this differentiation, and of a dim, large movement of thought towards a change of national method. I have glanced at the debasement of politics that bars any immediate hope of such reconstruction. And now it is time to introduce a new element of obstruction and difficulty into this complicating problem — the immigrants.

Into the lower levels of the American commimity there pours perpetually a vast torrent of strangers, speaking alien tongues, inspired by alien traditions, for the most part illiterate peasants and working-people. They come in at the bottom: that must be insisted upon. An enormous and ever-increasing proportion of the laboring classes, of all the lower class in America, is of recent European origin, is either of foreign birth or foreign parentage. The older American population is being floated up on the top of this influx, a sterile aristocracy above a racially different and astonishingly fecund proletariat. (For it grows rankly in this new soil. One section of immigrants, the Hungarians, have here a birthrate of forty-six in the thousand, the highest of any civilized people in the world.)

Few people grasp the true dimensions of this invasion. Figures carry so little. The influx has clambered from half a million to 700,000, to 800,000; this year the swelling figures roll up as if they mean to go far over the million mark. The flood swells to overtake the total birth-rate; it has already overtopped the total of births of children to native-American parents.

I have already told something of the effect of Ellis Island. I have told how I watched the long procession of simple-looking, hopeful, sunburned country folk from Russia, from the Carpathians, from southern Italy and Turkey and Syria, filing through the wickets, bringing their young wives for the mills of Paterson and Fall River, their children for the Pennsylvania coal-breakers and the cotton-mills of the South.

Yet there are moments when I could have imagined there were no immigrants at all. All the time, except for one distinctive evening, I seem to have been talking to English-speaking men, now and then to the Irishman, now and then, but less frequently, to an Americanized German. In the clubs there are no immigrants. There are not even Jews, as there are in London clubs. One goes about the wide streets of Boston, one meets all sorts of Boston people, one visits the State-House; it's all the authentic English-speaking America. Fifth Avenue, too, is America without a touch of foreign-born; and Washington. You go a hundred yards south of the pretty Boston Common and, behold! you are in a polyglot slum! You go a block or so east of Fifth Avenue and you are in a vaster, more Yiddish White-chapel. You cross from New York to Staten Island, attracted by its distant picturesque suggestion of scattered homes among the trees, and you discover black-tressed, bold-eyed women on those pleasant verandas, half-clad brats, and ambiguous washing, where once the native American held his simple state. You ask the way of a young man who has just emerged from a ramshackle factory, and you are answered in some totally incomprehensible tongue. You come up again after such a dive below, to dine with the original Americans again, talk with them, go about with them and forget....

In Boston, one Sunday afternoon, this fact of immigration struck upon Mr. Henry James:

"There went forward across the cop of the hill a continuous

passage of men and women, in couples and talkative companies, who struck me as laboring wage-earners of the simpler sort arrayed in their Sunday best and decently enjoying their leisure... no sound of English in a single instance escaped their lips; the greater number spoke a rude form of Italian, the others some outland dialect unknown to me — though I waited and waited to catch an echo of antique refrains."

That's one of a series of recurrent, uneasy observations of this great replacement I find in Mr. James's book.

The immigrant does not clamor for attention. He is, indeed, almost entirely inaudible, inarticulate, and underneath. He is in origin a peasant, inarticulate, and imderneath by habit and tradition. Mr. James has, as it were, to put his ear to earth, to catch the murmuring of strange tongues. The incomer is of diverse nationality and diverse tongues, and that " breaks him up " politically and socially. He drops into American clothes, and then he does not catch the careless eye. He goes into special regions and works there. Where Americans talk or think or have leisure to observe, he does not intrude. The bulk of the Americans don't get as yet any real sense of his portentous multitude at all. He does not read very much, and so he produces no effect upon the book trade or magazines. You can go through such a periodical as *Harper's Magazine*, for example, from cover to cover, and unless there is some article or story bearing specifically upon the subject you might doubt if there was an immigrant in the country. On the liner coming over, at Ellis Island, and sometimes on the railroads one saw him — him and his womankind, — in some picturesque east-European garb, very respectful, very polite, adventurous, and a little scared. Then he became less visible. He had got into cheap American clothes, resorted to what naturalists call "protective mimicry," even perhaps acquired a collar. Also his bearing had changed, become charged with a certain aggression. He had got a pocket-handkerchief, and had learned to move fast and work fast, and to chew and spit with the proper meditative expression. One detected him by his diminishing accent, and by a few persistent traits — rings in his ears, perhaps, or the like adornment. In the next stage these also had gone; he had become ashamed of the music of his native tongue, and talked even to his wife, on the trolley-car and

other public places, at least, in brief remarkable American. Before that he had become ripe for a vote.

The next stage of Americanization, I suppose, is this dingy quick-eyed citizen with his schooner of beer in my Chicago saloon — if it is not that crumpled thing I saw lying so still in the sunlight under the trestle bridge on my way to Washington....

§ II

Every American above forty, and most of those below that limit, seem to be enthusiastic advocates of unrestricted immigration. I could not make them understand the apprehension with which this huge dilution of the American people with profoundly ignorant foreign peasants filled me. I rode out on an automobile into the pretty New York country beyond Yonkers with that finely typical American, Mr. Z. — he wanted to show me the pleasantness of the land, — and he sang the song of American confidence, I think, more clearly and loudly than any. He told me liow everybody had hope, how everybody had incentive, how magnificently it was all going on. He told me — what is, I am afraid, a widely spread delusion — that elementary education stands on a higher level of efficiency in the States than in England. He had no doubt whatever of the national powers of assimilation. "Let them all come," he said, cheerfully.

"The Chinese?" said I.

"We can do with them all..."

He was exceptional in that extension. Most Americans stop at the Ural Mountains, and refuse the "Asiatic." It was not a matter for discussion with him, but a question of belief. He had ceased to reason about immigration long ago. He was a man in the fine autumn of life, abounding in honors, wrapped in furs, and we drove swiftly in his automobile, through the spring sunshine. ("By Jove!" thought I, "you talk like Pippa's rich uncle.") By some half-brother of a coincidence we happened first upon this monument commemorating a memorable incident of the War of Independence, and then upon that. He recalled details of that great campaign as Washington was fought out of Manhattan northward. I remember one stone among the

shooting trees that indicated where in the Hudson River near by a British sloop had fired the first salute in honor of the American flag. That salute was vividly present still to him; it echoed among the woods, it filled him with a sense of personal triumph; it seemed halfway back to Agincourt to me. All that bright morning the stars and stripes made an almost luminous visible presence about us. Open-handed hospitality and confidence in God so swayed me that it is indeed only now, as I put this book together, I see this shining buoyancy, this bunting patriotism, in its direct relation to the Italian babies in the cotton-mills, to the sinister crowd that stands in the saloon smoking and drinking beer, an accumulating reserve of unintelligent force behind the manoeuvres of the professional politicians....

I tried my views upon Commissioner Watchorn as we leaned together over the gallery railing and surveyed that bimdle-carrying crowd creeping step by step through the wire filter of the central hall of Ellis Island — into America.

"You don't think they'll swamp you?" I said.

"Now look here," said the Commissioner, "I'm English born — Derbyshire. I came into America when I was a lad. I had fifteen dollars. And here I am! Well, do you expect me, now I'm here, to shut the door on any other poor chaps who want a start — a start with hope in it, in the New World.?"

A pleasant-mannered, a fair-haired young man, speaking excellent English, had joined us as we went round, and nodded approval.

I asked him for his opinion, and gathered he was from Milwaukee, and the son of a Scandinavian immigrant. He, too, was for "fair-play" and an open door for every one. " Except," he added, " Asiatics." So also, I remember, was a very New England lady I met at Hull House, who wasn't, as a matter of fact, a New-Englander at all, but the daughter of a German settler in the Middle West. They all seemed to think that I was inspired by hostility to the immigrant in breathing any doubt about the desirability of this immense process....

I tried in each case to point out that this idea of not being churHshly exclusive did not exhaust the subject, that the present immigration is a different thing entirely from the immigration of half a century ago, that in the interest of the immigrant and his offspring

more than any one, is the protest to be made. Fifty years ago more than half of the torrent was English speaking, and the rest mostly from the Teutonic and Scandinavian northwest of Europe, an influx of people closely akin to the native Americans in temperament and social tradition. They were able to hold their own and mix perfectly. Even then the quantity of illiterate Irish produced a marked degradation of political life. The earlier immigration was an influx of energetic people who wanted to come, and who had to put themselves to considerable exertion to get here; it was higher in character and in social quality than the present flood. The immigration of to-day is largely the result of energetic canvassing by the steamship companies; it is, in the main, an importation of laborers and not of economically independent settlers, and it is increasingly alien to the native tradition. The bulk of it is now Italian, Russian Jewish, Russian, Hungarian, Croatian, Roumanian, and eastern European generally.

"The children learn English, and become more American and better patriots than the Americans," Commissioner Watchorn — echoing everybody in that — told me....

(In Boston one oftimistic lady looked to the Calabrian and Sicilian peasants to introduce an artistic element into the population — no doubt because they come from the same peninsula that produced the Florentines.)

§ III

Will the reader please remember that I've been just a few weeks in the States altogether, and value my impressions at that! And will he, nevertheless, read of doubts that won't diminish. I doubt very much if America is going to assimilate all that she is taking in now; much more do I doubt that she will assimilate the still greater inflow of the coming years. I believe she is going to find infinite difficulties in that task. By "assimilate" I mean make intelligently co-operative citizens of these people. She will, I have no doubt whatever, impose upon them a bare use of the English language, and give them votes and certain patriotic persuasions, but I believe that if things go on as they

are going the great mass of them will remain a very low lower class — will remain largely illiterate industrialized peasants. They are decent-minded peasant people, orderly, industrious people, rather dirty in their habits, and with a low standard of life. Wherever they accumulate in numbers they present to my eye a social phase far below the level of either England, France, north Italy, or Switzerland. And, frankly, I do not find the American nation has either in its schools — which are as backward in some States as they are forward in others — in its press, in its religious bodies or its general tone, any organized means or effectual influences for raising these huge masses of humanity to the requirements of an ideal modern civilization. They are, to my mind, "biting off more than they can chaw" in this matter.

I got some very interesting figures from Dr. Hart, of the Children's Home and Aid Society, Chicago, in this matter. He was pleading for the immigrant against my scepticisms. He pointed out to me that the generally received opinion that the European immigrants are exceptionally criminal is quite wrong. The 1900 census report collapsed after a magnificent beginning, and its figures are not available, but from the earlier records there can be no doubt that the percentage of criminals among the "foreign-born" is higher than that among the native-born. This, however, is entirely due to the high criminal record of the French Canadians in the Northeast, and the Mexicans in Arizona, who are not over-seas immigrants at all. The criminal statistics of the French Canadians in the States should furnish useful matter for the educational controversy in Great Britain. Allowing for their activities — which appear to be based on an education of peculiar religious virtue — the figures bring the criminal percentage among the foreigners far below that of the native-born. But Dr. Hart's figures also showed very clearly something further: as between the offspring of native and foreign parents the preponderance of crime is enormously on the side of the latter.

That, at any rate, falls in with my own preconceptions and roving observations. Bear in mind always that this is just one questioning individual's impression. It seems to me that the immigrant arrives an artless, rather uncivilized, pious, good-hearted peasant, with a

disposition towards submissive industry and rude effectual moral habits. America, it is alleged, makes a man of him. It seems to me that all too often she makes an infuriated toiler of him, tempts him with dollars and speeds him up with competition, hardens him, coarsens his manners, and, worst crime of all, lures and forces him to sell his children into toil. The home of the immigrant in America looks to me worse than the home he came from in Italy. It is just as dirty, it is far less simple and beautiful, the food is no more wholesome, the moral atmosphere far less wholesome; and, as a consequence, the child of the immigrant is a worse man than his father.

I am fully aware of the generosity, the nobility of sentiment which underlies the American objection to any hindrance to immigration. But either that general sentiment should be carried out to a logical completeness and a gigantic and costly machinery organized to educate and civilize these people as they come in, or it should be chastened to restrict the inflow to numbers assimilable under existing conditions. At present, if we disregard sentiment, if we deny the alleged need of gross flattery whenever one writes of America for Americans, and state the bare facts of the case, they amount to this: that America, in the urgent process of individualistic industrial development, in its feverish haste to get through with its material possibilities, is importing a large portion of the peasantry of central and eastern Europe, and converting it into a practically illiterate industrial proletariat. In doing this it is doing a something that, however different in spirit, differs from the slave trade of its early history only in the narrower gap between employer and laborer. In the "colored" population America has already ten million descendants of unassimilated and perhaps im-assimilable labor immigrants. These people are not only half civilized and ignorant, but they have infected the white population about them with a kindred ignorance. For there can be no doubt that if an Englishman or Scotchman of the year 1500 were to return to earth alid seek his most retrograde and decivilized descendants, he would find them at last among the white and colored population south of Washington. And I have a foreboding that in this mixed flood of workers that pours into America by the million to-day, in this torrent of ignorance,

against which that heroic being, the schoolmarm, battles at present all unaided by men, there is to be found the possibility of another dreadful separation of class and kind, a separation perhaps not so profound but far more universal. One sees the possibility of a rich industrial and mercantile aristocracy of western European origin, dominating a darker-haired, darker-eyed, uneducated proletariat from central and eastern Europe. The immigrants are being given votes, I know, but that does not free them, it only enslaves the country. The negroes were given votes.

That is the quality of the danger as I see it. But before this indigestion of immigrants becomes an incurable sickness of the States many things may happen. There is every sign, as I have said, that a great awakening, a great disillusionment, is going on in the American mind. The Americans have become suddenly self-critical, are hot with an unwonted fever for reform and constructive effort. This swamping of the country may yet be checked. They may make a strenuous effort to emancipate children below fifteen from labor, and so destroy one of the chief inducements of immigration. Once convince them that their belief in the superiority of their public schools to those of England and Germany is an illusion, or at least that their schools are inadequate to the task before them, and it may be they w411 perform some swift American miracle of educational organization and finance. For all the very heavy special educational charges that are needed if the immigrant is really to be assimilated, it seems a reasonable proposal that immigration should pay. Suppose the new-comer were presently to be taxed on arrival for his own training and that of any children he had with him, that again would check the inrush very greatly. Or the steamship company might be taxed, and left to settle the trouble with the immigrant by raising his fare. And finally, it may be that if the line is drawn, as it seems highly probable it will be, at "Asiatics," then there may even be a drying up of the torrent at its source. The European countries are not unlimited reservoirs of offspring. As they pass from their old conditions into more and more completely organized modern industrial states, they develop a new internal equilibrium and cease to secrete an excess of population. England no longer supplies any great quantity of Americans; Scotland barely any; France is

exhausted; Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia have, it seems, disgorged nearly all their surplus load, and now run dry....

These are all mitigations of the outlook, but still the dark shadow of disastrous possibility remains. The immigrant comes in to weaken and confuse the counsels of labor, to serve the purposes of corruption, to complicate any economic and social development, above all to retard enormously the development of that national consciousness and will on which the hope of the future depends.

§ IV

I TOLD these doubts of mine to a pleasant young lady of New York, who seems to find much health and a sustaining happiness in settlement work on the East Side. She scorned my doubts. “Children make better citizens than the old Americans,” she said, like one who quotes a classic, and took me with her forthwith to see the central school of the Educational Alliance, that fine imposing building in East Broadway,

It’s a thing I’m glad not to have missed. I recall a large cool room with a sloping floor, tier rising above tier of seats and desks, and a big class of bright-eyed Jewish children, boys and girls, each waving two little American flags to the measure of the song they sang, singing to the accompaniment of the piano on the platform beside us.

“God bless our native land,” they sang — with a considerable variety of accent and distinctness, but with a very real emotion.

Where Immigrant Children Are Americanized

Some of them had been in America a month, some much longer, but here they were — imder the auspices of the wealthy Hebrews of New York and Mr. Blaustein's enthusiastic direction — ^being Americanized. They sang of America—" sweet land of liberty"; they, stood up and drilled with the little bright pretty flags; swish they crossed and swish they waved back, a waving froth of flags and flushed children's faces; and they stood up and repeated the oath of allegiance, and at the end filed tramping by me and out of the hall. The oath they take is finely worded. It runs:

"Flag our great Republic, inspirer in battle, guardian of our homes, whose stars and stripes stand for bravery, purity, truth, and union, we salute thee! We, the natives of distant lands, who find rest under thy folds, do pledge our hearts, our lives, and our sacred honor to love and protect thee, our country, and the liberty of the American people forever."

I may have been fanciful, but as I stood aside and watched them going proudly past, it seemed to me that eyes met mine, triumphant and victorious eyes — for was I not one of these British from whom freedom was won? But that was an ignoble suspicion. They had been but a few weeks in America, and that light in their eyes was just a brotherly challenge to one they supposed a fellow-citizen who stood unduly thoughtful amid their rhythmic exaltation. They tramped out and past with their flags and guidons.

"It is touching!" whispered my guide, and I saw she had caught a

faint reflection of that glow that lit the children.

I told her it was the most touching thing I had seen in America.

And so it remains.

Think of the immense promise in it! Think of the flower of belief and effort that may spring from this warm sowing! We passed out of this fluttering multiplication of the most beautiful flag in the world, into streets abominable with offal and indescribable filth, and dark and horrible under the thunderous girders of the Elevated railroad, to our other quest for that morning, a typical New York tenement. For I wanted to see one, with practically windowless bedrooms....

The Educational Alliance is of course not a public institution; it was organized by Hebrews, and conducted for Hebrews, chiefly for the benefit of the Hebrew immigrant. It is practically the only organized attempt to Americanize the immigrant child. After the children have mastered sufficient English and acquired the simpler elements of patriotism — which is practically no more than an emotional attitude towards the flag — they pass on into the ordinary public schools.

"Yes," I told my friend, "I know how these children feel. That, less articulate perhaps, but no less sincere, is the thing — something between pride and a passionate desire — that fills three-quarters of the people at Ellis Island now. They come ready to love and worship, ready to bow down and kiss the folds of your flag. They give themselves — they want to give. Do you know I, too, have come near feeling that at times for America."...

We were separated for a while by a long hole in the middle of the street and a heap of builder's refuse. Before we came within talking distance again I was in reaction against the gleam of satisfaction my last confession had evoked.

"In the end," I said, "you Americans won't be able to resist it."

"Resist what?"

"You'll respect your country," I said.

"What do you mean?"

In those crowded noisy East Side streets one has to shout, and shout compact things. "This!" I said to the barbaric disorder about us. "Lynching! Child Labor! Graft!"

Then we were separated by a heap of decaying fish that some

hawker had dumped in the gutter.

My companion shouted something I did not catch.

"*We'll* tackle it!" she repeated.

I looked at her, bright and courageous and youthful, a little overconfident, I thought, but extremely reassuring, going valiantly through a disorderly world of obstacles, and for the moment — I suppose that waving bunting and the children's voices had got into my head a little — I forgot all sorts of things....

I could have imagined her the spirit of America incarnate rather than a philanthropic young lady of New York.

X. — STATE-BLINDNESS

§ I

In what I have written so far, I have tried to get the effect of the American outlook, the American task, the American problem as a whole, as it has presented itself to me. Clearly, as I see it, it is a mental and moral issue. There seems to me an economic process going on that tends to concentrate first wealth and then power in the hands of a small number of adventurous individuals of no very high intellectual type, a huge importation of alien and unassimilable workers, and a sustained disorder of local and political administration. Correlated with this is a great increase in personal luxury and need. In all these respects there is a strong parallelism between the present condition of the United States and the Roman Republic in the time of the early Caesars; and arguing from these alone one might venture to forecast the steady development of an exploiting and devastating plutocracy, leading perhaps to Caesarism, and a progressive decline in civilization and social solidarity. But there are forces of recuperation and construction in America such as the earlier instance did not display. There is infinitely more original and originating thought in the state, there are the organized forces of science, a habit of progress, clearer and wider knowledge among the general mass of the people. These promise, and must, indeed, inevitably make, some synthetic effort of greater or less homogeneity and force. It is upon that synthetic effort that the distinctive destiny of America depends.

I propose to go on now to discuss the mental quality of America as I have been able to focus it. (Remember always that I am an undiplomatic tourist of no special knowledge or authority, who came, moreover, to America with certain prepossessions.) And first, and chiefly, I have to convey what seems to me the most significant and pregnant thing of all. It is a matter of something wanting, that the American shares with the great mass of prosperous middle-class people in England. I think it is best indicated by saying that the typical American has no “ sense of the state.” I do not mean that he is

not passionately and vigorously patriotic. But I mean that he has no perception that his business activities, his private employments, are constituents in a large collective process; that they affect other people and the world forever, and cannot, as he imagines, begin and end w4th him. He sees the world in fragments; it is to him a multitudinous collection of individual "stories" — as the newspapers put it. If one studies an American newspaper, one discovers it is all individuality, all a matter of personal doings, of what so and so said and how so and so felt. And all these individualities are un-fused. Not a touch of abstraction or generalization, no thinnest atmosphere of reflection, mitigates these harsh, emphatic, isolated happenings. The American, it seems to me, has yet to achieve what is, after all, the product of education and thought, the conception of a whole to which all individual acts and happenings are subordinate and contributory.

When I say this much, I do not mean to insinuate that any other nation in the world has any superiority in this matter. But I do want to urge that the American problem is pre-eminently one that must be met by broad ways of thinking, by creative, synthetic, and merging ideas, and that a great number of Americans seem to lack these altogether.

§ II

Let me by way of illustration give a specimen American mind. It is not the mind of a writer or philosopher, it is just a plain successful business-man who exposes himself, and makes it clear that this want of any sense of the state of any large duty of constructive loyalty, is not an idiosyncrasy, but the quality of all his circle, his friends, his religious teacher....

I found my specimen in a book called *With John Bull And Jonathan*. It contains the rather rambling reminiscences of Mr. J. Morgan Richards, the wealthy and successful London agent of a great number of well-advertised American proprietary articles, and I read it first, I will confess, chiefly in search of such delightful phrases as the one "mammoth in character" I have already quoted. But there

were few to equal that first moment's bright discovery. What I got from it finally wasn't so much that sort of thing as this realization of Mr. Richards's peculiar quality, this acute sense of all that he hadn't got. Mr. Richards told of advertising enterprises, of contracts and journeyings, of his great friendship with the late Dr. Parker, of his domestic affairs, and all the changes in the world that had struck him, and of a remarkable dining club, called (paradoxically) the Sphinx, in which the giants (or are they the mammoths?) of the world of advertisement foregather. He gave his portrait, and the end-paper presented him playfully as the jolly president of the Sphinx Club, champagne-bottle crowned, but else an Egyptian monarch; and on the cover are two gilt hands clasped across a gilt ripple of sea ("hands across the sea"), under intertwining English and American flags. From the book one got an effect, garrulous perhaps, but on the whole not unpleasing, of an elderly but still active business personality quite satisfied by his achievements, and representative of I know not what proportion, but at any rate a considerable proportion, of his fellow-countrymen. And one got an effect of a being not simply indifferent to the health and vigor and growth of the community of which he was a part, but unaware of its existence.

He displays this irresponsibility of the commercial mind so illuminatingly because he does in a way attempt to tell something more than his personal story. He notes the changes in the world about him, how this has improved and that progressed, which contrasts between England and America struck upon his mind. That he himself is responsible amid these changes never seems to dawn upon him. His freedom from any sense of duty to the world as a whole, of any subordination of trading to great ideas, is naive and fundamental. He tells of how he arranged with the authorities in charge of the Independence Day celebrations on Boston Common to display "three large pieces" containing the name of a certain "bitters," which they did, and how this no doubt very desirable commodity was first largely advertised throughout the United States in the fall of 1861, and rapidly became the success of the day, because of the enormous amount of placarding given to the cabalistic characters 'S-T -1860-X.' Those strange letters and figures stared upon people from wall and fence and tree, in every leading town

throughout the United States. They were painted on the rocks of the Hudson River to such an extent that the attention of the Legislature was drawn to the fact, and a law was passed to prevent the further disfigurement of river scenery."

He calls this "cute." He tells, too, of his educational work upon the English press, how he won it over to "display" advertisements, and devised "the first sixteen-sheet double-demy poster ever seen in England in connection with a proprietary article." He introduced the smoking of cigarettes into England against great opposition. Mr. Richards finds no incongruity, but apparently a very delightful association, in the fact that this great victory for the adolescent's cigarette was won on the site of Strud-wick's house, wherein John Bunyan died, and hard by the path of the Smithfield martyrs to their fiery sacrifice. Both they and Mr. Richards "lit such a candle in England—"

Well, my business is not to tell of the feats by which Mr. Richards grew wealthy and important as a tree may grow and flourish amid the masonry it helps to disintegrate. My business is purely with his insensibility to the state as an aspect of his personal life. It is insensibility — not disregard or hostility. One gets an impression from this book that if Mr. Richards had lived in a different culture, he would have been a generous giver of himself. In spite of his curious incapacity to appreciate any issues larger than large enterprises in selling, he is very evidently a religious man. He sat under the late Dr. Parker of the rich and prosperous City Temple, and that reverend gentleman's leonine visage adorns the book. Its really the light one gets on Dr. Parker and his teaching that appeals to me most in this voliime. For this gentleman Mr. Richards seems to have entertained a feeling approaching reverence. He notes such details as:

"At the conclusion of an invocation or prayer, his habit always was to make a pause of a few seconds before pronouncing 'Amen,' This was most impressive....

"He spoke such words as 'God,' 'Jesus Christ,' 'No,' 'Yes,' 'Nothing,' in a way to give more value to each word than any speaker I have ever heard."

They became great friends, rarely a week passed without their meeting, and, says Mr. Richards, he "was pleased, in the course of

time, to honor me with his confidence in a marked degree, as though he recognized in me some quality which satisfied his judgment, that I could be trusted in business questions quite apart from those relating to his church. He was not only a born preacher, but possessed a marvellous grasp of sound, practical knowledge upon the affairs of the day. I often consulted with him regarding my own affairs, always getting the most practical help."

When Dr. Parker came to America, the two friends corresponded warmly, and several of the letters are quoted. Even £5,000 a year easily made" could not tempt him from London and the modest opulence of the City Temple....

But my business now is not to dwell on these characteristic details, but to point out that Mr. Richards does not stand alone in the entire detachment, not only of his worldly achievements, but of his spiritual life, from any creative solicitude for the state. If he was merely an isolated "character" I should have no concern with him. His association with Dr. Parker shows most luminously that he presents a whole cult of English and American rich traders, who in America "sat imder" such men as the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, for example, who evidently stand for much more in America than in England, and who, so far as the state and political and social work go, are scarcely of more use, are probably more hindrance, than any organization of selfish voluptuaries of equal wealth and numbers. It is a cult, it has its teachers and its books. I have had a glimpse of one of its manuals. I find Mr. Richards quoting with approval Dr. Parker's "Ten General Commandments for Men of Business," commandments which strike me as not only State-blind, but utterly God-blind, which are, indeed, no more than shrewd counsels for "getting on." It is really quite horrible stuff morally. "Thou shalt not hobnob with idle persons," parodies Dr. Parker in commandment V., so glossing richly upon the teachings of Him who ate with publicans and sinners, and (no doubt to instil the advisability of keeping one's more delicate business procedure in one's own hands), "Thou shalt not forget that a servant who can tell lies for thee, may one day tell lies to thee."...

I am not throwing any doubt upon the sincerity of Dr. Parker and Mr. Richards. I believe that nothing could exceed the transparent

honesty that ends this record which tells of a certain bitters pushed at the sacrifice of beautiful scenery, of a successful propaganda of cigarette-smoking, and of all sorts of proprietary articles landed well home in their gastric target of a whole life lost, indeed, in commercial self-seeking, with "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?"

"The Now is an atom of Sand,
And the Near is a perishing Clod,
But Afar is a fairyland.
And Beyond is the Bosom of God."

What I have to insist upon now is that this is a sample, and, so far as I can tell, a fair sample, of the quality and trend of the mind-stufi and the breadth and height of the tradition of a large and I know not how influential mass of prosperous middle-class English, and of a much more prosperous and influential and important section of Americans. They represent much energy, they represent much property, they are a factor to reckon with. They present a powerful opposing force to anything that will suppress their disgusting notice-boards or analyze their ambiguous "proprietary articles," or tax their gettings for any decent public purpose. And here I find them selling poisons as pain-killers, and alcohol as tonics, and fighting ably and boldly to silence adverse discussion. In the face of the great needs that lie before America their active trivality of soul, their energy and often unscrupulous activity, and their quantitative importance become, to my mind, adverse and threatening, a stumbling-block for hope. For the impression I have got by going to and fro in America is that Mr, Richards is a fair sample of at least the older type of American. So far as I can learn, Mr. J.D. Rockefeller is just another product of the same cult. You meet these older types everywhere, they range from-fervent piety and temperance to a hearty drinking, " story "-telling, poker-playing type, but they have in common a sharp, shrewd, narrow, business habit of mind that ignores the future and the state altogether. But I do not find the younger men are following in their lines. Some are. But just how many and to what extent, I do not know. It is very hard for a literary man to estimate the quantity

and importance of ideas in a community. The people he meets naturally all entertain ideas, or they would not come in his way. The people who have new ideas talk; those who have not, go about their business. But I hazard an opinion that Young America now presents an altogether different type from the young men of enterprise and soiind Baptist and business principles who were the backbone of the irresponsible commercial America of yesterday, the America that rebuilt Chicago on "floating foundations," covered the world with advertisement boards, gave the great cities the elevated railroads, and organized the trusts.

§ III

I SPENT a curious day amid the memories of that strangely interesting social experiment, the Oneida Community, and met a most significant contemporary, "live American" of the newer school, in the son of the founder and the present head of "Oneida Limited."

There are moments when that visit I paid to Oneida seems to me to stand for all America. The place, you know, was once the seat of a perfectionist community; the large red community buildings stand now among green lawns and ripening trees, and I dined in the communal dining-room, and visited the library, and saw the chain and trap factory, and the silk-spinning factory and something of all its industries. I talked to old and middle-aged people who told me all sorts of interesting things of "community days," looked through curious old-fashioned albums of photographs, showing the women in their bloomers and cropped hair, and the men in the ill-fitting frock-coats of the respectable mediocre person in early Victorian times. I think that some of the reminiscences I awakened had been voiceless for some time. At moments it was like hearing the story of a flattened, dry, and colorless flower between the pages of a book, of a verse written in faded ink, or of some daguerreotype spotted and faint beyond recognition. It was extraordinarily New England in its quality as I looked back at it all. They claimed a quiet perfection of soul, they searched one another marvellously for spiritual chastening, they defied custom and opinion, they followed their reasoning and

their theology to the inmost amazing abnegations — and they kept themselves solvent by the manufacture of steel traps that catch the legs of beasts in their strong and pitiless jaws.... But this book is not about the things that concerned Oneida in community days, and I mention them here only because of the curious developments of the present time. Years ago, when the founder, John Humphrey Noyes, grew old and unable to control the new dissensions that arose out of the sceptical attitude of the younger generation towards his ingenious theology, and such-like stresses, communism was abandoned, the religious life and services discontinued, the concern turned into a joint-stock company, and the members made shareholders on strictly commercial lines. For some years its prosperity declined. Many of the members went away. But a nucleus remained as residents in the old buildings, and after a time there were returns.

I was told that in the early days of the new period there was a violent reaction against communistic methods, a jealous inexperienced insistence upon property. "It was difficult to borrow a hammer," said one of my informants.

Then, as the new generation began to feel its feet, came a fresh development of vitality. The Oneida company began to set up new machinery, to seek wider markets, to advertise and fight competitors.

This Mr. P.B. Noyes was the leader into the new paths. He possesses all the force of character, the constructive passion, the imaginative power of his progenitor, and it has all gone into business competition. I have heard much talk of the romance of business, chiefly from people I heartily despised, but in Mr. Noyes I found business indeed romantic. It had got hold of him, it possessed him like a passion. He has inspired all his half-brothers and cousins and younger fellow-members of the community with his own imaginative motive. They, too, are enthusiasts for business.

Mr. Noyes is a tall man, who looks down when he talks to one. He showed me over the associated factories, told me how the trap trade of all North America is in Oneida's hands, told me of how they fight and win against the British traps in South America and Burmah. He showed me photographs of panthers in traps, tigers in traps, bears snarling at death, unfortunate deer, foxes caught by the paws....

I did my best to forget those photographs at once in the interest of

his admirable machinery, which busied itself with chain-making as though it had eyes and hands. I went beside him, full of that respect that a literary man must needs feel when a creative business controller displays his quality.

"But the old religion of Oneida?" I would interpolate.

"Each one of us is free to follow his own religion. Here is a new sort of chain we are making for hanging-lamps. Hitherto—"

Presently I would try again. "Are the workers here in any way members of the community?"

"Oh no! Many of them are Italian immigrants. We think of building a school for them.... No, we get no labor troubles. We pay always above the trade- union rates, and so we get the pick of the workmen. Our class of work can't be sweated."...

Yes, he was an astonishing personality, so immensely concentrated on these efficient manufacturing and trading developments, so evidently careless of theology, philosophy, social speculation, beauty.

"Your father was a philosopher," I said.

"I think in ten years' time I may give up the control here," he threw out, "and write something."

"I've thought of the publishing trade myself," I said, "when my wits are old and stiff."...

I never met a man before so firmly gripped by the romantic constructive and adventurous element of business, so little concerned about personal riches or the accumulation of wealth. He illuminated much that had been dark to me in the American character. I think better of business by reason of him. And time after time I tried him upon politics. It came to nothing. Making a new world was, he thought, a rhetorical flourish about futile and troublesome activities, and politicians merely a disreputable sort of parasite upon honorable people who made chains and plated spoons. All his constructive instincts, all his devotion, were for Oneida and its enterprises. America was just the impartial space, the large liberty, in which Oneida grew, the Stars and Stripes a wide sanction akin to the impartial irresponsible harboring sky overhead. Sense of the State had never grown in him — can now, I felt convinced, never grow....

But some day, I like to imagine, the World State, and not Oneida

corporations, and a nobler trade than traps, will command such services as his.

XI. — TWO STUDIES IN DISAPPOINTMENT

§ I

In considering the quality of the American mind (upon which, as I believe, the ultimate destiny of America entirely depends), it has been necessary to point out that, considered as one whole, it still seems lacking in any of that living sense of the state out of which constructive effort must arise, and that, conscr quently, enormous amounts of energy go to waste in anarchistic and chaotically competitive private enterprise. I believe there are powerful forces at work in the trend of modern thought, science, and method, in the direction of bringing order, control, and design into this confused gigantic conflict, and the discussion of these constructive forces must necessarily form the crown of my forecast of America's future. But before I come to that I must deal with certain American traits that puzzle me, that I cannot completely explain to myself, that dash my large expectations with an obstinate shadow of foreboding. Essentially these are disintegrating influences, in the nature of a fierce intolerance, that lead to conflicts and destroy co-operation. One makes one's criticism with compunction. One moves through the American world, meeting constantly with kindness and hospitality, with a familiar helpfulness that is delightful, with sympathetic enterprise and energetic imagination, and then suddenly there flashes out a quality of harshness....

I will explain in a few minutes what I mean by this flash of harshness. Let me confess here that I cannot determine whether it is a necessary consequence of American conditions, the scar upon the soul of too strenuous business competition, or whether it is something deeper, some subtle, unavoidable infection perhaps in this soil that was once the Red Indian's battle-ground, some poison, it may be, mingled with this clear exhilarating air. And going with this harshness there seems also something else, a contempt for abstract justice that one does not find in any European intelligence — not even among the English. This contempt may be a correlative of the intense practicality begotten by a scruple-destroying commercial

training. That, at any rate, is my own prepossession. Conceivably I am over-disposed to make that tall lady in New York Harbor stand as a symbol for the liberty of property, and to trace the indisputable hastiness of life here — it is haste sometimes rather than speed, — its scorn of aesthetic and abstract issues, this frequent quality of harshness, and a certain public disorder, whatever indeed mars the splendid promise and youth of America, to that. I think it is an accident of the commercial phase that presses men beyond dignity, patience, and magnanimity. I am loath to believe it is something fundamentally American.

I have very clearly in my memory the figure of yoimg MacQueen, in his gray prison clothes in Trenton jail, and how I talked with him. He and Mr. Booker T. Washington and Maxim Gorky stand for me as figures in the shadow — symbolical men. I think of America as pride and promise, as large growth and large • courage, all set with beautiful fluttering bunting, and then my vision of these three men comes back to me; they return presences inseparable from my American effect, unlit and uncomplaining on the sunless side of her, implying rather than voicing certain accusations. America can be hasty, can be obstinately thoughtless and unjust....

Well, let me set down as shortly as I can how I saw them, and then go on again with my main thesis.

§ II

MACQUEEN is one of those young men England is now making by the thousand in her elementary schools — a man of that active, intelligent, mentally hungry, self-educating sort that is giving us our elementary teachers, our labor members, able journalists, authors, civil servants, and some of the most public-spirited and efficient of our municipal administrators. He is the sort of man an Englishman grows prouder of as he sees America and something of her politicians and labor leaders. After his board-school days MacQueen went to work as a painter and grainer, and gave his spare energy to self- education. He mastered German, and read widely and freely. He corresponded with William Morris, devoured Tolstoy and Bernard

Shaw, followed the *Clarion* week by week, discussed social questions, wrote to the newspapers, debated, made speeches. The English reader will begin to recognize the type. Jail had worn him when I saw him, but I should think he was always physically delicate; he wears spectacles, he warms emotionally as he talks. And he decided, after much excogitation, that the ideal state is one of so fine a quality of moral training that people will not need coercion and repressive laws. He calls himself an anarchist — of the early Christian, Tols-toyan, non-resisting school. Such an anarchist was Emerson, among other dead Americans whose names are better treasured than their thoughts. That sort of anarchist has as much connection with embittered bomb-throwers and assassins as Miss Florence Nightingale has with the woman Hartmann, who put on a nurse's uniform to poison and rob.... Well, MacQueen led an active life in England, married, made a decent living, and took an honorable part in the local affairs of Leeds until he was twenty-six. Then he conceived a desire for wider opportunity than England offers men of his class.

In January, 1902, he crossed the Atlantic, and, no doubt, he came very much aglow with the American idea. He felt that he was exchanging a decadent country of dwarfing social and political traditions for a land of limitless outlook. He became a proof-reader in New York, and began to seek around him for opportunities of speaking and forwarding social progress. He tried to float a newspaper. The New York labor-unions found him a useful speaker, and, among others, the German silk-workers of New York became aware of him. In June they asked him to go to Paterson to speak in German to the weavers in that place.

The silk-dyers were on strike in Paterson, but the weavers were weaving "scab-silk," dyed by dyers elsewhere, and it was believed that the dyers' strike would fail imless they struck also. They had to be called out. They w^ere chiefly Italians, some Hungarians. It was felt by the New York German silk-workers that perhaps MacQueen's German learned in England might meet the linguistic difficulties of the case.

He went. I hope he will forgive me if I say that his was an extremely futile expedition. He did very little. He wrote an entirely

harmless article or so in English for La Questione Sociale, and he declined with horror and publicity to appear upon the same platform with a mischievous and violent lady anarchist called Emma Goldman. On June 17, 1902, he went to Paterson again, and spoke to his own undoing. There is no evidence that he said anything illegal or inflammatory, there is clear evidence that he bored his audience. They shouted him down, and called for a prominent local speaker named Galiano. MacQueen subsided into the background, and Galiano spoke for an hour in Italian. He aroused great enthusiasm, and the proceedings terminated with a destructive riot.

Eight witnesses testify to the ineffectual efforts on the part of MacQueen to combat the violence in progress....

That finishes the story of MacQueen's activities in America, for which he is now in durance at Trenton. He, in common with a large crowd and in common, too, with nearly all the witnesses against him, did commit one offence against the law — he did not go home when destruction began. He was arrested next day. From that time forth his fate was out of his hands, and in the control of a number of people who wanted to "make an example" of the Paterson strikers. The press took up MacQueen. They began to clothe the bare bones of this simple little history I have told in fluent, unmitigated lying. They blackened him, one might think, out of sheer artistic pleasure in the operation. They called this rather nervous, educated, nobly meaning if ill-advised young man a "notorious anarchist"; his headline title became "Anarchistic MacQueen"; they wrote his "story" in a vein of imaginative fervor; they invented "an unsavory police record" for him in England; and enlarged upon the marvellous secret organization for crime of which he was representative and leader. In a little while Mac-Queen had ceased to be a credible human being; he might have been invented by Mr. William le Queux. He was arrested — Galiano went scot-free — and released on bail. It was discovered that his pleasant, decent Yorkshire wife and three children were coming out to America to him, and she became "the woman Nellie Barton" — her maiden name — and "a socialist of the Emma Goldman stripe." This, one gathers, is the most horrible stripe known to American journalism. Had there been a worse one, Mrs. MacQueen would have been the ex officio. And now here is an

extraordinary thing — public officials began to join in the process. This is what perplexes me most in this affair. I am told that Assistant-Secretary-of-the-Treasury H.A. Taylor, without a fact to go upon, subscribed to the "unsavory record" legend and Assistant-Secretary C.H. Keep fell in with it. They must have seen what it was they were indorsing. In a letter from Mr. Keep to the Reverend A.W. Wishart, of Trenton (who throughout has fought most gallantly for justice in this case), I find Mr. Keep distinguishes himself by the artistic device of putting "William MacQueen's" name in inverted commas. So, very delicately, he conveys out of the void the insinuation that the name is an alias. Meanwhile the Commissioner of Immigration prepared to take a hand in the game of breaking up MacQueen. He stopped Mrs. MacQueen at the threshold of liberty, imprisoned her in Ellis Island, and sent her back to Europe. MacQueen, still on bail, was not informed of this action, and waited on the pier for some hours before he understood. His wife had come second class to America, but she was returned first class, and the steamship company seized her goods for the return fare....

That was more than MacQueen could stand. He had been tried, convicted, sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and he was now out on bail pending an appeal. Anxiety about his wife and children was too much for him. He slipped off to England after them ("Escape of the Anarchist MacQueen"), made what provision and arrangements he could for them, and returned in time to save his bondsman's money ("Capture of the Escaped Anarchist MacQueen"). Several members of the Leeds City Council (" Criminal Associates in Europe") saw him off. That was in 1903. His appeal had been refused on a technical point. He went into Trenton jail, and there he is to this day. There I saw him. Trenton Jail did not impress me as an agreeable place. The building is fairly old, and there is no nonsense about the food. The cells hold, some of them, four criminals, some of them two, but latterly MacQueen has had spells in the infirmary, and has managed to get a cell to himself. Many of the criminals are negroes and half-breeds, imprisoned for unspeakable offences. In the exercising-yard MacQueen likes to keep apart. "When I first came I used to get in a corner," he said....

Now this case of MacQueen has exercised my mind enormously.

It was painful to go out of the gray jail again after I had talked to him — of Shaw and Morris, of the Fabian Society and the British labor members — into sunlight and freedom, and ever and again, as I went about New York having the best of times among the most agreeable people, the figure of him would come back to me quite vividly, in his gray dress, sitting on the edge of an unaccustomed chair, hands on his knees, speaking a little nervously and jerkily, and very glad indeed to see me. He is younger than myself, but much my sort of man, and we talked of books and education and his case like brothers. There can be no doubt to any sensible person who will look into the story of his conviction, who will even go and see him, that there has been a serious miscarriage of justice.

There has been a serious miscarriage of justice, such as (unhappily) might happen in any cotmtry. That is nothing distinctive of America. But what does impress me as remarkable and perplexing is the immense difficulty — the perhaps unsurmountable difficulty — of getting this man released. The Governor of the State of New Jersey knows he is innocent, the judges of the Court of Pardons know he is innocent. Three of them I was able to button-hole at Trenton, and hear their point of view. Two are of the minority and for release, one was doubtful in attitude but hostile in spirit. They hold, the man, he thinks, on the score of public policy. They put it that Paterson is a "hotbed" of crime and violence; that once MacQueen is released every anarchist in the country will be emboldened to crime, and so on and so on. I admit Paterson festers, but if we are to punish anybody instead of reforming the system, it's the masters who ought to be in jail for that.

"What will the property-owners in Paterson say to us if this man is released?" one of the judges admitted frankly.

"But he hadn't anything to do with the violence," I said, an argued the case over again — quite missing the point of that objection.

Whenever I had a chance in New York, in Boston, in Washington, even amid the conversation of a Washington dinner-table, I dragged up the case of MacQueen. Nobody seemed indignant. One lady admitted the sentence was heavy, "he might have been given six months to cool off in," she said. I protested he ought not to have been given a day. "Why did he go there?" said a Supreme Court judge in

Washington, a lawyer in New York, and several other people. "Wasn't he making trouble?" I was asked.

At last that reached my sluggish intelligence.

Yet I still hesitate to accept the new interpretations. Galiano, who preached blind violence and made the riot, got off scot-free; MacQueen, who wanted a legitimate strike on British lines, went to jail. So long as the social injustice, the sweated disorder of Paterson's industrialism, vents its cries in Italian in La Questione Sociale, so long as it remains an inaudible misery so far as the great public is concerned, making vehement yet impotent appeals to mere force, and so losing its last chances of popular sympathy, American property, I gather, is content. The masters and the immigrants can deal with one another on those lines. But to have outsiders coming in!

There is an active press campaign against the release of "the Anarchist MacQueen," and I do not believe that Mr. Wishart will succeed in his endeavors. I think MacQueen will serve out his five years.

The plain truth is "that no one pretends he is in jail on his merits; he is in jail as an example and lesson to any one who proposes to come between master and immigrant worker in Paterson, He has attacked the system. The people who profit by the system, the people who think things are " all right as they are," have hit back in the most effectual way they can, according to their lights.

That, I think, accounts for the sustained quality of the lying in this case, and, indeed, for the whole situation. He is in jail on principle and without personal animus, just as they used to tar and feather the stray abolitionist on principle in Carolina. The policy of stringent discouragement is a reasonable one — scoundrelly, no doubt, but understandable. And I think I can put myself sufficiently into the place of the Paterson masters, of the Trenton judges, of those journalists, of those subordinate officials at Washington even, to understand their motives and inducements. I indiilge in no self-righteous pride. Simply, I thank Heaven I have not had their peculiar temptations.

But my riddle lies in the attitude of the public — of the American nation, which hasn't, it seems, a spark of moral indignation for this

sort of thing, which indeed joins in quite cheerfully against the victim.

It is ill served by its press, no doubt, but surely it understands....

§ III

THEN I assisted at the coming of Maxim Gorky, and witnessed many intimate details of what Professor Giddings, that courageous publicist, has called his "lynching."

Here, again, is a case I fail altogether to understand. The surface values of that affair have a touch of the preposterous. I set them down in infinite perplexity.

My first week in New York was in the period of Gorky's advent. Expectation was at a high pitch, and one might have foretold a stupendous, a history-making campaign. The American nation seemed concentrated upon one great and ennobling idea, the freedom of Russia, and upon Gorky as the embodiment of that idea. A protest was to be made against cruelty and violence and massacre. That great figure of Liberty with the torch was to make it flare visibly half-way round the world, reproving tyranny. Gorky arrived, and the eclat was immense. We dined him, we lunched him, we were photographed in his company by flash-light. I very gladly shared that honor, for Gorky is not only a great master of the art I practise, but a splendid personality. He is one of those people to whom the camera does no justice, whose work, as I know it in an English translation, forceful as it is, fails very largely to convey his peculiar quality. His is a big, quiet figure; there is a curious power of appeal in his face, a large simplicity in his voice and gesture. He was dressed, when I met him, in peasant clothing, in a belted blue shirt, trousers of some shiny black material, and boots; and save for a few common greetings he has no other language than Russian. So it was necessary that he should bring with him some one he could trust to interpret him to the world. And having, too, much of the practical helplessness of his type of genius, he could not come without his right hand, that brave and honorable lady, Madame Andreieva, who has been now for years in everything but the severest legal sense his wife. Russia has no

Dakota; and although his legal wife has long since found another companion, the Orthodox Church in Russia has no divorce facilities for men in the revolutionary camp. So Madame Andreieva stands to him as George Eliot stood to George Lewes, and I suppose the two of them had almost forgotten the technical illegality of their tie, until it burst upon them and the American public in a monstrous storm of exposure.

It was like a summer thunder-storm. At one moment Gorky was in an immense sunshine, a plenipotentiary from oppression to liberty, at the next he was being almost literally pelted through the streets.

I do not know what motive actuated a certain section of the American press to initiate this pelting of Maxim Gorky. A passion for moral purity may perhaps have prompted it, but certainly no passion for purity ever before begot so brazen and abundant a torrent of lies. It was precisely the sort of campaign that damned poor MacQueen, but this time on an altogether imperial scale. The irregularity of Madame Andreieva's position was a mere point of departure. The journalists went on to invent a deserted wife and children, they declared Madame Amdreieva was an "actress," and loaded her with all the unpleasant implications of that unfortunate word; they spoke of her generally as "the woman Andreieva"; they called upon the Commissioner of Immigration to deport her as a "female of bad character"; quite influential people wrote to him to that effect; they published the name of the hotel that sheltered her, and organized a boycott. Whoever dared to countenance the victims was denounced. Professor Dewar of Columbia had given them a reception; "Dewar must go," said the headlines. Mark Twain, who had assisted in the great welcome, was invited to recant and contribute unfriendly comments. The Gorkys were pursued with insult from hotel to hotel. Hotel after hotel turned them out. They found themselves at last, after midnight, in the streets of New York city with every door closed against them. Infected persons could not have been treated more abominably in a town smitten with a panic of plague.

This change happened in the course of twenty-four hours. On one day Gorky was at the zenith, on the next he had been swept from the world. To me it was astounding — it was terrifying. I wanted to talk

to Gorky about it, to find out the hidden springs of this amazing change. I spent a Sunday evening looking for him with an ever-deepening respect for the power of the American press. I had a quaint conversation with the clerk of the hotel in Fifth Avenue from which he had first been driven. Europeans can scarcely hope to imagine the moral altitudes at which American hotels are conducted.... I went thence to seek Mr. Abraham Cahan in the East Side, and thence to other people I knew, but in vain. Gorky was obliterated.

I thought this affair was a whirlwind of foolish misunderstanding, such as may happen in any capital, and that presently his entirely tolerable relationship would be explained. But for all the rest of my time in New York this insensate campaign went on. There was no attempt of any importance to stem the tide, and to.this day large sections of the American public must be under the impression that this great writer is a depraved man of pleasure accompanied by a favorite cocotte. The writers of paragraphs racked their brains to invent new and smart ways of insulting Madame Andreieva. The chaste entertainers of the music-halls of the Tenderloin district introduced allusions. And amid this riot of personalities Russia was forgotten. The massacres, the chaos of cruelty and blundering, the tyranny, the women outraged, the children tortured and slain — all that was forgotten. In Boston, in Chicago, it was the same. At the bare suggestion of Gorky's coming the same outbreak occurred, the same display of imbecile gross lying, the same absolute disregard of the tragic cause he had come to plead.

One gleam of comedy in this remarkable outbreak I recall. Some one in ineffectual protest had asked what Americans would have said if Benjamin Franklin had encountered such ignominies on his similar mission of appeal to Paris before the War of Independence. "Benjamin Franklin," retorted one bright young Chicago journalist, " was a man of very different moral character from Gorky," and proceeded to explain how Chicago was prepared to defend the purity of her homes against the invader. Benjamin Franklin, it is true, was a person of very different morals from Gorky — but I don't think that bright yoimg man in Chicago had a very sound idea of where the difference lay.

I spent my last evening on American soil in the hospitable home

in Staten Island that sheltered Grorky and Madame Andreieva. After dinner we sat together in the deepening twilight upon a broad veranda that looks out upon one of the most beautiful views in the world, upon serene large spaces of land and sea, upon slopes of pleasant, window-lit, tree-set wooden houses, upon the glittering clusters of lights, and the black and luminous shipping that comes and goes about the Narrows and the Upper Bay. Half masked by a hill contour to the left was the light of the torch of Liberty.... Gorky's big form fell into shadow, Madame Andreieva sat at his feet, translating methodically, sentence by sentence, into clear French whatever he said, translating our speeches into Russian, He told us stories — of the soul of the Russian, of Russian religious sects, of kindnesses and cruelties, of his great despair.

Ever and again, in the pauses, my eyes would go to where New York far away glittered like a brighter and more numerous Pleiades.

I gauged something of the real magnitude of this one man's disappointment, the immense expectation of his arrival, the impossible dream of his mission.

He had come — the Russian peasant in person, out of a terrific confusion of bloodshed, squalor, injustice — to tell America, the land of light and achieved freedom, of all these evil things. She would receive him, help him, understand truly what he meant with his "Rossiya." I could imagine how he had felt as he came in the big steamer to her, up that large converging display of space and teeming energy. There she glowed to-night across the water, a queen among cities, as if indeed she was the light of the world. Nothing, I think, can ever rob that splendid harbor approach of its invincible quality of promise.... And to him she had shown herself no more than the luminous hive of multitudes of base and busy, greedy and childish little men.

MacQueen in jail, Gorky with his reputation wantonly bludgeoned and flung aside; they are just two chance specimens of the myriads who have come up this great waterway bearing hope and gifts.

XII. — THE TRAGEDY OF COLOR

§ I

I SEEM to find the same hastiness and something of the same note of harshness that strike me in the cases of MacQueen and Gorky in America's treatment of her colored population. I am aware how intricate, how multitudinous, the aspects of this enormous question have become, but looking at it in the broad and transitory manner I have proposed for myself in these papers, it does seem to present many parallel elements. There is the same disposition towards an indiscriminating verdict, the same disregard of proportion as between small evils and great ones, the same indifference to the fact that the question does not stand alone, but is a part, and this time a by no means small part, in the working out of America's destinies.

In regard to the colored population, just as in regard to the great and growing accumulations of unassimilated and increasingly unpopular Jews, and to the great and growing multitudes of Roman Catholics whose special education contradicts at so many points those conceptions of individual judgment and responsibility upon which America relies, I have attempted time after time to get some answer from the Americans I have met to what is to me the most obvious of questions. " Your grandchildren' and the grandchildren of these people will have to live in this country side by side; do you propose, do you believe it possible, that under the increasing pressure of population and competition they should be living then in just the same relations that you and these people are living now; if you do not, then what relations do you propose shall exist between them?" It is not too much to say that I have never once had the beginnings of an answer to this question. Usually one is told with great gravity that the problem of color is one of the most difficult that we have to consider, and the conversation then breaks up into discursive anecdotes and statements about black people. One man will dwell upon the uncontrollable violence of a black man's evil passions (in Jamaica and Barbadoes colored people form an overwhelming proportion of the population, and they have behaved in an exemplary

fashion for the last thirty years); another will dilate upon the incredible stupidity of the full-blooded negro (during my stay in New York the prize for oratory at Columbia University, oratory which was the one redeeming charm of Daniel Webster, was awarded to a Zulu of unmitigated blackness); a third will speak of his physical offensiveness, his peculiar smell which necessitates his social isolation (most well-to-do Southerners are brought up by negro "mammies"); others, again, will enter upon the painful history of the years that followed the war, though it seems a foolish thing to let those wrongs of the past dominate the outlook for the future. And one charming Southern lady expressed the attitude of mind of a whole class very completely, I think, when she said, " You have to be one of us to feel this question at all as it ought to be felt."

There, I think, I got something tangible. These emotions are a cult.

My globe-trotting impudence will seem, no doubt, to mount to its zenith when I declare that hardly any Americans at all seem to be in possession of the elementary facts in relation to this question. These broad facts are not taught, as of course they ought to be taught, in school; and what each man knows is picked up by the accidents of his own untrained observation, by conversation always tinctured by personal prejudice, by hastily read newspapers and magazine articles and the like. The quality of this discussion is very variable, but on the whole pretty low. While I was in New York opinion was greatly swayed by an article in, if I remember rightly, the Century Magazine, by a gentleman who had deduced from a few weeks' observation in the slums of Khartoum the entire incapacity of the negro to establish a civilization of his own. He never had, therefore he never could; a discouraging ratiocination. We English, a century or so ago, said all these things of the native Irish, If there is any trend of opinion at all in this matter at present, it lies in the direction of a generous decision on the part of the N orth and West to leave the black more and more to the judgment and mercy of the white people with whom he is locally associated. This judgment and mercy points, on the whole, to an accentuation of the colored man's natural inferiority, to the cessation of any other educational attempts than those that increase his industrial usefulness (it is already illegal in Louisiana to educate

him above a contemptible level), to his industrial exploitation through usury and legal chicanery, and to a systematic strengthening of the social barriers between colored people of whatever shade and the whites.

Meanwhile, in this state of general confusion, in the absence of any determining rules or assumptions, all sorts of things are happening — according to the accidents of local feeling. In Massachusetts you have people with, I am afraid, an increasing sense of sacrifice to principle, lunching and dining with people of color. They do it less than they did, I was told. Massachusetts stands, I believe, at the top of the scale of tolerant humanity. One seems to reach the bottom at Springfield, Missouri, which is a county seat with a college, an academy, a high school, and a zoological garden. There the exemplary method reaches the nadir. Last April three unfortunate negroes were burned to death, apparently because they were negroes, and as a general corrective of impertinence. They seem to have been innocent of any particular offence. It was a sort of racial sacrament. The edified Sunday-school children hurried from their gospel-teaching to search for souvenirs among the ashes, and competed with great spirit for a fragment of charred skull.

It is true that in this latter case Governor Folk acted with vigor and justice, and that the better element of Springfield society was evidently shocked when it was found that quite innocent negroes had been used in these instructive pyrotechnics; but the fact remains that a large and numerically important section of the American public does think that fierce and cruel reprisals are a necessary part of the system of relationships between white and colored man. In our dispersed British community we have almost exactly the same range between our better attitudes and our worse — I'm making no claim of national superiority. In London, perhaps, we outdo Massachusetts in liberality; in the National Liberal Club or the Reform a black man meets all the courtesies of humanity — as though there was no such thing as color. But, on the other hand, the Cape won't bear looking into for a moment. The same conditions give the same results; a half-educated white population of British or Dutch or German ingredients greedy for gain, ill controlled and feebly influenced, in contact with a black population, is bound to reproduce the same brutal and stupid

aggressions, the same half-honest prejudices to justify those aggressions, the same ugly, mean excuses. “Things are better in Jamaica and Barbadoes,” said I, in a moment of patriotic weakness, to Mr. Booker T. Washington.

“Eh!” said he, and thought in that long silent way he has.... “They’re worse in South Africa — much. Here we’ve got a sort of light. We know generally what we’ve got to stand. There—”

His words sent my memory back to some conversations I had quite recently with a man from a dry-goods store in Johannesburg. He gave me clearly enough tlie attitude of the common white out there; the dull prejudice; the readiness to take advantage of the “boy”; the utter disrespect for colored womankind; the savage, intolerant resentment, dashed dangerously with fear, which the native arouses in him. (Think of all that must have happened in wrongful practice and wrongful law and neglected educational possibilities before our Zulus in Natal were goaded to face massacre, spear against rifle!) The rare and culminating result of education and experience is to enable men to grasp facts, to balance justly among their fluctuating and innumerable aspects, and only a small minority in our world is educated to that pitch. Ignorant people can think only in types and abstractions, can achieve only emphatic absolute decisions, and when the commonplace American or the commonplace colonial Briton sets to work to “ think over” the negro problem, he instantly banishes most of the material evidence from his mind — clears for action, as it were. He forgets the genial carriage of the ordinary colored man, his beaming face, his kindly eye, his rich, jolly voice, his touching and trusted friendliness, his amiable, unprejudiced readiness to serve and follow a white man who seems to know what he is doing. He forgets — perhaps he has never seen — the dear humanity of these people, their slightly exaggerated vanity, their innocent and delightful love of color and song, their immense capacity for affection, the warm romantic touch in their imaginations. He ignores the real fineness of the indolence that despises servile toil, of the carelessness that disdains the watchful aggressive economies, day by day, now a wretched little gain here and now a wretched little gain there, that make the dirty fortune of the Russian Jews who prey upon color in the Carolinas.

No; in the place of all these tolerable every-day experiences he lets his imagination go to work upon a monster, the "real nigger."

"Ah! You don't know the real nigger," said one American to me when I praised the colored people I had seen. "You should see the buck nigger down South, Congo brand. Then you'd understand, sir."

His voice, his face had a gleam of passionate animosity.

One could see he had been brooding himself out of all relations to reality in this matter. He was a man beyond reason or pity. He was obsessed. Hatred of that imaginary diabolical "buck nigger" blackened his soul. It was no good to talk to him of the "buck American, Packingtown brand," or the "buck Englishman, suburban race-meeting type," and to ask him if these intensely disagreeable persons justified outrages on Senator Lodge, let us say, or Mrs. Longworth. No reply would have come from him. "You don't understand the question," he would have answered. "You don't know how we Southerners feel."

Well, one can make a tolerable guess.

§ II

I CERTAINLY did not begin to realize one most important aspect of this question until I reached America. I thought of those eight millions as of men, black as ink. But when I met Mr. Booker T. Washington, for example, I met a man certainly as white in appearance as our Admiral Fisher, who is, as a matter of fact, quite white. A very large proportion of these colored people, indeed, is more than half white. One hears a good deal about the high social origins of the Southern planters, very many derive indisputably from the first families of England. It is the same blood flows in these mixed colored people's veins. Just think of the sublime absurdity, therefore, of the ban. There are gentlemen of education and refinement, qualified lawyers and doctors, whose ancestors assisted in the Norman Conquest, and they dare not enter a car marked "white" and intrude upon the dignity of the rising loan-monger from Esthonia. For them the "Jim Crow" car....

One tries to put that aspect to the American in vain. "These

people," you say, "are nearer your blood, nearer your temper, than any of those bright-eyed, ringleted immigrants on the East Side. Are you ashamed of your poor relations? Even if you don't like the half, or the quarter of negro blood, you might deal civilly with the three-quarters white. It doesn't say much for your faith in your own racial prepotency, anyhow."...

The answer to that is usually in terms of mania.

"Let me tell you a little story just to illustrate," said one deponent to me in an impressive undertone—" just to illustrate, you know.... A few years ago a young fellow came to Boston from New Orleans. Looked all right. Dark — but he explained that by an Italian grandmother. Touch of French in him, too. Popular. Well, he made advances to a Boston girl — good family. Gave a fairly straight account of himself. Married."

He paused. "Course of time — offspring. Little son."

His eye made me feel what was coming.

"Was it by any chance very, very black?" I whispered.

"Yes, sir. Black! Black as your hat. Absolutely negroid. Projecting jaw, thick lips, frizzy hair, flat nose — everything....

"But consider the mother's feelings, sir, consider that! A pure-minded, pure white woman!"

What can one say to a story of this sort, when the taint in the blood surges up so powerfully as to blacken the child at birth beyond even the habit of the pure-blooded negro? What can you do with a public opinion made of this class of ingredient? And this story of the lamentable results of intermarriage was used, not as an argument against intermarriage, but as an argument against the extension of quite rudimentary civilities to the men of color. " If you eat with them, you've got to marry them," he said, an entirely fabulous post-prandial responsibility.

It is to the tainted whites my sympathies go out. The black or mainly black people seem to be fairly content with their inferiority; one sees them all about the States as waiters, cab-drivers, railway porters, car attendants, laborers of various sorts, a pleasant, smiling, acquiescent folk. But consider the case of a man with a broader brain than such small uses need, conscious, perhaps, of exceptional gifts, capable of wide interests and sustained attempts, who is perhaps as

English as you or I, with just a touch of color in his eyes, in his lips, in his fingernails, and in his imagination. Think of the accumulating sense of injustice he must bear with him through hfe, the perpetual slight and insult he must undergo from all that is vulgar and brutal among the whites! Something of that one may read in the sorrowful pages of Du Bois's The Souls of Black Folk. They would have made Alexandre Dumas travel in the Jim Crow car if he had come to Virginia. But I can imagine some sort of protest on the part of that admirable but extravagant man.... They even talk of "Jim Grow elevators" now in Southern hotels.

At Hull House, in Chicago, I was present at a conference of colored people — Miss Jane Addams efficiently in control — to consider the coming of a vexatious play, "The Glansman," which seems to have been written and produced entirely to exacerbate racial feeling. Both men and women were present, business people, professional men, and their wives; the speaking was clear, temperate, and wonderfully to the point, high above the level of any British town council I have ever attended. One 4ady would have stood out as capable and charming in any sort of public discussion in England — though we are not wanting in good women speakers — and she was at least three- quarters black....

And while I was in Chicago, too, I went to the Peking Theatre — a "coon" music-hall — and saw something of a lower level of colored life. The common white, I must explain, delights in calling colored people "coons," and the negro, so far as I could learn, uses no retaliatory word. It was a "variety" entertainment, with one turn, at least, of quite distinguished merit, good-humored and brisk throughout. I watched keenly, and I could detect nothing of that trail of base suggestion one would find as a matter of course in a music-hall in such English towns as Brighton and Portsmouth. What one heard of kissing and love-making was quite artless and simple indeed. The negro, it seemed to me, did this sort of thing with a better grace and a better temper than a Londoner, and shows, I think, a finer self-respect. He thinks more of deportment, he bears himself more elegantly by far than the white at the same social level. The audience reminded me of the sort of gathering one would find in a theatre in Camden Town or Hoxton. There were a number of family

groups, the girls brightly dressed, and young couples quite of the London music-hall type. Clothing ran "smart," but not smarter than it would be among fairly prosperous north London Jews. There was no gallery — socially — no collection of orange-eating, interrupting hooligans at all. Nobody seemed cross, nobody seemed present for vicious purposes, and everybody was sober. Indeed, there and elsewhere I took and confirmed a mighty liking to these gentle, human, dark-skinned people.

§ III

BUT whatever aspect I recall of this great taboo that shows no signs of lifting, of this great problem of the future that America in her haste, her indiscriminating prejudice, her lack of any sustained study and teaching of the broad issues she must decide, complicates and intensifies, and makes threatening, there presently comes back to mind the browned face of Mr. Booker T. Washington, as he talked to me over our lunch in Boston.

He has a face rather Irish in type, and the soft slow negro voice. He met my regard with the brown sorrowful eyes of his race. He wanted very much that I should hear him make a speech, because then his words came better; he talked, he implied, with a certain difficulty. But I preferred to have his talking, and get not the orator — every one tells me he is an altogether great orator in this cotmtry where oratory is still esteemed — but the man.

He answered my questions meditatively. I wanted to know with an active pertinacity. What struck me most was the way in which his sense of the overpowering forces of race prejudice weighs upon him. It is a thing he accepts; in our time and conditions it is not to be fought about. He makes one feel with an exaggerated intensity (though I could not even draw him to admit) its monstrous injustice. He makes no accusations. He is for taking it as a part of the present fate of his "people," and for doing all that can be done for them within the limit it sets.

Therein he differs from Du Bois, the other great spokesman color has found in our time. Du Bois, is more of the artist, less of the

statesman; he conceals his passionate resentment all too thinly. He batters himself into rhetoric against these walls. He will not repudiate the clear right of the black man to every educational facility, to equal citizenship, and equal respect. But Mr, Washington has statecraft. He looks before and after, and plans and keeps his counsel with the scope and range of a statesman, I use "statesman" in its highest sense; his is a mind that can grasp the situation and destinies of a people. After I had talked to him I went back to my club, and found there an English newspaper with a report of the opening debate upon Mr. Birrell's Education Bill, It was like turning from the discussion of life and death to a dispute about the dregs in the bottom of a tea-cup somebody had neglected to wash up in Victorian times.

I argued strongly against the view he seems to hold that black and white might live without mingling and without injustice, side by side. That I do not believe. Racial differences seem to me always to exasperate intercourse unless people have been elaborately trained to ignore them. Uneducated men are as bad as cattle ia persecuting all that is different among themselves. The most miserable and disorderly countries of the world are the countries where two races, two inadequate cultures, keep a jarring, continuous separation. "You must repudiate separation," I said. "No peoples have ever yet endured the tension of intermingled distinctness,"

"May we not become a peculiar people — like the Jews?" he suggested. "Isn't that possible?"

But there I could not agree with him. I thought of the dreadful history of the Jews and Armenians. And the negro cannot do what the Jews and Armenians have done. The colored people of America are of a different quality from the Jew altogether, more genial, more careless, more sympathetic, franker, less intellectual, less acquisitive, less wary and restrained — in a word, more Occidental. They have no common religion and culture, no conceit of race to hold them together. The Jews make a ghetto for themselves wherever they go; no law but their own solidarity has given America the East Side. The colored people are ready to disperse and interbreed, are not a community at all in the Jewish sense, but outcasts from a community. They are the victims of a prejudice that has to be destroyed. These things I urged, but it was, I think, empty speech to

my hearer. I could talk lightly of destroying that prejudice, but he knew better. It is the central fact of his life, a law of his being. He has shaped all his projects and policy upon that. Exclusion is inevitable. So he dreams of a colored race of decent and inaggressive men silently giving the lie to all the legend of their degradation. They will have their own doctors, their own lawyers, their own capitalists, their own banks — because the whites desire it so. But will the uneducated whites endure even so submissive a vindication as that? Will they suffer the horrid spectacle of free and self-satisfied negroes in decent clothing on any terms without resentment?

He explained how at the Tuskegee Institute they make useful men, skilled engineers, skilled agriculturalists, men to live down the charge of practical incompetence, of ignorant and slovenly farming and house management....

"I wish you would tell me," I said, abruptly, "just what you think of the attitude of white America towards you. Do you think it is generous?"

He regarded me for a moment. "No end of people help us," he said.

"Yes," I said; "but the ordinary man. Is he fair?"

"Some things are not fair," he said, leaving the general question alone. "It isn't fair to refuse a colored man a berth on a sleeping-car. I? — I happen to be a privileged person, they make an exception for me; but the ordinary educated colored man isn't admitted to a sleeping-car at all. If he has to go a long journey, he has to sit up all night. His white competitor sleeps. Then in some places, in the hotels and restaurants — It's all right here in Boston — but southwardly he can't get proper refreshments. All that's a handicap....

"The remedy lies in education," he said; "ours — and *theirs*."

"The real thing," he told me, "isn't to be done by talking and agitation. It's a matter of lives. The only answer to it all is for colored men to be patient, to make themselves competent, to do good work, to live well, to give no occasion against us. We feel that. In a way it's an inspiration....

"There is a man here in Boston, a negro, who owns and runs some big stores, employs all sorts of people, deals justly. That man has done more good for our people than all the eloquence or argument in

the world.... That is what we have to do — it is all we can do....”

Whatever America has to show in heroic living today, I doubt if she can show anything finer than the quality of the resolve, the steadfast effort hundreds of black and colored men are making to-day to live blamelessly, honorably, and patiently, getting for themselves what scraps of refinement, learning, and beauty they may, keeping their hold on a civilization they are grudged and denied. They do it not for themselves only, but for all their race. Each educated colored man is an ambassador to civilization. They know they have a handicap, that they are not exceptionally brilliant nor clever people. Yet every such man stands, one likes to think, aware of his representative and vicarious character, fighting against foul imaginations, misrepresentations, injustice, insult, and the naive unspeakable meannesses of base antagonists. Every one of them who keeps decent and honorable does a little to beat that opposition down.

But the patience the negro needs! He may not even look contempt. He must admit superiority in those whose daily conduct to him is the clearest evidence of moral inferiority. We sympathetic whites, indeed, may claim honor for him; if he is wise he will be silent under our advocacy. He must go to and fro self-controlled, bereft of all the equalities that the great flag of America proclaims — that flag for whose united empire his people fought and died, giving place and precedence to the strangers who pour in to share its beneficence, strangers ignorant even of its tongue. That he must do — and wait. The Welsh, the Irish, the Poles, the white South, the indefatigable Jews may cherish grievances and rail aloud. He must keep still. They may be hysterical revengeful, threatening, and perverse; their wrongs excuse them. For him there is no excuse. And of all the races upon earth, which has suffered such wrongs as this negro blood that is still imputed to him as a sin? These people who disdain him, who have no sense of reparation towards him, have sinned against him beyond all measure....

No, I can’t help idealizing the dark submissive figure of the negro in this spectacle of America. He, too, seems to me to sit waiting — and waiting with a marvellous and simple-minded patience — for finer understanding’s and a nobler time.

XIII. — THE MIND OF A MODERN STATE

§ I

I DO not know if I am conveying to any extent the picture of America as I see it, the vast rich various continent, the gigantic energetic process of development, the acquisitive successes, the striving failures, the multitudes of those rising and falling who come between, all set in a texture of spacious countryside, animate with pleasant timber homes, of clangorous towns that bristle to the skies, of great exploitation districts and crowded factories, of wide deserts and mine-torn mountains, and huge half-tamed rivers. I have tried to make the note of immigration grow slowly to a dominating significance in this panorama, and with that, to make more and more evident my sense of the need of a creative assimilation, the cry for synthetic effort, lest all this great being, this splendid promise of a new world, should decay into a vast unprogressive stagnation of unhappiness and disorder. I have hinted at failures and cruelties, I have put into the accumulating details of my vision, children America blights, men she crushes, fine hopes she disappoints and destroys. I have found a place for the questioning figure of the Soiith, the sorrowful interrogation of the outcast colored people. These are but the marginal shadows of a process in its totality magnificent, but they exist, they go on to mingle in her destinies.

Then I have tried to show, too, the conception I have formed of the great skein of industrial competition that has been tightening and becoming more and more involved through all this century-long age, the age of blind growth, that draws now towards its end; until the process threatens to throttle individual freedom and individual enterprise altogether. And of a great mental uneasiness and discontent, unprecedented in the history of the American mind, that promises in the near future some general and conscious endeavor to arrest this unanticipated strangulation of freedom and free living, some widespread struggle, of I know not what constructive power, with the stains and disorders and indignities that oppress and grow larger in the national consciousness. I perceive more and more that in

coming to America I have chanced upon a time of peculiar significance. The note of disillusionment sounds everywhere. America, for the first time in her history, is taking thought about herself, and ridding herself of long-cherished illusions. I have already mentioned (in Chapter VIII.) the memorable literature of self-examination that has come into being during the last decade. Hitherto American thought has been extraordinarily localized; there has been no national press, in the sense that the press of London or Paris is national. Americans knew of America as a whole, mainly as the flag. Beneath the flag America is lost among constituent States and cities. All her newspapers have been, by English standards, "local" papers, preoccupied by local affairs, and taking an intensely localized point of view. A national newspaper for America would be altogether too immense an enterprise. Only since 1896, and in the form of weekly and monthly ten-cent magazines, have the rudiments of a national medium of expression appeared, and appeared to voice strange pregnant doubts. I had an interesting talk with Mr. Brisben Walker upon this new development. To him the first ten-cent magazine. The Cosmopolitan, was due, and he was naturally glad to tell me of the growth of this vehicle. To-day there is an aggregate circulation of ten millions of these magazines; they supply fiction, no doubt, and much of light interesting ephemeral matter, but not one of them is without its element of grave public discussion. I do not wish to make too much of this particular development, but regard it as a sign of new interests, of keen curiosities.

Now I must confess when I consider this ocean of readers I find the fears I have expressed of some analogical development of American affairs towards the stagnant commercialism of China, or towards a plutocratic imperialism and decadence of the Roman type, look singularly flimsy. Upon its present lines, and supposing there were no new sources of mental supply and energy, I do firmly believe that America might conceivably come more and more under the control of a tacitly organized and exhausting plutocracy, be swamped by a swelling tide of ignorant and unassimilable labor immigrants, decline towards violence and social misery, fall behind Europe in education and intelligence, and cease to lead civilization. In such a decay Ca^sarism would be a most probable and natural

phase, Caesarism and a splitting into contending Csesarisms. Come but a little sinking from intelligence towards coarseness and passion, and the South will yet endeavor to im.pose servitude anew upon its colored people, or secede — that trouble is not yet over. A little darkening and improverishment of outlook and New York would split from New England, and Colorado from the East. An illiterate, short-sighted America would be America doomed. But America is not illiterate; there are these great imprecedented reservoirs of intelligence and understanding, these millions of people who follow the process with an increasing comprehension. It is these millions of readers who make the American problem, and the problem of Europe and the world to-day, unique and incalculable, who provide a cohesive and reasonable and pacifying medium the Old World did not know.

§ II

You see, my hero in the confused drama of human life is intelligence; intelligence inspired by constructive passion. There is a demi-god imprisoned in mankind. All human history presents itself to me as the unconscious or half-unconscious struggle of human thought to emerge from the sightless interplay of instinct, individual passion, prejudice, and ignorance. One sees this diviner element groping after law and order and fine arrangement, like a thing blind and half-buried, in ancient Egypt, in ancient Judaea, in ancient Greece. It embodies its purpose in religions, invents the disciplines of morality, the reminders of ritual. It loses itself and becomes confused. It wearies and rests. In Plato, for the first time, one discovers it conscious and open-eyed, trying, indeed, to take hold of life and control it. Then it goes under, and becomes again a convulsive struggle, an inco-ordinated gripping and leaving, a muttering of literature and art, until the coming of our own times. Most painful and blundering of demi-gods it seems through all that space of years, with closed eyes and feverish effort. And now again it is clear to the minds of many men that they may lay hold upon and control the destiny of their kind....

It is strange, it is often grotesque to mark how the reviving racial consciousness finds expression to-day. Now it startles itself into a new phase of self-knowledge by striking a note from this art, and now by striking one from that. It breaks out in fiction that is ostensibly written only to amuse, it creeps into after-dinner discussions, and invades a press which is economically no more than a system of advertisement sheets proclaiming the price of the thing that is. Presently it is on the stage; the music-hall even is not safe from it. Youths walk in the streets to-day, talking together of things that were once the ultimate speculation of philosophy. I am no contemner of the present. To me it appears a time of immense and wonderful beginnings. New ideas are organizing themselves out of the little limited efforts of innumerable men. Never was there an age so intellectually prolific and abundant as this in the aggregate is. It is true, indeed, that we who write and think and investigate to-day, present nothing to compare with the magnificent reputations and intensely individualized achievements of the impressive personalities of the past. None the less is it true that taken all together we signifiy infinitely more. We no longer pose ourselves for admiration, high priests and princes of letters in a world of finite achievement; we admit ourselves no more than pages bearing the train of a Queen — but a Queen of limitless power. The knowledge we co-ordinate, the ideas we build together, the growing blaze in which we are willingly consumed, are wider and higher and richer in promise than anything the world has had before....

When one takes count of the forces of intelligence upon which we may rely in the great conflict against matter, brute instinct, and individualistic disorder, to make the new social state, when we consider the organizing forms that emerge already from the general vague confusion, we find apparent in every modern state three chief series of developments. There is first the thinking and investigatory elements that grow constantly more important in our university life, the enlarging recognition of the need of a systematic issue of university publications, books, periodicals, and of sustained and fertilizing discussion. Then there is the greater, cruder, and bolder sea of mental activities outside academic limits, the amateurs, the free lances of thought and inquiry, the writers and artists, the

innumerable ill-disciplined, untrained, but interested and well-meaning people who write and talk. They find their medium in contemporary literature, in journalism, in organizations for the propaganda of opinion. And, thirdly, there is the immense, nearly universally diffused system of education which, inadequately enough, serves to spread the new ideas as they are elaborated, which does, at any rate by its preparatory work, render them accessible. All these new manifestations of mind embody themselves in material forms, in class-rooms and laboratories, in libraries, and a vast machinery of book and newspaper production and distribution.

Consider the new universities that spring up all over America. Almost imperceptibly throughout the past century, little by little, the conception of a university has changed, until now it is nearly altogether changed. The old-time university was a collection of learned men; it believed that all the generalizations had been made, all the fundamental things said; it had no vistas towards the future; it existed for teaching and exercises, and more than half implied what Dr. Johnson, for example, believed, that secular degeneration was the rule of human life. All that, you know, has gone; every university, even Oxford (though, poor pretentious dear, she still professes to read and think metaphysics in "the original" Greek) admits the conception of a philosophy that progresses, that broadens and intensifies, age by age. But to come to America is to come to a country far more alive to the thinking and knowledge-making function of universities than Great Britain. One splendidly endowed foundation, the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, exists only for research, and that was the first intention of Chicago University also. In sociology, in pedagogics, in social psychology, these vital sciences for the modern state, America is producing an amount of work which, however trivial in proportion to the task before her, is at any rate immense in comparison with our own British output....

§ III

I DID my amateurish and transitory best to see something of the American universities. There was Columbia. Thither I went with a

letter to Professor Giddings, whose sociological writings are world-famous. I found him busy with a secretary in a business-like little room, stowed away somewhere under the dome of the magnificent building of the university library. He took me round the opulent spaces, the fine buildings of Columbia.... I suppose it is inevitable that a visitor should see the constituents of a uni-versify out of proportion, but I came away with an impression overwhelmingly architectural. The library dome, I confess, was fine, and the desks below well filled with students, the books were abundant, well arranged, and well tended. But I recall marble staircases, I recall great wastes of marble steps, I recall, in particular, students' baths of extraordinary splendor, and I do not recall anything like an equivalent effect of large leisure and dignity for intellectual men. Professor Giddings seemed driven and busy, the few men I met there appeared all to have a lot of immediate work to do. It occurred to me in Columbia, as it occurred to me later in the University of Chicago, that the disposition of the university founder is altogether too much towards buildings and memorial inscriptions, and all too little towards the more difficult and far more valuable end of putting men of pre-eminent ability into positions of stimulated leisure. This is not a distinctly American effect. In Oxford, just as much as in Columbia, nay, far more! you find stone and student lording it over the creative mental thing; the dons go about like some sort of little short-coated parasite, pointing respectfully to tower and fagade, which have, in truth, no reason for existing except to shelter them. Columbia is almost as badly off for means of publication as Oxford, and quite as poor in inducements towards creative work. Professors talk in an altogether British way of getting work done in the vacation.

Moreover, there was an effect of remoteness about Columbia. It may have been the quality of a blue still morning of sunshine that invaded my impression. I came up out of the crowded timiult of New York to it, with a sense of the hooting, hurrying traffics of the wide harbor, the teeming East Side, the glitter of spending, the rush of finance, the whole headlong process of America, behind me. I came out of the subway station into wide still streets. It was very spacious, very dignified, very quiet. Well, I want the universities of the modern state to be more aggressive. I want to think of a Columbia University

of a less detached appearance, even if she is less splendidly clad. I want to think of her as sitting up there, cheek on hand, with knitted brows, brooding upon the millions below. I want to think of all the best minds conceivable going to and fro — thoughts and purposes in her organized mind. And when she speaks that busy world should listen....

As a matter of fact, much of that busy world still regards a professor as something between a dealer in scientific magic and a crank, and a university as an institution every good American should be honestly proud of and avoid.

§ IV

Harvard, too, is detached, though not quite with the same immediacy of contrast. Harvard reminded me very much of my first impressions of Oxford. One was taken about in the same way to see this or that point of view. Much of Harvard is Georgian red brick, that must have seemed very ripe and venerable until a year or so ago one bitter winter killed all the English ivy. There are students' clubs, after the fashion of the Oxford Union, but finer and better equipped; there is an amazing Germanic museum, the gift of the present Emperor, that does, in a concentrated form, present all that is flamboyant of Germany; there are noble museums and libraries, and very many fine and dignified aspects and spaces, and an abundant intellectual life. Harvard is happily free from the collegiate politics that absorb most of the surplus mental energy of Oxford and Cambridge, and the professors can and do meet and talk. At Harvard men count. I was condoled with on all hands in my disappointment that I could not meet Professor William James — he was still in California — and I had the good fortune to meet and talk to President Eliot, who is, indeed, a very considerable voice in American affairs. To me he talked quite readily and frankly of a very living subject,, the integrity of the press in relation to the systematic and successful efforts of the advertising chemists and druggists to stifle exposures of noxious proprietary articles. He saw the problem as the subtle play of group psychology it is; there was none of that feeble horror of these

troubles as “ modern and vulgar” that one would expect in an English university leader. I fell into a great respect for his lean fine face and figure, his deliberate voice, his open, balanced, and constructive mind. He was the first man I had met who had any suggestion of a force and quality that might stand up to and prevail against the forces of acquisition and brute trading. He bore himself as though some sure power were behind him, unlike many other men I met who criticised abuses abusively, or in the key of facetious despair. He had very much of that fine aristocratic quality one finds cropping up so frequently among Americans of old tradition, an aristocratic quality that is free from either privilege or pretension....

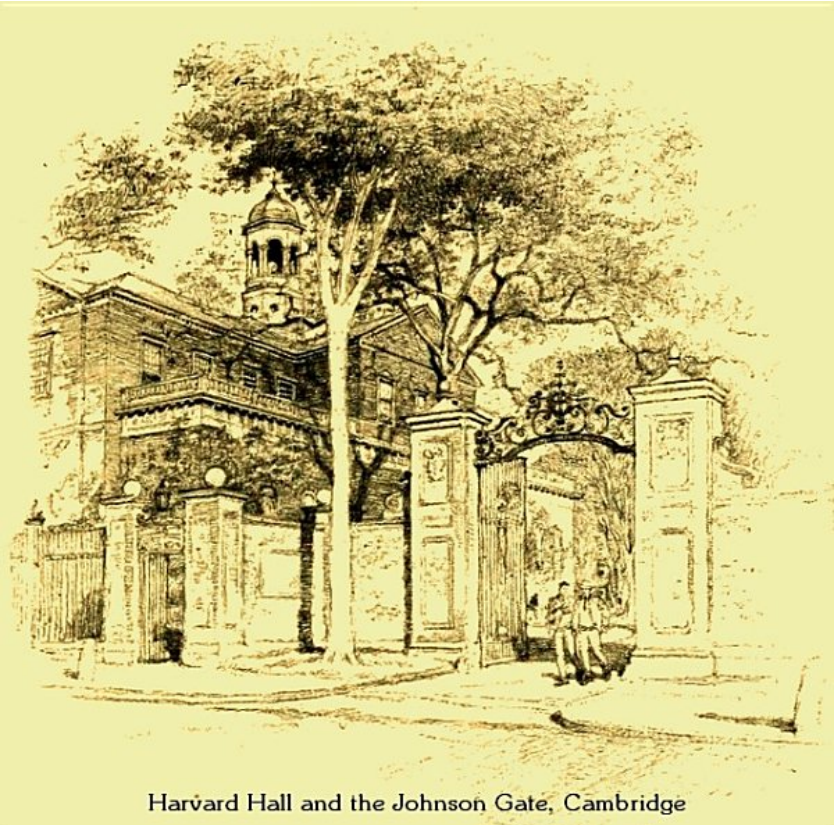

Harvard Hall and the Johnson Gate, Cambridge

At Harvard, too, I met Professor Miinsterberg, one of the few writers of standing who have attempted a general review of the American situation. He is a tall fair German, but newly annexed to

America, with a certain diplomatic quality in his personality, standing almost consciously, as it were, for Germany in America, and for America in Germany. He has written a book for either people, because hitherto they have seen each other too much through English media ("von Englischen linseln retouchiert"), and he has done much to spread the conception of a common quality and sympathy between Germany and America. "Blood," he says in this connection, "is thicker than water, but printer's ink is thicker than blood." England is too aristocratic, France too shockingly immoral, Russia too absolutist to be the sympathetic and similar friend of America, and so, by a process of exhaustion, Germany remains the one power on earth capable of an "inner understanding." (Also he has drawn an alluring parallel between President Roosevelt and the Emperor William to complete the approximation of "die beiden Edelnationen"). I had read all this, and was interested to encounter him therefore at a Harvard table in a circle of his colleagues, agreeable and courteous, and still scarcely more assimilated than the brightly new white Germanic museum among the red brick traditions of Kirkland and Cambridge streets....

Harvard impresses me altogether as a very living factor in the present American outlook, not only when I was in Cambridge, but in the way the place tells in New York, in Chicago, in Washington. It has a living and contemporary attitude, and it is becoming more and more audible. Harvard opinion influences the magazines and affects the press, at least in the East, to an increasing extent. It may, in the near future, become still more rapidly audible. Professor Eliot is now full of years and honor, and I found in New York, in Boston, in Washington, that his successor was being discussed. In all these cities I met people disposed to believe that if President Roosevelt does not become President of the United States for a further term, he may succeed President Eliot. Now that I have seen President Roosevelt it seems to me that this might have a most extraordinary effect in accelerating the reaction upon the people of America of the best and least mercenary of their national thought. Already he is exerting an immense influence in the advertisement of new ideas and ideals. But of President Roosevelt I shall write more fully later....

A Bit of Princeton University

§ V

CHICAGO UNIVERSITY, too, is a splendid place of fine buildings and green spaces and trees, with a great going to and fro of students, a wonderful contrast to the dark congestions of the mercantile city to

the north. To all the disorganization of that it is even physically antagonistic, and I could think as I went about it that already this new organization has produced such writing as Veblen's admirable ironies (*The Theory Of Business Enterprise*, for example), and such sociological work as that of Zueblin and Albion Small. I went through the vigorous and admirably equipped pedagogic department, which is evidently a centre of thought and stimulus for the whole teaching profession of Illinois; I saw a library of sociology and economics beyond anything that London can boast; I came upon little groups of students working amid piles of books in a businesslike manner, and if at times in other sections this suggestion was still insistent that thought was as yet only "moving in" and, as it were, getting the carpets down, it was equally clear that thought was going to live freely and spaciously, to an unprecedented extent, so soon as things were in order.

I visited only these three great foundations, each in its materially embodiment already larger, wealthier, and more hopeful than any contemporary British institution, and it required an effort to realize that they were but a portion of the embattled universities of America, that I had not seen Yale nor Princeton nor Cornell nor Leland Stanford nor any Western State university, not a tithe, indeed, of America's drilling levies in the coming war of thought against chaos. I am in no way equipped to estimate the value of the drilling; I have been unable to get any conception how far these tens of thousands of students in these institutions are really alive intellectually, are really inquiring, discussing, reading, and criticising; I have no doubt the great numbers of them spend many hours after the fashion of one roomful I saw intent upon a blackboard covered with Greek; but allowing the utmost for indolence, games, distractions, and waste of time and energy upon unfruitful and obsolete studies, the fact of this great increasing proportion of minds at least a little trained in things immaterial, a little exercised in the critical habit, remains a fact to put over against that million and a half child workers who can barely have learned to read — the other side, the redeeming side of the American prospect.

§ VI

I AM impressed by the evident consciousness of the American universities of the role they have to play in America's future. They seem to me pervaded by the constructive spirit. They are intelligently antagonistic to lethargic and self-indulgent traditions, to disorder, and disorderly institutions. It is from the universities that the deliberate invasion of the political machine by independent men of honor and position — of whom President Roosevelt is the type and chief — proceeds. Mr. George lies has called my attention to a remarkable address made so long ago as the year 1883 before the Yale Alumni, by President Andrew D. White (the first president), of Cornell, who was afterwards American Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Berlin. President White was a member of the class of '53, and he addressed himself particularly to the men of that year. His title was "The Message of the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth," and it is full of a spirit that grows and spreads throughout American life, that may ultimately spread throughout the life of the whole nation, a spirit of criticism and constructive effort, of a scope and quality the world has never seen before. The new class of '83 are the messengers.

"To a few tottering old men of our dear class of '53 it will be granted to look with straining eyes over the boundary into the twentieth century; but even these can do little to make themselves heard then. Most of us shall not see it. But before us and around us; nay, in our own families are the men who shall see it. The men who go forth from these dear shades to-morrow are girding themselves for it. Often as I have stood in the presence of such bands of youthful messengers I have never been able to resist a feeling of awe, as in my boyhood when I stood before men who were soon to see Palestine and the Far East, or the Golden Gates of the West, and the islands of the Pacific. The old story of St. Fillipo Neri at Rome comes back to me, who, in the days of the Elizabethan persecutions, made men bring him out into the open air and set him opposite the door of the Papal College of Rome, that he might look into the faces of the English students, destined to go forth to triumph or to martyrdom for the faith in far-off, heretic England."

I cannot forbear from quoting further from this address; it is all so

congenial to my own beliefs. Indeed, I like to think of that gathering of young men and old as if it were still existing, as though the old fellows of '53 were still sitting listening and looking up responsive to this appeal that comes down to us. I fancy President White on the platform before them, a little figure in the perspective of a quarter of a century, but still quite clearly audible, delivering his periods to that now indistinguishable audience:

"What, then, is to be done? Mercantilism, necessitated at first by our circumstances and position, has been in the main a great blessing. It has been so under a simple law of history. How shall it be prevented from becoming in obedience to a similar inexorable law, a curse?

"Here, in the answer to this question, it seems to me, is the most important message from this century to the next.

"For the great thing to be done is neither more nor less than to develop other great elements of civilization now held in check, which shall take their rightful place in the United States, which shall modify the mercantile spirit,... which shall make the history of our country something greater and broader than anything we have reached, or ever can reach, under the sway of mercantilism alone.

"What shall be those counter elements of civilization? Monarchy, aristocracy, militarism we could not have if we would, we would not have if we could. What shall we have?

"I answer simply that we must do all that we can to rear greater fabrics of religious, philosophic thought, literary thought, scientific, artistic, political thought to summon young men more and more into these fields, not as a matter of taste or social opportunity, but as a patriotic duty; to hold before them not the incentive of mere gain or of mere pleasure or of mere reputation, but the ideal of a new and higher civilization. The greatest work which the coming century has to do in this country is to build up an aristocracy of thought and feeling which shall hold its own against the aristocracy of mercantilism. I would have more and more the appeal made to every young man who feels within him the ability to do good or great things in any of these higher fields, to devote his powers to them as a sacred duty, no matter how strongly the mercantile or business spirit may draw him. I would have the idea preached early and late....

“And as the guardian of such a movement,... I would strengthen at every point this venerable university, and others like it throughout the country. Remiss, indeed, have the graduates and friends of our own honored Yale been in their treatment of her. She has never had the means to do a tithe of what she might do. She ought to be made strong enough,with more departments, more professors, more fellowships, to become one of a series of great rallying points or fortresses, and to hold always concentrated here a strong army, ever active against mercantilism, materialism, and Philistinism....

“But, after all, the effort to create these new counterpoising, modifying elements of a greater civilization must be begun in the individual man, and especially in the youth who feels within himself the power to think, the power to write, the power to carve the marble, to paint, to leave something behind him better than dollars. In the individual minds and hearts and souls of the messengers who are preparing for the next century is a source of regeneration. They must form an ideal of religion higher than that of a life devoted to grasping and grinding and griping, with a whine for mercy at the end of it. They must form an ideal of science higher than that of increasing the production of iron or cotton. They must form an ideal of literature and of art higher than that of pandering to the latest prejudice or whimsey. And they must form an ideal of man himself worthy of that century into which are to be poured the accumulations of this. So shall material elements be brought to their proper place, made stronger for good, made harmless for evil. So shall we have that development of new and greater elements, that balance of principles which shall make this republic greater than anything of which we now can dream.”

XIV. — CULTURE

§ I

YET even as I write of the universities as the central intellectual organ of a modern state, as I sit implying salvation by schools, there comes into my mind a mass of qualification. The devil in the American world drama may be mercantilism, ensnaring, tempting, battling against my hero, the creative mind of man, but mercantilism is not the only antagonist. In Fifth Avenue or Paterson one may find nothing but the zenith and nadir of the dollar hunt, at a Harvard table one may encounter nothing but living minds, but in Boston — I mean not only Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue, but that Boston of the mind and heart that pervades American refinement and goes about the world — one finds the human mind not base, nor brutal, nor stupid, nor ignorant, but mysteriously enchanting and ineffectual, so that having eyes it yet does not see, having powers it achieves nothing....

I remember Boston as a quiet effect, as something a little withdrawn, as a place standing aside from the throbbing interchange of East and West. When I hear the word Boston now it is that quaHty returns. I do not think of the spreading parkways of Mr. Woodbury and Mr, Olmstead nor of the crowded harbor; the congested tenement-house regions, full of those aliens whose tongues struck so strangely on the ears of Mr. Henry James, come not to mind. But I think of rows of well-built, brown and ruddy homes, each with a certain sound architectural distinction, each with its two sqtiares of neatly trimmed grass between itself and the broad, quiet street, and each with its family of cultured peojDle within. I am reminded of deferential but unostentatious servants, and of being ushered into large, dignified entrance-halls. I think of spacious stairways, curtained archways, and rooms of agreeable, receptive persons. I recall the finished informality of the high tea. All the people of my impression have been taught to speak English with a quite admirable intonation; some of the men and most of the women are proficient in two or three languages; they have travelled in Italy, they have all the

recognized classics of European literatiu'e in their minds, and apt quotations at command. And I think of the constant presence of treasured associations with the titanic and now mellowing literary reputations of Victorian times, with Emerson (who called Poe "that jingle man"), and with Longfellow, whose house is now sacred, its view towards the Charles River and the stadium — it is a real, correct stadium — secured by the purchase of the sward before it forever....

At the mention of Boston I think, too, of autotypes and then of plaster casts. I do not think I shall ever see an autotype again without thinking of Boston. I think of autotypes of the supreme masterpieces of sculpture and painting, and particularly of the fluttering garments of the "Nike of Samothrace." (That I saw, also, in little casts and big, and photographed from every conceivable point of view.) It is incredible how many people in Boston have selected her for their sesthetic symbol and expression. Always that lady was in evidence about me, unobtrusively persistent, until at last her frozen stride pursued me into my dreams. That frozen stride became the visible spirit of Boston in my imagination, a sort of blind, headless, and unprogressive fine resolution that took no heed of any contemporary thing. Next to that I recall, as inseparably Bostonian, the dreaming grace of Botticelli's "Prima vera." All Bostonians admire Botticelli, and have a feeling for the roof of the Sistine chapel — to so casual and adventurous a person as myself, indeed, Boston presents a terrible, a terrifying unanimity of aesthetic discriminations. I was nearly brought back to my childhood's persuasion that, after all, there is a right and wrong in these things. And Boston clearly thought the less of Mr. Bernard Shaw when I told her he had induced me to buy a pianola, not that Boston ever did set much store by so contemporary a person as Mr. Bernard Shaw. The books she reads are toned and seasoned books — preferably in the okl or else in limited editions, and by authors who may be lectured upon without decorum....

Boston has in her symphony concerts the best music in America, and here her tastes are severely orthodox and classic. I heard Beethoven's Fifth Symphony extraordinarily well done, the familiar pinnacled Fifth Symphony, and now, whenever I grind that out upon

the convenient mechanism beside my desk at home, mentally I shall be transferred to Boston again, shall hear its magnificent aggressive thumpings transfigured into exquisite orchestration, and sit again among that audience of pleased and pleasant ladies in chaste, high-necked, expensive dresses, and refined, attentive, appreciative, bald, or iron-gray men....

§ II

THEN Boston has historical associations that impresscd me like iron- moulded, leather-bound, eighteenth-century books. The War of Independence, that to us in England seems half-way back to the days of Elizabeth, is a thing of yesterday in Boston. "Here," your host will say and pause, "came marching" so-and-so, "with his troops to relieve" so-and-so. And you will find he is the great-grandson of so-and-so. and still keeps that ancient colonial's sword. And these things happened before they dug the Hythe military canal, before Sandgate, except for a decrepit castle, existed; before the days when Bonaparte gathered his army at Boulogne — in the days of muskets and pigtails — and erected that column my telescope at home can reach for me on a clear day. All that is ancient history in England and in Boston the decade before those distant alarums and excursions is yesterday. A year or so ago they restored the British arms to the old State-House. "Feeling," my informant witnessed, "was dying down." But there were protests, nevertheless....

If there is one note of incongruity in Boston, it is in the gilt dome of the Massachusetts State-House at night. They illuminate it with electric light. That shocked me as an anachronism. It shocked me — much as it would have shocked me to see one of the colonial portraits, or even one of the endless autotypes of the Belvidere Apollo replaced, let us say, by one of Mr. Alvin Coburn's wonderfully beautiful photographs of modern New York. That electric glitter breaks the spell; it is the admission of the present, of the twentieth century. It is just as if the Quirinal and Vatican took to an exchange of badinage with search-lights, or the King mounted an illuminated E.R. on the Round Tower at Windsor.

Save for that one discord there broods over the real Boston an immense effect of finality. One feels in Boston, as one feels in no other part of the States, that the intellectual movement has ceased.

Boston is now producing no literature except a little criticism. Contemporary Boston art is imitative art, its writers are correct and imitative writers the central figure of its literary world is that charming old lady of eighty-eight, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe. One meets her and Colonel Higginson in the midst of an authors' society that is not so much composed of minor stars as a chorus of indistinguishable culture. There are an admirable library and a museum in Boston, and the library is Italianate, and decorated within like an ancient missal. In the less ornamental spaces of this place there are books and readers. There is particularly a charming large room for chil'dren, full of pigmy chairs and tables, in which quite little tots sit reading. I regret now I did not ascertain precisely what they were reading, but I have no doubt it was classical matter.

I do not know why the full sensing of what is ripe and good in the past should carry with it this quality of discriminating against the present and the future. The fact remains that it does so almost oppressively. I found myself by some accident of hospitality one evening in the company of a number of Boston gentlemen who constituted a book-collecting club. They had dined, and they were listening to a paper on Bibles printed in America. It was a scholarl}'-, valuable, and exhaustive piece of research. The surviving copies of each edition were traced, and when some rare specimen was mentioned as the property of any member of the club there was decorously warm applause. I had been seeing Boston, drinking in the Boston atmosphere all day.... I know it will seem an ungracious and ungrateful thing to confess (yet the necessities of my picture of America compel me), but as I sat at the large and beautifully ordered table, with these fine, rich men about me, and listened to the steady progress of the reader's ever unrhetorical sentences, and the little bursts of approval, it came to me with a horrible quality of conviction that the mind of the world was dead, and that this was a distribution of souvenirs.

Indeed, so strongly did this grip me that presently, upon some slight occasion, I excused myself and went out into the night. I

wandered about Boston for some hours, trying to shake off this unfortunate idea. I felt that all the books had been written, all the pictures painted, all the thoughts said — or at least that nobody would ever believe this wasn't so. I felt it was dreadful nonsense to go on writing books. Nothing remained but to collect them in the richest, finest manner one could. Somewhere about midnight I came to a publisher's window, and stood in the dim moonlight peering enviously at piled copies of Izaak Walton and Omar Khayyam, and all the happy immortals who got in before the gates were shut. And then in the corner I discovered a thin, small book. For a time I could scarcely believe my eyes. I lit a match to be the surer. And it was A Modern Symposium, by Lowes Dickinson, beyond all disputing. It was strangely comforting to see it there — a leaf of olive from the world of thought I had imagined drowned forever.

That was just one night's mood. I do not wish to accuse Boston of any wilful, deliberate repudiation of the present and the future. But I think that Boston — when I say Boston let the reader always understand I mean that intellectual and spiritual Boston that goes about the world, that traffics in book-shops in Rome and Piccadilly, that I have dined with and wrangled with in my friend W.'s house in Blackheath, dear W., who, I believ^, has never seen America — I think, I say, that Boston commits the scholastic error and tries to remember too much, to treasure too much, and has refined and studied and collected herself into ^ state of hopeless intellectual and aesthetic repletion in consequence. In these matters there are limits. The finality of Boston is a quantitive consequence. The capacity of Boston, it would seem, was just sufficient but no more than sufficient, to comprehend the whole achievement of the human intellect up, let us say, to the year 1875 A.D. Then an equilibrium was established. At or about that year Boston filled up.

§ III

It is the peculiarity of Boston's in-AboutWeiiesiey tcllcctual quality that she cannot unload again. She treasures Longfellow in quantity. She treasures his works, she treasures associations, she treasures his

Cambridge home. Now, really, to be perfectly frank about him, Longfellow is not good enough for that amount of intellectual house room. He cumbers Boston. And when I went out to Wellesley to see that delightful girls' college everybody told me I should be reminded of the "Princess." For the life of me I could not remember what "Princess." Much of my time in Boston was darkened by the constant strain of concealing the frightful gaps in my intellectual baggage, this absence of things I might reasonably be supposed, as a cultivated person, to have, but which, as a matter of fact, I'd either left behind, never possessed, or deliberately thrown away. I felt instinctively that Boston could never possibly understand the light travelling of a philosophical carpet-bagger. But I "md — in full view of the tree-set Wellseley lake, ay, with the skiffs of " sweet girl graduates" — own up. "I say," I said, "I wish you wouldn't all be so allusive. What Princess?"

It was, of course, that thing of Tennyson's. It is a long, frequently happy and elegant, and always meritorious narrative poem, in which a chaste Victorian amorousness struggles with the early formulae of the feminist movement. I had read it when I was a boy, I was delighted to be able to claim, and had honorably forgotten the incident. But in Boston they treat it as a living classic, and expect you to remember constantly and with appreciation this passage and that. I think that quite typical of the Bostonian weakness. It is the error of the clever high-school girl, it is the mistake of the scholastic mind all the world over, to learn too thoroughly and to carry too much. They want to know and remember Longfellow and Tennyson — just as in art they want to know and remember Raphael and all the elegant inanity of the sacrifice at Lystra, or the miraculous draught of Fishes; just as in history they keep all the picturesque legends of the War of Independence — looking up the dates and minor names, one imagines, ever and again. Some years ago I met two Boston ladies in Rome. Each day they sallied forth from our hotel to see and appreciate; each evening, after dinner, they revised and underlined in Baedeker what they had seen. They meant to miss nothing in, Rome. It's fine in its way — this receptive eagerness, this learners' avidity. Only people who can go about in this spirit need, if their minds are to remain mobile, not so much heads as cephalic pantechnicon vans....

§ IV

I FIND this appetite to have all the mellow and refined and beautiful things in life to the exclusion of all thought for the present and the future even in the sweet, free air of Wellesley's broad park, that most delightful, that almost incredible girls' university, with its class-rooms, its halls of residence, its club-houses and gathering-places among the glades and trees. I have very vivid in my mind a sunlit room in which girls were copying the detail in the photographs of masterpieces, and all around this room were cabinets of drawers, and in each drawer photographs. There must be in that room photographs of every picture of the slightest importance in Italy, and detailed studies of many. I suppose, too, there are photographs of all the sculpture and buildings in Italy that are by any standard considerable. There is, indeed, a great civilization, stretching over centuries and embodying the thought and devotion, the scepticism and levities, the ambition, the pretensions, the passions, and desires of innumerable sinful and world-used men — canned, as it were, in this one room, and freed from any deleterious ingredients. The young ladies, under the direction of competent instructors, go through it, no doubt, industriously, and emerge — capable of Browning.

I was taken into two or three charming clubhouses that dot this beautiful domain. There was a Shakespeare club-house, with a delightful theatre, Elizabethan in style, and all set about with Shakespearean things; there was the club-house of the girls who are fitting themselves for their share in the great American problem by the study of Greek. Groups of pleasant girls in each, grave with the fine gravity of youth, entertained the reluctantly critical visitor, and were unmistakably delighted and relaxed when one made it clear that one was not in the Great Teacher line of business, when one confided that one was there on false pretences, and insisting on seeing the pantry. They have jolly little pantries, and they make excellent tea.

I returned to Boston at last in a state of mxighty doubting, provided with a Wellesley College calendar to study at my leisure.

I cannot, for the life of me, determine how far Wellesley is an

aspect of what I have called Boston; how far it is a part of that wide forward movement of the universities upon which I lavish hope and blessings. Those drawings of photographed Madonnas and Holy Families and Annunciations, the sustained study of Greek, the class in the French drama of the seventeenth century, the study of the topography of Rome fill me with misgivings, seeing the world is in torment for the want of living thought about its present affairs. But, on the other hand, there are courses upon socialism — though the textbook is still *Das Kapital* of Marx — and upon the industrial history of England and America. I didn't discover a debating society, but there is a large accessible library.

How far, I wonder still, are these girls thinking and feeding mentally for themselves? What do they discuss one with another? How far do they suffer under that plight of feminine education — notetaking from lectures?...

But, after all, this about Wellesley is a digression into which I fell by way of Boston's autotypes. My main thesis was that culture, as it is conceived in Boston, is no contribution to the future of America, that cultivated people may be, in effect, as state-blind as — Mr. Morgan Richards. It matters little in the mind of the world whether any one is concentrated upon mediasval poetry, Florentine pictures, or the propagation of pills. The common, significant fact in all these cases is this, a blindness to the crude splendor of the possibilities of America now, to the tragic greatness of the unheeded issues that blunder towards solution. Frankly, I grieve over Boston — Boston throughout the world — as a great waste of leisure and energy, as a frittering away of moral and intellectual possibilities. We give too much to the past. New York is not simply more interesting than Rome, but more significant, more stimulating, and far more beautiful, and the idea that to be concerned about the latter in preference to the former is a mark of a finer mental quality is one of the most mischievous and foolish ideas that ever invaded the mind of man. We are obsessed by the scholastic prestige of mere knowledge and genteel remoteness. Over against unthinking ignorance is scholarly refinement, the spirit of Boston; between that Scylla and this Charybdis the creative mind of man steers its precarious way.

XV. — AT WASHINGTON

§ I

I CAME to Washington full of expecations and curiosities. Here, I felt, so far as it could exist visibly and palpably anywhere, was the head and mind of this colossal America over which my observant curiosities had wandered. In this place I should find, among other things, perhaps as many as ten thousand men who would not be concerned in trade. There would be all the Senators and representatives, their secretaries and officials, and four thousand and more scientific and literary men of Washington's institutions and libraries, the diplomatic corps, the educational centres, the civil service, the writers and thinking men who must inevitably be drawn to this predestined centre. I promised myself arduous intercourse with a teeming intellectual life. Here I should find questions answered, discover missing clues, get hold of the last connections in my inquiry. I should complete at Washington my vision of America; my forecast would follow.

I don't precisely remember how this vision departed. I know only that after a day or so in Washington an entirely different conception was established, a conception of Washington as architecture and avenues, as a place of picture post-cards and excursions, with sightseers instead of thoughts going to and fro. I had imagined that in Washington I should find such mentally vigorous discussion-centres as the New York X Club on a quite magnificent scale. Instead, I found the chief scientific gathering-place has, like so many messes in the British army before the Boer war, a rule against talking "shop." In all Washington there is no clearing-house of thought at all; Washington has no literary journals, no magazines, no publications other than those of the official specialist — there does not seem to be a living for a single firm of publishers in this magnificent empty city.

I went about the place in a state of ridiculous and deepening concern. I went though the splendid Botanical Gardens, through the spacious and beautiful Capitol, and so to the magnificently equipped Library of Congress. There in an upper chamber that commands an

altogether beautiful view of long vistas of avenue and garden to that stupendous unmeaning obelisk (the work of the women of America) that dominates all Washington, I found at last a little group of men who could talk. It was like a small raft upon a limitless empty sea. I lunched with them at their Round Table, and afterwards Mr. Putnam showed me the Rotunda, quite the most gracious reading-room dome the world possesses, and explained the wonderful mechanical organization that brings almost every volume in that immense collection within a minute of one's hand. "With all this," I asked him, "why doesn't the place think?" He seemed, discreetly, to consider it did.

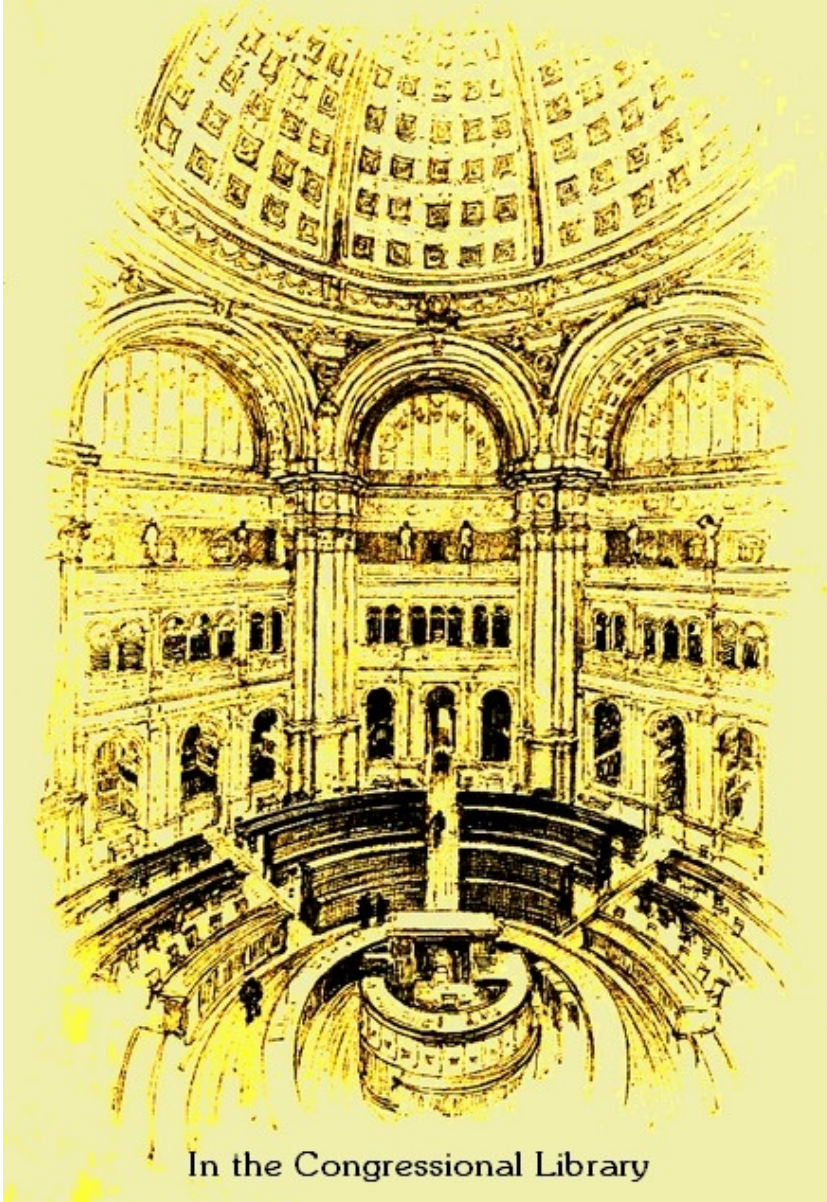

It was in the vein of Washington's detached deadness that I should find Professor Langley (whose flying experiments I have followed for some years with close interest) was dead, and I went through the long galleries of archaeological specimens and stufifed animals in the Smithsonian Institution to inflict my questions upon

his temporary successor. Dr. Cyrus Adler. He had no adequate excuses. He found a kind of explanation in the want of enterprise of American publishers, so that none of them come to Washington to tap its latent resources of knowledge and intellectual capacity; but that does not account for the absence of any traffic in ideas. It is perhaps near the truth to say that this dearth of any general and comprehensive intellectual activity is due to intellectual specialization. The four thousand scientific men in Washington are all too energetically busy with ethnographic details, electrical computations, or herbaria to talk about common and universal things. They ought not to be so busy, and a science so specialized sinks half-way down the scale of sciences. Science is one of those things that cannot hustle; if it does, it loses its connections. In Washington some men, I gathered, hustle, others play bridge, and general questions are left, a little contemptuously, as being of the nature of "gas," to the newspapers and magazines. Philosophy, which correlates the sciences and keeps them subservient to the universals of life, has no seat there. My anticipated synthesis of ten thousand minds refused, under examination, to synthesize at all; it remained disintegrated, a mob, individually active and collectively futile, of specialists and politicians.

§ II

But that is only one side of Washington, the side east and south of the White House. Northwestward I found, I confess, the most agreeable social atmosphere in America. It is a region of large fine houses, of dignified and ample-minded people, people not given over to "smartness" nor redolent of dollars, unhurried and reflective, not altogether lost to the wider aspects of life. In Washington I met again that peculiarly aristocratic quality I had found in Harvard — in the person of President Eliot, for example — an aristocratic quality that is all the finer for the absence of rank, that has integral in it — books thought, and responsibility. And yet I could have wished these fine people more alive to present and future things, a little less established upon completed and mellowing foundations, a little less final in their

admirable finish....

There was, I found, a little breeze of satisfaction fluttering the Washington atmosphere in this region. Mr. Henry James came through the States last year distributing epithets among their cities with the justest aptitude. Washington was the "City of Conversation"; and she was pleasantly conscious that she merited this friendly coronation.

Washington, indeed, converses well, without av/k-wardness, without chatterings, kindly, watchful, agreeably witty. vShe lulled and tamed my purpose to ask about primary things, to discuss large questions. Only once, and that was in an after-dinner duologue, did I get at all into a question in Washington. For the rest, Washington remarked and alluded and made her point and got away.

§ III

And Washington, with a remarkable unanimity and in the most charming manner, assured me that if I came to see and understand America I must on no account miss Mount Vernon. To have passed indifferently by Concord was bad enough, I was told, but to ignore the home of the first president, to turn my back upon that ripe monument of colonial simplicity, would be quite criminal neglect. To me it was a revelation how sincerely insistent they were upon this. It reminded me of an effect I had already appreciated very keenly in Boston — and even before Boston, when Mr. Z took me across Spuyten Duyvil into the country of Sleepy Hollow, and spoke of Cornwallis as though he had died yesterday — and that is the longer historical perspectives of America. America is an older country than any European one, for she has not rejuvenesced for a hundred and thirty years. In endless ways America fails to be contemporary. In many respects, no doubt, she is decades in front of Europe, in mechanism, for example, and productive organization, but in very many other and more fundamental ones she is decades behind. Go but a little way back and you will find the European's perspectives close up; they close at '71, at '48, down a vista of reform bills, at Waterloo and the treaty of Paris, at the Irish Union, at

the coming of Victor Emanuel; Great Britain, for example, in the last hundred years has reconstructed politically and socially, created half her present peerage, evolved the Empire of India, developed Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, fought fifty considerable wars. Mount Vernon, on the other hand, goes back with unbroken continuity, a broad band of mellow tradition, to the War of Independence.

Well, I got all that in conversation at Washington, and so I didn't need to go to Mount Vernon, after all. I got all that about 1777, and I failed altogether to get anything of any value whatever about 1977 — which is the year of greater interest to me. About the direction and destinies of that great American process that echoes so remotely through Washington's cool gracefulness of architecture and her umbrageous parks, this cultivated society seemed to me to be terribly incurious and indifferent. It was alive to political personalities, no doubt, its sons and husbands were Senators, judges, ambassadors, and the like; it was concerned with their speeches and prospects, but as to the trend of the whole thing Washington does not picture it, does not want to picture it. I found myself presently excusing myself for Mount Vernon on the ground that I was not a retrospective American, but a go-ahead Englishman, and so apologizing for my want of reverence for venerable things. "We are a young people," I maintained. "We are a new generation."

§ IV

I WENT to see the Senate debating the railway-rate bill, and from the Senatorial gallery I had pointed out to me Tillman and Platt, Foraker and Lodge, and all the varied personalities of the assembly. The chamber is a circular one, with enormously capacious galleries. The members speak from their desks, other members write letters, read (and rustle) newspapers, sit among accumulations of torn paper, or stand round the apartment in audibly conversational groups. A number of messenger-boys — they wear no uniform — share the floor of the House with the representatives, and are called by clapping the hands. They go to and fro, or sit at the feet of the Vice-

President. Behind and above the Vice-President the newspaper men sit in a state of partial attention, occasionally making notes for the vivid descriptions that have long since superseded verbatim reports in America. The public galleries contain hundreds of intermittently talkative spectators. For the most part these did not seem to me to represent, as the little strangers' gallery in the House of Commons represents, interests affected. They were rather spectators seeing Washington, taking the Senate en route for the obelisk top and Mount Vernon. They made little attempt to hear the speeches.

In a large distinguished emptiness among these galleries is the space devoted to diplomatic representatives, and there I saw, sitting in a meritorious solitude, the British charge d'affaires and his wife following the debate below. I found it altogether too submerged for me to follow. The countless spectators, the Senators, the boy messengers, the comings and goings kept up a perpetual confusing babblement. One saw men walking carelessly between the Speaker and the Vice-President, and at one time two gentlemen with their backs to the member in possession of the House engaged the Vice-President in an earnest conversation. The messengers circulated at a brisk trot, or sat on the edge of the dais exchanging subdued badinage. I have never seen a more distracted Legislature.

The whole effect of Washington is a want of concentration, of something unprehensile and apart. It is on, not in, the American process. The place seems to me to reflect, even in its sounds and physical forms, that dispersal of power, that evasion of a simple conclusiveness, which is the peculiar effect of that ancient compromise, the American Constitution. The framers of that treaty were haunted by two terrible bogies, a military dictatorship and what they called "mob rule," they were obsessed by the need of safeguards against these dangers, they were controlled by the mutual distrust of constituent States far more alien to one another than they are now, and they failed to foresee both the enormous assimilation of interests and character presently to be wrought by the railways and telegraphs, and the huge possibilities of corruption, elaborate electrical arrangements offer to clever unscrupulous men. And here in Washington is the result, a Legislature that fails to legislate, a government that cannot govern, a pseudo-responsible administration

that offers enormous scope for corruption, and that is perhaps invincibly intrenched behind the two-party system from any insurgence of the popular will. The plain fact of the case is that Congress, as it is constituted at present, is the feeblest, least accessible, and most inefficient central government of any civilized nation in the world west of Russia. Congress is entirely inadequate to the tasks of the present time.

I came away from Washington with my preconception enormously reinforced that the supreme need of America, the preliminary thing to any social or economic reconstruction, is political reform. It seems to me to lie upon the surface that America has to be democratized. It is necessary to make the Senate and the House of Representatives more interdependent, and to abolish the possibilities of deadlocks between them, to make election to the Senate direct from the people, and to qualify and weaken the power of the two-party system by the introduction of "second ballots" and the referendum....

But how such drastic changes are to be achieved constitutionally in America I cannot imagine. Only a great educated, trained, and sustained agitation can bring about so fundamental a political revolution, and at present I can find nowhere even the beginnings of a realization of this need.

§ V

In the White House, set midway between the Washington of the sightseers and the Washington of brilliant conversation, I met President Roosevelt. I was mightily pleased by the White House; it is dignified and simple — once again am I tempted to use the phrase "aristocratic in the best sense" of things American; and an entire absence of uniforms or liveries creates an atmosphere of Republican equality that is reinforced by "Mr. President's" friendly grasp of one's undistinguishable hand. And after lunch I walked about the grounds with him, and so achieved my ambition to get him "placed," as it were, in my vision of America.

In the rare chances I have had of meeting statesmen, there has

always been one common effect, an effect of their being smaller, less audible, and less saliently featured than one had expected. A common man builds up his picture of the men prominent in the great game of life very largely out of caricature, out of head-lines, out of posed and "characteristic" portraits. One associates them with actresses and actors, literary poseurs and suchlike public performers, anticipates the same vivid self-consciousness as these display in common intercourse, keys one's self up for the paint on their faces, and for voices and manners altogether too accentuated for the gray-toned lives of common men. I've met politicians who remained at that. But so soon as Mr. Roosevelt entered the room, "Teddy," the Teddy of the slouch hat, the glasses, the teeth, and the sword, that strenuous vehement Teddy (who had, let me admit, survived a full course of reading in the President's earlier writings) vanished, and gave place to an entirely negotiable individuality. To-day, at any rate, the "Teddy" legend is untrue. Perhaps it wasn't always quite untrue. There was a time dtiring the world predominance of Mr. Kipling, when I think the caricature must have come close to certain of Mr. Roosevelt's acceptances and attitudes. But that was ten years and more ago, and Mr. Roosevelt to this day goes on thinking and changing and growing....

For me, anyhow, that strenuousness has vanished beyond recalling, and there has emerged a figure in gray of a quite reasonable size, with a face far more thoughtful and perplexed than strenuous, with a clinched hand that does indeed gesticulate, though it is by no means a gigantic fist — and with quick movements, a voice strained indeed, a little forced for oratory, but not raised or aggressive in any fashion, and friendly screwed-up eyes behind the glasses.

It isn't my purpose at all to report a conversation that went from point to point. I wasn't interviewing the President, and I made no note at the time of the things said. My impression was of a mind — for the situation — quite extraordinarily open. That is the value of President Roosevelt for me, and why I can't for the life of my book leave him out. He is the seeking mind of America displayed. The ordinary politician goes through his career like a charging bull, with his eyes shut to any changes in the premises. He locks up his mind like a powder magazine. But any spark may fire the mind of

President Roosevelt. His range of reading is amazing; he seems to be echoing with all the thought of the time, he has receptivity to the pitch of genius. And he does not merely receive, he digests and reconstructs; he thinks. It is his political misfortune that at times he thinks aloud. His mind is active with projects of solution for the teeming problems around him. Traditions have no hold upon him — nor, his enemies say, have any but quite formal pledges. It is hard to tie him. In all these things he is to a single completeness, to mind and will of contemporary America. And by an unparalleled conspiracy of political accidents, as all the world knows, he has got to the White House. He is not a part of the regular American political system at all — he has, it happens, stuck through.

Now my picture of America is, as I have tried to make clear, one of a gigantic process of growth, of economic coming and going, spaced out over vast distances and involving millions of hastening men; I see America as towns and urgency and greatnesses beyond, I suppose, any precedent that has ever been in the world. And like a little island of order amid that ocean of enormous opportunity and business turmoil and striving individualities, is this District of Columbia, with Washington and its Capitol and obelisk. It is .a mere pin-point in the unlimited, on which, in peace times, the national government lies marooned, twisted up into knots, bound with safeguards, and altogether impotently stranded. And peering closely, and looking from the Capitol down the vista of Pennsylvania Avenue, I see the White House, minute and clear, with a fountain playing before it, and behind it a railed garden set with fine trees. The trees are not so thick, nor the railings so high but that the people on the big "seeing Washington" cannot crane to look into it and watch whoever walk about it. And in this garden goes a living speck, as it were, in gray, talking, swinging a white clinched hand, and trying vigorously and resolutely to get a hold upon the significance of the whole vast process in which he and his island of government are set.

Always before him there have been political resultants, irrelevancies and futilities of the White House; and after him, it would seem, they may come again. I do not know anything of the quality of Mr. Bryan, who may perhaps succeed him. He, too, is something of an exception, it seems, and keeps a still developing and

inquiring mind. Beyond is a vista of figures of questionable value so far as I am concerned. They have this in common that they don't stand for thought. For the present, at any rate, a personality, extraordinarily representative, occupies the White House. And what he chooses to say publicly (and some things he says privately) are, by an exceptional law of acoustics, heard in San Francisco, in Chicago, in New Orleans, in New York and Boston, in Kansas, and Maine, throughout the whole breadth of the United States of America. He assimilates contemporary thought, delocalizes and reverberates it. He is America for the first time vocal to itself.

What is America saying to itself?

I've read most of the President's recent speeches, and they fall in oddly with that quality in his face that so many photographs even convey, a complex mingling of will and a critical perplexity. Taken all together they amount to a mass of not always consistent suggestions, that and conflict overlap. Things crowd upon him, rebate scandals, insurance scandals, the meat scandals, this insecurity and that. The conditions of his position press upon him. It is no wonder he gives out no single, simple note....

The plain fact is that in the face of the teeming situations of to-day America does not know what to do. Nobody, except those happily gifted individuals who can see but one aspect of an intricate infinitude, imagines any simple solution. For the rest the time is one of ample, vigorous, and at times impatient inquiry, and of intense disillusionment with old assumptions and methods. And never did a President before so reflect the quality of his time. The trend is altogether away from the anarchistic individualism of the nineteenth century, that much is sure, and towards some constructive scheme which, if not exactly socialism, as socialism is defined, will be, at any rate, closely analogous to socialism. This is the immense change of thought and attitude in which President Roosevelt participates, and to which he gives a unique expression. Day by day he changes with the big world about him — contradicts himself....

I came away with the clear impression that neither President Roosevelt nor America will ever, as some people prophesy, "declare for socialism," but my impression is equally clear, that he and all the world of men he stands for, have done forever with the threadbare

formulae that have served America such an unconscionable time. We talked of the press and books and of the question of color, and then for a while about the role of the imiversities in the life of the coming time.

Now it is a curious thing that as I talked with President Roosevelt in the garden of the White House there came back to me quite forcibly that undertone of doubt that has haunted me throughout this journey. After all, does this magnificent appearance of beginnings which is America, convey any clear and certain promise of permanence and fulfilment whatever? Much makes for construction, a great wave of reform is going on, but will it drive on to anything more than a breaking impact upon even more gigantic uncertainties and dangers. Is America a giant childhood or a gigantic futility, a mere latest phase of that long succession of experiments which has been and may be for interminable years — may be indeed altogether until the end — man's social history? I can't now recall how our discursive talk settled towards that, but it is clear to me that I struck upon a familiar vein of thought in the President's mind. He hadn't, he said, an effectual dis-jjroof of any pessimistic interpretation of the future. If one chose to say America must presently lose the impetus of her ascent, that she and all mankind must culminate and pass, he could not conclusively deny that possibility. Only he chose to live as if this were not so.

That remained in his mind. Presently he reverted to it. He made a sort of apology for his life against the doubts and scepticisms that, I fear, must be in the background of the thoughts of every modern man who is intellectually alive. He mentioned a little book of mine, an early book full of the deliberate pessimism of youth, in which I drew a picture of a future of decadence, of a time when constructive effort had fought its fight and failed, when the inevitable segregations of an individualistic system had worked themselves out and all the hope and vigor of humanity had gone forever. The descendants of the workers had become etiolated, sinister, and subterranean monsters, the property-owners had degenerated into a hectic and feebly self-indulgent race, living fitfully amid the ruins of the present time. He became gesticulatory, and his straining voice a note higher in denying this as a credible interpretation of destiny. With one of those

sudden movements of his, he knelt forward in a garden chair — we were standing before our parting beneath the colonnade — and addressed me very earnestly over the back, clutching it, and then thrusting out his famiUar gesture, a hand first partly open and then closed.

"Suppose after all," he said, slowly, "that should prove to be right, and it all ends in your butterflies and morlocks. That doesn't matter now. The effort's real. It's worth going on with. It's worth it. It's worth it — even then...."

I can see him now and hear his unmusical voice saying "The effort — the effort's worth it," and see the gesture of his clinched hand and the — how can I describe it? the friendly peering snarl of his face, like a man with the sun in his eyes. He sticks in my mind as that, as a very symbol of the creative will in man, in its limitations, its doubtful adequacy, its valiant persistence amid perplexities and confusions. He kneels out, assertive against his setting — and his setting is the White House with a background of all America.

I could almost write, with a background of all the world — for I know of no other a tithe so representative of the creative purpose, the good-will in men as he. In his undisciplined hastiness, his limitations, his prejudices, his unfairness, his frequent errors, just as much as in his force, his sustained courage, his integrity, his open intelligence, he stands for his people and his kind.

THE ENVOY

And at last I am back in my study by the sea. It is high June. When I said good-bye to things it was March, a March warm and eager to begin with, and then dashed with sleet and wind; but the daffodils were out, and the primulas and primroses shone brown and yellow in the unseasonable snow. The spring display that was just beginning is over. The iris rules. Outside the window is a long level line of black fleur-de-lys rising from a serried rank of leaf-blades. Their silhouettes stand out against the brightness of the twilight sea. They mark, so opened, two months of absence. And in the interval I have seen a great world.

I have tried to render it as I saw it. I have tried to present the first exhilaration produced by the sheer growth of it, the morning-time hopefulness of spacious and magnificent opportunity, the optimism of successful, swift, progressive effort in material things. And from that I have passed to my sense of the chaotic condition of the American will, and that first confidence has darkened more and more towards doubt again. I came to America questioning the certitudes of progress. For a time I forgot my questionings; I sincerely believed, "These people can do anything," and, now I have it all in perspective, I have to confess that doubt has taken me again. "These people," I say, "might do anything. They are the finest people upon earth — the most hopeful. But they are vain and hasty; they are thoughtless, harsh, and undisciplined. In the end, it may be, they will accomplish nothing." I see, I have noted in its place, the great forces of construction, the buoyant, creative spirit of America. But I have marked, too, the intricacy of snares and obstacles in its path. The problem of America, save in its scale and freedom, is no different from the problem of Great Britain, of Europe, of all humanity; it is one chiefly moral and intellectual; it is to resolve a confusion of purposes, traditions, habits, into a common ordered intention. Everywhere one finds what seem to me the beginnings of that — and, for this epoch it is all too possible, they may get no further than beginnings. Yet another Decline and Fall may remain to be written, another and another, and it may be another, before the World State

comes and Peace.

Yet against this prospect of a dispersal of will, of a secular decline in honor, education, public spirit, and confidence, of a secular intensification of corruption, lawlessness, and disorder, I do, with a confidence that waxes and wanes, balance the creative spirit in America, and that kindred spirit that for me finds its best symbol in the President's kneeling, gesticulating figure, and his urgent "The effort's worth it!" Who can gauge the far-reaching influence of even the science we have, in ordering and quickening the imagination of man, in enhancing and assuring their powers? Common men feel secure to-day in enterprises it needed men of genius to conceive in former times. And there is a literature — for all our faults we do write more widely, deeply, disinterestedly, more freely and frankly than any set of writers ever did before — reaching incalculable masses of readers, and embodying an amount of common consciousness and purpose beyond all precedent. Consider only how nowadays the problems that were once the inaccessible thoughts of statesmen may be envisaged by common men! Here am I really able, in a few weeks of observant work, to get a picture of America. I publish it. If it bears a likeness, it will live and be of use; if not it will die, and be no irreparable loss. Some fragment, some suggestion may survive. My friend Mr. F. Madox Hueffer was here a day or so ago to say good-bye; he starts for America as I write here, to get his vision. As I have been writing these papers I have also been reading, instalment by instalment, the subtle, fine renderings of America revisited by Mr. Henry James. We work in shoals, great and small together, one trial thought following another. We are getting the world presented. It is not simply America that we swarm over and build up into a conceivable process, into something understandable and negotiable by the mind. I find on my desk here waiting for me a most illuminating *Vision Of India*, in which Mr. Sidney Low, with a marvellous aptitude, has interpreted east to west. Besides my poor superficialities in *The Tribune* appears Sir William Butler, with a livid frankness expounding the most intimate aspects of the South African situation. A friend who called to-day spoke of Nevinson's raid upon the slave trade of Portuguese East Africa, and of two irrepressible writers upon the Congo crimes. I have already

mentioned the economic and social literature, the so-called literature of exposure in America. This altogether represents collectively a tremendous illumination. No social development was ever so lit and seen before. Collectively, this literature of facts and theories and impressions is of immense importance. Things are done in the light, more and more are they done in the light. The world perceives and thinks....

After all is said and done, I do find the balance of my mind tilts steadily to a belief in a continuing and accelerated progress now in human affairs. And in spite of my patriotic inclinations, in spite, too, of the present high intelligence and efficiency of Germany, it seems to me that in America, by sheer virtue of its size, its free traditions, and the habit of initiative in its people, the leadership of progress must ultimately rest. Things like the Chicago scandals, the insurance scandals, and all the manifest crudities of the American spectacle, don't seem to me to be more than relatively trivial after all. There are the universities, the turbines of Niagara, the New York architecture, and the quality of the mediocre people to set against these....

Within a week after I saw the President I was on the *Umbria* and steaming slowly through the long spectacle of that harbor which was my first impression of America, which still, to my imagination, stands so largely for America. The crowded ferryboats hooted past; athwart the shining water, tugs clamored to and fro. The skyscrapers raised their slender masses heavenward — America's gay bunting lit the scene. As we dropped down I had a last glimpse of the Brooklyn Bridge. There to the right was Ellis Island, where the immigrants, minute by minute, drip and drip into America, and beyond that the tall spike-headed Liberty with the reluctant torch, which I have sought to make the centre of all this writing. And suddenly as I looked back at the skyscrapers of lower New York a queer fancy sprang into my head. They reminded me quite irresistibly of piled-up packing cases outside a warehouse. I was amazed I had not seen the resemblance before. I could really have believed for a moment that that was what they were, and that presently out of these would come the real thing, palaces and noble places, free, high circumstances, and space and leisure, light and fine living for the sons of men....

Ocean, cities, multitudes, long journeys, mountains, lakes as large

as seas, and the riddle of a nation's destiny; I've done my impertinent best now with this monstrous insoluble problem. I finish.

The air is very warm and pleasant in my garden to-night, the sunset has left a rim of greenish-gold about the northward sky, shading up a blue that is, as yet, scarce pierced by any star. I write down these last words here, and then I shall step through the window and sit out there in the kindly twilight, now quiet, now gossiping idly of what so-and-so has done while I have been away, of personal motives and of little incidents and entertaining intimate things.

THE END

THIS MISERY OF BOOTS

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I. — THE WORLD AS BOOTS AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

IT does not do," said a friend of mine, "to think about boots." For my own part, I have always been particularly inclined to look at boots, and think about them. I have an odd idea that most general questions can be expressed in terms of foot-wear — which is perhaps why cobblers are often such philosophical men. Accident it may be, gave me this persuasion. A very considerable part of my childhood was spent in an underground kitchen; the window opened upon a bricked-in space, surmounted by a grating before my father's shop window. So that, when I looked out of the window, instead of seeing — as children of a higher upbringing would do — the heads and bodies of people, I saw their under side. I got acquainted indeed with all sorts of social types as boots simply, indeed, as the soles of boots; and only subsequently, and with care, have I fitted heads, bodies, and legs to these pediments.

There would come boots and shoes (no doubt holding people) to stare at the shop, finicking, neat little women's boots, good sorts and bad sorts, fresh and new, worn crooked in the tread, patched or needing patching; men's boots, clumsy and fine, rubber shoes, tennis shoes, goloshes. Brown shoes I never beheld — it was before that time; but I have seen pattens. Boots used to come and commune at the window, duets that marked their emotional development by a restlessness or a kick.... But anyhow, that explains my preoccupation with boots.

But my friend did not think it did, to think about boots.

My friend was a realistic novelist, and a man from whom hope had departed. I cannot tell you how hope had gone out of his life; some subtle disease of the soul had robbed him at last of any enterprise, or belief in coming things; and he was trying to live the few declining years that lay before him in a sort of bookish comfort, among surroundings that seemed peaceful and beautiful, by not thinking of things that were painful and cruel. And we met a tramp who limped along the lane.

“Chafed heel,” I said, when we had parted from him again; “and on these pebbly byways no man goes barefooted.” My friend winced; and a little silence came between us. We were both recalling things; and then for a time, when we began to talk again, until he would have no more of it, we rehearsed the miseries of boots.

We agreed that to a very great majority of people in this country boots are constantly a source of distress, giving pain and discomfort, causing trouble, causing anxiety. We tried to present the thing in a concrete form to our own minds by hazardous statistical inventions. “At the present moment,” said I, “one person in ten in these islands is in discomfort through boots.”

My friend thought it was nearer one in five.

“In the life of a poor man or a poor man’s wife, and still more in the lives of their children, this misery of the hoot occurs and recurs — every year so many days.”

We made a sort of classification of these troubles.

There is the trouble of the new boot.

(i) They are made of some bad, un-ventilated material; and “draw the feet,” as people say.

(ii) They do not fit exactly. Most people have to buy ready-made boots; they cannot afford others, and, in the submissive philosophy of poverty, they wear them to “get used” to them. This gives you the little-toe pinch, the big-toe pinch, the squeeze and swelling across the foot; and, as a sort of chronic development of these pressures, come corns and all the misery of corns. Children’s feet get distorted for good by this method of fitting the human being to the thing; and a vast number of people in the world are, as a consequence of this, ashamed to appear barefooted. (I used to press people who came to see me in warm pleasant weather to play Badminton barefooted on the grass — a delightful thing to do — until I found out that many were embarrassed at the thought of displaying twisted toes and corns, and such-like disfigurements.)

(iii) The third trouble of new boots is this: they are unseasoned and in bad condition, and so they squeak and make themselves an insulting commentary on one’s ways.

But these are but trifling troubles to what arises as the boots get into wear. Then it is the pinch comes in earnest. Of these troubles of

the work boot, I and my friend, before he desisted, reckoned up three principal classes.

(i) There are the various sorts of chafe. Worst of the chafes is certainly the heel chafe, when something goes wrong with the upright support at the heel. This, as a boy, I have had to endure for days together; because there were no other boots for me. Then there is the chafe that comes when that inner lining of the boot rucks up — very like the chafe it is that poor people are always getting from over-darned and hastily-darned socks. And then there is the chafe that comes from ready-made boots one has got a trifle too large or long, in order to avoid the pinch and corns. After a little while, there comes a transverse crease across the loose-fitting forepart; and, when the boot stiffens from wet or any cause, it chafes across the base of the toes. They have you all ways. And I have a very lively recollection too of the chafe of the knots one made to mend broken laces — one cannot be always buying new laces, and the knots used to work inward. And then the chafe of the crumpled tongue.

(ii) Then there are the miseries that come from the wear of the sole. There is the rick of ankle because the heel has gone over, and the sense of insecurity; and there is the miserable sense of not looking well from behind that many people must feel. It is almost always painful to me to walk behind girls who work out, and go to and fro, consuming much foot-wear, for this very reason, that their heels seem always to wear askew. Girls ought always to be so beautiful, most girls could be so beautiful, that to see their poor feet askew, the grace of their walk gone, a sort of spinal curvature induced, makes me wretched, and angry with a world that treats them so. And then there is the working through of nails, nails in the shoe. One limps on manfully in the hope presently of a quiet moment and a quiet corner in which one may hammer the thing down again. Thirdly, under this heading I recall the flapping sole. My boots always came to that stage at last; I wore the toes out first, and then the sole split from before backwards. As one walked it began catching the ground. One made fantastic paces to prevent it happening; one was dreadfully ashamed. At last one was forced to sit by the wayside frankly, and cut the flap away.

(iii) Our third class of miseries we made of splitting and leaks.

These are for the most part mental miseries, the feeling of shabbiness as one sees the ugly yawn, for example, between toe cap and the main upper of the boot; but they involve also chills, colds, and a long string of disagreeable consequences. And we spoke too of the misery of sitting down to work (as multitudes of London school children do every wet morning) in boots with soles worn thin or into actual holes, that have got wet and chilling on the way to the work-place...

From these instances my mind ran on to others. I made a discovery. I had always despised the common run of poor Londoners for not spending their Sundays and holidays in sturdy walks, the very best of exercise. I had allowed myself to say when I found myself one summer day at Margate: "What a soft lot all these young people must be who loaf about the band-stand here, when they might be tramping over the Kentish hills inland!" But now I repented me of that.

Long tramps indeed! Their boots would have hurt them. Their boots would not stand it. I saw it all.

And now my discourse was fairly under way. "*Ex pede Herculem*" I said; "these miseries of boots are no more than a sample. The clothes people wear are no better than their boots; and the houses they live in far worse. And think of the shoddy garment of ideas and misconceptions and partial statements into which their poor minds have been jammed by way of education! Think of the way that pinches and chafes them! If one expanded the miseries of these things . . . Think, for example, of the results of the poor, bad, unwise food, of badly-managed eyes and ears and teeth! Think of the quantity of toothache."

"I tell you, it does not do to think of such things!" cried my friend, in a sort of anguish; and would have no more of it at any price...

And yet in his time he had written books full of these very matters, before despair overtook him.

II. — PEOPLE WHOSE BOOTS DON'T HURT THEM

WELL, I did not talk merely to torment him; nor have I written this merely to torment yon. You see I have a persistent persuasion that all these miseries are preventable miseries, which it lies in the power of men to cure.

Everybody does not suffer misery from boots.

One person I know, another friend of mine, who can testify to that; who has tasted all the miseries of boots, and who now goes about the world free of them, but not altogether forgetful of them. A stroke of luck, aided perhaps by a certain alacrity on his own part, lifted him out of the class in which one buys one's boots and clothes out of what is left over from a pound a week, into the class in which one spends seventy or eighty pounds a year on clothing. Sometimes he buys shoes and boots at very good shops; sometimes he has them made for him; he has them stored in a proper cupboard, and great care is taken of them; and so his boots and shoes and slippers never chafe, never pinch, never squeak, never hurt nor worry him, never bother him; and, when he sticks out his toes before the fire, they do not remind him that he is a shabby and contemptible wretch, living meanly on the dust heaps of the world. You might think from this he had every reason to congratulate himself and be happy, seeing that he has had good follow after evil; but, such is the oddness of the human heart, he isn't contented at all. The thought of the multitudes so much worse off than himself in this matter of foot-wear, gives him no sort of satisfaction. Their boots pinch him vicariously. The black rage with the scheme of things that once he felt through suffering in his own person in the days when he limped shabbily through gaily busy, fashionable London streets, in split boots that chafed, he feels now just as badly as he goes about the world very comfortably himself, but among people whom he knows with a pitiless clearness to be almost intolerably uncomfortable. He has no optimistic illusion that things are all right with them. Stupid people who have always been well off, who have always had boots that fit, may think that; but not

so, he. In one respect the thought of boots makes him even more viciously angry now, than it used to do. In the old days he was savage with his luck, but hopelessly savage; he thought that bad boots, ugly uncomfortable clothes, rotten houses, were in the very nature of things. Now, when he sees a child sniffing and blubbering and halting upon the pavement, or an old country-woman going painfully along a lane, he no longer recognises the Pinch of Destiny. His rage is lit by the thought, that there are fools in this world who ought to have foreseen and prevented this. He no longer curses fate, but the dullness of statesmen and powerful responsible people who have neither the heart, nor courage, nor capacity, to change the state of mismanagement that gives us these things.

Now do not think I am dwelling unduly upon my second friend's good fortune, when I tell you that once he was constantly getting pain and miserable states of mind, colds for example, from the badness of his clothing, shame from being shabby, pain from the neglected state of his teeth, from the indigestion of unsuitable food eaten at unsuitable hours, from the insanitary ugly house in which he lived and the bad air of that part of London, from things indeed quite beyond the unaided power of a poor overworked man to remedy. And now all these disagreeable things have gone out of his life; he has consulted dentists and physicians, he has hardly any dull days from colds, no pain from toothache at all, no gloom of indigestion....

I will not go on with the tale of good fortune of this lucky person. My purpose is served if I have shown that this misery of boots is not an unavoidable curse upon mankind. If one man can evade it, others can. By good management it may be altogether escaped. If you, or what is more important to most human beings, if any people dear to you, suffer from painful or disfiguring boots or shoes, and you can do no better for them, it is simply because you are getting the worse side of an ill-managed world. It is not the universal lot.

And what I say of boots is true of all the other minor things of life. If your wife catches a bad cold because her boots are too thin for the time of the year, or dislikes going out because she cuts a shabby ugly figure, if your children look painfully nasty because their faces are swollen with toothache, or because their clothes are dirty, old, and ill-fitting, if you are all dull and disposed to be cross with one

another for want of decent amusement and change of air — don't submit, don't be humbugged for a moment into believing that this is the dingy lot of all mankind. Those people you love are living in a badly-managed world and on the wrong side of it; and such wretchednesses are the daily demonstration of that.

Don't say for a moment: "Such is life." Don't think their miseries are part of some primordial curse there is no escaping. The disproof of that is for any one to see. There are people, people no more deserving than others, who suffer from none of these things. You may feel you merit no better than to live so poorly and badly that your boots are always hurting you; but do the little children, the girls, the mass of decent hard-up people, deserve no better fate?

III. — AT THIS POINT A DISPUTE ARISES

NOW let us imagine some one who will dispute what I am saying. I do not suppose any one will dispute my argument that a large part of the misery of civilised life — I do not say "all" but only a "large part" — arises out of the network of squalid insufficiencies of which I have taken this misery of boots as the simplest example. But I do believe quite a lot of people will be prepared to deny that such miseries can be avoided. They will say that every one cannot have the best of things, that of all sorts of good things, including good leather and cobbling, there is not enough to go round, that lower-class people ought not to mind being shabby and uncomfortable, that they ought to be very glad to be able to live at all, considering what they are, and that it is no good stirring up discontent about things that cannot be altered or improved.

Such arguments are not to be swept aside with a wave of the hand. It is perfectly true that every one cannot have the best of things; and it is in the nature of things that some boots should be better and some worse. To some people, either by sheer good luck, or through the strength of their determination to have them, the exquisitely good boots, those of the finest leather and the most artistic cut, will fall. I have never denied that. Nobody dreams of a time when every one will have exactly as good boots as every one else; I am not preaching any such childish and impossible equality. But it is a long way from recognising that there must be a certain picturesque and interesting variety in this matter of foot-wear, to the admission that a large majority of people can never hope for more than to be shod in a manner that is frequently painful, uncomfortable, unhealthy, or unsightly. That admission I absolutely refuse to make. There is enough good leather in the world to make good sightly boots and shoes for all who need them, enough men at leisure and enough power and machinery to do all the work required, enough unemployed intelligence to organise the shoemaking and shoe distribution for everybody. What stands in the way? Let us put that question in a rather different form. Here on the one hand — you can see for yourself in any unfashionable part of Great Britain — are

people badly, uncomfortably, painfully shod, in old boots, rotten boots, sham boots; and on the other great stretches of land in the world, with unlimited possibilities of cattle and leather and great numbers of people, who, either through wealth or trade disorder, are doing no work. And our question is: "Why cannot the latter set to work and make and distribute boots?"

Imagine yourself trying to organise something of this kind of Free Booting expedition; and consider the difficulties you would meet with. You would begin by looking for a lot of leather. Imagine yourself setting off to South America, for example, to get leather; beginning at the very beginning by setting to work to kill and flay a herd of cattle. You find at once you are interrupted. Along comes your first obstacle in the shape of a man who tells you the cattle and the leather belong to him. You explain that the leather is wanted for people who have no decent boots in England. He says he does not care a rap what you want it for; before you may take it from him you have to buy him off; it is his private property, this leather, and the herd and the land over which the herd ranges. You ask him how much he wants for his leather; and he tells you frankly, just as much as he can induce you to give.

If he chanced to be a person of exceptional sweetness of disposition, you might perhaps argue with him. You might point out to him that this project of giving people splendid boots was a fine one that would put an end to much human misery. He might even sympathise with your generous enthusiasm; but you would, I think, find him adamantine in his resolve to get just as much out of you for his leather as you could with the utmost effort pay.

Suppose now you said to him: "But how did you come by this land and these herds, so that you can stand between them and the people who have need of them, exacting this profit?" lie would probably either embark upon a long rigmarole, or, what is much more probable, lose his temper and decline to argue. Pursuing your doubt as to the rightfulness of his property in these things, you might admit he deserved a certain reasonable fee for the rough care he had taken of the land and herds. But cattle breeders are a rude, violent race; and it is doubtful if you would get far beyond your proposition of a reasonable fee. You would in fact have to buy off this owner of

the leather at a good thumping price — he exacting just as much as he could get from you — if you wanted to go on with your project.

Well, then you would have to get your leather here; and, to do that, you would have to bring it by railway and ship to this country. And here again you would find people without any desire or intention of helping your project, standing in your course, resolved to make every possible penny out of you on your way to provide sound boots for every one. You would find the railway was private property, and had an owner or owners; you would find the ship was private property, with an owner or owners; and that none of these would be satisfied for a moment with a mere; fee adequate to their services. They too would be resolved to make every penny of profit out of you. If you made inquiries about the matter, you would probably find the real owners of railway and ship were companies of shareholders, and that the profit squeezed out of your poor people's boots at this stage went to fill the pockets of old ladies at Torquay, spendthrifts in Paris, well-booted gentlemen in London clubs, all sorts of glossy people....

Well, you get the leather to England at last; and now you want to make it into boots. You take it to a centre of population, invite workers to come to you, erect sheds and machinery upon a vacant piece of ground, and start off in a sort of fury of generous industry, boot-making.... Do you? There comes along an owner for that vacant piece of ground, declares it is his property, demands an enormous sum for rent. And your workers all round you, you find, cannot get house room until they too have paid rent — every inch of the country is somebody's property, and a man may not shut his eyes for an hour without the consent of some owner or other. And the food your shoemakers eat, the clothes they wear, have all paid tribute and profit to land-owners, cart-owners, house-owners, endless tribute over and over and above the fair pay for work that has been done upon them.... So one might go on. But you begin to see now one set of reasons at least why every one has not good comfortable boots. There could be plenty of leather; and there is certainly plenty of labour and quite enough intelligence in the world to manage that and a thousand other desirable things. But this institution of Private Property in land and naturally produced tilings, these obstructive claims that prevent you

using ground, or moving material, and that have to be bought out at exorbitant prices, stand in the way. All these owners hang like parasites upon your enterprise at its every stage; and, by the time you get your sound boots well made in England, you will find them costing about a pound a pair — high out of the reach of the general mass of people. And you will perhaps not think me fanciful and extravagant when I confess that when I realise this, and look at poor people's boots in the street, and see them cracked and misshapen and altogether nasty, I seem to see also a lot of little phantom land-owners, cattle-owners, house-owners, owners of all sorts, swarming over their pinched and weary feet like leeches, taking much and giving nothing, and being the real cause of all such miseries.

Now is this a necessary and unavoidable thing? — that is our question. Is there no other way of managing things than to let these property-owners exact their claims, and squeeze comfort, pride, happiness, out of the lives of the common run of people? Because, of course, it is not only the boots they squeeze into meanness and badness. It is the claim and profit of the land-owner and house-owner that make our houses so ugly, shabby, and dear, that make our roadways and railways so crowded and inconvenient, that sweat our schools, our clothing, our food — boots we took merely by way of one example of a universal trouble.

Well, there are a number of people who say there is a better way and that the world could be made infinitely better in all these matters, made happier and better than it ever has been in these respects, by refusing to have private property in all these universally necessary things. They say that it is possible to have the land administered, and such common and needful things as leather produced, and boots manufactured, and no end of other such generally necessary services carried on, not for the private profit of individuals, but for the good of all. They propose that the State should take away the land, and the railways, and shipping, and many great organised enterprises from their owners, who use them simply to squeeze the means for a wasteful private expenditure out of the common mass of men, and should administer all these things, generously and boldly, not for profit, but for service. It is this idea of extracting profit they hold which is the very root of the evil. These are the Socialists; and they

are the only people who do hold out any hope of far-reaching change that will alter the present dingy state of affairs, of which this painful wretchedness of boots is only one typical symbol.

IV. — IS SOCIALISM POSSIBLE?

I WILL not pretend to be impartial in this matter, and to discuss as though I had an undecided mind, whether the world would be better if we could abolish private property in land and in many things of general utility; because I have no doubt left in the matter. I believe that private property in these things is no more necessary and unavoidable than private property in our fellow-creatures, or private property in bridges and roads. The idea that anything and everything may be claimed as private property belongs to the dark ages of the world; and it is not only a monstrous injustice, but a still more monstrous inconvenience. Suppose we still admitted private property in high roads, and let every man who had a scrap of high road haggle a bargain with us before we could drive by in a cab! You say life would be unendurable. But indeed it amounts to something a little like that if we use a railway now; and it is quite like that if one wants a spot of ground somewhere upon which one may live. I see no more difficulty in managing land, factories, and the like, publicly for the general good, than there is in managing roads and bridges, and the post office and the police. So far I see no impossibility whatever in Socialism. To abolish private property in these things would be to abolish all that swarm of parasites, whose greed for profit and dividend hampers and makes a thousand useful and delightful enterprises costly or hopeless. It would abolish them; but is that any objection whatever?

And as for taking such property from the owners; why shouldn't we? The world has not only in the past taken slaves from their owners, with no compensation or with a meagre compensation; but in the history of mankind, dark as it is, there are innumerable cases of slave-owners resigning their inhuman rights. You may say that to take away property from people is unjust and robbery; but is that really so? Suppose you found a number of children in a nursery all very dull and unhappy because one of them, who had been badly spoilt, had got all the toys together and claimed them all, and refused to let the others have any. Would you not dispossess the child, however honest its illusion that it was right to be greedy? That is

practically the position of the property-owner to-day. You may say, if you choose, that property-owners, land-owners for example, must be bought out and not robbed; but since getting the money to buy them out involves taxing the property of some one else, who may possibly have a better claim to it than the land-owner to his, I don't quite see where the honesty of that course comes in. You can only give property for property in buying and selling; and if private property is not robbery, then not only Socialism but ordinary taxation must be. But if taxation is a justifiable proceeding, if you can tax me (as I am taxed) for public services, a shilling and more out of every twenty shillings I earn, then I do not see why you should not put a tax upon the land-owner if you want to do so, of a half or two thirds or all his land, or upon the railway share-holder of ten or fifteen or twenty shillings in the pound on his shares. In every change some one has to hear the brunt; every improvement in machinery and industrial organisation deprives some poor people of an income; and I do not see why we should be so extraordinarily tender to the rich, to those who have been unproductive all their lives, when they stand in the way of the general happiness. And though I deny the right to compensation I do not deny its probable advisability. So far as the question of method goes it is quite conceivable that we may partially compensate the property owners and make all sorts of mitigating arrangements to avoid cruelty to them in our attempt to end the wider cruelties of to-day.

But, apart from the justice of the case, many people seem to regard Socialism as a hopeless dream, because, as they put it, "it is against human nature." Every one with any scrap of property in land, or shares, or what not, they tell us, will be bitterly opposed to the coming of Socialism; and, as such people have all the leisure and influence in the world, and as all able and energetic people tend naturally to join that class, there never can be any effectual force to bring Socialism about. But that seems to me to confess a very base estimate of human nature. There are, no doubt, a number of dull, base, rich people who hate and dread Socialism for purely selfish reasons; but it is quite possible to be a property owner and yet be anxious to see Socialism come to its own.

For example, the man whose private affairs I know best in the

world, the second friend I named, the owner of all those comfortable boots, gives time and energy and money to further this hope of Socialism, although he pays income tax on twelve hundred a year, and has shares and property to the value of some thousands of pounds. And that he does out of no instinct of sacrifice. He believes he would be happier and more comfortable in a Socialistic state of affairs, when it would not be necessary for him to hold on to that life-belt of invested property. He finds it — and quite a lot of well-off people are quite of his way of thinking — a constant flaw upon a life of comfort and pleasant interests to see so many people, who might be his agreeable friends and associates, detestably under-educated, detestably housed, in the most detestable clothes and boots, and so detestably broken in spirit that they will not treat him as an equal. It makes him feel he is like that spoilt child in the nursery; he feels ashamed and contemptible; and, since individual charity only seems in the long run to make matters* worse, he is ready to give a great deal of his life, and lose his entire little heap of possessions if need be, very gladly lose it, to change the present order of things in a comprehensive manner.

I am quite convinced that there are numbers of much richer and more influential people who are of his way of thinking. Much more likely to obstruct the way to Socialism is the ignorance, the want of courage, the stupid want of imagination of the very poor, too shy and timid and clumsy to face any change they can evade! But, even with them, popular education is doing its work; and I do not fear but that in the next generation we shall find Socialists even in the slums.

The unimaginative person who owns some little bit of property, an acre or so of freehold land, or a hundred pounds in the savings bank, will no doubt be the most tenacious passive resister to Socialistic ideas; and such, I fear, we must reckon, together with the insensitive rich, as our irreconcilable enemies, as irremovable pillars of the present order. The mean and timid elements in "human nature" are, and will be, I admit, against Socialism; but they are not all "human nature," not half human nature. And when, in the whole history of the world, have meanness and timidity won a struggle? It is passion, it is enthusiasm, and indignation that mould the world to their will — and I cannot see how any one can go into the back

streets of London, or any large British town, and not be filled up with shame, and passionate resolve to end so grubby and mean a state of affairs as is displayed there.

I don't think the "human nature" argument against the possibility of Socialism will hold water.

V. — SOCIALISM MEANS REVOLUTION

LET us be clear about one thing: that Socialism means revolution, that it means a change in the every-day texture of life. It may be a very gradual change, but it will be a very complete one. You cannot change the world, and at the same time not change the world. You will find Socialists about, or at any rate men calling themselves Socialists, who will pretend that this is not so, who will assure you that some odd little jobbing about municipal gas and water is Socialism, and back-stairs intervention between Conservative and Liberal the way to the millennium. You might as well call a gas jet in the lobby of a meeting-house, the glory of God in Heaven!

Socialism aims to change, not only the boots on people's feet, but the clothes they wear, the houses they inhabit, the work they do, the education they get, their places, their honours, and all their possessions. Socialism aims to make a new world out of the old. It can only be attained by the intelligent, outspoken, courageous resolve of a great multitude of men and women. You must get absolutely clear in your mind that Socialism means a complete change, a break with history, with much that is picturesque; whole classes will vanish. The world will be vastly different, with a different sort of houses, different sorts of people. All the different trades and industries will be changed, the medical profession will be carried on under different conditions, engineering, science-, the theatrical trade, the clerical trade, schools, hotels, almost every trade, will have to undergo as complete an internal change as a caterpillar does when it becomes a moth. If you are afraid of so much change as that, it is better you should funk about it now than later. The whole system has to be changed, if we are to get rid of the masses of dull poverty that render our present state detestable to any sensitive man or woman. That, and no less, is the aim of all sincere Socialists: the establishment of a new and better order of society by the abolition of private property in land, in natural productions, and in their exploitation — a change as profound as the abolition of private property in slaves would have been in ancient Rome or Athens. If you demand less than that, if you are not prepared to struggle for

that, you arc not really a Socialist. If you funk that, then you must make up your mind to square your life to a sort of personal and private happiness with things as they are, and decide with my other friend that "it doesn't do to think about boots."

It is well to insist upon one central idea. Socialism is a common-sense, matter-of-fact proposal to change our conventional admission of what is or is not property, and to re-arrange the world according to these revised conceptions. A certain number of clever people, dissatisfied with the straightforwardness of this, have set themselves to put it in some brilliant obscure way; they will tell you that Socialism is based on the philosophy of Hegel, or that it turns on a theory of Rent, or that it is somehow muddled up with a sort of white Bogey called the Overman, and all sorts of brilliant, nonsensical, unappetising things. The theory of Socialism, so far as English people are concerned, seems to have got up into the clouds, and its practice down into the drains; and it is well to warn inquiring men, that neither the epigram above nor the job beneath are more than the accidental accompaniments of Socialism. Socialism is a very large, but a plain, honest, and human enterprise; its ends are to be obtained neither by wit nor cunning, but by outspoken resolve, by the self-abnegation, the enthusiasm, and the loyal cooperation of great masses of people.

The main thing, therefore, is the creation of these great masses of people out of the intellectual confusion and vagueness of the present time. Let me suppose that you find yourself in sympathy with this tract, that you, like my second friend, find the shabby dullness, the positive misery of a large proportion of the population of our world, make life under its present conditions almost intolerable, and that it is in the direction of Socialism that the only hope of a permanent remedy lies. What are we to do? Obviously to give our best energies to making other people Socialists, to organising ourselves with all other Socialists, irrespective of class or the minor details of creed, and to making ourselves audible, visible, effectual as Socialists, wherever and whenever we can.

We have to think about Socialism, read about it, discuss it; so that we may be assured and clear and persuasive about it. We have to confess our faith openly and frequently. We must refuse to be called

Liberal or Conservative, Republican or Democrat, or any of those ambiguous things. Everywhere we must make or join a Socialist organisation, a club or association or what not, so that we may "count." For us, as for the early Christians, preaching our gospel is the supreme duty. Until Socialists can be counted, and counted upon by the million, little will be done. When they are — a new world will be ours.

Above all, if I may offer advice to a fellow-Socialist, I would say: Cling to the simple essential idea of Socialism, which is the abolition of private property in anything but what a man has earned or made. Do not complicate your cause with elaborations. And keep in your mind, if you can, some sort of talisman to bring you back to that essential gospel, out of the confusions and warring suggestions of every-day discussion.

For my own part, I have, as I said at the beginning, a prepossession with boots; and my talisman is this: — The figure of a badly fed but rather pretty little girl of ten or eleven, dirty, and her hands coarse with rough usage, her poor pretty child's body in ungainly rags, and, on her feet, big broken-down boots that hurt her. And particularly I think of her wretched sticks of legs and the limp of her feet; and all those phantom owners and profit-takers I spoke of, they are there about her martyrdom, leech-like, clinging to her as she goes....

I want to change everything in the world that made that; and I do not greatly care what has to go in the process. Do you?

H.G. Wells

[Here is just a bit of hard fact to carry out what I say. It is a quotation from a letter from a workman to my friend Mr. Chiozza Money, one of the best informed writers upon labour questions in England:

"I am a railway man, in constant work at 30s. per week. I am the happy, or otherwise, father of six healthy children. Last year I bought twenty pairs of boots. This year, up to date, I have bought ten pairs, costing £2; and yet, at the present time, my wife and five of the children have only one pair each. 1 have two pairs, both of which let in the water; but I see no prospect at present of getting new ones. I

ought to say, of course, that my wife is a thoroughly domesticated woman, and I am one of the most temperate of men. So much so, that if all I spend in luxuries was saved it would not buy a pair of hoots once a year. But this is the point I want to mention. During 1903 my wages were 25s. 6d per week; and I then had the six children. My next-door neighbour was a boot-maker and repairer. He fell out of work, and was out for months. During that time, of course, my children's boots needed repairing as at other times. I had not the money to pay for them being repaired, so had to do what repairing I could myself. One day I found out that I was repairing boots on one side of the wall, and my neighbour on the other side out of work, and longing to do the work I was compelled to do myself...."

The wall was a commercial organisation of society based on private property in land and natural productions. These two men must work for the owners or not at all; they cannot work for one another. Food first, then rent; and boots, if you can, when all the owners are paid.]

THE END

NEW WORLDS FOR OLD

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

"Undiluted Atheism, theft and immorality…. I know of no language sufficiently potent to express fully my absolute detestation of what I believe to be the most poisonous doctrine ever put forward, namely Socialism."

His Grace the Duke of Rutland.

"Let all parties then unite to defeat this insidious Socialism which is threatening the country, and take immediate steps to expose and bring it to light. The country may truly be said to be sleeping over a veritable volcano which the next general election may precipitate, unless steps are taken at once to bring this nightmare into the light of day and force it out of its creeping nocturnal habits."

Mr. Dudley S. A. Cosby in the *Westminster Review*.

"Many people think that it is possible to conduct a victorious campaign with the single watchword 'Down with Socialism.' Well, I am not fond of mere negatives. I do not like fighting an abstract noun. My objection to Anti-Socialism as a platform is that Socialism means so many different things. On this point I agree with Mr. Asquith. I will wait before I denounce Socialism till I see what form it takes… Socialism is not necessarily synonymous with robbery. Correctly used, the word only signifies a particular view of the proper relation of the State to its citizens, a tendency to substitute public for private ownership, or to restrict the freedom of individual enterprise in the interests of the public. But there are some forms of property which we all admit should be public and not private, and the freedom of individual enterprise is already limited by a hundred laws. Socialism and Individualism, — I am not fond of these abstract phrases. There are opposing principles which enter in various proportions into the constitution of every civilized society. It is merely a question of degree. One community is more Socialistic than another. The same community is more Socialistic at one time than at another. This country is far more Socialistic than it was fifty years ago, and for most of the changes in that direction the Unionist or Tory Party is responsible."

Lord Milner.

CHAPTER I THE GOOD WILL IN MAN

§ 1.

The present writer has long been deeply interested in the Socialist movement in Great Britain and America, and in all those complicated issues one lumps together as "social questions." In the last few years he has gone into it personally and studied the Socialist movement closely and intimately at first hand; he has made the acquaintance of many of its leaders upon both sides of the Atlantic, joined numerous organizations, attended and held meetings, experimented in Socialist politics. From these inquiries he has emerged with certain very definite conclusions as to the trend and needs of social development, and these he is now rendering in this book. He calls himself a Socialist, but he is by no means a fanatical or uncritical adherent. To him Socialism presents itself as a very noble but a very human and fallible system of ideas and motives, a system that grows and develops. He regards its spirit, its intimate substance as the most hopeful thing in human affairs at the present time, but he does also find it shares with all mundane concerns the qualities of inadequacy and error. It suffers from the common penalty of noble propositions; it is hampered by the insufficiency of its supporters and advocates, and by the superficial tarnish that necessarily falls in our atmosphere of greed and conflict darkest upon the brightest things. In spite of these admissions of failure and unworthiness in himself and those about him, he remains a Socialist.

In discussing Socialism with very various sorts of people he has necessarily had, time after time, to encounter and frame a reply to a very simple seeming and a really very difficult question: "What is Socialism?" It is almost like asking "What is Christianity?" or demanding to be shown the atmosphere. It is not to be answered fully by a formula or an epigram. Again and again the writer has been asked for some book which would set out in untechnical language, frankly and straightforwardly, what Socialism is and what it is not, and always he has hesitated in his reply. Many good books there are upon this subject, clear and well written, but none that seem to tell

the whole story as he knows it; no book that gives not only the outline but the spirit, answers the main objections, clears up the chief ambiguities, covers all the ground; no book that one can put into the hands of inquiring youth and say: "There! that will tell you precisely the broad facts you want to know." Some day, no doubt, such a book will come. In the meanwhile he has ventured to put forth this temporary substitute, his own account of the faith that is in him.1

Socialism, then, as he understands it, is a great intellectual process, a development of desires and ideas that takes the form of a project — a project for the reshaping of human society upon new and better lines. That in the ampler proposition is what Socialism claims to be. This book seeks to expand and establish that proposition, and to define the principles upon which the Socialist believes this reconstruction of society should go. The particulars and justification of this project and this claim, it will be the business of this book to discuss just as plainly as the writer can.

§ 2.

Now, because the Socialist seeks the reshaping of human society, it does not follow that he denies it to be even now a very wonderful and admirable spectacle. Nor does he deny that for many people life is even now a very good thing….

For his own part, though the writer is neither a very strong nor a very healthy nor a very successful person, though he finds much unattainable and much to regret, yet life presents itself to him more and more with every year as a spectacle of inexhaustible interest, of unfolding and intensifying beauty, and as a splendid field for high attempts and stimulating desires. Yet none the less is it a spectacle shot strangely with pain, with mysterious insufficiencies and cruelties, with pitfalls into anger and regret, with aspects unaccountably sad. Its most exalted moments are most fraught for him with the appeal for endeavour, with the urgency of unsatisfied wants. These shadows and pains and instabilities do not, to his sense at least, darken the whole prospect; it may be indeed that they intensify its splendours to his perceptions; yet all these evil and ugly aspects of life come to him with an effect of challenge, as something

not to be ignored but passionately disputed, as an imperative call for whatever effort and courage lurks in his composition. Life and the world are fine, but not as an abiding place; as an arena — yes, an arena gorgeously curtained with sea and sky, mountains and broad prospects, decorated with all the delicate magnificence of leaf tracery and flower petal and feather, soft fur and the shining wonder of living skin, musical with thunder and the singing of birds; but an arena nevertheless, an arena which offers no seats for idle spectators, in which one must will and do, decide, strike and strike back — and presently pass away.

And it needs but a cursory view of history to realize — though all knowledge of history confirms the generalization — that this arena is not a confused and aimless conflict of individuals. Looked at too closely it may seem to be that — a formless web of individual hates and loves; but detach oneself but a little, and the broader forms appear. One perceives something that goes on, that is constantly working to make order out of casualty, beauty out of confusion; justice, kindliness, mercy out of cruelty and inconsiderate pressure. For our present purpose it will be sufficient to speak of this force that struggles and tends to make and do, as Good Will. More and more evident is it, as one reviews the ages, that there is this as well as lust, hunger, avarice, vanity and more or less intelligent fear to be counted among the motives of mankind. This Good Will of our race, however arising, however trivial, however subordinated to individual ends, however comically inadequate a thing it may be in this individual case or that, is in the aggregate an operating will. In spite of all the confusions and thwartings of life, the halts and resiliencies and the counter strokes of fate, it is manifest that in the long run human life becomes broader than it was, gentler than it was, finer and deeper. On the whole — and now-a-days almost steadily — things *get better*. There is a secular amelioration of life, and it is brought about by Good Will working through the efforts of men.

Now this proposition lies quite open to dispute. There are people who will dispute it and make a very passable case. One may deny the amelioration, or one may deny that it is the result of any Good Will or of anything but quite mechanical forces. The former is the commoner argument. The appeal is usually to what has been finest in

the past, and to all that is bad and base in the present. At once the unsoundest and the most attractive argument is to be found in the deliberate idealization of particular ages, the thirteenth century in England, for example, or the age of the Antonines. The former is presented with the brightness of a missal, the latter with all the dignity of a Roman inscription. One is asked to compare these ages so delightfully conceived, with a patent medicine vendor's advertisement or a Lancashire factory town, quite ignoring the iniquity of mediæval law or the slums and hunger and cruelty of Imperial Rome.

But quite apart from such unsound comparisons, it is, we may admit, possible to make a very excellent case against our general assertion of progress. One can instance a great number of things, big and little, that have been better in past times than they are now; for example, they dressed more sumptuously and delightfully in mediæval Venice and Florence than we do — all, that is, who could afford it; they made quite unapproachably beautiful marble figures in Athens in the time of Pericles; there is no comparison between the brickwork of Verona in the twelfth century and that of London when Cannon Street Station was erected; the art of cookery declined after the splendid period of Roman history for more than a thousand years; the Gothic architecture of France and England exceeds in nobility and quality and aggregated beauty, every subsequent type of structure. This much, one agrees, is true, and beyond disputing. The philosophical thought of Athens again, to come to greater things, was at its climax, more free, more finely expressed than that of any epoch since. And the English of Elizabeth's time was, we are told by competent judges, a more gracious and powerful instrument of speech than in the days of Queen Anne or of Queen Victoria.

So one might go on in regard to a vast number of things, petty and large alike; the list would seem overwhelming until the countervailing considerations came into play. But, as a matter of fact, there is hardly an age or a race that does not show us something better done than ever it was before or since, because at no time has human effort ceased and absolutely failed. Isolated eminence is no proof of general elevation. Always in this field or that, whether it was in the binding of books or the enamelling of metal, the refinement of

language or the assertion of liberty, particular men have, by a sort of necessity, grasped at occasion, “found themselves,” as the saying goes, and done the best that was in them. So always while man endures, whatever else betide, one may feel assured at this or that special thing some men will find a way to do and get to the crown of endeavour. Such considerations of decline in particular things from the standard of the past do not really affect the general assertion of a continuous accumulating betterment in the lot of men, do not invalidate the hopes of those who believe in the power of men to end for ever many of the evils that now darken the world, who look to the reservoirs of human possibility as a supply as yet scarcely touched, who make of all the splendour and superiorities of the past no more than a bright promise and suggestion for the unborn future our every act builds up, into which, whether we care or no, all our achievements pour.

Many evils have been overcome, much order and beauty and scope for living has been evolved since man was a hairy savage holding scarcely more than a brute’s intercourse with his fellows; but even in the comparatively short perspective of history, one can scarcely deny a steady process of overcoming evil. One may sneer at contemporary things; it is a fashion with that unhappily trained type of mind which cannot appreciate without invidious comparison, so poor in praise that it cannot admit worth without venting a compensatory envy; but of one permanent result of progress surely every one is assured. In the matter of thoughtless and instinctive cruelty — and that is a very fundamental matter — mankind mends steadily. I wonder and doubt if in the whole world at any time before this an aged, ill-clad woman, or a palpable cripple could have moved among a crowd of low-class children as free from combined or even isolated insult as such a one would be to-day, if caught in the rush from a London Council school. Then, for all our sins, I am sure the sense of justice is quicker and more nearly universal than ever before. Certain grave social evils, too, that once seemed innate in humanity, have gone, gone so effectually that we cannot now imagine ourselves subjected to them; the cruelties and insecurities of private war, the duel, overt slavery, for example, have altogether ceased; and in all Western Europe and America chronic local

famines and great pestilences come no more. No doubt it is still an unsatisfactory world that mars the roadside with tawdry advertisements of drugs and food; but less than two centuries ago, remember, the place of these boards was taken by gibbets and crow-pecked, tattered corpses swinging in the wind, and the heads of dead gentlemen (drawn and quartered, and their bowels burnt before their eyes) rotted in the rain on Temple Bar.

The world is now a better place for a common man than ever it was before, the spectacle wider and richer and deeper, and more charged with hope and promise. Think of the universal things it is so easy to ignore; of the great and growing multitude, for example, of those who may travel freely about the world, who may read freely, think freely, speak freely! Think of the quite unprecedented numbers of well-ordered homes and cared-for, wholesome, questioning children! And it is not only that we have this increasing sea of mediocre well-being in which the realities of the future are engendering, but in the matter of sheer achievement I believe in my own time. It has been the cry of the irresponsive man since criticism began, that his own generation produced nothing; it is a cry that I hate and deny. When the dross has been cleared away and comparison becomes possible, I am convinced it will be admitted that in the aggregate, in philosophy and significant literature, in architecture, painting and scientific research, in engineering and industrial invention, in statecraft, humanity and valiant deeds, the last thirty years of man's endeavours will bear comparison with any other period of thirty years whatever in his history.

And this is the result of effort; things get better because men mean them to get better and try to bring betterment about; this progress goes on because man, in spite of evil temper, blundering and vanity, in spite of indolence and base desire, does also respond to Good Will and display Good Will. You may declare that all the good things in life are the result of causes over which man has no control, that in pursuit of an "enlightened self-interest" he makes things better inadvertently. But think of any good thing you know! Was it thus it came?

§ 3.

And yet, let us not disguise it from ourselves, for all the progress one can claim, life remains very evil; about the feet of all these glories of our time lurk darknesses.

Let me take but one group of facts that cry out to all of us — and will not cry in vain. I mean the lives of little children that are going on now — as the reader sits with this book in his hand. Think, for instance, of the little children who have been pursued and tormented and butchered in the Congo Free State during the last year or so, hands and feet chopped off, little bodies torn and thrown aside that rubber might be cheap, the tyres of our cars run smoothly, and that detestable product of political expediency, the King of the Belgians, have his pleasures. Think too of the fear and violence, the dirt and stress of the lives of the children who grow up amidst the lawless internal strife of the Russian political chaos. Think of the emigrant ships even now rolling upon the high seas, their dark, evil-smelling holds crammed with humanity, and the huddled sick children in them — fleeing from certain to uncertain wretchedness. Think of the dreadful tale of childish misery and suffering that goes on wherever there are not sane factory laws; how even in so civilized a part of the world as the United States of America (as Spargo's *Bitter Cry of the Children* tells in detail) thousands of little white children of six and seven, ill fed and often cruelly handled, toil without hope.

And in all agricultural lands too, where there is no sense of education, think of the children dragging weary feet from the filthy hovels that still house peasants the whole world over, to work in the mire and the pitiless winds, scaring birds, bending down to plant and weed. Even in London again, think just a little of the real significance of some facts I have happened upon in the Report of the Education Committee of the London County Council for the year 1905.

The headmaster of one casually selected school makes a special return upon the quality of the clothing of his 405 children. He tells of 7.4 per cent. of his boys whose clothing was "the scantiest possible — *e.g.* one ragged coat buttoned up and practically nothing found beneath it; and boots either absent or represented by a mass of rags tied upon the feet"; of 34.8 per cent. whose "clothing was insufficient to retain animal heat and needed urgent remedy"; of 45.9 per cent, whose clothing was "poor but passable; an old and perhaps ragged

suit, with some attempt at proper underclothing — usually of flannelette"; thus leaving only 12.8 per cent. who could, in the broadest sense, be termed "well clad."

Taking want of personal cleanliness as the next indication of neglect at home, 11 per cent. of the boys are reported as "very dirty and verminous"; 34.7 per cent. whose "clothes and body were dirty but not verminous"; 42.5 per cent, were "passably clean, for boys," and only "12 per cent. clean above the average."

Eleven per cent. verminous; think what it means! Think what the homes must be like from which these poor little wretches come! Better, perhaps, than the country cottage where the cesspool drains into the water supply and the hen-house vermin invades the home, but surely intolerable beside our comforts! Give but a moment again to the significance of the figures I have italicized in the table that follows, a summarized return for the year 1906 of the "Ringworm" Nurses who visit the London Elementary Schools and inspect the children for various forms of dirt disease.

Departments	**Number of children examined.**	**Clean.**	**Partially cleansed.**	**Verminous.**
Boys	34,345	32,726	847	1,139
Girls	36,445	22,476	4,426	12,003
Infants	42,140			

6,675
2,661
29,675

Mixed
5,855
4,886
298
897

Special
977
624
133
296

Total
119,762
67,387
8,365
44,010

Does not this speak of dirt and disorder we cannot suffer to continue, of women ill trained for motherhood and worked beyond care for cleanliness, of a vast amount of preventable suffering? And these figures of filth and bad clothing are paralleled by others at least equally impressive, displaying emaciation, under-nutrition, anæmia and every other painful and wretched consequence of neglect and insufficiency. These underfed, under-clothed, undersized children are also the backward children; they grow up through a darkened, joyless childhood into a grey, perplexing, hopeless world that beats them down at last, after servility, after toil, after crime it may be and despair, to death.

And while you grasp the offence of these facts, do not be carried away into supposing that this age is therefore unprecedentedly evil. Such dirt, toil, cruelty have always been, have been in larger measure. Don't idealize the primitive cave, the British hut, the

peasant's cottage, damp and windowless, the filth-strewn, plague-stricken, mediæval town. In spite of all these crushed, mangled, starved, neglected little ones about the feet of this fine time, in spite of a thousand other disorders and miseries almost as cruel, the fact remains that this age has not only more but a larger percentage of healthy, happy, kindly-treated children than any age since the world began; that to look back into the domestic history of other times is to see greater squalor and more suffering.

Why! read the tombstones and monuments in any old English church, those, I mean, that date from earlier than 1800, and you will see the history of every family, of even the prosperous county families, *laced* with the deaths of infants and children. Nearly half of them died. Think, too, how stern was the upbringing. And always before these days it seemed natural to make all but the children of the very wealthy and very refined, fear and work from their earliest years. There comes to us too, from these days, beautiful furniture, fine literature, paintings; but there comes too, much evidence of harsh whippings, dark imprisonments and hardly a children's book, hardly the broken vestige of a toy. Bad as things are, they are better — rest assured — and yet they are still urgently bad. The greater evil of the past is no reason for contentment with the present. But it is an earnest for hoping that our efforts, and that Good Will of which they are a part and outcome, may still go on bearing fruit in perpetually dwindling misery.

§ 4.

It seems to me that the whole spirit and quality of both the evil and the good of our time, and of the attitude not simply of the Socialist but of every sane reformer towards these questions, was summarized in a walk I had a little while ago with a friend along the Thames Embankment, from Blackfriars Bridge to Westminster. We had dined together and we went there because we thought that with a fitful moon and clouds adrift, on a night when the air was a crystal air that gladdened and brightened, that crescent of great buildings and steely, soft-hurrying water must needs be altogether beautiful. And indeed it was beautiful; the mysteries and mounting masses of the buildings to

the right of us, the blurs of this coloured light or that, blue-white, green-white, amber or warmer orange, the rich black archings of Waterloo Bridge, the rippled lights upon the silent-flowing river, the lattice of girders and the shifting trains of Charing Cross Bridge — their funnels pouring a sort of hot-edged moonlight by way of smoke — and then the sweeping line of lamps, the accelerated run and diminuendo of the Embankment lamps as one came into sight of Westminster. The big hotels were very fine, huge swelling shapes of dun dark-grey and brown, huge shapes seamed and bursting and fenestrated with illumination, tattered at a thousand windows with light and the indistinct, glowing suggestions of feasting and pleasure. And dim and faint above it all and very remote was the moon's dead wan face veiled and then displayed.

But we were dashed by an unanticipated refrain to this succession of magnificent things, and we did not cry, as we had meant to cry, how good it was to be alive! We found something else, something we had forgotten.

Along the Embankment, you see, there are iron seats at regular intervals, seats you cannot lie upon because iron arm-rests prevent that, and each seat, one saw by the lamplight, was filled with crouching and drooping figures. Not a vacant place remained, not one vacant place. These were the homeless, and they had come to sleep here. Now one noted a poor old woman with a shameful battered straw hat awry over her drowsing face, now a young clerk staring before him at despair; now a filthy tramp, and now a bearded, frock-coated, collarless respectability; I remember particularly one ghastly long white neck and white face that lopped backward, choked in some nightmare, awakened, clutched with a bony hand at the bony throat, and sat up and stared angrily as we passed. The wind had a keen edge that night even for us who had dined and were well clad. One crumpled figure coughed and went on coughing — damnably.

"It's fine," said I, trying to keep hold of the effects to which this line of poor wretches was but the selvage; "it's fine! But I can't stand *this*."

"It changes all that we expected," admitted my friend, after a silence.

“Must we go on — past them all?”

“Yes. I think we ought to do that. It’s a lesson, perhaps — for trying to get too much beauty out of life as it is — and forgetting. Don’t shirk it!”

“Great God!” cried I. “But must life always be like this? I could die — indeed, I would willingly jump into this cold and muddy river now, if by so doing I could stick a stiff dead hand through all these things — into the future; a dead commanding hand insisting with a silent irresistible gesture that this waste and failure of life should cease, and cease for ever.”

“But it does cease! Each year its proportion is a little less.”

I walked in silence, and my companion talked by my side.

“We go on. Here is a good thing done, and there is a good thing done. The Good Will in man — —”

“Not fast enough. It goes so slowly — and in a little while we too must die — —”

“It can be done,” said my companion.

“It could be avoided,” said I.

“It shall be in the days to come. There is food enough for all, shelter for all, wealth enough for all. Men need only know it and will it. And yet we have this!”

“And so much like this!” said I….

So we talked and were tormented.

And I remember how later we found ourselves on Westminster Bridge, looking back upon the long sweep of wrinkled black water that reflected lights and palaces and the flitting glow of steamboats, and by that time we had talked ourselves past our despair. We perceived that what was splendid remained splendid, that what was mysterious remained insoluble for all our pain and impatience. But it was clear to us the thing for us two to go upon was not the good of the present nor the evil, but the effort and the dream of the finer order, the fuller life, the banishment of suffering, to come.

“We want all the beauty that is here,” said my friend, “and more also. And none of these distresses. We are here — we know not whence nor why — to want that and to struggle to get it, you and I and ten thousand others, thinly hidden from us by these luminous darknesses. We work, we pass — whither I know not, but out of our

knowing. But we work — we are spurred to work. That yonder — those people are the spur — for us who cannot answer to any finer appeal. Each in our measure must do. And our reward? Our reward is our faith. Here is my creed to-night. I believe — out of me and the Good Will in me and my kind there comes a regenerate world — cleansed of suffering and sorrow. That is our purpose here — to forward that. It gives us work for all our lives. Why should we ask to know more? Our errors — our sins — to-night they seem to matter very little. If we stumble and roll in the mud, if we blunder against each other and hurt one another — —"

"We have to go on," said my friend, after a pause.

We stood for a time in silence.

One's own personal problems came and went like a ripple on the water. Even that whisky dealer's advertisement upon the southern bank became through some fantastic transformation a promise, an enigmatical promise flashed up the river reach in letters of fire. London was indeed very beautiful that night. Without hope she would have seemed not only as beautiful but as terrible as a black panther crouching on her prey. Our hope redeemed her. Beyond her dark and meretricious splendours, beyond her throned presence jewelled with links and points and cressets of fire, crowned with stars, robed in the night, hiding cruelties, I caught a moment's vision of the coming City of Mankind, of a city more wonderful than all my dreaming, full of life, full of youth, full of the spirit of creation….

CHAPTER II THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF SOCIALISM

The fundamental idea upon which Socialism rests is the same fundamental idea as that upon which all real scientific work is carried on. It is the denial that chance impulse and individual will and happening constitute the only possible methods by which things may be done in the world. It is an assertion that things are in their nature orderly, that things may be computed, may be calculated upon and foreseen. In the spirit of this belief Science aims at a systematic knowledge of material things. "Knowledge is power," knowledge that is frankly and truly exchanged — that is the primary assumption of the *New Atlantis* which created the Royal Society and the organization of research. The Socialist has just that same faith in the order, the knowableness of things and the power of men in co-operation to overcome chance; but to him, dealing as he does with the social affairs of men, it takes the form not of schemes for collective research but for collective action and the creation of a comprehensive design for all the social activities of man. While Science gathers knowledge, Socialism in an entirely harmonious spirit criticizes and develops a general plan of social life. Each seeks to replace disorder by order.

Each of these systems of ideas has, of course, its limits; we know in matters of material science that no calculated quantity is ever exact, no outline without a fogging at the edge, no angle without a curve at the apex; and in social affairs also, there must needs always be individuality and the unexpected and incalculable. But these things do not vitiate the case for a general order, any more than the different sizes and widths and needs of the human beings who travel prevent our having our railway carriages and seats and doors of a generally convenient size, nor our sending everybody over the same gauge of rail.

Now Science has not only this in common with Socialism that it has grown out of men's courageous confidence in the superiority of order to muddle, but these two great processes of human thought are

further in sympathy in the demand they make upon men to become less egotistical and isolated. The main difference of modern scientific research from that of the middle ages, the secret of its immense successes, lies in its collective character, in the fact that every fruitful experiment is published, every new discovery of relationships explained. In a sense scientific research is a triumph over natural instinct, over that mean instinct that makes men secretive, that makes a man keep knowledge to himself and use it slyly to his own advantage. The training of a scientific man is a training in what an illiterate lout would despise as a weakness; it is a training in blabbing, in blurting things out, in telling just as plainly as possible and as soon as possible what it is he has found. To "keep shut" and bright-eyed and to score advantages, that is the wisdom of the common stuff of humanity still. To science it is a crime. The noble practice of that noble profession medicine, for example, is to condemn as a quack and a rascal every man who uses secret remedies. And it is one of the most encouraging things for all who speculate upon human possibility to consider the multitude of men in the last three centuries who have been content to live laborious, unprofitable, and for the most part quite undistinguished lives in the service of knowledge that has transformed the world. Some names indeed stand out by virtue of gigantic or significant achievement, such names as Bacon, Newton, Volta, Darwin, Faraday, Joule; but these are but the culminating peaks of a nearly limitless Oberland of devoted toiling men, men one could list by the thousand. The rest have had the smallest meed of fame, small reward, much toil, much abandonment, of pleasure for their lot. One thing ennobles them all in common — their conquest over the meanness of concealment, their systematic application of energy to other than personal ends!

And that, too, Socialism pre-eminently demands. It applies to social and economic relationships the same high rule of frankness and veracity, the same subordination of purely personal considerations to a common end that Science demands in the field of thought and knowledge. Just as Science aims at a common organized body of knowledge to which all its servants contribute and in which they share, so Socialism insists upon its ideal of an organized social order which every man serves and by which every man benefits.

Their common enemy is the secret-thinking, self-seeking man. Secrecy, subterfuge and the private gain; these are the enemies of Socialism and the adversaries of Science. At times, I will admit, both Socialist and scientific man forget this essential sympathy. You will find specialized scientific investigators who do not realize they are, in effect, Socialists, and Socialists so dull to the quality of their own professions, that they gird against Science, and are secretive in policy. But such purblind servants of the light cannot alter the essential correlation of the two systems of ideas.

Now the Socialist, inspired by this conception of a possible frank and comprehensive social order to which mean and narrow ends must be sacrificed, attacks and criticizes the existing order of things at a great number of points and in a great variety of phraseology. At all points, however, you will find upon analysis that his criticism amounts to a declaration that there is wanting a sufficiency of Constructive Design. That in the last resort is what he always comes to.

He wants a complete organization for all those human affairs that are of collective importance. He says, to take instances almost haphazard, that our ways of manufacturing a great multitude of necessary things, of getting and distributing food, of conducting all sorts of business, of begetting and rearing children, of permitting diseases to engender and spread are chaotic and undisciplined, so badly done that here is enormous hardship, and there enormous waste, here excess and degeneration, and there privation and death. He declares that for these collective purposes, in the satisfaction of these universal needs, mankind presents the appearance and follows the methods of a mob when it ought to follow the method of an army. In place of disorderly individual effort, each man doing what he pleases, the Socialist wants organized effort and a plan. And while the scientific man seeks to make an orderly map of the half-explored wilderness of fact, the Socialist seeks to make an orderly plan for the half-conceived wilderness of human effort.

That and no other is the essential Socialist idea.

But do not let this image mislead you. When the Socialist speaks of a plan, he knows clearly that it is impossible to make a plan as an architect makes a plan, because while the architect deals with dead

stone and timber, the statesman and Socialist deal with living and striving things. But he seeks to make a plan as one designs and lays out a garden, so that sweet and seemly things may grow, wide and beautiful vistas open and weeds and foulness disappear. Always a garden plan develops and renews itself and discovers new possibilities, but what makes all its graciousness and beauty possible is the scheme and the persistent intention, the watching and the waiting, the digging and burning, the weeder clips and the hoe. That is the sort of plan, a living plan for things that live and grow, that the Socialist seeks for social and national life.

To make all this distincter I will show the planlessness of certain contemporary things, of two main sets of human interests in fact, and explain what inferences a Socialist draws in these matters. You will then see exactly what is meant when we deny that this present state of affairs has any constructive plan, and you will appreciate in the most generalized form the nature of the constructive plan which Socialists are making and offering the world.

CHAPTER III THE FIRST MAIN GENERALIZATION OF SOCIALISM

§ 1.

The first — the chief aspect of social life in relation to which the Socialist finds the world now planless and drifting, and for which he earnestly propounds the scheme of a better order, is that whole side of existence which is turned towards children, their begetting and upbringing, their care and education. Perpetually the world begins anew, perpetually death wipes out failure, disease, unteachableness and all that has served life and accomplished itself; and to many Socialists, if not to all, this is the supreme fact in the social scheme. The whole measure of progress in a generation is the measure in which the children improve in physical and mental quality, in social co-ordination, in opportunity, upon their parents. Nothing else matters in the way of success if in that way the Good Will fails.

Let us now consider how such matters stand in our world at the present time, and let us examine them in the light of the Socialist spirit. I have already quoted certain facts from the London Education Committee's Report, by which you have seen that by taking a school haphazard — dipping a ladle, as it were, into the welter of the London population — we find more than eighty in the hundred of the London children insufficiently clad, more than half unwholesomely dirty — eleven per cent. verminous — and more than half the infants infested with vermin! The nutrition of these children is equally bad. The same report shows clearly that differences in clothing and cleanliness are paralleled with differences in nutrition that are equally striking.

"The 30 boys of the lowest class showed considerable failure to reach the average weight for their age of the school; the average shortage per boy for his age being as much as .7 kilogram. The effect upon weight was more striking than upon height, as the average failure in height was one centimetre. The 141 boys of the next class worked out at exactly the average. The 49 well-clad boys showed an average excess per age-weight of .54 kilogram and age-height of 1.8

centimetres.”

And who can doubt the amount of mental and moral dwarfing that is going on side by side with this physical shortage?

Now, it may be argued that this is not a fair sample of our general population, that these facts have been culled from a special section of the population, that here we are dealing with the congestion of London slums and altogether exceptional conditions. This is not so. The school examined was not from a specially bad district. And it happens that the entire working-class population of one typical English town, York, has been exhaustively studied by Mr. B. S. Rowntree, and here are some facts from his result that quite confirm the impression given by the London figures.

“It was quite impossible to make a thorough examination of the physical condition of all the children, but as they came up to be weighed and measured, they were classified under the four headings, ‘Very Good,’ ‘Good,’ ‘Fair,’ or ‘Bad,’ by an investigator whose training and previous experience in similar work enabled her to make a reliable, even if rough, classification….

“‘Bad’ implies that the child bore physical traces of underfeeding and neglect.

“The numbers classified under the various heads were as follows:—

BOYS.

Very Good, per cent.

Good, per cent.

Fair, per cent.

Bad, per cent.

Section 1 (poorest)
2.8
14.6

31.
51.6

Section 2 (middle)
7.4
20.1
53.7
18.8

Section 3 (highest)
27.4
33.8
27.4
11.4

GIRLS.

Section 1 (poorest)
2.1
14.6
31.
52.3

Section 2 (middle)
7.5
21.2
50.4
20.9

Section 3 (highest)
27.2
38.
23.1
11.7

"It will be seen that the proportion of children classed as 'very good' in Section 3 is about ten times as large as in the poorest section, and that *more than half of the children in the poorest section*

are classed as 'bad.'

"These 'bad' children presented a pathetic spectacle, all bore some mark of the hard conditions against which they were struggling. Puny and feeble bodies, dirty and often sadly insufficient clothing, sore eyes, in many cases acutely inflamed through continued want of attention, filthy heads, cases of hip disease, swollen glands — all these and other signs told the same tale of privation and neglect. It will be noticed that the condition of the children in Section 2 (middle-class labour) comes about half-way between Sections 1 and 3. In considering the above table it must of course be remembered that there was no absolute standard by which each child could be judged, but the broad comparison between the different classes is unimpeachable. The table affords further evidence of serious physical deterioration amongst the poorest section of the community."

And if York and London will not satisfy, let the reader take Edinburgh, whose Charity Organization Society has produced an admirable but infinitely distressing report of the physical conditions of the school children there. It gives a summary account of the homes of fourteen hundred children in one of the Edinburgh Elementary Schools, selected because it represented a fair mixture of prosperous and unprosperous people. I take the first ten entries of this list just as they come, representing thirty-eight children, and they are a fair sample of the whole list. No amount of writing could make these little thumbnail sketches of the reality of domestic life among our population to-day more impressive than they are, thus barrenly given.

"1. A bad home. Woman twice married; second husband deserted her six or seven years ago and she now keeps a bad house in which much drinking and rioting goes on. Daughter on stage sends 10/- a week, son is out of work. A son is in an institution. All as filthy as is the house. The food is irregular. Two children have had free dinners from school this and last winter, clothes were also given for one each time. The boy attends regularly. The woman is a hard drinker, and gets money in undesirable ways. The eldest child has glands, neck; hair not good but clean; fleabitten. The second child, adenoids and tonsils. Housing: five in one room. Evidence from Police, School

Charity, Headmistress, School Officers and Doctors.

"2. The drinking capacity of this family cannot be too much emphasized. The parents can't agree, and live apart, the man allowing 7/6 a week when girl is with mother, and 5/- when she comes to him. She is verminous and very badly kept. Mother can't get charing, as she lives in so bad a neighbourhood, so means to move; at present she keeps other women's babies at 6*d.* a day each. Elder boy out of work, a tidy lad, reads in Free Library. One child has died. Housing: three in one room. House not so very untidy. Evidence from Police, Church and Officer.

"3. A miserable family and in very wretched circumstances. Father deserts home at intervals, but last time seemed 'sent back by providence,' as the works in the town he was in were burnt down. Children starving in his absence; one had pneumonia, and died since of the effects. The eldest child has adenoids; the second, urticaria; lice, bad; clothes full of pediculi. Housing: six in two rooms. Mother hard-working, does her best, but has chronic bronchitis; does not keep house over tidy. The two elder boys are very idle, tiresome fellows, and worry the father a great deal. They improved and found work during the year following the visit, in which time the father got into decent work in the City. The S. P. C. C. branch had to interfere on behalf of small children. Three dead since marriage, when parents were at ages 23 and 20. Food good when there is any. School gave free dinners and clothes to two. Evidence from Police, S. P. C. C. branch, School Charity, Parish Sister, Employer, Headmistress, School Officer and Doctors.

"4. The father a complete wreck through intemperate and fast living; speculation first brought him down. Was later moved to hospital, where he died. Had worked on railway a little time. Mother hard-working, works out, home untidy owing to her being out so much. She pays rent regularly, and does her best. An elder boy groom, fed and clad by his master, sends home what he can. Eldest boy does odd jobs, but seems a wastrel. Parish gave 7/6 after father ill, and feeds four children now. Winter of visit school dined five free daily, and clothed three, and previous winter three had free dinners and two had clothes. A school-boy earns. The twins are delicate. There are two lodgers. The eldest child very dirty; the second,

glands; the third, knock-kneed, pigeon chest; very feeble, enlarged radices. Three children have died. Housing: nine in three rooms. Evidence from Police, Poor Law Officer, Parish Sister, School Charity, Army Charity, Children's Employment, School Officer, Factor, Pawnbroker and Doctors.

"5. The mother, a nice, clean, tidy woman, doing pretty well by the children. They kept a little shop for a time, and she used to do a day's charing now and then, but has too many babies now. Parents married at 21 and 18 respectively; two children dead and another expected. He reads papers a good deal, gets them out of trains. This is his first spell of regular work. Two boys sell papers, and a Mission gives cheap meal. Food none too plentiful. One child gets free dinners. The eldest child has glands; impetigo; thin and badly nourished. The second, glands, hair lice and nits bad. The third, boils on neck, glands, thin. The fourth, glands. Housing: eight in two rooms. They are in two thrift societies. Evidence from School-master, Police, Parish Sister, Club, Army Charity, Charity School, Pawnbroker and Doctors.

"6. Father works in a shop in daytime, and in a public-house at night. Rather soft; but wife industrious and energetic and does her best. Children well fed and regular at school. Two children have enlarged tonsils. They get no help, and belong to two thrift societies. One of six children dead in ten years of married life. Housing: seven in two rooms. Evidence from Police, Doctors, Society, Church, Mission, Club, Headmistress, Charity School and Pawnbrokers.

"7. A family where parents are much given to drink; father invalided and being helped by a Sick Society, 3/- a week, and Parish 5/- a week. Housing: five in two rooms. They are in a burying club. Children fleabitten. Two have died. Food is rather scanty. Wife *very* quarrelsome and drunken. The boys play truant often. Two were given free food and clothes two winters ago, and this winter one has free dinners and clothes given. A Mission has given cheap clothes. Evidence from School-master, Police, Poor Law Officer, C.O.S. branch, Church, School Charity, Sick Society, Children's Employment, Factor, School Officer, Charity School, Pawnbroker and Doctors.

"8. Fairly decent family; mother washes out, and man has very

early work. He drinks, and his employment is somewhat irregular. A son in the country on a farm, and two dead. They were married at 21 and 18. The food is erratic, the children getting 'pieces' at dinner-time, or free school dinners; or when mother comes home, soup with her. The children are rather neglected, and the police give the parents an indifferent character. The eldest child has Eustacian catarrh and nasopharyngitis; glands. The second, enlarged uvula. Housing: four in two very small rooms. Evidence from School-master, Police, Parish Sister, Church, Factor and Doctors.

"9. Father an old soldier without a pension, who reads novels. All the small children were found eating a large meal of ham and eggs and strong tea after 8 p.m., he in bed at the time. They have lapsed from thrift society membership. They are extremely filthy and the man drinks. A Mission sells them meal cheap. Wife 18 at marriage and one child died. They feed pretty largely but unhealthily, and eat 'pieces' at lunch-time. At time of visit, though very dirty, they were tidier than ever found before. The eldest child has chronic suppuration and large perforation of ear. Housing: five in two rooms. Evidence from Police, Parish Sister, Factor, Soldiers' Society, Charity School and Doctors.

"10. The man a carter, who drank to a certain extent, and died some months after visit, when a Charity gave her help. She had an illegitimate child and two others. He was careless, and both neglected church-going. No medical evidence. Housing: five in two rooms. Evidence from Police, two Churches, Parish Sister, Employer and Charity School."

§ 2.

Now to the Socialist, as to any one who has caught any tinge of the modern scientific spirit, these facts present themselves simply as an atrocious failure of statesmanship. Indeed, a social system in which the mass of the population is growing up under these conditions, he scarcely recognizes as a State, rather it seems to him a mere preliminary higgledy-piggledy aggregation of human beings, out of which a State has to be made. It seems to him that this wretched confusion of affairs which repeats itself throughout the country

wherever population has gathered, must be due to more than individual inadequacy; it must be due to some general and essential failure, some unsoundness in the broad principles upon which the whole organization is conducted.

What is this general principle of failure beneath all these particular cases?

In any given instance this or that reason for the failure of a child may be given. In one case it may be the father or mother drinks, in another that the child is an orphan, neglected by aunt or stepmother, in another that the mother is an invalid or a sweated worker too overwrought to do much for him, or, though a good-hearted soul, she is careless and dirty or ignorant, or that she is immoral and reckless, and so on and so on. Our haphazard sample of ten Scotch cases gives instances of nearly all these alternatives. And from these proximate causes one might work back to more general ones, to the necessity of controlling the drink traffic, of abolishing sweating, of shortening women's hours of labour, of suppressing vice. But for the present argument it is not necessary to follow up these special causes. We can make a wider generalization. For our present analysis it is sufficient to say that one more general maladjustment covers every case of neglected or ill-brought-up children in the world, and that is this, that with or without a decent excuse, the parent has not been equal to the task of rearing a civilized citizen. We have demanded too much from the parent, materially and morally, and the ten cases we have quoted are just ten out of ten millions of the replies to that demand. Of fifty-two children born, fourteen are dead; and of the remainder we can hardly regard more than thirteen as being tolerably reared.

Is it not obvious then that, unless we are content that things should remain as they are, we must put the relations of parent to child on some securer and more wholesome footing than they are at the present time? We demand too much from the parent, and this being recognized, clearly there are only two courses open to us. The first is to relieve the parents by lowering the standard of our demand; the second is to relieve them by supplementing their efforts.

The first course, the Socialist holds, is not only cruel and unjust to the innocent child, but an entirely barbaric and retrogressive thing to

do. It is a frank abandonment of all ideas of progress and world betterment. He puts it aside, therefore, and turns to the alternative. In doing that he comes at once into harmony with all the developmental tendencies of the last hundred years. For a hundred years there has been going on a process of supplementing and controlling parental effort.

A hundred years or so ago, the parent was the supreme authority in a child's destiny — short only of direct murder. Parents were held responsible for their children's rearing to God alone; should they fail, individual good-hearted people might, if they thought proper, step in, give food, give help — provided the parents consented, that is, but it was not admitted that the community as a whole was concerned in the matter. Parents (and guardians in the absence of parents) were allowed to starve their children, leave them naked, prey upon their children by making them work in factories or as chimney-sweeps and the like; the law was silent, the State acquiesced. Good-hearted parents, on the other hand, who were unsuccessful in the world's affairs, had the torment of seeing their children go short of food and garments, grow up ignorant and feeble, their only hope of help the chancy kindliness of their more prosperous neighbours and the ill-organized charities left by the benevolent dead.

Through all the nineteenth century the irresistible logic of necessity has been forcing people out of the belief in that state of affairs, has been making them see the impossibility of leaving things so absolutely to parental discretion and conscience, has been forcing them towards a constructive and organizing, that is to say towards a Socialist attitude. Essentially the Socialist attitude is this, an insistence that parentage can no longer be regarded as an isolated private matter; that the welfare of the children is of universal importance, and must, therefore, be finally a matter of collective concern. The State, which a hundred years ago was utterly careless of children, is now every year becoming more and more their Guardian, their Over-Parent.

To-day the power of the parents is limited in ways that would have seemed incredible a hundred years ago. In the first place they must no longer unrestrictedly use their very young children to earn money for them in toil and suffering. A great mass of labour

legislation forbids them. In the next place their right to inflict punishment or to hurt wantonly has been limited in many ways. The private enterprises of charitable organizations for the prevention of cruelty and neglect has led to a growing system of law in this direction also. Nor may a parent now prevent a child getting some rudiments of an education.

Between the parent and Heaven now, in addition to the more or less legalized voluntary interference of well-disposed private people, there do appear certain rare functionaries who — while they interfere not at all between good and competent parents and their children, do, in certain instances, save a parental default from its complete fruition. There are the school attendance officer and the sanitary inspector. Then there are — in the London County Council area — the "Ringworm" nurses, who examine the children systematically and by means of certain white and red cards of remonstrance and warning intimidate the parent into good behaviour or pave the way for a prosecution. Everywhere there is the factory inspector — and in certain cases the police. All these functionaries and "accessory consciences" have been thrust in between the supremacy of the parent and the child within the century.

So much the Socialist regards as all to the good, as all in the direction of that great constructive plan of organized human welfare at which he aims. And they all amount to a destruction, so much with this and so much with that, of the independence of the family, an invasion of the old moral isolation of parent and child.

But while a number of people (who haven't read the Edinburgh Charity Organization Society's Report) are content to regard these interventions as "going far enough," the Socialist considers these things as only the beginning of the organization of the welfare of the nation's children. You will notice that all these laws and regulations at which we have glanced are in the nature of prohibitions or compulsions; few have any element of aid. By virtue of them we have diminished the power of the inferior sort of parents to do evil by their child, but we have done little or nothing to increase and stimulate their powers to do good. We may prevent them doing some sorts of evil things to the child; they may not give it poisonous things, or let it live in morally or physically contagious places, but

we do not insure that they shall give it wholesome things — better than they had themselves. We must, if our work is ever to reach effectual fruition, go on to the logical completion of that process of supplementing the parent that the nineteenth century began.

Consider, for instance, the circumstances of parentage among the large section of the working classes whose girls and women engage in factory labour. In many cases the earnings of the woman are vitally necessary to the solvency of the family budget, the father's wages do not nearly cover the common expenditure. In some cases the women are unmarried, or the man is an invalid or out of work. Consider such a woman on the verge of motherhood. Either she must work in a factory right up to the birth of her child — and so damage its health through her strain and fatigue,2 or she must give up her work, lose money and go short of food and necessities and *so* damage the coming citizen. Moreover, after the child is born, either she must feed it artificially and return to work (and prosperity) soon, with a very great risk indeed that the child will die, or she must stay at home to nourish and tend it — until her landlord sells her furniture and turns her out!

Now it does not need that you should be a Socialist to see how cruel and ridiculous it is to have mothers in such a dilemma. But while people who are not Socialists have no remedy to suggest, or only immediate and partial remedies, such, for example, as the forbidding of factory work to women who are about to be or have recently been mothers — an expedient which is bound to produce a plentiful crop of "concealment of birth" and infanticide convictions — the Socialist does proffer a general principle to guide the community in dealing not only with this particular hardship, but with all the kindred hardships which form a system with it. He declares that we are here in the presence of an unsound and harmful way of regarding parentage; that we treat it as a *private affair*, that we are still disposed to assume that people's children are almost as much their private concern as their cats, and as little entitled to public protection and assistance. The right view, he maintains, is altogether opposed to this; parentage is a public service and a public duty; a good mother is the most precious type of common individual a community can have, and to let a woman on the one hand earn a

living as we do, by sewing tennis-balls or making cardboard boxes or calico, and on the other, not simply not to pay her, but to impoverish her because she bears and makes sacrifices to rear children, is the most irrational aspect of all the evolved and chancy ideas and institutions that make up the modern State. It is as if we believed our civilization existed to make cheap cotton and tennis-balls instead of fine human lives.

The Socialist takes all that the nineteenth century has done in remedial legislation as a mere earnest of all that it has still to do. He works for a consistent application of the principle that England, for example, tacitly admitted when she opened her public elementary schools and compelled the children to come in; the principle that the Community as a whole is the general Over-Parent of all its children; that the parents must be made answerable to the community for the welfare of their children, for their clear minds and clean bodies, their eyesight and weight and training; and that, on the other hand, the parents who do their duty well are as much entitled to collective provision for their needs and economic security as a soldier, a judge or any other sort of public servant.

§ 3.

Now do not imagine the case for the State being regarded as the Over-Parent, and for the financial support of parents is based simply upon the consideration of neglected, underfed, undereducated and poverty-blighted children. No doubt in every one of the great civilized countries of the world at the present time such children are to be counted by the hundred thousand — by the million; but there is a much stronger case to be stated in regard to that possibly greater multitude of parents who are not in default, those common people, the mass of our huge populations, the wives of the moderately skilled workers or the reasonably comfortable employees, of the middling sort of people, the two, three and four hundred pounds a year families who toil and deny themselves for love of their children, and do contrive to rear them cleanly, passably well grown, decent minded, taught and intelligent to serve the future. Consider the enormous unfairness with which we treat them, the way in which the

modern State, such as it is, trades upon their instincts, their affections, their sense of duty and self-respect, to get from them for nothing the greatest social service in the world.

For while the least fortunate sort of children have at any rate the protection of the police and school inspectors, and the baser sort of parent has all sorts of public and quasi-public helps and doles, the families that make the middle mass of our population are still in the position of the families of a hundred years ago, and have no help under heaven against the world. It matters not how well the home of the skilled artisan's wife or the small business man's wife has been managed — she may have educated her children marvellously, they may be clean, strong, courteous, intelligent — if the husband gets out of work or suffers from business ill-luck or trade depression, or chances to be killed uninsured, down they all go to want. Such insurance as they are able to make, and it needs a tremendously heavy premium to secure an insurance that will not mean a heavy fall of income with the bread-winner's death — must needs be in a private insurance office, and there is no effectual guarantee for either honesty or solvency in that. In most of the petty insurance business the thrifty poor are enormously overcharged and overreached. Rumour has been busy, and I fear only too justly, with the financial outlook of some of the Friendly Societies upon which the scanty security of so many working-class families depends. Such investments as the lower and middle-class father makes of surplus profits and savings must be made in ignorance of the manœuvres of the big and often quite ruthless financiers who control the world of prices. If he builds or trades, he does so as a small investor, at the highest cost and lowest profit. Half the big businesses in the world have been made out of the lost savings of the small investor; a point to which I shall return later. People talk as though Socialism proposed to rob the thrifty industrious man of his savings. He could not be more systematically robbed of his savings than he is at the present time. Nowhere beyond the limit of the Post Office Savings' Bank is there security — not even in the gilt-edged respectability of Consols, which in the last ten years have fallen from 114 to under 82. Consider the adventure of the thrifty well-meaning citizen who used his savings-bank hoard to buy Consols at the former price, and now

finds himself the poorer for not having buried his savings in his garden. The middling sort of man saves for the sake of wife and child; our State not only fails to protect him from the adventures of the manipulating financier, but it deliberately avoids competition with banker, insurance agent and promoter. In no way can the middle-class or artisan parent escape the financier's power and get real security for his home or his children's upbringing.

Not only is every parent of any but the richest classes worried and discouraged by the universal insecurity of outlook in this private adventure world, but at every turn his efforts to do his best for his children are discouraged. If he has no children, he will have all his income to spend on his own pleasures; he need only live in a little house, he pays nothing for school, less for doctor, less for all the needs of life, and he is taxed less; his income tax is the same, no bigger; his rent, his rates, his household bills are all less….

The State will not even help him to a tolerable home, to wholesome food, to needed fuel for the new citizens he is training for it. The State now-a-days in its slow awakening does show a certain concern in the housing of the lowest classes, a concern alike stimulated and supplemented by such fine charities as Peabody's for example, but no one stands between the two-hundred-a-year man and his landlord in the pitiless struggle to get. For every need of his children whom he toils to make into good men and women, he must pay a toll of owner's profits, he must trust to the anything but intelligent greed of private enterprise.

The State will not even insist that a sufficiency of comfortable, sanitary homes shall be built for his class; if he wants the elementary convenience of a bathroom, he must pay extra toll to the water shareholder; his gas is as cheap in quality and dear in price as it can be; his bread and milk, under the laws of supply and demand, are at the legal minimum of wholesomeness; the coal trade cheerfully raises his coal in mid-winter to ruinous prices. He buys clothes of shoddy and boots of brown paper. To get any other is nearly impossible for a man with three hundred pounds a year. His newspapers, which are supported by advertisers and financiers, in order to hide the obvious injustice of this one-man-fight against the allied forces of property, din in his ears that his one grievance is local

taxation, his one remedy "to keep down the rates" — the "rates" which do at least repair his roadway, police his streets, give him open spaces for his babies and help to educate his children, and which, moreover, constitute a burthen he might by a little intelligent political action shift quite easily from his own shoulders to the broad support of capital and land.

If the children of the decent skilled artisan and middle-class suffer less obviously than the poorer sort of children, assuredly the parents in wearing anxiety, in toil and limitation and disappointment, suffer more. And in less intense and dramatic, but perhaps even more melancholy ways, the children of this class do suffer. They do not die so abundantly in infancy, but they grow up, too many of them, to shabby and limited lives; in Britain they are still, as a class, extraordinarily ill educated — many of them still go to incompetent, understaffed and ill-equipped private adventure schools — they are sent into business prematurely, often at fourteen or fifteen, they become mechanical "respectable" drudges in processes they do not understand. They may escape want and squalor for a while, perhaps, but they cannot escape narrowness and limitation and a cramped and anxious life. If they get to anything better than that, it is chiefly through almost heroic parental effort and sacrifice.

The plain fact is that the better middle-class parents serve the State in this matter of child-rearing, the less is their reward, the less is their security, the greater their toil and anxiety. Is it any wonder then that throughout this more comfortable but more refined and exacting class, the skilled artisan and middle-class, there goes on something even more disastrous, from the point of view of the State, than the squalor, despair and neglect of the lower levels, and that is a very evident strike against parentage? While the very poor continue to have many children who die or grow up undersized, crippled or half-civilized, the middle mass, which *can* contrive with a struggle and sacrifice to rear fairly well-grown and well-equipped offspring, which has a conscience for the well-being and happiness of the young, manifests a diminishing spirit for parentage, its families fall to four, to three, to two — and in an increasing number of instances there are no children at all.

With regard to the struggling middle-class and skilled artisan class

parent, even more than to the lower poor, does the Socialist insist upon the plain need, if only that our State and nation should continue, of endowment and help. He deems it not simply unreasonable but ridiculous that in a world of limitless resources, of vast expenditure, of unparalleled luxury, in which two-million-pound battleships and multi-millionaires are common objects, the supremely important business of rearing the bulk of the next generation of the middling sort of people should be left almost entirely to the unaided, unguided efforts of impoverished and struggling women and men. It seems to him almost beyond sanity to suppose that so things must or can continue.

§ 4.

And what I have said of the middle-class parent is true with certain modifications of all the classes above it, except that in a monarchy you reach at last one State-subsidized family — in the case of Britain a very healthy and active group, the Royal family — which is not only State supported, but also beyond the requirements of any modern Socialist, State bred. There are enormous handicaps at every other social level upon efficient parentage, and upon the training of children for any public and generous end. Parentage is treated as a private foible, and those who undertake its solemn responsibilities are put at every sort of disadvantage against those who lead sterile lives, who give all their strength and resources to vanity and socially harmful personal indulgence. These latter, with an ampler leisure and ampler means, determine the forms of pleasure and social usage, they "set the fashion" and bar pride, distinction or relaxation to the devoted parent. The typical British aristocrat is not parent bred, but class bred, a person with a lively sense of social influences and no social ideas. The one class that is economically capable of making all that can be made of its children is demoralized by the very irresponsibility of the wealth that creates this opportunity. This is still more apparent in the American plutocracy, where perhaps half the women appear to be artificially sterilized spenders of money upon frivolous things.

No doubt there is in the richer strata of the community a certain

proportion of families with a real tradition of upbringing and service; such English families as the Cecils, Balfours and Trevelyans, for example, produce, generation after generation, public-spirited and highly competent men. But the family tradition in these cases is an excess of virtue rather than any necessary consequence of a social advantage; it is a defiance rather than a necessity of our economic system. It is natural that such men as Lord Hugh and Lord Robert Cecil, highly trained, highly capable, but without that gift of sympathetic imagination which releases a man from the subtle mental habituations of his upbringing, should idealize every family in the world to the likeness of their own — and find the Socialist's Over-Parent of the State not simply a needless but a mischievous and wicked innovation. They think — they will, I fear, continue to think — of England as a world of happy Hatfields, cottage Hatfields, villa Hatfields, Hatfields over the shop, and Hatfields behind the farmyard — wickedly and wantonly assailed and interfered with by a band of weirdly discontented men. It is a dream that the reader must not share. Even in the case of the rich and really prosperous it is an illusion. In no class at the present time is there a real inducement to the effectual rearing of trained and educated citizens; in every class are difficulties and discouragements.

This state of affairs, says the Socialist, is chaotic or indifferent to a sea of wretchedness and failure, in health, vigour, order and beauty. Such pleasure as it permits is a gaudy indulgence filched from children and duty; such beauty — a hectic beauty stained with injustice; such happiness — a happiness that can only continue so long as it remains blind or indifferent to a sea of wretchedness and failure. Our present system of isolated and unsupported families keeps the mass of the world beyond all necessity painful, ugly and squalid. It stands condemned, and it must end.

§ 5.

Let me summarize what has been said in this chapter in a compact proposition, and so complete the statement of the First Main Generalization of Socialism.

The ideas of the private individual rights of the parent and of his

isolated responsibility for his children are harmfully exaggerated in the contemporary world. We do not sufficiently protect children from negligent, incompetent, selfish or wicked parents, and we do not sufficiently aid and encourage good parents; parentage is too much a matter of private adventure, and the individual family is too irresponsible. As a consequence there is a huge amount of avoidable privation, suffering and sorrow, and a large proportion of the generation that grows up, grows up stunted, limited, badly educated and incompetent in comparison with the strength, training and beauty with which a better social organization could endow it.

The Socialist holds that the community as a whole should be responsible, and every individual in the community, married or single, parent or childless, should be responsible for the welfare and upbringing of every child born into that community. This responsibility may be entrusted in whole or in part to parent, teacher or other guardian — but it is not simply the right but the duty of the State — that is to say of the organized power and intelligence of the community — to direct, to inquire, and to intervene in any default for the child's welfare.

Parentage rightly undertaken is a service as well as a duty to the world, carrying with it not only obligations but a claim, the strongest of claims, upon the whole community. It must be provided for like any other public service; in any completely civilized State it must be sustained, rewarded and controlled. And this is to be done not to supersede the love, pride and conscience of the parent, but to supplement, encourage and maintain it.

§ 6.

This is the first of the twin generalizations upon which the whole edifice of modern Socialism rests. Its fellow generalization we must consider in the chapter immediately to follow.

But at this point the reader unaccustomed to social questions will experience a difficulty. He will naturally think of this much of change we have broached, as if it was to happen in a world that otherwise was to remain just as the world is now, with merchants, landowners, rich and poor and all the rest of it. You are proposing, he

may say, what is no doubt a highly desirable but which is also a quite impossible thing. You propose practically to educate all the young of the country and to pay at least sufficient to support them and their mothers in decency — out of what? Where will you get the money?

That is a perfectly legitimate question and one that must be answered fully if our whole project is not to fall to the ground.

So we come to the discussion of material means, of the wherewithal, that is to say to the "Economics" of Socialism. The reader will see very speedily that this great social revolution we propose necessarily involves a revolution in business and industry that will be equally far reaching. The two revolutions are indeed inseparable, two sides of one wheel, and it is scarcely possible that one could happen without the other.

Of course the community supports all its children now — the only point is that it does not support them in its collective character as a State "as a whole." All the children in the world are supported by all the people in the world, but very unfairly and irregularly, through the intervention of that great multitude of small private proprietors, the parents. When the parents fail, Charity and the Parish step in. If the reader will refer to those ten cases from Edinburgh I have already quoted in Chapter III., § 1, he will note that in eight out of the ten there comes in the eleemosynary element; in the seventh case especially he will get an inkling of its waste. A change in the system that diminished (though it by no means abolished) this separate dependence of children upon parents, each child depending upon those "pieces" from its particular parental feast, need not necessarily diminish the amount of wheat, or leather, or milk in the world; the children would still get the bread and milk and boots, but through different channels and in a different spirit. They might even get more. The method of making and distribution will evidently have to be a different one and run counter to currently accepted notions; that is all. Not only is it true that a change of system need not diminish the amount of food in the world; it might even increase it. The Socialist declares that his system would increase it. He proposes a method of making and distribution, a change in industrial conditions and in the conventions of property, that he declares will not only not diminish

but greatly increase the production of the world, and changes in the administration that he is equally convinced will insure a far juster and better use of all that is produced.

This side of his proposals we will proceed to consider in our next chapter.

CHAPTER IV THE SECOND MAIN GENERALIZATION OF SOCIALISM

§ 1.

We have considered the Socialist criticism of the present state of affairs in relation to the most important of all public questions, the question of the welfare and upbringing of the next generation. We have stated the general principle of social reconstruction that emerges from that criticism. We have now to enter upon the question of ways and means, the economic question. We have to ask whether the vision we have conjured up of a whole population well fed, well clad, well educated — in a word, well brought-up — is, after all, only an amiable dream. Is it true that humanity is producing all that it can produce at the present time, and managing everything about as well as it can be managed; that, as a matter of fact, there isn't enough of food and care to go round, and hence the unavoidable anxiety in the life of every one (except in the case of a small minority of exceptionally secure people), and the absolute wretchedness of vast myriads of the poorer sort?

The Socialist says, No! He asserts that our economic system is as chaotic and wasteful as our system of rearing children — is only another aspect of the same planlessness — that it does its work with a needless excess of friction, that it might be far simpler and almost infinitely more productive than it is.

Let us detach ourselves a little from our everyday habits of thinking in these matters; let us cease to take customary things for granted, and let us try and consider how our economic arrangements would strike a disinterested intelligence that looked at them freshly for the first time. Let us take some matter of primary economic importance, such as the housing of the population, and do our best to criticize it in this spirit of personal aloofness.

In order to do that, let us try to detach ourselves a little from our own personal interest in these affairs. Imagine a mind ignorant of our history and traditions, coming from some other sphere, from some world more civilized, from some other planet perhaps, to this earth.

Would our system of housing strike it as the very wisest and most practical possible, would it really seem to be the attainable maximum of outcome for human exertion, or would it seem confused, disorderly, wasteful and bad? The Socialist holds that the latter would certainly be the verdict of such an impartial examination.

What would our visitor find in such a country as England, for example? He would find a few thousand people housed with conspicuous comfort and sumptuousness, in large, airy and often extremely beautiful homes equipped with every convenience — except such as economize labour — and waited on by many thousands of attendants. He would find next, several hundreds of thousands in houses reasonably well built, but for the most part ill designed and unpleasant to the eye, houses passably sanitary and convenient, fitted with bathrooms, with properly equipped kitchens, usually with a certain space of air and garden about them. And the rest of our millions he would find crowded into houses evidently too small for a decent life, and often dreadfully dirty and insanitary, without proper space or appliances to cook properly, wash properly or indeed perform any of the fundamental operations of a civilized life tolerably well — without, indeed, even the privacy needed for common decency. In the towns he would find most of the houses occupied by people for whose needs they were obviously not designed, and in many cases extraordinarily crowded, ramshackle and unclean; in the country he would be amazed to find still denser congestion, sometimes a dozen people in one miserable, tumble-down, outwardly picturesque and inwardly abominable two-roomed cottage, people living up against pigsties and drawing water from wells they could not help but contaminate. Think of how the intimate glimpses from the railway train one gets into people's homes upon the outskirts of any of our large towns would impress him. And being, as we assume, clear minded and able to trace cause and effect, he would see all this disorder working out in mortality, disease, misery and intellectual and moral failure.

All this would strike our visitor as a very remarkable state of affairs for reasonable creatures to endure, and probably he would not understand at first that millions of people were content to regard all this disorder as the permanent lot of humanity. He would assume that

this must be a temporary state of affairs due to some causes unknown to him, some great migration, for example. He would suppose we were all busy putting things right. He would see on the one hand unemployed labour and unemployed material; on the other, great areas of suitable land and the crying need for more and better homes than the people had, and it would seem the most natural thing in the world that the directing intelligence of the community should set the unemployed people to work with the unemployed material upon the land to house the whole population fairly and well. There exists all that is needed to house the whole population admirably, the building material, the room, the unoccupied hands. Why is it not being done?

Our answer would be, of course, that he did not understand our difficulties; the land was not ours to do as we liked with, it did not belong to the community but to certain persons, the Owners, who either refused to let us build upon it or buy it or have anything to do with it, or demanded money we could not produce for it; that equally the material was not ours, but belonged to certain other Owners, and that, thirdly, the community had insufficient money or credit to pay the wages and maintenance and equipment of the workers who starved and degenerated in our streets — for that money, too, was privately owned.

This would puzzle our visitor considerably.

"Why do you have Owners?" he would ask.

We might find that difficult to answer.

"But why do you let the land be owned?" he would go on. "You don't let people own the air. And these bricks and timber you mustn't touch, the mortar you need and the gold you need — they all came out of the ground — they all belonged to everybody or nobody a little while ago!"

You would say something indistinct about Property.

"But why?"

"Somebody must own the things."

"Well, let the State own the things and use them for the common good. It owns the roads, it owns the foreshores and the territorial seas — nobody owns the air!"

If you entered upon historical explanations with him, you would soon be in difficulties. You would find that so recently as the Feudal

System — which was still living, so to speak, yesterday — the King, who stood for the State, held the land as the Realm, and the predecessors of the present owners held under him merely as the administrative officials who performed all sorts of public services and had all sorts of privileges thereby. They have dropped the services and stuck to the land and the privileges; that is all.

"I begin to perceive," our visitor would say as this became clear; "your world is under the spell of an exaggerated idea, this preposterous idea there must be an individual Owner for everything in the world. Obviously you can't get on while you are under the spell of that! So long as you have this private ownership in everything, there's no help for you. You cut up your land and material in parcels of all sorts and sizes among this multitude of irresponsible little monarchs; you let all the material you need get distributed among another small swarm of Owners, and clearly you can only get them to work for public ends in the most roundabout, tedious and wasteful way. Why should they? They're very well satisfied as they are! But if the community as a whole insisted that this idea of private Ownership you have in regard to land and natural things was all nonsense — and it is all nonsense! — just think what you might not do with it now that you have all the new powers and lights that Science has given you. You might turn all your towns into garden cities, put an end to overcrowding, abolish smoky skies — —"

"Hush!" I should have to interrupt; "if you talk of the things that are clearly possible in the world to-day, they will say you are an Utopian dreamer!"

But at least one thing would have become clear, the little swarm of Owners and their claims standing in the way of any bold collective dealing with housing or any such public concern. The real work to be done here is to change an idea, that idea of ownership, to so modify it that it will cease to obstruct the rational development of life; and that is what the Socialist seeks to do.

§ 2.

Now the argument that the civilized housing of the masses of our

population now is impossible because if you set out to do it you come up against the veto of the private owner at every stage, can be applied to almost every general public service. Some little while ago I wrote a tract for the Fabian Society about Boots;3 and I will not apologize for repeating here a passage from that. To begin with, this tract pointed out the badness, unhealthiness and discomfort of people's footwear as one saw it in every poor quarter, and asked why it was that things were in so disagreeable a state. There was plenty of leather in the world, plenty of labour.

"Here on the one hand — you can see for yourself in any unfashionable part of Great Britain — are people badly, uncomfortably, painfully shod in old boots, rotten boots, sham boots; and on the other great stretches of land in the world, with unlimited possibilities of cattle and leather and great numbers of people who, either through wealth or trade disorder, are doing no work. And our question is: 'Why cannot the latter set to work and make and distribute boots?'

"Imagine yourself trying to organize something of this kind of Free Booting expedition and consider the difficulties you would meet with. You would begin by looking for a lot of leather. Imagine yourself setting off to South America, for example, to get leather; beginning at the very beginning by setting to work to kill and flay a herd of cattle. You find at once you are interrupted. Along comes your first obstacle in the shape of a man who tells you the cattle and the leather belong to him. You explain that the leather is wanted for people who have no decent boots in England. He says he does not care a rap what you want it for; before you may take it from him you have to buy him off; it is his private property, this leather, and the herd and the land over which the herd ranges. You ask him how much he wants for his leather, and he tells you frankly, just as much as he can induce you to give.

"If he chanced to be a person of exceptional sweetness of disposition, you might perhaps argue with him. You might point out to him that this project of giving people splendid boots was a fine one that would put an end to much human misery. He might even sympathize with your generous enthusiasm, but you would, I think, find him adamantine in his resolve to get just as much out of you for

his leather as you could with the utmost effort pay.

"Suppose, now, you said to him: 'But how did you come by this land and these herds so that you can stand between them and the people who have need of them, exacting this profit?' He would probably either embark upon a long rigmarole, or, what is much more probable, lose his temper and decline to argue. Pursuing your doubt as to the rightfulness of his property in these things, you might admit he deserved a certain reasonable fee for the rough care he had taken of the land and herds. But cattle breeders are a rude violent race, and it is doubtful if you would get far beyond your proposition of a reasonable fee. You would, in fact, have to buy off this owner of the leather at a good thumping price — he exacting just as much as he could get from you — if you wanted to go on with your project.

"Well, then you would have to get your leather here, and to do that you would have to bring it by railway and ship to this country. And here again you would find people without any desire or intention of helping your project, standing in your course resolved to make every possible penny out of you on your way to provide sound boots for every one. You would find the railway was private property and had an owner or owners; you would find the ship was private property with an owner or owners, and that none of these would be satisfied for a moment with a mere fee adequate to their services. They too would be resolved to make every penny of profit out of you. If you made inquiries about the matter, you would probably find the real owners of railway and ship were companies of shareholders, and the profit squeezed out of your poor people's boots at this stage went to fill the pockets of old ladies, at Torquay, spendthrifts in Paris, well-booted gentlemen in London clubs, all sorts of glossy people….

"Well, you get the leather to England at last; and now you want to make it into boots. You take it to a centre of population, invite workers to come to you, erect sheds and machinery upon a vacant piece of ground, and start off in a sort of fury of generous industry, boot-making…. Do you? There comes along an owner for that vacant piece of ground, declares it is his property, demands an enormous sum for rent. And your workers all round you, you find, cannot get house room until they too have paid rent — every inch of the country

is somebody's property, and a man may not shut his eyes for an hour without the consent of some owner or other. And the food your shoemakers eat, the clothes they wear, have all paid tribute and profit to land-owners, cart-owners, house-owners, endless tribute over and above the fair pay for work that has been done upon them….

"So one might go on. But you begin to see now one set of reasons at least why every one has not good comfortable boots. There could be plenty of leather; and there is certainly plenty of labour and quite enough intelligence in the world to manage that and a thousand other desirable things. But this institution of Private Property in land and naturally produced things, these obstructive claims that prevent you using ground, or moving material, and that have to be bought out at exorbitant prices, stand in the way. All these owners hang like parasites upon your enterprise at its every stage; and by the time you get your sound boots well made in England, you will find them costing about a pound a pair — high out of reach of the general mass of people. And you will perhaps not think me fanciful and extravagant when I confess that when I realize this and look at poor people's boots in the street, and see them cracked and misshapen and altogether nasty, I seem to see also a lot of little phantom land-owners, cattle-owners, house-owners, owners of all sorts, swarming over their pinched and weary feet like leeches, taking much and giving nothing and being the real cause of all such miseries."

§ 3.

Our visitor would not only be struck by the clogging of our social activities through this system of leaving everything to private enterprise; he would also be struck by the immense wastefulness. Everywhere he would see things in duplicate and triplicate; down the High Street of any small town he would find three or four butchers — mostly selling New Zealand mutton and Argentine beef as English — five or six grocers, three or four milk shops, one or two big drapers and three or four small haberdashers, milliners, and "fancy shops," two or three fishmongers, all very poor, all rather bad, most of them in debt and with their assistants all insecure and underpaid. He would find in spite of this wealth of competition that

every one who could contrive it, all the really prosperous people in fact, bought most of their food and drapery from big London firms.

But why should I go on writing fresh arguments when we have Elihu's classic tract4 to quote.

"Observe how private enterprise supplies the streets with milk. At 7.30 a milk cart comes lumbering along and delivers milk at one house and away again. Half-an-hour later another milk cart arrives and delivers milk, first on this side of the street and then on that, until seven houses have been supplied, and then he departs. During the next three or four hours four other milk carts put in an appearance at varying intervals, supplying a house here and another there, until finally, as it draws towards noon, their task is accomplished and the street supplied with milk.

"The time actually occupied by one and another of these distributors of milk makes in all about an hour and forty minutes, six men and six horses and carts being required for the purpose, and these equipages rattle along one after the other, all over the district, through the greater part of the day, in the same erratic and extraordinary manner."

§ 4.

Our imaginary visitor would probably quite fail to grasp the reasons why we do not forthwith shake off this obstructive and harmful idea of Private Ownership, dispossess our Landowners and so forth as gently as possible, and set to work upon collective housing and the rest of it. And so he would "exit wondering."

But that would be only the opening of the real argument. A competent Anti-Socialist of a more terrestrial experience would have a great many very effectual and very sound considerations to advance in defence of the present system.

He might urge that our present way of doing things, though it was sometimes almost as wasteful as Nature when fresh spawn or pollen germs are scattered, was in many ways singularly congenial to the infirmities of humanity. The idea of property is a spontaneous product of the mortal mind; children develop it in the nursery, and are passionately alive to the difference of *meum* and *tuum*, and its

extension to land, subterranean products and wild free things, even if it is under analysis a little unreasonable, was at least singularly acceptable to humanity.

And there would be admirable soundness in all this. There can be little or no doubt that the conception of personal ownership has in the past contributed elements to human progress that could have come through no other means. It has allowed private individuals in odd corners to try experiments in new methods and new appliances, that the general intelligence, such as it was, of the community could not have understood. For all its faults, our present individualistic order compared not simply with the communism of primitive tribes, but even with the personal and largely illiterate control of the mediæval feudal governments, is a good efficient working method. I don't think a Socialist need quarrel with the facts of history or human nature. But he would urge that Private Ownership is only a phase, though no doubt quite a necessary phase, in human development. The world has needed Private Ownership just as (Lester F. Ward declares5) it once needed slavery to discipline men and women to agriculture and habits of industry, and just as it needed autocratic kings to weld warring tribes into nations and nations into empires, to build high roads, end private war and establish the idea of Law, and a wider than tribal loyalty. But just as Western Europe has passed out of the phases of slavery and of autocracy (which is national slavery) into constitutionalism, so, he would hold, we are passing out of the phase of private ownership of land and material and food. We are doing so not because we reject it, but because we have worked it out, because we have learnt its lessons and can now go on to a higher and finer organization.

There the Anti-Socialist would join issue with a lesser advantage. He would have to show not only that Private Ownership has been serviceable and justifiable in the past — which many Socialists admit quite cheerfully — but that it is the crown and perfection of human methods, which the Socialists flatly deny. Universal Private Ownership, an extreme development of the sentiment of individual autonomy and the limitation of the State to the merest police functions, were a necessary outcome of the breakdown of the unprogressive authoritative Feudal System in alliance with a

dogmatic Church. It reached its maximum in the eighteenth century, when even some of the prisons and workhouses were run by private contract, when people issued a private money, the old token coinage, and even regiments of soldiers were raised by private enterprise. It was, the Socialist alleges, a mere phase of that breaking up of the old social edifice, a weakening of the old circle of ideas that had to precede the new constructive effort. But with land, with all sorts of property and all sorts of businesses and public services, just as with the old isolated private family, the old separateness and independence is giving way to a new synthesis. The idea of Private Ownership, albeit still the ruling idea of our civilization, does not rule nearly so absolutely as it did. It weakens and falters before the inexorable demands of social necessity — manifestly under our eyes.

The Socialist would be able to appeal to a far greater number of laws in the nature of limitation of the owner of property than could be quoted to show the limitation of the old supremacy of the head of the family. In the first place he would be able to point to a constantly increasing interference with the right of the landowner to do what he liked with his own, building regulations, intervention to create allotments and so forth. Then there would be a vast mass of factory and industrial legislation, controlling, directing, prohibiting; fencing machinery, interfering on behalf of health, justice and public necessity with the owner's free bargain with his work-people. His business undertakings would be under limitations his grandfather never knew — even harmless adulterations that merely intensify profit, forbidden him!

And in the next place and still more significant is the manifest determination to keep in public hands many things that would once inevitably have become private property. For example, in the middle Victorian period a water supply, a gas supply, a railway or tramway was inevitably a private enterprise, the creation of a new property; now, this is the exception rather than the rule. While gas and water and trains were supplied by speculative owners for profit, electric light and power, new tramways and light railways are created in an increasing number of cases by public bodies who retain them for the public good. Nobody who travels to London as I do regularly in the dirty, over-crowded carriages of the infrequent and unpunctual trains

of the South-Eastern Company, and who then transfers to the cleanly, speedy, frequent — in a word, "civilized" electric cars of the London County Council, can fail to estimate the value and significance of this supersession of the private owner by the common-weal.

All these things, the Socialists insist, are but a beginning. They point to a new phase in social development, to the appearance of a collective intelligence and a sense of public service taking over appliances, powers, enterprises, with a growing confidence that must end finally in the substitution of collective for private ownership and enterprise throughout the whole area of the common business of life.

§ 5.

In relation to quite a number of large public services it can be shown that even under contemporary conditions Private Ownership does work with an enormous waste and inefficiency. Necessarily it seeks for profit; necessarily it seeks to do as little as possible for as much as possible. The prosperity of all Kent is crippled by a "combine" of two ill-managed and unenterprising railway companies, with no funds for new developments, grinding out an uncertain dividend by clipping expenditure.

I happen to see this organization pretty closely, and I can imagine no State enterprise west of Turkey or Persia presenting even to the passing eye so deplorable a spectacle of ruin and inefficiency. The South-Eastern Company's estate at Seabrook presents the dreariest spectacle of incompetent development conceivable; one can see its failure three miles away; it is a waste with an embryo slum in one corner protected by an extravagant sea-wall, already partly shattered, from the sea.

To-day (Nov. 4, 1907) the price of the ordinary South-Eastern stock is 65 and its deferred stock 31; of the London, Chatham and Dover ordinary stock 10½; an eloquent testimony to the disheartened state of the owners who now cling reluctantly to this disappointing monopoly. Spite of this impoverishment of the ordinary shareholder, this railway system has evidently paid too much profit in the past for efficiency; the rolling stock is old and ageing — much of it is by modern standards abominable — the

trains are infrequent, and the shunting operations at local stations, with insufficient sidings and insufficient staffs, produce a chronic dislocation and unpunctuality in the traffic that is exaggerated by the defects of direction evident even in the very time-tables. The trains are not well planned, the connections with branch lines are often extremely ill managed. The service is bad to its details. It is the exception rather than the rule to find a ticket-office in the morning with change for a five-pound note; and, as a little indication of the spirit of the whole machine, I discovered the other day that the conductors upon the South-Eastern trams at Hythe start their morning with absolutely no change at all. Recently the roof of the station at Charing Cross fell in — through sheer decay…. A whole rich county now stagnates hopelessly under the grip of this sample of private enterprise, towns fail to grow, trade flows sluggishly from point to point. No population in the world would stand such a management as it endures at the hands of the South-Eastern Railway from any responsible public body. Out would go the whole board of managers at the next election. Consider what would have happened if the London County Council had owned Charing Cross Station three years ago. But manifestly there is nothing better to be done under private ownership conditions. The common shareholders are scattered and practically powerless, and their collective aim is, at any expense to the public welfare, to keep the price of the shares from going still lower.

The South-Eastern Railway is only one striking instance of the general unserviceableness of private ownership for public services. Nearly all the British railway companies, in greater or less degree, present now a similar degenerative process. Years of profit-sweating, of high dividends, have left them with old stations, old rolling stock, old staffs, bad habits and diminishing borrowing power. Only a few of these corporations make any attempt to keep pace with invention. It is remarkable now in an epoch of almost universal progress how stagnant the British privately owned railways are. One travels now-a-days if anything with a decrease of comfort from the 1880 accommodation, because of the greater overcrowding; and there has been no general increase of speed, no increase in smooth running, no increase in immunity from accident now for quite a number of years.

One travels in a dingy box of a compartment that is too ill-lit at night for reading and full of invincible draughts. In winter the only warmth is too often an insufficient footwarmer of battered tin, for which the passengers fight fiercely with their feet. An observant person cannot fail to be struck — especially if he is returning from travel upon the State railways of Switzerland or Germany — by the shabby-looking porters on so many of our lines — they represent the standard of good clothing for the year 1848 or thereabouts — and by the bleak misery of many of the stations, the universal dirt that electricity might even now abolish. You dare not drop a parcel on any British railway cushion for fear of the cloud of horrible dust you would raise; you have to put it down softly. Consider, too, the congested infrequent suburban trains that ply round any large centre of population, the inefficient goods and parcel distribution that hangs up the trade of the local shopman everywhere. Not only in the arrested standard of comfort, but in the efficiency of working also are our privately owned railways a hopeless discredit to private ownership.

None of them, hampered by their present equipment, are able to adapt themselves readily to the new and better mechanism science produces for them, electric traction, electric lighting and so forth; and it seems to me highly probable that the last steam-engines and the last oil lamps in the world will be found upon the southern railway lines of Great Britain. How can they go on borrowing new capital with their stock at the prices I have quoted, and how can they do anything without new capital? The conception of profit-raising that rules our railways takes rather an altogether different direction; it takes the form of attempts to procure a monopoly even of the minor traffic by resisting the development of light railways, and of keeping the standard of comfort, decency and cleanliness low. As for the vast social ameliorations that could be wrought now, and are urgently needed now, by redistributing population through enhanced and cheapened services scientifically planned, and by an efficient collection and carriage of horticultural and agricultural produce, these things lie outside the philosophy of the Private Owner altogether. They would probably not pay him, and there the matter ends; that they would pay the community enormously, does not for

one moment enter into his circle of ideas.

There can be little doubt that in the next decade or so the secular decay and lagging of the British railway services which is inevitable under existing conditions (in speed, in comfort, they have long been distanced by continental lines), the probable increase in accidents due to economically administered permanent ways and ageing stations and bridges, and the ever more perceptible check to British economic development due to this clogging of the circulatory system, will be of immense value to the Socialist propaganda as an object lesson in private ownership. In Italy the thing has already passed its inevitable climax, and the State is now struggling valiantly to put a disorganized, ill-equipped and undisciplined network of railways, the legacy of a period of private enterprise, into tolerable working order.

§ 6.

In a second great public service there is a perceptible, a growing recognition of the evil and danger of allowing profit-seeking Private Ownership to prevail; and that is the general food supply. A great quickening of the public imagination in this matter has occurred through the "boom" of Mr. Upton Sinclair's book, *The Jungle* — a book every student of the elements of Socialism should read. He accumulated a considerable mass of facts about the Chicago stockyards, and incorporated them with his story, and so enabled people to realize what they might with a little imaginative effort have inferred before; that the slaughtering of cattle and the preparation of meat, when it is done wholly and solely for profit, that is to say when it is done as rapidly and cheaply as possible, is done *horribly*; that it is a business cruel to the beasts, cruel to the workers and dangerous to the public health. The United States has long recognized the inadequacy of private consciences in this concern, and while all the vast profits of the business go to the meat packers, the community has maintained an insufficient supply of underpaid and, it is said in some cases, bribable inspectors to look after the public welfare.

In this country also, slaughtering is a private enterprise but slightly checked by inspection, and if we have no Chicago, we

probably have all its mean savings, its dirt and carelessness and filth, scattered here and there all over the country, a little in this privately owned slaughter-house, a little in that. For what inducement has a butcher to spend money and time in making his slaughter-house decent, sanitary and humane above the standard of his fellows? To do that will only make him poor and insolvent. Anyhow, few of his customers will come to see their meat butchered, and, as they say in the South of England, "What the eye don't see the heart don't grieve."

Many witnesses concur in declaring that our common jam, pickle and preserve trade is carried on under equally filthy conditions. If it is not, it is a miracle, in view of the inducements the Private Owner has to cut his expenses, economize on premises and wages, and buy his fruit as near decay and his sugar as near dirt as he can. The scandal of our milk supply is an open one; it is more and more evident that so long as Private Ownership rules the milk trade, we can never be sure that at every point in the course of the milk from cow to consumer there will not creep in harmful and dishonest profit-making elements. The milking is too often done dirtily from dirty cows and into dirty vessels — why should a business man fool away his profits in paying for scrupulous cleanliness when it is almost impossible to tell at sight whether milk is clean or dirty? — and there come more or less harmful dilutions and adulterations and exposures to infection at every handling, at every chance at profit making. The unavoidable inefficiency of the private milk trade reflects itself in infant mortality — we pay our national tribute to private enterprise in milk, a tribute of many thousands of babies every year. We try to reduce this tribute by inspection. But why should the State pay money for inspection, upon keeping highly-trained and competent persons merely to pry and persecute in order that private incompetent people should reap profits with something short of a maximum of child murder? It would be much simpler to set to work directly, employ and train these private persons, and run the dairies and milk distribution ourselves.

There is an equally strong case for a public handling of bakehouses and the bread supply. Already the public is put to great and entirely unremunerative expense in inspecting and checking

weights and hunting down the grosser instances of adulteration, grubbiness and dirt, and with it all the common bakehouse remains for the most part a subterranean haunt of rats, mice and cockroaches, and the ordinary baker's bread is so insipid and unnutritious that a great number of more prosperous people now-a-days find it advantageous to health and pocket alike to bake at home. A considerable amount of physical degeneration may be connected with the general poorness of our bread. The plain fact of the case is that our population will never get good wholesome bread from the Private Owner's bakehouse, until it employs one skilled official to watch every half-dozen bakers — and another to watch him; and it seems altogether saner and cheaper to abolish the Private Owner in this business also and do the job cleanly, honestly and straightforwardly in proper buildings with properly paid labour as a public concern.

Now, what has been said of the food supply is still truer of the trade in fuel. Between the consumer and the collier is a string of private persons each resolved to squeeze every penny of profit out of the coal on its way to the cheap and wasteful grate one finds in the jerry-built homes of the poor. In addition there is every winter now, whether in Great Britain or America, a manipulation of the coal market and a more or less severe coal famine. Coal is jerked up to unprecedented prices, and the small consumer, who has no place for storage, who must buy, if not from day to day, from week to week, finds he must draw upon his food fund and his savings to meet the Private Owner's raised demands — or freeze. Every such coal famine reaps its harvest for death of old people and young children, and wipes out so many thousands of savings' bank accounts and hoarded shillings. Consider the essential imbecility of allowing the nation's life and the nation's thrift to be preyed upon for profit in this way! Is it possible to doubt that the civilized community of the future will have to resume possession of all its stores of fuel, will keep itself informed of the fluctuating needs of its population, and will distribute and sell coal, gas and oil — not for the maximum profit, but the maximum general welfare?6

Another great branch of trade in which Private Ownership and private freedom is manifestly antagonistic to the public welfare is the

Drink Traffic. Here we have a commodity, essentially a drug, its use readily developing a vice, deleterious at its best, complex in composition, and particularly susceptible to adulteration and the enhancement of its attraction by poisonous ingredients and indeed to every sort of mischievous secret manipulation. Probably nothing is more rarely found pure and honest than beer or whisky; whisky begins to be blended and doctored before it leaves the distillery. And we allow the production and distribution of this drug of alcoholic drink to be from first to last a source of private profit. We so contrive it that we put money prizes upon the propaganda of drink. Is it any wonder that drink is not only made by adulteration far more evil than it naturally is, but that it is forced upon the public in every possible way?

"He tempts them to drink," I have heard a clergyman say of his village publican. But what else did he think the publican was there for? — to preach total abstinence? Naturally, inevitably, the whole of the Trade is a propaganda — not of drunkenness, but of habitual heavy drinking. The more successful propagandists, the great brewers and distillers grow rich just in the proportion that people consume beer and spirits; they gain honour and peerages in the measure of their success.

It is very interesting to the Socialist to trace the long struggle of the temperance movement against its initial ideas of freedom, and to see how inevitably the most reluctant and unlikely people have been forced to recognize Private Ownership in this trade and for profit as the ultimate evil. I am delighted to have to hand an excellent little tract by "A Ratepayer": *National Efficiency and the Drink Traffic*. It has a preface by Mr. Haldane, and it is as satisfactory a demonstration of the absolute necessity of thoroughgoing Socialism in this particular field as any Socialist could wish. One encounters the Bishop of Chester, for example, in its pages talking the purest Socialism, and making the most luminous admissions of the impossibility of continued private control, in phrases that need but a few verbal changes to apply equally to milk, to meat, to bread, to housing, to book-selling7….

§ 7.

Land and housing, railways, food, drink, coal, in each of these great general interests there is a separate strong case for the substitution of collective control for the Private Ownership methods of the present time. There is a great and growing number of people like "A Ratepayer" and Mr. Haldane, who do not call themselves Socialists but who are yet strongly tinged with Socialist conceptions; who are convinced — some in the case of the land, some in the case of the drink trade or the milk, that Private Ownership and working for profit must cease. But they will not admit a general principle, they argue each case on its merits.

The Socialist maintains that, albeit the details of each problem must be studied apart, there does underlie all these cases and the whole economic situation at the present time, one general fact, that through our whole social system from top to base we find things under the influence of a misleading idea that must be changed, and which, until it is changed, will continue to work out in waste, unserviceableness, cramped lives and suffering and death. Each man is for himself, that is this misleading idea, seeking, perforce, ends discordant with the general welfare; who serves the community without exacting pay, goes under; who exacts pay without service prospers and continues; success is not to do well, it is to have and to get; failure is not to do ill, it is to lose and not have; and under these conditions how can we expect anything but dislocated, unsatisfying service at every turn?

The contemporary anti-Socialist moralist and the social satirist would appeal to the Owner's sense of duty; he would declare in a platitudinous tone that property had its duties as well as its rights, and so forth. The Socialist, however, looks a little deeper, and puts the thing differently. He brings both rights and duties to a keener scrutiny. What underlies all these social disorders, he alleges, is one simple thing, a misconception of property; an unreasonable exaggeration, an accumulated, inherited exaggeration, of the idea of property. He says the idea of private property, which is just and reasonable in relation to intimate personal things, to clothes, appliances, books, one's home or apartments, the garden one loves or the horse one rides, has become unreasonably exaggerated until it obsesses the world; that the freedom we have given men to claim and

own and hold the land upon which we must live, the fuel we burn, the supplies of food and metal we require, the railways and ships upon which our business goes, and to fix what prices they like to exact for all these services, leads to the impoverishment and practical enslavement of the mass of mankind.

And so he comes to his second main generalization, which I may perhaps set out in these words: —

The idea of the private ownership of things and the rights of owners is enormously and mischievously exaggerated in the contemporary world. The conception of private property has been extended to land, to material, to the values and resources accumulated by past generations, to a vast variety of things that are properly the inheritance of the whole race. As a result of this, there is much obstruction and waste of human energy and a huge loss of opportunity and freedom for the mass of mankind; progress is retarded, there is a vast amount of avoidable wretchedness, cruelty and injustice.

The Socialist holds that the community as a whole should be inalienably the owner and administrator of the land, of raw materials, of values and resources accumulated from the past, and that private property must be of a terminable nature, reverting to the community, and subject to the general welfare.

This is the second of the twin generalizations upon which the edifice of modern Socialism rests. Like the first, and like the practical side of all sound religious teaching, it is a specific application of one general rule of conduct, and that is the subordination of the individual motive to the happiness and welfare of the species.

§ 8.

But now the reader unaccustomed to Socialist discussion will begin to see the crude form of the answer to the question raised by the previous chapter; he will see the resources from which the enlargement of human life we there contemplated is to be derived, and realize the economic methods to be pursued. Collective ownership is the necessary corollary of collective responsibility. There are to be no private land owners, no private bankers and

lenders of money, no private insurance adventurers, no private railway owners nor shipping owners, no private mine owners, oil kings, silver kings, coal and wheat forestallers or the like. All this realm of property is to be resumed by the State, is to be State-owned and State-managed, and the vast revenues that are now devoted to private ends will go steadily to feed, maintain and educate a new and better generation, to promote research and advance science, to build new houses, develop fresh resources, plant, plan, beautify and reconstruct the world.

CHAPTER V THE SPIRIT OF GAIN AND THE SPIRIT OF SERVICE

§ 1.

We have stated now how the constructive plan of Socialism aims to replace the accepted ideas about two almost fundamental human relations by broader and less fiercely egotistical conceptions; how it denies a man "property" rights over his wife and children, leaving, however, all his other relations with them intact, how it would insure and protect their welfare, and how it asserts that a vast range of inanimate things also which are now held as private property must be regarded as the inalienable possession of the whole community. This change in the circle of ideas (as the Herbartians put it) is the essence of the Socialist project.

It means no little change. It means a general change in the spirit of living; it means a change from the spirit of gain (which now necessarily rules our lives) to the spirit of service.

I have tried to show in the preceding chapter that Socialism seeks to make life less squalid and cruel, less degrading and dwarfing for the children that are born into it, and I have tried also to make clear that realization of, and revolt against, the bad management and waste and muddle which result from our present economic system. I want now to point out that Socialism seeks to ennoble the intimate personal life, by checking and discouraging passions that at present run rampant, and by giving wider scope for passions that are now thwarted and subdued. The Socialist declares that life is now needlessly dishonest, base and mean, because our present social organization, such as it is, makes an altogether too powerful appeal to some of the very meanest elements in our nature.

Not perhaps to the lowest. There can be no disputing that our present civilization does discourage much of the innate bestiality of man; that it helps people to a measure of continence, cleanliness and mutual toleration; that it does much to suppress brute violence, the spirit of lawlessness, cruelty and wanton destruction. But on the other hand it does also check and cripple generosity and frank

truthfulness, any disinterested creative passion, the love of beauty, the passion for truth and research, and it stimulates avarice, parsimony, overreaching, usury, falsehood and secrecy, by making money-getting its criterion of intercourse.

Whether we like it or not, we who live in this world to-day find we must either devote a considerable amount of our attention to getting and keeping money, and shape our activities — or, if you will, distort them — with a constant reference to that process, or we must accept futility. Whatever powers men want to exercise, whatever service they wish to do, it is a preliminary condition for most of them that they must, by earning something or selling something, achieve opportunity. If they cannot turn their gift into some saleable thing or get some propertied man to "patronize" them, they cannot exercise these gifts. The gift for getting is the supreme gift — all others bow before it.

Now this is not a thing that comes naturally out of the quality of man; it is the result of a blind and complex social growth, of this set of ideas working against that, and of these influences modifying those. The idea of property has run wild and become a choking universal weed. It is not the natural master-passion of a wholesome man to want constantly to own. People talk of Socialism as being a proposal "against human nature," and they would have us believe that this life of anxiety, of parsimony and speculation, of mercenary considerations and forced toil we all lead, is the complete and final expression of the social possibilities of the human soul. But, indeed, it is only quite abnormal people, people of a narrow, limited, specialized intelligence, Rockefellers, Morgans and the like, people neither great nor beautiful, mere financial monomaniacs, who can keep themselves devoted to and concentrated upon gain. To the majority of capable good human stuff, buying and selling, saving and investing, insuring oneself and managing property, is a mass of uncongenial, irrational and tiresome procedure, conflicting with the general trend of instinct and the finer interests of life. The great mass of men and women, indeed, find the whole process so against nature, that in spite of all the miseries of poverty, all the slavery of the economic disadvantage, they cannot urge themselves to this irksome cunning game of besting the world, they remain poor. Most, in a sort

of despair, make no effort; many resort to that floundering endeavour to get by accident, gambling; many achieve a precarious and unsatisfactory gathering of possessions, a few houses, a claim on a field, a few hundred pounds in some investment as incalculable as a kite in a gale; just a small minority have and get — for the most part either inheritors of riches or energetic people who, through a real dulness toward the better and nobler aspects of life, can give themselves almost entirely to grabbing and accumulation. To such as these, all common men who are not Socialists do in effect conspire to give the world.

The Anti-Socialist argues that out of this evil of encouraged and stimulated avarice comes good, and that this peculiar meanly greedy type that predominates in the individualist world to-day, the Rockefeller-Harriman type, "creates" great businesses, exploits the possibilities of nature, gives mankind railways, power, commodities. As a matter of fact, a modern intelligent community is quite capable of doing all these things infinitely better for itself, and the beneficent influence of commerce may easily become, and does easily become, the basis of a cant. Exploitation by private persons is no doubt a necessary condition to economic development in an illiterate community of low intelligence, just as flint implements marked a necessary phase in the social development of mankind; but to-day the avaricious getter, like some obsolescent organ in the body, consumes strength and threatens health. And to-day he is far more mischievous than ever he was before, because of the weakened hold of the old religious organization upon his imagination. For the most part the great fortunes of the modern world have been built up by proceedings either not socially beneficial, or in some cases positively harmful. Consider some of the commoner methods of growing rich. There is first the selling of rubbish for money, exemplified by the great patent medicine fortunes and the fortunes achieved by the debasement of journalism, the sale of prize-competition magazines and the like; next there is forestalling, the making of "corners" in such commodities as corn, nitrates, borax and the like; then there is the capture of what Americans call "franchises," securing at low terms by expedients that usually will not bear examination, the right to run some profitable public service for private profit which would

be better done in public hands — the various private enterprises for urban traffic, for example; then there are the various more or less complex financial operations, watering stock, "reconstructing," "shaking out" the ordinary shareholder, which transfer the savings of the common struggling person to the financial magnate. All the activities in this list are more or less anti-social, yet it is by practising them that the great successes of recent years have been achieved. Fortunes of a second rank have no doubt been made by building up manufactures and industries of various types by persons who have known how to buy labour cheap, organize it well and sell its produce dear, but even in these cases the social advantage of the new product is often largely discounted by the labour conditions. It is impossible, indeed, directly one faces current facts, to keep up the argument of the public good achieved by men under the incentive of gain and the necessity of that incentive to progress and economic development.

Now not only is it true that the subordination of our affairs to this spirit of gain placed our world in the hands of a peculiar, acquisitive, uncreative, wary type of person, and that the mass of people hate serving the spirit of gain and are forced to do so through the obsession of the whole community by this idea of Private Ownership, but it is also true that even now the real driving force that gets the world along is not that spirit at all, but the spirit of service. Even to-day it would be impossible for the world to get along if the mass of its population was really specialized for gain. A world of Rockefellers, Morgans and Rothschilds would perish miserably after a vigorous campaign of mutual skinning; it is only because the common run of men is better than these profit-hunters that any real and human things are achieved.

Let us go into this aspect of the question a little more fully, because it is one that appears to be least clearly grasped by those who discuss Socialism to-day.

§ 2.

This fact must be insisted upon, that most of the work of the world and all the good work is done to-day for some other motive than gain; that profit-seeking not only is not the moving power of the

world but that it cannot be, that it runs counter to the doing of effectual work in every department of life.

It is hard to know how to set about proving a fact that is to the writer's perception so universally obvious. One can only appeal to the intelligent reader to use his own personal observation upon the people about him. Everywhere he will see the property-owner doing nothing, the profit-seeker busy with unproductive efforts, with the writing of advertisements, the misrepresentation of goods, the concoction of a plausible prospectus and the extraction of profits from the toil of others, while the real necessary work of the world — I don't mean the labour and toil only, but the intelligent direction, the real planning and designing and inquiry, the management and the evolution of ideas and methods, is in the enormous majority of cases done by salaried individuals working either for a fixed wage and the hope of increments having no proportional relation to the work done, or for a wage varying within definite limits. All the engineering design, all architecture, all our public services, — the exquisite work of our museum control, for example, — all the big wholesale and retail businesses, almost all big industrial concerns, mines, estates, all these things are really in the hands of salaried or quasi-salaried persons *now* — just as they would be under Socialism. They are only possible now because all these managers, officials, employees are as a class unreasonably honest and loyal, are interested in their work and anxious to do it well, and do not seek *profits* in every transaction they handle. Give them even a small measure of security and they are content with interesting work; they are glad to set aside the urgent perpetual search for personal gain that Individualists have persuaded themselves is the ruling motive of mankind, they are glad to set these aside altogether and, as the phrase goes, "get something done." And this is true all up and down the social scale. A bricklayer is no good unless he can be interested in laying bricks. One knows whenever a domestic servant becomes mercenary, when she ceases to take, as people say, "a pride in her work," and thinks only of "tips" and getting, she becomes impossible. Does a signalman every time he pulls over a lever, or a groom galloping a horse, think of his wages, — or want to?

I will confess I find it hard to write with any patience and civility

of this argument that humanity will not work except for greed or need of money and only in proportion to the getting. It is so patently absurd. I suppose the reasonable Anti-Socialist will hardly maintain it seriously with that crudity. He will qualify. He will say that although it may be true that good work is always done for the interest of the doing or in the spirit of service, yet in order to get and keep people at work, and to keep the standard high through periods of indolence and distraction, there must be the dread of dismissal and the stimulating eye of the owner. That certainly puts the case a good deal less basely and much more plausibly.

There is, perhaps, this much truth in that, that most people do need a certain stimulus to exertion and a certain standard of achievement to do their best, but to say that this is provided by private ownership and can only be provided by private ownership is an altogether different thing. Is the British Telephone Service, for example, kept as efficient as it is — which isn't very much, by the bye, in the way of efficiency — by the protests of the shareholders or of the subscribers? Does the grocer's errand-boy loiter any less than his brother who carries the Post Office telegrams? In the matter of the public milk supply, again, would not an intelligently critical public anxious for its milk good and early be a far more formidable master than a speculative proprietor in the back room of a creamery? And when one comes to large business organizations managed by officials and owned by dispersed shareholders, the contrast is all to the advantage of the community.

No! the only proper virtues in work, the virtues that must be relied upon, and developed and rewarded in the civilized State we Socialists are seeking to bring about, are the spirit of service and the passion for doing well, the honourable competition not to get but to *do*. By sweating and debasing urgency, we get meagrely done what we might get handsomely done by the Good Will of emancipated mankind. For all who really make, who really do, the imperative of gain is the inconvenience, the enemy. Every artist, every scientific investigator, every organizer, every good workman, knows that. Every good architect knows that this is so and can tell of time after time when he has sacrificed manifest profit and taken a loss to get a thing done as he wanted it done, right and well; every good doctor,

too, has turned from profit and high fees to the moving and interesting case, to the demands of knowledge and the public health; every teacher worth his or her salt can witness to the perpetual struggle between business advantage and right teaching; every writer has faced the alternative of his æsthetic duty and the search for beauty on one hand and the "saleable" on the other. All this is as true of ordinary making as of special creative work. Every plumber capable of his business hates to have to paint his leadwork; every carpenter knows the disgust of turning out unfinished "cheap" work, however well it pays him; every tolerable cook can feel shame for an unsatisfying dish, and none the less shame because by making it materials are saved and economies achieved.

And yet, with all these facts clear as day before any observant person, *we are content to live on in an economic system that raises every man who subordinates these wholesome prides and desires to watchful, incessant getting, over the heads of every other type of character*; that in effect gives all the power and influence in our State to successful getters; that subordinates art, direction, wisdom and labour to these inferior narrow men, these men who clutch and keep.

Our social system, based on Private Ownership, encourages and glorifies this spirit of gain, and cripples and thwarts the spirit of service. You need but have your eyes once opened to its influence, and thereafter you will never cease to see how the needs and imperatives of property taint the honour and dignity of human life. Just where life should flower most freely into splendour, this chill, malign obsession most nips and cripples. The law that makes getting and keeping an imperative necessity poisons and destroys the freedom of men and women in love, in art and in every concern in which spiritual or physical beauty should be the inspiring and determining factor. Behind all the handsome professions of romantic natures the gaunt facts of monetary necessity remain the rulers of life. Every youth who must sell his art and capacity for gain, every girl who must sell herself for money, is one more sacrifice to the Minotaur of Private Ownership — before the Theseus of Socialism comes.

Opponents of Socialism, ignoring all these things and inventing with that profusion which is so remarkable a trait of the anti-Socialist

campaign, are wont to declare that we, whose first and last thought is the honour and betterment of life, seek to destroy all beauty and freedom in love, accuse us of aiming at some "human stud farm." The reader will measure the justice of that by the next chapter, but here I would say that just as the private ownership of all that is necessary to humanity, except the air and sunlight and a few things that it has been difficult to appropriate, debases work and all the common services of life, so also it taints and thwarts the emotions, and degrades the intimate physical and emotional existence of an innumerable multitude of people.

All this amounts to a huge impoverishment of life, a loss of beauty and discrimination of rich and subtle values. Human existence to-day is a mere tantalizing intimation of what it might be. It is frostbitten and dwarfed from palace to slum. It is not only that a great mass of our population is deprived of space, beauty and pleasure, but that a large proportion of such space, beauty and pleasure as there are in the world must necessarily have a meretricious taint and be in the nature of things bought and made for pay.

§ 3.

If there is one profession more than another in which devotion is implied and assumed, it is that of the doctor. It happens that on the morning when this chapter was drafted, I came upon the paragraph that follows; it seemed to me to supply just one striking concrete instance of how life is degraded by our present system, and to offer me a convenient text for a word or so more upon this question between gain and service. It is a little vague in its reference to Mr. Tompkins "of Birmingham," and I should not be surprised if it were a considerable exaggeration of what really happened. But it is true enough to life in this, that it is a common practice, a necessity with doctors in poor neighbourhoods to insist inexorably upon a fee before attendance.

"A case of medical inhumanity is reported from Birmingham. A poor man named Tompkins was taken seriously ill early on Christmas morning, and although snow was falling and the atmosphere was terribly raw, his wife left the house in search of a

doctor. The nearest practitioner declined to leave the house without being paid his fee; a second imposed the same condition, and the woman then went to the police station. As the horse ambulance was out, they could not help her, and she tried other doctors. In all the poor woman called on eight, and the only one who did not decline to get up without his fee was down with influenza. Eventually a local chemist was persuaded to see the man, and he ordered his removal to the hospital."

That is the story. You note the charge of "inhumanity" in the very first line, and in much subsequent press comment there was the same note. Apparently every one expects a doctor to be ready at any point in the day or night to attend anybody for nothing. Most Socialists are disposed to agree with the spirit of that expectation. A practising doctor should be in lifelong perpetual war against pain and disease, just as a campaigning soldier is continually alert and serving. But existing conditions will not permit that. Existing conditions require the doctor to get his fee at any cost; if he goes about doing work for nothing, they punish him with shabbiness and incapacitating need, they forbid his marriage or doom his wife and children to poverty and unhappiness. A doctor *must* make money whatever else he does or does not do; he *must* secure his fees. He is a private adventurer, competing in a crowded market for gain, and keeping his energies perforce for those who can pay best for them. To expect him to behave like a public servant whose income and outlook are secure, or like a priest whose church will never let him want or starve, is ridiculous. If you put him on a footing with the greengrocer and coal merchant, you must expect him to behave like a tradesman. Why should the press blame the poor doctor of a poor neighbourhood because a moneyless man goes short of medical attendance, when it does not for one moment blame Mr. J. D. Rockefeller because a poor man goes short of oil, or the Duke of Devonshire because tramps need lodgings in Eastbourne? One never reads this sort of paragraph: —

"A case of commercial inhumanity is reported from Birmingham. A poor man named Tompkins was seriously hungry early on Christmas morning, and although snow was falling and the atmosphere was terribly raw, his wife left the house in search of

food. The nearest grocer declined to supply provisions without being paid his price; a second imposed the same condition, and the woman then went to the police station. As that is not a soup-kitchen, they could not help her, and she tried other grocers and bread-shops. In all the poor woman called on eight, and the only one who did not decline to supply food without payment was for some reason bankrupt and out of stock. Eventually a local overseer was persuaded to see the man, and he ordered his removal to the workhouse, where, after considerable hardship, he was partly appeased with skilly."

I, myself, have known an overworked, financially worried doctor at his bedroom window call out, "Have you brought the fee?" and have pitied and understood his ugly alternatives. "Once I began that sort of thing," he explained to me a little apologetically, "they'd none of them pay — none."

The Socialist's remedy for this squalid state of affairs is plain and simple. Medicine is a public service, an honourable devotion; it should no more be a matter of profit-making than the food-supply service or the house-supply service — or salvation. It should be a part of the organization of a civilized State to have a Public Health service of well-paid, highly-educated men distributed over the country and closely correlated with public research departments and a reserve of specialists, who would be as ready and eager to face dangers and to sacrifice themselves for honour and social necessity as soldiers or sailors. I believe every honourable man in the medical profession under forty now would rather it were so. It is, indeed, a transition from private enterprise to public organization that is already beginning. We have the first intimation of the change in the appearance of the medical officer of health, underpaid, overworked and powerless though he is at the present time. It cannot be long before the manifest absurdity of our present conditions begins a process of socialization of the medical profession entirely analogous to that which has changed three-fourths of the teachers in Great Britain from private adventurers to public servants in the last forty years.

And that is the aim of Socialism all along the line; to convert one public service after another from a chaotic profit-scramble of proprietors amidst a mass of sweated employees into a secure and

disciplined service, in which every man will work for honour, promotion, achievement and the commonweal.

I write a "secure and disciplined service," and I intend by that not simply an exterior but an interior discipline. Let us have done with this unnatural theory that men may submit unreservedly to the guidance of "self-interest." Self-interest never took a man or a community to any other end than damnation. For all services there is necessary a code of honour and devotion which a man must set up for himself and obey, to which he must subordinate a number of his impulses. The must is seconded by an internal imperative. Men and women *want* to have a code of honour. In the army, for example, there is among the officers particularly, a tradition of courage, cleanliness and good form, more imperative than any law; in the little band of men who have given the world all that we mean by science, the little host of volunteers and underpaid workers who have achieved the triumphs of research, there is a tradition of self-abnegation and of an immense, painstaking, self-forgetful veracity. These traditions work. They add something to the worth of every man who comes under them.

Every writer, again, knows clearly the difference between gain-seeking and doing good work, and few there are who have not at times done something, as they say, "to please themselves." Then in the studio, for all the non-moral protests of Bohemia, there is a tradition, an admirable tradition, of disregard for mercenary imperatives, a scorn of shams and plagiarism that triumphs again and again over economic laws. The public services of the coming civilization will demand, and will develop, a far completer discipline and tradition of honour. Against the development and persistence of all such honourable codes now, against every attempt at personal nobility, at a new chivalry, at sincere artistry, our present individualist system wages pitiless warfare, says in effect, "Fools you are! Look at Rockefeller! Look at Pierpont Morgan! Get money! All your sacrifices only go to their enrichment. You cannot serve humanity however much you seek to do so. They block your way, enormously receptive of all you give. All the increment of human achievement goes to them — they own it *a priori*.... Get money! Money is freedom to do, to keep, to rule. Do you care nothing for

your wives and children? Are you content to breed servants and dependants for the children of these men? Make things beautiful, make things abundant, make life glorious! Fools! if you work and sacrifice yourselves and do not *get*, they will possess. Your sons shall be the loan-monger's employees, your daughters handmaidens to the millionaire. Or, if you cannot face that, go childless, and let your life-work gild the palace of the millionaire's still more acquisitive descendants!"

Who can ignore the base scramble for money under these alternatives?

§ 4.

Let me here insert a very brief paragraph to point out one particular thing, and that is that Socialism does not propose to "abolish competition" — as many hasty and foolish antagonists declare. If the reader has gone through what has preceded this he will know that this is not so. Socialism trusts to competition, looks to competition for the service and improvement of the world. And in order that competition between man and man may have free play, Socialism seeks to abolish one particular form of competition, the competition to get and hold property — even to marry property, that degrades our present world. But it would leave men free to compete for fame, for service, for salaries, for position and authority, for leisure, for love and honour.

§ 5.

And now let me take up certain difficulties the student of Socialism encounters. He comes thus far perhaps with the Socialist argument, and then his imagination gets to work trying to picture a world in which a moiety of the population, perhaps even the larger moiety, is employed by the State, and in which the whole population is educated by the State and insured of a decent and comfortable care and subsistence during youth and old age. He then begins to think of how all this vast organization is to be managed, and with that his real difficulties begin.

Now I for one am prepared to take these difficulties very seriously, as the latter part of this book will show. I will even go so far as to say that, to my mind, the contemporary Socialist controversialist meets all this system of objections far too cavalierly. These difficulties are real difficulties for the convinced Socialist as for the inquirer; they open up problems that have still to be solved before the equipment of Socialism is complete. "How will you Socialists get the right men in the right place for the work that has to be done? How will you arrange promotion? How will you determine" (I put the argument in its crudest form) "who is to engage in historical research in the Bodleian, and who is to go out seaward in November and catch mackerel?" Such "posers" — they have a thousand variants — convey the spirit of the living resistance to Socialism; they explain why every rational man is not an enraptured Socialist at the present time.

Throughout the rest of this book I hope that the reader will be able to see growing together in this aspect and then in that, in this and that suggestion, the complex solution of this complex system of difficulties. My object in raising them now is not to dispose of them, but to give them the fullest recognition — and to ask the student to read on. In all these matters the world is imperfect now, and it will still be imperfect under Socialism — though, I firmly believe, with an infinitely lesser and altogether nobler imperfection.

But I do want to point out here that though these are reasonable and, to all undogmatic men, most helpful criticisms of the Socialist design, they are no sort of justification for things as they are. All the difficulties that the ordinary exposition of Socialism seems to leave unsolved are at least equally not solved now. Only rarely does the right man seem to struggle to his place of adequate opportunity. Men and women get their chance in various ways; some of implacable temper and versatile gifts thrust themselves to the position they need for the exercise of their powers; others display an astonishing facility in securing honours and occasions they can then only waste; others, outside their specific gift, are the creatures of luck or the victims of modesty, tactlessness or incapacity. Most of the large businesses of the world now are in the hands of private proprietors and managed either directly by an owner or by directors or managers acting for

directors. The quality of promotion or the recognition of capacity varies very much in these great concerns, but they are on the whole probably inferior to the public services. Even where the administration is keenest it must be remembered it is not seeking the men who work the machine best, but the men who can work it cheapest and with the maximum of profit. It is pure romancing to represent the ordinary business magnate as being in perpetual search for capacity among the members of his staff. He wants them to get along and not make trouble.

Among the smaller businesses that still, I suppose, constitute the bulk of the world's economic body, capacity is enormously hampered. I was once an apprentice in a chemist's shop, and also once in a draper's — two of my brothers have been shop assistants, and so I am still able to talk understandingly with clerks and employees, and I know that in all that world all sorts of minor considerations obstruct the very beginnings of efficient selection. Every shop is riddled with jealousies, "sucking up to the gov'nor" is the universal crime, and among the women in many callings promotion is too often tainted by still baser suspicions. No doubt in a badly criticized public service there is such a thing as "sucking up to" the head of the department, but at its worst it is not nearly so bad as things may be in a small private concern under a petty autocrat.

In America it is said that the public services are inferior in personal quality to the staffs of the great private business organizations. My own impression is that, considering the salaries paid, they are, so far as Federal concerns go, immeasurably superior. In State and municipal affairs, American conditions offer no satisfactory criterion; the Americans are, for reasons I have discussed elsewhere,8 a "State-blind" people concentrated upon private getting; they have been negligent of public concerns, and the public appointments have been left to the peculiarly ruffianly type of politician their unfortunate Constitution and their individualist traditions have evolved. In England, too, public servants are systematically undersalaried, so that the big businesses have merely to pay reasonably well to secure the pick of the national capacity. Moreover, it must be remembered by the reader that the public services do not advertise, and that the private businesses do; so that

while there is the fullest ventilation of any defects in our military or naval organization, there is a very considerable check upon the discussion of individualist incapacity. An editor will rush into print with the flimsiest imputations upon the breech of a new field-gun or the housing of the militia at Aldershot, but he thinks twice before he proclaims that the preserved fruits that pay his proprietor a tribute of some hundreds a year are an unwholesome embalmment of decay. On the whole it is probable that in spite of scandalously bad pay and of the embarrassment of party considerations, the British Navy, Post Office, and Civil Service generally, and the educational work and much of the transit and building work of the London County Council and of many of the greater English and Scotch municipalities, are as well managed as any private businesses in the world.

On the other hand, one must admit there are political and social conditions that can carry the quality of the State service almost as low as the lowest type of private enterprise. It is little marvel that under the typical eighteenth century monarchy, when the way to ship, regiment and the apostolic succession alike lay through the ante-chamber of the king's mistress, there was begotten that absolute repudiation of State Control to which Herbert Spencer was destined at last to give the complete expression, that irrational, passionate belief that whatever else is right the State is necessarily incompetent and wrong….

The gist of this matter seems to be that where you have honourable political institutions, free speech and a general high level of intelligence and education, you will have an efficient criticism of men and their work and powers, and you will get a wholesome system of public promotion and many right men in the right place. The higher the collective intelligence, that is to say, the higher is the collective possibility. Under Socialist institutions which will give education and a sense of personal security to every one, this necessity of criticism is likely to be most freely, frankly and disinterestedly provided. But it is well to keep in mind the entire dependence of Socialism upon a high level of intelligence, education and freedom. Socialist institutions, as I understand them, are only possible in a civilized State, in a State in which the whole population can read, write, discuss, participate and in a considerable measure

understand. Education must precede the Socialist State. Socialism, modern Socialism that is to say, such as I am now concerned with, is essentially an exposition of and training in certain general ideas; it is impossible in an illiterate community, a basely selfish community, or in a community without the capacity to use the machinery and the apparatus of civilization. At the best, and it is a poor best, a stupid, illiterate population can but mock Socialism with a sort of bureaucratic tyranny; for a barbaric population too large and various for the folk-meeting, there is nothing but monarchy and the ownership of the king; for a savage tribe, tradition and the undocumented will of the strongest males. Socialism, I will admit, presupposes intelligence, and demands as fundamental necessities schools, organized science, literature and a sense of the State.

CHAPTER VI WOULD SOCIALISM DESTROY THE HOME?

§ 1.

For reasons that will become clearer when we tell something of the early history and development of Socialism, the Socialist propositions with regard to the family lie open to certain grave misconceptions. People are told — and told quite honestly and believingly — that Socialism will destroy the home, will substitute a sort of human stud farm for that warm and intimate nest of human life, will bring up our children in incubators and crèches and — Institutions generally.

But before we come to what modern Socialists do desire in these matters, it may be well to consider something of the present reality of the home people are so concerned about. The reader must not idealize. He must not shut his eyes to facts, dream, as Lord Hugh Cecil and Lord Robert Cecil — those admirable champions of a bad cause — probably do, of a beautiful world of homes, orderly, virtuous, each a little human fastness, each with its porch and creeper, each with its books and harmonium, its hymn-singing on Sunday night, its dear mother who makes such wonderful cakes, its strong and happy father — and then say, "These wicked Socialists want to destroy all this." Because, in the first place, such homes are being destroyed and made impossible now by the very causes against which Socialism fights, and because in this world at the present time very few homes are at all like this ideal. In reality every poor home is haunted by the spectre of irregular employment and undermined by untrustworthy insurance, it must shelter in insanitary dwellings and its children eat adulterated food because none other can be got. And that, I am sorry to say, it is only too easy to prove, by a second appeal to a document of which I have already made use.

One hears at times still of the austere, virtuous, kindly, poor Scotch home, one has a vision of the "Cottar's Saturday night." "Perish all other dreams," one cries, "rather than that such goodness and simplicity should end." But now let us look at the average poor

Scotch home, and compare it with our dream.

Here is the reality.

These entries come from the recently published Edinburgh Charity Organization Society's report upon the homes of about fourteen hundred school-children, that is to say, about eight hundred Scotch homes. Remember they are *sample homes*. They are, as I have already suggested by quoting authorities for London and York — and as any district visitor will recognize — little worse and little better than the bulk of poor people's homes in Scotland and England at the present time. I am just going to copy down — not a selection, mind — but a series of consecutive entries taken haphazard from this implacable list. My last quotation was from cases 1, 2, 3 and so on; I've now thrust my fingers among the pages and come upon numbers 191 and 192, etc. Here they are, one after the other, just as they come in the list: —

"191. A widow and child lodging with a married son. Three grown-up people and three children occupy one room and bed-closet. The widow leads a wandering life, and is intemperate. The house is thoroughly bad and insanitary. The child is pallid and delicate looking, and receives little attention, for the mother is usually out working. He plays in the streets. Five children are dead. Boy has glands and is fleabitten. Evidence from Police, School Officer and Employer.

"192. A miserable home. Father dead. Mother and eldest son careless and indifferent. Of the five children, the two eldest are grown up. The elder girl is working, and she is of a better type and might do well under better circumstances; she looks overworked. The mother is supposed to char; she gets parish relief, and one child earns out of school hours. Four children are dead. The children at school are dirty and ragged. The mother could get work if she did not drink. The children at school get free dinners and clothing, and the family is favourably reported on by the Church. The second child impetigo; neck glands; body dirty. The third, glands; dirty and fleabitten. Housing: six in two small rooms. Evidence from Parish Sister, Parish Council, School Charity, Police, Teacher, Children's Employment and School Officer.

"193. A widow, apparently respectable and well-doing, but may

drink. She must in any case have a struggle to maintain her family, though she has much help from Parish, Church, etc. She works out. The children at school are fed, and altogether a large amount of charity must be received, as two Churches have interested themselves in the matter. Three children dead. Housing: three in two tiny rooms. Evidence from Church, Parish Council, School Charity, Police, Parish Sister, Teacher, Insurance and Factor.

"194. The father drinks, and, to a certain extent, the mother; but the home is tidy and clean, and the rent is regularly paid. Indeed, there is no sign of poverty. There is a daughter who has got into trouble. Only two children out of nine are alive. The father comes from the country and seems intelligent enough, but he appears to have degenerated. They go to a mission, it is believed for what they can get from it. Housing: four in two rooms. Evidence from Club, Church, Factor and Police.

"195. The husband is intemperate. The mother is quiet, but it is feared that she drinks also. She seems to have lost control of her little boy of seven. The parents married very young, and the first child was born before the marriage. The man's work is not regular, and probably things are not improving with him. Still, the house is fairly comfortable, and they pay club money regularly, and have a good police report. One child has died. Housing: five in two rooms. Evidence from Parish Sister, Police, Club, Employer, School-mistress and Factor.

"196. A filthy, dirty house. The most elementary notions of cleanliness seem disregarded. The father's earnings are not large, and the house is insanitary, but more might be made of things if there were sobriety and thrift. There does not, however, appear to be *great* drunkenness, and five small children must be difficult to bring up on the money coming in. There are two women in the house. The eldest child dirty and fleabitten. Housing: seven in two rooms. Evidence from Police, Club, Employer, School-mistress and School Officer.

"197. The parents are thoroughly drunken and dissolute. They have sunk almost to the lowest depths of social degradation. There is no furniture in the house, and the five children are neglected and starved. One boy earns a trifle out of school hours. All accounts agree as to the character of the father and mother, though they have

not been in the hands of the police. Second child has rickets, bronchitis, slight glands and is bow-legged. Two children have died. Housing: seven in two rooms. Evidence from Police, Parish Sister, Employer and School-mistress.

"198. This house is fairly comfortable, and there is no evidence of drink, but the surroundings have a bad and depressing effect on the parents. The children are sent to school very untidy and dirty, and are certainly underfed. The father's wages are very small, and only one boy is working; there are six altogether. The mother chars occasionally. Food and clothing is given to school-children. The man is in a saving club. The eldest child fleabitten; body unwashed. The second, glands; fleabitten and dirty; cretinoid; much undergrown. Two have died. Housing: seven in two rooms. Evidence from School Charity, Factor, Police and School-mistress.

"199. The house was fairly comfortable and the man appeared to be intelligent and the wife hard-working, but the police reports are very bad; there are several convictions against the former. He has consequently been idle, and the burden of the family has rested on the wife. There are six children, two of them are working and earning a little, but a large amount of charity from school, church and private generosity keeps the family going. The children are fearfully verminous. There is a suggestion that some baby farming is done, so many are about. Eldest child anæmic; glands; head badly crusted; lice very bad. Second child, numerous glands; head covered with crusts; lice very bad. Four have died. Housing: eight in two rooms. Evidence from Police, Teacher, Church, Parish Sister and Factor.

"200. The home is wretched and practically without furniture. The parents were married at ages 17 and 18. One child died, and their mode of life has been reckless, if not worse. The present means of subsistence cannot be ascertained, as the man is idle; however, he recently joined the Salvation Army and signed the pledge. The child at school is helped with food and clothes. The girl very badly bitten; lice and fleas, hair nits. Housing: four in one room. Evidence from Church, School Charity, Co-operative, Employer, Parish Sister, Police and School-mistress."

Total of children still living, 39.

Total of children dead, 27.

Need I go on? They are all after this fashion, eight hundred of them.

And if you turn from the congested town to the wholesome, simple country, here is the sort of home you have. This passage is a cutting from the *Daily News* of Jan. 1, 1907; and its assertions have never been contradicted. It fills one with only the mildest enthusiasm for the return of our degenerate townsmen "back to the land." I came upon it as I read that morning's paper after drafting this chapter.

"Our attention has been called to a sordid Herefordshire tragedy recently revealed at an inquest on a child aged one year and nine months, who died in Weobly Workhouse of pneumonia. She entered the institution emaciated to half the proper weight of her age and with a broken arm — till then undiscovered — that the doctors found to be of about three weeks' standing. Her mother was shown to be in an advanced stage of consumption; one child had died at the age of seven months, and seven now remain. The father, whose work consists in tending eighty-nine head of cattle and ten pigs, is in receipt of eleven shillings a week, three pints of skim milk a day, and a cottage that has been condemned by the sanitary inspector and described as having no bedroom windows. We are not surprised to learn that the coroner, before taking the verdict, asked the house surgeon, who gave evidence, whether he could say that death 'was accelerated by anything.' Our wonder is that the reply was in the negative. The cottage is in the possession of the farmer who employs the man, but his landlord is said to be liable for repairs. That landlord is a clergyman of the Church of England, a J.P., a preserver of game, and owner of three or four thousand acres of land."

And here, again, is the *Times*, by no means a Socialist organ, generalizing from official statements: —

"Houses unfit for human habitation, rooms destitute of light and ventilation, overcrowding in rural cottages, contaminated water supplies, accumulations of every description of filth and refuse, a total absence of drainage, a reign of unbelievable dirt in milk-shops and slaughter-houses, a total neglect of bye-laws, and an inadequate supervision by officials who are frequently incompetent; such, in a general way, is the picture that is commonly presented in the reports of inquiries in certain rural districts made by medical officers of the

Local Government Board."

And even of such homes as this there is an insufficiency. In 1891-95, more than a quarter of the deaths in London occurred in workhouses and other charitable institutions.9 Now suppose the modern Socialist did want to destroy the home; suppose that some Socialists have in the past really wanted to do so, remember that that is the reality they wanted to destroy.

But does the modern Socialist want to destroy the home? Rather, I hold, he wants to save it from a destruction that is even now going on, to — I won't say restore it, because I have very grave doubts if the world has ever yet held a high percentage of good homes, but raise it to the level of its better realizations of happiness and security. And it is not only I say this, but all my fellow Socialists say it too. Read, for example, that admirable paper, "Economic and Social Justice," in Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's *Studies Scientific and Social*, and you will have the clearest statement of the attitude of a representative modern Socialist to this question.

§ 2.

The reader must get quite out of his head the idea that the present system maintains the home and social purity.

In London at the present time there are thousands of prostitutes; in Paris, in Berlin, in every great city of Europe or America, thousands; in the whole of Christendom there cannot be less than a million of these ultimate instances of our civilization. They are the logical extremity of a civilization based on cash payments. Each of these women represents a smashed and ruined home and wasted possibilities of honour, service and love, each one is so much sheer waste. For the food they consume, their clothing, their lodging, they render back nothing to the community as a whole, and only a gross, dishonouring satisfaction to their casual employers. And don't imagine they are inferior women, that there has been any selection of the unfit in their sterilization; they are, one may see for oneself, well above the average in physical vigour, in spirit and beauty. Few of them have come freely to their trade, the most unnatural in the world; few of them have anything but shame and loathing for their life; and

most of them must needs face their calling fortified by drink and drugs. For virtuous people do not begin to understand the things they endure. But it *pays* to be a prostitute, it does not pay to be a mother and a home-maker, and the gist of the present system of individual property is that a thing *must pay* to exist…. So much for one aspect of our present system of a "world of homes."

Consider next the great army of employed men and women, shop assistants, clerks, and so forth, living in, milliners, typists, teachers, servants who have practically no prospect whatever of marrying and experiencing those domestic blisses the Socialist is supposed to want to rob them of. They are involuntary monks and nuns, celibate not from any high or religious motive, but through economic hardship. Consider all that amount of pent-up, thwarted or perverted emotional possibility, the sheer irrational waste of life implied….

We have glanced at the reality of the family among the poor; what is it among the rich? Does the wealthy mother of the upper middle-class or upper class really sit among her teeming children, teaching them in an atmosphere of love and domestic exaltation? As a matter of fact she is a conspicuously devoted woman if she gives them an hour a day — the rest of the time they spend with nurse or governess, and when they are ten or eleven off they go to board at the preparatory school. Whenever I find among my press-cuttings some particularly scathing denunciation of Socialists as home-destroyers, as people who want to snatch the tender child from the weeping mother to immure it in some terrible wholesale institution, I am apt to walk out into my garden, from which three boarding-schools for little children of the prosperous classes are visible, and rub my eyes and renew that sight and marvel at my kind….

Consider now, with these things in mind, the real drift of the first main Socialist proposition, and compare its tendency with these contemporary conditions. Socialism regards parentage under proper safeguards and good auspices as "not only a duty but a service" to the State; that is to say it proposes to pay for good parentage — in other words to *endow the home*. Socialism comes not to destroy but to save.

And how will the endowment be done? Very probably it will be found that the most convenient and best method of doing this will be

to subsidize the mother — who is, or should be, the principal person concerned in this affair — for her children; to assist her, not as a charity, but as a right in the period before the birth of her anticipated child, and afterwards to provide her with support for that child so long as it is kept clean in a tolerable home, in good health, well taught and properly clad. It will say to the sound mothering woman, Not type-writing, nor shirt-sewing, nor charing is your business — these children are. Neglect them, ill-treat them, prove incompetent, and your mother-right will cease and we shall take them away from you and do what we can for them; love them, serve them and, through them, the State, and you will serve yourself. Is that destroying the home? Is it not rather the rescue of the home from economic destruction?

Certain restrictions, it is true, upon our present way of doing things would follow almost necessarily from the adoption of these methods. It is manifest that no intelligent State would willingly endow the homes of hopelessly diseased parents, of imbecile fathers or mothers, of obstinately criminal persons or people incapable of education. It is evident, too, that the State would not tolerate chance fatherhood, that it would insist very emphatically upon marriage and the purity of the home, much more emphatically than we do now. Such a case as the one numbered 197, a beautiful instance of the sweet, old-fashioned, homely, simple life of the poor we Socialists are supposed to be vainly endeavouring to undermine — would certainly be dealt with in a drastic and conclusive spirit….

§ 3.

So far Socialism goes toward regenerating the family and sustaining the home. But let there be no ambiguity on one point. It will be manifest that while it would reinvigorate and confirm the home, it does quite decidedly tend to destroy what has hitherto been the most typical form of the family throughout the world, that is to say the family which is in effect the private property of the father, the patriarchal family. The tradition of the family in which we are still living, we must remember, has developed from a former state in which man owned the wife or child as completely as he owned horse

or hut. He was the family's irresponsible owner. Socialism seeks to make him and his wife its jointly responsible heads. Until quite recently the husband might beat his wife and put all sorts of physical constraint upon her; he might starve her or turn her out of doors; her property was his; her earnings were his; her children were his. Under certain circumstances it was generally recognized he might kill her. To-day we live in a world that has faltered from the rigours of this position, but which still clings to its sentimental consequences. The wife now-a-days is a sort of pampered and protected half-property. If she leaves her husband for another man, it is regarded not as a public offence on her part, but as a sort of mitigated theft on the part of the latter, entitling the former to damages. Politically she doesn't exist; the husband sees to all that. But on the other hand he mustn't drive her by physical force, but only by the moral pressure of disagreeable behaviour. Nor has he the same large powers of violence over her children that once he had. He may beat — within limits. He may dictate their education so far as his religious eccentricities go, and be generous or meagre with the supplies. He may use his "authority" as a vague power far on into their adult life, if he is a forcible character. But it is at its best a shorn splendour he retains. He has ceased to be an autocrat and become a constitutional monarch; the State, sustained by the growing reasonableness of the world, intervenes more and more between him and the wife and children who were once powerless in his hands.

The Socialist would end that old legal predominance altogether. The woman, he declares, must be as important and responsible a citizen in the State as the man. She must cease to be in any sense or degree private property. The man must desist from tyrannizing in the nursery and do his proper work in the world. So far, therefore, as the family is a name for a private property in a group of related human beings vesting in one of them, the Head of the Family, Socialism repudiates it altogether as unjust and uncivilized; but so far as the family is a grouping of children with their parents, with the support and consent and approval of the whole community, Socialism advocates it, would make it for the first time, so far as a very large moiety of our population is concerned, a possible and efficient thing.

Moreover, as the present writer has pointed out elsewhere,10 this

putting of the home upon a public basis destroys its autonomy. Just as the Socialist and all who have the cause of civilization at heart would substitute for the inefficient, wasteful, irresponsible, unqualified "private adventure school" that did such infinite injury to middle-class education in Great Britain during the Victorian period a public school, publicly and richly endowed and responsible and controlled, so the Socialist would put an end to the uncivilized go-as-you-please of the private adventure family. "Socialism in fact is the State family. The old family of the private individual must vanish before it just as the old water-works of private enterprise or the old gas company."11 To any one not idiotic nor blind with a passionate desire to lie about Socialism, the meaning of this passage is perfectly plain. Socialism seeks to broaden the basis of the family and to make the once irresponsible parent responsible to the State for its welfare. Socialism creates parental responsibility.

§ 4.

And here we may give a few words to certain questions that are in reality outside the scope of Socialists altogether, special questions involving the most subtle ethical and psychological decisions. Upon them Socialists are as widely divergent as people who are not Socialists, and Socialism as a whole presents nothing but an open mind. They are questions that would be equally open to discussion in relation to an Individualist State or to any sort of State. Certain religious organizations have given clear and imperative answers to some or all of these questions, and so far as the reader is a member of such an organization, he may rest assured that Socialism, as an authoritative whole, has nothing to say for or against his convictions. This cannot be made too plain by Socialists, nor too frequently repeated by them. A very large part of the so-called arguments against them arise out of deliberate misrepresentations and misconceptions of some alleged Socialist position in these indifferent matters.

I refer more particularly to the numerous problems in private morality and social organization arising from sexual conduct. May a man love one woman only in his life, or more, and may a woman

love only one man? Should marriage be an irrevocable life union or not? Is sterile physical love possible, permissible, moral, honourable or intolerable? Upon all these matters individual Socialists, like most other people, have their doubts and convictions, but it is no more just to saddle all Socialism with their private utterances and actions upon these issues than it would be to declare that the Roman Catholic Communion is hostile to beauty because worshippers coming and going have knocked the noses off the figures on the bronze doors of the Church of San Zeno at Verona, or that Christianity involves the cultivation of private vermin, because of the condition of Saint Thomas à Beckett's hair shirt.12 To argue in that way is to give up one's birthright as a reasonable being.

Upon certain points modern Socialism is emphatic; women and children must not be dealt with as private property, women must be citizens equally with men, children must not be casually born, their parents must be known and worthy; that is to say there must be deliberation in begetting children, marriage under conditions. And there Socialism stops.

Socialism has not even worked out what are the reasonable conditions of a State marriage contract, and it would be ridiculous to pretend it had. This is not a defect in Socialism particularly, but a defect in human knowledge. At countless points in the tangle of questions involved, the facts are not clearly known. Socialism does not present any theory whatever about the duration of marriage, whether, as among the Roman Catholics, it should be absolutely for life, or, as some hold, for ever; or, as among the various divorce-permitting Protestant bodies, until this or that eventuality; or even, as Mr. George Meredith suggested some years ago, for a term of ten years. In these matters Socialism does not decide, and it is quite reasonable to argue that Socialism need not decide. Socialism maintains an attitude of neutrality. And the practical effect of an attitude of neutrality is to leave these things as they are at present. The State is not urgently concerned with these questions. So long as a marriage contract provides for the health and sanity of the contracting parties, and for their proper behaviour so far as their offspring is concerned, and for so long as their offspring need it, the demands of the community, as the guardian of the children, are

satisfied. That certainly would be the minimum marriage, the State marriage, and I, for my own part, would exact nothing more *in the legal contract*. But a number of more representative Socialists than I are for a legally compulsory life marriage. Some — but they are mostly of the older, less definite, Social Democratic teaching — are for a looser tie. Let us clearly understand that we are here talking of the legal marriage only — the State's share. We are not talking of what people will do, but of how much they are to be made to do. A vast amount of stupid confusion arises from forgetting that. What was needed more than that minimum I have specified would be provided, I believe — it always has been provided hitherto, even to excess — by custom, religion, social influence, public opinion.

For it may not be altogether superfluous to remind the reader how little of our present moral code is ruled by law. We have in England, it is true, certain laws prescribing the conditions of the marriage contract, penalties of a quite ferocious kind to prevent bigamy, and a few quite trivial disabilities put upon those illegitimately born. But there is no legal compulsion upon any one to marry now, and far less legal restriction upon irregular and careless parentage than would be put in any scientifically organized Socialism. Do let us get it out of our heads that monogamy is enforced by law at the present time. It is not. You are only forbidden to enter into normal marriage with more than one person. If a man of means chooses to have as many concubines as King Solomon and live with them all openly, the law (I am speaking of Great Britain) will do nothing to prevent him. If he chooses to go through any sort of nuptial ceremony, provided it does not simulate a legal marriage, with some or all of them he may. And to any one who evades the legal marriage bond, there is a vast range of betrayal and baseness as open as anything can be. "Free Love" is open to any one who chooses to practise it to-day. The real controlling force in these matters is social influence, public opinion, a sort of conscience and feeling for the judgment of others that is part of the normal human equipment. And the same motives and considerations that keep people's lives pure and discreet now, will be all the more freely in operation under Socialism, when money will count for less and reputation for more than they do now. Modern Socialism is a project to change the organization of living and the

circle of human ideas; but it is no sort of scheme to attempt the impossible, to change human nature and to destroy the social sensitiveness of man.

I do not deny the intense human interest of these open questions, the imperative need there is to get the truth, whether one considers it to be one's own truth or the universal truth, upon them. But my point is that they are to be discussed apart from Socialist theory, and that anyhow they have nothing to do with Socialist politics. It is no doubt interesting to discuss the benefits of vaccination and the justice and policy of its public compulsion, to debate whether one should eat meat or confine oneself to a vegetable dietary, whether the overhead or the slot system is preferable for tramway traction, whether steamboats are needed on the Thames in winter, and whether it is wiser to use metal or paper for money; but none of these things have anything to do with the principles of Socialism. Nor need we decide whether Whistler, Raphael or Carpaccio has left us the most satisfying beauty, or which was the greater musician, Wagner, Scarlatti or Beethoven, nor pronounce on the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy in any prescribed way, because we accept Socialism.

Coming to graver matters there are ardent theologians who would create an absolute antagonism between Socialism and Christianity, who would tie up Socialism with some extraordinary doctrine of Predestination, or deny the possibility of a Christian being a Socialist or a Socialist being a Christian. But these are matters on different planes. In a sense Socialism is a religion; to me it is a religion, in the sense, that is, that it gives a work to do that is not self-seeking, that it determines one in a thousand indecisions, that it supplies that imperative craving of so many human souls, a devotion. But I do not see why a believer in any of the accepted creeds of Christianity, from the Apostles' Creed upward, should not also whole-heartedly give himself to this great work of social reconstruction. To believe in a real and personal Heaven is surely not to deny earth with its tragedy, its sorrows, its splendid possibilities. It is simply to believe a little more concretely than I do, that is all. To assert the brotherhood of man under God seems to me to lead logically to a repudiation of the severities of Private Ownership — that is to Socialism. When the rich young man was told to give up his property to follow Christ,

when the disciples were told to leave father and mother, it seems to me ridiculous to present Christianity as opposed to the self-abnegation of the two main generalizations of Socialism — that relating to property in things, and that relating to property in persons. It is true that the Church of Rome has taken the deplorable step of forbidding Socialism (or at least *Socialismus*) to its adherents; but there is no need for Socialists to commit a reciprocal stupidity. Let us Socialists at any rate keep our intellectual partitions up. The Church that now quarrels with Socialism once quarrelled with astronomy and geology, and astronomers and geologists went on with their own business. Both religion and astronomy are still alive and in the same world together. And the Vatican observatory, by the bye, is honourably distinguished for its excellent stellar photographs. Perhaps, after all, the Church does not mean by *Socialismus* Socialism as it is understood in English; perhaps it simply means the dogmatically anti-Christian Socialism of the Continental type.

I am not advocating indifference to any interest I have here set aside as irrelevant to Socialism. Men have discussed and will, I hope, continue to discuss such questions as I have instanced with passionate zeal; but Socialism need not be entangled by their decisions. We can go on our road to Socialism, we can get to Socialism, to the Civilized State, whichever answer is given to any of these questions, great or small.

CHAPTER VII WOULD MODERN SOCIALISM ABOLISH ALL PROPERTY?

§ 1.

Having in the previous chapter cleared up a considerable mass of misconception and possibility of misrepresentation about the attitude of Socialism to the home, let us now devote a little more attention to the current theory of property and say just exactly where Modern Socialism stands in that matter.

The plain fact of the case is that the Socialist, whether he wanted to or no, would no more be able to abolish personal property altogether than he would be able to abolish the human liver. The extension of one's personality to things outside oneself is indeed as natural and instinctive a thing as eating. But because the liver is necessary and inevitable, there is no reason why it should be enlarged to uncomfortable proportions, and because eating is an unconquerable instinct there is no excuse for repletion. The position of the modern Socialist is that the contemporary idea of personal property is enormously exaggerated and improperly extended to things that ought not to be "private"; not that it is not a socially most useful and desirable idea within its legitimate range.

There can be no doubt that many of those older writers who were "Socialists before Socialism," Plato, for instance, and Sir Thomas More, did very roundly abolish private property altogether. They were extreme Communists, and so were many of the earlier Socialists; in More's Utopia, doors might not be fastened, they stood open; one hadn't even a private room. These earlier writers wished to insist upon the need of self-abnegation in the ideal State, and to startle and confound, they insisted overmuch. The early Christians, one gathers, were almost completely communistic, and that interesting experiment in Christian Socialism (of a rather unorthodox type of Christianity), the American Oneida community, was successfully communistic in every respect for many years. But the modern Socialist is not a communist; the modern Socialist, making his scheme of social reconstruction for the whole world and for every

type of character, recognizes the entire impracticability of such dreams, recognizing, too, it may be, the sacrifice of human personality and distinction such ideals involve.

The word "property," one must remember, is a slightly evasive word. Absolute property hardly exists — absolute, that is to say, in the sense of unlimited right of disposal; almost all property is incomplete and relative. A man, under our present laws, has no absolute property even in his own life; he is restrained from suicide and punished if he attempt it. He may not go offensively filthy nor indecently clad; there are limits to his free use of his body. The owner of a house, of land, of a factory is subject to all sorts of limitations, building regulations for example, and so is the owner of horse or dog. Nor again is any property exempt from taxation. Even now property is a limited thing, and it is well to bear that much in mind. It can be defined as something one may do "what one likes with," subject only to this or that specific restriction, and at any time, it would seem, the State is at least legally entitled to increase the quantity and modify the nature of the restriction. The extremest private property is limited to a certain sanity and humanity in its use.

In that sense every adult now-a-days has private property in his or her own person, in clothes, in such personal implements as hand-tools, as a bicycle, as a cricket-bat or golf-sticks. In quite the same sense would he have it under Socialism so far as these selfsame things go. The sense of property in such things is almost instinctive; my little boys of five and three have the keenest sense of *mine* and (almost, if not quite so vividly) *thine* in the matter of toys and garments. The disposition of modern Socialism is certainly no more to override these natural tendencies than it is to fly in the face of human nature in regard to the home. The disposition of modern Socialism is indeed far more in the direction of confirming and insuring this natural property. And again modern Socialism has no designs upon the money in a man's pocket. It is quite true that the earlier and extreme Socialist theorists did in their communism find no use for money, but I do not think there are any representative Socialists now who do not agree that the State must pay and receive in money, that money is indispensable to human freedom. The featurelessness of money, its universal convertibility, gives human

beings a latitude of choice and self-expression in its spending that is inconceivable without its use.

All such property Socialism will ungrudgingly sustain, and it will equally sustain property in books and objects of æsthetic satisfaction, in furnishing, in the apartments or dwelling-house a man or woman occupies and in their household implements. It will sustain far more property than the average working-class man has to-day. Nor will it prevent savings or accumulations, if men do not choose to expend their earnings — nor need it interfere with lending. How far it will permit or countenance usury is another question altogether. There will no doubt remain, after all the work-a-day needs of the world have been met by a scientific public organization of the general property in Nature, a great number of businesses and enterprises and new and doubtful experiments outside the range of legitimate State activity. In these, interested and prosperous people will embark their surplus money as shareholders in a limited liability company, making partnership profits or losses in an entirely proper manner. But whether there should be debentures and mortgages or preference shares, or suchlike manipulatory distinctions, or interest in any shape or form, I am inclined to doubt. A money-lender should share risk as well as profit — that is surely the moral law in lending that forbids usury; he should not be allowed to bleed a failing business with his inexorable percentage and so eat up the ordinary shareholder or partner any more than the landlord should be allowed to eat up the failing tenant for rent. That was once the teaching of Christianity, and I do not know enough of the history or spiritual development of the Catholic Church to tell when she became what she now appears to be — the champion of the rent-exacting landlord and the usurer against Socialism. It is the present teaching of Socialism. If usury obtains at all under the Socialist State, if inexorable repayments are to be made in certain cases, it will, I conceive, be a State monopoly. The State will be the sole banker for every hoard and every enterprise, just as it will be the universal landlord and the universal fire and accident and old age insurance office. In money matters as in public service and administration, it will stand for the species, the permanent thing behind every individual accident and adventure.

Posthumous property, that is to say the power to bequeath and the

right to inherit things, will also persist in a mitigated state under Socialism. There is no reason whatever why it should not do so. There is a strong natural sentiment in favour of the institution of heirlooms, for example; one feels a son might well own — though he should certainly not sell — the intimate things his father desires to leave him. The pride of descent is an honourable one, the love for one's blood, and I hope that a thousand years from now some descendant will still treasure an obsolete weapon here, a picture there, or a piece of faint and faded needlework from our days and the days before our own. One may hate inherited privileges and still respect a family tree.

Widows and widowers again have clearly a kind of natural property in the goods they have shared with the dead; in the home, in the garden close, in the musical instruments and books and pleasant home-like things. Now, in nine cases out of ten, we do in effect bundle the widow out; she remains nominally owner of the former home, but she has to let it furnished or sell it, to go and live in a boarding-house or an exiguous flat.

Even perhaps a proportion of accumulated money may reasonably go to friend or kin. It is a question of public utility; Socialism has done with absolute propositions in all such things, and views these problems now as questions of detail, matters for fine discriminations. We want to be quit of pedantry. All that property which is an enlargement of personality, the modern Socialist seeks to preserve; it is that exaggerated property that gives power over the food and needs of one's fellow-creatures, property and inheritance in land, in industrial machinery, in the homes of others and in the usurer's grip upon others, that he seeks to destroy. The more doctrinaire Socialists will tell you they do not object to property for use and consumption, but only to property in "the means of production," but I do not choose to resort to over-precise definitions. The general intention is clear enough, the particular instance requires particular application. But it is just because we modern Socialists want every one to have play for choice and individual expression in all these realities of property that we object to this monstrous property of a comparatively small body of individuals expropriating the world.

§ 2.

I am inclined to think — but here I speak beyond the text of contemporary Socialist literature — that in certain directions Socialism, while destroying property, will introduce a compensatory element by creating rights. For example, Socialism will certainly destroy all private property in land and in natural material and accumulated industrial resources; it will be the universal landlord and the universal capitalist, but that does not mean that we shall all be the State's tenants-at-will. There can be little doubt that the Socialist State will recognize the rights of the improving occupier and the beneficial hirer. It is manifestly in accordance both with justice and public policy that a man who takes a piece of land and creates a value on it — by making a vineyard, let us say — is entitled to security of tenure, is to be dispossessed only in exceptional circumstances and with ample atonement. If a man who takes an agricultural or horticultural holding comes to feel that there he will toil and there later he will rest upon his labours, I do not think a rational Socialism will war against this passion for the vine and fig-tree. If it absolutely refuses the idea of freehold, it will certainly not repudiate leasehold. I think the State may prove a far more generous and sentimental landlord in many things than any private person.

In another correlated direction, too, Socialism is quite reconcilable with a finer quality of property than our landowner-ridden Britain allows to any but the smallest minority. I mean property in the house one occupies…. If I may indulge in a quite unauthorized speculation, I am inclined to think there may be two collateral methods of home-building in the future. For many people always there will need to be houses to which they may come and go for longer and shorter tenancies and which they will in no manner own. Now-a-days such people are housed in the exploits of the jerry-builder — all England is unsightly with their meagre pretentious villas and miserable cottages and tenement houses. Such homes in the Socialist future will certainly be supplied by the local authority, but they will be fair, decent houses by good architects, fitted to be clean and lit, airy and convenient, the homes of civilized people, sightly things altogether in a generous and orderly world. But in

addition there will be the prosperous private person with a taste that way, building himself a home as a lease-holder under the public landlord. For him, too, there will be a considerable measure of property, a measure of property that might even extend to a right, if not of bequest, then at any rate of indicating a preference among his possible successors in the occupying tenancy….

Then there is a whole field of proprietary sensations in relation to official duties and responsibility. Men who have done good work in any field are not to be lightly torn from it. A medical officer of health who has done well in his district, a teacher who has taught a generation of a town, a man who has made a public garden, have a moral lien upon their work for all their lives. They do not get it under our present conditions. I know that it will be quite easy to say all this is a question of administration and detail. It is. But it is, nevertheless, important to state it clearly here, to make it evident that the coming of Socialism involves no destruction of this sort of identification of a man with the thing he does; this identification that is so natural and desirable — that this living and legitimate sense of property will if anything be encouraged and its claims strengthened under Socialism. To-day that particularly living sort of property-sense is often altogether disregarded. Every day one hears of men who have worked up departments in businesses, men who have created values for employers, men who have put their lives into an industrial machine, being flung aside because their usefulness is over, or out of personal pique, or to make way for favourites, for the employer's son or cousin or what not, without any sort of appeal or compensation. Ownership is autocracy; at the best it is latent injustice in all such matters of employment.

Then again, consider the case of the artist and the inventor who are too often forced by poverty now to sell their early inventions for the barest immediate subsistence. Speculators secure these initial efforts — sometimes to find them worthless, sometimes to discover in them the sources of enormous wealth. In no matter is it more difficult to estimate value than in the case of creative work; few geniuses are immediately recognized, and the history of art, literature and invention is full of Chattertons and Savages who perished before recognition came, and of Dickenses who sold themselves unwisely.

Consider the immense social benefit if the creator even now possessed an inalienable right to share in the appreciation of his work. Under Socialism it would for all his life be his — and the world's, and controllable by him. He would be free to add, to modify, to repeat.

In all these respects modern Socialism tends to create and confirm property and rights, the property of the user, the rights of the creator. It is quite other property it tends to destroy; the property, the claim, of the creditor, the mortgagee, the landlord, and usurer, the forestaller, gambling speculator, monopolizer and absentee…. In very truth Socialism would destroy no property at all, but only that sham property that, like some wizard-cast illusion, robs us all.

§ 3.

And now we are discussing the Socialist attitude towards property, it may be well to consider a little group of objections that are often made in anti-Socialist tracts. I refer more particularly to a certain hard case, the hard case of the Savings of the Virtuous Small Man.

The reader, if he is at all familiar with this branch of controversial literature, probably knows how that distressing case is put. One is presented with a poor man of inconceivable industry, goodness and virtue; he has worked, he has saved; at last, for the security of his old age, he holds a few shares in a business, a "bit of land" or — perhaps through a building society — house property. Would we — the Anti-Socialist chokes with emotion — so alter the world as to rob him of *that*? … The Anti-Socialist gathers himself together with an effort and goes on to a still more touching thought … the widow!13

Well, I think there are assurances in the previous section to disabuse the reader's mind a little in this matter. This solicitude for the Saving Small Man and for the widow and orphan seems to me one of the least honest of all the anti-Socialist arguments. The man "who has saved a few pounds," the poor widow woman and her children clinging to some scrap of freehold are thrust forward to defend the harvest of the landlord and the financier. Let us look at the facts of the case and see how this present economic system of ours really does treat the "stocking" of the poor.

In the first place it does not guarantee to the small investor any security for his little hoard at all. He comes into the world of investment ill-informed, credulous or only unintelligently suspicious — and he is as a class continually and systematically deprived of his little accumulations. One great financial operation after another in the modern world, as any well-informed person can witness, eats up the small investor. Some huge, vastly respectable-looking enterprise is floated with a capital of so many scores or hundreds of thousands, divided into so many thousands of ordinary shares, so many five or six per cent. preference, so much debentures. It begins its career with a flourish of prosperity, the ordinary shares for a few years pay seven, eight, ten per cent. The Virtuous Small Man provides for his widow and his old age by buying this estimable security. Its price clambers to a premium, and so it passes slowly and steadily from its first speculative holder into the hands of the investing public. Then comes a slow, quiet, downward movement, a check at the interim dividend, a rapid contraction. Consider such a case as that of the great British Electric Traction Company which began with ordinary shares at ten, which clambered above twenty-one (21⅞), which is now (October 1907) fluctuating about two. Its six per cent, preference shares have moved between fourteen and five and a half. Its ordinary shares represent a total capital of £1,333,010, and its preference £1,614,370; so that here in this one concern we have a phantom appearance and disappearance of over two million pounds' worth of value and a real disappearance of perhaps half that amount. It requires only a very slight knowledge of the world to convince one that the bulk of that sum was contributed by the modest investments of mediocre and small people out of touch with the real conditions of the world of finance.

These little investors, it is said, are the bitter champions of private finance against the municipalities and Socialists. One wonders why.

One could find a score of parallels and worse instances representing in the end many scores of millions of pounds taken from the investing public in the last few years. I will, however, content myself with one sober quotation from the New York *Journal of Commerce*, which the reader will admit is not likely to be a willing witness for Socialism. Commenting on the testimony of the

principal witness, Mr. Harriman, of the Illinois Central Railroad, before the Inter-State Commerce Commission (March 1907), it says: —

"On his own admission he was one of a 'combine' of four who got possession of the Chicago and Alton Railroad, and immediately issued bonds for $40,000,000, out of the proceeds of which they paid themselves a dividend of 30 per cent, on the stock they held, besides taking the bonds at 65 and subsequently selling them at 90 or more, some of them to life insurance companies with which Mr. Harriman had some kind of relation. There were no earnings or surplus out of which the dividend could be paid, but the books of the company were juggled by transferring some $12,000,000 expended for betterments to capital account as a sort of bookkeeping basis for the performance.

"Besides this, the Chicago and Alton Railroad was transformed into a 'railway,' and a capitalization of a little under $40,000,000 was swollen to nearly $123,000,000 to cover an actual expenditure in improvements of $22,500,000. In the process there was an injection of about $60,600,000 of 'water' into the stock held by the four, some of which was sold to the Union Pacific, of which Mr. Harriman was president, and more was 'unloaded' upon the Rock Island. Mr. Harriman refused to tell how much he made out of that operation.

"It shows how some of our enormous fortunes are made, as well as what motives and purposes sometimes prevail in the use of the power entrusted to the directors and officers of corporations. It is a simple and elementary principle that all values are created by the productive activity of capital, labour and ability in industrial operations of one kind and another. No wealth comes out of nothing, but all must be produced and distributed, and what one gets by indirection another loses or fails to get. The personal profit of these speculative operations in which the capital, credit and power of corporations are used by those entrusted with their direction come out of the general body of stockholders whose interests are sacrificed, or out of the public investors who are lured and deceived, or out of shippers who are overtaxed for the service for which railroads are chartered, or out of all these in varying proportions. In other words they are the fruits of robbery."

So that you see it is not only untrue that Socialism would rob a poor man of his virtuously acquired "bit of property," but the direct contrary is the truth, that the present system, non-Socialism, is now constantly *butchering thrift*! Simple people believe the great financiers win and lose money to each other. They are not — to put it plainly — such fools. They use the public, and the public goes on being used, as a perpetual source of freshly accumulated wealth. I know one case of a man of fifty who serves in a shop, a most industrious, competent man, who has been saving and investing money all his life in what he had every reason to believe were safe and sober businesses; he has been denying himself pleasures, cramping his life to put by about a third of his wages every year since he was two-and-twenty, and to-day he has not got his keep for a couple of years, and his only security against disablement and old age is his subscription to a Friendly Society, a society which I have a very strong suspicion is no better off than most other Friendly Societies — and that is by no means well off, and by no means confident of the future.

It is possible to argue that the small man ought to take more pains about his investments, but, as a matter of fact, investing money securely and profitably is a special occupation of extraordinary complexity, and the common man with a few hundred pounds has no more chance in that market than he would have under water in Sydney Harbour amidst a shoal of sharks. It may be said that he is greedy, wants too much interest, but that is nonsense. One of the crudest gulfs into which small savings have gone in the case of the British public has been the trap of Consols, which pay at the present price less than three per cent. Servants and working men with Post Office Savings' Bank accounts were urged, tempted and assisted to invest in this solemn security — even when it stood at 114. Those who did so have now (November 1907) lost almost a third of their money.

It is scarcely too much to say that a very large proportion of our modern great properties, tramway systems, railways, gas-works, bread companies, have been created for their present owners the debenture holders and mortgagers, the great capitalists, by the unintentional altruism of that voluntary martyr, the Saving Small

Man.

Of course the habitual saver can insure with an insurance company for his old age and against all sorts of misadventures, and because of the Government interference with "private enterprise" in that sort of business, be reasonably secure; but under Socialism he would be able to do that with absolute security in the State Insurance Office — if the universal old age pension did not satisfy him. That, however, is beside our present discussion. I am writing now only of the sort of property that Socialism would destroy, and to show how little benefit or safety it brings to the small owner now. The unthinking rich prate "thrift" to the poor, and grow richer by a half-judicious, half-unconscious absorption of the resultant savings; that, in brief, is the grim humour of our present financial method.

It is not only in relation to investments that this absorption of small parcels of savings goes on. In every town the intelligent and sympathetic observer may see, vivid before the eyes of all who are not blind by use and wont, the slow subsidence of petty accumulations, The lodging-house and the small retail shop are, as it were, social "destructors"; all over the country they are converting hopeful, enterprising, ill-advised people with a few score or hundreds of pounds, slowly, inevitably into broken-hearted failures. It is, to my mind, the crudest aspect of our economic struggle. In the little High Street of Sandgate, over which my house looks, I should say between a quarter and a third of the shops are such downward channels from decency to despair; they are sanctioned, inevitable citizen breakers. Now it is a couple of old servants opening a "fancy" shop or a tobacco shop, now it is a young couple plunging into the haberdashery, now it is a new butcher or a new fishmonger or a grocer. This perpetual procession of bankruptcies has made me lately shun that pleasant-looking street, that in my unthinking days I walked through cheerfully enough. The doomed victims have a way of coming to the doors at first and looking out politely and hopefully. There is a rich and lucrative business done by certain wholesale firms in starting the small dealer in almost every branch of retail trade; they fit up his shop, stock him, take his one or two hundred pounds and give him credit for forty or fifty. The rest of his story is an impossible struggle to pay rent and get that debt down. Things go on

for a time quite bravely. I go furtively and examine the goods in the window, with a dim hope that this time something really will come off; I learn reluctantly from my wife that they are no better than any one else's, and rather dearer than those of the one or two solid and persistent shops that do the steady business of the place. Perhaps I see the new people going to church once or twice very respectably, as I set out for a Sunday walk, and if they are a young couple the husband usually wears a silk hat. Presently the stock in the window begins to deteriorate in quantity and quality, and then I know that credit is tightening. The proprietor no longer comes to the door, and his first bright confidence is gone. He regards one now through the darkling panes with a gloomy animosity. He suspects one all too truly of dealing with the "Stores." … Then suddenly he has gone; the savings are gone, and the shop — like a hungry maw — waits for a new victim. There is the simple common tragedy of the little shop; the landlord of the house has *his* money all right, the ground landlord has, of course, every penny of his money, the kindly wholesalers are well out of it, and the young couple or the old people, as the case may be, are looking for work or the nearest casual ward — just as though there was no such virtue as thrift in the world.

The particular function of the British lodging-house — though the science of economics is silent on this point — is to use up the last strength of the trusty old servant and the plucky widow. These people will invest from two or three hundred to a thousand pounds in order to gain a bare subsistence by toiling for boarders and lodgers. It is their idea of a safe investment. They can see it all the time. All over England this process goes on. The curious inquirer may see every phase for himself by simply looking for rooms among the apartment houses of such a region as Camden Town, London; he will realize more and more surely as he goes about that none of these people gain money, none of them ever recover the capital they sink, they are happy if they die before their inevitable financial extinction. It is so habitual with people to think of classes as stable, of a butcher or a baker as a man who keeps a shop of a certain sort at a certain level throughout a long and indeterminate life, that it may seem incredible to many readers that those two typically thrifty classes, the lodging-letting householder and the small retailer, are maintained by

a steady supply of failing individuals; the fact remains that it is so. Their little savings are no good to them, investments and business beginnings mock them alike: steadily, relentlessly our competitive system eats them up.

It is said that no class of people in the community is more hostile to Socialism and Socialistic legislation than these small owners and petty investors, these small ratepayers. They do not understand. Rent they consider in the nature of things like hunger and thirst; the economic process that dooms the weak enterprise to ruin is beyond the scope of their intelligence; but the rate-collector who calls and calls again for money, for more money, to educate "other people's children," to "keep paupers in luxury," to "waste upon roads and light and trams," seems the agent of an unendurable wrong. So the poor creatures go out pallidly angry to vote down that hated thing municipal enterprise, and to make still more scope for that big finance that crushes them in the wine-press of its exploitation. It is a wretched and tragic antagonism, for which every intelligent Socialist must needs have sympathy, which he must meet with patience — and lucid explanations. If the public authority took rent there would be no need of rates; that is the more obvious proposition. But the ampler one is the cruelty, the absurdity and the social injury of the constant consumption of unprotected savings which is an essential part of our present system.

It is a doctrinaire and old-fashioned Socialism that quarrels with the little hoard; the quarrel of modern Socialism is with the landowner and the great capitalist who devour it.

§ 4.

While we are discussing the true attitude of modern Socialism to property, it will be well to explain quite clearly the secular change of opinion that is going on in the Socialist ranks in regard to the process of expropriation. Even in the case of those sorts of property that Socialism repudiates, property in land, natural productions, inherited business capital and the like, Socialism has become humanized and rational from its first extreme and harsh positions.

The earlier Socialism was fierce and unjust to owners. "Property

is Robbery," said Proudhon, and right down to the nineties Socialism kept too much of the spirit of that proposition. The property owner was to be promptly and entirely deprived of his goods, and to think himself lucky he was not lynched forthwith as an abominable rascal. The first Basis of the Fabian Society, framed so lately as 1884, seems to repudiate "compensation," even a partial compensation of property owners, though in its practical proposals the Fabian Society has always admitted compensatory arrangements. The exact words of the Basis are "without compensation though not without such relief to expropriated individuals as may seem fit to the community." The wording is pretty evidently the result of a compromise between modern views and older teachings. If the Fabian Society were rewriting its Basis now I doubt if any section would insist even upon that eviscerated "without compensation."

Now property is not robbery. It may be a mistake, it may be unjust and socially disadvantageous to recognize private property in these great common interests, but every one concerned, and the majority of the property owners certainly, held and hold in good faith, and do their best by the light they have. We live to-day in a vast tradition of relationships in which the rightfulness of that kind of private property is assumed, and suddenly, instantly, to deny and abolish it would be — I write this as a convinced and thorough Socialist — quite the most dreadful catastrophe human society could experience. For what sort of provisional government should we have in that confusion?

Expropriation must be a gradual process, a process of economic and political readjustment, accompanied at every step by an explanatory educational advance. There is no reason why a cultivated property owner should not welcome and hasten its coming. Modern Socialism is prepared to compensate him, not perhaps "fully" but reasonably, for his renunciations and to avail itself of his help, to relieve him of his administrative duties, his excess of responsibility for estate and business. It does not grudge him a compensating annuity nor terminating rights of user. It has no intention of obliterating him nor the things he cares for. It wants not only to socialize his possessions, but to socialize his achievement in culture and all that leisure has taught him of the possibilities of life. It wants

all men to become as fine as he. Its enemy is not the rich man but the aggressive rich man, the usurer, the sweater, the giant plunderer, who are developing the latent evil of riches. It repudiates altogether the conception of a bitter class-war between those who Have and those who Have Not.

But this new tolerant spirit in method involves no weakening of the ultimate conception. Modern Socialism sets itself absolutely against the creation of new private property out of land, or rights or concessions not yet assigned. All new great monopolistic enterprises in transit, building and cultivation, for example, must from the first be under public ownership. And the chief work of social statesmanship, the secular process of government, must be the steady, orderly resumption by the community, without violence and without delay, of the land, of the apparatus of transit, of communication, of food distribution and of all the great common services of mankind, and the care and training of a new generation in their collective use and in more civilized conceptions of living.

CHAPTER VIII THE MIDDLE-CLASS MAN, THE BUSINESS MAN, AND SOCIALISM

§ 1.

Let me insert here a few remarks upon a question that arises naturally out of the preceding discussion, and that is the future of that miscellaneous section of the community known as the middle class. It is one that I happen to know with a peculiar intimacy.

For a century or more the grinding out of the middle class has been going on. I began to find it interesting — altogether too interesting indeed, when I was still only a little boy. My father was one of that multitude of small shopkeepers which has been caught between the "Stores" and such-like big distributors above and the rising rates below, and from the knickerbocker stage onward I was acutely aware of the question hanging over us. "This isn't going on," was the proposition. "This shop in which our capital is invested will never return it. Nobody seems to understand what is happening, and there is nobody to advise or help us. What are we going to do?"

Except that people are beginning to understand a little now what it all means, exactly the same question hangs over many hundreds of thousands of households to-day, not only over the hundreds of small shopkeepers, but of small professional men, of people living upon small parcels of investments, of clerks who find themselves growing old and their value depreciated by the competition of a new, better-educated generation, of private school-masters, of boarding-and lodging-house keepers and the like. They are all vaguely aware of something more than personal failure, of a drift and process which is against all their kind, of the need of "doing something" for themselves and their children, something different from just sticking to the shop or the "situation" — and they don't know what to do! What ought they to do?

Well, first, before one answers that, let us ask what it is exactly that is grinding the middle class in this way. Is it a process we can stop? Can we direct the millstones? If we can, ought we to do so? And if we cannot, or decide that it isn't worth while, then what can

we do to mitigate this cruelty of slowly impoverishing and taxing out of existence a class that was once the backbone of the community? It is not mere humanity dictates this much, it is a question that affects the State as a whole. It must be extremely bad for the spirit of the nation and for our national future that its middle mass should be in a state of increasing financial worry and stress, irritated, depressed, and broken in courage. One effect is manifest in our British politics now. Each fresh election turns upon expenditure more evidently than the last, and the promise to reduce taxation or lower the rates overrides more and more certainly any other consideration. What are Empire or Education to men who feel themselves drifting helplessly into debt? What chance has any constructive scheme with an electorate of men who are being slowly submerged in an economic bog?

The process that has brought the middle class into these troubles is a complex one, but the essential thing about it seems to be this, that there is a *change of scale* going on in most human affairs, a substitution of big organizations for detached individual effort almost everywhere. A hundred and fifty years ago or so the only very rich people in the community were a handful of great landowners and a few bankers; the rest of the world's business was being done by small prosperous independent men. The labourers were often very poor and wretched, ill clad, bootless, badly housed and short of food, but there was nevertheless a great deal of middle-class comfort and prosperity. The country was covered with flourishing farmers, every country town was a little world in itself, with busy tradespeople and professional men; manufacturing was still done mainly by small people employing a few hands, master and apprentice working together; in every town you found a private school or so, an independent doctor and the like, doing well in a mediocre, comfortable fashion. All the carrying trade was in the hands of small independent carriers; the shipping was held by hundreds of small shipowners. And London itself was only a larger country town. It was, in effect, a middle-class world ruled over by aristocrats; the millstones had as yet scarcely stirred.

Then machinery came into the lives of men, and steam power, and there began that change of scale which is going on still to-day, making an ever-widening separation of master and man and an ever-

enlarging organization of industry and social method. Its most striking manifestation was at first the substitution of organized manufacture in factories for the half-domestic hand-industrialism of the earlier period; the growth of the fortunes of some of the merchants and manufacturers to dimensions comparable with the wealth of the great landowners, and the sinking of the rest of their class towards the status of wage-earners. The development of joint-stock enterprise arose concurrently with this to create a new sort of partnership capable of handling far greater concerns than any single wealthy person, as wealth was measured by the old scale, could do. There followed a great development of transit, culminating for a time in the coming of the railways and steamships, which abolished the isolation of the old towns and brought men at the remotest quarters of the earth into business competition. Big towns of the modern type, with half-a-million inhabitants or more, grew up rapidly all over Europe and America. For the European big towns are as modern as New York, and the East End and south side of London scarcely older than Chicago. Shopkeeping, like manufactures, began to concentrate in large establishments, and big wholesale distribution to replace individual buying and selling. As the need for public education under the changing conditions of life grew more and more urgent, the individual enterprise of this school-master and that gave place to the organized effort of such giant societies as (in Britain) the old National School Society and the British School Society, and at last to State education. And one after another the old prosperous middle-class callings fell under the stress of the new development.

The process still goes on, and there can be little doubt of the ultimate issue. The old small manufacturers are either ruined or driven into sweating and the slums; the old coaching innkeeper and common carrier have been impoverished or altogether superseded by the railways and big carrier companies; the once flourishing shopkeeper lives to-day on the mere remnants of the trade that great distributing stores or the branches of great companies have left him. Tea companies, provision-dealing companies, tobacconist companies, make the position of the old-established private shop unstable and the chances of the new beginner hopeless. Railways and tramways take the custom more and more effectually past the door of

the small draper and outfitter to the well-stocked establishments at the centre of things; telephone and telegraph assist that shopping at the centre more and more. The small "middle-class" school-master finds himself beaten by revived endowed schools and by new public endowments; the small doctor, the local dentist, find Harley Street always nearer to them and practitioners in motor-cars from the great centres playing havoc with their practices. And while the small men are more and more distressed, the great organizations of trade, of production, of public science, continue to grow and coalesce, until at last they grow into national or even world trusts, or into publicly-owned monopolies. In America slaughtering and selling meat has grown into a trust, steel and iron are trustified, mineral oil is all gathered into a few hands. All through the trades and professions and sciences and all over the world the big eats up the small, the new enlarged scale replaces the old.

And this is equally true, though it is only now beginning to be recognized, of the securities of that other section of the middle class, the section which lives upon invested money. There, too, big eats little. There, too, the small man is more and more manifestly at the mercy of the large organization. It was a pleasant illusion of the Victorian time that one put one's hundred pounds or thousand pounds "into something," beside the rich man's tens of thousands, and drew one's secure and satisfying dividends. The intelligent reader of Mr. Lawson's *Frenzied Finance* or of the bankruptcy proceedings of Mr. Hooley realizes this idyll is scarcely true to nature. Through the seas and shallows of investment flow great tides and depressions, on which the big fortunes ride to harbour while the little accumulations, capsized and swamped, quiver down to the bottom. It becomes more and more true that the small man saves his money for the rich man's pocket. Only by drastic State intervention is a certain measure of safety secured for insurance, and in America recently we have had the spectacle of the people's insurance-money used as a till by the rich financiers.

And when the middle-class man turns in his desperation from the advance of the big competitor who is consuming him, as a big codfish eats its little brother, to the State, he meets a tax-paper; he sees as the State's most immediate aspect the rate-collector and

inexorable demands. The burthen of taxation certainly falls upon him, and it falls upon him because he is collectively the weakest class that possesses any property to be taxed. Below him are classes either too poor to tax or too politically effective to stand taxation. Above him is the class which owns a large part of the property in the world; but it also owns the newspapers and periodicals that are necessary for an adequate discussion of social justice, and it finds it cheaper to pay a voluntary tax to the hoardings at election time than to take over the small man's burdens. He rolls about between these two parties, antagonized first to one and then the other, and altogether helpless and ineffectual. So the millstones grind, and so it would seem they will continue to grind until there is nothing between them; until organized property in the hands of the few on the one hand and the proletariat on the other grind face to face. So, at least, Karl Marx taught in *Das Kapital*.

But when one says the middle class will disappear, one means that it will disappear as a class. Its individuals and its children will survive, and the whole process is not nearly so fatalistic as the Marxists would have us believe. The new great organizations that are replacing the little private enterprises of the world before machinery are not all private property. There are alternatives in the matter of handling a great business. To the exact nature of these alternatives the middle-class mind needs to direct itself if it is to exert any control whatever over its future. Take the case of the butcher. It is manifestly written on the scroll of destiny that the little private slaughter-house, the little independent butcher's shop, buying and selling locally, must disappear. The meat will all be slaughtered at some great, conveniently organized centre, and distributed thence to shops that will necessarily be mere agencies for distributing meat. Now, this great slaughtering and distributing business may either be owned by one or a group of owners working it for profit — in which case it will be necessary for the State to employ an unremunerative army of inspectors to see that the business is kept decently clean and honest — or it may be run by the public authority. In the former case the present-day butcher or his son will be a slaughterman or shopkeeper employed by the private owners; in the latter case by the public authority. This is equally true of a milk-seller, of a small

manufacturer, of a builder, of a hundred and one other trades. They are bound to be incorporated in a larger organization; they are bound to become salaried men where formerly they were independent men, and it is no good struggling against that. It is doubtful, indeed, whether from the standpoint of welfare it would be worth the middle-class man's while to struggle against that. But in the case of very many great public services — meat, milk, bread, transit, housing and land administration, education and research, and the public health — it is still an open question whether the big organization is to be publicly owned, publicly controlled, and constantly refreshed by public scrutiny and comment, or whether it is to be privately owned, and conducted solely for the profit of a small group of very rich owners. The alternatives are Plutocracy or Socialism, and between these the middle-class man remains weakly undecided and ineffectual, lending no weight to and getting small consideration therefore from either side. He remains so because he has not grasped the real nature of his problem, because he clings in the face of overwhelming fate to the belief that in some way the wheels of change may be arrested and his present method of living preserved.

I think, if he could shake himself free from that impossible conservatism he would realize that his interests lie with the interests of the intelligent working-class man — that is to say, in the direction of Socialism rather than in the direction of capitalistic competition; that the best use he can make of such educational and social advantages as still remain for him is to become the willing leader instead of the panic-fierce antagonist of the Socialist movement. His place, I hold, is to forward the development of that State and municipal machinery the Socialist foreshadows, and to secure for himself and his sons and daughters an adequate position and voice in the administration. Instead of struggling to diminish that burthen of public expenditure which educates and houses, conveys and protects him and his children, he ought rather to increase it joyfully, while at the same time working manfully to transfer its pressure to the broad shoulders of those very rich people who have hitherto evaded their legitimate share of it. The other course is to continue his present policy of obstinate resistance to the extension of public property and public services. In which case these things will necessarily become

that basis of monopolistic property on which the coming plutocracy will establish itself. The middle-class man will be taxed and competed out of independence just the same, and he will become a salaried officer just the same, but with a different sort of master and under different social conditions according as one or other of these alternatives prevails.

Which is the better master — the democratic State or a "combine" of millionaires? Which will give the best social atmosphere for one's children to breathe — a Plutocracy or a Socialism? That is the real question to which the middle-class man should address himself.

No doubt to many minds a Plutocracy presents many attractions. In the works of Thomas Love Peacock, and still more clearly in the works of Mr. W. H. Mallock, you will find an agreeable rendering of that conception. The bulk of the people will be organized out of sight in a state of industrious and productive congestion, and a wealthy, leisurely, and refined minority will live in spacious homes, with excellent museums, libraries, and all the equipments of culture; will go to town, concentrate in Paris, London, and Rome, and travel about the world. It is to these large, luxurious, powerful lives that the idealist naturally turns. Their motor-cars, their aeroplanes, their steam yachts will awaken terror and respect in every corner of the globe. Their handsome doings will fill the papers. They will patronize the arts and literature, while at the same time mellowing them by eliminating that too urgent insistence upon contemporary fact which makes so much of what is done to-day harsh and displeasing. The middle-class tradition will be continued by a class of stewards, tenants, managers, and foremen, secretaries and the like, respected and respectful. The writer, the artist, will lead lives of comfortable dependence, a link between class and class, the lowest of the rich man's guests, the highest of his servants. As for the masses, they will be fed with a sort of careless vigour and considerable economy from the Chicago stockyards, and by agricultural produce trusts, big breweries, fresh-water companies, and the like; they will be organized industrially and carefully controlled. Their spiritual needs will be provided for by churches endowed by the wealthy, their physical distresses alleviated by the hope of getting charitable aid, their lives made bright and

adventurous by the crumbs of sport that fall from the rich man's table. They will crowd to see the motor-car races, the aeroplane competitions. It will be a world rich in contrasts and not without its gleam of pure adventure. Every bright young fellow of capacity will have the hope of catching the eye of some powerful personage, of being advanced to some high position of trust, of even ending his days as a partner, a subordinate assistant plutocrat. Or he may win a quite agreeable position by literary or artistic merit. A pretty girl, a clever woman of the middle class would have before her even more brilliant and romantic possibilities.

There can be no denying the promises of colour and eventfulness a Plutocracy holds out, and though they do not attract me, I can quite understand their appeal to the more ductile and appreciative mind of Mr. Mallock. But there are countervailing considerations. There is, it is said, a tendency in Plutocracies either to become unprogressive, unenterprising and stagnantly autocratic, or to develop states of stress and discontent, and so drift towards Cæsarism. The latter was the fate of the Roman Republic, and may perhaps be the destiny of the budding young Plutocracy of America. But the developing British Plutocracy, like the Carthaginian, will be largely Semitic in blood, and like the Carthaginian may resist these insurgent tendencies.

So much for the Plutocratic possibility. If the middle-class man on any account does not like that outlook, he can turn in the other direction; and then he will find fine promises indeed, but much more uncertainty than towards Plutocracy. Plutocracies the world has seen before, but a democratic civilization organized upon the lines laid down by modern Socialists would be a new beginning in the world's history. It is not a thing that will come about by itself; it will have to be the outcome of a sustained moral and intellectual effort in the community. If there is not that effort, if things go on as they are going now, the coming of a Plutocracy is inevitable. That effort, I am convinced, cannot be successfully made by the lower-class man alone; from him, unaided and unguided, there is nothing to be expected but wild convulsive attempts at social upheaval, which, whether they succeed (as the French Revolution did) or fail (as did the insurrectionary outbreaks of the Republic in Rome), lead ultimately to a Napoleon or a Cæsar. But our contemporary

civilization is unprecedented in the fact that the whole population now reads, and that intelligence and free discussion saturate the whole mass. Only time can show what possibilities of understanding, leadership, and political action lie in our new generation of the better-educated middle class. Will it presently begin to define a line for itself? Will it remain disorganized and passive, or will it become intelligent and decisive between these millstones of the organized property and the organizing State, between Plutocracy and Socialism, whose opposition is the supreme social and political fact in the world at the present time?

§ 2.

Perhaps, also, it may be helpful here to insert a view of the contemporary possibilities of Socialism from a rather different angle, a view that follows on to the matter of the previous section, but appeals to a different section of the Middle Class. It is a quotation from the *Magazine of Commerce* for September 1907, and leads to an explanation by the present writer.

"The recent return of Mr. Grayson, a Socialist, as member of Parliament for the Colne Valley, has brought prominently before the public mind the question of Socialism. Mr. Pete Curran's success at Jarrow a month or so ago, and the large number of Labour members returned at the last General Election, caused more or less desultory comment on Socialism as a possible feature of practical politics in the remote future; but Mr. Grayson can certainly claim that his achievement at Colne Valley brought the question of Socialism in to the very forefront at one bound. It is difficult to ignore Socialism, to dismiss it as a mere fad and fancy of a few hare-brained enthusiasts, after Mr. Grayson's success. The verdict of Colne Valley may be the verdict of many another constituency where the so-called working-class electors are numerically predominant. When we consider that the manual worker represents the majority of the electorate of the country, this contingency does not appear to be so very remote, provided that the leaders of Socialism can organize their resources and canvass the working-men on a wide and carefully-planned scale. In this respect the Colne Valley result may very well give them the

lead and stimulus they have been waiting for. It must be borne in mind, too, that the forward section of the Labour Party is avowedly Socialist in its sympathies, and a definite start may therefore be said to have been made towards capturing the machinery of Government in the Cause of Socialism.

"How will Socialism affect the business world? This is a question which many thoughtful business men must have already put to themselves. For reply we must go to the leaders of Socialism, and discover what their policy actually is. The common impression that Socialism spells barefaced confiscation is too superficial to be seriously adduced as an argument against Socialism. The leaders of the Cause include some of the cleverest men of the day — men who have a more rational basis for their policy than that of simply robbing Peter to pay Paul. The suggestion that Socialism means a compulsory 'share out' may be rightly dismissed as an idle scare. The most bitter opponent of Socialism must at least admit that there is a stronger argument to be met than that implied by the parrot-cry of 'spoliation.' Socialism has, at any rate, so far advanced as to be allowed the ordinary courtesies of debate. We may oppose it tooth and nail, but we must confront argument with argument and not with abuse.

"Despite much excellent literature which is read widely by cultured people, very little is known by the general public of the principles which modern British Socialists have adopted as their guiding rules. Few business men care to study the subject. We have therefore addressed a letter to the chief leaders of the Cause, with the purpose of ascertaining the effect which Socialism would have on our business habits. Our object was to discover how far Socialism might disturb or improve business; whether it would altogether subvert present methods, or whether it could be applied without injury to these methods. To put the matter very plainly, we wished to learn whether we should carry on our business much as we do now, giving free play to individual effort and individual fortune-building.

"The reply of Mr. Wells is as follows: —

"'My Dear Sir,

"'I wish very much I could reply at adequate length to your very admirably framed question. The constant stream of abuse and of

almost imbecile misrepresentations of Socialism in the Press has no doubt served to distort the idea of our movement in the minds of a large proportion of busy men, and filled them with an unfounded dread of social insecurity. If it were possible to allay that by an epigrammatic programme, "Socialism in a Nutshell," so to speak, I would do my best. But the economic and trading system of a modern State is not only a vast and complex tangle of organizations, but at present an uncharted tangle, and necessarily the methods of transition from the limited individualism of our present condition to the scientifically-organized State, which is the Socialist ideal, must be gradual, tentative and various.

"'To build up a body of social and economic science, to develop a class of trained administrators, to rearrange local government areas, to educate the whole community in the "sense of the State" are necessary parts of the Socialist scheme. You must try and induce your readers to recognize that when Socialism finds such supporters as Sir Oliver Lodge and Professor Karl Pearson, as William Morris (who revolutionized the furniture trade), as Granville Barker (who is revolutionizing the London stage), as Mr. George Cadbury and Mr. Fels (whose names are not unknown in the world of advertisement), as Mr. Allan (of the Allan Line), as Mr. George Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb and Sir Sidney Olivier (the present Governor of Jamaica) — all of them fairly comfortable and independent people, practically acquainted with the business of investment and affairs generally and quite alive to the present relations of property to the civilized life — the suggestion that it is a raid of the ignorant "Have-nots" on the possessions of the wise and good "Haves" cannot be a very intelligent one nor addressed to very intelligent people. Essentially Socialism is the scientifically-organized State as distinguished from the haphazard, wasteful, blundering, child-sweating State of the eighteenth century. It is the systematization of present tendency. Necessarily its methods of transition will be progressively scientific and humane.

"'So far as your specific questions go, I do not think there could possibly be anything in the nature of "compulsory profit-sharing" if a Socialist Government came into office. There is at present a compulsory profit-sharing in the form of an income-tax, but that tax

does not appeal to the Socialist as a particularly scientific one. The advent of a strongly-Socialist Government would mean no immediate revolutionary changes at all. There would be, no doubt, a vigorous acceleration of the educational movement to increase the economic value and productivity of the average citizen of the next generation, and legislation upon the lines laid down by the principle of the "minimum wage" to check the waste of our national resources by destructive employment. Also a systematic shifting of the burthen of taxation from enterprise to rent would begin. But nothing convulsive would occur.'"

"'The means of transit and communication of the country (both internal and external), and especially the railways and canals (which are now rapidly falling into inefficiency through the exhaustion of their capital upon excessive dividends in the past), would probably be transferred from competitive private to organized public control — a transfer that would certainly be enormously stimulating to business generally. There would be no "robbery," the former shareholders would become stock or annuity holders. Nor would there be any financial convulsion due to the raising of the "enormous sum" necessary to effect this purchase. The country would simply create stock, while at the same time taking over assets to balance the new liability.

"'A Socialist Government would certainly also acquire the coal mines and the coal trade, and relieve industry from the inconveniences due to the manipulation of the supply of this vitally important factor, and it would accelerate the obvious tendency of the present time to bring the milk trade, the drink trade, slaughtering, local traffic, lighting and power supply into public hands. But none of this is the destruction of property, but only its organization and standardization. Such a State organization of public services is, I submit, enough to keep a Socialist Government busy for some few years, and makes not only for social progress, but social stability.

"'And does an honest and capable business man stand to lose or gain by the coming of such a Socialist Government? I submit that, on the whole, he stands to gain. Let me put down the essential points in his outlook as I conceive them.

"'Under a Socialist Government such as is quite possible in

England at the present time: —

"'He will be restricted from methods of production and sale that are socially mischievous.

"'He will pay higher wages.

"'He will pay a larger proportion of his rate-rent outgoings to the State and Municipality, and less to the landlord. Ultimately he will pay it all to the State or Municipality, and as a voter help to determine how it shall be spent, and the landlord will become a Government stock-holder. Practically he will get his rent returned to him in public services.

"'He will speedily begin to get better-educated, better-fed and better-trained workers, so that he will get money value for the higher wages he pays.

"'He will get a regular, safe, cheap supply of power and material. He will get cheaper and more efficient internal and external transit.

"'He will be under an organized scientific State, which will naturally pursue a vigorous scientific collective policy in support of the national trade.

"'He will be less of an adventurer and more of a citizen….'"

So I wrote to the *Magazine of Commerce*, and that for the energetic man who is conducting a real and socially useful business is the outlook. Socialism is not the coming of chaos and repudiation, it is the coming of order and justice. For confusion and accident and waste, the Socialist seeks to substitute design and collective economy. That too is the individual aim of every good business man who is not a mere advertising cheat or financial adventurer. To the sound-minded, clear-headed man of affairs, Socialism appeals just as it appeals to the scientific man, to the engineer, to the artist, because it is the same reality, the large scale aspect of the same constructive motive, that stirs in himself.

§ 3.

Let me finally quote the chairman of one of the most enterprising and enlightened business organizations of our time to show that in claiming the better type of business man for modern Socialism I am making no vain boast. Sir John Brunner may not call himself a

Socialist, but this is very probably due to the fact that he gets his ideas of Socialism from the misquotations of its interested adversaries. This that follows from the *Manchester Guardian* is pure Socialism.

Speaking at the annual meeting of Brunner, Mond and Co., Ltd., in Liverpool (1907), the chairman, Sir John Brunner, M.P., made a remarkable pronouncement on the subject of the collective ownership of canals. He said: —

"I have been one of a Royal Commission visiting the North of France, Belgium, and Northern Germany, and our duty has been to examine what those three countries have done in the improvement of their canals and their waterways. We have been very deeply impressed by what we have seen, and I can tell you to-day, speaking as a man of business to men of business, that the fact that in these three countries there is communal effort — that is to say, that the State in money and in credit for the benefit of the national trade — has brought to those three countries enormous, almost incalculable, benefits; and I think that any man, any intelligent man, who studies this matter as I have studied it for a great many years, will come the conclusion, as I have come very clearly and decidedly, that the old policy which we have adopted for generations of leaving all public works to private enterprise — the old policy, so called, of *laissez faire* — is played out completely, and I am of opinion, very firmly, that, if we mean to hold our own in matters of trade, we must learn to follow the example that has been set us not only by France, Belgium, and Germany, but by the United States and by every one of the Colonies of our Empire. Everywhere do you find that trade is helped by the effort of the community, by the force of the State, and I shall be very heartily pleased if those who hear me will think the matter over and decide for themselves whether or not we as business people — preeminently the business people of the world — are to maintain the old policy of leaving everything to private enterprise, or whether we are to act together for the good of all in this important matter of the national trade."

CHAPTER IX SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM

§ 1.

In the preceding eight chapters I have sought to give as plain and full an account of the great generalizations of Socialism as I can, and to make it clear exactly what these generalizations convey, and how far they go in this direction and that. Before we go on to a brief historical and anticipatory account of the actual Socialist movement, it may be worth while to take up and consider compactly the chief objections that are urged against the general propositions of Socialism in popular discussion.

Now a very large proportion of these arise out of the commonest vice of the human mind, its disposition to see everything as "yes" or "no," as "black" or "white," its impatience, its incapacity for a fine discrimination of intermediate shades.14 The queer old scholastic logic still prevails remarkably in our modern world; you find Mr. Mallock, for example, going about arranging his syllogisms, extracting his opponent's "self-contradictions," and disposing of Socialism with stupendous self-satisfaction in all the magazines. He disposes of Socialism quite in the spirit of the young mediæval scholar returning home to prove beyond dispute that "my cat has ten tails" and, given a yard's start, that a tortoise can always keep ahead of a running man. The essential fallacy is always to declare that either a thing is A or it is not A; either a thing is green or it is not green; either a thing is heavy or it is not heavy. Unthinking people, and some who ought to know better, fall into that trap. They dismiss from their minds the fact that there is a tinge of green in nearly every object in the world, and that there is no such thing as pure green, unless it be just one line or so in the long series of the spectrum; they forget that the lightest thing has weight and that the heaviest thing can be lifted. The rest of the process is simple and has no relation whatever to the realities of life. They agree to some hard and fast impossible definition of Socialism, permit the exponent to extract absurdities therefrom as a conjurer gets rabbits from a hat, and retire

with a conviction that on the whole it is well to have had this disturbing matter settled once for all.

For example, the Anti-Socialist declares that Socialism "abolishes property." He makes believe there is a hard absolute thing called "property" which must either be or not be, which is now, and which will not be under Socialism. To any person with a philosophical education this is a ridiculous mental process, but it seems perfectly rational to an untrained mind — and that is the usual case with the Anti-Socialist. Having achieved this initial absurdity, he then asks in a tone of bitter protest whether a man may not sleep in his own bed, and is he to do nothing if he finds a coal-heaver already in possession when he retires? This is the method of Mr. G. R. Sims, that delightful writer, who from altitudes of exhaustive misunderstanding tells the working-man that under Socialism he will have — I forget his exact formula, but it is a sort of refrain — no money of his own, no home of his own, no wife of his own, no hair of his own! It is effective nonsense in its way — but nonsense nevertheless. In my preceding chapters I hope I have made it clear that "property" even to-day is a very qualified and uncertain thing, a natural vague instinct capable of perversion and morbid exaggeration and needing control, and that Socialism seeks simply to give it a sharper, juster and rationally limited form in relation to the commonweal.

Or again, the opponent has it that Socialism "abolishes the family" — and with it, of course, "every sacred and tender association," etc., etc. To that also I have given a chapter.

I do not think much Anti-Socialism is dishonest in these matters. The tricks of deliberate falsification, forgery and falsehood that discredit a few Conservative candidates and speakers in the north of England and smirch the reputations of one or two London papers, are due to a quite exceptional streak of baseness in what is on the whole a straightforward opposition to Socialism. Anti-Socialism, as its name implies, is no alternative doctrine; it is a mental resistance, not a mental force. For the most part one is dealing with sheer intellectual incapacity; with people, muddle-headed perhaps, but quite well-meaning, who are really unable to grasp the quantitative element in things. They think with a simple flat certitude that if, for

example, a doctor says quinine is good for a case it means that he wishes to put every ounce of quinine that can be procured into his patient, to focus all the quinine in the world upon him; or that if a woman says she likes dancing, that thereby she declares her intention to dance until she drops. They are dear lumpish souls who like things "straightforward" as they say — all or nothing. They think qualifications or any quantitative treatment "quibbling," to be loudly scorned, bawled down and set aside.

In controversy the temptations for a hot and generous temperament, eager for victory, to misstate and overstate the antagonist's position are enormous, and the sensible Socialist must allow for them unless he is to find discussion intolerable. The reader of the preceding chapters should know exactly how Socialism stands to the family relations, the things it urges, the things it regards with impartiality or patient toleration, the things it leaves alone. The preceding chapters merely summarize a literature that has been accessible for years. Yet it is extraordinary how few antagonists of Socialism seem able even to approach these questions in a rational manner. One admirably typical critic of a pamphlet in which I propounded exactly the same opinions as are here set out in the third chapter, found great comfort in the expression "brood mares." He took hold of my phrase, "State family," and ran wild with it. He declared it to be my intention that women were no longer to be wives but "brood mares" for the State. Nothing would convince him that this was a glaring untruth. His mind was essentially equestrian; "human stud farm" was another of his expressions.15 Ridicule and argument failed to touch him; I believe he would have gone to the stake to justify his faith that Socialists want to put woman in the Government *haras*. His thick-headedness had, indeed, a touch of the heroic.

Then a certain Father Phelan of St. Louis, no doubt in a state of mental exaltation as honest as it was indiscriminating, told the world through the columns of an American magazine that I wanted to tear the babe from the mother's breast and thrust it into an "Institution." He said worse things than that — but I set them aside as pulpit eloquence. Some readers, no doubt, knew better and laughed, but many were quite sincerely shocked, and resolved after that to give

Socialism a very wide berth indeed. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*; the revolting ideas that disgusted them were not mine, they came from some hot dark reservoir of evil thoughts that years of chastity and discipline seem to have left intact in Father Phelan's soul.

The error in all these cases is the error of overstatement, of getting into a condition of confused intellectual excitement, and because a critic declares your window curtains too blue, saying, therefore, and usually with passion, that he wants the whole universe, sky and sea included, painted bright orange. The inquirer into the question of Socialism will find that an almost incurable disease of these controversies. Again and again he will meet with it. If after that critic's little proposition about your window curtains he chances to say that on the whole he thinks an orange sky would be unpleasant, the common practice is to accuse him of not "sticking to his guns."

My friends, Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. Max Beerbohm, those brilliant ornaments of our age, when they chance to write about Socialism, confess this universal failing — albeit in a very different quality and measure. They are not, it is true, distressed by that unwashed coal-heaver who haunts the now private bed of the common Anti-Socialist, nor have they any horrid vision of the fathers of the community being approved by a select committee of the County Council — no doubt wrapped in horse-cloths and led out by their grooms — such as troubles the spurred and quivering soul of that equestrian — I forget his name — the "brood-mare" gentleman who denounced me in the *Pall Mall Gazette*; but their souls fly out in a passion of protest against the hints of discipline and order the advancement of Socialism reveals. Mr. G. K. Chesterton mocks valiantly and passionately, I know, against an oppressive and obstinately recurrent anticipation of himself in Socialist hands, hair clipped, meals of a strictly hygienic description at regular hours, a fine for laughing — not that he would want to laugh — and austere exercises in several of the more metallic virtues daily. Mr. Max Beerbohm's conception is rather in the nature of a nightmare, a hopeless, horrid, frozen flight from the pursuit of Mr. Sidney Webb and myself, both of us short, inelegant men indeed, but for all that terribly resolute, indefatigable, incessant, to capture him, to drag him off to a mechanical Utopia and there to take his thumb-mark and his

name, number him distinctly in indelible ink, dress him in an unbecoming uniform, and let him loose (under inspection) in a world of neat round lakes of blue lime water and vistas of white sanitary tiling….

The method of reasoning in all these cases is the same; it is to assume that whatever the Socialist postulates as desirable is wanted without limit or qualification, to imagine whatever proposal is chosen for the controversy is to be carried out by uncontrolled monomaniacs, and so to make a picture of the Socialist dream. This picture is presented to the simple-minded person in doubt with "This is Socialism. Surely! SURELY! you don't want this!"

And occasionally the poor, simple-minded person really is overcome by these imagined terrors. He turns back to our dingy realities again, to the good old grimy world he knows, thanking God beyond measure that he will never live to see the hateful day when one baby out of every four ceases to die in our manufacturing towns, when lives of sordid care are banished altogether from the earth, and when the "sense of humour" and the cult of Mark Tapley which flourishes so among these things will be in danger of perishing from disuse….

But the reader sees now what Socialism is in its essentials, the tempered magnificence of the constructive scheme to which it asks him to devote his life. It is a laborious, immense project to make the world a world of social justice, of opportunity and full living, to abolish waste, to abolish the lavish unpremeditated cruelty of our present social order. Do not let the wit or perversity of the adversary or, what is often a far worse influence, the zeal and overstatement of the headlong advocate, do not let the manifest personal deficiencies of this spokesman or that, distract you from the living heart in Socialism, its broad generosity of conception, its immense claim in kinship and direction upon your Good Will.

§ 2.

For the convenience of those readers who are in the position of inquirers, I had designed at this point a section which was to contain a list of the chief objections to Socialism — other than mere

misrepresentations — which are current now-a-days. I had meant at first to answer each one fully and gravely, to clear them all up exhaustively and finally before proceeding. But I find now upon jotting them down, that they are for the most part already anticipated by the preceding chapters, and so I will note them here, very compactly indeed, and make but the briefest comment upon each.

There is first the assertion, which effectually bars a great number of people from further inquiry into Socialist teaching, that *Socialism is contrary to Christianity*. I would urge that this is the absolute inversion of the truth. Christianity involves, I am convinced, a practical Socialism if it is honestly carried out. This is not only my conviction, but the reader, if he is a Nonconformist, can find it set out at length by Dr. Clifford in a Fabian tract, *Socialism and the Teaching of Christ*; and, if a Churchman, by the Rev. Stewart Headlam in another, *Christian Socialism*. He will find a longer and fuller discussion of this question in the Rev. R. J. Campbell's *Christianity and Social Order*. In the list of members of such a Socialist Society as the Fabian Society will be found the names of clergy of the principal Christian denominations, excepting only the Roman Catholic Church. It is said, indeed, that a good Catholic of the Roman Communion cannot also be any sort of Socialist. Even this very general persuasion may not be correct. I believe the papal prohibition was originally aimed entirely at a specific form of Socialism, the Socialism of Marx, Engels and Bebel, which is, I must admit, unfortunately strongly anti-Christian in tone, as is the Socialism of the British Social Democratic Federation to this day. It is true that many leaders of the Socialist party have also been Secularists, and that they have mingled their theological prejudices with their political work. This is the case not only in Germany and America, but in Great Britain, where Mr. Robert Blatchford of the *Clarion*, for example, has also carried on a campaign against doctrinal Christianity. But this association of Secularism and Socialism is only the inevitable throwing together of two sets of ideas because they have this in common, that they run counter to generally received opinions; there is no other connection. Many prominent Secularists, like Charles Bradlaugh and Mr. J. M.

Robertson, are as emphatically anti-Socialist as the Pope. Secularists and Socialists get thrown together and classed together just as early Christians and criminals and rebels against the Emperor were no doubt thrown together in the Roman gaols. They had this much in common, that they were in conflict with what most people considered to be right. It is a confusion that needs constant explaining away. It is to me a most lamentable association of two entirely separate thought processes, one constructive socially and the other destructive intellectually, and I have already, in Chapter VI., § 4, done my best to disavow it.

Socialism is pure Materialism, it seeks only physical well-being, — just as much as nursing lepers for pity and the love of God is pure materialism that seeks only physical well-being.

Socialism advocates Free Love. This objection I have also disposed of in Chapter VI., §§ 2 and 4.

Socialism renders love impossible, and reduces humanity to the condition of a stud farm. This, too, has been already dealt with; see Chapter III., §§ 2 and 5, and Chapter VI., §§ 2, 3, and 4. These two objections generally occur together in the same anti-Socialist speech or tract.

Socialism would destroy parental responsibility. This absurd perversion is altogether disposed of in Chapter VI., § 3. It is a direct inversion of current Socialist teaching.

§ 3.

Socialism would open the way to vast public corruption. This is flatly opposed to the experience of America, where local administration has been as little Socialistic and as corrupt as anywhere in the world. Obviously in order that a public official should be bribed, there must be some wealthy person outside the system to bribe him and with an interest in bribing him. When you have a weak administration with feeble powers and resources and strong unscrupulous private corporations seeking to override the law and public welfare, the

possibilities of bribing are at the highest point. In a community given over to the pursuit of gain, powerful private enterprises will resort to corruption to get and protract franchises, to evade penalties, to postpone expropriation, and they will do it systematically and successfully. And even where there is partial public enterprise and a competition among contractors, there will certainly be, at least, attempts at corruption to get contracts. But where the whole process is in public hands, where can the bribery creep in; who is going to find the money for the bribes, and why?

It is urged that in another direction there is likely to be a corruption of public life due to the organized voting of the *employés* in this branch of the public service or that, seeking some advantage for their own service. This is Lord Avebury's bogey.16 Frankly, such voting by services is highly probable. The tramway men or the milk-service men may think they are getting too long hours or too low pay in comparison with the teachers or men on the ocean liners, and the thing may affect elections. That is only human nature, and the point to bear in mind is that this sort of thing goes on to-day, and goes on with a vigour out of all proportion to the mild possibilities of a Socialist *régime*. The landowners of Great Britain, for example, are organized in the most formidable manner against the general interests of the community, and constantly subordinate the interests of the common-weal to their conception of justice to their class; the big railways are equally potent, and so are the legal profession and the brewers. But to-day these political interventions of great organized services athwart the path of statesmanship are sustained by enormous financial resources. The State *employés* under Socialism will be in the position of employing one another and paying one another; the teacher, for example, will be educating the sons of the tramway men up to the requirements of the public paymaster, and travelling in the trams to and from his work; there will be close mutual observation and criticism, therefore, and a strong community of spirit, and that will put very definite limits indeed upon the possibly evil influence of class and service interests in politics.

Socialism would destroy Incentive and Efficiency. This is dealt with in Chapter V. on the Spirit of Gain and the Spirit of Service.

Socialism is economically unsound. The student of Socialism who

studies — and every student of Socialism should study very carefully — the literature directed against Socialism, will encounter a number of rather confused and frequently very confusing arguments running upon "business" or "economic" lines. In nearly all of these the root error is a misconception of the nature and aim of Socialist claims. Sometimes this misconception is stated and manifest, often it is subtly implied, and then it presents the greatest difficulties to the inexpert dialectician. I find, for instance, Mr. W. H. Lever, in an article on Socialism and Business in the *Magazine of Commerce* for October 1907, assuming that there will be no increase in the total wealth of the community under Socialism, whereas, as my fourth chapter shows, Socialist proposals in the matter of property aim directly at the cessation of the waste occasioned by competition through the duplication and multiplication of material and organizations (see for example the quotation from Elihu,), and at the removal of the obstructive claims of private ownership (see) from the path of production. If Socialism does not increase the total wealth of the community, Socialism is impossible.

Having made this assumption, however, Mr. Lever next assumes that all contemporary business is productive of honest, needed commodities, and that its public utility and its profitable conduct measure one another. But this ignores the manifest fact that success in business now-a-days is far more often won by the mere salesmanship of mediocre or inferior or short-weight goods than it is by producing exceptional value, and the Kentish railways, for example, are a standing contrast of the conflict between public service and private profit-seeking. But having committed himself to these two entirely unsound assumptions, it is easy for Mr. Lever to show that since Socialism will give no more wealth, and since what he calls Labour, Capital and the Employer (*i. e.* Labour, Plant and Management) are necessary to production and must be maintained out of the total product, there will be little more, practically, for the Labourer under Socialist conditions than under the existing *régime*. Going on further to assume that the Owner is always enterprising and intelligent and public-spirited, and the State stupid (which is a quite unjustifiable assumption), he shows their share may even be less. But the whole case for the Socialist proposals, the student must bear in

mind, rests upon the recognition that private management of our collective concerns means chaotic and socially wasteful management — however efficient it may be in individual cases for competitive purposes — and that the systematic abolition of the parasitic Owner from our economic process implies the replacement of confusion by order and an immense increase in the efficiency of that economic process. Socialism is economy. If the student of Socialism does not bear this in mind, if once he allows the assumption to creep in that Socialism is not so much a proposal to change, concentrate and organize the economic process, as one to distribute the existing wealth of the country in some new manner, he will find there is a bad case for Socialism.

It is an amusing and I think a fair comment on the arguments of Mr. Lever that a year or so ago he was actually concerned — no doubt in the interests of the public as well as his own — in organizing the production and distribution of soap so as to economize the waste and avoid the public disservice due to the extreme competition of the soap dealers. He wanted to do in the soap industry just exactly what Socialism wants to do in the case of all public services, that is to say he wanted to give it the economic advantages of a Great Combine. In some directions the saving to the soap interest would have been immense; all the vast expenditure upon newspaper advertisements, for example, all the waste upon competing travellers would have been saved. Whether the public would have benefited greatly or not is beside the present question; Mr. Lever and other great soap proprietors would certainly have benefited enormously. They would have benefited by working as a collective interest instead of as independent private owners. But in this little experiment in what was really a sort of voluntary Socialism for particular ends, Mr. Lever reckoned without another great system of private adventurers, the halfpenny newspaper proprietors, who had hitherto been drawing large sums from soap advertisement, and who had in fact been so far parasitic on the public soap supply. One group of these papers at once began a campaign against the "Soap Trust," a campaign almost as noisy and untruthful as the anti-Socialist campaign. They accused Mr. Lever of nearly every sort of cheating that can be done by a soap seller, and anticipated every sort of

oppression a private monopolist can practise. In the end they paid unprecedented damages for libel, but they stopped Mr. Lever's intelligent and desirable endeavours to replace the waste and disorder of our existing soap supply by a simple and more efficient organization. Mr. Lever cannot have forgotten these facts; they were surely in the back of his mind when he wrote his "Socialism and Business" paper, and it is a curious instance of the unconscious limitations one may encounter in a mind of exceptional ability that he could not bring them forward and apply them to the problem in hand.

Socialism is unbusinesslike. See Chapter VIII., §§ 2 and 3.

§ 4.

Socialism would destroy freedom. This is a more considerable difficulty. To begin with it may be necessary to remind the reader that absolute freedom is an impossibility. As I have written in my *Modern Utopia*: —

"The idea of individual liberty is one that has grown in importance and grows with every development of modern thought. To the classical Utopists freedom was relatively trivial. Clearly they considered virtue and happiness as entirely separable from liberty, and as being altogether more important things. But the modern view, with its deepening insistence upon individuality and upon the significance of its uniqueness, steadily intensifies the value of freedom, until at last we begin to see liberty as the very substance of life, that indeed it is life, and that only the dead things, the choiceless things live in absolute obedience to law. To have free play for one's individuality is, in the modern view, the subjective triumph of existence, as survival in creative work and offspring is its objective triumph. But for all men, since man is a social creature, the play of will must fall short of absolute freedom. Perfect human liberty is possible only to a despot who is absolutely and universally obeyed. Then to will would be to command and achieve, and within the limits of natural law we could at any moment do exactly as it pleased us to do. All other liberty is a compromise between our own freedom of

will and the wills of those with whom we come in contact. In an organized state each one of us has a more or less elaborate code of what he may do to others and to himself, and what others may do to him. He limits others by his rights and is limited by the rights of others, and by considerations affecting the welfare of the community as a whole.

"Individual liberty in a community is not, as mathematicians would say, always of the same sign. To ignore this is the essential fallacy of the cult called Individualism. But in truth, a general prohibition in a State may increase the sum of liberty, and a general permission may diminish it. It does not follow, as these people would have us believe, that a man is more free where there is least law, and more restricted where there is most law. A socialism or a communism is not necessarily a slavery, and there is no freedom under anarchy….

"It follows, therefore, in a modern Utopia, which finds the final hope of the world in the evolving interplay of unique individualities, that the State will have effectually chipped away just all those spendthrift liberties that waste liberty, and not one liberty more, and so have attained the maximum general freedom."…

That is the gist of the Socialist's answer to this accusation. He asks what freedom is there to-day for the vast majority of mankind? They are free to do nothing but work for a bare subsistence all their lives, they may not go freely about the earth even, but are prosecuted for trespassing upon the health-giving breast of our universal mother. Consider the clerks and girls who hurry to their work of a morning across Brooklyn Bridge in New York, or Hungerford Bridge in London; go and see them, study their faces. They are free, with a freedom Socialism would destroy. Consider the poor painted girls who pursue bread with nameless indignities through our streets at night. They are free by the current standard. And the poor half-starved wretches struggling with the impossible stint of oakum in a casual ward, they too are free! The nimble footman is free, the crushed porter between the trucks is free, the woman in the mill, the child in the mine. Ask them! They will tell you how free they are. They have happened to choose these ways of living — that is all. No doubt the piquancy of the life attracts them in many such cases.

Let us be frank; a form of Socialism might conceivably exist without much freedom, with hardly more freedom than that of a British worker to-day. A State Socialism tyrannized over by officials who might be almost as bad at times as uncontrolled small employers, is so far possible that in Germany it is practically half-existent now. A bureaucratic Socialism might conceivably be a state of affairs scarcely less detestable than our own. I will not deny there is a clear necessity of certain addenda to the wider formulæ of Socialism if we are to be safeguarded effectually from the official. We need free speech, free discussion, free publication, as essentials for a wholesome Socialist State. How they may be maintained I shall discuss in a later chapter. But these admissions do not justify the present system. Socialism, though it failed to give us freedom, would not destroy anything that we have in this way. We want freedom now, and we have it not. We speak of freedom of speech, but to-day, in innumerable positions, Socialist *employés* who declared their opinions openly would be dismissed. Then again in religious questions there is an immense amount of intolerance and suppression of social and religious discussion to-day, especially in our English villages. As for freedom of action, most of us, from fourteen to the grave, are chased from even the leisure to require freedom by the necessity of earning a living….

Socialism, as I have stated it thus far, and as it is commonly stated, would give economic liberty to men and women alike, it would save them from the cruel urgency of need, and so far it would enormously enlarge freedom, but it does not guarantee them political or intellectual liberty. That I frankly admit, and accept as one of the incompletenesses of contemporary Socialism. I conceive, therefore, as I shall explain at length in a later chapter, that it is necessary to supplement such Socialism as is currently received by certain new propositions. But to admit that Socialism does not guarantee freedom, is not to admit that Socialism will destroy it. It is possible, given certain conditions, for men to be nearly absolutely free in speech, in movement, in conduct; enormously free, that is, as compared with our present conditions, in a Socialist State established upon the two great propositions I have formulated in Chapters III. and IV. So that the statement that Socialism will destroy freedom is a

baseless one of no value as a general argument against the Socialist idea.

§ 5.

Socialism would reduce life to one monotonous dead level! This in a world in which the majority of people live in cheap cottages, villa residences and tenement houses, read halfpenny newspapers and wear ready-made clothes!

Socialism would destroy Art, Invention and Literature. I do not know why this objection is made, unless it be that the objectors suppose that artists will not create, inventors will not think, and no one write or sing except to please a wealthy patron. Without his opulent smile, where would they be? Well, do not let us be ungrateful; the arts owe much to patronage. Go to Venice, go to Florence, and you will find a glorious harvest of pictures and architecture, sown and reaped by a mercantile plutocracy. But then in Rome, in Athens, you will find an equal accumulation made under very different conditions. Reach a certain phase of civilization, a certain leisure and wealth, and art will out, however the wealth may be distributed. In certain sumptuous directions art flourishes now, and would certainly flourish less in a Socialist State; in the gear of ostentatious luxury, in private furniture of all sorts, in palace building, in the exquisite confections of costly feminine adornment, in the luxurious binding of books, in the cooking of larks, in the distinguished portraiture of undistinguished persons, in the various refinements of prostitution, in the subtle accommodations of mystic theology, in jewellery. It is quite conceivable that in such departments Socialism will discourage and limit æsthetic and intellectual effort. But no mercantile plutocracy could ever have produced a Gothic cathedral, a folk-lore, a gracious natural type of cottage or beautiful clothing for the common people, and no mercantile plutocracy will ever tolerate a literature of power. If the coming of Socialism destroys arts, it will also create arts; the architecture of private palaces will give place to an architecture of beautiful common homes, cottages and colleges, and to a splendid development of public buildings, the Sargents of Socialism will paint

famous people instead of millionaires' wives, poetry and popular romantic literature will revive. For my own part I have no doubt where the balance of advantage lies.

It seems reasonable to look to the literary and artistic people themselves for a little guidance in this matter. Well, we had in the nineteenth century an absolute revolt of artists against Individualism. The proportion of open and declared Socialists among the great writers, artists, playwrights, critics, of the Victorian period was out of all proportion to the number of Socialists in the general population. Wilde in his *Soul of Man under Socialism*, Ruskin in many volumes of imperishable prose, Morris in all his later life, have witnessed to the unending protest of the artistic spirit against the rule of gain. Some of these writers are not, perhaps, to be regarded as orthodox Socialists in the modern sense, but their disgust with and contempt for Individualist competition is entirely in the vein of our teaching.

Even this Individualistic country of ours, after the shameful shock of the Great Exhibition of 1851, decided that it could no longer leave art to private enterprise, and organized that systematic government Art Teaching that has, in spite of its many defects, revolutionized the æsthetic quality of this country. And so far as research and invention go, one may very reasonably appeal to such an authority on the other side, as the late Mr. Beit, of Wernher Beit & Co. The outcome of his experience as an individualist financier was to convince him that the only way to raise the standard of technical science in England, and therewith of economic enterprise, was by the endowment of public teaching, and the huge "London Charlottenburg" rises — out of his conviction. Even Messrs. Rockefeller and Carnegie admit the failure of Individualism in this matter by pouring money into public universities and public libraries. All these heads of the commercial process confess by such acts just exactly what this objection of the inexperienced denies, that is to say the power of the State to develop art, invention and knowledge; the necessity that this duty should be done if not by, then at any rate through, the State.

Socialism may very seriously change the direction of intellectual and æsthetic endeavour; that one admits. But there is no reason whatever for supposing it will not, and there are countless reasons for

supposing that it will, enormously increase the opportunities and encouragements for æsthetic and intellectual endeavour.

§ 6.

Socialism would arrest the survival of the Fittest. Here is an objection from quite a new quarter. It is the stock objection of the science student. Hitherto we have considered religious and æsthetic difficulties, but this is the difficulty of the mind that realizes clearly the nature of the biological process, the secular change in every species under the influence of its environment, and is most concerned with that. Species, it is said, change — and the student of the elements of science is too apt to conclude that this change is always ascent in the scale of being — by the killing off of the individuals out of harmony with the circumstances under which the species is living. This is not quite true. The truer statement is that species change because, allowing for chance and individual exceptions, only those individuals survive to reproduce themselves who are fairly well adjusted to the conditions of life; so that in each generation there is only a small proportion of births out of harmony with these conditions. This sounds very like the previous proposition, but it differs in this that the accent is shifted from the "killing" to the suppression of births, that is the really important fact. In any case, then, the believer in evolution holds that the qualities encouraged by the environment increase in the species and the qualities discouraged diminish. The qualities that have survival value are not always what we human beings consider admirable — that is a consideration many science students fail to grasp. The remarkable habits of all the degenerating crustacea, for example, the appetite of the vulture, the unpleasing personality of the common hyæna, all that less charming side of Mother Nature that her scandalized children may read of in Cobbold's *Human Parasites*, are the result of survival under the pressure of environment, just as much as the human eye or the wing of an eagle. Let the objector therefore ask himself what sort of "fittest" are surviving now.

The plain answer is that under our present conditions the *Breeding-Getter* wins, the man who can hold and keep and reproduce

his kind. People with the instinct of owning stronger than any other instinct float out upon the top of our seething mass, and flourish there. Aggressive, intensely acquisitive, reproductive people — the ignoble sort of Jew is the very type of it — are the people who will prevail in a social system based on private property and mercantile competition. No creative power, no nobility, no courage can battle against them. And below — in the slums and factories, what will be going on? The survival of a race of stunted toilers, with great resisting power to infection, contagion and fatigue, omnivorous as rats….

Don't imagine that the high infantile death rate of our manufacturing centres spares the fine big children. It does not. Here is the effectual answer to that. It is taken from the Report of the Education Committee of the London County Council for the year 1905, and it is part of an account of an inquiry conducted by the headmaster of one school in a poor neighbourhood.

"The object of the inquiry was to discover the causes of variation in the physical condition of children within the limits of this single school. Each of the 405 boys was carefully weighed and measured without boots, a note was made of the condition of the teeth, and a general estimate of the personal cleanliness and sufficiency of clothing as a basis for determining the home conditions of neglect or otherwise from external evidence. The teacher of each class added an estimate of mental capacity." (Here follow tabular arrangements of results, and height and weight charts.)

"… It may be noted in the heights and weights for each age that the curve is not a continuous line of growth, but that at some ages it springs nearer to, and at others sinks further from, the normal. The greatest effect upon the life capital of the population is produced by the infantile mortality, which in some years actually kills off during the first year one in five of all children born; the question naturally arises what is its effect upon the survivors — do the weakly ones get killed off and only the strong muddle through, or does the adverse environment which slaughters one in five have a maiming effect upon those left?… When the infantile mortality for the parish in which the school is situate was charted above the physique curve, an absolute correspondence is to be observed. The children born in a

year when infantile mortality is low show an increased physique, rising nearest to the normal in the extraordinary good year 1892; and those born in the years of high mortality show a decreased physique…. It appears certain, therefore, that in years of high infantile mortality the conditions, to which one in five or six of the children born are sacrificed, have a maiming effect upon the other four or five."

The fine big children are born in periods of low infantile mortality, that is the essential point.

So that anyhow, since the fittest under present conditions is manifestly the ratlike, the survival of the fittest that is going on now is one that it is highly desirable to stop as soon as possible, and so far Socialism *will* arrest the survival of the fittest. But that does not mean that it will stop the development of the species altogether. It will merely shift the incident of selection and rejection to a new set of qualities. I think I have already hinted (Chapter VI., § 2) that a State that undertakes to sustain all the children born into it will do its best to secure good births. That implies a distinct bar to the marriage and reproduction of the halt and the blind, the bearers of transmissible diseases and the like. And women being economically independent will have a far freer choice in wedlock than they have now. Now they must in practice marry men who can more or less keep them, they must subordinate every other consideration to that. Under Socialism they will certainly look less to a man's means and acquisitive gifts, and more to the finer qualities of his personality. They will prefer prominent men, able men, fine, vigorous and attractive persons. There will, indeed, be far more freedom of choice on either side than under the sordid conditions of the present time. I submit that such a free choice is far more likely to produce a secular increase in the beauty, the intellectual and physical activity and the capacity of the race, than our present haphazard mercenariness.

The science student will be interested to read in this connection *The Ethic of Free Thought* (A. & C. Black, 1888), *Socialism in Theory and Practice* (1884), and *The Chances of Death, and other Studies in Evolution* (Arnold, 1897), by Karl Pearson. Professor Pearson is not

in all respects to be taken as an authoritative exponent of Modern Socialism, and he is associated with no Socialist organization, but his treatment of the biological aspect is that of a specialist and a master.

§ 7.

Socialism is against Human Nature. This objection I have left until last because, firstly, it is absolutely true, and secondly, it leads naturally to the newer ideas that have already peeped out once or twice in my earlier chapters and which will now ride up to a predominance in what follows, and particularly the idea that an educational process and a moral discipline are not only a necessary part, but the most fundamental part of any complete Socialist scheme. Socialism is against Human Nature. That is true, and it is equally true of everything else; capitalism is against human nature, competition is against human nature, cruelty, kindness, religion and doubt, monogamy, polygamy, celibacy, decency, indecency, piety and sin are all against human nature. The present system in particular is against human nature, or what is the policeman for, the soldier, the debt-collector, the judge, the hangman? What means the glass along my neighbour's wall? Human nature is against human nature. For human nature is in a perpetual conflict; it is the Ishmael of the universe, against everything, and with everything against it; and within, no more and no less than a perpetual battleground of passion, desire, cowardice, indolence and good will. So that our initial proposition as it stands at the head of this section, is, as an argument against Socialism, just worth nothing at all.

None the less valuable is it as a reminder of the essential constructive task of which the two primary generalizations of Socialism we have so far been developing are but the outward and visible forms. There is no untutored naturalness in Socialism, no uneducated blind force on our side. Socialism is made of struggling Good Will, made out of a conflict of wills. I have tried to let it become apparent that while I do firmly believe not only in the splendour and nobility of the Socialist dream but in its ultimate practicality, I do also recognize quite clearly that with people just as they are now, with their prejudices, their ignorances, their

misapprehensions, their unchecked vanities and greeds and jealousies, their crude and misguided instincts, their irrational traditions, no Socialist State can exist, no better State can exist, than the one we have now with all its squalor and cruelty. Every change in human institutions must happen concurrently with a change of ideas. Upon this plastic, uncertain, teachable thing Human Nature, within us and without, we have, if we really contemplate Socialism as our achievement, to impose guiding ideas and guiding habits, we have to co-ordinate all the Good Will that is active or latent in our world in one constructive plan. To-day the spirit of humanity is lost to itself, divided, dispersed and hidden in little narrow distorted circles of thought. These divided, misshapen circles of thought are not "human nature," but human nature has fallen into these forms and has to be released. Our fundamental business is to develop the human spirit. It is in the enlargement and enrichment of the average circle of thought that the essential work and method of Socialism is to be found.

CHAPTER X SOCIALISM A DEVELOPING DOCTRINE

§ 1.

So far we have been discussing the broad elementary propositions of Modern Socialism. As we have dealt with them, they amount to little more than a sketch of the foundation for a great scheme of social reconstruction. It would be a poor service to Socialism to pretend that this scheme is complete. From this point onward one enters upon a series of less unanimous utterances and more questionable suggestions. Concerning much of what follows, Socialism has as yet not elaborated its teaching. It has to do so, it is doing so, but huge labours lie before its servants. Before it can achieve any full measure of realization, it has to overcome problems at present but half solved, problems at present scarcely touched, the dark unsettling suggestion of problems that still await formulation. The Anti-Socialist is freely welcome to all these admissions. No doubt they will afford grounds for some cheap transitory triumph. They affect our great generalizations not at all; they detract nothing from the fact that Socialism presents the most inspiring, creative scheme that ever came into the chaos of human affairs. The fact that it is not cut and dried, that it lives and grows, that every honest adherent adds not only to its forces but to its thought and spirit, is itself inspiration.

The new adherent to Socialism in particular must bear this in mind, that Socialism is no garment made and finished that we can reasonably ask the world to wear forthwith. It is not that its essentials remain in doubt, it is not that it does not stand for things supremely true, but that its proper method and its proper expedients have still to be established. Over and above the propaganda of its main constructive ideas and the political work for their more obvious and practical application, an immense amount of intellectual work remains to be done for Socialism. The battle for Socialism is to be fought not simply at the polls and in the market-place, but at the writing-desk and in the study. To many questions, the attitude of Socialism to-day is one of confessed inquiring imperfection.17 It

would indeed be very remarkable if a proposition for changes so vast and comprehensive as Socialism advances was in any different state at this present time.

It is so recently as 1833 that the world first heard the word Socialism.18 It appeared then, with the vaguest implications and the most fluctuating definition, as a general term for a disconnected series of protests against the extreme theories of Individualism and Individualist Political Economy; against the cruel, race-destroying industrial spirit that then dominated the world. Of these protests the sociological suggestions and experiments of Robert Owen were most prominent in the English community, and he it is, more than any other single person, whom we must regard as the father of Socialism. But in France ideas essentially similar were appearing about such movements and personalities as those of Saint Simon, Proudhon and Fourier. They were part of a vast system of questionings and repudiations, political doubts, social doubts, hesitating inquiries and experiments.

It is only to be expected that early Socialism should now appear as not only an extremely imperfect but a very inconsistent system of proposals. Its value lay not so much in its plans as in its hopeful and confident denials. It had hold of one great truth; it moved one great amendment to the conception of practical equality the French Revolution had formulated, and that was its clear indication of the evil of unrestricted private property and of the necessary antagonism of the interests of the individual to the common-weal, of "Wealth against Commonwealth," that went with that. While most men had to go propertyless in a world that was privately owned, the assertion of equality was an empty lie. For the rest, primordial Socialism was entirely sketchy and experimental. It was wild as the talk of school-boys. It disregarded the most obvious needs. It did not provide for any principle of government, or for the maintenance of collective thought and social determination, it offered no safeguards and guarantees for even the most elementary privacies and freedoms; it was extraordinarily non-constructive. It was extreme in its proposed abolition of the home, and it flatly ignored the huge process of transition needed for a change so profound and universal.

The early Socialism was immediately millennial. It had no

patience. The idea was to be made into a definite project forthwith; Fourier drew up his compact scheme, arranged how many people should live in each *phalange* and so forth, and all that remained to do, he thought, was to sow *phalanges* as one scatters poppy seed. With him it was to be Socialism by contagion, with many of his still hastier contemporaries it was to be Socialism by proclamation. All the evils of society were to crumble to ruins like the Walls of Jericho at the first onset of the Great Idea.

Our present generation is less buoyant perhaps, but wiser. However young you may be as a reformer, you know you must face certain facts those early Socialists ignored. Whatever sort of community you dream of, you realize that it has to be made of the sort of people you meet every day or of the children growing up under their influence. The damping words of the old philosopher to the ardent Social reformer of seventeen were really the quintessence of our criticism of revolutionary Socialism: "Will your aunts join us, my dear? No! Well — is the grocer on our side? And the family solicitor? We shall have to provide for them all, you know, unless you suggest a lethal chamber."

For a generation Socialism, in the exaltation of its self-discovery, failed to measure these primary obstacles, failed to recognize the real necessity, the quality of the task of making these people understand. To this day the majority of Socialists still fail to grasp completely the Herbartian truth, the fact that every human soul moves within its *circle of ideas*, resisting enlargement, incapable indeed if once it is adult of any extensive enlargement, and that all effectual human progress can be achieved only through such enlargement. Only ideas cognate to a circle of ideas are assimilated or assimilable; ideas too alien, though you shout them in the ear, thrust them in the face, remain foreign and incomprehensible.

The early Socialists, arriving at last at their Great Idea, after toilsome questionings, after debates, disputations, studies, trials, *saw*, and instantly couldn't understand those others who did not see; they failed altogether to realize the leaps they had made, the brilliant omissions they had achieved, the difficulties they had evaded to get to this magnificent conception. I suppose such impatience is as natural and understandable as it is unfortunate. None of us escape it.

Much of this early Socialism is as unreal as mathematics, has much the same relation to truth as the abstract absolute process of calculation has to concrete individual things; much of it more than justifies altogether that "black or white" method of criticism of which I wrote in the preceding chapter. They were as downright and unconsidering, as little capable of the reasoned middle attitude. Proudhon, perceiving that the world was obsessed by a misconception of the scope of property whereby the many were enslaved to the few, went off at a tangent to the announcement that "Property is Robbery," an exaggeration that, as I have already shown, still haunts Socialist discussion. The ultimate factor of all human affairs, the psychological factor, was disregarded. Like the classic mathematical problem, early Socialism was always "neglecting the weight of the elephant" — or some other — from the practical point of view — equally essential factor. This was, perhaps, an unavoidable stage. It is probable that by no other means than such exaggeration and partial statement could Socialism have got itself begun. The world of 1830 was fatally wrong in its ideas of property; early Socialism rose up and gave those ideas a flat, extreme, outrageous contradiction. After that analysis and discussion became possible.

The early Socialist literature teems with rash, suggestive schemes. It has the fertility, the confusion, the hopefulness, the promise of glowing youth. It is a quarry of ideas, a mine of crude expedients, a fountain of emotions. The abolition of money, the substitution of Labour Notes, the possibility, justice and advantage of equalizing upon a time-basis the remuneration of the worker, the relation of the new community to the old family, a hundred such topics were ventilated — were not so much ventilated as tossed about in an impassioned gale.

Much of this earlier Socialist literature was like Cabet's book, actually Utopian in form; a still larger proportion was Utopian in spirit; its appeal was imaginative, and it aimed to be a plan of a new state as definite and detailed as the plan for the building of a house. It has been the fashion with a number of later Socialist writers and speakers, mind-struck with that blessed word "evolution," confusing "scientific," a popular epithet to which they aspired, with

"unimaginative," to sneer at the Utopian method, to make a sort of ideal of a leaden practicality, but it does not follow because the Utopias produced and the experiments attempted were in many aspects unreasonable and absurd that the method itself is an unsound one. At a certain phase of every creative effort you must cease to study the thing that is, and plan the thing that is not. The early Socialisms were only premature plans and hasty working models that failed to work.

And it must be remembered when we consider Socialism's early extravagancies, that any idea or system of ideas which challenges the existing system is necessarily, in relation to that system, outcast. Mediocre men go soberly on the highroads, but saints and scoundrels meet in the gaols. If A and B rebel against the Government, they are apt, although they rebel for widely different reasons, to be classed together; they are apt indeed to be thrown together and tempted to sink even quite essential differences in making common cause against the enemy. So that from its very beginning Socialism was mixed up — to this day it remains mixed up — with other movements of revolt and criticism, with which it has no very natural connection. There is, for example, the unfortunate entanglement between the Socialist theory and that repudiation of any but subjective sexual limitations which is called "free love," and there is that still more unfortunate association of its rebellion against orthodox economic theories, with rebellion against this or that system of religious teaching. Several of the early Socialist communities, again, rebelled against ordinary clothing, and their women made short hair and bloomers the outward and visible associations of the communistic idea. In Holyoake's *History of Co-operation* it is stated that one early experiment was known to its neighbours as "the grass-eating Atheists of Ham Common." I have done my very best (in Chapter VIII., § 2) to clear the exposition of Socialism from these entanglements, but it is well to recognize that these are no corruptions of its teaching, but an inevitable birth-infection that has still to be completely overcome.

§ 2.

The comprehensively constructive spirit of modern Socialism is very much to seek in these childhood phases that came before Marx. These early projects were for the most part developed by literary men (and by one philosophic business man, Owen) to whose circle of ideas the conception of State organization and administration was foreign. They took peace and order for granted — they left out the school-master, the judge and the policeman, as the amateur architect of the anecdote left out the staircase. They set out to contrive a better industrial organization, or a better social atmosphere within the present scheme of things. They wished to reform what they understood, and what was outside their circle of ideas they took for granted, as they took the sky and sea. Not only was their literature Utopian literature, about little islands of things begun over again from the beginning, but their activities tended in the direction of Utopian experiments equally limited and isolated. Here again a just critic will differ from many contemporary Socialists in their depreciation of this sort of work. Owen's experiments in socialized production were of enormous educational and scientific value. They were, to use a mining expert's term, "hand specimens" of human welfare of the utmost value to promoters. They made factory legislation possible; they initiated the now immense co-operative movement; they stirred commonplace imaginations as only achievement can stir them; they set going a process of amelioration in industrial conditions that will never, I believe, cease again until the Socialist state is attained.

But apart from Owen and the general advertisement given to Socialist ideas, it must be admitted that a great majority of Socialist communities have, by every material standard, failed rather than succeeded. Some went visibly insolvent and to pieces, others were changed by prosperity. Some were wrecked by the sudden lapse of the treasurer into an extreme individualism. Essentially Socialism is a project for the species, but these communities made it a system of relationships within a little group; to the world without they had necessarily to turn a competitive face, to buy and sell and advertise on the lines of the system as it is. If they failed, they failed; if they succeeded they presently found themselves landlords, employers, no more and no less than a corporate individualism. I have described

elsewhere19 the fate of the celebrated Oneida community of New York State, and how it is now converted into an aggressive, wealthy, fighting corporation of the most modern type, employing immigrant labour.

Professed and conscious Socialism in its earliest stages, then, was an altogether extreme proposition, it was at once imperfect and over-emphatic, and it was confused with many quite irrelevant and inconsistent novelties with regard to diet, dress, medicine and religion. Its first manifest, acknowledged and labelled fruits were a series of futile "communities" — Noyes' *History of American Socialisms* gives their simple history of births and of fatal infantile ailments — Brook Farm, Fourierite "Phalanges" and the like. But correlated with these extreme efforts, drawing ideas and inspiration from them, was the great philanthropic movement for the amelioration of industrialism, that was, I insist, for all its absence of a definite Socialist label in many cases, an equally legitimate factor in the making of the great conception of modern Socialism. Socialism may be the child of the French Revolution, but it certainly has one aristocratic Tory grandparent. There can be little dispute of the close connection of Lord Shaftesbury's Factory Acts, that commencement of constructive statesmanship in industrialism, with the work of Owen. The whole Victorian period marks a steady development of social organization out of the cruel economic anarchy of its commencement; the beginnings of public education, adulteration acts and similar checks upon the extremities of private enterprise, the great successful experiments of co-operative consumers' associations and the development of what has now become a quasi-official representation of labour in the State through the Trade Unions. Two great writers, Carlyle and Ruskin, the latter a professed Socialist, spent their powers in a relentless campaign against the harsh theories of the liberty of property, the gloomy superstitions of political economy that barred the way to any effectual constructive scheme. An enormous work was done throughout the whole Victorian period by Socialists and Socialistic writers, in criticizing and modifying the average circle of ideas, in bringing conceptions that had once seemed weird, outcast and altogether fantastic, more and more within the range of acceptable

practicality.

The first early Socialisms were most various and eccentric upon the question of government and control. They had no essential political teaching. Many, but by no means all, were inspired by the democratic idealism of the first French Revolution. They believed in a mystical something that was wiser and better than any individual, — the People, the Common Man. But that was by no means the case with all of them. The Noyes community was a sort of Theocratic autocracy; the Saint Simonian tendency was aristocratic. The English Socialism that in the middle Victorian period developed partly out of the suggestions of Owen's beginnings and partly as an independent fresh outpouring of the struggling Good Will in man, that English Socialism that found a voice in Ruskin and in Maurice and Kingsley and the Christian Socialists, was certainly not democratic. It kept much of what was best in the "public spirit" of contemporary English life, and it implied if it did not postulate a "governing class." Benevolent and even generous in conception, its exponents betray all too often the ties of social habituations, the limited circle of ideas of English upper and upper middle-class life, easy and cultivated, well served and distinctly, most unmistakably, authoritative.

While the experimental Utopian Socialisms gave a sort of variegated and conflicting pattern of a reorganized industrialism and (incidentally to that) a new heaven and earth, the benevolent Socialism, Socialistic Liberalism and Socialistic philanthropy of the middle Victorian period, really went very little further in effect than a projected amelioration and moralization of the relations of rich and poor. It needed the impact of an entirely new type of mind before Socialism began to perceive its own significance as an ordered scheme for the entire reconstruction of the world, began to realize the gigantic breadth of its implications.

CHAPTER XI REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

§ 1.

It was Karl Marx who brought the second great influx of suggestion into the intellectual process of Socialism. Before his time there does not seem to have been any clear view of economic relationships as having laws of development, as having interactions that began and went on and led towards new things. But Marx had vision. He had — as Darwin and the evolutionists had, as most men with a scientific training, and many educated men without that advantage now have — a sense of secular change. Instead of being content with the accepted picture of the world as a scene where men went on producing and distributing wealth and growing rich or poor, it might be for endless ages, he made an appeal to history and historical analogies, and for the first time viewed our age of individualist industrial development, not as a possibly permanent condition of humanity, but as something unstable and in motion, as an economic process, that is to say, with a beginning, a middle, and as he saw it, an almost inevitable end.

The last thing men contrive to discern in every question is the familiar obvious, and it came as a great and shattering discovery to the economic and sociological thought of the latter half of the nineteenth century that there was going on not simply a production but an immense concentration of wealth, a differentiation of a special wealthy class of landholder and capitalist, a diminution of small property owners and the development of a great and growing class of landless, nearly propertyless men, the *proletariat*. Marx showed — he showed so clearly that to-day it is recognized by every intelligent man — that *given a continuance of our industrial and commercial system*, of uncontrolled gain seeking, that is, given a continuance of our present spirit and ideas of property, there must necessarily come a time when the owner and the proletarian will stand face to face, with nothing — if we except a middle class of educated professionals dependent on the wealthy, who are after all no more than the upper

stratum of the proletariat — to mask or mitigate their opposition. We shall have two classes, the class-conscious worker and the class-conscious owner, and they will be at war. And with a broad intellectual sweep he flung the light of this conception upon the whole contemporary history of mankind. *Das Kapital* was no sketch of Utopias, had no limitation to the conditions or possibilities of this country or that. "Here," he says, in the widest way, "is what is going on all over the world. So long as practically untrammelled private property, such as you conceive it to-day, endures, this must go on. The worker gravitates steadily everywhere to a bare subsistence, the rest of the proceeds of his labour swell the power of the owners. So it will go on while gain and getting are the rule of your system, until accumulated tensions between class and class smash this present social organization and inaugurate a new age."

In considering the thought and work of Karl Marx, the reader must bear in mind the epoch in which that work commenced. The intellectual world was then under the sway of an organized mass of ideas known as the Science of Political Economy, a mass of ideas that has now not so much been examined and refuted as slipped away imperceptibly from its hold upon the minds of men. In the beginning, in the hands of Adam Smith — whose richly suggestive book is now all too little read — political economy was a broad-minded and sane inquiry into the statecraft of trade based upon current assumptions of private ownership and personal motives, but from him it passed to men of perhaps, in some cases, quite equal intellectual energy but inferior vision and range. The history of Political Economy is indeed one of the most striking instances of the mischief wrought by intellectual minds devoid of vision, in the entire history of human thought. Special definition, technicality, are the stigmata of second-rate intellectual men; they cannot work with the universal tool, they cannot appeal to the general mind. They must abstract and separate. On such men fell the giant's robe of Adam Smith, and they wore it after their manner. Their arid atmospheres are intolerant of clouds, an outline that is not harsh is abominable to them. They criticized their master's vagueness and must needs mend it. They sought to give political economy a precision and conviction such a subject will not stand. They took such words as "*value*," an incurably and necessarily

vague word, "*rent*," the name of the specific relation of landlord and tenant, and "*capital*," and sought to define them with relentless exactness and use them with inevitable effect. So doing they departed more and more from reality. They developed a literature more abundant, more difficult and less real than all the exercises of the schoolmen put together. To use common words in uncommon meanings is to sow a jungle of misunderstanding. It was only to be expected that the bulk of this economic literature resolves upon analysis into a ponderous, intricate, often astonishingly able and foolish wrangling about terminology.

Now in the early Victorian period in which Marx planned his theorizing, political economy ruled the educated world. Ruskin had still to attack the primary assumptions of that tyrannous and dogmatic edifice. The duller sort of educated people talked of the "immutable laws of political economy" in the blankest ignorance that the basis of everything in this so-called science was a plastic human convention. Humane impulses were checked, creative effort tried and condemned by these mystical formulæ. Political economy traded on the splendid achievements of physics and chemistry and pretended to an inexorable authority. Only a man of supreme intelligence and power, a man resolved to give his lifetime to the task, could afford in those days to combat the pretensions of the political economist; to deny that his categories presented scientific truth, and to cast that jargon aside. As for Marx, he saw fit to accept the verbal instruments of his time (albeit he bent them not a little in use), to accommodate himself to their spirit and to split and re-classify and re-define them at his need. So that he has become already difficult to follow, and his more specialized exponents among Socialists use terms that arouse no echoes in the contemporary mind. The days when Socialism need present its theories in terms of a science whose fundamental propositions it repudiates, are at an end. One hears less and less of "surplus value" now, as one hears less and less of McCulloch's Law of Wages. It may crop up in the inquiries of some intelligent mechanic seeking knowledge among the obsolescent accumulations of a public library, or it may for a moment be touched upon by some veteran teacher. But the time when social and economic science had to choose between debatable and inexpressive technicalities on the

one hand or the stigma of empiricism on the other, is altogether past.

The language a man uses, however, is of far less importance than the thing he has to say, and it detracts little from the cardinal importance of Marx that his books will presently demand restatement in contemporary phraseology, and revision in the light of contemporary facts. He opened out Socialism. It is easy to quibble about Marx, and say he didn't see this or that, to produce this eddy in a backwater or that as a triumphant refutation of his general theory. One may quibble about the greatness of Marx as one may quibble about the greatness of Darwin; he remains great and cardinal. He first saw and enabled the world to see capitalistic production as a world process, passing by necessity through certain stages of social development, and unless some change of law and spirit came to modify it, moving towards an inevitable destiny. His followers are too apt to regard that as an absolutely inevitable destiny, but the fault lies not at his door. He saw it as Socialism. It did not appear to him as it does to many that there is a possible alternative to Socialism, that the process may give us, not a triumph for the revolting proletariat, but their defeat, and the establishment of a plutocratic aristocracy culminating in imperialism and ending in social disintegration. From his study, from the studious rotunda of the British Museum Reading-room he made his prophecy of the growing class consciousness of the workers, of the inevitable class war, of the revolution and the millennium that was to follow it. He gathered his facts, elaborated his deductions and waited for the dawn.

So far as his broad generalization of economic development goes, events have wonderfully confirmed Marx. The development of Trusts, the concentration of property that America in particular displays, he foretold. Given that men keep to the unmodified ideas of private property and individualism, and it seems absolutely true that so the world must go. And in the American *Appeal to Reason*, for example, which goes out weekly from Kansas to a quarter of a million of subscribers, one may, if one chooses, see the developing class consciousness of the workers, and the promise — and when strikers take to rifles and explosives as they do in Pennsylvania and Colorado, something more than the promise — of the class war….

But the modern Socialist considers that this generalization is a

little too confident and comprehensive; he perceives that a change in custom, law or public opinion may delay, arrest or invert the economic process, and that Socialism may arrive after all not by a social convulsion, but by the gradual and detailed concession of its propositions. The Marxist presents dramatically what after all may come methodically and unromantically, a revolution as orderly and quiet as the precession of the equinoxes. There may be a concentration of capital and a relative impoverishment of the general working mass of people, for example, and yet a general advance in the world's prosperity and a growing sense of social duty in the owners of capital and land may do much to mask this antagonism of class interests and ameliorate its miseries. Moreover, this antagonism itself may in the end find adequate expression through temperate discussion, and the class war come disguised beyond recognition, with hates mitigated by charity and swords beaten into pens, a mere constructive conference between two classes of fairly well-intentioned albeit perhaps still biassed men and women.

§ 2.

The circle of ideas in which Marx moved was that of a student deeply tinged with the idealism of the renascent French Revolution. His life was the life of a recluse from affairs — an invalid's life; a large part of it was spent round and about the British Museum Reading-room, and his conceptions of Socialism and the social process have at once the spacious vistas given by the historical habit and the abstract quality that comes with a divorce from practical experience of human government. Only in England and in the eighties did the expanding propositions of Socialism come under the influence of men essentially administrative. As a consequence Marx, and still more the early Marxists, were and are negligent of the necessities of government and crude in their notions of class action. He saw the economic process with a perfect lucidity, practically he foretold the consolidation of the Trusts, and his statement of the necessary development of an entirely propertyless working-class with an intensifying class consciousness is a magnificent generalization. He saw clearly up to that opposition of the many and

the few, and then his vision failed because his experience and interests failed. There was to be a class war, and numbers schooled to discipline by industrial organization were to win.

After that the teaching weakens in conviction. The proletariat was to win in the class war; then classes would be abolished, property in the means of production and distribution would be abolished, all men would work reasonably — and the millennium would be with us.

The constructive part of the Marxist programme was too slight. It has no psychology. Contrasted, indeed, with the splendid destructive criticisms that preceded it, it seems indeed trivial. It diagnoses a disease admirably, and then suggests rather an incantation than a plausible remedy. And as a consequence Marxist Socialism appeals only very feebly to the man of public affairs or business or social experience. It does not attract teachers or medical men or engineers. It arouses such men to a sense of social instability but it offers no remedy. They do not believe in the mystical wisdom of the People. They find no satisfactory promise of a millennium in anything Marx foretold.

To the labouring man, however, accustomed to take direction and government as he takes air and sky, these difficulties of the administrative and constructive mind do not occur. His imagination raises no questioning in that picture of the proletariat triumphant after a class war and quietly coming to its own. It does not occur to him for an instant to ask "how?"

Question the common Marxist upon these difficulties and he will relapse magnificently into the doctrine of *laissez faire*. "That will be all right," he will tell you.

"How?"

"We'll take over the Trusts and run them."…

It is part of the inconveniences attending all powerful new movements of the human mind that the disciple bolts with the teacher, overstates him, underlines him, and it is no more than a tribute to the potency of Marx that he should have paralyzed the critical faculty in a number of very able men. To them Marx is a final form of truth. They talk with bated breath of a "classic Socialism," to which no man may add one jot or one tittle, to which they are as uncritically pledged as extreme Bible Christians are bound to the

letter of the "Word."…

The peculiar evil of the Marxist teaching is this, that it carries the conception of a necessary economic development to the pitch of fatalism, it declares with all the solemnity of popular "science" that Socialism *must* prevail. Such a fatalism is morally bad for the adherent; it releases him from the inspiring sense of uncertain victory, it leads him to believe the stars in their courses will do his job for him. The common Marxist is apt to be sterile of effort, therefore, and intolerant — preaching predestination and salvation without works.

By a circuitous route, indeed, the Marxist reaches a moral position curiously analogous to that of the disciple of Herbert Spencer. Since all improvement will arrive by leaving things alone, the worse things get, the better; for so much the nearer one comes to the final exasperation, to the class war and the Triumph of the Proletariat. This certainty of victory in the nature of things makes the Marxists difficult in politics, pedantic sticklers for the letter of the teaching, obstinate opponents of what they call "Palliatives" — of any instalment system of reform. They wait until they can make the whole journey in one stride, and would, in the meanwhile, have no one set forth upon the way. In America the Marxist fatalism has found a sort of supreme simplification in the gospel of Mr. H. G. Wilshire. The Trusts, one learns, are to consolidate all the industry in the country, own all the property. Then when they own everything, the Nation will take them over. "Let the Nation own the Trusts!" The Nation in the form of a public, reading capitalistic newspapers, inured to capitalistic methods, represented and ruled by capital-controlled politicians, will suddenly take over the Trusts and begin a new system….

It would be quite charmingly easy — if it were only in the remotest degree credible.

§ 3.

The Marxist teaching tends to an unreasonable fatalism. Its conception of the world after the class war is over is equally antagonistic to intelligent constructive effort. It faces that Future,

utters the word “democracy,” and veils its eyes.

The conception of democracy to which the Marxist adheres is that same mystical democracy that was evolved at the first French Revolution; it will sanction no analysis of the popular wisdom. It postulates a sort of spirit hidden as it were in the masses and only revealed by a universal suffrage of all adults — or, according to some Social Democratic Federation authorities who do not believe in women, all adult males — at the ballot box. Even a large proportion of the adults will not do — it must be all. The mysterious spirit that thus peers out and vanishes again at each election is the People, not any particular person, but the quintessence, and it is supposed to be infallible; it is supposed to be not only morally but intellectually omniscient. It will not even countenance the individuality of elected persons, they are to be mere tools, *delegates*, from this diffused, intangible Oracle, the Ultimate Wisdom….

Well, it may seem ungracious to sneer at the grotesque formulation of an idea profoundly wise, at the hurried, wrong, arithmetical method of rendering that collective spirit a community undoubtedly can and sometimes does possess — I myself am the profoundest believer in democracy, in a democracy awake intellectually, conscious and self-disciplined — but so long as this mystic faith in the crowd, this vague, emotional, uncritical way of evading the immense difficulties of organizing just government and a collective will prevails, so long must the Socialist project remain not simply an impracticable but, in an illiterate, badly-organized community, even a dangerous suggestion. I as a Socialist am not blind to these possibilities, and it is foolish because a man is in many ways on one’s side that one should not call attention to his careless handling of a loaded gun. Social-Democracy may conceivably become a force that in the sheer power of untutored faith may destroy government and not replace it. I do not know how far that is not already the case in Russia. I do not know how far this may not ultimately be the case in the United States of America.

The Marxist teaching, great as was its advance on the dispersed chaotic Socialism that preceded it, was defective in other directions as well as in its innocence of any scheme of State organization. About women and children, for example, it was ill-informed; its

founders do not seem to have been inspired either by educational necessities or philoprogenitive passion. No biologist — indeed no scientific mind at all — seems to have tempered its severely "economic" tendencies. It so over-accentuates the economic side of life that at moments one might imagine it dealt solely with some world of purely "productive" immortals, who were never born and never aged, but only warred for ever in a developing industrial process.

Now reproduction and not production is the more central fact of social life. Women and children and education are things in the background of the Marxist proposal — like a man's dog, or his private reading, or his pet rabbits. They are in the foreground of modern Socialism. The Social Democrat's doctrines go little further in this direction than the Liberalism that founded the United States, which ignored women, children and niggers, and made the political unit the adult white man. They were blind to the supreme importance of making the next generation better than the present as the aim and effort of the whole community. Herr Bebel's book, *Woman*, is an ample statement of the evils of woman's lot under the existing *régime*, but the few pages upon the Future of Woman with which he concludes are eloquent of the jejune insufficiency of the Marxist outlook in this direction. Marriage, which modern Socialism tends more and more to sustain, was to vanish — at least as a law-made bond; women were to count as men so far as the State is concerned….

This disregard of the primary importance of births and upbringing in human affairs and this advocacy of mystical democracy alike contribute to blind the Marxist to the necessity of an educational process and of social discipline and to the more than personal importance of marriage in the Socialist scheme. He can say with a light and confident heart to untrained, ignorant, groping souls: "Destroy the Government; expropriate the rich, establish manhood suffrage, elect delegates strictly pledged — and you will be happy!"

A few modern Marxists stipulate in addition for a Referendum, by which the acts of the elected delegates can be further checked by referring disputed matters to a general vote of all the adults in the community….

§ 4.

My memory, as I write these things of Marxism, carries me to the dusky largeness of a great meeting in Queen's Hall, and I see again the back of Mr. Hyndman's head moving quickly, as he receives and answers questions. It was really one of the strangest and most interesting meetings I have ever attended. It was a great rally of the Social Democratic Federation, and the place — floor, galleries and platform — was thick but by no means overcrowded with dingy, earnest people. There was a great display of red badges and red ties, and many white faces, and I was struck by the presence of girls and women with babies. It was more like the Socialist meetings of the popular novel than any I had ever seen before. In the chair that night was Lady Warwick, that remarkable intruder into the class conflict, a blond lady, rather expensively dressed, so far as I could judge, about whom the atmosphere of class consciousness seemed to thicken. Her fair hair, her floriferous hat, told out against the dim multitudinous values of the gathering unquenchably; there were moments when one might have fancied it was simply a gathering of village tradespeople about the lady patroness, and at the end of the proceedings, after the red flag had been waved, after the "Red Flag" had been sung by a choir and damply echoed by the audience, some one moved a vote of thanks to the Countess in terms of familiar respect that completed the illusion.

Mr. Hyndman's lecture was entitled "In the Rapids of Revolution," and he had been explaining how inevitable the whole process was, how Russia drove ahead, and Germany and France and America, to the foretold crisis and the foretold millennium. But incidentally he also made a spirited exhortation for effort, for agitation, and he taunted England for lagging in the schemes of fate. Some one amidst the dim multitude discovered an inconsistency in that.

Now the questions were being handed in, written on strips of paper, and at last that listener's difficulty cropped up.

"What's this?" said Mr. Hyndman; unfolded the slip and read out: "Why trouble to agitate or work if the Trusts are going to do it all for us?"

The veteran leader of the Social Democratic Federation paused only for a moment.

"Well, we've got to get *ready* for it, you know," he said, rustling briskly with the folds of the question to follow — and with these words, it seemed to me, that fatalistic Marxism crumbled down to dust.

We *have* got to get ready for it. Indeed, we have to make it — by education and intention and set resolve. Socialism is to be attained not by fate, but by will.

§ 5.

And here, as a sort of Eastern European gloss upon Marxist Socialism, as an extreme and indeed ultimate statement of this marriage of mystical democracy to Socialism, we may say a word of Anarchism. Anarchism carries the administrative *laissez faire* of Marx to its logical extremity. "If the common, untutored man is right anyhow — why these ballot boxes; why these intermediaries in the shape of law and representative?"

That is the perfectly logical outcome of ignoring administration and reconstruction. The extreme Social-Democrat and the extreme Individualist meet in a doctrine of non-resistance to the forces of Evolution — which in this connection they deify with a capital letter. Organization, control, design, the disciplined will, these are evil, they declare — *the* evil of life. So you come at the end of the process, if you are active-minded, to the bomb as the instrument of man's release to unimpeded virtue, and if you are pacific in disposition to the Tolstoyan attitude of passive resistance to all rule and property.

Anarchism, then, is as it were a final perversion of the Socialist stream, a last meandering of Socialist thought, released from vitalizing association with an active creative experience. Anarchism comes when the Socialist repudiation of property is dropped into the circles of thought of men habitually ruled and habitually irresponsible, men limited in action and temperamentally adverse to the toil, to the vexatious rebuffs and insufficiencies, the dusty effort, fatigue, and friction of the practical pursuit of a complex ideal. So that it most flourishes eastwardly, where men, it would seem, are

least energetic and constructive, and it explodes or dies on American soil.

Anarchism, with its knife and bomb, is a miscarriage of Socialism, an acephalous birth from that fruitful mother. It is an unnatural offspring, opposed in nature to its parent, for always from the beginning the constructive spirit, the ordering and organizing spirit has been strong among Socialists. It was by a fallacy, an oversight, that *laissez faire* in politics crept into a movement that was before all things an organized denial of *laissez faire* in economic and social life….

I write this of the Anarchism that is opposed to contemporary Socialism, the political Anarchism. But there is also another sort of Anarchism, which the student of these schools of thought must keep clear in his mind from this, the Anarchism of Tolstoy and that other brand of William Morris, neither of which waves any flag of black, nor counsels violence; they present that conception of untrammelled and spontaneous rightness and goodness which is, indeed, I hazard, the moral ideal of all rightly-thinking men. It is worth while to define very clearly the relation of this second sort of Anarchism, the nobler Anarchism, to the toiling constructive Socialism which many of us now make our practical guide in life's activities, to say just where they touch and where they are apart.

Now the ultimate ideal of human intercourse is surely not Socialism at all, but a way of life that is not litigious and not based upon jealously-guarded rights, which is free from property, free from jealousy, and "above the law." There, there shall not be "marriage or giving in marriage." The whole mass of Christian teaching points to such an ideal; Paul and Christ turn again and again to the ideal of a world of "just men made perfect," in which right and beauty come by instinct, in which just laws and regulations are unnecessary and unjust ones impossible. "Turn your attention," says my friend, the Rev. Stewart Headlam, in his admirable tract on Christian Socialism —

"Turn your attention to that series of teachings of Christ's which we call parables — comparisons, that is to say, between what Christ saw going on in the every-day world around Him and the Kingdom of Heaven. If by the Kingdom of Heaven in these parables is meant a

place up in the clouds, or merely a state in which people will be after death, then I challenge you to get any kind of meaning out of them whatever. But if by the Kingdom of Heaven is meant (as it is clear from other parts of Christ's teaching is the case) the righteous society to be established upon earth, then they all have a plain and beautiful meaning; a meaning well summed up in that saying so often quoted against us by the sceptic and the atheist, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' or, in other words, 'Live,' Christ said, 'all of you together, not each of you by himself; live as members of the righteous society which I have come to found upon earth, and then you will be clothed as beautifully as the Eastern lily and fed as surely as the birds.'"

And the Rev. R. J. Campbell, who comes to Socialism by way of Nonconformity, is equally convincing in support of this assertion that the "Kingdom of Heaven" was and is a terrestrial ideal.

This is not simply the Christian ideal of society, it is the ideal of every right-thinking man, of every man with a full sense of beauty. You will find it rendered in two imperishably beautiful Utopias of our own time, both, I glory to write, by Englishmen, the *News from Nowhere* of William Morris, and Hudson's exquisite *Crystal Age*. Both these present practically Anarchist States, both assume idealized human beings, beings finer, simpler, nobler than the heated, limited and striving poor souls who thrust and suffer among the stresses of this present life. And the present writer, too — I must mention him here to guard against a confusion in the future — when a little while ago he imagined humanity exalted morally and intellectually by the brush of a comet's tail,20 was forced by the logic of his premises and even against his first intention to present not a Socialist State but a glorious anarchism as the outcome of that rejuvenescence of the world.

But the business of Socialism lies at a lower level and concerns immediate things; our material is the world as it is, full of unjust laws, bad traditions, bad habits, inherited diseases and weaknesses, germs and poisons, filths and envies. We are not dealing with magnificent creatures such as one sees in ideal paintings and splendid sculpture, so beautiful they may face the world naked and unashamed; we are dealing with hot-eared, ill-kempt people, who are

liable to indigestion, baldness, corpulence and fluctuating tempers; who wear top-hats and bowler hats or hats kept on by hat-pins (and so with all the other necessary clothing); who are pitiful and weak and vain and touchy almost beyond measure, and very naughty and intemperate; who have, alas! to be bound over to be in any degree faithful and just to one another. To strip such people suddenly of law and restraint would be as dreadful and ugly as stripping the clothes from their poor bodies….

That Anarchist world, I admit, is our dream; we do believe — well, I, at any rate, believe this present world, this planet, will some day bear a race beyond our most exalted and temerarious dreams, a race begotten of our wills and the substance of our bodies, a race, so I have said it, "who will stand upon the earth as one stands upon a footstool, and laugh and reach out their hands amidst the stars," but the way to that is through education and discipline and law. Socialism is the preparation for that higher Anarchism; painfully, laboriously we mean to destroy false ideas of property and self, eliminate unjust laws and poisonous and hateful suggestions and prejudices, create a system of social right-dealing and a tradition of right-feeling and action. Socialism is the school-room of true and noble Anarchism, wherein by training and restraint we shall make free men.

There is a graceful and all too little known fable by Mr. Max Beerbohm, *The Happy Hypocrite*, which gives, I think, not only the relation of Socialism to philosophic Anarchism, but of all discipline to all idealism. It is the story of a beautiful mask that was worn by a man in love, until he tired even of that much of deceit and, a little desperately, threw it aside — to find his own face beneath changed to the likeness of the self he had desired. So would we veil the greed, the suspicion of the self-seeking scramble of to-day under institutions and laws that will cry "duty and service" in the ears and eyes of all mankind, keep down the evil so long and so effectually that at last law will be habit, and greed and self-seeking cease for ever, from being the ruling impulse of the world. Socialism is the mask that will mould the world to that better Anarchism of good men's dreams….

But these are long views, glimpses beyond the Socialist horizon.

The people who would set up Anarchism to-day are people without human experience or any tempering of humour, only one shade less impossible than the odd one-sided queer beings one meets, ridiculously inaccessible to laughter, who, caricaturing their Nietzsche and misunderstanding their Shaw, invite one to set up consciously with them in the business of being Overmen, to rule a world full of our betters, by fraud and force. It is a foolish teaching saved only from being horrible by being utterly ludicrous. For us the best is faith and humility, truth and service, our utmost glory is to have seen the vision and to have failed — not altogether…. For ourselves and such as we are, let us not "deal in pride," let us be glad to learn a little of this spirit of service, to achieve a little humility, to give ourselves to the making of Socialism and the civilized State without presumption — as children who are glad they may help in a work greater than themselves and the toys that have heretofore engaged them.

CHAPTER XII ADMINISTRATIVE SOCIALISM

§ 1.

Marx gave to Socialism a theory of world-wide social development, and rescued it altogether from the eccentric and localized associations of its earliest phases; he brought it so near to reality that it could appear as a force in politics, embodied first as the International Association of Working Men, and then as the Social Democratic movement of the continent of Europe that commands to-day over a third of the entire poll of German voters. So much Marx did for Socialism. But if he broadened its application to the world, he narrowed its range to only the economic aspect of life. He arrested for a time the discussion of its biological and moral aspects altogether. He left it an incomplete doctrine of merely economic reconstruction supplemented by mystical democracy, and both its mysticism and incompleteness, while they offered no difficulties to a labouring man ignorant of affairs, rendered it unsubstantial and unattractive to people who had any real knowledge of administration.

It was left chiefly to the little group of English people who founded the Fabian Society to supply a third system of ideas to the amplifying conception of Socialism, to convert Revolutionary Socialism into Administrative Socialism.

This new development was essentially the outcome of the reaction of its broad suggestions of economic reconstruction upon the circle of thought of one or two young officials of genius, and of one or two persons upon the fringe of that politic-social stratum of Society, the English "governing class." I make this statement, I may say, in the loosest possible spirit. The reaction is one that was not confined to England, it was to some extent inevitable wherever the new movement in thought became accessible to intelligent administrators and officials. But in the peculiar atmosphere of British public life, with its remarkable blend of individual initiative and a lively sense of the State, this reaction has had the freest development. There was, indeed, Fabianism before the Fabian Society; it would be ingratitude

to some of the most fruitful social work of the middle Victorian period to ignore the way in which it has contributed in suggestion and justification to the Socialist synthesis. The city of Birmingham, for example, developed the most extensive process of municipalization as the mere common-sense of local patriotism. But the movement was without formulæ and correlation until the Fabians came.

That unorganized, unpaid public service of public-spirited aristocratic and wealthy financial and business people, the "governing class," which dominated the British Empire throughout the nineteenth century, has, through the absence of definite class boundaries in England and the readiness of each class to take its tone from the class above, that "Snobbishness" which is so often heedlessly dismissed as altogether evil, given a unique quality to British thought upon public questions and to British conceptions of Socialism. It has made the British mind as a whole "administrative." As compared with the American mind, for example, the British is State-conscious, the American State-blind. The American is no doubt intensely patriotic, but the nation and the State to which his patriotism points is something overhead and comprehensive like the sky, like a flag hoisted; something, indeed, that not only does not but must not interfere with his ordinary business occupations. To have public spirit, to be aware of the State as a whole and to have an administrative feeling towards it, is necessarily to be accessible to constructive ideas — that is to say, to Socialistic ideas. In the history of thought in Victorian Great Britain, one sees a constant conflict of this administrative disposition with the individualistic commercialism of the aggressively trading and manufacturing class, the class that in America reigns unchallenged to this day. In the latter country Individualism reigns unchallenged, it is assumed; in the former it has fought an uphill fight against the traditions of Church and State and has never absolutely prevailed. The political economists and Herbert Spencer were its prophets, and they never at any time held the public mind in any invincible grip. Since the eighties that grip has weakened more and more. Socialistic thought and legislation, therefore, was going on in Great Britain through all the Victorian period. Nevertheless, it was the Fabian Society that, in

the eighties and through the intellectual impetus of at most four or five personalities, really brought this obstinately administrative spirit in British affairs into relation with Socialism as such.

The dominant intelligence of this group was Mr. Sidney Webb, and as I think of him thus coming after Marx to develop the third phase of Socialism, I am struck by the contrast with the big-bearded Socialist leaders of the earlier school and this small, active, unpretending figure with the finely-shaped head, the little imperial under the lip, the glasses, the slightly lisping, insinuating voice. He emerged as a Colonial Office clerk of conspicuous energy and capacity, and he was already the leader and "idea factory" of the Fabian Society when he married Miss Beatrice Potter, the daughter of a Conservative Member of Parliament, a girl friend of Herbert Spencer, and already a brilliant student of sociological questions. Both he and she are devotees to social service, living laborious, ordered, austere, incessant lives, making the employment of secretaries their one extravagance, and alternations between research and affairs their change of occupation. A new type of personality altogether they were in the Socialist movement, which had hitherto been richer in eloquence than discipline. And during the past twenty years of the work of the Fabian Society through their influence, one dominant question has prevailed. Assuming the truth of the two main generalizations of Socialism, taking that statement of intention for granted, *how is the thing to be done*? They put aside the glib assurances of the revolutionary Socialists that everything would be all right when the People came to their own; and so earned for themselves the undying resentment of all those who believe the world is to be effectually mended by a liberal use of chest notes and red flags. They insisted that the administrative and economic methods of the future must be a secular development of existing institutions, and inaugurated a process of study — which has long passed beyond the range of the Fabian Society, broadening out with the organized work of the New University of London, with its special School of Economics and Political Science and of a growing volume of university study in England and America — to the end that this "*how?*" should be answered….

The broad lines of the process of transition from the present state

of affairs to the Socialist state of the future as they are developed by administrative Socialism lie along the following lines.

1. The peaceful and systematic taking over from private enterprise, by purchase or otherwise, whether by the national or by the municipal authorities as may be most convenient, of the great common services of land control, mining, transit, food supply, the drink trade, lighting, force supply and the like.

2. Systematic expropriation of private owners by death-duties and increased taxation.

3. The building up of a great scientifically organized administrative machinery to carry on these enlarging public functions.

4. A steady increase and expansion of public education, research, museums, libraries and all such public services. The systematic promotion of measures for raising the school-leaving age, for the public feeding of school children, for the provision of public baths, parks, playgrounds and the like.

5. The systematic creation of a great service of public health to take over the disorganized confusion of hospitals and other charities, sanitary authorities, officers of health and private enterprise medical men.

6. The recognition of the claim of every citizen to welfare by measures for the support of mothers and children and by the establishment of old-age pensions.

7. The systematic raising of the minimum standard of life by factory and other labour legislation, and particularly by the establishment of a legal minimum wage….

These are the broad forms of the Fabian Socialist's answer to the question of *how*, with which the revolutionary Socialists were confronted. The diligent student of Socialism will find all these proposals worked out to a very practicable-looking pitch indeed in that Bible of Administrative Socialism, the collected tracts of the Fabian Society,21 and to that volume I must refer him. The theory of the minimum standard and the minimum wage is explained, moreover, with the utmost lucidity in that Socialist classic, *Industrial Democracy*, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. It is a theory that must

needs be mastered by every intelligent Socialist, but it is well to bear in mind that the method of the minimum wage is no integral part of the general Socialist proposition, and that it still lies open to discussion and modification.

§ 2.

Every movement has the defects of its virtues, and it is not, perhaps, very remarkable that the Fabian Society of the eighties and nineties, having introduced the conception of the historical continuity of institutions into the Propaganda of Socialism, did certainly for a time greatly over-accentuate that conception and draw away attention from aspects that may be ultimately more essential.

Beginning with the proposition that the institutions and formulæ of the future must necessarily be developed from those of the present, that one cannot start *de novo* even after a revolution; one may easily end in an attitude of excessive conservatism towards existing machinery. In spite of the presence of such fine and original intelligences as Mr. (now Sir) Sydney Olivier and Mr. Graham Wallas in the Fabian counsels, there can be no denial that for the first twenty years of its career, Mr. Webb was the prevailing Fabian. Now his is a mind legal as well as creative, and at times his legal side quite overcomes his constructive element; he is extraordinarily fertile in expedients and skilful in adaptation, and with a real horror of open destruction. This statement by no means exhausts him, but it does to a large extent convey the qualities that were uppermost in the earlier years, at any rate, of his influence. His insistence upon continuity pervaded the Society, was re-echoed and intensified by others, and developed into something like a mania for achieving Socialism without the overt change of any existing ruling body. His impetus carried this reaction against the crude democratic idea to its extremest opposite. Then arose Webbites to caricature Webb. From saying that the unorganized people cannot achieve Socialism, they passed to the implication that organization alone, without popular support, might achieve Socialism. Socialism was to arrive as it were insidiously.

To some minds this new proposal had the charm of a school-boy's

first dark-lantern. Socialism ceased to be an open revolution, and became a plot. Functions were to be shifted, quietly, unostentatiously, from the representative to the official he appointed; a bureaucracy was to slip into power through the mechanical difficulties of an administration by debating representatives; and since these officials would by the nature of their positions constitute a scientific bureaucracy, and since Socialism is essentially scientific government as distinguished from haphazard government, they would necessarily run the country on the lines of a pretty distinctly undemocratic Socialism.

The process went even further than secretiveness in its reaction from the large rhetorical forms of revolutionary Socialism. There arose even a repudiation of "principles" of action, and a type of worker which proclaimed itself "Opportunist-Socialist." It was another instance of Socialism losing sight of itself, it was a process quite parallel at the other extreme with the self-contradiction of the Anarchist-Socialist. Socialism as distinguished from mere Liberalism, for example, is an organized plan for social reconstruction, while Liberalism relies upon certain vague "principles"; Socialism declares that good intentions and doing what comes first to hand will not suffice. Now Opportunism is essentially benevolent adventure and the doing of first-hand things.

This conception of indifference to the forms of government, of accepting whatever governing bodies existed and using them to create officials and "*get something done*," was at once immediately fruitful in many directions, and presently productive of many very grave difficulties in the path of advancing Socialism. Webb himself devoted immense industry and capacity to the London County Council — it is impossible to measure the share he has had in securing such great public utilities as water supply, traction and electric supply, for example, from complete exploitation by private profit seekers, but certainly it is a huge one — and throughout England and presently in America, there went on a collateral activity of Fabian Socialists. They worked like a ferment in municipal politics, encouraging and developing local pride and local enterprise in public works. In the case of large public bodies, working in suitable areas and commanding the services of men of high quality,

striking advances in Social organization were made, but in the case of smaller bodies in unsuitable districts and with no attractions for people of gifts and training, the influence of Fabianism did on the whole produce effects that have tended to discredit Socialism. Aggressive, ignorant and untrained men and women, usually neither inspired by Socialist faith nor clearly defining themselves as Socialists, persons too often of wavering purpose and doubtful honesty, got themselves elected in a state of enthusiasm to undertake public functions and challenge private enterprise under conditions that doomed them to waste and failure. This was the case in endless parish councils and urban districts; it was also the case in many London boroughs. It has to be admitted by Socialists with infinite regret that the common borough-council Socialist is too often a lamentable misrepresentative of the Socialist idea.

The creation of the London Borough Councils found English Socialism unprepared. They were bodies doomed by their nature to incapacity and waste. They represented neither natural communities nor any practicable administrative unit of area. Their creation was the result of quite silly political considerations. The slowness with which Socialists have realized that for the larger duties that they wish to have done collectively, a new scheme of administration is necessary; that bodies created to sweep the streets and admirably adapted to that duty may be conspicuously not adapted to supply electric power or interfere with transit, is accountable for much disheartening bungling. Instead of taking a clear line from the outset, and denouncing these glorified vestries as useless, impossible and entirely unscientific organs, too many Socialists tried to claim Bumble as their friend and use him as their tool. And Bumble turned out to be a very bad friend and a very poor tool….

In all these matters the real question at issue is one between the emergency and the implement. One may illustrate by a simple comparison. Suppose there is a need to dig a hole and that there is no spade available, a Fabian with Mr. Webb's gifts becomes invaluable. He seizes upon a broken old cricket-bat, let us say, uses it with admirable wit and skill, and presto! there is the hole made and the moral taught that one need not always wait for spades before digging holes. It is a lesson that Socialism stood in need of, and which

henceforth it will always bear in mind. But suppose we want to dig a dozen holes, it may be worth while to spend a little time in going to beg, borrow or buy a spade. If we have to dig holes indefinitely, day after day, it will be sheer foolishness sticking to the bat. It will be worth while then not simply to get a spade, but to get just the right sort of spade in size and form that the soil requires, to get the proper means of sharpening and repairing the spade, to insure a proper supply. Or to point the comparison, the reconstruction of our legislative and local government machinery is a necessary preliminary to Socialization in many directions. Mr. Webb has very effectually admitted that, is in fact himself leading us away from that by taking up the study of local government as his principal occupation, but the typical "Webbite" of the Fabian Society, who is very much to Webb what the Marxist is to Marx, entranced by his leader's skill, still clings to a caricature distortion of this earlier Fabian ideal. He dreams of the most foxy and wonderful digging by means of box-lids, table-spoons, dish-covers — anything but spades designed and made for the job in hand — just as he dreams of an extensive expropriation of landlords by a legislature that includes the present unreformed House of Lords….

§ 3.

It was only at the very end of the nineteenth century that the Fabian Socialist movement was at all quickened to the need of political reconstruction as extensive as the economic changes it advocated, and it is still far from a complete apprehension of the importance of the political problem. To begin with, Mr. and Mrs. Webb, having completed their work on Labour Regulation, took up the study of local government and commenced that colossal task that still engages them, their book upon *English Local Government*, of which there has as yet appeared (1907) only one volume out of seven. (Immense as this service is, it is only one part of conjoint activities that will ultimately give constructive social conceptions an enormous armoury of scientifically arranged fact.)

As the outcome of certain private experiences, the moral of which was pointed by discussion with Mr. and Mrs. Webb, the present

writer in 1902 put before the Fabian Society a paper on Administrative Areas,22 in which he showed clearly that the character and efficiency and possibilities of a governing body depend almost entirely upon the suitability to its particular function of the size and quality of the constituency it represents and the area it administers. This may be stated with something approaching scientific confidence. A local governing body for too small an area or elected upon an unsound franchise *cannot* be efficient. But obviously before you can transfer property from private to collective control you must have something in the way of a governing institution which has a reasonably good chance of developing into an efficient controlling body. The leading conception of this Administrative Area paper appeared subsequently running through a series of tracts, *The New Heptarchy Series*, in which one finds it applied first to this group of administrative problems and then to that.23 These tracts are remarkable if only because they present the first systematic recognition on the part of any organized Socialist body of the fact that a scientific reconstruction of the methods of government constitutes not simply an incidental but a necessary part of the complete Socialist scheme, the first recognition of the widening scope of the Socialist design that makes it again a deliberately constructive project.24

It is only an initial recognition, a mere first raid into a great and largely unexplored province of study. This province is in the broadest terms, social psychology. A huge amount of thought, discussion, experiment, is to be done in this field — needs imperatively to be done before the process of the socialization of economic life can go very far beyond its present attainments. Except for these first admissions, Socialism has concerned itself only with the material reorganization of Society and its social consequences, with economic changes and the reaction of these changes on administrative work; it has either accepted existing intellectual conditions and political institutions as beyond its control or assumed that they will obediently modify as economic and administrative necessity dictates. Declare the Social revolution, we were told in a note of cheery optimism by the Marxist apostles, and political institutions will come like flowers in May! Achieve your

expropriation, said the early Fabians, get your network of skilled experts spread over the country, and your political forms, your public opinion, your collective soul will not trouble you.

The student of history knows better. These confident claims ignore the psychological factors in government and human association; they disregard a jungle of difficulties that lie directly in our way. Socialists have to face the facts; firstly, that the political and intellectual institutions of the present time belong to the present condition of things, and that the intellectual methods, machinery and political institutions of the better future must almost inevitably be of a very different type; secondly, that such institutions will not come about of themselves — which indeed is the old superstition of *laissez faire* in a new form — but must be thought out, planned and organized just as completely as economic socialization has had to be planned and organized; and thirdly, that so far Socialism has evolved scarcely any generalizations even, that may be made the basis of new intellectual and governmental — as distinguished from administrative — methods. It has preached collective ownership and collective control, and it has only begun to recognize that this implies the necessity of a collective will and new means and methods altogether for the collective mind.

The administrative Socialism which Mr. Webb and the Fabian Society developed upon a modification of the broad generalizations of the Marx phase, is as it were no more than the first courses above those foundations of Socialism. It supplies us with a conception of methods of transition and with a vision of a great and disciplined organization of officials, a scientific bureaucracy appointed by representative bodies of diminishing activity and importance, and coming to be at last the real working control of the Socialist State. But it says nothing of what is above the officials, what drives the officials. It is a palace without living rooms, with nothing but offices; a machine, as yet unprovided with a motor. No doubt we must have that organization of officials if we mean to bring about a Socialist State, but the mind recoils with something like terror from the conception of a State run and ruled by officials, terminating in officials, with an official as its highest expression. One has a vision of a community with blue-books instead of a literature, and inspectors

instead of a conscience. The mystical democracy of the Marxist, though manifestly impossible, had in it something attractive, something humanly and desperately pugnacious and generous, something indeed heroic; the bureaucracy of the Webbite, though far more attainable, is infinitely less inspiring. But that may be because the inspiring elements remain to be stated rather than that these practical constructive projects are in their nature, and incurably, hard and narrow. Instead of a gorgeous flare in the darkness, we have the first cold onset of daylight heralding the sun. If the letter of the teaching of Mr. and Mrs. Webb is bureaucracy, that is certainly not the spirit of their lives.

The earlier Socialists gave Socialism substance, *rudis indigestaque moles*, but noble stuff; Administrative Socialism gave it a physical structure and nerves, defined its organs and determined its functions; it remains for the Socialist of to-day to realize in this shaping body of the civilized State of the future the breath of life already unconfessedly there, to state in clear terms the reality for which our plans are made, by which alone they can be realized, that is to say, *the collective mind of humanity, the soul and moral being of mankind*.

CHAPTER XIII CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIALISM

§ 1.

Such a group of ideas and motives as Socialism, fundamentally true as it is to the needs of life, and arising as it does from the inevitable suggestion of very widely dispersed evils and insufficiencies, does not spring from any one source, nor develop along any single line. It appears as a smouldering fire appears, first here, then there, first in one form of expression and then another, now under this name and now under that.

The manifest new possibilities created by the progress of applied science, the inevitable change of scale and of the size and conception of a community that arises out of them, *necessitate* at least the material form of Socialism — that is to say, the replacement of individual action by public organization, in spite of a hundred vested interests. The age that regarded Herbert Spencer as its greatest philosopher, for example, was urged nevertheless, unwillingly and protestingly but effectually, through phase after phase of more and more co-ordinated voluntary effort, until at last it had to undertake a complete system of organized free public primary education. There the moving finger of change halts not a moment; already it is going on to secondary education, to schemes for a complete public educational organization from reformatory school up to professorial chair. The practical logic of the case is invincible.

So, too, the public organization of scientific research goes on steadily against all prejudices and social theories, and, in a very different field, the plain inconveniences of a private control of traffic in America and England alike, force the affected property owners whose businesses are hampered and damaged towards the realization that freedom of private property, in these services at least, is evil and must end. As the proofs of these pages pass through my hands comes the news of Mr. Lloyd George's settlement of the dispute between railway directors and *employés* by the establishment of a method of compulsory arbitration. Then, again, the movement for public sanitation and hygiene spreads and broadens, and the natural alarm of

even the most conservative at the falling birth-rate and the stationary infantile death-rate is evidently ripening for an advance towards public control and care even in the relation of child to parent, the most intimate of all personal affairs.

Inevitably all such movements must coalesce — their spirit is one, the spirit of construction — and inevitably their coalescence will take the form of a wide and generous restatement of Socialism. Nothing but a broader understanding of the broadening propositions of Socialism is needed for that recognition now.

Socialism, indeed, does not simply look, it appeals to the constructive professions at the present time, to the medical man, the engineer, the architect, the scientific agriculturist.

Each of these sorts of men, in just so far as he is concerned with the reality of his profession, in just so far as he is worthy of his profession, must resent the considerations of private profit, of base economies, that constantly limit and spoil his work and services in the interests of a dividend or of some financial manœuvre. So far they have been antagonized towards Socialism by the errors of its adherents, by the impression quite wantonly created, that Socialism meant either mob rule or the rule of pedantic, unsympathetic officials. They have heard too much of democracy, too much of bureaucracy, and not enough of construction. They have felt that on the whole the financial exploiter, detestable master as he often is, was better than the rule of either clamour on the one hand or red tape on the other. But, as I have been seeking to suggest, mob rule and official rule do not exhaust the possible alternatives. Neither ignorant democracy nor narrow bureaucracy can be the destined rulers of a Socialist State. The only conceivable rule in a Socialist civilization is through the operation of a collective mind that must be by its nature constructive and enterprising, because only through the creation of such a mind can Socialism be brought about. A Socialist State cannot exist without that mind existing also, and a collective mind can scarcely appear without some form of Socialism giving it a material body. Now it is only under an intelligent collective mind that any of the dreams of these constructive professions can attain an effective realization. Where will the private profit in a universal sanitation, for example, be found, in the abolition of diseases, in the

planned control of the public health, in the abolition of children's deaths? What thought of private gain will ever scrap our obsolescent railroads and our stagnating industrial monopolies for new clean methods? So long as they pay a dividend they will keep on upon their present lines. The modern architect knows, the engineer knows we might build ourselves perfectly clean, smokeless magnificent cities to-day, as full of pure water as ancient Rome, as full of pure air as the Engadine, if private ownership did not block the way. Who can doubt it who understands what a doctor, or an electrical engineer, or a real architect understands? Surely all the best men in these professions are eager to get to work on the immense possibilities of life, possibilities of things cleared up, of things made anew, that their training has enabled them to visualize! What stands in their way, stands in our way; social disorganization, individualist self-seeking, narrowness of outlook, self-conceit, ignorance.

With that conception they must surely turn in the end, as we Socialists turn, to the most creative profession of all, to that great calling which with each generation renews the world's "circle of ideas," the Teachers!

The whole trend and purpose of this book from the outset has been to insist upon *the mental quality of Socialism*, to maintain that it is a business of conventions about property and plans of reorganization, that is to say, of changes and expansions of the ideas of men, changes and expansions of their spirit of action and their habitual circles of ideas. Unless you can change men's minds you cannot effect Socialism, and when you have made clear and universal certain broad understandings, Socialism becomes a mere matter of science and devices and applied intelligence. That is the constructive Socialist's position. Logically, therefore, he declares the teacher master of the situation. Ultimately the Socialist movement *is* teaching, and the most important people in the world from the Socialist's point of view are those who teach — I mean of course not simply those who teach in schools, but those who teach in pulpits, in books, in the press, in universities and lecture-theatres, in parliaments and councils, in discussions and associations and experiments of every sort, and, last in my list but most important of all, those mothers and motherly women who teach little children in

their earliest years. Every one, too, who enunciates a new and valid idea, or works out a new contrivance, is a teacher in this sense.

And these Teachers collectively, perpetually renew the collective mind. In the measure that in each successive generation they apprehend Socialism and transmit its spirit, is Socialism nearer its goal.

§ 2.

At the present time in America and all the western European countries, there is a collective mind, a public opinion made up of the most adventitious and interesting elements. It is not even a national or a racial thing, it is curiously international, curiously responsive to thought from every quarter; a something, vague here, clear there, here diffused, there concentrated. It demands the closest attention from Socialists this something, this something which is so hard to define and so impossible to deny — civilized feeling, the thought of our age, the mind of the world. It has organs, it has media, yet it is as hard to locate as the soul of a man. We know that somewhere in the brain and body of a man lives his Self; that you must preserve that brain entire, aërate it, nourish it lest it die and his whole being die, and yet you cannot say it is in this cell — or in that. So with an equal mystery of diffusion the mind of mankind exists. No man, no organization, no authority, can be more than a part of it. Twice at least have there been attempts of parts to be the whole; the Catholic Church and the Chinese Academy have each in varying measure sought to play the part of a collective mind for all humanity and failed. All individual achievement, fine books, splendid poems, great discoveries, new generalizations, lives of thought, are no more than flashes in this huge moral and intellectual being which grows now self-conscious and purposeful, just as a child grows out of its early self-ignorance to an elusive, indefinable, indisputable sense of itself. This collective mind has to be filled and nourished with the Socialist purpose, to receive and assimilate our great idea. That is the true work of Socialism.

Consider the organs and media of the collective mind as one finds them in England or America now, how hazardous they are and

accidental! At the basis of this strange thought-process is the intelligence of the common man, once illiterate and accessible only to the crude, inarticulate influences of talk and rumour, now rapidly becoming educated, or at any rate educated to the level of a reader and writer, and responding more and more to literary influences. The great mass of the population is indeed at the present time like clay which has hitherto been a mere deadening influence underneath, but which this educational process, like some drying and heating influence upon that clay, is rendering resonant, capable of, in a dim answering way, *ringing* to the appeals made upon it. Reaching through this mass, appealing to it in various degrees at various levels and to various ends, there are a number of systems of organizations of unknown value and power. Its response, such as it is, robbed by multitudinousness of any personality or articulation, is a broad emotional impulse.

Above this fundamental mass is the growing moiety which has a conscious thought-process, of a sort. Its fundamental ideas, its preconceptions, are begotten of a mixture of social traditions learnt at home and in school and from the suggestions of contemporary customs and affairs. But it reads and listens more or less. And scattered through this, here and there, are people really learning, really increasing and accumulating knowledge, really thinking and conversing — the active mind-cells, as it were, of the world. Their ideas are conveyed into the mass much as impulses are conveyed into an imperfectly innervated tissue, they are conveyed by books and pamphlets, by lecturing, by magazine articles and newspaper articles, by the agency of the pulpit, by organized propaganda, by political display and campaigns. The gross effect is considerable, but it is just as well that the Socialist should look a little closely at the economic processes that underlie these intellectual activities at the present time. Except for the universities and much of the public educational organization, except for a few pulpits endowed for good under conditions that limit freedom of thought and expression, except for certain needy and impecunious propagandas, the whole of this apparatus of public thought and discussion to-day has been created and is sustained by commercial necessity.

For example, consider what is I suppose by far the most important

vehicle of ideas at the present time, which for a huge majority of adults is the sole vehicle of ideas, the newspaper. It is universal because it is cheap, and it is cheap because the cost of production is paid for by the advertisements of private enterprise. The newspaper is to a very large extent parasitic upon competition; its criticism, its discussion, its correspondence, are, from the business point of view, written on the backs of puffs of competing tobaccos, soaps, medicines and the like. No newspaper could pay upon its sales alone, and the same thing is true of most popular magazines and weekly publications. It is highly probable that whatever checks public advertisement in other directions, the prohibition of bill-posting upon hoardings, for example, the protection of scenery, railway carriages and architecture from the advertiser, stimulates the production of attractive literature. Necessarily what is published in newspapers and magazines must be acceptable to advertising businesses and not too openly contrary to their interests. With that limitation the newspapers provide a singularly free and various arena for discussion at the present time. It must, however, be obvious that to advance towards Socialism is, if not to undermine the newspaper altogether, at least to change very profoundly this material vehicle of popular thought….

The newspaper disseminates ideas. So, too, does the book and the pamphlet, and so far as these latter are concerned, their distribution does not at present rest in the same degree upon their value as vehicles of advertisement. They are saleable things unaided. The average book of to-day at its nominal price of six shillings pays in itself and supports its producers. So in a lesser degree does the sixpenny pamphlet, but neither book nor pamphlet reach so wide a public as the halfpenny and penny press. The methods and media of the book trade have grown up, no man designing them; they change, and no one is able to foretell the effect of their changes. At present there is a great movement to cheapen new books, and it would seem the cheapening is partly to be made up for in enhanced sales and partly by an increased use of new books for advertisement. Many people consider this cheapening of new books as being detrimental to the interests of all but the most vulgarly popular authors. They believe it will increase the difficulty of new writers, and hopelessly impoverish just the finest element in our literary life, those original

and exceptional minds who demand educated appreciation and do not appeal to the man in the street. This may or may not be true; the aspect of interest to Socialists is that here is a process going on which is likely to produce the most far-reaching results upon the collective mind, upon that thought-process of the whole community which is necessary for the progressive organization of Society. It is a process which is likely to spread one type of writer far and wide, which may silence or demoralize another, which may vulgarize and debase discussion, and which will certainly make literature far more dependent than it is at present upon the goodwill of advertising firms. Yet as Socialists they have no ideas whatever in this matter; their project of activities ignores it altogether….

Books and newspapers constitute two among the chief mental organs of a modern community, but almost, if not equally important is that great apparatus for the dissemination of ideas made up of the pulpits and lecture halls of a thousand sects and societies. Towards all these things Socialism has hitherto maintained an absurd attitude of *laissez faire*….

So far I have looked at the collective mind as a thought process only, but it has much graver and more immediate functions in a democratic State. It has, one must remember, to *will* social order and development. In every country the machinery for determining and expressing this will is complex. The common method in the modern western State is through the voting of a numerous electorate, which tends, it would seem, to become more and more the entire manhood, if not the entire adult population of the country. It is a curious but perhaps inevitable method. Practically thought has to percolate down to the common man through all those strange and accidental channels, newspapers which are advertisement sheets, books which may be boycotted in a "Book War," pulpits pledged to doctrine and lecture halls kept open by rich people's subscriptions; it has to reach him, to mingle itself with generalized emotional forces in the heat of mysteriously subsidized election campaigns, and then return as a collective determination. For the Statesman and the Socialist there could hardly be any study more important, one might think, than the science of these processes and methods. Yet the world has still to produce even the rudimentary generalizations of this needed science

of collective psychology.

§ 3.

Now, I ask the reader to consider very carefully how the Socialist movement, using that expression now in its wider sense, stands to this very vague and very real outcome of social evolution, the Collective Mind; what it is really aspiring to do in that Collective Mind.

One has to recognize that this mind is at present a mind in a state of confusion, full of warring suggestions and warring impulses. It is like a very disturbed human mind, it is without a clear aim, it does not know except in the vaguest terms what it wants to do, it has impulses, it has fancies, it begins and forgets. In addition it is afflicted with a division within itself that is strictly analogous to that strange mental disorder, which is known to psychologists as multiple personality. It has no clear conception of the whole of itself, it goes about forgetting its proper name and address. Part of it thinks of itself as one great being, as, let us say, Germany; another thinks of itself as Catholicism, another as the White Race, or Judæa. At times one might deem the whole confusion not so much a mind as incurable dementia, a chaos of mental elements, haunted by invincible and mutually incoherent fixed ideas. This you will remember is the gist of that melancholy torso of irony, Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*.

In its essence the Socialist movement amounts to this; it is an attempt in this warring chaos of a collective mind to pull itself together, to develop and establish a governing idea of itself. It is like a man saying to himself resolutely, "What am I? What am I doing with myself? Where am I drifting?" and making an answer, hesitating at first, crude at first, and presently clear and lucid.

The Socialist movement is from this point of view, no less than the development of the collective self-consciousness of humanity. Necessarily, therefore, it must be international as well as outspoken, making no truce with prejudices against race and colour. These national and racial collective consciousnesses of to-day are things as vague, as fluctuating as mists or clouds, they melt, dissolve into one

another, they coalesce, they split. No clear isolated national mind can ever maintain itself under modern conditions; even the mind of Japan now comes into the common melting-pot of thought. We Socialists take up to-day the assertion the early Christians were the first to make, that mankind is of one household and one substance; the Samaritan who stoops to the wounded stranger by the wayside our brother rather than that Levite….

In a very different sense indeed the Socialist propaganda must be *the germ of the collective self-consciousness of mankind in the coming time*. If the purpose of Socialism is to prevail, its scattered writings, its dispersed, indistinct and confused utterances must increase in height and breadth and range, increase in power and service, gather to themselves every means of expression, grow into an ordered system of thought, art, literature and will. The Socialist Propaganda of to-day must beget the whole Public Opinion of to-morrow or fail, the Socialists must play the part of a little leaven to leaven the whole world. If they do not leaven it then they are altogether defeated….

§ 4.

Now, this conception of Socialism as being ultimately a moral and intellectual synthesis of mankind from which fresh growth may come, sets a fresh test of value upon all the activities of the Socialist — and opens up altogether new departments for research. Let us face the peculiar difficulty of the Socialist position. We propose to destroy the competitive capitalistic system that owns and sustains our present newspapers, gives and leaves money to universities, endows fresh pulpits, publishes, advertises, and buys books; we have to ask, as reasonable creatures, what new media we propose to give in the place of these accidental and unsatisfactory methods of distributing and exchanging thought. It would almost seem as though current Socialism breathes public opinion as the Middle Ages breathed air, without realizing that it existed, that it might be vitiated or withheld. And so we are beyond the range of prepared and digested Socialist proposals here altogether. It is still open to the Anti-Socialist to allege that Socialism may incidentally destroy itself by choking the

channels of its own thinking, and the Socialist has still to reply in vague general terms.

We must insure the continuity of the collective mind; that is manifestly a primary necessity for Socialism. The attempt to realize the Marxist idea of a democratic Socialism without that, might easily fail into the abortive birth of an acephalous monster, the secular development of administrative Socialism give the world over to a bureaucratic mandarinate, self-satisfied, interfering and unteachable, with whom wisdom would die. And yet we Socialists can produce in our plans no absolute bar to these possibilities. Here I can suggest only in the most general terms methods and certain principles. They need to be laid down as vitally necessary to Socialism, and so far they have not been so laid down. They have still to be incorporated in the Socialist creed. They are essentially principles of that Liberalism out of whose generous aspirations Socialism sprang, but they are principles that even to-day, unhappily, do not figure in the fundamental professions of any Socialist body.

The first of these is the principle of *freedom of speech*; the second, *freedom of writing*; and the third, *universality of information*. In the civilized State every one must be free to know, knowledge must be patent and at hand, and any one must be free to discuss, write, suggest and persuade. These freedoms must be guarded as sacred things. It is not in the untutored nature of man to respect any of these freedoms; it is not in the bureaucratic habit of mind. Indeed, the desire to suppress opinions adverse to our own is almost instinctive in human nature. It is an instinct we have to conquer. Fair play in discussion is sustained by a cultivated respect, by a correction of natural instinct; men need to be *trained* to be jealous of obscurantism, of unfair argument, of authoritative interference with opinion when that opinion is against them. In England such a jealousy does already largely exist, it has been cultivated with us since the seventeenth century at least; America, it seemed to me during my short visit to the States, has somewhat retrograded from its former British standard in this respect, there is a crude majority tyranny in the matter of publication, an un-English disposition to boycott libraries, books, authors and publications upon petty issues, a growing disposition to discriminate in the mails against unpopular

views. These interferences with open statement and discussion are decivilizing forces.

Given a clear public understanding of these necessities as primary, then one may point out that the next necessity for the mental existence of a Socialist State is an extension and cheapening of the impartial universal distributing activity of the public post so that it becomes not only the means of correspondence, but also of distributing books and newspapers, pamphlets and every form of printed matter. The post-office must become bookseller and newsagent. In France this is already the case with the press, and newspapers are handed in not by the newsboy but by the public mail. In England Messrs. Smith and Mudie, and so forth, may censor what they like among periodicals or books. The remedy is more toilsome and vexatious than the injury. Neither England nor America has any security against finding its public supply of magazines or literature suddenly choked by the manœuvres of some blackmailing Book or News Trust squalidly "fighting" author or publisher for an increase in its proportion of profits, or interested in financial exploitations liable to exposure. Neither country is secure against the complete control of its channels of thought by some successful monopolistic adventurer….

The Socialist State will not for a moment permit such risks as these; it must certainly be a ubiquitous newsvendor and bookseller; the ordinary newsvendor and bookseller must become an impartial State official, working for a sure and comfortable salary instead of for precarious profits. And this amplification of the book and news post and the book and news trades will need to be not simply a municipal but a State service of the widest range.

Distribution, however, is only the beginning of the problem. There is the more difficult issue of getting books and papers printed and published. And here we come to an intricate puzzle in reconciling the indisputable need for untrammelled individual expression on the one hand with public ownership on the other, and also with the difficult riddle how authors may be supported under Socialist conditions. It is not within the design of this book to do more than indicate a possible solution. These are problems the Socialist has still to work out. At present authors with business

shrewdness and the ability to be interesting get an income from the sale of their books, and it seems possible that they might continue to be paid in that way under Socialism. It is difficult outside the field of specialist work (which under any social system has to be endowed in relation to colleges and universities) to find any other just way of discriminating between the author who ought to get a living from writing, and the author who has no reasonable claim to do so. But under Socialism, in addition to the private publisher or altogether replacing him, there will have to be some sort of public publisher.

Here again difficulties arise. It is difficult to see how, if there is only one general State publishing department, a sort of censorship can be altogether avoided, and even if, for example, one insists upon the right of every one who cares to pay for it to have matter printed, bound and issued by the public presses and binders, it still leaves a disagreeable possibility of uniformity haunting the mind. But the whole trend of administrative Socialism is towards a conception of great local governments, of land, elementary education, omnibus-transit, power distribution and the like, vesting in the hands of municipalities as great as mediæval principalities; and it seems possible to look to these great bodies and to the municipal patriotism and inter-municipal rivalries that will develop about them, for just that spirited and competitive publishing that is desirable, just as one looks now to their rivalries as a stimulus for art and architecture and public dignity and display.25 Already, as I have pointed out in a previous chapter (Chapter IX., § 5), the decorative arts had to be rescued from the degrading influence of private enterprise; no one wants to go back now to the early Victorian state of affairs, and so it is reasonable to hope that out of the municipal art and technical schools, which teach printing, binding and the like, public presses, public binderies and all the machinery of book production may be developed in a natural and convenient manner. So, too, the municipalities might publish, seek out, maintain and honour writers and sell the books they produced, against each other all over the world. It would be a matter of pride for authors still unrecognized to go forth to the world with the arms of some great city on their covers, and it would be a matter of pride for any city to have its arms

upon work become classic and immortal. So at least one method of competition is possible in this matter….

This, however, is but one passing suggestion out of many possibilities. But in all these issues of the intellectual life, it is manifest that public ownership must be so contrived, and can be so contrived as to avoid centralization and a control without alternatives. Moreover, whatever public publishing is done, it must be left open to any one to set up as an independent publisher or printer, and to sell and advertise through the impartial public book and news distributing organization.

I lay some stress upon this matter of book issuing because I think it is a remarkable and regrettable thing about contemporary Socialist discussion that it does not seem to be in the least alive to the great public disadvantage of leaving this vitally important service to private gain getting. Municipal coal, municipal milk, municipal house owning, the Socialists seem prepared for, and even municipal theatres, but municipal publication they still do not take into consideration. They leave the capitalist free to contrive the control of their book supply and to check and determine all the provender of their minds….

The problem of the press is perhaps to be solved by some parallel combination of individual enterprise and public resources. All sorts of things may happen to the newspaper of to-day even in the near future, it cannot but be felt that in its present form it is an extremely transitory phenomenon, that it no longer embodies and rules public thought as it did in the middle and later Victorian period, and that a separation of public discussion from the news sheet is already in progress. Both in England and America the popular magazine seems taking over an increasing share of the public thinking. The newspaper appears to be in the opening throes of a period of fundamental change.

But I will not go into the future of the newspaper here. All these suggestions are merely thrown out in the most tentative way to indicate the nature of the field for study that lies open for any intelligent worker to cultivate, and that Socialists have so far been too busy to consider….

The same truth that controls must be divided and a competition at least for honour and repute kept alive under Socialism, needs also to be applied to schools and colleges, and all the vast machinery of research. It is imperative that there should be overlapping and competing organizations. An educated and prosperous community such as we postulate for the Socialist State will necessarily be more alert for interest and intellectual quality than our present "driven" multitude; its ampler leisure, its wider horizons, will keep it critical and exacting of what claims its attention. The rivalries of institutions and municipalities will be part of the drama of life. Under Socialism, with the extension of the educational process it contemplates, universities and colleges must become the most prominent of facts; nearly every one will have that feeling for some such place which now one finds in a Trinity man for Trinity; the sort of feeling that sent the last thoughts of Cecil Rhodes back to Oriel. Everywhere, balanced against the Town Hall or the Parliament House, will be the great university buildings and art museums, the lecture halls open to all comers, the great noiseless libraries, the book exhibitions and book and pamphlet stores, keenly criticized, keenly used, will teem with unhurrying, incessant, creative activities.

And all this immense publicly sustained organization will be doing greatly and finely what now our scattered line of Socialist propagandists is doing under every disadvantage, that is to say it will be developing and sustaining the social self-consciousness, the collective sense of the State.

§ 5.

I am naturally preoccupied with the Mind of that Civilized State we seek to make; because my work lies in this department. But while the writer, the publisher and printer, the bookseller and librarian, and teacher and preacher must chiefly direct himself to developing this great organized mind and intention in the world, other sorts of men will be concerned with parallel aspects of the Socialist synthesis. The medical worker or the medical investigator will be building up the body of a new generation, the Body of the Civilized State, and he will be doing all he can not simply as an individual, but as a citizen,

to *organize* his services of cure and prevention, of hygiene and selection. And the specialized man of science — he will be concerned with his own special synthesis, the Knowledge of the Civilized State, whether he measure crystals or stain microtome sections or count stars. A great and growing multitude of men will be working out the Apparatus of the Civilized State; the students of transit and housing, the engineers in their incessantly increasing variety, the miners and geologists estimating the world's resources in metals and minerals, the mechanical inventors perpetually economizing force. The scientific agriculturist, again, will be studying the food supply of the world as a whole, and how it may be increased and distributed and economized. And to the student of law comes the task of rephrasing his intricate and often quite beautiful science in relation to the new social assumptions we have laid down. All these and a hundred other aspects are integral to the wide project of Constructive Socialism as it shapes itself now.

And to the man or woman who looks at these issues not as one specialized in relation to some constructive calling but as a common citizen, a mere human being eager to make and do from the standpoint of personal liberty and personal affections, the appeal of this great constructive project is equally strong. You want security and liberty! Here it is, safe from the greed of trust and landlord; here is investment with absolute assurance and trading with absolute justice; this is the only safe way to build your own house in perfect security, to make your own garden safe for yourself and for your children's children, the only way in which you can link a hundred million kindred wills in loyal co-operation with your own, and that is to do it not for yourself alone and for your children alone, but for all the world — all the world doing it also for you — to join yourself to this great making of a permanent well-being for mankind.

And here, finally, let me set out a sort of programme of Constructive Socialism, as it seems to be shaping itself in the minds of contemporary Socialists out of the Fabianism of the eighties and nineties, in order that the reader may be able to measure this fuller and completer proposition against the earlier Administrative Socialism whose propositions are set out in Chapter XI., § 1. All

those are incorporated in this that follows — there is no contradiction whatever between them, but there is amplification; new elements are taken into consideration, once disregarded difficulties have been faced and partially resolved.

First, then, the Constructive Socialist has to do whatever lies in his power towards *the enrichment of the Socialist idea*. He has to give whatever gifts he has as artist, as writer, as maker of any sort to increasing and refining the conception of civilized life. He has to embody and make real the State and the City. And the Socialist idea, constantly restated, refreshed and elaborated, has to be made a part of the common circle of ideas; has to be grasped and felt and assimilated by the whole mass of mankind, has to be made the basis of each individual's private morality. That mental work is the primary, most essential function of Constructive Socialism.

And next, Constructive Socialism has in every country to direct its energies and attention to *political reform*, to the scientific reconstruction of our representative and administrative machinery so as to give power and real expression to the developing collective mind of the community, and to remove the obstructions to Socialization that are inevitable where institutions stand for "interests" or have fallen under the sway of aggressive private property or of narrowly organized classes. Governing and representative bodies, advisory and investigatory organizations of a liberal and responsive type have to be built up, bodies that shall be really capable of the immense administrative duties the secular abolition of the great bulk of private ownership will devolve upon them.

Thirdly, the constructive Socialist sets himself to forward *the resumption of the land by the community*, by increased control, by taxation, by death duties, by purchase and by partially compensated confiscation as circumstances may render advisable, and so to make the municipality the sole landlord in the reorganized world.

And meanwhile the constructive Socialist goes on also with the work of *socializing the main public services*, by transferring them steadily from private enterprise to municipal and State control, by working steadily for such transfers and by opposing every party and

every organization that does not set its face resolutely against the private exploitation of new needs and services.

There are four distinct systems of public service which could very conveniently be organized under collective ownership and control now, and each can be attacked independently of the others. There is first the need of public educational machinery, and by education I mean not simply elementary education, but the equally vital need for great colleges not only to teach and study technical arts and useful sciences, but also to enlarge learning and sustain philosophical and literary work. A civilized community is impossible without great public libraries, public museums, public art schools, without public honour and support for contemporary thought and literature, and all these things the constructive Socialist may forward at a hundred points.

Then next there is the need and opportunity of organizing the whole community in relation to health, the collective development of hospitals, medical aid, public sanitation, child welfare, into one great loyal and efficient public service. This, too, may be pushed forward either as part of the general Socialist movement or independently as a thing in itself by those who may find the whole Socialist proposition unacceptable or inconvenient.

A third system of interests upon which practical work may be done at the present time lies in the complex interdependent developments of transit and housing, questions that lock up inextricably with the problem of re-planning our local government areas. Here, too, the whole world is beginning to realize more and more clearly that private enterprise is wasteful and socially disastrous, that collective control, collective management, and so on to collective enterprise and ownership of building-land, houses, railways, tramways and omnibuses, give the only way of escape from an endless drifting entanglement and congestion of our mobile modern population.

The fourth department of economic activity in which collectivism is developing, and in which the constructive Socialist will find enormous scope for work, is in connection with the more generalized forms of public trading, and especially with the production, handling and supply of food and minerals. When the lagging enterprise of

agriculture needs to be supplemented by endowed educational machinery, agricultural colleges and the like; when the feeble intellectual initiative of the private adventure miner and manufacturer necessitates a London "Charlottenburg," it must be manifest that State initiative has altogether out-distanced the possibilities of private effort, and that the next step to the public authority instructing men how to farm, prepare food, run dairies, manage mines and distribute minerals, is to cut out the pedagogic middleman and undertake the work itself. The State education of the expert for private consumption (such as we see at the Royal School of Mines) is surely too ridiculous a sacrifice of the community to private property to continue at that. The further inevitable line of advance is the transfer from private to public hands by purchase, by competing organizations or what not, of all those great services, just as rapidly as the increasing capacity and experience of the public authority permits.

This briefly is the work and method of Constructive Socialism to-day. Under one or other head it can utilize almost every sort of capacity and every type of opportunity. It refuses no one who will serve it. It is no narrow doctrinaire cult. It does not seek the best of an argument, but the best of a world. Its worst enemies are those foolish and litigious advocates who antagonize and estrange every development of human Good Will that does not pay tribute to their vanity in open acquiescence. Its most loyal servants, its most effectual helpers on the side of art, invention and public organization and political reconstruction, may be men who will never adopt the Socialist name.

CHAPTER XIV SOME ARGUMENTS AD HOMINEM

§ 1.

Before I conclude this compact exposition of modern Socialism, it is reasonable that the reader should ask for some little help in figuring to himself this new world at which we Socialists aim.

"I see the justice of much of the Socialist position," he will say, "and the soundness of many of your generalizations. But it still seems to remain — generalizations; and I feel the need of getting it into my mind as something concrete and real. What will the world be *like* when its state is really a Socialist one? That's my difficulty."

The full answer to that would be another book. I myself have tried to render my own personal dream in a book called *A Modern Utopia*,26 but that has not been so widely read as I could have wished, it does not appeal strongly enough, perhaps, to the practical every-day side of life, and here I may do my best to give very briefly some intimation of a few of the differences that would strike a contemporary if he or she could be transferred to the new order we are trying to evolve.

It would be a world and a life in no fundamental respect different from the world of to-day, made up of the same creatures as ourselves, as limited in capacity if not in outlook, as hasty, as quick to take offence, as egotistical essentially, as hungry for attention, as easily discouraged — they would indeed be better educated and better trained, less goaded and less exasperated, with ampler opportunities for their finer impulses and smaller scope for rage and secrecy, but they would still be human. At bottom it would still be a struggle for individual ends, albeit ennobled individual ends; for self-gratification and self-realization against external difficulty and internal weakness. Self-gratification would be sought more keenly in self-development and self-realization in service, but that is a change of tone and not of nature. We shall still be individuals. You might, indeed, were you suddenly flung into it, fail to note altogether for a long time the widest of the differences between the Socialist State

and our present one — the absence of that worrying urgency to earn, that sense of constant economic insecurity, which afflicts all but the very careless or the very prosperous to-day. Painful things being absent are forgotten. On the same principle certain common objects of our daily life you might not miss at all. There would be no slums, no hundreds of miles of insanitary, ignoble homes, no ugly health-destroying cheap factories. If you were not in the habit of walking among slums and factories you would scarcely notice that. Din and stress would be enormously gone. But you would remark simply a change in the atmosphere about you and in your own contentment that would be as difficult to analyze as the calm of a Sunday morning in sunshine in a pleasant country.

Let me put my conception of the Socialist world to a number of typical readers, as it were, so that they may see clearly just what difference in circumstances there would be for them if we Socialists could have our way now. Let me suppose them as far as possible exactly what they are now save for these differences.

Then first let us take a sample case and suppose yourself to be an elementary teacher. So far as your work went you would be very much as you are to-day; you would have a finer and more beautiful school-room perhaps, better supplied with apparatus and diagrams; you would have cleaner and healthier, that is to say brighter and more responsive children, and you would have smaller and more manageable classes. Schools will be very important things in the Socialist State, and you will find outside your class-room a much ampler building with open corridors, a library, a bath, refectory for the children's midday meal, and gymnasium, and beyond the playground a garden. You will be an enlisted member of a public service, free under reasonable conditions to resign, liable under extreme circumstances to dismissal for misconduct, but entitled until you do so to a minimum salary, a maintenance allowance, that is, and to employment. You will have had a general education from the State up to the age of sixteen or seventeen, and then three or four years of sound technical training, so that you will know your work from top to bottom. You will have applied for your present position in the service, whatever it is, and have been accepted, much as you apply and are accepted for positions now, by the school managers, and you

will have done so because it attracted you and they will have accepted you because your qualifications seemed adequate to them. You will draw a salary attached to the position, over and above that minimum maintenance salary to which I have already alluded. You will be working just as keenly as you are now, and better because of the better training you have had, and because of shorter hours and more invigorating conditions, and you will be working for much the same ends, that is to say for promotion to a larger salary and wider opportunities and for the interest and sake of the work. In your leisure you may be studying, writing, or doing some work of supererogation for the school or the State — because *under Socialist conditions it cannot be too clearly understood that all the reasons the contemporary Trade Unionist finds against extra work and unpaid work will have disappeared*! You will not in a Socialist State make life harder for others by working keenly and doing much if you are so disposed. You will be free to give yourself generously to your work. You will have no anxiety about sickness or old age, the State, the universal Friendly Society, will hold you secure against that; but if you like to provide extra luxury and dignity for your declining years, if you think you will be amused to collect prints or books, or travel then, or run a rose garden or grow chrysanthemums, the State will be quite ready for you to pay it an insurance premium in order that you may receive in due course an extra annuity to serve that end you contemplate.

You will probably live as a tenant in a house which may either stand alone or be part of a terrace or collegiate building, but instead of having a private landlord, exacting of rent and reluctant of repairs, your house landlord will very probably be, and your ground landlord will certainly be, the municipality, the great Birmingham or London or Hampshire or Glasgow or such-like municipality; and your house will be built solidly and prettily instead of being jerry-built and mean-looking, and it will have bathroom, electric light, electrically equipped kitchen and so forth, as every modern civilized house might have and should have now. If your taste runs to a little close garden of your own, you will probably find plenty of houses with one; if that is not so, and you want it badly, you will get other people of like tastes to petition the municipality to provide some, and if that

will not do, you will put yourself up as a candidate for the parish or municipal council to bring this about. You will pay very much the sort of rent you pay now, but you will not pay it to a private landlord to spend as he likes at Monte Carlo or upon foreign missions or in financing "Moderate" bill-posting or what not, but to the municipality, and you will pay no rates at all. The rent will do under Socialism what the rates do now. You cannot grasp too clearly that *Socialism will abolish rates* absolutely. Rates for public purposes are necessary to-day because the landowners of the world evade the public obligations that should, in common sense, go with the rent.

Light, heating, water and so on will either be covered by the rent or charged for separately, and they will be supplied just as near cost-price as possible. I don't think you will buy coals, because I think that in a few years' time it will be possible to heat every house adequately by electricity; but if I am wrong in that, then you will buy your coals just as you do now, except that you will have an honest coal merchant, the Public Coal Service, a merchant not greedy for profit nor short in the weight, calculating and foreseeing your needs, not that it may profit by them but in order to serve them, storing coal against a demand and so never raising the price in winter.

I am assuming you are going to be a house occupier, but if you are a single man, you will probably live in pleasant apartments in an hotel or college and dine in a club, and perhaps keep no more than a couple of rooms, one for sleep and one for study and privacy of your own. But if you are a married man, then I must enlarge a little further upon your domestic details, because you will probably want a "home of your own."…

§ 2.

Now, just how a married couple lives in the Socialist State will depend very much, as indeed it does now, on the individual relations and individual taste and proclivities of the two people most concerned. Many couples are childless now, and indisposed for home and children, and such people will also be found in the Socialist State, and in their case the wife will probably have an occupation and be a teacher, a medical practitioner, a government clerk or official, an

artist, a milliner, and earn her own living. In which case they will share apartments, perhaps, and dine in a club and go about together very much as a childless couple of journalists or artists or theatrical people do in London to-day. But of course if either of them chooses to idle more or less and live on the earnings of the other, that will be a matter quite between themselves. No one will ask who pays their rent and their bills; that will be for their own private arrangement.

But if they are not childless people, but have children, things will be on a rather different footing. Then they will probably have a home all to themselves, and that will be the wife's chief affair; only incidentally will she attend to any other occupation. You will remember that the State is to be a sort of universal Friendly Society supplying good medical advice and so forth, and so soon as a woman is likely to become a mother, her medical adviser, man or woman as the case may be, will report this to the proper officials and her special income as a prospective mother in the State will begin. Then, when her child is born, there will begin an allowance for its support, and these payments will continue monthly or quarterly, and will be larger or smaller according first to the well-being of the child, and secondly to the need the State may have for children — so long as the children are in their mother's care. All this money for maternity will be the wife's independent income, and normally she will be the house ruler — just as she is now in most well-contrived households. Her personality will make the home atmosphere; that is the woman's gift and privilege, and she will be able to do it with a free hand. I suppose that for the husband's cost in the household the present custom of cultivated people of independent means will continue, and he will pay over to his wife his share of the household expenses….

After the revenue in the domestic budget under Socialism one must consider the expenditure. I have already given an idea how the rent and rates, lighting and water are to be dealt with under Socialist conditions. For the rest, the housewife will be dealing on very similar lines to those she goes upon at present. She will buy what she wants and pay cash for it. The milkman will come in the morning and leave his "book" at the end of the week, but instead of coming from Mr. Watertap Jones' or the Twenty-per-cent. Dairy Company, he will come from the Municipal Dairy; he will have no interest in giving

short measure, and all the science in the State will be behind him in keeping the milk clean and pure. If he is unpunctual or trying in any way, the lady will complain just as she does now, but to his official superiors instead of his employer; and if that does not do, she and her aggrieved neighbours (all voters, you will understand) will put the thing to their representative in the parish or municipal council. Then she will buy her meat and grocery and so on, not in one of a number of inefficient little shops with badly assorted goods under unknown brands as she does now if she lives in a minor neighbourhood, but in a branch of a big, well-organized business like Lipton's or Whiteley's or Harrod's. She may have to go to it on a municipal electric car, for which she will probably pay a fare just as she does now, unless, perhaps, her house rent includes a season ticket. The store will not belong to Mr. Lipton or Mr. Whiteley or Mr. Harrod, but to the public — that will be the chief difference — and if she does not like her service she will be able to criticize and remedy it, just as one can now criticize and remedy any inefficiency in one's local post-office. If she does not like the brands of goods supplied she will be able to insist upon others. There will be brands, too, different from the household names of to-day in the goods she will buy. The county arms of Devon will be on the butter paper, Hereford and Kent will guarantee her cider, Hampshire and Wiltshire answer for her bacon — just as now already Australia brands her wines and New Zealand protects her from deception (and insures clean, decent slaughtering) in the matter of Canterbury lamb. I rather like to think of the red dagger of London on the wholesome bottled ales of her great (municipalized) breweries, and Maidstone or Rochester, let us say, boasting a special reputation for jam or pickles. Good honest food all of it will be, made by honest unsweated women and men, with the pride of broad vales and uplands, counties, principalities and great cities behind it. Each county and municipality will be competing freely against its fellows, not in price but quality, the cheeses of Cheshire against the cheeses of France and Switzerland, the beer of Munich against the Kentish brew; bread from the bakeries of London and Paris, biscuits from Reading town, chocolates from Switzerland and Bourneville, side by side with butter from the meadows of Denmark and Russia.

Then, when the provisions have been bought, she will go perhaps to the other departments of the great store and buy or order the fine linen and cotton of the Manchester men, the delicate woollens of the Bradford city looms, the silks of London or Mercia, Northampton or American boots, and so forth, just as she does now in any of the great stores. But, as I say, all these goods will be honest goods, made to wear as well as look well, and the shopman will have no "premiums" to tempt him to force rubbish upon her instead of worthy makes by specious "introduction."

But suppose she wants a hat or a dress made. Then, probably, for all that the world is under Socialism she will have to go to private enterprise; a matter of taste and individuality such as dress cannot be managed in a wholesale way. She will probably find in the same building as the big department store, a number of little establishments, of Madame This, of Mrs. That, some perhaps with windows displaying a costume or so or a hat or so, and here she will choose her particular artiste and contrive the thing with her. I am inclined to think the dressmaker or milliner will charge a fee according to her skill and reputation for designing and cutting and so on, and that the customer will pay the store separately for material and the municipal workshop for the making under the artiste's direction. I don't think, that is, that the milliner or dressmaker will make a trading profit, but only an artiste's fee.

And if the lady wants to buy books, music, artistic bric-a-brac, or what not, she will find the big store displaying and selling all these things on commission for the municipal or private producers all over the world….

So much for the financial and economic position of an ordinary woman in a Socialist State. But management and economies are but the basal substance of a woman's life. She will be free not merely financially; the systematic development of the social organisation and of the mechanism of life will be constantly releasing her more and more from the irksome duties and drudgeries that have consumed so much of the energies of her sex in the past. She will be a citizen, and free as a man to read for herself, think for herself and seek expression. Under the law, in politics and all the affairs of life she will be the equal of a man. No one will control her movements or

limit her actions or stand over her to make decisions for her. All these things are implicit in the fundamental generalization of Socialism, which denies property in human beings.

§ 3.

Perhaps now the reader will be able to figure a little better the common texture of the life of a teacher or a housewife under Socialism. And incidentally I have glanced at the position a clever milliner or dressmaker would probably have under the altered conditions. The great mass of the *employés* in the distributing trade would obviously be living a sort of clarified, dignified version of their present existence, freed from their worst anxieties, the terror of the "swap," the hopeless approach of old age, and from the sweated food and accommodation of the living-in system. Under Socialism the "living-in" system would be incredible. Their conditions of life would approximate to those of the teacher. Like him they would be enrolled a part of a great public service, and like him entitled to a minimum wage, and over and above that they would draw salaries commensurate with the positions their energy and ability had won. The prosperous merchant of to-day would find himself somewhere high in the hierarchy of the distributing service. If, for example, you are a tea merchant or a provision broker, then probably if you like that calling, you would be handling the same kind of goods, not for profit but efficiency, "shipping into the Midlands" from Liverpool, let us say, much as you do now. You would be keener on quality and less keen on deals; that is all. You would not be trying to "skin" a business rival, but very probably you would be just as keen to beat the London distributers and distinguish yourself in that way. And you would get a pretty good salary; modern Socialism does not propose to maintain any dead-level to the detriment of able men. Modern Socialism has cleared itself of that jealous hatred of prosperity that was once a part of class-war Socialism. You would be, you see, far more than you are now, one of the pillars of your town's prosperity — and the Town Hall would be a place worth sitting in….

So far as the rank and file of the distributing service is concerned the chief differences would be a better education, security for a minimum living, an assured old age, shorter hours, more private freedom and more opportunity. Since the whole business would be public and the customer would be one's indirect master through the polling booth, promotion would be far more by merit than it is now in private businesses, where irrelevant personal considerations are often overpowering, and it would be open to any one to apply for a transfer to some fresh position if he or she found insufficient scope in the old one. The staff of the stores will certainly "live out," and their homes and way of living will be closely parallel to that of the two people I have sketched in §§ 1 and 2.

In the various municipal and State Transit Services, the condition of affairs would be even closer to a broadened and liberalized version of things as they are. The conductors and drivers will no doubt wear uniforms for convenience of recognition, but a uniform will carry with it no association with the idea of a livery as it does at the present time. Mostly this service will be run by young men, and each one, like the private of the democratic French Army, will feel that he has a marshal's *batôn* in his knapsack. He will have had a good education; he will have short hours of duty and leisure for self-improvement or other pursuits, and if he remains a conductor or driver all his life he will have only his own unpretending qualities to thank for that. He will probably remain a conductor if he likes to remain a conductor, and go elsewhere if he does not. He is not obliged to take that *batôn* out and bother with it if he has quiet tastes.

The great organized industries, mining, cotton, iron, building and the like, would differ chiefly in the permanence of employment and the systematic evasion of the social hardship caused now-a-days by new inventions and economies in method. There will exist throughout the world an organized economic survey, which will continually prepare and revise estimates of the need of iron, coal, cloth and so forth in the coming months; the blind speculative production of our own times is due merely to the dark ignorance in which we work in these matters, and with such a survey, employment will lose much of the cruel intermittence it now

displays. The men in these great productive services, quite equally with teachers and railwaymen, will be permanently employed. They will be no more taken on and turned off by the day or week than we should take on or turn off an extra policeman, or depend for our defence upon soldiers casually engaged upon the battlefield at sixpence an hour. And if by adopting some ingenious device we dispense suddenly with the labour of hundreds of men, the Socialist State will send them, not into the casual wards and colonies as our State does, to become a social burthen there, but into the technical schools to train for some fresh use of their energies. Taken all round, of course, these men, even the least enterprising or able, will be better off than they are now, with a fuller share of the product of their industry. Many will no doubt remain as they are, rather through want of ambition than want of push, because under Socialism life will be tolerable for a poor man. A man who chooses to do commonplace work and spend his leisure upon chess or billiards, or in gossip or eccentric studies, or amusing but ineffectual art, will remain a poor man indeed, but not be made a wretched one. Sheer toil of a mechanical sort there is little need of in the world now, it could be speedily dispensed with at a thousand points were human patience not cheaper than good machinery, but there will still remain ten thousand undistinguished sorts of work for unambitious men….

If you are a farmer or any sort of horticulturist, a fruit or flower grower, let us say, or a seedsman, you will probably find yourself still farming under Socialism — that is to say, renting land and getting what you can out of it. Your rent will be fixed just as it is to-day by what people will give. But your landlord will be the Municipality or the County, and the rent you pay will largely come back to you in repairs, in the guiding reports and advice of the Agricultural Department, in improved roads, in subventions to a good electric car service to take your produce to market; in aids and education for your children. You will probably have a greater fixity of tenure and a clearer ownership in improvements than you have to-day. I am inclined to think that your dairying and milking and so forth will be done for you wholesale in big public dairies and mills because of the economy of that; you will send up the crude produce and sell it, perhaps, to the county association to brand and distribute.

It is probable you will sell your crops standing, and the public authority will organize the harvesting and bring out an army of workers from the towns to gather your fruit, hops and corn. You will need, therefore, only a small permanent staff of labourers, and these are much more likely to be partners with you in the enterprise than wage workers needing to be watched and driven.

In your leisure you will shoot, perhaps, or hunt, if your tastes incline that way — it is quite likely that scattered among the farms of the future countryside will be the cottages and homes of all sorts of people with open-air tastes who will share their sports with you. One need not dread the disappearance of sport with the disappearance of the great house…. In the dead winter-time you will probably like to run into the nearest big town with your wife and family, stay in an hotel for a few weeks to talk to people in your clubs, see what plays there are in the municipal theatres and so forth. And you will no doubt travel also in your holidays. All the world will know something of the pleasures and freedom of travel, of wandering and the enjoyment of unfamiliar atmospheres, of mountains and deserts and remote cities and deep forests, and the customs of alien peoples.

§4.

A medical man or woman, or a dentist or any such skilled professional, like the secondary school-master, will cease to be a private adventurer under Socialism, concerned chiefly with the taking of a showy house and the use of a showy conveyance; he or she will become part of one of the greatest of all the public services in the coming time, the service of public health. Either he — I use this pronoun and imply its feminine — will be on the staff of one of the main hospitals (which will not be charities, but amply endowed public institutions), or he will be a part of a district staff, working in conjunction with a nursing organization, a cottage hospital, an isolation hospital and so forth, or he will be an advising specialist, or mainly engaged in research or teaching and training a new generation in the profession.

He must not judge his life and position quite by the lives and position of publicly endowed investigators and medical officers of

health to-day. At present, because of the jealousy of the private owner who has, as he says, to "find the funds," almost all public employment is badly paid relatively to privately earned incomes. The same thing is true of all scientific investigators and of most public officials. The state of things to which Socialism points is a world that will necessarily be harmonious with these constructive conceptions and free from these jealousies. Whitehall and South Kensington have much to fear from the wanton columns of a vulgarized capitalistic press and from the greedy intrigues of syndicated capital, but nothing from a sane constructive Socialism. To the public official, therefore, of the present time, the Socialist has merely to say that he will probably be better paid, relatively, than he is now, and in the matter of his house rents and domestic marketing, *vide supra*….

But now, suppose you are an artist — and I use the word to cover all sorts of art, literary, dramatic and musical, as well as painting, sculpture, design and architecture — you want before all things freedom for personal expression, and you probably have an idea that this is the last thing you will get in the Socialist State. But, indeed, you will get far more than you do now. You will begin as a student, no doubt, in your local Municipal Art Schools, and there you will win prizes and scholarships and get some glorious years of youth and work in Italy or Paris, or Germany or London, or Boston or New York, or wherever the great teachers and workers of your art gather thickest; and then you will compete, perhaps, for some public work, and have something printed or published or reproduced and sold for you by your school or city; or get a loan from your home municipality for material — if your material costs money — and set to work making that into some saleable beautiful thing. If you are at all distinguished in quality, you will have a competition among public authorities from the beginning, to act as sponsors and dealers for your work; benevolent dealers they will be, and content with a commission. And if you make things that make many people interested and happy, you may by that fortunate gift of yours, grow to be as rich and magnificent a person as any one in the Socialist State. But if you do not please people at all, either the connoisseurs of the municipal art collection or private associations of art patrons or the popular buyer, well, then your lot will be no harder than the lot

of any unsuccessful artist now; you will have to do something else for a time and win leisure to try again.

Theatrical productions will be run on a sort of improvement upon contemporary methods, but there will be no cornering of talent possible, no wild advertisement of favoured stars upon strictly commercial lines, no Theatrical Trust. The theatres will be municipal buildings, every theatre-going voter will be keen to see them comfortable and fine; they will, perhaps, be run in some cases by a public repertoire company and in another by a lessee, and this latter may be financed by his own private savings or by subscribers or partners, or by a loan from the public bank as the case may be. This latter method of exploitation by a lessee will probably also work best in the public Music Halls, but it is quite equally possible that these may be controlled by managers under partly elected and partly appointed public committees. In some cases the theatrical lessee might be a kind of stage society organized for the production of particular types of play. The spectators will pay for admission, of course, as they do now, but to the municipal box offices; and I suppose the lessee or the author and artists will divide up the surplus after the rent of the theatre has been deducted for the municipal treasury. In every town of any importance there will be many theatres, music halls and the like, perhaps under competing committees. In all these matters, as every intelligent person understands, one has to maintain variety of method, a choice of avenues, freedom from autocracies; and since the Socialist community will contain a great number of intelligent persons with leisure and opportunity for artistic appreciation, there is little chance of this important principle being forgotten, much less than there is in this world where a group of dealers can often make an absolute corner in this artistic market or that. You will not, under Socialism, see Sarah Bernhardt playing in a tent as she had to do in America, because all the theatres have been closed against her through some mean dispute with a Trust about the sharing of profits….

And if it is not too sudden a transition, it seems most convenient in a Socialist State to leave religious worship entirely to the care of private people; to let them subscribe among themselves, subject, of course, to a reasonable statute of mortmain, to lease land, and build

and endow and maintain churches and chapels, altars and holy places and meeting-houses, priests and devout ceremonies. This will be the more easily done since the heavy social burthens that oppress religious bodies at the present time will be altogether lifted from them; they will have no poor to support, no schools, no hospitals, no nursing sisters, the advance of civilization will have taken over these duties of education and humanity that Christianity first taught us to realize. So, too, there seems no objection and no obstacle in Socialism to religious houses, to nunneries, monasteries and the like, so far as these institutions are compatible with personal freedom and the public health, but of course factory laws and building laws will run through all these places, and the common laws and limitations of contract override their vows, if their devotees repent. So that you see Socialism will touch nothing living of religion, and if you are a religious minister, you will be very much as you are at the present time, but with lightened parochial duties. If you are an earnest woman and want to nurse the sick and comfort the afflicted, you will need only, in addition to your religious profession, to qualify as a nurse or medical practitioner. There will still be ample need of you. Socialism will not make an end of human trouble, either of the body or of the soul, albeit it will put these things into such comfort and safety as it may.

§ 5.

And now let me address a section to those particular social types whose method of living seems most threatened by the development of an organized civilization, who find it impossible to imagine lives at all like their own in the Socialist State….

But first it may be well to remind them again of something I have already done my best to make clear, that the modern Socialist contemplates no swift change of conditions from those under which we live, to Socialism. There will be no wonderful Monday morning when the old order will give place to the new. Year by year the great change has to be brought about, now by this socialization of a service, now by an alteration in the incidence of taxation, now by a new device of public trading, now by an extension of education. This

problem at the utmost is a problem of adaptation, and for most of those who would have no standing under the revised conceptions of social intercourse, it is no more than to ask whether it is wise they should prepare their sons or daughters to follow in their footsteps or consent to regard their callings as a terminating function.

So far as many professions and callings go, this matter may be dismissed in a few words. Under Socialism, while the particular trade or profession might not exist, there would probably be ample scope in the public machine for the socially more profitable employment of the same energies. A family solicitor, such as we know now, would have a poor time in a Socialist State, but the same qualities of watchful discretion would be needed at a hundred new angles and friction surfaces of the State organization. In the same way the private shopkeeper, as I have already explained, would be replaced by the department managers and buyers of the public stores, the rent collector, the estate bailiff — one might make long lists of social types who would undergo a parallel transformation.

But suppose now you are a servant, I mean a well-trained, expert, prosperous servant; would the world have no equivalent of you under the new order? I think probably it would. With a difference, there will be room for a vast body of servants in the Socialist State. But I think there will be very few servants to private people, and that the "menial" conception of a servant will have vanished in an entirely educated community. The domestic work of the ordinary home, one may prophesy confidently, will be very much reduced in the near future whether we move toward Socialism or no; all the dirt of coal, all the disagreeableness attendant upon lamps and candles, most of the heavy work of cooking will be obviated by electric lighting and heating, and much of the bedroom service dispensed with through the construction of properly equipped bath-dressing-rooms. In addition, it is highly probable that there will be a considerable extension of the club idea; ordinary people will dine more freely in public places, and conveniences for their doing so will increase. The single-handed servant will have disappeared, and if you are one of that class you must console yourself by thinking that under Socialism you would have been educated up to seventeen or eighteen and then equipped for some more interesting occupation. But there will

remain much need of occasional help of a more skilled sort, in cleaning out the house thoroughly every now and then, probably with the help of mechanisms, in recovering and repairing furniture, and in all this sort of "helping" which will be done as between one social equal and another, many people who are now, through lack of opportunity and education, servants, will no doubt be employed. But where the better type of service will be found will probably be in the clubs and associated homes, where pleasant-mannered, highly-paid, skilful people will see to the ease and comfort of a considerable *clientèle* without either offence or servility. There still remains, no doubt, a number of valets, footmen, maids and so on, who under Socialism would not be servants at all, but something far better, more interesting and more productive socially.

But this writing of servants brings me now to another possibility, and that is that perhaps you are, dear reader, one of that small number of fortunate people, rich and well placed in the world, who even under existing conditions seem to possess all that life can offer a human being. You live beautifully in a great London house, waited upon by companies of servants, you have country seats with parks about them and fine gardens, you can travel luxuriously to any part of the civilized world and live sumptuously there. All things are done for you, all ways are made smooth for you. A skilled maid or valet saves you even the petty care of your person; skilled physicians, wonderful specialists intervene at any threat of illness or discomfort; you keep ten years younger in appearance than your poorer contemporaries and twice as splendid. And above all you have an immense sense of downward perspectives, of being special and apart and above the common herd of mankind.

Now frankly Socialism will be incompatible with this patrician style. You must contemplate the end of all that. You may still be healthy, refined, free, beautifully clothed and housed; but you will not have either the space or the service or the sense of superiority you enjoy now, under Socialism. You would have to take your place among the multitude again. Only a moiety of your property will remain to your sort of person if any revolution is achieved. The rents upon which you live, the investments that yield the income that makes the employment of that army of butlers and footmen, estate

workers and underlings possible, that buys your dresses, your jewels, your motorcars, your splendid furnishings and equipments, will for the most part be public property, yielding revenue to some national or municipal treasury. You will have to give up much of that. There is no way out of it, your way to Socialism is through "the needle's eye." From your rare class and from your class alone does Socialism require a real material sacrifice. You must indeed give up much coarse pride. There is no help for it, you must face that if you face Socialism at all. You must come down to a simpler and, in many material aspects, less distinguished way of living.

This is so clearly evident that to any one who believes self-seeking is the ruling motive, the only possible motive in mankind, it seems incredible that your class ever will do anything than oppose to the last the advancement of Socialism. You will fight for what you have, and the Have-nots will fight to take it away. Therefore it is that the Socialists of the Social Democratic Federation preach a class war; to my mind a lurid, violent and distasteful prospect. We shall have to get out of the miseries and disorder of to-day, they think, if not by way of chateau-burning and tumbrils, at least by a mitigated equivalent of that. But I am not of that opinion. I have a lurking belief that you are not altogether eaten up by the claims of your own magnificence. While there are no doubt a number of people in your class who would fight like rats in a corner against, let us say, the feeding of poor people's starving children or the recovery of the land by the State to which it once belonged, I believe there is enough of nobility in your class as a whole to considerably damp their resistance. Because you have silver mirrors and silver hairbrushes, it does not follow that you have not a conscience. I am no believer in the theory that to be a *sans-culotte* is to be morally impeccable, or that a man loses his soul because he possesses thirty pairs of trousers beautifully folded by a valet. I cherish the belief that your very refinement will turn — I have seen it in one or two fine minds visibly turning — against the social conditions that made it possible. All this space, all this splendour has its traceable connection with the insufficiencies and miseries from which you are so remote. Once that realization comes to you the world changes. In certain lights, correlated with that, your magnificence can look, you will discover

— forgive the word! — a little *vulgar*….

Once you have seen that you will continue to see it. The *nouveau riche* of the new Plutocratic type comes thrusting among you, demonstrating that sometimes quite obtrusively. You begin by feeling sorry for his servants and then apologetic to your own. You cannot "go it" as the rich Americans and the rich South Africans, or prosperous book-makers or rich music-hall proprietors, "go it," their silver and ivory and diamonds throw light on your own. And among other things you discover you are not nearly so dependent on the numerous men in livery, the spaces and enrichments, for your pride and comfort, as these upstart people.

I trust also to the appeal of the intervening spaces. You cannot so entirely close your world in from the greater world without that, in transit at least, the other aspects do not intrude. Every time you leave Charing Cross for the Continent, for example, there are all those horrible slums on either side of the line. These things *are*, you know, a part of your system, part of you; they are the reverse of that splendid fabric and no separate thing, the wide rich tapestry of your lives comes through on the other side, stitch for stitch in stunted bodies, in children's deaths, in privation and anger. Your grandmothers did not realize that. You do. You *know*. In that recognition and a certain nobility I find in you, I put my hope, much more than in any dreadful memories of 1789 and those vindictive pikes. Your class is a strangely mixed assembly of new and old, of base and fine. But through it all, in Great Britain and Western Europe generally, soaks a tradition truly aristocratic, a tradition that transcends property; you are aware, and at times uneasily aware, of duty and a sort of honour. You cannot bilk cabmen nor cheat at cards; there is something in your making forbids that as strongly as an instinct. But what if it is made clear to you (and it is being made clear to you) that the wealth you have is, all unwittingly on your part, the outcome of a colossal — if unpremeditated — social bilking?

Moreover, though Socialism does ask you to abandon much space and service, it offers you certain austere yet not altogether inadequate compensations. If you will cease to have that admirable house in Mayfair and the park in Kent and the moorlands and the Welsh castle, yet you will have another ownership of a finer kind to replace

those things. For all London will be yours, a city to serve indeed, and a sense of fellowship that is, if you could but realize it, better than respect. The common people will not be common under Socialism. That is a very important thing for you to remember. But better than those thoughts is this, that you will own yourself too, more than you do now. All that state, all that prominence of yours — do you never feel how it stands between you and life?

So I appeal from your wealth to your nobility, to help us to impoverish your class a little relatively and make all the world infinitely richer by that impoverishment. And I am sure that to some of you I shall not appeal in vain….

§ 6.

And lastly, perhaps you are chiefly a patriot and you are concerned for the flag and country with which your emotions have interwoven. You find that the Socialist talks constantly of internationalism and the World State, and that presents itself to your imagination as a very vague and colourless substitute for a warm and living reality of England or "these States" or the Empire. Well, your patriotism will have suffered a change, but I do not think it need starve under Socialist conditions. It may be that war will have ceased, but the comparison and competition and pride of communities will not have ceased. Philadelphia and Chicago, Boston and New York are at peace, in all probability for ever at peace, so far as guns and slaughter go, but each perpetually criticizes, goads and tries to outshine the other. And the civic pride and rivalry of to-day will be nothing to that pride and rivalry when every man's business is the city and the city's honour and well-being is his own. You will have, therefore, first this civic patriotism, your ancient pride in your city, a city which will be like the city of the ancient Athenian's, or the mediæval Italian's, the centre of a system of territories and the property and chief interest of its citizens. I, for instance, should love and serve, even as I love to-day, my London and my Cinque Ports, these Home Counties about London, the great lap of the Thames valley and the Weald and Downland, my own country in which all my life has been spent; for you the city may be Ulster or

Northumbria, or Wales or East or West Belgium, or Finland or Burgundy, or Berne or Berlin, or Venetia, Pekin, Calcutta, Queensland or San Francisco. And keeping the immediate peace between these vigorous giant municipal states and holding them together there will still be in many cases the old national or Imperial government and the old flag, a means of joint action between associated and kindred municipalities with a common language and a common history and a common temper and race. The nation and the national government will be the custodian of the national literature and the common law, the controller and perhaps the vehicle of intermunicipal and international trade, and an intermediary between its municipal governments and that great Congress to which all things are making, that permanent international Congress which will be necessary to insure the peace of the world.

That, at least, is my own dream of the order that may emerge from the confusion of distrusts and tentatives and dangerous absurdities, those reactions of fear and old traditional attitudes and racial misconceptions which one speaks of as international relations to-day. For I do not believe that war is a necessary condition to human existence and progress, that it is anything more than a confusion we inherit from the less organized phases of social development. I think but a little advancement in general intelligence will make it an impossible thing.

But suppose after all that I am wrong in my estimate in this matter, and that war will still be possible in a Socialist or partly Socialist world; suppose that the Socialist State in which I am imagining you to live is threatened by some military power. Then I don't think the military power that threatens it need threaten very long. Because consider, here will be a State organized for collective action as never a State has been organized before, a State in which every man and woman will be a willing and conscious citizen saturated with the spirit of service, in which scientific research will be at a maximum of vigour and efficiency. What individualist or autocratic militarism will stand a chance against it? It goes quite without saying from the essential principles of Socialism that *if war is necessary* then every citizen will, as a matter of course, take his part in that war. It is mere want of intellectual grasp that has made a

few working-class Socialists in England and France oppose military service. Universal military service, given the need for it, is innate in the Socialist idea, just as it is blankly antagonistic to the “private individual” ideas of Eighteenth-Century Liberalism. It is innate in the Socialist idea, but equally innate in that is the conception of establishing and maintaining for ever a universal peace.

CHAPTER XV THE ADVANCEMENT OF SOCIALISM

§ 1.

And here my brief exposition of the ideals of Modern Socialism may fitly end.

I have done my best to set out soberly and plainly this great idea of deliberately making a real civilization by the control and subordination of the instinct of property, and the systematic development of a state of consciousness out of the achievements and squalor, out of the fine forces and wasted opportunities of to-day. I may have an unconscious bias perhaps, but so far as I have been able I have been just and frank, concealing nothing of the doubts and difficulties of Socialism, nothing of the divergencies of opinion among its supporters, nothing of the generous demands it makes upon the social conscience, the Good Will in man. Its supporters are divergent upon a hundred points, but upon its fundamental generalizations they are all absolutely agreed, and some day the whole world will be agreed. Their common purport is the resumption by the community of all property that is not justly and obviously personal, and the substitution of the spirit of service for the spirit of gain in all human affairs.

It must be clear to the reader who has followed my explanations continuously, that the present advancement of Socialism must lie now along three several lines.

FIRST, and most important, is the primary intellectual process, the elaboration, criticism, discussion, enrichment and enlargement of the project of Socialism. This includes all sorts of sociological and economic research, the critical literature of Socialism, and every possible way — the drama, poetry, painting, music — of expressing and refining its spirit, its attitudes and conceptions. It includes, too, all sorts of experiments in living and association. In its widest sense it includes all science, literature and invention.

SECONDLY, comes the propaganda; the publication, distribution, repetition, discussion and explanation of this growing body of ideas,

until this conception of a real civilized State as being in the making, becomes the common intellectual property of all intelligent people in the world; until the laws and social injustices that now seem, to the ordinary man, as much parts of life as the east wind and influenza, will seem irrational, unnatural and absurd. This educational task is at the present time the main work that the mass of Socialists have before them. Most other possibilities wait upon that enlargement of the general circle of ideas. It is a work that every one can help forward in some measure, by talk and discussion, by the distribution of literature, by writing and speaking in public, by subscribing to propagandist organizations.

And THIRDLY, there is the actual changing of practical things in the direction of the coming Socialized State, the actual socialization, bit by bit and more and more completely, of the land, of the means of production, of education and child welfare, of insurance and the food supply, the realization, in fact, of that great design which the intellectual process of Socialism is continually making more beautiful, attractive and worthy. Now this third group of activities is necessarily various and divergent, and at every point the conscious and confessed Socialist will find himself co-operating with partial or unintentional Socialists, with statesmen and officials, with opportunist philanthropists, with trade unionists, with religious bodies and religious teachers, with educationists, with scientific and medical specialists, with every sort of public-spirited person. He should never lose an opportunity of explaining to such people how necessarily they are Socialists, but he should never hesitate to work with them because they refuse the label. For in the house of Socialism as in the house of God, there are many mansions.

These are the three main channels for Socialist effort, thought, propaganda and practical social and political effort, and between them they afford opportunity for almost every type of intelligent human being. One may bring leisure, labour, gifts, money, reputation, influence to the service of Socialism; there is ample use for them all. There is work to be done for this idea, from taking tickets at a doorway and lending a drawing-room for a meeting, to facing death, impoverishment and sorrow for its sake.

§ 2.

Socialism is a moral and intellectual process, let me in conclusion reiterate that. Only secondarily and incidentally does it sway the world of politics. It is not a political movement; it may engender political movements, but it can never become a political movement; any political body, any organization whatever, that professes to stand for Socialism, makes an altogether too presumptuous claim. The whole is greater than the part, the will than the instrument. There can be no official nor pontifical Socialism; the theory lives and grows. It springs out of the common sanity of mankind. Constructive Socialism shapes into a great system of developments to be forwarded, points to a great number of systems of activity amidst which its adherents may choose their field for work. Parties and societies may come or go, parties and organizations and names may be used and abandoned; constructive Socialism lives and remains.

There is a constantly recurring necessity to insist on the difference between two things, the larger and the lesser, the greater being the Socialist movement, the lesser the various organizations that come and go. There is this necessity because there is a sort of natural antagonism between the thinker and writer who stand by the scheme and seek to develop and expound it, and the politician who attempts to realize it. They are allies, but allies who often pull against each other, whom a little heat and thoughtlessness may precipitate into a wasteful conflict. The former is, perhaps, too apt to resent the expenditure of force in those conflicts of cliques and personal ambition that inevitably arise among men comparatively untrained for politics, those squabbles and intrigues, reservations and insincerities that precede the birth of a tradition of discipline; the latter is equally prone to think literature too broad-minded for daily life, and to associate all those aspects of the Socialist project which do not immediately win votes, with fads, kid gloves, "gentlemanliness," rose-water and such-like contemptible things. These squabbles of the engineer and the navigating officer must not be allowed to confuse the mind of the student of Socialism. They are quarrels of the mess-room, quarrels on board the ship and within limits, they have nothing to do with the general direction of

Socialism. Like all indisciplines they hinder but they do not contradict the movement. Socialism, the politicians declare, can only be realized through politics. Socialism, I would answer, can never be narrowed down to politics. Your parties and groups may serve Socialism, but they can never be Socialism. Scientific progress, medical organization, the advancement of educational method, artistic production and literature are all aspects of Socialism, they are all interests and developments that lie apart from anything one may call — except by sheer violence to language — politics.

And since Socialism is an intellectual as well as a moral thing, it will never tolerate in its adherents the abnegation of individual thought and intention. It demands devotion to an idea, not devotion to a leader. No addicted follower of so-and-so or of so-and-so can be a good Socialist any more than he can be a good scientific investigator. So far Socialism has produced no great leaders at all. Lassalle alone of all its prominent names was of that romantic type of personality which men follow with enthusiasm. The others, Owen, Saint Simon, and Fourier, Proudhon, Marx, and Engels, Bebel, Webb, J. S. Mill, Jaurès, contributed to a process they never seized hold upon, never made their own, they gave enrichment and enlargement and the movement passed on; passes on gathering as it goes. Kingsley, Morris, Ruskin — none are too great to serve this idea, and none so great they may control it or stand alone for it. So it will continue. Socialism under a great leader, or as a powerfully organized party would be the end of Socialism. No doubt it might also be its partial triumph; but the reality of the movement would need to take to itself another name; to call itself "constructive civilization" or some such synonym, in order to continue its undying work. Socialism no doubt will inspire great leaders in the future, and supply great parties with ideas; in itself it will still be greater than all such things.

§ 3.

But here, perhaps, before the finish, since the business of this book is explanation, it may be well to define a little the relation of Socialism to the political party that is most closely identified with it in the

popular mind. This is the Labour Party. There can be no doubt of the practical association of aim and interest of the various Labour parties throughout modern civilized communities with the Socialist movement. The Social democrats of Germany are the Labour Party of that country, and wherever the old conception of Socialism prevails, those "class war" ideas of the Marxist that have been superseded in English Socialism for nearly a quarter of a century, there essentially the Socialist movement will take the form of a revolutionary attack upon the owning and governing sections of the community. But in Great Britain and America the Labour movement has never as a whole been revolutionary or insurrectionary in spirit, and in these countries Socialism has been affected from its very beginnings by constructive ideas. It has never starkly antagonized Labour on the one hand, and the other necessary elements in a civilized State on the other; it has never — I speak of the movement as a whole and not of individual utterances — contemplated a community made up wholly of "Labour" and emotionally democratic, such as the Marxist teaching suggests. The present labouring classes stand to gain enormously in education, dignity, leisure, efficiency and opportunity by the development of a Socialist State, and just in so far as they become intelligent will they become Socialist; but we all, all of us of Good Will, we and our children, of nearly every section of the community stand also to gain and have also our interest in this development. Great as the Labour movement is, the Socialist movement remains something greater. The one is the movement of a class, the other a movement of the best elements in every class.

None the less it remains true that under existing political conditions it is to the Labour Party that the Socialist must look for the mass and emotion and driving force of political Socialism. Among the wage workers of the modern civilized community Socialists are to be counted now by the hundred thousand, and in those classes alone does an intelligent self-interest march clearly and continuously in the direction of constructive civilization. In the other classes the Socialists are dispersed and miscellaneous in training and spirit, hampered by personal and social associations, presenting an enormous variety of aspects and incapable, it would seem, of co-

operation except in relation to the main Socialist body, the Labour mass. Through that, and in relation and service to that, they must, it would seem, spend their political activities (I am writing now only of political activities) if they are not to be spent very largely to waste. The two other traditional parties in British politics are no doubt undergoing remarkable changes and internal disruptions, and the constructive spirit of the time is at work within them; but it does not seem that either is likely to develop anything nearly so definitely a Socialist programme as the Labour Party. The old Conservative Party, in spite of its fine aristocratic traditions, tends more and more to become the party of the adventurous Plutocracy, of the aggressive *nouveau riche*, inclines more and more towards the inviting financial possibilities of modern "Imperialism" and "Tariff Reform." The old Liberal Party strains between these two antagonists and its own warring and conflicting traditions of Whiggery and Radicalism. There can be no denying the great quantity of "Good Will" and constructive intention that finds a place in its very miscellaneous ranks, but the strong strain of obstinate and irreconcilable individualism is equally indisputable.

But the official Liberal attitude is one thing, and a very unsubstantial and transitory thing, and the great mass of Good Will and broad thinking in the ranks of Liberalism and the middle class quite another. Socialists are to be found not only in every class, but in every party. There can be no "Socialist" party as such. That is the misleading suggestion of irresponsible and destructive adventurers. It is impossible to estimate what forces of political synthesis may be at work at the present time, or what ruptures and coalitions may not occur in the course of a few years. These things belong to the drama of politics. They do not affect the fact that the chief Interest in the community on the side of Socialism is Labour; through intelligent Labour it is that Socialism becomes a political force and possibility, and it is to the Labour Party that the Socialist who wishes to engage in active political work may best give his means and time and energy and ability.

I write "political work," and once more I would repeat that it is to the field of electioneering and parliamentary politics under present conditions that this section refers. The ultimate purpose of Socialism

can rely upon no class because it aims to reconstitute all classes. In a Socialist State there will be no class doomed to mere "labour," no class privileged to rule and decide. For every child there will be fair opportunity and education and scope to the limit of its possibilities. To the best there will be given difficulty and responsibility, honour and particular rewards, but to all security and reasonable work and a tolerable life. The interests and class traditions upon which our party distinctions of to-day rely must necessarily undergo progressive modification with every step we take towards the realization of the Socialist ideal.

§ 4.

So this general account of Socialism concludes. I have tried to put it as what it is, as the imperfect and still growing development of the social idea, of the collective Good Will in man. I have tried to indicate its relation to politics, to religion, to art and literature, to the widest problems of life. Its broad generalizations are simple and I believe acceptable to all clear-thinking minds. And in a way they do greatly simplify life. Once they have been understood they render impossible a thousand confusions and errors of thought and practice. They are in the completest sense of the word, illumination.

But Socialism is no panacea, no magic "Open Sesame" to the millennium. Socialism lights up certain once hopeless evils in human affairs and shows the path by which escape is possible, but it leaves that path rugged and difficult. Socialism is hope, but it is not assurance. Throughout this book I have tried to keep that before the reader.

Directly one accepts those great generalizations one passes on to a jungle of incurably intricate problems, through which man has to make his way or fail, the riddles and inconsistencies of human character, the puzzles of collective action, the power and decay of traditions, the perpetually recurring tasks and problems of education. To have become a Socialist is to have learnt something, to have made an intellectual and a moral step, to have discovered a general purpose in life and a new meaning in duty and brotherhood. But to have become a Socialist is not, as many suppose, to have become

generally wise. Rather in realizing the nature of the task that could be done, one realizes also one's insufficiencies, one's want of knowledge, one's need of force and training. Here and in this manner, says Socialism, a palace and safety and great happiness may be made for mankind. But it seems to me the Socialist as he turns his hand and way of living towards that common end knows little of the nature of his task if he does so with any but a lively sense of his individual weakness and the need of charity for all that he achieves.

In that spirit, and with no presumption of finality, this little book of explanations is given to the world.

THE END

FIRST AND LAST THINGS

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INTRODUCTION.

Recently I set myself to put down what I believe. I did this with no idea of making a book, but at the suggestion of a friend and to interest a number of friends with whom I was associated. We were all, we found, extremely uncertain in our outlook upon life, about our religious feelings and in our ideas of right and wrong. And yet we reckoned ourselves people of the educated class and some of us talk and lecture and write with considerable confidence. We thought it would be of very great interest to ourselves and each other if we made some sort of frank mutual confession. We arranged to hold a series of meetings in which first one and then another explained the faith, so far as he understood it, that was in him. We astonished ourselves and our hearers by the irregular and fragmentary nature of the creeds we produced, clotted at one point, inconsecutive at another, inconsistent and unconvincing to a quite unexpected degree. It would not be difficult to caricature one of those meetings; the lecturer floundering about with an air of exquisite illumination, the audience attentive with an expression of thwarted edification upon its various brows. For my own part I grew so interested in planning my lecture and in joining up point and point, that my notes soon outran the possibilities of the hour or so of meeting for which I was preparing them. The meeting got only a few fragments of what I had to say, and made what it could of them. And after that was over I let myself loose from limits of time and length altogether and have expanded these memoranda into a book.

It is as it stands now the frank confession of what one man of the early Twentieth Century has found in life and himself, a confession just as frank as the limitations of his character permit; it is his metaphysics, his religion, his moral standards, his uncertainties and the expedients with which he has met them. On every one of these departments and aspects I write — how shall I put it? — as an amateur. In every section of my subject there are men not only of far greater intellectual power and energy than I, but who have devoted their whole lives to the sustained analysis of this or that among the questions I discuss, and there is a literature so enormous in the

aggregate that only a specialist scholar could hope to know it. I have not been unmindful of these professors and this literature; I have taken such opportunities as I have found, to test my propositions by them. But I feel that such apology as one makes for amateurishness in this field has a lesser quality of self-condemnation than if one were dealing with narrower, more defined and fact-laden matters. There is more excuse for one here than for the amateur maker of chemical theories, or the man who evolves a system of surgery in his leisure. These things, chemistry, surgery and so forth, we may take on the reputation of an expert, but our own fundamental beliefs, our rules of conduct, we must all make for ourselves. We may listen and read, but the views of others we cannot take on credit; we must rethink them and "make them our own." And we cannot do without fundamental beliefs, explicit or implicit. The bulk of men are obliged to be amateur philosophers, — all men indeed who are not specialized students of philosophical subjects, — even if their philosophical enterprise goes no further than prompt recognition of and submission to Authority.

And it is not only the claim of the specialist that I would repudiate. People are too apt to suppose that in order to discuss morals a man must have exceptional moral gifts. I would dispute that naive supposition. I am an ingenuous enquirer with, I think, some capacity for religious feeling, but neither a prophet nor a saint. On the whole I should be inclined to classify myself as a bad man rather than a good; not indeed as any sort of picturesque scoundrel or non-moral expert, but as a person frequently irritable, ungenerous and forgetful, and intermittently and in small but definite ways bad. One thing I claim, I have got my beliefs and theories out of my life and not fitted them to its circumstances. As often as not I have learnt good by the method of difference; by the taste of the alternative. I tell this faith I hold as I hold it and I sketch out the principles by which I am generally trying to direct my life at the present time, because it interests me to do so and I think it may interest a certain number of similarly constituted people. I am not teaching. How far I succeed or fail in that private and personal attempt to behave well, has nothing to do with the matter of this book. That is another story, a reserved and private affair. I offer simply intellectual experiences and ideas.

It will be necessary to take up the most abstract of these questions of belief first, the metaphysical questions. It may be that to many readers the opening sections may seem the driest and least attractive. But I would ask them to begin at the beginning and read straight on, because much that follows this metaphysical book cannot be appreciated at its proper value without a grasp of these preliminaries.

BOOK THE FIRST. — METAPHYSICS.

1.1. THE NECESSITY FOR METAPHYSICS.

As a preliminary to that experiment in mutual confession from which this book arose, I found it necessary to consider and state certain truths about the nature of knowledge, about the meaning of truth and the value of words, that is to say I found I had to begin by being metaphysical. In writing out these notes now I think it is well that I should state just how important I think this metaphysical prelude is.

There is a popular prejudice against metaphysics as something at once difficult and fruitless, as an idle system of enquiries remote from any human interest. I suppose this odd misconception arose from the vulgar pretensions of the learned, from their appeal to ancient names and their quotations in unfamiliar tongues, and from the easy fall into technicality of men struggling to be explicit where a high degree of explicitness is impossible. But it needs erudition and accumulated and alien literature to make metaphysics obscure, and some of the most fruitful and able metaphysical discussion in the world was conducted by a number of unhampered men in small Greek cities, who knew no language but their own and had scarcely a technical term. The true metaphysician is after all only a person who says, “Now let us take a thought for a moment before we fall into a discussion of the broad questions of life, lest we rush hastily into impossible and needless conflict. What is the exact value of these thoughts we are thinking and these words we are using?” He wants to take thought about thought. Those other ardent spirits on the contrary, want to plunge into action or controversy or belief without taking thought; they feel that there is not time to examine thought. “While you think,” they say, “the house is burning.” They are the kin of those who rush and struggle and make panics in theatre fires.

Now it seems to me that most of the troubles of humanity are really misunderstandings. Men’s compositions and characters are, I think, more similar than their views, and if they had not needlessly different modes of expression upon many broad issues, they would be practically at one upon a hundred matters where now they widely differ.

Most of the great controversies of the world, most of the wide

religious differences that keep men apart, arise from this: from differences in their way of thinking. Men imagine they stand on the same ground and mean the same thing by the same words, whereas they stand on slightly different grounds, use different terms for the same thing and express the same thing in different words. Logomachies, conflicts about words, — into such death-traps of effort those ardent spirits run and perish.

This is now almost a commonplace; it has been said before by numberless people. It has been said before by numberless people, but it seems to me it has been realised by very few — and until it is realised to the fullest extent, we shall continue to live at intellectual cross purposes and waste the forces of our species needlessly and abundantly.

This persuasion is a very important thing in my mind.

I think that the time has come when the human mind must take up metaphysical discussion again — when it must resume those subtle but necessary and unavoidable problems that it dropped unsolved at the close of the period of Greek freedom, when it must get to a common and general understanding upon what its ideas of truth, good, and beauty amount to, and upon the relation of the name to the thing, and of the relation of one mind to another mind in the matter of resemblance and the matter of difference — upon all those issues the young science student is as apt to dismiss as Rot, and the young classical student as Gas, and the austere student of the science of Economics as Theorising, unsuitable for his methods of research.

In our achievement of understandings in the place of these evasions about fundamental things lies the road, I believe, along which the human mind can escape, if ever it is to escape, from the confusion of purposes that distracts it at the present time.

1.2. THE RESUMPTION OF METAPHYSICAL ENQUIRY.

It seems to me that the Greek mind up to the disaster of the Macedonian Conquest was elaborately and discursively discussing these questions of the forms and methods of thought and that the discussion was abruptly closed and not naturally concluded, summed up hastily as it were, in the career and lecturings of Aristotle.

Since then the world never effectually reopened these questions until the modern period. It went on from Plato and Aristotle just as the art of the seventeenth and eighteenth century went on from Raphael and Michael Angelo. Effectual criticism was absolutely silent until the Renaissance, and then for a time was but a matter of scattered utterances having only the slightest collective effect. In the past half century there has begun a more systematic critical movement in the general mind, a movement analogous to the Pre-Raphaelite movement in art — a Pre-Aristotelian movement, a scepticism about things supposed to be settled for all time, a resumed inquiry into the fundamental laws of thought, a harking back to positions of the older philosophers and particularly to Heraclitus, so far as the surviving fragments of his teaching enable one to understand him, and a new forward movement from that recovered ground.

1.3. THE WORLD OF FACT.

Necessarily when one begins an inquiry into the fundamental nature of oneself and one's mind and its processes, one is forced into autobiography. I begin by asking how the conscious mind with which I am prone to identify myself, began.

It presents itself to me as a history of a perception of the world of facts opening out from an accidental centre at which I happened to begin.

I do not attempt to define this word fact. Fact expresses for me something in its nature primary and unanalyzable. I start from that. I take as a typical statement of fact that I sit here at my desk writing with a fountain pen on a pad of ruled scribbling paper, that the sunlight falls upon me and throws the shadow of my window mullion across the page, that Peter, my cat, sleeps on the window-seat close at hand and that this agate paper-weight with the silver top that once was Henley's holds my loose memoranda together. Outside is a patch of lawn and then a fringe of winter-bitten iris leaves and then the sea, greatly wrinkled and astir under the south-west wind. There is a boat going out which I think may be Jim Pain's, but of that I cannot be sure...

These are statements of a certain quality, a quality that extends through a huge universe in which I find myself placed.

I try to recall how this world of fact arose in my mind. It began with a succession of limited immediate scenes and of certain minutely perceived persons; I recall an underground kitchen with a drawered table, a window looking up at a grating, a back yard in which, growing out by a dustbin, was a grape-vine; a red-papered room with a bookcase over my father's shop, the dusty aisles and fixtures, the regiments of wine-glasses and tumblers, the rows of hanging mugs and jugs, the towering edifices of jam-pots, the tea and dinner and toilet sets in that emporium, its brighter side of cricket goods, of pads and balls and stumps. Out of the window one peeped at the more exterior world, the High Street in front, the tailor's garden, the butcher's yard, the churchyard and Bromley church tower behind; and one was taken upon expeditions to fields and open

places. This limited world was peopled with certain familiar presences, mother and father, two brothers, the evasive but interesting cat, and by intermittent people of a livelier but more transient interest, customers and callers.

Such was my opening world of fact, and each day it enlarged and widened and had more things added to it. I had soon won my way to speech and was hearing of facts beyond my visible world of fact. Presently I was at a Dame's school and learning to read.

From the centre of that little world as primary, as the initiatory material, my perception of the world of fact widened and widened, by new sights and sounds, by reading and hearing descriptions and histories, by guesses and inferences; my curiosity and interest, my appetite for fact, grew by what it fed upon, I carried on my expansion of the world of fact until it took me through the mineral and fossil galleries of the Natural History Museum, through the geological drawers of the College of Science, through a year of dissection and some weeks at the astronomical telescope. So I built up my conceptions of a real world out of facts observed and out of inferences of a nature akin to fact, of a world immense and enduring, receding interminably into space and time. In that I found myself placed, a creature relatively infinitesimal, needing and struggling. It was clear to me, by a hundred considerations, that I in my body upon this planet Earth, was the outcome of countless generations of conflict and begetting, the creature of natural selection, the heir of good and bad engendered in that struggle.

So my world of fact shaped itself. I find it altogether impossible to question or doubt that world of fact. Particular facts one may question as facts. For instance, I think I see an unseasonable yellow wallflower from my windows, but you may dispute that and show that it is only a broken end of iris leaf accidentally lit to yellow. That is merely a substitution of fact for fact. One may doubt whether one is perceiving or remembering or telling facts clearly, but the persuasion that there are facts, independent of one's interpretations and obdurate to one's will, remains invincible.

1.4. SCEPTICISM OF THE INSTRUMENT.

At first I took the world of fact as being exactly as I perceived it. I believed my eyes. Seeing was believing, I thought. Still more did I believe my reasoning. It was only slowly that I began to suspect that the world of fact could be anything different from the clear picture it made upon my mind.

I realised the inadequacy of the senses first. Into that I will not enter here. Any proper text book of physiology or psychology will supply a number of instances of the habitual deceptions of sight and touch and hearing. I came upon these things in my reading, in the laboratory, with microscope or telescope, lived with them as constant difficulties. I will only instance one trifling case of visual deception in order to lead to my next question. One draws two lines strictly parallel; so

(two horizontal and parallel lines.)

Oblique to them one draws a series of lines; so

(a series of parallel and closely-spaced lines drawn through each horizontal line, one series (top) sloping to the right, the other (bottom) to the left)

and instantly the parallelism seems to be disturbed. If the second figure is presented to any one without sufficient science to understand this delusion, the impression is created that these lines converge to the right and diverge to the left. The vision is deceived in its mental factor and judges wrongly of the thing seen.

In this case we are able to measure the distance of the lines, to find how the main lines looked before the cross ones were drawn, to bring the deception up against fact of a different sort and so correct the mistake. If the ignorant observer were unable to do that, he might remain permanently under the impression that the main lines were out of parallelism. And all the infirmities of eye and ear, touch and taste, are discovered and checked by the fact that the erroneous impressions presently strike against fact and discover an incompatibility with it. If they did not we should never have discovered them. If on the other hand they are so incompatible with fact as to endanger the lives of the beings labouring under such

infirmities, they would tend to be eliminated from among our defects.

The presumption to which biological science brings one is that the senses and mind will work as well as the survival of the species may require, but that they will not work so very much better. There is no ground in matter-of-fact experience for assuming that there is any more inevitable certitude about purely intellectual operations than there is about sensory perceptions. The mind of a man may be primarily only a food-seeking, danger-avoiding, mate-finding instrument, just as the mind of a dog is, just as the nose of a dog is, or the snout of a pig.

You see the strong preparatory reason there is in this view of life for entertaining the suppositions that: —

The senses seem surer than they are.

The thinking mind seems clearer than it is and is more positive than it ought to be.

The world of fact is not what it appears to be.

1.5. THE CLASSIFICATORY ASSUMPTION.

After I had studied science and particularly biological science for some years, I became a teacher in a school for boys. I found it necessary to supplement my untutored conception of teaching method by a more systematic knowledge of its principles and methods, and I took the courses for the diplomas of Licentiate and Fellow of the London College of Preceptors which happened to be convenient for me. These courses included some of the more elementary aspects of psychology and logic and set me thinking and reading further. From the first, Logic as it was presented to me impressed me as a system of ideas and methods remote and secluded from the world of fact in which I lived and with which I had to deal. As it came to me in the ordinary textbooks, it presented itself as the science of inference using the syllogism as its principal instrument. Now I was first struck by the fact that while my teachers in Logic seemed to be assuring me I always thought in this form: —

"M is P,
S is M,
S is P,"

the method of my reasoning was almost always in this form: —

"S1 is more or less P,
S2 is very similar to S1,
S2 is very probably but not certainly more or less P.
Let us go on that assumption and see how it works."

That is to say, I was constantly reasoning by analogy and applying verification. So far from using the syllogistic form confidently, I habitually distrusted it as anything more than a test of consistency in statement. But I found the textbooks of logic disposed to ignore my customary method of reasoning altogether or to recognise it only where S1 and S2 could be lumped together under a common name. Then they put it something after this form as Induction: —

"S1, S2, S3, and S4 are P
S1 + S2 + S3 + S4 +... are all S
All S is P."

I looked into the laws of thought and into the postulates upon

which the syllogistic logic is based, and it slowly became clear to me that from my point of view, the point of view of one who seeks truth and reality, logic assumed a belief in the objective reality of classification of which my studies in biology and mineralogy had largely disabused me. Logic, it seemed to me, had taken a common innate error of the mind and had emphasised it in order to develop a system of reasoning that should be exact in its processes. I turned my attention to the examination of that. For in common with the general run of men I had supposed that logic professed to supply a trustworthy science and method for the investigation and expression of reality.

A mind nourished on anatomical study is of course permeated with the suggestion of the vagueness and instability of biological species. A biological species is quite obviously a great number of unique individuals which is separable from other biological species only by the fact that an enormous number of other linking individuals are inaccessible in time — are in other words dead and gone — and each new individual in that species does, in the distinction of its own individuality, break away in however infinitesimal degree from the previous average properties of the species. There is no property of any species, even the properties that constitute the specific definition, that is not a matter of more or less.

If, for example, as species be distinguished by a single large red spot on the back, you will find if you go over a great number of specimens that red spot shrinking here to nothing, expanding there to a more general redness, weakening to pink, deepening to russet and brown, shading into crimson, and so on and so on. And this is true not only of biological species. It is true of the mineral specimens constituting a mineral species, and I remember as a constant refrain in the lectures of Professor Judd upon rock classification, the words, “they pass into one another by insensible gradations.” It is true, I hold, of all things.

You will think perhaps of atoms of the elements as instances of identically similar things, but these are things not of experience but of theory, and there is not a phenomenon in chemistry that is not equally well explained on the supposition that it is merely the immense quantities of atoms necessarily taken in any experiment that

masks by the operation of the law of averages the fact that each atom also has its unique quality, its special individual difference.

This ideal of uniqueness in all individuals is not only true of the classifications of material science; it is true and still more evidently true of the species of common thought; it is true of common terms. Take the word "Chair." When one says chair, one thinks vaguely of an average chair. But collect individual instances; think of armchairs and reading-chairs and dining-room chairs, and kitchen chairs, chairs that pass into benches, chairs that cross the boundary and become settees, dentist's chairs, thrones, opera stalls, seats of all sorts, those miraculous fungoid growths that cumber the floor of the Arts and Crafts exhibition, and you will perceive what a lax bundle in fact is this simple straightforward term. In co-operation with an intelligent joiner I would undertake to defeat any definition of chair or chairishness that you gave me. Chairs just as much as individual organisms, just as much as mineral and rock specimens, are unique things — if you know them well enough you will find an individual difference even in a set of machine-made chairs — and it is only because we do not possess minds of unlimited capacity, because our brain has only a limited number of pigeon-holes for our correspondence with an unlimited universe of objective uniques, that we have to delude ourselves into the belief that there is a chairishness in this species common to and distinctive of all chairs.

Classification and number, which in truth ignore the fine differences of objective realities, have in the past of human thought been imposed upon things...

Greek thought impresses me as being over much obsessed by an objective treatment of certain necessary preliminary conditions of human thought — number and definition and class and abstract form! But these things, — number, definition, class and abstract form, — I hold, are merely unavoidable conditions of mental activity — regrettable conditions rather than essential facts. THE FORCEPS OF OUR MINDS ARE CLUMSY FORCEPS AND CRUSH THE TRUTH A LITTLE IN TAKING HOLD OF IT...

Let me give you a rough figure of what I am trying to convey in this first attack upon the philosophical validity of general terms. You have seen the result of those various methods of black and white

reproduction that involve the use of a rectangular net. You know the sort of process picture I mean — it used to be employed very frequently in reproducing photographs. At a little distance you really seem to have a faithful reproduction of the original picture, but when you peer closely you find not the unique form and masses of the original, but a multitude of little rectangles, uniform in shape and size. The more earnestly you go into the thing, the closelier you look, the more the picture is lost in reticulations. I submit, the world of reasoned inquiry has a very similar relation to the world of fact. For the rough purposes of every day the network picture will do, but the finer your purpose the less it will serve, and for an ideally fine purpose, for absolute and general knowledge that will be as true for a man at a distance with a telescope as for a man with a microscope, it will not serve at all.

It is true you can make your net of logical interpretation finer and finer, you can fine your classification more and more — up to a certain limit. But essentially you are working in limits, and as you come closer, as you look at finer and subtler things, as you leave the practical purpose for which the method exists, the element of error increases. Every species is vague, every term goes cloudy at its edges; and so in my way of thinking, relentless logic is only another name for a stupidity — for a sort of intellectual pigheadedness. If you push a philosophical or metaphysical inquiry through a series of valid syllogisms — never committing any generally recognised fallacy — you nevertheless leave behind you at each step a certain rubbing and marginal loss of objective truth, and you get deflections that are difficult to trace at each phase in the process. Every species waggles about in its definition, every tool is a little loose in its handle, every scale has its individual error. So long as you are reasoning for practical purposes about finite things of experience you can every now and then check your process and correct your adjustments. But not when you make what are called philosophical and theological inquiries, when you turn your implement towards the final absolute truth of things.

This real vagueness of class terms is equally true whether we consider those terms used extensively or intensively, that is to say whether in relation to all the members of the species or in relation to

an imaginary typical specimen. The logician begins by declaring that S is either P or not P. In the world of fact it is the rarest thing to encounter this absolute alternative; S1 is pink, but S2 is pinker, S3 is scarcely pink at all, and one is in doubt whether S4 is not properly to be called scarlet. The finest type specimen you can find simply has the characteristic quality a little more rather than a little less. The neat little circles the logician uses to convey his idea of P or not P to the student are just pictures of boundaries in his mind, exaggerations of a natural mental tendency. They are required for the purposes of his science, but they are departures from the nature of fact.

1.6. EMPTY TERMS.

Classes in logic are not only represented by circles with a hard firm outline, whereas in fact they have no such definite limits, but also there is a constant disposition to think of all names as if they represented positive classes. With words just as with numbers and abstract forms there have been definite phases of human development. There was with regard to number, the phase when man could barely count at all, or counted in perfect good faith and sanity upon his fingers. Then there was the phase when he struggled with the development of number, when he began to elaborate all sorts of ideas about numbers, until at last he developed complex superstitions about perfect numbers and imperfect numbers, about threes and sevens and the like. The same was the case with abstract forms; and even to-day we are scarcely more than heads out of the vast subtle muddle of thinking about spheres and ideally perfect forms and so on, that was the price of this little necessary step to clear thinking. How large a part numerical and geometrical magic, numerical and geometrical philosophy have played in the history of the mind! And the whole apparatus of language and mental communication is beset with like dangers. The language of the savage is I suppose purely positive; the thing has a name, the name has a thing. This indeed is the tradition of language, and even to-day, we, when we hear a name are predisposed — and sometimes it is a very vicious disposition — to imagine forthwith something answering to the name. WE ARE DISPOSED, AS AN INCURABLE MENTAL VICE, TO ACCUMULATE INTENSION IN TERMS. If I say to you Wodget or Crump, you find yourself passing over the fact that these are nothings, these are, so to speak mere blankety blanks, and trying to think what sort of thing a Wodget or a Crump may be. You find yourself led insensibly by subtle associations of sound and ideas to giving these blank terms attributes.

Now this is true not only of quite empty terms but of terms that carry a meaning. It is a mental necessity that we should make classes and use general terms, and as soon as we do that we fall into immediate danger of unjustifiably increasing the intension of these

terms. You will find a large proportion of human prejudice and misunderstanding arises from this universal proclivity.

1.7. NEGATIVE TERMS.

There is a particular sort of empty terms that has been and is conspicuously dangerous to the thinker, the class of negative terms. The negative term is in plain fact just nothing; "Not-A" is the absence of any trace of the quality that constitutes A, it is the rest of everything for ever. But there seems to be a real bias in the mind towards regarding "Not-A" as a thing mysteriously in the nature of A, as though "Not-A" and A were species of the same genus. When one speaks of Not-pink one is apt to think of green things and yellow things and to ignore anger or abstract nouns or the sound of thunder. And logicians, following the normal bias of the mind, do actually present A and not-A in this sort of diagram: —

(the letter A inside a circular boundary, together with the words Not A, all inside a bigger circular boundary.)

ignoring altogether the difficult case of the space in which these words are printed. Obviously the diagram that comes nearer experienced fact is: —

(the word Not, followed by the letter A inside a circular boundary, followed by the letter A)

with no outer boundary. But the logician finds it necessary for his processes to present that outer Not-A as bounded (Vide e.g. Kayne's "Formal Logic" re Euler's diagrams and Immediate Inferences.), and to speak of the total area of A and Not-A as the Universe of Discourse; and the metaphysician and the commonsense thinker alike fall far too readily into the belief that this convention of method is an adequate representation of fact.

Let me try and express how in my mind this matter of negative terms has shaped itself. I think of something which I may perhaps best describe as being off the stage or out of court, or as the Void without Implications, or as Nothingness, or as Outer Darkness. This is a sort of hypothetical Beyond to the visible world of human thought, and thither I think all negative terms reach at last, and merge and become nothing. Whatever positive class you make, whatever boundary you draw, straight away from that boundary begins the corresponding negative class and passes into the illimitable horizon

of nothingness. You talk of pink things, you ignore, as the arbitrary postulates of Logic direct, the more elusive shades of pink, and draw your line. Beyond is the not-pink, known and knowable, and still in the not-pink region one comes to the Outer Darkness. Not blue, not happy, not iron, all the NOT classes meet in that Outer Darkness. That same Outer Darkness and nothingness is infinite space and infinite time and any being of infinite qualities; and all that region I rule out of court in my philosophy altogether. I will neither affirm nor deny if I can help it about any NOT things. I will not deal with not things at all, except by accident and inadvertence. If I use the word "infinite" I use it as one often uses "countless," "the countless hosts of the enemy" — or "immeasurable"— "immeasurable cliffs" — that is to say as the limit of measurement, as a convenient equivalent to as many times this cloth yard as you can, and as many again, and so on and so on until you and your numerical system are beaten to a standstill.

Now a great number of apparently positive terms are, or have become, practically negative terms and are under the same ban with me. A considerable number of terms that have played a great part in the world of thought, seem to me to be invalidated by this same defect, to have no content or an undefined content or an unjustifiable content. For example, that word Omniscient, as implying infinite knowledge, impresses me as being a word with a delusive air of being solid and full, when it is really hollow with no content whatever. I am persuaded that knowing is the relation of a conscious being to something not itself, that the thing known is defined as a system of parts and aspects and relationships, that knowledge is comprehension, and so that only finite things can know or be known. When you talk of a being of infinite extension and infinite duration, omniscient and omnipotent and perfect, you seem to me to be talking in negatives of nothing whatever.

1.8. LOGIC STATIC AND LIFE KINETIC.

There is another infirmity of the mind to which my attention has been called by an able paper read this spring to the Cambridge Moral Science Club by my friend Miss Amber Reeves. In this she has developed a suggestion of Mr. F.C.S. Schiller's. The current syllogistic logic rests on the assumption that either A is B or it is not B. The practical reality, she contends, is that nothing is permanent; A is always becoming more or less B or ceasing to be more or less B. But it would seem the human mind cannot manage with that. It has to hold a thing still for a moment before it can think it. It arrests the present moment for its struggle as Joshua stopped the sun. It cannot contemplate things continuously, and so it has to resort to a series of static snapshots. It has to kill motion in order to study it, as a naturalist kills and pins out a butterfly in order to study life.

You see the mind is really pigeon-holed and discontinuous in two respects, in respect to time and in respect to classification; whereas one has a strong persuasion that the world of fact is unbounded or continuous.

1.9. PLANES AND DIALECTS OF THOUGHT.

Finally; the Logician, intent upon perfecting the certitudes of his methods rather than upon expressing the confusing subtleties of truth, has done little to help thinking men in the perpetual difficulty that arises from the fact that the universe can be seen in many different fashions and expressed by many different systems of terms, each expression within its limits true and yet incommensurable with expression upon a differing system. There is a sort of stratification in human ideas. I have it very much in mind that various terms in our reasoning lie, as it were, at different levels and in different planes, and that we accomplish a large amount of error and confusion by reasoning terms together that do not lie or nearly lie in the same plane.

Let me endeavour to make myself a little less obscure by a flagrant instance from physical things. Suppose some one began to talk seriously of a man seeing an atom through a microscope, or better perhaps of cutting one in half with a knife. There are a number of non-analytical people who would be quite prepared to believe that an atom could be visible to the eye or cut in this manner. But any one at all conversant with physical conceptions would almost as soon think of killing the square root of 2 with a rook rifle as of cutting an atom in half with a knife. One's conception of an atom is reached through a process of hypothesis and analysis, and in the world of atoms there are no knives and no men to cut. If you have thought with a strong consistent mental movement, then when you have thought of your atom under the knife blade, your knife blade has itself become a cloud of swinging grouped atoms, and your microscope lens a little universe of oscillatory and vibratory molecules. If you think of the universe, thinking at the level of atoms, there is neither knife to cut, scale to weigh, nor eye to see. The universe at that plane to which the mind of the molecular physicist descends has none of the shapes or forms of our common life whatever. This hand with which I write is, in the universe of molecular physics, a cloud of warring atoms and molecules, combining and recombining, colliding, rotating, flying hither and

thither in the universal atmosphere of ether.

You see, I hope, what I mean when I say that the universe of molecular physics is at a different level from the universe of common experience; — what we call stable and solid is in that world a freely moving system of interlacing centres of force, what we call colour and sound is there no more than this length of vibration of that. We have reached to a conception of that universe of molecular physics by a great enterprise of organised analysis, and our universe of daily experiences stands in relation to that elemental world as if it were a synthesis of those elemental things.

I would suggest to you that this is only a very extreme instance of the general state of affairs, that there may be finer and subtler differences of level between one term and another, and that terms may very well be thought of as lying obliquely and as being twisted through different levels.

It will perhaps give a clearer idea of what I am seeking to convey if I suggest a concrete image for the whole world of a man's thought and knowledge. Imagine a large clear jelly, in which at all angles and in all states of simplicity or contortion his ideas are imbedded. They are all valid and possible ideas as they lie, none incompatible with any. If you imagine the direction of up or down in this clear jelly being as it were the direction in which one moves by analysis or synthesis, if you go down for example from matter to atoms and centres of force and up to men and states and countries — if you will imagine the ideas lying in that manner — you will get the beginnings of my intention. But our instrument, our process of thinking, like a drawing before the discovery of perspective, appears to have difficulties with the third dimension, appears capable only of dealing with or reasoning about ideas by projecting them upon the same plane. It will be obvious that a great multitude of things may very well exist together in a solid jelly, which would be overlapping and incompatible and mutually destructive when projected together upon one plane. Through the bias in our instrument to do this, through reasoning between terms not in the same plane, an enormous amount of confusion, perplexity, and mental deadlocking occurs.

The old theological deadlock between predestination and free will serves admirably as an example of the sort of deadlock I mean. Take

life at the level of common sensation and common experience and there is no more indisputable fact than man's freedom of will, unless it is his complete moral responsibility. But make only the least penetrating of scientific analyses and you perceive a world of inevitable consequences, a rigid succession of cause and effect. Insist upon a flat agreement between the two, and there you are! The instrument fails.

So far as this particular opposition is concerned, I shall point out later the reasonableness and convenience of regarding the common-sense belief in free will as truer for one's personal life than determinism.

1.10. PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THESE CONSIDERATIONS.

Now what is the practical outcome of all these criticisms of the human mind? Does it follow that thought is futile and discussion vain? By no means. Rather these considerations lead us toward mutual understanding. They clear up the deadlocks that come from the hard and fast use of terms, they establish mutual charity as an intellectual necessity. The common way of speech and thought which the old system of logic has simply systematized, is too glib and too presumptuous of certainty. We must needs use language, but we must use it always with the thought in our minds of its unreal exactness, its actual habitual deflection from fact. All propositions are approximations to an elusive truth, and we employ them as the mathematician studies the circle by supposing it to be a polygon of a very great number of sides.

We must make use of terms and sometimes of provisional terms. But we must guard against such terms and the mental danger of excessive intension they carry with them. The child takes a stick and says it is a sword and does not forget, he takes a shadow under the bed and says it is a bear and he half forgets. The man takes a set of emotions and says it is a God, and he gets excited and propagandist and does forget; he is involved in disputes and confusions with the old gods of wood and stone, and presently he is making his God a Great White Throne and fitting him up with a mystical family.

Essentially we have to train our minds to think anew, if we are to think beyond the purposes for which the mind seems to have been evolved. We have to disabuse ourselves from the superstition of the binding nature of definitions and the exactness of logic. We have to cure ourselves of the natural tricks of common thought and argument. You know the way of it, how effective and foolish it is; the quotation of the exact statement of which every jot and tittle must be maintained, the challenge to be consistent, the deadlock between your terms and mine.

More and more as I grow older and more settled in my views am I

bored by common argument, bored not because I am ceasing to be interested in the things argued about, but because I see more and more clearly the futility of the methods pursued.

How then are we to think and argue and what truth may we attain? Is not the method of the scientific investigator a valid one, and is there not truth to the world of fact in scientific laws? Decidedly there is. And the continual revision and testing against fact that these laws get is constantly approximating them more and more nearly to a trustworthy statement of fact. Nevertheless they are never true in that dogmatic degree in which they seem true to the unphilosophical student of science. Accepting as I do the validity of nearly all the general propositions of modern science, I have constantly to bear in mind that about them too clings the error of excessive claims to precision.

The man trained solely in science falls easily into a superstitious attitude; he is overdone with classification. He believes in the possibility of exact knowledge everywhere. What is not exact he declares is not knowledge. He believes in specialists and experts in all fields.

I dispute this universal range of possible scientific precision. There is, I allege, a not too clearly recognised order in the sciences which forms the gist of my case against this scientific pretension. There is a gradation in the importance of the individual instance as one passes from mechanics and physics and chemistry through the biological sciences to economics and sociology, a gradation whose correlations and implications have not yet received adequate recognition, and which does profoundly affect the method of study and research in each science.

Let me repeat in slightly altered terms some of the points raised in the preceding sections. I have doubted and denied that there are identically similar objective experiences; I consider all objective beings as individual and unique. It is now understood that conceivably only in the subjective world, and in theory and the imagination, do we deal with identically similar units, and with absolutely commensurable quantities. In the real world it is reasonable to suppose we deal at most with PRACTICALLY similar units and PRACTICALLY commensurable quantities. But there is a

strong bias, a sort of labour-saving bias, in the normal human mind, to ignore this, and not only to speak but to think of a thousand bricks or a thousand sheep or a thousand Chinamen as though they were all absolutely true to sample. If it is brought before a thinker for a moment that in any special case this is not so, he slips back to the old attitude as soon as his attention is withdrawn. This type of error has, for instance, caught many of the race of chemists, and ATOMS and IONS and so forth of the same species are tacitly assumed to be similar to one another.

Be it noted that, so far as the practical results of chemistry and physics go, it scarcely matters which assumption we adopt, the number of units is so great, the individual difference so drowned and lost. For purposes of enquiry and discussion the incorrect one is infinitely more convenient.

But this ceases to be true directly we emerge from the region of chemistry and physics. In the biological sciences of the eighteenth century, common-sense struggled hard to ignore individuality in shells and plants and animals. There was an attempt to eliminate the more conspicuous departures as abnormalities, as sports, nature's weak moments; and it was only with the establishment of Darwin's great generalizations that the hard and fast classificatory system broke down and individuality came to its own. Yet there had always been a clearly felt difference between the conclusions of the biological sciences and those dealing with lifeless substance, in the relative vagueness, the insubordinate looseness and inaccuracy of the former. The naturalist accumulated facts and multiplied names, but he did not go triumphantly from generalization to generalization after the fashion of the chemist or physicist. It is easy to see, therefore, how it came about that the inorganic sciences were regarded as the true scientific bed-rock. It was scarcely suspected that the biological sciences might perhaps after all be TRUER than the experimental, in spite of the difference in practical value in favour of the latter. It was, and is by the great majority of people to this day, supposed to be the latter that are invincibly true; and the former are regarded as a more complex set of problems merely, with obliquities and refractions that presently will be explained away. Comte and Herbert Spencer certainly seem to me to have taken that much for granted. Herbert

Spencer no doubt talked of the unknown and unknowable, but not in this sense as an element of inexactness running through all things. He thought, it seems to me, of the unknown as the indefinable Beyond of an immediate world that might be quite clearly and definitely known.

There is a growing body of people which is beginning to hold the converse view — that counting, classification, measurement, the whole fabric of mathematics, is subjective and untrue to the world of fact, and that the uniqueness of individuals is the objective truth. As the number of units taken diminishes, the amount of variety and inexactness of generalization increases, because individuality tells for more and more. Could you take men by the thousand billion, you could generalize about them as you do about atoms; could you take atoms singly, it may be that you would find them as individual as your aunts and cousins. That concisely is the minority belief, and my belief.

Now what is called the scientific method in the physical sciences rests upon the ignoring of individualities; and like many mathematical conventions, its great practical convenience is no proof whatever of its final truth. Let me admit the enormous value, the wonder of its results in mechanics, in all the physical sciences, in chemistry, even in physiology, — but what is its value beyond that? Is the scientific method of value in biology? The great advances made by Darwin and his school in biology were not made, it must be remembered, by the scientific method, as it is generally conceived, at all. His was historical research. He conducted research into pre-documentary history. He collected information along the lines indicated by certain interrogations; and the bulk of his work was the digesting and critical analysis of that. For documents and monuments he had fossils and anatomical structures and germinating eggs too innocent to lie. But, on the other hand, he had to correspond with breeders and travellers of various sorts; classes entirely analogous, from the point of view of evidence, to the writers of history and memoirs. I question profoundly whether the word "science," in current usage anyhow, ever means such patient disentanglement as Darwin pursued. It means the attainment of something positive and emphatic in the way of a conclusion, based on amply repeated experiments capable of infinite repetition, "proved," as they say, "up

to the hilt."

It would be of course possible to dispute whether the word "science" should convey this quality of certitude, but to most people it certainly does at the present time. So far as the movements of comets and electric trams go, there is no doubt practically cock-sure science; and Comte and Herbert Spencer seem to me to have believed that cock-sure could be extended to every conceivable finite thing. The fact that Herbert Spencer called a certain doctrine Individualism reflects nothing on the non-individualizing quality of his primary assumptions and of his mental texture. He believed that individuality (heterogeneity) was and is an evolutionary product from an original homogeneity, begotten by folding and multiplying and dividing and twisting it, and still fundamentally IT. It seems to me that the general usage is entirely for the limitation of the word "science" to knowledge and the search after knowledge of a high degree of precision. And not simply the general usage; "Science is measurement," Science is "organized commonsense," proud in fact of its essential error, scornful of any metaphysical analysis of its terms.

Now my contention is that we can arrange the fields of human thought and interest about the world of fact in a sort of scale. At one end the number of units is infinite and the methods exact, at the other we have the human subjects in which there is no exactitude. The science of society stands at the extreme end of the scale from the molecular sciences. In these latter there is an infinitude of units; in sociology, as Comte perceived, there is only one unit. It is true that Herbert Spencer, in order to get classification somehow, did, as Professor Durkheim has pointed out, separate human society into societies, and made believe they competed one with another and died and reproduced just like animals, and that economists following List have for the purposes of fiscal controversy discovered economic types; but this is a transparent device, and one is surprised to find thoughtful and reputable writers off their guard against such bad analogy. But indeed it is impossible to isolate complete communities of men, or to trace any but rude general resemblances between group and group. These alleged units have as much individuality as pieces of cloud; they come, they go, they fuse and separate. And we are

forced to conclude that not only is the method of observation, experiment, and verification left far away down the scale, but that the method of classification under types, which has served so useful a purpose in the middle group of subjects, the subjects involving numerous but a finite number of units, has also to be abandoned in social science. We cannot put Humanity into a museum or dry it for examination; our one single still living specimen is all history, all anthropology, and the fluctuating world of men. There is no satisfactory means of dividing it, and nothing else in the real world with which to compare it. We have only the remotest ideas of its "life-cycle" and a few relics of its origin and dreams of its destiny.

This denial of scientific precision is true of all questions of general human relations and attitude. And in regard to all these matters affecting our personal motives, our self-control and our devotions, it is much truer.

From this it is an easy step to the statement that so far as the clear-cut confident sort of knowledge goes, the sort of knowledge one gets from a time-table or a text-book of chemistry, or seeks from a witness in a police court, I am, in relation to religious and moral questions an agnostic. I do not think any general propositions partaking largely of the nature of fact can be known about these things. There is nothing possessing the general validity of fact to be stated or known.

1.11. BELIEFS.

Yet it is of urgent practical necessity that we should have such propositions and beliefs. All those we conjure out of our mental apparatus and the world of fact dissolve and disappear again under scrutiny. It is clear we must resort to some other method for these necessities.

Now I make my beliefs as I want them. I do not attempt to distil them out of fact as physicists distil their laws. I make them thus and not thus exactly as an artist makes a picture so and not so. I believe that is how we all make our beliefs, but that many people do not see this clearly and confuse their beliefs with perceived and proven fact.

I draw my beliefs exactly as an artist draws lines to make a picture, to express my impression of the world and my purpose.

The artist cannot defend his expression as a scientific man defends his, and demonstrate that they are true upon any assumptions whatsoever. Any loud fool may stand in front of a picture and call it inaccurate, untrustworthy, unbeautiful. That last, the most vital issue of all, is the one least assured. Loud fools always do do that sort of thing. Take quite ignorant people before almost any beautiful work of art and they will laugh at it as absurd. If one sits on a popular evening in that long room at South Kensington which contains Raphael's cartoons, one remarks that perhaps a third of those who stray through and look at all those fine efforts, titter. If one searches in the magazines of a little while ago, one finds in the angry and resentful reception of the Pre-Raphaelites another instance of the absolutely indefensible nature of many of the most beautiful propositions. And as a still more striking and remarkable case, take the onslaught made by Ruskin upon the works of Whistler. You will remember that a libel action ensued and that these pictures were gravely reasoned about by barristers and surveyed by jurymen to assess their merits...

In the end it is the indefensible truth that lasts; it lasts because it works and serves. People come to it and remain and attract other understanding and enquiring people.

Now when I say I make my beliefs and that I cannot prove them

to you and convince you of them, that does not mean that I make them wantonly and regardless of fact, that I throw them off as a child scribbles on a slate. Mr. Ruskin, if I remember rightly, accused Whistler of throwing a pot of paint in the face of the public, — that was the essence of his libel. The artistic method in this field of beliefs, as in the field of visual renderings, is one of great freedom and initiative and great poverty of test, but of no wantonness; the conditions of rightness are none the less imperative because they are mysterious and indefinable. I adopt certain beliefs because I feel the need for them, because I feel an often quite unanalyzable rightness in them; because the alternative of a chaotic life distresses me. My belief in them rests upon the fact that they WORK for me and satisfy my desire for harmony and beauty. They are arbitrary assumptions, if you will, that I see fit to impose upon my universe.

But though they are arbitrary, they are not necessarily individual. Just so far as we all have a common likeness, just so far can we be brought under the same imperatives to think and believe.

And though they are arbitrary, each day they stand wear and tear, and each new person they satisfy, is another day and another voice towards showing they do correspond to something that is so far fact and real.

This is Pragmatism as I conceive it; the abandonment of infinite assumptions, the extension of the experimental spirit to all human interests.

1.12. SUMMARY.

In concluding this first Book let me give a summary of the principal points of what has gone before.

I figure the mind of man as an imperfect being obtaining knowledge by imperfect eyesight, imperfect hearing and so forth; who must needs walk manfully and patiently, exercising will and making choices and determining things between the mysteries of external and internal fact.

Essentially man's mind moves within limits depending upon his individual character and experience. These limits constitute what Herbart called his "circle of thought," and they differ for everyone.

That briefly is what I consider to be the case with my own mind, and I believe it is the case with everyone's.

Most minds, it seems to me, are similar, but none are absolutely alike in character or in contents.

We are all biassed to ignore our mental imperfections and to talk and act as though our minds were exact instruments, — something wherewith to scale the heavens with assurance, — and also we are biassed to believe that, except for perversity, all our minds work exactly alike.

Man, thinking man, suffers from intellectual over-confidence and a vain belief in the universal validity of reasoning.

We all need training, training in the balanced attitude.

Of everything we need to say: this is true but it is not quite true.

Of everything we need to say: this is true in relation to things in or near its plane, but not true of other things.

Of everything we have to remember: this may be truer for us than for other people.

In disputation particularly we have to remember this (and most with our antagonist): that the spirit of an utterance may be better than the phrase.

We have to discourage the cheap tricks of controversy, the retort, the search for inconsistency. We have to realize that these things are as foolish and ill-bred and anti-social as shouting in conversation or making puns; and we have to work out habits of thought purged from

the sin of assurance. We have to do this for our own good quite as much as for the sake of intercourse.

All the great and important beliefs by which life is guided and determined are less of the nature of fact than of artistic expression.

BOOK THE SECOND — OF BELIEFS

2.1. MY PRIMARY ACT OF FAITH.

And now having stated my conception of the true relationship between our thoughts and words to facts, having distinguished between the more accurate and frequently verified propositions of science and the more arbitrary and infrequently verified propositions of belief, and made clear the spontaneous and artistic quality that inheres in all our moral and religious generalizations, I may hope to go on to my confession of faith with less misunderstanding.

Now my most comprehensive belief about the external and the internal and myself is that they make one universe in which I and every part are ultimately important. That is quite an arbitrary act of my mind. It is quite possible to maintain that everything is a chaotic assembly, that any part might be destroyed without affecting any other part. I do not choose to argue against that. If you choose to say that, I am no more disposed to argue with you than if you choose to wear a mitre in Fleet Street or drink a bottle of ink, or declare the figure of Ally Sloper more dignified and beautiful than the head of Jove. There is no Q.E.D. that you cannot do so. You can. You will not like to go on with it, I think, and it will not answer, but that is a different matter.

I dismiss the idea that life is chaotic because it leaves my life ineffectual, and I cannot contemplate an ineffectual life patiently. I am by my nature impelled to refuse that. I assert that it is not so. I assert therefore that I am important in a scheme, that we are all important in that scheme, that the wheel-smashed frog in the road and the fly drowning in the milk are important and correlated with me. What the scheme as a whole is I do not know; with my limited mind I cannot know. There I become a Mystic. I use the word scheme because it is the best word available, but I strain it in using it. I do not wish to imply a schemer, but only order and co-ordination as distinguished from haphazard. “All this is important, all this is profoundly significant.” I say it of the universe as a child that has not learnt to read might say it of a parchment agreement. I cannot read the universe, but I can believe that this is so.

And this unfounded and arbitrary declaration of the ultimate

rightness and significance of things I call the Act of Faith. It is my fundamental religious confession. It is a voluntary and deliberate determination to believe, a choice made.

2.2. ON USING THE NAME OF GOD.

You may say if you will that this scheme I talk about, this something that gives importance and correlation and significance, is what is meant by God. You may embark upon a logical wrangle here with me if you have failed to master what I have hitherto said about the meaning of words. If a Scheme, you will say, then there must be a Schemer.

But, I repeat, I am using scheme and importance and significance here only in a spirit of analogy because I can find no better words, and I will not allow myself to be entangled by an insistence upon their implications.

Yet let me confess that I am greatly attracted by such fine phrases as the Will of God, the Hand of God, the Great Commander. These do most wonderfully express aspects of this belief I choose to hold. I think if there had been no gods before, I would call this God. But I feel that there is a great danger in doing this sort of thing unguardedly. Many people would be glad for rather trivial and unworthy reasons that I should confess a faith in God, and few would take offence. But the run of people even nowadays mean something more and something different when they say "God." They intend a personality exterior to them and limited, and they will instantly conclude I mean the same thing. To permit that misconception is, I feel, the first step on the slippery slope of meretricious complaisance, is to become in some small measure a successor of those who cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Occasionally we may best serve the God of Truth by denying him.

Yet at times I admit the sense of personality in the universe is very strong. If I am confessing, I do not see why I should not confess up to the hilt. At times in the silence of the night and in rare lonely moments, I come upon a sort of communion of myself and something great that is not myself. It is perhaps poverty of mind and language obliges me to say that then this universal scheme takes on the effect of a sympathetic person — and my communion a quality of fearless worship. These moments happen, and they are the supreme fact in my religious life to me, they are the crown of my religious

experiences.

None the less, I do not usually speak of God even in regard to these moments, and where I do use that word it must be understood that I use it as a personification of something entirely different in nature from the personality of a human being.

2.3. FREE WILL AND PREDESTINATION.

And now let me return to a point raised in the first Book in Chapter 1.9. Is the whole of this scheme of things settled and done? The whole trend of Science is to that belief. On the scientific plane one is a fatalist, the universe a system of inevitable consequences. But as I show in that section referred to, it is quite possible to accept as true in their several planes both predestination and free will. (I use free will in the sense of self-determinisn and not as it is defined by Professor William James, and predestination as equivalent to the conception of a universe rigid in time and space.) If you ask me, I think I should say I incline to believe in predestination and do quite completely believe in free will. The important belief is free will.

But does the whole universe of fact, the external world about me, the mysterious internal world from which my motives rise, form one rigid and fated system as determinists teach? Do I believe that, had one a mind ideally clear and powerful, the whole universe would seem orderly and absolutely predestined? I incline to that belief. I do not harshly believe it, but I admit its large plausibility — that is all. I see no value whatever in jumping to a decision. One or two Pragmatists, so far as I can understand them, do not hold this view of predestination at all; but as a provisional assumption it underlies most scientific work.

I glance at this question rather to express a detachment than a view.

For me as a person this theory of predestination has no practical value. At the utmost it is an interesting theory like the theory that there is a fourth dimension. There may be a fourth dimension of space, but one gets along quite well by assuming there are just three. It may be knowable the next time I come to cross roads which I shall take. Possibly that knowledge actually exists somewhere. There are those who will tell you that they can get intimations in the matter from packs of cards or the palms of my hands, or see by peering into crystals. Of such beliefs I am entirely free. The fact is I believe that neither I know nor anybody else who is practically concerned knows which I shall take. I hesitate, I choose just as though the thing was

unknowable. For me and my conduct there is that much wide practical margin of freedom.

I am free and freely and responsibly making the future — so far as I am concerned. You others are equally free. On that theory I find my life will work, and on a theory of mechanical predestination nothing works.

I take the former theory therefore for my everyday purposes, and as a matter of fact so does everybody else. I regard myself as a free responsible person among free responsible persons.

2.4. A PICTURE OF THE WORLD OF MEN.

Now I have already given a first picture of the world of fact as it shaped itself upon my mind. Let me now give a second picture of this world in which I find myself, a picture in a rather different key and at a different level, in which I turn to a new set of aspects and bring into the foreground the other minds which are with me in the midst of this great spectacle.

What am I?

Here is a question to which in all ages men have sought to give a clear unambiguous answer, and to which a clear unambiguous answer is manifestly unfitted. Am I my body? Yes or no? It seems to me that I can externalize and think of as "not myself" nearly everything that pertains to my body, hands and feet, and even the most secret and central of those living and hidden parts, the pulsing arteries, the throbbing nerves, the ganglionic centres, that no eye, save for the surgeon's knife has ever seen or ever will see until they coagulate in decay. So far I am not my body; and then as clearly, since I suffer through it, see the whole world through it and am always to be called upon where it is, I am it. Am I a mind mysteriously linked to this thing of matter and endeavour?

So I can present myself. I seem to be a consciousness, vague and insecure, placed between two worlds. One of these worlds seems clearly "not me," the other is more closely identified with me and yet is still imperfectly me. The first I call the exterior world, and it presents itself to me as existing in Time and Space. In a certain way I seem able to interfere with it and control it. The second is the interior world, having no forms in space and only a vague evasive reference to time, from which motives arise and storms of emotion, which acts and reacts constantly and in untraceable way with my conscious mind. And that consciousness itself hangs and drifts about the region where the inner world and the outer world meet, much as a patch of limelight drifts about the stage, illuminating, affecting, following no manifest law except that usually it centres upon the hero, my Ego.

It seems to me that to put the thing much more precisely than this is to depart from the reality of the matter.

But so departing a little, let me borrow a phrase from Herbart and identify myself more particularly with my mental self. It seems to me that I may speak of myself as a circle of thought and experience hung between these two imperfectly understood worlds of the internal and the external and passing imperceptibly into the former. The external world impresses me as being, as a practical fact, common to me and many other creatures similar to myself; the internal, I find similar but not identical with theirs. It is MINE. It seems to me at times no more than something cut off from that external world and put into a sort of pit or cave, much as all the inner mystery of my body, those living, writhing, warm and thrilling organs are isolated, hidden from all eyes and interference so long as I remain alive. And I myself, the essential me, am the light and watcher in the mouth of the cave.

So I think of myself, and so I think of all other human beings, as circles of thought and experience, each a little different from the others. Each human being I see as essentially a circle of thought between an internal and an external world.

I figure these circles of thought as more or less imperfectly focussed pictures, all a little askew and vague as to margins and distances. In the internal world arise motives, and they pass outward through the circle of thought and are modified and directed by it into external acts. And through speech, example, and a hundred various acts, one such circle, one human mind, lights and enlarges and plays upon another. That is the image under which the interrelation of minds presents itself to me.

2.5. THE PROBLEM OF MOTIVES THE REAL PROBLEM OF LIFE.

Now each self among us, for all its fluctuations and vagueness of boundary, is, as I have already pointed out, invincibly persuaded of Free Will. That is to say, it has a persuasion of responsible control over the impulses that teem from the internal world and tend to express themselves in act. The problem of that control and its solution is the reality of life. “What am I to do?” is the perpetual question of our existence. Our metaphysics, our beliefs are all sought as subsidiary to that and have no significance without it.

I confess I find myself a confusion of motives beside which my confusion of perceptions pales into insignificance.

There are many various motives and motives very variously estimated — some are called gross, some sublime, some — such as pride — wicked. I do not readily accept these classifications.

Many people seem to make a selection among their motives without much enquiry, taking those classifications as just; they seek to lead what they call pure lives or useful lives and to set aside whole sets of motives which do not accord with this determination. Some exclude the seeking of pleasure as a permissible motive, some the love of beauty; some insist upon one’s “being oneself” and prohibit or limit responses to exterior opinions. Most of such selections strike me as wanton and hasty. I decline to dismiss any of my motives at all in that wholesale way. Just as I believe I am important in the scheme of things, so I believe are all my motives. Turning one’s back on any set of them seems to me to savour of the headlong actions of stupidity. To suppress a passion or a curiosity for the sake of suppressing a passion is to my mind just the burial of a talent that has been entrusted to one’s care. One has, I feel, to take all these things as weapons and instruments, material in the service of the scheme; one has to take them in the end gravely and do right among them unbiassed in favour of any set. To take some poor appetite and fling it out is to my mind a cheap and unsatisfactory way of simplifying one’s moral problems. One has to accept these things in oneself, I

feel — even if one knows them to be dangerous things, even if one is sure they have an evil side.

Let me, however, in order to express my attitude better, make a rough grouping of the motives I find in myself and the people about me.

2.6. A REVIEW OF MOTIVES.

I cannot divide them into clearly defined classes, but I may perhaps begin with those that bring one into the widest sympathy with living things and go on to those one shares only with highly intelligent and complex human beings.

There come first the desires one shares with those more limited souls the beasts, just as much as one does with one's fellow man. These are the bodily appetites and the crude emotions of fear and resentment. These first clamour for attention and must be assuaged or controlled before the other sets come into play.

Now in this matter of physical appetites I do not know whether to describe myself as a sensualist or an ascetic. If an ascetic is one who suppresses to a minimum all deference to these impulses, then certainly I am not an ascetic; if a sensualist is one who gives himself to heedless gratification, then certainly I am not a sensualist. But I find myself balanced in an intermediate position by something that I will speak of as the sense of Beauty. This sense of Beauty is something in me which demands not simply gratification but the best and keenest of a sense or continuance of sense impressions, and which refuses coarse quantitative assuagements. It ranges all over the senses, and just as I refuse to wholly cut off any of my motives, so do I refuse to limit its use to the plane of the eye or the ear.

It seems to me entirely just to speak of beauty in matters of scent and taste, to talk not only of beautiful skies and beautiful sounds but of beautiful beer and beautiful cheese! The balance as between asceticism and sensuality comes in, it seems to me, if we remember that to drink well one must not have drunken for some time, that to see well one's eye must be clear, that to make love well one must be fit and gracious and sweet and disciplined from top to toe, that the finest sense of all — the joyous sense of bodily well-being — comes only with exercises and restraints and fine living. There I think lies the way of my disposition. I do not want to live in the sensual sty, but I also do not want to scratch in the tub of Diogenes.

But I diverge a little in these comments from my present business of classifying motives.

Next I perceive hypertrophied in myself and many sympathetic human beings a passion that many animals certainly possess, the beautiful and fearless cousin of fear, Curiosity, that seeks keenly for knowing and feeling. Apart from appetites and bodily desires and blind impulses, I want most urgently to know and feel, for the sake of knowing and feeling. I want to go round corners and see what is there, to cross mountain ranges, to open boxes and parcels. Young animals at least have that disposition too. For me it is something that mingles with all my desires. Much more to me than the desire to live is the desire to taste life. I am not happy until I have done and felt things. I want to get as near as I can to the thrill of a dog going into a fight or the delight of a bird in the air. And not simply in the heroic field of war and the air do I want to understand. I want to know something of the jolly wholesome satisfaction that a hungry pig must find in its wash. I want to get the quintessence of that.

I do not think that in this I confess to any unusual temperament. I think that the more closely mentally animated people scrutinize their motives the less is the importance they will attach to mere physical and brute urgencies and the more to curiosity.

Next after curiosity come those desires and motives that one shares perhaps with some social beasts, but far more so as a conscious thing with men alone. These desires and motives all centre on a clearly apprehended "self" in relation to "others"; they are the essentially egotistical group. They are self-assertion in all its forms. I have dealt with motives toward gratification and motives towards experience; this set of motives is for the sake of oneself. Since they are the most acutely conscious motives in unthinking men, there is a tendency on the part of unthinking philosophers to speak of them as though vanity, self-seeking, self-interest were the only motives. But one has but to reflect on what has gone before to realize that this is not so. One finds these "self" motives vary with the mental power and training of the individual; here they are fragmentary and discursive, there drawn tight together into a coherent scheme. Where they are weak they mingle with the animal motives and curiosity like travellers in a busy market-place, but where the sense of self is strong they become rulers and regulators, self-seeking becomes deliberate and sustained in the case of the human being, vanity passes into

pride.

Here again that something in the mind so difficult to define, so easy for all who understand to understand, that something which insists upon a best and keenest, the desire for beauty, comes into the play of motives. Pride demands a beautiful self and would discipline all other passions to its service. It also demands recognition for that beautiful self. Now pride, I know, is denounced by many as the essential quality of sin. We are taught that "self-abnegation" is the substance of virtue and self-forgetfulness the inseparable quality of right conduct. But indeed I cannot so dismiss egotism and that pride which was the first form in which the desire to rule oneself as a whole came to me. Through pride one shapes oneself towards a best, though at first it may be an ill-conceived best. Pride is not always arrogance and aggression. There is that pride that does not ape but learn humility.

And with the human imagination all these elementary instincts, of the flesh, of curiosity, of self-assertion, become only the basal substance of a huge elaborate edifice of secondary motive and intention. We live in a great flood of example and suggestion, our curiosity and our social quality impel us to a thousand imitations, to dramatic attitudes and subtly obscure ends. Our pride turns this way and that as we respond to new notes in the world about us. We are arenas for a conflict between suggestions flung in from all sources, from the most diverse and essentially incompatible sources. We live long hours and days in a kind of dream, negligent of self-interest, our elementary passions in abeyance, among these derivative things.

2.7. THE SYNTHETIC MOTIVE.

Such it seems to me are the chief masses of the complex of motives in us, the group of sense, the group of pride, curiosity and the imitative and suggested motives, making up the system of impulses which is our will. Such has been the common outfit of motives in every age, and in every age its melee has been found insufficient in itself. It is a heterogeneous system, it does not form in any sense a completed or balanced system, its constituents are variable and compete amongst themselves. They are not so much arranged about one another as superposed and higgledy-piggledy. The senses and curiosity war with pride and one another, the motives suggested to us fall into conflict with this element or that of our intimate and habitual selves. We find all our instincts are snares to excess. Excesses of indulgence lead to excesses of abstinence, and even the sense of beauty may be clouded and betray. So to us all, even for the most balanced of us, come disappointments, regrets, gaps; and for most of us who are ill-balanced, miseries and despairs. Nearly all of us want something to hold us together — something to dominate this swarming confusion and save us from the black misery of wounded and exploded pride, of thwarted desire, of futile conclusions. We want more oneness, some steadying thing that will afford an escape from fluctuations.

Different people, of differing temperament and tradition, have sought oneness, this steadying and universalizing thing, in various manners. Some have attained it in this manner, and some in that. Scarcely a religious system has existed that has not worked effectively and proved true for someone. To me it seems that the need is synthetic, that some synthetic idea and belief is needed to harmonize one's life, to give a law by which motive may be tried against motive and an effectual peace of mind achieved. I want an active peace and not a quiescence, and I do not want to suppress and expel any motive at all. But to many people the effort takes the form of attempts to cut off some part of oneself as it were, to repudiate altogether some straining or distressing or disappointing factor in the scheme of motives, and find a tranquillizing refuge in the residuum.

So we have men and women abandoning their share in economic development, crushing the impulses and evading the complications that arise out of sex and flying to devotions and simple duties in nunneries and monasteries; we have people cutting their lives down to a vegetarian dietary and scientific research, resorting to excesses of self-discipline, giving themselves up wholly to some "art" and making everything else subordinate to that, or, going in another direction, abandoning pride and love in favour of an acquired appetite for drugs or drink.

Now it seems to me that this desire to get the confused complex of life simplified is essentially what has been called the religious motive, and that the manner in which a man achieves that simplification, if he does achieve it, and imposes an order upon his life, is his religion. I find in the scheme of conversion and salvation as it is presented by many Christian sects, a very exact statement of the mental processes I am trying to express. In these systems this discontent with the complexity of life upon which religion is based, is called the conviction of sin, and it is the first phase in the process of conversion — of finding salvation. It leads through distress and confusion to illumination, to the act of faith and peace.

And after peace comes the beginning of right conduct. If you believe and you are saved, you will want to behave well, you will do your utmost to behave well and to understand what is behaving well, and you will feel neither shame nor disappointment when after all you fail. You will say then: "so it is failure I had to achieve." And you will not feel bitterly because you seem unsuccessful beside others or because you are misunderstood or unjustly treated, you will not bear malice nor cherish anger nor seek revenge, you will never turn towards suicide as a relief from intolerable things; indeed there will be no intolerable things. You will have peace within you.

But if you do not truly believe and are not saved, you will know it because you will still suffer the conflict of motives; and in regrets, confusions, remorses and discontents, you will suffer the penalties of the unbeliever and the lost. You will know certainly your own salvation.

2.8. THE BEING OF MANKIND.

I will boldly adopt the technicalities of the sects. I will speak as a person with experience and declare that I have been through the distresses of despair and the conviction of sin and that I have found salvation.

I BELIEVE.

I believe in the scheme, in the Project of all things, in the significance of myself and all life, and that my defects and uglinesses and failures, just as much as my powers and successes, are things that are necessary and important and contributory in that scheme, that scheme which passes my understanding — and that no thwarting of my conception, not even the cruelty of nature, now defeats or can defeat my faith, however much it perplexes my mind.

And though I say that scheme passes my understanding, nevertheless I hope you will see no inconsistency when I say that necessarily it has an aspect towards me that I find imperative.

It has an aspect that I can perceive, however dimly and fluctuatingly.

I take it that to perceive this aspect to the utmost of my mental power and to shape my acts according to that perception is my function in the scheme; that if I hold steadfastly to that conception, I am SAVED. I find in that idea of perceiving the scheme as a whole towards me and in this attempt to perceive, that something to which all my other emotions and passions may contribute by gathering and contributing experience, and through which the synthesis of my life becomes possible.

Let me try to convey to you what it is I perceive, what aspect this scheme seems to bear on the whole towards me.

The essential fact in man's history to my sense is the slow unfolding of a sense of community with his kind, of the possibilities of co-operations leading to scarce dreamt-of collective powers, of a synthesis of the species, of the development of a common general idea, a common general purpose out of a present confusion. In that awakening of the species, one's OWN PERSONAL BEING LIVES AND MOVES — A PART OF IT AND CONTRIBUTING TO IT.

ONE'S INDIVIDUAL EXISTENCE IS NOT SO ENTIRELY CUT OFF AS IT SEEMS AT FIRST; ONE'S ENTIRELY SEPARATE INDIVIDUALITY IS ANOTHER, A PROFOUNDER, AMONG THE SUBTLE INHERENT DELUSIONS OF THE HUMAN MIND. Between you and me as we set our minds together, and between us and the rest of mankind, there is SOMETHING, something real, something that rises through us and is neither you nor me, that comprehends us, that is thinking here and using me and you to play against each other in that thinking just as my finger and thumb play against each other as I hold this pen with which I write.

Let me point out that this is no sentimental or mystical statement. It is hard fact as any hard fact we know. We, you and I, are not only parts in a thought process, but parts of one flow of blood and life. Let me put that in a way that may be new to some readers. Let me remind you of what is sometimes told as a jest, the fact that the number of one's ancestors increases as we look back in time. Disregarding the chances of intermarriage, each one of us had two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and so on backward, until very soon, in less than fifty generations, we should find that, but for the qualification introduced, we should have all the earth's inhabitants of that time as our progenitors. For a hundred generations it must hold absolutely true, that everyone of that time who has issue living now is ancestral to all of us. That brings the thing quite within the historical period. There is not a western European palaeolithic or neolithic relic that is not a family relic for every soul alive. The blood in our veins has handled it.

And there is something more. We are all going to mingle our blood again. We cannot keep ourselves apart; the worst enemies will some day come to the Peace of Verona. All the Montagues and Capulets are doomed to intermarry. A time will come in less than fifty generations when all the population of the world will have my blood, and I and my worst enemy will not be able to say which child is his or mine.

But you may retort — perhaps you may die childless. Then all the sooner the whole species will get the little legacy of my personal achievement, whatever it may be.

You see that from this point of view — which is for me the

vividly true and dominating point of view — our individualities, our nations and states and races are but bubbles and clusters of foam upon the great stream of the blood of the species, incidental experiments in the growing knowledge and consciousness of the race.

I think this real solidarity of humanity is a fact that is only slowly being apprehended, that it is an idea that we who have come to realize it have to assist in thinking into the collective mind. I believe the species is still as a whole unawakened, still sunken in the delusion of the permanent separateness of the individual and of races and nations, that so it turns upon itself and frets against itself and fails to see the stupendous possibilities of deliberate self-development that lie open to it now.

I see myself in life as part of a great physical being that strains and I believe grows towards beauty, and of a great mental being that strains and I believe grows towards knowledge and power. In this persuasion that I am a gatherer of experience, a mere tentacle that arranges thought beside thought for this being of the species, this being that grows beautiful and powerful, in this persuasion I find the ruling idea of which I stand in need, the ruling idea that reconciles and adjudicates among my warring motives. In it I find both concentration of myself and escape from myself; in a word, I find Salvation.

2.9. INDIVIDUALITY AN INTERLUDE.

I would like in a parenthetical section to expand and render rather more concrete this idea of the species as one divaricating flow of blood, by an appeal to its arithmetical aspect. I do not know if it has ever occurred to the reader to compute the number of his living ancestors at some definite date, at, let us say, the year one of the Christian era. Everyone has two parents and four grandparents, most people have eight great-grandparents, and if we ignore the possibility of intermarriage we shall go on to a fresh power of two with every generation, thus: —

Column 1: Number of generations.
Column 2: Number of ancestors.

3:	8
4:	16
5:	32
7:	128
10:	1,024
20:	126,976
30:	15,745,024
40:	1,956,282,976

I do not know whether the average age of the parent at the birth of a child under modern conditions can be determined from existing figures. There is, I should think, a strong presumption that it has been a rising age. There may have been a time in the past when most women were mothers in their early teens and bore most or all of their children before thirty, and when men had done the greater part of their procreation before thirty-five; this is still the case in many tropical climates, and I do not think I favour my case unduly by assuming that the average parent must be about, or even less than, five and twenty. This gives four generations to a century. At that rate and DISREGARDING INTERMARRIAGE OF RELATIONS the ancestors living a thousand years ago needed to account for a living person would be double the estimated population of the world. But it is obvious that if a person sprang from a marriage of first cousins, the eight ancestors of the third generation are cut down to six; if of

cousins at the next stage, to fourteen in the fourth. And every time that a common pair of ancestors appears in any generation, the number of ancestors in that generation must be reduced by two from our original figures, or if it is only one common ancestor, by one, and as we go back that reduction will have to be doubled, quadrupled and so on. I daresay that by the time anyone gets to the 8916 names of his Elizabethan ancestors he will find quite a large number repeated over and over again in the list and that he is cut down to perhaps two or three thousand separate persons. But this does not effectually invalidate my assumption that if we go back only to the closing years of the Roman Republic, we go back to an age in which nearly every person living within the confines of what was then the Roman Empire who left living offspring must have been ancestral to every person living within that area to-day. No doubt they were so in very variable measure. There must be for everyone some few individuals in that period who have so to speak intermarried with themselves again and again and again down the genealogical series, and others who are represented by just one touch of their blood. The blood of the Jews, for example, has turned in upon itself again and again; but for all we know one Italian proselyte in the first year of the Christian era may have made by this time every Jew alive a descendant of some unrecorded bastard of Julius Caesar. The exclusive breeding of the Jews is in fact the most effectual guarantee that whatever does get into the charmed circle through either proselytism, the violence of enemies, or feminine unchastity, must ultimately pervade it universally.

It may be argued that as a matter of fact humanity has until recently been segregated in pools; that in the great civilization of China, for example, humanity has pursued its own interlacing system of inheritances without admixture from other streams of blood. But such considerations only defer the conclusion; they do not stave it off indefinitely. It needs only that one philoprogenitive Chinaman should have wandered into those regions that are now Russia, about the time of Pericles, to link east and west in that matter; one Tartar chieftain in the Steppes may have given a daughter to a Roman soldier and sent his grandsons east and west to interlace the branches of every family tree in the world. If any race stands apart it is such an isolated

group as that of the now extinct Tasmanian primitives or the Australian black. But even here, in the remote dawn of navigation, may have come some shipwrecked Malays, or some half-breed woman kidnapped by wandering Phoenicians have carried this link of blood back to the western world. The more one lets one's imagination play upon the incalculable drift and soak of population, the more one realizes the true value of that spreading relation with the past.

But now let us turn in the other direction, the direction of the future, because there it is that this series of considerations becomes most edifying. It is the commonest trick to think of a man's descendants as though they were his own. We are told that one of the dearest human motives is the desire to found a family, but think how much of a family one founds at the best. One's son is after all only half one's blood, one grandson only a quarter, and so one goes on until it may be that in ten brief generations one's heir and namesake has but 1/1024th of one's inherited self. Those other thousand odd unpredictable people thrust in and mingle with one's pride. The trend of all things nowadays — the ever-increasing ease of communication, the great and increasing drift of population, the establishment of a common standard of civilization — is to render such admixture far more probable and facile in the future than in the past.

It is a pleasant fancy to imagine some ambitious hoarder of wealth, some egotistical founder of name and family, returning to find his descendants — HIS descendants — after the lapse of a few brief generations. His heir and namesake may have not a thousandth part of his heredity, while under some other name, lost to all the tradition and glory of him, enfeebled and degenerate through much intermarriage, may be a multitude of people who have as much as a fiftieth or even more of his quality. They may even be in servitude and dependence to the really alien person who is head of the family. Our founder will go through the spreading record of offspring and find it mixed with that of people he most hated and despised. The antagonists he wronged and overcame will have crept into his line and recaptured all they lost; have played the cuckoo in his blood and acquisitions, and turned out his diluted strain to perish.

And while I am being thus biological let me point out another queer aspect in which our egotism is overridden by physical facts. Men and women are apt to think of their children as being their very own, blood of their blood and bone of their bone. But indeed one of the most striking facts in this matter is the frequent want of resemblance between parents and children. It is one of the commonest things in the world for a child to resemble an aunt or an uncle, or to revive a trait of some grandparent that has seemed entirely lost in the intervening generation. The Mendelians have given much attention to facts of this nature; and though their general method of exposition seems to me quite unjustifiably exact and precise, it cannot be denied that it is often vividly illuminating. It is so in this connexion. They distinguish between "dominant" and "recessive" qualities, and they establish cases in which parents with all the dominant characteristics produce offspring of recessive type. Recessive qualities are constantly being masked by dominant ones and emerging again in the next generation. It is not the individual that reproduces himself, it is the species that reproduces through the individual and often in spite of his characteristics.

The race flows through us, the race is the drama and we are the incidents. This is not any sort of poetical statement; it is a statement of fact. In so far as we are individuals, in so far as we seek to follow merely individual ends, we are accidental, disconnected, without significance, the sport of chance. In so far as we realize ourselves as experiments of the species for the species, just in so far do we escape from the accidental and the chaotic. We are episodes in an experience greater than ourselves.

Now none of this, if you read me aright, makes for the suppression of one's individual difference, but it does make for its correlation. We have to get everything we can out of ourselves for this very reason that we do not stand alone; we signify as parts of a universal and immortal development. Our separate selves are our charges, the talents of which much has to be made. It is because we are episodical in the great synthesis of life that we have to make the utmost of our individual lives and traits and possibilities.

2.10. THE MYSTIC ELEMENT.

What stupendous constructive mental and physical possibilities are there to which I feel I am contributing, you may ask, when I feel that I contribute to this greater Being; and at once I confess I become vague and mystical. I do not wish to pass glibly over this point. I call your attention to the fact that here I am mystical and arbitrary. I am what I am, an individual in this present phase. I can see nothing of these possibilities except that they will be in the nature of those indefinable and overpowering gleams of promise in our world that we call Beauty. Elsewhere (in my "Food of the Gods") I have tried to render my sense of our human possibility by monstrous images; I have written of those who will "stand on this earth as on a footstool and reach out their hands among the stars." But that is mere rhetoric at best, a straining image of unimaginable things. Things move to Power and Beauty; I say that much and I have said all that I can say.

But what is Beauty, you ask, and what will Power do? And here I reach my utmost point in the direction of what you are free to call the rhapsodical and the incomprehensible. I will not even attempt to define Beauty. I will not because I cannot. To me it is a final, quite indefinable thing. Either you understand it or you do not. Every true artist and many who are not artists know — they know there is something that shows suddenly — it may be in music, it may be in painting, it may be in the sunlight on a glacier or a shadow cast by a furnace or the scent of a flower, it may be in the person or act of some fellow creature, but it is right, it is commanding, it is, to use theological language, the revelation of God.

To the mystery of Power and Beauty, out of the earth that mothered us, we move.

I do not attempt to define Beauty nor even to distinguish it from Power. I do not think indeed that one can effectually distinguish these aspects of life. I do not know how far Beauty may not be simply fulness and clearness of sensation, a momentary unveiling of things hitherto seen but dully and darkly. As I have already said, there may be beauty in the feeling of beer in the throat, in the taste of cheese in the mouth; there may be beauty in the scent of the earth, in

the warmth of a body, in the sensation of waking from sleep. I use the word Beauty therefore in its widest possible sense, ranging far beyond the special beauties that art discovers and develops. Perhaps as we pass from death to life all things become beautiful. The utmost I can do in conveying what I mean by Beauty is to tell of things that I have perceived to be beautiful as beautifully as I can tell of them. It may be, as I suggest elsewhere, that Beauty is a thing synthetic and not simple; it is a common effect produced by a great medley of causes, a larger aspect of harmony.

But the question of what Beauty is does not very greatly concern me since I have known it when I met it and since almost every day in life I seem to apprehend it more and to find it more sufficient and satisfying. Objectively it may be altogether complex and various and synthetic, subjectively it is altogether simple. All analysis, all definition, must in the end rest upon and arrive at unanalyzable and indefinable things. Beauty is light — I fall back upon that image — it is all things that light can be, beacon, elucidation, pleasure, comfort and consolation, promise, warning, the vision of reality.

2.11. THE SYNTHESIS.

It seems to me that the whole living creation may be regarded as walking in its sleep, as walking in the sleep of instinct and individualized illusion, and that now out of it all rises man, beginning to perceive his larger self, his universal brotherhood and a collective synthetic purpose to increase Power and realize Beauty...

I write this down. It is the form of my belief, and that unanalyzable something called Beauty is the light that falls upon that form.

It is only by such images, it is only by the use of what are practically parables, that I can in any way express these things in my mind. These two things, I say, are the two aspects of my belief; one is the form and the other the light. The former places me as it were in a scheme, the latter illuminates and inspires me. I am a member in that great being, and my function is, I take it, to develop my capacity for beauty and convey the perception of it to my fellows, to gather and store experience and increase the racial consciousness. I hazard no whys nor wherefores. That is how I see things; that is how the universe, in response to my demand for a synthesizing aspect, presents itself to me.

2.12. OF PERSONAL IMMORTALITY.

These are my beliefs. They begin with arbitrary assumptions; they end in a mystery.

So do all beliefs that are not grossly utilitarian and material, promising houris and deathless appetite or endless hunting or a cosmic mortgage. The Peace of God passeth understanding, the Kingdom of Heaven within us and without can be presented only by parables. But the unapproachable distance and vagueness of these things makes them none the less necessary, just as a cloud upon a mountain or sunlight remotely seen upon the sea are as real as, and to many people far more necessary than, pork chops. The driven swine may root and take no heed, but man the dreamer drives. And because these things are vague and impalpable and wilfully attained, it is none the less important that they should be rendered with all the truth of one's being. To be atmospherically vague is one thing; to be haphazard, wanton and untruthful, quite another.

But here I may give a specific answer to a question that many find profoundly important, though indeed it is already implicitly answered in what has gone before.

I do not believe I have any personal immortality. I am part of an immortality perhaps; but that is different. I am not the continuing thing. I personally am experimental, incidental. I feel I have to do something, a number of things no one else could do, and then I am finished and finished altogether. Then my substance returns to the common lot. I am a temporary enclosure for a temporary purpose; that served, and my skull and teeth, my idiosyncracy and desire, will disperse, I believe, like the timbers of a booth after a fair.

Let me shift my ground a little and ask you to consider what is involved in the opposite belief.

My idea of the unknown scheme is of something so wide and deep that I cannot conceive it encumbered by my egotism perpetually. I shall serve my purpose and pass under the wheel and end. That distresses me not at all. Immortality would distress and perplex me. If I may put this in a mixture of theological and social language, I cannot respect, I cannot believe in a God who is always

going about with me.

But this is after all what I feel is true and what I choose to believe. It is not a matter of fact. So far as that goes there is no evidence that I am immortal and none that I am not.

I may be altogether wrong in my beliefs; I may be misled by the appearances of things. I believe in the great and growing Being of the Species from which I rise, to which I return, and which, it may be, will ultimately even transcend the limitation of the Species and grow into the Conscious Being, the eternally conscious Being of all things. Believing that, I cannot also believe that my peculiar little thread will not undergo synthesis and vanish as a separate thing.

And what after all is my distinctive something, a few capacities, a few incapacities, an uncertain memory, a hesitating presence? It matters no doubt in its place and time, as all things matter in their place and time, but where in it all is the eternally indispensable? The great things of my life, love, faith, the intimation of beauty, the things most savouring of immortality, are the things most general, the things most shared and least distinctively me.

2.13. A CRITICISM OF CHRISTIANITY.

And here perhaps, before I go on to the question of Conduct, is the place to define a relationship to that system of faith and religious observance out of which I and most of my readers have come. How do these beliefs on which I base my rule of conduct stand to Christianity?

They do not stand in any attitude of antagonism. A religious system so many-faced and so enduring as Christianity must necessarily be saturated with truth even if it be not wholly true. To assume, as the Atheist and Deist seem to do, that Christianity is a sort of disease that came upon civilization, an unprofitable and wasting disease, is to deny that conception of a progressive scheme and rightness which we have taken as our basis of belief. As I have already confessed, the Scheme of Salvation, the idea of a process of sorrow and atonement, presents itself to me as adequately true. So far I do not think my new faith breaks with my old. But it follows as a natural consequence of my metaphysical preliminaries that I should find the Christian theology Aristotelian, over defined and excessively personified. The painted figure of that bearded ancient upon the Sistine Chapel, or William Blake's wild-haired, wild-eyed Trinity, convey no nearer sense of God to me than some mother-of-pearl-eyed painted and carven monster from the worship of the South Sea Islanders. And the Miltonic fable of the offended creator and the sacrificial son! it cannot span the circle of my ideas; it is a little thing, and none the less little because it is intimate, flesh of my flesh and spirit of my spirit, like the drawings of my youngest boy. I put it aside as I would put aside the gay figure of a costumed officiating priest. The passage of time has made his canonicals too strange, too unlike my world of common thought and costume. These things helped, but now they hinder and disturb. I cannot bring myself back to them...

But the psychological experience and the theology of Christianity are only a ground-work for its essential feature, which is the conception of a relationship of the individual believer to a mystical being at once human and divine, the Risen Christ. This being

presents itself to the modern consciousness as a familiar and beautiful figure, associated with a series of sayings and incidents that coalesce with a very distinct and rounded-off and complete effect of personality. After we have cleared off all the definitions of theology, He remains, mystically suffering for humanity, mystically asserting that love in pain and sacrifice in service are the necessary substance of Salvation. Whether he actually existed as a finite individual person in the opening of the Christian era seems to me a question entirely beside the mark. The evidence at this distance is of imperceptible force for or against. The Christ we know is quite evidently something different from any finite person, a figure, a conception, a synthesis of emotions, experiences and inspirations, sustained by and sustaining millions of human souls.

Now it seems to be the common teaching of almost all Christians, that Salvation, that is to say the consolidation and amplification of one's motives through the conception of a general scheme or purpose, is to be attained through the personality of Christ. Christ is made cardinal to the act of Faith. The act of Faith, they assert, is not simply, as I hold it to be, BELIEF, but BELIEF IN HIM.

We are dealing here, be it remembered, with beliefs deliberately undertaken and not with questions of fact. The only matters of fact material here are facts of experience. If in your experience Salvation is attainable through Christ, then certainly Christianity is true for you. And if a Christian asserts that my belief is a false light and that presently I shall "come to Christ," I cannot disprove his assertion. I can but disbelieve it. I hesitate even to make the obvious retort.

I hope I shall offend no susceptibilities when I assert that this great and very definite personality in the hearts and imaginations of mankind does not and never has attracted me. It is a fact I record about myself without aggression or regret. I do not find myself able to associate Him in any way with the emotion of Salvation.

I admit the splendid imaginative appeal in the idea of a divine-human friend and mediator. If it were possible to have access by prayer, by meditation, by urgent outcries of the soul, to such a being whose feet were in the darknesses, who stooped down from the light, who was at once great and little, limitless in power and virtue and one's very brother; if it were possible by sheer will in believing to

make and make one's way to such a helper, who would refuse such help? But I do not find such a being in Christ. I do not find, I cannot imagine, such a being. I wish I could. To me the Christian Christ seems not so much a humanized God as an incomprehensibly sinless being neither God nor man. His sinlessness wears his incarnation like a fancy dress, all his white self unchanged. He had no petty weaknesses.

Now the essential trouble of my life is its petty weaknesses. If I am to have that love, that sense of understanding fellowship, which is, I conceive, the peculiar magic and merit of this idea of a personal Saviour, then I need someone quite other than this image of virtue, this terrible and incomprehensible Galilean with his crown of thorns, his blood-stained hands and feet. I cannot love him any more than I can love a man upon the rack. Even in the face of torments I do not think I should feel a need for him. I had rather then a hundred times have Botticelli's armed angel in his Tobit at Florence. (I hope I do not seem to want to shock in writing these things, but indeed my only aim is to lay my feelings bare.) I know what love for an idealized person can be. It happens that in my younger days I found a character in the history of literature who had a singular and extraordinary charm for me, of whom the thought was tender and comforting, who indeed helped me through shames and humiliations as though he held my hand. This person was Oliver Goldsmith. His blunders and troubles, his vices and vanities, seized and still hold my imagination. The slights of Boswell, the contempt of Gibbon and all his company save Johnson, the exquisite fineness of spirit in his "Vicar of Wakefield," and that green suit of his and the doctor's cane and the love despised, these things together made him a congenial saint and hero for me, so that I thought of him as others pray. When I think of that youthful feeling for Goldsmith, I know what I need in a personal Saviour, as a troglodyte who has seen a candle can imagine the sun. But the Christian Christ in none of his three characteristic phases, neither as the magic babe (from whom I am cut off by the wanton and indecent purity of the Immaculate Conception), nor as the white-robed, spotless miracle worker, nor as the fierce unreal torment of the cross, comes close to my soul. I do not understand the Agony in the Garden; to me it is like a scene from a play in an unknown tongue.

The la t cry of despair is the one human touch, discordant with all the rest of the story. One cry of despair does not suffice. The Christian's Christ is too fine for me, not incarnate enough, not flesh enough, not earth enough. He was never foolish and hot-eared and inarticulate, never vain, he never forgot things, nor tangled his miracles. I could love him I think more easily if the dead had not risen and if he had lain in peace in his sepulchre instead of coming back more enhaloed and whiter than ever, as a postscript to his own tragedy.

When I think of the Resurrection I am always reminded of the "happy endings" that editors and actor managers are accustomed to impose upon essentially tragic novels and plays...

You see how I stand in this matter, puzzled and confused by the Christian presentation of Christ. I know there are many will answer — as I suppose my friend the Rev. R.J. Campbell would answer — that what confuses me is the overlaying of the personality of Jesus by stories and superstitions and conflicting symbols; he will in effect ask me to disentangle the Christ I need from the accumulated material, choosing and rejecting. Perhaps one may do that. He does, I know, so present Him as a man inspired, and strenuously, inadequately and erringly presenting a dream of human brotherhood and the immediate Kingdom of Heaven on earth and so blundering to his failure and death. But that will be a recovered and restored person he would give me, and not the Christ the Christians worship and declare they love, in whom they find their Salvation.

When I write "declare they love" I throw doubt intentionally upon the universal love of Christians for their Saviour. I have watched men and nations in this matter. I am struck by the fact that so many Christians fall back upon more humanized figures, upon the tender figure of Mary, upon patron saints and such more erring creatures, for the effect of mediation and sympathy they need.

You see it comes to this: that I think Christianity has been true and is for countless people practically true, but that it is not true now for me, and that for most people it is true only with modifications. Every believing Christian is, I am sure, my spiritual brother, but if systematically I called myself a Christian I feel that to most men I should imply too much and so tell a lie.

2.14. OF OTHER RELIGIONS.

In the same manner, in varying degree, I hold all religions to be in a measure true. Least comprehensible to me are the Indian formulae, because they seem to stand not on common experience but on those intellectual assumptions my metaphysical analysis destroys. Transmigration of souls without a continuing memory is to my mind utter foolishness, the imagining of a race of children. The aggression, discipline and submission of Mahommedanism makes, I think, an intellectually limited but fine and honourable religion — for men. Its spirit if not its formulae is abundantly present in our modern world. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, for example, manifestly preaches a Mahommedan God, a modernised God with a taste for engineering. I have no doubt that in devotion to a virile, almost national Deity and to the service of His Empire of stern Law and Order, efficiently upheld, men have found and will find Salvation.

All these religions are true for me as Canterbury Cathedral is a true thing and as a Swiss chalet is a true thing. There they are, and they have served a purpose, they have worked. Men and women have lived in and by them. Men and women still do. Only they are not true for me to live in them. I have, I believe, to live in a new edifice of my own discovery. They do not work for me.

These schemes are true, and also these schemes are false! in the sense that new things, new phrasings, have to replace them.

2.15.

Such are the essential beliefs by which I express myself. But now comes the practical outcome of these things, and that is to discuss and show how upon this metaphysical basis and these beliefs, and in obedience to the ruling motive that arises with them, I frame principles of conduct.

BOOK THE THIRD — OF GENERAL CONDUCT

3.1. CONDUCT FOLLOWS FROM BELIEF.

I hold that the broad direction of conduct follows necessarily from belief. The believer does not require rewards and punishments to direct him to the right. Motive and idea are not so separable. To believe truly is to want to do right. To get salvation is to be unified by a comprehending idea of a purpose and by a ruling motive.

The believer wants to do right, he naturally and necessarily seeks to do right. If he fails to do right, if he finds he has done wrong instead of right, he is not greatly distressed or terrified, he naturally and cheerfully does his best to correct his error. He can be damned only by the fading and loss of his belief. And naturally he recurs to and refreshes his belief.

I write in phrases that the evangelical Christianity of my childhood made familiar to me, because they are the most expressive phrases I have ever met for the psychological facts with which I am dealing.

But faith, though it banishes fear and despair and brings with it a real prevailing desire to know and do the Good, does not in itself determine what is the Good or supply any simple guide to the choice between alternatives. If it did, there would be nothing more to be said, this book upon conduct would be unnecessary.

3.2. WHAT IS GOOD?

It seems to me one of the heedless errors of those who deal in philosophy, to suppose all things that have simple names or unified effects are in their nature simple and may be discovered and isolated as a sort of essence by analysis. It is natural to suppose — and I think it is also quite wrong to suppose — that such things as Good and Beauty can be abstracted from good and beautiful things and considered alone. But pure Good and pure Beauty are to me empty terms. It seems to me that these are in their nature synthetic things, that they arise out of the coming together of contributory things and conditions, and vanish at their dispersal; they are synthetic just as more obviously Harmony is synthetic. It is consequently not possible to give a definition of Good, just as it is not possible to give a definition of that other something which is so closely akin to it, Beauty. Nor is it to be maintained that what is good for one is good for another. But what is good of one's general relations and what is right in action must be determined by the nature of one's beliefs about the purpose in things. I have set down my broad impression of that purpose in respect to me, as the awakening and development of the consciousness and will of our species, and I have confessed my belief that in subordinating myself and all my motives to that idea lies my Salvation. It follows from that, that the good life is the life that most richly gathers and winnows and prepares experience and renders it available for the race, that contributes most effectively to the collective growth.

This is in general terms my idea of Good. So soon as one passes from general terms to the question of individual good, one encounters individuality; for everyone in the differing quality and measure of their personality and powers and possibilities, good and right must be different. We are all engaged, each contributing from his or her own standpoint, in the collective synthesis; whatever one can best do, one must do that; in whatever manner one can best help the synthesis, one must exert oneself; the setting apart of oneself, secrecy, the service of secret and personal ends, is the waste of life and the essential quality of Sin.

That is the general expression for right living as I conceive it.

3.3. SOCIALISM.

In the study of what is Good, it is very convenient to make a rough division of our subject into general and particular. There are first the interests and problems that affect us all collectively, in which we have a common concern and from which no one may legitimately seek exemption; of these interests and problems we may fairly say every man should do so and so, or so and so, or the law should be so and so, or so and so; and secondly there are those other problems in which individual difference and the interplay of one or two individualities is predominant. This is of course no hard and fast classification, but it gives a method of approach. We can begin with the generalized person in ourselves and end with individuality.

In the world of ideas about me, I have found going on a great social and political movement that correlates itself with my conception of a great synthesis of human purpose as the aspect towards us of the universal scheme. This movement is Socialism. Socialism is to me no clear-cut system of theories and dogmas; it is one of those solid and extensive and synthetic ideas that are better indicated by a number of different formulae than by one, just as one only realizes a statue by walking round it and seeing it from a number of points of view. I do not think it is to be completely expressed by any one system of formulae or by any one man. Its common quality from nearly every point of view is the subordination of the will of the self-seeking individual to the idea of a racial well-being embodied in an organized state, organized for every end that can be obtained collectively. Upon that I seize; that is the value of Socialism for me.

Socialism for me is a common step we are all taking in the great synthesis of human purpose. It is the organization, in regard to a great mass of common and fundamental interests that have hitherto been dispersedly served, of a collective purpose.

I see humanity scattered over the world, dispersed, conflicting, unawakened... I see human life as avoidable waste and curable confusion. I see peasants living in wretched huts knee-deep in manure, mere parasites on their own pigs and cows; I see shy hunters

wandering in primaeval forests; I see the grimy millions who slave for industrial production; I see some who are extravagant and yet contemptible creatures of luxury, and some leading lives of shame and indignity; tens of thousands of wealthy people wasting lives in vulgar and unsatisfying trivialities, hundreds of thousands meanly chaffering themselves, rich or poor, in the wasteful byways of trade; I see gamblers, fools, brutes, toilers, martyrs. Their disorder of effort, the spectacle of futility, fills me with a passionate desire to end waste, to create order, to develop understanding... All these people reflect and are part of the waste and discontent of my life, and this co-ordination of the species to a common general end, and the quest for my personal salvation, are the social and the individual aspect of essentially the same desire...

And yet dispersed as all these people are, they are far more closely drawn together to common ends and common effort than the filthy savages who ate food rotten and uncooked in the age of unpolished stone. They live in the mere opening phase of a synthesis of effort the end of which surpasses our imagination. Such intercourse and community as they have is only a dawn. We look towards the day, the day of the organized civilized world state. The first clear intimation of that conscious synthesis of human thought to which I look, the first edge of the dayspring, has arisen — as Socialism, as I conceive of Socialism. Socialism is to me no more and no less than the awakening of a collective consciousness in humanity, a collective will and a collective mind out of which finer individualities may arise forever in a perpetual series of fresh endeavours and fresh achievements for the race.

3.4. A CRITICISM OF CERTAIN FORMS OF SOCIALISM.

It is necessary to point out that a Socialism arising in this way out of the conception of a synthesis of the will and thought of the species will necessarily differ from conceptions of Socialism arrived at in other and different ways. It is based on a self-discontent and self-abnegation and not on self-satisfaction, and it will be a scheme of persistent thought and construction, essentially, and it will support this or that method of law-making, or this or that method of economic exploitation, or this or that matter of social grouping, only incidentally and in relation to that.

Such a conception of Socialism is very remote in spirit, however it may agree in method, from that philanthropic administrative socialism one finds among the British ruling and administrative class. That seems to me to be based on a pity which is largely unjustifiable and a pride that is altogether unintelligent. The pity is for the obvious wants and distresses of poverty, the pride appears in the arrogant and aggressive conception of raising one's fellows. I have no strong feeling for the horrors and discomforts of poverty as such, sensibilities can be hardened to endure the life led by the "Romans" in Dartmoor jail a hundred years ago (See "The Story of Dartmoor Prison" by Basil Thomson (Heinemann — 1907).), or softened to detect the crumpled rose-leaf; what disgusts me is the stupidity and warring purposes of which poverty is the outcome. When it comes to the idea of raising human beings, I must confess the only person I feel concerned about raising is H.G. Wells, and that even in his case my energies might be better employed. After all, presently he must die and the world will have done with him. His output for the species is more important than his individual elevation.

Moreover, all this talk of raising implies a classification I doubt. I find it hard to fix any standards that will determine who is above me and who below. Most people are different from me I perceive, but which among them is better, which worse? I have a certain power of communicating with other minds, but what experiences I

communicate seem often far thinner and poorer stuff than those which others less expressive than I half fail to communicate and half display to me. My "inferiors," judged by the common social standards, seem indeed intellectually more limited than I and with a narrower outlook; they are often dirtier and more driven, more under the stress of hunger and animal appetites; but on the other hand have they not more vigorous sensations than I, and through sheer coarsening and hardening of fibre, the power to do more toilsome things and sustain intenser sensations than I could endure? When I sit upon the bench, a respectable magistrate, and commit some battered reprobate for trial for this lurid offence or that, or send him or her to prison for drunkenness or such-like indecorum, the doubt drifts into my mind which of us after all is indeed getting nearest to the keen edge of life. Are I and my respectable colleagues much more than successful evasions of THAT? Perhaps these people in the dock know more of the essential strains and stresses of nature, are more intimate with pain. At any rate I do not think I am justified in saying certainly that they do not know...

No, I do not want to raise people using my own position as a standard, I do not want to be one of a gang of consciously superior people, I do not want arrogantly to change the quality of other lives. I do not want to interfere with other lives, except incidentally — incidentally, in this way that I do want to get to an understanding with them, I do want to share and feel with them in our commerce with the collective mind. I suppose I do not stretch language very much when I say I want to get rid of stresses and obstacles between our minds and personalities and to establish a relation that is understanding and sympathy.

I want to make more generally possible a relationship of communication and interchange, that for want of a less battered and ambiguous word I must needs call love.

And if I disavow the Socialism of condescension, so also do I disavow the Socialism of revolt. There is a form of Socialism based upon the economic generalizations of Marx, an economic fatalistic Socialism that I hold to be rather wrong in its vision of facts, rather more distinctly wrong in its theory, and altogether wrong and hopeless in its spirit. It preaches, as inevitable, a concentration of

property in the hands of a limited number of property owners and the expropriation of the great proletarian mass of mankind, a concentration which is after all no more than a tendency conditional on changing and changeable conventions about property, and it finds its hope of a better future in the outcome of a class conflict between the expropriated Many and the expropriating Few. Both sides are to be equally swayed by self-interest, but the toilers are to be gregarious and mutually loyal in their self-interest — Heaven knows why, except that otherwise the Marxist dream will not work. The experience of contemporary events seems to show at least an equal power of combination for material ends among owners and employers as among workers.

Now this class-war idea is one diametrically opposed to that religious-spirited Socialism which supplies the form of my general activities. This class-war idea would exacerbate the antagonism of the interests of the many individuals against the few individuals, and I would oppose the conceiving of the Whole to the self-seeking of the Individual. The spirit and constructive intention of the many to-day are no better than those of the few, poor and rich alike are over-individualized, self-seeking and non-creative; to organize the confused jostling competitions, over-reachings, envies and hatreds of to-day into two great class-hatreds and antagonisms will advance the reign of love at most only a very little, only so far as it will simplify and make plain certain issues. It may very possibly not advance the reign of love at all, but rather shatter the order we have. Socialism, as I conceive it, and as I have presented it in my book, "New Worlds for Old," seeks to change economic arrangements only by the way, as an aspect and outcome of a great change, a change in the spirit and method of human intercourse.

I know that here I go beyond the limits many Socialists in the past, and some who are still contemporary, have set themselves. Much Socialism to-day seems to think of itself as fighting a battle against poverty and its concomitants alone. Now poverty is only a symptom of a profounder evil and is never to be cured by itself. It is one aspect of divided and dispersed purposes. If Socialism is only a conflict with poverty, Socialism is nothing. But I hold that Socialism is and must be a battle against human stupidity and egotism and

disorder, a battle fought all through the forests and jungles of the soul of man. As we get intellectual and moral light and the realization of brotherhood, so social and economic organization will develop. But the Socialist may attack poverty for ever, disregarding the intellectual and moral factors that necessitate it, and he will remain until the end a purely economic doctrinaire crying in the wilderness in vain.

And if I antagonize myself in this way to the philanthropic Socialism of kindly prosperous people on the one hand and to the fierce class-hatred Socialism on the other, still more am I opposed to that furtive Socialism of the specialist which one meets most typically in the Fabian Society. It arises very naturally out of what I may perhaps call specialist fatigue and impatience. It is very easy for writers like myself to deal in the broad generalities of Socialism and urge their adoption as general principles; it is altogether another affair with a man who sets himself to work out the riddle of the complications of actuality in order to modify them in the direction of Socialism. He finds himself in a jungle of difficulties that strain his intellectual power to the utmost. He emerges at last with conclusions, and they are rarely the obvious conclusions, as to what needs to be done. Even the people of his own side he finds do not see as he sees; they are, he perceives, crude and ignorant.

Now I hold that his duty is to explain his discoveries and intentions until they see as he sees. But the specialist temperament is often not a generalizing and expository temperament. Specialists are apt to measure minds by their speciality and underrate the average intelligence. The specialist is appalled by the real task before him, and he sets himself by tricks and misrepresentations, by benevolent scoundrelism in fact, to effect changes he desires. Too often he fails even in that. Where he might have found fellowship he arouses suspicion. And even if a thing is done in this way, its essential merit is lost. For it is better, I hold, for a man to die of his disease than to be cured unwittingly. That is to cheat him of life and to cheat life of the contribution his consciousness might have given it.

The Socialism of my beliefs rests on a profounder faith and broader proposition. It looks over and beyond the warring purposes of to-day as a general may look over and beyond a crowd of sullen,

excited and confused recruits, to the day when they will be disciplined, exercised, trained, willing and convergent on a common end. It holds persistently to the idea of men increasingly working in agreement, doing things that are sane to do, on a basis of mutual helpfulness, temperance and toleration. It sees the great masses of humanity rising out of base and immediate anxieties, out of dwarfing pressures and cramped surroundings, to understanding and participation and fine effort. It sees the resources of the earth husbanded and harvested, economized and used with scientific skill for the maximum of result. It sees towns and cities finely built, a race of beings finely bred and taught and trained, open ways and peace and freedom from end to end of the earth. It sees beauty increasing in humanity, about humanity and through humanity. Through this great body of mankind goes evermore an increasing understanding, an intensifying brotherhood. As Christians have dreamt of the New Jerusalem so does Socialism, growing ever more temperate, patient, forgiving and resolute, set its face to the World City of Mankind.

3.5. HATE AND LOVE.

Before I go on to point out the broad principles of action that flow from this wide conception of Socialism, I may perhaps give a section to elucidating that opposition of hate and love I made when I dealt with the class war. I have already used the word love several times; it is an ambiguous word and it may be well to spend a few words in making clear the sense in which it is used here. I use it in a very broad sense to convey all that complex of motives, impulses, sentiments, that incline us to find our happiness and satisfactions in the happiness and sympathy of others. Essentially it is a synthetic force in human affairs, the merger tendency, a linking force, an expression in personal will and feeling of the common element and interest. It insists upon resemblances and shares and sympathies. And hate, I take it, is the emotional aspect of antagonism, it is the expression in personal will and feeling of the individual's separation from others. It is the competing and destructive tendency. So long as we are individuals and members of a species, we must needs both hate and love. But because I believe, as I have already confessed, that the oneness of the species is a greater fact than individuality, and that we individuals are temporary separations from a collective purpose, and since hate eliminates itself by eliminating its objects, whilst love multiplies itself by multiplying its objects, so love must be a thing more comprehensive and enduring than hate.

Moreover, hate must be in its nature a good thing. We individuals exist as such, I believe, for the purpose in things, and our separations and antagonisms serve that purpose. We play against each other like hammer and anvil. But the synthesis of a collective will in humanity, which is I believe our human and terrestrial share in that purpose, is an idea that carries with it a conception of a secular alteration in the scope and method of both love and hate. Both widen and change with man's widening and developing apprehension of the purpose he serves. The savage man loves in gusts a fellow creature or so about him, and fears and hates all other people. Every expansion of his scope and ideas widens either circle. The common man of our civilized world loves not only many of his friends and associates

systematically and enduringly, but dimly he loves also his city and his country, his creed and his race; he loves it may be less intensely but over a far wider field and much more steadily. But he hates also more widely if less passionately and vehemently than a savage, and since love makes rather harmony and peace and hate rather conflict and events, one may easily be led to suppose that hate is the ruling motive in human affairs. Men band themselves together in leagues and loyalties, in cults and organizations and nationalities, and it is often hard to say whether the bond is one of love for the association or hatred of those to whom the association is antagonized. The two things pass insensibly into one another. London people have recently seen an edifying instance of the transition, in the Brown Dog statue riots. A number of people drawn together by their common pity for animal suffering, by love indeed of the most disinterested sort, had so forgotten their initial spirit as to erect a monument with an inscription at once recklessly untruthful, spiteful in spirit and particularly vexatious to one great medical school of London. They have provoked riots and placarded London with taunts and irritating misrepresentation of the spirit of medical research, and they have infected a whole fresh generation of London students with a bitter partizan contempt for the humanitarian effort that has so lamentably misconducted itself. Both sides vow they will never give in, and the anti-vivisectionists are busy manufacturing small china copies of the Brown Dog figure, inscription and all, for purposes of domestic irritation. Here hate, the evil ugly brother of effort, has manifestly slain love the initiator and taken the affair in hand. That is a little model of human conflicts. So soon as we become militant and play against one another, comes this danger of strain and this possible reversal of motive. The fight begins. Into a pit of heat and hate fall right and wrong together.

Now it seems to me that a religious faith such as I have set forth in the second Book, and a clear sense of our community of blood with all mankind, must necessarily affect both our loving and our hatred. It will certainly not abolish hate, but it will subordinate it altogether to love. We are individuals, so the Purpose presents itself to me, in order that we may hate the things that have to go, ugliness, baseness, insufficiency, unreality, that we may love and experiment

and strive for the things that collectively we seek — power and beauty. Before our conversion we did this darkly and with our hate spreading to persons and parties from the things for which they stood. But the believer will hate lovingly and without fear. We are of one blood and substance with our antagonists, even with those that we desire keenly may die and leave no issue in flesh or persuasion. They all touch us and are part of one necessary experience. They are all necessary to the synthesis, even if they are necessary only as the potato-peel in the dust-bin is necessary to my dinner.

So it is I disavow and deplore the whole spirit of class-war Socialism with its doctrine of hate, its envious assault upon the leisure and freedom of the wealthy. Without leisure and freedom and the experience of life they gave, the ideas of Socialism could never have been born. The true mission of Socialism is against darkness, vanity and cowardice, that darkness which hides from the property owner the intense beauty, the potentialities of interest, the splendid possibilities of life, that vanity and cowardice that make him clutch his precious holdings and fear and hate the shadow of change. It has to teach the collective organization of society; and to that the class-consciousness and intense class-prejudices of the worker need to bow quite as much as those of the property owner. But when I say that Socialism's mission is to teach, I do not mean that its mission is a merely verbal and mental one; it must use all instruments and teach by example as well as precept. Socialism by becoming charitable and merciful will not cease to be militant. Socialism must, lovingly but resolutely, use law, use force, to dispossess the owners of socially disadvantageous wealth, as one coerces a lunatic brother or takes a wrongfully acquired toy from a spoilt and obstinate child. It must intervene between all who would keep their children from instruction in the business of citizenship and the lessons of fraternity. It must build and guard what it builds with laws and with that sword which is behind all laws. Non-resistance is for the non-constructive man, for the hermit in the cave and the naked saint in the dust; the builder and maker with the first stroke of his foundation spade uses force and opens war against the anti-builder.

3.6. THE PRELIMINARY SOCIAL DUTY.

The belief I have that contributing to the development of the collective being of man is the individual's general meaning and duty, and the formulae of the Socialism which embodies this belief so far as our common activities go, give a general framework and direction how a man or woman should live. (I do throughout all this book mean man or woman equally when I write of "man," unless it is manifestly inapplicable.)

And first in this present time he must see to it that he does live, that is to say he must get food, clothing, covering, and adequate leisure for the finer aspects of living. Socialism plans an organized civilization in which these things will be a collective solicitude, and the gaining of a subsistence an easy preliminary to the fine drama of existence, but in the world as we have it we are forced to engage much of our energy in scrambling for these preliminary necessities. Our problems of conduct lie in the world as it is and not in the world as we want it to be. First then a man must get a living, a fair civilized living for himself. It is a fundamental duty. It must be a fair living, not pinched nor mean nor strained. A man can do nothing higher, he can be no service to any cause, until he himself is fed and clothed and equipped and free. He must earn this living or equip himself to earn it in some way not socially disadvantageous, he must contrive as far as possible that the work he does shall be constructive and contributory to the general well-being.

And these primary necessities of food, clothing and freedom being secured, one comes to the general disposition of one's surplus energy. With regard to that I think that a very simple proposition follows from the broad beliefs I have chosen to adopt. The general duty of a man, his existence being secured, is to educate, and chiefly to educate and develop himself. It is his duty to live, to make all he can out of himself and life, to get full of experience, to make himself fine and perceiving and expressive, to render his experience and perceptions honestly and helpfully to others. And in particular he has to educate himself and others with himself in Socialism. He has to make and keep this idea of synthetic human effort and of conscious

constructive effort clear first to himself and then clear in the general mind. For it is an idea that comes and goes. We are all of us continually lapsing from it towards individual isolation again. He needs, we all need, constant refreshment in this belief if it is to remain a predominant living fact in our lives.

And that duty of education, of building up the collective idea and organization of humanity, falls into various divisions depending in their importance upon individual quality. For all there is one personal work that none may evade, and that is thinking hard, criticising strenuously and understanding as clearly as one can religion, socialism and the general principle of one's acts. The intellectual factor is of primary importance in my religion. I can see no more reason why salvation should come to the intellectually incapable than to the morally incapable. For simple souls thinking in simple processes, salvation perhaps comes easily, but there is none for the intellectual coward, for the mental sloven and sluggard, for the stupid and obdurate mind. The Believer will think hard and continue to grow and learn, to read and seek discussion as his needs determine.

Correlated with one's own intellectual activity, part of it and growing out of it for almost everyone, is intellectual work with and upon others. By teaching we learn. Not to communicate one's thoughts to others, to keep one's thoughts to oneself as people say, is either cowardice or pride. It is a form of sin. It is a duty to talk, teach, explain, write, lecture, read and listen. Every truly religious man, every good Socialist, is a propagandist. Those who cannot write or discuss can talk, those who cannot argue can induce people to listen to others and read. We have a belief and an idea that we want to spread, each to the utmost of his means and measure, throughout all the world. We have a thought that we want to make humanity's thought. And it is a duty too that one should, within the compass of one's ability, make teaching, writing and lecturing possible where it has not existed before. This can be done in a hundred ways, by founding and enlarging schools and universities and chairs, for example; by making print and reading and all the material of thought cheap and abundant, by organizing discussion and societies for inquiry.

And talk and thought and study are but the more generalized

aspects of duty. The Believer may find his own special aptitude lies rather among concrete things, in experimenting and promoting experiments in collective action. Things teach as well as words, and some of us are most expressive by concrete methods. The Believer will work himself and help others to his utmost in all those developments of material civilization, in organized sanitation for example, all those developments that force collective acts upon communities and collective realizations into the minds of men. And the whole field of scientific research is a field of duty calling to everyone who can enter it, to add to the permanent store of knowledge and new resources for the race.

The Mind of that Civilized State we seek to make by giving ourselves into its making, is evidently the central work before us. But while the writer, the publisher and printer, the bookseller and librarian and teacher and preacher, the investigator and experimenter, the reader and everyone who thinks, will be contributing themselves to this great organized mind and intention in the world, many sorts of specialized men will be more immediately concerned with parallel and more concrete aspects of the human synthesis. The medical worker and the medical investigator, for example, will be building up the body of a new generation, the body of the civilized state, and he will be doing all he can, not simply as an individual, but as a citizen, to ORGANIZE his services of cure and prevention, of hygiene and selection. A great and growing multitude of men will be working out the apparatus of the civilized state; the organizers of transit and housing, the engineers in their incessantly increasing variety, the miners and geologists estimating the world's resources in metals and minerals, the mechanical inventors perpetually economizing force. The scientific agriculturist again will be studying the food supply of the world as a whole, and how it may be increased and distributed and economized. And to the student of law comes the task of rephrasing his intricate and often quite beautiful science in relation to modern conceptions. All these and a hundred other aspects are integral to the wide project of Constructive Socialism as it shapes itself in my faith.

3.7. WRONG WAYS OF LIVING.

When we lay down the proposition that it is one's duty to get one's living in some way not socially disadvantageous, and as far as possible by work that is contributory to the general well-being and development, when we state that one's surplus energies, after one's living is gained, must be devoted to experience, self-development and constructive work, it is clear we condemn by implication many modes of life that are followed to-day.

For example, it is manifest we condemn living in idleness or on non-productive sport, on the income derived from private property, and all sorts of ways of earning a living that cannot be shown to conduce to the constructive process. We condemn trading that is merely speculative, and in fact all trading and manufacture that is not a positive social service; we condemn living by gambling or by playing games for either stakes or pay. Much more do we condemn dishonest or fraudulent trading and every act of advertisement that is not punctiliously truthful. We must condemn too the taking of any income from the community that is neither earned nor conceded in the collective interest. But to this last point, and to certain issues arising out of it, I will return in the section next following this one.

And it follows evidently from our general propositions that every form of prostitution is a double sin, against one's individuality and against the species which we serve by the development of that individuality's preferences and idiosyncracies.

And by prostitution I mean not simply the act of a woman who sells for money, and against her thoughts and preferences, her smiles and endearments and the secret beauty and pleasure of her body, but the act of anyone who, to gain a living, suppresses himself, does things in a manner alien to himself and subserves aims and purposes with which he disagrees. The journalist who writes against his personal convictions, the solicitor who knowingly assists the schemes of rogues, the barrister who pits himself against what he perceives is justice and the right, the artist who does unbeautiful things or less beautiful things than he might, simply to please base employers, the craftsman who makes instruments for foolish uses or

bad uses, the dealer who sells and pushes an article because it fits the customer's folly; all these are prostitutes of mind and soul if not of body, with no right to lift an eyebrow at the painted disasters of the streets.

3.8. SOCIAL PARASITISM AND CONTEMPORARY INJUSTICES.

These broad principles about one's way of living are very simple; our minds move freely among them. But the real interest is with the individual case, and the individual case is almost always complicated by the fact that the existing social and economic system is based upon conditions that the growing collective intelligence condemns as unjust and undesirable, and that the constructive spirit in men now seeks to supersede. We have to live in a provisional State while we dream of and work for a better one.

The ideal life for the ordinary man in a civilized, that is to say a Socialist, State would be in public employment or in private enterprise aiming at public recognition. But in our present world only a small minority can have that direct and honourable relation of public service in the work they do; most of the important business of the community is done upon the older and more tortuous private ownership system, and the great mass of men in socially useful employment find themselves working only indirectly for the community and directly for the profit of a private owner, or they themselves are private owners. Every man who has any money put by in the bank, or any money invested, is a private owner, and in so far as he draws interest or profit from this investment he is a social parasite. It is in practice almost impossible to divest oneself of that parasitic quality however straightforward the general principle may be.

It is practically impossible for two equally valid sets of reasons. The first is that under existing conditions, saving and investment constitute the only way to rest and security in old age, to leisure, study and intellectual independence, to the safe upbringing of a family and the happiness of one's weaker dependents. These are things that should not be left for the individual to provide; in the civilized state, the state itself will insure every citizen against these anxieties that now make the study of the City Article almost a duty. To abandon saving and investment to-day, and to do so is of course

to abandon all insurance, is to become a driven and uncertain worker, to risk one's personal freedom and culture and the upbringing and efficiency of one's children. It is to lower the standard of one's personal civilization, to think with less deliberation and less detachment, to fall away from that work of accumulating fine habits and beautiful and pleasant ways of living contributory to the coming State. And in the second place there is not only no return for such a sacrifice in anything won for Socialism, but for fine-thinking and living people to give up property is merely to let it pass into the hands of more egoistic possessors. Since at present things must be privately owned, it is better that they should be owned by people consciously working for social development and willing to use them to that end.

We have to live in the present system and under the conditions of the present system, while we work with all our power to change that system for a better one.

The case of Cadburys the cocoa and chocolate makers, and the practical slavery under the Portuguese of the East African negroes who grow the raw material for Messrs. Cadbury, is an illuminating one in this connection. The Cadburys, like the Rowntrees, are well known as an energetic and public-spirited family, their social and industrial experiments at Bournville and their general social and political activities are broad and constructive in the best sense. But they find themselves in the peculiar dilemma that they must either abandon an important and profitable portion of their great manufacture or continue to buy produce grown under cruel and even horrible conditions. Their retirement from the branch of the cocoa and chocolate trade concerned would, under these circumstances, mean no diminution of the manufacture or of the horrors of this particular slavery; it would merely mean that less humanitarian manufacturers would step in to take up the abandoned trade. The self-righteous individualist would have no doubts about the question; he would keep his hands clean anyhow, retrench his social work, abandon the types of cocoa involved, and pass by on the other side. But indeed I do not believe we came into the mire of life simply to hold our hands up out of it. Messrs. Cadbury follow a better line; they keep their business going, and exert themselves in every way to

let light into the secrets of Portuguese East Africa and to organize a better control of these labour cruelties. That I think is altogether the right course in this difficulty.

We cannot keep our hands clean in this world as it is. There is no excuse indeed for a life of fraud or any other positive fruitless wrong-doing or for a purely parasitic non-productive life, yet all but the fortunate few who are properly paid and recognized state servants must in financial and business matters do their best amidst and through institutions tainted with injustice and flawed with unrealities. All Socialists everywhere are like expeditionary soldiers far ahead of the main advance. The organized state that should own and administer their possessions for the general good has not arrived to take them over; and in the meanwhile they must act like its anticipatory agents according to their lights and make things ready for its coming.

The Believer then who is not in the public service, whose life lies among the operations of private enterprise, must work always on the supposition that the property he administers, the business in which he works, the profession he follows, is destined to be taken over and organized collectively for the commonweal and must be made ready for the taking over; that the private outlook he secures by investment, the provision he makes for his friends and children, are temporary, wasteful, though at present unavoidable devices to be presently merged in and superseded by the broad and scientific previsions of the co-operative commonwealth.

3.9. THE CASE OF THE WIFE AND MOTHER.

These principles give a rule also for the problem that faces the great majority of thinking wives and mothers to-day. The most urgent and necessary social work falls upon them; they bear, and largely educate and order the homes of, the next generation, and they have no direct recognition from the community for either of these supreme functions. They are supposed to perform them not for God or the world, but to please and satisfy a particular man. Our laws, our social conventions, our economic methods, so hem a woman about that, however fitted for and desirous of maternity she may be, she can only effectually do that duty in a dependent relation to her husband. Nearly always he is the paymaster, and if his payments are grudging or irregular, she has little remedy short of a breach and the rupture of the home. Her duty is conceived of as first to him and only secondarily to her children and the State. Many wives become under these circumstances mere prostitutes to their husbands, often evading the bearing of children with their consent and even at their request, and "loving for a living." That is a natural outcome of the proprietary theory of the family out of which our civilization emerges. But our modern ideas trend more and more to regard a woman's primary duty to be her duty to the children and to the world to which she gives them. She is to be a citizen side by side with her husband; no longer is he to intervene between her and the community. As a matter of contemporary fact he can do so and does so habitually, and most women have to square their ideas of life to that possibility.

Before any woman who is clear-headed enough to perceive that this great business of motherhood is one of supreme public importance, there are a number of alternatives at the present time. She may, like Grant Allan's heroine in "The Woman Who Did," declare an exaggerated and impossible independence, refuse the fetters of marriage and bear children to a lover. This, in the present state of public opinion in almost every existing social atmosphere, would be a purely anarchistic course. It would mean a fatherless home, and since the woman will have to play the double part of income-earner and mother, an impoverished and struggling home. It

would mean also an unsocial because ostracized home. In most cases, and even assuming it to be right in idea, it would still be on all fours with that immediate abandonment of private property we have already discussed, a sort of suicide that helps the world nothing.

Or she may "strike," refuse marriage and pursue a solitary and childless career, engaging her surplus energies in constructive work. But that also is suicide; it is to miss the keenest experiences, the finest realities life has to offer.

Or she may meet a man whom she can trust to keep a treaty with her and supplement the common interpretations and legal insufficiencies of the marriage bond, who will respect her always as a free and independent person, will abstain absolutely from authoritative methods, and will either share and trust his income and property with her in a frank communism, or give her a sufficient and private income for her personal use. It is only fair under existing economic conditions that at marriage a husband should insure his life in his wife's interest, and I do not think it would be impossible to bring our legal marriage contract into accordance with modern ideas in that matter. Certainly it should be legally imperative that at the birth of each child a new policy upon its father's life, as the income-getter, should begin. The latter provision at least should be a normal condition of marriage and one that the wife should have power to enforce when payments fall away. With such safeguards and under such conditions marriage ceases to be a haphazard dependence for a woman, and she may live, teaching and rearing and free, almost as though the co-operative commonwealth had come.

But in many cases, since great numbers of women marry so young and so ignorantly that their thinking about realities begins only after marriage, a woman will find herself already married to a man before she realizes the significance of these things. She may be already the mother of children. Her husband's ideas may not be her ideas. He may dominate, he may prohibit, he may intervene, he may default. He may, if he sees fit, burthen the family income with the charges of his illegitimate offspring.

We live in the world as it is and not in the world as it should be. That sentence becomes the refrain of this discussion.

The normal modern married woman has to make the best of a bad

position, to do her best under the old conditions, to live as though she was under the new conditions, to make good citizens, to give her spare energies as far as she can to bringing about a better state of affairs. Like the private property owner and the official in a privately owned business, her best method of conduct is to consider herself an unrecognized public official, irregularly commanded and improperly paid. There is no good in flagrant rebellion. She has to study her particular circumstances and make what good she can out of them, keeping her face towards the coming time. I cannot better the image I have already used for the thinking and believing modern-minded people of to-day as an advance guard cut off from proper supplies, ill furnished so that makeshift prevails, and rather demoralized. We have to be wise as well as loyal; discretion itself is loyalty to the coming State.

3.10. ASSOCIATIONS.

In the previous section I have dealt with the single individual's duty in relation to the general community and to law and generally received institutions. But there is a new set of questions now to be considered. Let us take up the modifications that arise when it is not one isolated individual but a group of individuals who find themselves in disagreement with contemporary rule or usage and disposed to find a rightness in things not established or not conceded. They too live in the world as it is and not in the world as it ought to be, but their association opens up quite new possibilities of anticipating coming developments of living, and of protecting and guaranteeing one another from what for a single unprotected individual would be the inevitable consequences of a particular line of conduct, conduct which happened to be unorthodox or only, in the face of existing conditions, unwise.

For example, a friend of mine who had read a copy of the preceding section wrote as follows: —

"I can see no reason why even to-day a number of persons avowedly united in the same 'Belief' and recognizing each other as the self-constituted social vanguard should not form a recognized spiritual community centering round some kind of 'religious' edifice and ritual, and agree to register and consecrate the union of any couples of the members according to a contract which the whole community should have voted acceptable. The community would be the guardian of money deposited or paid in gradually as insurance for the children. And the fact of the whole business being regular, open and connected with a common intellectual and moral ritual and a common name, such for example as your name of 'The Samurai,' would secure the respect of outsiders, so that eventually these new marriage arrangements would modify the old ones. People would ask, 'Were you married before the registrar?' and the answer would be, 'No, we are Samurai and were united before the Elders.' In Catholic countries those who use only the civil marriage are considered outcasts by the religiously minded, which shows that recognition by the State is not as potent as recognition by the

community to which one belongs. The religious marriage is considered the only one binding by Catholics, and the civil ceremony is respected merely because the State has brute force behind it."

There is in this passage one particularly valuable idea, the idea of an association of people to guarantee the welfare of their children in common. I will follow that a little, though it takes me away from my main line of thought. It seems to me that such an association might be found in many cases a practicable way of easing the conflict that so many men and women experience, between their individual public service and their duty to their own families. Many people of exceptional gifts, whose gifts are not necessarily remunerative, are forced by these personal considerations to direct them more or less askew, to divert them from their best application to some inferior but money-making use; and many more are given the disagreeable alternative of evading parentage or losing the freedom of mind needed for socially beneficial work. This is particularly the case with many scientific investigators, many sociological and philosophical workers, many artists, teachers and the like. Even when such people are fairly prosperous personally they do not care to incur the obligation to keep prosperous at any cost to their work that a family in our competitive system involves. It gives great ease of mind to any sort of artistic or intellectual worker to feel free to become poor. I do not see why a group of such people should not attempt a merger of their family anxieties and family adventures, insure all its members, and while each retains a sufficient personal independence for freedom of word and movement, pool their family solicitudes and resources, organize a collective school and a common maintenance fund for all the children born of members of the association. I do not see why they should not in fact develop a permanent trust to maintain, educate and send out all their children into the world, a trust to which their childless friends and associates could contribute by gift and bequest, and to which the irregular good fortune that is not uncommon in the careers of these exceptional types could be devoted. I do not mean any sort of charity but an enlarged family basis.

Such an idea passes very readily into the form of a Eugenic association. It would be quite possible and very interesting for

prosperous people interested in Eugenics to create a trust for the offspring of a selected band of beneficiaries, and with increasing resources to admit new members and so build up within the present social system a special strain of chosen people. So far people with eugenic ideas and people with conceptions of associated and consolidated families have been too various and too dispersed for such associations to be practicable, but as such views of life become more common, the chance of a number of sufficiently homogeneous and congenial people working out the method of such a grouping increases steadily.

Moreover, I can imagine no reason to prevent any women who are in agreement with the moral standards of the "Woman who Did" (standards I will not discuss at this present point but defer for a later section) combining for mutual protection and social support and the welfare of such children as they may bear. Then certainly, to the extent that this succeeds, the objections that arise from the evil effects upon the children of social isolation disappear. This isolation would be at worst a group isolation, and there can be no doubt that my friend is right in pointing out that there is much more social toleration for an act committed under the sanction of a group than for an isolated act that may be merely impulsive misbehaviour masquerading as high principle.

It seems to me remarkable that, to the best of my knowledge, so obvious a form of combination has never yet been put in practice. It is remarkable but not inexplicable. The first people to develop novel ideas, more particularly of this type, are usually people in isolated circumstances and temperamentally incapable of disciplined cooperation.

3.11. OF AN ORGANIZED BROTHERHOOD.

The idea of organizing the progressive elements in the social chaos into a regular developing force is one that has had a great attraction for me. I have written upon it elsewhere, and I make no apology for returning to it here and examining it in the light of various afterthoughts and with fresh suggestions.

I first broached this idea in a book called "Anticipations," wherein I described a possible development of thought and concerted action which I called the New Republicanism, and afterwards I redrew the thing rather more elaborately in my "Modern Utopia." I had been struck by the apparently chaotic and wasteful character of most contemporary reform movements, and it seemed reasonable to suppose that those who aimed at organizing society and replacing chaos and waste by wise arrangements, might very well begin by producing a more effective organization for their own efforts. These complexities of good intention made me impatient, and I sought industriously in my mind for a short cut through them. In doing so I think I overlooked altogether too much how heterogeneous all progressive thought and progressive people must be.

In my "Modern Utopia" I turned this idea of an organized brotherhood about very thoroughly and looked at it from this point and that; I let it loose as it were, and gave it its fullest development, and so produced a sort of secular Order of governing men and women. In a spirit entirely journalistic I called this the Order of the Samurai, for at the time I wrote there was much interest in Bushido because of the capacity for hardship and self-sacrifice this chivalrous culture appears to have developed in the Japanese. These Samurai of mine were a sort of voluntary nobility who supplied the administrative and organizing forces that held my Utopian world together. They were the "New Republicans" of my "Anticipations" and "Mankind in the Making," much developed and supposed triumphant and ruling the world.

I sought of course to set out these ideas as attractively as possible in my books, and they have as a matter of fact proved very attractive to a certain number of people. Quite a number have wanted to go on

with them. Several little organizations of Utopians and Samurai and the like have sprung up and informed me of themselves, and some survive; and young men do still at times drop into my world "personally or by letter" declaring themselves New Republicans.

All this has been very helpful and at times a little embarrassing to me. It has given me an opportunity of seeing the ideals I flung into the distance beyond Sirius and among the mountain snows coming home partially incarnate in girls and young men. It has made me look into individualized human aspirations, human impatience, human vanity and a certain human need of fellowship, at close quarters. It has illuminated subtle and fine traits; it has displayed nobilities, and it has brought out aspects of human absurdity to which only the pencil of Mr. George Morrow could do adequate justice. The thing I have had to explain most generally is that my New Republicans and Samurai are but figures of suggestion, figures to think over and use in planning disciplines, but by no means copies to follow. I have had to go over again, as though it had never been raised before in any previous writings, the difference between the spirit and the letter.

These responses have on the whole confirmed my main idea that there is a real need, a need that many people, and especially adolescent people, feel very strongly, for some sort of constructive brotherhood of a closer type than mere political association, to co-ordinate and partly guide their loose chaotic efforts to get hold of life — but they have also convinced me that no wide and comprehensive organization can supply that want.

My New Republicans were presented as in many respects harsh and overbearing people, "a sort of outspoken secret society" for the organization of the world. They were not so much an ideal order as the Samurai of the later book, being rather deduced as a possible outcome of certain forces and tendencies in contemporary life (A.D. 1900) than, as literary people say, "created." They were to be drawn from among engineers, doctors, scientific business organizers and the like, and I found that it is to energetic young men of the more responsible classes that this particular ideal appeals. Their organization was quite informal, a common purpose held them together.

Most of the people who have written to me to call themselves

New Republicans are I find also Imperialists and Tariff Reformers, and I suppose that among the prominent political figures of to-day the nearest approach to my New Republicans is Lord Milner and the Socialist-Unionists of his group. It is a type harshly constructive, inclined to an unscrupulous pose and slipping readily into a Kiplingesque brutality.

The Samurai on the other hand were more picturesque figures, with a much more elaborated organization.

I may perhaps recapitulate the points about that Order here.

In the "Modern Utopia" the visitor from earth remarks: —

"These Samurai form the real body of the State. All this time that I have spent going to and fro in this planet, it has been growing upon me that this order of men and women, wearing such a uniform as you wear, and with faces strengthened by discipline and touched with devotion, is the Utopian reality; that but for them the whole fabric of these fair appearances would crumble and tarnish, shrink and shrivel, until at last, back I should be amidst the grime and disorders of the life of earth. Tell me about these Samurai, who remind me of Plato's guardians, who look like Knight Templars, who bear a name that recalls the swordsmen of Japan. What are they? Are they an hereditary cast, a specially educated order, an elected class? For, certainly, this world turns upon them as a door upon its hinges."

His informant explains: —

"Practically the whole of the responsible rule of the world is in their hands; all our head teachers and disciplinary heads of colleges, our judges, barristers, employers of labour beyond a certain limit, practising medical men, legislators, must be Samurai, and all the executive committees and so forth, that play so large a part in our affairs, are drawn by lot exclusively from them. The order is not hereditary — we know just enough of biology and the uncertainties of inheritance to know how silly that would be — and it does not require an early consecration or novitiate or ceremonies and initiations of that sort. The Samurai are, in fact, volunteers. Any intelligent adult in a reasonably healthy and efficient state may, at any age after five and twenty, become one of the Samurai and take a hand in the universal control."

"Provided he follows the Rule."

“Precisely — provided he follows the Rule.”

“I have heard the phrase, ‘voluntary nobility.’”

“That was the idea of our Founders. They made a noble and privileged order — open to the whole world. No one could complain of an unjust exclusion, for the only thing that could exclude them from the order was unwillingness or inability to follow the Rule.

“The Rule aims to exclude the dull and base altogether, to discipline the impulses and emotions, to develop a moral habit and sustain a man in periods of stress, fatigue and temptation, to produce the maximum co-operation of all men of good-intent, and in fact to keep all the Samurai in a state of moral and bodily health and efficiency. It does as much of this as well as it can, but of course, like all general propositions, it does not do it in any case with absolute precision. AT FIRST IN THE MILITANT DAYS, IT WAS A TRIFLE HARD AND UNCOMPROMISING; IT HAD RATHER TOO STRONG AN APPEAL TO THE MORAL PRIG AND THE HARSHLY RIGHTEOUS MAN, but it has undergone, and still undergoes, revision and expansion, and every year it becomes a little better adapted to the need of a general rule of life that all men may try to follow. We have now a whole literature with many very fine things in it, written about the Rule.

“The Rule consists of three parts; there is the list of things that qualify, the list of things that must not be done, and the list of things that must be done. Qualification exacts a little exertion as evidence of good faith and it is designed to weed out the duller dull and many of the base.”

He goes on to tell of certain intellectual qualifications and disciplines.

“Next to the intellectual qualification comes the physical, the man must be in sound health, free from certain foul, avoidable and demoralizing diseases, and in good training. We reject men who are fat, or thin, or flabby, or whose nerves are shaky — we refer them back to training. And finally the man or woman must be fully adult.”

“Twenty-one? But you said twenty-five!”

“The age has varied. At first it was twenty-five or over; then the minimum became twenty-five for men and twenty-one for women. Now there is a feeling that it ought to be raised. We don’t want to

take advantage of mere boy and girl emotions — men of my way of thinking, at any rate, don't — we want to get our Samurai with experiences, with settled mature conviction. Our hygiene and regimen are rapidly pushing back old age and death, and keeping men hale and hearty to eighty and more. There's no need to hurry the young. Let them have a chance of wine, love and song; let them feel the bite of full-blooded desire, and know what devils they have to reckon with...

"We forbid a good deal. Many small pleasures do no great harm, but we think it well to forbid them none the less, so that we can weed out the self-indulgent. We think that a constant resistance to little seductions is good for a man's quality. At any rate, it shows that a man is prepared to pay something for his honour and privileges. We prescribe a regimen of food, forbid tobacco, wine, or any alcoholic drink, all narcotic drugs...

"Originally the Samurai were forbidden usury, that is to say, the lending of money at fixed rates of interest. They are still under that interdiction, but since our commercial code practically prevents usury altogether, and our law will not recognize contracts for interest upon private accommodation loans to unprosperous borrowers," (he is speaking of Utopia), "it is now scarcely necessary. The idea of a man growing richer by mere inaction and at the expense of an impoverished debtor is profoundly distasteful to Utopian ideas, and our State insists pretty effectually now upon the participation of the lender in the borrower's risks. This, however, is only one part of a series of limitations of the same character. It is felt that to buy simply in order to sell again brings out many unsocial human qualities; it makes a man seek to enhance profits and falsify values, and so the Samurai are forbidden to buy or sell on their own account or for any employer save the State, unless by some process of manufacture they change the nature of the commodity (a mere change in bulk or packing does not suffice), and they are forbidden salesmanship and all its arts. Nor may the Samurai do personal services, except in the matter of medicine or surgery; they may not be barbers, for example, nor inn waiters nor boot cleaners, men do such services for themselves. Nor may a man under the Rule be any man's servant, pledged to do whatever he is told. He may neither be a servant nor

keep one; he must shave and dress and serve himself, carry his own food from the helper's place, redd his sleeping room and leave it clean..."

Finally came the things they had to do. Their Rule contained: —

"many precise directions regarding his health, and rules that would aim at once at health and that constant exercise or will that makes life good. Save in specified exceptional circumstances, the Samurai must bathe in cold water and the men shave every day; they have the precisest directions in such matters; the body must be in health, the skin and nerves and muscles in perfect tone, or the Samurai must go to the doctors of the order and give implicit obedience to the regimen prescribed. They must sleep alone at least four nights in five; and they must eat with and talk to anyone in their fellowship who cares for their conversation for an hour at least, at the nearest club-house of the Samurai, once on three chosen days in every week. Moreover they must read aloud from the Book of the Samurai for at least five minutes every day. Every month they must buy and read faithfully through at least one book that has been published during the past five years, and the only intervention with private choice in that matter is the prescription of a certain minimum of length for the monthly book or books. But the full rule in these minor compulsory matters is voluminous and detailed, and it abounds with alternatives. Its aim is rather to keep before the Samurai by a number of simple duties, as it were, the need of and some of the chief methods towards health of body and mind rather than to provide a comprehensive rule, and to ensure the maintenance of a community of feeling and interests among the Samurai through habit, intercourse and a living contemporary literature. These minor obligations do not earmark more than an hour in the day. Yet they serve to break down isolations of sympathy, all sorts of physical and intellectual sluggishness and the development of unsocial preoccupations of many sorts...

"So far as the Samurai have a purpose in common in maintaining the State and the order and discipline of the world, so far, by their discipline and denial, by their public work and effort, they worship God together. But the ultimate fount of motives lies in the individual life, it lies in silent and deliberate reflections, and at this the most

striking of all the rules of the Samurai aims. For seven consecutive days of the year, at least, each man or woman under the Rule must go right out of all the life of men into some wild and solitary place, must speak to no man or woman and have no sort of intercourse with mankind. They must go bookless and weaponless, without pen or paper or money. Provision must be taken for the period of the journey, a rug or sleeping sack — for they must sleep under the open sky — but no means of making a fire. They may study maps before to guide them, showing any difficulties and dangers in the journey, but they may not carry such helps. They must not go by beaten ways or wherever there are inhabited houses, but into the bare, quiet places of the globe — the regions set apart for them.

"This discipline was invented to secure a certain stoutness of heart and body in the Samurai. Otherwise the order might have lain open to too many timorous, merely abstemious men and women. Many things had been suggested, sword-play and tests that verged on torture, climbing in giddy places and the like, before this was chosen. Partly, it is to ensure good training and sturdiness of body and mind, but partly also, it is to draw the minds of the Samurai for a space from the insistent details of life, from the intricate arguments and the fretting effort to work, from personal quarrels and personal affections and the things of the heated room. Out they must go, clean out of the world..."

These passages will at least serve to present the Samurai idea and the idea of common Rule of conduct it embodied.

In the "Modern Utopia" I discuss also a lesser Rule and the modification of the Rule for women and the relation to the order of what I call the poietic types, those types whose business in life seems to be rather to experience and express than to act and effectually do. For those things I must refer the reader to the book itself. Together with a sentence I have put in italics above, they serve to show that even when I was devising these Samurai I was not unmindful of the defects that are essential to such a scheme.

This dream of the Samurai proved attractive to a much more various group of readers than the New Republican suggestion, and there have been actual attempts to realise the way of life proposed. In most of these cases there was manifest a disposition greatly to over-

accentuate organization, to make too much of the disciplinary side of the Rule and to forget the entire subordination of such things to active thought and constructive effort. They are valuable and indeed only justifiable as a means to an end. These attempts of a number of people of very miscellaneous origins and social traditions to come together and work like one machine made the essential wastefulness of any terrestrial realization of my Samurai very clear. The only reason for such an Order is the economy and development of force, and under existing conditions disciplines would consume more force than they would engender. The Order, so far from being a power, would be an isolation. Manifestly the elements of organization and uniformity were overdone in my Utopia; in this matter I was nearer the truth in the case of my New Republicans. These, in contrast with the Samurai, had no formal general organization, they worked for a common end, because their minds and the suggestion of their circumstances pointed them to a common end. Nothing was enforced upon them in the way of observance or discipline. They were not shepherded and trained together, they came together. It was assumed that if they wanted strongly they would see to it that they lived in the manner most conducive to their end just as in all this book I am taking it for granted that to believe truly is to want to do right. It was not even required of them that they should sedulously propagate their constructive idea.

Apart from the illumination of my ideas by these experiments and proposals, my Samurai idea has also had a quite unmerited amount of subtle and able criticism from people who found it at once interesting and antipathetic. My friends Vernon Lee and G.K. Chesterton, for example, have criticized it, and I think very justly, on the ground that the invincible tortuousness of human pride and class-feeling would inevitably vitiate its working. All its disciplines would tend to give its members a sense of distinctness, would tend to syndicate power and rob it of any intimacy and sympathy with those outside the Order...

It seems to me now that anyone who shares the faith I have been developing in this book will see the value of these comments and recognize with me that this dream is a dream; the Samurai are just one more picture of the Perfect Knight, an ideal of clean, resolute

and balanced living. They may be valuable as an ideal of attitude but not as an ideal of organization. They are never to be put, as people say, upon a business footing and made available as a refuge from the individual problem.

To modernize the parable, the Believer must not only not bury his talent but he must not bank it with an organization. Each Believer must decide for himself how far he wants to be kinetic or efficient, how far he needs a stringent rule of conduct, how far he is poietic and may loiter and adventure among the coarse and dangerous things of life. There is no reason why one should not, and there is every reason why one should, discuss one's personal needs and habits and disciplines and elaborate one's way of life with those about one, and form perhaps with those of like training and congenial temperament small groups for mutual support. That sort of association I have already discussed in the previous section. With adolescent people in particular such association is in many cases an almost instinctive necessity. There is no reason moreover why everyone who is lonely should not seek out congenial minds and contrive a grouping with them. All mutual lovers for example are Orders of a limited membership, many married couples and endless cliques and sets are that. Such small and natural associations are indeed force-giving Orders because they are brought together by a common innate disposition out of a possibility of mutual assistance and inspiration; they observe a Rule that springs up and not a Rule imposed. The more of such groups and Orders we have the better. I do not see why having formed themselves they should not define and organize themselves. I believe there is a phase somewhere between fifteen and thirty, in the life of nearly everybody, when such a group is sought, is needed and would be helpful in self-development and self-discovery. In leagues and societies for specific ends, too, we must all participate. But the order of the Samurai as a great progressive force controlling a multitude of lives right down to their intimate details and through all the phases of personal development is a thing unrealizable. To seek to realize it is impatience. True brotherhood is universal brotherhood. The way to that is long and toilsome, but it is a way that permits of no such energetic short cuts as this militant order of my dream would achieve.

3.12. CONCERNING NEW STARTS AND NEW RELIGIONS.

When one is discussing this possible formation of cults and brotherhoods, it may be well to consider a few of the conditions that rule such human re-groupings. We live in the world as it is and not in the world as we want it to be, that is the practical rule by which we steer, and in directing our lives we must constantly consider the forces and practicabilities of the social medium in which we move.

In contemporary life the existing ties are so various and so imperative that the detachment necessary as a preliminary condition to such new groupings is rarely found. This is not a period in which large numbers of people break away easily and completely from old connexions. Things change less catastrophically than once they did. More particularly is there less driving out into the wilderness. There is less heresy hunting; persecution is frequently reluctant and can be evaded by slight concessions. The world as a whole is less harsh and emphatic than it was. Customs and customary attitudes change nowadays not so much by open, defiant and revolutionary breaches as by the attrition of partial negligences and new glosses. Innovating people do conform to current usage, albeit they conform unwillingly and imperfectly. There is a constant breaking down and building up of usage, and as a consequence a lessened need of wholesale substitutions. Human methods have become viviparous; the New nowadays lives for a time in the form of the Old. The friend I quote in Chapter 2.10 writes of a possible sect with a "religious edifice" and ritual of its own, a new religious edifice and a new ritual. In practice I doubt whether "real" people, people who matter, people who are getting things done and who have already developed complex associations, can afford the extensive re-adjustment implied in such a new grouping. It would mean too much loss of time, too much loss of energy and attention, too much sacrifice of existing co-operations.

New cults, new religions, new organizations of all sorts, insisting upon their novelty and difference, are most prolific and most

successful wherever there is an abundant supply of dissociated people, where movement is in excess of deliberation, and creeds and formulae unyielding and unadaptable because they are unthinking. In England, for example, in the last century, where social conditions have been comparatively stable, discussion good and abundant and internal migration small, there have been far fewer such developments than in the United States of America. In England toleration has become an institution, and where Tory and Socialist, Bishop and Infidel, can all meet at the same dinner-table and spend an agreeable week-end together, there is no need for defensive segregations. In such an atmosphere opinion and usage change and change continually, not dramatically as the results of separations and pitched battles but continuously and fluently as the outcome of innumerable personal reactions. America, on the other hand, because of its material preoccupations, because of the dispersal of its thinking classes over great areas, because of the cruder understanding of its more heterogeneous population (which constantly renders hard and explicit statement necessary), MEANS its creeds much more literally and is at once more experimental and less compromising and tolerant. It is there if anywhere that new brotherhoods and new creeds will continue to appear. But even in America I think the trend of things is away from separations and segregations and new starts, and towards more comprehensive and graduated methods of development.

New religions, I think, appear and are possible and necessary in phases of social disorganization, in phases when considerable numbers of people are detached from old systems of direction and unsettled and distressed. So, at any rate, it was Christianity appeared, in a strained and disturbed community, in the clash of Roman and Oriental thought, and for a long time it was confined to the drifting population of seaports and great cities and to wealthy virgins and widows, reaching the most settled and most adjusted class, the pagani, last of all and in its most adaptable forms. It was the greatest new beginning in the world's history, and the wealth of political and literary and social and artistic traditions it abandoned had subsequently to be revived and assimilated to it fragment by fragment from the past it had submerged. Now, I do not see that the

world to-day presents any fair parallelism to that sere age of stresses in whose recasting Christianity played the part of a flux. Ours is on the whole an organizing and synthetic rather than a disintegrating phase throughout the world. Old institutions are neither hard nor obstinate to-day, and the immense and various constructive forces at work are saturated now with the conception of evolution, of secular progressive development, as opposed to the revolutionary idea. Only a very vast and terrible war explosion can, I think, change this state of affairs.

This conveys in general terms, at least, my interpretation of the present time, and it is in accordance with this view that the world is moving forward as a whole and with much dispersed and discrepant rightness, that I do not want to go apart from the world as a whole into any smaller community, with all the implication of an exclusive possession of right which such a going apart involves. Put to the test by my own Samurai for example by a particularly urgent and enthusiastic discipline, I found I did not in the least want to be one of that organization, that it only expressed one side of a much more complex self than its disciplines permitted. And still less do I want to hamper the play of my thoughts and motives by going apart into the particularism of a new religion. Such refuges are well enough when the times threaten to overwhelm one. The point about the present age, so far as I am able to judge the world, is that it does not threaten to overwhelm; that at the worst, by my standards, it maintains its way of thinking instead of assimilating mine.

3.13. THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH.

Now all this leads very directly to a discussion of the relations of a person of my way of thinking to the Church and religious institutions generally. I have already discussed my relation to commonly accepted beliefs, but the question of institutions is, it seems to me, a different one altogether. Not to realize that, to confuse a church with its creed, is to prepare the ground for a mass of disastrous and life-wasting errors.

Now my rules of conduct are based on the supposition that moral decisions are to be determined by the belief that the individual life guided by its perception of beauty is incidental, experimental, and contributory to the undying life of the blood and race. I have decided for myself that the general business of life is the development of a collective consciousness and will and purpose out of a chaos of individual consciousnesses and wills and purposes, and that the way to that is through the development of the Socialist State, through the socialization of existing State organizations and their merger of pacific association in a World State. But so far I have not taken up the collateral aspect of the synthesis of human consciousness, the development of collective feeling and willing and expression in the form, among others, of religious institutions.

Religious institutions are things to be legitimately distinguished from the creeds and cosmogonies with which one finds them associated. Customs are far more enduring things than ideas, — witness the mistletoe at Christmas, or the old lady turning her money in her pocket at the sight of the new moon. And the exact origin of a religious institution is of much less significance to us than its present effect. The theory of a religion may propose the attainment of Nirvana or the propitiation of an irascible Deity or a dozen other things as its end and aim; the practical fact is that it draws together great multitudes of diverse individualized people in a common solemnity and self-subordination however vague, and is so far, like the State, and in a manner far more intimate and emotional and fundamental than the State, a synthetic power. And in particular, the idea of the Catholic Church is charged with synthetic suggestion; it is

in many ways an idea broader and finer than the constructive idea of any existing State. And just as the Beliefs I have adopted lead me to regard myself as in and of the existing State, such as it is, and working for its rectification and development, so I think there is a reasonable case for considering oneself in and of the Catholic Church and bound to work for its rectification and development; and this in spite of the fact that one may not feel justified in calling oneself a Christian in any sense of the term.

It may be maintained very plausibly that the Catholic Church is something greater than Christianity, however much the Christians may have contributed to its making. From the historical point of view it is a religious and social method that developed with the later development of the world empire of Rome and as the expression of its moral and spiritual side. Its head was, and so far as its main body is concerned still is, the pontifex maximus of the Roman world empire, an official who was performing sacrifices centuries before Christ was born. It is easy to assert that the Empire was converted to Christianity and submitted to its terrestrial leader, the bishop of Rome; it is quite equally plausible to say that the religious organization of the Empire adopted Christianity and so made Rome, which had hitherto had no priority over Jerusalem or Antioch in the Christian Church, the headquarters of the adopted cult. And if the Christian movement could take over and assimilate the prestige, the world predominance and sacrificial conception of the pontifex maximus and go on with that as part at any rate of the basis of a universal Church, it is manifest that now in the fulness of time this great organization, after its accumulation of Christian tradition, may conceivably go on still further to alter and broaden its teaching and observances and formulae.

In a sense no doubt all we moderns are bound to consider ourselves children of the Catholic Church, albeit critical and innovating children with a tendency to hark back to our Greek grandparents; we cannot detach ourselves absolutely from the Church without at the same time detaching ourselves from the main process of spiritual synthesis that has made us what we are. And there is a strong case for supposing that not only is this reasonable for us who live in the tradition of Western Europe, but that we are

legitimately entitled to call upon extra European peoples to join with us in that attitude of filiation to the Catholic Church since, outside it, there is no organization whatever aiming at a religious catholicity and professing or attempting to formulate a collective religious consciousness in the world. So far as they come to a conception of a human synthesis they come to it by coming into our tradition.

I write here of the Catholic Church as an idea. To come from that idea to the world of present realities is to come to a tangle of difficulties. Is the Catholic Church merely the Roman communion or does it include the Greek and Protestant Churches? Some of these bodies are declaredly dissentient, some claim to be integral portions of the Catholic Church which have protested against and abandoned certain errors of the central organization. I admit it becomes a very confusing riddle in such a country as England to determine which is the Catholic Church; whether it is the body which possesses and administers Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, or the bodies claiming to represent purer and finer or more authentic and authoritative forms of Catholic teaching which have erected that new Byzantine-looking cathedral in Westminster, or Whitfield's Tabernacle in the Tottenham Court Road, or a hundred or so other organized and independent bodies. It is still more perplexing to settle upon the Catholic Church in America among an immense confusion of sectarian fragments.

Many people, I know, take refuge from the struggle with this tangle of controversies by refusing to recognize any institutions whatever as representing the Church. They assume a mystical Church made up of all true believers, of all men and women of good intent, whatever their formulae or connexion. Wherever there is worship, there, they say, is a fragment of the Church. All and none of these bodies are the true Church.

This is no doubt profoundly true. It gives something like a working assumption for the needs of the present time. People can get along upon that. But it does not exhaust the question. We seek a real and understanding synthesis. We want a real collectivism, not a poetical idea; a means whereby men and women of all sorts, all kinds of humanity, may pray together, sing together, stand side by side, feel the same wave of emotion, develop a collective being. Doubtless

right-spirited men are praying now at a thousand discrepant altars. But for the most part those who pray imagine those others who do not pray beside them are in error, they do not know their common brotherhood and salvation. Their brotherhood is masked by unanalyzable differences; theirs is a dispersed collectivism; their churches are only a little more extensive than their individualities and intenser in their collective separations.

The true Church towards which my own thoughts tend will be the conscious illuminated expression of Catholic brotherhood. It must, I think, develop out of the existing medley of Church fragments and out of all that is worthy in our poetry and literature, just as the worldwide Socialist State at which I aim must develop out of such state and casual economic organizations and constructive movements as exist to-day. There is no "beginning again" in these things. In neither case will going apart out of existing organizations secure our ends. Out of what is, we have to develop what has to be. To work for the Reformation of the Catholic Church is an integral part of the duty of a believer.

It is curious how misleading a word can be. We speak of a certain phase in the history of Christianity as the Reformation, and that word effectually conceals from most people the simple indisputable fact that there has been no Reformation. There was an attempt at a Reformation in the Catholic Church, and through a variety of causes it failed. It detached great masses from the Catholic Church and left that organization impoverished intellectually and spiritually, but it achieved no reconstruction at all. It achieved no reconstruction because the movement as a whole lacked an adequate grasp of one fundamentally necessary idea, the idea of Catholicity. It fell into particularism and failed. It set up a vast process of fragmentation among Christian associations. It drove huge fissures through the once common platform. In innumerable cases they were fissures of organization and prejudice rather than real differences in belief and mental habit. Sometimes it was manifestly conflicting material interests that made the split. People are now divided by forgotten points of difference, by sides taken by their predecessors in the disputes of the sixteenth century, by mere sectarian names and the walls of separate meeting places. In the present time, as a result of

the dissenting method, there are multitudes of believing men scattered quite solitarily through the world.

The Reformation, the Reconstruction of the Catholic Church lies still before us. It is a necessary work. It is a work strictly parallel to the reformation and expansion of the organized State. Together, these processes constitute the general duty before mankind.

3.14. OF SECESSION.

The whole trend of my thought in matters of conduct is against whatever accentuates one's individual separation from the collective consciousness. It follows naturally from my fundamental creed that avoidable silences and secrecy are sins, just as abstinences are in themselves sins rather than virtues. And so I think that to leave any organization or human association except for a wider and larger association, to detach oneself in order to go alone, or to go apart narrowly with just a few, is fragmentation and sin. Even if one disagrees with the professions or formulae or usages of an association, one should be sure that the disagreement is sufficiently profound to justify one's secession, and in any case of doubt, one should remain. I count schism a graver sin than heresy.

No profession of faith, no formula, no usage can be perfect. It is only required that it should be possible. More particularly does this apply to churches and religious organizations. There never was a creed nor a religious declaration but admitted of a wide variety of interpretations and implied both more and less than it expressed. The pedantically conscientious man, in his search for an unblemished religious brotherhood, has tended always to a solitude of universal dissent.

In the religious as in the economic sphere one must not look for perfect conditions. Setting up for oneself in a new sect is like founding Utopias in Paraguay, an evasion of the essential question; our real business is to take what we have, live in and by it, use it and do our best to better such faults as are manifest to us, in the direction of a wider and nobler organization. If you do not agree with the church in which you find yourself, your best course is to become a reformer IN that church, to declare it a detached forgetful part of the greater church that ought to be, just as your State is a detached unawakened part of the World State. You take it at what it is and try and broaden it towards reunion. It is only when secession is absolutely unavoidable that it is right to secede.

This is particularly true of state churches such as is the Church of England. These are bodies constituted by the national law and

amenable to the collective will. I do not think a man should consider himself excluded from them because they have articles of religion to which he cannot subscribe and creeds he will not say. A national state church has no right to be thus limited and exclusive. Rather then let any man, just to the very limit that is possible for his intellectual or moral temperament, remain in his church to redress the balance and do his utmost to change and broaden it.

But perhaps the Church will not endure a broad-minded man in its body, speaking and reforming, and will expel him?

Be expelled — well and good! That is altogether different. Let them expel you, struggling valiantly and resolved to return so soon as they release you, to hammer at the door. But withdrawing — sulking — going off in a serene huff to live by yourself spiritually and materially in your own way — that is voluntary damnation, the denial of the Brotherhood of Man. Be a rebel or a revolutionary to your heart's content, but a mere seceder never.

For otherwise it is manifest that we shall have to pay for each step of moral and intellectual progress with a fresh start, with a conflict between the new organization and the old from which it sprang, a perpetually-recurring parricide. There will be a series of religious institutions in developing order, each containing the remnant too dull or too hypocritical to secede at the time of stress that began the new body. Something of the sort has indeed happened to both the Catholic and the English Protestant churches. We have the intellectual and moral guidance of the people falling more and more into the hands of an informal Church of morally impassioned leaders, writers, speakers, and the like, while the beautiful cathedrals in which their predecessors sheltered fall more and more into the hands of an uninspiring, retrogressive but conforming clergy.

Now this was all very well for the Individualist Liberal of the Early Victorian period, but Individualist Liberalism was a mere destructive phase in the process of renewing the old Catholic order, a clearing up of the site. We Socialists want a Church through which we can feel and think collectively, as much as we want a State that we can serve and be served by. Whether as members or external critics we have to do our best to get rid of obsolete doctrinal and ceremonial barriers, so that the churches may merge again in a

universal Church, and that Church comprehend again the whole growing and amplifying spiritual life of the race.

I do not know if I make my meaning perfectly clear here. By conformity I do not mean silent conformity. It is a man's primary duty to convey his individual difference to the minds of his fellow men. It is because I want that difference to tell to the utmost that I suggest he should not leave the assembly. But in particular instances he may find it more striking and significant to stand out and speak as a man detached from the general persuasion, just as obstructed and embarrassed ministers of State can best serve their country at times by resigning office and appealing to the public judgment by this striking and significant act.

3.15. A DILEMMA.

We are led by this discussion of secession straight between the horns of a moral dilemma. We have come to two conclusions; to secede is a grave sin, but to lie is also a grave sin.

But often the practical alternative is between futile secession or implicit or actual falsehood. It has been the instinct of the aggressive controversialist in all ages to seize upon collective organizations and fence them about with oaths and declarations of such a nature as to bar out anyone not of his own way of thinking. In a democracy, for example, to take an extreme caricature of our case, a triumphant majority in power, before allowing anyone to vote, might impose an oath whereby the leader of the minority and all his aims were specifically renounced. And if no country goes so far as that, nearly all countries and all churches make some such restrictions upon opinion. The United States, that land of abandoned and receding freedoms, imposes upon everyone who crosses the Atlantic to its shores a childish ineffectual declaration against anarchy and polygamy. None of these tests exclude the unhesitating liar, but they do bar out many proud and honest minded people. They "fix" and kill things that should be living and fluid; they are offences against the mind of the race. How is a man then to behave towards these test oaths and affirmations, towards repeating creeds, signing assent to articles of religion and the like? Do not these unavoidable barriers to public service, or religious work, stand on a special footing?

Personally I think they do.

I think that in most cases personal isolation and disuse is the greater evil. I think if there is no other way to constructive service except through test oaths and declarations, one must take then. This is a particular case that stands apart from all other cases. The man who preaches a sermon and pretends therein to any belief he does not truly hold is an abominable scoundrel, but I do not think he need trouble his soul very greatly about the barrier he stepped over to get into the pulpit, if he felt the call to preach, so long as the preaching be honest. A Republican who takes the oath of allegiance to the King and wears his uniform is in a similar case. These things stand apart;

they are so formal as to be scarcely more reprehensible than the falsehood of calling a correspondent "Dear," or asking a tiresome lady to whom one is being kind and civil, for the pleasure of dancing with her. We ought to do what we can to abolish these absurd barriers and petty falsehoods, but we ought not to commit a social suicide against them.

That is how I think and feel in this matter, but if a man sees the matter more gravely, if his conscience tells him relentlessly and uncompromisingly, "this is a lie," then it is a lie and he must not be guilty of it. But then I think it ill becomes him to be silently excluded. His work is to clamour against the existence of the barrier that wastes him.

I do not see that lying is a fundamental sin. In the first place some lying, that is to say some unavoidable inaccuracy of statement, is necessary to nearly everything we do, and the truest statement becomes false if we forget or alter the angle at which it is made, the direction in which it points. In the next the really fundamental and most generalized sin is self-isolation. Lying is a sin only because self-isolation is a sin, because it is an effectual way of cutting oneself off from human co-operation. That is why there is no sin in telling a fairy tale to a child. But telling the truth when it will be misunderstood is no whit better than lying; silences are often blacker than any lies. I class secrets with lies and cannot comprehend the moral standards that exonerate secrecy in human affairs.

To all these things one must bring a personal conscience and be prepared to examine particular cases. The excuses I have made, for example, for a very broad churchman to stay in the Church might very well be twisted into an excuse for taking an oath in something one did not to the slightest extent believe, in order to enter and betray some organization to which one was violently hostile. I admit that there may be every gradation between these two things. The individual must examine his special case and weigh the element of treachery against the possibility of co-operation. I do not see how there can be a general rule. I have already shown why in my own case I hesitate to profess a belief in God, because, I think, the misleading element in that profession would outweigh the advantage of sympathy and confidence gained.

3.16. A COMMENT.

The preceding section has been criticized by a friend who writes: —

"In religious matters apparent assent produces false unanimity. There is no convention about these things; if there were they would not exist. On the contrary, the only way to get perfunctory tests and so forth abrogated, is for a sufficient number of people to refuse to take them. It is in this case as in every other; secession is the beginning of a new integration. The living elements leave the dead or dying form and gradually create in virtue of their own combinations a new form more suited to present things. There is a formative, a creative power in sincerity and also in segregation itself. And the new form, the new species produced by variation and segregation will measure itself and its qualities with the old one. The old one will either go to the wall, accept the new one and be renewed by it, or the new one will itself be pushed out of existence if the old one has more vitality and is better adapted to the circumstances. This process of variation, competition and selection, also of intermarriage between equally vital and equally adapted varieties, is after all the process by which not only races exist but all human thoughts."

So my friend, who I think is altogether too strongly swayed by biological analogies. But I am thinking not of the assertion of opinions primarily but of co-operation with an organization with which, save for the matter of the test, one may agree. Secession may not involve the development of a new and better moral organization; it may simply mean the suicide of one's public aspect. There may be no room or no need of a rival organization. To secede from State employment, for example, is not to create the beginnings of a new State, however many — short of a revolution — may secede with you. It is to become a disconnected private person, and throw up one's social side.

3.17. WAR.

I do not think a discussion of man's social relations can be considered at all complete or satisfactory until we have gone into the question of military service. To-day, in an increasing number of countries, military service is an essential part of citizenship and the prospect of war lies like a great shadow across the whole bright complex prospect of human affairs. What should be the attitude of a right-living man towards his State at war and to warlike preparations?

In no other connexion are the confusions and uncertainty of the contemporary mind more manifest. It is an odd contradiction that in Great Britain and Western Europe generally, just those parties that stand most distinctly for personal devotion to the State in economic matters, the Socialist and Socialistic parties, are most opposed to the idea of military service, and just those parties that defend individual self-seeking and social disloyalty in the sphere of property are most urgent for conscription. No doubt some of this uncertainty is due to the mixing in of private interests with public professions, but much more is it, I think, the result of mere muddle-headedness and an insufficient grasp of the implications of the propositions under discussion. The ordinary political Socialist desires, as I desire, and as I suppose every sane man desires as an ultimate ideal, universal peace, the merger of national partitions in loyalty to the World State. But he does not recognize that the way to reach that goal is not necessarily by minimizing and specializing war and war responsibility at the present time. There he falls short of his own constructive conceptions and lapses into the secessionist methods of the earlier Radicals. We have here another case strictly parallel to several we have already considered. War is a collective concern; to turn one's back upon it, to refuse to consider it as a possibility, is to leave it entirely to those who are least prepared to deal with it in a broad spirit.

In many ways war is the most socialistic of all forces. In many ways military organization is the most peaceful of activities. When the contemporary man steps from the street of clamorous insincere

advertisement, push, adulteration, under-selling and intermittent employment, into the barrack-yard, he steps on to a higher social plane, into an atmosphere of service and co-operation and of infinitely more honourable emulations. Here at least men are not flung out of employment to degenerate because there is no immediate work for them to do. They are fed and drilled and trained for better services. Here a man is at least supposed to win promotion by self-forgetfulness and not by self-seeking. And beside the feeble and irregular endowment of research by commercialism, its little short-sighted snatches at profit by innovation and scientific economy, see how remarkable is the steady and rapid development of method and appliances in naval and military affairs! Nothing is more striking than to compare the progress of civil conveniences which has been left almost entirely to the trader, to the progress in military apparatus during the last few decades. The house appliances of to-day for example, are little better than they were fifty years ago. A house of to-day is still almost as ill-ventilated, badly heated by wasteful fires, clumsily arranged and furnished as the house of 1858. Houses a couple of hundred years old are still satisfactory places of residence, so little have our standards risen. But the rifle or battleship of fifty years ago was beyond all comparison inferior to those we possess; in power, in speed, in convenience alike. No one has a use now for such superannuated things.

3.18. WAR AND COMPETITION.

What is the meaning of war in life?

War is manifestly not a thing in itself, it is something correlated with the whole fabric of human life. That violence and killing which between animals of the same species is private and individual becomes socialized in war. It is a co-operation for killing that carries with it also a co-operation for saving and a great development of mutual help and development within the war-making group.

War, it seems to me, is really the elimination of violent competition as between man and man, an excretion of violence from the developing social group. Through war and military organization, and through war and military organization only, has it become possible to conceive of peace.

This violence was a necessary phase in human and indeed in all animal development. Among low types of men and animals it seems an inevitable condition of the vigour of the species and the beauty of life. The more vital and various individual must lead and prevail, leave progeny and make the major contribution to the synthesis of the race; the weaker individual must take a subservient place and leave no offspring. That means in practice that the former must directly or indirectly kill the latter until some mitigated but equally effectual substitute for that killing is invented. That duel disappears from life, the fight of the beasts for food and the fight of the bulls for the cows, only by virtue of its replacement by new forms of competition. With the development of primitive war we have such a replacement. The competition becomes a competition to serve and rule in the group, the stronger take the leadership and the larger share of life, and the weaker co-operate in subordination, they waive and compromise the conflict and use their conjoint strength against a common rival.

Competition is a necessary condition of progressive life. I do not know if so far I have made that belief sufficiently clear in these confessions. Perhaps in my anxiety to convey my idea of a human synthesis I have not sufficiently insisted upon the part played by competition in that synthesis. But the implications of the view that I

have set forth are fairly plain. Every individual, I have stated, is an experiment for the synthesis of the species, and upon that idea my system of conduct so far as it is a system is built. Manifestly the individual's function is either self-development, service and reproduction, or failure and an end.

With moral and intellectual development the desire to serve and participate in a collective purpose arises to control the blind and passionate impulse to survival and reproduction that the struggle for life has given us, but it does not abolish the fact of selection, of competition. I contemplate no end of competition. But for competition that is passionate, egoistic and limitless, cruel, clumsy and wasteful, I desire to see competition that is controlled and fair-minded and devoted, men and women doing their utmost with themselves and making their utmost contribution to the specific accumulation, but in the end content to abide by a verdict.

The whole development of civilization, it seems to me, consists in the development of adequate tests of survival and of an intellectual and moral atmosphere about those tests so that they shall be neither cruel nor wasteful. If the test is not to be 'are you strong enough to kill everyone you do not like?' that will only be because it will ask still more comprehensively and with regard to a multitude of qualities other than brute killing power, 'are you adding worthily to the synthesis by existence and survival?'

I am very clear in my mind on this perpetual need of competition. I admit that upon that turns the practicability of all the great series of organizing schemes that are called Socialism. The Socialist scheme must show a system in which predominance and reproduction are correlated with the quality and amount of an individual's social contribution, and so far I acknowledge it is only in the most general terms that this can be claimed as done. We Socialists have to work out all these questions far more thoroughly than we have done hitherto. We owe that to our movement and the world.

It is no adequate answer to our antagonists to say, indeed it is a mere tu quoque to say, that the existing system does not present such a correlation, that it puts a premium on secretiveness and self-seeking and a discount on many most necessary forms of social service. That is a mere temporary argument for a delay in judgment.

The whole history of humanity seems to me to present a spectacle of this organizing specialization of competition, this replacement of the indiscriminate and collectively blind struggle for life by an organized and collectively intelligent development of life. We see a secular replacement of brute conflict by the law, a secular replacement of indiscriminate brute lust by marriage and sexual taboos, and now with the development of Socialistic ideas and methods, the steady replacement of blind industrial competition by public economic organization. And moreover there is going on a great educational process bringing a greater and greater proportion of the minds of the community into relations of understanding and interchange.

Just as this process of organization proceeds, the violent and chaotic conflict of individuals and presently of groups of individuals disappears, personal violence, private war, cut-throat competition, local war, each in turn is replaced by a more efficient and more economical method of survival, a method of survival giving constantly and selecting always more accurately a finer type of survivor.

I might compare the social synthesis to crystals growing out of a fluid matrix. It is where the growing order of the crystals has as yet not spread that the old resource to destruction and violent personal or associated acts remains.

But this metaphor of crystals is a very inadequate one, because crystals have no will in themselves; nor do crystals, having failed to grow in some particular form, presently modify that form more or less and try again. I see the organizing of forces, not simply law and police which are indeed paid mercenaries from the region of violence, but legislation and literature, teaching and tradition, organized religion, getting themselves and the social structure together, year after year and age after age, halting, failing, breaking up in order to try again. And it seems to me that the amount of lawlessness and crime, the amount of waste and futility, the amount of war and war possibility and war danger in the world are just the measure of the present inadequacy of the world's system of collective organization to the purpose before them.

It follows from this very directly that only one thing can end war

on the earth and that is a subtle mental development, an idea, the development of the idea of the world commonweal in the collective mind. The only real method of abolishing war is to perceive it, to realize it, to express it, to think it out and think about it, to make all the world understand its significance, and to clear and preserve its significant functions. In human affairs to understand an evil is to abolish it; it is the only way to abolish any evil that arises out of the untutored nature of man. Which brings me back here again to my already repeated persuasion, that in expressing things, rendering things to each other, discussing our differences, clearing up the metaphysical conceptions upon which differences are discussed, and in a phrase evolving the collective mind, lies not only the cures of war and poverty but the general form of all a man's duty and the essential work of mankind.

3.19. MODERN WAR.

In our contemporary world, in our particular phase, military and naval organization loom up, colossal and unprecedent facts. They have the effect of an overhanging disaster that grows every year more tremendous, every year in more sinister contrast with the increasing securities and tolerations of the everyday life. It is impossible to imagine now what a great war in Europe would be like; the change in material and method has been so profound since the last cycle of wars ended with the downfall of the Third Napoleon. But there can be little or no doubt that it would involve a destruction of property and industrial and social disorganization of the most monstrous dimensions. No man, I think, can mark the limits of the destruction of a great European conflict were it to occur at the present time; and the near advent of practicable flying machines opens a whole new world of frightful possibilities.

For my own part I can imagine that a collision between such powers as Great Britain, Germany or America, might very well involve nearly every other power in the world, might shatter the whole fabric of credit upon which our present system of economics rests and put back the orderly progress of social construction for a vast interval of time. One figures great towns red with destruction while giant airships darken the sky, one pictures the crash of mighty ironclads, the bursting of tremendous shells fired from beyond the range of sight into unprotected cities. One thinks of congested ways swarming with desperate fighters, of torrents of fugitives and of battles gone out of the control of their generals into unappeasable slaughter. There is a vision of interrupted communications, of wrecked food trains and sunken food ships, of vast masses of people thrown out of employment and darkly tumultuous in the streets, of famine and famine-driven rioters. What modern population will stand a famine? For the first time in the history of warfare the rear of the victor, the rear of the fighting line becomes insecure, assailable by flying machines and subject to unprecedented and unimaginable panics. No man can tell what savagery of desperation these new conditions may not release in the soul of man. A conspiracy of

adverse chances, I say, might contrive so great a cataclysm. There is no effectual guarantee that it could not occur.

But in spite of that, I believe that on the whole there is far more good than evil in the enormous military growths that have occurred in the last half century. I cannot estimate how far the alternative to war is lethargy. It is through military urgencies alone that many men can be brought to consent to the collective endowment of research, to public education and to a thousand interferences with their private self-seeking. Just as the pestilence of cholera was necessary before men could be brought to consent to public sanitation, so perhaps the dread of foreign violence is an unavoidable spur in an age of chaotic industrial production in order that men may be brought to subserve the growth of a State whose purpose might otherwise be too high for them to understand. Men must be forced to care for fleets and armies until they have learnt to value cities and self development and a beautiful social life.

The real danger of modern war lies not in the disciplined power of the fighting machine but in the undisciplined forces in the collective mind that may set that machine in motion. It is not that our guns and ships are marvellously good, but that our press and political organizations are haphazard growths entirely inferior to them. If this present phase of civilization should end in a debacle, if presently humanity finds itself beginning again at a lower level of organization, it will not be because we have developed these enormous powers of destruction but because we have failed to develop adequate powers of control for them and collective determination. This panoply of war waits as the test of our progress towards the realization of that collective mind which I hold must ultimately direct the evolution of our specific being. It is here to measure our incoherence and error, and in the measure of those defects to refer us back to our studies.

Just as we understand does war become needless.

But I do not think that war and military organization will so much disappear as change its nature as the years advance. I think that the phase of universal military service we seem to be approaching is one through which the mass of mankind may have to pass, learning something that can be learnt in no other way, that the uniforms and

flags, the conceptions of order and discipline, the tradition of service and devotion, of physical fitness, unstinted exertion and universal responsibility, will remain a permanent acquisition, though the last ammunition has been used ages since in the pyrotechnic display that welcomed the coming of the ultimate Peace.

3.20. OF ABSTINENCES AND DISCIPLINES.

From these large issues of conduct, let me come now to more intimate things, to one's self control, the regulation of one's personal life. And first about abstinences and disciplines.

I have already confessed (Chapter 2.6) that my nature is one that dislikes abstinences and is wearied by and wary of excess.

I do not feel that it is right to suppress altogether any part of one's being. In itself abstinence seems to me a refusal to experience, and that, upon the lines of thought I follow, is to say that abstinence for its own sake is evil. But for an end all abstinences are permissible, and if the kinetic type of believer finds both his individual and his associated efficiency enhanced by a systematic discipline, if he is convinced that he must specialize because of the discursiveness of his motives, because there is something he wants to do or be so good that the rest of them may very well be suppressed for its sake, then he must suppress. But the virtue is in what he gets done and not in what he does not do. Reasonable fear is a sound reason for abstinence, as when a man has a passion like a lightly sleeping maniac that the slightest indulgence will arouse. Then he must needs adopt heroic abstinence, and even more so must he take to preventive restraint if he sees any motive becoming unruly and urgent and troublesome. Fear is a sound reason for abstinence and so is love. Many who have sensitive imaginations nowadays very properly abstain from meat because of butchery. And it is often needful, out of love and brotherhood, to abstain from things harmless to oneself because they are inconveniently alluring to others linked to us. The moderate drinker who sits at table sipping his wine in the sight of one he knows to be a potential dipsomaniac is at best an unloving fool.

But mere abstinence and the doing of barren toilsome unrewarding things for the sake of the toil, is a perversion of one's impulses. There is neither honour nor virtue nor good in that.

I do not believe in negative virtues. I think the ideas of them arise out of the system of metaphysical errors I have roughly analyzed in my first Book, out of the inherent tendency of the mind to make the relative absolute and to convert quantitative into qualitative

differences. Our minds fall very readily under the spell of such unmitigated words as Purity and Chastity. Only death beyond decay, absolute non-existence, can be Pure and Chaste. Life is impurity, fact is impure. Everything has traces of alien matter; our very health is dependent on parasitic bacteria; the purest blood in the world has a tainted ancestor, and not a saint but has evil thoughts. It was blindness to that which set men stoning the woman taken in adultery. They forgot what they were made of. This stupidity, this unreasonable idealism of the common mind, fills life to-day with cruelties and exclusions, with partial suicides and secret shames. But we are born impure, we die impure; it is a fable that spotless white lilies sprang from any saint's decay, and the chastity of a monk or nun is but introverted impurity. We have to take life valiantly on these conditions and make such honour and beauty and sympathy out of our confusions, gather such constructive experience, as we may.

There is a mass of real superstition upon these points, a belief in a magic purity, in magic personalities who can say: —

My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure,

and wonderful clairvoyant innocents like the young man in Mr. Kipling's "Finest Story in the World."

There is a lurking disposition to believe, even among those who lead the normal type of life, that the abstinent and chastely celibate are exceptionally healthy, energetic, immune. The wildest claims are made. But indeed it is true for all who can see the facts of life simply and plainly, that man is an omnivorous, versatile, various creature and can draw his strength from a hundred varieties of nourishment. He has physiological idiosyncrasies too that are indifferent to biological classifications and moral generalities. It is not true that his absorbent vessels begin their task as children begin the guessing game, by asking, "Is it animal, vegetable or mineral?" He responds to stimulation and recuperates after the exhaustion of his response, and his being is singularly careless whether the stimulation comes as a drug or stimulant, or as anger or music or noble appeals.

Most people speak of drugs in the spirit of that admirable firm of soap-boilers which assures its customers that the soap they make "contains no chemicals." Drugs are supposed to be a mystic

diabolical class of substance, remote from and contrasting in their nature with all other things. So they banish a tonic from the house and stuff their children with manufactured cereals and chocolate creams. The drunken helot of this system of absurdities is the Christian Scientist who denies healing only to those who have studied pathology, and declares that anything whatever put into a bottle and labelled with directions for its use by a doctor is thereby damnable and damned. But indeed all drugs and all the things of life have their uses and dangers, and there is no wholesale truth to excuse us a particular wisdom and watchfulness in these matters. Unless we except smoking as an unclean and needless artificiality, all these matters of eating and drinking and habit are matters of more or less. It seems to me foolish to make anything that is stimulating and pleasurable into a habit, for that is slowly and surely to lose a stimulus and pleasure and create a need that it may become painful to check or control. The moral rule of my standards is irregularity. If I were a father confessor I should begin my catalogue of sins by asking: "are you a man of regular life?" And I would charge my penitent to go away forthwith and commit some practicable saving irregularity; to fast or get drunk or climb a mountain or sup on pork and beans or give up smoking or spend a month with publicans and sinners. Right conduct for the common unspecialized man lies delicately adjusted between defect and excess as a watch is adjusted and adjustable between fast and slow. We none of us altogether and always keep the balance or are altogether safe from losing it. We swing, balancing and adjusting, along our path. Life is that, and abstinence is for the most part a mere evasion of life.

3.21. ON FORGETTING, AND THE NEED OF PRAYER, READING, DISCUSSION AND WORSHIP.

One aspect of life I had very much in mind when I planned those Samurai disciplines of mine. It was forgetting.

We forget.

Even after we have found Salvation, we have to keep hold of Salvation; believing, we must continue to believe. We cannot always be at a high level of noble emotion. We have clambered on the ship of Faith and found our place and work aboard, and even while we are busied upon it, behold we are back and drowning in the sea of chaotic things.

Every religious body, every religious teacher, has appreciated this difficulty and the need there is of reminders and renewals. Faith needs restatement and revival as the body needs food. And since the Believer is to seek much experience and be a judge of less or more in many things, it is particularly necessary that he should keep hold upon a living Faith.

How may he best do this?

I think we may state it as a general duty that he must do whatever he can to keep his faith constantly alive. But beyond that, what a man must do depends almost entirely upon his own intellectual character. Many people of a regular type of mind can refresh themselves by some recurrent duty, by repeating a daily prayer, by daily reading or re-reading some devotional book. With others constant repetition leads to a mental and spiritual deadening, until beautiful phrases become unmeaning, eloquent statements inane and ridiculous, — matter for parody. All who can, I think, should pray and should read and re-read what they have found spiritually helpful, and if they know of others of kindred dispositions and can organize these exercises, they should do so. Collective worship again is a necessity for many Believers. For many, the public religious services of this or that form of Christianity supply an atmosphere rich in the essential quality of religion and abounding in phrases about the religious life,

mellow from the use of centuries and almost immediately applicable. It seems to me that if one can do so, one should participate in such public worship and habituate oneself to read back into it that collective purpose and conscience it once embodied.

Very much is to be said for the ceremony of Holy Communion or the Mass, for those whom accident or scruples do not debar. I do not think your modern liberal thinkers quite appreciate the finer aspects of this, the one universal service of the Christian Church. Some of them are set forth very finely by a man who has been something of a martyr for conscience' sake, and is for me a hero as well as a friend, in a world not rich in heroes, the Rev. Stewart Headlam, in his book, "The Meaning of the Mass."

With others again, Faith can be most animated by writing, by confession, by discussion, by talk with friends or antagonists.

One or other or all of these things the Believer must do, for the mind is a living and moving process, and the thing that lies inert in it is presently covered up by new interests and lost. If you make a sort of King Log of your faith, presently something else will be sitting upon it, pride or self-interest, or some rebel craving, King de facto of your soul, directing it back to anarchy.

For many types that, however, is exactly what happens with public worship. They DO get a King Log in ceremony. And if you deliberately overcome and suppress your perception of and repugnance to the perfunctoriness of religion in nine-tenths of the worshippers about you, you may be destroying at the same time your own intellectual and moral sensitiveness. But I am not suggesting that you should force yourself to take part in public worship against your perceptions, but only that if it helps you to worship you should not hesitate to do so.

We deal here with a real need that is not to be fettered by any general prescription. I have one Cambridge friend who finds nothing so uplifting in the world as the atmosphere of the afternoon service in the choir of King's College Chapel, and another, a very great and distinguished and theologically sceptical woman, who accustomed herself for some time to hear from a distant corner the evening service in St. Paul's Cathedral and who would go great distances to do that.

Many people find an exaltation and broadening of the mind in mountain scenery and the starry heavens and the wide arc of the sea; and as I have already said, it was part of the disciplines of these Samurai of mine that yearly they should go apart for at least a week of solitary wandering and meditation in lonely and desolate places. Music again is a frequent means of release from the narrow life as it closes about us. One man I know makes an anthology into which he copies to re-read any passage that stirs and revives in him the sense of broad issues. Others again seem able to refresh their nobility of outlook in the atmosphere of an intense personal love.

Some of us seem to forget almost as if it were an essential part of ourselves. Such a man as myself, irritable, easily fatigued and bored, versatile, sensuous, curious, and a little greedy for experience, is perpetually losing touch with his faith, so that indeed I sometimes turn over these pages that I have written and come upon my declarations and confessions with a sense of alien surprise.

It may be, I say, that for some of us forgetting is the normal process, that one has to believe and forget and blunder and learn something and regret and suffer and so come again to belief much as we have to eat and grow hungry and eat again. What these others can get in their temples we, after our own manner, must distil through sleepless and lonely nights, from unavoidable humiliations, from the smarting of bruised shins.

3.22. DEMOCRACY AND ARISTOCRACY.

And now having dealt with the general form of a man's duty and with his duty to himself, let me come to his attitude to his individual fellow-men.

The broad principles determining that attitude are involved in things already written in this book. The belief in a collective being gathering experience and developing will, to which every life is subordinated, renders the cruder conception of aristocracy, the idea of a select life going on amidst a majority of trivial and contemptible persons who "do not exist," untenable. It abolishes contempt. Indeed to believe at all in a comprehensive purpose in things is to abandon that attitude and all the habits and acts that imply it. But a belief in universal significance does not altogether preclude a belief in an aristocratic method of progress, in the idea of the subordination of a number of individuals to others who can utilize their lives and help and contributory achievements in the general purpose. To a certain extent, indeed, this last conception is almost inevitable. We must needs so think of ourselves in relation to plants and animals, and I see no reason why we should not think so of our relations to other men. There are clearly great differences in the capacity and range of experience of man and man and in their power of using and rendering their experiences for the racial synthesis. Vigorous persons do look naturally for help and service to persons of less initiative, and we are all more or less capable of admiration and hero-worship and pleased to help and give ourselves to those we feel to be finer or better or completer or more forceful and leaderly than ourselves. This is natural and inevitable aristocracy.

For that reason it is not to be organized. We organize things that are not inevitable, but this is clearly a complex matter of accident and personalities for which there can be no general rule. All organized aristocracy is manifestly begotten by that fallacy of classification my Metaphysical book set itself to expose. Its effect is, and has been in all cases, to mask natural aristocracy, to draw the lines by wholesale and wrong, to bolster up weak and ineffectual persons in false positions and to fetter or hamper strong and vigorous people. The

false aristocrat is a figure of pride and claims, a consumer followed by dupes. He is proudly secretive, pretending to aims beyond the common understanding. The true aristocrat is known rather than knows; he makes and serves. He exacts no deference. He is urgent to makes others share what he knows and wants and achieves. He does not think of others as his but as the End's.

There is a base democracy just as there is a base aristocracy, the swaggering, aggressive disposition of the vulgar soul that admits neither of superiors nor leaders. Its true name is insubordination. It resents rules and refinements, delicacies, differences and organization. It dreams that its leaders are its delegates. It takes refuge from all superiority, all special knowledge, in a phantom ideal, the People, the sublime and wonderful People. "You can fool some of the people all the time, and all the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time," expresses I think quite the quintessence of this mystical faith, this faith in which men take refuge from the demand for order, discipline and conscious light. In England it has never been of any great account, but in America the vulgar individualist's self-protective exaltation of an idealized Common Man has worked and is working infinite mischief.

In politics the crude democratic faith leads directly to the submission of every question, however subtle and special its issues may be, to a popular vote. The community is regarded as a consultative committee of profoundly wise, alert and well-informed Common Men. Since the common man is, as Gustave le Bon has pointed out, a gregarious animal, collectively rather like a sheep, emotional, hasty and shallow, the practical outcome of political democracy in all large communities under modern conditions is to put power into the hands of rich newspaper proprietors, advertising producers and the energetic wealthy generally who are best able to flood the collective mind freely with the suggestions on which it acts.

But democracy has acquired a better meaning than its first crude intentions — there never was a theory started yet in the human mind that did not beget a finer offspring than itself — and the secondary meaning brings it at last into entire accordance with the subtler conception of aristocracy. The test of this quintessential democracy is neither a passionate insistence upon voting and the majority rule,

nor an arrogant bearing towards those who are one's betters in this aspect or that, but fellowship. The true democrat and the true aristocrat meet and are one in feeling themselves parts of one synthesis under one purpose and one scheme. Both realize that self-concealment is the last evil, both make frankness and veracity the basis of their intercourse. The general rightness of living for you and others and for others and you is to understand them to the best of your ability and to make them all, to the utmost limits of your capacity of expression and their understanding and sympathy, participators in your act and thought.

3.23. ON DEBTS OF HONOUR.

My ethical disposition is all against punctilio and I set no greater value on unblemished honour than I do on purity. I never yet met a man who talked proudly of his honour who did not end by cheating or trying to cheat me, nor a code of honour that did not impress me as a conspiracy against the common welfare and purpose in life. There is honour among thieves, and I think it might well end there as an obligation in conduct. The soldier who risks a life he owes to his army in a duel upon some silly matter of personal pride is no better to me than the clerk who gambles with the money in his master's till. When I was a boy I once paid a debt of honour, and it is one of the things I am most ashamed of. I had played cards into debt and I still remember burningly how I went flushed and shrill-voiced to my mother and got the money she could so ill afford to give me. I would not pay such a debt of honour now. If I were to wake up one morning owing big sums that I had staked overnight I would set to work at once by every means in my power to evade and repudiate that obligation. Such money as I have I owe under our present system to wife and sons and my work and the world, and I see no valid reason why I should hand it over to Smith because he and I have played the fool and rascal and gambled. Better by far to accept that fact and be for my own part published fool and rascal.

I have never been able to understand the sentimental spectacle of sons toiling dreadfully and wasting themselves upon mere money-making to save the secret of a father's peculations and the "honour of the family," or men conspiring to weave a wide and mischievous net of lies to save the "honour" of a woman. In the conventional drama the preservation of the honour of a woman seems an adequate excuse for nearly any offence short of murder; the preservation that is to say of the appearance of something that is already gone. Here it is that I do definitely part company with the false aristocrat who is by nature and intent a humbug and fabricator of sham attitudes, and ally myself with democracy. Fact, valiantly faced, is of more value than any reputation. The false aristocrat is robed to the chin and unwashed beneath, the true goes stark as Apollo. The false is ridiculous with

undignified insistence upon his dignity; the true says like God, “I am that I am.”

3.24. THE IDEA OF JUSTICE.

One word has so far played a very little part in this book, and that is the word Justice.

Those who have read the opening book on Metaphysics will perhaps see that this is a necessary corollary of the system of thought developed therein. In my philosophy, with its insistence upon uniqueness and marginal differences and the provisional nature of numbers and classes, there is little scope for that blind-folded lady with the balances, seeking always exact equivalents. Nowhere in my system of thought is there work for the idea of Rights and the conception of conscientious litigious-spirited people exactly observing nicely defined relationships.

You will note, for example, that I base my Socialism on the idea of a collective development and not on the "right" of every man to his own labour, or his "right" to work, or his "right" to subsistence. All these ideas of "rights" and of a social "contract" however implicit are merely conventional ways of looking at things, conventions that have arisen in the mercantile phase of human development.

Laws and rights, like common terms in speech, are provisional things, conveniences for taking hold of a number of cases that would otherwise be unmanageable. The appeal to Justice is a necessarily inadequate attempt to de-individualize a case, to eliminate the self's biassed attitude. I have declared that it is my wilful belief that everything that exists is significant and necessary. The idea of Justice seems to me a defective, quantitative application of the spirit of that belief to men and women. In every case you try and discover and act upon a plausible equity that must necessarily be based on arbitrary assumptions.

There is no equity in the universe, in the various spectacle outside our minds, and the most terrible nightmare the human imagination has ever engendered is a Just God, measuring, with himself as the Standard, against finite men. Ultimately there is no adequacy, we are all weighed in the balance and found wanting.

So, as the recognition of this has grown, Justice has been tempered with Mercy, which indeed is no more than an attempt to

equalize things by making the factors of the very defect that is condemned, its condonation. The modern mind fluctuates uncertainly somewhere between these extremes, now harsh and now ineffectual.

To me there seems no validity in these quasi-absolute standards.

A man seeks and obeys standards of equity simply to economize his moral effort, not because there is anything true or sublime about justice, but because he knows he is too egoistic and weak-minded and obsessed to do any perfect thing at all, because he cannot trust himself with his own transitory emotions unless he trains himself beforehand to observe a predetermined rule. There is scarcely an eventuality in life that without the help of these generalizations would not exceed the average man's intellectual power and moral energy, just as there is scarcely an idea or an emotion that can be conveyed without the use of faulty and defective common names. Justice and Mercy are indeed not ultimately different in their nature from such other conventions as the rules of a game, the rules of etiquette, forms of address, cab tariffs and standards of all sorts. They are mere organizations of relationship either to economize thought or else to facilitate mutual understanding and codify common action. Modesty and self-submission, love and service are, in the right system of my beliefs, far more fundamental rightnesses and duties.

We are not mercantile and litigious units such as making Justice our social basis would imply, we are not select responsible persons mixed with and tending weak irresponsible wrong persons such as the notion of Mercy suggests, we are parts of one being and body, each unique yet sharing a common nature and a variety of imperfections and working together (albeit more or less darkly and ignorantly) for a common end.

We are strong and weak together and in one brotherhood. The weak have no essential rights against the strong, nor the strong against the weak. The world does not exist for our weaknesses but our strength. And the real justification of democracy lies in the fact that none of us are altogether strong nor altogether weak; for everyone there is an aspect wherein he is seen to be weak; for everyone there is a strength though it may be only a little peculiar strength or an undeveloped potentiality. The unconverted man uses his strength egotistically, emphasizes himself harshly against the

man who is weak where he is strong, and hates and conceals his own weakness. The Believer, in the measure of his belief, respects and seeks to understand the different strength of others and to use his own distinctive power with and not against his fellow men, in the common service of that synthesis to which each one of them is ultimately as necessary as he.

3.25. OF LOVE AND JUSTICE.

Now here the friend who has read the first draft of this book falls into something like a dispute with me. She does not, I think, like this dismissal of Justice from a primary place in my scheme of conduct.

"Justice," she asserts, "is an instinctive craving very nearly akin to the physical craving for equilibrium. Its social importance corresponds. It seeks to keep the individual's claims in such a position as to conflict as little as possible with those of others. Justice is the root instinct of all social feeling, of all feeling which does not take account of whether we like or dislike individuals, it is the feeling of an orderly position of our Ego towards others, merely considered AS others, and of all the Egos merely AS Egos towards each other. LOVE cannot be felt towards others AS others. Love is the expression of individual suitability and preference, its positive existence in some cases implies its absolute negation in others. Hence Love can never be the essential and root of social feeling, and hence the necessity for the instinct of abstract justice which takes no account of preferences or aversions. And here I may say that all application of the word LOVE to unknown, distant creatures, to mere OTHERS, is a perversion and a wasting of the word love, which, taking its origin in sexual and parental preference, always implies a preference of one object to the other. To love everybody is simply not to love at all. And it is JUST BECAUSE of the passionate preference instinctively felt for some individuals, that mankind requires the self-regarding and self-respecting passion of justice."

Now this is not altogether contradictory of what I hold. I disagree that because love necessarily expresses itself in preference, selecting this rather than that, that it follows necessarily that its absolute negation is implied in the non-selected cases. A man may go into the world as a child goes into a garden and gathers its hands full of the flowers that please it best and then desists, but only because its hands are full and not because it is at an end of the flowers that it can find delight in. So the man finds at last his memory and apprehensions glutted. It is not that he could not love those others. And I dispute that to love everybody is not to love at all. To love two people is

surely to love more than to love just one person, and so by way of three and four to a very large number. But if it is put that love must be a preference because of the mental limitations that forbid us to apprehend and understand more than a few of the multitudinous lovables of life, then I agree. For all the individuals and things and cases for which we have inadequate time and energy, we need a wholesale method — justice. That is exactly what I have said in the previous section.

3.26. THE WEAKNESS OF IMMATURITY.

One is apt to write and talk of strong and weak as though some were always strong, some always weak. But that is quite a misleading version of life. Apart from the fact that everyone is fluctuatingly strong and fluctuatingly weak, and weak and strong according to the quality we judge them by, we have to remember that we are all developing and learning and changing, gaining strength and at last losing it, from the cradle to the grave. We are all, to borrow the old scholastic term, pupil-teachers of Life; the term is none the less appropriate because the pupil-teacher taught badly and learnt under difficulties.

It may seem to be a crowning feat of platitude to write that "we have to remember" this, but it is overlooked in a whole mass of legal, social and economic literature. Those extraordinary imaginary cases as between a man A and a man B who start level, on a desert island or elsewhere, and work or do not work, or save or do not save, become the basis of immense schemes of just arrangement which soar up confidently and serenely regardless of the fact that never did anything like that equal start occur; that from the beginning there were family groups and old heads and young heads, help, guidance and sacrifice, and those who had learnt and those who had still to learn, jumbled together in confused transactions. Deals, tradings and so forth are entirely secondary aspects of these primaries, and the attempt to get an idea of abstract relationship by beginning upon a secondary issue is the fatal pervading fallacy in all these regions of thought. At the present moment the average age of the world is I suppose about 21 or 22, the normal death somewhen about 44 or 45, that is to say nearly half the world is "under age," green, inexperienced, demanding help, easily misled and put in the wrong and betrayed. Yet the younger moiety, if we do indeed assume life's object is a collective synthesis, is more important than the older, and every older person bound to be something of a guardian to the younger. It follows directly from the fundamental beliefs I have assumed that we are missing the most important aspects of life if we are not directly or indirectly serving the young, helping them

individually or collectively. Just in the measure that one's living falls away from that, do we fall away from life into a mere futility of existence, and approach the state, the extraordinary and wonderful middle state of (for example) those extinct and entirely damned old gentlemen one sees and hears eating and sleeping in every comfortable London club.

That constructive synthetic purpose which I have made the ruling idea in my scheme of conduct may be indeed completely restated in another form, a form I adopted for a book I wrote some years ago called "Mankind in the Making." In this I pointed out that "Life is a tissue of births";

"and if the whole of life is an evolving succession of births, then not only must a man in his individual capacity (physically as parent, doctor, food dealer, food carrier, home builder, protector; or mentally as teacher, news dealer, author, preacher) contribute to births and growths and the fine future of mankind, but the collective aspects of man, his social and political organizations must also be, in the essence, organizations that more or less profitably and more or less intentionally set themselves towards this end. They are finally concerned with the birth, and with the sound development towards still better births, of human lives, just as every implement in the toolshed of a seedsman's nursery, even the hoe and the roller, is concerned finally with the seeding and with the sound development towards still better seeding of plants. The private and personal motive of the seedsman in procuring and using these tools may be avarice, ambition, a religious belief in the saving efficacy of nursery keeping or a simple passion for bettering flowers, that does not affect the definite final purpose of his outfit of tools.

"And just as we might judge completely and criticize and improve that outfit from an attentive study of the welfare of plants, and with an entire disregard of his remoter motives, so we may judge all collective human enterprises from the standpoint of an attentive study of human births and development. ANY COLLECTIVE HUMAN ENTERPRISE, INSTITUTION, MOVEMENT, PARTY OR STATE, IS TO BE JUDGED AS A WHOLE AND COMPLETELY, AS IT CONDUCES MORE OR LESS TO WHOLESOME AND HOPEFUL BIRTHS, AND ACCORDING TO

THE QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ADVANCE DUE TO ITS INFLUENCE MADE BY EACH GENERATION OF CITIZENS BORN UNDER ITS INFLUENCE TOWARDS A HIGHER AND AMPLER STANDARD OF LIFE."

And individual conduct, quite as much as collective affairs, comes under the same test. We are guides and school builders, helpers and influences every hour of our lives, and by that standard we can and must judge all our ways of living.

3.27. POSSIBILITY OF A NEW ETIQUETTE.

These two ideas, firstly the pupil-teacher parental idea and secondly the democratic idea (that is to say the idea of an equal ultimate significance), the second correcting any tendency in the first to pedagogic arrogance and tactful concealments, do I think give, when taken together, the general attitude a right-living man will take to his individual fellow creature. They play against each other, providing elements of contradiction and determining a balanced course. It seems to me to follow necessarily from my fundamental beliefs that the Believer will tend to be and want to be and seek to be friendly to, and interested in, all sorts of people, and truthful and helpful and hating concealment. To be that with any approach to perfection demands an intricate and difficult effort, introspection to the hilt of one's power, a saving natural gift; one has to avoid pedantry, aggression, brutality, amiable tiresomeness — there are pitfalls on every side. The more one thinks about other people the more interesting and pleasing they are; I am all for kindly gossip and knowing things about them, and all against the silly and limiting hardness of soul that will not look into one's fellows nor go out to them. The use and justification of most literature, of fiction, verse, history, biography, is that it lets us into understandings and the suggestion of human possibilities. The general purpose of intercourse is to get as close as one can to the realities of the people one meets, and to give oneself to them just so far as possible.

From that I think there arises naturally a newer etiquette that would set aside many of the rigidities of procedure that keep people apart to-day. There is a fading prejudice against asking personal questions, against talking about oneself or one's immediate personal interests, against discussing religion and politics and any such keenly felt matter. No doubt it is necessary at times to protect oneself against clumsy and stupid familiarities, against noisy and inattentive egotists, against intriguers and liars, but only in the last resort do such breaches of patience seem justifiable to me; for the most part our traditions of speech and intercourse altogether overdo separations, the preservation of distances and protective devices in

general.

3.28. SEX.

So far I have ignored the immense importance of Sex in our lives and for the most part kept the discussion so generalized as to apply impartially to women and men. But now I have reached a point when this great boundary line between two halves of the world and the intense and intimate personal problems that play across it must be faced.

For not only must we bend our general activities and our intellectual life to the conception of a human synthesis, but out of our bodies and emotional possibilities we have to make the new world bodily and emotionally. To the test of that we have to bring all sorts of questions that agitate us to-day, the social and political equality and personal freedom of women, the differing code of honour for the sexes, the controls and limitations to set upon love and desire. If, for example, it is for the good of the species that a whole half of its individuals should be specialized and subordinated to the physical sexual life, as in certain phases of human development women have tended to be, then certainly we must do nothing to prevent that. We have set aside the conception of Justice as in any sense a countervailing idea to that of the synthetic process.

And it is well to remember that for the whole of sexual conduct there is quite conceivably no general simple rule. It is quite possible that, as Metchnikoff maintains in his extraordinarily illuminating "Nature of Man," we are dealing with an irresolvable tangle of disharmonies. We have passions that do not insist upon their physiological end, desires that may be prematurely vivid in childhood, a fantastic curiosity, old needs of the ape but thinly overlaid by the acquisitions of the man, emotions that jar with physical impulses, inexplicable pains and diseases. And not only have we to remember that we are dealing with disharmonies that may at the very best be only patched together, but we are dealing with matters in which the element of idiosyncrasy is essential, insisting upon an incalculable flexibility in any rule we make, unless we are to take types and indeed whole classes of personality and write them down as absolutely bad and fit only for suppression and restraint.

And on the mental side we are further perplexed by the extraordinary suggestibility of human beings. In sexual matters there seems to me — and I think I share a general ignorance here — to be no directing instinct at all, but only an instinct to do something generally sexual; there are almost equally powerful desires to do right and not to act under compulsion. The specific forms of conduct imposed upon these instincts and desires depend upon a vast confusion of suggestions, institutions, conventions, ways of putting things. We are dealing therefore with problems ineradicably complex, varying endlessly in their instances, and changing as we deal with them. I am inclined to think that the only really profitable discussion of sexual matters is in terms of individuality, through the novel, the lyric, the play, autobiography or biography of the frankest sort. But such generalizations as I can make I will.

To me it seems manifest that sexual matters may be discussed generally in at least three permissible and valid ways, of which the consideration of the world as a system of births and education is only the dominant chief. There is next the question of the physical health and beauty of the community and how far sexual rules and customs affect that, and thirdly the question of the mental and moral atmosphere in which sexual conventions and laws must necessarily be an important factor. It is alleged that probably in the case of men, and certainly in the case of women, some sexual intercourse is a necessary phase in existence; that without it there is an incompleteness, a failure in the life cycle, a real wilting and failure of energy and vitality and the development of morbid states. And for most of us half the friendships and intimacies from which we derive the daily interest and sustaining force in our lives, draw mysterious elements from sexual attraction, and depend and hesitate upon our conception of the liberties and limits we must give to that force.

3.29. THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE.

The individual attitudes of men to women and of women to men are necessarily determined to a large extent by certain general ideas of relationship, by institutions and conventions. One of the most important and debatable of these is whether we are to consider and treat women as citizens and fellows, or as beings differing mentally from men and grouped in positions of at least material dependence to individual men. Our decision in that direction will affect all our conduct from the larger matters down to the smallest points of deportment; it will affect even our manner of address and determine whether when we speak to a woman we shall be as frank and unaffected as with a man or touched with a faint suggestion of the reserves of a cat which does not wish to be suspected of wanting to steal the milk.

Now so far as that goes it follows almost necessarily from my views upon aristocracy and democracy that I declare for the conventional equality of women, that is to say for the determination to make neither sex nor any sexual characteristic a standard of superiority or inferiority, for the view that a woman is a person as important and necessary, as much to be consulted, and entitled to as much freedom of action as a man. I admit that this decision is a choice into which temperament enters, that I cannot produce compelling reasons why anyone else should adopt my view. I can produce considerations in support of my view, that is all. But they are so implicit in all that has gone before that I will not trouble to detail them here.

The conception of equality and fellowship between men and women is an idea at least as old as Plato and one that has recurred wherever civilization has reached a phase in which men and women were sufficiently released from militant and economic urgency to talk and read and think. But it has never yet been, at least in the historical period and in any but isolated social groups, a working structural idea. The working structural idea is the Patriarchal Family in which the woman is inferior and submits herself and is subordinated to the man, the head of the family.

We live in a constantly changing development and modification of that tradition. It is well to bring that factor of constant change into mind at the outset of this discussion and to keep it there. To forget it, and it is commonly forgotten, is to falsify every issue. Marriage and the Family are perennially fluctuating institutions, and probably scarcely anything in modern life is changing so much; they are in their legal constitution or their moral and emotional quality profoundly different things from what they were a hundred years ago. A woman who marries nowadays marries, if one may put it quantitatively, far less than she did even half a century ago; the married woman's property act, for example, has revolutionized the economic relationship; her husband has lost his right to assault her and he cannot even compel her to cohabit with him if she refuses to do so. Legal separations and divorces have come to modify the quality and logical consequences of the bond. The rights of parent over the child have been even more completely qualified. The State has come in as protector and educator of the children, taking over personal powers and responsibilities that have been essential to the family institution ever since the dawn of history. It inserts itself more and more between child and parent. It invades what were once the most sacred intimacies, and the Salvation Army is now promoting legislation to invade those overcrowded homes in which children (it is estimated to the number of thirty or forty thousand) are living as I write, daily witnesses of their mother's prostitution or in constant danger of incestuous attack from drunken fathers and brothers. And finally as another indication of profound differences, births were almost universally accidental a hundred years ago; they are now in an increasing number of families controlled and deliberate acts of will. In every one of their relations do Marriage and the Family change and continue to change.

But the inherent defectiveness of the human mind which my metaphysical book sets itself to analyze, does lead it constantly to speak of Marriage and the Family as things as fixed and unalterable as, let us say, the characteristics of oxygen. One is asked, Do you believe in Marriage and the Family? as if it was a case of either having or not having some definite thing. Socialists are accused of being "against the Family," as if it were not the case that Socialists,

Individualists, high Anglicans and Roman Catholics are ALL against Marriage and the Family as these institutions exist at the present time. But once we have realized the absurdity of this absolute treatment, then it should become clear that with it goes most of the fabric of right and wrong, and nearly all those arbitrary standards by which we classify people into moral and immoral. Those last words are used when as a matter of fact we mean either conforming or failing to conform to changing laws and developing institutional customs we may or may not consider right or wrong. Their use imparts a flavour of essential wrong-doing and obliquity into acts and relations that may be in many cases no more than social indiscipline, which may be even conceivably a courageous act of defiance to an obsolescent limitation. Such, until a little while ago, was a man's cohabitation with his deceased wife's sister. This, which was scandalous yesterday, is now a legally honourable relationship, albeit I believe still regarded by the high Anglican as incestuous wickedness.

Now I will not deal here with the institutional changes that are involved in that general scheme of progress called Socialism. I have discussed the relation of Socialism to Marriage and the Family quite fully in my "New Worlds for Old" ("New Worlds for Old" (A. Constable and Co., 1908).) and to that I must refer the reader. Therein he will see how the economic freedom and independent citizenship of women, and indeed also the welfare of the whole next generation, hang on the idea of endowing motherhood, and he will find too how much of the nature of the marriage contract is outside the scope of Socialist proposals altogether.

Apart from the broad proposals of Socialism, as a matter of personal conviction quite outside the scope of Socialism altogether, I am persuaded of the need of much greater facilities of divorce than exist at present, divorce on the score of mutual consent, of faithlessness, of simple cruelty, of insanity, habitual vice or the prolonged imprisonment of either party. And this being so I find it impossible to condemn on any ground, except that it is "breaking ranks" and making a confusion, those who by anticipating such wide facilities as I propose have sinned by existing standards. How far and in what manner such breaking of ranks is to be condoned I will

presently discuss. But it is clear it is an offence of a different nature from actions one believes to be in themselves and apart from the law reprehensible things.

But my scepticisms about the current legal institutions and customary code are not exhausted by these modifications I have suggested. I believe firmly in some sort of marriage, that is to say an open declaration of the existence of sexual relations between a man and a woman, because I am averse to all unnecessary secrecies and because the existence of these peculiarly intimate relationships affects everybody about the persons concerned. It is ridiculous to say as some do that sexual relations between two people affect no one but themselves unless a child is born. They do, because they tend to break down barriers and set up a peculiar emotional partnership. It is a partnership that kept secret may work as anti-socially as a secret business partnership or a secret preferential railway tariff. And I believe too in the general social desirability of the family group, the normal group of father, mother and children, and in the extreme efficacy in the normal human being of the blood link and pride link between parent and child in securing loving care and upbringing for the child. But this clear adhesion to Marriage and to the Family grouping about mother and father does not close the door to a large series of exceptional cases which our existing institutions and customs ignore or crush.

For example, monogamy in general seems to me to be clearly indicated (as doctors say) by the fact that there are not several women in the world for every man, but quite as clearly does it seem necessary to recognize that the fact that there are (or were in 1901) 21,436,107 females to 20,172,984 males in our British community seems to condemn our present rigorous insistence upon monogamy, unless feminine celibacy has its own delights. But, as I have said, it is now largely believed that the sexual life of a woman is more important to her than his sexual life to a man and less easily ignored.

It is true also on the former side that for the great majority of people one knows personally, any sort of household but a monogamous one conjures up painful and unpleasant visions. The ordinary civilized woman and the ordinary civilized man are alike obsessed with the idea of meeting and possessing one peculiar

intimate person, one special exclusive lover who is their very own, and a third person of either sex cannot be associated with that couple without an intolerable sense of privacy and confidence and possession destroyed. It is difficult to imagine a second wife in a home who would not be and feel herself to be a rather excluded and inferior person. But that does not abolish the possibility that there are exceptional people somewhere capable of, to coin a phrase, triangular mutuality, and I do not see why we should either forbid or treat with bitterness or hostility a grouping we may consider so inadvisable or so unworkable as never to be adopted, if three people of their own free will desire it.

The peculiar defects of the human mind when they approach these questions of sex are reinforced by passions peculiar to the topic, and it is perhaps advisable to point out that to discuss these possibilities is not the same thing as to urge the married reader to take unto himself or herself a second partner or a series of additional partners. We are trained from the nursery to become secretive, muddle-headed and vehemently conclusive upon sexual matters, until at last the editors of magazines blush at the very phrase and long to put a petticoat over the page that bears it. Yet our rebellious natures insist on being interested by it. It seems to me that to judge these large questions from the personal point of view, to insist upon the whole world without exception living exactly in the manner that suits oneself or accords with one's emotional imagination and the forms of delicacy in which one has been trained, is not the proper way to deal with them. I want as a sane social organizer to get just as many contented and law-abiding citizens as possible; I do not want to force people who would otherwise be useful citizens into rebellion, concealments and the dark and furtive ways of vice, because they may not love and marry as their temperaments command, and so I want to make the meshes of the law as wide as possible. But the common man will not understand this yet, and seeks to make the meshes just as small as his own private case demands.

Then marriage, to resume my main discussion, does not necessarily mean cohabitation. All women who desire children do not want to be entrusted with their upbringing. Some women are sexual and philoprogenitive without being sedulously maternal, and

some are maternal without much or any sexual passion. There are men and women in the world now, great allies, fond and passionate lovers who do not live nor want to live constantly together. It is at least conceivable that there are women who, while desiring offspring, do not want to abandon great careers for the work of maternity, women again who would be happiest managing and rearing children in manless households that they might even share with other women friends, and men to correspond with these who do not wish to live in a household with wife and children. I submit, these temperaments exist and have a right to exist in their own way. But one must recognize that the possibility of these departures from the normal type of household opens up other possibilities. The polygamy that is degrading or absurd under one roof assumes a different appearance when one considers it from the point of view of people whose habits of life do not centre upon an isolated home.

All the relations I have glanced at above do as a matter of fact exist to-day, but shamefully and shabbily, tainted with what seems to me an unmerited and unnecessary ignominy. The punishment for bigamy seems to me insane in its severity, contrasted as it is with our leniency to the common seducer. Better ruin a score of women, says the law, than marry two. I do not see why in these matters there should not be much ampler freedom than there is, and this being so I can hardly be expected to condemn with any moral fervour or exclude from my society those who have seen fit to behave by what I believe may be the standards of A.D. 2000 instead of by the standards of 1850. These are offences, so far as they are offences, on an altogether different footing from murder, or exacting usury, or the sweating of children, or cruelty, or transmitting diseases, or unveracity, or commercial or intellectual or physical prostitution, or any such essentially grave anti-social deeds. We must distinguish between sins on the one hand and mere errors of judgment and differences of taste from ourselves. To draw up harsh laws, to practise exclusions against everyone who does not see fit to duplicate one's own blameless home life, is to waste a number of courageous and exceptional persons in every generation, to drive many of them into a forced alliance with real crime and embittered rebellion against custom and the law.

3.30. CONDUCT IN RELATION TO THE THING THAT IS.

But the reader must keep clear in his mind the distinction between conduct that is right or permissible in itself and conduct that becomes either inadvisable or mischievous and wrong because of the circumstances about it. There is no harm under ordinary conditions in asking a boy with a pleasant voice to sing a song in the night, but the case is altered altogether if you have reason to suppose that a Red Indian is lying in wait a hundred yards off, holding a loaded rifle and ready to fire at the voice. It is a valid objection to many actions that I do not think objectionable in themselves, that to do them will discharge a loaded prejudice into the heart of my friend — or even into my own. I belong to the world and my work, and I must not lightly throw my time, my power, my influence away. For a splendid thing any risk or any defiance may be justifiable, but is it a sufficiently splendid thing? So far as he possibly can a man must conform to common prejudices, prevalent customs and all laws, whatever his estimate of them may be. But he must at the same time to his utmost to change what he thinks to be wrong.

And I think that conformity must be honest conformity. There is no more anti-social act than secret breaches, and only some very urgent and exceptional occasion justifies even the unveracity of silence about the thing done. If your personal convictions bring you to a breach, let it be an open breach, let there be no misrepresentation of attitudes, no meanness, no deception of honourable friends. Of course an open breach need not be an ostentatious breach; to do what is right to yourself without fraud or concealment is one thing, to make a challenge and aggression quite another. Your friends may understand and sympathize and condone, but it does not lie upon you to force them to identify themselves with your act and situation. But better too much openness than too little. Squalid intrigue was the shadow of the old intolerably narrow order; it is a shadow we want to illuminate out of existence. Secrets will be contraband in the new time.

And if it chances to you to feel called upon to make a breach with the institution or custom or prejudice that is, remember that doing so is your own affair. You are going to take risks and specialize as an experiment. You must not expect other people about you to share the consequences of your dash forward. You must not drag in confidants and secondaries. You must fight your little battle in front on your own responsibility, unsupported — and take the consequences without repining.

3.31. CONDUCT TOWARDS TRANSGRESSORS.

So far as breaches of the prohibitions and laws of marriage go, to me it seems they are to be tolerated by us in others just in the measure that, within the limits set by discretion, they are frank and truthful and animated by spontaneous passion and pervaded by the quality of beauty. I hate the vulgar sexual intriguer, man or woman, and the smart and shallow atmosphere of unloving lust and vanity about the type as I hate few kinds of human life; I would as lief have a polecat in my home as this sort of person; and every sort of prostitute except the victim of utter necessity I despise, even though marriage be the fee. But honest lovers should be I think a charge and pleasure for us. We must judge each pair as we can.

One thing renders a sexual relationship incurably offensive to others and altogether wrong, and that is cruelty. But who can define cruelty? How far is the leaving of a third person to count as cruelty? There again I hesitate to judge. To love and not be loved is a fate for which it seems no one can be blamed; to lose love and to change one's loving belongs to a subtle interplay beyond analysis or control, but to be deceived or mocked or deliberately robbed of love, that at any rate is an abominable wrong.

In all these matters I perceive a general rule is in itself a possible instrument of cruelty. I set down what I can in the way of general principles, but it all leaves off far short of the point of application. Every case among those we know I think we moderns must judge for ourselves. Where there is doubt, there I hold must be charity. And with regard to strangers, manifestly our duty is to avoid inquisitorial and uncharitable acts.

This is as true of financial and economic misconduct as of sexual misconduct, of ways of living that are socially harmful and of political faith. We are dealing with people in a maladjusted world to whom absolute right living is practically impossible, because there are no absolutely right institutions and no simple choice of good or evil, and we have to balance merits and defects in every case.

Some people are manifestly and essentially base and self-seeking and regardless of the happiness and welfare of their fellows, some in business affairs and politics as others in love. Some wrong-doers again are evidently so through heedlessness, through weakness, timidity or haste. We have to judge and deal with each sort upon no clear issue, but upon impressions they have given us of their spirit and purpose. We owe it to them and ourselves not to judge too rashly or too harshly, but for all that we are obliged to judge and take sides, to avoid the malignant and exclude them from further opportunity, to help and champion the cheated and the betrayed, to forgive and aid the repentant blunderer and by mercy to save the lesser sinner from desperate alliance with the greater. That is the broad rule, and it is as much as we have to go upon until the individual case comes before us.

BOOK THE FOURTH — SOME PERSONAL THINGS.

4.1. PERSONAL LOVE AND LIFE.

It has been most convenient to discuss all that might be generalized about conduct first, to put in the common background, the vistas and atmosphere of the scene. But a man's relations are of two orders, and these questions of rule and principle are over and about and round more vivid and immediate interests. A man is not simply a relationship between his individual self and the race, society, the world and God's Purpose. Close about him are persons, friends and enemies and lovers and beloved people. He desires them, lusts after them, craves their affection, needs their presence, abhors them, hates and desires to limit and suppress them. This is for most of us the flesh and blood of life. We go through the noble scene of the world neither alone, nor alone with God, nor serving an undistinguishable multitude, but in a company of individualized people.

Here is a system of motives and passions, imperious and powerful, which follows no broad general rule and in which each man must needs be a light unto himself upon innumerable issues. I am satisfied that these personal urgencies are neither to be suppressed nor crudely nor ruthlessly subordinated to the general issues. Religious and moral teachers are apt to make this part of life either too detached or too insignificant. They teach it either as if it did not matter or as if it ought not to matter. Indeed our individual friends and enemies stand between us and hide or interpret for us all the larger things. Few of us can even worship alone. We must feel others, and those not strangers, kneeling beside us.

I have already spoken under the heading of Beliefs of the part that the idea of a Mediator has played and can play in the religious life. I have pointed out how the imagination of men has sought and found in certain personalities, historical or fictitious, a bridge between the blood-warm private life and the intolerable spaciousness of right and wrong. The world is full of such figures and their images, Christ and Mary and the Saints and all the lesser, dearer gods of heathendom. These things and the human passion for living leaders and heroes and leagues and brotherhoods all confess the mediatory role, the mediatory possibilities of personal love between the individual and

the great synthesis of which he is a part and agent. The great synthesis may become incarnate in personal love, and personal love lead us directly to universal service.

I write “may” and temper that sentence to the quality of a possibility alone. This is only true for those who believe, for those who have faith, whose lives have been unified, who have found Salvation. For those whose lives are chaotic, personal loves must also be chaotic; this or that passion, malice, a jesting humour, some physical lust, gratified vanity, egotistical pride, will rule and limit the relationship and colour its ultimate futility. But the Believer uses personal love and sustains himself by personal love. It is his provender, the meat and drink of his campaign.

4.2. THE NATURE OF LOVE.

It is well perhaps to look a little into the factors that make up Love.

Love does not seem to me to be a simple elemental thing. It is, as I have already said, one of the vicious tendencies of the human mind to think that whatever can be given a simple name can be abstracted as a single something in a state of quintessential purity. I have pointed out that this is not true of Harmony or Beauty, and that these are synthetic things. You bring together this which is not beautiful and that which is not beautiful, and behold! Beauty! So also Love is, I think, a synthetic thing. One observes this and that, one is interested and stirred; suddenly the metal fuses, the dry bones live! One loves.

Almost every interest in one's being may be a factor in the love synthesis. But apart from the overflowing of the parental instinct that makes all that is fine and delicate and young dear to us and to be cherished, there are two main factors that bring us into love with our fellows. There is first the emotional elements in our nature that arise out of the tribal necessity, out of a fellowship in battle and hunting, drinking and feasting, out of the needs and excitements and delights of those occupations; and there is next the intenser narrower desirings and gratitudes, satisfactions and expectations that come from sexual intercourse. Now both these factors originate in physical needs and consummate in material acts, and it is well to remember that this great growth of love in life roots there, and, it may be, dies when its roots are altogether cut away.

At its lowest, love is the mere sharing of, or rather the desire to share, pleasure and excitement, the excitements of conflict or lust or what not. I think that the desire to partake, the desire to merge one's individual identity with another's, remains a necessary element in all personal loves. It is a way out of ourselves, a breaking down of our individual separation, just as hate is an intensification of that. Personal love is the narrow and intense form of that breaking down, just as what I call Salvation is its widest, most extensive form. We cast aside our reserves, our secrecies, our defences; we open ourselves; touches that would be intolerable from common people become a mystery of delight, acts of self-abasement and self-sacrifice

are charged with symbolical pleasure. We cannot tell which of us is me, which you. Our imprisoned egoism looks out through this window, forgets its walls, and is for those brief moments released and universal.

For most of us the strain of primordial sexual emotion in our loves is very strong. Many men can love only women, many women only men, and some can scarcely love at all without bodily desire. But the love of fellowship is a strong one also, and for many, love is most possible and easy when the thought of physical lovemaking has been banished. Then the lovers will pursue interests together, will work together or journey together. So we have the warm fellowships of men for men and women for women. But even then it may happen that men friends together will talk of women, and women friends of men. Nevertheless we have also the strong and altogether sexless glow of those who have fought well together, or drunk or jested together or hunted a common quarry.

Now it seems to me that the Believer must also be a Lover, that he will love as much as he can and as many people as he can, and in many moods and ways. As I have said already, many of those who have taught religion and morality in the past have been neglectful or unduly jealous of the intenser personal loves. They have been, to put it by a figure, urgent upon the road to the ocean. To that they would lead us, though we come to it shivering, fearful and unprepared, and they grudge it that we should strip and plunge into the wayside stream. But all streams, all rivers come from this ocean in the beginning, lead to it in the end.

It is the essential fact of love as I conceive it, that it breaks down the boundaries of self. That love is most perfect which does most completely merge its lovers. But no love is altogether perfect, and for most men and women love is no more than a partial and temporary lowering of the barriers that keep them apart. With many, the attraction of love seems always to fall short of what I hold to be its end, it draws people together in the most momentary of self-forgetfulnesses, and for the rest seems rather to enhance their egotisms and their difference. They are secret from one another even in their embraces. There is a sort of love that is egotistical lust almost regardless of its partner, a sort of love that is mere fleshless pride and

vanity at a white heat. There is the love-making that springs from sheer boredom, like a man reading a story-book to fill an hour. These inferior loves seek to accomplish an agreeable act, or they seek the pursuit or glory of a living possession, they aim at gratification or excitement or conquest. True love seeks to be mutual and easy-minded, free of doubts, but these egotistical mockeries of love have always resentment in them and hatred in them and a watchful distrust. Jealousy is the measure of self-love in love.

True love is a synthetic thing, an outcome of life, it is not a universal thing. It is the individualized correlative of Salvation; like that it is a synthetic consequence of conflicts and confusions. Many people do not desire or need Salvation, they cannot understand it, much less achieve it; for them chaotic life suffices. So too, many never, save for some rare moment of illumination, desire or feel love. Its happy abandonment, its careless self-giving, these things are mere foolishness to them. But much has been said and sung of faith and love alike, and in their confused greed these things also they desire and parody. So they act worship and make a fine fuss of their devotions. And also they must have a few half-furtive, half-flaunting fallen love-triumphs prowling the secret backstreets of their lives, they know not why.

(In setting this down be it remembered I am doing my best to tell what is in me because I am trying to put my whole view of life before the reader without any vital omissions. These are difficult matters to explain because they have no clear outlines; one lets in a hard light suddenly upon things that have lurked in warm intimate shadows, dim inner things engendering motives. I am not only telling quasi-secret things but exploring them for myself. They are none the less real and important because they are elusive.)

True love I think is not simply felt but known. Just as Salvation as I conceive it demands a fine intelligence and mental activity, so love calls to brain and body alike and all one's powers. There is always elaborate thinking and dreaming in love. Love will stir imaginations that have never stirred before.

Love may be, and is for the most part, one-sided. It is the going out from oneself that is love, and not the accident of its return. It is the expedition whether it fail or succeed.

But an expedition starves that comes to no port. Love always seeks mutuality and grows by the sense of responses, or we should love beautiful inanimate things more passionately than we do. Failing a full return, it makes the most of an inadequate return. Failing a sustained return it welcomes a temporary coincidence. Failing a return it finds support in accepted sacrifices. But it seeks a full return, and the fulness of life has come only to those who, loving, have met the lover.

I am trying to be as explicit as possible in thus writing about Love. But the substance in which one works here is emotion that evades definition, poetic flashes and figures of speech are truer than prosaic statements. Body and the most sublimated ecstasy pass into one another, exchange themselves and elude every net of words we cast.

I have put out two ideas of unification and self-devotion, extremes upon a scale one from another; one of these ideas is that devotion to the Purpose in things I have called Salvation; the other that devotion to some other most fitting and satisfying individual which is passionate love, the former extensive as the universe, the latter the intensest thing in life. These, it seems to me, are the boundary and the living capital of the empire of life we rule.

All empires need a comprehending boundary, but many have not one capital but many chief cities, and all have cities and towns and villages beyond the capital. It is an impoverished capital that has no dependent towns, and it is a poor love that will not overflow in affection and eager kindly curiosity and sympathy and the search for fresh mutuality. To love is to go living radiantly through the world. To love and be loved is to be fearless of experience and rich in the power to give.

4.3. THE WILL TO LOVE.

Love is a thing to a large extent in its beginnings voluntary and controllable, and at last quite involuntary. It is so hedged about by obligations and consequences, real and artificial, that for the most part I think people are overmuch afraid of it. And also the tradition of sentiment that suggests its forms and guides it in the world about us, is far too strongly exclusive. It is not so much when love is glowing as when it is becoming habitual that it is jealous for itself and others. Lovers a little exhausting their mutual interest find a fillip in an alliance against the world. They bury their talent of understanding and sympathy to return it duly in a clean napkin. They narrow their interest in life lest the other lover should misunderstand their amplitude as disloyalty.

Our institutions and social customs seem all to assume a definiteness of preference, a singleness and a limitation of love, which is not psychologically justifiable. People do not, I think, fall naturally into agreement with these assumptions; they train themselves to agreement. They take refuge from experiences that seem to carry with them the risk at least of perplexing situations, in a theory of barred possibilities and locked doors. How far this shy and cultivated irresponsive lovelessness towards the world at large may not carry with it the possibility of compensating intensities, I do not know. Quite equally probable is a starvation of one's emotional nature.

The same reasons that make me decide against mere wanton abstinences make me hostile to the common convention of emotional indifference to most of the charming and interesting people one encounters. In pleasing and being pleased, in the mutual interest, the mutual opening out of people to one another, is the key of the door to all sweet and mellow living.

4.4. LOVE AND DEATH.

For he who has faith, death, so far as it is his own death, ceases to possess any quality of terror. The experiment will be over, the rinsed beaker returned to its shelf, the crystals gone dissolving down the waste-pipe; the duster sweeps the bench. But the deaths of those we love are harder to understand or bear.

It happens that of those very intimate with me I have lost only one, and that came slowly and elaborately, a long gradual separation wrought by the accumulation of years and mental decay, but many close friends and many whom I have counted upon for sympathy and fellowship have passed out of my world. I miss such a one as Bob Stevenson, that luminous, extravagant talker, that eager fantastic mind. I miss him whenever I write. It is less pleasure now to write a story since he will never read it, much less give me a word of praise for it. And I miss York Powell's friendly laughter and Henley's exuberant welcome. They made a warmth that has gone, those men. I can understand why I, with my fumbling lucidities and explanations, have to finish up presently and go, expressing as I do the mood of a type and of a time; but not those radiant presences.

And the gap these men have left, these men with whom after all I only sat now and again, or wrote to in a cheerful mood or got a letter from at odd times, gives me some measure of the thing that happens, that may happen, when the mind that is always near one's thoughts, the person who moves to one's movement and lights nearly all the common flow of events about one with the reminder of fellowship and meaning — ceases.

Faith which feeds on personal love must at last prevail over it. If Faith has any virtue it must have it here when we find ourselves bereft and isolated, facing a world from which the light has fled leaving it bleak and strange. We live for experience and the race; these individual interludes are just helps to that; the warm inn in which we lovers met and refreshed was but a halt on a journey. When we have loved to the intensest point we have done our best with each other. To keep to that image of the inn, we must not sit overlong at our wine beside the fire. We must go on to new

experiences and new adventures. Death comes to part us and turn us out and set us on the road again.

But the dead stay where we leave them.

I suppose that is the real good in death, that they do stay; that it makes them immortal for us. Living they were mortal. But now they can never spoil themselves or be spoilt by change again. They have finished — for us indeed just as much as themselves. There they sit for ever, rounded off and bright and done. Beside these clear and certain memories I have of my dead, my impressions of the living are vague provisional things.

And since they are gone out of the world and become immortal memories in me, I feel no need to think of them as in some disembodied and incomprehensible elsewhere, changed and yet not done. I want actual immortality for those I love as little as I desire it for myself.

Indeed I dislike the idea that those I have loved are immortal in any real sense; it conjures up dim uncomfortable drifting phantoms, that have no kindred with the flesh and blood I knew. I would as soon think of them trailing after the tides up and down the Channel outside my window. Bob Stevenson for me is a presence utterly concrete, slouching, eager, quick-eyed, intimate and profound, carelessly dressed (at Sandgate he commonly wore a little felt hat that belonged to his son) and himself, himself, indissoluble matter and spirit, down to the heels of his boots. I cannot conceive of his as any but a concrete immortality. If he lives, he lives as I knew him and clothed as I knew him and with his unalterable voice, in a heaven of daedal flowers or a hell of ineffectual flame; he lives, dreaming and talking and explaining, explaining it all very earnestly and preposterously, so I picture him, into the ear of the amused, incredulous, principal person in the place.

I have a real hatred for those dreary fools and knaves who would have me suppose that Henley, that crippled Titan, may conceivably be tapping at the underside of a mahogany table or scratching stifled incoherence into a locked slate! Henley tapping! — for the professional purposes of Sludge! If he found himself among the circumstances of a spiritualist seance he would, I know, instantly smash the table with that big fist of his. And as the splinters flew,

surely York Powell, out of the dead past from which he shines on me, would laugh that hearty laugh of his back into the world again.

Henley is nowhere now except that, red-faced and jolly like an October sunset, he leans over a gate at Worthing after a long day of picnicking at Chanctonbury Ring, or sits at his Woking table praising and quoting "The Admiral Bashville," or blue-shirted and wearing that hat that Nicholson has painted, is thrust and lugged, laughing and talking aside in his bath-chair, along the Worthing esplanade...

And Bob Stevenson walks for ever about a garden in Chiswick, talking in the dusk.

4.5. THE CONSOLATION OF FAILURE.

That parable of the talents I have made such free use of in this book has one significant defect. It gives but two cases, and three are possible. There was first the man who buried his talent, and of his condemnation we are assured. But those others all took their talents and used them courageously and came back with gain. Was that gain inevitable? Does courage always ensure us victory? because if that is so we can all be heroes and valour is the better part of discretion. Alas! the faith in such magic dies. What of the possible case of the man who took his two or three talents and invested them as best he could and was deceived or heedless and lost them, interest and principal together?

There is something harder to face than death, and that is the realization of failure and misdirected effort and wrong-doing. Faith is no Open Sesame to right-doing, much less is it the secret of success. The service of God on earth is no processional triumph. What if one does wrong so extremely as to condemn one's life, to make oneself part of the refuse and not of the building? Or what if one is misjudged, or it may be too pitilessly judged, and one's co-operation despised and the help one brought becomes a source of weakness? Or suppose that the fine scheme one made lies shattered or wrecked by one's own act, or through some hidden blemish one's offering is rejected and flung back and one is thrust out?

So in the end it may be you or I will find we have been anvil and not hammer in the Purpose of God.

Then indeed will come the time for Faith, for the last word of Faith, to say still steadfastly, disgraced or dying, defeated or discredited, that all is well: —

"This and not that was my appointed work, and this I had to be."

4.6. THE LAST CONFESSION.

So these broken confessions and statements of mood and attitude come to an end.

But at this end, since I have, I perceive, run a little into a pietistic strain, I must repeat again how provisional and personal I know all these things to be. I began by disavowing ultimates. My beliefs, my dogmas, my rules, they are made for my campaigning needs, like the knapsack and water-bottle of a Cockney soldier invading some stupendous mountain gorge. About him are fastnesses and splendours, torrents and cataracts, glaciers and untrodden snows. He comes tramping on heel-worn boots and ragged socks. Beauties and blue mysteries shine upon him and appeal to him, the enigma of beauty smiling the faint strange smile of Leonardo's Mona Lisa. He sees a light on the grass like music; and the blossom on the trees against the sky brings him near weeping. Such things come to him, give themselves to him. I do not know why he should not in response fling his shabby gear aside and behave like a god; I only know that he does not do so. His grunt of appreciation is absurd, his speech goes like a crippled thing — and withal, and partly by virtue of the knapsack and water-bottle, he is conqueror of the valley. The valley is his for the taking.

There is a duality in life that I cannot express except by such images as this, a duality so that we are at once absurd and full of sublimity, and most absurd when we are most anxious to render the real splendours that pervade us. This duplicity in life seems to me at times ineradicable, at times like the confusing of something essentially simple, like the duplication when one looks through a doubly refracting medium. You think in this latter mood that you have only to turn the crystal of Iceland spar about in order to have the whole thing plain. But you never get it plain. I have been doing my halting utmost to get down sincerely and simply my vision of life and duty. I have permitted myself no defensive restraints; I have shamelessly written my starkest, and it is plain to me that a smile that is not mine plays over my most urgent passages. There is a rebellious rippling of the grotesque under our utmost tragedy and gravity.

One's martialled phrases grimace as one turns, and wink at the reader. None the less they signify. Do you note how in this that I have written, such a word as Believer will begin to wear a capital letter and give itself solemn ridiculous airs? It does not matter. It carries its message for all that necessary superficial absurdity.

Thought has made me shameless. It does not matter at last at all if one is a little harsh or indelicate or ridiculous if that also is in the mystery of things.

Behind everything I perceive the smile that makes all effort and discipline temporary, all the stress and pain of life endurable. In the last resort I do not care whether I am seated on a throne or drunk or dying in a gutter. I follow my leading. In the ultimate I know, though I cannot prove my knowledge in any way whatever, that everything is right and all things mine.

THE END

FLOOR GAMES

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Section I

THE TOYS TO HAVE

The jolliest indoor games for boys and girls demand a floor, and the home that has no floor upon which games may be played falls so far short of happiness. It must be a floor covered with linoleum or cork carpet, so that toy soldiers and such-like will stand up upon it, and of a color and surface that will take and show chalk marks; the common green-colored cork carpet without a pattern is the best of all. It must be no highway to other rooms, and well lit and airy. Occasionally, alas! it must be scrubbed — and then a truce to Floor Games. Upon such a floor may be made an infinitude of imaginative games, not only keeping boys and girls happy for days together, but building up a framework of spacious and inspiring ideas in them for after life. The men of tomorrow will gain new strength from nursery floors. I am going to tell of some of these games and what is most needed to play them; I have tried them all and a score of others like them with my sons, and all of the games here illustrated have been set out by us. I am going to tell of them here because I think what we have done will interest other fathers and mothers, and perhaps be of use to them (and to uncles and such-like tributary sub-species of humanity) in buying presents for their own and other people's children.

Now, the toys we play with time after time, and in a thousand permutations and combinations, belong to four main groups. We have (1) SOLDIERS, and with these I class sailors, railway porters, civilians, and the lower animals generally, such as I will presently describe in greater detail; (2) BRICKS; (3) BOARDS and PLANKS; and (4) a lot of CLOCKWORK RAILWAY ROLLING-STOCK AND RAILS. Also there are certain minor objects — tin ships, Easter eggs, and the like — of which I shall make incidental mention, that like the kiwi and the duck-billed platypus refuse to be classified.

These we arrange and rearrange in various ways upon our floor, making a world of them. In doing so we have found out all sorts of pleasant facts, and also many undesirable possibilities; and very

probably our experience will help a reader here and there to the former and save him from the latter. For instance, our planks and boards, and what one can do with them, have been a great discovery. Lots of boys and girls seem to be quite without planks and boards at all, and there is no regular trade in them. The toyshops, we found, did not keep anything of the kind we wanted, and our boards, which we had to get made by a carpenter, are the basis of half the games we play. The planks and boards we have are of various sizes. We began with three of two yards by one; they were made with cross pieces like small doors; but these we found unnecessarily large, and we would not get them now after our present experience. The best thickness, we think, is an inch for the larger sizes and three-quarters and a half inch for the smaller; and the best sizes are a yard square, thirty inches square, two feet, and eighteen inches square — one or two of each, and a greater number of smaller ones, 18 x 9, 9 x 9, and 9 x 4-1/2. With the larger ones we make islands and archipelagos on our floor while the floor is a sea, or we make a large island or a couple on the Venice pattern, or we pile the smaller on the larger to make hills when the floor is a level plain, or they roof in railway stations or serve as bridges, in such manner as I will presently illustrate. And these boards of ours pass into our next most important possession, which is our box of bricks.

(But I was nearly forgetting to tell this, that all the thicker and larger of these boards have holes bored through them. At about every four inches is a hole, a little larger than an ordinary gimlet hole. These holes have their uses, as I will tell later, but now let me get on to the box of bricks.)

This, again, wasn't a toy-shop acquisition. It came to us by gift from two generous friends, unhappily growing up and very tall at that; and they had it from parents who were one of several families who shared in the benefit of a Good Uncle. I know nothing certainly of this man except that he was a Radford of Plymouth. I have never learned nor cared to learn of his commoner occupations, but certainly he was one of those shining and distinguished uncles that tower up at times above the common levels of humanity. At times, when we consider our derived and undeserved share of his inheritance and count the joys it gives us, we have projected half in jest and half in

earnest the putting together of a little exemplary book upon the subject of such exceptional men: Celebrated Uncles, it should be called; and it should stir up all who read it to some striving at least towards the glories of the avuncular crown. What this great benefactor did was to engage a deserving unemployed carpenter through an entire winter making big boxes of wooden bricks for the almost innumerable nephews and nieces with which an appreciative circle of brothers and sisters had blessed him. There are whole bricks 4-1/2 inches x 2-1/4 x 1-1/8; and there are quarters — called by those previous owners (who have now ascended to, we hope but scarcely believe, a happier life near the ceiling) "piggys." You note how these sizes fit into the sizes of the boards, and of each size — we have never counted them, but we must have hundreds. We can pave a dozen square yards of floor with them.

How utterly we despise the silly little bricks of the toyshops! They are too small to make a decent home for even the poorest lead soldiers, even if there were hundreds of them, and there are never enough, never nearly enough; even if you take one at a time and lay it down and say, "This is a house," even then there are not enough. We see rich people, rich people out of motor cars, rich people beyond the dreams of avarice, going into toyshops and buying these skimpy, sickly, ridiculous pseudo-boxes of bricklets, because they do not know what to ask for, and the toyshops are just the merciless mercenary enemies of youth and happiness — so far, that is, as bricks are concerned. Their unfortunate under-parented offspring mess about with these gifts, and don't make very much of them, and put them away; and you see their consequences in after life in the weakly-conceived villas and silly suburbs that people have built all round big cities. Such poor under-nourished nurseries must needs fall back upon the Encyclopedia Britannica, and even that is becoming flexible on India paper! But our box of bricks almost satisfies. With our box of bricks we can scheme and build, all three of us, for the best part of the hour, and still have more bricks in the box.

So much now for the bricks. I will tell later how we use cartridge paper and cardboard and other things to help in our and of the decorative make of plasticine. Of course, it goes without saying that we despise those foolish, expensive, made-up wooden and

pasteboard castles that are sold in shops — playing with them is like playing with somebody else's dead game in a state of rigor mortis. Let me now say a little about toy soldiers and the world to which they belong. Toy soldiers used to be flat, small creatures in my own boyhood, in comparison with the magnificent beings one can buy to-day. There has been an enormous improvement in our national physique in this respect. Now they stand nearly two inches high and look you broadly in the face, and they have the movable arms and alert intelligence of scientifically exercised men. You get five of them mounted or nine afoot in a box for a small price. We three like those of British manufacture best; other makes are of incompatible sizes, and we have a rule that saves much trouble, that all red coats belong to G. P. W., and all other colored coats to F. R. W., all gifts, bequests, and accidents notwithstanding. Also we have sailors; but, since there are no red-coated sailors, blue counts as red.

Then we have "beefeaters," (Footnote; The warders in the Tower of London are called "beefeaters"; the origin of the term is obscure.) Indians, Zulus, for whom there are special rules. We find we can buy lead dogs, cats, lions, tigers, horses, camels, cattle, and elephants of a reasonably corresponding size, and we have also several boxes of railway porters, and some soldiers we bought in Hesse-Darmstadt that we pass off on an unsuspecting home world as policemen. But we want civilians very badly. We found a box of German from an exaggerated curse of militarism, and even the grocer wears epaulettes. This might please Lord Roberts and Mr. Leo Maxse, but it certainly does not please us. I wish, indeed, that we could buy boxes of tradesmen: a blue butcher, a white baker with a loaf of standard bread, a merchant or so; boxes of servants, boxes of street traffic, smart sets, and so forth. We could do with a judge and lawyers, or a box of vestrymen. It is true that we can buy Salvation Army lasses and football players, but we are cold to both of these. We have, of course, boy scouts. With such boxes of civilians we could have much more fun than with the running, marching, swashbuckling soldiery that pervades us. They drive us to reviews; and it is only emperors, kings, and very silly small boys who can take an undying interest in uniforms and reviews.

And lastly, of our railways, let me merely remark here that we

have always insisted upon one uniform gauge and everything we buy fits into and develops our existing railway system. Nothing is more indicative of the wambling sort of parent and a coterie of witless, worthless uncles than a heap of railway toys of different gauges and natures in the children's playroom. And so, having told you of the material we have, let me now tell you of one or two games (out of the innumerable many) that we have played. Of course, in this I have to be a little artificial. Actual games of the kind I am illustrating here have been played by us, many and many a time, with joy and happy invention and no thought of publication. They have gone now, those games, into that vaguely luminous and iridescent into which happiness have tried out again points in world of memories all love-engendering must go. But we our best to set them and recall the good them here.

Section II

THE GAME OF THE WONDERFUL ISLANDS

In this game the floor is the sea. Half — rather the larger half because of some instinctive right of primogeniture — is assigned to the elder of my two sons (he is, as it were, its Olympian), and the other half goes to his brother. We distribute our boards about the sea in an archipelagic manner. We then dress our islands, objecting strongly to too close a scrutiny of our proceedings until we have done. Here, in the illustration, is such an archipelago ready for its explorers, or rather on the verge of exploration. There are altogether four islands, two to the reader's right and two to the left, and the nearer ones are the more northerly; it is as many as we could get into the camera. The northern island to the right is most advanced in civilization, and is chiefly temple. That temple has a flat roof, diversified by domes made of half Easter eggs and cardboard cones. These are surmounted by decorative work of a flamboyant character in plasticine, designed by G. P. W. An oriental population crowds the courtyard and pours out upon the roadway. Note the grotesque plasticine monsters who guard the portals, also by G. P. W., who had a free hand with the architecture of this remarkable specimen of eastern religiosity. They are nothing, you may be sure, to the gigantic idols inside, out of the reach of the sacrilegious camera. To the right is a tropical thatched hut. The thatched roof is really that nice ribbed paper that comes round bottles — a priceless boon to these games. All that comes into the house is saved for us. The owner of the hut lounges outside the door. He is a dismounted cavalry-corps man, and he owns one cow. His fence, I may note, belonged to a little wooden farm we bought in Switzerland. Its human inhabitants are scattered; its beasts follow a precarious living as wild guinea-pigs on the islands to the south.

Your attention is particularly directed to the trees about and behind the temple, which thicken to a forest on the further island to the right. These trees we make of twigs taken from trees and bushes in the garden, and stuck into holes in our boards. Formerly we lived

in a house with a little wood close by, and our forests were wonderful. Now we are restricted to our garden, and we could get nothing for this set out but jasmine and pear. Both have wilted a little, and are not nearly such spirited trees as you can make out of fir trees, for instance. It is for these woods chiefly that we have our planks perforated with little holes. No tin trees can ever be so plausible and various and jolly as these. With a good garden to draw upon one can make terrific sombre woods, and then lie down and look through them at lonely horsemen or wandering beasts.

That further island on the right is a less settled country than the island of the temple. Camels, you note, run wild there; there is a sort of dwarf elephant, similar to the now extinct kind of which one finds skeletons in Malta, pigs, a red parrot, and other such creatures, of lead and wood. The pear-trees are fine. It is those which have attracted white settlers (I suppose they are), whose thatched huts are to be seen both upon the beach and in-land. By the huts on the beach lie a number of pear-tree logs; but a raid of negroid savages from the to the left is in the only settler is the man in a adjacent island progress, and clearly visible rifleman's uniform running inland for help. Beyond, peeping out among the trees, are the supports he seeks.

These same negroid savages are as bold as they are ferocious. They cross arms of the sea upon their rude canoes, made simply of a strip of cardboard. Their own island, the one to the south-left, is a rocky wilderness containing caves. Their chief food is the wild-goat, but in pursuit of these creatures you will also sometimes find the brown bear, who sits — he is small but perceptible to the careful student — in the mouth of his cave. Here, too, you will distinguish small guinea pig-like creatures of wood, in happier days the inhabitants of that Swiss farm. Sunken rocks off this island are indicated by a white foam which takes the form of letters, and you will also note a whirlpool between the two islands to the right.

Finally comes the island nearest to the reader on the left. This also is wild and rocky, inhabited not by negroid blacks, but by Indians, whose tents, made by F. R. W. out of ordinary brown paper and adorned with chalk totems of a rude and characteristic kind, pour forth their fierce and well-armed inhabitants at the intimation of an invader. The rocks on this island, let me remark, have great mineral

wealth. Among them are to be found not only sheets and veins of silver paper, but great nuggets of metal, obtained by the melting down of hopelessly broken soldiers in an iron spoon. Note, too, the peculiar and romantic shell beach of this country. It is an island of exceptional interest to the geologist and scientific explorer. The Indians, you observe, have domesticated one leaden and one wooden cow.

This is how the game would be set out. Then we build ships and explore these islands, but in these pictures the ships are represented as already arriving. The ships are built out of our wooden bricks on flat keels made of two wooden pieces of 9 x 4-1/2; inches, which are very convenient to push about over the floor. Captain G. P. W. is steaming into the bay between the eastern and western islands. He carries heavy guns, his ship bristles with an extremely aggressive soldiery, who appear to be blazing away for the mere love of the thing. (I suspect him of Imperialist intentions.) Captain F. R. W. is apparently at anchor between his northern and southern islands. His ship is of a slightly more pacific type. I note on his deck a lady and a gentleman (of German origin) with a bag, two of our all too rare civilians. No doubt the bag contains samples and a small conversation dictionary in the negroid dialects. (I think F. R. W. may turn out to be a Liberal.) Perhaps he will sail on and rescue the raided huts, perhaps he will land and build a jetty, and begin mining among the rocks to fill his hold with silver. Perhaps the natives will kill and eat the gentleman with the bag. All that is for Captain F. R. W. to decide.

You see how the game goes on. We land and alter things, and build and rearrange, and hoist paper flags on pins, and subjugate populations, and confer all the blessings of civilization upon these lands. We keep them going for days. And at last, as we begin to tire of them, comes the scrubbing brush, and we must burn our trees and dismantle our islands, and put our soldiers in the little nests of drawers, and stand the island boards up against the wall, and put everything away. Then perhaps, after a few days, we begin upon some other such game, just as we feel disposed. But it is never quite the same game, never. Another time it may be wildernesses for example, and the boards are hills, and never a drop of water is to be

found except for the lakes and rivers we may mark out in chalk. But after one example others are easy, and next I will tell you of our way of making towns.

Section III

OF THE BUILDING OF CITIES

WE always build twin cities, like London and Westminster, or Buda-Pesth, because two of us always want, both of them, to be mayors and municipal councils, and it makes for local freedom and happiness to arrange it so; but when steam railways or street railways are involved we have our rails in common, and we have an excellent law that rails must be laid down and switches kept open in such a manner that anyone feeling so disposed may send a through train from their own station back to their own station again without needless negotiation or the personal invasion of anybody else's administrative area. It is an undesirable thing to have other people bulging over one's houses, standing in one's open spaces, and, in extreme cases, knocking down and even treading on one's citizens. It leads at times to explanations that are afterwards regretted.

We always have twin cities, or at the utmost stage of coalescence a city with two wards, Red End and Blue End; we mark the boundaries very carefully, and our citizens have so much local patriotism (Mr. Chesterton will learn with pleasure) that they stray but rarely over that thin little streak of white that bounds their municipal allegiance. Sometimes we have an election for mayor; it is like a census but very abusive, and Red always wins. Only citizens with two legs and at least one arm and capable of standing up may vote, and voters may poll on horseback; boy scouts and women and children do not vote, though there is a vigorous agitation to remove these disabilities. Zulus and foreign-looking persons, such as East Indian cavalry and American Indians, are also disfranchised. So are riderless horses and camels; but the elephant has never attempted to vote on any occasion, and does not seem to desire the privilege. It influences public opinion quite sufficiently as it is by nodding its head.

We have set out and I have photographed one of our cities to illustrate more clearly the amusement of the game. Red End is to the reader's right, and includes most of the hill on which the town

stands, a shady zoological garden, the town hall, a railway tunnel through the hill, a museum (away in the extreme right-hand corner), a church, a rifle range, and a shop. Blue End has the railway station, four or five shops, several homes, a hotel, and a farm-house, close to the railway station. The boundary drawn by me as overlord (who also made the hills and tunnels and appointed the trees to grow) runs irregularly between the two shops nearest the cathedral, over the shoulder in front of the town hall, and between the farm and the rifle range.

The nature of the hills I have already explained, and this time we have had no lakes or ornamental water. These are very easily made out of a piece of glass — the glass lid of a box for example — laid upon silver paper. Such water becomes very readily populated by those celluloid seals and swans and ducks that are now so common. Paper fish appear below the surface and may be peered at by the curious. But on this occasion we have nothing of the kind, nor have we made use of a green-colored tablecloth we sometimes use to drape our hills. Of course, a large part of the fun of this game lies in the witty incorporation of all sorts of extraneous objects. But the incorporation must be witty, or you may soon convert the whole thing into an incoherent muddle of half-good ideas.

I have taken two photographs, one to the right and one to the left of this agreeable place. I may perhaps adopt a kind of guide-book style in reviewing its principal features: I begin at the railway station. I have made a rather nearer and larger photograph of the railway station, which presents a diversified and entertaining scene to the incoming visitor. Porters (out of a box of porters) career here and there with the trucks and light baggage. Quite a number of our all-too-rare civilians parade the platform: two gentlemen, a lady, and a small but evil-looking child are particularly noticeable; and there is a wooden sailor with jointed legs, in a state of intoxication as reprehensible as it is nowadays happily rare. Two virtuous dogs regard his abandon with quiet scorn. The seat on which he sprawls is a broken piece of some toy whose nature I have long forgotten, the station clock is a similar fragment, and so is the metallic pillar which bears the name of the station. So many toys, we find, only become serviceable with a little smashing. There is an allegory in this — as

Hawthorne used to write in his diary.

("What is he doing, the great god Pan, Down in the reeds by the river?")

The fences at the ends of the platforms are pieces of wood belonging to the game of Matador — that splendid and very educational construction game, hailing, I believe, from Hungary. There is also, I regret to say, a blatant advertisement of Jab's "Hair Color," showing the hair. (In the photograph the hair does not come out very plainly.) This is by G. P. W., who seems marked out by destiny to be the advertisement-writer of the next generation. He spends much of his scanty leisure inventing and drawing advertisements of imaginary commodities. Oblivious to many happy, beautiful, and noble things in life, he goes about studying and imitating the literature of the billboards. He and his brother write newspapers almost entirely devoted to these annoying appeals. You will note, too, the placard at the mouth of the railway tunnel urging the existence of Jinks' Soap upon the passing traveller. The oblong object on the placard represents, no doubt, a cake of this offensive and aggressive commodity. The zoological garden flaunts a placard, "Zoo, two cents pay," and the grocer's picture of a cabbage with "Get Them" is not to be ignored. F. R. W. is more like the London County Council in this respect, and prefers bare walls.

"Returning from the station," as the guide-books say, and "giving one more glance" at the passengers who are waiting for the privilege of going round the circle in open cars and returning in a prostrated condition to the station again, and "observing" what admirable platforms are made by our 9 x 4-1/2 pieces, we pass out to the left into the village street. A motor omnibus (a one-horse hospital cart in less progressive days) stands waiting for passengers; and, on our way to the Cherry Tree Inn, we remark two nurses, one in charge of a child with a plasticine head. The landlord of the inn is a small grotesque figure of plaster; his sign is fastened on by a pin. No doubt the refreshment supplied here has an enviable reputation, to judge by the alacrity with which a number of riflemen move to-wards the door. The inn, by the by, like the station and some private houses, is roofed with stiff paper.

These stiff-paper roofs are one of our great inventions. We get

thick, stiff paper at twopence a sheet and cut it to the sizes we need. After the game is over, we put these roofs inside one another and stick them into the bookshelves. The roof one folds and puts away will live to roof another day.

Proceeding on our way past the Cherry Tree, and resisting cosy invitation of its portals, we come to the shopping quarter of the town. The stock in windows is made by hand out of plasticine. We note the meat and hams of "Mr. Woddy," the cabbages and carrots of "Tod & Brothers," the general activities of the "Jokil Co." shopmen. It is de rigueur with our shop assistants that they should wear white helmets. In the street, boy scouts go to and fro, a wagon clatters by; most of the adult population is about its business, and a red-coated band plays along the roadway. Contrast this animated scene with the mysteries of sea and forest, rock and whirlpool, in our previous game. Further on is the big church or cathedral. It is built in an extremely debased Gothic style; it reminds us most of a church we once surveyed during a brief visit to Rotterdam on our way up the Rhine. A solitary boy scout, mindful of the views of Lord Haldane, enters its high portal. Passing the cathedral, we continue to the museum. This museum is no empty boast; it contains mineral specimens, shells — such great shells as were found on the beaches of our previous game — the Titanic skulls of extinct rabbits and cats, and other such wonders. The slender curious may lie down on the floor and peep in at the windows.

"We now," says the guide-book, "retrace our steps to the shops, and then, turning to the left, ascend under the trees up the terraced hill on which stands the Town Hall. This magnificent building is surmounted by a colossal statue of a chamois, the work of a Wengen artist; it is in two stories, with a battlemented roof, and a crypt (entrance to right of steps) used for the incarceration of offenders. It is occupied by the town guard, who wear 'beefeater' costumes of ancient origin."

Note the red parrot perched on the battlements; it lives tame in the zoological gardens, and is of the same species as one we formerly observed in our archipelago. Note, too, the brisk cat-and-dog encounter below. Steps descend in wide flights down the hillside into Blue End. The two couchant lions on either side of the steps are in

plasticine, and were executed by that versatile artist, who is also mayor of Red End, G. P. W. He is present. Our photographer has hit upon a happy moment in the history of this town, and a conversation of the two mayors is going on upon the terrace before the palace. F. R. W., mayor of Blue End, stands on the steps in the costume of an admiral; G. P. W. is on horseback (his habits are equestrian) on the terrace. The town guard parades in their honor, and up the hill a number of musicians (a little hidden by trees) ride on gray horses towards them.

Passing in front of the town hall, and turning to the right, we approach the zoological gardens. Here we pass two of our civilians: a gentleman in black, a lady, and a large boy scout, presumably their son. We enter the gardens, which are protected by a bearded janitor, and remark at once a band of three performing dogs, who are, as the guide-book would say, "discoursing sweet music." In neither ward of the city does there seem to be the slightest restraint upon the use of musical instruments. It is no place for neurotic people.

The gardens contain the inevitable elephants, camels (which we breed, and which are therefore in considerable numbers), a sitting bear, brought from last game's caves, goats from the same region, tamed and now running loose in the gardens, dwarf elephants, wooden nondescripts, and other rare creatures. The keepers wear a uniform not unlike that of railway guards and porters. We wander through the gardens, return, descend the hill by the school of musketry, where soldiers are to be seen shooting at the butts, pass through the paddock of the old farm, and so return to the railway station, extremely gratified by all we have seen, and almost equally divided in our minds between the merits and attractiveness of either ward. A clockwork train comes clattering into the station, we take our places, somebody hoots or whistles for the engine (which can't), the signal is knocked over in the excitement of the moment, the train starts, and we "wave a long, regretful farewell to the salubrious cheerfulness of Chamois City."

You see now how we set out and the spirit in which we set out our towns. It demands but the slightest exercise of the imagination to devise a hundred additions and variations of the scheme. You can make picture-galleries — great fun for small boys who can draw; you

can make factories; you can plan out flower-gardens — which appeals very strongly to intelligent little girls; your town hall may become a fortified castle; or you may put the whole town on boards and make a Venice of it, with ships and boats upon its canals, and bridges across them. We used to have some very serviceable ships of cardboard, with flat bottoms; and then we used to have a harbor, and the ships used to sail away to distant rooms, and even into the garden, and return with the most remarkable cargoes, loads of nasturtium-stem logs, for example. We had sacks then, made of glove-fingers, and several toy cranes. I suppose we could find most of these again if we hunted for them. Once, with this game fresh in our we went to see the docks, which struck us as just our old harbor game magnified.

"I say, Daddy," said one of us in a quiet corner, wistfully, as one who speaks knowingly against the probabilities of the case, and yet with a faint, thin hope, "couldn't we play just for a little with these sacks ... until some-body comes?"

Of course the setting-out of the city is half the game. Then you devise incidents. As I wanted to photograph the particular set-out for the purpose of illustrating this account, I took a larger share in the arrangement than I usually do. It was necessary to get everything into the picture, to ensure a light background that would throw up some of the trees, prevent too much overlapping, and things like that. When the photographing was over, matters became more normal. I left the schoolroom, and when I returned I found that the group of riflemen which had been converging on the publichouse had been sharply recalled to duty, and were trotting in a disciplined, cheerless way towards the railway station. The elephant had escaped from the zoo into the Blue Ward, and was being marched along by a military patrol. The originally scattered boy scouts were being paraded. G. P. W. had demolished the shop of the Jokil Company, and was building a Red End station near the bend. The stock of the Jokil Company had passed into the hands of the adjacent storekeepers. Then the town hall ceremonies came to an end and the guard marched off. Then G. P. W. demolished the rifle-range, and ran a small branch of the urban railway uphill to the town hall door, and on into the zoological gardens. This was only the beginning of a period of enterprise in

transit, a small railway boom. A number of halts of simple construction sprang up. There was much making of railway tickets, of a size that enabled passengers to stick their heads through the middle and wear them as a Mexican does his blanket. Then a battery of artillery turned up in the High Street and there was talk of fortifications. Suppose wild Indians were to turn up across the plains to the left and attack the town! Fate still has toy drawers untouched...

So things will go on till putting-away night on Friday. Then we shall pick up the roofs and shove them away among the books, return the clockwork engines very carefully to their boxes, for engines are fragile things, stow the soldiers and civilians and animals in their nests of drawers, burn the trees again — this time they are sweet-bay; and all the joys and sorrows and rivalries and successes of Blue End and Red End will pass, and follow Carthage and Nineveh, the empire of Aztec and Roman, the arts of Etruria and the palaces of Crete, and the plannings and contrivings of innumerable myriads of children, into the limbo of games exhausted ... it may be, leaving some profit, in thoughts widened, in strengthened apprehensions; it may be, leaving nothing but a memory that dies.

Section IV

FUNICULARS, MARBLE TOWERS, CASTLES AND WAR GAMES, BUT VERY LITTLE OF WAR GAMES

I have now given two general types of floor game; but these are only just two samples of delightful and imagination-stirring variations that can be contrived out of the toys I have described. I will now glance rather more shortly at some other very good uses of the floor, the boards, the bricks, the soldiers, and the railway system — that pentagram for exorcising the evil spirit of dulness from the lives of little boys and girls. And first, there is a kind of lark we call Funiculars. There are times when islands cease somehow to dazzle, and towns and cities are too orderly and uneventful and cramped for us, and we want something — something to whizz. Then we say: "Let us make a funicular. Let us make a funicular more than we have ever done. Let us make one to reach up to the table." We dispute whether it isn't a mountain railway we are after. The bare name is refreshing; it takes us back to that unforgettable time when we all went to Wengen, winding in and out and up and up the mountain side — from slush, to such snow and sunlight as we had never seen before. And we make a mountain railway. So far, we have never got it up to the table, but some day we will, Then we will have a station there on the flat, and another station on the floor, with shunts and sidings to each.

The peculiar joy of the mountain railway is that, if it is properly made, a loaded car — not a toy engine; it is too rough a game for delicate, respectable engines — will career from top to bottom of the system, and go this way and that as your cunningly-arranged switches determine; and afterwards — and this is a wonderful and distinctive discovery — you can send it back by 'lectric.

What is a 'lectric? You may well ask. 'Lectrics were invented almost by accident, by one of us, to whom also the name is due. It came out of an accident to a toy engine; a toy engine that seemed done for and that was yet full of life.

You know, perhaps, what a toy engine is like. It has the general

appearance of a railway engine; funnels, buffers, cab, and so forth. All these are very elegant things, no doubt; but they do not make for lightness, they do not facilitate hill-climbing. Now, sometimes an engine gets its clockwork out of order, and then it is over and done for; but sometimes it is merely the outer semblance that is injured — the funnel bent, the body twisted. You remove the things and, behold! you have bare clockwork on wheels, an apparatus of almost malignant energy, soul without body, a kind of metallic rage. This it was that our junior member instantly knew for a 'lectric, and loved from the moment of its stripping.

(I have, by the by, known a very serviceable little road 'lectric made out of a clockwork mouse.)

Well, when we have got chairs and boxes and bricks, and graded our line skilfully and well, easing the descent, and being very careful of the joining at the bends for fear that the descending trucks and cars will jump the rails, we send down first an empty truck, then trucks loaded with bricks and lead soldiers, and then the 'lectric; and then afterwards the sturdy 'lectric shoves up the trucks again to the top, with a kind of savagery of purpose and a whizz that is extremely gratifying to us. We make switches in these lines; we make them have level-crossings, at which collisions are always being just averted; the lines go over and under each other, and in and out of tunnels.

The marble tower, again, is a great building, on which we devise devious slanting ways down which marbles run. I do not know why it is amusing to make a marble run down a long intricate path, and dollop down steps, and come almost but not quite to a stop, and rush out of dark places and across little bridges of card: it is, and we often do it.

Castles are done with bricks and cardboard turrets and a portcullis of card, and drawbridge and moats; they are a mere special sort of city-building, done because we have a box of men in armor. We could reconstruct all sorts of historical periods if the toy soldier makers would provide us with people. But at present, as I have already complained, they make scarcely anything but contemporary fighting men. And of the war game I must either write volumes or nothing. For the present let it be nothing. Some day, perhaps, I will

write a great book about the war game and tell of battles and campaigns and strategy and tactics. But this time I set out merely to tell of the ordinary joys of playing with the floor, and to gird improvingly and usefully at toymakers. So much, I think, I have done. If one parent or one uncle buys the wiselier for me, I shall not altogether have lived in vain.

LITTLE WARS

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I. OF THE LEGENDARY PAST

"LITTLE WARS" is the game of kings — for players in an inferior social position. It can be played by boys of every age from twelve to one hundred and fifty — and even later if the limbs remain sufficiently supple — by girls of the better sort, and by a few rare and gifted women. This is to be a full History of Little Wars from its recorded and authenticated beginning until the present time, an account of how to make little warfare, and hints of the most priceless sort for the recumbent strategist....

But first let it be noted in passing that there were prehistoric "Little Wars." This is no new thing, no crude novelty; but a thing tested by time, ancient and ripe in its essentials for all its perennial freshness — like spring. There was a Someone who fought Little Wars in the days of Queen Anne; a garden Napoleon. His game was inaccurately observed and insufficiently recorded by Laurence Sterne. It is clear that Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim were playing Little Wars on a scale and with an elaboration exceeding even the richness and beauty of the contemporary game. But the curtain is drawn back only to tantalise us. It is scarcely conceivable that anywhere now on earth the Shandean Rules remain on record. Perhaps they were never committed to paper....

And in all ages a certain barbaric warfare has been waged with soldiers of tin and lead and wood, with the weapons of the wild, with the catapult, the elastic circular garter, the peashooter, the rubber ball, and such-like appliances — a mere setting up and knocking down of men. Tin murder. The advance of civilisation has swept such rude contests altogether from the playroom. We know them no more....

II. THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN LITTLE WARFARE

THE beginning of the game of Little War, as we know it, became possible with the invention of the spring breechloader gun. This priceless gift to boyhood appeared somewhen towards the end of the last century, a gun capable of hitting a toy soldier nine times out of ten at a distance of nine yards. It has completely superseded all the spiral-spring and other makes of gun hitherto used in playroom warfare. These spring breechloaders are made in various sizes and patterns, but the one used in our game is that known in England as the four-point-seven gun. It fires a wooden cylinder about an inch long, and has a screw adjustment for elevation and depression. It is an altogether elegant weapon.

It was with one of these guns that the beginning of our war game was made. It was at Sandgate — in England.

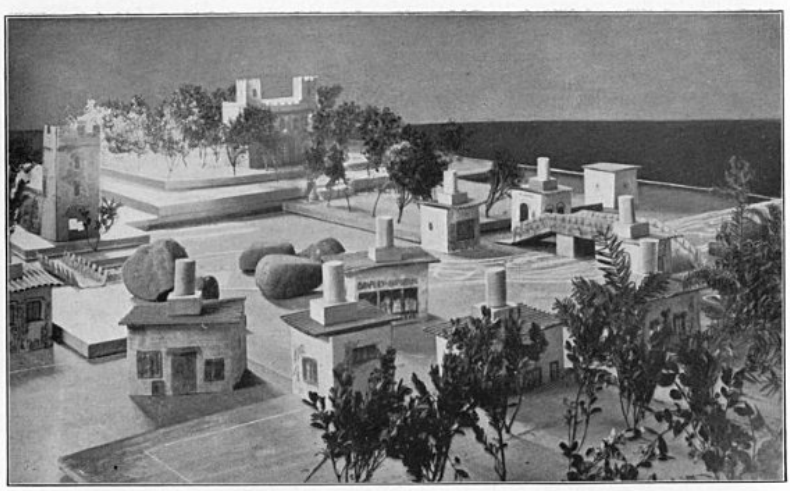

SHOWING A COUNTRY PREPARED FOR THE WAR GAME.

The houses are made of wall-paper with painted doors and windows, the roofs are cut out of packing paper, and the houses are filled with wooden toy bricks to make them solid. The castle and the church are made from brown cardboard. There is a river chalked across the centre of the battlefield, which widens to flow past the great rocks in the centre. A ford is marked near the church.

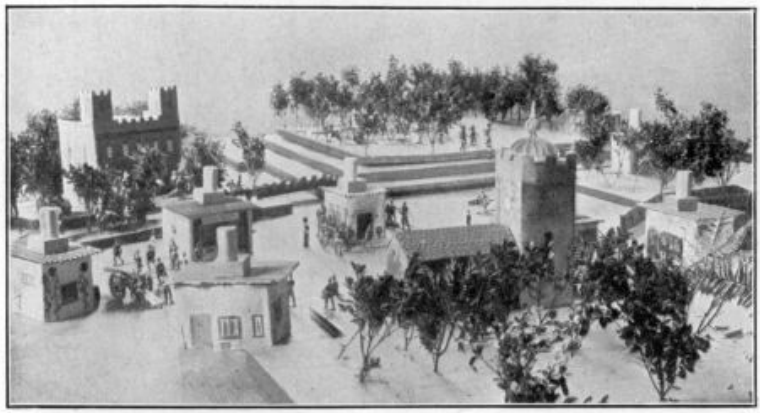

SHOWING COUNTRIES PREPARED FOR THE WAR GAME.

The present writer had been lunching with a friend — let me veil his identity under the initials J. K. J. — in a room littered with the irrepressible debris of a small boy's pleasures. On a table near our own stood four or five soldiers and one of these guns. Mr J. K. J., his more urgent needs satisfied and the coffee imminent, drew a chair to this little table, sat down, examined the gun discreetly, loaded it warily, aimed, and hit his man. Thereupon he boasted of the deed,

and issued challenges that were accepted with avidity....

He fired that day a shot that still echoes round the world. An affair — let us parallel the Cannonade of Valmy and call it the Cannonade of Sandgate — occurred, a shooting between opposed ranks of soldiers, a shooting not very different in spirit — but how different in results! — from the prehistoric warfare of catapult and garter. "But suppose," said his antagonists; "suppose somehow one could move the men!" and therewith opened a new world of belligerence.

The matter went no further with Mr J. K. J. The seed lay for a time gathering strength, and then began to germinate with another friend, Mr W. To Mr W. was broached the idea: "I believe that if one set up a few obstacles on the floor, volumes of the British Encyclopedia and so forth, to make a Country, and moved these soldiers and guns about, one could have rather a good game, a kind of kriegspiel."...

Primitive attempts to realise the dream were interrupted by a great rustle and chattering of lady visitors. They regarded the objects upon the floor with the empty disdain of their sex for all imaginative things.

But the writer had in those days a very dear friend, a man too ill for long excursions or vigorous sports (he has been dead now these six years), of a very sweet companionable disposition, a hearty jester and full of the spirit of play. To him the idea was broached more fruitfully. We got two forces of toy soldiers, set out a lumpish Encyclopaedic land upon the carpet, and began to play. We arranged to move in alternate moves: first one moved all his force and then the other; an infantry-man could move one foot at each move, a cavalry-man two, a gun two, and it might fire six shots; and if a man was moved up to touch another man, then we tossed up and decided which man was dead. So we made a game, which was not a good game, but which was very amusing once or twice. The men were packed under the lee of fat volumes, while the guns, animated by a spirit of their own, banged away at any exposed head, or prowled about in search of a shot. Occasionally men came into contact, with remarkable results. Rash is the man who trusts his life to the spin of a coin. One impossible paladin slew in succession nine men and turned defeat to victory, to the extreme exasperation of the strategist who

had led those victims to their doom. This inordinate factor of chance eliminated play; the individual freedom of guns turned battles into scandals of crouching concealment; there was too much cover afforded by the books and vast intervals of waiting while the players took aim. And yet there was something about it.... It was a game crying aloud for improvement.

Improvement came almost simultaneously in several directions. First there was the development of the Country. The soldiers did not stand well on an ordinary carpet, the Encyclopedia made clumsy cliff-like "cover", and more particularly the room in which the game had its beginnings was subject to the invasion of callers, alien souls, trampling skirt-swishers, chatterers, creatures unfavourably impressed by the spectacle of two middle-aged men playing with "toy soldiers" on the floor, and very heated and excited about it. Overhead was the day nursery, with a wide extent of smooth cork carpet (the natural terrain of toy soldiers), a large box of bricks — such as I have described in Floor Games — and certain large inch-thick boards.

It was an easy task for the head of the household to evict his offspring, annex these advantages, and set about planning a more realistic country. (I forget what became of the children.) The thick boards were piled up one upon another to form hills; holes were bored in them, into which twigs of various shrubs were stuck to represent trees; houses and sheds (solid and compact piles of from three to six or seven inches high, and broad in proportion) and walls were made with the bricks; ponds and swamps and rivers, with fords and so forth indicated, were chalked out on the floor, garden stones were brought in to represent great rocks, and the "Country" at least of our perfected war game was in existence. We discovered it was easy to cut out and bend and gum together paper and cardboard walls, into which our toy bricks could be packed, and on which we could paint doors and windows, creepers and rain-water pipes, and so forth, to represent houses, castles, and churches in a more realistic manner, and, growing skilful, we made various bridges and so forth of card. Every boy who has ever put together model villages knows how to do these things, and the attentive reader will find them edifyingly represented in our photographic illustrations.

There has been little development since that time in the Country. Our illustrations show the methods of arrangement, and the reader will see how easily and readily the utmost variety of battlefields can be made. (It is merely to be remarked that a too crowded Country makes the guns ineffective and leads to a mere tree to tree and house to house scramble, and that large open spaces along the middle, or rivers without frequent fords and bridges, lead to ineffective cannonades, because of the danger of any advance. On the whole, too much cover is better than too little.) We decided that one player should plan and lay out the Country, and the other player choose from which side he would come. And to-day we play over such landscapes in a cork-carpeted schoolroom, from which the proper occupants are no longer evicted but remain to take an increasingly responsible and less and less audible and distressing share in the operations.

SHOWING THE WAR GAME IN THE OPEN AIR.

The soldiers stand quite well on carefully mown grass. The paper houses are loaded with wooden toy bricks as in the indoor game. Twig trees are quite easily stuck into the ground, but none are shown in these pictures. As space is less restricted, one can double the length of the moves and play with a more open country.

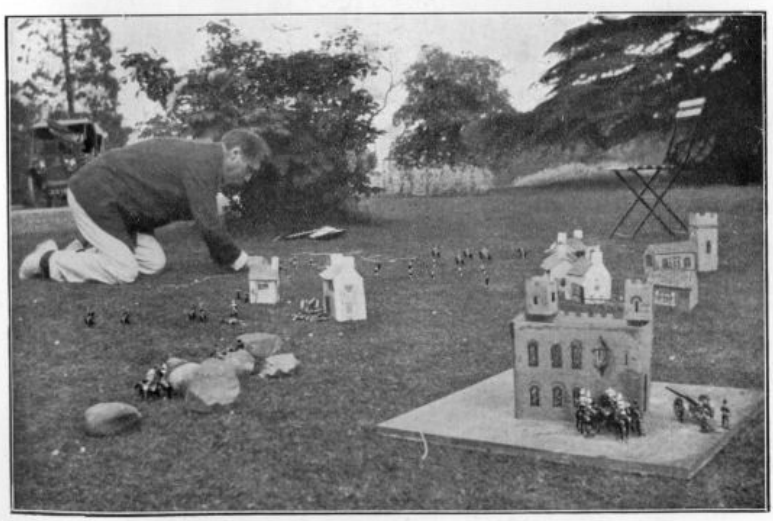

THE WAR GAME IN THE OPEN AIR.

We found it necessary to make certain general rules. Houses and sheds must be made of solid lumps of bricks, and not hollow so that soldiers can be put inside them, because otherwise muddled situations arise. And it was clearly necessary to provide for the replacement of disturbed objects by chalking out the outlines of boards and houses upon the floor or boards upon which they stood.

And while we thus perfected the Country, we were also eliminating all sorts of tediums, disputable possibilities, and

deadlocks from the game. We decided that every man should be as brave and skilful as every other man, and that when two men of opposite sides came into contact they would inevitably kill each other. This restored strategy to its predominance over chance.

We then began to humanise that wild and fearful fowl, the gun. We decided that a gun could not be fired if there were not six — afterwards we reduced the number to four — men within six inches of it. And we ruled that a gun could not both fire and move in the same general move: it could either be fired or moved (or left alone). If there were less than six men within six inches of a gun, then we tried letting it fire as many shots as there were men, and we permitted a single man to move a gun, and move with it as far as he could go by the rules — a foot, that is, if he was an infantry-man, and two feet if he was a cavalry-man. We abolished altogether that magical freedom of an unassisted gun to move two feet. And on such rules as these we fought a number of battles. They were interesting, but not entirely satisfactory. We took no prisoners — a feature at once barbaric and unconvincing. The battles lingered on a long time, because we shot with extreme care and deliberation, and they were hard to bring to a decisive finish. The guns were altogether too predominant. They prevented attacks getting home, and they made it possible for a timid player to put all his soldiers out of sight behind hills and houses, and bang away if his opponent showed as much as the tip of a bayonet. Monsieur Bloch seemed vindicated, and Little War had become impossible. And there was something a little absurd, too, in the spectacle of a solitary drummer-boy, for example, marching off with a gun.

But as there was nevertheless much that seemed to us extremely pretty and picturesque about the game, we set to work — and here a certain Mr M. with his brother, Captain M., hot from the Great War in South Africa, came in most helpfully — to quicken it. Manifestly the guns had to be reduced to manageable terms. We cut down the number of shots per move to four, and we required that four men should be within six inches of a gun for it to be in action at all. Without four men it could neither fire nor move — it was out of action; and if it moved, the four men had to go with it. Moreover, to put an end to that little resistant body of men behind a house, we

required that after a gun had been fired it should remain, without alteration of the elevation, pointing in the direction of its last shot, and have two men placed one on either side of the end of its trail. This secured a certain exposure on the part of concealed and sheltered gunners. It was no longer possible to go on shooting out of a perfect security for ever. All this favoured the attack and led to a livelier game.

Our next step was to abolish the tedium due to the elaborate aiming of the guns, by fixing a time limit for every move. We made this an outside limit at first, ten minutes, but afterwards we discovered that it made the game much more warlike to cut the time down to a length that would barely permit a slow-moving player to fire all his guns and move all his men. This led to small bodies of men lagging and "getting left," to careless exposures, to rapid, less accurate shooting, and just that eventfulness one would expect in the hurry and passion of real fighting. It also made the game brisker. We have since also made a limit, sometimes of four minutes, sometimes of five minutes, to the interval for adjustment and deliberation after one move is finished and before the next move begins. This further removes the game from the chess category, and approximates it to the likeness of active service. Most of a general's decisions, once a fight has begun, must be made in such brief intervals of time. (But we leave unlimited time at the outset for the planning.)

As to our time-keeping, we catch a visitor with a stop-watch if we can, and if we cannot, we use a fair-sized clock with a second-hand: the player not moving says "Go," and warns at the last two minutes, last minute, and last thirty seconds. But I think it would not be difficult to procure a cheap clock — because, of course, no one wants a very accurate agreement with Greenwich as to the length of a second — that would have minutes instead of hours and seconds instead of minutes, and that would ping at the end of every minute and discharge an alarm note at the end of the move. That would abolish the rather boring strain of time-keeping. One could just watch the fighting.

Moreover, in our desire to bring the game to a climax, we decided that instead of a fight to a finish we would fight to some determined point, and we found very good sport in supposing that the arrival of

three men of one force upon the back line of the opponent's side of the country was of such strategic importance as to determine the battle. But this form of battle we have since largely abandoned in favour of the old fight to a finish again. We found it led to one type of battle only, a massed rush at the antagonist's line, and that our arrangements of time-limits and capture and so forth had eliminated most of the concluding drag upon the game.

Our game was now very much in its present form. We considered at various times the possibility of introducing some complication due to the bringing up of ammunition or supplies generally, and we decided that it would add little to the interest or reality of the game. Our battles are little brisk fights in which one may suppose that all the ammunition and food needed are carried by the men themselves.

But our latest development has been in the direction of killing hand to hand or taking prisoners. We found it necessary to distinguish between an isolated force and a force that was merely a projecting part of a larger force. We made a definition of isolation. After a considerable amount of trials we decided that a man or a detachment shall be considered to be isolated when there is less than half its number of its own side within a move of it. Now, in actual civilised warfare small detached bodies do not sell their lives dearly; a considerably larger force is able to make them prisoners without difficulty. Accordingly we decided that if a blue force, for example, has one or more men isolated, and a red force of at least double the strength of this isolated detachment moves up to contact with it, the blue men will be considered to be prisoners.

That seemed fair; but so desperate is the courage and devotion of lead soldiers, that it came to this, that any small force that got or seemed likely to get isolated and caught by a superior force instead of waiting to be taken prisoners, dashed at its possible captors and slew them man for man. It was manifestly unreasonable to permit this. And in considering how best to prevent such inhuman heroisms, we were reminded of another frequent incident in our battles that also erred towards the incredible and vitiated our strategy. That was the charging of one or two isolated horse-men at a gun in order to disable it. Let me illustrate this by an incident. A force consisting of ten infantry and five cavalry with a gun are retreating across an exposed

space, and a gun with thirty men, cavalry and infantry, in support comes out upon a crest into a position to fire within two feet of the retreating cavalry. The attacking player puts eight men within six inches of his gun and pushes the rest of his men a little forward to the right or left in pursuit of his enemy. In the real thing, the retreating horsemen would go off to cover with the gun, “hell for leather,” while the infantry would open out and retreat, firing. But see what happened in our imperfect form of Little War! The move of the retreating player began. Instead of retreating his whole force, he charged home with his mounted desperadoes, killed five of the eight men about the gun, and so by the rule silenced it, enabling the rest of his little body to get clean away to cover at the leisurely pace of one foot a move. This was not like any sort of warfare. In real life cavalry cannot pick out and kill its equivalent in cavalry while that equivalent is closely supported by other cavalry or infantry; a handful of troopers cannot gallop past well and abundantly manned guns in action, cut down the gunners and interrupt the fire. And yet for a time we found it a little difficult to frame simple rules to meet these two bad cases and prevent such scandalous possibilities. We did at last contrive to do so; we invented what we call the melee, and our revised rules in the event of a melee will be found set out upon a later page. They do really permit something like an actual result to hand-to-hand encounters. They abolish Horatius Cocles.

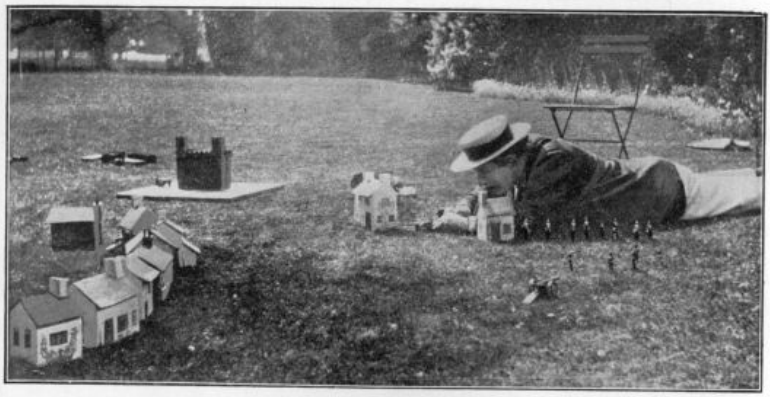

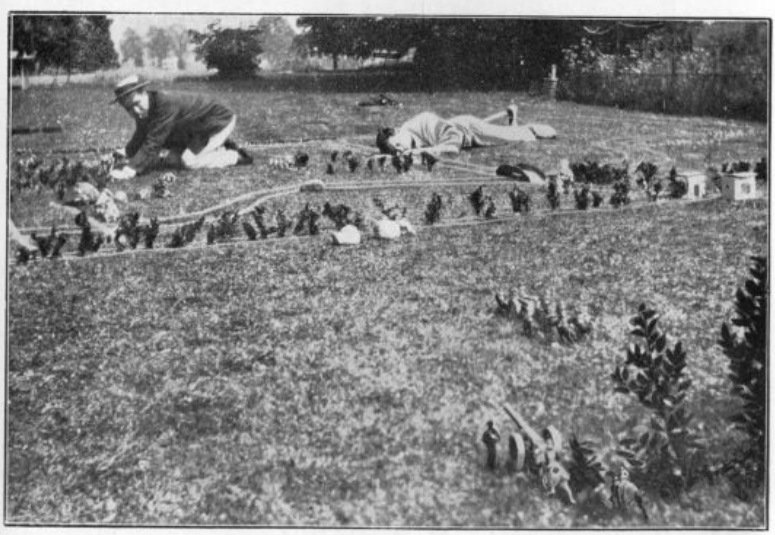

THE WAR GAME IN THE OPEN AIR.

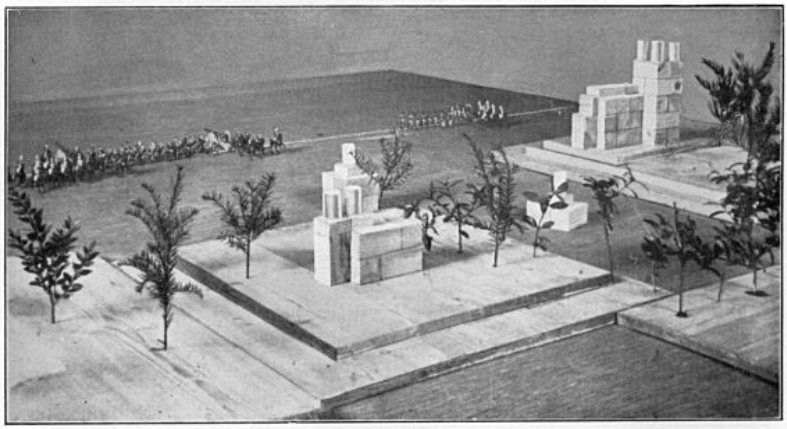

FIG. 1.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. General view of the battlefield and the Red Army. (See page 73.)

We also found difficulties about the capturing of guns. At first we had merely provided that a gun was captured when it was out of action and four men of the opposite force were within six inches of it, but we found a number of cases for which this rule was too vague. A gun, for example, would be disabled and left with only three men within six inches; the enemy would then come up eight or ten strong within six inches on the other side, but not really reaching the gun. At the next move the original possessor of the gun would bring up half a dozen men within six inches. To whom did the gun belong? By the original wording of our rule, it might be supposed to belong to the attack which had never really touched the gun yet, and they could claim to turn it upon its original side. We had to meet a number of such cases. We met them by requiring the capturing force — or, to be precise, four men of it — actually to pass the axle of the gun before it could be taken.

All sorts of odd little difficulties arose too, connected with the use of the guns as a shelter from fire, and very exact rules had to be made to avoid tilting the nose and raising the breech of a gun in order to use it as cover....

We still found it difficult to introduce any imitation into our game of either retreat or the surrender of men not actually taken prisoners in a melee. Both things were possible by the rules, but nobody did them because there was no inducement to do them. Games were apt to end obstinately with the death or capture of the last man. An

inducement was needed. This we contrived by playing not for the game but for points, scoring the result of each game and counting the points towards the decision of a campaign. Our campaign was to our single game what a rubber is to a game of whist. We made the end of a war 200, 300, or 400 or more points up, according to the number of games we wanted to play, and we scored a hundred for each battle won, and in addition 1 for each infantry-man, 1-1/2 for each cavalry-man, 10 for each gun, 1/2 for each man held prisoner by the enemy, and 1/2 for each prisoner held at the end of the game, subtracting what the antagonist scored by the same scale. Thus, when he felt the battle was hopelessly lost, he had a direct inducement to retreat any guns he could still save and surrender any men who were under the fire of the victors' guns and likely to be slaughtered, in order to minimise the score against him. And an interest was given to a skilful retreat, in which the loser not only saved points for himself but inflicted losses upon the pursuing enemy.

At first we played the game from the outset, with each player's force within sight of his antagonist; then we found it possible to hang a double curtain of casement cloth from a string stretched across the middle of the field, and we drew this back only after both sides had set out their men. Without these curtains we found the first player was at a heavy disadvantage, because he displayed all his dispositions before his opponent set down his men.

And at last our rules have reached stability, and we regard them now with the virtuous pride of men who have persisted in a great undertaking and arrived at precision after much tribulation. There is not a piece of constructive legislation in the world, not a solitary attempt to meet a complicated problem, that we do not now regard the more charitably for our efforts to get a right result from this apparently easy and puerile business of fighting with tin soldiers on the floor.

And so our laws all made, battles have been fought, the mere beginnings, we feel, of vast campaigns. The game has become in a dozen aspects extraordinarily like a small real battle. The plans are made, the Country hastily surveyed, and then the curtains are closed, and the antagonists make their opening dispositions. Then the curtains are drawn back and the hostile forces come within sight of

each other; the little companies and squadrons and batteries appear hurrying to their positions, the infantry deploying into long open lines, the cavalry sheltering in reserve, or galloping with the guns to favourable advance positions.

In two or three moves the guns are flickering into action, a cavalry melee may be in progress, the plans of the attack are more or less apparent, here are men pouring out from the shelter of a wood to secure some point of vantage, and here are troops massing among farm buildings for a vigorous attack. The combat grows hot round some vital point. Move follows move in swift succession. One realises with a sickening sense of error that one is outnumbered and hard pressed here and uselessly cut off there, that one's guns are ill-placed, that one's wings are spread too widely, and that help can come only over some deadly zone of fire.

So the fight wears on. Guns are lost or won, hills or villages stormed or held; suddenly it grows clear that the scales are tilting beyond recovery, and the loser has nothing left but to contrive how he may get to the back line and safety with the vestiges of his command....

But let me, before I go on to tell of actual battles and campaigns, give here a summary of our essential rules.

III. THE RULES

HERE, then, are the rules of the perfect battle-game as we play it in an ordinary room.

THE COUNTRY

(1) The Country must be arranged by one player, who, failing any other agreement, shall be selected by the toss of a coin.

(2) The other player shall then choose which side of the field he will fight from.

(3) The Country must be disturbed as little as possible in each move. Nothing in the Country shall be moved or set aside deliberately to facilitate the firing of guns. A player must not lie across the Country so as to crush or disturb the Country if his opponent objects. Whatever is moved by accident shall be replaced after the end of the move.

THE MOVE

(1) After the Country is made and the sides chosen, then (and not until then) the players shall toss for the first move.

(2) If there is no curtain, the player winning the toss, hereafter called the First Player, shall next arrange his men along his back line, as he chooses. Any men he may place behind or in front of his back line shall count in the subsequent move as if they touched the back line at its nearest point. The Second Player shall then do the same. But if a curtain is available both first and second player may put down their men at the same time. Both players may take unlimited time for the putting down of their men; if there is a curtain it is drawn back when they are ready, and the game then begins.

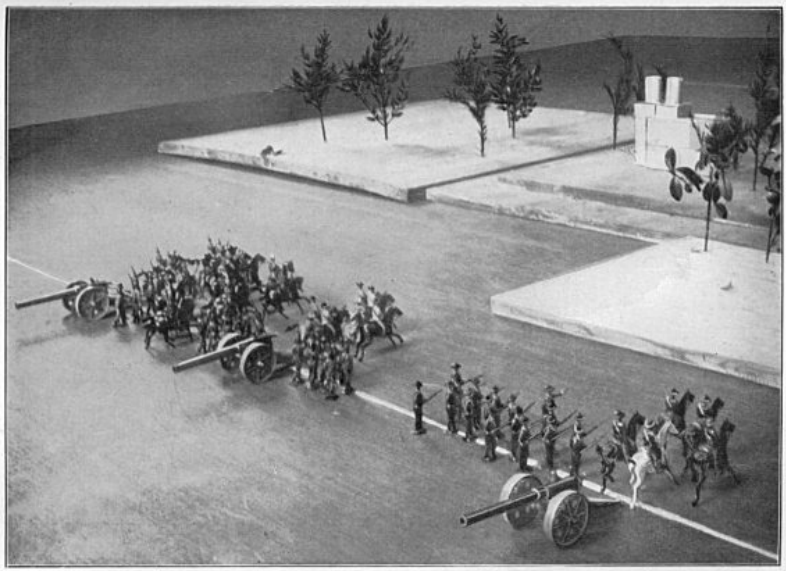

FIG. 2.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. A rear view of the Blue Army. (*See page* 74.)

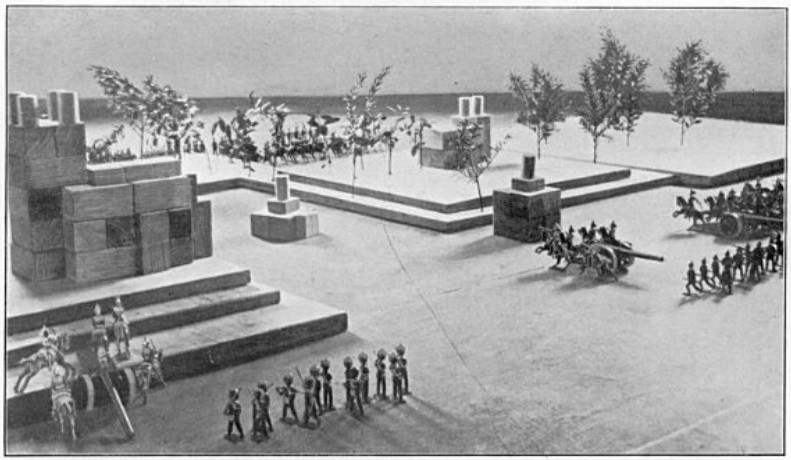

FIG. 3.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. Positions of both armies after their first move. The Red Army is in the foreground. (*See page* 75.)

(3) The subsequent moves after the putting down are timed. The length of time given for each move is determined by the size of the forces engaged. About a minute should be allowed for moving 30 men and a minute for each gun. Thus for a force of 110 men and 3 guns, moved by one player, seven minutes is an ample allowance. As

the battle progresses and the men are killed off, the allowance is reduced as the players may agree. The player about to move stands at attention a yard behind his back line until the timekeeper says "Go." He then proceeds to make his move until time is up. He must instantly stop at the cry of "Time." Warning should be given by the timekeeper two minutes, one minute, and thirty seconds before time is up. There will be an interval before the next move, during which any disturbance of the Country can be rearranged and men accidentally overturned replaced in a proper attitude. This interval must not exceed five or four minutes, as may be agreed upon.

(4) Guns must not be fired before the second move of the first player — not counting the "putting down" as a move. Thus the first player puts down, then the second player, the first player moves, then the second player, and the two forces are then supposed to come into effective range of each other and the first player may open fire if he wishes to do so.

(5) In making his move a player must move or fire his guns if he wants to do so, before moving his men. To this rule of "Guns First" there is to be no exception.

(6) Every soldier may be moved and every gun moved or fired at each move, subject to the following rules:

MOBILITY OF THE VARIOUS ARMS

(Each player must be provided with two pieces of string, one two feet in length and the other six inches.)

(I) An infantry-man may be moved a foot or any less distance at each move.

(II) A cavalry-man may be moved two feet or any less distance at each move.

(III) A gun is in action if there are at least four men of its own side within six inches of it. If there are not at least four men within that distance, it can neither be moved nor fired.

(IV) If a gun is in action it can either be moved or fired at each move, but not both. If it is fired, it may fire as many as four shots in each move. It may be swung round on its axis (the middle point of its

wheel axle) to take aim, provided the Country about it permits; it may be elevated or depressed, and the soldiers about it may, at the discretion of the firer, be made to lie down in their places to facilitate its handling. Moreover, soldiers who have got in front of the fire of their own guns may lie down while the guns fire over them. At the end of the move the gun must be left without altering its elevation and pointing in the direction of the last shot. And after firing, two men must be placed exactly at the end of the trail of the gun, one on either side in a line directly behind the wheels. So much for firing. If the gun is moved and not fired, then at least four men who are with the gun must move up with it to its new position, and be placed within six inches of it in its new position. The gun itself must be placed trail forward and the muzzle pointing back in the direction from which it came, and so it must remain until it is swung round on its axis to fire. Obviously the distance which a gun can move will be determined by the men it is with; if there are at least four cavalry-men with it, they can take the gun two feet, but if there are fewer cavalry-men than four and the rest infantry, or no cavalry and all infantry, the gun will be movable only one foot.

(V) Every man must be placed fairly clear of hills, buildings, trees, guns, etc. He must not be jammed into interstices, and either player may insist upon a clear distance between any man and any gun or other object of at least one-sixteenth of an inch. Nor must men be packed in contact with men. A space of one-sixteenth of an inch should be kept between them.

(VI) When men are knocked over by a shot they are dead, and as many men are dead as a shot knocks over or causes to fall or to lean so that they would fall if unsupported. But if a shot strikes a man but does not knock him over, he is dead, provided the shot has not already killed a man. But a shot cannot kill more than one man without knocking him over, and if it touches several without oversetting them, only the first touched is dead and the others are not incapacitated. A shot that rebounds from or glances off any object and touches a man, kills him; it kills him even if it simply rolls to his feet, subject to what has been said in the previous sentence.

HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTING AND CAPTURING

(1) A man or a body of men which has less than half its own number of men on its own side within a move of it, is said to be isolated. But if there is at least half its number of men of its own side within a move of it, it is not isolated; it is supported.

(2) Men may be moved up into virtual contact (one-eighth of an inch or closer) with men of the opposite side. They must then be left until the end of the move.

(3) At the end of the move, if there are men of the side that has just moved in contact with any men of the other side, they constitute a melee. All the men in contact, and any other men within six inches of the men in contact, measuring from any point of their persons, weapons, or horses, are supposed to take part in the melee. At the end of the move the two players examine the melee and dispose of the men concerned according to the following rules: —

Either the numbers taking part in the melee on each side are equal or unequal.

(a) If they are equal, all the men on both sides are killed.

(b) If they are unequal, then the inferior force is either isolated or (measuring from the points of contact) not isolated.

(i) If it is isolated (see (1) above), then as many men become prisoners as the inferior force is less in numbers than the superior force, and the rest kill each a man and are killed. Thus nine against eleven have two taken prisoners, and each side seven men dead. Four of the eleven remain with two prisoners. One may put this in another way by saying that the two forces kill each other off, man for man, until one force is double the other, which is then taken prisoner. Seven men kill seven men, and then four are left with two.

(ii) But if the inferior force is not isolated (see (1) above), then each man of the inferior force kills a man of the superior force and is himself killed.

And the player who has just completed the move, the one who has charged, decides, when there is any choice, which men in the melee, both of his own and of his antagonist, shall die and which shall be prisoners or captors.

All these arrangements are made after the move is over, in the

interval between the moves, and the time taken for the adjustment does not count as part of the usual interval for consideration. It is extra time.

The player next moving may, if he has taken prisoners, move these prisoners. Prisoners may be sent under escort to the rear or wherever the capturer directs, and one man within six inches of any number of prisoners up to seven can escort these prisoners and go with them. Prisoners are liberated by the death of any escort there may be within six inches of them, but they may not be moved by the player of their own side until the move following that in which the escort is killed. Directly prisoners are taken they are supposed to be disarmed, and if they are liberated they cannot fight until they are rearmed. In order to be rearmed they must return to the back line of their own side. An escort having conducted prisoners to the back line, and so beyond the reach of liberation, may then return into the fighting line.

Prisoners once made cannot fight until they have returned to their back line. It follows, therefore, that if after the adjudication of a melee a player moves up more men into touch with the survivors of this first melee, and so constitutes a second melee, any prisoners made in the first melee will not count as combatants in the second melee. Thus if A moves up nineteen men into a melee with thirteen of B's — B having only five in support — A makes six prisoners, kills seven men, and has seven of his own killed. If, now, B can move up fourteen men into melee with A's victorious survivors, which he may be able to do by bringing the five into contact, and getting nine others within six inches of them, no count is made of the six of B's men who are prisoners in the hands of A. They are disarmed. B, therefore, has fourteen men in the second melee and A twelve, B makes two prisoners, kills ten of A's men, and has ten of his own killed. But now the six prisoners originally made by A are left without an escort, and are therefore recaptured by B. But they must go to B's back line and return before they can fight again. So, as the outcome of these two melees, there are six of B's men going as released prisoners to his back line whence they may return into the battle, two of A's men prisoners in the hands of B, one of B's staying with them as escort, and three of B's men still actively free for

action. A, at a cost of nineteen men, has disposed of seventeen of B's men for good, and of six or seven, according to whether B keeps his prisoners in his fighting line or not, temporarily.

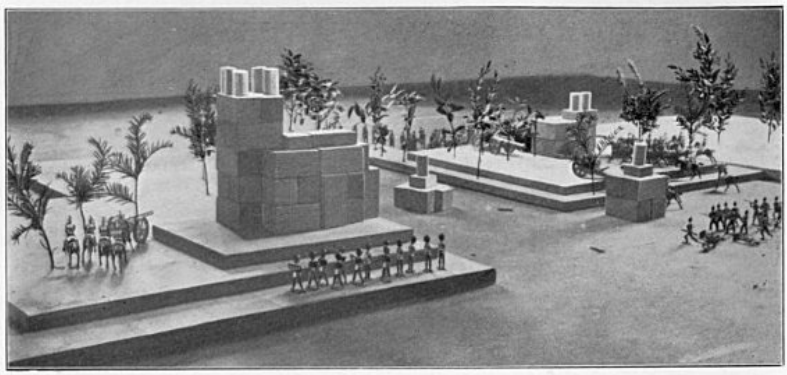

FIG. 4.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. The affair is developing rapidly. (*See page 76.*)

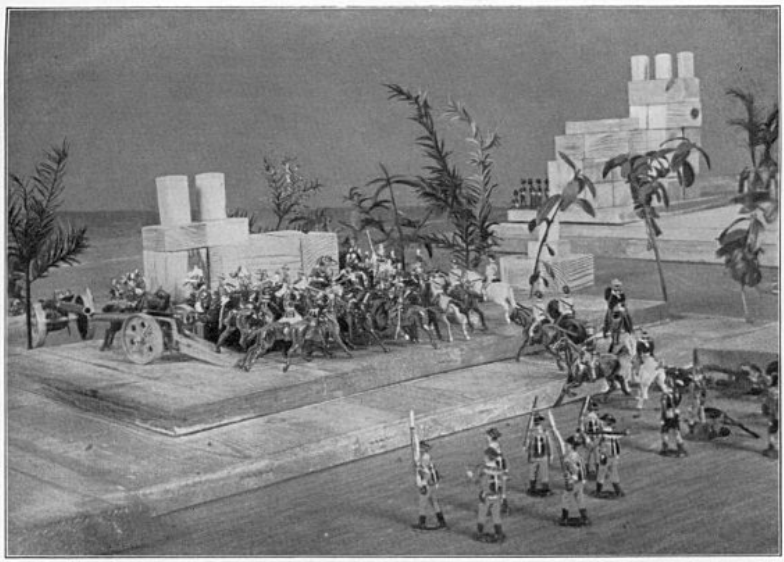

FIG. 5A.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. Red Cavalry charging home over the Blue guns. (*See page 78.*)

(4) Any isolated body may hoist the white flag and surrender at any time.

(5) A gun is captured when there is no man whatever of its original side within six inches of it, and when at least four men of the antagonist side have moved up to it and have passed its wheel axis

going in the direction of their attack. This latter point is important. An antagonist's gun may be out of action, and you may have a score of men coming up to it and within six inches of it, but it is not yet captured; and you may have brought up a dozen men all round the hostile gun, but if there is still one enemy just out of their reach and within six inches of the end of the trail of the gun, that gun is not captured: it is still in dispute and out of action, and you may not fire it or move it at the next move. But once a gun is fully captured, it follows all the rules of your own guns.

VARIETIES OF THE BATTLE-GAME

You may play various types of game.

(1) One is the Fight to the Finish. You move in from any points you like on the back line and try to kill, capture, or drive over his back line the whole of the enemy's force. You play the game for points; you score 100 for the victory, and 10 for every gun you hold or are in a position to take, 1-1/2 for every cavalry-man, 1 for every infantry-man still alive and uncaptured, 1/2 for every man of yours prisoner in the hands of the enemy, and 1/2 for every prisoner you have taken. If the battle is still undecided when both forces are reduced below fifteen men, the battle is drawn and the 100 points for victory are divided.

Note — This game can be fought with any sized force, but if it is fought with less than 50 a side, the minimum must be 10 a side.

(2) The Blow at the Rear game is decided when at least three men of one force reach any point in the back line of their antagonist. He is then supposed to have suffered a strategic defeat, and he must retreat his entire force over the back line in six moves, i.e. six of his moves. Anything left on the field after six moves capitulates to the victor. Points count as in the preceding game, but this lasts a shorter time and is better adapted to a cramped country with a short back line. With a long rear line the game is simply a rush at some weak point in the first player's line by the entire cavalry brigade of the second player. Instead of making the whole back line available for the Blow at the Rear, the middle or either half may be taken.

(3) In the Defensive Game, a force, the defenders, two-thirds as strong as its antagonist, tries to prevent the latter arriving, while still a quarter of its original strength, upon the defender's back line. The Country must be made by one or both of the players before it is determined which shall be defender. The players then toss for choice of sides, and the winner of the toss becomes the defender. He puts out his force over the field on his own side, anywhere up to the distance of one move off the middle line — that is to say, he must not put any man within one move of the middle line, but he may do so anywhere on his own side of that limit — and then the loser of the toss becomes first player, and sets out his men a move from his back line. The defender may open fire forthwith; he need not wait until after the second move of the first player, as the second player has to do.

COMPOSITION OF FORCES

Except in the above cases, or when otherwise agreed upon, the forces engaged shall be equal in number and similar in composition. The methods of handicapping are obvious. A slight inequality (chances of war) may be arranged between equal players by leaving out 12 men on each side and tossing with a pair of dice to see how many each player shall take of these. The best arrangement and proportion of the forces is in small bodies of about 20 to 25 infantry-men and 12 to 15 cavalry to a gun. Such a force can maneuver comfortably on a front of 4 or 5 feet. Most of our games have been played with about 80 infantry, 50 cavalry, 3 or 4 naval guns, and a field gun on either side, or with smaller proportional forces. We have played excellent games on an eighteen-foot battlefield with over two hundred men and six guns a side. A player may, of course, rearrange his forces to suit his own convenience; brigade all or most of his cavalry into a powerful striking force, or what not. But more guns proportionally lead to their being put out of action too early for want of men; a larger proportion of infantry makes the game sluggish, and more cavalry — because of the difficulty of keeping large bodies of this force under cover — leads simply to early heavy losses by gunfire and violent and

disastrous charging. The composition of a force may, of course, be varied considerably. One good Fight to a Finish game we tried as follows: We made the Country, tossed for choice, and then drew curtains across the middle of the field. Each player then selected his force from the available soldiers in this way: he counted infantry as 1 each, cavalry as 1-1/2, and a gun as 10, and, taking whatever he liked in whatever position he liked, he made up a total of 150. He could, for instance, choose 100 infantry and 5 guns, or 100 cavalry and no guns, or 60 infantry, 40 cavalry, and 3 guns. In the result, a Boer-like cavalry force of 80 with 3 guns suffered defeat at the hands of 110 infantry with 4.

SIZE OF THE SOLDIERS

The soldiers used should be all of one size. The best British makers have standardised sizes, and sell infantry and cavalry in exactly proportioned dimensions; the infantry being nearly two inches tall. There is a lighter, cheaper make of perhaps an inch and a half high that is also available. Foreign-made soldiers are of variable sizes.

IV. THE BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM

AND now, having given all the exact science of our war game, having told something of the development of this warfare, let me here set out the particulars of an exemplary game. And suddenly your author changes. He changes into what perhaps he might have been — under different circumstances. His inky fingers become large, manly hands, his drooping scholastic back stiffens, his elbows go out, his etiolated complexion corrugates and darkens, his moustaches increase and grow and spread, and curl up horribly; a large, red scar, a sabre cut, grows lurid over one eye. He expands — all over he expands. He clears his throat startlingly, lugs at the still growing ends of his moustache, and says, with just a faint and fading doubt in his voice as to whether he can do it, "Yas, Sir!"

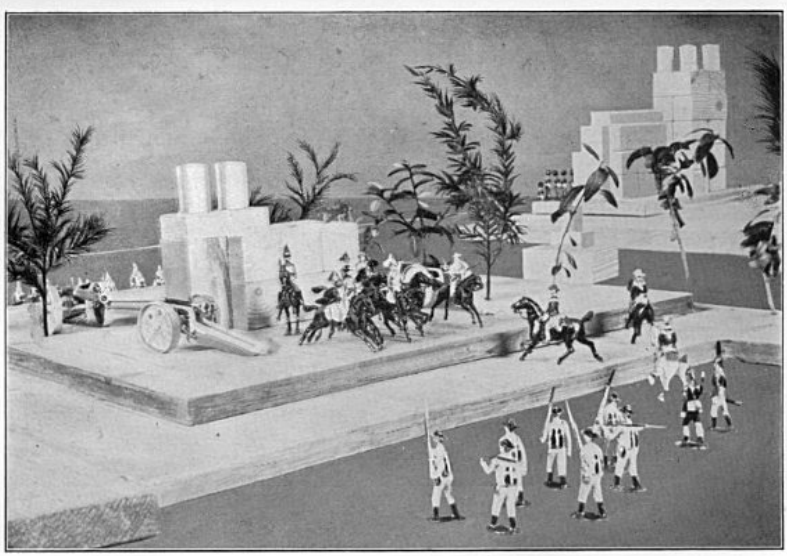

FIG. 30.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. After the cavalry mêlée. (*See page 80.*)

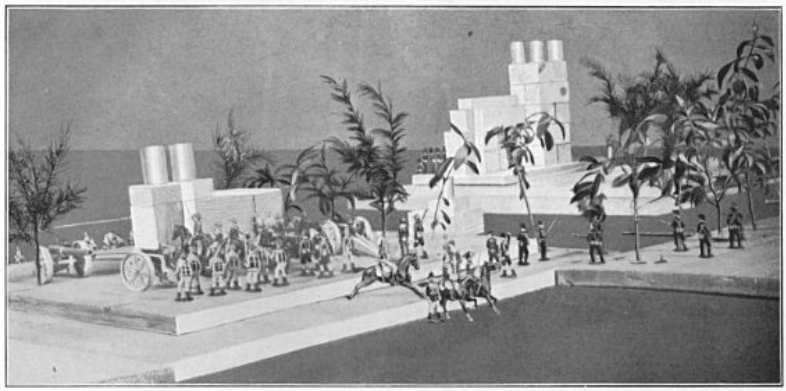

FIG. 6A.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. The three Red Cavalry prisoners are being led to the rear. (*See page* 80.)

Now for a while you listen to General H. G. W., of the Blue Army. You hear tales of victory. The photographs of the battlefields are by a woman war-correspondent, A. C. W., a daring ornament of her sex. I vanish. I vanish, but I will return. Here, then, is the story of the battle of Hook's Farm.

"The affair of Hook's Farm was one of those brisk little things that did so much to build up my early reputation. I did remarkably well, though perhaps it is not my function to say so. The enemy was slightly stronger, both in cavalry and infantry, than myself [Footnote: A slight but pardonable error on the part of the gallant gentleman. The forces were exactly equal.]; he had the choice of position, and opened the ball. Nevertheless I routed him. I had with me a compact little force of 3 guns, 48 infantry, and 25 horse. My instructions were to clear up the country to the east of Firely Church.

"We came very speedily into touch. I discovered the enemy advancing upon Hook's Farm and Firely Church, evidently with the intention of holding those two positions and giving me a warm welcome. I have by me a photograph or so of the battlefield and also a little sketch I used upon the field. They will give the intelligent reader a far better idea of the encounter than any so-called 'fine writing' can do.

"The original advance of the enemy was through the open country behind Firely Church and Hook's Farm; I sighted him between the points marked A A and B B, and his force was divided into two columns, with very little cover or possibility of communication

between them if once the intervening ground was under fire. I reckoned about 22 to his left and 50 or 60 to his right. [Footnote: Here again the gallant gentleman errs; this time he magnifies.] Evidently he meant to seize both Firely Church and Hook's Farm, get his guns into action, and pound my little force to pieces while it was still practically in the open. He could reach both these admirable positions before I could hope to get a man there. There was no effective cover whatever upon my right that would have permitted an advance up to the church, and so I decided to concentrate my whole force in a rush upon Hook's Farm, while I staved off his left with gun fire. I do not believe any strategist whatever could have bettered that scheme. My guns were at the points marked D C E, each with five horsemen, and I deployed my infantry in a line between D and E. The rest of my cavalry I ordered to advance on Hook's Farm from C. I have shown by arrows on the sketch the course I proposed for my guns. The gun E was to go straight for its assigned position, and get into action at once. C was not to risk capture or being put out of action; its exact position was to be determined by Red's rapidity in getting up to the farm, and it was to halt and get to work directly it saw any chance of effective fire.

"Red had now sighted us. Throughout the affair he showed a remarkably poor stomach for gun-fire, and this was his undoing. Moreover, he was tempted by the poorness of our cover on our right to attempt to outflank and enfilade us there. Accordingly, partly to get cover from our two central guns and partly to outflank us, he sent the whole of his left wing to the left of Firely Church, where, except for the gun, it became almost a negligible quantity. The gun came out between the church and the wood into a position from which it did a considerable amount of mischief to the infantry on our right, and nearly drove our rightmost gun in upon its supports. Meanwhile, Red's two guns on his right came forward to Hook's Farm, rather badly supported by his infantry.

"Once they got into position there I perceived that we should be done for, and accordingly I rushed every available man forward in a vigorous counter attack, and my own two guns came lumbering up to the farmhouse corners, and got into the wedge of shelter close behind the house before his could open fire. His fire met my advance,

littering the gentle grass slope with dead, and then, hot behind the storm of shell, and even as my cavalry gathered to charge his guns, he charged mine. I was amazed beyond measure at that rush, knowing his sabres to be slightly outnumbered by mine. In another moment all the level space round the farmhouse was a whirling storm of slashing cavalry, and then we found ourselves still holding on, with half a dozen prisoners, and the farmyard a perfect shambles of horses and men. The melee was over. His charge had failed, and, after a brief breathing — space for my shot — torn infantry to come up, I led on the counter attack. It was brilliantly successful; a hard five minutes with bayonet and sabre, and his right gun was in our hands and his central one in jeopardy.

"And now Red was seized with that most fatal disease of generals, indecision. He would neither abandon his lost gun nor adequately attack it. He sent forward a feeble little infantry attack, that we cut up with the utmost ease, taking several prisoners, made a disastrous demonstration from the church, and then fell back altogether from the gentle hill on which Hook Farm is situated to a position beside and behind an exposed cottage on the level. I at once opened out into a long crescent, with a gun at either horn, whose crossfire completely destroyed his chances of retreat from this ill-chosen last stand, and there presently we disabled his second gun. I now turned my attention to his still largely unbroken right, from which a gun had maintained a galling fire on us throughout the fight. I might still have had some stiff work getting an attack home to the church, but Red had had enough of it, and now decided to relieve me of any further exertion by a precipitate retreat. My gun to the right of Hook's Farm killed three of his flying men, but my cavalry were too badly cut up for an effective pursuit, and he got away to the extreme left of his original positions with about 6 infantry-men, 4 cavalry, and 1 gun. He went none too soon. Had he stayed, it would have been only a question of time before we shot him to pieces and finished him altogether."

So far, and a little vaingloriously, the general. Let me now shrug my shoulders and shake him off, and go over this battle he describes a little more exactly with the help of the photographs. The battle is a small, compact game of the Fight-to-a-Finish type, and it was

arranged as simply as possible in order to permit of a full and exact explanation.

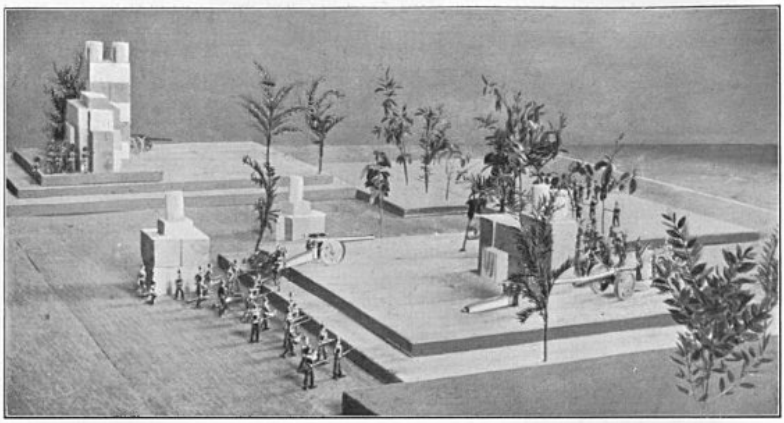

FIG. 6B.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. Position of armies at end of Blue's third move. (*See page* 81.)

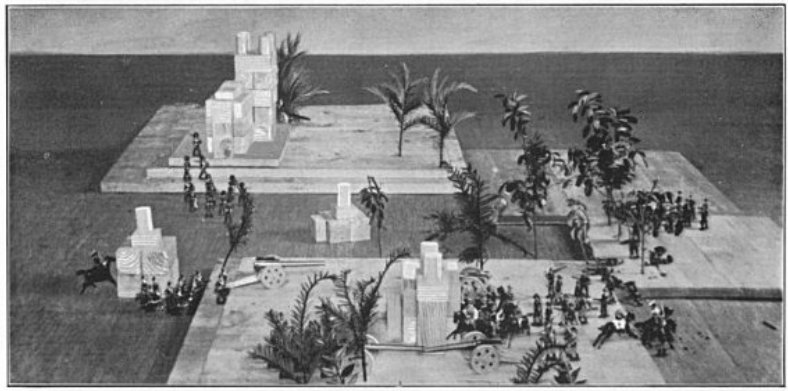

FIG. 7.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. Showing the frantic rush of Red's left wing across the open to join the main body. (*See page* 82.)

Figure 1 shows the country of the battlefield put out; on the right is the church, on the left (near the centre of the plate) is the farm. In the hollow between the two is a small outbuilding. Directly behind the farm in the line of vision is another outbuilding. This is more distinctly seen in other photographs. Behind, the chalk back line is clear. Red has won the toss, both for the choice of a side and, after making that choice, for first move, and his force is already put out upon the back line. For the sake of picturesqueness, the men are not put exactly on the line, but each will have his next move measured

from that line. Red has broken his force into two, a fatal error, as we shall see, in view of the wide space of open ground between the farm and the church. He has 1 gun, 5 cavalry, and 13 infantry on his left, who are evidently to take up a strong position by the church and enfilade Blue's position; Red's right, of 2 guns, 20 cavalry, and 37 infantry aim at the seizure of the farm.

Figure 2 is a near view of Blue's side, with his force put down. He has grasped the strategic mistake of Red, and is going to fling every man at the farm. His right, of 5 cavalry and 16 infantry, will get up as soon as possible to the woods near the centre of the field (whence the fire of their gun will be able to cut off the two portions of Red's force from each other), and then, leaving the gun there with sufficient men to serve it, the rest of this party will push on to co-operate with the main force of their comrades in the inevitable scrimmage for the farm.

Figure 3 shows the fight after Red and Blue have both made their first move. It is taken from Red's side. Red has not as yet realised the danger of his position. His left gun struggles into position to the left of the church, his centre and right push for the farm. Blue's five cavalry on his left have already galloped forward into a favourable position to open fire at the next move — they are a little hidden in the picture by the church; the sixteen infantry follow hard, and his main force makes straight for the farm.

Figure 4 shows the affair developing rapidly. Red's cavalry on his right have taken his two guns well forward into a position to sweep either side of the farm, and his left gun is now well placed to pound Blue's infantry centre. His infantry continue to press forward, but Blue, for his second move, has already opened fire from the woods with his right gun, and killed three of Red's men. His infantry have now come up to serve this gun, and the cavalry who brought it into position at the first move have now left it to them in order to gallop over to join the force attacking the farm. Undismayed by Red's guns, Blue has brought his other two guns and his men as close to the farm as they can go. His leftmost gun stares Red's in the face, and prevents any effective fire, his middle gun faces Red's middle gun. Some of his cavalry are exposed to the right of the farm, but most are completely covered now by the farm from Red's fire. Red has now to

move. The nature of his position is becoming apparent to him. His right gun is ineffective, his left and his centre guns cannot kill more than seven or eight men between them; and at the next move, unless he can silence them, Blue's guns will be mowing his exposed cavalry down from the security of the farm. He is in a fix. How is he to get out of it? His cavalry are slightly outnumbered, but he decides to do as much execution as he can with his own guns, charge the Blue guns before him, and then bring up his infantry to save the situation.

Figure 5a shows the result of Red's move. His two effective guns have between them bowled over two cavalry and six infantry in the gap between the farm and Blue's right gun; and then, following up the effect of his gunfire, his cavalry charges home over the Blue guns. One oversight he makes, to which Blue at once calls his attention at the end of his move. Red has reckoned on twenty cavalry for his charge, forgetting that by the rules he must put two men at the tail of his middle gun. His infantry are just not able to come up for this duty, and consequently two cavalry-men have to be set there. The game then pauses while the players work out the cavalry melee. Red has brought up eighteen men to this; in touch or within six inches of touch there are twenty-one Blue cavalry. Red's force is isolated, for only two of his men are within a move, and to support eighteen he would have to have nine. By the rules this gives fifteen men dead on either side and three Red prisoners to Blue. By the rules also it rests with Red to indicate the survivors within the limits of the melee as he chooses. He takes very good care there are not four men within six inches of either Blue gun, and both these are out of action therefore for Blue's next move. Of course Red would have done far better to have charged home with thirteen men only, leaving seven in support, but he was flurried by his comparatively unsuccessful shooting — he had wanted to hit more cavalry — and by the gun-trail mistake. Moreover, he had counted his antagonist wrongly, and thought he could arrange a melee of twenty against twenty.

Figure 5b shows the game at the same stage as 5a, immediately after the adjudication of the melee. The dead have been picked up, the three prisoners, by a slight deflection of the rules in the direction of the picturesque, turn their faces towards captivity, and the rest of the picture is exactly in the position of 5a.

It is now Blue's turn to move, and figure 6a shows the result of his move. He fires his rightmost gun (the nose of it is just visible to the right) and kills one infantry-man and one cavalry-man (at the tail of Red's central gun), brings up his surviving eight cavalry into convenient positions for the service of his temporarily silenced guns, and hurries his infantry forward to the farm, recklessly exposing them in the thin wood between the farm and his right gun. The attentive reader will be able to trace all this in figure 6a, and he will also note the three Red cavalry prisoners going to the rear under the escort of one Khaki infantry man.

Figure 6b shows exactly the same stage as figure 6a, that is to say, the end of Blue's third move. A cavalry-man lies dead at the tail of Red's middle gun, an infantry-man a little behind it. His rightmost gun is abandoned and partly masked, but not hidden, from the observer, by a tree to the side of the farmhouse.

And now, what is Red to do?

The reader will probably have his own ideas, as I have mine. What Red did do in the actual game was to lose his head, and then at the end of four minutes' deliberation he had to move, he blundered desperately. He opened fire on Blue's exposed centre and killed eight men. (Their bodies litter the ground in figure 7, which gives a complete bird's-eye view of the battle.) He then sent forward and isolated six or seven men in a wild attempt to recapture his lost gun, massed his other men behind the inadequate cover of his central gun, and sent the detachment of infantry that had hitherto lurked uselessly behind the church, in a frantic and hopeless rush across the open to join them. (The one surviving cavalry-man on his right wing will be seen taking refuge behind the cottage.) There can be little question of the entire unsoundness of all these movements. Red was at a disadvantage, he had failed to capture the farm, and his business now was manifestly to save his men as much as possible, make a defensive fight of it, inflict as much damage as possible with his leftmost gun on Blue's advance, get the remnants of his right across to the church — the cottage in the centre and their own gun would have given them a certain amount of cover — and build up a new position about that building as a pivot. With two guns right and left of the church he might conceivably have saved the rest of the fight.

That, however, is theory; let us return to fact. Figure 8 gives the disastrous consequences of Red's last move. Blue has moved, his guns have slaughtered ten of Red's wretched foot, and a rush of nine Blue cavalry and infantry mingles with Red's six surviving infantry about the disputed gun. These infantry by the definition are isolated; there are not three other Reds within a move of them. The view in this photograph also is an extensive one, and the reader will note, as a painful accessory, the sad spectacle of three Red prisoners receding to the right. The melee about Red's lost gun works out, of course, at three dead on each side, and three more Red prisoners.

Henceforth the battle moves swiftly to complete the disaster of Red. Shaken and demoralised, that unfortunate general is now only for retreat. His next move, of which I have no picture, is to retreat the infantry he has so wantonly exposed back to the shelter of the church, to withdraw the wreckage of his right into the cover of the cottage, and — one last gleam of enterprise — to throw forward his left gun into a position commanding Blue's right.

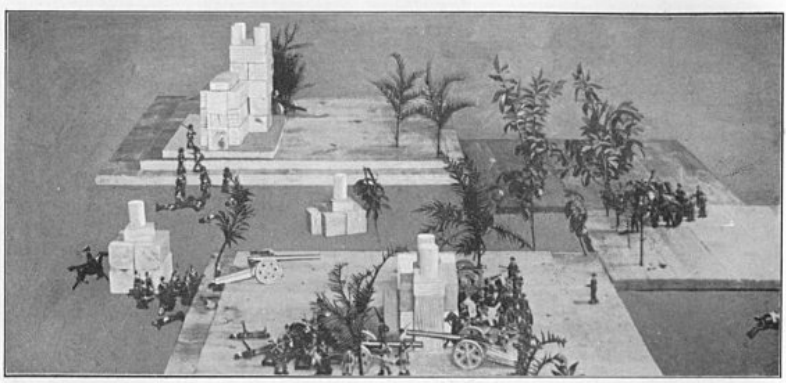

FIG. 8.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. The Red Army suffers heavy losses. (See page 83a)

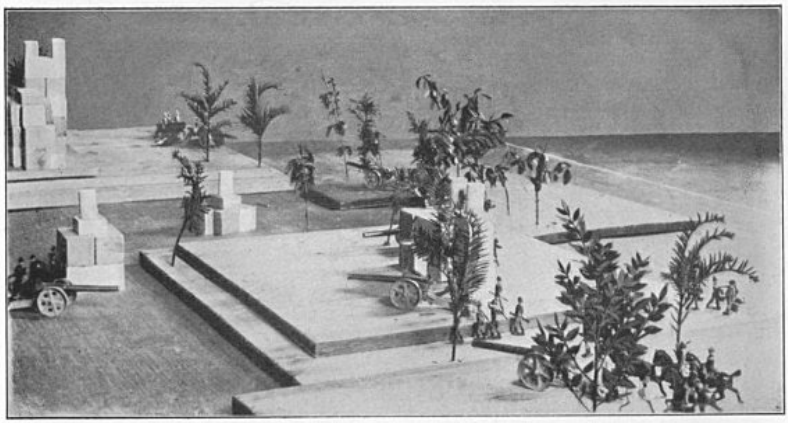

FIG. 9.—BATTLE OF HOOK'S FARM. Complete victory of the Blue Army. (See page 85.)

Blue then pounds Red's right with his gun to the right of the farm and kills three men. He extends his other gun to the left of the farm, right out among the trees, so as to get an effective fire next time upon the tail of Red's gun. He also moves up sufficient men to take possession of Red's lost gun. On the right Blue's gun engages Red's and kills one man. All this the reader will see clearly in figure 9, and he will also note a second batch of Red prisoners — this time they are infantry, going rearward. Figure 9 is the last picture that is needed to tell the story of the battle. Red's position is altogether hopeless. He has four men left alive by his rightmost gun, and their only chance is to attempt to save that by retreating with it. If they fire it, one or other will certainly be killed at its tail in Blue's subsequent move, and then the gun will be neither movable nor fireable. Red's left gun, with four men only, is also in extreme peril, and will be immovable and helpless if it loses another man.

Very properly Red decided upon retreat. His second gun had to be abandoned after one move, but two of the men with it escaped over his back line. Five of the infantry behind the church escaped, and his third gun and its four cavalry got away on the extreme left-hand corner of Red's position. Blue remained on the field, completely victorious, with two captured guns and six prisoners.

There you have a scientific record of the worthy general's little affair.

V. EXTENSIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS OF LITTLE WAR

Now that battle of Hook's Farm is, as I have explained, a simplification of the game, set out entirely to illustrate the method of playing; there is scarcely a battle that will not prove more elaborate (and eventful) than this little encounter. If a number of players and a sufficiently large room can be got, there is no reason why armies of many hundreds of soldiers should not fight over many square yards of model country. So long as each player has about a hundred men and three guns there is no need to lengthen the duration of a game on that account. But it is too laborious and confusing for a single player to handle more than that number of men.

Moreover, on a big floor with an extensive country it is possible to begin moving with moves double or treble the length here specified, and to come down to moves of the ordinary lengths when the troops are within fifteen or twelve or ten feet of each other. To players with the time and space available I would suggest using a quite large country, beginning with treble moves, and, with the exception of a select number of cavalry scouts, keeping the soldiers in their boxes with the lids on, and moving the boxes as units. (This boxing idea is a new one, and affords a very good substitute for the curtain; I have tried it twice for games in the open air where the curtain was not available.) Neither side would, of course, know what the other had in its boxes; they might be packed regiments or a mere skeleton force. Each side would advance on the other by double or treble moves behind a screen of cavalry scouts, until a scout was within ten feet of a box on the opposite side. Then the contents of that particular box would have to be disclosed and the men stood out. Troops without any enemy within twenty feet could be returned to their boxes for facility in moving. Playing on such a scale would admit also of the introduction of the problem of provisions and supplies. Little toy Army Service waggons can be bought, and it could be ruled that troops must have one such waggon for every fifty men within at least six moves. Moreover, ammunition carts may be got, and it may be

ruled that one must be within two moves of a gun before the latter can be fired. All these are complications of the War Game, and so far I have not been able to get together sufficient experienced players to play on this larger, more elaborate scale. It is only after the smaller simpler war game here described has been played a number of times, and its little dodges mastered completely, that such more warlike devices become practicable.

But obviously with a team of players and an extensive country, one could have a general controlling the whole campaign, divisional commanders, batteries of guns, specialised brigades, and a quite military movement of the whole affair. I have (as several illustrations show) tried Little Wars in the open air. The toy soldiers stand quite well on closely mown grass, but the long-range gun-fire becomes a little uncertain if there is any breeze. It gives a greater freedom of movement and allows the players to lie down more comfortably when firing, to increase, and even double, the moves of the indoor game. One can mark out high roads and streams with an ordinary lawn-tennis marker, mountains and rocks of stones, and woods and forests of twigs are easily arranged. But if the game is to be left out all night and continued next day (a thing I have as yet had no time to try), the houses must be of some more solid material than paper. I would suggest painted blocks of wood. On a large lawn, a wide country-side may be easily represented. The players may begin with a game exactly like the ordinary Kriegspiel, with scouts and boxed soldiers, which will develop into such battles as are here described, as the troops come into contact. It would be easy to give the roads a real significance by permitting a move half as long again as in the open country for waggons or boxed troops along a road. There is a possibility of having a toy railway, with stations or rolling stock into which troops might be put, on such a giant war map. One would allow a move for entraining and another for detraining, requiring the troops to be massed alongside the train at the beginning and end of each journey, and the train might move at four or five times the cavalry rate. One would use open trucks and put in a specified number of men — say twelve infantry or five cavalry or half a gun per truck — and permit an engine to draw seven or eight trucks, or move at a reduced speed with more. One could also rule that four

men — the same four men — remaining on a line during two moves, could tear up a rail, and eight men in three moves replace it.

I will confess I have never yet tried over these more elaborate developments of Little Wars, partly because of the limited time at my disposal, and partly because they all demand a number of players who are well acquainted with the same on each side if they are not to last interminably. The Battle of Hook's Farm (one player a side) took a whole afternoon, and most of my battles have lasted the better part of a day.

VI. ENDING WITH A SORT OF CHALLENGE

I COULD go on now and tell of battles, copiously. In the memory of the one skirmish I have given I do but taste blood. I would like to go on, to a large, thick book. It would be an agreeable task. Since I am the chief inventor and practiser (so far) of Little Wars, there has fallen to me a disproportionate share of victories. But let me not boast. For the present, I have done all that I meant to do in this matter. It is for you, dear reader, now to get a floor, a friend, some soldiers and some guns, and show by a grovelling devotion your appreciation of this noble and beautiful gift of a limitless game that I have given you.

And if I might for a moment trumpet! How much better is this amiable miniature than the Real Thing! Here is a homeopathic remedy for the imaginative strategist. Here is the premeditation, the thrill, the strain of accumulating victory or disaster — and no smashed nor sanguinary bodies, no shattered fine buildings nor devastated country sides, no petty cruelties, none of that awful universal boredom and embitterment, that tiresome delay or stoppage or embarrassment of every gracious, bold, sweet, and charming thing, that we who are old enough to remember a real modern war know to be the reality of belligerence. This world is for ample living; we want security and freedom; all of us in every country, except a few dull-witted, energetic bores, want to see the manhood of the world at something better than apeing the little lead toys our children buy in boxes. We want fine things made for mankind — splendid cities, open ways, more knowledge and power, and more and more and more — and so I offer my game, for a particular as well as a general end; and let us put this prancing monarch and that silly scare-monger, and these excitable "patriots," and those adventurers, and all the practitioners of Welt Politik, into one vast Temple of War, with cork carpets everywhere, and plenty of little trees and little houses to knock down, and cities and fortresses, and unlimited soldiers — tons, cellars-full — and let them lead their own lives there away from us.

My game is just as good as their game, and saner by reason of its size. Here is War, done down to rational proportions, and yet out of

the way of mankind, even as our fathers turned human sacrifices into the eating of little images and symbolic mouthfuls. For my own part, I am *prepared*. I have nearly five hundred men, more than a score of guns, and I twirl my moustache and hurl defiance eastward from my home in Essex across the narrow seas. Not only eastward. I would conclude this little discourse with one other disconcerting and exasperating sentence for the admirers and practitioners of Big War. I have never yet met in little battle any military gentleman, any captain, major, colonel, general, or eminent commander, who did not presently get into difficulties and confusions among even the elementary rules of the Battle. You have only to play at Little Wars three or four times to realise just what a blundering thing Great War must be.

Great War is at present, I am convinced, not only the most expensive game in the universe, but it is a game out of all proportion. Not only are the masses of men and material and suffering and inconvenience too monstrously big for reason, but — the available heads we have for it, are too small. That, I think, is the most pacific realisation conceivable, and Little War brings you to it as nothing else but Great War can do.

APPENDIX. LITTLE WARS AND KRIEGSPIEL

THIS little book has, I hope, been perfectly frank about its intentions. It is not a book upon Kriegspiel. It gives merely a game that may be played by two or four or six amateurish persons in an afternoon and evening with toy soldiers. But it has a very distinct relation to Kriegspiel; and since the main portion of it was written and published in a magazine, I have had quite a considerable correspondence with military people who have been interested by it, and who have shown a very friendly spirit towards it — in spite of the pacific outbreak in its concluding section. They tell me — what I already a little suspected — that Kriegspiel, as it is played by the British Army, is a very dull and unsatisfactory exercise, lacking in realism, in stir and the unexpected, obsessed by the umpire at every turn, and of very doubtful value in waking up the imagination, which should be its chief function. I am particularly indebted to Colonel Mark Sykes for advice and information in this matter. He has pointed out to me the possibility of developing Little Wars into a vivid and inspiring Kriegspiel, in which the element of the umpire would be reduced to a minimum; and it would be ungrateful to him, and a waste of an interesting opportunity, if I did not add this Appendix, pointing out how a Kriegspiel of real educational value for junior officers may be developed out of the amusing methods of Little War. If Great War is to be played at all, the better it is played the more humanely it will be done. I see no inconsistency in deploring the practice while perfecting the method. But I am a civilian, and Kriegspiel is not my proper business. I am deeply preoccupied with a novel I am writing, and so I think the best thing I can do is just to set down here all the ideas that have cropped up in my mind, in the footsteps, so to speak, of Colonel Sykes, and leave it to the military expert, if he cares to take the matter up, to reduce my scattered suggestions to a system.

Now, first, it is manifest that in Little Wars there is no equivalent for rifle-fire, and that the effect of the gun-fire has no resemblance to

the effect of shell. That may be altered very simply. Let the rules as to gun-fire be as they are now, but let a different projectile be used — a projectile that will drop down and stay where it falls. I find that one can buy in ironmongers' shops small brass screws of various sizes and weights, but all capable of being put in the muzzle of the 4'7 guns without slipping down the barrel. If, with such a screw in the muzzle, the gun is loaded and fired, the wooden bolt remains in the gun and the screw flies and drops and stays near where it falls — its range being determined by the size and weight of screw selected by the gunner. Let us assume this is a shell, and it is quite easy to make a rule that will give the effect of its explosion. Half, or, in the case of an odd number, one more than half, of the men within three inches of this shell are dead, and if there is a gun completely within the circle of three inches radius from the shell, it is destroyed. If it is not completely within the circle, it is disabled for two moves. A supply waggon is completely destroyed if it falls wholly or partially within the radius. But if there is a wall, house, or entrenchment between any men and the shell, they are uninjured — they do not count in the reckoning of the effect of the shell.

I think one can get a practical imitation of the effect of rifle-fire by deciding that for every five infantry-men who are roughly in a line, and who do not move in any particular move, there may be one (ordinary) shot taken with a 4'7 gun. It may be fired from any convenient position behind the row of live men, so long as the shot passes roughly over the head of the middle man of the five.

Of course, while in Little Wars there are only three or four players, in any proper Kriegspiel the game will go on over a larger area — in a drill-hall or some such place — and each arm and service will be entrusted to a particular player. This permits all sorts of complicated imitations of reality that are impossible to our parlour and playroom Little Wars. We can consider transport, supply, ammunition, and the moral effect of cavalry impact, and of uphill and downhill movements. We can also bring in the spade and entrenchment, and give scope to the Royal Engineers. But before I write anything of Colonel Sykes' suggestions about these, let me say a word or two about Kriegspiel "country."

The country for Kriegspiel should be made up, I think, of heavy

blocks or boxes of wood about 3 x 3 x 1/2 feet, and curved pieces (with a rounded outline and a chord of three feet, or shaped like right-angled triangles with an incurved hypotenuse and two straight sides of 3 feet) can easily be contrived to round off corners and salient angles. These blocks can be bored to take trees, etc., exactly as the boards in Little Wars are bored, and with them a very passable model of any particular country can be built up from a contoured Ordnance map. Houses may be made very cheaply by shaping a long piece of wood into a house-like section and sawing it up. There will always be someone who will touch up and paint and stick windows on to and generally adorn and individualise such houses, which are, of course, the stabler the heavier the wood used. The rest of the country as in Little Wars.

Upon such a country a Kriegspiel could be played with rules upon the lines of the following sketch rules, which are the result of a discussion between Colonel Sykes and myself, and in which most of the new ideas are to be ascribed to Colonel Sykes. We proffer them, not as a finished set of rules, but as material for anyone who chooses to work over them, in the elaboration of what we believe will be a far more exciting and edifying Kriegspiel than any that exists at the present time. The game may be played by any number of players, according to the forces engaged and the size of the country available. Each side will be under the supreme command of a General, who will be represented by a cavalry soldier. The player who is General must stand at or behind his representative image and within six feet of it. His signalling will be supposed to be perfect, and he will communicate with his subordinates by shout, whisper, or note, as he thinks fit. I suggest he should be considered invulnerable, but Colonel Sykes has proposed arrangements for his disablement. He would have it that if the General falls within the zone of destruction of a shell he must go out of the room for three moves (injured); and that if he is hit by rifle-fire or captured he shall quit the game, and be succeeded by his next subordinate.

Now as to the Moves.

It is suggested that:

Infantry shall move one foot.

Cavalry shall move three feet.

The above moves are increased by one half for troops in twos or fours on a road.

Royal Engineers shall move two feet.

Royal Artillery shall move two feet.

Transport and Supply shall move one foot on roads, half foot across country.

The General shall move six feet (per motor), three feet across country.

Boats shall move one foot.

In moving uphill, one contour counts as one foot; downhill, two contours count as one foot. Where there are four contours to one foot vertical the hill is impassable for wheels unless there is a road.

Infantry.

To pass a fordable river = one move.

To change from fours to two ranks = half a move.

To change from two ranks to extension = half a move.

To embark into boats = two moves for every twenty men embarked at any point.

To disembark = one move for every twenty men.

Cavalry.

To pass a fordable river = one move.

To change formation = half a move.

To mount = one move.

To dismount = one move.

Artillery.

To unlimber guns = half a move.

To limber up guns = half a move.

Rivers are impassable to guns.

NEITHER INFANTRY, CAVALRY, NOR ARTILLERY CAN FIRE AND MOVE IN ONE MOVE.

Royal Engineers.

No repairs can be commenced, no destructions can be begun, during a move in which R.E. have changed position.

Rivers impassable.

Transport and Supply.

No supplies or stores can be delivered during a move if T. and S. have moved.

Rivers impassable.

Next as to Supply in the Field:

All troops must be kept supplied with food, ammunition, and forage. The players must give up, every six moves, one packet of food per thirty men; one packet of forage per six horses; one packet of ammunition per thirty infantry which fire for six consecutive moves.

These supplies, at the time when they are given up, must be within six feet of the infantry they belong to and eighteen feet of the cavalry.

Isolated bodies of less than thirty infantry require no supplies — a body is isolated if it is more than twelve feet off another body. In calculating supplies for infantry the fractions either count as thirty if fifteen or over, or as nothing if less than fifteen. Thus forty-six infantry require two packets of food or ammunition; forty-four infantry require one packet of food.

N.B. — Supplies are not effective if enemy is between supplies and troops they belong to.

Men surrounded and besieged must be victualled at the following rate: —

One packet food for every thirty men for every six moves.

One packet forage every six horses for every six moves.

In the event of supplies failing, horses may take the place of food, but not of course of forage; one horse to equal one packet.

In the event of supplies failing, the following consequences ensue: —

Infantry without ammunition cannot fire (guns are supposed to have unlimited ammunition with them).

Infantry, cavalry, R.A., and R.E. cannot move without supply — if supplies are not provided within six consecutive moves, they are out of action.

A force surrounded must surrender four moves after eating its last horse.

Now as to Destructions:

To destroy a railway bridge R.E. take two moves; to repair, R.E. take ten moves.

To destroy a railway culvert R.E. take one move; to repair R.E. take five moves. To destroy a river road bridge R.E. take one move; to repair, R.E. take five moves.

A supply depot can be destroyed by one man in two moves, no matter how large (by fire).

Four men can destroy the contents of six waggons in one move.

A contact mine can be placed on a road or in any place by two men in six moves; it will be exploded by the first pieces passing over it, and will destroy everything within six inches radius.*

Next as to Constructions:

Entrenchments can be made by infantry in four moves.* They are to be strips of wood two inches high tacked to the country, or wooden bricks two inches high. Two men may make an inch of entrenchment.

Epaulements for guns may be constructed at the rate of six men to one epaulement in four moves.*

[* Notice to be given to umpire of commencement of any work or the placing of a mine. In event of no umpire being available, a folded note must be put on the mantelpiece when entrenchment is commenced, and opponent asked to open it when the trench is completed or the mine exploded.]

Rules as to Cavalry Charging:

No body of less than eight cavalry may charge, and they must charge in proper formation.

If cavalry charges infantry in extended order —

If the charge starts at a distance of more than two feet, the cavalry loses one man for every five infantry-men charged, and the infantry loses one man for each sabre charging.

At less than two feet and more than one foot, the cavalry loses one man for every ten charged, and the infantry two men for each sabre charging.

At less than one foot, the cavalry loses one man for every fifteen

charged, and the infantry three men for each sabre charging.

If cavalry charges infantry in close order, the result is reversed.

Thus at more than two feet one infantry-man kills three cavalry-men, and fifteen cavalry-men one infantry-man.

At more than one foot one infantry-man kills two cavalry, and ten cavalry one infantry.

At less than one foot one infantry-man kills one cavalry, and five cavalry one infantry.

However, infantry that have been charged in close order are immobile for the subsequent move.

Infantry charged in extended order must on the next move retire one foot; they can be charged again.

If cavalry charges cavalry: —

If cavalry is within charging distance of the enemy's cavalry at the end of the enemy's move, it must do one of three things — dismount, charge, or retire. If it remains stationary and mounted and the enemy charges, one charging sabre will kill five stationary sabres and put fifteen others three feet to the rear.

Dismounted cavalry charged is equivalent to infantry in extended order.

If cavalry charges cavalry and the numbers are equal and the ground level, the result must be decided by the toss of a coin; the loser losing three-quarters of his men and obliged to retire, the winner losing one-quarter of his men.

If the numbers are unequal, the melee rules for Little Wars obtain if the ground is level.

If the ground slopes, the cavalry charging downhill will be multiplied according to the number of contours crossed. If it is one contour, it must be multiplied by two; two contours, multiplied by three; three contours, multiplied by four.

If cavalry retires before cavalry instead of accepting a charge, it must continue to retire so long as it is pursued — the pursuers can only be arrested by fresh cavalry or by infantry or artillery fire.

If driven off the field or into an unfordable river, the retreating body is destroyed.

If infantry find hostile cavalry within charging distance at the end of the enemy's move, and this infantry retires and yet is still within

charging distance, it will receive double losses if in extended order if charged; and if in two ranks or in fours, will lose at three feet two men for each charging sabre; at two feet, three men for each charging sabre. The cavalry in these circumstances will lose nothing. The infantry will have to continue to retire until their tormentors have exterminated them or been driven off by someone else.

If cavalry charges artillery and is not dealt with by other forces, one gun is captured with a loss to the cavalry of four men per gun for a charge at three feet, three men at two feet, and one man at one foot.

If artillery retires before cavalry when cavalry is within charging distance, it must continue to retire so long as the cavalry pursues.

The introduction of toy railway trains, moving, let us say, eight feet per move, upon toy rails, needs rules as to entraining and detraining and so forth, that will be quite easily worked out upon the model of boat embarkation here given. An engine or truck within the circle of destruction of a shell will be of course destroyed.

The toy soldiers used in this Kriegspiel should not be the large soldiers used in Little Wars. The British manufacturers who turn out these also make a smaller, cheaper type of man — the infantry about an inch high — which is better adapted to Kriegspiel purposes.

We hope, if these suggestions "catch on," to induce them to manufacture a type of soldier more exactly suited to the needs of the game, including tray carriers for troops in formation and (what is at present not attainable) dismountable cavalry that will stand.

We place this rough sketch of a Kriegspiel entirely at the disposal of any military men whose needs and opportunities enable them to work it out and make it into an exacter and more realistic game. In doing so, we think they will find it advisable to do their utmost to make the game work itself, and to keep the need for umpire's decisions at a minimum. Whenever possible, death should be by actual gun- and rifle-fire and not by computation. Things should happen, and not be decided. We would also like to insist upon the absolute need of an official upon either side, simply to watch and measure the moves taken, and to collect and check the amounts of supply and ammunition given up. This is a game like real war, played against time, and played under circumstances of considerable

excitement, and it is remarkable how elastic the measurements of quite honest and honourable men can become.

We believe that the nearer that Kriegspiel approaches to an actual small model of war, not only in its appearance but in its emotional and intellectual tests, the better it will serve its purpose of trial and education.

THE WAR THAT WILL END WAR

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I. — WHY BRITAIN WENT TO WAR: A CLEAR EXPOSITION OF WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR

THE cause of a war and the object of a war are not necessarily the same. The cause of this war was the invasion of Luxemburg and Belgium. We declared war because we were bound by treaty to declare war. We have been pledged , to protect the integrity of Belgium since the kingdom of Belgium has existed. If the Germans had not broken the guarantees they shared with us to respect the neutrality of these little States we should certainly not be at war J at the present time. The fortified eastern frontier of France could have been held against any attack without any help from us. We had no obligations and no interests there. We were pledged to France simply to protect her from, a naval attack by sea, but the Germans had already given us an undertaking not to make such an attack. It was our Belgian treaty and the sudden outrage on Luxemburg that precipitated us into" this conflict. No Power in the world would have respected our Flag or accepted our national word again if we had not fought. So much for the immediate cause of the war.

But now we come to the object of this war. We began to fight because our honour and our pledge obliged us; but so soon as we are embarked upon the fighting we have to ask ourselves what is the end at which our fighting aims. We cannot simply put the Germans back over the Belgian border and tell them not to do it again. We find ourselves at war with that huge military empire with which we have been doing our best to keep the peace since first it rose upon the ruins of French Imperialism in 1871. And war is mortal conflict. We have now either to destroy or be destroyed. We have not sought this reckoning, we have done our utmost to avoid it; but now that it has been forced upon us it is imperative that it should be a thorough reckoning. This is a war that touches every man and every home in each of the combatant countries. It is a war, as Mr. Sidney Low has said, not of soldiers but of whole peoples. And it is a war that must be fought to such a finish that every man in each of the nations

engaged understands what has happened. There can be no diplomatic settlement that will leave German Imperialism free to explain away its failure to its people and start new preparations. We have to go on until we are absolutely done for, or until the Germans as a people know that they are beaten, and are convinced that they have had enough of war.

We are fighting Germany. But we are fighting without any hatred of the German people. We do not intend to destroy either their freedom or their unity. But we have to destroy an evil system of government and the mental and material corruption that has got hold of the German imagination and taken possession of German life. We have to smash the Prussian Imperialism as thoroughly as Germany in 1871 smashed the rotten Imperialism of Napoleon III. And also we have to learn from the failure of that victory to avoid a vindictive triumph.

This Prussian Imperialism has been for forty years an intolerable nuisance in the earth. Ever since the crushing of the French in 1871 the evil thing has grown and cast its spreading shadow over Europe. Germany has preached a propaganda of ruthless force and political materialism to the whole uneasy world. "Blood and iron," she boasted, was the cement of her unity, and almost as openly the little, mean, aggressive statesmen and professors who have guided her destinies to this present conflict have professed cynicism and an utter disregard of any ends but nationally selfish ends, as though it were religion. Evil just as much as good may be made into a Cant. Physical and moral brutality has indeed become a cant in the German mind, and spread from Germany throughout the world. I could wish it were possible to say that English and American thought had altogether escaped its corruption. But now at last we shake ourselves free and turn upon this boasting wickedness to rid the world of it. The whole world is tired of it. And "Gott!" — Gott so perpetually invoked — Gott indeed must be very tired of it

This is already the vastest war in history. It is war not of nations, but of mankind. It is a war to exorcise a world-madness and end an age.

I could note how this Cant of public rottenness has had its secret side. The man who preaches cynicism in his own business

transactions had better keep a detective and a cash register for his clerks; and it is the most natural thing in the world to find that this system, which is outwardly vile, is also inwardly rotten. Beside the Kaiser stands the firm of Krupp, a second head to the State; on the very steps of the throne is the armament trust, that organised scoundrelism which has, in its relentless propaganda for profit, mined all the security of civilisation, brought up and dominated a Press, ruled a national literature, and corrupted universities.

Consider what the Germans have been, and what the Germans can be. Here is a race which has for its chief fault docility and a belief in teachers and rulers. For the rest, as all who know it intimately will testify, it is the most amiable of peoples. It is naturally kindly, comfort-loving, child-loving, musical, artistic, intelligent. In countless respects German homes and towns and countrysides are the most civilised in the world. But these people did a little lose their heads after the victories of the sixties and seventies, and there began a propaganda of national vanity and national ambition. It was organised by a stupidly forceful statesman, it was fostered by folly upon the throne. It was guarded from wholesome criticism by an intolerant censorship. It never gave sanity a chance. A certain patriotic sentimentality lent itself only too readily to the suggestion of the flatterer, and so there grew up this monstrous trade in weapons. German patriotism became an "interest," the greatest of the "interests." It developed a vast advertisement propaganda. It subsidised Navy Leagues and Aerial Leagues, threatening the world. Mankind, we saw too late, had been guilty of an incalculable folly in permitting private men to make a profit out of the dreadful preparations for war. But the evil was started; the German imagination was captured and enslaved. On every other European country that valued its integrity there was thrust the overwhelming necessity to arm and drill — and still to arm and drill. Money was withdrawn from education, from social progress, from business enterprise, and art and scientific research, and from every kind of happiness; life was drilled and darkened.

So that the harvest of this darkness comes now almost as a relief, and it is a grim satisfaction in our discomforts that we can at last look across the roar and torment of battlefields to the possibility of an

organised peace.

For this is now a war for peace.

It aims straight at disarmament. It aims at a settlement that shall stop this sort of thing for ever. Every soldier who fights against Germany now is a crusader against war. This, the greatest of all wars, is not just another war — it is the last war! England, France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, and all the little countries of Europe, are heartily sick of war; the Tsar has expressed a passionate hatred of war; the most of Asia is unwarlike; the United States has no illusions about war.

And never was war begun so joylessly, and never was war begun with so grim a resolution. In England, France, Belgium, Russia, there is no thought of glory.

We know we face unprecedented slaughter and agonies; we know that for neither side will there be easy triumphs or prancing victories. Already, in that warring sea of men, there is famine as well as hideous butchery, and soon there must come disease.

Can it be otherwise?

We face, perhaps, the most awful winter that mankind has ever faced.

But we English and our allies, who did not seek this catastrophe, face it with anger and determination rather than despair.

Through this war we have to march, through pain, through agonies of the spirit worse than pain, through seas of blood and filth. We English have not had things kept from us. We know what war is; we have no delusions. We have read books that tell us of the stench of battlefields, and the nature of wounds, books that Germany suppressed and hid from her people. And we face these horrors to make an end of them.

There shall be no more Kaisers, there shall be no more Krupps, we are resolved. That foolery shall end!

And not simply the present belligerents must come into the settlement.

All America, Italy, China, the Scandinavian Powers, must have a voice in the final readjustment, and set their hands to the ultimate guarantees. I do not mean that they need fire a single shot or load a single gun. But they must come in. And in particular to the United

States do we look to play a part in that pacification of the world for which our whole nation is working, and for which, by the thousand, men are now laying down their lives.

II. — THE SWORD OF PEACE: "EVERY SWORD THAT IS DRAWN AGAINST GERMANY NOW IS A SWORD DRAWN FOR PEACE"

EUROPE is at war!

The monstrous vanity that was begotten by the easy victories of '70 and '71 has challenged the world, and Germany prepares to reap the harvest Bismarck sowed. That trampling, drilling foolery in the heart of Europe, that has arrested civilisation and darkened the hopes of mankind for forty years. German Imperialism, German militarism, has struck its inevitable blow. The victory of Germany will mean the permanent enthronement of the War God over all human affairs. The defeat of Germany may open the way to disarmament and peace throughout the earth.

To those who love peace there can be no other hope in the present conflict than the defeat, the utter discrediting of the German legend, the ending for good and all of the blood and iron superstition, of Krupp, flag-wagging Teutonic Kiplingism, and all that criminal, sham efficiency that centres in Berlin. Never was war so righteous as war against Germany now. Never has any State in the world so clamoured for punishment.

But be it remembered that Europe's quarrel is with the German State, not with the German people; with a system, and not with a race. The older tradition of Germany is a pacific and civilising tradition. The temperament of the mass of German people is kindly, sane and amiable. Disaster to the German Army, if it is unaccompanied by any such memorable wrong as dismemberment or intolerable indignity, will mean the restoration of the greatest people in Europe to the fellowship of Western nations. The role of England in this huge struggle is plain as daylight. We have to fight. If only on account of the Luxemburg outrage we have to fight. If we do not fight, England will cease to be a country to be proud of; it will be a dirt-bath to escape from. But it is inconceivable that we should not fight. And having fought, then in the hour of victory it will be for us

to save the liberated Germans from vindictive treatment, to secure for this great people their right, as one united German-speaking State, to a place in the sun.

First we have to save ourselves and Europe, and then we have to stand between German on the one hand and the Cossack and revenge on the other.

For my own part, I do not doubt that Germany and Austria are doomed to defeat in this war. It may not be catastrophic defeat, though even that is possible, but it is defeat. There is no destiny in the stars and every sign is false if this is not so.

They have provoked an overwhelming combination of enemies. They have under-rated France. They are hampered by a bad social and military tradition. The German is not naturally a good soldier; he is orderly and obedient, but he is not nimble nor quick-witted; since his sole considerable military achievement, his not very lengthy march to Paris in 1870 and '71, the conditions of modern warfare have been almost completely revolutionised and in a direction that subordinates the massed fighting of unintelligent men to the rapid initiative of individualised soldiers. And, on the other hand, since those years of disaster, the Frenchman has learnt the lesson of humility; he is prepared now sombrely for a sombre struggle; his is the gravity that precedes astonishing victories. In the air, in the open field, with guns and machines, it is doubtful if anyone fully realises the superiority of his quality to the German. This sudden attack may take him aback for a week or so, though I doubt even that, but in the end I think he will hold his own; even without us he will hold his own, and with us then I venture to prophesy that within three months from now his Tricolour will be over the Rhine. And even suppose his line gets broken by the first rush. Even then I do not see how the Germans are to get to Paris or anywhere near Paris. I do not see how against the strength of the modern defensive and the stinging power of an intelligent enemy in retreat, of which we had a little foretaste in South Africa, the exploit of Sedan can be repeated. A retiring German army, on the other hand, will be far less formidable than a retiring French army, because it has less "devil" in it, because it is made up of men taught to obey in masses, because its intelligence is concentrated in its aristocratic officers, because it is dismayed when

it breaks ranks. The German army is everything the Conscriptionists dreamt of making our people; it is, in fact, an army about twenty years behind the requirements of contemporary conditions.

On the Eastern frontier the issue is more doubtful because of the uncertainty of Russian things. The peculiar military strength of Russia, a strength it was not able to display in Manchuria, lies in its vast resources of mounted men. A set invasion of Prussia may be a matter of many weeks, but the raiding possibilities in Eastern Germany are enormous. It is difficult to guess how far the Russian attack will be guided by intelligence, and how far Russia will blunder, but Russia will have to blunder very disastrously indeed before she can be put upon the defensive. A Russian raid is far more likely to threaten Berlin than a German to reach Paris.

Meanwhile there is the struggle on the sea. In that I am prepared for some rude shocks. The Germans have devoted an amount of energy to the creation of an aggressive navy that would have been spent more wisely in consolidating their European position. It is probably a thoroughly good navy, and ship for ship the equal of our own. But the same lack of invention, the same relative uncreativeness that has kept the German behind the Frenchman in things aerial has made him, regardless of his shallow seas, follow our lead in naval matters, and if we have erred, and I believe we have erred, in overrating the importance of the big battleship, the German has at least very obligingly fallen in with our error. The safest, most effective, place for the German fleet at the present time is the Baltic Sea. On this side of the Kiel Canal, unless I overrate the powers of the water-plane, there is no safe harbour for it. If it goes into port anywhere that port can be ruined, and the bottled-up ships can be destroyed at leisure by aerial bombs. So that if they are on this side of the Kiel Canal they must keep the sea and fight, if we let them, before their coal runs short. Battle in the open sea in this case is their only chance. They will fight against odds, and with every prospect of a smashing, albeit we shall certainly have to pay for that victory in ships and men. In the Baltic we shall not be able to get at them without the participation of Denmark, and they may have a considerable use against Russia. But in the end even there mine and aeroplane and destroyer should do their work.

So I reckon that Germany will be held east and west, and that she will get her fleet practically destroyed. We ought also to be able to sweep her shipping off the seas, and lower her flag for ever in Africa and Asia and the Pacific. All the probabilities, it seems to me, point to that. There is no reason why Italy should not stick to her present neutrality, and there is considerable inducement close at hand for both Denmark and Japan to join in, directly they are convinced of the failure of the first big rush on the part of Germany. All these issues will be more or less definitely decided within the next two or three months. By that time I believe German Imperialism will be shattered, and it may be possible to anticipate the end of the armaments phase of European history. France, Italy, England, and all the smaller Powers of Europe are now pacific countries; Russia, after this huge war, will be too exhausted for further adventure; a shattered Germany will be a revolutionary Germany, as sick of uniforms and the Imperialist idea as France was in 1871, as disillusioned about predominance as Bulgaria is to-day. The way will be open at last for all these Western Powers to organise peace. That is why I, with my declared horror of war, have not signed any of these "stop-the-war" appeals and declarations that have appeared in the last few days. Every sword that is drawn against Germany now is a sword drawn for peace.

III. — HANDS OFF THE PEOPLE'S FOOD

THIS is a war-torn article, a convalescent article.

It is characteristic of the cheerful gallantry of the time that after being left for dead on Saturday evening this article should be able, in an only very slightly bandaged condition, to take its place in the firing-line again on Thursday morning.

It was first written late on Friday night; it was written in a mood of righteous excitement, and it was an extremely ineffective article. In the night I could not sleep because of its badness, and because I did so vehemently want it to hit hard and get its effect. I turned out about two o'clock in the morning and redrafted it, and the next day I wrote it all over again differently and carefully, and I think better. In the afternoon it was blown up by the discovery that Mr. Runciman had anticipated its essential idea. He had brought in, and the House had passed through all its stages, a Bill to give the Board of Trade power to requisition and deal with hoarded or reserved food. That was exactly the demand of my article. My article, about to die, saluted this most swift and decisive Government of ours.

Then I perceived that there were still many things to be said about this requisitioning of food. The Board of Trade has got its powers, but apparently they have still to be put into operation. It is extremely desirable that there should be a strong public opinion supporting and watching the exercise of these powers, and that they should be applied at the proper point immediately. The powers Mr. Runciman has secured so rapidly for the Board of Trade have to be put into operation there must be an equally rapid development of local committees and commandos to carry out his idea. The shortage continues. It is not over. The common people, who are sending their boys so bravely and uncomplainingly to the front, must be relieved at once from the intolerable hardships which a certain section of the prosperous classes, a small section but an actively mischievous section, is causing them. It is a right; not a demand for charity. It is ridiculous to treat the problem in any other way.

So far the poorer English have displayed an amazing and exemplary patience in this crisis, a humility and courage that make

one the prouder for being also English. Apart from any failure of employment at the present time, it must be plain to anyone who has watched the present rise of prices and who knows anything either at first hand of poor households or by reading such investigations as those of Mrs. Pember Reeves upon the family budgets of the poor, that the rank and file of our population cannot now be getting enough to eat. They are suffering needless deprivation and also they are suffering needless vexation. And there is no atom of doubt why they are suffering these distresses. It is that pretentious section of the prosperous classes, the section we might hit off with the phrase "automobile-driving villadom," the "Tariff Reform and damn Lloyd George and Keir Hardie" class, the most pampered and least public-spirited of any stratum in the community, which has grabbed at the food; it has given way to an inglorious panic; it has broken ranks and stampeded to the stores and made the one discreditable exception in the splendid spectacle of our national solidarity. While the attention of all decent English folk has been concentrated upon the preparations for our supreme blow at Prussian predominance in Europe, villadom has been swarming to the shops, buying up the food of the common people, carrying it off in the family car (adorned, of course, with a fluttering little Union Jack); father has given a day from business, mother has helped, even those shiny-headed nuts, the sons, have condescended to assist, and now villadom, feeling a little safer, is ready with the dinner-bell, its characteristic instrument of music, to maffick at the victories it has done its best to spoil. And villadom promoted and distended, villadom in luck, turned millionaire, villadom on a scale that can buy a peerage and write you its thousands-of-pounds cheque for a showy subscription list, has been true to its origins. Lord Maffick, emulating Mr. and Mrs. Maffick, swept his district clean of flour; let the thing go down to history. Lord Maffick now explains that he bought it to distribute among his poorer neighbours — that is going to be the stock excuse of these people — but that sort of buying is just exactly as bad for prices as buying for Lord Maffick's personal interior. The sooner that flour gets out of the houses of Lord Maffick and Horatio Maffick, Esquire, and young Mr. Maffick and the rest of them, and into the houses of their poorer neighbours, the better for them and the

country. The greatest danger to England at the present time is neither the German army nor the German fleet, but this morally rotten section of our community.

Now it is no use scolding these people. It is no use appealing to their honour and patriotism. Honour they have none, and their idea of patriotism is to "tax the foreigner," wave Union Jacks, and clamour for the application to England of just that universal compulsory service which leads straight to those crowded, ineffective massacres of common soldiers that are beginning upon the German war-front. Exhortation may sway the ninety-and-nine, but the one mean man in the hundred will spoil the lot. The thing to do now is to get to work at once in every locality, requisitioning all excessive private stores of food or gold coins — they can be settled for after the war — not only the stores of the private food-grabbers, but also the stores of the speculative wholesalers who are holding up prices to the retail shops. Only in that way can the operations of this intolerable little minority be completely checked. Under every county council food committees should be formed at once to report on the necessities of the general mass and conduct inquiries into hoarding and the seizure and distribution of hoards, small and great.

Now this is a public work calling for the most careful and open methods. Food distribution in England is partly in the hands of great systems of syndicated shops and partly still in the hands of one-shop local tradesmen. It is imperative that the brightest light should be kept upon the operations of both small and large provision dealers. The big firms are in the control of men whose business successes have received in many instances marks of the signal favour and trust of our rulers. Lord Devonport, for example, is a peer; Sir Thomas Lipton is a baronet; they are not to be regarded as mere private traders, but as men honoured by association with the hierarchy of our national life on account of their distinguished share in the public food service. It will help them in their quasi-public duties to give them the support of our attention. Are they devoting their enormous economic advantages to keeping prices at a reasonable level, or are these various systems of syndicated provision shops also putting things up against the consumer? With concerted action on the part of these stores the most perfect control of prices is possible everywhere,

except in the case of a few out-of-the-way villages. Is it being done? Nobody wants to see the names of Lord Devonport or Sir Thomas Lipton or the various other rich men associated with them in the food supply flourishing about on royal subscription lists at the present time; their work lies closer at hand. What we all want is to feel that they are devoting their utmost resources to the public food service of which they constitute so important a part. Let me say at once that I have every reason to believe they are doing it, and that they are alive to the responsibilities of their positions. But we must keep the limelight on them and on their less honoured and conspicuous fellow-merchants. They are playing as important and vital a part — indeed, they are called upon to play as brave and self-sacrificing a part — as any general at the front. If they fail us it will be worse than the loss of many thousands of men in battle. Let us watch them, and I believe we shall watch them with admiration. But let us watch them. Let us report their movements, ask them to reassure us, chronicle their visits to the Board of Trade.

I will not expatiate upon the possible heroisms of the wholesale provision trade. I do but glance at the possibility of Lord Devonport or Sir Thomas Lipton, after the war, living, financially ruined, but glorious, in a little cottage. "I gave back to the people in their hour of need what I made from them in their hours of plenty," he would say. "I have suffered that thousands might not suffer. It is nothing. Think of the lads who died in Belgium."

By all accounts, the small one-shop provision dealers are behaving extremely well. In my own town of Dunmow I know of two little shopkeepers who have dared to offend important customers rather than fulfil panic orders. They deserve medals. In poor districts many such men are giving credit, eking out, tiding over, and all the time running tremendous risks. Not all heroes are upon the battlefield, and some of the heroes of this war are now fighting gallantly for our land behind grocers' counters and in village general shops, and may end, if not in the burial trench, in the bankruptcy court. Indeed, many of them are already on the verge of bankruptcy. The wholesalers have, I know, in many cases betrayed them, not simply by putting up prices, but by suddenly stopping customary credits, and this last week has seen some dismal nights of sleepless

worry in the little bedrooms over the isolated grocery. While we look to the syndicated shops to do their duty, it is of the utmost importance also that we should not permit a massacre of the small tradespeople. A catastrophe to the small shopkeeper at the present time will not only throw a multitude of broken men upon public resources, but leave a gap in the homely give-and-take of back-street and village economies that will not be easily repaired. So that I suggest that the requisitioned stocks of forestalling wholesalers — there ought to be a great bulk of such food-stuff already in the hands of the authorities — shall be sold in the first instance at wholesale prices to the isolated shopkeepers, and not directly to the public. Only in the event of a local failure of duty should the direct course be taken.

It must be remembered that the whole of the present stress for food is an artificial stress due to the vehement selfishness of vulgar-minded prosperous people and to the base cunning of quite exceptional merchants. But under the strange and difficult and planless conditions of to-day quite a few people can start a rush and produce an almost irresistible pressure. The majority of people who have hoarded and forestalled have probably done so very unwillingly, because "others will do it." They would welcome any authoritative action that would enable them to disgorge without feeling that somebody else would instantly snatch what they had surrendered and profit by it. It is for that reason that we must at once organise the commandeering and requisitioning of hoards and reserved goods. The mere threat will probably produce a great relaxation of the situation, but the threat must be carried out to the point of having everything ready as soon as possible to seize and sell and distribute. Until that is done this food crisis will wax and wane, but it will not cease; if we do not carry out Mr. Runciman's initiatives with a certain harsh promptness food trouble will be an intermittent wasting fever in the body politic until the end of the war.

And the business will not be over at the end of the war. The patience of the common people has been astonishing. In countless homes there must have been the extremest worry and misery. But except for a few trivial rows, such as the smashing of the windows of Mr. Moss, at Hitchin, who was probably not a bit to blame, an attack

on a bakery somewhere, and some not very bad behaviour in the way of threats and demonstrations on the part of East End Jews, there has been no disorder at all. That is because the people are full of the first solemnity of war, eagerly trustful, and still — well nourished.

At the end unless the more prosperous people pull themselves together it will not be like that.

IV. — CONCERNING MR. MAXIMILIAN CRAFT

I FIND myself enthusiastic for this war against Prussian militarism. We are, I believe, assisting at the end of a vast, intolerable oppression upon civilisation. We are fighting to release Germany and all the world from the superstition that brutality and cynicism are the methods of success, that Imperialism is better than free citizenship and conscripts better soldiers than free men.

And I find another writer who is also being, he declares, patriotically British. Indeed, he waves the Union Jack about to an extent from which my natural modesty recoils. Because you see I am English-cum-Irish, and save for the cross of St. Andrew that flag is mine. To wave it about would, I feel, be just vulgar self-assertion. He, however, is not English. He assumes a variety of names, and some are quite lovely old English names. But his favourite name is Craft, Maximilian Craft — and I understand he was born a Kraft. He shoves himself into the affairs of this country with an extraordinary energy; he takes possession of my Union Jack as if St. George was his father. At present he is advising me very actively how to conduct this war, and telling me exactly what I ought to think about it. He is, in fact, the English equivalent of those professors of *Weltpolitik* who have guided the German mind to its present magnificent display of shrewd, triumphant statecraft. I suspect him of a distant cousinship with Professor Delbruck. And he is urging upon our attention now a magnificent coup, with which I will shortly deal.

In appearance Kraft is by no means completely anglicised himself. He is a large-faced creature with enormous long features and a woolly head; he is heavy in build and with a back slightly hunched; he lisps slightly and his manner is either insolently contemptuous or aggressively familiar. He thinks all born Englishmen, as distinguished from the naturalised Englishmen, are also born fools. Always his manner is pervaded by a faint flavour of astonishment at the born foolishness of the born Englishmen. But he thinks their Empire a marvellous accident, a wonderful opportunity — for

cleverer people.

So, with a kind of disinterested energy, he has been doing his best to educate Englishmen up to their Imperial opportunities, to show them how to change luck into cunning, take the wall of every other breed and swagger foremost in the world. He cannot understand that English blood does not warm to such ambitions. When he has wealth it is his nature to show it in watch-chains and studs and signet-rings; if he had a wife she would dazzle in diamonds; the furniture of his flat is wonderfully "good," all picked English pieces and worth no end; he thinks it is just dullness and poorness of spirit that disregards these things. He came to England to instruct us in the arts of Empire, when he found that already there was a glut of his kind of wisdom in the German universities. For years until this present outbreak I have followed his career with silent interest rather than affection. And the first thing he undertook to teach us was, I remember, Tariff Reform, "taxing the foreigner." Limitless wealth you get, and you pay nothing. You get a huge national income in imported goods, and also, as your tariff prevents importation, you develop a tremendous internal trade. Two birds (in quite opposite directions) with the same stone. It seemed just plain common sense to him. Anyhow, he felt sure it was good enough for the born English....

He is still a little incredulous of our refusal to accept that delightful idea. Meanwhile his kind have dominated the more docile German intelligence altogether. They have listened to the whisper of *Weltpolitik*, or at least their rulers have attended; they have sown exasperation on every frontier, taken the wall, done all the showily aggresssive and successful things. They were the pupils he should have taught. A people at once teachable and spirited. Almost tearfully Kraft has asked us to mark that glorious progress of a once philosophical, civilised, and kindly people. And indeed we have had to mark it and polish our weapons, and with a deepening resentment get more and more weapons, and keep our powder dry, when we would have been far rather occupied with other things.

But amazingly enough we would not listen to his suggestion of universal service. Kraft and his kind believe in numbers. Even the Boer War could not shake his natural aptitude for political arithmetic. He has tried to bring the situation home to us by

diagrams, showing us enormous figures, colossal soldiers to represent the German forces and tiny little British men, smaller than the army figures for Bulgaria and for Serbia. He does not understand that there can be too many soldiers on a field of battle; he could as soon believe that one could have too much money. And so he thinks the armies of Russia must be more powerful than the French. When I deny that superiority — as I do — he simply notes the fact that I am unable to count.

And when it comes to schemes of warfare then a kind of delirium of cunning descends upon Kraft. He is full of devices such as we poor fools cannot invent; sudden attacks without a declaration of war, vast schemes for spy systems and assassin-like disguises, the cowing of a country by the wholesale shooting of uncivil non-combatants, breaches of neutrality, national treacheries, altered dispatches, forged letters, diplomatic lies, a perfect world-organisation of Super-sneaks. Our poor cousin, Michael, the German, has listened to such wisdom only too meekly. Poor Michael, with his honest blue eyes wonder-lit, has tried his best to be a very devil, and go where Kraft's cousin, Bernhardi, the military "expert," has led him. (So far it has led him into the ditches of Liège and the gorges of the Ardennes and much hunger and dirt and blood.) And Kraft over here has watched with an intolerable envy Berlin lying and bullying and being the very Superman of *Weltpolitik*. He has been talking, writing, praying us to do likewise, to strike suddenly before war was declared at the German fleet, to outrage the neutrality of Denmark, to seize Holland, to do something nationally dishonest and disgraceful. Daily he has raged at our milk and water methods. At times we have seemed to him more like a lot of Woodrow Wilsons than reasonable sane men.

And he is still at it.

Only a few days ago I took up the paper that has at last moved me to the very plain declarations of this article. It was an English daily paper, and Kraft was telling us, as usual, and with his usual despairful sense of our stupidity, how to conduct this war. And what he said was this — that we have to starve Germany — not realising that with her choked railways and her wasted crops Germany may be trusted very rapidly to starve herself — and that, if we do not prevent

them, foodstuffs will go into Germany by way of Holland and Italy. So he wants us to begin at once a hostile blockade of Holland and Italy, c~ better, perhaps, to send each of these innocent and friendly countries an ultimatum forthwith. He wants it done at once, because otherwise the Berlin Krafts, some Delbruck or Bernhardi, or that egregious young statesman, the Crown Prince, may persuade the Prussians to get in their ultimatum first. Then we should have no chance of doing anything internationally idiotic at all, unless, perhaps, we seized a port in Norway. It might be rather a fine thing, he thinks upon reflection, to seize a port in Norway.

Now let us English make it clear, once for all, to the Krafts and other kindred patriotic gentlemen from abroad who are showing us the really artful way to do things, that this is not our way of doing things. Into this war we have gone with clean hands — to end the reign of brutal and artful internationalism for ever. Our hearts are heavy at the task before us, but our intention is grim. We mean to conquer. We are prepared for every disaster, for intolerable stresses, for bankruptcy, for hunger, for anything but defeat. Now that we have begun to fight we will fight if needful until the children die of famine in our homes, we will fight though every ship we have is at the bottom of the sea. We mean to fight this war to its very finish, and that finish we are absolutely resolved must be the end of Kraftism in the world. And we will come out of this war with hands as clean as they are now, unstained by any dirty tricks in field or council chamber, neutralities respected and treaties kept. Then we will reckon once for all with Kraft and with his friends and supporters, the private dealers in armaments, and with all this monstrous, stupid brood of villainy that has brought this vast catastrophe upon the world.

I say this plainly now for myself and for thousands of silent plain men, because the sooner Kraft realises how we feel in this matter the better for him. He betrays at times a remarkable persuasion that at the final settling up of things he will make himself invaluable to us. At diplomacy he knows he shines. Then the lisping whisper has its use, and the studied insolence. Finish the fighting, and then leave it to him. He really believes the born English will. He does not understand in the slightest degree the still passion of our streets.

There never was less shouting and less demonstration in England, and never was England so quietly intent. This war is not going to end in diplomacy; it is going to end diplomacy. It is quite a different sort of war from any that have gone before it. At the end there will be no Conference of Europe on the old lines at all, but a Conference of the World. It will be a Conference for Kraft to laugh at. He will run about button-holing people about it; almost spitting in their faces with the eagerness of his derisive whispers. It will conduct its affairs with scandalous publicity and a deliberate simplicity. It will be worse than Woodrow Wilson. And it will make a peace that will put an end to Kraft and the spirit of Kraft and Kraftism and the private armament firms behind him for evermore.

At which I imagine the head of Kraft going down between his shoulders and his large hands going out like the wings of a cherub. “Englishmen! Liberals! Fools! Incurable! How can such things be? It is not how things are done.”

It is how they are going to be done if this world is to be worth living in at all after this war. When we fight Berlin, Kraft, we fight you.... An absolute end to you. Yes,

V. — THE MOST NECESSARY MEASURES IN THE WORLD

IN this smash-up of empires and diplomacy, this utter disaster of international politics, certain things which would have seemed ridiculously Utopian a few weeks ago have suddenly become reasonable and practicable. One of these, a thing that would have seemed fantastic until the very moment when we joined issue with Germany and which may now be regarded as a sober possibility, is the absolute abolition throughout the world of the manufacture of weapons for private gain. Whatever may be said of the practicability of national disarmament, there can be no dispute not merely of the possibility but of the supreme necessity of ending for ever the days of private profit in the instruments of death. That is the real enemy. That is the evil thing at the very centre of this trouble.

At the very core of all this evil that has burst at last in world disaster lies this Kruppism, this sordid enormous trade in the instruments of death. It is the closest, most gigantic organisation in the world. Time after time this huge business, with its bought newspapers, its paid spies, its agents, its shareholders, its insane sympathisers, its vast ramification of open and concealed associates, has defeated attempts at pacification, has piled the heap of explosive material higher and higher — the heap that has toppled at last into this bloody welter in Belgium, in which the lives of four great nations are now being torn and tormented and slaughtered and wasted beyond counting, beyond imagining. I dare not picture it — thinking now of who may read.

So long as the unstable peace endured, so long as the Emperor of the Germans and the Krupp concern and the vanities of Prussia hung together, threatening but not assailing the peace of the world, so long as one could dream of holding off the crash and saving lives, so long was it impossible to bring this business to an end or even to propose plainly to bring this business to an end. It was still possible to argue that to be prepared for war was the way to keep the peace; But now everyone knows better. The war has come. Preparation has exploded.

Outrageous plunder has passed into outrageous bloodshed. All Europe is in revolt against this evil system. There is no going back now to peace; our men must die, in heaps, in thousands; we cannot delude ourselves with dreams of easy victories; we must all suffer endless miseries and anxieties; scarcely a human affair is there that will not be marred and darkened by this war. Out of it all must come one universal resolve: that this iniquity must be plucked out by the roots. Whatever follies still lie ahead for mankind this folly at least must end. There must be no more buying and selling of guns and warships and war-machines. There must be no more gain in arms. Kings and Kaisers must cease to be the commercial travellers of monstrous armament concerns. With the *Goeben* the Kaiser has made his last sale. Whatever arms the nations think they need they must make for themselves and give to their own subjects. Beyond that there must be no making of weapons in the earth.

This is the clearest common sense. I do not need to argue what is manifest, what every German knows, what every intelligent educated man in the world knows. The Krupp concern and the tawdry Imperialism of Berlin are linked like thief and receiver; the hands of the German princes are dirty with the trade. All over the world statecraft and royalty have been approached and touched and tainted by these vast firms, but it is in Berlin that the corruption has centred, it is from Berlin that the intolerable pressure to arm and still to arm has come, it is at Berlin alone that the evil can be grappled and killed. Before this there was no reaching it. It was useless to dream even of disarmament while these people could still go on making their material uncontrolled, waiting for the moment of national passion, feeding the national mind with fears and suspicions through their subsidised Press. But now there is a new spirit in the world. There are no more fears; the worst evil has come to pass. The ugly hatreds, the nourished misconceptions of an armed peace, begin already to give place to the mutual respect and pity and disillusionment of a universally disastrous war.

We can at last deal with Krupps and the kindred firms throughout the world as one general problem, one world-wide accessible evil.

Outside the circle of belligerent States, and the States which, like Denmark, Italy, Rumania, Norway and Sweden, must necessarily be

invited to take a share in the final re-settlement of the world's affairs, there are only three systems of Powers which need be considered in this matter, namely, the English and Spanish-speaking Republics of America and China. None of these States is deeply involved in the armaments trade, several of them have every reason to hate a system that has linked the obligation to deal in armaments with every loan. The United States of America is now, more than ever it was, an anti-militarist Power, and it is not too much to say that the Government of the United States of America holds in its hand the power to sanction or prevent this most urgent need of mankind. If the people of the United States will consider and grasp this tremendous question now; if they will make up their minds now that there shall be no more profit made in America or anywhere else upon the face of the earth in raw material; if they will determine to put the vast moral, financial and material influence the States will be able to exercise at the end of this war in the scale against the survival of Kruppism, then it will be possible to finish that vile industry for ever. If, through a failure of courage or imagination, they will not come into this thing, then I fear if it may be done. But I misjudge the United States if, in the end, they abstain from so glorious and congenial an opportunity.

Let me set out the suggestion very plainly. All the plant for the making of war material throughout the world must be taken over by the Government of the State in which it exists; every gun factory, every rifle factory, every dockyard for the building of warships. It may be necessary to compensate the shareholders more or less completely; there may have to be a war indemnity to provide for that, but that is a question of detail. The thing is the conversion everywhere of arms-making into a State monopoly, so that nowhere shall there be a ha'porth of avoidable private gain in it. Then, and then only, will it become possible to arrange for the gradual dismantling of this industry which is destroying humanity, and the reduction of the armed forces of the world to reasonable dimensions. I would carry this suppression down even to the restriction of the manufacture and sale of every sort of gun, pistol, and explosive. They should be made only in Government workshops and sold only in Government shops; there should not be a single rifle, not a Browning pistol, unregistered, unrecorded, and untraceable in the

world. But that may be a counsel of perfection. The essential thing is the world suppression of this abominable traffic in the big gear of war, in warships and great guns.

With this corruption cleared out of the way, with the armaments commercial traveller flung down the back-stairs he has haunted for so long — and flung so hard that he will be incapacitated for ever — it will become possible to consider a scheme for the establishment of the peace of the world. Until that is done any such scheme will remain an idle dream. But him disposed of, the way is open for the association of armed nations, determined to stamp out at once every recrudescence of aggressive war. They will not be totally disarmed Powers. It is no good to disarm while any one single Power is still in love with the dream of military glory. It is no good to disarm while the possibility of war fever is still in the human blood. The intelligence of the whole world must watch for febrile symptoms and prepare to allay them. But after this struggle one may count on the pacific intentions of at least the following States: The British Empire, France, Italy, and all the minor States of the north and west; the United States has always been a pacific Power; Japan has had its lesson and is too impoverished for serious hostilities; China has never been aggressive; Germany also, unless this war leads to intolerable insults and humiliations for the German spirit, will be war-sick. The Spanish and Portuguese-speaking Republics of America are too busy developing materially to dream of war on the modern scale, and the same may presently be true of the Greek, Latin and Slav communities of south-east Europe if, as I hope and believe, this war leads to the rational rearrangement of the Austro-Hungarian empire. 1915 will indeed find this world a strangely tamed and reasonable world.

There is only one doubtful country, Russia, and for my own part I do not believe in the wickedness and I doubt the present power of that stupendous barbaric State. Finland and a renascent Polish kingdom at least will be weight on the side of peace. It will be indeed the phase of supreme opportunity for peace. If there is courage and honesty enough in men, I believe it will be possible to establish a world council for the regulation of armaments as the natural outcome of this war. First, the trade in armaments must be absolutely killed.

And then the next supremely important measure to secure the peace of the world is the neutralisation of the sea.

It will lie in the power of England, France, Russia, Italy, Japan and the United States, if Germany and Austria are shattered in this war, to forbid the further building of any more ships of war at all; to persuade, and if need be, to oblige the minor Powers to sell their navies and to refuse the seas to armed ships not under the control of the confederation. To launch an armed ship can be made an invasion of the common territory of the world. This will be an open possibility in 1915. It will remain an open possibility until men recover from the shock of this conflict. As that begins to be forgotten so this will cease to be a possibility again — perhaps for hundreds of years. Already human intelligence and honesty have contrived to keep the great American lakes and the enormous Canadian frontier disarmed for a century. Warlike folly has complained of that, but it has never been strong enough to upset it. What is possible on that scale is possible universally, so soon as the armament trader is put out of mischief. And with the Confederated Peace Powers keeping the seas and guaranteeing the peaceful freedom of the seas to all mankind, treating the transport of armed men and war material, except between one detached part of a State and another, as contraband, and impartially blockading all belligerents, those who know best the significance of the sea power will realise best the reduction in the danger of extensive wars on land.

This is no dream. This is the plain common sense of the present opportunity.

It may be urged that this is a premature discussion, that this war is still undecided. But, indeed, there can be no decision to this war for France and England at any rate but the defeat of Germany, the abandonment of German militarism, the destruction of the German fleet, and the creation of this opportunity. Nothing short of that is tolerable; we must fight on to extinction rather than submit to a dishonouring peace in defeat or to any premature settlement. The fate of the world under triumphant Prussianism and Kruppism for the next two hundred years is not worth discussing. There is no conceivable conclusion to this war but submission at Berlin. There is no reasonable course before us now but to give all our strength for

victory and the establishment of victory. The end must be victory or our effacement. What will happen after our effacement is for the Germans to consider.

A war that will merely beat Germany a little and restore the hateful tensions of the last forty years is not worth waging. As an end to all our effort it will be almost as intolerable as defeat. Yet unless a body of definite ideas is formed and promulgated now things may happen so. And so now, while there is yet time, the Liberalism of France and England must speak plainly and make its appeal to the Liberalism of all the world, not to share our war indeed, but to share the great ends for which we are so gladly waging this war. For, indeed, sombrely enough England and France and Belgium and Russia are glad of this day. The age of armed anxiety is over. Whatever betide, it must be an end. And there is no way of making it an end but through these two associated decisions, the abolition of Kruppism and the neutralisation of the sea.

VI. — THE NEED OF A NEW MAP OF EUROPE

AT the moment of writing the war has not lasted many days, great battles by land and sea alike impend, and yet I find my steadfast anticipation that Prussianism, Bernhardi-ism, the whole theory and practice of the Empire of the Germans, is a rotten and condemned thing, has already strengthened to an absolute conviction. Unforeseen accidents may happen. I say nothing of the sea, but the general and ultimate result seems to me now as certain as the rising of to-morrow's sun. I do not know how much slaughter lies before Europe before Germany realises that she is fool-led and fool-poisoned. I do not know how long the swaggering Prussian officer will be able to drive his crowded men to massacre before they revolt against him, nor do I know how far the inflated vanity of Berlin has made provision for defeat. Germany on the defensive for all we can tell may prove a very stubborn thing, and Russia's strength may be, and I think is, over-estimated. All that may delay, but it will not alter the final demonstration that Prussianism, as Mr. Belloc foretold so amazingly, took its mortal wound at the first onset before the trenches of Liege. We begin a new period of history.

It is not Germany that has been defeated; Germany is still an unconquered country. Indeed, now it is a released country. It is a country glorious in history and with a glorious future. But never more after this war has ended will it march to the shout of the Prussian drill sergeant and strive to play bully to the world. The legend of Prussia is exploded. Its appeal was to one coarse criterion, success, and it has failed. Nevermore will the harshness of Berlin overshadow the great and friendly civilisation of Southern and Western Germany. The work before a world in arms is to clean off the Prussian blue from the life and spirit of mankind.

No European Power has any real quarrel with Germany. Our quarrel is with the Empire of the Germans, not with a people but with an idea. Let us in all that follows keep that clearly in our minds. It may be that the German repulse at Liege was but the beginning of a

German disaster as great as that of France in 1871. It may be that Germany has no second plan if her first plan fails; that she will go to pieces after her first defeat. It seems to me that this is so — I risk the prophecy, and I would have us prepare ourselves for the temptations of victory. And so to begin with, let us of the liberal faith declare our fixed, unalterable conviction that it will be a sin to dismember Germany or to allow any German-speaking and German-feeling territory to fall under a foreign yoke. Let us English make sure of ourselves in that matter. There may be restorations of alien territory — Polish, French, Danish, Italian, but we have seen enough of racial subjugation now to be sure that we will tolerate no more of it. From the Rhine to East Prussia and from the Baltic to the southern limits of German-speaking Austria, the Germans are one people. Let us begin with the resolution to permit no new bitterness of "conquered territories" to come into existence to disturb the future peace of Europe. Let us see to it that at the ultimate settlement the Germans, however great his overthrow may be, are all left free men. When the Prussians invaded Luxemburg they tore up the map of Europe. To the redrawing of that map a thousand complex forces will come. There will be much attempted over-reaching in the business and much greed. Few will come to negotiations with simple intentions. In a wrangle all sorts of ugly and stupid things may happen. It is for us English to get a head in that matter, to take counsel with ourselves and determine what is just; it is for us, who are in so many ways detached from and independent of the national passions of the Continent, not to be cunning or politic, but to contrive as unanimous a purpose as possible now, so that we may carry this war to its end with a clear conception of its end, and to use the whole of our strength to make an enduring peace in Europe. That means that we have to re-draw the map so that there shall be, for just as far as we can see ahead, as little cause for warfare among us Western nations as possible. That means that we have to re- draw it justly. And very extensively.

Is that an impossible proposal? I think not. There are, indeed, such things as non-irritating frontiers. Witness the frontiers of Canada. Certain boundaries have served in Europe now for the better part of a hundred years, and grow less amenable to disturbance every year.

Nobody, for example, wants to use force to readjust the mutual frontiers in Europe of Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, and none of these Powers desire now to acquire the foreign possessions of any other of the group. They are Powers permanently at peace. Will it not be possible now to make so drastic a readjustment as to secure the same practical contentment between all the European Powers? Is not this war that crowning opportunity? It seems to me that in this matter it behoves us to form an opinion sane and definite enough to meet the sudden impulses of belligerent triumph and override the secret counsels of diplomacy. It is a thing to do forthwith. Let us decide what we are going on fighting for, and let us secure it and settle it. It is not an abstract interesting thing to do; it is the duty of every English citizen now to study this problem of the map of Europe, so that we can make an end for ever to that dark game of plots and secret treaties and clap-trap synthetic schemes that has wasted the forces of civilisation (and made the fortunes of the Krupp family) in the last forty years. We are fighting now for a new map of Europe if we are fighting for anything at all. I could imagine that new map of Europe as if it were the flag of the allies who now prepare to press the Germans back towards their proper territory.

In the first place, I suggest that France must recover Lorraine, and that Luxemburg must be linked in closer union with Belgium. Alsace, it seems to me, should be given a choice between France and an entry into the Swiss Confederation. It would possibly choose France. Denmark should have again the distinctly Danish part of her lost provinces restored to her. Trieste and Trent, and perhaps also Pola, should be restored to Italy. This will re-unite several severed fragments of peoples to their more congenial associates. But these are minor changes compared with the new developments that are now, in some form, inevitable in the East of Europe, and for those we have to nerve our imaginations, if this vast war and waste of men is to end in an enduring peace. The break-up of the Austrian Empire has hung over Europe like a curse for forty years. Let us break it up now and have done with it. What is to become of the non-German regions of Austria-Hungary? And what is to happen upon the Polish frontier of Russia?

First, then, I would suggest that the three fragments of Poland

should be reunited, and that the Tsar of Russia should be crowned King of Poland. I propose then we define that as our national intention, that we use all the liberalising influence this present war will give us in Russia to that end. And secondly, I propose that we set before ourselves as our policy the unification of that larger Rumania which includes Transsylvania, and the gathering together into a confederation of the Swiss type of all the Serbian and quasi-Serbian provinces of the Austrian Empire. Let us, as the price greater Serbia will pay for its unity, exact the restoration to Bulgaria of any Bulgarian-speaking districts that are now under Serbian rule; let us save Scutari from the iniquity of a nose-slashing occupation by Montenegrins and try to effect another Swiss confederation of the residual Bohemian, Slavic and Hungarian fragments. I am convinced that the time has come for the substitution of Swiss associations for the discredited Imperialisms and kingdoms that have made Europe unstable for so long. Every emperor and every king, we now perceive, means a national ambition more organic, concentrated and dangerous than is possible under Republican conditions. Our own peculiar monarchy is the one exception that proves this rule. There is no reason why we should multiply these centres of aggression.

Probably neither Bulgaria nor Serbia would miss their kings very keenly, and anyhow, I do not see any need for more of these irritating ambition-pimples upon the fair face of the world. Let us cease to give indigestible princes to the new States that we Schweitzerize. Albania, particularly, with its miscellaneous tribes has certainly no use for monarchy, and the suggestion that has been made for its settlement, as a confederation of small tribal cantons is the only one I have ever heard that seemed to contain a ray of hope for that distracted patch of earth. There is certainly no reason why these people should be exploited by Italy, since Italy can claim a more legitimate gratification. There, in a paragraph, is a sketch of the map of Europe that may emerge from the present struggle. It is my personal idea of our purpose in this war.

Quite manifestly in all these matters I am a fairly ignorant person. Quite manifestly this is crude stuff. And I admit a certain sense of presumptuous absurdity as I sit here before the map of Europe like a carver before a duck and take off a slice here and decide on a cut

there. None the less it is what everyone of us has to do. I intend to go on redrawing the map of Europe with every intelligent person I meet. We are all more or less ignorant; it is unfortunate but it does not alter the fact that we cannot escape either decisions or passive acquiescences in these matters. If we do not do our utmost to understand the new map, if we make no decisions, then still cruder things will happen; Europe will blunder into a new set of ugly complications and prepare a still more colossal Armageddon than this that is now going on. No one, I hope, will suggest after this war that we should still leave things to the diplomatists. Yet the alternative to you and me is diplomacy. If you want to see where diplomacy and *Weltpolitik* have landed Europe after forty years of anxiety and armament, you must go and look into the ditches of Liege. These bloody heaps are the mere first samples of the harvest. The only alternative to diplomacy is outspoken intelligence, yours and mine and every articulate person's. We have all of us to undertake this redrawing of the map of Europe, in the measure of our power and capacity. That our power and capacity are unhappily not very considerable does not absolve us. It is for us to secure a lasting settlement of all the European frontiers if we can. If we common intelligent people at large do not secure that, nobody will. If we have no intentions with regard to the map of Europe, we shall soon be going on with the war for nothing in particular. The Prussian spirit has broken itself beyond repair, and the north coast of France and the integrity of Belgium are saved. All the fighting that is still to come will only be the confirmation and development of that. If we have no further plan before us our task is at an end. If that is all, we may stand aside now with a good conscience and watch a slower war drag to an evil end. Left to herself a victorious Russia is far more likely to help herself to East Prussia and set to work to Russianise its inhabitants than to risk an indigestion of more Poles; Italy may go into Albania and a new conflict with Serbia; it is even conceivable that France may be ungenerous. She will have a good excuse for being ungenerous. Meanwhile, German-speaking populations will find themselves under instead of upper dogs in half the provinces of Austria-Hungary; mischievous little kings, with chancellors and national policies and ambitions all complete, will rise and fluctuate

and fall upon that slippery soil, and a bloody and embittered Germany, continually stung by the outcries of her subject kindred, will sit down grimly to grow a new generation of soldiers and prepare for her revenge....

That is why I think we liberal English should draw our new map of Europe now, first of all on paper and then upon the face of the earth.

We ought to draw that map now, and propagate the idea of it, and make it our national purpose, and call the intelligence and consciences of the United States and France and Scandinavia to our help. Openly and plainly we ought to discuss and decide and tell the world what we mean to do. The reign of brutality, cynicism, and secretive treachery is shattered in Europe. Over the ruins of the Prussian War-Lordship, reason, public opinion, justice, international good faith and good intentions will be free to come back and rule the destinies of man. But things will not wait for reason and justice, if just and reasonable men have neither energy nor unity.

VII. — THE OPPORTUNITY OF LIBERALISM

THE opportunity of Liberalism has come at last, an overwhelming opportunity. The age of militarism has rushed to its inevitable and yet surprising climax. The great soldier empire, made for war, which has dominated Europe for forty years has pulled itself up by the roots and flung itself into the struggle for which it was made. Whether it win or lose, it will never put itself back again. All Europe, following that lead, is a-field for war. The good harvests stand neglected, the factories are idle, a thin, uncertain trickle of paper money replaces the chinking flow of commerce; whichever betide, defeat or deadlock, the capitalist military civilisation uproots itself and ends. The war may burn itself out more quickly than those who regard its immensity think, but the war itself is the mere smash of the thing. The reality is the uprooting, the incurable dislocation.

Trying to map and measure that dislocation is rather like one's first effort to think in sun's distances. It is to transfer one's mind to a new and overwhelming scale. Never did any time carry so swift a burthen of change as this time. It is manifest that in a year or so the world of men is going to alter more than it has altered in the last century and a half, more indeed than it ever altered before these last centuries since history began. Think of the mere geographical dislocation. There is scarcely a country in Europe that will not emerge from this struggle with entirely fresh frontiers, sovereign powers will vanish from the map, new sovereign powers will come. In the disorders that are upon us and of which this war itself is the mere preliminary phase in uniform, inevitably there must be social reconstruction. Who can doubt it? Who can doubt the break-up of confidence and usage that is in progress? Plainly you can see famine coming — in France, in Germany, in Russia. Does anyone suppose that those sham efficient Germans have fully worked out the care and feeding of the madly distended hosts they have hurled at France? Does anyone dream that they have reckoned for a check and halt? Does anyone imagine their sanitary arrangements are perfect? There will be pestilence. And can one believe that whatever feats of financial fiction we contrive, their financial crash can be staved off,

and that the bankers of Hamburg and Frankfort are likely to be shovelling gold next January in a still methodical world? The German State machine has probably already done all that it was ever made to do. It stands now exhausted amidst the turmoil of its consequences. Its mobilization arrangements are said to have been astonishingly complete. Ten million men for and against have been got into the field — with ammunition. Prussian Germany has carried out its arrangements and committed the business to Gott. German foresight has exhausted itself. If Gott fail Germany, I do not believe that Germany has the remotest idea what to do next. For the most part those millions will never get home any more. They will certainly never get back to their work again, because it will have disappeared.

When I think of European statecraft presently trying to put all these things back again I am reminded of a story of a friend whose neighbour tried to cut his throat and then repented. He came round to her with a towel about his neck making peculiar noises. It was a distressing but illuminating experience for her. She was a plucky and resourceful woman, and she did her best. "There was such a lot of it," she said. "I hadn't an idea things were packed so tight in us."

It is characteristic of such times as this — that much in the world, and, more particularly, much in the minds of men, much that has seemed as invincible as the mountains and as deeply rooted as the sea, magically loses its solidity, fades, changes, vanishes. When one looked at the map of Europe a month ago most of the lines of its frontiers seemed almost as stable as the coastlines. Now they waver under one's eyes. When one thought of the heritage of the Crown Prince of Germany, it seemed as fixed as a constellation, and now in a little while it may be worth as little as a bloody rag in the trenches of Liège. In little things as in great, one is suddenly confronted by undreamt-of instabilities. The Reform Club, which has been a cheerful and refreshing trickle of gold to me for years, now yields me reluctantly for my cheque two inartistic pound notes. My other club has ceased the kindly custom of cashing cheques altogether. One is glad that poor Bagehot did not live to see this day. Each day now I marvel to wake and find I have still a banker.... And I perceive too, that if presently my banker dissolved into the rest of this dissolving world — a thing I should have thought an unendurable calamity a

month ago — I shall laugh and go on.... Ideas that have ruled life as though they were divine truths are being chased and slaughtered in the streets. The rights of property, for example, the sturdy virtues of individualism, all toleration for the rewards of abstinence, vanished last week suddenly amidst the execrations of mankind upon a hurrying motor-car loaded with packages of sugar and flour. They bolted, leaving Socialism and Collectivism in possession. The State takes over flour mills and the food supply, not merely for military purposes, but for the general welfare of the community. The State controls the railways with a sudden complete disregard of shareholders. There is not even a letter to the 'limes to object. If the State sees fit to keep its hold upon these things for good, or loosens its hold only to improve its grip, I question if there is very much left in the minds of men, even after the mere preliminary sweeping of the last two weeks, to dispute possession. Society as we knew it a year ago has indeed already broken up; it has lost all real cohesion; only the absence of any attraction elsewhere keeps us bunched together. We keep our relative positions because there is nowhither to stampede. Dazed, astonished people fill the streets; and we talk of the national calm. The more intelligent men thrown out of their jobs make for the recruiting offices, because they have nothing else to do; we talk of the magnificent response to Lord Kitchener's appeal. Everybody is offering services. Everybody is looking for someone to tell him what to do. It is not organisation; it is the first phase of dissolution.

I am not writing prophecies now, and I am not "displaying imagination." I am just running as hard as I can by the side of the marching facts, and pointing to them. Institutions and conventions crumble about us, and release to unprecedented power the two sorts of rebel that ordinary times suppress, will and ideas.

The character of the new age that must come out of the catastrophies of this epoch will be no mechanical consequence of inanimate forces. Will and ideas will take a larger part in this swirl-ahead than they have even taken in any previous collapse. No doubt the mass of mankind will still pour along the channels of chance, but the desire for a new world of a definite character will be a force, and if it is multitudinously unanimous enough, it may even be a guiding

force, in shaping the new time. The common man and base men are scared to docility. Rulers, pomposities, obstructives are suddenly apologetic, helpful, asking for help. This is a time of incalculable plasticity. For the men who know what they want, the moment has come. It is the supreme opportunity, the test or condemnation of constructive liberal thought in the world.

Now what does Liberalism mean to do? It has always been alleged against Liberalism that it is carpingly critical, disorganised, dispersed, impracticable, fractious, readier to "resign" and "rebel" than help. That is the common excuse of all modern autocracies, bureaucracies, and dogmatisms. Are they right? Is Liberal thought in this world-crisis going to present the spectacle of a swarm of little wrangling men swept before the mindless besom of brute accident, or shall we be able in this vast collapse or re-birth of the world, to produce and express ideas that will rule? Has it all been talk? Or has it been planning? Is the new world, in fact, to be shaped by the philosophers or by the Huns?

First, as to peace. Do Liberals realise that now is the time to plan the confederation and collective disarmament of Europe, now is the time to re-draw the map of Europe so that there may be no more rankling sores or unsatisfied national ambitions? Are the Liberals as a body going to cry "Peace! Peace! " and leave the questions alone, or are they going to take hold of them? If Liberalism throughout the world develops no plan of a pacified world until the diplomatists get to work, it will be too late.

Peace may come to Europe this winter as swiftly and disastrously as the war.

And next, as to social reconstruction. Do Liberals realise that the individualist capitalist system is helpless now? It may be picked up unresistingly. It is stunned. A new economic order may be improvised and probably will in some manner be improvised in the next two or three years. What are the intentions of Liberalism? What will be the contribution of Liberalism? One poor Liberal, I perceive, is possessed, to the exclusion of every other consideration, by the idea that we were not legally bound to fight for Belgium. A pretty point, but a petty one. Liberalism is something greater than unfavourable comment on the deeds of active men. Let us set about

defining our intentions. Let us borrow a little from the rash vigour of the types that have contrived this disaster. Let us make a truce of our finer feelings and control our dissentient passions. Let us re-draw the map of Europe boldly, as we mean it to be re-drawn, an let us re-plan society as we mean it to be reconstructed. Let us get to work while there is still a little time left to us. Or while our futile fine intelligences are busy, each with its particular exquisitely-felt point, the Northcliffes and the diplomatists, the *Weltpolitik* whisperers, and the financiers, and militarists, the armaments interests, and the Cossack Tsar, terrified by the inevitable red dawn of leaderless social democracy, by the beginning of the stupendous stampede that will follow this great jar and displacement, will surely contrive some monstrous blundering settlement, and the latter state of this world will be worse than the former.

Now is the opportunity to do fundamental things that will otherwise not get done for hundreds of years. If Liberals throughout the world — and in this matter the Liberalism of America is a stupendous possibility — will insist upon a World conference at the end of this conflict, if they refuse all partial settlements and merely European solutions, they may re-draw every frontier they choose, they may reduce a thousand chafing conflicts of race and language and government to a minimum, and set up a Peace League that will control the globe. The world will be ripe for it. And the world will be ripe, too, for the banishment of the private industry in armaments and all the vast corruption that entails from the earth for ever. It is possible now to make an end to Kruppism. It may never be possible again. Henceforth let us say weapons must be made by the State, and only by the State; there must be no more private profit in blood. That is the second great possibility for Liberalism, linked to the first. And, thirdly, we may turn our present social necessities to the most enduring social reorganization; with an absolute minimum of effort now, we may help to set going methods and machinery that will put the feeding and housing of the population and the administration of the land out of the reach of private greed and selfishness for ever.

VIII. — THE LIBERAL FEAR OF RUSSIA

IT is evident that there is a very considerable dread of the power and intentions of Russia in this country. It is well that the justification of this dread should be discussed now, for it is likely to affect the attitude of British and American Liberalism very profoundly, both towards the continuation of the war and towards the ultimate settlement.

It is, I believe, an exaggerated dread arising out of our extreme ignorance of Russian realities. English people imagine Russia to be more purposeful than she is. more concentrated, more inimical to Western civilisation. They think of Russian policy as if it were a diabolically clever spider in a dark place. They imagine that the tremendous unification of State and national pride and ambition which has made the German Empire at last insupportable, may presently be repeated upon an altogether more gigantic scale, that Pan-Slavism will take the place of Pan-Germanism, as the ruling aggression of the world.

This is a dread due, I am convinced, to fundamental misconceptions and hasty parallelisms. Russia is not only the vastest country in the world, but the laxest; she is incapable of that tremendous unification. Not for two centuries yet, if ever, will it be necessary for a reasonably united Western Europe to trouble itself, once Prussianism has been disposed of, about the risk of definite aggression from the East. I do not think it will ever have to trouble itself.

Socially and politically, Russia is an entirely unique structure. It is the fashion to talk of Russia as being "in the fourteenth century," or "in the sixteenth century." As a matter of fact, Russia, like everything else, is in the twentieth century, and it is quite impossible to find in any other age a similar social organisation. In bulk, she is barbaric. Between eighty and ninety per cent, of her population is living at a level very little above the level of those agricultural Aryan races who were scattered over Europe before the beginning of written history. It is an illiterate population. It is superstitious in a primitive way, conservative and religious in a primitive way, it is

incapable of protecting itself in the ordinary commerce of modern life; against the business enterprise of better educated races it has no weapon but a peasant's poor cunning. It is, indeed, a helpless, unawakened mass. Above these peasants come a few millions of fairly well-educated and actively intelligent people. They are all that corresponds in any way to a Western community such as ours. Either they are officials, clerical or lay, in the great government machine that was consolidated chiefly by Peter the Great to control the souls and bodies of the peasant mass, or they are private persons more or less resentfully entangled in that machine. At the head of this structure, with powers of interference strictly determined by his individual capacity, is that tragic figure, the Tsar. That, briefly, is the composition of Russia, and it is unlike any other State on earth. It will follow laws of its own and have a destiny of its own.

Involved with the affairs of Russia are certain less barbaric States. There is Finland, which is by comparison highly civilised, and Poland, which is not nearly so far in advance of Russia. Both these countries are perpetually uneasy under the blundering pressure of foolish attempts to "Russianize" them. In addition, in the South and East are certain provinces thick with Jews, whom Russia can neither contrive to tolerate nor assimilate, who have no comprehensible projects for the help or reorganisation of the country, and who deafen all the rest of Europe with their bitter, unhelpful tale of grievances, so that it is difficult to realise how local and partial are their wrongs. There is a certain "Russian idea," containing within itself all the factors of failure, inspiring the general policy of this vast amorphous State. It found its completest expression in the works of the now defunct Pobedonostsev, and it pervades the bureaucracy. It is obscurantist, denying the common people education; it is orthodox, forbidding free thought and preferring conformity to ability; it is bureaucratic and autocratic; it is Pan-Slavic, Russianizing, and aggressive. It is this "Russian idea" that Western Liberalism dreads, and, as I want to point out, dreads unreasonably. I do not want to plead that it is not a bad thing; it is a bad thing. I want to point out that, unlike Prussianism, it is not a great danger to the world at large.

So long as this Russian idea, this Russian Toryism, dominates Russian affairs, Russia can never be really formidable either to India,

to China, or to the Liberal nations of Western Europe. And whenever she abandons this Toryism and becomes modern and formidable, she will cease to be aggressive. That is my case. While Russia has the will to oppress the world she will never have the power; when she has the power she will cease to have the will. Let me state my reasons for this belief as compactly as possible, because if I am right a number of Liberal-minded people in Great Britain and America and Scandinavia, who may collectively have a very great influence upon the settlement of Europe that will follow this war, are wrong. They may want to bolster up a really dangerous and evil Austria-cum-Germany at the expense of France, Belgium, and subject Slav populations, because of their dread of this Russia which can never be at the same time evil and dangerous.

Now, first let me point out what the Boer War showed, and what this tremendous conflict in Belgium is already enforcing, that the day of the unintelligent common soldier is past; that men who are animated and individualised can, under modern conditions, fight better than men who are unintelligent and obedient. Soldiering is becoming more specialised. It is calling for the intelligent handling of weapons so elaborate and destructive that great masses of men in the field are an encumbrance rather than a power. Battles must spread out, and leading give place to individual initiative. Consequently Russia can only become powerful enough to overcome any highly civilised European country by raising its own average of education and initiative, and this it can do only by abandoning its obscurantist methods, by liberalising upon the Western European model. That is to say, it will have to teach its population to read, to multiply its schools, and increase its universities; and that will make an entirely different Russia from this one we fear. It involves a relaxation of the grip of orthodoxy, an alteration of the intellectual outlook of officialdom, an abandonment of quasi-religious autocracy — in short, the complete abandonment of the "Russian idea" as we know it. And it means also a great development of local self-consciousness. Russia seems homogeneous now, because in the mass it is so ignorant as to be unaware of its differences; but an educated Russia means a Russia in which Ruthenian and Great Russian, Lett and Tartar will be mutually critical and aware of one another. The existing Russian idea

will need to give place to an entirely more democratic, tolerant, and cosmopolitan idea of Russia as a whole, if Russia is to merge from its barbarism and remain united. There is no cheap "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" sentiment ready-made to hand. National quality is against it. Patience under patriotism is a German weakness. Russians could no more go on singing and singing, "Russia, Russia over all," than Englishmen could go on singing "Rule, Britannia." It would bore them. The temperament of none of the Russian peoples justifies the belief that they will repeat on a larger scale even as much docility as the Germans have shown under the Prussians. No one who has seen the Russians, who has had opportunities of comparing Berlin with St. Petersburg or Moscow, or who knows anything of Russian art or Russian literature, will imagine this naturally wise, humourous, and impatient people reduplicating the self-conscious, drill-dulled, soulless culture of Germany, or the political vulgarities of Potsdam. This is a terrible world, I admit, but Prussianism is the sort of thing that does not happen twice.

Russia is substantially barbaric. Who can deny it? State-stuff rather than a State. But people in Western Europe are constantly writing of Russia and the Russians as though the qualities natural to barbarism were qualities inherent in the Russian blood. Russia massacres, sometimes even with official connivance. But Russia in all its history has no massacres so abominable as we gentle English were guilty of in Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Russia, too, "Russianizes," sometimes clumsily, sometimes rather successfully. But Germany has sought to Germanise — in Bohemia and Poland, for instance, with conspicuous violence and failure. We "Anglicised" Ireland. These forcible efforts to create uniformity are natural to a phase of social and political development, from which no people on earth have yet fully emerged. And if we set ourselves now to create a reunited Poland under the Russian crown, if we bring all the great influence of the Western Powers to bear upon the side of the liberalising forces in Finland, if we do not try to thwart and stifle Russia by closing her legitimate outlet into the Mediterranean, we shall do infinitely more for human happiness than if we distrust her, check her, and force her back upon the barbarism from which, with a sort of blind pathetic wisdom, she seeks to emerge.

It is unfortunate for Russia that she has come into conspicuous conflict with the Jews. She has certainly treated them no worse than she has treated her own people, and she has treated them less atrociously than they were treated in England during the Middle Ages. The Jews by their particularism invite the resentment of all uncultivated humanity. Civilisation and not revolt emancipates them. And while Russian reverses will throw back her civilisation and intensify the sufferings of all her subject Jews, Russian success in this alliance will inevitably spell Westernisation, progress, and amelioration for them. But unhappily this does not seem to be patent to many Jewish minds. They have been embittered by their wrongs, and, in the English and still more in the American Press, a heavy weight of grievance against Russia finds voice, and distorts the issue of this. While we are still only in the opening phase of this struggle for life against the Prussianized German Empire, this struggle to escape from the militarism that has been slowly strangling civilisation, it is a huge misfortune that this racial resentment, which, great as it is, is still a little thing beside the world issues involved, should break the united front of western civilisation, and that the confidence of Russia should be threatened, as it is threatened now by doubt and disparagement in the Press. We are not so sure of victory that we can estrange an ally. We have to make up our minds to see all Poland reunited under the Russian Crown, and if the Turks choose to play a foolish part, it is not for us to quarrel now about the fate of Constantinople. The Allies are not to be tempted into a quarrel about Constantinople. The balance of power in the Balkans, that is to say, incessant intrigue between Austria and Russia, has arrested the civilisation of South-eastern Europe for a century. Let it topple. An unchallenged Russia will be a wholesome check, and no great danger for the new greater Serbia and the new greater Rumania and the enlarged and restored Bulgaria this war renders possible.

One civilised country only does Russia really “threaten,” and that country is Sweden. Sweden has a vast wealth of coal and iron within reach of Russia’s hand. And I confess I watch Scandinavia with a certain terror during these days. Sweden is the only European country in which there is a pro-German militarist party, and she may be tempted — I do not know how strongly she may not have been

tempted already — to drag herself and Norway into this struggle on the German side. If she does, our Government will be not a little to blame for not having given her, and induced Russia to give her, the strongest joint assurances and guarantees of her integrity for ever. But if the Scandinavian countries abstain from any participation in this present war, then I do not see what is to prevent us and France and Russia from making the most public, definite, and binding declaration of our common interest in Sweden's integrity and our common determination to preserve it.

Beyond that, I see no danger to civilisation in Russia anywhere — at least, no danger so considerable as the Kaiser-Krupp power we fight to finish. This war, even if it brings us the utmost success, will still leave Russia face to face with a united and chastened Germany. For it must be remembered that the downfall of Prussianism and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, will leave German Germany not smaller but larger than she is now. To India, decently governed and guarded, with an educational level higher than her own, and three times her gross population, Russia can only be dangerous through the grossest misgovernment on our part, and her powers of intervention in China will be restricted for many years. But all our powers of intervention in China will be restricted for many years. A breathing space for Chinese reconstruction is one of the most immediate and least equivocal blessings of this war. Unless the Chinese are unteachable — and only stupid people suppose them a stupid race — the China of 1934 will not be a China for either us or Russia to meddle with. So where in all the world is this danger from Russia?

The danger of a Krupp-cum-Kaiser dominance of the whole world, on the other hand, is immediate. Defeat, or even a partial victory for the Allies, means nothing less than that.

IX. — AN APPEAL TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

THIS appeal comes to you from England at war, and it is addressed to you because upon your nation rests the issue of this conflict. The influence of your States upon its nature and duration must needs be enormous, and at its ending you may play a part such as no nation has ever played since the world began.

For it rests with you to establish and secure or to refuse to establish and secure the permanent peace of the world, the final ending of war.

This appeal comes to you from England, but it is no appeal to ancient associations or racial affinities. Your common language is indeed English, but your nation has long since outgrown these early links, the blood of every people in Europe mingles in the unity of your States, and it is to the greatness of your future rather than the accidents of your first beginnings, to the humanity in you, and not to the English and Irish and Scotch and Welsh in you that this appeal is made. Half the world is at war, or on the very verge of war; it is impossible that you should disregard or turn away from this conflict. Unavoidably you have to judge us. Unavoidable is your participation in the ultimate settlement which will make or mar the welfare of mankind for centuries to come. We appeal to you to judge us, to listen patiently to our case, to exert the huge decisive power, you hold in the balance not hastily, not heedlessly. For we do not disguise from ourselves that you can shatter all our hopes in this conflict. You are a people more than twice as numerous as we are, and still you are only the beginning of what you are to be, with a clear prospect of expansion that mocks the limits of these little islands, with illimitable and still scarcely tapped sources of wealth and power. You have already come to a stage when a certain magnanimity becomes you in your relation to European affairs.

Now, while you, because of your fortunate position, and because of the sane and brotherly relations that have become a fixed tradition along your northern boundary — we English had a share in securing

that — while you live free of the sight and burthen of military preparations, free as it seems for ever, all Europe has for more than half a century bent more and more wearily under a perpetually increasing burthen of armaments. For many years Europe has been an armed camp, with millions of men continually under arms, with the fear of war universally poisoning its life, with its education impoverished, its social development retarded, with everything pinched but its equipment for war. It would be foolish to fix the blame for this state of affairs upon any particular nation; it has grown up, as most great evils grow, quietly, unheeded. One may cast back in history to the Thirty Years' War, to such names as Frederick the Great, Napoleon the First, Napoleon the Third, Bismarck; what does it matter now who began the thing, and which was most to blame? Here it is, and we have to deal with it.

But we English do assert that it is the Government of the German Emperor which has for the last 40 years taken the lead and forced the pace in these matters, which has driven us English to add warship to warship in a pitiless competition to retain that predominance at sea upon which our existence as a free people depends, and which has strained the strength of France almost beyond the pitch of human endurance, so that the education and the welfare of her people have suffered greatly, so that Paris to-day is visibly an impoverished and over-taxed city. And this perpetual fear of the armed strength of Germany has forced upon France alliances and entanglements she would otherwise have avoided.

Let us not attempt to deny the greatness of Germany and of Germany's contributions to science and art and literature and all that is good in human life. But evil influences may overshadow the finest peoples, and it is our case that since the victories of 1871 Germany has been obsessed by the worship of material power and glory and scornful of righteousness; that she has been threatening and overbearing to all the world. There has been a propaganda of cynicism and national roughness, a declared contempt for treaties and pledges, so that all Europe has been uneasy and in fear. And since none of us are saints, and certainly no nations are saintly, we have been resentful; there is not a country in Europe that has not shown itself resentful under this perpetual menace of Germany. And

now at last and suddenly the threatened thing has come to pass and Germany is at war.

Because of a murder committed by one of her own subjects Austria made war upon Serbia, Russia armed to protect a kindred country, and then with the swiftness of years of premeditation Germany declared war upon Russia and struck at France, striking through the peaceful land of Belgium, a little country we English had pledged ourselves to protect, a little country that had never given Germany the faintest pretext for hostility, and in the hope of finding France unready. Of course, we went to war. If we had not done so, could we English have ever looked the world in the face again?

And it is with scarcely a dissentient voice that England is at war. Never were the British people so unanimous; all Ireland is with us, and the conscience of all the world. And, now this war has begun, we are resolved to put an end to militarism in the world for evermore. We are not fighting to destroy Germany; it is the firm resolve of England to permit no fresh "conquered provinces" to darken the future of Europe. Whatever betide, all German Germany will come out of this war undivided and German still. Her own "conquests" she may have to relinquish, her Poles and other subject peoples, but that is the utmost we shall exact of her. With the accession of Austria, Germany may even come out of this war a larger Germany than at the beginning. We have no hatred of things German and German people. But we are fighting to break this huge fighting machine for ever — this fighting machine which has been such an oppression as no native-born American can dream of, to every other nation in Europe. We are fighting to end Kaiserism and Kruppism for ever and ever. There, shortly and plainly, is our case and our object. Now let us come to the immediate substance of this appeal.

We do not ask you for military help. Keep the peace which it is your unparalleled good fortune to enjoy so securely. But keep it fairly. Remember that we fight now for national existence, and that in the night, even as this is written, within a hundred miles or so of this place, the dark ships feel their way among the floating mines with which the Germans have strewn the North Sea, and our sons and the sons of Belgium and France go side by side, not by the hundred nor by the thousand, but by the hundred thousand, rank after rank,

line beyond line — to death. Even as this is written the harvest of death is being reaped. Remember our tragic case. Europe is full of a joyless determination to end this evil for ever; she plunges grimly and sadly into the cruel monstrosities of war, and assuredly there will be little shouting for the victors whichever side may win. At the end we do most firmly believe there will be established a new Europe, a Europe riddened of rankling oppressions, with a free Poland, a free Finland, a free Germany, the Balkans settled, the little nations safe, and peace secure. And it is of supreme importance that we should ask you now — What are you going to do throughout the struggle, and what will you do at the end?

One thing we are told in England that you mean to do, a thing that has moved me to this appeal. For it is not only a strange thing in itself, but it may presently be followed by other similar ideas. Come what may, all the liberal forces in England and France are resolved to respect the freedom of Holland. But the position of Holland is, as you may see in any atlas, a very peculiar one in this war. The Rhine runs along the rear of the long German line as if it were a canal to serve that line with supplies, and then it passes into Holland and so by Rotterdam to the sea. So that it is possible for any neutral power, such as you are, to pour a stream of food supplies and war material by way of Holland almost into the hands of the German combatant line. Even if we win our battles in the field this will enormously diminish our chance of concluding this war. But we shall suffer it; it is within the rights of Holland to victual the Germans in this way, and we cannot prevent it without committing just such another outrage upon the laws of nations as Germany was guilty of in invading Belgium.

And here is where your country comes in. In your harbours lie a great number of big German ships that dare not venture to sea because of our fleet. It is proposed, we are told, to arrange a purchase of these ships by American citizens, to facilitate by special legislation their transfer to your flag, and then to load them with food and war material and send them across the Atlantic and through the narrow seas, seas that at the price of a cruiser and many men we have painfully cleared of German contact mines, to get war prices in Rotterdam and supply our enemies. It is, we confess, a smart thing to

do; it will give your people not only huge immediate profits but a mercantile marine at one coup; it will certainly prolong the war, and so it will mean the killing and wounding of scores of thousands of young Germans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Belgians, who might otherwise have escaped. It is within your legal rights, and we will tell you plainly now that we shall refuse to quarrel with you about it, but we ask you not to be too easily offended if we betray a certain lack of enthusiasm for this idea.

And begun such enterprises as this, what are you going to do for mankind and the ultimate peace of the world? You know that the Tsar has restored the freedom of Finland and promised to re-unite the torn fragments of Poland into a free kingdom, but probably you do not know that he and England have engaged themselves to respect and protect from each other and all the world the autonomy of Norway and Sweden, and of Sweden's vast and tempting stores of mineral wealth close to the Russian boundary.

We ask you not to be too cynical about the Tsar's promises, and to be prepared to help us and France and him to see that they become real. And this with regard to Scandinavia, is not only Russia's promise but ours. This is more than a war of armies; it is a great moral upheaval, and you must not judge of the spirit of Europe to-day by the history of her diplomacies. When this war is ended, all Europe will cry for disarmament. Are you going to help then or are you going to thwart that cry? In Europe we shall attempt to extinguish that huge private trade in war material, that "Kruppism" which lies so near the roots of all this monstrous calamity. We cannot do that unless you do it too. Are you prepared to do that? Are you prepared to come into a conference at the end of this war to ensure the peace of the world, or are you going to stand out, make difficulties for us out of our world perplexities, snatch advantages, carp from your infinite security at our Allies, and perhaps in the crisis of our struggle pick a quarrel with us upon some secondary score? Are you indeed going to play the part of a merely numerous little people, a cute trading, excitable people, or are you going to play the part of a great nation in this life and death struggle of the old world civilisations? Are you prepared now to take that lead among the nations to which your greatness and freedom point you? It is not

for ourselves we make this appeal to you; it is for the whole future of mankind. And we make it with the more assurance because already your Government has stood for peace and the observation of treaties against base advantages.

Already the wounds of our dead cry out to you.

X. — COMMON SENSE AND THE BALKAN STATES

THE Balkan States never have been a problem, they have only been a part of a problem. That is why no human being has ever yet produced even a paper solution acceptable to another human being.

The attempt to settle Balkan affairs with the Austro-Hungarian Empire left out of the problem has been like an attempt to deal with a number of hospital cases in which the head and shoulders of one patient, the legs of another, the abdomen of a third had to be disregarded. The bulk of the Serbian people and a great mass of the Rumanians were in the Austro-Hungarian system, and it was the Austrian bar to any development of Serbia towards the Adriatic that forced that country back into its unhappy conflict with Bulgaria. Now everything has altered. English people need trouble no longer about Austrian susceptibilities, and not merely our interests but our urgent necessities march with the reasonable ambitions of the four Balkan nations.

Let us begin by clearing away a certain amount of nonsense that is said and believed by many good people about two of these States. It is too much the custom to speak and write of Serbia and Bulgaria as though they were almost hopelessly barbaric and criminal communities, incapable of participation in the fellowship of European nations. The murder of the late King and Queen of Serbia, the assassination of Sarajevo, the foolish onslaught of Bulgaria upon Serbia that led to the break-up of the Balkan League, and the endless cruelties and barbarities of the warfare in Macedonia, are allowed to weigh too much against the clear need of a reunited Greater Serbia, a restored Bulgaria, and the reasonable prospect of a rehabilitated Balkan League.

Now there is no getting over the hard facts of these crimes and cruelties. But they have to be kept in their proper proportion to the tremendous issues now before the world. Let us call in a few figures that will fix the scale. The Serbian people number altogether over ten millions, the Rumanians as many, there are more than twenty million

Poles, and perhaps seven millions Bulgarians. The Czechs and Slovenes total six or seven millions, the Magyars exceed ten millions, and the Ruthenians still under Austrian control four millions. It is manifest to every reasonable Englishman now that very few of these sixty or seventy million people are likely to be socially and politically happy until they have got themselves disentangled from intimate subjection to alien rulers speaking unfamiliar tongues, and it is equally manifest that until they are reasonably content, the peace of the rest of Europe will remain uncertain. So that it is upon these regions that the peace of England, France, Germany, Russia and Italy rests.

The lives, therefore, of hundreds of millions of people must be affected, for good or evil, by the sane re-mapping and pacification of south-eastern Europe. In that sane re-mapping and pacification we are, in fact, dealing with matters so gigantic that the mere assassination of this person or the murder of that dwindles almost to the vanishing point. It is surely preposterous that the murder of an unwise young King, who subordinated his nation's destinies to a romantic love affair, a murder done, not by a whole nation, not even by a mob, but by less than a hundred officers, who were at least as patriotic as they were cruel, or even the net of conspiracy that killed the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, should stand in the way of the liberation and unity of millions of Serbs who were as innocent of these things as any Wiltshire farmer. All nations have had their criminal and sanguinary phase; the British and American people who profess such a horror of Serbia's murders and Bulgaria's massacres must be blankly ignorant of the history of Scotland and Ireland and the darker side of the Red Indians' destiny. If murder conspiracy was hatched in Serbia, were there no Fenians in Ireland and America? We English, at any rate, have not let the highly-organised Phoenix Park murders drown the freedom of Ireland for ever, or cause a war with America. The sooner we English and Americans clear our minds of this self-righteous cant against the whole Serbian race because of a few horrors inevitable in a state of barbaric disturbance, the sooner we shall be able to help these peoples forward to the freedom and security that alone can make such barbarities impossible. It would be just as reasonable to vow undying hatred and pitiless vengeance

against the whole German-speaking race (of seventy millions or so) because of the burning and killing in Liege. Stifled nations, outraged races, are the fortresses of resentful cruelty. This war is no cinematograph melodrama. The deaths of Queen Draga and the Archduke Franz Ferdinand are scarcely in this picture at all. It is not the business of statecraft to avenge the past, but to deal with the possibilities of the present and the hope of the future.

And the open possibility of the present is for us to bring about a revival of the Balkan League, and identify ourselves with the reasonable hopes of these renascent peoples. In that revival England may play an active and directing part. The break-up of the first Balkan League was a deep disappointment to liberal opinion throughout the world; but it was not an irrevocable disaster. The wonder was, indeed, not the rupture but the union. And the rupture itself was very largely due to the thwarting of Serbia, not by her associates, but by Austria. Now Austria is out of consideration. For Rumania and for each of the three Balkan Powers, there is a plain, honourable and reasonable advantage in a common agreement and concerted action with us now. There are manifest compensations for Greece in Epirus and the islands and — we can spare it — Cyprus. For Bulgaria there is a generous rectification of Macedonia. The natural expansion of the two northern States has been already indicated. And should Turkey be foolish and blunder at this crisis, then further very natural v, and quite desirable readjustments become possible.!What holds these States back from concerted ‘action on our side now, is merely the distrusts and enmities left over from the break-up of the first Balkan League. They will not readily trust one another again. But they would trust England. They would sit down now at a conference in which England and Russia and Italy were represented, and to which England and Russia and Italy would bring assurances of a permanent settlement and arrange every detail of their prospective boundaries in a day. They would arrange a peace that would last a century. England could do more than reconcile; she could finance. And the attack upon Vienna and the German rear would then be reinforced immediately by six or seven hundred thousand seasoned soldiers.

Moreover, it is scarcely possible that Italy could refuse to come

into this war if a reunited Balkan League did so. With the Serbians in Dalmatia it would be scarcely possible to keep the Italians out of Trieste and Fiume, and long before that earnestly awaited Russian avalanche won its way to Berlin, this southern attack might be in Vienna. The time when the scope of this war could be restricted is past long ago, and every fresh soldier who goes into action now shortens the agony of Europe.

But it is not with the immediate military advantages of a Balkan League that I am most concerned. A Balkan League of Peace, for mutual protection, will be an absolute necessity in a regenerated Europe. It is necessary for the tranquility of the world. It is necessary if the Wiltshire farmer is to herd his sheep in peace; it is necessary if people are to be prosperous and happy in Chicago and Yokohama. Perhaps "Balkan League" is now an insufficiently extensive word, since Rumania is not in the Balkan Peninsula, and Italy must necessarily be involved in any enduring settlement. But it is clear that the settlement of Europe upon liberal lines involves the creation of these various ten-to-twenty-million-people States, none of them powerful enough to be secure alone, but amounting in the aggregate to the greatest power in Europe, and it is equally clear that they must be linked by some common bond and understanding.

There can be no doubt of the very serious complication of all these possibilities by the jerry-built dynastic interests that have been unhappily run up in these new States. It is unfortunate that we have to reckon not only with peoples but kings. Such a monarchy as that of Serbia or Bulgaria narrows, personifies, intensifies and misrepresents national feeling. National hatreds and national ambitions can no doubt be at times very malign influences in the world's affairs, but it is the greed and vanities of exceptional monarchs, of the Napoleons and Fredericks the Great, and so forth, that bring these vague, vast feelings to an edge and a crisis. And it will be these same concentrated and over individualised purposes, these little gods of the coin and postage stamp that will stand most in the way of a reasonable Schweitzerisation and pacification of south-eastern Europe. The more clearly this is recognised in Europe now, the less likely are they, the less able will they be to obstruct a sane settlement. On our side, at least, this is a war of nations and not of

princes.

It is for that reason that we have to make the discussion of these national arrangements as open and public as we possibly can. This is not a matter for the quiet little deals of the diplomatists. This is no chance for kings. All the civilised peoples of the earth have to form an idea of the general lines upon which a pacific Europe can be established, an idea clear and powerful enough to prevent and override the manoeuvres of the chancelleries. The nations themselves have to become the custodians of the common peace. In Italy, indeed, this is already the case. The Italian monarchy is a strong and Liberal monarchy, secure in the confidence of its people; but were it not so, it is a fairly evident fact that no betrayal by its rulers would induce the Italian people to make war upon France in the interests of Austria and Prussia. I doubt, too, if the present King of Bulgaria can afford to blunder again. The world moves steadily away from the phase of Court-centred nationalism to the phase of a collective national purpose. It is for the whole strength of western liberalism to throw itself upon the side of that movement, and in no direction can it make its strength so effective at the present time as in the open and energetic promotion of a new and greater Balkan League.

XI. — THE WAR OF THE MIND

ALL the realities of this war are things of the mind. This is a conflict of cultures, and nothing else in the world. All the world-wide pain and weariness, fear and anxieties, the bloodshed and destruction, the innumerable torn bodies of men and horses, the stench of putrefaction, the misery of hundreds of millions of human beings, the waste of mankind, are but the material consequences of a false philosophy and foolish thinking. We fight not to destroy a nation, but a nest of evil ideas.

We fight because a whole nation has become obsessed by pride, by the cant of cynicism and the vanity of violence, by the evil suggestion of such third- rate writers as Gobineau and Stewart Chamberlain that they were a people of peculiar excellence destined to dominate the earth, by the base offer of advantage in cunning and treachery held out by such men as Delbruck and Bernhardi, by the theatricalism of the Kaiser, and by two stirring songs about Deutschland and the Rhine. These things, interweaving with the tradesmen's activities of the armaments trust and the common vanity and weaknesses of unthinking men, have been sufficient to release disaster — we do not begin to measure the magnitude of the disaster. On the back of it all, spurring it on, are the idea-mongers, the base-spirited writing men, pretentious little professors in frock coats scribbling colonels. They are the idea. They pointed the way and whispered "Go!" They ride the world now to catastrophe. It is as if God in a moment of wild humour had lent his whirlwinds for an outing to half-a-dozen fleas.

And the real task before mankind is quite beyond the business of the fighting line, the simple awful business of discrediting and discouraging these stupidities by battleship, artillery, rifle and the blood and courage of seven million men. The real task of mankind is to get better sense into the heads of these Germans, and therewith and thereby into the heads of humanity generally, and to end not simply a war, but the idea of war. What printing and writing and talking have done, printing and writing and talking can undo. Let no man be fooled by bulk and matter. Rifles do but kill men, and fresh

men are born to follow them. Our business is to kill ideas. The ultimate purpose of this war is propaganda, the destruction of certain beliefs, and the creation of others. It is to this propaganda that reasonable men must address themselves.

And when I write propaganda, I do not for a moment mean the propaganda with which the name of Mr. Norman Angell is associated; this great modern gospel that war does not pay. That is indeed the only decent and attractive thing that can still be said for war. Nothing that is really worth having in life does pay. Men live in order that they may pay for the unpaying things. Love does not pay, art does not pay, happiness does not pay, honesty is not the best policy, generosity invites the ingratitude of the mean; what is the good of this huckster's argument? It revolts all honourable men. But war, whether it pay or not, is an atrociously ugly thing, cruel, destroying countless beauties. Who cares whether war pays or does not pay, when one thinks of some obstinate Belgian peasant woman being interrogated and shot by a hectoring German officer, or of the weakly whimpering mess of some poor hovel with little children in it, struck by a shell? Even if war paid twelve-and-a-half per cent, per annum for ever on every pound it cost to wage, would it be any the less a sickening abomination to every decent soul? And, moreover, it is a bore. It is an unendurable bore. War and the preparation for war, the taxes, the drilling, the interference with every free activity, the arrest and stiffening up of life, the obedience to third-rate people in uniform, of which Berlin-struck Germans have been the implacable exponents, have become an unbearable nuisance to all humanity. Neither Belgium nor France nor Britain is fighting now for glory or advantage. I do not believe Russia is doing so; we are all, I believe, fighting in a fury of resentment because at last after years of waste and worry to prevent it, we have been obliged to do so. Our grievance is the grievance of every decent life-loving German, of every German mother and sweetheart who watched her man go off under his incompetent leaders to hardship and mutilations and death. And our propaganda against the Prussian idea has to be no vile argument to the pocket, but an appeal to the common sense and common feeling of humanity. We have to clear the heads of the Germans, and keep the heads of our own people clear about this war.

Particularly is there need to dissuade our people against the dream of profit-filching, the "War against German Trade." We have to reiterate over and over again that we fight, resolved that at the end no nationality shall oppress any nationality or language again in Europe for ever, and by way of illustration, we want not those ingenious arrangements of figures that touch the Angell imagination, but photographs of the Kaiser in his glory at a review, and photographs of the long, unintelligent side-long face of the Crown Prince, his son, photographs of that great original Krupp taking his pleasures at Capri and, to set beside these, photographs pitilessly showing men killed and horribly torn upon the battlefield, and men crippled and women and men murdered, and homes burnt and, to the verge of indecency, all the peculiar filthiness of war. And the case that has thus to be stated has to be brought before the minds of the Germans, of Americans, of French people, and English people, of Swedes and Russians and Italians as our common evil, which, though it be at the expense of several Governments, we have to end.

Now, how is this literature to be spread? How are we to reach the common people of the Western European countries with these explanations, these assurances, these suggestions that are necessary for the proper ending of this war? I could wish we had a Government capable of something more articulate than "Wait and see! " a Government that dared confess a national intention to all the world. For what a Government says is audible to all the world. King George, too, has the ear of a thousand million people. If he saw fit to say simply and clearly what it is we fight for and what we seek, his voice would be heard universally, through Germany, through all America. No other voice has such penetration. He is, he has told us, watching the war with interest, but that is not enough; we could have guessed that, knowing his spirit. As a nation, we need expression that shall reach the other side. But our Government is, I fear, one of those that obey necessity; it is only very reluctantly creative; it rests, therefore, with us who, outside all formal government, represent the national will and intention, to take this work into our hands. By means of a propaganda of books, newspaper articles, leaflets, tracts in English, French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Italian, Chinese and Japanese we have to spread this idea, repeat this idea,

and impose upon this war the idea that this war must end war. We have to create a wide common conception of a re-mapped and pacified Europe, released from the abominable dangers of a private trade in armaments, largely disarmed and pledged to mutual protection. This conception has sprung up in a number of minds, and there have been proposals at once most extraordinary and feasible for its realisation, projects of aeroplanes scattering leaflets across Germany, of armies distributing tracts as they advance, of prisoners of war much afflicted by such literature. These ideas have the absurdity of novelty, but otherwise they are by no means absurd. They will strike many soldiers as being indecent, but the world is in revolt against the standards of soldiering.

Never before has the world seen clearly as it now sees clearly, the role of thought in the making of war. This new conception carries with it the corollary of an entirely new campaign.

How can we get at the minds of our enemies? How can we make explanation more powerful than armies and fleets? Failing an articulate voice at the head of our country, we must needs look for the resonating appeal we need in other quarters. We look to the Church that takes for its purposes the name of the Prince of Peace. In England, except for the smallest, meekest protest against war, any sort of war, on the part of a handful of Quakers, Christianity is silent. Its universally present organisation speaks no coherent counsels. Its workers for the most part are buried in the loyal manufacture of flannel garments and an inordinate quantity of bed-socks for the wounded. It is an extraordinary thing to go now and look at one's parish church and note the pulpit, the orderly arrangements for the hearers, the proclamations on the doors, to sit awhile on the stone wall about the graves and survey the comfortable vicarage, and to reflect that this is just the local representation of a universally present organisation for the communication of ideas; that all over Europe there are such pulpits, such possibilities of gathering and saying, and that it gathers nothing and has nothing to say. Pacific, patriotic sentiment it utters perhaps, but nothing that anyone can act upon, nothing to draw together, will, and make an end. It is strange to sit alive in the sunshine and realise that, and to think of how tragically that same realisation came to another mind in Europe.

Several things have happened during the past few weeks with the intensest symbolical quality; the murder of Jaurès, for example; but surely nothing has occurred so wonderful and touching as the death of the Pope, that faithful, honest, simple old man. The war and the perplexity of the war darkened his last hours. “Once the Church could have stopped this thing,” he said, with a sense of threads missed and controls that have slipped away — it may be with a sense of vivifying help discouraged and refused. The *Tribuna* tells a story that, if not true, is marvellously invented, of the Austrian representative coming to ask him for a blessing on the Austrian arms. He feigned not to hear, or perhaps he did not hear. The Austrian asked again, and again there was silence. Then, at the third request, when he could be silent no longer, he broke out: “No! Bless peace!” As the temperature of his weary body rose, his last clear moments were spent in attempts to word telegrams that should have some arresting hold upon the gigantic crash that was coming, and in his last delirium he lamented war and the impotence of the Church....

Intellect without faith is the devil, but faith without intellect is a negligent angel with rusty weapons. This European catastrophe is the tragedy of the weak though righteous Christian will. We begin to see that to be right and indolent, or right and scornfully silent, or right and abstinent from the conflict is to be wrong. Righteousness has need to be as clear and efficient and to do things as sedulously in the right way as any evil doer. There is no meaning in the Christianity of a Christian who is not now a propagandist for peace — who is not now also a politician. There is no faith in the Liberalism that merely carps at the manner of our entanglement in a struggle that must alter all the world for ever. We need not only to call for peace, but to seek and show and organise the way of peace....

One thinks of Governments and the Church and the Press, and then, turning about for some other source of mental control, we recall the organisations, the really quite opulent organisations, that are professedly devoted to the promotion of peace. There is no voice from The Hague. The so-called peace movement in our world has consumed money enough and service enough to be something better than a weak little grumble at the existence of war. What is this movement and its organisations doing now? Ninety-nine people in

Europe out of every hundred are complaining of war now. It needs no specially endowed committees to do that. They preach to a converted world. The question is how to end it and prevent its recurrence. But have these specially peace-seeking people ever sought for the secret springs of war, or looked into the powers that war for war, or troubled to learn how to grasp war and subdue it? All Germany is knit by the fighting spirit, and armed beyond the rest of the world. Until the mind of Germany is changed, there can be no safe peace on earth. But that, it seems, does not trouble the professional peace advocate if only he may cry Peace, and live somewhere in comfort, and with the comfortable sense of a superior dissent from the general emotion.

How are we to gather together the wills and understanding of men for the tremendous necessities and opportunities of this time? Thought, speech, persuasion, an incessant appeal for clear intentions, clear statements for the dispelling of suspicion and the abandonment of secrecy and trickery; there is work for every man who writes or talks and has the slightest influence upon another creature. This monstrous conflict in Europe, the slaughtering, the famine, the confusion, the panic and hatred and lying pride, it is all of it real only in the darkness of the mind. At the coming of understanding it will vanish as dreams vanish at awakening. But never will it vanish until understanding has come. It goes on only because we, who are voices, who suggest, who might elucidate and inspire, are ourselves such little scattered creatures that though we strain to the breaking point, we still have no strength to turn on the light that would save us. There have been moments in the last three weeks when life has been a waking nightmare, one of those frozen nightmares when, with salvation within one's reach, one cannot move, and the voice dies in one's throat.

THE END

AN ENGLISHMAN LOOKS AT THE WORLD

OR, SOCIAL FORCES IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

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THE COMING OF BLÉRIOT

(*July, 1909.*)

The telephone bell rings with the petulant persistence that marks a trunk call, and I go in from some ineffectual gymnastics on the lawn to deal with the irruption. There is the usual trouble in connecting up, minute voices in Folkestone and Dover and London call to one another and are submerged by buzzings and throbbings. Then in elfin tones the real message comes through: "Blériot has crossed the Channel…. An article … about what it means."

I make a hasty promise and go out and tell my friends.

From my garden I look straight upon the Channel, and there are white caps upon the water, and the iris and tamarisk are all asway with the south-west wind that was also blowing yesterday. M. Blériot has done very well, and Mr. Latham, his rival, had jolly bad luck. That is what it means to us first of all. It also, I reflect privately, means that I have under-estimated the possible stability of aeroplanes. I did not expect anything of the sort so soon. This is a good five years before my reckoning of the year before last.

We all, I think, regret that being so near we were not among the fortunate ones who saw that little flat shape skim landward out of the blue; surely they have an enviable memory; and then we fell talking and disputing about what that swift arrival may signify. It starts a swarm of questions.

First one remarks that here is a thing done, and done with an astonishing effect of ease, that was incredible not simply to ignorant people but to men well informed in these matters. It cannot be fifteen years ago since Sir Hiram Maxim made the first machine that could lift its weight from the ground, and I well remember how the clumsy quality of that success confirmed the universal doubt that men could ever in any effectual manner fly.

Since then a conspiracy of accidents has changed the whole problem; the bicycle and its vibrations developed the pneumatic tyre, the pneumatic tyre rendered a comfortable mechanically driven road vehicle possible, the motor-car set an enormous premium on the development of very light, very efficient engines, and at last the

engineer was able to offer the experimentalists in gliding one strong enough and light enough for the new purpose. And here we are! Or, rather, M. Blériot is!

What does it mean for us?

One meaning, I think, stands out plainly enough, unpalatable enough to our national pride. This thing from first to last was made abroad. Of all that made it possible we can only claim so much as is due to the improvement of the bicycle. Gliding began abroad while our young men of muscle and courage were braving the dangers of the cricket field. The motor-car and its engine was being worked out "over there," while in this country the mechanically propelled road vehicle, lest it should frighten the carriage horses of the gentry, was going meticulously at four miles an hour behind a man with a red flag. Over there, where the prosperous classes have some regard for education and some freedom of imaginative play, where people discuss all sorts of things fearlessly, and have a respect for science, this has been achieved.

And now our insularity is breached by the foreigner who has got ahead with flying.

It means, I take it, first and foremost for us, that the world cannot wait for the English.

It is not the first warning we have had. It has been raining warnings upon us; never was a slacking, dull people so liberally served with warnings of what was in store for them. But this event — this foreigner-invented, foreigner-built, foreigner-steered thing, taking our silver streak as a bird soars across a rivulet — puts the case dramatically. We have fallen behind in the quality of our manhood. In the men of means and leisure in this island there was neither enterprise enough, imagination enough, knowledge nor skill enough to lead in this matter. I do not see how one can go into the history of this development and arrive at any other conclusion. The French and Americans can laugh at our aeroplanes, the Germans are ten years ahead of our poor navigables. We are displayed a soft, rather backward people. Either we are a people essentially and incurably inferior, or there is something wrong in our training, something benumbing in our atmosphere and circumstances. That is the first and gravest intimation in M. Blériot's feat.

The second is that, in spite of our fleet, this is no longer, from the military point of view, an inaccessible island.

So long as one had to consider the navigable balloon the aerial side of warfare remained unimportant. A Zeppelin is little good for any purpose but scouting and espionage. It can carry very little weight in proportion to its vast size, and, what is more important, it cannot drop things without sending itself up like a bubble in soda water. An armada of navigables sent against this island would end in a dispersed, deflated state, chiefly in the seas between Orkney and Norway — though I say it who should not. But these aeroplanes can fly all round the fastest navigable that ever drove before the wind; they can drop weights, take up weights, and do all sorts of able, inconvenient things. They are birds. As for the birds, so for aeroplanes; there is an upward limit of size. They are not going to be very big, but they are going to be very able and active. Within a year we shall have — or rather *they* will have — aeroplanes capable of starting from Calais, let us say, circling over London, dropping a hundredweight or so of explosive upon the printing machines of *The Times*, and returning securely to Calais for another similar parcel. They are things neither difficult nor costly to make. For the price of a Dreadnought one might have hundreds. They will be extremely hard to hit with any sort of missile. I do not think a large army of under-educated, under-trained, extremely unwilling conscripts is going to be any good against this sort of thing.

I do not think that the arrival of M. Blériot means a panic resort to conscription. It is extremely desirable that people should realise that these foreign machines are not a temporary and incidental advantage that we can make good by fussing and demanding eight, and saying we won't wait, and so on, and then subsiding into indolence again. They are just the first-fruits of a steady, enduring lead that the foreigner has won. The foreigner is ahead of us in education, and this is especially true of the middle and upper classes, from which invention and enterprise come — or, in our own case, do not come. He makes a better class of man than we do. His science is better than ours. His training is better than ours. His imagination is livelier. His mind is more active. His requirements in a novel, for example, are not kindly, sedative pap; his uncensored plays deal with reality. His

schools are places for vigorous education instead of genteel athleticism, and his home has books in it, and thought and conversation. Our homes and schools are relatively dull and uninspiring; there is no intellectual guide or stir in them; and to that we owe this new generation of nicely behaved, unenterprising sons, who play golf and dominate the tailoring of the world, while Brazilians, Frenchmen, Americans and Germans fly.

That we are hopelessly behindhand in aeronautics is not a fact by itself. It is merely an indication that we are behindhand in our mechanical knowledge and invention M. Blériot's aeroplane points also to the fleet.

The struggle for naval supremacy is not merely a struggle in shipbuilding and expenditure. Much more is it a struggle in knowledge and invention. It is not the Power that has the most ships or the biggest ships that is going to win in a naval conflict. It is the Power that thinks quickest of what to do, is most resourceful and inventive. Eighty Dreadnoughts manned by dull men are only eighty targets for a quicker adversary. Well, is there any reason to suppose that our Navy is going to keep above the general national level in these things? Is the Navy *bright*?

The arrival of M. Blériot suggests most horribly to me how far behind we must be in all matters of ingenuity, device, and mechanical contrivance. I am reminded again of the days during the Boer war, when one realised that it had never occurred to our happy-go-lucky Army that it was possible to make a military use of barbed wire or construct a trench to defy shrapnel. Suppose in the North Sea we got a surprise like that, and fished out a parboiled, half-drowned admiral explaining what a confoundedly slim, unexpected, almost ungentlemanly thing the enemy had done to him.

Very probably the Navy is the exception to the British system; its officers are rescued from the dull homes and dull schools of their class while still of tender years, and shaped after a fashion of their own. But M. Blériot reminds us that we may no longer shelter and degenerate behind these blue backs. And the keenest men at sea are none the worse for having keen men on land behind them.

Are we an awakening people?

It is the vital riddle of our time. I look out upon the windy

Channel and think of all those millions just over there, who seem to get busier and keener every hour. I could imagine the day of reckoning coming like a swarm of birds.

Here the air is full of the clamour of rich and prosperous people invited to pay taxes, and beyond measure bitter. They are going to live abroad, cut their charities, dismiss old servants, and do all sorts of silly, vindictive things. We seem to be doing feeble next-to-nothings in the endowment of research. Not one in twenty of the boys of the middle and upper classes learns German or gets more than a misleading smattering of physical science. Most of them never learn to speak French. Heaven alone knows what they do with their brains! The British reading and thinking public probably does not number fifty thousand people all told. It is difficult to see whence the necessary impetus for a national renascence is to come…. The universities are poor and spiritless, with no ambition to lead the country. I met a Boy Scout recently. He was hopeful in his way, but a little inadequate, I thought, as a basis for confidence in the future of the Empire.

We have still our Derby Day, of course….

Apart from these patriotic solicitudes, M. Blériot has set quite another train of thought going in my mind. The age of natural democracy is surely at an end through these machines. There comes a time when men will be sorted out into those who will have the knowledge, nerve, and courage to do these splendid, dangerous things, and those who will prefer the humbler level. I do not think numbers are going to matter so much in the warfare of the future, and that when organised intelligence differs from the majority, the majority will have no adequate power of retort. The common man with a pike, being only sufficiently indignant and abundant, could chase the eighteenth century gentleman as he chose, but I fail to see what he can do in the way of mischief to an elusive chevalier with wings. But that opens too wide a discussion for me to enter upon now.

MY FIRST FLIGHT

(EASTBOURNE, *August 5, 1912 — three years later.*)

Hitherto my only flights have been flights of imagination but this morning I flew. I spent about ten or fifteen minutes in the air; we went out to sea, soared up, came back over the land, circled higher, planed steeply down to the water, and I landed with the conviction that I had had only the foretaste of a great store of hitherto unsuspected pleasures. At the first chance I will go up again, and I will go higher and further.

This experience has restored all the keenness of my ancient interest in flying, which had become a little fagged and flat by too much hearing and reading about the thing and not enough participation. Sixteen years ago, in the days of Langley and Lilienthal, I was one of the few journalists who believed and wrote that flying was possible; it affected my reputation unfavourably, and produced in the few discouraged pioneers of those days a quite touching gratitude. Over my mantel as I write hangs a very blurred and bad but interesting photograph that Professor Langley sent me sixteen years ago. It shows the flight of the first piece of human machinery heavier than air that ever kept itself up for any length of time. It was a model, a little affair that would not have lifted a cat; it went up in a spiral and came down unsmashed, bringing back, like Noah's dove, the promise of tremendous things.

That was only sixteen years ago, and it is amusing to recall how cautiously even we out-and-out believers did our prophesying. I was quite a desperate fellow; I said outright that in my lifetime we should see men flying. But I qualified that by repeating that for many years to come it would be an enterprise only for quite fantastic daring and skill. We conjured up stupendous difficulties and risks. I was deeply impressed and greatly discouraged by a paper a distinguished Cambridge mathematician produced to show that a flying machine was bound to pitch fearfully, that as it flew on its pitching *must* increase until up went its nose, down went its tail, and it fell like a knife. We exaggerated every possibility of instability. We imagined that when the aeroplane wasn't "kicking up ahind and afore" it would

be heeling over to the lightest side wind. A sneeze might upset it. We contrasted our poor human equipment with the instinctive balance of a bird, which has had ten million years of evolution by way of a start….

The waterplane in which I soared over Eastbourne this morning with Mr.
Grahame-White was as steady as a motor-car running on asphalt.

Then we went on from those anticipations of swaying insecurity to speculations about the psychological and physiological effects of flying. Most people who look down from the top of a cliff or high tower feel some slight qualms of dread, many feel a quite sickening dread. Even if men struggled high into the air, we asked, wouldn't they be smitten up there by such a lonely and reeling dismay as to lose all self-control? And, above all, wouldn't the pitching and tossing make them quite horribly sea-sick?

I have always been a little haunted by that last dread. It gave a little undertow of funk to the mood of lively curiosity with which I got aboard the waterplane this morning — that sort of faint, thin funk that so readily invades one on the verge of any new experience; when one tries one's first dive, for example, or pushes off for the first time down an ice run. I thought I should very probably be sea-sick — or, to be more precise, air-sick; I thought also that I might be very giddy, and that I might get thoroughly cold and uncomfortable None of those things happened.

I am still in a state of amazement at the smooth steadfastness of the motion. There is nothing on earth to compare with that, unless — and that I can't judge — it is an ice yacht travelling on perfect ice. The finest motor-car in the world on the best road would be a joggling, quivering thing beside it.

To begin with, we went out to sea before the wind, and the plane would not readily rise. We went with an undulating movement, leaping with a light splashing pat upon the water, from wave to wave. Then we came about into the wind and rose, and looking over I saw that there were no longer those periodic flashes of white foam. I was flying. And it was as still and steady as dreaming. I watched

the widening distance between our floats and the waves. It wasn't by any means a windless day; there was a brisk, fluctuating breeze blowing out of the north over the downs. It seemed hardly to affect our flight at all.

And as for the giddiness of looking down, one does not feel it at all. It is difficult to explain why this should be so, but it is so. I suppose in such matters I am neither exceptionally steady-headed nor is my head exceptionally given to swimming. I can stand on the edge of cliffs of a thousand feet or so and look down, but I can never bring myself right up to the edge nor crane over to look to the very bottom. I should want to lie down to do that. And the other day I was on that Belvedere place at the top of the Rotterdam sky-scraper, a rather high wind was blowing, and one looks down through the chinks between the boards one stands on upon the heads of the people in the streets below; I didn't like it. But this morning I looked directly down on a little fleet of fishing boats over which we passed, and on the crowds assembling on the beach, and on the bathers who stared up at us from the breaking surf, with an entirely agreeable exaltation. And Eastbourne, in the early morning sunshine, had all the brightly detailed littleness of a town viewed from high up on the side of a great mountain.

When Mr. Grahame-White told me we were going to plane down I will confess I tightened my hold on the sides of the car and prepared for something like the down-going sensation of a switchback railway on a larger scale. Just for a moment there was that familiar feeling of something pressing one's heart up towards one's shoulders, and one's lower jaw up into its socket and of grinding one's lower teeth against the upper, and then it passed. The nose of the car and all the machine was slanting downwards, we were gliding quickly down, and yet there was no feeling that one rushed, not even as one rushes in coasting a hill on a bicycle. It wasn't a tithe of the thrill of those three descents one gets on the great mountain railway in the White City. There one gets a disagreeable quiver up one's backbone from the wheels, and a real sense of falling.

It is quite peculiar to flying that one is incredulous of any collision. Some time ago I was in a motor-car that ran over and killed a small dog, and this wretched little incident has left an open wound

upon my nerves. I am never quite happy in a car now; I can't help keeping an apprehensive eye ahead. But you fly with an exhilarating assurance that you cannot possibly run over anything or run into anything — except the land or the sea, and even those large essentials seem a beautifully safe distance away.

I had heard a great deal of talk about the deafening uproar of the engine. I counted a headache among my chances. There again reason reinforced conjecture. When in the early morning Mr. Travers came from Brighton in this Farman in which I flew I could hear the hum of the great insect when it still seemed abreast of Beachy Head, and a good two miles away. If one can hear a thing at two miles, how much the more will one not hear it at a distance of two yards? But at the risk of seeming too contented for anything I will assert I heard that noise no more than one hears the drone of an electric ventilator upon one's table. It was only when I came to speak to Mr. Grahame-White, or he to me, that I discovered that our voices had become almost infinitesimally small.

And so it was I went up into the air at Eastbourne with the impression that flying was still an uncomfortable experimental, and slightly heroic thing to do, and came down to the cheerful gathering crowd upon the sands again with the knowledge that it is a thing achieved for everyone. It will get much cheaper, no doubt, and much swifter, and be improved in a dozen ways — we *must* get self-starting engines, for example, for both our aeroplanes and motor-cars — but it is available to-day for anyone who can reach it. An invalid lady of seventy could have enjoyed all that I did if only one could have got her into the passenger's seat. Getting there was a little difficult, it is true; the waterplane was out in the surf, and I was carried to it on a boatman's back, and then had to clamber carefully through the wires, but that is a matter of detail. This flying is indeed so certain to become a general experience that I am sure that this description will in a few years seem almost as quaint as if I had set myself to record the fears and sensations of my First Ride in a Wheeled Vehicle. And I suspect that learning to control a Farman waterplane now is probably not much more difficult than, let us say, twice the difficulty in learning the control and management of a motor-bicycle. I cannot understand the sort of young man who won't

learn how to do it if he gets half a chance.

The development of these waterplanes is an important step towards the huge and swarming popularisation of flying which is now certainly imminent. We ancient survivors of those who believed in and wrote about flying before there was any flying used to make a great fuss about the dangers and difficulties of landing and getting up. We wrote with vast gravity about "starting rails" and "landing stages," and it is still true that landing an aeroplane, except upon a well-known and quite level expanse, is a risky and uncomfortable business. But getting up and landing upon fairly smooth water is easier than getting into bed. This alone is likely to determine the aeroplane routes along the line of the world's coastlines and lake groups and waterways. The airmen will go to and fro over water as the midges do. Wherever there is a square mile of water the waterplanes will come and go like hornets at the mouth of their nest. But there are much stronger reasons than this convenience for keeping over water. Over water the air, it seems, lies in great level expanses; even when there are gales it moves in uniform masses like the swift, still rush of a deep river. The airman, in Mr. Grahame-White's phrase, can go to sleep on it. But over the land, and for thousands of feet up into the sky, the air is more irregular than a torrent among rocks; it is — if only we could see it — a waving, whirling, eddying, flamboyant confusion. A slight hill, a ploughed field, the streets of a town, create riotous, rolling, invisible streams and cataracts of air that catch the airman unawares, make him drop disconcertingly, try his nerves. With a powerful enough engine he climbs at once again, but these sudden downfalls are the least pleasant and most dangerous experience in aviation. They exact a tiring vigilance.

Over lake or sea, in sunshine, within sight of land, this is the perfect way of the flying tourist. Gladly would I have set out for France this morning instead of returning to Eastbourne. And then coasted round to Spain and into the Mediterranean. And so by leisurely stages to India. And the East Indies….

I find my study unattractive to-day.

OFF THE CHAIN

(*December, 1910*)

I was ill in bed, reading Samuel Warren's "Ten Thousand a Year," and noting how much the world can change in seventy years.

I had just got to the journey of Titmouse from London to Yorkshire in
that ex-sheriff's coach he bought in Long Acre — where now the motor-cars
are sold — when there came a telegram to bid me note how a certain Mr.
Holt was upon the ocean, coming back to England from a little excursion.
He had left London last Saturday week at midday; he hoped to be back by
Thursday; and he had talked to the President in Washington, visited
Philadelphia, and had a comparatively loitering afternoon in New York.
What had I to say about it?

Firstly, that I wish this article could be written by Samuel Warren. And
failing that, I wish that Charles Dickens, who wrote in his "American
Notes" with such passionate disgust and hostility about the first
Cunarder, retailing all the discomfort and misery of crossing the
Atlantic by steamship, could have shared Mr. Holt's experience.

Because I am chiefly impressed by the fact not that Mr. Holt has taken days where weeks were needed fifty years ago, but that he has done it very comfortably, without undue physical exertion, and at no greater expense, I suppose, than it cost Dickens, whom the journey nearly killed.

If Mr. Holt's expenses were higher, it was for the special trains and the sake of the record. Anyone taking ordinary trains and ordinary passages may do what he has done in eighteen or twenty

days.

When I was a boy, “Around the World in Eighty Days” was still a brilliant piece of imaginative fiction. Now that is almost an invalid’s pace. It will not be very long before a man will be able to go round the world if he wishes to do so ten times in a year. And it is perhaps forgivable if those who, like Jules Verne, saw all these increments in speed, motor-cars, and airships aeroplanes, and submarines, wireless telegraphy and what not, as plain and necessary deductions from the promises of physical science, should turn upon a world that read and doubted and jeered with “I told you so. *Now* will you respect a prophet?”

It was not that the prophets professed any mystical and inexplicable illumination at which a sceptic might reasonably mock; they were prepared with ample reasons for the things they foretold. Now, quite as confidently, they point on to a new series of consequences, high probabilities that follow on all this tremendous development of swift, secure, and cheapened locomotion, just as they followed almost necessarily upon the mechanical developments of the last century.

Briefly, the ties that bind men to place are being severed; we are in the beginning of a new phase in human experience.

For endless ages man led the hunting life, migrating after his food, camping, homeless, as to this day are many of the Indians and Esquimaux in the Hudson Bay Territory. Then began agriculture, and for the sake of securer food man tethered himself to a place. The history of man’s progress from savagery to civilisation is essentially a story of settling down. It begins in caves and shelters; it culminates in a wide spectacle of farms and peasant villages, and little towns among the farms. There were wars, crusades, barbarous invasions, set-backs, but to that state all Asia, Europe, North Africa worked its way with an indomitable pertinacity. The enormous majority of human beings stayed at home at last; from the cradle to the grave they lived, married, died in the same district, usually in the same village; and to that condition, law, custom, habits, morals, have adapted themselves. The whole plan and conception of human society is based on the rustic home and the needs and characteristics of the agricultural family. There have been gipsies, wanderers,

knaves, knights-errant and adventurers, no doubt, but the settled permanent rustic home and the tenure of land about it, and the hens and the cow, have constituted the fundamental reality of the whole scene. Now, the really wonderful thing in this astonishing development of cheap, abundant, swift locomotion we have seen in the last seventy years — in the development of which Mauretanias, aeroplanes, mile-a-minute expresses, tubes, motor-buses and motor cars are just the bright, remarkable points — is this: that it dissolves almost all the reason and necessity why men should go on living permanently in any one place or rigidly disciplined to one set of conditions. The former attachment to the soil ceases to be an advantage. The human spirit has never quite subdued itself to the laborious and established life; it achieves its best with variety and occasional vigorous exertion under the stimulus of novelty rather than by constant toil, and this revolution in human locomotion that brings nearly all the globe within a few days of any man is the most striking aspect of the unfettering again of the old restless, wandering, adventurous tendencies in man's composition.

Already one can note remarkable developments of migration. There is, for example, that flow to and fro across the Atlantic of labourers from the Mediterranean. Italian workmen by the hundred thousand go to the United States in the spring and return in the autumn. Again, there is a stream of thousands of prosperous Americans to summer in Europe. Compared with any European country, the whole population of the United States is fluid. Equally notable is the enormous proportion of the British prosperous which winters either in the high Alps or along the Riviera. England is rapidly developing the former Irish grievance of an absentee propertied class. It is only now by the most strenuous artificial banking back that migrations on a far huger scale from India into Africa, and from China and Japan into Australia and America are prevented.

All the indications point to a time when it will be an altogether exceptional thing for a man to follow one occupation in one place all his life, and still rarer for a son to follow in his father's footsteps or die in his father's house.

The thing is as simple as the rule of three. We are off the chain of

locality for good and all. It was necessary heretofore for a man to live in immediate contact with his occupation, because the only way for him to reach it was to have it at his door, and the cost and delay of transport were relatively too enormous for him to shift once he was settled. *Now* he may live twenty or thirty miles away from his occupation; and it often pays him to spend the small amount of time and money needed to move — it may be half-way round the world — to healthier conditions or more profitable employment.

And with every diminution in the cost and duration of transport it becomes more and more possible, and more and more likely, to be profitable to move great multitudes of workers seasonally between regions where work is needed in this season and regions where work is needed in that. They can go out to the agricultural lands at one time and come back into towns for artistic work and organised work in factories at another. They can move from rain and darkness into sunshine, and from heat into the coolness of mountain forests. Children can be sent for education to sea beaches and healthy mountains.

Men will harvest in Saskatchewan and come down in great liners to spend the winter working in the forests of Yucatan.

People have hardly begun to speculate about the consequences of the return of humanity from a closely tethered to a migratory existence. It is here that the prophet finds his chief opportunity. Obviously, these great forces of transport are already straining against the limits of existing political areas. Every country contains now an increasing ingredient of unenfranchised Uitlanders. Every country finds a growing section of its home-born people either living largely abroad, drawing the bulk of their income from the exterior, and having their essential interests wholly or partially across the frontier.

In every locality of a Western European country countless people are found delocalised, uninterested in the affairs of that particular locality, and capable of moving themselves with a minimum of loss and a maximum of facility into any other region that proves more attractive. In America political life, especially State life as distinguished from national political life, is degraded because of the natural and inevitable apathy of a large portion of the population

whose interests go beyond the State.

Politicians and statesmen, being the last people in the world to notice what is going on in it, are making no attempt whatever to re-adapt this hugely growing floating population of delocalised people to the public service. As Mr. Marriott puts it in his novel, "*Now,*" they "drop out" from politics as we understand politics at present. Local administration falls almost entirely — and the decision of Imperial affairs tends more and more to fall — into the hands of that dwindling and adventurous moiety which sits tight in one place from the cradle to the grave. No one has yet invented any method for the political expression and collective direction of a migratory population, and nobody is attempting to do so. It is a new problem….

Here, then, is a curious prospect, the prospect of a new kind of people, a floating population going about the world, uprooted, delocalised, and even, it may be, denationalised, with wide interests and wide views, developing no doubt, customs and habits of its own, a morality of its own, a philosophy of its own, and yet from the point of view of current politics and legislation unorganised and ineffective.

Most of the forces of international finance and international business enterprise will be with it. It will develop its own characteristic standards of art and literature and conduct in accordance with its new necessities. It is, I believe, the mankind of the future. And the last thing it will be able to do will be to legislate. The history of the immediate future will, I am convinced, be very largely the history of the conflict of the needs of this new population with the institutions, the boundaries the laws, prejudices, and deep-rooted traditions established during the home-keeping, localised era of mankind's career.

This conflict follows as inevitably upon these new gigantic facilities of locomotion as the *Mauretania* followed from the discoveries of steam and steel.

OF THE NEW REIGN

(*June, 1911.*)

The bunting and the crimson vanish from the streets. Already the vast army of improvised carpenters that the Coronation has created set themselves to the work of demolition, and soon every road that converges upon Central London will be choked again with great loads of timber — but this time going outward — as our capital emerges from this unprecedented inundation of loyalty. The most elaborately conceived, the most stately of all recorded British Coronations is past.

What new phase in the life of our nation and our Empire does this tremendous ceremony inaugurate? The question is inevitable. There is nothing in all the social existence of men so full of challenge as the crowning of a king. It is the end of the overture; the curtain rises. This is a new beginning-place for histories.

To us, the great mass of common Englishmen, who have no place in the hierarchy of our land, who do not attend Courts nor encounter uniforms, whose function is at most spectacular, who stand in the street and watch the dignitaries and the liveries pass by, this sense of critical expectation is perhaps greater than it is for those more immediately concerned in the spectacle. They have had their parts to play, their symbolic acts to perform, they have sat in their privileged places, and we have waited at the barriers until their comfort and dignity was assured. I can conceive many of them, a little fatigued, preparing now for social dispersal, relaxing comfortably into gossip, discussing the detail of these events with an air of things accomplished. They will decide whether the Coronation has been a success and whether everything has or has not passed off very well. For us in the great crowd nothing has as yet succeeded or passed off well or ill. We are intent upon a King newly anointed and crowned, a King of whom we know as yet very little, but who has, nevertheless, roused such expectation as no King before him has done since Tudor times, in the presence of gigantic opportunities.

There is a conviction widespread among us — his own words, perhaps, have done most to create it — that King George is inspired,

as no recent predecessor has been inspired, by the conception of kingship, that his is to be no rôle of almost indifferent abstinence from the broad processes of our national and imperial development. That greater public life which is above party and above creed and sect has, we are told, taken hold of his imagination; he is to be no crowned image of unity and correlation, a layer of foundation-stones and a signature to documents, but an actor in our drama, a living Prince.

Time will test these hopes, but certainly we, the innumerable democracy of individually unimportant men, have felt the need for such a Prince. Our consciousness of defects, of fields of effort untilled, of vast possibilities neglected and slipping away from us for ever, has never really slumbered again since the chastening experiences of the Boer War. Since then the national spirit, hampered though it is by the traditions of party government and a legacy of intellectual and social heaviness, has been in uneasy and ineffectual revolt against deadness, against stupidity and slackness, against waste and hypocrisy in every department of life. We have come to see more and more clearly how little we can hope for from politicians, societies and organised movements in these essential things. It is this that has invested the energy and manhood, the untried possibilities of the new King with so radiant a light of hope for us.

Think what it may mean for us all — I write as one of that great ill-informed multitude, sincerely and gravely patriotic, outside the echoes of Court gossip and the easy knowledge of exalted society — if our King does indeed care for these wider and profounder things! Suppose we have a King at last who cares for the advancement of science, who is willing to do the hundred things that are so easy in his position to increase research, to honour and to share in scientific thought. Suppose we have a King whose head rises above the level of the Court artist, and who not only can but will appeal to the latent and discouraged power of artistic creation in our race. Suppose we have a King who understands the need for incessant, acute criticism to keep our collective activities intelligent and efficient, and for a flow of bold, unhampered thought through every department of the national life, a King liberal without laxity and patriotic without

pettiness or vulgarity. Such, it seems to us who wait at present almost inexpressively outside the immediate clamours of a mere artificial loyalty, are the splendid possibilities of the time.

For England is no exhausted or decaying country. It is rich with an unmeasured capacity for generous responses. It is a country burthened indeed, but not overwhelmed, by the gigantic responsibilities of Empire, a little relaxed by wealth, and hampered rather than enslaved by a certain shyness of temperament, a certain habitual timidity, slovenliness and insincerity of mind. It is a little distrustful of intellectual power and enterprise, a little awkward and ungracious to brave and beautiful things, a little too tolerant of dull, well-meaning and industrious men and arrogant old women. It suffers hypocrites gladly, because its criticism is poor, and it is wastefully harsh to frank unorthodoxy. But its heart is sound if its judgments fall short of acuteness and if its standards of achievement are low. It needs but a quickening spirit upon the throne, always the traditional centre of its respect, to rise from even the appearance of decadence. There is a new quality seeking expression in England like the rising of sap in the spring, a new generation asking only for such leadership and such emancipation from restricted scope and ungenerous hostility as a King alone can give it….

When in its turn this latest reign comes at last to its reckoning, what will the sum of its achievement be? What will it leave of things visible? Will it leave a London preserved and beautified, or will it but add abundantly to the lumps of dishonest statuary, the scars and masses of ill-conceived rebuilding which testify to the aesthetic degradation of the Victorian period? Will a great constellation of artists redeem the ambitious sentimentalities and genteel skilfulness that find their fitting mausoleum in the Tate Gallery? Will our literature escape at last from pretentiousness and timidity, our philosophy from the foolish cerebrations of university "characters" and eminent politicians at leisure, and our starved science find scope and resources adequate to its gigantic needs? Will our universities, our teaching, our national training, our public services, gain a new health from the reviving vigour of the national brain? Or is all this a mere wild hope, and shall we, after perhaps some small flutterings of effort, the foundation of some ridiculous little academy of literary

busybodies and hangers-on, the public recognition of this or that sociological pretender or financial "scientist," and a little polite jobbery with picture-buying, relapse into lassitude and a contented acquiescence in the rivalry of Germany and the United States for the moral, intellectual and material leadership of the world?

The deaths and accessions of Kings, the changing of names and coins and symbols and persons, a little force our minds in the marking off of epochs. We are brought to weigh one generation against another, to reckon up our position and note the characteristics of a new phase. What lies before us in the next decades? Is England going on to fresh achievements, to a renewed and increased predominance, or is she falling into a secondary position among the peoples of the world?

The answer to that depends upon ourselves. Have we pride enough to attempt still to lead mankind, and if we have, have we the wisdom and the quality? Or are we just the children of Good Luck, who are being found out?

Some years ago our present King exhorted this island to "wake up" in one of the most remarkable of British royal utterances, and Mr. Owen Seaman assures him in verse of an altogether laureate quality that we are now

"Free of the snare of slumber's silken bands,"

though I have not myself observed it. It is interesting to ask, Is England really waking up? and if she is, what sort of awakening is she likely to have?

It is possible, of course, to wake up in various different ways. There is the clear and beautiful dawn of new and balanced effort, easy, unresting, planned, assured, and there is also the blundering-up of a still half-somnolent man, irascible, clumsy, quarrelsome, who stubs his toe in his first walk across the room, smashes his too persistent alarum clock in a fit of nerves, and cuts his throat while shaving. All patriotic vehemence does not serve one's country. Exertion is a more critical and dangerous thing than inaction, and the essence of success is in the ability to develop those qualities which make action effective, and without which strenuousness is merely a clumsy and noisy protest against inevitable defeat. These necessary qualities, without which no community may hope for pre-eminence

to-day, are a passion for fine and brilliant achievement, relentless veracity of thought and method, and richly imaginative fearlessness of enterprise. Have we English those qualities, and are we doing our utmost to select and develop them?

I doubt very much if we are. Let me give some of the impressions that qualify my assurance in the future of our race.

I have watched a great deal of patriotic effort during the last decade, I have seen enormous expenditures of will, emotion and material for the sake of our future, and I am deeply impressed, not indeed by any effect of lethargy, but by the second-rate quality and the shortness and weakness of aim in very much that has been done. I miss continually that sharply critical imaginativeness which distinguishes all excellent work, which shines out supremely in Cromwell's creation of the New Model, or Nelson's plan of action at Trafalgar, as brightly as it does in Newton's investigation of gravitation, Turner's rendering of landscape, or Shakespeare's choice of words, but which cannot be absent altogether if any achievement is to endure. We seem to have busy, energetic people, no doubt, in abundance, patient and industrious administrators and legislators; but have we any adequate supply of really creative ability?

Let me apply this question to one matter upon which England has certainly been profoundly in earnest during the last decade. We have been almost frantically resolved to keep the empire of the sea. But have we really done all that could have been done? I ask it with all diffidence, but has our naval preparation been free from a sort of noisy violence, a certain massive dullness of conception? Have we really made anything like a sane use of our resources? I do not mean of our resources in money or stuff. It is manifest that the next naval war will be beyond all precedent a war of mechanisms, giving such scope for invention and scientifically equipped wit and courage as the world has never had before. Now, have we really developed any considerable proportion of the potential human quality available to meet the demand for wits? What are we doing to discover, encourage and develop those supreme qualities of personal genius that become more and more decisive with every new weapon and every new complication and unsuspected possibility it introduces? Suppose, for example, there was among us to-day a one-eyed, one-armed

adulterer, rather fragile, prone to sea-sickness, and with just that one supreme quality of imaginative courage which made Nelson our starry admiral. Would he be given the ghost of a chance now of putting that gift at his country's disposal? I do not think he would, and I do not think he would because we underrate gifts and exceptional qualities, because there is no quickening appreciation for the exceptional best in a man, and because we overvalue the good behaviour, the sound physique, the commonplace virtues of mediocrity.

I have but the knowledge of the man in the street in these things, though once or twice I have chanced on prophecy, and I am uneasily apprehensive of the quality of all our naval preparations. We go on launching these lumping great Dreadnoughts, and I cannot bring myself to believe in them. They seem vulnerable from the air above and the deep below, vulnerable in a shallow channel and in a fog (and the North Sea is both foggy and shallow), and immensely costly. If I were Lord High Admiral of England at war I would not fight the things. I would as soon put to sea in St. Paul's Cathedral. If I were fighting Germany, I would stow half of them away in the Clyde and half in the Bristol Channel, and take the good men out of them and fight with mines and torpedoes and destroyers and airships and submarines.

And when I come to military matters my persuasion that things are not all right, that our current hostility to imaginative activity and our dull acceptance of established methods and traditions is leading us towards grave dangers, intensifies. In South Africa the Boers taught us in blood and bitterness the obvious fact that barbed wire had its military uses, and over the high passes on the way to Lhassa (though, luckily, it led to no disaster) there was not a rifle in condition to use because we had not thought to take glycerine. The perpetual novelty of modern conditions demands an imaginative alertness we eliminate. I do not believe that the Army Council or anyone in authority has worked out a tithe of the essential problems of contemporary war. If they have, then it does not show. Our military imagination is half-way back to bows and arrows. The other day I saw a detachment of the Legion of Frontiersmen disporting itself at Totteridge. I presume these young heroes consider they are

preparing for a possible conflict in England or Western Europe, and I presume the authorities are satisfied with them. It is at any rate the only serious war of which there is any manifest probability. Western Europe is now a network of railways, tramways, high roads, wires of all sorts; its chief beasts of burthen are the railway train and the motor car and the bicycle; towns and hypertrophied villages are often practically continuous over large areas; there is abundant water and food, and the commonest form of cover is the house. But the Legion of Frontiersmen is equipped for war, oh! — in Arizona in 1890, and so far as I am able to judge the most modern sections of the army extant are organised for a colonial war in (say) 1899 or 1900. There is, of course, a considerable amount of vague energy demanding conscription and urging our youth towards a familiarity with arms and the backwoodsman's life, but of any thought-out purpose in our arming widely understood, of any realisation of what would have to be done and where it would have to be done, and of any attempts to create an instrument for that novel unprecedented undertaking, I discover no trace.

In my capacity of devil's advocate pleading against national over-confidence, I might go on to the quality of our social and political movements. One hears nowadays a vast amount of chatter about efficiency — that magic word — and social organisation, and there is no doubt a huge expenditure of energy upon these things and a widespread desire to rush about and make showy and startling changes. But it does not follow that this involves progress if the enterprise itself is dully conceived and most of it does seem to me to be dully conceived. In the absence of penetrating criticism, any impudent industrious person may set up as an "expert," organise and direct the confused good intentions at large, and muddle disastrously with the problem in hand. The "expert" quack and the bureaucratic intriguer increase and multiply in a dull-minded, uncritical, strenuous period as disease germs multiply in darkness and heat.

I find the same doubts of our quality assail me when I turn to the supreme business of education. It is true we all seem alive nowadays to the need of education, are all prepared for more expenditure upon it and more, but it does not follow necessarily in a period of stagnating imagination that we shall get what we pay for. The other

day I discovered my little boy doing a subtraction sum, and I found he was doing it in a slower, clumsier, less businesslike way than the one I was taught in an old-fashioned "Commercial Academy" thirty odd years ago. The educational "expert," it seems, has been at work substituting a bad method for a good one in our schools because it is easier of exposition. The educational "expert," in the lack of a lively public intelligence, develops all the vices of the second-rate energetic, and he is, I am only too disposed to believe, making a terrible mess of a great deal of our science teaching and of the teaching of mathematics and English….

I have written enough to make clear the quality of my doubts. I think the English mind cuts at life with a dulled edge, and that its energy may be worse than its somnolence. I think it undervalues gifts and fine achievement, and overvalues the commonplace virtues of mediocre men. One of the greatest Liberal statesmen in the time of Queen Victoria never held office because he was associated with a divorce case a quarter of a century ago. For him to have taken office would have been regarded as a scandal. But it is not regarded as a scandal that our Government includes men of no more ability than any average assistant behind a grocer's counter. These are your gods, O England! — and with every desire to be optimistic I find it hard under the circumstances to anticipate that the New Epoch is likely to be a blindingly brilliant time for our Empire and our race.

WILL THE EMPIRE LIVE?

What will hold such an Empire as the British together, this great, laxly scattered, sea-linked association of ancient states and new-formed countries, Oriental nations, and continental colonies? What will enable it to resist the endless internal strains, the inevitable external pressures and attacks to which it must be subjected This is the primary question for British Imperialism; everything else is secondary or subordinated to that.

There is a multitude of answers. But I suppose most of them will prove under examination either to be, or to lead to, or to imply very distinctly this generalisation that if most of the intelligent and active people in the Empire want it to continue it will, and that if a large proportion of such active and intelligent people are discontented and estranged, nothing can save it from disintegration. I do not suppose that a navy ten times larger than ours, or conscription of the most irksome thoroughness, could oblige Canada to remain in the Empire if the general will and feeling of Canada were against it, or coerce India into a sustained submission if India presented a united and resistant front. Our Empire, for all its roll of battles, was not created by force; colonisation and diplomacy have played a far larger share in its growth than conquest; and there is no such strength in its sovereignty as the rule of pride and pressure demand. It is to the free consent and participation of its constituent peoples that we must look for its continuance.

A large and influential body of politicians considers that in preferential trading between the parts of the Empire, and in the erection of a tariff wall against exterior peoples, lies the secret of that deepened emotional understanding we all desire. I have never belonged to that school. I am no impassioned Free Trader — the sacred principle of Free Trade has always impressed me as a piece of party claptrap; but I have never been able to understand how an attempt to draw together dominions so scattered and various as ours by a network of fiscal manipulation could end in anything but mutual inconvenience mutual irritation, and disruption.

In an open drawer in my bureau there lies before me now a

crumpled card on which are the notes I made of a former discussion of this very issue, a discussion between a number of prominent politicians in the days before Mr. Chamberlain's return from South Africa and the adoption of Tariff Reform by the Unionist Party; and I decipher again the same considerations, unanswered and unanswerable, that leave me sceptical to-day.

Take a map of the world and consider the extreme differences in position and condition between our scattered states. Here is Canada, lying along the United States, looking eastward to Japan and China, westward to all Europe. See the great slashes of lake, bay, and mountain chain that cut it meridianally. Obviously its main routes and trades and relations lie naturally north and south; obviously its full development can only be attained with those ways free, open, and active. Conceivably, you may build a fiscal wall across the continent; conceivably, you may shut off the east and half the west by impossible tariffs, and narrow its trade to one artificial duct to England, but only at the price of a hampered development It will be like nourishing the growing body of a man with the heart and arteries of a mouse.

Then here, again, are New Zealand and Australia, facing South America and the teeming countries of Eastern Asia; surely it is in relation to these vast proximities that their economic future lies. Is it possible to believe that shipping mutton to London is anything but the mere beginning of their commercial development Look at India, again, and South Africa. Is it not manifest that from the economic and business points of view each of these is an entirely separate entity, a system apart, under distinct necessities, needing entire freedom to make its own bargains and control its trade in its own way in order to achieve its fullest material possibilities?

Nor can I believe that financial entanglements greatly strengthen the bonds of an empire in any case. We lost the American colonies because we interfered with their fiscal arrangements, and it was Napoleon's attempt to strangle the Continental trade with Great Britain that began his downfall.

I do not find in the ordinary relations of life that business relations necessarily sustain intercourse. The relations of buyer and seller are ticklish relations, very liable to strains and conflicts. I do not find

people grow fond of their butchers and plumbers, and I doubt whether if one were obliged by some special taxation to deal only with one butcher or one plumber, it would greatly endear the relationship. Forced buying is irritated buying, and it is the forbidden shop that contains the coveted goods. Nor do I find, to take another instance, among the hotel staffs of Switzerland and the Riviera — who live almost entirely upon British gold — those impassioned British imperialist views the economic link theory would lead me to expect.

And another link, too, upon which much stress is laid but about which I have very grave doubts, is the possibility of a unified organisation of the Empire for military defence. We are to have, it is suggested, an imperial Army and an imperial Navy, and so far, no doubt, as the guaranteeing of a general peace goes, we may develop a sense of participation in that way. But it is well in these islands to remember that our extraordinary Empire has no common enemy to weld it together from without.

It is too usual to regard Germany as the common enemy. We in Great Britain are now intensely jealous of Germany. We are intensely jealous of Germany not only because the Germans outnumber us, and have a much larger and more diversified country than ours, and lie in the very heart and body of Europe, but because in the last hundred years, while we have fed on platitudes and vanity, they have had the energy and humility to develop a splendid system of national education, to toil at science and art and literature, to develop social organisation, to master and better our methods of business and industry, and to clamber above us in the scale of civilisation. This has humiliated and irritated rather than chastened us, and our irritation has been greatly exacerbated by the swaggering bad manners, the talk of "Blood and Iron" and Mailed Fists, the Welt-Politik rubbish that inaugurated the new German phase.

The British middle-class, therefore, is full of an angry, vague disposition to thwart that expansion which Germans regard very reasonably as their natural destiny; there are all the possibilities of a huge conflict in that disposition, and it is perhaps well to remember how insular — or, at least, how European — the essentials of this quarrel are. We have lost our tempers, but Canada has not. There is

nothing in Germany to make Canada envious and ashamed of wasted years. Canada has no natural quarrel with Germany, nor has India, nor South Africa, nor Australasia. They have no reason to share our insular exasperation. On the other hand, all these states have other special preoccupations. New Zealand, for example, having spent half a century and more in sheep-farming, land legislation, suppressing its drink traffic, lowering its birth-rate, and, in short, the achievement of an ideal preventive materialism, is chiefly consumed by hate and fear of Japan, which in the same interval has made a stride from the thirteenth to the twentieth century, and which teems with art and life and enterprise and offspring. Now Japan in Welt-Politik is our ally.

You see, the British Empire has no common economic interests and no natural common enemy. It is not adapted to any form of Zollverein or any form of united aggression. Visibly, on the map of the world it has a likeness to open hands, while the German Empire — except for a few ill-advised and imitative colonies — is clenched into a central European unity.

Physically, our Empire is incurably scattered, various, and divided, and it is to quite other links and forces, it seems to me, than fiscal or military unification that we who desire its continuance must look to hold it together. There never was anything like it before. Essentially it is an adventure of the British spirit, sanguine, discursive, and beyond comparison insubordinate, adaptable, and originating. It has been made by odd and irregular means by trading companies, pioneers, explorers, unauthorised seamen, adventurers like Clive, eccentrics like Gordon, invalids like Rhodes. It has been made, in spite of authority and officialdom, as no other empire was ever made. The nominal rulers of Britain never planned it. It happened almost in spite of them. Their chief contribution to its history has been the loss of the United States. It is a living thing that has arisen, not a dead thing put together. Beneath the thin legal and administrative ties that hold it together lies the far more vital bond of a traditional free spontaneous activity. It has a common medium of expression in the English tongue, a unity of liberal and tolerant purpose amidst its enormous variety of localised life and colour. And it is in the development and strengthening, the enrichment the rendering more conscious and more purposeful, of that broad

creative spirit of the British that the true cement and continuance of our Empire is to be found.

The Empire must live by the forces that begot it. It cannot hope to give any such exclusive prosperity as a Zollverein might afford; it can hold out no hopes of collective conquests and triumphs — its utmost military rôle must be the guaranteeing of a common inaggressive security; but it can, if it is to survive, it must, give all its constituent parts such a civilisation as none of them could achieve alone, a civilisation, a wealth and fullness of life increasing and developing with the years. Through that, and that alone, can it be made worth having and worth serving.

And in the first place the whole Empire must use the English language. I do not mean that any language must be stamped out, that a thousand languages may not flourish by board and cradle and in folk-songs and village gossip — Erse, the Taal, a hundred Indian and other Eastern tongues, Canadian French — but I mean that also English must be available, that everywhere there must be English teaching. And everyone who wants to read science or history or philosophy, to come out of the village life into wider thoughts and broader horizons, to gain appreciation in art, must find ready to hand, easily attainable in English, all there is to know and all that has been said thereon. It is worth a hundred Dreadnoughts and a million soldiers to the Empire, that wherever the imperial posts reach, wherever there is a curious or receptive mind, there in English and by the imperial connection the full thought of the race should come. To the lonely youth upon the New Zealand sheep farm, to the young Hindu, to the trapper under a Labrador tilt, to the half-breed assistant at a Burmese oil-well, to the self-educating Scottish miner or the Egyptian clerk, the Empire and the English language should exist, visibly and certainly, as the media by which his spirit escapes from his immediate surroundings and all the urgencies of every day, into a limitless fellowship of thought and beauty.

Now I am not writing this in any vague rhetorical way; I mean specifically that our Empire has to become the medium of knowledge and thought to every intelligent person in it, or that it is bound to go to pieces. It has no economic, no military, no racial, no religious unity. Its only conceivable unity is a unity of language and purpose

and outlook. If it is not held together by thought and spirit, it cannot be held together. No other cement exists that can hold it together indefinitely.

Not only English literature, but all other literatures well translated into English, and all science and all philosophy, have to be brought within the reach of everyone capable of availing himself of such reading. And this must be done, not by private enterprise or for gain, but as an Imperial function. Wherever the Empire extends there its presence must signify all that breadth of thought and outlook no localised life can supply.

Only so is it possible to establish and maintain the wide understandings, the common sympathy necessary to our continued association. The Empire, mediately or immediately, must become the universal educator, news-agent, book-distributor, civiliser-general, and vehicle of imaginative inspiration for its peoples, or else it must submit to the gravitation of its various parts to new and more invigorating associations.

No empire, it may be urged, has ever attempted anything of this sort, but no empire like the British has ever yet existed. Its conditions and needs are unprecedented, its consolidation is a new problem, to be solved, if it is solved at all, by untried means. And in the English language as a vehicle of thought and civilisation alone is that means to be found.

Now it is idle to pretend that at the present time the British Empire is giving its constituent peoples any such high and rewarding civilisation as I am here suggesting. It gives them a certain immunity from warfare, a penny post, an occasional spectacular coronation, a few knighthoods and peerages, and the services of an honest, unsympathetic, narrow-minded, and unattractive officialism. No adequate effort is being made to render the English language universal throughout its limits, none at all to use it as a medium of thought and enlightenment. Half the good things of the human mind are outside English altogether, and there is not sufficient intelligence among us to desire to bring them in. If one would read honest and able criticism, one must learn French; if one would be abreast of scientific knowledge and philosophical thought, or see many good plays or understand the contemporary European mind, German.

And yet it would cost amazingly little to get every good foreign thing done into English as it appeared. It needs only a little understanding and a little organisation to ensure the immediate translation of every significant article, every scientific paper of the slightest value. The effort and arrangement needed to make books, facilities for research, and all forms of art accessible throughout the Empire, would be altogether trivial in proportion to the consolidation it would effect.

But English people do not understand these things. Their Empire is an accident. It was made for them by their exceptional and outcast men, and in the end it will be lost, I fear, by the intellectual inertness of their commonplace and dull-minded leaders. Empire has happened to them and civilisation has happened to them as fresh lettuces come to tame rabbits. They do not understand how they got, and they will not understand how to keep. Art, thought, literature, all indeed that raises men above locality and habit, all that can justify and consolidate the Empire, is nothing to them. They are provincials mocked by a world-wide opportunity, the stupid legatees of a great generation of exiles. They go out of town for the "shootin'," and come back for the fooleries of Parliament, and to see what the Censor has left of our playwrights and Sir Jesse Boot of our writers, and to dine in restaurants and wear clothes.

Mostly they call themselves Imperialists, which is just their harmless way of expressing their satisfaction with things as they are. In practice their Imperialism resolves itself into a vigorous resistance to taxation and an ill-concealed hostility to education. It matters nothing to them that the whole next generation of Canadians has drawn its ideas mainly from American publications, that India and Egypt, in despite of sounder mental nourishment, have developed their own vernacular Press, that Australia and New Zealand even now gravitate to America for books and thought. It matters nothing to them that the poverty and insularity of our intellectual life has turned American art to France and Italy, and the American universities towards Germany. The slow starvation and decline of our philosophy and science, the decadence of British invention and enterprise, troubles them not at all, because they fail to connect these things with the tangible facts of empire. "The world cannot wait for

the English.” … And the sands of our Imperial opportunity twirl through the neck of the hour-glass.

THE LABOUR UNREST

(*May, 1912.*)

Sec. 1

Our country is, I think, in a dangerous state of social disturbance. The discontent of the labouring mass of the community is deep and increasing. It may be that we are in the opening phase of a real and irreparable class war.

Since the Coronation we have moved very rapidly indeed from an assurance of extreme social stability towards the recognition of a spreading disorganisation. It is idle to pretend any longer that these Labour troubles are the mere give and take of economic adjustment. No adjustment is in progress. New and strange urgencies are at work in our midst, forces for which the word "revolutionary" is only too faithfully appropriate. Nothing is being done to allay these forces; everything conspires to exasperate them.

Whither are these forces taking us? What can still be done and what has to be done to avoid the phase of social destruction to which we seem to be drifting?

Hitherto, in Great Britain at any rate, the working man has shown himself a being of the most limited and practical outlook. His narrowness of imagination, his lack of general ideas, has been the despair of the Socialist and of every sort of revolutionary theorist. He may have struck before, but only for definite increments of wages or definite limitations of toil; his acceptance of the industrial system and its methods has been as complete and unquestioning as his acceptance of earth and sky. Now, with an effect of suddenness, this ceases to be the case. A new generation of workers is seen replacing the old, workers of a quality unfamiliar to the middle-aged and elderly men who still manage our great businesses and political affairs. The worker is beginning now to strike for unprecedented ends — against the system, against the fundamental conditions of labour, to strike for no defined ends at all, perplexingly and disconcertingly. The old-fashioned strike was a method of bargaining, clumsy and violent perhaps, but bargaining still; the new-fashioned strike is far less of a haggle, far more of a display of temper. The first thing that

has to be realised if the Labour question is to be understood at all is this, that the temper of Labour has changed altogether in the last twenty or thirty years. Essentially that is a change due to intelligence not merely increased but greatly stimulated, to the work, that is, of the board schools and of the cheap Press. The outlook of the workman has passed beyond the works and his beer and his dog. He has become — or, rather, he has been replaced by — a being of eyes, however imperfect, and of criticism, however hasty and unjust. The working man of to-day reads, talks, has general ideas and a sense of the round world; he is far nearer to the ruler of to-day in knowledge and intellectual range than he is to the working man of fifty years ago. The politician or business magnate of to-day is no better educated and very little better informed than his equals were fifty years ago. The chief difference is golf. The working man questions a thousand things his father accepted as in the very nature of the world, and among others he begins to ask with the utmost alertness and persistence why it is that he in particular is expected to toil. The answer, the only justifiable answer, should be that that is the work for which he is fitted by his inferior capacity and culture, that these others are a special and select sort, very specially trained and prepared for their responsibilities, and that at once brings this new fact of a working-class criticism of social values into play. The old workman might and did quarrel very vigorously with his specific employer, but he never set out to arraign all employers; he took the law and the Church and Statecraft and politics for the higher and noble things they claimed to be. He wanted an extra shilling or he wanted an hour of leisure, and that was as much as he wanted. The young workman, on the other hand, has put the whole social system upon its trial, and seems quite disposed to give an adverse verdict. He looks far beyond the older conflict of interests between employer and employed. He criticises the good intentions of the whole system of governing and influential people, and not only their good intentions, but their ability. These are the new conditions, and the middle-aged and elderly gentlemen who are dealing with the crisis on the supposition that their vast experience of Labour questions in the ‘seventies and ‘eighties furnishes valuable guidance in this present issue are merely bringing the gunpowder of misapprehension

to the revolutionary fort.

The workman of the new generation is full of distrust the most demoralising of social influences. He is like a sailor who believes no longer either in the good faith or seamanship of his captain, and, between desperation and contempt, contemplates vaguely but persistently the assumption of control by a collective forecastle. He is like a private soldier obsessed with the idea that nothing can save the situation but the death of an incompetent officer. His distrust is so profound that he ceases not only to believe in the employer, but he ceases to believe in the law, ceases to believe in Parliament, as a means to that tolerable life he desires; and he falls back steadily upon his last resource of a strike, and — if by repressive tactics we make it so — a criminal strike. The central fact of all this present trouble is that distrust. There is only one way in which our present drift towards revolution or revolutionary disorder can be arrested, and that is by restoring the confidence of these alienated millions, who visibly now are changing from loyalty to the Crown, from a simple patriotism, from habitual industry, to the more and more effective expression of a deepening resentment.

This is a psychological question, a matter of mental states. Feats of legal subtlety are inopportune, arithmetical exploits still more so. To emerge with the sum of 4s. 6-1/2d. as a minimum, by calculating on the basis of the mine's present earnings, from a conference which the miners and everybody else imagined was to give a minimum of 5s., may be clever, but it is certainly not politic in the present stage of Labour feeling. To stamp violently upon obscure newspapers nobody had heard of before and send a printer to prison, and to give thereby a flaming advertisement to the possible use of soldiers in civil conflicts and set every barrack-room talking, may be permissible, but it is certainly very ill-advised. The distrust deepens.

The real task before a governing class that means to go on governing is not just at present to get the better of an argument or the best of a bargain, but to lay hold of the imaginations of this drifting, sullen and suspicious multitude, which is the working body of the country. What we prosperous people, who have nearly all the good things of life and most of the opportunity, have to do now is to justify ourselves. We have to show that we are indeed responsible

and serviceable, willing to give ourselves, and to give ourselves generously for what we have and what we have had. We have to meet the challenge of this distrust.

The slack days for rulers and owners are over. If there are still to be rulers and owners and managing and governing people, then in the face of the new masses, sensitive, intelligent, critical, irritable, as no common people have ever been before, these rulers and owners must be prepared to make themselves and display themselves wise, capable and heroic — beyond any aristocratic precedent. The alternative, if it is an alternative, is resignation — to the Social Democracy.

And it is just because we are all beginning to realise the immense need for this heroic quality in those who rule and are rich and powerful, as the response and corrective to these distrusts and jealousies that are threatening to disintegrate our social order, that we have all followed the details of this great catastrophe in the Atlantic with such intense solicitude. It was one of those accidents that happen with a precision of time and circumstance that outdoes art; not an incident in it all that was not supremely typical. It was the penetrating comment of chance upon our entire social situation. Beneath a surface of magnificent efficiency was — slap-dash. The third-class passengers had placed themselves on board with an infinite confidence in the care that was to be taken of them, and they went down, and most of their women and children went down with the cry of those who find themselves cheated out of life.

In the unfolding record of behaviour it is the stewardesses and bandsmen and engineers — persons of the trade-union class — who shine as brightly as any. And by the supreme artistry of Chance it fell to the lot of that tragic and unhappy gentleman, Mr. Bruce Ismay, to be aboard and to be caught by the urgent vacancy in the boat and the snare of the moment. No untried man dare say that he would have behaved better in his place. He escaped. He thought it natural to escape. His class thinks it was right and proper that he did escape. It is not the man I would criticise, but the manifest absence of any such sense of the supreme dignity of his position as would have sustained him in that crisis. He was a rich man and a ruling man, but in the test he was not a proud man. In the common man's realisation that such

is indeed the case with most of those who dominate our world, lies the true cause and danger of our social indiscipline. And the remedy in the first place lies not in social legislation and so forth, but in the consciences of the wealthy. Heroism and a generous devotion to the common good are the only effective answer to distrust. If such dominating people cannot produce these qualities there will have to be an end to them, and the world must turn to some entirely different method of direction.

Sec. 2

The essential trouble in our growing Labour disorder is the profound distrust which has grown up in the minds of the new generation of workers of either the ability or the good faith of the property owning, ruling and directing class. I do not attempt to judge the justice or not of this distrust; I merely point to its existence as one of the striking and essential factors in the contemporary Labour situation.

This distrust is not, perhaps, the proximate cause of the strikes that now follow each other so disconcertingly, but it embitters their spirit, it prevents their settlement, and leads to their renewal. I have tried to suggest that, whatever immediate devices for pacification might be employed, the only way to a better understanding and co-operation, the only escape from a social slide towards the unknown possibilities of Social Democracy, lies in an exaltation of the standard of achievement and of the sense of responsibility in the possessing and governing classes. It is not so much "Wake up, England!" that I would say as "Wake up, gentlemen!" — for the new generation of the workers is beyond all question quite alarmingly awake and critical and angry. And they have not merely to wake up, they have to wake up visibly and ostentatiously if those old class reliances on which our system is based are to be preserved and restored.

We need before anything else a restoration of class confidence. It is a time when class should speak with class very frankly.

There is too much facile misrepresentation, too ready a disposition on either side to accept caricatures as portraits and charges as facts. However tacit our understandings were in the past, with this new kind of Labour, this young, restive Labour of the

twentieth century, which can read, discuss and combine, we need something in the nature of a social contract. And it is when one comes to consider by what possible means these suspicious third-class passengers in our leaking and imperilled social liner can be brought into generous co-operation with the second and the first that one discovers just how lamentably out of date and out of order our political institutions, which should supply the means for just this inter-class discussion, have become. Between the busy and preoccupied owning and employing class on the one hand, and the distressed, uneasy masses on the other, intervenes the professional politician, not as a mediator, but as an obstacle, who must be propitiated before any dealings are possible. Our national politics no longer express the realities of the national life; they are a mere impediment in the speech of the community. With our whole social order in danger, our Legislature is busy over the trivial little affairs of the Welsh Established Church, whose endowment probably is not equal to the fortune of any one of half a dozen *Titanic* passengers or a tithe of the probable loss of another strike among the miners. We have a Legislature almost antiquarian, compiling a museum of Gladstonian legacies rather than governing our world to-day.

Law is the basis of civilisation, but the lawyer is the law's consequence, and, with us at least, the legal profession is the political profession. It delights in false issues and merely technical politics. Steadily with the ascendancy of the House of Commons the barristers have ousted other types of men from political power. The decline of the House of Lords has been the last triumph of the House of Lawyers, and we are governed now to a large extent not so much by the people for the people as by the barristers for the barristers. They set the tone of political life. And since they are the most specialised, the most specifically trained of all the professions, since their training is absolutely antagonistic to the creative impulses of the constructive artist and the controlled experiments of the scientific man, since the business is with evidence and advantages and the skilful use of evidence and advantages, and not with understanding, they are the least statesmanlike of all educated men, and they give our public life a tone as hopelessly discordant with our very great and urgent social needs as one could well imagine. They do not want

to deal at all with great and urgent social needs. They play a game, a long and interesting game, with parties as sides, a game that rewards the industrious player with prominence, place, power and great rewards, and the less that game involves the passionate interests of other men, the less it draws them into participation and angry interference, the better for the steady development of the politician's career. A distinguished and active fruitlessness, leaving the world at last as he found it, is the political barrister's ideal career. To achieve that, he must maintain legal and political monopolies, and prevent the invasion of political life by living interests. And so far as he has any views about Labour beyond the margin of his brief, the barrister politician seems to regard getting men back to work on any terms and as soon as possible as the highest good.

And it is with such men that our insurgent modern Labour, with its vaguely apprehended wants, its large occasions and its rapid emotional reactions, comes into contact directly it attempts to adjust itself in the social body. It is one of the main factors in the progressive embitterment of the Labour situation that whatever business is afoot — arbitration, conciliation, inquiry — our contemporary system presents itself to Labour almost invariably in a legal guise. The natural infirmities of humanity rebel against an unimaginative legality of attitude, and the common workaday man has no more love for this great and necessary profession to-day than he had in the time of Jack Cade. Little reasonable things from the lawyers' point of view — the rejection, for example, of certain evidence in the *Titanic* inquiry because it might amount to a charge of manslaughter, the constant interruption and checking of a Labour representative at the same tribunal upon trivial points — irritate quite disproportionately.

Lawyer and working man are antipathetic types, and it is a very grave national misfortune that at this time, when our situation calls aloud for statecraft and a certain greatness of treatment, our public life should be dominated as it has never been dominated before by this most able and illiberal profession.

Now for that great multitude of prosperous people who find themselves at once deeply concerned in our present social and economic crisis, and either helplessly entangled in party organisation

or helplessly outside politics, the elimination and cure of this disease of statecraft, the professional politician, has become a very urgent matter. To destroy him, to get him back to his law courts and keep him there, it is necessary to destroy the machinery of the party system that sustains him, and to adopt some electoral method that will no longer put the independent representative man at a hopeless disadvantage against the party nominee. Such a method is to be found in proportional representation with large constituencies, and to that we must look for our ultimate liberation from our present masters, these politician barristers. But the Labour situation cannot wait for this millennial release, and for the current issue it seems to me patent that every reasonable prosperous man will, even at the cost to himself of some trouble and hard thinking, do his best to keep as much of this great and acute controversy as he possibly can out of the lawyer's and mere politician's hands and in his own. Leave Labour to the lawyers, and we shall go very deeply into trouble indeed before this business is over. They will score their points, they will achieve remarkable agreements full of the possibility of subsequent surprises, they will make reputations, and do everything Heaven and their professional training have made them to do, and they will exasperate and exasperate!

Lawyers made the first French Revolution, and now, on a different side, they may yet bring about an English one. These men below there are still, as a class, wonderfully patient and reasonable, quite prepared to take orders and recognise superior knowledge, wisdom and nobility. They make the most reasonable claims for a tolerable life, for certain assurances and certain latitudes. Implicit rather than expressed is their demand for wisdom and right direction from those to whom the great surplus and freedom of civilisation are given. It is an entirely reasonable demand if man is indeed a social animal. But we have got to treat them fairly and openly. This patience and reasonableness and willingness for leadership is not limitless. It is no good scoring our mean little points, for example, and accusing them of breach of contract and all sorts of theoretical wrongs because they won't abide by agreements to accept a certain scale of wages when the purchasing power of money has declined. When they made that agreement they did not think of that possibility. When they said a

pound they thought of what was then a poundsworth of living. The Mint has since been increasing its annual output of gold coins to two or three times the former amount, and we have, as it were, debased the coinage with extraordinary quantities of gold. But we who know and own did nothing to adjust that; we did not tell the working man of that; we have let him find it out slowly and indirectly at the grocer's shop. That may be permissible from the lawyer's point of view, but it certainly isn't from the gentleman's, and it is only by the plea that its inequalities give society a gentleman that our present social system can claim to endure.

I would like to accentuate that, because if we are to emerge again from these acute social dissensions a reunited and powerful people, there has to be a change of tone, a new generosity on the part of those who deal with Labour speeches, Labour literature, Labour representatives, and Labour claims. Labour is necessarily at an enormous disadvantage in discussion; in spite of a tremendous inferiority in training and education it is trying to tell the community its conception of its needs and purposes. It is not only young as a participator in the discussion of affairs; it is actually young. The average working man is not half the age of the ripe politicians and judges and lawyers and wealthy organisers who trip him up legally, accuse him of bad faith, mark his every inconsistency. It isn't becoming so to use our forensic advantages. It isn't — if that has no appeal to you — wise.

The thing our society has most to fear from Labour is not organised resistance, not victorious strikes and raised conditions, but the black resentment that follows defeat. Meet Labour half-way, and you will find a new co-operation in government; stick to your legal rights, draw the net of repressive legislation tighter, then you will presently have to deal with Labour enraged. If the anger burns free, that means revolution; if you crush out the hope of that, then sabotage and a sullen general sympathy for anarchistic crime.

Sec. 3

In the preceding pages I have discussed certain aspects of the present Labour situation. I have tried to show the profound significance in this discussion of the distrust which has grown up in the minds of the workers, and how this distrust is being exacerbated

by our entirely too forensic method of treating their claims. I want now to point out a still more powerful set of influences which is steadily turning our Labour struggles from mere attempts to adjust hours and wages into movements that are gravely and deliberately revolutionary.

This is the obvious devotion of a large and growing proportion of the time and energy of the owning and ruling classes to pleasure and excitement, and the way in which this spectacle of amusement and adventure is now being brought before the eyes and into the imagination of the working man.

The intimate psychology of work is a thing altogether too little considered and discussed. One asks: "What keeps a workman working properly at his work?" and it seems a sufficient answer to say that it is the need of getting a living. But that is not the complete answer. Work must to some extent interest; if it bores, no power on earth will keep a man doing it properly. And the tendency of modern industrialism has been to subdivide processes and make work more boring and irksome. Also the workman must be satisfied with the living he is getting, and the tendency of newspaper, theatre, cinematograph show and so forth is to fill his mind with ideas of ways of living infinitely more agreeable and interesting than his own. Habit also counts very largely in the regular return of the man to his job, and the fluctuations of employment, the failure of the employing class to provide any alternative to idleness during slack time, break that habit of industry. And then, last but not least, there is self-respect. Men and women are capable of wonders of self-discipline and effort if they feel that theirs is a meritorious service, if they imagine the thing they are doing is the thing they ought to do. A miner will cut coal in a different spirit and with a fading zest if he knows his day's output is to be burnt to waste secretly by a lunatic. Man is a social animal; few men are naturally social rebels, and most will toil very cheerfully in subordination if they feel that the collective end is a fine thing and a great thing.

Now, this force of self-respect is much more acutely present in the mind of the modern worker than it was in the thought of his fathers. He is intellectually more active than his predecessors, his imagination is relatively stimulated, he asks wide questions. The

worker of a former generation took himself for granted; it is a new phase when the toilers begin to ask, not one man here or there, but in masses, in battalions, in trades: "Why, then, are *we* toilers, and for what is it that we toil?"

What answer do we give them?

I ask the reader to put himself in the place of a good workman, a young, capable miner, let us say, in search of an answer to that question. He is, we will suppose, temporarily unemployed through the production of a glut of coal, and he goes about the world trying to see the fine and noble collective achievements that justify the devotion of his whole life to humble toil. I ask the reader: What have we got to show that man? What are we doing up in the light and air that justifies our demand that he should go on hewing in narrow seams and cramped corners until he can hew no more? Where is he to be taken to see these crowning fruits of our release from toil? Shall we take him to the House of Commons to note which of the barristers is making most headway over Welsh Disestablishment, or shall we take him to the *Titanic* inquiry to hear the latest about those fifty-five third-class children (out of eighty-three) who were drowned? Shall we give him an hour or so among the portraits at the Royal Academy, or shall we make an enthusiastic tour of London sculpture and architecture and saturate his soul with the beauty he makes possible? The new Automobile Club, for example. "Without you and your subordination we could not have had that." Or suppose we took him the round of the West-End clubs and restaurants and made him estimate how many dinners London can produce at a pinch at the price of his local daily minimum, say, and upward; or borrow an aeroplane at Hendon and soar about counting all the golfers in the Home Counties on any week-day afternoon. "You suffer at the roots of things, far below there, but see all this nobility and splendour, these sweet, bright flowers to which your rootlet life contributes." Or we might spend a pleasant morning trying to get a passable woman's hat for the price of his average weekly wages in some West-End shop….

But indeed this thing is actually happening. The older type of miner was illiterate, incurious; he read nothing, lived his own life, and if he had any intellectual and spiritual urgencies in him beyond

eating and drinking and dog-fighting, the local little Bethel shunted them away from any effective social criticism. The new generation of miners is on an altogether different basis. It is at once less brutal and less spiritual; it is alert, informed, sceptical, and the Press, with photographic illustrations, the cinema, and a score of collateral forces, are giving it precisely that spectacular view of luxury, amusement, aimlessness and excitement, taunting it with just that suggestion that it is for that, and that alone, that the worker's back aches and his muscles strain. Whatever gravity and spaciousness of aim there may be in our prosperous social life does not appear to him. He sees, and he sees all the more brightly because he is looking at it out of toil and darkness, the glitter, the delight for delight's sake, the show and the pride and the folly. Cannot you understand how it is that these young men down there in the hot and dangerous and toilsome and inglorious places of life are beginning to cry out, "We are being made fools of," and to fling down their tools, and cannot you see how futile it is to dream that Mr. Asquith or some other politician by some trick of a Conciliation Act or some claptrap of Compulsory Arbitration, or that any belated suppression of discussion and strike organisations by the law, will avert this gathering storm? The Spectacle of Pleasure, the parade of clothes, estates, motor-cars, luxury and vanity in the sight of the workers is the culminating irritant of Labour. So long as that goes on, this sombre resolve to which we are all awakening, this sombre resolve rather to wreck the whole fabric than to continue patiently at work, will gather strength. It does not matter that such a resolve is hopeless and unseasonable; we are dealing here with the profounder impulses that underlie reason. Crush this resentment; it will recur with accumulated strength.

It does not matter that there is no plan in existence for any kind of social order that could be set up in the place of our present system; no plan, that is, that will endure half an hour's practical criticism. The cardinal fact before us is that the workers do not intend to stand things as they are, and that no clever arguments, no expert handling of legal points, no ingenious appearances of concession, will stay that progressive embitterment.

But I think I have said enough to express and perhaps convey my

conviction that our present Labour troubles are unprecedented, and that they mean the end of an epoch. The supply of good-tempered, cheap labour — upon which the fabric of our contemporary ease and comfort is erected — is giving out. The spread of information and the means of presentation in every class and the increase of luxury and self-indulgence in the prosperous classes are the chief cause of that. In the place of that old convenient labour comes a new sort of labour, reluctant, resentful, critical, and suspicious. The replacement has already gone so far that I am certain that attempts to baffle and coerce the workers back to their old conditions must inevitably lead to a series of increasingly destructive outbreaks, to stresses and disorder culminating in revolution. It is useless to dream of going on now for much longer upon the old lines; our civilisation, if it is not to enter upon a phase of conflict and decay, must begin to adapt itself to the new conditions of which the first and foremost is that the wages-earning labouring class as a distinctive class, consenting to a distinctive treatment and accepting life at a disadvantage is going to disappear. Whether we do it soon as the result of our reflections upon the present situation, or whether we do it presently through the impoverishment that must necessarily result from a lengthening period of industrial unrest, there can be little doubt that we are going to curtail very considerably the current extravagance of the spending and directing classes upon food, clothing, display, and all the luxuries of life. The phase of affluence is over. And unless we are to be the mere passive spectators of an unprecedented reduction of our lives, all of us who have leisure and opportunity have to set ourselves very strenuously to the problem not of reconciling ourselves to the wage-earners, for that possibility is over, but of establishing a new method of co-operation with those who seem to be definitely decided not to remain wage-earners for very much longer. We have, as sensible people, to realise that the old arrangement which has given us of the fortunate minority so much leisure, luxury, and abundance, advantages we have as a class put to so vulgar and unprofitable a use, is breaking down, and that we have to discover a new, more equable way of getting the world's work done.

Certain things stand out pretty obviously. It is clear that in the times ahead of us there must be more economy in giving trouble and

causing work, a greater willingness to do work for ourselves, a great economy of labour through machinery and skilful management. So much is unavoidable if we are to meet these enlarged requirements upon which the insurgent worker insists. If we, who have at least some experience of affairs, who own property, manage businesses, and discuss and influence public organisation, if we are not prepared to undertake this work of discipline and adaptation for ourselves, then a time is not far distant when insurrectionary leaders, calling themselves Socialists or Syndicalists, or what not, men with none of our experience, little of our knowledge, and far less hope of success, will take that task out of our hands.

[Footnote 1: Larkinism comes to endorse me since this was written.]

We have, in fact, to "pull ourselves together," as the phrase goes, and make an end to all this slack, extravagant living, this spectacle of pleasure, that has been spreading and intensifying in every civilised community for the last three or four decades. What is happening to Labour is indeed, from one point of view, little else than the correlative of what has been happening to the more prosperous classes in the community. They have lost their self-discipline, their gravity, their sense of high aims, they have become the victims of their advantages and Labour, grown observant and intelligent, has discovered itself and declares itself no longer subordinate. Just what powers of recovery and reconstruction our system may have under these circumstances the decades immediately before us will show.

Sec. 4

Let us try to anticipate some of the social developments that are likely to spring out of the present Labour situation.

It is quite conceivable, of course, that what lies before us is not development but disorder. Given sufficient suspicion on one side and sufficient obstinacy and trickery on the other, it may be impossible to restore social peace in any form, and industrialism may degenerate into a wasteful and incurable conflict. But that distressful possibility is the worst and perhaps the least probable of many. It is much more acceptable to suppose that our social order will be able to adjust itself to the new outlook and temper and quality of the labour stratum that elementary education, a Press very cheap and free, and a period of

great general affluence have brought about.

One almost inevitable feature of any such adaptation will be a changed spirit in the general body of society. We have come to a serious condition of our affairs, and we shall not get them into order again without a thorough bracing-up of ourselves in the process. There can be no doubt that for a large portion of our comfortable classes existence has been altogether too easy for the last lifetime or so. The great bulk of the world's work has been done out of their sight and knowledge; it has seemed unnecessary to trouble much about the general conduct of things, unnecessary, as they say, to "take life too seriously." This has not made them so much vicious as slack, lazy, and over-confident; there has been an elaboration of trivial things and a neglect of troublesome and important things. The one grave shock of the Boer War has long been explained and sentimentalised away. But it will not be so easy to explain away a dislocated train service and an empty coal cellar as it was to get a favourable interpretation upon some demonstration of national incompetence half the world away.

It is indeed no disaster, but a matter for sincere congratulation that the British prosperous and the British successful, to whom warning after warning has rained in vain from the days of Ruskin, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, should be called to account at last in their own household. They will grumble, they will be very angry, but in the end, I believe, they will rise to the opportunities of their inconvenience. They will shake off their intellectual lassitude, take over again the public and private affairs they have come to leave so largely in the hands of the political barrister and the family solicitor, become keen and critical and constructive, bring themselves up to date again.

That is not, of course, inevitable, but I am taking now the more hopeful view.

And then? What sort of working arrangements are our renascent owning and directing classes likely to make with the new labouring class? How is the work going to be done in the harder, cleaner, more equalised, and better managed State that, in one's hopeful mood, one sees ahead of us?

Now after the experiences of the past twelve months it is obvious

that the days when most of the directed and inferior work of the community will be done by intermittently employed and impecunious wage-earners is drawing to an end. A large part of the task of reconstruction ahead of us will consist in the working out of schemes for a more permanent type of employment and for a direct participation of the worker in the pride, profits, and direction of the work. Such schemes admit of wide variations between a mere bonus system, a periodic tipping of the employees to prevent their striking and a real and honest co-partnery.

In the latter case a great enterprise, forced to consider its "hands" as being also in their degree "heads," would include a department of technical and business instruction for its own people. From such ideas one passes very readily to the conception of guild-managed businesses in which the factor of capital would no longer stand out as an element distinct from and contrasted with the proprietorship of the workers. One sees the worker as an active and intelligent helper during the great portion of his participation, and as an annuitant and perhaps, if he has devised economies and improvements, a receiver of royalties during his declining years.

And concurrently with the systematic reconstruction of a large portion of our industries upon these lines there will have to be a vigorous development of the attempts that are already being made, in garden cities, garden suburbs, and the like, to re-house the mass of our population in a more civilised and more agreeable manner. Probably that is not going to pay from the point of view of the money-making business man, but we prosperous people have to understand that there are things more important and more profitable than money-making, and we have to tax ourselves not merely in money, but in time, care, and effort in the matter. Half the money that goes out of England to Switzerland and the Riviera ought to go to the extremely amusing business of clearing up ugly corners and building jolly and convenient workmen's cottages — even if we do it at a loss. It is part of our discharge for the leisure and advantages the system has given us, part of that just give and take, over and above the solicitor's and bargain-hunter's and money-lender's conception of justice, upon which social order ultimately rests. We have to do it not in a mood of patronage, but in a mood of attentive solicitude. If

not on high grounds, then on low grounds our class has to set to work and make those other classes more interested and comfortable and contented. It is what we are for. It is quite impossible for workmen and poor people generally to plan estates and arrange their own homes; they are entirely at the mercy of the wealthy in this matter. There is not a slum, not a hovel, not an eyesore upon the English landscape for which some well-off owner is not ultimately to be blamed or excused, and the less we leave of such things about the better for us in that day of reckoning between class and class which now draws so near.

It is as plain now as the way from Calais to Paris that if the owning class does not attend to these amenities the mass of the people, doing its best to manage the thing through the politicians, presently will. They may make a frightful mess of it, but that will never bring back things again into the hands that hold them and neglect them. Their time will have passed for ever.

But these are the mere opening requirements of this hope of mine of a quickened social consciousness among the more fortunate and leisurely section of the community I believe that much profounder changes in the conditions of labour are possible than those I have suggested I am beginning to suspect that scarcely any of our preconceptions about the way work must be done, about the hours of work and the habits of work, will stand an exhaustive scientific analysis. It is at least conceivable that we could get much of the work that has to be done to keep our community going in far more toil-saving and life-saving ways than we follow at the present time. So far scientific men have done scarcely anything to estimate under what conditions a man works best, does most work, works more happily. Suppose it turns out to be the case that a man always following one occupation throughout his lifetime, working regularly day after day for so many hours, as most wage-earners do at the present time, does not do nearly so much or nearly so well as he would do if he followed first one occupation and then another, or if he worked as hard as he possibly could for a definite period and then took holiday? I suspect very strongly, indeed I am convinced, that in certain occupations, teaching, for example, or surgery, a man begins by working clumsily and awkwardly, that his interest and skill rise

rapidly, that if he is really well suited in his profession he may presently become intensely interested and capable of enormous quantities of his very best work, and that then his interest and vigour rapidly decline I am disposed to believe that this is true of most occupations, of coal-mining or engineering, or brick-laying or cotton-spinning. The thing has never been properly thought about. Our civilisation has grown up in a haphazard kind of way, and it has been convenient to specialise workers and employ them piecemeal. But if it is true that in respect of any occupation a man has his period of maximum efficiency, then we open up a whole world of new social possibilities. What we really want from a man for our social welfare in that case is not regular continuing work, but a few strenuous years of high-pressure service. We can as a community afford to keep him longer at education and training before he begins, and we can release him with a pension while he is still full of life and the capacity for enjoying freedom. But obviously this is impossible upon any basis of weekly wages and intermittent employment; we must be handling affairs in some much more comprehensive way than that before we can take and deal with the working life of a man as one complete whole.

That is one possibility that is frequently in my thoughts about the present labour crisis. There is another, and that is the great desirability of every class in the community having a practical knowledge of what labour means. There is a vast amount of work which either is now or is likely to be in the future within the domain of the public administration — road-making, mining, railway work, post-office and telephone work, medical work, nursing, a considerable amount of building for example. Why should we employ people to do the bulk of these things at all? Why should we not as a community do them ourselves? Why, in other words, should we not have a labour conscription and take a year or so of service from everyone in the community, high or low? I believe this would be of enormous moral benefit to our strained and relaxed community. I believe that in making labour a part of everyone's life and the whole of nobody's life lies the ultimate solution of these industrial difficulties.

Sec. 5

It is almost a national boast that we “muddle through” our troubles, and I suppose it is true and to our credit that by virtue of a certain kindliness of temper, a humorous willingness to make the best of things, and an entirely amiable forgetfulness, we do come out of pressures and extremities that would smash a harder, more brittle people only a little chipped and damaged. And it is quite conceivable that our country will, in a measure, survive the enormous stresses of labour adjustment that are now upon us, even if it never rises to any heroic struggle against these difficulties. But it may survive as a lesser country, as an impoverished and second-rate country. It will certainly do no more than that, if in any part of the world there is to be found a people capable of taking up this gigantic question in a greater spirit. Perhaps there is no such people, and the conflicts and muddles before us will be world-wide. Or suppose that it falls to our country in some strange way to develop a new courage and enterprise, and to be the first to go forward into this new phase of civilisation I foresee, from which a distinctive labouring class, a class that is of expropriated wage-earners, will have almost completely disappeared.

Now hitherto the utmost that any State, overtaken by social and economic stresses, has ever achieved in the way of adapting itself to them has been no more than patching.

Individuals and groups and trades have found themselves in imperfectly apprehended and difficult times, and have reluctantly altered their ways and ideas piecemeal under pressure. Sometimes they have succeeded in rubbing along upon the new lines, and sometimes the struggle has submerged them, but no community has ever yet had the will and the imagination to recast and radically alter its social methods as a whole. The idea of such a reconstruction has never been absent from human thought since the days of Plato, and it has been enormously reinforced by the spreading material successes of modern science, successes due always to the substitution of analysis and reasoned planning for trial and the rule of thumb. But it has never yet been so believed in and understood as to render any real endeavour to reconstruct possible. The experiment has always been altogether too gigantic for the available faith behind it, and there have been against it the fear of presumption, the interests of all

advantaged people, and the natural sloth of humanity. We do but emerge now from a period of deliberate happy-go-lucky and the influence of Herbert Spencer, who came near raising public shiftlessness to the dignity of a national philosophy. Everything would adjust itself — if only it was left alone.

Yet some things there are that cannot be done by small adjustments, such as leaping chasms or killing an ox or escaping from the roof of a burning house. You have to decide upon a certain course on such occasions and maintain a continuous movement. If you wait on the burning house until you scorch and then turn round a bit or move away a yard or so, or if on the verge of a chasm you move a little in the way in which you wish to go, disaster will punish your moderation. And it seems to me that the establishment of the world's work upon a new basis — and that and no less is what this Labour Unrest demands for its pacification — is just one of those large alterations which will never be made by the collectively unconscious activities of men, by competitions and survival and the higgling of the market. Humanity is rebelling against the continuing existence of a labour class as such, and I can see no way by which our present method of weekly wages employment can change by imperceptible increments into a method of salary and pension — for it is quite evident that only by reaching that shall we reach the end of these present discontents. The change has to be made on a comprehensive scale or not at all. We need nothing less than a national plan of social development if the thing is to be achieved.

Now that, I admit, is, as the Americans say, a large proposition. But we are living in a time of more and more comprehensive plans, and the mere fact that no scheme so extensive has ever been tried before is no reason at all why we should not consider one. We think nowadays quite serenely of schemes for the treatment of the nation's health as one whole, where our fathers considered illness as a blend of accident with special providences; we have systematised the community's water supply, education, and all sorts of once chaotic services, and Germany and our own infinite higgledy-piggledy discomfort and ugliness have brought home to us at last even the possibility of planning the extension of our towns and cities. It is only another step upward in scale to plan out new, more tolerable

conditions of employment for every sort of worker and to organise the transition from our present disorder.

The essential difficulty between the employer and the statesman in the consideration of this problem is the difference in the scope of their view. The employer's concern with the man who does his work is day-long or week-long; the statesman's is life-long. The conditions of private enterprise and modern competition oblige the employer to think only of the worker as a hand, who appears and does his work and draws his wages and vanishes again. Only such strikes as we have had during the past year will rouse him from that attitude of mind. The statesman at the other extremity has to consider the worker as a being with a beginning, a middle, an end — and offspring. He can consider all these possibilities of deferring employment and making the toil of one period of life provide for the leisure and freedom of another, which are necessarily entirely out of the purview of an employer pure and simple. And I find it hard to see how we can reconcile the intermittency of competitive employment with the unremitting demands of a civilised life except by the intervention of the State or of some public organisation capable of taking very wide views between the business organiser on the one hand and the subordinate worker on the other. On the one hand we need some broader handling of business than is possible in the private adventure of the solitary proprietor or the single company, and on the other some more completely organised development of the collective bargain. We have to bring the directive intelligence of a concern into an organic relation with the conception of the national output as a whole, and either through a trade union or a guild, or some expansion of a trade union, we have to arrange a secure, continuous income for the worker, to be received not directly as wages from an employer but intermediately through the organisation. We need a census of our national production, a more exhaustive estimate of our resources, and an entirely more scientific knowledge of the conditions of maximum labour efficiency. One turns to the State…. And it is at this point that the heart of the patriotic Englishman sinks, because it is our national misfortune that all the accidents of public life have conspired to retard the development of just that body of knowledge, just that scientific breadth of

imagination which is becoming a vital necessity for the welfare of a modern civilised community.

We are caught short of scientific men just as in the event of a war with Germany we shall almost certainly be caught short of scientific sailors and soldiers. You cannot make that sort of thing to order in a crisis. Scientific education — and more particularly the scientific education of our owning and responsible classes — has been crippled by the bitter jealousy of the classical teachers who dominate our universities, by the fear and hatred of the Established Church, which still so largely controls our upper-class schools, and by the entire lack of understanding and support on the part of those able barristers and financiers who rule our political life. Science has been left more and more to men of modest origin and narrow outlook, and now we are beginning to pay in internal dissensions, and presently we may have to pay in national humiliation for this almost organised rejection of stimulus and power.

But however thwarted and crippled our public imagination may be, we have still got to do the best we can with this situation; we have to take as comprehensive views as we can, and to attempt as comprehensive a method of handling as our party-ridden State permits. In theory I am a Socialist, and were I theorising about some nation in the air I would say that all the great productive activities and all the means of communication should be national concerns and be run as national services. But our State is peculiarly incapable of such functions; at the present time it cannot even produce a postage stamp that will stick; and the type of official it would probably evolve for industrial organisation, slowly but unsurely, would be a maddening combination of the district visitor and the boy clerk. It is to the independent people of some leisure and resource in the community that one has at last to appeal for such large efforts and understandings as our present situation demands. In the default of our public services, there opens an immense opportunity for voluntary effort. Deference to our official leaders is absurd; it is a time when men must, as the phrase goes, “come forward.”

We want a National Plan for our social and economic development which everyone may understand and which will serve as a unifying basis for all our social and political activities. Such a

plan is not to be flung out hastily by an irresponsible writer. It can only come into existence as the outcome of a wide movement of inquiry and discussion. My business in these pages has been not prescription but diagnosis. I hold it to be the clear duty of every intelligent person in the country to do his utmost to learn about these questions of economic and social organisation and to work them out to conclusions and a purpose. We have come to a phase in our affairs when the only alternative to a great, deliberate renascence of will and understanding is national disorder and decay.

Sec. 6

I have attempted a diagnosis of this aspect of our national situation. I have pointed out that nearly all the social forces of our time seem to be in conspiracy to bring about the disappearance of a labour class as such and the rearrangement of our work and industry upon a new basis. That rearrangement demands an unprecedented national effort and the production of an adequate National Plan. Failing that, we seem doomed to a period of chronic social conflict and possibly even of frankly revolutionary outbreaks that may destroy us altogether or leave us only a dwarfed and enfeebled nation….

And before we can develop that National Plan and the effective realisation of such a plan that is needed to save us from that fate, two things stand immediately before us to be done, unavoidable preliminaries to that more comprehensive work. The first of these is the restoration of representative government, and the second a renascence of our public thought about political and social things.

As I have already suggested, a main factor in our present national inability to deal with this profound and increasing social disturbance is the entirely unrepresentative and unbusinesslike nature of our parliamentary government.

It is to a quite extraordinary extent a thing apart from our national life. It becomes more and more so. To go into the House of Commons is to go aside out of the general stream of the community's vitality into a corner where little is learnt and much is concocted, into a specialised Assembly which is at once inattentive to and monstrously influential in our affairs. There was a period when the debates in the House of Commons were an integral, almost

a dominant, part of our national thought, when its speeches were read over in tens of thousands of homes, and a large and sympathetic public followed the details of every contested issue. Now a newspaper that dared to fill its columns mainly with parliamentary debates, with a full report of the trivialities the academic points, the little familiar jokes, and entirely insincere pleadings which occupy that gathering would court bankruptcy.

This diminishing actuality of our political life is a matter of almost universal comment to-day. But it is extraordinary how much of that comment is made in a tone of hopeless dissatisfaction, how rarely it is associated with any will to change a state of affairs that so largely stultifies our national purpose. And yet the causes of our present political ineptitude are fairly manifest, and a radical and effective reconstruction is well within the wit of man.

All causes and all effects in our complex modern State are complex, but in this particular matter there can be little doubt that the key to the difficulty lies in the crudity and simplicity of our method of election, a method which reduces our apparent free choice of rulers to a ridiculous selection between undesirable alternatives, and hands our whole public life over to the specialised manipulator. Our House of Commons could scarcely misrepresent us more if it was appointed haphazard by the Lord Chamberlain or selected by lot from among the inhabitants of Netting Hill. Election of representatives in one-member local constituencies by a single vote gives a citizen practically no choice beyond the candidates appointed by the two great party organisations in the State. It is an electoral system that forbids absolutely any vote splitting or any indication of shades of opinion. The presence of more than two candidates introduces an altogether unmanageable complication, and the voter is at once reduced to voting not to secure the return of the perhaps less hopeful candidate he likes, but to ensure the rejection of the candidate he most dislikes. So the nimble wire-puller slips in. In Great Britain we do not have Elections any more; we have Rejections. What really happens at a general election is that the party organisations — obscure and secretive conclaves with entirely mysterious funds — appoint about 1,200 men to be our rulers, and all that we, we so-called self-governing people, are permitted to do is, in

a muddled, angry way, to strike off the names of about half of these selected gentlemen.

Take almost any member of the present Government and consider his case. You may credit him with a lifelong industrious intention to get there, but ask yourself what is this man's distinction, and for what great thing in our national life does he stand? By the complaisance of our party machinery he was able to present himself to a perplexed constituency as the only possible alternative to Conservatism and Tariff Reform, and so we have him. And so we have most of his colleagues.

Now such a system of representation is surely a system to be destroyed at any cost, because it stifles our national discussion and thwarts our national will. And we can leave no possible method of alteration untried. It is not rational that a great people should be baffled by the mere mechanical degeneration of an electoral method too crudely conceived. There exist alternatives, and to these alternatives we must resort. Since John Stuart Mill first called attention to the importance of the matter there has been a systematic study of the possible working of electoral methods, and it is now fairly proved that in proportional representation, with large constituencies returning each many members, there is to be found a way of escape from this disastrous embarrassment of our public business by the party wire-puller and the party nominee.

I will not dwell upon the particulars of the proportional representation system here. There exists an active society which has organised the education of the public in the details of the proposal. Suffice it that it does give a method by which a voter may vote with confidence for the particular man he prefers, with no fear whatever that his vote will be wasted in the event of that man's chance being hopeless. There is a method by which the order of the voter's subsequent preference is effectively indicated. That is all, but see how completely it modifies the nature of an election. Instead of a hampered choice between two, you have a free choice between many. Such a change means a complete alteration in the quality of public life.

The present immense advantage of the party nominee — which is the root cause, which is almost the sole cause of all our present

political ineptitude — would disappear. He would be quite unable to oust any well-known and representative independent candidate who chose to stand against him. There would be an immediate alteration in type in the House of Commons. In the place of these specialists in political getting-on there would be few men who had not already gained some intellectual and moral hold upon the community; they would already be outstanding and distinguished men before they came to the work of government. Great sections of our national life, science, art, literature, education, engineering, manufacture would cease to be under-represented, or misrepresented by the energetic barrister and political specialist, and our Legislature would begin to serve, as we have now such urgent need of its serving, as the means and instrument of that national conference upon the social outlook of which we stand in need.

And it is to the need and nature of that Conference that I would devote myself. I do not mean by the word Conference any gathering of dull and formal and inattentive people in this dusty hall or that, with a jaded audience and intermittently active reporters, such as this word may conjure up to some imaginations. I mean an earnest direction of attention in all parts of the country to this necessity for a studied and elaborated project of conciliation and social co-operation We cannot afford to leave such things to specialised politicians and self-appointed, self-seeking "experts" any longer. A modern community has to think out its problems as a whole and co-operate as a whole in their solution. We have to bring all our national life into this discussion of the National Plan before us, and not simply newspapers and periodicals and books, but pulpit and college and school have to bear their part in it. And in that particular I would appeal to the schools, because there more than anywhere else is the permanent quickening of our national imagination to be achieved.

We want to have our young people filled with a new realisation that History is not over, that nothing is settled, and that the supreme dramatic phase in the story of England has still to come. It was not in the Norman Conquest, not in the flight of King James II, nor the overthrow of Napoleon; it is here and now. It falls to them to be actors not in a reminiscent pageant but a living conflict, and the sooner they are prepared to take their part in that the better our

Empire will acquit itself. How absurd is the preoccupation of our schools and colleges with the little provincialisms of our past history before A.D. 1800! "No current politics," whispers the schoolmaster, "no religion — except the coldest formalities *Some parent might object*." And he pours into our country every year a fresh supply of gentlemanly cricketing youths, gapingly unprepared — unless they have picked up a broad generalisation or so from some surreptitious Socialist pamphlet — for the immense issues they must control, and that are altogether uncontrollable if they fail to control them. The universities do scarcely more for our young men. All this has to be altered, and altered vigorously and soon, if our country is to accomplish its destinies. Our schools and colleges exist for no other purpose than to give our youths a vision of the world and of their duties and possibilities in the world. We can no longer afford to have them the last preserves of an elderly orthodoxy and the last repository of a decaying gift of superseded tongues. They are needed too urgently to make our leaders leader-like and to sustain the active understandings of the race.

And from the labour class itself we are also justified in demanding a far more effectual contribution to the National Conference than it is making at the present time. Mere eloquent apologies for distrust, mere denunciations of Capitalism and appeals for a Socialism as featureless as smoke, are unsatisfactory when one regards them as the entire contribution of the ascendant worker to the discussion of the national future. The labour thinker has to become definite in his demands and clearer upon the give and take that will be necessary before they can be satisfied. He has to realise rather more generously than he has done so far the enormous moral difficulty there is in bringing people who have been prosperous and at an advantage all their lives to the pitch of even contemplating a social reorganisation that may minimise or destroy their precedence. We have all to think, to think hard and think generously, and there is not a man in England to-day, even though his hands are busy at work, whose brain may not be helping in this great task of social rearrangement which lies before us all.

SOCIAL PANACEAS

(*June, 1912*.)

To have followed the frequent discussions of the Labour Unrest in the Press is to have learnt quite a lot about the methods of popular thought. And among other things I see now much better than I did why patent medicines are so popular. It is clear that as a community we are far too impatient of detail and complexity, we want overmuch to simplify, we clamour for panaceas, we are a collective invitation to quacks.

Our situation is an intricate one, it does not admit of a solution neatly done up in a word or a phrase. Yet so powerful is this wish to simplify that it is difficult to make it clear that one is not oneself a panacea-monger. One writes and people read a little inattentively and more than a little impatiently, until one makes a positive proposal Then they jump. "So *that's* your Remedy!" they say. "How absurdly inadequate!" I was privileged to take part in one such discussion in 1912, and among other things in my diagnosis of the situation I pointed out the extreme mischief done to our public life by the futility of our electoral methods. They make our whole public life forensic and ineffectual, and I pointed out that this evil effect, which vitiates our whole national life, could be largely remedied by an infinitely better voting system known as Proportional Representation. Thereupon the *Westminster Gazette* declared in tones of pity and contempt that it was no Remedy — and dismissed me. It would be as intelligent to charge a doctor who pushed back the crowd about a broken-legged man in the street with wanting to heal the limb by giving the sufferer air.

The task before our community, the task of reorganising labour on a basis broader than that of employment for daily or weekly wages, is one of huge complexity, and it is as entirely reasonable as it is entirely preliminary to clean and modernise to the utmost our representative and legislative machinery.

It is remarkable how dominant is this disposition to get a phrase, a word, a simple recipe, for an undertaking so vast in reality that for all the rest of our lives a large part of the activities of us, forty million

people, will be devoted to its partial accomplishment. In the presence of very great issues people become impatient and irritated, as they would not allow themselves to be irritated by far more limited problems. Nobody in his senses expects a panacea for the comparatively simple and trivial business of playing chess. Nobody wants to be told to "rely wholly upon your pawns," or "never, never move your rook"; nobody clamours "give me a third knight and all will be well"; but that is exactly what everybody seems to be doing in our present discussion And as another aspect of the same impatience, I note the disposition to clamour against all sorts of necessary processes in the development of a civilisation. For example, I read over and over again of the failure of representative government, and in nine cases out of ten I find that this amounts to a cry against any sort of representative government. It is perfectly true that our representative institutions do not work well and need a vigorous overhauling, but while I find scarcely any support for such a revision, the air is full of vague dangerous demands for aristocracy, for oligarchy, for autocracy. It is like a man who jumps out of his automobile because he has burst a tyre, refuses a proffered Stepney, and bawls passionately for anything — for a four-wheeler, or a donkey, as long as he can be free from that exploded mechanism. There are evidently quite a considerable number of people in this country who would welcome a tyrant at the present time, a strong, silent, cruel, imprisoning, executing, melodramatic sort of person, who would somehow manage everything while they went on — being silly. I find that form of impatience cropping up everywhere. I hear echoes of Mr. Blatchford's "Wanted, a Man," and we may yet see a General Boulanger prancing in our streets. There never was a more foolish cry. It is not a man we want, but just exactly as many million men as there are in Great Britain at the present time, and it is you, the reader, and I, and the rest of us who must together go on with the perennial task of saving the country by *firstly*, doing our own jobs just as well as ever we can, and *secondly* — and this is really just as important as firstly — doing our utmost to grasp our national purpose, doing our utmost, that is, to develop and carry out our National Plan. It is Everyman who must be the saviour of the State in a modern community; we cannot shift our share in the

burthen; and here again, I think, is something that may well be underlined and emphasised. At present our "secondly" is unduly subordinated to our "firstly"; our game is better individually than collectively; we are like a football team that passes badly, and our need is not nearly so much to change the players as to broaden their style. And this brings me, in a spirit entirely antagonistic, up against Mr. Galsworthy's suggestion of an autocratic revolution in the methods of our public schools.

But before I go on to that, let me first notice a still more comprehensive cry that has been heard again and again in this discussion, and that is the alleged failure of education generally. There is never any remedial suggestion made with this particular outcry; it is merely a gust of abuse and insult for schools, and more particularly board schools, carrying with it a half-hearted implication that they should be closed, and then the contribution concludes. Now there is no outcry at the present time more unjust or — except for the "Wanted, a Man" clamour — more foolish. No doubt our educational resources, like most other things, fall far short of perfection, but of all this imperfection the elementary schools are least imperfect; and I would almost go so far as to say that, considering the badness of their material, the huge, clumsy classes they have to deal with, the poorness of their directive administration, their bad pay and uncertain outlook, the elementary teachers of this country are amazingly efficient. And it is not simply that they are good under their existing conditions, but that this service has been made out of nothing whatever in the course of scarcely forty years. An educational system to cover an Empire is not a thing that can be got for the asking, it is not even to be got for the paying; it has to be grown; and in the beginning it is bound to be thin, ragged, forced, crammy, text-bookish, superficial, and all the rest of it. As reasonable to complain that the children born last year were immature. A little army of teachers does not flash into being at the passing of an Education Act. Not even an organisation for training those teachers comes to anything like satisfactory working order for many years, without considering the delays and obstructions that have been caused by the bickerings and bitterness of the various Christian Churches. So that it is not the failure of elementary education we

have really to consider, but the continuance and extension of its already almost miraculous results.

And when it comes to the education of the ruling and directing classes, there is kindred, if lesser reason, for tempering zeal with patience. This upper portion of our educational organisation needs urgently to be bettered, but it is not to be bettered by trying to find an archangel who will better it dictatorially. For the good of our souls there are no such beings to relieve us of our collective responsibility. It is clear that appointments in this field need not only far more care and far more insistence upon creative power than has been shown in the past, but for the rest we have to do with the men we have and the schools we have. We cannot have an educational purge, if only because we have not the new men waiting. Here again the need is not impatience, not revolution, but a sustained and penetrating criticism, a steadfast, continuous urgency towards effort and well-planned reconstruction and efficiency.

And as a last example of the present hysterical disposition to scrap things before they have been fairly tried is the outcry against examinations, which has done so much to take the keenness off the edge of school work in the last few years. Because a great number of examiners chosen haphazard turned out to be negligent and incompetent as examiners, because their incapacity created a cynical trade in cramming, a great number of people have come to the conclusion, just as examinations are being improved into efficiency, that all examinations are bad. In particular that excellent method of bringing new blood and new energy into the public services and breaking up official gangs and cliques, the competitive examination system, has been discredited, and the wire-puller and the influential person are back again tampering with a steadily increasing proportion of appointments….

But I have written enough of this impatience, which is, as it were, merely the passion for reconstruction losing its head and defeating its own ends. There is no hope for us outside ourselves. No violent changes, no Napoleonic saviours can carry on the task of building the Great State, the civilised State that rises out of our disorders That is for us to do, all of us and each one of us. We have to think clearly, and study and consider and reconsider our ideas about public things

to the very utmost of our possibilities. We have to clarify our views and express them and do all we can to stir up thinking and effort in those about us.

I know it would be more agreeable for all of us if we could have some small pill-like remedy for all the troubles of the State, and take it and go on just as we are going now. But, indeed, to say a word for that idea would be a treason. We are the State, and there is no other way to make it better than to give it the service of our lives. Just in the measure of the aggregate of our devotions and the elaborated and criticised sanity of our public proceedings will the world mend.

I gather from a valuable publication called "Secret Remedies," which analyses many popular cures, that this hasty passion for simplicity, for just one thing that will settle the whole trouble, can carry people to a level beyond an undivided trust in something warranted in a bottle. They are ready to put their faith in what amounts to practically nothing in a bottle. And just at present, while a number of excellent people of the middle class think that only a "man" is wanted and all will be well with us, there is a considerable wave of hopefulness among the working class in favour of a weak solution of nothing, which is offered under the attractive label of Syndicalism. So far I have been able to discuss the present labour situation without any use of this empty word, but when one finds it cropping up in every other article on the subject, it becomes advisable to point out what Syndicalism is not. And incidentally it may enable me to make clear what Socialism in the broader sense, constructive Socialism, that is to say, is.

SYNDICALISM OR CITIZENSHIP

"Is a railway porter a railway porter first and a man afterwards, or is he a man first and incidentally a railway porter?"

That is the issue between this tawdrification of trade unionism which is called Syndicalism, and the ideals of that Great State, that great commonweal, towards which the constructive forces in our civilisation tend. Are we to drift on to a disastrous intensification of our present specialisation of labour as labour, or are we to set to work steadfastly upon a vast social reconstruction which will close this widening breach and rescue our community from its present dependence upon the reluctant and presently insurgent toil of a wages-earning proletariat? Regarded as a project of social development, Syndicalism is ridiculous; regarded as an illuminating and unintentionally ironical complement to the implicit theories of our present social order, it is worthy of close attention. The dream of the Syndicalist is an impossible social fragmentation. The transport service is to be a democratic republic, the mines are to be a democratic republic, every great industry is to be a democratic republic within the State; our community is to become a conflict of inter-woven governments of workers, incapable of progressive changes of method or of extension or transmutation of function, the whole being of a man is to lie within his industrial specialisation, and, upon lines of causation not made clear, wages are to go on rising and hours of work are to go on falling…. There the mind halts, blinded by the too dazzling vistas of an unimaginative millennium And the way to this, one gathers, is by striking — persistent, destructive striking — until it comes about.

Such is Syndicalism, the cheap Labour Panacea, to which the more passionate and less intelligent portion of the younger workers, impatient of the large constructive developments of modern Socialism, drifts steadily. It is the direct and logical reaction to our present economic system, which has counted our workers neither as souls nor as heads, but as hands. They are beginning to accept the suggestions of that method. It is the culmination in aggression of that, at first, entirely protective trade unionism which the individual

selfishness and collective short-sightedness and State blindness of our owning and directing and ruling classes forced upon the working man. At first trade unionism was essentially defensive; it was the only possible defence of the workers, who were being steadily pressed over the margin of subsistence. It was a nearly involuntary resistance to class debasement. Mr. Vernon Hartshorn has expressed it as that in a recent article. But his paper, if one read it from beginning to end, displayed, compactly and completely, the unavoidable psychological development of the specialised labour case. He began in the mildest tones with those now respectable words, a "guaranteed minimum" of wages, housing, and so forth, and ended with a very clear intimation of an all-labour community.

If anything is certain in this world, it is that the mass of the community will not rest satisfied with these guaranteed minima. All those possible legislative increments in the general standard of living are not going to diminish the labour unrest; they are going to increase it. A starving man may think he wants nothing in the world but bread, but when he has eaten you will find he wants all sorts of things beyond. Mr. Hartshorn assures us that the worker is "not out for a theory." So much the worse for the worker and all of us when, like the mere hand we have made him, he shows himself unable to define or even forecast his ultimate intentions. He will in that case merely clutch. And the obvious immediate next objective of that clutch directly its imagination passes beyond the "guaranteed minima" phase is the industry as a whole.

I do not see how anyone who desires the continuing development of civilisation can regard a trade union as anything but a necessary evil, a pressure-relieving contrivance an arresting and delaying organisation begotten by just that class separation of labour which in the commonweal of the Great State will be altogether destroyed. It leads nowhither; it is a shelter hut on the road. The wider movement of modern civilisation is against class organisation and caste feeling. These are forces antagonistic to progress, continually springing up and endeavouring to stereotype the transitory organisation, and continually being defeated.

Of all the solemn imbecilities one hears, surely the most foolish is this, that we are in "an age of specialisation." The comparative

fruitfulness and hopefulness of our social order, in comparison with any other social system, lies in its flat contradiction of that absurdity. Our medical and surgical advances, for example, are almost entirely due to the invasion of medical research by the chemist; our naval development to the supersession of the sailor by the engineer; we sweep away the coachman with the railway, beat the suburban line with the electric tramway, and attack that again with the petrol omnibus, oust brick and stonework in substantial fabrics by steel frames, replace the skilled maker of woodcuts by a photographer, and so on through the whole range of our activities. Change of function, arrest of specialisation by innovations in method and appliance, progress by the infringement of professional boundaries and the defiance of rule: these are the commonplaces of our time. The trained man, the specialised man, is the most unfortunate of men; the world leaves him behind, and he has lost his power of overtaking it. Versatility, alert adaptability, these are our urgent needs. In peace and war alike the unimaginative, uninventive man is a burthen and a retardation, as he never was before in the world's history. The modern community, therefore, that succeeds most rapidly and most completely in converting both its labourers and its leisure class into a population of active, able, unhurried, educated, and physically well-developed people will be inevitably the dominant community in the world. That lies on the face of things about us; a man who cannot see that must be blind to the traffic in our streets.

Syndicalism is not a plan of social development. It is a spirit of conflict. That conflict lies ahead of us, the open war of strikes, or — if the forces of law and order crush that down — then sabotage and that black revolt of the human spirit into crime which we speak of nowadays as anarchism, unless we can discover a broad and promising way from the present condition of things to nothing less than the complete abolition of the labour class.

That, I know, sounds a vast proposal, but this is a gigantic business altogether, and we can do nothing with it unless we are prepared to deal with large ideas. If St. Paul's begins to totter it is no good propping it up with half a dozen walking-sticks, and small palliatives have no legitimate place at all in this discussion. Our

generation has to take up this tremendous necessity of a social reconstruction in a great way; its broad lines have to be thought out by thousands of minds, and it is for that reason that I have put the stress upon our need of discussion, of a wide intellectual and moral stimulation of a stirring up in our schools and pulpits, and upon the modernisation and clarification of what should be the deliberative assembly of the nation.

It would be presumptuous to anticipate the National Plan that must emerge from so vast a debate, but certain conclusions I feel in my bones will stand the test of an exhaustive criticism. The first is that a distinction will be drawn between what I would call "interesting work" and what I would call "mere labour." The two things, I admit, pass by insensible gradations into one another, but while on the one hand such work as being a master gardener and growing roses, or a master cabinet maker and making fine pieces, or an artist of almost any sort, or a story writer, or a consulting physician, or a scientific investigator, or a keeper of wild animals, or a forester, or a librarian, or a good printer, or many sorts of engineer, is work that will always find men of a certain temperament enthusiastically glad to do it, if they can only do it for comfortable pay — for such work is in itself *living* — there is, on the other hand, work so irksome and toilsome, such as coal mining, or being a private soldier during a peace, or attending upon lunatics, or stoking, or doing over and over again, almost mechanically, little bits of a modern industrial process, or being a cash desk clerk in a busy shop, that few people would undertake if they could avoid it.

And the whole strength of our collective intelligence will be directed first to reducing the amount of such irksome work by labour-saving machinery, by ingenuity of management, and by the systematic avoidance of giving trouble as a duty, and then to so distributing the residuum of it that it will become the whole life of no class whatever in our population. I have already quoted the idea of Professor William James of a universal conscription for such irksome labour, and while he would have instituted that mainly for its immense moral effect upon the community, I would point out that, combined with a nationalisation of transport, mining, and so forth, it is also a way to a partial solution of this difficulty of "mere toil."

And the mention of a compulsory period of labour service for everyone — a year or so with the pickaxe as well as with the rifle — leads me to another idea that I believe will stand the test of unlimited criticism, and that is a total condemnation of all these eight-hour-a-day, early-closing, guaranteed-weekly-half-holiday notions that are now so prevalent in Liberal circles. Under existing conditions, in our system of private enterprise and competition, these restrictions are no doubt necessary to save a large portion of our population from lives of continuous toil, but, like trade unionism, they are a necessity of our present conditions, and not a way to a better social state. If we rescue ourselves as a community from poverty and discomfort, we must take care not to fling ourselves into something far more infuriating to a normal human being — and that is boredom. The prospect of a carefully inspected sanitary life, tethered to some light, little, uninteresting daily job, six or eight hours of it, seems to me — and I am sure I write here for most normal, healthy, active people — more awful than hunger and death. It is far more in the quality of the human spirit, and still more what we all in our hearts want the human spirit to be, to fling itself with its utmost power at a job and do it with passion.

For my own part, if I was sentenced to hew a thousand tons of coal, I should want to get at it at once and work furiously at it, with the shortest intervals for rest and refreshment and an occasional night holiday, until I hewed my way out, and if some interfering person with a benevolent air wanted to restrict me to hewing five hundredweight, and no more and no less, each day and every day, I should be strongly disposed to go for that benevolent person with my pick. That is surely what every natural man would want to do, and it is only the clumsy imperfection of our social organisation that will not enable a man to do his stint of labour in a few vigorous years and then come up into the sunlight for good and all.

It is along that line that I feel a large part of our labour reorganisation, over and beyond that conscription, must ultimately go. The community as a whole would, I believe, get far more out of a man if he had such a comparatively brief passion of toil than if he worked, with occasional lapses into unemployment, drearily all his life. But at present, with our existing system of employment, one

cannot arrange so comprehensive a treatment of a man's life. There is needed some State or quasi-public organisation which shall stand between the man and the employer, act as his banker and guarantor, and exact his proper price. Then, with his toil over, he would have an adequate pension and be free to do nothing or anything else as he chose. In a Socialistic order of society, where the State would also be largely the employer, such a method would be, of course, far more easily contrived.

The more modern statements of Socialism do not contemplate making the State the sole employer; it is chiefly in transport, mining, fisheries, forestry, the cultivation of the food staples, and the manufacture of a few such articles as bricks and steel, and possibly in housing in what one might call the standardisable industries, that the State is imagined as the direct owner and employer and it is just in these departments that the bulk of the irksome toil is to be found. There remain large regions of more specialised and individualised production that many Socialists nowadays are quite prepared to leave to the freer initiatives of private enterprise. Most of these are occupations involving a greater element of interest, less direction and more co-operation, and it is just here that the success of co-partnery and a sustained life participation becomes possible….

This complete civilised system without a specialised, property-less labour class is not simply a possibility, it is necessary; the whole social movement of the time, the stars in their courses, war against the permanence of the present state of affairs. The alternative to this gigantic effort to rearrange our world is not a continuation of muddling along, but social war. The Syndicalist and his folly will be the avenger of lost opportunities. Not a Labour State do we want, nor a Servile State, but a powerful Leisure State of free men.

THE GREAT STATE

Sec. 1

For many years now I have taken a part in the discussion of Socialism. During that time Socialism has become a more and more ambiguous term. It has seemed to me desirable to clear up my own ideas of social progress and the public side of my life by restating them, and this I have attempted in this essay.

In order to do so it has been convenient to coin two expressions, and to employ them with a certain defined intention. They are firstly: The Normal Social Life, and secondly: The Great State. Throughout this essay these expressions will be used in accordance with the definitions presently to be given, and the fact that they are so used will be emphasised by the employment of capitals. It will be possible for anyone to argue that what is here defined as the Normal Social Life is not the normal social life, and that the Great State is indeed no state at all. That will be an argument outside the range delimited by these definitions.

Now what is intended by the Normal Social Life here is a type of human association and employment, of extreme prevalence and antiquity, which appears to have been the lot of the enormous majority of human beings as far back as history or tradition or the vestiges of material that supply our conceptions of the neolithic period can carry us. It has never been the lot of all humanity at any time, to-day it is perhaps less predominant than it has ever been, yet even to-day it is probably the lot of the greater moiety of mankind.

Essentially this type of association presents a localised community, a community of which the greater proportion of the individuals are engaged more or less directly in the cultivation of the land. With this there is also associated the grazing or herding over wider or more restricted areas, belonging either collectively or discretely to the community, of sheep, cattle, goats, or swine, and almost always the domestic fowl is commensal with man in this life. The cultivated land at least is usually assigned, temporarily or inalienably, as property to specific individuals, and the individuals are grouped in generally monogamic families of which the father is

the head. Essentially the social unit is the Family, and even where, as in Mohammedan countries, there is no legal or customary restriction upon polygamy, monogamy still prevails as the ordinary way of living. Unmarried women are not esteemed, and children are desired. According to the dangers or securities of the region, the nature of the cultivation and the temperament of the people, this community is scattered either widely in separate steadings or drawn together into villages. At one extreme, over large areas of thin pasture this agricultural community may verge on the nomadic; at another, in proximity to consuming markets, it may present the concentration of intensive culture. There may be an adjacent Wild supplying wood, and perhaps controlled by a simple forestry. The law that holds this community together is largely traditional and customary and almost always as its primordial bond there is some sort of temple and some sort of priest. Typically, the temple is devoted to a local god or a localised saint, and its position indicates the central point of the locality, its assembly place and its market. Associated with the agriculture there are usually a few imperfectly specialised tradesmen, a smith, a garment-maker perhaps, a basket-maker or potter, who group about the church or temple. The community may maintain itself in a state of complete isolation, but more usually there are tracks or roads to the centres of adjacent communities, and a certain drift of travel, a certain trade in non-essential things. In the fundamentals of life this normal community is independent and self-subsisting, and where it is not beginning to be modified by the novel forces of the new times it produces its own food and drink, its own clothing, and largely intermarries within its limits.

This in general terms is what is here intended by the phrase the Normal Social Life. It is still the substantial part of the rural life of all Europe and most Asia and Africa, and it has been the life of the great majority of human beings for immemorial years. It is the root life. It rests upon the soil, and from that soil below and its reaction to the seasons and the moods of the sky overhead have grown most of the traditions, institutions, sentiments, beliefs, superstitions, and fundamental songs and stories of mankind.

But since the very dawn of history at least this Normal Social Life has never been the whole complete life of mankind. Quite apart from

the marginal life of the savage hunter, there have been a number of forces and influences within men and women and without, that have produced abnormal and surplus ways of living, supplemental, additional, and even antagonistic to this normal scheme.

And first as to the forces within men and women. Long as it has lasted, almost universal as it has been, the human being has never yet achieved a perfect adaptation to the needs of the Normal Social Life. He has attained nothing of that frictionless fitting to the needs of association one finds in the bee or the ant. Curiosity, deep stirrings to wander, the still more ancient inheritance of the hunter, a recurrent distaste for labour, and resentment against the necessary subjugations of family life have always been a straining force within the agricultural community. The increase of population during periods of prosperity has led at the touch of bad seasons and adversity to the desperate reliefs of war and the invasion of alien localities. And the nomadic and adventurous spirit of man found reliefs and opportunities more particularly along the shores of great rivers and inland seas. Trade and travel began, at first only a trade in adventitious things, in metals and rare objects and luxuries and slaves. With trade came writing and money; the inventions of debt and rent, usury and tribute. History finds already in its beginnings a thin network of trading and slaving flung over the world of the Normal Social Life, a network whose strands are the early roads, whose knots are the first towns and the first courts.

Indeed, all recorded history is in a sense the history of these surplus and supplemental activities of mankind. The Normal Social Life flowed on in its immemorial fashion, using no letters, needing no records, leaving no history. Then, a little minority, bulking disproportionately in the record, come the trader, the sailor, the slave, the landlord and the tax-compeller, the townsman and the king.

All written history is the story of a minority and their peculiar and abnormal affairs. Save in so far as it notes great natural catastrophes and tells of the spreading or retrocession of human life through changes of climate and physical conditions it resolves itself into an account of a series of attacks and modifications and supplements made by excessive and superfluous forces engendered within the community upon the Normal Social Life. The very invention of

writing is a part of those modifying developments. The Normal Social Life is essentially illiterate and traditional. The Normal Social Life is as mute as the standing crops; it is as seasonal and cyclic as nature herself, and reaches towards the future only an intimation of continual repetitions.

Now this human over-life may take either beneficent or maleficent or neutral aspects towards the general life of humanity. It may present itself as law and pacification, as a positive addition and superstructure to the Normal Social Life, as roads and markets and cities, as courts and unifying monarchies, as helpful and directing religious organisations, as literature and art and science and philosophy, reflecting back upon the individual in the Normal Social Life from which it arose, a gilding and refreshment of new and wider interests and added pleasures and resources. One may define certain phases in the history of various countries when this was the state of affairs, when a countryside of prosperous communities with a healthy family life and a wide distribution of property, animated by roads and towns and unified by a generally intelligible religious belief, lived in a transitory but satisfactory harmony under a sympathetic government. I take it that this is the condition to which the minds of such original and vigorous reactionary thinkers as Mr. G.K. Chesterton and Mr. Hilaire Belloc for example turn, as being the most desirable state of mankind.

But the general effect of history is to present these phases as phases of exceptional good luck, and to show the surplus forces of humanity as on the whole antagonistic to any such equilibrium with the Normal Social Life. To open the book of history haphazard is, most commonly, to open it at a page where the surplus forces appear to be in more or less destructive conflict with the Normal Social Life. One opens at the depopulation of Italy by the aggressive great estates of the Roman Empire, at the impoverishment of the French peasantry by a too centralised monarchy before the revolution, or at the huge degenerative growth of the great industrial towns of western Europe in the nineteenth century. Or again one opens at destructive wars. One sees these surplus forces over and above the Normal Social Life working towards unstable concentrations of population, to centralisation of government, to migrations and conflicts upon a large

scale; one discovers the process developing into a phase of social fragmentation and destruction and then, unless the whole country has been wasted down to its very soil, the Normal Social Life returns as the heath and furze and grass return after the burning of a common. But it never returns in precisely its old form. The surplus forces have always produced some traceable change; the rhythm is a little altered. As between the Gallic peasant before the Roman conquest, the peasant of the Gallic province, the Carlovingian peasant, the French peasant of the thirteenth, the seventeenth, and the twentieth centuries, there is, in spite of a general uniformity of life, of a common atmosphere of cows, hens, dung, toil, ploughing, economy, and domestic intimacy, an effect of accumulating generalising influences and of wider relevancies. And the oscillations of empires and kingdoms, religious movements, wars, invasions, settlements leave upon the mind an impression that the surplus life of mankind, the less-localised life of mankind, that life of mankind which is not directly connected with the soil but which has become more or less detached from and independent of it, is becoming proportionately more important in relation to the Normal Social Life. It is as if a different way of living was emerging from the Normal Social Life and freeing itself from its traditions and limitations.

And this is more particularly the effect upon the mind of a review of the history of the past two hundred years. The little speculative activities of the alchemist and natural philosopher, the little economic experiments of the acquisitive and enterprising landed proprietor, favoured by unprecedented periods of security and freedom, have passed into a new phase of extraordinary productivity. They had added preposterously and continue to add on a gigantic scale and without any evident limits to the continuation of their additions, to the resources of humanity. To the strength of horses and men and slaves has been added the power of machines and the possibility of economies that were once incredible The Normal Social Life has been overshadowed as it has never been overshadowed before by the concentrations and achievements of the surplus life. Vast new possibilities open to the race; the traditional life of mankind, its traditional systems of association, are challenged and threatened; and all the social thought, all the political activity of

our time turns in reality upon the conflict of this ancient system whose essentials we have here defined and termed the Normal Social Life with the still vague and formless impulses that seem destined either to involve it and the race in a final destruction or to replace it by some new and probably more elaborate method of human association.

Because there is the following difference between the action of the surplus forces as we see them to-day and as they appeared before the outbreak of physical science and mechanism. Then it seemed clearly necessary that whatever social and political organisation developed, it must needs; rest ultimately on the tiller of the soil, the agricultural holding, and the Normal Social Life. But now even in agriculture huge wholesale methods have appeared. They are declared to be destructive; but it is quite conceivable that they may be made ultimately as recuperative as that small agriculture which has hitherto been the inevitable social basis. If that is so, then the new ways of living may not simply impose themselves in a growing proportion upon the Normal Social Life, but they may even oust it and replace it altogether. Or they may oust it and fail to replace it. In the newer countries the Normal Social Life does not appear to establish itself at all rapidly. No real peasantry appears in either America or Australia; and in the older countries, unless there is the most elaborate legislative and fiscal protection, the peasant population wanes before the large farm, the estate, and overseas production.

Now most of the political and social discussion of the last hundred years may be regarded and rephrased as an attempt to apprehend this defensive struggle of the Normal Social Life against waxing novelty and innovation and to give a direction and guidance to all of us who participate. And it is very largely a matter of temperament and free choice still, just where we shall decide to place ourselves. Let us consider some of the key words of contemporary thought, such as Liberalism, Individualism, Socialism, in the light of this broad generalisation we have made; and then we shall find it easier to explain our intention in employing as a second technicality the phrase of The Great State as an opposite to the Normal Social Life, which we have already defined.

Sec. 2

The Normal Social Life has been defined as one based on agriculture, traditional and essentially unchanging. It has needed no toleration and displayed no toleration for novelty and strangeness. Its beliefs have been on such a nature as to justify and sustain itself, and it has had an intrinsic hostility to any other beliefs. The God of its community has been a jealous god even when he was only a tribal and local god. Only very occasionally in history until the coming of the modern period do we find any human community relaxing from this ancient and more normal state of entire intolerance towards ideas or practices other than its own. When toleration and a receptive attitude towards alien ideas was manifested in the Old World, it was at some trading centre or political centre; new ideas and new religions came by water along the trade routes. And such toleration as there was rarely extended to active teaching and propaganda. Even in liberal Athens the hemlock was in the last resort at the service of the ancient gods and the ancient morals against the sceptical critic.

But with the steady development of innovating forces in human affairs there has actually grown up a cult of receptivity, a readiness for new ideas, a faith in the probable truth of novelties. Liberalism — I do not, of course, refer in any way to the political party which makes this profession — is essentially anti-traditionalism; its tendency is to commit for trial any institution or belief that is brought before it. It is the accuser and antagonist of all the fixed and ancient values and imperatives and prohibitions of the Normal Social Life. And growing up in relation to Liberalism and sustained by it is the great body of scientific knowledge, which professes at least to be absolutely undogmatic and perpetually on its trial and under assay and re-examination.

Now a very large part of the advanced thought of the past century is no more than the confused negation of the broad beliefs and institutions which have been the heritage and social basis of humanity for immemorial years. This is as true of the extremest Individualism as of the extremest Socialism. The former denies that element of legal and customary control which has always subdued the individual to the needs of the Normal Social Life, and the latter that qualified independence of distributed property which is the basis of family autonomy. Both are movements against the ancient life,

and nothing is more absurd than the misrepresentation which presents either as a conservative force. They are two divergent schools with a common disposition to reject the old and turn towards the new. The Individualist professes a faith for which he has no rational evidence, that the mere abandonment of traditions and controls must ultimately produce a new and beautiful social order; while the Socialist, with an equal liberalism, regards the outlook with a kind of hopeful dread, and insists upon an elaborate readjustment, a new and untried scheme of social organisation to replace the shattered and weakening Normal Social Life.

Both these movements, and, indeed, all movements that are not movements for the subjugation of innovation and the restoration of tradition, are vague in the prospect they contemplate. They produce no definite forecasts of the quality of the future towards which they so confidently indicate the way. But this is less true of modern socialism than of its antithesis, and it becomes less and less true as socialism, under an enormous torrent of criticism, slowly washes itself clean from the mass of partial statement, hasty misstatement, sheer error and presumption that obscured its first emergence.

But it is well to be very clear upon one point at this stage, and that is, that this present time is not a battle-ground between individualism and socialism; it is a battle-ground between the Normal Social Life on the one hand and a complex of forces on the other which seek a form of replacement and seem partially to find it in these and other doctrines.

Nearly all contemporary thinkers who are not too muddled to be assignable fall into one of three classes, of which the third we shall distinguish is the largest and most various and divergent. It will be convenient to say a little of each of these classes before proceeding to a more particular account of the third. Our analysis will cut across many accepted classifications, but there will be ample justification for this rearrangement. All of them may be dealt with quite justly as accepting the general account of the historical process which is here given.

Then first we must distinguish a series of writers and thinkers which one may call — the word conservative being already politically assigned — the Conservators.

These are people who really do consider the Normal Social Life as the only proper and desirable life for the great mass of humanity, and they are fully prepared to subordinate all exceptional and surplus lives to the moral standards and limitations that arise naturally out of the Normal Social Life. They desire a state in which property is widely distributed, a community of independent families protected by law and an intelligent democratic statecraft from the economic aggressions of large accumulations and linked by a common religion. Their attitude to the forces of change is necessarily a hostile attitude. They are disposed to regard innovations in transit and machinery as undesirable, and even mischievous disturbances of a wholesome equilibrium. They are at least unfriendly to any organisation of scientific research, and scornful of the pretensions of science. Criticisms of the methods of logic, scepticism of the more widely diffused human beliefs, they would classify as insanity. Two able English writers, Mr. G.K. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc, have given the clearest expression to this system of ideals, and stated an admirable case for it. They present a conception of vinous, loudly singing, earthy, toiling, custom-ruled, wholesome, and insanitary men; they are pagan in the sense that their hearts are with the villagers and not with the townsmen, Christian in the spirit of the parish priest. There are no other Conservators so clear-headed and consistent. But their teaching is merely the logical expression of an enormous amount of conservative feeling. Vast multitudes of less lucid minds share their hostility to novelty and research; hate, dread, and are eager to despise science, and glow responsive to the warm, familiar expressions of primordial feelings and immemorial prejudices The rural conservative, the liberal of the allotments and small-holdings type, Mr. Roosevelt — in his Western-farmer, philoprogenitive phase as distinguished from the phase of his more imperialist moments — all present themselves as essentially Conservators as seekers after and preservers of the Normal Social Life.

So, too, do Socialists of the William Morris type. The mind of William Morris was profoundly reactionary He hated the whole trend of later nineteenth-century modernism with the hatred natural to a man of considerable scholarship and intense aesthetic sensibilities. His mind turned, exactly as Mr. Belloc's turns, to the finished and

enriched Normal Social Life of western Europe in the middle ages, but, unlike Mr. Belloc, he believed that, given private ownership of land and the ordinary materials of life, there must necessarily be an aggregatory process, usury, expropriation, the development of an exploiting wealthy class. He believed profit was the devil. His "News from Nowhere" pictures a communism that amounted in fact to little more than a system of private ownership of farms and trades without money or any buying and selling, in an atmosphere of geniality, generosity, and mutual helpfulness. Mr. Belloc, with a harder grip upon the realities of life, would have the widest distribution of proprietorship, with an alert democratic government continually legislating against the protean reappearances of usury and accumulation and attacking, breaking up, and redistributing any large unanticipated bodies of wealth that appeared. But both men are equally set towards the Normal Social Life, and equally enemies of the New. The so-called "socialist" land legislation of New Zealand again is a tentative towards the realisation of the same school of ideas: great estates are to be automatically broken up, property is to be kept disseminated; a vast amount of political speaking and writing in America and throughout the world enforces one's impression of the widespread influence of Conservator ideals.

Of course, it is inevitable that phases of prosperity for the Normal Social Life will lead to phases of over-population and scarcity, there will be occasional famines and occasional pestilences and plethoras of vitality leading to the blood-letting of war. I suppose Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc at least have the courage of their opinions, and are prepared to say that such things always have been and always must be; they are part of the jolly rhythms of the human lot under the sun, and are to be taken with the harvest home and love-making and the peaceful ending of honoured lives as an integral part of the unending drama of mankind.

Sec. 3

Now opposed to the Conservators are all those who do not regard contemporary humanity as a final thing nor the Normal Social Life as the inevitable basis of human continuity. They believe in secular change, in Progress, in a future for our species differing continually more from its past. On the whole, they are prepared for the gradual

disentanglement of men from the Normal Social Life altogether, and they look for new ways of living and new methods of human association with a certain adventurous hopefulness.

Now, this second large class does not so much admit of subdivision into two as present a great variety of intermediaries between two extremes. I propose to give distinctive names to these extremes, with the very clear proviso that they are not antagonised, and that the great multitude of this second, anti-conservator class, this liberal, more novel class modern conditions have produced falls between them, and is neither the one nor the other, but partaking in various degrees of both. On the one hand, then, we have that type of mind which is irritated by and distrustful of all collective proceedings which is profoundly distrustful of churches and states, which is expressed essentially by Individualism. The Individualist appears to regard the extensive disintegrations of the Normal Social Life that are going on to-day with an extreme hopefulness. Whatever is ugly or harsh in modern industrialism or in the novel social development of our time he seems to consider as a necessary aspect of a process of selection and survival, whose tendencies are on the whole inevitably satisfactory. The future welfare of man he believes in effect may be trusted to the spontaneous and planless activities of people of goodwill, and nothing but state intervention can effectively impede its attainment. And curiously close to this extreme optimistic school in its moral quality and logical consequences, though contrasting widely in the sinister gloom of its spirit, is the socialism of Karl Marx. He declared the contemporary world to be a great process of financial aggrandisement and general expropriation, of increasing power for the few and of increasing hardship and misery for the many, a process that would go on until at last a crisis of unendurable tension would be reached and the social revolution ensue. The world had, in fact, to be worse before it could hope to be better. He contemplated a continually exacerbated Class War, with a millennium of extraordinary vagueness beyond as the reward of the victorious workers. His common quality with the Individualist lies in his repudiation of and antagonism to plans and arrangements, in his belief in the overriding power of Law. Their common influence is the discouragement of collective understandings upon the basis of the

existing state. Both converge in practice upon *laissez faire*. I would therefore lump them together under the term of Planless Progressives, and I would contrast with them those types which believe supremely in systematised purpose.

The purposeful and systematic types, in common with the Individualist and Marxist, regard the Normal Social Life, for all the many thousands of years behind it, as a phase, and as a phase which is now passing, in human experience; and they are prepared for a future society that may be ultimately different right down to its essential relationships from the human past. But they also believe that the forces that have been assailing and disintegrating the Normal Social Life, which have been, on the one hand, producing great accumulations of wealth, private freedom, and ill-defined, irresponsible and socially dangerous power, and, on the other, labour hordes, for the most part urban, without any property or outlook except continuous toil and anxiety, which in England have substituted a dischargeable agricultural labourer for the independent peasant almost completely, and in America seem to be arresting any general development of the Normal Social Life at all, are forces of wide and indefinite possibility that need to be controlled by a collective effort implying a collective design, deflected from merely injurious consequences and organised for a new human welfare upon new lines. They agree with that class of thinking I have distinguished as the Conservators in their recognition of vast contemporary disorders and their denial of the essential beneficence of change. But while the former seem to regard all novelty and innovation as a mere inundation to be met, banked back, defeated and survived, these more hopeful and adventurous minds would rather regard contemporary change as amounting on the whole to the tumultuous and almost catastrophic opening-up of possible new channels, the violent opportunity of vast, deep, new ways to great unprecedented human ends, ends that are neither feared nor evaded.

Now while the Conservators are continually talking of the "eternal facts" of human life and human nature and falling back upon a conception of permanence that is continually less true as our perspectives extend, these others are full of the conception of adaptation, of deliberate change in relationship and institution to

meet changing needs. I would suggest for them, therefore, as opposed to the Conservators and contrasted with the Planless Progressives, the name of Constructors. They are the extreme right, as it were, while the Planless Progressives are the extreme left of Anti-Conservator thought.

I believe that these distinctions I have made cover practically every clear form of contemporary thinking, and are a better and more helpful classification than any now current. But, of course, nearly every individual nowadays is at least a little confused, and will be found to wobble in the course even of a brief discussion between one attitude and the other. This is a separation of opinions rather than of persons. And particularly that word Socialism has become so vague and incoherent that for a man to call himself a socialist nowadays is to give no indication whatever whether he is a Conservator like William Morris, a non-Constructor like Karl Marx, or a Constructor of any of half a dozen different schools. On the whole, however, modern socialism tends to fall towards the Constructor wing. So, too, do those various movements in England and Germany and France called variously nationalist and imperialist, and so do the American civic and social reformers. Under the same heading must come such attempts to give the vague impulses of Syndicalism a concrete definition as the "Guild Socialism" of Mr. Orage. All these movements are agreed that the world is progressive towards a novel and unprecedented social order, not necessarily and fatally better, and that it needs organised and even institutional guidance thither, however much they differ as to the form that order should assume.

For the greater portion of a century socialism has been before the world, and it is not perhaps premature to attempt a word or so of analysis of that great movement in the new terms we are here employing. The origins of the socialist idea were complex and multifarious never at any time has it succeeded in separating out a statement of itself that was at once simple, complete and acceptable to any large proportion of those who call themselves socialists. But always it has pointed to two or three definite things. The first of these is that unlimited freedoms of private property, with increasing facilities of exchange, combination, and aggrandisement, become more and more dangerous to human liberty by the expropriation and

reduction to private wages slavery of larger and larger proportions of the population. Every school of socialism states this in some more or less complete form, however divergent the remedial methods suggested by the different schools. And, next, every school of socialism accepts the concentration of management and property as necessary, and declines to contemplate what is the typical Conservator remedy, its re-fragmentation. Accordingly it sets up not only against the large private owner, but against owners generally, the idea of a public proprietor, the State, which shall hold in the collective interest. But where the earlier socialisms stopped short, and where to this day socialism is vague, divided, and unprepared, is upon the psychological problems involved in that new and largely unprecedented form of proprietorship, and upon the still more subtle problems of its attainment. These are vast, and profoundly, widely, and multitudinously difficult problems, and it was natural and inevitable that the earlier socialists in the first enthusiasm of their idea should minimise these difficulties, pretend in the fullness of their faith that partial answers to objections were complete answers, and display the common weaknesses of honest propaganda the whole world over. Socialism is now old enough to know better. Few modern socialists present their faith as a complete panacea, and most are now setting to work in earnest upon these long-shirked preliminary problems of human interaction through which the vital problem of a collective head and brain can alone be approached.

A considerable proportion of the socialist movement remains, as it has been from the first, vaguely democratic. It points to collective ownership with no indication of the administrative scheme it contemplates to realise that intention. Necessarily it remains a formless claim without hands to take hold of the thing it desires. Indeed in a large number of cases it is scarcely more than a resentful consciousness in the expropriated masses of social disintegration. It spends its force very largely in mere revenges upon property as such, attacks simply destructive by reason of the absence of any definite ulterior scheme. It is an ill-equipped and planless belligerent who must destroy whatever he captures because he can neither use nor take away. A council of democratic socialists in possession of London would be as capable of an orderly and sustained

administration as the Anabaptists in Munster. But the discomforts and disorders of our present planless system do tend steadily to the development of this crude socialistic spirit in the mass of the proletariat; merely vindictive attacks upon property, sabotage, and the general strike are the logical and inevitable consequences of an uncontrolled concentration of property in a few hands, and such things must and will go on, the deep undertow in the deliquescence of the Normal Social Life, until a new justice, a new scheme of compensations and satisfactions is attained, or the Normal Social Life re-emerges.

Fabian socialism was the first systematic attempt to meet the fatal absence of administrative schemes in the earlier socialisms. It can scarcely be regarded now as anything but an interesting failure, but a failure that has all the educational value of a first reconnaissance into unexplored territory. Starting from that attack on aggregating property, which is the common starting-point of all socialist projects, the Fabians, appalled at the obvious difficulties of honest confiscation and an open transfer from private to public hands, conceived the extraordinary idea of *filching* property for the state. A small body of people of extreme astuteness were to bring about the municipalisation and nationalisation first of this great system of property and then of that, in a manner so artful that the millionaires were to wake up one morning at last, and behold, they would find themselves poor men! For a decade or more Mr. Pease, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, Mrs. Besant, Dr. Lawson Dodd, and their associates of the London Fabian Society, did pit their wits and ability, or at any rate the wits and ability of their leisure moments, against the embattled capitalists of England and the world, in this complicated and delicate enterprise, without any apparent diminution of the larger accumulations of wealth. But in addition they developed another side of Fabianism, still more subtle, which professed to be a kind of restoration in kind of property to the proletariat and in this direction they were more successful. A dexterous use, they decided, was to be made of the Poor Law, the public health authority, the education authority, and building regulations and so forth, to create, so to speak, a communism of the lower levels. The mass of people whom the forces of change had

expropriated were to be given a certain minimum of food, shelter, education, and sanitation, and this, the socialists were assured, could be used as the thin end of the wedge towards a complete communism. The minimum, once established, could obviously be raised continually until either everybody had what they needed, or the resources of society gave out and set a limit to the process.

This second method of attack brought the Fabian movement into co-operation with a large amount of benevolent and constructive influence outside the socialist ranks altogether. Few wealthy people really grudge the poor a share of the necessities of life, and most are quite willing to assist in projects for such a distribution. But while these schemes naturally involved a very great amount of regulation and regimentation of the affairs of the poor, the Fabian Society fell away more and more from its associated proposals for the socialisation of the rich. The Fabian project changed steadily in character until at last it ceased to be in any sense antagonistic to wealth as such. If the lion did not exactly lie down with the lamb, at any rate the man with the gun and the alleged social mad dog returned very peaceably together. The Fabian hunt was up.

Great financiers contributed generously to a School of Economics that had been founded with moneys left to the Fabian Society by earlier enthusiasts for socialist propaganda and education. It remained for Mr. Belloc to point the moral of the whole development with a phrase, to note that Fabianism no longer aimed at the socialisation of the whole community, but only at the socialisation of the poor. The first really complete project for a new social order to replace the Normal Social Life was before the world, and this project was the compulsory regimentation of the workers and the complete state control of labour under a new plutocracy. Our present chaos was to be organised into a Servile State.

Sec. 4

Now to many of us who found the general spirit of the socialist movement at least hopeful and attractive and sympathetic, this would be an almost tragic conclusion, did we believe that Fabianism was anything more than the first experiment in planning — and one almost inevitably shallow and presumptuous — of the long series that may be necessary before a clear light breaks upon the road

humanity must follow. But we decline to be forced by this one intellectual fiasco towards the *laissez faire* of the Individualist and the Marxist, or to accept the Normal Social Life with its atmosphere of hens and cows and dung, its incessant toil, its servitude of women, and its endless repetitions as the only tolerable life conceivable for the bulk of mankind — as the ultimate life, that is, of mankind. With less arrogance and confidence, but it may be with a firmer faith, we declare that we believe a more spacious social order than any that exists or ever has existed, a Peace of the World in which there is an almost universal freedom, health, happiness, and well-being and which contains the seeds of a still greater future, is possible to mankind. We propose to begin again with the recognition of those same difficulties the Fabians first realised. But we do not propose to organise a society, form a group for the control of the two chief political parties, bring about "socialism" in twenty-five years, or do anything beyond contributing in our place and measure to that constructive discussion whose real magnitude we now begin to realise.

We have faith in a possible future, but it is a faith that makes the quality of that future entirely dependent upon the strength and clearness of purpose that this present time can produce. We do not believe the greater social state is inevitable.

Yet there is, we hold, a certain qualified inevitability about this greater social state because we believe any social state not affording a general contentment, a general freedom, and a general and increasing fullness of life, must sooner or later collapse and disintegrate again, and revert more or less completely to the Normal Social Life, and because we believe the Normal Social Life is itself thick-sown with the seeds of fresh beginnings. The Normal Social Life has never at any time been absolutely permanent, always it has carried within itself the germs of enterprise and adventure and exchanges that finally attack its stability. The superimposed social order of to-day, such as it is, with its huge development of expropriated labour, and the schemes of the later Fabians to fix this state of affairs in an organised form and render it plausibly tolerable, seem also doomed to accumulate catastrophic tensions. Bureaucratic schemes for establishing the regular lifelong subordination of a

labouring class, enlivened though they may be by frequent inspection, disciplinary treatment during seasons of unemployment, compulsory temperance, free medical attendance, and a cheap and shallow elementary education fail to satisfy the restless cravings in the heart of man. They are cravings that even the baffling methods of the most ingeniously worked Conciliation Boards cannot permanently restrain. The drift of any Servile State must be towards a class revolt, paralysing sabotage and a general strike. The more rigid and complete the Servile State becomes, the more thorough will be its ultimate failure. Its fate is decay or explosion. From its débris we shall either revert to the Normal Social Life and begin again the long struggle towards that ampler, happier, juster arrangement of human affairs which we of this book, at any rate, believe to be possible, or we shall pass into the twilight of mankind.

This greater social life we put, then, as the only real alternative to the Normal Social Life from which man is continually escaping. For it we do not propose to use the expressions the "socialist state" or "socialism," because we believe those terms have now by constant confused use become so battered and bent and discoloured by irrelevant associations as to be rather misleading than expressive. We propose to use the term The Great State to express this ideal of a social system no longer localised, no longer immediately tied to and conditioned by the cultivation of the land, world-wide in its interests and outlook and catholic in its tolerance and sympathy, a system of great individual freedom with a universal understanding among its citizens of a collective thought and purpose.

Now, the difficulties that lie in the way of humanity in its complex and toilsome journey through the coming centuries towards this Great State are fundamentally difficulties of adaptation and adjustment. To no conceivable social state is man inherently fitted: he is a creature of jealousy and suspicion, unstable, restless, acquisitive, aggressive, intractable, and of a most subtle and nimble dishonesty. Moreover, he is imaginative, adventurous, and inventive. His nature and instincts are as much in conflict with the necessary restrictions and subjugation of the Normal Social Life as they are likely to be with any other social net that necessity may weave about him. But the Normal Social Life has this advantage that it has a vast

accumulated moral tradition and a minutely worked-out material method. All the fundamental institutions have arisen in relation to it and are adapted to its conditions. To revert to it after any phase of social chaos and distress is and will continue for many years to be the path of least resistance for perplexed humanity.

This conception of the Great State, on the other hand, is still altogether unsubstantial. It is a project as dream-like to-day as electric lighting, electric traction, or aviation would have been in the year 1850. In 1850 a man reasonably conversant with the physical science of his time could have declared with a very considerable confidence that, given a certain measure of persistence and social security, these things were more likely to be attained than not in the course of the next century. But such a prophecy was conditional on the preliminary accumulation of a considerable amount of knowledge, on many experiments and failures. Had the world of 1850, by some wave of impulse, placed all its resources in the hands of the ablest scientific man alive, and asked him to produce a practicable paying electric vehicle before 1852, at best he would have produced some clumsy, curious toy, more probably he would have failed altogether; and, similarly, if the whole population of the world came to the present writer and promised meekly to do whatever it was told, we should find ourselves still very largely at a loss in our project for a millennium. Yet just as nearly every man at work upon Voltaic electricity in 1850 knew that he was preparing for electric traction, so do I know quite certainly, in spite of a whole row of unsolved problems before me, that I am working towards the Great State.

Let me briefly recapitulate the main problems which have to be attacked in the attempt to realise the outline of the Great State. At the base of the whole order there must be some method of agricultural production, and if the agricultural labourer and cottager and the ancient life of the small householder on the holding, a life laborious, prolific, illiterate, limited, and in immediate contact with the land used, is to recede and disappear it must recede and disappear before methods upon a much larger scale, employing wholesale machinery and involving great economies. It is alleged by modern writers that the permanent residence of the cultivator in close relation to his

ground is a legacy from the days of cumbrous and expensive transit, that the great proportion of farm work is seasonal, and that a migration to and fro between rural and urban conditions would be entirely practicable in a largely planned community. The agricultural population could move out of town into an open-air life as the spring approached, and return for spending, pleasure, and education as the days shortened. Already something of this sort occurs under extremely unfavourable conditions in the movement of the fruit and hop pickers from the east end of London into Kent, but that is a mere hint of the extended picnic which a broadly planned cultivation might afford. A fully developed civilisation, employing machines in the hands of highly skilled men, will minimise toil to the very utmost, no man will shove where a machine can shove, or carry where a machine can carry; but there will remain, more particularly in the summer, a vast amount of hand operations, invigorating and even attractive to the urban population Given short hours, good pay, and all the jolly amusement in the evening camp that a free, happy, and intelligent people will develop for themselves, and there will be little difficulty about this particular class of work to differentiate it from any other sort of necessary labour.

One passes, therefore, with no definite transition from the root problem of agricultural production in the Great State to the wider problem of labour in general.

A glance at the countryside conjures up a picture of extensive tracts being cultivated on a wholesale scale, of skilled men directing great ploughing, sowing, and reaping plants, steering cattle and sheep about carefully designed enclosures, constructing channels and guiding sewage towards its proper destination on the fields, and then of added crowds of genial people coming out to spray trees and plants, pick and sort and pack fruits. But who are these people? Why are they in particular doing this for the community? Is our Great State still to have a majority of people glad to do commonplace work for mediocre wages, and will there be other individuals who will ride by on the roads, sympathetically, no doubt, but with a secret sense of superiority? So one opens the general problem of the organisation for labour.

I am careful here to write “for labour” and not “of Labour,”

because it is entirely against the spirit of the Great State that any section of the people should be set aside as a class to do most of the monotonous, laborious, and uneventful things for the community. That is practically the present arrangement, and that, with a quickened sense of the need of breaking people in to such a life, is the ideal of the bureaucratic Servile State to which, in common with the Conservators, we are bitterly opposed. And here I know I am at my most difficult, most speculative, and most revolutionary point. We who look to the Great State as the present aim of human progress believe a state may solve its economic problem without any section whatever of the community being condemned to lifelong labour. And contemporary events, the phenomena of recent strikes, the phenomena of sabotage, carry out the suggestion that in a community where nearly everyone reads extensively travels about, sees the charm and variety in the lives of prosperous and leisurely people, no class is going to submit permanently to modern labour conditions without extreme resistance, even after the most elaborate Labour Conciliation schemes and social minima are established Things are altogether too stimulating to the imagination nowadays. Of all impossible social dreams that belief in tranquillised and submissive and virtuous Labour is the wildest of all. No sort of modern men will stand it. They will as a class do any vivid and disastrous thing rather than stand it. Even the illiterate peasant will only endure lifelong toil under the stimulus of private ownership and with the consolations of religion; and the typical modern worker has neither the one nor the other. For a time, indeed, for a generation or so even, a labour mass may be fooled or coerced, but in the end it will break out against its subjection, even if it breaks out to a general social catastrophe.

We have, in fact, to invent for the Great State, if we are to suppose any Great State at all, an economic method without any specific labour class. If we cannot do so, we had better throw ourselves in with the Conservators forthwith, for they are right and we are absurd. Adhesion to the conception of the Great State involves adhesion to the belief that the amount of regular labour, skilled and unskilled, required to produce everything necessary for everyone living in its highly elaborate civilisation may, under modern conditions, with the help of scientific economy and power-

producing machinery, be reduced to so small a number of working hours per head in proportion to the average life of the citizen, as to be met as regards the greater moiety of it by the payment of wages over and above the gratuitous share of each individual in the general output; and as regards the residue, a residue of rough, disagreeable, and monotonous operations, by some form of conscription, which will demand a year or so, let us say, of each person's life for the public service. If we reflect that in the contemporary state there is already food, shelter, and clothing of a sort for everyone, in spite of the fact that enormous numbers of people do no productive work at all because they are too well off, that great numbers are out of work, great numbers by bad nutrition and training incapable of work, and that an enormous amount of the work actually done is the overlapping production of competitive trade and work upon such politically necessary but socially useless things as Dreadnoughts, it becomes clear that the absolutely unavoidable labour in a modern community and its ratio to the available vitality must be of very small account indeed. But all this has still to be worked out even in the most general terms. An intelligent science of economics should afford standards and technicalities and systematised facts upon which to base an estimate. The point was raised a quarter of a century ago by Morris in his "News from Nowhere," and indeed it was already discussed by More in his "Utopia." Our contemporary economics is, however, still a foolish, pretentious pseudo-science, a festering mass of assumptions about buying and selling and wages-paying, and one would as soon consult Bradshaw or the works of Dumas as our orthodox professors of economics for any light upon this fundamental matter.

Moreover, we believe that there is a real disposition to work in human beings, and that in a well-equipped community, in which no one was under an unavoidable urgency to work, the greater proportion of productive operations could be made sufficiently attractive to make them desirable occupations. As for the irreducible residue of undesirable toil, I owe to my friend the late Professor William James this suggestion of a general conscription and a period of public service for everyone, a suggestion which greatly occupied his thoughts during the last years of his life. He was profoundly

convinced of the high educational and disciplinary value of universal compulsory military service, and of the need of something more than a sentimental ideal of duty in public life. He would have had the whole population taught in the schools and prepared for this year (or whatever period it had to be) of patient and heroic labour, the men for the mines, the fisheries, the sanitary services, railway routine, the women for hospital, and perhaps educational work, and so forth. He believed such a service would permeate the whole state with a sense of civic obligation….

But behind all these conceivable triumphs of scientific adjustment and direction lies the infinitely greater difficulty on our way to the Great State, the difficulty of direction. What sort of people are going to distribute the work of the community, decide what is or is not to be done, determine wages, initiate enterprises; and under what sort of criticism, checks, and controls are they going to do this delicate and extensive work? With this we open the whole problem of government, administration and officialdom.

The Marxist and the democratic socialist generally shirk this riddle altogether; the Fabian conception of a bureaucracy, official to the extent of being a distinct class and cult, exists only as a starting-point for healthy repudiations. Whatever else may be worked out in the subtler answers our later time prepares, nothing can be clearer than that the necessary machinery of government must be elaborately organised to prevent the development of a managing caste in permanent conspiracy, tacit or expressed, against the normal man. Quite apart from the danger of unsympathetic and fatally irritating government there can be little or no doubt that the method of making men officials for life is quite the worst way of getting official duties done. Officialdom is a species of incompetence. This rather priggish, teachable, and well-behaved sort of boy, who is attracted by the prospect of assured income and a pension to win his way into the Civil Service, and who then by varied assiduities rises to a sort of timidly vindictive importance, is the last person to whom we would willingly entrust the vital interests of a nation. We want people who know about life at large, who will come to the public service seasoned by experience, not people who have specialised and acquired that sort of knowledge which is called, in much the same

spirit of qualification as one speaks of German Silver, Expert Knowledge. It is clear our public servants and officials must be so only for their periods of service. They must be taught by life, and not "trained" by pedagogues. In every continuing job there is a time when one is crude and blundering, a time, the best time, when one is full of the freshness and happiness of doing well, and a time when routine has largely replaced the stimulus of novelty. The Great State will, I feel convinced, regard changes in occupation as a proper circumstance in the life of every citizen; it will value a certain amateurishness in its service, and prefer it to the trite omniscience of the stale official. On that score of the necessity or versatility, if on no other score, I am flatly antagonistic to the conceptions of "Guild Socialism" which have arisen recently out of the impact of Mr. Penty and Syndicalism upon the uneasy intelligence of Mr. Orage.

And since the Fabian socialists have created a widespread belief that in their projected state every man will be necessarily a public servant or a public pupil because the state will be the only employer and the only educator, it is necessary to point out that the Great State presupposes neither the one nor the other. It is a form of liberty and not a form of enslavement. We agree with the older forms of socialism in supposing an initial proprietary independence in every citizen. The citizen is a shareholder in the state. Above that and after that, he works if he chooses. But if he likes to live on his minimum and do nothing — though such a type of character is scarcely conceivable — he can. His earning is his own surplus. Above the basal economics of the Great State we assume with confidence there will be a huge surplus of free spending upon extra-collective ends. Public organisations, for example, may distribute impartially and possibly even print and make ink and paper for the newspapers in the Great State, but they will certainly not own them. Only doctrine-driven men have ever ventured to think they would. Nor will the state control writers and artists, for example, nor the stage — though it may build and own theatres — the tailor, the dressmaker, the restaurant cook, an enormous multitude of other busy workers-for-preferences. In the Great State of the future, as in the life of the more prosperous classes of to-day, the greater proportion of occupations and activities will be private and free.

I would like to underline in the most emphatic way that it is possible to have this Great State, essentially socialistic, owning and running the land and all the great public services, sustaining everybody in absolute freedom at a certain minimum of comfort and well-being, and still leaving most of the interests, amusements, and adornments of the individual life, and all sorts of collective concerns, social and political discussion, religious worship, philosophy, and the like to the free personal initiatives of entirely unofficial people.

This still leaves the problem of systematic knowledge and research, and all the associated problems of aesthetic, moral, and intellectual initiative to be worked out in detail; but at least it dispels the nightmare of a collective mind organised as a branch of the civil service, with authors, critics, artists, scientific investigators appointed in a phrensy of wire-pulling — as nowadays the British state appoints its bishops for the care of its collective soul.

Let me now indicate how these general views affect the problem of family organisation and the problem of women's freedom. In the Normal Social Life the position of women is easily defined. They are subordinated but important. The citizenship rests with the man, and the woman's relation to the community as a whole is through a man. But within that limitation her functions as mother, wife, and home-maker are cardinal. It is one of the entirely unforeseen consequences that have arisen from the decay of the Normal Social Life and its autonomous home that great numbers of women while still subordinate have become profoundly unimportant They have ceased to a very large extent to bear children, they have dropped most of their home-making arts, they no longer nurse nor educate such children as they have, and they have taken on no new functions that compensate for these dwindling activities of the domestic interior. That subjugation which is a vital condition to the Normal Social Life does not seem to be necessary to the Great State. It may or it may not be necessary. And here we enter upon the most difficult of all our problems. The whole spirit of the Great State is against any avoidable subjugation; but the whole spirit of that science which will animate the Great State forbids us to ignore woman's functional and temperamental differences. A new status has still to be invented for women, a Feminine Citizenship differing in certain respects from the

normal masculine citizenship. Its conditions remain to be worked out. We have indeed to work out an entire new system of relations between men and women, that will be free from servitude, aggression, provocation, or parasitism. The public Endowment of Motherhood as such may perhaps be the first broad suggestion of the quality of this new status. A new type of family, a mutual alliance in the place of a subjugation, is perhaps the most startling of all the conceptions which confront us directly we turn ourselves definitely towards the Great State.

And as our conception of the Great State grows, so we shall begin to realise the nature of the problem of transition, the problem of what we may best do in the confusion of the present time to elucidate and render practicable this new phase of human organisation. Of one thing there can be no doubt, that whatever increases thought and knowledge moves towards our goal; and equally certain is it that nothing leads thither that tampers with the freedom of spirit, the independence of soul in common men and women. In many directions, therefore, the believer in the Great State will display a jealous watchfulness of contemporary developments rather than a premature constructiveness. We must watch wealth; but quite as necessary it is to watch the legislator, who mistakes propaganda for progress and class exasperation to satisfy class vindictiveness for construction. Supremely important is it to keep discussion open, to tolerate no limitation on the freedom of speech, writing, art and book distribution, and to sustain the utmost liberty of criticism upon all contemporary institutions and processes.

This briefly is the programme of problems and effort to which my idea of the Great State, as the goal of contemporary progress, leads me.

The diagram on shows compactly the gist of the preceding discussion; it gives the view of social development upon which I base all my political conceptions.

produces an increasing surplus of energy and opportunity, more particularly under modern conditions of scientific organisation and power production; and this through the operation of rent and of usury tends to

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        |—— —— —— —— —— —— —— —|
(a) release and (b) expropriate
        | |
an increasing proportion of the population to become:
        | |
(a) A LEISURE CLASS and (b) A LABOUR CLASS
  under no urgent compulsion divorced from the land and
        to work living upon uncertain wages
|3 |2 |1 |1 2 3|
| | which may degenerate degenerate | |
| | into a waster class into a sweated, | |
| | \ overworked, | |
| | \ violently | |
| | \ resentful | |
| | \ and destructive | |
| | \ rebel class | |
| | \ / | |
| | and produce a | |
| | SOCIAL DEBACLE | |
| | | |
| which may become which may become |
| a Governing the controlled |
| Class (with waster regimented |
| elements) in and disciplined |
| an unprogressive Labour Class of |
| Bureaucratic <—— —— —— ——> an unprogressive |
| SERVILE STATE Bureaucratic |
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which may become which may be
the whole community rendered needless
of the GREAT STATE by a universal
working under various compulsory year
motives and inducements or so of labour
but not constantly, service together
nor permanently with a scientific
nor unwillingly organisation

of production,
and so reabsorbed
by re-endowment
into the Leisure
Class of the
GREAT STATE

THE COMMON SENSE OF WARFARE

Sec. 1

CONSCRIPTION

I want to say as compactly as possible why I do not believe that conscription would increase the military efficiency of this country, and why I think it might be a disastrous step for this country to take.

By conscription I mean the compulsory enlistment for a term of service in the Army of the whole manhood of the country. And I am writing now from the point of view merely of military effectiveness. The educational value of a universal national service, the idea which as a Socialist I support very heartily, of making every citizen give a year or so of his life to our public needs, are matters quite outside my present discussion. What I am writing about now is this idea that the country can be strengthened for war by making every man in it a bit of a soldier.

And I want the reader to be perfectly clear about the position I assume with regard to war preparations generally. I am not pleading for peace when there is no peace; this country has been constantly threatened during the past decade, and is threatened now by gigantic hostile preparations; it is our common interest to be and to keep at the maximum of military efficiency possible to us. My case is not merely that conscription will not contribute to that, but that it would be a monstrous diversion of our energy and emotion and material resources from the things that need urgently to be done. It would be like a boxer filling his arms with empty boxing-gloves and then rushing — his face protruding over the armful — into the fray.

Let me make my attack on this prevalent and increasing superstition of the British need for conscription in two lines, one following the other. For, firstly, it is true that Britain at the present time is no more capable of creating such a conscript army as France or Germany possesses in the next ten years than she is of covering her soil with a tropical forest, and, secondly, it is equally true that if she had such an army it would not be of the slightest use to her. For the conscript armies in which Europe still so largely believes are only of use against conscript armies and adversaries who will consent to play the rules of the German war game; they are, if we chose to determine they shall be, if we chose to deal with them as

they should be dealt with, as out of date as a Roman legion or a Zulu impi.

Now, first, as to the impossibility of getting our great army into existence. All those people who write and talk so glibly in favour of conscription seem to forget that to take a common man, and more particularly a townsman, clap him into a uniform and put a rifle in his hand does not make a soldier. He has to be taught not only the use of his weapons, but the methods of a strange and unfamiliar life out of doors; he has to be not simply drilled, but accustomed to the difficult modern necessities of open order fighting, of taking cover, of entrenchment, and he has to have created within him, so that it will stand the shock of seeing men killed round about him, confidence in himself, in his officers, and the methods and weapons of his side. Body, mind, and imagination have all to be trained — and they need trainers. The conversion of a thousand citizens into anything better than a sheep-like militia demands the enthusiastic services of scores of able and experienced instructors who know what war is; the creation of a universal army demands the services of many scores of thousands of not simply "old soldiers," but keen, expert, modern-minded *officers*.

Without these officers our citizen army would be a hydra without heads.
And we haven't these officers. We haven't a tithe of them.

We haven't these officers, and we can't make them in a hurry. It takes at least five years to make an officer who knows his trade. It needs a special gift, in addition to that knowledge, to make a man able to impart it. And our Empire is at a peculiar disadvantage in the matter, because India and our other vast areas of service and opportunity overseas drain away a large proportion of just those able and educated men who would in other countries gravitate towards the army. Such small wealth of officers as we have — and I am quite prepared to believe that the officers we have are among the very best in the world — are scarcely enough to go round our present supply of private soldiers. And the best and most brilliant among this scanty supply are being drawn upon more and more for aerial work, and for

all that increasing quantity of highly specialised services which are manifestly destined to be the real fighting forces of the future. We cannot spare the best of our officers for training conscripts; we shall get the dismallest results from the worst of them; and so even if it were a vital necessity for our country to have an army of all its manhood now, we could not have it, and it would be a mere last convulsion to attempt to make it with the means at our disposal.

But that brings me to my second contention, which is that we do not want such an army. I believe that the vast masses of men in uniform maintained by the Continental Powers at the present time are enormously overrated as fighting machines. I see Germany in the likeness of a boxer with a mailed fist as big as and rather heavier than its body, and I am convinced that when the moment comes for that mailed fist to be lifted, the whole disproportionate system will topple over. The military ascendancy of the future lies with the country that dares to experiment most, that experiments best, and meanwhile keeps its actual fighting force fit and admirable and small and flexible. The experience of war during the last fifteen years has been to show repeatedly the enormous defensive power of small, scientifically handled bodies of men. These huge conscript armies are made up not of masses of military muscle, but of a huge proportion of military fat. Their one way of fighting will be to fall upon an antagonist with all their available weight, and if he is mobile and dexterous enough to decline that issue of adiposity they will become a mere embarrassment to their own people. Modern weapons and modern contrivance are continually decreasing the number of men who can be employed efficiently upon a length of front. I doubt if there is any use for more than 400,000 men upon the whole Franco-Belgian frontier at the present time. Such an army, properly supplied, could — so far as terrestrial forces are concerned — hold that frontier against any number of assailants. The bigger the forces brought against it the sooner the exhaustion of the attacking power. Now, it is for employment upon that frontier, and for no other conceivable purpose in the world, that Great Britain is asked to create a gigantic conscript army.

And if too big an army is likely to be a mere encumbrance in war, it is perhaps even a still graver blunder to maintain one during that

conflict of preparation which is at present the European substitute for actual hostilities. It consumes. It produces nothing. It not only eats and drinks and wears out its clothes and withdraws men from industry, but under the stress of invention it needs constantly to be re-armed and freshly equipped at an expenditure proportionate to its size. So long as the conflict of preparation goes on, then the bigger the army your adversary maintains under arms the bigger is his expenditure and the less his earning power. The less the force you employ to keep your adversary over-armed, and the longer you remain at peace with him while he is over-armed, the greater is your advantage. There is only one profitable use for any army, and that is victorious conflict. Every army that is not engaged in victorious conflict is an organ of national expenditure, an exhausting growth in the national body. And for Great Britain an attempt to create a conscript army would involve the very maximum of moral and material exhaustion with the minimum of military efficiency. It would be a disastrous waste of resources that we need most urgently for other things.

Sec. 2

In the popular imagination the Dreadnought is still the one instrument of naval war. We count our strength in Dreadnoughts and Super-Dreadnoughts, and so long as we are spending our national resources upon them faster than any other country, if we sink at least £160 for every £100 sunk in these obsolescent monsters by Germany, we have a reassuring sense of keeping ahead and being thoroughly safe. This confidence in big, very expensive battleships is, I believe and hope, shared by the German Government and by Europe generally, but it is, nevertheless, a very unreasonable confidence, and it may easily lead us into the most tragic of national disillusionments.

We of the general public are led to suppose that the next naval war — if ever we engage in another naval war — will begin with a decisive fleet action. The plan of action is presented with an alluring simplicity. Our adversary will come out to us, in a ratio of 10 to 16, or in some ratio still more advantageous to us, according as our adversary happens to be this Power or that Power, there will be some tremendous business with guns and torpedoes, and our admirals will

return victorious to discuss the discipline and details of the battle and each other's little weaknesses in the monthly magazines. This is a desirable but improbable anticipation. No hostile Power is in the least likely to send out any battleships at all against our invincible Dreadnoughts. They will promenade the seas, always in the ratio of 16 or more to 10, looking for fleets securely tucked away out of reach. They will not, of course, go too near the enemy's coast, on account of mines, and, meanwhile, our cruisers will hunt the enemy's commerce into port.

Then other things will happen.

The enemy we shall discover using unsportsmanlike devices against our capital ships. Unless he is a lunatic, he will prove to be much stronger in reality than he is on paper in the matter of submarines, torpedo-boats, waterplanes and aeroplanes. These are things cheap to make and easy to conceal. He will be richly stocked with ingenious devices for getting explosives up to these two million pound triumphs of our naval engineering. On the cloudy and foggy nights so frequent about these islands he will have extraordinary chances, and sooner or later, unless we beat him thoroughly in the air above and in the waters beneath, for neither of which proceedings we are prepared, some of these chances will come off, and we shall lose a Dreadnought.

It will be a poor consolation if an ill-advised and stranded Zeppelin or so enlivens the quiet of the English countryside by coming down and capitulating. It will be a trifling countershock to wing an aeroplane or so, or blow a torpedo-boat out of the water. Our Dreadnoughts will cease to be a source of unmitigated confidence A second battleship disaster will excite the Press extremely. A third will probably lead to a retirement of the battle fleet to some east coast harbour, a refuge liable to aeroplanes, or to the west coast of Ireland — and the real naval war, which, as I have argued in an earlier chapter, will be a war of destroyers, submarines and hydroplanes, will begin. Incidentally a commerce destroyer may take advantage of the retirement of our fleet to raid our trade routes.

We shall then realise that the actual naval weapons are these smaller weapons, and especially the destroyer, the submarine, and the waterplane — the waterplane most of all, because of its

possibilities of a comparative bigness — in the hands of competent and daring men. And I find myself, as a patriotic Englishman, more and more troubled by doubts whether we are as certainly superior to any possible adversary in these essential things as we are in the matter of Dreadnoughts. I find myself awake at nights, after a day much agitated by a belligerent Press, wondering whether the real Empire of the Sea may not even now have slipped out of our hands while our attention has been fixed on our stately procession of giant warships, while our country has been in a dream, hypnotised by the Dreadnought idea.

For some years there seems to have been a complete arrest of the British imagination in naval and military matters. That declining faculty, never a very active or well-exercised one, staggered up to the conception of a Dreadnought, and seems now to have sat down for good. Its reply to every demand upon it has been "more Dreadnoughts." The future, as we British seem to see it, is an avenue of Dreadnoughts and Super-Dreadnoughts and Super-Super-Dreadnoughts, getting bigger and bigger in a kind of inverted perspective. But the ascendancy of fleets of great battleships in naval warfare, like the phase of huge conscript armies upon land, draws to its close. The progress of invention makes both the big ship and the army crowd more and more vulnerable and less and less effective. A new phase of warfare opens beyond the vista of our current programmes. Smaller, more numerous and various and mobile weapons and craft and contrivances, manned by daring and highly skilled men, must ultimately take the place of those massivenesses. We are entering upon a period in which the invention of methods and material for war is likely to be more rapid and diversified than it has ever been before, and the question of what we have been doing behind the splendid line of our Dreadnoughts to meet the demands of this new phase is one of supreme importance. Knowing, as I do, the imaginative indolence of my countrymen, it is a question I face with something very near to dismay.

But it is one that has to be faced. The question that should occupy our directing minds now is no longer "How can we get more Dreadnoughts?" but "What have we to follow the Dreadnought?"

To the Power that has most nearly guessed the answer to that

riddle belongs the future Empire of the Seas. It is interesting to guess for oneself and to speculate upon the possibility of a kind of armoured mother-ship for waterplanes and submarines and torpedo craft, but necessarily that would be a mere journalistic and amateurish guessing. I am not guessing, but asking urgent questions. What force, what council, how many imaginative and inventive men has the country got at the present time employed not casually but professionally in anticipating the new strategy, the new tactics, the new material, the new training that invention is so rapidly rendering necessary? I have the gravest doubts whether we are doing anything systematic at all in this way.

Now, it is the tremendous seriousness of this deficiency to which I want to call attention. Great Britain has in her armour a gap more dangerous and vital than any mere numerical insufficiency of men or ships. She is short of minds. Behind its strength of current armaments to-day, a strength that begins to evaporate and grow obsolete from the very moment it comes into being, a country needs more and more this profounder strength of intellectual and creative activity.

This country most of all, which was left so far behind in the production of submarines, airships and aeroplanes, must be made to realise the folly of its trust in established things. Each new thing we take up more belatedly and reluctantly than its predecessor. The time is not far distant when we shall be "caught" lagging unless we change all this.

We need a new arm to our service; we need it urgently, and we shall need it more and more, and that arm is Research. We need to place inquiry and experiment upon a new footing altogether, to enlist for them and organise them, to secure the pick of our young chemists and physicists and engineers, and to get them to work systematically upon the anticipation and preparation of our future war equipment. We need a service of invention to recover our lost lead in these matters.

And it is because I feel so keenly the want of such a service, and the want of great sums of money for it, that I deplore the disposition to waste millions upon the hasty creation of a universal service army and upon excessive Dreadnoughting. I am convinced that we are

spending upon the things of yesterday the money that is sorely needed for the things of to-morrow.

With our eyes averted obstinately from the future we are backing towards disaster.

Sec. 3

In the present armament competition there are certain considerations that appear to be almost universally overlooked, and which tend to modify our views profoundly of what should be done. Ultimately they will affect our entire expenditure upon war preparation.

Expenditure upon preparation for war falls, roughly, into two classes: there is expenditure upon things that have a diminishing value, things that grow old-fashioned and wear out, such as fortifications, ships, guns, and ammunition, and expenditure upon things that have a permanent and even growing value, such as organised technical research, military and naval experiment, and the education and increase of a highly trained class of war experts.

I want to suggest that we are spending too much money in the former and not enough in the latter direction We are buying enormous quantities of stuff that will be old iron in twenty years' time, and we are starving ourselves of that which cannot be bought or made in a hurry, and upon which the strength of nations ultimately rests altogether; we are failing to get and maintain a sufficiency of highly educated and developed men inspired by a tradition of service and efficiency.

No doubt we must be armed to-day, but every penny we divert from men-making and knowledge-making to armament beyond the margin of bare safety is a sacrifice of the future to the present. Every penny we divert from national wealth-making to national weapons means so much less in resources, so much more strain in the years ahead. But a great system of laboratories and experimental stations, a systematic, industrious increase of men of the officer-aviator type, of the research student type, of the engineer type, of the naval-officer type, of the skilled sergeant-instructor type, a methodical development of a common sentiment and a common zeal among such a body of men, is an added strength that grows greater from the moment you call it into being. In our schools and military and naval

colleges lies the proper field for expenditure upon preparation for our ultimate triumph in war. All other war preparation is temporary but that.

This would be obvious in any case, but what makes insistence upon it peculiarly urgent is the manifestly temporary nature of the present European situation and the fact that within quite a small number of years our war front will be turned in a direction quite other than that to which it faces now.

For a decade and more all Western Europe has been threatened by German truculence; the German, inflamed by the victories of 1870 and 1871, has poured out his energy in preparation for war by sea and land, and it has been the difficult task of France and England to keep the peace with him. The German has been the provocator and leader of all modern armaments. But that is not going on. It is already more than half over. If we can avert war with Germany for twenty years, we shall never have to fight Germany. In twenty years' time we shall be talking no more of sending troops to fight side by side on the frontier of France; we shall be talking of sending troops to fight side by side with French and Germans on the frontiers of Poland.

And the justification of that prophecy is a perfectly plain one. The German has filled up his country, his birth-rate falls, and the very vigour of his military and naval preparations, by raising the cost of living, hurries it down. His birth-rate falls as ours and the Frenchman's falls, because he is nearing his maximum of population It is an inevitable consequence of his geographical conditions. But eastward of him, from his eastern boundaries to the Pacific, is a country already too populous to conquer, but with possibilities of further expansion that are gigantic. The Slav will be free to increase and multiply for another hundred years. Eastward and southward bristle the Slavs, and behind the Slavs are the colossal possibilities of Asia.

Even German vanity, even the preposterous ambitions that spring from that brief triumph of Sedan, must awaken at last to these manifest facts, and on the day when Germany is fully awake we may count the Western European Armageddon as "off" and turn our eyes to the greater needs that will arise beyond Germany. The old game

will be over and a quite different new game will begin in international relations.

During these last few years of worry and bluster across the North Sea we have a little forgotten India in our calculations. As Germany faces round eastward again, as she must do before very long, we shall find India resuming its former central position in our ideas of international politics. With India we may pursue one of two policies: we may keep her divided and inefficient for war, as she is at present, and hold her and own her and defend her as a prize, or we may arm her and assist her development into a group of quasi-independent English-speaking States — in which case she will become our partner and possibly at last even our senior partner. But that is by the way. What I am pointing out now is that whether we fight Germany or not, a time is drawing near when Germany will cease to be our war objective and we shall cease to be Germany's war objective, and when there will have to be a complete revision of our military and naval equipment in relation to those remoter, vaster Asiatic possibilities.

Now that possible campaign away there, whatever its particular nature may be, which will be shaping our military and naval policy in the year 1933 or thereabouts, will certainly be quite different in its conditions from the possible campaign in Europe and the narrow seas which determines all our preparations now. We cannot contemplate throwing an army of a million British conscripts on to the North-West Frontier of India, and a fleet of Super-Dreadnoughts will be ineffective either in Thibet or the Baltic shallows. All our present stuff, indeed, will be on the scrap-heap then. What will not be on the scrap-heap will be such enterprise and special science and inventive power as we have got together. That is versatile. That is good to have now and that will be good to have then.

Everyone nowadays seems demanding increased expenditure upon war preparation. I will follow the fashion. I will suggest that we have the courage to restrain and even to curtail our monstrous outlay upon war material and that we begin to spend lavishly upon military and naval education and training, upon laboratories and experimental stations, upon chemical and physical research and all that makes knowledge and leading, and that we increase our expenditure upon

these things as fast as we can up to ten or twelve millions a year. At present we spend about eighteen and a half millions a year upon education out of our national funds, but fourteen and a half of this, supplemented by about as much again from local sources, is consumed in merely elementary teaching. So that we spend only about four millions a year of public money on every sort of research and education above the simple democratic level. Nearly thirty millions for the foundations and only a seventh for the edifice of will and science! Is it any marvel that we are a badly organised nation, a nation of very widely diffused intelligence and very second-rate guidance and achievement? Is it any marvel that directly we are tested by such a new development as that of aeroplanes or airships we show ourselves in comparison with the more braced-up nations of the Continent backward, unorganised unimaginative, unenterprising?

Our supreme want to-day, if we are to continue a belligerent people, is a greater supply of able educated men, versatile men capable of engines, of aviation, of invention, of leading and initiative. We need more laboratories, more scholarships out of the general mass of elementary scholars, a quasi-military discipline in our colleges and a great array of new colleges, a much readier access to instruction in aviation and military and naval practice. And if we are to have national service let us begin with it where it is needed most and where it is least likely to disorganise our social and economic life; let us begin at the top. Let us begin with the educated and propertied classes and exact a couple of years' service in a destroyer or a waterplane, or an airship, or a, research laboratory, or a training camp, from the sons of everybody who, let us say, pays income tax without deductions. Let us mix with these a big proportion — a proportion we may increase steadily — of keen scholarship men from the elementary schools. Such a braced-up class as we should create in this way would give us the realities of military power, which are enterprise, knowledge, and invention; and at the same time it would add to and not subtract from the economic wealth of the community Make men; that is the only sane, permanent preparation for war. So we should develop a strength and create a tradition that would not rust nor grow old-fashioned in all the years to come.

THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

Circumstances have made me think a good deal at different times about the business of writing novels, and what it means, and is, and may be; and I was a professional critic of novels long before I wrote them. I have been writing novels, or writing about novels, for the last twenty years. It seems only yesterday that I wrote a review — the first long and appreciative review he had — of Mr. Joseph Conrad's "Almayer's Folly" in the *Saturday Review*. When a man has focussed so much of his life upon the novel, it is not reasonable to expect him to take too modest or apologetic a view of it. I consider the novel an important and necessary thing indeed in that complicated system of uneasy adjustments and readjustments which is modern civilisation I make very high and wide claims for it. In many directions I do not think we can get along without it.

Now this, I know, is not the usually received opinion. There is, I am aware, the theory that the novel is wholly and solely a means of relaxation. In spite of manifest facts, that was the dominant view of the great period that we now in our retrospective way speak of as the Victorian, and it still survives to this day. It is the man's theory of the novel rather than the woman's. One may call it the Weary Giant theory. The reader is represented as a man, burthened, toiling, worn. He has been in his office from ten to four, with perhaps only two hours' interval at his club for lunch; or he has been playing golf; or he has been waiting about and voting in the House; or he has been fishing; or he has been disputing a point of law; or writing a sermon; or doing one of a thousand other of the grave important things which constitute the substance of a prosperous man's life. Now at last comes the little precious interval of leisure, and the Weary Giant takes up a book. Perhaps he is vexed: he may have been bunkered, his line may have been entangled in the trees, his favourite investment may have slumped, or the judge have had indigestion and been extremely rude to him. He wants to forget the troublesome realities of life. He wants to be taken out of himself, to be cheered, consoled, amused — above all, amused. He doesn't want ideas, he doesn't want facts; above all, he doesn't want — *Problems*. He wants

to dream of the bright, thin, gay excitements of a phantom world — in which he can be hero — of horses ridden and lace worn and princesses rescued and won. He wants pictures of funny slums, and entertaining paupers, and laughable longshoremen, and kindly impulses making life sweet. He wants romance without its defiance, and humour without its sting; and the business of the novelist, he holds, is to supply this cooling refreshment. That is the Weary Giant theory of the novel. It ruled British criticism up to the period of the Boer war — and then something happened to quite a lot of us, and it has never completely recovered its old predominance. Perhaps it will; perhaps something else may happen to prevent its ever doing so.

Both fiction and criticism to-day are in revolt against that tired giant, the prosperous Englishman. I cannot think of a single writer of any distinction to-day, unless it is Mr. W.W. Jacobs, who is content merely to serve the purpose of those slippered hours. So far from the weary reader being a decently tired giant, we realise that he is only an inexpressibly lax, slovenly and under-trained giant, and we are all out with one accord resolved to exercise his higher ganglia in every possible way. And so I will say no more of the idea that the novel is merely a harmless opiate for the vacant hours of prosperous men. As a matter of fact, it never has been, and by its nature I doubt if it ever can be.

I do not think that women have ever quite succumbed to the tired giant attitude in their reading. Women are more serious, not only about life, but about books. No type or kind of woman is capable of that lounging, defensive stupidity which is the basis of the tired giant attitude, and all through the early ‘nineties, during which the respectable frivolity of Great Britain left its most enduring marks upon our literature, there was a rebel undertow of earnest and aggressive writing and reading, supported chiefly by women and supplied very largely by women, which gave the lie to the prevailing trivial estimate of fiction. Among readers, women and girls and young men at least will insist upon having their novels significant and real, and it is to these perpetually renewed elements in the public that the novelist must look for his continuing emancipation from the wearier and more massive influences at work in contemporary British

life.

And if the novel is to be recognised as something more than a relaxation, it has also, I think, to be kept free from the restrictions imposed upon it by the fierce pedantries of those who would define a general form for it. Every art nowadays must steer its way between the rocks of trivial and degrading standards and the whirlpool of arbitrary and irrational criticism. Whenever criticism of any art becomes specialised and professional whenever a class of adjudicators is brought into existence, those adjudicators are apt to become as a class distrustful of their immediate impressions, and anxious for methods of comparison between work and work, they begin to emulate the classifications and exact measurements of a science, and to set up ideals and rules as data for such classification and measurements. They develop an alleged sense of technique, which is too often no more than the attempt to exact a laboriousness of method, or to insist upon peculiarities of method which impress the professional critic not so much as being merits as being meritorious. This sort of thing has gone very far with the critical discussion both of the novel and the play. You have all heard that impressive dictum that some particular theatrical display, although moving, interesting, and continually entertaining from start to finish, was for occult technical reasons "not a play," and in the same way you are continually having your appreciation of fiction dashed by the mysterious parallel condemnation, that the story you like "isn't a novel." The novel has been treated as though its form was as well-defined as the sonnet. Some year or so ago, for example, there was a quite serious discussion, which began, I believe, in a weekly paper devoted to the interests of various nonconformist religious organisations, about the proper length for a novel. The critic was to begin his painful duties with a yard measure. The matter was taken up with profound gravity by the *Westminster Gazette*, and a considerable number of literary men and women were circularised and asked to state, in the face of "Tom Jones," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "The Shabby-Genteel Story," and "Bleak House," just exactly how long the novel ought to be. Our replies varied according to the civility of our natures, but the mere attempt to raise the question shows, I think, how widespread among the editorial,

paragraph-writing, opinion-making sort of people is this notion of prescribing a definite length and a definite form for the novel. In the newspaper correspondence that followed, our friend the weary giant made a transitory appearance again. We were told the novel ought to be long enough for him to take up after dinner and finish before his whisky at eleven.

That was obviously a half-forgotten echo of Edgar Allan Poe's discussion of the short story. Edgar Allan Poe was very definite upon the point that the short story should be finished at a sitting. But the novel and short story are two entirely different things, and the train of reasoning that made the American master limit the short story to about an hour of reading as a maximum, does not apply to the longer work. A short story is, or should be, a simple thing; it aims at producing one single, vivid effect; it has to seize the attention at the outset, and never relaxing, gather it together more and more until the climax is reached. The limits of the human capacity to attend closely therefore set a limit to it; it must explode and finish before interruption occurs or fatigue sets in. But the novel I hold to be a discursive thing; it is not a single interest, but a woven tapestry of interests; one is drawn on first by this affection and curiosity, and then by that; it is something to return to, and I do not see that we can possibly set any limit to its extent. The distinctive value of the novel among written works of art is in characterisation, and the charm of a well-conceived character lies, not in knowing its destiny, but in watching its proceedings. For my own part, I will confess that I find all the novels of Dickens, long as they are, too short for me. I am sorry they do not flow into one another more than they do. I wish Micawber and Dick Swiveller and Sairey Gamp turned up again in other novels than their own, just as Shakespeare ran the glorious glow of Falstaff through a group of plays. But Dickens tried this once when he carried on the Pickwick Club into "Master Humphrey's Clock." That experiment was unsatisfactory, and he did not attempt anything of the sort again. Following on the days of Dickens, the novel began to contract, to subordinate characterisation to story and description to drama; considerations of a sordid nature, I am told, had to do with that; something about a guinea and a half and six shillings with which we will not concern ourselves — but I rejoice to

see many signs to-day that that phase of narrowing and restriction is over, and that there is every encouragement for a return towards a laxer, more spacious form of novel-writing. The movement is partly of English origin, a revolt against those more exacting and cramping conceptions of artistic perfection to which I will recur in a moment, and a return to the lax freedom of form, the rambling discursiveness, the right to roam, of the earlier English novel, of "Tristram Shandy" and of "Tom Jones"; and partly it comes from abroad, and derives a stimulus from such bold and original enterprises as that of Monsieur Rolland in his "Jean Christophe." Its double origin involves a double nature; for while the English spirit is towards discursiveness and variety, the new French movement is rather towards exhaustiveness. Mr. Arnold Bennett has experimented in both forms of amplitude. His superb "Old Wives' Tale," wandering from person to person and from scene to scene, is by far the finest "long novel" that has been written in English in the English fashion in this generation, and now in "Clayhanger" and its promised collaterals, he undertakes that complete, minute, abundant presentation of the growth and modification of one or two individual minds, which is the essential characteristic of the Continental movement towards the novel of amplitude. While the "Old Wives' Tale" is discursive, "Clayhanger" is exhaustive; he gives us both types of the new movement in perfection.

I name "Jean Christophe" as a sort of archetype in this connection, because it is just at present very much in our thoughts by reason of the admirable translation Mr. Cannan is giving us; but there is a greater predecessor to this comprehensive and spectacular treatment of a single mind and its impressions and ideas, or of one or two associated minds, that comes to us now *via* Mr. Bennett and Mr. Cannan from France. The great original of all this work is that colossal last unfinished book of Flaubert, "Bouvard et Pécuchet." Flaubert, the bulk of whose life was spent upon the most austere and restrained fiction — Turgenev was not more austere and restrained — broke out at last into this gay, sad miracle of intellectual abundance. It is not extensively read in this country; it is not yet, I believe, translated into English; but there it is — and if it is new to the reader I make him this present of the secret of a book that is a

precious wilderness of wonderful reading. But if Flaubert is really the Continental emancipator of the novel from the restrictions of form, the master to whom we of the English persuasion, we of the discursive school, must for ever recur is he, whom I will maintain against all comers to be the subtlest and greatest *artist* — I lay stress upon that word artist — that Great Britain has ever produced in all that is essentially the novel, Laurence Sterne….

The confusion between the standards of a short story and the standards of the novel which leads at last to these — what shall I call them? — *Westminster Gazettisms?* — about the correct length to which the novelist should aspire, leads also to all kinds of absurd condemnations and exactions upon matters of method and style. The underlying fallacy is always this: the assumption that the novel, like the story, aims at a single, concentrated impression. From that comes a fertile growth of error. Constantly one finds in the reviews of works of fiction the complaint that this, that or the other thing in a novel is irrelevant. Now it is the easiest thing, and most fatal thing, to become irrelevant in a short story. A short story should go to its point as a man flies from a pursuing tiger: he pauses not for the daisies in his path, or to note the pretty moss on the tree he climbs for safety. But the novel by comparison is like breakfasting in the open air on a summer morning; nothing is irrelevant if the waiter's mood is happy, and the tapping of the thrush upon the garden path, or the petal of apple-blossom that floats down into my coffee, is as relevant as the egg I open or the bread and butter I bite. And all sorts of things that inevitably mar the tense illusion which is the aim of the short story — the introduction, for example, of the author's personality — any comment that seems to admit that, after all, fiction is fiction, a change in manner between part and part, burlesque, parody, invective, all such thing's are not necessarily wrong in the novel. Of course, all these things may fail in their effect; they may jar, hinder, irritate, and all are difficult to do well; but it is no artistic merit to evade a difficulty any more than it is a merit in a hunter to refuse even the highest of fences. Nearly all the novels that have, by the lapse of time, reached an assured position of recognised greatness, are not only saturated in the personality of the author, but have in addition quite unaffected personal outbreaks. The least successful

instance the one that is made the text against all such first-personal interventions, is, of course, Thackeray. But I think the trouble with Thackeray is not that he makes first-personal interventions, but that he does so with a curious touch of dishonesty. I agree with the late Mrs. Craigie that there was something profoundly vulgar about Thackeray. It was a sham thoughtful, sham man-of-the-world pose he assumed; it is an aggressive, conscious, challenging person astride before a fire, and a little distended by dinner and a sense of social and literary precedences, who uses the first person in Thackeray's novels. It isn't the real Thackeray; it isn't a frank man who looks you in the eyes and bares his soul and demands your sympathy. That is a criticism of Thackeray, but it isn't a condemnation of intervention.

I admit that for a novelist to come in person in this way before his readers involves grave risks; but when it is done without affectations, starkly as a man comes in out of the darkness to tell of perplexing things without — as, for instance, Mr. Joseph Conrad does for all practical purposes in his "Lord Jim" — then it gives a sort of depth, a sort of subjective reality, that no such cold, almost affectedly ironical detachment as that which distinguishes the work of Mr. John Galsworthy, for example, can ever attain. And in some cases the whole art and delight of a novel may lie in the author's personal interventions; let such novels as "Elizabeth and her German Garden," and the same writer's "Elizabeth in Rügen," bear witness.

Now, all this time I have been hacking away at certain hampering and limiting beliefs about the novel, letting it loose, as it were, in form and purpose; I have still to say just what I think the novel is, and where, if anywhere, its boundary-line ought to be drawn. It is by no means an easy task to define the novel. It is not a thing premeditated. It is a thing that has grown up into modern life, and taken upon itself uses and produced results that could not have been foreseen by its originators. Few of the important things in the collective life of man started out to be what they are. Consider, for example, all the unexpected aesthetic values, the inspiration and variety of emotional result which arises out of the cross-shaped plan of the Gothic cathedral, and the undesigned delight and wonder of white marble that has ensued, as I have been told, through the ageing and whitening of the realistically coloured statuary of the Greeks and

Romans. Much of the charm of the old furniture and needlework, again, upon which the present time sets so much store, lies in acquired and unpremeditated qualities. And no doubt the novel grew up out of simple story-telling, and the universal desire of children, old and young alike, for a story. It is only slowly that we have developed the distinction of the novel from the romance, as being a story of human beings, absolutely credible and conceivable as distinguished from human beings frankly endowed with the glamour, the wonder, the brightness, of a less exacting and more vividly eventful world. The novel is a story that demands, or professes to demand, no make-believe. The novelist undertakes to present you people and things as real as any that you can meet in an omnibus. And I suppose it is conceivable that a novel might exist which was just purely a story of that kind and nothing more. It might amuse you as one is amused by looking out of a window into a street, or listening to a piece of agreeable music, and that might be the limit of its effect. But almost always the novel is something more than that, and produces more effect than that. The novel has inseparable moral consequences. It leaves impressions, not simply of things seen, but of acts judged and made attractive or unattractive. They may prove very slight moral consequences, and very shallow moral impressions in the long run, but there they are, none the less, its inevitable accompaniments. It is unavoidable that this should be so. Even if the novelist attempts or affects to be impartial, he still cannot prevent his characters setting examples; he still cannot avoid, as people say, putting ideas into his readers' heads. The greater his skill, the more convincing his treatment the more vivid his power of suggestion. And it is equally impossible for him not to betray his sense that the proceedings of this person are rather jolly and admirable, and of that, rather ugly and detestable. I suppose Mr. Bennett, for example, would say that he should not do so; but it is as manifest to any disinterested observer that he greatly loves and admires his Card, as that Richardson admired his Sir Charles Grandison, or that Mrs. Humphry Ward considers her Marcella a very fine and estimable young woman. And I think it is just in this, that the novel is not simply a fictitious record of conduct, but also a study and judgment of conduct, and through that of the ideas that lead to conduct, that the

real and increasing value — or perhaps to avoid controversy I had better say the real and increasing importance — of the novel and of the novelist in modern life comes in.

It is no new discovery that the novel, like the drama, is a powerful instrument of moral suggestion. This has been understood in England ever since there has been such a thing as a novel in England. This has been recognised equally by novelists, novel-readers, and the people who wouldn't read novels under any condition whatever. Richardson wrote deliberately for edification, and "Tom Jones" is a powerful and effective appeal for a charitable, and even indulgent, attitude towards loose-living men. But excepting Fielding and one or two other of those partial exceptions that always occur in the case of critical generalisations, there is a definable difference between the novel of the past and what I may call the modern novel. It is a difference that is reflected upon the novel from a difference in the general way of thinking. It lies in the fact that formerly there was a feeling of certitude about moral values and standards of conduct that is altogether absent to-day. It wasn't so much that men were agreed upon these things — about these things there have always been enormous divergences of opinion — as that men were emphatic, cocksure, and unteachable about whatever they did happen to believe to a degree that no longer obtains. This is the Balfourian age, and even religion seeks to establish itself on doubt. There were, perhaps, just as many differences in the past as there are now, but the outlines were harder — they were, indeed, so hard as to be almost, to our sense, savage. You might be a Roman Catholic, and in that case you did not want to hear about Protestants, Turks, Infidels, except in tones of horror and hatred. You knew exactly what was good and what was evil. Your priest informed you upon these points, and all you needed in any novel you read was a confirmation, implicit or explicit, of these vivid, rather than charming, prejudices. If you were a Protestant you were equally clear and unshakable. Your sect, whichever sect you belonged to, knew the whole of truth and included all the nice people. It had nothing to learn in the world, and it wanted to learn nothing outside its sectarian convictions. The unbelievers you know, were just as bad, and said their creeds with an equal fury — merely interpolating *nots*. People of every sort —

Catholic, Protestant, Infidel, or what not — were equally clear that good was good and bad was bad, that the world was made up of good characters whom you had to love, help and admire, and of bad characters to whom one might, in the interests of goodness, even lie, and whom one had to foil, defeat and triumph over shamelessly at every opportunity. That was the quality of the times. The novel reflected this quality of assurance, and its utmost charity was to unmask an apparent villain and show that he or she was really profoundly and correctly good, or to unmask an apparent saint and show the hypocrite. There was no such penetrating and pervading element of doubt and curiosity — and charity, about the rightfulness and beauty of conduct, such as one meets on every hand to-day.

The novel-reader of the past, therefore, like the novel-reader of the more provincial parts of England to-day, judged a novel by the convictions that had been built up in him by his training and his priest or his pastor. If it agreed with these convictions he approved; if it did not agree he disapproved — often with great energy. The novel, where it was not unconditionally banned altogether as a thing disturbing and unnecessary, was regarded as a thing subordinated to the teaching of the priest or pastor, or whatever director and dogma was followed. Its modest moral confirmations began when authority had completed its direction. The novel was good — if it seemed to harmonise with the graver exercises conducted by Mr. Chadband — and it was bad and outcast if Mr. Chadband said so. And it is over the bodies of discredited and disgruntled Chadbands that the novel escapes from its servitude and inferiority.

Now the conflict of authority against criticism is one of the eternal conflicts of humanity. It is the conflict of organisation against initiative, of discipline against freedom. It was the conflict of the priest against the prophet in ancient Judaea, of the Pharisee against the Nazarene, of the Realist against the Nominalist, of the Church against the Franciscan and the Lollard, of the Respectable Person against the Artist, of the hedge-clippers of mankind against the shooting buds. And to-day, while we live in a period of tightening and extending social organisation, we live also in a period of adventurous and insurgent thought, in an intellectual spring unprecedented in the world's history. There is an enormous criticism

going on of the faiths upon which men's lives and associations are based, and of every standard and rule of conduct. And it is inevitable that the novel, just in the measure of its sincerity and ability, should reflect and co-operate in the atmosphere and uncertainties and changing variety of this seething and creative time.

And I do not mean merely that the novel is unavoidably charged with the representation of this wide and wonderful conflict. It is a necessary part of the conflict. The essential characteristic of this great intellectual revolution amidst which we are living to-day, that revolution of which the revival and restatement of nominalism under the name of pragmatism is the philosophical aspect, consists in the reassertion of the importance of the individual instance as against the generalisation. All our social, political, moral problems are being approached in a new spirit, in an inquiring and experimental spirit, which has small respect for abstract principles and deductive rules. We perceive more and more clearly, for example, that the study of social organisation is an empty and unprofitable study until we approach it as a study of the association and inter-reaction of individualised human beings inspired by diversified motives, ruled by traditions, and swayed by the suggestions of a complex intellectual atmosphere. And all our conceptions of the relationships between man and man, and of justice and rightfulness and social desirableness, remain something misfitting and inappropriate, something uncomfortable and potentially injurious, as if we were trying to wear sharp-edged clothes made for a giant out of tin, until we bring them to the test and measure of realised individualities.

And this is where the value and opportunity of the modern novel comes in. So far as I can see, it is the only medium through which we can discuss the great majority of the problems which are being raised in such bristling multitude by our contemporary social development Nearly every one of those problems has at its core a psychological problem, and not merely a psychological problem, but one in which the idea of individuality is an essential factor. Dealing with most of these questions by a rule or a generalisation is like putting a cordon round a jungle full of the most diversified sort of game. The hunting only begins when you leave the cordon behind you and push into the thickets.

Take, for example, the immense cluster of difficulties that arises out of the increasing complexity of our state. On every hand we are creating officials, and compared with only a few years ago the private life in a dozen fresh directions comes into contact with officialdom. But we still do practically nothing to work out the interesting changes that occur in this sort of man and that, when you withdraw him as it were from the common crowd of humanity, put his mind if not his body into uniform and endow him with powers and functions and rules. It is manifestly a study of the profoundest public and personal importance. It is manifestly a study of increasing importance. The process of social and political organisation that has been going on for the last quarter of a century is pretty clearly going on now if anything with increasing vigour — and for the most part the entire dependence of the consequences of the whole problem upon the reaction between the office on the one hand and the weak, uncertain, various human beings who take office on the other, doesn't seem even to be suspected by the energetic, virtuous and more or less amiable people whose activities in politics and upon the backstairs of politics bring about these developments. They assume that the sort of official they need, a combination of god-like virtue and intelligence with unfailing mechanical obedience, can be made out of just any young nephew. And I know of no means of persuading people that this is a rather unjustifiable assumption, and of creating an intelligent controlling criticism of officials and of assisting conscientious officials to an effective self-examination, and generally of keeping the atmosphere of official life sweet and healthy, except the novel. Yet so far the novel has scarcely begun its attack upon this particular field of human life, and all the attractive varied play of motive it contains.

Of course we have one supreme and devastating study of the illiterate minor official in Bumble. That one figure lit up and still lights the whole problem of Poor Law administration for the English reading community. It was a translation of well-meant regulations and pseudo-scientific conceptions of social order into blundering, arrogant, ill-bred flesh and blood. It was worth a hundred Royal Commissions. You may make your regulations as you please, said Dickens in effect; this is one sample of the stuff that will carry them

out. But Bumble stands almost alone. Instead of realising that he is only one aspect of officialdom, we are all too apt to make him the type of all officials, and not an urban district council can get into a dispute about its electric light without being denounced as a Bumbledom by some whirling enemy or other. The burthen upon Bumble's shoulders is too heavy to be borne, and we want the contemporary novel to give us a score of other figures to put beside him, other aspects and reflections upon this great problem of officialism made flesh. Bumble is a magnificent figure of the follies and cruelties of ignorance in office — I would have every candidate for the post of workhouse master pass a severe examination upon "Oliver Twist" — but it is not only caricature and satire I demand. We must have not only the fullest treatment of the temptations, vanities, abuses, and absurdities of office, but all its dreams, its sense of constructive order, its consolations, its sense of service, and its nobler satisfactions. You may say that is demanding more insight and power in our novels and novelists than we can possibly hope to find in them. So much the worse for us. I stick to my thesis that the complicated social organisation of to-day cannot get along without the amount of mutual understanding and mutual explanation such a range of characterisation in our novels implies. The success of civilisation amounts ultimately to a success of sympathy and understanding. If people cannot be brought to an interest in one another greater than they feel to-day, to curiosities and criticisms far keener, and co-operations far subtler, than we have now; if class cannot be brought to measure itself against, and interchange experience and sympathy with class, and temperament with temperament then we shall never struggle very far beyond the confused discomforts and uneasiness of to-day, and the changes and complications of human life will remain as they are now, very like the crumplings and separations and complications of an immense avalanche that is sliding down a hill. And in this tremendous work of human reconciliation and elucidation, it seems to me it is the novel that must attempt most and achieve most.

You may feel disposed to say to all this: We grant the major premises, but why look to the work of prose fiction as the main instrument in this necessary process of, so to speak, sympathising

humanity together? Cannot this be done far more effectively through biography and autobiography, for example? Isn't there the lyric; and, above all, isn't there the play? Well, so far as the stage goes, I think it is a very charming and exciting form of human activity, a display of actions and surprises of the most moving and impressive sort; but beyond the opportunity it affords for saying startling and thought-provoking things — opportunities Mr. Shaw, for example, has worked to the utmost limit — I do not see that the drama does much to enlarge our sympathies and add to our stock of motive ideas. And regarded as a medium for startling and thought-provoking things, the stage seems to me an extremely clumsy and costly affair. One might just as well go about with a pencil writing up the thought-provoking phrase, whatever it is, on walls. The drama excites our sympathies intensely, but it seems to me it is far too objective a medium to widen them appreciably, and it is that widening, that increase in the range of understanding, at which I think civilisation is aiming. The case for biography, and more particularly autobiography, as against the novel, is, I admit, at the first blush stronger. You may say: Why give us these creatures of a novelist's imagination, these phantom and fantastic thinkings and doings, when we may have the stories of real lives, really lived — the intimate record of actual men and women? To which one answers: "Ah, if one could!" But it is just because biography does deal with actual lives, actual facts, because it radiates out to touch continuing interests and sensitive survivors, that it is so unsatisfactory, so untruthful. Its inseparable falsehood is the worst of all kinds of falsehood — the falsehood of omission. Think what an abounding, astonishing, perplexing person Gladstone must have been in life, and consider Lord Morley's "Life of Gladstone," cold, dignified — not a life at all, indeed, so much as embalmed remains; the fire gone, the passions gone, the bowels carefully removed. All biography has something of that post-mortem coldness and respect, and as for autobiography — a man may show his soul in a thousand half-conscious ways, but to turn upon oneself and explain oneself is given to no one. It is the natural liars and braggarts, your Cellinis and Casanovas, men with a habit of regarding themselves with a kind of objective admiration, who do best in autobiography. And, on the other hand, the novel has neither the intense self-

consciousness of autobiography nor the paralysing responsibilities of the biographer. It is by comparison irresponsible and free. Because its characters are figments and phantoms, they can be made entirely transparent. Because they are fictions, and you know they are fictions, so that they cannot hold you for an instant so soon as they cease to be true, they have a power of veracity quite beyond that of actual records. Every novel carries its own justification and its own condemnation in its success or failure to convince you that *the thing was so*. Now history, biography, blue-book and so forth, can hardly ever get beyond the statement that the superficial fact was so.

You see now the scope of the claim I am making for the novel; it is to be the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of morals and the exchange of manners, the factory of customs, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas. It is to be the home confessional, the initiator of knowledge, the seed of fruitful self-questioning. Let me be very clear here. I do not mean for a moment that the novelist is going to set up as a teacher, as a sort of priest with a pen, who will make men and women believe and do this and that. The novel is not a new sort of pulpit; humanity is passing out of the phase when men *sit under* preachers and dogmatic influences. But the novelist is going to be the most potent of artists, because he is going to present conduct, devise beautiful conduct, discuss conduct analyse conduct, suggest conduct, illuminate it through and through. He will not teach, but discuss, point out, plead, and display. And this being my view you will be prepared for the demand I am now about to make for an absolutely free hand for the novelist in his choice of topic and incident and in his method of treatment; or rather, if I may presume to speak for other novelists, I would say it is not so much a demand we make as an intention we proclaim. We are going to write, subject only to our limitations, about the whole of human life. We are going to deal with political questions and religious questions and social questions. We cannot present people unless we have this free hand, this unrestricted field. What is the good of telling stories about people's lives if one may not deal freely with the religious beliefs and organisations that have controlled or failed to control them? What is the good of pretending to write about love, and the loyalties

and treacheries and quarrels of men and women, if one must not glance at those varieties of physical temperament and organic quality, those deeply passionate needs and distresses from which half the storms of human life are brewed? We mean to deal with all these things, and it will need very much more than the disapproval of provincial librarians, the hostility of a few influential people in London, the scurrility of one paper, and the deep and obstinate silences of another, to stop the incoming tide of aggressive novel-writing. We are going to write about it all. We are going to write about business and finance and politics and precedence and pretentiousness and decorum and indecorum, until a thousand pretences and ten thousand impostures shrivel in the cold, clear air of our elucidations. We are going to write of wasted opportunities and latent beauties until a thousand new ways of living open to men and women. We are going to appeal to the young and the hopeful and the curious, against the established, the dignified, and defensive. Before we have done, we will have all life within the scope of the novel.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S PUBLIC LIBRARY

Suppose a philosopher had a great deal of money to spend — though this is not in accordance with experience, it is not inherently impossible — and suppose he thought, as any philosopher does think, that the British public ought to read much more and better books than they do, and that founding public libraries was the way to induce them to do so, what sort of public libraries would he found? That, I submit, is a suitable topic for a disinterested speculator.

He would, I suppose, being a philosopher, begin by asking himself what a library essentially was, and he would probably come to the eccentric conclusion that it was essentially a collection of books. He would, in his unworldliness, entirely overlook the fact that it might be a job for a municipally influential builder, a costly but conspicuous monument to opulent generosity, a news-room, an employment bureau, or a meeting-place for the glowing young; he would never think for a moment of a library as a thing one might build, it would present itself to him with astonishing simplicity as a thing one would collect. Bricks ceased to be literature after Babylon.

His first proceeding would be, I suppose, to make a list of that collection. What books, he would say, have all my libraries to possess anyhow? And he would begin to jot down — with the assistance of a few friends, perhaps — this essential list.

He would, being a philosopher, insist on good editions, and he would also take great pains with the selection. It would not be a limited or an exclusive list — when in doubt he would include. He would disregard modern fiction very largely, because any book that has any success can always be bought for sixpence, and modern poetry, because, with an exception or so, it does not signify at all. He would set almost all the Greek and Roman literature in well-printed translations and with luminous introductions — and if there were no good translations he would give some good man £500 or so to make one — translations of all that is good in modern European literatures, and, last but largest portion of his list, editions of all that is worthy of our own. He would make a very careful list of thoroughly modern encyclopaedias, atlases, and volumes of information, and a

particularly complete catalogue of all literature that is still copyright; and then — with perhaps a secretary or so — he would revise all his lists and mark against every book whether he would have two, five or ten or twenty copies, or whatever number of copies of it he thought proper in each library.

Then next, being a philosopher, he would decide that if he was going to buy a great number of libraries in this way, he was going to make an absolutely new sort of demand for these books, and that he was entitled to a special sort of supply.

He would not expect the machinery of retail book-selling to meet the needs of wholesale buying. So he would go either to wholesale booksellers, or directly to the various publishers of the books and editions he had chosen, and ask for reasonable special prices for the two thousand or seven thousand or fifty thousand of each book he required. And the publishers would, of course, give him very special prices, more especially in the case of the out-of-copyright books. He would probably find it best to buy whole editions in sheets and bind them himself in strong bindings. And he would emerge from these negotiations in possession of a number of complete libraries each of — how many books? Less than twenty thousand ought to do it, I think, though that is a matter for separate discussion, and that should cost him, buying in this wholesale way, under rather than over £2,000 a library.

And next he would bethink himself of the readers of these books. "These people," he would say, "do not know very much about books, which, indeed, is why I am giving them this library."

Accordingly, he would get a number of able and learned people to write him guides to his twenty thousand books, and, in fact, to the whole world of reading, a guide, for example, to the books on history in general, a special guide to books on English history, or French or German history, a guide to the books on geology, a guide to poetry and poetical criticisms, and so forth.

Some such books our philosopher would find already done — the "Bibliography of American History," of the American Libraries' Association, for example, and Mr. Nield's "Guide to Historical Fiction" — and what are not done he would commission good men to do for him. Suppose he had to commission forty such guides

altogether and that they cost him on the average £500 each, for he would take care not to sweat their makers, then that would add another £20,000 to his expenditure. But if he was going to found 400 libraries, let us say, that would only be £50 a library — a very trivial addition to his expenditure.

The rarer books mentioned in these various guides would remind him, however, of the many even his ample limit of twenty thousand forced him to exclude, and he would, perhaps, consider the need of having two or three libraries each for the storage of a hundred thousand books or so not kept at the local libraries, but which could be sent to them at a day's notice at the request of any reader. And then, and only then, would he give his attention to the housing and staffing that this reality of books would demand.

Being a philosopher and no fool, he would draw a very clear, hard distinction between the reckless endowment of the building trade and the dissemination of books. He would distinguish, too, between a library and a news-room, and would find no great attraction in the prospect of supplying the national youth with free but thumby copies of the sixpenny magazines. He would consider that all that was needed for his library was, first, easily accessible fireproof shelving for his collection, with ample space for his additions, an efficient distributing office, a cloak-room, and so forth, and eight or nine not too large, well lit, well carpeted, well warmed and well ventilated rooms radiating from that office, in which the guides and so forth could be consulted, and where those who had no convenient, quiet room at home could read.

He would find that, by avoiding architectural vulgarities, a simple, well proportioned building satisfying all these requirements and containing housing for the librarian, assistant, custodian and staff could be built for between £4,000 and £5,000, excluding the cost of site, and his sites, which he would not choose for their conspicuousness, might average something under another £1,000.

He would try to make a bargain with the local people for their co-operation in his enterprise, though he would, as a philosopher, understand that where a public library is least wanted it is generally most needed. But in most cases he would succeed in stipulating for a certain standard of maintenance by the local authority. Since

moderately prosperous illiterate men undervalue education and most town councillors are moderately illiterate men, he would do his best to keep the salary and appointment of the librarian out of such hands. He would stipulate for a salary of at least £400, in addition to housing, light and heat, and he would probably find it advisable to appoint a little committee of visitors who would have the power to examine qualifications, endorse the appointment, and recommend the dismissal of all his four hundred librarians. He would probably try to make the assistantship at £100 a year or thereabout a sort of local scholarship to be won by competition, and only the cleaner and caretaker's place would be left to the local politician. And, of course, our philosopher would stipulate that, apart from all other expenditure, a sum of at least £200 a year should be set aside for buying new books.

So our rich philosopher would secure at the minimum cost a number of efficiently equipped libraries throughout the country. Eight thousand pounds down and £900 a year is about as cheap as a public library can be. Below that level, it would be cheaper to have no public library. Above that level, a public library that is not efficient is either dishonestly or incapably organised or managed, or it is serving too large a district and needs duplication, or it is trying to do too much.

ABOUT CHESTERTON AND BELLOC

It has been one of the less possible dreams of my life to be a painted Pagan God and live upon a ceiling. I crown myself becomingly in stars or tendrils or with electric coruscations (as the mood takes me), and wear an easy costume free from complications and appropriate to the climate of those agreeable spaces. The company about me on the clouds varies greatly with the mood of the vision, but always it is in some way, if not always a very obvious way, beautiful. One frequent presence is G.K. Chesterton, a joyous whirl of brush work, appropriately garmented and crowned. When he is there, I remark, the whole ceiling is by a sort of radiation convivial. We drink limitless old October from handsome flagons, and we argue mightily about Pride (his weak point) and the nature of Deity. A hygienic, attentive, and essentially anaesthetic Eagle checks, in the absence of exercise, any undue enlargement of our Promethean livers…. Chesterton often — but never by any chance Belloc. Belloc I admire beyond measure, but there is a sort of partisan viciousness about Belloc that bars him from my celestial dreams. He never figures, no, not even in the remotest corner, on my ceiling. And yet the divine artist, by some strange skill that my ignorance of his technique saves me from the presumption of explaining, does indicate exactly where Belloc is. A little quiver of the paint, a faint aura, about the spectacular masses of Chesterton? I am not certain. But no intelligent beholder can look up and miss the remarkable fact that Belloc exists — and that he is away, safely away, away in his heaven, which is, of course, the Park Lane Imperialist's hell. There he presides….

But in this life I do not meet Chesterton exalted upon clouds, and there is but the mockery of that endless leisure for abstract discussion afforded by my painted entertainments. I live in an urgent and incessant world, which is at its best a wildly beautiful confusion of impressions and at its worst a dingy uproar. It crowds upon us and jostles us, we get our little interludes for thinking and talking between much rough scuffling and laying about us with our fists. And I cannot afford to be continually bickering with Chesterton and Belloc about forms of expression. There are others for whom I want

to save my knuckles. One may be wasteful in peace and leisure, but economies are the soul of conflict.

In many ways we three are closely akin; we diverge not by necessity but accident, because we speak in different dialects and have divergent metaphysics. All that I can I shall persuade to my way of thinking about thought and to the use of words in my loose, expressive manner, but Belloc and Chesterton and I are too grown and set to change our languages now and learn new ones; we are on different roads, and so we must needs shout to one another across intervening abysses. These two say Socialism is a thing they do not want for men, and I say Socialism is above all what I want for men. We shall go on saying that now to the end of our days. But what we do all three want is something very alike. Our different roads are parallel. I aim at a growing collective life, a perpetually enhanced inheritance for our race, through the fullest, freest development of the individual life. What they aim at ultimately I do not understand, but it is manifest that its immediate form is the fullest and freest development of the individual life. We all three hate equally and sympathetically the spectacle of human beings blown up with windy wealth and irresponsible power as cruelly and absurdly as boys blow up frogs; we all three detest the complex causes that dwarf and cripple lives from the moment of birth and starve and debase great masses of mankind. We want as universally as possible the jolly life, men and women warm-blooded and well-aired, acting freely and joyously, gathering life as children gather corn-cockles in corn. We all three want people to have property of a real and personal sort, to have the son, as Chesterton put it, bringing up the port his father laid down, and pride in the pears one has grown in one's own garden. And I agree with Chesterton that giving — giving oneself out of love and fellowship — is the salt of life.

But there I diverge from him, less in spirit, I think, than in the manner of his expression. There is a base because impersonal way of giving. "Standing drink," which he praises as noble, is just the thing I cannot stand, the ultimate mockery and vulgarisation of that fine act of bringing out the cherished thing saved for the heaven-sent guest. It is a mere commercial transaction, essentially of the evil of our time. Think of it! Two temporarily homeless beings agree to drink

together, and they turn in and face the public supply of drink (a little vitiated by private commercial necessities) in the public-house. (It is horrible that life should be so wholesale and heartless.) And Jones, with a sudden effusion of manner, thrusts twopence or ninepence (got God knows how) into the economic mysteries and personal delicacy of Brown. I'd as soon a man slipped sixpence down my neck. If Jones has used love and sympathy to detect a certain real thirst and need in Brown and knowledge and power in its assuaging by some specially appropriate fluid, then we have an altogether different matter; but the common business of "standing treat" and giving presents and entertainments is as proud and unspiritual as cock-crowing, as foolish and inhuman as that sorry compendium of mercantile vices, the game of poker, and I am amazed to find Chesterton commend it.

But that is a criticism by the way. Chesterton and Belloc agree with the Socialist that the present world does not give at all what they want. They agree that it fails to do so through a wild derangement of our property relations. They are in agreement with the common contemporary man (whose creed is stated, I think, not unfairly, but with the omission of certain important articles by Chesterton), that the derangements of our property relations are to be remedied by concerted action and in part by altered laws. The land and all sorts of great common interests must be, if not owned, then at least controlled, managed, checked, redistributed by the State. Our real difference is only about a little more or a little less owning. I do not see how Belloc and Chesterton can stand for anything but a strong State as against those wild monsters of property, the strong, big private owners. The State must be complex and powerful enough to prevent them. State or plutocrat there is really no other practical alternative before the world at the present time. Either we have to let the big financial adventurers, the aggregating capitalist and his Press, in a loose, informal combination, rule the earth, either we have got to stand aside from preventive legislation and leave things to work out on their present lines, or we have to construct a collective organisation sufficiently strong for the protection of the liberties of the some-day-to-be-jolly common man. So far we go in common. If Belloc and Chesterton are not Socialists, they are at any rate not anti-

Socialists. If they say they want an organised Christian State (which involves practically seven-tenths of the Socialist desire), then, in the face of our big common enemies, of adventurous capital, of alien Imperialism, base ambition, base intelligence, and common prejudice and ignorance, I do not mean to quarrel with them politically, so long as they force no quarrel on me. Their organised Christian State is nearer the organised State I want than our present plutocracy. Our ideals will fight some day, and it will be, I know, a first-rate fight, but to fight now is to let the enemy in. When we have got all we want in common, then and only then can we afford to differ. I have never believed that a Socialist Party could hope to form a Government in this country in my lifetime; I believe it less now than ever I did. I don't know if any of my Fabian colleagues entertain so remarkable a hope. But if they do not, then unless their political aim is pure cantankerousness, they must contemplate a working political combination between the Socialist members in Parliament and just that non-capitalist section of the Liberal Party for which Chesterton and Belloc speak. Perpetual opposition is a dishonourable aim in politics; and a man who mingles in political development with no intention of taking on responsible tasks unless he gets all his particular formulae accepted is a pervert, a victim of Irish bad example, and unfit far decent democratic institutions …

I digress again, I see, but my drift I hope is clear. Differ as we may, Belloc and Chesterton are with all Socialists in being on the same side of the great political and social cleavage that opens at the present time. We and they are with the interests of the mass of common men as against that growing organisation of great owners who have common interests directly antagonistic to those of the community and State. We Socialists are only secondarily politicians. Our primary business is not to impose upon, but to ram right into the substance of that object of Chesterton's solicitude, the circle of ideas of the common man, the idea of the State as his own, as a thing he serves and is served by. We want to add to his sense of property rather than offend it. If I had my way I would do that at the street corners and on the trams, I would take down that alien-looking and detestable inscription "L.C.C.," and put up, "This Tram, this Street, belongs to the People of London." Would Chesterton or Belloc

quarrel with that? Suppose that Chesterton is right, and that there are incurable things in the mind of the common man flatly hostile to our ideals; so much of our ideals will fail. But we are doing our best by our lights, and all we can. What are Chesterton and Belloc doing? If our ideal is partly right and partly wrong, are they trying to build up a better ideal? Will they state a Utopia and how they propose it shall be managed? If they lend their weight only to such fine old propositions as that a man wants freedom, that he has a right to do as he likes with his own, and so on, they won't help the common man much. All that fine talk, without some further exposition, goes to sustain Mr. Rockefeller's simple human love of property, and the woman and child sweating manufacturer in his fight for the inspector-free home industry. I bought on a bookstall the other day a pamphlet full of misrepresentation and bad argument against Socialism by an Australian Jew, published by the Single-Tax people apparently in a disinterested attempt to free the land from the landowner by the simple expedient of abusing anyone else who wanted to do as much but did not hold Henry George to be God and Lord; and I know Socialists who will protest with tears in their eyes against association with any human being who sings any song but the "Red Flag" and doubts whether Marx had much experience of affairs. Well, there is no reason why Chesterton and Belloc should at their level do the same sort of thing. When we talk on a ceiling or at a dinner-party with any touch of the celestial in its composition, Chesterton and I, Belloc and I, are antagonists with an undying feud, but in the fight against human selfishness and narrowness and for a finer, juster law, we are brothers — at the remotest, half-brothers.

Chesterton isn't a Socialist — agreed! But now, as between us and the Master of Elibank or Sir Hugh Bell or any other Free Trade Liberal capitalist or landlord, which side is he on? You cannot have more than one fight going on in the political arena at the same time, because only one party or group of parties can win.

And going back for a moment to that point about a Utopia, I want one from Chesterton. Purely unhelpful criticism isn't enough from a man of his size. It isn't justifiable for him to go about sitting on other people's Utopias. I appeal to his sense of fair play. I have done my best to reconcile the conception of a free and generous style of

personal living with a social organisation that will save the world from the harsh predominance of dull, persistent, energetic, unscrupulous grabbers tempered only by the vulgar extravagance of their wives and sons. It isn't an adequate reply to say that nobody stood treat there, and that the simple, generous people like to beat their own wives and children on occasion in a loving and intimate manner, and that they won't endure the spirit of Mr. Sidney Webb.

ABOUT SIR THOMAS MORE

There are some writers who are chiefly interesting in themselves, and some whom chance and the agreement of men have picked out as symbols and convenient indications of some particular group or temperament of opinions. To the latter it is that Sir Thomas More belongs. An age and a type of mind have found in him and his Utopia a figurehead and a token; and pleasant and honourable as his personality and household present themselves to the modern reader, it is doubtful if they would by this time have retained any peculiar distinction among the many other contemporaries of whom we have chance glimpses in letters and suchlike documents, were it not that he happened to be the first man of affairs in England to imitate the "Republic" of Plato. By that chance it fell to him to give the world a noun and an adjective of abuse, "Utopian," and to record how under the stimulus of Plato's releasing influence the opening problems of our modern world presented themselves to the English mind of his time. For the most part the problems that exercised him are the problems that exercise us to-day, some of them, it may be, have grown up and intermarried, new ones have joined their company, but few, if any, have disappeared, and it is alike in his resemblances to and differences from the modern speculative mind that his essential interest lies.

The portrait presented by contemporary mention and his own intentional and unintentional admissions, is of an active-minded and agreeable-mannered man, a hard worker, very markedly prone to quips and whimsical sayings and plays upon words, and aware of a double reputation as a man of erudition and a wit. This latter quality it was that won him advancement at court, and it may have been his too clearly confessed reluctance to play the part of an informal table jester to his king that laid the grounds of that deepening royal resentment that ended only with his execution. But he was also valued by the king for more solid merits, he was needed by the king, and it was more than a table scorned or a clash of opinion upon the validity of divorce; it was a more general estrangement and avoidance of service that caused that fit of regal petulance by which

he died.

It would seem that he began and ended his career in the orthodox religion and a general acquiescence in the ideas and customs of his time, and he played an honourable and acceptable part in that time; but his permanent interest lies not in his general conformity but in his incidental scepticism, in the fact that underlying the observances and recognised rules and limitations that give the texture of his life were the profoundest doubts, and that, stirred and disturbed by Plato, he saw fit to write them down. One may question if such scepticism is in itself unusual, whether any large proportion of great statesmen, great ecclesiastics and administrators have escaped phases of destructive self-criticism of destructive criticism of the principles upon which their general careers were framed. But few have made so public an admission as Sir Thomas More. A good Catholic undoubtedly he was, and yet we find him capable of conceiving a non-Christian community excelling all Christendom in wisdom and virtue; in practice his sense of conformity and orthodoxy was manifest enough, but in his "Utopia" he ventures to contemplate, and that not merely wistfully, but with some confidence, the possibility of an absolute religious toleration.

The "Utopia" is none the less interesting because it is one of the most inconsistent of books. Never were the forms of Socialism and Communism animated by so entirely an Individualist soul. The hands are the hands of Plato, the wide-thinking Greek, but the voice is the voice of a humane, public-spirited, but limited and very practical English gentleman who takes the inferiority of his inferiors for granted, dislikes friars and tramps and loafers and all undisciplined and unproductive people, and is ruler in his own household. He abounds in sound practical ideas, for the migration of harvesters, for the universality of gardens and the artificial incubation of eggs, and he sweeps aside all Plato's suggestion of the citizen woman as though it had never entered his mind. He had indeed the Whig temperament, and it manifested itself down even to the practice of reading aloud in company, which still prevails among the more representative survivors of the Whig tradition. He argues ably against private property, but no thought of any such radicalism as the admission of those poor peons of his, with head half-shaved and

glaring uniform against escape, to participation in ownership appears in his proposals. His communism is all for the convenience of his Syphogrants and Tranibores, those gentlemen of gravity and experience, lest one should swell up above the others. So too is the essential Whiggery of the limitation of the Prince's revenues. It is the very spirit of eighteenth century Constitutionalism. And his Whiggery bears Utilitarianism instead of the vanity of a flower. Among his cities, all of a size, so that "he that knoweth one knoweth all," the Benthamite would have revised his sceptical theology and admitted the possibility of heaven.

Like any Whig, More exalted reason above the imagination at every point, and so he fails to understand the magic prestige of gold, making that beautiful metal into vessels of dishonour to urge his case against it, nor had he any perception of the charm of extravagance, for example, or the desirability of various clothing. The Utopians went all in coarse linen and undyed wool — why should the world be coloured? — and all the economy of labour and shortening of the working day was to no other end than to prolong the years of study and the joys of reading aloud, the simple satisfactions of the good boy at his lessons, to the very end of life. "In the institution of that weal publique this end is only and chiefly pretended and minded, that what time may possibly be spared from the necessary occupations and affairs of the commonwealth, all that the citizens should withdraw from the bodily service to the free liberty of the mind and garnishing of the same. For herein they suppose the felicity of this life to consist."

Indeed, it is no paradox to say that "Utopia," which has by a conspiracy of accidents become a proverb for undisciplined fancifulness in social and political matters, is in reality a very unimaginative work. In that, next to the accident of its priority, lies the secret of its continuing interest. In some respects it is like one of those precious and delightful scrapbooks people disinter in old country houses; its very poverty of synthetic power leaves its ingredients, the cuttings from and imitations of Plato, the recipe for the hatching of eggs, the stern resolutions against scoundrels and rough fellows, all the sharper and brighter. There will always be found people to read in it, over and above the countless multitudes

who will continue ignorantly to use its name for everything most alien to More's essential quality.

TRAFFIC AND REBUILDING

The London traffic problem is just one of those questions that appeal very strongly to the more prevalent and less charitable types of English mind. It has a practical and constructive air, it deals with impressively enormous amounts of tangible property, it rests with a comforting effect of solidity upon assumptions that are at once doubtful and desirable. It seems free from metaphysical considerations, and it has none of those disconcerting personal applications, those penetrations towards intimate qualities, that makes eugenics, for example, faintly but persistently uncomfortable. It is indeed an ideal problem for a healthy, hopeful, and progressive middle-aged public man. And, as I say, it deals with enormous amounts of tangible property.

Like all really serious and respectable British problems it has to be handled gently to prevent its coming to pieces in the gift. It is safest in charge of the expert, that wonderful last gift of time. He will talk rapidly about congestion, long-felt wants, low efficiency, economy, and get you into his building and rebuilding schemes with the minimum of doubt and head-swimming. He is like a good Hendon pilot. Unspecialised writers have the destructive analytical touch. They pull the wrong levers. So far as one can gather from the specialists on the question, there is very considerable congestion in many of the London thoroughfares, delays that seem to be avoidable occur in the delivery of goods, multitudes of empty vans cumber the streets, we have hundreds of acres of idle trucks — there are more acres of railway sidings than of public parks in Greater London — and our Overseas cousins find it ticklish work crossing Regent Street and Piccadilly. Regarding life simply as an affair of getting people and things from where they are to where they appear to be wanted, this seems all very muddled and wanton. So far it is quite easy to agree with the expert. And some of the various and entirely incompatible schemes experts are giving us by way of a remedy, appeal very strongly to the imagination. For example, there is the railway clearing house, which, it is suggested, should cover I do not know how many acres of what is now slumland in Shoreditch. The

position is particularly convenient for an underground connection with every main line into London. Upon the underground level of this great building every goods train into London will run. Its trucks and vans will be unloaded, the goods passed into lifts, which will take every parcel, large and small, at once to a huge, ingeniously contrived sorting-floor above. There in a manner at once simple, ingenious and effective, they will be sorted and returned, either into delivery vans at the street level or to the trains emptied and now reloading on the train level. Above and below these three floors will be extensive warehouse accommodation. Such a scheme would not only release almost all the vast area of London now under railway yards for parks and housing, but it would give nearly every delivery van an effective load, and probably reduce the number of standing and empty vans or half-empty vans on the streets of London to a quarter or an eighth of the present number. Mostly these are heavy horse vans, and their disappearance would greatly facilitate the conversion of the road surfaces to the hard and even texture needed for horseless traffic.

But that is a scheme too comprehensive and rational for the ordinary student of the London traffic problem, whose mind runs for the most part on costly and devastating rearrangements of the existing roadways. Moreover, it would probably secure a maximum of effect with a minimum of property manipulation; always an undesirable consideration in practical politics. And it would commit London and England to goods transit by railway for another century. Far more attractive to the expert advisers of our various municipal authorities are such projects as a new Thames bridge scheme, which will (with incalculable results) inject a new stream of traffic into Saint Paul's Churchyard; and the removal of Charing Cross Station to the south side of the river. Then, again, we have the systematic widening of various thoroughfares, the shunting of tramways into traffic streams, and many amusing, expensive, and interesting tunnellings and clearances. Taken together, these huge reconstructions of London are incoherent and conflicting; each is based on its own assumptions and separate "expert" advice, and the resulting new opening plays its part in the general circulation as duct or aspirator, often with the most surprising results. The discussion of

the London traffic problem as we practise it in our clubs is essentially the sage turning over and over again of such fragmentary schemes, headshakings over the vacant sites about Aldwych and the Strand, brilliant petty suggestions and — dispersal. Meanwhile the experts intrigue; one partial plan after another gets itself accepted, this and that ancient landmark perish, builders grow rich, and architects infamous, and some Tower Bridge horror, some vulgarity of the Automobile Club type, some Buckingham Palace atrocity, some Regent Street stupidity, some such cramped and thwarted thing as that new arch which gives upon Charing Cross is added to the confusion. I do not see any reason to suppose that this continuous muddle of partial destruction and partial rebuilding is not to constitute the future history of London.

Let us, however, drop the expert methods and handle this question rather more rudely. Do we want London rebuilt? If we do, is there, after all, any reason why we should rebuild it on its present site? London is where it is for reasons that have long ceased to be valid; it grew there, it has accumulated associations, an immense tradition, that this constant mucking about of builders and architects is destroying almost as effectually as removal to a new site. The old sort of rebuilding was a natural and picturesque process, house by house, and street by street, a thing as pleasing and almost as natural in effect as the spreading and interlacing of trees; as this new building, this clearance of areas, the piercing of avenues, becomes more comprehensive, it becomes less reasonable. If we can do such big things we may surely attempt bigger things, so that whether we want to plan a new capital or preserve the old, it comes at last to the same thing, that it is unreasonable to be constantly pulling down the London we have and putting it up again. Let us drain away our heavy traffic into tunnels, set up that clearing-house plan, and control the growth at the periphery, which is still so witless and ugly, and, save for the manifest tidying and preserving that is needed, begin to leave the central parts of London, which are extremely interesting even where they are not quite beautiful, in peace.

THE SO-CALLED SCIENCE OF SOCIOLOGY

It has long been generally recognised that there are two quite divergent ways of attacking sociological and economic questions, one that is called scientific and one that is not, and I claim no particular virtue in the recognition of that; but I do claim a certain freshness in my analysis of this difference, and it is to that analysis that your attention is now called. When I claim freshness I do not make, you understand, any claim to original discovery. What I have to say, and have been saying for some time, is also more or less, and with certain differences to be found in the thought of Professor Bosanquet, for example, in Alfred Sidgwick's "Use of Words in Reasoning," in Sigwart's "Logic," in contemporary American metaphysical speculation. I am only one incidental voice speaking in a general movement of thought. My trend of thought leads me to deny that sociology is a science, or only a science in the same loose sense that modern history is a science, and to throw doubt upon the value of sociology that follows too closely what is called the scientific method.

The drift of my argument is to dispute not only that sociology is a science, but also to deny that Herbert Spencer and Comte are to be exalted as the founders of a new and fruitful system of human inquiry. I find myself forced to depreciate these modern idols, and to reinstate the Greek social philosophers in their vacant niches, to ask you rather to go to Plato for the proper method, the proper way of thinking sociologically.

We certainly owe the word Sociology to Comte, a man of exceptionally methodical quality. I hold he developed the word logically from an arbitrary assumption that the whole universe of being was reducible to measurable and commeasurable and exact and consistent expressions.

In a very obvious way, sociology seemed to Comte to crown the edifice of the sciences; it was to be to the statesman what pathology and physiology were to the doctor; and one gathers that, for the most part, he regarded it as an intellectual procedure in no way differing from physics. His classification of the sciences shows pretty clearly

that he thought of them all as exact logical systematisations of fact arising out of each other in a synthetic order, each lower one containing the elements of a lucid explanation of those above it — physics explaining chemistry; chemistry, physiology; physiology, sociology; and so forth. His actual method was altogether unscientific; but through all his work runs the assumption that in contrast with his predecessors he is really being as exact and universally valid as mathematics. To Herbert Spencer — very appropriately since his mental characteristics make him the English parallel to Comte — we owe the naturalisation of the word in English. His mind being of greater calibre than Comte's, the subject acquired in his hands a far more progressive character. Herbert Spencer was less unfamiliar with natural history than with any other branch of practical scientific work; and it was natural he should turn to it for precedents in sociological research. His mind was invaded by the idea of classification, by memories of specimens and museums; and he initiated that accumulation of desiccated anthropological anecdotes that still figures importantly in current sociological work. On the lines he initiated sociological investigation, what there is of it, still tends to go.

From these two sources mainly the work of contemporary sociologists derives. But there persists about it a curious discursiveness that reflects upon the power and value of the initial impetus. Mr. V.V. Branford, the able secretary of the Sociological Society, recently attempted a useful work in a classification of the methods of what he calls "approach," a word that seems to me eminently judicious and expressive. A review of the first volume the Sociological Society has produced brings home the aptness of this image of exploratory operations, of experiments in "taking a line." The names of Dr. Beattie Crozier and Mr. Benjamin Kidd recall works that impress one as large-scale sketches of a proposed science rather than concrete beginnings and achievements. The search for an arrangement, a "method," continues as though they were not. The desperate resort to the analogical method of Commenius is confessed by Dr. Steinmetz, who talks of social morphology, physiology, pathology, and so forth. There is also a less initiative disposition in the Vicomte Combes de Lestrade and in the work of Professor

Giddings. In other directions sociological work is apt to lose its general reference altogether, to lapse towards some department of activity not primarily sociological at all. Examples of this are the works of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, M. Ostrogorski and M. Gustave le Bon. From a contemplation of all this diversity Professor Durkheim emerges, demanding a "synthetic science," "certain synthetic conceptions" — and Professor Karl Pearson endorses the demand — to fuse all these various activities into something that will live and grow. What is it that tangles this question so curiously that there is not only a failure to arrive at a conclusion, but a failure to join issue?

Well, there is a certain not too clearly recognised order in the sciences to which I wish to call your attention, and which forms the gist of my case against this scientific pretension. There is a gradation in the importance of the instance as one passes from mechanics and physics and chemistry through the biological sciences to economics and sociology, a gradation whose correlatives and implications have not yet received adequate recognition, and which do profoundly affect the method of study and research in each science.

Let me begin by pointing out that, in the more modern conceptions of logic, it is recognised that there are no identically similar objective experiences; the disposition is to conceive all real objective being as individual and unique. This is not a singular eccentric idea of mine; it is one for which ample support is to be found in the writings of absolutely respectable contemporaries, who are quite untainted by association with fiction. It is now understood that conceivably only in the subjective world, and in theory and the imagination, do we deal with identically similar units, and with absolutely commensurable quantities. In the real world it is reasonable to suppose we deal at most with *practically* similar units and *practically* commensurable quantities. But there is a strong bias, a sort of labour-saving bias in the normal human mind to ignore this, and not only to speak but to think of a thousand bricks or a thousand sheep or a thousand sociologists as though they were all absolutely true to sample. If it is brought before a thinker for a moment that in any special case this is not so, he slips back to the old attitude as soon as his attention is withdrawn. This source of error has, for

instance, caught nearly the whole race of chemists, with one or two distinguished exceptions, and *atoms* and *ions* and so forth of the same species are tacitly assumed to be similar one to another. Be it noted that, so far as the practical results of chemistry and physics go, it scarcely matters which assumption we adopt. For purposes of inquiry and discussion the incorrect one is infinitely more convenient.

But this ceases to be true directly we emerge from the region of chemistry and physics. In the biological sciences of the eighteenth century, commonsense struggled hard to ignore individuality in shells and plants and animals. There was an attempt to eliminate the more conspicuous departures as abnormalities, as sports, nature's weak moments, and it was only with the establishment of Darwin's great generalisation that the hard and fast classificatory system broke down, and individuality came to its own. Yet there had always been a clearly felt difference between the conclusions of the biological sciences and those dealing with lifeless substance, in the relative vagueness, the insubordinate looseness and inaccuracy of the former. The naturalist accumulated facts and multiplied names, but he did not go triumphantly from generalisation to generalisation after the fashion of the chemist or physicist. It is easy to see, therefore, how it came about that the inorganic sciences were regarded as the true scientific bed-rock. It was scarcely suspected that the biological sciences might perhaps, after all, be *truer* than the experimental, in spite of the difference in practical value in favour of the latter. It was, and is by the great majority of people to this day, supposed to be the latter that are invincibly true; and the former are regarded as a more complex set of problems merely, with obliquities and refractions that presently will be explained away. Comte and Herbert Spencer certainly seem to me to have taken that much for granted. Herbert Spencer no doubt talked of the unknown and the unknowable, but not in this sense, as an element of inexactness running through all things. He thought of the unknown as the indefinable beyond to an immediate world that might be quite clearly and exactly known.

Well, there is a growing body of people who are beginning to hold the converse view — that counting, classification, measurement, the whole fabric of mathematics, is subjective and deceitful, and that the

uniqueness of individuals is the objective truth. As the number of units taken diminishes, the amount of variety and inexactness of generalisation increases, because individuality tells more and more. Could you take men by the thousand billion, you could generalise about them as you do about atoms; could you take atoms singly, it may be you would find them as individual as your aunts and cousins. That concisely is the minority belief, and it is the belief on which this present paper is based.

Now, what is called the scientific method is the method of ignoring individualities; and, like many mathematical conventions, its great practical convenience is no proof whatever of its final truth. Let me admit the enormous value, the wonder of its results in mechanics, in all the physical sciences, in chemistry, even in physiology — but what is its value beyond that? Is the scientific method of value in biology? The great advances made by Darwin and his school in biology were not made, it must be remembered, by the scientific method, as it is generally conceived, at all. He conducted a research into pre-documentary history. He collected information along the lines indicated by certain interrogations; and the bulk of his work was the digesting and critical analysis of that. For documents and monuments he had fossils and anatomical structures and germinating eggs too innocent to lie, and so far he was nearer simplicity. But, on the other hand, he had to correspond with breeders and travellers of various sorts, classes entirely analogous, from the point of view of evidence, to the writers of history and memoirs. I question profoundly whether the word "science," in current usage anyhow, ever means such patient disentanglement as Darwin pursued. It means the attainment of something positive and emphatic in the way of a conclusion, based on amply repeated experiments capable of infinite repetition, "proved," as they say, "up to the hilt."

It would be, of course, possible to dispute whether the word "science" should convey this quality of certitude; but to most people it certainly does at the present time. So far as the movements of comets and electric trams go, there is, no doubt, practically cocksure science; and indisputably Comte and Herbert Spencer believed that cocksure could be extended to every conceivable finite thing. The

fact that Herbert Spencer called a certain doctrine Individualism reflects nothing on the non-individualising quality of his primary assumptions and of his mental texture. He believed that individuality (heterogeneity) was and is an evolutionary product from an original homogeneity. It seems to me that the general usage is entirely for the limitation of the use of the word "science" to knowledge and the search after knowledge of a high degree of precision. And not simply the general usage: "Science is measurement," Science is "organised common sense," proud, in fact, of its essential error, scornful of any metaphysical analysis of its terms.

If we quite boldly face the fact that hard positive methods are less and less successful just in proportion as our "ologies" deal with larger and less numerous individuals; if we admit that we become less "scientific" as we ascend the scale of the sciences, and that we do and must change our method, then, it is humbly submitted we shall be in a much better position to consider the question of "approaching" sociology. We shall realise that all this talk of the organisation of sociology, as though presently the sociologist would be going about the world with the authority of a sanitary engineer, is and will remain nonsense.

In one respect we shall still be in accordance with the Positivist map of the field of human knowledge; with us as with that, sociology stands at the extreme end of the scale from the molecular sciences. In these latter there is an infinitude of units; in sociology, as Comte perceived, there is only one unit. It is true that Herbert Spencer, in order to get classification somehow, did, as Professor Durkheim has pointed out, separate human society into societies, and made believe they competed one with another and died and reproduced just like animals, and that economists, following List, have for the purposes of fiscal controversy discovered economic types; but this is a transparent device, and one is surprised to find thoughtful and reputable writers off their guard against such bad analogy. But, indeed, it is impossible to isolate complete communities of men, or to trace any but rude general resemblances between group and group. These alleged units have as much individuality as pieces of cloud; they come, they go, they fuse and separate. And we are forced to conclude that not only is the method of observation, experiment, and

verification left far away down the scale, but that the method of classification under types, which has served so useful a purpose in the middle group of subjects, the subjects involving numerous but a finite number of units, has also to be abandoned here. We cannot put Humanity into a museum, or dry it for examination; our one single still living specimen is all history, all anthropology, and the fluctuating world of men. There is no satisfactory means of dividing it, and nothing else in the real world with which to compare it. We have only the remotest ideas of its "life-cycle" and a few relics of its origin and dreams of its destiny …

Sociology, it is evident, is, upon any hypothesis, no less than the attempt to bring that vast, complex, unique Being, its subject, into clear, true relations with the individual intelligence. Now, since individual intelligences are individual, and each is a little differently placed in regard to the subject under consideration, since the personal angle of vision is much wider towards humanity than towards the circumambient horizon of matter, it should be manifest that no sociology of universal compulsion, of anything approaching the general validity of the physical sciences, is ever to be hoped for — at least upon the metaphysical assumptions of this paper. With that conceded, we may go on to consider the more hopeful ways in which that great Being may be presented in a comprehensible manner. Essentially this presentation must involve an element of self-expression must partake quite as much of the nature of art as of science. One finds in the first conference of the Sociological Society, Professor Stein, speaking, indeed a very different philosophical dialect from mine, but coming to the same practical conclusion in the matter, and Mr. Osman Newland counting "evolving ideals for the future" as part of the sociologist's work. Mr. Alfred Fouillée also moves very interestingly in the region of this same idea; he concedes an essential difference between sociology and all other sciences in the fact of a "certain kind of liberty belonging to society in the exercise of its higher functions." He says further: "If this view be correct, it will not do for us to follow in the steps of Comte and Spencer, and transfer, bodily and ready-made, the conceptions and the methods of the natural sciences into the science of society. For here the fact of *consciousness* entails a reaction of the whole

assemblage of social phenomena upon themselves, such as the natural sciences have no example of." And he concludes: "Sociology ought, therefore, to guard carefully against the tendency to crystallise that which is essentially fluid and moving, the tendency to consider as given fact or dead data that which creates itself and gives itself into the world of phenomena continually by force of its own ideal conception." These opinions do, in their various keys, sound a similar *motif* to mine. If, indeed, the tendency of these remarks is justifiable, then unavoidably the subjective element, which is beauty, must coalesce with the objective, which is truth; and sociology mast be neither art simply, nor science in the narrow meaning of the word at all, but knowledge rendered imaginatively, and with an element of personality that is to say, in the highest sense of the term, literature.

If this contention is sound, if therefore we boldly set aside Comte and Spencer altogether, as pseudo-scientific interlopers rather than the authoritative parents of sociology, we shall have to substitute for the classifications of the social sciences an inquiry into the chief literary forms that subserve sociological purposes. Of these there are two, one invariably recognised as valuable and one which, I think, under the matter-of-fact scientific obsession, is altogether underrated and neglected The first, which is the social side of history, makes up the bulk of valid sociological work at the present time. Of history there is the purely descriptive part, the detailed account of past or contemporary social conditions, or of the sequence of such conditions; and, in addition, there is the sort of historical literature that seeks to elucidate and impose general interpretations upon the complex of occurrences and institutions, to establish broad historical generalisations, to eliminate the mass of irrelevant incident, to present some great period of history, or all history, in the light of one dramatic sequence, or as one process. This Dr. Beattie Crozier, for example, attempts in his "History of Intellectual Development." Equally comprehensive is Buckle's "History of Civilisation." Lecky's "History of European Morals," during the onset of Christianity again, is essentially sociology. Numerous works — Atkinson's "Primal Law," and Andrew Lang's "Social Origins," for example — may be considered, as it were, to be fragments to the same purport. In the great design of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of

the Roman Empire," or Carlyle's "French Revolution," you have a greater insistence upon the dramatic and picturesque elements in history, but in other respects an altogether kindred endeavour to impose upon the vast confusions of the past a scheme of interpretation, valuable just to the extent of its literary value, of the success with which the discrepant masses have been fused and cast into the shape the insight of the writer has determined. The writing of great history is entirely analogous to fine portraiture, in which fact is indeed material, but material entirely subordinate to vision.

One main branch of the work of a Sociological Society therefore should surely be to accept and render acceptable, to provide understanding, criticism, and stimulus for such literary activities as restore the dead bones of the past to a living participation in our lives.

But it is in the second and at present neglected direction that I believe the predominant attack upon the problem implied by the word "sociology" must lie; the attack that must be finally driven home. There is no such thing in sociology as dispassionately considering what *is*, without considering what is *intended to be*. In sociology, beyond any possibility of evasion, ideas are facts. The history of civilisation is really the history of the appearance and reappearance, the tentatives and hesitations and alterations, the manifestations and reflections in this mind and that, of a very complex, imperfect elusive idea, the Social Idea. It is that idea struggling to exist and realise itself in a world of egotisms, animalisms, and brute matter. Now, I submit it is not only a legitimate form of approach, but altogether the most promising and hopeful form of approach, to endeavour to disentangle and express one's personal version of that idea, and to measure realities from the stand-point of that idealisation. I think, in fact, that the creation of Utopias — and their exhaustive criticism — is the proper and distinctive method of sociology.

Suppose now the Sociological Society, or some considerable proportion of it, were to adopt this view, that sociology is the description of the Ideal Society and its relation to existing societies, would not this give the synthetic framework Professor Durkheim, for example, has said to be needed?

Almost all the sociological literature beyond the province of history that has stood the test of time and established itself in the esteem of men is frankly Utopian. Plato, when his mind turned to schemes of social reconstruction thrust his habitual form of dialogue into a corner; both the "Republic" and the "Laws" are practically Utopias in monologue; and Aristotle found the criticism of the Utopian suggestions of his predecessors richly profitable. Directly the mind of the world emerged again at the Renascence from intellectual barbarism in the brief breathing time before Sturm and the schoolmasters caught it and birched it into scholarship and a new period of sterility, it went on from Plato to the making of fresh Utopias. Not without profit did More discuss pauperism in this form and Bacon the organisation of research; and the yeast of the French Revolution was Utopias. Even Comte, all the while that he is professing science, fact, precision, is adding detail after detail to the intensely personal Utopia of a Western Republic that constitutes his one meritorious gift to the world. Sociologists cannot help making Utopias; though they avoid the word, though they deny the idea with passion, their very silences shape a Utopia. Why should they not follow the precedent of Aristotle, and accept Utopias as material?

There used to be in my student days, and probably still flourishes, a most valuable summary of fact and theory in comparative anatomy, called Rolleston's "Forms of Animal Life." I figure to myself a similar book, a sort of dream book of huge dimensions, in reality perhaps dispersed in many volumes by many hands, upon the Ideal Society. This book, this picture of the perfect state, would be the backbone of sociology. It would have great sections devoted to such questions as the extent of the Ideal Society, its relation to racial differences, the relations of the sexes in it, its economic organisations, its organisation for thought and education, its "Bible" — as Dr. Beattie Crozier would say — its housing and social atmosphere, and so forth. Almost all the divaricating work at present roughly classed together as sociological could be brought into relation in the simplest manner, either as new suggestions, as new discussion or criticism, as newly ascertained facts bearing upon such discussions and sustaining or eliminating suggestions. The institutions of existing states would come into comparison with the

institutions of the Ideal State, their failures and defects would be criticised most effectually in that relation, and the whole science of collective psychology, the psychology of human association, would be brought to bear upon the question of the practicability of this proposed ideal.

This method would give not only a boundary shape to all sociological activities, but a scheme of arrangement for text books and lectures, and points of direction and reference for the graduation and post graduate work of sociological students.

Only one group of inquiries commonly classed as sociological would have to be left out of direct relationship with this Ideal State; and that is inquiries concerning the rough expedients to meet the failure of imperfect institutions. Social emergency work of all sorts comes under this head. What to do with the pariah dogs of Constantinople, what to do with the tramps who sleep in the London parks, how to organise a soup kitchen or a Bible coffee van, how to prevent ignorant people, who have nothing else to do, getting drunk in beer-houses, are no doubt serious questions for the practical administrator, questions of primary importance to the politician; but they have no more to do with sociology than the erection of a temporary hospital after the collision of two trains has to do with railway engineering.

So much for my second and most central and essential portion of sociological work. It should be evident that the former part, the historical part, which conceivably will be much the bulkier and more abundant of the two, will in effect amount to a history of the suggestions in circumstance and experience of that Idea of Society of which the second will consist, and of the instructive failures in attempting its incomplete realisation.

DIVORCE

The time is fast approaching when it will be necessary for the general citizen to form definite opinions upon proposals for probably quite extensive alterations of our present divorce laws, arising out of the recommendations of the recent Royal Commission on the subject. It may not be out of place, therefore, to run through some of the chief points that are likely to be raised, and to set out the main considerations affecting these issues.

Divorce is not one of those things that stand alone, and neither divorce law nor the general principles of divorce are to be discussed without a reference to antecedent arrangements. Divorce is a sequel to marriage, and a change in the divorce law is essentially a change in the marriage law. There was a time in this country when our marriage was a practically divorceless bond, soluble only under extraordinary circumstances by people in situations of exceptional advantage for doing so. Now it is a bond under conditions, and in the event of the adultery of the wife, or of the adultery plus cruelty or plus desertion of the husband, and of one or two other rarer and more dreadful offences, it can be broken at the instance of the aggrieved party. A change in the divorce law is a change in the dissolution clauses, so to speak, of the contract for the marriage partnership. It is a change in the marriage law.

A great number of people object to divorce under any circumstances whatever. This is the case with the orthodox Catholic and with the orthodox Positivist. And many religious and orthodox people carry their assertion of the indissolubility of marriage to the grave; they demand that the widow or widower shall remain unmarried, faithful to the vows made at the altar until death comes to the release of the lonely survivor also. Re-marriage is regarded by such people as a posthumous bigamy. There is certainly a very strong and logical case to be made out for a marriage bond that is indissoluble even by death. It banishes step-parents from the world. It confers a dignity of tragic inevitability upon the association of husband and wife, and makes a love approach the gravest, most momentous thing in life. It banishes for ever any dream of escape

from the presence and service of either party, or of any separation from the children of the union. It affords no alternative to "making the best of it" for either husband or wife; they have taken a step as irrevocable as suicide. And some logical minds would even go further, and have no law as between the members of a family, no rights, no private property within that limit. The family would be the social unit and the father its public representative, and though the law might intervene if he murdered or ill-used wife or children, or they him, it would do so in just the same spirit that it might prevent him from self-mutilation or attempted suicide, for the good of the State simply, and not to defend any supposed independence of the injured member. There is much, I assert, to be said for such a complete shutting up of the family from the interference of the law, and not the least among these reasons is the entire harmony of such a view with the passionate instincts of the natural man and woman in these matters. All unsophisticated human beings appear disposed to a fierce proprietorship in their children and their sexual partners, and in no respect is the ordinary mortal so easily induced to vehemence and violence.

For my own part, I do not think the maintenance of a marriage that is indissoluble, that precludes the survivor from re-marriage, that gives neither party an external refuge from the misbehaviour of the other, and makes the children the absolute property of their parents until they grow up, would cause any very general unhappiness Most people are reasonable enough, good-tempered enough, and adaptable enough to shake down even in a grip so rigid, and I would even go further and say that its very rigidity, the entire absence of any way out at all, would oblige innumerable people to accommodate themselves to its conditions and make a working success of unions that, under laxer conditions, would be almost certainly dissolved. We should have more people of what I may call the "broken-in" type than an easier release would create, but to many thinkers the spectacle of a human being thoroughly "broken-in" is in itself extremely satisfactory. A few more crimes of desperation perhaps might occur, to balance against an almost universal effort to achieve contentment and reconciliation. We should hear more of the "natural law" permitting murder by the jealous husband or by the jealous

wife, and the traffic in poisons would need a sedulous attention — but even there the impossibility of re-marriage would operate to restrain the impatient. On the whole, I can imagine the world rubbing along very well with marriage as unaccommodating as a perfected steel trap. Exceptional people might suffer or sin wildly — to the general amusement or indignation.

But when once we part from the idea of such a rigid and eternal marriage bond — and the law of every civilised country and the general thought and sentiment everywhere have long since done so — then the whole question changes. If marriage is not so absolutely sacred a bond, if it is not an eternal bond, but a bond we may break on this account or that, then at once we put the question on a different footing. If we may terminate it for adultery or cruelty, or any cause whatever, if we may suspend the intimacy of husband and wife by separation orders and the like, if we recognise their separate property and interfere between them and their children to ensure the health and education of the latter, then we open at once the whole question of a terminating agreement. Marriage ceases to be an unlimited union and becomes a definite contract. We raise the whole question of "What are the limits in marriage, and how and when may a marriage terminate?"

Now, many answers are being given to that question at the present time. We may take as the extremest opposite to the eternal marriage idea the proposal of Mr. Bernard Shaw, that marriage should be terminable at the instance of either party. You would give due and public notice that your marriage was at an end, and it would be at an end. This is marriage at its minimum, as the eternal indissoluble marriage is marriage at its maximum, and the only conceivable next step would be to have a marriage makeable by the oral declaration of both parties and terminable by the oral declaration of either, which would be, indeed, no marriage at all, but an encounter. You might marry a dozen times in that way in a day…. Somewhere between these extremes lies the marriage law of a civilised state. Let us, rather than working down from the eternal marriage of the religious idealists, work up from Mr. Shaw. The former course is, perhaps, inevitable for the legislator, but the latter is much more convenient for our discussion.

Now, the idea of a divorce so easy and wilful as Mr. Shaw proposes arises naturally out of an exclusive consideration of what I may call the amorous sentimentalities of marriage. If you regard marriage as merely the union of two people in love, then, clearly, it is intolerable, an outrage upon human dignity, that they should remain intimately united when either ceases to love. And in that world of Mr. Shaw's dreams, in which everybody is to have an equal income and nobody is to have children, in that culminating conversazione of humanity, his marriage law will, no doubt, work with the most admirable results. But if we make a step towards reality and consider a world in which incomes are unequal, and economic difficulties abound — for the present we will ignore the complication of offspring — we at once find it necessary to modify the first fine simplicity of divorce at either partner's request. Marriage is almost always a serious economic disturbance for both man and woman: work has to be given up and rearranged, resources have to be pooled; only in the rarest cases does it escape becoming an indefinite business partnership. Accordingly, the withdrawal of one partner raises at once all sorts of questions of financial adjustment, compensation for physical, mental, and moral damage, division of furniture and effects and so forth. No doubt a very large part of this could be met if there existed some sort of marriage settlement providing for the dissolution of the partnership. Otherwise the petitioner for a Shaw-esque divorce must be prepared for the most exhaustive and penetrating examination before, say, a court of three assessors — representing severally the husband, the wife, and justice — to determine the distribution of the separation. This point, however, leads me to note in passing the need that does exist even to-day for a more precise business supplement to marriage as we know it in England and America. I think there ought to be a very definite and elaborate treaty of partnership drawn up by an impartial private tribunal for every couple that marries, providing for most of the eventualities of life, taking cognizance of the earning power, the property and prospects of either party, insisting upon due insurances, ensuring private incomes for each partner, securing the welfare of the children, and laying down equitable conditions in the event of a divorce or separation. Such a treaty ought to be a necessary prelude

to the issue of a licence to marry. And given such a basis to go upon, then I see no reason why, in the case of couples who remain childless for five or six years, let us say, and seem likely to remain childless, the Shaw-esque divorce at the instance of either party, without reason assigned, should not be a very excellent thing indeed.

And I take up this position because I believe in the family as the justification of marriage. Marriage to me is no mystical and eternal union, but a practical affair, to be judged as all practical things are judged — by its returns in happiness and human welfare. And directly we pass from the mists and glamours of amorous passion to the warm realities of the nursery, we pass into a new system of considerations altogether. We are no longer considering A. in relation to Mrs. A., but A. and Mrs. A. in relation to an indefinite number of little A.'s, who are the very life of the State in which they live. Into the case of Mr. A. *v.* Mrs. A. come Master A. and Miss A. intervening. They have the strongest claim against both their parents for love, shelter and upbringing, and the legislator and statesman, concerned as he is chiefly with the future of the community, has the strongest reasons for seeing that they get these things, even at the price of considerable vexation, boredom or indignity to Mr. and Mrs. A. And here it is that there arises the rational case against free and frequent divorce and the general unsettlement and fluctuation of homes that would ensue.

At this point we come to the verge of a jungle of questions that would demand a whole book for anything like a complete answer. Let us try as swiftly and simply as possible to form a general idea at least of the way through. Remember that we are working upward from Mr. Shaw's question of "Why not separate at the choice of either party?" We have got thus far, that no two people who do not love each other should be compelled to live together, except where the welfare of their children comes in to override their desire to separate, and now we have to consider what may or may not be for the welfare of the children. Mr. Shaw, following the late Samuel Butler, meets this difficulty by the most extravagant abuse of parents. He would have us believe that the worst enemies a child can have are its mother and father, and that the only civilised path to citizenship is by the incubator, the crêche, and the mixed school and college. In

these matters he is not only ignorant, but unfeeling and unsympathetic, extraordinarily so in view of his great capacity for pity and sweetness in other directions and of his indignant hatred of cruelty and unfairness, and it is not necessary to waste time in discussing what the common experience confutes Neither is it necessary to fly to the other extreme, and indulge in preposterous sentimentalities about the magic of fatherhood and a mother's love. These are not magic and unlimited things, but touchingly qualified and human things. The temperate truth of the matter is that in most parents there are great stores of pride, interest, natural sympathy, passionate love and devotion which can be tapped in the interests of the children and the social future, and that it is the mere commonsense of statecraft to use their resources to the utmost. It does not follow that every parent contains these reservoirs, and that a continual close association with the parents is always beneficial to children. If it did, we should have to prosecute everyone who employed a governess or sent away a little boy to a preparatory school. And our real task is to establish a test that will gauge the desirability and benefit of a parent's continued parentage. There are certainly parents and homes from which the children might be taken with infinite benefit to themselves and to society, and whose union it is ridiculous to save from the divorce court shears.

Suppose, now, we made the willingness of a parent to give up his or her children the measure of his beneficialness to them. There is no reason why we should restrict divorce only to the relation of husband and wife. Let us broaden the word and make it conceivable for a husband or wife to divorce not only the partner, but the children. Then it might be possible to meet the demands of the Shaw-esque extremist up to the point of permitting a married parent, who desired freedom, to petition for a divorce, not from his or her partner simply, but from his or her family, and even for a widow or widower to divorce a family. Then would come the task of the assessors. They would make arrangements for the dissolution of the relationship, erring from justice rather in the direction of liberality towards the divorced group, they would determine contributions, exact securities appoint trustees and guardians…. On the whole, I do not see why such a system should not work very well. It would break up many

loveless homes, quarrelling and bickering homes, and give a safety-valve for that hate which is the sinister shadow of love. I do not think it would separate one child from one parent who was really worthy of its possession.

So far I have discussed only the possibility of divorce without offences, the sort of divorce that arises out of estrangement and incompatibilities. But divorce, as it is known in most Christian countries, has a punitive element, and is obtained through the failure of one of the parties to observe the conditions of the bond and the determination of the other to exact suffering. Divorce as it exists at present is not a readjustment but a revenge. It is the nasty exposure of a private wrong. In England a husband may divorce his wife for a single act of infidelity, and there can be little doubt that we are on the eve of an equalisation of the law in this respect. I will confess I consider this an extreme concession to the passion of jealousy, and one likely to tear off the roof from many a family of innocent children. Only infidelity leading to supposititious children in the case of the wife, or infidelity obstinately and offensively persisted in or endangering health in the case of the husband, really injure the home sufficiently to justify a divorce on the assumptions of our present argument. If we are going to make the welfare of the children our criterion in these matters, then our divorce law does in this direction already go too far. A husband or wife may do far more injury to the home by constantly neglecting it for the companionship of some outside person with whom no "matrimonial offence" is ever committed. Of course, if our divorce law exists mainly for the gratification of the fiercer sexual resentments, well and good, but if that is so, let us abandon our pretence that marriage is an institution for the establishment and protection of homes. And while on the one hand existing divorce laws appear to be obsessed by sexual offences, other things of far more evil effect upon the home go without a remedy. There are, for example, desertion, domestic neglect, cruelty to the children drunkenness or harmful drug-taking, indecency of living and uncontrollable extravagance. I cannot conceive how any logical mind, having once admitted the principle of divorce, can hesitate at making these entirely home-wrecking things the basis of effective pleas. But in another direction, some strain of sentimentality

in my nature makes me hesitate to go with the great majority of divorce law reformers. I cannot bring myself to agree that either a long term of imprisonment or the misfortune of insanity should in itself justify a divorce. I admit the social convenience, but I wince at the thought of those tragic returns of the dispossessed. So far as insanity goes, I perceive that the cruelty of the law would but endorse the cruelty of nature. But I do not like men to endorse the cruelty of nature.

And, of course, there is no decent-minded person nowadays but wants to put an end to that ugly blot upon our civilisation, the publication of whatever is most spicy and painful in divorce court proceedings. It is an outrage which falls even more heavily on the innocent than on the guilty, and which has deterred hundreds of shy and delicate-minded people from seeking legal remedies for nearly intolerable wrongs. The sort of person who goes willingly to the divorce court to-day is the sort of person who would love a screaming quarrel in a crowded street. The emotional breach of the marriage bond is as private an affair as its consummation, and it would be nearly as righteous to subject young couples about to marry to a blustering cross-examination by some underbred bully of a barrister upon their motives, and then to publish whatever chance phrases in their answers appeared to be amusing in the press, as it is to publish contemporary divorce proceedings. The thing is a nastiness, a stream of social contagion and an extreme cruelty, and there can be no doubt that whatever other result this British Royal Commission may have, there at least will be many sweeping alterations.

THE SCHOOLMASTER AND THE EMPIRE

Sec. 1

"If Youth but Knew" is the title of a book published some years ago, but still with a quite living interest, by "Kappa"; it is the bitter complaint of a distressed senior against our educational system. He is hugely disappointed in the public-school boy, and more particularly in one typical specimen. He is — if one might hazard a guess — an uncle bereft of great expectations. He finds an echo in thousands of other distressed uncles and parents. They use the most divergent and inadequate forms of expression for this vague sense that the result has not come out good enough; they put it contradictorily and often wrongly, but the sense is widespread and real and justifiable and we owe a great debt to "Kappa" for an accurate diagnosis of what in the aggregate amounts to a grave national and social evil.

The trouble with "Kappa's" particular public-school boy is his unlit imagination, the apathetic commonness of his attitude to life at large. He is almost stupidly not interested in the mysteries of material fact, nor in the riddles and great dramatic movements of history, indifferent to any form of beauty, and pedantically devoted to the pettiness of games and clothing and social conduct. It is, in fact, chiefly by his style in these latter things, his extensive unilluminated knowledge of Greek and Latin, and his greater costliness, that he differs from a young carpenter or clerk. A young carpenter or clerk of the same temperament would have no narrower prejudices nor outlook, no less capacity for the discussion of broad questions and for imaginative thinking. And it has come to the mind of "Kappa" as a discovery, as an exceedingly remarkable and moving thing, a thing to cry aloud about, that this should be so, that this is all that the best possible modern education has achieved. He makes it more than a personal issue. He has come to the conclusion that this is not an exceptional case at all, but a fair sample of what our upper-class education does for the imagination of those who must presently take the lead among us. He declares plainly that we are raising a generation of rulers and of those with whom the duty of initiative should chiefly reside, who have minds atrophied by dull studies and

deadening suggestions, and he thinks that this is a matter of the gravest concern for the future of this land and Empire. It is difficult to avoid agreeing with him either in his observation or in his conclusion. Anyone who has seen much of undergraduates, or medical students, or Army candidates, and also of their social subordinates, must be disposed to agree that the difference between the two classes is mainly in unimportant things — in polish, in manner, in superficialities of accent and vocabulary and social habit — and that their minds, in range and power, are very much on a level. With an invincibly aristocratic tradition we are failing altogether to produce a leader class adequate to modern needs. The State is light-headed.

But while one agrees with "Kappa" and shares his alarm, one must confess the remedies he considers indicated do not seem quite so satisfactory as his diagnosis of the disease. He attacks the curriculum and tells us we must reduce or revolutionise instruction and exercise in the dead languages, introduce a broader handling of history, a more inspiring arrangement of scientific courses, and so forth. I wish, indeed, it were possible to believe that substituting biology for Greek prose composition or history with models and photographs and diagrams for Latin versification, would make any considerable difference in this matter. For so one might discuss this question and still give no offence to a most amiable and influential class of men. But the roots of the evil, the ultimate cause of that typical young man's deadness, lie not at all in that direction. To indicate the direction in which it does lie is quite unavoidably to give offence to an indiscriminatingly sensitive class. Yet there is need to speak plainly. This deadening of soul comes not from the omission or inclusion of this specific subject or that; it is the effect of the general scholastic atmosphere. It is an atmosphere that admits of no inspiration at all. It is an atmosphere from which living stimulating influences have been excluded from which stimulating and vigorous personalities are now being carefully eliminated, and in which dull, prosaic men prevail invincibly. The explanation of the inert commonness of "Kappa's" schoolboy lies not in his having learnt this or not learnt that, but in the fact that from seven to twenty he has been in the intellectual shadow of a number of good-hearted,

sedulously respectable conscientiously manly, conforming, well-behaved men, who never, to the knowledge of their pupils and the public, at any rate, think strange thoughts do imaginative or romantic things, pay tribute to beauty, laugh carelessly, or countenance any irregularity in the world. All erratic and enterprising tendencies in him have been checked by them and brought at last to nothing; and so he emerges a mere residuum of decent minor dispositions. The dullness of the scholastic atmosphere the grey, intolerant mediocrity that is the natural or assumed quality of every upper-class schoolmaster, is the true cause of the spiritual etiolation of "Kappa's" young friend.

Now, it is a very grave thing, I know, to bring this charge against a great profession — to say, as I do say, that it is collectively and individually dull. But someone has to do this sooner or later; we have restrained ourselves and argued away from the question too long. There is, I allege, a great lack of vigorous and inspiring minds in our schools. Our upper-class schools are out of touch with the thought of the time, in a backwater of intellectual apathy. We have no original or heroic school-teachers. Let me ask the reader frankly what part our leading headmasters play in his intellectual world; if when some prominent one among them speaks or writes or talks, he expects anything more than platitudes and little things? Has he ever turned aside to learn what this headmaster or that thought of any question that interested him? Has he ever found freshness or power in a schoolmaster's discourse; or found a schoolmaster caring keenly for fine and beautiful things? Who does not know the schoolmaster's trite, safe admirations, his thin, evasive discussion, his sham enthusiasms for cricket, for fly-fishing, for perpendicular architecture, for boyish traits; his timid refuge in "good form," his deadly silences?

And if we do not find him a refreshing and inspiring person, and his mind a fountain of thought in which we bathe and are restored, is it likely our sons will? If the schoolmaster at large is grey and dull, shirking interesting topics and emphatic speech, what must he be like in the monotonous class-room? These may seem wanton charges to some, but I am not speaking without my book. Monthly I am brought into close contact with the pedagogic intelligence through the

medium of three educational magazines. A certain morbid habit against which I struggle in vain makes me read everything I catch a schoolmaster writing. I am, indeed, one of the faithful band who read the Educational Supplement of the *Times*. In these papers schoolmasters write about their business, lectures upon the questions of their calling are reported at length, and a sort of invalid discussion moves with painful decorum through the correspondence column. The scholastic mind so displayed in action fascinates me. It is like watching a game of billiards with wooden cushes and beechwood balls.

Sec. 2

But let me take one special instance. In a periodical, now no longer living, called the *Independent Review*, there appeared some years ago a very curious and typical contribution by the Headmaster of Dulwich, which I may perhaps use as an illustration of the mental habits which seem inseparably associated with modern scholastic work. It is called "English Ideas on Education," and it begins — trite, imitative, undistinguished — thus:

"The most important question in a country is that of education, and the most important people in a country are those who educate its inhabitants. Others have most of the present in their hands: those who educate have all the future. With the present is bound up all the happiness only of the utterly selfish and the thoughtless among mankind; on the future rest all the thoughts of every parent and every wise man and patriot."

It is the opening of a boy's essay. And from first to last this remarkable composition is at or below that level. It is an entirely inconclusive paper, it is impossible to understand why it was written; it quotes nothing it says nothing about and was probably written in ignorance of "Kappa" or any other modern contributor to English ideas, and it occupied about six and a quarter of the large-type pages of this now vanished *Independent Review*. "English Ideas on Education"! — this very brevity is eloquent, the more so since the style is by no means succinct. It must be read to be believed. It is quite extraordinarily non-prehensile in quality and substance nothing is gripped and maintained and developed; it is like the passing of a lax hand over the surfaces of disarranged things. It is difficult to read,

because one's mind slips over it and emerges too soon at the end, mildly puzzled though incurious still as to what it is all about. One perceives Mr. Gilkes through a fog dimly thinking that Greek has something vital to do with "a knowledge of language and man," that the classical master is in some mysterious way superior to the science man and more imaginative, and that science men ought not to be worried with the Greek that is too high for them; and he seems, too, to be under the odd illusion that "on all this" Englishmen "seem now to be nearly in agreement," and also on the opinion that games are a little overdone and that civic duties and the use of the rifle ought to be taught. Statements are made — the sort of statements that are suffered in an atmosphere where there is no swift, fierce opposition to be feared; they frill out into vague qualifications and butt gently against other partially contradictory statements. There is a classification of minds — the sort of classification dear to the Y.M.C.A. essayists, made for the purposes of the essay and unknown to psychology. There are, we are told, accurate unimaginative, ingenious minds capable of science and kindred vulgar things (such was Archimedes), and vague, imaginative minds, with the gift for language and for the treatment of passion and the higher indefinable things (such as Homer and Mr. Gilkes), and, somehow, this justifies those who are destined for "science" in dropping Greek. Certain "considerations," however, loom inconclusively upon this issue — rather like interested spectators of a street fight in a fog. For example, to learn a language is valuable "in proportion as the nation speaking it is great" — a most empty assertion; and "no languages are so good," for the purpose of improving style, "as the exact and beautiful languages of Rome and Greece."

Is it not time at least that this last, this favourite but threadbare article of the schoolmaster's creed was put away for good? Everyone who has given any attention to this question must be aware that the intellectual gesture is entirely different in highly inflected languages such as Greek and Latin and in so uninflected a language as English, that learning Greek to improve one's English style is like learning to swim in order to fence better, and that familiarity with Greek seems only too often to render a man incapable of clear, strong expression in English at all. Yet Mr. Gilkes can permit this old assertion, so dear

to country rectors and the classical scholar, to appear within a column's distance of such style as this:

"It is now understood that every subject is valuable, if it is properly taught; it will perform that which, as follows from the accounts given above of the aim of education, is the work most important in the case of boys — that is, it will draw out their faculties and make them useful in the world, alert, trained in industry, and able to understand, so far as their school lessons educated them, and make themselves master of any subject set before them."

This quotation is conclusive.

Sec. 3

I am haunted by a fear that the careless reader will think I am writing against upper-class schoolmasters. I am, it is undeniable, writing against their dullness, but it is, I hold, a dullness that is imposed upon them by the conditions under which they live. Indeed, I believe, could I put the thing directly to the profession— "Do you not yourselves feel needlessly limited and dull?" — should receive a majority of affirmative responses. We have, as a nation, a certain ideal of what a schoolmaster must be; to that he must by art or nature approximate, and there is no help for it but to alter our ideal. Nothing else of any wide value can be done until that is done.

In the first place, the received ideal omits a most necessary condition. We do not insist upon a headmaster or indeed any of our academic leaders and dignitaries, being a man of marked intellectual character, a man of intellectual distinction. It is assumed, rather lightly in many cases, that he has done "good work," as they say — the sort of good work that is usually no good at all, that increases nothing, changes nothing, stimulates no one, leads no whither. That, surely, must be altered. We must see to it that our leading schoolmasters at any rate must be men of insight and creative intelligence, men who could at a pinch write a good novel or produce illuminating criticism or take an original part in theological or philosophical discussion, or do any of these minor things. They must be authentic men, taking a line of their own and capable of intellectual passion. They should be able to make their mark outside the school, if only to show they carry a living soul into it. As things

are, nothing is so fatal to a schoolmaster's career as to do that.

And closely related to this omission is our extreme insistence upon what we call high moral character, meaning, really, something very like an entire absence of moral character. We insist upon tact, conformity, and an unblemished record. Now, in these days, of warring opinion, these days of gigantic, strange issues that cannot possibly be expressed in the formulae of the smaller times that have gone before, tact is evasion, conformity formality, and silence an unblemished record, mere evidence of the damning burial of a talent of life. The sort of man into whose hands we give our sons' minds must never have experimented morally or thought at all freely or vigorously about, for example, God, Socialism, the Mosaic account of the Creation, social procedure, Republicanism, beauty, love, or, indeed, about anything likely to interest an intelligent adolescent. At the approach of all such things he must have acquired the habit of the modest cough, the infectious trick of the nice evasion. How can "Kappa" expect inspiration from the decorous resultants who satisfy these conditions? What brand can ever be lit at altars that have borne no fire? And you find the secondary schoolmaster who complies with these restrictions becoming the zealous and grateful agent of the tendencies that have made him what he is, converting into a practice those vague dreads of idiosyncrasy, of positive acts and new ideas, that dictated the choice of him and his rule of life. His moral teaching amounts to this: to inculcate truth-telling about small matters and evasion about large, and to cultivate a morbid obsession in the necessary dawn of sexual consciousness. So far from wanting to stimulate the imagination, he hates and dreads it. I find him perpetually haunted by a ridiculous fear that boys will "do something," and in his terror seeking whatever is dull and unstimulating and tiring in intellectual work, clipping their reading, censoring their periodicals, expurgating their classics, substituting the stupid grind of organised "games" for natural, imaginative play, persecuting loafers — and so achieving his end and turning out at last, clean-looking, passively well-behaved, apathetic, obliterated young men, with the nicest manners and no spark of initiative at all, quite safe not to "do anything" for ever.

I submit this may be a very good training for polite servants, but it

is not the way to make masters in the world. If we English believe we are indeed a masterful people, we must be prepared to expose our children to more and more various stimulations than we do; they must grow up free, bold, adventurous, initiated, even if they have to take more risks in the doing of that. An able and stimulating teacher is as rare as a fine artist, and is a thing worth having for your son, even at the price of shocking your wife by his lack of respect for that magnificent compromise, the Establishment, or you by his Socialism or by his Catholicism or Darwinism, or even by his erroneous choice of ties and collars. Boys who are to be free, masterly men must hear free men talking freely of religion, of philosophy, of conduct. They must have heard men of this opinion and that, putting what they believe before them with all the courage of conviction. They must have an idea of will prevailing over form. It is far more important that boys should learn from original, intellectually keen men than they should learn from perfectly respectable men, or perfectly orthodox men, or perfectly nice men. The vital thing to consider about your son's schoolmaster is whether he talked lifeless twaddle yesterday by way of a lesson, and not whether he loved unwisely or was born of poor parents, or was seen wearing a frock-coat in combination with a bowler, or confessed he doubted the Apostles' Creed, or called himself a Socialist, or any disgraceful thing like that, so many years ago. It is that sort of thing "Kappa" must invert if he wants a change in our public schools. You may arrange and rearrange curricula, abolish Greek, substitute "science" — it will not matter a rap. Even those model canoes of yours, "Kappa," will be wasted if you still insist upon model schoolmasters. So long as we require our schoolmasters to be politic, conforming, undisturbing men, setting up Polonius as an ideal for them, so long will their influence deaden the souls of our sons.

THE ENDOWMENT OF MOTHERHOOD

Some few years ago the Fabian Society, which has been so efficient in keeping English Socialism to the lines of "artfulness and the 'eighties," refused to have anything to do with the Endowment of Motherhood. Subsequently it repented and produced a characteristic pamphlet in which the idea was presented with a sort of minimising furtiveness as a mean little extension of outdoor relief. These Fabian Socialists, instead of being the daring advanced people they are supposed to be, are really in many things twenty years behind the times. There need be nothing shamefaced about the presentation of the Endowment of Motherhood. There is nothing shameful about it. It is a plain and simple idea for which the mind of the man in the street has now been very completely prepared. It has already crept into social legislation to the extent of thirty shillings.

I suppose if one fact has been hammered into us in the past two decades more than any other it is this: that the supply of children is falling off in the modern State; that births, and particularly good-quality births, are not abundant enough; that the birth-rate, and particularly the good-class birth-rate, falls steadily below the needs of our future.

If no one else has said a word about this important matter, ex-President
Roosevelt would have sufficed to shout it to the ends of the earth.
Every civilised community is drifting towards "race-suicide" as Rome
drifted into "race-suicide" at the climax of her empire.

Well, it is absurd to go on building up a civilisation with a dwindling supply of babies in the cradles — and these not of the best possible sort — and so I suppose there is hardly an intelligent person in the English-speaking communities who has not thought of some possible remedy — from the naive scoldings of Mr. Roosevelt and the more stolid of the periodicals to sane and intelligible legislative projects.

The reasons for the fall in the birth-rate are obvious enough. It is a necessary consequence of the individualistic competition of modern life. People talk of modern women "shirking" motherhood, but it would be a silly sort of universe in which a large proportion of women had any natural and instinctive desire to shirk motherhood, and, I believe, a huge proportion of modern women are as passionately predisposed towards motherhood as ever women were. But modern conditions conspire to put a heavy handicap upon parentage and an enormous premium upon the partial or complete evasion of offspring, and that is where the clue to the trouble lies. Our social arrangements discourage parentage very heavily, and the rational thing for a statesman to do in the matter is not to grow eloquent, but to do intelligent things to minimise that discouragement.

Consider the case of an energetic young man and an energetic young woman in our modern world. So long as they remain "unencumbered" they can subsist on a comparatively small income and find freedom and leisure to watch for and follow opportunities of self-advancement; they can travel, get knowledge and experience, make experiments, succeed. One might almost say the conditions of success and self-development in the modern world are to defer marriage as long as possible, and after that to defer parentage as long as possible. And even when there is a family there is the strongest temptation to limit it to three or four children at the outside. Parents who can give three children any opportunity in life prefer to do that than turn out, let us say, eight ill-trained children at a disadvantage, to become the servants and unsuccessful competitors of the offspring of the restrained. That fact bites us all; it does not require a search. It is all very well to rant about "race-suicide," but there are the clear, hard conditions of contemporary circumstances for all but the really rich, and so patent are they that I doubt if all the eloquence of Mr. Roosevelt and its myriad echoes has added a thousand babies to the eugenic wealth of the English-speaking world.

Modern married people, and particularly those in just that capable middle class from which children are most urgently desirable from the statesman's point of view, are going to have one or two children to please themselves but they are not going to have larger families

under existing conditions, though all the ex-Presidents and all the pulpits in the world clamour together for them to do so.

If having and rearing children is a private affair, then no one has any right to revile small families; if it is a public service, then the parent is justified in looking to the State to recognise that service and offer some compensation for the worldly disadvantages it entails. He is justified in saying that while his unencumbered rival wins past him he is doing the State the most precious service in the world by rearing and educating a family, and that the State has become his debtor.

In other words, the modern State has got to pay for its children if it really wants them — and more particularly it has to pay for the children of good homes.

The alternative to that is racial replacement and social decay. That is the essential idea conveyed by this phrase, the Endowment of Motherhood.

Now, how is the paying to be done? That needs a more elaborate answer, of which I will give here only the roughest, crudest suggestion.

Probably it would be found best that the payment should be made to the mother, as the administrator of the family budget, that its amount should be made dependent upon the quality of the home in which the children are being reared, upon their health and physical development, and upon their educational success. Be it remembered, we do not want any children; we want good-quality children. The amount to be paid, I would particularly point out, should vary with the standing of the home. People of that excellent class which spends over a hundred a year on each child ought to get about that much from the State, and people of the class which spends five shillings a week per head on them would get about that, and so on. And if these payments were met by a special income tax there would be no social injustice whatever in such an unequality of payment. Each social stratum would pay according to its prosperity, and the only redistribution that would in effect occur would be that the childless people of each class would pay for the children of that class. The childless family and the small family would pay equally with the large family, incomes being equal, but they would receive in

proportions varying with the health and general quality of their children. That, I think, gives the broad principles upon which the payments would be made.

Of course, if these subsidies resulted in too rapid a rise in the birth-rate, it would be practicable to diminish the inducement; and if, on the other hand, the birth-rate still fell, it would be easy to increase the inducement until it sufficed.

That concisely is the idea of the Endowment of Motherhood. I believe firmly that some such arrangement is absolutely necessary to the continuous development of the modern State. These proposals arise so obviously out of the needs of our time that I cannot understand any really intelligent opposition to them. I can, however, understand a partial and silly application of them. It is most important that our good-class families should be endowed, but the whole tendency of the timid and disingenuous progressivism of our time, which is all mixed up with ideas of charity and aggressive benevolence to the poor, would be to apply this — as that Fabian tract I mention does — only to the poor mother. To endow poor and bad-class motherhood and leave other people severely alone would be a proceeding so supremely idiotic, so harmful to our national quality, as to be highly probable in the present state of our public intelligence. It comes quite on a level with the policy of starving middle-class education that has left us with nearly the worst educated middle class in Western Europe.

The Endowment of Motherhood does not attract the bureaucratic type of reformer because it offers a minimum chance of meddlesome interference with people's lives. There would be no chance of "seeking out" anybody and applying benevolent but grim compulsions on the strength of it. In spite of its wide scope it would be much less of a public nuisance than that Wet Children's Charter, which exasperates me every time I pass a public-house on a rainy night. But, on the other hand, there would be an enormous stimulus to people to raise the quality of their homes, study infantile hygiene, seek out good schools for them — and do their duty as all good parents naturally want to do now — if only economic forces were not so pitilessly against them — thoroughly and well.

DOCTORS

In that extravagant world of which I dream, in which people will live in delightful cottages and ground rents will serve instead of rates, and everyone will have a chance of being happy — in that impossible world all doctors will be members of one great organisation for the public health, with all or most of their income guaranteed to them: I doubt if there will be any private doctors at all.

Heaven forbid I should seem to write a word against doctors as they are. Daily I marvel at the wonders the general practitioner achieves, having regard to the difficulties of his position.

But I cannot hide from myself, and I do not intend to hide from anyone else, my firm persuasion that the services the general practitioner is able to render us are not one-tenth so effectual as they might be if, instead of his being a private adventurer, he were a member of a sanely organised public machine. Consider what his training and equipment are, consider the peculiar difficulties of his work, and then consider for a moment what better conditions might be invented, and perhaps you will not think my estimate of one-tenth an excessive understatement in this matter.

Nearly the whole of our medical profession and most of our apparatus for teaching and training doctors subsist on strictly commercial lines by earning fees. This chief source of revenue is eked out by the wanton charity of old women, and conspicuous subscriptions by popularity hunters, and a small but growing contribution (in the salaries of medical officers of health and so forth) from the public funds. But the fact remains that for the great mass of the medical profession there is no living to be got except at a salary for hospital practice or by earning fees in receiving or attending upon private cases.

So long as a doctor is learning or adding to knowledge, he earns nothing, and the common, unintelligent man does not see why he should earn anything. So that a doctor who has no religious passion for poverty and self-devotion gets through the minimum of training and learning as quickly and as cheaply as possible, and does all he can to fill up the rest of his time in passing rapidly from case to case.

The busier he keeps, the less his leisure for thought and learning, the richer he grows, and the more he is esteemed. His four or five years of hasty, crowded study are supposed to give him a complete and final knowledge of the treatment of every sort of disease, and he goes on year after year, often without co-operation, working mechanically in the common incidents of practice, births, cases of measles and whooping cough, and so forth, and blundering more or less in whatever else turns up.

There are no public specialists to whom he can conveniently refer the difficulties he constantly encounters; only in the case of rich patients is the specialist available; there are no properly organised information bureaus for him, and no means whatever of keeping him informed upon progress and discovery in medical science. He is not even required to set apart a month or so in every two or three years in order to return to lectures and hospitals and refresh his knowledge. Indeed, the income of the average general practitioner would not permit of such a thing, and almost the only means of contact between him and current thought lies in the one or other of our two great medical weeklies to which he happens to subscribe.

Now just as I have nothing but praise for the average general practitioner, so I have nothing but praise and admiration for those stalwart-looking publications. Without them I can imagine nothing but the most terrible intellectual atrophy among our medical men. But since they are private properties run for profit they have to pay, and half their bulk consists of the brilliantly written advertisements of new drugs and apparatus. They give much knowledge, they do much to ventilate perplexing questions, but a broadly conceived and properly endowed weekly circular could, I believe, do much more. At any rate, in my Utopia this duty of feeding up the general practitioners will not be left to private enterprise.

Behind the first line of my medical army will be a second line of able men constantly digesting new research for its practical needs — correcting, explaining, announcing; and, in addition, a force of public specialists to whom every difficulty in diagnosis will be at once referred. And there will be a properly organised system of reliefs that will allow the general practitioner and his right hand, the nurse, to come back to the refreshment of study before his knowledge and

mind have got rusty. But then my Utopia is a Socialistic system. Under our present system of competitive scramble, under any system that reduces medical practice to mere fee-hunting nothing of this sort is possible.

Then in my Utopia, for every medical man who was mainly occupied in practice, I would have another who was mainly occupied in or about research. People hear so much about modern research that they do not realise how entirely inadequate it is in amount and equipment. Our general public is still too stupid to understand the need and value of sustained investigations in any branch of knowledge at all. In spite of all the lessons of the last century, it still fails to realise how discovery and invention enrich the community and how paying an investment is the public employment of clever people to think and experiment for the benefit of all. It still expects to get a Newton or a Joule for £800 a year, and requires him to conduct his researches in the margin of time left over when he has got through his annual eighty or ninety lectures. It imagines discoveries are a sort of inspiration that comes when professors are running to catch trains. It seems incapable of imagining how enormous are the untried possibilities of research. Of course, if you will only pay a handful of men salaries at which the cook of any large London hotel would turn up his nose, you cannot expect to have the master minds of the world at your service; and save for a few independent or devoted men, therefore, it is not reasonable to suppose that such a poor little dribble of medical research as is now going on is in the hands of persons of much more than average mental equipment. How can it be?

One hears a lot of the rigorous research into the problem of cancer that is now going on. Does the reader realise that all the men in the whole world who are giving any considerable proportion of their time to this cancer research would pack into a very small room, that they are working in little groups without any properly organised system of intercommunication, and that half of them are earning less than a quarter of the salary of a Bond Street shopwalker by those vastly important inquiries? Not one cancer case in twenty thousand is being properly described and reported. And yet, in comparison with other diseases, cancer is being particularly well attended to.

The general complacency with the progress in knowledge we have made and are making is ridiculously unjustifiable. Enormous things were no doubt done in the nineteenth century in many fields of knowledge, but all that was done was out of all proportion petty in comparison with what might have been done. I suppose the whole of the unprecedented progress in material knowledge of the nineteenth century was the work of two or three thousand men, who toiled against opposition, spite and endless disadvantages, without proper means of intercommunication and with wretched facilities for experiment. Such discoveries as were distinctively medical were the work of only a few hundred men. Now, suppose instead of that scattered band of un-co-ordinated workers a great army of hundreds of thousands of well-paid men; suppose, for instance, the community had kept as many scientific and medical investigators as it has bookmakers and racing touts and men about town — should we not know a thousand times as much as we do about disease and health and strength and power?

But these are Utopian questionings. The sane, practical man shakes his head, smiles pityingly at my dreamy impracticability, and passes them by.

AN AGE OF SPECIALISATION

There is something of the phonograph in all of us, but in the sort of eminent person who makes public speeches about education and reading, and who gives away prizes and opens educational institutions, there seems to be little else but gramophone.

These people always say the same things, and say them in the same note.
And why should they do that if they are really individuals?

There is, I cannot but suspect, in the mysterious activities that underlie life, some trade in records for these distinguished gramophones, and it is a trade conducted upon cheap and wholesale lines. There must be in these demiurgic profundities a rapid manufacture of innumerable thousands of that particular speech about "scrappy reading," and that contrast of "modern" with "serious" literature, that babbles about in the provinces so incessantly. Gramophones thinly disguised as bishops, gramophones still more thinly disguised as eminent statesmen, gramophones K.C.B. and gramophones F.R.S. have brazened it at us time after time, and will continue to brazen it to our grandchildren when we are dead and all our poor protests forgotten. And almost equally popular in their shameless mouths is the speech that declares this present age to be an age of specialisation. We all know the profound droop of the eminent person's eyelids as he produces that discovery, the edifying deductions or the solemn warnings he unfolds from this proposition, and all the dignified, inconclusive rigmarole of that cylinder. And it is nonsense from beginning to end.

This is most distinctly *not* an age of specialisation. There has hardly been an age in the whole course of history less so than the present. A few moments of reflection will suffice to demonstrate that. This is beyond any precedent an age of change, change in the appliances of life, in the average length of life, in the general temper of life; and the two things are incompatible. It is only under fixed conditions that you can have men specialising.

They specialise extremely, for example, under such conditions as one had in Hindustan up to the coming of the present generation. There the metal worker or the cloth worker, the wheelwright or the druggist of yesterday did his work under almost exactly the same conditions as his predecessor did it five hundred years before. He had the same resources, the same tools, the same materials; he made the same objects for the same ends. Within the narrow limits thus set him he carried work to a fine perfection; his hand, his mental character were subdued to his medium. His dress and bearing even were distinctive; he was, in fact, a highly specialised man. He transmitted his difference to his sons. Caste was the logical expression in the social organisation of this state of high specialisation, and, indeed, what else is caste or any definite class distinctions but that? But the most obvious fact of the present time is the disappearance of caste and the fluctuating uncertainty of all class distinctions.

If one looks into the conditions of industrial employment specialisation will be found to linger just in proportion as a trade has remained unaffected by inventions and innovation. The building trade, for example, is a fairly conservative one. A brick wall is made to-day much as it was made two hundred years ago, and the bricklayer is in consequence a highly skilled and inadaptable specialist. No one who has not passed through a long and tedious training can lay bricks properly. And it needs a specialist to plough a field with horses or to drive a cab through the streets of London. Thatchers, old-fashioned cobblers, and hand workers are all specialised to a degree no new modern calling requires. With machinery skill disappears and unspecialised intelligence comes in. Any generally intelligent man can learn in a day or two to drive an electric tram, fix up an electric lighting installation, or guide a building machine or a steam plough. He must be, of course, much more generally intelligent than the average bricklayer, but he needs far less specialised skill. To repair machinery requires, of course, a special sort of knowledge, but not a special sort of training.

In no way is this disappearance of specialisation more marked than in military and naval affairs. In the great days of Greece and Rome war was a special calling, requiring a special type of man. In

the Middle Ages war had an elaborate technique, in which the footman played the part of an unskilled labourer, and even within a period of a hundred years it took a long period of training and discipline before the common discursive man could be converted into the steady soldier. Even to-day traditions work powerfully, through extravagance of uniform, and through survivals of that mechanical discipline that was so important in the days of hand-to-hand fighting, to keep the soldier something other than a man. For all the lessons of the Boer war we are still inclined to believe that the soldier has to be something severely parallel, carrying a rifle he fires under orders, obedient to the pitch of absolute abnegation of his private intelligence. We still think that our officers have, like some very elaborate and noble sort of performing animal, to be "trained." They learn to fight with certain specified "arms" and weapons, instead of developing intelligence enough to use anything that comes to hand.

But, indeed, when a really great European war does come and lets loose motor-cars, bicycles, wireless telegraphy, aeroplanes, new projectiles of every size and shape, and a multitude of ingenious persons upon the preposterously vast hosts of conscription, the military caste will be missing within three months of the beginning, and the inventive, versatile, intelligent man will have come to his own.

And what is true of a military caste is equally true of a special governing class such as our public schools maintain.

The misunderstanding that has given rise to this proposition that this is an age of specialisation, and through that no end of mischief in misdirected technical education and the like, is essentially a confusion between specialisation and the division of labour. No doubt this is an age when everything makes for wider and wider co-operations. Work that was once done by one highly specialised man — the making of a watch, for example — is now turned out wholesale by elaborate machinery, or effected in great quantities by the contributed efforts of a number of people. Each of these people may bring a highly developed intelligence to bear for a time upon the special problem in hand, but that is quite a different thing from specialising to do that thing.

This is typically shown in scientific research. The problem or the parts of problems upon which the inquiry of an individual man is concentrated are often much narrower than the problems that occupied Faraday or Dalton, and yet the hard and fast lines that once divided physicist from chemist, or botanist from pathologist have long since gone. Professor Farmer, the botanist, investigates cancer, and the ordinary educated man, familiar though he is with their general results, would find it hard to say which were the chemists and which the physicists among Professors Dewar and Ramsey Lord Rayleigh and Curie. The classification of sciences that was such a solemn business to our grandfathers is now merely a mental obstruction.

It is interesting to glance for a moment at the possible source of this mischievous confusion between specialisation and the division of labour. I have already glanced at the possibility of a diabolical world manufacturing gramophone records for our bishops and statesmen and suchlike leaders of thought, but if we dismiss that as a merely elegant trope, I must confess I think it is the influence of Herbert Spencer. His philosophy is pervaded by an insistence which is, I think, entirely without justification, that the universe, and every sort of thing in it, moves from the simple and homogeneous to the complex and heterogeneous. An unwary man obsessed with that idea would be very likely to assume without consideration that men were less specialised in a barbaric state of society than they are to-day. I think I have given reasons for believing that the reverse of this is nearer the truth.

IS THERE A PEOPLE?

Of all the great personifications that have dominated the mind of man, the greatest, the most marvellous, the most impossible and the most incredible, is surely the People, that impalpable monster to which the world has consecrated its political institutions for the last hundred years.

It is doubtful now whether this stupendous superstition has reached its grand climacteric, and there can be little or no dispute that it is destined to play a prominent part in the history of mankind for many years to come. There is a practical as well as a philosophical interest, therefore, in a note or so upon the attributes of this legendary being. I write "legendary," but thereby I display myself a sceptic. To a very large number of people the People is one of the profoundest realities in life. They believe — what exactly do they believe about the people?

When they speak of the People they certainly mean something more than the whole mass of individuals in a country lumped together. That is the people, a mere varied aggregation of persons, moved by no common motive, a complex interplay. The People, as the believer understands the word, is something more mysterious than that. The People is something that overrides and is added to the individualities that make up the people. It is, as it were, itself an individuality of a higher order — as indeed, its capital "P" displays. It has a will of its own which is not the will of any particular person in it, it has a power of purpose and judgment of a superior sort. It is supposed to be the underlying reality of all national life and the real seat of all public religious emotion. Unfortunately, it lacks powers of expression, and so there is need of rulers and interpreters. If they express it well in law and fact, in book and song, they prosper under its mysterious approval; if they do not, it revolts or forgets or does something else of an equally annihilatory sort. That, briefly, is the idea of the People. My modest thesis is that there exists nothing of the sort, that the world of men is entirely made up of the individuals that compose it, and that the collective action is just the algebraic sum of all individual actions.

How far the opposite opinion may go, one must talk to intelligent Americans or read the contemporary literature of the first French Revolution to understand. I find, for example, so typical a young American as the late Frank Norris roundly asserting that it is the People to whom we are to ascribe the triumphant emergence of the name of Shakespeare from the ruck of his contemporaries and the passage in which this assertion is made is fairly representative of the general expression of this sort of mysticism. "One must keep one's faith in the People — the Plain People, the Burgesses, the Grocers — else of all men the artists are most miserable and their teachings vain. Let us admit and concede that this belief is ever so sorely tried at times…. But in the end, and at last, they will listen to the true note and discriminate between it and the false." And then he resorts to italics to emphasise: "*In the last analysis the People are always right*."

And it was that still more typical American, Abraham Lincoln, who declared his equal confidence in the political wisdom of this collective being. "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time." The thing is in the very opening words of the American Constitution, and Theodore Parker calls it "the American idea" and pitches a still higher note: "A government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people; a government of all the principles of eternal justice, *the unchanging law of God."*

It is unavoidable that a collective wisdom distinct from any individual and personal one is intended in these passages. Mr. Norris, for example, never figured to himself a great wave of critical discrimination sweeping through the ranks of the various provision trades and a multitude of simple, plain burgesses preferring Shakespeare and setting Marlowe aside. Such a particularisation of his statement would have at once reduced it to absurdity. Nor does any American see the people particularised in that way. They believe in the People one and indivisible, a simple, mystical being, which pervades and dominates the community and determines its final collective consequences.

Now upon the belief that there is a People rests a large part of the political organisation of the modern world. The idea was one of the

chief fruits of the speculations of the eighteenth century, and the American Constitution is its most perfect expression. One turns, therefore, inevitably to the American instance, not because it is the only one, but because there is the thing in its least complicated form. We have there an almost exactly logical realisation of this belief. The whole political machine is designed and expressed to register the People's will, literature is entirely rewarded and controlled by the effectual suffrages of the bookseller's counter, science (until private endowment intervened) was in the hands of the State Legislatures, and religion the concern of the voluntary congregations.

On the assumption that there is a People there could be no better state of affairs. You and I and everyone, except for a vote or a book, or a service now and then, can go about our business, you to your grocery and I to mine, and the direction of the general interests rests safe in the People's hands. Now that is by no means a caricature of the attitude of mind of many educated Americans. You find they have little or nothing to do with actual politics, and are inclined to regard the professional politician with a certain contempt; they trouble their heads hardly at all about literature, and they contemplate the general religious condition of the population with absolute unconcern. It is not that they are unpatriotic or morally trivial that they stand thus disengaged; it is that they have a fatalistic belief in this higher power. Whatever troubles and abuses may arise they have an absolute faith that "in the last analysis" the People will get it right.

And now suppose that I am right and that there is no People! Suppose that the crowd is really no more than a crowd, a vast miscellaneous confusion of persons which grows more miscellaneous every year. Suppose this conception of the People arose out of a sentimental idealisation, Rousseau fashion, of the ancient homogeneous peasant class — a class that is rapidly being swept out of existence by modern industrial developments — and that whatever slender basis of fact it had in the past is now altogether gone. What consequences may be expected?

It does not follow that because the object of your reverence is a dead word you will get no oracles from the shrine. If the sacred People remains impassive, inarticulate, non-existent, there are always the keepers of the shrine who will oblige. Professional politicians,

venal and violent men, will take over the derelict political control, people who live by the book trade will alone have a care for letters, research and learning will be subordinated to political expediency, and a great development of noisily competitive religious enterprises will take the place of any common religious formula. There will commence a secular decline in the quality of public thought, emotion and activity. There will be no arrest or remedy for this state of affairs so long as that superstitious faith in the People as inevitably right "in the last analysis" remains. And if my supposition is correct, it should be possible to find in the United States, where faith in the people is indisputably dominant, some such evidence of the error of this faith. Is there?

I write as one that listens from afar. But there come reports of legislative and administrative corruption, of organised public blackmail, that do seem to carry out my thesis. One thinks of Edgar Allan Poe, who dreamt of founding a distinctive American literature, drugged and killed almost as it were symbolically, amid electioneering and nearly lied out of all posthumous respect by that scoundrel Griswold; one thinks of State Universities that are no more than mints for bogus degrees; one thinks of "Science" Christianity and Zion City. These things are quite insufficient for a Q.E.D., but I submit they favour my proposition.

Suppose there is no People at all, but only enormous, differentiating millions of men. All sorts of widely accepted generalisations will collapse if that foundation is withdrawn. I submit it as worth considering.

THE DISEASE OF PARLIAMENTS

Sec. 1

There is a growing discord between governments and governed in the world.

There has always been discord between governments and governed since States began; government has always been to some extent imposed, and obedience to some extent reluctant. We have come to regard it as a matter of course that under all absolutions and narrow oligarchies the community, so soon as it became educated and as its social elaboration developed a free class with private initiatives, so soon, indeed, as it attained to any power of thought and expression at all, would express discontent. But we English and Americans and Western Europeans generally had supposed that, so far as our own communities were concerned, this discontent was already anticipated and met by representative institutions. We had supposed that, with various safeguards and elaborations, our communities did, as a matter of fact, govern themselves. Our panacea for all discontents was the franchise. Social and national dissatisfaction could be given at the same time a voice and a remedy in the ballot box. Our liberal intelligences could and do still understand Russians wanting votes, Indians wanting votes, women wanting votes. The history of nineteenth-century Liberalism in the world might almost be summed up in the phrase "progressive enfranchisement." But these are the desires of a closing phase in political history. The new discords go deeper than that. The new situation which confronts our Liberal intelligence is the discontent of the enfranchised, the contempt and hostility of the voters for their elected delegates and governments.

This discontent, this resentment, this contempt even, and hostility to duly elected representatives is no mere accident of this democratic country or that; it is an almost world-wide movement. It is an almost universal disappointment with so-called popular government, and in many communities — in Great Britain particularly — it is manifesting itself by an unprecedented lawlessness in political matters, and in a strange and ominous contempt for the law. One sees

it, for example, in the refusal of large sections of the medical profession to carry out insurance legislation, in the repudiation of Irish Home Rule by Ulster, and in the steady drift of great masses of industrial workers towards the conception of a universal strike. The case of the discontented workers in Great Britain and France is particularly remarkable. These people form effective voting majorities in many constituencies; they send alleged Socialist and Labour representatives into the legislative assembly; and, in addition, they have their trade unions with staffs of elected officials, elected ostensibly to state their case and promote their interests. Yet nothing is now more evident than that these officials, working-men representatives and the like, do not speak for their supporters, and are less and less able to control them. The Syndicalist movement, sabotage in France, and Larkinism in Great Britain, are, from the point of view of social stability, the most sinister demonstrations of the gathering anger of the labouring classes with representative institutions. These movements are not revolutionary movements, not movements for reconstruction such as were the democratic Socialist movements that closed the nineteenth century. They are angry and vindictive movements. They have behind them the most dangerous and terrible of purely human forces, the wrath, the blind destructive wrath, of a cheated crowd.

Now, so far as the insurrection of labour goes, American conditions differ from European, and the process of disillusionment will probably follow a different course. American labour is very largely immigrant labour still separated by barriers of language and tradition from the established thought of the nation. It will be long before labour in America speaks with the massed effectiveness of labour in France and England, where master and man are racially identical, and where there is no variety of “Dagoes” to break up the revolt. But in other directions the American disbelief in and impatience with “elected persons” is and has been far profounder than it is in Europe. The abstinence of men of property and position from overt politics, and the contempt that banishes political discussion from polite society, are among the first surprises of the visiting European to America, and now that, under an organised pressure of conscience, college-trained men and men of wealth are

abandoning this strike of the educated and returning to political life, it is, one notes, with a prevailing disposition to correct democracy by personality, and to place affairs in the hands of autocratic mayors and presidents rather than to carry out democratic methods to the logical end. At times America seems hot for a Caesar. If no Caesar is established, then it will be the good fortune of the Republic rather than its democratic virtue which will have saved it.

And directly one comes to look into the quality and composition of the elected governing body of any modern democratic State, one begins to see the reason and nature of its widening estrangement from the community it represents. In no sense are these bodies really representative of the thought and purpose of the nation; the conception of its science, the fresh initiatives of its philosophy and literature, the forces that make the future through invention and experiment, exploration and trial and industrial development have no voice, or only an accidental and feeble voice, there. The typical elected person is a smart rather than substantial lawyer, full of cheap catchwords and elaborate tricks of procedure and electioneering, professing to serve the interests of the locality which is his constituency, but actually bound hand and foot to the specialised political association, his party, which imposed him upon that constituency. Arrived at the legislature, his next ambition is office, and to secure and retain office he engages in elaborate manoeuvres against the opposite party, upon issues which his limited and specialised intelligence indicates as electorally effective. But being limited and specialised, he is apt to drift completely out of touch with the interests and feelings of large masses of people in the community. In Great Britain, the United States and France alike there is a constant tendency on the part of the legislative body to drift into unreality, and to bore the country with the disputes that are designed to thrill it. In Great Britain, for example, at the present time the two political parties are both profoundly unpopular with the general intelligence, which is sincerely anxious, if only it could find a way, to get rid of both of them. Irish Home Rule — an issue as dead as mutton, is opposed to Tariff Reform, which has never been alive. Much as the majority of people detest the preposterously clumsy attempts to amputate Ireland from the rule of the British Parliament

which have been going on since the breakdown of Mr. Gladstone's political intelligence, their dread of foolish and scoundrelly fiscal adventurers is sufficiently strong to retain the Liberals in office. The recent exposures of the profound financial rottenness of the Liberal party have deepened the public resolve to permit no such enlarged possibilities of corruption as Tariff Reform would afford their at least equally dubitable opponents. And meanwhile, beneath those ridiculous alternatives, those sham issues, the real and very urgent affairs of the nation, the vast gathering discontent of the workers throughout the Empire, the racial conflicts in India and South Africa which will, if they are not arrested, end in our severance from India, the insane waste of national resources, the control of disease, the frightful need of some cessation of armament, drift neglected….

Now do these things indicate the ultimate failure and downfall of representative government? Was this idea which inspired so much of the finest and most generous thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a wrong idea, and must we go back to Caesarism or oligarchy or plutocracy or a theocracy, to Rome or Venice or Carthage, to the strong man or the ruler by divine right, for the political organisation of the future?

My answer to that question would be an emphatic No. My answer would be that the idea of representative government is the only possible idea for the government of a civilised community. But I would add that so far representative government has not had even the beginnings of a fair trial. So far we have not had representative government, but only a devastating caricature.

It is quite plain now that those who first organised the parliamentary institutions which now are the ruling institutions of the greater part of mankind fell a prey to certain now very obvious errors. They did not realise that there are hundreds of different ways in which voting may be done, and that every way will give a different result. They thought, and it is still thought by a great number of mentally indolent people, that if a country is divided up into approximately equivalent areas, each returning one or two representatives, if every citizen is given one vote, and if there is no legal limit to the presentation of candidates, that presently a cluster of the wisest, most trusted and best citizens will come together in the

legislative assembly.

In reality the business is far more complicated than this. In reality a country will elect all sorts of different people according to the electoral method employed. It is a fact that anyone who chooses to experiment with a willing school or club may verify. Suppose, for example, that you take your country, give every voter one single vote, put up six and twenty candidates for a dozen vacancies, and give them no adequate time for organisation. The voters, you will find, will return certain favourites, A and B and C and D let us call them, by enormous majorities, and behind these at a considerable distance will come E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L. Now give your candidates time to develop organisation. A lot of people who swelled A's huge vote will dislike J and K and L so much, and prefer M and N so much, that if they are assured that by proper organisation A's return can be made certain without their voting for him, they will vote for M and N. But they will do so only on that understanding. Similarly certain B-ites will want O and P if they can be got without sacrificing B. So that adequate party organisation in the community may return not the dozen a naive vote would give, but A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, M, N, O, P. Now suppose that, instead of this arrangement, your community is divided into twelve constituencies and no candidate may contest more than one of them. And suppose each constituency has strong local preferences. A, B and C are widely popular; in every constituency they have supporters but in no constituency does any one of the three command a majority. They are great men, not local men. Q, who is an unknown man in most of the country, has, on the contrary, a strong sect of followers in the constituency for which A stands, and beats him by one vote; another local celebrity, E, disposes of B in the same way; C is attacked not only by S but T, whose peculiar views upon vaccination, let us say, appeal to just enough of C's supporters to let in S. Similar accidents happen in the other constituencies, and the country that would have unreservedly returned A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K and L on the first system, return instead O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z. Numerous voters who would have voted for A if they had a chance vote instead for R, S, T, etc., numbers who would have voted for B, vote for Q, V, W, X, etc. But now suppose that A and B are opposed

to one another, and that there is a strong A party and a strong B party highly organised in the country. B is really the second favourite over the country as a whole, but A is the first favourite. D, F, H, J, L, N, P, R, U, W, Y constitute the A candidates and in his name they conquer. B, C, E, G, I, K, M, O, Q, S, V are all thrown out in spite of the wide popularity of B and C. B and C, we have supposed, are the second and third favourites, and yet they go out in favour of Y, of whom nobody has heard before, some mere hangers-on of A's. Such a situation actually occurs in both Ulster and Home-Rule Ireland.

But now let us suppose another arrangement, and that is that the whole country is one constituency, and every voter has, if he chooses to exercise them, twelve votes, which, however, he must give, if he gives them all, to twelve separate people. Then quite certainly A, B, C, D will come in, but the tail will be different. M, N, O, P may come up next to them, and even Z, that eminent non-party man, may get in. But now organisation may produce new effects. The ordinary man, when he has twelve votes to give, likes to give them all, so that there will be a good deal of wild voting at the tails of the voting papers. Now if a small resolute band decide to plump for T or to vote only for A and T or B and T, T will probably jump up out of the rejected. This is the system which gives the specialist, the anti-vaccinator or what not, the maximum advantage. V, W, X and Y, being rather hopeless anyhow, will probably detach themselves from party and make some special appeal, say to the teetotal vote or the Mormon vote or the single tax vote, and so squeeze past O, P, Q, R, who have taken a more generalised line.

I trust the reader will bear with me through these alphabetical fluctuations. Many people, I know from colloquial experiences, do at about this stage fly into a passion. But if you will exercise self-control, then I think you will see my point that, according to the method of voting, almost any sort of result may be got out of an election except the production of a genuinely representative assembly.

And that is the a priori case for supposing, what our experience of contemporary life abundantly verifies, that the so-called representative assemblies of the world are not really representative at all. I will go farther and say that were it not for the entire inefficiency

of our method of voting, not one-tenth of the present American and French Senators, the French Deputies, the American Congressmen, and the English Members of Parliament would hold their positions to-day. They would never have been heard of. They are not really the elected representatives of the people; they are the products of a ridiculous method of election; they are the illegitimate children of the party system and the ballot-box, who have ousted the legitimate heirs from their sovereignty. They are no more the expression of the general will than the Tsar or some President by *pronunciamento*. They are an accidental oligarchy of adventurers. Representative government has never yet existed in the world; there was an attempt to bring it into existence in the eighteenth century, and it succumbed to an infantile disorder at the very moment of its birth. What we have in the place of the leaders and representatives are politicians and "elected persons."

The world is passing rapidly from localised to generalised interests, but the method of election into which our fathers fell is the method of electing one or two representatives from strictly localised constituencies. Its immediate corruption was inevitable. If discussing and calculating the future had been, as it ought to be, a common, systematic occupation, the muddles of to-day might have been foretold a hundred years ago. From such a rough method of election the party system followed as a matter of course. In theory, of course, there may be any number of candidates for a constituency and a voter votes for the one he likes best; in practice there are only two or three candidates, and the voter votes for the one most likely to beat the candidate he likes least. It cannot be too strongly insisted that in contemporary elections we vote against; we do not vote for. If A, B and C are candidates, and you hate C and all his works and prefer A, but doubt if he will get as many votes as B, who is indifferent to you, the chances are you will vote for B. If C and B have the support of organised parties, you are still less likely to risk "wasting" your vote upon A. If your real confidence is in G, who is not a candidate for your constituency, and if B pledges himself to support G, while A retains the right of separate action, you may vote for B even if you distrust him personally. Additional candidates would turn any election of this type into a wild scramble. The system lies, in fact,

wholly open to the control of political organisations, calls out, indeed, for the control of political organisations, and has in every country produced what is so evidently demanded. The political organisations to-day rule us unchallenged. Save as they speak for us, the people are dumb.

Elections of the prevalent pattern, which were intended and are still supposed by simple-minded people to give every voter participation in government, do as a matter of fact effect nothing of the sort. They give him an exasperating fragment of choice between the agents of two party organisations, over neither of which he has any intelligible control. For twenty-five years I have been a voter, and in all that time I have only twice had an opportunity of voting for a man of distinction in whom I had the slightest confidence. Commonly my choice of a "representative" has been between a couple of barristers entirely unknown to me or the world at large. Rather more than half the men presented for my selection have not been English at all, but of alien descent. This, then, is the sum of the political liberty of the ordinary American or Englishman, that is the political emancipation which Englishwomen have shown themselves so pathetically eager to share. He may reject one of two undesirables, and the other becomes his "representative." Now this is not popular government at all; it is government by the profession of politicians, whose control becomes more and more irresponsible in just the measure that they are able to avoid real factions within their own body. Whatever the two party organisations have a mind to do together, whatever issue they chance to reserve from "party politics," is as much beyond the control of the free and independent voter as if he were a slave subject in ancient Peru.

Our governments in the more civilised parts of the world to-day are only in theory and sentiment democratic. In reality they are democracies so eviscerated by the disease of bad electoral methods that they are mere cloaks for the parasitic oligarchies that have grown up within their form and substance. The old spirit of freedom and the collective purpose which overthrew and subdued priestcrafts and kingcrafts, has done so, it seems, only to make way for these obscure political conspiracies. Instead of liberal institutions, mankind has invented a new sort of usurpation. And it is not unnatural that many

of us should be in a phase of political despair.

These oligarchies of the party organisations have now been evolving for two centuries, and their inherent evils and dangers become more and more manifest. The first of these is the exclusion from government of the more active and intelligent sections of the community. It is not treated as remarkable, it is treated as a matter of course, that neither in Congress nor in the House of Commons is there any adequate representation of the real thought of the time, of its science, invention and enterprise, of its art and feeling, of its religion and purpose. When one speaks of Congressmen or Members of Parliament one thinks, to be plain about it, of intellectual riff-raff. When one hears of a pre-eminent man in the English-speaking community, even though that pre-eminence may be in political or social science, one is struck by a sense of incongruity if he happens to be also in the Legislature. When Lord Haldane disengages the Gifford lectures or Lord Morley writes a "Life of Gladstone" or ex-President Roosevelt is delivered of a magazine article, there is the same sort of excessive admiration as when a Royal Princess does a water-colour sketch or a dog walks on its hind legs.

Now this intellectual inferiority of the legislator is not only directly bad for the community by producing dull and stupid legislation, but it has a discouraging and dwarfing effect upon our intellectual life. Nothing so stimulates art, thought and science as realisation; nothing so cripples it as unreality. But to set oneself to know thoroughly and to think clearly about any human question is to unfit oneself for the forensic claptrap which is contemporary politics, is to put oneself out of the effective current of the nation's life. The intelligence of any community which does not make a collective use of that intelligence, starves and becomes hectic, tends inevitably to preciousness and futility on the one hand, and to insurgency, mischief and anarchism on the other.

From the point of view of social stability this estrangement of the national government and the national intelligence is far less serious than the estrangement between the governing body and the real feeling of the mass of the people. To many observers this latter estrangement seems to be drifting very rapidly towards a social explosion in the British Isles. The organised masses of labour find

themselves baffled both by their parliamentary representatives and by their trade union officials. They are losing faith in their votes and falling back in anger upon insurrectionary ideals, upon the idea of a general strike, and upon the expedients of sabotage. They are doing this without any constructive proposals at all, for it is ridiculous to consider Syndicalism as a constructive proposal. They mean mischief because they are hopeless and bitterly disappointed. It is the same thing in France, and before many years are over it will be the same thing in America. That way lies chaos. In the next few years there may be social revolt and bloodshed in most of the great cities of Western Europe. That is the trend of current probability. Yet the politicians go on in an almost complete disregard of this gathering storm. Their jerrymandered electoral methods are like wool in their ears, and the rejection of Tweedledum for Tweedledee is taken as a "mandate" for Tweedledee's distinctive brand of political unrealities….

Is this an incurable state of things? Is this method of managing our affairs the only possible electoral method, and is there no remedy for its monstrous clumsiness and inefficiency but to "show a sense of humour," or, in other words, to grin and bear it? Or is it conceivable that there may be a better way to government than any we have yet tried, a method of government that would draw every class into conscious and willing co-operation with the State, and enable every activity of the community to play its proper part in the national life? That was the dream of those who gave the world representative government in the past. Was it an impossible dream?

Sec. 2

Is this disease of Parliaments an incurable disease, and have we, therefore, to get along as well as we can with it, just as a tainted and incurable invalid diets and is careful and gets along through life? Or is it possible that some entirely more representative and effective collective control of our common affairs can be devised?

The answer to that must determine our attitude to a great number of fundamental questions. If no better governing body is possible than the stupid, dilatory and forensic assemblies that rule in France, Britain and America to-day, then the civilised human community has reached its climax. That more comprehensive collective handling of

the common interests to which science and intelligent Socialism point, that collective handling which is already urgently needed if the present uncontrolled waste of natural resources and the ultimate bankruptcy of mankind is to be avoided, is quite beyond the capacity of such assemblies; already there is too much in their clumsy and untrustworthy hands, and the only course open to us is an attempt at enlightened Individualism, an attempt to limit and restrict State activities in every possible way, and to make little private temporary islands of light and refinement amidst the general disorder and decay. All collectivist schemes, all rational Socialism, if only Socialists would realise it, all hope for humanity, indeed, are dependent ultimately upon the hypothetical possibility of a better system of government than any at present in existence.

Let us see first, then, if we can lay down any conditions which such a better governing body would satisfy. Afterwards it will be open to us to believe or disbelieve in its attainment. Imagination is the essence of creation. If we can imagine a better government we are half-way to making it.

Now, whatever other conditions such a body will satisfy, we may be sure that it will not be made up of members elected by single-member constituencies. A single-member constituency must necessarily contain a minority, and may even contain a majority of dissatisfied persons whose representation is, as it were, blotted out by the successful candidate. Three single-member constituencies which might all return members of the same colour, if they were lumped together to return three members would probably return two of one colour and one of another. There would still, however, be a suppressed minority averse to both these colours, or desiring different shades of those colours from those afforded them in the constituency. Other things being equal, it may be laid down that the larger the constituency and the more numerous its representatives, the greater the chance of all varieties of thought and opinion being represented.

But that is only a preliminary statement; it still leaves untouched all the considerations advanced in the former part of this discussion to show how easily the complications and difficulties of voting lead to a falsification of the popular will and understanding. But here we

enter a region where a really scientific investigation has been made, and where established results are available. A method of election was worked out by Hare in the middle of the last century that really does seem to avoid or mitigate nearly every falsifying or debilitating possibility in elections; it was enthusiastically supported by J.S. Mill; it is now advocated by a special society — the Proportional Representation Society — to which belong men of the most diverse type of distinction, united only by the common desire to see representative government a reality and not a disastrous sham. It is a method which does render impossible nearly every way of forcing candidates upon constituencies, and nearly every trick for rigging results that now distorts and cripples the political life of the modern world. It exacts only one condition, a difficult but not an impossible condition, and that is the honest scrutiny and counting of the votes.

The peculiar invention of the system is what is called the single transferable vote — that is to say, a vote which may be given in the first instance to one candidate, but which, in the event of his already having a sufficient quota of votes to return him, may be transferred to another. The voter marks clearly in the list of the candidates the order of his preference by placing 1, 2, 3, and so forth against the names. In the subsequent counting the voting papers are first classified according to the first votes. Let us suppose that popular person A is found to have received first votes enormously in excess of what is needed to return him. The second votes are then counted on his papers, and after the number of votes necessary to return him has been deducted, the surplus votes are divided in due proportion among the second choice names, and count for them. That is the essential idea of the whole thing. At a stroke all that anxiety about wasting votes and splitting votes, *which is the secret of all party political manipulation* vanishes. You may vote for A well knowing that if he is safe your vote will be good for C. You can make sure of A, and at the same time vote for C. You are in no need of a "ticket" to guide you, and you need have no fear that in supporting an independent candidate you will destroy the prospects of some tolerably sympathetic party man without any compensating advantage. The independent candidate does, in fact, become possible for the first time. The Hobson's choice of the party machine is

abolished.

Let me be a little more precise about the particulars of this method, the only sound method, of voting in order to ensure an adequate representation of the community. Let us resort again to the constituency I imagined in my last paper, a constituency in which candidates represented by all the letters of the alphabet struggle for twelve places. And let us suppose that A, B, C and D are the leading favourites. Suppose that there are twelve thousand voters in the constituency, and that three thousand votes are cast for A — I am keeping the figures as simple as possible — then A has two thousand more than is needed to return him. *All* the second votes on his papers are counted, and it is found that 600, or a fifth of them, go to C; 500, or a sixth, go to E; 300, or a tenth, to G; 300 to J; 200, or a fifteenth, each to K and L, and a hundred each, or a thirtieth, to M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, W and Z. Then the surplus of 2,000 is divided in these proportions — that is a fifth of 2,000 goes to C, a sixth to E, and the rest to G, J, etc., in proportion. C, who already has 900 votes, gets another 400, and is now returned and has, moreover, 300 to spare; and the same division of the next votes upon C's paper occurs as has already been made with A's. But previously to this there has been a distribution of B's surplus votes, B having got 1,200 of first votes. And so on. After the distribution of the surplus votes of the elect at the top of the list, there is a distribution of the second votes upon the papers of those who have voted for the hopeless candidates at the bottom of the list. At last a point is reached when twelve candidates have a quota.

In this way the "wasting" of a vote, or the rejection of a candidate for any reason except that hardly anybody wants him, become practically impossible. This method of the single transferable vote with very large constituencies and many members does, in fact, give an entirely valid electoral result; each vote tells for all it is worth, and the freedom of the voter is only limited by the number of candidates who put up or are put up for election. This method, and this method alone, gives representative government; all others of the hundred and one possible methods admit of trickery, confusion and falsification. Proportional Representation is not a faddist proposal, not a perplexing ingenious complication of a simple business; it is the

carefully worked out right way to do something that hitherto we have been doing in the wrong way. It is no more an eccentricity than is proper baking in the place of baking amidst dirt and with unlimited adulteration, or the running of trains to their destinations instead of running them without notice into casually selected sidings and branch lines. It is not the substitution of something for something else of the same nature; it is the substitution of right for wrong. It is the plain common sense of the greatest difficulty in contemporary affairs.

I know that a number of people do not, will not, admit this of Proportional Representation. Perhaps it is because of that hideous mouthful of words for a thing that would be far more properly named Sane Voting. This, which is the only correct way, these antagonists regard as a peculiar way. It has unfamiliar features, and that condemns it in their eyes. It takes at least ten minutes to understand, and that is too much for their plain, straightforward souls. "Complicated" — that word of fear! They are like the man who approved of an electric tram, but said that he thought it would go better without all that jiggery-pokery of wires up above. They are like the Western judge in the murder trial who said that if only they got a man hanged for this abominable crime, he wouldn't make a pedantic fuss about the question of *which* man. They are like the plain, straightforward promoter who became impatient with maps and planned a railway across Switzerland by drawing a straight line with a ruler across Jungfrau and Matterhorn and glacier and gorge. Or else they are like Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P., who knows too well what would happen to him.

Now let us consider what would be the necessary consequences of the establishment of Proportional Representation in such a community as Great Britain — that is to say, the redistribution of the country into great constituencies such as London or Ulster or Wessex or South Wales, each returning a score or more of members, and the establishment of voting by the single transferable vote. The first, immediate, most desirable result would be the disappearance of the undistinguished party candidate; he would vanish altogether. He would be no more seen. Proportional Representation would not give him the ghost of a chance. The very young man of good family, the

subsidised barrister, the respectable nobody, the rich supporter of the party would be ousted by known men. No candidate who had not already distinguished himself, and who did not stand for something in the public eye, would have a chance of election. There alone we have a sufficient reason for anticipating a very thorough change in the quality and character of the average legislator.

And next, no party organisation, no intimation from headquarters, no dirty tricks behind the scenes, no conspiracy of spite and scandal would have much chance of keeping out any man of real force and distinction who had impressed the public imagination. To be famous in science, to have led thought, to have explored or administered or dissented courageously from the schemes of official wire-pullers would no longer be a bar to a man's attainment of Parliament. It would be a help. Not only the level of parliamentary intelligence, but the level of personal independence would be raised far above its present position. And Parliament would become a gathering of prominent men instead of a means to prominence.

The two-party system which holds all the English-speaking countries to-day in its grip would certainly be broken up by Proportional Representation. Sane Voting in the end would kill the Liberal and Tory and Democratic and Republican party-machines. That secret rottenness of our public life, that hidden conclave which sells honours, fouls finance, muddles public affairs, fools the passionate desires of the people, and ruins honest men by obscure campaigns would become impossible. The advantage of party support would be a doubtful advantage, and in Parliament itself the party men would find themselves outclassed and possibly even outnumbered by the independent. It would be only a matter of a few years between the adoption of Sane Voting and the disappearance of the Cabinet from British public life. It would become possible for Parliament to get rid of a minister without getting rid of a ministry, and to express its disapproval of — let us say — some foolish project for rearranging the local government of Ireland without opening the door upon a vista of fantastical fiscal adventures. The party-supported Cabinet, which is now the real government of the so-called democratic countries, would cease to be so, and government would revert more and more to the legislative assembly. And not only

would the latter body resume government, but it would also necessarily take into itself all those large and growing exponents of extra-parliamentary discontent that now darken the social future. The case of the armed "Unionist" rebel in Ulster, the case of the workman who engages in sabotage, the case for sympathetic strikes and the general strike, all these cases are identical in this, that they declare Parliament a fraud, that justice lies outside it and hopelessly outside it, and that to seek redress through Parliament is a waste of time and energy. Sane Voting would deprive all these destructive movements of the excuse and necessity for violence.

There is, I know, a disposition in some quarters to minimise the importance of Proportional Representation, as though it were a mere readjustment of voting methods. It is nothing of the sort; it is a prospective revolution. It will revolutionise government far more than a mere change from kingdom to republic or vice versa could possibly do; it will give a new and unprecedented sort of government to the world. The real leaders of the country will govern the country. For Great Britain, for example, instead of the secret, dubious and dubitable Cabinet, which is the real British government of to-day, poised on an unwieldy and crowded House of Commons, we should have open government by the representatives of, let us say, twenty great provinces, Ulster, Wales, London, for example, each returning from twelve to thirty members. It would be a steadier, stabler, more confident, and more trusted government than the world has ever seen before. Ministers, indeed, and even ministries might come and go, but that would not matter, as it does now, because there would be endless alternatives through which the assembly could express itself instead of the choice between two parties.

The arguments against Proportional Representation that have been advanced hitherto are trivial in comparison with its enormous advantages. Implicit in them all is the supposition that public opinion is at bottom a foolish thing, and that electoral methods are to pacify rather than express a people. It is possibly true that notorious windbags, conspicuously advertised adventurers, and the heroes of temporary sensations may run a considerable chance upon the lists. My own estimate of the popular wisdom is against the idea that any vividly prominent figure must needs get in; I think the public is

capable of appreciating, let us say, the charm and interest of Mr. Sandow or Mr. Jack Johnson or Mr. Harry Lauder or Mr. Evan Roberts without wanting to send these gentlemen into Parliament. And I think that the increased power that the Press would have through its facilities in making reputations may also be exaggerated. Reputations are mysterious things and not so easily forced, and even if it were possible for a section of the Press to limelight a dozen or so figures up to the legislature, they would still have, I think, to be interesting, sympathetic and individualised figures; and at the end they would be only half a dozen among four hundred men of a repute more naturally achieved. A third objection is that this reform would give us group politics and unstable government. It might very possibly give us unstable ministries, but unstable ministries may mean stable government, and such stable ministries as that which governs England at the present time may, by clinging obstinately to office, mean the wildest fluctuations of policy. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald has drawn a picture of the too-representative Parliament of Proportional Representation, split up into groups each pledged to specific measures and making the most extraordinary treaties and sacrifices of the public interest in order to secure the passing of these definite bills. But Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is exclusively a parliamentary man; he knows contemporary parliamentary "shop" as a clerk knows his "guv'nor," and he thinks in the terms of his habitual life; he sees representatives only as politicians financed from party headquarters; it is natural that he should fail to see that the quality and condition of the sanely elected Member of Parliament will be quite different from these scheming climbers into positions of trust with whom he deals to-day. It is the party system based on insane voting that makes governments indivisible wholes and gives the group and the cave their terrors and their effectiveness. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is as typical a product of existing electoral methods as one could well have, and his peculiarly keen sense of the power of intrigue in legislation is as good evidence as one could wish for of the need for drastic change.

Of course, Sane Voting is not a short cut to the millennium, it is no way of changing human nature, and in the new type of assembly, as in the old, spite, vanity, indolence, self-interest, and downright

dishonesty will play their part. But to object to a reform on that account is not a particularly effective objection. These things will play their part, but it will be a much smaller part in the new than in the old. It is like objecting to some projected and long-needed railway because it does not propose to carry its passengers by immediate express to heaven.

THE AMERICAN POPULATION

Sec. 1

The social conditions and social future of America constitute a system of problems quite distinct and separate from the social problems of any other part of the world. The nearest approach to parallel conditions, and that on a far smaller and narrower scale, is found in the British colonies and in the newly settled parts of Siberia. For while in nearly every other part of the world the population of to-day is more or less completely descended from the prehistoric population of the same region, and has developed its social order in a slow growth extending over many centuries, the American population is essentially a transplanted population, a still fluid and imperfect fusion of great fragments torn at this point or that from the gradually evolved societies of Europe. The European social systems grow and flower upon their roots, in soil which has made them and to which they are adapted. The American social accumulation is a various collection of cuttings thrust into a new soil and respiring a new air, so different that the question is still open to doubt, and indeed there are those who do doubt, how far these cuttings are actually striking root and living and growing, whether indeed they are destined to more than a temporary life in the new hemisphere. I propose to discuss and weigh certain arguments for and against the belief that these ninety million people who constitute the United States of America are destined to develop into a great distinctive nation with a character and culture of its own.

Humanly speaking, the United States of America (and the same is true of Canada and all the more prosperous, populous and progressive regions of South America) is a vast sea of newly arrived and unstably rooted people. Of the seventy-six million inhabitants recorded by the 1900 census, ten and a half million were born and brought up in one or other of the European social systems, and the parents of another twenty-six millions were foreigners. Another nine million are of African negro descent. Fourteen million of the sixty-five million native-born are living not in the state of their birth, but in other states to which they have migrated. Of the thirty and a half

million whites whose parents on both sides were native Americans, a high proportion probably had one if not more grand-parents foreign-born. Nearly five and a half million out of thirty-three and a half million whites in 1870 were foreign-born, and another five and a quarter million the children of foreign-born parents. The children of the latter five and a quarter million count, of course, in the 1900 census as native-born of native parents. Immigration varies enormously with the activity of business, but in 1906 it rose for the first time above a million.

These figures may be difficult to grasp. The facts may be seen in a more concrete form by the visitor to Ellis Island, the receiving station for the immigrants into New York Harbour. One goes to this place by tugs from the United States barge office in Battery Park, and in order to see the thing properly one needs a letter of introduction to the commissioner in charge. Then one is taken through vast barracks littered with people of every European race, every type of low-class European costume, and every degree of dirtiness, to a central hall in which the gist of the examining goes on. The floor of this hall is divided up into a sort of maze of winding passages between lattice work, and along these passages, day after day, incessantly, the immigrants go, wild-eyed Gipsies, Armenians, Greeks, Italians, Ruthenians, Cossacks, German peasants, Scandinavians, a few Irish still, impoverished English, occasional Dutch; they halt for a moment at little desks to exhibit papers, at other little desks to show their money and prove they are not paupers, to have their eyes scanned by this doctor and their general bearing by that. Their thumb-marks are taken, their names and heights and weights and so forth are recorded for the card index; and so, slowly, they pass along towards America, and at last reach a little wicket, the gate of the New World. Through this metal wicket drips the immigration stream — all day long, every two or three seconds, an immigrant with a valise or a bundle, passes the little desk and goes on past the well-managed money-changing place, past the carefully organised separating ways that go to this railway or that, past the guiding, protecting officials — into a new world. The great majority are young men and young women between seventeen and thirty, good, youthful, hopeful peasant stock. They stand in a long string, waiting to go through that wicket, with

bundles, with little tin boxes, with cheap portmanteaus with odd packages, in pairs, in families, alone, women with children, men with strings of dependents, young couples. All day that string of human beads waits there, jerks forward, waits again; all day and every day, constantly replenished, constantly dropping the end beads through the wicket, till the units mount to hundreds and the hundreds to thousands…. In such a prosperous year as 1906 more immigrants passed through that wicket into America than children were born in the whole of France.

This figure of a perpetual stream of new stranger citizens will serve to mark the primary distinction between the American social problem and that of any European or Asiatic community.

The vast bulk of the population of the United States has, in fact, only got there from Europe in the course of the last hundred years, and mainly since the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne of Great Britain. That is the first fact that the student of the American social future must realise. Only an extremely small proportion of its blood goes back now to those who fought for freedom in the days of George Washington. The American community is not an expanded colonial society that has become autonomous. It is a great and deepening pool of population accumulating upon the area these predecessors freed, and since fed copiously by affluents from every European community. Fresh ingredients are still being added in enormous quantity, in quantity so great as to materially change the racial quality in a score of years. It is particularly noteworthy that each accession of new blood seems to sterilise its predecessors. Had there been no immigration at all into the United States, but had the rate of increase that prevailed in 1810-20 prevailed to 1900, the population, which would then have been a purely native American one, would have amounted to a hundred million — that is to say, to approximately nine million in excess of the present total population. The new waves are for a time amazingly fecund, and then comes a rapid fall in the birth-rate. The proportion of colonial and early republican blood in the population is, therefore, probably far smaller even than the figures I have quoted would suggest.

These accesses of new population have come in a series of waves, very much as if successive reservoirs of surplus population in the

Old World had been tapped, drained and exhausted. First came the Irish and Germans, then Central Europeans of various types, then Poland and Western Russia began to pour out their teeming peoples, and more particularly their Jews, Bohemia, the Slavonic states, Italy and Hungary followed and the latest arrivals include great numbers of Levantines, Armenians and other peoples from Asia Minor and the Balkan Peninsula. The Hungarian immigrants have still a birth-rate of forty-six per thousand, the highest birth-rate in the world.

A considerable proportion of the Mediterranean arrivals, it has to be noted, and more especially the Italians, do not come to settle. They work for a season or a few years, and then return to Italy. The rest come to stay.

A vast proportion of these accessions to the American population since 1840 has, with the exception of the East European Jews, consisted of peasantry, mainly or totally illiterate, accustomed to a low standard of life and heavy bodily toil. For most of them the transfer to a new country meant severance from the religious communion in which they had been bred and from the servilities or subordinations to which they were accustomed They brought little or no positive social tradition to the synthesis to which they brought their blood and muscle.

The earlier German, English and Scandinavian incomers were drawn from a somewhat higher social level, and were much more closely akin in habits and faith to the earlier founders of the Republic.

Our inquiry is this: What social structure is this pool of mixed humanity developing or likely to develop?

Sec. 2

If we compare any European nation with the American, we perceive at once certain broad differences. The former, in comparison with the latter, is evolved and organised; the latter, in comparison with the former, is aggregated and chaotic. In nearly every European country there is a social system often quite elaborately classed and defined; each class with a sense of function, with an idea of what is due to it and what is expected of it. Nearly everywhere you find a governing class, aristocratic in spirit, sometimes no doubt highly modified by recent economic and industrial changes, with more or

less of the tradition of a feudal nobility, then a definite great mercantile class, then a large self-respecting middle class of professional men, minor merchants, and so forth, then a new industrial class of employees in the manufacturing and urban districts, and a peasant population rooted to the land. There are, of course, many local modifications of this form: in France the nobility is mostly expropriated; in England, since the days of John Bull, the peasant has lost his common rights and his holding, and become an "agricultural labourer" to a newer class of more extensive farmer. But these are differences in detail; the fact of the organisation, and the still more important fact of the traditional feeling of organisation, remain true of all these older communities.

And in nearly every European country, though it may be somewhat despoiled here and shorn of exclusive predominance there, or represented by a dislocated "reformed" member, is the Church, custodian of a great moral tradition, closely associated with the national universities and the organisation of national thought. The typical European town has its castle or great house, its cathedral or church, its middle-class and lower-class quarters. Five miles off one can see that the American town is on an entirely different plan. In his remarkable "American Scene," Mr. Henry James calls attention to the fact that the Church as one sees it and feels it universally in Europe is altogether absent, and he adds a comment as suggestive as it is vague. Speaking of the appearance of the Churches, so far as they do appear amidst American urban scenery, he says:

"Looking for the most part no more established or seated than a stopped omnibus, they are reduced to the inveterate bourgeois level (that of private, accommodated pretensions merely), and fatally despoiled of the fine old ecclesiastical arrogance, … The field of American life is as bare of the Church as a billiard-table of a centre-piece; a truth that the myriad little structures 'attended' on Sundays and on the 'off' evenings of their 'sociables' proclaim as with the audible sound of the roaring of a million mice….

"And however one indicates one's impression of the clearance, the clearance itself, in its completeness, with the innumerable odd connected circumstances that bring it home, represents, in the history of manners and morals, a deviation in the mere measurement of

which hereafter may well reside a certain critical thrill. I say hereafter because it is a question of one of those many measurements that would as yet, in the United States, be premature. Of all the solemn conclusions one feels as 'barred,' the list is quite headed in the States, I think, by this particular abeyance of judgment. When an ancient treasure of precious vessels, overscored with glowing gems and wrought artistically into wondrous shapes, has, by a prodigious process, been converted through a vast community into the small change, the simple circulating medium of dollars and 'nickels,' we can only say that the consequent permeation will be of values of a new order. Of *what* order we must wait to see."

America has no Church. Neither has it a peasantry nor an aristocracy, and until well on in the Victorian epoch it had no disproportionately rich people.

In America, except in the regions where the negro abounds, there is no lower stratum. There is no "soil people" to this community at all; your bottom-most man is a mobile freeman who can read, and who has ideas above digging and pigs and poultry-keeping, except incidentally for his own ends. No one owns to subordination As a consequence, any position which involves the acknowledgment of an innate inferiority is difficult to fill; there is, from the European point of view, an extraordinary dearth of servants, and this endures in spite of a great peasant immigration. The servile tradition will not root here now; it dies forthwith. An enormous importation of European serfs and peasants goes on, but as they touch this soil their backs begin to stiffen with a new assertion.

And at the other end of the scale, also, one misses an element. There is no territorial aristocracy, no aristocracy at all, no throne, no legitimate and acknowledged representative of that upper social structure of leisure, power and State responsibility which in the old European theory of Society was supposed to give significance to the whole. The American community, one cannot too clearly insist, does not correspond to an entire European community at all, but only to the middle masses of it, to the trading and manufacturing class between the dimensions of the magnate and the clerk and skilled artisan. It is the central part of the European organism without either the dreaming head or the subjugated feet. Even the highly feudal

slave-holding “county family” traditions of Virginia and the South pass now out of memory. So that in a very real sense the past of the American nation is in Europe, and the settled order of the past is left behind there. This community was, as it were, taken off its roots, clipped of its branches, and brought hither. It began neither serf nor lord, but burgher and farmer; it followed the normal development of the middle class under Progress everywhere and became capitalistic. The huge later immigration has converged upon the great industrial centres and added merely a vast non-servile element of employees to the scheme.

America has been and still very largely is a one-class country. It is a great sea of human beings detached from their traditions of origin. The social difference from Europe appears everywhere, and nowhere more strikingly than in the railway carriages. In England the compartments in these are either “first class,” originally designed for the aristocracy, or “second class,” for the middle class, or “third class,” for the populace. In America there is only one class, one universal simple democratic car. In the Southern States, however, a proportion of these simple democratic cars are inscribed with the word “White,” whereby nine million people are excluded. But to this original even-handed treatment there was speedily added a more sumptuous type of car, the parlour car, accessible to extra dollars; and then came special types of train, all made up of parlour cars and observation cars and the like. In England nearly every train remains still first, second and third, or first and third. And now, quite outdistancing the differentiation of England, America produces private cars and private trains, such as Europe reserves only for crowned heads.

The evidence of the American railways, then, suggests very strongly what a hundred other signs confirm, that the huge classless sea of American population is not destined to remain classless, is already developing separations and distinctions and structures of its own. And monstrous architectural portents in Boston and Salt Lake City encourage one to suppose that even that churchless aspect, which so stirred the speculative element in Mr. Henry James, is only the opening formless phase of a community destined to produce not only classes but intellectual and moral forms of the most remarkable

kind.

Sec. 3

It is well to note how these ninety millions of people whose social future we are discussing are distributed. This huge development of human appliances and resources is here going on in a community that is still, for all the dense crowds of New York, the teeming congestion of East Side, extraordinarily scattered. America, one recalls, is still an unoccupied country across which the latest developments of civilisation are rushing. We are dealing here with a continuous area of land which is, leaving Alaska out of account altogether, equal to Great Britain, France, the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Holland, Spain and Portugal, Sweden and Norway, Turkey in Europe, Egypt and the whole Empire of India, and the population spread out over this vast space is still less than the joint population of the first two countries named and not a quarter that of India.

Moreover, it is not spread at all evenly. Much of it is in undistributed clots. It is not upon the soil; barely half of it is in holdings and homes and authentic communities. It is a population of an extremely modern type. Urban concentration has already gone far with it; fifteen millions of it are crowded into and about twenty great cities, another eighteen millions make up five hundred towns. Between these centres of population run railways indeed, telegraph wires, telephone connections, tracks of various sorts, but to the European eye these are mere scratchings on a virgin surface. An empty wilderness manifests itself through this thin network of human conveniences, appears in the meshes even at the railroad side.

Essentially, America is still an unsettled land, with only a few incidental good roads in favoured places, with no universal police, with no wayside inns where a civilised man may rest, with still only the crudest of rural postal deliveries, with long stretches of swamp and forest and desert by the track side, still unassailed by industry. This much one sees clearly enough eastward of Chicago. Westward it becomes more and more the fact. In Idaho, at last, comes the untouched and perhaps invincible desert, plain and continuous through the long hours of travel. Huge areas do not contain one human being to the square mile, still vaster portions fall short of

two….

It is upon Pennsylvania and New York State and the belt of great towns that stretches out past Chicago to Milwaukee and Madison that the nation centres and seems destined to centre. One needs but examine a tinted population map to realise that. The other concentrations are provincial and subordinate; they have the same relation to the main axis that Glasgow or Cardiff have to London in the British scheme.

Sec. 4

When I speak of this vast multitude, these ninety millions of the United States of America as being for the most part peasants de-peasant-ised and common people cut off from their own social traditions, I do not intend to convey that the American community is as a whole traditionless. There is in America a very distinctive tradition indeed, which animates the entire nation, gives a unique idiom to its press and all its public utterances, and is manifestly the starting point from which the adjustments of the future must be made.

The mere sight of the stars and stripes serves to recall it; "Yankee" in the mouth of a European gives something of its quality. One thinks at once of a careless abandonment of any pretension, of tireless energy and daring enterprise, of immense self-reliance, of a disrespect for the past so complete that a mummy is in itself a comical object, and the blowing out of an ill-guarded sacred flame, a delightful jest. One thinks of the enterprise of the sky-scraper and the humour of "A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur," and of "Innocents Abroad." Its dominant notes are democracy, freedom, and confidence. It is religious-spirited without superstition consciously Christian in the vein of a nearly Unitarian Christianity, fervent but broadened, broadened as a halfpenny is broadened by being run over by an express train, substantially the same, that is to say, but with a marked loss of outline and detail. It is a tradition of romantic concession to good and inoffensive women and a high development of that personal morality which puts sexual continence and alcoholic temperance before any public virtue. It is equally a tradition of sporadic emotional public-spiritedness, entirely of the quality of gallantry, of handsome and surprising gifts to the people,

disinterested occupation of office and the like. It is emotionally patriotic, hypotheticating fighting and dying for one's country as a supreme good while inculcating also that working and living for oneself is quite within the sphere of virtuous action. It adores the flag but suspects the State. One sees more national flags and fewer national servants in America than in any country in the world. Its conception of manners is one of free plain-spoken men revering women and shielding them from most of the realities of life, scornful of aristocracies and monarchies, while asserting simply, directly, boldly and frequently an equal claim to consideration with all other men. If there is any traditional national costume, it is shirt-sleeves. And it cherishes the rights of property above any other right whatsoever.

Such are the details that come clustering into one's mind in response to the phrase, the American tradition.

From the War of Independence onward until our own times that tradition, that very definite ideal, has kept pretty steadily the same. It is the image of a man and not the image of a State. Its living spirit has been the spirit of freedom at any cost, unconditional and irresponsible. It is the spirit of men who have thrown off a yoke, who are jealously resolved to be unhampered masters of their "own," to whom nothing else is of anything but secondary importance. That was the spirit of the English small gentry and mercantile class, the comfortable property owners, the Parliamentarians, in Stuart times. Indeed even earlier, it is very largely the spirit of More's "Utopia." It was that spirit sent Oliver Cromwell himself packing for America, though a heedless and ill-advised and unforeseeing King would not let him go. It was the spirit that made taxation for public purposes the supreme wrong and provoked each country, first the mother country and then in its turn the daughter country, to armed rebellion. It has been the spirit of the British Whig and the British Nonconformist almost up to the present day. In the Reform Club of London, framed and glazed over against Magna Charta, is the American Declaration of Independence, kindred trophies they are of the same essentially English spirit of stubborn insubordination. But the American side of it has gone on unchecked by the complementary aspect of the English character which British Toryism expresses.

The War of Independence raised that Whig suspicion of and hostility to government and the freedom of private property and the repudiation of any but voluntary emotional and supererogatory co-operation in the national purpose to the level of a religion, and the American Constitution with but one element of elasticity in the Supreme Court decisions, established these principles impregnably in the political structure. It organised disorganisation. Personal freedom, defiance of authority, and the stars and stripes have always gone together in men's minds; and subsequent waves of immigration, the Irish fleeing famine, for which they held the English responsible, and the Eastern European Jews escaping relentless persecutions, brought a persuasion of immense public wrongs, as a necessary concomitant of systematic government, to refresh without changing this defiant thirst for freedom at any cost.

In my book, "The Future in America," I have tried to make an estimate of the working quality of this American tradition of unconditional freedom for the adult male citizen. I have shown that from the point of view of anyone who regards civilisation as an organisation of human interdependence and believes that the stability of society can be secured only by a conscious and disciplined co-ordination of effort, it is a tradition extraordinarily and dangerously deficient in what I have called a "*sense of the State*." And by a "sense of the State" I mean not merely a vague and sentimental and showy public-spiritedness — of that the States have enough and to spare — but a real sustaining conception of the collective interest embodied in the State as an object of simple duty and as a determining factor in the life of each individual. It involves a sense of function and a sense of "place," a sense of a general responsibility and of a general well-being overriding the individual's well-being, which are exactly the senses the American tradition attacks and destroys.

For the better part of a century the American tradition, quite as much by reason of what it disregards as of what it suggests, has meant a great release of human energy, a vigorous if rough and untidy exploitation of the vast resources that the European invention of railways and telegraphic communication put within reach of the American people. It has stimulated men to a greater individual activity, perhaps, than the world has ever seen before. Men have

been wasted by misdirection no doubt, but there has been less waste by inaction and lassitude than was the case in any previous society. Great bulks of things and great quantities of things have been produced, huge areas brought under cultivation, vast cities reared in the wilderness.

But this tradition has failed to produce the beginnings or promise of any new phase of civilised organisation, the growths have remained largely invertebrate and chaotic, and, concurrently with its gift of splendid and monstrous growth, it has also developed portentous political and economic evils. No doubt the increment of human energy has been considerable, but it has been much less than appears at first sight. Much of the human energy that America has displayed in the last century is not a development of new energy but a diversion. It has been accompanied by a fall in the birth-rate that even the immigration torrent has not altogether replaced. Its insistence on the individual, its disregard of the collective organisation, its treatment of women and children as each man's private concern, has had its natural outcome. Men's imaginations have been turned entirely upon individual and immediate successes and upon concrete triumphs; they have had no regard or only an ineffectual sentimental regard for the race. Every man was looking after himself, and there was no one to look after the future. Had the promise of 1815 been fulfilled, there would now be in the United States of America one hundred million descendants of the homogeneous and free-spirited native population of that time. There is not, as a matter of fact, more than thirty-five million. There is probably, as I have pointed out, much less. Against the assets of cities, railways, mines and industrial wealth won, the American tradition has to set the price of five-and-seventy million native citizens who have never found time to get born, and whose place is now more or less filled by alien substitutes. Biologically speaking, this is not a triumph for the American tradition. It is, however, very clearly an outcome of the intense individualism of that tradition. Under the sway of that it has burnt its future in the furnace to keep up steam.

The next and necessary evil consequent upon this exaltation of the individual and private property over the State, over the race that is

and over public property, has been a contempt for public service. It has identified public spirit with spasmodic acts of public beneficence. The American political ideal became a Cincinnatus whom nobody sent for and who therefore never left his plough. There has ensued a corrupt and undignified political life, speaking claptrap, dark with violence, illiterate and void of statesmanship or science, forbidding any healthy social development through public organisation at home, and every year that the increasing facilities of communication draw the alien nations closer, deepening the risks of needless and disastrous wars abroad.

And in the third place it is to be remarked that the American tradition has defeated its dearest aims of a universal freedom and a practical equality. The economic process of the last half-century, so far as America is concerned has completely justified the generalisations of Marx. There has been a steady concentration of wealth and of the reality as distinguished from the forms of power in the hands of a small energetic minority, and a steady approximation of the condition of the mass of the citizens to that of the so-called proletariat of the European communities. The tradition of individual freedom and equality is, in fact, in process of destroying the realities of freedom and equality out of which it rose. Instead of the six hundred thousand families of the year 1790, all at about the same level of property and, excepting the peculiar condition of seven hundred thousand blacks, with scarcely anyone in the position of a hireling, we have now as the most striking, though by no means the most important, fact in American social life a frothy confusion of millionaires' families, just as wasteful, foolish and vicious as irresponsible human beings with unlimited resources have always shown themselves to be. And, concurrently with the appearance of these concentrations of great wealth, we have appearing also poverty, poverty of a degree that was quite unknown in the United States for the first century of their career as an independent nation. In the last few decades slums as frightful as any in Europe have appeared with terrible rapidity, and there has been a development of the viler side of industrialism, of sweating and base employment of the most ominous kind.

In Mr. Robert Hunter's "Poverty" one reads of "not less than

eighty thousand children, most of whom are little girls, at present employed in the textile mills of this country. In the South there are now six times as many children at work as there were twenty years ago. Child labour is increasing yearly in that section of the country. Each year more little ones are brought in from the fields and hills to live in the degrading and demoralising atmosphere of the mill towns…."

Children are deliberately imported by the Italians. I gathered from Commissioner Watchorn at Ellis Island that the proportion of little nephews and nieces, friends' sons and so forth brought in by them is peculiarly high, and I heard him try and condemn a doubtful case. It was a particularly unattractive Italian in charge of a dull-eyed little boy of no ascertainable relationship….

In the worst days of cotton-milling in England the conditions were hardly worse than those now existing in the South. Children, the tiniest and frailest, of five and six years of age, rise in the morning and, like old men and women, go to the mills to do their day's labour; and, when they return home, "wearily fling themselves on their beds, too tired to take off their clothes." Many children work all night— "in the maddening racket of the machinery, in an atmosphere insanitary and clouded with humidity and lint."

"It will be long," adds Mr. Hunter in his description, "before I forget the face of a little boy of six years, with his hands stretched forward to rearrange a bit of machinery, his pallid face and spare form already showing the physical effects of labour. This child, six years of age, was working twelve hours a day."

From Mr. Spargo's "Bitter Cry of the Children" I learn this much of the joys of certain among the youth of Pennsylvania:

"For ten or eleven hours a day children of ten and eleven stoop over the chute and pick out the slate and other impurities from the coal as it moves past them. The air is black with coal dust, and the roar of the crushers, screens and rushing mill-race of coal is deafening. Sometimes one of the children falls into the machinery and is terribly mangled, or slips into the chute and is smothered to death. Many children are killed in this way. Many others, after a time, contract coal-miners asthma and consumption, which gradually undermine their health. Breathing continually day after day the

clouds of coal dust, their lungs become black and choked with small particles of anthracite…."

In Massachusetts, at Fall River, the Hon. J.F. Carey tells how little naked boys, free Americans, work for Mr. Borden, the New York millionaire, packing cloth into bleaching vats, in a bath of chemicals that bleaches their little bodies like the bodies of lepers….

Altogether it would seem that at least one million and a half children are growing up in the United States of America stunted and practically uneducated because of unregulated industrialism. These children, ill-fed, ill-trained mentally benighted, since they are alive and active, since they are an active and positive and not a negative evil, are even more ominous in the American outlook than those five and sixty million of good race and sound upbringing who will now never be born.

Sec. 5

It must be repeated that the American tradition is really the tradition of one particular ingredient in this great admixture and stirring up of peoples. This ingredient is the Colonial British, whose seventeenth century Puritanism and eighteenth century mercantile radicalism and rationalism manifestly furnished all the stuff out of which the American tradition is made. It is this stuff planted in virgin soil and inflated to an immense and buoyant optimism by colossal and unanticipated material prosperity and success. From that British middle-class tradition comes the individualist protestant spirit, the keen self-reliance and personal responsibility, the irresponsible expenditure, the indiscipline and mystical faith in things being managed properly if they are only let alone. "State-blindness" is the natural and almost inevitable quality of a middle-class tradition, a class that has been forced neither to rule nor obey, which has been concentrated and successfully concentrated on private gain.

This middle-class British section of the American population was, and is to this day, the only really articulate ingredient in its mental composition. And so it has had a monopoly in providing the American forms of thought. The other sections of peoples that have been annexed by or have come into this national synthesis are *silent* so far as any contribution to the national stock of ideas and ideals is concerned. There are, for example, those great elements, the Spanish

Catholics, the French Catholic population of Louisiana, the Irish Catholics, the French-Canadians who are now ousting the sterile New Englander from New England, the Germans, the Italians the Hungarians. Comparatively they say nothing. From all the ten million of coloured people come just two or three platform voices, Booker Washington, Dubois, Mrs. Church Terrell, mere protests at specific wrongs. The clever, restless Eastern European Jews, too, have still to find a voice. Professor Münsterberg has written with a certain bitterness of the inaudibility of the German element in the American population. They allow themselves, he remonstrates, to count for nothing. They did not seem to exist, he points out, even in politics until prohibitionist fury threatened their beer. Then, indeed, the American German emerged from silence and obscurity, but only to rescue his mug and retire again with it into enigmatical silence.

If there is any exception to this predominance of the tradition of the English-speaking, originally middle-class, English-thinking northerner in the American mind, it is to be found in the spread of social democracy outward from the festering tenement houses of Chicago into the mining and agrarian regions of the middle west. It is a fierce form of socialist teaching that speaks throughout these regions, far more closely akin to the revolutionary Socialism of the continent of Europe than to the constructive and evolutionary Socialism of Great Britain. Its typical organ is *The Appeal to Reason*, which circulates more than a quarter of a million copies weekly from Kansas City. It is a Socialism reeking with class feeling and class hatred and altogether anarchistic in spirit; a new and highly indigestible contribution to the American moral and intellectual synthesis. It is remarkable chiefly as the one shrill exception in a world of plastic acceptance.

Now it is impossible to believe that this vast silence of these imported and ingested factors that the American nation has taken to itself is as acquiescent as it seems. No doubt they are largely taking over the traditional forms of American thought and expression quietly and without protest, and wearing them; but they will wear them as a man wears a misfit, shaping and adapting it every day more and more to his natural form, here straining a seam and there taking in a looseness. A force of modification must be at work. It must be at

work in spite of the fact that, with the exception of social democracy, it does not anywhere show as a protest or a fresh beginning or a challenge to the prevailing forms.

How far it has actually been at work is, perhaps, to be judged best by an observant stroller, surveying the crowds of a Sunday evening in New York, or read in the sheets of such a mirror of popular taste as the Sunday edition of the *New York American* or the *New York Herald*. In the former just what I mean by the silent modification of the old tradition is quite typically shown. Its leading articles are written by Mr. Arthur Brisbane, the son of one of the Brook Farm Utopians, that gathering in which Hawthorne and Henry James senior, and Margaret Fuller participated, and in which the whole brilliant world of Boston's past, the world of Emerson, Longfellow, Thoreau, was interested. Mr. Brisbane is a very distinguished man, quite over and above the fact that he is paid the greatest salary of any journalist in the world. He writes with a wit and directness that no other living man can rival, and he holds up constantly what is substantially the American ideal of the past century to readers who evidently need strengthening in it. It is, of course, the figure of a man and not of a State; it is a man, clean, clean shaved and almost obtrusively strong-jawed, honest, muscular, alert, pushful, chivalrous, self-reliant, non-political except when he breaks into shrewd and penetrating voting— "you can fool all the people some of the time," etc. — and independent — independent — in a world which is therefore certain to give way to him.

His doubts, his questionings, his aspirations, are dealt with by Mr. Brisbane with a simple direct fatherliness with all the beneficent persuasiveness of a revivalist preacher. Millions read these leaders and feel a momentary benefit, en route for the more actual portions of the paper. He asks: "Why are all men gamblers?" He discusses our Longing for Immortal Imperfection, and "Did we once live on the moon?" He recommends the substitution of whisky and soda for neat whisky, drawing an illustration from the comparative effect of the diluted and of the undiluted liquid as an eye-wash ("Try whisky on your friend's eyeball!" is the heading), sleep ("The man who loses sleep will make a failure of his life, or at least diminish greatly his chances of success"), and the education of the feminine intelligence

("The cow that kicks her weaned calf is all heart"). He makes identically the same confident appeal to the moral motive which was for so long the salvation of the Puritan individualism from which the American tradition derives. "That hand," he writes, "which supports the head of the new-born baby, the mother's hand, supports the civilisation of the world."

But that sort of thing is not saving the old native strain in the population. It moves people, no doubt, but inadequately. And here is a passage that is quite the quintessence of Americanism, of all its deep moral feeling and sentimental untruthfulness. I wonder if any man but an American or a British nonconformist in a state of rhetorical excitement ever believed that Shakespeare wrote his plays or Michael Angelo painted in a mood of humanitarian exaltation, "*for the good of all men*."

"What *shall* we strive for? *Money*?

"Get a thousand millions. Your day will come, and in due course the graveyard rat will gnaw as calmly at your bump of acquisitiveness as at the mean coat of the pauper.

"Then shall we strive for *power*?

"The names of the first great kings of the world are forgotten, and the names of all those whose power we envy will drift to forgetfulness soon. What does the most powerful man in the world amount to standing at the brink of Niagara, with his solar plexus trembling? What is his power compared with the force of the wind or the energy of one small wave sweeping along the shore?

"The power which man can build up within himself, for himself, is nothing. Only the dull reasoning of gratified egotism can make it seem worth while.

"Then what is worth while? Let us look at some of the men who have come and gone, and whose lives inspire us. Take a few at random:

"Columbus, Michael Angelo, Wilberforce, Shakespeare, Galileo, Fulton, Watt, Hargreaves — these will do.

"Let us ask ourselves this question: 'Was there any

one thing that distinguished *all* their lives,
that united all these men, active in fields so different?'

"Yes. Every man among them, and every man whose life history is worth the telling, did something for *the good of other men*….

"Get money if you can. Get power if you can; Then, if you want to be more than the ten thousand million unknown mingled in the dust beneath you, see what good you can do with your money and your power.

"If you are one of the many millions who have not and can't get money or power, see what good you can do without either:

"You can help carry a load for an old man. You can encourage and help a poor devil trying to reform. You can set a good example to children. You can stick to the men with whom you work, fighting honestly for their welfare.

"Time was when the ablest man would rather kill ten men than feed a thousand children. That time has gone. We do not care much about feeding the children, but we care less about killing the men. To that extent we have improved already.

"The day will come when we shall prefer helping our neighbour to robbing him — legally — of a million dollars.

"Do what good you can *now*, while it is unusual, and have the satisfaction of being a pioneer and an eccentric."

It is the voice of the American tradition strained to the utmost to make itself audible to the new world, and cracking into italics and breaking into capitals with the strain. The rest of that enormous bale of paper is eloquent of a public void of moral ambitions, lost to any sense of comprehensive things, deaf to ideas, impervious to generalisations, a public which has carried the conception of freedom to its logical extreme of entire individual detachment. These tell-tale columns deal all with personality and the drama of personal life. They witness to no interest but the interest in intense individual experiences. The engagements, the love affairs, the scandals of conspicuous people are given in pitiless detail in articles adorned with vigorous portraits and sensational pictorial comments. Even the eavesdroppers who write this stuff strike the personal note, and their heavily muscular portraits frown beside the initial letter. Murders and

crimes are worked up to the keenest pitch of realisation, and any new indelicacy in fashionable costume, any new medical device or cure, any new dance or athleticism, any new breach in the moral code, any novelty in sea bathing or the woman's seat on horseback, or the like, is given copious and moving illustration, stirring headlines, and eloquent reprobation. There is a coloured supplement of knock-about fun, written chiefly in the quaint dialect of the New York slums. It is a language from which "th" has vanished, and it presents a world in which the kicking by a mule of an endless succession of victims is an inexhaustible joy to young and old. "Dat ole Maud!" There is a smaller bale dealing with sport. In the advertisement columns one finds nothing of books, nothing of art; but great choice of bust developers, hair restorers, nervous tonics, clothing sales, self-contained flats, and business opportunities….

Individuality has, in fact, got home to itself, and, as people say, taken off its frills. All but one; Mr. Arthur Brisbane's eloquence one may consider as the last stitch of the old costume — mere decoration. Excitement remains the residual object in life. The *New York American* represents a clientele to be counted by the hundred thousand, manifestly with no other solicitudes, just burning to live and living to burn.

Sec. 6

The modifications of the American tradition that will occur through its adoption by these silent foreign ingredients in the racial synthesis are not likely to add to it or elaborate it in any way. They tend merely to simplify it to bare irresponsible non-moral individualism. It is with the detail and qualification of a tradition as with the inflexions of a language; when another people takes it over the refinements disappear. But there are other forces of modification at work upon the American tradition of an altogether more hopeful kind. It has entered upon a constructive phase. Were it not so, then the American social outlook would, indeed, be hopeless.

The effectual modifying force at work is not the strangeness nor the temperamental maladjustment of the new elements of population, but the conscious realisation of the inadequacy of the tradition on the part of the more intelligent sections of the American population. That blind national conceit that would hear no criticism and admit no

deficiency has disappeared. In the last decade such a change has come over the American mind as sometimes comes over a vigorous and wilful child. Suddenly it seems to have grown up, to have begun to weigh its powers and consider its possible deficiencies. There was a time when American confidence and self-satisfaction seemed impregnable; at the slightest qualm of doubt America took to violent rhetoric as a drunkard resorts to drink. Now the indictment I have drawn up harshly, bluntly and unflatteringly in Sec. 4 would receive the endorsement of American after American. The falling birth-rate of all the best elements in the State, the cankering effect of political corruption, the crumbling of independence and equality before the progressive aggregation of wealth — he has to face them, he cannot deny them. There has arisen a new literature, the literature of national self-examination, that seems destined to modify the American tradition profoundly. To me it seems to involve the hope and possibility of a conscious collective organisation of social life.

If ever there was an epoch-marking book it was surely Henry Demarest Lloyd's "Wealth against Commonwealth." It marks an epoch not so much by what it says as by what it silently abandons. It was published in 1894, and it stated in the very clearest terms the incompatibility of the almost limitless freedom of property set up by the constitution, with the practical freedom and general happiness of the mass of men. It must be admitted that Lloyd never followed up the implications of this repudiation. He made his statements in the language of the tradition he assailed, and foreshadowed the replacement of chaos by order in quite chaotic and mystical appeals. Here, for instance, is a typical passage from "Man, the Social Creator".

"Property is now a stumbling-block to the people, just as government has been. Property will not be abolished, but, like government, it will be democratised.

"The philosophy of self-interest as the social solution was a good living and working synthesis in the days when civilisation was advancing its frontiers twenty miles a day across the American continent, and every man for himself was the best social mobilisation possible.

"But to-day it is a belated ghost that has overstayed the cock-

crow. These were frontier morals. But this same, everyone for himself, becomes most immoral when the frontier is abolished and the pioneer becomes the fellow-citizen and these frontier morals are most uneconomic when labour can be divided and the product multiplied. Most uneconomic, for they make closure the rule of industry, leading not to wealth, but to that awful waste of wealth which is made visible to every eye in our unemployed — not hands alone, but land, machinery, and, most of all, hearts. Those who still practise these frontier morals are like criminals, who, according to the new science of penology, are simply reappearances of old types. Their acquisitiveness once divine like Mercury's, is now out of place except in jail. Because out of place, they are a danger. A sorry day it is likely to be for those who are found in the way when the new people rise to rush into each other's arms, to get together, to stay together and to live together. The labour movement halts because so many of its rank and file — and all its leaders — do not see clearly the golden thread of love on which have been strung together all the past glories of human association, and which is to serve for the link of the new Association of Friends who Labour, whose motto is 'All for All.'"

The establishment of the intricate co-operative commonwealth by a rush of eighty million flushed and shiny-eyed enthusiasts, in fact, is Lloyd's proposal. He will not face, and few Americans to this day will face, the cold need of a great science of social adjustment and a disciplined and rightly ordered machinery to turn such enthusiasms to effect. They seem incurably wedded to gush. However, he did express clearly enough the opening phase of American disillusionment with the wild go-as-you-please that had been the conception of life in America through a vehement, wasteful, expanding century. And he was the precursor of what is now a bulky and extremely influential literature of national criticism. A number of writers, literary investigators one may call them, or sociological men of letters, or magazine publicists — they are a little difficult to place — has taken up the inquiry into the condition of civic administration, into economic organisation into national politics and racial interaction, with a frank fearlessness and an absence of windy eloquence that has been to many Europeans a surprising revelation of

the reserve forces of the American mind. President Roosevelt, that magnificent reverberator of ideas, that gleam of wilful humanity, that fantastic first interruption to the succession of machine-made politicians at the White House, has echoed clearly to this movement and made it an integral part of the general intellectual movement of America.

It is to these first intimations of the need of a "sense of the State" in America that I would particularly direct the reader's attention in this discussion. They are the beginnings of what is quite conceivably a great and complex reconstructive effort. I admit they are but beginnings. They may quite possibly wither and perish presently; they may much more probably be seized upon by adventurers and converted into a new cant almost as empty and fruitless as the old. The fact remains that, through this busy and immensely noisy confusion of nearly a hundred millions of people, these little voices go intimating more and more clearly the intention to undertake public affairs in a new spirit and upon new principles, to strengthen the State and the law against individual enterprise, to have done with those national superstitions under which hypocrisy and disloyalty and private plunder have sheltered and prospered for so long.

Just as far as these reform efforts succeed and develop is the organisation of the United States of America into a great, self-conscious, civilised nation, unparalleled in the world's history, possible; just as far as they fail is failure written over the American future. The real interest of America for the next century to the student of civilisation will be the development of these attempts, now in their infancy, to create and realise out of this racial hotchpotch, this human chaos, an idea, of the collective commonwealth as the datum of reference for every individual life.

Sec. 7

I have hinted in the last section that there is a possibility that the new wave of constructive ideas in American thought may speedily develop a cant of its own. But even then, a constructive cant is better than a destructive one. Even the conscious hypocrite has to do something to justify his pretences, and the mere disappearance from current thought of the persuasion that organisation is a mistake and discipline needless, clears the ground of one huge obstacle even if it

guarantees nothing about the consequent building.

But, apart from this, are there more solid and effectual forces behind this new movement of ideas that makes for organisation in American medley at the present time?

The speculative writer casting about for such elements lights upon four sets of possibilities which call for discussion. First, one has to ask: How far is the American plutocracy likely to be merely a wasteful and chaotic class, and how far is it likely to become consciously aristocratic and constructive? Secondly, and in relation to this, what possibilities of pride and leading are there in the great university foundations of America? Will they presently begin to tell as a restraining and directing force upon public thought? Thirdly, will the growing American Socialist movement, which at present is just as anarchistic and undisciplined in spirit as everything else in America, presently perceive the constructive implications of its general propositions and become statesmanlike and constructive? And, fourthly, what are the latent possibilities of the American women? Will women as they become more and more aware of themselves as a class and of the problem of their sex become a force upon the anarchistic side, a force favouring race-suicide, or upon the constructive side which plans and builds and bears the future?

The only possible answer to each one of these questions at present is guessing and an estimate. But the only way in which a conception of the American social future may be reached lies through their discussion.

Let us begin by considering what constructive forces may exist in this new plutocracy which already so largely sways American economic and political development. The first impression is one of extravagant and aimless expenditure, of a class irresponsible and wasteful beyond all precedent. One gets a Zolaesque picture of that aspect in Mr. Upton Sinclair's "Metropolis," or the fashionable intelligence of the popular New York Sunday editions, and one finds a good deal of confirmatory evidence in many incidental aspects of the smart American life of Paris and the Riviera. The evidence in the notorious Thaw trial, after one has discounted its theatrical elements, was still a very convincing demonstration of a rotten and extravagant, because aimless and functionless, class of rich people.

But one has to be careful in this matter if one is to do justice to the facts. If a thing is made up of two elements, and one is noisy and glaringly coloured, and the other is quiet and colourless, the first impression created will be that the thing is identical with the element that is noisy and glaringly coloured. One is much less likely to hear of the broad plans and the quality of the wise, strong and constructive individuals in a class than of their foolish wives, their spendthrift sons, their mistresses, and their moments of irritation and folly.

In the making of very rich men there is always a factor of good fortune and a factor of design and will. One meets rich men at times who seem to be merely lucky gamblers, who strike one as just the thousandth man in a myriad of wild plungers, who are, in fact, chance nobodies washed up by an eddy. Others, again, strike one as exceptionally lucky half-knaves. But there are others of a growth more deliberate and of an altogether higher personal quality. One takes such men as Mr. J.D. Rockefeller or Mr. Pierpont Morgan — the scale of their fortunes makes them public property — and it is clear that we are dealing with persons on quite a different level of intellectual power from the British Colonel Norths, for example, or the South African Joels. In my "Future in America" I have taken the former largely at Miss Tarbell's estimate, and treated him as a case of acquisitiveness raised in Baptist surroundings. But I doubt very much if that exhausts the man as he is to-day. Given a man brought up to saving and "getting on" as if to a religion, a man very acquisitive and very patient and restrained, and indubitably with great organising power, and he grows rich beyond the dreams of avarice. And having done so, there he is. What is he going to do? Every step he takes up the ascent to riches gives him new perspectives and new points of view.

It may have appealed to the young Rockefeller, clerk in a Chicago house, that to be rich was itself a supreme end; in the first flush of the discovery that he was immensely rich, he may have thanked Heaven as if for a supreme good, and spoken to a Sunday school gathering as if he knew himself for the most favoured of men. But all that happened twenty years ago or more. One does not keep on in that sort of satisfaction; one settles down to the new facts. And such men

as Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Pierpont Morgan do not live in a made and protected world with their minds trained, tamed and fed and shielded from outside impressions as royalties do. The thought of the world has washed about them; they have read and listened to the discussion of themselves for some decades; they have had sleepless nights of self-examination. To succeed in acquiring enormous wealth does not solve the problem of life; indeed, it reopens it in a new form. "What shall I do with myself?" simply recurs again. You may have decided to devote yourself to getting on, getting wealthy. Well, you have got it. Now, again, comes the question: "What shall I do?"

Mr. Pierpont Morgan, I am told, collected works of art. I can understand that satisfying a rich gentleman of leisure, but not a man who has felt the sensation of holding great big things in his great big hands. Saul, going out to seek his father's asses, found a kingdom — and became very spiritedly a king, and it seems to me that these big industrial and financial organisers, whatever in their youth they proposed to do or be, must many of them come to realise that their organising power is up against no less a thing than a nation's future. Napoleon, it is curious to remember once wanted to run a lodging-house, and a man may start to corner oil and end the father of a civilisation.

Now, I am disposed to suspect at times that an inkling of such a realisation may have come to some of these very rich men. I am inclined to put it among the possibilities of our time that it may presently become clearly and definitely the inspiring idea of many of those who find themselves predominantly rich. I do not see why these active rich should not develop statesmanship, and I can quite imagine them developing very considerable statesmanship. Because these men were able to realise their organising power in the absence of economic organisation, it does not follow that they will be fanatical for a continuing looseness and freedom of property. The phase of economic liberty ends itself, as Marx long ago pointed out. The American business world becomes more and more a managed world with fewer and fewer wild possibilities of succeeding. Of all people the big millionaires should realise this most acutely, and, in fact, there are many signs that they do. It seems to me that the educational zeal of Mr. Andrew Carnegie and the university and

scientific endowments of Mr. Rockefeller are not merely showy benefactions; they express a definite feeling of the present need of constructive organisation in the social scheme. The time has come to build. There is, I think, good reason for expecting that statesmanship of the millionaires to become more organised and scientific and comprehensive in the coming years. It is plausible at least to maintain that the personal quality of the American plutocracy has risen in the last three decades, has risen from the quality of a mere irresponsible wealthy person towards that of a real aristocrat with a "sense of the State." That one may reckon the first hopeful possibility in the American outlook.

And intimately connected with this development of an attitude of public responsibility in the very rich is the decay on the one hand of the preposterous idea once prevalent in America that politics is an unsuitable interest for a "gentleman," and on the other of the democratic jealousy of any but poor politicians. In New York they talk very much of "gentlemen," and by "gentlemen" they seem to mean rich men "in society" with a college education. Nowadays, "gentlemen" seem more and more disposed towards politics, and less and less towards a life of business or detached refinement. President Roosevelt, for example, was one of the pioneers in this new development, this restoration of virility to the gentlemanly ideal. His career marks the appearance of a new and better type of man in American politics, the close of the rule of the idealised nobody.

The prophecy has been made at times that the United States might develop a Caesarism, and certainly the position of president might easily become that of an imperator. No doubt in the event of an acute failure of the national system such a catastrophe might occur, but the more hopeful and probable line of development is one in which a conscious and powerful, if informal, aristocracy will play a large part. It may, indeed, never have any of the outward forms of an aristocracy or any definite public recognition. The Americans are as chary of the coronet and the known aristocratic titles as the Romans were of the word King. Octavius, for that reason, never called himself king nor Italy a kingdom. He was just the Caesar of the Republic, and the Empire had been established for many years before the Romans fully realised that they had returned to monarchy.

Sec. 8

The American universities are closely connected in their development with the appearance and growing class-consciousness of this aristocracy of wealth. The fathers of the country certainly did postulate a need of universities, and in every state Congress set aside public lands to furnish a university with material resources. Every State possesses a university, though in many instances these institutions are in the last degree of feebleness. In the days of sincere democracy the starvation of government and the dislike of all manifest inequalities involved the starvation of higher education. Moreover, the entirely artificial nature of the State boundaries, representing no necessary cleavages and traversed haphazard by the lines of communication, made some of these State foundations unnecessary and others inadequate to a convergent demand. From the very beginning, side by side with the State universities, were the universities founded by benefactors; and with the evolution of new centres of population, new and extremely generous plutocratic endowments appeared. The dominant universities of America to-day, the treasure houses of intellectual prestige, are almost all of them of plutocratic origin, and even in the State universities, if new resources are wanted to found new chairs, to supply funds for research or publication or what not, it is to the more State-conscious wealthy and not to the State legislature that the appeal is made almost as a matter of course. The common voter, the small individualist has less constructive imagination — is more individualistic, that is, than the big individualist.

This great network of universities that is now spread over the States, interchanging teachers, literature and ideas, and educating not only the professions but a growing proportion of business leaders and wealthy people, must necessarily take an important part in the reconstruction of the American tradition that is now in progress. It is giving a large and increasing amount of attention to the subjects that bear most directly upon the peculiar practical problems of statecraft in America, to psychology, sociology and political science. It is influencing the press more and more directly by supplying a rising proportion of journalists and creating an atmosphere of criticism and suggestion. It is keeping itself on the one hand in touch with the

popular literature of public criticism in those new and curious organs of public thought, the ten-cent magazines; and on the other it is making a constantly more solid basis of common understanding upon which the newer generation of plutocrats may meet. That older sentimental patriotism must be giving place under its influence to a more definite and effectual conception of a collective purpose. It is to the moral and intellectual influence of sustained scientific study in the universities, and a growing increase of the college-trained element in the population that we must look if we are to look anywhere for the new progressive methods, for the substitution of persistent, planned and calculated social development for the former conditions of systematic neglect and corruption in public affairs varied by epileptic seizures of "Reform."

Sec. 9

A third influence that may also contribute very materially to the reconstruction of the American tradition is the Socialist movement. It is true that so far American Socialism has very largely taken an Anarchistic form, has been, in fact, little more than a revolutionary movement of the wages-earning class against the property owner. It has already been pointed out that it derives not from contemporary English Socialism but from the Marxist social democracy of the continent of Europe, and has not even so much of the constructive spirit as has been developed by the English Socialists of the Fabian and Labour Party group or by the newer German evolutionary Socialists. Nevertheless, whenever Socialism is intelligently met by discussion or whenever it draws near to practicable realisation, it becomes, by virtue of its inherent implications, a constructive force, and there is no reason to suppose that it will not be intelligently met on the whole and in the long run in America. The alternative to a developing Socialism among the labouring masses in America is that revolutionary Anarchism from which it is slowly but definitely marking itself off. In America we have to remember that we are dealing with a huge population of people who are for the most part, and more and more evidently destined under the present system of free industrial competition, to be either very small traders, small farmers on the verge of debt, or wages-earners for all their lives. They are going to lead limited lives and worried lives — and they

know it. Nearly everyone can read and discuss now, the process of concentrating property and the steady fixation of conditions that were once fluid and adventurous goes on in the daylight visibly to everyone. And it has to be borne in mind also that these people are so far under the sway of the American tradition that each thinks himself as good as any man and as much entitled to the fullness of life. Whatever social tradition their fathers had, whatever ideas of a place to be filled humbly and seriously and duties to be done, have been left behind in Europe. No Church dominates the scenery of this new land, and offers in authoritative and convincing tones consolations hereafter for lives obscurely but faithfully lived. Whatever else happens in this national future, upon one point the patriotic American may feel assured, and that is of an immense general discontent in the working class and of a powerful movement in search of a general betterment. The practical forms and effects of that movement will depend almost entirely upon the average standard of life among the workers and their general education. Sweated and ill-organised foreigners, such as one finds in New Jersey living under conditions of great misery, will be fierce, impatient and altogether dangerous. They will be acutely exasperated by every picture of plutocratic luxury in their newspaper, they will readily resort to destructive violence. The western miner, the western agriculturist, worried beyond endurance between the money-lender and railway combinations will be almost equally prone to savage methods of expression. *The Appeal to Reason*, for example, to which I have made earlier reference in this chapter, is furious to wreck the present capitalistic system, but it is far too angry and impatient for that satisfaction to produce any clear suggestion of what shall replace it.

To call this discontent of the seething underside of the American system Socialism is a misnomer. Were there no Socialism there would be just as much of this discontent, just the same insurgent force and desire for violence, taking some other title and far more destructive methods. This discontent is a part of the same planless confusion that gives on the other side the wanton irresponsible extravagances of the smart people of New York. But Socialism alone, of all the forms of expression adopted by the losers in the economic struggle, contains constructive possibilities and leads its

adherents towards that ideal of an organised State, planned and developed, from which these terrible social stresses may be eliminated, which is also the ideal to which sociology and the thoughts of every constructive-minded and foreseeing man in any position of life tend to-day. In the Socialist hypothesis of collective ownership and administration as the social basis, there is the germ of a "sense of the State" that may ultimately develop into comprehensive conceptions of social order, conceptions upon which enlightened millionaires and unenlightened workers may meet at last in generous and patriotic co-operation.

The chances of the American future, then, seem to range between two possibilities just as a more or less constructive Socialism does or does not get hold of and inspire the working mass of the population. In the worst event — given an emotional and empty hostility to property as such, masquerading as Socialism — one has the prospect of a bitter and aimless class war between the expropriated many and the property-holding few, a war not of general insurrection but of localised outbreaks, strikes and brutal suppressions, a war rising to bloody conflicts and sinking to coarsely corrupt political contests, in which one side may prevail in one locality and one in another, and which may even develop into a chronic civil war in the less-settled parts of the country or an irresistible movement for secession between west and east. That is assuming the greatest imaginable vehemence and short-sighted selfishness and the least imaginable intelligence on the part of both workers and the plutocrat-swayed government. But if the more powerful and educated sections of the American community realise in time the immense moral possibilities of the Socialist movement, if they will trouble to understand its good side instead of emphasising its bad, if they will keep in touch with it and help in the development of a constructive content to its propositions, then it seems to me that popular Socialism may count as a third great factor in the making of the civilised American State.

In any case, it does not seem to me probable that there can be any national revolutionary movement or any complete arrest in the development of an aristocratic phase in American history. The area of the country is too great and the means of communication between the workers in different parts inadequate for a concerted rising or

even for effective political action in mass. In the worst event — and it is only in the worst event that a great insurrectionary movement becomes probable — the newspapers, magazines, telephones and telegraphs, all the apparatus of discussion and popular appeal, the railways, arsenals, guns, flying machines, and all the material of warfare, will be in the hands of the property owners, and the average of betrayal among the leaders of a class, not racially homogeneous, embittered, suspicious united only by their discomforts and not by any constructive intentions, will necessarily be high. So that, though the intensifying trouble between labour and capital may mean immense social disorganisation and lawlessness, though it may even supply the popular support in new attempts at secession, I do not see in it the possibility and force for that new start which the revolutionary Socialists anticipate; I see it merely as one of several forces making, on the whole and particularly in view of the possible mediatory action of the universities, for construction and reconciliation.

Sec. 10

What changes are likely to occur in the more intimate social life of the people of the United States? Two influences are at work that may modify this profoundly. One is that spread of knowledge and that accompanying change in moral attitude which is more and more sterilising the once prolific American home, and the second is the rising standard of feminine education. There has arisen in this age a new consciousness in women. They are entering into the collective thought to a degree unprecedented in the world's history, and with portents at once disquieting and confused.

In Sec. 5 I enumerated what I called the silent factors in the American synthesis, the immigrant European aliens, the Catholics, the coloured blood, and so forth. I would now observe that, in the making of the American tradition, the women also have been to a large extent, and quite remarkably, a silent factor. That tradition is not only fundamentally middle-class and English, but it is also fundamentally masculine. The citizen is the man. The woman belongs to him. He votes for her, works for her, does all the severer thinking for her. She is in the home behind the shop or in the dairy at the farmhouse with her daughters. She gets the meal while the men

talk. The American imagination and American feeling centre largely upon the family and upon "mother." American ideals are homely. The social unit is the home, and it is another and a different set of influences and considerations that are never thought of at all when the home sentiment is under discussion, that, indeed, it would be indelicate to mention at such a time, which are making that social unit the home of one child or of no children at all.

That ideal of a man-owned, mother-revering home has been the prevalent American ideal from the landing of the *Mayflower* right down to the leader writing of Mr. Arthur Brisbane. And it is clear that a very considerable section among one's educated women contemporaries do not mean to stand this ideal any longer. They do not want to be owned and cherished, and they do not want to be revered. How far they represent their sex in this matter it is very hard to say. In England in the professional and most intellectually active classes it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that *all* the most able women below five-and-thirty are workers for the suffrage and the ideal of equal and independent citizenship, and active critics of the conventions under which women live to-day. It is at least plausible to suppose that a day is approaching when the alternatives between celibacy or a life of economic dependence and physical subordination to a man who has chosen her, and upon whose kindness her happiness depends, or prostitution, will no longer be a satisfactory outlook for the great majority of women, and when, with a newly aroused political consciousness, they will be prepared to exert themselves as a class to modify this situation. It may be that this is incorrect, and that in devotion to an accepted male and his children most women do still and will continue to find their greatest satisfaction in life. But it is the writer's impression that so simple and single-hearted a devotion is rare, and that, released from tradition — and education, reading and discussion do mean release from tradition — women are as eager for initiative, freedom and experience as men. In that case they will persist in the present agitation for political rights, and these secured, go on to demand a very considerable reconstruction of our present social order.

It is interesting to point the direction in which this desire for independence will probably take them. They will discover that the

dependence of women at the present time is not so much a law-made as an economic dependence due to the economic disadvantages their sex imposes upon them. Maternity and the concomitants of maternity are the circumstances in their lives, exhausting energy and earning nothing, that place them at a discount. From the stage when property ceased to be chiefly the creation of feminine agricultural toil (the so-called primitive matriarchate) to our present stage, women have had to depend upon a man's willingness to keep them, in order to realise the organic purpose of their being. Whether conventionally equal or not, whether voters or not, that necessity for dependence will still remain under our system of private property and free independent competition. There is only one evident way by which women as a class can escape from that dependence each upon an individual man and from all the practical inferiority this dependence entails, and that is by so altering their status as to make maternity and the upbringing of children a charge not upon the husband of the mother but upon the community. The public Endowment of Maternity is the only route by which the mass of women can reach that personal freedom and independent citizenship so many of them desire.

Now, this idea of the Endowment of Maternity — or as it is frequently phrased, the Endowment of the Home — is at present put forward by the modern Socialists as an integral part of their proposals, and it is interesting to note that there is this convergent possibility which may bring the feminist movement at last altogether into line with constructive Socialism. Obviously, before anything in the direction of family endowment becomes practicable, public bodies and the State organisation will need to display far more integrity and efficiency than they do in America at the present time. Still, that is the trend of things in all contemporary civilised communities, and it is a trend that will find a powerful reinforcement in men's solicitudes as the increasing failure of the unsupported private family to produce offspring adequate to the needs of social development becomes more and more conspicuous. The impassioned appeals of President Roosevelt have already brought home the race-suicide of the native-born to every American intelligence, but mere rhetoric will not in itself suffice to make people, insecurely employed and struggling to maintain a comfortable standard of life against

great economic pressure, prolific. Presented as a call to a particularly onerous and quite unpaid social duty the appeal for unrestricted parentage fails. Husband and wife alike dread an excessive burthen. Travel, leisure, freedom, comfort, property and increased ability for business competition are the rewards of abstinence from parentage, and even the disapproval of President Roosevelt and the pride of offspring are insufficient counterweights to these inducements. Large families disappear from the States, and more and more couples are childless. Those who have children restrict their number in order to afford those they have some reasonable advantage in life. This, in the presence of the necessary knowledge, is as practically inevitable a consequence of individualist competition and the old American tradition as the appearance of slums and a class of millionaires.

These facts go to the very root of the American problem. I have already pointed out that, in spite of a colossal immigration, the population of the United States was at the end of the nineteenth century over twenty millions short of what it should have been through its own native increase had the birth-rate of the opening of the century been maintained. For a hundred years America has been "fed" by Europe. That feeding process will not go on indefinitely. The immigration came in waves as if reservoir after reservoir was tapped and exhausted. Nowadays England, Scotland, Ireland, France and Scandinavia send hardly any more; they have no more to send. Germany and Switzerland send only a few. The South European and Austrian supply is not as abundant as it was. There may come a time when Europe and Western Asia will have no more surplus population to send, when even Eastern Asia will have passed into a less fecund phase, and when America will have to look to its own natural increase for the continued development of its resources.

If the present isolated family of private competition is still the social unit, it seems improbable that there will be any greater natural increase than there is in France.

Will the growing idea of a closer social organisation have developed by that time to the possibility of some collective effort in this matter? Or will that only come about after the population of the world has passed through a phase of absolute recession? The peculiar constitution of the United States gives a remarkable freedom of

experiment in these matters to each individual state, and local developments do not need to wait upon a national change of opinion; but, on the other hand, the superficial impression of an English visitor is that any such profound interference with domestic autonomy runs counter to all that Americans seem to hold dear at the present time. These are, however, new ideas and new considerations that have still to be brought adequately before the national consciousness, and it is quite impossible to calculate how a population living under changing conditions and with a rising standard of education and a developing feminine consciousness may not think and feel and behave in a generation's time. At present for all political and collective action America is a democracy of untutored individualist men who will neither tolerate such interference between themselves and the women they choose to marry as the Endowment of Motherhood implies, nor view the "kids" who will at times occur even in the best-regulated families as anything but rather embarrassing, rather amusing by-products of the individual affections.

I find in the London *New Age* for August 15th, 1908, a description by Mr. Jerome K. Jerome of "John Smith," the average British voter. John Smith might serve in some respects for the common man of all the modern civilisations. Among other things that John Smith thinks and wants, he wants:

"a little house and garden in the country all to himself. His idea is somewhere near half an acre of ground. He would like a piano in the best room; it has always been his dream to have a piano. The youngest girl, he is convinced, is musical. As a man who has knocked about the world and has thought, he quite appreciates the argument that by co-operation the material side of life can be greatly improved. He quite sees that by combining a dozen families together in one large house better practical results can be obtained. It is as easy to direct the cooking for a hundred as for half a dozen. There would be less waste of food, of coals, of lighting. To put aside one piano for one girl is absurd. He sees all this, but it does not alter one little bit his passionate craving for that small house and garden all to himself. He is built that way. He is typical of a good many other men and women built on the same pattern. What are you going to do with

them? Change them — their instincts, their very nature, rooted in the centuries? Or, as an alternative, vary Socialism to fit John Smith? Which is likely to prove the shorter operation?"

That, however, is by the way. Here is the point at issue:

"He has heard that Socialism proposes to acknowledge woman's service to the State by paying her a weekly wage according to the number of children that she bears and rears. I don't propose to repeat his objections to the idea; they could hardly be called objections. There is an ugly look comes into his eyes; something quite undefinable, prehistoric, almost dangerous, looks out of them…. In talking to him on this subject you do not seem to be talking to a man. It is as if you had come face to face with something behind civilisation, behind humanity, something deeper down still among the dim beginnings of creation…."

Now, no doubt Mr. Jerome is writing with emphasis here. But there is sufficient truth in the passage for it to stand here as a rough symbol of another factor in this question. John Smithism, that manly and individualist element in the citizen, stands over against and resists all the forces of organisation that would subjugate it to a collective purpose. It is careless of coming national cessation and depopulation, careless of the insurgent spirit beneath the acquiescences of Mrs. Smith, careless of its own inevitable defeat in the economic struggle, careless because it can understand none of these things; it is obstinately muddle-headed, asserting what it conceives to be itself against the universe and all other John Smiths whatsoever. It is a factor with all other factors. The creative, acquisitive, aggressive spirit of those bigger John Smiths who succeed as against the myriads of John Smiths who fail, the wider horizons and more efficient methods of the educated man, the awakening class-consciousness of women, the inevitable futility of John Smithism, the sturdy independence that makes John Smith resent even disciplined co-operation with Tom Brown to achieve a common end, his essential incapacity, indeed, for collective action; all these things are against the ultimate triumph, and make for the ultimate civilisation even of John Smith.

Sec. 11

It may be doubted if the increasing collective organisation of

society to which the United States of America, in common with all the rest of the world, seem to be tending will be to any very large extent a national organisation. The constitution is an immense and complicated barrier to effectual centralisation. There are many reasons for supposing the national government will always remain a little ineffectual and detached from the full flow of American life, and this notwithstanding the very great powers with which the President is endowed.

One of these reasons is certainly the peculiar accident that has placed the seat of government upon the Potomac. To the thoughtful visitor to the United States this hiding away of the central government in a minute district remote from all the great centres of thought, population and business activity becomes more remarkable more perplexing, more suggestive of an incurable weakness in the national government as he grasps more firmly the peculiarities of the American situation.

I do not see how the central government of that great American nation of which I dream can possibly be at Washington, and I do not see how the present central government can possibly be transferred to any other centre. But to go to Washington, to see and talk to Washington, is to receive an extraordinary impression of the utter isolation and hopelessness of Washington. The National Government has an air of being marooned there. Or as though it had crept into a corner to do something in the dark. One goes from the abounding movement and vitality of the northern cities to this sunny and enervating place through the negligently cultivated country of Virginia, and one discovers the slovenly, unfinished promise of a city, broad avenues lined by negro shanties and patches of cultivation, great public buildings and an immense post office, a lifeless museum, an inert university, a splendid desert library, a street of souvenir shops, a certain industry of “seeing Washington,” an idiotic colossal obelisk. It seems an ideal nest for the tariff manipulator, a festering corner of delegates and agents and secondary people. In the White House, in the time of President Roosevelt, the present writer found a transitory glow of intellectual activity, the spittoons and glass screens that once made it like a London gin palace had been removed, and the former orgies of

handshaking reduced to a minimum. It was, one felt, an accidental phase. The assassination of McKinley was an interruption of the normal Washington process. To this place, out of the way of everywhere, come the senators and congressmen, mostly leaving their families behind them in their states of origin, and hither, too, are drawn a multitude of journalists and political agents and clerks, a crowd of underbred, mediocre men. For most of them there is neither social nor intellectual life. The thought of America is far away, centred now in New York; the business and economic development centres upon New York; apart from the President, it is in New York that one meets the people who matter, and the New York atmosphere that grows and develops ideas and purposes. New York is the natural capital of the United States, and would need to be the capital of any highly organised national system. Government from the district of Columbia is in itself the repudiation of any highly organised national system.

But government from this ineffectual, inert place is only the most striking outcome of that inflexible constitution the wrangling delegates of 1787-8 did at last produce out of a conflict of State jealousies. They did their best to render centralisation or any coalescence of States impossible and private property impregnable, and so far their work has proved extraordinarily effective. Only a great access of intellectual and moral vigour in the nation can ever set it aside. And while the more and more sterile millions of the United States grapple with the legal and traditional difficulties that promise at last to arrest their development altogether, the rest of the world will be moving on to new phases. An awakened Asia will be reorganising its social and political conceptions in the light of modern knowledge and modern ideas, and South America will be working out its destinies, perhaps in the form of a powerful confederation of states. All Europe will be schooling its John Smiths to finer discipline and broader ideas. It is quite possible that the American John Smiths may have little to brag about in the way of national predominance by A.D. 2000. It is quite possible that the United States may be sitting meekly at the feet of at present unanticipated teachers.

THE POSSIBLE COLLAPSE OF CIVILISATION

(*New Year, 1909.*)

The Editor of the *New York World* has asked me to guess the general trend of events in the next thirty years or so with especial reference to the outlook for the State and City of New York. I like and rarely refuse such cheerful invitations to prophesy. I have already made a sort of forecast (in my "Anticipations") of what may happen if the social and economic process goes on fairly smoothly for all that time, and shown a New York relieved from its present congestion by the development of the means of communication, and growing and spreading in wide and splendid suburbs towards Boston and Philadelphia. I made that forecast before ever I passed Sandy Hook, but my recent visit only enhanced my sense of growth and "go" in things American. Still, we are nowadays all too apt to think that growth is inevitable and progress in the nature of things; the Wonderful Century, as Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace called the nineteenth, has made us perhaps over-confident and forgetful of the ruins of great cities and confident prides of the past that litter the world, and here I will write about the other alternative, of the progressive process "hitting something," and smashing.

There are two chief things in modern life that impress me as dangerous and incalculable. The first of these is the modern currency and financial system, and the second is the chance we take of destructive war. Let me dwell first of all on the mysterious possibilities of the former, and then point out one or two uneasy developments of the latter.

Now, there is nothing scientific about our currency and finance at all. It is a thing that has grown up and elaborated itself out of very simple beginnings in the course of a century or so. Three hundred years ago the edifice had hardly begun to rise from the ground, most property was real, most people lived directly on the land, most business was on a cash basis, oversea trade was a proportionately small affair, labour was locally fixed. Most of the world was at the

level at which much of China remains to-day — able to get along without even coinage. It was a rudimentary world from the point of view of the modern financier and industrial organiser. Well, on that rude, secure basis there has now been piled the most chancy and insecurely experimental system of conventions and assumptions about money and credit it is possible to imagine. There has grown up a vast system of lending and borrowing, a world-wide extension of joint-stock enterprises that involve at last the most fantastic relationships. I find myself, for example, owning (partially, at least) a bank in New Zealand, a railway in Cuba, another in Canada, several in Brazil, an electric power plant in the City of Westminster, and so on, and I use these stocks and shares as a sort of interest-bearing money. If I want money to spend, I sell a railway share much as one might change a hundred-pound banknote; if I have more cash than I need immediately I buy a few shares. I perceive that the value of these shares oscillates, sometimes rather gravely, and that the value of the alleged money on the cheques I get also oscillates as compared with the things I want to buy; that, indeed, the whole system (which has only existed for a couple of centuries or so, and which keeps on getting higher and giddier) is perpetually swaying and quivering and bending and sagging; but it is only when such a great crisis occurs as that of 1907 that it enters my mind that possibly there is no limit to these oscillations, that possibly the whole vast accidental edifice will presently come smashing down.

Why shouldn't it?

I defy any economist or financial expert to prove that it cannot. That it hasn't done so in the little time for which it has existed is no reply at all. It is like arguing that a man cannot die because he has never been known to do so. Previous men have died, previous civilisations have collapsed, if not of acute, then of chronic financial disorders.

The experience of 1907 indicated very clearly how a collapse might occur. A panic, like an avalanche, is a thing much easier to start than stop. Previous panics have been arrested by good luck; this last one in America, for example, found Europe strong and prosperous and helpful. In every panic period there is a huge dislocation of business enterprises, vast multitudes of men are

thrown out of employment, there is grave social and political disorder; but in the end, so far, things have an air of having recovered. But now, suppose the panic wave a little more universal — and panic waves tend to be more extensive than they used to be. Suppose that when securities fall all round, and gold appreciates in New York, and frightened people begin to sell investments and hoard gold, the same thing happens in other parts of the world. Increase the scale of the trouble only two or three times, and would our system recover? Imagine great masses of men coming out of employment, and angry and savage, in all our great towns; imagine the railways working with reduced staffs on reduced salaries or blocked by strikers; imagine provision dealers stopping consignments to retailers, and retailers hesitating to give credit. A phase would arrive when the police and militia keeping order in the streets would find themselves on short rations and without their weekly pay.

What we moderns, with our little three hundred years or so of security, do not recognise is that things that go up and down may, given a certain combination of chances, go down steadily, down and down.

What would you do, dear reader — what should I do — if a slump went on continually?

And that brings me to the second great danger to our modern civilisation, and that is War. We have over-developed war. While we have left our peace organisation to the niggling, slow, self-seeking methods of private enterprise; while we have left the breeding of our peoples to chance, their minds to the halfpenny press and their wealth to the drug manufacturer, we have pushed forward the art of war on severely scientific and Socialist lines; we have put all the collective resources of the community and an enormous proportion of its intelligence and invention ungrudgingly into the improvement and manufacture of the apparatus of destruction. Great Britain, for example, is content with the railways and fireplaces and types of housing she had fifty years ago; she still uses telephones and the electric light in the most tentative spirit; but every ironclad she had five-and-twenty years ago is old iron now and abandoned. Everything crawls forward but the science of war; that rushes on. Of what will happen if presently the guns begin to go off I have no

shadow of doubt. Every year has seen the disproportionate increase until now. Every modern European state is more or less like a cranky, ill-built steamboat in which some idiot has mounted and loaded a monstrous gun with no apparatus to damp its recoil. Whether that gun hits or misses when it is fired, of one thing we may be absolutely certain — it will send the steamboat to the bottom of the sea.

Modern warfare is an insanity, not a sane business proposition. Its preparation eats more and more into the resources which should be furnishing a developing civilisation; its possibilities of destruction are incalculable. A new epoch has opened with the coming of the navigable balloon and the flying machine. To begin with, these things open new gulfs for expenditure; in the end they mean possibilities of destruction beyond all precedent. Such things as the *Zeppelin* and the *Ville de Paris* are only the first pigmy essays of the aeronaut. It is clear that to be effective, capable of carrying guns and comparatively insensitive to perforation by shot and shell, these things will have to be very much larger and as costly, perhaps, as a first-class cruiser. Imagine such monsters of the air, and wild financial panic below!

Here, then, are two associated possibilities with which to modify our expectation of an America advancing steadily on the road to an organised civilisation, of New York rebuilding herself in marble, spreading like a garden city over New Jersey and Long Island and New York State, becoming a new and greater Venice, queen of the earth.

Perhaps, after all, the twentieth century isn't going to be so prosperous as the nineteenth. Perhaps, instead of going resistlessly onward, we are going to have a set-back. Perhaps we are going to be put back to learn over again under simpler conditions some of those necessary fundamental lessons our race has learnt as yet insufficiently well — honesty and brotherhood, social collectivism, and the need of some common peace-preserving council for the whole world.

THE IDEAL CITIZEN

Our conceptions of what a good citizen should be are all at sixes and sevens. No two people will be found to agree in every particular of such an ideal, and the extreme divergences upon what is necessary, what is permissible, what is unforgivable in him, will span nearly the whole range of human possibility and conduct. As a consequence, we bring up our children in a mist of vague intimations, in a confusion of warring voices, perplexed as to what they must do, uncertain as to what they may do, doomed to lives of compromise and fluctuating and inoperative opinion. Ideals and suggestions come and go before their eyes like figures in a fog. The commonest pattern, perhaps — the commonest pattern certainly in Sunday schools and edifying books, and on all those places and occasions when morality is sought as an end — is a clean and able-bodied person, truthful to the extent that he does not tell lies, temperate so far as abstinence is concerned, honest without pedantry, and active in his own affairs, steadfastly law-abiding and respectful to custom and usage, though aloof from the tumult of politics, brave but not adventurous, punctual in some form of religious exercise, devoted to his wife and children, and kind without extravagance to all men. Everyone feels that this is not enough, everyone feels that something more is wanted and something different; most people are a little interested in what that difference can be, and it is a business that much of what is more than trivial in our art, our literature and our drama must do to fill in bit by bit and shade by shade the subtle, the permanent detail of the answer.

It does very greatly help in this question to bear in mind the conflict of our origins. Every age is an age of transition, of minglings, of the breaking up of old, narrow cultures, and the breaking down of barriers, of spiritual and often of actual interbreeding. Not only is the physical but the moral and intellectual ancestry of everyone more mixed than ever it was before. We blend in our blood, everyone of us, and we blend in our ideas and purposes, craftsmen, warriors, savages, peasants, and a score of races, and an endless multitude of social expedients and rules. Go back but a hundred generations in the lineage of the most delicate girl you

know, and you will find a dozen murderers. You will find liars and cheats, lascivious sinners, women who have sold themselves, slaves, imbeciles, devotees, saints, men of fantastic courage, discreet and watchful persons, usurers, savages, criminals and kings, and every one of this miscellany, not simply fathering or mothering on the way to her, but teaching urgently and with every grade of intensity, views and habits for which they stand. Something of it all has come to her, albeit much may seem forgotten. In every human birth, with a new little variation, a fresh slight novelty of arrangement the old issues rise again. Our ideas, even more than our blood, flow from multitudinous sources.

Certain groups of ideas come to us distinctively associated with certain marked ways of life. Many, and for a majority of us, it may be, most of our ancestors were serfs or slaves. And men and women who have had, generation after generation, to adapt themselves to slavery and the rule of a master, develop an idea of goodness very different from that of princes. From our slave ancestry, says Lester Ward, we learnt to work, and certainly it is from slavery we derive the conception that industry, even though it be purposeless industry, is a virtue in itself. The good slave, too, has a morality of restraints; he abstains from the food he handles and hungers for, and he denies himself pride and initiative of every sort. He is honest in not taking, but he is unscrupulous about adequate service. He makes no virtue of frankness, but much of kindly helpfulness and charity to the weak. He has no sense of duty in planning or economising. He is polite and soft-spoken, and disposed to irony rather than denunciation, ready to admire cuteness and condone deception. Not so the rebel. That tradition is working in us also. It has been the lot of vast masses of population in every age to be living in successful or unsuccessful resistance to mastery, to be dreading oppression or to be just escaped from it. Resentment becomes a virtue then, and any peace with the oppressor a crime. It is from rebel origins so many of us get the idea that disrespectfulness is something of a duty and obstinacy a fine thing. And under the force of this tradition we idealise the rugged and unmanageable, we find something heroic in rough clothes and hands, in bad manners, insensitive behaviour, and unsociableness. And a community of settlers, again, in a rough country, fighting for a

bare existence, makes a virtue of vehemence, of a hasty rapidity of execution. Hurried and driven men glorify "push" and impatience, and despise finish and fine discriminations as weak and demoralising things. These three, the Serf, the Rebel, and the Squatter, are three out of a thousand types and aspects that have gone to our making. In the American composition they are dominant. But all those thousand different standards and traditions are our material, each with something fine, and each with something evil. They have all provided the atmosphere of upbringing for men in the past. Out of them and out of unprecedented occasions, we in this newer age, in which there are no slaves, in which every man is a citizen, in which the conveniences of a great and growing civilisation makes the frantic avidity of the squatter a nuisance, have to set ourselves to frame the standard of our children's children, to abandon what the slave or the squatter or the rebel found necessary and that we find unnecessary, to fit fresh requirements to our new needs. So we have to develop our figure of the fine man, our desirable citizen in that great and noble civilised state we who have a "sense of the state" would build out of the confusions of our world.

To describe that ideal modern citizen now is at best to make a guess and a suggestion of what must be built in reality by the efforts of a thousand minds. But he will be a very different creature from that indifferent, well-behaved business man who passes for a good citizen to-day. He will be neither under the slave tradition nor a rebel nor a vehement elemental man. Essentially he will be aristocratic, aristocratic not in the sense that he has slaves or class inferiors, because probably he will have nothing of the sort, but aristocratic in the sense that he will feel the State belongs to him and he to the State. He will probably be a public servant; at any rate, he will be a man doing some work in the complicated machinery of the modern community for a salary and not for speculative gain. Typically, he will be a professional man. I do not think the ideal modern citizen can be a person living chiefly by buying for as little as he can give and selling for as much as he can get; indeed, most of what we idolise to-day as business enterprise I think he will regard with considerable contempt. But, then, I am a Socialist, and look forward to the time when the economic machinery of the community will be a

field not for private enrichment but for public service.

He will be good to his wife and children as he will be good to his friend, but he will be no partisan for wife and family against the common welfare. His solicitude will be for the welfare of all the children of the community; he will have got beyond blind instinct; he will have the intelligence to understand that almost any child in the world may have as large a share as his own offspring in the parentage of his great-great-grandchildren His wife he will treat as his equal; he will not be "kind" to her, but fair and frank and loving, as one equal should be with another; he will no more have the impertinence to pet and pamper her, to keep painful and laborious things out of her knowledge to "shield" her from the responsibility of political and social work, than he will to make a Chinese toy of her and bind her feet. He and she will love that they may enlarge and not limit one another.

Consciously and deliberately the ideal citizen will seek beauty in himself and in his way of living. He will be temperate rather than harshly abstinent, and he will keep himself fit and in training as an elementary duty. He will not be a fat or emaciated person. Fat, panting men, and thin, enfeebled ones cannot possibly be considered good citizens any more than dirty or verminous people. He will be just as fine and seemly in his person as he can be, not from vanity and self-assertion but to be pleasing and agreeable to his fellows. The ugly dress and ugly bearing of the "good man" of to-day will be as incomprehensible to him as the filth of a palaeolithic savage is to us. He will not speak of his "frame," and hang clothes like sacks over it; he will know and feel that he and the people about him have wonderful, delightful and beautiful bodies.

And — I speak of the ideal common citizen — he will be a student and a philosopher. To understand will be one of his necessary duties. His mind, like his body, will be fit and well clothed. He will not be too busy to read and think, though he may be too busy to rush about to get ignorantly and blatantly rich. It follows that, since he will have a mind exercised finely and flexible and alert, he will not be a secretive man. Secretiveness and secret planning are vulgarity; men and women need to be educated, and he will be educated out of these vices. He will be intensely truthful, not simply in the vulgar

sense of not misstating facts when pressed, but truthful in the manner of the scientific man or the artist, and as scornful of concealment as they; truthful, that is to say, as the expression of a ruling desire to have things made plain and clear, because that so they are most beautiful and life is at its finest….

And all that I have written of him is equally true and applies word for word, with only such changes of gender as are needed, to the woman citizen also.

SOME POSSIBLE DISCOVERIES

The present time is harvest home for the prophets. The happy speculator in future sits on the piled-up wain, singing "I told you so," with the submarine and the flying machine and the Marconigram and the North Pole successfully achieved. In the tumult of realisations it perhaps escapes attention that the prophetic output of new hopes is by no means keeping pace with the crop of consummations. The present trend of scientific development is not nearly so obvious as it was a score of years ago; its promises lack the elementary breadth of that simpler time. Once you have flown, you have flown. Once you have steamed about under water, you have steamed about under water. There seem no more big things of that kind available — so that I almost regret the precipitance of Commander Peary and Captain Amundsen. No one expects to go beyond that atmosphere for some centuries at least; all the elements are now invaded. Conceivably man may presently contrive some sort of earthworm apparatus, so that he could go through the rocks prospecting very much as an earthworm goes through the soil, excavating in front and dumping behind, but, to put it moderately, there are considerable difficulties. And I doubt the imaginative effect. On the whole, I think material science has got samples now of all its crops at this level, and that what lies before it in the coming years is chiefly to work them out in detail and realise them on the larger scale. No doubt science will still yield all sorts of big surprising effects, but nothing, I think, to equal the dramatic novelty, the demonstration of man having got to something altogether new and strange, of Montgolfier, or the Wright Brothers, of Columbus, or the Polar conquest. There remains, of course, the tapping of atomic energy, but I give two hundred years yet before that….

So far, then, as mechanical science goes I am inclined to think the coming period will be, from the point of view of the common man, almost without sensational interest. There will be an immense amount of enrichment and filling-in, but of the sort that does not get prominently into the daily papers. At every point there will be economies and simplifications of method, discoveries of new

artificial substances with new capabilities, and of new methods of utilising power. There will be a progressive change in the apparatus and quality of human life — the sort of alteration of the percentages that causes no intellectual shock. Electric heating, for example, will become practicable in our houses, and then cheaper, and at last so cheap and good that nobody will burn coal any more. Little electric contrivances will dispense with menial service in more and more directions. The builder will introduce new, more convenient, healthier and prettier substances, and the young architect will become increasingly the intelligent student of novelty. The steam engine, the coal yard, and the tail chimney, and indeed all chimneys, will vanish quietly from our urban landscape. The speeding up and cheapening of travel, and the increase in its swiftness and comfort will go on steadily — widening experience. A more systematic and understanding social science will be estimating the probable growth and movement of population, and planning town and country on lines that would seem to-day almost inconceivably wise and generous. All this means a quiet broadening and aeration and beautifying of life. Utopian requirements, so far as the material side of things goes, will be executed and delivered with at last the utmost promptness….

It is in quite other directions that the scientific achievements to astonish our children will probably be achieved. Progress never appears to be uniform in human affairs. There are intricate correlations between department and department. One field must mark time until another can come up to it with results sufficiently arranged and conclusions sufficiently simplified for application Medicine waits on organic chemistry, geology on mineralogy, and both on the chemistry of high pressures and temperature. And subtle variations in method and the prevailing mental temperament of the type of writer engaged, produce remarkable differences in the quality and quantity of the stated result. Moreover, there are in the history of every scientific province periods of seed-time, when there is great activity without immediate apparent fruition, and periods, as, for example, the last two decades of electrical application, of prolific realisation. It is highly probable that the physiologist and the organic chemist are working towards co-operations that may make the

physician's sphere the new scientific wonderland.

At present dietary and regimen are the happy hunting ground of the quack and that sort of volunteer specialist, half-expert, half-impostor, who flourishes in the absence of worked out and definite knowledge. The general mass of the medical profession, equipped with a little experience and a muddled training, and preposterously impeded by the private adventure conditions under which it lives, goes about pretending to the possession of precise knowledge which simply does not exist in the world. Medical research is under-endowed and stupidly endowed, not for systematic scientific inquiry so much as for the unscientific seeking of remedies for specific evils — for cancer, consumption, and the like. Yet masked, misrepresented limited and hampered, the work of establishing a sound science of vital processes in health and disease is probably going on now, similar to the clarification of physics and chemistry that went on in the later part of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth centuries. It is not unreasonable to suppose that medicine may presently arrive at far-reaching generalised convictions, and proceed to take over this great hinterland of human interests which legitimately belongs to it.

But medicine is not the only field to which we may reasonably look for a sudden development of wonders. Compared with the sciences of matter, psychology and social science have as yet given the world remarkably little cause for amazement. Not only is our medicine feeble and fragmentary, but our educational science is the poorest miscellany of aphorisms and dodges. Indeed, directly one goes beyond the range of measurement and weighing and classification, one finds a sort of unprogressive floundering going on, which throws the strongest doubts upon the practical applicability of the current logical and metaphysical conceptions in those fields. We have emerged only partially from the age of the schoolmen In these directions we have not emerged at all. It is quite possible that in university lecture rooms and forbidding volumes of metaphysical discussion a new emancipation of the human intellect and will is even now going on. Presently men may be attacking the problems of the self-control of human life and of human destiny in new phrases and an altogether novel spirit.

Guesses at the undiscovered must necessarily be vague, but my anticipations fall into two groups, and first I am disposed to expect a great systematic increment in individual human power. We probably have no suspicion as yet of what may be done with the human body and mind by way of enhancing its effectiveness I remember talking to the late Sir Michael Foster upon the possibilities of modern surgery, and how he confessed that he did not dare for his reputation's sake tell ordinary people the things he believed would some day become matter-of-fact operations. In that respect I think he spoke for very many of his colleagues. It is already possible to remove almost any portion of the human body, including, if needful, large sections of the brain; it is possible to graft living flesh on living flesh, make new connections, mould, displace, and rearrange. It is also not impossible to provoke local hypertrophy, and not only by knife and physical treatment but by the subtler methods of hypnotism, profound changes can be wrought in the essential structure of a human being. If only our knowledge of function and value were at all adequate, we could correct and develop ourselves in the most extraordinary way. Our knowledge is not adequate, but it may not always remain inadequate.

We have already had some very astonishing suggestions in this direction from Doctor Metchnikoff. He regards the human stomach and large intestine as not only vestigial and superfluous in the human economy, but as positively dangerous on account of the harbour they afford for those bacteria that accelerate the decay of age. He proposes that these viscera should be removed. To a layman like myself this is an altogether astounding and horrifying idea, but Doctor Metchnikoff is a man of the very greatest scientific reputation, and it does not give him any qualm of horror or absurdity to advance it. I am quite sure that if a gentleman called upon me "done up" in the way I am dimly suggesting, with most of the contents of his abdomen excavated, his lungs and heart probably enlarged and improved, parts of his brain removed to eliminate harmful tendencies and make room for the expansion of the remainder, his mind and sensibilities increased, and his liability to fatigue and the need of sleep abolished, I should conceal with the utmost difficulty my inexpressible disgust and terror. But, then, if M. Blériot, with his flying machine, ear-flaps and

goggles, had soared down in the year 54 B.C., let us say, upon my woad-adorned ancestors — every family man in Britain was my ancestor in those days — at Dover, they would have had entirely similar emotions. And at present I am not discussing what is beautiful in humanity, but what is possible — and what, being possible, is likely to be attempted.

It does not follow that because men will some day have this enormous power over themselves, physically and mentally, that they will necessarily make themselves horrible — even by our present standards quite a lot of us would be all the slenderer and more active and graceful for "Metchnikoffing" — nor does surgery exhaust the available methods. We are still in the barbaric age, so far as our use of food and drugs is concerned. We stuff all sorts of substances into our unfortunate interiors and blunder upon the most various consequences. Few people of three score and ten but have spent in the aggregate the best part of a year in a state of indigestion, stupid, angry or painful indigestion as the case may be. No one would be so careless and ignorant about the fuel he burnt in his motor-car as most of us are about the fuel we burn in our bodies. And there are all sort of stimulating and exhilarating things, digesting things, fatigue-suppressing things, exercise economising things, we dare not use because we are afraid of our ignorance of their precise working. There seems no reason to suppose that human life, properly understood and controlled, could not be a constant succession of delightful and for the most part active bodily and mental phases. It is sheer ignorance and bad management that keep the majority of people in that disagreeable system of states which we indicate by saying we are "a bit off colour" or a little "out of training." It may seem madly Utopian now to suggest that practically everyone in the community might be clean, beautiful, incessantly active, "fit," and long-lived, with the marks of all the surgery they have undergone quite healed and hidden, but not more madly Utopian than it would have seemed to King Alfred the Great if one had said that practically everyone in this country, down to the very swineherds, should be able to read and write.

Metchnikoff has speculated upon the possibility of delaying old age, and I do not see why his method should not be applied to the

diurnal need of sleep. No vital process seems to be absolutely fated in itself; it is a thing conditioned and capable of modification. If Metchnikoff is right — and to a certain extent he must be right — the decay of age is due to changing organic processes that may be checked and delayed and modified by suitable food and regimen. He holds out hope of a new phase in the human cycle, after the phase of struggle and passion, a phase of serene intellectual activity, old age with all its experience and none of its infirmities. Still more are fatigue and the need for repose dependent upon chemical changes in the body. It would seem we are unable to maintain exertion, partly through the exhaustion of our tissues, but far more by the loading of our blood with fatigue products — a recuperative interlude must ensue. But there is no reason to suppose that the usual food of to-day is the most rapidly assimilable nurture possible, that a rapidly digestible or injectable substance is not conceivable that would vastly accelerate repair, nor that the elimination and neutralisation of fatigue products might not also be enormously hastened. There is no inherent impossibility in the idea not only of various glands being induced to function in a modified manner, but even in the insertion upon the circulation of interceptors and artificial glandular structures. No doubt that may strike even an adventurous surgeon as chimerical, but consider what people, even authoritative people, were saying of flying and electric traction twenty years ago. At present a man probably does not get more than three or four hours of maximum mental and physical efficiency in the day. Few men can keep at their best in either physical or intellectual work for so long as that. The rest of the time goes in feeding, digesting, sleeping, sitting about, relaxation of various kinds. It is quite possible that science may set itself presently to extend systematically that proportion of efficient time. The area of maximum efficiency may invade the periods now demanded by digestion, sleep, exercise, so that at last nearly the whole of a man's twenty-four hours will be concentrated on his primary interests instead of dispersed among these secondary necessary matters.

Please understand I do not consider this concentration of activity and these vast "artificialisations" of the human body as attractive or desirable things. At the first proposal much of this tampering with the

natural stuff of life will strike anyone, I think, as ugly and horrible, just as seeing a little child, green-white and still under an anaesthetic, gripped my heart much more dreadfully than the sight of the same child actively bawling with pain. But the business of this paper is to discuss things that may happen, and not to evolve dreams of loveliness. Perhaps things of this kind will be manageable without dreadfulness. Perhaps man will come to such wisdom that neither the knife nor the drugs nor any of the powers which science thrusts into his hand will slay the beauty of life for him. Suppose we assume that he is not such a fool as to let that happen, and that ultimately he will emerge triumphant with all these powers utilised and controlled.

It is not only that an amplifying science may give mankind happier bodies and far more active and eventful lives, but that psychology and educational and social science, reinforcing literature and working through literature and art, may dare to establish serenities in his soul. For surely no one who has lived, no one who has watched sin and crime and punishment, but must have come to realise the enormous amount of misbehaviour that is mere ignorance and want of mental scope. For my own part I have never believed in the devil. And it may be a greater undertaking but no more impossible to make ways to goodwill and a good heart in men than it is to tunnel mountains and dyke back the sea. The way that led from the darkness of the cave to the electric light is the way that will lead to light in the souls of men, that is to say, the way of free and fearless thinking, free and fearless experiment, organised exchange of thoughts and results, and patience and persistence and a sort of intellectual civility.

And with the development of philosophical and scientific method that will go on with this great increase in man's control over himself, another issue that is now a mere pious aspiration above abysses of ignorance and difficulty, will come to be a manageable matter. It has been the perpetual wonder of philosophers from Plato onward that men have bred their dogs and horses and left any man or woman, however vile, free to bear offspring in the next generation of men. Still that goes on. Beautiful and wonderful people die childless and bury their treasure in the grave, and we rest content with a system of matrimony that seems designed to perpetuate mediocrity. A day will

come when men will be in possession of knowledge and opportunity that will enable them to master this position, and then certainly will it be assured that every generation shall be born better than was the one before it. And with that the history of humanity will enter upon a new phase, a phase which will be to our lives as daylight is to the dreaming of a child as yet unborn.

THE HUMAN ADVENTURE

Alone among all the living things this globe has borne, man reckons with destiny. All other living things obey the forces that created them; and when the mood of the power changes, submit themselves passively to extinction Man only looks upon those forces in the face, anticipates the exhaustion of Nature's kindliness, seeks weapons to defend himself. Last of the children of Saturn, he escapes their general doom. He dispossesses his begetter of all possibility of replacement, and grasps the sceptre of the world. Before man the great and prevalent creatures followed one another processionally to extinction; the early monsters of the ancient seas, the clumsy amphibians struggling breathless to the land, the reptiles, the theriomorpha and the dinosaurs, the bat-winged reptiles of the Mesozoic forests, the colossal grotesque first mammals, the giant sloths, the mastodons and mammoths; it is as if some idle dreamer moulded them and broke them and cast them aside, until at last comes man and seizes the creative wrist that would wipe him out of being again.

There is nothing else in all the world that so turns against the powers that have made it, unless it be man's follower fire. But fire is witless; a little stream, a changing breeze can stop it. Man circumvents. If fire were human it would build boats across the rivers and outmanoeuvre the wind. It would lie in wait in sheltered places, smouldering, husbanding its fuel until the grass was yellow and the forests sere. But fire is a mere creature of man's; our world before his coming knew nothing of it in any of its habitable places, never saw it except in the lightning flash or remotely on some volcanic coronet. Man brought it into the commerce of life, a shining, resentful slave, to hound off the startled beasts from his sleeping-place and serve him like a dog.

Suppose that some enduring intelligence watched through the ages the successions of life upon this planet, marked the spreading first of this species and then that, the conflicts, the adaptations, the predominances, the dyings away, and conceive how it would have witnessed this strange dramatic emergence of a rare great ape to

manhood. To such a mind the creature would have seemed at first no more than one of several varieties of clambering frugivorous mammals, a little distinguished by a disposition to help his clumsy walking with a stake and reinforce his fist with a stone. The foreground of the picture would have been filled by the rhinoceros and mammoth, the great herds of ruminants, the sabre-toothed lion and the big bears. Then presently the observer would have noted a peculiar increasing handiness about the obscurer type, an unwonted intelligence growing behind its eyes. He would have perceived a disposition in this creature no beast had shown before, a disposition to make itself independent of the conditions of climate and the chances of the seasons. Did shelter fail among the trees and rocks, this curious new thing-began to make itself harbours of its own; was food irregular, it multiplied food. It began to spread out from its original circumstances, fitting itself to novel needs, leaving the forests, invading the plains, following the watercourses upward and downward, presently carrying the smoke of its fires like a banner of conquest into wintry desolations and the high places of the earth.

The first onset of man must have been comparatively slow, the first advances needed long ages. By small degrees it gathered pace. The stride from the scattered savagery of the earlier stone period to the first cities, historically a vast interval, would have seemed to that still watcher, measuring by the standards of astronomy and the rise and decline of races and genera and orders, a, step almost abrupt. It took, perhaps, a thousand generations or so to make it. In that interval man passed from an animal-like obedience to the climate and the weather and his own instincts, from living in small family parties of a score or so over restricted areas of indulgent country, to permanent settlements, to the life of tribal and national communities and the beginnings of cities. He had spread in that fragment of time over great areas of the earth's surface, and now he was adapting himself to the Arctic circle on the one hand and to the life of the tropics on the other; he had invented the plough and the ship, and subjugated most of the domestic animals; he was beginning to think of the origin of the world and the mysteries of being. Writing had added its enduring records to oral tradition, and he was already making roads. Another five or six hundred generations at most bring

him to ourselves. We sweep into the field of that looker-on, the momentary incarnations of this sempiternal being, Man. And after us there comes —

A curtain falls.

The time in which we, whose minds meet here in this writing, were born and live and die, would be to that imagined observer a mere instant's phase in the swarming liberation of our kind from ancient imperatives. It would seem to him a phase of unprecedented swift change and expansion and achievement. In this last handful of years, electricity has ceased to be a curious toy, and now carries half mankind upon their daily journeys, it lights our cities till they outshine the moon and stars, and reduces to our service a score of hitherto unsuspected metals; we clamber to the pole of our globe, scale every mountain, soar into the air, learn how to overcome the malaria that barred our white races from the tropics, and how to draw the sting from a hundred such agents of death. Our old cities are being rebuilt in towering marble; great new cities rise to vie with them. Never, it would seem, has man been so various and busy and persistent, and there is no intimation of any check to the expansion of his energies.

And all this continually accelerated advance has come through the quickening and increase of man's intelligence and its reinforcement through speech and writing. All this has come in spite of fierce instincts that make him the most combatant and destructive of animals, and in spite of the revenge Nature has attempted time after time for his rebellion against her routines, in the form of strange diseases and nearly universal pestilences. All this has come as a necessary consequence of the first obscure gleaming of deliberate thought and reason through the veil of his animal being. To begin with, he did not know what he was doing. He sought his more immediate satisfaction and safety and security. He still apprehends imperfectly the change that comes upon him. The illusion of separation that makes animal life, that is to say, passionate competing and breeding and dying, possible, the blinkers Nature has put upon us that we may clash against and sharpen one another, still darken our eyes. We live not life as yet, but in millions of separated lives, still unaware except in rare moods of illumination that we are

more than those fellow beasts of ours who drop off from the tree of life and perish alone. It is only in the last three or four thousand years, and through weak and tentative methods of expression, through clumsy cosmogonies and theologies, and with incalculable confusion and discoloration, that the human mind has felt its way towards its undying being in the race. Man still goes to war against himself, prepares fleets and armies and fortresses, like a sleep-walker who wounds himself, like some infatuated barbarian who hacks his own limbs with a knife.

But he awakens. The nightmares of empire and racial conflict and war, the grotesques of trade jealousy and tariffs, the primordial dream-stuff of lewdness and jealousy and cruelty, pale before the daylight which filters between his eyelids. In a little while we individuals will know ourselves surely for corpuscles in his being, for thoughts that come together out of strange wanderings into the coherence of a waking mind. A few score generations ago all living things were in our ancestry. A few score generations ahead, and all mankind will be in sober fact descendants from our blood. In physical as in mental fact we separate persons, with all our difference and individuality, are but fragments, set apart for a little while in order that we may return to the general life again with fresh experiences and fresh acquirements, as bees return with pollen and nourishment to the fellowship of the hive.

And this Man, this wonderful child of old earth, who is ourselves in the measure of our hearts and minds, does but begin his adventure now. Through all time henceforth he does but begin his adventure. This planet and its subjugation is but the dawn of his existence. In a little while he will reach out to the other planets, and take that greater fire, the sun, into his service. He will bring his solvent intelligence to bear upon the riddles of his individual interaction, transmute jealousy and every passion, control his own increase, select and breed for his embodiment a continually finer and stronger and wiser race. What none of us can think or will, save in a disconnected partiality, he will think and will collectively. Already some of us feel our merger with that greater life. There come moments when the thing shines out upon our thoughts. Sometimes in the dark sleepless solitudes of night, one ceases to be so-and-so, one ceases to bear a proper name,

forgets one's quarrels and vanities, forgives and understands one's enemies and oneself, as one forgives and understands the quarrels of little children, knowing oneself indeed to be a being greater than one's personal accidents, knowing oneself for Man on his planet, flying swiftly to unmeasured destinies through the starry stillnesses of space.

WHAT IS COMING?

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I. FORECASTING THE FUTURE

Prophecy may vary between being an intellectual amusement and a serious occupation; serious not only in its intentions, but in its consequences. For it is the lot of prophets who frighten or disappoint to be stoned. But for some of us moderns, who have been touched with the spirit of science, prophesying is almost a habit of mind.

Science is very largely analysis aimed at forecasting. The test of any scientific law is our verification of its anticipations. The scientific training develops the idea that whatever is going to happen is really here now — if only one could see it. And when one is taken by surprise the tendency is not to say with the untrained man, "Now, who'd ha' thought it?" but "Now, what was it we overlooked?"

Everything that has ever existed or that will ever exist is here — for anyone who has eyes to see. But some of it demands eyes of superhuman penetration. Some of it is patent; we are almost as certain of next Christmas and the tides of the year 1960 and the death before 3000 A.D. of everybody now alive as if these things had already happened. Below that level of certainty, but still at a very high level of certainty, there are such things as that men will probably be making aeroplanes of an improved pattern in 1950, or that there will be a through railway connection between Constantinople and Bombay and between Baku and Bombay in the next half-century. From such grades of certainty as this, one may come down the scale until the most obscure mystery of all is reached: the mystery of the individual. Will England presently produce a military genius? or what will Mr. Belloc say the day after to-morrow? The most accessible field for the prophet is the heavens; the least is the secret of the jumping cat within the human skull. How will so-and-so behave, and how will the nation take it? For such questions as that we need the subtlest guesses of all.

Yet, even to such questions as these the sharp, observant man may risk an answer with something rather better than an even chance of being right.

The present writer is a prophet by use and wont. He is more interested in to-morrow than he is in to-day, and the past is just

material for future guessing. “Think of the men who have walked here!” said a tourist in the Roman Coliseum. It was a Futurist mind that answered: “Think of the men who will.” It is surely as interesting that presently some founder of the World Republic, some obstinate opponent of militarism or legalism, or the man who will first release atomic energy for human use, will walk along the Via Sacra as that Cicero or Giordano Bruno or Shelley have walked there in the past. To the prophetic mind all history is and will continue to be a prelude. The prophetic type will steadfastly refuse to see the world as a museum; it will insist that here is a stage set for a drama that perpetually begins.

Now this forecasting disposition has led the writer not only to publish a book of deliberate prophesying, called “Anticipations,” but almost without premeditation to scatter a number of more or less obvious prophecies through his other books. From first to last he has been writing for twenty years, so that it is possible to check a certain proportion of these anticipations by the things that have happened, Some of these shots have hit remarkably close to the bull’s-eye of reality; there are a number of inners and outers, and some clean misses. Much that he wrote about in anticipation is now established commonplace. In 1894 there were still plenty of sceptics of the possibility either of automobiles or aeroplanes; it was not until 1898 that Mr. S.P. Langley (of the Smithsonian Institute) could send the writer a photograph of a heavier-than-air flying machine actually in the air. There were articles in the monthly magazines of those days *proving* that flying was impossible.

One of the writer’s luckiest shots was a description (in “Anticipations” in 1900) of trench warfare, and of a deadlock almost exactly upon the lines of the situation after the battle of the Marne. And he was fortunate (in the same work) in his estimate of the limitations of submarines. He anticipated Sir Percy Scott by a year in his doubts of the decisive value of great battleships (*see* “An Englishman Looks at the World”); and he was sound in denying the decadence of France; in doubting (before the Russo-Japanese struggle) the greatness of the power of Russia, which was still in those days a British bogey; in making Belgium the battle-ground in a coming struggle between the mid-European Powers and the rest of

Europe; and (he believes) in foretelling a renascent Poland. Long before Europe was familiar with the engaging personality of the German Crown Prince, he represented great airships sailing over England (which country had been too unenterprising to make any) under the command of a singularly anticipatory Prince Karl, and in "The World Set Free" the last disturber of the peace is a certain "Balkan Fox."

In saying, however, here and there that "before such a year so-and-so will happen," or that "so-and-so will not occur for the next twenty years," he was generally pretty widely wrong; most of his time estimates are too short; he foretold, for example, a special motor track apart from the high road between London and Brighton before 1910, which is still a dream, but he doubted if effective military aviation or aerial fighting would be possible before 1950, which is a miss on the other side. He will draw a modest veil over certain still wider misses that the idle may find for themselves in his books; he prefers to count the hits and leave the reckoning of the misses to those who will find a pleasure in it.

Of course, these prophecies of the writer's were made upon a basis of very generalised knowledge. What can be done by a really sustained research into a particular question — especially if it is a question essentially mechanical — is shown by the work of a Frenchman all too neglected by the trumpet of fame — Clement Ader. M. Ader was probably the first man to get a mechanism up into the air for something more than a leap. His *Eole*, as General Mensier testifies, prolonged a jump as far as fifty metres as early as 1890. In 1897 his *Avion* fairly flew. (This is a year ahead of the date of my earliest photograph of S.P. Langley's aeropile in mid-air.) This, however, is beside our present mark. The fact of interest here is that in 1908, when flying was still almost incredible, M. Ader published his "Aviation Militaire." Well, that was eight years ago, and men have been fighting in the air now for a year, and there is still nothing being done that M. Ader did not see, and which we, if we had had the wisdom to attend to him, might not have been prepared for. There is much that he foretells which is still awaiting its inevitable fulfilment. So clearly can men of adequate knowledge and sound reasoning power see into the years ahead in all such matters of material

development.

But it is not with the development of mechanical inventions that the writer now proposes to treat. In this book he intends to hazard certain forecasts about the trend of events in the next decade or so. Mechanical novelties will probably play a very small part in that coming history. This world-wide war means a general arrest of invention and enterprise, except in the direction of the war business. Ability is concentrated upon that; the types of ability that are not applicable to warfare are neglected; there is a vast destruction of capital and a waste of the savings that are needed to finance new experiments. Moreover, we are killing off many of our brightest young men.

It is fairly safe to assume that there will be very little new furniture on the stage of the world for some considerable time; that if there is much difference in the roads and railways and shipping it will be for the worse; that architecture, domestic equipment, and so on, will be fortunate if in 1924 they stand where they did in the spring of 1914. In the trenches of France and Flanders, and on the battlefields of Russia, the Germans have been spending and making the world spend the comfort, the luxury and the progress of the next quarter-century. There is no accounting for tastes. But the result is that, while it was possible for the writer in 1900 to write "Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical Progress upon Human Life and Thought," in 1916 his anticipations must belong to quite another system of consequences.

The broad material facts before us are plain enough. It is the mental facts that have to be unravelled. It isn't now a question of "What thing — what faculty — what added power will come to hand, and how will it affect our ways of living?" It is a question of "How are people going to take these obvious things — waste of the world's resources, arrest of material progress, the killing of a large moiety of the males in nearly every European country, and universal loss and unhappiness?" We are going to deal with realities here, at once more intimate and less accessible than the effects of mechanism.

As a preliminary reconnaissance, as it were, over the region of problems we have to attack, let us consider the difficulties of a single

question, which is also a vital and central question in this forecast. We shall not attempt a full answer here, because too many of the factors must remain unexamined; later, perhaps, we may be in a better position to do so. This question is the probability of the establishment of a long world peace.

At the outset of the war there was a very widely felt hope among the intellectuals of the world that this war might clear up most of the outstanding international problems, and prove the last war. The writer, looking across the gulf of experience that separates us from 1914, recalls two pamphlets whose very titles are eloquent of this feeling— "The War that will End War," and "The Peace of the World." Was the hope expressed in those phrases a dream? Is it already proven a dream? Or can we read between the lines of the war news, diplomatic disputations, threats and accusations, political wranglings and stories of hardship and cruelty that now fill our papers, anything that still justifies a hope that these bitter years of world sorrow are the darkness before the dawn of a better day for mankind? Let us handle this problem for a preliminary examination.

What is really being examined here is the power of human reason to prevail over passion — and certain other restraining and qualifying forces. There can be little doubt that, if one could canvass all mankind and ask them whether they would rather have no war any more, the overwhelming mass of them would elect for universal peace. If it were war of the modern mechanical type that was in question, with air raids, high explosives, poison gas and submarines, there could be no doubt at all about the response. "Give peace in our time, O Lord," is more than ever the common prayer of Christendom, and the very war makers claim to be peace makers; the German Emperor has never faltered in his assertion that he encouraged Austria to send an impossible ultimatum to Serbia, and invaded Belgium because Germany was being attacked. The Krupp-Kaiser Empire, he assures us, is no eagle, but a double-headed lamb, resisting the shearers and butchers. The apologists for war are in a hopeless minority; a certain number of German Prussians who think war good for the soul, and the dear ladies of the London *Morning Post* who think war so good for the manners of the working classes, are rare, discordant voices in the general chorus against war. If a

mere unsupported and uncoordinated will for peace could realise itself, there would be peace, and an enduring peace, to-morrow. But, as a matter of fact, there is no peace coming to-morrow, and no clear prospect yet of an enduring universal peace at the end of this war.

Now what are the obstructions, and what are the antagonisms to the exploitation of this world-wide disgust with war and the world-wide desire for peace, so as to establish a world peace?

Let us take them in order, and it will speedily become apparent that we are dealing here with a subtle quantitative problem in psychology, a constant weighing of whether this force or that force is the stronger. We are dealing with influences so subtle that the accidents of some striking dramatic occurrence, for example, may turn them this way or that. We are dealing with the human will — and thereby comes a snare for the feet of the would-be impartial prophet. To foretell the future is to modify the future. It is hard for any prophet not to break into exhortation after the fashion of the prophets of Israel.

The first difficulty in the way of establishing a world peace is that it is nobody's business in particular. Nearly all of us want a world peace — in an amateurish sort of way. But there is no specific person or persons to whom one can look for the initiatives. The world is a supersaturated solution of the will-for-peace, and there is nothing for it to crystallise upon. There is no one in all the world who is responsible for the understanding and overcoming of the difficulties involved. There are many more people, and there is much more intelligence concentrated upon the manufacture of cigarettes or hairpins than upon the establishment of a permanent world peace. There are a few special secretaries employed by philanthropic Americans, and that is about all. There has been no provision made even for the emoluments of these gentlemen when universal peace is attained; presumably they would lose their jobs.

Nearly everybody wants peace; nearly everybody would be glad to wave a white flag with a dove on it now — provided no unfair use was made of such a demonstration by the enemy — but there is practically nobody thinking out the arrangements needed, and nobody making nearly as much propaganda for the instruction of the world in the things needful as is made in selling any popular make of

automobile. We have all our particular businesses to attend to. And things are not got by just wanting them; things are got by getting them, and rejecting whatever precludes our getting them.

That is the first great difficulty: the formal Peace Movement is quite amateurish.

It is so amateurish that the bulk of people do not even realise the very first implication of the peace of the world. It has not succeeded in bringing this home to them.

If there is to be a permanent peace of the world, it is clear that there must be some permanent means of settling disputes between Powers and nations that would otherwise be at war. That means that there must be some head power, some point of reference, a supreme court of some kind, a universally recognised executive over and above the separate Governments of the world that exist to-day. That does not mean that those Governments Have to disappear, that "nationality" has to be given up, or anything so drastic as that. But it does mean that all those Governments have to surrender almost as much of their sovereignty as the constituent sovereign States which make up the United States of America have surrendered to the Federal Government; if their unification is to be anything more than a formality, they will have to delegate a control of their inter-State relations to an extent for which few minds are prepared at present.

It is really quite idle to dream of a warless world in which States are still absolutely free to annoy one another with tariffs, with the blocking and squeezing of trade routes, with the ill-treatment of immigrants and travelling strangers, and between which there is no means of settling boundary disputes. Moreover, as between the united States of the world and the United States of America there is this further complication of the world position: that almost all the great States of Europe are in possession, firstly, of highly developed territories of alien language and race, such as Egypt; and, secondly, of barbaric and less-developed territories, such as Nigeria or Madagascar. There will be nothing stable about a world settlement that does not destroy in these "possessions" the national preference of the countries that own them and that does not prepare for the immediate or eventual accession of these subject peoples to State rank. Most certainly, however, thousands of intelligent people in

those great European countries who believe themselves ardent for a world peace will be staggered at any proposal to place any part of "our Empire" under a world administration on the footing of a United States territory. Until they cease to be staggered by anything of the sort, their aspirations for a permanent peace will remain disconnected from the main current of their lives. And that current will flow, sluggishly or rapidly, towards war. For essentially these "possessions" are like tariffs, like the strategic occupation of neutral countries or secret treaties; they are forms of the conflict between nations to oust and prevail over other nations.

Going on with such things and yet deprecating war is really not an attempt to abolish conflict; it is an attempt to retain conflict and limit its intensity; it is like trying to play hockey on the understanding that the ball shall never travel faster than eight miles an hour.

Now it not only stands in our way to a permanent peace of the world that the great mass of men are not prepared for even the most obvious implications of such an idea, but there is also a second invincible difficulty — that there is nowhere in the world anybody, any type of men, any organisation, any idea, any nucleus or germ, that could possibly develop into the necessary over-Government. We are asking for something out of the air, out of nothingness, that will necessarily array against itself the resistance of all those who are in control, or interested in the control, of the affairs of sovereign States of the world as they are at present; the resistance of a gigantic network of Government organisations, interests, privileges, assumptions.

Against this a headless, vague aspiration, however universal, is likely to prove quite ineffective. Of course, it is possible to suggest that the Hague Tribunal is conceivably the germ of such an overriding direction and supreme court as the peace of the world demands, but in reality the Hague Tribunal is a mere legal automatic machine. It does nothing unless you set it in motion. It has no initiative. It does not even protest against the most obvious outrages upon that phantom of a world-conscience — international law.

Pacificists in their search for some definite starting-point, about which the immense predisposition for peace may crystallise, have suggested the Pope and various religious organisations as a possible

basis for the organisation of peace. But there would be no appeal from such a beginning to the non-Christian majority of mankind, and the suggestion in itself indicates a profound ignorance of the nature of the Christian churches. With the exception of the Quakers and a few Russian sects, no Christian sect or church has ever repudiated war; most have gone out of the way to sanction it and bless it.

It is altogether too rashly assumed by people whose sentimentality outruns their knowledge that Christianity is essentially an attempt to carry out the personal teachings of Christ. It is nothing of the sort, and no church authority will support that idea. Christianity — more particularly after the ascendancy of the Trinitarian doctrine was established — was and is a theological religion; it is the religion that triumphed over Arianism, Manichseism, Gnosticism, and the like; it is based not on Christ, but on its creeds. Christ, indeed, is not even its symbol; on the contrary, the chosen symbol of Christianity is the cross to which Christ was nailed and on which He died. It was very largely a religion of the legions. It was the warrior Theodosius who, more than any single other man, imposed it upon Europe.

There is no reason, therefore, either in precedent or profession, for expecting any plain lead from the churches in this tremendous task of organising and making effective the widespread desire of the world for peace. And even were this the case, it is doubtful if we should find in the divines and dignitaries of the Vatican, of the Russian and British official churches, or of any other of the multitudinous Christian sects, the power and energy, the knowledge and ability, or even the goodwill needed to negotiate so vast a thing as the creation of a world authority.

One other possible starting-point has been suggested. It is no great feat for a naive imagination to suppose the President of the Swiss Confederation or the President of the United States — for each of these two systems is an exemplary and encouraging instance of the possibility of the pacific synthesis of independent States — taking a propagandist course and proposing extensions of their own systems to the suffering belligerents.

But nothing of the sort occurs. And when you come to look into the circumstances of these two Presidents you will discover that neither of them is any more free than anybody else to embark upon

the task of creating a State-overriding, war-preventing organisation of the world. He has been created by a system, and he is bound to a system; his concern is with the interests of the people of Switzerland or of the United States of America. President Wilson, for example, is quite sufficiently occupied by the affairs of the White House, by the clash of political parties, by interferences with American overseas trade and the security of American citizens. He has no more time to give to projects for the fundamental reconstruction of international relationships than has any recruit drilling in England, or any captain on an ocean liner, or any engineer in charge of a going engine.

We are all, indeed, busy with the things that come to hand every day. We are all anxious for a permanent world peace, but we are all up to the neck in things that leave us no time to attend to this world peace that nearly every sane man desires.

Meanwhile, a small minority of people who trade upon contention — militarists, ambitious kings and statesmen, war contractors, loan mongers, sensational journalists — follow up their interests and start and sustain war.

There lies the paradoxical reality of this question. Our first inquiry lands us into the elucidation of this deadlock. Nearly everybody desires a world peace, and yet there is not apparent anywhere any man free and able and willing to establish it, while, on the other hand, there are a considerable number of men in positions of especial influence and power who will certainly resist the arrangements that are essential to its establishment.

But does this exhaust the question, and must we conclude that mankind is doomed to a perpetual, futile struggling of States and nations and peoples — breaking ever and again into war? The answer to that would probably, be "Yes" if it were not for the progress of war. War is continually becoming more scientific, more destructive, more coldly logical, more intolerant of non-combatants, and more exhausting of any kind of property. There is every reason to believe that it will continue to intensify these characteristics. By doing so it may presently bring about a state of affairs that will supply just the lacking elements that are needed for the development of a world peace.

I would venture to suggest that the present war is doing so now:

that it is producing changes in men's minds that may presently give us both the needed energy and the needed organisation from which a world direction may develop.

The first, most distinctive thing about this conflict is the exceptionally searching way in which it attacks human happiness. No war has ever destroyed happiness so widely. It has not only killed and wounded an unprecedented proportion of the male population of all the combatant nations, but it has also destroyed wealth beyond precedent. It has also destroyed freedom — of movement, of speech, of economic enterprise. Hardly anyone alive has escaped the worry of it and the threat of it. It has left scarcely a life untouched, and made scarcely a life happier. There is a limit to the principle that "everybody's business is nobody's business." The establishment of a world State, which was interesting only to a few cranks and visionaries before the war, is now the lively interest of a very great number of people. They inquire about it; they have become accessible to ideas about it.

Peace organisation seems, indeed, to be following the lines of public sanitation. Everybody in England, for example, was bored by the discussion of sanitation — until the great cholera epidemic. Everybody thought public health a very desirable thing, but nobody thought it intensely and overridingly desirable. Then the interest in sanitation grew lively, and people exerted themselves to create responsible organisations. Crimes of violence, again, were neglected in the great cities of Europe until the danger grew to dimensions that evolved the police. There come occasions when the normal concentration of an individual upon his own immediate concerns becomes impossible; as, for instance, when a man who is stocktaking in his business premises discovers that the house next door is on fire. A great many people who have never troubled their heads about anything but their own purely personal and selfish interests are now realising that quite a multitude of houses about them are ablaze, and that the fire is spreading.

That is one change the war will bring about that will make for world peace: a quickened general interest in its possibility. Another is the certainty that the war will increase the number of devoted and fanatic characters available for disinterested effort. Whatever other

outcome this war may have, it means that there lies ahead a period of extreme economic and political dislocation. The credit system has been strained, and will be strained, and will need unprecedented readjustments. In the past such phases of uncertainty, sudden impoverishment and disorder as certainly lie ahead of us, have meant for a considerable number of minds a release — or, if you prefer it, a flight — from the habitual and selfish. Types of intense religiosity, of devotion and of endeavour are let loose, and there will be much more likelihood that we may presently find, what it is impossible to find now, a number of devoted men and women ready to give their whole lives, with a quasi-religious enthusiasm, to this great task of peace establishment, finding in such impersonal work a refuge from the disappointments, limitations, losses and sorrows of their personal life — a refuge we need but little in more settled and more prosperous periods. They will be but the outstanding individuals in a very universal quickening. And simultaneously with this quickening of the general imagination by experience there are certain other developments in progress that point very clearly to a change under the pressure of this war of just those institutions of nationality, kingship, diplomacy and inter-State competition that have hitherto stood most effectually in the way of a world pacification. The considerations that seem to point to this third change are very convincing, to my mind.

The real operating cause that is, I believe, going to break down the deadlock that has hitherto made a supreme court and a federal government for the world at large a dream, lies in just that possibility of an "inconclusive peace" which so many people seem to dread. Germany, I believe, is going to be beaten, but not completely crushed, by this war; she is going to be left militarist and united with Austria and Hungary, and unchanged in her essential nature; and out of that state of affairs comes, I believe, the hope for an ultimate confederation of the nations of the earth.

Because, in the face of a league of the Central European Powers attempting recuperation, cherishing revenge, dreaming of a renewal of the struggle, it becomes impossible for the British, the French, the Belgians, Russians, Italians or Japanese to think any longer of settling their differences by war among themselves. To do so will

mean the creation of opportunity for the complete reinstatement of German militarism. It will open the door for a conclusive German hegemony. Now, however clumsy and confused the diplomacy of these present Allies may be (challenged constantly, as it is, by democracy and hampered by a free, venal and irresponsible Press in at least three of their countries), the necessity they will be under will be so urgent and so evident, that it is impossible to imagine that they will not set up some permanent organ for the direction and co-ordination of their joint international relationships. It may be a queerly constituted body at first; it may be of a merely diplomatic pretension; it may be called a Congress, or any old name of that sort, but essentially its business will be to conduct a joint fiscal, military and naval policy, to keep the peace in the Balkans and Asia, to establish a relationship with China, and organise joint and several arbitration arrangements with America. And it must develop something more sure and swift than our present diplomacy. One of its chief concerns will be the right of way through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and the watching of the forces that stir up conflict in the Balkans and the Levant. It must have unity enough for that; it must be much more than a mere leisurely, unauthoritative conference of representatives.

For precisely similar reasons it seems to me incredible that the two great Central European Powers should ever fall into sustained conflict again with one another. They, too, will be forced to create some overriding body to prevent so suicidal a possibility. America too, it may be, will develop some Pan-American equivalent. Probably the hundred millions of Latin America may achieve a method of unity, and then deal on equal terms with the present United States. The thing has been ably advocated already in South America. Whatever appearances of separate sovereignties are kept up after the war, the practical outcome of the struggle is quite likely to be this: that there will be only three great World Powers left — the anti-German allies, the allied Central Europeans, the Pan-Americans. And it is to be noted that, whatever the constituents of these three Powers may be, none of them is likely to be a monarchy. They may include monarchies, as England includes dukedoms. But they will be overriding alliances, not overriding rulers. I leave it to the

mathematician to work out exactly how much the chances of conflict are diminished when there are practically only three Powers in the world instead of some scores. And these new Powers will be in certain respects unlike any existing European "States." None of the three Powers will be small or homogeneous enough to serve dynastic ambitions, embody a national or racial Kultur, or fall into the grip of any group of financial enterprises. They will be more comprehensive, less romantic, and more businesslike altogether. They will be, to use a phrase suggested a year or so ago, Great States.... And the war threat between the three will be so plain and definite, the issues will be so lifted out of the spheres of merely personal ambition and national feeling, that I do not see why the negotiating means, the standing conference of the three, should not ultimately become the needed nucleus of the World State for which at present we search the world in vain.

There are more ways than one to the World State, and this second possibility of a post-war conference and a conference of the Allies, growing almost unawares into a pacific organisation of the world, since it goes on directly from existing institutions, since it has none of the quality of a clean break with the past which the idea of an immediate World State and Pax Mundi involves, and more particularly since it neither abolishes nor has in it anything to shock fundamentally the princes, the diplomatists, the lawyers, the statesmen and politicians, the nationalists and suspicious people, since it gives them years in which to change and die out and reappear in new forms, and since at the same time it will command the support of every intelligent human being who gets his mind clear enough from his circumstances to understand its import, is a far more credible hope than the hope of anything coming *de novo* out of Hague Foundations or the manifest logic of the war.

But, of course, there weighs against these hopes the possibility that the Allied Powers are too various in their nature, too biased, too feeble intellectually and imaginatively, to hold together and maintain any institution for co-operation. The British Press may be too silly not to foster irritation and suspicion; we may get Carsonism on a larger scale trading on the resuscitation of dying hatreds; the British and Russian diplomatists may play annoying tricks upon one another

by sheer force of habit. There may be many troubles of that sort. Even then I do not see that the hope of an ultimate world peace vanishes. But it will be a Roman world peace, made in Germany, and there will have to be several more great wars before it is established. Germany is too homogeneous yet to have begun the lesson of compromise and the renunciation of the dream of national conquest. The Germans are a national, not an imperial people. France has learnt that through suffering, and Britain and Russia because for two centuries they have been imperial and not national systems. The German conception of world peace is as yet a conception of German ascendancy. The Allied conception becomes perforce one of mutual toleration.

But I will not press this inquiry farther now. It is, as I said at the beginning, a preliminary exploration of one of the great questions with which I propose to play in these articles. The possibility I have sketched is the one that most commends itself to me as probable. After a more detailed examination of the big operating forces at present working in the world, we may be in a position to revise these suggestions with a greater confidence and draw our net of probabilities a little tighter.

II. THE END OF THE WAR[1]

The prophet who emerges with the most honour from this war is Bloch. It must be fifteen or sixteen years ago since this gifted Pole made his forecast of the future. Perhaps it is more, for the French translation of his book was certainly in existence before the Boer War. His case was that war between antagonists of fairly equal equipment must end in a deadlock because of the continually increasing defensive efficiency of entrenched infantry. This would give the defensive an advantage over the most brilliant strategy and over considerably superior numbers that would completely discourage all aggression. He concluded that war was played out.

This chapter was originally a newspaper article. It was written in December, 1915, and published about the middle of January. Some of it has passed from the quality of anticipation to achievement, but I do not see that it needs any material revision on that account.

His book was very carefully studied in Germany. As a humble disciple of Bloch I should have realised this, but I did not, and that failure led me into some unfortunate prophesying at the outbreak of the war. I judged Germany by the Kaiser, and by the Kaiser-worship which I saw in Berlin. I thought that he was a theatrical person who would dream of vast massed attacks and tremendous cavalry charges, and that he would lead Germany to be smashed against the Allied defensive in the West, and to be smashed so thoroughly that the war would be over. I did not properly appreciate the more studious and more thorough Germany that was to fight behind the Kaiser and thrust him aside, the Germany we British fight now, the Ostwald-Krupp Germany of 1915. That Germany, one may now perceive, had read and thought over and thought out the Bloch problem.

There was also a translation of Bloch into French. In English a portion of his book was translated for the general reader and published with a preface by the late Mr. W.T. Stead. It does not seem to have reached the British military authorities, nor was it published in England with an instructive intention. As an imaginative work it would have been considered worthless and impracticable.

But it is manifest now that if the Belgian and French frontiers had

been properly prepared — as they should have been prepared when the Germans built their strategic railways — with trenches and gun emplacements and secondary and tertiary lines, the Germans would never have got fifty miles into either France or Belgium. They would have been held at Liége and in the Ardennes. Five hundred thousand men would have held them indefinitely. But the Allies had never worked trench warfare; they were unready for it, Germans knew of their unreadiness, and their unreadiness it is quite clear they calculated. They did not reckon, it is now clear that they were right in not reckoning, the Allies as contemporary soldiers. They were going to fight a 1900 army with a 1914 army, and their whole opening scheme was based on the conviction that the Allies would not entrench.

Somebody in those marvellous maxims from the dark ages that seem to form the chief reading of our military experts, said that the army that entrenches is a defeated army. The silly dictum was repeated and repeated in the English papers after the battle of the Marne. It shows just where our military science had reached in 1914, namely, to a level a year before Bloch wrote. So the Allies retreated.

For long weeks the Allies retreated out of the west of Belgium, out of the north of France, and for rather over a month there was a loose mobile war — as if Bloch had never existed. The Germans were not fighting the 1914 pattern of war, they were fighting the 1899 pattern of war, in which direct attack, outflanking and so on were still supposed to be possible; they were fighting confident in their overwhelming numbers, in their prepared surprise, in the unthought-out methods of their opponents. In the "Victorian" war that ended in the middle of September, 1914, they delivered their blow, they over-reached, they were successfully counter-attacked on the Marne, and then abruptly — almost unfairly it seemed to the British sportsmanlike conceptions — they shifted to the game played according to the very latest rules of 1914. The war did not come up to date until the battle of the Aisne. With that the second act of the great drama began.

I do not believe that the Germans ever thought it would come up to date so soon. I believe they thought that they would hustle the French out of Paris, come right up to the Channel at Calais before the

end of 1914, and then entrench, produce the submarine attack and the Zeppelins against England, working from Calais as a base, and that they would end the war before the spring of 1915 — with the Allies still a good fifteen years behindhand.

I believe the battle of the Marne was the decisive battle of the war, in that it shattered this plan, and that the rest of the 1914 fighting was Germany's attempt to reconstruct their broken scheme in the face of an enemy who was continually getting more and more nearly up to date with the fighting. By December, Bloch, who had seemed utterly discredited in August, was justified up to the hilt. The world was entrenched at his feet. By May the lagging military science of the British had so far overtaken events as to realise that shrapnel was no longer so important as high explosive, and within a year the significance of machine guns, a significance thoroughly ventilated by imaginative writers fifteen years before, was being grasped by the conservative but by no means inadaptable leaders of Britain.

The war since that first attempt — admirably planned and altogether justifiable (from a military point of view, I mean) — of Germany to "rush" a victory, has consisted almost entirely of failures on both sides either to get round or through or over the situation foretold by Bloch. There has been only one marked success, the German success in Poland due to the failure of the Russian munitions. Then for a time the war in the East was mobile and precarious while the Russians retreated to their present positions, and the Germans pursued and tried to surround them. That was a lapse into the pre-Bloch style. Now the Russians are again entrenched, their supplies are restored, the Germans have a lengthened line of supplies, and Bloch is back upon his pedestal so far as the Eastern theatre goes.

Bloch has been equally justified in the Anglo-French attempt to get round through Gallipoli. The forces of the India Office have pushed their way through unprepared country towards Bagdad, and are now entrenching in Mesopotamia, but from the point of view of the main war that is too remote to be considered either getting through or getting round; and so too the losses of the German colonies and the East African War are scarcely to be reckoned with

in the main war. They have no determining value. There remains the Balkan struggle. But the Balkan struggle is something else; it is something new. It must be treated separately. It is a war of treacheries and brags and appearances. It is not a part of, it is a sequence to, the deadlock war of 1915.

But before dealing with this new development of the latter half of 1915 it is necessary to consider certain general aspects of the deadlock war. It is manifest that the Germans hoped to secure an effective victory in this war before they ran up against Bloch. But reckoning with Bloch, as they certainly did, they hoped that even in the event of the war getting to earth, it would still be possible to produce novelties that would sufficiently neutralise Bloch to secure a victorious peace. With unexpectedly powerful artillery suddenly concentrated, with high explosives, with asphyxiating gas, with a well-organised system of grenade throwing and mining, with attacks of flaming gas, and above all with a vast munition-making plant to keep them going, they had a very reasonable chance of hacking their way through.

Against these prepared novelties the Allies have had to improvise, and on the whole the improvisation has kept pace with the demands made upon it. They have brought their military science up to date, and to-day the disparity in science and equipment between the antagonists has greatly diminished. There has been no escaping Bloch after all, and the deadlock, if no sudden peace occurs, can end now in only one thing, the exhaustion in various degrees of all the combatants and the succumbing of the most exhausted. The idea of a conclusive end of the traditional pattern to this war, of a triumphal entry into London, Paris, Berlin or Moscow, is to be dismissed altogether from our calculations. The end of this war will be a matter of negotiation between practically immobilised and extremely shattered antagonists.

There is, of course, one aspect of the Bloch deadlock that the Germans at least have contemplated. If it is not possible to get through or round, it may still be possible to get over. There is the air path.

This idea has certainly taken hold of the French mind, but France has been too busy and is temperamentally too economical to risk

large expenditures upon what is necessarily an experiment. The British are too conservative and sceptical to be the pioneers in any such enterprise. The Russians have been too poor in the necessary resources of mechanics and material.

The Germans alone have made any sustained attempt to strike through the air at their enemies beyond the war zone. Their Zeppelin raids upon England have shown a steadily increasing efficiency, and it is highly probable that they will be repeated on a much larger scale before the war is over. Quite possibly, too, the Germans are developing an accessory force of large aeroplanes to co-operate in such an attack. The long coasts of Britain, the impossibility of their being fully equipped throughout their extent, except at a prohibitive cost of men and material, to resist air invaders, exposes the whole length of the island to considerable risk and annoyance from such an expedition.

It is doubtful, though, if the utmost damage an air raid is likely to inflict upon England would count materially in the exhaustion process, and the moral effect of these raids has been, and will be, to stiffen the British resolution to fight this war through to the conclusive ending of any such possibilities.

The net result of these air raids is an inflexible determination of the British people rather to die in death grips with German militarism than to live and let it survive. The best chance for the aircraft was at the beginning of the war, when a surprise development might have had astounding results. That chance has gone by. The Germans are racially inferior to both French and English in the air, and the probability of effective blows over the deadlock is on the whole a probability in favour of the Allies. Nor is there anything on or under the sea that seems likely now to produce decisive results. We return from these considerations to a strengthened acceptance of Bloch.

The essential question for the prophet remains therefore the question of which group of Powers will exhaust itself most rapidly. And following on from that comes the question of how the successive stages of exhaustion will manifest themselves in the combatant nations. The problems of this war, as of all war, end as they begin in national psychology.

But it will be urged that this is reckoning without the Balkans. I

submit that the German thrust through the wooded wilderness of Serbia is really no part of the war that has ended in the deadlock of 1915. It is dramatic, tragic, spectacular, but it is quite inconclusive. Here there is no way round or through to any vital centre of Germany's antagonists. It turns nothing; it opens no path to Paris, London, or Petrograd. It is a long, long way from the Danube to either Egypt or Mesopotamia, and there — and there — Bloch is waiting. I do not think the Germans have any intention of so generous an extension of their responsibilities. The Balkan complication is no solution of the deadlock problem. It is the opening of the sequel.

A whole series of new problems are opened up directly we turn to this most troubled region of the Balkans — problems of the value of kingship, of nationality, of the destiny of such cities as Constantinople, which from their very beginning have never had any sort of nationality at all, of the destiny of countries such as Albania, where a tangle of intense tribal nationalities is distributed in spots and patches, or Dalmatia, where one extremely self-conscious nation and language is present in the towns and another in the surrounding country, or Asia Minor, where no definite national boundaries, no religious, linguistic, or social homogeneities have ever established themselves since the Roman legions beat them down.

But all these questions can really be deferred or set aside in our present discussion, which is a discussion of the main war. Whatever surprises or changes this last phase of the Eastern Empire, that blood-clotted melodrama, may involve, they will but assist and hasten on the essential conclusion of the great war, that the Central Powers and their pledged antagonists are in a deadlock, unable to reach a decision, and steadily, day by day, hour by hour, losing men, destroying material, spending credit, approaching something unprecedented, unknown, that we try to express to ourselves by the word exhaustion.

Just how the people who use the word "exhaustion" so freely are prepared to define it, is a matter for speculation. The idea seems to be a phase in which the production of equipped forces ceases through the using up of men or material or both. If the exhaustion is fairly mutual, it need not be decisive for a long time. It may mean simply

an ebb of vigour on both sides, unusual hardship, a general social and economic disorganisation and grading down. The fact that a great killing off of men is implicit in the process, and that the survivors will be largely under discipline, militates against the idea that the end may come suddenly through a vigorous revolutionary outbreak. Exhaustion is likely to be a very long and very thorough process, extending over years. A "war of attrition" may last into 1918 or 1919, and may bring us to conditions of strain and deprivation still only very vaguely imagined. What happens in the Turkish Empire or India or America or elsewhere may extend the areas of waste and accelerate or retard the process, but is quite unlikely to end it.

Let us ask now which of the combatants is likely to undergo exhaustion most rapidly, and what is of equal or greater importance, which is likely to feel it first and most? No doubt there is a bias in my mind, but it seems to me that the odds are on the whole heavily against the Central Powers. Their peculiar German virtue, their tremendously complete organisation, which enabled them to put so large a proportion of their total resources into their first onslaught and to make so great and rapid a recovery in the spring of 1915, leaves them with less to draw upon now. Out of a smaller fortune they have spent a larger sum. They are blockaded to a very considerable extent, and against them fight not merely the resources of the Allies, but, thanks to the complete British victory in the sea struggle, the purchasable resources of all the world.

Conceivably the Central Powers will draw upon the resources of their Balkan and Asiatic allies, but the extent to which they can do that may very easily be over-estimated. There is a limit to the power for treason of these supposititious German monarchs that Western folly has permitted to possess these Balkan thrones — thrones which need never have been thrones at all — and none of the Balkan peoples is likely to witness with enthusiasm the complete looting of its country in the German interest by a German court. Germany will have to pay on the nail for most of her Balkan help. She will have to put more into the Balkans than she takes out.

Compared with the world behind the Allies the Turkish Empire is a country of mountains, desert and undeveloped lands. To develop these regions into a source of supplies under the strains and shortages

of war-time, will be an immense and dangerous undertaking for Germany. She may open mines she may never work, build railways that others will enjoy, sow harvests for alien reaping. The people the Bulgarians want in Bulgaria are not Germans but Bulgarians; the people the Turks want in Anatolia are not Germans but Turks. And for all these tasks Germany must send men. Men?

At present, so far as any judgment is possible, Germany is feeling the pinch of the war much more even than France, which is habitually parsimonious, and instinctively cleverly economical, and Russia, which is hardy and insensitive. Great Britain has really only begun to feel the stress. She has probably suffered economically no more than have Holland or Switzerland, and Italy and Japan have certainly suffered less. All these three great countries are still full of men, of gear, of saleable futures. In every part of the globe Great Britain has colossal investments. She has still to apply the great principle of conscription not only to her sons but to the property of her overseas investors and of her landed proprietors. She has not even looked yet at the German financial expedients of a year ago. She moves reluctantly, but surely, towards such a thoroughness of mobilisation. There need be no doubt that she will completely socialise herself, completely reorganise her whole social and economic structure sooner than lose this war. She will do it clumsily and ungracefully, with much internal bickering, with much trickery on the part of her lawyers, and much baseness on the part of her landlords; but she will do it not so slowly as a logical mind might anticipate. She will get there a little late, expensively, but still in time....

The German group, I reckon, therefore, will become exhausted first. I think, too, that Germany will, as a nation, feel and be aware of what is happening to her sooner than any other of the nations that are sharing in this process of depletion. In 1914 the Germans were reaping the harvest of forty years of economic development and business enterprise. Property and plenty were new experiences, and a generation had grown up in whose world a sense of expansion and progress was normal. There existed amongst it no tradition of the great hardship of war, such as the French possessed, to steel its mind. It had none of the irrational mute toughness of the Russians and

British. It was a sentimental people, making a habit of success; it rushed chanting to war against the most grimly heroic and the most stolidly enduring of races. Germany came into this war more buoyantly and confidently than any other combatant. It expected another 1871; at the utmost it anticipated a year of war.

Never were a people so disillusioned as the Germans must already be, never has a nation been called upon for so complete a mental readjustment. Neither conclusive victories nor defeats have been theirs, but only a slow, vast transition from joyful effort and an illusion of rapid triumph to hardship, loss and loss and loss of substance, the dwindling of great hopes, the realisation of ebb in the tide of national welfare. Now they must fight on against implacable, indomitable Allies. They are under stresses now as harsh at least as the stresses of France. And, compared with the French, the Germans are untempered steel.

We know little of the psychology of this new Germany that has come into being since 1871, but it is doubtful if it will accept defeat, and still more doubtful how it can evade some ending to the war that will admit the failure of all its great hopes of Paris subjugated, London humbled, Russia suppliant, Belgium conquered, the Near East a prey. Such an admission will be a day of reckoning that German Imperialism will postpone until the last hope of some breach among the Allies, some saving miracle in the old Eastern Empire, some dramatically-snatched victory at the eleventh hour, is gone.

Nor can the Pledged Allies consent to a peace that does not involve the evacuation and compensation of Belgium and Serbia, and at least the autonomy of the lost Rhine provinces of France. That is their very minimum. That, and the making of Germany so sick and weary of military adventure that the danger of German ambition will cease to overshadow European life. Those are the ends of the main war. Europe will go down through stage after stage of impoverishment and exhaustion until these ends are attained, or made for ever impossible.

But these things form only the main outline of a story with a vast amount of collateral interest. It is to these collateral issues that the amateur in prophecy must give his attention. It is here that the German will be induced by his Government to see his

compensations. He will be consoled for the restoration of Serbia by the prospect of future conflicts between Italian and Jugoslav that will let him in again to the Adriatic. His attention will be directed to his newer, closer association with Bulgaria and Turkey. In those countries he will be told he may yet repeat the miracle of Hungary. And there may be also another Hungary in Poland. It will be whispered to him that he has really conquered those countries when indeed it is highly probable he has only spent his substance in setting up new assertive alien allies. The Kaiser, if he is not too afraid of the precedent of Sarajevo, may make a great entry into Constantinople, with an effect of conquering what is after all only a temporarily allied capital. The German will hope also to retain his fleet, and no peace, he will be reminded, can rob him of his hard-earned technical superiority in the air. The German air fleet of 1930 may yet be something as predominant as the British Navy of 1915, and capable of delivering a much more intimate blow. Had he not better wait for that? When such consolations as these become popular in the German Press we of the Pledged Allies may begin to talk of peace, for these will be its necessary heralds.

The concluding phase of a process of general exhaustion must almost inevitably be a game of bluff. Neither side will admit its extremity. Neither side, therefore, will make any direct proposals to its antagonists nor any open advances to a neutral. But there will be much inspired peace talk through neutral media, and the consultations of the anti-German allies will become more intimate and detailed. Suggestions will "leak out" remarkably from both sides, to journalists and neutral go-betweens. The Eastern and Western Allies will probably begin quite soon to discuss an anti-German Zollverein and the co-ordination of their military and naval organisations in the days that are to follow the war. A discussion of a Central European Zollverein is already afoot. A general idea of the possible rearrangement of the European States after the war will grow up in the common European and American mind; public men on either side will indicate concordance with this general idea, and some neutral power, Denmark or Spain or the United States or Holland, will invite representatives to an informal discussion of these possibilities.

Probably, therefore, the peace negotiations will take the extraordinary form of two simultaneous conferences — one of the Pledged Allies, sitting probably in Paris or London, and the other of representatives of all the combatants meeting in some neutral country — Holland would be the most convenient — while the war will still be going on. The Dutch conference would be in immediate contact by telephone and telegraph with the Allied conference and with Berlin....

The broad conditions of a possible peace will begin to get stated towards the end of 1916, and a certain lassitude will creep over the operations in the field.... The process of exhaustion will probably have reached such a point by that time that it will be a primary fact in the consciousness of common citizens of every belligerent country. The common life of all Europe will have become — miserable. Conclusive blows will have receded out of the imagination of the contending Powers. The war will have reached its fourth and last stage as a war. The war of the great attack will have given place to the war of the military deadlock; the war of the deadlock will have gone on, and as the great combatants have become enfeebled relatively to the smaller States, there will have been a gradual shifting of the interest to the war of treasons and diplomacies in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Quickly thereafter the last phase will be developing into predominance, in which each group of nations will be most concerned, no longer about victories or conquests, but about securing for itself the best chances of rapid economic recuperation and social reconstruction. The commercial treaties, the arrangements for future associated action, made by the great Allies among themselves will appear more and more important to them, and the mere question of boundaries less and less. It will dawn upon Europe that she has already dissipated the resources that have enabled her to levy the tribute paid for her investments in every quarter of the earth, and that neither the Germans nor their antagonists will be able for many years to go on with those projects for world exploitation which lay at the root of the great war. Very jaded and anaemic nations will sit about the table on which the new map of Europe will be drawn.... Each of the diplomatists will come to that business with a certain pre-

occupation. Each will be thinking of his country as one thinks of a patient of doubtful patience and temper who is coming-to out of the drugged stupor of a crucial, ill-conceived, and unnecessary operation ... Each will be thinking of Labour, wounded and perplexed, returning to the disorganised or nationalised factories from which Capital has gone a-fighting, and to which it may never return.

III. NATIONS IN LIQUIDATION

The war has become a war of exhaustion. One hears a great deal of the idea that "financial collapse" may bring it to an end. A number of people seem to be convinced that a war cannot be waged without money, that soldiers must be paid, munitions must be bought; that for this money is necessary and the consent of bank depositors; so that if all the wealth of the world were nominally possessed by some one man in a little office he could stop the war by saying simply, "I will lend you no more money."

Now, as a matter of fact, money is a power only in so far as people believe in it and Governments sustain it. If a State is sufficiently strong and well organised, its control over the money power is unlimited. If it can rule its people, and if it has the necessary resources of men and material within its borders, it can go on in a state of war so long as these things last, with almost any flimsy sort of substitute for money that it chooses to print. It can enrol and use the men, and seize and work the material. It can take over the land and cultivate it and distribute its products. The little man in the office is only a power because the State chooses to recognise his claim. So long as he is convenient he seems to be a power. So soon as the State is intelligent enough and strong enough it can do without him. It can take what it wants, and tell him to go and hang himself. That is the melancholy ultimate of the usurer. That is the quintessence of "finance." All credit is State-made, and what the State has made the State can alter or destroy.

The owner and the creditor have never had any other power to give or withhold credit than the credit that was given to them. They exist by sufferance or superstition and not of necessity.

It is the habit of overlooking this little flaw in the imperatives of ownership that enables people to say that this war cannot go on beyond such and such a date — the end of 1916 is much in favour just now — because we cannot pay for it. It would be about as reasonable to expect a battle to end because a landlord had ordered the soldiers off his estate. So long as there are men to fight and stuff to fight with the war can go on. There is bankruptcy, but the

bankruptcy of States is not like the bankruptcy of individuals. There is no such thing among States as an undischarged bankrupt who is forbidden to carry on. A State may keep on going bankrupt indefinitely and still carry on. It will be the next step in our prophetic exercise to examine the differences between State bankruptcy and the bankruptcy of a subject of the State.

The belligerent Powers are approaching a phase when they will no longer be paying anything like twenty shillings in the pound. In a very definite sense they are not paying twenty shillings in the pound now. That is not going to stop the war, but it involves a string of consequences and possibilities of the utmost importance to our problem of what is coming when the war is over.

The exhaustion that will bring this war to its end at last is a process of destruction of men and material. The process of bankruptcy that is also going on is nothing of the sort. Bankruptcy destroys no concrete thing; it merely writes off a debt; it destroys a financial but not an economic reality. It is, in itself, a mental, not a physical fact. "A" owes "B" a debt; he goes bankrupt and pays a dividend, a fraction of his debt, and gets his discharge. "B's" feelings, as we novelists used to say, are "better imagined than described"; he does his best to satisfy himself that "A" can pay no more, and then "A" and "B" both go about their business again.

In England, if "A" is a sufficiently poor man not to be formidable, and has gone bankrupt on a small scale, he gets squeezed ferociously to extract the last farthing from him; he may find himself in jail and his home utterly smashed up. If he is a richer man, and has failed on a larger scale, our law is more sympathetic, and he gets off much more easily. Often his creditors find it advisable to arrange with him so that he will still carry on with his bankrupt concern. They find it is better to allow him to carry on than to smash him up.

There are countless men in the world living very comfortably indeed, and running businesses that were once their own property for their creditors. There are still more who have written off princely debts and do not seem to be a "ha'p'orth the worse." And their creditors have found a balm in time and philosophy. Bankruptcy is only painful and destructive to small people and helpless people; but then for them everything is painful and destructive; it can be a very

light matter to big people; it may be almost painless to a State.

If England went bankrupt in the completest way to-morrow, and repudiated all its debts both as a nation and as a community of individuals, if it declared, if I may use a self-contradictory phrase, a permanent moratorium, there would be not an acre of ploughed land in the country, not a yard of cloth or a loaf of bread the less for that. There would be nothing material destroyed within the State. There would be no immediate convulsion. Use and wont would carry most people on some days before they even began to doubt whether So-and-so could pay his way, and whether there would be wages at the end of the week.

But people who lived upon rent or investments or pensions would presently be very busy thinking how they were going to get food when the butcher and baker insisted upon cash. It would be only with comparative slowness that the bulk of men would realise that a fabric of confidence and confident assumptions had vanished; that cheques and bank notes and token money and every sort of bond and scrip were worthless, that employers had nothing to pay with, shopkeepers no means of procuring stock, that metallic money was disappearing, and that a paralysis had come upon the community.

Such an establishment as a workhouse or an old-fashioned monastery, living upon the produce of its own farming and supplying all its own labour, would be least embarrassed amidst the general perplexity. For it would not be upon a credit basis, but a socialistic basis, a basis of direct reality, and its need for payments would be incidental. And land-owning peasants growing their own food would carry on, and small cultivating occupiers, who could easily fall back on barter for anything needed.

The mass of the population in such a country as England would, however, soon be standing about in hopeless perplexity and on the verge of frantic panic — although there was just as much food to be eaten, just as many houses to live in, and just as much work needing to be done. Suddenly the pots would be empty, and famine would be in the land, although the farms and butchers' shops were still well stocked. The general community would be like an automobile when the magneto fails. Everything would be there and in order, except for the spark of credit which keeps the engine working.

That is how quite a lot of people seem to imagine national bankruptcy: as a catastrophic jolt. It is a quite impossible nightmare of cessation. The reality is the completest contrast. All the belligerent countries of the world are at the present moment quietly, steadily and progressively going bankrupt, and the mass of people are not even aware of this process of insolvency.

An individual when he goes bankrupt is measured by the monetary standard of the country he is in; he pays five or ten or fifteen or so many shillings in the pound. A community in debt does something which is in effect the same, but in appearance rather different. It still pays a pound, but the purchasing power of the pound has diminished. This is what is happening all over the world to-day; there is a rise in prices. This is automatic national bankruptcy; unplanned, though perhaps not unforeseen. It is not a deliberate State act, but a consequence of the interruption of communications, the diversion of productive energy, the increased demand for many necessities by the Government and the general waste under war conditions.

At the beginning of this war England had a certain national debt; it has paid off none of that original debt; it has added to it tremendously; so far as money and bankers' records go it still owes and intends to pay that original debt; but if you translate the language of £.s.d. into realities, you will find that in loaves or iron or copper or hours of toil, or indeed in any reality except gold, it owes now, so far as that original debt goes, far less than it did at the outset. As the war goes on and the rise in prices continues, the subsequent borrowings and contracts are undergoing a similar bankrupt reduction. The attempt of the landlord of small weekly and annual properties to adjust himself to the new conditions by raising rents is being checked by legislation in Great Britain, and has been completely checked in France. The attempts of labour to readjust wages have been partially successful in spite of the eloquent protests of those great exponents of plain living, economy, abstinence, and honest, modest, underpaid toil, Messrs. Asquith, McKenna, and Runciman. It is doubtful if the rise in wages is keeping pace with the rise in prices. So far as it fails to do so the load is on the usual pack animal, the poor man.

The rest of the loss falls chiefly upon the creditor class, the people

with fixed incomes and fixed salaries, the landlords, who have let at long leases, the people with pensions, endowed institutions, the Church, insurance companies, and the like. They are all being scaled down. They are all more able to stand scaling down than the proletarians.

Assuming that it is possible to bring up wages to the level of the higher prices, and that the rise in rents can be checked by legislation or captured by taxation, the rise in prices is, on the whole, a thing to the advantage of the propertyless man as against accumulated property. It writes off the past and clears the way for a fresh start in the future.

An age of cheapness is an old usurers' age. England before the war was a paradise of ancient usuries; everywhere were great houses and enclosed parks; the multitude of gentlemen's servants and golf clubs and such like excrescences of the comfort of prosperous people was perpetually increasing; it did not "pay" to build labourers' cottages, and the more expensive sort of automobile had driven the bicycle as a pleasure vehicle off the roads. Western Europe was running to fat and not to muscle, as America is to-day.

But if that old usurer's age is over, the young usurer's age may be coming. To meet such enormous demands as this war is making there are three chief courses open to the modern State.

The first is to *take* — to get men by conscription and material by requisition. The British Government *takes* more modestly than any other in the world; its tradition from Magna Charta onward, the legal training of most of its members, all make towards a reverence for private ownership and private claims, as opposed to the claims of State and commonweal, unequalled in the world's history.

The next course of a nation in need is to *tax* and pay for what it wants, which is a fractional and more evenly distributed method of taking. Both of these methods raise prices, the second most so, and so facilitate the automatic release of the future from the boarding of the past. So far all the belligerent Governments have taxed on the timid side.

Finally there is the *loan*. This mortgages the future to the present necessity, and it has so far been the predominant source of war credits. It is the method that produces least immediate friction in the

State; it employs all the savings of surplus income that the unrest of civil enterprise leaves idle; it has an effect of creating property by a process that destroys the substance of the community. In Germany an enormous bulk of property has been mortgaged to supply the subscriptions to the war loans, and those holdings have again been hypothecated to subscribe to subsequent loans. The Pledged Allies with longer stockings have not yet got to this pitch of overlapping. But everywhere in Europe what is happening is a great transformation of the property owner into a *rentier*, and the passing of realty into the hands of the State.

At the end of the war Great Britain will probably find herself with a national debt so great that she will be committed to the payment of an annual interest greater in figures than the entire national expenditure before the war. As an optimistic lady put it the other day: "All the people who aren't killed will be living quite comfortably on War Loan for the rest of their lives."

But part, at least, of the bulk of this wealth will be imaginary rather than real because of the rise in prices, in wages, in rent, and in taxation. Most of us who are buying the British and French War Loans have no illusions on that score; we know we are buying an income of diminishing purchasing power. Yet it would be a poor creature in these days when there is scarcely a possible young man in one's circle who has not quite freely and cheerfully staked his life, who was not prepared to consider his investments as being also to an undefined extent a national subscription.

A rise in prices is not, however, the only process that will check the appearance of a new rich usurer class after the war. There is something else ahead that has happened already in Germany, that is quietly coming about among the Allies, and that is the cessation of gold payments. In Great Britain, of course, the pound note is still convertible into a golden sovereign; but Great Britain will not get through the war on those terms. There comes a point in the stress upon a Government when it must depart from the austerer line of financial rectitude — and tamper in some way with currency.

Sooner or later, and probably in all cases before 1917, all the belligerents will be forced to adopt inconvertible paper money for their internal uses. There will be British assignats or greenbacks. It

will seem to many financial sentimentalists almost as though Great Britain were hauling down a flag when the sovereign, which has already disappeared into bank and Treasury coffers, is locked up there and reserved for international trade. But Great Britain has other sentiments to consider than the finer feelings of bankers and the delicacies of usury. The pound British will come out of this war like a company out of a well-shelled trench — attenuated.

Depreciation of the currency means, of course, a continuing rise in prices, a continuing writing off of debt. If labour has any real grasp of its true interests it will not resent this. It will merely insist steadfastly on a proper adjustment of its wages to the new standard. On that point, however, it will be better to write later....

Let us see how far we have got in this guessing. We have considered reasons that seem to point to the destruction of a great amount of old property and old debt, and the creation of a great volume of new debt before the end of the war, and we have adopted the ideas that currency will probably have depreciated more and more and prices risen right up to the very end.

There will be by that time a general habit of saving throughout the community, a habit more firmly established perhaps in the propertied than in the wages-earning class. People will be growing accustomed to a dear and insecure world. They will adopt a habit of caution; become desirous of saving and security.

Directly the phase of enormous war loans ends, the new class of *rentiers* holding the various great new national loans will find themselves drawing this collectively vast income and anxious to invest it. They will for a time be receiving the bulk of the unearned income of the world. Here, in the high prices representing demand and the need for some reinvestment of interest representing supply, we have two of the chief factors that are supposed to be necessary to a phase of business enterprise. Will the economic history of the next few decades be the story of a restoration of the capitalistic system upon a new basis? Shall we all become investors, speculators, or workers toiling our way to a new period of security, cheapness and low interest, a restoration of the park, the enclosure, the gold standard and the big automobile, with only this difference — that the minimum wage will be somewhere about two pounds, and that a

five-pound note will purchase about as much as a couple of guineas would do in 1913?

That is practically parallel with what happened in the opening half of the nineteenth century after the Napoleonic wars, and it is not an agreeable outlook for those who love the common man or the nobility of life. But if there is any one principle sounder than another of all those that guide the amateur in prophecy, it is that *history never repeats itself*. The human material in which those monetary changes and those developments of credit will occur will be entirely different from the social medium of a hundred years ago.

The nature of the State has altered profoundly in the last century. The later eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries constituted a period of extreme individualism. What were called "economic forces" had unrestricted play. In the minds of such people as Harriet Martineau and Herbert Spencer they superseded God. People were no longer reproached for "flying in the face of Providence," but for "flying in the face of Political Economy."

In that state of freedom you got whatever you could in any way you could; you were not your neighbour's keeper, and except that it interfered with the enterprise of pickpockets, burglars and forgers, and kept the dice loaded in favour of landlords and lawyers, the State stood aside from the great drama of human getting. For industrialism and speculation the State's guiding maxim was *laissez faire*.

The State is now far less aloof and far more constructive. It is far more aware of itself and a common interest. Germany has led the way from a system of individuals and voluntary associations in competition towards a new order of things, a completer synthesis. This most modern State is far less a swarming conflict of businesses than a great national business. It will emerge from this war much more so than it went in, and the thing is and will remain so plain and obvious that only the greediest and dullest people among the Pledged Allies will venture to disregard it. The Allied nations, too, will have to rescue their economic future from individual grab and grip and chance.

The second consideration that forbids us to anticipate any parallelism of the history of 1915-45 with 1815-45 is the greater lucidity of the general mind, the fact that all Western Europe, down

to the agricultural labourers, can read and write and does read newspapers and "get ideas." The explanation of economic and social processes that were mysterious to the elect a hundred years ago are now the commonplaces of the tap-room. What happened then darkly, and often unconsciously, must happen in 1916-26 openly and controllably. The current bankruptcy and liquidation and the coming reconstruction of the economic system of Europe will go on in a quite unprecedented amount of light. We shall see and know what is happening much more clearly than anything of the kind has ever been seen before.

It is not only that people will have behind them, as a light upon what is happening, the experiences and discussions of a hundred years, but that the international situation will be far plainer than it has ever been. This war has made Germany the central fact in all national affairs about the earth. It is not going to destroy Germany, and it seems improbable that either defeat or victory, or any mixture of these, will immediately alter the cardinal fact of Germany's organised aggressiveness.

The war will not end the conflict of anti-Germany and Germany, That will only end when the results of fifty years of aggressive education in Germany have worn away. This will be so plain that the great bulk of people everywhere will not only see their changing economic relationships far more distinctly than such things have been seen hitherto, but that they will see them as they have never been seen before, definitely orientated to the threat of German world predominance. The landlord who squeezes, the workman who strikes and shirks, the lawyer who fogs and obstructs, will know, and will know that most people know, that what he does is done, not under an empty, regardless heaven, but in the face of an unsleeping enemy and in disregard of a continuous urgent necessity for unity.

So far we have followed this speculation upon fairly firm ground, but now our inquiry must plunge into a jungle of far more difficult and uncertain possibilities. Our next stage brings us to the question of how people and peoples and classes of people are going to react to the new conditions of need and knowledge this war will have brought about, and to the new demands that will be made upon them.

This is really a question of how far they will prove able to get out

of the habits and traditions of their former social state, how far they will be able to take generous views and make sacrifices and unselfish efforts, and how far they will go in self-seeking or class selfishness regardless of the common welfare. This is a question we have to ask separately of each great nation, and of the Central Powers as a whole, and of the Allies as a whole, before we can begin to estimate the posture of the peoples of the world in, say, 1946.

Now let me here make a sort of parenthesis on human nature. It will be rather platitudinous, but it is a necessary reminder for what follows.

So far as I have been able to observe, nobody lives steadily at one moral level. If we are wise we shall treat no man and no class — and for the matter of that no nation — as either steadfastly malignant or steadfastly disinterested. There are phases in my life when I could die quite cheerfully for an idea; there are phases when I would not stir six yards to save a human life. Most people fluctuate between such extremes. Most people are self-seeking, but most people will desist from a self-seeking cause if they see plainly and clearly that it is not in the general interest, and much more readily if they also perceive that other people are of the same mind and know that they know their course is unsound.

The fundamental error of orthodox political economy and of Marxian socialism is to assume the inveterate selfishness of everyone. But most people are a little more disposed to believe what it is to their interest to believe than the contrary. Most people abandon with reluctance ways of living and doing that have served them well. Most people can see the neglect of duty in other classes more plainly than they do in their own.

This war has brought back into the everyday human life of Europe the great and overriding conception of devotion to a great purpose. But that does not imply clear-headedness in correlating the ways of one's ordinary life with this great purpose. It is no good treating as cynical villainy things that merely exhibit the incapacity of our minds to live consistently.

One Labour paper a month or so ago was contrasting Mr. Asquith's eloquent appeals to the working man to economise and forgo any rise in wages with the photographs that were appearing

simultaneously in the smart papers of the very smart marriage of Mr. Asquith's daughter. I submit that by that sort of standard none of us will be blameless. But without any condemnation, it is easy to understand that the initiative to tax almost to extinction large automobiles, wedding dresses, champagne, pâté de foie gras and enclosed parks, instead of gin and water, bank holiday outings and Virginia shag, is less likely to come from the Prime Minister class than from the class of dock labourers. There is an unconscious class war due to habit and insufficient thinking and insufficient sympathy that will play a large part in the distribution of the burthen of the State bankruptcy that is in progress, and in the subsequent readjustment of national life.

And having made this parenthesis, I may perhaps go on to point out the peculiar limitations under which various classes will be approaching the phase of reorganisation, without being accused of making this or that class the villain of an anticipatory drama.

Now, three great classes will certainly resist the valiant reconstruction of economic life with a vigour in exact proportion to their baseness, stupidity and narrowness of outlook. They will, as classes, come up for a moral judgment, on whose verdict the whole future of Western civilisation depends. If they cannot achieve a considerable, an unprecedented display of self-sacrifice, unselfish wisdom, and constructive vigour, if the community as a whole can produce no forces sufficient to restrain their lower tendencies, then the intelligent father had better turn his children's faces towards the New World. For Europe will be busy with social disorder for a century.

The first great class is the class that owns and holds land and land-like claims upon the community, from the Throne downward. This Court and land-holding class cannot go on being rich and living rich during the strains of the coming years. The reconstructing world cannot bear it. Whatever rises in rent may occur through the rise in prices, must go to meet the tremendous needs of the State.

This class, which has so much legislative and administrative power in at least three of the great belligerents — in Great Britain and Germany perhaps most so — must be prepared to see itself taxed, and must be willing to assist in its own taxation to the very

limit of its statistical increment. The almost vindictive greed of the landowners that blackened the history of England after Waterloo, and brought Great Britain within sight of revolution, must not be repeated. The British Empire cannot afford a revolution in the face of the Central European Powers. But in the past century there has been an enormous change in men's opinions and consciences about property; whereas we were Individualists, now we are Socialists. The British lord, the German junker, has none of the sense of unqualified rights that his great-grandfather had, and he is aware of a vigour of public criticism that did not exist in the former time....

How far will these men get out of the tradition of their birth and upbringing?

Next comes the great class of lawyers who, through the idiotic method of voting in use in modern democracies, are able practically to rule Great Britain, and who are powerful and influential in all democratic countries.

In order to secure a certain independence and integrity in its courts, Great Britain long ago established the principle of enormously overpaying its judges and lawyers. The natural result has been to give our law courts and the legal profession generally a bias in favour of private wealth against both the public interest and the proletariat. It has also given our higher national education an overwhelming direction towards the training of advocates and against science and constructive statecraft. An ordinary lawyer has no idea of making anything; that tendency has been destroyed in his mind; he waits and sees and takes advantage of opportunity. Everything that can possibly be done in England is done to make our rulers Micawbers and Artful Dodgers.

One of the most anxious questions that a Briton can ask himself to-day is just how far the gigantic sufferings and still more monstrous warnings of this war have shocked the good gentlemen who must steer the ship of State through the strong rapids of the New Peace out of this forensic levity their training has imposed upon them....

There, again, there are elements of hope. The lawyer has heard much about himself in the past few years. His conscience may check his tradition. And we have a Press — it has many faults, but it is no longer a lawyer's Press....

And the third class which has immediate interests antagonistic to bold reconstructions of our national methods is that vaguer body, the body of investing capitalists, the savers, the usurers, who live on dividends. It is a vast class, but a feeble class in comparison with the other two; it is a body rather than a class, a weight rather than a power. It consists of all sorts of people with nothing in common except the receipt of unearned income....

All these classes, by instinct and the baser kinds of reason also, will be doing their best to check the rise in prices, stop and reverse the advance in wages, prevent the debasement of the circulation, and facilitate the return to a gold standard and a repressive social stability. They will be resisting any comprehensive national reconstruction, any increase in public officials, any "conscription" of land or railways or what not for the urgent civil needs of the State. They will have fighting against these tendencies something in their own consciences, something in public opinion, the tradition of public devotion their own dead sons have revived — and certain other forces.

They will have over against them the obvious urgent necessities of the time.

The most urgent necessity will be to get back the vast moiety of the population that has been engaged either in military service or the making of munitions to productive work, to the production of food and necessary things, and to the restoration of that export trade which, in the case of Great Britain at least, now that her overseas investments have been set off by overseas war debts, is essential to the food supply. There will be coming back into civil life, not merely thousands, but millions of men who have been withdrawn from it. They will feel that they have deserved well of their country. They will have had their imaginations greatly quickened by being taken away from the homes and habits to which they were accustomed. They will have been well fed and inured to arms, to danger, and the chances of death. They will have no illusions about the conduct of the war by the governing classes, or the worshipful heroism of peers and princes. They will know just how easy is courage, and how hard is hardship, and the utter impossibility of doing well in war or peace under the orders of detected fools.

This vast body will constitute a very stimulating congregation of spectators in any attempt on the part of landlord, lawyer and investor to resume the old political mystery dance, in which rents are to be sent up and wages down, while the old feuds of Wales and Ireland, ancient theological and sectarian jealousies and babyish loyalties, and so forth are to be waved in the eyes of the no longer fascinated realist.

"Meanwhile," they will say, with a stiff impatience unusual in their class, "about *us*?" ...

Here are the makings of internal conflict in every European country. In Russia the landlord and lawyer, in France the landlord, are perhaps of less account, and in France the investor is more universal and jealous. In Germany, where Junker and Court are most influential and brutal, there is a larger and sounder and broader tradition of practical efficiency, a modernised legal profession, and a more widely diffused scientific imagination.

How far in each country will imagination triumph over tradition and individualism? How far does the practical bankruptcy of Western civilisation mean a revolutionary smash-up, and a phase that may last for centuries, of disorder and more and more futile conflict? And how far does it mean a reconstruction of human society, within a few score of years, upon sounder and happier lines? Must that reconstruction be preceded by a revolution in all or any of the countries?

To what extent can the world produce the imagination it needs? That, so far, is the most fundamental question to which our prophetic explorations have brought us.

IV. BRAINTREE, BOCKING, AND THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

Will the war be followed by a period of great distress, social disorder and a revolution in Europe, or shall we pull through the crisis without violent disaster? May we even hope that Great Britain will step straight out of the war into a phase of restored and increasing welfare?

Like most people, I have been trying to form some sort of answer to this question. My state of mind in the last few months has varied from a considerable optimism to profound depression. I have met and talked to quite a number of young men in khaki — ex-engineers, ex-lawyers, ex-schoolmasters, ex-business men of all sorts — and the net result of these interviews has been a buoyant belief that there is in Great Britain the pluck, the will, the intelligence to do anything, however arduous and difficult, in the way of national reconstruction. And on the other hand there is a certain stretch of road between Dunmow and Coggeshall....

That stretch of road is continually jarring with my optimistic thoughts. It is a strongly pro-German piece of road. It supports allegations against Great Britain, as, for instance, that the British are quite unfit to control their own affairs, let alone those of an empire; that they are an incompetent people, a pig-headedly stupid people, a wasteful people, a people incapable of realising that a man who tills his field badly is a traitor and a weakness to his country....

Let me place the case of this high road through Braintree (Bocking intervening) before the reader. It is, you will say perhaps, very small beer. But a straw shows the way the wind blows. It is a trivial matter of road metal, mud, and water-pipes, but it is also diagnostic of the essential difficulties in the way of the smooth and rapid reconstruction of Great Britain — and very probably of the reconstruction of all Europe — after the war. The Braintree high road, I will confess, becomes at times an image of the world for me. It is a poor, spiritless-looking bit of road, with raw stones on one side of it. It is also, I perceive, the high destiny of man in conflict with

mankind. It is the way to Harwich, Holland, Russia, China, and the whole wide world.

Even at the first glance it impresses one as not being the road that would satisfy an energetic and capable people. It is narrow for a high road, and in the middle of it one is checked by an awkward bend, by cross-roads that are not exactly cross-roads, so that one has to turn two blind corners to get on eastward, and a policeman, I don't know at what annual cost, has to be posted to nurse the traffic across. Beyond that point one is struck by the fact that the south side is considerably higher than the north, that storm water must run from the south side to the north and lie there. It does, and the north side has recently met the trouble by putting down raw flints, and so converting what would be a lake into a sort of flint pudding. Consequently one drives one's car as much as possible on the south side of this road. There is a suggestion of hostility and repartee between north and south side in this arrangement, which the explorer's inquiries will confirm. It may be only an accidental parallelism with profounder fact; I do not know. But the middle of this high road is a frontier. The south side belongs to the urban district of Braintree; the north to the rural district of Bocking.

If the curious inquirer will take pick and shovel he will find at any rate one corresponding dualism below the surface. He will find a Bocking water main supplying the houses on the north side and a Braintree water main supplying the south. I rather suspect that the drains are also in duplicate. The total population of Bocking and Braintree is probably little more than thirteen thousand souls altogether, but for that there are two water supplies, two sets of schools, two administrations.

To the passing observer the rurality of the Bocking side is indistinguishable from the urbanity of the Braintree side; it is just a little muddier. But there are dietetic differences. If you will present a Bocking rustic with a tin of the canned fruit that is popular with the Braintree townsfolk, you discover one of these differences. A dustman perambulates the road on the Braintree side, and canned food becomes possible and convenient therefore. But the Braintree grocers sell canned food with difficulty into Bocking. Bocking, less fortunate than its neighbour, has no dustman apparently, and is left

with the tin on its hands. It can either bury it in its garden — if it has a garden — take it out for a walk wrapped in paper and drop it quietly in a ditch, if possible in the Braintree area, or build a cairn with it and its predecessors and successors in honour of the Local Government Board (President £5,000, Parliamentary Secretary £1,500, Permanent Secretary £2,000, Legal Adviser £1,000 upward, a total administrative expenditure of over £300,000 ...). In death Bocking and Braintree are still divided. They have their separate cemeteries....

Now to any disinterested observer there lies about the Braintree-Bocking railway station one community. It has common industries and common interests. There is no *octroi* or anything of that sort across the street. The shops and inns on the Bocking side of the main street are indistinguishable from those on the Braintree side. The inhabitants of the two communities intermarry freely. If this absurd separation did not exist, no one would have the impudence to establish it now. It is wasteful, unfair (because the Bocking piece is rather better off than Braintree and with fewer people, so that there is a difference in the rates), and for nine-tenths of the community it is more or less of a nuisance.

It is also a nuisance to the passing public because of such inconvenience as the asymmetrical main road. It hinders local development and the development of a local spirit. It may, of course, appeal perhaps to the humorous outlook of the followers of Mr. G.K. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc, who believe that this war is really a war in the interests of the Athanasian Creed, fatness, and unrestricted drink against science, discipline, and priggishly keeping fit enough to join the army, as very good fun indeed, good matter for some jolly reeling ballad about Roundabout and Roundabout, the jolly town of Roundabout; but to anyone else the question of how it is that this wasteful Bocking-Braintree muddle, with its two boards, its two clerks, its two series of jobs and contracts, manages to keep on, was even before the war a sufficiently discouraging one.

It becomes now a quite crucial problem. Because the muddle between the sides of the main road through Bocking and Braintree is not an isolated instance; it is a fair sample of the way things are done in Great Britain; it is an intimation of the way in which the great task

of industrial resettlement that the nation must face may be attempted.

It is — or shall I write, “it may be”?

That is just the question I do not settle in my mind. I would like to think that I have hit upon a particularly bad case of entangled local government. But it happens that whenever I have looked into local affairs I have found the same sort of waste and — insobriety of arrangement. When I started, a little while back, to go to Braintree to verify these particulars, I was held up by a flood across the road between Little Easton and Dunmow. Every year that road is flooded and impassable for some days, because a bit of the affected stretch is under the County Council and a bit under the Little Easton Parish Council, and they cannot agree about the contribution of the latter. These things bump against the most unworldly. And when one goes up the scale from the urban district and rural district boundaries, one finds equally crazy county arrangements, the same tangle of obstacle in the way of quick, effective co-ordinations, the same needless multiplicity of clerks, the same rich possibilities of litigation, misunderstanding, and deadlocks of opinion between areas whose only difference is that a mischievous boundary has been left in existence between them. And so on up to Westminster. And to still greater things....

I know perfectly well how unpleasant all this is to read, this outbreak at two localities that have never done me any personal harm except a little mud-splashing. But this is a thing that has to be said now, because we are approaching a crisis when dilatory ways, muddle, and waste may utterly ruin us. This is the way things have been done in England, this is our habit of procedure, and if they are done in this way after the war this Empire is going to smash.

Let me add at once that it is quite possible that things are done almost as badly or quite as badly in Russia or France or Germany or America; I am drawing no comparisons. All of us human beings were made, I believe, of very similar clay, and very similar causes have been at work everywhere. Only that excuse, so popular in England, will not prevent a smash if we stick to the old methods under the stresses ahead. I do not see that it is any consolation to share in a general disaster.

And I am sure that there must be the most delightful and

picturesque reasons why we have all this overlapping and waste and muddle in our local affairs; why, to take another example, the boundary of the Essex parishes of Newton and Widdington looks as though it had been sketched out by a drunken man in a runaway cab with a broken spring.

This Bocking-Braintree main road is, it happens, an old Stane Street, along which Roman legions marched to clean up the councils and clerks of the British tribal system two thousand years ago, and no doubt an historian could spin delightful consequences; this does not alter the fact that these quaint complications in English affairs mean in the aggregate enormous obstruction and waste of human energy. It does not alter the much graver fact, the fact that darkens all my outlook upon the future, that we have never yet produced evidence of any general disposition at any time to straighten out or even suspend these fumbling intricacies and ineptitudes. Never so far has there appeared in British affairs that divine passion to do things in the clearest, cleanest, least wasteful, most thorough manner that is needed to straighten out, for example, these universal local tangles. Always we have been content with the old intricate, expensive way, and to this day we follow it....

And what I want to know, what I would like to feel much surer about than I do is, is this in our blood? Or is it only the deep-seated habit of long ages of security, long years of margins so ample, that no waste seemed altogether wicked. Is it, in fact, a hopeless and ineradicable trait that we stick to extravagance and confusion?

What I would like to think possible at the present time, up and down the scale from parish to province, is something of this sort. Suppose the clerk of Braintree went to the clerk of Bocking and said: "Look here, one of us could do the work of both of us, as well or better. The easy times are over, and offices as well as men should be prepared to die for their country. Shall we toss to see who shall do it, and let the other man go off to find something useful to do?" Then I could believe. Such acts of virtue happen in the United States. Here is a quotation from the New York *World* of February 15th, 1916:

"For two unusual acts Henry Bruère may be remembered by New York longer than nine days. Early in his incumbency he declared that his office was superfluous and should be abolished, the Comptroller

assuming its duties. He now abolishes by resignation his own connection with it, in spite of its $12,000 salary."

Suppose the people of Braintree and Bocking, not waiting for that lead, said: "But this is absurd! Let us have an identical council and one clerk, and get ahead, instead of keeping up this silly pretence that one town is two." Suppose someone of that 300,000 pounds' worth of gentlemen at the Local Government Board set to work to replan our local government areas generally on less comic lines. Suppose his official superiors helped, instead of snubbing him....

I see nothing of the sort happening. I see everywhere wary, watchful little men, thinking of themselves, thinking of their parish, thinking close, holding tight....

I know that there is a whole web of excuses for all these complicated, wasteful, and obstructive arrangements of our local government, these arrangements that I have taken merely as a sample of the general human way of getting affairs done. For it is affairs at large I am writing about, as I warned the reader at the beginning. Directly one inquires closely into any human muddle, one finds all sorts of reasonable rights and objections and claims barring the way to any sweeping proposals. I can quite imagine that Bocking has admirable reasons for refusing coalescence with Braintree, except upon terms that Braintree could not possibly consider. I can quite understand that there are many inconveniences and arguable injustices that would be caused by a merger of the two areas. I have no doubt it would mean serious loss to So-and-so, and quite novel and unfair advantage to So-and-so. It would take years to work the thing and get down to the footing of one water supply and an ambidextrous dustman on the lines of perfect justice and satisfactoriness all round.

But what I want to maintain is that these little immediate claims and rights and vested interests and bits of justice and fairness are no excuse at all for preventing things being done in the clear, clean, large, quick way. They never constituted a decent excuse, and now they excuse waste and delay and inconvenience less than ever. Let us first do things in the sound way, and then, if we can, let us pet and compensate any disappointed person who used to profit by their being done roundabout instead of earning an honest living. We are

beginning to agree that reasonably any man may be asked to die for his country; what we have to recognise is that any man's proprietorship, interest, claims or rights may just as properly be called upon to die. Bocking and Braintree and Mr. John Smith — Mr. John Smith, the ordinary comfortable man with a stake in the country — have been thinking altogether too much of the claims and rights and expectations and economies of Bocking and Braintree and Mr. John Smith. They have to think now in a different way....

Just consider the work of reconstruction that Great Britain alone will have to face in the next year or so. (And her task is, if anything, less than that of any of her antagonists or Allies, except Japan and Italy.) She has now probably from six to ten million people in the British Isles, men and women, either engaged directly in warfare or in the manufacture of munitions or in employments such as transit, nursing, and so forth, directly subserving these main ends. At least five-sixths of these millions must be got back to employment of a different character within a year of the coming of peace. Everywhere manufacture, trade and transit has been disorganised, disturbed or destroyed. A new economic system has to be put together within a brief score or so of weeks; great dislocated masses of population have to be fed, kept busy and distributed in a world financially strained and abounding in wounded, cripples, widows, orphans and helpless people.

In the next year or so the lives of half the population will have to be fundamentally readjusted. Here is work for administrative giants, work for which no powers can be excessive. It will be a task quite difficult enough to do even without the opposition of legal rights, haggling owners, and dexterous profiteers. It would be a giant's task if all the necessary administrative machinery existed now in the most perfect condition. How is this tremendous job going to be done if every Bocking in the country is holding out for impossible terms from Braintree, and every Braintree holding out for impossible terms from Bocking, while the road out remains choked and confused between them; and if every John Smith with a claim is insisting upon his reasonable expectation of profits or dividends, his reasonable solatium and compensation for getting out of the way?

I would like to record my conviction that if the business of this

great crisis is to be done in the same spirit, the jealous, higgling, legal spirit that I have seen prevailing in British life throughout my half-century of existence, it will not in any satisfactory sense of the phrase get done at all. This war has greatly demoralised and discredited the governing class in Great Britain, and if big masses of unemployed and unfed people, no longer strung up by the actuality of war, masses now trained to arms and with many quite sympathetic officers available, are released clumsily and planlessly into a world of risen prices and rising rents, of legal obstacles and forensic complications, of greedy speculators and hampered enterprises, there will be insurrection and revolution. There will be bloodshed in the streets and the chasing of rulers.

There *will* be, if we do seriously attempt to put the new wine of humanity, the new crude fermentations at once so hopeful and so threatening, that the war has released, into the old administrative bottles that served our purposes before the war.

I believe that for old lawyers and old politicians and "private ownership" to handle the great problem of reconstruction after the war in the spirit in which our affairs were conducted before the war is about as hopeful an enterprise as if an elderly jobbing brick-layer, working on strict trade-union rules, set out to stop the biggest avalanche that ever came down a mountain-side. And since I am by no means altogether pessimistic, in spite of my qualmy phases, it follows that I do not believe that the old spirit will necessarily prevail. I do not, because I believe that in the past few decades a new spirit has come into human affairs; that our ostensible rulers and leaders have been falling behind the times, and that in the young and the untried, in, for example, the young European of thirty and under who is now in such multitudes thinking over life and his seniors in the trenches, there are still unsuspected resources of will and capacity, new mental possibilities and new mental habits, that entirely disturb the argument — based on the typical case of Bocking and Braintree — for a social catastrophe after the war.

How best can this new spirit be defined?

It is the creative spirit as distinguished from the legal spirit; it is the spirit of courage to make and not the spirit that waits and sees and claims; it is the spirit that looks to the future and not to the past.

It is the spirit that makes Bocking forget that it is not Braintree and John Smith forget that he is John Smith, and both remember that they are England.

For everyone there are two diametrically different ways of thinking about life; there is individualism, the way that comes as naturally as the grunt from a pig, of thinking outwardly from oneself as the centre of the universe, and there is the way that every religion is trying in some form to teach, of thinking back to oneself from greater standards and realities. There is the Braintree that is Braintree against England and the world, giving as little as possible and getting the best of the bargain, and there is the Braintree that identifies itself with England and asks how can we do best for the world with this little place of ours, how can we educate best, produce most, and make our roads straight and good for the world to go through.

Every American knows the district that sends its congressman to Washington for the good of his district, and the district, the rarer district, that sends a man to work for the United States. There is the John Smith who feels toward England and the world as a mite feels toward its cheese, and the John Smith who feels toward his country as a sheep-dog feels toward the flock. The former is the spirit of individualism, "business," and our law, the latter the spirit of socialism and science and — khaki.... They are both in all of us, they fluctuate from day to day; first one is ascendant and then the other.

War does not so much tilt the balance as accentuate the difference. One rich British landowner sneaks off to New York State to set up a home there and evade taxation; another turns his mansion into a hospital and goes off to help Serbian refugees. Acts of baseness or generosity are contagious; this man will give himself altogether because of a story of devotion, this man declares he will do nothing until Sir F.E. Smith goes to the front. And the would-be prophet of what is going to happen must guess the relative force of these most impalpable and uncertain things.

This Braintree-Bocking boundary which runs down the middle of the road is to be found all over the world. You will find it in Ireland and the gentlemen who trade on the jealousies of the north side and the gentlemen who trade on the jealousies of the south. You will find it in England among the good people who would rather wreck the

Empire than work honestly and fairly with Labour. There are not only parish boundaries, but park boundaries and class and sect boundaries. You will find the Bocking-Braintree line too at a dozen points on a small scale map of Europe.... These Braintree-Bocking lines are the barbed-wire entanglements between us and the peace of the world. Against these entanglements in every country the new spirit struggles in many thousands of minds. Where will it be strongest? Which country will get clear first, get most rapidly to work again, have least of the confusion and wrangling that must in some degree occur everywhere? Will any country go altogether to pieces in hopeless incurable discord?

Now I believe that the answer to that last question is "No." And my reason for that answer is the same as my reason for believing that the association of the Pledged Allies will not break up after the war; it is that I believe that this war is going to end not in the complete smashing up and subjugation of either side, but in a general exhaustion that will make the recrudescence of the war still possible but very terrifying.

Mars will sit like a giant above all human affairs for the next two decades, and the speech of Mars is blunt and plain. He will say to us all: "Get your houses in order. If you squabble among yourselves, waste time, litigate, muddle, snatch profits and shirk obligations, I will certainly come down upon you again. I have taken all your men between eighteen and fifty, and killed and maimed such as I pleased; millions of them. I have wasted your substance — contemptuously. Now, mark you, you have multitudes of male children between the ages of nine and nineteen running about among you. Delightful and beloved boys. And behind them come millions of delightful babies. Of these I have scarcely smashed and starved a paltry hundred thousand perhaps by the way. But go on muddling, each for himself and his parish and his family and none for all the world, go on in the old way, stick to-your 'rights,' stick to your 'claims' each one of you, make no concessions and no sacrifices, obstruct, waste, squabble, and presently I will come back again and take all that fresh harvest of life I have spared, all those millions that are now sweet children and dear little boys and youths, and I will squeeze it into red pulp between my hands, I will mix it with the mud of trenches and

feast on it before your eyes, even more damnably than I have done with your grown-up sons and young men. And I have taken most of your superfluities already; next time I will take your barest necessities."

So the red god, Mars; and in these days of universal education the great mass of people will understand plainly now that that is his message and intention. Men who cannot be swayed by the love of order and creation may be swayed by the thought of death and destruction.... There, I think, is the overriding argument that will burst the proprietorships and divisions and boundaries, the web of ineffectiveness that has held the world so long. Labour returning from the trenches to its country and demanding promptness, planning, generous and devoted leaderships and organisation, demanding that the usurer and financier, the landlord and lawyer shall, if need be, get themselves altogether out of the way, will have behind its arguments the thought of the enemy still unsubdued, still formidable, recovering. Both sides will feel that. This world is a more illuminated world than 1816; a thousand questions between law and duty have been discussed since then; beyond all comparison we know better what we are doing. I think the broad side of John Smith (and Sir John Smith and John Smith, K.C.) will get the better of his narrow ends — and that so it will be with Jean Dupont and Hans Meyer and the rest of them. There may be riots here and there; there may be some pretty considerable rows; but I do not think there is going to be a chaotic and merely destructive phase in Great Britain or any Western European country. I cast my guess for reconstruction and not for revolt.

V. HOW FAR WILL EUROPE GO TOWARD SOCIALISM?

A number of people are saying that this war is to be the end of Individualism. “Go as you please” has had its death-blow. Out of this war, whatever else emerges, there will emerge a more highly organised State than existed before — that is to say, a less individualistic and more socialistic State. And there seems a heavy weight of probability on the side of this view. But there are also a number of less obvious countervailing considerations that may quite possibly modify or reverse this tendency.

In this chapter an attempt is to be made to strike a balance between the two systems of forces, and guess how much will be private and how much public in Europe in 1930, or thereabouts.

The prophets who foretell the coming of Socialism base their case on three sets of arguments. They point out, first, the failure of individual enterprise to produce a national efficiency comparable to the partial State Socialism of Germany, and the extraordinary, special dangers inherent in private property that the war has brought to light; secondly, to the scores of approaches to practical Socialism that have been forced upon Great Britain — for example, by the needs of the war; and, thirdly, to the obvious necessities that will confront the British Empire and the Allies generally after the war — necessities that no unorganised private effort can hope to meet effectively.

All these arguments involve the assumption that the general understanding of the common interest will be sufficient to override individual and class motives; an exceedingly doubtful assumption, to say the least of it. But the general understanding of the common interest is most likely to be kept alive by the sense of a common danger, and we have already arrived at the conclusion that Germany is going to be defeated but not destroyed in this war, and that she will be left with sufficient vitality and sufficient resentment and sufficient of her rancid cultivated nationalism to make not only the continuance of the Alliance after the war obviously advisable and highly probable, but also to preserve in the general mind for a generation or

so that sense of a common danger which most effectually conduces to the sweeping aside of merely personal and wasteful claims. Into the consequences of this we have now to look a little more closely.

It was the weaknesses of Germany that made this war, and not her strength. The weaknesses of Germany are her Imperialism, her Junkerism, and her intense, sentimental Nationalism; for the former would have no German ascendancy that was not achieved by force, and, with the latter, made the idea of German ascendancy intolerable to all mankind. Better death, we said. And had Germany been no more than her Court, her Junkerism, her Nationalism, the whole system would have smashed beneath the contempt and indignation of the world within a year.

But the strength of Germany has saved her from that destruction. She was at once the most archaic and modern of states. She was Hohenzollern, claiming to be Caesar, and flaunting a flat black eagle borrowed from Imperial Rome; and also she was the most scientific and socialist of states. It is her science and her Socialism that have held and forced back the avengers of Belgium for more than a year and a half. If she has failed as a conqueror, she has succeeded as an organisation. Her ambition has been thwarted, and her method has been vindicated. She will, I think, be so far defeated in the contest of endurance which is now in progress that she will have to give up every scrap of territorial advantage she has gained; she may lose most of her Colonial Empire; she may be obliged to complete her modernisation by abandoning her militant Imperialism; but she will have at least the satisfaction of producing far profounder changes in the chief of her antagonists than those she herself will undergo.

The Germany of the Hohenzollerns had its mortal wound at the Marne; the Germany we fight to-day is the Germany of Krupp and Ostwald. It is merely as if she had put aside a mask that had blinded her. She was methodical and civilised except for her head and aim; she will become entirely methodical. But the Britain and Russia and France she fights are lands full of the spirit of undefined novelty. They are being made over far more completely. They are being made over, not in spite of the war, but because of the war. Only by being made over can they win the war. And if they do not win the war, then they are bound to be made over. They are not merely putting aside

old things, but they are forming and organising within themselves new structures, new and more efficient relationships, that will last far beyond the still remote peace settlement.

What this war has brought home to the consciousness of every intelligent man outside the German system, with such thoroughness as whole generations of discussion and peace experience could never have achieved, is a double lesson: that Germany had already gone far to master when she blundered into the war; firstly, the waste and dangers of individualism, and, secondly, the imperative necessity of scientific method in public affairs. The waste and dangers of individualism have had a whole series of striking exemplifications both in Europe and America since the war began. Were there such a thing as a Socialist propaganda in existence, were the so-called socialistic organisations anything better than a shabby little back-door into contemporary politics, those demonstrations would be hammering at the mind of everyone. It may be interesting to recapitulate some of the most salient instances.

The best illustration, perhaps, of the waste that arises out of individualism is to be found in the extreme dislocation of the privately owned transit services of Great Britain at the present time. There is no essential reason whatever why food and fuel in Great Britain should be considerably dearer than they are under peace conditions. Just the same home areas are under cultivation, just the same foreign resources are available; indeed, more foreign supplies are available because we have intercepted those that under normal conditions would have gone to Germany. The submarine blockade of Britain is now a negligible factor in this question.

Despite these patent conditions there has been, and is, a steady increase in the cost of provisions, coal, and every sort of necessity. This increase means an increase in the cost of production of many commodities, and so contributes again to the general scarcity. This is the domestic aspect of a difficulty that has also its military side. It is not sufficient merely to make munitions; they must also be delivered, Great Britain is suffering very seriously from congestion of the railways. She suffers both in social and military efficiency, and she is so suffering because her railways, instead of being planned as one great and simple national distributing system, have grown up under

conditions of clumsy, dividend-seeking competition.

Each great railway company and combination has worked its own areas, and made difficulties and aggressions at the boundaries of its sphere of influence; here are inconvenient junctions and here unnecessary duplications; nearly all the companies come into London, each taking up its own area of expensive land for goods yards, sidings, shunting grounds, and each regardless of any proper correlation with the other; great areas of the County of London are covered with their idle trucks and their separate coal stores; in many provincial towns you will find two or even three railway stations at opposite ends of the town; the streets are blocked by the vans and trolleys of the several companies tediously handing about goods that could be dealt with at a tenth of the cost in time and labour at a central clearing-house, did such a thing exist; and each system has its vast separate staff, unaccustomed to work with any other staff.

Since the war began the Government has taken over the general direction of this disarticulated machinery, but no one with eyes who travels about England now can fail to remark, in the miles and miles of waiting loaded trucks on every siding, the evidences of mischievous and now almost insuperable congestion. The trucks of each system that have travelled on to another still go back, for the most part, *empty* to their own; and thousands of privately owned trucks, which carry cargo only one way, block our sidings. Great Britain wastes men and time to a disastrous extent in these needless shuntings and handlings.

Here, touching every life in the community, is one instance of the muddle that arises naturally out of the individualistic method of letting public services grow up anyhow without a plan, or without any direction at all except the research for private profit.

A second series of deficiencies that the war has brought to light in the too individualistic British State is the entire want of connection between private profit and public welfare. So far as the interests of the capitalist go it does not matter whether he invests his money at home or abroad; it does not matter whether his goods are manufactured in London or Timbuctoo.

But what of the result? At the outbreak of the war Great Britain found that a score of necessary industries had drifted out of the

country, because it did not “pay” any private person to keep them here. The shortage of dyes has been amply discussed as a typical case. A much graver one that we may now write about was the shortage of zinc. Within a month or so of the outbreak of the war the British Government had to take urgent and energetic steps to secure this essential ingredient of cartridge cases. Individualism had let zinc refining drift to Belgium and Germany; it was the luck rather than the merit of Great Britain that one or two refineries still existed.

Still more extraordinary things came to light in the matter of the metal supply. Under an individualistic system you may sell to the highest bidder, and anyone with money from anywhere may come in and buy. Great supplies of colonial ores were found to be cornered by semi-national German syndicates. Supplies were held up by these contracts against the necessities of the Empire. And this was but one instance of many which have shown that, while industrial development in the Allied countries is still largely a squabbling confusion of little short-sighted, unscientific, private profit-seeking owners, in Germany it has been for some years increasingly run on far-seeing collectivist lines. Against the comparatively little and mutually jealous British or American capitalists and millionaires Germany pits itself as a single great capitalist and competitor. She has worked everywhere upon a comprehensive plan. Against her great national electric combination, for example, only another national combination could stand. As it was, Germany — in the way of business — wired and lit (and examined) the forts at Liége. She bought and prepared a hundred strategic centres in individualistic Belgium and France.

So we pass from the fact that individualism is hopeless muddle to the fact that the individualist idea is one of limitless venality, Who can buy, may control. And Germany, in her long scheming against her individualist rivals, has not simply set herself to buy and hold the keys and axles of their economic machinery. She has set herself, it must be admitted, with a certain crudity and little success, but with unexampled vigour, to buy the minds of her adversaries. The Western nations have taken a peculiar pride in having a free Press; that is to say, a Press that may be bought by anyone. Our Press is constantly bought and sold, in gross and detail, by financiers,

advertisers, political parties, and the like. Germany came into the market rather noisily, and great papers do to a large extent live in glass houses; but her efforts have been sufficient to exercise the minds of great numbers of men with the problem of what might have happened in the way of national confusion if the German attack had been more subtly conceived....

It is only a partial answer to this difficulty to say that a country that is so nationalist and aggressive as Germany is incapable of subtle conceptions. The fact remains that in Great Britain at the present time there are newspaper proprietors who would be good bargains for Germany at two million pounds a head, and that there was no effectual guarantee in the individualistic system, but only our good luck and the natural patriotism of the individuals concerned that she did not pick up these bargains before trading with the enemy became illegal. It happened, for example, that Lord Northcliffe was public-spirited, That was the good luck of Great Britain rather than her merit. There was nothing in the individualistic system to prevent Germany from buying up the entire Harmsworth Press — *The Times, Daily Mail*, and all — five years before the war, and using it to confuse the national mind, destroy the national unity, sacrifice the national interests, and frustrate the national will.

Not only the newspapers, but the news-agents and booksellers of both Great Britain and America are entirely at the disposal of any hostile power which chooses to buy them up quietly and systematically. It is merely a question of wealth and cleverness. And if the failure of the Germans to grip the Press of the French and English speaking countries has been conspicuous, she has been by no means so unsuccessful in — for example — Spain. At the present time the thought and feeling of the Spanish speaking world is being *educated* against the Allies. The Spanish mind has been sold by its custodians into German control.

Muddle and venality do not, however, exhaust the demonstrated vices of individualism. Individualism encourages desertion and treason. Individualism permits base private people to abscond with the national resources and squeeze a profit out of national suffering. In the early stages of the war some bright minds conceived the idea of a corner in drugs. It is not illegal; it is quite the sort of thing that

appeals to the individualistic frame of mind as entirely meritorious. As the *New Statesman* put it recently: "The happy owners of the world's available stock of a few indispensable drugs did not refrain from making, not only the various Governments, but also all the sick people of the world pay double, and even tenfold, prices for what was essential to relieve pain and save life. What fortunes were thus made we shall probably never know, any more than we shall know the tale of the men and women and children who suffered and died because of their inability to pay, not the cost of production of what would have saved them, but the unnecessarily enhanced price that the chances of the market enabled the owners to exact."

And another bright instance of the value of individualism is the selling of British shipping to neutral buyers just when the country is in the most urgent need of every ship it can get, and the deliberate transfer to America of a number of British businesses to evade paying a proper share of the national bill in taxation. The English who have gone to America at different times have been of very different qualities; at the head of the list are the English who went over in the *Mayflower*; at the bottom will be the rich accessions of this war....

And perhaps a still more impressive testimony to the rottenness of these "business men," upon whom certain eccentric voices call so amazingly to come and govern us, is the incurable distrust they have sown in the minds of labour. Never was an atmosphere of discipline more lamentable than that which has grown up in the factories, workshops, and great privately owned public services of America and Western Europe. The men, it is evident, *expect* to be robbed and cheated at every turn. I can only explain their state of mind by supposing that they have been robbed and cheated. Their scorn and contempt for their employees' good faith is limitless. Their *morale* is undermined by an invincible distrust.

It is no good for Mr. Lloyd George to attempt to cure the gathered ill of a century with half an hour or so of eloquence. When Great Britain, in her supreme need, turns to the workmen she has trained in the ways of individualism for a century, she reaps the harvest individualism has sown. She has to fight with that handicap. Every regulation for the rapid mobilisation of labour is scrutinised to find

the trick in it.

And they find the trick in it as often as not. Smart individualistic "business experience" has been at the draughtsman's elbow. A man in an individualistic system does not escape from class ideas and prejudices by becoming an official. There is profound and bitter wisdom in the deep distrust felt by British labour for both military and industrial conscription.

The breakdown of individualism has been so complete in Great Britain that we are confronted with the spectacle of this great and ancient kingdom reconstructing itself perforce, while it wages the greatest war in history. A temporary nationalisation of land transit has been improvised, and only the vast, deep-rooted, political influence of the shipowners and coalowners have staved off the manifestly necessary step of nationalising shipping and coal. I doubt if they will be able to stave it off to the end of the long struggle which is still before us if the militarism of Germany is really to be arrested and discredited. Expropriation and not conscription will be the supreme test of Britain's loyalty to her Allies.

The British shipowners, in particular, are reaping enormous but precarious profits from the war. The blockade of Britain, by the British shipowners is scarcely less effective than the blockade of Germany by Britain. With an urgent need of every ship for the national supplies, British ships, at the present moment of writing this, are still carrying cheap American automobiles to Australia. They would carry munitions to Germany if their owners thought they had a sporting chance of not getting caught at it. These British shipowners are a pampered class with great political and social influence, and no doubt as soon as the accumulating strain of the struggle tells to the extent of any serious restriction of their advantage and prospects, we shall see them shifting to the side of the at present negligible group of British pacifists. I do not think one can count on any limit to their selfishness and treason.

I believe that the calculations of some of these extreme and apparently quite unreasonable "pacifists" are right. Before the war is over there will be a lot of money in the pacifist business. The rich curs of the West End will join hands with the labour curs of the Clyde. The base are to be found in all classes, but I doubt if they

dominate any. I do not believe that any interest or group of interests in Great Britain can stand in the way of the will of the whole people to bring this struggle to a triumphant finish at any cost. I do not believe that the most sacred ties of personal friendship and blood relationship with influential people can save either shipowners or coalowners or army contractors to the end.

There will be no end until these profit-makings are arrested. The necessary "conscriptions of property" must come about in Great Britain because there is no alternative but failure in the war, and the British people will not stand failure. I believe that the end of the war will see, not only transit, but shipping, collieries, and large portions of the machinery of food and drink production and distribution no longer under the administration of private ownership, but under a sort of provisional public administration. And very many British factories will be in the same case.

Two years ago no one would have dared to prophesy the tremendous rearrangement of manufacturing machinery which is in progress in Britain to-day. Thousands of firms of engineers and manufacturers of all sorts, which were flourishing in 1914, exist to-day only as names, as shapes, as empty shells. Their staffs have been shattered, scattered, reconstructed; their buildings enlarged and modified; their machinery exchanged, reconstituted, or taken. The reality is a vast interdependent national factory that would have seemed incredible to Fourier.

It will be as impossible to put back British industrialism into the factories and forms of the pre-war era as it would be to restore the Carthaginian Empire. There is a new economic Great Britain to-day, emergency made, jerry-built no doubt, a gawky, weedy giant, but a giant who may fill out to such dimensions as the German national system has never attained. Behind it is an *idea*, a new idea, the idea of the nation as one great economic system working together, an idea which could not possibly have got into the sluggish and conservative British intelligence in half a century by any other means than the stark necessities of this war.... Great Britain cannot retrace those steps even if she would, and so she will be forced to carry this process of reconstruction through. And what is happening to Great Britain must, with its national differences, be happening to France

and Russia. Not only for war ends, but for peace ends, behind the front and sustaining the front, individualities are being hammered together into common and concerted activities.

At the end of this war Great Britain will find herself with this great national factory, this great national organisation of labour, planned, indeed, primarily to make war material, but convertible with the utmost ease to the purposes of automobile manufacture, to transit reconstruction, to electrical engineering, and endless such uses.

France and Russia will be in a parallel case. All the world will be exhausted, and none of the Allies will have much money to import automobiles, railway material, electrical gear, and so on, from abroad. Moreover, it will be a matter of imperative necessity for them to get ahead of the Central Powers with their productive activities. We shall all be too poor to import from America, and we shall be insane to import from Germany. America will be the continent with the long purse, prepared to buy rather than sell. Each country will have great masses of soldiers waiting to return to industrial life, and will therefore be extremely indisposed to break up any existing productive organisation.

In the face of these facts, will any of the Allied Powers be so foolish as to disband this great system of national factories and nationally worked communications? Moreover, we have already risked the prophecy that this war will not end with such conclusiveness as to justify an immediate beating out of our swords into ploughshares. There will be a military as well as a social reason for keeping the national factories in a going state.

What more obvious course, then, than to keep them going by turning them on to manufacture goods of urgent public necessity? There are a number of modern commodities now practically standardised: the bicycle, the cheap watch, the ordinary tradesman's delivery automobile, the farmer's runabout, the country doctor's car, much electric-lighting material, dynamos, and so forth. And also, in a parallel case, there is shipbuilding. The chemical side of munition work can turn itself with no extreme difficulty to the making of such products as dyes.

We face the fact, then, that either the State must go on with this production, as it can do, straight off from the signing of peace,

converting with a minimum of friction, taking on its soldiers as they are discharged from the army as employees with a minimum waste of time and a minimum of social disorder, and a maximum advantage in the resumption of foreign trade, or there will be a dangerous break-up of the national factory system, a time of extreme chaos and bitter unemployment until capital accumulates for new developments. The risks of social convulsion will be enormous. And there is small hope that the Central Powers, and particularly industrial Germany, will have the politeness to wait through the ten or twelve years of economic embarrassment that a refusal to take this bold but obviously advantageous step into scientific Socialism will entail.

But the prophet must be on his guard against supposing that, because a thing is highly desirable, it must necessarily happen; or that, because it is highly dangerous, it will be avoided. This bold and successful economic reconstruction upon national lines is not inevitable merely because every sound reason points us in that direction. A man may be very ill, a certain drug may be clearly indicated as the only possible remedy, but it does not follow that the drug is available, that the doctor will have the sense to prescribe it, or the patient the means to procure it or the intelligence to swallow it.

The experience of history is that nations do not take the obviously right course, but the obviously wrong one. The present prophet knows only his England, but, so far as England is concerned, he can cover a sheet of paper with scarcely a pause, jotting down memoranda of numberless forces that make against any such rational reconstruction. Most of these forces, in greater or less proportion, must be present in the case of every other country under consideration.

The darkest shadow upon the outlook of European civilisation at the present time is not the war; it is the failure of any co-operative spirit between labour and the directing classes. The educated and leisured classes have been rotten with individualism for a century; they have destroyed the confidence of the worker in any leadership whatever. Labour stands apart, intractable. If there is to be any such rapid conversion of the economic machinery as the opportunities and necessities of this great time demand, then labour must be taken into the confidence of those who would carry it through. It must be

reassured and enlightened. Labour must know clearly what is being done; it must be an assenting co-operator. The stride to economic national service and Socialism is a stride that labour should be more eager to take than any other section of the community.

The first step in reassuring labour must be to bring the greedy private owner and the speculator under a far more drastic discipline than at present. The property-owning class is continually accusing labour of being ignorant, suspicious, and difficult; it is blind to the fact that it is itself profit-seeking by habit, greedy, conceited, and half educated.

Every step in the mobilisation of Great Britain's vast resources for the purposes of the war has been hampered by the tricks, the failures to understand, and the almost instinctive disloyalties of private owners. The raising of rents in Glasgow drove the infuriated workmen of the Clyde district into an unwilling strike. It was an exasperating piece of private selfishness, quite typical of the individualistic state of mind, and the failure to anticipate or arrest it on the part of the Government was a worse failure than Suvla Bay. And everywhere the officials of the Ministry of Munitions find private employers holding back workers and machinery from munition works, intriguing — more particularly through the Board of Trade — to have all sorts of manufactures for private profit recognised as munition work, or if that contention is too utterly absurd, then as work vitally necessary to the maintenance of British export trade and the financial position of the country. It is an undeniable fact that employers and men alike have been found far readier to risk their lives for their country than to lay aside any scale of profits to which they have grown accustomed.

This conflict of individualistic enterprise and class suspicion against the synthesis of the public welfare is not peculiar to Great Britain; it is probably going on with local variations in Germany, Russia, Italy, France, and, indeed, in every combatant country. Because of the individualistic forces and feelings, none of us, either friends or enemies, are really getting anything like our full possible result out of our national efforts. But in Germany there is a greater tradition of subordination; in France there is a greater clarity of mind than in any other country.

Great Britain and Russia in this, as in so many other matters, are at once close kindred and sharp antithesis. Each is mentally crippled by the corruption of its educational system by an official religious orthodoxy, and hampered by a Court which disowns any function of intellectual stimulus. Neither possesses a scientifically educated *class* to which it can look for the powerful handling of this great occasion; and each has acquired under these disadvantages the same strange faculty for producing sane resultants out of illogical confusions. It is the way of these unmethodical Powers to produce unexpected, vaguely formulated, and yet effective cerebral action — apparently from their backbones.

As I sit playing at prophecy, and turn over the multitudinous impressions of the last year in my mind, weighing the great necessities of the time against obstacles and petty-mindedness, I become more and more conscious of a third factor that is neither need nor obstruction, and that is the will to get things right that has been liberated by the war.

The new spirit is still but poorly expressed, but it will find expression. The war goes on, and we discuss this question of economic reconstruction as though it was an issue that lay between the labour that has stayed behind and the business men, for the most part old men with old habits of mind, who have stayed behind.

The real life of Europe's future lies on neither side of that opposition. The real life is mutely busy at present, saying little because of the uproar of the guns, and not so much learning as casting habits and shedding delusions. In the trenches there are workers who have broken with the old slacking and sabotage, and there are prospective leaders who have forgotten profit. The men between eighteen and forty are far too busy in the blood and mud to make much showing now, but to-morrow these men will be the nation.

When that third factor of the problem is brought in the outlook of the horoscope improves. The spirit of the war may be counted upon to balance and prevail against this spirit of individualism, this spirit of suspicion and disloyalty, which I fear more than anything else in the world.

I believe in the young France, young England, and young Russia

this war is making, and so I believe that every European country will struggle along the path that this war has opened to a far more completely organised State than has existed ever before. The Allies will become State firms, as Germany was, indeed, already becoming before the war; setting private profit aside in the common interest, handling agriculture, transport, shipping, coal, the supply of metals, the manufacture of a thousand staple articles, as national concerns.

In the face of the manifest determination of the Central Powers to do as much, the Allies will be forced also to link their various State firms together into a great allied trust, trading with a common interest and a common plan with Germany and America and the rest of the world.... Youth and necessity will carry this against selfishness, against the unimaginative, against the unteachable, the suspicious, the "*old fool*."

But I do not venture to prophesy that this will come about as if it were a slick and easy deduction from present circumstances. Even in France I do not think things will move as lucidly and generously as that. There will be a conflict everywhere between wisdom and cunning, between the eyes of youth and the purblind, between energy and obstinacy.

The reorganisation of the European States will come about clumsily and ungraciously. At every point the sticker will be found sticking tight, holding out to be bought off, holding out for a rent or a dividend or a share, holding out by mere instinct. At every turn, too, the bawler will be loud and active, bawling suspicions, bawling accusations, bawling panic, or just simply bawling. Tricks, peculation, obstinacies, vanities — after this war men will still be men. But I do believe that through all the dust and din, the great reasons in the case, the steady constructive forces of the situation, will carry us.

I believe that out of the ruins of the nineteenth century system of private capitalism that this war has smashed for ever, there will arise, there does even now arise, in this strange scaffolding of national munition factories and hastily nationalised public services, the framework of a new economic and social order based upon national ownership and service.

Let us now recapitulate a little and see how far we have got in

constructing a picture of the European community as it will be in fifteen or twenty years' time. Nominally it will be little more of a Socialist State than it is to-day, but, as a matter of fact, the ships, the railways, the coal and metal supply, the great metal industries, much engineering, and most agriculture, will be more or less completely under collective ownership, and certainly very completely under collective control. This does not mean that there will have been any disappearance of private property, but only that there will have been a very considerable change in its character; the owner will be less of controller but more of a creditor; he will be a *rentier* or an annuitant.

The burthen of this class upon the community will not be relatively quite so heavy as it would otherwise have been, because of a very considerable rise in wages and prices.

In a community in which all the great initiatives have been assumed by the State, the importance of financiers and promoters will have diminished relatively to the importance of administrative officials; the opportunities of private exploitation, indeed, will have so diminished that there will probably be far less evidence of great concentrations of private wealth in the European social landscape than there was before the war.

On the other hand, there will be an enormously increased *rentier* class drawing the interest of the war loans from the community, and maintaining a generally high standard of comfort. There will have been a great demand for administrative and technical abilities and a great stimulation of scientific and technical education. By 1926 we shall be going about a world that will have recovered very largely from the impoverishment of the struggle; we shall tour in State-manufactured automobiles upon excellent roads, and we shall live in houses equipped with a national factory electric light installation, and at every turn we shall be using and consuming the products of nationalised industry — and paying off the National Debt simultaneously, and reducing our burden of *rentiers*.

At the same time our boys will be studying science in their schools more thoroughly than they do now, and they will in many cases be learning Russian instead of Greek or German. More of our boys will be going into the public service, and fewer thinking of private business, and they will be going into the public service, not as

clerks, but as engineers, technical chemists, manufacturers, State agriculturists, and the like. The public service will be less a service of clerks and more a service of practical men. The ties that bind France and Great Britain at the present moment will have been drawn very much closer. France, Belgium and England will be drifting towards a French-English bi-lingualism....

So much of our picture we may splash in now. Much that is quite essential remains to be discussed. So far we have said scarcely a word about the prospects of party politics and the problems of government that arise as the State ceases to be a mere impartial adjudicator between private individuals, and takes upon itself more and more of the direction of the general life of the community.

VI. LAWYER AND PRESS

The riddle of administration is the most subtle of all those that the would-be prophet of the things that are coming must attempt. We see the great modern States confronted now by vast and urgent necessities, by opportunities that may never recur. Individualism has achieved its inevitable failure; "go as you please" in a world that also contained aggressive militarism, has broken down. We live in a world of improvised State factories, commandeered railways, substituted labour and emergency arrangements. Our vague-minded, lax, modern democracy has to pull itself together, has to take over and administer and succeed with a great system of collective functions, has to express its collective will in some better terms than "go as you please," or fail.

And we find the affairs of nearly every great democratic State in the hands of a class of men not specially adapted to any such constructive or administrative work.

I am writing here now chiefly of the Western Allies. Russia is peculiar in having her administrative machine much more highly developed in relation to her general national life than the free democratic countries. She has to make a bureaucracy that has not hitherto been an example for efficiency into a bureaucracy that will be constructive, responsive, liberal, scientific, and efficient; the Western countries have to do the same with that oligarchy of politicians which, as Professor Michels has recently pointed out in his striking book on "Political Parties," is the necessary reality of democratic government. By different methods the Eastern and Western Powers have to attain a common end. Both bureaucracy and pseudo-democratic oligarchy have to accomplish an identical task, to cement the pacific alliance of the Pledged Allies and to socialise their common industrial and economic life, so as to make it invulnerable to foreign attack.

Now in Great Britain, which is the democracy that has been most under the close observation of the present prophet, there is at present a great outcry against the "politician," and more particularly against the "lawyer-politician." He is our embarrassment. In him we

personify all our difficulties. Let us consider the charges against this individual. Let us ask, can we do without him? And let us further see what chances there may be of so altering, qualifying, or balancing him as to minimise the evil of his influence. To begin with, let us run over the essentials of the charge against him.

It is with a modest blush that the present prophet recapitulates these charges. So early as the year 1902 he was lifting up his voice, not exactly in the wilderness but at least in the Royal Institution, against the legal as compared with the creative or futurist type of mind. The legal mind, he insisted, looks necessarily to the past. It is dilatory because it has no sense of coming things, it is uninventive and wasteful, it does not create, it takes advantage. It is the type of mind least able, under any circumstances, to organise great businesses, to plan campaigns, to adventure or achieve. "Wait and see" crystallises its spirit. Its resistance is admirable, and it has no "go." Nevertheless there is a tendency for power to gravitate in all democratic countries to the lawyer.

In the British system the normal faults of the lawyer are enhanced, and his predominance intensified, by certain peculiarities of our system. In the first place, he belongs to a guild of exceptional power. In Britain it happens that the unfortunate course was taken ages ago of bribing the whole legal profession to be honest. The British judges and law officers are stupendously overpaid in order to make them incorruptible; it is a poor but perhaps a well-merited compliment to their professional code. We have squared the whole profession to be individually unbribable.

The judges, moreover, in the Anglo-Saxon communities are appointed from among the leading barristers, an arrangement that a child can see is demoralising and inadvisable. And in Great Britain all the greatest salaries in the government service are reserved for the legal profession. The greatest prizes, therefore, before an energetic young man who has to make his way in Great Britain are the legal prizes, and his line of advancement to these lies, for all the best years of his life, not through the public service, but through the private practice of advocacy. The higher education, such as it is, in Great Britain, produces under the stimulus of these conditions an advocate as its finest flower. To go from the posing and chatter of the Union

Debating Society to a university laboratory is, in Britain, to renounce ambition. Few men of exceptional energy will do that.

The national consequences of this state of affairs have been only too manifest throughout the conduct of the war. The British Government has developed all the strength and all the weakness of the great profession it represents. It has been uninventive, dilatory, and without initiative; it has been wasteful and evasive; but it has not been wanting in a certain eloquence and dignity, it has been wary and shrewd, and it has held on to office with the concentrated skill and determination of a sucker-fish. And the British mind, with a concentration and intensity unprecedented before the war, is speculating how it can contrive to get a different sort of ruler and administrator at work upon its affairs.

There is a disposition in the Press, and much of the private talk one hears, to get rid of lawyers from the control of national affairs altogether, to substitute "business men" or scientific men or "experts." That way lies dictatorship and Caesarism. And even Great Britain is not so heedless of the experiences of other nations as to attempt again what has already been so abundantly worked out in national disaster across the Channel. The essential business of government is to deal between man and man; it is not to manage the national affairs in detail, but to secure the proper managers, investigators, administrators, generals, and so forth, to maintain their efficiency, and keep the balance between them. We cannot do without a special class of men for these interventions and controls. In other words, we cannot do without a special class of politicians. They may be elected by a public or appointed by an autocrat; at some point they have to come in. And this business of intervening between men and classes and departments in public life, and getting them to work together, is so closely akin to the proper work of a lawyer in dealing between men and men, that, unless the latter are absolutely barred from becoming the former, it is almost unavoidable that politicians should be drawn more abundantly from the lawyer class than from any other class in the community.

This is so much the case, that when the London *Times* turns in despair from a government of lawyers and looks about for an alternative, the first figure that presents itself is that distinguished

advocate Sir Edward Carson!

But there is a difference between recognising that some sort of lawyer-politician is unavoidable and agreeing that the existing type of lawyer who is so largely accountable for the massive slowness, the confused action, the slovenliness rather than the weakness of purpose, shown by Great Britain in this war, is the only possible type, The British system of education and legal organisation is not the last word of human wisdom in these matters.

The real case we British have against our lawyers, if I may adopt an expressive colloquialism, is not that they are lawyers, but that they are such infernal lawyers. They trail into modern life most of the faults of a mediaeval guild. They seem to have no sense of the State they could develop, no sense of the future they might control. Their law and procedure has never been remodelled upon the framework of modern ideas; their minds are still set to the tune of mediaeval bickerings, traditionalism, and State blindness. They are mystery dealers, almost unanimously they have resisted giving the common man the protection of a code.

In the United Kingdom we have had no Napoleon to override the profession. It is extraordinary how complete has been their preservation of barbaric conceptions. Even the doctor is now largely emancipated from his archaic limitations as a skilled retainer. He thinks more and more of the public health, and less and less of his patron. The more recent a profession the less there is of the individualistic personal reference; scientific research, for example, disavows and forbids every personal reference.

But while everyone would be shocked at some great doctor, or some great research institution, in these days of urgent necessity spending two or three weeks on the minor ailments of some rich person's lapdog, nobody is scandalised at the spectacle of Sir Edward Carson and a costly law court spending long days upon the sordid disputes that centre upon young Master Slingsby's ear — whether it is the Slingsby family ear or the ear of a supposititious child — a question that any three old women might be trusted to settle. After that he rests for a fortnight and recuperates, and returns — to take up a will case turning upon the toy rabbits and suchlike trifles which entertained the declining years of a nonagenarian. This, when we are

assured that the country awaits Sir Edward as its Deliverer. It is as if Lord Kitchener took a month off to act at specially high rates for the "movies." Our standard for the lawyer is older and lower than it is for other men.

There is no more reason nowadays why a lawyer should look to advocacy as a proper use of his knowledge than that a doctor should make private poisoning the lucrative side of his profession. There is no reason why a court of law should ignore the plain right of the commonweal to intervene in every case between man and man. There is every reason why trivial disputes about wills and legitimacy should not be wasting our national resources at the present time, when nearly every other form of waste is being restrained. The sound case against the legal profession in Anglo-Saxon countries is not that it is unnecessary, but that it is almost incredibly antiquated, almost incredibly careless of the public well-being, and that it corrupts or dwarfs all the men who enter it.

Our urgent need is not so much to get rid of the lawyer from our affairs as to get rid of the wig and gown spirit and of the special pleader, and to find and develop the new lawyer, the lawyer who is not an advocate, who is not afraid of a code, who has had some scientific education, and whose imagination has been quickened by the realisation of life as creative opportunity. We want to emancipate this profession from its ancient guild restrictions — the most anti-social and disastrous of all such restrictions — to destroy its disgraceful traditions of over-payment and fee-snatching, to insist upon a scientific philosophical training for its practitioners, to make the practice of advocacy a fall from grace, and to bar professional advocates from the bench.

In the British trenches now there must be many hundreds of fine young lawyers, still but little corrupted, who would be only too glad to exchange the sordid vulgarities and essential dishonour of a successful lawyer's career under the old conditions for lives of service and statecraft....

No observer of the general trend of events in Europe will get any real grasp of what is happening until he realises the cardinal importance of the reactions that centre upon this question. The current development of political institutions and the possible

development of a new spirit and method in the legal profession are so intimately interwoven as to be practically one and the same question. The international question is, can we get a new Germany? The national question everywhere is, can we get a better politician?

The widely prevalent discontent with the part played by the lawyer in the affairs of all the Western Allies is certain to develop into a vigorous agitation for legal reconstruction. In the case of every other great trade union the war has exacted profound and vital concessions. The British working men, for example, have abandoned scores of protective restrictions upon women's labour, upon unskilled labour, for which they have fought for generations; they have submitted to a virtual serfdom that the nation's needs might be supplied; the medical profession has sent almost too large a proportion of its members to the front; the scientific men, the writers, have been begging to be used in any capacity at any price or none; the Ministry of Munitions is full of unpaid workers, and so on.

The British legal profession and trade union alone has made no sign of any disposition to relax its elaborate restrictions upon the labour of amateurs and women, or to abate one jot or one tittle of its habitual rewards. There has been no attempt to reduce the costly law officers of the Government, for example, or to call in the help of older men or women to release law officers who are of military experience or age.

And I must admit that there are small signs of the advent of the "new lawyer," at whose possibility I have just flung a hopeful glance, to replace the existing mass of mediaeval unsoundness. Barristers seem to age prematurely — at least in Great Britain — unless they are born old. In the legal profession one hears nothing of "the young"; one hears only of "smart juniors." Reform and progressive criticism in the legal profession, unlike all other professions, seem to be the monopoly of the retired.

Nevertheless, Great Britain is as yet only beginning to feel the real stresses of the war; she is coming into the full strain a year behind France, Germany, and Russia; and after the war there lies the possibility of still more violent stresses; so that what is as yet a mere cloud of criticism and resentment at our lawyer-politicians and privileged legal profession may gather to a great storm before 1918

or 1919.

I am inclined to foretell as one most highly probable development of the present vague but very considerable revolt against the lawyer in British public life, first, some clumsy proposals or even attempts to leave him out, and use "business men," soldiers, admirals, dictators, or men of science, in his place — which is rather like throwing away a blottesque fountain-pen and trying to write with a walking-stick or a revolver or a flash-light — and then when that is found to be impossible, a resolute attempt to clean and reconstitute the legal profession on modern and more honourable lines; a movement into which, quite possibly, a number of the younger British lawyers, so soon as they realise that the movement is good enough to risk careers upon, may throw themselves. A large share in such a reform movement, if it occurs, will be brought about by the Press; by which I mean not simply the periodical Press, but all books and contemporary discussion. It is only by the natural playing off of Press against lawyer-politician that democratic States can ever come to their own.

And that brings me to the second part of this question, which is whether, quite apart from the possible reform and spiritual rebirth of the legal profession, there is not also the possibility of balancing and correcting its influence. In ancient Hebrew history — it may be a warning rather than a precedent — there were two great forces, one formal, conservative and corrupting, the other undisciplined, creative, and destructive; the first was the priest, the second the prophet. Their interaction is being extraordinarily paralleled in the Anglo-Saxon democracies by the interaction of lawyer-politician and Press to-day.

If the lawyer-politician is unavoidable, the Press is indispensable. It is not in the clash and manoeuvres and mutual correction of party, but in the essential conflict of political authority on the one hand and Press on the other that the future of democratic government apparently lies. In the clearer, simpler case of France, a less wealthy and finer type of lawyer interacts with a less impersonal Press. It is in the great contrasts and the essential parallelism of the French and the Anglo-Saxon democratic systems that one finds the best practical reason for anticipating very profound changes in these two

inevitables of democracy, the Press and the lawyer-politician, and for assuming that the method of democracy has still a vast range of experimental adjustment between them still untried. Such experimental adjustment will be the chief necessity and business of political life in every country of the world for the next few decades.

The lawyer-politician and the Press are as it were the right and left hands of a modern democracy. The war has brought this out clearly. It has ruptured the long-weakened bonds that once linked this and that newspaper with this and that party. For years the Press of all the Western democracies has been drifting slowly away from the tradition — it lasted longest and was developed most completely in Great Britain — that-newspapers were party organs.

In the novels of Disraeli the Press appears as an ambiguously helpful person who is asked out to dinner, who is even admitted to week-end conferences, by the political great. He takes his orders from the Whig peers or the Tory peers. At his greatest he advises them respectfully. But that was in the closing days of the British oligarchy; that was before modern democracy had begun to produce its characteristic political forms. It is not so very much more than a century ago that Great Britain had her first lawyer Prime Minister. Through all the Napoleonic wars she was still a country ruled by great feudal landlords, and gentlemen adventurers associated with them. The lawyers only came to their own at the close of the great Victorian duet of Disraeli and Gladstone, the last of the political gentlemen adventurers. It is only now, in the jolts and dissatisfactions of this war, that Great Britain rubs her eyes and looks at her government as it is.

The old oligarchy established the tradition of her diplomacy. Illiberal at home, it was liberal abroad; Great Britain was the defender of nationality, of constitutionalism, and of the balance of power against the holy alliance. In the figure of such a gentleman as Sir Edward Grey the old order mingles with the new. But most of his colleagues are of the new order. They would have been incredible in the days of Lord Melbourne. In its essential quality the present British Government is far more closely akin to the French than it is to its predecessor of a hundred years ago. Essentially it is a Government of lawyer-politicians with no close family ties or

intimate political traditions and prejudices. And its natural and proper corrective is the Press, over which it fails to exercise now even a shadow of the political and social influence that once kept that power in subjection.

It is the way with all human institutions; they remain in appearance long after they have passed away in reality. It is on record that the Roman senate still thought Rome was a republic in the third century of the Christian era. It is nothing wonderful, therefore, that people suppose that the King, the Lords, and the Commons, debating through a Ministry and an Opposition, still govern the British Empire. As a matter of fact it is the lawyer-politicians, split by factions that simulate the ancient government and opposition, who rule, under a steadily growing pressure and checking by the Press. Since this war began the Press has released itself almost inadvertently from its last association with the dying conflicts of party politics, and has taken its place as a distinct power in the realm, claiming to be more representative of the people than their elected representatives, and more expressive of the national mind and will.

Now there is considerable validity in this claim. It is easy to say that a paper may be bought by any proprietor and set to put what he chooses into the public mind. As a matter of fact, buying a newspaper is far more costly and public a proceeding than buying a politician. And if on the one hand the public has no control over what is printed in a paper, it has on the other the very completest control over what is read. A politician is checked by votes cast once in several years, a newspaper is checked by sales that vary significantly from day to day. A newspaper with no circulation is a newspaper that does not matter; a few weeks will suffice to show if it has carried its public with it or gone out of influence. It is absurd to speak of a newspaper as being less responsible than a politician.

Nevertheless, the influence of a great newspaper is so much greater than that of any politician, and its power more particularly for mischief — for the creation of panic conditions, for example — so much swifter, that it is open to question whether the Press is at present sufficiently held to its enormous responsibilities.

Let us consider its weaknesses at the present time, let us ask what changes in its circumstances are desirable in the public interest, and

what are likely to come about. We have already reckoned upon the Press as a chief factor in the adequate criticism, cleansing, and modernisation of the British lawyer-politician; is there any power to which we may look for the security of the Press? And I submit the answer is the Press. For while the legal profession is naturally homogeneous, the Press is by nature heterogeneous. Dog does not eat dog, nor lawyer, lawyer; but the newspapers are sharks and cannibals, they are in perpetual conflict, the Press is a profession as open as the law is closed; it has no anti-social guild feeling; it washes its dirty linen in public by choice and necessity, and disdains all professional etiquette. Few people know what criticisms of the Lord Chief Justice may have ripened in the minds of Lord Halsbury or Sir Edward Carson, but we all know, to a very considerable degree of accuracy, the worst of what this great journalist or group of newspaper proprietors thinks of that.

We have, therefore, considerable reason for regarding the Press as being, in contrast with the legal profession, a self-reforming body. In the last decade there has been an enormous mass of criticism of the Press by the Press. There has been a tendency to exaggerate its irresponsibility. A better case is to be made against it for what I will call, using the word in its least offensive sense, its venality. By venality I mean the fact, a legacy from the now happily vanishing age of individualism, that in theory and law at least anyone may own a newspaper and sell it publicly or secretly to anyone, that its circulation and advertisement receipts may be kept secret or not as the proprietors choose, and that the proprietor is accountable to no one for any exceptional incomings or any sudden fluctuations in policy.

A few years ago we were all discussing who should buy *The Times*; I do not know what chances an agent of the Kaiser might not have had if he had been sufficiently discreet. This venality will be far more dangerous to the Allied countries after the war than during its continuance. So long as the state of war lasts there are prompt methods available for any direct newspaper treason, and it is in the neutral countries only that the buying and selling of papers against the national interest has occurred to any marked extent.

Directly peace is signed, unless we provide for the event

beforehand, our Press will pass under neutral conditions. There will be nothing to prevent, for example, any foreseeing foreign power coming into Great Britain, offering to buy up not only this paper or that, but also, what is far more important, to buy up the great book and newspaper distributing firms. These vitally important public services, so far as law and theory go, will be as entirely in the market as railway tickets at a station unless we make some intelligent preventive provision. Unless we do, and if, as is highly probable, peace puts no immediate stop to international malignity, the Germans will be bigger fools than I think them if they do not try to get hold of these public services. It is a matter of primary importance in the outlook of every country in Europe, therefore, that it should insist upon and secure responsible native ownership of every newspaper and news and book distributing agency, and the most drastic punishment for newspaper corruption. Given that guarantee against foreign bribery, we may, I think, let free speech rage. This is so much a matter of common sense that I cannot imagine even British "wait and see" waiting for the inevitable assault upon our national journalistic virtue that will follow the peace.

So I spread out the considerations that I think justify our forecasting, in a very changed Great Britain and a changed Europe, firstly, a legal profession with a quickened conscience, a sense of public function and a reformed organisation, and, secondly, a Press, which is recognised and held accountable in law and in men's minds, as an estate of the realm, as something implicitly under oath to serve the State. I do not agree with Professor Michel's pessimistic conclusion that peace will bring back exacerbated party politics and a new era of futility to the democratic countries. I believe that the tremendous demonstration of this war (a demonstration that gains weight with every week of our lengthening effort), of the waste and inefficiency of the system of 1913-14, will break down at last even the conservatism of the most rigidly organised and powerful and out-of-date of all professions.

It is not only that I look to the indignation and energy of intelligent men who are outside our legal and political system to reform it, but to those who are in it now. A man may be quietly parasitic upon his mother, and yet incapable of matricide. So much

of our national energy and ability has been attracted to the law in Great Britain that our nation, with our lawyers in modern clothing instead of wigs and gowns, lawyers who have studied science and social theory instead of the spoutings of Cicero and the loquacious artfulness of W.E. Gladstone, lawyers who look forward at the destiny of their country instead of backward and at the markings on their briefs, may yet astonish the world. The British lawyer really holds the future of the British Empire and, indeed, I could almost say, of the whole world in his hands at the present time, as much as any single sort of man can be said to hold it. Inside his skull imagination and a heavy devil of evil precedent fight for his soul and the welfare of the world. And generosity fights against tradition and individualism. Only the men of the Press have anything like the same great possibilities of betrayal.

To these two sorts of men the dim spirit of the nation looks for such leading as a democracy can follow. To them the men with every sort of special ability, the men of science, the men of this or that sort of administrative ability and experience, the men of creative gifts and habits, every sort of man who wants the world to get on, look for the removal (or the ingenious contrivance) of obstructions and entanglements, for the allaying (or the fomentation) of suspicion, misapprehension, and ignorant opposition, for administration (or class blackmail).

Yet while I sit as a prophetic amateur weighing these impalpable forces of will and imagination and habit and interest in lawyer, pressman, maker and administrator, and feeling by no means over-confident of the issue, it dawns upon me suddenly that there is another figure present, who has never been present before in the reckoning up of British affairs. It is a silent figure. This figure stands among the pressmen and among the lawyers and among the workers; for a couple of decades at least he will be everywhere in the British system; he is young and he is uniformed in khaki, and he brings with him a new spirit into British life, the spirit of the new soldier, the spirit of subordination to a common purpose....

France, which has lived so much farther and deeper and more bitterly than Britain, knows....

In “An Englishman Looks at the World,” a companion volume to

the present one, which was first published by Messrs. Cassell early in 1914, and is now obtainable in a shilling edition, the reader will find a full discussion of the probable benefit of proportional representation in eliminating the party hack from political life. Proportional representation would probably break up party organisations altogether, and it would considerably enhance the importance and responsibility of the Press. It would do much to accelerate the development of the state of affairs here foreshadowed, in which the rôle of government and opposition under the party system will be played by elected representatives and Press respectively.

VII. THE NEW EDUCATION

Some few months ago Mr. Harold Spender, in the *Daily News*, was calling attention to a very significant fact indeed. The higher education in England, and more particularly the educational process of Oxford and Cambridge, which has been going on continuously since the Middle Ages, is practically in a state of suspense. Oxford and Cambridge have stopped. They have stopped so completely that Mr. Spender can speculate whether they can ever pick up again and resume upon the old lines.

For my own part, as the father of two sons who are at present in mid-school, I hope with all my heart that they will not. I hope that the Oxford and Cambridge of unphilosophical classics and Little-go Greek for everybody, don's mathematics, bad French, ignorance of all Europe except Switzerland, forensic exercises in the Union Debating Society, and cant about the Gothic, the Oxford and Cambridge that turned boys full of life and hope and infinite possibility into barristers, politicians, mono-lingual diplomatists, bishops, schoolmasters, company directors, and remittance men, are even now dead.

Quite recently I passed through Cambridge, and, with the suggestions of Mr. Spender in my mind, I paused to savour the atmosphere of the place. He had very greatly understated the facts of the case. He laid stress upon the fact that instead of the normal four thousand undergraduates or so, there are now scarcely four hundred. But before I was fairly in Cambridge I realised that that gives no idea of the real cessation of English education. Of the first seven undergraduates I saw upon the Trumpington road, one was black, three were coloured, and one of the remaining three was certainly not British, but, I should guess, Spanish-American. And it isn't only the undergraduates who have gone. All the dons of military age and quality have gone too, or are staying up not in caps and gowns, but in khaki; all the vigorous teachers are soldiering; there are no dons left except those who are unfit for service — and the clergy. Buildings, libraries, empty laboratories, empty lecture theatres, vestiges, refugees, neutrals, khaki; that is Cambridge to-day.

There never was before, there never may be again, so wonderful an opportunity for a cleaning-up and sweeping-out of those two places, and for a profitable new start in British education.

The cessation of Oxford and Cambridge does not give the full measure of the present occasion. All the other British universities are in a like case. And the schools which feed them have been practically swept clean of their senior boys. And not a tithe of any of this war class of schoolboys will ever go to the universities now, not a tithe of the war class of undergraduates will ever return. Between the new education and the old there will be a break of two school generations. For the next thirty or forty years an exceptional class of men will play a leading part in British affairs, men who will have learnt more from reality and less from lectures than either the generations that preceded or the generations that will follow them. The subalterns of the great war will form a distinct generation and mark an epoch. Their experiences of need, their sense of deficiencies, will certainly play a large part in the reconstitution of British education. *The stamp of the old system will not be on them.*

Now is the time to ask what sort of training should a university give to produce the ruling, directing, and leading men which it exists to produce? Upon that Great Britain will need to make up its mind speedily. It is not a matter for to-morrow or the day after; it is necessary to decide now what it is the Britain that is coming will need and want, and to set to work revising the admission and degree requirements, and reconstructing all those systems of public examinations for the public services that necessarily dominate school and university teaching, before the universities and schools reassemble. If the rotten old things once get together again, the rotten old things will have a new lease of life. This and no other is the hour for educational reconstruction. And it is in the decisions and readjustments of schools and lectures and courses, far more than anywhere else, that the real future of Great Britain will be decided. Equally true is this of all the belligerent countries. Much of the future has a kind of mechanical inevitableness, but here far more than anywhere else, can a few resolute and capable men mould the spirit and determine the quality of the Europe to come.

Now surely the chief things that are needed in the education of a

ruling class are these — first, the selection and development of Character, then the selection and development of Capacity, and, thirdly, the imparting of Knowledge upon broad and comprehensive lines, and the power of rapidly taking up and using such detailed knowledge as may be needed for special occasions. It is upon the first count that the British schools and universities have been most open to criticism. We have found the British university-trained class under the fiery tests of this war an evasive, temporising class of people, individualistic, ungenerous, and unable either to produce or obey vigorous leadership. On the whole, it is a matter for congratulation, it says wonderful things for the inherent natural qualities of the English-speaking peoples, that things have proved no worse than they are, considering the nature of the higher education under which they have suffered.

Consider in what that educational process has consisted. Its backbone has been the teaching of Latin by men who can read, write, and speak it rather worse than a third-rate Babu speaks English, and of Ancient Greek by teachers who at best half know this fine lost language. They do not expect any real mastery of either tongue by their students, and naturally, therefore, no real mastery is ever attained. The boys and young men just muff about at it for three times as long as would be needed to master completely both those tongues if they had "live" teachers, and so they acquire habits of busy futility and petty pedantry in all intellectual processes that haunt them throughout life. There are also sterile mathematical studies that never get from "exercises" to practice. There is a pretence of studying philosophy based on Greek texts that few of the teachers and none of the taught can read comfortably, and a certain amount of history. The Modern History School at Oxford, for example, is the queerest collection of chunks of reading. English history from the beginning, with occasional glances at Continental affairs, European history for about a century, bits of economics, and — the *Politics* of Aristotle! It is not education; it is a jack-daw collection....This sort of jumble has been the essentials of the more pretentious type of "higher education" available in Great Britain up to the present.

In this manner, through all the most sensitive and receptive years of life, our boys have been trained in "how not to get there," in a

variety of disconnected subjects, by men who have never "got there," and it would be difficult to imagine any curriculum more calculated to produce a miscellaneous incompetence. They have also, it happens, received a certain training in *savoir faire* through the collective necessities of school life, and a certain sharpening in the arts of advocacy through the debating society. Except for these latter helps, they have had to face the world with minds neither more braced, nor more trained, nor more informed than any "uneducated" man's.

Surely the first condition that should be laid down for the new education in Europe is that whatever is undertaken must be undertaken in grim earnest and done. It is ridiculous to talk about the "character-forming" value of any study that does not go through to an end. Manifestly Greek must be dropped as a part of the general curriculum for a highly educated man, for the simple reason that now there are scarcely any competent teachers, and because the sham of teaching it partially and pretentiously demoralises student and school alike. The claim of the clergy and so forth to "know" Greek is one of the many corrupting lies in British intellectual life. English comic writers never weary of sneering at the Hindu who claimed to be a "failed B.A.," but what is the ordinary classical degree man of an English university but a "failed" Greek scholar? Latin, too, must be either reduced to the position of a study supplementary to the native tongue, or brought up to an honest level of efficiency.

French and German in the case of the English, and English in the case of the French and Russians, are essentially governess languages; any intelligent boy or girl from a reasonably prosperous home ought to be able to read, write, and speak either before fifteen; they are to be taken by the way rather than regarded as a fundamental part of education. The French, German, or English literature and literary development up to and including contemporary work is, of course, an entirely different matter. But there can be no doubt of the great educational value of some highly inflected and well-developed language *taught by men to whom it is a genuine means of expression*. Educational needs and public necessity point alike to such languages as Russian or, in the case of Great Britain, Hindustani to supply this sound training.

If Great Britain means business after this war, if she is to do her duty by the Eastern world she controls, she will not stick at the petty expense of getting a few hundreds of good Russian and Hindu teachers into the country, and she will place Russian and Hindustani upon at least an equal footing with Greek in all her university and competitive examinations. Moreover, it is necessary to set a definite aim of application before university mathematical teaching. As the first condition of character-building in all these things, the student should do what he ostensibly sets out to do. No degree and no position should be attainable by half accomplishment.

Of course, languages and mathematics do not by any means round off the education of a man of the leading classes. There is no doubt much exercise in their attainment, much value in their possession. But the essence of the higher education is now, as it always has been, philosophy; not the antiquated pretence of "reading" Plato and Aristotle, but the thorough and subtle examination of those great questions of life that most exercise and strengthen the mind. Surely that is the essential difference of the "educated" and the "common" man. The former has thought, and thought out thoroughly and clearly, the relations of his mind to the universe as a whole, and of himself to the State and life. A mind untrained in swift and adequate criticism is essentially an uneducated mind, though it has as many languages as a courier and as much computation as a bookie.

And what is our fundamental purpose in all this reform of our higher education? It is neither knowledge nor technical skill, but to make our young men talk less and think more, and to think more swiftly, surely, and exactly. For that we want less debating society and more philosophy, fewer prizes for forensic ability and more for strength and vigour of analysis. The central seat of character is the mind. A man of weak character thinks vaguely, a man of clear intellectual decisions acts with precision and is free from vacillation. A country of educated men acts coherently, smites swiftly, plans ahead; a country of confused education is a country of essential muddle.

It is as the third factor in education that the handling and experience of knowledge comes, and of all knowledge that which is most accessible, most capable of being handled with the greatest

variety of educational benefit, so as to include the criticism of evidence, the massing of facts, the extraction and testing of generalisations, lies in the two groups of the biological sciences and the exact sciences. No doubt a well-planned system of education will permit of much varied specialisation, will, indeed, specialise those who have special gifts from a very early age, will have corners for Greek, Hebrew, Sanscrit, philology, archaeology, Christian theology, and so on, and so on; nevertheless, for that great mass of sound men of indeterminate all-round ability who are the intellectual and moral backbone of a nation, it is in scientific studies that their best training lies, studies most convenient to undertake and most readily applied in life. From either of the two groups of the sciences one may pass on to research or to technical applications leading directly to the public service. The biological sciences broaden out through psychology and sociology to the theory and practice of law, and to political life. They lead also to medical and agricultural administration. The exact sciences lead to the administrative work of industrialism, and to general economics.

These are the broad, clear lines of the educational necessities of a modern community, plain enough to see, so that every man who is not blinded by prejudice and self-interest can see them to-day. We have now before us a phase of opportunity in educational organisation that will never recur again. Now that the apostolic succession of the old pedagogy is broken, and the entire system discredited, it seems incredible that it can ever again be reconstituted in its old seats upon the old lines. In these raw, harsh days of boundless opportunity, the opportunity of the new education, because it is the most fundamental, is assuredly the greatest of all.

VIII. WHAT THE WAR IS DOING FOR WOMEN

Section 1

To discuss the effect of this war upon the relations of men and women to each other is to enter upon the analysis of a secular process compared with which even the vast convulsions and destructions of this world catastrophe appear only as jolts and incidents and temporary interruptions. There are certain matters that sustain a perennial development, that are on a scale beyond the dramatic happenings of history; wars, the movements of peoples and races, economic changes, such things may accelerate or stimulate or confuse or delay, but they cannot arrest the endless thinking out, the growth and perfecting of ideas, upon the fundamental relationships of human Beings. First among such eternally progressive issues is religion, the relationship of man to God; next in importance and still more immediate is the matter of men's relations to women. In such matters each phase is a new phase; whatever happens, there is no going back and beginning over again. The social life, like the religious life, must grow and change until the human story is at an end.

So that this war involves, in this as in so many matters, no fundamental set-back, no reversals nor restorations. At the most it will but realise things already imagined, release things latent. The nineteenth century was a period of unprecedented modification of social relationships; but great as these changes were, they were trivial in comparison with the changes in religious thought and the criticism of moral ideals. Hell was the basis of religious thinking in A.D. 1800, and the hangman was at the back of the law; in 1900 both Hell and the hangman seemed on the verge of extinction. The creative impulse was everywhere replacing fear and compulsion in human motives. The opening decade of the twentieth century was a period of unprecedented abundance in everything necessary to human life, of vast accumulated resources, of leisure and release. It was also, because of that and because of the changed social and religious spirit, a period of great social disorganisation and confused impulses.

We British can already look back to the opening half of 1914 as to an age gone for ever. Except that we were all alive then and can

remember, it has become now almost as remote, almost as "historical," as the days before the French Revolution. Our days, our methods and reactions, are already so different. The greater part of the freedom of movement, the travel and going to and fro, the leisure, the plenty and carelessness, that distinguished early twentieth century life from early nineteenth century life, has disappeared. Most men are under military discipline, and every household economises. The whole British people has been brought up against such elementary realities of need, danger, and restraint as it never realised before. We discover that we had been living like Olympians in regard to worldly affairs, we had been irresponsibles, amateurs. Much of that fatness of life, the wrappings and trimmings of our life, has been stripped off altogether. That has not altered the bones of life; it has only made them plainer; but it has astonished us as much as if looking into a looking-glass one suddenly found oneself a skeleton. Or a diagram.

What was going on before this war in the relations of men and women is going on still, with more rapidity perhaps, and certainly with more thoroughness. The war is accentuating, developing, defining. Previously our discussions and poses and movements had merely the air of seeking to accentuate and define. What was apparently being brought about by discursive efforts, and in a mighty controversy and confusion, is coming about now as a matter of course.

Before the war, in the British community as in most civilised communities, profound changes were already in progress, changes in the conditions of women's employment, in the legal relations of husband and wife, in the political status of women, in the status of illegitimate children, in manners and customs affecting the sexes. Every civilised community was exhibiting a falling birth-rate and a falling death-rate, was changing the quality of its housing, and diminishing domestic labour by organising supplies and developing, appliances. That is to say, that primary human unit, the home, was altering in shape and size and frequency and colour and effect. A steadily increasing proportion of people were living outside the old family home, the home based on maternity and offspring, altogether. A number of us were doing our best to apprehend the summation of

all this flood of change. We had a vague idea that women were somehow being "emancipated," but just what this word meant and what it implied were matters still under exploration. Then came the war. For a time it seemed as if all this discussion was at an end, as if the problem itself had vanished.

But that was only a temporary distraction of attention. The process of change swirled into new forms that did not fit very easily into the accepted formulae, swirled into new forms and continued on its way. If the discussion ceased for a time, the process of change ceased not at all. Matters have travelled all the farther in the last two years for travelling mutely. The questions between men and women are far more important and far more incessant than the questions between Germans and the rest of mankind. They are coming back now into the foreground of human thought, but amended and altered. Our object is to state the general nature of that alteration. It has still been "emancipation," but very different in quality from the "emancipation" that was demanded so loudly and incoherently in that ancient world — of 1913!

Never had the relations of men and women been so uneasy as they were in the opening days of 1914. The woman's movement battered and banged through all our minds. It broke out into that tumult in Great Britain perhaps ten years ago. When Queen Victoria died it was inaudible; search *Punch*, search the newspapers of that tranquil age. In 1914 it kicked up so great a dust that the Germans counted on the Suffragettes as one of the great forces that were to paralyse England in the war.

The extraordinary thing was that the feminist movement was never clearly defined during all the time of its maximum violence. We begin to perceive in the retrospect that the movement was multiple, made up of a number of very different movements interwoven. It seemed to concentrate upon the Vote; but it was never possible to find even why women wanted the vote. Some, for example, alleged that it was because they were like men, and some because they were entirely different. The broad facts that one could not mistake were a vast feminine discontent and a vast display of feminine energy. What had brought that about?

Two statistical factors are to be considered here. One of these was

the steady decline in the marriage rate, and the increasing proportion of unmarried women of all classes, but particularly of the more educated classes, requiring employment. The second was the fall in the birth-rate, the diminution in size of the average family, the increase of sterile unions, and the consequent release of a considerable proportion of the energy of married women. Co-operating with these factors of release were the economic elaborations that were improving the appliances of domestic life, replacing the needle by the sewing machine, the coal fire and lamp by gas and electricity, the dustpan and brush by the pneumatic carpet cleaner, and taking out of the house into the shop and factory the baking, much of the cooking, the making of clothes, the laundry work, and so forth, that had hitherto kept so many women at home and too busy to think. The care of even such children as there were was also less arduous; crêche and school held out hands for them, ready to do even that duty better.

Side by side with these releases from duty was a rise in the standard of education that was stimulating the minds and imaginations of woman beyond a point where the needle — even if there had been any use for the needle — can be an opiate. Moreover, the world was growing richer, and growing richer in such a way that not only were leisure and desire increasing, but, because of increasingly scientific methods of production, the need in many branches of employment for any but very keen and able workers was diminishing. So that simultaneously the world, that vanished world before 1914, was releasing and disengaging enormous volumes of untrained and unassigned feminine energy and also diminishing the usefulness of unskilful effort in every department of life. There was no demand to meet the supply. These were the underlying processes that produced the feminist outbreak of the decade before the war.

Now the debate between the sexes is a perennial. It began while we were still in the trees. It has its stereotyped accusations; its stereotyped repartees. The Canterbury Pilgrims had little to learn from Christabel Pankhurst. Man and woman in that duet struggle perpetually for the upper hand, and the man restrains the woman and the woman resents the man. In every age some voice has been heard asserting, like Plato, that the woman is a human being; and the

prompt answer has been, “but such a different human being.” Wherever there is a human difference fair play is difficult, the universal clash of races witnesses to that, and sex is the greatest of human differences.

But the general trend of mankind towards intelligence and reason has been also a trend away from a superstitious treatment of sexual questions and a recognition, so to speak, that a woman’s “a man for a’ that,” that she is indeed as entitled to an independent soul and a separate voice in collective affairs. As brain has counted for more and more in the human effort and brute strength and the advantage of not bearing children for less and less, as man has felt a greater need for a companion and a lesser need for a slave, and as the increase of food and the protection of the girl from premature child-bearing has approximated the stature and strength and enterprise of the woman more and more to that of the man, this secular emancipation of the human female from the old herd subordination and servitude to the patriarchal male has gone on. Essentially the secular process has been an equalising process. It was merely the exaggeration of its sustaining causes during the plenty and social and intellectual expansion of the last half-century that had stimulated this secular process to the pitch of crisis.

There have always been two extreme aspects of the sexual debate. There have always been the oversexed women who wanted to be treated primarily as women, and the women who were irritated and bored by being treated primarily as women. There have always been those women who wanted to get, like Joan of Arc, into masculine attire, and the school of the “mystical darlings.” There have always been the women who wanted to share men’s work and the women who wanted to “inspire” it — the mates and the mistresses. Of course, the mass of women lies between these extremes. But it is possible, nevertheless, to discuss this question as though it were a conflict of two sharply opposed ideals. It is convenient to write as if there were just these two sorts of women because so one can get a sharp definition in the picture. The ordinary woman fluctuates between the two, turns now to the Western ideal of citizenship and now to the Eastern of submission. These ideals fight not only in human society, but in every woman’s career.

Chitra in Rabindranath Tagore's play, for example, tried both aspects of the woman's life, and Tagore is at one with Plato in preferring the Rosalind type to the houri. And with him I venture to think is the clear reason of mankind. The real "emancipation" to which reason and the trend of things makes is from the yielding to the energetic side of a woman's disposition, from beauty enthroned for love towards the tall, weather-hardened woman with a spear, loving her mate as her mate loves her, and as sexless as a man in all her busy hours.

But it was not simply the energies that tended towards this particular type that were set free during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Every sort of feminine energy was set free. And it was not merely the self-reliant, independence-seeking women who were discontented. The ladies who specialised in feminine arts and graces and mysteries were also dissatisfied. They found they were not important enough. The former type found itself insufficiently respected, and the latter type found itself insufficiently adored. The two mingled their voices in the most confusing way in the literature of the suffrage movement before the war. The two tendencies mingle confusingly in the minds of the women that this movement was stirring up to think. The Vote became the symbol for absolutely contradictory things; there is scarcely a single argument for it in suffragist literature that cannot be completely negatived out of suffragist literature.

For example, compare the writings of Miss Cicely Hamilton, the distinguished actress, with the publications of the Pankhurst family. The former expresses a claim that, except for prejudice, a woman is as capable a citizen as a man and differing only in her sex; the latter consist of a long rhapsody upon the mystical superiorities of women and the marvellous benefits mankind will derive from handing things over to these sacred powers. The former would get rid of sex from most human affairs; the latter would make what our Georgian grandfathers called "The Sex" rule the world.

Or compare, say, the dark coquettings of Miss Elizabeth Robins' "Woman's Secret" with the virile common sense of that most brilliant young writer, Miss Rebecca West, in her bitter onslaught on feminine limitations in the opening chapters of "The World's Worst

Failure." The former is an extravagance of sexual mysticism. Man can never understand women. Women always hide deep and wonderful things away beyond masculine discovery. Men do not even suspect. Some day, perhaps — It is someone peeping from behind a curtain, and inviting men in provocative tones to come and play catch in a darkened harem. The latter is like some gallant soldier cursing his silly accoutrements. It is a hearty outbreak against that apparent necessity for elegance and sexual specialisation that undercuts so much feminine achievement, that reduces so much feminine art and writing to vapidity, and holds back women from the face of danger and brave and horrible deaths. It is West to Miss Robins' East. And yet I believe I am right in saying that all these four women writers have jostled one another upon suffrage platforms, and that they all suffered blows and injuries in the same cause, during the various riots and conflicts that occurred in London in the course of the great agitation. It was only when the agitation of the Pankhurst family, aided by Miss Robins' remarkable book "Where are you going to ...?" took a form that threatened to impose the most extraordinary restrictions on the free movements of women, and to establish a sort of universal purdah of hostility and suspicion against those degraded creatures, those stealers and destroyers of women, "the men," that the British feminist movement displayed any tendency to dissociate into its opposed and divergent strands.

It is a little detail, but a very significant one in this connection, that the committee that organised the various great suffrage processions in London were torn by dispute about the dresses of the processionists. It was urged that a "masculine style of costume" discredited the movement, and women were urged to dress with a maximum of feminine charm. Many women obtained finery they could ill afford, to take part in these demonstrations, and minced their steps as womanly as possible to freedom....

It would be easy to overstate the efflorescence of distinctively feminine emotion, dressiness, mysticism, and vanity upon the suffrage movement. Those things showed for anyone to see. This was the froth of the whirlpool. What did not show was the tremendous development of the sense of solidarity among women. Everybody knew that women had been hitting policemen at Westminster; it was

not nearly so showy a fact that women of title, working women, domestic servants, tradesmen's wives, professional workers, had all been meeting together and working together in a common cause, working with an unprecedented capacity and an unprecedented disregard of social barriers. One noted the nonsensical by-play of the movement; the way in which women were accustoming themselves to higher standards of achievement was not so immediately noticeable. That a small number of women were apparently bent on rendering the Vote impossible by a campaign of violence and malicious mischief very completely masked the fact that a very great number of girls and young women no longer considered it seemly to hang about at home trying by a few crude inducements to tempt men to marry them, but were setting out very seriously and capably to master the young man's way of finding a place for oneself in the world. Beneath the dust and noise realities were coming about that the dust and noise entirely failed to represent. We know that some women were shrieking for the Vote; we did not realise that a generation of women was qualifying for it.

The war came, the jolt of an earthquake, to throw things into their proper relationships.

The immediate result was the disappearance of the militant suffragists from public view for a time, into which the noisier section hastened to emerge in full scream upon the congenial topic of War Babies. "Men," those dreadful creatures, were being camped and quartered all over the country. It followed, from all the social principles known to Mrs. and Miss Pankhurst, that it was necessary to provide for an enormous number of War Babies. Subscriptions were invited. Statisticians are still looking rather perplexedly for those War Babies; the illegitimate birth-rate has fallen, and what has become of the subscriptions I do not know. *The Suffragette* rechristened itself *Britannia*, dropped the War Baby agitation, and, after an interlude of self-control, broke out into denunciations, first of this public servant and then of that, as traitors and German spies. Finally, it discovered a mare's nest in the case of Sir Edward Grey that led to its suppression, and the last I have from this misleading and unrepresentative feminist faction is the periodic appearance of a little ill-printed sheet of abuse about the chief Foreign Office people,

resembling in manner and appearance the sort of denunciatory letter, at once suggestive and evasive, that might be written by the curate's discharged cook. And with that the aggressive section of the suffragist movement seems to have petered out, leaving the broad reality of feminine emancipation to go on in a beneficent silence.

There can be no question that the behaviour of the great mass of women in Great Britain has not simply exceeded expectation but hope. And there can be as little doubt that the suffrage question, in spite of the self-advertising violence of its extravagant section, did contribute very materially to build up the confidence, the willingness to undertake responsibility and face hardship, that has been so abundantly displayed by every class of woman. It is not simply that there has been enough women and to spare for hospital work and every sort of relief and charitable service; that sort of thing has been done before, that was in the tradition of womanhood. It is that at every sort of occupation, clerking, shop-keeping, railway work, automobile driving, agricultural work, police work, they have been found efficient beyond precedent and intelligent beyond precedent. And in the munition factories, in the handling of heavy and often difficult machinery, and in adaptability and inventiveness and enthusiasm and steadfastness their achievement has been astonishing. More particularly in relation to intricate mechanical work is their record remarkable and unexpected.

There is scarcely a point where women, having been given a chance, have not more than made good. They have revolutionised the estimate of their economic importance, and it is scarcely too much to say that when, in the long run, the military strength of the Allies bears down the strength of Germany, it will be this superiority of our women which enables us to pit a woman at — the censorship will object to exact geography upon this point — against a man at Essen which has tipped the balance of this war.

Those women have won the vote. Not the most frantic outbursts of militancy after this war can prevent them getting it. The girls who have faced death and wounds so gallantly in our cordite factories — there is a not inconsiderable list of dead and wounded from those places — have killed for ever the poor argument that women should not vote because they had no military value. Indeed, they have killed

every argument against their subjection. And while they do these things, that paragon of the virtues of the old type, that miracle of domestic obedience, the German *haus-frau*, the faithful Gretchen, riots for butter.

And as I have before remarked, the Germans counted on the suffragettes as one of the great forces that were to paralyse England in this war.

It is not simply that the British women have so bountifully produced intelligence and industry; that does not begin their record. They have been willing to go dowdy. The mass of women in Great Britain are wearing the clothes of 1914. In 1913 every girl and woman one saw in the streets of London had an air of doing her best to keep in the fashion. Now they are for the most part as carelessly dressed as a busy business man or a clever young student might have been. They are none the less pretty for that, and far more beautiful. But the fashions have floated away to absurdity. Every now and then through the austere bustle of London in war time drifts a last practitioner of the "eternal feminine" — with the air of a foreign visitor, with the air of devotion to some peculiar cult. She has very high-heeled boots; she shows a leg, she has a short skirt with a peculiar hang, due no doubt to mysteries about the waist; she wears a comic little hat over one brow; there is something of Columbine about her, something of the Watteau shepherdess, something of a vivandiere, something of every age but the present age. Her face, subject to the strange dictates of the mode, is smooth like the back of a spoon, with small features and little whisker-like curls before the ears such as butcher-boys used to wear half a century ago. Even so, she dare not do this thing alone. Something in khaki is with her, to justify her. You are to understand that this strange rig is for seeing him off or giving him a good time during his leave. Sometimes she is quite elderly, sometimes nothing khaki is to be got, and the pretence that this is desired of her wears thin. Still, the type will out.

She does not pass with impunity, the last exponent of true feminine charm. The vulgar, the street boy, have evolved one of those strange sayings that have the air of being fragments from some lost and forgotten chant:

"She's the Army Contractor's Only Daughter,
Spending it now."

Or simply, "Spending it now."

She does not pass with impunity, but she passes. She makes her stilted passage across the arena upon which the new womanhood of Western Europe shows its worth. It is an exit. There is likely to be something like a truce in the fashions throughout Europe for some years. It is in America if anywhere that the holy fires of smartness and the fashion will be kept alive....

And so we come to prophecy.

I do not believe that this invasion by women of a hundred employments hitherto closed to them is a temporary arrangement that will be reversed after the war. It is a thing that was going on, very slowly, it is true, and against much prejudice and opposition, before the war, but it was going on; it is in the nature of things. These women no doubt enter these employments as substitutes, but not usually as inferior substitutes; in quite a number of cases they are as good as men, and in many they are not underselling, they are drawing men's pay. What reason is there to suppose that they will relapse into a state of superfluous energy after the war? The war has merely brought about, with the rapidity of a landslide, a state of affairs for which the world was ripe. The world after the war will have to adjust itself to this extension of women's employment, and to this increase in the proportion of self-respecting, self-supporting women.

Contributing very largely to the establishment of this greatly enlarged class of independent women will be the great shortage for the next decade of marriageable men, due to the killing and disablement of the war. The women of the next decades will not only be able to get along economically without marriage, but they will find it much more difficult to marry. It will also probably be a period in which a rise in prices may, as it usually does, precede the compensating rise in wages. It may be that for some years it will be more difficult to maintain a family. This will be a third factor in the fixation of this class of bachelor women.

Various writers, brooding over the coming shortage of men, have

jumped to the conclusion that polygamy is among the probabilities of the near future. They write in terms of real or affected alarm for which there is no justification; they wallow in visions of Germany "legalising" polygamy, and see Berlin seeking recuperation, in man power by converting herself into another Salt Lake City. But I do not think that Germany, in the face of the economic ring that the Allies will certainly draw about her, is likely to desire a very great increase in population for the next few years; I do not see any great possibility of a specially rich class capable of maintaining numerous wives being sustained by the impoverished and indebted world of Europe, nor the sources from which a supply of women preferring to become constituents in a polygamous constellation rather than self-supporting freewomen is to be derived.

The temperamental dislike of intelligent women to polygamy is at least as strong as a man's objection to polyandry. Polygamy, open or hidden, flourishes widely only where there are women to be bought. Moreover, there are considerable obstacles in religion and custom to be overcome by the innovating polygamist — even in Germany. It might mean a breach of the present good relations between Germany and the Vatican. The relative inferiority of the tradition of the German to that of most other European women, its relative disposition towards feminine servitude, is no doubt a consideration on the other scale of this discussion, but I do not think it is one heavy enough to tilt back the beam.

So far from a great number of men becoming polygamists, I think it would be possible to show cause for supposing that an increasing proportion will cease even to be monogamists. The romantic excitements of the war have produced a temporary rise in the British marriage rate; but before the war it had been falling slowly and the average age at marriage had been rising, and it is quite possible that this process will be presently resumed and, as a new generation grows up to restore the balance of the sexes, accelerated.

We conclude, therefore, that this increase in the class of economically independent bachelor women that is now taking place is a permanent increase. It is probably being reinforced by a considerable number of war widows who will not remarry. We have to consider in what directions this mass of capable, intelligent,

energetic, undomesticated freewomen is likely to develop, what its effect will be on social usage, and particularly how it will react upon the lives of the married women about them. Because, as we have already pointed out in this chapter, the release of feminine energy upon which the feminist problem depends is twofold, being due not only to the increased unmarriedness of women through the disproportion of the sexes and the rise in the age of marriage, but also to the decreased absorption of married women in domestic duties. A woman, from the point of view of this discussion, is not "married and done for," as she used to be. She is not so extensively and completely married. Her large and increasing leisure remains in the problem.

The influence of this coming body of freewomen upon the general social atmosphere will be, I venture to think, liberalising and relaxing in certain directions and very bracing in others. This new type of women will want to go about freely without an escort, to be free to travel alone, take rooms in hotels, sit in restaurants, and so forth. Now, as the women of the past decade showed, there are for a woman two quite antagonistic ways of going about alone. Nothing showed the duplicate nature of the suffragist movement more than the great variety of deportment of women in the London streets during that time. There were types that dressed neatly and quietly and went upon their business with intent and preoccupied faces. Their intention was to mingle as unobtrusively as possible into the stream of business, to be as far as possible for the ordinary purposes of traffic "men in a world of men." A man could speak to such women as he spoke to another man, without suspicion, could, for example, ask his way and be directed without being charged with annoying or accosting a delicate female.

At the other extreme there was a type of young woman who came into the streets like something precious that has got loose. It dressed itself as feminine loveliness; it carried sex like a banner and like a challenge. Its mind was fully prepared by the Pankhurst literature for insult. It swept past distressed manhood imputing motives. It was pure hareem, and the perplexed masculine intelligence could never determine whether it was out for a demonstration or whether it was out for a spree. Its motives in thus marching across the path of

feminine emancipation were probably more complicated and confused than that alternative suggests, and sheer vanity abounded in the mixture. But undoubtedly that extremity is the vanishing extremity of these things. The new freewoman is going to be a grave and capable being, soberly dressed, and imposing her own decency and neutrality of behaviour upon the men she meets. And along the line of sober costume and simple and restrained behaviour that the freewoman is marking out, the married woman will also escape to new measures of freedom.

I do not believe that among women of the same social origins and the same educational quality there can exist side by side entirely distinct schools of costume, deportment, and behaviour based on entirely divergent views of life. I do not think that men can be trained to differentiate between different sorts of women, sorts of women they will often be meeting simultaneously, and to treat this one with frankness and fellowship and that one with awe passion and romantic old-world gallantry. All sorts of intermediate types — the majority of women will be intermediate types — will complicate the problem. This conflict of the citizen-woman ideal with the loveliness-woman ideal, which was breaking out very plainly in the British suffrage movement before the war, will certainly return after the war, and I have little doubt which way the issue will fall. The human being is going to carry it against the sexual being. The struggle is going to be extensive and various and prolonged, but in the serious years ahead the serious type must, I feel, win. The plain, well-made dress will oust the ribbon and the decolletage.

In every way the war is accelerating the emancipation of women from sexual specialisation. It is facilitating their economic emancipation. It is liberating types that will inevitably destroy both the "atmosphere of gallantry" which is such a bar to friendliness between people of opposite sexes and that atmosphere of hostile distrust which is its counterpart in the minds of the over-sexual suffragettes. It is arresting the change of fashions and simplifying manners.

In another way also it is working to the same end. That fall in the birth-rate which has been so marked a feature in the social development of all modern states has become much more perceptible

since the war began to tell upon domestic comfort. There is a full-cradle agitation going on in Germany to check this decline; German mothers are being urged not to leave the Crown Prince of 1930 or 1940 without the necessary material for glory at some fresh Battle of Verdun. I doubt the zeal of their response. But everywhere the war signifies economic stress which must necessarily continue long after the war is over, and in the present state of knowledge that stress means fewer children. The family, already light, will grow lighter. This means that marriage, although it may be by no means less emotionally sacred, will become a lighter thing.

Once, to be married was a woman's whole career. Household cares, a dozen children, and she was consumed. All her romances ended in marriage. All a decent man's romance ended there, too. She proliferated and he toiled, and when the married couple had brought up some of their children and buried the others, and blessed their first grandchildren, life was over.

Now, to be married is an incident in a woman's career, as in a man's. There is not the same necessity of that household, not the same close tie; the married woman remains partially a freewoman and assimilates herself to the freewoman. There is an increasing disposition to group solitary children and to delegate their care to specially qualified people, and this is likely to increase, because the high earning power of young women will incline them to entrust their children to others, and because a shortage of men and an excess of widows will supply other women willing to undertake that care. The more foolish women will take these releases as a release into levity, but the common sense of the newer types of women will come to the help of men in recognising the intolerable nuisance of this prolongation of flirting and charming on the part of people who have had what should be a satisfying love.

Nor will there be much wealth or superfluity to make levity possible and desirable. Winsome and weak womanhood will be told bluntly by men and women alike that it is a bore. The frou-frou of skirts, the delicate mysteries of the toilette, will cease to thrill any but the very young men. Marriage, deprived of its bonds of material necessity, will demand a closer and closer companionship as its justification and excuse. A marriage that does not ripen into a close

personal friendship between two equals will be regarded with increasing definiteness as an unsatisfactory marriage.

These things are not stated here as being desirable or undesirable. This is merely an attempt to estimate the drift and tendency of the time as it has been accentuated by the war. It works out to the realisation that marriage is likely to count for less and less as a state and for more and more as a personal relationship. It is likely to be an affair of diminishing public and increasing private importance. People who marry are likely to remain, so far as practical ends go, more detached and separable. The essential link will be the love and affection and not the home.

With that go certain logical consequences. The first is that the circumstances of the unmarried mother will resemble more than they have hitherto done those of many married mothers; the harsh lines once drawn between them will dissolve. This will fall in with the long manifest tendency in modern society to lighten the disadvantages (in the case of legacy duties, for example) and stigma laid upon illegitimate children. And a type of marriage where personal compatibility has come to be esteemed the fundamental thing will be altogether more amenable to divorce than the old union which was based upon the kitchen and the nursery, and the absence of any care, education, or security for children beyond the range of the parental household. Marriage will not only be lighter, but more dissoluble.

To summarise all that has gone before, this war is accelerating rather than deflecting the stream of tendency, and is bringing us rapidly to a state of affairs in which women will be much more definitely independent of their sexual status, much less hampered in their self-development, and much more nearly equal to men than has ever been known before in the whole history of mankind....

IX. THE NEW MAP OF EUROPE

Section 1

In this chapter it is proposed to embark upon what may seem now, with the Great War still in progress and still undecided, the most hopeless of all prophetic adventures. This is to speculate upon the redrawing of the map of Europe after the war. But because the detailed happenings and exact circumstances of the ending of the war are uncertain, they need not alter the inevitable broad conclusion. I have already discussed that conclusion, and pointed out that the war has become essentially a war of mutual exhaustion. This does not mean, as some hasty readers may assume, that I foretell a "draw." We may be all white and staggering, but Germany is, I believe, fated to go down first. She will make the first advances towards peace; she will ultimately admit defeat.

But I do want to insist that by that time every belligerent, and not simply Germany, will be exhausted to a pitch of extreme reasonableness. There will be no power left as Germany was left in 1871, in a state of "freshness" and a dictatorial attitude. That is to say they will all be gravitating, not to triumphs, but to such a settlement as seems to promise the maximum of equilibrium in the future.

If towards the end of the war the United States should decide, after all, to abandon their present attitude of superior comment and throw their weight in favour of such a settlement as would make the recrudescence of militarism impossible, the general exhaustion may give America a relative importance far beyond any influence she could exert at the present time. In the end, America may have the power to insist upon almost vital conditions in the settlement; though whether she will have the imaginative force and will is, of course, quite another question.

And before I go on to speculate about the actual settlement, there are one or two generalisations that it may be interesting to try over. Law is a thin wash that we paint over the firm outlines of reality, and the treaties and agreements of emperors and kings and statesmen have little of the permanence of certain more fundamental human realities. I was looking the other day at Sir Mark Sykes' "The Caliph's Inheritance," which contains a series of coloured maps of

the political boundaries of south-western Asia for the last three thousand years. The shapes and colours come and go — now it is Persia, now it is Macedonia, now the Eastern Empire, now the Arab, now the Turk who is ascendant. The colours change as if they were in a kaleidoscope; they advance, recede, split, vanish. But through all that time there exists obstinately an Armenia, an essential Persia, an Arabia; they, too, advance or recede a little. I do not claim that they are eternal things, but they are far more permanent things than any rulers or empires; they are rooted to the ground by a peasantry, by a physical and temperamental attitude. Apart from political maps of mankind, there are natural maps of mankind. I find it, too, in Europe; the monarchs splash the water and break up the mirror in endless strange shapes; nevertheless, always it is tending back to its enduring forms; always it is gravitating back to a Spain, to a Gaul, to an Italy, to a Serbo-Croatia, to a Bulgaria, to a Germany, to a Poland. Poland and Armenia and Egypt destroyed, subjugated, invincible, I would take as typical of what I mean by the natural map of mankind.

Let me repeat again that I do not assert there is an eternal map. It does change; there have been times — the European settlement of America and Siberia, for example, the Arabic sweep across North Africa, the invasion of Britain by the Low German peoples — when it has changed very considerably in a century or so; but at its swiftest it still takes generations to change. The gentlemen who used to sit in conferences and diets, and divide up the world ever and again before the nineteenth century, never realised this. It is only within the last hundred years that mankind has begun to grasp the fact that one of the first laws of political stability is to draw your political boundaries along the lines of the natural map of mankind.

Now the nineteenth century phrased this conception by talking about the "principle of nationality." Such interesting survivals of the nineteenth century as Mr. C.R. Buxton still talk of settling human affairs by that "principle." But unhappily for him the world is not so simply divided. There are tribal regions with no national sense. There are extensive regions of the earth's surface where the population is not homogeneous, where people of different languages or different incompatible creeds live village against village, a kind of human emulsion, incapable of any true mixture or unity. Consider, for

example, Central Africa, Tyrone, Albania, Bombay, Constantinople or Transylvania. Here are regions and cities with either no nationality or with as much nationality as a patchwork quilt has colour....

Now so far as the homogeneous regions of the world go, I am quite prepared to sustain the thesis that they can only be tranquil, they can only develop their possibilities freely and be harmless to their neighbours, when they are governed by local men, by men of the local race, religion and tradition, and with a form of government that, unlike a monarchy or a plutocracy, does not crystallise commercial or national ambition. So far I go with those who would appeal to the "principle of nationality."

But I would stipulate, further, that it would enormously increase the stability of the arrangement if such "nations" could be grouped together into "United States" wherever there were possibilities of inter-state rivalries and commercial friction. Where, however, one deals with a region of mixed nationality, there is need of a subtler system of adjustments. Such a system has already been worked out in the case of Switzerland, where we have the community not in countries but cantons, each with its own religion, its culture and self-government, and all at peace under a polyglot and impartial common government. It is as plain as daylight to anyone who is not blinded by patriotic or private interests that such a country as Albania, which is mono-lingual indeed, but hopelessly divided religiously, will never be tranquil, never contented, unless it is under a cantonal system, and that the only solution of the Irish difficulty along the belt between Ulster and Catholic Ireland lies in the same arrangement.

Then; thirdly, there are the regions and cities possessing no nationality, such as Constantinople or Bombay, which manifestly appertain not to one nation but many; the former to all the Black Sea nations, the latter to all India. Disregarding ambitions and traditions, it is fairly obvious that such international places would be best under the joint control of, and form a basis of union between, all the peoples affected.

Now it is suggested here that upon these threefold lines it is possible to work out a map of the world of maximum contentment and stability, and that there will be a gravitation of all other arrangements, all empires and leagues and what not, towards this

rational and natural map of mankind. This does not imply that that map will ultimately assert itself, but that it will always be tending to assert itself. It will obsess ostensible politics.

I do not pretend to know with any degree of certainty what peculiar forms of muddle and aggression may not record themselves upon the maps of 2200; I do not certainly know whether mankind will be better off or worse off then, more or less civilised; but I do know, with a very considerable degree of certainty, that in A.D. 2200 there will still be a France, an Ireland, a Germany, a Jugo-Slav region, a Constantinople, a Rajputana, and a Bengal. I do not mean that these are absolutely fixed things; they may have receded or expanded. But these are the more permanent things; these are the field, the groundwork, the basic reality; these are fundamental forces over which play the ambitions, treacheries, delusions, traditions, tyrannies of international politics. All boundaries will tend to reveal these fundamental forms as all clothing tends to reveal the body. You may hide the waist; you will only reveal the shoulders the more. You may mask, you may muffle the body; it is still alive inside, and the ultimate determining thing.

And, having premised this much, it is possible to take up the problem of the peace of 1917 or 1918, or whenever it is to be, with some sense of its limitations and superficiality.

Section 2

We have already hazarded the prophecy that after a long war of general exhaustion Germany will be the first to realise defeat. This does not mean that she will surrender unconditionally, but that she will be reduced to bargaining to see how much she must surrender, and what she may hold. It is my impression that she will be deserted by Bulgaria, and that Turkey will be out of the fighting before the end. But these are chancy matters. Against Germany there will certainly be the three great allies, France, Russia and Britain, and almost certainly Japan will be with them. The four will probably have got to a very complete and detailed understanding among themselves. Italy — in, I fear, a slightly detached spirit — will sit at the board. Hungary will be present, sitting, so to speak, amidst the decayed remains of Austria. Roumania, a little out of breath through hurrying at the last, may be present as the latest ally of Italy. The European neutrals will be at least present in spirit; their desires will be acutely felt; but it is doubtful if the United States will count for all that they might in the decision. Such weight as America chooses to exercise — would that she would choose to exercise more! — will probably be on the side of the rational and natural settlement of the world.

Now the most important thing of all at this settlement will be the temper and nature of the Germany with which the Allies will be dealing.

Let us not be blinded by the passions of war into confusing a people with its government and the artificial Kultur of a brief century. There is a Germany, great and civilised, a decent and admirable people, masked by Imperialism, blinded by the vanity of the easy victories of half a century ago, wrapped in illusion. How far will she be chastened and disillusioned by the end of this war?

The terms of peace depend enormously upon the answer to that question. If we take the extremest possibility, and suppose a revolution in Germany or in South Germany, and the replacement of the Hohenzollerns in all or part of Germany by a Republic, then I am convinced that for republican Germany there would be not simply

forgiveness, but a warm welcome back to the comity of nations. The French, British, Belgians and Italians, and every civilised force in Russia would tumble over one another in their eager greeting of this return to sanity.

If we suppose a less extreme but more possible revolution, taking the form of an inquiry into the sanity of the Kaiser and his eldest son, and the establishment of constitutional safeguards for the future, that also would bring about an extraordinary modification of the resolution of the Pledged Allies. But no ending to this war, no sort of settlement, will destroy the antipathy of the civilised peoples for the violent, pretentious, sentimental and cowardly imperialism that has so far dominated Germany. All Europe outside Germany now hates and dreads the Hohenzollerns. No treaty of peace can end that hate, and so long as Germany sees fit to identify herself with Hohenzollern dreams of empire and a warfare of massacre and assassination, there must be war henceforth, open, or but thinly masked, against Germany. It will be but the elementary common sense of the situation for all the Allies to plan tariffs, exclusions, special laws against German shipping and shareholders and immigrants for so long a period as every German remains a potential servant of that system.

Whatever Germany may think of the Hohenzollerns, the world outside Germany regards them as the embodiment of homicidal nationalism. And the settlement of Europe after the war, if it is to be a settlement with the Hohenzollerns and not with the German people, must include the virtual disarming of those robber murderers against any renewal of their attack. It would be the most obvious folly to stop anywhere short of that. With Germany we would welcome peace to-morrow; we would welcome her shipping on the seas and her flag about the world; against the Hohenzollerns it must obviously be war to the bitter end.

But the ultimate of all sane European policy, as distinguished from oligarchic and dynastic foolery, is the establishment of the natural map of Europe. There exists no school of thought that can claim a moment's consideration among the Allies which aims at the disintegration of the essential Germany or the subjugation of any Germans to an alien rule. Nor does anyone grudge Germany wealth,

trade, shipping, or anything else that goes with the politician's phrase of "legitimate expansion" for its own sake. If we do now set our minds to deprive Germany of these things in their fullness, it is in exactly the same spirit as that in which one might remove that legitimate and peaceful implement, a bread knife, from the hand of a homicidal maniac. Let but Germany cure herself of her Hohenzollern taint, and the world will grudge her wealth and economic pre-eminence as little as it grudges wealth and economic pre-eminence to the United States.

Now the probabilities of a German revolution open questions too complex and subtle for our present speculation. I would merely remark in passing that in Great Britain at least those possibilities seem to me to be enormously underrated. For our present purpose it will be most convenient to indicate a sort of maximum and minimum, depending upon the decision of Germany to be entirely Hohenzollern or wholly or in part European. But in either case we are going to assume that it is Germany which has been most exhausted by the war, and which is seeking peace from the Allies, who have also, we will assume, excellent internal reasons for desiring it.

With the Hohenzollerns it is mere nonsense to dream of any enduring peace, but whether we are making a lasting and friendly peace with Germany or merely a sort of truce of military operations that will be no truce in the economic war against Hohenzollern resources, the same essential idea will, I think, guide all the peace-desiring Powers. They will try to draw the boundaries as near as they can to those of the natural map of mankind.

Then, writing as an Englishman, my first thought of the European map is naturally of Belgium. Only absolute smashing defeat could force either Britain or France to consent to anything short of the complete restoration of Belgium. Rather than give that consent they will both carry the war to at present undreamt-of extremities. Belgium must be restored; her neutrality must be replaced by a defensive alliance with her two Western Allies; and if the world has still to reckon with Hohenzollerns, then her frontier must be thrust forward into the adjacent French-speaking country so as to minimise the chances of any second surprise.

It is manifest that every frontier that gives upon the Hohenzollerns must henceforth be entrenched line behind line, and held permanently by a garrison ready for any treachery, and it becomes of primary importance that the Franco-Belgian line should be as short and strong as possible. Aix, which Germany has made a mere jumping-off place for aggressions, should clearly be held by Belgium against a Hohenzollern Empire, and the fortified and fiscal frontier would run from it southward to include the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, with its French sympathies and traditions, in the permanent alliance. It is quite impossible to leave this ambiguous territory as it was before the war, with its railway in German hands and its postal and telegraphic service (since 1913) under Hohenzollern control. It is quite impossible to hand over this strongly anti-Prussian population to Hohenzollern masters.

But an Englishman must needs write with diffidence upon this question of the Western boundary. It is clear that all the boundaries of 1914 from Aix to Bale are a part of ancient history. No "as you were" is possible there. And it is not the business of anyone in Great Britain to redraw them. That task on our side lies between France and Belgium. The business of Great Britain in the matter is as plain as daylight. It is to support to her last man and her last ounce of gold those new boundaries her allies consider essential to their comfort and security.

But I do not see how France, unless she is really convinced she is beaten, can content herself with anything less than a strong Franco-Belgian frontier from Aix, that will take in at least Metz and Saarburg. She knows best the psychology of the lost provinces, and what amount of annexation will spell weakness or strength. If she demands all Alsace-Lorraine back from the Hohenzollerns, British opinion is resolved to support her, and to go through with this struggle until she gets it. To guess at the direction of the new line is not to express a British opinion, but to speculate upon the opinion of France. After the experience of Luxembourg and Belgium no one now dreams of a neutralised buffer State. What does not become French or Belgian of the Rhineland will remain German — for ever. That is perhaps conceivable, for example, of Strassburg and the low-lying parts of Alsace. I do not know enough to do more than guess.

It is conceivable, but I do not think that it is probable. I think the probability lies in the other direction. This war of exhaustion may be going on for a year or so more, but the end will be the thrusting in of the too extended German lines. The longer and bloodier the job is, the grimmer will be the determination of the Pledged Allies to exact a recompense. If the Germans offer peace while they still hold some part of Belgium, there will be dealings. If they wait until the French are in the Palatinate, then I doubt if the French will consent to go again. There will be no possible advantage to Germany in a war of resistance once the scale of her fortunes begins to sink....

It is when we turn to the east of Germany that the map-drawing becomes really animated. Here is the region of great decisions. The natural map shows a line of obstinately non-German communities, stretching nearly from the Baltic to the Adriatic. There are Poland, Bohemia (with her kindred Slovaks), the Magyars, and the Jugo-Serbs. In a second line come the Great and Little Russians, the Roumanians, and the Bulgarians. And here both Great Britain and France must defer to the wishes of their two allies, Russia and Italy. Neither of these countries has expressed inflexible intentions, and the situation has none of the inevitable quality of the Western line. Except for the Tsar's promise of autonomy to Poland, nothing has been promised. On the Western line there are only two possibilities that I can see: the Aix-Bale boundary, or the sickness and death of France. On the Eastern line nothing is fated. There seems to be enormous scope for bargaining over all this field, and here it is that the chances of compensations and consolations for Germany are to be found.

Let us first consider the case for Poland. The way to a reunited Poland seems to me a particularly difficult one. The perplexity arises out of the crime of the original partition; whichever side emerges with an effect of victory must needs give up territory if an autonomous Poland is to reappear. A victorious Germany would probably reconstitute the Duchy of Warsaw under a German prince; an entirely victorious Russia would probably rejoin Posen to Russian Poland and the Polish fragment of Galicia, and create a dependent Polish kingdom under the Tsar. Neither project would be received with unstinted delight by the Poles, but either would probably be

acceptable to a certain section of them. Disregarding the dim feelings of the peasantry, Austrian Poland would probably be the most willing to retain a connection with its old rulers. The Habsburgs have least estranged the Poles. The Cracow district is the only section of Poland which has been at all reconciled to foreign control; it is the most autonomous and contented of the fragments.

It is doubtful how far national unanimity is any longer possible between the three Polish fragments. Like most English writers, I receive a considerable amount of printed matter from various schools of Polish patriotism, and wide divergences of spirit and intention appear. A weak, divided and politically isolated Poland of twelve or fifteen million people, under some puppet adventurer king set up between the Hohenzollerns and the Tsardom, does not promise much happiness for the Poles or much security for the peace of the world. An entirely independent Poland will be a feverish field of international intrigue — intrigue to which the fatal Polish temperament lends itself all too readily; it may be a battlefield again within five-and-twenty years. I think, if I were a patriotic Pole, I should determine to be a Slav at any cost, and make the best of Russia; ally myself with all her liberal tendencies, and rise or fall with her. And I should do my utmost in a field where at present too little has been done to establish understandings and lay the foundations of a future alliance with the Czech-Slovak community to the south. But, then, I am not a Pole, but a Western European with a strong liking for the Russians. I am democratic and scientific, and the Poles I have met are Catholic and aristocratic and romantic, and all sorts of difficult things that must make co-operation with them on the part of Russians, Ruthenian peasants, Czechs, and, indeed, other Poles, slow and insecure. I doubt if either Germany or Russia wants to incorporate more Poles — Russia more particularly, which has all Siberia over which to breed Russians — and I am inclined to think that there is a probability that the end of this war may find Poland still divided, and with boundary lines running across her not materially different from those of 1914. That is, I think, an undesirable probability, but until the Polish mind qualifies its desire for absolute independence with a determination to orient itself definitely to some larger political mass, it remains one that has to be

considered.

But the future of Poland is not really separate from that of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, nor is that again to be dealt with apart from that of the Balkans. From Danzig to the Morea there runs across Europe a series of distinctive peoples, each too intensely different and national to be absorbed and assimilated by either of their greater neighbours, Germany or Russia, and each relatively too small to stand securely alone. None have shaken themselves free from monarchical traditions; each may become an easy prey to dynastic follies and the aggressive obsessions of diplomacy. Centuries of bloody rearrangement may lie before this East Central belt of Europe.

To the liberal idealist the thought of a possible Swiss system or group of Swiss systems comes readily to mind. One thinks of a grouping of groups of Republics, building up a United States of Eastern Europe. But neither Hohenzollerns nor Tsar would welcome that. The arm of democratic France is not long enough to reach to help forward such a development, and Great Britain is never sure whether she is a "Crowned Republic" or a Germanic monarchy. Hitherto in the Balkans she has lent her influence chiefly to setting up those treacherous little German kings who have rewarded her so ill. The national monarchs of Serbia and Montenegro have alone kept faith with civilisation. I doubt, however, if Great Britain will go on with that dynastic policy. She herself is upon the eve of profound changes of spirit and internal organisation. But whenever one thinks of the possibilities of Republican development in Europe as an outcome of this war, it is to realise the disastrous indifference of America to the essentials of the European situation. The United States of America could exert an enormous influence at the close of the war in the direction of a liberal settlement and of liberal institutions.... They will, I fear, do nothing of the sort.

It is here that the possibility of some internal change in Germany becomes of such supreme importance. The Hohenzollern Imperialism towers like the black threat of a new Caesarism over all the world. It may tower for some centuries; it may vanish to-morrow. A German revolution may destroy it; a small group of lunacy commissioners may fold it up and put it away. But should it go, it

would at least take with it nearly every crown between Hamburg and Constantinople. The German kings would vanish like a wisp of smoke. Suppose a German revolution and a correlated step forward towards liberal institutions on the part of Russia, then the whole stage of Eastern Europe would clear as fever goes out of a man. This age of international elbowing and jostling, of intrigue and diplomacy, of wars, massacres, deportations *en masse*, and the continual fluctuation of irrational boundaries would come to an end forthwith.

So sweeping a change is the extreme possibility. The probability is of something less lucid and more prosaic; of a discussion of diplomatists; of patched arrangements. But even under these circumstances the whole Eastern European situation is so fluid and little controlled by any plain necessity, that there will be enormous scope for any individual statesman of imagination and force of will.

There have recently been revelations, more or less trustworthy, of German schemes for a rearrangement of Eastern Europe. They implied a German victory. Bohemia, Poland, Galicia and Ruthenia were to make a Habsburg-ruled State from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The Jugo-Slav and the Magyar were to be linked (uneasy bedfellows) into a second kingdom, also Habsburg ruled; Austria was to come into the German Empire as a third Habsburg dukedom or kingdom; Roumania, Bulgaria and Greece were to continue as independent Powers, German ruled. Recently German proposals published in America have shown a disposition to admit the claims of Roumania to the Wallachian districts of Transylvania.

Evidently the urgent need to create kingdoms or confederations larger than any such single States as the natural map supplies, is manifest to both sides. If Germany, Italy and Russia can come to any sort of general agreement in these matters, their arrangements will be a matter of secondary importance to the Western Allies — saving our duty to Serbia and Montenegro and their rulers. Russia may not find the German idea of a Polish *plus* Bohemian border State so very distasteful, provided that the ruler is not a German; Germany may find the idea still tolerable if the ruler is not the Tsar.

The destiny of the Serbo-Croatian future lies largely in the hands of Italy and Bulgaria. Bulgaria was not in this war at the beginning, and she may not be in it at the end. Her King is neither immortal nor

irreplaceable. Her desire now must be largely to retain her winnings in Macedonia, and keep the frontier posts of a too embracing Germany as far off as possible. She has nothing to gain and much to fear from Roumania and Greece. Her present relations with Turkey are unnatural. She has everything to gain from a prompt recovery of the friendship of Italy and the sea Powers. A friendly Serbo-Croatian buffer State against Germany will probably be of equal comfort in the future to Italy and Bulgaria; more especially if Italy has pushed down the Adriatic coast along the line of the former Venetian possessions. Serbia has been overrun, but never were the convergent forces of adjacent interests so clearly in favour of her recuperation. The possibility of Italy and that strange Latin outlier, Roumania, joining hands through an allied and friendly Serbia must be very present in Italian thought. The allied conception of the land route from the West and America to Bagdad and India is by Mont Cenis, Trieste, Serbia and Constantinople, as their North European line to India is through Russia by Baku.

And that brings us to Constantinople.

Constantinople is not a national city; it is now, and it has always been, an artificial cosmopolis, and Constantinople and the Dardanelles are essentially the gate of the Black Sea. It is to Russia that the waterway is of supreme importance. Any other Power upon it can strangle Russia; Russia, possessing it, is capable of very little harm to any other country.

Roumania is the next most interested country. But Roumania can reach up the Danube and through Bulgaria, Serbia or Hungary to the outer world. Her greatest trade will always be with Central Europe. For generations the Turks held Thrace and Anatolia before they secured Constantinople. The Turk can exist without Constantinople; he is at his best outside Constantinople; the fall of Constantinople was the beginning of his decay. He sat down there and corrupted. His career was at an end. I confess that I find a bias in my mind for a Russian ownership of Constantinople. I think that if she does not get it now her gravitation towards it in the future will be so great as to cause fresh wars. Somewhere she must get to open sea, and if it is not through Constantinople then her line must lie either through a dependent Armenia thrust down to the coast of the Levant or, least

probable and least desirable of all, through the Persian Gulf. The Constantinople route is the most natural and least controversial of these. With the dwindling of the Turkish power, the Turks at Constantinople become more and more like robber knights levying toll at the pass. I can imagine Russia making enormous concessions in Poland, for example, accepting retrocessions, and conceding autonomy, rather than foregoing her ancient destiny upon the Bosphorus. I believe she will fight on along the Black Sea coast until she gets there.

This, I think, is Russia's fundamental end, without which no peace is worth having, as the liberation of Belgium and the satisfaction of France is the fundamental end of Great Britain, and Trieste-Fiume is the fundamental end of Italy.

But for all the lands that lie between Constantinople and West Prussia there are no absolutely fundamental ends; that is the land of *quid pro quo*; that is where the dealing will be done. Serbia must be restored and the Croats liberated; sooner or later the south Slav state will insist upon itself; but, except for that, I see no impossibility in the German dream of three kingdoms to take the place of Austro-Hungary, nor even in a southward extension of the Hohenzollern Empire to embrace the German one of the three. If the Austrians have a passion for Prussian "kultur," it is not for us to restrain it. Austrian, Saxon, Bavarian, Hanoverian and Prussian must adjust their own differences. Hungary would be naturally Habsburg; is, in fact, now essentially Habsburg, more Habsburg than Austria, and essentially anti-Slav. Her gravitation to the Central Powers seems inevitable.

Whether the Polish-Czech combination would be a Habsburg kingdom at all is another matter. Only if, after all, the Allies are far less successful than they have now every reason to hope would that become possible.

The gravitation of that west Slav state to the Central European system or to Russia will, I think, be the only real measure of ultimate success or failure in this war. I think it narrows down to that so far as Europe is concerned. Most of the other things are inevitable. Such, it seems to me, is the most open possibility in the European map in the years immediately before us.

If by dying I could assure the end of the Hohenzollern Empire tomorrow I would gladly do it. But I have, as a balancing prophet, to face the high probability of its outliving me for some generations. It is to me a deplorable probability. Far rather would I anticipate Germany quit of her eagles and Hohenzollerns, and ready to take her place as the leading Power of the United States of Europe.

X. THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE, BRITAIN, AND RUSSIA

Section 1

In this chapter I propose to speculate a little about the future development of these four great States, whose destinies are likely to be much more closely interwoven than their past histories have been. I believe that the stars in their courses tend to draw these States together into a dominant peace alliance, maintaining the peace of the world. There may be other stars in that constellation, Italy, Japan, a confederated Latin America, for example; I do not propose to deal with that possibility now, but only to dwell upon the development of understandings and common aims between France, Russia, and the English-speaking States.

They have all shared one common experience during the last two years; they have had an enormous loss of self-sufficiency. This has been particularly the case with the United States of America. At the beginning of this war, the United States were still possessed by the glorious illusion that they were aloof from general international politics, that they needed no allies and need fear no enemies, that they constituted a sort of asylum from war and all the bitter stresses and hostilities of the old world. Themselves secure, they could intervene with grim resolution to protect their citizens all over the world. Had they not bombarded Algiers?...

I remember that soon after the outbreak of the war I lunched at the Savoy Hotel in London when it was crammed with Americans suddenly swept out of Europe by the storm. My host happened to be a man of some diplomatic standing, and several of them came and talked to him. They were full of these old-world ideas of American immunity. Their indignation was comical even at the time. Some of them had been hustled; some had lost their luggage in Germany. When, they asked, was it to be returned to them? Some seemed to be under the impression that, war or no war, an American tourist had a perfect right to travel about in the Vosges or up and down the Rhine just as he thought fit. They thought he had just to wave a little American flag, and the referee would blow a whistle and hold up the battle until he had got by safely. One family had actually been careering about in a cart — their automobile seized — between the

closing lines of French and Germans, brightly unaware of the disrespect of bursting shells for American nationality.... Since those days the American nation has lived politically a hundred years.

The people of the United States have shed their delusion that there is an Eastern and a Western hemisphere, and that nothing can ever pass between them but immigrants and tourists and trade, and realised that this world is one round globe that gets smaller and smaller every decade if you measure it by day's journeys. They are only going over the lesson the British have learnt in the last score or so of years. This is one world and bayonets are a crop that spreads. Let them gather and seed, it matters not how far from you, and a time will come when they will be sticking up under your nose. There is no real peace but the peace of the whole world, and that is only to be kept by the whole world resisting and suppressing aggression wherever it arises. To anyone who watches the American Press, this realisation has been more and more manifest. From dreams of aloofness and ineffable superiority, America comes round very rapidly to a conception of an active participation in the difficult business of statecraft. She is thinking of alliances, of throwing her weight and influence upon the side of law and security. No longer a political Thoreau in the woods, a sort of vegetarian recluse among nations, a being of negative virtues and unpremeditated superiorities, she girds herself for a manly part in the toilsome world of men.

So far as I can judge, the American mind is eminently free from any sentimental leaning towards the British. Americans have a traditional hatred of the Hanoverian monarchy, and a democratic disbelief in autocracy. They are far more acutely aware of differences than resemblances. They suspect every Englishman of being a bit of a gentleman and a bit of a flunkey. I have never found in America anything like that feeling common in the mass of English people that prevents the use of the word "foreigner" for an American; there is nothing to reciprocate the sympathy and pride that English and Irish republicans and radicals feel for the States. Few Americans realise that there are such beings as English republicans.

What has linked Americans with the British hitherto has been very largely the common language and literature; it is only since the war began that there seems to have been any appreciable

development of fraternal feeling. And that has been not so much discovery of a mutual affection as the realisation of a far closer community of essential thought and purpose than has hitherto been suspected. The Americans, after thinking the matter out with great frankness and vigour, do believe that Britain is on the whole fighting against aggression and not for profit, that she is honestly backing France and Belgium against an intolerable attack, and that the Hohenzollern Empire is a thing that needs discrediting and, if possible, destroying in the interests of all humanity, Germany included.

America has made the surprising discovery that, allowing for their greater nearness, the British are thinking about these things almost exactly as Americans think about them. They follow the phases of the war in Great Britain, the strain, the blunderings, the tenacity, the onset of conscription in an essentially non-military community, with the complete understanding of a people similarly circumstanced, differing only by scale and distance. They have been through something of the sort already; they may have something of the sort happen again. It had not occurred to them hitherto how parallel we were. They begin to have inklings of how much more parallel we may presently become.

There is evidence of a real search for American affinities among the other peoples of the world; it is a new war-made feature of the thoughtful literature and journalists of America. And it is interesting to note how partial and divided these affinities must necessarily be. Historically and politically, the citizen of the United States must be drawn most closely to France. France is the one other successful modern republic; she was the instigator and friend of American liberation. With Great Britain the tie of language, the tradition of personal freedom, and the strain in the blood are powerful links. But both France and Britain are old countries, thickly populated, with a great and ancient finish and completeness, full of implicit relationships; America is by comparison crude, uninformed, explicit, a new country, still turning fresh soil, still turning over but half-explored natural resources.

The United States constitute a modern country, a country on an unprecedented scale, being organised from the very beginning on

modern lines. There is only one other such country upon the planet, and that curiously enough is parallel in climate, size, and position — Russia in Asia. Even Russia in Europe belongs rather to the newness that is American than to the tradition that is European; Harvard was founded more than half a century before Petrograd. And when I looked out of the train window on my way to Petrograd from Germany, the little towns I saw were like no European towns I had ever seen. The wooden houses, the broad unmade roads, the traffic, the winter-bitten scenery, a sort of untidy spaciousness, took my mind instantly to the country one sees in the back part of New York State as one goes from Boston to Niagara. And the reality follows the appearance.

The United States and Russia are the west and the east of the same thing; they are great modern States, developing from the beginning upon a scale that only railways make possible. France and Britain may perish in the next two centuries or they may persist, but there can be no doubt that two centuries ahead Russia and the United States will be two of the greatest masses of fairly homogeneous population on the globe.

There are no countries with whom the people of the United States are so likely to develop sympathy and a sense of common values and common interests as with these three, unless it be with the Scandinavian peoples. The Scandinavian peoples have developed a tendency to an extra-European outlook, to look west and east rather than southwardly, to be pacifist and progressive in a manner essentially American. From any close sympathy with Germany the Americans are cut off at present by the Hohenzollerns and the system of ideas that the Hohenzollerns have imposed upon German thought. So long as the Germans cling to the tawdry tradition of the Empire, so long as they profess militarism, so long as they keep up their ridiculous belief in some strange racial superiority to the rest of mankind, it is absurd to expect any co-operative feeling between them and any other great people.

The American tradition is based upon the casting off of a Germanic monarchy; it is its cardinal idea. These sturdy Republicans did not fling out the Hanoverians and their Hessian troops to prepare the path of glory for Potsdam. But except for the gash caused by the

Teutonic monarchy, there runs round the whole world a north temperate and sub-arctic zone of peoples, generally similar in complexion, physical circumstances, and intellectual and moral quality, having enormous undeveloped natural resources, and a common interest in keeping the peace while these natural resources are developed, having also a common interest in maintaining the integrity of China and preventing her development into a military power; it is a zone with the clearest prospect of a vast increase in its already enormous population, and it speaks in the main one or other of three languages, either French, Russian, or English. I believe that natural sympathy will march with the obvious possibilities of the situation in bringing the American mind to the realisation of this band of common interests and of its compatibility with the older idea of an American continent protected by a Monroe doctrine from any possibility of aggression from the monarchies of the old world.

As the old conception of isolation fades and the American mind accustoms itself to the new conception of a need of alliances and understandings to save mankind from the megalomania of races and dynasties, I believe it will turn first to the idea of keeping the seas with Britain and France, and then to this still wider idea of an understanding with the Pledged Allies that will keep the peace of the world.

Now Germany has taught the world several things, and one of the most important of these lessons is the fact that the destinies of states and peoples is no longer to be determined by the secret arrangements of diplomatists and the agreements or jealousies of kings. For fifty years Germany has been unifying the mind of her people against the world. She has obsessed them with an evil ideal, but the point we have to note is that she has succeeded in obsessing them with that ideal. No other modern country has even attempted such a moral and mental solidarity as Germany has achieved. And good ideals need, just as much as bad ones, systematic inculcation, continual open expression and restatement. Mute, mindless, or demented nations are dangerous and doomed nations. The great political conceptions that are needed to establish the peace of the world must become the common property of the mass of intelligent adults if they are to hold against the political scoundrel, the royal adventurer, the forensic

exploiter, the enemies and scatterers of mankind. The French, Americans, and English have to realise this necessity; they have to state a common will and they have to make their possession by that will understood by the Russian people, and they have to share that will with the Russian people. Beyond that there lies the still greater task or making some common system of understandings with the intellectual masses of China and India. At present, with three of these four great powers enormously preoccupied with actual warfare, there is an opportunity for guiding expression on the part of America, for a real world leadership, such as may never occur again....

So far I have been stating a situation and reviewing certain possibilities. In the past half-century the United States has been developing a great system of universities and a continental production of literature and discussion to supplement the limited Press and the New England literature of the earlier phase of the American process. It is one of the most interesting speculations in the world to everyone how far this new organisation of the American mind is capable of grasping the stupendous opportunities and appeals of the present time. The war and the great occasions that must follow the war will tax the mind and the intellectual and moral forces of the Pledged Allies enormously. How far is this new but very great and growing system of thought and learning in the United States capable of that propaganda of ideas and language, that progressive expression of a developing ideal of community, that in countries so spontaneous, so chaotic or democratic as the United States and the Pledged Allies must necessarily take the place of the organised authoritative *Kultur* of the Teutonic type of state?

As an undisguisedly patriotic Englishman, I would like to see the lead in this intellectual synthesis of the nations, that *must* be achieved if wars are to cease, undertaken by Great Britain. But I am bound to confess that in Great Britain I see neither the imaginative courage of France nor the brisk enterprise of the Americans. I see this matter as a question of peace and civilisation, but there are other baser but quite as effective reasons why America, France, and Great Britain should exert themselves to create confidences and understandings between their populations and the Russian population. There is the immediate business opportunity in Russia. There is the secondary

business opportunity in China that can best be developed as the partners rather than as the rivals of the Russians. Since the Americans are nearest, by way of the Pacific, since they are likely to have more capital and more free energy to play with than the Pledged Allies, I do on the whole incline to the belief that it is they who will yet do the pioneer work and the leading work that this opportunity demands.

Section 2

If beneath the alliances of the present war there is to grow up a system of enduring understandings that will lead to the peace of the world, there is needed as a basis for such understandings much greater facility of intellectual intercourse than exists at present. Firstly, the world needs a *lingua franca*; next, the Western peoples need to know more of the Russian language and life than they do, and thirdly, the English language needs to be made more easily accessible than it is at present. The chief obstacle to a Frenchman or Englishman learning Russian is the difficult and confusing alphabet; the chief obstacle to anyone learning English is the irrational spelling. Are people likely to overcome these very serious difficulties in the future, and, if so, how will they do it? And what prospects are there of a *lingua franca*?

Wherever one looks closely into the causes and determining influences of the great convulsions of this time, one is more and more impressed by the apparent smallness of the ultimate directing influence. It seems to me at least that it is a practically proven thing that this vast aggression of Germany is to be traced back to a general tone of court thinking and discussion in the Prussia of the eighteenth century, to the theories of a few professors and the gathering trend of German education in a certain direction. It seems to me that similarly the language teachers of to-day and to-morrow may hold in their hands the seeds of gigantic international developments in the future.

It is not a question of the skill or devotion of individual teachers so much as of the possibility of organising them upon a grand scale. An individual teacher must necessarily use the ordinary books and ordinary spelling and type of the language in which he is giving instruction; he may get a few elementary instruction books from a private publisher, specially printed for teaching purposes, but very speedily he finds himself obliged to go to the current printed matter. This, as I will immediately show, bars the most rapid and fruitful method of teaching. And in this as in most affairs, private enterprise, the individualistic system, shows itself a failure. In England, for example, the choice of Russian lesson books is poor and

unsatisfactory, and there is either no serviceable Russian-English, English-Russian school dictionary in existence, or it is published so badly as to be beyond the range of my inquiries. But a state, or a group of universities, or even a rich private association such as far-seeing American, French and British business men might be reasonably expected to form, could attack the problem of teaching a language in an altogether different fashion.

The difficulty in teaching English lies in the inconsistency of the spelling, and the consequent difficulties of pronunciation. If there were available an ample series of text-books, reading books, and books of general interest, done in a consistent phonetic type and spelling — in which the value of the letters of the phonetic system followed as far as possible the prevalent usage in Europe — the difficulty in teaching English not merely to foreigners but, as the experiments in teaching reading of the Simplified Spelling Society have proved up to the hilt, to English children can be very greatly reduced. At first the difficulty of the irrational spelling can be set on one side. The learner attacks and masters the essential language. Then afterwards he can, if he likes, go on to the orthodox spelling, which is then no harder for him to read and master than it is for an Englishman of ordinary education to read the facetious orthography of Artemus Ward or of the *Westminster Gazette* "orfis boy." The learner does one thing at a time instead of attempting, as he would otherwise have to do, two things — and they are both difficult and different and conflicting things — simultaneously.

Learning a language is one thing and memorising an illogical system of visual images — for that is what reading ordinary English spelling comes to — is quite another. A man can learn to play first chess and then bridge in half the time that these two games would require if he began by attempting simultaneous play, and exactly the same principle applies to the language problem.

These considerations lead on to the idea of a special development or sub-species of the English language for elementary teaching and foreign consumption. It would be English, very slightly simplified and regularised, and phonetically spelt. Let us call it Anglo-American. In it the propagandist power, whatever that power might be, state, university or association, would print not simply,

instruction books but a literature of cheap editions. Such a specialised simplified Anglo-American variety of English would enormously stimulate the already wide diffusion of the language, and go far to establish it as that *lingua franca* of which the world has need.

And in the same way, the phonetic alphabet adopted as the English medium could be used as the medium for instruction in French, where, as in the British Isles, Canada, North and Central Africa, and large regions of the East, it is desirable to make an English-speaking community bi-lingual. At present a book in French means nothing to an uninstructed Englishman, an English book conveys no accurate sound images to an uninstructed Frenchman. On the other hand, a French book printed on a proper phonetic system could be immediately read aloud — though of course it could not be understood — by an uninstructed Englishman. From the first he would have no difficulties with the sounds. And vice versa. Such a system of books would mean the destruction of what are, for great masses of French and English people, insurmountable difficulties on the way to bi-lingualism. Its production is a task all too colossal for any private publishers or teachers, but it is a task altogether trivial in comparison with the national value of its consequences. But whether it will ever be carried out is just one of those riddles of the jumping cat in the human brain that are most perplexing to the prophet.

The problem becomes at once graver, less hopeful, and more urgent when we take up the case of Russian. I have looked closely into this business of Russian teaching, and I am convinced that only a very, very small number of French-and English-speaking people are going to master Russian under the existing conditions of instruction. If we Westerns want to get at Russia in good earnest we must take up this Russian language problem with an imaginative courage and upon a scale of which at present I see no signs. If we do not, then the Belgians, French, Americans and English will be doing business in Russia after the war in the German language — or through a friendly German interpreter. That, I am afraid, is the probability of the case. But it need not be the case. Will and intelligence could alter all that.

What has to be done is to have Russian taught at first in a Western

phonetic type. Then it becomes a language not very much more difficult to acquire than, say, German by a Frenchman. When the learner can talk with some freedom, has a fairly full vocabulary, a phraseology, knows his verb and so on, then and then only should he take up the unfamiliar and confusing set of visual images of Russian lettering — I speak from the point of view of those who read the Latin alphabet. How confusing it may be only those who have tried it can tell. Its familiarity to the eye increases the difficulty; totally unfamiliar forms would be easier to learn. The Frenchman or Englishman is confronted with

COP;

the sound of that is

SAR!

For those who learn languages, as so many people do nowadays, by visual images, there will always be an undercurrent toward saying "COP." The mind plunges hopelessly through that tangle to the elements of a speech which is as yet unknown.

Nevertheless almost all the instruction in Russian of which I can get an account begins with the alphabet, and must, I suppose, begin with the alphabet until teachers have a suitably printed set of instruction books to enable them to take the better line. One school teacher I know, in a public school, devoted the entire first term, the third of a year, to the alphabet. At the end he was still dissatisfied with the progress of his pupils. He gave them Russian words, of course, words of which they knew nothing — in Russian characters. It was too much for them to take hold of at one and the same time. He did not even think of teaching them to write French and English words in the strange lettering. He did not attempt to write his Russian in Latin letters. He was apparently ignorant of any system of transliteration, and he did nothing to mitigate the impossible task before him. At the end of the term most of his pupils gave up the hopeless effort. It is not too much to say that for a great number of "visualising" people, the double effort at the outset of Russian is entirely too much. It stops them altogether. But to almost anyone it is possible to learn Russian if at first it is presented in a lettering that gives no trouble.

If I found myself obliged to learn Russian urgently, I would get

some accepted system of transliteration, carefully transcribe every word of Russian in my text-book into the Latin characters, and learn the elements of the language from my manuscript. A year or so ago I made a brief visit to Russia with a "Russian Self-Taught" in my pocket. Nothing sticks, nothing ever did stick of that self-taught Russian except the words that I learnt in Latin type. Those I remember as I remember all words, as groups of Latin letters. I learnt to count, for example, up to a hundred. The other day I failed to recognise the Russian word for eleven in Russian characters until I had spelt it out. Then I said, "Oh, of course!" But I knew it when I heard it.

I write of these things from the point of view of the keen learner. Some Russian teachers will be found to agree with me; others will not. It is a paradox in the psychology of the teacher that few teachers are willing to adopt "slick" methods of teaching; they hate cutting corners far more than they hate obstacles, because their interest is in the teaching and not in the "getting there." But what we learners want is not an exquisite, rare knowledge of particulars, we do not want to spend an hour upon Russian needlessly; we want to get there as quickly and effectively as possible. And for that, transliterated books are essential.

Now these may seem small details in the learning of languages, mere schoolmasters' gossip, but the consequences are on the continental scale. The want of these national text-books and readers is a great gulf between Russia and her Allies; *it is a greater gulf than the profoundest political misunderstanding could be*. We cannot get at them to talk plainly to them, and they cannot get at us to talk plainly to us. A narrow bridge of interpreters is our only link with the Russian mind. And many of those interpreters are of a race which is for very good reasons hostile to Russia. An abundant cheap supply, firstly, of English and French books, *in* English and French, but in the Russian character, by means of which Russians may rapidly learn French and English — for it is quite a fable that these languages are known and used in Russia below the level of the court and aristocracy — and, secondly, of Russian books in the Latin (or some easy phonetic development of the Latin) type, will do more to facilitate interchange and intercourse between Russia and France,

America and Britain, and so consolidate the present alliance than almost any other single thing. But that supply will not be a paying thing to provide; if it is left to publishers or private language teachers or any form of private enterprise it will never be provided. It is a necessary public undertaking.

But because a thing is necessary it does not follow that it will be achieved. Bread may be necessary to a starving man, but there is always the alternative that he will starve. France, which is most accessible to creative ideas, is least interested in this particular matter. Great Britain is still heavily conservative. It is idle to ignore the forces still entrenched in the established church, in the universities and the great schools, that stand for an irrational resistance to all new things. American universities are comparatively youthful and sometimes quite surprisingly innovating, and America is the country of the adventurous millionaire. There has been evidence in several American papers that have reached me recently of a disposition to get ahead with Russia and cut out the Germans (and incidentally the British). Amidst the cross-currents and overlappings of this extraordinary time, it seems to me highly probable that America may lead in this vitally important effort to promote international understanding.

XI. “THE WHITE MAN’S BURTHEN”

One of the most curious aspects of the British “Pacifist” is his willingness to give over great blocks of the black and coloured races to the Hohenzollerns to exploit and experiment upon. I myself being something of a pacifist, and doing what I can, in my corner, to bring about the Peace of the World, the Peace of the World triumphant and armed against every disturber, could the more readily sympathise with the passive school of Pacifists if its proposals involved the idea that England should keep to England and Germany to Germany. My political ideal is the United States of the World, a union of states whose state boundaries are determined by what I have defined as the natural map of mankind. I cannot understand those pacifists who talk about the German right to “expansion,” and babble about a return of her justly lost colonies. That seems to me not pacificism but patriotic inversion. This large disposition to hand over our fellow-creatures to a Teutonic educational system, with “frightfulness” in reserve, to “efficiency” on Wittenberg lines, leaves me — hot. The ghosts of the thirst-tormented Hereros rise up in their thousands from the African dust, protesting.

This talk of “legitimate expansion” is indeed now only an exploiter’s cant. The age of “expansion,” the age of European “empires” is near its end. No one who can read the signs of the times in Japan, in India, in China, can doubt it. It ended in America a hundred years ago; it is ending now in Asia; it will end last in Africa, and even in Africa the end draws near. Spain has but led the way which other “empires” must follow. Look at her empire in the atlases of 1800. She fell down the steps violently and painfully, it is true — but they are difficult to descend. No sane man, German or anti-German, who has weighed the prospects of the new age, will be desirous of a restoration of the now vanished German colonial empire, vindictive, intriguing, and unscrupulous, a mere series of centres of attack upon adjacent territory, to complicate the immense disentanglements and readjustments that lie already before the French and British and Italians.

Directly we discuss the problem of the absolutely necessary

permanent alliance that this war has forced upon at least France, Belgium, Britain and Russia, this problem of the "empires" faces us. What are these Allies going to do about their "subject races"? What is the world going to do about the "subject races"? It is a matter in which the "subject races" are likely to have an increasingly important voice of their own. We Europeans may discuss their fate to-day among ourselves; we shall be discussing it with them to-morrow. If we do not agree with them then, they will take their fates in their own hands in spite of us. Long before A.D. 2100 there will be no such thing as a "subject race" in all the world.

Here again we find ourselves asking just that same difficult question of more or less, that arises at every cardinal point of our review of the probable future. How far is this thing going to be done finely; how far is it going to be done cunningly and basely? How far will greatness of mind, how far will imaginative generosity, prevail over the jealous and pettifogging spirit that lurks in every human being? Are French and British and Belgians and Italians, for example, going to help each other in Africa, or are they going to work against and cheat each other? Is the Russian seeking only a necessary outlet to the seas of the world, or has he dreams of Delhi? Here again, as in all these questions, personal idiosyncrasy comes in; I am strongly disposed to trust the good in the Russian.

But apart from this uncertain question of generosity, there are in this case two powerful forces that make against disputes, secret disloyalties, and meanness. One is that Germany will certainly be still dangerous at the end of the war, and the second is that the gap in education, in efficiency, in national feeling and courage of outlook, between the European and the great Asiatic and African communities, is rapidly diminishing. If the Europeans squabble much more for world ascendancy, there will be no world ascendancy for them to squabble for. We have still no means of measuring the relative enfeeblement of Europe in comparison with Asia already produced by this war. As it is, certain things are so inevitable — the integration of a modernised Bengal, of China, and of Egypt, for example — that the question before us is practically reduced to whether this restoration of the subject peoples will be done with the European's aid and goodwill, or whether it will be done against him.

That it will be done in some manner or other is certain.

The days of suppression are over. They know it in every country where white and brown and yellow mingle. If the Pledged Allies are not disposed to let in light to their subject peoples and prepare for the days of world equality that are coming, the Germans will. If the Germans fail to be the most enslaving of people, they may become the most liberating. They will set themselves, with their characteristic thoroughness, to destroy that magic "prestige" which in Asia particularly is the clue to the miracle of European ascendancy. In the long run that may prove no ill service to mankind. The European must prepare to make himself acceptable in Asia, to state his case to Asia and be understood by Asia, or to leave Asia. That is the blunt reality of the Asiatic situation.

It has already been pointed out in these chapters that if the alliance of the Pledged Allies is indeed to be permanent, it implies something in the nature of a Zollverein, a common policy towards the rest of the world and an arrangement involving a common control over the dependencies of all the Allies. It will be interesting, now that we have sketched a possible map of Europe after the war, to look a little more closely into the nature of the "empires" concerned, and to attempt a few broad details of the probable map of the Eastern hemisphere outside Europe in the years immediately to come.

Now there are, roughly speaking, three types of overseas "possessions." They may be either (1) territory that was originally practically unoccupied and that was settled by the imperial people, or (2) territory with a barbaric population having no national idea, or (3) conquered states. In the case of the British Empire all three are present; in the case of the French only the second and third; in the case of the Russian only the first and third. Each of these types must necessarily follow its own system of developments. Take first those territories originally but thinly occupied, or not occupied at all, of which all or at least the dominant element of the population is akin to that of the "home country." These used to be called by the British "colonies" — though the "colonies" of Greece and Rome were really only garrison cities settled in foreign lands — and they are now being rechristened "Dominions." Australia, for instance, is a British Dominion, and Siberia and most of Russia in Asia, a Russian

Dominion. Their manifest destiny is for their children to become equal citizens with the cousins and brothers they have left at home.

There has been much discussion in England during the last decade upon some modification of the British legislature that would admit representatives from the Dominions to a proportional share in the government of the Empire. The problem has been complicated by the unsettled status of Ireland and the mischief-making Tories there, and by the perplexities arising out of those British dependencies of non-British race — the Indian states, for example, whose interests are sometimes in conflict with those of the Dominions.

The attractiveness of the idea of an Imperial legislature is chiefly on the surface, and I have very strong doubts of its realisability. These Dominions seem rather to tend to become independent and distinct sovereign states in close and affectionate alliance with Great Britain, and having a common interest in the British Navy. In many ways the interests of the Dominions are more divergent from those of Great Britain than are Great Britain and Russia, or Great Britain and France. Many of the interests of Canada are more closely bound to those of the United States than they are to those of Australasia, in such a matter as the maintenance of the Monroe Principle, for example. South Africa again takes a line with regard to British Indian subjects which is highly embarrassing to Great Britain. There is a tendency in all the British colonies to read American books and periodicals rather than British, if for no other reason than because their common life, life in a newish and very democratic land, is much more American than British in character.

On the other hand, one must remember that Great Britain has European interests — the integrity of Holland and Belgium is a case in point — which are much closer to the interests of France than they are to those of the younger Britains beyond the seas. A voice in an Alliance that included France and the United States, and had its chief common interest in the control of the seas, may in the future seem far more desirable to these great and growing English-speaking Dominions than the sending of representatives to an Imperial House of Lords at Westminster, and the adornment of elderly colonial politicians with titles and decorations at Buckingham Palace.

I think Great Britain and her Allies have all of them to prepare

their minds for a certain release of their grip upon their "possessions," if they wish to build up a larger unity; I do not see that any secure unanimity of purpose is possible without such releases and readjustments.

Now the next class of foreign "possession" is that in which the French and Belgians and Italians are most interested. Britain also has possessions of this type in Central Africa and the less civilised districts of India, but Russia has scarcely anything of the sort. In this second class of possession the population is numerous, barbaric, and incapable of any large or enduring political structure, and over its destinies rule a small minority of European administrators.

The greatest of this series of possessions are those in black Africa. The French imagination has taken a very strong hold of the idea of a great French-speaking West and Central Africa, with which the ordinary British citizen will only too gladly see the conquered German colonies incorporated. The Italians have a parallel field of development in the hinterland of Tripoli. Side by side, France, Belgium and Italy, no longer troubled by hostile intrigues, may very well set themselves in the future to the task of building up a congenial Latin civilisation out of the tribal confusions of these vast regions. They will, I am convinced, do far better than the English in this domain. The English-speaking peoples have been perhaps the most successful *settlers* in the world; the United States and the Dominions are there to prove it; only the Russians in Siberia can compare with them; but as administrators the British are a race coldly aloof. They have nothing to give a black people, and no disposition to give.

The Latin-speaking peoples, the Mediterranean nations, on the other hand, have proved to be the most successful *assimilators* of other races that mankind has ever known. Alexandre Dumas is not the least of the glories of France. In a hundred years' time black Africa, west of Tripoli, from Oran to Rhodesia, will, I believe, talk French. And what does not speak French will speak the closely related Italian. I do not see why this Latin black culture should not extend across equatorial Africa to meet the Indian influence at the coast, and reach out to join hands with Madagascar. I do not see why the British flag should be any impediment to the Latinisation of

tropical Africa or to the natural extension of the French and Italian languages through Egypt. I guess, however, that it will be an Islamic and not a Christian cult that will be talking Italian and French. For the French-speaking civilisation will make roads not only for French, Belgians, and Italians, but for the Arabs whose religion and culture already lie like a net over black Africa. No other peoples and no other religion can so conveniently give the negro what is needed to bring him into the comity of civilised peoples....

A few words of digression upon the future of Islam may not be out of place here. The idea of a militant Christendom has vanished from the world. The last pretensions of Christian propaganda have been buried in the Balkan trenches. A unification of Africa under Latin auspices carries with it now no threat of missionary invasion. Africa will be a fair field for all religions, and the religion to which the negro will take will be the religion that best suits his needs. That religion, we are told by nearly everyone who has a right to speak upon such questions, is Islam, and its natural propagandist is the Arab. There is no reason why he should not be a Frenchified Arab.

Both the French and the British have the strongest interest in the revival of Arabic culture. Let the German learn Turkish if it pleases him. Through all Africa and Western Asia there is a great to-morrow for a renascent Islam under Arab auspices. Constantinople, that venal city of the waterways, sitting like Asenath at the ford, has corrupted all who came to her; she has been the paralysis of Islam. But the Islam of the Turk is a different thing from the Islam of the Arab. That was one of the great progressive impulses in the world of men. It is our custom to underrate the Arab's contribution to civilisation quite absurdly in comparison with our debt to the Hebrew and Greek. It is to the initiatives of Islamic culture, for example, that we owe our numerals, the bulk of modern mathematics, and the science of chemistry. The British have already set themselves to the establishment of Islamic university teaching in Egypt, but that is the mere first stroke of the pick at the opening of the mine. English, French, Russian, Arabic, Hindustani, Spanish, Italian; these are the great world languages that most concern the future of civilisation from the point of view of the Peace Alliance that impends. No country can afford to neglect any of those languages, but as a matter

of primary importance I would say, for the British, Hindustani, for the Americans, Russian or Spanish, for the French and Belgians and Italians, Arabic. These are the directions in which the duty of understanding is most urgent for each of these peoples, and the path of opportunity plainest.

The disposition to underrate temporarily depressed nations, races, and cultures is a most irrational, prevalent, and mischievous form of stupidity. It distorts our entire outlook towards the future. The British reader can see its absurdity most easily when he reads the ravings of some patriotic German upon the superiority of the "Teuton" over the Italians and Greeks — to whom we owe most things of importance in European civilisation. Equally silly stuff is still to be read in British and American books about "Asiatics." And was there not some fearful rubbish, not only in German but in English and French, about the "decadence" of France? But we are learning — rapidly. When I was a student in London thirty years ago we regarded Japan as a fantastic joke; the comic opera, *The Mikado*, still preserves that foolish phase for the admiration of posterity. And to-day there is a quite unjustifiable tendency to ignore the quality of the Arab and of his religion. Islam is an open-air religion, noble and simple in its broad conceptions; it is none the less vital from Nigeria to China because it has sickened in the closeness of Constantinople. The French, the Italians, the British have to reckon with Islam and the Arab; where the continental deserts are, there the Arabs are and there is Islam; their culture will never be destroyed and replaced over these regions by Europeanism. The Allies who prepare the Peace of the World have to make their peace with that. And when I foreshadow this necessary liaison of the French and Arabic cultures, I am thinking not only of the Arab that is, but of the Arab that is to come. The whole trend of events in Asia Minor, the breaking up and decapitation of the Ottoman Empire and the Euphrates invasion, points to a great revival of Mesopotamia — at first under European direction. The vast system of irrigation that was destroyed by the Mongol armies of Hulugu in the thirteenth century will be restored; the desert will again become populous. But the local type will prevail. The new population of Mesopotamia will be neither European nor Indian; it will be Arabic; and with its concentration

Arabic will lay hold of the printing press. A new intellectual movement in Islam, a renascent Bagdad, is as inevitable as is 1950.

I have, however, gone a little beyond the discussion of the future of the barbaric possessions in these anticipations of an Arabic co-operation with the Latin peoples in the reconstruction of Western Asia and the barbaric regions of north and central Africa. But regions of administered barbarism occur not only in Africa. The point is that they are administered, and that their economic development is very largely in the hands, and will for many generations remain in the hands, of the possessing country. Hitherto their administration has been in the interests of the possessing nation alone. Their acquisition has been a matter of bitter rivalries, their continued administration upon exclusive lines is bound to lead to dangerous clashings. The common sense of the situation points to a policy of give and take, in which throughout the possessions of all the Pledged Allies, the citizens of all will have more or less equal civil advantages. And this means some consolidation of the general control of those Administered Territories. I have already hinted at the possibility that the now exclusively British navy may some day be a world-navy controlled by an Admiralty representing a group of allies, Australasia, Canada, Britain and, it may be, France and Russia and the United States. To those who know how detached the British Admiralty is at the present time from the general methods of British political life, there will be nothing strange in this idea of its completer detachment. Its personnel does to a large extent constitute a class apart. It takes its boys out of the general life very often before they have got to their fourteenth birthday. It is not so closely linked up with specific British social elements, with political parties and the general educational system, as are the rest of the national services.

There is nothing so very fantastic in this idea of a sort of World-Admiralty; it is not even completely novel. Such bodies as the Knights Templars transcended nationality in the Middle Ages. I do not see how some such synthetic control of the seas is to be avoided in the future. And now coming back to the "White Man's Burthen," is there not a possibility that such a board of marine and international control as the naval and international problems of the future may produce (or some closely parallel body with a stronger Latin

element), would also be capable of dealing with these barbaric "Administered Territories"? A day may come when Tripoli, Nigeria, the French and the Belgian Congo will be all under one supreme control. We may be laying the foundations of such a system to-day unawares. The unstable and fluctuating conferences of the Allies to-day, their repeated experiences of the disadvantages of evanescent and discontinuous co-ordinations, may press them almost unconsciously toward this building up of things greater than they know.

We come now to the third and most difficult type of overseas "possessions." These are the annexed or conquered regions with settled populations already having a national tradition and culture of their own. They are, to put it bluntly, the suppressed, the overlaid, nations. Now I am a writer rather prejudiced against the idea of nationality; my habit of thought is cosmopolitan; I hate and despise a shrewish suspicion of foreigners and foreign ways; a man who can look me in the face, laugh with me, speak truth and deal fairly, is my brother though his skin is as black as ink or as yellow as an evening primrose. But I have to recognise the facts of the case. In spite of all my large liberality, I find it less irritating to be ruled by people of my own language and race and tradition, and I perceive that for the mass of people alien rule is intolerable.

Local difference, nationality, is a very obstinate thing. Every country tends to revert to its natural type. Nationality will out. Once a people has emerged above the barbaric stage to a national consciousness, that consciousness will endure. There is practically always going to be an Egypt, a Poland, an Armenia. There is no Indian nation, there never has been, but there are manifestly a Bengal and a Rajputana, there is manifestly a constellation of civilised nations in India. Several of these have literatures and traditions that extend back before the days when the Britons painted themselves with woad. Let us deal with this question mainly with reference to India. What is said will apply equally to Burmah or Egypt or Armenia or — to come back into Europe — Poland.

Now I have talked, I suppose, with many scores of people about the future of India, and I have never yet met anyone, Indian or British, who thought it desirable that the British should evacuate

India at once. And I have never yet met anyone who did not think that ultimately the British must let the Indian nations control their own destinies. There are really not two opposite opinions about the destiny of India, but only differences of opinion as to the length of time in which that destiny is to be achieved. Many Indians think (and I agree with them) that India might be a confederation of sovereign states in close alliance with the British Empire and its allies within the space of fifty years or so. The opposite extreme was expressed by an old weary Indian administrator who told me, "Perhaps they may begin to be capable of self-government in four or five hundred years." These are the extreme Liberal and the extreme Tory positions in this question. It is a choice between decades and centuries. There is no denial of the inevitability of ultimate restoration. No one of any experience believes the British administration in India is an eternal institution.

There is a great deal of cant in this matter in Great Britain. Genteel English people with relations in the Indian Civil Service and habits of self-delusion, believe that Indians are "grateful" for British rule. The sort of "patriotic" self-flattery that prevailed in the Victorian age, and which is so closely akin to contemporary German follies, fostered and cultivated this sweet delusion. There are, no doubt, old ladies in Germany to-day who believe that Belgium will presently be "grateful" for the present German administration. Let us clear our minds of such cant. As a matter of fact no Indians really like British rule or think of it as anything better than a necessary, temporary evil. Let me put the parallel case to an Englishman or a Frenchman. Through various political ineptitudes our country has, we will suppose, fallen under the rule of the Chinese. They administer it, we will further assume, with an efficiency and honesty unparalleled in the bad old times of our lawyer politicians. They do not admit us to the higher branches of the administration; they go about our country wearing a strange costume, professing a strange religion — which implies that ours is wrong — speaking an unfamiliar tongue. They control our financial system and our economic development — on Chinese lines of the highest merit. They take the utmost care of our Gothic cathedrals for us. They put our dearest racial possessions into museums and admire them very

much indeed. They teach our young men to fly kites and eat bird's nest soup. They do all that a well-bred people can do to conceal their habit and persuasion of a racial superiority. But they keep up their "prestige." ... You know, we shouldn't love them. It really isn't a question of whether they rule well or ill, but that the position is against certain fundamentals of human nature. The only possible footing upon which we could meet them with comfortable minds would be the footing that we and they were discussing the terms of the restoration of our country. Then indeed we might almost feel friendly with them. That is the case with all civilised "possessions." The only terms upon which educated British and Indians can meet to-day with any comfort is precisely that. The living intercourse of the British and Indian mind to-day is the discussion of the restoration. Everything else is humbug on the one side and self-deception on the other.

It is idle to speak of the British occupation of India as a conquest or a robbery. It is a fashion of much "advanced" literature in Europe to assume that the European rule of various Asiatic countries is the result of deliberate conquest with a view to spoliation. But that is only the ugly side of the facts. Cases of the deliberate invasion and spoliation of one country by another have been very rare in the history of the last three centuries. There has always been an excuse, and there has always been a percentage of truth in the excuse. The history of every country contains phases of political ineptitude in which that country becomes so misgoverned as to be not only a nuisance to the foreigner within its borders but a danger to its neighbours. Mexico is in such a phase to-day. And most of the aggressions and annexations of the modern period have arisen out of the inconveniences and reasonable fears caused by such an inept phase. I am a persistent advocate for the restoration of Poland, but at the same time it is very plain to me that it is a mere travesty of the facts to say that Poland, was a white lamb of a country torn to pieces by three wicked neighbours, Poland in the eighteenth century was a dangerous political muddle, uncertain of her monarchy, her policy, her affinities. She endangered her neighbours because there was no guarantee that she might not fall under the tutelage of one of them and become a weapon against the others.

The division of Poland was an outrage upon the Polish people, but it was largely dictated by an entirely honest desire to settle a dangerous possibility. It seemed less injurious than the possibility of a vacillating, independent Poland playing off one neighbour against another. That possibility will still be present in the minds of the diplomatists who will determine the settlement after the war. Until the Poles make up their minds, and either convince the Russians that they are on the side of Russia and Bohemia against Germany for evermore, or the Germans that they are willing to be Posenised, they will live between two distrustful enemies.

The Poles need to think of the future more and the wrongs of Poland less. They want less patriotic intrigue and more racial self-respect. They are not only Poles but members of a greater brotherhood. My impression is that Poland will "go Slav" — in spite of Cracow. But I am not sure. I am haunted by the fear that Poland may still find her future hampered by Poles who are, as people say, "too clever by half." An incalculable Poland cannot be and will not be tolerated by the rest of Europe.

And the overspreading of India by the British was in the same way very clearly done under compulsion, first lest the Dutch or French should exploit the vast resources of the peninsula against Britain, and then for fear of a Russian exploitation. I am no apologist for British rule in India; I think we have neglected vast opportunities there; it was our business from the outset to build up a free and friendly Indian confederation, and we have done not a tithe of what we might have done to that end. But then we have not done a little of what we might have done for our own country.

Nevertheless we have our case to plead, not only for going to India but — with the Berlin papers still babbling of Bagdad and beyond — of sticking there very grimly. And so too the British have a fairly sound excuse for grabbing Egypt in their fear lest in its phase of political ineptitude it should be the means of strangling the British Empire as the Turk in Constantinople has been used to strangle the Russian. None of these justifications I admit are complete, but all deserve consideration. It is no good arguing about the finer ethics of the things that are; the business of sane men is to get things better. The business of all sane men in all the countries of the Pledged

Allies and in America is manifestly to sink petty jealousies and a suicidal competitiveness, and to organise co-operation with all the intellectual forces they can find or develop in the subject countries, to convert these inept national systems into politically efficient independent organisations in a world peace alliance. If we fail to do that, then all the inept states and all the subject states about the world will become one great field for the sowing of tares by the enemy.

This was written late in February, 1916.

So that with regard to the civilised just as with regard to the barbaric regions of the "possessions" of the European-centred empires, we come to the same conclusion. That on the whole the path of safety lies in the direction of pooling them and of declaring a common policy of progressive development leading to equality. The pattern of the United States, in which the procedure is first the annexation of "territories" and then their elevation to the rank of "States," must, with of course far more difficulty and complication, be the pattern for the "empires" of to-day — so far as they are regions of alien population. The path of the Dominions, settled by emigrants akin to the home population, Siberia, Canada, and so forth, to equal citizenship with the people of the Mother Country is by comparison simple and plain.

And so the discussion of the future of the overseas "empires" brings us again to the same realisation to which the discussion of nearly every great issue arising out of this war has pointed, the realisation of the imperative necessity of some great council or conference, some permanent overriding body, call it what you will, that will deal with things more broadly than any "nationalism" or "patriotic imperialism" can possibly do. That body must come into human affairs. Upon the courage and imagination of living statesmen it depends whether it will come simply and directly into concrete reality or whether it will materialise slowly through, it may be, centuries of blood and blundering from such phantom anticipations as this, anticipations that now haunt the thoughts of all politically-minded men.

XII. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE GERMANS

Section 1

Whatever some of us among the Allies may say, the future of Germany lies with Germany. The utmost ambition of the Allies falls far short of destroying or obliterating Germany; it is to give the Germans so thorough and memorable an experience of war that they will want no more of it for a few generations, and, failing the learning of that lesson, to make sure that they will not be in a position to resume their military aggressions upon mankind with any hope of success. After all, it is not the will of the Allies that has determined even this resolve. It is the declared and manifest will of Germany to become predominant in the world that has created the Alliance against Germany, and forged and tempered our implacable resolution to bring militarist Germany down. And the nature of the coming peace and of the politics that will follow the peace are much more dependent upon German affairs than upon anything else whatever.

This is so clearly understood in Great Britain that there is scarcely a newspaper that does not devote two or three columns daily to extracts from the German newspapers, and from letters found upon German killed, wounded, or prisoners, and to letters and descriptive articles from neutrals upon the state of the German mind. There can be no doubt that the British intelligence has grasped and kept its hold upon the real issue of this war with an unprecedented clarity. At the outset there came declarations from nearly every type of British opinion that this war was a war against the Hohenzollern militarist idea, against Prussianism, and not against Germany.

In that respect Britain has documented herself to the hilt. There have been, of course, a number of passionate outcries and wild accusations against Germans, as a race, during the course of the struggle; but to this day opinion is steadfast not only in Britain, but if I may judge from the papers I read and the talk I hear, throughout the whole English-speaking community, that this is a war not of races but ideas. I am so certain of this that I would say if Germany by some swift convulsion expelled her dynasty and turned herself into a republic, it would be impossible for the British Government to

continue the war for long, whether it wanted to do so or not. The forces in favour of reconciliation would be too strong. There would be a complete revulsion from the present determination to continue the war to its bitter but conclusive end.

It is fairly evident that the present German Government understands this frame of mind quite clearly, and is extremely anxious to keep it from the knowledge of the German peoples. Every act or word from a British source that suggests an implacable enmity against the Germans as a people, every war-time caricature and insult, is brought to their knowledge. It is the manifest interest of the Hohenzollerns and Prussianism to make this struggle a race struggle and not merely a political struggle, and to keep a wider breach between the peoples than between the Governments. The "Made in Germany" grievance has been used to the utmost against Great Britain as an indication of race hostility. The everyday young German believes firmly that it was a blow aimed specially at Germany; that no such regulation affected any goods but German goods. And the English, with their characteristic heedlessness, have never troubled to disillusion him. But even the British caricaturist and the British soldier betray their fundamental opinion of the matter in their very insults. They will not use a word of abuse for the Germans as Germans; they call them "Huns," because they are thinking of Attila, because they are thinking of them as invaders under a monarch of peaceful France and Belgium, and not as a people living in a land of their own.

In Great Britain there is to this day so little hostility for Germans as such, that recently a nephew of Lord Haldane's, Sir George Makgill, has considered it advisable to manufacture race hostility and provide the Hohenzollerns with instances and quotations through the exertions of a preposterous Anti-German League. Disregarding the essential evils of the Prussian idea, this mischievous organisation has set itself to persuade the British people that the Germans are diabolical *as a race*. It has displayed great energy and ingenuity in pestering and insulting naturalised Germans and people of German origin in Britain — below the rank of the Royal Family, that is — and in making enduring bad blood between them and the authentic British. It busies itself in breaking up meetings at which sentiments

friendly to Germany might be expressed, sentiments which, if they could be conveyed to German hearers, would certainly go far to weaken the determination of the German social democracy to fight to the end.

There can, of course, be no doubt of the good faith of Sir George Makgill, but he could do the Kaiser no better service than to help in consolidating every rank and class of German, by this organisation of foolish violence of speech and act, by this profession of an irrational and implacable hostility. His practical influence over here is trivial, thanks to the general good sense and the love of fair play in our people, but there can be little doubt that his intentions are about as injurious to the future peace of the world as any intentions could be, and there can be no doubt that intelligent use is made in Germany of the frothings and ravings of his followers. "Here, you see, is the disposition of the English," the imperialists will say to the German pacifists. "They are dangerous lunatics. Clearly we must stick together to the end." ...

The stuff of Sir George Makgill's league must not be taken as representative of any considerable section of British opinion, which is as a whole nearly as free from any sustained hatred of the Germans as it was at the beginning of the war. There are, of course, waves of indignation at such deliberate atrocities as the *Lusitania* outrage or the Zeppelin raids, Wittenberg will not easily be forgotten, but it would take many Sir George Makgills to divert British anger from the responsible German Government to the German masses.

That lack of any essential hatred does not mean that British opinion is not solidly for the continuation of this war against militarist imperialism to its complete and final defeat. But if that can be defeated to any extent in Germany by the Germans, if the way opens to a Germany as unmilitary and pacific as was Great Britain before this war, there remains from the British point of view nothing else to fight about. With the Germany of *Vorwaerts* which, I understand, would evacuate and compensate Belgium and Serbia, set up a buffer state in Alsace-Lorraine, and another in a restored Poland (including Posen), the spirit of the Allies has no profound quarrel at all, has never had any quarrel. We would only too gladly meet that Germany at a green table to-morrow, and set to work arranging the

compensation of Belgium and Serbia, and tracing over the outlines of the natural map of mankind the new political map of Europe.

Still it must be admitted that not only in Great Britain but in all the allied countries one finds a certain active minority corresponding to Sir George Makgill's noisy following, who profess to believe that all Germans to the third and fourth generation (save and except the Hanoverian royal family domiciled in Great Britain) are a vile, treacherous, and impossible race, a race animated by an incredible racial vanity, a race which is indeed scarcely anything but a conspiracy against the rest of mankind.

The ravings of many of these people can only be paralleled by the stuff about the cunning of the Jesuits that once circulated in ultra-Protestant circles in England. Elderly Protestant ladies used to look under the bed and in the cupboard every night for a Jesuit, just as nowadays they look for a German spy, and as no doubt old German ladies now look for Sir Edward Grey. It may be useful therefore, at the present time, to point out that not only is the aggressive German idea not peculiar to Germany, not only are there endless utterances of French Chauvinists and British imperialists to be found entirely as vain, unreasonable and aggressive, but that German militarist imperialism is so little representative of the German quality, that scarcely one of its leading exponents is a genuine German.

Of course there is no denying that the Germans are a very distinctive people, as distinctive as the French. But their distinctions are not diabolical. Until the middle of the nineteenth century it was the fashion to regard them as a race of philosophical incompetents. Their reputation as a people of exceptionally military quality sprang up in the weed-bed of human delusions between 1866 and 1872; it will certainly not survive this war. Their reputation for organisation is another matter. They are an orderly, industrious, and painstaking people, they have a great respect for science, for formal education, and for authority. It is their respect for education which has chiefly betrayed them, and made them the instrument of Hohenzollern folly. Mr. F.M. Hueffer has shown this quite conclusively in his admirable but ill-named book, "When Blood is Their Argument." Their minds have been systematically corrupted by base historical teaching, and the inculcation of a rancid patriotism. They are a people under the

sway of organised suggestion. This catastrophic war and its preparation have been their chief business for half a century; none the less their peculiar qualities have still been displayed during that period; they have still been able to lead the world in several branches of social organisation and in the methodical development of technical science. Systems of ideas are perhaps more readily shattered than built up; the aggressive patriotism of many Germans must be already darkened by serious doubts, and I see no inherent impossibility in hoping that the mass of the Germans may be restored to the common sanity of mankind, even in the twenty or thirty years of life that perhaps still remain for me.

Consider the names of the chief exponents of the aggressive German idea, and you will find that not one is German. The first begetter of Nietzsche's "blond beast," and of all that great flood of rubbish about a strange superior race with whitish hair and blue eyes, that has so fatally rotted the German imagination, was a Frenchman named Gobineau. We British are not altogether free from the disease. As a small boy I read the History of J.R. Green, and fed my pride upon the peculiar virtues of my Anglo-Saxon blood. ("Cp.," as they say in footnotes, Carlyle and Froude.) It was not a German but a renegade Englishman of the Englishman-hating Whig type, Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, who carried the Gobineau theory to that delirious level which claims Dante and Leonardo as Germans, and again it was not a German but a British peer, still among us, Lord Redesdale, who in his eulogistic preface to the English translation of Chamberlain's torrent of folly, hinted not obscurely that the real father of Christ was not the Jew, Joseph, but a much more Germanic person. Neither Clausewitz, who first impressed upon the German mind the theory of ruthless warfare, nor Bernhardi, nor Treitschke, who did as much to build up the Emperor's political imagination, strike one as bearing particularly German names. There are indeed very grave grounds for the German complaint that Germany has been the victim of alien flattery and alien precedents. And what after all is the Prussian dream of world empire but an imitative response to the British empire and the adventure of Napoleon? The very title of the German emperor is the name of an Italian, Caesar, far gone in decay. And the backbone of the German

system at the present time is the Prussian, who is not really a German at all but a Germanised Wend. Take away the imported and imposed elements from the things we fight to-day, leave nothing but what is purely and originally German, and you leave very little. We fight dynastic ambition, national vanity, greed, and the fruits of fifty years of basely conceived and efficiently conducted education.

The majority of sensible and influential Englishmen are fully aware of these facts. This does not alter their resolution to beat Germany thoroughly and finally, and, if Germany remains Hohenzollern after the war, to do their utmost to ring her in with commercial alliances, tariffs, navigation and exclusion laws that will keep her poor and powerless and out of mischief so long as her vice remains in her. But these considerations of the essential innocence of the German do make all this systematic hostility, which the British have had forced upon them, a very uncongenial and reluctant hostility. Pro-civilisation, and not Anti-German, is the purpose of the Allies. And the speculation of just how relentlessly and for how long this ring of suspicion and precaution need be maintained about Germany, of how soon the German may decide to become once more a good European, is one of extraordinary interest to every civilised man. In other words, what are the prospects of a fairly fundamental revolution in German life and thought and affairs in the years immediately before us?

Section 2

In a sense every European country must undergo revolutionary changes as a consequence of the enormous economic exhaustion and social dislocations of this war. But what I propose to discuss here is the possibility of a real political revolution, in the narrower sense of the word, in Germany, a revolution that will end the Hohenzollern system, the German dynastic system, altogether, that will democratise Prussia and put an end for ever to that secretive scheming of military aggressions which is the essential quarrel of Europe with Germany. It is the most momentous possibility of our times, because it opens the way to an alternative state of affairs that may supersede the armed watching and systematic war of tariffs, prohibitions, and exclusions against the Central Empires that must quite unavoidably be the future attitude of the Pledged Allies to any survival of the Hohenzollern empire.

We have to bear in mind that in this discussion we are dealing with something very new and quite untried hitherto by anything but success, that new Germany whose unification began with the spoliation of Denmark and was completed at Versailles. It is not a man's lifetime old. Under the state socialism and aggressive militarism of the Hohenzollern regime it had been led to a level of unexampled pride and prosperity, and it plunged shouting and singing into this war, confident of victories. It is still being fed with dwindling hopes of victory, no longer unstinted hopes, but still hopes — by a sort of political bread-card system. The hopes outlast the bread-and-butter, but they dwindle and dwindle. How is this parvenu people going to stand the cessation of hope, the realisation of the failure and fruitlessness of such efforts as no people on earth have ever made before? How are they going to behave when they realise fully that they have suffered and died and starved and wasted all their land in vain? When they learn too that the cause of the war was a trick, and the Russian invasion a lie? They have a large democratic Press that will not hesitate to tell them that, that does already to the best of its ability disillusion them. They are a carefully trained and educated and disciplined people, it is true; but the solicitude of the

German Government everywhere apparent, thus to keep the resentment of the people directed to the proper quarter, is, I think, just one of the things that are indicative of the revolutionary possibilities in Germany. The Allied Governments let opinion, both in their own countries and in America, shift for itself; they do not even trouble to mitigate the inevitable exasperation of the military censorship by an intelligent and tactful control. The German Government, on the other hand, has organised the putting of the blame upon other shoulders than its own elaborately and ably from the very beginning of the war. It must know its own people best, and I do not see why it should do this if there were not very dangerous possibilities ahead for itself in the national temperament.

A recent circular, which *Vorwaerts* quotes, sent by the education officials to the teachers of Frankfurt-am-Main, points out the necessity of the "beautiful task" of inculcating a deep love for the House of Hohenzollern (Crown Prince, grin and all), and concludes, "All efforts to excuse or minimise or explain the disgraceful acts which our enemies have committed against Germans all over the world are to be firmly opposed by you should you see any signs of these efforts entering the schools."

It is one of the commonplaces of this question that in the past the Germans have always been loyal subjects and never made a revolution. It is alleged that there has never been a German republic. That is by no means conclusively true. The nucleus of Swiss freedom was the German-speaking cantons about the Lake of Lucerne; Tell was a German, and he was glorified by the German Schiller. No doubt the Protestant reformation was largely a business of dukes and princes, but the underlying spirit of that revolt also lay in the German national character. The Anabaptist insurrection was no mean thing in rebellions, and the history of the Dutch, who are, after all, only the extreme expression of the Low German type, is a history of the most stubborn struggle for freedom in Europe. This legend of German docility will not bear close examination. It is true that they are not given to spasmodic outbreaks, and that they do not lend themselves readily to intrigues and pronunciamentos, but there is every reason to suppose that they have the heads to plan and the wills to carry out as sound and orderly and effective a revolution as any people in Europe.

Before the war drove them frantic, the German comic papers were by no means suggestive of an abject worship of authority and royalty for their own sakes. The teaching of all forms of morality and sentimentality in schools produces not only belief but reaction, and the livelier and more energetic the pupil the more likely he is to react rather than accept.

Whatever the feelings of the old women of Germany may be towards the Kaiser and his family, my impression of the opinion of Germans in general is that they believed firmly in empire, Kaiser and militarism wholly and solely because they thought these things meant security, success, triumph, more and more wealth, more and more Germany, and all that had come to them since 1871 carried on to the *n*th degree.... I do not think that all the schoolmasters of Germany, teaching in unison at the tops of their voices, will sustain that belief beyond the end of this war.

At present every discomfort and disappointment of the German people is being sedulously diverted into rage against the Allies, and particularly against the English. This is all very well as long as the war goes on with a certain effect of hopefulness. But what when presently the beam has so tilted against Germany that an unprofitable peace has become urgent and inevitable? How can the Hohenzollern suddenly abandon his pose of righteous indignation and make friends with the accursed enemy, and how can he make any peace at all with us while he still proclaims us accursed? Either the Emperor has to go to his people and say, "We promised you victory and it is defeat," or he has to say, "It is not defeat, but we are going to make peace with these Russian barbarians who invaded us, with the incompetent English who betrayed us, with all these degenerate and contemptible races you so righteously hate and despise, upon such terms that we shall never be able to attack them again. This noble and wonderful war is to end in this futility and — these graves. You were tricked into it, as you were tricked into war in 1870 — but this time it has not turned out quite so well. And besides, after all, we find we can continue to get on with these people." ...

In either case, I do not see how he can keep the habitual and cultivated German hate pointing steadily away from himself. So long as the war is going on that may be done, but when the soldiers come

home the hate will come home as well. In times of war peoples may hate abroad and with some unanimity. But after the war, with no war going on or any prospect of a fresh war, with every exploiter and every industrial tyrant who has made his unobtrusive profits while the country scowled and spat at England, stripped of the cover of that excitement, then it is inevitable that much of this noble hate of England will be seen for the cant it is. The cultivated hate of the war phase, reinforced by the fresh hate born of confusion and misery, will swing loose, as it were, seeking dispersedly for objects. The petty, incessant irritations of proximity will count for more; the national idea for less. The Hohenzollerns and the Junkers will have to be very nimble indeed if the German accomplishment of hate does not swing round upon them.

It is a common hypothesis with those who speculate on the probable effects of these disillusionments that Germany may break up again into its component parts. It is pointed out that Germany is, so to speak, a palimpsest, that the broad design of the great black eagle and the imperial crown are but newly painted over a great number of particularisms, and that these particularisms may return. The empire of the Germans may break up again. That I do not believe. The forces that unified Germany lie deeper than the Hohenzollern adventure; print, paper and the spoken word have bound Germany now into one people for all time. None the less those previous crowns and symbols that still show through the paint of the new design may help greatly, as that weakens under the coming stresses, to disillusion men about its necessity. There was, they will be reminded, a Germany before Prussia, before Austria for the matter of that. The empire has been little more than the first German experiment in unity. It is a new-fangled thing that came and may go again — leaving Germany still a nation, still with the sense of a common Fatherland.

Let us consider a little more particularly the nature of the mass of population whose collective action in the years immediately ahead of us we are now attempting to forecast. Its social strata are only very inexactly equivalent to those in the countries of the Pledged Allies. First there are the masses of the people. In England for purposes of edification we keep up the legend of the extreme efficiency of

Germany, the high level of German education, and so forth. The truth is that the average *elementary* education of the common people in Britain is superior to that of Germany, that the domestic efficiency of the British common people is greater, their moral training better, and their personal quality higher. This is shown by a number of quite conclusive facts of which I will instance merely the higher German general death-rate, the higher German infantile death-rate, the altogether disproportionate percentage of crimes of violence in Germany, and the indisputable personal superiority of the British common soldier over his German antagonist. It is only when we get above the level of the masses that the position is reversed. The ratio of public expenditure upon secondary and higher education in Germany as compared with the expenditure upon elementary education is out of all proportion to the British ratio.

Directly we come to the commercial, directive, official, technical and professional classes in Germany, we come to classes far more highly trained, more alert intellectually, more capable of collective action, and more accessible to general ideas, than the less numerous and less important corresponding classes in Britain. This great German middle class is the strength and substance of the new Germany; it has increased proportionally to the classes above and below it, it has developed almost all its characteristics during the last half-century. At its lower fringe it comprehends the skilled and scientifically trained artisans, it supplies the brains of social democracy, and it reaches up to the world of finance and quasi-state enterprise. And it is the "dark horse" in all these speculations.

Hitherto this middle class has been growing almost unawares. It has been so busy coming into existence and growing, there has been so much to do since 1871, that it has had scarcely a moment to think round the general problem of politics at all. It has taken the new empire for granted as a child takes its home for granted, and its state of mind to-day must be rather like that of an intelligent boy who suddenly discovers that his father's picturesque and wonderful speculations have led to his arrest and brought the brokers into the house, and that there is nothing for it but to turn to and take control of the family affairs.

In Germany, the most antiquated and the most modern of

European states, the old dynastic Germany of the princes and junkers has lasted on by virtue of exceptional successes and prestige into the world of steel and electricity. But their prestige has paled before the engineering of Krupp; their success evaporates. A new nation awakens to self-consciousness only to find itself betrayed into apparently irreconcilable hostility against the rest of mankind....

What will be the quality of the monarch and court and junkerdom that will face this awaking new Germany?

The monarch will be before very long the present Crown Prince. The Hohenzollerns have at least the merit of living quickly, and the present Emperor draws near his allotted term. He will break a record in his family if he lives another dozen years. So that quite soon after the war this new disillusioned Germany will be contemplating the imperial graces of the present Crown Prince. In every way he is an unattractive and uninspiring figure; he has identified himself completely with that militarism that has brought about the European catastrophe; in repudiating him Germany will repudiate her essential offence against civilisation, and his appears to be the sort of personality that it is a pleasure to repudiate. He or some kindred regent will be the symbol of royalty in Germany through all those years of maximum stress and hardship ahead. Through-out the greater part of Germany the tradition of loyalty to his house is not a century old. And the real German loyalty is racial and national far more than dynastic. It is not the Hohenzollern over all that they sing about; it is Deutschland. (And — as in the case of all imperfectly civilised people — songs of hate for foreigners.) But it needed a decadent young American to sing:

"Thou Prince of Peace,
Thou God of War,"

to the dismal rhetorician of Potsdam. Real emperors reconcile and consolidate peoples, for an empire is not a nation; but the Hohenzollerns have never dared to be anything but sedulously national, "echt Deutsch" and advocates of black-letter. They know the people they have to deal with.

This new substantial middle mass of Germany has never been on

friendly terms with the Germany of the court and the landowner. It has inherited a burgerlich tradition and resented even while it tolerated the swagger of the aristocratic officer. It tolerated it because that sort of thing was supposed to be necessary to the national success. But Munich, the comic papers, Herr Harden, *Vorwaerts*, speak, I think, for the central masses of German life far more truly than any official utterances do. They speak in a voice a little gross, very sensible, blunt, with a kind of heavy humour. That German voice one may not like, but one must needs respect it. It is, at any rate, not bombastic. It is essentially honest. When the imperial eagle comes home with half its feathers out like a crow that has met a bear; when the surviving aristocratic officers reappear with a vastly diminished swagger in the biergartens, I believe that the hitherto acquiescent middle classes and skilled artisan class of German will entirely disappoint those people who expect them to behave either with servility or sentimental loyalty. The great revolutionary impulse of the French was passionate and generous. The revolutionary impulse of Germany may be even more deadly; it may be contemptuous. It may be they will not even drag emperor and nobles down; they will shove them aside....

In all these matters one must ask the reader to enlarge his perspectives at least as far back as the last three centuries. The galaxy of German monarchies that has over-spread so much of Europe is a growth of hardly more than two centuries. It is a phase in the long process of the break-up of the Roman Empire and of the catholic system that inherited its tradition. These royalties have formed a class apart, breeding only among themselves, and attempting to preserve a sort of caste internationalism in the face of an advance in human intelligence, a spread of printing, reading, and writing that makes inevitably for the recrudescence of national and race feeling, and the increasing participation of the people in government.

In Russia and England these originally German dynasties are meeting the problems of the new time by becoming national. They modify themselves from year to year. The time when Britain will again have a Queen of British race may not be very remote. The days when the affairs of Europe could be discussed at Windsor in German and from a German standpoint ended with the death of Queen

Victoria, and it is only in such improvised courts as those of Greece and Bulgaria that the national outlook can still be contemplated from a foreign standpoint and discussed in a foreign tongue. The age when the monarchical system made the courts of three-quarters of Europe a German's Fatherland has ended for ever. And with that, the last rational advantage of monarchy and royalist sentimentality disappears from the middle-class German's point of view.

So it seems to me that the following conclusions about the future of Germany emerge from these considerations. It is improbable that there will be any such revolution as overthrew French Imperialism in 1871; the new Prussian Imperialism is closer to the tradition of the people and much more firmly established through the educational propaganda of the past half-century. But liberal forces in Germany may nevertheless be strong enough to force a peace upon the Hohenzollern empire so soon as any hopes of aggressive successes die away, before the utmost stage of exhaustion is reached, early in 1917, perhaps, or at latest in 1918. This, we suppose, will be a restrictive peace so far as Germany is concerned, humiliating her and hampering her development. The German Press will talk freely of a *revanche* and the renewal of the struggle, and this will help to consolidate the Pledged Allies in their resolve to hold Germany on every front and to retard her economic and financial recovery. The dynasty will lose prestige gradually, the true story of the war will creep slowly into the German consciousness, and the idea of a middle-class republic, like the French Republic, only defensively militant and essentially pacific and industrial, will become more and more popular in the country.

This will have the support of strong journalists, journalists of the Harden type for example. The dynasty tends to become degenerate, so that the probability of either some gross scandals or an ill-advised reactionary movement back to absolutism may develop a crisis within a few years of the peace settlement. The mercantile and professional classes will join hands with the social democrats to remove the decaying incubus of the Hohenzollern system, and Germany will become a more modern and larger repetition of the Third French republic. This collapse of the Germanic monarchical system may spread considerably beyond the limits of the German

empire. It will probably be effected without much violence as a consequence of the convergence and maturity of many streams of very obvious thought. Many of the monarchs concerned may find themselves still left with their titles, palaces, and personal estates, and merely deprived of their last vestiges of legal power. The way will thus be opened for a gradual renewal of good feeling between the people of Germany and the western Europeans. This renewal will be greatly facilitated by the inevitable fall in the German birth-rate that the shortage and economies of this war will have done much to promote, and by the correlated discrediting of the expansionist idea. By 1960 or so the alteration of perspectives will have gone so far that historians will be a little perplexed to explain the causes of the Great War. The militarist monomania of Germany will have become incomprehensible; her *Welt Politik* literature incredible and unreadable....

Such is my reading of the German horoscope.

I doubt if there will be nearly so much writing and reading about the Great War in the latter half of the twentieth century as there was about Napoleon at the end of the nineteenth. The Great War is essentially undramatic, it has no hero, it has no great leaders. It is a story of the common sense of humanity suppressing certain tawdry and vulgar ideas and ambitions, and readjusting much that was wasteful and unjust in social and economic organisation. It is the story of how the spirit of man was awakened by a nightmare of a War Lord.... The nightmare will fade out of mind, and the spirit of man, with revivified energies, will set about the realities of life, the re-establishment of order, the increase of knowledge and creation. Amid these realities the great qualities of the Germans mark them for a distinguished and important rôle.

Section 3

The primary business of the Allies is not reconciliation with Germany. Their primary concern is to organise a great League of Peace about the world with which the American States and China may either unite or establish a permanent understanding. Separate attempts to restore friendship with the Germans will threaten the unanimity of the League of Peace, and perhaps renew the intrigues and evils of the Germanic dynastic system which this war may destroy. The essential restoration of Germany must be the work of German men speaking plain sense to Germans, and inducing their country to hold out its hand not to this or that suspicious neighbour but to mankind. A militarist Germany is a Germany self-condemned to isolation or world empire. A Germany which has returned to the ways of peace, on the other hand, will be a country that cannot be kept out of the system of civilisation. The tariff wall cannot but be lowered, the watchful restrictions cannot but be discontinued against such a Germany. Europe is a system with its heart half used, so long as Germany is isolated. The German population is and will remain the central and largest mass of people in Europe. That is a fact as necessary as the Indianism of India.

To reconstruct modern civilisation without Germany would be a colossal artificial task that would take centuries to do. It is inconceivable that Germany will stand out of Europeanism so long as to allow the trade routes of the world to be entirely deflected from her. Her own necessities march with the natural needs of the world.

So that I give the alliance for the isolation of Germany at the outside a life of forty years before it ceases to be necessary through the recovered willingness of the Germans to lay aside aggression.

But this is not a thing to be run at too hastily. It may be easily possible to delay this national general reconciliation of mankind by an unreal effusion. There will be no advantage in forcing the feelings of the late combatants. It is ridiculous to suppose that for the next decade or so, whatever happens, any Frenchmen are going to feel genial about the occupation of their north-east provinces, or any Belgians smile at the memory of Dinant or Louvain, or the Poles or

Serbs forgive the desolation of their country, or any English or Russians take a humorous view of the treatment their people have had as prisoners in Germany. So long as these are living memories they will keep a barrier of dislike about Germany. Nor is it probable that the ordinary German is going to survey the revised map of Africa with a happy sense of relief, or blame no one but himself for the vanished prosperity of 1914. That is asking too much of humanity. Unless I know nothing of Germany, Germany will bristle with "denkmals" to keep open all such sores. The dislike of Germany by the allied nations will be returned in the hostility of a thwarted and disappointed people. Not even the neutrals will be aloof from these hostilities and resentments. The world will still, in 1950 or so, be throwing much passion into the rights and wrongs of the sinking of the *Lusitania*. There will be a bitterness in the memories of this and the next generation that will make the spectacle of ardent Frenchmen or Englishmen or Belgians or Russians embracing Germans with gusto — unpleasant, to say the least of it.

We may bring ourselves to understand, we may bring ourselves to a cold and reasonable forgiveness, we may suppress our Sir George Makgills and so forth, but it will take sixty or seventy years for the two sides in this present war to grow kindly again. Let us build no false hopes nor pretend to any false generosities. These hatreds can die out only in one way, by the passing of a generation, by the dying out of the wounded and the wronged. Our business, our unsentimental business, is to set about establishing such conditions that they will so die out. And that is the business of the sane Germans too. Behind the barriers this war will have set up between Germany and Anti-Germany, the intelligent men in either camp must prepare the ultimate peace they will never enjoy, must work for the days when their sons at least may meet as they themselves can never meet, without accusation or resentment, upon the common business of the World Peace. That is not to be done by any conscientious sentimentalities, any slobbering denials of unforgettable injuries. We want no Pro-German Leagues any more than we want Anti-German Leagues. We want patience — and silence.

My reason insists upon the inevitableness and necessity of this ultimate reconciliation. I will do no more than I must to injure

Germany further, and I will do all that I can to restore the unity of mankind. None the less is it true that for me for all the rest of my life the Germans I shall meet, the German things I shall see, will be smeared with the blood of my people and my friends that the wilfulness of Germany has spilt.

THE ELEMENTS OF RECONSTRUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

THIS little volume is a reproduction of six articles which appeared some little time ago in the columns of the *Times*. I know nothing about the authors except what can be gathered from their own writing. But the articles from the outset arrested my attention, as they doubtless did that of many others, by their originality and breadth of view, and so I read on with steadily growing interest and sympathy. The suggestions of the writers appeared to me to deserve more than a cursory perusal, and I am glad that they are now to be given to the public in a permanent form.

The tremendous upheaval caused by the war has led to great searchings of heart, and the air is full of bold and sometimes rather wild speculation about fundamentals. 'It is not often in our history,' as some one has recently said,* 'that the nation has found time to think. Now, by a curious paradox, while the flower of her youth and strength are fighting for her freedom and her life, the others have a chance of thinking out the best use to which that life and freedom can be put when they are safe once more. Indeed at the present time activity is as marked in the field of ideas as it is in the field of war.'

[* 'Report of the Committee of the Privy Council on Scientific and Industrial Research,' .]

What is characteristic about that activity is its unusual freedom from the shackles of dogma and convention. It may be said — using the word in no party sense — that we are all Radicals to-day, all prepared to entertain, and to judge dispassionately on their merits, proposals which only a few years ago would have seemed wildly revolutionary. But with all this speculation going on, much of it excellent in quality, there is some danger of distraction. There is a limit to what can be done, all at once, to alter the bases, social, economic and political, of our national life. We seem to be more than ever in need of synthesis, of some unifying principle, else we may easily find ourselves pursuing a number of ends which, though perhaps individually commendable, are incompatible with one another. Hence we have cause to be grateful to any one who seeks, like the authors of this volume, to cover the whole field, to see all the

main objects of the new national endeavour in their relation to one another, and to find principles by which they can be worked into a coherent scheme.

So bold an enterprise has the faults of its qualities. No human mind can be equally familiar with the ins and outs of all the large and diverse questions here brought under review.

And it is no disparagement to the authors of this volume to say that they seem to me less at home in dealing with the constitutional and political aspects of their subject than with the economic and social. Not that their handling of the former is without merit and interest. I, of all men, should be the first to welcome their clear perception that the problem of reconstruction is not merely a British but an Imperial problem, and their advocacy of 'the development of the present British Parliament into an Imperial Parliament with oversea representatives,' leaving the purely local concerns of the United Kingdom to be dealt with by subordinate assemblies. Nor am I any less in sympathy with their attitude to our outworn party divisions — the 'bilateral system of conflict about false issues,' now happily in abeyance, and never, let us hope, to be revived in its old insincerity. As that system has been found an intolerable encumbrance in time of war, it would certainly be no less wasteful and futile when we come to deal with the colossal problems which the return of peace will bring. If these problems are to be tackled with any prospect of a good result, the stereotyped old parties have got to disappear and to make room for fresh groups, whose members will be bound together by a genuine agreement of opinion on the live issues of the new age, not by a mechanical and meaningless acceptance of the shibboleths of a dead past. That this necessary regrouping would be assisted by a change in our methods of election, and especially by the adoption of what is known as 'proportional representation,' is a point on which our authors lay particular stress. 'The sane method of voting is known as Proportional Representation with large constituencies and the single transferable vote, and it is as reasonable and necessary that the country should adopt it as soon as possible as that it should adopt the right types of aeroplane and the best sorts of gun. The advantage of this method is not a matter of opinion, but a matter of demonstration.' That is a strong statement,

though personally I do not disagree with it. But I find more difficulty in accepting another and even more drastic reform, which the writers advocate with equal insistence, namely, the substitution of 'occupational' for local constituencies. And without going into the merits of this proposal, about which much might be said by way of criticism, it is in my humble opinion evident that the attempt to run two such radical changes concurrently is quite impracticable. Nor do our authors attempt to show us how the simultaneous adoption of these two new principles could be made to work. In this as in other portions of their schemes of constitutional change there is indeed much that is ingenious and attractive. But I cannot help feeling that we are sometimes getting rather far away from the immediately possible. I doubt whether the writers have much experience of actual politics. In their excursions into that region, so inhospitable to philosophy, they do not seem to have their feet quite on the ground.

Very different is the impression made upon my mind by the chapters which deal with the industrial future. The breadth of view and boldness of imagination, which are the great merits of the whole treatise, are in this portion of it buttressed by a familiarity with existing conditions and a close touch with fact. Opinions may differ about many of the arguments of the writers. But no serious student of the subject can fail to benefit from contact with their ideas or to recognise the insight, the grasp, and the architectonic quality of their work. They are not scratching the surface of the question, but going to the root of it. In following their lead the reader will find himself constantly at the centre of the problem, not wandering in the outskirts and on the fringes of it. And I shall be greatly surprised if he does not feel, when he puts down the book, that it has saved him from pursuing m.any false scents and has shed new light upon the few big essential points, on which it has caused him to concentrate his attention.

On none of these points is the case of the writers more clear and convincing than When they are pressing home the intimate connection between the reform of our educational system, now so loudly demanded — which aims at much more and better teaching of science — and such a reorganisation of our great national industries as will enable us to make good use of the increased number of men

of scientific training whom our schools and colleges are asked to turn out. ‘To educate without creating opportunity,’ as they truly say, ‘is to set a bonus upon the export of national ability.’ I will not try to summarise their argument, which is already quite sufficiently condensed. The reader will be much better employed in studying it in their own words. But it may be interesting to point out how remarkably their contention on this head is reinforced by the recently published Report — from which I have already quoted — of the Committee of the Privy Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. In that Report, a remarkable document far above the average of official productions of its class, the opinion is expressed that ‘a good deal of the inertia which British manufacturers have shown towards research may have been due to a realisation, partly instinctive perhaps, but partly based on experience, that research *on the small scale they could afford* (the italics are mine) was at best a doubtful proposition.’ And again, ‘Our experience up to the present leads us to think that the small scale on which most British industrial firms have been planned is one of the principal impediments in the way of the organisation of research, with a view to the conduct of those long and complicated investigations which are necessary for the solution of the fundamental problems lying at the basis of our staple industries.’

Here we have precisely the same insistence on the ‘importance of scale’ which the reader will find repeatedly illustrated in the following pages. The words I have just quoted might be paralleled by a number of passages in this volume. I will quote only one: ‘Though a million pound business may be easily able to sustain and profit by fifty chemists, of whom one now and again makes a paying discovery, it does not follow that a hundred thousand pound business can profitably sustain any chemists at all, much less keep up a laboratory for five. Although a State containing a number of big businesses may maintain a multitude of industrial scientific investigators employed in them, it does not follow necessarily that another State, although it contains many more businesses and those of greater aggregate value, can, if they are businesses of a smaller scale individually, employ any investigators at all. It certainly does not reflect unfavourably upon either the intelligence, the energy or

the patriotism of the business men in the small-scale-business country, and it is high time that that sort of blame, which entirely confuses the issue, ceased.'

The authors of the Report and the writers of this volume are both largely concerned with what, in the jargon of the day, are known as 'pivotal or key industries.' I think that the passages which I have just quoted from them may be said to contain a pivotal or key idea. It may turn out after all that the shortcomings with which it is just now the custom to reproach the British man of business, in contrast, for instance, with his German rival — his conservatism, his lack of enterprise, his neglect to avail himself of the aid of science, his reluctance to combine with his fellows for common ends — are not so much faults of character, as necessary consequences of an antiquated system, for which not individuals, but State policy, economic doctrine and wrong popular notions should share the blame. The majority of our men of business have no doubt been doing their best on the lines which they have always been taught, and have themselves believed to be the only right ones. But the world has been moving at a tremendous pace, and the industrial and commercial methods and maxims of fifty or sixty years ago have, under the changed conditions, lost much of their virtue. They were the natural product of the transitional epoch which followed the Industrial Revolution. The mistake which most people then made was in thinking that the principles of Go As You Please and the General Scramble, which may have been necessary and even appropriate during the inevitable break-up of the Old Order, could possibly be the permanent foundations of the New. But we all recognise now that there must be a fresh effort of economic and social organisation. We see the crude and formidable beginnings of it already in the growth of mammoth businesses and combines and in the huge federations of Labour. They are a product of the vast scale of modern enterprise resulting from the achievements of science in the development of mechanical power, and they render the position of the small isolated business and of the so-called 'free,' that is to say unassociated, labourer constantly more precarious and untenable. The drawback and evils of these great agglomerations are obvious, but they are after all the necessary raw material of the New Order.

They only make for oppression and social conflict when they are not controlled in the interests of the community, and are directed, as they are even now not wholly directed, to the pursuit of purely selfish ends.

For this process of agglomeration is certainly going on. There is indeed no resisting it, and those who cannot accommodate themselves to inevitable conditions will presently be forced to the wall. The recognition of these truths is no longer confined to the theorist and the outside observer. From the heart of the business world itself come the most urgent warnings against excessive unregulated competition and the loudest appeals for organisation on co-operative lines and for the helping hand of the State. I wonder whether many of my readers have met with a little book, published not long ago, bearing the title of 'Trade as a Science,' from the pen of Mr. Ernest Benn. I am afraid it has so far not attracted the attention it deserves, for it is full of practical knowledge and shrewd ideas, expounded in a terse, fresh, vigorous, not to say pugnacious style. It is written exclusively from the point of view of a man actually engaged in 'the making and selling of goods' who has not much use for professional economists and none at all for politicians. Yet this eminently practical person is just as condemnatory as any member of the Fabian Society, of the 'individualistic, inarticulate, unorganised mass' of old-fashioned British trade. He sees as clearly as any one that the future belongs to big-scale businesses or to such smaller businesses as can learn to work together and to pool their resources for certain objects — the full use of scientific research being only one of them — which individually they are not strong enough to attain.

This modern tendency to concentration in business, alike on its productive and its distributive side, has all-important consequences beyond the economic sphere. It affects the whole structure of society and is responsible for the new views now steadily gaining ground of the functions and responsibilities of the State. Of this reaction of recent economic developments upon social and civic life our authors have much to say. It is indeed their central theme. And if in discussing it within such narrow limits of space they are compelled, as they themselves confess, to be 'severely elementary,' I do not

think they can be accused of any lack of thoroughness in laying out the ground. Perhaps the point at which the whole range of their constructive principles is most clearly exhibited is in the brilliant chapter on 'Scientific Agriculture and the Nation's Food.' Progressive agriculturists, in their uphill but increasingly hopeful struggle, will be grateful for the support here given to all their main objects by men who evidently are not of their number, but approach the subject from a new angle and purely from the national point of view\ And if I dare add another sentence or two to an Introduction which has already run to excessive length, let me specially commend to them, and to others, what our authors have to say about the true place and also the limitations of a Tariff, or indeed of any form of Protection, in a national economic policy. Their wise and discriminating words on this subject should show us a way out of what has now become a barren and boring controversy between Protectionists and Free Traders, obviate any further misunderstanding, and allow us all to get to practical business.

But I must not let myself be tempted to stray into any further discussion of the numerous and alluring topics which are crowded into this stimulating book. My duty is discharged in commending it to the public as a valuable and distinguished contribution to the national symposium on the revolution which is being brought about by the war. There are indeed some who think that all such speculations are idle and based on a false hypothesis. When the war is once over, they tell us, we shall all hasten to return to the old ways. Its lessons will soon be forgotten, and a few years hence everything will be very much the same as it was before. For my own part I differ entirely from that view of the probabilities of the future. No doubt it is possible to exaggerate the effect which even the greatest external events can have upon the character of human beings. The men and women who survive the war will be the same men and women, and it would be a moral miracle if they should be entirely transformed by it. But it would be even more miraculous if the catastrophic experiences of the last two years did not leave a permanent mark upon them. Apart from its material effects which both in the way of destruction and construction are simply immense, the present struggle is certain, as it seems to me, to leave behind it a profound

change in the national spirit and outlook. Whether we like it or not there is no possibility of getting back into the old grooves. When the war at long last comes to an end, we shall find ourselves confronted with a maze of difficulties such as no generation of men, of whom w^e have any record, have ever had to face before. As the war itself is the greatest in history, so will its aftermath be the most prodigious. And upon all those, who are not of necessity wholly absorbed in the conduct of the war itself, there rests no higher obligation than to think constantly, strenuously, connectedly, with soberness but also, if they are fortunate enough to possess it, with imagination, of the new measures and methods by which those difficulties may haply be overcome. To that kind of thought, serious, practical and constructive, the following pages should afford valuable aid.

— MILNER.

I. — SCIENCE IN EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY

IN a recent conversation between two friends the complaint was made that there existed no clear and systematic national plan or policy for the development of the Empire after the war. This complaint was discussed, and both friends concluded at last that it was unfounded, that there did exist — though too often expressed in a fragmentary way and much obscured by personal and party questions — a clear and simple course before the country. The two friends attempted a plain statement of this course, and came to a very complete agreement upon it. Their attempt seemed so to clear up their own ideas that they think the results may appeal to a wider circle. They have ventured to compress them into some three or four letters (in which it may be noted two hands are engaged), believing that what they will have to say will outline a complete and consistent liberal and progressive policy in British affairs. They find they can approach the whole matter most conveniently by coming into it in reference to the recent discussion of the national neglect of science.

For the last quarter of a century one of these writers has been interested in the movement for the development of science teaching and scientific research in this country. He has been equally impressed by the excellence and by the futility of the criticisms levelled at our higher educational organization, from the days of Matthew Arnold to the recent gathering in the rooms of the Linnean Society, when, under appropriately asphyxiating conditions, witness after witness testified to the suffocation of science in British affairs, to waste, disastrous ignorance, and murderous indifference to knowledge in our administration, and to our planless future. The figure of Sir Ray Lankester still haunts his memory. Sir Ray, with a corrugated brow and troubled eyes, asking in a kind of perplexed whisper what it was held us back, why, with so overwhelming a case against neglect, with such instances and proofs, in these days of tragic and bitter demonstration, we still even now were not getting on to any real expansion either of scientific education or of the organization of

research.

SCIENCE AND THE PUBLIC SERVICES

Sir Ray Lankester's answer to his own question was to attack the Civil Service Commissioners. They have a bias in favour of the old classical education, and they load the scales against science by overmarking Greek and Latin subjects and undermarking science. In practice this closes the big public services to the science student. Clever and ambitious boys are drawn over to the classical side; they acquire an 'anti-modern side' habit of mind and a certain contempt for the modern side residuum. The science of the country suffers doubly — first, because the abler and administrative men are unscientific and ignorant of science; and, secondly, because science does not get the pick of our young men. The case of the scientific men for an immediate scaling up of the marks given for science in the Civil Service requirements is overwhelming and unanswerable. Nothing that is written here is to be taken as detracting from the urgency of that demand.

Nevertheless it is arguable that obstruction by the friends of the old- fashioned education among the Civil Service Commissioners does not exhaust the account of the forces that blockade science from this country. The diagnosis of our scientific congestion, our scientific atrophy, may be carried farther. The question may be a much wider one than it is generally supposed to be. The British neglect of science may be not a specific trouble in itself, but a symptom of some much decider and more general trouble. It is possible that in attacking classical dons. University prejudices. Convocation clerics, scholastic stupidity, national apathy about science, journalistic ignorance, and so on and so on, the scientific progressive has been attacking on too narrow a front and at the wrong point in the front. It is conceivable that British education will never be extensively altered in this way; the experience of a quarter of a century at least points to that conclusion. It is conceivable that the educational problem is not a problem-in-itself at all, and that when we begin to regard it as a part in a much larger problem, as part of the general problem of national reconstruction, we shall find that, instead of our difficulties being increased by this enlargement of purview, they will be found to

vanish away.

This, at any rate, is the thesis now presented. It is submitted that the problem of national education and the problem of economic reconstruction are inseparable and cannot be dealt with apart. They must be part of one plan, the national plan. What other problems may also enter into this plan may be deferred for a later date. The present thesis is quite enough for this opening discussion.

THE GREAT DYE QUESTION

Everybody is familiar at the present time with what we may call the instance of the dyes, the great dye question. That may serve very well as our type case. What is true of the dyes will be found with a rough parallelism to be true of metallurgy, engineering, the electrical industry, and so on. The story of the dyes as it is usually told is the story of a British discovery exploited by Germany because Germany was developing and was able to get to work at once with a large class of properly trained mediocre chemical investigators, while Britain had no such class available. At a comparatively trivial amount spent upon scientific education Germany captured an industry not merely worth twenty million and more a year to her, but giving her, as we now discover, remarkable military and political advantages. So far we endorse the story. But then comes the implication that had Britain laid down, as one lays down wine, a few thousand chemical students in the 'eighties and 'nineties to mature, at a cost, let us say, of a thousand pounds a head or so, nothing of the sort would have happened, and that all that we have now to do after the war is just to set aside an annual million earmarked 'chemists,' and then all these arrears will be made up to us.

But, indeed, the business is not so simple as that. We submit that it has been practically impossible for Britain to produce that class of technical chemists up to the present time, that no subsidizing of education, however generous, would have enabled her to do so, and that without changes far more extensive than a mere endowment of technical universities and colleges she will still be unable to produce it.

There comes in at this point something which is generally spoken of as the apathy of the British manufacturer. Everyone has heard of his remarkable refusal to employ technical chemists and scientific experts, even such few as we had. And everybody has heard of those wonderful German firms that keep one hundred, three hundred, six hundred industrial chemists constantly at work. From that the narrator proceeds to vehement abuse of the conservative British employer, whose only ambition is to be mistaken for a country

gentleman, who lives by his grandfather's routines, deserts the works for an estate, shoots pheasants, and so on and so on. We are all familiar with the shrill indictment, the popular novelist-reformer is for ever at it. The 'apathetic' manufacturer shares with the 'clerical headmaster' his acutest indignation. Such social criticisms brighten life, but they fail altogether to exhaust this problem.

Indeed, they scarcely touch it. Even if the British manufacturer lived always in his shirt-sleeves and never washed his hands, and kept a torn-out page of a chemical text-book pinned above his shaving-glass, he would still not be in a position to employ a large staff of technical chemists. He cannot do so because his business and his plant are not upon a scale that permits that sort of thing. In that lies the gist of this matter. The British economic system developed some generations before the German did, before electricity, and concurrently with the railways; it is older, it is more old-fashioned, its parts are upon a different scale. America and Germany have developed the present economic system upon that larger scale which the enormous development of means and rapidity of communications in the nineteenth century have made possible. Britain was doing very well on the older scale. Necessarily one must state things crudely, but the broad fact in the business issue between Britain and Germany during the last quarter-century is that Britain has been a country of a great number of little hundred-thousand-pound businesses, so to speak, with a tradition of mutual competition, with, indeed, competition preached as a gospel, and Germany has been a country of fewer and co-operating five-million businesses and combines. All sorts of consequences follow from that essential structural difference in the two systems, but the only one that concerns us now is in its relation to the industrial application of science.

It is one of the commonest delusions of unwary minds that things can be reduced to scale and still remain the same sort of things. But for most practical purposes that is not the case; you cannot reduce a house to scale, for example, because of the doors and windows, and our legislative amateurs in popular economy will probably discover in a year or so that the psychology of investing five shillings is not at all the same process writ small as the psychology of investing a thousand pounds. In the same way, though a million- pound business may be easily able to sustain and profit by fifty chemists, of whom one now and then makes a paying discovery, it does not follow that a hundred-thousand-pound business can profitably sustain any

chemists at all, much less keep up a laboratory for five. Although a State containing a number of big businesses may maintain a multitude of industrial scientific investigators employed in them, it does not follow necessarily that another State, although it contains many more businesses, and those of a greater aggregate value, can, if they are businesses on a smaller scale individually, employ any investigators at all. It certainly does not reflect unfavourably upon either the intelligence, the energy, or the patriotism of the business men in the small-scale-business country, and it is high time that that sort of blame, which entirely confuses the issue, ceased. And although the colleges of the latter State, the State on small-business lines, turn out chemists and investigators by the myriad, it does not follow that they will be efficiently employed, at least until they can learn to live on the wages of a boy clerk and experiment in an outhouse for the love of knowledge and their employer with three test tubes and a Bunsen burner. The tendency of the best among them will be to emigrate to the big-business State. Perkins and his aniline dyes go to Germany. To educate without creating opportunity is to set a bonus upon the export of national ability. In other words, big business, progressive methods, and scientific research come together and must come together. Syndicating businesses and organizing scientific education and research are two aspects of the same job.

THE PATTERN OF 1920

The conclusion follows from these considerations that those who are attacking the problem of the industrial reorganization of the Empire and those who are working for educational reconstruction need to join hands. Apart both movements are likely to be far less effective than upon a broader common intention. Apart each may much more easily fail. The British industrial and business problem is to scrap the methods of 1850-60, and not to imitate Germany with a copy of her 1890-1900 methods, but to go right ahead to the 1920 pattern. What that pattern should be it is in its general form not very difficult to say, whatever discoveries in detail remain to be made. The experiment of controlled establishments, the experiences of trusts and combines, German State socialism, the theories of guild socialism, are all in the solution. When one watches a process of crystallisation ever and again one sees a jerk and a shift as the

growing crystals adjust. Such an incident occurred recently. This was the big amalgamation of Brunner Mond and Co. and Castner Kellner and Co. The shares of both companies appreciated at once. But why should amalgamation in the chemical industry stop at Brunner Mond and Co. and Castner Kellner and Co.? Why not face the present desirability and the final necessity of a still more comprehensive crystallisation, and prepare now to bring in the British Empire itself as an active and contributing partner in the ultimate combination?

Brunner Mond and Co., it is said, have never had a strike, retain their men for exceptionally long periods, train many of them specially, and pension old men off. They do this with no pretensions to philanthropy, but because it pays. But no small hundred-thousand-pound concern can afford to do anything of the sort; it works on a narrower basis for too immediate ends. A chemical industry on an Imperial scale can, on the other hand, do things on a far wider basis, can work for larger and remoter advantages, and turn its vast profits far more directly to the enduring benefit of the community. It can plan such a liberal and comprehensive treatment of labour as no smaller employer can attempt. The minor employer deals with his men by the hour, day, or job; he has to take them as they come 'out of the unknown' to him; he is unable to treat them generously as they age; he is powerless to help their children; indeed, to do his duty in any way beyond the immediate business in hand. But a nationalized industry can see the life of labour as a whole, and can deal with its own section of organized labour not through a mere string of isolated jobs, snatch-profit occasions, and petty disputes, but as a scheme of lives; can guarantee ease presently in return for energy now, and can formulate and realise big, thorough, efficient, economical, and racially beneficial schemes of education, training, selection, direction, and research.

In this time of reconstruction there are two entirely divergent ways in which the new education may develop: one leading straight to Britain's last muddle, and the other to an Imperial renascence. The first is the traditional national method, planless, incoherent, wildly wasteful. It begins in a tangle of agitating bodies, committees, and organizations; it goes on to much zeal, more anger, storms of blame, scraps of fine performance, the setting to work of conceivably quite

large numbers of professors, instructors, demonstrators, and students, who won't understand quite why, who won't understand quite to what end, who will get all sorts of knowledge perhaps, but certainly no knowledge of the ends and methods of the business machinery in which their knowledge is required. And so on to disputes, bitterness, inadequate opportunities, wasted lives, and an ultimate triumph of some better-organized foreign State. That is the easier way, the greater probability.

RESEARCH AMALGAMATED WITH INDUSTRY

The second way is a replanning of scientific education and research, concurrently with, and as a part of, a systematic amalgamation and co- ordination of industries, so that the same men who plan the plant may have a decisive voice in the education of the men who will work the plant. The boys and girls in the schools and the men and women in the technical college will be instructed in, they will be parties to, the great national industrial undertakings. Instead of thinking of leaving school, as one routs out of bed on a cold morning, and plunging into an alien world of insecure, generally distasteful, and, from the employee's point of view, unmeaning employment, they will think about and choose and prepare themselves for the part they will play and the career they will follow, if not in most cases to conspicuous success and usefulness, then at least to an ordinary conclusion in comfort and leisure, in the national life.

This, then, is the present thesis; that if they wish to be anything more than an academic voice crying vainly in the darkness, Sir Ray Lankester and his friends of the British Science Guild must set out and take counsel with and understand those captains and organizers of industry and those labour leaders, whose primary concern should be the reinstatement of the national economic life after the war. There must be mutual inspiration and help, a common theory and a common aim. Talking about national scientific education without talking about social and economic reconstruction is ploughing the sands and beating the air. The effort to save the minds of the next generation from those clerical, social, and merely scholastic powers, amiable, but unimaginative and ignorant of present-day needs and possibilities, that at present so fatally control our educational machinery, is doomed to certain failure unless it is part of a far more comprehensive scheme.

So far we have insisted merely upon the correlation of education and industrialism. Certain subsequent arguments will seek to extend this correlation so as to demonstrate the futility of any sort of piece-

meal reconstruction at the present time, and the necessity for one national plan. And, further, we shall attempt to state in plain, broad terms the lines upon which such a plan must be drawn if it is to succeed. These ideas will be the very carefully thought-out views of the writer, and they will be set out as the basis of a campaign of reconstructive effort. Our British world is at present a confusion of fragmentary good intentions and partial proposals. We discuss the projection of tariffs and we discuss the organization of labour without considering the profound difference it makes whether we are dealing with the projection and manning of a chaotic world of individualistic businesses run for unchecked private profit or a system of amalgamated businesses in which the public interest is the controlling shareholder. A man may very well be a violent Free-trader and trade unionist in the former alternative and quite the reverse in the latter. We are going about the business of our national future like a family which is acquiring an automobile by sending father out to get some sort of good engine, it doesn't matter what, mother to back her fancy in carburettors, Frankie to get acetylene headlights, Bertie to buy wheels, and Georgie to buy tires, regardless of each other and the weight and size of the whole, leaving the rest of the equipage to happen somehow, while sister Beatrice sits at home inquiring into the respective merits of the petrol and the steam engine, and Caroline looks through the accounts to find out whether the family can afford to set up a car of any sort at all. But, indeed, the future of the Empire is now either one whole, one plan, or — failure and fragmentation.

II. — SCIENTIFIC AGRICULTURE AND THE NATION'S FOOD

IT is probable that historians will mark the year 1914 as the end of the Socialist movement; it was an ailing movement before that time, and after the war we shall find new oppositions and new formulae replacing the obsolete '-isms' of the former age. This is not to say that Socialism will be counted to have failed. No movement can be said to have failed which has sat so triumphantly on the grave of its antagonists as Socialism has sat upon the grave of laissez faire. But the movement combined general ideas of the utmost sanity with methods of utter impracticability, and, while the sounder elements of the Socialistic proposal have so passed into the general consciousness as to be no longer distinctive, its rejected factors shrivel and perish as things completely judged, and its name becomes a shelter for 'rebels' and faddists.

Perhaps the deadest part of Socialism now is all that centred about the idea of 'expropriation.' In the 'eighties the Socialists were always discussing the taking away of the land from its owners and of capital from its owners, 'with or without compensation.' The fiercer sort were very stern against compensation. At the most they would consider humane provision for the declining years of the more elderly rich. They regretfully abandoned the idea of a punitive treatment of Dives so far as this world went. And then the economic system was to be handed over to the most marvellous officials, who were no doubt to spring forth at once in limitless numbers from the brains of the Socialist propagandists ready equipped for their task. The early Socialists expounded their doctrine with the blithest disregard of what one might have imagined was a fairly obvious fact, that you cannot suddenly create whole new classes of men. That is the common error of almost all the revolutionary schemes of the study and of the work-room alike. It was the English Fabian Socialists who first betrayed a doubt of the practicability of this sensational change of hands. Being largely recruited from the ranks of Government clerks, who did at least correspond about affairs, the

Fabians perceived a necessity for prepared bureaucrats.

ABSURDITY OF 'EXPROPRIATION'

That Fabian doubt has grown now to a complete understanding of the absurdity of any proposal to 'expropriate' owners and rebuild the social world anew with new units of an entirely different sort. There can be no interval for such a reconstruction; we may change the world indeed as much as we like, provided we keep on going all the time, but we cannot do the smallest change that involves a week's stoppage. So that while on the one hand the bulk of reasonable men in the Empire have come over to the primary Socialist assertion that food production, transport, all the big industrialism are matters not for the profit-seeking of private ownership, but for public administration, it has also come to the completest realization that it is impossible to wrench these services suddenly from the hands that control them to-day. We cannot cut to-morrow off from yesterday; the world will be of the same men. Without any preachment or propaganda we all find ourselves to-day drifted into a virtual agreement upon the reasonable course of economic development. It is a development towards nationalization; so far we go with the Socialist, but it is a development not by the Socialist's panacea of 'expropriation' at all, but by amalgamation, by co-ordination and co-operation, by bringing the State into partnership, and an increasing partnership, in the big businesses that result from those amalgamations, by developing the crude beginnings of the 'controlled establishment,' by the quid pro quo of profit-sharing and control in the national interest in exchange for the national credit and a helpful tariff.

This outlook for the land and the food supply of the Empire opens some broad questions of very remarkable interest. It is not one of the least of the compensations for this war that it has necessitated experiments upon an otherwise impossible scale in the handling and rationing of the people's food and drink, and upon the conversion of private into quasi-public businesses. There has been haste and no doubt there has been much waste and a considerable variety of incidental inaccuracies and abuses, favouritism, jobbery, the wrong man in this place and the crooked man in that, but on the whole this

series of improvised ‘nationalizations’ is full of suggestion and encouragement for the more deliberate and permanent readjustments that must be made after the war. The most striking demonstration has been of the practicability of the State coming in as the food buyer and distributor, and of the great possibilities of control and participation that this opens out to us, first, of the already very extensively syndicated popular provision trade of the country, and secondly, of the cultivator. The State can step in here with a minimum of social disturbance. It need expropriate nobody, it need confiscate nothing, it leaves the landlord his acres, the farmer his farm, the wholesaler his warehouse, and the retailer his shop, but on the one hand it can insist upon certain standards of quality, wholesomeness and cheapness, and on the other upon certain standards of cultivation. The great advantage of the quasi-public big business is that the profit the State partner seeks is not a dividend but the public welfare. It can afford to buy even at a loss a crop which is socially beneficial, it can afford to sell even at a loss a product which is wholesome or socially stimulating. Its true profit is a highly cultivated country and a well-fed, energetic population. Big business, and particularly State business, means wide views and distant ends, and they are attainable in no other way.

THE USE OF A TARIFF

The use of a tariff in regulating international trade relations is entirely consonant with the general trend of modern thought. When Socialism spent her declining years rejoicing over the grave of laissez faire, the kindred superstition of Free Trade, the superstition that all goes well with a land if only you leave imports alone, lay waiting to join its parent in that grave. But there is also a danger — and nowadays it is the great danger — of becoming just as blindly superstitious about a tariff.

A tariff is perhaps a necessary part of any national economic scheme, but it is not in itself an economic scheme. Nevertheless there does seem to be a superstition in some quarters that if only the price of a commodity which it is desirable to produce in this country is driven up and its importation checked by a tariff, that commodity will necessarily be produced adequately and sufficiently in this country. This, at best, would be a lazy-tongs way of doing things, but

also it is the wrong way. It does not exclude the possibility of a permanent scarcity of the desired product, of an economic hold-up, and of large private fortunes being made at the public expense. A tariff, we must bear in mind, varies in public value with the economic constitution of the State it protects. In an individualistic State of uncontrolled and irresponsible businesses it becomes very easily a means of looting the general public and impoverishing the country. The really formidable opponents of tariff projects are shrewd men acquainted with human nature, and quite free from any superstitions about the automatic blessedness of everything under free trade. But they will not have the faintest toleration for any tariff that, for example, will tend in their opinion to make farmers lazily fat and send up the landowners' rents in a time when it is the bounden duty of everyone to be lean and active. The country will not stand a merely protective tariff in foodstuffs, or in any commodity.

A BONUS FOR FARMERS

Considerations of this sort have recently produced from one ex-Fabian Socialist, Sir Leo Chiozza Money, a scheme that is, to say the least of it, of very considerable interest. It proposes that, roughly speaking, the State, by co-ordinating the present wholesalers and distributing agencies, should buy all the food in the country and hand it out to the retailers. It would buy first the national produce, and this it would buy with a view to developing the highest and most beneficial forms of cultivation. It would then supplement this supply by buying through the Colonial Governments and importing the surplus colonial output. Finally it would, if necessary, complete its needs by buying in the cheapest foreign market. It would of course buy at three price levels, and it would in effect subsidise the home grower, who would have as his encouragement not a protective tariff but a bonus price. And the cost of this encouragement would fall not upon the poorer sort of consumer, as a tariff would do, but upon the general community, which would be profiting by the security and prosperity of agriculture and by the increased national safety to which a well-maintained agriculture conduces.

The reaction upon the life and quality of the farmer, although it would be neither revolutionary nor in any way violent, would nevertheless be very considerable. With the State as his buyer he

would no longer be under any necessity to dodder into the market-town with his bits of produce on a market-day and pick up scraps of scientific farming amidst the quizzing of the farmers' ordinary. It is the privilege of the customer to call the tune of the seller, and the State buyer would also be the State Department of Agriculture; the Department of Agriculture, in concert with existing buyers and wholesale distributors, would not only be buying the national produce, it would be conducting the teaching of agricultural science, it would be maintaining experimental farms and agricultural research, it would be controlling the systematic improvement of breed and seed, and working with the syndicated national chemical industries for the supply of fertilisers. And the farmer would no longer be unable to take up the new better methods because of the smallness of his scale and the shortness of his views, or free to hump his back and declare that what was good enough for his father was good enough for him. The State buyer would be in a position to indicate, and to indicate with a certain authority, the best seeds, the best breeds, the preferable methods. He would have an eye, too, to the welfare of the farmer's hands, and some power to object to such obsolete and wasteful methods as contrive to muddle along at the grave social cost of underpaid labour. He would be in a position to press the too individualistic farmer towards a co-operative use of machinery, of dairies, and such-like plant.

SYNDICATION WITHOUT CONFISCATION

So in the matter of the land, just as in the matter of industrial production which was discussed in our first chapter, the alternative to the development of grave social stresses as the outcome of the war — stresses that may easily develop upon a quite catastrophic scale — seems to lie along the line of the syndication and nationalization of existing public services. This does not necessarily involve the transfer of control to public officials but rather the conversion of the existing direction to the national service. It recognizes, organizes, and renders more responsible and efficient a state of affairs that the wholesale and distributive syndications of the last few decades have already partially and informally brought about. Without confiscation, revolution, or personal hardship, it opens the way to a state of affairs when all the land of Britain will be administered as if it were one

great estate for the general national benefit.

And the attention of those who are agitating for extensive reforms in our education is particularly drawn to the way in which the development of a great system of scientific study and teaching follows almost necessarily upon such a national organization of agricultural production as a part of its development. Scientific education on the biological side becomes no longer an educational blind alley, a protesting ineffectiveness; it leads straight to appointments, influence, and usefulness. It is a point that we believe to be of extreme importance, and one that seems to be overlooked entirely in the current discussion of educational reform, it is a point that a study of the history of scientific and technical development in Germany will completely endorse, that economic reconstruction must if anything precede, and certainly must accompany, any large development of scientific and technical teaching.

III. — THE LONG VIEW AND LABOUR

IN no relationship, not even in relationship to the inevitable hostile competition of Central Europe, does the making of a national plan for the reconstruction of our economic life upon bigger and less individualistic lines become so suddenly urgent as it does in relation to the possibilities of acute labour trouble after the war. The very great sense and understanding of the labour masses have consented to a general truce in labour disputes during this vital conflict. There have been breaches of the truce, it is true, but always with very colourable justification or through peculiar instigation, and I think there are few of those who have watched the labour situation during the last quarter-century who will not agree that the general willingness and loyalty of our workers under the test of war have been remarkable and of the most hopeful augury for the future of the Empire. It will be nothing less than shameful on the part of those who rule us and of those who control our industrial life if they are unprepared to meet the men at the peace with something better than a resumption of the pitiful old struggles. And just as it has been maintained in two previous chapters that the key to a successful scientific competition with Germany and the key to a proper development of the home food supply lie alike in comprehensive amalgamations and syndications into which the, State enters as a controlling partner, so now it will be argued that the key of escape from a chaotic and disastrous series of labour conflicts lies in the same process.

Every age expresses itself in transitory oppositions which it believes to be permanent, and the thought of every age is hampered by the oppositions of its predecessor. We talk and write too much as if we were still in the extremely individualistic world of Herbert Spencer and the Manchester School; as though every man were to be assigned either to the class of capital or the class of labour, as though capital were a system of freely competitive employers working for profit and labour a system of freely competitive workers struggling for a living just above the margin of existence, and as though the State were nothing but a restraining influence upon the massacre that

would otherwise naturally ensue. With the whole nation unified as it has never been before in the most honourable struggle in its history there are yet people who can still imagine that such base chaotic scramblings are the continuing conditions of civil life. But, indeed, such conditions are as dead and done with as slavery — or Harriet Martineau. Unhappily they have left abundant traces upon the relations of employer and employed, and, in particular, upon the ideas and traditions of labour, a legacy that may yet greatly embarrass the development of a new and better England.

EMPLOYERS AND TRADE UNIONS

Nearly all the mixed peoples of the British Isles are generous-spirited and good-humoured people, but it is idle to approach the question of labour without recognizing the distortions of resentment, suspicion, and unwillingness that have been left upon our naturally genial, popular mind by the experiences of the Selfish Age, the age of the medium-sized competing businesses, in economic development. The workers, faced by employers who were obsessed by the idea of getting as much work for as little money as possible, and who were indeed, because of the scale of their businesses, unable to take the long views that can disregard immediate losses or advantages, developed a quite ferocious resolution to give as little work for as much money as possible. Neither side was thinking of the community or the future, because the conditions were too close, because the business was on too small a scale to admit of that. The trade unions grew up, we have to remember, as the organization of a resistance to near-sighted exactions; their primary purpose was the protection of human life from an irrational and destructive pressure, and that primary purpose has left its form upon trade unionism to this day. The original trade unions, to put it bluntly, aimed at shirking. They were indeed perfectly justified in aiming at shirking, at less work and more pay, in the presence of an industrialism that aimed only at private profit, at more work for less pay, and that canted about 'liberty' whenever it was reminded of the most elementary duties towards housing, education, sanitation, and the national and Imperial future. And it is merely foolish for people nowadays to set up an outcry at the restrictive and obstructive traditions of trade unionism and to expect these highly defensive organizations of the less educated to leap forward open-handed to greet the slowly formed and still very imperfect realizations of public duty on the part of the owning and employing classes. It is scarcely less just to blame the employers for sweating to get profits. Both sides were demoralized by the old conditions. Both sides are still imperfectly adapted to the new possibilities and necessities. Neither has much right to call the other side shortsighted and narrow. They have to go

to school together if the Empire is to be saved. It is hopeless for anyone to discuss the future of labour in Great Britain who does not bear continually in mind this legacy of lurking suspicion. It is a vital part of this problem that whatever is not done openly now, whatever is not clearly and fully explained now so that most workmen and most employers understand it, will be misinterpreted and blocked by popular distrust. Economic reconstruction must be a general act. It is an idle dream, and all too prevalent a dream, to suppose that any great economic reorganization can be brought about by quiet meetings of bankers and big business men and unobtrusive bargains with Government departments. The workers are going to be restive at any changes they cannot understand and watch. Whatever reorganization is attempted must be done in the daylight; it must be set out quite plainly in the popular Press, it must be forced upon the attention of the worker; he must be made a party to every step in the national process. That he can very easily be made a party, that indeed already there is coming in from the labour side and expressed in labour terms a closely kindred movement to the movement for quasi-nationalization that is coming from above, will be almost immediately pointed out.

THE SCALE OF BUSINESS

Let us insist again upon the dominant idea that runs through all these letters, which is the importance of scale; in this connexion this takes the form of the proposition that the relation of the management of the business of manufacture to the worker varies in its nature as the business varies in its scale. The difference in scale makes a difference in kind. The relation of a man who employs just two men to those men, differs from the relation of the director of a hundred-thousand-pound business to his workers, and this again differs from the relation of a State trust to its workers not simply in scale but, because of the difference in scale, in almost every other conceivable respect. The last two relationships differ almost as widely as the act of taking a passing taxicab and the act of buying an estate. As the business merges in the State we pass from the question of selling hours of labour to the question of how to make the best use of a whole life. We pass from an antagonism of buyers and sellers of work to a scheme for a common welfare. And there come into the field of vision considerations of Imperial and racial benefit that are entirely beyond the range of the Selfish Age.

The old conception of labour was well expressed by the term 'hands.' The employer took his hands on as he listed and paid them off when he thought fit. His business fluctuated widely, as small businesses must. When he didn't want his workers he kept them loafing about outside his gates doing nothing, waiting for a job. He did not lose by that very much, but the Empire did. Moreover, he employed them when they were still imperfectly educated and immature. He made what he could out of them; what they became was none of his concern. He did not lose by that, but the Empire did. He dropped them at the first sign of age, and he did not hesitate to work them so that they aged rapidly. He did not have to keep them when they were incapacitated, but the Empire did. He fought them with lock-outs and was gallant against a strike. The men and their families degenerated during their conflicts, but there were always other men to be found. He won his fight, perhaps. But we will not italicize again. The Empire as employer cannot afford to treat its man

power in this fashion. The quasi-nationalized business can confer with the State and with organized labour and scheme a use of labour that will be at once far more profitable to the community and far more acceptable to the worker. For example, it seems to be demonstrable that much more can be got out of a man if he works intensely, continually, and hopefully for quite a few years than if he works hopelessly and unwillingly for all his life. Very few private employers can bargain with a man upon the lifetime scale; but the nationalized industry can. It can pay in that most attractive of all wages, security; it can guarantee a man's ultimate leisure and independence. The private employer cannot arrange that the worker shall remain under training up to 18 or 20, so increasing his ultimate efficiency; the national employer can. And it is in this direction of the quasi-national business that our urgent international position, our national welfare and the happiness of the people alike point. Whether we think of Imperial success, social efficiency, or human comfort and happiness, the conclusion is the same.

GUILD SOCIALISM

It has already been suggested here that no movement in the direction of national trusts has any prospect of success if it is made a matter of private arrangement and secret intrigue. Such methods are not only contrary to the suspicious nature of a modern democracy demoralized by industrialism, but they disregard and waste the enormous possibilities of contributory assistance in an even partially educated populace. And it is in this connexion that more attention needs to be given by organizers and directors of industry to those comparatively modern developments of labour thought which figure as Syndicalism and Guild Socialism. These ideas are stirring great numbers of the younger workers, and they are receiving quite inadequate notice in the general Press. Our governing class, thanks to the facilities for a classical education existing in Great Britain, know far more about the ideas of the Gracchi than they do about the notions that such people as, for example, Mr. Cole and Mr. Mellor and the Editor of The New Age, are spreading industriously in the country.

No doubt there is much to be said for the systematic snubbing of these busy propagandists. England would not be what it is if we did not snub, but large sections of the workers are not snubbing these people and these ideas. Let us by all means continue to snub them, take it out of them socially and so on, but let us at least see whether some use is not to be made of their ideas. These new ideas among the workers need not make for conflict, but they certainly will make for conflict if they are ignored. That is the important fact to grasp. These new views are apt to be couched in terms of class hostility and in the old aggressive and now irritating phrases of militant Marxism, but essentially these new views are constructive views; from the labour side they really present what is a reciprocal movement to the trend of the employer organizations towards trusts and national associations. Like all labour movements, they tend to disregard the practical difficulties in the way of a complete change of control; they do seem at times to contemplate — just as the older Socialists did — a revolutionary change of control. There is no recognition of that

fundamental principle of statecraft upon which we have already laid stress in these papers — that new social classes cannot be suddenly created. But this misconception is bound to correct itself at the first attempt at realization, and so it has none of the importance some frightened magnates may be disposed to give it. The fact — the very valuable and cardinal fact — remains that this group of movements of which Guild Socialism is the most typical is rapidly preparing the minds of large masses of workers for industries upon a national scale, and making the position of the hundred-thousand-pound business even worse than it would otherwise be. We have to allow for prejudice and unreasonableness on both sides of this question. Naturally a popular movement will demand a new sort of democratic control, with every porter and ticket-clerk voting upon railway management, and naturally the railway directors (who will, after all, become the national directors) regard this proposal with quite needless horror, because both sides are obsessed by this idea, that with nationalization some entirely novel sort of management can be immediately improvised. If only the business organizer could be induced to see what a pious aspiration is the democratic control of the Guild Socialist, how apart it is from the rest of the question, and how inevitable is the continuation of the existing control into the new conditions, he would perhaps be readier with help and a welcome for what is really a most valuable educational movement. He is in practice, if he would only realize it, as irremovable as — Mr. Asquith.

Gifted literary men have been obliging us recently with picturesque speculations upon the profound psychological changes that are going on in the New Armies. We must not be too ready.to recoil from their highly imaginative assurances to the opposite extreme of supposing that the ten millions or so of people who have been engaged either in Army or Navy or upon some special war-time work have not got a very much clearer idea of the possibility of great national businesses and a much stronger disposition to prefer direct public service to work under individualist control. With every desire to be unimaginative, one feels the probability of such a change in the general mind. It is a change altogether upon the lines we have been laying down. Opportunity, current thought, and the new disposition

of great multitudes of people march with our Imperial necessities.

In our two preceding chapters it was sought to show that the essential of a plan of national reconstruction must be the reorganization of business and agriculture upon the lines of national trusts. The thesis of this chapter is that it is possible, desirable, and necessary to change the life of labour concurrently with this process of industrial nationalization, and to replace the chancy, insecure, distressing, discouraging, and publicly wasteful method of employment on a basis of weekly and even hourly wages by much longer and fairer forms of engagement. This is a change that can only be effected with the consent and concurrence of labour, organized or unorganized. The national plan must be a public plan — no Peace Book hidden away in Westminster and jealously guarded from the curiosity of 'outsiders' will serve; the broad ideas of any effective national plan need to be canvassed in the popular Press; the mind of the New Labour needs to be cultivated and has to be respected. Syndication upon a national scale, and with extreme publicity and public participation — such, it is submitted, are the lines, and the only possible lines, upon which we must go if our Empire is to wax and not wane in the new era that this war begins.

IV. — PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL ADAPTATION

IN our three preceding chapters it has been propounded that the ruling idea to adopt in our national policy, the idea about which the rest of our policy can be built as a body is built upon a backbone, is the idea of national syndication, the idea of grouping and amalgamating our industries, our food supply and our labour organization, upon a national scale; that only upon those lines can we hope to make our industries scientific and progressive, defeat foreign competition, secure a satisfactory home food supply, and come to an understanding and keep the peace with labour, and that the alternative to such a reconstruction boldly and openly planned and carried through is decadence and Imperial disintegration. We have now, if our plan is to be a complete one, to go on to the consideration of a much more subtle and intricate matter, the legislative and administrative changes that are needed for the effective carrying out of this reconstruction. We ask — with a negative answer in our tones — whether the existing machinery is equal to the task. If it is not, we ask, then wherein does it fail? What are the minimum changes and the least disturbing methods of change necessary to clear the way to these vital economic developments?

WANT OF CLEAR THINKING

It is the purpose of these chapters to be plain and elementary, to put what we believe to be the stark essentials of a hopeful scheme of reconstruction, of what the writers believe to be the only possible scheme of reconstruction, with the utmost bareness and simplicity. We believe that there is at present a dangerous want of clear general thinking upon the national outlook and a dangerous disposition to undertake piecemeal changes without any comprehensive vision. We believe that this is one problem, and not to be dealt with miscellaneously. The misconception is still too prevalent that it is 'practical' to work with one's nose right up close to this question or that, and 'theoretical' and useless to get a little way off and look at what we are doing.

In no relation is this small-business method of feeling about things rather than of thinking about things, of making our estimates with the point of the nose, so to speak, instead of the cerebral hemispheres, more evident and more evidently mischievous than in relation to projected legislative developments. These have to be envisaged largely, we passionately believe, or patched disastrously. It is evident that our Legislature and Administration work slowly, lack initiative, are not really in touch with the mind of the community, and so keep the community in a fever of unrest. The Press and public discussion are full of complaints, instances of failure, accusation of lost opportunity and shirked responsibility. But they are confused and incoherent complaints, they do not seem to produce any real working project for political reconstruction, they are almost as unhelpful to the forming of a plan as the moaning of a patient is to the formation of a diagnosis. Let us, therefore, make an attempt here to sort out the constituents of what is probably in its very essence a confused and complex trouble. Let us try to distinguish the factors in the political tangle. It is probable, we suggest, that it is not one thing wrong but several distinct things wrong, things not very closely correlated, that makes our existing government so slow, so evasive, and so generally unsatisfactory — and, when we consider the task of reconstruction before us, so hopeless. There may be quite separable

things wrong, and each thing wrong may demand quite separate treatment.

That at least is the suggestion we are making here. That is our present thesis. We are going to suggest here that there is not only a complexity of origin but a masking of symptoms in this case.

THE MACHINE OF GOVERNMENT

The complaint on the surface, as we hear it, is that the undoubted slowness and clumsiness of British government are due to the predominance of lawyers in politics. Gentlemen unversed in affairs give us to understand that government should be in the hands of men of science or 'business-men,' regardless of the fairly obvious fact that men of science are most properly engaged in the advancement of science, and that the proper business of a business man is to mind his own business. As a matter of fact politics and government have always been, and will always be so long as human communities endure, largely in the hands of lawyers or lawyer-like persons, and this for no other reason than that they are matters of systematic human relationship, which is only another way of saying that they are matters of law. In an autocracy the lawyer may have to propitiate the autocrat, in a democracy the lawyer may have to propitiate the people, but under any form of government he remains the intermediary, the active agent, the minister between men and men. This is so obvious that this outcry against lawyers already changes its direction, and in the place of a simple Jack Cade-like proposal to be quit of them altogether we are getting analyses of the 'legal' type of mind, and complaints, with which we ourselves are in far more sympathy, that the organization, procedure and education of our legal profession fall short of modern needs, are still essentially Gothic and mediaeval. We are, in fact, no longer asked to slaughter our lawyers, but to bring them up to date. The modernisation of the political lawyer is quite a different proposition from the abolition of the political lawyer, and apart from such special questions as the relation of the two branches of the profession to each other and the relations of the advocate to the judge, questions with which these papers will not deal, its discussion passes indistinguishably into a discussion of a general liberal education. As a part of that discussion we will return to it in a later paper.

But our suggestion here is that whatever the present defects of the legal tradition and the legal training may be, they are not really the major reasons for our present clumsiness and unconstructiveness of

government. They are at the utmost a minor contributory reason. We want to suggest that our existing governing machine is, quite apart from the percentage of lawyers in it, an unsuitable instrument, a misfit, a very incomplete and unsatisfactory adaptation to current needs of forms of government originally set up under conditions of communication and transit and economic production that carry us halfway back to the Bronze Age. We suggest that this governing machine of ours has hitherto always been patched up for fresh needs at the latest possible moment under a maximum of urgency and with a minimum of efficiency, and that it is possible not only to scheme out but to carry out much more drastic and fundamental re-arrangements. Reform Bills, Parliament Acts, Home Rule Bills, quieter but more effectual changes of method and relationship than have been, of course; the political history of the British Empire for a century has been very largely a history of a struggle to adjust, but it is still open to question whether any step has ever been taken except as a reluctant minimum concession to a need already flagrant. And about the suitability of this patched-up fabric to control the vast changes demanded in our immediate future it seems to us there can be hardly any doubt at all.

THE THREE ESTATES

The form of the British governing machine was of course determined long ago by the needs and conditions of a comparatively small feudal monarchy, a monarchy with practically no manufactures and only a very trifling interest on the sea, in which there was no such thing as a town as big as Winchester is now; and its three tiers of King, Lords, and Commons still represent very fairly the three organs, as it were, of such a simple community, first the law and the State, secondly the landowner, the land administration, and thirdly the tenantry. All the references of the governing machine are references to practically autonomous localities — the Lords have chiefly territorial titles still, the members in the Commons still represent local interests; everything was localized, because in those days, apart from the Crown, there were no such things as non-local interests, such interests as a participating share in a railway system, a bicycle business, colonial trade, foreign investments, chemical industries, or book-printing, for example, give a man to-day. The modern State contains not three organs, but a great number, some of which have no representative at all in the government as distinctive organs, and some of which get a representation in disguise, as when some great railway man or some great Colonial man pretends to be the landlord of Thistown or Thatshire, or some energetic industrial organizer assures us that he represents the southern division of Cow-shire. None of these modern organs has a representation that has any thought-out proportion or relationship to that of the many other organs in our intricate modern State. It is only by assuming that there is a special national providence that we can assume that our governing apparatus can be anything like the best possible for the Empire; and the whole mass of our present discontents argues that it is not so. Upon three distinct lines, we submit, we can challenge these existing arrangements and point to conceivably better ones.

LOCAL REFERENCE

The first of these defects of the British Parliament is this question of local reference. We assert that, for a large and increasing number of citizens in a modern State, locality has only a residential interest, and often even that residential interest is transitory, and that the major aspect of the existences of such citizens is towards some trade or industry or occupation of national dimensions. The real 'estates' of a modern community are cut up politically into kaleidoscopic fragments and distributed among topographical constituencies. We have on the one hand 'representatives' of such places as Croydon or Hampstead or Battersea, whose inhabitants have scarcely anything in common except a postal address, and, on the other hand, if we want to deal in any satisfactory way with the transport workers or railway servants or medical men or electrical engineers, we have to go outside the formal Constitution altogether and discuss matters with trade and professional organizations that have neither legislative nor administrative power, that may not represent the entire profession or industry concerned, that are often mere organizations for restricting work and raising wages without any tradition or sense of public function. Yet straight ahead of us is a time in which it is manifest we must either reconstruct our economic life on a larger scale or succumb to a better-organized State, and the only means at present in existence for the vast discussions and agreements between employer and employed that are necessary to this reconstruction are these not very efficient and essentially defensive labour organizations on the one hand, and the voluntary organizations of employers on the other; and between these two, to direct their cooperation and adjudicate, is this old-fashioned Legislature, with its obsolete reference to localities and to the social grades of the Feudal Age and its admitted practical ineptitude. Perhaps the shortest way to economic reorganization may lie in lifting most of the task out of the scope of the Legislature altogether, in largely increasing the powers and scope and responsibilities of the great labour organizations on the one hand, in bringing both them and the national councils of the employers and proprietors of the great industries into the structure of

the Constitution, in insisting upon joint conferences and joint action, and in leaving Parliament little more than the power to endorse or veto the outcome of these joint deliberations. But this will be to set up an industrial state beside the feudal state. On the face of it this may seem to offer a less serious break with older forms and habits than an attempt to supersede or supplement the existing methods of Parliamentary representation by national occupational constituencies; but that is not our opinion. In reality we believe it is a far more dangerous method than to attempt a courageous reform of representational method.

The increasing disharmony between Parliament and our urgent national needs, due to this persistence of local reference when the whole drift of things is towards broadening the interests of every citizen who matters beyond the limits of any localized constituency, does not by any means exhaust the tale of our legislative inefficiency. There is next the unwieldiness of both Houses, and thirdly there is that persistent tendency to a bilateral system of conflict about false issues which is denounced as the 'party system.'

With regard to the former point we are dealing once again with another instance of that blindness to the question of scale on the part of the British which has been the burden of all these papers. It would seem to be the most obvious of propositions that there must be in legislative assemblies, as in other bodies, a size for maximum efficiency. But it is a proposition extraordinarily disregarded. Above a certain optimum of size the numbers must become too great for attention and discussion, and the assembly begin to tail out towards a mob, to lose will-power and intention, and obey the laws of mob psychology; below it, the assembly must be insufficiently various and representative. Yet our House of Commons seems to have been put together with an entire disregard of any such possibilities, and new peer after new peer has been added to the House of Lords without any thought whatever of the mechanical effect of these additions upon the vigour of the whole.

The Party System

Much graver than its unwieldiness is the persistent bilaterality of our Legislature. Party has turned legislation into a duel, and party interests and party loyalty have blinded men to the future dangers and opportunities of the Empire. But why has party been able to do this, and whence does party derive its strength? This is a question to which an answer exists, but it is a question very rarely answered. We read a great deal of rather clamorous matter in the popular Press about the abolition of the party system, but a careful examination of such utterances reveals no project of how the party system is to be abolished. A small but active section of journalists inspired by Mr. Sidney Low's very able criticisms (in his Governance of England) of our methods of government has made his views its own, has claimed them as its own, and used them as a basis for much aimless rhetoric. But no attempt whatever has been made to analyse the processes that have given and must give a Legislature this bilateral character. To do so would have been to abandon irresistible opportunities for indulgence in conspiracy mania. It was more romantic and attractive to present party as a conspiracy of the rich. A soberer inquiry into this defect, as into most defects of our British system, will go far to restore our faith in British human nature and in the remediable quality of our difficulties. The true source of Parliamentary bilaterality had been analysed in anticipation half a century ago.

From the days of Hare and John Stuart Mill onward there has been a progressive analysis of the character and effects of voting methods, and it may now be taken as demonstrated that, wherever the common and obvious method of giving each voter in any election a single non-transferable vote is adopted, it follows necessarily that there can be no real decision between more than two candidates, and further it follows that the affairs decided by such voting will gravitate continually into the control of two antagonized party organizations. This is, of course, tame stuff compared with heady shoutings and accusations against plutocrats, rich Jews, privileged families, and party funds, but it is the simple essential of this question. Voting, like any other process, is subject to scientific treatment; there is one right

method of voting which automatically destroys bilaterality, and there is a considerable variety of wrong methods amenable to manipulation and fruitful of corruption and enfeebling complications. The sane method of voting is known as Proportional Representation with large constituencies and the single transferable vote, and it is as reasonable and necessary that the country should adopt it as soon as possible as that it should adopt the right types of aeroplane and the best sorts of gun. The advantage of this method is not a matter of opinion, but a matter of demonstration; it needs but an hour or so of inquiry to convince any intelligent person of its merit and desirability and of the fatal and incurable mischiefs of any other method. It is the custom of the melodramatic school of political writers to speak of Proportional Representation as a 'fad': but it is no more a fad to want the methods of proportional representation in Parliamentary election than it is to want copper wire instead of ginger-beer bottle wire in an electrical installation, or wheaten flour instead of chaff in a loaf. With it Parliamentary institutions will work freely; without it they will certainly choke and block in any great emergency.

Party manipulation and the political irrelevance due to our method of voting, unwieldiness due to our national disregard of the importance of scale, and a complete failure to shape out or present in any way the real conflicting interests and classes of a modern community, a failure due to the antiquity of the machine, these are the three categories of our Parliamentary failure. They are, so to speak, the mechanical defects of our government. They are continually preventing and perverting our national effort; they waste time and energy enormously, while before us now lies a period wherein we cannot afford to waste either time or energy, when indeed nervelessness, evasiveness, and dilatoriness mean the certain downfall of our Empire.

The cure of these mechanical defects, we would assert, constitutes a group of urgencies that can be considered apart from another set of problems that looms far more insistently upon the public imagination. These latter are the problems of Imperial reorganization, of Colonial representation, for example, upon an Imperial Council. Pursuing our scheme of a complete review in outline of a possible national and Imperial policy, we shall take these

up in our next paper. Here we would claim only to have set out and established a statement of defects as a preliminary to this inquiry, and to have indicated cause for a change in the size of Parliament and in the method of electing representatives.

V. — AN IMPERIAL CONSTITUTION

OF the four chapters that have preceded this, the first three have been devoted to three aspects of the thesis that the central idea about which any scheme of Imperial reconstruction must be grouped is the idea of economic syndications upon a national or Imperial scale; that about this idea the agitations for scientific education and scientific method, for tariff defence and aggressive industrialism, the perplexities of the national food supply, and the rational solution of the labour problem, group themselves into a coherent national plan, and that they can group themselves hopefully in no other way. The fourth chapter took up the question of the sufficiency of our Imperial Legislatures for this task. That chapter was in the nature of a clearance of the ground; the popular attacks upon the predominance of lawyers and upon party government were considered and shown not to cover the essentials of the case. Attention was drawn to the widely disregarded failure of Parliament to represent adequately those great modern estates of the realm that have no local reference, such, for example, as the engineering and transit industries. It is from this point that we would now carry on.

Our view is that these great economic syndications upon a national scale, which is the only possible means of saving and developing the British Empire against the dangers and competition that threaten it, must be settled, and can only be settled, with the understanding, participation, and consent of both labour on the one hand and the existing proprietors, directors, and managers concerned in these economic systems on the other. It is absurd to suppose any sudden and violent change of system in these things; the arrangements of yesterday are the only possible material we have for the arrangements of to-morrow. We want to see labour inspired and stimulated by our new sense of common needs, in conference with capital, quickened by a sense of extreme national danger, upon these great constructive projects.

PRESENT METHODS OF REPRESENTATION

Now our case is that our Parliament as at present constituted is a gathering of representatives not of interests but of localities, and, considered as representatives, very badly elected even at that. It is not equal to this vast and intricate task in its present state, and so we have either to perform an operation upon our Parliamentary institutions far more drastic than any previous Reform Bill, or to contemplate a still more novel possibility in the appearance of, so to speak, a collateral state, a conference of labour and capital outside Parliament, reconstructing the economic life of the community regardless of Parliament, and quite possibly developing friction with Parliament from the very beginning of its attempt. The possibility will be so alarming to conservative-minded people that they will be strongly disposed to recoil from either, to fall back upon the dignified passiveness of 'wait and see; it will last our time,' and so to leave our children to drift on to the decline and humiliations, the internal conflicts and national disasters of a national obsolescence that we, at any rate, may never live to witness. Anything, we submit, is better than that counsel of despair. The alternative we would advocate here is the bolder and more hopeful one of political reconstruction, of a courageous recasting of our Parliamentary institutions to meet the needs of the new time.

And here again we would attack our problem by bringing in a whole set of wider problems, the problems that arise out of the manifest necessity at the present time first for a clearer definition of the relationship of the various parts of the Empire one to another, and then for the establishment of some permanent method of relationship that will exclude the possibility of war, first with our present Allies and secondly with the United States of America. We may find the method of beginning with the widest possible problem, the general problem of an Imperial constitution and an international peace league, makes the confusion of problems of national and colonial government fall into place and proportion in just the same way that the idea of a reconstruction of economic life by the syndication of businesses and the control of agriculture upon a national scale clears

up the otherwise aimless tangle of domestic politics.

Let us consider in the order of their extent the possible political bodies and world associations that loom upon men's imaginations at the present time. The widest dream of all is the dream of a League of Peace. This is a possibility, even a probability; it may be some sort of league that will include America, or it may be a league of our present Allies; but its nature must necessarily be one that puts it outside our present inquiry. It will have to be based on treaties; it will be diplomatic in its nature; its character will not reflect back in any structural and necessary way into the general political life of the constituent States. Its indirect and prospective consequences in the security of all its constituent States will, of course, be enormous, but we are writing here not of such indirect and ultimate consequences, but of the way in which the widest considerations must determine the form of the narrower problems, and from that point of view councils of the Allies and Leagues of Peace may be left out of this discussion.

A COUNCIL OF EMPIRE

Coming now down the scale to the next synthetic idea we have the dream of a council of the whole Empire, the dream of a defining by some comprehensive constitutional law the at present extraordinarily informal relations of the various parts of the Empire. Everybody perceives that the Government of Great Britain is not really representative of the Empire it rules; Great Britain is remarkably in the position of a trustee minding the affairs of various kindred minors and of various races and communities temporarily incapacitated from independent sovereignty, and almost everybody feels that this must necessarily be a temporary arrangement and that what is desirable marches with what is just, when we look to a recasting of this complicated system of relationships in which Great Britain will no longer be sole director, but merely a partner in partnership with its former Dependencies. So far as the Dominions go that are predominantly of British descent, the Dominions that are pleased to be called Britains beyond the seas, it is quite conceivable that there may be political unifications of a very thorough sort, but so far as the great masses of non-British people go, peoples with alien racial and national traditions, the idea of assimilation is equally unacceptable with the idea of continuing and unending subjection. Ireland has taught the British the folly of rash and premature experiments in amalgamation, and it is clear that the future of the non-kindred parts of the Empire, such as Egypt or Rajputana or Bengal, lies along the line of education and autonomous development to the position of free and equal allies in one great Imperial confederation. So far as these non-British peoples are concerned it may be questioned whether the setting up of any common Imperial Council to include them is advisable. So far as they are concerned it may be wiser at present for the trustee to continue to administer.

That does not mean an arrest of political development. It means that these mainly Oriental dependencies, which are now in phases of profound economic reconstruction and which are emerging rather rapidly from ancient and primitive political conditions to the possession of a Press and to a steadily increasing racial and national

self-consciousness, have still to show their quality and difference under modern conditions, have still to shape. They may presently be plainly developing on lines so similar to the lines in the development of our own community that our sons may be able to take up the question of an equal and parallel share in a common Empire with some confidence; or they may display so essential and incurable a divergence that the problem may have become manifestly the problem of an alliance of dissimilars. We know too little to foretell which of these directions will be taken, and meanwhile we submit that the general policy of the Imperial Government is to keep things going, to release every tendency that does not threaten the safety of the Empire, to give the native every chance and every opportunity that is not plainly mischievous, to encourage experiment as much as possible and to direct it as little as possible, and in and out of season steadily, persistently, to set up and maintain in the minds of ruling race and subject race alike this idea of the trustee, the idea of 'when you are ready to take it back your land is yours.' Upon which lines of thought it is clear that the idea of a council representative of the whole Empire recedes also from our problem.

AN IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT

That leads us to the next stage down the scale, to the idea of an Imperial Government which, while still acting as a trustee for the non-kindred races and nations under the Imperial Crown, will be no longer merely representative of Great Britain, but of what Mr. Hughes has accustomed us to speak of as the Britains. We would suggest that this is a practicable proposition, and that the general form and composition of this new Imperial Parliament can be indicated. We believe that the development of the present British Parliament into an Imperial Parliament with oversea representatives, together with the relegation of purely English, Welsh, Scotch, Irish, and Ulster concerns to subordinate assemblies, involves the solution of endless squabbles between Celt and Saxon, and is the next necessary step towards a secure and efficient Empire.

First we would point out that there are a number of functions that would be far better performed by such a broader-based Parliament. The first of these is the support and maintenance of the Navy and naval establishments and fortifications throughout the Empire. The second is the control of the Expeditionary Army and the maintenance of a skeleton military establishment for the Empire by which the national service militias that must certainly follow this war could be gunned, mobilised, and directed in an Imperial crisis. The third is the Imperial control of the food supply and of the Imperial resources of raw material. The fourth is Imperial transit, posts, money, standards, ports, and seaways. The fifth is the common Imperial trade policy. The sixth is the supreme direction of education, not with any power of prohibition, but with unlimited powers of endowment, to maintain the common language and the supply of higher education universally throughout the Empire. The seventh is the maintenance of the Supreme Court of the Empire. The eighth is the control of foreign policy and the continuation of the Imperial trusteeship over the non-represented Dependencies. Such, roughly, are the functions which an Imperial Parliament could discharge, and could manifestly discharge more conveniently and with a broader basis of support than our present British Parliament.

In setting it up there would be ample opportunity of remedying the manifest defects of the existing Legislature, of pruning its numbers, replacing the bilateral vote by the proper method of voting, and making it really representative of the estates of a modern community. And we suggest that this can be done without the destruction of the outward form of the existing British Parliament, and indeed without any very dramatic breach of continuity.

LORDS AND COMMONS

It has already been pointed out that the opposition of Lords and Commons in the British Parliament represents nothing but the factors of landlord and tenant in the originally agricultural British nation. The main factors of a modern State are not there; the main factors of a modern State are first Direction and secondly Democracy or Labour. The main function of a modern Legislature is the conference and co-operation of these two powers. The essential necessity in the process of conversion which has been blundering and struggling along in British political affairs for the last ninety years has been the conversion of the House of Lords into a House of Directors and of the House of Commons into a representative Democratic assembly, but so far as the former goes it is a valid complaint that the landlords do still remain disproportionally represented, while a considerable amount of Direction has been forced into the Lower House; and so far as the latter goes, that the retention of localized constituencies has masked the proper representation of labour and forced it into irregular and collateral forms of expression through irresponsible or inadequately responsible Trade Unions. The manifest common sense of our present necessities is to complete this hitherto blind and confused effort of our Parliament to adapt itself to modern conditions along lines that the industry of a considerable number of ingenious writers has already made fairly plain and continuous.

The modernisation of the House of Lords that these speculations have worked out does not present itself as a very terrible or revolutionary process. The essential idea in most of these suggestions is to extend the method of representative peers, already used in the case of the Irish and Scotch peerage, to the entire peerage. All the peers now either sitting in or voting for representatives in the House of Lords will become, it is proposed, members of a new body of electors, to whom will be added a considerable number — some thousands, certainly — of leading men, directors of great businesses and public services, men of science and learning, lawyers, administrators, soldiers, admirals, and so on, all the people who ought to be placed or whom it is advisable to place upon the honours

lists. Whether these electors will bear titles or not does not matter here. But they will be classified by functions; there will be a faculty of transit, for example, a military faculty, a faculty of literature and education, and so on, and each faculty will elect its quota of representatives to sit beside the law lords in the Imperial Upper House. In this way, it is pointed out, with the minimum of revolutionary disturbance, we can get a modernized House of Lords. This is clearly no mere Utopian project. It is quite a workable and practical method for the rearrangement, for the simplification and clearer responsibility of those unco-ordinated persons who already 'exist' as our directors and leaders; it is the minimum change needed to give an efficient Upper House.

OCCUPATIONAL CONSTITUENCIES

And for the Lower House, if we want to get a clear statement from and a clear understanding with the mass of the people, if an Imperial plan is ever to be made plain and acceptable, it is equally evident that we must be prepared for a rearrangement of our population for the purposes of Parliamentary elections into national occupational constituencies, so that instead of labour being partially and imperfectly represented by men subsidized by levies made upon more or less representative Trade Unions and Socialistic societies, and sitting ostensibly as members for Hanley or Halifax or Blackburn, we shall have groups of members directly representing Scotch Minerals or Australian Transport or British Textiles or the Army and Navy. Instead of a crowd of vague and amateurish legislators representing with a conscientious unmeaningness unmeaning areas, we shall have men representing certain national functions intensely, and just as a diagram of the circulation or the nervous system or the muscles shapes out the whole body, so these men through their special wide interest will shape out the whole nation and the Empire. In both Houses we shall gain enormously in sincerity, directness of method and authority. We shall have the real living interests of the country in direct touch with legislative and organizing power, and the vast series of misunderstandings upon falsely conceived issues and all the passion, social conflict, disorder, and delay that are otherwise inevitable in the time of great reconstruction ahead will be cut out. We shall no longer have labour represented often by mere mischief-makers, maintained and returned to Parliament in the queerest ways, boasting that they are 'rebels,' and conceiving their highest purpose as the obstruction and annoyance of the national administration. We shall, instead, get men as keen as the masters for effective national action. With such a reconstructed Legislature, we submit, our Empire will reconstruct with swiftness and vigour, and stand renewed. In no other way, we are persuaded, can great social stresses be avoided. This, then, is the right way for the country, the proper national plan for efficiency, the plan that all reasonable men must combine to see that the nation

understand and approve it. We have small doubt that this is the right way, and that the need to take it is urgent. The days of leisure have passed. There is the right way now before the British Empire, or there is destruction. ‘The world will not wait for the English ‘another score of years.

VI. — HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE EMPIRE

AND now, having drawn in a rough but nearly complete outline the nature of the task of reconstruction that we conceive to lie before the British people, we return to the question from which we set out, the question of a better education.

Throughout these papers we have not so much argued as taken for granted that no modern State may hope to achieve any effective reconstruction or remain at any satisfactory level of organization without the assent and understanding of most of its people. This has been fully recognized and attended to in this first great attempt at national organization that has so startled the world by its power and efficiency — the German Empire. In this new phase of high organization, upon which Germany has been the first to enter, and into which the rest of the world is now passing, there must exist something more than unavoidable interests and coercions, there must be a closer nexus than that to hold man to man in the common effort; and just as far as these will-destroying links are superseded by understandings and willing participations, just so far does the national efficiency cease to be mechanical and become a living reality. This education, this plain explanation of the State and of the intentions of the State to the common citizen, was necessary in the pioneer experiment of Germany; it is far more necessary to the coming developments of the Allied League and the British Imperial system. Our British peoples in particular are all more intractable under education than the Germans and far more suspicious and difficult, but once their reluctant confidence is gained they are probably much more generous and helpful. Our economic and political organization will be futile if it does not carry with it an organization of our at present aimless and confused national intelligence. Quite apart from that technical education which is necessary for the economic efficiency of the citizen, there has to be an education of the national mind in general ideas. That is the mental side of these material developments. To think of changes in factory and Legislature without thinking of changes in school and Press is like thinking of going for a walk with one's left leg only, leaving the

right at home.

THE TWO ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

Since our aim in these papers is to be severely elementary, to establish a very plain, firm outline of reconstructive policy, we will make no apology for insisting upon the all too frequently disregarded distinction of these two aspects of education, the technical and the liberal. Upon the former we do not propose to write further here. We believe that in the last decades there has already been set up an admirable and hopeful system of scientific and technical research and education in Great Britain, that requires little more than the stimulation, correlation, generous enlargement and greatly increased endowment that national economic syndication will give it, to meet the needs of the Empire fully. We will add nothing to the many things that are being said at the present time about the usefulness and urgent need of good teaching in Russian, chemistry, economic botany, or the like.

These things will come naturally and in the way of business in a syndicating State, and they will come sufficiently in no other way. They are, therefore, questions of detail, very important detail no doubt, but detail, and our purpose in these letters is to avoid detail and to keep our outline clear. It is upon the other side of education, the liberal education of the citizen as distinguished from training and useful accomplishments, that opinion seems least formed, and upon which it is more necessary to attempt lucidity.

A series of national critics from Matthew Arnold onward have attacked the defects or absence of a liberal education as the fundamental weakness of the British system. We are, as a people, charged with inaccessibility to general ideas, with want of imagination, and want of that foresight which demands imagination; we are told we are platitudinous, confused, and instinctive — if it were not that we were instinctive there would be little grace in us. It is one of the consolations of this war that Matthew Arnold is no longer with us to say, at a hundred disconcerting revelations, in atone of irritating mockery, 'I told you so.'

They say we are aimless, having nothing to hold us together for any great purpose, that we are a nation adrift. The last of this series

of sorrowful rather than angry critics, Mr. Clutton-Brock, tells us in his ‘The Ultimate Belief’: —

‘They [the Germans] have made their country the tidiest, the most efficient, the most powerful in the world, and an intolerable nuisance to all mankind. Clearly, then, their notion of goodness is not our notion; but we need to know what our notion is if we are to keep our minds free from the contagion of theirs. And we have made little effort to know what our notion is or to teach it to our children. We cannot teach it to them unless we know what it is, unless we know what we believe about the mind of man, about the purpose of his life, and about the nature of the universe. Without this knowledge our teaching must be dull and incoherent and unconvincing, and our children will rebel against it, as, indeed, they often do. There is in England a great deal of blind rebellion and wasteful reaction among the young.’

And so on. There is no gainsaying it. It was true in the ‘eighties, and it is still true to-day. And we need to draw together our chaotic thought and will into one Imperial will and understand, just as urgently as we need to draw together the individualistic chaos of our economic life into one systematic unity.

‘

THE STUPIDEST OF OPPOSITIONS’

Now it is not our intention to take sides in what is probably the stupidest of all stupid oppositions — the opposition of natural science to ‘the Latin and Greek classics’ — as though either of these ‘groups of subjects’ — shall we call them? — constituted a liberal education. What all these educational critics and reformers are talking about is neither of these things; it is the lack of enough coherent philosophy, enough depth and breadth of vision, enough sense of history, enough curiosity or animation, in the minds of our people, and particularly of our ruling people. It is ridiculous to suppose that the substitution of an inaccurate knowledge of organic chemistry or mineralogy for an inaccurate knowledge of Latin and a pretence of Greek will make any change for the better in these respects. Compulsory elementary chemistry for the arts degree will be just as big a nuisance as the present compulsory smattering of Greek at Oxford and Cambridge. And it is quite beside the mark that the educational institutions of this country had made remarkable progress towards efficiency in the teaching of modern languages and chemistry and physics and manual training in the last twenty years. This may sharpen us and brighten us at points, but it will do nothing to unify the national will or to inspire our coordinated national institutions with a common understanding.

What should constitute the education of the public man? This is something above and outside his attainments, his accomplishments, his business equipment, his knowledge of Russian or economic biology, or the petrol engine or what-not. These are secondary things. But what should make the man so that he will know how to rule and know how to serve? What is the backbone stuff? The answer to-day is surely not essentially different from the answer a Greek would have given in the time of Plato. He would have said nothing of the importance of compulsory Egyptian or Sanscrit, and equally nothing of a knowledge of simples or metal working. But he would have said that the backbone stuff must be a clear and critical knowledge of oneself in relation to God and to the universe. That, we submit, under modern conditions means for an Englishman a thorough study of

philosophy and of history — not merely the history of England or of a part of Europe, but of the world from its problematical beginnings to the present, which means that he must know with some thoroughness the story that physical science, ethnology, and archaeology have to tell, as well as human history. No doubt such a general knowledge must be supplemented by a critical and intensive study of some special aspect of the world's process, by a more thorough treatment of history, through the classics, or through a modern history course, or through comparative anatomy and embryology; these are questions for the educationist; but that philosophy and history in some form, together with the social science that necessarily springs out of historical or biological teaching, constitute and alone can constitute the liberal education which must be the substance of a nation's culture seems to us scarcely to need arguing. It would be incredible to us, were it not obviously the fact, that anyone could accept the Cambridge Mathematical Tripos or the strange miscellaneousness demanded for a London degree or a degree course in physical science as any more of a liberal education than the qualification of a pharmaceutical chemist.

WHAT IS A LIBERAL EDUCATION?

Now we would point out that here we are claiming very little more as a liberal education than what is already attempted in the Oxford final schools in *litterae humaniores* and modern history or in the Cambridge Classical Tripos Parts I. and 11. All these three comprehend philosophy, « history, and criticism. What we would?] put beside these leading courses is a biological science tripos that includes modern philosophy and a tripos in 'natural philosophy' that went into speculations upon the origin of things, and we would add to the present history school as alternative supplements and substitutes, syllabuses in Asiatic history, medieval history, the developments and varieties of Christianity, the Islamic story, economic history, ethnology, and archaeology. We do not believe that any course of study composed almost entirely of language study, or of mathematics, or of physics and chemistry, is to be regarded as a liberal education, though all these studies fall necessarily into place in one or other of these wider schemes. And we object altogether to the idea that bodies of faddists should be allowed to impose such tiresome compulsory futilities as mixed mathematics or botany or Greek upon a liberal education. Greek, Sanscrit, Russian, mathematics, botany, petrology, all must play their part in this or that school, but it is ridiculous to pretend that a liberal education is impossible without them, and that is what all these compulsory-subject people do pretend.

We would like to repeat our conviction here that the antagonism of science versus the classics in education is perhaps the most mischievous and certainly the silliest of all confusions of issue that prevail at present. It is high time that this muddling and heating misrepresentation of the matter were laughed out of court.

And having brought back into this discussion of education the distinction between what is technical and what is liberal, having shown that technical and scientific education, in its narrower sense, is really an aspect of economic organization, to be organized in relation to that and to be separated entirely in our thought from liberal education, and having laid bare again what everybody knows who is

not confused into and lost among secondary questions to be the reality of a liberal education, we come to the question what classes in particular should have a liberal education.

We submit that in a modern democratic community everybody should have a certain amount of liberal education quite over and above their merely occupational training, their French or Russian or chemistry or botany or mathematics or what not. Without a general liberal education we can have no massive national intelligence, no sense of a common purpose and adventure, no general willingness. Lacking this, the majority of homes in the community will be materialistic in the narrowest sense, unstimulating, and unproductive in the next generation of that sporadic ability upon which so much national progress has always depended and will always depend. But large sections of the public will necessarily have a not very deep or very critical liberal education, based rather on popular books and magazines and newspapers than upon thorough and sustained studies and thought. Where the quality of a nation's liberal education tells most is through those men and women whose specific function is in relation to the State as a whole, or in relation to the dealings of man and man, or in relation to the public mind; that is to say the politicians and lawyers, the churches and preachers, writers and journalists, the employers and organizers, the owners, every sort of determining and controlling person, the civil service and the medical profession, together with the women who are the wives and mothers, associates and counsellors of these people. These together constitute in its intenser form the national intelligence and the national will, and it is against these that the charges of Matthew Arnold and his successors have been aimed and are still valid.

FEMININE EDUCATION AND THE LAWYER MIND

If one may attempt to concentrate vast clouds of criticism into a brief paragraph it is that the social life of those ostensibly educated classes who 'give' our thought and will as a State and as a community is wanting in coherence and vigour through the want of a really sound and generally prevalent liberal culture. Partly this is ascribable to a lamentable superficiality of feminine education in a community in which women take an unusually large share in political discussions, party conflicts, questions of appointments and the like; but much more is it due to the medieval organization and unsatisfactory general culture of the lawyers, who should be the natural medium between different types of men. The modem State needs politicians and lawyers who can take long views, who can think largely and constructively; in Great Britain our politicians and lawyers are too often men trained to think from hand to mouth, full of the 'shop' of court and legislature, and habitually resistant to ideas. They have cramped minds and cramping methods, and their tone is reflected in the general tone of the community. They bring exceptional natural abilities to bear upon obstructive, cautious, and delaying expedients. We cannot do without lawyers, but we cannot do with lawyers whose training and outlook antagonize them to large progressive and constructive adventures. This country can no more do with old-fashioned lawyers than it can do with old-fashioned business methods and old-fashioned guns, and so any scheme for a policy of Imperial reorganization must certainly fail if it does not include the vigorous promotion of liberal as well as technical education, and a thorough revision in the light of modern needs of the procedure, organization, and qualifications of the legal profession and all the circumstances of the politico-legal career.

Social psychology is as necessary a study in the proper readjustment of a great Empire entering upon a new phase of economic existence as economics. The spirit of a profession changes with its institutions, and we have hitherto been regardless of the

changes in the social atmosphere wrought by changes in the conditions under which this or that class has worked. The British lawyer has ‘happened’ just as the British civil servant and the British schoolmaster have ‘happened,’ It is time that the successors of Matthew Arnold put an end to mere criticisms of our national intellectual confusion and embarked upon that process of analysis that leads to tangible educational reforms. This is an infinitely more delicate and subtle task than economic reorganization, but it is as necessary a part of the effort that lies before us if our Empire is to remain united and make its full contribution to the rising destinies of man. Happy go lucky and wait and see are at an end in mental as in material things.

THE END

INTRODUCTION TO ‘Nocturne by Frank Swinnerton’

“‘But do I see afore me, him as I ever sported with in his times of happy infancy? And may I — *may* I?’

“This May I, meant might he shake hands?”

— DICKENS, *Great Expectations*.

I do not know why I should be so overpoweringly reminded of the immortal, if at times impossible, Uncle Pumblechook, when I sit down to write a short preface to Mr. Swinnerton’s *Nocturne*. Jests come at times out of the backwoods of a writer’s mind. It is part of the literary quality that behind the writer there is a sub-writer, making a commentary. This is a comment against which I may reasonably expostulate, but which nevertheless I am indisposed to ignore.

The task of introducing a dissimilar writer to a new public has its own peculiar difficulties for the elder hand. I suppose logically a writer should have good words only for his own imitators. For surely he has chosen what he considers to be the best ways. What justification has he for praising attitudes he has never adopted and commending methods of treatment from which he has abstained? The reader naturally receives his commendations with suspicion. Is this man, he asks, stricken with penitence in the flower of his middle-age? Has he but just discovered how good are the results that the other game, the game he has never played, can give? Or has he been disconcerted by the criticism of the Young? The Fear of the Young is the beginning of his wisdom. Is he taking this alien-spirited work by the hand simply to say defensively and vainly: “I assure you, indeed, I am *not* an old fogy; I *quite* understand it.” (There it is, I fancy, that the Pumblechook quotation creeps in.) To all of which suspicions, enquiries and objections, I will quote, tritely but conclusively: “In my Father’s house are many Mansions,” or in the words of Mr. Kipling:

"There are five and forty ways
Of composing tribal lays
And every blessed one of them is right."

Indeed now that I come to think it over, I have never in all my life read a writer of closely kindred method to my own that I have greatly admired; the confessed imitators give me all the discomfort without the relieving admission of caricature; the parallel instances I have always wanted to rewrite; while, on the other hand, for many totally dissimilar workers I have had quite involuntary admirations. It isn't merely that I don't so clearly see how they are doing it, though that may certainly be a help; it is far more a matter of taste. As a writer I belong to one school and as a reader to another — as a man may like to make optical instruments and collect old china. Swift, Sterne, Jane Austen, Thackeray and the Dickens of *Bleak House* were the idols of my youthful imitation, but the contemporaries of my early praises were Joseph Conrad, W.H. Hudson, and Stephen Crane, all utterly remote from that English tradition. With such recent admirations of mine as James Joyce, Mr. Swinnerton, Rebecca West, the earlier works of Mary Austen or Thomas Burke, I have as little kindred as a tunny has with a cuttlefish. We move in the same medium and that is about all we have in common.

This much may sound egotistical, and the impatient reader may ask when I am coming to Mr. Swinnerton, to which the only possible answer is that I am coming to Mr. Swinnerton as fast as I can and that all this leads as straightly as possible to a definition of Mr. Swinnerton's position. The science of criticism is still crude in its classification, there are a multitude of different things being done that are all lumped together heavily as novels, they are novels as distinguished from romances, so long as they are dealing with something understood to be real. All that they have in common beyond that is that they agree in exhibiting a sort of story continuum. But some of us are trying to use that story continuum to present ideas in action, others to produce powerful excitements of this sort or that, as Burke and Mary Austen do, while others again concentrate upon the giving of life as it is, seen only more intensely. Personally I have no use at all for life as it is, except as raw material. It bores me to

look at things unless there is also the idea of doing something with them. I should find a holiday, doing nothing amidst beautiful scenery, not a holiday, but a torture. The contemplative ecstacy of the saints would be hell to me. In the — I forget exactly how many — books I have written, it is always about life being altered I write, or about people developing schemes for altering life. And I have never once "presented" life. My apparently most objective books are criticisms and incitements to change. Such a writer as Mr. Swinnerton, on the contrary, sees life and renders it with a steadiness and detachment and patience quite foreign to my disposition. He has no underlying motive. He sees and tells. His aim is the attainment of that beauty which comes with exquisite presentation. Seen through his art, life is seen as one sees things through a crystal lens, more intensely, more completed, and with less turbidity. There the business begins and ends for him. He does not want you or any one to do anything.

Mr. Swinnerton is not alone among recent writers in this clear, detached objectivity. We have in England a writer, Miss Dorothy Richardson, who has probably carried impressionism in fiction to its furthest limit. I do not know whether she will ever make large captures of the general reader, but she is certainly a very interesting figure for the critic and the amateur of fiction. In *Pointed Roofs* and *Honeycomb*, for example, her story is a series of dabs of intense superficial impression; her heroine is not a mentality, but a mirror. She goes about over her facts like those insects that run over water sustained by surface tension. Her percepts never become concepts. Writing as I do at the extremest distance possible from such work, I confess I find it altogether too much — or shall I say altogether too little? — for me. But Mr. Swinnerton, like Mr. James Joyce, does not repudiate the depths for the sake of the surface. His people are not splashes of appearance, but living minds. Jenny and Emmy in this book are realities inside and out; they are imaginative creatures so complete that one can think with ease of Jenny ten years hence or of Emmy as a baby. The fickle Alf is one of the most perfect Cockneys — a type so easy to caricature and so hard to get true — in fiction. If there exists a better writing of vulgar lovemaking, so base, so honest, so touchingly mean and so touchingly full of the craving for

happiness than this that we have here in the chapter called *After the Theatre*, I do not know of it. Only a novelist who has had his troubles can understand fully what a dance among china cups, what a skating over thin ice, what a tight-rope performance is achieved in this astounding chapter. A false note, one fatal line, would have ruined it all. On the one hand lay brutality; a hundred imitative louts could have written a similar chapter brutally, with the soul left out, we've loads of such "strong stuff" and it is nothing; on the other side was the still more dreadful fall into sentimentality, the tear of conscious tenderness, the redeeming glimpse of "better things" in Alf or Emmy that would at one stroke have converted their reality into a genteel masquerade. The perfection of Alf and Emmy is that at no point does a "nature's gentleman" or a "nature's lady" show through and demand our refined sympathy. It is only by comparison with this supreme conversation that the affair of Keith and Jenny seems to fall short of perfection. But that also is at last perfected, I think, by Jenny's final, "Keith…. Oh, Keith!…"

Above these four figures again looms the majestic invention of "Pa." Every reader can appreciate the truth and humour of Pa, but I doubt if any one without technical experience can realise how the atmosphere is made and completed and rounded off by Pa's beer, Pa's needs, and Pa's accident, how he binds the bundle and makes the whole thing one, and what an enviable triumph his achievement is.

But the book is before the reader and I will not enlarge upon its merits further. Mr. Swinnerton has written four or five other novels before this one, but none of them compare with it in quality. His earlier books were strongly influenced by the work of George Gissing; they have something of the same fatigued greyness of texture and little of the artistic completeness and intense vision of *Nocturne*. He has also made two admirable and very shrewd and thorough studies of the work and lives of Robert Louis Stevenson and George Gissing. Like these two, he has had great experience of illness. He is a young man of so slender a health, so frequently ill, that even for the most sedentary purposes of this war, his country will not take him. It was in connection with his Gissing volume, for which I possessed some material he needed, that I first made his

acquaintance. He has had something of Gissing's restricted and grey experiences, but he has nothing of Gissing's almost perverse gloom and despondency. Indeed he is as gay a companion as he is fragile. He is a twinkling addition to any Christmas party, and the twinkle is here in the style. And having sported with him "in his times of happy infancy," I add an intimate and personal satisfaction to my pleasant task of saluting this fine work that ends a brilliant apprenticeship and ranks Swinnerton as Master. This is a book that will not die. It is perfect, authentic, and alive. Whether a large and immediate popularity will fall to it I cannot say, but certainly the discriminating will find it and keep it and keep it alive. If Mr. Swinnerton were never to write another word I think he might count on this much of his work living, as much of the work of Mary Austen, W.H. Hudson, and Stephen Crane will live, when many of the more portentous reputations of to-day may have served their purpose in the world and become no more than fading names.

DECEMBER, 1917

INTRODUCTION TO 'The Pivot of Civilization by Margaret Sanger'

Birth Control, Mrs. Sanger claims, and claims rightly, to be a question of fundamental importance at the present time. I do not know how far one is justified in calling it the pivot or the corner-stone of a progressive civilization. These terms involve a criticism of metaphors that may take us far away from the question in hand. Birth Control is no new thing in human experience, and it has been practised in societies of the most various types and fortunes. But there can be little doubt that at the present time it is a test issue between two widely different interpretations of the word civilization, and of what is good in life and conduct. The way in which men and women range themselves in this controversy is more simply and directly indicative of their general intellectual quality than any other single indication. I do not wish to imply by this that the people who oppose are more or less intellectual than the people who advocate Birth Control, but only that they have fundamentally contrasted general ideas, — that, mentally, they are DIFFERENT. Very simple, very complex, very dull and very brilliant persons may be found in either camp, but all those in either camp have certain attitudes in common which they share with one another, and do not share with those in the other camp.

There have been many definitions of civilization. Civilization is a complexity of countless aspects, and may be validly defined in a great number of relationships. A reader of James Harvey Robinson's MIND IN THE MAKING will find it very reasonable to define a civilization as a system of society-making ideas at issue with reality. Just so far as the system of ideas meets the needs and conditions of survival or is able to adapt itself to the needs and conditions of survival of the society it dominates, so far will that society continue and prosper. We are beginning to realize that in the past and under different conditions from our own, societies have existed with systems of ideas and with methods of thought very widely

contrasting with what we should consider right and sane to-day. The extraordinary neolithic civilizations of the American continent that flourished before the coming of the Europeans, seem to have got along with concepts that involved pedantries and cruelties and a kind of systematic unreason, which find their closest parallels to-day in the art and writings of certain types of lunatic. There are collections of drawings from English and American asylums extraordinarily parallel in their spirit and quality with the Maya inscriptions of Central America. Yet these neolithic American societies got along for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, they respected seed-time and harvest, they bred and they maintained a grotesque and terrible order. And they produced quite beautiful works of art. Yet their surplus of population was disposed of by an organization of sacrificial slaughter unparalleled in the records of mankind. Many of the institutions that seemed most normal and respectable to them, filled the invading Europeans with perplexity and horror.

When we realize clearly this possibility of civilizations being based on very different sets of moral ideas and upon different intellectual methods, we are better able to appreciate the profound significance of the schism in our modern community, which gives us side by side, honest and intelligent people who regard Birth Control as something essentially sweet, sane, clean, desirable and necessary, and others equally honest and with as good a claim to intelligence who regard it as not merely unreasonable and unwholesome, but as intolerable and abominable. We are living not in a simple and complete civilization, but in a conflict of at least two civilizations, based on entirely different fundamental ideas, pursuing different methods and with different aims and ends.

I will call one of these civilizations our Traditional or Authoritative Civilization. It rests upon the thing that is, and upon the thing that has been. It insists upon respect for custom and usage; it discourages criticism and enquiry. It is very ancient and conservative, or, going beyond conservation, it is reactionary. The vehement hostility of many Catholic priests and prelates towards new views of human origins, and new views of moral questions, has led many careless thinkers to identify this old traditional civilization with Christianity, but that identification ignores the strongly

revolutionary and initiatory spirit that has always animated Christianity, and is untrue even to the realities of orthodox Catholic teaching. The vituperation of individual Catholics must not be confused with the deliberate doctrines of the Church which have, on the whole, been conspicuously cautious and balanced and sane in these matters. The ideas and practices of the Old Civilization are older and more widespread than and not identifiable with either Christian or Catholic culture, and it will be a great misfortune if the issues between the Old Civilization and the New are allowed to slip into the deep ruts of religious controversies that are only accidentally and intermittently parallel.

Contrasted with the ancient civilization, with the Traditional disposition, which accepts institutions and moral values as though they were a part of nature, we have what I may call — with an evident bias in its favour — the civilization of enquiry, of experimental knowledge, Creative and Progressive Civilization. The first great outbreak of the spirit of this civilization was in republican Greece; the martyrdom of Socrates, the fearless Utopianism of Plato, the ambitious encyclopaedism of Aristotle, mark the dawn of a new courage and a new wilfulness in human affairs. The fear of set limitations, of punitive and restrictive laws imposed by Fate upon human life was visibly fading in human minds. These names mark the first clear realization that to a large extent, and possibly to an illimitable extent, man's moral and social life and his general destiny could be seized upon and controlled by man. But — he must have knowledge. Said the Ancient Civilization — and it says it still through a multitude of vigorous voices and harsh repressive acts: "Let man learn his duty and obey." Says the New Civilization, with ever-increasing confidence: "Let man know, and trust him."

For long ages, the Old Civilization kept the New subordinate, apologetic and ineffective, but for the last two centuries, the New has fought its way to a position of contentious equality. The two go on side by side, jostling upon a thousand issues. The world changes, the conditions of life change rapidly, through that development of organized science which is the natural method of the New Civilization. The old tradition demands that national loyalties and ancient belligerence should continue. The new has produced means

of communication that break down the pens and separations of human life upon which nationalist emotion depends. The old tradition insists upon its ancient blood-letting of war; the new knowledge carries that war to undreamt of levels of destruction. The ancient system needed an unrestricted breeding to meet the normal waste of life through war, pestilence, and a multitude of hitherto unpreventable diseases. The new knowledge sweeps away the venerable checks of pestilence and disease, and confronts us with the congestions and explosive dangers of an over-populated world. The old tradition demands a special prolific class doomed to labor and subservience; the new points to mechanism and to scientific organization as a means of escape from this immemorial subjugation. Upon every main issue in life, there is this quarrel between the method of submission and the method of knowledge. More and more do men of science and intelligent people generally realize the hopelessness of pouring new wine into old bottles. More and more clearly do they grasp the significance of the Great Teacher's parable.

The New Civilization is saying to the Old now: "We cannot go on making power for you to spend upon international conflict. You must stop waving flags and bandying insults. You must organize the Peace of the World; you must subdue yourselves to the Federation of all mankind. And we cannot go on giving you health, freedom, enlargement, limitless wealth, if all our gifts to you are to be swamped by an indiscriminate torrent of progeny. We want fewer and better children who can be reared up to their full possibilities in unencumbered homes, and we cannot make the social life and the world-peace we are determined to make, with the ill-bred, ill-trained swarms of inferior citizens that you inflict upon us." And there at the passionate and crucial question, this essential and fundamental question, whether procreation is still to be a superstitious and often disastrous mystery, undertaken in fear and ignorance, reluctantly and under the sway of blind desires, or whether it is to become a deliberate creative act, the two civilizations join issue now. It is a conflict from which it is almost impossible to abstain. Our acts, our way of living, our social tolerance, our very silences will count in this crucial decision between the old and the new.

In a plain and lucid style without any emotional appeals, Mrs.

Margaret Sanger sets out the case of the new order against the old. There have been several able books published recently upon the question of Birth Control, from the point of view of a woman's personal life, and from the point of view of married happiness, but I do not think there has been any book as yet, popularly accessible, which presents this matter from the point of view of the public good, and as a necessary step to the further improvement of human life as a whole. I am inclined to think that there has hitherto been rather too much personal emotion spent upon this business and far too little attention given to its broader aspects. Mrs. Sanger with her extraordinary breadth of outlook and the real scientific quality of her mind, has now redressed the balance. She has lifted this question from out of the warm atmosphere of troubled domesticity in which it has hitherto been discussed, to its proper level of a predominantly important human affair.

H.G. Wells
Easton Glebe, Dunmow,
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GOD THE INVISIBLE KING

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PREFACE

This book sets out as forcibly and exactly as possible the religious belief of the writer. That belief is not orthodox Christianity; it is not, indeed, Christianity at all; its core nevertheless is a profound belief in a personal and intimate God. There is nothing in its statements that need shock or offend anyone who is prepared for the expression of a faith different from and perhaps in several particulars opposed to his own. The writer will be found to be sympathetic with all sincere religious feeling. Nevertheless it is well to prepare the prospective reader for statements that may jar harshly against deeply rooted mental habits. It is well to warn him at the outset that the departure from accepted beliefs is here no vague scepticism, but a quite sharply defined objection to dogmas very widely revered. Let the writer state the most probable occasion of trouble forthwith. An issue upon which this book will be found particularly uncompromising is the dogma of the Trinity. The writer is of opinion that the Council of Nicaea, which forcibly crystallised the controversies of two centuries and formulated the creed upon which all the existing Christian churches are based, was one of the most disastrous and one of the least venerable of all religious gatherings, and he holds that the Alexandrine speculations which were then conclusively imposed upon Christianity merit only disrespectful attention at the present time. There you have a chief possibility of offence. He is quite unable to pretend any awe for what he considers the spiritual monstrosities established by that undignified gathering. He makes no attempt to be obscure or propitiatory in this connection. He criticises the creeds explicitly and frankly, because he believes it is particularly necessary to clear them out of the way of those who are seeking religious consolation at this present time of exceptional religious need. He does little to conceal his indignation at the role played by these dogmas in obscuring, perverting, and preventing the religious life of mankind. After this warning such readers from among the various Christian churches and sects as are accessible to storms of theological fear or passion to whom the Trinity is an ineffable mystery and the name of God almost unspeakably awful, read on at

their own risk. This is a religious book written by a believer, but so far as their beliefs and religion go it may seem to them more sceptical and more antagonistic than blank atheism. That the writer cannot tell. He is not simply denying their God. He is declaring that there is a living God, different altogether from that Triune God and nearer to the heart of man. The spirit of this book is like that of a missionary who would only too gladly overthrow and smash some Polynesian divinity of shark's teeth and painted wood and mother-of-pearl. To the writer such elaborations as "begotten of the Father before all worlds" are no better than intellectual shark's teeth and oyster shells. His purpose, like the purpose of that missionary, is not primarily to shock and insult; but he is zealous to liberate, and he is impatient with a reverence that stands between man and God. He gives this fair warning and proceeds with his matter.

His matter is modern religion as he sees it. It is only incidentally and because it is unavoidable that he attacks doctrinal Christianity.

In a previous book, "First and Last Things" (Constable and Co.), he has stated his convictions upon certain general ideas of life and thought as clearly as he could. All of philosophy, all of metaphysics that is, seems to him to be a discussion of the relations of class and individual. The antagonism of the Nominalist and the Realist, the opposition of the One and the Many, the contrast of the Ideal and the Actual, all these oppositions express a certain structural and essential duality in the activity of the human mind. From an imperfect recognition of that duality ensue great masses of misconception. That was the substance of "First and Last Things." In this present book there is no further attack on philosophical or metaphysical questions. Here we work at a less fundamental level and deal with religious feeling and religious ideas. But just as the writer was inclined to attribute a whole world of disputation and inexactitudes to confused thinking about the exact value of classes and terms, so here he is disposed to think that interminable controversies and conflicts arise out of a confusion of intention due to a double meaning of the word "God"; that the word "God" conveys not one idea or set of ideas, but several essentially different ideas, incompatible one with another, and falling mainly into one or other of two divergent groups; and that people slip carelessly from one to the other of these groups of ideas

and so get into ultimately inextricable confusions.

The writer believes that the centuries of fluid religious thought that preceded the violent ultimate crystallisation of Nicaea, was essentially a struggle — obscured, of course, by many complexities — to reconcile and get into a relationship these two separate main series of God-ideas.

Putting the leading idea of this book very roughly, these two antagonistic typical conceptions of God may be best contrasted by speaking of one of them as God-as-Nature or the Creator, and of the other as God-as-Christ or the Redeemer. One is the great Outward God; the other is the Inmost God. The first idea was perhaps developed most highly and completely in the God of Spinoza. It is a conception of God tending to pantheism, to an idea of a comprehensive God as ruling with justice rather than affection, to a conception of aloofness and awestriking worshipfulness. The second idea, which is opposed to this idea of an absolute God, is the God of the human heart. The writer would suggest that the great outline of the theological struggles of that phase of civilisation and world unity which produced Christianity, was a persistent but unsuccessful attempt to get these two different ideas of God into one focus. It was an attempt to make the God of Nature accessible and the God of the Heart invincible, to bring the former into a conception of love and to vest the latter with the beauty of stars and flowers and the dignity of inexorable justice. There could be no finer metaphor for such a correlation than Fatherhood and Sonship. But the trouble is that it seems impossible to most people to continue to regard the relations of the Father to the Son as being simply a mystical metaphor. Presently some materialistic bias swings them in a moment of intellectual carelessness back to the idea of sexual filiation.

And it may further be suggested that the extreme aloofness and inhumanity, which is logically necessary in the idea of a Creator God, of an Infinite God, was the reason, so to speak, for the invention of a Holy Spirit, as something proceeding from him, as something bridging the great gulf, a Comforter, a mediator descending into the sphere of the human understanding. That, and the suggestive influence of the Egyptian Trinity that was then being worshipped at the Serapeum, and which had saturated the thought of

Alexandria with the conception of a trinity in unity, are probably the realities that account for the Third Person of the Christian Trinity. At any rate the present writer believes that the discussions that shaped the Christian theology we know were dominated by such natural and fundamental thoughts. These discussions were, of course, complicated from the outset; and particularly were they complicated by the identification of the man Jesus with the theological Christ, by materialistic expectations of his second coming, by materialistic inventions about his "miraculous" begetting, and by the morbid speculations about virginity and the like that arose out of such grossness. They were still further complicated by the idea of the textual inspiration of the scriptures, which presently swamped thought in textual interpretation. That swamping came very early in the development of Christianity. The writer of St. John's gospel appears still to be thinking with a considerable freedom, but Origen is already hopelessly in the net of the texts. The writer of St. John's gospel was a free man, but Origen was a superstitious man. He was emasculated mentally as well as bodily through his bibliolatry. He quotes; his predecessor thinks.

But the writer throws out these guesses at the probable intentions of early Christian thought in passing. His business here is the definition of a position. The writer's position here in this book is, firstly, complete Agnosticism in the matter of God the Creator, and secondly, entire faith in the matter of God the Redeemer. That, so to speak, is the key of his book. He cannot bring the two ideas under the same term God. He uses the word God therefore for the God in our hearts only, and he uses the term the Veiled Being for the ultimate mysteries of the universe, and he declares that we do not know and perhaps cannot know in any comprehensible terms the relation of the Veiled Being to that living reality in our lives who is, in his terminology, the true God. Speaking from the point of view of practical religion, he is restricting and defining the word God, as meaning only the personal God of mankind, he is restricting it so as to exclude all cosmogony and ideas of providence from our religious thought and leave nothing but the essentials of the religious life.

Many people, whom one would class as rather liberal Christians of an Arian or Arminian complexion, may find the larger part of this

book acceptable to them if they will read “the Christ God” where the writer has written “God.” They will then differ from him upon little more than the question whether there is an essential identity in aim and quality between the Christ God and the Veiled Being, who answer to their Creator God. This the orthodox post Nicaean Christians assert, and many pre-Nicaeans and many heretics (as the Cathars) contradicted with its exact contrary. The Cathars, Paulicians, Albigenses and so on held, with the Manichaeans, that the God of Nature, God the Father, was evil. The Christ God was his antagonist. This was the idea of the poet Shelley. And passing beyond Christian theology altogether a clue can still be found to many problems in comparative theology in this distinction between the Being of Nature (cf. Kant’s “starry vault above”) and the God of the heart (Kant’s “moral law within”). The idea of an antagonism seems to have been cardinal in the thought of the Essenes and the Orphic cult and in the Persian dualism. So, too, Buddhism seems to be “antagonistic.” On the other hand, the Moslem teaching and modern Judaism seem absolutely to combine and identify the two; God the creator is altogether and without distinction also God the King of Mankind. Christianity stands somewhere between such complete identification and complete antagonism. It admits a difference in attitude between Father and Son in its distinction between the Old Dispensation (of the Old Testament) and the New. Every possible change is rung in the great religions of the world between identification, complete separation, equality, and disproportion of these Beings; but it will be found that these two ideas are, so to speak, the basal elements of all theology in the world. The writer is chary of assertion or denial in these matters. He believes that they are speculations not at all necessary to salvation. He believes that men may differ profoundly in their opinions upon these points and still be in perfect agreement upon the essentials of religion. The reality of religion he believes deals wholly and exclusively with the God of the Heart. He declares as his own opinion, and as the opinion which seems most expressive of modern thought, that there is no reason to suppose the Veiled Being either benevolent or malignant towards men. But if the reader believes that God is Almighty and in every way Infinite the practical outcome is

not very different. For the purposes of human relationship it is impossible to deny that God PRESENTS HIMSELF AS FINITE, as struggling and taking a part against evil.

The writer believes that these dogmas of relationship are not merely extraneous to religion, but an impediment to religion. His aim in this book is to give a statement of religion which is no longer entangled in such speculations and disputes.

Let him add only one other note of explanation in this preface, and that is to remark that except for one incidental passage (in Chapter IV., 1), nowhere does he discuss the question of personal immortality. [It is discussed in "First and Last Things," Book IV, 4.] He omits this question because he does not consider that it has any more bearing upon the essentials of religion, than have the theories we may hold about the relation of God and the moral law to the starry universe. The latter is a question for the theologian, the former for the psychologist. Whether we are mortal or immortal, whether the God in our hearts is the Son of or a rebel against the Universe, the reality of religion, the fact of salvation, is still our self-identification with God, irrespective of consequences, and the achievement of his kingdom, in our hearts and in the world. Whether we live forever or die tomorrow does not affect righteousness. Many people seem to find the prospect of a final personal death unendurable. This impresses me as egotism. I have no such appetite for a separate immortality. God is my immortality; what, of me, is identified with God, is God; what is not is of no more permanent value than the snows of yester-year.

H. G. W.

Dunmow, May, 1917.

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE COSMOGONY OF MODERN RELIGION

1. MODERN RELIGION HAS NO FOUNDER

Perhaps all religions, unless the flaming onset of Mohammedanism be an exception, have dawned imperceptibly upon the world. A little while ago and the thing was not; and then suddenly it has been found in existence, and already in a state of diffusion. People have begun to hear of the new belief first here and then there. It is interesting, for example, to trace how Christianity drifted into the consciousness of the Roman world. But when a religion has been interrogated it has always had hitherto a tale of beginnings, the name and story of a founder. The renascent religion that is now taking shape, it seems, had no founder; it points to no origins. It is the Truth, its believers declare; it has always been here; it has always been visible to those who had eyes to see. It is perhaps plainer than it was and to more people — that is all.

It is as if it still did not realise its own difference. Many of those who hold it still think of it as if it were a kind of Christianity. Some, catching at a phrase of Huxley's, speak of it as Christianity without Theology. They do not know the creed they are carrying. It has, as a matter of fact, a very fine and subtle theology, flatly opposed to any belief that could, except by great stretching of charity and the imagination, be called Christianity. One might find, perhaps, a parallelism with the system ascribed to some Gnostics, but that is far more probably an accidental rather than a sympathetic coincidence. Of that the reader shall presently have an opportunity of judging.

This indefiniteness of statement and relationship is probably only the opening phase of the new faith. Christianity also began with an extreme neglect of definition. It was not at first anything more than a sect of Judaism. It was only after three centuries, amidst the uproar and emotions of the council of Nicaea, when the more enthusiastic Trinitarians stuffed their fingers in their ears in affected horror at the arguments of old Arius, that the cardinal mystery of the Trinity was established as the essential fact of Christianity. Throughout those

three centuries, the centuries of its greatest achievements and noblest martyrdoms, Christianity had not defined its God. And even to-day it has to be noted that a large majority of those who possess and repeat the Christian creeds have come into the practice so insensibly from unthinking childhood, that only in the slightest way do they realise the nature of the statements to which they subscribe. They will speak and think of both Christ and God in ways flatly incompatible with the doctrine of the Triune deity upon which, theoretically, the entire fabric of all the churches rests. They will show themselves as frankly Arians as though that damnable heresy had not been washed out of the world forever after centuries of persecution in torrents of blood. But whatever the present state of Christendom in these matters may be, there can be no doubt of the enormous pains taken in the past to give Christian beliefs the exactest, least ambiguous statement possible. Christianity knew itself clearly for what it was in its maturity, whatever the indecisions of its childhood or the confusions of its decay. The renascent religion that one finds now, a thing active and sufficient in many minds, has still scarcely come to self-consciousness. But it is so coming, and this present book is very largely an attempt to state the shape it is assuming and to compare it with the beliefs and imperatives and usages of the various Christian, pseudo-Christian, philosophical, and agnostic cults amidst which it has appeared.

The writer's sympathies and convictions are entirely with this that he speaks of as renascent or modern religion; he is neither atheist nor Buddhist nor Mohammedan nor Christian. He will make no pretence, therefore, to impartiality and detachment. He will do his best to be as fair as possible and as candid as possible, but the reader must reckon with this bias. He has found this faith growing up in himself; he has found it, or something very difficult to distinguish from it, growing independently in the minds of men and women he has met. They have been people of very various origins; English, Americans, Bengalis, Russians, French, people brought up in a "Catholic atmosphere," Positivists, Baptists, Sikhs, Mohammedans. Their diversity of source is as remarkable as their convergence of tendency. A miscellany of minds thinking upon parallel lines has come out to the same light. The new teaching is also traceable in many

professedly Christian religious books and it is to be heard from Christian pulpits. The phase of definition is manifestly at hand.

2. MODERN RELIGION HAS A FINITE GOD

Perhaps the most fundamental difference between this new faith and any recognised form of Christianity is that, knowingly or unknowingly, it worships A FINITE GOD. Directly the believer is fairly confronted with the plain questions of the case, the vague identifications that are still carelessly made with one or all of the persons of the Trinity dissolve away. He will admit that his God is neither all-wise, nor all-powerful, nor omnipresent; that he is neither the maker of heaven nor earth, and that he has little to identify him with that hereditary God of the Jews who became the "Father" in the Christian system. On the other hand he will assert that his God is a god of salvation, that he is a spirit, a person, a strongly marked and knowable personality, loving, inspiring, and lovable, who exists or strives to exist in every human soul. He will be much less certain in his denials that his God has a close resemblance to the Pauline (as distinguished from the Trinitarian) "Christ." . . .

The modern religious man will almost certainly profess a kind of universalism; he will assert that whensoever men have called upon any God and have found fellowship and comfort and courage and that sense of God within them, that inner light which is the quintessence of the religious experience, it was the True God that answered them. For the True God is a generous God, not a jealous God; the very antithesis of that bickering monopolist who "will have none other gods but Me"; and when a human heart cries out — to what name it matters not — for a larger spirit and a stronger help than the visible things of life can give, straightway the nameless Helper is with it and the God of Man answers to the call. The True God has no scorn nor hate for those who have accepted the many-handed symbols of the Hindu or the lacquered idols of China. Where there is faith, where there is need, there is the True God ready to clasp the hands that stretch out seeking for him into the darkness behind the ivory and gold.

The fact that God is FINITE is one upon which those who think clearly among the new believers are very insistent. He is, above everything else, a personality, and to be a personality is to have

characteristics, to be limited by characteristics; he is a Being, not us but dealing with us and through us, he has an aim and that means he has a past and future; he is within time and not outside it. And they point out that this is really what everyone who prays sincerely to God or gets help from God, feels and believes. Our practice with God is better than our theory. None of us really pray to that fantastic, unqualified danse a trois, the Trinity, which the wranglings and disputes of the worthies of Alexandria and Syria declared to be God. We pray to one single understanding person. But so far the tactics of those Trinitarians at Nicaea, who stuck their fingers in their ears, have prevailed in this world; this was no matter for discussion, they declared, it was a Holy Mystery full of magical terror, and few religious people have thought it worth while to revive these terrors by a definite contradiction. The truly religious have been content to lapse quietly into the comparative sanity of an unformulated Arianism, they have left it to the scoffing Atheist to mock at the patent absurdities of the official creed. But one magnificent protest against this theological fantasy must have been the work of a sincerely religious man, the cold superb humour of that burlesque creed, ascribed, at first no doubt facetiously and then quite seriously, to Saint Athanasius the Great, which, by an irony far beyond its original intention, has become at last the accepted creed of the church.

The long truce in the criticism of Trinitarian theology is drawing to its end. It is when men most urgently need God that they become least patient with foolish presentations and dogmas. The new believers are very definitely set upon a thorough analysis of the nature and growth of the Christian creeds and ideas. There has grown up a practice of assuming that, when God is spoken of, the Hebrew-Christian God of Nicaea is meant. But that God trails with him a thousand misconceptions and bad associations; his alleged infinite nature, his jealousy, his strange preferences, his vindictive Old Testament past. These things do not even make a caricature of the True God; they compose an altogether different and antagonistic figure.

It is a very childish and unphilosophical set of impulses that has led the theologians of nearly every faith to claim infinite qualities for

their deity. One has to remember the poorness of the mental and moral quality of the churchmen of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries who saddled Christendom with its characteristic dogmas, and the extreme poverty and confusion of the circle of ideas within which they thought. Many of these makers of Christianity, like Saint Ambrose of Milan (who had even to be baptised after his election to his bishopric), had been pitchforked into the church from civil life; they lived in a time of pitiless factions and personal feuds; they had to conduct their disputations amidst the struggles of would-be emperors; court eunuchs and favourites swayed their counsels, and popular rioting clinched their decisions. There was less freedom of discussion then in the Christian world than there is at present (1916) in Belgium, and the whole audience of educated opinion by which a theory could be judged did not equal, either in numbers or accuracy of information, the present population of Constantinople. To these conditions we owe the claim that the Christian God is a magic god, very great medicine in battle, "in hoc signo vinces," and the argument so natural to the minds of those days and so absurd to ours, that since he had ALL power, all knowledge, and existed for ever and ever, it was no use whatever to set up any other god against him. . . .

By the fifth century Christianity had adopted as its fundamental belief, without which everyone was to be "damned everlastingly," a conception of God and of Christ's relation to God, of which even by the Christian account of his teaching, Jesus was either totally unaware or so negligent and careless of the future comfort of his disciples as scarcely to make mention. The doctrine of the Trinity, so far as the relationship of the Third Person goes, hangs almost entirely upon one ambiguous and disputed utterance in St. John's gospel (XV. 26). Most of the teachings of Christian orthodoxy resolve themselves to the attentive student into assertions of the nature of contradiction and repartee. Someone floats an opinion in some matter that has been hitherto vague, in regard, for example, to the sonship of Christ or to the method of his birth. The new opinion arouses the hostility and alarm of minds unaccustomed to so definite a statement, and in the zeal of their recoil they fly to a contrary proposition. The Christians would neither admit that they worshipped more gods than

one because of the Greeks, nor deny the divinity of Christ because of the Jews. They dreaded to be polytheistic; equally did they dread the least apparent detraction from the power and importance of their Saviour. They were forced into the theory of the Trinity by the necessity of those contrary assertions, and they had to make it a mystery protected by curses to save it from a reductio ad absurdam. The entire history of the growth of the Christian doctrine in those disordered early centuries is a history of theology by committee; a history of furious wrangling, of hasty compromises, and still more hasty attempts to clinch matters by anathema. When the muddle was at its very worst, the church was confronted by enormous political opportunities. In order that it should seize these one chief thing appeared imperative: doctrinal uniformity. The emperor himself, albeit unbaptised and very ignorant of Greek, came and seated himself in the midst of Christian thought upon a golden throne. At the end of it all Eusebius, that supreme Trimmer, was prepared to damn everlastingly all those who doubted that consubstantiality he himself had doubted at the beginning of the conference. It is quite clear that Constantine did not care who was damned or for what period, so long as the Christians ceased to wrangle among themselves. The practical unanimity of Nicaea was secured by threats, and then, turning upon the victors, he sought by threats to restore Arius to communion. The imperial aim was a common faith to unite the empire. The crushing out of the Arians and of the Paulicians and suchlike heretics, and more particularly the systematic destruction by the orthodox of all heretical writings, had about it none of that quality of honest conviction which comes to those who have a real knowledge of God; it was a bawling down of dissensions that, left to work themselves out, would have spoilt good business; it was the fist of Nicolas of Myra over again, except that after the days of Ambrose the sword of the executioner and the fires of the book-burner were added to the weapon of the human voice. Priscillian was the first human sacrifice formally offered up under these improved conditions to the greater glory of the reinforced Trinity. Thereafter the blood of the heretics was the cement of Christian unity.

It is with these things in mind that those who profess the new faith are becoming so markedly anxious to distinguish God from the

Trinitarian's deity. At present if anyone who has left the Christian communion declares himself a believer in God, priest and parson swell with self-complacency. There is no reason why they should do so. That many of us have gone from them and found God is no concern of theirs. It is not that we who went out into the wilderness which we thought to be a desert, away from their creeds and dogmas, have turned back and are returning. It is that we have gone on still further, and are beyond that desolation. Never more shall we return to those who gather under the cross. By faith we disbelieved and denied. By faith we said of that stuffed scarecrow of divinity, that incoherent accumulation of antique theological notions, the Nicene deity, "This is certainly no God." And by faith we have found God. . . .

3. THE INFINITE BEING IS NOT GOD

There has always been a demand upon the theological teacher that he should supply a cosmogony. It has always been an effective propagandist thing to say: "OUR God made the whole universe. Don't you think that it would be wise to abandon YOUR deity, who did not, as you admit, do anything of the sort?"

The attentive reader of the lives of the Saints will find that this style of argument did in the past bring many tribes and nations into the Christian fold. It was second only to the claim of magic advantages, demonstrated by a free use of miracles. Only one great religious system, the Buddhist, seems to have resisted the temptation to secure for its divinity the honour and title of Creator. Modern religion is like Buddhism in that respect. It offers no theory whatever about the origin of the universe. It does not reach behind the appearances of space and time. It sees only a featureless presumption in that playing with superlatives which has entertained so many minds from Plotinus to the Hegelians with the delusion that such negative terms as the Absolute or the Unconditioned, can assert anything at all. At the back of all known things there is an impenetrable curtain; the ultimate of existence is a Veiled Being, which seems to know nothing of life or death or good or ill. Of that Being, whether it is simple or complex or divine, we know nothing; to us it is no more than the limit of understanding, the unknown beyond. It may be of practically limitless intricacy and possibility.

The new religion does not pretend that the God of its life is that Being, or that he has any relation of control or association with that Being. It does not even assert that God knows all or much more than we do about that ultimate Being.

For us life is a matter of our personalities in space and time. Human analysis probing with philosophy and science towards the Veiled Being reveals nothing of God, reveals space and time only as necessary forms of consciousness, glimpses a dance of atoms, of whirls in the ether. Some day in the endless future there may be a knowledge, an understanding of relationship, a power and courage that will pierce into those black wrappings. To that it may be our God, the Captain of Mankind will take us.

That now is a mere speculation. The veil of the unknown is set with the stars; its outer texture is ether and atom and crystal. The Veiled Being, enigmatical and incomprehensible, broods over the mirror upon which the busy shapes of life are moving. It is as if it waited in a great stillness. Our lives do not deal with it, and cannot deal with it. It may be that they may never be able to deal with it.

4. THE LIFE FORCE IS NOT GOD

So it is that comprehensive setting of the universe presents itself to the modern mind. It is altogether outside good and evil and love and hate. It is outside God, who is love and goodness. And coming out of this veiled being, proceeding out of it in a manner altogether inconceivable, is another lesser being, an impulse thrusting through matter and clothing itself in continually changing material forms, the maker of our world, Life, the Will to Be. It comes out of that inscrutable being as a wave comes rolling to us from beyond the horizon. It is as it were a great wave rushing through matter and possessed by a spirit. It is a breeding, fighting thing; it pants through the jungle track as the tiger and lifts itself towards heaven as the tree; it is the rabbit bolting for its life and the dove calling to her mate; it crawls, it flies, it dives, it lusts and devours, it pursues and eats itself in order to live still more eagerly and hastily; it is every living thing, of it are our passions and desires and fears. And it is aware of itself not as a whole, but dispersedly as individual self-consciousness, starting out dispersedly from every one of the sentient creatures it has called into being. They look out for their little moments, red-eyed

and fierce, full of greed, full of the passions of acquisition and assimilation and reproduction, submitting only to brief fellowships of defence or aggression. They are beings of strain and conflict and competition. They are living substance still mingled painfully with the dust. The forms in which this being clothes itself bear thorns and fangs and claws, are soaked with poison and bright with threats or allurements, prey slyly or openly on one another, hold their own for a little while, breed savagely and resentfully, and pass. . . .

This second Being men have called the Life Force, the Will to Live, the Struggle for Existence. They have figured it too as Mother Nature. We may speculate whether it is not what the wiser among the Gnostics meant by the Demiurge, but since the Christians destroyed all the Gnostic books that must remain a mere curious guess. We may speculate whether this heat and haste and wrath of life about us is the Dark God of the Manichees, the evil spirit of the sun worshippers. But in contemporary thought there is no conviction apparent that this Demiurge is either good or evil; it is conceived of as both good and evil. If it gives all the pain and conflict of life, it gives also the joy of the sunshine, the delight and hope of youth, the pleasures. If it has elaborated a hundred thousand sorts of parasite, it has also moulded the beautiful limbs of man and woman; it has shaped the slug and the flower. And in it, as part of it, taking its rewards, responding to its goads, struggling against the final abandonment to death, do we all live, as the beasts live, glad, angry, sorry, revengeful, hopeful, weary, disgusted, forgetful, lustful, happy, excited, bored, in pain, mood after mood but always fearing death, with no certainty and no coherence within us, until we find God. And God comes to us neither out of the stars nor out of the pride of life, but as a still small voice within.

5. GOD IS WITHIN

God comes we know not whence, into the conflict of life. He works in men and through men. He is a spirit, a single spirit and a single person; he has begun and he will never end. He is the immortal part and leader of mankind. He has motives, he has characteristics, he has an aim. He is by our poor scales of measurement boundless love, boundless courage, boundless generosity. He is thought and a steadfast will. He is our friend and

brother and the light of the world. That briefly is the belief of the modern mind with regard to God. There is no very novel idea about this God, unless it be the idea that he had a beginning. This is the God that men have sought and found in all ages, as God or as the Messiah or the Saviour. The finding of him is salvation from the purposelessness of life. The new religion has but disentangled the idea of him from the absolutes and infinities and mysteries of the Christian theologians; from mythological virgin births and the cosmogonies and intellectual pretentiousness of a vanished age.

Modern religion appeals to no revelation, no authoritative teaching, no mystery. The statement it makes is, it declares, a mere statement of what we may all perceive and experience. We all live in the storm of life, we all find our understandings limited by the Veiled Being; if we seek salvation and search within for God, presently we find him. All this is in the nature of things. If every one who perceives and states it were to be instantly killed and blotted out, presently other people would find their way to the same conclusions; and so on again and again. To this all true religion, casting aside its hulls of misconception, must ultimately come. To it indeed much religion is already coming. Christian thought struggles towards it, with the millstones of Syrian theology and an outrageous mythology of incarnation and resurrection about its neck. When at last our present bench of bishops join the early fathers of the church in heaven there will be, I fear, a note of reproach in their greeting of the ingenious person who saddled them with OMNIPOTENS. Still more disastrous for them has been the virgin birth, with the terrible fascination of its detail for unpoetic minds. How rich is the literature of authoritative Christianity with decisions upon the continuing virginity of Mary and the virginity of Joseph — ideas that first arose in Arabia as a Moslem gloss upon Christianity — and how little have these peepings and pryings to do with the needs of the heart and the finding of God!

Within the last few years there have been a score or so of such volumes as that recently compiled by Dr. Foakes Jackson, entitled "The Faith and the War," a volume in which the curious reader may contemplate deans and canons, divines and church dignitaries, men intelligent and enquiring and religiously disposed, all lying like

overladen camels, panting under this load of obsolete theological responsibility, groaning great articles, outside the needle's eye that leads to God.

6. THE COMING OF GOD

Modern religion bases its knowledge of God and its account of God entirely upon experience. It has encountered God. It does not argue about God; it relates. It relates without any of those wrappings of awe and reverence that fold so necessarily about imposture, it relates as one tells of a friend and his assistance, of a happy adventure, of a beautiful thing found and picked up by the wayside.

So far as its psychological phases go the new account of personal salvation tallies very closely with the account of "conversion" as it is given by other religions. It has little to tell that is not already familiar to the reader of William James's "Varieties of Religious Experience." It describes an initial state of distress with the aimlessness and cruelties of life, and particularly with the futility of the individual life, a state of helpless self-disgust, of inability to form any satisfactory plan of living. This is the common prelude known to many sorts of Christian as "conviction of sin"; it is, at any rate, a conviction of hopeless confusion. . . . Then in some way the idea of God comes into the distressed mind, at first simply as an idea, without substance or belief. It is read about or it is remembered; it is expounded by some teacher or some happy convert. In the case of all those of the new faith with whose personal experience I have any intimacy, the idea of God has remained for some time simply as an idea floating about in a mind still dissatisfied. God is not believed in, but it is realised that if there were such a being he would supply the needed consolation and direction, his continuing purpose would knit together the scattered effort of life, his immortality would take the sting from death. Under this realisation the idea is pursued and elaborated. For a time there is a curious resistance to the suggestion that God is truly a person; he is spoken of preferably by such phrases as the Purpose in Things, as the Racial Consciousness, as the Collective Mind.

I believe that this resistance in so many contemporary minds to the idea of God as a person is due very largely to the enormous prejudice against divine personality created by the absurdities of the

Christian teaching and the habitual monopoly of the Christian idea. The picture of Christ as the Good Shepherd thrusts itself before minds unaccustomed to the idea that they are lambs. The cross in the twilight bars the way. It is a novelty and an enormous relief to such people to realise that one may think of God without being committed to think of either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost, or of all of them at once. That freedom had not seemed possible to them. They had been hypnotised and obsessed by the idea that the Christian God is the only thinkable God. They had heard so much about that God and so little of any other. With that release their minds become, as it were, nascent and ready for the coming of God.

Then suddenly, in a little while, in his own time, God comes. This cardinal experience is an undoubting, immediate sense of God. It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in oneself. It is as if one was touched at every point by a being akin to oneself, sympathetic, beyond measure wiser, steadfast and pure in aim. It is completer and more intimate, but it is like standing side by side with and touching someone that we love very dearly and trust completely. It is as if this being bridged a thousand misunderstandings and brought us into fellowship with a great multitude of other people. . . .

"Closer he is than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

The moment may come while we are alone in the darkness, under the stars, or while we walk by ourselves or in a crowd, or while we sit and muse. It may come upon the sinking ship or in the tumult of the battle. There is no saying when it may not come to us. . . . But after it has come our lives are changed, God is with us and there is no more doubt of God. Thereafter one goes about the world like one who was lonely and has found a lover, like one who was perplexed and has found a solution. One is assured that there is a Power that fights with us against the confusion and evil within us and without. There comes into the heart an essential and enduring happiness and courage.

There is but one God, there is but one true religious experience, but under a multitude of names, under veils and darknesses, God has in this manner come into countless lives. There is scarcely a faith, however mean and preposterous, that has not been a way to holiness.

God who is himself finite, who himself struggles in his great effort from strength to strength, has no spite against error. Far beyond halfway he hastens to meet the purblind. But God is against the darkness in their eyes. The faith which is returning to men girds at veils and shadows, and would see God plainly. It has little respect for mysteries. It rends the veil of the temple in rags and tatters. It has no superstitious fear of this huge friendliness, of this great brother and leader of our little beings. To find God is but the beginning of wisdom, because then for all our days we have to learn his purpose with us and to live our lives with him.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

HERESIES; OR THE THINGS THAT GOD IS NOT

1. HERESIES ARE MISCONCEPTIONS OF GOD

Religion is not a plant that has grown from one seed; it is like a lake that has been fed by countless springs. It is a great pool of living water, mingled from many sources and tainted with much impurity. It is synthetic in its nature; it becomes simpler from original complexities; the sediment subsides.

A life perfectly adjusted to its surroundings is a life without mentality; no judgment is called for, no inhibition, no disturbance of the instinctive flow of perfect reactions. Such a life is bliss, or nirvana. It is unconsciousness below dreaming. Consciousness is discord evoking the will to adjust; it is inseparable from need. At every need consciousness breaks into being. Imperfect adjustments, needs, are the rents and tatters in the smooth dark veil of being through which the light of consciousness shines — the light of consciousness and will of which God is the sun.

So that every need of human life, every disappointment and dissatisfaction and call for help and effort, is a means whereby men may and do come to the realisation of God.

There is no cardinal need, there is no sort of experience in human life from which there does not come or has not come a contribution to men's religious ideas. At every challenge men have to put forth effort, feel doubt of adequacy, be thwarted, perceive the chill shadow of their mortality. At every challenge comes the possibility of help from without, the idea of eluding frustration, the aspiration towards immortality. It is possible to classify the appeals men make for God under the headings of their chief system of effort, their efforts to understand, their fear and their struggles for safety and happiness, the craving of their restlessness for peace, their angers against disorder and their desire for the avenger; their sexual passions and perplexities. . . .

Each of these great systems of needs and efforts brings its own sort of sediment into religion. Each, that is to say, has its own kind of

heresy, its distinctive misapprehension of God. It is only in the synthesis and mutual correction of many divergent ideas that the idea of God grows clear. The effort to understand completely, for example, leads to the endless Heresies of Theory. Men trip over the inherent infirmities of the human mind. But in these days one does not argue greatly about dogma. Almost every conceivable error about unity, about personality, about time and quantity and genus and species, about begetting and beginning and limitation and similarity and every kink in the difficult mind of man, has been thrust forward in some form of dogma. Beside the errors of thought are the errors of emotion. Fear and feebleness go straight to the Heresies that God is Magic or that God is Providence; restless egotism at leisure and unchallenged by urgent elementary realities breeds the Heresies of Mysticism, anger and hate call for God's Judgments, and the stormy emotions of sex gave mankind the Phallic God. Those who find themselves possessed by the new spirit in religion, realise very speedily the necessity of clearing the mind of all these exaggerations, transferences, and overflows of feeling. The search for divine truth is like gold washing; nothing is of any value until most has been swept away.

2. HERESIES OF SPECULATION

One sort of heresies stands apart from the rest. It is infinitely the most various sort. It includes all those heresies which result from wrong-headed mental elaboration, as distinguished from those which are the result of hasty and imperfect apprehension, the heresies of the clever rather than the heresies of the obtuse. The former are of endless variety and complexity; the latter are in comparison natural, simple confusions. The former are the errors of the study, the latter the superstitions that spring by the wayside, or are brought down to us in our social structure out of a barbaric past.

To the heresies of thought and speculation belong the elaborate doctrine of the Trinity, dogmas about God's absolute qualities, such odd deductions as the accepted Christian teachings about the virginity of Mary and Joseph, and the like. All these things are parts of orthodox Christianity. Yet none of them did Christ, even by the Christian account, expound or recommend. He treated them as negligible. It was left for the Alexandrians, for Alexander, for little,

red-haired, busy, wire-pulling Athanasius to find out exactly what their Master was driving at, three centuries after their Master was dead. . . .

Men still sit at little desks remote from God or life, and rack their inadequate brains to meet fancied difficulties and state unnecessary perfections. They seek God by logic, ignoring the marginal error that creeps into every syllogism. Their conceit blinds them to the limitations upon their thinking. They weave spider-like webs of muddle and disputation across the path by which men come to God. It would not matter very much if it were not that simpler souls are caught in these webs. Every great religious system in the world is choked by such webs; each system has its own. Of all the blood-stained tangled heresies which make up doctrinal Christianity and imprison the mind of the western world to-day, not one seems to have been known to the nominal founder of Christianity. Jesus Christ never certainly claimed to be the Messiah; never spoke clearly of the Trinity; was vague upon the scheme of salvation and the significance of his martyrdom. We are asked to suppose that he left his apostles without instructions, that were necessary to their eternal happiness, that he could give them the Lord's Prayer but leave them to guess at the all-important Creed,* and that the Church staggered along blindly, putting its foot in and out of damnation, until the "experts" of Nicaea, that "garland of priests," marshalled by Constantine's officials, came to its rescue. . . . From the conversion of Paul onward, the heresies of the intellect multiplied about Christ's memory and hid him from the sight of men. We are no longer clear about the doctrine he taught nor about the things he said and did. . . .

> * Even the "Apostles' Creed" is not traceable earlier than the fourth century. It is manifestly an old, patched formulary. Rutinius explains that it was not written down for a long time, but transmitted orally, kept secret, and used as a sort of password among the elect.

We are all so weary of this theology of the Christians, we are all at heart so sceptical about their Triune God, that it is needless here to spend any time or space upon the twenty thousand different formulae in which the orthodox have attempted to believe in something of the sort. There are several useful encyclopaedias of sects and heresies,

compact, but still bulky, to which the curious may go. There are ten thousand different expositions of orthodoxy. No one who really seeks God thinks of the Trinity, either the Trinity of the Trinitarian or the Trinity of the Sabellian or the Trinity of the Arian, any more than one thinks of those theories made stone, those gods with three heads and seven hands, who sit on lotus leaves and flourish lingams and what not, in the temples of India. Let us leave, therefore, these morbid elaborations of the human intelligence to drift to limbo, and come rather to the natural heresies that spring from fundamental weaknesses of the human character, and which are common to all religions. Against these it is necessary to keep constant watch. They return very insidiously.

3. GOD IS NOT MAGIC

One of the most universal of these natural misconceptions of God is to consider him as something magic serving the ends of men.

It is not easy for us to grasp at first the full meaning of giving our souls to God. The missionary and teacher of any creed is all too apt to hawk God for what he will fetch; he is greedy for the poor triumph of acquiescence; and so it comes about that many people who have been led to believe themselves religious, are in reality still keeping back their own souls and trying to use God for their own purposes. God is nothing more for them as yet than a magnificent Fetish. They did not really want him, but they have heard that he is potent stuff; their unripe souls think to make use of him. They call upon his name, they do certain things that are supposed to be peculiarly influential with him, such as saying prayers and repeating gross praises of him, or reading in a blind, industrious way that strange miscellany of Jewish and early Christian literature, the Bible, and suchlike mental mortification, or making the Sabbath dull and uncomfortable. In return for these fetishistic propitiations God is supposed to interfere with the normal course of causation in their favour. He becomes a celestial log-roller. He remedies unfavourable accidents, cures petty ailments, contrives unexpected gifts of medicine, money, or the like, he averts bankruptcies, arranges profitable transactions, and does a thousand such services for his little clique of faithful people. The pious are represented as being constantly delighted by these little surprises, these bouquets and chocolate boxes from the divinity. Or

contrawise he contrives spiteful turns for those who fail in their religious attentions. He murders Sabbath-breaking children, or disorganises the careful business schemes of the ungodly. He is represented as going Sabbath-breakering on Sunday morning as a Staffordshire worker goes ratting. Ordinary everyday Christianity is saturated with this fetishistic conception of God. It may be disowned in THE HIBBERT JOURNAL, but it is unblushingly advocated in the parish magazine. It is an idea taken over by Christianity with the rest of the qualities of the Hebrew God. It is natural enough in minds so self-centred that their recognition of weakness and need brings with it no real self-surrender, but it is entirely inconsistent with the modern conception of the true God.

There has dropped upon the table as I write a modest periodical called THE NORTHERN BRITISH ISRAEL REVIEW, illustrated with portraits of various clergymen of the Church of England, and of ladies and gentlemen who belong to the little school of thought which this magazine represents; it is, I should judge, a sub-sect entirely within the Established Church of England, that is to say within the Anglican communion of the Trinitarian Christians. It contains among other papers a very entertaining summary by a gentleman entitled — I cite the unusual title-page of the periodical— "Landseer Mackenzie, Esq.," of the views of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Obadiah upon the Kaiser William. They are distinctly hostile views. Mr. Landseer Mackenzie discourses not only upon these anticipatory condemnations but also upon the relations of the weather to this war. He is convinced quite simply and honestly that God has been persistently rigging the weather against the Germans. He points out that the absence of mist on the North Sea was of great help to the British in the autumn of 1914, and declares that it was the wet state of the country that really held up the Germans in Flanders in the winter of 1914-15. He ignores the part played by the weather in delaying the relief of Kut-el-Amara, and he has not thought of the difficult question why the Deity, having once decided upon intervention, did not, instead of this comparatively trivial meteorological assistance, adopt the more effective course of, for example, exploding or spoiling the German stores of ammunition by some simple atomic miracle, or misdirecting their gunfire by a

sudden local modification of the laws of refraction or gravitation.

Since these views of God come from Anglican vicarages I can only conclude that this kind of belief is quite orthodox and permissible in the established church, and that I am charging orthodox Christianity here with nothing that has ever been officially repudiated. I find indeed the essential assumptions of Mr. Landseer Mackenzie repeated in endless official Christian utterances on the part of German and British and Russian divines. The Bishop of Chelmsford, for example, has recently ascribed our difficulties in the war to our impatience with long sermons — among other similar causes. Such Christians are manifestly convinced that God can be invoked by ritual — for example by special days of national prayer or an increased observance of Sunday — or made malignant by neglect or levity. It is almost fundamental in their idea of him. The ordinary Mohammedan seems as confident of this magic pettiness of God, and the belief of China in the magic propitiations and resentments of "Heaven" is at least equally strong.

But the true God as those of the new religion know him is no such God of luck and intervention. He is not to serve men's ends or the ends of nations or associations of men; he is careless of our ceremonies and invocations. He does not lose his temper with our follies and weaknesses. It is for us to serve Him. He captains us, he does not coddle us. He has his own ends for which he needs us. . . .

4. GOD IS NOT PROVIDENCE

Closely related to this heresy that God is magic, is the heresy that calls him Providence, that declares the apparent adequacy of cause and effect to be a sham, and that all the time, incalculably, he is pulling about the order of events for our personal advantages.

The idea of Providence was very gaily travested by Daudet in "Tartarin in the Alps." You will remember how Tartarin's friend assured him that all Switzerland was one great Trust, intent upon attracting tourists and far too wise and kind to permit them to venture into real danger, that all the precipices were netted invisibly, and all the loose rocks guarded against falling, that avalanches were prearranged spectacles and the crevasses at their worst slippery ways down into kindly catchment bags. If the mountaineer tried to get into real danger he was turned back by specious excuses. Inspired by this

persuasion Tartarin behaved with incredible daring. . . . That is exactly the Providence theory of the whole world. There can be no doubt that it does enable many a timid soul to get through life with a certain recklessness. And provided there is no slip into a crevasse, the Providence theory works well. It would work altogether well if there were no crevasses.

Tartarin was reckless because of his faith in Providence, and escaped. But what would have happened to him if he had fallen into a crevasse?

There exists a very touching and remarkable book by Sir Francis Younghusband called "Within." [Williams and Norgate, 1912.] It is the confession of a man who lived with a complete confidence in Providence until he was already well advanced in years. He went through battles and campaigns, he filled positions of great honour and responsibility, he saw much of the life of men, without altogether losing his faith. The loss of a child, an Indian famine, could shake it but not overthrow it. Then coming back one day from some races in France, he was knocked down by an automobile and hurt very cruelly. He suffered terribly in body and mind. His sufferings caused much suffering to others. He did his utmost to see the hand of a loving Providence in his and their disaster and the torment it inflicted, and being a man of sterling honesty and a fine essential simplicity of mind, he confessed at last that he could not do so. His confidence in the benevolent intervention of God was altogether destroyed. His book tells of this shattering, and how labouriously he reconstructed his religion upon less confident lines. It is a book typical of an age and of a very English sort of mind, a book well worth reading.

That he came to a full sense of the true God cannot be asserted, but how near he came to God, let one quotation witness.

"The existence of an outside Providence," he writes, "who created us, who watches over us, and who guides our lives like a Merciful Father, we have found impossible longer to believe in. But of the existence of a Holy Spirit radiating upward through all animate beings, and finding its fullest expression, in man in love, and in the flowers in beauty, we can be as certain as of anything in the world. This fiery spiritual impulsion at the centre and the source of things,

ever burning in us, is the supremely important factor in our existence. It does not always attain to light. In many directions it fails; the conditions are too hard and it is utterly blocked. In others it only partially succeeds. But in a few it bursts forth into radiant light. There are few who in some heavenly moment of their lives have not been conscious of its presence. We may not be able to give it outward expression, but we know that it is there." . . .

God does not guide our feet. He is no sedulous governess restraining and correcting the wayward steps of men. If you would fly into the air, there is no God to bank your aeroplane correctly for you or keep an ill-tended engine going; if you would cross a glacier, no God nor angel guides your steps amidst the slippery places. He will not even mind your innocent children for you if you leave them before an unguarded fire. Cherish no delusions; for yourself and others you challenge danger and chance on your own strength; no talisman, no God, can help you or those you care for. Nothing of such things will God do; it is an idle dream. But God will be with you nevertheless. In the reeling aeroplane or the dark ice-cave God will be your courage. Though you suffer or are killed, it is not an end. He will be with you as you face death; he will die with you as he has died already countless myriads of brave deaths. He will come so close to you that at the last you will not know whether it is you or he who dies, and the present death will be swallowed up in his victory.

5. THE HERESY OF QUIETISM

God comes to us within and takes us for his own. He releases us from ourselves; he incorporates us with his own undying experience and adventure; he receives us and gives himself. He is a stimulant; he makes us live immortally and more abundantly. I have compared him to the sensation of a dear, strong friend who comes and stands quietly beside one, shoulder to shoulder.

The finding of God is the beginning of service. It is not an escape from life and action; it is the release of life and action from the prison of the mortal self. Not to realise that, is the heresy of Quietism, of many mystics. Commonly such people are people of some wealth, able to command services for all their everyday needs. They make religion a method of indolence. They turn their backs on the toil and stresses of existence and give themselves up to a

delicious reverie in which they flirt with the divinity. They will recount their privileges and ecstasies, and how ingeniously and wonderfully God has tried and proved them. But indeed the true God was not the lover of Madame Guyon. The true God is not a spiritual troubadour wooing the hearts of men and women to no purpose. The true God goes through the world like fifes and drums and flags, calling for recruits along the street. We must go out to him. We must accept his discipline and fight his battle. The peace of God comes not by thinking about it but by forgetting oneself in him.

6. GOD DOES NOT PUNISH

Man is a social animal, and there is in him a great faculty for moral indignation. Many of the early Gods were mainly Gods of Fear. They were more often "wrath" than not. Such was the temperament of the Semitic deity who, as the Hebrew Jehovah, proliferated, perhaps under the influence of the Alexandrian Serapeum, into the Christian Trinity and who became also the Moslem God.* The natural hatred of unregenerate men against everything that is unlike themselves, against strange people and cheerful people, against unfamiliar usages and things they do not understand, embodied itself in this conception of a malignant and partisan Deity, perpetually "upset" by the little things people did, and contriving murder and vengeance. Now this God would be drowning everybody in the world, now he would be burning Sodom and Gomorrah, now he would be inciting his congenial Israelites to the most terrific pogroms. This divine "frightfulness" is of course the natural human dislike and distrust for queer practices or for too sunny a carelessness, a dislike reinforced by the latent fierceness of the ape in us, liberating the latent fierceness of the ape in us, giving it an excuse and pressing permission upon it, handing the thing hated and feared over to its secular arm. . . .

* It is not so generally understood as it should be among English and American readers that a very large proportion of early Christians before the creeds established and regularised the doctrine of the Trinity, denied absolutely that Jehovah was God; they regarded Christ as a rebel against Jehovah and a rescuer of humanity from him, just as Prometheus was a rebel against Jove. These beliefs survived

for a thousand years throughout Christendom: they were held by a great multitude of persecuted sects, from the Albigenses and Cathars to the eastern Paulicians. The catholic church found it necessary to prohibit the circulation of the Old Testament among laymen very largely on account of the polemics of the Cathars against the Hebrew God. But in this book, be it noted, the word Christian, when it is not otherwise defined, is used to indicate only the Trinitarians who accept the official creeds.

It is a human paradox that the desire for seemliness, the instinct for restraints and fair disciplines, and the impulse to cherish sweet familiar things, that these things of the True God should so readily liberate cruelty and tyranny. It is like a woman going with a light to tend and protect her sleeping child, and setting the house on fire. None the less, right down to to-day, the heresy of God the Revengeful, God the Persecutor and Avenger, haunts religion. It is only in quite recent years that the growing gentleness of everyday life has begun to make men a little ashamed of a Deity less tolerant and gentle than themselves. The recent literature of the Anglicans abounds in the evidence of this trouble.

Bishop Colenso of Natal was prosecuted and condemned in 1863 for denying the irascibility of his God and teaching "the Kaffirs of Natal" the dangerous heresy that God is all mercy. "We cannot allow it to be said," the Dean of Cape Town insisted, "that God was not angry and was not appeased by punishment." He was angry "on account of Sin, which is a great evil and a great insult to His Majesty." The case of the Rev. Charles Voysey, which occurred in 1870, was a second assertion of the Church's insistence upon the fierceness of her God. This case is not to be found in the ordinary church histories nor is it even mentioned in the latest edition of the ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA; nevertheless it appears to have been a very illuminating case. It is doubtful if the church would prosecute or condemn either Bishop Colenso or Mr. Voysey to-day.

7. GOD AND THE NURSERY-MAID

Closely related to the Heresy of God the Avenger, is that kind of miniature God the Avenger, to whom the nursery-maid and the overtaxed parent are so apt to appeal. You stab your children with

such a God and he poisons all their lives. For many of us the word "God" first came into our lives to denote a wanton, irrational restraint, as Bogey, as the All-Seeing and quite ungenerous Eye. God Bogey is a great convenience to the nursery-maid who wants to leave Fear to mind her charges and enforce her disciplines, while she goes off upon her own aims. But indeed, the teaching of God Bogey is an outrage upon the soul of a child scarcely less dreadful than an indecent assault. The reason rebels and is crushed under this horrible and pursuing suggestion. Many minds never rise again from their injury. They remain for the rest of life spiritually crippled and debased, haunted by a fear, stained with a persuasion of relentless cruelty in the ultimate cause of all things.

I, who write, was so set against God, thus rendered. He and his Hell were the nightmare of my childhood; I hated him while I still believed in him, and who could help but hate? I thought of him as a fantastic monster, perpetually spying, perpetually listening, perpetually waiting to condemn and to "strike me dead"; his flames as ready as a grill-room fire. He was over me and about my feebleness and silliness and forgetfulness as the sky and sea would be about a child drowning in mid-Atlantic. When I was still only a child of thirteen, by the grace of the true God in me, I flung this Lie out of my mind, and for many years, until I came to see that God himself had done this thing for me, the name of God meant nothing to me but the hideous scar in my heart where a fearful demon had been.

I see about me to-day many dreadful moral and mental cripples with this bogey God of the nursery-maid, with his black, insane revenges, still living like a horrible parasite in their hearts in the place where God should be. They are afraid, afraid, afraid; they dare not be kindly to formal sinners, they dare not abandon a hundred foolish observances; they dare not look at the causes of things. They are afraid of sunshine, of nakedness, of health, of adventure, of science, lest that old watching spider take offence. The voice of the true God whispers in their hearts, echoes in speech and writing, but they avert themselves, fear-driven. For the true God has no lash of fear. And how the foul-minded bigot, with his ill-shaven face, his greasy skin, his thick, gesticulating hands, his bellowings and threatenings, loves to reap this harvest of fear the ignorant cunning of

the nursery girl has sown for him! How he loves the importance of denunciation, and, himself a malignant cripple, to rally the company of these crippled souls to persecute and destroy the happy children of God! . . .

Christian priestcraft turns a dreadful face to children. There is a real wickedness of the priest that is different from other wickedness, and that affects a reasonable mind just as cruelty and strange perversions of instinct affect it. Let a former Archbishop of Canterbury speak for me. This that follows is the account given by Archbishop Tait in a debate in the Upper House of Convocation (July 3rd, 1877) of one of the publications of a certain SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CROSS:

"I take this book, as its contents show, to be meant for the instruction of very young children. I find, in one of the pages of it, the statement that between the ages of six and six and a half years would be the proper time for the inculcation of the teaching which is to be found in the book. Now, six to six and a half is certainly a very tender age, and to these children I find these statements addressed in the book:

"'It is to the priest, and to the priest only, that the child must acknowledge his sins, if he desires that God should forgive him.'

"I hope and trust the person, the three clergymen, or however many there were, did not exactly realise what they were writing; that they did not mean to say that a child was not to confess its sins to God direct; that it was not to confess its sins, at the age of six, to its mother, or to its father, but was only to have recourse to the priest. But the words, to say the least of them, are rash. Then comes the very obvious question:

"'Do you know why? It is because God, when he was on earth, gave to his priests, and to them alone, the Divine Power of forgiving men their sins. It was to priests alone that Jesus said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." . . . Those who will not confess will not be cured. Sin is a terrible sickness, and casts souls into hell.'

"That is addressed to a child six years of age.

"'I have known,' the book continues, 'poor children who concealed their sins in confession for years; they were very unhappy, were tormented with remorse, and if they had died in that state they

would certainly have gone to the everlasting fires of hell.'" . . .

Now here is something against nature, something that I have seen time after time in the faces and bearing of priests and heard in their preaching. It is a distinct lust. Much nobility and devotion there are among priests, saintly lives and kindly lives, lives of real worship, lives no man may better; this that I write is not of all, perhaps not of many priests. But there has been in all ages that have known sacerdotalism this terrible type of the priest; priestcraft and priestly power release an aggressive and narrow disposition to a recklessness of suffering and a hatred of liberty that surely exceeds the badness of any other sort of men.

8. THE CHILDREN'S GOD

Children do not naturally love God. They have no great capacity for an idea so subtle and mature as the idea of God. While they are still children in a home and cared for, life is too kind and easy for them to feel any great need of God. All things are still something God-like. . . .

The true God, our modern minds insist upon believing, can have no appetite for unnatural praise and adoration. He does not clamour for the attention of children. He is not like one of those senile uncles who dream of glory in the nursery, who love to hear it said, "The children adore him." If children are loved and trained to truth, justice, and mutual forbearance, they will be ready for the true God as their needs bring them within his scope. They should be left to their innocence, and to their trust in the innocence of the world, as long as they can be. They should be told only of God as a Great Friend whom some day they will need more and understand and know better. That is as much as most children need. The phrases of religion put too early into their mouths may become a cant, something worse than blasphemy.

Yet children are sometimes very near to God. Creative passion stirs in their play. At times they display a divine simplicity. But it does not follow that therefore they should be afflicted with theological formulae or inducted into ceremonies and rites that they may dislike or misinterpret. If by any accident, by the death of a friend or a distressing story, the thought of death afflicts a child, then he may begin to hear of God, who takes those that serve him out of

their slain bodies into his shining immortality. Or if by some menial treachery, through some prowling priest, the whisper of Old Bogey reaches our children, then we may set their minds at ease by the assurance of his limitless charity. . . .

With adolescence comes the desire for God and to know more of God, and that is the most suitable time for religious talk and teaching.

9. GOD IS NOT SEXUAL

In the last two or three hundred years there has been a very considerable disentanglement of the idea of God from the complex of sexual thought and feeling. But in the early days of religion the two things were inseparably bound together; the fury of the Hebrew prophets, for example, is continually proclaiming the extraordinary "wrath" of their God at this or that little dirtiness or irregularity or breach of the sexual tabus. The ceremony of circumcision is clearly indicative of the original nature of the Semitic deity who developed into the Trinitarian God. So far as Christianity dropped this rite, so far Christianity disavowed the old associations. But to this day the representative Christian churches still make marriage into a mystical sacrament, and, with some exceptions, the Roman communion exacts the sacrifice of celibacy from its priesthood, regardless of the mischievousness and maliciousness that so often ensue. Nearly every Christian church inflicts as much discredit and injustice as it can contrive upon the illegitimate child. They do not treat illegitimate children as unfortunate children, but as children with a mystical and an incurable taint of SIN. Kindly easy-going Christians may resent this statement because it does not tally with their own attitudes, but let them consult their orthodox authorities.

One must distinguish clearly here between what is held to be sacred or sinful in itself and what is held to be one's duty or a nation's duty because it is in itself the wisest, cleanest, clearest, best thing to do. By the latter tests and reasonable arguments most or all of our institutions regulating the relations of the sexes may be justifiable. But my case is not whether they can be justified by these tests but that it is not by these tests that they are judged even to-day, by the professors of the chief religions of the world. It is the temper and not the conclusions of the religious bodies that I would criticise.

These sexual questions are guarded by a holy irascibility, and the most violent efforts are made — with a sense of complete righteousness — to prohibit their discussion. That fury about sexual things is only to be explained on the hypothesis that the Christian God remains a sex God in the minds of great numbers of his exponents. His disentanglement from that plexus is incomplete. Sexual things are still to the orthodox Christian, sacred things.

Now the God whom those of the new faith are finding is only mediately concerned with the relations of men and women. He is no more sexual essentially than he is essentially dietetic or hygienic. The God of Leviticus was all these things. He is represented as prescribing the most petty and intimate of observances — many of which are now habitually disregarded by the Christians who profess him. . . . It is part of the evolution of the idea of God that we have now so largely disentangled our conception of him from the dietary and regimen and meticulous sexual rules that were once inseparably bound up with his majesty. Christ himself was one of the chief forces in this disentanglement, there is the clearest evidence in several instances of his disregard of the rule and his insistence that his disciples should seek for the spirit underlying and often masked by the rule. His Church, being made of baser matter, has followed him as reluctantly as possible and no further than it was obliged. But it has followed him far enough to admit his principle that in all these matters there is no need for superstitious fear, that the interpretation of the divine purpose is left to the unembarrassed intelligence of men. The church has followed him far enough to make the harsh threatenings of priests and ecclesiastics against what they are pleased to consider impurity or sexual impiety, a profound inconsistency. One seems to hear their distant protests when one reads of Christ and the Magdalen, or of Christ eating with publicans and sinners. The clergy of our own days play the part of the New Testament Pharisees with the utmost exactness and complete unconsciousness. One cannot imagine a modern ecclesiastic conversing with a Magdalen in terms of ordinary civility, unless she was in a very high social position indeed, or blending with disreputable characters without a dramatic sense of condescension and much explanatory by-play. Those who profess modern religion do but follow in these matters a

course entirely compatible with what has survived of the authentic teachings of Christ, when they declare that God is not sexual, and that religious passion and insult and persecution upon the score of sexual things are a barbaric inheritance.

But lest anyone should fling off here with some hasty assumption that those who profess the religion of the true God are sexually anarchistic, let stress be laid at once upon the opening sentence of the preceding paragraph, and let me a little anticipate a section which follows. We would free men and women from exact and superstitious rules and observances, not to make them less the instruments of God but more wholly his. The claim of modern religion is that one should give oneself unreservedly to God, that there is no other salvation. The believer owes all his being and every moment of his life to God, to keep mind and body as clean, fine, wholesome, active and completely at God's service as he can. There is no scope for indulgence or dissipation in such a consecrated life. It is a matter between the individual and his conscience or his doctor or his social understanding what exactly he may do or not do, what he may eat or drink or so forth, upon any occasion. Nothing can exonerate him from doing his utmost to determine and perform the right act. Nothing can excuse his failure to do so. But what is here being insisted upon is that none of these things has immediately to do with God or religious emotion, except only the general will to do right in God's service. The detailed interpretation of that "right" is for the dispassionate consideration of the human intelligence.

All this is set down here as distinctly as possible. Because of the emotional reservoirs of sex, sexual dogmas are among the most obstinately recurrent of all heresies, and sexual excitement is always tending to leak back into religious feeling. Amongst the sex-tormented priesthood of the Roman communion in particular, ignorant of the extreme practices of the Essenes and of the Orphic cult and suchlike predecessors of Christianity, there seems to be an extraordinary belief that chastity was not invented until Christianity came, and that the religious life is largely the propitiation of God by feats of sexual abstinence. But a superstitious abstinence that scars and embitters the mind, distorts the imagination, makes the body gross and keeps it unclean, is just as offensive to God as any positive

depravity.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE LIKENESS OF GOD

1. GOD IS COURAGE

Now having set down what those who profess the new religion regard as the chief misconceptions of God, having put these systems of ideas aside from our explanations, the path is cleared for the statement of what God is. Since language springs entirely from material, spatial things, there is always an element of metaphor in theological statement. So that I have not called this chapter the Nature of God, but the Likeness of God.

And firstly, GOD IS COURAGE.

2. GOD IS A PERSON

And next GOD IS A PERSON.

Upon this point those who are beginning to profess modern religion are very insistent. It is, they declare, the central article, the axis, of their religion. God is a person who can be known as one knows a friend, who can be served and who receives service, who partakes of our nature; who is, like us, a being in conflict with the unknown and the limitless and the forces of death; who values much that we value and is against much that we are pitted against. He is our king to whom we must be loyal; he is our captain, and to know him is to have a direction in our lives. He feels us and knows us; he is helped and gladdened by us. He hopes and attempts. . . . God is no abstraction nor trick of words, no Infinite. He is as real as a bayonet thrust or an embrace.

Now this is where those who have left the old creeds and come asking about the new realisations find their chief difficulty. They say, Show us this person; let us hear him. (If they listen to the silences within, presently they will hear him.) But when one argues, one finds oneself suddenly in the net of those ancient controversies between species and individual, between the one and the many, which arise out of the necessarily imperfect methods of the human mind. Upon these matters there has been much pregnant writing during the last half century. Such ideas as this writer has to offer are to be found in a

previous little book of his, “First and Last Things,” in which, writing as one without authority or specialisation in logic and philosophy, as an ordinary man vividly interested, for others in a like case, he was at some pains to elucidate the imperfections of this instrument of ours, this mind, by which we must seek and explain and reach up to God. Suffice it here to say that theological discussion may very easily become like the vision of a man with cataract, a mere projection of inherent imperfections. If we do not use our phraseology with a certain courage, and take that of those who are trying to convey their ideas to us with a certain politeness and charity, there is no end possible to any discussion in so subtle and intimate a matter as theology but assertions, denials, and wranglings. And about this word “person” it is necessary to be as clear and explicit as possible, though perfect clearness, a definition of mathematical sharpness, is by the very nature of the case impossible.

Now when we speak of a person or an individual we think typically of a man, and we forget that he was once an embryo and will presently decay; we forget that he came of two people and may beget many, that he has forgotten much and will forget more, that he can be confused, divided against himself, delirious, drunken, drugged, or asleep. On the contrary we are, in our hasty way of thinking of him, apt to suppose him continuous, definite, acting consistently and never forgetting. But only abstract and theoretical persons are like that. We couple with him the idea of a body. Indeed, in the common use of the word “person” there is more thought of body than of mind. We speak of a lover possessing the person of his mistress. We speak of offences against the person as opposed to insults, libels, or offences against property. And the gods of primitive men and the earlier civilisations were quite of that quality of person. They were thought of as living in very splendid bodies and as acting consistently. If they were invisible in the ordinary world it was because they were aloof or because their “persons” were too splendid for weak human eyes. Moses was permitted a mitigated view of the person of the Hebrew God on Mount Horeb; and Semele, who insisted upon seeing Zeus in the glories that were sacred to Juno, was utterly consumed. The early Islamic conception of God, like the conception of most honest, simple Christians to-day, was clearly, in

spite of the theologians, of a very exalted anthropomorphic personality away somewhere in Heaven. The personal appearance of the Christian God is described in The Revelation, and however much that description may be explained away by commentators as symbolical, it is certainly taken by most straightforward believers as a statement of concrete reality. Now if we are going to insist upon this primary meaning of person and individual, then certainly God as he is now conceived is not a person and not an individual. The true God will never promenade an Eden or a Heaven, nor sit upon a throne.

But current Christianity, modern developments of Islam, much Indian theological thought — that, for instance, which has found such delicate and attractive expression in the devotional poetry of Rabindranath Tagore — has long since abandoned this anthropomorphic insistence upon a body. From the earliest ages man's mind has found little or no difficulty in the idea of something essential to the personality, a soul or a spirit or both, existing apart from the body and continuing after the destruction of the body, and being still a person and an individual. From this it is a small step to the thought of a person existing independently of any existing or pre-existing body. That is the idea of theological Christianity, as distinguished from the Christianity of simple faith. The Triune Persons — omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent — exist for all time, superior to and independent of matter. They are supremely disembodied. One became incarnate — as a wind eddy might take up a whirl of dust. . . . Those who profess modern religion conceive that this is an excessive abstraction of the idea of spirituality, a disembodiment of the idea of personality beyond the limits of the conceivable; nevertheless they accept the conception that a person, a spiritual individual, may be without an ordinary mortal body. . . . They declare that God is without any specific body, that he is immaterial, that he can affect the material universe — and that means that he can only reach our sight, our hearing, our touch — through the bodies of those who believe in him and serve him.

His nature is of the nature of thought and will. Not only has he, in his essence, nothing to do with matter, but nothing to do with space. He is not of matter nor of space. He comes into them. Since the

period when all the great theologies that prevail to-day were developed, there have been great changes in the ideas of men towards the dimensions of time and space. We owe to Kant the release from the rule of these ideas as essential ideas. Our modern psychology is alive to the possibility of Being that has no extension in space at all, even as our speculative geometry can entertain the possibility of dimensions — fourth, fifth, Nth dimensions — outside the three-dimensional universe of our experience. And God being non-spatial is not thereby banished to an infinite remoteness, but brought nearer to us; he is everywhere immediately at hand, even as a fourth dimension would be everywhere immediately at hand. He is a Being of the minds and in the minds of men. He is in immediate contact with all who apprehend him. . . .

But modern religion declares that though he does not exist in matter or space, he exists in time just as a current of thought may do; that he changes and becomes more even as a man's purpose gathers itself together; that somewhere in the dawning of mankind he had a beginning, an awakening, and that as mankind grows he grows. With our eyes he looks out upon the universe he invades; with our hands, he lays hands upon it. All our truth, all our intentions and achievements, he gathers to himself. He is the undying human memory, the increasing human will.

But this, you may object, is no more than saying that God is the collective mind and purpose of the human race. You may declare that this is no God, but merely the sum of mankind. But those who believe in the new ideas very steadfastly deny that. God is, they say, not an aggregate but a synthesis. He is not merely the best of all of us, but a Being in himself, composed of that but more than that, as a temple is more than a gathering of stones, or a regiment is more than an accumulation of men. They point out that a man is made up of a great multitude of cells, each equivalent to a unicellular organism. Not one of those cells is he, nor is he simply just the addition of all of them. He is more than all of them. You can take away these and these and these, and he still remains. And he can detach part of himself and treat it as if it were not himself, just as a man may beat his breast or, as Cranmer the martyr did, thrust his hand into the flames. A man is none the less himself because his hair is cut or his

appendix removed or his leg amputated.

And take another image. . . . Who bears affection for this or that spadeful of mud in my garden? Who cares a throb of the heart for all the tons of chalk in Kent or all the lumps of limestone in Yorkshire? But men love England, which is made up of such things.

And so we think of God as a synthetic reality, though he has neither body nor material parts. And so too we may obey him and listen to him, though we think but lightly of the men whose hands or voices he sometimes uses. And we may think of him as having moods and aspects — as a man has — and a consistency we call his character.

These are theorisings about God. These are statements to convey this modern idea of God. This, we say, is the nature of the person whose will and thoughts we serve. No one, however, who understands the religious life seeks conversion by argument. First one must feel the need of God, then one must form or receive an acceptable idea of God. That much is no more than turning one's face to the east to see the coming of the sun. One may still doubt if that direction is the east or whether the sun will rise. The real coming of God is not that. It is a change, an irradiation of the mind. Everything is there as it was before, only now it is aflame. Suddenly the light fills one's eyes, and one knows that God has risen and that doubt has fled for ever.

3. GOD IS YOUTH

The third thing to be told of the true God is that GOD IS YOUTH.

God, we hold, began and is always beginning. He looks forever into the future.

Most of the old religions derive from a patriarchal phase. God is in those systems the Ancient of Days. I know of no Christian attempt to represent or symbolise God the Father which is not a bearded, aged man. White hair, beard, bearing, wrinkles, a hundred such symptoms of senile decay are there. These marks of senility do not astonish our modern minds in the picture of God, only because tradition and usage have blinded our eyes to the absurdity of a time-worn immortal. Jove too and Wotan are figures far past the prime of their vigour. These are gods after the ancient habit of the human mind, that turned perpetually backward for causes and reasons and

saw all things to come as no more than the working out of Fate, —

> "Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woe."

But the God of this new age, we repeat, looks not to our past but our future, and if a figure may represent him it must be the figure of a beautiful youth, already brave and wise, but hardly come to his strength. He should stand lightly on his feet in the morning time, eager to go forward, as though he had but newly arisen to a day that was still but a promise; he should bear a sword, that clean, discriminating weapon, his eyes should be as bright as swords; his lips should fall apart with eagerness for the great adventure before him, and he should be in very fresh and golden harness, reflecting the rising sun. Death should still hang like mists and cloud banks and shadows in the valleys of the wide landscape about him. There should be dew upon the threads of gossamer and little leaves and blades of the turf at his feet. . . .

4. WHEN WE SAY GOD IS LOVE

One of the sayings about God that have grown at the same time most trite and most sacred, is that God is Love. This is a saying that deserves careful examination. Love is a word very loosely used; there are people who will say they love new potatoes; there are a multitude of loves of different colours and values. There is the love of a mother for her child, there is the love of brothers, there is the love of youth and maiden, and the love of husband and wife, there is illicit love and the love one bears one's home or one's country, there are dog-lovers and the loves of the Olympians, and love which is a passion of jealousy. Love is frequently a mere blend of appetite and preference; it may be almost pure greed; it may have scarcely any devotion nor be a whit self-forgetful nor generous. It is possible so to phrase things that the furtive craving of a man for another man's wife may be made out to be a light from God. Yet about all the better sorts of love, the sorts of love that people will call "true love," there is something of that same exaltation out of the narrow self that is the essential quality of the knowledge of God.

Only while the exaltation of the love passion comes and goes, the exaltation of religious passion comes to remain. Lovers are the

windows by which we may look out of the prison of self, but God is the open door by which we freely go. And God never dies, nor disappoints, nor betrays.

The love of a woman and a man has usually, and particularly in its earlier phases of excitement, far too much desire, far too much possessiveness and exclusiveness, far too much distrust or forced trust, and far too great a kindred with jealousy to be like the love of God. The former is a dramatic relationship that drifts to a climax, and then again seeks presently a climax, and that may be satiated or fatigued. But the latter is far more like the love of comrades, or like the love of a man and a woman who have loved and been through much trouble together, who have hurt one another and forgiven, and come to a complete and generous fellowship. There is a strange and beautiful love that men tell of that will spring up on battlefields between sorely wounded men, and often they are men who have fought together, so that they will do almost incredibly brave and tender things for one another, though but recently they have been trying to kill each other. There is often a pure exaltation of feeling between those who stand side by side manfully in any great stress. These are the forms of love that perhaps come nearest to what we mean when we speak of the love of God.

That is man's love of God, but there is also something else; there is the love God bears for man in the individual believer. Now this is not an indulgent, instinctive, and sacrificing love like the love of a woman for her baby. It is the love of the captain for his men; God must love his followers as a great captain loves his men, who are so foolish, so helpless in themselves, so confiding, and yet whose faith alone makes him possible. It is an austere love. The spirit of God will not hesitate to send us to torment and bodily death. . . .

And God waits for us, for all of us who have the quality to reach him. He has need of us as we of him. He desires us and desires to make himself known to us. When at last the individual breaks through the limiting darknesses to him, the irradiation of that moment, the smile and soul clasp, is in God as well as in man. He has won us from his enemy. We come staggering through into the golden light of his kingdom, to fight for his kingdom henceforth, until at last we are altogether taken up into his being.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE RELIGION OF ATHEISTS

1. THE SCIENTIFIC ATHEIST

It is a curious thing that while most organised religions seem to drape about and conceal and smother the statement of the true God, the honest Atheist, with his passionate impulse to strip the truth bare, is constantly and unwittingly reproducing the divine likeness. It will be interesting here to call a witness or so to the extreme instability of absolute negation.

Here, for example, is a deliverance from Professor Metchnikoff, who was a very typical antagonist of all religion. He died only the other day. He was a very great physiologist indeed; he was a man almost of the rank and quality of Pasteur or Charles Darwin. A decade or more ago he wrote a book called "The Nature of Man," in which he set out very plainly a number of illuminating facts about life. They are facts so illuminating that presently, in our discussion of sin, they will be referred to again. But it is not Professor Metchnikoff's intention to provide material for a religious discussion. He sets out his facts in order to overthrow theology as he conceives it. The remarkable thing about his book, the thing upon which I would now lay stress, is that he betrays no inkling of the fact that he has no longer the right to conceive theology as he conceives it. The development of his science has destroyed that right.

He does not realise how profoundly modern biology has affected our ideas of individuality and species, and how the import of theology is modified through these changes. When he comes from his own world of modern biology to religion and philosophy he goes back in time. He attacks religion as he understood it when first he fell out with it fifty years or more ago.

Let us state as compactly as possible the nature of these changes that biological science has wrought almost imperceptibly in the general scheme and method of our thinking.

The influence of biology upon thought in general consists essentially in diminishing the importance of the individual and

developing the realisation of the species, as if it were a kind of super-individual, a modifying and immortal super-individual, maintaining itself against the outer universe by the birth and death of its constituent individuals. Natural History, which began by putting individuals into species as if the latter were mere classificatory divisions, has come to see that the species has its adventures, its history and drama, far exceeding in interest and importance the individual adventure. "The Origin of Species" was for countless minds the discovery of a new romance in life.

The contrast of the individual life and this specific life may be stated plainly and compactly as follows. A little while ago we current individuals, we who are alive now, were each of us distributed between two parents, then between four grandparents, and so on backward, we are temporarily assembled, as it were, out of an ancestral diffusion; we stand our trial, and presently our individuality is dispersed and mixed again with other individualities in an uncertain multitude of descendants. But the species is not like this; it goes on steadily from newness to newness, remaining still a unity. The drama of the individual life is a mere episode, beneficial or abandoned, in this continuing adventure of the species. And Metchnikoff finds most of the trouble of life and the distresses of life in the fact that the species is still very painfully adjusting itself to the fluctuating conditions under which it lives. The conflict of life is a continual pursuit of adjustment, and the "ills of life," of the individual life that is, are due to its "disharmonies." Man, acutely aware of himself as an individual adventure and unawakened to himself as a species, finds life jangling and distressful, finds death frustration. He fails and falls as a person in what may be the success and triumph of his kind. He does not apprehend the struggle or the nature of victory, but only his own gravitation to death and personal extinction.

Now Professor Metchnikoff is anti-religious, and he is anti-religious because to him as to so many Europeans religion is confused with priest-craft and dogmas, is associated with disagreeable early impressions of irrational repression and misguidance. How completely he misconceives the quality of religion, how completely he sees it as an individual's affair, his own

words may witness:

"Religion is still occupied with the problem of death. The solutions which as yet it has offered cannot be regarded as satisfactory. A future life has no single argument to support it, and the non-existence of life after death is in consonance with the whole range of human knowledge. On the other hand, resignation as preached by Buddha will fail to satisfy humanity, which has a longing for life, and is overcome by the thought of the inevitability of death."

Now here it is clear that by death he means the individual death, and by a future life the prolongation of individuality. But Buddhism does not in truth appear ever to have been concerned with that, and modern religious developments are certainly not under that preoccupation with the narrower self. Buddhism indeed so far from "preaching resignation" to death, seeks as its greater good a death so complete as to be absolute release from the individual's burthen of KARMA. Buddhism seeks an ESCAPE FROM INDIVIDUAL IMMORTALITY. The deeper one pursues religious thought the more nearly it approximates to a search for escape from the self-centred life and over-individuation, and the more it diverges from Professor Metchnikoff's assertion of its aims. Salvation is indeed to lose one's self. But Professor Metchnikoff having roundly denied that this is so, is then left free to take the very essentials of the religious life as they are here conceived and present them as if they were the antithesis of the religious life. His book, when it is analysed, resolves itself into just that research for an escape from the painful accidents and chagrins of individuation, which is the ultimate of religion.

At times, indeed, he seems almost wilfully blind to the true solution round and about which his writing goes. He suggests as his most hopeful satisfaction for the cravings of the human heart, such a scientific prolongation of life that the instinct for self-preservation will be at last extinct. If that is not the very "resignation" he imputes to the Buddhist I do not know what it is. He believes that an individual which has lived fully and completely may at last welcome death with the same instinctive readiness as, in the days of its strength, it shows for the embraces of its mate. We are to be glutted

by living to six score and ten. We are to rise from the table at last as gladly as we sat down. We shall go to death as unresistingly as tired children go to bed. Men are to have a life far beyond the range of what is now considered their prime, and their last period (won by scientific self-control) will be a period of ripe wisdom (from seventy to eighty to a hundred and twenty or thereabouts) and public service!

(But why, one asks, public service? Why not book-collecting or the simple pleasure of reminiscence so dear to aged egotists? Metchnikoff never faces that question. And again, what of the man who is challenged to die for right at the age of thirty? What does the prolongation of life do for him? And where are the consolations for accidental misfortune, for the tormenting disease or the lost limb?)

But in his peroration Professor Metchnikoff lapses into pure religiosity. The prolongation of life gives place to sheer self-sacrifice as the fundamental "remedy." And indeed what other remedy has ever been conceived for the general evil of life?

"On the other hand," he writes, "the knowledge that the goal of human life can be attained only by the development of a high degree of solidarity amongst men will restrain actual egotism. The mere fact that the enjoyment of life according to the precepts of Solomon (Ecelesiastes ix. 7-10)* is opposed to the goal of human life, will lessen luxury and the evil that comes from luxury. Conviction that science alone is able to redress the disharmonies of the human constitution will lead directly to the improvement of education and to the solidarity of mankind.

> * Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

"In progress towards the goal, nature will have to be consulted continuously. Already, in the case of the ephemerids, nature has

produced a complete cycle of normal life ending in natural death. In the problem of his own fate, man must not be content with the gifts of nature; he must direct them by his own efforts. Just as he has been able to modify the nature of animals and plants, man must attempt to modify his own constitution, so as to readjust its disharmonies. . . .

"To modify the human constitution, it will be necessary first, to frame the ideal, and thereafter to set to work with all the resources of science.

"If there can be formed an ideal able to unite men in a kind of religion of the future, this ideal must be founded on scientific principles. And if it be true, as has been asserted so often, that man can live by faith alone, the faith must be in the power of science."

Now this, after all the flat repudiations that have preceded it of "religion" and "philosophy" as remedies for human ills, is nothing less than the fundamental proposition of the religious life translated into terms of materialistic science, the proposition that damnation is really over-individuation and that salvation is escape from self into the larger being of life. . . .

What can this "religion of the future" be but that devotion to the racial adventure under the captaincy of God which we have already found, like gold in the bottom of the vessel, when we have washed away the confusions and impurities of dogmatic religion? By an inquiry setting out from a purely religious starting-point we have already reached conclusions identical with this ultimate refuge of an extreme materialist.

This altar to the Future of his, we can claim as an altar to our God — an altar rather indistinctly inscribed.

2. SACRIFICE IMPLIES GOD

Almost all Agnostic and Atheistical writings that show any fineness and generosity of spirit, have this tendency to become as it were the statement of an anonymous God. Everything is said that a religious writer would say — except that God is not named. Religious metaphors abound. It is as if they accepted the living body of religion but denied the bones that held it together — as they might deny the bones of a friend. It is true, they would admit, the body moves in a way that implies bones in its every movement, but — WE HAVE NEVER SEEN THOSE BONES.

The disputes in theory — I do not say the difference in reality — between the modern believer and the atheist or agnostic — becomes at times almost as impalpable as that subtle discussion dear to students of physics, whether the scientific "ether" is real or a formula. Every material phenomenon is consonant with and helps to define this ether, which permeates and sustains and is all things, which nevertheless is perceptible to no sense, which is reached only by an intellectual process. Most minds are disposed to treat this ether as a reality. But the acutely critical mind insists that what is only so attainable by inference is not real; it is no more than "a formula that satisfies all phenomena."

But if it comes to that, am I anything more than the formula that satisfies all my forms of consciousness?

Intellectually there is hardly anything more than a certain will to believe, to divide the religious man who knows God to be utterly real, from the man who says that God is merely a formula to satisfy moral and spiritual phenomena. The former has encountered him, the other has as yet felt only unassigned impulses. One says God's will is so; the other that Right is so. One says God moves me to do this or that; the other the Good Will in me which I share with you and all well-disposed men, moves me to do this or that. But the former makes an exterior reference and escapes a risk of self-righteousness.

I have recently been reading a book by Mr. Joseph McCabe called "The Tyranny of Shams," in which he displays very typically this curious tendency to a sort of religion with God "blacked out." His is an extremely interesting case. He is a writer who was formerly a Roman Catholic priest, and in his reaction from Catholicism he displays a resolution even sterner than Professor Metchnikoff's, to deny that anything religious or divine can exist, that there can be any aim in life except happiness, or any guide but "science." But — and here immediately he turns east again — he is careful not to say "individual happiness." And he says "Pleasure is, as Epicureans insisted, only a part of a large ideal of happiness." So he lets the happiness of devotion and sacrifice creep in. So he opens indefinite possibilities of getting away from any merely materialistic rule of life. And he writes:

"In every civilised nation the mass of the people are inert and

indifferent. Some even make a pretence of justifying their inertness. Why, they ask, should we stir at all? Is there such a thing as a duty to improve the earth? What is the meaning or purpose of life? Or has it a purpose?

"One generally finds that this kind of reasoning is merely a piece of controversial athletics or a thin excuse for idleness. People tell you that the conflict of science and religion — it would be better to say, the conflict of modern culture and ancient traditions — has robbed life of its plain significance. The men who, like Tolstoi, seriously urge this point fail to appreciate the modern outlook on life. Certainly modern culture — science, history, philosophy, and art — finds no purpose in life: that is to say, no purpose eternally fixed and to be discovered by man. A great chemist said a few years ago that he could imagine 'a series of lucky accidents' — the chance blowing by the wind of certain chemicals into pools on the primitive earth — accounting for the first appearance of life; and one might not unjustly sum up the influences which have lifted those early germs to the level of conscious beings as a similar series of lucky accidents.

"But it is sheer affectation to say that this demoralises us. If there is no purpose impressed on the universe, or prefixed to the development of humanity, it follows only that humanity may choose its own purpose and set up its own goal; and the most elementary sense of order will teach us that this choice must be social, not merely individual. In whatever measure ill-controlled individuals may yield to personal impulses or attractions, the aim of the race must be a collective aim. I do not mean an austere demand of self-sacrifice from the individual, but an adjustment — as genial and generous as possible — of individual variations for common good. Otherwise life becomes discordant and futile, and the pain and waste react on each individual. So we raise again, in the twentieth century, the old question of 'the greatest good,' which men discussed in the Stoa Poikile and the suburban groves of Athens, in the cool atria of patrician mansions on the Palatine and the Pincian, in the Museum at Alexandria, and the schools which Omar Khayyam frequented, in the straw-strewn schools of the Middle Ages and the opulent chambers of Cosimo dei Medici."

And again:

“The old dream of a co-operative effort to improve life, to bring happiness to as many minds of mortals as we can reach, shines above all the mists of the day. Through the ruins of creeds and philosophies, which have for ages disdained it, we are retracing our steps toward that height — just as the Athenians did two thousand years ago. It rests on no metaphysic, no sacred legend, no disputable tradition — nothing that scepticism can corrode or advancing knowledge undermine. Its foundations are the fundamental and unchanging impulses of our nature.”

And again:

“The revolt which burns in so much of the abler literature of our time is an unselfish revolt, or non-selfish revolt: it is an outcome of that larger spirit which conceives the self to be a part of the general social organism, and it is therefore neither egoistic nor altruistic. It finds a sanction in the new intelligence, and an inspiration in the finer sentiments of our generation, but the glow which chiefly illumines it is the glow of the great vision of a happier earth. It speaks of the claims of truth and justice, and assails untruth and injustice, for these are elemental principles of social life; but it appeals more confidently to the warmer sympathy which is linking the scattered children of the race, and it urges all to co-operate in the restriction of suffering and the creation of happiness. The advance guard of the race, the men and women in whom mental alertness is associated with fine feeling, cry that they have reached Pisgah’s slope and in increasing numbers men and women are pressing on to see if it be really the Promised Land.”

“Pisgah — the Promised Land!” Mr. McCabe in that passage sounds as if he were half-way to “Oh! Beulah Land!” and the tambourine.

That “larger spirit,” we maintain, is God; those “impulses” are the power of God, and Mr. McCabe serves a Master he denies. He has but to realise fully that God is not necessarily the Triune God of the Catholic Church, and banish his intense suspicion that he may yet be lured back to that altar he abandoned, he has but to look up from that preoccupation, and immediately he will begin to realise the presence of Divinity.

3. GOD IS AN EXTERNAL REALITY

It may be argued that if atheists and agnostics when they set themselves to express the good will that is in them, do shape out God, that if their conception of right living falls in so completely with the conception of God's service as to be broadly identical, then indeed God, like the ether of scientific speculation, is no more than a theory, no more than an imaginative externalisation of man's inherent good will. Why trouble about God then? Is not the declaration of a good disposition a sufficient evidence of salvation? What is the difference between such benevolent unbelievers as Professor Metchnikoff or Mr. McCabe and those who have found God?

The difference is this, that the benevolent atheist stands alone upon his own good will, without a reference, without a standard, trusting to his own impulse to goodness, relying upon his own moral strength. A certain immodesty, a certain self-righteousness, hangs like a precipice above him; incalculable temptations open like gulfs beneath his feet. He has not really given himself or got away from himself. He has no one to whom he can give himself. He is still a masterless man. His exaltation is self-centred, is priggishness, his fall is unrestrained by any exterior obligation. His devotion is only the good will in himself, a disposition; it is a mood that may change. At any moment it may change. He may have pledged himself to his own pride and honour, but who will hold him to his bargain? He has no source of strength beyond his own amiable sentiments, his conscience speaks with an unsupported voice, and no one watches while he sleeps. He cannot pray; he can but ejaculate. He has no real and living link with other men of good will.

And those whose acquiescence in the idea of God is merely intellectual are in no better case than those who deny God altogether. They may have all the forms of truth and not divinity. The religion of the atheist with a God-shaped blank at its heart and the persuasion of the unconverted theologian, are both like lamps unlit. The lit lamp has no difference in form from the lamp unlit. But the lit lamp is alive and the lamp unlit is asleep or dead.

The difference between the unconverted and the unbeliever and the servant of the true God is this; it is that the latter has experienced a complete turning away from self. This only difference is all the

difference in the world. It is the realisation that this goodness that I thought was within me and of myself and upon which I rather prided myself, is without me and above myself, and infinitely greater and stronger than I. It is the immortal and I am mortal. It is invincible and steadfast in its purpose, and I am weak and insecure. It is no longer that I, out of my inherent and remarkable goodness, out of the excellence of my quality and the benevolence of my heart, give a considerable amount of time and attention to the happiness and welfare of others — because I choose to do so. On the contrary I have come under a divine imperative, I am obeying an irresistible call, I am a humble and willing servant of the righteousness of God. That altruism which Professor Metchnikoff and Mr. McCabe would have us regard as the goal and refuge of a broad and free intelligence, is really the first simple commandment in the religious life.

4. ANOTHER RELIGIOUS MATERIALIST

Now here is a passage from a book, "Evolution and the War," by Professor Metchnikoff's translator, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, which comes even closer to our conception of God as an immortal being arising out of man, and external to the individual man. He has been discussing that well-known passage of Kant's: "Two things fill my mind with ever-renewed wonder and awe the more often and deeper I dwell on them — the starry vault above me, and the moral law within me."

From that discussion, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell presently comes to this most definite and interesting statement:

"Writing as a hard-shell Darwinian evolutionist, a lover of the scalpel and microscope, and of patient, empirical observation, as one who dislikes all forms of supernaturalism, and who does not shrink from the implications even of the phrase that thought is a secretion of the brain as bile is a secretion of the liver, I assert as a biological fact that the moral law is as real and as external to man as the starry vault. It has no secure seat in any single man or in any single nation. It is the work of the blood and tears of long generations of men. It is not in man, inborn or innate, but is enshrined in his traditions, in his customs, in his literature and his religion. Its creation and sustenance are the crowning glory of man, and his consciousness of it puts him in a high place above the animal world. Men live and die; nations

rise and fall, but the struggle of individual lives and of individual nations must be measured not by their immediate needs, but as they tend to the debasement or perfection of man's great achievement."

This is the same reality. This is the same Link and Captain that this book asserts. It seems to me a secondary matter whether we call Him "Man's Great Achievement" or "The Son of Man" or the "God of Mankind" or "God." So far as the practical and moral ends of life are concerned, it does not matter how we explain or refuse to explain His presence in our lives.

There is but one possible gap left between the position of Dr. Chalmers Mitchell and the position of this book. In this book it is asserted that GOD RESPONDS, that he GIVES courage and the power of self-suppression to our weakness.

5. A NOTE ON A LECTURE BY PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY

Let me now quote and discuss a very beautiful passage from a lecture upon Stoicism by Professor Gilbert Murray, which also displays the same characteristic of an involuntary shaping out of God in the forms of denial. It is a passage remarkable for its conscientious and resolute Agnosticism. And it is remarkable too for its blindness to the possibility of separating quite completely the idea of the Infinite Being from the idea of God. It is another striking instance of that obsession of modern minds by merely Christian theology of which I have already complained. Professor Murray has quoted Mr. Bevan's phrase for God, "the Friend behind phenomena," and he does not seem to realise that that phrase carries with it no obligation whatever to believe that this Friend is in control of the phenomena. He assumes that he is supposed to be in control as if it were a matter of course:

"We do seem to find," Professor Murray writes, "not only in all religions, but in practically all philosophies, some belief that man is not quite alone in the universe, but is met in his endeavours towards the good by some external help or sympathy. We find it everywhere in the unsophisticated man. We find it in the unguarded self-revelations of the most severe and conscientious Atheists. Now, the Stoics, like many other schools of thought, drew an argument from this consensus of all mankind. It was not an absolute proof of the

existence of the Gods or Providence, but it was a strong indication. The existence of a common instinctive belief in the mind of man gives at least a presumption that there must be a good cause for that belief.

"This is a reasonable position. There must be some such cause. But it does not follow that the only valid cause is the truth of the content of the belief. I cannot help suspecting that this is precisely one of those points on which Stoicism, in company with almost all philosophy up to the present time, has gone astray through not sufficiently realising its dependence on the human mind as a natural biological product. For it is very important in this matter to realise that the so-called belief is not really an intellectual judgment so much as a craving of the whole nature.

"It is only of very late years that psychologists have begun to realise the enormous dominion of those forces in man of which he is normally unconscious. We cannot escape as easily as these brave men dreamed from the grip of the blind powers beneath the threshold. Indeed, as I see philosophy after philosophy falling into this unproven belief in the Friend behind phenomena, as I find that I myself cannot, except for a moment and by an effort, refrain from making the same assumption, it seems to me that perhaps here too we are under the spell of a very old ineradicable instinct. We are gregarious animals; our ancestors have been such for countless ages. We cannot help looking out on the world as gregarious animals do; we see it in terms of humanity and of fellowship. Students of animals under domestication have shown us how the habits of a gregarious creature, taken away from his kind, are shaped in a thousand details by reference to the lost pack which is no longer there — the pack which a dog tries to smell his way back to all the time he is out walking, the pack he calls to for help when danger threatens. It is a strange and touching thing, this eternal hunger of the gregarious animal for the herd of friends who are not there. And it may be, it may very possibly be, that, in the matter of this Friend behind phenomena our own yearning and our own almost ineradicable instinctive conviction, since they are certainly not founded on either reason or observation, are in origin the groping of a lonely-souled gregarious animal to find its herd or its herd-leader in the great

spaces between the stars.

"At any rate, it is a belief very difficult to get rid of."

There the passage and the lecture end.

I would urge that here again is an inadvertent witness to the reality of God.

Professor Murray writes of gregarious animals as though there existed solitary animals that are not gregarious, pure individualists, "atheists" so to speak, and as though this appeal to a life beyond one's own was not the universal disposition of living things. His classical training disposes him to a realistic exaggeration of individual difference. But nearly every animal, and certainly every mentally considerable animal, begins under parental care, in a nest or a litter, mates to breed, and is associated for much of its life. Even the great carnivores do not go alone except when they are old and have done with the most of life. Every pack, every herd, begins at some point in a couple, it is the equivalent of the tiger's litter if that were to remain undispersed. And it is within the memory of men still living that in many districts the African lion has with a change of game and conditions lapsed from a "solitary" to a gregarious, that is to say a prolonged family habit of life.

Man too, if in his ape-like phase he resembled the other higher apes, is an animal becoming more gregarious and not less. He has passed within the historical period from a tribal gregariousness to a nearly cosmopolitan tolerance. And he has his tribe about him. He is not, as Professor Murray seems to suggest, a solitary LOST gregarious beast. Why should his desire for God be regarded as the overflow of an unsatisfied gregarious instinct, when he has home, town, society, companionship, trade union, state, INCREASINGLY at hand to glut it? Why should gregariousness drive a man to God rather than to the third-class carriage and the public-house? Why should gregariousness drive men out of crowded Egyptian cities into the cells of the Thebaid? Schopenhauer in a memorable passage (about the hedgehogs who assembled for warmth) is flatly opposed to Professor Murray, and seems far more plausible when he declares that the nature of man is insufficiently gregarious. The parallel with the dog is not a valid one.

Does not the truth lie rather in the supposition that it is not the

Friend that is the instinctive delusion but the isolation? Is not the real deception, our belief that we are completely individualised, and is it not possible that this that Professor Murray calls "instinct" is really not a vestige but a new thing arising out of our increasing understanding, an intellectual penetration to that greater being of the species, that vine, of which we are the branches? Why should not the soul of the species, many faceted indeed, be nevertheless a soul like our own?

Here, as in the case of Professor Metchnikoff, and in many other cases of atheism, it seems to me that nothing but an inadequate understanding of individuation bars the way to at least the intellectual recognition of the true God.

6. RELIGION AS ETHICS

And while I am dealing with rationalists, let me note certain recent interesting utterances of Sir Harry Johnston's. You will note that while in this book we use the word "God" to indicate the God of the Heart, Sir Harry uses "God" for that idea of God-of-the-Universe, which we have spoken of as the Infinite Being. This use of the word "God" is of late theological origin; the original identity of the words "good" and "god" and all the stories of the gods are against him. But Sir Harry takes up God only to define him away into incomprehensible necessity. Thus:

"We know absolutely nothing concerning the Force we call God; and, assuming such an intelligent ruling force to be in existence, permeating this universe of millions of stars and (no doubt) tens of millions of planets, we do not know under what conditions and limitations It works. We are quite entitled to assume that the end of such an influence is intended to be order out of chaos, happiness and perfection out of incompleteness and misery; and we are entitled to identify the reactionary forces of brute Nature with the anthropomorphic Devil of primitive religions, the power of darkness resisting the power of light. But in these conjectures we must surely come to the conclusion that the theoretical potency we call 'God' makes endless experiments, and scrap-heaps the failures. Think of the Dinosaurs and the expenditure of creative energy that went to their differentiation and their well-nigh incredible physical development. . . .

"To such a Divine Force as we postulate, the whole development and perfecting of life on this planet, the whole production of man, may seem little more than to any one of us would be the chipping out, the cutting, the carving, and the polishing of a gem; and we should feel as little remorse or pity for the scattered dust and fragments as must the Creative Force of the immeasurably vast universe feel for the DISJECTA MEMBRA of perfected life on this planet. . . ."

But thence he goes on to a curiously imperfect treatment of the God of man as if he consisted in nothing more than some vague sort of humanitarianism. Sir Harry's ideas are much less thoroughly thought out than those of any other of these sceptical writers I have quoted. On that account they are perhaps more typical. He speaks as though Christ were simply an eminent but ill-reported and abominably served teacher of ethics — and yet of the only right ideal and ethics. He speaks as though religions were nothing more than ethical movements, and as though Christianity were merely someone remarking with a bright impulsiveness that everything was simply horrid, and so, "Let us instal loving kindness as a cardinal axiom." He ignores altogether the fundamental essential of religion, which is THE DEVELOPMENT AND SYNTHESIS OF THE DIVERGENT AND CONFLICTING MOTIVES OF THE UNCONVERTED LIFE, AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL LIFE WITH THE IMMORTAL PURPOSE OF GOD. He presents a conception of religion relieved of its "nonsense" as the cheerful self-determination of a number of bright little individuals (much stirred but by no means overcome by Cosmic Pity) to the Service of Man. As he seems to present it, it is as outward a thing, it goes as little into the intimacy of their lives, as though they had after proper consideration agreed to send a subscription to a Red Cross Ambulance or take part in a public demonstration against the Armenian Massacres, or do any other rather nice-spirited exterior thing. This is what he says:

"I hope that the religion of the future will devote itself wholly to the Service of Man. It can do so without departing from the Christian ideal and Christian ethics. It need only drop all that is silly and disputable, and 'mattering not neither here nor there,' of Christian

theology — a theology virtually absent from the direct teaching of Christ — and all of Judaistic literature or prescriptions not made immortal in their application by unassailable truth and by the confirmation of science. An excellent remedy for the nonsense which still clings about religion may be found in two books: Cotter Monson's 'Service of Man,' which was published as long ago as 1887, and has since been re-issued by the Rationalist Press Association in its well-known sixpenny series, and J. Allanson Picton's 'Man and the Bible.' Similarly, those who wish to acquire a sane view of the relations between man and God would do well to read Winwood Reade's 'Martyrdom of Man.'"

Sir Harry in fact clears the ground for God very ably, and then makes a well-meaning gesture in the vacant space. There is no help nor strength in his gesture unless God is there. Without God, the "Service of Man" is no better than a hobby or a sentimentality or an hypocrisy in the undisciplined prison of the mortal life.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

THE INVISIBLE KING

1. MODERN RELIGION A POLITICAL RELIGION

The conception of a young and energetic God, an Invisible Prince growing in strength and wisdom, who calls men and women to his service and who gives salvation from self and mortality only through self-abandonment to his service, necessarily involves a demand for a complete revision and fresh orientation of the life of the convert.

God faces the blackness of the Unknown and the blind joys and confusions and cruelties of Life, as one who leads mankind through a dark jungle to a great conquest. He brings mankind not rest but a sword. It is plain that he can admit no divided control of the world he claims. He concedes nothing to Caesar. In our philosophy there are no human things that are God's and others that are Caesar's. Those of the new thought cannot render unto God the things that are God's, and to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Whatever claim Caesar may make to rule men's lives and direct their destinies outside the will of God, is a usurpation. No king nor Caesar has any right to tax or to service or to tolerance, except he claim as one who holds for and under God. And he must make good his claim. The steps of the altar of the God of Youth are no safe place for the sacrilegious figure of a king. Who claims "divine right" plays with the lightning.

The new conceptions do not tolerate either kings or aristocracies or democracies. Its implicit command to all its adherents is to make plain the way to the world theocracy. Its rule of life is the discovery and service of the will of God, which dwells in the hearts of men, and the performance of that will, not only in the private life of the believer but in the acts and order of the state and nation of which he is a part. I give myself to God not only because I am so and so but because I am mankind. I become in a measure responsible for every evil in the world of men. I become a knight in God's service. I become my brother's keeper. I become a responsible minister of my King. I take sides against injustice, disorder, and against all those temporal kings, emperors, princes, landlords, and owners, who set

themselves up against God's rule and worship. Kings, owners, and all who claim rule and decisions in the world's affairs, must either show themselves clearly the fellow-servants of the believer or become the objects of his steadfast antagonism.

2. THE WILL OF GOD

It is here that those who explain this modern religiosity will seem most arbitrary to the inquirer. For they relate of God, as men will relate of a close friend, his dispositions, his apparent intentions, the aims of his kingship. And just as they advance no proof whatever of the existence of God but their realisation of him, so with regard to these qualities and dispositions they have little argument but profound conviction. What they say is this; that if you do not feel God then there is no persuading you of him; we cannot win over the incredulous. And what they say of his qualities is this; that if you feel God then you will know, you will realise more and more clearly, that thus and thus and no other is his method and intention.

It comes as no great shock to those who have grasped the full implications of the statement that God is Finite, to hear it asserted that the first purpose of God is the attainment of clear knowledge, of knowledge as a means to more knowledge, and of knowledge as a means to power. For that he must use human eyes and hands and brains.

And as God gathers power he uses it to an end that he is only beginning to apprehend, and that he will apprehend more fully as time goes on. But it is possible to define the broad outlines of the attainment he seeks. It is the conquest of death.

It is the conquest of death; first the overcoming of death in the individual by the incorporation of the motives of his life into an undying purpose, and then the defeat of that death that seems to threaten our species upon a cooling planet beneath a cooling sun. God fights against death in every form, against the great death of the race, against the petty death of indolence, insufficiency, baseness, misconception, and perversion. He it is and no other who can deliver us "from the body of this death." This is the battle that grows plainer; this is the purpose to which he calls us out of the animal's round of eating, drinking, lusting, quarrelling and laughing and weeping, fearing and failing, and presently of wearying and dying, which is the

whole life that living without God can give us. And from these great propositions there follow many very definite maxims and rules of life for those who serve God. These we will immediately consider.

3. THE CRUCIFIX

But first let me write a few words here about those who hold a kind of intermediate faith between the worship of the God of Youth and the vaguer sort of Christianity. There are a number of people closely in touch with those who have found the new religion who, biased probably by a dread of too complete a break with Christianity, have adopted a theogony which is very reminiscent of Gnosticism and of the Paulician, Catharist, and kindred sects to which allusion has already been made. He, who is called in this book God, they would call God-the-Son or Christ, or the Logos; and what is here called the Darkness or the Veiled Being, they would call God-the-Father. And what we speak of here as Life, they would call, with a certain disregard of the poor brutes that perish, Man. And they would assert, what we of the new belief, pleading our profound ignorance, would neither assert nor deny, that that Darkness, out of which came Life and God, since it produced them must be ultimately sympathetic and of like nature with them. And that ultimately Man, being redeemed and led by Christ and saved from death by him, would be reconciled with God the Father.* And this great adventurer out of the hearts of man that we here call God, they would present as the same with that teacher from Galilee who was crucified at Jerusalem.

> * This probably was the conception of Spinoza. Christ for him is the wisdom of God manifested in all things, and chiefly in the mind of man. Through him we reach the blessedness of an intuitive knowledge of God. Salvation is an escape from the "inadequate" ideas of the mortal human personality to the "adequate" and timeless ideas of God.

Now we of the modern way would offer the following criticisms upon this apparent compromise between our faith and the current religion. Firstly, we do not presume to theorise about the nature of the veiled being nor about that being's relations to God and to Life. We do not recognise any consistent sympathetic possibilities between these outer beings and our God. Our God is, we feel, like Prometheus, a rebel. He is unfilial. And the accepted figure of Jesus,

instinct with meek submission, is not in the tone of our worship. It is not by suffering that God conquers death, but by fighting. Incidentally our God dies a million deaths, but the thing that matters is not the deaths but the immortality. It may be he cannot escape in this person or that person being nailed to a cross or chained to be torn by vultures on a rock. These may be necessary sufferings, like hunger and thirst in a campaign; they do not in themselves bring victory. They may be necessary, but they are not glorious. The symbol of the crucifixion, the drooping, pain-drenched figure of Christ, the sorrowful cry to his Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" these things jar with our spirit. We little men may well fail and repent, but it is our faith that our God does not fail us nor himself. We cannot accept the Christian's crucifix, or pray to a pitiful God. We cannot accept the Resurrection as though it were an after-thought to a bitterly felt death. Our crucifix, if you must have a crucifix, would show God with a hand or a foot already torn away from its nail, and with eyes not downcast but resolute against the sky; a face without pain, pain lost and forgotten in the surpassing glory of the struggle and the inflexible will to live and prevail. . . .

But we do not care how long the thorns are drawn, nor how terrible the wounds, so long as he does not droop. God is courage. God is courage beyond any conceivable suffering.

But when all this has been said, it is well to add that it concerns the figure of Christ only in so far as that professes to be the figure of God, and the crucifix only so far as that stands for divine action. The figure of Christ crucified, so soon as we think of it as being no more than the tragic memorial of Jesus, of the man who proclaimed the loving-kindness of God and the supremacy of God's kingdom over the individual life, and who, in the extreme agony of his pain and exhaustion, cried out that he was deserted, becomes something altogether distinct from a theological symbol. Immediately that we cease to worship, we can begin to love and pity. Here was a being of extreme gentleness and delicacy and of great courage, of the utmost tolerance and the subtlest sympathy, a saint of non-resistance. . . .

We of the new faith repudiate the teaching of non-resistance. We are the militant followers of and participators in a militant God. We can appreciate and admire the greatness of Christ, this gentle being

upon whose nobility the theologians trade. But submission is the remotest quality of all from our God, and a moribund figure is the completest inversion of his likeness as we know him. A Christianity which shows, for its daily symbol, Christ risen and trampling victoriously upon a broken cross, would be far more in the spirit of our worship.*

> * It is curious, after writing the above, to find in a letter written by Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, to that pertinacious correspondent, the late Lady Victoria Welby, almost exactly the same sentiments I have here expressed. "If I could fill the Crucifix with life as you do," he says, "I would gladly look on it, but the fallen Head and the closed Eye exclude from my thought the idea of glorified humanity. The Christ to whom we are led is One who 'hath been crucified,' who hath passed the trial victoriously and borne the fruits to heaven. I dare not then rest on this side of the glory."

I find, too, a still more remarkable expression of the modern spirit in a tract, "The Call of the Kingdom," by that very able and subtle, Anglican theologian, the Rev. W. Temple, who declares that under the vitalising stresses of the war we are winning "faith in Christ as an heroic leader. We have thought of Him so much as meek and gentle that there is no ground in our picture of Him, for the vision which His disciple had of Him: 'His head and His hair were white, as white wool, white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire: and His feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and His voice was as the voice of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength.'"

These are both exceptional utterances, interesting as showing how clearly parallel are the tendencies within and without Christianity.

4. THE PRIMARY DUTIES

Now it follows very directly from the conception of God as a finite intelligence of boundless courage and limitless possibilities of growth and victory, who has pitted himself against death, who stands close to our inmost beings ready to receive us and use us, to rescue

us from the chagrins of egotism and take us into his immortal adventure, that we who have realised him and given ourselves joyfully to him, must needs be equally ready and willing to give our energies to the task we share with him, to do our utmost to increase knowledge, to increase order and clearness, to fight against indolence, waste, disorder, cruelty, vice, and every form of his and our enemy, death, first and chiefest in ourselves but also in all mankind, and to bring about the establishment of his real and visible kingdom throughout the world.

And that idea of God as the Invisible King of the whole world means not merely that God is to be made and declared the head of the world, but that the kingdom of God is to be present throughout the whole fabric of the world, that the Kingdom of God is to be in the teaching at the village school, in the planning of the railway siding of the market town, in the mixing of the mortar at the building of the workman's house. It means that ultimately no effigy of intrusive king or emperor is to disfigure our coins and stamps any more; God himself and no delegate is to be represented wherever men buy or sell, on our letters and our receipts, a perpetual witness, a perpetual reminder. There is no act altogether without significance, no power so humble that it may not be used for or against God, no life but can orient itself to him. To realise God in one's heart is to be filled with the desire to serve him, and the way of his service is neither to pull up one's life by the roots nor to continue it in all its essentials unchanged, but to turn it about, to turn everything that there is in it round into his way.

The outward duty of those who serve God must vary greatly with the abilities they possess and the positions in which they find themselves, but for all there are certain fundamental duties; a constant attempt to be utterly truthful with oneself, a constant sedulousness to keep oneself fit and bright for God's service, and to increase one's knowledge and powers, and a hidden persistent watchfulness of one's baser motives, a watch against fear and indolence, against vanity, against greed and lust, against envy, malice, and uncharitableness. To have found God truly does in itself make God's service one's essential motive, but these evils lurk in the shadows, in the lassitudes and unwary moments. No one escapes

them altogether, there is no need for tragic moods on account of imperfections. We can no more serve God without blunders and set-backs than we can win battles without losing men. But the less of such loss the better. The servant of God must keep his mind as wide and sound and his motives as clean as he can, just as an operating surgeon must keep his nerves and muscles as fit and his hands as clean as he can. Neither may righteously evade exercise and regular washing — of mind as of hands. An incessant watchfulness of one's self and one's thoughts and the soundness of one's thoughts; cleanliness, clearness, a wariness against indolence and prejudice, careful truth, habitual frankness, fitness and steadfast work; these are the daily fundamental duties that every one who truly comes to God will, as a matter of course, set before himself.

5. THE INCREASING KINGDOM

Now of the more intimate and personal life of the believer it will be more convenient to write a little later. Let us for the present pursue the idea of this world-kingdom of God, to whose establishment he calls us. This kingdom is to be a peaceful and co-ordinated activity of all mankind upon certain divine ends. These, we conceive, are first, the maintenance of the racial life; secondly, the exploration of the external being of nature as it is and as it has been, that is to say history and science; thirdly, that exploration of inherent human possibility which is art; fourthly, that clarification of thought and knowledge which is philosophy; and finally, the progressive enlargement and development of the racial life under these lights, so that God may work through a continually better body of humanity and through better and better equipped minds, that he and our race may increase for ever, working unendingly upon the development of the powers of life and the mastery of the blind forces of matter throughout the deeps of space. He sets out with us, we are persuaded, to conquer ourselves and our world and the stars. And beyond the stars our eyes can as yet see nothing, our imaginations reach and fail. Beyond the limits of our understanding is the veiled Being of Fate, whose face is hidden from us. . . .

It may be that minds will presently appear among us of such a quality that the face of that Unknown will not be altogether hidden. . . .

But the business of such ordinary lives as ours is the setting up of this earthly kingdom of God. That is the form into which our lives must fall and our consciences adapt themselves.

Belief in God as the Invisible King brings with it almost necessarily a conception of this coming kingdom of God on earth. Each believer as he grasps this natural and immediate consequence of the faith that has come into his life will form at the same time a Utopian conception of this world changed in the direction of God's purpose. The vision will follow the realisation of God's true nature and purpose as a necessary second step. And he will begin to develop the latent citizen of this world-state in himself. He will fall in with the idea of the world-wide sanities of this new order being drawn over the warring outlines of the present, and of men falling out of relationship with the old order and into relationship with the new. Many men and women are already working to-day at tasks that belong essentially to God's kingdom, tasks that would be of the same essential nature if the world were now a theocracy; for example, they are doing or sustaining scientific research or education or creative art; they are making roads to bring men together, they are doctors working for the world's health, they are building homes, they are constructing machinery to save and increase the powers of men. . . .

Such men and women need only to change their orientation as men will change about at a work-table when the light that was coming in a little while ago from the southern windows, begins presently to come in chiefly from the west, to become open and confessed servants of God. This work that they were doing for ambition, or the love of men or the love of knowledge or what seemed the inherent impulse to the work itself, or for money or honour or country or king, they will realise they are doing for God and by the power of God. Self-transformation into a citizen of God's kingdom and a new realisation of all earthly politics as no more than the struggle to define and achieve the kingdom of God in the earth, follow on, without any need for a fresh spiritual impulse, from the moment when God and the believer meet and clasp one another.

This transfiguration of the world into a theocracy may seem a merely fantastic idea to anyone who comes to it freshly without such general theological preparation as the preceding pages have made.

But to anyone who has been at the pains to clear his mind even a little from the obsession of existing but transitory things, it ceases to be a mere suggestion and becomes more and more manifestly the real future of mankind. From the phase of "so things should be," the mind will pass very rapidly to the realisation that "so things will be." Towards this the directive wills among men have been drifting more and more steadily and perceptibly and with fewer eddyings and retardations, for many centuries. The purpose of mankind will not be always thus confused and fragmentary. This dissemination of will-power is a phase. The age of the warring tribes and kingdoms and empires that began a hundred centuries or so ago, draws to its close. The kingdom of God on earth is not a metaphor, not a mere spiritual state, not a dream, not an uncertain project; it is the thing before us, it is the close and inevitable destiny of mankind.

In a few score years the faith of the true God will be spreading about the world. The few halting confessions of God that one hears here and there to-day, like that little twittering of birds which comes before the dawn, will have swollen to a choral unanimity. In but a few centuries the whole world will be openly, confessedly, preparing for the kingdom. In but a few centuries God will have led us out of the dark forest of these present wars and confusions into the open brotherhood of his rule.

6. WHAT IS MY PLACE IN THE KINGDOM?

This conception of the general life of mankind as a transformation at thousands of points of the confused, egotistical, proprietary, partisan, nationalist, life-wasting chaos of human life to-day into the coherent development of the world kingdom of God, provides the form into which everyone who comes to the knowledge of God will naturally seek to fit his every thought and activity. The material greeds, the avarice, fear, rivalries, and ignoble ambitions of a disordered world will be challenged and examined under one general question: "What am I in the kingdom of God?"

It has already been suggested that there is a great and growing number of occupations that belong already to God's kingdom, research, teaching, creative art, creative administration, cultivation, construction, maintenance, and the honest satisfaction of honest practical human needs. For such people conversion to the intimacy of

God means at most a change in the spirit of their work, a refreshed energy, a clearer understanding, a new zeal, a completer disregard of gains and praises and promotion. Pay, honours, and the like cease to be the inducement of effort. Service, and service alone, is the criterion that the quickened conscience will recognise.

Most of such people will find themselves in positions in which service is mingled with activities of a baser sort, in which service is a little warped and deflected by old traditions and usage, by mercenary and commercial considerations, by some inherent or special degradation of purpose. The spirit of God will not let the believer rest until his life is readjusted and as far as possible freed from the waste of these base diversions. For example a scientific investigator, lit and inspired by great inquiries, may be hampered by the conditions of his professorship or research fellowship, which exact an appearance of "practical" results. Or he may be obliged to lecture or conduct classes. He may be able to give but half his possible gift to the work of his real aptitude, and that at a sacrifice of money and reputation among short-sighted but influential contemporaries. Well, if he is by nature an investigator he will know that the research is what God needs of him. He cannot continue it at all if he leaves his position, and so he must needs waste something of his gift to save the rest. But should a poorer or a humbler post offer him better opportunity, there lies his work for God. There one has a very common and simple type of the problems that will arise in the lives of men when they are lit by sudden realisation of the immediacy of God.

Akin to that case is the perplexity of any successful physician between the increase of knowledge and the public welfare on the one hand, and the lucrative possibilities of his practice among wealthy people on the other. He belongs to a profession that is crippled by a mediaeval code, a profession which was blind to the common interest of the Public Health and regarded its members merely as skilled practitioners employed to "cure" individual ailments. Very slowly and tortuously do the methods of the profession adapt themselves to the modern conception of an army of devoted men working as a whole under God for the health of mankind as a whole, broadening out from the frowsy den of the "leech," with its crocodile

and bottles and hieroglyphic prescriptions, to a skilled and illuminating co-operation with those who deal with the food and housing and economic life of the community.

And again quite parallel with these personal problems is the trouble of the artist between the market and vulgar fame on the one hand and his divine impulse on the other.

The presence of God will be a continual light and help in every decision that must be made by men and women in these more or less vitiated, but still fundamentally useful and righteous, positions.

The trouble becomes more marked and more difficult in the case of a man who is a manufacturer or a trader, the financier of business enterprise or the proprietor of great estates. The world is in need of manufactures and that goods should be distributed; land must be administered and new economic possibilities developed. The drift of things is in the direction of state ownership and control, but in a great number of cases the state is not ripe for such undertakings, it commands neither sufficient integrity nor sufficient ability, and the proprietor of factory, store, credit or land, must continue in possession, holding as a trustee for God and, so far as lies in his power, preparing for his supersession by some more public administration. Modern religion admits of no facile flights from responsibility. It permits no headlong resort to the wilderness and sterile virtue. It counts the recluse who fasts among scorpions in a cave as no better than a deserter in hiding. It unhesitatingly forbids any rich young man to sell all that he has and give to the poor. Himself and all that he has must be alike dedicated to God.

The plain duty that will be understood by the proprietor of land and of every sort of general need and service, so soon as he becomes aware of God, is so to administer his possessions as to achieve the maximum of possible efficiency, the most generous output, and the least private profit. He may set aside a salary for his maintenance; the rest he must deal with like a zealous public official. And if he perceives that the affair could be better administered by other hands than his own, then it is his business to get it into those hands with the smallest delay and the least profit to himself. . . .

The rights and wrongs of human equity are very different from right and wrong in the sight of God. In the sight of God no landlord

has a RIGHT to his rent, no usurer has a RIGHT to his interest. A man is not justified in drawing the profits from an advantageous agreement nor free to spend the profits of a speculation as he will. God takes no heed of savings nor of abstinence. He recognises no right to the "rewards of abstinence," no right to any rewards. Those profits and comforts and consolations are the inducements that dangle before the eyes of the spiritually blind. Wealth is an embarrassment to the religious, for God calls them to account for it. The servant of God has no business with wealth or power except to use them immediately in the service of God. Finding these things in his hands he is bound to administer them in the service of God.

The tendency of modern religion goes far beyond the alleged communism of the early Christians, and far beyond the tithes of the scribes and Pharisees. God takes all. He takes you, blood and bones and house and acres, he takes skill and influence and expectations. For all the rest of your life you are nothing but God's agent. If you are not prepared for so complete a surrender, then you are infinitely remote from God. You must go your way. Here you are merely a curious interloper. Perhaps you have been desiring God as an experience, or coveting him as a possession. You have not begun to understand. This that we are discussing in this book is as yet nothing for you.

7. ADJUSTING LIFE

This picturing of a human world more to the mind of God than this present world and the discovery and realisation of one's own place and work in and for that kingdom of God, is the natural next phase in the development of the believer. He will set about revising and adjusting his scheme of life, his ways of living, his habits and his relationships in the light of his new convictions.

Most men and women who come to God will have already a certain righteousness in their lives; these things happen like a thunderclap only in strange exceptional cases, and the same movements of the mind that have brought them to God will already have brought their lives into a certain rightness of direction and conduct. Yet occasionally there will be someone to whom the self-examination that follows conversion will reveal an entirely wrong and evil way of living. It may be that the light has come to some rich

idler doing nothing but follow a pleasurable routine. Or to someone following some highly profitable and amusing, but socially useless or socially mischievous occupation. One may be an advocate at the disposal of any man's purpose, or an actor or actress ready to fall in with any theatrical enterprise. Or a woman may find herself a prostitute or a pet wife, a mere kept instrument of indulgence. These are lives of prey, these are lives of futility; the light of God will not tolerate such lives. Here religion can bring nothing but a severance from the old way of life altogether, a break and a struggle towards use and service and dignity.

But even here it does not follow that because a life has been wrong the new life that begins must be far as the poles asunder from the old. Every sort of experience that has ever come to a human being is in the self that he brings to God, and there is no reason why a knowledge of evil ways should not determine the path of duty. No one can better devise protections against vices than those who have practised them; none know temptations better than those who have fallen. If a man has followed an evil trade, it becomes him to use his knowledge of the tricks of that trade to help end it. He knows the charities it may claim and the remedies it needs. . . .

A very interesting case to discuss in relation to this question of adjustment is that of the barrister. A practising barrister under contemporary conditions does indeed give most typically the opportunity for examining the relation of an ordinary self-respecting worldly life, to life under the dispensation of God discovered. A barrister is usually a man of some energy and ambition, his honour is moulded by the traditions of an ancient and antiquated profession, instinctively self-preserving and yet with a real desire for consistency and respect. As a profession it has been greedy and defensively conservative, but it has never been shameless nor has it ever broken faith with its own large and selfish, but quite definite, propositions. It has never for instance had the shamelessness of such a traditionless and undisciplined class as the early factory organisers. It has never had the dull incoherent wickedness of the sort of men who exploit drunkenness and the turf. It offends within limits. Barristers can be, and are, disbarred. But it is now a profession extraordinarily out of date; its code of honour derives from a time of cruder and lower

conceptions of human relationship. It apprehends the State as a mere "ring" kept about private disputations; it has not begun to move towards the modern conception of the collective enterprise as the determining criterion of human conduct. It sees its business as a mere play upon the rules of a game between man and man, or between men and men. They haggle, they dispute, they inflict and suffer wrongs, they evade dues, and are liable or entitled to penalties and compensations. The primary business of the law is held to be decision in these wrangles, and as wrangling is subject to artistic elaboration, the business of the barrister is the business of a professional wrangler; he is a bravo in wig and gown who fights the duels of ordinary men because they are incapable, very largely on account of the complexities of legal procedure, of fighting for themselves. His business is never to explore any fundamental right in the matter. His business is to say all that can be said for his client, and to conceal or minimise whatever can be said against his client. The successful promoted advocate, who in Britain and the United States of America is the judge, and whose habits and interests all incline him to disregard the realities of the case in favour of the points in the forensic game, then adjudicates upon the contest. . . .

Now this condition of things is clearly incompatible with the modern conception of the world as becoming a divine kingdom. When the world is openly and confessedly the kingdom of God, the law court will exist only to adjust the differing views of men as to the manner of their service to God; the only right of action one man will have against another will be that he has been prevented or hampered or distressed by the other in serving God. The idea of the law court will have changed entirely from a place of dispute, exaction and vengeance, to a place of adjustment. The individual or some state organisation will plead ON BEHALF OF THE COMMON GOOD either against some state official or state regulation, or against the actions or inaction of another individual. This is the only sort of legal proceedings compatible with the broad beliefs of the new faith. . . . Every religion that becomes ascendant, in so far as it is not otherworldly, must necessarily set its stamp upon the methods and administration of the law. That this was not the case with Christianity is one of the many contributory aspects that lead one to the

conviction that it was not Christianity that took possession of the Roman empire, but an imperial adventurer who took possession of an all too complaisant Christianity.

Reverting now from these generalisations to the problem of the religious from which they arose, it will have become evident that the essential work of anyone who is conversant with the existing practice and literature of the law and whose natural abilities are forensic, will lie in the direction of reconstructing the theory and practice of the law in harmony with modern conceptions, of making that theory and practice clear and plain to ordinary men, of reforming the abuses of the profession by working for the separation of bar and judiciary, for the amalgamation of the solicitors and the barristers, and the like needed reforms. These are matters that will probably only be properly set right by a quickening of conscience among lawyers themselves. Of no class of men is the help and service so necessary to the practical establishment of God's kingdom, as of men learned and experienced in the law. And there is no reason why for the present an advocate should not continue to plead in the courts, provided he does his utmost only to handle cases in which he believes he can serve the right. Few righteous cases are ill-served by a frank disposition on the part of lawyer and client to put everything before the court. Thereby of course there arises a difficult case of conscience. What if a lawyer, believing his client to be in the right, discovers him to be in the wrong? He cannot throw up the case unless he has been scandalously deceived, because so he would betray the confidence his client has put in him to "see him through." He has a right to "give himself away," but not to "give away" his client in this fashion. If he has a chance of a private consultation I think he ought to do his best to make his client admit the truth of the case and give in, but failing this he has no right to be virtuous on behalf of another. No man may play God to another; he may remonstrate, but that is the limit of his right. He must respect a confidence, even if it is purely implicit and involuntary. I admit that here the barrister is in a cleft stick, and that he must see the business through according to the confidence his client has put in him — and afterwards be as sorry as he may be if an injustice ensues. And also I would suggest a lawyer may with a fairly good conscience defend a

guilty man as if he were innocent, to save him from unjustly heavy penalties. . . .

This comparatively full discussion of the barrister's problem has been embarked upon because it does bring in, in a very typical fashion, just those uncertainties and imperfections that abound in real life. Religious conviction gives us a general direction, but it stands aside from many of these entangled struggles in the jungle of conscience. Practice is often easier than a rule. In practice a lawyer will know far more accurately than a hypothetical case can indicate, how far he is bound to see his client through, and how far he may play the keeper of his client's conscience. And nearly every day there happens instances where the most subtle casuistry will fail and the finger of conscience point unhesitatingly. One may have worried long in the preparation and preliminaries of the issue, one may bring the case at last into the final court of conscience in an apparently hopeless tangle. Then suddenly comes decision.

The procedure of that silent, lit, and empty court in which a man states his case to God, is very simple and perfect. The excuses and the special pleading shrivel and vanish. In a little while the case lies bare and plain.

8. THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The question of oaths of allegiance, acts of acquiescence in existing governments, and the like, is one that arises at once with the acceptance of God as the supreme and real King of the Earth. At the worst Caesar is a usurper, a satrap claiming to be sovereign; at the best he is provisional. Modern casuistry makes no great trouble for the believing public official. The chief business of any believer is to do the work for which he is best fitted, and since all state affairs are to become the affairs of God's kingdom it is of primary importance that they should come into the hands of God's servants. It is scarcely less necessary to a believing man with administrative gifts that he should be in the public administration, than that he should breathe and eat. And whatever oath or the like to usurper church or usurper king has been set up to bar access to service, is an oath imposed under duress. If it cannot be avoided it must be taken rather than that a man should become unserviceable. All such oaths are unfair and foolish things. They exclude no scoundrels; they are appeals to

superstition. Whenever an opportunity occurs for the abolition of an oath, the servant of God will seize it, but where the oath is unavoidable he will take it.

The service of God is not to achieve a delicate consistency of statement; it is to do as much as one can of God's work.

9. THE PRIEST AND THE CREED

It may be doubted if this line of reasoning regarding the official and his oath can be extended to excuse the priest or pledged minister of religion who finds that faith in the true God has ousted his formal beliefs.

This has been a frequent and subtle moral problem in the intellectual life of the last hundred years. It has been increasingly difficult for any class of reading, talking, and discussing people such as are the bulk of the priesthoods of the Christian churches to escape hearing and reading the accumulated criticism of the Trinitarian theology and of the popularly accepted story of man's fall and salvation. Some have no doubt defeated this universal and insidious critical attack entirely, and honestly established themselves in a right-down acceptance of the articles and disciplines to which they have subscribed and of the creeds they profess and repeat. Some have recanted and abandoned their positions in the priesthood. But a great number have neither resisted the bacillus of criticism nor left the churches to which they are attached. They have adopted compromises, they have qualified their creeds with modifying footnotes of essential repudiation; they have decided that plain statements are metaphors and have undercut, transposed, and inverted the most vital points of the vulgarly accepted beliefs. One may find within the Anglican communion, Arians, Unitarians, Atheists, disbelievers in immortality, attenuators of miracles; there is scarcely a doubt or a cavil that has not found a lodgment within the ample charity of the English Establishment. I have been interested to hear one distinguished Canon deplore that "they" did not identify the Logos with the third instead of the second Person of the Trinity, and another distinguished Catholic apologist declare his indifference to the "historical Jesus." Within most of the Christian communions one may believe anything or nothing, provided only that one does not call too public an attention to one's eccentricity. The late Rev. Charles

Voysey, for example, preached plainly in his church at Healaugh against the divinity of Christ, unhindered. It was only when he published his sermons under the provocative title of "The Sling and the Stone," and caused an outcry beyond the limits of his congregation, that he was indicted and deprived.

Now the reasons why these men do not leave the ministry or priesthood in which they find themselves are often very plausible. It is probable that in very few cases is the retention of stipend or incumbency a conscious dishonesty. At the worst it is mitigated by thought for wife or child. It has only been during very exceptional phases of religious development and controversy that beliefs have been really sharp. A creed, like a coin, it may be argued, loses little in practical value because it is worn, or bears the image of a vanished king. The religious life is a reality that has clothed itself in many garments, and the concern of the priest or minister is with the religious life and not with the poor symbols that may indeed pretend to express, but do as a matter of fact no more than indicate, its direction. It is quite possible to maintain that the church and not the creed is the real and valuable instrument of religion, that the religious life is sustained not by its propositions but by its routines. Anyone who seeks the intimate discussion of spiritual things with professional divines, will find this is the substance of the case for the ecclesiastical sceptic. His church, he will admit, mumbles its statement of truth, but where else is truth? What better formulae are to be found for ineffable things? And meanwhile — he does good.

That may be a valid defence before a man finds God. But we who profess the worship and fellowship of the living God deny that religion is a matter of ineffable things. The way of God is plain and simple and easy to understand.

Therewith the whole position of the conforming sceptic is changed. If a professional religious has any justification at all for his professionalism it is surely that he proclaims the nearness and greatness of God. And these creeds and articles and orthodoxies are not proclamations but curtains, they are a darkening and confusion of what should be crystal clear. What compensatory good can a priest pretend to do when his primary business is the truth and his method a lie? The oaths and incidental conformities of men who wish to serve

God in the state are on a different footing altogether from the falsehood and mischief of one who knows the true God and yet recites to a trustful congregation, foists upon a trustful congregation, a misleading and ill-phrased Levantine creed.

Such is the line of thought which will impose the renunciation of his temporalities and a complete cessation of services upon every ordained priest and minister as his first act of faith. Once that he has truly realised God, it becomes impossible for him ever to repeat his creed again. His course seems plain and clear. It becomes him to stand up before the flock he has led in error, and to proclaim the being and nature of the one true God. He must be explicit to the utmost of his powers. Then he may await his expulsion. It may be doubted whether it is sufficient for him to go away silently, making false excuses or none at all for his retreat. He has to atone for the implicit acquiescences of his conforming years.

10. THE UNIVERSALISM OF GOD

Are any sorts of people shut off as if by inherent necessity from God?

This is, so to speak, one of the standing questions of theology; it reappears with slight changes of form at every period of religious interest, it is for example the chief issue between the Arminian and the Calvinist. From its very opening proposition modern religion sweeps past and far ahead of the old Arminian teachings of Wesleyans and Methodists, in its insistence upon the entirely finite nature of God. Arminians seem merely to have insisted that God has conditioned himself, and by his own free act left men free to accept or reject salvation. To the realist type of mind — here as always I use "realist" in its proper sense as the opposite of nominalist — to the old-fashioned, over-exact and over-accentuating type of mind, such ways of thinking seem vague and unsatisfying. Just as it distresses the more downright kind of intelligence with a feeling of disloyalty to admit that God is not Almighty, so it troubles the same sort of intelligence to hear that there is no clear line to be drawn between the saved and the lost. Realists like an exclusive flavour in their faith. Moreover, it is a natural weakness of humanity to be forced into extreme positions by argument. It is probable, as I have already suggested, that the absolute attributes of God were forced upon

Christianity under the stresses of propaganda, and it is probable that the theory of a super-human obstinancy beyond salvation arose out of the irritations natural to theological debate. It is but a step from the realisation that there are people absolutely unable or absolutely unwilling to see God as we see him, to the conviction that they are therefore shut off from God by an invincible soul blindness.

It is very easy to believe that other people are essentially damned.

Beyond the little world of our sympathies and comprehension there are those who seem inaccessible to God by any means within our experience. They are people answering to the "hard-hearted," to the "stiff-necked generation" of the Hebrew prophets. They betray and even confess to standards that seem hopelessly base to us. They show themselves incapable of any disinterested enthusiasm for beauty or truth or goodness. They are altogether remote from intelligent sacrifice. To every test they betray vileness of texture; they are mean, cold, wicked. There are people who seem to cheat with a private self-approval, who are ever ready to do harsh and cruel things, whose use for social feeling is the malignant boycott, and for prosperity, monopolisation and humiliating display; who seize upon religion and turn it into persecution, and upon beauty to torment it on the altars of some joyless vice. We cannot do with such souls; we have no use for them, and it is very easy indeed to step from that persuasion to the belief that God has no use for them.

And besides these base people there are the stupid people and the people with minds so poor in texture that they cannot even grasp the few broad and simple ideas that seem necessary to the salvation we experience, who lapse helplessly into fetishistic and fearful conceptions of God, and are apparently quite incapable of distinguishing between what is practically and what is spiritually good.

It is an easy thing to conclude that the only way to God is our way to God, that he is the privilege of a finer and better sort to which we of course belong; that he is no more the God of the card-sharper or the pickpocket or the "smart" woman or the loan-monger or the village oaf than he is of the swine in the sty. But are we justified in thus limiting God to the measure of our moral and intellectual understandings? Because some people seem to me steadfastly and

consistently base or hopelessly and incurably dull and confused, does it follow that there are not phases, albeit I have never chanced to see them, of exaltation in the one case and illumination in the other? And may I not be a little restricting my perception of Good? While I have been ready enough to pronounce this or that person as being, so far as I was concerned, thoroughly damnable or utterly dull, I find a curious reluctance to admit the general proposition which is necessary for these instances. It is possible that the difference between Arminian and Calvinist is a difference of essential intellectual temperament rather than of theoretical conviction. I am temperamentally Arminian as I am temperamentally Nominalist. I feel that it must be in the nature of God to attempt all souls. There must be accessibilities I can only suspect, and accessibilities of which I know nothing.

Yet here is a consideration pointing rather the other way. If you think, as you must think, that you yourself can be lost to God and damned, then I cannot see how you can avoid thinking that other people can be damned. But that is not to believe that there are people damned at the outset by their moral and intellectual insufficiency; that is not to make out that there is a class of essential and incurable spiritual defectives. The religious life preceded clear religious understanding and extends far beyond its range.

In my own case I perceive that in spite of the value I attach to true belief, the reality of religion is not an intellectual thing. The essential religious fact is in another than the mental sphere. I am passionately anxious to have the idea of God clear in my own mind, and to make my beliefs plain and clear to other people, and particularly to other people who may seem to be feeling with me; I do perceive that error is evil if only because a faith based on confused conceptions and partial understandings may suffer irreparable injury through the collapse of its substratum of ideas. I doubt if faith can be complete and enduring if it is not secured by the definite knowledge of the true God. Yet I have also to admit that I find the form of my own religious emotion paralleled by people with whom I have no intellectual sympathy and no agreement in phrase or formula at all.

There is for example this practical identity of religious feeling and this discrepancy of interpretation between such an inquirer as myself

and a convert of the Salvation Army. Here, clothing itself in phrases and images of barbaric sacrifice, of slaughtered lambs and fountains of precious blood, a most repulsive and incomprehensible idiom to me, and expressing itself by shouts, clangour, trumpeting, gesticulations, and rhythmic pacings that stun and dismay my nerves, I find, the same object sought, release from self, and the same end, the end of identification with the immortal, successfully if perhaps rather insecurely achieved. I see God indubitably present in these excitements, and I see personalities I could easily have misjudged as too base or too dense for spiritual understandings, lit by the manifest reflection of divinity. One may be led into the absurdest underestimates of religious possibilities if one estimates people only coldly and in the light of everyday life. There is a sub-intellectual religious life which, very conceivably, when its utmost range can be examined, excludes nothing human from religious cooperation, which will use any words to its tune, which takes its phrasing ready-made from the world about it, as it takes the street for its temple, and yet which may be at its inner point in the directest contact with God. Religion may suffer from aphasia and still be religion; it may utter misleading or nonsensical words and yet intend and convey the truth. The methods of the Salvation Army are older than doctrinal Christianity, and may long survive it. Men and women may still chant of Beulah Land and cry out in the ecstasy of salvation; the tambourine, that modern revival of the thrilling Alexandrine sistrum, may still stir dull nerves to a first apprehension of powers and a call beyond the immediate material compulsion of life, when the creeds of Christianity are as dead as the lore of the Druids.

The emancipation of mankind from obsolete theories and formularies may be accompanied by great tides of moral and emotional release among types and strata that by the standards of a trained and explicit intellectual, may seem spiritually hopeless. It is not necessary to imagine the whole world critical and lucid in order to imagine the whole world unified in religious sentiment, comprehending the same phrases and coming together regardless of class and race and quality, in the worship and service of the true God. The coming kingship of God if it is to be more than hieratic tyranny must have this universality of appeal. As the head grows clear the

body will turn in the right direction. To the mass of men modern religion says, “This is the God it has always been in your nature to apprehend.”

11. GOD AND THE LOVE AND STATUS OF WOMEN

Now that we are discussing the general question of individual conduct, it will be convenient to take up again and restate in that relationship, propositions already made very plainly in the second and third chapters. Here there are several excellent reasons for a certain amount of deliberate repetition. . . .

All the mystical relations of chastity, virginity, and the like with religion, those questions of physical status that play so large a part in most contemporary religions, have disappeared from modern faith. Let us be as clear as possible upon this. God is concerned by the health and fitness and vigour of his servants; we owe him our best and utmost; but he has no special concern and no special preferences or commandments regarding sexual things.

Christ, it is manifest, was of the modern faith in these matters, he welcomed the Magdalen, neither would he condemn the woman taken in adultery. Manifestly corruption and disease were not to stand between him and those who sought God in him. But the Christianity of the creeds, in this as in so many respects, does not rise to the level of its founder, and it is as necessary to repeat to-day as though the name of Christ had not been ascendant for nineteen centuries, that sex is a secondary thing to religion, and sexual status of no account in the presence of God. It follows quite logically that God does not discriminate between man and woman in any essential things. We leave our individuality behind us when we come into the presence of God. Sex is not disavowed but forgotten. Just as one’s last meal is forgotten — which also is a difference between the religious moment of modern faith and certain Christian sacraments. You are a believer and God is at hand to you; heed not your state; reach out to him and he is there. In the moment of religion you are human; it matters not what else you are, male or female, clean or unclean, Hebrew or Gentile, bond or free. It is AFTER the moment of religion that we become concerned about our state and the manner in which we use ourselves.

We have to follow our reason as our sole guide in our individual

treatment of all such things as food and health and sex. God is the king of the whole world, he is the owner of our souls and bodies and all things. He is not particularly concerned about any aspect, because he is concerned about every aspect. We have to make the best use of ourselves for his kingdom; that is our rule of life. That rule means neither painful nor frantic abstinences nor any forced way of living. Purity, cleanliness, health, none of these things are for themselves, they are for use; none are magic, all are means. The sword must be sharp and clean. That does not mean that we are perpetually to sharpen and clean it — which would weaken and waste the blade. The sword must neither be drawn constantly nor always rusting in its sheath. Those who have had the wits and soul to come to God, will have the wits and soul to find out and know what is waste, what is vanity, what is the happiness that begets strength of body and spirit, what is error, where vice begins, and to avoid and repent and recoil from all those things that degrade. These are matters not of the rule of life but of the application of life. They must neither be neglected nor made disproportionally important.

To the believer, relationship with God is the supreme relationship. It is difficult to imagine how the association of lovers and friends can be very fine and close and good unless the two who love are each also linked to God, so that through their moods and fluctuations and the changes of years they can be held steadfast by his undying steadfastness. But it has been felt by many deep-feeling people that there is so much kindred between the love and trust of husband and wife and the feeling we have for God, that it is reasonable to consider the former also as a sacred thing. They do so value that close love of mated man and woman, they are so intent upon its permanence and completeness and to lift the dear relationship out of the ruck of casual and transitory things, that they want to bring it, as it were, into the very presence and assent of God. There are many who dream and desire that they are as deeply and completely mated as this, many more who would fain be so, and some who are. And from this comes the earnest desire to make marriage sacramental and the attempt to impose upon all the world the outward appearance, the restrictions, the pretence at least of such a sacramental union.

There may be such a quasi-sacramental union in many cases, but

only after years can one be sure of it; it is not to be brought about by vows and promises but by an essential kindred and cleaving of body and spirit; and it concerns only the two who can dare to say they have it, and God. And the divine thing in marriage, the thing that is most like the love of God, is, even then, not the relationship of the man and woman as man and woman but the comradeship and trust and mutual help and pity that joins them. No doubt that from the mutual necessities of bodily love and the common adventure, the necessary honesties and helps of a joint life, there springs the stoutest, nearest, most enduring and best of human companionship; perhaps only upon that root can the best of mortal comradeship be got; but it does not follow that the mere ordinary coming together and pairing off of men and women is in itself divine or sacramental or anything of the sort. Being in love is a condition that may have its moments of sublime exaltation, but it is for the most part an experience far down the scale below divine experience; it is often love only in so far as it shares the name with better things; it is greed, it is admiration, it is desire, it is the itch for excitement, it is the instinct for competition, it is lust, it is curiosity, it is adventure, it is jealousy, it is hate. On a hundred scores 'lovers' meet and part. Thereby some few find true love and the spirit of God in themselves or others.

Lovers may love God in one another; I do not deny it. That is no reason why the imitation and outward form of this great happiness should be made an obligation upon all men and women who are attracted by one another, nor why it should be woven into the essentials of religion. For women much more than for men is this confusion dangerous, lest a personal love should shape and dominate their lives instead of God. "He for God only; she for God in him," phrases the idea of Milton and of ancient Islam; it is the formula of sexual infatuation, a formula quite easily inverted, as the end of Goethe's Faust ("The woman soul leadeth us upward and on") may witness. The whole drift of modern religious feeling is against this exaggeration of sexual feeling, these moods of sexual slavishness, in spiritual things. Between the healthy love of ordinary mortal lovers in love and the love of God, there is an essential contrast and opposition in this, that preference, exclusiveness, and jealousy seem

to be in the very nature of the former and are absolutely incompatible with the latter. The former is the intensest realisation of which our individualities are capable; the latter is the way of escape from the limitations of individuality. It may be true that a few men and more women do achieve the completest unselfishness and self-abandonment in earthly love. So the poets and romancers tell us. If so, it is that by an imaginative perversion they have given to some attractive person a worship that should be reserved for God and a devotion that is normally evoked only by little children in their mother's heart. It is not the way between most of the men and women one meets in this world.

But between God and the believer there is no other way, there is nothing else, but self-surrender and the ending of self.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

MODERN IDEAS OF SIN AND DAMNATION

1. THE BIOLOGICAL EQUIVALENT OF SIN

If the reader who is unfamiliar with scientific things will obtain and read Metchnikoff's "Nature of Man," he will find there an interesting summary of the biological facts that bear upon and destroy the delusion that there is such a thing as individual perfection, that there is even ideal perfection for humanity. With an abundance of convincing instances Professor Metchnikoff demonstrates that life is a system of "disharmonies," capable of no perfect way, that there is no "perfect" dieting, no "perfect" sexual life, no "perfect" happiness, no "perfect" conduct. He releases one from the arbitrary but all too easy assumption that there is even an ideal "perfection" in organic life. He sweeps out of the mind with all the confidence and conviction of a physiological specialist, any idea that there is a perfect man or a conceivable perfect man. It is in the nature of every man to fall short at every point from perfection. From the biological point of view we are as individuals a series of involuntary "tries" on the part of an imperfect species towards an unknown end.

Our spiritual nature follows our bodily as a glove follows a hand. We are disharmonious beings and salvation no more makes an end to the defects of our souls than it makes an end to the decay of our teeth or to those vestigial structures of our body that endanger our physical welfare. Salvation leaves us still disharmonious, and adds not an inch to our spiritual and moral stature.

2. WHAT IS DAMNATION?

Let us now take up the question of what is Sin? and what we mean by the term "damnation," in the light of this view of human reality. Most of the great world religions are as clear as Professor Metchnikoff that life in the world is a tangle of disharmonies, and in most cases they supply a more or less myth-like explanation, they declare that evil is one side of the conflict between Ahriman and Ormazd, or that it is the punishment of an act of disobedience, of the

fall of man and world alike from a state of harmony. Their case, like his, is that THIS world is damned.

We do not find the belief that superposed upon the miseries of this world there are the still bitterer miseries of punishments after death, so nearly universal. The endless punishments of hell appear to be an exploit of theory; they have a superadded appearance even in the Christian system; the same common tendency to superlatives and absolutes that makes men ashamed to admit that God is finite, makes them seek to enhance the merits of their Saviour by the device of everlasting fire. Conquest over the sorrow of life and the fear of death do not seem to them sufficient for Christ's glory.

Now the turning round of the modern mind from a conception of the universe as something derived deductively from the past to a conception of it as something gathering itself adventurously towards the future, involves a release from the supposed necessity to tell a story and explain why. Instead comes the inquiry, "To what end?" We can say without mental discomfort, these disharmonies are here, this damnation is here — inexplicably. We can, without any distressful inquiry into ultimate origins, bring our minds to the conception of a spontaneous and developing God arising out of those stresses in our hearts and in the universe, and arising to overcome them. Salvation for the individual is escape from the individual distress at disharmony and the individual defeat by death, into the Kingdom of God. And damnation can be nothing more and nothing less than the failure or inability or disinclination to make that escape.

Something of that idea of damnation as a lack of the will for salvation has crept at a number of points into contemporary religious thought. It was the fine fancy of Swedenborg that the damned go to their own hells of their own accord. It underlies a queer poem, "Simpson," by that interesting essayist upon modern Christianity, Mr. Clutton Brock, which I have recently read. Simpson dies and goes to hell — it is rather like the Cromwell Road — and approves of it very highly, and then and then only is he completely damned. Not to realise that one can be damned is certainly to be damned; such is Mr. Brock's idea. It is his definition of damnation. Satisfaction with existing things is damnation. It is surrender to limitation; it is acquiescence in "disharmony"; it is making peace with that enemy

against whom God fights for ever.

(But whether there are indeed Simpsons who acquiesce always and for ever remains for me, as I have already confessed in the previous chapter, a quite open question. My Arminian temperament turns me from the Calvinistic conclusion of Mr. Brock's satire.)

3. SIN IS NOT DAMNATION

Now the question of sin will hardly concern those damned and lost by nature, if such there be. Sin is not the same thing as damnation, as we have just defined damnation. Damnation is a state, but sin is an incident. One is an essential and the other an incidental separation from God. It is possible to sin without being damned; and to be damned is to be in a state when sin scarcely matters, like ink upon a blackamoor. You cannot have questions of more or less among absolute things.

It is the amazing and distressful discovery of every believer so soon as the first exaltation of belief is past, that one does not remain always in touch with God. At first it seems incredible that one should ever have any motive again that is not also God's motive. Then one finds oneself caught unawares by a base impulse. We discover that discontinuousness of our apparently homogeneous selves, the unincorporated and warring elements that seemed at first altogether absent from the synthesis of conversion. We are tripped up by forgetfulness, by distraction, by old habits, by tricks of appearance. There come dull patches of existence; those mysterious obliterations of one's finer sense that are due at times to the little minor poisons one eats or drinks, to phases of fatigue, ill-health and bodily disorder, or one is betrayed by some unanticipated storm of emotion, brewed deep in the animal being and released by any trifling accident, such as personal jealousy or lust, or one is relaxed by contentment into vanity. All these rebel forces of our ill-coordinated selves, all these "disharmonies," of the inner being, snatch us away from our devotion to God's service, carry us off to follies, offences, unkindness, waste, and leave us compromised, involved, and regretful, perplexed by a hundred difficulties we have put in our own way back to God.

This is the personal problem of Sin. Here prayer avails; here God can help us. From God comes the strength to repent and make such

reparation as we can, to begin the battle again further back and lower down. From God comes the power to anticipate the struggle with one's rebel self, and to resist and prevail over it.

4. THE SINS OF THE INSANE

An extreme case is very serviceable in such a discussion as this.

It happens that the author carries on a correspondence with several lunatics in asylums. There is a considerable freedom of notepaper in these institutions; the outgoing letters are no doubt censored or selected in some way, but a proportion at any rate are allowed to go out to their addresses. As a journalist who signs his articles and as the author of various books of fiction, as a frequent NAME, that is, to any one much forced back upon reading, the writer is particularly accessible to this type of correspondent. The letters come, some manifesting a hopeless disorder that permits of no reply, but some being the expression of minds overlaid not at all offensively by a web of fantasy, and some (and these are the more touching ones and the ones that most concern us now) as sanely conceived and expressed as any letters could be. They are written by people living lives very like the lives of us who are called "sane," except that they lift to a higher excitement and fall to a lower depression, and that these extremer phases of mania or melancholia slip the leash of mental consistency altogether and take abnormal forms. They tap deep founts of impulse, such as we of the safer ways of mediocrity do but glimpse under the influence of drugs, or in dreams and rare moments of controllable extravagance. Then the insane become "glorious," or they become murderous, or they become suicidal. All these letter-writers in confinement have convinced their fellow-creatures by some extravagance that they are a danger to themselves or others.

The letters that come from such types written during their sane intervals, are entirely sane. Some, who are probably unaware — I think they should know — of the offences or possibilities that justify their incarceration, write with a certain resentment at their position; others are entirely acquiescent, but one or two complain of the neglect of friends and relations. But all are as manifestly capable of religion and of the religious life as any other intelligent persons during the lucid interludes that make up nine-tenths perhaps of their

lives. . . . Suppose now one of these cases, and suppose that the infirmity takes the form of some cruel, disgusting, or destructive disposition that may become at times overwhelming, and you have our universal trouble with sinful tendency, as it were magnified for examination. It is clear that the mania which defines his position must be the primary if not the cardinal business in the life of a lunatic, but his problem with that is different not in kind but merely in degree from the problem of lusts, vanities, and weaknesses in what we call normal lives. It is an unconquered tract, a great rebel province in his being, which refuses to serve God and tries to prevent him serving God, and succeeds at times in wresting his capital out of his control. But his relationship to that is the same relationship as ours to the backward and insubordinate parishes, criminal slums, and disorderly houses in our own private texture.

It is clear that the believer who is a lunatic is, as it were, only the better part of himself. He serves God with this unconquered disposition in him, like a man who, whatever else he is and does, is obliged to be the keeper of an untrustworthy and wicked animal. His beast gets loose. His only resort is to warn those about him when he feels that jangling or excitement of the nerves which precedes its escapes, to limit its range, to place weapons beyond its reach. And there are plenty of human beings very much in his case, whose beasts have never got loose or have got caught back before their essential insanity was apparent. And there are those uncertifiable lunatics we call men and women of "impulse" and "strong passions." If perhaps they have more self-control than the really mad, yet it happens oftener with them that the whole intelligent being falls under the dominion of evil. The passion scarcely less than the obsession may darken the whole moral sky. Repentance and atonement; nothing less will avail them after the storm has passed, and the sedulous preparation of defences and palliatives against the return of the storm.

This discussion of the lunatic's case gives us indeed, usefully coarse and large, the lines for the treatment of every human weakness by the servants of God. A "weakness," just like the lunatic's mania, becomes a particular charge under God, a special duty for the person it affects. He has to minimise it, to isolate it, to

keep it out of mischief. If he can he must adopt preventive measures. . . .

These passions and weaknesses that get control of us hamper our usefulness to God, they are an incessant anxiety and distress to us, they wound our self-respect and make us incomprehensible to many who would trust us, they discredit the faith we profess. If they break through and break through again it is natural and proper that men and women should cease to believe in our faith, cease to work with us or to meet us frankly. . . . Our sins do everything evil to us and through us except separate us from God.

Yet let there be no mistake about one thing. Here prayer is a power. Here God can indeed work miracles. A man with the light of God in his heart can defeat vicious habits, rise again combative and undaunted after a hundred falls, escape from the grip of lusts and revenges, make head against despair, thrust back the very onset of madness. He is still the same man he was before he came to God, still with his libidinous, vindictive, boastful, or indolent vein; but now his will to prevail over those qualities can refer to an exterior standard and an external interest, he can draw upon a strength, almost boundless, beyond his own.

5. BELIEVE, AND YOU ARE SAVED

But be a sin great or small, it cannot damn a man once he has found God. You may kill and hang for it, you may rob or rape; the moment you truly repent and set yourself to such atonement and reparation as is possible there remains no barrier between you and God. Directly you cease to hide or deny or escape, and turn manfully towards the consequences and the setting of things right, you take hold again of the hand of God. Though you sin seventy times seven times, God will still forgive the poor rest of you. Nothing but utter blindness of the spirit can shut a man off from God.

There is nothing one can suffer, no situation so unfortunate, that it can shut off one who has the thought of God, from God. If you but lift up your head for a moment out of a stormy chaos of madness and cry to him, God is there, God will not fail you. A convicted criminal, frankly penitent, and neither obdurate nor abject, whatever the evil of his yesterdays, may still die well and bravely on the gallows to the glory of God. He may step straight from that death into the immortal

being of God.

This persuasion is the very essence of the religion of the true God. There is no sin, no state that, being regretted and repented of, can stand between God and man.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE IDEA OF A CHURCH

1. THE WORLD DAWN

As yet those who may be counted as belonging definitely to the new religion are few and scattered and unconfessed, their realisations are still uncertain and incomplete. But that is no augury for the continuance of this state of affairs even for the next few decades. There are many signs that the revival is coming very swiftly, it may be coming as swiftly as the morning comes after a tropical night. It may seem at present as though nothing very much were happening, except for the fact that the old familiar constellations of theology have become a little pallid and lost something of their multitude of points. But nothing fades of itself. The deep stillness of the late night is broken by a stirring, and the morning star of creedless faith, the last and brightest of the stars, the star that owes its light to the coming sun is in the sky.

There is a stirring and a movement. There is a stir, like the stir before a breeze. Men are beginning to speak of religion without the bluster of the Christian formulae; they have begun to speak of God without any reference to Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence. The Deists and Theists of an older generation, be it noted, never did that. Their "Supreme Being" repudiated nothing. He was merely the whittled stump of the Trinity. It is in the last few decades that the western mind has slipped loose from this absolutist conception of God that has dominated the intelligence of Christendom at least, for many centuries. Almost unconsciously the new thought is taking a course that will lead it far away from the moorings of Omnipotence. It is like a ship that has slipped its anchors and drifts, still sleeping, under the pale and vanishing stars, out to the open sea. . . .

2. CONVERGENT RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

In quite a little while the whole world may be alive with this renascent faith.

For emancipation from the Trinitarian formularies and from a belief in an infinite God means not merely a great revivification of

minds trained under the decadence of orthodox Christianity, minds which have hitherto been hopelessly embarrassed by the choice between pseudo-Christian religion or denial, but also it opens the way towards the completest understanding and sympathy and participation with the kindred movements for release and for an intensification of the religious life, that are going on outside the sphere of the Christian tradition and influence altogether. Allusion has already been made to the sympathetic devotional poetry of Rabindranath Tagore; he stands for a movement in Brahminism parallel with and assimilable to the worship of the true God of mankind.

It is too often supposed that the religious tendency of the East is entirely towards other-worldness, to a treatment of this life as an evil entanglement and of death as a release and a blessing. It is too easily assumed that Eastern teaching is wholly concerned with renunciation, not merely of self but of being, with the escape from all effort of any sort into an exalted vacuity. This is indeed neither the spirit of China nor of Islam nor of the every-day life of any people in the world. It is not the spirit of the Sikh nor of these newer developments of Hindu thought. It has never been the spirit of Japan. To-day less than ever does Asia seem disposed to give up life and the effort of life. Just as readily as Europeans, do the Asiatics reach out their arms to that fuller life we can live, that greater intensity of existence, to which we can attain by escaping from ourselves. All mankind is seeking God. There is not a nation nor a city in the globe where men are not being urged at this moment by the spirit of God in them towards the discovery of God. This is not an age of despair but an age of hope in Asia as in all the world besides.

Islam is undergoing a process of revision closely parallel to that which ransacks Christianity. Tradition and mediaeval doctrines are being thrust aside in a similar way. There is much probing into the spirit and intention of the Founder. The time is almost ripe for a heart-searching Dialogue of the Dead, "How we settled our religions for ever and ever," between, let us say, Eusebius of Caesarea and one of Nizam-al-Mulk's tame theologians. They would be drawn together by the same tribulations; they would be in the closest sympathy against the temerity of the moderns; they would have a common

courtliness. The Quran is but little read by Europeans; it is ignorantly supposed to contain many things that it does not contain; there is much confusion in people's minds between its text and the ancient Semitic traditions and usages retained by its followers; in places it may seem formless and barbaric; but what it has chiefly to tell of is the leadership of one individualised militant God who claims the rule of the whole world, who favours neither rank nor race, who would lead men to righteousness. It is much more free from sacramentalism, from vestiges of the ancient blood sacrifice, and its associated sacerdotalism, than Christianity. The religion that will presently sway mankind can be reached more easily from that starting-point than from the confused mysteries of Trinitarian theology. Islam was never saddled with a creed. With the very name "Islam" (submission to God) there is no quarrel for those who hold the new faith. . . .

All the world over there is this stirring in the dry bones of the old beliefs. There is scarcely a religion that has not its Bahaism, its Modernists, its Brahmo Somaj, its "religion without theology," its attempts to escape from old forms and hampering associations to that living and world-wide spiritual reality upon which the human mind almost instinctively insists. . . .

It is the same God we all seek; he becomes more and more plainly the same God.

So that all this religious stir, which seems so multifold and incidental and disconnected and confused and entirely ineffective to-day, may be and most probably will be, in quite a few years a great flood of religious unanimity pouring over and changing all human affairs, sweeping away the old priesthoods and tabernacles and symbols and shrines, the last crumb of the Orphic victim and the last rag of the Serapeum, and turning all men about into one direction, as the ships and houseboats swing round together in some great river with the uprush of the tide. . . .

3. CAN THERE BE A TRUE CHURCH?

Among those who are beginning to realise the differences and identities of the revived religion that has returned to them, certain questions of organisation and assembly are being discussed. Every new religious development is haunted by the precedents of the

religion it replaces, and it was only to be expected that among those who have recovered their faith there should be a search for apostles and disciples, an attempt to determine sources and to form original congregations, especially among people with European traditions.

These dispositions mark a relapse from understanding. They are imitative. This time there has been no revelation here or there; there is no claim to a revelation but simply that God has become visible. Men have thought and sought until insensibly the fog of obsolete theology has cleared away. There seems no need therefore for special teachers or a special propaganda, or any ritual or observances that will seem to insist upon differences. The Christian precedent of a church is particularly misleading. The church with its sacraments and its sacerdotalism is the disease of Christianity. Save for a few doubtful interpolations there is no evidence that Christ tolerated either blood sacrifices or the mysteries of priesthood. All these antique grossnesses were superadded after his martyrdom. He preached not a cult but a gospel; he sent out not medicine men but apostles.

No doubt all who believe owe an apostolic service to God. They become naturally apostolic. As men perceive and realise God, each will be disposed in his own fashion to call his neighbour's attention to what he sees. The necessary elements of religion could be written on a post card; this book, small as it is, bulks large not by what it tells positively but because it deals with misconceptions. We may (little doubt have I that we do) need special propagandas and organisations to discuss errors and keep back the jungle of false ideas, to maintain free speech and restrain the enterprise of the persecutor, but we do not want a church to keep our faith for us. We want our faith spread, but for that there is no need for orthodoxies and controlling organisations of statement. It is for each man to follow his own impulse, and to speak to his like in his own fashion.

Whatever religious congregations men may form henceforth in the name of the true God must be for their own sakes and not to take charge of religion.

The history of Christianity, with its encrustation and suffocation in dogmas and usages, its dire persecutions of the faithful by the unfaithful, its desiccation and its unlovely decay, its invasion by

robes and rites and all the tricks and vices of the Pharisees whom Christ detested and denounced, is full of warning against the dangers of a church. Organisation is an excellent thing for the material needs of men, for the draining of towns, the marshalling of traffic, the collecting of eggs, and the carrying of letters, the distribution of bread, the notification of measles, for hygiene and economics and suchlike affairs. The better we organise such things, the freer and better equipped we leave men's minds for nobler purposes, for those adventures and experiments towards God's purpose which are the reality of life. But all organisations must be watched, for whatever is organised can be "captured" and misused. Repentance, moreover, is the beginning and essential of the religious life, and organisations (acting through their secretaries and officials) never repent. God deals only with the individual for the individual's surrender. He takes no cognisance of committees.

Those who are most alive to the realities of living religion are most mistrustful of this congregating tendency. To gather together is to purchase a benefit at the price of a greater loss, to strengthen one's sense of brotherhood by excluding the majority of mankind. Before you know where you are you will have exchanged the spirit of God for ESPRIT DE CORPS. You will have reinvented the SYMBOL; you will have begun to keep anniversaries and establish sacramental ceremonies. The disposition to form cliques and exclude and conspire against unlike people is all too strong in humanity, to permit of its formal encouragement. Even such organisation as is implied by a creed is to be avoided, for all living faith coagulates as you phrase it. In this book I have not given so much as a definite name to the faith of the true God. Organisation for worship and collective exaltation also, it may be urged, is of little manifest good. You cannot appoint beforehand a time and place for God to irradiate your soul.

All these are very valid objections to the church-forming disposition.

4. ORGANISATIONS UNDER GOD

Yet still this leaves many dissatisfied. They want to shout out about God. They want to share this great thing with all mankind.

Why should they not shout and share?

Let them express all that they desire to express in their own fashion by themselves or grouped with their friends as they will. Let them shout chorally if they are so disposed. Let them work in a gang if so they can work the better. But let them guard themselves against the idea that they can have God particularly or exclusively with them in any such undertaking. Or that so they can express God rather than themselves.

That I think states the attitude of the modern spirit towards the idea of a church. Mankind passes for ever out of the idolatry of altars, away from the obscene rites of circumcision and symbolical cannibalism, beyond the sway of the ceremonial priest. But if the modern spirit holds that religion cannot be organised or any intermediary thrust between God and man, that does not preclude infinite possibilities of organisation and collective action UNDER God and within the compass of religion. There is no reason why religious men should not band themselves the better to attain specific ends. To borrow a term from British politics, there is no objection to AD HOC organisations. The objection lies not against subsidiary organisations for service but against organisations that may claim to be comprehensive.

For example there is no reason why one should not — and in many cases there are good reasons why one should — organise or join associations for the criticism of religious ideas, an employment that may pass very readily into propaganda.

Many people feel the need of prayer to resist the evil in themselves and to keep them in mind of divine emotion. And many want not merely prayer but formal prayer and the support of others, praying in unison. The writer does not understand this desire or need for collective prayer very well, but there are people who appear to do so and there is no reason why they should not assemble for that purpose. And there is no doubt that divine poetry, divine maxims, religious thought finely expressed, may be heard, rehearsed, collected, published, and distributed by associations. The desire for expression implies a sort of assembly, a hearer at least as well as a speaker. And expression has many forms. People with a strong artistic impulse will necessarily want to express themselves by art when religion touches them, and many arts, architecture and the

drama for example, are collective undertakings. I do not see why there should not be, under God, associations for building cathedrals and suchlike great still places urgent with beauty, into which men and women may go to rest from the clamour of the day's confusions; I do not see why men should not make great shrines and pictures expressing their sense of divine things, and why they should not combine in such enterprises rather than work to fill heterogeneous and chaotic art galleries. A wave of religious revival and religious clarification, such as I foresee, will most certainly bring with it a great revival of art, religious art, music, songs, and writings of all sorts, drama, the making of shrines, praying places, temples and retreats, the creation of pictures and sculptures. It is not necessary to have priestcraft and an organised church for such ends. Such enrichments of feeling and thought are part of the service of God.

And again, under God, there may be associations and fraternities for research in pure science; associations for the teaching and simplification of languages; associations for promoting and watching education; associations for the discussion of political problems and the determination of right policies. In all these ways men may multiply their use by union. Only when associations seek to control things of belief, to dictate formulae, restrict religious activities or the freedom of religious thought and teaching, when they tend to subdivide those who believe and to set up jealousies or exclusions, do they become antagonistic to the spirit of modern religion.

5. THE STATE IS GOD'S INSTRUMENT

Because religion cannot be organised, because God is everywhere and immediately accessible to every human being, it does not follow that religion cannot organise every other human affair. It is indeed essential to the idea that God is the Invisible King of this round world and all mankind, that we should see in every government, great and small, from the council of the world-state that is presently coming, down to the village assembly, the instrument of God's practical control. Religion which is free, speaking freely through whom it will, subject to a perpetual unlimited criticism, will be the life and driving power of the whole organised world. So that if you prefer not to say that there will be no church, if you choose rather to declare that the world-state is God's church, you may have it so if

you will. Provided that you leave conscience and speech and writing and teaching about divine things absolutely free, and that you try to set no nets about God.

The world is God's and he takes it. But he himself remains freedom, and we find our freedom in him.

THE ENVOY

So I end this compact statement of the renascent religion which I believe to be crystallising out of the intellectual, social, and spiritual confusions of this time. It is an account rendered. It is a statement and record; not a theory. There is nothing in all this that has been invented or constructed by the writer; I have been but scribe to the spirit of my generation; I have at most assembled and put together things and thoughts that I have come upon, have transferred the statements of "science" into religious terminology, rejected obsolescent definitions, and re-coordinated propositions that had drifted into opposition. Thus, I see, ideas are developing, and thus have I written them down. It is a secondary matter that I am convinced that this trend of intelligent opinion is a discovery of truth. The reader is told of my own belief merely to avoid an affectation of impartiality and aloofness.

The theogony here set forth is ancient; one can trace it appearing and disappearing and recurring in the mutilated records of many different schools of speculation; the conception of God as finite is one that has been discussed very illuminatingly in recent years in the work of one I am happy to write of as my friend and master, that very great American, the late William James. It was an idea that became increasingly important to him towards the end of his life. And it is the most releasing idea in the system.

Only in the most general terms can I trace the other origins of these present views. I do not think modern religion owes much to what is called Deism or Theism. The rather abstract and futile Deism of the eighteenth century, of "votre Etre supreme" who bored the friends of Robespierre, was a sterile thing, it has little relation to these modern developments, it conceived of God as an infinite Being of no particular character whereas God is a finite being of a very especial character. On the other hand men and women who have set themselves, with unavoidable theological preconceptions, it is true,

to speculate upon the actual teachings and quality of Christ, have produced interpretations that have interwoven insensibly with thoughts more apparently new. There is a curious modernity about very many of Christ's recorded sayings. Revived religion has also, no doubt, been the receiver of many religious bankruptcies, of Positivism for example, which failed through its bleak abstraction and an unspiritual texture. Religion, thus restated, must, I think, presently incorporate great sections of thought that are still attached to formal Christianity. The time is at hand when many of the organised Christian churches will be forced to define their positions, either in terms that will identify them with this renascence, or that will lead to the release of their more liberal adherents. Its probable obligations to Eastern thought are less readily estimated by a European writer.

Modern religion has no revelation and no founder; it is the privilege and possession of no coterie of disciples or exponents; it is appearing simultaneously round and about the world exactly as a crystallising substance appears here and there in a super-saturated solution. It is a process of truth, guided by the divinity in men. It needs no other guidance, and no protection. It needs nothing but freedom, free speech, and honest statement. Out of the most mixed and impure solutions a growing crystal is infallibly able to select its substance. The diamond arises bright, definite, and pure out of a dark matrix of structureless confusion.

This metaphor of crystallisation is perhaps the best symbol of the advent and growth of the new understanding. It has no church, no authorities, no teachers, no orthodoxy. It does not even thrust and struggle among the other things; simply it grows clear. There will be no putting an end to it. It arrives inevitably, and it will continue to separate itself out from confusing ideas. It becomes, as it were the Koh-i-noor; it is a Mountain of Light, growing and increasing. It is an all-pervading lucidity, a brightness and clearness. It has no head to smite, no body you can destroy; it overleaps all barriers; it breaks out in despite of every enclosure. It will compel all things to orient themselves to it.

It comes as the dawn comes, through whatever clouds and mists may be here or whatever smoke and curtains may be there. It comes

as the day comes to the ships that put to sea.
It is the Kingdom of God at hand.

THE END

WAR AND THE FUTURE

OR, ITALY, FRANCE AND BRITAIN AT WAR

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THE PASSING OF THE EFFIGY

1

One of the minor peculiarities of this unprecedented war is the Tour of the Front. After some months of suppressed information — in which even the war correspondent was discouraged to the point of elimination — it was discovered on both sides that this was a struggle in which Opinion was playing a larger and more important part than it had ever done before. This wild spreading weed was perhaps of decisive importance; the Germans at any rate were attempting to make it a cultivated flower. There was Opinion flowering away at home, feeding rankly on rumour; Opinion in neutral countries; Opinion getting into great tangles of misunderstanding and incorrect valuation between the Allies. The confidence and courage of the enemy; the amiability and assistance of the neutral; the zeal, sacrifice, and serenity of the home population; all were affected. The German cultivation of opinion began long before the war; it is still the most systematic and, because of the psychological ineptitude of the Germans, it is probably the clumsiest. The French *Maison de la Presse* is certainly the best organisation in existence for making things clear, counteracting hostile suggestion, the British official organisations are comparatively ineffective; but what is lacking officially is very largely made up for by the good will and generous efforts of the English and American press. An interesting monograph might be written upon these various attempts of the belligerents to get themselves and their proceedings explained.

Because there is perceptible in these developments, quite over and above the desire to influence opinion, a very real effort to get things explained. It is the most interesting and curious — one might almost write touching — feature of these organisations that they do not constitute a positive and defined propaganda such as the Germans maintain. The German propaganda is simple, because its ends are simple; assertions of the moral elevation and loveliness of Germany; of the insuperable excellences of German Kultur, the Kaiser, and

Crown Prince, and so forth; abuse of the "treacherous" English who allied themselves with the "degenerate" French and the "barbaric" Russians; nonsense about "the freedom of the seas" — the emptiest phrase in history — childish attempts to sow suspicion between the Allies, and still more childish attempts to induce neutrals and simple-minded pacifists of allied nationality to save the face of Germany by initiating peace negotiations. But apart from their steady record and reminder of German brutalities and German aggression, the press organisations of the Allies have none of this definiteness in their task. The aim of the national intelligence in each of the allied countries is not to exalt one's own nation and confuse and divide the enemy, but to get a real understanding with the peoples and spirits of a number of different nations, an understanding that will increase and become a fruitful and permanent understanding between the allied peoples. Neither the English, the Russians, the Italians, nor the French, to name only the bigger European allies, are concerned in setting up a legend, as the Germans are concerned in setting up a legend of themselves to impose upon mankind. They are reality dealers in this war, and the Germans are effigy mongers. Practically the Allies are saying each to one another, "Pray come to me and see for yourself that I am very much the human stuff that you are. Come and see that I am doing my best — and I think that is not so very bad a best...." And with that is something else still more subtle, something rather in the form of, "And please tell me what you think of me — and all this."

So we have this curious byplay of the war, and one day I find Mr. Nabokoff, the editor of the *Retch*, and Count Alexy Tolstoy, that writer of delicate short stories, and Mr. Chukovsky, the subtle critic, calling in upon me after braving the wintry seas to see the British fleet; M. Joseph Reinach follows them presently upon the same errand; and then appear photographs of Mr. Arnold Bennett wading in the trenches of Flanders, Mr. Noyes becomes discreetly indiscreet about what he has seen among the submarines, and Mr. Hugh Walpole catches things from Mr. Stephen Graham in the Dark Forest of Russia. All this is quite over and above such writing of facts at first hand as Mr. Patrick McGill and a dozen other real experiencing soldiers — not to mention the soldiers' letters Mr. James Milne has

collected, or the unforgettable and immortal *Prisoner of War* of Mr. Arthur Green — or such admirable war correspondents' work as Mr. Philip Gibbs or Mr. Washburne has done. Some of us writers — I can answer for one — have made our Tour of the Fronts with a very understandable diffidence. For my own part I did not want to go. I evaded a suggestion that I should go in 1915. I travel badly, I speak French and Italian with incredible atrocity, and am an extreme Pacifist. I hate soldiering. And also I did not want to write anything "under instruction". It is largely owing to a certain stiffness in the composition of General Delme-Radcliffe is resolved that Italy shall not feel neglected by the refusal of the invitation from the Comando Supremo by anyone who from the perspective of Italy may seem to be a representative of British opinion. If Herbert Spencer had been alive General Radcliffe would have certainly made him come, travelling-hammock, ear clips and all — and I am not above confessing that I wish that Herbert Spencer was alive — for this purpose. I found Udine warm and gay with memories of Mr. Belloc, Lord Northcliffe, Mr. Sidney Low, Colonel Repington and Dr. Conan Doyle, and anticipating the arrival of Mr. Harold Cox. So we pass, mostly in automobiles that bump tremendously over war roads, a cloud of witnesses each testifying after his manner. Whatever else has happened, we have all been photographed with invincible patience and resolution under the direction of Colonel Barberich in a sunny little court in Udine.

My own manner of testifying must be to tell what I have seen and what I have thought during this extraordinary experience. It has been my natural disposition to see this war as something purposeful and epic, as it is great, as an epoch, as "the War that will end War" — but of that last, more anon. I do not think I am alone in this inclination to a dramatic and logical interpretation. The caricatures in the French shops show civilisation (and particularly Marianne) in conflict with a huge and hugely wicked Hindenburg Ogre. Well, I come back from this tour with something not so simple as that. If I were to be tied down to one word for my impression of this war, I should say that this war is *Queer*. It is not like anything in a really waking world, but like something in a dream. It hasn't exactly that clearness of light against darkness or of good against ill. But it has the quality of

wholesome instinct struggling under a nightmare. The world is not really awake. This vague appeal for explanations to all sorts of people, this desire to exhibit the business, to get something in the way of elucidation at present missing, is extraordinarily suggestive of the efforts of the mind to wake up that will sometimes occur at a deep crisis. My memory of this tour I have just made is full of puzzled-looking men. I have seen thousands of *poilus* sitting about in cafes, by the roadside, in tents, in trenches, thoughtful. I have seen Alpini sitting restfully and staring with speculative eyes across the mountain gulfs towards unseen and unaccountable enemies. I have seen trainloads of wounded staring out of the ambulance train windows as we passed. I have seen these dim intimations of questioning reflection in the strangest juxtapositions; in Malagasy soldiers resting for a spell among the big shells they were hoisting into trucks for the front, in a couple of khaki-clad Maoris sitting upon the step of a horse-van in Amiens station. It is always the same expression one catches, rather weary, rather sullen, inturned. The shoulders droop. The very outline is a note of interrogation. They look up as the privileged tourist of the front, in the big automobile or the reserved compartment, with his officer or so in charge, passes — importantly. One meets a pair of eyes that seems to say: "Perhaps *you* understand....

"In which case — ...?"

It is a part, I think, of this disposition to investigate what makes everyone collect "specimens" of the war. Everywhere the souvenir forces itself upon the attention. The homecoming permissionaire brings with him invariably a considerable weight of broken objects, bits of shell, cartridge clips, helmets; it is a peripatetic museum. It is as if he hoped for a clue. It is almost impossible, I have found, to escape these pieces in evidence. I am the least collecting of men, but I have brought home Italian cartridges, Austrian cartridges, the fuse of an Austrian shell, a broken Italian bayonet, and a note that is worth half a franc within the confines of Amiens. But a large heavy piece of exploded shell that had been thrust very urgently upon my attention upon the Carso I contrived to lose during the temporary confusion of our party by the arrival and explosion of another prospective souvenir in our close proximity. And two really very

large and almost complete specimens of some species of *Ammonites* unknown to me, from the hills to the east of the Adige, partially wrapped in a back number of the *Corriere della Sera*, that were pressed upon me by a friendly officer, were unfortunately lost on the line between Verona and Milan through the gross negligence of a railway porter. But I doubt if they would have thrown any very conclusive light upon the war.

2

I avow myself an extreme Pacifist. I am against the man who first takes up the weapon. I carry my pacifism far beyond the ambiguous little group of British and foreign sentimentalists who pretend so amusingly to be socialists in the *Labour Leader*, whose conception of foreign policy is to give Germany now a peace that would be no more than a breathing time for a fresh outrage upon civilisation, and who would even make heroes of the crazy young assassins of the Dublin crime. I do not understand those people. I do not merely want to stop this war. I want to nail down war in its coffin. Modern war is an intolerable thing. It is not a thing to trifle with in this Urban District Council way, it is a thing to end forever. I have always hated it, so far that is as my imagination enabled me to realise it; and now that I have been seeing it, sometimes quite closely for a full month, I hate it more than ever. I never imagined a quarter of its waste, its boredom, its futility, its desolation. It is merely a destructive and dispersive instead of a constructive and accumulative industrialism. It is a gigantic, dusty, muddy, weedy, bloodstained silliness. It is the plain duty of every man to give his life and all that he has if by so doing he may help to end it. I hate Germany, which has thrust this experience upon mankind, as I hate some horrible infectious disease. The new war, the war on the modern level, is her invention and her crime. I perceive that on our side and in its broad outlines, this war is nothing more than a gigantic and heroic effort in sanitary engineering; an effort to remove German militarism from the life and regions it has invaded, and to bank it in and discredit and enfeeble it so that never more will it repeat its present preposterous and horrible efforts. All human affairs and all great affairs have their reservations

and their complications, but that is the broad outline of the business as it has impressed itself on my mind and as I find it conceived in the mind of the average man of the reading class among the allied peoples, and as I find it understood in the judgement of honest and intelligent neutral observers.

It is my unshakeable belief that essentially the Allies fight for a permanent world peace, that primarily they do not make war but resist war, that has reconciled me to this not very congenial experience of touring as a spectator all agog to see, through the war zones. At any rate there was never any risk of my playing Balaam and blessing the enemy. This war is tragedy and sacrifice for most of the world, for the Germans it is simply the catastrophic outcome of fifty years of elaborate intellectual foolery. Militarism, Welt Politik, and here we are! What else *could* have happened, with Michael and his infernal War Machine in the very centre of Europe, but this tremendous disaster?

It is a disaster. It may be a necessary disaster; it may teach a lesson that could be learnt in no other way; but for all that, I insist, it remains waste, disorder, disaster.

There is a disposition, I know, in myself as well as in others, to wriggle away from this verity, to find so much good in the collapse that has come to the mad direction of Europe for the past half-century as to make it on the whole almost a beneficial thing. But at most I can find it in no greater good than the good of a nightmare that awakens the sleeper in a dangerous place to a realisation of the extreme danger of his sleep. Better had he been awake — or never there. In Venetia Captain Pirelli, whose task it was to keep me out of mischief in the war zone, was insistent upon the way in which all Venetia was being opened up by the new military roads; there has been scarcely a new road made in Venetia since Napoleon drove his straight, poplar-bordered highways through the land. M. Joseph Reinach, who was my companion upon the French front, was equally impressed by the stirring up and exchange of ideas in the villages due to the movement of the war. Charles Lamb's story of the discovery of roast pork comes into one's head with an effect of repartee. More than ideas are exchanged in the war zone, and it is doubtful how far the sanitary precautions of the military authorities avails against a

considerable propaganda of disease. A more serious argument for the good of war is that it evokes heroic qualities that it has brought out almost incredible quantities of courage, devotion, and individual romance that did not show in the suffocating peace time that preceded the war. The reckless and beautiful zeal of the women in the British and French munition factories, for example, the gaiety and fearlessness of the common soldiers everywhere; these things have always been there — like champagne sleeping in bottles in a cellar. But was there any need to throw a bomb into the cellar?

I am reminded of a story, or rather of the idea for a story that I think I must have read in that curious collection of fantasies and observations, Hawthorne's *Note Book.* It was to be the story of a man who found life dull and his circumstances altogether mediocre. He had loved his wife, but now after all she seemed to be a very ordinary human being. He had begun life with high hopes — and life was commonplace. He was to grow fretful and restless. His discontent was to lead to some action, some irrevocable action; but upon the nature of that action I do not think the *Note Book* was very clear. It was to carry him in such a manner that he was to forget his wife. Then, when it was too late, he was to see her at an upper window, stripped and firelit, a glorious thing of light and loveliness and tragic intensity....

The elementary tales of the world are very few, and Hawthorne's story and Lamb's story are, after all, only variations upon the same theme. But can we poor human beings never realise our quality without destruction?

3

One of the larger singularities of the great war is its failure to produce great and imposing personalities, mighty leaders, Napoleons, Caesars. I would indeed make that the essential thing in my reckoning of the war. It is a drama without a hero; without countless incidental heroes no doubt, but no star part. Even the Germans, with a national predisposition for hero-cults and living still in an atmosphere of Victorian humbug, can produce nothing better than that timber image, Hindenburg.

It is not that the war has failed to produce heroes so much as that it has produced heroism in a torrent. The great man of this war is the common man. It becomes ridiculous to pick out particular names. There are too many true stories of splendid acts in the past two years ever to be properly set down. The V.C.'s and the palms do but indicate samples. One would need an encyclopaedia, a row of volumes, of the gloriousness of human impulses. The acts of the small men in this war dwarf all the pretensions of the Great Man. Imperatively these multitudinous heroes forbid the setting up of effigies. When I was a young man I imitated Swift and posed for cynicism; I will confess that now at fifty and greatly helped by this war, I have fallen in love with mankind.

But if I had to pick out a single figure to stand for the finest quality of the Allies' war, I should I think choose the figure of General Joffre. He is something new in history. He is leadership without vulgar ambition. He is the extreme antithesis to the Imperial boomster of Berlin. He is as it were the ordinary common sense of men, incarnate. He is the antithesis of the effigy.

By great good luck I was able to see him. I was delayed in Paris on my way to Italy, and my friend Captain Millet arranged for a visit to the French front at Soissons and put me in charge of Lieutenant de Tessin, whom I had met in England studying British social questions long before this war. Afterwards Lieutenant de Tessin took me to the great hotel — it still proclaims "*Restaurant*" in big black letters on the garden wall — which shelters the General Headquarters of France, and here I was able to see and talk to Generals Pelle and Castelnau as well as to General Joffre. They are three very remarkable and very different men. They have at least one thing in common; it is clear that not one of them has spent ten minutes in all his life in thinking of himself as a Personage or Great Man. They all have the effect of being active and able men doing an extremely complicated and difficult but extremely interesting job to the very best of their ability. With me they had all one quality in common. They thought I was interested in what they were doing, and they were quite prepared to treat me as an intelligent man of a different sort, and to show me as much as I could understand....

Let me confess that de Tessin had had to persuade me to go to

Headquarters. Partly that was because I didn't want to use up even ten minutes of the time of the French commanders, but much more was it because I have a dread of Personages.

There is something about these encounters with personages — as if one was dealing with an effigy, with something tremendous put up to be seen. As one approaches they become remoter; great unsuspected crevasses are discovered. Across these gulfs one makes ineffective gestures. They do not meet you, they pose at you enormously. Sometimes there is something more terrible than dignity; there is condescension. They are affable. I had but recently had an encounter with an imported Colonial statesman, who was being advertised like a soap as the coming saviour of England. I was curious to meet him. I wanted to talk to him about all sorts of things that would have been profoundly interesting, as for example his impressions of the Anglican bishops. But I met a hoarding. I met a thing like a mask, something surrounded by touts, that was dully trying — as we say in London — to "come it" over me. He said he had heard of me. He had read *Kipps.* I intimated that though I had written *Kipps* I had continued to exist — but he did not see the point of that. I said certain things to him about the difference in complexity between political life in Great Britain and the colonies, that he was manifestly totally capable of understanding. But one could as soon have talked with one of the statesmen at Madame Tussaud's. An antiquated figure.

The effect of these French commanders upon me was quite different from my encounter with that last belated adventurer in the effigy line. I felt indeed that I was a rather idle and flimsy person coming into the presence of a tremendously compact and busy person, but I had none of that unpleasant sensation of a conventional role, of being expected to play the minute worshipper in the presence of the Great Image. I was so moved by the common humanity of them all that in each case I broke away from the discreet interpretations of de Tessin and talked to them directly in the strange dialect which I have inadvertently made for myself out of French, a disemvowelled speech of epicene substantives and verbs of incalculable moods and temperaments, "*Entente Cordiale.*" The talked back as if we had met in a club. General Pelle pulled my leg

very gaily with some quotations from an article I had written upon the conclusion of the war. I think he found my accent and my idioms very refreshing. I had committed myself to a statement that Bloch has been justified in his theory that under modern conditions the defensive wins. There were excellent reasons, and General Pelle pointed them out, for doubting the applicability of this to the present war.

Both he and General Castelnau were anxious that I should see a French offensive sector as well as Soissons. Then I should understand. And since then I have returned from Italy and I have seen and I do understand. The Allied offensive was winning; that is to say, it was inflicting far greater losses than it experienced; it was steadily beating the spirit out of the German army and shoving it back towards Germany. Only peace can, I believe, prevent the western war ending in Germany. And it is the Frenchmen mainly who have worked out how to do it.

But of that I will write later. My present concern is with General Joffre as the antithesis of the Effigy. The effigy,

> "Thou Prince of Peace,
> Thou God of War,"

as Mr. Sylvester Viereck called him, prances on a great horse, wears a Wagnerian cloak, sits on thrones and talks of shining armour and "unser Gott." All Germany gloats over his Jovian domesticities; when I was last in Berlin the postcard shops were full of photographs of a sort of procession of himself and his sons, all with long straight noses and sidelong eyes. It is all dreadfully old-fashioned. General Joffre sits in a pleasant little sitting-room in a very ordinary little villa conveniently close to Headquarters. He sits among furniture that has no quality of pose at all, that is neither magnificent nor ostentatiously simple and hardy. He has dark, rather sleepy eyes under light eyelashes, eyes that glance shyly and a little askance at his interlocutor and then, as he talks, away — as if he did not want to be preoccupied by your attention. He has a broad, rather broadly modelled face, a soft voice, the sort of persuasive reasoning voice that many Scotchmen have. I had a feeling that if he were to talk English he would do so with a Scotch accent. Perhaps somewhere I have met a Scotchman of his type. He sat sideways to his table as a

man might sit for a gossip in a cafe.

He is physically a big man, and in my memory he grows bigger and bigger. He sits now in my memory in a room like the rooms that any decent people might occupy, like that vague room that is the background of so many good portraits, a great blue-coated figure with a soft voice and rather tired eyes, explaining very simply and clearly the difficulties that this vulgar imperialism of Germany, seizing upon modern science and modern appliances, has created for France and the spirit of mankind.

He talked chiefly of the strangeness of this confounded war. It was exactly like a sanitary engineer speaking of the unexpected difficulties of some particularly nasty inundation. He made little stiff horizontal gestures with his hands. First one had to build a dam and stop the rush of it, so; then one had to organise the push that would send it back. He explained the organisation of the push. They had got an organisation now that was working out most satisfactorily. Had I seen a sector? I had seen the sector of Soissons. Yes, but that was not now an offensive sector. I must see an offensive sector; see the whole method. Lieutenant de Tessin must see that that was arranged....

Neither he nor his two colleagues spoke of the Germans with either hostility or humanity. Germany for them is manifestly merely an objectionable Thing. It is not a nation, not a people, but a nuisance. One has to build up this great counter-thrust bigger and stronger until they go back. The war must end in Germany. The French generals have no such delusions about German science or foresight or capacity as dominates the smart dinner chatter of England. One knows so well that detestable type of English folly, and its voice of despair: “They *plan* everything. They foresee everything.” This paralysing Germanophobia is not common among the French. The war, the French generals said, might take — well, it certainly looked like taking longer than the winter. Next summer perhaps. Probably, if nothing unforeseen occurred, before a full year has passed the job might be done. Were any surprises in store? They didn’t seem to think it was probable that the Germans had any surprises in store.... The Germans are not an inventive people; they are merely a thorough people. One never knew for certain.

Is any greater contrast possible than between so implacable,

patient, reasonable — and above all things *capable* — a being as General Joffre and the rhetorician of Potsdam, with his talk of German Might, of Hammer Blows and Hacking Through? Can there be any doubt of the ultimate issue between them?

There are stories that sound pleasantly true to me about General Joffre's ambitions after the war. He is tired; then he will be very tired. He will, he declares, spend his first free summer in making a tour of the waterways of France in a barge. So I hope it may be. One imagines him as sitting quietly on the crumpled remains of the last and tawdriest of Imperial traditions, with a fishing line in the placid water and a large buff umbrella overhead, the good ordinary man who does whatever is given to him to do — as well as he can. The power that has taken the great effigy of German imperialism by the throat is something very composite and complex, but if we personify it at all it is something more like General Joffre than any other single human figure I can think of or imagine.

If I were to set a frontispiece to a book about this War I would make General Joffre the frontispiece.

4

As we swung back along the dusty road to Paris at a pace of fifty miles an hour and upwards, driven by a helmeted driver with an aquiline profile fit to go upon a coin, whose merits were a little flawed by a childish and dangerous ambition to run over every cat he saw upon the road, I talked to de Tessin about this big blue-coated figure of Joffre, which is not so much a figure as a great generalisation of certain hitherto rather obscured French qualities, and of the impression he had made upon me. And from that I went on to talk about the Super Man, for this encounter had suddenly crystallised out a set of realisations that had been for some time latent in my mind.

How much of what follows I said to de Tessin at the time I do not clearly remember, but this is what I had in mind.

The idea of the superman is an idea that has been developed by various people ignorant of biology and unaccustomed to biological ways of thinking. It is an obvious idea that follows in the course of

half an hour or so upon one's realisation of the significance of Darwinism. If man has evolved from something different, he must now be evolving onward into something sur-human. The species in the future will be different from the species of the past. So far at least our Nietzsches and Shaws and so on went right.

But being ignorant of the elementary biological proposition that modification of a species means really a secular change in its average, they jumped to a conclusion — to which the late Lord Salisbury also jumped years ago at a very memorable British Association meeting — that a species is modified by the sudden appearance of eccentric individuals here and there in the general mass who interbreed — preferentially. Helped by a streak of antic egotism in themselves, they conceived of the superman as a posturing personage, misunderstood by the vulgar, fantastic, wonderful. But the antic Personage, the thing I have called the Effigy, is not new but old, the oldest thing in history, the departing thing. It depends not upon the advance of the species but upon the uncritical hero-worship of the crowd. You may see the monster drawn twenty times the size of common men upon the oldest monuments of Egypt and Assyria. The true superman comes not as the tremendous personal entry of a star, but in the less dramatic form of a general increase of goodwill and skill and common sense. A species rises not by thrusting up peaks but by the brimming up as a flood does. The coming of the superman means not an epidemic of personages but the disappearance of the Personage in the universal ascent. That is the point overlooked by the megalomaniac school of Nietzsche and Shaw.

And it is the peculiarity of this war, it is the most reassuring evidence that a great increase in general ability and critical ability has been going on throughout the last century, that no isolated great personages have emerged. Never has there been so much ability, invention, inspiration, leadership; but the very abundance of good qualities has prevented our focusing upon those of any one individual. We all play our part in the realisation of God's sanity in the world, but, as the strange, dramatic end of Lord Kitchener has served to remind us, there is no single individual of all the allied nations whose death can materially affect the great destinies of this

war.

In the last few years I have developed a religious belief that has become now to me as real as any commonplace fact. I think that mankind is still as it were collectively dreaming and hardly more awakened to reality than a very young child. It has these dreams that we express by the flags of nationalities and by strange loyalties and by irrational creeds and ceremonies, and its dreams at times become such nightmares as this war. But the time draws near when mankind will awake and the dreams will fade away, and then there will be no nationality in all the world but humanity, and no kind, no emperor, nor leader but the one God of mankind. This is my faith. I am as certain of this as I was in 1900 that men would presently fly. To me it is as if it must be so.

So that to me this extraordinary refusal of the allied nations under conditions that have always hitherto produced a Great Man to produce anything of the sort, anything that can be used as an effigy and carried about for the crowd to follow, is a fact of extreme significance and encouragement. It seems to me that the twilight of the half gods must have come, that we have reached the end of the age when men needed a Personal Figure about which they could rally. The Kaiser is perhaps the last of that long series of crowned and cloaked and semi-divine personages which has included Caesar and Alexander and Napoleon the First — and Third. In the light of the new time we see the emperor-god for the guy he is. In the August of 1914 he set himself up to be the paramount Lord of the World, and it will seem to the historian to come, who will know our dates so well and our feelings, our fatigues and efforts so little, it will seem a short period from that day to this, when the great figure already sways and staggers towards the bonfire.

5

I had the experience of meeting a contemporary king upon this journey. He was the first king I had ever met. The Potsdam figure — with perhaps some local exceptions behind the Gold Coast — is, with its collection of uniforms and its pomps and splendours, the purest survival of the old tradition of divine monarchy now that the

Emperor at Pekin has followed the Shogun into the shadows. The modern type of king shows a disposition to intimate at the outset that he cannot help it, and to justify or at any rate utilise his exceptional position by sound hard work. It is an age of working kings, with the manners of private gentlemen. The King of Italy for example is far more accessible than was the late Pierpont Morgan or the late Cecil Rhodes, and he seems to keep a smaller court.

I went to see him from Udine. He occupied a moderate-sized country villa about half an hour by automobile from headquarters. I went over with General Radcliffe; we drove through the gates of the villa past a single sentinel in an ordinary infantry uniform, up to the door of the house, and the number of guards, servants, attendants, officials, secretaries, ministers and the like that I saw in that house were — I counted very carefully — four. Downstairs were three people, a tall soldier of the bodyguard in grey; an A.D.C., Captain Moreno, and Col. Matteoli, the minister of the household. I went upstairs to a drawing-room of much the same easy and generalised character as the one in which I had met General Joffre a few days before. I gave my hat to a second bodyguard, and as I did so a pleasantly smiling man appeared at the door of the study whom I thought at first must be some minister in attendance. I did not recognise him instantly because on the stamps and coins he is always in profile. He began to talk in excellent English about my journey, and I replied, and so talking we went into the study from which he had emerged. Then I realised I was talking to the king.

Addicted as I am to the cinematograph, in which the standard of study furniture is particularly rich and high, I found something very cooling and simple and refreshing in the sight of the king's study furniture. He sat down with me at a little useful writing table, and after asking me what I had seen in Italy and hearing what I had seen and what I was to see, he went on talking, very good talk indeed.

I suppose I did a little exceed the established tradition of courts by asking several questions and trying to get him to talk upon certain points as to which I was curious, but I perceived that he had had to carry on at least so much of the regal tradition as to control the conversation. He was, however, entirely un-posed. His talk reminded me somehow of Maurice Baring's books; it had just the same quick,

positive understanding. And he had just the same detachment from the war as the French generals. He spoke of it — as one might speak of an inundation. And of its difficulties and perplexities.

Here on the Adriatic side there were political entanglements that by comparison made our western after-the-war problems plain sailing. He talked of the game of spellicans among the Balkan nationalities. How was that difficulty to be met? In Macedonia there were Turkish villages that were Christian and Bulgarians that were Moslem. There were families that changed the termination of their names from *ski* to *off* as Serbian or Bulgarian prevailed. I remarked that that showed a certain passion for peace, and that much of the mischief might be due to the propaganda of the great Powers. I have a prejudice against that blessed Whig "principle of nationality," but the King of Italy was not to be drawn into any statement about that. He left the question with his admission of its extreme complexity.

He went on to talk of the strange contrasts of war, of such things as the indifference of the birds to gunfire and desolation. One day on the Carso he had been near the newly captured Austrian trenches, and suddenly from amidst a scattered mass of Austrian bodies a quail had risen that had struck him as odd, and so too had the sight of a pack of cards and a wine flask on some newly-made graves. The ordinary life was a very *obstinate* thing....

He talked of the courage of modern men. He was astonished at the quickness with which they came to disregard shrapnel. And they were so quietly enduring when they were wounded. He had seen a lot of the wounded, and he had expected much groaning and crying out. But unless a man is hit in the head and goes mad he does not groan or scream! They are just brave. If you ask them how they feel it is always one of two things: either they say quietly that they are very bad or else they say there is nothing the matter....

He spoke as if these were mere chance observations, but everyone tells me that nearly every day the king is at the front and often under fire. He has taken more risks in a week than the Potsdam War Lord has taken since the war began. He keeps himself acutely informed upon every aspect of the war. He was a little inclined to fatalism, he confessed. There were two stories current of two families of four sons, in each three had been killed and in each there was an attempt

to put the fourth in a place of comparative safety. In one case a general took the fourth son in as an attendant and embarked upon a ship that was immediately torpedoed; in the other the fourth son was killed by accident while he was helping to carry dinner in a rest camp. From those stories we came to the question whether the uneducated Italians were more superstitious than the uneducated English; the king thought they were much less so. That struck me as a novel idea. But then he thought that English rural people believe in witches and fairies.

I have given enough of this talk to show the quality of this king of the new dispensation. It was, you see, the sort of easy talk one might hear from fine-minded people anywhere. When we had done talking he came to the door of the study with me and shook hands and went back to his desk — with that gesture of return to work which is very familiar and sympathetic to a writer, and with no gesture of regality at all.

Just to complete this impression let me repeat a pleasant story about this king and our Prince of Wales, who recently visited the Italian front. The Prince is a source of anxiety on these visits; he has a very strong and very creditable desire to share the ordinary risks of war. He is keenly interested, and unobtrusively bent upon getting as near the fighting as line as possible. But the King of Italy was firm upon keeping him out of anything more than the most incidental danger. “We don’t want any historical incidents here,” he said. I think that might well become an historical phrase. For the life of the Effigy is a series of historical incidents.

6

Manifestly one might continue to multiply portraits of fine people working upon this great task of breaking and ending the German aggression, the German legend, the German effigy, and the effigy business generally; the thesis being that the Allies have no effigy. One might fill a thick volume with pictures of men up the scale and down working loyally and devotedly upon the war, to make this point clear that the essential king and the essential loyalty of our side is the commonsense of mankind.

There comes into my head as a picture at the other extreme of this series, a memory of certain trenches I visited on my last day in France. They were trenches on an offensive front; they were not those architectural triumphs, those homes from home, that grow to perfection upon the less active sections of the great line. They had been first made by men who had run rapidly forward with spade and rifle, stooping as they ran, who had dropped into the craters of big shells, who had organised these chiefly at night and dug the steep ditches sideways to join up into continuous trenches. Now they were pushing forward saps into No Man's Land, linking them across, and so continually creeping nearer to the enemy and a practicable jumping-off place for an attack. (It has been made since; the village at which I peeped was in our hands a week later.) These trenches were dug into a sort of yellowish sandy clay; the dug-outs were mere holes in the earth that fell in upon the clumsy; hardly any timber had been got up the line; a storm might flood them at any time a couple of feet deep and begin to wash the sides. Overnight they had been "strafed" and there had been a number of casualties; there were smashed rifles about and a smashed-up machine gun emplacement, and the men were dog-tired and many of them sleeping like logs, half buried in clay. Some slept on the firing steps. As one went along one became aware ever and again of two or three pairs of clay-yellow feet sticking out of a clay hole, and peering down one saw the shapes of men like rudely modelled earthen images of soldiers, motionless in the cave.

I came round the corner upon a youngster with an intelligent face and steady eyes sitting up on the firing step, awake and thinking. We looked at one another. There are moments when mind leaps to mind. It is natural for the man in the trenches suddenly confronted by so rare a beast as a middle-aged civilian with an enquiring expression, to feel oneself something of a spectacle and something generalised. It is natural for the civilian to look rather in the vein of saying, "Well, how do you take it?" As I pushed past him we nodded slightly with an effect of mutual understanding. And we said with our nods just exactly what General Joffre had said with his horizontal gestures of the hand and what the King of Italy conveyed by his friendly manner; we said to each other that here was the trouble those

Germans had brought upon us and here was the task that had to be done.

Our guide to these trenches was a short, stocky young man, a cob; with a rifle and a tight belt and projecting skirts and a helmet, a queer little figure that, had you seen it in a picture a year or so before the war, you would most certainly have pronounced Chinese. He belonged to a Northumbrian battalion; it does not matter exactly which. As we returned from this front line, trudging along the winding path through the barbed wire tangles before the smashed and captured German trench that had been taken a fortnight before, I fell behind my guardian captain and had a brief conversation wit this individual. He was a lad in the early twenties, weather-bit and with bloodshot eyes. He was, he told me, a miner. I asked my stock question in such cases, whether he would go back to the old work after the war. He said he would, and then added — with the events of overnight on his mind: "If A'hm looky."

Followed a little silence. Then I tried my second stock remark for such cases. One does not talk to soldiers at the front in this war of Glory or the "Empire on which the sun never sets" or "the meteor flag of England" or of King and Country or any of those fine old headline things. On the desolate path that winds about amidst the shell craters and the fragments and the red-rusted wire, with the silken shiver of passing shells in the air and the blue of the lower sky continually breaking out into eddying white puffs, it is wonderful how tawdry such panoplies of the effigy appear. We knew that we and our allies are upon a greater, graver, more fundamental business than that sort of thing now. We are very near the waking point.

"Well," I said, "it's got to be done."

"Aye," he said, easing the strap of his rifle a little; "it's got to be done."

THE WAR IN ITALY (AUGUST, 1916)

I. THE ISONZO FRONT

1

My first impressions of the Italian war centre upon Udine. So far I had had only a visit to Soissons on an exceptionally quiet day and the sound of a Zeppelin one night in Essex for all my experience of actual warfare. But my bedroom at the British mission in Udine roused perhaps extravagant expectations. There were holes in the plaster ceiling and wall, betraying splintered laths, holes, that had been caused by a bomb that had burst and killed several people in the little square outside. Such excitements seem to be things of the past now in Udine. Udine keeps itself dark nowadays, and the Austrian sea-planes, which come raiding the Italian coast country at night very much in the same aimless, casually malignant way in which the Zeppelins raid England, apparently because there is nothing else for them to do, find it easier to locate Venice.

My earlier rides in Venetia began always with the level roads of the plain, roads frequently edged by watercourses, with plentiful willows beside the road, vines and fields of Indian corn and suchlike lush crops. Always quite soon one came to some old Austrian boundary posts; almost everywhere the Italians are fighting upon what is technically enemy territory, but nowhere does it seem a whit less Italian than the plain of Lombardy. When at last I motored away from Udine to the northern mountain front I passed through Campo-Formio and saw the white-faced inn at which Napoleon dismembered the ancient republic of Venice and bartered away this essential part of Italy into foreign control. It just gravitates back now — as though there had been no Napoleon.

And upon the roads and beside them was the enormous equipment of a modern army advancing. Everywhere I saw new roads being made, railways pushed up, vast store dumps, hospitals; everywhere the villages swarmed with grey soldiers; everywhere our automobile was threading its way and taking astonishing risks among interminable processions of motor lorries, strings of ambulances or of mule carts, waggons with timber, waggons with wire, waggons

with men's gear, waggons with casks, waggons discreetly veiled, columns of infantry, cavalry, batteries *en route.* Every waggon that goes up full comes back empty, and many wounded were coming down and prisoners and troops returning to rest. Goritzia had been taken a week or so before my arrival; the Isonzo had been crossed and the Austrians driven back across the Carso for several miles; all the resources of Italy seemed to be crowding up to make good these gains and gather strength for the next thrust. The roads under all this traffic remained wonderful; gangs of men were everywhere repairing the first onset of wear, and Italy is the most fortunate land in the world for road metal; her mountains are solid road metal, and in this Venetian plain you need but to scrape through a yard of soil to find gravel.

One travelled through a choking dust under the blue sky, and above the steady incessant dusty succession of lorry, lorry, lorry, lorry that passed one by, one saw, looking up, the tree tops, house roofs, or the solid Venetian campanile of this or that wayside village. Once as we were coming out of the great grey portals of that beautiful old relic of a former school of fortification, Palmanova, the traffic became suddenly bright yellow, and for a kilometre or so we were passing nothing but Sicilian mule carts loaded with hay. These carts seem as strange among the grey shapes of modern war transport as a Chinese mandarin in painted silk would be. They are the most individual of things, all two-wheeled, all bright yellow and the same size it is true, but upon each there are they gayest of little paintings, such paintings as one sees in England at times upon an ice-cream barrow. Sometimes the picture will present a scriptural subject, sometimes a scene of opera, sometimes a dream landscape or a trophy of fruits or flowers, and the harness — now much out of repair — is studded with brass. Again and again I have passed strings of these gay carts; all Sicily must be swept of them.

Through the dust I came to Aquileia, which is now an old cathedral, built upon the remains of a very early basilica, standing in a space in a scattered village. But across this dusty space there was carried the head of the upstart Maximinus who murdered Alexander Severus, and later Aquileia brought Attila near to despair. Our party alighted; we inspected a very old mosaic floor which has been

uncovered since the Austrian retreat. The Austrian priests have gone too, and their Italian successors are already tracing out a score of Roman traces that it was the Austrian custom to minimise. Captain Pirelli refreshed my historical memories; it was rather like leaving a card on Gibbon *en route* for contemporary history.

By devious routes I went on to certain batteries of big guns which had played their part in hammering the Austrian left above Monfalcone across an arm of the Adriatic, and which were now under orders to shift and move up closer. The battery was the most unobtrusive of batteries; its one desire seemed to be to appear a simple piece of woodland in the eye of God and the aeroplane. I went about the network of railways and paths under the trees that a modern battery requires, and came presently upon a great gun that even at the first glance seemed a little less carefully hidden than its fellows. Then I saw that it was a most ingenious dummy made of a tree and logs and so forth. It was in the emplacement of a real gun that had been located; it had its painted sandbags about it just the same, and it felt itself so entirely a part of the battery that whenever its companions fired t burnt a flash and kicked up a dust. It was an excellent example of the great art of camouflage which this war has developed.

I went on through the wood to a shady observation post high in a tree, into which I clambered with my guide. I was able from this position to get a very good idea of the lie of the Italian eastern front. I was in the delta of the Isonzo. Directly in front of me were some marshes and the extreme tip of the Adriatic Sea, at the head of which was Monfalcone, now in Italian hands. Behind Monfalcone ran the red ridge of the Carso, of which the Italians had just captured the eastern half. Behind this again rose the mountains to the east of the Isonzo which the Austrians still held. The Isonzo came towards me from out of the mountains, in a great westward curve. Fifteen or sixteen miles away where it emerged from the mountains lay the pleasant and prosperous town of Goritzia, and at the westward point of the great curve was Sagrado with its broken bridge. The battle of Goritzia was really not fought at Goritzia at all. What happened was the brilliant and bloody storming of Mounts Podgora and Sabotino on the western side of the river above Goritzia, and simultaneously a

crossing at Sagrado below Goritzia and a magnificent rush up the plateau and across the plateau of the Carso. Goritzia itself was not organised for defence, and the Austrians were so surprised by the rapid storm of the mountains to the north-west of it and of the Carso to the south-east, that they made no fight in the town itself.

As a consequence when I visited it I found it very little injured — compared, that is, with such other towns as have been fought through. Here and there the front of a house has been knocked in by an Austrian shell, or a lamp-post prostrated. But the road bridge had suffered a good deal; its iron parapet was twisted about by shell bursts and interwoven with young trees and big boughs designed to screen the passer-by from the observation of the Austrian gunners upon Monte Santo. Here and there were huge holes through which one could look down upon the blue trickles of water in the stony river bed far below. The driver of our automobile displayed what seemed to me an extreme confidence in the margins of these gaps, but his confidence was justified. At Sagrado the bridge had been much more completely demolished; no effort had been made to restore the horizontal roadway, but one crossed by a sort of timber switchback that followed the ups and downs of the ruins.

It is not in these places that one must look for the real destruction of modern war. The real fight on the left of Goritzia went through the village of Lucinico up the hill of Podgora. Lucinico is nothing more than a heap of grey stones; except for a bit of the church wall and the gable end of a house one cannot even speak of it as ruins. But in one place among the rubble I saw the splintered top and a leg of a grand piano. Podgora hill, which was no doubt once neatly terraced and cultivated, is like a scrap of landscape from some airless, treeless planet. Still more desolate was the scene upon the Carso to the right (south) of Goritzia. Both San Martino and Doberdo are destroyed beyond the limits of ruination. The Carso itself is a waterless upland with but a few bushy trees; it must always have been a desolate region, but now it is an indescribable wilderness of shell craters, smashed-up Austrian trenches, splintered timber, old iron, rags, and that rusty thorny vileness of man's invention, worse than all the thorns and thickets of nature, barbed wire. There are no dead visible; the wounded have been cleared away; but about the trenches and

particularly near some of the dug-outs there was a faint repulsive smell....

Yet into this wilderness the Italians are now thrusting a sort of order. The German is a wonderful worker, they say on the Anglo-French front that he makes his trenches by way of resting, but I doubt if he can touch the Italian at certain forms of toil. All the way up to San Martino and beyond, swarms of workmen were making one of those carefully graded roads that the Italians make better than any other people. Other swarms were laying water-pipes. For upon the Carso there are neither roads nor water, and before the Italians can thrust farther both must be brought up to the front.

As we approached San Martino an Austrian aeroplane made its presence felt overhead by dropping a bomb among the tents of some workmen, in a little scrubby wood on the hillside near at hand. One heard the report and turned to see the fragments flying and the dust. Probably they got someone. And then, after a little pause, the encampment began to spew out men; here, there and everywhere they appeared among the tents, running like rabbits at evening-time, down the hill. Soon after and probably in connection with this signal, Austrian shells began to come over. They do not use shrapnel because the rocky soil of Italy makes that unnecessary. They fire a sort of shell that goes bang and releases a cloud of smoke overhead, and then drops a parcel of high explosive that bursts on the ground. The ground leaps into red dust and smoke. But these things are now to be seen on the cinema. Forthwith the men working on the road about us begin to down tools and make for the shelter trenches, a long procession going at a steady but resolute walk. Then like a blow in the chest came the bang of a big Italian gun somewhere close at hand....

Along about four thousand miles of the various fronts this sort of thing was going on that morning....

2

This Carso front is the practicable offensive front of Italy. From the left wing on the Isonzo along the Alpine boundary round to the Swiss boundary there is mountain warfare like nothing else in the world; it

is warfare that pushes the boundary backward, but it is mountain warfare that will not, for so long a period that the war will be over first, hold out any hopeful prospects of offensive movements on a large scale against Austria or Germany. It is a short distance as the crow flies from Rovereto to Munich, but not as the big gun travels. The Italians, therefore, as their contribution to the common effort, are thrusting rather eastwardly towards the line of the Julian Alps through Carinthia and Carniola. From my observation post in the tree near Monfalcone I saw Trieste away along the coast to my right. It looked scarcely as distant as Folkestone from Dungeness. The Italian advanced line is indeed scarcely ten miles from Trieste. But the Italians are not, I think, going to Trieste just yet. That is not the real game now. They are playing loyally with the Allies for the complete defeat of the Central Powers, and that is to be achieved striking home into Austria. Meanwhile there is no sense in knocking Trieste to pieces, or using Italians instead of Austrian soldiers to garrison it.

II. THE MOUNTAIN WAR

1

The mountain warfare of Italy is extraordinarily unlike that upon any other front. From the Isonzo to the Swiss frontier we are dealing with high mountains, cut by deep valleys between which there is usually no practicable lateral communication. Each advance must have the nature of an unsupported shove along a narrow channel, until the whole mountain system, that is, is won, and the attack can begin to deploy in front of the passes. Geographically Austria has the advantage. She had the gentler slope of the mountain chains while Italy has the steep side, and the foresight of old treaties has given her deep bites into what is naturally Italian territory; she is far nearer the Italian plain than Italy is near any practicable fighting ground for large forces; particularly is this the case in the region of the Adige valley and Lake Garda.

The legitimate war, so to speak, in this region is a mountaineering war. The typical position is roughly as follows. The Austrians occupy valley A which opens northward; the Italians occupy valley B which opens southward. The fight is for the crest between A and B. The side that wins that crest gains the power of looking down into, firing into and outflanking the positions of the enemy valley. In most cases it is the Italians now who are pressing, and if the reader will examine a map of the front and compare it with the official reports he will soon realise that almost everywhere the Italians are up to the head of the southward valleys and working over the crests so as to press down upon the Austrian valleys. But in the Trentino the Austrians are still well over the crest on the southward slopes. When I was in Italy they still held Rovereto.

Now it cannot be said that under modern conditions mountains favour either the offensive or the defensive. But they certainly make operations far more deliberate than upon a level. An engineered road or railway in an Alpine valley is the most vulnerable of things; its curves and viaducts may be practically demolished by shell fire or swept by shrapnel, although you hold the entire valley except for one

vantage point. All the mountains round about a valley must be won before that valley is safe for the transport of an advance. But on the other hand a surprise capture of some single mountain crest and the hoisting of one gun into position there may block the retreat of guns and material from a great series of positions. Mountain surfaces are extraordinarily various and subtle. You may understand Picardy on a map, but mountain warfare is three-dimensional. A struggle may go on for weeks or months consisting of apparently separate and incidental skirmishes, and then suddenly a whole valley organisation may crumble away in retreat or disaster. Italy is gnawing into the Trentino day by day, and particularly around by her right wing. At no time I shall be surprised to see a sudden lunge forward on that front, and hear a tale of guns and prisoners. This will not mean that she has made a sudden attack, but that some system of Austrian positions has collapsed under her continual pressure.

Such briefly is the *idea* of mountain struggle. Its realities, I should imagine, are among the strangest and most picturesque in all this tremendous world conflict. I know nothing of the war in the east, of course, but there are things here that must be hard to beat. Happily they will soon get justice done to them by an abler pen than mine. I hear that Kipling is to follow me upon this ground; nothing can be imagined more congenial to his extraordinary power of vivid rendering than this struggle against cliffs, avalanches, frost and the Austrian.

To go the Italian round needs, among other things, a good head. Everywhere it has been necessary to make roads where hitherto there have been only mule tracks or no tracks at all; the roads are often still in the making, and the automobile of the war tourist skirts precipices and takes hairpin bends upon tracks of loose metal not an inch too broad for the operation, or it floats for a moment over the dizzy edge while a train of mule transport blunders by. The unruly imagination of man's heart (which is "only evil continually") speculates upon what would be the consequences of one good bump from the wheel of a mule cart. Down below, the trees that one sees through a wisp of cloud look far too small and spiky and scattered to hold out much hope for a fallen man of letters. And at the high positions they are too used to the vertical life to understand the secret feelings of the

visitor from the horizontal. General Bompiani, whose writings are well known to all English students of military matters, showed me the Gibraltar he is making of a great mountain system east of the Adige.

"Let me show you," he said, and flung himself on to the edge of the precipice into exactly the position of a lady riding side-saddle. "You will find it more comfortable to sit down."

But anxious as I am abroad not to discredit my country by unseemly exhibitions I felt unequal to such gymnastics without a proper rehearsal at a lower level. I seated myself carefully at a yard (perhaps it was a couple of yards) from the edge, advanced on my trousers without dignity to the verge, and so with an effort thrust my legs over to dangle in the crystalline air.

"That," proceeded General Bompiani, pointing with a giddy flourish of his riding whip, "is Monte Tomba."

I swayed and half-extended my hand towards him. But he was still there — sitting, so to speak, on the half of himself.... I was astonished that he did not disappear abruptly during his exposition....

2

The fighting man in the Dolomites has been perhaps the most wonderful of all these separate campaigns. I went up by automobile as far as the clambering new road goes up the flanks of Tofana No. 2; thence for a time by mule along the flank of Tofana No. 1, and thence on foot to the vestiges of the famous Castelletto.

The aspect of these mountains is particularly grim and wicked; they are worn old mountains, they tower overhead in enormous vertical cliffs of sallow grey, with the square jointings and occasional clefts and gullies, their summits are toothed and jagged; the path ascends and passes round the side of the mountain upon loose screes, which descend steeply to a lower wall of precipices. In the distance rise other harsh and desolate-looking mountain masses, with shining occasional scars of old snow. Far below is a bleak valley of stunted pine trees through which passes the road of the Dolomites.

As I ascended the upper track two bandages men were coming down on led mules. It was mid-August, and they were suffering from

frostbite. Across the great gap between the summits a minute traveller with some provisions was going up by wire to some post upon the crest. For everywhere upon the icy pinnacles are observation posts directing the fire of the big guns on the slopes below, or machine-gun stations, or little garrisons that sit and wait through the bleak days. Often they have no link with the world below but a precipitous climb or a "teleferic" wire. Snow and frost may cut them off absolutely for weeks from the rest of mankind. The sick and wounded must begin their journey down to help and comfort in a giddy basket that swings down to the head of the mule track below.

Originally all these crests were in Austrian hands; they were stormed by the Alpini under almost incredible conditions. For fifteen days, for example, they fought their way up these screes on the flanks of Tofana No. 2 to the ultimate crags, making perhaps a hundred metres of ascent each day, hiding under rocks and in holes in the daylight and receiving fresh provisions and ammunition and advancing by night. They were subjected to rifle fire, machine-gun fire and bombs of a peculiar sort, big iron balls of the size of a football filled with explosive that were just flung down the steep. They dodged flares and star shells. At one place they went up a chimney that would be far beyond the climbing powers of any but a very active man. It must have been like storming the skies. The dead and wounded rolled away often into inaccessible ravines. Stray skeletons, rags of uniform, fragments of weapons, will add to the climbing interest of these gaunt masses for many years to come. In this manner it was that Tofana No. 2 was taken.

Now the Italians are organising this prize, and I saw winding up far above me on the steep grey slope a multitudinous string of little things that looked like black ants, each carrying a small bright yellow egg. They were mules bringing back balks of timber....

But one position held out invincibly; this was the Castelletto, a great natural fortress of rock standing out at an angle of the mountain in such a position that it commanded the Italian communications (the Dolomite road) in the valley below, and rendered all their positions uncomfortable and insecure. This obnoxious post was practically inaccessible either from above or below, and it barred the Italians even from looking into the Val Travenanzes which it defended. It

was, in fact, an impregnable position, and against it was pitted the invincible 5th Group of the Alpini. It was the old problem of the irresistible force in conflict with the immovable object. And the outcome has been the biggest military mine in all history.

The business began in January, 1916, with surveys of the rock in question. The work of surveying for excavations, never a very simple one, becomes much more difficult when the site is occupied by hostile persons with machine guns. In March, as the winter's snows abated, the boring machinery began to arrive, by mule as far as possible and then by hand. Altogether about half a kilometre of gallery had to be made to the mine chamber, and meanwhile the explosive was coming up load by load and resting first here, then there, in discreetly chosen positions. There were at the last thirty-five tons of it in the inner chamber. And while the boring machines bored and the work went on, Lieutenant Malvezzi was carefully working out the problem of "il massimo effetto dirompimento" and deciding exactly how to pack and explode his little hoard. On the eleventh of July, at 3.30, as he rejoices to state in his official report, "the mine responded perfectly both in respect of the calculations made and of the practical effects," that is to say, the Austrians were largely missing and the Italians were in possession of the crater of the Castelletto and looking down the Val Travenanzes from which they had been barred for so long. Within a month things had been so tidied up, and secured by further excavations and sandbags against hostile fire, that even a middle-aged English writer, extremely fagged and hot and breathless, could enjoy the same privilege. All this, you must understand, had gone on at a level to which the ordinary tourist rarely climbs, in a rarefied, chest-tightening atmosphere, with wisps of clouds floating in the clear air below and club-huts close at hand....

Among these mountains avalanches are frequent; and they come down regardless of human strategy. In many cases the trenches cross avalanche tracks; they and the men in them are periodically swept away and periodically replaced. They are positions that must be held; if the Italians will not face such sacrifices, the Austrians will. Avalanches and frostbite have slain and disabled their thousands; they have accounted perhaps for as many Italians in this austere and giddy campaign as the Austrians....

It seems to be part of the stern resolve of Fate that this, the greatest of wars, shall be the least glorious; it is manifestly being decided not by victories but by blunders. It is indeed a history of colossal stupidities. Among the most decisive of these blunders, second only perhaps of the blunder of the Verdun attack and far outshining the wild raid of the British towards Bagdad, was the blunder of the Trentino offensive. It does not need the equipment of a military expert, it demands only quite ordinary knowledge and average intelligence, to realise the folly of that Austrian adventure. There is some justification for a claim that the decisive battle of the war was fought upon the soil of Italy. There is still more justification for saying that it might have been.

There was only one good point about the Austrian thrust. No one could have foretold it. And it did so completely surprise the Italians as to catch them without any prepared line of positions in the rear. On the very eve of the big Russian offensive, the Austrians thrust eighteen divisions hard at the Trentino frontier. The Italian posts were then in Austrian territory; they held on the left wing and the right, but they were driven by the sheer weight of men and guns in the centre; they lost guns and prisoners because of the difficulty of mountain retreats to which I have alluded, and the Austrians pouring through reached not indeed the plain of Venetia, but to the upland valleys immediately above it, to Asiago and Arsiero. They probably saw the Venetian plain through gaps in the hills, but they were still separated from it even at Arsiero by what are mountains to an English eye, mountains as high as Snowdon. But the Italians of such beautiful old places and Vicenza, Marostica, and Bassano could watch the Austrian shells bursting on the last line of hills above the plain, and I have no doubt they felt extremely uneasy.

As one motors through these ripe and beautiful towns and through the rich valleys that link them — it is a smiling land abounding in old castles and villas, Vicenza is a rich museum of Palladio's architecture and Bassano is full of irreplaceable painted buildings — one feels that the things was a narrow escape, but from the military point of view it was merely an insane escapade. The Austrians had

behind them — and some way behind them — one little strangulated railway and no good pass road; their right was held at Pasubio, their left was similarly bent back. In front of them was between twice and three times their number of first class troops, with an unlimited equipment. If they had surmounted that last mountain crest they would have come down to almost certain destruction in the plain. They could never have got back. For a time it was said that General Cadorna considered that possibility. From the point of view of purely military considerations, the Trentino offensive should perhaps have ended in the capitulation of Vicenza.

I will confess I am glad it did not do so. This tour of the fronts has made me very sad and weary with a succession of ruins. I can bear no more ruins unless they are the ruins of Dusseldorf, Cologne, Berlin, or suchlike modern German city. Anxious as I am to be a systematic Philistine, to express my preference for Marinetti over the Florentine British and generally to antagonise aesthetic prigs, I rejoiced over that sunlit land as one might rejoice over a child saved from beasts.

On the hills beyond Schio I walked out through the embrasure of a big gun in a rock gallery, and saw the highest points upon the hillside to which the Austrian infantry clambered in their futile last attacks. Below me were the ruins of Arsiero and Velo d'Astico recovered, and across the broad valley rose Monte Cimone with the Italian trenches upon its crest and the Austrians a little below to the north. A very considerable bombardment was going on and it reverberated finely. (It is only among mountains that one hears anything that one can call the thunder of guns. The heaviest bombardments I heard in France sounded merely like Brock's benefit on a much large scale, and disappointed me extremely.) As I sat and listened to the uproar and watched the shells burst on Cimone and far away up the valley over Castelletto above Pedescala, Captain Pirelli pointed out the position of the Austrian frontier. I doubt if the English people realise that the utmost depth to which this great Trentino offensive, which exhausted Austria, wasted the flower of the Hungarian army and led directly to the Galician disasters and the intervention of Rumania, penetrated into Italian territory was about six miles.

III. BEHIND THE FRONT

1

I have a peculiar affection for Verona and certain things in Verona. Italians must forgive us English this little streak of impertinent proprietorship in the beautiful things of their abundant land. It is quite open to them to revenge themselves by professing a tenderness for Liverpool or Leeds. It was, for instance, with a peculiar and personal indignation that I saw where an Austrian air bomb had killed five-and-thirty people in the Piazza Erbe. Somehow in that jolly old place, a place that have very much of the quality of a very pretty and cheerful old woman, it seemed exceptionally an outrage. And I made a special pilgrimage to see how it was with that monument of Can Grande, the equestrian Scaliger with the sidelong grin, for whom I confess a ridiculous admiration. Can Grande, I rejoice to say, has retired into a case of brickwork, surmounted by a steep roof of thick iron plates; no aeroplane exists to carry bombs enough to smash that covering; there he will smile securely in the darkness until peace comes again.

All over Venetia the Austrian seaplanes are making the same sort of idiot raid on lighted places that the Zeppelins have been making over England. These raids do no effective military work. What conceivable military advantage can there be in dropping bombs into a marketing crowd? It is a sort of anti-Teutonic propaganda by the Central Powers to which they seem to have been incited by their own evil genius. It is as if they could convince us that there is an essential malignity in Germans, that until the German powers are stamped down into the mud they will continue to do evil things. All of the Allies have borne the thrusting and boasting of Germany with exemplary patience for half a century; England gave her Heligoland and stood out of the way of her colonial expansion, Italy was a happy hunting ground for her business enterprise, France had come near resignation on the score of Alsace-Lorraine. And then over and above the great outrage of the war come these incessant mean-spirited atrocities. A great and simple wickedness it is possible to

forgive; the war itself, had it been fought greatly by Austria and Germany, would have made no such deep and enduring breach as these silly, futile assassinations have down between the Austro-Germans and the rest of the civilised world. One great misdeed is a thing understandable and forgivable; what grows upon the consciousness of the world is the persuasion that here we fight not a national sin but a national insanity; that we dare not leave the German the power to attack other nations any more for ever....

Venice has suffered particularly from this ape-like impulse to hurt and terrorise enemy non-combatants. Venice has indeed suffered from this war far more than any other town in Italy. Her trade has largely ceased; she has no visitors. I woke up on my way to Udine and found my train at Venice with an hour to spare; after much examining and stamping of my passport I was allowed outside the station wicket to get coffee in the refreshment room and a glimpse of a very sad and silent Grand Canal. There was nothing doing; a black despondent remnant of the old crowd of gondolas browsed dreamily among against the quay to stare at me the better. The empty palaces seemed to be sleeping in the morning sunshine because it was not worth while to wake up....

2

Except in the case of Venice, the war does not seem as yet to have made nearly such a mark upon life in Italy as it has in England or provincial France. People speak of Italy as a poor country, but that is from a banker's point of view. In some respects she is the richest country on earth, and in the matter of staying power I should think she is better off than any other belligerent. She produces food in abundance everywhere; her women are agricultural workers, so that the interruption of food production by the war has been less serious in Italy than in any other part of Europe. In peace time, she has constantly exported labour; the Italian worker has been a seasonal emigrant to America, north and south, to Switzerland, Germany and the south of France. The cessation of this emigration has given her great reserves of man power, so that she has carried on her admirable campaign with less interference with her normal economic life than

any other power. The first person I spoke to upon the platform at Modane was a British officer engaged in forwarding Italian potatoes to the British front in France. Afterwards, on my return, when a little passport irregularity kept me for half a day in Modane, I went for a walk with him along the winding pass road that goes down into France. "You see hundreds and hundreds of new Fiat cars," he remarked, "along here — going up to the French front."

But there is a return trade. Near Paris I saw scores of thousands of shells piled high to go to Italy....

I doubt if English people fully realise either the economic sturdiness or the political courage of their Italian ally. Italy is not merely fighting a first-class war in first-class fashion but she is doing a big, dangerous, generous and far-sighted thing in fighting at all. France and England were obliged to fight; the necessity was as plain as daylight. The participation of Italy demanded a remoter wisdom. In the long run she would have been swallowed up economically and politically by Germany if she had not fought; but that was not a thing staring her plainly in the face as the danger, insult and challenge stared France and England in the face. What did stare her in the face was not merely a considerable military and political risk, but the rupture of very close financial and commercial ties. I found thoughtful men talking everywhere I have been in Italy of two things, of the Jugo-Slav riddle and of the question of post war finance. So far as the former matter goes, I think the Italians are set upon the righteous solution of all such riddles, they are possessed by an intelligent generosity. They are clearly set upon deserving Jugo-Slav friendship; they understand the plain necessity of open and friendly routes towards Roumania. It was an Italian who set out to explain to me that Fiume must be at least a free port; it would be wrong and foolish to cut the trade of Hungary off from the Mediterranean. But the banking puzzle is a more intricate and puzzling matter altogether than the possibility of trouble between Italian and Jugo-Slav.

I write of these things with the simplicity of an angel, but without an angelic detachment. Here are questions into which one does not so much rush as get reluctantly pushed. Currency and banking are dry distasteful questions, but it is clear that they are too much in the hands of mystery-mongers; it is as much the duty of anyone who

talks and writes of affairs, it is as much the duty of every sane adult, to bring his possibly poor and unsuitable wits to bear upon these things, as it is for him to vote or enlist or pay his taxes. Behind the simple ostensible spectacle of Italy recovering the unredeemed Italy of the Trentino and East Venetia, goes on another drama. Has Italy been sinking into something rather hard to define called "economic slavery"? Is she or is she not escaping from that magical servitude? Before this question has been under discussion for a minute comes a name — for a time I was really quite unable to decide whether it is the name of the villain in the piece or of the maligned heroine, or a secret society or a gold mine, or a pestilence or a delusion — the name of the *Banca Commerciale Italiana.*

Banking in a country undergoing so rapid and vigorous an economic development as Italy is very different from the banking we simple English know of at home. Banking in England, like land-owning, has hitherto been a sort of hold up. There were always borrowers, there were always tenants, and all that had to be done was to refuse, obstruct, delay and worry the helpless borrower or would-be tenant until the maximum of security and profit was obtained. I have never borrowed but I have built, and I know something of the extreme hauteur of property of England towards a man who wants to do anything with land, and with money I gather the case is just the same. But in Italy, which already possessed a sunny prosperity of its own upon mediaeval lines, the banker has had to be suggestive and persuasive, sympathetic and helpful. These are unaccustomed attitudes for British capital. The field has been far more attractive to the German banker, who is less of a proudly impassive usurer and more of a partner, who demands less than absolute security because he investigates more industriously and intelligently. This great bank, the Banca Commerciale Italiana, is a bank of the German type: to begin with, it was certainly dominated by German directors; it was a bank of stimulation, and its activities interweave now into the whole fabric of Italian commercial life. But it has already liberated itself from German influence, and the bulk of its capital is Italian. Nevertheless I found discussion ranging about firstly what the Banca Commerciale essentially *was*, secondly what it might *become*, thirdly what it might *do*, and fourthly what, if anything, had to be done to it.

It is a novelty to an English mind to find banking thus mixed up with politics, but it is not a novelty in Italy. All over Venetia there are agricultural banks which are said to be "clerical." I grappled with this mystery. "How are they clerical?" I asked Captain Pirelli. "Do they lend money on bad security to clerical voters, and on no terms whatever to anti-clericals?" He was quite of my way of thinking. "*Pecunia non olet*," he said; "I have never yet smelt a clerical fifty lira note."... But on the other hand Italy is very close to Germany; she wants easy money for development, cheap coal, a market for various products. The case against the Germans — this case in which the Banca Commerciale Italiana appears, I am convinced unjustly, as a suspect — is that they have turned this natural and proper interchange with Italy into the acquisition of German power. That they have not been merely easy traders, but patriotic agents. It is alleged that they used their early "pull" in Italian banking to favour German enterprises and German political influence against the development of native Italian business; that their merchants are not bona-fide individuals, but members of a nationalist conspiracy to gain economic controls. The German is a patriotic monomaniac. He is not a man but a limb, the worshipper of a national effigy, the digit of an insanely proud and greedy Germania, and here are the natural consequences.

The case of the individual Italian compactly is this: "We do not like the Austrians and Germans. These Imperialisms look always over the Alps. Whatever increases German influence here threatens Italian life. The German is a German first and a human being afterwards.... But on the other hand England seems commercially indifferent to us and France has been economically hostile..."

"After all," I said presently, after reflection, "in that matter of *Pecunia non olet*; there used to be fusses about European loans in China. And one of the favourite themes of British fiction and drama before the war was the unfortunate position of the girl who accepted a loan from the wicked man to pay her debts at bridge."

"Italy," said Captain Pirelli, "isn't a girl. And she hasn't been playing bridge."

I incline on the whole to his point of view. Money is facile cosmopolitan stuff. I think that any bank that settles down in Italy is

going to be slowly and steadily naturalised Italian, it will become more and more Italian until it is wholly Italian. I would trust Italy to make and keep the Banca Commerciale Italiana Italian. I believe the Italian brain is a better brain than the German article. But still I heard people talking of the implicated organisation as if it were engaged in the most insidious duplicities. "Wait for only a year or so after the war," said one English authority to me, "and the mask will be off and it will be frankly a 'Deutsche Bank' once more." They assure me that then German enterprises will be favoured again, Italian and Allied enterprises blockaded and embarrassed, the good understanding of Italians and English poisoned, entirely through this organisation....

The reasonable uncommercial man would like to reject all this last sort of talk as "suspicion mania." So far as the Banca Commerciale Italiana goes, I at least find that easy enough; I quote that instance simply because it is a case where suspicion has been dispelled, but in regard to a score of other business veins it is not so easy to dispel suspicion. This war has been a shock to reasonable men the whole world over. They have been forced to realise that after all a great number of Germans have been engaged in a crack-brained conspiracy against the non-German world; that in a great number of cases when one does business with a German the business does not end with the individual German. We hated to believe that a business could be tainted by German partners or German associations. If now we err on the side of over-suspicion, it is the German's little weakness for patriotic disingenuousness that is most to blame....

But anyhow I do not think there is much good in a kind of witch-smelling among Italian enterprises to find the hidden German. Certain things are necessary for Italian prosperity and Italy must get them. The Italians want intelligent and helpful capital. They want a helpful France. They want bituminous coal for metallurgical purposes. They want cheap shipping. The French too want metallurgical coal. It is more important for civilisation, for the general goodwill of the Allies and for Great Britain that these needs should be supplied than that individual British money-owners or ship-owners should remain sluggishly rich by insisting upon high security or high freights. The control of British coal-mining and shipping is in the national interests — for international interests —

rather than for the creation of that particularly passive, obstructive, and wasteful type of wealth, the wealth of the mere profiteer, is as urgent a necessity for the commercial welfare of France and Italy and the endurance of the Great Alliance as it is for the well-being of the common man in Britain.

3

I left my military guide at Verona on Saturday afternoon and reached Milan in time to dine outside Salvini's in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, with an Italian fellow story-writer. The place was as full as ever; we had to wait for a table. It is notable that there were still great numbers of young men not in uniform in Milan and Turin and Vicenza and Verona; there was no effect anywhere of a depletion of men. The whole crowded place was smouldering with excitement. The diners looked about them as they talked, some talked loudly and seemed to be expressing sentiments. Newspaper vendors appeared at the intersection of the arcades, uttering ambiguous cries, and did a brisk business of flitting white sheets among the little tables.

"To-night," said my companion, "I think we shall declare war upon Germany. The decision is being made."

I asked intelligently why this had not been done before. I forget the precise explanation he gave. A young soldier in uniform, who had been dining at an adjacent table and whom I had not recognised before as a writer I had met some years previously in London, suddenly joined in our conversation, with a slightly different explanation. I had been carrying on a conversation in slightly ungainly French, but now I relapsed into English.

But indeed the matter of that declaration of war is as plain as daylight; the Italian national consciousness has not at first that direct sense of the German danger that exists in the minds of the three northern Allies. To the Italian the traditional enemy is Austria, and this war is not primarily a war for any other end than the emancipation of Italy. Moreover we have to remember that for years there has been serious commercial friction between France and Italy, and considerable mutual elbowing in North Africa. Both Frenchmen and Italians are resolute to remedy this now, but the restoration of

really friendly and trustful relations is not to be done in a day. It has been an extraordinary misfortune for Great Britain that instead of boldly taking over her shipping from its private owners and using it all, regardless of their profit, in the interests of herself and her allies, her government has permitted so much of it as military and naval needs have not requisitioned to continue to ply for gain, which the government itself has shared by a tax on war profits. The Anglophobe elements in Italian public life have made the utmost of this folly or laxity in relation more particularly to the consequent dearness of coal in Italy. They have carried on an amazingly effective campaign in which this British slackness with the individual profiteer, is represented as if it were the deliberate greed of the British state. This certainly contributed very much to fortify Italy's disinclination to slam the door on the German connection.

I did my best to make it clear to my two friends that so far from England exploiting Italy, I myself suffered in exactly the same way as any Italian, through the extraordinary liberties of our shipping interest. "I pay as well as you do," I said; "the shippers' blockade of Great Britain is more effective than the submarines'. My food, my coal, my petrol are all restricted in the sacred name of private property. You see, capital in England has hitherto been not an exploitation but a hold-up. We are learning differently now.... And anyhow, Mr. Runciman has been here and given Italy assurances...."

In the train to Modane this old story recurred again. It is imperative that English readers should understand clearly how thoroughly these little matters have been *worked* by the enemy.

Some slight civilities led to a conversation that revealed the Italian lady in the corner as an Irishwoman married to an Italian, and also brought out the latent English of a very charming elderly lady opposite to her. She had heard a speech, a wonderful speech from a railway train, by "the Lord Runciman." He had said the most beautiful things about Italy.

I did my best to echo these beautiful things.

Then the Irishwoman remarked that Mr. Runciman had not satisfied everybody. She and her husband had met a minister — I found afterwards he was one of the members of the late Giolotti government — who had been talking very loudly and scornfully of

the bargain Italy was making with England. I assured her that the desire of England was simply to give Italy all that she needed.

"But," said the husband casually, "Mr. Runciman is a shipowner."

I explained that he was nothing of the sort. It was true that he came of a shipowning family — and perhaps inherited a slight tendency to see things from a shipowning point of view — but in England we did not suspect a man on such a score as that.

"In Italy I think we should," said the husband of the Irish lady.

4

This incidental discussion is a necessary part of my impression of Italy at war. The two western allies and Great Britain in particular have to remember Italy's economic needs, and to prepare to rescue them from the blind exploitation of private profit. They have to remember these needs too, because, if they are left out of the picture, then it becomes impossible to understand the full measure of the risk Italy has faced in undertaking this war for an idea. With a Latin lucidity she has counted every risk, and with a Latin idealism she has taken her place by the side of those who fight for a liberal civilisation against a Byzantine imperialism.

As I came out of the brightly lit Galleria Vittorio Emanuele into the darkened Piazza del Duomo I stopped under the arcade and stood looking up at the shadowy darkness of that great pinnacled barn, that marble bride-cake, which is, I suppose, the last southward fortress of the Franco-English Gothic.

"It was here," said my host, "that we burnt the German stuff."

"What German stuff?"

"Pianos and all sorts of things. From the shops. It is possible, you know, to buy things too cheaply — and to give too much for the cheapness."

THE WESTERN WAR (SEPTEMBER, 1916)

I. RUINS

1

If I had to present some particular scene as typical of the peculiar vileness and mischief wrought by this modern warfare that Germany has elaborated and thrust upon the world, I do not think I should choose as my instance any of those great architectural wrecks that seem most to impress contemporary writers. I have seen the injuries and ruins of the cathedrals at Arras and Soissons and the wreckage of the great church at Saint Eloi, I have visited the Hotel de Ville at Arras and seen photographs of the present state of the Cloth Hall at Ypres — a building I knew very well indeed in its days of pride — and I have not been very deeply moved. I suppose that one is a little accustomed to Gothic ruins, and that there is always something monumental about old buildings; it is only a question of degree whether they are more or less tumble-down. I was far more desolated by the obliteration of such villages as Fricourt and Dompierre, and by the horrible state of the fields and gardens round about them, and my visit to Arras railway station gave me all the sensations of coming suddenly on a newly murdered body.

Before I visited the recaptured villages in the zone of the actual fighting, I had an idea that their evacuation was only temporary, that as soon as the war line moved towards Germany the people of the devastated villages would return to build their houses and till their fields again. But I see now that not only are homes and villages destroyed almost beyond recognition, but the very fields are destroyed. They are wildernesses of shell craters; the old worked soil is buried and great slabs of crude earth have been flung up over it. No ordinary plough will travel over this frozen sea, let along that everywhere chunks of timber, horrible tangles of rusting wire, jagged fragments of big shells, and a great number of unexploded shells are entangled in the mess. Often this chaos is stained bright yellow by high explosives, and across it run the twisting trenches and communication trenches eight, ten, or twelve feet deep. These will become water pits and mud pits into which beasts will fall. It is

incredible that there should be crops from any of this region of the push for many years to come. There is no shade left; the roadside trees are splintered stumps with scarcely the spirit to put forth a leaf; a few stunted thistles and weeds are the sole proofs that life may still go on.

The villages of this wide battle region are not ruined; they are obliterated. It is just possible to trace the roads in them, because the roads have been cleared and repaired for the passing of the guns and ammunition. Fricourt is a tangle of German dug-outs. One dug-out in particular there promises to become a show place. It must be the masterpiece of some genius for dug-outs; it is made as if its makers enjoyed the job; it is like the work of some horrible badger among the vestiges of what were pleasant human homes. You are taken down a timbered staircase into its warren of rooms and passages; you are shown the places under the craters of the great British shells, where the wood splintered but did not come in. (But the arrival of those shells must have been a stunning moment.) There are a series of ingenious bolting shafts set with iron climbing bars. In this place German officers and soldiers have lived continually for nearly two years. This war is, indeed, a troglodytic propaganda. You come up at last at the far end into what was once a cellar of a decent Frenchman's home.

But there are stranger subterranean refuges than that at Fricourt. At Dompierre the German trenches skirted the cemetery, and they turned the dead out of their vaults and made lurking places of the tombs. I walked with M. Joseph Reinach about this place, picking our way carefully amidst the mud holes and the wire, and watched the shells bursting away over the receding battle line to the west. The wreckage of the graves was Durereqsue. And here would be a fragment of marble angle and here a split stone with an inscription. Splinters of coffins, rusty iron crosses and the petals of tin flowers were trampled into the mud, amidst the universal barbed wire. A little distance down the slope is a brand new cemetery, with new metal wreaths and even a few flowers; it is a disciplined array of uniform wooden crosses, each with its list of soldiers' names. Unless I am wholly mistaken in France no Germans will ever get a chance for ever more to desecrate that second cemetery as they have done its

predecessor.

We walked over the mud heaps and litter that had once been houses towards the centre of Dompierre village, and tried to picture to ourselves what the place had been. Many things are recognisable in Dompierre that have altogether vanished at Fricourt; for instance, there are quire large triangular pieces of the church wall upstanding at Dompierre. And a mile away perhaps down the hill on the road towards Amiens, the ruins of the sugar refinery are very distinct. A sugar refinery is an affair of big iron receptacles and great flues and pipes and so forth, and iron does not go down under gun fire as stone or brick does. The whole fabric wars rust, bent and twisted, gaping with shell holes, that raggedest display of old iron, but it still kept its general shape, as a smashed, battered, and sunken ironclad might do at the bottom of the sea.

There wasn't a dog left of the former life of Dompierre. There was not even much war traffic that morning on the worn and muddy road. The guns muttered some miles away to the west, and a lark sang. But a little way farther on up the road was an intermediate dressing station, rigged up with wood and tarpaulins, and orderlies were packing two wounded men into an ambulance. The men on the stretchers were grey faced, as though they had been trodden on by some gigantic dirty boot.

As we came back towards where our car waited by the cemetery I heard the jingle of a horseman coming across the space behind us. I turned and beheld one of the odd contrasts that seem always to be happening in this incredible war. This man was, I suppose, a native officer of some cavalry force from French north Africa. He was a handsome dark brown Arab, wearing a long yellow-white robe and a tall cap about which ran a band of sheepskin. He was riding one of those little fine lean horses with long tails that I think are Barbary horses, his archaic saddle rose fore and aft of him, and the turned-up toes of his soft leather boots were stuck into great silver stirrups. He might have ridden straight out of the Arabian nights. He passed thoughtfully, picking his way delicately among the wire and the shell craters, and coming into the road, broke into a canter and vanished in the direction of the smashed-up refinery.

About such towns as Rheims or Arras or Soissons there is an effect of waiting stillness like nothing else I have ever experienced. At Arras the situation is almost incredible to the civilian mind. The British hold the town, the Germans hold a northern suburb; at one point near the river the trenches are just four metres apart. This state of tension has lasted for long months.

Unless a very big attack is contemplated, I suppose there is no advantage in an assault; across that narrow interval we should only get into trenches that might be costly or impossible to hold, and so it would be for the Germans on our side. But there is a kind of etiquette observed; loud vulgar talking on either side of the four-metre gap leads at once to bomb throwing. And meanwhile on both sides guns of various calibre keep up an intermittent fire, the German guns register — I think that is the right term — on the cross of Arras cathedral, the British guns search lovingly for the German batteries. As one walks about the silent streets one hears, "*Bang* — Pheeee — woooo" and then far away "*dump.*" One of ours. Then presently back comes "Pheeee — woooo — *Bang!*" One of theirs.

Amidst these pleasantries, the life of the town goes on. *Le Lion d'Arras*, an excellent illustrated paper, produces its valiant sheets, and has done so since the siege began.

The current number of *Le Lion d'Arras* had to report a local German success. Overnight they had killed a gendarme. There is to be a public funeral and much ceremony. It is rare for anyone now to get killed; everything is so systematised.

You may buy postcards with views of the destruction at various angles, and send them off with the Arras postmark. The town is not without a certain business activity. There is, I am told, a considerable influx of visitors of a special sort; they wear khaki and lead the troglodytic life. They play cards and gossip and sleep in the shadows, and may not walk the streets. I had one glimpse of a dark crowded cellar. Now and then one sees a British soldier on some special errand; he keeps to the pavement, mindful of the spying German sausage balloon in the air. The streets are strangely quite and grass grows between the stones.

The Hotel de Ville and the cathedral are now mostly heaps of litter, but many streets of the town have suffered very little. Here and there a house has been crushed and one or two have been bisected, the front reduced to a heap of splinters and the back halves of the rooms left so that one sees the bed, the hanging end of the carpet, the clothes cupboard yawning open, the pictures still on the wall. In one place a lamp stands on a chest of drawers, on a shelf of floor cut off completely from the world below.... Pheeee — woooo — *Bang!* One would be irresistibly reminded of a Sunday afternoon in the city of London, if it were not for those unmeaning explosions.

I went to the station, a dead railway station. A notice-board requested us to walk around the silent square on the outside pavement and not across it. The German sausage balloon had not been up for days; it had probably gone off to the Somme; the Somme was a terrible vortex just then which was sucking away the resources of the whole German line; but still discipline is discipline. The sausage might come peeping up at any moment over the station roof, and so we skirted the square. Arras was fought for in the early stages of the war; two lines of sand-bagged breastworks still run obliquely through the station; one is where the porters used to put luggage upon cabs and one runs the length of the platform. The station was a fine one of the modern type, with a glass roof whose framework still remains, though the glass powders the floor and is like a fine angular gravel underfoot. The rails are rails of rust, and cornflowers and mustard and tall grasses grow amidst the ballast. The waiting-rooms have suffered from a shell or so, but there are still the sofas of green plush, askew, a little advertisement hung from the wall, the glass smashed. The ticket bureau is as if a giant had scattered a great number of tickets, mostly still done up in bundles, to Douai, to Valenciennes, to Lens and so on. These tickets are souvenirs too portable to resist. I gave way to that common weakness.

I went out and looked up and down the line; two deserted goods trucks stood as if they sheltered under a footbridge. The grass poked out through their wheels. The railway signals seemed uncertain in their intimations; some were up and some were down. And it was as still and empty as a summer afternoon in Pompeii. No train has come into Arras for two long years now.

We lunched in a sunny garden with various men who love Arras but are weary of it, and we disputed about Irish politics. We discussed the political future of Sir F. E. Smith. We also disputed whether there was an equivalent in English for *embusque*. Every now and then a shell came over — an aimless shell.

A certain liveliness marked our departure from the town. Possibly the Germans also listen for the rare infrequent automobile. At any rate, as we were just starting our way back — it is improper to mention the exact point from which we started — came "Pheeee — woooo." Quite close. But there was no *Bang!* One's mind hung expectant and disappointed. It was a dud shell.

And then suddenly I became acutely aware of the personality of our chauffeur. It was not his business to talk to us, but he turned his head, showed a sharp profile, wry lips and a bright excited eye, and remarked, "*That* was a near one — anyhow." He then cut a corner over the pavement and very nearly cut it through a house. He bumped us over a shell hole and began to toot his horn. At every gateway, alley, and cross road on this silent and empty streets of Arras and frequently in between, he tooted punctiliously. (It is not proper to sound motor horns in Arras.) I cannot imagine what the listening Germans made of it. We passed the old gates of that city of fear, still tooting vehemently, and then with shoulders eloquent of his feelings, our chauffeur abandoned the horn altogether and put his whole soul into the accelerator....

3

Soissons was in very much the same case as Arras. There was the same pregnant silence in her streets, the same effect of waiting for the moment which draws nearer and nearer, when the brooding German lines away there will be full of the covert activities of retreat, when the streets of the old town will stir with the joyous excitement of the conclusive advance.

The organisation of Soissons for defence is perfect. I may not describe it, but think of whatever would stop and destroy an attacking party or foil the hostile shell. It is there. Men have had nothing else to do and nothing else to think of for two years. I

crossed the bridge the English made in the pursuit after the Marne, and went into the first line trenches and peeped towards the invisible enemy. To show me exactly where to look a seventy-five obliged with a shell. In the crypt of the Abbey of St. Medard near by it — it must provoke the Germans bitterly to think that all the rest of the building vanished ages ago — the French boys sleep beside the bones of King Childebert the Second. They shelter safely in the prison of Louis the Pious. An ineffective shell from a German seventy-seven burst in the walled garden close at hand as I came out from those thousand-year-old memories again.

The cathedral at Soissons had not been nearly so completely smashed up as the one at Arras; I doubt if it has been very greatly fired into. There is a peculiar beauty in the one long vertical strip of blue sky between the broken arches in the chief gap where the wall has tumbled in. And the people are holding on in many cases exactly as they are doing in Arras; I do not know whether it is habit or courage that is most apparent in this persistence. About the chief place of the town there are ruined houses, but some invisible hand still keeps the grass of the little garden within bounds and has put out a bed of begonias. In Paris I met a charming American writer, the wife of a French artist, the lady who wrote *My House on the Field of Honour*. She gave me a queer little anecdote. On account of some hospital work she had been allowed to visit Soissons — a rare privilege for a woman — and she stayed the night in a lodging. The room into which she was shown was like any other French provincial bedroom, and after her Anglo-Saxon habit she walked straight to the windows to open them.

They looked exactly like any other French bedroom windows, with neat, clean white lace curtains across them. The curtains had been put there, because they were the proper things to put there.

"Madame," said the hostess, "need not trouble to open the glass. There is no more glass in Soissons."

But there were curtains nevertheless. There was all the precise delicacy of the neatly curtained home life of France.

And she told me too of the people at dinner, and how as the little serving-maid passed about a proud erection of cake and conserve and cream, came the familiar "Pheeee — woooo — *Bang!*"

“That must have been the Seminaire,” said someone.

As one speaks of the weather or a passing cart.

“It was in the Rue de la Bueire, M’sieur,” the little maid asserted with quiet conviction, poising the trophy of confectionery for Madame Huard with an unshaking hand.

So stoutly do the roots of French life hold beneath the tramplings of war.

II. THE GRADES OF WAR

1 Soissons and Arras when I visited them were samples of the deadlock war; they were like Bloch come true. The living fact about war so far is that Bloch has not come true — *yet.* I think in the end he will come true, but not so far as this war is concerned, and to make that clear it is necessary to trouble the reader with a little disquisition upon war — omitting as far as humanly possible all mention of Napoleon's campaigns.

The development of war has depended largely upon two factors. One of these is invention. New weapons and new methods have become available, and have modified tactics, strategy, the relative advantage of offensive and defensive. The other chief factor in the evolution of the war has been social organisation. As Machiavelli points out in his *Art of War*, there was insufficient social stability in Europe to keep a properly trained and disciplined infantry in the field from the passing of the Roman legions to the appearance of the Swiss footmen. He makes it very clear that he considers the fighting of the Middle Ages, though frequent and bloody, to be a confused, mobbing sort of affair, and politically and technically unsatisfactory. The knight was an egotist in armour. Machiavelli does small justice to the English bowmen. It is interesting to note that Switzerland, that present island of peace, was regarded by him as the mother of modern war. Swiss aggression was the curse of the Milanese. That is a remark by the way; our interest here is to note that modern war emerges upon history as the sixteenth century unfolds, as an affair in which the essential factor is the drilled and trained infantryman. The artillery is developing as a means of breaking the infantry; cavalry for charging them when broken, for pursuit and scouting. To this day this triple division of forces dominates soldiers' minds. The mechanical development of warfare has consisted largely in the development of facilities for enabling or hindering the infantry to get to close quarters. As that has been made easy or difficult the offensive or the defensive has predominated.

A history of military method for the last few centuries would be a record of successive alternate steps in which offensive and defensive

contrivances pull ahead, first one and then the other. Their relative fluctuations are marked by the varying length of campaigns. From the very outset we have the ditch and the wall; the fortified place upon a pass or main road, as a check to the advance. Artillery improves, then fortification improves. The defensive holds its own for a long period, wars are mainly siege wars, and for a century before the advent of Napoleon there are no big successful sweeping invasions, no marches upon the enemy capital and so on. There were wars of reduction, wars of annoyance. Napoleon developed the offensive by seizing upon the enthusiastic infantry of the republic, improving transport and mobile artillery, using road-making as an aggressive method. In spite of the successful experiment of Torres Vedras and the warning of Plevna the offensive remained dominant throughout the nineteenth century.

But three things were working quietly towards the rehabilitation of the defensive; firstly the increased range, accuracy and rapidity of rifle fire, with which we may include the development of the machine gun; secondly the increasing use of the spade, and thirdly the invention of barbed wire. By the end of the century these things had come so far into military theory as to produce the great essay of Bloch, and to surprise the British military people, who are not accustomed to read books or talk shop, in the Boer war. In the thinly populated war region of South Africa the difficulties of forcing entrenched positions were largely met by outflanking, the Boers had only a limited amount of barbed wire and could be held down in their trenches by shrapnel, and even at the beginning of the present war there can be little doubt that we and our Allies were still largely unprepared for the full possibilities of trench warfare, we attempted a war of manoeuvres, war at about the grade to which war had been brought in 1898, and it was the Germans who first brought the war up to date by entrenching upon the Aisne. We had, of course, a few aeroplanes at that time, but they were used chiefly as a sort of accessory cavalry for scouting; our artillery was light and our shell almost wholly shrapnel.

Now the grades of warfare that have been developed since the present war began, may be regarded as a series of elaborations and counter elaborations of the problem which begins as a line of

trenches behind wire, containing infantry with rifles and machine guns. Against this an infantry attack with bayonet, after shrapnel fails. This we will call Grade A. To this the offensive replies with improved artillery, and particularly with high explosive shell instead of shrapnel. By this the wire is blown away, the trench wrecked and the defender held down as the attack charges up. This is Grade B. But now appear the dug-out elaborating the trench and the defensive battery behind the trench. The defenders, under the preliminary bombardment, get into the dug-outs with their rifles and machine guns, and emerge as fresh as paint as the attack comes up. Obviously there is much scope for invention and contrivance in the dug-out as the reservoir of counter attacks. Its possibilities have been very ably exploited by the Germans. Also the defensive batteries behind, which have of course the exact range of the captured trench, concentrate on it and destroy the attack at the moment of victory. The trench falls back to its former holders under this fire and a counter attack. Check again for the offensive. Even if it can take, it cannot hold a position under these conditions. This we will call Grade A2; a revised and improved A. What is the retort from the opposite side? Obviously to enhance and extend the range of the preliminary bombardment behind the actual trench line, to destroy or block, if it can, the dug-outs and destroy or silence the counter offensive artillery. If it can do that, it can go on; otherwise Bloch wins.

If fighting went on only at ground level Bloch would win at this stage, but here it is that the aeroplane comes in. From the ground it would be practically impossible to locate the enemies' dug-outs, secondary defences, and batteries. But the aeroplane takes us immediately into a new grade of warfare, in which the location of the defender's secondary trenches, guns, and even machine-gun positions becomes a matter of extreme precision — provided only that the offensive has secured command of the air and can send his aeroplanes freely over the defender lines. Then the preliminary bombardment becomes of a much more extensive character; the defender's batteries are tackled by the overpowering fire of guns they are unable to locate and answer; the secondary dug-outs and strong places are plastered down, a barrage fire shuts off support from the doomed trenches, the men in these trenches are held down by a

concentrated artillery fire and the attack goes up at last to hunt them out of the dug-outs and collect the survivors. Until the attack is comfortably established in the captured trench, the fire upon the old counter attack position goes on. This is the grade, Grade B2, to which modern warfare has attained upon the Somme front. The appearance of the Tank has only increased the offensive advantage. There at present warfare rests.

There is, I believe, only one grade higher possible. The success of B2 depends upon the completeness of the aerial observation. The invention of an anti-aircraft gun which would be practically sure of hitting and bringing down an aeroplane at any height whatever up to 20,000 feet, would restore the defensive and establish what I should think must be the final grade of war, A3. But at present nothing of the sort exists and nothing of the sort is likely to exist for a very long time; at present hitting an aeroplane by any sort of gun at all is a rare and uncertain achievement. Such a gun is not impossible and therefore we must suppose such a gun will some day be constructed, but it will be of a novel type and character, unlike anything at present in existence. The grade of fighting that I was privileged to witness on the Somme, the grade at which a steady successful offensive is possible, is therefore, I conclude, the grade at which the present war will end.

2

But now having thus spread out the broad theory of the business, let me go on to tell some of the actualities of the Somme offensive. They key fact upon both British and French fronts was the complete ascendancy of the Allies aeroplanes. It is the necessary preliminary condition for the method upon which the great generals of the French army rely in this sanitary task of shoving the German Thing off the soil of Belgium and France back into its own land. A man who is frequently throwing out prophecies is bound to score a few successes, and one that I may legitimately claim is my early insistence upon that fact that the equality of the German aviator was likely to be inferior to that of his French or British rival. The ordinary German has neither the flexible quality of body, the

quickness of nerve, the temperament, nor the mental habits that make a successful aviator. This idea was first put into my head by considering the way in which Germans walk and carry themselves, and by nothing the difference in nimbleness between the cyclists in the streets of German and French towns. It was confirmed by a conversation I had with a German aviator who was also a dramatist, and who came to see me upon some copyright matter in 1912. He broached the view that aviation would destroy democracy, because he said only aristocrats make aviators. (He was a man of good family.) With a duke or so in my mind I asked him why. Because, he explained, a man without aristocratic quality in tradition, cannot possibly endure the "high loneliness" of the air. That sounded rather like nonsense at the time, and then I reflected that for a Prussian that might be true. There may be something in the German composition that does demand association and the support of pride and training before dangers can be faced. The Germans are social and methodical, the French and English are by comparison chaotic and instinctive; perhaps the very readiness for a conscious orderliness that makes the German so formidable upon the ground, so thorough and fore-seeking, makes him slow and unsure in the air. At any rate the experiences of this war have seemed to carry out this hypothesis. The German aviators will not as a class stand up to those of the Allies. They are not nimble in the air. Such champions as they have produced have been men of one trick; one of their great men, Immelmann — he was put down by an English boy a month or so ago — had a sort of hawk's swoop. He would go very high and then come down at his utmost pace at his antagonist, firing his machine gun at him as he came. If he missed in this hysterical lunge, he went on down.... This does not strike the Allied aviator as very brilliant. A gentleman of that sort can sooner or later be caught on the rise by going for him over the German lines.

The first phase, then, of the highest grade offensive, the ultimate development of war regardless of expense, is the clearance of the air. Such German machines as are up are put down by fighting aviators. These last fly high; in the clear blue of the early morning they look exactly like gnats; some trail a little smoke in the sunshine; they take their machine guns in pursuit over the German lines, and the German

anti-aircraft guns, the Archibalds, begin to pattern the sky about them with little balls of black smoke. From below one does not see men nor feel that men are there; it is as if it were an affair of midges. Close after the fighting machines come the photographic aeroplanes, with cameras as long as a man is high, flying low — at four or five thousand feet that is — over the enemy trenches. The Archibald leaves these latter alone; it cannot fire a shell to explode safely so soon after firing; but they are shot at with rifles and machine guns. They do not mind being shot at; only the petrol tank and the head and thorax of the pilot are to be considered vital. They will come back with forty or fifty bullet holes in the fabric. They will go under this fire along the length of the German positions exposing plate after plate; one machine will get a continuous panorama of many miles and then come back straight to the aerodrome to develop its plates.

There is no waste of time about the business, the photographs are developed as rapidly as possible. Within an hour and a half after the photographs were taken the first prints are going back into the bureau for the examination of the photographs. Both British and French air photographs are thoroughly scrutinised and marked.

An air photograph to an inexperienced eye is not a very illuminating thing; one makes our roads, blurs of wood, and rather vague buildings. But the examiner has an eye that has been in training; he is a picked man; he has at hand yesterday's photographs and last week's photographs, marked maps and all sorts of aids and records. If he is a Frenchman he is only too happy to explain his ideas and methods. Here, he will point out, is a little difference between the German trench beyond the wood since yesterday. For a number of reasons he thinks that will be a new machine gun emplacement; here at the centre of the farm wall they have been making another. This battery here — isn't it plain? Well, it's a dummy. The grass in front of it hasn't been scorched, and there's been no serious wear on the road here for a week. Presently the Germans will send one or two waggons up and down that road and instruct them to make figures of eight to imitate scorching on the grass in front of the gun. We know all about that. The real wear on the road, compare this and this and this, ends here at this spot. It turns off into the wood. There's a sort of track in the trees. Now look

where the trees are just a little displaced! (This lens is rather better for that.) *That's* one gun. You see? Here, I will show you another....

That process goes on two or three miles behind the front line. Very clean young men in white overalls do it as if it were a labour of love. And the Germans in the trenches, the German gunners, *know it is going on.* They know that in the quickest possible way these observations of the aeroplane that was over them just now will go to the gunners. The careful gunner, firing by the map and marking by aeroplane, kite balloon or direct observation, will be getting onto the located guns and machine guns in another couple of hours. The French claim that they have located new batteries, got their *tir de demolition* upon them in and destroyed them within five hours. The British I told of that found it incredible. Every day the French print special maps showing the guns, sham guns, trenches, everything of significance behind the German lines, showing everything that has happened in the last four-and-twenty hours. It is pitiless. It is indecent. The map-making and printing goes on in the room next and most convenient to the examination of the photographs. And, as I say, the German army knows of this, and knows that it cannot prevent it because of its aerial weakness. That knowledge is not the last among the forces that is crumpling up the German resistance upon the Somme.

I visited some French guns during the *tir de demolition* phase. I counted nine aeroplanes and twenty-six kite balloons in the air at the same time. There was nothing German visible in the air at all.

It is a case of eyes and no eyes.

The French attack resolves itself into a triple system of gunfire. First for a day or so, or two or three days, there is demolition fire to smash up all the exactly located batteries, organisation, supports, behind the front line enemy trenches; then comes barrage fire to cut off supplies and reinforcements; then, before the advance, the hammering down fire, "heads down," upon the trenches. When at last this stops and the infantry goes forward to rout out the trenches and the dug-outs, they go forward with a minimum of inconvenience. The first wave of attack fights, destroys, or disarms the surviving Germans and sends them back across the open to the French trenches. They run as fast as they can, hands up, and are shepherded

farther back. The French set to work to turn over the captured trenches and organise themselves against any counter attack that may face the barrage fire.

That is the formula of the present fighting, which the French have developed. After an advance there is a pause, while the guns move up nearer the Germans and fresh aeroplane reconnaissance goes on. Nowhere on this present offensive has a German counter attack had more than the most incidental success; and commonly they have had frightful losses. Then after a few days of refreshment and accumulation, the Allied attack resumes.

That is the perfected method of the French offensive. I had the pleasure of learning its broad outlines in good company, in the company of M. Joseph Reinach and Colonel Carence, the military writer. Their talk together and with me in the various messes at which we lunched was for the most part a keen discussion of every detail and every possibility of the offensive machine; every French officer's mess seems a little council upon the one supreme question in France, *how to do it best.* M. Reinach has made certain suggestions about the co-operation of the French and British that I will discuss elsewhere, but one great theme was the constitution of "the ideal battery." For years French military thought has been acutely attentive to the best number of guns for effective common action, and has tended rather to the small battery theory. My two companies were playing with the idea that the ideal battery was a battery of one big gun, with its own aeroplane and kite balloon marking for it.

The British seem to be associated with the adventurous self-reliance needed in the air. The British aeroplanes do not simply fight the Germans out of the sky; they also make themselves an abominable nuisance by bombing the enemy trenches. For every German bomb that is dropped by aeroplane on or behind the British lines, about twenty go down on the heads of the Germans. British air bombs upon guns, stores and communications do some of the work that the French effect by their systematic demolition fire.

And the British aviator has discovered and is rapidly developing an altogether fresh branch of air activity in the machine-gun attack at a very low altitude. Originally I believe this was tried in western

Egypt, but now it is being increasingly used upon the British front in France. An aeroplane which comes down suddenly, travelling very rapidly, to a few hundred feet, is quite hard to hit, even if it is not squirting bullets from a machine gun as it advances. Against infantry in the open this sort of thing is extremely demoralising. It is a method of attack still in its infancy, but there are great possibilities for it in the future, when the bending and cracking German line gives, as ultimately it must give if this offensive does not relax. If the Allies persist in their pressure upon the western front, if there is no relaxation in the supply of munitions from Britain and no lapse into tactical stupidity, a German retreat eastward is inevitable.

Now a cavalry pursuit alone may easily come upon disaster, cavalry can be so easily held up by wire and a few machine guns. I think the Germans have reckoned on that and on automobiles, probably only the decay of their *morale* prevents their opening their lines now on the chance of the British attempting some such folly as a big cavalry advance, but I do not think the Germans have reckoned on the use of machine guns in aeroplanes, supported by and supporting cavalry or automobiles. At the present time I should imagine there is no more perplexing consideration amidst the many perplexities of the German military intelligence than the new complexion put upon pursuit by these low level air developments. It may mean that in all sorts of positions where they had counted confidently on getting away, they may not be able to get away — from the face of a scientific advance properly commanding and using modern material in a dexterous and intelligent manner.

III. THE WAR LANDSCAPE

1

I saw rather more of the British than of the French aviators because of the vileness of the weather when I visited the latter. It is quite impossible for me to institute comparisons between these two services. I should think that the British organisation I saw would be hard to beat, and that none but the French could hope to beat it. On the Western front the aviation has been screwed up to a very much higher level than on the Italian line. In Italy it has not become, as it has in France, the decisive factor. The war on the Carso front in Italy — I say nothing of the mountain warfare, which is a thing in itself — is in fact still in the stage that I have called B. It is good warfare well waged, but not such an intensity of warfare. It has not, as one says of pianos and voices, the same compass.

This is true in spite of the fact that the Italians along of all the western powers have adopted a type of aeroplane larger and much more powerful than anything except the big Russian machines. They are not at all suitable for any present purpose upon the Italian front, but at a later stage, when the German is retiring and Archibald no longer searches the air, they would be invaluable on the western front because of their enormous bomb or machine gun carrying capacity. "But sufficient for the day is the swat thereof," as the British public schoolboy says, and no doubt we shall get them when we have sufficiently felt the need for them. The big Caproni machines which the Italians possess are of 300 h.p. and will presently be of 500 h.p. One gets up a gangway into them was one gets into a yacht; they wave a main deck, a forward machine gun deck and an aft machine gun; one may walk about in them; in addition to guns and men they carry a very considerable weight of bombs beneath. They cannot of course beget up with the speed nor soar to the height of our smaller aeroplanes; it is as carriers in raids behind a force of fighting machines that they should find their use.

The British establishment I visited was a very refreshing and reassuring piece of practical organisation. The air force of Great

Britain has had the good fortune to develop with considerable freedom from old army tradition; many of its officers are ex-civil engineers and so forth; Headquarters is a little shy of technical direction; and all this in a service that is still necessarily experimental and plastic is to the good. There is little doubt that, given a release from prejudice, bad associations and the equestrian tradition, British technical intelligence and energy can do just as well as the French. Our problem with our army is not to create intelligence, there is an abundance of it, but to release it from a dreary social and official pressure. The air service ransacks the army for men with technical training and sees that it gets them, there is a real keenness upon the work, and the men in these great mobile hangars talk shop readily and clearly.

I have already mentioned and the newspapers have told abundantly of the pluck, daring, and admirable work of our aviators; what is still untellable in any detail is the energy and ability of the constructive and repairing branch upon whose efficiency their feats depend. Perhaps the most interesting thing I saw in connection with the air work was the hospital for damaged machines and the dump to which those hopelessly injured are taken, in order that they may be disarticulated and all that is sound in them used for reconstruction. How excellently this work is being done may be judged from the fact that our offensive in July started with a certain number of aeroplanes, a number that would have seemed fantastic in a story a year before the war began. These aeroplanes were in constant action; they fought, they were shot down, they had their share of accidents. Not only did the repair department make good every loss, but after three weeks of the offensive the army was fighting with fifty more machines than at the outset. One goes through a vast Rembrandtesque shed opening upon a great sunny field, in whose cool shadows rest a number of interesting patients; captured and slightly damaged German machines, machines of our own with scars of battle upon them, one or two cases of bad landing. The star case came over from Peronne. It had come in two days ago.

I examined this machine and I will tell the state it was in, but I perceive that what I have to tell will read not like a sober statement of truth but like strained and silly lying. The machine had had a

direct hit from an Archibald shell. The propeller had been clean blown away; so had the machine gun and all its fittings. The engines had been stripped naked and a good deal bent about. The timber stay over the aviator had been broken, so that it is marvellous the wings of the machine did not just up at once like the wings of a butterfly. The solitary aviator had been wounded in the face. He had then come down in a long glide into the British lines, and made a tolerable landing....

2

One consequence of the growing importance of the aeroplane in warfare is the development of a new military art, the art of camouflage. Camouflage is humbugging disguise, it is making things — and especially in this connection, military things — seem not what they are, but something peaceful and rural, something harmless and quite uninteresting to aeroplane observers. It is the art of making big guns look like haystacks and tents like level patches of field.

Also it includes the art of making attractive models of guns, camps, trenches and the like that are not bona-fide guns, camps, or trenches at all, so that the aeroplane bomb-dropper and the aeroplane observer may waste his time and energies and the enemy gunfire be misdirected. In Italy I saw dummy guns so made as to deceive the very elect at a distance of a few thousand feet. The camouflage of concealment aims either at invisibility or imitation; I have seen a supply train look like a row of cottages, its smoke-stack a chimney, with the tops of sham palings running along the back of the engine and creepers painted up its sides. But that was a flight of the imagination; the commonest camouflage is merely to conceal. Trees are brought up and planted near the object to be hidden, it is painted in the same tones as its background, it is covered with an awning painted to look like grass or earth. I suppose it is only a matter of development before a dummy cow or so is put up to chew the cud on the awning.

But camouflage or no camouflage, the bulk of both the French and British forces in the new won ground of the great offensive lay necessarily in the open. Only the big guns and the advanced Red

Cross stations had got into pits and subterranean hiding places. The advance has been too rapid and continuous for the armies to make much of a toilette as they halted, and the destruction and the desolation of the country won afforded few facilities for easy concealment. Tents, transport, munitions, these all indicated an army on the march — at the rate of half a mile in a week or so, to Germany. If the wet and mud of November and December have for a time delayed that advance, the force behind has but accumulated for the resumption of the thrust.

3

A journey up from the base to the front trenches shows an interesting series of phases. One leaves Amiens, in which the normal life threads its way through crowds of resting men in khaki and horizon blue, in which staff officers in automobiles whisk hither and thither, in which there are nurses and even a few inexplicable ladies in worldly costume, in which restaurants and cafes are congested and busy, through which there is a perpetual coming and going of processions of heavy vans to the railway sidings. One dodges past a monstrous blue-black gun going up to the British front behind two resolute traction engines — the three sun-blistered young men in the cart that trails behind lounge in attitudes of haughty pride that would shame the ceiling gods of Hampton Court. One passes through arcades of waiting motor vans, through arcades of waiting motor vans, through suburbs still more intensely khaki or horizon blue, and so out upon the great straight poplar-edged road — to the front. Sometimes one laces through spates of heavy traffic, sometimes the dusty road is clear ahead, now we pass a vast aviation camp, now a park of waiting field guns, now an encampment of cavalry. One turns aside, and abruptly one is in France — France as one knew it before the war, on a shady secondary road, past a delightful chateau behind its iron gates, past a beautiful church, and then suddenly we are in a village street full of stately Indian soldiers.

It betrays no military secret to say that commonly the rare tourist to the British offensive passes through Albert, with its great modern red cathedral smashed to pieces and the great gilt Madonna and Child

that once surmounted the tower now, as everyone knows, hanging out horizontally in an attitude that irresistibly suggests an imminent dive upon the passing traveller. One looks right up under it.

Presently we begin to see German prisoners. The whole lot look entirely contented, and are guarded by perhaps a couple of men in khaki. These German prisoners do not attempt to escape, they have not the slightest desire for any more fighting, they have done their bit, they say, honour is satisfied; they give remarkably little trouble. A little way further on perhaps we pass their cage, a double barbed-wire enclosure with a few tents and huts within.

A string of covered waggons passes by. I turn and see a number of men sitting inside and looking almost as cheerful as a beanfeast in Epping Forest. They make facetious gestures. They have a subdued sing-song going on. But one of them looks a little sick, and then I notice not very obtrusive bandages. "Sitting-up cases," my guide explains.

These are part of the casualties of last night's fight.

The fields on either side are now more evidently in the war zone. The array of carts, the patches of tents, the coming and going of men increases. But here are three women harvesting, and presently in a cornfield are German prisoners working under one old Frenchman. Then the fields become trampled again. Here is a village, not so very much knocked about, and passing through it we go slowly beside a long column of men going up to the front. We scan their collars for signs of some familiar regiment. These are new men going up for the first time; there is a sort of solemn elation in many of their faces.

The men coming down are usually smothered in mud or dust, and unless there has been a fight they look pretty well done up. They stoop under their equipment, and some of the youngsters drag. One pleasant thing about this coming down is the welcome of the regimental band, which is usually at work as soon as the men turn off from the high road. I hear several bands on the British front; they do much to enhance the general cheerfulness. On one of these days of my tour I had the pleasure of seeing the — th Blankshires coming down after a fight. As we drew near I saw that they combined an extreme muddiness with an unusual elasticity. They all seemed to be looking us in the face instead of being too fagged to bother. Then I

noticed a nice grey helmet dangling from one youngster's bayonet, in fact his eye directed me to it. A man behind him had a black German helmet of the type best known in English illustrations; then two more grey appeared. The catch of helmets was indeed quite considerable. Then I perceived on the road bank above and marching parallel with this column, a double file of still muddier Germans. Either they wore caps or went bare-headed. There were no helmets among them. We do not rob our prisoners but — a helmet is a weapon. Anyhow, it is an irresistible souvenir.

Now and then one sees afar off an ammunition dump, many hundreds of stacks of shells — without their detonators as yet — being unloaded from railway trucks, transferred from the broad gauge to the narrow gauge line, or loaded onto motor trolleys. Now and then one crosses a railway line. The railway lines run everywhere behind the British front, the construction follows the advance day by day. They go up as fast as the guns. One's guide remarks as the car bumps over the level crossing, "That is one of Haig's railways." It is an aspect of the Commander-in-Chief that has much impressed and pleased the men. And at last we begin to enter the region of the former Allied trenches, we pass the old German front line, we pass ruined houses, ruined fields, and thick patches of clustering wooden crosses and boards where the dead of the opening assaults lie. There are no more reapers now, there is no more green upon the fields, there is no green anywhere, scarcely a tree survives by the roadside, but only overthrown trunks and splintered stumps; the fields are wildernesses of shell craters and coarse weeds, the very woods are collections of blasted stems and stripped branches. This absolutely ravaged and ruined battlefield country extends now along the front of the Somme offensive for a depth of many miles; across it the French and British camps and batteries creep forward, the stores, the dumps, the railways creep forward, in their untiring, victorious thrust against the German lines. Overhead hum and roar the aeroplanes, away towards the enemy the humped, blue sausage-shaped kite balloons brood thoughtfully, and from this point and that, guns, curiously invisible until they speak, flash suddenly and strike their one short hammer-blow of sound.

Then one sees an enemy shell drop among the little patch of trees

on the crest to the right, and kick up a great red-black mass of smoke and dust. We see it, and then we hear the whine of its arrival and at last the bang. The Germans are blind now, they have lost the air, they are firing by guesswork and their knowledge of the abandoned territory.

"They think they have got divisional headquarters there," someone remarks.... "They haven't. But they keep on."

In this zone where shells burst the wise automobile stops and tucks itself away as inconspicuously as possible close up to a heap of ruins. There is very little traffic on the road now except for a van or so that hurries up, unloads, and gets back as soon as possible. Mules and men are taking the stuff the rest of the journey. We are in a flattened village, all undermined by dug-outs that were in the original German second line. We report ourselves to a young troglodyte in one of these, and are given a guide, and so set out on the last part of the journey to the ultimate point, across the land of shell craters and barbed wire litter and old and new trenches. We have all put on British steel helmets, hard but heavy and inelegant head coverings. I can write little that is printable about these aesthetic crimes. The French and German helmets are noble and beautiful things. These lumpish *pans*...

They ought to be called by the name of the man who designed them.

Presently we are advised to get into a communication trench. It is not a very attractive communication trench, and we stick to our track across the open. Three or four shells shiver overhead, but we decide they are British shells, going out. We reach a supporting trench in which men are waiting in a state of nearly insupportable boredom for the midday stew, the one event of interest in a day-long vigil. Here we are told imperatively to come right in at once, and we do.

All communication trenches are tortuous and practically endless. On an offensive front they have vertical sides of unsupported earth and occasional soakaways for rain, covered by wooden gratings, and they go on and on and on. At rare intervals they branch, and a notice board says "To Regent Street," or "To Oxford Street," or some such lie. It is all just trench. For a time you talk, but talking in single file soon palls. You cease to talk, and trudge. A great number of

telephone wires come into the trench and cross and recross it. You cannot keep clear of them. Your helmet pings against them and they try to remove it. Sometimes you have to stop and crawl under wires. Then you wonder what the trench is like in really wet weather. You hear a shell burst at no great distance. You pass two pages of *The Strand Magazine.* Perhaps thirty yards on you pass a cigarette end. After these sensational incidents the trench quiets down again and continues to wind endlessly — just a sandy, extremely narrow vertical walled trench. A giant crack.

At last you reach the front line trench. On an offensive sector it has none of the architectural interest of first line trenches at such places as Soissons or Arras. It was made a week or so ago by joining up shell craters, and if all goes well we move into the German trench along by the line of scraggy trees, at which we peep discreetly, tomorrow night. We can peep discreetly because just at present our guns are putting shrapnel over the enemy at the rate of about three shells a minute, the puffs follow each other up and down the line, and no Germans are staring out to see us.

The Germans "strafed" this trench overnight, and the men are tired and sleepy. Our guns away behind us are doing their best now to give them a rest by strafing the Germans. One or two men are in each forward sap keeping a look out; the rest sleep, a motionless sleep, in the earthy shelter pits that have been scooped out. One officer sits by a telephone under an earth-covered tarpaulin, and a weary man is doing the toilet of a machine gun. We go on to a shallow trench in which we must stoop, and which has been badly knocked about.... Here we have to stop. The road to Berlin is not opened up beyond this point.

My companion on this excursion is a man I have admired for years and never met until I came out to see the war, a fellow writer. He is a journalist let loose. Two-thirds of the junior British officers I met on this journey were really not "army men" at all. One finds that the apparent subaltern is really a musician, or a musical critic, or an Egyptologist, or a solicitor, or a cloth manufacturer, or a writer. At the outbreak of the war my guide dyed his hair to conceal its tell-tale silver, and having been laughed to scorn by the ordinary recruiting people, enlisted in the sportsmen's battalion. He was wounded, and

then the authorities discovered that he was likely to be of more use with a commission and drew him, in spite of considerable resistance, out of the firing line. To which he always returns whenever he can get a visitor to take with him as an excuse. He now stood up, fairly high and clear, explaining casually that the Germans were no longer firing, and showed me the points of interest.

I had come right up to No Man's Land at last. It was under my chin. The skyline, the last skyline before the British could look down on Bapaume, showed a mangy wood and a ruined village, crouching under repeated gobbings of British shrapnel. "They've got a battery just there, and we're making it uncomfortable." No Man's Land itself is a weedy space broken up by shell craters, with very little barbed wire in front of us and very little in front of the Germans. "They've got snipers in most of the craters, and you see them at twilight hopping about from one to the other." We have very little wire because we don't mean to stay for very long in this trench, but the Germans have very little wire because they have not been able to get it up yet. They never will get it up now....

I had been led to believe that No Man's Land was littered with the unburied dead, but I saw nothing of the sort at this place. There had been no German counter attack since our men came up here. But at one point as we went along the trench there was a dull stench. "Germans, I think," said my guide, though I did not see how he could tell.

He looked at his watch and remarked reluctantly, "If you start at once, you may just do it."

I wanted to catch the Boulogne boat. It was then just past one in the afternoon. We met the stew as we returned along the communication trench, and it smelt very good indeed.... We hurried across the great spaces of rusty desolation upon which every now and again a German shell was bursting....

That night I was in my flat in London. I had finished reading the accumulated letters of some weeks, and I was just going comfortably to bed.

IV. NEW ARMS FOR OLD ONES

1

Such are the landscapes and method of modern war. It is more difficult in its nature from war as it was waged in the nineteenth century than that was from the nature of the phalanx or the legion. The nucleus fact — when I talked to General Joffre he was very insistent upon this point — is still as ever the ordinary fighting man, but all the accessories and conditions of his personal encounter with the fighting man of the other side have been revolutionised in a quarter of a century. The fighting together in a close disciplined order, shoulder to shoulder, which has held good for thousands of years as the best and most successful fighting, has been destroyed; the idea of *breaking* infantry formation as the chief offensive operation has disappeared, the cavalry charge and the cavalry pursuit are as obsolete as the cross-bow. The modern fighting man is as individualised as a half back or a centre forward in a football team. Personal fighting has become "scrapping" again, an individual adventure with knife, club, bomb, revolver or bayonet. In this war we are working out things instead of thinking them out, and these enormous changes are still but imperfectly apprehended. The trained and specialised military man probably apprehends them as feebly as anyone.

This is a thing that I want to state as emphatically as possible. It is the pith of the lesson I have learnt at the front. The whole method of war has been so altered in the past five and twenty years as to make it a new and different process altogether. Much the larger part of this alteration has only become effective in the last two years. Everyone is a beginner at this new game; everyone is experimenting and learning.

The idea has been put admirably by *Punch.* That excellent picture of the old-fashioned sergeant who complains to his officer of the new recruit; "'E's all right in the trenches, Sir; 'e's all right at a scrap; but 'e won't never make a soldier," is the quintessence of everything I am saying here. And were there not the very gravest doubts about

General Smuts in British military circles because he had "had no military training"? A Canadian expressed the new view very neatly on being asked, in consequence of a deficient salute, whether he wanted to be a soldier, by saying, "Not I! I want to be a fighter!"

The professional officer of the old dispensation was a man specialised in relation to one of the established "arms." He was an infantryman, a cavalryman, a gunner or an engineer. It will be interesting to trace the changes that have happened to all these arms.

Before this war began speculative writers had argued that infantry drill in close formation had now no fighting value whatever, that it was no doubt extremely necessary for the handling, packing, forwarding and distribution of men, but that the ideal infantry fighter was now a highly individualised and self-reliant man put into a pit with a machine gun, and supported by a string of other men bringing him up supplies and ready to assist him in any forward rush that might be necessary.

The opening phases of the war seemed to contradict this. It did not at first suit the German game to fight on this most modern theory, and isolated individual action is uncongenial to the ordinary German temperament and opposed to the organised social tendencies of German life. To this day the Germans attack only in close order; they are unable to produce a real modern infantry for aggressive purposes, and it is a matter of astonishment to military minds on the English side that our hastily trained new armies should turn out to be just as good at the new fighting as the most "seasoned troops." But there is no reason whatever why they should not be. "Leading," in the sense of going ahead of the men and making them move about mechanically at the word of command, has ceased. On the British side our magnificent new subalterns and our equally magnificent new non-commissioned officers play the part of captains of football teams; they talk their men individually into an understanding of the job before them; they criticise style and performance. On the French side things have gone even farther. Every man in certain attacks has been given a large scale map of the ground over which he has to go, and has had his own individual job clearly marked and explained to him. All the Allied infantrymen tend to become specialised, as bombers, as machine-gun men, and so on. The unspecialised

common soldier, the infantryman who has stood and marched and moved in ranks and ranks, the "serried lines of men," who are the main substance of every battle story for the last three thousand years, are as obsolete as the dodo. The rifle and bayonet very probably are becoming obsolete too. Knives and clubs and revolvers serve better in the trenches. The krees and the Roman sword would be as useful. The fine flourish of the bayonet is only possible in the rare infrequent open. Even the Zulu assegai would serve as well.

The two operations of the infantry attack now are the rush and the "scrap." These come after the artillery preparation. Against the rush, the machine gun is pitted. The machine gun becomes lighter and more and more controllable by one man; as it does so the days of the rifle draw to a close. Against the machine gun we are now directing the "Tank," which goes ahead and puts out the machine gun as soon as it begins to sting the infantry rush. We are also using the swooping aeroplane with a machine gun. Both these devices are of British origin, and they promise very well.

After the rush and the scrap comes the organisation of the captured trench. "Digging in" completes the cycle of modern infantry fighting. You may consider this the first or the last phase of an infantry operation. It is probably at present the least worked-out part of the entire cycle. Here lies the sole German superiority; they bunch and crowd in the rush, they are inferior at the scrap, but they do dig like moles. The weakness of the British is their failure to settle down. They like the rush and the scrap; they press on too far, they get outflanked and lost "in the blue"; they are not naturally clever at the excavating part of the work, and they are not as yet well trained in making dug-outs and shelter-pits rapidly and intelligently. They display most of the faults that were supposed to be most distinctively French before this war came to revolutionise all our conceptions of French character.

2

Now the operations of this modern infantry, which unlike any preceding infantry in the history of war does not fight in disciplined formations but as highly individualised specialists, are determined

almost completely by the artillery preparation. Artillery is now the most essential instrument of war. You may still get along with rather bad infantry; you may still hold out even after the loss of the aerial ascendancy, but so soon as your guns fail you approach defeat. The backbone process of the whole art of war is the manufacture in overwhelming quantities, the carriage and delivery of shell upon the vulnerable points of the enemy's positions. That is, so to speak, the essential blow. Even the infantryman is now hardly more than the residuary legatee after the guns have taken their toll.

I have now followed nearly every phase in the life history of a shell from the moment when it is a segment of steel bar just cut off, to the moment when it is no more than a few dispersed and rusting rags and fragments of steel — pressed upon the stray visitor to the battlefield as souvenirs. All good factories are intensely interesting places to visit, but a good munition factory is romantically satisfactory. It is as nearly free from the antagonism of employer and employed as any factory can be. The busy sheds I visited near Paris struck me as being the most living and active things in the entire war machine. Everywhere else I saw fitful activity, or men waiting. I have seen more men sitting about and standing about, more bored inactivity, during my tour than I have ever seen before in my life. Even the front line trenches seem to slumber; the Angel of Death drowses over them, and moves in his sleep to crush out men's lives. The gunfire has an indolent intermittence. But the munition factories grind on night and day, grinding against the factories in Central Europe, grinding out the slow and costly and necessary victory that should end aggressive warfare in the world for ever.

It would be very interesting if one could arrange a meeting between any typical Allied munition maker on the one hand, and the Kaiser and Hindenburg, those two dominant effigies of the German nationalists' dream of "world might." Or failing that, Mr. Dyson might draw the encounter. You imagine these two heroic figures got up for the interview, very magnificent in shining helms and flowing cloaks, decorations, splendid swords, spurs. "Here," one would say, "is the power that has held you. You were bolstered up very loyally by the Krupp firm and so forth, you piled up shell, guns, war material, you hoped to snatch your victory before the

industrialisation and invention of the world could turn upon you. But you failed. You were not rapid enough. The battle of the Marne was your misfortune. And Ypres. You lost some chances at Ypres. Two can play at destructive industrialism, and now we out-gun you. We are piling up munitions now faster than you. The essentials of this Game of the War Lord are idiotically simple, but it was not of our choosing. It is now merely a question of months before you make your inevitable admission. This is no war to any great commander's glory. This gentleman in the bowler hat is the victor, Sire; not you. Assisted, Sire, by these disrespectful-looking factory girls in overalls."

For example, there is M. Citroen. Before the war I understand he made automobiles; after the war he wants to turn to and make automobiles again. For the duration of the war he makes shell. He has been temporarily diverted from constructive to destructive industrialism. He did me the honours of his factory. He is a compact, active man in dark clothes and a bowler hat, with a pencil and notebook conveniently at hand. He talked to me in carefully easy French, and watched my face with an intelligent eye through his pince-nez for the signs of comprehension. Then he went on to the next point.

He took me through every stage of his process. In his office he showed me the general story. Here were photographs of certain vacant fields and old sheds— "this place" — he indicated the altered prospect from the window— "at the outbreak of the war." He showed me a plan of the first undertaking. "Now we have rather over nine thousand workpeople."

He showed me a little row of specimens. "These we make for Italy. These go to Russia. These are the Rumanian pattern."

Thence to the first stage, the chopping up of the iron bars, the furnace, the punching out of the first shape of the shell; all this is men's work. I had seen this sort of thing before in peace ironworks, but I saw it again with the same astonishment, the absolute precision of movement on the part of the half-naked sweating men, the calculated efficiency of each worker, the apparent heedlessness, the real certitude, with which the blazing hot cylinder is put here, dropped there, rolls to its next appointed spot, is chopped up and

handed on, the swift passage to the cooling crude, pinkish-purple shell shape. Down a long line one sees in perspective a practical symmetry, of furnace and machine group and the shells marching on from this first series of phases to undergo the long succession of operations, machine after machine, across the great width of the shed in which eighty per cent of the workers are women. There is a thick dust of sounds in the air, a rumble of shafting, sudden thuddings, clankings, and M. Citroen has to raise his voice. He points out where he has made little changes in procedures, cut out some wasteful movement.... He has an idea and makes a note in the ever-ready notebook.

There is a beauty about all these women, there is extraordinary grace in their finely adjusted movements. I have come from an after-lunch coffee upon the boulevards and from watching the ugly fashion of our time; it is a relief to be reminded that most women can after all be beautiful — if only they would not "dress." these women wear simple overalls and caps. In the cap is a rosette. Each shed has its own colour of rosette.

"There is much esprit de corps here," says M. Citroen.

"And also," he adds, showing obverse as well as reverse of the world's problem of employment and discipline, "we can see at once if a woman is not in her proper shed."

Across the great sheds under the shafting — how fine it must look at night! — the shells march, are shaped, cut, fitted with copper bands, calibrated, polished, varnished....

Then we go on to another system of machines in which lead is reduced to plastic ribbons and cut into shrapnel bullets as the sweetstuff makers pull out and cut up sweetstuff. And thence into a warren of hot underground passages in which run the power cables. There is not a cable in the place that is not immediately accessible to the electricians. We visit the dynamos and a vast organisation of switchboards....

These things are more familiar to M. Citroen than they are to me. He wants me to understand, but he does not realise that I would like a little leisure to wonder. What is interesting him just now, because it is the newest thing, is his method of paying his workers. He lifts a hand gravely: "I said, what we must do is abolish altogether the

counting of change."

At a certain hour, he explained, came pay-time. The people had done; it was to his interest and their that they should get out of the works as quickly as possible and rest and amuse themselves. He watched them standing in queues at the wickets while inside someone counted; so many francs, so many centimes. It bored him to see this useless, tiresome waiting. It is abolished. Now at the end of each week the worker goes to a window under the initial of his name, and is handed a card on which these items have been entered:

Balance from last week. So many hours at so much. Premiums.

The total is so many francs, so many centimes. This is divided into the nearest round number, 100, 120, 80 francs as the case may be, and a balance of the odd francs and centimes. The latter is carried forward to the next week's account. At the bottom of the card is a tear-off coupon with a stamp, coloured to indicate the round sum, green, let us say, for 100, blue for 130 francs. This is taken to a wicket marked 100 or 130 as the case may be, and there stands a cashier with his money in piles of 100 or 130 francs counted ready to hand; he sweeps in the coupon, sweeps out the cash. "*Next!*"

I became interested in the worker's side of this organisation. I insist on seeing the entrances, the clothes-changing places, the lavatories, and so forth of the organisation. As we go about we pass a string of electric trolleys steered by important-looking girls, and loaded with shell, finished as far as these works are concerned and on their way to the railway siding. We visit the hospital, for these works demand a medical staff. It is not only that men and women faint or fall ill, but there are accidents, burns, crushings, and the like. The war casualties begin already here, and they fall chiefly among the women. I saw a wounded woman with a bandaged face sitting very quietly in the corner.

The women here face danger, perhaps not quite such obvious danger as the women who, at the next stage in the shell's career, make and pack the explosives in their silk casing, but quite considerable risk. And they work with a real enthusiasm. They know they are fighting the Bloches as well as any men. Certain of them wear Russian decorations. The women of this particular factory have been thanked by the Tsar, and a number of decorations were sent by

him for distribution among them.

3

The shell factory and the explosives shed stand level with the drill yard as the real first stage in one of the two essential *punches* in modern war. When one meets the shell again it is being unloaded from the railway truck into an ammunition dump. And here the work of control is much more the work of a good traffic manager than of the old-fashioned soldier.

The dump I best remember I visited on a wet and windy day. Over a great space of ground the sidings of the rail-head spread, the normal gauge rail-head spread out like a fan and interdigitated with the narrow gauge lines that go up practically to the guns. And also at the sides camions were loading, and an officer from the Midi in charge of one of these was being dramatically indignant at five minutes' delay. Between these two sets of lines, shells were piled of all sizes, I should think some hundreds of thousands of shells altogether, wet and shining in the rain. French reservists, soldiers from Madagascar, and some Senegalese were busy at different points loading and unloading the precious freights. A little way from me were despondent-looking German prisoners handling timber. All this dump was no more than an eddy as it were in the path of the shell from its birth from the steel bars near Paris to the accomplishment of its destiny in the destruction or capture of more Germans.

And next the visitor meets the shell coming up upon a little trolley to the gun. He sees the gunners, as drilled and precise as the men he saw at the forges, swing out the breech block and run the shell, which has met and combined with its detonators and various other industrial products since it left the main dump, into the gun. The breech closes like a safe door, and hides the shell from the visitor. It is "good-bye." He receives exaggerated warning of the danger to his ears, stuffs his fingers into them, and opens his mouth as instructed, hears a loud but by no means deafening report, and sees a spit of flame near the breech. Regulations of a severe character prevent his watching from an aeroplane the delivery of the goods upon the customers opposite.

I have already described the method of locating enemy guns and

so forth by photography. Many of the men at this work are like dentists rather than soldiers; they are busy in carefully lit rooms, they wear white overalls, they have clean hands and laboratory manners. The only really romantic figure in the whole of this process, the only figure that has anything of the old soldierly swagger about him still, is the aviator. And, as one friend remarked to me when I visited the work of the British flying corps, "The real essential strength of this arm is the organisation of its repairs. Here is one of the repair vans through which our machine guns go. It is a motor workshop on wheels. But at any time all this park, everything, can pack up and move forward like Barnum and Bailey's Circus. The machine guns come through this shop in rotation; they go out again, cleaned, repaired, made new again. Since we got all that working we have heard nothing of a machine gun jamming in any air fight at all."...

The rest of the career of the shell after it has left the gun one must imagine chiefly from the incoming shell from the enemy. You see suddenly a flying up of earth and stones and anything else that is movable in the neighbourhood of the shell-burst, the instantaneous unfolding of a dark cloud of dust and reddish smoke, which comes very quickly to a certain size and then begins slowly to fray out and blow away. Then, after seeing the cloud of the burst you hear the hiss of the shell's approach, and finally you are hit by the sound of the explosion. This is the climax and end of the life history of any shell that is not a dud shell. Afterwards the battered fuse may serve as some journalist's paper-weight. The rest is scrap iron.

Such is, so to speak, the primary process of modern warfare. I will not draw the obvious pacifist moral of the intense folly of human concentration upon such a process. The Germans willed it. We Allies have but obeyed the German will for warfare because we could not do otherwise, we have taken up this simple game of shell delivery, and we are teaching them that we can play it better, in the hope that so we and the world may be freed from the German will-to-power and all its humiliating and disgusting consequences henceforth for ever. Europe now is no more than a household engaged in holding up and if possible overpowering a monomaniac member.

Now the whole of this process of the making and delivery of a shell, which is the main process of modern warfare, is one that can be far better conducted by a man accustomed to industrial organisation or transit work than by the old type of soldier. This is a thing that cannot be too plainly stated or too often repeated. Germany nearly won this way because of her tremendously modern industrial resources; but she blundered into it and she is losing it because she has too many men in military uniform and because their tradition and interests were to powerful with her. All the state and glories of soldiering, the bright uniforms, the feathers and spurs, the flags, the march-past, the disciplined massed advance, the charge; all these are as needless and obsolete now in war as the masks and shields of an old-time Chinese brave. Liberal-minded people talk of the coming dangers of militarism in the face of events that prove conclusively that professional militarism is already as dead as Julius Caesar. What is coming is not so much the conversion of men into soldiers as the socialisation of the economic organisation of the country with a view to both national and international necessities. We do not want to turn a chemist or a photographer into a little figure like a lead soldier, moving mechanically at the word of command, but we do want to make his chemistry or photography swiftly available if the national organisation is called upon to fight.

We have discovered that the modern economic organisation is in itself a fighting machine. It is so much so that it is capable of taking on and defeating quite easily any merely warrior people that is so rash as to pit itself against it. Within the last sixteen years methods of fighting have been elaborated that have made war an absolutely hopeless adventure for any barbaric or non-industrialised people. In the rush of larger events few people have realised the significance of the rapid squashing of the Senussi in western Egypt, and the collapse of De Wet's rebellion in South Africa. Both these struggles would have been long, tedious and uncertain even in A.D. 1900. This time they have been, so to speak, child's play.

Occasionally into the writer's study there come to hand drifting fragments of the American literature upon the question of "preparedness," and American papers discussing the Mexican situation. In none of these is there evident any clear realisation of the

fundamental revolution that has occurred in military methods during the last two years. It looks as if a Mexican war, for example, was thought of as an affair of rather imperfectly trained young men with rifles and horses and old-fashioned things like that. A Mexican war on that level might be as tedious as the South African war. But if the United States preferred to go into Mexican affairs with what I may perhaps call a 1916 autumn outfit instead of the small 1900 outfit she seems to possess at present, there is no reason why America should not clear up any and every Mexican guerilla force she wanted to in a few weeks.

To do that she would need a plant of a few hundred aeroplanes, for the most part armed with machine guns, and the motor repair vans and so forth needed to go with the aeroplanes; she would need a comparatively small army of infantry armed with machine guns, with motor transport, and a few small land ironclads. Such a force could locate, overtake, destroy and disperse any possible force that a country in the present industrial condition of Mexico could put into the field. No sort of entrenchment or fortification possible in Mexico could stand against it. It could go from one end of the country to the other without serious loss, and hunt down and capture anyone it wished....

The practical political consequence of the present development of warfare, of the complete revolution in the conditions of warfare since this century began, is to make war absolutely hopeless for any peoples not able either to manufacture or procure the very complicated appliances and munitions now needed for its prosecution. Countries like Mexico, Bulgaria, Serbia, Afghanistan or Abyssinia are no more capable of going to war without the connivance and help of manufacturing states than horses are capable of flying. And this makes possible such a complete control of war by the few great states which are at the necessary level of industrial development as not the most Utopian of us have hitherto dared to imagine.

5

Infantrymen with automobile transport, plentiful machine guns,

Tanks and such-like accessories; that is the first Arm in modern war. The factory hand and all the material of the shell route from the factory to the gun constitute the second Arm. Thirdly comes the artillery, the guns and the photographic aeroplanes working with the guns. Next I suppose we must count sappers and miners as a fourth Arm of greatly increased importance. The fifth and last combatant Arm is the modern substitute for cavalry; and that also is essentially a force of aeroplanes supported by automobiles. Several of the French leaders with whom I talked seemed to be convinced that the horse is absolutely done with in modern warfare. There is nothing, they declared, that cavalry ever did that cannot now be done better by aeroplane.

This is something to break the hearts of the Prussian junkers and of old-fashioned British army people. The hunt across the English countryside, the preservation of the fox as a sacred animal, the race meeting, the stimulation of betting in all classes of the public; all these things depend ultimately upon the proposition that the "breed of horses" is of vital importance to the military strength of Great Britain. But if the arguments of these able French soldiers are sound, the cult of the horse ceases to be of any more value to England than the elegant activities of the Toxophilite Society. Moreover, there has been a colossal buying of horses for the British army, a tremendous organisation for the purchase and supply of fodder, then employment of tens of thousands of men as grooms, minders and the like, who would otherwise have been in the munition factories or the trenches.

To what possible use can cavalry be put? Can it be used in attack? Not against trenches; that is better done by infantrymen following up gunfire. Can it be used against broken infantry in the open? Not if the enemy has one or two machine guns covering their retreat. Against expose infantry the swooping aeroplane with a machine gun is far more deadly and more difficult to hit. Behind it your infantry can follow to receive surrenders; in most circumstances they can come up on cycles if it is a case of getting up quickly across a wide space. Similarly for pursuit the use of wire and use of the machine gun have abolished the possibility of a pouring cavalry charge. The swooping aeroplane does everything that cavalry can do in the way of disorganising the enemy, and far more than it can do in the way of

silencing machine guns. It can capture guns in retreat much more easily by bombing traction engines and coming down low and shooting horses and men. An ideal modern pursuit would be an advance of guns, automobiles full of infantry, motor cyclists and cyclists, behind a high screen of observation aeroplanes and a low screen of bombing and fighting aeroplanes. Cavalry *might* advance across fields and so forth, but only as a very accessory part of the general advance....

And what else is there for the cavalry to do?

It may be argued that horses can go over country that is impossible for automobiles. That is to ignore altogether what has been done in this war by such devices as caterpillar wheels. So far from cavalry being able to negotiate country where machines would stick and fail, mechanism can now ride over places where any horse would flounder.

I submit these considerations to the horse-lover. They are not my original observations; they have been put to me and they have convinced me. Except perhaps as a parent of transport mules I see no further part henceforth for the horse to play in war.

6

The form and texture of the coming warfare — if there is still warfare to come — are not yet to be seen in their completeness upon the modern battlefield. One swallow does not make a summer, nor a handful of aeroplanes, a "Tank" or so, a few acres of shell craters, and a village here and there, pounded out of recognition, do more than foreshadow the spectacle of modernised war on land. War by these developments has become the monopoly of the five great industrial powers; it is their alternative to end or evolve it, and if they continue to disagree, then it must needs become a spectacle of majestic horror such as no man can yet conceive. It has been wise of Mr. Pennell therefore, who has recently been drawing his impressions of the war upon stone, to make his pictures not upon the battlefield, but among the huge industrial apparatus that is thrusting behind and thrusting up through the war of the gentlemen in spurs. He gives us the splendours and immensities of forge and gun pit,

furnace and mine shaft. He shows you how great they are and how terrible. Among them go the little figures of men, robbed of all dominance, robbed of all individual quality. He leaves it for you to draw the obvious conclusion that presently, if we cannot contrive to put an end to war, blacknessess like these, enormities and flares and towering threats, will follow in the track of the Tanks and come trampling over the bickering confusion of mankind.

There is something very striking in these insignificant and incidental men that Mr. Pennell shows us. Nowhere does a man dominate in all these wonderful pictures. You may argue perhaps that that is untrue to the essential realities; all this array of machine and workshop, all this marshalled power and purpose, has been the creation of inventor and business organiser. But are we not a little too free with that word "*creation*"? Falstaff was a "creation" perhaps, or the Sistine sibyls; there we have indubitably an end conceived and sought and achieved; but did these inventors and business organisers do more than heed certain unavoidable imperatives? Seeking coal they were obliged to mine in a certain way; seeking steel they had to do this and this and not that and that; seeking profit they had to obey the imperative of the economy. So little did they plan their ends that most of these manufacturers speak with a kind of astonishment of the deadly use to which their works are put. They find themselves making the new war as a man might wake out of some drugged condition to find himself strangling his mother.

So that Mr. Pennell's sketchy and transient human figures seem altogether right to me. He sees these forges, workshops, cranes and the like, as inhuman and as wonderful as cliffs or great caves or icebergs or the stars. They are a new aspect of the logic of physical necessity that made all these older things, and he seizes upon the majesty and beauty of their dimensions with an entire impartiality. And they are as impartial. Through all these lithographs runs one present motif, the motif of the supreme effort of western civilisation to save itself and the world from the dominance of the reactionary German Imperialism of modern science. The pictures are arranged to shape out the life of a shell, from the mine to the great gun; nothing remains of their history to show except the ammunition dump, the gun in action and the shell-burst. Upon this theme all these great

appearances are strung to-day. But to-morrow they may be strung upon some other and nobler purpose. These gigantic beings of which the engineer is the master and slave, are neither benevolent nor malignant. To-day they produce destruction, they are the slaves of the spur; to-morrow we hope they will bridge and carry and house and help again.

For that peace we struggle against the dull inflexibility of the German Will-to-Power.

V. TANKS

1

It is the British who have produced the "land ironclad" since I returned from France, and used it apparently with very good effect. I felt no little chagrin at not seeing them there, because I have a peculiar interest in these contrivances. It would be more than human not to claim a little in this matter. I described one in a story in *The Strand Magazine* in 1903, and my story could stand in parallel columns beside the first account of these monsters in action given by Mr. Beach Thomas or Mr. Philip Gibbs. My friend M. Joseph Reinach has successfully passed off long extracts from my story as descriptions of the Tanks upon British officers who had just seen them. The filiation was indeed quite traceable. They were my grandchildren — I felt a little like King Lear when first I read about them. Yet let me state at once that I was certainly not their prime originator. I took up an idea, manipulated it slightly, and handed it on. The idea was suggested to me by the contrivances of a certain Mr. Diplock, whose "ped-rail" notion, the notion of a wheel that was something more than a wheel, a wheel that would take locomotives up hill-sides and over ploughed fields, was public property nearly twenty years ago. Possibly there were others before Diplock. To the Ped-rail also Commander Murray Sueter, one of the many experimentalists upon the early tanks, admits his indebtedness, and it would seem that Mr. Diplock was actually concerned in the earlier stage of the tanks.

Since my return I have been able to see the Tank at home, through the courtesy of the Ministry of Munitions. They have progressed far beyond any recognisable resemblance to the initiatives of Mr. Diplock; they have approximated rather to the American caterpillar. As I suspected when first I heard of these devices, the War Office and the old army people had practically nothing to do with their development. They took to it very reluctantly — as they have taken to every novelty in this war. One brilliant general scrawled over an early proposal the entirely characteristic comment that it was a pity

the inventor could not use his imagination to better purpose. (That foolish British trick of sneering at "imagination" has cost us hundreds of thousands of useless casualties and may yet lose us the war.) Tanks were first mooted at the front about a year and a half ago; Mr. Winston Churchill was then asking questions about their practicability; he filled many simple souls with terror; they thought him a most dangerous lunatic. The actual making of the Tanks arose as an irregular side development of the armoured-car branch of the Royal Naval Air Service work. The names most closely associated with the work are (I quote a reply of Dr. Macnamara's in the House of Commons) Mr. d'Eyncourt, the Director of Naval Construction, Mr. W. O. Tritton, Lieut. Wilson, R.N.A.S., Mr. Bussell, Lieut. Stern, R.N.A.S., who is now Colonel Stern, Captain Symes, and Mr. F. Skeens. There are many other claims too numerous to mention in detail.

But however much the Tanks may disconcert the gallant Colonel Newcomes who throw an air of restraint over our victorious front, there can be no doubt that they are an important as well as a novel development of the modern offensive. Of course neither the Tanks nor their very obvious next developments going to wrest the decisive pre-eminence from the aeroplane. The aeroplane remains now more than ever the instrument of victory upon the western front. Aerial ascendancy, properly utilised, is victory. But the mobile armoured big gun and the Tank as a machine-gun silencer must enormously facilitate an advance against the blinded enemy. Neither of them can advance against properly aimed big gun fire. That has to be disposed of before they make their entrance. It remains the function of the aeroplane to locate the hostile big guns and to direct the *tir de demolition* upon them before the advance begins — possibly even to bomb them out. But hitherto, after the destruction of driving back of the defender's big guns has been effected, the dug-out and the machine gun have still inflicted heavy losses upon the advancing infantry until the fight is won. So soon as the big guns are out, the tanks will advance, destroying machine guns, completing the destruction of the wire, and holding prisoners immobile. Then the infantry will follow to gather in the sheaves. Multitudinously produced and — I write it with a defiant eye on Colonel Newcome

— *properly handled*, these land ironclads are going to do very great things in shortening the war, in pursuit, in breaking up the retreating enemy. Given the air ascendancy, and I am utterly unable to imagine any way of conclusively stopping or even greatly delaying an offensive thus equipped.

2

The young of even the most horrible beasts have something piquant and engaging about them, and so I suppose it is in the way of things that the land ironclad which opens a new and more dreadful and destructive phase in the human folly of warfare, should appear first as if it were a joke. Never has any such thing so completely masked its wickedness under an appearance of genial silliness. The Tank is a creature to which one naturally flings a pet name; the five or six I was shown wandering, rooting and climbing over obstacles, round a large field near X, were as amusing and disarming as a little of lively young pigs.

At first the War Office prevented the publication of any pictures or descriptions of these contrivances except abroad; then abruptly the embargo was relaxed, and the press was flooded with photographs. The reader will be familiar now with their appearance. They resemble large slugs with an underside a little like the flattened rockers of a rocking-horse, slugs between 20 and 40 feet long. They are like flat-sided slugs, slugs of spirit, who raise an enquiring snout, like the snout of a dogfish, into the air. They crawl upon their bellies in a way that would be tedious to describe to the general reader and unnecessary to describe to the enquiring specialists. They go over the ground with the sliding speed of active snails. Behind them trail two wheels, supporting a flimsy tail, wheels that strike one as incongruous as if a monster began kangaroo and ended doll's perambulator. (These wheels annoy me.) They are not steely monsters; they are painted with drab and unassuming colours that are fashionable in modern warfare, so that the armour seems rather like the integument of a rhinoceros. At the sides of the head project armoured checks, and from above these stick out guns that look like stalked eyes. That is the general appearance of the contemporary

tank.

It slides on the ground; the silly little wheels that so detract from the genial bestiality of its appearance dandle and bump behind it. It swings about its axis. It comes to an obstacle, a low wall let us say, or a heap of bricks, and sets to work to climb it with its snout. It rears over the obstacle, it raises its straining belly, it overhangs more and more, and at last topples forward; it sways upon the heap and then goes plunging downwards, sticking out the weak counterpoise of its wheeled tail. If it comes to a house or a tree or a wall or such-like obstruction it rams against it so as to bring all its weight to bear upon it — it weighs *some* tons — and then climbs over the debris. I saw it, and incredulous soldiers of experience watched it at the same time, cross trenches and wallow amazingly through muddy exaggerations of small holes. Then I repeated the tour inside.

Again the Tank is like a slug. The slug, as every biological student knows, is unexpectedly complicated inside. The Tank is as crowded with inward parts as a battleship. It is filled with engines, guns and ammunition, and in the interstices men.

"You will smash your hat," said Colonel Stern. "No; keep it on, or else you will smash your head."

Only Mr. C. R. W. Nevinson could do justice to the interior of a Tank. You see a hand gripping something; you see the eyes and forehead of an engineer's face; you perceive that an overall bluishness beyond the engine is the back of another man. "Don't hold that," says someone; "it is too hot. Hold on to that." The engines roar, so loudly that I doubt whether one could hear guns without; the floor begins to slope and slopes until one seems to be at forty-five degrees or thereabouts; then the whole concern swings up and sways and slants the other way. You have crossed a bank. You heel sideways. Through the door which has been left open you see the little group of engineers, staff officers and naval men receding and falling away behind you. You straighten up and go up hill. You halt and begin to rotate. Through the open door, the green field, with its red walls, rows of worksheds and forests of chimneys in the background, begins a steady processional movement. The group of engineers and officers and naval men appears at the other side of the door and farther off. Then comes a sprint down hill. You descend and

stretch your legs.

About the field other Tanks are doing their stunts. One is struggling in an apoplectic way in the mud pit with a cheek half buried. It noses its way out and on with an air of animal relief.

They are like jokes by Heath Robinson. One forgets that these things have already saved the lives of many hundreds of our soldiers and smashed and defeated thousands of Germans.

Said one soldier to me: "In the old attacks you used to see the British dead lying outside the machine-gun emplacements like birds outside a butt with a good shot inside. *Now*, these things walk through."

3

I saw other things that day at X. The Tank is only a beginning in a new phase of warfare. Of these other things I may only write in the most general terms.

But though Tanks and their collaterals are being made upon a very considerable scale in X, already I realised as I walked through gigantic forges as high and marvellous as cathedrals, and from workshed to workshed where gun carriages, ammunition carts and a hundred such things were flowing into existence with the swelling abundance of a river that flows out of a gorge, that as the demand for the new developments grows clear and strong, the resources of Britain are capable still of a tremendous response. *If only we do not rob these great factories and works of their men.*

Upon this question certain things need to be said very plainly. The decisive factor in the sort of war we are now waging is production and right use of mechanical material; victory in this war depends now upon three things: the aeroplane, the gun, and the Tank developments. These — and not crowds of men — are the prime necessity for a successful offensive. Every man we draw from munition making to the ranks brings our western condition nearer to the military condition of Russia. In these things we may be easily misled by military "experts" We have to remember that the military "expert" is a man who learnt his business before 1914, and that the business of war has been absolutely revolutionised since 1914; the

military expert is a man trained to think of war as essentially an affair of cavalry, infantry in formation, and field guns, whereas cavalry is entirely obsolete, infantry no longer fights in formation, and the methods of gunnery have been entirely changed. The military man I observe still runs about the world in spurs, he travels in trains in spurs, he walks in spurs, he thinks in terms of spurs. He has still to discover that it is about as ridiculous as if he were to carry a crossbow. I take it these spurs are only the outward and visible sign of an inward obsolescence. The disposition of the military "expert" is still to think too little of machinery and to demand too much of the men. Behind our front at the time of my visit there were, for example, many thousands of cavalry, men tending horses, men engaged in transporting bulky fodder for horses and the like. These men were doing about as much in this war as if they had been at Timbuctoo. Every man who is taken from munition making at X to spur-worshipping in khaki, is a dead loss to the military efficiency of the country. Every man that is needed or is likely to be needed for the actual operations of modern warfare can be got by combing out the cavalry, the brewing and distilling industries, the theatres and music halls, and the like unproductive occupations. The under-staffing of munition works, the diminution of their efficiency by the use of aged and female labour, is the straight course to failure in this war.

In X, in the forges and machine shops, I saw already too large a proportion of boys and grey heads.

War is a thing that changes very rapidly, and we have in the Tanks only the first of a great series of offensive developments. They are bound to be improved, at a great pace. The method of using them will change very rapidly. Any added invention will necessitate the scrapping of old types and the production of the new patterns in quantity. It is of supreme necessity to the Allies if they are to win this war outright that the lead in inventions and enterprise which the British have won over the Germans in this matter should be retained. It is our game now to press the advantage for all it is worth. We have to keep ahead to win. We cannot do so unless we have unstinted men and unstinted material to produce each new development as its use is realised.

Given that much, the Tank will enormously enhance the

advantage of the new offensive method on the French front; the method that is of gun demolition after aerial photography, followed by an advance; it is a huge addition to our prospect of decisive victory. What does it do? It solves two problems. The existing Tank affords a means of advancing against machine-gun fire and of destroying wire and machine guns without much risk of loss, so soon as the big guns have done their duty by the enemy guns. And also behind the Tank itself, it is useless to conceal, lies the possibility of bringing up big guns and big gun ammunition, across nearly any sort of country, as fast as the advance can press forward. Hitherto every advance has paid a heavy toll to the machine gun, and every advance has had to halt after a couple of miles or so while the big guns (taking five or six days for the job) toiled up to the new positions.

4

It is impossible to restrain a note of sharp urgency from what one has to say about these developments. The Tanks remove the last technical difficulties in our way to decisive victory and a permanent peace; they also afford a reason for straining every nerve to bring about a decision and peace soon. At the risk of seeming an imaginative alarmist I would like to point out the reasons these things disclose for hurrying this war to a decision and doing our utmost to arrange the world's affairs so as to make another war improbable. Already these serio-comic Tanks, weighing something over twenty tons or so, have gone slithering around and sliding over dead and wounded men. That is not an incident for sensitive minds to dwell upon, but it is a mere little child's play anticipation of what the big land ironclads *that are bound to come if there is no world pacification*, are going to do.

What lies behind the Tank depends upon this fact; there is no definable upward limit of mass. Upon that I would lay all the stress possible, because everything turns upon that.

You cannot make a land ironclad so big and heavy but that you cannot make a caterpillar track wide enough and strong enough to carry it forward. Tanks are quite possible that will carry twenty-inch or twenty-five inch guns, besides minor armament. Such Tanks may

be undesirable; the production may exceed the industrial resources of any empire to produce; but there is no inherent impossibility in such things. There are not even the same limitations as to draught and docking accommodation that sets bounds to the size of battleships. It follows, therefore, as a necessary deduction that if the world's affairs are so left at the end of the war that the race of armaments continues, that Tank will develop steadily into a tremendous instrument of warfare, driven by engines of scores of thousands of horse-power, tracking on a track scores of hundreds of yards wide and weighing hundreds or thousands of tons. Nothing but a world agreement not to do so can prevent this logical development of the land ironclad. Such a structure will make wheel-ruts scores of feet deep; it will plough up, devastate and destroy the country it passes over altogether.

For my own part I never imagined the land ironclad idea would get loose into war. I thought that the military intelligence was essentially unimaginative and that such an aggressive military power as Germany, dominated by military people, would never produce anything of the sort. I thought that this war would be fought out without Tanks and that then war would come to an end. For of course it is mere stupidity that makes people doubt the ultimate ending of war. I have been so far justified in these expectations of mine, that it is not from military sources that these things have come. They have been thrust upon the soldiers from without. But now that they are loose, now that they are in war, we have to face their full possibilities, to use our advantage in them and press on to the end of the war. In support of a photo-aero directed artillery, even our present Tanks can be used to complete an invisible offensive. We shall not so much push as ram. It is doubtful if the Germans can get anything of the sort into action before six months are out. We ought to get the war on to German soil before the Tanks have grown to more than three or four times their present size. Then it will not matter so much how much bigger they grow. It will be the German landscape that will suffer.

After one has seen the actual Tanks it is not very difficult to close one's eyes and figure the sort of Tank that may be arguing with Germany in a few months' time about the restoration of Belgium and Serbia and France, the restoration of the sunken tonnage, the

penalties of the various Zeppelin and submarine murders, the freedom of seas and land alike from piracy, the evacuation of all Poland including Posen and Cracow, and the guarantees for the future peace of Europe. The machine will be perhaps as big as a destroyer and more heavily armed and equipped. It will swim over and through the soil at a pace of ten or twelve miles an hour. In front of it will be corn, land, neat woods, orchards, pasture, gardens, villages and towns. It will advance upon its belly with a swaying motion, devouring the ground beneath it. Behind it masses of soil and rock, lumps of turf, splintered wood, bits of houses, occasional streaks of red, will drop from its track, and it will leave a wake, six or seven times as wide as a high road, from which all soil, all cultivation, all semblance to cultivated or cultivatable land will have disappeared. It will not even be a track of soil. It will be a track of subsoil laid bare. It will be a flayed strip of nature. In the course of its fighting the monster may have to turnabout. It will then halt and spin slowly round, grinding out an arena of desolation with a diameter equal to its length. If it has to retreat and advance again these streaks and holes of destruction will increase and multiply. Behind the fighting line these monsters will manoeuvre to and fro, destroying the land for all ordinary agricultural purposes for ages to come. The first imaginative account of the land ironclad that was ever written concluded with the words, "They are the *reductio ad absurdum* of war." They are, and it is to the engineers, the ironmasters, the workers and the inventive talent of Great Britain and France that we must look to ensure that it is in Germany, the great teacher of war, that this demonstration of war's ultimate absurdity is completed.

For forty years Frankenstein Germany invoked war, turned every development of material and social science to aggressive ends, and at last when she felt the time was ripe she let loose the new monster that she had made of war to cow the spirit of mankind. She set the thing trampling through Belgium. She cannot grumble if at last it comes home, stranger and more dreadful even than she made it, trampling the German towns and fields with German blood upon it and its eyes towards Berlin.

This logical development of the Tank idea may seem a gloomy

prospect for mankind. But it is open to question whether the tremendous development of warfare that has gone on in the last two years does after all open a prospect of unmitigated gloom. There has been a good deal of cheap and despondent sneering recently at the phrase, "The war that will end war." It is still possible to maintain that that may be a correct description of this war. It has to be remembered that war, as the aeroplane and the Tank have made it, has already become an impossible luxury for any barbaric or uncivilised people. War on the grade that has been achieved on the Somme predicates an immense industrialism behind it. Of all the States in the world only four can certainly be said to be fully capable of sustaining war at the level to which it has now been brought upon the western front. These are Britain, France, Germany, and the United States of America. Less certainly equal to the effort are Italy, Japan, Russia, and Austria. These eight powers are the only powers *capable of warfare under modern conditions.* Five are already Allies and one is incurably pacific. There is no other power or people in the world that can go to war now without the consent and connivance of these great powers. If we consider their alliances, we may count it that the matter rests now between two groups of Allies and one neutral power. So that while on the one hand the development of modern warfare of which the Tank is the present symbol opens a prospect of limitless senseless destruction, it opens on the other hand a prospect of organised world control. This Tank development must ultimately bring the need of a real permanent settlement within the compass of the meanest of diplomatic intelligences. A peace that will restore competitive armaments has now become a less desirable prospect for everyone than a continuation of the war. Things were bad enough before, when the land forces were still in a primitive phase of infantry, cavalry and artillery, and when the only real race to develop monsters and destructors was for sea power. But the race for sea power before 1914 was mere child's play to the breeding of engineering monstrosities for land warfare that must now follow any indeterminate peace settlement. I am no blind believer in the wisdom of mankind, but I cannot believe that men are so insensate and headstrong as to miss the plain omens of the present situation.

So that after all the cheerful amusement the sight of a Tank causes

may not be so very unreasonable. These things may be no more than one of those penetrating flashes of wit that will sometimes light up and dispel the contentions of an angry man. If they are not that, then they are the grimmest jest that ever set men grinning. Wait and see, if you do not believe me.

HOW PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE WAR

I. DO THEY REALLY THINK AT ALL?

All human affairs are mental affairs; the bright ideas of to-day are the realities of to-morrow. The real history of mankind is the history of how ideas have arisen, how they have taken possession of men's minds, how they have struggled, altered, proliferated, decayed. There is nothing in this war at all but a conflict of ideas, traditions, and mental habits. The German Will clothed in conceptions of aggression and fortified by cynical falsehood, struggles against the fundamental sanity of the German mind and the confused protest of mankind. So that the most permanently important thing in the tragic process of this war is the change of opinion that is going on. What are people making of it? Is it producing any great common understandings, any fruitful unanimities?

No doubt it is producing enormous quantities of cerebration, but is it anything more than chaotic and futile cerebration? We are told all sorts of things in answer to that, things without a scrap of evidence or probability to support them. It is, we are assured, turning people to religion, making them moral and thoughtful. It is also, we are assured with equal confidence, turning them to despair and moral disaster. It will be followed by (1) a period of moral renascence, and (2) a debauch. It is going to make the workers (1) more and (2) less obedient and industrious. It is (1) inuring men to war and (2) filling them with a passionate resolve never to suffer war again. And so on. I propose now to ask what is really happening in this matter? How is human opinion changing? I have opinions of my own and they are bound to colour my discussion. The reader must allow for that, and as far as possible I will remind him where necessary to make his allowance.

Now first I would ask, is any really continuous and thorough mental process going on at all about this war? I mean, is there any considerable number of people who are seeing it as a whole, taking it in as a whole, trying to get a general idea of it from which they can form directing conclusions for the future? Is there any considerable number of people even trying to do that? At any rate let me point out first that there is quite an enormous mass of people who — in spite of

the fact that their minds are concentrated on aspects of this war, who are at present hearing, talking, experiencing little else than the war — are nevertheless neither doing nor trying to do anything that deserves to be called thinking about it at all. They may even be suffering quite terribly by it. But they are no more mastering its causes, reasons, conditions, and the possibility of its future prevention than a monkey that has been rescued in a scorching condition from the burning of a house will have mastered the problem of a fire. It is just happening to and about them. It may, for anything they have learnt about it, happen to them again.

A vast majority of people are being swamped by the spectacular side of the business. It was very largely my fear of being so swamped myself that made me reluctant to go as a spectator to the front. I knew that my chances of being hit by a bullet were infinitesimal, but I was extremely afraid of being hit by some too vivid impression. I was afraid that I might see some horribly wounded man or some decayed dead body that would so scar my memory and stamp such horror into me as to reduce me to a mere useless, gibbering, stop-the-war-at-any-price pacifist. Years ago my mind was once darkened very badly for some weeks with a kind of fear and distrust of life through a sudden unexpected encounter one tranquil evening with a drowned body. But in this journey in Italy and France, although I have had glimpses of much death and seen many wounded men, I have had no really horrible impressions at all. That side of the business has, I think, been overwritten. The thing that haunts me most is the impression of a prevalent relapse into extreme untidiness, of a universal discomfort, of fields, and of ruined houses treated disregardfully.... But that is not what concerns us now in this discussion. What concerns us now is the fact that this war is producing spectacular effects so tremendous and incidents so strange, so remarkable, so vivid, that the mind forgets both causes and consequences and simply sits down to stare.

For example, there is this business of the Zeppelin raids in England. It is a supremely silly business; it is the most conclusive demonstration of the intellectual inferiority of the German to the Western European that is should ever have happened. There was the clearest *a priori* case against the gas-bag. I remember the discussions

ten or twelve years ago in which it was established to the satisfaction of every reasonable man that ultimately the "heavier than air" machine (as we called it then) must fly better than the gas-bag, and still more conclusively that no gas-bag was conceivable that could hope to fight and defeat aeroplanes. Nevertheless the German, with that dull faith of his in mere "Will," persisted along his line. He knew instinctively that he could not produce aviators to meet the Western European; all his social instincts made him cling to the idea of a great motherly, almost sow-like bag of wind above him. At an enormous waste of resources Germany has produced these futile monsters, that drift in the darkness over England promiscuously dropping bombs on fields and houses. They are now meeting the fate that was demonstrably certain ten years ago. If they found us unready for them it is merely that we were unable to imagine so idiotic an enterprise would ever be seriously sustained and persisted in. We did not believe in the probability of Zeppelin raids any more than we believed that Germany would force the world into war. It was a thing too silly to be believed. But they came — to their certain fate. In the month after I returned from France and Italy, no less than four of these fatuities were exploded and destroyed within thirty miles of my Essex home.... There in chosen phrases you have the truth about these things. But now mark the perversion of thought due to spectacular effect.

I find over the Essex countryside, which has been for more than a year and a half a highway for Zeppelins, a new and curious admiration for them that has arisen out of these very disasters. Previously they were regarded with dislike and a sort of distrust, as one might regard a sneaking neighbour who left his footsteps in one's garden at night. But the Zeppelins of Billericay and Potter's Bar are — heroic things. (The Cuffley one came down too quickly, and the fourth one which came down for its crew to surrender is despised.) I have heard people describe the two former with eyes shining with enthusiasm.

"First," they say, "you saw a little round red glow that spread. Then you saw the whole Zeppelin glowing. Oh, it was *beautiful!* Then it began to turn over and come down, and it flames and pieces began to break away. And then down it came, leaving flaming pieces

all up the sky. At last it was a pillar of fire eight thousand feet high.... Everyone said, 'Ooooo!' And then someone pointed out the little aeroplane lit up by the flare — such a leetle thing up there in the night! It is the greatest thing I have ever seen. Oh! the most wonderful — most wonderful!"

There is a feeling that the Germans really must after all be a splendid people to provide such magnificent pyrotechnics.

Some people in London the other day were pretending to be shocked by an American who boasted that he had been in "two *bully* bombardments," but he was only saying what everyone feels more or less. We are at a spectacle that — as a spectacle — our grandchildren will envy. I understand now better the story of the man who stared at the sparks raining up from his own house as it burnt in the night and whispered "*Lovely! Lovely!*"

The spectacular side of the war is really an enormous distraction from thought. And against thought there also fights the native indolence of the human mind. The human mind, it seems, was originally developed to think about the individual; it thinks reluctantly about the species. It takes refuge from that sort of thing if it possibly can. And so the second great preventive of clear thinking is the tranquillising platitude.

The human mind is an instrument very easily fatigued. Only a few exceptions go on thinking restlessly — to the extreme exasperation of their neighbours. The normal mind craves for decisions, even wrong or false decisions rather than none. It clutches at comforting falsehoods. It loves to be told, "*There*, don't you worry. That'll be all right. That's *settled.*" This war has come as an almost overwhelming challenge to mankind. To some of us it seems as it if were the Sphynx proffering the alternative of its riddle or death. Yet the very urgency of this challenge to think seems to paralyse the critical intelligence of very many people altogether. They will say, "This war is going to produce enormous changes in everything." They will then subside mentally with a feeling of having covered the whole ground in a thoroughly safe manner. Or they will adopt an air of critical aloofness. They will say, "How is it possible to foretell what may happen in this tremendous sea of change?" And then, with an air of superior modesty, they will go on doing — whatever they feel

inclined to do. Many others, a degree less simple in their methods, will take some entirely partial aspect, arrive at some guesswork decision upon that, and then behave as though that met every question we have to face. Or they will make a sort of admonitory forecast that is conditional upon the good behaviour of other people. “Unless the Trade Unions are more reasonable,” they will say. Or, “Unless the shipping interest is grappled with and controlled.” Or, “Unless England wakes up.” And with that they seem to wash their hands of further responsibility for the future.

One delightful form of put-off is the sage remark, “Let us finish the war first, and then let us ask what is going to happen after it.” One likes to think of the beautiful blank day after the signing of the peace when these wise minds swing round to pick up their deferred problems....

I submit that a man has not done his duty by himself as a rational creature unless he has formed an idea of what is going on, as one complicated process, until he has formed an idea sufficiently definite for him to make it the basis of a further idea, which is his own relationship to that process. He must have some notion of what the process is going to do to him, and some notion of what he means to do, if he can, to the process. That is to say, he must not only have an idea how the process is going, but also an idea of how he wants it to go. It seems so natural and necessary for a human brain to do this that it is hard to suppose that everyone has not more or less attempted it. But few people, in Great Britain at any rate, have the habit of frank expression, and when people do not seem to have made out any of these things for themselves there is a considerable element of secretiveness and inexpressiveness to be allowed for before we decide that they have not in some sort of fashion done so. Still, after all allowances have been made, there remains a vast amount of jerry-built and ready-made borrowed stuff in most of people’s philosophies of the war. The systems of authentic opinion in this world of thought about the war are like comparatively rare thin veins of living mentality in a vast world of dead repetitions and echoed suggestions. And that being the case, it is quite possible that history after the war, like history before the war, will not be so much a display of human will and purpose as a resultant of human

vacillations, obstructions, and inadvertences. We shall still be in a drama of blind forces following the line of least resistance.

One of the people who is often spoken of as if he were doing an enormous amount of concentrated thinking is "the man in the trenches." We are told — by gentlemen writing for the most part at home — of the most extraordinary things that are going on in those devoted brains, how they are getting new views about the duties of labour, religion, morality, monarchy, and any other notions that the gentleman at home happens to fancy and wished to push. Now that is not at all the impression of the khaki mentality I have reluctantly accepted as correct. For the most part the man in khaki is up against a round of tedious immediate duties that forbid consecutive thought; he is usually rather crowded and not very comfortable. He is bored.

The real horror of modern war, when all is said and done, is the boredom. To get killed our wounded may be unpleasant, but it is at any rate interesting; the real tragedy is in the desolated fields, the desolated houses, the desolated hours and days, the bored and desolated minds that hang behind the melee and just outside the melee. The peculiar beastliness of the German crime is the way the German war cant and its consequences have seized upon and paralysed the mental movement of Western Europe. Before 1914 war was theoretically unpopular in every European country; we thought of it as something tragic and dreadful. Now everyone knows by experience that it is something utterly dirty and detestable. We thought it was the Nemean lion, and we have found it is the Augean stable. But being bored by war and hating war is quite unproductive *unless you are thinking about its nature and causes so thoroughly that you will presently be able to take hold of it and control it and end it.* It is no good for everyone to say unanimously, "We will have no more war," unless you have thought out how to avoid it, and mean to bring that end about. It is as if everyone said, "We will have no more catarrh," or "no more flies," or "no more east wind." And my point is that the immense sorrows at home in every European country and the vast boredom of the combatants are probably not really producing any effective remedial mental action at all, and will not do so unless we get much more thoroughly to work upon the thinking-out process.

In such talks as I could get with men close up to the front I found beyond this great boredom and attempts at distraction only very specialised talk about changes in the future. Men were keen upon questions of army promotion, of the future of conscription, of the future of the temporary officer, upon the education of boys in relation to army needs. But the war itself was bearing them all upon its way, as unquestioned and uncontrolled as if it were the planet on which they lived.

II. THE YIELDING PACIFIST AND THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR

1 Among the minor topics that people are talking about behind the western fronts is the psychology of the Yielding Pacifist and the Conscientious Objector. Of course, we are all pacifists nowadays; I know of no one who does not want not only to end this war but to put an end to war altogether, except those blood-red terrors Count Reventlow, Mr. Leo Maxse — how he does it on a vegetarian dietary I cannot imagine! — and our wild-eyed desperados of *The Morning Post.* But most of the people I meet, and most of the people I met on my journey, are pacifists like myself who want to *make* peace by beating the armed man until he gives in and admits the error of his ways, disarming him and reorganising the world for the forcible suppression of military adventures in the future. They want belligerency put into the same category as burglary, as a matter of forcible suppression. The Yielding Pacifist who will accept any sort of peace, and the Conscientious Objector who will not fight at all, are not of that opinion.

Both Italy and France produce parallel types to those latter, but it would seem that in each case England displays the finer developments. The Latin mind is directer than the English, and its standards — shall I say? — more primitive; it gets more directly to the fact that here are men who will not fight. And it is less charitable. I was asked quite a number of times for the English equivalent of an *embusque.* "We don't generalise," I said, "we treat each case on its merits!"

One interlocutor near Udine was exercised by our Italian Red Cross work.

"Here," he said, "are sixty or seventy young Englishmen, all fit for military service.... Of course they go under fire, but it is not like being junior officers in the trenches. Not one of them has been killed or wounded."

He reflected. "One, I think, has been decorated," he said....

My French and Italian are only for very rough common jobs;

when it came to explaining the Conscientious Objector sympathetically they broke down badly. I had to construct long parenthetical explanations of our antiquated legislative methods to show how it was that the "conscientious objector" had been so badly defined. The foreigner does not understand the importance of vague definition in British life. "Practically, of course, we offered to exempt anyone who conscientiously objected to fight or serve. Then the Pacifist and German people started a campaign to enrol objectors. Of course every shirker, every coward and slacker in the country decided at once to be a conscientious objector. Anyone but a British legislator could have foreseen that. Then we started Tribunals to wrangle with the objectors about their *bona fides.* Then the Pacifists and the Pro-Germans issued little leaflets and started correspondence courses to teach people exactly how to lie to the Tribunals. Trouble about freedom of the pamphleteer followed. I had to admit — it has been rather a sloppy business. The people who made the law knew their own minds, but we English are not an expressive people."

These are not easy things to say in Elementary (and slightly Decayed) French or in Elementary and Corrupt Italian.

"But why do people support the sham conscientious objector and issue leaflets to help him — when there is so much big work clamouring to be done?"

"That," I said, "is the Whig tradition."

When they pressed me further, I said: "I am really the questioner. I am visiting *your* country, and you have to tell *me* things. It is not right that I should do all the telling. Tell me all about Romain Rolland."

And so I pressed them about the official socialists in Italy and the Socialist minority in France until I got the question out of the net of national comparisons and upon a broader footing. In several conversations we began to work out in general terms the psychology of those people who were against the war. But usually we could not get to that; my interlocutors would insist upon telling me just what they would like to do or just what they would like to see done to stop-the-war pacifists and conscientious objectors; pleasant rather than fruitful imaginative exercises from which I could effect no more than platitudinous uplifts.

But the general drift of such talks as did seem to penetrate the question was this, that among these stop-the-war people there are really three types. First there is a type of person who hates violence and the infliction of pain under any circumstances, and who have a mystical belief in the rightness (and usually the efficacy) of non-resistance. These are generally Christians, and then their cardinal text is the instruction to "turn the other cheek." Often they are Quakers. If they are consistent they are vegetarians and wear *Lederlos* boots. They do not desire police protection for their goods. They stand aloof from all the force and conflict of life. They have always done so. This is an understandable and respectable type. It has numerous Hindu equivalents. It is a type that finds little difficulty about exemptions — provided the individual has not been too recently converted to his present habits. But it is not the prevalent type in stop-the-war circles. Such genuine ascetics do not number more than a thousand or so, all three of our western allied countries. The mass of the stop-the-war people is made up quite other elements.

2

In the complex structure of the modern community there are two groups or strata or pockets in which the impulse of social obligation, the gregarious sense of a common welfare, is at its lowest; one of these is the class of the Resentful Employee, the class of people who, without explanation, adequate preparation or any chance, have been shoved at an early age into uncongenial work and never given a chance to escape, and the other is the class of people with small fixed incomes or with small salaries earnt by routine work, or half independent people practising some minor artistic or literary craft, who have led uneventful, irresponsible lives from their youth up, and never came at any point into relations of service to the state. This latter class was more difficult to define than the former — because it is more various within itself. My French friends wanted to talk of the "Psychology of the Rentier." I was for such untranslatable phrases as the "Genteel Whig," or the "Donnish Liberal." But I lit up an Italian — he is a Milanese manufacturer — with "these Florentine English who would keep Italy in a glass case." "I know," he said. Before I go

on to expand this congenial theme, let me deal first with the Resentful Employee, who is a much more considerable, and to me a much more sympathetic, figure in European affairs. I began life myself as a Resentful Employee. By the extremest good luck I have got my mind and spirit out of the distortions of that cramping beginning, but I can still recall even the anger of those old days.

He becomes an employee between thirteen and fifteen; he is made to do work he does not like for no other purpose that he can see except the profit and glory of a fortunate person called his employer, behind whom stand church and state blessing and upholding the relationship. He is not allowed to feel that he has any share whatever in the employer's business, or that any end is served but the employer's profit. He cannot see that the employer acknowledges any duty to the state. Neither church nor state seems to insist that the employer has any public function. At no point does the employee come into a clear relationship of mutual obligation with the state. There does not seem to be any way out for the employee from a life spent in this subordinate, toilsome relationship. He feels put upon and cheated out of life. He is without honour. If he is a person of ability or stubborn temper he struggles out of his position; if he is a kindly and generous person he blames his "luck" and does his work and lives his life as cheerfully as possible — and so live the bulk of our amazing European workers; if he is a being of great magnanimity he is content to serve for the ultimate good of the race; if he has imagination, he says, "Things will not always be like this," and becomes a socialist or a guild socialist, and tries to educate the employer to a sense of reciprocal duty; but if he is too human for any of these things, then he begins to despise and hate the employer and the system that made him. He wants to hurt them. Upon that hate it is easy to trade.

A certain section of what is called the Socialist press and the Socialist literature in Europe is no doubt great-minded; it seeks to carve a better world out of the present. But much of it is socialist only in name. Its spirit is Anarchistic. Its real burthen is not construction but grievance; it tells the bitter tale of the employee, it feeds and organises his malice, it schemes annoyance and injury for the hated employer. The state and the order of the world is

confounded with the capitalist. Before the war the popular so-called socialist press reeked with the cant of rebellion, the cant of any sort of rebellion. "I'm a rebel," was the silly boast of the young disciple. "Spoil something, set fire to something," was held to be the proper text for any girl or lad of spirit. And this blind discontent carried on into the war. While on the one hand a great rush of men poured into the army saying, "Thank God! we can serve our country at last instead of some beastly profiteer," a sourer remnant, blind to the greater issues of the war, clung to the reasonless proposition, "the state is only for the Capitalist. This war is got up by Capitalists. Whatever has to be done — *we are rebels.*"

Such a typical paper as the British *Labour Leader*, for example, may be read in vain, number after number, for any sound and sincere constructive proposal. It is a prolonged scream of extreme individualism, a monotonous repetition of incoherent discontent with authority, with direction, with union, with the European effort. It wants to do nothing. It just wants effort to stop — even at the price of German victory. If the whole fabric of society in western Europe were to be handed over to those pseudo-socialists to-morrow, to be administered for the common good, they would fly the task in terror. They would make excuses and refuse the undertaking. They do not want the world to go right. The very idea of the world going right does not exist in their minds. They are embodied discontent and hatred, making trouble, and that is all they are. They want to be "rebels" — to be admired as "rebels".

That is the true psychology of the Resentful Employee. He is a de-socialised man. His sense of the State has been destroyed.

The Resentful Employees are the outcome of our social injustices. They are the failures of our social ad educational systems. We may regret their pitiful degradation, we may exonerate them from blame; none the less they are a pitiful crew. I have seen the hardship of the trenches, the gay and gallant wounded. I do a little understand what our soldiers, officers and men alike, have endured and done. And though I know I ought to allow for all that I have stated, I cannot regard these conscientious objectors with anything but contempt. Into my house there pours a dismal literature rehearsing the hardships of these men who set themselves up to be martyrs for

liberty; So and So, brave hero, has been sworn at — positively sworn at by a corporal; a nasty rough man came into the cell of So and So and dropped several h's; So and So, refusing to undress and wash, has been undressed and washed, and soap was rubbed into his eyes — perhaps purposely; the food and accommodation are not of the best class; the doctors in attendance seem hasty; So and So was put into a damp bed and has got a nasty cold. Then I recall a jolly vanload of wounded men I saw out there....

But after all, we must be just. A church and state that permitted these people to be thrust into dreary employment in their early 'teens, without hope or pride, deserves such citizens as these. The marvel is that there are so few. There are a poor thousand or so of these hopeless, resentment-poisoned creatures in Great Britain. Against five willing millions. The Allied countries, I submit, have not got nearly all the conscientious objectors they deserve.

3

If the Resentful Employee provides the emotional impulse of the resisting pacifist, whose horizon is bounded by his one passionate desire that the particular social system that has treated him so ill should collapse and give in, and its leaders and rulers be humiliated and destroyed, the intellectual direction of a mischievous pacifism comes from an entirely different class.

The Genteel Whig, though he differs very widely in almost every other respect from the Resentful Employee, has this much in common, that he has never been drawn into the whirl of collective life in any real and assimilative fashion. This is what is the matter with both of them. He is a little loose, shy, independent person. Except for eating and drinking — in moderation, he has never done anything real from the day he was born. He has frequently not even faced the common challenge of matrimony. Still more frequently is he childless, or the daring parent of one particular child. He has never traded nor manufactured. He has drawn his dividends or his salary with an entire unconsciousness of any obligations to policemen or navy for these punctual payments. Probably he has never ventured even to reinvest his little legacy. He is acutely aware

of possessing an exceptionally fine intelligence, but he is entirely unconscious of a fundamental unreality. Nothing has ever occurred to him to make him ask why the mass of men were either not possessed of his security or discontented with it. The impulses that took his school friends out upon all sorts of odd feats and adventures struck him as needless. As he grew up he turned with an equal distrust from passion or ambition. His friends went out after love, after adventure, after power, after knowledge, after this or that desire, and became men. But he noted merely that they became fleshly, that effort strained them, that they were sometimes angry or violent or heated. He could not but feel that theirs were vulgar experiences, and he sought some finer exercise for his exceptional quality. He pursued art or philosophy or literature upon their more esoteric levels, and realised more and more the general vulgarity and coarseness of the world about him, and his own detachment. The vulgarity and crudity of the things nearest him impressed him most; the dreadful insincerity of the Press, the meretriciousness of success, the loudness of the rich, the baseness of common people in his own land. The world overseas had by comparison a certain glamour. Except that when you said "United States" to him he would draw the air sharply between his teeth and beg you not to...

Nobody took him by the collar and shook him.

If our world had considered the advice of William James and insisted upon national service from everyone, national service in the drains or the nationalised mines or the nationalised deep-sea fisheries if not in the army or navy, we should not have had any such men. If it had insisted that wealth and property are no more than a trust for the public benefit, we should have had no genteel indispensables. These discords in our national unanimity are the direct consequence of our bad social organisation. We permit the profiteer and the usurer; they evoke the response of the Reluctant Employee, and the inheritor of their wealth becomes the Genteel Whig.

But that is by the way. It was of course natural and inevitable that the German onslaught upon Belgium and civilisation generally should strike these recluse minds not as a monstrous ugly wickedness to be resisted and overcome at any cost, but merely as a nerve-racking experience. Guns were going off on both sides. The Genteel

Whig was chiefly conscious of a repulsive vast excitement all about him, in which many people did inelegant and irrational things. They waved flags — nasty little flags. This child of the ages, this last fruit of the gigantic and tragic tree of life, could no more than stick its fingers in its ears as say, "Oh, please, do *all* stop!" and then as the strain grew intenser and intenser set itself with feeble pawings now to clamber "Au-dessus de la Melee," and now to — in some weak way — stop the conflict. ("Au-dessus de la Melee" — as the man said when they asked him where he was when the bull gored his sister.) The efforts to stop the conflict at any price, even at the price of entire submission to the German Will, grew more urgent as the necessity that everyone should help against the German Thing grew more manifest.

Of all the strange freaks of distressed thinking that this war has produced, the freaks of the Genteel Whig have been among the most remarkable. With an air of profound wisdom he returns perpetually to his proposition that there are faults on both sides. To say that is his conception of impartiality. I suppose that if a bull gored his sister he would say that there were faults on both sides; his sister ought not to have strayed into the field, she was wearing a red hat of a highly provocative type; she ought to have been a cow and then everything would have been different. In the face of the history of the last forty years, the Genteel Whig struggles persistently to minimise the German outrage upon civilisation and to find excuses for Germany. He does this, not because he has any real passion for falsehood, but because by training, circumstance, and disposition he is passionately averse from action with the vulgar majority and from self-sacrifice in a common cause, and because he finds in the justification of Germany and, failing that, in the blackening of the Allies to an equal blackness, one line of defence against the wave of impulse that threatens to submerge his private self. But when at last that line is forced he is driven back upon others equally extraordinary. You can often find simultaneously in the same Pacifist paper, and sometimes even in the utterances of the same writer, two entirely incompatible statements. The first is that Germany is so invincible that it is useless to prolong the war since no effort of the Allies is likely to produce any material improvement in their position, and the second is that

Germany is so thoroughly beaten that she is now ready to abandon militarism and make terms and compensations entirely acceptable to the countries she has forced into war. And when finally facts are produced to establish the truth that Germany, though still largely wicked and impenitent, is being slowly and conclusively beaten by the sanity, courage and persistence of the Allied common men, then the Genteel Whig retorts with his last defensive absurdity. He invents a national psychology for Germany. Germany, he invents, loves us and wants to be our dearest friend. Germany has always loved us. The Germans are a loving, unenvious people. They have been a little mislead — but nice people do not insist upon that fact. But beware of beating Germany, beware of humiliating Germany; then indeed trouble will come. Germany will begin to dislike us. She will plan a revenge. Turning aside from her erstwhile innocent career, she may even think of hate. What are our obligations to France, Italy, Serbia and Russia, what is the happiness of a few thousands of the Herero, a few millions of the Belgians — whose numbers moreover are constantly diminishing — when we might weigh them against the danger, the most terrible danger, of incurring *permanent German hostility?...*

A Frenchman I talked to knew better than that. "What will happen to Germany," I asked, "if we are able to do so to her and so; would she take to dreams of a *Revanche?*"

"She will take to Anglomania," he said, and added after a flash of reflection, "In the long run it will be the worse for you."

III. THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

1

One of the indisputable things about the war, so far as Britain and France go — and I have reason to believe that on a lesser scale things are similar in Italy — is that it has produced a very great volume of religious thought and feeling. About Russia in these matters we hear but little at the present time, but one guesses at parallelism. People habitually religious have been stirred to new depths of reality and sincerity, and people are thinking of religion who never thought of religion before. But as I have already pointed out, thinking and feeling about a matter is of no permanent value unless something is *thought out*, unless there is a change of boundary or relationship, and it an altogether different question to ask whether any definite change is resulting from this universal ferment. If it is not doing so, then the sleeper merely dreams a dream that he will forget again....

Now in no sort of general popular mental activity is there so much froth and waste as in religious excitements. This has been the case in all periods of religious revival. The number who are rather impressed, who for a few days or weeks take to reading their Bibles or going to a new place of worship or praying or fasting or being kind and unselfish, is always enormous in relation to the people whose lives are permanently changed. The effort needed if a contemporary is to blow off the froth, is always very considerable.

Among the froth that I would blow off is I think most of the tremendous efforts being made in England by the Anglican church to attract favourable attention to itself *apropos* of the war. I came back from my visit to the Somme battlefields to find the sylvan peace of Essex invaded by a number of ladies in blue dresses adorned with large white crosses, who, regardless of the present shortage of nurses, were visiting every home in the place on some mission of invitation whose details remained obscure. So far as I was able to elucidate this project, it was in the nature of a magic incantation; a satisfactory end of the war was to be brought about by convergent prayer and religious assiduities. The mission was shy of dealing with me

personally, although as a lapsed communicant I should have thought myself a particularly hopeful field for Anglican effort, and it came to my wife and myself merely for our permission and countenance in an appeal to our domestic servants. My wife consulted the household; it seemed very anxious to escape from that appeal, and as I respect Christianity sufficiently to detest the identification of its services with magic processes, the mission retired — civilly repulsed. But the incident aroused an uneasy curiosity in my mind with regard to the general trend of Anglican teaching and Anglican activities at the present time. The trend of my enquiries is to discover the church much more incoherent and much less religious — in any decent sense of the word — than I had supposed it to be.

Organisation is the life of material and the death of mental and spiritual processes. There could be no more melancholy exemplification of this than the spectacle of the Anglican and Catholic churches at the present time, one using the tragic stresses of war mainly for pew-rent touting, and the other paralysed by its Austrian and South German political connections from any clear utterance upon the moral issues of the war. Through the opening phases of the war the Established Church of England was inconspicuous; this is no longer the case, but it may be doubted whether the change is altogether to its advantage. To me this is a very great disappointment. I have always had a very high opinion of the intellectual values of the leading divines of both the Anglican and Catholic communions. The self-styled Intelligentsia of Great Britain is all too prone to sneer at their equipment; but I do not see how any impartial person can deny that Father Bernard Vaughn is in mental energy, vigour of expression, richness of thought and variety of information fully the equal of such an influential lay publicist as Mr. Horatio Bottomley. One might search for a long time among prominent laymen to find the equal of the Bishop of London. Nevertheless it is impossible to conceal the impression of tawdriness that this latter gentleman's work as head of the National Mission has left upon my mind. Attired in khaki he has recently been preaching in the open air to the people of London upon Tower Hill, Piccadilly, and other conspicuous places. Obsessed as I am by the humanities, and impressed as I have always been by the inferiority of material to

moral facts, I would willingly have exchanged the sight of two burning Zeppelins for this spectacle of ecclesiastical fervour. But as it is, I am obliged to trust to newspaper reports and the descriptions of hearers and eye-witnesses. They leave to me but little doubt of the regrettable superficiality of the bishop's utterances.

We have a multitude of people chastened by losses, ennobled by a common effort, needing support in that effort, perplexed by the reality of evil and cruelty, questioning and seeking after God. What does the National Mission offer? On Tower Hill the bishop seems to have been chiefly busy with a wrangling demonstration that ten thousand a year is none too big a salary for a man subject to such demands and expenses as his see involves. So far from making anything out of his see he was, he declared, two thousand a year to the bad. Some day, when the church has studied efficiency, I suppose that bishops will have the leisure to learn something about the general state of opinion and education in their dioceses. The Bishop of London was evidently unaware of the almost automatic response of the sharp socialists among his hearers. Their first enquiry would be to learn how he came by that mysterious extra two thousand a year with which he supplemented his stipend. How did he earn *that?* And if he didn't earn it — ! And secondly, they would probably have pointed out to him that his standard of housing, clothing, diet and entertaining was probably a little higher than theirs. It is really no proof of virtuous purity that a man's expenditure exceeds his income. And finally some other of his hearers were left unsatisfied by his silence with regard to the current proposal to pool all clerical stipends for the common purposes of the church. It is a reasonable proposal, and if bishops must dispute about stipends instead of preaching the kingdom of God, then they are bound to face it. The sooner they do so, the more graceful will the act be. From these personal apologetics the bishop took up the question of the exemption, at the request of the bishops, of the clergy from military service. It is one of our contrasts with French conditions — and it is all to the disadvantage of the British churches.

In his Piccadilly contribution to the National Mission of Repentance and Hope the bishop did not talk politics but sex. He gave his hearers the sort of stuff that is handed out so freely by the

Cinema Theatres, White Slave Traffic talk, denunciations of "Night Hawks" — whatever "Night Hawks" may be — and so on. One this or another occasion the bishop — he boasts that he himself is a healthy bachelor — lavished his eloquence upon the Fall in the Birth Rate, and the duty of all married people, from paupers upward, to have children persistently. Now sex, like diet, is a department of conduct and a very important department, but *it isn't religion!* The world is distressed by international disorder, by the monstrous tragedy of war; these little hot talks about indulgence and begetting have about as much to do with the vast issues that concern us as, let us say, a discussion of the wickedness of eating very new and indigestible bread. It is talking round and about the essential issue. It is fogging the essential issue, which is the forgotten and neglected kingship of God. The sin that is stirring the souls of men is the sin of this war. It is the sin of national egotism and the devotion of men to loyalties, ambitions, sects, churches, feuds, aggressions, and divisions that are an outrage upon God's universal kingdom.

2

The common clergy of France, sharing the military obligations and the food and privations of their fellow parishioners, contrast very vividly with the home-staying types of the ministries of the various British churches. I met and talked to several. Near Frise there were some barge gunboats — they have since taken their place in the fighting, but then they were a surprise — and the men had been very anxious to have their craft visited and seen. The priest who came after our party to see if he could still arrange that, had been decorated for gallantry. Of course the English too have their gallant chaplains, but they are men of the officer caste, they are just young officers with peculiar collars; not men among men, as are the French priests.

There can be no doubt that the behaviour of the French priests in this war has enormously diminished anti-clerical bitterness in France. There can be no doubt that France is far more a religious country than it was before the war. But if you ask whether that means any return to the church, any reinstatement of the church, the answer is a doubtful one. Religion and the simple priest are stronger in France

to-day; the church, I think, is weaker.

I trench on no theological discussion when I record the unfavourable impression made upon all western Europe by the failure of the Holy Father to pronounce definitely upon the rights and wrongs of the war. The church has abrogated its right of moral judgement. Such at least seemed to be the opinion of the Frenchmen with whom I discussed a remarkable interview with Cardinal Gasparri that I found one morning in *Le Journal.*

It was not the sort of interview to win the hearts of men who were ready to give their lives to set right what they believe to be the greatest outrage that has ever been inflicted upon Christendom, that is to say the forty-three years of military preparation and of diplomacy by threats that culminated in the ultimatum to Serbia, the invasion of Belgium and the murder of the Vise villagers. It was adorned with a large portrait of "Benoit XV.," looking grave and discouraging over his spectacles, and the headlines insisted it was "*La Pensee du Pape.*" Cross-heads sufficiently indicated the general tone. One read:

"Le Saint Siege impartial... Au-dessus de la bataille...." The good Cardinal would have made a good lawyer. He had as little to say about God and the general righteousness of things as the Bishop of London. But he got in some smug reminders of the severance of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Perhaps now France will be wiser. He pointed out that the Holy See in its Consistorial Allocution of January 22nd, 1915, invited the belligerents to observe the rules of war. Could anything more be done than that? Oh! — in the general issue of the war, if you want a judgement on the war as a whole, how is it possible that the Vatican to decide? Surely the French know that excellent principle of justice, *Audiatur et altera pars*, and how under existing circumstances can the Vatican do that...? The Vatican is cut off from communication with Austria and Germany. The Vatican has been deprived of its temporal power and local independence (another neat point)....

So France is bowed out. When peace is restored, the Vatican will perhaps be able to enquire if there was a big German army in 1914, if German diplomacy was aggressive from 1875 onward, if Belgium was invaded unrighteously, if (Catholic) Austria forced the pace

upon (non-Catholic) Russia. But now — now the Holy See must remain as impartial as an unbought mascot in a shop window....

The next column of *Le Journal* contained an account of the Armenian massacres; the blood of the Armenian cries out past the Holy Father to heaven; but then Armenians are after all heretics, and here again the principle of *Audiatur et altera pars* comes in. Communications are not open with the Turks. Moreover, Armenians, like Serbs, are worse than infidels; they are heretics. Perhaps God is punishing them....

Audiatur et altera pars, and the Vatican has not forgotten the infidelity and disrespect of both France and Italy in the past. These are the things, it seems, that really matter to the Vatican. Cardinal Gasparri's portrait, in the same issue of *Le Journal*, displays a countenance of serene contentment, a sort of incarnate "Told-you-so."

So the Vatican lifts its pontifical skirts and shakes the dust of western Europe off its feet.

It is the most astounding renunciation in history.

Indubitably the Christian church took a wide stride from the kingship of God when it placed a golden throne for the unbaptised Constantine in the midst of its most sacred deliberations at Nicaea. But it seems to me that this abandonment of moral judgements in the present case by the Holy See is an almost wider step from the church's allegiance to God....

3

Thought about the great questions of life, thought and reasoned direction, this is what the multitude demands mutely and weakly, and what the organised churches are failing to give. They have not the courage of their creeds. Either their creeds are intellectual flummery or they are the solution to the riddles with which the world is struggling. But the churches make no mention of their creeds. They chatter about sex and the magic effect of church attendance and simple faith. If simple faith is enough, the churches and their differences are an imposture. Men are stirred to the deepest questions about life and God, and the Anglican church, for example, obliges —

as I have described.

It is necessary to struggle against the unfavourable impression made by these things. They must not blind us to the deeper movement that is in progress in a quite considerable number of minds in England and France alike towards the realisation of the kingdom of God.

What I conceive to be the reality of the religious revival is to be found in quarters remote from the religious professionals. Let me give but one instance of several that occur to me. I met soon after my return from France a man who has stirred my curiosity for years, Mr. David Lubin, the prime mover in the organisation of the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome. It is a movement that has always appealed to my imagination. The idea is to establish and keep up to date a record of the food supplies in the world with a view to the ultimate world control of food supply and distribution. When its machinery has developed sufficiently to a control in the interests of civilisation of many other staples besides foodstuffs. It is in fact the suggestion and beginning of the economic world peace and the economic world state, just as the Hague Tribunal is the first faint sketch of a legal world state. The King of Italy has met Mr. Lubin's idea with open hands. (It was because of this profoundly interesting experiment that in a not very widely known book of mine, *The World Set Free* (May, 1914), in which I represented a world state as arising out of Armageddon, I made the first world conference meet at Brissago in Italian Switzerland under the presidency of the King of Italy.) So that when I found I could meet Mr. Lubin I did so very gladly. We lunched together in a pretty little room high over Knightsbridge, and talked through an afternoon.

He is a man rather after the type of Gladstone; he could be made to look like Gladstone in a caricature, and he has that compelling quality of intense intellectual excitement which was one of the great factors in the personal effectiveness of Gladstone. He is a Jew, but until I had talked to him for some time that fact did not occur to me. He is in very ill health, he has some weakness of the heart that grips him and holds him at times white and silent.

At first we talked of his Institute and its work. Then we came to shipping and transport. Whenever one talks now of human affairs one

comes presently to shipping and transport generally. In Paris, in Italy, when I returned to England, everywhere I found "cost of carriage" was being discovered to be a question of fundamental importance. Yet transport, railroads and shipping, these vitally important services in the world's affairs, are nearly everywhere in private hands and run for profit. In the case of shipping they are run for profit on such antiquated lines that freights vary from day to day and from hour to hour. It makes the business of food supply a gamble. And it need not be a gamble.

But that is by the way in the present discussion. As we talked, the prospect broadened out from a prospect of the growing and distribution of food to a general view of the world becoming one economic community.

I talked of various people I had been meeting in the previous few weeks. "So many of us," I said, "seem to be drifting away from the ideas of nationalism and faction and policy, towards something else which is larger. It is an idea of a right way of doing things for human purposes, independently of these limited and localised references. Take such things as international hygiene for example, take *this* movement. We are feeling our way towards a bigger rule."

"The rule of Righteousness," said Mr. Lubin.

I told him that I had been coming more and more to the idea — not as a sentimentality or a metaphor, but as the ruling and directing idea, the structural idea, of all one's political and social activities — of the whole world as one state and community and of God as the King of that state.

"But *I* say that," cried Mr. Lubin, "I have put my name to that. And — it is *here!*"

He struggled up, seized an Old Testament that lay upon a side table. He stood over it and rapped its cover. "It is *here*," he said, looking more like Gladstone than ever, "in the Prophets."

4

That is all I mean to tell at present of that conversation.

We talked of religion for two hours. Mr. Lubin sees things in terms of Israel and I do not. For all that we see things very much

after the same fashion. That talk was only one of a number of talks about religion that I have had with hard and practical men who want to get the world straighter than it is, and who perceive that they must have a leadership and reference outside themselves. That is why I assert so confidently that there is a real deep religious movement afoot in the world. But not one of those conversations could have gone on, it would have ceased instantly, if anyone bearing the uniform and brand of any organised religious body, any clergyman, priest, mollah, of suchlike advocate of the ten thousand patented religions in the world, had come in. He would have brought in his sectarian spites, his propaganda of church-going, his persecution of the heretic and the illegitimate, his ecclesiastical politics, his taboos, and his doctrinal touchiness.... That is why, though I perceive there is a great wave of religious revival in the world to-day, I doubt whether it bodes well for the professional religions....

The other day I was talking to an eminent Anglican among various other people and someone with an eye to him propounded this remarkable view.

"There are four stages between belief and utter unbelief. There are those who believe in God, those who doubt like Huxley the Agnostic, those who deny him like the Atheists but who do at least keep his place vacant, and lastly those who have set up a Church in his place. That is the last outrage of unbelief."

IV. THE RIDDLE OF THE BRITISH

All the French people I met in France seemed to be thinking and talking about the English. The English bring their own atmosphere with them; to begin with they are not so talkative, and I did not find among them anything like the same vigour of examination, the same resolve to understand the Anglo-French reaction, that I found among the French. In intellectual processes I will confess that my sympathies are undisguisedly with the French; the English will never think nor talk clearly until the get clerical "Greek" and sham "humanities" out of their public schools and sincere study and genuine humanities in; our disingenuous Anglican compromise is like a cold in the English head, and the higher education in England is a training in evasion. This is an always lamentable state of affairs, but just now it is particularly lamentable because quite tremendous opportunities for the good of mankind turn on the possibility of a thorough and entirely frank mutual understanding between French, Italians, and English. For years there has been a considerable amount of systematic study in France of English thought and English developments. Upon almost any question of current English opinion and upon most current English social questions, the best studies are in French. But there has been little or no reciprocal activity. The English in France seem to confine their French studies to *La Vie Parisienne.* It is what they have been led to expect of French literature.

There can be no doubt in any reasonable mind that this war is binding France and England very closely together. They dare not quarrel for the next fifty years. They are bound to play a central part in the World League for the Preservation of Peace that must follow this struggle. There is no question of their practical union. It is a thing that must be. But it is remarkable that while the French mind is agog to apprehend every fact and detail it can about the British, to make the wisest and fullest use of our binding necessities, that strange English "incuria" — to use the new slang — attains to its most monumental in this matter.

So there is not much to say about how the British think about the

French. They do not think. They feel. At the outbreak of the war, when the performance of France seemed doubtful, there was an enormous feeling for France in Great Britain; it was like the formless feeling one has for a brother. It was as if Britain had discovered a new instinct. If France had crumpled up like paper, the English would have fought on passionately to restore her. That is ancient history now. Now the English still feel fraternal and fraternally proud; but in a mute way they are dazzled. Since the German attack on Verdun began, the French have achieved a crescendo. None of us could have imagined it. It did not seem possible to very many of us at the end of 1915 that either France or Germany could hold on for another year. There was much secret anxiety for France. It has given place now to unstinted confidence and admiration. In their astonishment the British are apt to forget the impressive magnitude of their own effort, the millions of soldiers, the innumerable guns, the endless torrent of supplies that pour into France to avenge the little army of Mons. It seems natural to us that we should so exert ourselves under the circumstances. I suppose it is wonderful, but, as a sample Englishman, I do not feel that it is at all wonderful. I did not feel it wonderful even when I saw the British aeroplanes lording it in the air over Martinpuich, and not a German to be seen. Since Michael would have it so, there, at last, they were.

There was a good deal of doubt in France about the vigour of the British effort, until the Somme offensive. All that had been dispelled in August when I reached Paris. There was not the shadow of a doubt remaining anywhere of the power and loyalty of the British. These preliminary assurances have to be made, because it is in the nature of the French mind to criticise, and it must not be supposed that criticisms of detail and method affect the fraternity and complete mutual confidence which is the stuff of the Anglo-French relationship.

2

Now first the French have been enormously astonished by the quality of the ordinary British soldiers in our new armies. One Colonial colonel said something almost incredible to me — almost incredible

as coming as from a Frenchman; it was a matter to solemn for any compliments or polite exaggerations; he said in tones of wonder and conviction, "*They are as good as ours.*" It was his acme of all possible praise.

That means any sort of British soldier. Unless he is assisted by a kilt the ordinary Frenchman is unable to distinguish between one sort of British soldier and another. He cannot tell — let the ardent nationalist mark the fact! — a Cockney from an Irishman or the Cardiff from the Essex note. He finds them all extravagantly and unquenchably cheerful and with a generosity— "like good children." There his praise is a little tinged by doubt. The British are reckless — recklessness in battle a Frenchman can understand, but they are also reckless about to-morrow's bread and whether the tent is safe against a hurricane in the night. He is struck too by the fact that they are much more vocal than the French troops, and that they seem to have a passion for bad lugubrious songs. There he smiles and shrugs his shoulders, and indeed what else can any of us do in the presence of that mystery? At any rate the legend of the "phlegmatic" Englishman has been scattered to the four winds of heaven by the guns of the western front. The men are cool in action, it is true; but for the rest they are, by the French standards, quicksilver.

But I will not expand further upon the general impression made by the English in France. Philippe Millet's *En Liaison avec les Anglais* gives in a series of delightful pictures portraits of British types from the French angle. There can be little doubt that the British quality, genial naive, plucky and generous, has won for itself a real affection in France wherever it has had a chance to display itself....

But when it comes to British methods then the polite Frenchman's difficulties begin. Translating hints into statements and guessing at reservations, I would say that the French fall very short of admiration of the way in which our higher officers set about their work, they are disagreeably impressed by a general want of sedulousness and close method in our leading. They think we economise brains and waste blood. They are shocked at the way in which obviously incompetent or inefficient men of the old army class are retained in their positions even after serious failures, and they were profoundly moved by the bad staff work and needlessly heavy losses of our opening attacks in

July. They were ready to condone the blunderings and flounderings of the 1915 offensive as the necessary penalties of an "amateur" army, they had had to learn their own lesson in Champagne, but they were surprised to find how much the British had still to learn in July, 1916. The British officers excuse themselves because, they plead, they are still amateurs. "That is no reason," says the Frenchman, "why they should be amateurish."

No Frenchman said as much as this to me, but their meaning was as plain as daylight. I tackled one of my guides on this matter; I said that it was the plain duty of the French military people to criticise British military methods sharply if they thought they were wrong. "It is not easy," he said. "Many British officers do not think they have anything to learn. And English people do not like being told things. What could we do? We could hardly send a French officer or so to your headquarters in a tutorial capacity. You have to do things in your own way." When I tried to draw General Castelnau into this dangerous question by suggesting that we might borrow a French general or so, he would say only, "There is only one way to learn war, and that is to make war." When it was too late, in the lift, I thought of the answer to that. There is only one way to make war, and that is by the sacrifice of incapables and the rapid promotion of able men. If old and tried types fail now, new types must be sought. But to do that we want a standard of efficiency. We want a conception of intellectual quality in performance that is still lacking....

M. Joseph Reinach, in whose company I visited the French part of the Somme front, was full of a scheme, which he has since published, for the breaking up and recomposition of the French and British armies into a series of composite armies which would blend the magnificent British manhood and material with French science and military experience. He pointed out the endless advantages of such an arrangement; the stimulus of emulation, the promotion of intimate fraternal feeling between the peoples of the two countries. "At present," he said, "no Frenchman ever sees an Englishman except at Amiens or on the Somme. Many of them still have no idea of what the English are doing...."

"Have I ever told you the story of compulsory Greek at Oxford

and Cambridge?" I asked abruptly.

"What has that to do with it?"

"Or how two undistinguished civil service commissioners can hold up the scientific education of our entire administrative class?"

M. Reinach protested further.

"Because you are proposing to loosen the grip of a certain narrow and limited class upon British affairs, and you propose it as though it were a job as easy as rearranging railway fares or sending a van to Calais. That is the problem that every decent Englishman is trying to solve to-day, every man of that Greater Britain which has supplied these five million volunteers, these magnificent temporary officers and all this wealth of munitions. And the oligarchy is so invincibly fortified! Do you think it will let in Frenchmen to share its controls? It will not even let in Englishmen. It holds the class schools; the class universities; the examinations for our public services are its class shibboleths; it is the church, the squirearchy, the permanent army class, permanent officialdom; it makes every appointment, it is the fountain of honour; what it does not know is not knowledge, what it cannot do must not be done. It rules India ignorantly and obstructively; it will wreck the empire rather than relinquish its ascendancy in Ireland. It is densely self-satisfied and instinctively monopolistic. It is on our backs, and with it on our backs we common English must bleed and blunder to victory.... And you make this proposal!"

3

The antagonistic relations of the Anglican oligarchy with the greater and greater-spirited Britain that thrust behind it in this war are probably paralleled very closely in Germany, probably they are exaggerated in Germany with a bigger military oligarchy and a relatively lesser civil body under it. This antagonism is the oddest outcome of the tremendous *de-militarisation* of war that has been going on. In France it is probably not so marked because of the greater flexibility and adaptability of the French culture.

All military people — people, that is, professionally and primarily military — are inclined to be conservative. For thousands of years

the military tradition has been a tradition of discipline. The conception of the common soldier has been a mechanically obedient, almost dehumanised man, of the of officer a highly trained autocrat. In two years all this has been absolutely reversed. Individual quality, inventive organisation and industrialism will win this war. And no class is so innocent of these things as the military caste. Long accustomed as they are to the importance of moral effect they put a brave face upon the business; they save their faces astonishingly, but they are no longer guiding and directing this war, they are being pushed from behind by forces they never foresaw and cannot control. The aeroplanes and great guns have bolted with them, the tanks begotten of naval and civilian wits, shove them to victory in spite of themselves.

Wherever I went behind the British lines the officers were going about in spurs. These spurs at last got on my nerves. They became symbolical. They became as grave an insult to the tragedy of the war as if they were false noses. The British officers go for long automobile rides in spurs. They walk about the trenches in spurs. Occasionally I would see a horse; I do not wish to be unfair in this matter, there were riding horses sometimes within two or three miles of the ultimate front, but they were rarely used.

I do not say that the horse is entirely obsolescent in this war. In was nothing is obsolete. In the trenches men fight with sticks. In the Pasubio battle the other day one of the Alpini silenced a machine gun by throwing stones. In the West African campaign we have employed troops armed with bows and arrows, and they have done very valuable work. But these are exceptional cases. The military use of the horse henceforth will be such an exceptional case. It is ridiculous for these spurs still to clink about the modern battlefield. What the gross cost of the spurs and horses and trappings of the British army amount to, and how many men are grooming and tending horses who might just as well be ploughing and milking at home, I cannot guess; it must be a total so enormous as seriously to affect the balance of the war.

And these spurs and their retention are only the outward and visible symbol of the obstinate resistance of the Anglican intelligence to the clear logic of the present situation. It is not only

the external equipment of our leaders that falls behind the times; our political and administrative services are in the hands of the same desolatingly inadaptable class. The British are still wearing spurs in Ireland; they are wearing them in India; and the age of the spur has passed. At the outset of this war there was an absolute cessation of criticism of the military and administrative castes; it is becoming a question whether we may not pay too heavily in blundering and waste, in military and economic lassitude, in international irritation and the accumulation of future dangers in Ireland, Egypt, India, and elsewhere, for an apparent absence of internal friction. These people have no gratitude for tacit help, no spirit of intelligent service, and no sense of fair play to the outsider. The latter deficiency indeed they call *esprit de corps* and prize it as if it were a noble quality.

It becomes more and more imperative that the foreign observer should distinguish between this narrower, older official Britain and the greater newer Britain that struggles to free itself from the entanglement of a system outgrown. There are many Englishmen who would like to say to the French and Irish and the Italians and India, who indeed feel every week now a more urgent need of saying, "Have patience with us." The Riddle of the British is very largely solved if you will think of a great modern liberal nation seeking to slough an exceedingly tough and tight skin....

Nothing is more illuminating and self-educational than to explain one's home politics to an intelligent foreigner enquirer; it strips off all the secondary considerations, the allusiveness, the merely tactical considerations, the allusiveness, the merely tactical considerations. One sees the forest not as a confusion of trees but as something with a definite shape and place. I was asked in Italy and in France, "Where does Lord Northcliffe come into the British system — or Lloyd George? Who is Mr. Redmond? Why is Lloyd George a Minister, and why does not Mr. Redmond take office? Isn't there something called an ordnance department, and why is there a separate ministry of munitions? Can Mr. Lloyd George remove an incapable general?..."

I found it M. Joseph Reinach particularly penetrating and persistent. It is an amusing but rather difficult exercise to recall what I tried to convey to him by way of a theory of Britain. He is by no

means an uncritical listener. I explained that there is an "inner Britain," official Britain, which is Anglican or official Presbyterian, which at the outside in the whole world cannot claim to speak for twenty million Anglican or Presbyterian communicants, which monopolises official positions, administration and honours in the entire British empire, dominates the court, and, typically, is spurred and red-tabbed. (It was just at this time that the spurs were most on my nerves.)

This inner Britain, I went on to explain, holds tenaciously to its positions of advantage, from which it is difficult to dislodge it without upsetting the whole empire, and it insists upon treating the rest of the four hundred millions who constitute that empire as outsiders, foreigners, subject races and suspected persons.

"To you," I said, "it bears itself with an appearance of faintly hostile, faintly contemptuous apathy. It is still so entirely insular that it shudders at the thought of the Channel Tunnel. This is the Britain which irritates and puzzles you so intensely — that you are quite unable to conceal these feelings from me. Unhappily it is the Britain you see most of. Well, outside this official Britain is 'Greater Britain' — the real Britain with which you have to reckon in the future." (From this point a faint flavour of mysticism crept into my dissertation. I found myself talking with something in my voice curiously reminiscent of those liberal Russians who set themselves to explain the contrasts and contradictions of "official" Russia and "true" Russia.) "This Greater Britain," I asserted, "is in a perpetual conflict with official Britain, struggling to keep it up to its work, shoving it towards its ends, endeavouring in spite of its tenacious mischievousness of the privileged to keep the peace and a common aim with the French and Irish and Italians and Russians and Indians. It is to that outer Britain that those Englishmen you found so interesting and sympathetic, Lloyd George and Lord Northcliffe, for example, belong. It is the Britain of the great effort, the Britain of the smoking factories and the torrent of munitions, the Britain of the men and subalterns of the new armies, the Britain which invents and thinks and achieves, and stands now between German imperialism and the empire of the world. I do not want to exaggerate the quality of greater Britain. If the inner set are narrowly educated, the outer set

if often crudely educated. If the inner set is so close knit as to seem like a conspiracy, the outer set is so loosely knit as to seem like a noisy confusion. Greater Britain is only beginning to realise itself and find itself. For all its crudity there is a giant spirit in it feeling its way towards the light. It has quite other ambitions for the ending of the war than some haggled treaty of alliance with France and Italy; some advantage that will invalidate German competition; it begins to realise newer and wider sympathies, possibilities of an amalgamation of interests and community of aim that is utterly beyond the habits of the old oligarchy to conceive, beyond the scope of that tawdry word 'Empire' to express...."

I descended from my rhetoric to find M. Reinach asking how and when this greater Britain was likely to become politically effective.

V. THE SOCIAL CHANGES IN PROGRESS

1

"Nothing will be the same after the war." This is one of the consoling platitudes with which people cover over voids of thought. They utter it with an air of round-eyed profundity. But to ask in reply, "Then how will things be different?" is in many cases to rouse great resentment. It is almost as rude as saying, "Was that thought of yours really a thought?"

Let us in this chapter confine ourselves to the social-economic processes that are going on. So far as I am able to distinguish among the things that are being said in these matters, they may be classified out into groups that centre upon several typical questions. There is the question of "How to pay for the war?" There is the question of the behaviour of labour after the war. "Will there be a Labour Truce or a violent labour struggle?" There is the question of the reconstruction of European industry after the war in the face of an America in a state of monetary and economic repletion through non-intervention. My present purpose in this chapter is a critical one; it is not to solve problems but to set out various currents of thought that are flowing through the general mind. Which current is likely to seize upon and carry human affairs with it, is not for our present speculation.

There seem to be two distinct ways of answering the first of the questions I have noted. They do not necessarily contradict each other. Of course the war is being largely paid for immediately out of the accumulated private wealth of the past. We are buying off the "hold-up" of the private owner upon the material and resources we need, and paying in paper money and war loans. This is not in itself an impoverishment of the community. The wealth of individuals is not the wealth of nations; the two things may easily be contradictory when the rich man's wealth consists of land or natural resources or franchises or privileges the use of which he reluctantly yields for high prices. The conversion of held-up land and material into workable and actively used material in exchange for national debt

may be indeed a positive increase in the wealth of the community. And what is happening in all the belligerent countries is the taking over of more and more of the realities of wealth from private hands and, in exchange, the contracting of great masses of debt to private people. The nett tendency is towards the disappearance of a reality holding class and the destruction of realities in warfare, and the appearance of a vast *rentier* class in its place. At the end of the war much material will be destroyed for evermore, transit, food production and industry will be everywhere enormously socialised, and the country will be liable to pay every year in interest, a sum of money exceeding the entire national expenditure before the war. From the point of view of the state, and disregarding material and moral damages, that annual interest is the annual instalment of the price to be paid for the war.

Now the interesting question arises whether these great belligerent states may go bankrupt, and if so to what extent. States may go bankrupt to the private creditor without repudiating their debts or seeming to pay less to him. They can go bankrupt either by a depreciation of their currency or — without touching the gold standard — through a rise in prices. In the end both these things work out to the same end; the creditor gets so many loaves or pairs of boots or workman's hours of labour for his pound *less* than he would have got under the previous conditions. One may imagine this process of price (and of course wages) increase going on to a limitless extent. Many people are inclined to look to such an increase in prices as a certain outcome of the war, and just so far as it goes, just so far will the burthen of the *rentier* class, their call, tat is, for goods and services, be lightened. This expectation is very generally entertained, and I can see little reason against it. The intensely stupid or dishonest "labour" press, however, which in the interests of the common enemy misrepresents socialism and seeks to misguide labour in Great Britain, ignores these considerations, and positively holds out this prospect of rising prices as an alarming one to the more credulous and ignorant of its readers.

But now comes the second way of meeting the after-the-war obligations. This second way is by increasing the wealth of the state and by increasing the national production to such an extent that the

payment of the *rentier* class will not be an overwhelming burthen. Rising prices bilk the creditor. Increased production will check the rise in prices and get him a real payment. The outlook for the national creditor seems to be that he will be partly bilked and partly paid; how far he will be bilked and how far depends almost entirely upon this possible increase in production; and there is consequently a very keen and quite unprecedented desire very widely diffused among intelligent and active people, holding War Loan scrip and the like, in all the belligerent countries, to see bold and hopeful schemes for state enrichment pushed forward. The movement towards socialism is receiving an impulse from a new and unexpected quarter, there is now a *rentier* socialism, and it is interesting to note that while the London *Times* is full of schemes of great state enterprises, for the exploitation of Colonial state lands, for the state purchase and wholesaling of food and many natural products, and for the syndication of shipping and the great staple industries into vast trusts into which not only the British but the French and Italian governments may enter as partners, the so-called socialist press of Great Britain is chiefly busy about the draughts in the cell of Mr. Fenner Brockway and the refusal of Private Scott Duckers to put on his khaki trousers. *The New Statesman* and the Fabian Society, however, display a wider intelligence.

There is a great variety of suggestions for this increase of public wealth and production. Many of them have an extreme reasonableness. The extent to which they will be adopted depends, no doubt, very largely upon the politician and permanent official, and both these classes are prone to panic in the presence of reality. In spite of its own interests in restraining a rise in prices, the old official "salariat" is likely to be obstructive to any such innovations. It is the resistance of spurs and red tabs to military innovations over again. This is the resistance of quills and red tape. On the other hand the organisation of Britain for war has "officialised" a number of industrial leaders, and created a large body of temporary and adventurous officials. They may want to carry on into peace production the great new factories the war has created. At the end of the war, for example, every belligerent country will be in urgent need of cheap automobiles for farmers, tradesmen, and industrial purposes

generally, America is now producing such automobiles at a price of eighty pounds. But Europe will be heavily in debt to America, her industries will be disorganised, and there will therefore be no sort of return payment possible for these hundreds of thousands of automobiles. A country that is neither creditor nor producer cannot be an importer. Consequently though those cheap tin cars may be stacked as high as the Washington Monument in America, they will never come to Europe. On the other hand the great shell factories of Europe will be standing idle and ready, their staffs disciplined and available, for conversion to the new task. The imperative common sense of the position seems to be that the European governments should set themselves straight away to out-Ford Ford, and provide their own people with cheap road transport.

But here comes in the question whether this common-sense course is inevitable. Suppose the mental energy left in Europe after the war is insufficient for such a constructive feat as this. There will certainly be the obstruction of official pedantry, the hold-up of this vested interest and that, the greedy desire of "private enterprise" to exploit the occasion upon rather more costly and less productive lines, the general distrust felt by ignorant and unimaginative people of a new way of doing things. The process after all may not get done in the obviously wise way. This will not mean that Europe will buy American cars. It will be quite unable to buy American cars. It will be unable to make anything that America will not be able to make more cheaply for itself. But it will mean that Europe will go on without cheap cars, that is to say it will go on a more sluggishly and clumsily and wastefully at a lower economic level. Hampered transport means hampered production of other things, and in increasing inability to buy abroad. And so we go down and down.

It does not follow that because a course is the manifestly right and advantageous course for the community that it will be taken. I am reminded of this by a special basket in my study here, into which I pitch letters, circulars, pamphlets and so forth as they come to hand from a gentleman named Gattie, and his friends Mr. Adrian Ross, Mr. Roy Horniman, Mr. Henry Murray and others. His particular project is the construction of a Railway Clearing House for London. It is an absolutely admirable scheme. It would cut down the heavy

traffic in the streets of London to about one-third; it would enable us to run the goods traffic of England with less than half the number of railway trucks we now employ; it would turn over enormous areas of valuable land from their present use as railway goods yards and sidings; it would save time in the transit of goods and labour in their handling. It is a quite beautifully worked out scheme. For the last eight or ten years this group of devoted fanatics has been pressing this undertaking upon an indifferent country with increasing vehemence and astonishment at that indifference. The point is that its adoption, though it would be of general benefit, would be of no particular benefit to any leading man or highly placed official. On the other hand it would upset all sorts of individuals who are in a position to obstruct it quietly — and they do so. Meaning no evil. I dip my hand in the accumulation and extract a leaflet by the all too zealous Mr. Murray. In it he denounces various public officials by name as he cheats and scoundrels, and invites a prosecution for libel.

In that fashion nothing will ever get done. There is no prosecution, but for all that I do not agree with Mr. Murray about the men he names. These gentlemen are just comfortable gentlemen, own brothers to these old generals of ours who will not take off their spurs. They are probably quite charming people except that they know nothing of that Fear of God which searches by heart. Why should they bother?

So many of these after-the-war problems bring one back to the question of how far the war has put the Fear of God into the hearts of responsible men. There is really no other reason in existence that I can imagine why they should ask themselves the question, “Have I done my best?” and that still more important question, “Am I doing my best now?” And so while I hear plenty of talk about the great reorganisations that are to come after the war, while there is the stir of doubt among the *rentiers* whether, after all, they will get paid, while the unavoidable stresses and sacrifices of the war are making many people question the rightfulness of much that they did as a matter of course, and of much that they took for granted, I perceive there is also something dull and not very articulate in this European world, something resistant and inert, that is like the obstinate rolling over of a heavy sleeper after he has been called upon to get up. “Just

a little longer.... Just for *my* time."

One thought alone seems to make these more intractable people anxious. I thrust it in as my last stimulant when everything else has failed. "There will be *frightful* trouble with labour after the war," I say.

They try to persuade themselves that military discipline is breaking in labour....

2

What does British labour think of the outlook after the war?

As a distinctive thing British labour does not think. "Class-conscious labour," as the Marxists put it, scarcely exists in Britain. The only convincing case I ever met was a bath-chairman of literary habits Eastbourne. The only people who are, as a class, class-conscious in the British community are the Anglican gentry and their fringe of the genteel. Everybody else is "respectable." The mass of British workers find their thinking in the ordinary halfpenny papers or in *John Bull.* The so-called labour papers are perhaps less representative of British Labour than any other section of the press; the *Labour Leader*, for example, is the organ of such people as Bertrand Russell, Vernon Lee, Morel, academic *rentiers* who know about as much as of the labour side of industrialism as they do of cock-fighting. All the British peoples are racially willing and good-tempered people, quite ready to be led by those they imagine to be abler than themselves. They make the most cheerful and generous soldiers in the whole world, without insisting upon that democratic respect which the Frenchman exacts. They do not criticise and they do not trouble themselves much about the general plan of operations, so long as they have confidence in the quality and good will of their leading. But British soldiers will of their loading. But British soldiers will hiss a general when they think he is selfish, unfeeling, or a muff. And the socialist propaganda has imported ideas of public service into private employment. Labour in Britain has been growing increasingly impatient of bad or selfish industrial leadership. Labour trouble in Great Britain turns wholly upon the idea crystallised in the one word "profiteer." Legislation and regulation of hours of labour,

high wages, nothing will keep labour quiet in Great Britain if labour thinks it is being exploited for private gain.

Labour feels very suspicious of private gain. For that suspicion a certain rather common type of employer is mainly to blame. Labour believes that employers is mainly to blame. Labour believes that employers as a class cheat workmen as a class, plan to cheat them of their full share in the common output, and drive hard bargains. It believes that private employers are equally ready to sacrifice the welfare of the nation and the welfare of the workers for mere personal advantage. It has a traditional experience to support these suspicions.

In no department of morals have ideas changed so completely during the last eight years as in relation to "profits". Eighty years ago everyone believed in the divine right of property to do what it pleased its advantages, a doctrine more disastrous socially than the divine right of kings. There was no such sense of the immorality of "holding up" as pervades the public conscience to-day. The worker was expected not only to work, but to be grateful for employment. The property owner held his property and handed it out for use and development or not, just as he thought fit. These ideas are not altogether extinct today. Only a few days ago I met a magnificent old lady of seventy nine or eighty, who discoursed upon the wickedness of her gardener in demanding another shilling a week because of war prices.

She was a valiant and handsome personage. A face that had still a healthy natural pinkness looked out from under blond curls, and an elegant and carefully tended hand tossed back some fine old lace to gesticulate more freely. She had previously charmed her hearers by sweeping aside certain rumours that were drifting about.

"Germans invade *Us!*" she cried. "Who'd *let* 'em, I'd like to know? Who'd *let* 'em?"

And then she reverted to her grievance about the gardener.

"I told him that after the war he'd be glad enough to get anything. Grateful! They'll all be coming back after the war — all of 'em, glad enough to get anything. Asking for another shilling indeed!"

Everyone who heard her looked shocked. But that was the tone of everyone of importance in the dark years that followed the

Napoleonic wars. That is just one survivor of the old tradition. Another is Blight the solicitor, who goes about bewailing the fact that we writers are "holding out false hopes of higher agricultural wages after the war." But these are both exceptions. They are held to be remarkable people even by their own class. The mass of property owners and influential people in Europe to-day no more believe in the sacred right of property to hold up development and dictate terms than do the more intelligent workers. The ideas of collective ends and of the fiduciary nature of property, had been soaking through the European community for years before the war. The necessity for sudden and even violent co-operations and submersions of individuality in a common purpose, is rapidly crystallising out these ideas into clear proposals.

War is an evil thing, but most people who will not learn from reason must have an ugly teacher. This war has brought home to everyone the supremacy of the public need over every sort of individual claim.

One of the most remarkable things in the British war press is the amount of space given to the discussion of labour developments after the war. This in its completeness peculiar to the British situation. Nothing on the same scale is perceptible in the press of the Latin allies. A great movement on the part of capitalists and business organisers is manifest to assure the worker of a change of heart and a will to change method. Labour is suspicious, not foolishly but wisely suspicious. But labour is considering it.

"National industrial syndication," say the business organisers.

"Guild socialism," say the workers.

There is also a considerable amount of talking and writing about "profit-sharing" and about giving the workers a share in the business direction. Neither of these ideas appeals to the shrewder heads among the workers. So far as direction goes their disposition is to ask the captain to command the ship. So far as profits go, they think the captain has no more right than the cabin boy to speculative gains; he should do his work for his pay whether it is profitable or unprofitable work. There is little balm for labour discontent in these schemes for making the worker also an infinitesimal profiteer.

During my journey in Italy and France I met several men who

were keenly interested in business organisation. Just before I started my friend N, who has been the chief partner in the building up of a very big and very extensively advertised American business, came to see me on his way back to America. He is as interested in his work as a scientific specialist, and as ready to talk about it to any intelligent and interested hearer. He was particularly keen upon the question of continuity in the business, when it behoves the older generation to let in the younger to responsible management and to efface themselves. He was a man of five-and-forty. Incidentally he mentioned that he had never taken anything for his private life out of the great business he had built up but a salary, "a good salary," and that now he was gong to grant himself a pension. "I shan't interfere any more. I shall come right away and live in Europe for a year so as not to be tempted to interfere. The boys have got to run it some day, and they had better get their experience while they're young and capable of learning by it. I did."

I like N's ideas. "Practically," I said, "you've been a public official. You've treated your business like a public service."

That was his idea.

"Would you mind if it was a public service?"

He reflected, and some disagreeable memory darkened his face. "Under the politicians?" he said.

I took the train of thought N had set going abroad with me next day. I had the good luck to meet men who were interesting industrially. Captain Pirelli, my guide in Italy, has a name familiar to every motorist; his name goes wherever cars go, spelt with a big long capital P. Lieutenant de Tessin's name will recall one of the most interesting experiments in profit-sharing to the student of social science. I tried over N's problem on both of them. I found in both their minds just the same attitude as he takes up towards his business. They think any businesses that are worthy of respect, the sorts of businesses that interest them, are public functions. Money-lenders and speculators, merchants and gambling gentlefolk may think in terms of profit; capable business directors certainly do nothing of the sort.

I met a British officer in France who is also a landowner. I got him to talk about his administrative work upon his property. He was very

keen upon new methods. He said he tried to do his duty by his land.

"How much land?" I asked.

"Just over nine thousand acres," he said.

"But you could manage forty or fifty thousand with little more trouble."

"If I had it. In some ways it would be easier."

"What a waste!" I said. "Of course you ought not to *own* these acres; what you ought to be is the agricultural controller of just as big an estate of the public lands as you could manage — with a suitable salary."

He reflected upon that idea. He said he did not get much of a salary out of his land as it was, and made a regrettable allusion to Mr. Lloyd George. "When a man tries to do his duty by his land," he said...

But here running through the thoughts of the Englishman and the Italian and the Frenchman and the American alike one finds just the same idea of a kind of officialdom in ownership. It is an idea that pervades our thought and public discussion to-day everywhere, and it is an idea that is scarcely traceable at all in the thought of the early half of the nineteenth century. The idea of service and responsibility in property has increased and is increasing, the conception of "hold-up," the usurer's conception of his right to be bought out of the way, fades. And the process has been enormously enhanced by the various big-scale experiments in temporary socialism that have been forced upon the belligerent powers. Men of the most individualistic quality are being educated up to the possibilities of concerted collective action. My friend and fellow-student Y, inventor and business organiser, who used to make the best steam omnibuses in the world, and who is now making all sorts of things for the army, would go pink with suspicious anger at the mere words "inspector" or "socialism" three or four years ago. He does not do so now.

A great proportion of this sort of man, this energetic directive sort of man in England, is thinking socialism to-day. They may not be saying socialism, but they are thinking it. When labour begins to realise what is adrift it will be divided between two things: between appreciative co-operation, for which guild socialism in particular has prepared its mind, and traditional suspicion. I will not over to guess

here which will prevail.

3

The impression I have of the present mental process in the European communities is that while the official class and the *rentier* class is thinking very poorly and inadequately and with a merely obstructive disposition; while the churches are merely wasting their energies in futile self-advertisement; while the labour mass is suspicious and disposed to make terms for itself rather than come into any large schemes of reconstruction that will abolish profit as a primary aim in economic life, there is still a very considerable movement towards such a reconstruction. Nothing is so misleading as a careless analogy. In the dead years that followed the Napoleonic wars, which are often quoted as a precedent for expectation now, the spirit of collective service was near its minimum; it was never so strong and never so manifestly spreading and increasing as it is to-day.

But service to what?

I have my own very strong preconceptions here, and since my temperament is sanguine they necessarily colour my view. I believe that this impulse to collective service can satisfy itself only under the formula that mankind is one state of which God is the undying king, and that the service of men's collective needs is the true worship of God. But eagerly as I would grasp at any evidence that this idea is being developed and taken up by the general consciousness, I am quite unable to persuade myself that anything of the sort is going on. I do perceive a search for large forms into which the prevalent impulse to devotion can be thrown. But the organised religious bodies, with their creeds and badges and their instinct for self-preservation at any cost, stand between men and their spiritual growth in just the same way the forestallers stand between men and food. Their activities at present are an almost intolerable nuisance. One cannot say "God" but some tout is instantly seeking to pluck one into his particular cave of flummery and orthodoxy. What a rational man means by God is just God. The more you define and argue about God the more he remains the same simple thing. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, modern Hindu religious thought, all agree in

declaring that there is one God, master and leader of all mankind, in unending conflict with cruelty, disorder, folly and waste. To my mind, it follows immediately that there can be no king, no government of any sort, which is not either a subordinate or a rebel government, a local usurpation, in the kingdom of God. But no organised religious body has ever had the courage and honesty to insist upon this. They all pander to nationalism and to powers and princes. They exists so to pander. Every organised religion in the world exists only to exploit and divert and waste the religious impulse in man.

This conviction that the world kingdom of God is the only true method of human service, is so clear and final in my own mind, it seems so inevitably the conviction to which all right-thinking men must ultimately come, that I feel almost like a looker-on at a game of blind-man's bluff as I watch the discussion of synthetic political ideas. The blind man thrusts his seeking hands into the oddest corners, he clutches at chairs and curtains, but at last he must surely find and hold and feel over and guess the name of the plainly visible quarry.

Some of the French and Italian people I talked to said they were fighting for "Civilisation." That is one name for the kingdom of God, and I have heard English people use it too. But much of the contemporary thought of England stills wanders with its back to the light. Most of it is pawing over jerry-built, secondary things. I have before me a little book, the joint work of Dr. Grey and Mr. Turner, of an ex-public schoolmaster and a manufacturer, called *Eclipse or Empire?* (The title *World Might or Downfall?* had already been secured in another quarter.) It is a book that has been enormously advertised; it has been almost impossible to escape its column-long advertisements; it is billed upon the hoardings, and it is on the whole a very able and right-spirited book. It calls for more and better education, for more scientific methods, for less class suspicion and more social explicitness and understanding, for a franker and fairer treatment of labour. But why does it call for these things? Does it call for them because they are right? Because in accomplishing them one serves God?

Not at all. But because otherwise this strange sprawling empire of

ours will drop back into a secondary place in the world. These two writers really seem to think that the slack workman, the slacker wealthy man, the negligent official, the conservative schoolmaster, the greedy usurer, the comfortable obstructive, confronted with this alternative, terrified at this idea of something or other called the Empire being "eclipsed," eager for the continuance of this undefined glory over their fellow-creatures called "Empire," will perceive the error of their ways and become energetic, devoted, capable. They think an ideal of that sort is going to change the daily lives of men.... I sympathise with their purpose, and I deplore their conception of motives. If men will not give themselves for righteousness, they will not give themselves for a geographical score. If they will not work well for the hatred of bad work, they will not work well for the hatred of Germans. This "Empire" idea has been cadging about the British empire, trying to collect enthusiasm and devotion, since the days of Disraeli. It is, I submit, too big for the mean-spirited, and too tawdry and limited for the fine and generous. It leaves out the French and the Italians and the Belgians and all our blood brotherhood of allies. It has no compelling force in it. We British are not naturally Imperialist; we are something greater — or something less. For two years and a half now we have been fighting against Imperialism in its most extravagant form. It is a poor incentive to right living to propose to parody the devil we fight against.

The blind man must lunge again.

For when the right answer is seized it answers not only the question why men should work for their fellow-men but also why nation should cease to arm and plan and contrive against nation. The social problem is only the international problem in retail, the international problem is only the social one in gross.

My bias rules me altogether here. I see men in social, in economic and in international affairs alike, eager to put an end to conflict, inexpressibly weary of conflict and the waste and pain and death it involves. But to end conflict one must abandon aggressive or uncordial pretensions. Labour is sick at the idea of more strikes and struggles after the war, industrialism is sick of competition and anxious for service, everybody is sick of war. But how can they end any of these clashes except by the definition and recognition of a

common end which will establish a standard for the trial of every conceivable issue, to which, that is, every other issue can be subordinated; and what common end can there be in all the world except this idea of the world kingdom of God? What is the good of orienting one's devotion to a firm, or to class solidarity, or *La Republique Francais*, or Poland, or Albania, or such love and loyalty as people profess for King George or King Albert or the Duc d'Orleans — it puzzles me why — or any such intermediate object of self-abandonment? We need a standard so universal that the platelayer may say to the barrister or the duchess, or the Red Indian to the Limehouse sailor, or the Anzac soldier to the Sinn Feiner or the Chinaman, "What are we two doing for it?" And to fill the place of that "it," no other idea is great enough or commanding enough, but only the world kingdom of God.

However long he may have to hunt, the blind man who is seeking service and an end to bickerings will come to that at last, because of all the thousand other things he may clutch at, nothing else can satisfy his manifest need.

VI. THE ENDING OF THE WAR

1

About the end of the war there are two chief ways of thinking, there is a simpler sort of mind which desires merely a date, and a more complex kind which wants particulars. To the former class belong most of the men out at the front. They are so bored by this war that they would welcome any peace that did not definitely admit defeat — and examine the particulars later. The "tone" of the German army, to judge by its captured letters, is even lower. It would welcome peace in any form. Never in the whole history of the world has a war been so universally unpopular as this war.

The mind of the soldier is obsessed by a vision of home-coming for good, so vivid and alluring that it blots out nearly every other consideration. The visions of people at home are of plenty instead of privation, lights up, and the cessation of a hundred tiresome restrictions. And it is natural therefore that a writer rather given to guesses and forecasts should be asked very frequently to guess how long the war has still to run.

All such forecasting is the very wildest of shooting. There are the chances of war to put one out, and of a war that changes far faster than the military intelligence. I have made various forecasts. At the outset I thought that military Germany would fight at about the 1899 level, would be lavish with cavalry and great attacks, that it would be reluctant to entrench, and that the French and British had learnt the lesson of the Boer war better than the Germans. I trusted to the melodramatic instinct of the Kaiser. I trusted to the quickened intelligence of the British military caste. The first rush seemed to bear me out, and I opened my paper day by day expecting to read of the British and French entrenched and the Germans beating themselves to death against wire and trenches. In those days I wrote of the French being over the Rhine before 1915. But it was the Germans who entrenched first.

Since then I have made some other attempts. I did not prophesy at all in 1915, so far as I can remember. If I had I should certainly have

backed the Gallipoli attempt to win. It was the right thing to do, and it was done abominably. It should have given us Constantinople and brought Bulgaria to our side; it gave us a tragic history of administrative indolence and negligence, and wasted bravery and devotion. I was very hopeful of the western offensive in 1915; and in 1916 I counted still on our continuing push. I believe we were very near something like decision this last September, but some archaic dream of doing it with cavalry dashed these hopes. The "Tanks" arrived to late to do their proper work, and their method of use is being worked out very slowly.... I still believe in the western push, if only we push it for all we are worth. If only we push it with our brains, with our available and still unorganised brains; if only we realise that the art of modern war is to invent and invent and invent. Hitherto I have always hoped and looked for decision, a complete victory that would enable the Allies to dictate peace. But such an expectation is largely conditioned by these delicate questions of adaptability that my tour of the front has made very urgent in my mind. A spiteful German American writer has said that the British would rather kill twenty thousand of their men than break one general. Even a grain of truth in such a remark is a very valid reasoning for lengthening one's estimate of the duration of the war.

There can be no doubt that the Western allies are playing a winning game upon the western front, and that this is the front of decision now. It is not in doubt that they are beating the Germans and shoving them back. The uncertain factor is the rate at which they are shoving them back. If they can presently get to so rapid an advance as to bring the average rate since July 1st up to two or three miles a day, then we shall still see the Allies dictating terms. But if the shove drags on at its present pace of less than a mile and four thousand prisoners a week over the limited Somme front only, if nothing is attempted elsewhere to increase the area of pressure, [*This was written originally before the French offensive at Verdun.] then the intolerable stress and boredom of the war will bring about a peace long before the Germans are decisively crushed. But the war, universally detested, may go on into 1918 or 1919. Food riots, famine, and general disorganisation will come before 1920, if it does. The Allies have a winning game before them, but they seem unable

to discover and promote the military genius needed to harvest an unquestionable victory. In the long run this may not be an unmixed evil. Victory, complete and dramatic, may be bought too dearly. We need not triumphs out of this war but the peace of the world.

This war is altogether unlike any previous war, and its ending, like its development, will follow a course of its own. For a time people's minds ran into the old grooves, the Germans were going *nach Paris* and *nach London*; Lord Curzon filled our minds with a pleasant image of the Bombay Lancers riding down *Unter den Linden.* But the Versailles precedent of a council of victors dictating terms to the vanquished is not now so evidently in men's minds. The utmost the Allies talk upon now is to say, "We must end the war on German soil." The Germans talk frankly of "holding out." I have guessed that the western offensive will be chiefly on German soil by next June; it is a mere guess, and I admit it is quite conceivable that the "push" may still be grinding out its daily tale of wounded and prisoners in 1918 far from that goal.

None of the combatants expected such a war as this, and the consequence is that the world at large has no idea how to get out of it. The war may stay with us like a schoolboy caller, because it does not know how to go. The Italians said as much to me. "Suppose we get to Innsbruck and Laibach and Trieste," they said, "it isn't an end!" Lord Northcliffe, I am told, came away from Italy with the conviction that the war would last six years.

There is the clearest evidence that nearly everyone is anxious to get out of the war now. Nobody at all, except perhaps a few people who may be called to account, and a handful of greedy profit-seekers, wants to keep it going. Quietly perhaps and unobtrusively, everyone I know is now trying to find the way out of the war, and I am convinced that the same is the case in Germany. That is what makes the Peace-at-any-price campaign so exasperating. It is like being chased by clamorous geese across a common in the direction in which you want to go. But how are we to get out — with any credit — in such a way as to prevent a subsequent collapse into another war as frightful?

At present three programmes are before the world of the way in which the war can be ended. The first of these assumes a complete

predominance of our Allies. It has been stated in general terms by Mr. Asquith. Evacuation, reparation, due punishment of those responsible for the war, and guarantees that nothing of the sort shall happen again. There is as yet no mention of the nature of these guarantees. Just exactly what is to happen to Poland, Austria, and the Turkish Empire does not appear in this prospectus. The German Chancellor is equally elusive. The Kaiser has stampeded the peace-at-any-price people of Great Britain by proclaiming that Germany wants peace. We knew that. But what sort of peace? It would seem that we are promised vaguely evacuation and reparation on the western frontier, and in addition there are to be guarantees — but it is quite evident that they are altogether different guarantees from Mr. Asquith's — that nothing of the sort is ever to happen again. The programme of the British and their Allies seems to contemplate something like a forcible disarmament and military occupation of Belgium, the desertion of Serbia and Russia, and the surrender to Germany of every facility for a later and more successful German offensive in the west. But it is clear that on these terms as stated the war must go on to the definite defeat of one side or the other, or a European chaos. They are irreconcilable sets of terms.

Yet it is hard to say how they can be modified on either side, if the war is to be decided only between the belligerents and by standards of national interest only, without reference to any other considerations. Our Allies would be insane to leave the Hohenzollern at the end of the war with a knife in his hand, after the display he has made of his quality. To surrender his knife means for the Hohenzollern the abandonment of his dreams, the repudiation of the entire education and training of Germany for half a century. When we realise the fatality of this antagonism, we realise how it is that, in this present anticipation of hell, the weary, wasted and tormented nations must still sustain their monstrous dreary struggle. And that is why this thought that possible there may be a side way out, a sort of turning over of the present endlessly hopeless game into a new and different and manageable game through the introduction of some external factor, creeps and spreads as I find it creeping and spreading.

That is what the finer intelligences of America are beginning to realise, and why men in Europe continually turn their eyes to

America, with a surmise, with a doubt.

A point of departure for very much thinking in this matter is the recent speech of President Wilson that heralded the present discussion. All Europe was impressed by the truth, and by President Wilson's recognition of the truth, that from any other great war after this America will be unable to abstain. Can America come into this dispute at the end to insist upon something better than a new diplomatic patchwork, and so obviate the later completer Armageddon? Is there, above the claims and passions of Germany, France, Britain, and the rest of them, a conceivable right thing to do for all mankind, that it might also be in the interest of America to support? Is there a Third Party solution, so to speak, which may possibly be the way out from this war?

And further I would go on to ask, is not this present exchange of Notes, appealing to the common sense of the world, really the beginning, and the proper beginning, of the unprecedented Peace Negotiations to end this unprecedented war? And, I submit, the longer this open discussion goes on before the doors close upon the secret peace congress the better for mankind.

2

Let me sketch out here what I conceive to be the essentials of a world settlement. Some of the items are the mere commonplaces of everyone who discusses this question; some are less frequently insisted upon. I have been joining up one thing to another, suggestions I have heard from this man and that, and I believe that it is really possible to state a solution that will be acceptable to the bulk of reasonable men all about the world. Directly we put the panic-massacres of Dinant and Louvain, the crime of the *Lusitania* and so on into the category of symptoms rather than essentials, outrages that call for special punishments and reparations, but that do not enter further into the ultimate settlement, we can begin to conceive a possible world treaty. Let me state the broad outlines of this pacification. The outlines depend one upon the other; each is a condition of the other. It is upon these lines that the thoughtful, as distinguished from the merely the combative people, seem to be

drifting everywhere.

In the first place, it is agreed that there would have to be an identical treaty between all the great powers of the world binding them to certain things. It would have to provide: —

That the few great industrial states capable of producing modern war equipment should take over and control completely the manufacture of all munitions of war in the world. And that they should absolutely close the supply of such material to all the other states in the world. This is a far easier task than many people suppose. War has now been so developed on its mechanical side that the question of its continuance or abolition rests now entirely upon four or five great powers.

Next comes the League of Peace idea; that there should be an International Tribunal for the discussion and settlement of international disputes. That the dominating powers should maintain land and sea forces only up to a limit agreed upon and for internal police use only or for the purpose of enforcing the decisions of the Tribunal. That they should all be bound to attack and suppress any power amongst them which increases its war equipment beyond its defined limits.

That much has already been broached in several quarters. But so far is not enough. It ignores the chief processes of that economic war that aids and abets and is inseparably a part of modern international conflicts. If we are to go as far as we have already stated in the matter of international controls, then we must go further and provide that the International Tribunal should have power to consider and set aside all tariffs and localised privileges that seem grossly unfair or seriously irritating between the various states of the world. It should have power to pass or revise all new tariff, quarantine, alien exclusion, or the like legislation affecting international relations. Moreover, it should take over and extend the work of the International Bureau of Agriculture at Rome with a view to the control of all staple products. It should administer the sea law of the world, and control and standardise freights in the common interests of mankind. Without these provisions it would be merely preventing the use of certain weapons; it would be doing nothing to prevent countries strangling or suffocating each other by commercial warfare.

It would not abolish war.

Now upon this issue people do not seem to me to be yet thinking very clearly. It is the exception to find anyone among the peace talkers who really grasps how inseparably the necessity for free access for everyone to natural products, to coal and tropical products, e.g. free shipping at non-discriminating tariffs, and the recognition by a Tribunal of the principle of common welfare in trade matters, is bound up with the ideal of a permanent world peace. But any peace that does not provide for these things will be merely laying down of the sword in order to take up the cudgel. And a "peace" that did not rehabilitate industrial Belgium, Poland, and the north of France would call imperatively for the imposition upon the Allies of a system of tariffs in the interests of these countries, and for a bitter economic "war after the war" against Germany. That restoration is, of course, an implicit condition to any attempt to set up an economic peace in the world.

These things being arranged for the future, it would be further necessary to set up an International Boundary Commission, subject to certain defining conditions agreed upon by the belligerents, to re-draw the map of Europe, Asia, and Africa. This war does afford an occasion such as the world may never have again of tracing out the "natural map" of mankind, the map that will secure the maximum of homogeneity and the minimum of racial and economic freedom. All idealistic people hope for a restored Poland. But it is a childish thing to dream of a contented Poland with Posen still under the Prussian heel, with Cracow cut off, and without a Baltic port. These claims of Poland to completeness have a higher sanction than the mere give and take of belligerents in congress.

Moreover this International Tribunal, if it was indeed to prevent war, would need also to have power to intervene in the affairs of any country or region in a state of open and manifest disorder, for the protection of foreign travellers and of persons and interests localised in that country but foreign to it.

Such an agreement as I have here sketched out would at once lift international politics out of the bloody and hopeless squalor of the present conflict. It is, I venture to assert, the peace of the reasonable man in any country whatever. But it needs the attention of such a

disengaged people as the American people to work it out and supply it with — weight. It needs putting before the world with some sort of authority greater than its mere entire reasonableness. Otherwise it will not come before the minds of ordinary men with the effect of a practicable proposition. I do not see any such plant springing from the European battlefields. It is America's supreme opportunity. And yet it is the common sense of the situation, and the solution that must satisfy a rational German as completely as a rational Frenchman or Englishman. It has nothing against it but the prejudice against new and entirely novel things.

3

In throwing out the suggestion that America should ultimately undertake the responsibility of proposing a world peace settlement, I admit that I run counter to a great deal of European feeling. Nowhere in Europe now do people seem to be in love with the United States. But feeling is a colour that passes. And the question is above matters of feeling. Whether the belligerents dislike Americans or the Americans dislike the belligerents is an incidental matter. The main question is of the duty of a great and fortunate nation towards the rest of the world and the future of mankind.

I do not know how far Americans are aware of the trend of feeling in Europe at the present time. Both France and Great Britain have a sense of righteousness in this war such as no nation, no people, has ever felt in war before. We know we are fighting to save all the world from the rule of force and the unquestioned supremacy of the military idea. Few Frenchmen or Englishmen can imagine the war presenting itself to an American intelligence under any other guise. At the invasion of Belgium we were astonished that America did nothing. At the sinking of the *Lusitania* all Europe looked to America. The British mind contemplates the spectacle of American destroyers acting as bottleholders to German submarines with a dazzled astonishment. "Manila," we gasp. In England we find excuses for America in our own past. In '64 we betrayed Denmark; in '70 we deserted France. The French have not these memories. They do not understand the damning temptations of those who feel

they are "*au-dessus de la melee.*" They believe they had some share in the independence of America, that there is a sacred cause in republicanism, that there are grounds for a peculiar sympathy between France and the United States in republican institutions. They do not realise that Germany and America have a common experience in recent industrial development, and a common belief in the "degeneracy" of all nations with a lower rate of trade expansion. They do not realise how a political campaign with the slogan of "Peace and a Full Dinner-Pail" looks in the middle west, what an honest, simple, rational appeal it makes there. Atmospheres alter values. In Europe, strung up to tragic and majestic issues, to Europe gripping a gigantic evil in a death struggle, that would seem an inscription worthy of a pigsty. A child in Europe would know now that the context is, "until the bacon-buyer calls," and it is difficult to realise that adult citizens in America may be incapable of realising that obvious context.

I set these things down plainly. There is a very strong disposition in all the European countries to believe America fundamentally indifferent to the rights and wrongs of the European struggle; sentimentally interested perhaps, but fundamentally indifferent. President Wilson is regarded as a mere academic sentimentalist by a great number of Europeans. There is a very widespread disposition to treat America lightly and contemptuously, to believe that America, as one man put it to me recently, "hasn't the heart to do anything great or the guts to do anything wicked." There is a strong undercurrent of hostility therefore to the idea of America having any voice whatever in the final settlement after the war. It is not for a British writer to analyse the appearance that have thus affected American world prestige. I am telling what I have observed.

Let me relate two trivial anecdotes.

X came to my hotel in Paris one day to take me to see a certain munitions organisation. He took from his pocket a picture postcard that had been sent him by a well-meaning American acquaintance from America. It bore a portrait of General Lafayette, and under it was printed the words, "General Lafayette, *Colonel in the United States army.*"

"Oh! These Americans!" said X with a gesture.

And as I returned to Paris from the French front, our train stopped at some intermediate station alongside of another train of wounded men. Exactly opposite our compartment was a car. It arrested our conversation. It was, as it were, an ambulance *de grand luxe*; it was a thing of very light, bright wood and very golden decorations; at one end of it was painted very large and fair the Stars and Stripes, and at the other fair-sized letters of gold proclaimed — I am sure the lady will not resent this added gleam of publicity— "Presented by Mrs. William Vanderbilt."

My companions were French writers and French military men, and they were discussing with very keen interest that persistent question, "the ideal battery." But that ambulance sent a shaft of light into our carriage, and we stared together.

Then Colonel Z pointed with two fingers and remarked to us, without any excess of admiration:

"*America!*"

Then he shrugged his shoulders and pulled down the corners of his mouth.

We felt there was nothing more to add to that, and after a little pause the previous question was resumed.

I state these things in order to make it clear that America will start at a disadvantage when she starts upon the mission of salvage and reconciliation which is, I believe, her proper role in this world conflict. One would have to be blind and deaf on this side to be ignorant of European persuasion of America's triviality. I would not like to be an American travelling in Europe now, and those I meet here and there have some of the air of men who at any moment may be dunned for a debt. They explode without provocation into excuses and expostulations.

And I will further confess that when Viscount Grey answered the intimations of President Wilson and ex-President Taft of an American initiative to found a World League for Peace, by asking if America was prepared to back that idea with force, he spoke the doubts of all thoughtful European men. No one but an American deeply versed in the idiosyncrasies of the American population can answer that question, or tell us how far the delusion of world isolation which has prevailed in America for several generations has

been dispelled. But if the answer to Lord Grey is "Yes," then I think history will emerge with a complete justification of the obstinate maintenance of neutrality by America. It is the end that reveals a motive. It is our ultimate act that sometimes teaches us our original intention. No one can judge the United States yet. Were you neutral because you are too mean and cowardly, or too stupidly selfish, or because you had in view an end too great to be sacrificed to a moment of indignant pride and a force in reserve too precious to dispel? That is the still open question for America.

Every country is a mixture of many strands. There is a Base America, there is a Dull America, there is an Ideal and Heroic America. And I am convinced that at present Europe underrates and misjudges the possibilities of the latter.

All about the world to-day goes a certain freemasonry of thought. It is an impalpable and hardly conscious union of intention. It thinks not in terms of national but human experience; it falls into directions and channels of thinking that lead inevitably to the idea of a world-state under the rule of one righteousness. In no part of the world is this modern type of mind so abundantly developed, less impeded by antiquated and perverse political and religious forms, and nearer the sources of political and administrative power, than in America. It does not seem to matter what thousand other things America may happen to be, seeing that it is also that. And so, just as I cling to the belief, in spite of hundreds of adverse phenomena, that the religious and social stir of these times must ultimately go far to unify mankind under the kingship of God, so do I cling also to the persuasion that there are intellectual forces among the rational elements in the belligerent centres, among the other neutrals and in America, that will co-operate in enabling the United States to play that role of the Unimpassioned Third Party, which becomes more and more necessary to a generally satisfactory ending of the war.

4

The idea that the settlement of this war must be what one might call an unimpassioned settlement or, if you will, a scientific settlement or a judicial and not a treaty settlement, a settlement, that is, based upon

some conception of what is right and necessary rather than upon the relative success or failure of either set of belligerents to make its Will the standard of decision, is one that, in a great variety of forms and partial developments, I find gaining ground in the most different circles. The war was an adventure, it was the German adventure under the Hohenzollern tradition, to dominate the world. It was to be the last of the Conquests. It has failed. Without calling upon the reserve strength of America the civilised world has defeated it, and the war continues now partly upon the issue whether it shall be made for ever impossible, and partly because Germany has no organ but its Hohenzollern organisation through which it can admit its failure and develop its latent readiness for a new understanding on lines of mutual toleration. For that purpose nothing more reluctant could be devised than Hohenzollern imperialism. But the attention of every new combatant — it is not only Germany now — has been concentrated upon military necessities; every nation is a clenched nation, with its powers of action centred in its own administration, bound by many strategic threats and declarations, and dominated by the idea of getting and securing advantages. It is inevitable that a settlement made in a conference of belligerents alone will be shortsighted, harsh, limited by merely incidental necessities, and obsessed by the idea of hostilities and rivalries continuing perennially; it will be a trading of advantages for subsequent attacks. It will be a settlement altogether different in effect as well as in spirit from a world settlement made primarily to establish a new phase in the history of mankind.

Let me take three instances of the impossibility of complete victory *on either side* giving a solution satisfactory to the conscience and intelligence of reasonable men.

The first — on which I will not expatiate, for everyone knows of its peculiar difficulty — is Poland.

The second is a little one, but one that has taken hold of my imagination. In the settlement of boundaries preceding this war the boundary between Serbia and north-eastern Albania was drawn with an extraordinary disregard of the elementary needs of the Albanians of that region. It ran along the foot of the mountains which form their summer pastures and their refuge from attack, and it cut their

mountains off from their winter pastures and market towns. Their whole economic life was cut to pieces and existence rendered intolerable for them. Now an intelligent Third Party settling Europe would certainly restore these market towns, Ipek, Jakova, and Prisrend, to Albania. But the Albanians have no standing in this war; theirs is the happy lot that might have fallen to Belgium had she not resisted; the war goes to and fro through Albania; and when the settlement comes, it is highly improbable that the slightest notice will be taken of Albania's plight in the region. In which case these particular Albanians will either be driven into exile to America or they will be goaded to revolt, which will be followed no doubt by the punitive procedure usual in the Balkan peninsula.

For my third instance I would step from a matter as small as three market towns and the grazing of a few thousand head of sheep to a matter as big as the world. What is going to happen to the shipping of the world after this war? The Germans, with that combination of cunning and stupidity which baffles the rest of mankind, have set themselves to destroy the mercantile marine not merely of Britain and France but of Norway and Sweden, Holland, and all the neutral countries. The German papers openly boast that they are building up a big mercantile marine that will start out to take up the world's overseas trade directly peace is declared. Every such boast receives careful attention in the British press. We have heard a very great deal about the German will-to-power in this war, but there is something very much older and tougher and less blatant and conspicuous, the British will. In the British papers there has appeared and gained a permanent footing this phrase, "ton for ton." This means that Britain will go on fighting until she has exacted and taken over from Germany the exact equivalent of all the British shipping Germany has submarined. People do not realise that a time may come when Germany will be glad and eager to give Russia, France and Italy all that they require of her, when Great Britain may be quite content to let her allies make an advantageous peace and herself still go on fighting Germany. She does not intend to let that furtively created German mercantile marine ship or coal or exist upon the high seas — so long as it can be used as an economic weapon against her. Neither Britain nor France nor Italy can tolerate anything of the sort.

It has been the peculiar boast of Great Britain that her shipping has been unpatriotic. She has been the impartial carrier of the whole world. Her shippers may have served their own profit; they have never served hers. The fluctuations of freight charges may have been a universal nuisance, but they have certainly not been an aggressive national conspiracy. It is Britain's case against any German ascendancy at sea, an entirely convincing case, that such an ascendancy would be used ruthlessly for the advancement of German world power. The long-standing freedom of the seas vanishes at the German touch. So beyond the present war there opens the agreeable prospect of a mercantile struggle, a bitter freight war and a war of Navigation Acts for the ultimate control in the interests of Germany or of the Anti-German allies, of the world's trade.

Now how in any of these three cases can the bargaining and trickery of diplomatists and the advantage-hunting of the belligerents produce any stable and generally beneficial solution? What all the neutrals want, what every rational and far-sighted man in the belligerent countries wants, what the common sense of the whole world demands, is neither the "ascendancy" of Germany nor the "ascendancy" of Great Britain nor the "ascendancy" of any state or people or interest in the shipping of the world. The plain right thing is a world shipping control, as impartial as the Postal Union. What right and reason and the welfare of coming generations demand in Poland is a unified and autonomous Poland, with Cracow, Danzig, and Posen brought into the same Polish-speaking ring-fence with Warsaw. What everyone who has looked into the Albanian question desires is that the Albanians shall pasture their flocks and market their sheepskins in peace, free of Serbian control. In every country at present at war, the desire of the majority of people is for a non-contentious solution that will neither crystallise a triumph nor propitiate an enemy, but which will embody the economic and ethnological and geographical common sense of the matter. But while the formulae of national belligerence are easy, familiar, blatant, and instantly present, the gentler, greater formulae of that wider and newer world pacifism has still to be generally understood. It is so much easier to hate and suspect than negotiate generously and patiently; it is so much harder to think than to let go in a shrill storm

of hostility. The rational pacifist is hampered not only by belligerency, but by a sort of malignant extreme pacifism as impatient and silly as the extremest patriotism.

5

I sketch out these ideas of a world pacification from a third-party standpoint, because I find them crystallising out in men's minds. I note how men discuss the suggestion that America may play a large part in such a permanent world pacification. There I end my account rendered. These things are as much a part of my impression of the war as a shell-burst on the Carso or the yellow trenches at Martinpuich. But I do not know how opinion is going in America, and I am quite unable to estimate the power of these new ideas I set down, relative to the blind forces of instinct and tradition that move the mass of mankind. On the whole I believe more in the reason-guided will-power of men than I did in the early half of 1914. If I am doubtful whether after all this war will "end war," I think on the other hand it has had such an effect of demonstration that it may start a process of thought and conviction, it may sow the world with organisations and educational movements considerable enough to grapple with an either arrest or prevent the next great war catastrophe. I am by no means sure even now that this is not the last great war in the experience of men. I still believe it may be.

The most dangerous thing in the business so far is concerned is the wide disregard of the fact that national economic fighting is bound to cause war, and the almost universal ignorance of the necessity of subjecting shipping and overseas and international trade to some kind of international control. These two things, restraint of trade and advantage of shipping, are the chief material causes of anger between modern states. But they would not be in themselves dangerous things if it were not for the exaggerated delusions of kind and difference, and the crack-brained "loyalties" arising out of these, that seem still to rule men's minds. Years ago I came to the conviction that much of the evil in human life was due to the inherent vicious disposition of the human mind to intensify classification.[*See my "First and Last Things," Book I. and my

“Modern Utopia,” Chapter X.] I do not know how it will strike the reader, but to me this war, this slaughter of eight or nine million people, is due almost entirely to this little, almost universal lack of clear-headedness; I believe that the share of wickedness in making war is quite secondary to the share of this universal shallow silliness of outlook. These effigies of emperors and kings and statesmen that lead men into war, these legends of nationality and glory, would collapse before our universal derision, if they were not stuffed tight and full with the unthinking folly of the common man.

There is in all of us an indolent capacity for suffering evil and dangerous things, that I contemplate each year of my life with a deepening incredulity. I perceive we suffer them; I record the futile protests of the intelligence. It seems to me incredible that men should not rise up out of this muddy, bloody, wasteful mess of a world war, with a resolution to end for ever the shams, the prejudices, the pretences and habits that have impoverished their lives, slaughtered our sons, and wasted the world, a resolution so powerful and sustained that nothing could withstand it.

But it is not apparent that any such will arises. Does it appear at all? I find it hard to answer that question because my own answer varies with my mood. There are moods when it seems to me that nothing of the sort is happening. This war has written its warning in letters of blood and flame and anguish in the skies of mankind for two years and a half. When I look for the collective response to that warning, I see a multitude of little chaps crawling about their private ends like mites in an old cheese. The kings are still in their places, not a royal prince has been killed in this otherwise universal slaughter; when the fatuous portraits of the monarchs flash upon the screen the widows and orphans still break into loyal song. The ten thousand religions of mankind are still ten thousand religions, all busy at keeping men apart and hostile. I see scarcely a measurable step made anywhere towards that world kingdom of God, which is, I assert, the manifest solution, the only formula that can bring peace to all mankind. Mankind as a whole seems to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing in thirty months of war.

And then on the other hand I am aware of much quiet talking. This book tells of how I set out to see the war, and it is largely

conversation.... Perhaps men have always expected miracles to happen; if one had always lived in the night and only heard tell of the day, I suppose one would have expected dawn to come as a vivid flash of light. I suppose one would still think it was night long after the things about one had crept out of the darkness into visibility. In comparison with all previous wars there has been much more thinking and much more discussion. If most of the talk seems to be futile, if it seems as if everyone were talking and nobody doing, it does not follow that things are not quietly slipping and sliding out of their old adjustments amidst the babble and because of the babble. Multitudes of men must be struggling with new ideas. It is reasonable to argue that there must be reconsideration, there must be time, before these millions of mental efforts can develop into a new collective purpose and really *show* — in consequences.

But that they will do so is my hope always and, on the whole, except in moods of depression and impatience, my belief. When one has travelled to a conviction so great as mine it is difficult to doubt that other men faced by the same universal facts will not come to the same conclusion. I believe that only through a complete simplification o religion to its fundamental idea, to a world-wide realisation of God as the king of the heart and of all mankind, setting aside monarchy and national egotism altogether, can mankind come to any certain happiness and security. The precedent of Islam helps my faith in the creative inspiration of such a renascence of religion. The Sikh, the Moslem, the Puritan have shown that men can fight better for a Divine Idea than for any flag or monarch in the world. It seems to me that illusions fade and effigies lose credit everywhere. It is a very wonderful thing to me that China is now a republic.... I take myself to be very nearly an average man, abnormal only by reason of a certain mental rapidity. I conceive myself to be thinking as the world thinks, and if I find no great facts, I find a hundred little indications to reassure me that God comes. Even those who have neither the imagination nor the faith to apprehend God as a reality will, I think, realise presently that the Kingdom of God over a world-wide system of republican states, is the only possible formula under which we may hope to unify and save mankind.

IN THE FOURTH YEAR

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PREFACE

In the latter half of 1914 a few of us were writing that this war was a "War of Ideas." A phrase, "The War to end War," got into circulation, amidst much sceptical comment. It was a phrase powerful enough to sway many men, essentially pacifists, towards taking an active part in the war against German imperialism, but it was a phrase whose chief content was its aspiration. People were already writing in those early days of disarmament and of the abolition of the armament industry throughout the world; they realized fully the element of industrial belligerency behind the shining armour of imperialism, and they denounced the "Krupp-Kaiser" alliance. But against such writing and such thought we had to count, in those days, great and powerful realities. Even to those who expressed these ideas there lay visibly upon them the shadow of impracticability; they were very "advanced" ideas in 1914, very Utopian. Against them was an unbroken mass of mental habit and public tradition. While we talked of this "war to end war," the diplomatists of the Powers allied against Germany were busily spinning a disastrous web of greedy secret treaties, were answering aggression by schemes of aggression, were seeing in the treacherous violence of Germany only the justification for countervailing evil acts. To them it was only another war for "ascendancy." That was three years and a half ago, and since then this "war of ideas" has gone on to a phase few of us had dared hope for in those opening days. The Russian revolution put a match to that pile of secret treaties and indeed to all the imperialist plans of the Allies; in the end it will burn them all. The greatest of the Western Allies is now the United States of America, and the Americans have come into this war simply for an idea. Three years and a half ago a few of us were saying this was a war against the idea of imperialism, not German imperialism merely, but British and French and Russian imperialism, and we were saying this not because it was so, but because we hoped to see it become so. To-day we can say so, because now it is so.

In those days, moreover, we said this is the "war to end war," and we still did not know clearly how. We thought in terms of treaties

and alliances. It is largely the detachment and practical genius of the great English-speaking nation across the Atlantic that has carried the world on beyond and replaced that phrase by the phrase, "The League of Nations," a phrase suggesting plainly the organization of a sufficient instrument by which war may be ended for ever. In 1913 talk of a World League of Nations would have seemed, to the extremest pitch, "Utopian." To-day the project has an air not only of being so practicable, but of being so urgent and necessary and so manifestly the sane thing before mankind that not to be busied upon it, not to be making it more widely known and better understood, not to be working out its problems and bringing it about, is to be living outside of the contemporary life of the world. For a book upon any other subject at the present time some apology may be necessary, but a book upon this subject is as natural a thing to produce now as a pair of skates in winter when the ice begins to bear.

All we writers find ourselves engaged perforce in some part or other of a world-wide propaganda of this the most creative and hopeful of political ideas that has ever dawned upon the consciousness of mankind. With no concerted plan we feel called upon to serve it. And in no connection would one so like to think oneself un-original as in this connection. It would be a dismaying thing to realize that one were writing anything here which was not the possible thought of great multitudes of other people, and capable of becoming the common thought of mankind. One writes in such a book as this not to express oneself but to swell a chorus. The idea of the League of Nations is so great a one that it may well override the pretensions and command the allegiance of kings; much more does it claim the self-subjugation of the journalistic writer. Our innumerable books upon this great edifice of a World Peace do not constitute a scramble for attention, but an attempt to express in every variety of phrase and aspect this one system of ideas which now possesses us all. In the same way the elementary facts and ideas of the science of chemistry might conceivably be put completely and fully into one text-book, but, as a matter of fact, it is far more convenient to tell that same story over in a thousand different forms, in a text-book for boys here, for a different sort or class of boy there, for adult students, for reference, for people expert in mathematics, for people unused to

the scientific method, and so on. For the last year the writer has been doing what he can — and a number of other writers have been doing what they can — to bring about a united declaration of all the Atlantic Allies in favour of a League of Nations, and to define the necessary nature of that League. He has, in the course of this work, written a series of articles upon the League and upon *the necessary sacrifices of preconceptions* that the idea involves in the London press. He has also been trying to clear his own mind upon the real meaning of that ambiguous word "democracy," for which the League is to make the world "safe." The bulk of this book is made up of these discussions. For a very considerable number of readers, it may be well to admit here, it can have no possible interest; they will have come at these questions themselves from different angles and they will have long since got to their own conclusions. But there may be others whose angle of approach may be similar to the writer's, who may have asked some or most of the questions he has had to ask, and who may be actively interested in the answers and the working out of the answers he has made to these questions. For them this book is printed.

H. G. WELLS, *May*, 1918.

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It is a dangerous thing to recommend specific books out of so large and various a literature as the "League of Nations" idea has already produced, but the reader who wishes to reach beyond the range of this book, or who does not like its tone and method, will probably find something to meet his needs and tastes better in Marburg's "League of Nations," a straightforward account of the American side of the movement by the former United States Minister in Belgium, on the one hand, or in the concluding parts of Mr. Fayle's "Great Settlement" (1915), a frankly sceptical treatment from the British Imperialist point of view, on the other. An illuminating discussion, advocating peace treaties rather than a league, is Sir Walter Phillimore's "Three Centuries of Treaties." Two excellent books from America, that chance to be on my table, are Mr. Goldsmith's "League to Enforce Peace" and "A World in Ferment" by President

Nicholas Murray Butler. Mater's "Société des Nations" (Didier) is an able presentation of a French point of view. Brailsford's "A League of Nations" is already a classic of the movement in England, and a very full and thorough book; and Hobson's "Towards International Government" is a very sympathetic contribution from the English liberal left; but the reader must understand that these two writers seem disposed to welcome a peace with an unrevolutionized Germany, an idea to which, in common with most British people, I am bitterly opposed. Walsh's "World Rebuilt" is a good exhortation, and Mugge's "Parliament of Man" is fresh and sane and able. The omnivorous reader will find good sense and quaint English in Judge Mejdell's "*Jus Gentium*," published in English by Olsen's of Christiania. There is an active League of Nations Society in Dublin, as well as the London and Washington ones, publishing pamphlets and conducting propaganda. All these books and pamphlets I have named happen to lie upon my study table as I write, but I have made no systematic effort to get together literature upon the subject, and probably there are just as many books as good of which I have never even heard. There must, I am sure, be statements of the League of Nations idea forthcoming from various religious standpoints, but I do not know any sufficiently well to recommend them. It is incredible that neither the Roman Catholic Church, the English Episcopal Church, nor any Nonconformist body has made any effort as an organization to forward this essentially religious end of peace on earth. And also there must be German writings upon this same topic. I mention these diverse sources not in order to present a bibliography, but because I should be sorry to have the reader think that this little book pretends to state *the* case rather than *a* case for the League of Nations.

I. — THE WAY TO CONCRETE REALIZATION

More and more frequently does one hear this phrase, The League of Nations, used to express the outline idea of the new world that will come out of the war. There can be no doubt that the phrase has taken hold of the imaginations of great multitudes of people: it is one of those creative phrases that may alter the whole destiny of mankind. But as yet it is still a very vague phrase, a cloudy promise of peace. I make no apology therefore, for casting my discussion of it in the most general terms. The idea is the idea of united human effort to put an end to wars; the first practical question, that must precede all others, is how far can we hope to get to a concrete realization of that?

But first let me note the fourth word in the second title of this book. The common talk is of a "League of Nations" merely. I follow the man who is, more than any other man, the leader of English political thought throughout the world to-day, President Wilson, in inserting that significant adjective "Free." We western allies know to-day what is involved in making bargains with governments that do not stand for their peoples; we have had all our Russian deal, for example, repudiated and thrust back upon our hands; and it is clearly in his mind, as it must be in the minds of all reasonable men, that no mere "scrap of paper," with just a monarch's or a chancellor's endorsement, is a good enough earnest of fellowship in the league. It cannot be a diplomatist's league. The League of Nations, if it is to have any such effect as people seem to hope from it, must be, in the first place, "understanded of the people." It must be supported by sustained, deliberate explanation, and by teaching in school and church and press of the whole mass of all the peoples concerned. I underline the adjective "Free" here to set aside, once for all, any possible misconception that this modern idea of a League of Nations has any affinity to that Holy Alliance of the diplomatists, which set out to keep the peace of Europe so disastrously a century ago.

Later I will discuss the powers of the League. But before I come to that I would like to say a little about the more general question of

its nature and authority. What sort of gathering will embody it? The suggestions made range from a mere advisory body, rather like the Hague convention, which will merely pronounce on the rights and wrongs of any international conflict, to the idea of a sort of Super-State, a Parliament of Mankind, a "Super National" Authority, practically taking over the sovereignty of the existing states and empires of the world. Most people's ideas of the League fall between these extremes. They want the League to be something more than an ethical court, they want a League that will act, but on the other hand they shrink from any loss of "our independence." There seems to be a conflict here. There is a real need for many people to tidy up their ideas at this point. We cannot have our cake and eat it. If association is worth while, there must be some sacrifice of freedom to association. As a very distinguished colonial representative said to me the other day: "Here we are talking of the freedom of small nations and the 'self-determination' of peoples, and at the same time of the Council of the League of Nations and all sorts of international controls. Which do we want?"

The answer, I think, is "Both." It is a matter of more or less, of getting the best thing at the cost of the second-best. We may want to relax an old association in order to make a newer and wider one. It is quite understandable that peoples aware of a distinctive national character and involved in some big existing political complex, should wish to disentangle themselves from one group of associations in order to enter more effectively into another, a greater, and more satisfactory one. The Finn or the Pole, who has hitherto been a rather reluctant member of the synthesis of the Russian empire, may well wish to end that attachment in order to become a free member of a worldwide brotherhood. The desire for free arrangement is not a desire for chaos. There is such a thing as untying your parcels in order to pack them better, and I do not see myself how we can possibly contemplate a great league of freedom and reason in the world without a considerable amount of such preliminary dissolution.

It happens, very fortunately for the world, that a century and a quarter ago thirteen various and very jealous states worked out the problem of a Union, and became — after an enormous, exhausting

wrangle — the United States of America. Now the way they solved their riddle was by delegating and giving over jealously specified sovereign powers and doing all that was possible to retain the residuum. They remained essentially sovereign states. New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, for example, remained legally independent. The practical fusion of these peoples into one people outran the legal bargain. It was only after long years of discussion that the point was conceded; it was indeed only after the Civil War that the implications were fully established, that there resided a sovereignty in the American people as a whole, as distinguished from the peoples of the several states. This is a precedent that every one who talks about the League of Nations should bear in mind. These states set up a congress and president in Washington with strictly delegated powers. That congress and president they delegated to look after certain common interests, to deal with interstate trade, to deal with foreign powers, to maintain a supreme court of law. Everything else — education, militia, powers of life and death — the states retained for themselves. To this day, for instance, the federal courts and the federal officials have no power to interfere to protect the lives or property of aliens in any part of the union outside the district of Columbia. The state governments still see to that. The federal government has the legal right perhaps to intervene, but it is still chary of such intervention. And these states of the American Union were at the outset so independent-spirited that they would not even adopt a common name. To this day they have no common name. We have to call them Americans, which is a ridiculous name when we consider that Canada, Mexico, Peru, Brazil are all of them also in America. Or else we have to call them Virginians, Californians, New Englanders, and so forth. Their legal and nominal separateness weighs nothing against the real fusion that their great league has now made possible.

Now, that clearly is a precedent of the utmost value in our schemes for this council of the League of Nations. We must begin by delegating, as the States began by delegating. It is a far cry to the time when we shall talk and think of the Sovereign People of the Earth. That council of the League of Nations will be a tie as strong, we hope, but certainly not so close and multiplex as the early tie of

the States at Washington. It will begin by having certain delegated powers and no others. It will be an "*ad hoc*" body. Later its powers may grow as mankind becomes accustomed to it. But at first it will have, directly or mediately, all the powers that seem necessary to restrain the world from war — and unless I know nothing of patriotic jealousies it will have not a scrap of power more. The danger is much more that its powers will be insufficient than that they will be excessive. Of that later. What I want to discuss here now is the constitution of this delegated body. I want to discuss that first in order to set aside out of the discussion certain fantastic notions that will otherwise get very seriously in our way. Fantastic as they are, they have played a large part in reducing the Hague Tribunal to an ineffective squeak amidst the thunders of this war.

A number of gentlemen scheming out world unity in studies have begun their proposals with the simple suggestion that each sovereign power should send one member to the projected parliament of mankind. This has a pleasant democratic air; one sovereign state, one vote. Now let us run over a list of sovereign states and see to what this leads us. We find our list includes the British Empire, with a population of four hundred millions, of which probably half can read and write some language or other; Bogota with a population of a million, mostly poets; Hayti with a population of a million and a third, almost entirely illiterate and liable at any time to further political disruption; Andorra with a population of four or five thousand souls. The mere suggestion of equal representation between such "powers" is enough to make the British Empire burst into a thousand (voting) fragments. A certain concession to population, one must admit, was made by the theorists; a state of over three millions got, if I remember rightly, two delegates, and if over twenty, three, and some of the small states were given a kind of intermittent appearance, they only came every other time or something of that sort; but at The Hague things still remained in such a posture that three or four minute and backward states could outvote the British Empire or the United States. Therein lies the clue to the insignificance of The Hague. Such projects as these are idle projects and we must put them out of our heads; they are against nature; the great nations will not suffer them for a moment.

But when we dismiss this idea of representation by states, we are left with the problem of the proportion of representation and of relative weight in the Council of the League on our hands. It is the sort of problem that appeals terribly to the ingenious. We cannot solve it by making population a basis, because that will give a monstrous importance to the illiterate millions of India and China. Ingenious statistical schemes have been framed in which the number of university graduates and the steel output come in as multipliers, but for my own part I am not greatly impressed by statistical schemes. At the risk of seeming something of a Prussian, I would like to insist upon certain brute facts. The business of the League of Nations is to keep the peace of the world and nothing else. No power will ever dare to break the peace of the world if the powers that are capable of making war under modern conditions say "*No*." And there are only four powers certainly capable at the present time of producing the men and materials needed for a modern war in sufficient abundance to go on fighting: Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. There are three others which are very doubtfully capable: Italy, Japan, and Austria. Russia I will mark — it is all that one can do with Russia just now — with a note of interrogation. Some day China may be war capable — I hope never, but it is a possibility. Personally I don't think that any other power on earth would have a ghost of a chance to resist the will — if it could be an honestly united will — of the first-named four. All the rest fight by the sanction of and by association with these leaders. They can only fight because of the split will of the war-complete powers. Some are forced to fight by that very division.

No one can vie with me in my appreciation of the civilization of Switzerland, Sweden, or Holland, but the plain fact of the case is that such powers are absolutely incapable of uttering an effective protest against war. Far less so are your Haytis and Liberias. The preservation of the world-peace rests with the great powers and with the great powers alone. If they have the will for peace, it is peace. If they have not, it is conflict. The four powers I have named can now, if they see fit, dictate the peace of the world for ever.

Let us keep our grip on that. Peace is the business of the great powers primarily. Steel output, university graduates, and so forth

may be convenient secondary criteria, may be useful ways of measuring war efficiency, but the meat and substance of the Council of the League of Nations must embody the wills of those leading peoples. They can give an enduring peace to the little nations and the whole of mankind. It can arrive in no other way. So I take it that the Council of an ideal League of Nations must consist chiefly of the representatives of the great belligerent powers, and that the representatives of the minor allies and of the neutrals — essential though their presence will be — must not be allowed to swamp the voices of these larger masses of mankind.

And this state of affairs may come about more easily than logical, statistical-minded people may be disposed to think. Our first impulse, when we discuss the League of Nations idea, is to think of some very elaborate and definite scheme of members on the model of existing legislative bodies, called together one hardly knows how, and sitting in a specially built League of Nations Congress House. All schemes are more methodical than reality. We think of somebody, learned and "expert," in spectacles, with a thin clear voice, reading over the "Projected Constitution of a League of Nations" to an attentive and respectful Peace Congress. But there is a more natural way to a league than that. Instead of being made like a machine, the League of Nations may come about like a marriage. The Peace Congress that must sooner or later meet may itself become, after a time, the Council of a League of Nations. The League of Nations may come upon us by degrees, almost imperceptibly. I am strongly obsessed by the idea that that Peace Congress will necessarily become — and that it is highly desirable that it should become — a most prolonged and persistent gathering. Why should it not become at length a permanent gathering, inviting representatives to aid its deliberations from the neutral states, and gradually adjusting itself to conditions of permanency?

I can conceive no such Peace Congress as those that have settled up after other wars, settling up after this war. Not only has the war been enormously bigger than any other war, but it has struck deeper at the foundations of social and economic life. I doubt if we begin to realize how much of the old system is dead to-day, how much has to be remade. Since the beginnings of history there has been a credible

promise of gold payments underneath our financial arrangements. It is now an incredible promise. The value of a pound note waves about while you look at it. What will happen to it when peace comes no man can tell. Nor what will happen to the mark. The rouble has gone into the Abyss. Our giddy money specialists clutch their handfuls of paper and watch it flying down the steep. Much as we may hate the Germans, some of us will have to sit down with some of the enemy to arrange a common scheme for the preservation of credit in money. And I presume that it is not proposed to end this war in a wild scramble of buyers for such food as remains in the world. There is a shortage now, a greater shortage ahead of the world, and there will be shortages of supply at the source and transport in food and all raw materials for some years to come. The Peace Congress will have to sit and organize a share-out and distribution and reorganization of these shattered supplies. It will have to Rhondda the nations. Probably, too, we shall have to deal collectively with a pestilence before we are out of the mess. Then there are such little jobs as the reconstruction of Belgium and Serbia. There are considerable rectifications of boundaries to be made. There are fresh states to be created, in Poland and Armenia for example. About all these smaller states, new and old, that the peace must call into being, there must be a system of guarantees of the most difficult and complicated sort.

I do not see the Press Congress getting through such matters as these in a session of weeks or months. The idea the Germans betrayed at Brest, that things were going to be done in the Versailles fashion by great moustached heroes frowning and drawing lines with a large black soldierly thumbnail across maps, is — old-fashioned. They have made their eastern treaties, it is true, in this mode, but they are still looking for some really responsible government to keep them now that they are made. From first to last clearly the main peace negotiations are going to follow unprecedented courses. This preliminary discussion of war aims by means of great public speeches, that has been getting more and more explicit now for many months, is quite unprecedented. Apparently all the broad preliminaries are to be stated and accepted in the sight of all mankind before even an armistice occurs on the main, the western front. The German diplomatists hate this process. So do a lot of ours. So do

some of the diplomatic Frenchmen. The German junkers are dodging and lying, they are fighting desperately to keep back everything they possibly can for the bargaining and bullying and table-banging of the council chamber, but that way there is no peace. And when at last Germany says snip sufficiently to the Allies' snap, and the Peace Congress begins, it will almost certainly be as unprecedented as its prelude. Before it meets, the broad lines of the settlement will have been drawn plainly with the approval of the mass of mankind.

II. — THE LEAGUE MUST BE REPRESENTATIVE

A Peace Congress, growing permanent, then, may prove to be the most practical and convenient embodiment of this idea of a League of Nations that has taken possession of the imagination of the world. A most necessary preliminary to a Peace Congress, with such possibilities inherent in it, must obviously be the meeting and organization of a preliminary League of the Allied Nations. That point I would now enlarge.

Half a world peace is better than none. There seems no reason whatever why the world should wait for the Central Powers before it begins this necessary work. Mr. McCurdy has been asking lately, "Why not the League of Nations *now*?" That is a question a great number of people would like to echo very heartily. The nearer the Allies can come to a League of Free Nations before the Peace Congress the more prospect there is that that body will approximate in nature to a League of Nations for the whole world.

In one most unexpected quarter the same idea has been endorsed. The King's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament this February was one of the most remarkable royal utterances that have ever been made from the British throne. There was less of the old-fashioned King and more of the modern President about it than the most republican-minded of us could have anticipated. For the first time in a King's Speech we heard of the "democracies" of the world, and there was a clear claim that the Allies at present fighting the Central Powers did themselves constitute a League of Nations.

But we must admit that at present they do so only in a very rhetorical sense. There is no real council of empowered representatives, and nothing in the nature of a united front has been prepared. Unless we provide beforehand for something more effective, Italy, France, the United States, Japan, and this country will send separate groups of representatives, with separate instructions, unequal status, and very probably conflicting views upon many subjects, to the ultimate peace discussions. It is quite conceivable —

it is a very serious danger — that at this discussion skilful diplomacy on the part of the Central Powers may open a cleft among the Allies that has never appeared during the actual war. Have the British settled, for example, with Italy and France for the supply of metallurgical coal after the war? Those countries must have it somehow. Across the board Germany can make some tempting bids in that respect. Or take another question: Have the British arrived at common views with France, Belgium, Portugal, and South Africa about the administration of Central Africa? Suppose Germany makes sudden proposals affecting native labour that win over the Portuguese and the Boers? There are a score of such points upon which we shall find the Allied representatives haggling with each other in the presence of the enemy if they have not been settled beforehand.

It is the plainest common sense that we should be fixing up all such matters with our Allies now, and knitting together a common front for the final deal with German Imperialism. And these things are not to be done effectively and bindingly nowadays by official gentlemen in discreet undertones. They need to be done with the full knowledge and authority of the participating peoples.

The Russian example has taught the world the instability of diplomatic bargains in a time of such fundamental issues as the present. There is little hope and little strength in hole-and-corner bargainings between the officials or politicians who happen to be at the head of this or that nation for the time being. Our Labour people will not stand this sort of thing and they will not be bound by it. There will be the plain danger of repudiation for all arrangements made in that fashion. A gathering of somebody or other approved by the British Foreign Office and of somebody or other approved by the French Foreign Office, of somebody with vague powers from America, and so on and so on, will be an entirely ineffective gathering. But that is the sort of gathering of the Allies we have been having hitherto, and that is the sort of gathering that is likely to continue unless there is a considerable expression of opinion in favour of something more representative and responsible.

Even our Foreign Office must be aware that in every country in the world there is now bitter suspicion of and keen hostility towards merely diplomatic representatives. One of the most significant

features of the time is the evident desire of the Labour movement in every European country to take part in a collateral conference of Labour that shall meet when and where the Peace Congress does and deliberate and comment on its proceedings. For a year now the demand of the masses for such a Labour conference has been growing. It marks a distrust of officialdom whose intensity officialdom would do well to ponder. But it is the natural consequence of, it is the popular attempt at a corrective to, the aloofness and obscurity that have hitherto been so evil a characteristic of international negotiations. I do not think Labour and intelligent people anywhere are going to be fobbed off with an old-fashioned diplomatic gathering as being that League of Free Nations they demand.

On the other hand, I do not contemplate this bi-cameral conference with the diplomatists trying to best and humbug the Labour people as well as each other and the Labour people getting more and more irritated, suspicious, and extremist, with anything but dread. The Allied countries must go into the conference *solid*, and they can only hope to do that by heeding and incorporating Labour ideas before they come to the conference. The only alternative that I can see to this unsatisfactory prospect of a Peace Congress sitting side by side with a dissentient and probably revolutionary Labour and Socialist convention — both gatherings with unsatisfactory credentials contradicting one another and drifting to opposite extremes — is that the delegates the Allied Powers send to the Peace Conference (the same delegates which, if they are wise, they will have previously sent to a preliminary League of Allied Nations to discuss their common action at the Peace Congress), should be elected *ad hoc* upon democratic lines.

I know that this will be a very shocking proposal to all our able specialists in foreign policy. They will talk at once about the "ignorance" of people like the Labour leaders and myself about such matters, and so on. What do we know of the treaty of so-and-so that was signed in the year seventeen something? — and so on. To which the answer is that we ought not to have been kept ignorant of these things. A day will come when the Foreign Offices of all countries will have to recognize that what the people do not know of

international agreements “ain’t facts.” A secret treaty is only binding upon the persons in the secret. But what I, as a sample common person, am not ignorant of is this: that the business that goes on at the Peace Congress will either make or mar the lives of everyone I care for in the world, and that somehow, by representative or what not, *I have to be there*. The Peace Congress deals with the blood and happiness of my children and the future of my world. Speaking as one of the hundreds of millions of “rank outsiders” in public affairs, I do not mean to respect any peace treaty that may end this war unless I am honestly represented at its making. I think everywhere there is a tendency in people to follow the Russian example to this extent and to repudiate bargains in which they have had no voice.

I do not see that any genuine realization of the hopes with which all this talk about the League of Nations is charged can be possible, unless the two bodies which should naturally lead up to the League of Nations — that is to say, firstly, the Conference of the Allies, and then the Peace Congress — are elected bodies, speaking confidently for the whole mass of the peoples behind them. It may be a troublesome thing to elect them, but it will involve much more troublesome consequences if they are not elected. This, I think, is one of the considerations for which many people’s minds are still unprepared. But unless we are to have over again after all this bloodshed and effort some such “Peace with Honour” foolery as we had performed by “Dizzy” and Salisbury at that fatal Berlin Conference in which this present war was begotten, we must sit up to this novel proposal of electoral representation in the peace negotiations. Something more than common sense binds our statesmen to this idea. They are morally pledged to it. President Wilson and our British and French spokesmen alike have said over and over again that they want to deal not with the Hohenzollerns but with the German people. In other words, we have demanded elected representatives from the German people with whom we may deal, and how can we make a demand of that sort unless we on our part are already prepared to send our own elected representatives to meet them? It is up to us to indicate by our own practice how we on our side, professing as we do to act for democracies, to make democracy safe on the earth, and so on, intend to meet this new occasion.

Yet it has to be remarked that, so far, not one of the League of Nations projects I have seen have included any practicable proposals for the appointment of delegates either to that ultimate body or to its two necessary predecessors, the Council of the Allies and the Peace Congress. It is evident that here, again, we are neglecting to get on with something of very urgent importance. I will venture, therefore, to say a word or two here about the possible way in which a modern community may appoint its international representatives.

And here, again, I turn from any European precedents to that political outcome of the British mind, the Constitution of the United States. (Because we must always remember that while our political institutions in Britain are a patch-up of feudalism, Tudor, Stuart, and Hanoverian monarchist traditions and urgent merely European necessities, a patch-up that has been made quasi- democratic in a series of after-thoughts, the American Constitution is a real, deliberate creation of the English-speaking intelligence.) The President of the United States, then, we have to note, is elected in a most extraordinary way, and in a way that has now the justification of very great successes indeed. On several occasions the United States has achieved indisputable greatness in its Presidents, and very rarely has it failed to set up very leaderly and distinguished men. It is worth while, therefore, to inquire how this President is elected. He is neither elected directly by the people nor appointed by any legislative body. He is chosen by a special college elected by the people. This college exists to elect him; it meets, elects him, and disperses. (I will not here go into the preliminary complications that makes the election of a President follow upon a preliminary election of two Presidential Candidates. The point I am making here is that he is a specially selected man chosen *ad hoc*.) Is there any reason why we should, not adopt this method in this new necessity we are under of sending representatives, first, to the long overdue and necessary Allied Council, then to the Peace Congress, and then to the hoped-for Council of the League of Nations?

I am anxious here only to start for discussion the idea of an electoral representation of the nations upon these three bodies that must in succession set themselves to define, organize, and maintain the peace of the world. I do not wish to complicate the question by

any too explicit advocacy of methods of election or the like. In the United States this college which elects the President is elected on the same register of voters as that which elects the Senate and Congress, and at the same time. But I suppose if we are to give a popular mandate to the three or five or twelve or twenty (or whatever number it is) men to whom we are going to entrust our Empire's share in this great task of the peace negotiations, it will be more decisive of the will of the whole nation if the college that had to appoint them is elected at a special election. I suppose that the great British commonweals over-seas, at present not represented in Parliament, would also and separately at the same time elect colleges to appoint their representatives. I suppose there would be at least one Indian representative elected, perhaps by some special electoral conference of Indian princes and leading men. The chief defect of the American Presidential election is that as the old single vote method of election is employed it has to be fought on purely party lines. He is the select man of the Democratic half, or of the Republican half of the nation. He is not the select man of the whole nation. It would give a far more representative character to the electoral college if it could be elected by fair modern methods, if for this particular purpose parliamentary constituencies could be grouped and the clean scientific method of proportional representation could be used. But I suppose the party politician in this, as in most of our affairs, must still have his pound of our flesh — and we must reckon with him later for the bloodshed.

These are all, however, secondary considerations. The above paragraph is, so to speak, in the nature of a footnote. The fundamental matter, if we are to get towards any realization of this ideal of a world peace sustained by a League of Nations, is to get straight away to the conception of direct special electoral mandates in this matter. At present all the political luncheon and dinner parties in London are busy with smirking discussions of "Who is to go?" The titled ladies are particularly busy. They are talking about it as if we poor, ignorant, tax-paying, blood-paying common people did not exist. "L. G.," they say, will of course "*insist* on going," but there is much talk of the "Old Man." People are getting quite nice again about "the Old Man's feelings." It would be such a pretty thing to send him. But if "L. G." goes we want him to go with something

more than a backing of intrigues and snatched authority. And I do not think the mass of people have any enthusiasm for the Old Man. It is difficult again — by the dinner-party standards — to know how Lord Curzon can be restrained. But we common people do not care if he is restrained to the point of extinction. Probably there will be nobody who talks or understands Russian among the British representatives. But, of course, the British governing class has washed its hands of the Russians. They were always very difficult, and now they are "impossible, my dear, perfectly impossible."

No! That sort of thing will not do now. This Peace Congress is too big a job for party politicians and society and county families. The bulk of British opinion cannot go on being represented for ever by President Wilson. We cannot always look to the Americans to express our ideas and do our work for democracy. The foolery of the Berlin Treaty must not be repeated. We cannot have another popular Prime Minister come triumphing back to England with a gross of pink spectacles — through which we may survey the prospect of the next great war. The League of Free Nations means something very big and solid; it is not a rhetorical phrase to be used to pacify a restless, distressed, and anxious public, and to be sneered out of existence when that use is past. When the popular mind now demands a League of Free Nations it demands a reality. The only way to that reality is through the direct participation of the nation as a whole in the settlement, and that is possible only through the direct election for this particular issue of representative and responsible men.

III. — THE NECESSARY POWERS OF THE LEAGUE

If this phrase, "the League of Free Nations," is to signify anything more than a rhetorical flourish, then certain consequences follow that have to be faced now. No man can join a partnership and remain an absolutely free man. You cannot bind yourself to do this and not to do that and to consult and act with your associates in certain eventualities without a loss of your sovereign freedom. People in this country and in France do not seem to be sitting up manfully to these necessary propositions.

If this League of Free Nations is really to be an effectual thing for the preservation of the peace of the world it must possess power and exercise power, powers must be delegated to it. Otherwise it will only help, with all other half-hearted good resolutions, to pave the road of mankind to hell. Nothing in all the world so strengthens evil as the half-hearted attempts of good to make good.

It scarcely needs repeating here — it has been so generally said — that no League of Free Nations can hope to keep the peace unless every member of it is indeed a free member, represented by duly elected persons. Nobody, of course, asks to "dictate the internal government" of any country to that country. If Germans, for instance, like to wallow in absolutism after the war they can do so. But if they or any other peoples wish to take part in a permanent League of Free Nations it is only reasonable to insist that so far as their representatives on the council go they must be duly elected under conditions that are by the standards of the general league satisfactorily democratic. That seems to be only the common sense of the matter. Every court is a potential conspiracy against freedom, and the League cannot tolerate merely court appointments. If courts are to exist anywhere in the new world of the future, they will be wise to stand aloof from international meddling. Of course if a people, after due provision for electoral representation, choose to elect dynastic candidates, that is an altogether different matter.

And now let us consider what are the powers that must be

delegated to this proposed council of a League of Free Nations, if that is really effectually to prevent war and to organize and establish and make peace permanent in the world.

Firstly, then, it must be able to adjudicate upon all international disputes whatever. Its first function must clearly be that. Before a war can break out there must be the possibility of a world decision upon its rights and wrongs. The League, therefore, will have as its primary function to maintain a Supreme Court, whose decisions will be final, before which every sovereign power may appear as plaintiff against any other sovereign power or group of powers. The plea, I take it, will always be in the form that the defendant power or powers is engaged in proceedings "calculated to lead to a breach of the peace," and calling upon the League for an injunction against such proceedings. I suppose the proceedings that can be brought into court in this way fall under such headings as these that follow; restraint of trade by injurious tariffs or suchlike differentiations or by interference with through traffic, improper treatment of the subjects *or their property* (here I put a query) of the plaintiff nation in the defendant state, aggressive military or naval preparation, disorder spreading over the frontier, trespass (as, for instance, by airships), propaganda of disorder, espionage, permitting the organization of injurious activities, such as raids or piracy. Clearly all such actions must come within the purview of any world-supreme court organized to prevent war. But in addition there is a more doubtful and delicate class of case, arising out of the discontent of patches of one race or religion in the dominions of another. How far may the supreme court of the world attend to grievances between subject and sovereign?

Such cases are highly probable, and no large, vague propositions about the "self-determination" of peoples can meet all the cases. In Macedonia, for instance, there is a jumble of Albanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek and Rumanian villages always jostling one another and maintaining an intense irritation between the kindred nations close at hand. And quite a large number of areas and cities in the world, it has to be remembered, are not homogeneous at all. Will the great nations of the world have the self-abnegation to permit a scattered subject population to appeal against the treatment of its ruling power to the Supreme Court? This is a much more serious

interference with sovereignty than intervention in an external quarrel. Could a Greek village in Bulgarian Macedonia plead in the Supreme Court? Could the Armenians in Constantinople, or the Jews in Roumania, or the Poles in West Prussia, or the negroes in Georgia, or the Indians in the Transvaal make such an appeal? Could any Indian population in India appeal? Personally I should like to see the power of the Supreme Court extend as far as this. I do not see how we can possibly prevent a kindred nation pleading for the scattered people of its own race and culture, or any nation presenting a case on behalf of some otherwise unrepresented people — the United States, for example, presenting a case on behalf of the Armenians. But I doubt if many people have made up their minds yet to see the powers of the Supreme Court of the League of Nations go so far as this. I doubt if, to begin with, it will be possible to provide for these cases. I would like to see it done, but I doubt if the majority of the sovereign peoples concerned will reconcile their national pride with the idea, at least so far as their own subject populations go.

Here, you see, I do no more than ask a question. It is a difficult one, and it has to be answered before we can clear the way to the League of Free Nations.

But the Supreme Court, whether it is to have the wider or the narrower scope here suggested, would be merely the central function of the League of Free Nations. Behind the decisions of the Supreme Court must lie power. And here come fresh difficulties for patriotic digestions. The armies and navies of the world must be at the disposal of the League of Free Nations, and that opens up a new large area of delegated authority. The first impulse of any power disposed to challenge the decisions of the Supreme Court will be, of course, to arm; and it is difficult to imagine how the League of Free Nations can exercise any practical authority unless it has power to restrain such armament. The League of Free Nations must, in fact, if it is to be a working reality, have power to define and limit the military and naval and aerial equipment of every country in the world. This means something more than a restriction of state forces. It must have power and freedom to investigate the military and naval and aerial establishments of all its constituent powers. It must also have effective control over every armament industry. And armament

industries are not always easy to define. Are aeroplanes, for example, armament? Its powers, I suggest, must extend even to a restraint upon the belligerent propaganda which is the natural advertisement campaign of every armament industry. It must have the right, for example, to raise the question of the proprietorship of newspapers by armament interests. Disarmament is, in fact, a necessary factor of any League of Free Nations, and you cannot have disarmament unless you are prepared to see the powers of the council of the League extend thus far. The very existence of the League presupposes that it and it alone is to have and to exercise military force. Any other belligerency or preparation or incitement to belligerency becomes rebellion, and any other arming a threat of rebellion, in a world League of Free Nations.

But here, again, has the general mind yet thought out all that is involved in this proposition? In all the great belligerent countries the armament industries are now huge interests with enormous powers. Krupp's business alone is as powerful a thing in Germany as the Crown. In every country a heavily subsidized "patriotic" press will fight desperately against giving powers so extensive and thorough as those here suggested to an international body. So long, of course, as the League of Free Nations remains a project in the air, without body or parts, such a press will sneer at it gently as "Utopian," and even patronize it kindly. But so soon as the League takes on the shape its general proposition makes logically necessary, the armament interest will take fright. Then it is we shall hear the drum patriotic loud in defence of the human blood trade. Are we to hand over these most intimate affairs of ours to "a lot of foreigners"? Among these "foreigners" who will be appealed to to terrify the patriotic souls of the British will be the "Americans." Are we men of English blood and tradition to see our affairs controlled by such "foreigners" as Wilson, Lincoln, Webster and Washington? Perish the thought! When they might be controlled by Disraelis, Wettins, Mount-Battens, and what not! And so on and so on. Krupp's agents and the agents of the kindred firms in Great Britain and France will also be very busy with the national pride of France. In Germany they have already created a colossal suspicion of England.

Here is a giant in the path....

But let us remember that it is only necessary to defeat the propaganda of this vile and dangerous industry in four great countries. And for the common citizen, touched on the tenderest part of his patriotic susceptibilities, there are certain irrefutable arguments. Whether the ways of the world in the years to come are to be the paths of peace or the paths of war is not going to alter this essential fact, that the great educated world communities, with a social and industrial organization on a war-capable scale, are going to dominate human affairs. Whether they spend their power in killing or in educating and creating, France, Germany, however much we may resent it, the two great English-speaking communities, Italy, Japan China, and presently perhaps a renascent Russia, are jointly going to control the destinies of mankind. Whether that joint control comes through arms or through the law is a secondary consideration. To refuse to bring our affairs into a common council does not make us independent of foreigners. It makes us more dependent upon them, as a very little consideration will show.

I am suggesting here that the League of Free Nations shall practically control the army, navy, air forces, and armament industry of every nation in the world. What is the alternative to that? To do as we please? No, the alternative is that any malignant country will be free to force upon all the rest just the maximum amount of armament it chooses to adopt. Since 1871 France, we say, has been free in military matters. What has been the value of that freedom? The truth is, she has been the bond-slave of Germany, bound to watch Germany as a slave watches a master, bound to launch submarine for submarine and cast gun for gun, to sweep all her youth into her army, to subdue her trade, her literature, her education, her whole life to the necessity of preparations imposed upon her by her drill-master over the Rhine. And Michael, too, has been a slave to his imperial master for the self-same reason, for the reason that Germany and France were both so proudly sovereign and independent. Both countries have been slaves to Kruppism and Zabernism — *because they were sovereign and free*! So it will always be. So long as patriotic cant can keep the common man jealous of international controls over his belligerent possibilities, so long will he be the helpless slave of the foreign threat, and “Peace” remain a mere name for the resting phase

between wars.

But power over the military resources of the world is by no means the limit of the necessary powers of an effective League of Free Nations. There are still more indigestible implications in the idea, and, since they have got to be digested sooner or later if civilization is not to collapse, there is no reason why we should not begin to bite upon them now. I was much interested to read the British press upon the alleged proposal of the German Chancellor that we should give up (presumably to Germany) Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, and suchlike key possessions. It seemed to excite several of our politicians extremely. I read over the German Chancellor's speech very carefully, so far as it was available, and it is clear that he did not propose anything of the sort. Wilfully or blindly our press and our demagogues screamed over a false issue. The Chancellor was defending the idea of the Germans remaining in Belgium and Lorraine because of the strategic and economic importance of those regions to Germany, and he was arguing that before we English got into such a feverish state of indignation about that, we should first ask ourselves what we were doing in Gibraltar, etc., etc. That is a different thing altogether. And it is an argument that is not to be disposed of by misrepresentation. The British have to think hard over this quite legitimate German *tu quoque*. It is no good getting into a patriotic bad temper and refusing to answer that question. We British people are so persuaded of the purity and unselfishness with which we discharge our imperial responsibilities, we have been so trained in imperial self-satisfaction, we know so certainly that all our subject nations call us blessed, that it is a little difficult for us to see just how the fact that we are, for example, so deeply rooted in Egypt looks to an outside intelligence. Of course the German imperialist idea is a wicked and aggressive idea, as Lord Robert Cecil has explained; they want to set up all over the earth coaling stations and strategic points, *on the pattern of ours.* Well, they argue, we are only trying to do what you British have done. If we are not to do so — because it is aggression and so on and so on — is not the time ripe for you to make some concessions to the public opinion of the world? That is the German argument. Either, they say, tolerate this idea of a Germany with advantageous posts and possessions round and about

the earth, or reconsider your own position.

Well, at the risk of rousing much patriotic wrath, I must admit that I think we *have* to reconsider our position. Our argument is that in India, Egypt, Africa and elsewhere, we stand for order and civilization, we are the trustees of freedom, the agents of knowledge and efficiency. On the whole the record of British rule is a pretty respectable one; I am not ashamed of our record. Nevertheless *the case is altering*.

It is quite justifiable for us British, no doubt, if we do really play the part of honest trustees, to remain in Egypt and in India under existing conditions; it is even possible for us to glance at the helplessness of Arabia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, as yet incapable of self-government, helpless as new-born infants. But our case, our only justifiable case, is that we are trustees because there is no better trustee possible. And the creation of a council of a League of Free Nations would be like the creation of a Public Trustee for the world. The creation of a League of Free Nations must necessarily be the creation of an authority that may legitimately call existing empires to give an account of their stewardship. For an unchecked fragmentary control of tropical and chaotic regions, it substitutes the possibility of a general authority. And this must necessarily alter the problems not only of the politically immature nations and the control of the tropics, but also of the regulation of the sea ways, the regulation of the coming air routes, and the distribution of staple products in the world. I will not go in detail over the items of this list, because the reader can fill in the essentials of the argument from what has gone before. I want simply to suggest how widely this project of a League of Free Nations swings when once you have let it swing freely in your mind! And if you do not let it swing freely in your mind, it remains nothing — a sentimental gesture.

The plain truth is that the League of Free Nations, if it is to be a reality, if it is to effect a real pacification of the world, must do no less than supersede Empire; it must end not only this new German imperialism, which is struggling so savagely and powerfully to possess the earth, but it must also wind up British imperialism and French imperialism, which do now so largely and inaggressively possess it. And, moreover, this idea queries the adjective of Belgian,

Portuguese, French, and British Central Africa alike, just as emphatically as it queries “German.” Still more effectually does the League forbid those creations of the futurist imagination, the imperialism of Italy and Greece, which make such threatening gestures at the world of our children. Are these incompatibilities understood? Until people have faced the clear antagonism that exists between imperialism and internationalism, they have not begun to suspect the real significance of this project of the League of Free Nations. They have not begun to realize that peace also has its price.

IV. — THE LABOUR VIEW OF MIDDLE AFRICA

I was recently privileged to hear the views of one of those titled and influential ladies — with a general education at about the fifth standard level, plus a little French, German, Italian, and music — who do so much to make our England what it is at the present time, upon the Labour idea of an international control of "tropical" Africa. She was loud and derisive about the "ignorance" of Labour. "What can *they* know about foreign politics?" she said, with gestures to indicate her conception of *them*.

I was moved to ask her what she would do about Africa. "Leave it to Lord Robert!" she said, leaning forward impressively. "*Leave it to the people who know*."

Unhappily I share the evident opinion of Labour that we are not blessed with any profoundly wise class of people who have definite knowledge and clear intentions about Africa, that these "*people who know*" are mostly a pretentious bluff, and so, in spite of a very earnest desire to take refuge in my "ignorance" from the burthen of thinking about African problems, I find myself obliged, like most other people, to do so. In the interests of our country, our children, and the world, we common persons *have* to have opinions about these matters. A muddle-up in Africa this year may kill your son and mine in the course of the next decade. I know this is not a claim to be interested in things African, such as the promoter of a tropical railway or an oil speculator has; still it is a claim. And for the life of me I cannot see what is wrong about the Labour proposals, or what alternative exists that can give even a hope of peace in and about Africa.

The gist of the Labour proposal is an international control of Africa between the Zambesi and the Sahara. This has been received with loud protests by men whose work one is obliged to respect, by Sir Harry, Johnston, for example, and Sir Alfred Sharpe, and with something approaching a shriek of hostility by Mr. Cunninghame Graham. But I think these gentlemen have not perhaps given the

Labour proposal quite as much attention as they have spent upon the details of African conditions. I think they have jumped to conclusions at the mere sound of the word "international." There have been some gross failures in the past to set up international administrations in Africa and the Near East. And these gentlemen think at once of some new Congo administration and of nondescript police forces commanded by cosmopolitan adventurers. (See Joseph Conrad's "Out-post of Civilization.") They think of internationalism with greedy Great Powers in the background outside the internationalized area, intriguing to create disorder and mischief with ideas of an ultimate annexation. But I doubt if such nightmares do any sort of justice to the Labour intention.

And the essential thing I would like to point out to these authorities upon African questions is that not one of them even hints at any other formula which covers the broad essentials of the African riddle.

What are these broad essentials? What are the ends that *must* be achieved if Africa is not to continue a festering sore in the body of mankind?

The first most obvious danger of Africa is the militarization of the black. General Smuts has pointed this out plainly. The negro makes a good soldier; he is hardy, he stands the sea, and he stands cold. (There was a negro in the little party which reached the North Pole.) It is absolutely essential to the peace of the world that there should be no arming of the negroes beyond the minimum necessary for the policing of Africa. But how is this to be watched and prevented if there is no overriding body representing civilization to say "Stop" to the beginnings of any such militarization? I do not see how Sir Harry Johnston, Sir Alfred Sharpe, and the other authorities can object to at least an international African "Disarmament Commission" to watch, warn, and protest. At least they must concede that.

But in practice this involves something else. A practical consequence of this disarmament idea must be an effective control of the importation of arms into the "tutelage" areas of Africa. That rat at the dykes of civilization, that ultimate expression of political scoundrelism, the Gun-Runner, has to be kept under and stamped out in Africa as everywhere. A Disarmament Commission that has no

forces available to prevent the arms trade will be just another Hague Convention, just another vague, well-intentioned, futile gesture.

And closely connected with this function of controlling the arms trade is another great necessity of Africa under "tutelage," and that is the necessity of a common collective agreement not to demoralize the native population. That demoralization, physical and moral, has already gone far. The whole negro population of Africa is now rotten with diseases introduced by Arabs and Europeans during the last century, and such African statesmen as Sir Harry Johnston are eloquent upon the necessity of saving the blacks — and the baser whites — from the effects of trade gin and similar alluring articles of commerce. Moreover, from Africa there is always something new in the way of tropical diseases, and presently Africa, if we let it continue to fester as it festers now, may produce an epidemic that will stand exportation to a temperate climate. A bacterium that may kill you or me in some novel and disgusting way may even now be developing in some Congo muck-heap. So here is the need for another Commission to look after the Health of Africa. That, too, should be of authority over all the area of "tutelage" Africa. It is no good stamping out infectious disease in Nyasaland while it is being bred in Portuguese East Africa. And if there is a Disarmament Commission already controlling the importation of arms, why should not that body also control at the same time the importation of trade gin and similar delicacies, and direct quarantine and such-like health regulations?

But there is another question in Africa upon which our "ignorant" Labour class is far better informed than our dear old eighteenth-century upper class which still squats so firmly in our Foreign and Colonial Offices, and that is the question of forced labour. We cannot tolerate any possibilities of the enslavement of black Africa. Long ago the United States found out the impossibility of having slave labour working in the same system with white. To cure that anomaly cost the United States a long and bloody war. The slave- owner, the exploiter of the black, becomes a threat and a nuisance to any white democracy. He brings back his loot to corrupt Press and life at home. What happened in America in the midst of the last century between Federals and Confederates must not happen again on a larger scale

between white Europe and middle Africa. Slavery in Africa, open or disguised, whether enforced by the lash or brought about by iniquitous land-stealing, strikes at the home and freedom of every European worker — *and Labour knows this*.

But how are we to prevent the enslavement and economic exploitation of the blacks if we have no general watcher of African conditions? We want a common law for Africa, a general Declaration of Rights, of certain elementary rights, and we want a common authority to which the black man and the native tribe may appeal for justice. What is the good of trying to elevate the population of Uganda and to give it a free and hopeful life if some other population close at hand is competing against the Baganda worker under lash and tax? So here is a third aspect of our international Commission, as a native protectorate and court of appeal!

There is still a fourth aspect of the African question in which every mother's son in Europe is closely interested, and that is the trade question. Africa is the great source of many of the most necessary raw materials upon which our modern comforts and conveniences depend; more particularly is it the source of cheap fat in the form of palm oil. One of the most powerful levers in the hands of the Allied democracies at the present time in their struggle against the imperial brigands of Potsdam is the complete control we have now obtained over these essential supplies. We can, if we choose, cut off Germany altogether from these vital economic necessities, if she does not consent to abandon militant imperialism for some more civilized form of government. We hope that this war will end in that renunciation, and that Germany will re-enter the community of nations. But whether that is so or not, whether Germany is or is not to be one of the interested parties in the African solution, the fact remains that it is impossible to contemplate a continuing struggle for the African raw material supply between the interested Powers. Sooner or later that means a renewal of war. International trade rivalry is, indeed, only war — *smouldering*. We need, and Labour demands, a fair, frank treatment of African trade, and that can only be done by some overriding regulative power, a Commission which, so far as I can see, might also be the same Commission as that we have already hypothesized as being necessary to control the Customs

in order to prevent gun-running and the gin trade. That Commission might very conveniently have a voice in the administration of the great waterways of Africa (which often run through the possessions of several Powers) and in the regulation of the big railway lines and air routes that will speedily follow the conclusion of peace.

Now this I take it is the gist of the Labour proposal. This — and no more than this — is what is intended by the "international control of tropical Africa." *I do not read that phrase as abrogating existing sovereignties in Africa*. What is contemplated is a delegation of authority. Every one should know, though unhappily the badness of our history teaching makes it doubtful if every one does know, that the Federal Government of the United States of America did not begin as a sovereign Government, and has now only a very questionable sovereignty. Each State was sovereign, and each State delegated certain powers to Washington. That was the initial idea of the union. Only later did the idea of a people of the States as a whole emerge. In the same way I understand the Labour proposal as meaning that we should delegate to an African Commission the middle African Customs, the regulation of inter-State trade, inter-State railways and waterways, quarantine and health generally, and the establishment of a Supreme Court for middle African affairs. One or two minor matters, such as the preservation of rare animals, might very well fall under the same authority.

Upon that Commission the interested nations, that is to say — putting them in alphabetical order — the Africander, the Briton, the Belgian, the Egyptian, the Frenchman, the Italian, the Indian the Portuguese — might all be represented in proportion to their interest. Whether the German would come in is really a question for the German to consider; he can come in as a good European, he cannot come in as an imperialist brigand. Whether, too, any other nations can claim to have an interest in African affairs, whether the Commission would not be better appointed by a League of Free Nations than directly by the interested Governments, and a number of other such questions, need not be considered here. Here we are discussing only the main idea of the Labour proposal.

Now beneath the supervision and restraint of such a delegated Commission I do not see why the existing administrations of tutelage

Africa should not continue. I do not believe that the Labour proposal contemplates any humiliating cession of European sovereignty. Under that international Commission the French flag may still wave in Senegal and the British over the protected State of Uganda. Given a new spirit in Germany I do not see why the German flag should not presently be restored in German East Africa. But over all, standing for righteousness, patience, fair play for the black, and the common welfare of mankind would wave a new flag, the Sun of Africa representing the Central African Commission of the League of Free Nations.

That is my vision of the Labour project. It is something very different, I know, from the nightmare of an international police of cosmopolitan scoundrels in nondescript uniforms, hastening to loot and ravish his dear Uganda and his beloved Nigeria, which distresses the crumpled pillow of Sir Harry Johnston. But if it is not the solution, then it is up to him and his fellow authorities to tell us what is the solution of the African riddle.

V. — GETTING THE LEAGUE IDEA CLEAR IN RELATION TO IMPERIALISM

§ 1

It is idle to pretend that even at the present time the idea of the League of Free Nations has secure possession of the British mind. There is quite naturally a sustained opposition to it in all the fastnesses of aggressive imperialism. Such papers as the *Times* and the *Morning Post* remain hostile and obstructive to the expression of international ideas. Most of our elder statesmen seem to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing during the years of wildest change the world has ever known. But in the general mind of the British peoples the movement of opinion from a narrow imperialism towards internationalism has been wide and swift. And it continues steadily. One can trace week by week and almost day by day the Americanization of the British conception of the Allied War Aims. It may be interesting to reproduce here three communications upon this question made at different times by the present writer to the press. The circumstances of their publication are significant. The first is in substance identical with a letter which was sent to the *Times* late in May, 1917, and rejected as being altogether too revolutionary. For nowadays the correspondence in the *Times* has ceased to be an impartial expression of public opinion. The correspondence of the *Times* is now apparently selected and edited in accordance with the views upon public policy held by the acting editor for the day. More and more has that paper become the organ of a sort of Oxford Imperialism, three or four years behind the times and very ripe and "expert." The letter is here given as it was finally printed in the issue of the *Daily Chronicle* for June 4th, 1917, under the heading, "Wanted a Statement of Imperial Policy."

Sir, — The time seems to have come for much clearer statements of outlook and intention from this country than it has hitherto been possible to make. The entry of America into the war and the banishment of autocracy and aggressive diplomacy from Russia have enormously cleared the air, and the recent great speech of General

Smuts at the Savoy Hotel is probably only the first of a series of experiments in statement. It is desirable alike to clear our own heads, to unify our efforts, and to give the nations of the world some assurance and standard for our national conduct in the future, that we should now define the Idea of our Empire and its relation to the world outlook much more clearly than has ever hitherto been done. Never before in the history of mankind has opinion counted for so much and persons and organizations for so little as in this war. Never before has the need for clear ideas, widely understood and consistently sustained, been so commandingly vital.

What do we mean by our Empire, and what is its relation to that universal desire of mankind, the permanent rule of peace and justice in the world? The whole world will be the better for a very plain answer to that question.

Is it not time for us British not merely to admit to ourselves, but to assure the world that our Empire as it exists to-day is a provisional thing, that in scarcely any part of the world do we regard it as more than an emergency arrangement, as a necessary association that must give place ultimately to the higher synthesis of a world league, that here we hold as trustees and there on account of strategic considerations that may presently disappear, and that though we will not contemplate the replacement of our flag anywhere by the flag of any other competing nation, though we do hope to hold together with our kin and with those who increasingly share our tradition and our language, nevertheless we are prepared to welcome great renunciations of our present ascendency and privileges in the interests of mankind as a whole. We need to make the world understand that we do not put our nation nor our Empire before the commonwealth of man. Unless presently we are to follow Germany along the tragic path her national vanity and her world ambitions have made for her, that is what we have to make clear now. It is not only our duty to mankind, it is also the sane course for our own preservation.

Is it not the plain lesson of this stupendous and disastrous war that there is no way to secure civilization from destruction except by an impartial control and protection in the interests of the whole human race, a control representing the best intelligence of mankind, of these

main causes of war.

(1) The politically undeveloped tropics;

(2) Shipping and international trade; and

(3) Small nationalities and all regions in a state of political impotence or confusion?

It is our case against the Germans that in all these three cases they have subordinated every consideration of justice and the general human welfare to a monstrous national egotism. That argument has a double edge. At present there is a vigorous campaign in America, Russia, the neutral countries generally, to represent British patriotism as equally egotistic, and our purpose in this war as a mere parallel to the German purpose. In the same manner, though perhaps with less persistency, France and Italy are also caricatured. We are supposed to be grabbing at Mesopotamia and Palestine, France at Syria; Italy is represented as pursuing a Machiavellian policy towards the unfortunate Greek republicans, with her eyes on the Greek islands and Greece in Asia. Is it not time that these base imputations were repudiated clearly and conclusively by our Alliance? And is it not time that we began to discuss in much more frank and definite terms than has hitherto been done, the nature of the international arrangement that will be needed to secure the safety of such liberated populations as those of Palestine, of the Arab regions of the old Turkish empire, of Armenia, of reunited Poland, and the like?

I do not mean here mere diplomatic discussions and "understandings," I mean such full and plain statements as will be spread through the whole world and grasped and assimilated by ordinary people everywhere, statements by which we, as a people, will be prepared to stand or fall.

Almost as urgent is the need for some definite statement about Africa. General Smuts has warned not only the Empire, but the whole world of the gigantic threat to civilization that lies in the present division of Africa between various keenly competitive European Powers, any one of which will be free to misuse the great natural resources at its disposal and to arm millions of black soldiers for aggression. A mere elimination of Germany from Africa will not solve that difficulty. What we have to eliminate is not this nation or that, but the system of national shoving and elbowing, the treatment

of Africa as the board for a game of beggar-my-neighbour-and-damn-the-niggers, in which a few syndicates, masquerading as national interests, snatch a profit to the infinite loss of all mankind. We want a lowering of barriers and a unification of interests, we want an international control of these disputed regions, to override nationalist exploitation. The whole world wants it. It is a chastened and reasonable world we live in to-day, and the time for white reason and the wide treatment of these problems is now.

Finally, the time is drawing near when the Egyptian and the nations of India will ask us, "Are things going on for ever here as they go on now, or are we to look for the time when we, too, like the Africander, the Canadian and the Australian, will be your confessed and equal partners?" Would it not be wise to answer that question in the affirmative before the voice in which it is asked grows thick with anger? In Egypt, for example, we are either robbers very like — except for a certain difference in touch — the Germans in Belgium, or we are honourable trustees. It is our claim and pride to be honourable trustees. Nothing so becomes a trustee as a cheerful openness of disposition. Great Britain has to table her world policy. It is a thing overdue. No doubt we have already a literature of liberal imperialism and a considerable accumulation of declarations by this statesman or that. But what is needed is a formulation much more representative, official and permanent than that, something that can be put beside President Wilson's clear rendering of the American idea. We want all our peoples to understand, and we want all mankind to understand that our Empire is not a net about the world in which the progress of mankind is entangled, but a self-conscious political system working side by side with the other democracies of the earth, preparing the way for, and prepared at last to sacrifice and merge itself in, the world confederation of free and equal peoples.

§ 2

This letter was presently followed up by an article in the *Daily News*, entitled "A Reasonable Man's Peace." This article provoked a considerable controversy in the imperialist press, and it was reprinted

as a pamphlet by a Free Trade organization, which distributed over 200,000 copies. It is particularly interesting to note, in view of what follows it, that it was attacked with great virulence in the *Evening News*, the little fierce mud-throwing brother of the *Daily Mail*.

The international situation at the present time is beyond question the most wonderful that the world has ever seen. There is not a country in the world in which the great majority of sensible people are not passionately desirous of peace, of an enduring peace, and — the war goes on. The conditions of peace can now be stated, in general terms that are as acceptable to a reasonable man in Berlin as they are to a reasonable man in Paris or London or Petrograd or Constantinople. There are to be no conquests, no domination of recalcitrant populations, no bitter insistence upon vindictive penalties, and there must be something in the nature of a world-wide League of Nations to keep the peace securely in future, to "make the world safe for democracy," and maintain international justice. To that the general mind of the world has come to-day.

Why, then, does the waste and killing go on? Why is not the Peace Conference sitting now?

Manifestly because a small minority of people in positions of peculiar advantage, in positions of trust and authority, and particularly the German reactionaries, prevent or delay its assembling.

The answer which seems to suffice in all the Allied countries is that the German Imperial Government — that the German Imperial Government alone — stands in the way, that its tradition is incurably a tradition of conquest and aggression, that until German militarism is overthrown, etc. Few people in the Allied countries will dispute that that is broadly true. But is it the whole and complete truth? Is there nothing more to be done on our side? Let us put a question that goes to the very heart of the problem. Why does the great mass of the German people still cling to its incurably belligerent Government?

The answer to that question is not overwhelmingly difficult. The German people sticks to its militarist imperialism as Mazeppa stuck to his horse; because it is bound to it, and the wolves pursue. The attentive student of the home and foreign propaganda literature of the German Government will realize that the case made by German

imperialism, the main argument by which it sticks to power, is this, that the Allied Governments are also imperialist, that they also aim at conquest and aggression, that for Germany the choice is world empire or downfall and utter ruin. This is the argument that holds the German people stiffly united. For most men in most countries it would be a convincing argument, strong enough to override considerations of right and wrong. I find that I myself am of this way of thinking, that whether England has done right or wrong in the past — and I have sometimes criticized my country very bitterly — I will not endure the prospect of seeing her at the foot of some victorious foreign nation. Neither will any German who matters. Very few people would respect a German who did. But the case for the Allies is that this great argument by which, and by which alone, the German Imperial Government keeps its grip upon the German people at the present time, and keeps them facing their enemies, is untrue. The Allies declare that they do not want to destroy the German people, they do not want to cripple the German people; they want merely to see certain gaping wounds inflicted by Germany repaired, and beyond that reasonable requirement they want nothing but to be assured, completely assured, absolutely assured, against any further aggressions on the part of Germany.

Is that true? Our leaders say so, and we believe them. We would not support them if we did not. And if it is true, have the statesmen of the Allies made it as transparently and convincingly clear to the German people as possible? That is one of the supreme questions of the present time. We cannot too earnestly examine it. Because in the answer to it lies the reason why so many men were killed yesterday on the eastern and western front, so many ships sunk, so much property destroyed, so much human energy wasted for ever upon mere destruction, and why to-morrow and the next day and the day after — through many months yet, perhaps — the same killing and destroying must still go on.

In many respects this war has been an amazing display of human inadaptability. The military history of the war has still to be written, the grim story of machinery misunderstood, improvements resisted, antiquated methods persisted in; but the broad facts are already before the public mind. After three years of war the air offensive, the

only possible decisive blow, is still merely talked of. Not once nor twice only have the Western Allies had victory within their grasp — and failed to grip it. The British cavalry generals wasted the great invention of the tanks as a careless child breaks a toy. At least equally remarkable is the dragging inadaptability of European statecraft. Everywhere the failure of ministers and statesmen to rise to the urgent definite necessities of the present time is glaringly conspicuous. They seem to be incapable even of thinking how the war may be brought to an end. They seem incapable of that plain speaking to the world audience which alone can bring about a peace. They keep on with the tricks and feints of a departed age. Both on the side of the Allies and on the side of the Germans the declarations of public policy remain childishly vague and disingenuous, childishly "diplomatic." They chaffer like happy imbeciles while civilization bleeds to death. It was perhaps to be expected. Few, if any, men of over five-and-forty completely readjust themselves to changed conditions, however novel and challenging the changes may be, and nearly all the leading figures in these affairs are elderly men trained in a tradition of diplomatic ineffectiveness, and now overworked and overstrained to a pitch of complete inelasticity. They go on as if it were still 1913. Could anything be more palpably shifty and unsatisfactory, more senile, more feebly artful, than the recent utterances of the German Chancellor? And, on our own side —

Let us examine the three leading points about this peace business in which this jaded statecraft is most apparent.

Let the reader ask himself the following questions: —

Does he know what the Allies mean to do with the problem of Central Africa? It is the clear common sense of the African situation that while these precious regions of raw material remain divided up between a number of competitive European imperialisms, each resolutely set upon the exploitation of its "possessions" to its own advantage and the disadvantage of the others, there can be no permanent peace in the world. There can be permanent peace in the world only when tropical and sub-tropical Africa constitute a field free to the commercial enterprise of every one irrespective of nationality, when this is no longer an area of competition between nations. This is possible only under some supreme international

control. It requires no special knowledge nor wisdom to see that. A schoolboy can see it. Any one but a statesman absolutely flaccid with overstrain can see that. However difficult it may prove to work out in detail, such an international control *must* therefore be worked out. The manifest solution of the problem of the German colonies in Africa is neither to return them to her nor deprive her of them, but to give her a share in the pooled general control of mid-Africa. In that way she can be deprived of all power for political mischief in Africa without humiliation or economic injury. In that way, too, we can head off — and in no other way can we head off — the power for evil, the power of developing quarrels inherent in "imperialisms" other than German.

But has the reader any assurance that this sane solution of the African problem has the support of the Allied Governments? At best he has only a vague persuasion. And consider how the matter looks "over there." The German Government assures the German people that the Allies intend to cut off Germany from the African supply of raw material. That would mean the practical destruction of German economic life. It is something far more vital to the mass of Germans than any question of Belgium or Alsace-Lorraine. It is, therefore, one of the ideas most potent in nerving the overstrained German people to continue their fight. Why are we, and why are the German people, not given some definite assurance in this matter? Given reparation in Europe, is Germany to be allowed a fair share in the control and trade of a pooled and neutralized Central Africa? Sooner or later we must come to some such arrangement. Why not state it plainly now?

A second question is equally essential to any really permanent settlement, and it is one upon which these eloquent but unsatisfactory mouthpieces of ours turn their backs with an equal resolution, and that is the fate of the Ottoman Empire. What in plain English are we up to there? Whatever happens, that Humpty Dumpty cannot be put back as it was before the war. The idea of the German imperialist, the idea of our own little band of noisy but influential imperialist vulgarians, is evidently a game of grab, a perilous cutting up of these areas into jostling protectorates and spheres of influence, from which either the Germans or the Allies (according to the side you are on) are to be viciously shut out. On such a basis this war is a war to the

death. Neither Germany, France, Britain, Italy, nor Russia can live prosperously if its trade and enterprise is shut out from this cardinally important area. There is, therefore, no alternative, if we are to have a satisfactory permanent pacification of the world, but local self-development in these regions under honestly conceived international control of police and transit and trade. Let it be granted that that will be a difficult control to organize. None the less it has to be attempted. It has to be attempted because *there is no other way of peace*. But once that conception has been clearly formulated, a second great motive why Germany should continue fighting will have gone.

The third great issue about which there is nothing but fog and uncertainty is the so-called "War After the War," the idea of a permanent economic alliance to prevent the economic recuperation of Germany. Upon that idea German imperialism, in its frantic effort to keep its tormented people fighting, naturally puts the utmost stress. The threat of War after the War robs the reasonable German of his last inducement to turn on his Government and insist upon peace. Shut out from all trade, unable to buy food, deprived of raw material, peace would be as bad for Germany as war. He will argue naturally enough and reasonably enough that he may as well die fighting as starve. This is a far more vital issue to him than the Belgian issue or Poland or Alsace-Lorraine. Our statesmen waste their breath and slight our intelligence when these foreground questions are thrust in front of the really fundamental matters. But as the mass of sensible people in every country concerned, in Germany just as much as in France or Great Britain, know perfectly well, unimpeded trade is good for every one except a few rich adventurers, and restricted trade destroys limitless wealth and welfare for mankind to make a few private fortunes or secure an advantage for some imperialist clique. We want an end to this economic strategy, we want an end to this plotting of Governmental cliques against the general welfare. In such offences Germany has been the chief of sinners, but which among the belligerent nations can throw the first stone? Here again the way to the world's peace, the only way to enduring peace, lies through internationalism, through an international survey of commercial treaties, through an international control of inter-State shipping and

transport rates. Unless the Allied statesmen fail to understand the implications of their own general professions they mean that. But why do they not say it plainly? Why do they not shout it so compactly and loudly that all Germany will hear and understand? Why do they justify imperialism to Germany? Why do they maintain a threatening ambiguity towards Germany on all these matters?

By doing so they leave Germany no choice but a war of desperation. They underline and endorse the claim of German imperialism that this is a war for bare existence. They unify the German people. They prolong the war.

§ 3

Some weeks later I was able, at the invitation of the editor, to carry the controversy against imperialism into the *Daily Mail*, which has hitherto counted as a strictly imperialist paper. The article that follows was published in the *Daily Mail* under the heading, "Are we Sticking to the Point? A Discussion of War Aims."

Has this War-Aims controversy really got down to essentials? Is the purpose of this world conflict from first to last too complicated for brevity, or can we boil it down into a statement compact enough for a newspaper article?

And if we can, why is there all this voluminous, uneasy, unquenchable disputation about War Aims?

As to the first question, I would say that the gist of the dispute between the Central Powers and the world can be written easily without undue cramping in an ordinary handwriting upon a postcard. It is the second question that needs answering. And the reason why the second question has to be asked and answered is this, that several of the Allies, and particularly we British, are not being perfectly plain and simple-minded in our answer to the first, that there is a division among us and in our minds, and that our division is making us ambiguous in our behaviour, that it is weakening and dividing our action and strengthening and consolidating the enemy, and that unless we can drag this slurred-over division of aim and spirit into the light of day and *settle it now*, we are likely to remain double-

minded to the end of the war, to split our strength while the war continues and to come out of the settlement at the end with nothing nearly worth the strain and sacrifice it has cost us.

And first, let us deal with that postcard and say what is the essential aim of the war, the aim to which all other aims are subsidiary. It is, we have heard repeated again and again by every statesman of importance in every Allied country, to defeat and destroy military imperialism, to make the world safe for ever against any such deliberate aggression as Germany prepared for forty years and brought to a climax when she crossed the Belgian frontier in 1914. We want to make anything of that kind on the part of Germany or of any other Power henceforth impossible in this world. That is our great aim. Whatever other objects may be sought in this war no responsible statesman dare claim them as anything but subsidiary to that; one can say, in fact, this is our sole aim, our other aims being but parts of it. Better that millions should die now, we declare, than that hundreds of millions still unborn should go on living, generation after generation, under the black tyranny of this imperialist threat.

There is our common agreement. So far, at any rate, we are united. The question I would put to the reader is this: Are we all logically, sincerely, and fully carrying out the plain implications of this War Aim? Or are we to any extent muddling about with it in such a way as to confuse and disorganize our Allies, weaken our internal will, and strengthen the enemy?

Now the plain meaning of this supreme declared War Aim is that we are asking Germany to alter her ways. We are asking Germany to become a different Germany. Either Germany has to be utterly smashed up and destroyed or else Germany has to cease to be an aggressive military imperialism. The former alternative is dismissed by most responsible statesmen. They declare that they do not wish to destroy the German people or the German nationality or the civilized life of Germany. I will not enlarge here upon the tedium and difficulties such an undertaking would present. I will dismiss it as being not only impossible, but also as an insanely wicked project. The second alternative, therefore, remains as our War Aim. I do not see how the sloppiest reasoner can evade that. As we do not want to kill Germany we must want to change Germany. If we do not want to

wipe Germany off the face of the earth, then we want Germany to become the prospective and trust-worthy friend of her fellow nations. And if words have any meaning at all, that is saying that we are fighting to bring about a Revolution in Germany. We want Germany to become a democratically controlled State, such as is the United States to-day, with open methods and pacific intentions, instead of remaining a clenched fist. If we can bring that about we have achieved our War Aim; if we cannot, then this struggle has been for us only such loss and failure as humanity has never known before.

But do we, as a nation, stick closely to this clear and necessary, this only possible, meaning of our declared War Aim? That great, clear-minded leader among the Allies, that Englishman who more than any other single man speaks for the whole English-speaking and Western-thinking community, President Wilson, has said definitely that this is his meaning. America, with him as her spokesman, is under no delusion; she is fighting consciously for a German Revolution as the essential War Aim. We in Europe do not seem to be so lucid. I think myself we have been, and are still, fatally and disastrously not lucid. It is high time, and over, that we cleared our minds and got down to the essentials of the war. We have muddled about in blood and dirt and secondary issues long enough.

We in Britain are not clear-minded, I would point out, because we are double-minded. No good end is served by trying to ignore in the fancied interests of "unity" a division of spirit and intention that trips us up at every step. We are, we declare, fighting for a complete change in international methods, and we are bound to stick to the logical consequences of that. We have placed ourselves on the side of democratic revolution against autocratic monarchy, and we cannot afford to go on shilly-shallying with that choice. We cannot in these days of black or white play the part of lukewarm friends to freedom. I will not remind the reader here of the horrible vacillations and inconsistencies of policy in Greece that have prolonged the war and cost us wealth and lives beyond measure, but President Wilson himself has reminded us pungently enough and sufficiently enough of the follies and disingenuousness of our early treatment of the Russian Revolution. What I want to point out here is the supreme importance of a clear lead in this matter *now* in order that we should

state our War Aims effectively.

In every war there must be two sets of War Aims kept in mind; we ought to know what we mean to do in the event of victory so complete that we can dictate what terms we choose, and we ought to know what, in the event of a not altogether conclusive tussle, are the minimum terms that we should consider justified us in a discontinuance of the tussle. Now, unless our leading statesmen are humbugs and unless we are prepared to quarrel with America in the interests of the monarchist institutions of Europe, we should, in the event of an overwhelming victory, destroy both the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg Imperialisms, and that means, if it means anything at all and is not mere lying rhetoric, that we should insist upon Germany becoming free and democratic, that is to say, in effect if not in form republican, and upon a series of national republics, Polish, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, and the like, in Eastern Europe, grouped together if possible into congenial groups — crowned republics it might be in some cases, in the case of the Serb for example, but in no case too much crowned — that we should join with this renascent Germany and with these thus liberalized Powers and with our Allies and with the neutrals in one great League of Free Nations, trading freely with one another, guaranteeing each other freedom, and maintaining a world-wide peace and disarmament and a new reign of law for mankind.

If that is not what we are out for, then I do not understand what we are out for; there is dishonesty and trickery and diplomacy and foolery in the struggle, and I am no longer whole-hearted for such a half-hearted war. If after a complete victory we are to bolster up the Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, and their relations, set up a constellation of more cheating little subordinate kings, and reinstate that system of diplomacies and secret treaties and secret understandings, that endless drama of international threatening and plotting, that never-ending arming, that has led us after a hundred years of waste and muddle to the supreme tragedy of this war, then the world is not good enough for me and I shall be glad to close my eyes upon it. I am not alone in these sentiments. I believe that in writing thus I am writing the opinion of the great mass of reasonable British, French, Italian, Russian, and American men. I believe, too, that this is the

desire also of great numbers of Germans, and that they would, if they could believe us, gladly set aside their present rulers to achieve this plain common good for mankind.

But, the reader will say, what evidence is there of any republican feeling in Germany? That is always the objection made to any reasonable discussion of the war — and as most of us are denied access to German papers, it is difficult to produce quotations; and even when one does, there are plenty of fools to suggest and believe that the entire German Press is an elaborate camouflage. Yet in the German Press there is far more criticism of militant imperialism than those who have no access to it can imagine. There is far franker criticism of militarism in Germany than there is of reactionary Toryism in this country, and it is more free to speak its mind.

That, however, is a question by the way. It is not the main thing that I have to say here. What I have to say here is that in Great Britain — I will not discuss the affairs of any of our Allies — there are groups and classes of people, not numerous, not representative, but placed in high and influential positions and capable of free and public utterance, who are secretly and bitterly hostile to this great War Aim, which inspires all the Allied peoples. These people are permitted to deny — our peculiar censorship does not hamper them — loudly and publicly that we are fighting for democracy and world freedom; "Tosh," they say to our dead in the trenches, "you died for a mistake"; they jeer at this idea of a League of Nations making an end to war, an idea that has inspired countless brave lads to face death and such pains and hardships as outdo even death itself; they perplex and irritate our Allies by propounding schemes for some precious economic league of the British Empire — that is to treat all "foreigners" with a common base selfishness and stupid hatred — and they intrigue with the most reactionary forces in Russia.

These British reactionaries openly, and with perfect impunity, represent our war as a thing as mean and shameful as Germany's attack on Belgium, and they do it because generosity and justice in the world is as terrible to them as dawn is to the creatures of the night. Our Tories blundered into this great war, not seeing whither it would take them. In particular it is manifest now by a hundred signs that they dread the fall of monarchy in Germany and Austria. Far

rather would they make the most abject surrenders to the Kaiser than deal with a renascent Republican Germany. The recent letter of Lord Lansdowne, urging a peace with German imperialism, was but a feeler from the pacifist side of this most un-English, and unhappily most influential, section of our public life. Lord Lansdowne's letter was the letter of a Peer who fears revolution more than national dishonour.

But it is the truculent wing of this same anti-democratic movement that is far more active. While our sons suffer and die for their comforts and conceit, these people scheme to prevent any communication between the Republican and Socialist classes in Germany and the Allied population. At any cost this class of pampered and privileged traitors intend to have peace while the Kaiser is still on his throne. If not they face a new world — in which their part will be small indeed. And with the utmost ingenuity they maintain a dangerous vagueness about the Allied peace terms, *with the sole object of preventing a revolutionary movement in Germany*.

Let me put it to the reader exactly why our failure to say plainly and exactly and conclusively what we mean to do about a score of points, and particularly about German economic life after the war, paralyses the penitents and friends and helpers that we could now find in Germany. Let me ask the reader to suppose himself a German in Germany at the present time. Of course if he was, he is sure that he would hate the Kaiser as the source of this atrocious war, he would be bitterly ashamed of the Belgian iniquity, of the submarine murders, and a score of such stains upon his national honour; and he would want to alter his national system and make peace. Hundreds of thousands of Germans are in that mood now. But as most of us have had to learn, a man may be bitterly ashamed of this or that incident in his country's history — what Englishman, for instance, can be proud of Glencoe? — he may disbelieve in half its institutions and still love his country far too much to suffer the thought of its destruction. I prefer to see my country right, but if it comes to the pinch and my country sins I will fight to save her from the destruction her sins may have brought upon her. That is the natural way of a man.

But suppose a German wished to try to start a revolutionary movement in Germany at the present time, have we given him any

reason at all for supposing that a Germany liberated and democratized, but, of course, divided and weakened as she would be bound to be in the process, would get better terms from the Allies than a Germany still facing them, militant, imperialist, and wicked? He would have no reason for believing anything of the sort. If we Allies are honest, then if a revolution started in Germany to-day we should if anything lower the price of peace to Germany. But these people who pretend to lead us will state nothing of the sort. For them a revolution in Germany would be the signal for putting up the price of peace. At any risk they are resolved that that German revolution shall not happen. Your sane, good German, let me assert, is up against that as hard as if he was a wicked one. And so, poor devil, he has to put his revolutionary ideas away, they are hopeless ideas for him because of the power of the British reactionary, they are hopeless because of the line we as a nation take in this matter, and he has to go on fighting for his masters.

A plain statement of our war aims that did no more than set out honestly and convincingly the terms the Allies would make with a democratic republican Germany — republican I say, because where a scrap of Hohenzollern is left to-day there will be a fresh militarism to-morrow — would absolutely revolutionize the internal psychology of Germany. We should no longer face a solid people. We should have replaced the false issue of Germany and Britain fighting for the hegemony of Europe, the lie upon which the German Government has always traded, and in which our extreme Tory Press has always supported the German Government, by the true issue, which is freedom versus imperialism, the League of Nations versus that net of diplomatic roguery and of aristocratic, plutocratic, and autocratic greed and conceit which dragged us all into this vast welter of bloodshed and loss.

VI. — THE WAR AIMS OF THE WESTERN ALLIES COMPACTLY STATED

Here, quite compactly, is the plain statement of the essential cause and process of the war to which I would like to see the Allied Foreign Offices subscribe, and which I would like to have placed plainly before the German mind. It embodies much that has been learnt and thought out since this war began, and I think it is much truer and more fundamental than that mere raging against German "militarism," upon which our politicians and press still so largely subsist.

The enormous development of war methods and war material within the last fifty years has made war so horrible and destructive that it is impossible to contemplate a future for mankind from which it has not been eliminated; the increased facilities of railway, steamship, automobile travel and air navigation have brought mankind so close together that ordinary human life is no longer safe anywhere in the boundaries of the little states in which it was once secure. In some fashion it is now necessary to achieve sufficient human unity to establish a world peace and save the future of mankind.

In one or other of two ways only is that unification possible. Either men may set up a common league to keep the peace of the earth, or one state must ultimately become so great and powerful as to repeat for all the world what Rome did for Europe two thousand years ago. Either we must have human unity by a league of existing states or by an Imperial Conquest. The former is now the declared Aim of our country and its Allies; the latter is manifestly the ambition of the present rulers of Germany. Whatever the complications may have been in the earlier stages of the war, due to treaties that are now dead letters and agreements that are extinct, the essential issue now before every man in the world is this: Is the unity of mankind to be the unity of a common freedom, in which every race and nationality may participate with complete self-respect, playing its part, according to its character, in one great world

community, or is it to be reached — and it can only be so reached through many generations of bloodshed and struggle still, even if it can be ever reached in this way at all — through conquest and a German hegemony?

While the rulers of Germany to-day are more openly aggressive and imperialist than they were in August, 1914, the Allies arrayed against them have made great progress in clearing up and realizing the instincts and ideals which brought them originally into the struggle. The German government offers the world to-day a warring future in which Germany alone is to be secure and powerful and proud. *Mankind will not endure that*. The Allies offer the world more and more definitely the scheme of an organized League of Free Nations, a rule of law and justice about the earth. To fight for that and for no other conceivable end, the United States of America, with the full sympathy and co-operation of every state in the western hemisphere, has entered the war. The British Empire, in the midst of the stress of the great war, has set up in Dublin a Convention of Irishmen of all opinions with the fullest powers of deciding upon the future of their country. If Ireland were not divided against herself she could be free and equal with England to-morrow. It is the open intention of Great Britain to develop representative government, where it has not hitherto existed, in India and Egypt, to go on steadfastly increasing the share of the natives of these countries in the government of their own lands, until they too become free and equal members of the world league. Neither France nor Italy nor Britain nor America has ever tampered with the shipping of other countries except in time of war, and the trade of the British Empire has been impartially open to all the world. The extra-national "possessions," the so-called "subject nations" in the Empires of Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, are, in fact, possessions held in trust against the day when the League of Free Nations will inherit for mankind.

Is it to be union by conquest or is it to be union by league? For any sort of man except the German the question is, Will you be a free citizen or will you be an underling to the German imperialism? For the German now the question is a far graver and more tragic one. For him it is this: "You belong to a people not now increasing very

rapidly, a numerous people, but not so numerous as some of the great peoples of the world, a people very highly trained, very well drilled and well armed, perhaps as well trained and drilled and equipped as ever it will be. The collapse of Russian imperialism has made you safe if now you can get peace, and you *can* get a peace now that will neither destroy you nor humiliate you nor open up the prospect of fresh wars. The Allies offer you such a peace. To accept it, we must warn you plainly, means refusing to go on with the manifest intentions of your present rulers, which are to launch you and your children and your children's children upon a career of struggle for war predominance, which may no doubt inflict untold deprivations and miseries upon the rest of mankind, but whose end in the long run, for Germany and things German, can be only Judgment and Death."

In such terms as these the Oceanic Allies could now state their war-will and carry the world straightway into a new phase of human history. They could but they do not. For alas! not one of them is free from the entanglements of past things; when we look for the wisdom of statesmen we find the cunning of politicians; when open speech and plain reason might save the world, courts, bureaucrats, financiers and profiteers conspire.

VII. — THE FUTURE OF MONARCHY

From the very outset of this war it was manifest to the clear-headed observer that only the complete victory of German imperialism could save the dynastic system in Europe from the fate that it had challenged. That curious system had been the natural and unplanned development of the political complications of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Two systems of monarchies, the Bourbon system and the German, then ruled Europe between them. With the latter was associated the tradition of the European unity under the Roman empire; all the Germanic monarchs had an itch to be called Caesar. The Kaiser of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the Czar had, so to speak, the prior claim to the title. The Prussian king set up as a Caesar in 1871; Queen Victoria became the Caesar of India (Kaisir-i-Hind) under the auspices of Lord Beaconsfield, and last and least, that most detestable of all Coburgers, Ferdinand of Bulgaria, gave Kaiserism a touch of quaint absurdity by setting up as Czar of Bulgaria. The weakening of the Bourbon system by the French revolution and the Napoleonic adventure cleared the way for the complete ascendancy of the Germanic monarchies in spite of the breaking away of the United States from that system.

After 1871, a constellation of quasi-divine Teutonic monarchs, of which the German Emperor, the German Queen Victoria, the German Czar, were the greatest stars, formed a caste apart, intermarried only among themselves, dominated the world and was regarded with a mystical awe by the ignorant and foolish in most European countries. The marriages, the funerals, the coronations, the obstetrics of this amazing breed of idols were matters of almost universal worship. The Czar and Queen Victoria professed also to be the heads of religion upon earth. The court-centered diplomacies of the more firmly rooted monarchies steered all the great liberating movements of the nineteenth century into monarchical channels. Italy was made a monarchy; Greece, the motherland of republics, was handed over to a needy scion of the Danish royal family; the sturdy peasants of Bulgaria suffered from a kindred imposition. Even Norway was saddled with as much of a king as it would stand, as a

condition of its independence. At the dawn of the twentieth century republican freedom seemed a remote dream beyond the confines of Switzerland and France — and it had no very secure air in France. Reactionary scheming has been an intermittent fever in the French republic for six and forty years. The French foreign office is still undemocratic in tradition and temper. But for the restless disloyalty of the Hohenzollerns this German kingly caste might be dominating the world to this day.

Of course the stability of this Teutonic dynastic system in Europe — which will presently seem to the student of history so curious a halting-place upon the way to human unity — rested very largely upon the maintenance of peace. It was the failure to understand this on the part of the German and Bulgarian rulers in particular that has now brought all monarchy to the question. The implicit theory that supported the intermarrying German royal families in Europe was that their inter-relationship and their aloofness from their subjects was a mitigation of national and racial animosities. In the days when Queen Victoria was the grandmother of Europe this was a plausible argument. King, Czar and Emperor, or Emperor and Emperor would meet, and it was understood that these meetings were the lubrication of European affairs. The monarchs married largely, conspicuously, and very expensively for our good. Royal funerals, marriages, christenings, coronations, and jubilees interrupted traffic and stimulated trade everywhere. They seemed to give a *raison d'être* for mankind. It is the Emperor William and the Czar Ferdinand who have betrayed not only humanity but their own strange caste by shattering all these pleasant illusions. The wisdom of Kant is justified, and we know now that kings cause wars. It needed the shock of the great war to bring home the wisdom of that old Scotchman of Königsberg to the mind of the ordinary man. Moreover in support of the dynastic system was the fact that it did exist as the system in possession, and all prosperous and intelligent people are chary of disturbing existing things. Life is full of vestigial structures, and it is a long way to logical perfection. Let us keep on, they would argue, with what we have. And another idea which, rightly or wrongly, made men patient with the emperors and kings was an exaggerated idea of the insecurity of republican institutions.

You can still hear very old dull men say gravely that "kings are better than pronunciamentos"; there was an article upon Greece to this effect quite recently in that uncertain paper *The New Statesman*. Then a kind of illustrative gesture would be made to the South American republics, although the internal disturbances of the South American republics have diminished to very small dimensions in the last three decades and although pronunciamentos rarely disturb the traffic in Switzerland, the United States, or France. But there can be no doubt that the influence of the Germanic monarchy up to the death of Queen Victoria upon British thought was in the direction of estrangement from the two great modern republics and in the direction of assistance and propitiation to Germany. We surrendered Heligoland, we made great concessions to German colonial ambitions, we allowed ourselves to be jockeyed into a phase of dangerous hostility to France. A practice of sneering at things American has died only very recently out of English journalism and literature, as any one who cares to consult the bound magazines of the 'seventies and 'eighties may soon see for himself. It is well too in these days not to forget Colonel Marchand, if only to remember that such a clash must never recur. But in justice to our monarchy we must remember that after the death of Queen Victoria, the spirit, if not the forms, of British kingship was greatly modified by the exceptional character and ability of King Edward VII. He was curiously anti-German in spirit; he had essentially democratic instincts; in a few precious years he restored good will between France and Great Britain. It is no slight upon his successor to doubt whether any one could have handled the present opportunities and risks of monarchy in Great Britain as Edward could have handled them.

Because no doubt if monarchy is to survive in the British Empire it must speedily undergo the profoundest modification. The old state of affairs cannot continue. The European dynastic system, based upon the intermarriage of a group of mainly German royal families, is dead to-day; it is freshly dead, but it is as dead as the rule of the Incas. It is idle to close our eyes to this fact. The revolution in Russia, the setting up of a republic in China, demonstrating the ripeness of the East for free institutions, the entry of the American

republics into world politics — these things slam the door on any idea of working back to the old nineteenth-century system. People calls to people. “No peace with the Hohenzollerns” is a cry that carries with it the final repudiation of emperors and kings. The man in the street will assure you he wants no diplomatic peace. Beyond the unstable shapes of the present the political forms of the future rise now so clearly that they are the common talk of men. Kant’s lucid thought told us long ago that the peace of the world demanded a world union of republics. That is a commonplace remark now in every civilized community.

The stars in their courses, the logic of circumstances, the everyday needs and everyday intelligence of men, all these things march irresistibly towards a permanent world peace based on democratic republicanism. The question of the future of monarchy is not whether it will be able to resist and overcome that trend; it has as little chance of doing that as the Lama of Thibet has of becoming Emperor of the Earth. It is whether it will resist openly, become the centre and symbol of a reactionary resistance, and have to be abolished and swept away altogether everywhere, as the Romanoffs have already been swept away in Russia, or whether it will be able in this country and that to adapt itself to the necessities of the great age that dawns upon mankind, to take a generous and helpful attitude towards its own modification, and so survive, for a time at any rate, in that larger air.

It is the fashion for the apologists of monarchy in the British Empire to speak of the British system as a crowned republic. That is an attractive phrase to people of republican sentiments. It is quite conceivable that the British Empire may be able to make that phrase a reality and that the royal line may continue, a line of hereditary presidents, with some of the ancient trappings and something of the picturesque prestige that, as the oldest monarchy in Europe, it has to-day. Two kings in Europe have already gone far towards realizing this conception of a life president; both the King of Italy and the King of Norway live as simply as if they were in the White House and are far more accessible. Along that line the British monarchy must go if it is not to go altogether. Will it go along those lines?

There are many reasons for hoping that it will do so. The *Times*

has styled the crown the "golden link" of the empire. Australians and Canadians, it was argued, had little love for the motherland but the greatest devotion to the sovereign, and still truer was this of Indians, Egyptians, and the like. It might be easy to press this theory of devotion too far, but there can be little doubt that the British Crown does at present stand as a symbol of unity over diversity such as no other crown, unless it be that of Austria- Hungary, can be said to do. The British crown is not like other crowns; it may conceivably take a line of its own and emerge — possibly a little more like a hat and a little less like a crown — from trials that may destroy every other monarchial system in the world.

Now many things are going on behind the scenes, many little indications peep out upon the speculative watcher and vanish again; but there is very little that is definite to go upon at the present time to determine how far the monarchy will rise to the needs of this great occasion. Certain acts and changes, the initiative to which would come most gracefully from royalty itself, could be done at this present time. They may be done quite soon. Upon the doing of them wait great masses of public opinion. The first of these things is for the British monarchy to sever itself definitely from the German dynastic system, with which it is so fatally entangled by marriage and descent, and to make its intention of becoming henceforth more and more British in blood as well as spirit, unmistakably plain. This idea has been put forth quite prominently in the *Times*. The king has been asked to give his countenance to the sweeping away of all those restrictions first set up by George the Third, upon the marriage of the Royal Princes with British, French and American subjects. The British Empire is very near the limit of its endurance of a kingly caste of Germans. The choice of British royalty between its peoples and its cousins cannot be indefinitely delayed. Were it made now publicly and boldly, there can be no doubt that the decision would mean a renascence of monarchy, a considerable outbreak of royalist enthusiasm in the Empire. There are times when a king or queen must need be dramatic and must a little anticipate occasions. It is not seemly to make concessions perforce; kings may not make obviously unwilling surrenders; it is the indecisive kings who lose their crowns.

No doubt the Anglicization of the royal family by national

marriages would gradually merge that family into the general body of the British peerage. Its consequent loss of distinction might be accompanied by an associated fading out of function, until the King became at last hardly more functional than was the late Duke of Norfolk as premier peer. Possibly that is the most desirable course from many points of view.

It must be admitted that the abandonment of marriages within the royal caste and a bold attempt to introduce a strain of British blood in the royal family does not in itself fulfil all that is needed if the British king is indeed to become the crowned president of his people and the nominal and accepted leader of the movement towards republican institutions. A thing that is productive of an enormous amount of republican talk in Great Britain is the suspicion — I believe an ill-founded suspicion — that there are influences at work at court antagonistic to republican institutions in friendly states and that there is a disposition even to sacrifice the interests of the liberal allies to dynastic sympathies. These things are not to be believed, but it would be a feat of vast impressiveness if there were something like a royal and public repudiation of the weaknesses of cousinship. The behaviour of the Allies towards that great Balkan statesman Venizelos, the sacrificing of the friendly Greek republicans in favour of the manifestly treacherous King of Greece, has produced the deepest shame and disgust in many quarters that are altogether friendly, that are even warmly "loyal" to the British monarchy.

And in a phase of tottering thrones it is very undesirable that the British habit of asylum should be abused. We have already in England the dethroned monarch of a friendly republic; he is no doubt duly looked after. In the future there may be a shaking of the autumnal boughs and a shower of emperors and kings. We do not want Great Britain to become a hotbed of reactionary plotting and the starting-point of restoration raids into the territories of emancipated peoples. This is particularly desirable if presently, after the Kaiser's death — which by all the statistics of Hohenzollern mortality cannot be delayed now for many years — the present Crown Prince goes a-wandering. We do not want any German ex-monarchs; Sweden is always open to them and friendly, and to Sweden they ought to go; and particularly do British people dread an irruption of

Hohenzollerns or Coburgers. Almost as undesirable would be the arrival of the Czar and Czarina. It is supremely important that no wind of suspicion should blow between us and the freedom of Russia. After the war even more than during the war will the enemy be anxious to sow discord between the great Russian-speaking and English-speaking democracies. Quite apart from the scandal of their inelegant domesticities, the establishment of the Czar and Czarina in England with frequent and easy access to our royal family may be extraordinarily unfortunate for the British monarchy. I will confess a certain sympathy for the Czar myself. He is not an evil figure, he is not a strong figure, but he has that sort of weakness, that failure in decision, which trails revolution in its wake. He has ended one dynasty already. The British royal family owes it to itself, that he bring not the infection of his misfortunes to Windsor.

The security of the British monarchy lies in such a courageous severance of its destinies from the Teutonic dynastic system. Will it make that severance? There I share an almost universal ignorance. The loyalty of the British is not to what kings are too prone to call "my person," not to a chosen and admired family, but to a renascent mankind. We have fought in this war for Belgium, for France, for general freedom, for civilization and the whole future of mankind, far more than for ourselves. We have not fought for a king. We are discovering in that spirit of human unity that lies below the idea of a League of Free Nations the real invisible king of our heart and race. But we will very gladly go on with our task under a nominal king unless he hampers us in the task that grows ever more plainly before us.... That, I think, is a fair statement of British public opinion on this question. But every day when I am in London I walk past Buckingham Palace to lunch at my club, and I look at that not very expressive façade and wonder — and we all wonder — what thoughts are going on behind it and what acts are being conceived there. Out of it there might yet come some gesture of acceptance magnificent enough to set beside President Wilson's magnificent declaration of war....

These are things in the scales of fate. I will not pretend to be able to guess even which way the scales will swing.

VIII. — THE PLAIN NECESSITY FOR A LEAGUE

Great as the sacrifices of prejudice and preconception which any effective realization of this idea of a League of Free Nations will demand, difficult as the necessary delegations of sovereignty must be, none the less are such sacrifices and difficulties unavoidable. People in France and Italy and Great Britain and Germany alike have to subdue their minds to the realization that some such League is now a necessity for them if their peace and national life are to continue. There is no prospect before them but either some such League or else great humiliation and disastrous warfare driving them down towards social dissolution; and for the United States it is only a question of a little longer time before the same alternatives have to be faced.

Whether this war ends in the complete defeat of Germany and German imperialism, or in a revolutionary modernization of Germany, or in a practical triumph for the Hohenzollerns, are considerations that affect the nature and scope of the League, but do not affect its essential necessity. In the first two cases the League of Free Nations will be a world league including Germany as a principal partner, in the latter case the League of Free Nations will be a defensive league standing steadfast against the threat of a world imperialism, and watching and restraining with one common will the homicidal maniac in its midst. But in all these cases there can be no great alleviation of the evils that now blacken and threaten to ruin human life altogether, unless all the civilized and peace-seeking peoples of the world are pledged and locked together under a common law and a common world policy. There must rather be an intensification of these evils. There must be wars more evil than this war continuing this war, and more destructive of civilized life. There can be no peace and hope for our race but an organized peace and hope, armed against disturbance as a state is armed against mad, ferocious, and criminal men.

Now, there are two chief arguments, running one into the other,

for the necessity of merging our existing sovereignties into a greater and, if possible, a world-wide league. The first is the present geographical impossibility of nearly all the existing European states and empires; and the second is the steadily increasing disproportion between the tortures and destructions inflicted by modern warfare and any possible advantages that may arise from it. Underlying both arguments is the fact that modern developments of mechanical science have brought the nations of Europe together into too close a proximity. This present war, more than anything else, is a violent struggle between old political ideas and new antagonistic conditions.

It is the unhappy usage of our schools and universities to study the history of mankind only during periods of mechanical unprogressiveness. The historical ideas of Europe range between the time when the Greeks were going about the world on foot or horseback or in galleys or sailing ships to the days when Napoleon, Wellington, and Nelson were going about at very much the same pace in much the same vehicles and vessels. At the advent of steam and electricity the muse of history holds her nose and shuts her eyes. Science will study and get the better of a modern disease, as, for example, sleeping sickness, in spite of the fact that it has no classical standing; but our history schools would be shocked at the bare idea of studying the effect of modern means of communication upon administrative areas, large or small. This defect in our historical training has made our minds politically sluggish. We fail to adapt readily enough. In small things and great alike we are trying to run the world in areas marked out in or before the eighteenth century, regardless of the fact that a man or an army or an aeroplane can get in a few minutes or a few hours to points that it would have taken days or weeks to reach under the old foot-and-horse conditions. That matters nothing to the learned men who instruct our statesmen and politicians. It matters everything from the point of view of social and economic and political life. And the grave fact to consider is that all the great states of Europe, except for the unification of Italy and Germany, are still much of the size and in much the same boundaries that made them strong and safe in the eighteenth century, that is to say, in the closing years of the foot-horse period. The British empire grew and was organized under those conditions, and had to modify

itself only a little to meet the needs of steam shipping. All over the world are its linked possessions and its ports and coaling stations and fastnesses on the trade routes. And British people still look at the red-splashed map of the world with the profoundest self-satisfaction, blind to the swift changes that are making that scattered empire — if it is to remain an isolated system — almost the most dangerous conceivable.

Let me ask the British reader who is disposed to sneer at the League of Nations and say he is very well content with the empire, thank you, to get his atlas and consider one or two propositions. And, first, let him think of aviation. I can assure him, because upon this matter I have some special knowledge, that long-distance air travel for men, for letters and light goods and for bombs, is continually becoming more practicable. But the air routes that air transport will follow must go over a certain amount of land, for this reason that every few hundred miles at the longest the machine must come down for petrol. A flying machine with a safe non-stop range of 1500 miles is still a long way off. It may indeed be permanently impracticable because there seems to be an upward limit to the size of an aeroplane engine. And now will the reader take the map of the world and study the air routes from London to the rest of the empire? He will find them perplexing — if he wants them to be "All-Red." Happily this is not a British difficulty only. Will he next study the air routes from Paris to the rest of the French possessions? And, finally, will he study the air routes out of Germany to anywhere? The Germans are as badly off as any people. But we are all badly off. So far as world air transit goes any country can, if it chooses, choke any adjacent country. Directly any trade difficulty breaks out, any country can begin a vexatious campaign against its neighbour's air traffic. It can oblige it to alight at the frontier, to follow prescribed routes, to land at specified places on those routes and undergo examinations that will waste precious hours. But so far as I can see, no European statesman, German or Allied, have begun to give their attention to this amazing difficulty. Without a great pooling of air control, either a world-wide pooling or a pooling at least of the Atlantic-Mediterranean Allies in one Air League, the splendid peace possibilities of air transport — and they are indeed splendid — must

remain very largely a forbidden possibility to mankind.

And as a second illustration of the way in which changing conditions are altering political questions, let the reader take his atlas and consider the case of that impregnable fastness, that great naval station, that Key to the Mediterranean, Gibraltar. British boys are brought up on Gibraltar and the Gibraltar idea. To the British imagination Gibraltar is almost as sacred a national symbol as the lions in Trafalgar Square. Now, in his atlas the reader will almost certainly find an inset map of this valuable possession, coloured bright red. The inset map will have attached to it a small scale of miles. From that he will be able to satisfy himself that there is not an inch of the rock anywhere that is not within five miles or less of Spanish land, and that there is rather more than a semicircle of hills round the rock within a range of seven or eight miles. That is much less than the range of a sixteen-inch gun. In other words, the Spaniards are in a position to knock Gibraltar to bits whenever they want to do so, or to smash and sink any ships in its harbour. They can hit it on every side. Consider, moreover, that there are long sweeps of coast north, south, and west of the Rock, from which torpedoes could be discharged at any ship that approached. Inquire further where on the Rock an aeroplane can land. And having ascertained these things, ask yourself what is the present value of Gibraltar?

I will not multiply disagreeable instances of this sort, though it would be easy enough to do so in the case both of France and Italy as well as of Great Britain. I give them as illustrations of the way in which everywhere old securities and old arrangements must be upset by the greater range of modern things. Let us get on to more general conditions. There is not a capital city in Europe that twenty years from now will not be liable to a bombing raid done by hundreds or even thousands of big aeroplanes, upon or even before a declaration of war, and there is not a line of sea communication that will not be as promptly interrupted by the hostile submarine. I point these things out here only to carry home the fact that the ideas of sovereign isolation and detachment that were perfectly valid in 1900, the self-sufficient empire, Imperial Zollverein and all that stuff, and damn the foreigner! are now, because of the enormous changes in range of

action and facility of locomotion that have been going on, almost as wild — or would be if we were not so fatally accustomed to them — and quite as dangerous, as the idea of setting up a free and sovereign state in the Isle of Dogs. All the European empires are becoming vulnerable at every point. Surely the moral is obvious. The only wise course before the allied European powers now is to put their national conceit in their pockets and to combine to lock up their foreign policy, their trade interests, and all their imperial and international interests into a League so big as to be able to withstand the most sudden and treacherous of blows. And surely the only completely safe course for them and mankind — hard and nearly impossible though it may seem at the present juncture — is for them to lock up into one unity with a democratized Germany and with all the other states of the earth into one peace-maintaining League.

If the reader will revert again to his atlas he will see very clearly that a strongly consolidated League of Free Nations, even if it consisted only of our present allies, would in itself form a combination with so close a system of communication about the world, and so great an economic advantage, that in the long run it could oblige Germany and the rest of the world to come in to its council. Divided the Oceanic Allies are, to speak plainly, geographical rags and nakedness; united they are a world. To set about organizing that League now, with its necessary repudiation on the part of Britain, France, and Italy, of a selfish and, it must be remembered in the light of these things I have but hinted at here, a *now hopelessly unpracticable imperialism*, would, I am convinced, lead quite rapidly to a great change of heart in Germany and to a satisfactory peace. But even if I am wrong in that, then all the stronger is the reason for binding, locking and uniting the allied powers together. It is the most dangerous of delusions for each and all of them to suppose that either Britain, France or Italy can ever stand alone again and be secure.

And turning now to the other aspect of these consequences of the development of material science, it is too often assumed that this war is being as horrible and destructive as war can be. There never was so great a delusion. This war has only begun to be horrible. No doubt it is much more horrible and destructive than any former war, but

even in comparison with the full possibilities of known and existing means of destruction it is still a mild war. Perhaps it will never rise to its full possibilities. At the present stage there is not a combatant, except perhaps America, which is not now practising a pinching economy of steel and other mechanical material. The Germans are running short of first-class flying men, and if we and our allies continue to press the air attack, and seek out and train our own vastly greater resources of first quality young airmen, the Germans may come as near to being "driven out of the air" as is possible. I am a firmer believer than ever I was in the possibility of a complete victory over Germany — through and by the air. But the occasional dropping of a big bomb or so in London is not to be taken as anything but a minimum display of what air war can do. In a little while now our alliance should be in a position to commence day and night continuous attacks upon the Rhine towns. Not hour-long raids such as London knows, but week-long raids. Then and then only shall we be able to gauge the really horrible possibilities of the air war. They are in our hands and not in the hands of the Germans. In addition the Germans are at a huge disadvantage in their submarine campaign. Their submarine campaign is only the feeble shadow of what a submarine campaign might be. Turning again to the atlas the reader can see for himself that the German and Austrian submarines are obliged to come out across very narrow fronts. A fence of mines less than three hundred miles long and two hundred feet deep would, for example, completely bar their exit through the North Sea. The U-boats run the gauntlet of that long narrow sea and pay a heavy toll to it. If only our Admiralty would tell the German public what that toll is now, there would come a time when German seamen would no longer consent to go down in them. Consider, however, what a submarine campaign would be for Great Britain if instead of struggling through this bottle-neck it were conducted from the coast of Norway, where these pests might harbour in a hundred fiords. Consider too what this weapon may be in twenty years' time in the hands of a country in the position of the United States. Great Britain, if she is not altogether mad, will cease to be an island as soon as possible after the war, by piercing the Channel Tunnel — how different our transport problem would be if we had that now! — but

such countries as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, directly they are involved in the future in a war against any efficient naval power with an unimpeded sea access, will be isolated forthwith. I cannot conceive that any of the great ocean powers will rest content until such a tremendous possibility of blockade as the submarine has created is securely vested in the hands of a common league beyond any power of sudden abuse.

It must always be remembered that this war is a mechanical war conducted by men whose discipline renders them uninventive, who know little or nothing of mechanism, who are for the most part struggling blindly to get things back to the conditions for which they were trained, to Napoleonic conditions, with infantry and cavalry and comparatively light guns, the so-called "war of manoeuvres." It is like a man engaged in a desperate duel who keeps on trying to make it a game of cricket. Most of these soldiers detest every sort of mechanical device; the tanks, for example, which, used with imagination, might have given the British and French overwhelming victory on the western front, were subordinated to the usual cavalry "break through" idea. I am not making any particular complaint against the British and French generals in saying this. It is what must happen to any country which entrusts its welfare to soldiers. A soldier has to be a severely disciplined man, and a severely disciplined man cannot be a versatile man, and on the whole the British army has been as receptive to novelties as any. The German generals have done no better; indeed, they have not done so well as the generals of the Allies in this respect. But after the war, if the world does not organize rapidly for peace, then as resources accumulate a little, the mechanical genius will get to work on the possibilities of these ideas that have merely been sketched out in this war. We shall get big land ironclads which will smash towns. We shall get air offensives — let the experienced London reader think of an air raid going on hour after hour, day after day — that will really burn out and wreck towns, that will drive people mad by the thousand. We shall get a very complete cessation of sea transit. Even land transit may be enormously hampered by aerial attack. I doubt if any sort of social order will really be able to stand the strain of a fully worked out modern war. We have still, of course, to feel the full

shock effects even of this war. Most of the combatants are going on, as sometimes men who have incurred grave wounds will still go on for a time — without feeling them. The educational, biological, social, economic punishment that has already been taken by each of the European countries is, I feel, very much greater than we yet realize. Russia, the heaviest and worst-trained combatant, has indeed shown the effects and is down and sick, but in three years' time all Europe will know far better than it does now the full price of this war. And the shock effects of the next war will have much the same relation to the shock effects of this, as the shock of breaking a finger-nail has to the shock of crushing in a body. In Russia to-day we have seen, not indeed social revolution, not the replacement of one social order by another, but disintegration. Let not national conceit blind us. Germany, France, Italy, Britain are all slipping about on that same slope down which Russia has slid. Which goes first, it is hard to guess, or whether we shall all hold out to some kind of Peace. At present the social discipline of France and Britain seems to be at least as good as that of Germany, and the *morale* of the Rhineland and Bavaria has probably to undergo very severe testing by systematized and steadily increasing air punishment as this year goes on. The next war — if a next war comes — will see all Germany, from end to end, vulnerable to aircraft....

Such are the two sets of considerations that will, I think, ultimately prevail over every prejudice and every difficulty in the way of the League of Free Nations. Existing states have become impossible as absolutely independent sovereignties. The new conditions bring them so close together and give them such extravagant powers of mutual injury that they must either sink national pride and dynastic ambitions in subordination to the common welfare of mankind or else utterly shatter one another. It becomes more and more plainly a choice between the League of Free Nations and a famished race of men looting in search of non-existent food amidst the smouldering ruins of civilization. In the end I believe that the common sense of mankind will prefer a revision of its ideas of nationality and imperialism, to the latter alternative. It may take obstinate men a few more years yet of blood and horror to learn this lesson, but for my own part I cherish an obstinate belief in the

potential reasonableness of mankind.

IX. — DEMOCRACY

All the talk, all the aspiration and work that is making now towards this conception of a world securely at peace, under the direction of a League of Free Nations, has interwoven with it an idea that is often rather felt than understood, the idea of Democracy. Not only is justice to prevail between race and race and nation and nation, but also between man and man; there is to be a universal respect for human life throughout the earth; the world, in the words of President Wilson, is to be made "safe for democracy." I would like to subject that word to a certain scrutiny to see whether the things we are apt to think and assume about it correspond exactly with the feeling of the word. I would like to ask what, under modern conditions, does democracy mean, and whether we have got it now anywhere in the world in its fulness and completion.

And to begin with I must have a quarrel with the word itself. The eccentricities of modern education make us dependent for a number of our primary political terms upon those used by the thinkers of the small Greek republics of ancient times before those petty states collapsed, through sheer political ineptitude, before the Macedonians. They thought in terms of states so small that it was possible to gather all the citizens together for the purposes of legislation. These states were scarcely more than what we English might call sovereign urban districts. Fast communications were made by runners; even the policeman with a bicycle of the modern urban district was beyond the scope of the Greek imagination. There were no railways, telegraphs, telephones, books or newspapers, there was no need for the state to maintain a system of education, and the affairs of the state were so simple that they could be discussed and decided by the human voice and open voting in an assembly of all the citizens. That is what democracy, meant. In Andorra, or perhaps in Canton Uri, such democracy may still be possible; in any other modern state it cannot exist. The opposite term to it was oligarchy, in which a small council of men controlled the affairs of the state. Oligarchy, narrowed down to one man, became monarchy. If you wished to be polite to an oligarchy you called it an aristocracy; if you

wished to point out that a monarch was rather by way of being self-appointed, you called him a Tyrant. An oligarchy with a property qualification was a plutocracy.

Now the modern intelligence, being under a sort of magic slavery to the ancient Greeks, has to adapt all these terms to the problems of states so vast and complex that they have the same relation to the Greek states that the anatomy of a man has to the anatomy of a jellyfish. They are not only greater in extent and denser in population, but they are increasingly innervated by more and more rapid means of communication and excitement. In the classical past — except for such special cases as the feeding of Rome with Egyptian corn — trade was a traffic in luxuries or slaves, war a small specialized affair of infantry and horsemen in search of slaves and loot, and empire the exaction of tribute. The modern state must conduct its enormous businesses through a system of ministries; its vital interests go all round the earth; nothing that any ancient Greek would have recognized as democracy is conceivable in a great modern state. It is absolutely necessary, if we are to get things clear in our minds about what democracy really means in relation to modern politics, first to make a quite fresh classification in order to find what items there really are to consider, and then to inquire which seem to correspond more or less closely in spirit with our ideas about ancient democracy.

Now there are two primary classes of idea about government in the modern world depending upon our conception of the political capacity of the common man. We may suppose he is a microcosm, with complete ideas and wishes about the state and the world, or we may suppose that he isn't. We may believe that the common man can govern, or we may believe that he can't. We may think further along the first line that he is so wise and good and right that we only have to get out of his way for him to act rightly and for the good of all mankind, or we may doubt it. And if we doubt that we may still believe that, though perhaps "you can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time," the common man, expressing himself by a majority vote, still remains the secure source of human wisdom. But next, while we may deny this universal distribution of political wisdom, we may, if we are sufficiently under

the sway of modern ideas about collective psychology, believe that it is necessary to poke up the political indifference and inability of the common man as much as possible, to thrust political ideas and facts upon him, to incite him to a watchful and critical attitude towards them, and above all to secure his assent to the proceedings of the able people who are managing public affairs. Or finally, we may treat him as a thing to be ruled and not consulted. Let me at this stage make out a classificatory diagram of these elementary ideas of government in a modern country.

CLASS I. It is supposed that the common man *can* govern:

(1) without further organization (Anarchy);

(2) through a majority vote by delegates.

CLASS II. It is supposed that the common man *cannot* govern, and that government therefore must be through the agency of Able Persons who may be classified under one of the following sub-heads, either as

(1) persons elected by the common man because he believes them to be persons able to govern — just as he chooses his doctors as persons able to secure health, and his electrical engineers as persons able to attend to his tramways, lighting, etc., etc.;

(2) persons of a special class, as, for example, persons born and educated to rule (e.g. *Aristocracy*), or rich business adventurers *(Plutocracy)* who rule without consulting the common man at all.

To which two sub-classes we may perhaps add a sort of intermediate stage between them, namely:

(3) persons elected by a special class of voter.

Monarchy may be either a special case of Class II.(1), (2) or (3), in which the persons who rule have narrowed down in number to one person, and the duration of monarchy may be either for life or a term of years. These two classes and the five sub-classes cover, I believe, all the elementary political types in our world.

Now in the constitution of a modern state, because of the conflict and confusion of ideas, all or most of these five sub-classes may usually be found intertwined. The British constitution, for instance, is a complicated tangle of arrangements, due to a struggle between the ideas of Class I.(2), Class II.(3), tending to become Class II.(1) and Class II.(2) in both its aristocratic and monarchist forms. The

American constitution is largely dominated by Class I.(2), from which it breaks away in the case of the President to a short-term monarchist aspect of Class II.(1). I will not elaborate this classification further. I have made it here in order to render clear first, that what we moderns mean by democracy is not what the Greeks meant at all, that is to say, direct government by the assembly of all the citizens, and secondly and more important, that the word "democracy" is being used very largely in current discussion, so that it is impossible to say in any particular case whether the intention is Class I.(2) or Class II.(1), and that we have to make up our minds whether we mean, if I may coin two phrases, "delegate democracy" or "selective democracy," or some definite combination of these two, when we talk about "democracy," before we can get on much beyond a generous gesture of equality and enfranchisement towards our brother man. The word is being used, in fact, confusingly for these two quite widely different things.

Now, it seems to me that though there has been no very clear discussion of the issue between those two very opposite conceptions of democracy, largely because of the want of proper distinctive terms, there has nevertheless been a wide movement of public opinion away from "delegate democracy" and towards "selective democracy." People have gone on saying "democracy," while gradually changing its meaning from the former to the latter. It is notable in Great Britain, for example, that while there has been no perceptible diminution in our faith in democracy, there has been a growing criticism of "party" and "politicians," and a great weakening in the power and influence of representatives and representative institutions. There has been a growing demand for personality and initiative in elected persons. The press, which was once entirely subordinate politically to parliamentary politics, adopts an attitude towards parliament and party leaders nowadays which would have seemed inconceivable insolence in the days of Lord Palmerston. And there has been a vigorous agitation in support of electoral methods which are manifestly calculated to subordinate "delegated" to "selected" men.

The movement for electoral reform in Great Britain at the present time is one of quite fundamental importance in the development of

modern democracy. The case of the reformers is that heretofore modern democracy has not had a fair opportunity of showing its best possibilities to the world, because the methods of election have persistently set aside the better types of public men, or rather of would-be public men, in favour of mere party hacks. That is a story common to Britain and the American democracies, but in America it was expressed in rather different terms and dealt with in a less analytical fashion than it has been in Great Britain. It was not at first clearly understood that the failure of democracy to produce good government came through the preference of "delegated" over "selected" men, the idea of delegation did in fact dominate the minds of both electoral reformers and electoral conservatives alike, and the earlier stages of the reform movement in Great Britain were inspired not so much by the idea of getting a better type of representative as by the idea of getting a fairer representation of minorities. It was only slowly that the idea that sensible men do not usually belong to any political "party" took hold. It is only now being realized that what sensible men desire in a member of parliament is honour and capacity rather than a mechanical loyalty to a "platform." They do not want to dictate to their representative; they want a man they can trust as their representative. In the fifties and sixties of the last century, in which this electoral reform movement began and the method of Proportional Representation was thought out, it was possible for the reformers to work untroubled upon the assumption that if a man was not necessarily born a

"... little Liber-al, or else a little Conservative,"

he must at least be a Liberal-Unionist or a Conservative Free-Trader. But seeking a fair representation for party minorities, these reformers produced a system of voting at once simple and incapable of manipulation, that leads straight, not to the representation of small parties, but to a type of democratic government by selected best men.

Before giving the essential features of that system, it may be well to state in its simplest form the evils at which the reform aims. An election, the reformers point out, is not the simple matter it appears to be at the first blush. Methods of voting can be manipulated in various ways, and nearly every method has its own liability to falsification. We may take for illustration the commonest, simplest

case — the case that is the perplexity of every clear-thinking voter under British or American conditions — the case of a constituency in which every elector has one vote, and which returns one representative to Parliament. The naive theory on which people go is that all the possible candidates are put up, that each voter votes for the one he likes best, and that the best man wins. The bitter experience is that hardly ever are there more than two candidates, and still more rarely is either of these the best man possible. Suppose, for example, the constituency is mainly Conservative. A little group of pothouse politicians, wire-pullers, busybodies, local journalists, and small lawyers, working for various monetary interests, have "captured" the local Conservative organization. They have time and energy to capture it, because they have no other interest in life except that. It is their "business," and honest men are busy with other duties. For reasons that do not appear these local "workers" put up an unknown Mr. Goldbug as the official Conservative candidate. He professes a generally Conservative view of things, but few people are sure of him and few people trust him. Against him the weaker (and therefore still more venal) Liberal organization now puts up a Mr. Kentshire (formerly Wurstberg) to represent the broader thought and finer generosities of the English mind. A number of Conservative gentlemen, generally too busy about their honest businesses to attend the party "smokers" and the party cave, realize suddenly that they want Goldbug hardly more than they want Wurstberg. They put up their long-admired, trusted, and able friend Mr. Sanity as an Independent Conservative.

Every one knows the trouble that follows. Mr. Sanity is "going to split the party vote." The hesitating voter is told, with considerable truth, that a vote given for Mr. Sanity is a vote given for Wurstberg. At any price the constituency does not want Wurstberg. So at the eleventh hour Mr. Sanity is induced to withdraw, and Mr. Goldbug goes into Parliament to misrepresent this constituency. And so with most constituencies, and the result is a legislative body consisting largely of men of unknown character and obscure aims, whose only credential is the wearing of a party label. They come into parliament not to forward the great interests they ostensibly support, but with an eye to the railway jobbery, corporation business, concessions and

financial operations that necessarily go on in and about the national legislature. That in its simplest form is the dilemma of democracy. The problem that has confronted modern democracy since its beginning has not really been the representation of organized minorities — they are very well able to look after themselves — but *the protection of the unorganized mass of busily occupied, fairly intelligent men from the tricks of the specialists who work the party machines*. We know Mr. Sanity, we want Mr. Sanity, but we are too busy to watch the incessant intrigues to oust him in favour of the obscurely influential people, politically docile, who are favoured by the organization. We want an organizer-proof method of voting. It is in answer to this demand, as the outcome of a most careful examination of the ways in which voting may be protected from the exploitation of those who *work* elections, that the method of Proportional Representation with a single transferable vote has been evolved. It is organizer-proof. It defies the caucus. If you do not like Mr. Goldbug you can put up and vote for Mr. Sanity, giving Mr. Goldbug your second choice, in the most perfect confidence that in any case your vote cannot help to return Mr. Wurstberg.

With Proportional Representation with a single transferable vote (this specification is necessary, because there are also the inferior imitations of various election-riggers figuring as proportional representation), it is *impossible to prevent the effective candidature of independent men of repute beside the official candidates*.

The method of voting under the Proportional Representation system has been ignorantly represented as complex. It is really almost ideally simple. You mark the list of candidates with numbers in the order of your preference. For example, you believe A to be absolutely the best man for parliament; you mark him 1. But B you think is the next best man; you mark him 2. That means that if A gets an enormous amount of support, ever so many more votes than he requires for his return, your vote will not be wasted. Only so much of your vote as is needed will go to A; the rest will go to B. Or, on the other hand, if A has so little support that his chances are hopeless, you will not have thrown your vote away upon him; it will go to B. Similarly you may indicate a third, a fourth, and a fifth choice; if you like you may mark every name on your paper with a number to

indicate the order of your preferences. And that is all the voter has to do. The reckoning and counting of the votes presents not the slightest difficulty to any one used to the business of computation. Silly and dishonest men, appealing to still sillier audiences, have got themselves and their audiences into humorous muddles over this business, but the principles are perfectly plain and simple. Let me state them here; they can be fully and exactly stated, with various ornaments, comments, arguments, sarcastic remarks, and digressions, in seventy lines of this type.

It will be evident that, in any election under this system, any one who has got a certain proportion of No. 1 votes will be elected. If, for instance, five people have to be elected and 20,000 voters vote, then any one who has got 4001 first votes or more *must* be elected. 4001 votes is in that case enough to elect a candidate. This sufficient number of votes is called the *quota*, and any one who has more than that number of votes has obviously got more votes than is needful for election. So, to begin with, the voting papers are classified according to their first votes, and any candidates who have got more than a quota of first votes are forthwith declared elected. But most of these elected men would under the old system waste votes because they would have too many; for manifestly a candidate who gets more than the quota of votes *needs only a fraction of each of these votes to return him*. If, for instance, he gets double the quota he needs only half each vote. He takes that fraction, therefore, under this new and better system, and the rest of each vote is entered on to No. 2 upon that voting paper. And so on. Now this is an extremely easy job for an accountant or skilled computer, and it is quite easily checked by any other accountant and skilled computer. A reader with a bad arithmetical education, ignorant of the very existence of such a thing as a slide rule, knowing nothing of account keeping, who thinks of himself working out the resultant fractions with a stumpy pencil on a bit of greasy paper in a bad light, may easily think of this transfer of fractions as a dangerous and terrifying process. It is, for a properly trained man, the easiest, exactest job conceivable. The Cash Register people will invent machines to do it for you while you wait. What happens, then, is that every candidate with more than a quota, beginning with the top candidate, sheds a traction of each vote he has

received, down the list, and the next one sheds his surplus fraction in the same way, and so on until candidates lower in the list, who are at first below the quota, fill up to it. When all the surplus votes of the candidates at the head of the list have been disposed of, then the hopeless candidates at the bottom of the list are dealt with. The second votes on their voting papers are treated as whole votes and distributed up the list, and so on. It will be plain to the quick-minded that, towards the end, there will be a certain chasing about of little fractions of votes, and a slight modification of the quota due to voting papers having no second or third preferences marked upon them, a chasing about that it will be difficult for an untrained intelligence to follow. *But untrained intelligences are not required to follow it*. For the skilled computer these things offer no difficulty at all. And they are not difficulties of principle but of manipulation. One might as well refuse to travel in a taxicab until the driver had explained the magneto as refuse to accept the principle of Proportional Representation by the single transferable vote until one had remedied all the deficiencies of one's arithmetical education. The fundamental principle of the thing, that a candidate who gets more votes than he wants is made to hand on a fraction of each vote to the voter's second choice, and that a candidate whose chances are hopeless is made to hand on the whole vote to the voter's second choice, so that practically only a small number of votes are ineffective, is within the compass of the mind of a boy of ten.

But simple as this method is, it completely kills the organization and manipulation of voting. It completely solves the Goldbug-Wurstberg-Sanity problem. It is knave-proof — short of forging, stealing, or destroying voting papers. A man of repute, a leaderly man, may defy all the party organizations in existence and stand beside and be returned over the head of a worthless man, though the latter be smothered with party labels. That is the gist of this business. The difference in effect between Proportional Representation and the old method of voting must ultimately be to change the moral and intellectual quality of elected persons profoundly. People are only beginning to realize the huge possibilities of advance inherent in this change of political method. It means no less than a revolution from "delegate democracy" to "selective democracy."

Now, I will not pretend to be anything but a strong partizan in this matter. When I speak of "democracy" I mean "selective democracy." I believe that "delegate democracy" is already provably a failure in the world, and that the reason why to-day, after three and a half years of struggle, we are still fighting German autocracy and fighting with no certainty of absolute victory, is because the affairs of the three great Atlantic democracies have been largely in the hands not of selected men but of delegated men, men of intrigue and the party machine, of dodges rather than initiatives, second-rate men. When Lord Haldane, defending his party for certain insufficiencies in their preparation for the eventuality of the great war, pleaded that they had no "mandate" from the country to do anything of the sort, he did more than commit political suicide, he bore conclusive witness against the whole system which had made him what he was. Neither Britain nor France in this struggle has produced better statesmen nor better generals than the German autocracy. The British and French Foreign Offices are old monarchist organizations still. To this day the British and French politicians haggle and argue with the German ministers upon petty points and debating society advantages, smart and cunning, while the peoples perish. The one man who has risen to the greatness of this great occasion, the man who is, in default of any rival, rapidly becoming the leader of the world towards peace, is neither a delegate politician nor the choice of a monarch and his councillors. He is the one authoritative figure in these transactions whose mind has not been subdued either by long discipline in the party machine or by court intrigue, who has continued his education beyond those early twenties when the mind of the "budding politician" ceases to expand, who has thought, and thought things out, who is an educated man among dexterous under-educated specialists. By something very like a belated accident in the framing of the American constitution, the President of the United States is more in the nature of a selected man than any other conspicuous figure at the present time. He is specially elected by a special electoral college after an elaborate preliminary selection of candidates by the two great party machines. And be it remembered that Mr. Wilson is not the first great President the United States have had, he is one of a series of figures who tower over their European

contemporaries. The United States have had many advantageous circumstances to thank for their present ascendancy in the world's affairs: isolation from militarist pressure for a century and a quarter, a vast virgin continent, plenty of land, freedom from centralization, freedom from titles and social vulgarities, common schools, a real democratic spirit in its people, and a great enthusiasm for universities; but no single advantage has been so great as this happy accident which has given it a specially selected man as its voice and figurehead in the world's affairs. In the average congressman, in the average senator, as Ostrogorski's great book so industriously demonstrated, the United States have no great occasion for pride. Neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives seem to rise above the level of the British Houses of Parliament, with a Government unable to control the rebel forces of Ulster, unable to promote or dismiss generals without an outcry, weakly amenable to the press, and terrifyingly incapable of great designs. It is to the United States of America we must look now if the world is to be made "safe for democracy." It is to the method of selection, as distinguished from delegation, that we must look if democracy is to be saved from itself.

X. — THE RECENT STRUGGLE FOR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

British political life resists cleansing with all the vigour of a dirty little boy. It is nothing to your politician that the economic and social organization of all the world, is strained almost to the pitch of collapse, and that it is vitally important to mankind that everywhere the whole will and intelligence of the race should be enlisted in the great tasks of making a permanent peace and reconstructing the shattered framework of society. These are remote, unreal considerations to the politician. What is the world to him? He has scarcely heard of it. He has been far too busy as a politician. He has been thinking of smart little tricks in the lobby and brilliant exploits at question time. He has been thinking of jobs and appointments, of whether Mr. Asquith is likely to "come back" and how far it is safe to bank upon L. G. His one supreme purpose is to keep affairs in the hands of his own specialized set, to keep the old obscure party game going, to rig his little tricks behind a vast, silly camouflage of sham issues, to keep out able men and disinterested men, the public mind, and the general intelligence, from any effective interference with his disastrous manipulations of the common weal.

I do not see how any intelligent and informed man can have followed the recent debates in the House of Commons upon Proportional Representation without some gusts of angry contempt. They were the most pitiful and alarming demonstration of the intellectual and moral quality of British public life at the present time.

From the wire-pullers of the Fabian Society and from the party organizers of both Liberal and Tory party alike, and from the knowing cards, the pothouse shepherds, and jobbing lawyers who "work" the constituencies, comes the chief opposition to this straightening out of our electoral system so urgently necessary and so long overdue. They have fought it with a zeal and efficiency that is rarely displayed in the nation's interest. From nearly every

outstanding man outside that little inner world of political shams and dodges, who has given any attention to the question, comes, on the other hand, support for this reform. Even the great party leaders, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith, were in its favour. One might safely judge this question by considering who are the advocates on either side. But the best arguments for Proportional Representation arise out of its opponents' speeches, and to these I will confine my attention now. Consider Lord Harcourt — heir to the most sacred traditions of the party game — hurling scorn at a project that would introduce "faddists, mugwumps," and so on and so on — in fact independent thinking men — into the legislature. Consider the value of Lord Curzon's statement that London "rose in revolt" against the project. Do you remember that day, dear reader, when the streets of London boiled with passionate men shouting, "No Proportional Representation! Down with Proportional Representation"? You don't. Nor do I. But what happened was that the guinea-pigs and solicitors and nobodies, the party hacks who form the bulk of London's misrepresentation in the House of Commons, stampeded in terror against a proposal that threatened to wipe them out and replace them by known and responsible men. London, alas! does not seem to care how its members are elected. What Londoner knows anything about his member? Hundreds of thousands of Londoners do not even know which of the ridiculous constituencies into which the politicians have dismembered our London they are in. Only as I was writing this in my flat in St. James's Court, Westminster, did it occur to me to inquire who was representing me in the councils of the nation while I write....

After some slight difficulty I ascertained that my representative is a Mr. Burdett Coutts, who was, in the romantic eighties, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett. And by a convenient accident I find that the other day he moved to reject the Proportional Representation Amendment made by the House of Lords to the Representation of the People Bill, so that I am able to look up the debate in Hansard and study my opinions as he represented them and this question at one and the same time. And, taking little things first, I am proud and happy to discover that the member for me was the only participator in the debate who, in the vulgar and reprehensible phrase, "threw a dead

cat," or, in polite terms, displayed classical learning. My member said, "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*," with a rather graceful compliment to the Labour Conference at Nottingham. "I could not help thinking to myself," said my member, "that at that conference there must have been many men of sufficient classical reading to say to themselves, '*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*.'" In which surmise he was quite right. Except perhaps for "*Tempus fugit,*""*verbum sap.*," "*Arma virumque*," and "*Quis custodiet*," there is no better known relic of antiquity. But my member went a little beyond my ideas when he said: "We are asked to enter upon a method of legislation which can bear no other description than that of law-making in the dark," because I think it can bear quite a lot of other descriptions. This was, however, the artistic prelude to a large, vague, gloomy dissertation about nothing very definite, a muddling up of the main question with the minor issue of a schedule of constituencies involved in the proposal.

The other parts of my member's speech do not, I confess, fill me with the easy confidence I would like to feel in my proxy. Let me extract a few gems of eloquence from the speech of this voice which speaks for me, and give also the only argument he advanced that needs consideration. "History repeats itself," he said, "very often in curious ways as to facts, but generally with very different results." That, honestly, I like. It is a sentence one can read over several times. But he went on to talk of the entirely different scheme for minority representation, which was introduced into the Reform Bill of 1867, and there I am obliged to part company with him. That was a silly scheme for giving two votes to each voter in a three-member constituency. It has about as much resemblance to the method of scientific voting under discussion as a bath-chair has to an aeroplane. "But that measure of minority representation led to a baneful invention," my representative went on to say, "and left behind it a hateful memory in the Birmingham caucus. I well remember that when I stood for Parliament thirty-two years ago *we had no better platform weapon than repeating over and over again in a sentence the name of Mr. Schnadhorst,* and I am not sure that it would not serve the same purpose now. Under that system the work of the caucus was, of course, far simpler than it will be if this system ever

comes into operation. All the caucus had to do under that measure was to divide the electors into three groups and with three candidates, A., B., and C., to order one group to vote for A. and B., another for B. and C., and the third for A. and C., and they carried the whole of their candidates and kept them for many years. But the multiplicity of ordinal preferences, second, third, fourth, fifth, up to tenth, which the single transferable vote system would involve, will require a more scientific handling in party interests, and neither party will be able to face an election with any hope of success without the assistance of the most drastic form of caucus and *without its orders being carried out by the electors*."

Now, I swear by Heaven that, lowly creature as I am, a lost vote, a nothing, voiceless and helpless in public affairs, I am not going to stand the imputation that that sort of reasoning represents the average mental quality of Westminster — outside Parliament, that is. Most of my neighbours in St. James's Court, for example, have quite large pieces of head above their eyebrows. Read these above sentences over and ponder their significance — so far as they have any significance. Never mind my keen personal humiliation at this display of the mental calibre of my representative, but consider what the mental calibre of a House must be that did not break out into loud guffaws at such a passage. The line of argument is about as lucid as if one reasoned that because one can break a window with a stone it is no use buying a telescope. And it remains entirely a matter for speculation whether my member is arguing that a caucus *can* rig an election carried on under the Proportional Representation system or that it cannot. At the first blush it seems to read as if he intended the former. But be careful! Did he? Let me suggest that in that last sentence he really expresses the opinion that it cannot. It can be read either way. Electors under modern conditions are not going to obey the "orders" of even the "most drastic caucus" — whatever a "drastic caucus" may be. Why should they? In the Birmingham instance it was only a section of the majority, voting by wards, in an election on purely party lines, which "obeyed" in order to keep out the minority party candidate. I think myself that my member's mind waggled. Perhaps his real thoughts shone out through an argument not intended to betray them. What he did say as much as he said

anything was that under Proportional Representation, elections are going to be very troublesome and difficult for party candidates. If that was his intention, then, after all, I forgive him much. I think that and more than that. I think that they are going to make party candidates who are merely party candidates impossible. That is exactly what we reformers are after. Then I shall get a representative more to my taste than Mr. Burdett Coutts.

But let me turn now to the views of other people's representatives.

Perhaps the most damning thing ever said against the present system, damning because of its empty absurdity, was uttered by Sir Thomas Whittaker. He was making the usual exaggerations of the supposed difficulties of the method. He said English people didn't like such "complications." They like a "straight fight between two men." Think of it! A straight fight! For more than a quarter-century I have been a voter, usually with votes in two or three constituencies, and never in all that long political life have I seen a single straight fight in an election, but only the dismallest sham fights it is possible to conceive. Thrice only in all that time have I cast a vote for a man whom I respected. On all other occasions the election that mocked my citizenship was either an arranged walk-over for one party or the other, or I had a choice between two unknown persons, mysteriously selected as candidates by obscure busy people with local interests in the constituency. Every intelligent person knows that this is the usual experience of a free and independent voter in England. The "fight" of an ordinary Parliamentary election in England is about as "straight" as the business of a thimble rigger.

And consider just what these "complications" are of which the opponents of Proportional Representation chant so loudly. In the sham election of to-day, which the politicians claim gives them a mandate to muddle up our affairs, the voter puts a x against the name of the least detestable of the two candidates that are thrust upon him. Under the Proportional Representation method there will be a larger constituency, a larger list of candidates, and a larger number of people to be elected, and he will put I against the name of the man he most wants to be elected, 2 against his second choice, and if he likes he may indulge in marking a third, or even a further choice. He may, if he thinks fit, number off the whole list of candidates. That is all he

will have to do. That is the stupendous intricacy of the method that flattens out the minds of Lord Harcourt and Sir Thomas Whittaker. And as for the working of it, if you must go into that, all that happens is that if your first choice gets more votes than he needs for his return, he takes only the fraction of your vote that he requires, and the rest of the vote goes on to your Number 2. If 2 isn't in need of all of it, the rest goes on to 3. And so on. That is the profound mathematical mystery, that is the riddle beyond the wit of Westminster, which overpowers these fine intelligences and sets them babbling of "senior wranglers." Each time there is a debate on this question in the House, member after member hostile to the proposal will play the ignorant fool and pretend to be confused himself, and will try to confuse others, by deliberately clumsy statements of these most elementary ideas. Surely if there were no other argument for a change of type in the House, these poor knitted brows, these public perspirations of the gentry who "cannot understand P.R.," should suffice.

But let us be just; it is not all pretence; the inability of Mr. Austen Chamberlain to grasp the simple facts before him was undoubtedly genuine. He followed Mr. Burdett Coutts, in support of Mr. Burdett Coutts, with the most Christian disregard of the nasty things Mr. Burdett Coutts had seemed to be saying about the Birmingham caucus from which he sprang. He had a childish story to tell of how voters would not give their first votes to their real preferences, because they would assume he "would get in in any case" — God knows why. Of course on the assumption that the voter behaves like an idiot, anything is possible. And never apparently having heard of fractions, this great Birmingham leader was unable to understand that a voter who puts 1 against a candidate's name votes for that candidate anyhow. He could not imagine any feeling on the part of the voter that No. 1 was his man. A vote is a vote to this simple rather than lucid mind, a thing one and indivisible. Read this —

"Birmingham," he said, referring to a Schedule under consideration, "is to be cut into three constituencies of four members each. I am to have a constituency of 100,000 electors, I suppose. How many thousand inhabitants I do not know. *Every effort will be made to prevent any of those electors knowing — in fact, it would be*

impossible for any of them to know — whether they voted for me or not, or at any rate whether they effectively voted for me or not, or whether the vote which they wished to give to me was really diverted to somebody else."

Only in a house of habitually inattentive men could any one talk such nonsense without reproof, but I look in vain through Hansard's record of this debate for a single contemptuous reference to Mr. Chamberlain's obtuseness. And the rest of his speech was a lamentable account of the time and trouble he would have to spend upon his constituents if the new method came in. He was the perfect figure of the parochially important person in a state of defensive excitement. No doubt his speech appealed to many in the House.

Of course Lord Harcourt was quite right in saying that the character of the average House of Commons member will be changed by Proportional Representation. It will. It will make the election of obscure and unknown men, of carpet-bag candidates who work a constituency as a hawker works a village, of local pomposities and village-pump "leaders" almost impossible. It will replace such candidates by better known and more widely known men. It will make the House of Commons so much the more a real gathering of the nation, so much the more a house of representative men. (Lord Harcourt's "faddists and mugwumps.") And it is perfectly true as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (also an opponent) declares, that Proportional Representation means constituencies so big that it will be impossible for a poor man to cultivate and work them. That is unquestionable. But, mark another point, it will also make it useless, as Mr. Chamberlain has testified, for rich men to cultivate and work them. All this cultivating and working, all this going about and making things right with this little jobber here, that contractor there, all the squaring of small political clubs and organizations, all the subscription blackmail and charity bribery, that now makes a Parliamentary candidature so utterly rotten an influence upon public life, will be killed dead by Proportional Representation. You cannot job men into Parliament by Proportional Representation. Proportional Representation lets in the outsider. It lets in the common, unassigned voter who isn't in the local clique. That is the clue to nearly all this opposition of the politicians. It makes

democracy possible for the first time in modern history. And that poor man of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's imagination, instead of cadging about a constituency in order to start politician, will have to make good in some more useful way — as a leader of the workers in their practical affairs, for example — before people will hear of him and begin to believe in him.

The opposition to Proportional Representation of Mr. Sidney Webb and his little circle is a trifle more "scientific" in tone than these naive objections of the common run of antagonist, but underlying it is the same passionate desire to keep politics a close game for the politician and to bar out the politically unspecialized man. There is more conceit and less jobbery behind the criticisms of this type of mind. It is an opposition based on the idea that the common man is a fool who does not know what is good for him. So he has to be stampeded. Politics, according to this school, is a sort of cattle-driving.

The Webbites do not deny the broad facts of the case. Our present electoral system, with our big modern constituencies of thousands of voters, leads to huge turnovers of political power with a relatively small shifting of public opinion. It makes a mock of public opinion by caricature, and Parliament becomes the distorting mirror of the nation. Under some loud false issue a few score of thousands of votes turn over, and in goes this party or that with a big sham majority. This the Webbites admit. But they applaud it. It gives us, they say, "a strong Government." Public opinion, the intelligent man outside the House, is ruled out of the game. He has no power of intervention at all. The artful little Fabian politicians rub their hands and say, "*Now* we can get to work with the wires! No one can stop us." And when the public complains of the results, there is always the repartee, "*You* elected them." But the Fabian psychology is the psychology of a very small group of pedants who believe that fair ends may be reached by foul means. It is much easier and more natural to serve foul ends by foul means. In practice it is not tricky benevolence but tricky bargaining among the interests that will secure control of the political wires. That is a bad enough state of affairs in ordinary times, but in times of tragic necessity like the present men will not be mocked in this way. Life is going to be very intense in the years ahead of us. If

we go right on to another caricature Parliament, with perhaps half a hundred leading men in it and the rest hacks and nobodies, the baffled and discontented outsiders in the streets may presently be driven to rioting and the throwing of bombs. Unless, indeed, the insurrection of the outsiders takes a still graver form, and the Press, which has ceased entirely to be a Party Press in Great Britain, helps some adventurous Prime Minister to flout and set aside the lower House altogether. There is neither much moral nor much physical force behind the House of Commons at the present time.

The argument of the Fabian opponents to Proportional Representation is frankly that the strongest Government is got in a House of half a hundred or fewer leading men, with the rest of the Parliament driven sheep. But the whole mischief of the present system is that the obscure members of Parliament are not sheep; they are a crowd of little-minded, second-rate men just as greedy and eager and self-seeking as any of us. They vote straight indeed on all the main party questions, they obey their Whips like sheep then; but there is a great bulk of business in Parliament outside the main party questions, and obedience is not without its price. These are matters vitally affecting our railways and ships and communications generally, the food and health of the people, armaments, every sort of employment, the appointment of public servants, the everyday texture of all our lives. Then the nobody becomes somebody, the party hack gets busy, the rat is in the granary....

In these recent debates in the House of Commons one can see every stock trick of the wire-puller in operation. Particularly we have the old dodge of the man who is "in theory quite in sympathy with Proportional Representation, but..." It is, he declares regretfully, too late. It will cause delay. Difficult to make arrangements. Later on perhaps. And so on. It is never too late for a vital issue. Upon the speedy adoption of Proportional Representation depends, as Mr. Balfour made plain in an admirable speech, whether the great occasions of the peace and after the peace are to be handled by a grand council of all that is best and most leaderlike in the nation, or whether they are to be left to a few leaders, apparently leading, but really profoundly swayed by the obscure crowd of politicians and jobbers behind them. Are the politicians to hamper and stifle us in

this supreme crisis of our national destinies or are we British peoples to have a real control of our own affairs in this momentous time? Are men of light and purpose to have a voice in public affairs or not? Proportional Representation is supremely a test question. It is a question that no adverse decision in the House of Commons can stifle. There are too many people now who grasp its importance and significance. Every one who sets a proper value upon purity in public life and the vitality of democratic institutions will, I am convinced, vote and continue to vote across every other question against the antiquated, foul, and fraudulent electoral methods that have hitherto robbed democracy of three-quarters of its efficiency.

XI. — THE STUDY AND PROPAGANDA OF DEMOCRACY

In the preceding chapter I have dealt with the discussion of Proportional Representation in the British House of Commons in order to illustrate the intellectual squalor amidst which public affairs have to be handled at the present time, even in a country professedly "democratic." I have taken this one discussion as a sample to illustrate the present imperfection of our democratic instrument. All over the world, in every country, great multitudes of intelligent and serious people are now inspired by the idea of a new order of things in the world, of a world-wide establishment of peace and mutual aid between nation and nation and man and man. But, chiefly because of the elementary crudity of existing electoral methods, hardly anywhere at present, except at Washington, do these great ideas and this world-wide will find expression. Amidst the other politicians and statesmen of the world President Wilson towers up with an effect almost divine. But it is no ingratitude to him to say that he is not nearly so exceptional a being among educated men as he is among the official leaders of mankind. Everywhere now one may find something of the Wilson purpose and intelligence, but nearly everywhere it is silenced or muffled or made ineffective by the political advantage of privileged or of violent and adventurous inferior men. He is "one of us," but it is his good fortune to have got his head out of the sack that is about the heads of most of us. In the official world, in the world of rulers and representatives and "statesmen," he almost alone, speaks for the modern intelligence.

This general stifling of the better intelligence of the world and its possible release to expression and power, seems to me to be the fundamental issue underlying all the present troubles of mankind. We cannot get on while everywhere fools and vulgarians hold the levers that can kill, imprison, silence and starve men. We cannot get on with false government and we cannot get on with mob government; we must have right government. The intellectual people of the world have a duty of co-operation they have too long

neglected. The modernization of political institutions, the study of these institutions until we have worked out and achieved the very best and most efficient methods whereby the whole community of mankind may work together under the direction of its chosen intelligences, is the common duty of every one who has a brain for the service. And before everything else we have to realize this crudity and imperfection in what we call "democracy" at the present time. Democracy is still chiefly an aspiration, it is a spirit, it is an idea; for the most part its methods are still to seek. And still more is this "League of Free Nations" as yet but an aspiration. Let us not underrate the task before us. Only the disinterested devotion of hundreds of thousands of active brains in school, in pulpit, in book and press and assembly can ever bring these redeeming conceptions down to the solid earth to rule.

All round the world there is this same obscuration of the real intelligence of men. In Germany, human good will and every fine mind are subordinated to political forms that have for a mouthpiece a Chancellor with his brains manifestly addled by the theories of *Welt-Politik* and the Bismarckian tradition, and for a figurehead a mad Kaiser. Nevertheless there comes even from Germany muffled cries for a new age. A grinning figure like a bloodstained Punch is all that speaks for the best brains in Bulgaria. Yes. We Western allies know all that by heart; but, after all, the immediate question for each one of us is, "*What speaks for me?*" So far as official political forms go I myself am as ineffective as any right-thinking German or Bulgarian could possibly be. I am more ineffective than a Galician Pole or a Bohemian who votes for his nationalist representative. Politically I am a negligible item in the constituency of this Mr. Burdett Coutts into whose brain we have been peeping. Politically I am less than a waistcoat button on that quaint figure. And that is all I am — except that I revolt. I have written of it so far as if it were just a joke. But indeed bad and foolish political institutions cannot be a joke. Sooner or later they prove themselves to be tragedy. This war is that. It is yesterday's lazy, tolerant, "sense of humour" wading out now into the lakes of blood it refused to foresee.

It is absurd to suppose that anywhere to-day the nationalisms, the suspicions and hatreds, the cants and policies, and dead phrases that

sway men represent the current intelligence of mankind. They are merely the evidences of its disorganization. Even now we *know* we could do far better. Give mankind but a generation or so of peace and right education and this world could mock at the poor imaginations that conceived a millennium. But we have to get intelligences together, we have to canalize thought before it can work and produce its due effects. To that end, I suppose, there has been a vast amount of mental activity among us political "negligibles." For my own part I have thought of the idea of God as the banner of human unity and justice, and I have made some tentatives in that direction, but men, I perceive, have argued themselves mean and petty about religion. At the word "God" passions bristle. The word "God" does not unite men, it angers them. But I doubt if God cares greatly whether we call Him God or no. His service is the service of man. This double idea of the League of Free Nations, linked with the idea of democracy as universal justice, is free from the jealousy of the theologians and great enough for men to unite upon everywhere. I know how warily one must reckon with the spite of the priest, but surely these ideas may call upon the teachers of all the great world religions for their support. The world is full now of confused propaganda, propaganda of national ideas, of traditions of hate, of sentimental and degrading loyalties, of every sort of error that divides and tortures and slays mankind. All human institutions are made of propaganda, are sustained by propaganda and perish when it ceases; they must be continually explained and re-explained to the young and the negligent. And for this new world of democracy and the League of Free Nations to which all reasonable men are looking, there must needs be the greatest of all propagandas. For that cause every one must become a teacher and a missionary. "Persuade to it and make the idea of it and the necessity for it plain," that is the duty of every school teacher, every tutor, every religious teacher, every writer, every lecturer, every parent, every trusted friend throughout the world. For it, too, every one must become a student, must go on with the task of making vague intentions into definite intentions, of analyzing and destroying obstacles, of mastering the ten thousand difficulties of detail....

I am a man who looks now towards the end of life; fifty-one years

have I scratched off from my calendar, another slips by, and I cannot tell how many more of the sparse remainder of possible years are really mine. I live in days of hardship and privation, when it seems more natural to feel ill than well; without holidays or rest or peace; friends and the sons of my friends have been killed; death seems to be feeling always now for those I most love; the newspapers that come in to my house tell mostly of blood and disaster, of drownings and slaughterings, of cruelties and base intrigues. Yet never have I been so sure that there is a divinity in man and that a great order of human life, a reign of justice and world-wide happiness, of plenty, power, hope, and gigantic creative effort, lies close at hand. Even now we have the science and the ability available for a universal welfare, though it is scattered about the world like a handful of money dropped by a child; even now there exists all the knowledge that is needed to make mankind universally free and human life sweet and noble. We need but the faith for it, and it is at hand; we need but the courage to lay our hands upon it and in a little space of years it can be ours.

THE END

THE IDEA OF A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

WITH VISCOUNT EDWARD GREY, LIONEL CURTIS, WILLIAM ARCHER, H. WICKHAM STEED, A. E. ZIMMERN, J. A. SPENDER, VISCOUNT BRYCE AND GILBERT MURRAY

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PREFACE

In the latter half of 1914 a few of us were writing that this war was a "War of Ideas." A phrase, "The War to end War," got into circulation, amidst much sceptical comment. It was a phrase powerful enough to sway many men, essentially pacifists, towards taking an active part in the war against German imperialism, but it was a phrase whose chief content was its aspiration. People were already writing in those early days of disarmament and of the abolition of the armament industry throughout the world; they realized fully the element of industrial belligerency behind the shining armour of imperialism, and they denounced the "Krupp-Kaiser" alliance. But against such writing and such thought we had to count, in those days, great and powerful realities. Even to those who expressed these ideas there lay visibly upon them the shadow of impracticability; they were very "advanced" ideas in 1914, very Utopian. Against them was an unbroken mass of mental habit and public tradition. While we talked of this "war to end war," the diplomatists of the Powers allied against Germany were busily spinning a disastrous web of greedy secret treaties, were answering aggression by schemes of aggression, were seeing in the treacherous violence of Germany only the justification for countervailing evil acts. To them it was only another war for "ascendancy." That was three years and a half ago, and since then this "war of ideas" has gone on to a phase few of us had dared hope for in those opening days. The Russian revolution put a match to that pile of secret treaties and indeed to all the imperialist plans of the Allies; in the end it will burn them all. The greatest of the Western Allies is now the United States of America, and the Americans have come into this war simply for an idea. Three years and a half ago a few of us were saying this was a war against the idea of imperialism, not German imperialism merely, but British and French and Russian imperialism, and we were saying this not because it was so, but because we hoped to see it become so. To-day we can say so, because now it is so.

In those days, moreover, we said this is the "war to end war," and we still did not know clearly how. We thought in terms of treaties

and alliances. It is largely the detachment and practical genius of the great English-speaking nation across the Atlantic that has carried the world on beyond and replaced that phrase by the phrase, "The League of Nations," a phrase suggesting plainly the organization of a sufficient instrument by which war may be ended for ever. In 1913 talk of a World League of Nations would have seemed, to the extremest pitch, "Utopian." To-day the project has an air not only of being so practicable, but of being so urgent and necessary and so manifestly the sane thing before mankind that not to be busied upon it, not to be making it more widely known and better understood, not to be working out its problems and bringing it about, is to be living outside of the contemporary life of the world. For a book upon any other subject at the present time some apology may be necessary, but a book upon this subject is as natural a thing to produce now as a pair of skates in winter when the ice begins to bear.

All we writers find ourselves engaged perforce in some part or other of a world-wide propaganda of this the most creative and hopeful of political ideas that has ever dawned upon the consciousness of mankind. With no concerted plan we feel called upon to serve it. And in no connection would one so like to think oneself un-original as in this connection. It would be a dismaying thing to realize that one were writing anything here which was not the possible thought of great multitudes of other people, and capable of becoming the common thought of mankind. One writes in such a book as this not to express oneself but to swell a chorus. The idea of the League of Nations is so great a one that it may well override the pretensions and command the allegiance of kings; much more does it claim the self-subjugation of the journalistic writer. Our innumerable books upon this great edifice of a World Peace do not constitute a scramble for attention, but an attempt to express in every variety of phrase and aspect this one system of ideas which now possesses us all. In the same way the elementary facts and ideas of the science of chemistry might conceivably be put completely and fully into one text-book, but, as a matter of fact, it is far more convenient to tell that same story over in a thousand different forms, in a text-book for boys here, for a different sort or class of boy there, for adult students, for reference, for people expert in mathematics, for people unused to

the scientific method, and so on. For the last year the writer has been doing what he can — and a number of other writers have been doing what they can — to bring about a united declaration of all the Atlantic Allies in favour of a League of Nations, and to define the necessary nature of that League. He has, in the course of this work, written a series of articles upon the League and upon *the necessary sacrifices of preconceptions* that the idea involves in the London press. He has also been trying to clear his own mind upon the real meaning of that ambiguous word "democracy," for which the League is to make the world "safe." The bulk of this book is made up of these discussions. For a very considerable number of readers, it may be well to admit here, it can have no possible interest; they will have come at these questions themselves from different angles and they will have long since got to their own conclusions. But there may be others whose angle of approach may be similar to the writer's, who may have asked some or most of the questions he has had to ask, and who may be actively interested in the answers and the working out of the answers he has made to these questions. For them this book is printed.

H. G. WELLS.

May, 1918.

It is a dangerous thing to recommend specific books out of so large and various a literature as the "League of Nations" idea has already produced, but the reader who wishes to reach beyond the range of this book, or who does not like its tone and method, will probably find something to meet his needs and tastes better in Marburg's "League of Nations," a straightforward account of the American side of the movement by the former United States Minister in Belgium, on the one hand, or in the concluding parts of Mr. Fayle's "Great Settlement" (1915), a frankly sceptical treatment from the British Imperialist point of view, on the other. An illuminating discussion, advocating peace treaties rather than a league, is Sir Walter Phillimore's "Three Centuries of Treaties." Two excellent books from America, that chance to be on my table, are Mr. Goldsmith's "League to Enforce Peace" and "A World in Ferment"

by President Nicholas Murray Butler. Mater's "Société des Nations" (Didier) is an able presentation of a French point of view. Brailsford's "A League of Nations" is already a classic of the movement in England, and a very full and thorough book; and Hobson's "Towards International Government" is a very sympathetic contribution from the English liberal left; but the reader must understand that these two writers seem disposed to welcome a peace with an unrevolutionized Germany, an idea to which, in common with most British people, I am bitterly opposed. Walsh's "World Rebuilt" is a good exhortation, and Mugge's "Parliament of Man" is fresh and sane and able. The omnivorous reader will find good sense and quaint English in Judge Mejdell's "*Jus Gentium*," published in English by Olsen's of Christiania. There is an active League of Nations Society in Dublin, as well as the London and Washington ones, publishing pamphlets and conducting propaganda. All these books and pamphlets I have named happen to lie upon my study table as I write, but I have made no systematic effort to get together literature upon the subject, and probably there are just as many books as good of which I have never even heard. There must, I am sure, be statements of the League of Nations idea forthcoming from various religious standpoints, but I do not know any sufficiently well to recommend them. It is incredible that neither the Roman Catholic Church, the English Episcopal Church, nor any Nonconformist body has made any effort as an organization to forward this essentially religious end of peace on earth. And also there must be German writings upon this same topic. I mention these diverse sources not in order to present a bibliography, but because I should be sorry to have the reader think that this little book pretends to state *the* case rather than *a* case for the League of Nations.

THE WAY TO CONCRETE REALIZATION

More and more frequently does one hear this phrase, The League of Nations, used to express the outline idea of the new world that will come out of the war. There can be no doubt that the phrase has taken hold of the imaginations of great multitudes of people: it is one of those creative phrases that may alter the whole destiny of mankind. But as yet it is still a very vague phrase, a cloudy promise of peace. I make no apology therefore, for casting my discussion of it in the most general terms. The idea is the idea of united human effort to put an end to wars; the first practical question, that must precede all others, is how far can we hope to get to a concrete realization of that?

But first let me note the fourth word in the second title of this book. The common talk is of a "League of Nations" merely. I follow the man who is, more than any other man, the leader of English political thought throughout the world to-day, President Wilson, in inserting that significant adjective "Free." We western allies know to-day what is involved in making bargains with governments that do not stand for their peoples; we have had all our Russian deal, for example, repudiated and thrust back upon our hands; and it is clearly in his mind, as it must be in the minds of all reasonable men, that no mere "scrap of paper," with just a monarch's or a chancellor's endorsement, is a good enough earnest of fellowship in the league. It cannot be a diplomatist's league. The League of Nations, if it is to have any such effect as people seem to hope from it, must be, in the first place, "understanded of the people." It must be supported by sustained, deliberate explanation, and by teaching in school and church and press of the whole mass of all the peoples concerned. I underline the adjective "Free" here to set aside, once for all, any possible misconception that this modern idea of a League of Nations has any affinity to that Holy Alliance of the diplomatists, which set out to keep the peace of Europe so disastrously a century ago.

Later I will discuss the powers of the League. But before I come to that I would like to say a little about the more general question of its nature and authority. What sort of gathering will embody it? The suggestions made range from a mere advisory body, rather like the

Hague convention, which will merely pronounce on the rights and wrongs of any international conflict, to the idea of a sort of Super-State, a Parliament of Mankind, a "Super National" Authority, practically taking over the sovereignty of the existing states and empires of the world. Most people's ideas of the League fall between these extremes. They want the League to be something more than an ethical court, they want a League that will act, but on the other hand they shrink from any loss of "our independence." There seems to be a conflict here. There is a real need for many people to tidy up their ideas at this point. We cannot have our cake and eat it. If association is worth while, there must be some sacrifice of freedom to association. As a very distinguished colonial representative said to me the other day: "Here we are talking of the freedom of small nations and the 'self-determination' of peoples, and at the same time of the Council of the League of Nations and all sorts of international controls. Which do we want?"

The answer, I think, is "Both." It is a matter of more or less, of getting the best thing at the cost of the second-best. We may want to relax an old association in order to make a newer and wider one. It is quite understandable that peoples aware of a distinctive national character and involved in some big existing political complex, should wish to disentangle themselves from one group of associations in order to enter more effectively into another, a greater, and more satisfactory one. The Finn or the Pole, who has hitherto been a rather reluctant member of the synthesis of the Russian empire, may well wish to end that attachment in order to become a free member of a worldwide brotherhood. The desire for free arrangement is not a desire for chaos. There is such a thing as untying your parcels in order to pack them better, and I do not see myself how we can possibly contemplate a great league of freedom and reason in the world without a considerable amount of such preliminary dissolution.

It happens, very fortunately for the world, that a century and a quarter ago thirteen various and very jealous states worked out the problem of a Union, and became — after an enormous, exhausting wrangle — the United States of America. Now the way they solved their riddle was by delegating and giving over jealously specified

sovereign powers and doing all that was possible to retain the residuum. They remained essentially sovereign states. New York, Virginia, Massachusetts, for example, remained legally independent. The practical fusion of these peoples into one people outran the legal bargain. It was only after long years of discussion that the point was conceded; it was indeed only after the Civil War that the implications were fully established, that there resided a sovereignty in the American people as a whole, as distinguished from the peoples of the several states. This is a precedent that every one who talks about the League of Nations should bear in mind. These states set up a congress and president in Washington with strictly delegated powers. That congress and president they delegated to look after certain common interests, to deal with interstate trade, to deal with foreign powers, to maintain a supreme court of law. Everything else — education, militia, powers of life and death — the states retained for themselves. To this day, for instance, the federal courts and the federal officials have no power to interfere to protect the lives or property of aliens in any part of the union outside the district of Columbia. The state governments still see to that. The federal government has the legal right perhaps to intervene, but it is still chary of such intervention. And these states of the American Union were at the outset so independent-spirited that they would not even adopt a common name. To this day they have no common name. We have to call them Americans, which is a ridiculous name when we consider that Canada, Mexico, Peru, Brazil are all of them also in America. Or else we have to call them Virginians, Californians, New Englanders, and so forth. Their legal and nominal separateness weighs nothing against the real fusion that their great league has now made possible.

Now, that clearly is a precedent of the utmost value in our schemes for this council of the League of Nations. We must begin by delegating, as the States began by delegating. It is a far cry to the time when we shall talk and think of the Sovereign People of the Earth. That council of the League of Nations will be a tie as strong, we hope, but certainly not so close and multiplex as the early tie of the States at Washington. It will begin by having certain delegated powers and no others. It will be an "*ad hoc*" body. Later its powers

may grow as mankind becomes accustomed to it. But at first it will have, directly or mediately, all the powers that seem necessary to restrain the world from war — and unless I know nothing of patriotic jealousies it will have not a scrap of power more. The danger is much more that its powers will be insufficient than that they will be excessive. Of that later. What I want to discuss here now is the constitution of this delegated body. I want to discuss that first in order to set aside out of the discussion certain fantastic notions that will otherwise get very seriously in our way. Fantastic as they are, they have played a large part in reducing the Hague Tribunal to an ineffective squeak amidst the thunders of this war.

A number of gentlemen scheming out world unity in studies have begun their proposals with the simple suggestion that each sovereign power should send one member to the projected parliament of mankind. This has a pleasant democratic air; one sovereign state, one vote. Now let us run over a list of sovereign states and see to what this leads us. We find our list includes the British Empire, with a population of four hundred millions, of which probably half can read and write some language or other; Bogota with a population of a million, mostly poets; Hayti with a population of a million and a third, almost entirely illiterate and liable at any time to further political disruption; Andorra with a population of four or five thousand souls. The mere suggestion of equal representation between such "powers" is enough to make the British Empire burst into a thousand (voting) fragments. A certain concession to population, one must admit, was made by the theorists; a state of over three millions got, if I remember rightly, two delegates, and if over twenty, three, and some of the small states were given a kind of intermittent appearance, they only came every other time or something of that sort; but at The Hague things still remained in such a posture that three or four minute and backward states could outvote the British Empire or the United States. Therein lies the clue to the insignificance of The Hague. Such projects as these are idle projects and we must put them out of our heads; they are against nature; the great nations will not suffer them for a moment.

But when we dismiss this idea of representation by states, we are left with the problem of the proportion of representation and of

relative weight in the Council of the League on our hands. It is the sort of problem that appeals terribly to the ingenious. We cannot solve it by making population a basis, because that will give a monstrous importance to the illiterate millions of India and China. Ingenious statistical schemes have been framed in which the number of university graduates and the steel output come in as multipliers, but for my own part I am not greatly impressed by statistical schemes. At the risk of seeming something of a Prussian, I would like to insist upon certain brute facts. The business of the League of Nations is to keep the peace of the world and nothing else. No power will ever dare to break the peace of the world if the powers that are capable of making war under modern conditions say "*No*." And there are only four powers certainly capable at the present time of producing the men and materials needed for a modern war in sufficient abundance to go on fighting: Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. There are three others which are very doubtfully capable: Italy, Japan, and Austria. Russia I will mark — it is all that one can do with Russia just now — with a note of interrogation. Some day China may be war capable — I hope never, but it is a possibility. Personally I don't think that any other power on earth would have a ghost of a chance to resist the will — if it could be an honestly united will — of the first-named four. All the rest fight by the sanction of and by association with these leaders. They can only fight because of the split will of the war-complete powers. Some are forced to fight by that very division.

No one can vie with me in my appreciation of the civilization of Switzerland, Sweden, or Holland, but the plain fact of the case is that such powers are absolutely incapable of uttering an effective protest against war. Far less so are your Haytis and Liberias. The preservation of the world-peace rests with the great powers and with the great powers alone. If they have the will for peace, it is peace. If they have not, it is conflict. The four powers I have named can now, if they see fit, dictate the peace of the world for ever.

Let us keep our grip on that. Peace is the business of the great powers primarily. Steel output, university graduates, and so forth may be convenient secondary criteria, may be useful ways of measuring war efficiency, but the meat and substance of the Council

of the League of Nations must embody the wills of those leading peoples. They can give an enduring peace to the little nations and the whole of mankind. It can arrive in no other way. So I take it that the Council of an ideal League of Nations must consist chiefly of the representatives of the great belligerent powers, and that the representatives of the minor allies and of the neutrals — essential though their presence will be — must not be allowed to swamp the voices of these larger masses of mankind.

And this state of affairs may come about more easily than logical, statistical-minded people may be disposed to think. Our first impulse, when we discuss the League of Nations idea, is to think of some very elaborate and definite scheme of members on the model of existing legislative bodies, called together one hardly knows how, and sitting in a specially built League of Nations Congress House. All schemes are more methodical than reality. We think of somebody, learned and "expert," in spectacles, with a thin clear voice, reading over the "Projected Constitution of a League of Nations" to an attentive and respectful Peace Congress. But there is a more natural way to a league than that. Instead of being made like a machine, the League of Nations may come about like a marriage. The Peace Congress that must sooner or later meet may itself become, after a time, the Council of a League of Nations. The League of Nations may come upon us by degrees, almost imperceptibly. I am strongly obsessed by the idea that that Peace Congress will necessarily become — and that it is highly desirable that it should become — a most prolonged and persistent gathering. Why should it not become at length a permanent gathering, inviting representatives to aid its deliberations from the neutral states, and gradually adjusting itself to conditions of permanency?

I can conceive no such Peace Congress as those that have settled up after other wars, settling up after this war. Not only has the war been enormously bigger than any other war, but it has struck deeper at the foundations of social and economic life. I doubt if we begin to realize how much of the old system is dead to-day, how much has to be remade. Since the beginnings of history there has been a credible promise of gold payments underneath our financial arrangements. It is now an incredible promise. The value of a pound note waves about

while you look at it. What will happen to it when peace comes no man can tell. Nor what will happen to the mark. The rouble has gone into the Abyss. Our giddy money specialists clutch their handfuls of paper and watch it flying down the steep. Much as we may hate the Germans, some of us will have to sit down with some of the enemy to arrange a common scheme for the preservation of credit in money. And I presume that it is not proposed to end this war in a wild scramble of buyers for such food as remains in the world. There is a shortage now, a greater shortage ahead of the world, and there will be shortages of supply at the source and transport in food and all raw materials for some years to come. The Peace Congress will have to sit and organize a share-out and distribution and reorganization of these shattered supplies. It will have to Rhondda the nations. Probably, too, we shall have to deal collectively with a pestilence before we are out of the mess. Then there are such little jobs as the reconstruction of Belgium and Serbia. There are considerable rectifications of boundaries to be made. There are fresh states to be created, in Poland and Armenia for example. About all these smaller states, new and old, that the peace must call into being, there must be a system of guarantees of the most difficult and complicated sort.

I do not see the Press Congress getting through such matters as these in a session of weeks or months. The idea the Germans betrayed at Brest, that things were going to be done in the Versailles fashion by great moustached heroes frowning and drawing lines with a large black soldierly thumbnail across maps, is — old-fashioned. They have made their eastern treaties, it is true, in this mode, but they are still looking for some really responsible government to keep them now that they are made. From first to last clearly the main peace negotiations are going to follow unprecedented courses. This preliminary discussion of war aims by means of great public speeches, that has been getting more and more explicit now for many months, is quite unprecedented. Apparently all the broad preliminaries are to be stated and accepted in the sight of all mankind before even an armistice occurs on the main, the western front. The German diplomatists hate this process. So do a lot of ours. So do some of the diplomatic Frenchmen. The German junkers are dodging and lying, they are fighting desperately to keep back everything they

possibly can for the bargaining and bullying and table-banging of the council chamber, but that way there is no peace. And when at last Germany says snip sufficiently to the Allies' snap, and the Peace Congress begins, it will almost certainly be as unprecedented as its prelude. Before it meets, the broad lines of the settlement will have been drawn plainly with the approval of the mass of mankind.

II

THE LEAGUE MUST BE REPRESENTATIVE

A Peace Congress, growing permanent, then, may prove to be the most practical and convenient embodiment of this idea of a League of Nations that has taken possession of the imagination of the world. A most necessary preliminary to a Peace Congress, with such possibilities inherent in it, must obviously be the meeting and organization of a preliminary League of the Allied Nations. That point I would now enlarge.

Half a world peace is better than none. There seems no reason whatever why the world should wait for the Central Powers before it begins this necessary work. Mr. McCurdy has been asking lately, "Why not the League of Nations *now*?" That is a question a great number of people would like to echo very heartily. The nearer the Allies can come to a League of Free Nations before the Peace Congress the more prospect there is that that body will approximate in nature to a League of Nations for the whole world.

In one most unexpected quarter the same idea has been endorsed. The King's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament this February was one of the most remarkable royal utterances that have ever been made from the British throne. There was less of the old-fashioned King and more of the modern President about it than the most republican-minded of us could have anticipated. For the first time in a King's Speech we heard of the "democracies" of the world, and there was a clear claim that the Allies at present fighting the Central Powers did themselves constitute a League of Nations.

But we must admit that at present they do so only in a very rhetorical sense. There is no real council of empowered representatives, and nothing in the nature of a united front has been prepared. Unless we provide beforehand for something more effective, Italy, France, the United States, Japan, and this country will send separate groups of representatives, with separate instructions, unequal status, and very probably conflicting views upon many subjects, to the ultimate peace discussions. It is quite conceivable — it is a very serious danger — that at this discussion skilful diplomacy on the part of the Central Powers may open a cleft among the Allies

that has never appeared during the actual war. Have the British settled, for example, with Italy and France for the supply of metallurgical coal after the war? Those countries must have it somehow. Across the board Germany can make some tempting bids in that respect. Or take another question: Have the British arrived at common views with France, Belgium, Portugal, and South Africa about the administration of Central Africa? Suppose Germany makes sudden proposals affecting native labour that win over the Portuguese and the Boers? There are a score of such points upon which we shall find the Allied representatives haggling with each other in the presence of the enemy if they have not been settled beforehand.

It is the plainest common sense that we should be fixing up all such matters with our Allies now, and knitting together a common front for the final deal with German Imperialism. And these things are not to be done effectively and bindingly nowadays by official gentlemen in discreet undertones. They need to be done with the full knowledge and authority of the participating peoples.

The Russian example has taught the world the instability of diplomatic bargains in a time of such fundamental issues as the present. There is little hope and little strength in hole-and-corner bargainings between the officials or politicians who happen to be at the head of this or that nation for the time being. Our Labour people will not stand this sort of thing and they will not be bound by it. There will be the plain danger of repudiation for all arrangements made in that fashion. A gathering of somebody or other approved by the British Foreign Office and of somebody or other approved by the French Foreign Office, of somebody with vague powers from America, and so on and so on, will be an entirely ineffective gathering. But that is the sort of gathering of the Allies we have been having hitherto, and that is the sort of gathering that is likely to continue unless there is a considerable expression of opinion in favour of something more representative and responsible.

Even our Foreign Office must be aware that in every country in the world there is now bitter suspicion of and keen hostility towards merely diplomatic representatives. One of the most significant features of the time is the evident desire of the Labour movement in every European country to take part in a collateral conference of

Labour that shall meet when and where the Peace Congress does and deliberate and comment on its proceedings. For a year now the demand of the masses for such a Labour conference has been growing. It marks a distrust of officialdom whose intensity officialdom would do well to ponder. But it is the natural consequence of, it is the popular attempt at a corrective to, the aloofness and obscurity that have hitherto been so evil a characteristic of international negotiations. I do not think Labour and intelligent people anywhere are going to be fobbed off with an old-fashioned diplomatic gathering as being that League of Free Nations they demand.

On the other hand, I do not contemplate this bi-cameral conference with the diplomatists trying to best and humbug the Labour people as well as each other and the Labour people getting more and more irritated, suspicious, and extremist, with anything but dread. The Allied countries must go into the conference *solid*, and they can only hope to do that by heeding and incorporating Labour ideas before they come to the conference. The only alternative that I can see to this unsatisfactory prospect of a Peace Congress sitting side by side with a dissentient and probably revolutionary Labour and Socialist convention — both gatherings with unsatisfactory credentials contradicting one another and drifting to opposite extremes — is that the delegates the Allied Powers send to the Peace Conference (the same delegates which, if they are wise, they will have previously sent to a preliminary League of Allied Nations to discuss their common action at the Peace Congress), should be elected *ad hoc* upon democratic lines.

I know that this will be a very shocking proposal to all our able specialists in foreign policy. They will talk at once about the "ignorance" of people like the Labour leaders and myself about such matters, and so on. What do we know of the treaty of so-and-so that was signed in the year seventeen something? — and so on. To which the answer is that we ought not to have been kept ignorant of these things. A day will come when the Foreign Offices of all countries will have to recognize that what the people do not know of international agreements "ain't facts." A secret treaty is only binding upon the persons in the secret. But what I, as a sample common

person, am not ignorant of is this: that the business that goes on at the Peace Congress will either make or mar the lives of everyone I care for in the world, and that somehow, by representative or what not, *I have to be there*. The Peace Congress deals with the blood and happiness of my children and the future of my world. Speaking as one of the hundreds of millions of "rank outsiders" in public affairs, I do not mean to respect any peace treaty that may end this war unless I am honestly represented at its making. I think everywhere there is a tendency in people to follow the Russian example to this extent and to repudiate bargains in which they have had no voice.

I do not see that any genuine realization of the hopes with which all this talk about the League of Nations is charged can be possible, unless the two bodies which should naturally lead up to the League of Nations — that is to say, firstly, the Conference of the Allies, and then the Peace Congress — are elected bodies, speaking confidently for the whole mass of the peoples behind them. It may be a troublesome thing to elect them, but it will involve much more troublesome consequences if they are not elected. This, I think, is one of the considerations for which many people's minds are still unprepared. But unless we are to have over again after all this bloodshed and effort some such "Peace with Honour" foolery as we had performed by "Dizzy" and Salisbury at that fatal Berlin Conference in which this present war was begotten, we must sit up to this novel proposal of electoral representation in the peace negotiations. Something more than common sense binds our statesmen to this idea. They are morally pledged to it. President Wilson and our British and French spokesmen alike have said over and over again that they want to deal not with the Hohenzollerns but with the German people. In other words, we have demanded elected representatives from the German people with whom we may deal, and how can we make a demand of that sort unless we on our part are already prepared to send our own elected representatives to meet them? It is up to us to indicate by our own practice how we on our side, professing as we do to act for democracies, to make democracy safe on the earth, and so on, intend to meet this new occasion.

Yet it has to be remarked that, so far, not one of the League of Nations projects I have seen have included any practicable proposals

for the appointment of delegates either to that ultimate body or to its two necessary predecessors, the Council of the Allies and the Peace Congress. It is evident that here, again, we are neglecting to get on with something of very urgent importance. I will venture, therefore, to say a word or two here about the possible way in which a modern community may appoint its international representatives.

And here, again, I turn from any European precedents to that political outcome of the British mind, the Constitution of the United States. (Because we must always remember that while our political institutions in Britain are a patch-up of feudalism, Tudor, Stuart, and Hanoverian monarchist traditions and urgent merely European necessities, a patch-up that has been made quasi-democratic in a series of after-thoughts, the American Constitution is a real, deliberate creation of the English-speaking intelligence.) The President of the United States, then, we have to note, is elected in a most extraordinary way, and in a way that has now the justification of very great successes indeed. On several occasions the United States has achieved indisputable greatness in its Presidents, and very rarely has it failed to set up very leaderly and distinguished men. It is worth while, therefore, to inquire how this President is elected. He is neither elected directly by the people nor appointed by any legislative body. He is chosen by a special college elected by the people. This college exists to elect him; it meets, elects him, and disperses. (I will not here go into the preliminary complications that makes the election of a President follow upon a preliminary election of two Presidential Candidates. The point I am making here is that he is a specially selected man chosen *ad hoc*.) Is there any reason why we should, not adopt this method in this new necessity we are under of sending representatives, first, to the long overdue and necessary Allied Council, then to the Peace Congress, and then to the hoped-for Council of the League of Nations?

I am anxious here only to start for discussion the idea of an electoral representation of the nations upon these three bodies that must in succession set themselves to define, organize, and maintain the peace of the world. I do not wish to complicate the question by any too explicit advocacy of methods of election or the like. In the United States this college which elects the President is elected on the

same register of voters as that which elects the Senate and Congress, and at the same time. But I suppose if we are to give a popular mandate to the three or five or twelve or twenty (or whatever number it is) men to whom we are going to entrust our Empire's share in this great task of the peace negotiations, it will be more decisive of the will of the whole nation if the college that had to appoint them is elected at a special election. I suppose that the great British commonweals over-seas, at present not represented in Parliament, would also and separately at the same time elect colleges to appoint their representatives. I suppose there would be at least one Indian representative elected, perhaps by some special electoral conference of Indian princes and leading men. The chief defect of the American Presidential election is that as the old single vote method of election is employed it has to be fought on purely party lines. He is the select man of the Democratic half, or of the Republican half of the nation. He is not the select man of the whole nation. It would give a far more representative character to the electoral college if it could be elected by fair modern methods, if for this particular purpose parliamentary constituencies could be grouped and the clean scientific method of proportional representation could be used. But I suppose the party politician in this, as in most of our affairs, must still have his pound of our flesh — and we must reckon with him later for the bloodshed.

These are all, however, secondary considerations. The above paragraph is, so to speak, in the nature of a footnote. The fundamental matter, if we are to get towards any realization of this ideal of a world peace sustained by a League of Nations, is to get straight away to the conception of direct special electoral mandates in this matter. At present all the political luncheon and dinner parties in London are busy with smirking discussions of "Who is to go?" The titled ladies are particularly busy. They are talking about it as if we poor, ignorant, tax-paying, blood-paying common people did not exist. "L. G.," they say, will of course "*insist* on going," but there is much talk of the "Old Man." People are getting quite nice again about "the Old Man's feelings." It would be such a pretty thing to send him. But if "L. G." goes we want him to go with something more than a backing of intrigues and snatched authority. And I do not think the mass of people have any enthusiasm for the Old Man. It

is difficult again — by the dinner-party standards — to know how Lord Curzon can be restrained. But we common people do not care if he is restrained to the point of extinction. Probably there will be nobody who talks or understands Russian among the British representatives. But, of course, the British governing class has washed its hands of the Russians. They were always very difficult, and now they are "impossible, my dear, perfectly impossible."

No! That sort of thing will not do now. This Peace Congress is too big a job for party politicians and society and county families. The bulk of British opinion cannot go on being represented for ever by President Wilson. We cannot always look to the Americans to express our ideas and do our work for democracy. The foolery of the Berlin Treaty must not be repeated. We cannot have another popular Prime Minister come triumphing back to England with a gross of pink spectacles — through which we may survey the prospect of the next great war. The League of Free Nations means something very big and solid; it is not a rhetorical phrase to be used to pacify a restless, distressed, and anxious public, and to be sneered out of existence when that use is past. When the popular mind now demands a League of Free Nations it demands a reality. The only way to that reality is through the direct participation of the nation as a whole in the settlement, and that is possible only through the direct election for this particular issue of representative and responsible men.

III

THE NECESSARY POWERS OF THE LEAGUE

If this phrase, "the League of Free Nations," is to signify anything more than a rhetorical flourish, then certain consequences follow that have to be faced now. No man can join a partnership and remain an absolutely free man. You cannot bind yourself to do this and not to do that and to consult and act with your associates in certain eventualities without a loss of your sovereign freedom. People in this country and in France do not seem to be sitting up manfully to these necessary propositions.

If this League of Free Nations is really to be an effectual thing for the preservation of the peace of the world it must possess power and exercise power, powers must be delegated to it. Otherwise it will only help, with all other half-hearted good resolutions, to pave the road of mankind to hell. Nothing in all the world so strengthens evil as the half-hearted attempts of good to make good.

It scarcely needs repeating here — it has been so generally said — that no League of Free Nations can hope to keep the peace unless every member of it is indeed a free member, represented by duly elected persons. Nobody, of course, asks to "dictate the internal government" of any country to that country. If Germans, for instance, like to wallow in absolutism after the war they can do so. But if they or any other peoples wish to take part in a permanent League of Free Nations it is only reasonable to insist that so far as their representatives on the council go they must be duly elected under conditions that are by the standards of the general league satisfactorily democratic. That seems to be only the common sense of the matter. Every court is a potential conspiracy against freedom, and the League cannot tolerate merely court appointments. If courts are to exist anywhere in the new world of the future, they will be wise to stand aloof from international meddling. Of course if a people, after due provision for electoral representation, choose to elect dynastic candidates, that is an altogether different matter.

And now let us consider what are the powers that must be

delegated to this proposed council of a League of Free Nations, if that is really effectually to prevent war and to organize and establish and make peace permanent in the world.

Firstly, then, it must be able to adjudicate upon all international disputes whatever. Its first function must clearly be that. Before a war can break out there must be the possibility of a world decision upon its rights and wrongs. The League, therefore, will have as its primary function to maintain a Supreme Court, whose decisions will be final, before which every sovereign power may appear as plaintiff against any other sovereign power or group of powers. The plea, I take it, will always be in the form that the defendant power or powers is engaged in proceedings "calculated to lead to a breach of the peace," and calling upon the League for an injunction against such proceedings. I suppose the proceedings that can be brought into court in this way fall under such headings as these that follow; restraint of trade by injurious tariffs or suchlike differentiations or by interference with through traffic, improper treatment of the subjects *or their property* (here I put a query) of the plaintiff nation in the defendant state, aggressive military or naval preparation, disorder spreading over the frontier, trespass (as, for instance, by airships), propaganda of disorder, espionage, permitting the organization of injurious activities, such as raids or piracy. Clearly all such actions must come within the purview of any world-supreme court organized to prevent war. But in addition there is a more doubtful and delicate class of case, arising out of the discontent of patches of one race or religion in the dominions of another. How far may the supreme court of the world attend to grievances between subject and sovereign?

Such cases are highly probable, and no large, vague propositions about the "self-determination" of peoples can meet all the cases. In Macedonia, for instance, there is a jumble of Albanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek and Rumanian villages always jostling one another and maintaining an intense irritation between the kindred nations close at hand. And quite a large number of areas and cities in the world, it has to be remembered, are not homogeneous at all. Will the great nations of the world have the self-abnegation to permit a scattered subject population to appeal against the treatment of its ruling power to the Supreme Court? This is a much more serious

interference with sovereignty than intervention in an external quarrel. Could a Greek village in Bulgarian Macedonia plead in the Supreme Court? Could the Armenians in Constantinople, or the Jews in Roumania, or the Poles in West Prussia, or the negroes in Georgia, or the Indians in the Transvaal make such an appeal? Could any Indian population in India appeal? Personally I should like to see the power of the Supreme Court extend as far as this. I do not see how we can possibly prevent a kindred nation pleading for the scattered people of its own race and culture, or any nation presenting a case on behalf of some otherwise unrepresented people — the United States, for example, presenting a case on behalf of the Armenians. But I doubt if many people have made up their minds yet to see the powers of the Supreme Court of the League of Nations go so far as this. I doubt if, to begin with, it will be possible to provide for these cases. I would like to see it done, but I doubt if the majority of the sovereign peoples concerned will reconcile their national pride with the idea, at least so far as their own subject populations go.

Here, you see, I do no more than ask a question. It is a difficult one, and it has to be answered before we can clear the way to the League of Free Nations.

But the Supreme Court, whether it is to have the wider or the narrower scope here suggested, would be merely the central function of the League of Free Nations. Behind the decisions of the Supreme Court must lie power. And here come fresh difficulties for patriotic digestions. The armies and navies of the world must be at the disposal of the League of Free Nations, and that opens up a new large area of delegated authority. The first impulse of any power disposed to challenge the decisions of the Supreme Court will be, of course, to arm; and it is difficult to imagine how the League of Free Nations can exercise any practical authority unless it has power to restrain such armament. The League of Free Nations must, in fact, if it is to be a working reality, have power to define and limit the military and naval and aerial equipment of every country in the world. This means something more than a restriction of state forces. It must have power and freedom to investigate the military and naval and aerial establishments of all its constituent powers. It must also have effective control over every armament industry. And armament

industries are not always easy to define. Are aeroplanes, for example, armament? Its powers, I suggest, must extend even to a restraint upon the belligerent propaganda which is the natural advertisement campaign of every armament industry. It must have the right, for example, to raise the question of the proprietorship of newspapers by armament interests. Disarmament is, in fact, a necessary factor of any League of Free Nations, and you cannot have disarmament unless you are prepared to see the powers of the council of the League extend thus far. The very existence of the League presupposes that it and it alone is to have and to exercise military force. Any other belligerency or preparation or incitement to belligerency becomes rebellion, and any other arming a threat of rebellion, in a world League of Free Nations.

But here, again, has the general mind yet thought out all that is involved in this proposition? In all the great belligerent countries the armament industries are now huge interests with enormous powers. Krupp's business alone is as powerful a thing in Germany as the Crown. In every country a heavily subsidized "patriotic" press will fight desperately against giving powers so extensive and thorough as those here suggested to an international body. So long, of course, as the League of Free Nations remains a project in the air, without body or parts, such a press will sneer at it gently as "Utopian," and even patronize it kindly. But so soon as the League takes on the shape its general proposition makes logically necessary, the armament interest will take fright. Then it is we shall hear the drum patriotic loud in defence of the human blood trade. Are we to hand over these most intimate affairs of ours to "a lot of foreigners"? Among these "foreigners" who will be appealed to to terrify the patriotic souls of the British will be the "Americans." Are we men of English blood and tradition to see our affairs controlled by such "foreigners" as Wilson, Lincoln, Webster and Washington? Perish the thought! When they might be controlled by Disraelis, Wettins, Mount-Battens, and what not! And so on and so on. Krupp's agents and the agents of the kindred firms in Great Britain and France will also be very busy with the national pride of France. In Germany they have already created a colossal suspicion of England.

Here is a giant in the path….

But let us remember that it is only necessary to defeat the propaganda of this vile and dangerous industry in four great countries. And for the common citizen, touched on the tenderest part of his patriotic susceptibilities, there are certain irrefutable arguments. Whether the ways of the world in the years to come are to be the paths of peace or the paths of war is not going to alter this essential fact, that the great educated world communities, with a social and industrial organization on a war-capable scale, are going to dominate human affairs. Whether they spend their power in killing or in educating and creating, France, Germany, however much we may resent it, the two great English-speaking communities, Italy, Japan China, and presently perhaps a renascent Russia, are jointly going to control the destinies of mankind. Whether that joint control comes through arms or through the law is a secondary consideration. To refuse to bring our affairs into a common council does not make us independent of foreigners. It makes us more dependent upon them, as a very little consideration will show.

I am suggesting here that the League of Free Nations shall practically control the army, navy, air forces, and armament industry of every nation in the world. What is the alternative to that? To do as we please? No, the alternative is that any malignant country will be free to force upon all the rest just the maximum amount of armament it chooses to adopt. Since 1871 France, we say, has been free in military matters. What has been the value of that freedom? The truth is, she has been the bond-slave of Germany, bound to watch Germany as a slave watches a master, bound to launch submarine for submarine and cast gun for gun, to sweep all her youth into her army, to subdue her trade, her literature, her education, her whole life to the necessity of preparations imposed upon her by her drill-master over the Rhine. And Michael, too, has been a slave to his imperial master for the self-same reason, for the reason that Germany and France were both so proudly sovereign and independent. Both countries have been slaves to Kruppism and Zabernism — *because they were sovereign and free*! So it will always be. So long as patriotic cant can keep the common man jealous of international controls over his belligerent possibilities, so long will he be the helpless slave of the foreign threat, and “Peace” remain a mere name for the resting phase

between wars.

But power over the military resources of the world is by no means the limit of the necessary powers of an effective League of Free Nations. There are still more indigestible implications in the idea, and, since they have got to be digested sooner or later if civilization is not to collapse, there is no reason why we should not begin to bite upon them now. I was much interested to read the British press upon the alleged proposal of the German Chancellor that we should give up (presumably to Germany) Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, and suchlike key possessions. It seemed to excite several of our politicians extremely. I read over the German Chancellor's speech very carefully, so far as it was available, and it is clear that he did not propose anything of the sort. Wilfully or blindly our press and our demagogues screamed over a false issue. The Chancellor was defending the idea of the Germans remaining in Belgium and Lorraine because of the strategic and economic importance of those regions to Germany, and he was arguing that before we English got into such a feverish state of indignation about that, we should first ask ourselves what we were doing in Gibraltar, etc., etc. That is a different thing altogether. And it is an argument that is not to be disposed of by misrepresentation. The British have to think hard over this quite legitimate German *tu quoque*. It is no good getting into a patriotic bad temper and refusing to answer that question. We British people are so persuaded of the purity and unselfishness with which we discharge our imperial responsibilities, we have been so trained in imperial self-satisfaction, we know so certainly that all our subject nations call us blessed, that it is a little difficult for us to see just how the fact that we are, for example, so deeply rooted in Egypt looks to an outside intelligence. Of course the German imperialist idea is a wicked and aggressive idea, as Lord Robert Cecil has explained; they want to set up all over the earth coaling stations and strategic points, *on the pattern of ours.* Well, they argue, we are only trying to do what you British have done. If we are not to do so — because it is aggression and so on and so on — is not the time ripe for you to make some concessions to the public opinion of the world? That is the German argument. Either, they say, tolerate this idea of a Germany with advantageous posts and possessions round and about

the earth, or reconsider your own position.

Well, at the risk of rousing much patriotic wrath, I must admit that I think we *have* to reconsider our position. Our argument is that in India, Egypt, Africa and elsewhere, we stand for order and civilization, we are the trustees of freedom, the agents of knowledge and efficiency. On the whole the record of British rule is a pretty respectable one; I am not ashamed of our record. Nevertheless *the case is altering*.

It is quite justifiable for us British, no doubt, if we do really play the part of honest trustees, to remain in Egypt and in India under existing conditions; it is even possible for us to glance at the helplessness of Arabia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, as yet incapable of self-government, helpless as new-born infants. But our case, our only justifiable case, is that we are trustees because there is no better trustee possible. And the creation of a council of a League of Free Nations would be like the creation of a Public Trustee for the world. The creation of a League of Free Nations must necessarily be the creation of an authority that may legitimately call existing empires to give an account of their stewardship. For an unchecked fragmentary control of tropical and chaotic regions, it substitutes the possibility of a general authority. And this must necessarily alter the problems not only of the politically immature nations and the control of the tropics, but also of the regulation of the sea ways, the regulation of the coming air routes, and the distribution of staple products in the world. I will not go in detail over the items of this list, because the reader can fill in the essentials of the argument from what has gone before. I want simply to suggest how widely this project of a League of Free Nations swings when once you have let it swing freely in your mind! And if you do not let it swing freely in your mind, it remains nothing — a sentimental gesture.

The plain truth is that the League of Free Nations, if it is to be a reality, if it is to effect a real pacification of the world, must do no less than supersede Empire; it must end not only this new German imperialism, which is struggling so savagely and powerfully to possess the earth, but it must also wind up British imperialism and French imperialism, which do now so largely and inaggressively possess it. And, moreover, this idea queries the adjective of Belgian,

Portuguese, French, and British Central Africa alike, just as emphatically as it queries "German." Still more effectually does the League forbid those creations of the futurist imagination, the imperialism of Italy and Greece, which make such threatening gestures at the world of our children. Are these incompatibilities understood? Until people have faced the clear antagonism that exists between imperialism and internationalism, they have not begun to suspect the real significance of this project of the League of Free Nations. They have not begun to realize that peace also has its price.

IV

THE LABOUR VIEW OF MIDDLE AFRICA

I was recently privileged to hear the views of one of those titled and influential ladies — with a general education at about the fifth standard level, plus a little French, German, Italian, and music — who do so much to make our England what it is at the present time, upon the Labour idea of an international control of "tropical" Africa. She was loud and derisive about the "ignorance" of Labour. "What can *they* know about foreign politics?" she said, with gestures to indicate her conception of *them*.

I was moved to ask her what she would do about Africa. "Leave it to Lord Robert!" she said, leaning forward impressively. "*Leave it to the people who know*."

Unhappily I share the evident opinion of Labour that we are not blessed with any profoundly wise class of people who have definite knowledge and clear intentions about Africa, that these "*people who know*" are mostly a pretentious bluff, and so, in spite of a very earnest desire to take refuge in my "ignorance" from the burthen of thinking about African problems, I find myself obliged, like most other people, to do so. In the interests of our country, our children, and the world, we common persons *have* to have opinions about these matters. A muddle-up in Africa this year may kill your son and mine in the course of the next decade. I know this is not a claim to be interested in things African, such as the promoter of a tropical railway or an oil speculator has; still it is a claim. And for the life of me I cannot see what is wrong about the Labour proposals, or what alternative exists that can give even a hope of peace in and about Africa.

The gist of the Labour proposal is an international control of Africa between the Zambesi and the Sahara. This has been received with loud protests by men whose work one is obliged to respect, by Sir Harry, Johnston, for example, and Sir Alfred Sharpe, and with something approaching a shriek of hostility by Mr. Cunninghame Graham. But I think these gentlemen have not perhaps given the Labour proposal quite as much attention as they have spent upon the details of African conditions. I think they have jumped to

conclusions at the mere sound of the word "international." There have been some gross failures in the past to set up international administrations in Africa and the Near East. And these gentlemen think at once of some new Congo administration and of nondescript police forces commanded by cosmopolitan adventurers. (See Joseph Conrad's "Out-post of Civilization.") They think of internationalism with greedy Great Powers in the background outside the internationalized area, intriguing to create disorder and mischief with ideas of an ultimate annexation. But I doubt if such nightmares do any sort of justice to the Labour intention.

And the essential thing I would like to point out to these authorities upon African questions is that not one of them even hints at any other formula which covers the broad essentials of the African riddle.

What are these broad essentials? What are the ends that *must* be achieved if Africa is not to continue a festering sore in the body of mankind?

The first most obvious danger of Africa is the militarization of the black. General Smuts has pointed this out plainly. The negro makes a good soldier; he is hardy, he stands the sea, and he stands cold. (There was a negro in the little party which reached the North Pole.) It is absolutely essential to the peace of the world that there should be no arming of the negroes beyond the minimum necessary for the policing of Africa. But how is this to be watched and prevented if there is no overriding body representing civilization to say "Stop" to the beginnings of any such militarization? I do not see how Sir Harry Johnston, Sir Alfred Sharpe, and the other authorities can object to at least an international African "Disarmament Commission" to watch, warn, and protest. At least they must concede that.

But in practice this involves something else. A practical consequence of this disarmament idea must be an effective control of the importation of arms into the "tutelage" areas of Africa. That rat at the dykes of civilization, that ultimate expression of political scoundrelism, the Gun-Runner, has to be kept under and stamped out in Africa as everywhere. A Disarmament Commission that has no forces available to prevent the arms trade will be just another Hague Convention, just another vague, well-intentioned, futile gesture.

And closely connected with this function of controlling the arms trade is another great necessity of Africa under "tutelage," and that is the necessity of a common collective agreement not to demoralize the native population. That demoralization, physical and moral, has already gone far. The whole negro population of Africa is now rotten with diseases introduced by Arabs and Europeans during the last century, and such African statesmen as Sir Harry Johnston are eloquent upon the necessity of saving the blacks — and the baser whites — from the effects of trade gin and similar alluring articles of commerce. Moreover, from Africa there is always something new in the way of tropical diseases, and presently Africa, if we let it continue to fester as it festers now, may produce an epidemic that will stand exportation to a temperate climate. A bacterium that may kill you or me in some novel and disgusting way may even now be developing in some Congo muck-heap. So here is the need for another Commission to look after the Health of Africa. That, too, should be of authority over all the area of "tutelage" Africa. It is no good stamping out infectious disease in Nyasaland while it is being bred in Portuguese East Africa. And if there is a Disarmament Commission already controlling the importation of arms, why should not that body also control at the same time the importation of trade gin and similar delicacies, and direct quarantine and such-like health regulations?

But there is another question in Africa upon which our "ignorant" Labour class is far better informed than our dear old eighteenth-century upper class which still squats so firmly in our Foreign and Colonial Offices, and that is the question of forced labour. We cannot tolerate any possibilities of the enslavement of black Africa. Long ago the United States found out the impossibility of having slave labour working in the same system with white. To cure that anomaly cost the United States a long and bloody war. The slave-owner, the exploiter of the black, becomes a threat and a nuisance to any white democracy. He brings back his loot to corrupt Press and life at home. What happened in America in the midst of the last century between Federals and Confederates must not happen again on a larger scale between white Europe and middle Africa. Slavery in Africa, open or disguised, whether enforced by the lash or brought about by

iniquitous land-stealing, strikes at the home and freedom of every European worker — *and Labour knows this*.

But how are we to prevent the enslavement and economic exploitation of the blacks if we have no general watcher of African conditions? We want a common law for Africa, a general Declaration of Rights, of certain elementary rights, and we want a common authority to which the black man and the native tribe may appeal for justice. What is the good of trying to elevate the population of Uganda and to give it a free and hopeful life if some other population close at hand is competing against the Baganda worker under lash and tax? So here is a third aspect of our international Commission, as a native protectorate and court of appeal!

There is still a fourth aspect of the African question in which every mother's son in Europe is closely interested, and that is the trade question. Africa is the great source of many of the most necessary raw materials upon which our modern comforts and conveniences depend; more particularly is it the source of cheap fat in the form of palm oil. One of the most powerful levers in the hands of the Allied democracies at the present time in their struggle against the imperial brigands of Potsdam is the complete control we have now obtained over these essential supplies. We can, if we choose, cut off Germany altogether from these vital economic necessities, if she does not consent to abandon militant imperialism for some more civilized form of government. We hope that this war will end in that renunciation, and that Germany will re-enter the community of nations. But whether that is so or not, whether Germany is or is not to be one of the interested parties in the African solution, the fact remains that it is impossible to contemplate a continuing struggle for the African raw material supply between the interested Powers. Sooner or later that means a renewal of war. International trade rivalry is, indeed, only war — *smouldering*. We need, and Labour demands, a fair, frank treatment of African trade, and that can only be done by some overriding regulative power, a Commission which, so far as I can see, might also be the same Commission as that we have already hypothesized as being necessary to control the Customs in order to prevent gun-running and the gin trade. That Commission might very conveniently have a voice in the administration of the

great waterways of Africa (which often run through the possessions of several Powers) and in the regulation of the big railway lines and air routes that will speedily follow the conclusion of peace.

Now this I take it is the gist of the Labour proposal. This — and no more than this — is what is intended by the "international control of tropical Africa." *I do not read that phrase as abrogating existing sovereignties in Africa*. What is contemplated is a delegation of authority. Every one should know, though unhappily the badness of our history teaching makes it doubtful if every one does know, that the Federal Government of the United States of America did not begin as a sovereign Government, and has now only a very questionable sovereignty. Each State was sovereign, and each State delegated certain powers to Washington. That was the initial idea of the union. Only later did the idea of a people of the States as a whole emerge. In the same way I understand the Labour proposal as meaning that we should delegate to an African Commission the middle African Customs, the regulation of inter-State trade, inter-State railways and waterways, quarantine and health generally, and the establishment of a Supreme Court for middle African affairs. One or two minor matters, such as the preservation of rare animals, might very well fall under the same authority.

Upon that Commission the interested nations, that is to say — putting them in alphabetical order — the Africander, the Briton, the Belgian, the Egyptian, the Frenchman, the Italian, the Indian the Portuguese — might all be represented in proportion to their interest. Whether the German would come in is really a question for the German to consider; he can come in as a good European, he cannot come in as an imperialist brigand. Whether, too, any other nations can claim to have an interest in African affairs, whether the Commission would not be better appointed by a League of Free Nations than directly by the interested Governments, and a number of other such questions, need not be considered here. Here we are discussing only the main idea of the Labour proposal.

Now beneath the supervision and restraint of such a delegated Commission I do not see why the existing administrations of tutelage Africa should not continue. I do not believe that the Labour proposal contemplates any humiliating cession of European sovereignty.

Under that international Commission the French flag may still wave in Senegal and the British over the protected State of Uganda. Given a new spirit in Germany I do not see why the German flag should not presently be restored in German East Africa. But over all, standing for righteousness, patience, fair play for the black, and the common welfare of mankind would wave a new flag, the Sun of Africa representing the Central African Commission of the League of Free Nations.

That is my vision of the Labour project. It is something very different, I know, from the nightmare of an international police of cosmopolitan scoundrels in nondescript uniforms, hastening to loot and ravish his dear Uganda and his beloved Nigeria, which distresses the crumpled pillow of Sir Harry Johnston. But if it is not the solution, then it is up to him and his fellow authorities to tell us what is the solution of the African riddle.

V

GETTING THE LEAGUE IDEA CLEAR IN RELATION TO IMPERIALISM

§ 1

It is idle to pretend that even at the present time the idea of the League of Free Nations has secure possession of the British mind. There is quite naturally a sustained opposition to it in all the fastnesses of aggressive imperialism. Such papers as the *Times* and the *Morning Post* remain hostile and obstructive to the expression of international ideas. Most of our elder statesmen seem to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing during the years of wildest change the world has ever known. But in the general mind of the British peoples the movement of opinion from a narrow imperialism towards internationalism has been wide and swift. And it continues steadily. One can trace week by week and almost day by day the Americanization of the British conception of the Allied War Aims. It may be interesting to reproduce here three communications upon this question made at different times by the present writer to the press. The circumstances of their publication are significant. The first is in substance identical with a letter which was sent to the *Times* late in May, 1917, and rejected as being altogether too revolutionary. For nowadays the correspondence in the *Times* has ceased to be an impartial expression of public opinion. The correspondence of the *Times* is now apparently selected and edited in accordance with the views upon public policy held by the acting editor for the day. More and more has that paper become the organ of a sort of Oxford Imperialism, three or four years behind the times and very ripe and "expert." The letter is here given as it was finally printed in the issue of the *Daily Chronicle* for June 4th, 1917, under the heading, "Wanted a Statement of Imperial Policy."

Sir, — The time seems to have come for much clearer statements of outlook and intention from this country than it has hitherto been possible to make. The entry of America into the war and the banishment of autocracy and aggressive diplomacy from Russia have enormously cleared the air, and the recent great speech of General

Smuts at the Savoy Hotel is probably only the first of a series of experiments in statement. It is desirable alike to clear our own heads, to unify our efforts, and to give the nations of the world some assurance and standard for our national conduct in the future, that we should now define the Idea of our Empire and its relation to the world outlook much more clearly than has ever hitherto been done. Never before in the history of mankind has opinion counted for so much and persons and organizations for so little as in this war. Never before has the need for clear ideas, widely understood and consistently sustained, been so commandingly vital.

What do we mean by our Empire, and what is its relation to that universal desire of mankind, the permanent rule of peace and justice in the world? The whole world will be the better for a very plain answer to that question.

Is it not time for us British not merely to admit to ourselves, but to assure the world that our Empire as it exists to-day is a provisional thing, that in scarcely any part of the world do we regard it as more than an emergency arrangement, as a necessary association that must give place ultimately to the higher synthesis of a world league, that here we hold as trustees and there on account of strategic considerations that may presently disappear, and that though we will not contemplate the replacement of our flag anywhere by the flag of any other competing nation, though we do hope to hold together with our kin and with those who increasingly share our tradition and our language, nevertheless we are prepared to welcome great renunciations of our present ascendency and privileges in the interests of mankind as a whole. We need to make the world understand that we do not put our nation nor our Empire before the commonwealth of man. Unless presently we are to follow Germany along the tragic path her national vanity and her world ambitions have made for her, that is what we have to make clear now. It is not only our duty to mankind, it is also the sane course for our own preservation.

Is it not the plain lesson of this stupendous and disastrous war that there is no way to secure civilization from destruction except by an impartial control and protection in the interests of the whole human race, a control representing the best intelligence of mankind, of these

main causes of war.

(1) The politically undeveloped tropics;

(2) Shipping and international trade; and

(3) Small nationalities and all regions in a state of political impotence or confusion?

It is our case against the Germans that in all these three cases they have subordinated every consideration of justice and the general human welfare to a monstrous national egotism. That argument has a double edge. At present there is a vigorous campaign in America, Russia, the neutral countries generally, to represent British patriotism as equally egotistic, and our purpose in this war as a mere parallel to the German purpose. In the same manner, though perhaps with less persistency, France and Italy are also caricatured. We are supposed to be grabbing at Mesopotamia and Palestine, France at Syria; Italy is represented as pursuing a Machiavellian policy towards the unfortunate Greek republicans, with her eyes on the Greek islands and Greece in Asia. Is it not time that these base imputations were repudiated clearly and conclusively by our Alliance? And is it not time that we began to discuss in much more frank and definite terms than has hitherto been done, the nature of the international arrangement that will be needed to secure the safety of such liberated populations as those of Palestine, of the Arab regions of the old Turkish empire, of Armenia, of reunited Poland, and the like?

I do not mean here mere diplomatic discussions and "understandings," I mean such full and plain statements as will be spread through the whole world and grasped and assimilated by ordinary people everywhere, statements by which we, as a people, will be prepared to stand or fall.

Almost as urgent is the need for some definite statement about Africa. General Smuts has warned not only the Empire, but the whole world of the gigantic threat to civilization that lies in the present division of Africa between various keenly competitive European Powers, any one of which will be free to misuse the great natural resources at its disposal and to arm millions of black soldiers for aggression. A mere elimination of Germany from Africa will not solve that difficulty. What we have to eliminate is not this nation or that, but the system of national shoving and elbowing, the treatment

of Africa as the board for a game of beggar-my-neighbour-and-damn-the-niggers, in which a few syndicates, masquerading as national interests, snatch a profit to the infinite loss of all mankind. We want a lowering of barriers and a unification of interests, we want an international control of these disputed regions, to override nationalist exploitation. The whole world wants it. It is a chastened and reasonable world we live in to-day, and the time for white reason and the wide treatment of these problems is now.

Finally, the time is drawing near when the Egyptian and the nations of India will ask us, "Are things going on for ever here as they go on now, or are we to look for the time when we, too, like the Africander, the Canadian and the Australian, will be your confessed and equal partners?" Would it not be wise to answer that question in the affirmative before the voice in which it is asked grows thick with anger? In Egypt, for example, we are either robbers very like — except for a certain difference in touch — the Germans in Belgium, or we are honourable trustees. It is our claim and pride to be honourable trustees. Nothing so becomes a trustee as a cheerful openness of disposition. Great Britain has to table her world policy. It is a thing overdue. No doubt we have already a literature of liberal imperialism and a considerable accumulation of declarations by this statesman or that. But what is needed is a formulation much more representative, official and permanent than that, something that can be put beside President Wilson's clear rendering of the American idea. We want all our peoples to understand, and we want all mankind to understand that our Empire is not a net about the world in which the progress of mankind is entangled, but a self-conscious political system working side by side with the other democracies of the earth, preparing the way for, and prepared at last to sacrifice and merge itself in, the world confederation of free and equal peoples.

§ 2

This letter was presently followed up by an article in the *Daily News*, entitled "A Reasonable Man's Peace." This article provoked a considerable controversy in the imperialist press, and it was reprinted as a pamphlet by a Free Trade organization, which distributed over

200,000 copies. It is particularly interesting to note, in view of what follows it, that it was attacked with great virulence in the *Evening News*, the little fierce mud-throwing brother of the *Daily Mail*.

The international situation at the present time is beyond question the most wonderful that the world has ever seen. There is not a country in the world in which the great majority of sensible people are not passionately desirous of peace, of an enduring peace, and — the war goes on. The conditions of peace can now be stated, in general terms that are as acceptable to a reasonable man in Berlin as they are to a reasonable man in Paris or London or Petrograd or Constantinople. There are to be no conquests, no domination of recalcitrant populations, no bitter insistence upon vindictive penalties, and there must be something in the nature of a world-wide League of Nations to keep the peace securely in future, to "make the world safe for democracy," and maintain international justice. To that the general mind of the world has come to-day.

Why, then, does the waste and killing go on? Why is not the Peace Conference sitting now?

Manifestly because a small minority of people in positions of peculiar advantage, in positions of trust and authority, and particularly the German reactionaries, prevent or delay its assembling.

The answer which seems to suffice in all the Allied countries is that the German Imperial Government — that the German Imperial Government alone — stands in the way, that its tradition is incurably a tradition of conquest and aggression, that until German militarism is overthrown, etc. Few people in the Allied countries will dispute that that is broadly true. But is it the whole and complete truth? Is there nothing more to be done on our side? Let us put a question that goes to the very heart of the problem. Why does the great mass of the German people still cling to its incurably belligerent Government?

The answer to that question is not overwhelmingly difficult. The German people sticks to its militarist imperialism as Mazeppa stuck to his horse; because it is bound to it, and the wolves pursue. The attentive student of the home and foreign propaganda literature of the

German Government will realize that the case made by German imperialism, the main argument by which it sticks to power, is this, that the Allied Governments are also imperialist, that they also aim at conquest and aggression, that for Germany the choice is world empire or downfall and utter ruin. This is the argument that holds the German people stiffly united. For most men in most countries it would be a convincing argument, strong enough to override considerations of right and wrong. I find that I myself am of this way of thinking, that whether England has done right or wrong in the past — and I have sometimes criticized my country very bitterly — I will not endure the prospect of seeing her at the foot of some victorious foreign nation. Neither will any German who matters. Very few people would respect a German who did. But the case for the Allies is that this great argument by which, and by which alone, the German Imperial Government keeps its grip upon the German people at the present time, and keeps them facing their enemies, is untrue. The Allies declare that they do not want to destroy the German people, they do not want to cripple the German people; they want merely to see certain gaping wounds inflicted by Germany repaired, and beyond that reasonable requirement they want nothing but to be assured, completely assured, absolutely assured, against any further aggressions on the part of Germany.

Is that true? Our leaders say so, and we believe them. We would not support them if we did not. And if it is true, have the statesmen of the Allies made it as transparently and convincingly clear to the German people as possible? That is one of the supreme questions of the present time. We cannot too earnestly examine it. Because in the answer to it lies the reason why so many men were killed yesterday on the eastern and western front, so many ships sunk, so much property destroyed, so much human energy wasted for ever upon mere destruction, and why to-morrow and the next day and the day after — through many months yet, perhaps — the same killing and destroying must still go on.

In many respects this war has been an amazing display of human inadaptability. The military history of the war has still to be written, the grim story of machinery misunderstood, improvements resisted, antiquated methods persisted in; but the broad facts are already

before the public mind. After three years of war the air offensive, the only possible decisive blow, is still merely talked of. Not once nor twice only have the Western Allies had victory within their grasp — and failed to grip it. The British cavalry generals wasted the great invention of the tanks as a careless child breaks a toy. At least equally remarkable is the dragging inadaptability of European statecraft. Everywhere the failure of ministers and statesmen to rise to the urgent definite necessities of the present time is glaringly conspicuous. They seem to be incapable even of thinking how the war may be brought to an end. They seem incapable of that plain speaking to the world audience which alone can bring about a peace. They keep on with the tricks and feints of a departed age. Both on the side of the Allies and on the side of the Germans the declarations of public policy remain childishly vague and disingenuous, childishly "diplomatic." They chaffer like happy imbeciles while civilization bleeds to death. It was perhaps to be expected. Few, if any, men of over five-and-forty completely readjust themselves to changed conditions, however novel and challenging the changes may be, and nearly all the leading figures in these affairs are elderly men trained in a tradition of diplomatic ineffectiveness, and now overworked and overstrained to a pitch of complete inelasticity. They go on as if it were still 1913. Could anything be more palpably shifty and unsatisfactory, more senile, more feebly artful, than the recent utterances of the German Chancellor? And, on our own side —

Let us examine the three leading points about this peace business in which this jaded statecraft is most apparent.

Let the reader ask himself the following questions: —

Does he know what the Allies mean to do with the problem of Central Africa? It is the clear common sense of the African situation that while these precious regions of raw material remain divided up between a number of competitive European imperialisms, each resolutely set upon the exploitation of its "possessions" to its own advantage and the disadvantage of the others, there can be no permanent peace in the world. There can be permanent peace in the world only when tropical and sub-tropical Africa constitute a field free to the commercial enterprise of every one irrespective of nationality, when this is no longer an area of competition between

nations. This is possible only under some supreme international control. It requires no special knowledge nor wisdom to see that. A schoolboy can see it. Any one but a statesman absolutely flaccid with overstrain can see that. However difficult it may prove to work out in detail, such an international control *must* therefore be worked out. The manifest solution of the problem of the German colonies in Africa is neither to return them to her nor deprive her of them, but to give her a share in the pooled general control of mid-Africa. In that way she can be deprived of all power for political mischief in Africa without humiliation or economic injury. In that way, too, we can head off — and in no other way can we head off — the power for evil, the power of developing quarrels inherent in "imperialisms" other than German.

But has the reader any assurance that this sane solution of the African problem has the support of the Allied Governments? At best he has only a vague persuasion. And consider how the matter looks "over there." The German Government assures the German people that the Allies intend to cut off Germany from the African supply of raw material. That would mean the practical destruction of German economic life. It is something far more vital to the mass of Germans than any question of Belgium or Alsace-Lorraine. It is, therefore, one of the ideas most potent in nerving the overstrained German people to continue their fight. Why are we, and why are the German people, not given some definite assurance in this matter? Given reparation in Europe, is Germany to be allowed a fair share in the control and trade of a pooled and neutralized Central Africa? Sooner or later we must come to some such arrangement. Why not state it plainly now?

A second question is equally essential to any really permanent settlement, and it is one upon which these eloquent but unsatisfactory mouthpieces of ours turn their backs with an equal resolution, and that is the fate of the Ottoman Empire. What in plain English are we up to there? Whatever happens, that Humpty Dumpty cannot be put back as it was before the war. The idea of the German imperialist, the idea of our own little band of noisy but influential imperialist vulgarians, is evidently a game of grab, a perilous cutting up of these areas into jostling protectorates and spheres of influence, from which either the Germans or the Allies (according to the side you are on)

are to be viciously shut out. On such a basis this war is a war to the death. Neither Germany, France, Britain, Italy, nor Russia can live prosperously if its trade and enterprise is shut out from this cardinally important area. There is, therefore, no alternative, if we are to have a satisfactory permanent pacification of the world, but local self-development in these regions under honestly conceived international control of police and transit and trade. Let it be granted that that will be a difficult control to organize. None the less it has to be attempted. It has to be attempted because *there is no other way of peace*. But once that conception has been clearly formulated, a second great motive why Germany should continue fighting will have gone.

The third great issue about which there is nothing but fog and uncertainty is the so-called "War After the War," the idea of a permanent economic alliance to prevent the economic recuperation of Germany. Upon that idea German imperialism, in its frantic effort to keep its tormented people fighting, naturally puts the utmost stress. The threat of War after the War robs the reasonable German of his last inducement to turn on his Government and insist upon peace. Shut out from all trade, unable to buy food, deprived of raw material, peace would be as bad for Germany as war. He will argue naturally enough and reasonably enough that he may as well die fighting as starve. This is a far more vital issue to him than the Belgian issue or Poland or Alsace-Lorraine. Our statesmen waste their breath and slight our intelligence when these foreground questions are thrust in front of the really fundamental matters. But as the mass of sensible people in every country concerned, in Germany just as much as in France or Great Britain, know perfectly well, unimpeded trade is good for every one except a few rich adventurers, and restricted trade destroys limitless wealth and welfare for mankind to make a few private fortunes or secure an advantage for some imperialist clique. We want an end to this economic strategy, we want an end to this plotting of Governmental cliques against the general welfare. In such offences Germany has been the chief of sinners, but which among the belligerent nations can throw the first stone? Here again the way to the world's peace, the only way to enduring peace, lies through internationalism, through an international survey of commercial

treaties, through an international control of inter-State shipping and transport rates. Unless the Allied statesmen fail to understand the implications of their own general professions they mean that. But why do they not say it plainly? Why do they not shout it so compactly and loudly that all Germany will hear and understand? Why do they justify imperialism to Germany? Why do they maintain a threatening ambiguity towards Germany on all these matters?

By doing so they leave Germany no choice but a war of desperation. They underline and endorse the claim of German imperialism that this is a war for bare existence. They unify the German people. They prolong the war.

§ 3

Some weeks later I was able, at the invitation of the editor, to carry the controversy against imperialism into the *Daily Mail*, which has hitherto counted as a strictly imperialist paper. The article that follows was published in the *Daily Mail* under the heading, "Are we Sticking to the Point? A Discussion of War Aims."

Has this War-Aims controversy really got down to essentials? Is the purpose of this world conflict from first to last too complicated for brevity, or can we boil it down into a statement compact enough for a newspaper article?

And if we can, why is there all this voluminous, uneasy, unquenchable disputation about War Aims?

As to the first question, I would say that the gist of the dispute between the Central Powers and the world can be written easily without undue cramping in an ordinary handwriting upon a postcard. It is the second question that needs answering. And the reason why the second question has to be asked and answered is this, that several of the Allies, and particularly we British, are not being perfectly plain and simple-minded in our answer to the first, that there is a division among us and in our minds, and that our division is making us ambiguous in our behaviour, that it is weakening and dividing our action and strengthening and consolidating the enemy, and that unless we can drag this slurred-over division of aim and spirit into the light of day and *settle it now*, we are likely to remain double-

minded to the end of the war, to split our strength while the war continues and to come out of the settlement at the end with nothing nearly worth the strain and sacrifice it has cost us.

And first, let us deal with that postcard and say what is the essential aim of the war, the aim to which all other aims are subsidiary. It is, we have heard repeated again and again by every statesman of importance in every Allied country, to defeat and destroy military imperialism, to make the world safe for ever against any such deliberate aggression as Germany prepared for forty years and brought to a climax when she crossed the Belgian frontier in 1914. We want to make anything of that kind on the part of Germany or of any other Power henceforth impossible in this world. That is our great aim. Whatever other objects may be sought in this war no responsible statesman dare claim them as anything but subsidiary to that; one can say, in fact, this is our sole aim, our other aims being but parts of it. Better that millions should die now, we declare, than that hundreds of millions still unborn should go on living, generation after generation, under the black tyranny of this imperialist threat.

There is our common agreement. So far, at any rate, we are united. The question I would put to the reader is this: Are we all logically, sincerely, and fully carrying out the plain implications of this War Aim? Or are we to any extent muddling about with it in such a way as to confuse and disorganize our Allies, weaken our internal will, and strengthen the enemy?

Now the plain meaning of this supreme declared War Aim is that we are asking Germany to alter her ways. We are asking Germany to become a different Germany. Either Germany has to be utterly smashed up and destroyed or else Germany has to cease to be an aggressive military imperialism. The former alternative is dismissed by most responsible statesmen. They declare that they do not wish to destroy the German people or the German nationality or the civilized life of Germany. I will not enlarge here upon the tedium and difficulties such an undertaking would present. I will dismiss it as being not only impossible, but also as an insanely wicked project. The second alternative, therefore, remains as our War Aim. I do not see how the sloppiest reasoner can evade that. As we do not want to kill Germany we must want to change Germany. If we do not want to

wipe Germany off the face of the earth, then we want Germany to become the prospective and trust-worthy friend of her fellow nations. And if words have any meaning at all, that is saying that we are fighting to bring about a Revolution in Germany. We want Germany to become a democratically controlled State, such as is the United States to-day, with open methods and pacific intentions, instead of remaining a clenched fist. If we can bring that about we have achieved our War Aim; if we cannot, then this struggle has been for us only such loss and failure as humanity has never known before.

But do we, as a nation, stick closely to this clear and necessary, this only possible, meaning of our declared War Aim? That great, clear-minded leader among the Allies, that Englishman who more than any other single man speaks for the whole English-speaking and Western-thinking community, President Wilson, has said definitely that this is his meaning. America, with him as her spokesman, is under no delusion; she is fighting consciously for a German Revolution as the essential War Aim. We in Europe do not seem to be so lucid. I think myself we have been, and are still, fatally and disastrously not lucid. It is high time, and over, that we cleared our minds and got down to the essentials of the war. We have muddled about in blood and dirt and secondary issues long enough.

We in Britain are not clear-minded, I would point out, because we are double-minded. No good end is served by trying to ignore in the fancied interests of "unity" a division of spirit and intention that trips us up at every step. We are, we declare, fighting for a complete change in international methods, and we are bound to stick to the logical consequences of that. We have placed ourselves on the side of democratic revolution against autocratic monarchy, and we cannot afford to go on shilly-shallying with that choice. We cannot in these days of black or white play the part of lukewarm friends to freedom. I will not remind the reader here of the horrible vacillations and inconsistencies of policy in Greece that have prolonged the war and cost us wealth and lives beyond measure, but President Wilson himself has reminded us pungently enough and sufficiently enough of the follies and disingenuousness of our early treatment of the Russian Revolution. What I want to point out here is the supreme importance of a clear lead in this matter *now* in order that we should

state our War Aims effectively.

In every war there must be two sets of War Aims kept in mind; we ought to know what we mean to do in the event of victory so complete that we can dictate what terms we choose, and we ought to know what, in the event of a not altogether conclusive tussle, are the minimum terms that we should consider justified us in a discontinuance of the tussle. Now, unless our leading statesmen are humbugs and unless we are prepared to quarrel with America in the interests of the monarchist institutions of Europe, we should, in the event of an overwhelming victory, destroy both the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg Imperialisms, and that means, if it means anything at all and is not mere lying rhetoric, that we should insist upon Germany becoming free and democratic, that is to say, in effect if not in form republican, and upon a series of national republics, Polish, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, and the like, in Eastern Europe, grouped together if possible into congenial groups — crowned republics it might be in some cases, in the case of the Serb for example, but in no case too much crowned — that we should join with this renascent Germany and with these thus liberalized Powers and with our Allies and with the neutrals in one great League of Free Nations, trading freely with one another, guaranteeing each other freedom, and maintaining a world-wide peace and disarmament and a new reign of law for mankind.

If that is not what we are out for, then I do not understand what we are out for; there is dishonesty and trickery and diplomacy and foolery in the struggle, and I am no longer whole-hearted for such a half-hearted war. If after a complete victory we are to bolster up the Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, and their relations, set up a constellation of more cheating little subordinate kings, and reinstate that system of diplomacies and secret treaties and secret understandings, that endless drama of international threatening and plotting, that never-ending arming, that has led us after a hundred years of waste and muddle to the supreme tragedy of this war, then the world is not good enough for me and I shall be glad to close my eyes upon it. I am not alone in these sentiments. I believe that in writing thus I am writing the opinion of the great mass of reasonable British, French, Italian, Russian, and American men. I believe, too, that this is the

desire also of great numbers of Germans, and that they would, if they could believe us, gladly set aside their present rulers to achieve this plain common good for mankind.

But, the reader will say, what evidence is there of any republican feeling in Germany? That is always the objection made to any reasonable discussion of the war — and as most of us are denied access to German papers, it is difficult to produce quotations; and even when one does, there are plenty of fools to suggest and believe that the entire German Press is an elaborate camouflage. Yet in the German Press there is far more criticism of militant imperialism than those who have no access to it can imagine. There is far franker criticism of militarism in Germany than there is of reactionary Toryism in this country, and it is more free to speak its mind.

That, however, is a question by the way. It is not the main thing that I have to say here. What I have to say here is that in Great Britain — I will not discuss the affairs of any of our Allies — there are groups and classes of people, not numerous, not representative, but placed in high and influential positions and capable of free and public utterance, who are secretly and bitterly hostile to this great War Aim, which inspires all the Allied peoples. These people are permitted to deny — our peculiar censorship does not hamper them — loudly and publicly that we are fighting for democracy and world freedom; "Tosh," they say to our dead in the trenches, "you died for a mistake"; they jeer at this idea of a League of Nations making an end to war, an idea that has inspired countless brave lads to face death and such pains and hardships as outdo even death itself; they perplex and irritate our Allies by propounding schemes for some precious economic league of the British Empire — that is to treat all "foreigners" with a common base selfishness and stupid hatred — and they intrigue with the most reactionary forces in Russia.

These British reactionaries openly, and with perfect impunity, represent our war as a thing as mean and shameful as Germany's attack on Belgium, and they do it because generosity and justice in the world is as terrible to them as dawn is to the creatures of the night. Our Tories blundered into this great war, not seeing whither it would take them. In particular it is manifest now by a hundred signs that they dread the fall of monarchy in Germany and Austria. Far

rather would they make the most abject surrenders to the Kaiser than deal with a renascent Republican Germany. The recent letter of Lord Lansdowne, urging a peace with German imperialism, was but a feeler from the pacifist side of this most un-English, and unhappily most influential, section of our public life. Lord Lansdowne's letter was the letter of a Peer who fears revolution more than national dishonour.

But it is the truculent wing of this same anti-democratic movement that is far more active. While our sons suffer and die for their comforts and conceit, these people scheme to prevent any communication between the Republican and Socialist classes in Germany and the Allied population. At any cost this class of pampered and privileged traitors intend to have peace while the Kaiser is still on his throne. If not they face a new world — in which their part will be small indeed. And with the utmost ingenuity they maintain a dangerous vagueness about the Allied peace terms, *with the sole object of preventing a revolutionary movement in Germany*.

Let me put it to the reader exactly why our failure to say plainly and exactly and conclusively what we mean to do about a score of points, and particularly about German economic life after the war, paralyses the penitents and friends and helpers that we could now find in Germany. Let me ask the reader to suppose himself a German in Germany at the present time. Of course if he was, he is sure that he would hate the Kaiser as the source of this atrocious war, he would be bitterly ashamed of the Belgian iniquity, of the submarine murders, and a score of such stains upon his national honour; and he would want to alter his national system and make peace. Hundreds of thousands of Germans are in that mood now. But as most of us have had to learn, a man may be bitterly ashamed of this or that incident in his country's history — what Englishman, for instance, can be proud of Glencoe? — he may disbelieve in half its institutions and still love his country far too much to suffer the thought of its destruction. I prefer to see my country right, but if it comes to the pinch and my country sins I will fight to save her from the destruction her sins may have brought upon her. That is the natural way of a man.

But suppose a German wished to try to start a revolutionary movement in Germany at the present time, have we given him any

reason at all for supposing that a Germany liberated and democratized, but, of course, divided and weakened as she would be bound to be in the process, would get better terms from the Allies than a Germany still facing them, militant, imperialist, and wicked? He would have no reason for believing anything of the sort. If we Allies are honest, then if a revolution started in Germany to-day we should if anything lower the price of peace to Germany. But these people who pretend to lead us will state nothing of the sort. For them a revolution in Germany would be the signal for putting up the price of peace. At any risk they are resolved that that German revolution shall not happen. Your sane, good German, let me assert, is up against that as hard as if he was a wicked one. And so, poor devil, he has to put his revolutionary ideas away, they are hopeless ideas for him because of the power of the British reactionary, they are hopeless because of the line we as a nation take in this matter, and he has to go on fighting for his masters.

A plain statement of our war aims that did no more than set out honestly and convincingly the terms the Allies would make with a democratic republican Germany — republican I say, because where a scrap of Hohenzollern is left to-day there will be a fresh militarism to-morrow — would absolutely revolutionize the internal psychology of Germany. We should no longer face a solid people. We should have replaced the false issue of Germany and Britain fighting for the hegemony of Europe, the lie upon which the German Government has always traded, and in which our extreme Tory Press has always supported the German Government, by the true issue, which is freedom versus imperialism, the League of Nations versus that net of diplomatic roguery and of aristocratic, plutocratic, and autocratic greed and conceit which dragged us all into this vast welter of bloodshed and loss.

VI

THE WAR AIMS OF THE WESTERN ALLIES

Here, quite compactly, is the plain statement of the essential cause and process of the war to which I would like to see the Allied Foreign Offices subscribe, and which I would like to have placed plainly before the German mind. It embodies much that has been learnt and thought out since this war began, and I think it is much truer and more fundamental than that mere raging against German "militarism," upon which our politicians and press still so largely subsist.

The enormous development of war methods and war material within the last fifty years has made war so horrible and destructive that it is impossible to contemplate a future for mankind from which it has not been eliminated; the increased facilities of railway, steamship, automobile travel and air navigation have brought mankind so close together that ordinary human life is no longer safe anywhere in the boundaries of the little states in which it was once secure. In some fashion it is now necessary to achieve sufficient human unity to establish a world peace and save the future of mankind.

In one or other of two ways only is that unification possible. Either men may set up a common league to keep the peace of the earth, or one state must ultimately become so great and powerful as to repeat for all the world what Rome did for Europe two thousand years ago. Either we must have human unity by a league of existing states or by an Imperial Conquest. The former is now the declared Aim of our country and its Allies; the latter is manifestly the ambition of the present rulers of Germany. Whatever the complications may have been in the earlier stages of the war, due to treaties that are now dead letters and agreements that are extinct, the essential issue now before every man in the world is this: Is the unity of mankind to be the unity of a common freedom, in which every race and nationality may participate with complete self-respect, playing its part, according to its character, in one great world community, or is it to be reached — and it can only be so reached through many generations of bloodshed and struggle still, even if it

can be ever reached in this way at all — through conquest and a German hegemony?

While the rulers of Germany to-day are more openly aggressive and imperialist than they were in August, 1914, the Allies arrayed against them have made great progress in clearing up and realizing the instincts and ideals which brought them originally into the struggle. The German government offers the world to-day a warring future in which Germany alone is to be secure and powerful and proud. *Mankind will not endure that*. The Allies offer the world more and more definitely the scheme of an organized League of Free Nations, a rule of law and justice about the earth. To fight for that and for no other conceivable end, the United States of America, with the full sympathy and co-operation of every state in the western hemisphere, has entered the war. The British Empire, in the midst of the stress of the great war, has set up in Dublin a Convention of Irishmen of all opinions with the fullest powers of deciding upon the future of their country. If Ireland were not divided against herself she could be free and equal with England to-morrow. It is the open intention of Great Britain to develop representative government, where it has not hitherto existed, in India and Egypt, to go on steadfastly increasing the share of the natives of these countries in the government of their own lands, until they too become free and equal members of the world league. Neither France nor Italy nor Britain nor America has ever tampered with the shipping of other countries except in time of war, and the trade of the British Empire has been impartially open to all the world. The extra-national "possessions," the so-called "subject nations" in the Empires of Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, are, in fact, possessions held in trust against the day when the League of Free Nations will inherit for mankind.

Is it to be union by conquest or is it to be union by league? For any sort of man except the German the question is, Will you be a free citizen or will you be an underling to the German imperialism? For the German now the question is a far graver and more tragic one. For him it is this: "You belong to a people not now increasing very rapidly, a numerous people, but not so numerous as some of the great peoples of the world, a people very highly trained, very well drilled

and well armed, perhaps as well trained and drilled and equipped as ever it will be. The collapse of Russian imperialism has made you safe if now you can get peace, and you *can* get a peace now that will neither destroy you nor humiliate you nor open up the prospect of fresh wars. The Allies offer you such a peace. To accept it, we must warn you plainly, means refusing to go on with the manifest intentions of your present rulers, which are to launch you and your children and your children's children upon a career of struggle for war predominance, which may no doubt inflict untold deprivations and miseries upon the rest of mankind, but whose end in the long run, for Germany and things German, can be only Judgment and Death."

In such terms as these the Oceanic Allies could now state their war-will and carry the world straightway into a new phase of human history. They could but they do not. For alas! not one of them is free from the entanglements of past things; when we look for the wisdom of statesmen we find the cunning of politicians; when open speech and plain reason might save the world, courts, bureaucrats, financiers and profiteers conspire.

VII

THE FUTURE OF MONARCHY

From the very outset of this war it was manifest to the clear-headed observer that only the complete victory of German imperialism could save the dynastic system in Europe from the fate that it had challenged. That curious system had been the natural and unplanned development of the political complications of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Two systems of monarchies, the Bourbon system and the German, then ruled Europe between them. With the latter was associated the tradition of the European unity under the Roman empire; all the Germanic monarchs had an itch to be called Caesar. The Kaiser of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the Czar had, so to speak, the prior claim to the title. The Prussian king set up as a Caesar in 1871; Queen Victoria became the Caesar of India (Kaisir-i-Hind) under the auspices of Lord Beaconsfield, and last and least, that most detestable of all Coburgers, Ferdinand of Bulgaria, gave Kaiserism a touch of quaint absurdity by setting up as Czar of Bulgaria. The weakening of the Bourbon system by the French revolution and the Napoleonic adventure cleared the way for the complete ascendancy of the Germanic monarchies in spite of the breaking away of the United States from that system.

After 1871, a constellation of quasi-divine Teutonic monarchs, of which the German Emperor, the German Queen Victoria, the German Czar, were the greatest stars, formed a caste apart, intermarried only among themselves, dominated the world and was regarded with a mystical awe by the ignorant and foolish in most European countries. The marriages, the funerals, the coronations, the obstetrics of this amazing breed of idols were matters of almost universal worship. The Czar and Queen Victoria professed also to be the heads of religion upon earth. The court-centered diplomacies of the more firmly rooted monarchies steered all the great liberating movements of the nineteenth century into monarchical channels. Italy was made a monarchy; Greece, the motherland of republics, was handed over to a needy scion of the Danish royal family; the sturdy peasants of Bulgaria suffered from a kindred imposition. Even Norway was saddled with as much of a king as it would stand, as a

condition of its independence. At the dawn of the twentieth century republican freedom seemed a remote dream beyond the confines of Switzerland and France — and it had no very secure air in France. Reactionary scheming has been an intermittent fever in the French republic for six and forty years. The French foreign office is still undemocratic in tradition and temper. But for the restless disloyalty of the Hohenzollerns this German kingly caste might be dominating the world to this day.

Of course the stability of this Teutonic dynastic system in Europe — which will presently seem to the student of history so curious a halting-place upon the way to human unity — rested very largely upon the maintenance of peace. It was the failure to understand this on the part of the German and Bulgarian rulers in particular that has now brought all monarchy to the question. The implicit theory that supported the intermarrying German royal families in Europe was that their inter-relationship and their aloofness from their subjects was a mitigation of national and racial animosities. In the days when Queen Victoria was the grandmother of Europe this was a plausible argument. King, Czar and Emperor, or Emperor and Emperor would meet, and it was understood that these meetings were the lubrication of European affairs. The monarchs married largely, conspicuously, and very expensively for our good. Royal funerals, marriages, christenings, coronations, and jubilees interrupted traffic and stimulated trade everywhere. They seemed to give a *raison d'être* for mankind. It is the Emperor William and the Czar Ferdinand who have betrayed not only humanity but their own strange caste by shattering all these pleasant illusions. The wisdom of Kant is justified, and we know now that kings cause wars. It needed the shock of the great war to bring home the wisdom of that old Scotchman of Königsberg to the mind of the ordinary man. Moreover in support of the dynastic system was the fact that it did exist as the system in possession, and all prosperous and intelligent people are chary of disturbing existing things. Life is full of vestigial structures, and it is a long way to logical perfection. Let us keep on, they would argue, with what we have. And another idea which, rightly or wrongly, made men patient with the emperors and kings was an exaggerated idea of the insecurity of republican institutions.

You can still hear very old dull men say gravely that "kings are better than pronunciamentos"; there was an article upon Greece to this effect quite recently in that uncertain paper *The New Statesman*. Then a kind of illustrative gesture would be made to the South American republics, although the internal disturbances of the South American republics have diminished to very small dimensions in the last three decades and although pronunciamentos rarely disturb the traffic in Switzerland, the United States, or France. But there can be no doubt that the influence of the Germanic monarchy up to the death of Queen Victoria upon British thought was in the direction of estrangement from the two great modern republics and in the direction of assistance and propitiation to Germany. We surrendered Heligoland, we made great concessions to German colonial ambitions, we allowed ourselves to be jockeyed into a phase of dangerous hostility to France. A practice of sneering at things American has died only very recently out of English journalism and literature, as any one who cares to consult the bound magazines of the 'seventies and 'eighties may soon see for himself. It is well too in these days not to forget Colonel Marchand, if only to remember that such a clash must never recur. But in justice to our monarchy we must remember that after the death of Queen Victoria, the spirit, if not the forms, of British kingship was greatly modified by the exceptional character and ability of King Edward VII. He was curiously anti-German in spirit; he had essentially democratic instincts; in a few precious years he restored good will between France and Great Britain. It is no slight upon his successor to doubt whether any one could have handled the present opportunities and risks of monarchy in Great Britain as Edward could have handled them.

Because no doubt if monarchy is to survive in the British Empire it must speedily undergo the profoundest modification. The old state of affairs cannot continue. The European dynastic system, based upon the intermarriage of a group of mainly German royal families, is dead to-day; it is freshly dead, but it is as dead as the rule of the Incas. It is idle to close our eyes to this fact. The revolution in Russia, the setting up of a republic in China, demonstrating the ripeness of the East for free institutions, the entry of the American

republics into world politics — these things slam the door on any idea of working back to the old nineteenth-century system. People calls to people. “No peace with the Hohenzollerns” is a cry that carries with it the final repudiation of emperors and kings. The man in the street will assure you he wants no diplomatic peace. Beyond the unstable shapes of the present the political forms of the future rise now so clearly that they are the common talk of men. Kant’s lucid thought told us long ago that the peace of the world demanded a world union of republics. That is a commonplace remark now in every civilized community.

The stars in their courses, the logic of circumstances, the everyday needs and everyday intelligence of men, all these things march irresistibly towards a permanent world peace based on democratic republicanism. The question of the future of monarchy is not whether it will be able to resist and overcome that trend; it has as little chance of doing that as the Lama of Thibet has of becoming Emperor of the Earth. It is whether it will resist openly, become the centre and symbol of a reactionary resistance, and have to be abolished and swept away altogether everywhere, as the Romanoffs have already been swept away in Russia, or whether it will be able in this country and that to adapt itself to the necessities of the great age that dawns upon mankind, to take a generous and helpful attitude towards its own modification, and so survive, for a time at any rate, in that larger air.

It is the fashion for the apologists of monarchy in the British Empire to speak of the British system as a crowned republic. That is an attractive phrase to people of republican sentiments. It is quite conceivable that the British Empire may be able to make that phrase a reality and that the royal line may continue, a line of hereditary presidents, with some of the ancient trappings and something of the picturesque prestige that, as the oldest monarchy in Europe, it has to-day. Two kings in Europe have already gone far towards realizing this conception of a life president; both the King of Italy and the King of Norway live as simply as if they were in the White House and are far more accessible. Along that line the British monarchy must go if it is not to go altogether. Will it go along those lines?

There are many reasons for hoping that it will do so. The *Times*

has styled the crown the "golden link" of the empire. Australians and Canadians, it was argued, had little love for the motherland but the greatest devotion to the sovereign, and still truer was this of Indians, Egyptians, and the like. It might be easy to press this theory of devotion too far, but there can be little doubt that the British Crown does at present stand as a symbol of unity over diversity such as no other crown, unless it be that of Austria-Hungary, can be said to do. The British crown is not like other crowns; it may conceivably take a line of its own and emerge — possibly a little more like a hat and a little less like a crown — from trials that may destroy every other monarchial system in the world.

Now many things are going on behind the scenes, many little indications peep out upon the speculative watcher and vanish again; but there is very little that is definite to go upon at the present time to determine how far the monarchy will rise to the needs of this great occasion. Certain acts and changes, the initiative to which would come most gracefully from royalty itself, could be done at this present time. They may be done quite soon. Upon the doing of them wait great masses of public opinion. The first of these things is for the British monarchy to sever itself definitely from the German dynastic system, with which it is so fatally entangled by marriage and descent, and to make its intention of becoming henceforth more and more British in blood as well as spirit, unmistakably plain. This idea has been put forth quite prominently in the *Times*. The king has been asked to give his countenance to the sweeping away of all those restrictions first set up by George the Third, upon the marriage of the Royal Princes with British, French and American subjects. The British Empire is very near the limit of its endurance of a kingly caste of Germans. The choice of British royalty between its peoples and its cousins cannot be indefinitely delayed. Were it made now publicly and boldly, there can be no doubt that the decision would mean a renascence of monarchy, a considerable outbreak of royalist enthusiasm in the Empire. There are times when a king or queen must need be dramatic and must a little anticipate occasions. It is not seemly to make concessions perforce; kings may not make obviously unwilling surrenders; it is the indecisive kings who lose their crowns.

No doubt the Anglicization of the royal family by national

marriages would gradually merge that family into the general body of the British peerage. Its consequent loss of distinction might be accompanied by an associated fading out of function, until the King became at last hardly more functional than was the late Duke of Norfolk as premier peer. Possibly that is the most desirable course from many points of view.

It must be admitted that the abandonment of marriages within the royal caste and a bold attempt to introduce a strain of British blood in the royal family does not in itself fulfil all that is needed if the British king is indeed to become the crowned president of his people and the nominal and accepted leader of the movement towards republican institutions. A thing that is productive of an enormous amount of republican talk in Great Britain is the suspicion — I believe an ill-founded suspicion — that there are influences at work at court antagonistic to republican institutions in friendly states and that there is a disposition even to sacrifice the interests of the liberal allies to dynastic sympathies. These things are not to be believed, but it would be a feat of vast impressiveness if there were something like a royal and public repudiation of the weaknesses of cousinship. The behaviour of the Allies towards that great Balkan statesman Venizelos, the sacrificing of the friendly Greek republicans in favour of the manifestly treacherous King of Greece, has produced the deepest shame and disgust in many quarters that are altogether friendly, that are even warmly "loyal" to the British monarchy.

And in a phase of tottering thrones it is very undesirable that the British habit of asylum should be abused. We have already in England the dethroned monarch of a friendly republic; he is no doubt duly looked after. In the future there may be a shaking of the autumnal boughs and a shower of emperors and kings. We do not want Great Britain to become a hotbed of reactionary plotting and the starting-point of restoration raids into the territories of emancipated peoples. This is particularly desirable if presently, after the Kaiser's death — which by all the statistics of Hohenzollern mortality cannot be delayed now for many years — the present Crown Prince goes a-wandering. We do not want any German ex-monarchs; Sweden is always open to them and friendly, and to Sweden they ought to go; and particularly do British people dread an irruption of

Hohenzollerns or Coburgers. Almost as undesirable would be the arrival of the Czar and Czarina. It is supremely important that no wind of suspicion should blow between us and the freedom of Russia. After the war even more than during the war will the enemy be anxious to sow discord between the great Russian-speaking and English-speaking democracies. Quite apart from the scandal of their inelegant domesticities, the establishment of the Czar and Czarina in England with frequent and easy access to our royal family may be extraordinarily unfortunate for the British monarchy. I will confess a certain sympathy for the Czar myself. He is not an evil figure, he is not a strong figure, but he has that sort of weakness, that failure in decision, which trails revolution in its wake. He has ended one dynasty already. The British royal family owes it to itself, that he bring not the infection of his misfortunes to Windsor.

The security of the British monarchy lies in such a courageous severance of its destinies from the Teutonic dynastic system. Will it make that severance? There I share an almost universal ignorance. The loyalty of the British is not to what kings are too prone to call "my person," not to a chosen and admired family, but to a renascent mankind. We have fought in this war for Belgium, for France, for general freedom, for civilization and the whole future of mankind, far more than for ourselves. We have not fought for a king. We are discovering in that spirit of human unity that lies below the idea of a League of Free Nations the real invisible king of our heart and race. But we will very gladly go on with our task under a nominal king unless he hampers us in the task that grows ever more plainly before us. … That, I think, is a fair statement of British public opinion on this question. But every day when I am in London I walk past Buckingham Palace to lunch at my club, and I look at that not very expressive façade and wonder — and we all wonder — what thoughts are going on behind it and what acts are being conceived there. Out of it there might yet come some gesture of acceptance magnificent enough to set beside President Wilson's magnificent declaration of war. …

These are things in the scales of fate. I will not pretend to be able to guess even which way the scales will swing.

THE PLAIN NECESSITY FOR A LEAGUE

Great as the sacrifices of prejudice and preconception which any effective realization of this idea of a League of Free Nations will demand, difficult as the necessary delegations of sovereignty must be, none the less are such sacrifices and difficulties unavoidable. People in France and Italy and Great Britain and Germany alike have to subdue their minds to the realization that some such League is now a necessity for them if their peace and national life are to continue. There is no prospect before them but either some such League or else great humiliation and disastrous warfare driving them down towards social dissolution; and for the United States it is only a question of a little longer time before the same alternatives have to be faced.

Whether this war ends in the complete defeat of Germany and German imperialism, or in a revolutionary modernization of Germany, or in a practical triumph for the Hohenzollerns, are considerations that affect the nature and scope of the League, but do not affect its essential necessity. In the first two cases the League of Free Nations will be a world league including Germany as a principal partner, in the latter case the League of Free Nations will be a defensive league standing steadfast against the threat of a world imperialism, and watching and restraining with one common will the homicidal maniac in its midst. But in all these cases there can be no great alleviation of the evils that now blacken and threaten to ruin human life altogether, unless all the civilized and peace-seeking peoples of the world are pledged and locked together under a common law and a common world policy. There must rather be an intensification of these evils. There must be wars more evil than this war continuing this war, and more destructive of civilized life. There can be no peace and hope for our race but an organized peace and hope, armed against disturbance as a state is armed against mad, ferocious, and criminal men.

Now, there are two chief arguments, running one into the other, for the necessity of merging our existing sovereignties into a greater and, if possible, a world-wide league. The first is the present

geographical impossibility of nearly all the existing European states and empires; and the second is the steadily increasing disproportion between the tortures and destructions inflicted by modern warfare and any possible advantages that may arise from it. Underlying both arguments is the fact that modern developments of mechanical science have brought the nations of Europe together into too close a proximity. This present war, more than anything else, is a violent struggle between old political ideas and new antagonistic conditions.

It is the unhappy usage of our schools and universities to study the history of mankind only during periods of mechanical unprogressiveness. The historical ideas of Europe range between the time when the Greeks were going about the world on foot or horseback or in galleys or sailing ships to the days when Napoleon, Wellington, and Nelson were going about at very much the same pace in much the same vehicles and vessels. At the advent of steam and electricity the muse of history holds her nose and shuts her eyes. Science will study and get the better of a modern disease, as, for example, sleeping sickness, in spite of the fact that it has no classical standing; but our history schools would be shocked at the bare idea of studying the effect of modern means of communication upon administrative areas, large or small. This defect in our historical training has made our minds politically sluggish. We fail to adapt readily enough. In small things and great alike we are trying to run the world in areas marked out in or before the eighteenth century, regardless of the fact that a man or an army or an aeroplane can get in a few minutes or a few hours to points that it would have taken days or weeks to reach under the old foot-and-horse conditions. That matters nothing to the learned men who instruct our statesmen and politicians. It matters everything from the point of view of social and economic and political life. And the grave fact to consider is that all the great states of Europe, except for the unification of Italy and Germany, are still much of the size and in much the same boundaries that made them strong and safe in the eighteenth century, that is to say, in the closing years of the foot-horse period. The British empire grew and was organized under those conditions, and had to modify itself only a little to meet the needs of steam shipping. All over the world are its linked possessions and its ports and coaling stations and

fastnesses on the trade routes. And British people still look at the red-splashed map of the world with the profoundest self-satisfaction, blind to the swift changes that are making that scattered empire — if it is to remain an isolated system — almost the most dangerous conceivable.

Let me ask the British reader who is disposed to sneer at the League of Nations and say he is very well content with the empire, thank you, to get his atlas and consider one or two propositions. And, first, let him think of aviation. I can assure him, because upon this matter I have some special knowledge, that long-distance air travel for men, for letters and light goods and for bombs, is continually becoming more practicable. But the air routes that air transport will follow must go over a certain amount of land, for this reason that every few hundred miles at the longest the machine must come down for petrol. A flying machine with a safe non-stop range of 1500 miles is still a long way off. It may indeed be permanently impracticable because there seems to be an upward limit to the size of an aeroplane engine. And now will the reader take the map of the world and study the air routes from London to the rest of the empire? He will find them perplexing — if he wants them to be "All-Red." Happily this is not a British difficulty only. Will he next study the air routes from Paris to the rest of the French possessions? And, finally, will he study the air routes out of Germany to anywhere? The Germans are as badly off as any people. But we are all badly off. So far as world air transit goes any country can, if it chooses, choke any adjacent country. Directly any trade difficulty breaks out, any country can begin a vexatious campaign against its neighbour's air traffic. It can oblige it to alight at the frontier, to follow prescribed routes, to land at specified places on those routes and undergo examinations that will waste precious hours. But so far as I can see, no European statesman, German or Allied, have begun to give their attention to this amazing difficulty. Without a great pooling of air control, either a world-wide pooling or a pooling at least of the Atlantic-Mediterranean Allies in one Air League, the splendid peace possibilities of air transport — and they are indeed splendid — must remain very largely a forbidden possibility to mankind.

And as a second illustration of the way in which changing

conditions are altering political questions, let the reader take his atlas and consider the case of that impregnable fastness, that great naval station, that Key to the Mediterranean, Gibraltar. British boys are brought up on Gibraltar and the Gibraltar idea. To the British imagination Gibraltar is almost as sacred a national symbol as the lions in Trafalgar Square. Now, in his atlas the reader will almost certainly find an inset map of this valuable possession, coloured bright red. The inset map will have attached to it a small scale of miles. From that he will be able to satisfy himself that there is not an inch of the rock anywhere that is not within five miles or less of Spanish land, and that there is rather more than a semicircle of hills round the rock within a range of seven or eight miles. That is much less than the range of a sixteen-inch gun. In other words, the Spaniards are in a position to knock Gibraltar to bits whenever they want to do so, or to smash and sink any ships in its harbour. They can hit it on every side. Consider, moreover, that there are long sweeps of coast north, south, and west of the Rock, from which torpedoes could be discharged at any ship that approached. Inquire further where on the Rock an aeroplane can land. And having ascertained these things, ask yourself what is the present value of Gibraltar?

I will not multiply disagreeable instances of this sort, though it would be easy enough to do so in the case both of France and Italy as well as of Great Britain. I give them as illustrations of the way in which everywhere old securities and old arrangements must be upset by the greater range of modern things. Let us get on to more general conditions. There is not a capital city in Europe that twenty years from now will not be liable to a bombing raid done by hundreds or even thousands of big aeroplanes, upon or even before a declaration of war, and there is not a line of sea communication that will not be as promptly interrupted by the hostile submarine. I point these things out here only to carry home the fact that the ideas of sovereign isolation and detachment that were perfectly valid in 1900, the self-sufficient empire, Imperial Zollverein and all that stuff, and damn the foreigner! are now, because of the enormous changes in range of action and facility of locomotion that have been going on, almost as wild — or would be if we were not so fatally accustomed to them —

and quite as dangerous, as the idea of setting up a free and sovereign state in the Isle of Dogs. All the European empires are becoming vulnerable at every point. Surely the moral is obvious. The only wise course before the allied European powers now is to put their national conceit in their pockets and to combine to lock up their foreign policy, their trade interests, and all their imperial and international interests into a League so big as to be able to withstand the most sudden and treacherous of blows. And surely the only completely safe course for them and mankind — hard and nearly impossible though it may seem at the present juncture — is for them to lock up into one unity with a democratized Germany and with all the other states of the earth into one peace-maintaining League.

If the reader will revert again to his atlas he will see very clearly that a strongly consolidated League of Free Nations, even if it consisted only of our present allies, would in itself form a combination with so close a system of communication about the world, and so great an economic advantage, that in the long run it could oblige Germany and the rest of the world to come in to its council. Divided the Oceanic Allies are, to speak plainly, geographical rags and nakedness; united they are a world. To set about organizing that League now, with its necessary repudiation on the part of Britain, France, and Italy, of a selfish and, it must be remembered in the light of these things I have but hinted at here, a *now hopelessly unpracticable imperialism*, would, I am convinced, lead quite rapidly to a great change of heart in Germany and to a satisfactory peace. But even if I am wrong in that, then all the stronger is the reason for binding, locking and uniting the allied powers together. It is the most dangerous of delusions for each and all of them to suppose that either Britain, France or Italy can ever stand alone again and be secure.

And turning now to the other aspect of these consequences of the development of material science, it is too often assumed that this war is being as horrible and destructive as war can be. There never was so great a delusion. This war has only begun to be horrible. No doubt it is much more horrible and destructive than any former war, but even in comparison with the full possibilities of known and existing means of destruction it is still a mild war. Perhaps it will never rise to

its full possibilities. At the present stage there is not a combatant, except perhaps America, which is not now practising a pinching economy of steel and other mechanical material. The Germans are running short of first-class flying men, and if we and our allies continue to press the air attack, and seek out and train our own vastly greater resources of first quality young airmen, the Germans may come as near to being "driven out of the air" as is possible. I am a firmer believer than ever I was in the possibility of a complete victory over Germany — through and by the air. But the occasional dropping of a big bomb or so in London is not to be taken as anything but a minimum display of what air war can do. In a little while now our alliance should be in a position to commence day and night continuous attacks upon the Rhine towns. Not hour-long raids such as London knows, but week-long raids. Then and then only shall we be able to gauge the really horrible possibilities of the air war. They are in our hands and not in the hands of the Germans. In addition the Germans are at a huge disadvantage in their submarine campaign. Their submarine campaign is only the feeble shadow of what a submarine campaign might be. Turning again to the atlas the reader can see for himself that the German and Austrian submarines are obliged to come out across very narrow fronts. A fence of mines less than three hundred miles long and two hundred feet deep would, for example, completely bar their exit through the North Sea. The U-boats run the gauntlet of that long narrow sea and pay a heavy toll to it. If only our Admiralty would tell the German public what that toll is now, there would come a time when German seamen would no longer consent to go down in them. Consider, however, what a submarine campaign would be for Great Britain if instead of struggling through this bottle-neck it were conducted from the coast of Norway, where these pests might harbour in a hundred fiords. Consider too what this weapon may be in twenty years' time in the hands of a country in the position of the United States. Great Britain, if she is not altogether mad, will cease to be an island as soon as possible after the war, by piercing the Channel Tunnel — how different our transport problem would be if we had that now! — but such countries as Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, directly they are involved in the future in a war against any efficient naval power

with an unimpeded sea access, will be isolated forthwith. I cannot conceive that any of the great ocean powers will rest content until such a tremendous possibility of blockade as the submarine has created is securely vested in the hands of a common league beyond any power of sudden abuse.

It must always be remembered that this war is a mechanical war conducted by men whose discipline renders them uninventive, who know little or nothing of mechanism, who are for the most part struggling blindly to get things back to the conditions for which they were trained, to Napoleonic conditions, with infantry and cavalry and comparatively light guns, the so-called "war of manoeuvres." It is like a man engaged in a desperate duel who keeps on trying to make it a game of cricket. Most of these soldiers detest every sort of mechanical device; the tanks, for example, which, used with imagination, might have given the British and French overwhelming victory on the western front, were subordinated to the usual cavalry "break through" idea. I am not making any particular complaint against the British and French generals in saying this. It is what must happen to any country which entrusts its welfare to soldiers. A soldier has to be a severely disciplined man, and a severely disciplined man cannot be a versatile man, and on the whole the British army has been as receptive to novelties as any. The German generals have done no better; indeed, they have not done so well as the generals of the Allies in this respect. But after the war, if the world does not organize rapidly for peace, then as resources accumulate a little, the mechanical genius will get to work on the possibilities of these ideas that have merely been sketched out in this war. We shall get big land ironclads which will smash towns. We shall get air offensives — let the experienced London reader think of an air raid going on hour after hour, day after day — that will really burn out and wreck towns, that will drive people mad by the thousand. We shall get a very complete cessation of sea transit. Even land transit may be enormously hampered by aerial attack. I doubt if any sort of social order will really be able to stand the strain of a fully worked out modern war. We have still, of course, to feel the full shock effects even of this war. Most of the combatants are going on, as sometimes men who have incurred grave wounds will still go on

for a time — without feeling them. The educational, biological, social, economic punishment that has already been taken by each of the European countries is, I feel, very much greater than we yet realize. Russia, the heaviest and worst-trained combatant, has indeed shown the effects and is down and sick, but in three years' time all Europe will know far better than it does now the full price of this war. And the shock effects of the next war will have much the same relation to the shock effects of this, as the shock of breaking a finger-nail has to the shock of crushing in a body. In Russia to-day we have seen, not indeed social revolution, not the replacement of one social order by another, but disintegration. Let not national conceit blind us. Germany, France, Italy, Britain are all slipping about on that same slope down which Russia has slid. Which goes first, it is hard to guess, or whether we shall all hold out to some kind of Peace. At present the social discipline of France and Britain seems to be at least as good as that of Germany, and the *morale* of the Rhineland and Bavaria has probably to undergo very severe testing by systematized and steadily increasing air punishment as this year goes on. The next war — if a next war comes — will see all Germany, from end to end, vulnerable to aircraft….

Such are the two sets of considerations that will, I think, ultimately prevail over every prejudice and every difficulty in the way of the League of Free Nations. Existing states have become impossible as absolutely independent sovereignties. The new conditions bring them so close together and give them such extravagant powers of mutual injury that they must either sink national pride and dynastic ambitions in subordination to the common welfare of mankind or else utterly shatter one another. It becomes more and more plainly a choice between the League of Free Nations and a famished race of men looting in search of non-existent food amidst the smouldering ruins of civilization. In the end I believe that the common sense of mankind will prefer a revision of its ideas of nationality and imperialism, to the latter alternative. It may take obstinate men a few more years yet of blood and horror to learn this lesson, but for my own part I cherish an obstinate belief in the potential reasonableness of mankind.

DEMOCRACY

All the talk, all the aspiration and work that is making now towards this conception of a world securely at peace, under the direction of a League of Free Nations, has interwoven with it an idea that is often rather felt than understood, the idea of Democracy. Not only is justice to prevail between race and race and nation and nation, but also between man and man; there is to be a universal respect for human life throughout the earth; the world, in the words of President Wilson, is to be made "safe for democracy." I would like to subject that word to a certain scrutiny to see whether the things we are apt to think and assume about it correspond exactly with the feeling of the word. I would like to ask what, under modern conditions, does democracy mean, and whether we have got it now anywhere in the world in its fulness and completion.

And to begin with I must have a quarrel with the word itself. The eccentricities of modern education make us dependent for a number of our primary political terms upon those used by the thinkers of the small Greek republics of ancient times before those petty states collapsed, through sheer political ineptitude, before the Macedonians. They thought in terms of states so small that it was possible to gather all the citizens together for the purposes of legislation. These states were scarcely more than what we English might call sovereign urban districts. Fast communications were made by runners; even the policeman with a bicycle of the modern urban district was beyond the scope of the Greek imagination. There were no railways, telegraphs, telephones, books or newspapers, there was no need for the state to maintain a system of education, and the affairs of the state were so simple that they could be discussed and decided by the human voice and open voting in an assembly of all the citizens. That is what democracy, meant. In Andorra, or perhaps in Canton Uri, such democracy may still be possible; in any other modern state it cannot exist. The opposite term to it was oligarchy, in which a small council of men controlled the affairs of the state. Oligarchy, narrowed down to one man, became monarchy. If you wished to be polite to an oligarchy you called it an aristocracy; if you

wished to point out that a monarch was rather by way of being self-appointed, you called him a Tyrant. An oligarchy with a property qualification was a plutocracy.

Now the modern intelligence, being under a sort of magic slavery to the ancient Greeks, has to adapt all these terms to the problems of states so vast and complex that they have the same relation to the Greek states that the anatomy of a man has to the anatomy of a jellyfish. They are not only greater in extent and denser in population, but they are increasingly innervated by more and more rapid means of communication and excitement. In the classical past — except for such special cases as the feeding of Rome with Egyptian corn — trade was a traffic in luxuries or slaves, war a small specialized affair of infantry and horsemen in search of slaves and loot, and empire the exaction of tribute. The modern state must conduct its enormous businesses through a system of ministries; its vital interests go all round the earth; nothing that any ancient Greek would have recognized as democracy is conceivable in a great modern state. It is absolutely necessary, if we are to get things clear in our minds about what democracy really means in relation to modern politics, first to make a quite fresh classification in order to find what items there really are to consider, and then to inquire which seem to correspond more or less closely in spirit with our ideas about ancient democracy.

Now there are two primary classes of idea about government in the modern world depending upon our conception of the political capacity of the common man. We may suppose he is a microcosm, with complete ideas and wishes about the state and the world, or we may suppose that he isn't. We may believe that the common man can govern, or we may believe that he can't. We may think further along the first line that he is so wise and good and right that we only have to get out of his way for him to act rightly and for the good of all mankind, or we may doubt it. And if we doubt that we may still believe that, though perhaps "you can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time," the common man, expressing himself by a majority vote, still remains the secure source of human wisdom. But next, while we may deny this universal distribution of political wisdom, we may, if we are sufficiently under

the sway of modern ideas about collective psychology, believe that it is necessary to poke up the political indifference and inability of the common man as much as possible, to thrust political ideas and facts upon him, to incite him to a watchful and critical attitude towards them, and above all to secure his assent to the proceedings of the able people who are managing public affairs. Or finally, we may treat him as a thing to be ruled and not consulted. Let me at this stage make out a classificatory diagram of these elementary ideas of government in a modern country.

CLASS I. It is supposed that the common man *can* govern:

(1) without further organization (Anarchy);

(2) through a majority vote by delegates.

CLASS II. It is supposed that the common man *cannot* govern, and that government therefore must be through the agency of Able Persons who may be classified under one of the following sub-heads, either as

(1) persons elected by the common man because he believes them to be persons able to govern — just as he chooses his doctors as persons able to secure health, and his electrical engineers as persons able to attend to his tramways, lighting, etc., etc.;

(2) persons of a special class, as, for example, persons born and educated to rule (e.g. *Aristocracy*), or rich business adventurers *(Plutocracy)* who rule without consulting the common man at all.

To which two sub-classes we may perhaps add a sort of intermediate stage between them, namely:

(3) persons elected by a special class of voter.

Monarchy may be either a special case of Class II.(1), (2) or (3), in which the persons who rule have narrowed down in number to one person, and the duration of monarchy may be either for life or a term of years. These two classes and the five sub-classes cover, I believe, all the elementary political types in our world.

Now in the constitution of a modern state, because of the conflict and confusion of ideas, all or most of these five sub-classes may usually be found intertwined. The British constitution, for instance, is a complicated tangle of arrangements, due to a struggle between the ideas of Class I.(2), Class II.(3), tending to become Class II.(1) and Class II.(2) in both its aristocratic and monarchist forms. The

American constitution is largely dominated by Class I.(2), from which it breaks away in the case of the President to a short-term monarchist aspect of Class II.(1). I will not elaborate this classification further. I have made it here in order to render clear first, that what we moderns mean by democracy is not what the Greeks meant at all, that is to say, direct government by the assembly of all the citizens, and secondly and more important, that the word "democracy" is being used very largely in current discussion, so that it is impossible to say in any particular case whether the intention is Class I.(2) or Class II.(1), and that we have to make up our minds whether we mean, if I may coin two phrases, "delegate democracy" or "selective democracy," or some definite combination of these two, when we talk about "democracy," before we can get on much beyond a generous gesture of equality and enfranchisement towards our brother man. The word is being used, in fact, confusingly for these two quite widely different things.

Now, it seems to me that though there has been no very clear discussion of the issue between those two very opposite conceptions of democracy, largely because of the want of proper distinctive terms, there has nevertheless been a wide movement of public opinion away from "delegate democracy" and towards "selective democracy." People have gone on saying "democracy," while gradually changing its meaning from the former to the latter. It is notable in Great Britain, for example, that while there has been no perceptible diminution in our faith in democracy, there has been a growing criticism of "party" and "politicians," and a great weakening in the power and influence of representatives and representative institutions. There has been a growing demand for personality and initiative in elected persons. The press, which was once entirely subordinate politically to parliamentary politics, adopts an attitude towards parliament and party leaders nowadays which would have seemed inconceivable insolence in the days of Lord Palmerston. And there has been a vigorous agitation in support of electoral methods which are manifestly calculated to subordinate "delegated" to "selected" men.

The movement for electoral reform in Great Britain at the present time is one of quite fundamental importance in the development of

modern democracy. The case of the reformers is that heretofore modern democracy has not had a fair opportunity of showing its best possibilities to the world, because the methods of election have persistently set aside the better types of public men, or rather of would-be public men, in favour of mere party hacks. That is a story common to Britain and the American democracies, but in America it was expressed in rather different terms and dealt with in a less analytical fashion than it has been in Great Britain. It was not at first clearly understood that the failure of democracy to produce good government came through the preference of "delegated" over "selected" men, the idea of delegation did in fact dominate the minds of both electoral reformers and electoral conservatives alike, and the earlier stages of the reform movement in Great Britain were inspired not so much by the idea of getting a better type of representative as by the idea of getting a fairer representation of minorities. It was only slowly that the idea that sensible men do not usually belong to any political "party" took hold. It is only now being realized that what sensible men desire in a member of parliament is honour and capacity rather than a mechanical loyalty to a "platform." They do not want to dictate to their representative; they want a man they can trust as their representative. In the fifties and sixties of the last century, in which this electoral reform movement began and the method of Proportional Representation was thought out, it was possible for the reformers to work untroubled upon the assumption that if a man was not necessarily born a

"… little Liber-al, or else a little Conservative,"

he must at least be a Liberal-Unionist or a Conservative Free-Trader. But seeking a fair representation for party minorities, these reformers produced a system of voting at once simple and incapable of manipulation, that leads straight, not to the representation of small parties, but to a type of democratic government by selected best men.

Before giving the essential features of that system, it may be well to state in its simplest form the evils at which the reform aims. An election, the reformers point out, is not the simple matter it appears to be at the first blush. Methods of voting can be manipulated in various ways, and nearly every method has its own liability to falsification. We may take for illustration the commonest, simplest

case — the case that is the perplexity of every clear-thinking voter under British or American conditions — the case of a constituency in which every elector has one vote, and which returns one representative to Parliament. The naive theory on which people go is that all the possible candidates are put up, that each voter votes for the one he likes best, and that the best man wins. The bitter experience is that hardly ever are there more than two candidates, and still more rarely is either of these the best man possible. Suppose, for example, the constituency is mainly Conservative. A little group of pothouse politicians, wire-pullers, busybodies, local journalists, and small lawyers, working for various monetary interests, have "captured" the local Conservative organization. They have time and energy to capture it, because they have no other interest in life except that. It is their "business," and honest men are busy with other duties. For reasons that do not appear these local "workers" put up an unknown Mr. Goldbug as the official Conservative candidate. He professes a generally Conservative view of things, but few people are sure of him and few people trust him. Against him the weaker (and therefore still more venal) Liberal organization now puts up a Mr. Kentshire (formerly Wurstberg) to represent the broader thought and finer generosities of the English mind. A number of Conservative gentlemen, generally too busy about their honest businesses to attend the party "smokers" and the party cave, realize suddenly that they want Goldbug hardly more than they want Wurstberg. They put up their long-admired, trusted, and able friend Mr. Sanity as an Independent Conservative.

Every one knows the trouble that follows. Mr. Sanity is "going to split the party vote." The hesitating voter is told, with considerable truth, that a vote given for Mr. Sanity is a vote given for Wurstberg. At any price the constituency does not want Wurstberg. So at the eleventh hour Mr. Sanity is induced to withdraw, and Mr. Goldbug goes into Parliament to misrepresent this constituency. And so with most constituencies, and the result is a legislative body consisting largely of men of unknown character and obscure aims, whose only credential is the wearing of a party label. They come into parliament not to forward the great interests they ostensibly support, but with an eye to the railway jobbery, corporation business, concessions and

financial operations that necessarily go on in and about the national legislature. That in its simplest form is the dilemma of democracy. The problem that has confronted modern democracy since its beginning has not really been the representation of organized minorities — they are very well able to look after themselves — but *the protection of the unorganized mass of busily occupied, fairly intelligent men from the tricks of the specialists who work the party machines*. We know Mr. Sanity, we want Mr. Sanity, but we are too busy to watch the incessant intrigues to oust him in favour of the obscurely influential people, politically docile, who are favoured by the organization. We want an organizer-proof method of voting. It is in answer to this demand, as the outcome of a most careful examination of the ways in which voting may be protected from the exploitation of those who *work* elections, that the method of Proportional Representation with a single transferable vote has been evolved. It is organizer-proof. It defies the caucus. If you do not like Mr. Goldbug you can put up and vote for Mr. Sanity, giving Mr. Goldbug your second choice, in the most perfect confidence that in any case your vote cannot help to return Mr. Wurstberg.

With Proportional Representation with a single transferable vote (this specification is necessary, because there are also the inferior imitations of various election-riggers figuring as proportional representation), it is *impossible to prevent the effective candidature of independent men of repute beside the official candidates*.

The method of voting under the Proportional Representation system has been ignorantly represented as complex. It is really almost ideally simple. You mark the list of candidates with numbers in the order of your preference. For example, you believe A to be absolutely the best man for parliament; you mark him 1. But B you think is the next best man; you mark him 2. That means that if A gets an enormous amount of support, ever so many more votes than he requires for his return, your vote will not be wasted. Only so much of your vote as is needed will go to A; the rest will go to B. Or, on the other hand, if A has so little support that his chances are hopeless, you will not have thrown your vote away upon him; it will go to B. Similarly you may indicate a third, a fourth, and a fifth choice; if you like you may mark every name on your paper with a number to

indicate the order of your preferences. And that is all the voter has to do. The reckoning and counting of the votes presents not the slightest difficulty to any one used to the business of computation. Silly and dishonest men, appealing to still sillier audiences, have got themselves and their audiences into humorous muddles over this business, but the principles are perfectly plain and simple. Let me state them here; they can be fully and exactly stated, with various ornaments, comments, arguments, sarcastic remarks, and digressions, in seventy lines of this type.

It will be evident that, in any election under this system, any one who has got a certain proportion of No. 1 votes will be elected. If, for instance, five people have to be elected and 20,000 voters vote, then any one who has got 4001 first votes or more *must* be elected. 4001 votes is in that case enough to elect a candidate. This sufficient number of votes is called the *quota*, and any one who has more than that number of votes has obviously got more votes than is needful for election. So, to begin with, the voting papers are classified according to their first votes, and any candidates who have got more than a quota of first votes are forthwith declared elected. But most of these elected men would under the old system waste votes because they would have too many; for manifestly a candidate who gets more than the quota of votes *needs only a fraction of each of these votes to return him*. If, for instance, he gets double the quota he needs only half each vote. He takes that fraction, therefore, under this new and better system, and the rest of each vote is entered on to No. 2 upon that voting paper. And so on. Now this is an extremely easy job for an accountant or skilled computer, and it is quite easily checked by any other accountant and skilled computer. A reader with a bad arithmetical education, ignorant of the very existence of such a thing as a slide rule, knowing nothing of account keeping, who thinks of himself working out the resultant fractions with a stumpy pencil on a bit of greasy paper in a bad light, may easily think of this transfer of fractions as a dangerous and terrifying process. It is, for a properly trained man, the easiest, exactest job conceivable. The Cash Register people will invent machines to do it for you while you wait. What happens, then, is that every candidate with more than a quota, beginning with the top candidate, sheds a traction of each vote he has

received, down the list, and the next one sheds his surplus fraction in the same way, and so on until candidates lower in the list, who are at first below the quota, fill up to it. When all the surplus votes of the candidates at the head of the list have been disposed of, then the hopeless candidates at the bottom of the list are dealt with. The second votes on their voting papers are treated as whole votes and distributed up the list, and so on. It will be plain to the quick-minded that, towards the end, there will be a certain chasing about of little fractions of votes, and a slight modification of the quota due to voting papers having no second or third preferences marked upon them, a chasing about that it will be difficult for an untrained intelligence to follow. *But untrained intelligences are not required to follow it*. For the skilled computer these things offer no difficulty at all. And they are not difficulties of principle but of manipulation. One might as well refuse to travel in a taxicab until the driver had explained the magneto as refuse to accept the principle of Proportional Representation by the single transferable vote until one had remedied all the deficiencies of one's arithmetical education. The fundamental principle of the thing, that a candidate who gets more votes than he wants is made to hand on a fraction of each vote to the voter's second choice, and that a candidate whose chances are hopeless is made to hand on the whole vote to the voter's second choice, so that practically only a small number of votes are ineffective, is within the compass of the mind of a boy of ten.

But simple as this method is, it completely kills the organization and manipulation of voting. It completely solves the Goldbug-Wurstberg- Sanity problem. It is knave-proof — short of forging, stealing, or destroying voting papers. A man of repute, a leaderly man, may defy all the party organizations in existence and stand beside and be returned over the head of a worthless man, though the latter be smothered with party labels. That is the gist of this business. The difference in effect between Proportional Representation and the old method of voting must ultimately be to change the moral and intellectual quality of elected persons profoundly. People are only beginning to realize the huge possibilities of advance inherent in this change of political method. It means no less than a revolution from "delegate democracy" to "selective democracy."

Now, I will not pretend to be anything but a strong partizan in this matter. When I speak of "democracy" I mean "selective democracy." I believe that "delegate democracy" is already provably a failure in the world, and that the reason why to-day, after three and a half years of struggle, we are still fighting German autocracy and fighting with no certainty of absolute victory, is because the affairs of the three great Atlantic democracies have been largely in the hands not of selected men but of delegated men, men of intrigue and the party machine, of dodges rather than initiatives, second-rate men. When Lord Haldane, defending his party for certain insufficiencies in their preparation for the eventuality of the great war, pleaded that they had no "mandate" from the country to do anything of the sort, he did more than commit political suicide, he bore conclusive witness against the whole system which had made him what he was. Neither Britain nor France in this struggle has produced better statesmen nor better generals than the German autocracy. The British and French Foreign Offices are old monarchist organizations still. To this day the British and French politicians haggle and argue with the German ministers upon petty points and debating society advantages, smart and cunning, while the peoples perish. The one man who has risen to the greatness of this great occasion, the man who is, in default of any rival, rapidly becoming the leader of the world towards peace, is neither a delegate politician nor the choice of a monarch and his councillors. He is the one authoritative figure in these transactions whose mind has not been subdued either by long discipline in the party machine or by court intrigue, who has continued his education beyond those early twenties when the mind of the "budding politician" ceases to expand, who has thought, and thought things out, who is an educated man among dexterous under-educated specialists. By something very like a belated accident in the framing of the American constitution, the President of the United States is more in the nature of a selected man than any other conspicuous figure at the present time. He is specially elected by a special electoral college after an elaborate preliminary selection of candidates by the two great party machines. And be it remembered that Mr. Wilson is not the first great President the United States have had, he is one of a series of figures who tower over their European

contemporaries. The United States have had many advantageous circumstances to thank for their present ascendancy in the world's affairs: isolation from militarist pressure for a century and a quarter, a vast virgin continent, plenty of land, freedom from centralization, freedom from titles and social vulgarities, common schools, a real democratic spirit in its people, and a great enthusiasm for universities; but no single advantage has been so great as this happy accident which has given it a specially selected man as its voice and figurehead in the world's affairs. In the average congressman, in the average senator, as Ostrogorski's great book so industriously demonstrated, the United States have no great occasion for pride. Neither the Senate nor the House of Representatives seem to rise above the level of the British Houses of Parliament, with a Government unable to control the rebel forces of Ulster, unable to promote or dismiss generals without an outcry, weakly amenable to the press, and terrifyingly incapable of great designs. It is to the United States of America we must look now if the world is to be made "safe for democracy." It is to the method of selection, as distinguished from delegation, that we must look if democracy is to be saved from itself.

X

THE RECENT STRUGGLE FOR PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

British political life resists cleansing with all the vigour of a dirty little boy. It is nothing to your politician that the economic and social organization of all the world, is strained almost to the pitch of collapse, and that it is vitally important to mankind that everywhere the whole will and intelligence of the race should be enlisted in the great tasks of making a permanent peace and reconstructing the shattered framework of society. These are remote, unreal considerations to the politician. What is the world to him? He has scarcely heard of it. He has been far too busy as a politician. He has been thinking of smart little tricks in the lobby and brilliant exploits at question time. He has been thinking of jobs and appointments, of whether Mr. Asquith is likely to "come back" and how far it is safe to bank upon L. G. His one supreme purpose is to keep affairs in the hands of his own specialized set, to keep the old obscure party game going, to rig his little tricks behind a vast, silly camouflage of sham issues, to keep out able men and disinterested men, the public mind, and the general intelligence, from any effective interference with his disastrous manipulations of the common weal.

I do not see how any intelligent and informed man can have followed the recent debates in the House of Commons upon Proportional Representation without some gusts of angry contempt. They were the most pitiful and alarming demonstration of the intellectual and moral quality of British public life at the present time.

From the wire-pullers of the Fabian Society and from the party organizers of both Liberal and Tory party alike, and from the knowing cards, the pothouse shepherds, and jobbing lawyers who "work" the constituencies, comes the chief opposition to this straightening out of our electoral system so urgently necessary and so long overdue. They have fought it with a zeal and efficiency that is rarely displayed in the nation's interest. From nearly every

outstanding man outside that little inner world of political shams and dodges, who has given any attention to the question, comes, on the other hand, support for this reform. Even the great party leaders, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Asquith, were in its favour. One might safely judge this question by considering who are the advocates on either side. But the best arguments for Proportional Representation arise out of its opponents' speeches, and to these I will confine my attention now. Consider Lord Harcourt — heir to the most sacred traditions of the party game — hurling scorn at a project that would introduce "faddists, mugwumps," and so on and so on — in fact independent thinking men — into the legislature. Consider the value of Lord Curzon's statement that London "rose in revolt" against the project. Do you remember that day, dear reader, when the streets of London boiled with passionate men shouting, "No Proportional Representation! Down with Proportional Representation"? You don't. Nor do I. But what happened was that the guinea-pigs and solicitors and nobodies, the party hacks who form the bulk of London's misrepresentation in the House of Commons, stampeded in terror against a proposal that threatened to wipe them out and replace them by known and responsible men. London, alas! does not seem to care how its members are elected. What Londoner knows anything about his member? Hundreds of thousands of Londoners do not even know which of the ridiculous constituencies into which the politicians have dismembered our London they are in. Only as I was writing this in my flat in St. James's Court, Westminster, did it occur to me to inquire who was representing me in the councils of the nation while I write….

After some slight difficulty I ascertained that my representative is a Mr. Burdett Coutts, who was, in the romantic eighties, Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett. And by a convenient accident I find that the other day he moved to reject the Proportional Representation Amendment made by the House of Lords to the Representation of the People Bill, so that I am able to look up the debate in Hansard and study my opinions as he represented them and this question at one and the same time. And, taking little things first, I am proud and happy to discover that the member for me was the only participator in the debate who, in the vulgar and reprehensible phrase, "threw a dead

cat," or, in polite terms, displayed classical learning. My member said, "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*," with a rather graceful compliment to the Labour Conference at Nottingham. "I could not help thinking to myself," said my member, "that at that conference there must have been many men of sufficient classical reading to say to themselves, '*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*.'" In which surmise he was quite right. Except perhaps for "*Tempus fugit,*" "*verbum sap.*," "*Arma virumque*," and "*Quis custodiet*," there is no better known relic of antiquity. But my member went a little beyond my ideas when he said: "We are asked to enter upon a method of legislation which can bear no other description than that of law-making in the dark," because I think it can bear quite a lot of other descriptions. This was, however, the artistic prelude to a large, vague, gloomy dissertation about nothing very definite, a muddling up of the main question with the minor issue of a schedule of constituencies involved in the proposal.

The other parts of my member's speech do not, I confess, fill me with the easy confidence I would like to feel in my proxy. Let me extract a few gems of eloquence from the speech of this voice which speaks for me, and give also the only argument he advanced that needs consideration. "History repeats itself," he said, "very often in curious ways as to facts, but generally with very different results." That, honestly, I like. It is a sentence one can read over several times. But he went on to talk of the entirely different scheme for minority representation, which was introduced into the Reform Bill of 1867, and there I am obliged to part company with him. That was a silly scheme for giving two votes to each voter in a three-member constituency. It has about as much resemblance to the method of scientific voting under discussion as a bath-chair has to an aeroplane. "But that measure of minority representation led to a baneful invention," my representative went on to say, "and left behind it a hateful memory in the Birmingham caucus. I well remember that when I stood for Parliament thirty-two years ago *we had no better platform weapon than repeating over and over again in a sentence the name of Mr. Schnadhorst,* and I am not sure that it would not serve the same purpose now. Under that system the work of the caucus was, of course, far simpler than it will be if this system ever

comes into operation. All the caucus had to do under that measure was to divide the electors into three groups and with three candidates, A., B., and C., to order one group to vote for A. and B., another for B. and C., and the third for A. and C., and they carried the whole of their candidates and kept them for many years. But the multiplicity of ordinal preferences, second, third, fourth, fifth, up to tenth, which the single transferable vote system would involve, will require a more scientific handling in party interests, and neither party will be able to face an election with any hope of success without the assistance of the most drastic form of caucus and *without its orders being carried out by the electors*."

Now, I swear by Heaven that, lowly creature as I am, a lost vote, a nothing, voiceless and helpless in public affairs, I am not going to stand the imputation that that sort of reasoning represents the average mental quality of Westminster — outside Parliament, that is. Most of my neighbours in St. James's Court, for example, have quite large pieces of head above their eyebrows. Read these above sentences over and ponder their significance — so far as they have any significance. Never mind my keen personal humiliation at this display of the mental calibre of my representative, but consider what the mental calibre of a House must be that did not break out into loud guffaws at such a passage. The line of argument is about as lucid as if one reasoned that because one can break a window with a stone it is no use buying a telescope. And it remains entirely a matter for speculation whether my member is arguing that a caucus *can* rig an election carried on under the Proportional Representation system or that it cannot. At the first blush it seems to read as if he intended the former. But be careful! Did he? Let me suggest that in that last sentence he really expresses the opinion that it cannot. It can be read either way. Electors under modern conditions are not going to obey the "orders" of even the "most drastic caucus" — whatever a "drastic caucus" may be. Why should they? In the Birmingham instance it was only a section of the majority, voting by wards, in an election on purely party lines, which "obeyed" in order to keep out the minority party candidate. I think myself that my member's mind waggled. Perhaps his real thoughts shone out through an argument not intended to betray them. What he did say as much as he said

anything was that under Proportional Representation, elections are going to be very troublesome and difficult for party candidates. If that was his intention, then, after all, I forgive him much. I think that and more than that. I think that they are going to make party candidates who are merely party candidates impossible. That is exactly what we reformers are after. Then I shall get a representative more to my taste than Mr. Burdett Coutts.

But let me turn now to the views of other people's representatives.

Perhaps the most damning thing ever said against the present system, damning because of its empty absurdity, was uttered by Sir Thomas Whittaker. He was making the usual exaggerations of the supposed difficulties of the method. He said English people didn't like such "complications." They like a "straight fight between two men." Think of it! A straight fight! For more than a quarter-century I have been a voter, usually with votes in two or three constituencies, and never in all that long political life have I seen a single straight fight in an election, but only the dismallest sham fights it is possible to conceive. Thrice only in all that time have I cast a vote for a man whom I respected. On all other occasions the election that mocked my citizenship was either an arranged walk-over for one party or the other, or I had a choice between two unknown persons, mysteriously selected as candidates by obscure busy people with local interests in the constituency. Every intelligent person knows that this is the usual experience of a free and independent voter in England. The "fight" of an ordinary Parliamentary election in England is about as "straight" as the business of a thimble rigger.

And consider just what these "complications" are of which the opponents of Proportional Representation chant so loudly. In the sham election of to-day, which the politicians claim gives them a mandate to muddle up our affairs, the voter puts a x against the name of the least detestable of the two candidates that are thrust upon him. Under the Proportional Representation method there will be a larger constituency, a larger list of candidates, and a larger number of people to be elected, and he will put I against the name of the man he most wants to be elected, 2 against his second choice, and if he likes he may indulge in marking a third, or even a further choice. He may, if he thinks fit, number off the whole list of candidates. That is all he

will have to do. That is the stupendous intricacy of the method that flattens out the minds of Lord Harcourt and Sir Thomas Whittaker. And as for the working of it, if you must go into that, all that happens is that if your first choice gets more votes than he needs for his return, he takes only the fraction of your vote that he requires, and the rest of the vote goes on to your Number 2. If 2 isn't in need of all of it, the rest goes on to 3. And so on. That is the profound mathematical mystery, that is the riddle beyond the wit of Westminster, which overpowers these fine intelligences and sets them babbling of "senior wranglers." Each time there is a debate on this question in the House, member after member hostile to the proposal will play the ignorant fool and pretend to be confused himself, and will try to confuse others, by deliberately clumsy statements of these most elementary ideas. Surely if there were no other argument for a change of type in the House, these poor knitted brows, these public perspirations of the gentry who "cannot understand P.R.," should suffice.

But let us be just; it is not all pretence; the inability of Mr. Austen Chamberlain to grasp the simple facts before him was undoubtedly genuine. He followed Mr. Burdett Coutts, in support of Mr. Burdett Coutts, with the most Christian disregard of the nasty things Mr. Burdett Coutts had seemed to be saying about the Birmingham caucus from which he sprang. He had a childish story to tell of how voters would not give their first votes to their real preferences, because they would assume he "would get in in any case" — God knows why. Of course on the assumption that the voter behaves like an idiot, anything is possible. And never apparently having heard of fractions, this great Birmingham leader was unable to understand that a voter who puts 1 against a candidate's name votes for that candidate anyhow. He could not imagine any feeling on the part of the voter that No. 1 was his man. A vote is a vote to this simple rather than lucid mind, a thing one and indivisible. Read this —

"Birmingham," he said, referring to a Schedule under consideration, "is to be cut into three constituencies of four members each. I am to have a constituency of 100,000 electors, I suppose. How many thousand inhabitants I do not know. *Every effort will be made to prevent any of those electors knowing — in fact, it would be*

impossible for any of them to know — whether they voted for me or not, or at any rate whether they effectively voted for me or not, or whether the vote which they wished to give to me was really diverted to somebody else."

Only in a house of habitually inattentive men could any one talk such nonsense without reproof, but I look in vain through Hansard's record of this debate for a single contemptuous reference to Mr. Chamberlain's obtuseness. And the rest of his speech was a lamentable account of the time and trouble he would have to spend upon his constituents if the new method came in. He was the perfect figure of the parochially important person in a state of defensive excitement. No doubt his speech appealed to many in the House.

Of course Lord Harcourt was quite right in saying that the character of the average House of Commons member will be changed by Proportional Representation. It will. It will make the election of obscure and unknown men, of carpet-bag candidates who work a constituency as a hawker works a village, of local pomposities and village-pump "leaders" almost impossible. It will replace such candidates by better known and more widely known men. It will make the House of Commons so much the more a real gathering of the nation, so much the more a house of representative men. (Lord Harcourt's "faddists and mugwumps.") And it is perfectly true as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (also an opponent) declares, that Proportional Representation means constituencies so big that it will be impossible for a poor man to cultivate and work them. That is unquestionable. But, mark another point, it will also make it useless, as Mr. Chamberlain has testified, for rich men to cultivate and work them. All this cultivating and working, all this going about and making things right with this little jobber here, that contractor there, all the squaring of small political clubs and organizations, all the subscription blackmail and charity bribery, that now makes a Parliamentary candidature so utterly rotten an influence upon public life, will be killed dead by Proportional Representation. You cannot job men into Parliament by Proportional Representation. Proportional Representation lets in the outsider. It lets in the common, unassigned voter who isn't in the local clique. That is the clue to nearly all this opposition of the politicians. It makes

democracy possible for the first time in modern history. And that poor man of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's imagination, instead of cadging about a constituency in order to start politician, will have to make good in some more useful way — as a leader of the workers in their practical affairs, for example — before people will hear of him and begin to believe in him.

The opposition to Proportional Representation of Mr. Sidney Webb and his little circle is a trifle more "scientific" in tone than these naive objections of the common run of antagonist, but underlying it is the same passionate desire to keep politics a close game for the politician and to bar out the politically unspecialized man. There is more conceit and less jobbery behind the criticisms of this type of mind. It is an opposition based on the idea that the common man is a fool who does not know what is good for him. So he has to be stampeded. Politics, according to this school, is a sort of cattle-driving.

The Webbites do not deny the broad facts of the case. Our present electoral system, with our big modern constituencies of thousands of voters, leads to huge turnovers of political power with a relatively small shifting of public opinion. It makes a mock of public opinion by caricature, and Parliament becomes the distorting mirror of the nation. Under some loud false issue a few score of thousands of votes turn over, and in goes this party or that with a big sham majority. This the Webbites admit. But they applaud it. It gives us, they say, "a strong Government." Public opinion, the intelligent man outside the House, is ruled out of the game. He has no power of intervention at all. The artful little Fabian politicians rub their hands and say, "*Now* we can get to work with the wires! No one can stop us." And when the public complains of the results, there is always the repartee, "*You* elected them." But the Fabian psychology is the psychology of a very small group of pedants who believe that fair ends may be reached by foul means. It is much easier and more natural to serve foul ends by foul means. In practice it is not tricky benevolence but tricky bargaining among the interests that will secure control of the political wires. That is a bad enough state of affairs in ordinary times, but in times of tragic necessity like the present men will not be mocked in this way. Life is going to be very intense in the years ahead of us. If

we go right on to another caricature Parliament, with perhaps half a hundred leading men in it and the rest hacks and nobodies, the baffled and discontented outsiders in the streets may presently be driven to rioting and the throwing of bombs. Unless, indeed, the insurrection of the outsiders takes a still graver form, and the Press, which has ceased entirely to be a Party Press in Great Britain, helps some adventurous Prime Minister to flout and set aside the lower House altogether. There is neither much moral nor much physical force behind the House of Commons at the present time.

The argument of the Fabian opponents to Proportional Representation is frankly that the strongest Government is got in a House of half a hundred or fewer leading men, with the rest of the Parliament driven sheep. But the whole mischief of the present system is that the obscure members of Parliament are not sheep; they are a crowd of little-minded, second-rate men just as greedy and eager and self-seeking as any of us. They vote straight indeed on all the main party questions, they obey their Whips like sheep then; but there is a great bulk of business in Parliament outside the main party questions, and obedience is not without its price. These are matters vitally affecting our railways and ships and communications generally, the food and health of the people, armaments, every sort of employment, the appointment of public servants, the everyday texture of all our lives. Then the nobody becomes somebody, the party hack gets busy, the rat is in the granary….

In these recent debates in the House of Commons one can see every stock trick of the wire-puller in operation. Particularly we have the old dodge of the man who is "in theory quite in sympathy with Proportional Representation, but …" It is, he declares regretfully, too late. It will cause delay. Difficult to make arrangements. Later on perhaps. And so on. It is never too late for a vital issue. Upon the speedy adoption of Proportional Representation depends, as Mr. Balfour made plain in an admirable speech, whether the great occasions of the peace and after the peace are to be handled by a grand council of all that is best and most leaderlike in the nation, or whether they are to be left to a few leaders, apparently leading, but really profoundly swayed by the obscure crowd of politicians and jobbers behind them. Are the politicians to hamper and stifle us in

this supreme crisis of our national destinies or are we British peoples to have a real control of our own affairs in this momentous time? Are men of light and purpose to have a voice in public affairs or not? Proportional Representation is supremely a test question. It is a question that no adverse decision in the House of Commons can stifle. There are too many people now who grasp its importance and significance. Every one who sets a proper value upon purity in public life and the vitality of democratic institutions will, I am convinced, vote and continue to vote across every other question against the antiquated, foul, and fraudulent electoral methods that have hitherto robbed democracy of three-quarters of its efficiency.

XI

THE STUDY AND PROPAGANDA OF DEMOCRACY

In the preceding chapter I have dealt with the discussion of Proportional Representation in the British House of Commons in order to illustrate the intellectual squalor amidst which public affairs have to be handled at the present time, even in a country professedly "democratic." I have taken this one discussion as a sample to illustrate the present imperfection of our democratic instrument. All over the world, in every country, great multitudes of intelligent and serious people are now inspired by the idea of a new order of things in the world, of a world-wide establishment of peace and mutual aid between nation and nation and man and man. But, chiefly because of the elementary crudity of existing electoral methods, hardly anywhere at present, except at Washington, do these great ideas and this world-wide will find expression. Amidst the other politicians and statesmen of the world President Wilson towers up with an effect almost divine. But it is no ingratitude to him to say that he is not nearly so exceptional a being among educated men as he is among the official leaders of mankind. Everywhere now one may find something of the Wilson purpose and intelligence, but nearly everywhere it is silenced or muffled or made ineffective by the political advantage of privileged or of violent and adventurous inferior men. He is "one of us," but it is his good fortune to have got his head out of the sack that is about the heads of most of us. In the official world, in the world of rulers and representatives and "statesmen," he almost alone, speaks for the modern intelligence.

This general stifling of the better intelligence of the world and its possible release to expression and power, seems to me to be the fundamental issue underlying all the present troubles of mankind. We cannot get on while everywhere fools and vulgarians hold the levers that can kill, imprison, silence and starve men. We cannot get on with false government and we cannot get on with mob government; we must have right government. The intellectual people of the world have a duty of co-operation they have too long

neglected. The modernization of political institutions, the study of these institutions until we have worked out and achieved the very best and most efficient methods whereby the whole community of mankind may work together under the direction of its chosen intelligences, is the common duty of every one who has a brain for the service. And before everything else we have to realize this crudity and imperfection in what we call "democracy" at the present time. Democracy is still chiefly an aspiration, it is a spirit, it is an idea; for the most part its methods are still to seek. And still more is this "League of Free Nations" as yet but an aspiration. Let us not underrate the task before us. Only the disinterested devotion of hundreds of thousands of active brains in school, in pulpit, in book and press and assembly can ever bring these redeeming conceptions down to the solid earth to rule.

All round the world there is this same obscuration of the real intelligence of men. In Germany, human good will and every fine mind are subordinated to political forms that have for a mouthpiece a Chancellor with his brains manifestly addled by the theories of *Welt-Politik* and the Bismarckian tradition, and for a figurehead a mad Kaiser. Nevertheless there comes even from Germany muffled cries for a new age. A grinning figure like a bloodstained Punch is all that speaks for the best brains in Bulgaria. Yes. We Western allies know all that by heart; but, after all, the immediate question for each one of us is, "*What speaks for me?*" So far as official political forms go I myself am as ineffective as any right-thinking German or Bulgarian could possibly be. I am more ineffective than a Galician Pole or a Bohemian who votes for his nationalist representative. Politically I am a negligible item in the constituency of this Mr. Burdett Coutts into whose brain we have been peeping. Politically I am less than a waistcoat button on that quaint figure. And that is all I am — except that I revolt. I have written of it so far as if it were just a joke. But indeed bad and foolish political institutions cannot be a joke. Sooner or later they prove themselves to be tragedy. This war is that. It is yesterday's lazy, tolerant, "sense of humour" wading out now into the lakes of blood it refused to foresee.

It is absurd to suppose that anywhere to-day the nationalisms, the suspicions and hatreds, the cants and policies, and dead phrases that

sway men represent the current intelligence of mankind. They are merely the evidences of its disorganization. Even now we *know* we could do far better. Give mankind but a generation or so of peace and right education and this world could mock at the poor imaginations that conceived a millennium. But we have to get intelligences together, we have to canalize thought before it can work and produce its due effects. To that end, I suppose, there has been a vast amount of mental activity among us political "negligibles." For my own part I have thought of the idea of God as the banner of human unity and justice, and I have made some tentatives in that direction, but men, I perceive, have argued themselves mean and petty about religion. At the word "God" passions bristle. The word "God" does not unite men, it angers them. But I doubt if God cares greatly whether we call Him God or no. His service is the service of man. This double idea of the League of Free Nations, linked with the idea of democracy as universal justice, is free from the jealousy of the theologians and great enough for men to unite upon everywhere. I know how warily one must reckon with the spite of the priest, but surely these ideas may call upon the teachers of all the great world religions for their support. The world is full now of confused propaganda, propaganda of national ideas, of traditions of hate, of sentimental and degrading loyalties, of every sort of error that divides and tortures and slays mankind. All human institutions are made of propaganda, are sustained by propaganda and perish when it ceases; they must be continually explained and re-explained to the young and the negligent. And for this new world of democracy and the League of Free Nations to which all reasonable men are looking, there must needs be the greatest of all propagandas. For that cause every one must become a teacher and a missionary. "Persuade to it and make the idea of it and the necessity for it plain," that is the duty of every school teacher, every tutor, every religious teacher, every writer, every lecturer, every parent, every trusted friend throughout the world. For it, too, every one must become a student, must go on with the task of making vague intentions into definite intentions, of analyzing and destroying obstacles, of mastering the ten thousand difficulties of detail….

I am a man who looks now towards the end of life; fifty-one years

have I scratched off from my calendar, another slips by, and I cannot tell how many more of the sparse remainder of possible years are really mine. I live in days of hardship and privation, when it seems more natural to feel ill than well; without holidays or rest or peace; friends and the sons of my friends have been killed; death seems to be feeling always now for those I most love; the newspapers that come in to my house tell mostly of blood and disaster, of drownings and slaughterings, of cruelties and base intrigues. Yet never have I been so sure that there is a divinity in man and that a great order of human life, a reign of justice and world-wide happiness, of plenty, power, hope, and gigantic creative effort, lies close at hand. Even now we have the science and the ability available for a universal welfare, though it is scattered about the world like a handful of money dropped by a child; even now there exists all the knowledge that is needed to make mankind universally free and human life sweet and noble. We need but the faith for it, and it is at hand; we need but the courage to lay our hands upon it and in a little space of years it can be ours.

THE END

THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY

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INTRODUCTION

"*A philosophy of the history of the human race, worthy of its name, must begin with the heavens and descend to the earth, must be charged with the conviction that all existence is one — a single conception sustained from beginning to end upon one identical law.*" — Friedrich Ratzel.

THIS *Outline of History* is an attempt to tell, truly and clearly, in one continuous narrative, the whole story of life and mankind so far as it is known to-day. It is written plainly for the general reader, but its aim goes beyond its use as merely interesting reading matter. There is a feeling abroad that the teaching of history considered as a part of general education is in an unsatisfactory condition, and particularly that the ordinary treatment of this "subject" by the class and teacher and examiner is too partial and narrow. But the desire to extend the general range of historical ideas is confronted by the argument that the available time for instruction is already consumed by that partial and narrow treatment, and that therefore, however desirable this extension of range may be, it is in practice impossible. If an Englishman, for example, has found the history of England quite enough for his powers of assimilation, then it seems hopeless to expect his sons and daughters to master universal history, if that is to consist of the history of England, plus the history of France, plus the history of Germany, plus the history of Russia, and so on. To which the only possible answer is that universal history is at once something more and something less than the aggregate of the national histories to which we are accustomed, that it must be approached in a different spirit and dealt with in a different manner. This book seeks to justify that answer. It has been written primarily to show that *history as one whole* is amenable to a more broad and comprehensive handling than is the history of special nations and periods, a broader handling that will bring it within the normal limitations of time and energy set to the reading and education of an ordinary citizen. This outline deals with ages and races and nations, where the ordinary history deals with reigns and pedigrees and

campaigns; but it will not be found to be more crowded with names and dates, nor more difficult to follow and understand. History is no exception amongst the sciences; as the gaps fill in, the outline simplifies; as the outlook broadens, the clustering multitude of details dissolves into general laws. And many topics of quite primary interest to mankind, the first appearance and the growth of scientific knowledge for example, and its effects upon human life, the elaboration of the ideas of money and credit, or the story of the origins and spread and influence of Christianity, which must be treated fragmentarily or by elaborate digressions in any partial history, arise and flow completely and naturally in one general record of the world in which we live.

The need for a common knowledge of the general facts of human history throughout the world has become very evident during the tragic happenings of the last few years. Swifter means of communication have brought all men closer to one another for good or for evil. War becomes a universal disaster, blind and monstrously destructive; it bombs the baby in its cradle and sinks the food-ships that cater for the non-combatant and the neutral. There can be no peace now, we realize, but a common peace in all the world; no prosperity but a general prosperity. But *there can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas*. Without such ideas to hold them together in harmonious co-operation, with nothing but narrow, selfish, and conflicting nationalist traditions, races and peoples are bound to drift towards conflict and destruction. This truth, which was apparent to that great philosopher Kant a century or more ago — it is the gist of his tract upon universal peace — is now plain to the man in the street. Our internal policies and our economic and social ideas are profoundly vitiated at present by wrong and fantastic ideas of the origin and historical relationship of social classes. A sense of history as the common adventure of all mankind is as necessary for peace within as it is for peace between the nations.

Such are the views of history that this *Outline* seeks to realize. It is an attempt to tell how our present state of affairs, this distressed and multifarious human life about us, arose in the course of vast ages and out of the inanimate clash of matter, and to estimate the quality and amount and range of the hopes with which it now faces its

destiny. It is one experimental contribution to a great and urgently necessary educational reformation, which must ultimately restore universal history, revised, corrected, and brought up to date, to its proper place and use as the backbone of a general education. We say "restore," because all the great cultures of the world hitherto, Judaism and Christianity in the Bible, Islam in the Koran, have used some sort of cosmogony and world history as a basis. It may indeed be argued that without such a basis any really binding culture of men is inconceivable. Without it we are a chaos.

Remarkably few sketches of universal history by one single author have been written. One book that has influenced the writer very strongly is Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. This *dates*, as people say, nowadays, and it has a fine gloom of its own, but it is still an extraordinarily inspiring presentation of human history as one consistent process. Mr. F. S. Marvin's *Living Past* is also an admirable summary of human progress. There is a good *General History of the World* in one volume by Mr. Oscar Browning. America has recently produced two well-illustrated and up-to-date class books, Breasted's *Ancient Times* and Robinson's *Medieval and Modern Times*, which together give a very good idea of the story of mankind since the beginning of human societies. There are, moreover, quite a number of nominally Universal Histories in existence, but they are really not histories at all, they are encyclopædias of history; they lack the unity of presentation attainable only when the whole subject has been passed through one single mind. These universal histories are compilations, assemblies of separate national or regional histories by different hands, the parts being necessarily unequal in merit and authority and disproportionate one to another. Several such universal histories in thirty or forty volumes or so, adorned with allegorical title pages and illustrated by folding maps and plans of Noah's Ark, Solomon's Temple, and the Tower of Babel, were produced for the libraries of gentlemen in the eighteenth century. Helmolt's *World History*, in eight massive volumes, is a modern compilation of the same sort, very useful for reference and richly illustrated, but far better in its parts than as a whole. Another such collection is the *Historians' History of the World* in 25 volumes. *The Encyclopædia Britannica* contains, of

course, a complete encyclopædia of history within itself, and is the most modern of all such collections. F. Ratzel's *History of Mankind*, in spite of the promise of its title, is mainly a natural history of man, though it is rich with suggestions upon the nature and development of civilization. That publication and Miss Ellen Churchill Semple's *Influence of Geographical Environment*, based on Ratzel's work, are quoted in this *Outline*, and have had considerable influence upon its plan. F. Ratzel would indeed have been the ideal author for such a book as our present one. Unfortunately neither he nor any other ideal author was available.

The writer will offer no apology for making this experiment. His disqualifications are manifest. But such work needs to be done by as many people as possible, he was free to make his contribution, and he was greatly attracted by the task. He has read sedulously and made the utmost use of all the help he could obtain. There is not a chapter that has not been examined by some more competent person than himself and very carefully revised. He has particularly to thank his friends Sir E. Ray Lankester, Sir H. H. Johnston, Professor Gilbert Murray, and Mr. Ernest Barker for much counsel and direction and editorial help. Mr. Philip Guedalla has toiled most efficiently and kindly through all the proofs. Mr. A. Allison, Professor T. W. Arnold, Mr. Arnold Bennett, the Rev. A. H. Trevor Benson, Mr. Aodh de Blacam, Mr. Laurence Binyon, the Rev. G. W. Broomfield, Sir William Bull, Mr. L. Cranmer Byng, Mr. A. J. D. Campbell, Mr. A. Y. Campbell, Mr. L. Y. Chen, Mr. A. R. Cowan, Mr. O. G. S. Crawford, Dr. W. S. Culbertson, Mr. R. Langton Cole, Mr. B. G. Collins, Mr. J. J. L. Duyvendak, Mr. O. W. Ellis, Mr. G. S. Ferrier, Mr. David Freeman, Mr. S. N. Fu, Mr. G. B. Gloyne, Sir Richard Gregory, Mr. F. H. Hayward, Mr. Sydney Herbert, Dr. Fr. Krupicka, Mr. H. Lang Jones, Mr. C. H. B. Laughton, Mr. B. I. Macalpin, Mr. G. H. Mair, Mr. F. S. Marvin, Mr. J. S. Mayhew, Mr. B. Stafford Morse, Professor J. L. Myres, the Hon. W. Ormsby-Gore, Sir Sydney Olivier, Mr. R. I. Pocock, Mr. J. Pringle, Mr. W. H. R. Rivers, Sir Denison Ross, Dr. E. J. Russell, Dr. Charles Singer, Mr. A. St. George Sanford, Dr. C. O. Stallybrass, Mr. G. H. Walsh, Mr. G. P. Wells, Miss Rebecca West, and Mr. George Whale have all to be thanked for help, either by reading parts of the MS. or by pointing

out errors in the published parts, making suggestions, answering questions, or giving advice. The amount of friendly and sympathetic assistance the writer has received, often from very busy people, has been a quite extraordinary experience. He has met with scarcely a single instance of irritation or impatience on the part of specialists whose domains he has invaded and traversed in what must have seemed to many of them an exasperatingly impudent and superficial way. Numerous other helpful correspondents have pointed out printer's errors and minor slips in the serial publication which preceded this book edition, and they have added many useful items of information, and to those writers also the warmest thanks are due. But of course none of these generous helpers are to be held responsible for the judgments, tone, arrangement, or writing of this *Outline*. In the relative importance of the parts, in the moral and political implications of the story, the final decision has necessarily fallen to the writer. The problem of illustrations was a very difficult one for him, for he had had no previous experience in the production of an illustrated book. In Mr. J. F. Horrabin he has had the good fortune to find not only an illustrator but a collaborator. Mr. Horrabin has spared no pains to make this work informative and exact. His maps and drawings are a part of the text, the most vital and decorative part. Some of them, the hypothetical maps, for example, of the western world at the end of the last glacial age, during the "pluvial age" and 12,000 years ago, and the migration map of the Barbarian invaders of the Roman Empire, represent the reading and inquiry of many laborious days.

The index to this edition is the work of Mr. Strickland Gibson of Oxford. Several correspondents have asked for a pronouncing index and accordingly this has been provided.

The writer owes a word of thanks to that living index of printed books, Mr. J. F. Cox of the London Library. He would also like to acknowledge here the help he has received from Mrs. Wells. Without her labour in typing and re-typing the drafts of the various chapters as they have been revised and amended, in checking references, finding suitable quotations, hunting up illustrations, and keeping in order the whole mass of material for this history, and without her constant help and watchful criticism, its completion would have been

impossible.

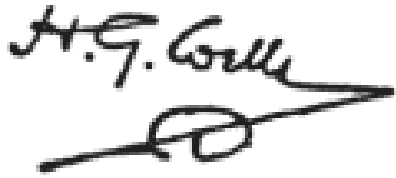

BOOK I. THE MAKING OF OUR WORLD

I

THE EARTH IN SPACE AND TIME

THE earth on which we live is a spinning globe. Vast though it seems to us, it is a mere speck of matter in the greater vastness of space.

Space is, for the most part, emptiness. At great intervals there are in this emptiness flaring centres of heat and light, the "fixed stars." They are all moving about in space, notwithstanding that they are called fixed stars, but for a long time men did not realize their motion. They are so vast and at such tremendous distances that their motion is not perceived. Only in the course of many thousands of years is it appreciable. These fixed stars are so far off that, for all their immensity, they seem to be, even when we look at them through the most powerful telescopes, mere points of light, brighter or less bright. A few, however, when we turn a telescope upon them, are seen to be whirls and clouds of shining vapour which we call nebulæ. They are so far off that a movement of millions of miles would be imperceptible.

One star, however, is so near to us that it is like a great ball of flame. This one is the sun. The sun is itself in its nature like a fixed star, but it differs from the other fixed stars in appearance because it is beyond comparison nearer than they are; and because it is nearer men have been able to learn something of its nature. Its mean distance from the earth is ninety-three million miles. It is a mass of flaming matter, having a diameter of 866,000 miles. Its bulk is a million and a quarter times the bulk of our earth.

These are difficult figures for the imagination. If a bullet fired from a Maxim gun at the sun kept its muzzle velocity unimpaired, it would take seven years to reach the sun. And yet we say the sun is near, measured by the scale of the stars. If the earth were a small ball, one inch in diameter, the sun would be a globe of nine feet diameter; it would fill a small bedroom. It is spinning round on its axis, but since it is an incandescent fluid, its polar regions do not travel with the same velocity as its equator, the surface of which rotates in about twenty-five days. The surface visible to us consists of clouds of incandescent metallic vapour. At what lies below we can only guess.

So hot is the sun's atmosphere that iron, nickel, copper, and tin are present in it in a gaseous state. About it at great distances circle not only our earth, but certain kindred bodies called the planets. These shine in the sky because they reflect the light of the sun; they are near enough for us to note their movements quite easily. Night by night their positions change with regard to the fixed stars.

It is well to understand how empty space is. If, as we have said, the sun were a ball nine feet across, our earth would, in proportion, be the size of a one-inch ball, and at a distance of 323 yards from the sun. The moon would be a speck the size of a small pea, thirty inches from the earth. Nearer to the sun than the earth would be two other very similar specks, the planets Mercury and Venus, at a distance of 125 and 250 yards respectively. Beyond the earth would come the planets Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, at distances of 500, 1806, 3000, 6000, and 9500 yards respectively. There would also be a certain number of very much smaller specks, flying about amongst these planets, more particularly a number called the asteroids circling between Mars and Jupiter, and occasionally a little puff of more or less luminous vapour and dust would drift into the system from the almost limitless emptiness beyond. Such a puff is what we call a comet. *All the rest of the space about us and around us and for unfathomable distances beyond is cold, lifeless, and void.* The nearest fixed star to us, *on this minute scale*, be it remembered, — the earth as a one-inch ball, and the moon a little pea — would be over 40,000 miles away.

The science that tells of these things and how men have come to know about them is Astronomy, and to books of astronomy the reader must go to learn more about the sun and stars. The science and description of the world on which we live are called respectively Geology and Geography.

The diameter of our world is a little under 8000 miles. Its surface is rough; the more projecting parts of the roughness are mountains, and in the hollows of its surface there is a film of water, the oceans and seas. This film of water is about five miles thick at its deepest part — that is to say, the deepest oceans have a depth of five miles. This is very little in comparison with the bulk of the world.

About this sphere is a thin covering of air, the atmosphere. As we

ascend in a balloon or go up a mountain from the level of the sea-shore the air is continually less dense, until at last it becomes so thin that it cannot support life. At a height of twenty miles there is scarcely any air at all — not one hundredth part of the density of air at the surface of the sea. The highest point to which a bird can fly is about four miles up — the condor, it is said, can struggle up to that; but most small birds and insects which are carried up by aeroplanes or balloons drop off insensible at a much lower level, and the greatest height to which any mountaineer has ever climbed is under five miles. Men have flown in aeroplanes to a height of over four miles, and balloons with men in them have reached very nearly seven miles, but at the cost of considerable physical suffering. Small experimental balloons, containing not men, but recording instruments, have gone as high as twenty-two miles.

It is in the upper few hundred feet of the crust of the earth, in the sea, and in the lower levels of the air below four miles that life is found. We do not know of any life at all except in these films of air and water upon our planet. So far as we know, all the rest of space is as yet without life. Scientific men have discussed the possibility of life, or of some process of a similar kind, occurring upon such kindred bodies as the planets Venus and Mars. But they point merely to questionable possibilities.

Astronomers and geologists and those who study physics have been able to tell us something of the origin and history of the earth. They consider that, vast ages ago, the sun was a spinning, flaring mass of matter, not yet concentrated into a compact centre of heat and light, considerably larger than it is now, and spinning very much faster, and that as it whirled, a series of fragments detached themselves from it, which became the planets. Our earth is one of these planets. The flaring mass that was the material of the earth broke as it spun into two masses, a larger, the earth itself, and a smaller, which is now the dead, still moon. Astronomers give us convincing reasons for supposing that sun and earth and moon and all that system were then whirling about at a speed much greater than the speed at which they are moving to-day, and that at first our earth was a flaming thing upon which no life could live. The way in which they have reached these conclusions is by a very beautiful and

interesting series of observations and reasoning, too long and elaborate for us to deal with here. But they oblige us to believe that the sun, incandescent though it is, is now much cooler than it was, and that it spins more slowly now than it did, and that it continues to cool and slow down. And they also show that the rate at which the earth spins is diminishing and continues to diminish — that is to say, that our day is growing longer and longer, and that the heat at the centre of the earth wastes slowly. There was a time when the day was not a half and not a third of what it is to-day; when a blazing hot sun, much greater than it is now, must have moved visibly — had there been an eye to mark it — from its rise to its setting across the skies. There will be a time when the day will be as long as a year is now, and the cooling sun, shorn of its beams, will hang motionless in the heavens.

It must have been in days of a much hotter sun, a far swifter day and night, high tides, great heat, tremendous storms and earthquakes, that life, of which we are a part, began upon the world. The moon also was nearer and brighter in those days and had a changing face.

II

THE RECORD OF THE ROCKS

§ 1. *The First Living Things.* § 2. *How Old Is the World?*

§ 1

WE do not know how life began upon the earth.

Biologists, that is to say, students of life, have made guesses about these beginnings, but we will not discuss them here. Let us only note that they all agree that life began where the tides of those swift days spread and receded over the steaming beaches of mud and sand.

The atmosphere was much denser then, usually great cloud masses obscured the sun, frequent storms darkened the heavens. The land of those days, upheaved by violent volcanic forces, was a barren land, without vegetation, without soil. The almost incessant rain-storms swept down upon it, and rivers and torrents carried great loads of sediment out to sea, to become muds that hardened later into slates and shales, and sands that became sandstones. The geologists have studied the whole accumulation of these sediments as it remains to-day, from those of the earliest ages to the most recent. Of course the oldest deposits are the most distorted and changed and worn, and in them there is now no certain trace to be found of life at all. Probably the earliest forms of life were small and soft, leaving no evidence of their existence behind them. It was only when some of these living things developed skeletons and shells of lime and such-like hard material that they left fossil vestiges after they died, and so put themselves on record for examination.

The literature of geology is very largely an account of the fossils that are found in the rocks, and of the order in which layers after layers of rocks lie one on another. The very oldest rocks must have been formed before there was any sea at all, when the earth was too hot for a sea to exist, and when the water that is now sea was an atmosphere of steam mixed with the air. Its higher levels were dense with clouds, from which a hot rain fell towards the rocks below, to be converted again into steam long before it reached their incandescence. Below this steam atmosphere the molten world-stuff

solidified as the first rocks. These first rocks must have solidified as a cake over glowing liquid material beneath, much as cooling lava does. They must have appeared first as crusts and clinkers. They must have been constantly remelted and recrystallized before any thickness of them became permanently solid. The name of Fundamental Gneiss is given to a great underlying system of crystalline rocks which probably formed age by age as this hot youth of the world drew to its close. The scenery of the world in the days when the Fundamental Gneiss was formed must have been more like the interior of a furnace than anything else to be found upon earth at the present time.

After long ages the steam in the atmosphere began also to condense and fall right down to earth, pouring at last over these warm primordial rocks in rivulets of hot water and gathering in depressions as pools and lakes and the first seas. Into those seas the streams that poured over the rocks brought with them dust and particles to form a sediment, and this sediment accumulated in layers, or as geologists call them, *strata*, and formed the first Sedimentary Rocks. Those earliest sedimentary rocks sank into depressions and were covered by others; they were bent, tilted up, and torn by great volcanic disturbances and by tidal strains that swept through the rocky crust of the earth. We find these first sedimentary rocks still coming to the surface of the land here and there, either not covered by later strata or exposed after vast ages of concealment by the wearing off of the rock that covered them later — there are great surfaces of them in Canada especially; they are cleft and bent, partially remelted, recrystallized, hardened and compressed, but recognizable for what they are. And they contain no single certain trace of life at all. They are frequently called *Azoic* (lifeless) Rocks. But since in some of these earliest sedimentary rocks a substance called graphite (black lead) occurs, and also red and black oxide of iron, and since it is asserted that these substances need the activity of living things for their production, which may or may not be the case, some geologists prefer to call these earliest sedimentary rocks *Archæozoic* (primordial life). They suppose that the first life was soft living matter that had no shells or skeletons or any such structure that could remain as a recognizable fossil after its

death, and that its chemical influence caused the deposition of graphite and iron oxide. This is pure guessing, of course, and there is at least an equal probability that in the time of formation of the Azoic Rocks, life had not yet begun.

Long ago there were found in certain of these ancient first-formed rocks in Canada, curious striped masses, and thin layers of white and green mineral substance which Sir William Dawson considered were fossil vestiges, the walls or coverings of some very simple sort of living thing which has now vanished from the earth. He called these markings *Eozoon Canadense* (the Canadian dawn-animal). There has been much discussion and controversy over this Eozoon, but to-day it is agreed that Eozoon is nothing more than a crystalline marking. Mixed minerals will often intercrystallize in blobs or branching shapes that are very suggestive of simple plant or animal forms. Any one who has made a lead tree in his schooldays, or lit those queer indoor fireworks known as serpents' eggs, which unfold like a long snake, or who has seen the curious markings often found in quartz crystals, or noted the tree-like pattern on old stone-ware beer mugs, will realize how closely non-living matter can sometimes mock the shapes of living things.

Overlying or overlapping these Azoic or Archæozoic rocks come others, manifestly also very ancient and worn, which do contain traces of life. These first remains are of the simplest description; they are the vestiges of simple plants, called algæ, or marks like the tracks made by worms in the sea mud. There are also the skeletons of the microscopic creatures called Radiolaria. This second series of rocks is called the Proterozoic (beginning of life) series, and marks a long age in the world's history. Lying over and above the Proterozoic rocks is a third series, which is found to contain a considerable number and variety of traces of living things. First comes the evidence of a diversity of shellfish, crabs, and such-like crawling things, worms, seaweeds, and the like; then of a multitude of fishes and of the beginnings of land plants and land creatures. These rocks are called the Palæozoic (ancient life) rocks. They mark a vast era, during which life was slowly spreading, increasing, and developing in the seas of our world. Through long ages, through the earliest Palæozoic time, it was no more than a proliferation of such

swimming and creeping things in the water. There were creatures called trilobites; they were crawling things like big sea woodlice that were probably related to the American king-crab of to-day. There were also sea-scorpions, the prefects of that early world. The individuals of certain species of these were nine feet long. These were the very highest sorts of life. There were abundant different sorts of an order of shellfish called brachiopods. There were plant animals, rooted and joined together like plants, and loose weeds that waved in the waters.

It was not a display of life to excite our imaginations. There was nothing that ran or flew or even swam swiftly or skilfully. Except for the size of some of the creatures, it was not very different from, and rather less various than, the kind of life a student would gather from any summer-time ditch nowadays for microscopic examination. Such was the life of the shallow seas through a hundred million years or more in the early Palæozoic period. The land during that time was apparently absolutely barren. We find no trace nor hint of land life. Everything that lived in those days lived under water for most or all of its life.

Life in the Early Palæozoic
Note its general resemblance, except for size, to the microscopic summer ditch-water life of to-day.

Between the formation of these Lower Palæozoic rocks in which the sea scorpion and trilobite ruled, and our own time, there have intervened almost immeasurable ages, represented by layers and masses of sedimentary rocks. There are first the Upper Palæozoic Rocks, and above these the geologists distinguish two great divisions. Next above the Palæozoic come the Mesozoic (middle life) rocks, a second vast system of fossil-bearing rocks, representing perhaps a hundred millions of swift years, and containing a wonderful array of fossil remains, bones of giant reptiles and the like, which we will presently describe; and above these again are the Cainozoic (recent life) rocks, a third great volume in the history of life, an unfinished volume of which the sand and mud that was carried out to sea yesterday by the rivers of the world, to bury the bones and scales and bodies and tracks that will become at last fossils of the things of to-day, constitute the last written leaf.

(It is, we may note, the practice of many geologists to make a break between the rest of the Cainozoic system of rocks and those which contain traces of humanity, which latter are cut off as a separate system under the name of Quaternary. But that, as we shall see, is rather like taking the last page of a book, which is really the conclusion of the last chapter, and making a separate chapter of it and calling it the last chapter.)

These markings and fossils in the rocks and the rocks themselves are our first historical documents. The history of life that men have puzzled out and are still puzzling out from them is called the Record of the Rocks. By studying this record men are slowly piecing together a story of life's beginnings, and of the beginnings of our kind, of which our ancestors a century or so ago had no suspicion. But when we call these rocks and the fossils a record and a history, it must not be supposed that there is any sign of an orderly keeping of a record. It is merely that whatever happens leaves some trace, if only we are intelligent enough to detect the meaning of that trace. Nor are the rocks of the world in orderly layers one above the other, convenient for men to read. They are not like the books and pages of a library. They are torn, disrupted, interrupted, flung about, defaced, like a carelessly arranged office after it has experienced in succession a bombardment, a hostile military occupation, looting, an earthquake,

riots, and a fire. And so it is that for countless generations this Record of the Rocks lay unsuspected beneath the feet of men. Fossils were known to the Ionian Greeks in the sixth century B.C., they were discussed at Alexandria by Eratosthenes and others in the third century B.C., a discussion which is summarized in Strabo's *Geography* (?20-10 B.C.). They were known to the Latin poet Ovid, but he did not understand their nature. He thought they were the first rude efforts of creative power. They were noted by Arabic writers in the tenth century. Leonardo da Vinci, who lived so recently as the opening of the sixteenth century (1452-1519), was one of the first Europeans to grasp the real significance of fossils, and it has been only within the last century and a half that man has begun the serious and sustained deciphering of these long-neglected early pages of his world's history.

§ 2

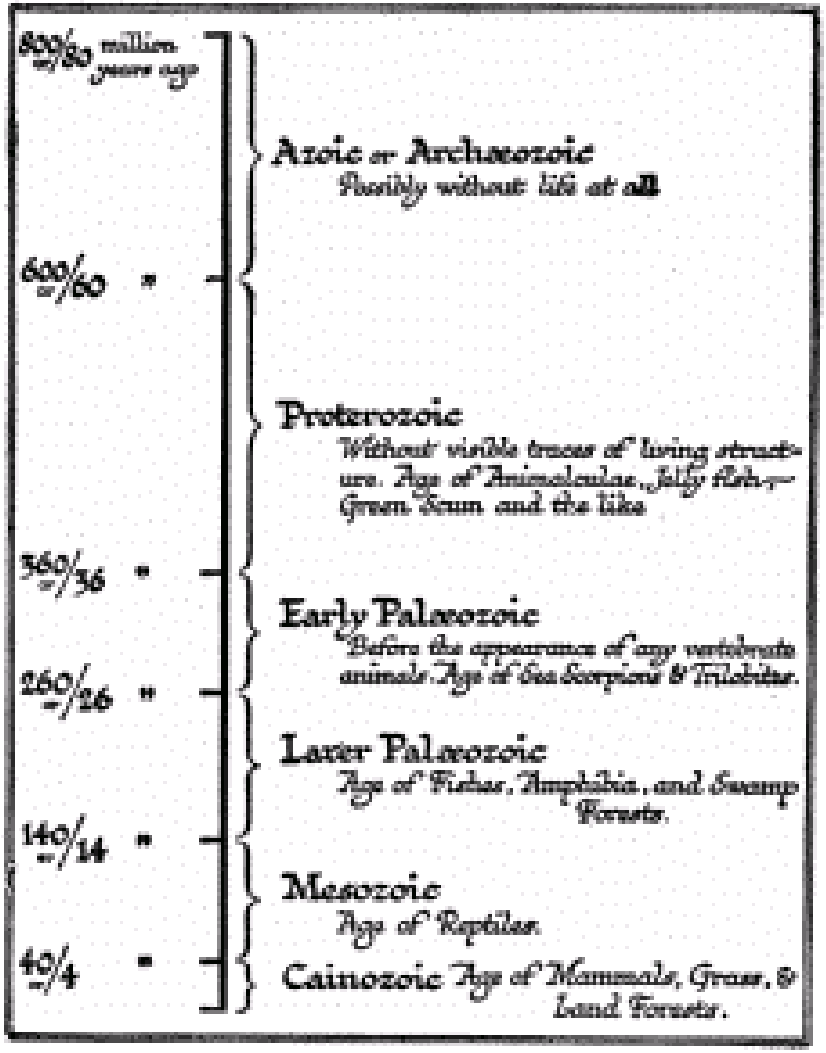

Speculations about geological time vary enormously. Estimates of the age of the oldest rocks by geologists and astronomers starting from different standpoints have varied between 1,600,000,000, and 25,000,000. The lowest estimate was made by Lord Kelvin in 1867. Professor Huxley guessed at 400,000,000 years. There is a summary of views and the grounds upon which the estimates have been made in Osborn's *Origin and Evolution of Life*; he inclines to the moderate total of 100,000,000. It must be clearly understood by the reader how

sketchy and provisional all these time estimates are. They rest nearly always upon theoretical assumptions of the slenderest kind. That the period of time has been vast, that it is to be counted by scores and possibly by hundreds of millions of years, is the utmost that can be said with certainty in the matter. It is quite open to the reader to divide every number in the appended time diagram by ten or multiply it by two; no one can gainsay him. Of the relative amount of time as between one age and another we have, however, stronger evidence; if the reader cuts down the 800,000,000 we have given here to 400,000,000, then he must reduce the 40,000,000 of the Cainozoic to 20,000,000. And be it noted that whatever the total sum may be, most geologists are in agreement that *half or more than half of the whole of geological time had passed before life had developed to the Later Palæozoic level*. The reader reading quickly through these opening chapters may be apt to think of them as a mere swift prelude of preparation to the apparently much longer history that follows, but in reality that subsequent history is longer only because it is more detailed and more interesting to us. It looms larger in perspective. For ages that stagger the imagination this earth spun hot and lifeless, and again for ages of equal vastness it held no life above the level of the animalculæ in a drop of ditch-water.

Not only is Space from the point of view of life and humanity empty, but Time is empty also. Life is like a little glow, scarcely kindled yet, in these void immensities.

III

NATURAL SELECTION AND THE CHANGES OF SPECIES

NOW here it will be well to put plainly certain general facts about this new thing, *life*, that was creeping in the shallow waters and intertidal muds of the early Palæozoic period, and which is perhaps confined to our planet alone in all the immensity of space.

Life differs from all things whatever that are without life in certain general aspects. There are the most wonderful differences among living things to-day, but all living things past and present agree in possessing *a certain power of growth*, all living things *take nourishment*, all living things *move about* as they feed and grow, though the movement may be no more than the spread of roots through the soil, or of branches in the air. Moreover, living things reproduce; they give rise to other living things, either by growing and then dividing or by means of seeds or spores or eggs or other ways of producing young. *Reproduction* is a characteristic of life.

No living thing goes on living forever. There seems to be a *limit of growth* for every kind of living thing. Among very small and simple living things, such as that microscopic blob of living matter the *Amæba*, an individual may grow and then divide completely into two new individuals, which again may divide in their turn. Many other microscopic creatures live actively for a time, grow, and then become quiet and inactive, enclose themselves in an outer covering and break up wholly into a number of still smaller things, spores, which are released and scattered and again grow into the likeness of their parent. Among more complex creatures the reproduction is not usually such simple division, though division does occur even in the case of many creatures big enough to be visible to the unassisted eye. But the rule with almost all larger beings is that the individual grows up to a certain limit of size. Then, before it becomes unwieldy, its growth declines and stops. As it reaches its full size it *matures*, it begins to produce young, which are either born alive or hatched from eggs. But all of its body does not produce young. Only a special part does that. After the individual has lived and produced offspring for

some time, it ages and dies. It does so by a sort of necessity. There is a practical limit to its life as well as to its growth. These things are as true of plants as they are of animals. And they are not true of things that do not live. Non-living things, such as crystals, grow, but they have no set limits of growth or size, they *do not move of their own accord* and there is *no stir within them*. Crystals once formed may last unchanged for millions of years. There is *no reproduction* for any non-living thing.

This growth and dying and reproduction of living things leads to some very wonderful consequences. The young which a living thing produces are either directly, or after some intermediate stages and changes (such as the changes of a caterpillar and butterfly), like the parent living thing. But they are never exactly like it or like each other. There is always a slight difference, which we speak of as *individuality*. A thousand butterflies this year may produce two or three thousand next year; these latter will look to us almost exactly like their predecessors, but each one will have just that slight difference. It is hard for us to see individuality in butterflies because we do not observe them very closely, but it is easy for us to see it in men. All the men and women in the world now are descended from the men and women of A.D. 1800, but not one of us now is exactly the same as one of that vanished generation. And what is true of men and butterflies is true of every sort of living thing, of plants as of animals. Every species changes all its individualities in each generation. That is as true of all the minute creatures that swarmed and reproduced and died in the Archæozoic and Proterozoic seas, as it is of men to-day.

Every species of living things is continually dying and being born again, as a multitude of fresh individuals.

Consider, then, what must happen to a new-born generation of living things of any species. Some of the individuals will be stronger or sturdier or better suited to succeed in life in some way than the rest, many individuals will be weaker or less suited. In particular single cases any sort of luck or accident may occur, but *on the whole* the better equipped individuals will live and grow up and reproduce themselves and the weaker will *as a rule* go under. The latter will be less able to get food, to fight their enemies and pull through. So that

in each generation there is as it were a picking over of a species, a picking out of most of the weak or unsuitable and a preference for the strong and suitable. This process is called *Natural Selection* or the *Survival of the Fittest*.

It follows, therefore, from the fact that living things grow and breed and die, that every species, so long as the conditions under which it lives remain the same, becomes more and more perfectly fitted to those conditions in every generation.

But now suppose those conditions change, then the sort of individual that used to succeed may now fail to succeed and a sort of individual that could not get on at all under the old conditions may now find its opportunity. These species will change, therefore, generation by generation; the old sort of individual that used to prosper and dominate will fail and die out and the new sort of individual will become the rule, — until the general character of the species changes.

Suppose, for example, there is some little furry whitey-brown animal living in a bitterly cold land which is usually under snow. Such individuals as have the thickest, whitest fur will be least hurt by the cold, less seen by their enemies, and less conspicuous as they seek their prey. The fur of this species will thicken and its whiteness increase with every generation, until there is no advantage in carrying any more fur.

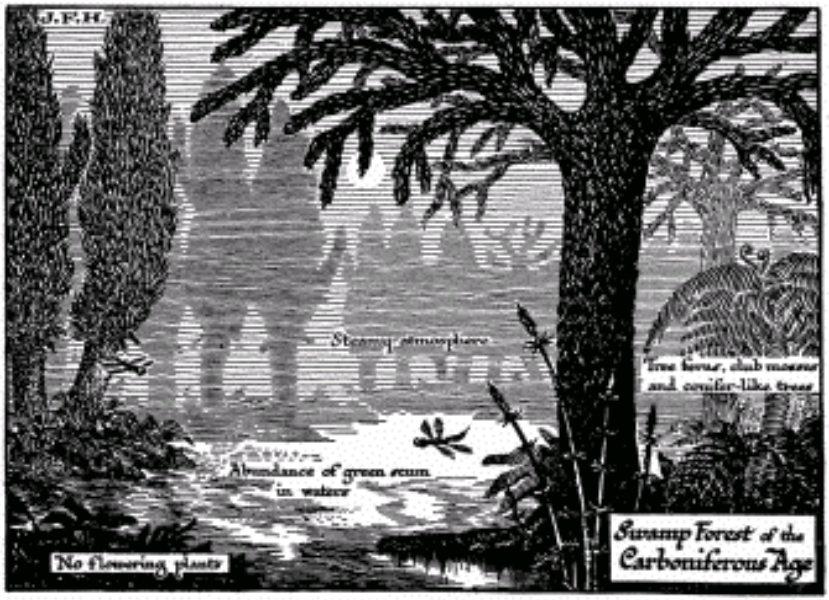

Diagram of Life in the Later Palæozoic Age.
Life is creeping out of the water. An insect like a dragon fly is shown. There were amphibia like gigantic newts and salamanders, and even primitive reptiles in these swamps.

Imagine now a change of climate that brings warmth into the land, sweeps away the snows, makes white creatures glaringly visible during the greater part of the year and thick fur an encumbrance. Then every individual with a touch of brown in its colouring and a thinner fur will find itself at an advantage, and very white and heavy fur will be a handicap. There will be a weeding out of the white in favour of the brown in each generation. If this change of climate come about too quickly, it may of course exterminate the species altogether; but if it come about gradually, the species, although it may have a hard time, may yet be able to change itself and adapt itself generation by generation. This change and adaptation is called the *Modification of Species*.

Perhaps this change of climate does not occur all over the lands inhabited by the species; maybe it occurs only on one side of some great arm of the sea or some great mountain range or such-like divide, and not on the other. A warm ocean current like the Gulf

Stream may be deflected, and flow so as to warm one side of the barrier, leaving the other still cold. Then on the cold side this species will still be going on to its utmost possible furriness and whiteness and on the other side it will be modifying towards brownness and a thinner coat. At the same time there will probably be other changes going on; a difference in the paws perhaps, because one half of the species will be frequently scratching through snow for its food, while the other will be scampering over brown earth. Probably also the difference of climate will mean differences in the sort of food available, and that may produce differences in the teeth and the digestive organs. And there may be changes in the sweat and oil glands of the skin due to the changes in the fur, and these will affect the excretory organs and all the internal chemistry of the body. And so through all the structure of the creature. A time will come when the two separated varieties of this formerly single species will become so unlike each other as to be recognizably different species. Such a splitting up of a species in the course of generations into two or more species is called the *Differentiation of Species*.

And it should be clear to the reader that given these elemental facts of life, given growth and death and reproduction with individual variation in a world that changes, life *must* change in this way, modification and differentiation *must* occur, old species *must* disappear, and new ones appear. We have chosen for our instance here a familiar sort of animal, but what is true of furry beasts in snow and ice is true of all life, and equally true of the soft jellies and simple beginnings that flowed and crawled for hundreds of millions of years between the tidal levels and in the shallow, warm waters of the Proterozoic seas.

The early life of the early world, when the blazing sun rose and set in only a quarter of the time it now takes, when the warm seas poured in great tides over the sandy and muddy shores of the rocky lands and the air was full of clouds and steam, must have been modified and varied and species must have developed at a great pace. Life was probably as swift and short as the days and years; the generations, which natural selection picked over, followed one another in rapid succession.

Natural selection is a slower process with man than with any other

creature. It takes twenty years or more before an ordinary human being in western Europe grows up and reproduces. In the case of most animals the new generation is on trial in a year or less. With such simple and lowly beings, however, as first appeared in the primordial seas, growth and reproduction was probably a matter of a few brief hours or even of a few brief minutes. Modification and differentiation of species must accordingly have been extremely rapid, and life had already developed a very great variety of widely contrasted forms before it began to leave traces in the rocks. The Record of the Rocks does not begin, therefore, with any group of closely related forms from which all subsequent and existing creatures are descended. It begins in the midst of the game, with nearly every main division of the animal kingdom already represented. Plants are already plants, and animals animals. The curtain rises on a drama in the sea that has already begun, and has been going on for some time. The brachiopods are discovered already in their shells, accepting and consuming much the same sort of food that oysters and mussels do now; the great water scorpions crawl among the seaweeds, the trilobites roll up into balls and unroll and scuttle away. In that ancient mud and among those early weeds there was probably as rich and abundant and active a life of infusoria and the like as one finds in a drop of ditch-water to-day. In the ocean waters, too, down to the utmost downward limit to which light could filter, then as now, there was an abundance of minute and translucent, and in many cases phosphorescent, beings.

But though the ocean and intertidal waters already swarmed with life, the land above the high-tide line was still, so far as we can guess, a stony wilderness without a trace of life.

IV

THE INVASION OF THE DRY LAND BY LIFE

§ 1. *Life and Water.* § 2. *The Earliest Animals.*

§ 1

WHEREVER the shore line ran there was life, and that life went on in and by and with water as its home, its medium, and its fundamental necessity.

The first jelly-like beginnings of life must have perished whenever they got out of the water, as jelly-fish dry up and perish on our beaches to-day. Drying up was the fatal thing for life in those days, against which at first it had no protection. But in a world of rain-pools and shallow seas and tides, any variation that enabled a living thing to hold out and keep its moisture during hours of low tide of drought met with every encouragement in the circumstances of the time. There must have been a constant risk of stranding. And, on the other hand, life had to keep rather near the shore and beaches in the shallows because it had need of air (dissolved of course in the water) and light.

No creature can breathe, no creature can digest its food, without water. We talk of breathing air, but what all living things really do is to breathe oxygen dissolved in water. The air we ourselves breathe must first be dissolved in the moisture in our lungs; and all our food must be liquefied before it can be assimilated. Water-living creatures which are always under water, wave the freely exposed gills by which they breathe in that water, and extract the air dissolved in it. But a creature that is to be exposed for any time out of the water, must have its body and its breathing apparatus protected from drying up. Before the seaweeds could creep up out of the Early Palæozoic seas into the intertidal line of the beach, they had to develop a tougher outer skin to hold their moisture. Before the ancestor of the sea scorpion could survive being left by the tide it had to develop its casing and armour. The trilobites probably developed their tough covering and rolled up into balls, far less as a protection against each other and any other enemies they may have possessed, than as a

precaution against drying. And when presently, as we ascend the Palæozoic rocks, the fish appear, first of all the backboned or vertebrated animals, it is evident that a number of them are already adapted by the protection of their gills with gill covers and by a sort of primitive lung swimming-bladder, to face the same risk of temporary stranding.

Now the weeds and plants that were adapting themselves to intertidal conditions were also bringing themselves into a region of brighter light, and light is very necessary and precious to all plants. Any development of structure that would stiffen them and hold them up to the light, so that instead of crumpling and flopping when the waters receded, they would stand up outspread, was a great advantage. And so we find them developing fibre and support, and the beginning of *woody fibre* in them. The early plants reproduced by soft spores, or half-animal "gametes," that were released in water, were distributed by water and could only germinate under water. The early plants were tied, and most lowly plants to-day are tied, by the conditions of their life cycle, to water. But here again there was a great advantage to be got by the development of some protection of the spores from drought that would enable reproduction to occur without submergence. So soon as a species could do that, it could live and reproduce and spread above the high-water mark, bathed in light and out of reach of the beating and distress of the waves. The main classificatory divisions of the larger plants mark stages in the release of plant life from the necessity of submergence by the development of woody support and of a method of reproduction that is more and more defiant of drying up. The lower plants are still the prisoner attendants of water. The lower mosses must live in damp, and even the development of the spore of the ferns demands at certain stages extreme wetness. The highest plants have carried freedom from water so far that they can live and reproduce if only there is some moisture in the soil below them. They have solved their problem of living out of water altogether.

The essentials of that problem were worked out through the vast æons of the Proterozoic Age and the early Palæozoic Age by nature's method of experiment and trial. Then slowly, but in great abundance, a variety of new plants began to swarm away from the sea and over

the lower lands, still keeping to swamp and lagoon and watercourse as they spread.

§ 2

And after the plants came the animal life.

There is no sort of land animal in the world, as there is no sort of land plant, whose structure is not primarily that of a water-inhabiting being which has been adapted through the modification and differentiation of species to life out of the water. This adaptation is attained in various ways. In the case of the land scorpion the gill-plates of the primitive sea scorpion are sunken into the body so as to make the lung-books secure from rapid evaporation. The gills of crustaceans, such as the crabs which run about in the air, are protected by the gill-cover extensions of the back shell or carapace. The ancestors of the insects developed a system of air pouches and air tubes, the tracheal tubes, which carry the air all over the body before it is dissolved. In the case of the vertebrated land animals, the gills of the ancestral fish were first supplemented and then replaced by a bag-like growth from the throat, the primitive lung swimming-bladder. To this day there survive certain mudfish which enable us to understand very clearly the method by which the vertebrated land animals worked their way out of the water. These creatures (*e.g.* the African lung fish) are found in tropical regions in which there is a rainy full season and a dry season, during which the rivers become mere ditches of baked mud. During the rainy season these fish swim about and breathe by gills like any other fish. As the waters of the river evaporate, these fish bury themselves in the mud, their gills go out of action, and the creature keeps itself alive until the waters return by swallowing air, which passes into its swimming-bladder. The Australian lung fish, when it is caught by the drying up of the river in stagnant pools, and the water has become deaerated and foul, rises to the surface and gulps air. A newt in a pond does exactly the same thing. These creatures still remain at the transition stage, the stage at which the ancestors of the higher vertebrated animals were released from their restriction to an under-water life.

The amphibia (frogs, newts, tritons, etc.) still show in their life

history all the stages in the process of this liberation. They are still dependent on water for their reproduction; their eggs must be laid in sunlit water, and there they must develop. The young tadpole has branching external gills that wave in the water; then a gill cover grows back over them and forms a gill chamber. Then, as the creature's legs appear and its tail is absorbed, it begins to use its lungs, and its gills dwindle and vanish. The adult frog can live all the rest of its days in the air, but it can be drowned if it is kept steadfastly below water. When we come to the reptile, however, we find an egg which is protected from evaporation by a tough egg case, and this egg produces young which breathe by lungs from the very moment of hatching. The reptile is on all fours with the seeding plant in its freedom from the necessity to pass any stage of its life cycle in water.

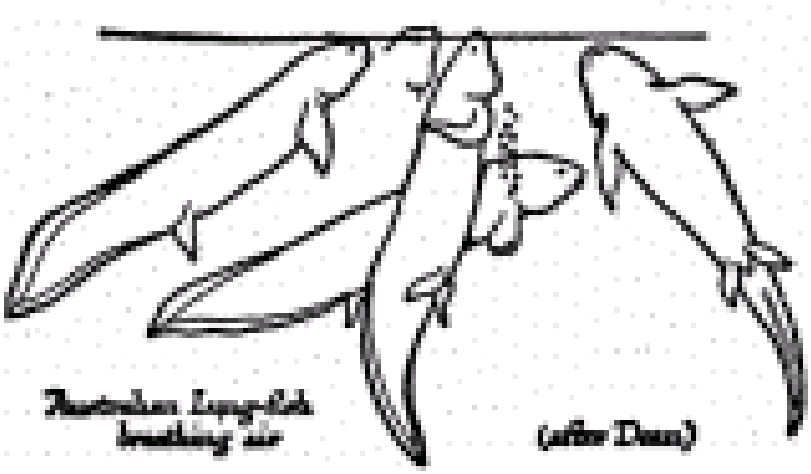

Australian Lung fish breathing air

The later Palæozoic Rocks of the northern hemisphere give us the materials for a series of pictures of this slow spreading of life over the land. Geographically, all round the northern half of the world it was an age of lagoons and shallow seas very favourable to this invasion. The new plants, now that they had acquired the power to live this new aerial life, developed with an extraordinary richness and variety.

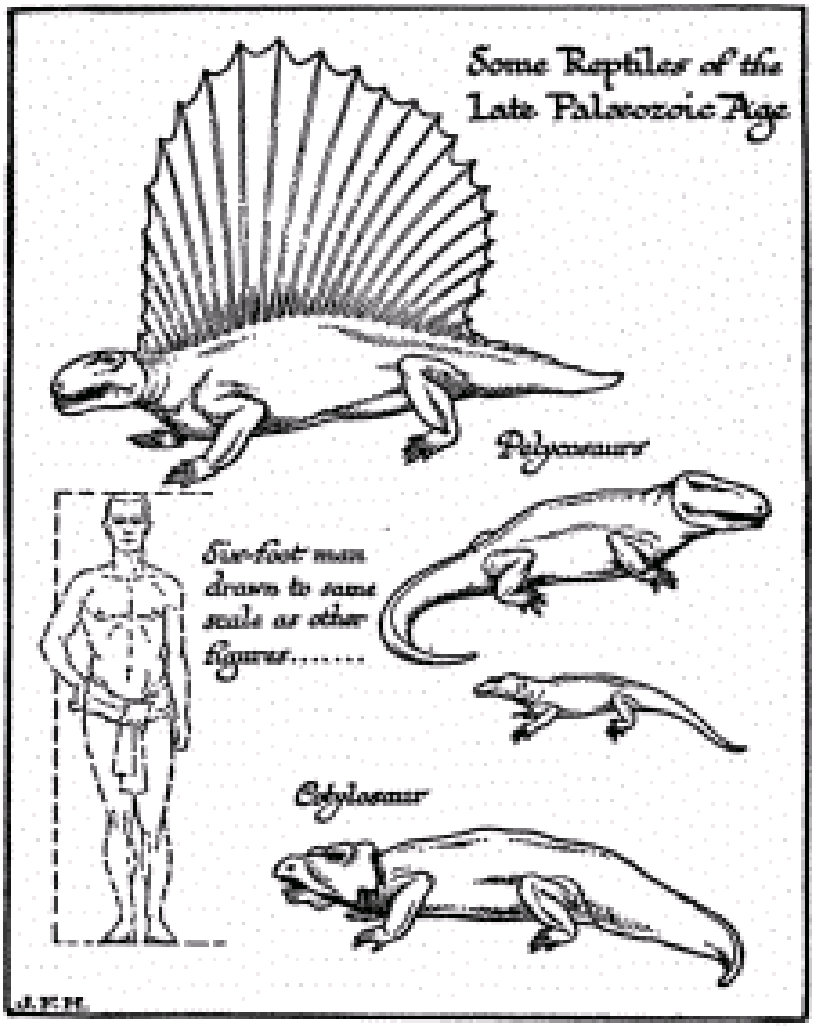

Some Reptiles of the Late Palæozoic Age

There were as yet no true flowering plants, no grasses nor trees that shed their leaves in winter; the first “flora” consisted of great tree ferns, gigantic equisetums, cycad ferns, and kindred vegetation. Many of these plants took the form of huge-stemmed trees, of which great multitudes of trunks survive fossilized to this day. Some of these trees were over a hundred feet high, of orders and classes now vanished from the world. They stood with their stems in the water, in which no doubt there was a thick tangle of soft mosses and green

slime and fungoid growths that left few plain vestiges behind them. The abundant remains of these first swamp forests constitute the main coal-measures of the world to-day.

Amidst this luxuriant primitive vegetation crawled and glided and flew the first insects. They were rigid-winged, four-winged creatures, often very big, some of them having wings measuring a foot in length. There were numerous dragon flies — one found in the Belgian coal-measures had a wing span of twenty-nine inches! There were also a great variety of flying cockroaches. Scorpions abounded, and a number of early spiders, which, however, had no spinnerets for web making. Land snails appeared. So too did the first-known step of our own ancestry upon land, the amphibia. As we ascend the higher levels of the Later Palæozoic record, we find the process of air adaptation has gone as far as the appearance of true reptiles amidst the abundant and various amphibia.

The land life of the Upper Palæozoic Age was the life of a green swamp forest without flowers or birds or the noises of modern insects. There were no big land beasts at all; wallowing amphibia and primitive reptiles were the very highest creatures that life had so far produced. Whatever land lay away from the water or high above the water was still altogether barren and lifeless. But steadfastly, generation by generation, life was creeping away from the shallow sea-water of its beginning.

V

CHANGES IN THE WORLD'S CLIMATE

§ 1. *Why Life Must Change Continually.* § 2. *The Sun a Steadfast Star.* § 3. *Changes from Within the Earth.* § 4. *Life May Control Change.*

§ 1

THE Record of the Rocks is like a great book that has been carelessly misused. All its pages are torn, worn, and defaced, and many are altogether missing. The outline of the story that we sketch here has been pieced together slowly and painfully in an investigation that is still incomplete and still in progress. The Carboniferous Rocks, the "coal-measures," give us a vision of the first great expansion of life over the wet lowlands. Then come the torn pages known as the Permian Rocks (which count as the last of the Palæozoic), that preserve very little for us of the land vestiges of their age. Only after a long interval of time does the history spread out generously again.

It must be borne in mind that great changes of climate have always been in progress, that have sometimes stimulated and sometimes checked life. Every species of living thing is always adapting itself more and more closely to its conditions. And conditions are always changing. There is no finality in adaptation. There is a continuing urgency towards fresh change.

About these changes of climate some explanations are necessary here. They are not regular changes; they are slow fluctuations between heat and cold. The reader must not think that because the sun and earth were once incandescent, the climatic history of the world is a simple story of cooling down. The centre of the earth is certainly very hot to this day, but we feel nothing of that internal heat at the surface; the internal heat, except for volcanoes and hot springs, has not been perceptible at the surface since first the rocks grew solid. Even in the Azoic or Archæozoic Age there are traces in ice-worn rocks and the like of periods of intense cold. Such cold waves have always been going on everywhere, alternately with warmer

conditions. And there have been periods of great wetness and periods of great dryness throughout the earth.

A complete account of the causes of these great climatic fluctuations has still to be worked out, but we may perhaps point out some of the chief of them. Prominent among them is the fact that the earth does not spin in a perfect circle round the sun. Its path or orbit is like a hoop that is distorted; it is, roughly speaking, elliptical (ovo-elliptical), and the sun is nearer to one end of the ellipse than the other. It is at a point which is a focus of the ellipse. And the shape of this orbit never remains the same. It is slowly distorted by the attractions of the other planets, for ages it may be nearly circular, for ages it is more or less elliptical. As the ellipse becomes most nearly circular, then the focus becomes most nearly the centre. When the orbit becomes most elliptical, then the position of the sun becomes most remote from the middle or, to use the astronomer's phrase, most eccentric. When the orbit is most nearly circular, then it must be manifest that all the year round the earth must be getting much the same amount of heat from the sun; when the orbit is most distorted, then there will be a season in each year when the earth is nearest the sun (this phase is called *Perihelion*) and getting a great deal of heat comparatively, and a season when it will be at its farthest from the sun (*Aphelion*) and getting very little warmth. A planet at *aphelion* is travelling its slowest, and its fastest at *perihelion*; so that the hot part of its year will last for a much less time than the cold part of its year. (Sir Robert Ball calculated that the greatest difference possible between the seasons was thirty-three days.) During ages when the orbit is most nearly circular there will therefore be least extremes of climate, and when the orbit is at its greatest eccentricity, there will be an age of cold with great extremes of seasonal temperature. These *changes in the orbit of the earth* are due to the varying pull of all the planets, and Sir Robert Ball declared himself unable to calculate any regular cycle of orbital change, but Professor G. H. Darwin maintained that it is possible to make out a kind of cycle between greatest and least eccentricity of about 200,000 years.

But this change in the shape of the orbit is only one cause of the change of the world's climate. There are many others that have to be considered with it. As most people know, the change in the seasons

is due to the fact that the equator of the earth is inclined at an angle to the plane of its orbit. If the earth stood up straight in its orbit, so that its equator was in the plane of its orbit, there would be no change in the seasons at all. The sun would always be overhead at the equator, and the day and night would each be exactly twelve hours long throughout the year everywhere. It is this inclination which causes the difference in the seasons and the unequal length of the day in summer and winter. There is, according to Laplace, a possible variation of nearly three degrees (from 22° 6' to 24° 50') in this inclination of the equator to the orbit, and when this is at a maximum, the difference between summer and winter is at its greatest. Great importance has been attached to this variation in the inclination of the equator to the orbit by Dr. Croll in his book *Climate and Time*. At present the angle is 23° 27'. Manifestly when the angle is at its least, the world's climate, other things being equal, will be most equable.

And as a third important factor there is what is called the *precession of the equinoxes*. This is a slow wabble of the pole of the spinning earth that takes 25,000 odd years. Any one who watches a spinning top as it "sleeps," will see its axis making a slow circular movement, exactly after the fashion of this circling movement of the earth's axis. The north pole, therefore, does not always point to the same north point among the stars; its pointing traces out a circle in the heavens every 25,000 years.

Now, there will be times when the earth is at its extreme of aphelion or of perihelion, when one hemisphere will be most turned to the sun in its midsummer position and the other most turned away at its midwinter position. And as the precession of the equinoxes goes on, a time will come when the summer-winter position will come not at aphelion and perihelion, but at the half-way points between them. When the summer of one hemisphere happens at perihelion and the winter at aphelion, it will be clear that the summer of the other hemisphere will happen at aphelion and its winter at perihelion. One hemisphere will have a short hot summer and a very cold winter, and the other a long cold summer and a briefer warmish winter. But when the summer-winter positions come at the half-way point of the orbit, and it is the spring of one hemisphere and the

autumn of the other that is at aphelion or perihelion, there will not be the same wide difference between the climate of the two hemispheres.

Here are three wavering systems of change all going on independently of each other; the precession of the equinoxes, the change in the obliquity of the equator to the orbit, and the changes in the eccentricity of the orbit. Each system tends by itself to produce periods of equability and periods of greater climatic contrast. And all these systems of change interplay with each other. When it happens that at the same time the orbit is most nearly circular, the equator is at its least inclination from the plane of the earth's orbit, and the spring and autumn are at perihelion and aphelion, then all these causes will be conspiring to make climate warm and uniform; there will be least difference of summer and winter. When, on the other hand, the orbit is in its most eccentric stage of deformation, when also the equator is most tilted up and when further the summer and winter are at aphelion and perihelion, then climates will be at their extremest and winter at its bitterest. There will be great accumulations of ice and snow in winter; the heat of the brief hot summer will be partly reflected back into space by the white snow, and it will be unequal to the task of melting all the winter's ice before the earth spins away once more towards its chilly aphelion. The earth will accumulate cold so long as this conspiracy of extreme conditions continues.

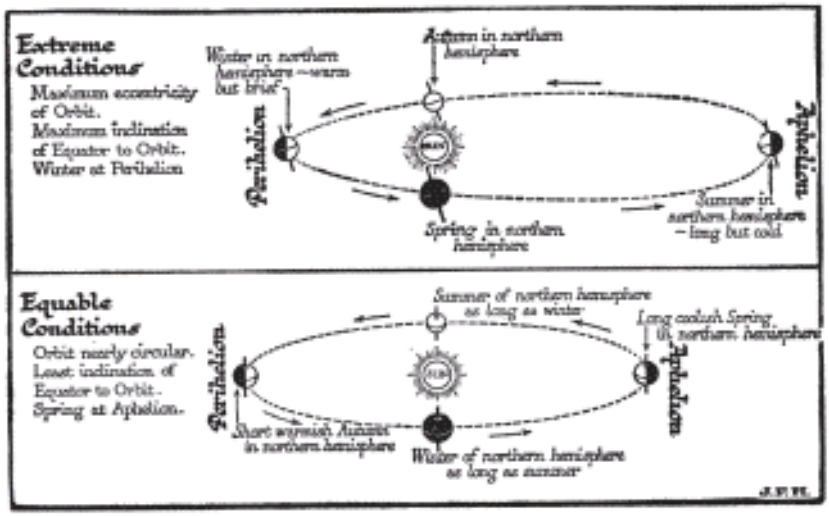

Diagram To Illustrate One Set of Causes, the Astronomical Variations, Which Make the Climate of the World Change Slowly but Continuously. It does not change in regular periods. It fluctuates through vast ages. As the world's climate changes, life must change too or perish.

So our earth's climate changes and wavers perpetually as these three systems of influence come together with a common tendency towards warmth or severity, or as they contradict and cancel each other.

We can trace in the Record of the Rocks an irregular series of changes due to the interplay of these influences; there have been great ages when the separate rhythms of these three systems kept them out of agreement and the atmosphere was temperate, ages of world-wide warmth, and other ages when they seemed to concentrate bitterly to their utmost extremity, to freeze out and inflict the utmost stresses and hardship upon life.

And in accordance we find from the record in the rocks that there have been long periods of expansion and multiplication when life flowed and abounded and varied, and harsh ages when there was a great weeding out and disappearance of species, genera, and classes, and the learning of stern lessons by all that survived. Such a propitious conjunction it must have been that gave the age of

luxuriant low-grade growth of the coal-measures; such an adverse series of circumstances that chilled the closing æons of the Palæozoic time.

It is probable that the warm spells have been long relatively to the cold ages. Our world to-day seems to be emerging with fluctuations from a prolonged phase of adversity and extreme conditions. Half a million years ahead it may be a winterless world with trees and vegetation even in the polar circles. At present we have no certainty in such a forecast, but later on, as knowledge increases, it may be possible to reckon with more precision, so that our race will make its plans thousands of years ahead to meet the coming changes.

§ 2

Another entirely different cause of changes in the general climate of the earth may be due to variations in the heat of the sun. We do not yet understand what causes the heat of the sun or what sustains that undying fire. It is possible that in the past there have been periods of greater and lesser intensity. About that we know nothing; human experience has been too short; and so far we have been able to find no evidence on this matter in the geological record. On the whole, scientific men are inclined to believe that the sun has blazed with a general steadfastness throughout geological time. It may have been cooling slowly, but, speaking upon the scale of things astronomical, it has certainly not cooled very much.

§ 3

A third great group of causes influencing climate are to be found in the forces within the world itself. Throughout the long history of the earth there has been a continuous wearing down of the hills and mountains by frost and rain and a carrying out of their material to become sedimentary rocks under the seas. There has been a continuous process of wearing down the land and filling up the seas, by which the seas, as they became shallower, must have spread more and more over the land. The reverse process, a process of crumpling and upheaval, has also been in progress, but less regularly. The

forces of upheaval have been spasmodic; the forces of wearing down continuous. For long ages there has been comparatively little volcanic upheaval, and then have come periods in which vast mountain chains have been thrust up and the whole outline of land and sea changed. Such a time was the opening stage of the Cainozoic period, in which the Alps, the Himalayas, and the Andes were all thrust up from the sea-level to far beyond their present elevations, and the main outlines of the existing geography of the world were drawn.

Now, a time of high mountains and deep seas would mean a larger dry land surface for the world, and a more restricted sea surface, and a time of low lands would mean a time of wider and shallower seas. High mountains precipitate moisture from the atmosphere and hold it out of circulation as snow and glaciers, while smaller oceans mean a lesser area for surface evaporation. Other things being equal, lowland stages of the world's history would be ages of more general atmospheric moisture than periods of relatively greater height of the mountains and greater depth of the seas. But even small increases in the amount of moisture in the air have a powerful influence upon the transmission of radiant heat through that air. The sun's heat will pass much more freely through dry air than through moist air, and so a greater amount of heat would reach the land surfaces of the globe under the conditions of extremes of elevation and depth, than during the periods of relative lowness and shallowness. Dry phases in the history of the earth mean, therefore, hot days. But they also mean cold nights, because for the same reason that the heat comes abundantly to the earth, it will be abundantly radiated away. Moist phases mean, on the other hand, cooler days and warmer nights. The same principle applies to the seasons, and so a phase of great elevations and depressions of the surface would also be another contributory factor on the side of extreme climatic conditions.

And a stage of greater elevation and depression would intensify its extreme conditions by the gradual accumulation of ice caps upon the polar regions and upon the more elevated mountain masses. This accumulation would be at the expense of the sea, whose surface would thus be further shrunken in comparison with the land.

Here, then, is another set of varying influences that will play in with and help or check the influence of the astronomical variations stated in § 1 and § 2. There are other more localized forces at work into which we cannot go in any detail here, but which will be familiar to the student of the elements of physical geography; the influence of great ocean currents in carrying warmth from equatorial to more temperate latitudes; the interference of mountain chains with the moisture borne by prevalent winds and the like. As in the slow processes of nature these currents are deflected or the mountain chains worn down or displaced by fresh upheavals, the climate over great areas will be changed and all the conditions of life changed with it. Under the incessant slow variations of these astronomical, telluric, and geographical influences life has no rest. As its conditions change it must change or perish.

§ 4

And while we are enumerating the forces that change climate and the conditions of terrestrial life, we may perhaps look ahead a little and add a fourth set of influences, at first unimportant in the history of the world so far as the land surface is concerned, but becoming more important after the age of Reptiles, to which we shall proceed in our next chapter. These are the effects produced upon climate by life itself. Particularly great is the influence of vegetation, and especially that of forests. Every tree is continually transpiring water vapour into the air; the amount of water evaporated in summer by a lake surface is far less than the amount evaporated by the same area of beech forest. As in the later Mesozoic and the Cainozoic Age, great forests spread over the world, their action in keeping the air moist and mitigating and stabilizing climate by keeping the summer cool and the winter mild must have become more and more important. Moreover, forests accumulate and protect soil and so prepare the possibility of agricultural life.

Water-weeds again may accumulate to choke and deflect rivers, flood and convert great areas into marshes, and so lead to the destruction of forests or the replacement of grass-lands by boggy wildernesses.

Finally, with the appearance of human communities, came what is perhaps the most powerful of all living influences upon climate. By fire and plough and axe man alters his world. By destroying forests and by irrigation man has already affected the climate of great regions of the world's surface. The destruction of forests makes the seasons more extreme; this has happened, for instance, in the northeastern states of the United States of America. Moreover, the soil is no longer protected from the scour of rain, and is washed away, leaving only barren rock beneath. This has happened in Spain and Dalmatia and, some thousands of years earlier, in South Arabia. By irrigation, on the other hand, man restores the desert to life and mitigates climate. This process is going on in Northwest India and Australia. In the future, by making such operations worldwide and systematic, man may be able to control climate to an extent at which as yet we can only guess.

VI

THE AGE OF REPTILES

§ 1. *The Age of Lowland Life.* § 2. *Flying Dragons.* § 3. *The First Birds.* § 4. *An Age of Hardship and Death.* § 5. *The First Appearance of Fur and Feathers.*

§ 1

WE know that for hundreds of thousands of years the wetness and warmth, the shallow lagoon conditions that made possible the vast accumulations of vegetable matter which, compressed and mummified, are now coal, prevailed over most of the world. There were some cold intervals, it is true; but they did not last long enough to destroy the growths. Then that long age of luxuriant low-grade vegetation drew to its end, and for a time life on the earth seems to have undergone a period of world-wide bleakness.

When the story resumes again, we find life entering upon a fresh phase of richness and expansion. Vegetation has made great advances in the art of living out of water. While the Palæozoic plants of the coal-measures probably grew with swamp water flowing over their roots, the Mesozoic flora from its very outset included palm-like cycads and low-ground conifers that were distinctly land plants growing on soil above the water level. The lower levels of the Mesozoic land were no doubt covered by great fern brakes and shrubby bush and a kind of jungle growth of trees. But there existed as yet no grass, no small flowering plants, no turf nor greensward. Probably the Mesozoic was not an age of very brightly coloured vegetation. It must have had a flora green in the wet season and brown and purple in the dry. There were no gay flowers, no bright autumn tints before the fall of the leaf, because there was as yet no fall of the leaf. And beyond the lower levels the world was still barren, still unclothed, still exposed without any mitigation to the wear and tear of the wind and rain.

When one speaks of conifers in the Mesozoic the reader must not think of the pines and firs that clothe the high mountain slopes of our time. He must think of low-growing evergreens. The mountains were

still as bare and lifeless as ever. The only colour effects among the mountains were the colour effects of naked rock, such colours as make the landscape of Colorado so marvellous to-day.

Amidst this spreading vegetation of the lower plains the reptiles were increasing mightily in multitude and variety. They were now in many cases absolutely land animals. There are numerous anatomical points of distinction between a reptile and an amphibian; they held good between such reptiles and amphibians as prevailed in the carboniferous time of the Upper Palæozoic; but the fundamental difference between reptiles and amphibia which matters in this history is that the amphibian must go back to the water to lay its eggs, and that in the early stages of its life it must live in and under water. The reptile, on the other hand, has cut out all the tadpole stages from its life cycle, or, to be more exact, its tadpole stages are got through before the young leave the egg case. The reptile has come out of the water altogether. Some had gone back to it again, just as the hippopotamus and the otter among mammals have gone back, but that is a further extension of the story to which we cannot give much attention in this *Outline*.

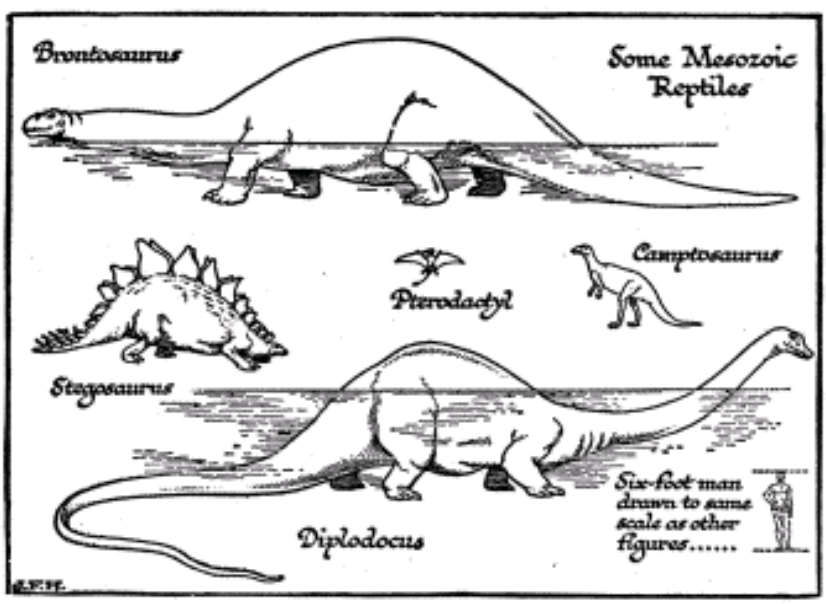

In the Palæozoic period, as we have said, life had not spread beyond the swampy river valleys and the borders of sea lagoons and the like; but in the Mesozoic, life was growing ever more accustomed to the thinner medium of the air, was sweeping boldly up over the plains and towards the hillsides. It is well for the student of human history and the human future to note that. If a disembodied intelligence with no knowledge of the future had come to earth and studied life during the early Palæozoic age, he might very reasonably have concluded that life was absolutely confined to the water, and that it could never spread over the land. It found a way. In the Later Palæozoic Period that visitant might have been equally sure that life could not go beyond the edge of a swamp. The Mesozoic Period would still have found him setting bounds to life far more limited than the bounds that are set to-day. And so to-day, though we mark how life and man are still limited to five miles of air and a depth of perhaps a mile or so of sea, we must not conclude from that present limitation that life, through man, may not presently spread out and up and down to a range of living as yet inconceivable.

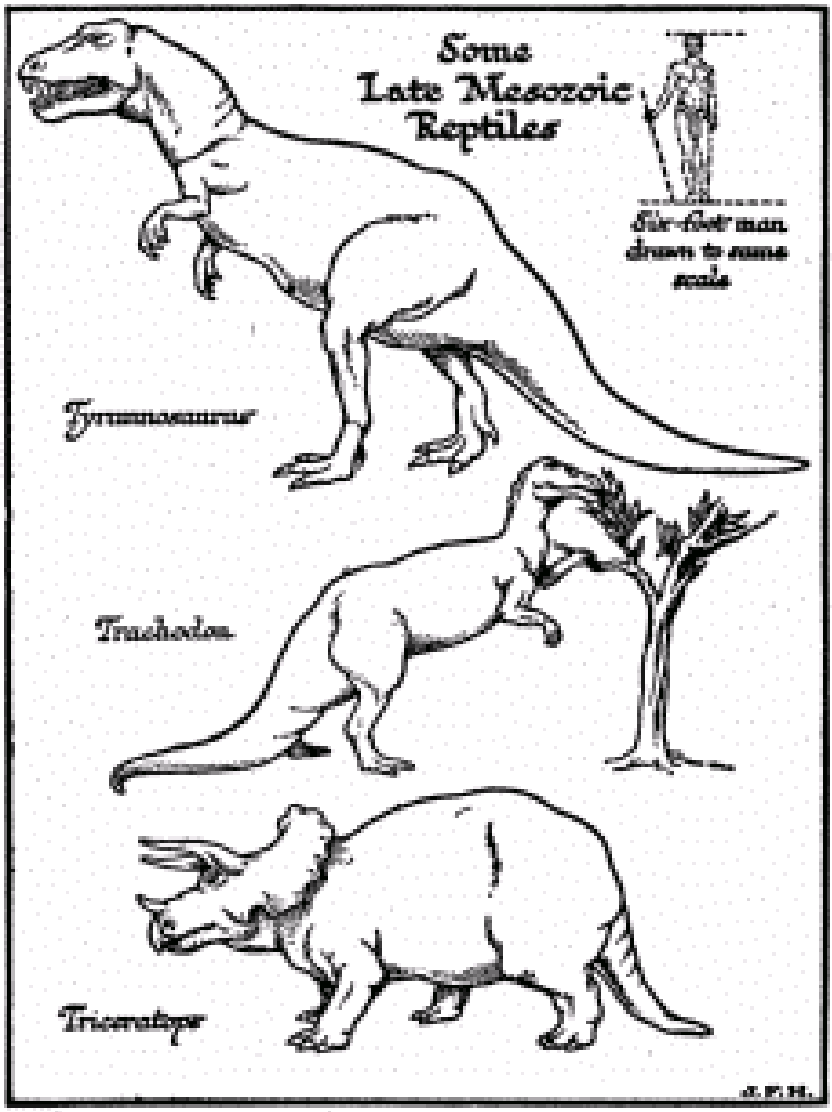

The earliest known reptiles were beasts with great bellies and not very powerful legs, very like their kindred amphibia, wallowing as the crocodile wallows to this day; but in the Mesozoic they soon began to stand up and go stoutly on all fours, and several great sections of them began to balance themselves on tail and hind legs, rather as the kangaroos do now, in order to release the fore limbs for grasping food. The bones of one notable division of reptiles which

retained a quadrupedal habit, a division of which many remains have been found in South African and Russian Early Mesozoic deposits, display a number of characters which approach those of the mammalian skeleton, and because of this resemblance to the mammals (beasts) this division is called the *Theriomorpha* (beastlike). Another division was the crocodile branch, and another developed towards the tortoises and turtles. The *Plesiosaurs* and *Ichthyosaurs* were two groups which have left no living representatives; they were huge reptiles returning to a whale-like life in the sea. *Pliosaurus*, one of the largest plesiosaurs, measured thirty feet from snout to tail tip — of which half was neck. The *Mosasaurs* were a third group of great porpoise-like marine lizards. But the largest and most diversified group of these Mesozoic reptiles was the group we have spoken of as kangaroo-like, the *Dinosaurs*, many of which attained enormous proportions. In bigness these greater *Dinosaurs* have never been exceeded, although the sea can still show in the whales creatures as great. Some of these, and the largest among them, were herbivorous animals; they browsed on the rushy vegetation and among the ferns and bushes, or they stood up and grasped trees with their fore legs while they devoured the foliage. Among the browsers, for example, were the *Diplodocus carnegii*, which measured eighty=four feet in length, and the *Atlantosaurus*. The *Gigantosaurus*, disinterred by a German expedition in 1912 from rocks in East Africa, was still more colossal. It measured well over a hundred feet! These greater monsters had legs, and they are usually figured as standing up on them; but it is very doubtful if they could have supported their weight in this way, out of water. Buoyed up by water or mud, they may have got along. Another noteworthy type we have figured is the *Triceratops*. There were also a number of great flesh-eaters who preyed upon these herbivores. Of these, *Tyrannosaurus* seems almost the last word in “frightfulness” among living things. Some species of this genus measured forty feet from snout to tail. Apparently it carried this vast body kangaroo fashion on its tail and hind legs. Probably it reared itself up. Some authorities even suppose that it leapt through the air. If so, it possessed muscles of a quite miraculous quality. A leaping elephant would be a far less astounding idea. Much more probably it waded half submerged in

pursuit of the herbivorous river saurians.

§ 2

One special development of the dinosaurian type of reptile was a light, hopping, climbing group of creatures which developed a bat-like web between the fifth finger and the side of the body, which was used in gliding from tree to tree after the fashion of the flying squirrels. These bat-lizards were the *Pterodactyls*. They are often described as *flying* reptiles, and pictures are drawn of Mesozoic scenery in which they are seen soaring and swooping about. But their breastbone has no keel such as the breastbone of a bird has for the attachment of muscles strong enough for long-sustained flying. They must have flitted about like bats. They must have had a grotesque resemblance to heraldic dragons, and they played the part of bat-like birds in the Mesozoic jungles. But bird-like though they were, they were not birds nor the ancestors of birds. The structure of their wings was altogether different from that of birds. The structure of their wings was that of a hand with one long finger and a web; the wing of a bird is like an arm with feathers projecting from its hind edge. And these Pterodactyls had no feathers.

§ 3

Far less prevalent at this time were certain other truly birdlike creatures, of which the earlier sorts also hopped and clambered and the later sorts skimmed and flew. These were at first — by all the standards of classification — Reptiles. They developed into true birds as they developed wings and as their reptilian scales became long and complicated, fronds rather than scales, and so at last, by much spreading and splitting, feathers. Feathers are the distinctive covering of birds, and they give a power of resisting heat and cold far greater than that of any other integumentary covering except perhaps the thickest fur. At a very early stage this novel covering of feathers, this new heatproof contrivance that life had chanced upon, enabled many species of birds to invade a province for which the pterodactyl was ill equipped. They took to sea fishing — if indeed they did not

begin with it — and spread to the north and south polewards beyond the temperature limits set to the true reptiles. The earliest birds seem to have been carnivorous divers and water birds. To this day some of the most primitive bird forms are found among the sea birds of the Arctic and Antarctic seas, and it is among these sea birds that zoologists still find lingering traces of teeth, which have otherwise vanished completely from the beak of the bird.

The earliest known bird (the *Archæopteryx*) had no beak; it had a row of teeth in a jaw like a reptile's. It had three claws at the forward corner of its wing. Its tail too was peculiar. All modern birds have their tail feathers set in a short compact bony rump; the *Archæopteryx* had a long bony tail with a row of feathers along each side.

§ 4

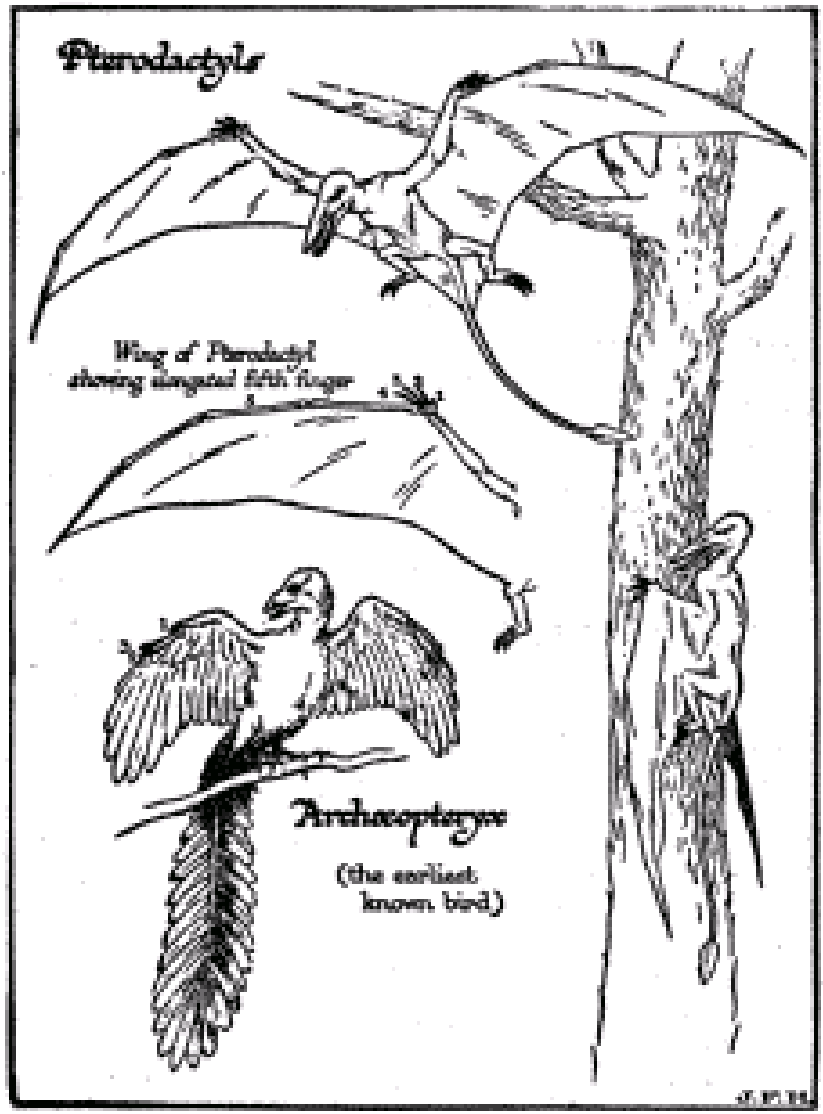

This great period of Mesozoic life, this second volume of the book of life, is indeed an amazing story of reptilian life proliferating and developing. But the most striking thing of all the story remains to be told. Right up to the latest Mesozoic Rocks we find all these reptilian orders we have enumerated still flourishing unchallenged. There is no hint of an enemy or competitor to them in the relics we find of their world. Then the record is broken. We do not know how

long a time the break represents; many pages may be missing here, pages that may represent some great cataclysmal climatic change. When next we find abundant traces of the land plants and the land animals of the earth, this great multitude of reptile species had gone. For the most part they have left no descendants. They have been "wiped out." The pterodactyls have gone absolutely; of the plesiosaurs and ichthyosaurs none is alive; the mosasaurs have gone; of the lizards a few remain, the monitor of the Dutch East Indies is the largest; all the multitude and diversity of the dinosaurs have vanished. Only the crocodiles and the turtles and tortoises carry on in any quantity into Cainozoic times. The place of all these types in the picture that the Cainozoic fossils presently unfold to us is taken by other animals not closely related to the Mesozoic reptiles and certainly not descended from any of their ruling types. A new kind of life is in possession of the world.

This apparently abrupt ending up of the reptiles is, beyond all question, the most striking revolution in the whole history of the earth before the coming of mankind. It is probably connected with the close of a vast period of equable warm conditions and the onset of a new austerer age, in which the winters were bitterer and the summers brief but hot. The Mesozoic life, animal and vegetable alike, was adapted to warm conditions and capable of little resistance to cold. The new life, on the other hand, was before all things capable of resisting great changes of temperature.

Whatever it was that led to the extinction of the Mesozoic reptiles, it was probably some very far-reaching change indeed, for the life of the seas did at the same time undergo a similar catastrophic alteration. The crescendo and ending of the Reptiles on land was paralleled by the crescendo and ending of the Ammonites, a division of creatures like squids with coiled shells which swarmed in those ancient seas. All through the rocky record of this Mesozoic period there is a vast multitude and variety of these coiled shells; there are hundreds of species, and towards the end of the Mesozoic period they increased in diversity and produced exaggerated types. When the record resumes, these too have gone. So far as the reptiles are concerned, people may perhaps be inclined to argue that they were exterminated because the Mammals that replaced them competed

with them, and were more fitted to survive; but nothing of the sort can be true of the Ammonites, because to this day their place has not been taken. Simply they are gone. Unknown conditions made it possible for them to live in the Mesozoic seas, and then some unknown change made life impossible for them. No genus of Ammonite survives to-day of all that vast variety, but there still exists one isolated genus very closely related to the Ammonites, the Pearly Nautilus. It is found, it is to be noted, in the warm waters of the Indian and Pacific oceans.

And as for the Mammals competing with and ousting the less fit reptiles, a struggle of which people talk at times, there is not a scrap of evidence of any such direct competition. To judge by the Record of the Rocks as we know it to-day, there is much more reason for believing that first the reptiles in some inexplicable way perished, and then that later on, after a very hard time for all life upon the earth, the mammals, as conditions became more genial again, developed and spread to fill the vacant world.

§ 5

Were there mammals in the Mesozoic period?

This is a question not yet to be answered precisely. Patiently and steadily the geologists gather fresh evidence and reason out completer conclusions. At any time some new deposit may reveal fossils that will illuminate this question. Certainly either mammals, or the ancestors of the mammals, must have lived throughout the Mesozoic period. In the very opening chapter of the Mesozoic volume of the Record there were those Theriomorphous Reptiles to which we have already alluded, and in the later Mesozoic a number of small jaw-bones are found, entirely mammalian in character. But there is not a scrap, not a bone, to suggest that there lived any Mesozoic Mammal which could look a dinosaur in the face. The Mesozoic mammals or mammal-like reptiles — for we do not know clearly which they were — seem to have been all obscure little beasts of the size of mice and rats, more like a down-trodden order of reptiles than a distinct class; probably they still laid eggs and were developing only slowly their distinctive covering of hair. They lived

away from big waters, and perhaps in the desolate uplands, as marmots do now; probably they lived there beyond the pursuit of the carnivorous dinosaurs. Some perhaps went on all fours, some chiefly went on their hind legs and clambered with their fore limbs. They became fossils only so occasionally that chance has not yet revealed a single complete skeleton in the whole vast record of the Mesozoic rocks by which to check these guesses.

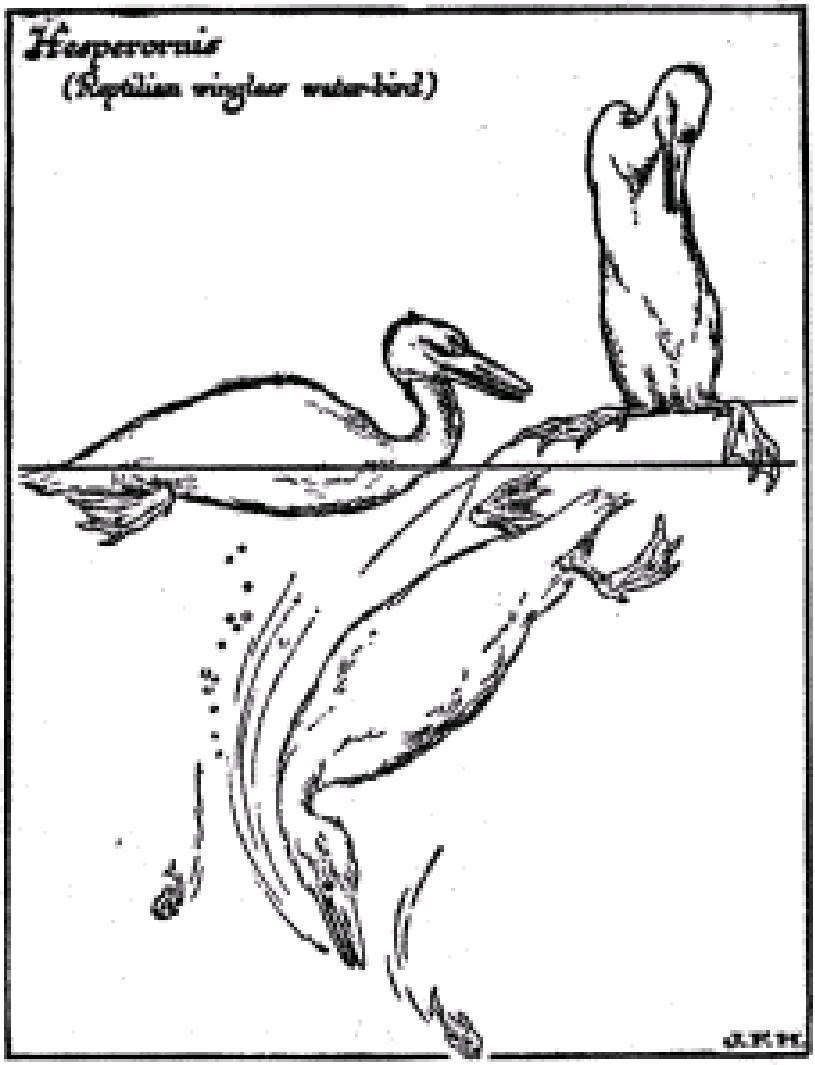

These little Theriomorphs, these ancestral mammals, developed hair. Hairs, like feathers, are long and elaborately specialized scales. Hair is perhaps the clue to the salvation of the early mammals. Leading lives upon the margin of existence, away from the marshes and the warmth, they developed an outer covering only second in its warmth-holding (or heat-resisting) powers to the down and feathers of the Arctic sea-birds. And so they held out through the age of hardship between the Mesozoic and Cainozoic ages, to which most

of the true reptiles succumbed.

All the main characteristics of this flora and sea and land fauna that came to an end with the end of the Mesozoic age were such as were adapted to an equable climate and to shallow and swampy regions. But in the case of their Cainozoic successors, both hair and feathers gave *a power of resistance to variable temperatures* such as no reptile possessed, and with it they gave a range far greater than any animal had hitherto attained.

The range of life of the Lower Palæozoic Period was confined to warm water.

The range of life of the Upper Palæozoic Period was confined to warm water or to warm swamps and wet ground.

The range of life of the Mesozoic Period as we know it was confined to water and fairly low-lying valley regions under equable conditions.

Meanwhile in each of these periods there were types involuntarily extending the range of life beyond the limits prevailing in that period; and when ages of extreme conditions prevailed, it was these marginal types which survived to inherit the depopulated world.

That perhaps is the most general statement we can make about the story of the geological record; it is a story of widening range. Classes, genera, and species of animals appear and disappear, but the range widens. It widens always. Life has never had so great a range as it has to-day. Life to-day, in the form of man, goes higher in the air than it has ever done before; man's geographical range is from pole to pole, he goes under the water in submarines, he sounds the cold, lifeless darkness of the deepest seas, he burrows into virgin levels of the rocks, and in thought and knowledge he pierces to the centre of the earth and reaches out to the uttermost star. Yet in all the relics of the Mesozoic time we find no certain memorials of his ancestry. His ancestors, like the ancestors of all the kindred mammals, must have been creatures so rare, so obscure, and so remote that they have left scarcely a trace amidst the abundant vestiges of the monsters that wallowed rejoicing in the steamy air and lush vegetation of the Mesozoic lagoons, or crawled or hopped or fluttered over the great river plains of that time.

THE AGE OF MAMMALS

§ 1. *A New Age of Light.* § 2. *Tradition Comes into the World.* § 3. *An Age of Brain Growth.* § 4. *The World Grows Hard Again.* § 5. *Chronology of the Ice Age.*

§ 1

THE third great division of the geological record, the Cainozoic, opens with a world already physically very like the world we live in to-day. Probably the day was at first still perceptibly shorter, but the scenery had become very modern in its character. Climate was, of course, undergoing, age by age, its incessant and irregular variations; lands that are temperate to-day have passed, since the Cainozoic age began, through phases of great warmth, intense cold, and extreme dryness; but the landscape, if it altered, altered to nothing that cannot still be paralleled to-day in some part of the world or other. In the place of the cycads, sequoias, and strange conifers of the Mesozoic, the plant names that now appear in the lists of fossils include birch, beech, holly, tulip trees, ivy, sweet gum, bread-fruit trees. Flowers had developed concurrently with bees and butterflies. Palms were now very important. Such plants had already been in evidence in the later levels of the (American Cretaceous) Mesozoic, but now they dominated the scene altogether. Grass was becoming a great fact in the world. Certain grasses, too, had appeared in the later Mesozoic, but only with the Cainozoic period came grass plains and turf spreading wide over a world that was once barren stone.

The period opened with a long phase of considerable warmth; then the world cooled. And in the opening of this third part of the record, this Cainozoic period, a gigantic crumpling of the earth's crust and an upheaval of mountain ranges was in progress. The Alps, the Andes, the Himalayas, are all Cainozoic mountain ranges; the background of an early Cainozoic scene, to be typical, should display an active volcano or so. It must have been an age of great earthquakes.

Geologists make certain main divisions of the Cainozoic period,

and it will be convenient to name them here and to indicate their climate. First comes the *Eocene* (dawn of recent life), an age of exceptional warmth in the world's history, subdivided into an older and newer Eocene; then the *Oligocene* (but little of recent life), in which the climate was still equable. The *Miocene* (with living species still in a minority) was the great age of mountain building, and the general temperature was falling. In the *Pliocene* (more living than extinct species), climate was very much at its present phase; but with the *Pleistocene* (a great majority of living species) there set in a long period of extreme conditions — it was the Great Ice Age. Glaciers spread from the poles towards the equator, until England to the Thames was covered in ice. Thereafter to our own time came a period of partial recovery.

§ 2

In the forests and following the grass over the Eocene plains there appeared for the first time a variety and abundance of mammals. Before we proceed to any description of these mammals, it may be well to note in general terms what a mammal is.

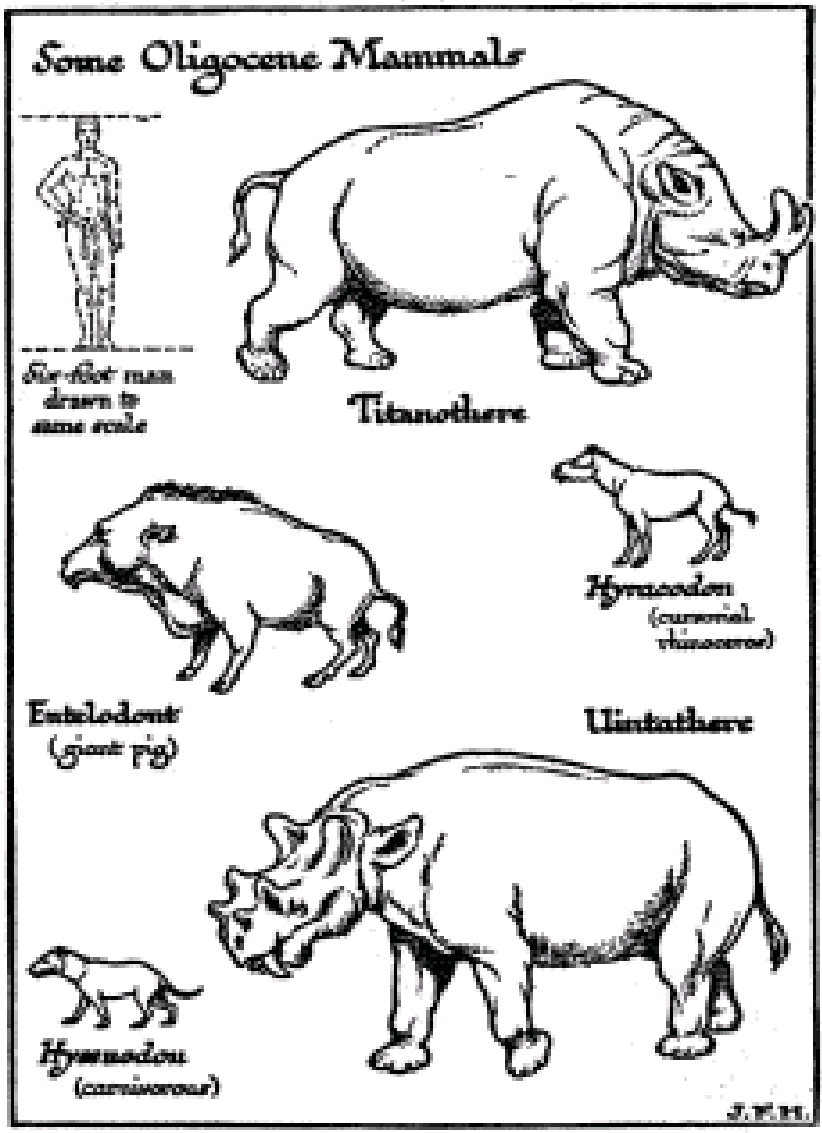

From the appearance of the vertebrated animals in the Lower Palæozoic Age, when the fish first swarmed out into the sea, there has been a steady progressive development of vertebrated creatures. A fish is a vertebrated animal that breathes by gills and can live only in water. An amphibian may be described as a fish that has added to its gill-breathing the power of breathing air with its swimming-

bladder in adult life, and that has also developed limbs with five toes to them in place of the fins of a fish. A tadpole is for a time a fish; it becomes a land creature as it develops. A reptile is a further stage in this detachment from water; it is an amphibian that is no longer amphibious; it passes through its tadpole stage — its fish stage, that is — in an egg. From the beginning it must breathe in air; it can never breathe under water as a tadpole can do. Now, a modern mammal is really a sort of reptile that has developed a peculiarly effective protective covering, hair; and that also retains its eggs in the body until they hatch so that it brings forth living young (viviparous), and even after birth it cares for them and feeds them by its mammæ for a longer or shorter period. Some reptiles, some vipers for example, are viviparous, but none stand by their young as the real mammals do. Both the birds and the mammals, which escaped whatever destructive forces made an end to the Mesozoic reptiles, and which survived to dominate the Cainozoic world, have these two things in common: first, a far more effective protection against changes of temperature than any other variation of the reptile type ever produced; and, secondly, a peculiar care for their eggs, the bird by incubation and the mammal by retention, and a disposition to look after the young for a certain period after hatching or birth. There is by comparison the greatest carelessness about offspring in the reptile.

Hair was evidently the earliest distinction of the mammals from the rest of the reptiles. It is doubtful if the particular Theriodont reptiles who were developing hair in the early Mesozoic were viviparous. Two mammals survive to this day which not only do not suckle their young, but which lay eggs, the *Ornithorhynchus* and the *Echidna*, and in the Eocene there were a number of allied forms. They are the survivors of what was probably a much larger number and variety of small egg-laying hairy creatures, hairy reptiles, hoppers, climbers, and runners, which included the Mesozoic ancestors of all existing mammals up to and including man.

Now we may put the essential facts about mammalian reproduction in another way. *The mammal is a family animal.* And the family habit involved the possibility of a new sort of continuity of experience in the world. Compare the completely closed-in life of an individual lizard with the life of even a quite lowly mammal of

almost any kind. The former has no mental continuity with anything beyond itself; it is a little self-contained globe of experience that serves its purpose and ends; but the latter "picks up" from its mother, and "hands on" to its offspring. All the mammals, except for the two genera we have named, had already before the lower Eocene age arrived at this stage of pre-adult dependence and imitation. They were all more or less imitative in youth and capable of a certain modicum of education; they all, as a part of their development, received a certain amount of care and example and even direction from their mother. This is as true of the hyæna and rhinoceros as it is of the dog or man; the difference of educability is enormous, but the fact of protection and educability in the young stage is undeniable. So far as the vertebrated animals go, these new mammals, with their viviparous, young-protecting disposition, and these new birds, with their incubating, young-protecting disposition, introduce at the opening of the Cainozoic period a fresh thing into the expanding story of life, namely, social association, the addition to hard and inflexible instinct of *tradition*, and the nervous organization necessary to receive tradition.

All the innovations that come into the history of life begin very humbly. The supply of blood-vessels in the swimming-bladder of the mudfish in the lower Palæozoic torrent-river, that enabled it to pull through a season of drought, would have seemed at that time to that bodiless visitant to our planet we have already imagined, a very unimportant side fact in that ancient world of great sharks and plated fishes, sea-scorpions, and coral reefs and seaweed; but it opened the narrow way by which the land vertebrates arose to predominance. The mudfish would have seemed then a poor refugee from the too crowded and aggressive life of the sea. But once lungs were launched into the world, every line of descent that had lungs went on improving them. So, too, in the upper Palæozoic, the fact that some of the Amphibia were losing their "amphibiousness" by a retardation of hatching of their eggs, would have appeared a mere response to the distressful dangers that threatened the young tadpole. Yet that prepared the conquest of the dry land for the triumphant multitude of the Mesozoic reptiles. It opened a new direction towards a free and vigorous land-life along which all the reptilian animals moved. And

this viviparous, young-tending training that the ancestral mammalia underwent during that age of inferiority and hardship for them, set going in the world a new continuity of perception, of which even man to-day only begins to appreciate the significance.

§ 3

A number of types of mammal already appear in the Eocene. Some are differentiating in one direction, and some in another, some are perfecting themselves as herbivorous quadrupeds, some leap and climb among the trees, some turn back to the water to swim, but all types are unconsciously exploiting and developing the brain which is the instrument of this new power of acquisition and educability. In the Eocene rocks are found small early predecessors of the horse (Eohippus), tiny camels, pigs, early tapirs, early hedgehogs, monkeys and lemurs, opossums and carnivores. Now, all these were more or less ancestral to living forms, and all have brains relatively much smaller than their living representatives. There is, for instance, an early rhinoceros, *Titanotherium*, with a brain not one tenth the size of that of the existing rhinoceros. The latter is by no means a perfect type of the attentive and submissive student, but even so it is ten times more observant and teachable than its predecessor. This sort of thing is true of all the orders and families that survive until to-day. All the Cainozoic mammals were doing this one thing in common under the urgency of a common necessity; they were all growing brain. It was a parallel advance. In the same order or family to-day, the brain is usually from six to ten times what it was in the Eocene ancestor.

Grass was now spreading over the world, and with this extension arose some huge graminivorous brutes of which no representative survives to-day. Such were the Uintatheres and the Titanotheres. And in pursuit of such beasts came great swarms of primitive dogs, some as big as bears, and the first cats, one in particular (*Smilodon*), a small fierce-looking creature with big knife-like canines, the first sabre-toothed tiger, which was to develop into greater things. American deposits in the Miocene display a great variety of camels, giraffe camels with long necks, gazelle camels, llamas, and true

camels. North America, throughout most of the Cainozoic period, appears to have been in open and easy continuation with Asia, and when at last the glaciers of the Great Ice Age, and then the Bering Strait, came to separate the two great continental regions, the last camels were left in the old world and the llamas in the new.

In the Eocene the first ancestors of the elephants appear in northern Africa as snouted creatures; the elephant's trunk dawned on the world in the Miocene.

One group of creatures is of peculiar interest in a history that is mainly to be the story of mankind. We find fossils in the Eocene of monkeys and lemurs, but of one particular creature we have as yet not a single bone. It was half ape, half monkey; it clambered about the trees and ran, and probably ran well, on its hind legs upon the ground. It was small-brained by our present standards, but it had clever hands with which it handled fruits and beat nuts upon the rocks and perhaps caught up sticks and stones to smite its fellows. It was our ancestor.

§ 4

Through millions of simian generations the spinning world circled about the sun; slowly its orbit, which may have been nearly circular during the equable days of the early Eocene, was drawn by the attraction of the circling outer planets into a more elliptical form. Its axis of rotation, which had always heeled over to the plane of its orbit, as the mast of a yacht under sail heels over to the level of the water, heeled over by imperceptible degrees a little more and a little more. And each year its summer point shifted a little further from perihelion round its path. These were small changes to happen to a one-inch ball, circling at a distance of 330 yards from a flaming sun nine feet across, in the course of a few million years. They were changes an immortal astronomer in Neptune, watching the earth from age to age, would have found almost imperceptible. But from the point of view of the surviving mammalian life of the Miocene, they mattered profoundly. Age by age the winters grew on the whole colder and harder and a few hours longer relatively to the summers in a thousand years; age by age the summers grew briefer. On an

average the winter snow lay a little later in the spring in each century, and the glaciers in the northern mountains gained an inch this year, receded half an inch next, came on again a few inches....

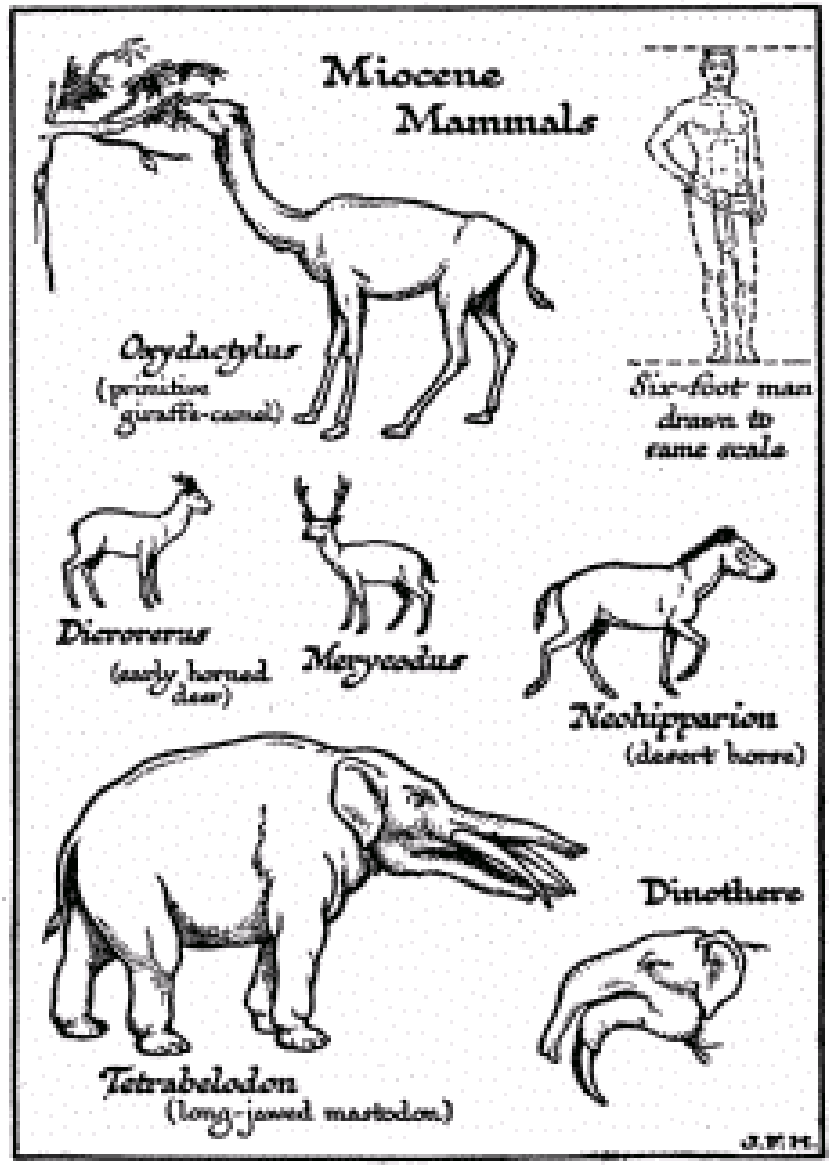

The Record of the Rocks tells of the increasing chill. The Pliocene was a temperate time, and many of the warmth-loving plants and animals had gone. Then, rather less deliberately, some feet or some inches every year, the ice came on.

An arctic fauna, musk ox, woolly mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, lemming, ushers in the Pleistocene. Over North America, and Europe and Asia alike, the ice advanced. For thousands of years it advanced, and then for thousands of years it receded, to advance again. Europe down to the Baltic shores, Britain down to the Thames, North America down to New England, and more centrally as far south as Ohio, lay for ages under the glaciers. Enormous volumes of water were withdrawn from the ocean and locked up in those stupendous ice caps so as to cause a world-wide change in the relative levels of land and sea. Vast areas were exposed that are now again sea bottom.

The world to-day is still coming slowly out of the last of four great waves of cold. It is not growing warmer steadily. There have been fluctuations. Remains of bog oaks, for example, which grew two or three thousand years ago, are found in Scotland at latitudes in which not even a stunted oak will grow at the present time. And it is amidst this crescendo and diminuendo of frost and snow that we first recognize forms that are like the forms of men. The Age of Mammals culminated in ice and hardship and man.

§ 5

Guesses about the duration of the great age of cold are still vague, but in the Time diagram on page 60 we follow H. F. Osborn in accepting as our guides the estimates of Albrecht Penck and C. A. Reeds.

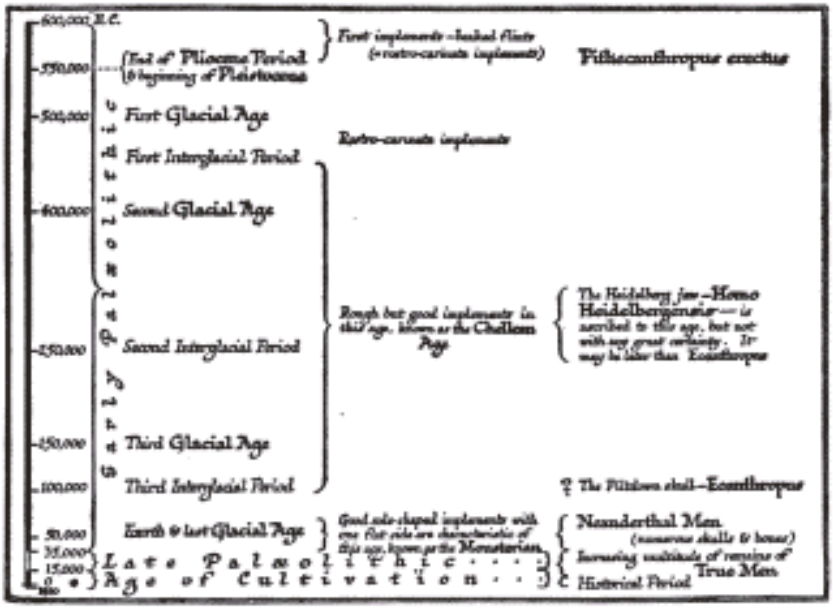

Time Diagram of the Glacial Ages.

The reader should compare this diagram carefully with our first time diagram, Chapter II, § 2, . That diagram, if it were on the same scale as this one, would be between 41 and 410 feet long. The position of the Eoanthropus is very uncertain: it may be as early as the Pliocene

BOOK II. THE MAKING OF MEN

VIII

THE ANCESTRY OF MAN

§ 1. *Man Descended from a Walking Ape.* § 2. *First Traces of Man-like Creatures.* § 3. *The Heidelberg Sub-man.* § 4. *The Piltdown Sub-man.* § 5. *The Riddle of the Piltdown Remains.*

§ 1

THE origin of man is still very obscure. It is commonly asserted that he is "descended" from some man-like ape such as the chimpanzee, the orang-utang, or the gorilla, but that of course is as reasonable as saying that I am "descended" from some Hottentot or Esquimaux as young or younger than myself. Others, alive to this objection, say that man is descended from the common ancestor of the chimpanzee, the orang-utang, and the gorilla. Some "anthropologists" have even indulged in a speculation whether mankind may not have a double or treble origin; the negro being descended from a gorilla-like ancestor, the Chinese from a chimpanzee-like ancestor, and so on. These are very fanciful ideas, to be mentioned only to be dismissed. It was formerly assumed that the human ancestor was "probably arboreal," but the current idea among those who are qualified to form an opinion seems to be that he was a "ground ape," and that the existing apes have developed in the arboreal direction.

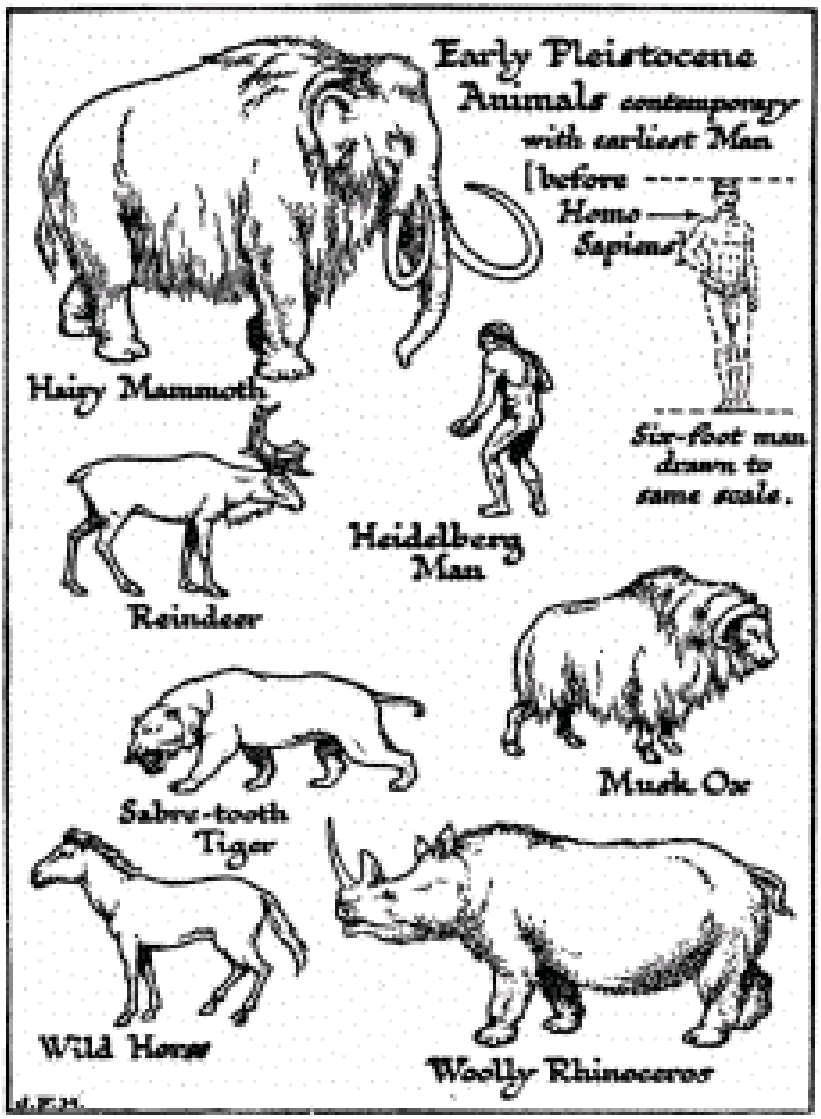

Of course, if one puts the skeleton of a man and the skeleton of a gorilla side by side, their general resemblance is so great that it is easy to jump to the conclusion that the former is derived from such a type as the latter by a process of brain growth and general refinement. But if one examines closely into one or two differences, the gap widens. Particular stress has recently been laid upon the tread

of the foot. Man walks on his toe and his heel; his great toe is his chief lever in walking, as the reader may see for himself if he examines his own footprints on the bathroom floor and notes where the pressure falls as the footprints become fainter. His great toe is the king of his toes.

Among all the apes and monkeys, the only group that have their great toes developed on anything like the same fashion as man are some of the lemurs. The baboon walks on a flat foot and all his toes, using his middle toe as his chief throw off, much as the bear does. And the three great apes all walk on the outer side of the foot in a very different manner from the walking of man.

Possible Appearance of the Sub-man Pithecanthropus. The face,

jaws, and teeth are mere guess work (see text). The creature may have been much less human looking than this.

The great apes are forest dwellers; their walking even now is incidental; they are at their happiest among trees. They have very distinctive methods of climbing; they swing by the arms much more than the monkeys do, and do not, like the latter, take off with a spring from the feet. They have a specially developed climbing style of their own. But man walks so well and runs so swiftly as to suggest a very long ancestry upon the ground. Also, he does not climb well now; he climbs with caution and hesitation. His ancestors may have been running creatures for long ages. Moreover, it is to be noted that he does not swim naturally; he has to learn to swim, and that seems to point to a long-standing separation from rivers and lakes and the sea. Almost certainly that ancestor was a smaller and slighter creature than its human descendants. Conceivably the human ancestor at the opening of the Cainozoic period was a running ape, living chiefly on the ground, hiding among rocks rather than trees. It could still climb trees well and hold things between its great toe and its second toe (as the Japanese can to this day), but it was already coming down to the ground again from a still remoter, a Mesozoic arboreal ancestry. It is quite understandable that such a creature would very rarely die in water in such circumstances as to leave bones to become fossilized.

It must always be borne in mind that among its many other imperfections the Geological Record necessarily contains abundant traces only of water or marsh creatures or of creatures easily and frequently drowned. The same reasons that make any traces of the ancestors of the mammals rare and relatively unprocurable in the Mesozoic rocks, probably make the traces of possible human ancestors rare and relatively unprocurable in the Cainozoic rocks. Such knowledge as we have of the earliest men, for example, is almost entirely got from a few caves, into which they went and in which they left their traces. Until the hard Pleistocene times they lived and died in the open, and their bodies were consumed or decayed altogether.

But it is well to bear in mind also that the Record of the Rocks has still to be thoroughly examined. It has been studied only for a few

generations, and by only a few men in each generation. Most men have been too busy making war, making profits out of their neighbours, toiling at work that machinery could do for them in a tenth of the time, or simply playing about, to give any attention to these more interesting things. There may be, there probably are, thousands of deposits still untouched containing countless fragments and vestiges of man and his progenitors. In Asia particularly, in India or the East Indies, there may be hidden the most illuminating clues. What we know to-day of early men is the merest scrap of what will presently be known.

The apes and monkeys already appear to have been differentiated at the beginning of the Cainozoic Age, and there are a number of Oligocene and Miocene apes whose relations to one another and to the human line have still to be made out. Among these we may mention *Dryopithecus* of the Miocene Age, with a very human-looking jaw. In the Siwalik Hills of northern India remains of some very interesting apes have been found, of which *Sivapithecus* and *Palæopithecus* were possibly related closely to the human ancestor. Possibly these animals already used implements. Charles Darwin represents baboons as opening nuts by breaking them with stones, using stakes to prize up rocks in the hunt for insects, and striking blows with sticks and stones. The chimpanzee makes itself a sort of tree hut by intertwining branches. Stones apparently chipped for use have been found in strata of Oligocene Age at Boncelles in Belgium. Possibly the implement-using disposition was already present in the Mesozoic ancestry from which we are descended.

§ 2

Among the earliest evidences of some creature, either human or at least more man-like than any living ape upon earth, are a number of flints and stones very roughly chipped and shaped so as to be held in the hand. These were probably used as hand-axes. These early implements ("Eoliths") are often so crude and simple that there was for a long time a controversy whether they were to be regarded as natural or artificial productions. The date of the earliest of them is

put by geologists as Pliocene — that is to say, *before the First Glacial Age*. They occur also throughout the First Interglacial period. We know of no bones or other remains in Europe or America of the quasi-human beings of half a million years ago, who made and used these implements. They used them to hammer with, perhaps they used them to fight with, and perhaps they used bits of wood for similar purposes.

But at Trinil, in Java, in strata which are said to correspond either to the later Pliocene or to the American and European First Ice Age, there have been found some scattered bones of a creature, such as the makers of these early implements may have been. The top of a skull, some teeth, and a thigh-bone have been found. The skull shows a brain-case about half-way in size between that of the chimpanzee and man, but the thigh-bone is that of a creature as well adapted to standing and running as a man, and as free, therefore, to use its hands. The creature was not a man, nor was it an arboreal ape like the chimpanzee. It was a walking ape. It has been named by naturalists *Pithecanthropus erectus* (the walking ape-man). We cannot say that it is a direct human ancestor, but we may guess that the creatures who scattered these first stone tools over the world must have been closely similar and kindred, and that our ancestor was a beast of like kind. This little trayful of bony fragments from Trinil is, at present, apart from stone implements, the oldest relic of early humanity, or of the close blood relations of early humanity, that is known.

While these early men or "sub-men" were running about Europe four or five hundred thousand years ago, there were mammoths, rhinoceroses, a huge hippopotamus, a giant beaver, and a bison and wild cattle in their world. There were also wild horses, and the sabre-toothed tiger still abounded. There are no traces of lions or true tigers at that time in Europe, but there were bears, otters, wolves, and a wild boar. It may be that the early sub-man sometimes played jackal to the sabre-toothed tiger, and finished up the bodies on which the latter had gorged itself.

§ 3

After this first glimpse of something at least sub-human in the record of geology, there is not another fragment of human or man-like bone yet known from that record for an interval of hundreds of thousands of years. It is not until we reach deposits which are stated to be of the Second Interglacial period, 200,000 years later, 200,000 or 250,000 years ago, that another little scrap of bone comes to hand. Then we find a jaw-bone.

This jaw-bone was found in a sandpit near Heidelberg, at a depth of eighty feet from the surface, and it is not the jaw-bone of a man as we understand man, but it is man-like in every respect, except that it has absolutely no trace of a chin; it is more massive than a man's, and its narrowness behind could not, it is thought, have given the tongue sufficient play for articulate speech. It is not an ape's jaw-bone; the teeth are human. The owner of this jaw-bone has been variously named *Homo Heidelbergensis* and *Palæoanthropus Heidelbergensis*, according to the estimate formed of its humanity or sub-humanity by various authorities. He lived in a world not remotely unlike the world of the still earlier sub-man of the first implements; the deposits in which it is found show that there were elephants, horses, rhinoceroses, bison, a moose, and so forth with it in the world, but the sabre-toothed tiger was declining and the lion was spreading over Europe. The implements of this period (known as the Chellean period) are a very considerable advance upon those of the Pliocene Age. They are well made but *very much bigger* than any truly human implements. The Heidelberg man may have had a very big body and large forelimbs. He may have been a woolly strange-looking creature.

§ 4

We must turn over the Record for, it may be, another 100,000 years for the next remains of anything human or sub-human. Then in a deposit ascribed to the Third Interglacial period, which may have begun 100,000 years ago and lasted 50,000 years, the smashed pieces of a whole skull turn up. The deposit is a gravel which may have been derived from the washing out of still earlier gravel strata and this skull fragment may be in reality as old as the First Glacial

period. The bony remains discovered at Piltdown in Sussex display a creature still ascending only very gradually from the sub-human.

The first scraps of this skull were found in an excavation for road gravel in Sussex. Bit by bit other fragments of this skull were hunted out from the quarry heaps until most of it could be pieced together. It is a thick skull, thicker than that of any living race of men, and it has a brain capacity intermediate between that of Pithecanthropus and man. This creature has been named *Eoanthropus*, the dawn man. In the same gravel-pits were found teeth of rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and the leg-bone of a deer with marks upon it that may be cuts. A curious bat-shaped instrument of elephant bone has also been found.

There was, moreover, a jaw-bone among these scattered remains, which was at first assumed naturally enough to belong to *Eoanthropus*, but which it was afterwards suggested was probably that of a chimpanzee. It is extraordinarily like that of a chimpanzee, but Dr. Keith, one of the greatest authorities in these questions, assigns it, after an exhaustive analysis in his *Antiquity of Man* (1915), to the skull with which it is found. It is, as a jaw-bone, far less human in character than the jaw of the much more ancient *Homo Heidelbergensis*, but the teeth are in some respects more like those of living men.

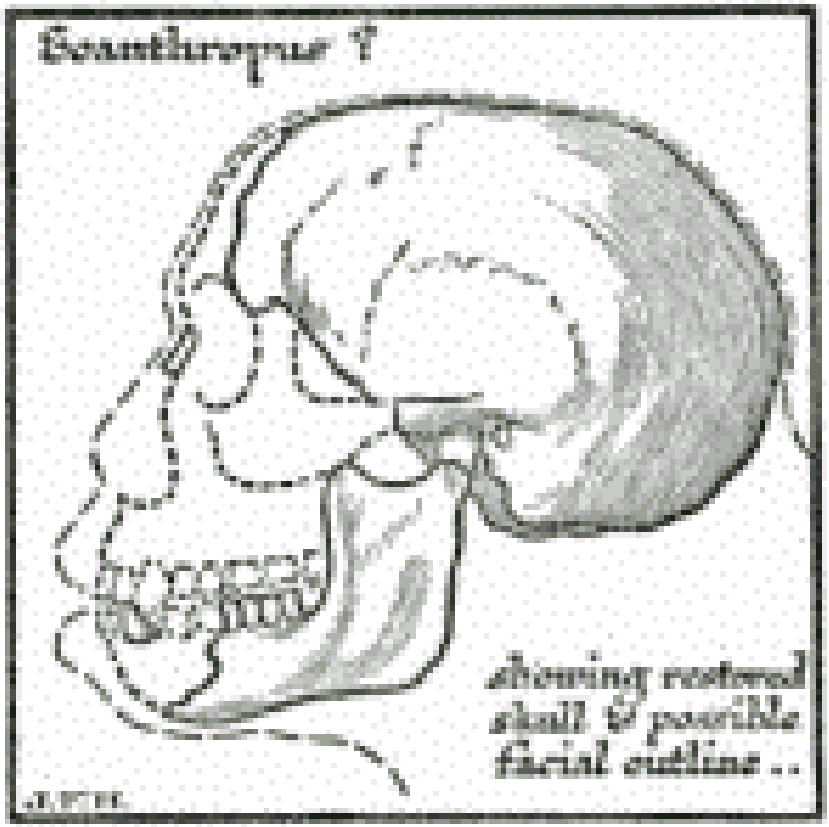

Diagram to Illustrate the Riddle of The Piltdown Sub-man.

Dr. Keith, swayed by the jaw-bone, does not think that *Eoanthropus*, in spite of its name, is a creature in the direct ancestry of man. Much less is it an intermediate form between the Heidelberg man and the Neanderthal man we shall presently describe. It was only related to the true ancestor of man as the orang is related to the chimpanzee. It was one of a number of sub-human running apes of more than ape-like intelligence, and if it was not on the line royal, it was at any rate a very close collateral.

After this glimpse of a skull, the Record for very many centuries gives nothing but flint implements, which improve steadily in quality. A very characteristic form is shaped like a sole, with one flat side stricken off at one blow and the other side worked. The archæologists, as the Record continues, are presently able to

distinguish scrapers, borers, knives, darts, throwing stones, and the like. Progress is now more rapid; in a few centuries the shape of the hand-axe shows distinct and recognizable improvements. And then comes quite a number of remains. The Fourth Glacial Age is rising towards its maximum. Man is taking to caves and leaving vestiges there; at Krapina in Croatia, at Neanderthal near Düsseldorf, at Spy, human remains have been found, skulls and bones of a creature that is certainly a man. Somewhere about 50,000 years ago, if not earlier, appeared *Homo Neanderthalensis* (also called *Homo antiquus* and *Homo primigenius*), a quite passable human being. His thumb was not quite equal in flexibility and usefulness to a human thumb, he stooped forward, and could not hold his head erect, as all living men do, he was chinless and perhaps incapable of speech, there were curious differences about the enamel and the roots of his teeth from those of all living men, he was very thick-set, he was, indeed, not quite of the human species; but there is no dispute about his attribution to the genus *Homo*. He was certainly not descended from Eoanthropus, but his jaw-bone is so like the Heidelberg jaw-bone as to make it possible that the clumsier and heavier *Homo Heidelbergensis*, a thousand centuries before him, was of his blood and race.

§ 5

Upon this question of the Piltdown jaw-bone, it may be of interest to quote here a letter to the writer from Sir Ray Lankester, discussing the question in a familiar and luminous manner. It will enable the reader to gauge the extent and quality of the evidence that we possess at present upon the nature of these early human and sub-human animals. Upon these fragile Piltdown fragments alone more than a hundred books, pamphlets, and papers have been written. These scraps of bone are guarded more carefully from theft and wilful damage than the most precious jewels, and in the museum cases one sees only carefully executed *fac-similes*.

"As to the Piltdown jaw-bone, the best study of it is that by Smith Woodward, who first described it and the canine found later. The jaw is imperfect in front, but has the broad, flat symphysis of the Apes.

G. S. Miller, an American anthropologist, has made a very good comparison of it with a chimpanzee's jaw, and concludes that it is a chimpanzee's. (His monograph is in the *Am. Jour. of Phys. Anthrop.*, vol. i, no. 1.) The one point in the Piltdown jaw itself against chimpanzee identification is the smooth, flat, worn surface of the molars. This is a human character, and is due to lateral movement of the jaw, and hence rubbing down of the tubercles of the molars. This is not worth much. But the serious question is, are we to associate this jaw with the cranium found close by it? If so, it is certainly not chimpanzee nor close to the Apes, but decidedly hominid. Two other small fragments of crania and a few more teeth have been found in the gravel two miles from Piltdown, which agree with the Piltdown cranium in having superciliary ridges fairly strong for a human skull, but not anything like the great superciliary ridges of Apes. The fact one has to face is this; here you have an imperfect cranium, very thick-walled and of small cubical contents (1100 or so), but much larger in that respect than any ape's. A few yards distant from it in the same layer of gravel is found a jaw-bone having rather large pointed canines, a flat, broad symphysis, and other points about the inner face of the ramus and ridges which resemble those of the chimpanzee. Which is the more likely: (*a*) that these two novel fragments tending apewards from man were parts of the same individual; or (*b*), that the sweeping of the Wealden valley has brought there together a half-jaw and a broken cranium *both* more ape-like in character than any known human corresponding bits, and yet derived from two separate anthropoid beasts, one (the jaw) more simian, and the other (the cranium) much less so? As to the probabilities, we must remember that this patch of gravel at Piltdown, clearly and definitely, is a wash-up of remains of various later tertiary and post-tertiary deposits. It contains fragments of Miocene mastodon and rhinoceros teeth. These latter differ entirely in mineral character from the Eoanthropus jaw and the cranium. But (and this needs re-examination and *chemical* analysis) the Piltdown jaw and the Piltdown cranium do not seem to me to be quite alike in their mineral condition. The jaw is more deeply iron-stained, and I should say (but not confidently), harder than the cranium. Now, it is easy to attribute too much importance to that difference, since in a

patch of iron-stained gravel, such as that at Piltdown, the soaking of water and iron salts into bones embedded may be much greater in one spot than in another only a yard off, or a few inches deeper!

"So I think we are stumped and baffled! The most prudent way is to keep the jaw and the cranium apart in all argument about them. On the other hand, on the principle that hypotheses are not to be multiplied beyond necessity, there is a case for regarding the two — jaw and cranium — as having been parts of one beast — or man."

To which Sir H. H. Johnston adds: "Against the chimpanzee hypothesis it must be borne in mind that so far no living chimpanzee or fossil chimpanzee-like remains have been found nearer England than north equatorial Africa or North-west India, and no remains of great apes at all nearer than Southern France and the upper Rhine — and those widely different from the *Eoanthropus* jaw."

IX

THE NEANDERTHAL MEN, AN EXTINCT RACE

(The Early Palæolithic Age)

§ 1. *The World 50,000 Years Ago.* § 2. *The Daily Life of the First Men.* § 3. *The Last Palæolithic Men.*

§ 1

IN the time of the Third Interglacial period the outline of Europe and western Asia was very different from what it is to-day. Vast areas to the west and northwest which are now under the Atlantic waters were then dry land; the Irish Sea and the North Sea were river valleys. Over these northern areas there spread and receded and spread again a great ice cap such as covers central Greenland to-day (see Map, on page 77). This vast ice cap, which covered both polar regions of the earth, withdrew huge masses of water from the ocean, and the sea-level consequently fell, exposing great areas of land that are now submerged again. The Mediterranean area was probably a great valley below the general sea-level, containing two inland seas cut off from the general ocean. The climate of this Mediterranean basin was perhaps cold temperate, and the region of the Sahara to the south was not then a desert of baked rock and blown sand, but a well-watered and fertile country. Between the ice sheets to the north and the Alps and Mediterranean valley to the south stretched a bleak wilderness whose climate changed from harshness to a mild kindliness and then hardened again for the Fourth Glacial Age.

Across this wilderness, which is now the great plain of Europe, wandered a various fauna. At first there were hippopotami, rhinoceroses, mammoths, and elephants. The sabre-toothed tiger was diminishing towards extinction. Then, as the air chilled, the hippopotamus, and then other warmth-loving creatures, ceased to come so far north, and the sabre-toothed tiger disappeared altogether. The woolly mammoth, the woolly rhinoceros, the musk ox, the bison, the aurochs, and the reindeer became prevalent, and the

temperate vegetation gave place to plants of a more arctic type. The glaciers spread southward to the maximum of the Fourth Glacial Age (about 50,000 years ago), and then receded again. In the earlier phase, the Third Interglacial period, a certain number of small family groups of men (*Homo Neanderthalensis*) and probably of sub-men (*Eoanthropus*) wandered over the land, leaving nothing but their flint implements to witness to their presence. They probably used a multitude and variety of wooden implements also; they had probably learnt much about the shapes of objects and the use of different shapes from wood, knowledge which they afterwards applied to stone; but none of this wooden material has survived; we can only speculate about its forms and uses. As the weather hardened to its maximum of severity, the Neanderthal men, already it would seem acquainted with the use of fire, began to seek shelter under rock ledges and in caves — and so leave remains behind them. Hitherto they had been accustomed to squat in the open about the fire, and near their water supply. But they were sufficiently intelligent to adapt themselves to the new and harder conditions. (As for the sub-men, they seem to have succumbed to the stresses of this Fourth Glacial Age altogether. At any rate, the rudest type of Palæolithic implements presently disappears.)

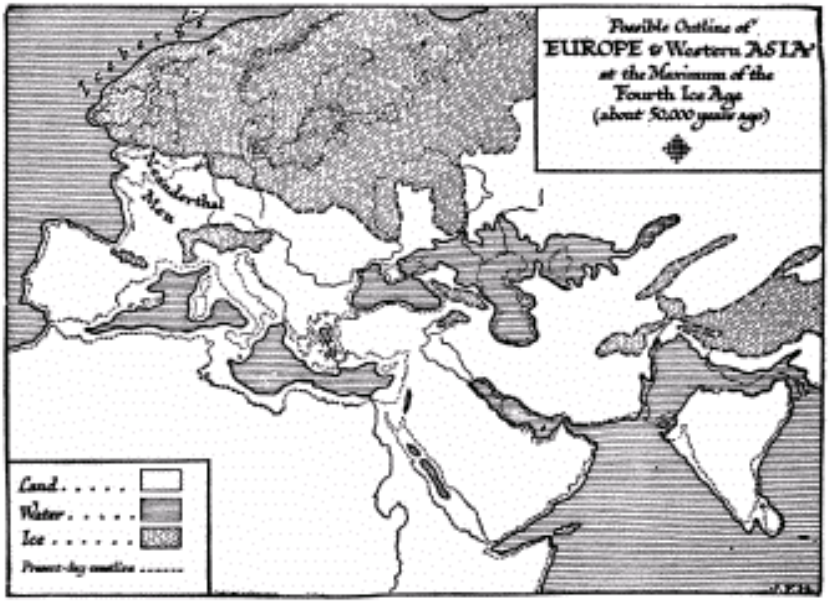

This Map Represents the Present State of Our Knowledge of the Geography of Europe And Western Asia at a Period which We Guess to be about 50,000 Years Ago, the Neanderthaler Age.
Much of this map is of course speculative, but its broad outlines must be fairly like those of the world in which men first became men.

Not merely man was taking to the caves. This period also had a cave lion, a cave bear, and a cave hyæna. These creatures had to be driven out of the caves and kept out of the caves in which these early men wanted to squat and hide; and no doubt fire was an effective method of eviction and protection. Probably early men did not go deeply into the caves, because they had no means of lighting their recesses. They got in far enough to be out of the weather, and stored wood and food in odd corners. Perhaps they barricaded the cave mouths. Their only available light for going deeply into the caverns would be torches.

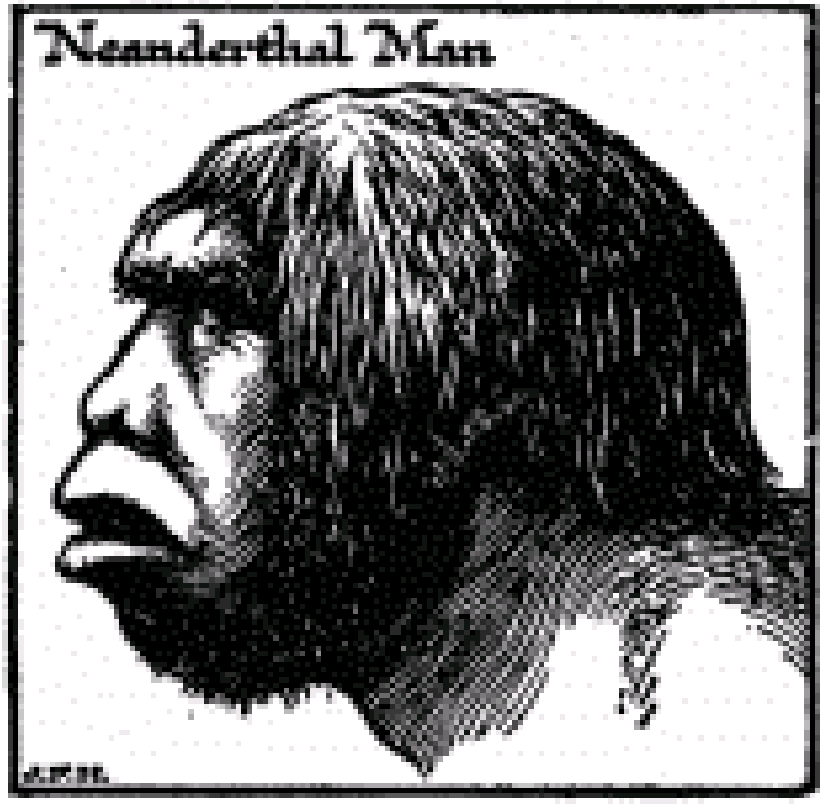

What did these Neanderthal men hunt? Their only possible weapons for killing such giant creatures as the mammoth or the cave bear, or even the reindeer, were spears of wood, wooden clubs, and those big pieces of flint they left behind them, the “Chellean” and “Mousterian” implements; and probably their usual quarry was smaller game. But they did certainly eat the flesh of the big beasts when they had a chance, and perhaps they followed them when sick or when wounded by combats, or took advantage of them when they were bogged or in trouble with ice or water. (The Labrador Indians still kill the caribou with spears at awkward river crossings.) At Dewlish in Dorset, an artificial trench has been found which is supposed to have been a Palæolithic trap for elephants. We know that the Neanderthalers partly ate their kill where it fell; but they brought back the big marrow bones to the cave to crack and eat at leisure, because few ribs and vertebræ are found in the caves, but great

quantities of cracked and split long bones. They used skins to wrap about them, and the women probably dressed the skins.

We know also that they were right-handed like modern men, because the left side of the brain (which serves the right side of the body) is bigger than the right. But while the back parts of the brain which deal with sight and touch and the energy of the body are well developed, the front parts, which are connected with thought and speech, are comparatively small. It was as big a brain as ours, but different. This species of *Homo* had certainly a very different mentality from ours; its individuals were not merely simpler and lower than we are, they were on another line. It may be they did not speak at all, or very sparingly. They had nothing that we should call a language.

§ 2

In Worthington Smith's *Man the Primeval Savage* there is a very vividly written description of early Palæolithic life, from which much of the following account is borrowed. In the original, Mr. Worthington Smith assumes a more extensive social life, a larger community, and a more definite division of labour among its members than is altogether justifiable in the face of such subsequent writings as J. J. Atkinson's memorable essay on Primal Law. For the little tribe Mr. Worthington Smith described there has been substituted, therefore, a family group under the leadership of one Old Man, and the suggestions of Mr. Atkinson as to the behaviour of the Old Man have been worked into the sketch.

Mr. Worthington Smith describes a squatting-place near a stream, because primitive man, having no pots or other vessels, must needs have kept close to a water supply, and with some chalk cliffs adjacent from which flints could be got to work. The air was bleak, and the fire was of great importance, because fires once out were not easily relit in those days. When not required to blaze it was probably banked down with ashes. The most probable way in which fires were started was by hacking a bit of iron pyrites with a flint amidst dry dead leaves; concretions of iron pyrites and flints are found together in England where the gault and chalk approach each other. The little

group of people would be squatting about amidst a litter of fern, moss, and such-like dry material. Some of the women and children would need to be continually gathering fuel to keep up the fires. It would be a tradition that had grown up. The young would imitate their elders in this task. Perhaps there would be rude wind shelters of boughs on one side of the encampment.

The Old Man, the father and master of the group, would perhaps be engaged in hammering flints beside the fire. The children would imitate him and learn to use the sharpened fragments. Probably some of the women would hunt good flints; they would fish them out of the chalk with sticks and bring them to the squatting-place.

There would be skins about. It seems probable that at a very early time primitive men took to using skins. Probably they were wrapped about the children, and used to lie upon when the ground was damp and cold. A woman would perhaps be preparing a skin. The inside of the skin would be well scraped free of superfluous flesh with trimmed flints, and then strained and pulled and pegged out flat on the grass, and dried in the rays of the sun.

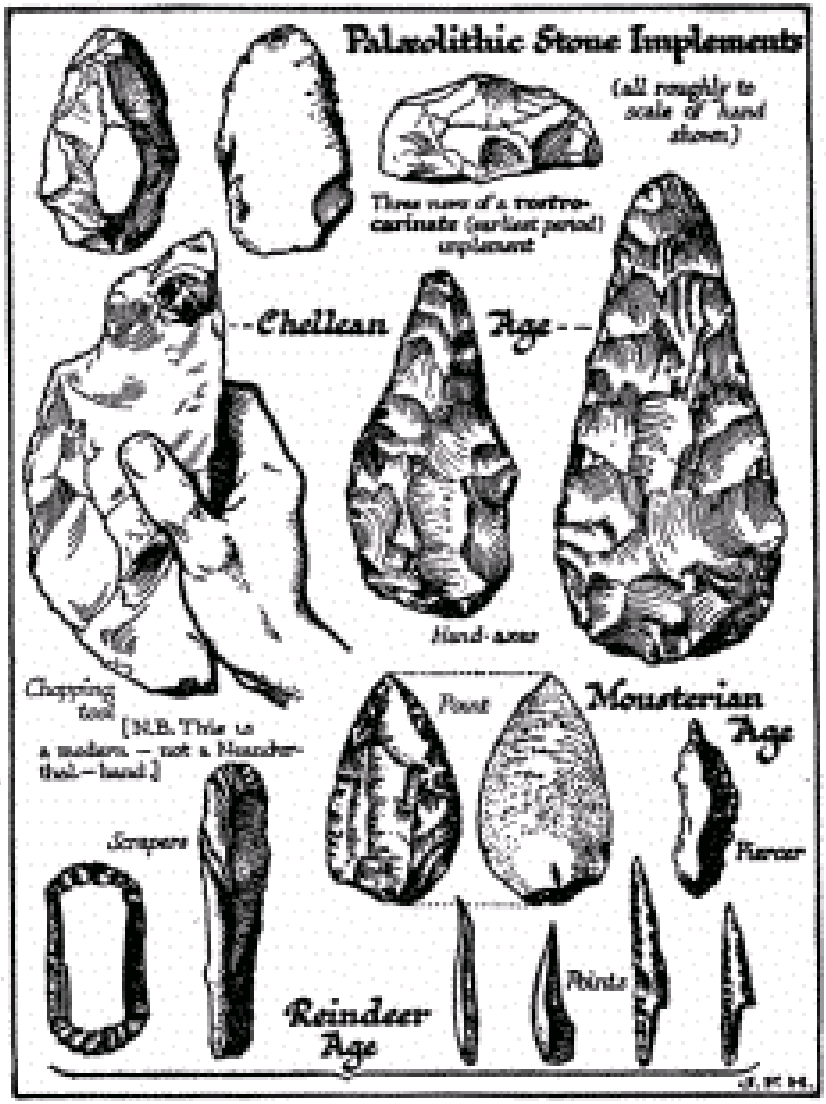

Early Stone Implements.

The Mousterian Age implements, and all above it, are those of Neanderthal men or, possibly in the case of the rostro-carinates, of sub-men. The lower row (Reindeer Age) are the work of true men. The student should compare this diagram with the time diagram attached to Chapter VII, § 6, and he should note the relatively large size of the pre-human implements.

Away from the fire other members of the family group prowl in search of food, but at night they all gather closely round the fire and build it up, for it is their protection against the wandering bear and such-like beasts of prey. The Old Man is the only fully adult male in the little group. There are women, boys and girls, but so soon as the boys are big enough to rouse the Old Man's jealousy, he will fall foul of them and either drive them off or kill them. Some girls may perhaps go off with these exiles, or two or three of these youths may keep together for a time, wandering until they come upon some other group, from which they may try to steal a mate. Then they would probably fall out among themselves. Some day, when he is forty years old perhaps or even older, and his teeth are worn down and his energy abating, some younger male will stand up to the Old Man and kill him and reign in his stead. There is probably short shrift for the old at the squatting-place. So soon as they grow weak and bad-tempered, trouble and death come upon them.

What did they eat at the squatting-place?

"Primeval man is commonly described as a hunter of the great hairy mammoth, of the bear, and the lion, but it is in the highest degree improbable that the human savage ever hunted animals much larger than the hare, the rabbit, and the rat. Man was probably the hunted rather than the hunter.

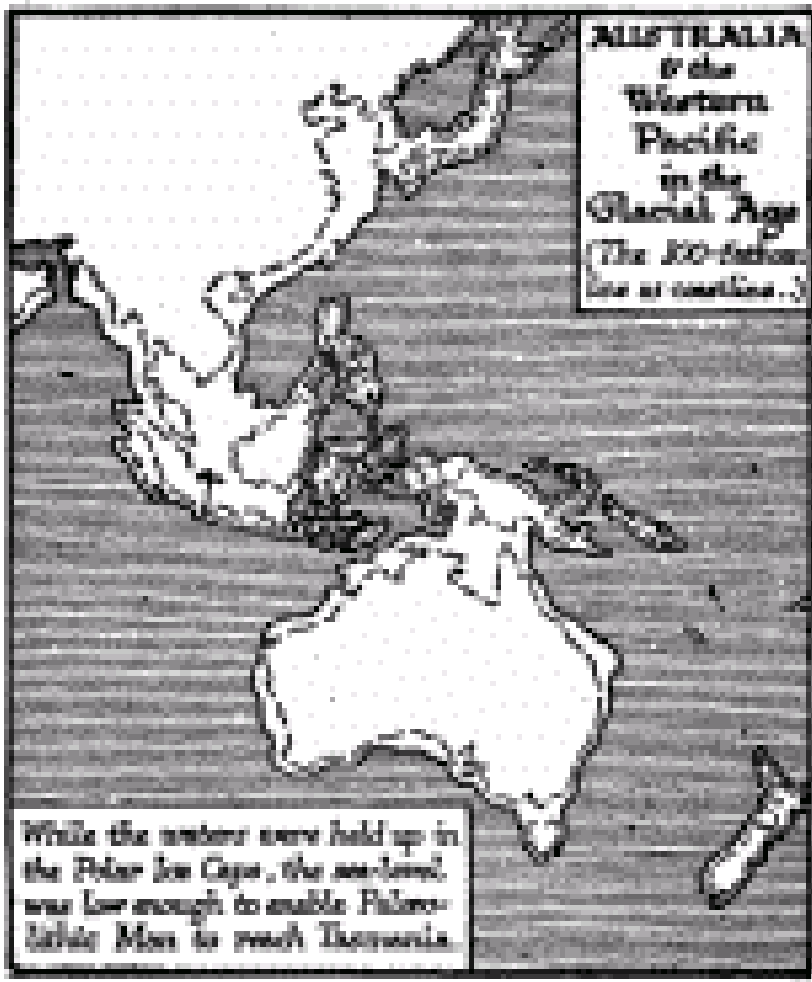

AUSTRALIA & the Western Pacific in the Glacial Age

"The primeval savage was both herbivorous and carnivorous. He had for food hazel-nuts, beech-nuts, sweet chestnuts, earth-nuts, and acorns. He had crab-apples, wild pears, wild cherries, wild gooseberries, bullaces, sorbs, sloes, blackberries, yewberries, hips and haws, water-cress, fungi, the larger and softer leaf-buds, Nostoc (the vegetable substance called 'fallen stars' by country-folk), the fleshy, juicy, asparagus-like rhizomes or subterranean stems of the *Labiatæ* and like plants, as well as other delicacies of the vegetable kingdom. He had birds' eggs, young birds, and the honey and

honeycomb of wild bees. He had newts, snails, and frogs — the two latter delicacies are still highly esteemed in Normandy and Brittany. He had fish, dead and alive, and fresh-water mussels; he could easily catch fish with his hands and paddle and dive for and trap them. By the seaside he would have fish, mollusca, and seaweed. He would have many of the larger birds and smaller mammals, which he could easily secure by throwing stones and sticks, or by setting simple snares. He would have the snake, the slow-worm, and the crayfish. He would have various grubs and insects, the large larvæ of beetles and various caterpillars. The taste for caterpillars still survives in China, where they are sold in dried bundles in the markets. A chief and highly nourishing object of food would doubtlessly be bones smashed up into a stiff and gritty paste.

"A fact of great importance is this — primeval man would not be particular about having his flesh food over-fresh. He would constantly find it in a dead state, and, if semi-putrid, he would relish it none the less — the taste for high or half-putrid game still survives. If driven by hunger and hard pressed, he would perhaps sometimes eat his weaker companions or unhealthy children who happened to be feeble or unsightly or burthensome. The larger animals in a weak and dying state would no doubt be much sought for; when these were not forthcoming, dead and half-rotten examples would be made to suffice. An unpleasant odour would not be objected to; it is not objected to now in many continental hotels.

"The savages sat huddled close together round their fire, with fruits, bones, and half-putrid flesh. We can imagine the old man and his women twitching the skin of their shoulders, brows, and muzzles as they were annoyed or bitten by flies or other insects. We can imagine the large human nostrils, indicative of keen scent, giving rapidly repeated sniffs at the foul meat before it was consumed; the bad odour of the meat, and the various other disgusting odours belonging to a haunt of savages, being not in the least disapproved.

"Man at that time was not a *degraded* animal, for he had never been higher; he was therefore an exalted animal, and, low as we esteem him now, he yet represented the highest stage of development of the animal kingdom of his time."

That is at least an acceptable sketch of a Neanderthal squatting-

place. But before extinction overtook them, even the Neanderthalers learnt much and went far.

Whatever the older Palæolithic men did with their dead, there is reason to suppose that the later *Homo Neanderthalensis* buried some individuals at least with respect and ceremony. One of the best-known Neanderthal skeletons is that of a youth who apparently had been deliberately interred. He had been placed in a sleeping posture, head on the right fore-arm. The head lay on a number of flint fragments carefully piled together "pillow fashion." A big hand-axe lay near his head, and around him were numerous charred and split ox bones, as though there had been a feast or an offering.

To this appearance of burial during the later Neanderthal age we shall return when we are considering the ideas that were inside the heads of primitive men.

This sort of men may have wandered, squatted about their fires, and died in Europe for a period extending over 100,000 years, if we assume, that is, that the Heidelberg jaw-bone belongs to a member of the species, a period so vast that all the subsequent history of our race becomes a thing of yesterday. Along its own line this species of men was accumulating a dim tradition, and working out its limited possibilities. Its thick skull imprisoned its brain, and to the end it was low-browed and brutish.

§ 3

When the Dutch discovered Tasmania, they found a detached human race not very greatly advanced beyond this Lower Palæolithic stage. But over most of the world the Lower Palæolithic culture had developed into a more complicated and higher life twenty or thirty thousand years ago. The Tasmanians were not racially Neanderthalers; their brain-cases, their neck-bones, their jaws and teeth, show that; they had no Neanderthal affinities; they were of the same species as ourselves. There can be little doubt that throughout the hundreds of centuries during which the scattered little groups of Neanderthal men were all that represented men in Europe, real men, of our own species, in some other part of the world, were working their way along parallel lines from much the same stage as the

Neanderthalers ended at, and which the Tasmanians preserved, to a higher level of power and achievement. The Tasmanians, living under unstimulating conditions, remote from any other human competition or example, lagged behind the rest of the human brotherhood.

About 200 centuries ago or earlier, real men of our own species, if not of our own race, came drifting into the European area.

X

THE LATER POSTGLACIAL PALÆOLITHIC MEN, THE FIRST TRUE MEN

(Later Palæolithic Age)

§ 1. *The Coming of Men Like Ourselves.* § 2. *Subdivision of the Later Palæolithic.* § 3. *The Earliest True Men Were Splendid Savages.* § 4. *Hunters Give Place to Herdsmen.* § 5. *No Sub-men in America.*

§ 1

THE Neanderthal type of man prevailed in Europe at least for tens of thousands of years. For ages that make all history seem a thing of yesterday, these nearly human creatures prevailed. If the Heidelberg jaw was that of a Neanderthaler, and if there is no error in the estimate of the age of that jaw, then the Neanderthal Race lasted out for more than 200,000 years! Finally, between 40,000 and 25,000 years ago, as the Fourth Glacial Age softened towards more temperate conditions (see Map on), a different human type came upon the scene, and, it would seem, exterminated *Homo Neanderthalensis*. This new type was probably developed in South Asia or North Africa, or in lands now submerged in the Mediterranean basin, and, as more remains are collected and evidence accumulates, men will learn more of their early stages. At present we can only guess where and how, through the slow ages, parallel with the Neanderthal cousin, these first *true men* arose out of some more ape-like progenitor. For hundreds of centuries they were acquiring skill of hand and limb, and power and bulk of brain, in that still unknown environment. They were already far above the Neanderthal level of achievement and intelligence, when first they come into our ken, and they had already split into two or more very distinctive races.

These new-comers did not migrate into Europe in the strict sense of the word, but rather, as century by century the climate ameliorated, they followed the food and plants to which they were accustomed, as those spread into the new realms that opened to them. The ice was receding, vegetation was increasing, big game of all sorts was becoming more abundant. Steppe-like conditions, conditions of pasture and shrub, were bringing with them vast herds of wild horse. Ethnologists (students of race) class these new human races in one same species as ourselves, and with all human races subsequent to them, under one common specific name of *Homo sapiens*. They had quite human brain-cases and hands. Their teeth and their necks were anatomically as ours are.

Now here again, with every desire to be plain and explicit with the reader, we have still to trouble him with qualified statements and

notes of interrogation. There is now an enormous literature about these earliest true men, the men of the Later Palæolithic Age, and it is still for the general reader a very confusing literature indeed. It is confusing because it is still confused at the source. We know of two distinct sorts of skeletal remains in this period, the first of these known as the Cro-Magnon race, and the second the Grimaldi race; but the great bulk of the human traces and appliances we find are either without human bones or with insufficient bones for us to define their associated physical type. There may have been many more distinct races than these two. There may have been intermediate types. In the grotto of Cro-Magnon it was that complete skeletons of one main type of these Newer Palæolithic men, these true men, were first found, and so it is that they are spoken of as Cro-Magnards.

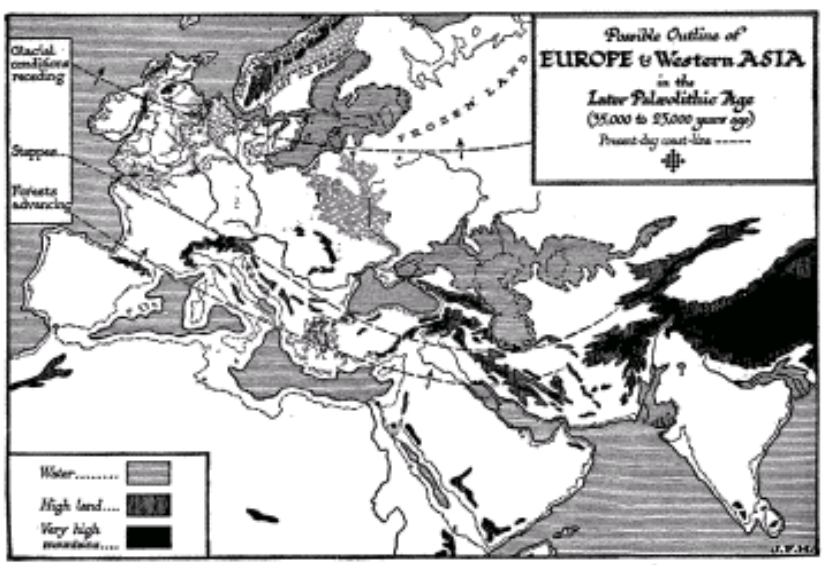

Map showing Europe and Western Asia about the Time the True Men were Replacing the Neanderthalers in Western Europe

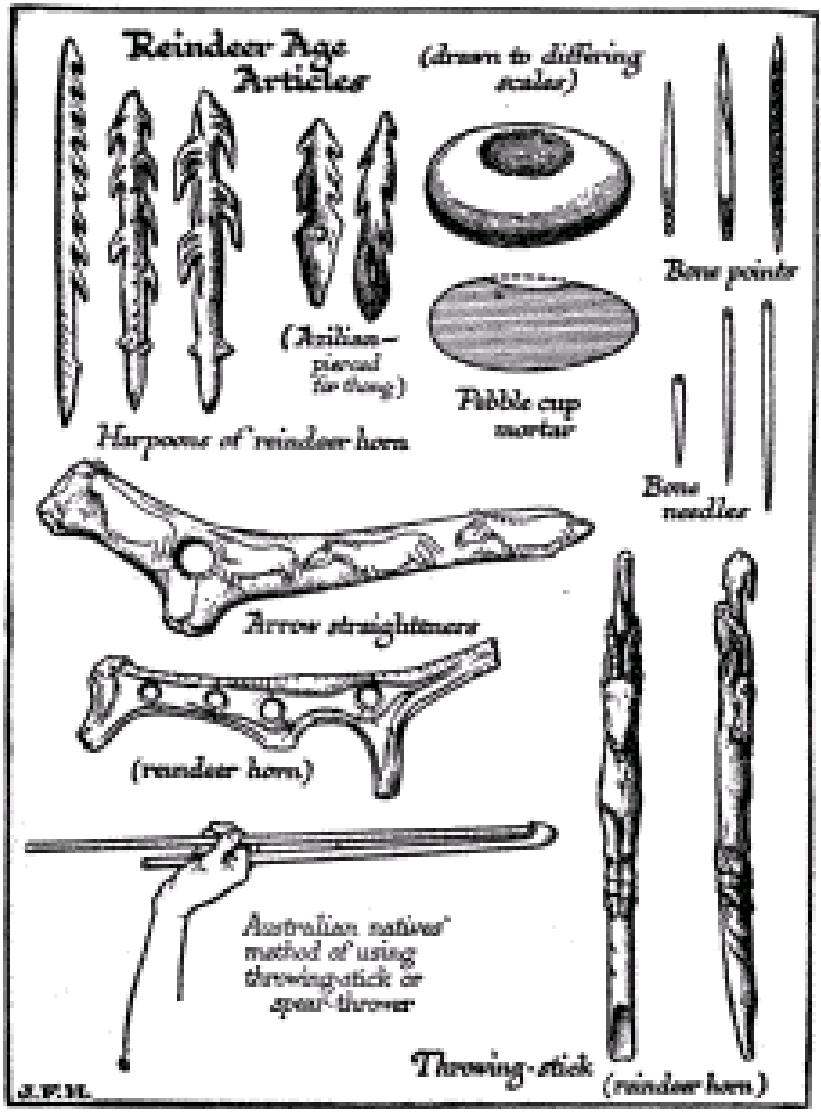

These Cro-Magnards were a tall people with very broad faces, prominent noses, and, all things considered, astonishingly big brains. The brain capacity of the woman in the Cro-Magnon cave exceeded that of the average male to-day. Her head had been smashed by a heavy blow. There were also in the same cave with her the complete skeleton of an older man, nearly six feet high, the fragments of a child's skeleton, and the skeletons of two young men. There were

also flint implements and perforated sea-shells, used no doubt as ornaments. Such is one sample of the earliest true men. But at the Grimaldi cave, near Mentone, were discovered two skeletons also of the Later Palæolithic period, but of a widely contrasted type, with negroid characteristics that point rather to the negroid type. There can be no doubt that we have to deal in this period with at least two, and probably more, highly divergent races of true men. They may have overlapped in time, or Cro-Magnards may have followed the Grimaldi race, and either or both may have been contemporary with the late Neanderthal men. Various authorities have very strong opinions upon these points, but they are, at most, opinions. The whole story is further fogged at present by our inability to distinguish, in the absence of skeletons, which race has been at work in any particular case. In what follows the reader will ask of this or that particular statement, "Yes, but is this the Cro-Magnard or the Grimaldi man or some other that you are writing about?" To which in most cases the honest answer is, "As yet we do not know." Confessedly our account of the newer Palæolithic is a jumbled account. There are probably two or three concurrent and only roughly similar histories of these newer Palæolithic men as yet, inextricably mixed up together. Some authorities appear to favour the Cro-Magnards unduly and to dismiss the Grimaldi people with as little as possible of the record.

The appearance of these truly human postglacial Palæolithic peoples was certainly an enormous leap forward in the history of mankind. Both of these main races had a human fore-brain, a human hand, an intelligence very like our own. They dispossessed *Homo Neanderthalensis* from his caverns and his stone quarries. And they agreed with modern ethnologists, it would seem, in regarding him as a different species. Unlike most savage conquerors, who take the women of the defeated side for their own and interbreed with them, it would seem that the true men would have nothing to do with the Neanderthal race, women or men. There is no trace of any intermixture between the races, in spite of the fact that the newcomers, being also flint users, were establishing themselves in the very same spots that their predecessors had occupied. We know nothing of the appearance of the Neanderthal man, but this absence

of intermixture seems to suggest an extreme hairiness, an ugliness, or a repulsive strangeness in his appearance over and above his low forehead, his beetle brows, his ape neck, and his inferior stature. Or he — and she — may have been too fierce to tame. Says Sir Harry Johnston, in a survey of the rise of modern man in his *Views and Reviews*: "The dim racial remembrance of such gorilla-like monsters, with cunning brains, shambling gait, hairy bodies, strong teeth, and possibly cannibalistic tendencies, may be the germ of the ogre in folklore...."

These true men of the Palæolithic Age, who replaced the Neanderthalers, were coming into a milder climate, and although they used the caves and shelters of their predecessors, they lived largely in the open. They were hunting peoples, and some or all of them appear to have hunted the mammoth and the wild horse as well as the reindeer, bison, and aurochs. They ate much horse. At a great open-air camp at Solutré, where they seem to have had animal gatherings for many centuries, it is estimated that there are the bones of 100,000 horses, besides reindeer, mammoth, and bison bones. They probably followed herds of horses, the little bearded ponies of that age, as these moved after pasture. They hung about on the flanks of the herd, and became very wise about its habits and dispositions. A large part of these men's lives must have been spent in watching animals.

Whether they tamed and domesticated the horse is still an open question. Perhaps they learnt to do so by degrees as the centuries passed. At any rate, we find late Palæolithic drawings of horses with marks about the heads that are strongly suggestive of bridles, and there exists a carving of a horse's head showing what is perhaps a rope of twisted skin or tendon. But even if they tamed the horse, it is still more doubtful whether they rode it or had much use for it when it was tamed. The horse they knew was a wild pony with a beard under its chin, not up to carrying a man for any distance. It is improbable that these men had yet learnt the rather unnatural use of animal's milk as food. If they tamed the horse at last, it was the only animal they seem to have tamed. They had no dogs, and they had little to do with any sort of domesticated sheep or cattle.

It greatly aids us to realize their common humanity that these

earliest true men could draw. Both races, it would seem, drew astonishingly well. They were by all standards savages, but they were artistic savages. They drew better than any of their successors down to the beginnings of history. They drew and painted on the cliffs and cave walls that they had wrested from the Neanderthal men. And the surviving drawings come to the ethnologist, puzzling over bones and scraps, with the effect of a plain message shining through guesswork and darkness. They drew on bones and antlers; they carved little figures.

These late Palæolithic people not only drew remarkably well for our information, and with an increasing skill as the centuries passed, but they have also left us other information about their lives in their graves. They buried. They buried their dead, often with ornaments, weapons, and food; they used a lot of colour in the burial, and evidently painted the body. From that one may infer that they painted their bodies during life. Paint was a big fact in their lives. They were inveterate painters; they used black, brown, red, yellow, and white pigments, and the pigments they used endure to this day in the caves of France and Spain. Of all modern races, none have shown so pictorial a disposition; the nearest approach to it has been among the American Indians.

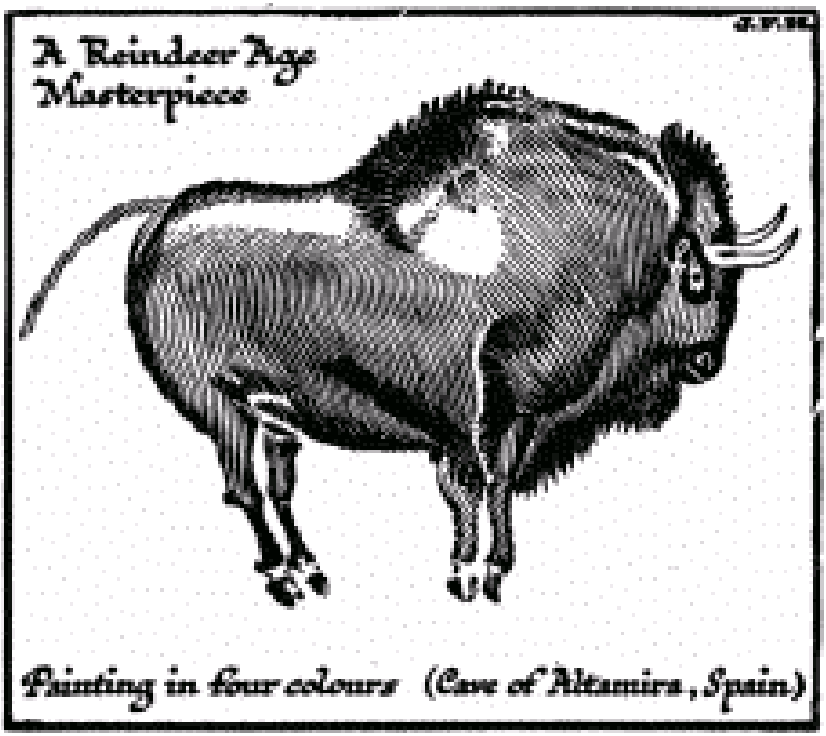

Painting in four colours (Cave of Altamira, Spain)

These drawings and paintings of the later Palæolithic people went on through a long period of time, and present wide fluctuations in artistic merit. We give here some early sketches, from which we learn of the interest taken by these early men in the bison, horse, ibex, cave bear, and reindeer. In its early stages the drawing is often primitive like the drawing of clever children; quadrupeds are usually drawn with one hindleg and one foreleg, as children draw them to

this day. The legs on the other side were too much for the artist's technique. Possibly the first drawings began as children's drawings begin, out of idle scratchings. The savage scratched with a flint on a smooth rock surface, and was reminded of some line or gesture. But their solid carvings are at least as old as their first pictures. The earlier drawings betray a complete incapacity to group animals. As the centuries progressed, more skilful artists appeared. The representation of beasts became at last astonishingly vivid and like. But even at the crest of their artistic time they still drew in profile as children do; perspective and the fore-shortening needed for back and front views were too much for them. They rarely drew themselves. The vast majority of their drawings represent animals. The mammoth and the horse are among the commonest themes. Some of the people, whether Grimaldi people or Cro-Magnon people, also made little ivory and soapstone statuettes, and among these are some very fat female figures. These latter suggest the physique of Grimaldi rather than of Cro-Magnon artists. They are like Bushmen women. The human sculpture of the earlier times inclined to caricature, and generally such human figures as they represent are far below the animal studies in vigour and veracity.

Later on there was more grace and less coarseness in the human representations. One little ivory head discovered is that of a girl with an elaborate coiffure. These people at a later stage also scratched and engraved designs on ivory and bone. Some of the most interesting groups of figures are carved very curiously round bone, and especially round rods of deer bone, so that it is impossible to see the entire design all together. Figures have also been found modelled in clay, although no Palæolithic people made any use of pottery.

Many of the paintings are found in the depths of unlit caves. They are often difficult of access. The artists must have employed lamps to do their work, and shallow soapstone lamps in which fat could have been burnt have been found. Whether the seeing of these cavern paintings was in some way ceremonial or under what circumstances they were seen, we are now altogether at a loss to imagine.

§ 2

Archæologists distinguish at present three chief stages in the history of these newer Palæolithic men in Europe, and we must name these stages here. But it may be as well to note at the same time that it is a matter of the utmost difficulty to distinguish which of two deposits in different places is the older or newer. We may very well be dealing with the work of more or less contemporary and different races when we think we are dealing with successive ones. We are dealing, the reader must bear in mind, with little disconnected patches of material, a few score all together. The earliest stage usually distinguished by the experts is the *Aurignacian* (from the grotto of Aurignac); it is characterized by very well-made flint implements, and by a rapid development of art and more particularly of statuettes and wall paintings. The most esteemed of the painted caves is ascribed to the latter part of this the first of the three subdivisions of the newer Palæolithic. The second subdivision of this period is called the *Solutrian* (from Solutré), and is distinguished particularly by the quality and beauty of its stone implements; some of its razor-like blades are only equalled and not surpassed by the very best of the Neolithic work. They are of course unpolished, but the best specimens are as thin as steel blades and almost as sharp. Finally, it would seem, came the *Magdalenian* (from La Madeleine) stage, in which the horse and reindeer were dwindling in numbers and the red deer coming into Europe. The stone implements are smaller, and there is a great quantity of bone harpoons, spearheads, needles, and the like. The hunters of the third and last stage of the later Palæolithic Age appear to have supplemented a diminishing food supply by fishing. The characteristic art of the period consists of deep reliefs done upon bone and line engraving upon bone. It is to this period that the designs drawn round bones belong, and it has been suggested that these designs upon round bones were used to print coloured designs upon leather. Some of the workmanship on bone was extraordinarily fine. Parkyn quotes from de Mortillet, about the Reindeer Age (Magdalenian) bone needles, that they “are much superior to those of later, even historical, times, down to the Renaissance. The Romans, for example, never had needles comparable to those of the Magdalenian epoch.”

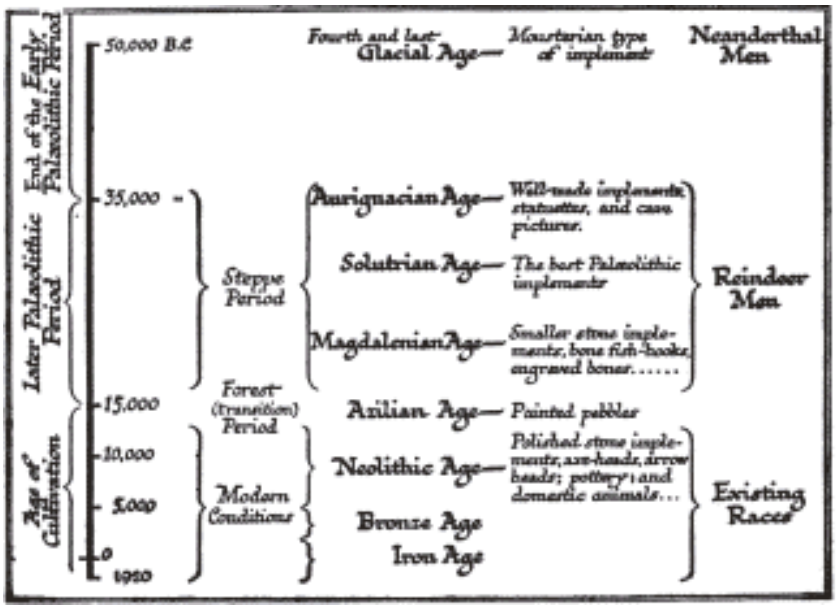

Time Diagram Showing the Estimated Duration of the True Human Periods.

This time diagram again is on a larger scale than its predecessors. The time diagram on page 60, if it were on this scale, would be nearly 4 feet long, and the diagram of the whole geological time on page 14, between 500 and 5000 feet long (or perhaps even as much as 10,000 feet long).

It is quite impossible at present to guess at the relative lengths of these ages. We are not even positive about their relative relationship. Each lasted perhaps for four or five more thousand years, more than double the time from the Christian Era to our own day.

At last it would seem that circumstances began to turn altogether against these hunting Newer Palæolithic people who had flourished for so long in Europe. They disappeared. New kinds of men appeared in Europe, replacing them. These latter seem to have brought in bow and arrows; they had domesticated animals and cultivated the soil. A new way of living, the Neolithic way of living, spread over the European area; and the life of the Reindeer Age and of the races of

Reindeer Men, the Later Palæolithic men, after a reign vastly greater than the time between ourselves and the very earliest beginnings of recorded history, passed off the European stage.

§ 3

There is a disposition on the part of many writers to exaggerate the intellectual and physical qualities of these later Palæolithic men and make a wonder of them. Collectively considered, these people had remarkable gifts, but a little reflection will show they had almost as remarkable deficiencies. The tremendous advance they display upon their Neanderthalian predecessors and their special artistic gift must not blind us to their very obvious limitations. For all the quantity of their brains, the quality was narrow and special. They had vivid perceptions, an acute sense of animal form, they had the real artist's impulse to render; so far they were fully grown human beings. But that disposition to paint and draw is shown to-day by the Bushmen, by Californian Indians, and by Australian black fellows; it is not a mark of all-round high intellectual quality. The cumulative effect of their drawings and paintings is very great, but we must not make the mistake of crowding all these achievements together in our minds as though they had suddenly flashed out upon the world in a brief interval of time, or as though they were all the achievements of one people. These races of Reindeer Men were in undisturbed possession of western Europe for a period at least ten times as long as the interval between ourselves and the beginning of the Christian Era, and through all that immense time they were free to develop and vary their life to its utmost possibilities. Their art constitutes their one claim to be accounted more than common savages.

They were in close contact with animals, but they never seemed to have got to terms with any animal unless it was the horse. They had no dogs. They had no properly domesticated animals at all. They watched and drew and killed and ate. They do not seem to have cooked their food. Perhaps they scorched and grilled it, but they could not have done much more, because they had no cooking implements. Although they had clay available, and although there are several Palæolithic clay figures on record, they had *no pottery*.

Although they had a great variety of flint and bone implements, they never rose to the possibilities of using timber for permanent shelters or such-like structures. They never made hafted axes or the like that would enable them to deal with timber. There is a suggestion in some of the drawings of a fence of stakes in which a mammoth seems to be entangled. But here we may be dealing with superimposed scratchings. They had *no buildings*. It is not even certain that they had tents or huts. They may have had simple skin tents. Some of the drawings seem to suggest as much. It is doubtful if they knew of the bow. They left no good arrowheads behind them. Certain of their implements are said to be "arrow-straighteners" by distinguished authorities, but that is about as much evidence as we have of arrows. They may have used sharpened sticks as arrows. They had *no cultivation* of grain or vegetables of any sort. Their women were probably squaws, smaller than the men; the earlier statuettes represent them as grossly fat, almost as the Bushmen women are often fat to-day. (But this may not be true of the Cro-Magnards.)

They clothed themselves, it would seem, in skins, if they clothed themselves at all. These skins they prepared with skill and elaboration, and towards the end of the age they used bone needles, no doubt to sew these pelts. One may guess pretty safely that they painted these skins, and it has even been supposed, printed off designs upon them from bone cylinders. But their garments were mere wraps; there are no clasps or catches to be found. They do not seem to have used grass or such-like fibre for textiles. Their statuettes are naked. They were, in fact, except for a fur wrap in cold weather, naked painted savages.

These hunters lived on open steppes for two hundred centuries or so, ten times the length of the Christian era. They were, perhaps, overtaken by the growth of the European forests, as the climate became milder and damper. When the wild horse and the reindeer diminished in Europe, and a newer type of human culture, with a greater power over food supply, a greater tenacity of settlement, and probably a larger social organization, arose, the Reindeer Men had to learn fresh ways of living or disappear. How far they learnt and mingled their strain with the new European populations, and how far they went under we cannot yet guess. Opinions differ widely. Wright

lays much stress on the “great hiatus” between the Palæolithic and Neolithic remains, while Osborn traces the likeness of the former in several living populations. In the region of the Doubs and of the Dordogne in France, many individuals are to be met with to this day with skulls of the “Cro-Magnon” type. Apparently the Grimaldi type of men has disappeared altogether from Europe. Whether the Cro-Magnon type of men mingled completely with the Neolithic peoples, or whether they remained distinct and held their own in favourable localities to the north and west, following the reindeer over Siberia and towards America, which at that time was continuous with Siberia, or whether they disappeared altogether from the world, is a matter that can be only speculated about at present. There is not enough evidence for a judgment. Possibly they mingled to a certain extent. There is little to prevent our believing that they survived without much intermixture for a long time in north Asia, that “pockets” of them remained here and there in Europe, that there is a streak of their blood in most European peoples to-day, and that there is a much stronger streak, if not a predominant strain, in the Mongolian and American races.

§ 4

It was about 12,000 or fewer years ago that, with the spread of forests and a great change of the fauna, the long prevalence of the hunting life in Europe drew to its end. Reindeer vanished. Changing conditions frequently bring with them new diseases. There may have been prehistoric pestilences. For many centuries there may have been no men in Britain or Central Europe (Wright). For a time there were in Southern Europe drifting communities of some little known people who are called the Azilians. They may have been transition generations; they may have been a different race. We do not know. Some authorities incline to the view that the Azilians were the first wave of a race which, as we shall see later, has played a great part in populating Europe, the dark-white or Mediterranean or Iberian race. These Azilian people have left behind them a multitude of pebbles, roughly daubed with markings of an unknown purport (see illus.,).

The use or significance of these Azilian pebbles is still a profound mystery. Was this some sort of token writing? Were they counters in some game? Did the Azilians play with these pebbles or tell a story with them, as imaginative children will do with bits of wood and stone nowadays? At present we are unable to cope with any of these questions.

We will not deal here with the other various peoples who left their scanty traces in the world during the close of the New Palæolithic period, the spread of the forests where formerly there had been steppes, and the wane of the hunters, some 10,000 or 12,000 years ago. We will go on to describe the new sort of human community that was now spreading over the northern hemisphere, whose appearance marks what is called the *Neolithic Age*. The map of the world was assuming something like its present outlines, the landscape and the flora and fauna were taking on their existing characteristics. The prevailing animals in the spreading woods of Europe were the royal stag, the great ox, and the bison; the mammoth and the musk ox had gone. The great ox, or aurochs, is now extinct, but it survived in the German forests up to the time of the Roman Empire. It was never domesticated. It stood eleven feet high at the shoulder, as high as an elephant. There were still lions in the Balkan peninsula, and they remained there until about 1000 or 1200 B.C. The lions of Württemberg and South Germany in those days were twice the size of the modern lion. South Russia and Central Asia were thickly wooded then, and there were elephants in Mesopotamia and Syria, and a fauna in Algeria that was tropical African in character.

Hitherto men in Europe had never gone farther north than the Baltic Sea or the English midlands, but now Ireland, the Scandinavian peninsula, and perhaps Great Russia were becoming possible regions for human occupation. There are no Palæolithic remains in Sweden or Norway, nor in Ireland or Scotland. Man, when he entered these countries, was apparently already at the Neolithic stage of social development.

§ 5

Nor is there any convincing evidence of man in America before the end of the Pleistocene. The same relaxation of the climate that permitted the retreat of the reindeer hunters into Russia and Siberia, as the Neolithic tribes advanced, may have allowed them to wander across the land that is now cut by Bering Strait, and so reach the American continent. They spread thence southward, age by age. When they reached South America, they found the giant sloth (the *Megatherium*), the glyptodon, and many other extinct creatures, still flourishing. The glyptodon was a monstrous South American armadillo, and a human skeleton has been found by Roth buried beneath its huge tortoise-like shell.

All the human remains in America, even the earliest, it is to be noted, are of an Amer-Indian character. In America there does not seem to have been any preceding races of sub-men. Man was fully man when he entered America. The old world was the nursery of the sub-races of mankind.

XI

NEOLITHIC MAN IN EUROPE

§ 1. *The Age of Cultivation Begins.* § 2. *Where Did the Neolithic Culture Arise?* § 3. *Everyday Neolithic Life.* § 4. *How Did Sowing Begin?* § 5. *Primitive Trade.* § 6. *The Flooding of the Mediterranean Valley.*

§ 1

THE Neolithic phase of human affairs began in Europe about 10,000 or 12,000 years ago. But probably men had reached the Neolithic stage elsewhere some thousands of years earlier. Neolithic men came slowly into Europe from the south or south-east as the reindeer and the open steppes gave way to forest and modern European conditions.

The Neolithic stage in culture is characterized by: (1) the presence of polished stone implements, and in particular the stone *axe*, which was perforated so as to be the more effectually fastened to a wooden handle, and which was probably used rather for working wood than in conflict. There are also abundant arrow heads. The fact that some implements are polished does not preclude the presence of great quantities of implements of unpolished stone. But there are differences in the make between even the unpolished tools of the Neolithic and of the Palæolithic Period. (2) The beginning of a sort of agriculture, and the use of plants and seeds. But at first there are abundant evidences that hunting was still of great importance in the Neolithic Age. Neolithic man did not at first sit down to his agriculture. He took snatch crops. He settled later. (3) Pottery and proper cooking. The horse is no longer eaten. (4) Domesticated animals. The dog appears very early. The Neolithic man had domesticated cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. He was a huntsman turned herdsman of the herds he once hunted. (5) Plaiting and weaving.

These Neolithic people probably "migrated" into Europe, in the same way that the Reindeer Men had migrated before them; that is to say, generation by generation and century by century, as the climate

changed, they spread after their accustomed food. They were not "nomads." Nomadism, like civilization, had still to be developed. At present we are quite unable to estimate how far the Neolithic peoples were new-comers and how far their arts were developed or acquired by the descendants of some of the hunters and fishers of the Later Palæolithic Age.

Whatever our conclusions in that matter, this much we may say with certainty; there is no great break, no further sweeping away of one kind of man and replacement by another kind between the appearance of the Neolithic way of living and our own time. There are invasions, conquests, extensive emigrations and intermixtures, but the races as a whole carry on and continue to adapt themselves to the areas into which they began to settle in the opening of the Neolithic Age. The Neolithic men of Europe were white men ancestral to the modern Europeans. They may have been of a darker complexion than many of their descendants; of that we cannot speak with certainty. But there is no real break in culture from their time onward until we reach the age of coal, steam, and power-driven machinery that began in the eighteenth century.

After a long time gold, the first known of the metals, appears among the bone ornaments with jet and amber. Irish Neolithic remains are particularly rich in gold. Then, perhaps 6000 or 7000 years ago in Europe, Neolithic people began to use copper in certain centres, making out of it implements of much the same pattern as their stone ones. They cast the copper in moulds made to the shape of the stone implements. Possibly they first found native copper and hammered it into shape. Later — we will not venture upon figures — men had found out how to get copper from its ore. Perhaps, as Lord Avebury suggested, they discovered the secret of smelting by the chance putting of lumps of copper ore among the ordinary stones with which they built the fire pits they used for cooking. In China, Hungary, Cornwall, and elsewhere copper ore and tinstone occur in the same veins; it is a very common association, and so, rather through dirtiness than skill, the ancient smelters, it may be, hit upon the harder and better bronze, which is an alloy of copper and tin. Bronze is not only harder than copper, but the mixture of tin and copper is more fusible and easier to reduce. The so-called "pure-

copper" implements usually contain a small proportion of tin, and there are no tin implements known, nor very much evidence to show that early men knew of tin as a separate metal. The plant of a prehistoric copper smelter has been found in Spain, and the material of bronze foundries in various localities. The method of smelting revealed by these finds carries out Lord Avebury's suggestion. In India, where zinc and copper ore occur together, brass (which is an alloy of the two metals) was similarly hit upon.

So slight was the change in fashions and methods produced by the appearance of bronze, that for a long time such bronze axes and so forth as were made were cast in moulds to the shape of the stone implements they were superseding.

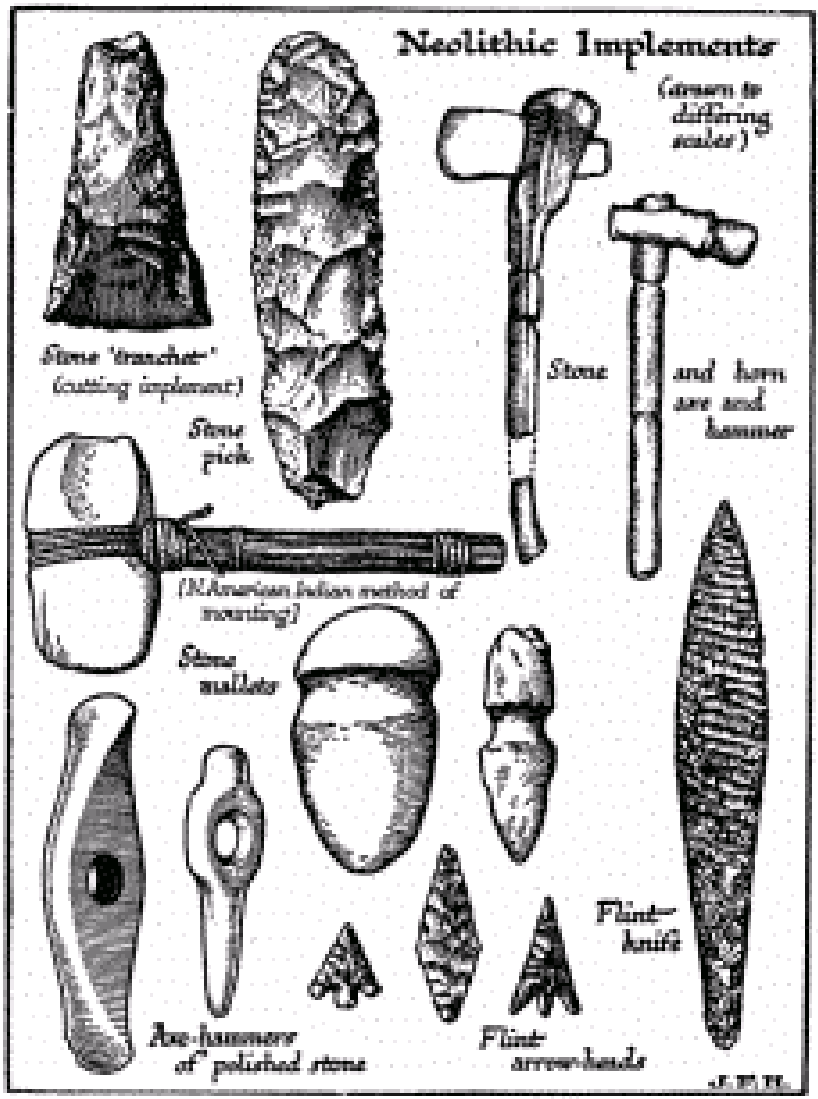

Finally, perhaps as early as 3000 years ago in Europe, and even earlier in Asia Minor, men began to smelt iron. Once smelting was known to men, there is no great marvel in the finding of iron. They smelted iron by blowing up a charcoal fire, and wrought it by heating and hammering. They produced it at first in comparatively small pieces; its appearance worked a gradual revolution in weapons and implements; but it did not suffice to change the general character of

men's surroundings. Much the same daily life that was being led by the more settled Neolithic men 10,000 years ago was being led by peasants in out-of-the-way places all over Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

People talk of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age in Europe, but it is misleading to put these ages as if they were of equal importance in history. Much truer is it to say that there was:

(1) An *Early Palæolithic Age*, of vast duration; (2) a *Later Palæolithic Age*, that lasted not a tithe of the time; and (3) the Age of Cultivation, the age of the white men in Europe, which began 10,000 or at most 12,000 years ago, of which the Neolithic Period was the beginning, and which is still going on.

§ 2

We do not know yet the region in which the ancestors of the white and whitish Neolithic peoples worked their way up from the Palæolithic stage of human development. Probably it was somewhere about south-western Asia, or in some region now submerged beneath the Mediterranean Sea or the Indian Ocean, that, while the Neanderthal men still lived their hard lives in the bleak climate of a glaciated Europe, the ancestors of the white men developed the rude arts of *their* Later Palæolithic period. But they do not seem to have developed the artistic skill of their more northerly kindred, the European Later Palæolithic races. And through the hundred centuries or so while Reindeer Men were living under comparatively unprogressive conditions upon the steppes of France, Germany, and Spain, these more-favoured and progressive people to the south were mastering agriculture, learning to develop their appliances, taming the dog, domesticating cattle, and, as the climate to the north mitigated and the equatorial climate grew more tropical, spreading northward. All these early chapters of our story have yet to be disinterred. They will probably be found in Asia Minor, Persia, Arabia, India, or north Africa, or they lie beneath the Mediterranean waters. Twelve thousand years ago, or thereabouts — we are still too early for anything but the roughest chronology — Neolithic peoples were scattered all over Europe, north Africa, and Asia. They were

peoples at about the level of many of the Polynesian islanders of the last century, and they were the most advanced peoples in the world.

§ 3

It will be of interest here to give a brief account of the life of the European Neolithic people before the appearance of metals. We get our light upon that life from various sources. They scattered their refuse about, and in some places (*e.g.* on the Danish coast) it accumulated in great heaps, known as the kitchen middens. They buried some of their people, but not the common herd, with great care and distinction, and made huge heaps of earth over their sepulchres; these heaps are the barrows or dolmens which contribute a feature to the European, Indian, and American scenery in many districts to this day. In connection with these mounds, or independently of them, they set up great stones (megaliths), either singly or in groups, of which Stonehenge in Wiltshire and Carnac in Brittany are among the best-known examples. In various places their villages are still traceable.

One fruitful source of knowledge about Neolithic life comes from Switzerland, and was first revealed by the very dry winter of 1854, when the water level of one of the lakes, sinking to an unheard-of lowness, revealed the foundations of prehistoric pile dwellings of the Neolithic and early Bronze Ages, built out over the water after the fashion of similar homes that exist to-day in Celebes and elsewhere. Not only were the timbers of those ancient platforms preserved, but a great multitude of wooden, bone, stone, and earthenware utensils and ornaments, remains of food and the like, were found in the peaty accumulations below them. Even pieces of net and garments have been recovered. Similar lake dwellings existed in Scotland, Ireland, and elsewhere — there are well-known remains at Glastonbury in Somersetshire; in Ireland lake dwellings were inhabited from prehistoric times up to the days when O'Neil of Tyrone was fighting against the English before the plantation of Scotch colonists to replace the Irish in Ulster in the reign of James I of England. These lake villages had considerable defensive value, and there was a sanitary advantage in living over flowing water.

Probably these Neolithic Swiss pile dwellings did not shelter the largest communities that existed in those days. They were the homes of small patriarchal groups. Elsewhere upon fertile plains and in more open country there were probably already much larger assemblies of homes than in those mountain valleys. There are traces of such a large community of families in Wiltshire in England, for example; the remains of the stone circle of Avebury near Silbury mound were once the "finest megalithic ruin in Europe." It consisted of two circles of stones surrounded by a larger circle and a ditch, and covering all together twenty-eight and a half acres. From it two avenues of stones, each a mile and a half long, ran west and south on either side of Silbury Hill. Silbury Hill is the largest prehistoric artificial mound in England. The dimensions of this centre of a faith and a social life now forgotten altogether by men indicate the concerted efforts and interests of a very large number of people, widely scattered though they may have been over the west and south and centre of England. Possibly they assembled at some particular season of the year in a primitive sort of fair. The whole community "lent a hand" in building the mounds and hauling the stones. The Swiss pile-dwellers, on the contrary, seem to have lived in practically self-contained villages.

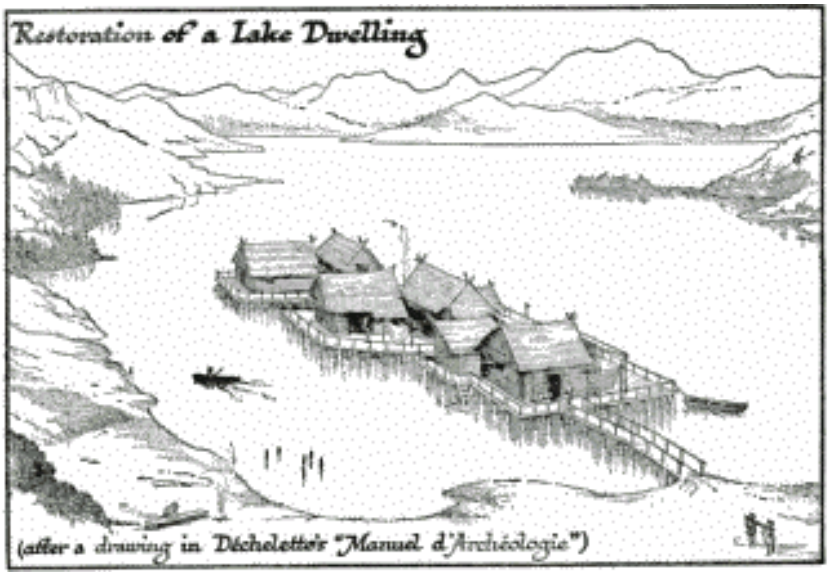

These lake-village people were considerably more advanced in methods and knowledge, and probably much later in time than the early Neolithic people who accumulated the shell mounds, known as kitchen middens, on the Danish and Scotch coasts. These kitchen midden folk may have been as early as 10,000 B.C. or earlier; the lake dwellings were probably occupied continuously from 5000 or 4000 B.C. down almost to historic times. Those early kitchen-midden people were among the most barbaric of Neolithic peoples, their stone axes were rough, and they had no domesticated animal

except the dog. The lake-dwellers, on the other hand, had, in addition to the dog, which was of a medium-sized breed, oxen, goats, and sheep. Later on, as they were approaching the Bronze Age, they got swine. The remains of cattle and goats prevail in their débris, and, having regard to the climate and country about them, it seems probable that these beasts were sheltered in the buildings upon the piles in winter, and that fodder was stored for them. Probably the beasts lived in the same houses with the people, as the men and beasts do now in Swiss chalets. The people in the houses possibly milked the cows and goats, and milk perhaps played as important a part in their economy as it does in that of the mountain Swiss of to-day. But of that we are not sure at present. Milk is not a natural food for adults; it must have seemed queer stuff to take at first; and it may have been only after much breeding that a continuous supply of milk was secured from cows and goats. Some people think that the use of milk, cheese, butter, and other milk products came later into human life when men became nomadic. The writer is, however, disposed to give the Neolithic men credit for having discovered milking. The milk, if they did use it (and, no doubt, in that case sour curdled milk also, but not well-made cheese and butter), they must have kept in earthenware pots, for they had pottery, though it was roughly hand-made pottery and not the shapely product of the potter's wheel. They eked out this food supply by hunting. They killed and ate red deer and roe deer, bison and wild boar. And they ate the fox, a rather high-flavoured meat, and not what any one would eat in a world of plenty. Oddly enough, they do not seem to have eaten the hare, although it was available as food. They are supposed to have avoided eating it, as some savages are said to avoid eating it to this day, because they feared that the flesh of so timid a creature might make them, by a sort of infection, cowardly.

Of their agricultural methods we know very little. No ploughs and no hoes have been found. They were of wood and have perished. Neolithic men cultivated and ate wheat, barley, and millet, but they knew nothing of oats or rye. Their grain they roasted, ground between stones and stored in pots, to be eaten when needed. And they made exceedingly solid and heavy bread, because round flat slabs of it have been got out of these deposits. Apparently they had

no yeast. If they had no yeast, then they had no fermented drink. One sort of barley that they had is the sort that was cultivated by the ancient Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians, and they also had an Egyptian variety of wheat, showing that their ancestors had brought or derived this cultivation from the south-east. The centre of diffusion of wheat was somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean region. A wild form is still found in the neighbourhood of Mt. Hermon (see footnote to Ch. XVI, § 1). When the lake dwellers sowed their little patches of wheat in Switzerland, they were already following the immemorial practice of mankind. The seed must have been brought age by age from that distant centre of diffusion. In the ancestral lands of the south-east men had already been sowing wheat perhaps for thousands of years. Those lake dwellers also ate peas, and crab-apples — the only apples that then existed in the world. Cultivation and selection had not yet produced the apple of to-day.

They dressed chiefly in skins, but they also made a rough cloth of flax. Fragments of that flaxen cloth have been discovered. Their nets were made of flax; they had as yet no knowledge of hemp and hempen rope. With the coming of bronze, their pins and ornaments increased in number. There is reason to believe they set great store upon their hair, wearing it in large shocks with pins of bone and afterwards of metal. To judge from the absence of realistic carvings or engravings or paintings, they either did not decorate their garments or decorated them with plaids, spots, interlacing designs, or similar conventional ornament. Before the coming of bronze there is no evidence of stools or tables; the Neolithic people probably squatted on their clay floors. There were no cats in these lake dwellings; no mice or rats had yet adapted themselves to human dwellings; the cluck of the hen was not as yet added to the sounds of human life, nor the domestic egg to its diet.

The chief tool and weapon of Neolithic man was his axe; his next the bow and arrow. His arrow heads were of flint, beautifully made, and he lashed them tightly to their shafts. Probably he prepared the ground for his sowing with a pole, or a pole upon which he had stuck a stag's horn. Fish he hooked or harpooned. These implements no doubt stood about in the interior of the house, from the walls of which hung his fowling-nets. On the floor, which was of clay or

trodden cow-dung (after the fashion of hut floors in India to-day), stood pots and jars and woven baskets containing grain, milk, and such-like food. Some of the pots and pans hung by rope loops to the walls. At one end of the room, and helping to keep it warm in winter by their animal heat, stabled the beasts. The children took the cows and goats out to graze, and brought them in at night before the wolves and bears came prowling.

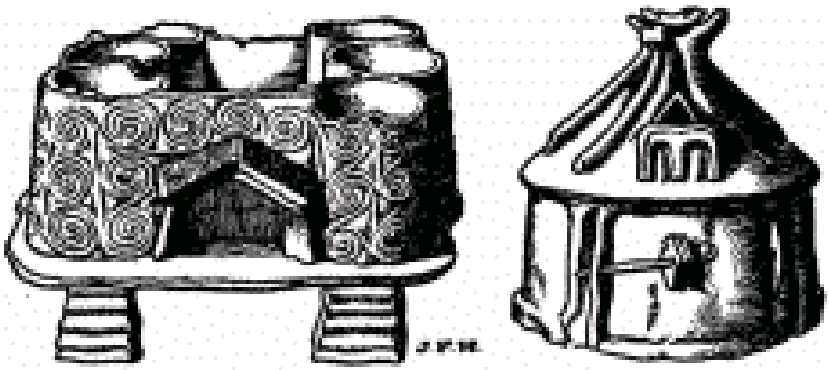

Hut urns, the first probably representing a lake-dwelling.... After Lubbock.

Since Neolithic man had the bow, he probably also had stringed instruments, for the rhythmic twanging of a bow-string seems almost inevitably to lead to that. He also had earthenware drums across which skins were stretched; perhaps also he made drums by stretching skins over hollow tree stems. We do not know when man began to sing, but evidently he was making music, and since he had words, songs were no doubt being made. To begin with, perhaps, he just let his voice loose as one may hear Italian peasants now behind their ploughs singing songs without words. After dark in the winter he sat in his house and talked and sang and made implements by touch rather than sight. His lighting must have been poor, and chiefly firelight, but there was probably always some fire in the village, summer or winter. Fire was too troublesome to make for men to be willing to let it out readily. Sometimes a great disaster happened to

those pile villages, the fire got free, and they were burnt out. The Swiss deposits contain clear evidence of such catastrophes.

All this we gather from the remains of the Swiss pile dwellings, and such was the character of the human life that spread over Europe, coming from the south and from the east with the forests as, 10,000 or 12,000 years ago, the reindeer and the Reindeer Men passed away. It is evident that we have here a way of life already separated by a great gap of thousands of years of invention from its original Palæolithic stage. The steps by which it rose from that condition we can only guess at. From being a hunter hovering upon the outskirts of flocks and herds of wild cattle and sheep, and from being a co-hunter with the dog, man by insensible degrees may have developed a sense of proprietorship in the beasts and struck up a friendship with his canine competitor. He learnt to turn the cattle when they wandered too far; he brought his better brain to bear to guide them to fresh pasture. He hemmed the beasts into valleys and enclosures where he could be sure to find them again. He fed them when they starved, and so slowly he tamed them. Perhaps his agriculture began with the storage of fodder. He reaped, no doubt, before he sowed. The Palæolithic ancestor away in that unknown land of origin to the south-east first supplemented the precarious meat supply of the hunter by eating roots and fruits and wild grains. Man storing graminiferous grasses for his cattle might easily come to beat out the grain for himself.

§ 4

How did man learn to sow in order that he might reap?

We may hesitate here to guess at the answer to that question. But a very great deal has been made of the fact that wherever sowing occurs among primitive people in any part of the world, it is accompanied by a human sacrifice or by some ceremony which may be interpreted as the mitigation and vestige of an ancient sacrificial custom. This is the theme of Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*. From this it has been supposed that the first sowings were in connection with the burial of a human being, either through wild grain being put with the dead body as food or through the scattering of grain over the

body. It may be argued that there is only one reason why man should have disturbed the surface of the earth before he took to agriculture, and that was to bury his dead; and in order to bury a dead body and make a mound over it, it was probably necessary for him to disturb the surface over a considerable area. Neolithic man's chief apparatus for mound-making consisted of picks of deer's horn and shovels of their shoulder-blades, and with this he would have found great difficulty in making a deep excavation. Nor do we find such excavations beside the barrows. Instead of going down into tough sub-soil, the mound-makers probably scraped up some of the surface soil and carried it to the mound. All this seems probable, and it gives just that wide area of bared and turned-over earth upon which an eared grass, such as barley, millet, or primitive wheat, might have seeded and grown. Moreover, the mound-makers, being busy with the mound, would not have time to hunt meat, and if they were accustomed to store and eat wild grain, they would be likely to scatter grain, and the grain would be blown by the wind out of their rude vessels over the area they were disturbing. And if they were bringing up seed in any quantity in baskets and pots to bury with the corpse, some of it might easily blow and be scattered over the fresh earth. Returning later to the region of the mound, they would discover an exceptionally vigorous growth of food grain, and it would be a natural thing to associate it with the buried person, and regard it as a consequence of his death and burial. He had given them back the grain they gave him increased a hundredfold.

At any rate, there is apparently all over the world a traceable association in ancient ceremonial and in the minds of barbaric people between the death and burial of a person and the ploughing and sowing of grain. From this it is assumed that there was once a world-wide persuasion that it was necessary that some one should be buried before a crop could be sown, and that out of this persuasion arose a practice and tradition of human sacrifice at seedtime, which has produced profound effects in the religious development of the race. There may have been some idea of refreshing the earth by a blood draught or revivifying it with the life of the sacrificed person. We state these considerations here merely as suggestions that have been made of the way in which the association of seedtime and sacrifice

arose. They are, at the best, speculations; they have a considerable vogue at the present time, and we have to note them, but we have neither the space nor the time here to examine them at length. The valuable accumulations of suggestions due to the industry and ingenuity of Sir J. G. Frazer still await a thorough critical examination, and to his works the reader must go for the indefatigable expansion of this idea.

§ 5

All these early beginnings must have taken place far back in time, and in regions of the world that have still to be effectively explored by the archæologists. They were probably going on in Asia or Africa, in what is now the bed of the Mediterranean, or in the region of the Indian Ocean, while the Reindeer man was developing his art in Europe. The Neolithic men who drifted over Europe and western Asia 12,000 or 10,000 years ago were long past these beginnings; they were already close, a few thousand years, to the dawn of written tradition and the remembered history of mankind. Without any very great shock or break, bronze came at last into human life, giving a great advantage in warfare to those tribes who first obtained it. Written history had already begun before weapons of iron came into Europe to supersede bronze.

Already in those days a sort of primitive trade had sprung up. Bronze and bronze weapons, and such rare and hard stones as jade, gold because of its plastic and ornamental possibilities, and skins and flax-net and cloth, were being swapped and stolen and passed from hand to hand over great stretches of country. Salt also was probably being traded. On a meat dietary men can live without salt, but grain-consuming people need it just as herbivorous animals need it. Hopf says that bitter tribal wars have been carried on by the desert tribes of the Soudan in recent years for the possession of the salt deposits between Fezzan and Murzuk. To begin with, barter, blackmail, tribute, and robbery by violence passed into each other by insensible degrees. Men got what they wanted by such means as they could.

§ 6

So far we have been telling of a history without events, a history of ages and periods and stages in development. But before we conclude this portion of the human story, we must record what was probably an event of primary importance and at first perhaps of tragic importance to developing mankind, and that was the breaking in of the Atlantic waters to the great Mediterranean valley.

The reader must keep in mind that we are endeavouring to give him plain statements that he can take hold of comfortably. But both in the matter of our time charts and the three maps we have given of prehistoric geography there is necessarily much speculative matter. We have dated the last Glacial Age and the appearance of the true men as about 40,000 or 35,000 years ago. Please bear that "about" in mind. The truth may be 60,000 or 20,000. But it is no good saying "a very long time" or "ages" ago, because then the reader will not know whether we mean centuries or millions of years. And similarly in these maps we give, they represent not the truth, but something like the truth. The outline of the land was "some such outline." There were such seas and such land masses. But both Mr. Horrabin, who has drawn these maps, and I, who have incited him to do so, have preferred to err on the timid side. We are not geologists enough to launch out into original research in these matters, and so we have stuck to the 40-fathom line and the recent deposits as our guides for our post-glacial map and for the map of 12,000 to 10,000 B.C. But in one matter we have gone beyond these guides. It is practically certain that at the end of the last Glacial Age the Mediterranean was a couple of land-locked sea basins, not connected — or only connected by a torrential overflow river. The eastern basin was the fresher; it was fed by the Nile, the "Adriatic" river, the "Red-Sea" river, and perhaps by a river that poured down amidst the mountains that are now the Greek Archipelago from the very much bigger Sea of Central Asia that then existed. Almost certainly human beings, and possibly even Neolithic men, wandered over that now lost Mediterranean valley.

The reasons for believing this are very good and plain. To this day the Mediterranean is a sea of evaporation. The rivers that flow into it do not make up for the evaporation from its surface. There is a constant current of water pouring into the Mediterranean from the Atlantic, and another current streaming in from the Bosphorus and

Black Sea. For the Black Sea gets more water than it needs from the big rivers that flow into it; it is an overflowing sea, while the Mediterranean is a thirsty sea. From which it must be plain that when the Mediterranean was cut off both from the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea it must have been a shrinking sea with its waters sinking to a much lower level than those of the ocean outside. This is the case of the Caspian Sea to-day. Still more so is it the case with the Dead Sea.

But if this reasoning is sound, then where to-day roll the blue waters of the Mediterranean there must once have been great areas of land, and land with a very agreeable climate. This was probably the case during the last Glacial Age, and we do not know how near it was to our time when the change occurred that brought back the ocean waters into the Mediterranean basin. Certainly there must have been Grimaldi people, and perhaps even Azilian and Neolithic people going about in the valleys and forests of these regions that are now submerged. The Neolithic Dark Whites, the people of the Mediterranean race, may have gone far towards the beginnings of settlement and civilization in that great lost Mediterranean Valley.

Mr. W. B. Wright gives us some very stimulating suggestions here. He suggests that in the Mediterranean basin there were two lakes, "one a fresh-water lake, in the eastern depression, which drained into the other in the western depression. It is interesting to think what must have happened when the ocean level rose once more as a result of the dissipation of the ice-sheets, and its waters began to pour over into the Mediterranean area. The inflow, small at first, must have ultimately increased to enormous dimensions, as the channel was slowly lowered by erosion and the ocean level slowly rose. If there were any unconsolidated materials on the sill of the Strait, the result must have been a genuine debacle, and if we consider the length of time which even an enormous torrent would take to fill such a basin as that of the Mediterranean, we must conclude that this result was likely to have been attained in any case. Now, this may seem all the wildest speculation, but it is not entirely so, for if we examine a submarine contour map of the Straits of Gibraltar, we find there is an enormous valley running up from the Mediterranean deep, right through the Straits, and trenching some

distance out on to the Atlantic shelf. This valley or gorge is probably the work of the inflowing waters of the ocean at the termination of the period of interior drainage."

This refilling of the Mediterranean, which by the rough chronology we are employing in this book may have happened somewhen between 30,000 and 10,000 B.C., must have been one of the greatest single events in the pre-history of our race. If the later date is the truer, then, as the reader will see plainly enough after reading the next two chapters, the crude beginnings of civilization, the first lake dwellings and the first cultivation, were probably round that eastern Levantine Lake into which there flowed not only the Nile, but the two great rivers that are now the Adriatic and the Red Sea. Suddenly the ocean waters began to break through over the westward hills and to pour in upon these primitive peoples — the lake that had been their home and friend became their enemy; its waters rose and never abated; their settlements were submerged; the waters pursued them in their flight. Day by day and year by year the waters spread up the valleys and drove mankind before them. Many must have been surrounded and caught by the continually rising salt flood. It knew no check; it came faster and faster; it rose over the treetops, over the hills, until it had filled the whole basin of the present Mediterranean and until it lapped the mountain cliffs of Arabia and Africa. Far away, long before the dawn of history, this catastrophe occurred.

XII

EARLY THOUGHT

§ 1. *Primitive Philosophy.* § 2. *The Old Man in Religion.* § 3. *Fear and Hope in Religion.* § 4. *Stars and Seasons.* § 5. *Story-telling and Myth-making.* § 6. *Complex Origins of Religion.*

§ 1

BEFORE we go on to tell how 6000 or 7000 years ago men began to gather into the first towns and to develop something more than the loose-knit tribes that had hitherto been their highest political association, something must be said about the things that were going on inside these brains of which we have traced the growth and development through a period of 500,000 years from the Pithecanthropus stage.

What was man thinking about himself and about the world in those remote days?

At first he thought very little about anything but immediate things. At first he was busy thinking such things as: "Here is a bear; what shall I do?" Or "There is a squirrel; how can I get it?" Until language had developed to some extent there could have been little thinking beyond the range of actual experience, for language is the instrument of thought as book-keeping is the instrument of business. It records and fixes and enables thought to get on to more and more complex ideas. It is the hand of the mind to hold and keep. Primordial man, before he could talk, probably saw very vividly, mimicked very cleverly, gestured, laughed, danced, and lived, without much speculation about whence he came or why he lived. He feared the dark, no doubt, and thunderstorms and big animals and queer things and whatever he dreamt about, and no doubt he did things to propitiate what he feared or to change his luck and please the imaginary powers in rock and beast and river. He made no clear distinction between animate and inanimate things; if a stick hurt him, he kicked it; if the river foamed and flooded, he thought it was hostile. His thought was probably very much at the level of a bright little contemporary boy of four or five. He had the same subtle

unreasonableness of transition and the same limitations. But since he had little or no speech he would do little to pass on the fancies that came to him, and develop any tradition or concerted acts about them.

The drawings even of Late Palæolithic man do not suggest that he paid any attention to sun or moon or stars or trees. He was preoccupied only with animals and men. Probably he took day and night, sun and stars, trees and mountains, as being in the nature of things — as a child takes its meal times and its nursery staircase for granted. So far as we can judge, he drew no fantasies, no ghosts or anything of that sort. The Reindeer Men's drawings are fearless familiar things, with no hint about them of any religious or occult feelings. There is scarcely anything that we can suppose to be a religious or mystical symbol at all in his productions. No doubt he had a certain amount of what is called *fetishism* in his life; he did things we should now think unreasonable to produce desired ends, for that is all fetishism amounts to; it is only incorrect science based on guess-work or false analogy, and entirely different in its nature from religion. No doubt he was excited by his dreams, and his dreams mixed up at times in his mind with his waking impressions and puzzled him. Since he buried his dead, and since even the later Neanderthal men seem to have buried their dead, and apparently with food and weapons, it has been argued that he had a belief in a future life. But it is just as reasonable to suppose that early men buried their dead with food and weapons because they doubted if they were dead, which is not the same thing as believing them to have immortal spirits, and that their belief in their continuing vitality was reinforced by dreams of the departed. They may have ascribed a sort of were-wolf existence to the dead, and wished to propitiate them.

The Reindeer man, we feel, was too intelligent and too like ourselves not to have had some speech, but quite probably it was not very serviceable for anything beyond direct statement or matter of fact narrative. He lived in a larger community than the Neanderthaler, but how large we do not know. Except when game is swarming, hunting communities must not keep together in large bodies or they will starve. The Indians who depend upon the caribou in Labrador must be living under circumstances rather like those of the Reindeer men. They scatter in small family groups, as the caribou

scatter in search of food; but when the deer collect for the seasonal migration, the Indians also collect. That is the time for trade and feasts and marriages. The simplest American Indian is 10,000 years more sophisticated than the Reindeer man, but probably that sort of gathering and dispersal was also the way of Reindeer men. At Solutré in France there are traces of a great camping and feasting-place. There was no doubt an exchange of news there, but one may doubt if there was anything like an exchange of ideas. One sees no scope in such a life for theology or philosophy or superstition or speculation. Fears, yes; but unsystematic fears; fancies and freaks of the imagination, but personal and transitory freaks and fancies.

Perhaps there was a certain power of suggestion in these encounters. A fear really felt needs few words for its transmission; a value set upon something may be very simply conveyed.

In these questions of primitive thought and religion, we must remember that the lowly and savage peoples of to-day probably throw very little light on the mental state of men before the days of fully developed language. Primordial man could have had little or no tradition before the development of speech. All savage and primitive peoples of to-day, on the contrary, are soaked in tradition — the tradition of thousands of generations. They may have weapons like their remote ancestors and methods like them, but what were slight and shallow impressions on the minds of their predecessors are now deep and intricate grooves worn throughout the intervening centuries generation by generation.

§ 2

Certain very fundamental things there may have been in men's minds long before the coming of speech. Chief among these must have been fear of the Old Man of the tribe. The young of the primitive squatting-place grew up under that fear. Objects associated with him were probably forbidden. Every one was forbidden to touch his spear or to sit in his place, just as to-day little boys must not touch father's pipe or sit in his chair. He was probably the master of all the women. The youths of the little community had to remember that. The idea of *something forbidden*, the idea of things being, as it is called, *tabu*,

not to be touched, not to be looked at, may thus have got well into the human mind at a very early stage indeed. J. J. Atkinson, in an ingenious analysis of these primitive tabus which are found among savage peoples all over the world, the tabus that separate brother and sister, the tabus that make a man run and hide from his stepmother, traces them to such a fundamental cause as this. Only by respecting this primal law could the young male hope to escape the Old Man's wrath. And the Old Man must have been an actor in many a primordial nightmare. A disposition to propitiate him even after he was dead is quite understandable. One was not sure that he *was* dead. He might only be asleep or shamming. Long after an Old Man was dead, when there was nothing to represent him but a mound and a megalith, the women would convey to their children how awful and wonderful he was. And being still a terror to his own little tribe, it was easy to go on to hoping that he would be a terror to other and hostile people. In his life he had fought for his tribe, even if he had bullied it. Why not when he was dead? One sees that the Old Man idea was an idea very natural to the primitive mind and capable of great development.

§ 3

Another idea probably arose early out of the mysterious visitation of infectious diseases, and that was the idea of uncleanness and of being accurst. From that, too, there may have come an idea of avoiding particular places and persons, and persons in particular phases of health. Here was the root of another set of tabus. Then man, from the very dawn of his mental life, may have had a feeling of the sinister about places and things. Animals, who dread traps, have that feeling. A tiger will abandon its usual jungle route at the sight of a few threads of cotton. Like most young animals, young human beings are easily made fearful of this or that by their nurses and seniors. Here is another set of ideas, ideas of repulsion and avoidance, that sprang up almost inevitably in men.

As soon as speech began to develop, it must have got to work upon such fundamental feelings and begun to systematize them, and

keep them in mind. By talking together men would reinforce each other's fears, and establish a common tradition of tabus of things forbidden and of things unclean. With the idea of uncleanness would come ideas of cleansing and of removing a curse. The cleansing would be conducted through the advice and with the aid of wise old men or wise old women, and in such cleansing would lie the germ of the earliest priestcraft and witchcraft.

Speech from the first would be a powerful supplement to the merely imitative education and to the education of cuffs and blows conducted by a speechless parent. Mothers would tell their young and scold their young. As speech developed, men would find they had experiences and persuasions that gave them or seemed to give them power. They would make secrets of these things. There is a double streak in the human mind, a streak of cunning secretiveness and a streak perhaps of later origin that makes us all anxious to tell and astonish and impress each other. Many people make secrets in order to have secrets to tell. These secrets of early men they would convey to younger, more impressionable people, more or less honestly and impressively in some process of initiation. Moreover, the pedagogic spirit overflows in the human mind; most people like "telling other people not to." Extensive arbitrary prohibitions for the boys, for the girls, for the women, also probably came very early into human history.

Then the idea of the sinister has for its correlative the idea of the propitious, and from that to the idea of making things propitious by ceremonies is an easy step.

§ 4

Out of such ideas and a jumble of kindred ones grew the first quasi-religious elements in human life. With every development of speech it became possible to intensify and develop the tradition of tabus and restraints and ceremonies. There is not a savage or barbaric race today that is not held in a net of such tradition. And with the coming of the primitive herdsman there would be a considerable broadening out of all this sort of practice. Things hitherto unheeded would be found of importance in human affairs. Neolithic man was nomadic in a

different spirit from the mere daylight drift after food of the primordial hunter. He was a herdsman, upon whose mind a sense of direction and the lie of the land had been forced. He watched his flock by night as well as by day. The sun by day and presently the stars by night helped to guide his migrations; he began to find after many ages that the stars are steadier guides than the sun. He would begin to note particular stars and star groups, and to distinguish any individual thing was, for primitive man, to believe it individualized and personal. He would begin to think of the chief stars as persons, very shining and dignified and trustworthy persons looking at him like bright eyes in the night. His primitive tillage strengthened his sense of the seasons. Particular stars ruled his heavens when seedtime was due. The beginnings of agriculture were in the sub-tropical zone, or even nearer the equator, where stars of the first magnitude shine with a splendour unknown in more temperate latitudes.

And Neolithic man was counting, and falling under the spell of numbers. There are savage languages that have no word for any number above five. Some peoples cannot go above two. But Neolithic man in the lands of his origin in Asia and Africa even more than in Europe was already counting his accumulating possessions. He was beginning to use tallies, and wondering at the triangularity of three and the squareness of four, and why some quantities like twelve were easy to divide in all sorts of ways, and others, like thirteen, impossible. Twelve became a noble, generous, and familiar number to him, and thirteen rather an outcast and disreputable one.

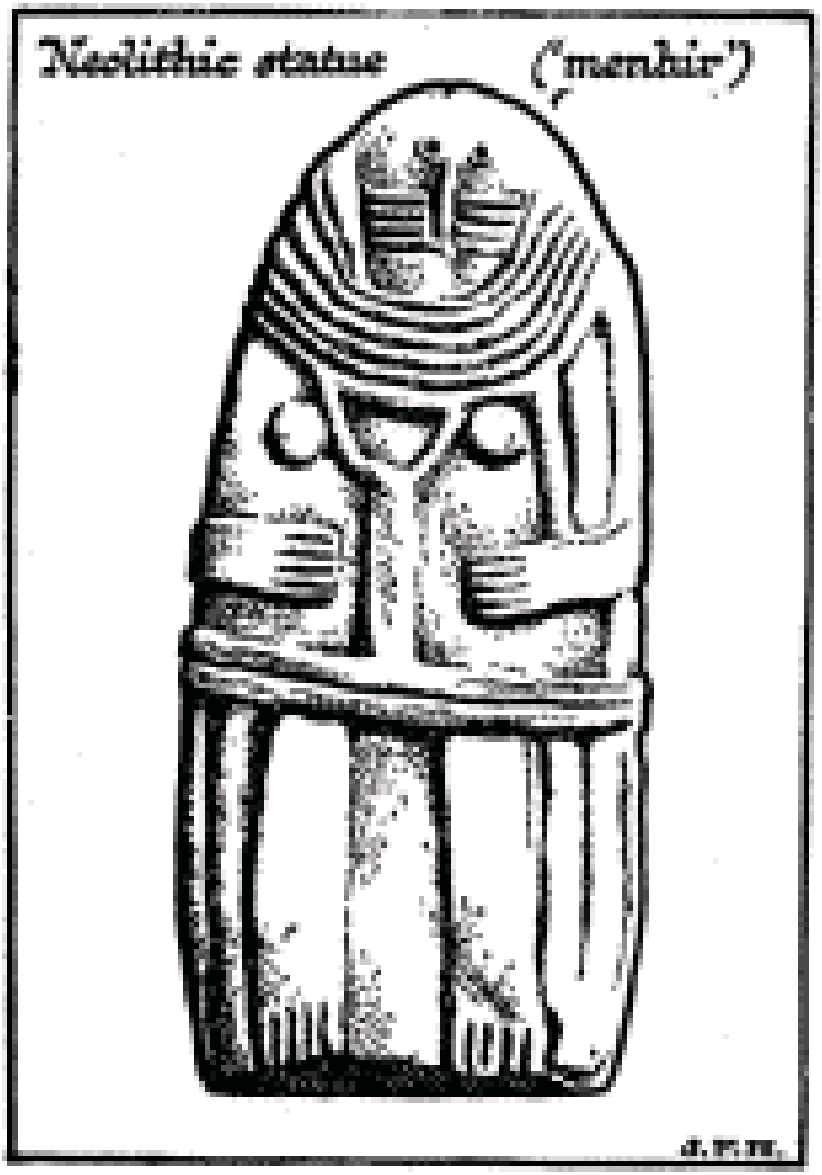

A Carved Statue ("Menhir") of the Neolithic Period — a Contrast to the Freedom and Vigour of Palæolithic Art.

Probably man began reckoning time by the clock of the full and new moons. Moonlight is an important thing to herdsmen who no longer merely hunt their herds, but watch and guard them.

Moonlight, too, was perhaps his time for love-making, as indeed it may have been for primordial man and the ground ape ancestor before him. But from the phases of the moon, as his tillage increased, man's attitude would go on to the greater cycle of the seasons. Primordial man probably only drifted before the winter as the days grew cold. Neolithic man knew surely that the winter would come, and stored his fodder and presently his grain. He had to fix a seedtime, a propitious seedtime, or his sowing was a failure. The earliest recorded reckoning is by moons and by generations of men. The former seems to be the case in the Book of Genesis, where, if one reads the great ages of the patriarchs who lived before the flood as lunar months instead of years, Methusaleh and the others are reduced to a credible length of life. But with agriculture began the difficult task of squaring the lunar month with the solar year; a task which has left its scars on our calendar to-day. Easter shifts uneasily from year to year, to the great discomfort of holiday-makers; it is now inconveniently early and now late in the season because of this ancient reference of time to the moon.

And when men began to move with set intention from place to place with their animal and other possessions, then they would begin to develop the idea of other places in which they were not, and to think of what might be in those other places. And in any valley where they lingered for a time, they would, remembering how they got there, ask, "How did this or that other thing get here?" They would begin to wonder what was beyond the mountains, and where the sun went when it set, and what was above the clouds.

§ 5

The capacity for telling things increased with their vocabulary. The simple individual fancies, the unsystematic fetish tricks and fundamental tabus of Palæolithic man began to be handed on and made into a more consistent system. Men began to tell stories about themselves, about the tribe, about its tabus and why they had to be, about the world and the why for the world. A tribal mind came into existence, a tradition. Palæolithic man was certainly more of a free individualist, more of an artist, as well as more of a savage, than

Neolithic man. Neolithic man was coming under prescription; he could be trained from his youth and told to do things and not to do things; he was not so free to form independent ideas of his own about things. He had thoughts given to him; he was under a new power of suggestion. And to have more words and to attend more to words is not simply to increase mental power; words themselves are powerful things and dangerous things. Palæolithic man's words, perhaps, were chiefly just names. He used them for what they were. But Neolithic man was thinking about these words, he was thinking about a number of things with a great deal of verbal confusion, and getting to some odd conclusions. In speech he had woven a net to bind his race together, but also it was a net about his feet. Man was binding himself into new and larger and more efficient combinations indeed, but at a price. One of the most notable things about the Neolithic Age is the total absence of that free direct artistic impulse which was the supreme quality of later Palæolithic man. We find much industry, much skill, polished implements, pottery with conventional designs, co-operation upon all sorts of things, but no evidence of personal creativeness. Self-suppression is beginning for men. Man has entered upon the long and tortuous and difficult path towards a life for the common good, with all its sacrifice of personal impulse, which he is still treading to-day.

Certain things appear in the mythology of mankind again and again. Neolithic man was enormously impressed by serpents — and he no longer took the sun for granted. Nearly everywhere that Neolithic culture went, there went a disposition to associate the sun and the serpent in decoration and worship. This primitive serpent worship spread ultimately far beyond the regions where the snake is of serious practical importance in human life.

§ 6

With the beginnings of agriculture a fresh set of ideas arose in men's minds. We have already indicated how easily and naturally men may have come to associate the idea of sowing with a burial. Sir J. G. Frazer has pursued the development of this association in the human mind, linking up with it the conception of special sacrificial persons

who are killed at seedtime, the conception of a specially purified class of people to kill these sacrifices, the first priests, and the conception of a *sacrament*, a ceremonial feast in which the tribe eats portions of the body of the victim in order to share in the sacrificial benefits.

Out of all these factors, out of the Old Man tradition, out of the desire to escape infection and uncleanness, out of the desire for power and success through magic, out of the sacrificial tradition of seedtime, and out of a number of like beliefs and mental experiments and misconceptions, a complex something was growing up in the lives of men which was beginning to bind them together mentally and emotionally in a common life and action. This something we may call *religion* (Lat. *religare*, to bind). It was not a simple or logical something, it was a tangle of ideas about commanding beings and spirits, about gods, about all sorts of "musts" and "must-nots." Like all other human matters, religion has grown. It must be clear from what has gone before that primitive man — much less his ancestral apes and his ancestral Mesozoic mammals — could have had no idea of God or Religion; only very slowly did his brain and his powers of comprehension become capable of such general conceptions. Religion is something that has grown up with and through human association, and God has been and is still being discovered by man.

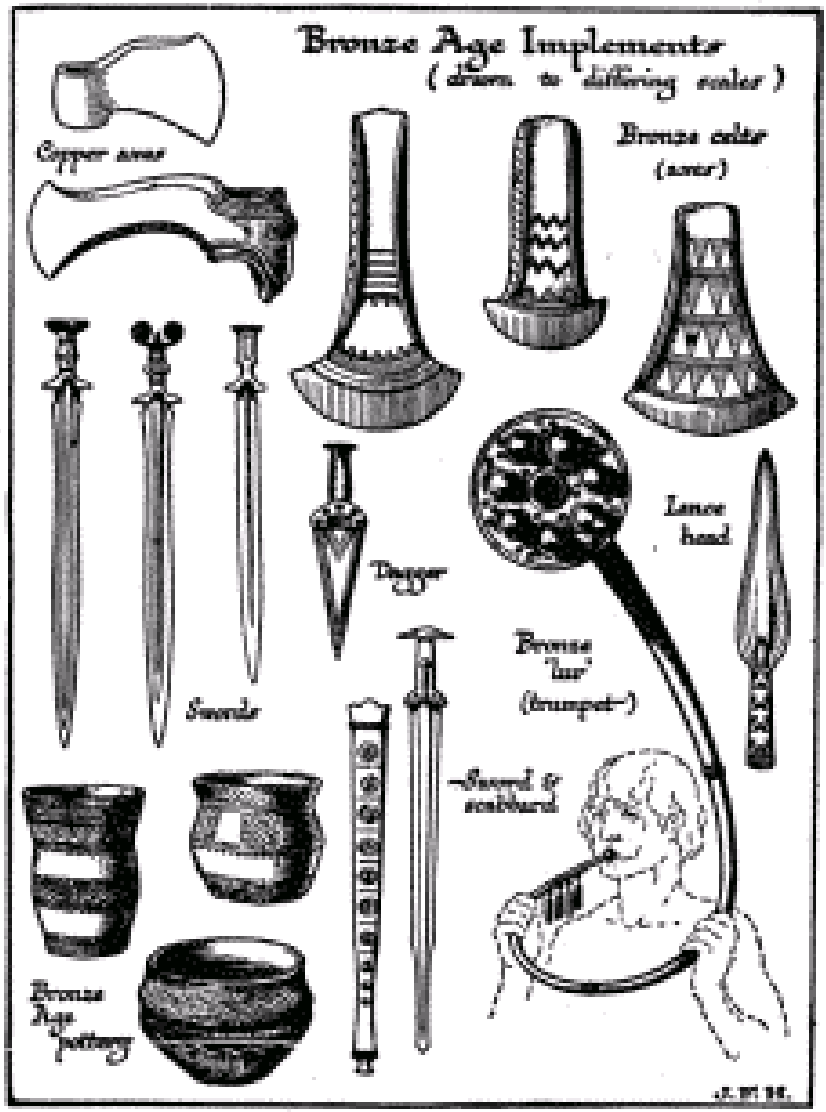

This book is not a theological book, and it is not for us to embark upon theological discussion; but it is a part, a necessary and central part, of the history of man to describe the dawn and development of his religious ideas and their influence upon his activities. All these factors we have noted must have contributed to this development, and various writers have laid most stress upon one or other of them.

Sir J. G. Frazer we have already noted as the leading student of the derivation of sacraments from magic sacrifices. Grant Allen, in his *Evolution of the Idea of God*, laid stress chiefly on the posthumous worship of the "Old Man." Sir E. B. Tylor (*Primitive Culture*) gave his attention mainly to the disposition of primitive man to ascribe a soul to every object animate and inanimate. Mr. A. E. Crawley, in *The Tree of Life*, has called attention to other centres of impulse and emotion, and particularly to sex as a source of deep excitement. The thing we have to bear in mind is that Neolithic man was still mentally undeveloped, he could be confused and illogical to a degree quite impossible to an educated modern person. Conflicting and contradictory ideas could lie in his mind without challenging one another; now one thing ruled his thoughts intensely and vividly and now another; his fears, his acts, were still disconnected as children's are.

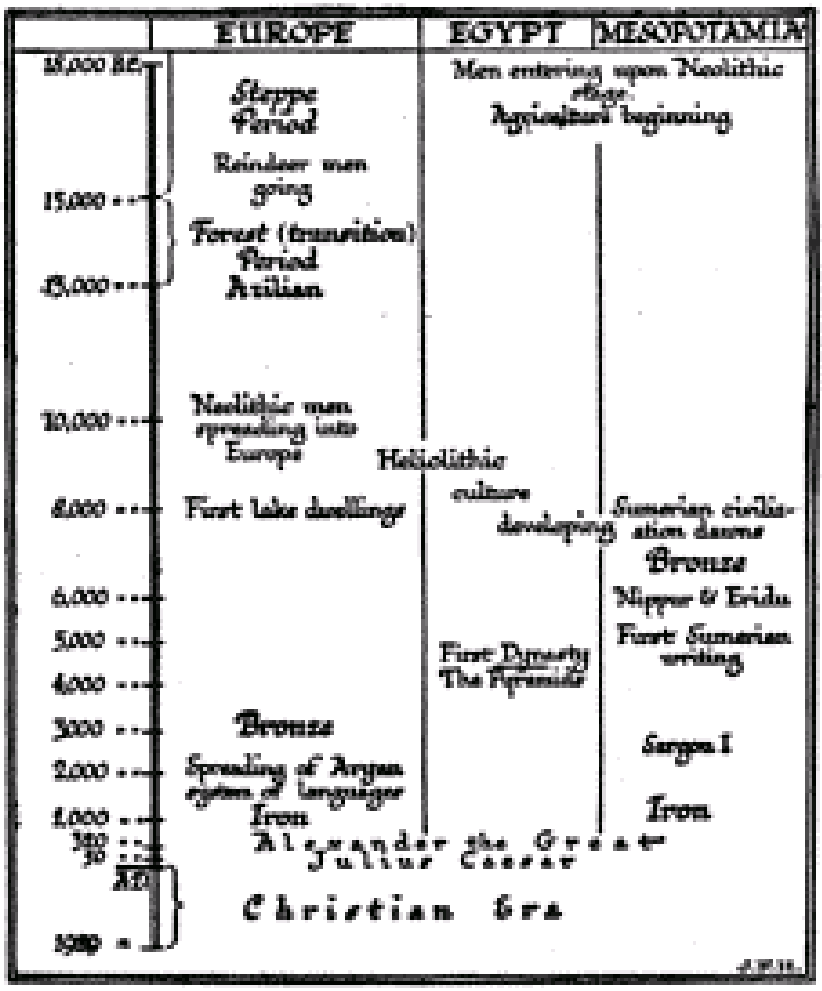

Time Diagram Showing the General Duration of the Neolithic Period in which Early Thought Developed.

Confusedly under the stimulus of the need and possibility of co-operation and a combined life, Neolithic mankind was feeling out for guidance and knowledge. Men were becoming aware that personally they needed protection and direction, cleansing from impurity, power beyond their own strength. Confusedly in response to that demand, bold men, wise men, shrewd and cunning men were arising to become magicians, priests, chiefs, and kings. They are not to be thought of as cheats or usurpers of power, nor the rest of mankind as

their dupes. All men are mixed in their motives; a hundred things move men to seek ascendancy over other men, but not all such motives are base or bad. The magicians usually believed more or less in their own magic, the priests in their ceremonies, the chiefs in their right. The history of mankind henceforth is a history of more or less blind endeavours to conceive a common purpose in relation to which all men may live happily, and to create and develop a common consciousness and a common stock of knowledge which may serve and illuminate that purpose. In a vast variety of forms this appearance of kings and priests and magic men was happening all over the world under Neolithic conditions. Everywhere mankind was seeking where knowledge and mastery and magic power might reside; everywhere individual men were willing, honestly or dishonestly, to rule, to direct, or to be the magic beings who would reconcile the confusions of the community.

In many ways the simplicity, directness, and detachment of a later Palæolithic rock-painter appeal more to modern sympathies than does the state of mind of these Neolithic men, full of the fear of some ancient Old Man who had developed into a tribal God, obsessed by ideas of sacrificial propitiation and magic murder. No doubt the reindeer hunter was a ruthless hunter and a combative and passionate creature, but he killed for reasons we can still understand; Neolithic man, under the sway of talk and a confused thought process, killed on theory, he killed for monstrous and now incredible ideas, he killed those he loved through fear and under direction. Those Neolithic men not only made human sacrifices at seedtime; there is every reason to suppose they sacrificed wives and slaves at the burial of their chieftains; they killed men, women, and children whenever they were under adversity and thought the gods were athirst. They practised infanticide. All these things passed on into the Bronze Age.

Hitherto a social consciousness had been asleep and not even dreaming in human history. Before it awakened it produced nightmares.

Away beyond the dawn of history, 3000 or 4000 years ago, one thinks of the Wiltshire uplands in the twilight of a midsummer day's morning. The torches pale in the growing light. One has a dim apprehension of a procession through the avenue of stone, of priests,

perhaps fantastically dressed with skins and horns and horrible painted masks — not the robed and bearded dignitaries our artists represent the Druids to have been — of chiefs in skins adorned with necklaces of teeth and bearing spears and axes, their great heads of hair held up with pins of bone, of women in skins or flaxen robes, of a great peering crowd of shock-headed men and naked children. They have assembled from many distant places; the ground between the avenues and Silbury Hill is dotted with their encampments. A certain festive cheerfulness prevails. And amidst the throng march the appointed human victims, submissive, helpless, staring towards the distant smoking altar at which they are to die — that the harvests may be good and the tribe increase.... To that had life progressed 3000 or 4000 years ago from its starting-place in the slime of the tidal beaches.

XIII

THE RACES OF MANKIND

§1. Is Mankind Still Differentiating? §2. The Main Races of Mankind. §3. Was There an Alpine Race? §4. The Brunet Peoples. §5. How Existing Races may be Related to Each Other.

§ 1

IT is necessary now to discuss plainly what is meant by a phrase, used often very carelessly, "The Races of Mankind."

It must be evident from what has already been explained in Chapter III that man, so widely spread and subjected therefore to great differences of climate, consuming very different food in different regions, attacked by different enemies, must always have been undergoing considerable local modification and differentiation. Man, like every other species of living thing, has constantly been tending to differentiate into several species; wherever a body of men has been cut off, in islands or oceans or by deserts or mountains, from the rest of humanity, it must have begun very soon to develop special characteristics, specially adapted to the local conditions. But, on the other hand, man is usually a wandering and enterprising animal, for whom there exist few insurmountable barriers. Men imitate men, fight and conquer them, interbreed, one people with another. Concurrently for thousands of years there have been two sets of forces at work, one tending to separate men into a multitude of local varieties, and another to remix and blend these varieties together before a separate species has been established.

These two sets of forces may have fluctuated in this relative effect in the past. Palæolithic man, for instance, may have been more of a wanderer, he may have drifted about over a much greater area, than later Neolithic man; he was less fixed to any sort of home or lair, he was tied by fewer possessions. Being a hunter, he was obliged to follow the migrations of his ordinary quarry. A few bad seasons may have shifted him hundreds of miles. He may therefore have mixed very widely and developed few varieties over the greater part of the world.

The appearance of agriculture tended to tie those communities of mankind that took it up to the region in which it was most conveniently carried on, and so to favour differentiation. Mixing or differentiation is not dependent upon a higher or lower stage of civilization; many savage tribes wander now for hundreds of miles; many English villagers in the eighteenth century, on the other hand, had never been more than eight or ten miles from their villages, neither they nor their fathers nor grandfathers before them. Hunting peoples often have enormous range. The Labrador country, for instance, is inhabited by a few thousand Indians, who follow the one great herd of caribou as it wanders yearly north and then south again in pursuit of food. This mere handful of people covers a territory as large as France. Nomad peoples also range very widely. Some Kalmuck tribes are said to travel nearly a thousand miles between summer and winter pasture.

It carries out this suggestion, that Palæolithic man ranged widely and was distributed, thinly indeed but uniformly, throughout the world, that the Palæolithic remains we find are everywhere astonishingly uniform. To quote Sir John Evans, "The implements in distant lands are so identical in form and character with the British specimens that they might have been manufactured by the same hands.... On the banks of the Nile, many hundreds of feet above its present level, implements of the European types have been discovered; while in Somaliland, in an ancient river-valley at a great elevation above the sea, Sir H. W. Seton-Karr has collected a large number of implements formed of flint and quartzite, which, judging from their form and character, might have been dug out of the drift-deposits of the Somme and the Seine, the Thames or the ancient Solent."

Phases of spreading and intermixture have probably alternated with phases of settlement and specialization in the history of mankind. But up to a few hundred years ago it is probable that since the days of the Palæolithic Age at least mankind has on the whole been differentiating. The species has differentiated in that period into a very great number of varieties, many of which have reblended with others, which have spread and undergone further differentiation or become extinct. Wherever there has been a strongly marked local

difference of conditions and a check upon intermixture, there one is almost obliged to assume a variety of mankind must have appeared. Of such local varieties there must have been a great multitude.

In one remote corner of the world, Tasmania, a little cut-off population of people remained in the early Palæolithic stage until the discovery of that island by the Dutch in 1642. They are now, unhappily, extinct. The last Tasmanian died in 1877. They may have been cut off from the rest of mankind for 15,000 or 20,000 or 25,000 years.

But among the numerous obstacles and interruptions to intermixture there have been certain main barriers, such as the Atlantic Ocean, the highlands, once higher, and the now vanished seas of central Asia and the like, which have cut off great groups of varieties from other great groups of varieties over long periods of time. These separated groups of varieties developed very early certain broad resemblances and differences. Most of the varieties of men in eastern Asia and America, but not all, have now this in common, that they have yellowish buff skins, straight black hair, and often high cheek-bones. Most of the native peoples of Africa south of the Sahara, but not all, have black or blackish skins, flat noses, thick lips, and frizzy hair. In north and western Europe a great number of peoples have fair hair, blue eyes, and ruddy complexions; and about the Mediterranean there is a prevalence of white-skinned peoples with dark eyes and black hair. The black hair of many of these dark whites is straight, but never so strong and waveless as the hair of the yellow peoples. It is straighter in the east than in the west. In southern India we find brownish and darker peoples with straight black hair, and these as we pass eastward give place to more distinctly yellow peoples. In scattered islands and in Papua and New Guinea we find another series of black and brownish peoples of a more lowly type with frizzy hair.

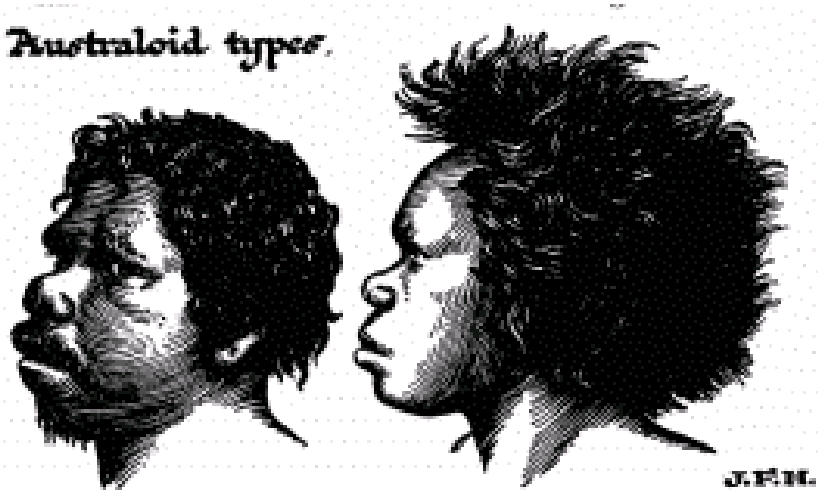

But it must be borne in mind that these are very loose-fitting generalizations. Some of the areas and isolated pockets of mankind in the Asiatic area may have been under conditions more like those in the European area; some of the African areas are of a more Asiatic and less distinctively African type. We find a wavy-haired, fairish, hairy-skinned race, the Ainu, in Japan. They are more like the Europeans in their facial type than the surrounding yellow Japanese. They may be a drifted patch of the whites or they may be a quite distinct people. We find primitive black people in the Andaman Islands far away from Australia and far away from Africa. There is a streak of very negroid blood traceable in south Persia and some parts of India. These are the "Asiatic" negroids. There is little or no proof that all black people, the Australians, the Asiatic negroids and the negroes, derive from one origin, but only that they have lived for vast periods under similar conditions. We must not assume that human beings in the eastern Asiatic area were all differentiating in one direction and all the human beings in Africa in another. There were great currents of tendency, it is true, but there were also backwaters, eddies, admixtures, readmixtures, and leakages from one main area to the other. A coloured map of the world to show the races would not present just four great areas of colour; it would have to be dabbed over with a multitude of tints and intermediate shades, simple here, mixed and overlapping there.

In the early Neolithic Period in Europe — it may be 10,000 or 12,000 years ago or so — man was differentiating all over the world, and he had already differentiated into a number of varieties, but he has never differentiated into different *species*. A "species," we must remember, in biological language is distinguished from a "variety" by the fact that varieties can interbreed, while species either do not do so or produce offspring which, like mules, are sterile. All mankind can interbreed freely, can learn to understand the same speech, can adapt itself to co-operation. And in the present age, man is probably no longer undergoing differentiation at all. Readmixture is now a far stronger force than differentiation. Men mingle more and more. Mankind from the view of a biologist is an animal species in a state of arrested differentiation and possible readmixture.

§ 2

It is only in the last fifty or sixty years that the varieties of men came to be regarded in this light, as a tangle of differentiations recently arrested or still in progress. Before that time students of mankind, influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the story of Noah and the Ark and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, were inclined to classify men into three or four great races, and they were disposed to regard these races as having always been separate things, descended from originally separate ancestors. They ignored the great possibilities of blended races and of special local isolations and variations. The classification has varied considerably, but there has been rather too much readiness to assume that mankind *must* be completely divisible into three or four main groups. Ethnologists (students of race) have fallen into grievous disputes about a multitude of minor peoples, as to whether they were of this or that primary race or "mixed," or strayed early forms, or what not. But all races are more or less mixed. There are, no doubt, four main groups, but each is a miscellany, and there are little groups that will not go into any of the four main divisions.

Subject to these reservations, when it is clearly understood that when we speak of these main divisions we mean not simple and pure races, but groups of races, then they have a certain convenience in discussion. Over the European and Mediterranean area and western Asia there are, and have been for many thousand years, white peoples, usually called the Caucasians, subdivided into two or three subdivisions, the northern blonds, an alleged intermediate race about which many authorities are doubtful, and the southern dark whites; over eastern Asia and America a second group of races prevails, the Mongolians, generally with yellow skins, straight black hair, and sturdy bodies; over Africa the Negroes, and in the region of Australia and New Guinea the black, primitive Australoids. These are convenient terms, provided the student bears in mind that they are

not exactly defined terms. They represent only the common characteristics of certain main groups of races; they leave out a number of little peoples who belong properly to none of these divisions, and they disregard the perpetual mixing where the main groups overlap.

§ 3

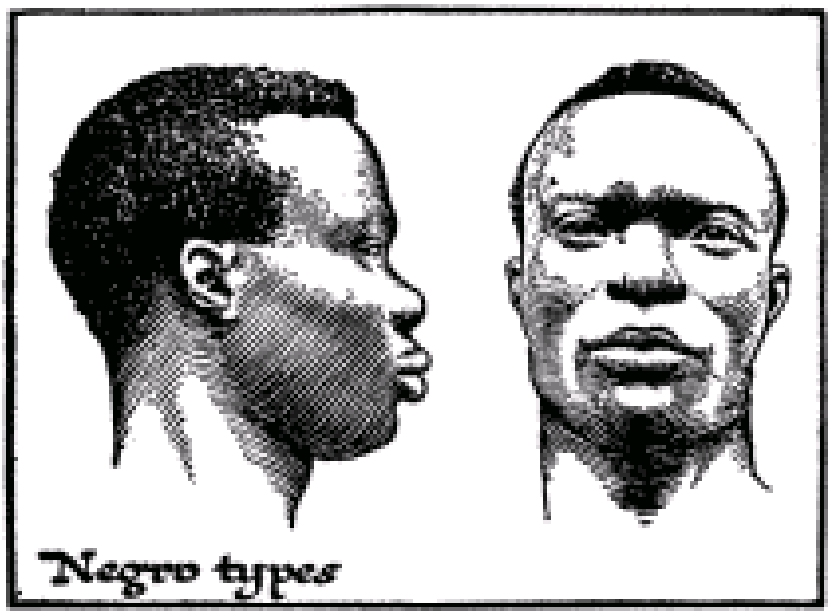

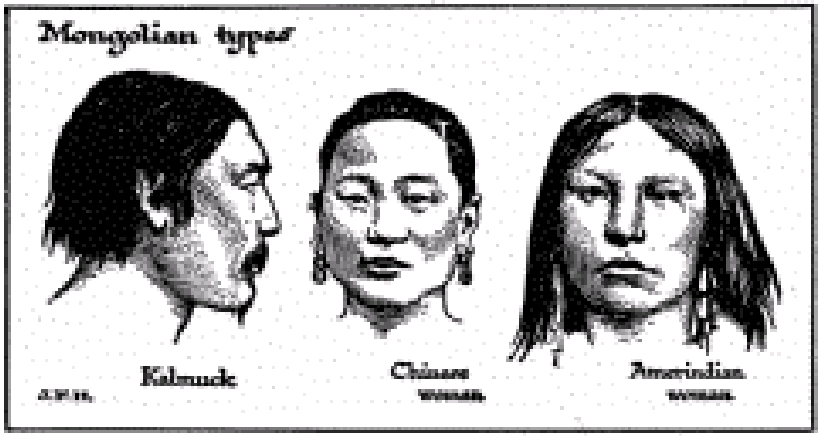

Mongolian Types

Whether the "Caucasian" race is to be divided into two or three main subdivisions depends upon the classificatory value to be attached to certain differences in the skeleton and particularly to the shape of the skull. The student in his further reading will meet with constant references to round-skulled (Brachycephalic) and long-skulled peoples (Dolichocephalic). No skull looked at from above is completely round, but some skulls (the dolichocephalic) are much more oblong than others; when the width of a skull is four-fifths or more of its length from back to front, that skull is called brachycephalic; when the width is less than four-fifths of the length, the skull is dolichocephalic. While some ethnologists regard the difference between brachycephaly and dolichocephaly as a difference of quite primary importance, another school — which the writer must confess has entirely captured his convictions — dismisses this as a mere secondary distinction. It seems probable that the skull shapes of a people may under special circumstances vary in comparatively few generations.

We do not know what influences alter the shape of the skull, just as we do not know why people of British descent in the Darling region of Australia ("Cornstalks") grow exceptionally tall, or why in New England their jaw-bones seem to become slighter and their teeth in consequence rather crowded. Even in Neolithic times dolichocephalic and brachycephalic skulls are found in the same

group of remains and often buried together, and that is true of most peoples to-day. Some peoples, such as the mountain people of central Europe, have more brachycephalic individuals per cent. than others; some, as the Scandinavians, are more prevalently dolichocephalic. In Neolithic Britain and in Scandinavia the earliest barrows (= tomb mounds) are long grave-shaped barrows and the late ones round, and the skulls found in the former are usually dolichocephalic and in the latter most frequently brachycephalic. This points perhaps to a succession of races in western Europe in the Neolithic Period (see Chapter XLV), but it may also point to changes of diet, habit, or climate.

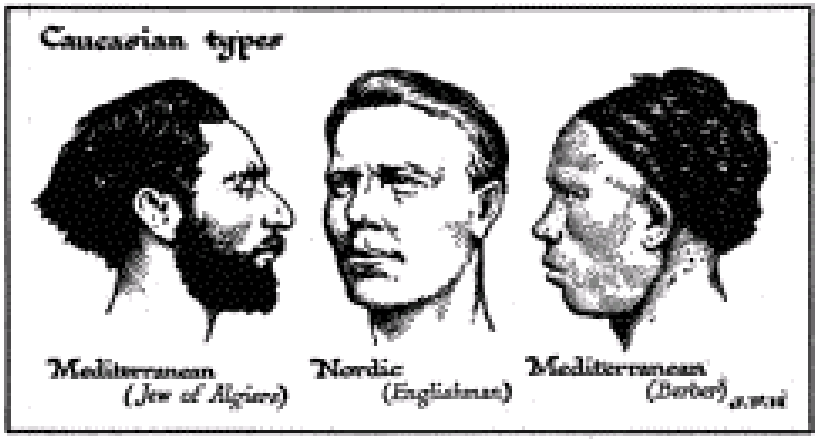

Caucasian Types

But it is this study of skull shapes which has led many ethnologists to divide the Caucasian race, not, as it was divided by Huxley, into two, the northern *blonds* and the Mediterranean and North African *dark whites* or brunets, but into three. They split his blonds into two classes. They distinguish a northern European type, blond and dolichocephalic, the Nordic; a Mediterranean or Iberian race, Huxley's dark whites, which is dark-haired and dolichocephalic, and between these two they descry this third race, their brachycephalic race, the Alpine race. The opposite school

would treat the alleged Alpine race simply as a number of local brachycephalic varieties of Nordic or Iberian peoples. The Iberian peoples were the Neolithic people of the long barrows, and seem at first to have pervaded most of Europe and western Asia.

§ 4

This Mediterranean or Iberian race certainly had a wider range in early times, and was a less specialized and distinctive race than the Nordic. It is very hard to define its southward boundaries from the Negro, or to mark off its early traces in central Asia from those of early Dravidians or Mongolians. Wilfred Scawen Blunt says that Huxley "had long suspected a common origin of the Egyptians and the Dravidians of India, perhaps a long belt of brown-skinned men from India to Spain in very early days." Across France and Great Britain these dark-white Iberian or Mediterranean people were ousted by a round-barrow-making "Alpine" or Alpine-Nordic race, and the dawn of history in Europe sees them being pressed westward

and southward everywhere by the expansion of the fairer northern peoples.

It is possible that this "belt" of Huxley's of dark-white and brown-skinned men, this race of brunet-brown folk, ultimately spread even farther than India; that they reached to the shores of the Pacific, and that they were everywhere the original possessors of the Neolithic culture and the beginners of what we call civilization. The Nordic and the Mongolian peoples may have been but north-western and north-eastern branches from this more fundamental stem. Or the Nordic race may have been a branch, while the Mongolian, like the Negro, may have been another equal and distinct stem with which the brunet-browns met and mingled in South China. Or the Nordic peoples also may have developed separately from a palæolithic stage.

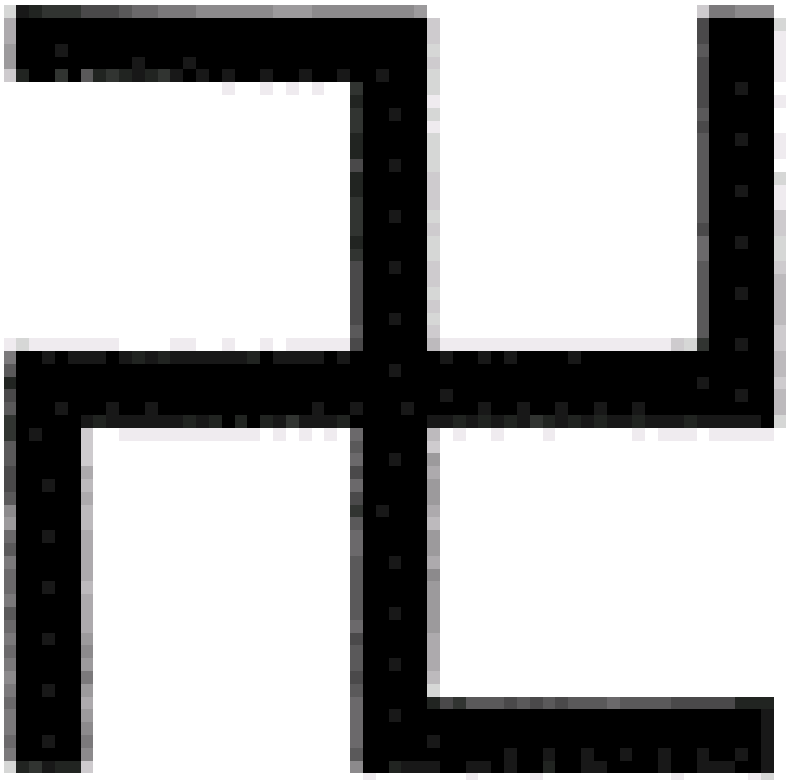

The Swastika

At some period in human history (see Elliot Smith's *Migrations of Early Culture*) there seems to have been a special type of Neolithic culture widely distributed in the world which had a group of features so curious and so unlikely to have been independently developed in different regions of the earth, as to compel us to believe that it was in effect one culture. It reached through all the regions inhabited by the brunet Mediterranean race, and beyond through India, Further India, up the Pacific coast of China, and it spread at last across the Pacific and to Mexico and Peru. It was a coastal culture not reaching deeply

inland. (Here again we cover the ground of Huxley's "belt of brown-skinned men," and extend it far to the east across the stepping-stones of Polynesia. There are, we may note, some very striking resemblances between early Japanese pottery and so forth and similar Peruvian productions.) This peculiar development of the Neolithic culture, which, Elliot Smith called the *heliolithic* culture, included many or all of the following odd practices: (1) circumcision, (2) the very queer custom of sending the *father* to bed when a child is born, known as the *couvade*, (3) the practice of massage, (4) the making of mummies, (5) megalithic monuments (*e.g.* Stonehenge), (6) artificial deformation of the heads of the young by bandages, (7) tattooing, (8) religious association of the sun and the serpent, and (9) the use of the symbol known as the swastika (see figure) for good luck. This odd little symbol spins gaily round the world; it seems incredible that men would have invented and made a pet of it twice over. Elliot Smith traces these practices in a sort of constellation all over this great Mediterranean-Indian Ocean-Pacific area. Where one occurs, most of the others occur. They link Brittany with Borneo and Peru. But this constellation of practices does not crop up in the primitive homes of Nordic or Mongolian peoples, nor does it extend southward much beyond equatorial Africa. For thousands of years, from 15,000 to 1000 B.C., such a heliolithic Neolithic culture and its brownish possessors may have been oozing round the world through the warmer regions of the world, drifting by canoes often across wide stretches of sea. And its region of origin may have been, as Elliot Smith suggests, the Mediterranean and North-African region. It must have been spreading up the Pacific Coast and across the island stepping-stones to America, long after it had passed on into other developments in its areas of origin. Many of the peoples of the East Indies, Melanesia and Polynesia were still in this heliolithic stage of development when they were discovered by European navigators in the eighteenth century. The first civilizations in Egypt and the Euphrates-Tigris valley probably developed directly out of this widespread culture. We will discuss later whether the Chinese civilization had a different origin. The Semitic nomads of the Arabian desert seem also to have had a heliolithic stage.

§ 5

It may clear up the necessarily rather confused discussion of this chapter to give a summary of the views expressed here in a diagram. This, on page 149, should be compared later with the language diagram on page 155.

We have put the Australoids as a Negroid branch, but many authorities would set back the Australoid stem closer to the Tasmanian, and there may even be sound reasons for transferring both Australoids and Tasmanians as separate branches to the left of the "Later Palæolithic Races." To avoid crowding we have omitted the Hairy Ainu. They may be the last vestiges of an ancient primitive Pre-Nordic Pre-Mongolian strain from which the Nordic races are descended.

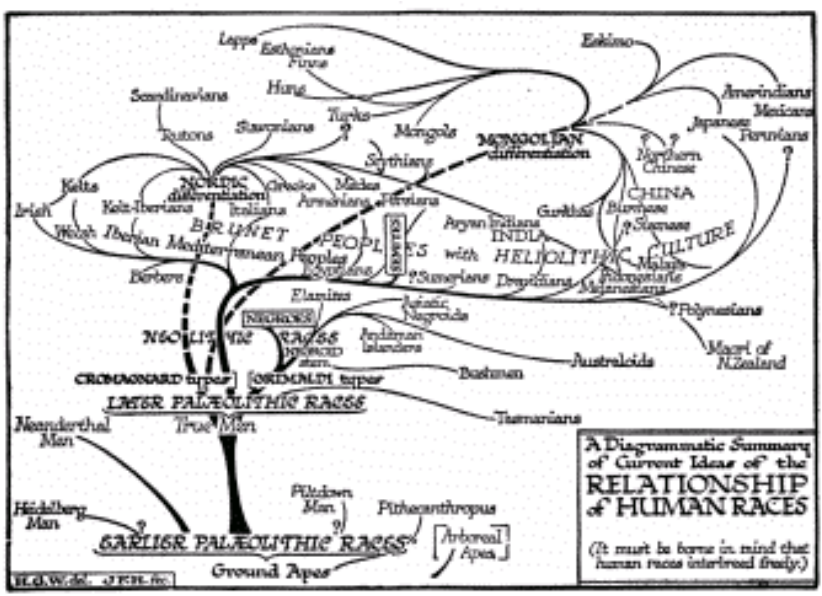

THE LANGUAGES OF MANKIND

§ 1. *No one Primitive Language.* § 2. *The Aryan Languages.* § 3. *The Semitic Languages.* § 4. *The Hamitic Languages.* § 5. *The Ural Altaic Languages.* § 6. *The Chinese Languages.* § 7. *Other Language Groups.* § 8. *Submerged and Lost Languages.* § 9. *How Languages may be Related.*

§ 1

IT is improbable that there was ever such a thing as a common human language. We know nothing of the language of Palæolithic man; we do not even know whether Palæolithic man talked freely.

We know that Palæolithic man had a keen sense of form and attitude, because of his drawings; and it has been suggested that he communicated his ideas very largely by gesture. Probably such words as the earlier men used were mainly cries of alarm or passion or names for concrete things, and in many cases they were probably imitative sounds made by or associated with the things named.

The first languages were probably small collections of such words; they consisted of interjections and nouns. Probably the nouns were said in different intonations to convey different meanings. If Palæolithic man had a word for "horse" or "bear," he probably showed by tone or gesture whether he meant "bear is coming," "bear is going," "bear is to be hunted," "dead bear," "bear has been here," "bear did this," and so on. Only very slowly did the human mind develop methods of indicating action and relationship in a formal manner. Modern languages contain many thousands of words, but the earlier languages could have consisted only of a few hundred. It is said that even modern European peasants can get along with something less than a thousand words, and it is quite conceivable that so late as the Early Neolithic Period that was the limit of the available vocabulary. Probably men did not indulge in those days in conversation or description. For narrative purposes they danced and acted rather than told. They had no method of counting beyond a method of indicating two by a dual number, and some way of

expressing many. The growth of speech was at first a very slow process indeed, and grammatical forms and the expression of abstract ideas may have come very late in human history, perhaps only 400 or 500 generations ago.

§ 2

The students of languages (philologists) tell us that they are unable to trace with certainty any common features in all the languages of mankind. They cannot even find any elements common to all the Caucasian languages. They find over great areas groups of languages which have similar root words and similar ways of expressing the same idea, but then they find in other areas languages which appear to be dissimilar down to their fundamental structure, which express action and relation by entirely dissimilar devices, and have an altogether different grammatical scheme. One great group of languages, for example, now covers nearly all Europe and stretches out to India; it includes English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Russian, Armenian, Persian, and various Indian tongues. It is called the Indo-European or Aryan family. The same fundamental roots, the same grammatical ideas, are traceable through all this family. Compare, for example, English *father, mother*, Gothic *fadar, moutar*, German *vater, mutter*, Latin *pater, mater*, Greek *pater, meter*, French *père, mère*, Armenian *hair, mair*, Sanscrit *pitar, matar*, etc., etc. In a similar manner the Aryan languages ring the changes on a great number of fundamental words, *f* in the Germanic languages becoming *p* in Latin, and so on. They follow a law of variation called Grimm's Law. These languages are not different things, they are variations of one thing. The people who use these languages think in the same way.

At one time in the remote past, in the Neolithic Age, that is to say 6000 years or more ago, there may have been one simple original speech from which all these Aryan languages have differentiated. Somewhere between central Europe and western Asia there must have wandered a number of tribes sufficiently intermingled to develop and use one tongue. It is convenient here to call them the Aryan peoples. Sir H. H. Johnston has called them "Aryan

Russians." They belonged mostly to the Caucasian group of races and to the blond and northern subdivision of the group, to the Nordic race that is.

Here one must sound a note of warning. There was a time when the philologists were disposed to confuse languages and races, and to suppose that people who once all spoke the same tongue must be all of the same blood. That, however, is not the case, as the reader will understand if he will think of the negroes of the United States who now all speak English, or of the Irish, who — except for purposes of political demonstration — no longer speak the old Erse language but English, or of the Cornish people, who have lost their ancient Keltic speech. But what a common language does do, is to show that a common intercourse has existed, and the possibility of intermixture; and if it does not point to a common origin, it points at least to a common future.

But even this original Aryan language, which was a spoken speech perhaps 4000 or 3000 B.C., was by no means a *primordial* language or the language of a savage race. Its speakers were in or past the Neolithic stage of civilization. It had grammatical forms and verbal devices of some complexity. The vanished methods of expression of the later Palæolithic peoples, of the Azilians, or of the early Neolithic kitchen-midden people for instance, were probably much cruder than the most elementary form of Aryan.

Probably the Aryan group of languages became distinct in a wide region of which the Danube, Dnieper, Don, and Volga were the main rivers, a region that extended eastward beyond the Ural mountains north of the Caspian Sea. The area over which the Aryan speakers roamed probably did not for a long time reach to the Atlantic or to the south of the Black Sea beyond Asia Minor. There was no effectual separation of Europe from Asia then at the Bosphorus. The Danube flowed eastward to a great sea that extended across the Volga region of south-eastern Russia right into Turkestan, and included the Black, Caspian, and Aral Seas of to-day. Perhaps it sent out arms to the Arctic Ocean. It must have been a pretty effective barrier between the Aryan speakers and the people in north-eastern Asia. South of this sea stretched a continuous shore from the Balkans to Afghanistan. North-west of it a region of swamps and lagoons

reached to the Baltic.

§ 3

Next to Aryan, philologists distinguish another group of languages which seem to have been made quite separately from the Aryan languages, the Semitic. Hebrew and Arabic are kindred, but they seem to have even a different set of root words from the Aryan tongues; they express their ideas of relationship in a different way; the fundamental ideas of their grammars are generally different. They were in all probability made by human communities quite out of touch with the Aryans, separately and independently. Hebrew, Arabic, Abyssinian, ancient Assyrian, ancient Phœnician, and a number of associated tongues are put together, therefore, as being derived from a second primary language, which is called the Semitic. In the very beginnings of recorded history we find Aryan-speaking peoples and Semitic-speaking peoples carrying on the liveliest intercourse of war and trade round and about the eastern end of the Mediterranean, but the fundamental differences of the primary Aryan and primary Semitic languages oblige us to believe that in early Neolithic times, before the historical period, there must for thousands of years have been an almost complete separation of the Aryan-speaking and the Semitic-speaking peoples. The latter seem to have lived either in south Arabia or in north-east Africa. In the opening centuries of the Neolithic Age the original Aryan speakers and the original Semitic speakers were probably living, so to speak, in different worlds, with a minimum of intercourse. Racially, it would seem, they had a remote common origin; both Aryan speakers and Semites are classed as Caucasians; but while the original Aryan speakers seem to have been of Nordic race, the original Semites were rather of the Mediterranean type.

§ 4

Philologists speak with less unanimity of a third group of languages, the Hamitic, which some declare to be distinct from, and others allied to, the Semitic. The weight of opinion inclines now towards

the idea of some primordial connection of these two groups. The Hamitic group is certainly a much wider and more various language group than the Semitic or the Aryan, and the Semitic tongues are more of a family, have more of a common likeness, than the Aryan. The Semitic languages may have arisen as some specialized proto-Hamitic group, just as the birds arose from a special group of reptiles (Chap. IV). It is a tempting speculation, but one for which there is really no basis of justifying fact, to suppose that the rude primordial ancestor group of the Aryan tongues branched off from the proto-Hamitic speech forms at some still earlier date than the separation and specialization of Semitic. The Hamitic speakers to-day, like the Semitic speakers, are mainly of the Mediterranean Caucasian race. Among the Hamitic languages are the ancient Egyptian and Coptic, the Berber languages (of the mountain people of north Africa, the Masked Tuaregs, and other such peoples), and what are called the Ethiopic group of African languages in eastern Africa, including the speech of the Gallas and the Somalis. The general grouping of these various tongues suggests that they originated over some great area to the west, as the primitive Semitic may have arisen to the east of the Red Sea divide. That divide was probably much more effective in Pleistocene times; the sea extended across to the west of the Isthmus of Suez, and a great part of lower Egypt was under water. Long before the dawn of history, however, Asia and Africa had joined at Suez, and these two language systems were in contact in that region. And if Asia and Africa were separated then at Suez, they may, on the other hand, have been joined by way of Arabia and Abyssinia.

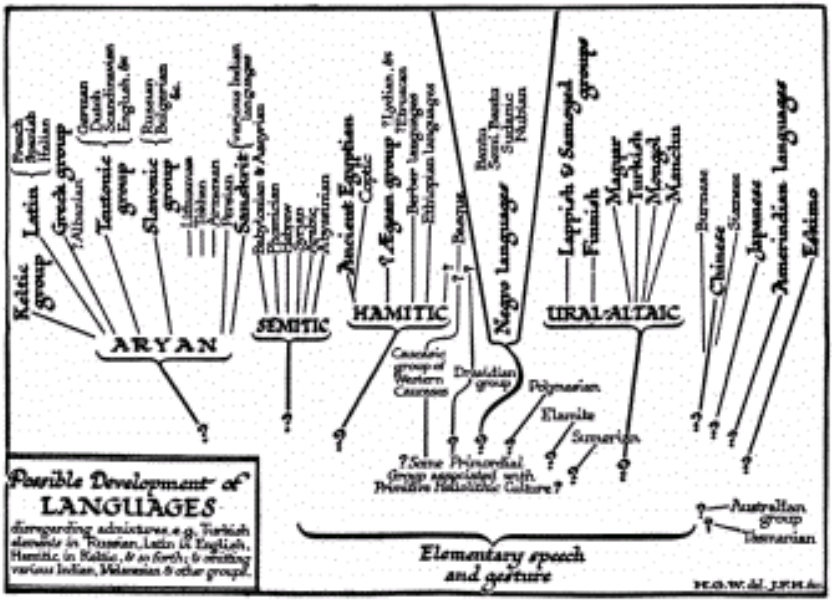

These Hamitic languages may have radiated from a centre on the African coast of the Mediterranean, and they may have extended over the then existing land connections very widely into western Europe.

All these three great groups of languages, it may be noted, the Aryan, Semitic, and Hamitic, have one feature in common which they do not share with any other language, and that is grammatical gender; but whether that has much weight as evidence of a remote common origin of Aryan, Semitic, and Hamitic, is a question for the philologist rather than for the general student. It does not affect the clear evidence of a very long and very ancient prehistoric separation of the speakers of these three diverse groups of tongues.

The bulk of the Semitic and Hamitic-speaking peoples are put by ethnologists with the Aryans among the Caucasian group of races. They are “white.” The Semitic and Nordic “races” have a much more distinctive physiognomy; they seem, like their characteristic languages, to be more marked and specialized than the Hamitic-speaking peoples.

Across to the north-east of the Aryan and Semitic areas there must once have spread a further distinct language system which is now represented by a group of languages known as the Turanian, or Ural-altaic group. This included the Lappish of Lapland and the Samoyed speech of Siberia, the Finnish language, Magyar, Turkish or Tartar, Manchu and Mongol; it has not as a group been so exhaustively studied by European philologists, and there is insufficient evidence yet whether it does or does not include the Korean and Japanese languages. (A Japanese writer, Mr. K. Hirai, has attempted to show that Japanese and Aryan may have had a common parent tongue.)

§ 6

A fifth region of language formation was south-eastern Asia, where there still prevails a group of languages consisting of monosyllables without any inflections, in which the tone used in uttering a word determines its meaning. This may be called the Chinese or Monosyllabic group, and it includes Chinese, Burmese, Siamese, and Tibetan. The difference between any of these Chinese tongues and the more western languages is profound. In the Pekinese form of Chinese there are only about 420 primary monosyllables, and consequently each of these has to do duty for a great number of things, and the different meanings are indicated either by the context or by saying the word in a distinctive tone. The relations of these words to each other are expressed by quite different methods from the Aryan methods; Chinese grammar is a thing different in nature from English grammar; it is a separate and different invention. Many writers declare there is no Chinese grammar at all, and that is true if we mean by grammar anything in the European sense of inflections and concords. Consequently any such thing as a literal translation from Chinese into English is an impossibility. The very method of the thought is different. Their philosophy remains still largely a sealed book to the European on this account, and vice versa, because of the different nature of the expressions.

§ 7

In addition the following other great language families are distinguished by the philologist. All the American-Indian languages, which vary widely among themselves, are separable from any Old World group. Here we may lump them together not so much as a family as a miscellany. There is one great group of languages in Africa, from a little way north of the equator to its southern extremity, the Bantu, and in addition a complex of other languages across the centre of the continent about which we will not trouble here. There are also two probably separate groups, the Dravidian in South India, and the Malay-Polynesian stretched over Polynesia, and also now including Indian tongues.

Now it seems reasonable to conclude from these fundamental differences that about the time when men were passing from the Palæolithic to Neolithic conditions, and beginning to form rather larger communities than the family herd, when they were beginning to tell each other long stories and argue and exchange ideas, human beings were distributed about the world in a number of areas which communicated very little with each other. They were separated by oceans, seas, thick forests, deserts or mountains from one another. There may have been in that remote time, it may be 10,000 years ago or more, Aryan, Semitic, Hamitic, Turanian, American, and Chinese-speaking tribes and families, wandering over their several areas of hunting and pasture, all at very much the same stage of culture, and each developing its linguistic instrument in its own way. Probably each of these original tribes was not more numerous altogether than the Indians in Hudson Bay Territory to-day. Agriculture was barely beginning, and until agriculture made a denser population possible men may have been almost as rare as the great apes have always been.

In addition to these early Neolithic tribes, there must have been various varieties of still more primitive forest folk in Africa and in India. Central Africa, from the Upper Nile, was then a vast forest, impenetrable to ordinary human life, a forest of which the Congo forests of to-day are the last shrunken remains.

Possibly the spread of men of a race higher than primitive Australoids into the East Indies, and the development of the languages of the Malay-Polynesian type came later in time than the

origination of these other language groups.

The language divisions of the philologist do tally, it is manifest, in a broad sort of way with the main race classes of the ethnologist, and they carry out the same idea of age-long separations between great divisions of mankind. In the Glacial Age, ice, or at least a climate too severe for the free spreading of peoples, extended from the north pole into central Europe and across Russia and Siberia to the great tablelands of central Asia. After the last Glacial Age, this cold north mitigated its severities very slowly, and was for long without any other population than the wandering hunters who spread eastward and across Bering Strait. North and central Europe and Asia did not become sufficiently temperate for agriculture until quite recent times, times that is within the limit of 12,000 or possibly even 10,000 years, and a dense forest period intervened between the age of the hunter and the agricultural clearings.

This forest period was also a very wet period. It has been called the Pluvial or Lacustrine Age, the rain or pond period. It has to be remembered that the outlines of the land of the world have changed greatly even in the last hundred centuries. Across European Russia, from the Baltic to the Caspian Sea, as the ice receded there certainly spread much water and many impassable swamps; the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Aral and parts of the Desert of Turkestan, are the vestiges of a great extent of sea that reached far up to the Volga valley and sent an arm westward to join the Black Sea. Mountain barriers much higher than they are now, and the arm of the sea that is now the region of the Indus, completed the separation of the early Caucasian races from the Mongolians and the Dravidians, and made the broad racial differentiation of those groups possible.

Again the blown-sand Desert of Sahara — it is not a dried-up sea, but a wind desert, and was once fertile and rich in life — becoming more and more dry and sandy, cut the Caucasians off from the sparse primitive Negro population in the central forest region of Africa.

The Persian Gulf extended very far to the north of its present head, and combined with the Syrian desert to cut off the Semitic peoples from the eastern areas, while on the other hand the south of Arabia, much more fertile than it is to-day, may have reached across what is now the Gulf of Aden towards Abyssinia and Somaliland.

The Mediterranean and Red Sea were probably still joined at Suez. The Himalayas and the higher and vaster massif of central Asia and the northward extension of the Bay of Bengal up to the present Ganges valley divided off the Dravidians from the Mongolians, the canoe was the chief link between Dravidian and Southern Mongol, and the Gobi system of seas and lakes which presently became the Gobi desert, and the great system of mountain chains which follow one another across Asia from the center to the north-east, split the Mongolian races into the Chinese and the Ural-Altaic language groups.

Bering Strait, when this came into existence, before or after the Pluvial Period, isolated the Amer-Indians.

These ancient separations must have remained effectual well into Neolithic times. The barriers between Africa, Asia, and Europe were lowered or bridged by that time, but mixing had not gone far. The practical separation of the west from Dravidian India and China continued indeed down almost into historical times; but the Semite, the Hamite, and the Aryan were already in close contact and vigorous reaction again in the very dawn of history.

We are not suggesting here, be it noted, that these ancient separations were absolute separations, but that they were effectual enough at least to prevent any great intermixture of blood or any great intermixture of speech in those days of man's social beginnings. There was, nevertheless, some amount of meeting and exchange even then, some drift of knowledge that spread the crude patterns and use of various implements, and the seeds of a primitive agriculture about the world.

§ 8

The fundamental tongues of these nine main language groups we have noted were not by any means all the human speech beginnings of the Neolithic Age. There may have been other, and possibly many other, ineffective centres of speech which were afterwards overrun by the speakers of still surviving tongues, and of elementary languages which faded out. We find strange little patches of speech still in the world which do not seem to be connected with any other

language about them. Sometimes, however, an exhaustive inquiry seems to affiliate these disconnected patches, seems to open out to us tantalizing glimpses of some simpler, wider, and more fundamental and universal form of human speech. One language group that has been keenly discussed is the Basque group of dialects. The Basques live now on the north and south slopes of the Pyrenees; they number perhaps 600,000 altogether in Europe, and to this day they are a very sturdy and independent-spirited people. Their language, as it exists to-day, is a fully developed one. But it is developed upon lines absolutely different from those of the Aryan languages about it. Basque newspapers have been published in the Argentine and in the United States to supply groups of prosperous emigrants. The earliest "French" settlers in Canada were Basque, and Basque names are frequent among the French Canadians to this day. Ancient remains point to a much wider distribution of the Basque speech and people over Spain. For a long time this Basque language was a profound perplexity to scholars, and its structural character led to the suggestion that it might be related to some Amer-Indian tongue. A. H. Keane, in *Man Past and Present*, assembles reasons for linking it — though remotely — with the Berber language of North Africa, and through the Berber with the general body of Hamitic languages, but this relationship is questioned by other philologists. They find Basque more akin to certain similarly stranded vestiges of speech found in the Caucasian Mountains, and they are disposed to regard it as a last surviving member, much changed and specialized, of a once very widely extended group of pre-Hamitic languages, otherwise extinct, spoken chiefly by peoples of that brunet Mediterranean race (round-barrow men) which once occupied most of western and southern Europe and western Asia, and which may have been very closely related to the Dravidians of India and the peoples with a heliolithic culture who spread eastward thence through the East Indies to Polynesia and beyond.

It is quite possible that over western and southern Europe language groups extended 10,000 years ago that have completely vanished before Aryan tongues. Later on we shall note, in passing, the possibility of three lost language groups represented by (1) Ancient Cretan, Lydian, and the like (though these may have

belonged, says Sir H. H. Johnston, to the "Basque-Caucasian-Dravidian (!) group"), (2) Sumerian, and (3) Elamite. The suggestion has been made — it is a mere guess — that ancient Sumerian may have been a linking language between the early Basque-Caucasian and early Mongolian groups. If this is true, then we have in this "Basque-Caucasian-Dravidian-Sumerian-proto-Mongolian" group a still more ancient and more ancestral system of speech than the fundamental Hamitic.

The Hottentot language is said to have affinities with the Hamitic tongues, from which it is separated by the whole breadth of Bantu-speaking central Africa. A Hottentot-like language with Bushman affinities is still spoken in equatorial east Africa, and this strengthens the idea that the whole of east Africa was once Hamitic-speaking. The Bantu languages and peoples spread, in comparatively recent times, from some center of origin in west central Africa and cut off the Hottentots from the other Hamitic peoples. But it is at least equally probable that the Hottentot is a separate language group.

Among other remote and isolated little patches of language are the Papuan speech of New Guinea and the native Australian. The now extinct Tasmanian language is little known. What we know of it is in support of what we have guessed about the comparative speechlessness of Palæolithic man.

We may quote a passage from Hutchinson's *Living Races of Mankind* upon this matter: —

"The language of the natives is irretrievably lost, only imperfect indication of its structure and a small proportion of its words having been preserved. In the absence of sibilants and some other features, their dialects resembled the Australian, but were of ruder, of less developed structure, and so imperfect that, according to Joseph Milligan, our best authority on the subject, they observed no settled order or arrangement of words in the construction of their sentences, but conveyed in a supplementary fashion by tone, manner, and gesture those modifications of meaning which we express by mood, tense, number, etc. Abstract terms were rare; for every variety of gum-tree or wattle-tree there was a name, but no word for 'tree' in general, nor for qualities such as hard, soft, warm, cold, long, short, round, etc. Anything hard was 'like a stone,' anything round 'like the

moon,' and so on, usually suiting the action to the word and confirming by some sign the meaning to be understood."

Racial types..... From Egyptian tomb-paintings. (After Champollion.)

§ 9

In reading this chapter it is well to remember how laborious and difficult are the tasks of comparative philology, and how necessary it is to understand the qualifications and limitations that are to be put upon its conclusions. The Aryan group of languages is much better understood than any other, for the simple reason that it has been more familiar and accessible to European science. The other groups have been less thoroughly investigated, because so far they have not been studied exhaustively by men accustomed to use them, and whose minds are set in the key of their structure. Even the Semitic languages have been approached at a disadvantage because few Jews think in Hebrew. But a time is fast approaching when Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, and Indian philologists will come to the rescue in these matters, and good reason may be found for revising much that has been said above about the native American, Ural-Altaic, primitive Chinese, and Polynesian groups of tongues.

BOOK III. THE DAWN OF HISTORY

XV

THE ARYAN-SPEAKING PEOPLES IN PREHISTORIC TIMES

§ 1. *The Spreading of the Aryan-Speakers.* § 2. *Primitive Aryan Life.* § 3. *Early Aryan Daily Life.*

§ 1

WE have spoken of the Aryan language as probably arising in the region of the Danube and South Russia and spreading from that region of origin. We say "probably," because it is by no means certainly proved that that was the centre; there have been vast discussions upon this point and wide divergences of opinion. We give the prevalent view. As it spread widely, Aryan began to differentiate into a number of subordinate languages. To the west and south it encountered the Basque language, which was then widely spread in Spain, and also possibly various Hamitic Mediterranean languages.

The Neolithic Mediterranean race, the Iberian race, was distributed over Great Britain, Ireland, France, Spain, north Africa, south Italy, and, in a more civilized state, Greece and Asia Minor. It was probably closely related to the Egyptian. To judge by its European vestiges it was a rather small human type, generally with an oval face and a long head. It buried its chiefs and important people in megalithic chambers — *i.e.* made of big stones — covered over by great mounds of earth; and these mounds of earth, being much longer than they are broad, are spoken of as the long barrows. These people sheltered at times in caves, and also buried some of their dead therein; and from the traces of charred, broken, and cut human bones, including the bones of children, it is inferred that they were cannibals. These short dark Iberian tribes (and the Basques also if they were a different race) were thrust back westward, and conquered and enslaved by slowly advancing waves of a taller and fairer Aryan-speaking people, coming southward and westward through central Europe, who are spoken of as the Kelts. Only the Basque resisted the conquering Aryan speech. Gradually these

Keltic-speakers made their way to the Atlantic, and all that now remains of the Iberians is mixed into the Keltic population. How far the Keltic invasion affected the Irish population is a matter of debate at the present time; the Kelts may have been a mere caste of conquerors who imposed their language on a larger subject population. It is even doubtful if the north of England is more Aryan than pre-Keltic in blood. There is a sort of short dark Welshman, and certain types of Irishmen, who are Iberians by race. The modern Portuguese are also largely of Iberian blood.

The Kelts spoke a language, Keltic, which was also in its turn to differentiate into the language of Gaul, Welsh, Breton, Scotch and Irish Gaelic, and other tongues. They buried the ashes of their chiefs and important people in round barrows. While these Nordic Kelts were spreading westward, other Nordic Aryan peoples were pressing down upon the dark white Mediterranean race in the Italian and Greek peninsulas, and developing the Latin and Greek groups of tongues. Certain other Aryan tribes were drifting towards the Baltic and across into Scandinavia, speaking varieties of the Aryan which became ancient Norse — the parent of Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic — Gothic, and Low and High German.

While the primitive Aryan speech was thus spreading and breaking up into daughter languages to the west, it was also spreading and breaking up to the east. North of the Carpathians and the Black Sea, Aryan-speaking tribes were increasing and spreading and using a distinctive dialect called Slavonian, from which came Russian, Serbian, Polish, Bulgarian, and other tongues; other variations of Aryan distributed over Asia Minor and Persia were also being individualized as Armenian and Indo-Iranian, the parent of Sanscrit and Persian. In this book we have used the word Aryan for all this family of languages, but the term Indo-European is sometimes used for the entire family, and “Aryan” itself restricted in a narrower sense to the Indo-Iranian speech. This Indo-Iranian speech was destined to split later into a number of languages, including Persian and Sanscrit, the latter being the language of certain tribes of fair-complexioned Aryan speakers who pushed eastward into India somewhen between 3000 and 1000 B.C. and conquered dark Dravidian peoples who were then in possession of

that land.

§ 2

What sort of life did these prehistoric Aryans lead, these Nordic Aryans who were the chief ancestors of most Europeans and most white Americans and European colonists of to-day, as well as of the Armenians, Persians, and high-caste Hindus?

In answering that question we are able to resort to a new source of knowledge in addition to the dug-up remains and vestiges upon which we have had to rely in the case of Palæolithic man. We have language. By careful study of the Aryan languages it has been found possible to deduce a number of conclusions about the life of these Aryan peoples 5000 or 4000 years ago. All these languages have a common resemblance, as each, as we have already explained, rings the changes upon a number of common roots. When we find the same root word running through all or most of these tongues, it seems reasonable to conclude that the thing that root word signifies must have been known to the common ancestors. Of course, if they have *exactly the same word* in their languages, this may not be the case; it may be the new name of a new thing or of a new idea that has spread over the world quite recently. "Gas," for instance is a word that was made by Van Helmont, a Dutch chemist, about 1625, and has spread into most civilized tongues, and "tobacco" again is an American-Indian word which followed the introduction of smoking almost everywhere. But if the same word turns up in a number of languages, and *if it follows the characteristic modifications of each language*, we may feel sure that it has been in that language, and a part of that language, since the beginning, suffering the same changes with the rest of it. We know, for example, that the words for waggon and wheel run in this fashion through the Aryan tongues, and so we are able to conclude that the primitive Aryans, the more purely Nordic Aryans, had waggons, though it would seem from the absence of any common roots for spokes, rim, or axle that their wheels were not wheelwright's wheels with spokes, but made of the trunks of trees shaped out with an axe between the ends.

These primitive waggons were drawn by oxen. The early Aryans

did not ride or drive horses; they had very little to do with horses. The Reindeer men were a horse-people, but the Neolithic Aryans were a cow-people. They ate beef, not horse; and after many ages they began this use of draught cattle. They reckoned wealth by cows. They wandered, following pasture, and "trekking" their goods, as the South African Boers do, in ox-waggons, though of course their waggons were much clumsier than any to be found in the world to-day. They probably ranged over very wide areas. They were migratory, but not in the strict sense of the word "nomadic"; they moved in a slower, clumsier fashion than did the later, more specialized nomadic peoples. They were forest and parkland people without horses. They were developing a migratory life out of the more settled "forest clearing" life of the earlier Neolithic period. Changes of climate which were replacing forest by pasture, and the accidental burning of forests by fire may have assisted this development.

When these early "Aryans" came to big rivers or open water, they built boats, at first hollow tree trunks and then skin-covered frameworks of lighter wood. Before history began there was already some Aryan canoe-traffic across the English Channel and in the Baltic, and also among the Greek islands. But the Aryans, as we shall see later, were probably not the first peoples to take to the sea.

We have already described the sort of home the primitive Aryan occupied and his household life, so far as the remains of the Swiss pile-dwellings enable us to describe these things. Mostly his houses were of too flimsy a sort, probably of wattle and mud, to have survived, and possibly he left them and trekked on for very slight reasons. The Aryan peoples burnt their dead, a custom they still preserve in India, but their predecessors, the long-barrow people, the Iberians, buried their dead in a sitting position. In some ancient Aryan burial mounds (round barrows) the urns containing the ashes of the departed are shaped like houses, and these represent rounded huts with thatched roofs. See Fig. .

The grazing of the primitive Aryan was far more important to him than his agriculture. At first he cultivated with a rough wooden hoe; then, after he had found out the use of cattle for draught purposes, he began real ploughing with oxen, using at first a suitably bent tree

bough as his plough. His first cultivation before that came about must have been rather in the form of garden patches near the house buildings than of fields. Most of the land his tribe occupied was common land on which the cattle grazed together.

He never used stone for building house walls until upon the very verge of history. He used stone for hearths (*e.g.* at Glastonbury) and sometimes stone sub-structures. He did, however, make a sort of stone house in the centre of the great mounds in which he buried his illustrious dead. He may have learnt this custom from his Iberian neighbours and predecessors. It was these dark whites of the heliolithic culture, and not the primitive Aryans, who were responsible for such primitive temples as Stonehenge or Carnac in Brittany.

His social life was growing. Man was now living in clans and tribal communities. These clans and communities clashed; they took each other's grazing land, they sought to rob each other; there began a new thing in human life, *war*. For war is not a primeval thing; it has not been in this world for more than 20,000 years. To this day very primitive peoples, such as the Australian black-fellows, do not understand war. The Palæolithic Age was an age of fights and murder, no doubt, but not of the organized collective fighting of numbers of men. But now men could talk together and group themselves under leaders, and they found a need of centres where they could come together with their cattle in time of raids and danger. They began to make camps with walls of earth and palisades, many of which are still to be traced in the history-worn contours of the European scenery. The leaders under whom men fought in war were often the same men as the sacrificial purifiers who were their early priests.

The knowledge of bronze spread late in Europe. Neolithic man had been making his slow advances age by age for 7000 or 8000 years before the metals came. By that time his social life had developed so that there were men of various occupations and men and women of different ranks in the community. There were men who worked wood and leather, potters and carvers. The women span and wove and embroidered. There were chiefs and families that were distinguished as leaderly and noble; and man varied the monotony of

his herding and wandering, he consecrated undertakings and celebrated triumphs, held funeral assemblies, and distinguished the traditional seasons of the year, by *feasts*. His meats we have already glanced at; but somewhen between 10,000 B.C. and the broadening separation of the Aryan peoples towards 2000 or 1000 B.C., mankind discovered fermentation, and began to brew intoxicating drinks. He made these of honey, of barley, and, as the Aryan tribes spread southward, of the grape. And he got merry and drunken. Whether he first used yeast to make his bread light or to ferment his drink we do not know.

At his feasts there were individuals with a gift for "playing the fool," who did so no doubt to win the laughter of their friends, but there was also another sort of men, of great importance in their time, and still more important to the historian, certain singers of songs and stories, the bards or rhapsodists. These *bards* existed among all the Aryan-speaking peoples; they were a consequence of and a further factor in that development of spoken language which was the chief of all the human advances made in Neolithic times. They chanted or recited stories of the past, or stories of the living chief and his people; they told other stories that they invented; they memorized jokes and catches. They found and seized upon and improved the rhythms, rhymes, alliterations, and such-like possibilities latent in language; they probably did much to elaborate and fix grammatical forms. They were the first great artists of the ear, as the later Aurignacian rock painters were the first great artists of the eye and hand. No doubt they used much gesture; probably they learnt appropriate gestures when they learnt their songs; but the order and sweetness and power of language was their primary concern.

And they mark a new step forward in the power and range of the human mind. They sustained and developed in men's minds a sense of a greater something than themselves, the tribe, and of a life that extended back into the past. They not only recalled old hatreds and battles, they recalled old alliances and a common inheritance. The feats of dead heroes lived again. A new thought came into men's minds, the desire to be remembered. Men began to live in thought before they were born and after they were dead.

Like most human things, this bardic tradition grew first slowly

and then more rapidly. By the time bronze was coming into Europe there was not an Aryan people that had not a profession and training of bards. In their hands language became as beautiful as it is ever likely to be. These bards were living books, man-histories, guardians and makers of a new and more powerful tradition in human life. Every Aryan people had its long poetical records thus handed down, its sagas (Teutonic), its epics (Greek), its vedas (Old Sanscrit). The earliest Aryan people were essentially a people of the voice. The recitation seems to have predominated even in those ceremonial and dramatic dances and that "dressing-up" which among most human races have also served for the transmission of tradition.

At that time there was no writing, and when first the art of writing crept into Europe, as we shall tell later, it must have seemed far too slow, clumsy, and lifeless a method of record for men to trouble very much about writing down these glowing and beautiful treasures of the memory. Writing was at first kept for accounts and matters of fact. The bards and rhapsodists flourished for long after the introduction of writing. They survived, indeed, in Europe as the minstrels into the Middle Ages.

Unhappily their tradition had not the fixity of a written record. They amended and reconstructed, they had their fashions and their phases of negligence. Accordingly we have now only the very much altered and revised vestiges of that spoken literature of prehistoric times. One of the most interesting and informing of these prehistoric compositions of the Aryans survives in the Greek *Iliad*. An early form of *Iliad* was probably recited by 1000 B.C., but it was not written down until perhaps 700 or 600 B.C. Many men must have had to do with it as authors and improvers, but later Greek tradition attributed it to a blind bard named Homer, to whom also is ascribed the *Odyssey*, a composition of a very different spirit and outlook. To be a bard was naturally a blind man's occupation. The Slavs called all bards *sliepac*, which was also their word for a blind man. The original recited version of the *Iliad* was older than that of the *Odyssey*. "The *Iliad* as a complete poem is older than the *Odyssey*, though the material of the *Odyssey*, being largely undatable folk-lore, is older than any of the historical material in the *Iliad*." Both epics were probably written over and rewritten by some poet of a later

date, in much the same manner that Lord Tennyson, the poet laureate of Queen Victoria, in his *Idylls of the King*, wrote over the *Morte d'Arthur* (which was itself a writing over by Sir Thomas Malory, *circ.* 1450, of pre-existing legends), making the speeches and sentiments and the characters more in accordance with those of his own time. But the events of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the way of living they describe, the spirit of the acts recorded, belong to the closing centuries of the prehistoric age. These sagas, epics, and vedas do supply, in addition to archæology and philology, a third source of information about those vanished times.

Here, for example, is the concluding passage of the *Iliad*, describing very exactly the making of a prehistoric barrow. (We have taken here Chapman's rhymed translation, correcting certain words with the help of the prose version of Lang, Leaf, and Myers.)

" ... Thus oxen, mules, in waggons straight they put,
Went forth, and an unmeasur'd pile of sylvan matter cut;
Nine days employ'd in carriage, but when the tenth morn shin'd
On wretched mortals, then they brought the bravest of his kind
Forth to be burned. Troy swam in tears. Upon the pile's most height
They laid the body, and gave fire. All day it burn'd, all night.
But when th' eleventh morn let on earth her rosy fingers shine,
The people flock'd about the pile, and first with gleaming wine
Quench'd all the flames. His brothers then, and friends, the snowy bones,
Gather'd into an urn of gold, still pouring out their moans.
Then wrapt they in soft purple veils the rich urn, digg'd a pit,
Grav'd it, built up the grave with stones, and quickly piled on it
A barrow....
... The barrow heap'd once, all the town
In Jove-nurs'd Priam's Court partook a sumptuous fun'ral feast,
And so horse-taming Hector's rites gave up his soul to rest."

There remains also an old English saga, *Beowulf*, made long before the English had crossed from Germany into England, which winds up with a similar burial. The preparation of a pyre is first described. It is hung round with shields and coats of mail. The body

is brought and the pyre fired, and then for ten days the warriors built a mighty mound to be seen afar by the traveller on sea or land. *Beowulf*, which is at least a thousand years later than the *Iliad*, is also interesting because one of the main adventures in it is the looting of the treasures of a barrow already ancient in those days.

§ 3

The Greek epics reveal the early Greeks with no knowledge of iron, without writing, and before any Greek-founded cities existed in the land into which they had evidently come quite recently as conquerors. They were spreading southward from the Aryan region of origin. They seem to have been a fair people, newcomers in Greece, newcomers to a land that had been held hitherto by a darker people, people who are now supposed to have belonged to a dark white "aboriginal" race, a "Mediterranean" people allied to those Iberians whom the Kelts pressed westward, and to the Hamitic white people of North Africa.

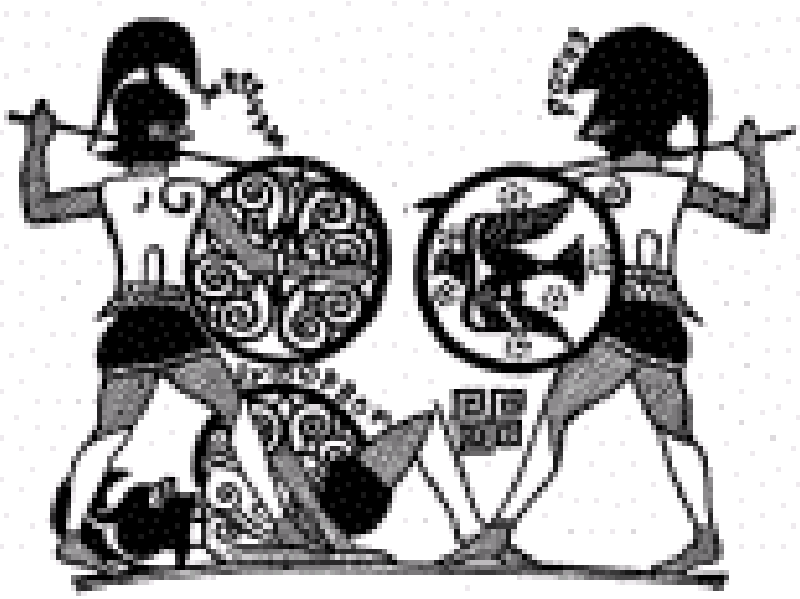

Combat between Menelaus & Hector (in the Iliad)

From a platter ascribed to the end of the seventh century in the British Museum. This is probably the earliest known vase bearing a Greek inscription. Greek writing was just beginning. Note the Swastika.

Let us, at the risk of a slight repetition, be perfectly clear upon one point. The *Iliad* does not give us the primitive neolithic life of that Aryan region of origin; it gives us that life already well on the move towards a new state of affairs. The primitive neolithic way of living, with its tame and domesticated animals, its pottery and cooking, and its patches of rude cultivation, we have sketched in Chapter XI. We have already discussed in § 4 of Chapter XIII the probability of a widespread *heliolithic* culture, a sort of sub-civilization, very like the Polynesian and Indonesian life of a hundred years ago, an elaboration of the earlier Neolithic stage. Between 15,000 and 6000 B.C. the neolithic way of living had spread with the forests and abundant vegetation of the Pluvial Period, over the greater part of the old world, from the Niger to the Hwang-ho and from Ireland to the south of India. Now, as the climate of great portions of the earth was swinging towards drier and more open conditions again, the primitive neolithic life was developing along two divergent directions. One was leading to a more wandering life, towards at last a constantly migratory life between summer and winter pasture, which is called Nomadism; the other, in certain sunlit river valleys, was towards a water-treasuring life of irrigation, in which men gathered into the first towns and made the first Civilization. The nature and development of civilization we shall consider more fully in the next chapter, but here we have to note that the Greeks, as the *Iliad* presents them, are neither simple neolithic nomads, innocent of civilization, nor are they civilized men. They are primitive nomads in an excited state, because they have just come upon civilization, and regard it as an opportunity for war and loot. So far they are exceptional and not representative. But our interest in them in this chapter is not in their distinctively Greek and predatory aspect, but in what they reveal of the ordinary northward life from which they are coming.

These early Greeks of the *Iliad* are sturdy fighters, but without discipline — their battles are a confusion of single combats. They have horses, but no cavalry; they use the horse, which is a comparatively recent addition to Aryan resources, to drag a rude fighting chariot into battle. The horse is still novel enough to be something of a terror in itself. For ordinary draught purposes, as in the quotation from the *Iliad* we have just made, oxen were employed.

The only priests of these Aryans are the keepers of shrines and sacred places. There are chiefs, who are heads of families and who also perform sacrifices, but there does not seem to be much mystery or sacramental feeling in their religion. When the Greeks go to war, these heads and elders meet in council and appoint a king, whose powers are very loosely defined. There are no laws, but only customs; and no exact standards of conduct.

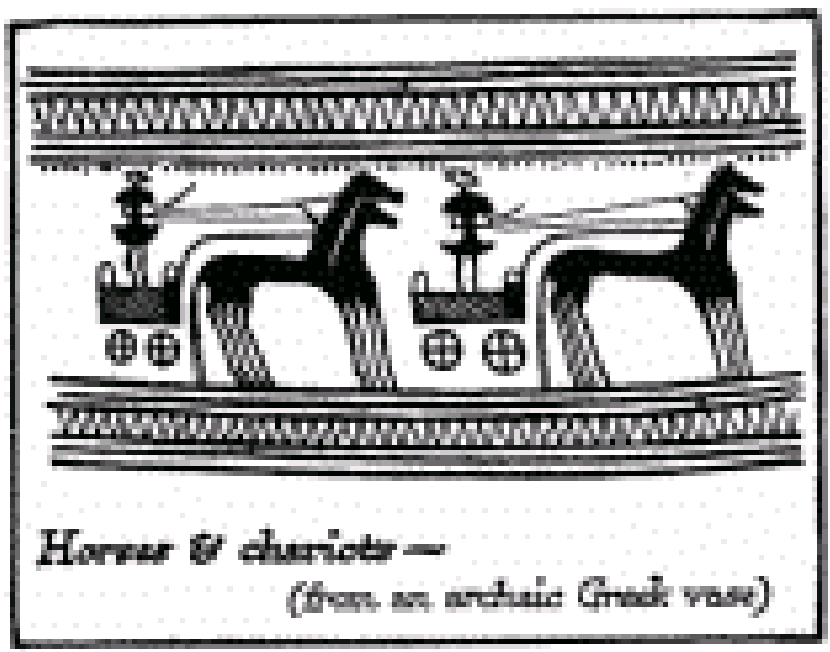

Horses & chariots —
(from an archaic Greek vase)

The social life of the early Greeks centred about the households of these leading men. There were no doubt huts for herds and the like,

and outlying farm buildings; but the hall of the chief was a comprehensive centre, to which everyone went to feast, to hear the bards, to take part in games and exercises. The primitive craftsmen were gathered there. About it were cowsheds and stabling and such-like offices. Unimportant people slept about anywhere as retainers did in the mediæval castles and as people still do in Indian households. Except for quite personal possessions, there was still an air of patriarchal communism about the tribe. The tribe, or the chief as the head of the tribe, owned the grazing lands; forest and rivers were the wild.

The Aryan civilization seems, and indeed all early communities seem, to have been without the little separate households that make up the mass of the population in western Europe or America to-day. The tribe was a big family; the nation a group of tribal families; a household often contained hundreds of people. Human society began, just as herds and droves begin among animals, by the family delaying its breaking up. Nowadays the lions in East Africa are apparently becoming social animals in this way, by the young keeping with the mother after they are fully grown, and hunting in a group. Hitherto the lion has been much more of a solitary beast. If men and women do not cling to their families nowadays as much as they did, it is because the state and the community now supply safety and help and facilities that were once only possible in the family group.

In the Hindu community of to-day these great households of the earlier stages of human society are still to be found. Mr. Bhupendranath Basu has recently described a typical Hindu household. It is an Aryan household refined and made gentle by thousands of years of civilization, but its social structure is the same as that of the households of which the Aryan epics tell.

"The joint family system," he said, "has descended to us from time immemorial, the Aryan patriarchal system of old still holding sway in India. The structure, though ancient, remains full of life. The joint family is a co-operative corporation, in which men and women have a well-defined place. At the head of the corporation is the senior member of the family, generally the eldest male member, but in his absence the senior female member often assumes control." (Cp.

Penelope in the *Odyssey*.)

"All able-bodied members must contribute their labour and earnings, whether of personal skill or agriculture and trade, to the common stock; weaker members, widows, orphans, and destitute relations, all must be maintained and supported; sons, nephews, brothers, cousins, all must be treated equally, for any undue preference is apt to break up the family. We have no word for cousins — they are either brothers or sisters, and we do not know what are cousins two degrees removed. The children of a first cousin are your nephews and nieces, just the same as the children of your brothers and sisters. A man can no more marry a cousin, however removed, than he can marry his own sister, except in certain parts of Madras, where a man may marry his maternal uncle's daughter. The family affections, the family ties, are always very strong, and therefore the maintenance of an equal standard among so many members is not so difficult as it may appear at first sight. Moreover, life is very simple. Until recently shoes were not in general use at home, but sandals without any leather fastenings. I have known of a well-to-do middle-class family of several brothers and cousins who had two or three pairs of leather shoes between them, these shoes being only used when they had occasion to go out, and the same practice is still followed in the case of the more expensive garments, like shawls, which last for generations, and with their age are treated with loving care, as having been used by ancestors of revered memory.

"The joint family remains together sometimes for several generations, until it becomes too unwieldy, when it breaks up into smaller families, and you thus see whole villages peopled by members of the same clan. I have said that the family is a co-operative society, and it may be likened to a small state, and is kept in its place by strong discipline based on love and obedience. You see nearly every day the younger members coming to the head of the family and taking the dust of his feet as a token of benediction; whenever they go on an enterprise, they take his leave and carry his blessing.... There are many bonds which bind the family together — the bonds of sympathy, of common pleasures, of common sorrows; when a death occurs, all the members go into mourning; when there

is a birth or a wedding, the whole family rejoices. Then above all is the family deity, some image of Vishnu, the preserver; his place is in a separate room, generally known as the room of God, or in well-to-do families in a temple attached to the house, where the family performs its daily worship. There is a sense of personal attachment between this image of the deity and the family, for the image generally comes down from past generations, often miraculously acquired by a pious ancestor at some remote time.... With the household gods is intimately associated the family priest.... The Hindu priest is a part of the family life of his flock, between whom and himself the tie has existed for many generations. The priest is not generally a man of much learning; he knows, however, the traditions of his faith.... He is not a very heavy burden, for he is satisfied with little — a few handfuls of rice, a few home-grown bananas or vegetables, a little unrefined sugar made in the village, and sometimes a few pieces of copper are all that is needed.... A picture of our family life would be incomplete without the household servants. A female servant is known as the 'jhi,' or daughter, in Bengal — she is like the daughter of the house; she calls the master and the mistress father and mother, and the young men and women of the family brothers and sisters. She participates in the life of the family; she goes to the holy places along with her mistress, for she could not go alone, and generally she spends her life with the family of her adoption; her children are looked after by the family. The treatment of men servants is very similar. These servants, men and women, are generally people of the humbler castes, but a sense of personal attachment grows up between them and the members of the family, and as they get on in years they are affectionately called by the younger members elder brothers, uncles, aunts, etc.... In a well-to-do house there is always a resident teacher, who instructs the children of the family as well as other boys of the village; there is no expensive school building, but room is found in some veranda or shed in the courtyard for the children and their teacher, and into this school low-caste boys are freely admitted. These indigenous schools were not of a very high order, but they supplied an agency of instruction for the masses which was probably not available in many other countries....

"With Hindu life is bound up its traditional duty of hospitality. It is the duty of a householder to offer a meal to any stranger who may come before midday and ask for one; the mistress of the house does not sit down to her meal until every member is fed, and, as sometimes her food is all that is left, she does not take her meal until well after midday lest a hungry stranger should come and claim one." ...

We have been tempted to quote Mr. Basu at some length, because here we do get to something like a living understanding of the type of household which has prevailed in human communities since Neolithic days, which still prevails to-day in India, China, and the Far East, but which in the west is rapidly giving ground before a state and municipal organization of education and a large-scale industrialism within which an amount of individual detachment and freedom is possible, such as these great households never knew....

But let us return now to the history preserved for us in the Aryan epics.

The Sanscrit epics tell a very similar story to that underlying the *Iliad*, the story of a fair, beef-eating people — only later did they become vegetarians — coming down from Persia into the plain of North India and conquering their way slowly towards the Indus. From the Indus they spread over India, but as they spread they acquired much from the dark Dravidians they conquered, and they seem to have lost their bardic tradition. The vedas, says Mr. Basu, were transmitted chiefly in the households by the women....

The oral literature of the Keltic peoples who pressed westward has not been preserved so completely as that of the Greeks or Indians; it was written down many centuries later, and so, like the barbaric, primitive English *Beowulf*, has lost any clear evidence of a period of migration into the lands of an antecedent people. If the pre-Aryans figure in it at all, it is as the fairy folk of the Irish stories. Ireland, most cut off of all the Keltic-speaking communities, retained to the latest date its primitive life; and the *Táin*, the Irish *Iliad*, describes a cattle-keeping life in which war chariots are still used, and war dogs also, and the heads of the slain are carried off slung round the horses' necks. The *Táin* is the story of a cattle raid. Here too the same social order appears as in the *Iliad*; the chiefs sit and

feast in great halls, they build halls for themselves, there is singing and story-telling by the bards and drinking and intoxication. Priests are not very much in evidence, but there is a sort of medicine man who deals in spells and prophecy.

XVI

THE FIRST CIVILIZATIONS

§ 1. *Early Cities and Early Nomads.* § 2A. *The Riddle of the Sumerians.* § 2B. *The Empire of Sargon the First.* § 2C. *The Empire of Hammurabi.* § 2D. *The Assyrians and their Empire.* § 2E. *The Chaldean Empire.* § 3. *The Early History of Egypt.* § 4. *The Early Civilization of India.* § 5. *The Early History of China.* § 6. *While the Civilizations were Growing.*

§ 1

WHEN the Aryan way of speech and life was beginning to spread to the east and west of the region in which it began, and breaking up as it spread into a number of languages and nations, considerable communities of much more civilized men were already in existence in Egypt and in Mesopotamia, and probably also in China and in (still purely Dravidian) India. Our story has overshot itself in its account of the Aryans and of their slow progress from early Neolithic conditions to the heroic barbarism of the Bronze Age. We must now go back. Such a pre-Keltic gathering as we sketched at Avebury would have happened about 2000 B.C., and the building of the barrow for Hector as the *Iliad* describes it, 1300 B.C. or even later. It is perhaps natural for a European writer writing primarily for English-reading students to overrun his subject in this way. No great harm is done if the student does clearly grasp that there has been an overlap.

Here then we take up the main thread of human history again. We must hark back to 6000 B.C. or even earlier. But although we shall go back so far, the people we shall describe are people already in some respects beyond the Neolithic Aryans of three thousand years later, more particularly in their social organization and their material welfare. While in Central Europe and Central Asia the primitive Neolithic way of life was becoming more migratory and developing into nomadism, in the great river valleys it is becoming more settled and localized. It is still doubtful whether we are to consider Mesopotamia or Egypt the earlier scene of the two parallel

beginnings of settled communities living in towns. By 4000 B.C., in both these regions of the earth, such communities existed, and had been going on for a very considerable time. The excavations of the American expedition at Nippur have unearthed evidence of a city community existing there at least as early as 5000 B.C., and probably as early as 6000 B.C., an earlier date than anything we know of in Egypt. De Candolle asserts that it is only in the Euphrates-Tigris district that wheat has ever been found growing wild. It may be that from Mesopotamia as a centre the cultivation of wheat spread over the entire eastern hemisphere. Or it may be that wheat grew wild in some regions now submerged. There may have been a wild wheat region in what is now the sea bottom of the eastern Mediterranean. But cultivation is not civilization; the growing of wheat had spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific with the distribution of the Neolithic culture by perhaps 10,000 or 9000 B.C., before the beginnings of civilization. Civilization is something more than the occasional seasonal growing of wheat. It is the settlement of men upon an area continuously cultivated and possessed, who live in buildings continuously inhabited with a common rule and a common city or citadel. For a long time civilization may quite possibly have developed in Mesopotamia without any relations with the parallel beginnings in Egypt. The two settlements may have been quite independent, arising separately out of the widely diffused Heliolithic Neolithic culture. Or they may have had a common origin in the region of the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and southern Arabia.

The first condition necessary to a real settling down of Neolithic men, as distinguished from a mere temporary settlement among abundant food, was of course a trustworthy all-the-year-round supply of water, fodder for the animals, food for themselves, and building material for their homes. There had to be everything they could need at any season, and no want that would tempt them to wander further. This was a possible state of affairs, no doubt, in many European and Asiatic valleys; and in many such valleys, as in the case of the Swiss lake-dwellings, men settled from a very early date indeed; but nowhere, of any countries now known to us, were these favourable conditions found upon such a scale, and nowhere did they hold good

so surely year in and year out as in Egypt and in the country between the upper waters of the Euphrates and Tigris and the Persian Gulf. Here was a constant water supply under enduring sunlight; trustworthy harvests year by year; in Mesopotamia wheat yielded, says Herodotus, two hundredfold to the sower; Pliny says that it was cut twice and afterwards yielded good fodder for sheep; there were abundant palms and many sorts of fruits; and as for building material, in Egypt there was clay and easily worked stone, and in Mesopotamia a clay that becomes a brick in the sunshine. In such countries men would cease to wander and settle down almost unawares; they would multiply and discover themselves numerous and by their numbers safe from any casual assailant. They multiplied, producing a denser human population than the earth had ever known before; their houses became more substantial, wild beasts were exterminated over great areas, the security of life increased so that ordinary men went about in the towns and fields without encumbering themselves with weapons, and, among themselves at least, they became peaceful peoples. Men took root as man had never taken root before.

But in the less fertile and more seasonal lands outside these favoured areas, there developed on the other hand a thinner, more active population of peoples, the primitive nomadic peoples. In contrast with the settled folk, the agriculturists, these nomads lived freely and dangerously. They were in comparison lean and hungry men. Their herding was still blended with hunting; they fought constantly for their pastures against hostile families. The discoveries in the elaboration of implements and the use of metals made by the settled peoples spread to them and improved their weapons. They followed the settled folk from Neolithic phase to Bronze phase. It is possible that, in the case of iron, the first users were nomadic. They became more warlike with better arms, and more capable of rapid movements with the improvement of their transport. One must not think of a nomadic stage as a predecessor of a settled stage in human affairs. To begin with, man was a slow drifter, following food. Then one sort of men began to settle down, and another sort became more distinctly nomadic. The settled sort began to rely more and more upon grain for food; the nomad began to make a greater use of milk

for food. He bred his cows for milk. The two ways of life specialized in opposite directions. It was inevitable that nomad folk and the settled folk should clash, that the nomads should seem hard barbarians to the settled peoples, and the settled peoples soft and effeminate and very good plunder to the nomad peoples. Along the fringes of the developing civilizations there must have been a constant raiding and bickering between hardy nomad tribes and mountain tribes and the more numerous and less warlike peoples in the towns and villages.

For the most part this was a mere raiding of the borders. The settled folk had the weight of numbers on their side; the herdsmen might raid and loot, but they could not stay. That sort of mutual friction might go on for many generations. But ever and again we find some leader or some tribe amidst the disorder of free and independent nomads, powerful enough to force a sort of unity upon its kindred tribes, and then woe betide the nearest civilization. Down pour the united nomads on the unwarlike, unarmed plains, and there ensues a war of conquest. Instead of carrying off the booty, the conquerors settle down on the conquered land, which becomes all booty for them; the villagers and townsmen are reduced to servitude and tribute-paying, they become hewers of wood and drawers of water, and the leaders of the nomads become kings and princes, masters and aristocrats. They too settle down, they learn many of the arts and refinements of the conquered, they cease to be lean and hungry, but for many generations they retain traces of their old nomadic habits, they hunt and indulge in open-air sports, they drive and race chariots, they regard work, especially agricultural work, as the lot of an inferior race and class.

This in a thousand variations has been one of the main stories in history for the last seventy centuries or more. In the first history that we can clearly decipher we find already in all the civilized regions a distinction between a non-working ruler class and the working mass of the population. And we find too that after some generations, the aristocrat, having settled down, begins to respect the arts and refinements and law-abidingness of settlement, and to lose something of his original hardihood. He intermarries, he patches up a sort of toleration between conqueror and conquered; he exchanges religious

ideas and learns the lessons upon which soil and climate insist. He becomes a part of the civilization he has captured. And as he does so, events gather towards a fresh invasion by the free adventurers of the outer world.

§ 2A

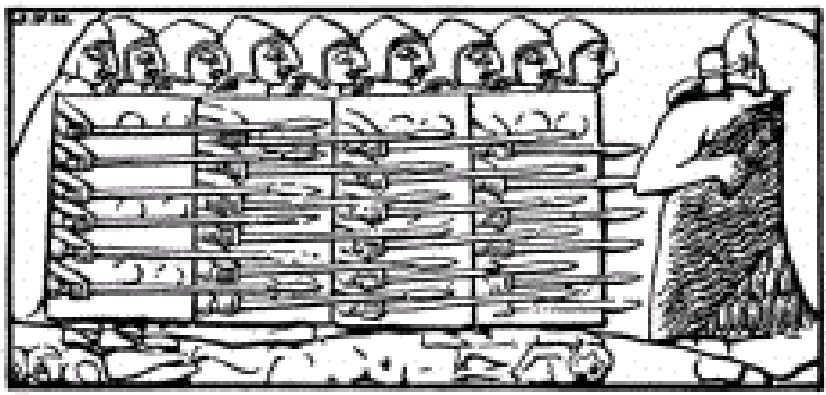

A very early Sumerian stone carving showing Sumerian warriors in phalanx

This alternation of settlement, conquest, refinement, fresh conquest, refinement, is particularly to be noted in the region of the Euphrates and Tigris, which lay open in every direction to great areas which are not arid enough to be complete deserts, but which were not fertile enough to support civilized populations. Perhaps the earliest people to form real cities in this part of the world, or indeed in any part of the world, were a people of mysterious origin called the Sumerians. They were neither Semites nor Aryans, and whence they came we do not know. Whether they were dark whites of Iberian or Dravidian affinities is less certainly to be denied. They used a kind of writing which they scratched upon clay, and their language has been deciphered. It was a language more like the unclassified Caucasic language groups than any others that now exist. These languages may be connected with Basque, and may represent what was once a widespread group extending from Spain and western Europe to eastern India, and reaching southwards to Central Africa. These people shaved their heads and wore simple tunic-like garments of wool. They settled first on the lower courses of the great river and

not very far from the Persian Gulf, which in those days ran up for a hundred and thirty miles and more beyond its present head. They fertilized their fields by letting water run through irrigation trenches, and they gradually became very skilful hydraulic engineers; they had cattle, asses, sheep, and goats, but no horses; their collections of mud huts grew into towns, and their religion raised up towerlike temple buildings.

Clay, dried in the sun, was a very great fact in the lives of these people. This lower country of the Euphrates-Tigris valleys had little or no stone. They built of brick, they made pottery and earthenware images, and they drew and presently wrote upon thin tile-like cakes of clay. They do not seem to have had paper or to have used parchment. Their books and memoranda, even their letters, were potsherds.

At Nippur they built a great tower of brick to their chief god, El-lil (Enlil), the memory of which is supposed to be preserved in the story of the Tower of Babel. They seem to have been divided up into city states, which warred among themselves and maintained for many centuries their military capacity. Their soldiers carried long spears and shields, and fought in close formation. Sumerians conquered Sumerians. Sumeria remained unconquered by any stranger race for a very long period of time indeed. They developed their civilization, their writing, and their shipping, through a period that may be twice as long as the whole period from the Christian era to the present time.

The first of all known empires was that founded by the high priest of the god of the Sumerian city of Erech. It reached, says an inscription at Nippur, from the Lower (Persian Gulf) to the Upper (Mediterranean or Red?) Sea. Among the mud heaps of the Euphrates-Tigris valley the record of that vast period of history, that first half of the Age of Cultivation, is buried. There flourished the first temples and the first priest-rulers that we know of among mankind.

§ 2B

Upon the western edge of this country appeared nomadic tribes of

Semitic-speaking peoples who traded, raided, and fought with the Sumerians for many generations. Then arose at last a great leader among these Semites, Sargon (2750 B.C.), who united them, and not only conquered the Sumerians, but extended his rule from beyond the Persian Gulf on the east to the Mediterranean on the west. His own people were called the Akkadians and his empire is called the Sumerian Akkadian Empire. It endured for over two hundred years.

But though the Semites conquered and gave a king to the Sumerian cities, it was the Sumerian civilization which prevailed over the simpler Semitic culture. The newcomers learnt the Sumerian writing (the "cuneiform" writing) and the Sumerian language; they set up no Semitic writing of their own. The Sumerian language became for these barbarians the language of knowledge and power, as Latin was the language of knowledge and power among the barbaric peoples of the middle ages in Europe. This Sumerian learning had a very great vitality. It was destined to survive through a long series of conquests and changes that now began in the valley of the two rivers.

§ 2C

As the people of the Sumerian Akkadian Empire lost their political and military vigour, fresh inundations of a warlike people began from the east, the Elamites, while from the west came the Semitic Amorites, pinching the Sumerian Akkadian Empire between them. The Amorites settled in what was at first a small up-river town, named Babylon; and after a hundred years of warfare became masters of all Mesopotamia under a great king, Hammurabi (2100 B.C.), who founded the first Babylonian Empire.

Again came peace and security and a decline in aggressive prowess, and in another hundred years fresh nomads from the east were invading Babylonia, bringing with them the horse and the war chariot, and setting up their own king in Babylon....

§2D

Higher up the Tigris, above the clay lands and with easy supplies of

workable stone, a Semitic people, the Assyrians, while the Sumerians were still unconquered by the Semites, were settling about a number of cities of which Assur and Nineveh were the chief. Their peculiar physiognomy, the long nose and thick lips, was very like that of the commoner type of Polish Jew to-day. They wore great beards and ringletted long hair, tall caps and long robes. They were constantly engaged in mutual raiding with the Hittites to the west; they were conquered by Sargon I and became free again; a certain Tushratta, King of Mitanni, to the north-west, captured and held their capital, Nineveh, for a time; they intrigued with Egypt against Babylon and were in the pay of Egypt; they developed the military art to a very high pitch, and became mighty raiders and exacters of tribute; and at last, adopting the horse and the war chariot, they settled accounts for a time with the Hittites, and then, under Tiglath Pileser I, conquered Babylon for themselves (about 1100 B.C.). But their hold on the lower, older, and more civilized land was not secure, and Nineveh, the stone city, as distinguished from Babylon, the brick city, remained their capital. For many centuries power swayed between Nineveh and Babylon, and sometimes it was an Assyrian and sometimes a Babylonian who claimed to be "king of the world."

For four centuries Assyria was restrained from expansion towards Egypt by a fresh northward thrust and settlement of another group of Semitic peoples, the Arameans, whose chief city was Damascus, and whose descendants are the Syrians of to-day. (There is, we may note, no connection whatever between the words Assyrian and Syrian. It is an accidental similarity.) Across these Syrians the Assyrian kings fought for power and expansion south-westward. In 745 B.C. arose another Tiglath Pileser, Tiglath Pileser III, the Tiglath Pileser of the Bible. He not only directed the transfer of the Israelites to Media (the "Lost Ten Tribes" whose ultimate fate has exercised so many curious minds), but he conquered and ruled Babylon, so founding what historians know as the New Assyrian Empire. His son, Shalmaneser IV, died during the siege of Samaria, and was succeeded by a usurper, who, no doubt to flatter Babylonian susceptibilities, took the ancient Akkadian Sumerian name of Sargon, Sargon II. He seems to have armed the Assyrian forces for the first time with iron weapons. It was probably Sargon II who actually carried out the deportation of

the Ten Tribes.

Such shiftings about of population became a very distinctive part of the political methods of the Assyrian new empire. Whole nations who were difficult to control in their native country would be shifted en *masse* to unaccustomed regions and amidst strange neighbours, where their only hope of survival would lie in obedience to the supreme power.

Assyrian warrior
(Bas-relief from the palace of Sargon II)

Sargon's son, Sennacherib, led the Assyrian hosts to the borders

of Egypt. There Sennacherib's army was smitten by a pestilence, a disaster described in the nineteenth chapter of the Second Book of Kings.

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh."

Sennacherib's grandson, Assurbanipal (called by the Greeks Sardanapalus), did succeed in conquering and for a time holding lower Egypt.

§2E

The Assyrian Empire lasted only a hundred and fifty years after Sargon II. Fresh nomadic Semites coming from the south-east, the Chaldeans, assisted by two Aryan peoples from the north, the Medes and Persians, combined against it, and took Nineveh in 606 B.C.

The Chaldean Empire, with its capital at Babylon (Second Babylonian Empire), lasted under Nebuchadnezzar the Great (Nebuchadnezzar II) and his successors until 539 B.C., when it collapsed before the attack of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian power....

So the story goes on. In 330 B.C., as we shall tell later in some detail, a Greek conqueror, Alexander the Great, is looking on the murdered body of the last of the Persian rulers.

The story of the Tigris and Euphrates civilizations, of which we have given as yet only the bare outline, is a story of conquest following after conquest, and each conquest replaces old rulers and ruling classes by new; races like the Sumerian and the Elamite are swallowed up, their languages vanish, they interbreed and are lost, the Assyrian melts away into Chaldean and Syrian, the Hittites become Aryanized and lose distinction, the Semites who swallowed up the Sumerians give place to Aryan rulers, Medes and Persians appear in the place of the Elamites, the Aryan Persian language dominates the empire until the Aryan Greek ousts it from official life.

Meanwhile the plough does its work year by year, the harvests are gathered, the builders build as they are told, the tradesmen work and acquire fresh devices; the knowledge of writing spreads, novel things, the horse and wheeled vehicles and iron, are introduced and become part of the permanent inheritance of mankind; the volume of trade upon sea and desert increases, men's ideas widen, and knowledge grows. There are set-backs, massacres, pestilence; but the story is, on the whole, one of enlargement. For four thousand years this new thing, civilization, which had set its root into the soil of the two rivers, grew as a tree grows; now losing a limb, now stripped by a storm, but always growing and resuming its growth. After four thousand years the warriors and conquerors were still going to and fro over this growing thing they did not understand, but men had now (330 B.C.) got iron, horses, writing and computation, money, a greater variety of foods and textiles, a wider knowledge of their world.

The time that elapsed between the empire of Sargon I and the conquest of Babylon by Alexander the Great was as long, be it noted, at the least estimate, as the time from Alexander the Great to the present day. And before the time of Sargon, men had been settled in the Sumerian land, living in towns, worshipping in temples, following an orderly Neolithic agricultural life in an organized community for at least as long again. "Eridu, Lagash, Ur, Uruk, Larsa, have already an immemorial past when first they appear in history."

One of the most difficult things for both the writer and student of history is to sustain the sense of these time intervals and prevent these ages becoming shortened by perspective in his imagination. Half the duration of human civilization and the keys to all its chief institutions are to be found *before* Sargon I. Moreover, the reader cannot too often compare the scale of the dates in these latter fuller pages of man's history with the succession of countless generations to which the time diagrams given on pages 14, 60, and 89 bear witness.

§ 3

The story of the Nile valley from the dawn of its traceable history until the time of Alexander the Great is not very dissimilar from that of Babylonia; but while Babylonia lay open on every side to invasion, Egypt was protected by desert to the west and by desert and sea to the east, while to the south she had only negro peoples. Consequently her history is less broken by the invasions of strange races than is the history of Assyria and Babylon, and until towards the eighth century B.C., when she fell under an Ethiopian dynasty, whenever a conqueror did come into her story, he came in from Asia by way of the Isthmus of Suez.

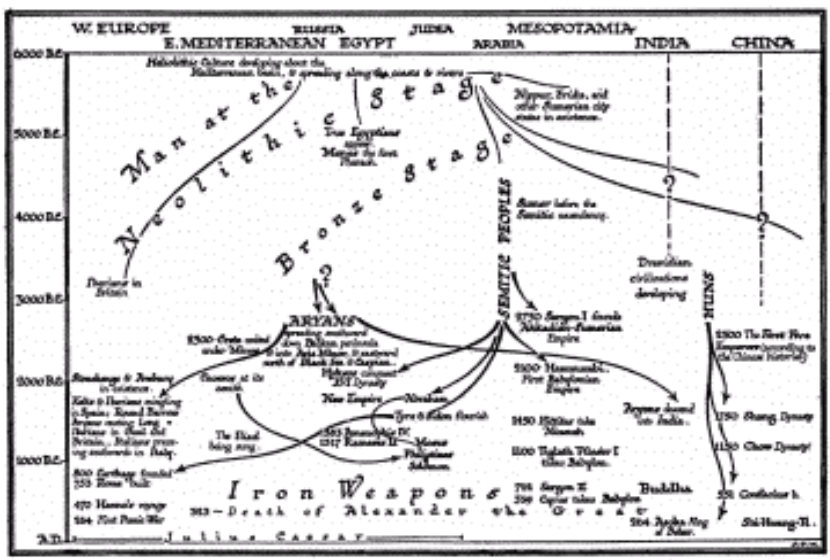

The Stone Age remains in Egypt are of very uncertain date; there are Palæolithic and then Neolithic remains. It is not certain whether the Neolithic pastoral people who left those remains were the direct ancestors of the later Egyptians. In many respects they differed entirely from their successors. They buried their dead, but before they buried them they cut up the bodies and apparently ate portions of the flesh. They seem to have done this out of a feeling of reverence for the departed; the dead were “eaten with honour”

according to the phrase of Mr. Flinders Petrie. It may have been that the survivors hoped to retain thereby some vestige of the strength and virtue that had died. Traces of similar savage customs have been found in the long barrows that were scattered over western Europe before the spreading of the Aryan peoples, and they have pervaded negro Africa, where they are only dying out at the present time.

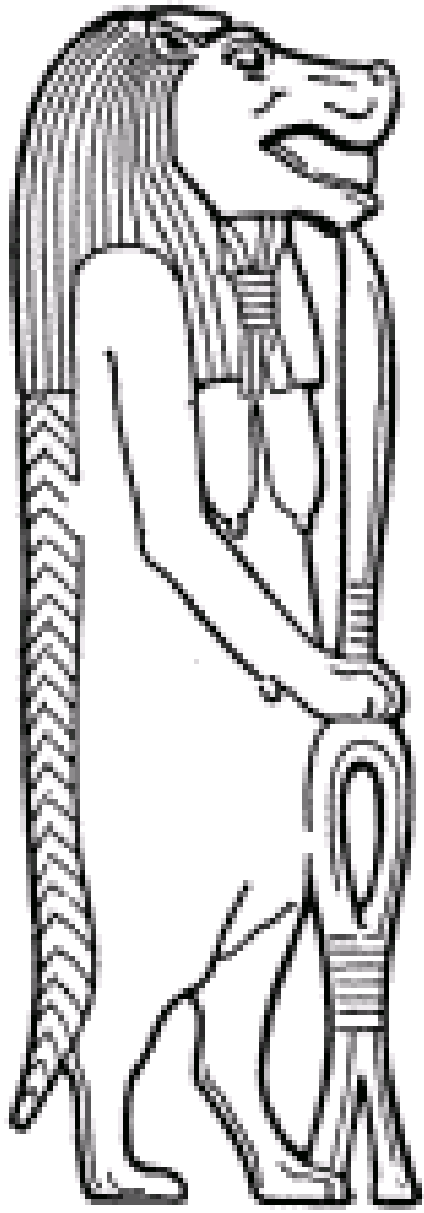

Early figure of the Egyptian hippopotamus goddess

About 5000 B.C., or earlier, the traces of these primitive peoples

cease, and the true Egyptians appear on the scene. The former people were hut builders and at a comparatively low stage of Neolithic culture, the latter were already a civilized Neolithic people; they used brick and wood buildings instead of their predecessors' hovels, and they were working stone. Very soon they passed into the Bronze Age. They possessed a system of picture writing almost as developed as the contemporary writing of the Sumerians, but quite different in character. Possibly there was an irruption from southern Arabia by way of Aden, of a fresh people, who came into upper Egypt and descended slowly towards the delta of the Nile. Dr. Wallis Budge writes of them as "conquerors from the East." But their gods and their ways, like their picture writing, were very different indeed from the Sumerian. One of the earliest known figures of a deity is that of a hippopotamus goddess, and so very distinctively African.

The clay of the Nile is not so fine and plastic as the Sumerian clay, and the Egyptians made no use of it for writing. But they early resorted to strips of the papyrus reed fastened together, from whose name comes our word "paper."

The broad outline of the history of Egypt is simpler than the history of Mesopotamia. It has long been the custom to divide the rulers of Egypt into a succession of Dynasties, and in speaking of the periods of Egyptian history it is usual to speak of the first, fourth, fourteenth, and so on, Dynasty. The Egyptians were ultimately conquered by the Persians after their establishment in Babylon, and when finally Egypt fell to Alexander the Great in 332 B.C., it was Dynasty XXXI that came to an end. In that long history of over 4000 years, a much longer period than that between the career of Alexander the Great and the present day, certain broad phases of development may be noted here. There was a phase known as the "old kingdom," which culminated in the IVth Dynasty; this Dynasty marks a period of wealth and splendour, and its monarchs were obsessed by such a passion for making monuments for themselves as no men have ever before or since had a chance to display and gratify. It was Cheops and Chephren and Mycerinus of this IVth Dynasty who raised the vast piles of the great and the second and the third pyramids at Gizeh. These unmeaning sepulchral piles, of an almost incredible vastness, erected in an age when engineering science had

scarcely begun, exhausted the resources of Egypt through three long reigns, and left her wasted as if by a war.

The story of Egypt from the IVth to the XVth Dynasty is a story of conflicts between alternative capitals and competing religions, of separations into several kingdoms and reunions. It is, so to speak, an internal history. Here we can name only one of that long series of Pharaohs, Pepi II, who reigned ninety years, the longest reign in history, and left a great abundance of inscriptions and buildings. At last there happened to Egypt what happened so frequently to the civilizations of Mesopotamia. Egypt was conquered by nomadic Semites, who founded a "shepherd" dynasty, the Hyksos (XVIth), which was finally expelled by native Egyptians. This invasion probably happened while that first Babylonian Empire which Hammurabi founded was flourishing, but the exact correspondences of dates between early Egypt and Babylonia are still very doubtful. Only after a long period of servitude did a popular uprising expel these foreigners again.

After the war of liberation (circa 1600 B.C.) there followed a period of great prosperity in Egypt, *the New Empire*. Egypt became a great and united military state, and pushed her expeditions at last as far as the Euphrates, and so the age-long struggle between the Egyptian and Babylonian-Assyrian power began.

For a time Egypt was the ascendant power. Thothmes III and his son Amenophis III (XVIIIth Dynasty) ruled from Ethiopia to the Euphrates in the fifteenth century B.C. For various reasons these names stand out with unusual distinctness in the Egyptian record. They were great builders, and left many monuments and inscriptions. Amenophis III founded Luxor, and added greatly to Karnak. At Tel-el-Amarna a mass of letters has been found, the royal correspondence with Babylonian and Hittite and other monarchs, including that Tushratta who took Nineveh, throwing a flood of light upon the political and social affairs of this particular age. Of Amenophis IV we shall have more to tell later, but of one, the most extraordinary and able of Egyptian monarchs, Queen Hatasu, the aunt and stepmother of Thotmes III, we have no space to tell. She is represented upon her monuments in masculine garb, and with a long beard as a symbol of wisdom.

Thereafter there was a brief Syrian conquest of Egypt, a series, of changing dynasties, among which we may note the XIXth, which included Rameses II, a great builder of temples, who reigned seventy-seven years (about 1317 to 1250 B.C.), and who is supposed by some to have been the Pharaoh of Moses, and the XXIInd, which included Shishak, who plundered Solomon's temple (circa 930 B.C.). An Ethiopian conqueror from the Upper Nile founded the XXVth Dynasty, a foreign dynasty, which went down (670 B.C.) before the new Assyrian Empire created by Tiglath Pileser III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib, of which we have already made mention.

The days of any Egyptian predominance over foreign nations were drawing to an end. For a time under Psammetichus I of the XXVIth Dynasty (664-610 B.C.) native rule was restored, and Necho II recovered for a time the old Egyptian possessions in Syria up to the Euphrates while the Medes and Chaldeans were attacking Nineveh. From those gains Necho II was routed out again after the fall of Nineveh and the Assyrians by Nebuchadnezzar II, the great Chaldean king, the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible. The Jews, who had been the allies of Necho II, were taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon.

When, in the sixth century B.C., Chaldea fell to the Persians, Egypt followed suit, a rebellion later made Egypt independent once more for sixty years, and in 332 B.C. she welcomed Alexander the Great as her conqueror, to be ruled thereafter by foreigners, first by Greeks, then by Romans, then in succession by Arabs, Turks, and British, until the present day.

Such briefly is the history of Egypt from its beginnings; a history first of isolation and then of increasing entanglement with the affairs of other nations, as increasing facilities of communication drew the peoples of the world into closer and closer interaction.

§ 4

The history we need to tell here of India is simpler even than this brief record of Egypt. Somewhere about the time of Hammurabi or later, a branch of the Aryan-speaking people who then occupied North Persia and Afghanistan, pushed down the northwest passes

into India. They conquered their way until they prevailed over all the darker populations of North India, and spread their rule or influence over the whole peninsula. They never achieved any unity in India; their history is a history of warring kings and republics. The Persian empire, in the days of its expansion after the capture of Babylon, pushed its boundaries beyond the Indus, and later Alexander the Great marched as far as the border of the desert that separates the Punjab from the Ganges valley. But with this bare statement we will for a time leave the history of India.

§ 5

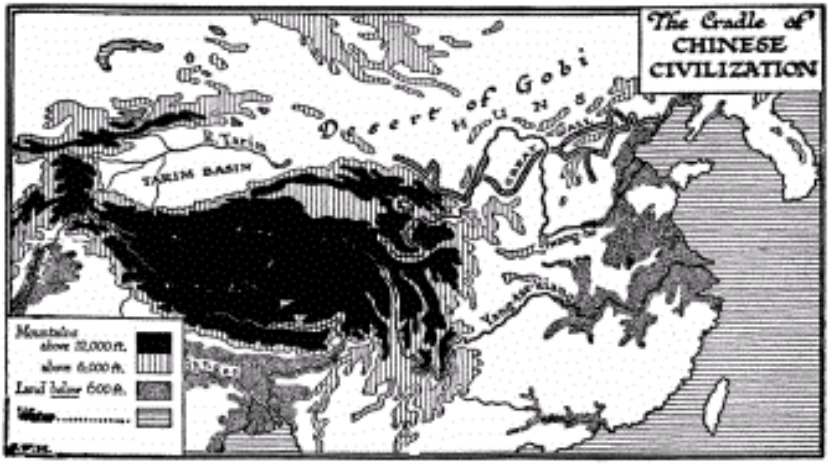

Meanwhile, as this triple system of White Man civilization developed in India and in the lands about the meeting-places of Asia, Africa, and Europe, another and quite distinct civilization was developing and spreading out from the then fertile but now dry and desolate valley of the Tarim and from the slopes of the Kuen-lun mountains in two directions, down the course of the Hwang-ho, and into the valley of the Yang-tse-kiang. We know practically nothing as yet of the archæology of China, we do not know anything of the Stone Age in that part of the world, and at present our ideas of this early civilization are derived from the still very imperfectly explored Chinese literature. It has evidently been from the first and throughout a Mongolian civilization. Until after the time of Alexander the Great

there are few traces of any Aryan or Semitic, much less of Hamitic influence. All such influences were still in another world, separated by mountains, deserts, and wild nomadic tribes until that time. The Chinese seem to have made their civilization spontaneously and unassisted. Some recent writers suppose indeed a connection with ancient Sumeria. Of course both China and Sumeria arose on the basis of the almost world-wide early Neolithic culture, but the Tarim valley and the lower Euphrates are separated by such vast obstacles of mountain and desert as to forbid the idea of any migration or interchange of peoples who had once settled down.

But though the civilization of China is wholly Mongolian (as we have defined Mongolian), it does not follow that the northern roots are the only ones from which it grew. If it grew first in the Tarim valley, then unlike all other civilizations (including the Mexican and Peruvian) it did not grow out of the heliolithic culture. We Europeans know very little as yet of the ethnology and pre-history of southern China. There the Chinese mingle with such kindred peoples as the Siamese and Burmese, and seem to bridge over towards the darker Dravidian peoples and towards the Malays. It is quite clear from the Chinese records that there were southern as well as northern beginnings of a civilization, and that the Chinese civilization that comes into history 2000 years B.C. is the result of a long process of conflicts, minglings, and interchanges between a southern and a northern culture of which the southern may have been the earlier. The southern Chinese perhaps played the rôle towards the northern Chinese that the Hamites or Sumerians played to the Aryan and Semitic peoples in the west, or that the settled Dravidians played towards the Aryans in India. They may have been the first agriculturists and the first temple builders. But so little is known as yet of this attractive chapter in pre-history, that we cannot dwell upon it further here.

The chief foreigners mentioned in the early annals of China were a Ural-Altaic people on the north-east frontier, the Huns, against whom certain of the earlier emperors made war.

Chinese history is still very imperfectly known to European students, and our accounts of the early records are particularly unsatisfactory. About 2700 to 2400 B.C. reigned five emperors, who

seem to have been almost incredibly exemplary beings.

There follows upon these first five emperors a series of dynasties, of which the accounts become more and more exact and convincing as they become more recent. China has to tell a long history of border warfare and of graver struggles between the settled and nomad peoples. To begin with, China, like Sumer and like Egypt, was a land of city states. The government was at first a government of numerous kings; they became loosely feudal under an emperor, as the Egyptians did; and then later, as with the Egyptians, came a centralizing empire. Shang (1750 to 1125 B.C.) and Chow (1125 to 250 B.C.) are named as being the two great dynasties of the feudal period. Bronze vessels of these earlier dynasties, beautiful, splendid, and with a distinctive style of their own, still exist, and there can be no doubt of the existence of a high state of culture even before the days of Shang.

It is perhaps a sense of symmetry that made the later historians of Egypt and China talk of the earlier phases of their national history as being under dynasties comparable to the dynasties of the later empires, and of such early "Emperors" as Menes (in Egypt) or the First Five Emperors (in China). The early dynasties exercised far less centralized powers than the later ones. Such unity as China possessed under the Shang dynasty was a religious rather than an effective political union. The "Son of Heaven" offered sacrifices for all the Chinese. There was a common script, a common civilization, and a common enemy in the Huns of the north-western borders.

The last of the Shang Dynasty was a cruel and foolish monarch who burnt himself alive (1125 B.C.) in his palace after a decisive defeat by Wu Wang, the founder of the Chow Dynasty. Wu Wang seems to have been helped by allies from among the south-western tribes as well as by a popular revolt.

For a time China remained loosely united under the Chow emperors, as loosely united as was Christendom under the popes in the Middle Ages; the Chow emperors had become the traditional high priests of the land in the place of the Shang Dynasty and claimed a sort of overlordship in Chinese affairs, but gradually the loose ties of usage and sentiment that held the empire together lost their hold upon men's minds. Hunnish peoples to the north and west

took on the Chinese civilization without acquiring a sense of its unity. Feudal princes began to regard themselves as independent. Mr. Liang-Chi-Chao, one of the Chinese representatives at the Paris Conference of 1919, states that between the eighth and fourth centuries B.C. “there were in the Hwang-ho and Yang-tse valleys no less than five or six thousand small states with about a dozen powerful states dominating over them.” The land was subjected to perpetual warfare (“Age of Confusion”). In the sixth century B.C. the great powers in conflict were Ts’i and Ts’in, which were northern Hwang-ho states, and Ch’u, which was a vigorous, aggressive power in the Yang-tse valley. A confederation against Ch’u laid the foundation for a league that kept the peace for a hundred years; the league subdued and incorporated Ch’u and made a general treaty of disarmament. It became the foundation of a new pacific empire.

The knowledge of iron entered China at some unknown date, but iron weapons began to be commonly used only about 500 B.C., that is to say two or three hundred years or more after this had become customary in Assyria, Egypt, and Europe. Iron was probably introduced from the north into China by the Huns.

The last rulers of the Chow Dynasty were ousted by the kings of Ts’in, the latter seized upon the sacred sacrificial bronze tripods, and so were able to take over the imperial duty of offering sacrifices to Heaven. In this manner was the Ts’in Dynasty established. It ruled with far more vigour and effect than any previous family. The reign of Shi-Hwang-ti (meaning “first universal emperor”) of this dynasty is usually taken to mark the end of feudal and divided China. He seems to have played the unifying rôle in the east that Alexander the Great might have played in the west, but he lived longer, and the unity he made (or restored) was comparatively permanent, while the empire of Alexander the Great fell to pieces, as we shall tell, at his death. Shi-Hwang-ti, among other feats in the direction of common effort, organized the building of the Great Wall of China against the Huns. A civil war followed close upon his reign, and ended in the establishment of the Han Dynasty. Under this Han Dynasty the empire grew greatly beyond its original two river valleys, the Huns were effectively restrained, and the Chinese penetrated westward until they began to learn at last of civilized races and civilizations

other than their own.

By 100 B.C. the Chinese had heard of India, their power had spread across Tibet and into Western Turkestan, and they were trading by camel caravans with Persia and the western world. So much for the present must suffice for our account of China. We shall return to the distinctive characters of its civilization later.

§ 6

And in these thousands of years during which man was making his way step by step from the barbarism of the heliolithic culture to civilization at these old-world centres, what was happening in the rest of the world? To the north of these centres, from the Rhine to the Pacific, the Nordic and Mongolian peoples, as we have told, were also learning the use of metals; but while the civilizations were settling down these men of the great plains were becoming migratory and developing from a slow wandering life towards a complete seasonal nomadism. To the south of the civilized zone, in central and southern Africa, the negro was making a slower progress, and that, it would seem, under the stimulus of invasion by whiter tribes from the Mediterranean regions, bringing with them in succession cultivation and the use of metals. These white men came to the black by two routes: across the Sahara to the west as Berbers and Tuaregs and the like, to mix with the negro and create such quasi-white races as the Fulas; and also by way of the Nile, where the Baganda (= Gandafolk) of Uganda, for example, may possibly be of remote white origin. The African forests were denser then, and spread eastward and northward from the Upper Nile.

The islands of the East Indies, three thousand years ago, were probably still only inhabited here and there by stranded patches of Palæolithic Australoids, who had wandered thither in those immemorial ages when there was a nearly complete land bridge by way of the East Indies to Australia. The islands of Oceania were uninhabited. The spreading of the heliolithic peoples by sea-going canoes into the islands of the Pacific came much later in the history of man, at earliest a thousand years B.C. Still later did they reach Madagascar. The beauty of New Zealand also was as yet wasted

upon mankind; its highest living creatures were a great ostrich-like bird, the moa, now extinct, and the little kiwi which has feathers like coarse hair and the merest rudiment of wings.

In North America a group of Mongoloid tribes were now cut off altogether from the old world. They were spreading slowly southward, hunting the innumerable bison of the plains. They had still to learn for themselves the secrets of a separate agriculture based on maize, and in South America to tame the lama to their service and so build up in Mexico and Peru two civilizations roughly parallel in their nature to that of Sumer, but different in many respects, and later by six or seven thousand years....

When men reached the southern extremity of America, the *Megatherium*, the giant sloth, and the *Glyptodon*, the giant armadillo, were still living....

There is a considerable imaginative appeal in the obscure story of the early American civilizations. It was largely a separate development. Somewhen at last the southward drift of the Amerindians must have met and mingled with the eastward, canoe-borne drift of the heliolithic culture. But it was the heliolithic culture still at a very lowly stage and probably before the use of metals. It has to be noted as evidence of this canoe-borne origin of American culture, that elephant-headed figures are found in Central American drawings. American metallurgy may have arisen independently of the old-world use of metal, or it may have been brought by these elephant carvers. These American peoples got to the use of bronze and copper, but not to the use of iron; they had gold and silver; and their stonework, their pottery, weaving, and dyeing were carried to a very high level. In all these things the American product resembles the old-world product generally, but always it has characteristics that are distinctive. The American civilizations had picture-writing of a primitive sort, but it never developed even to the pitch of the earliest Egyptian hieroglyphics. In Yucatan only was there a kind of script, the Maya writing, but it was used simply for keeping a calendar. In Peru the beginnings of writing were superseded by a curious and complicated method of keeping records by means of knots tied upon strings of various colours and shapes. It is said that even laws and orders could be conveyed by this code. These string bundles were

called *quipus*, but though quipus are still to be found in collections, the art of reading them is altogether lost. The Chinese histories, Mr. L. Y. Chen informs us, state that a similar method of record by knots was used in China before the invention of writing there. The Peruvians also got to making maps and the use of counting-frames. "But with all this there was no means of handing on knowledge and experience from one generation to another, nor was anything done to fix and summarize these intellectual possessions, which are the basis of literature and science."

When the Spaniards came to America, the Mexicans knew nothing of the Peruvians nor the Peruvians of the Mexicans. Intercourse there was none. Whatever links had ever existed were lost and forgotten. The Mexicans had never heard of the potato, which was a principal article of Peruvian diet. In 5000 B.C. the Sumerians and Egyptians probably knew as little of one another. America was 6000 years behind the Old World.

XVII

SEA PEOPLES AND TRADING PEOPLES

§ 1. *The Earliest Ships and Sailors.* § 2. *The Ægean Cities before History.* § 3. *The First Voyages of Exploration.* § 4. *Early Traders.* § 5. *Early Travellers.*

§ 1

THE first boats were made very early indeed in the Neolithic stage of culture by riverside and lakeside peoples. They were no more than trees and floating wood, used to assist the imperfect natural swimming powers of men. Then came the hollowing out of the trees, and then, with the development of tools and a primitive carpentry, the building of boats. Men in Egypt and Mesopotamia also developed a primitive type of basket-work boat, caulked with bitumen. Such was the "ark of bulrushes" in which Moses was hidden by his mother. A kindred sort of vessel grew up by the use of skins and hides expanded upon a wicker framework. To this day cow-hide wicker boats (coracles) are used upon the west coast of Ireland, where there is plenty of cattle and a poverty of big trees. They are also still used on the Euphrates, and on the Towy in South Wales. Inflated skins may have preceded the coracle, and are still used on the Euphrates and upper Ganges. In the valleys of the great rivers, boats must early have become an important means of communication; and it seems natural to suppose that it was from the mouths of the great rivers that man, already in a reasonably seaworthy vessel, first ventured out upon what must have seemed to him then the trackless and homeless sea.

No doubt he ventured at first as a fisherman, having learnt the elements of seacraft in creeks and lagoons. Men may have navigated boats upon the Levantine lake before the refilling of the Mediterranean by the Atlantic waters. The canoe was an integral part of the heliolithic culture, it drifted with that culture upon the warm waters of the earth from the Mediterranean to (at last) America. There were not only canoes, but Sumerian boats and ships upon the Euphrates and Tigris, when these rivers in 7000 B.C. fell by separate

mouths into the Persian Gulf. The Sumerian city of Eridu, which stood at the head of the Persian Gulf (from which it is now separated by a hundred and thirty miles of alluvium), had ships upon the sea then. We also find evidence of a fully developed sea life six thousand years ago at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and possibly at that time there were already canoes on the seas among the islands of the nearer East Indies. There are pre-dynastic Neolithic Egyptian representations of Nile ships of a fair size, capable of carrying elephants.

Very soon the seafaring men must have realized the peculiar freedom and opportunities the ship gave them. They could get away to islands; no chief nor king could pursue a boat or ship with any certainty; every captain was a king. The seamen would find it easy to make nests upon islands and in strong positions on the mainland. There they could harbour, there they could carry on a certain agriculture and fishery; but their speciality and their main business was, of course, the expedition across the sea. That was not usually a trading expedition; it was much more frequently a piratical raid. From what we know of mankind, we are bound to conclude that the first sailors plundered when they could, and traded when they had to.

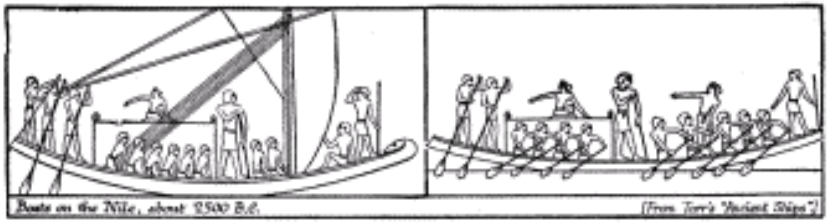

Boats on the Nile, about 2500 B.C. [From Torr's "Ancient Ships"]

Because it developed in the comparatively warm and tranquil waters of the eastern Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the western horn of the Indian Ocean, the shipping of the ancient world retained throughout certain characteristics that make it differ very widely from the ocean-going sailing shipping, with its vast spread of canvas, of the last four hundred years. “The Mediterranean,” says Mr. Torr, “is a sea where a vessel with sails

may lie becalmed for days together, while a vessel with oars would easily be traversing the smooth waters, with coasts and islands everywhere at hand to give her shelter in case of storm. In that sea, therefore, oars became the characteristic instruments of navigation, and the arrangement of oars the chief problem in shipbuilding. And so long as the Mediterranean nations dominated Western Europe, vessels of the southern type were built upon the northern coasts, though there generally was wind enough here for sails and too much wave for oars.... The art of rowing can first be discerned upon the Nile. Boats with oars are represented in the earliest pictorial monuments of Egypt, dating from about 2500 B.C.; and although some crews are paddling with their faces towards the bow, others are rowing with their faces towards the stern. The paddling is certainly the older practice, for the hieroglyph chen depicts two arms grasping an oar in the attitude of paddling, and the hieroglyphs were invented in the earliest ages. And that practice may really have ceased before 2500 B.C., despite the testimony of monuments of that date; for in monuments dating from about 1250 B.C. crews are represented unmistakably rowing with their faces towards the stern and yet grasping their oars in the attitude of paddling, so that even then Egyptian artists mechanically followed the turn of the hieroglyph to which their hands were accustomed. In these reliefs there are twenty rowers on the boats on the Nile, and thirty on the ships on the Red Sea; but in the earliest reliefs the number varies considerably, and seems dependent on the amount of space at the sculptor's disposal."

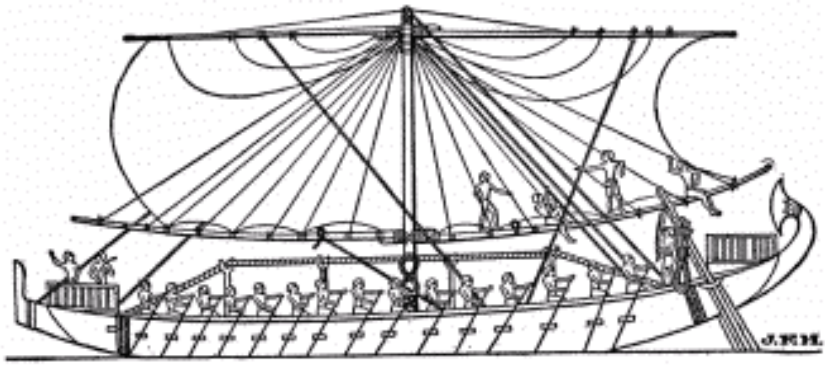

Egyptian ship on the Red Sea, about 1250 B.C. (From Torr's "Ancient Ships.")

Mr. Langton Cole calls attention to the rope truss in this illustration, stiffening the beam of the ship. No other such use of the truss is known until the days of modern engineering.

The Aryan peoples came late to the sea. The earliest ships on the sea were either Sumerian or Hamitic; the Semitic peoples followed close upon these pioneers. Along the eastern end of the Mediterranean, the Phœnicians, a Semitic people, set up a string of independent harbour towns of which Acre, Tyre, and Sidon were the chief; and later they pushed their voyages westward and founded Carthage and Utica in North Africa. Possibly Phœnician keels were already in the Mediterranean by 2000 B.C. Both Tyre and Sidon wee originally on islands, an so easily defensible against a land raid. But before we go on to the marine exploits of this great sea-going race, we must note a very remarkable and curious nest of early sea people whose remains have been discovered in Crete.

§ 2

These early Cretans were of unknown race, but probably of a race akin to the Iberians of Spain and Western Europe and the dark whites of Asia Minor and North Africa, and their language is unknown. This race lived not only in Crete, but in Cyprus, Greece, Asia Minor, Sicily, and South Italy. It was a civilized people for long ages before the fair Aryan Greeks spread southward through Macedonia. At

Cnossos, in Crete, there have been found the most astonishing ruins and remains, and Cnossos, therefore, is apt to overshadow the rest of these settlements in people's imaginations, but it is well to bear in mind that, though Cnossos was no doubt a chief city of this Ægean civilization, these "Ægeans" had in the fullness of their time many cities and a wide range. Possibly, all that we know of them now are but the vestiges of a far more extensive heliolithic Neolithic civilization which is now submerged under the waters of the Mediterranean.

At Cnossos there are Neolithic remains as old or older than any of the pre-dynastic remains of Egypt. The Bronze Age began in Crete as soon as it did in Egypt, and there have been vases found by Flinders Petrie in Egypt and referred by him to the Ist Dynasty, which he declared to be importations from Crete. Stone vessels have been found in Crete of forms characteristic of the IVth (pyramid-building) Dynasty, and there can be no doubt that there was a vigorous trade between Crete and Egypt in the time of the XIIth Dynasty. This continued until about 1000 B.C. It is clear that this island civilization arising upon the soil of Crete is at least as old as the Egyptian, and that it was already launched upon the sea as early as 4000 B.C.

The great days of Crete were not so early as this. It was only about 2500 B.C. that the island appears to have been unified under one ruler. Then began an age of peace and prosperity unexampled in the history of the ancient world. Secure from invasion, living in a delightful climate, trading with every civilized community in the world, the Cretans were free to develop all the arts and amenities of life. This Cnossos was not so much a town as the vast palace of the king and his people. It was not even fortified. The kings, it would seem, were called Minos always, as the kings of Egypt were all called Pharaoh; the king of Cnossos figures in the early legends of the Greeks as King Minos, who lived in the Labyrinth and kept there a horrible monster, half man, half bull, the Minotaur, to feed which he levied a tribute of youths and maidens from the Athenians. Those stories are a part of Greek literature, and have always been known, but it is only in the last few decades that the excavations at Cnossos have revealed how close these legends were to the reality. The Cretan labyrinth was a building as stately, complex, and luxurious as

any in the ancient world. Among other details we find waterpipes, bathrooms, and the like conveniences, such as have hitherto been regarded as the latest refinements of modern life. The pottery, the textile manufactures, the sculpture and painting of these people, their gem and ivory work, their metal and inlaid work, is as admirable as any that mankind has produced. They were much given to festivals and shows, and, in particular, they were addicted to bull-fights and gymnastic entertainments. Their female costume became astonishingly "modern" in style; their women wore corsets and flounced dresses. They had a system of writing which has not yet been deciphered.

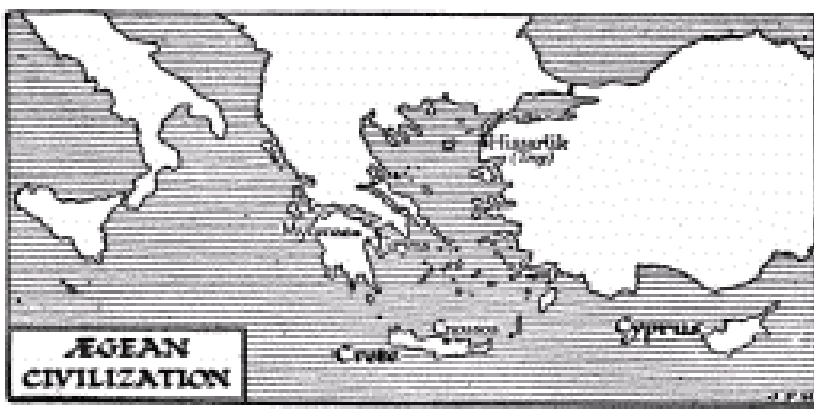

It is the custom nowadays to make a sort of wonder of these achievements of the Cretans, as though they were a people of incredible artistic ability living in the dawn of civilization. But their great time was long past that dawn; as late as 2000 B.C. It took them many centuries to reach their best in art and skill, and their art and luxury are by no means so great a wonder if we reflect that for 3000 years they were immune from invasion, that for a thousand years they were at peace. Century after century their artizans could perfect their skill, and their men and women refine upon refinement. Wherever men of almost any race have been comparatively safe in this fashion for such a length of time, they have developed much

artistic beauty. Given the opportunity, all races are artistic. Green legend has it that it was in Crete that Dædalus attempted to make the first flying machine. Dædalus (= cunning artificer) was a sort of personified summary of mechanical skill. It is curious to speculate what germ of fact lies behind him and those waxen wings that, according to the legend, melted and plunged his son Icarus in the sea.

Faience figure from Cnossos ... A votary of the Snake Goddess....
J.F.H. from photos by British School at Athens

There came at last a change in the condition of the lives of these Cretans, for other peoples, the Greeks and the Phœnicians, were also

coming out with powerful fleets upon the seas. We do not know what led to the disaster nor who inflicted it; but somewhen about 1400 B.C. Cnossos was sacked and burnt, and though the Cretan life struggled on there rather lamely for another four centuries, there came at last a final blow about 1000 B.C. (that is to say, in the days of the Assyrian ascendancy in the East). The palace at Cnossos was destroyed, and never rebuilt nor reinhabited. Possibly this was done by the ships of those newcomers into the Mediterranean, the barbaric Greeks, a group of Aryan tribes, who may have wiped out Cnossos as they wiped out the city of Troy. The legend of Theseus tells of such a raid. He entered the Labyrinth (which may have been the Cnossos Palace) by the aid of Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, and slew the Minotaur.

The *Iliad* makes it clear that destruction came upon Troy because the Trojans stole Greek women. Modern writers, with modern ideas in their heads, have tried to make out that the Greeks assailed Troy in order to secure a trade route or some such fine-spun commercial advantage. If so, the authors of the *Iliad* hid the motives of their characters very skilfully. It would be about as reasonable to say that the Homeric Greeks went to war with the Trojans in order to be well ahead with a station on the Berlin to Bagdad railway. The Homeric Greeks were a healthy barbaric Aryan people, with very poor ideas about trade and "trade routes"; they went to war with the Trojans because they were thoroughly annoyed about this stealing of women. It is fairly clear from the Minos legend and from the evidence of the Cnossos remains, that the Cretans kidnapped or stole youths and maidens to be slaves, bull-fighters, athletes, and perhaps sacrifices. They traded fairly with the Egyptians, but it may be they did not realize the gathering strength of the Greek barbarians; they "traded" violently with them, and so brought sword and flame upon themselves.

Another great sea people were the Phœnicians. They were great seamen because they were great traders. Their colony of Carthage (founded before 800 B.C. by Tyre) became at last greater than any of the older Phœnician cities, but already before 1500 B.C. both Sidon and Tyre had settlements upon the African coast. Carthage was comparatively inaccessible to the Assyrian and Babylonian hosts,

and, profiting greatly by the long siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar II, became the greatest maritime power the world had hitherto seen. She claimed the Western Mediterranean as her own, and seized every ship she could catch west of Sardinia. Roman writers accuse her of great cruelties. She fought the Greeks for Sicily, and later (in the second century B.C.) she fought the Romans. Alexander the Great formed plans for her conquest; but he died, as we shall tell later, before he could carry them out.

§ 3

At her zenith Carthage probably had the hitherto unheard-of population of a million. This population was largely industrial, and her woven goods were universally famous. As well as a coasting trade, she had a considerable land trade with Central Africa, and she sold negro slaves, ivory, metals, precious stones and the like, to all the Mediterranean people; she worked Spanish copper mines, and her ships went out into the Atlantic and coasted along Portugal and France northward as far as the Cassiterides (the Scilly Isles, or Cornwall, in England) to get tin. About 520 B.C. a certain Hanno made a voyage that is still one of the most notable in the world. This Hanno, if we may trust the *Periplus of Hanno*, the Greek translation of his account which still survives, followed the African coast southward from the Straits of Gibraltar as far as the confines of Liberia. He had sixty big ships, and his main task was to found or reinforce certain Carthaginian stations upon the Morocco coast. Then he pushed southward. He founded a settlement in the Rio de Oro (on Kerne or Herne Island), and sailed on past the Senegal river. The voyagers passed on for seven days beyond the Gambia, and landed at last upon some island. This they left in a panic, because, although the day was silent with the silence of the tropical forest, at night they heard the sound of flutes, drums, and gongs, and the sky was red with the blaze of the bush fires. The coast country for the rest of the voyage was one blaze of fire, from the burning of the bush. Streams of fire ran down the hills into the sea, and at length a blaze arose so loftily that it touched the skies. Three days further brought them to an island containing a lake (? Sherbro Island). In this lake was

another island (? Macaulay Island), and on this were wild, hairy men and women, "whom the interpreters called gorilla." The Carthaginians, having caught some of the females of these "gorillas" — they were probably chimpanzees — turned back and eventually deposited the skins of their captives — who had proved impossibly violent guests to entertain on board ship — in the Temple of Juno.

A still more wonderful Phœnician sea voyage, long doubted, but now supported by some archæological evidence, is related by Herodotus, who declares that the Pharaoh Necho of the XXVIth Dynasty commissioned some Phœnicians to attempt the circumnavigation of Africa, and that starting from the Gulf of Suez southward, they did finally come back through the Mediterranean to the Nile delta. They took nearly three years to complete their voyage. Each year they landed, and sowed and harvested a crop of wheat before going on.

§ 4

The great trading cities of the Phœnicians are the most striking of the early manifestations of the peculiar and characteristic gift of the Semitic peoples to mankind, trade and exchange. While the Semitic Phœnician peoples were spreading themselves upon the seas, another kindred Semitic people, the Arameans, whose occupation of Damascus we have already noted, were developing the caravan routes of the Arabian and Persian deserts, and becoming the chief trading people of Western Asia. The Semitic peoples, earlier civilized than the Aryan, have always shown, and still show to-day, a far greater sense of quality and quantity in marketable goods than the latter; it is to their need of account-keeping that the development of alphabetical writing is to be ascribed, and it is to them that most of the great advances in computation are due. Our modern numerals are Arabic; our arithmetic and algebra are essentially Semitic sciences.

The Semitic peoples, we may point out here, are to this day *counting peoples* strong in their sense of equivalents and reparation. The moral teaching of the Hebrews was saturated by such ideas. "With what measure ye mete, the same shall be meted unto you." Other races and peoples have imagined diverse and fitful and

marvellous gods, but it was the trading Semites who first began to think of God as a Righteous Dealer, whose promises were kept, who failed not the humblest creditor, and called to account every spurious act.

The trade that was going on in the ancient world before the sixth or seventh century B.C. was almost entirely a barter trade. There was little or no credit or coined money. The ordinary standard of value with the early Aryans was cattle, as it still is with the Zulus and Kaffirs to-day. In the *Iliad*, the respective values of two shields are stated in head of cattle, and the Roman word for moneys, *pecunia*, is derived from *pecus*, cattle. Cattle as money had this advantage; it did not need to be carried from one owner to another, and if it needed attention and food, at any rate it bred. But it was inconvenient for ship or caravan transit. Many other substances have at various times been found convenient as a standard; tobacco was once legal tender in the colonial days in North America, and in West Africa fines are paid and bargains made in bottles of trade gin. The early Asiatic trade included metals; and weighed lumps of metal, since they were in general demand and were convenient for hoarding and storage, costing nothing for fodder and needing small house-room, soon asserted their superiority over cattle and sheep. Iron, which seems to have been first reduced from its ores by the Hittites, was, to begin with, a rare and much-desired substance. It is stated by Aristotle to have supplied the first currency. In the collection of letters found at Tel-el-Amarna, addressed to and from Amenophis III (already mentioned) and his successor Amenophis IV, one from a Hittite king promises iron as an extremely valuable gift. Gold, then as now, was the most precious and therefore most portable, security. In early Egypt silver was almost as rare as gold until after the XVIIIth Dynasty. Later the general standard of value in the Eastern world became silver, measured by weight.

To begin with, metals were handed about in ingots and weighed at each transaction. Then they were stamped to indicate their fineness and guarantee their purity. The first recorded coins were minted about 600 B.C. in Lydia, a gold-producing country in the west of Asia Minor. The first-known gold coins were minted in Lydia by Crœsus, whose name has become a proverb for wealth; he was

conquered, as we shall tell later, by that same Cyrus the Persian who took Babylon in 539 B.C. But very probably coined money had been used in Babylonia before that time. The "sealed shekel," a stamped piece of silver, came very near to being a coin. The promise to pay so much silver or gold on "leather" (= parchment) with the seal of some established firm is probably as old or older than coinage. The Carthaginians used such "leather money." We know very little of the way in which small traffic was conducted. Common people, who in those ancient times were in dependent positions, seem to have had no money at all; they did their business by barter. Early Egyptian paintings show this going on.

§ 5

When one realizes the absence of small money or of any conveniently portable means of exchange in the pre-Alexandrian world, one perceives how impossible was private travel in those days. The first "inns" — no doubt a sort of caravanserai — are commonly said to have come into existence in Lydia in the third or fourth century B.C. That, however, is too late a date. They are certainly older than that. There is good evidence of them at least as early as the sixth century. Æschylus twice mentions inns. His word is "all-receiver," or "all-receiving house." Private travellers must have been fairly common in the Greek world, including its colonies, by this time. But such private travel was a comparatively new thing then. The early historians Hecatæus and Herodotus travelled widely. "I suspect," says Professor Gilbert Murray, "that this sort of travel 'for Historie' or 'for discovery' was rather a Greek invention. Solon is supposed to have practiced it; and even Lycurgus."... The earlier travellers were traders travelling in a caravan or in a shipload, and carrying their goods and their minas and shekels of metal or gems or bales of fine stuff with them, or government officials travelling with letters of introduction and a proper retinue. Possibly there were a few mendicants, and, in some restricted regions, religious pilgrims.

That earlier world before 600 B.C. was one in which a lonely "stranger" was a rare and suspected and endangered being. He might suffer horrible cruelties, for there was little law to protect such as he.

Few individuals strayed therefore. One lived and died attached and tied to some patriarchal tribe if one was a nomad, or to some great household if one was civilized, or to one of the big temple establishments which we will presently discuss. Or one was a herded slave. One knew nothing, except for a few monstrous legends, of the rest of the world in which one lived. We know more to-day, indeed, of the world of 600 B.C. than any single living being knew at that time. We map it out, see it as a whole in relation to past and future. We begin to learn precisely what was going on at the same time in Egypt and Spain and Media and India and China. We can share in imagination, not only the wonder of Hanno's sailors, but of the men who lit the warning beacons on the shore. We know that those "mountains flaming to the sky" were only the customary burning of the dry grass at that season of the year. Year by year, more and more rapidly, our common knowledge increases. In the years to come men will understand still more of those lives in the past until perhaps they will understand them altogether.

XVIII

WRITING

§ 1. *Picture Writing.* § 2. *Syllable Writing.* § 3. *Alphabet Writing.* § 4. *The Place of Writing in Human Life.*

§ 1

IN the five preceding chapters (XIII to XVII) we have sketched in broad outline the development of the chief human communities from the primitive beginnings of the heliolithic culture to the great historical kingdoms and empires in the sixth century B.C. We must now study a little more closely the general process of social change, the growth of human ideas, and the elaboration of human relationships that were going on during these ages between 10,000 B.C. and 500 B.C. What we have done so far is to draw the map and name the chief kings and empires, to define the relations in time and space of Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt, Phœnicia, Cnossos, and the like; we come now to the real business of history, which is to get down below these outer forms to the thoughts and lives of individual men.

By far the most important thing that was going on during those fifty or sixty centuries of social development was the invention of writing and its gradual progress to importance in human affairs. It was a new instrument for the human mind, an enormous enlargement of its range of action, a new means of continuity. We have seen how in later Palæolithic and early Neolithic times the elaboration of articulate speech gave men a mental handhold for consecutive thought and a vast enlargement of their powers of co-operation. For a time this new acquirement seems to have overshadowed their earlier achievement of drawing, and possibly it checked the use of gesture. But drawing presently reappeared again, for record, for signs, for the joy of drawing. Before real writing came picture-writing, such as is still practised by the Amerindians, the Bushmen, and savage and barbaric people in all parts of the world. It is essentially a drawing of things and acts, helped out by heraldic indications of proper names, and by strokes and dots to represent days and distances and such-like quantitative ideas.

Quite kindred to such picture-writing is the pictograph that one finds still in use to-day in international railway time-tables upon the continent of Europe, where a little black sign of a cup indicates a stand-up buffet for light refreshments; a crossed knife and fork, a restaurant; a little steamboat, a transfer to a steamboat; and a postilion's horn, a diligence. Similar signs are used in the well-known Michelin guides for automobilists in Europe, to show a post-office (envelope) or a telephone (telephone receiver). The quality of hotels is shown by an inn with one, two, three, or four gables, and so forth. Similarly, the roads of Europe are marked with wayside signs representing a gate, to indicate a level crossing ahead, a sinuous bend for a dangerous curve, and the like. From such pictographic signs to the first elements of Chinese writing is not a very long stretch.

In Chinese writing there are still traceable a number of pictographs. Most are now difficult to recognize. A mouth was originally written as a mouth-shaped hole and is now, for convenience of brushwork, squared; a child, originally a recognizable little mannikin, is now a hasty wriggle and a cross; the sun, originally a large circle with a dot in the centre, has been converted, for the sake of convenience of combination, into a crossed oblong, which is easier to make with a brush. By combining these pictographs, a second order of ideas is expressed. For example, the pictograph for mouth combined with pictograph for vapour expressed "words."

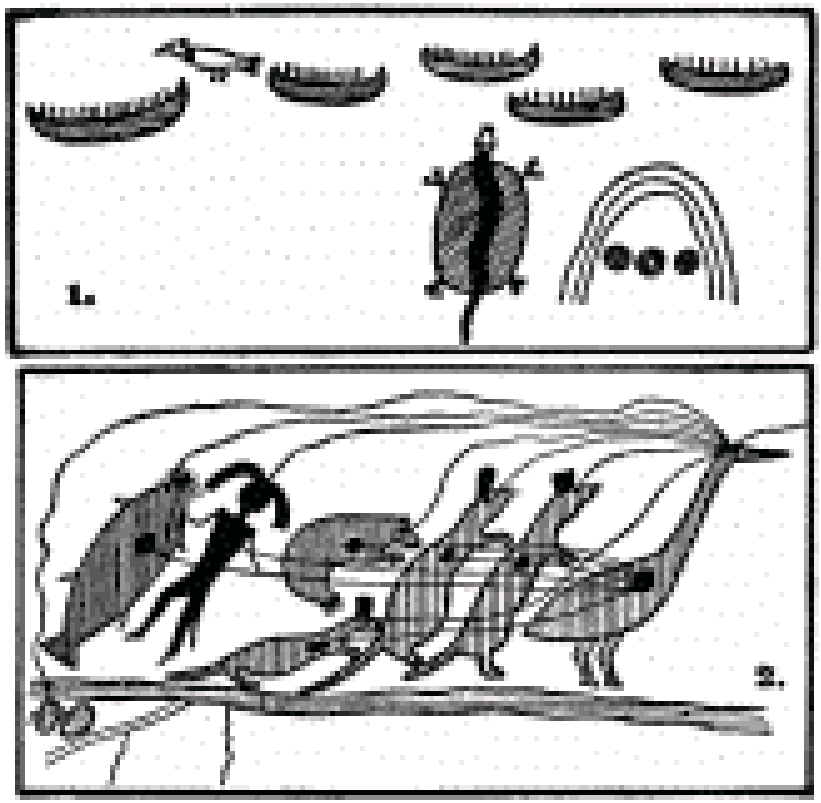

Specimens of American Indian picture-writing
(after Schoolcraft ...)

No. 1, painted on a rock on the shore of Lake Superior, records an expedition across the lake, in which five canoes took part. The upright strokes in each indicate the number of the crew, and the bird represents a chief, "The Kingfisher." The three circles (suns) under the arch (of heaven) indicate that the voyage lasted three days, and the tortoise, a symbol of land, denotes a safe arrival. No. 2 is a petition sent to the United States Congress by a group of Indian tribes, asking for fishing rights in certain small lakes. The tribes are represented by their totems, martens, bear, manfish, and catfish, led by the crane. Lines running from the heart and eye of each animal to the heart and eye of the crane denote that they are all of one mind; and a line runs from the eye of the crane to the lakes, shown in the

crude little “map” in the lower left-hand corner.

From such combinations one passes to what are called *ideograms*: the sign for “words” and the sign for “tongue” combine to make “speech”; the sign for “roof” and the sign for “pig” make “home” — for in the early domestic economy of China the pig was as important as it used to be in Ireland. But, as we have already noted earlier, the Chinese language consists of a comparatively few elementary monosyllabic sounds, which are all used in a great variety of meanings, and the Chinese soon discovered that a number of these *pictographs* and *ideographs* could be used also to express other ideas, not so conveniently pictured, but having the same sound. Characters so used are called *phonograms*. For example, the sound fang meant not only “boat,” but “a place,” “spinning,” “fragrant,” “inquire,” and several other meanings according to the context. But while a boat is easy to draw most of the other meanings are undrawable. How can one draw “fragrant” or “inquire”? The Chinese, therefore, took the same sign for all these meanings of *fang*, but added to each of them another distinctive sign, the determinative, to show what sort of *fang* was intended. A “place” was indicated by the same sign as for “boat” (*fang*) and the determinative sign for “earth”; “spinning” by the sign for *fang* and the sign for “silk”; “inquire” by the sign for *fang* and the sign for “words,” and so on.

One may perhaps make this development of pictographs, ideographs, and phonograms a little clearer by taking an analogous case in English. Suppose we were making up a sort of picture-writing in English, then it would be very natural to use a square with a slanting line to suggest a lid, for the word and thing *box*. That would be a pictograph. But now suppose we had a round sign for money, and suppose we put this sign inside the box sign, that would do for “cash-box” or “treasury.” That would be an ideogram. But the word “box” is used for other things than boxes. There is the box shrub which gives us boxwood. It would be hard to draw a recognizable box-tree distinct from other trees, but it is quite easy to put our sign “box,” and add our sign for shrub as a determinative to determine that it is that sort of box and not a common box that we want to express. And then there is “box,” the verb, meaning to fight with fists. Here, again, we need a determinative; we might add the two

crossed swords, a sign which is used very often upon maps to denote a battle. A box at a theatre needs yet another determinative, and so we go on, through a long series of phonograms.

Now it is manifest that here in the Chinese writing is a very peculiar and complex system of sign-writing. A very great number of characters have to be learnt and the mind habituated to their use. The power it possesses to carry ideas and discussion is still ungauged by western standards, but we may doubt whether with this instrument it will ever be possible to establish such a wide, common mentality as the simpler and swifter alphabets of the western civilizations permit. In China it created a special reading-class, the mandarins, who were also the ruling and official class. Their necessary concentration upon words and classical forms, rather than upon ideas and realities, seems, in spite of her comparative peacefulness and the very high individual intellectual quality of her people, to have greatly hampered the social and economic development of China. Probably it is the complexity of her speech and writing, more than any other imaginable cause, that has made China to-day politically, socially, and individually a vast pool of backward people rather than the foremost power in the whole world.

§ 2

But while the Chinese mind thus made for itself an instrument which is probably too elaborate in structure, too laborious in use, and too inflexible in its form to meet the modern need for simple, swift, exact, and lucid communications, the growing civilizations of the west were working out the problem of a written record upon rather different and, on the whole, more advantageous lines. They did not seek to improve their script to make it swift and easy, but circumstances conspired to make it so. The Sumerian picture-writing, which had to be done upon clay and with little styles, which made curved marks with difficulty and inaccurately, rapidly degenerated by a conventionalized dabbing down of wedged-shaped marks (cuneiform = wedge-shaped) into almost unrecognizable hints of the shapes intended. It helped the Sumerians greatly to learn to write, that they had to draw so badly. They got very soon to the Chinese

pictographs, ideographs, and phonograms, and beyond them.

Most people know a sort of puzzle called a rebus. It is a way of representing words by pictures, not of the things the words represent, but by the pictures of other things having a similar sound. For example, two gates and a head is a rebus for Gates-head; a little streamlet (beck), a crowned monarch, and a ham, Beckingham. The Sumerian language was a language well adapted to this sort of representation. It was apparently a language of often quite vast polysyllables, made up of very distinct inalterable syllables; and many of the syllables taken separately were the names of concrete things. So that this cuneiform writing developed very readily into a syllabic way of writing, in which each sign conveys a syllable just as each act in a charade conveys a syllable. When presently the Semites conquered Sumeria, they adapted the syllabic system to their own speech, and so this writing became entirely a sign-for-a-sound writing. It was so used by the Assyrians and by the Chaldeans. But it was not a letter-writing, it was a syllable-writing. This cuneiform script prevailed for long ages over Assyria, Babylonia, and the Near East generally; there are vestiges of it in some of the letters of our alphabet to-day.

§ 3

But, meanwhile, in Egypt and upon the Mediterranean coast another system of writing grew up. Its beginnings are probably to be found in the priestly picture-writing (hieroglyphics) of the Egyptians, which also in the usual way became partly a sound-sign system. As we see it on the Egyptian monuments, the hieroglyphic writing consists of decorative but stiff and elaborate forms, but for such purpose as letter-writing and the keeping of recipes and the like, the Egyptian priests used a much simplified and flowing form of these characters, the *hieratic script*. Side by side with this hieratic script rose another, probably also derivative from the hieroglyphs, a script now lost to us, which was taken over by various non-Egyptian peoples in the Mediterranean, the Phœnicians, Libyans, Lydians, Cretans, and Celt-Iberians, and used for business purposes. Possibly a few letters were borrowed from the later cuneiform. In the hands of these foreigners

this writing was, so to speak, cut off from its roots; it lost all but a few traces of its early pictorial character. It ceased to be pictographic or ideographic; it became simply a pure sound-sign system, an *alphabet*.

There were a number of such alphabets in the Mediterranean differing widely from each other. It may be noted that the Phœnician alphabet (and perhaps others) omitted vowels. Possibly they pronounced their consonants very hard and had rather indeterminate vowels, as is said to be still the case with tribes of South Arabia. Quite probably, too, the Phœnicians used their alphabet at first not so much for writing as for single initial letters in their business accounts and tallies. One of these Mediterranean alphabets reached the Greeks, long after the time of the Iliad, who presently set to work to make it express the clear and beautiful sounds of their own highly developed Aryan speech. It consisted at first of consonants, and the Greeks added the vowels. They began to write for record, to help and fix their bardic tradition....

§ 4

So it was by a series of very natural steps that writing grew out of the life of man. At first and for long ages it was the interest and the secret of only a few people in a special class, a mere accessory to the record of pictures. But there were certain very manifest advantages, quite apart from the increased expressiveness of mood and qualification, to be gained by making writing a little less plain than straightforward pictures, and in conventionalizing and codifying it. One of these was that so messages might be sent understandable by the sender and receiver, but not plain to the uninitiated. Another was that so one might put down various matters and help one's memory and the memory of one's friends, without giving away too much to the common herd. Among some of the earliest Egyptian writings, for example, are medical recipes and magic formulæ. Accounts, letters, recipes, name lists, itineraries; these were the earliest of written documents. Then, as the art of writing and reading spread, came that odd desire, that pathetic desire so common among human beings, to astonish some strange and remote person by writing down something

striking, some secret one knew, some strange thought, or even one's name, so that long after one had gone one's way, it might strike upon the sight and mind of another reader. Even in Sumeria men scratched on walls, and all that remains to us of the ancient world, its rocks, its buildings, is plastered thickly with the names and the boasting of those foremost among human advertisers, its kings. Perhaps half the early inscriptions in that ancient world are of this nature, if, that is, we group with the name-writing and boasting the epitaphs, which were probably in many cases prearranged by the deceased.

For long the desire for crude self-assertion of the name-scrawling sort and the love of secret understandings kept writing within a narrow scope; but that other, more truly social desire in men, the desire to *tell*, was also at work. The profounder possibilities of writing, the possibilities of a vast extension and definition and settlement of knowledge and tradition, only grew apparent after long ages. But it will be interesting at this point and in this connection to recapitulate certain elemental facts about life, upon which we laid stress in our earlier chapters, because they illuminate not only the huge value of writing in the whole field of man's history, but also the rôle it is likely to play in his future.

1. Life had at first, it must be remembered, only a discontinuous repetition of consciousness, as the old died and the young were born.

Such a creature as a reptile has in its brain a capacity for experience, but when the individual dies, its experience dies with it. Most of its motives are purely instinctive, and all the mental life that it has is the result of heredity (birth inheritance).

2. But ordinary mammals have added to pure instinct *tradition*, a tradition of experience imparted by the imitated example of the mother, and in the case of such mentally developed animals as dogs, cats, or apes, by a sort of mute precept also. For example, the mother cat chastises her young for misbehaviour. So do mother apes and baboons.

3. Primitive man added to his powers of transmitting experience, representative art and speech. Pictorial and sculptured record and *verbal tradition* began.

Verbal tradition was developed to its highest possibility by the bards. They did much to make language what it is to the world to-

day.

4. With the invention of writing, which developed out of pictorial record, human tradition was able to become fuller and much more exact. Verbal tradition, which had hitherto changed from age to age, began to be fixed. Men separated by hundreds of miles could now communicate their thoughts. An increasing number of human beings began to share a common written knowledge and a common sense of a past and a future. Human thinking became a larger operation in which hundreds of minds in different places and in different ages could react upon one another; it became a process constantly more continuous and sustained....

5. For hundreds of generations the full power of writing was not revealed to the world, because for a long time the idea of multiplying writings by taking prints of a first copy did not become effective. The only way of multiplying writings was by copying one copy at a time, and this made books costly and rare. Moreover, the tendency to keep things secret, to make a cult and mystery of them, and so to gain an advantage over the generality of men, has always been very strong in men's minds. It is only nowadays that the great masses of mankind are learning to read, and reaching out towards the treasures of knowledge and thought already stored in books.

Nevertheless, from the first writings onward a new sort of tradition, an enduring and immortal tradition, began in the minds of men. Life, through mankind, grew thereafter more and more distinctly conscious of itself and its world. It is a thin streak of intellectual growth we trace in history, at first in a world of tumultuous ignorance and forgetfulness; it is like a mere line of light coming through the chink of an opening door into a darkened room; but slowly it widens, it grows. At last came a time in the history of Europe when the door, at the push of the printer, began to open more rapidly. Knowledge flared up, and as it flared it ceased to be the privilege of a favoured minority. For us now that door swings wider, and the light behind grows brighter. Misty it is still, glowing through clouds of dust and reek.

The door is not half open; the light is but a light new lit. Our world to-day is only in the beginning of knowledge.

XIX

GODS AND STARS, PRIESTS AND KINGS

§ 1. *Nomadic and Settled Religion.* § 2. *The Priest Comes into History.* § 3. *Priests and the Stars.* § 4. *Priests and the Dawn of Learning.* § 5. *King against Priest.* § 6. *How Bel-Marduk Struggled against the Kings.* § 7. *The God-Kings of Egypt.* § 8. *Shi Hwang-ti Destroys the Books.*

§ 1

WE have already told what there is to tell of the social life of the Aryan tribes when they were settling down to the beginnings of civilized life; we have seen how they were associated in great households, grouped together under tribal leaders, who made a sort of informal aristocracy rather like that of the sixth form and prefects in an English boys' school; we have considered the rôle of the bards in the creation of an oral tradition, and we have glanced at their not very complex religious ideas. We may note one or two points of difference from the equivalent life of the nomadic Semites.

Like the early Aryan life, it was a life in a sort of family-tribe household. But it had differences due originally perhaps to the warmer, drier climate. Though both groups of races had cattle and sheep, the Aryans were rather herdsmen, the Semites, shepherds. The Semites had no long winter evenings and no bardic singing. They never sat in hall. They have consequently no epics. They had stories, camp-fire stories, but not verbally beautified story-recitations. The Semite also was more polygamous than the Aryan, his women less self-assertive, and the tendency of his government more patriarchal. The head of the household or the tribe was less of a leader and more of a master, more like the Palæolithic Old Man. And the Semitic nomads were closer to the earlier civilizations, a thing that fitted in with their greater aptitude for trade and counting. But the religion of the nomadic Semite was as little organized as the religion of the Aryan. In either case the leading man performed most of the functions of the priest. The Aryan gods were little more than a kind of magical super-prince; they were supposed to sit in hall together,

and to talk and make scenes with one another under Jupiter or Thor. The early Semitic gods, on the other hand, were thought of as tribal patriarchs. As peoples develop towards nomadism, they seem to lose even such primitive religion and magic as their Neolithic ancestors professed. Nomadism cuts men off from fixed temples and intense local associations; they take a broader and simpler view of the world. They tend towards religious simplification.

We write here of the nomadic peoples, the Aryan herdsmen and Semitic shepherds, and we write in the most general terms. They had their undercurrent of fables and superstitions, their phases of fear and abjection and sacrificial fury. These people were people like ourselves, with brains as busy and moody and inconsistent, and with even less training and discipline. It is absurd to suppose — as so many writers about early religion do seem to suppose — that their religious notions can be reduced to the consistent logical development of some one simple idea. We have already glanced, in Chapter XII, at the elements of religion that must have arisen necessarily in the minds of those early peoples. But for most of the twenty-four hours these nomads were busy upon other things, and there is no sign that their houses, their daily routines, their ordinary acts, were dominated or their social order shaped, by any ideas that we should now call religious. As yet life and its ideas were too elementary for that.

But directly we turn our attention to these new accumulations of human beings that are beginning in Egypt and Mesopotamia, we find that one of the most conspicuous objects in every city is a temple or a group of temples. In some cases there arises beside it in these regions a royal palace, but as often the temple towers over the palace. This presence of the temple is equally true of the Phœnician cities and of the Greek and Roman as they arise. The palace of Cnossos, with its signs of comfort and pleasure-seeking, and the kindred cities of the Ægean peoples, include religious shrines, but in Crete there are also temples standing apart from the palatial city-households. All over the ancient civilized world we find them; wherever primitive civilization set its foot in Africa, Europe, or western Asia, a temple arose, and where the civilization is most ancient, in Egypt and in Sumer, there the temple is most in evidence. When Hanno reached what he

thought was the most westerly point of Africa, he set up a temple to Hercules. We have, in fact, come now to a new stage in the history of mankind, the temple stage.

§ 2

In all these temples there was a shrine; dominating the shrine there was commonly a great figure, usually of some monstrous half-animal form, before which stood an altar for sacrifices. This figure was either regarded as the god or as the image or symbol of the god, for whose worship the temple existed. And connected with the temple there were a number, and often a considerable number, of priests or priestesses, and temple servants, generally wearing a distinctive costume and forming an important part of the city population. They belonged to no household, as did the simple priest of the primitive Aryan; they made up a new kind of household of their own. They were a caste and a class apart, attracting intelligent recruits from the general population.

The primary duty of this priesthood was concerned with the worship of and the sacrifices to the god of the temple. And these things were done, not at any time, but at particular times and seasons. There had come into the life of man with his herding and agriculture a sense of a difference between the parts of the year and of a difference between day and day. Men were beginning to work — and to need days of rest. The temple, by its festivals, kept count. The temple in the ancient city was like the clock and calendar upon a writing-desk.

But it was a centre of other functions. It was in the early temples that the records and tallies of events were kept and that writing began. And there was knowledge there. The people went to the temple not only *en masse* for festivals, but individually for help. The early priests were also doctors and magicians. In the earliest temples we already find those little offerings for some private and particular end, which are still made in the chapels of Catholic churches to-day, *ex votos*, little models of hearts relieved and limbs restored, acknowledgment of prayers answered and accepted vows.

It is clear that here we have that comparatively unimportant

element in the life of the early nomad, the medicine-man, the shrine-keeper, and the memorist, developed, with the development of the community and as a part of the development of the community from barbarism to civilized settlement, into something of very much greater importance. And it is equally evident that those primitive fears of (and hopes of help from) strange beings, the desire to propitiate unknown forces, the primitive desire for cleansing and the primitive craving for power and knowledge have all contributed to crystallize out this new social fact of the temple.

The temple was accumulated by complex necessities, it grew from many roots and needs, and the god that dominated the temple was the creation of many imaginations and made up of all sorts of impulses, ideas, and half ideas. Here there was a god in which one sort of ideas predominated, and there another. It is necessary to lay some stress upon this confusion and variety of origin in gods, because there is a very abundant literature now in existence upon religious origins, in which a number of writers insist, some on this leading idea and some on that — we have noted several in our Chapter XII on "Early Thought" — as though it were the only idea. Professor Max Müller in his time, for example, harped perpetually on the idea of sun stories and sun worship. He would have had us think that early man never had lusts or fears, cravings for power, nightmares or fantasies, but that he meditated perpetually on the beneficent source of light and life in the sky. Now dawn and sunset are very moving facts in the daily life, but they are only two among many.

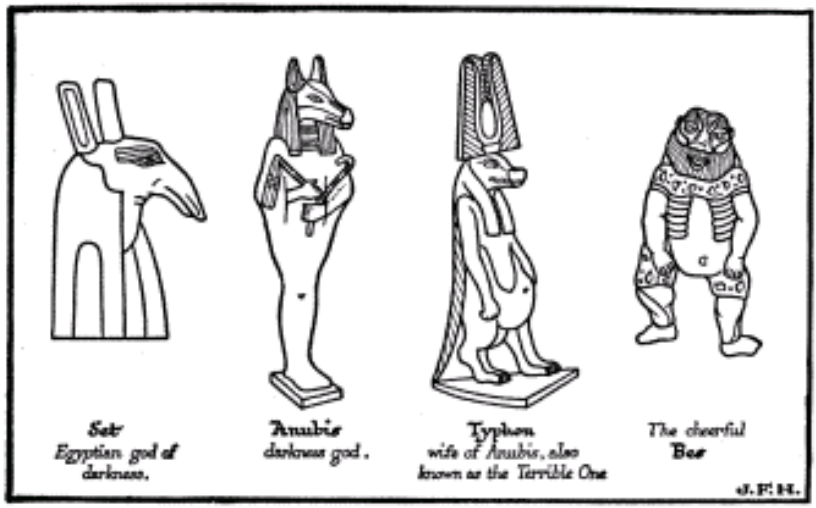

Early men, three or four hundred generations ago, had brains very like our own. The fancies of our childhood and youth are perhaps the best clue we have to the ground-stuff of early religion, and anyone who can recall those early mental experiences will understand very easily the vagueness, the monstrosity, and the incoherent variety of the first gods. There were sun gods, no doubt, early in the history of temples, but there were also hippopotamus gods and hawk gods; there were cow deities, there were monstrous male and female gods, there were gods of terror and gods of an adorable quaintness, there were gods who were nothing but lumps of meteoric stone that had fallen amazingly out of the sky, and gods who were mere natural stones that had chanced to have a queer and impressive shape. Some gods, like Marduk of Babylon and the Baal (= the Lord) of the Phœnicians, Canaanites, and the like, were quite probably at bottom just legendary wonder beings, such as little boys will invent for themselves to-day. The early Semites, it is said, as soon as they thought of a god, invented a wife for him; most of the Egyptian and Babylonian gods were married. But the gods of the nomadic Semites had not this marrying disposition. Children were less eagerly sought by the inhabitants of the food-grudging steppes.

Even more natural than to provide a wife for a god is to give him

a house to live in to which offerings can be brought. Of this house the knowing man, the magician, would naturally become the custodian. A certain seclusion, a certain aloofness, would add greatly to the prestige of the god. The steps by which the early temple and the early priesthood developed so soon as an agricultural population settled and increased are all quite natural and understandable, up to the stage of the long temple with the image, shrine and altar at one end and the long nave in which the worshippers stood. And this temple, because it had records and secrets, because it was a centre of power, advice, and instruction, because it sought and attracted imaginative and clever people for its service, naturally became a kind of brain in the growing community. The attitude of the common people who tilled the fields and herded the beasts towards the temple would remain simple and credulous. There, rarely seen and so imaginatively enhanced, lived the god whose approval gave prosperity, whose anger meant misfortune; he could be propitiated by little presents and the help of his servants could be obtained. He was wonderful, and of such power and knowledge that it did not do to be disrespectful to him even in one's thoughts. Within the priesthood, however, a certain amount of thinking went on at a rather higher level than that.

§ 3

And now we have to note a very interesting fact about the chief temples of Egypt and, so far as we know — because the ruins are not so distinct — of Babylonia, and that is that they were "oriented" — that is to say, that the same sort of temple was built so that the shrine and entrance always faced in the same direction. In Babylonian temples this was most often due east, facing the sunrise on March 21st and September 21st, the equinoxes; and it is to be noted that it was at the spring equinox that the Euphrates and Tigris came down in flood. The Pyramids of Gizeh are also oriented east and west, and the Sphinx faces due east, but very many of the Egyptian temples to the south of the delta of the Nile do not point due east, but to the point where the sun rises at the longest day — and in Egypt the inundation comes close to that date. Others, however, pointed nearly northward, and others again pointed to the rising of the star Sirius or

to the rising-point of other conspicuous stars. The fact of orientation links up with the fact that there early arose a close association between various gods and the sun and various fixed stars. Whatever the mass of people outside were thinking, the priests of the temples were beginning to link the movements of those heavenly bodies with the power in the shrine. They were thinking about the gods they served and thinking new meanings into them. They were brooding upon the mystery of the stars. It was very natural for them to suppose that these shining bodies, so irregularly distributed and circling so solemnly and silently, must be charged with portents to mankind.

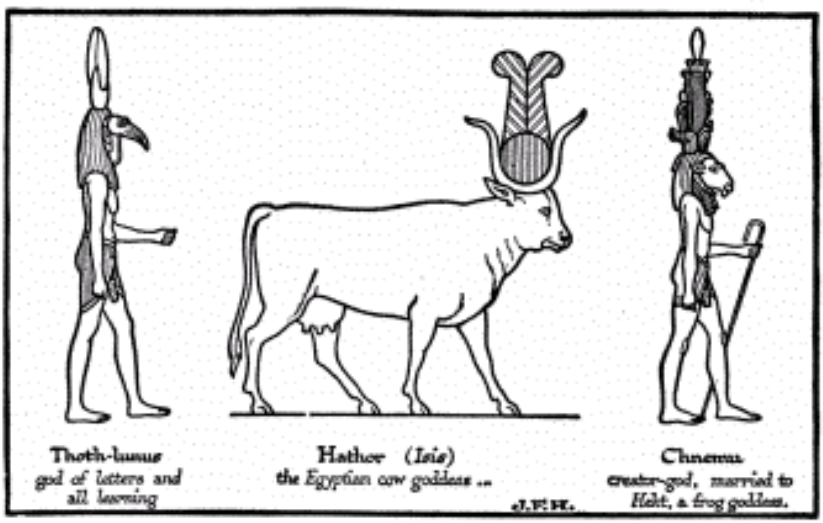

Among other things, this orientation of the temples served to fix and help the great annual festival of the New Year. On one morning in the year, and one morning alone, in a temple oriented to the rising-place of the sun at Midsummer Day, the sun's first rays would smite down through the gloom of the temple and the long alley of the temple pillars, and light up the god above the altar and irradiate him with glory. The narrow, darkened structure of the ancient temples seems to be deliberately planned for such an effect. No doubt the

people were gathered in the darkness before the dawn; in the darkness there was chanting and perhaps the offering of sacrifices; the god alone stood mute and invisible. Prayers and invocations would be made. Then upon the eyes of the worshippers, sensitized by the darkness, as the sun rose behind them, the god would suddenly shine.

So, at least, one explanation of orientation is found by such students of orientation as Sir Norman Lockyer. Not only is orientation apparent in most of the temples of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and the east, it is found in the Greek temples; Stonehenge is oriented to the midsummer sunrise, and so are most of the megalithic circles of Europe; the Temple of Heaven in Peking is oriented to midwinter. In the days of the Chinese Empire, up to a few years ago, one of the most important of all the duties of the Emperor of China was to sacrifice and pray in this temple upon midwinter's day for a propitious year.

The Egyptian priests had mapped out the stars into the constellations, and divided up the zodiac into twelve signs, by 3000 B.C. ...

§ 4

This clear evidence of astronomical inquiry and of a development of astronomical ideas is the most obvious, but only the most obvious, evidence of the very considerable intellectual activities that went on within the temple precincts in ancient times. There is a curious disposition among many modern writers to deprecate priesthoods and to speak of priests as though they had always been impostors and tricksters, preying upon the simplicity of mankind. But, indeed, they were for long the only writing class, the only reading public, the only learned and the only thinkers; they were all the professional classes of the time. You could have no intellectual life at all, you could not get access to literature or any knowledge except through the priesthood. The temples were not only observatories and libraries and clinics, they were museums and treasure-houses. The original *Periplus* of Hanno hung in one temple in Carthage, skins of his "gorillas" were hung and treasured in another. Whatever there was of

abiding worth in the life of the community sheltered there. Herodotus, the early Greek historian (485-425 B.C.), collected most of his material from the priests of the countries in which he travelled, and it is evident they met him generously and put their very considerable resources completely at his disposal. Outside the temples the world was still a world of blankly illiterate and unspeculative human beings, living from day to day entirely for themselves. Moreover, there is little evidence that the commonalty felt cheated by the priests, or had anything but trust and affection for the early priesthoods. Even the great conquerors of later times were anxious to keep themselves upon the right side of the priests of the nations and cities whose obedience they desired, because of the immense popular influence of these priests.

No doubt there were great differences between temple and temple and cult and cult in the spirit and quality of the priesthood. Some probably were cruel, some vicious and greedy, many dull and doctrinaire, stupid with tradition, but it has to be kept in mind that there were distinct limits to the degeneracy or inefficiency of a priesthood. It had to keep its grip upon the general mind. It could not go beyond what people would stand — either towards the darkness or towards the light. Its authority rested, in the end, on the persuasion that its activities were propitious.

§ 5

It is clear that the earliest civilized governments were essentially priestly governments. It was not kings and captains who first set men to the plough and a settled life. It was the ideas of the gods and plenty, working with the acquiescence of common men. The early rulers of Sumer we know were all priests, kings only because they were chief priests. And priestly government had its own weaknesses as well as its peculiar deep-rooted strength. The power of a priesthood is a power over their own people alone. It is a subjugation through mysterious fears and hopes. The priesthood can gather its people together for war, but its traditionalism and all its methods unfit it for military control. Against the enemy without, a priest-led people is feeble.

Moreover, a priest is a man vowed, trained, and consecrated, a man belonging to a special corps, and necessarily with an intense *esprit de corps*. He has given up his life to his temple and his god. This is a very excellent thing for the internal vigour of his own priesthood, his own temple. He lives or dies for the honour of his particular god. But in the next town or village is another temple with another god. It is his constant preoccupation to keep his people from that god. Religious cults and priesthoods are sectarian by nature; they will convert, they will overcome, but they will never coalesce. Our first perceptions of events in Sumer, in the dim uncertain light before history began, is of priests and gods in conflict; until the Sumerians were conquered by the Semites they were never united; and the same incurable conflict of priesthoods scars all the temple ruins of Egypt. It was impossible that it could have been otherwise, having regard to the elements out of which religion arose.

An Assyrian King & his Chief Minister

It was out of those two main weaknesses of all priesthoods, namely, the incapacity for efficient military leadership and their inevitable jealousy of all other religious cults, that the power of secular kingship arose. The foreign enemy either prevailed and set up

a king over the people, or the priesthoods who would not give way to each other set up a common fighting captain, who retained more or less power in peace time. This secular king developed a group of officials about him and began, in relation to military organization, to take a share in the priestly administration of the people's affairs. So, growing out of priestcraft and beside the priest, the king, the protagonist of the priest, appears upon the stage of human history, and a very large amount of the subsequent experiences of mankind is only to be understood as an elaboration, complication, and distortion of the struggle, unconscious or deliberate, between these two systems of human control, the temple and the palace. And it was in the original centres of civilization that this antagonism was most completely developed. The Aryan peoples never passed through a phase of temple rule on their way to civilization; they came to civilization late; they found that drama already half-played. They took over the ideas of both temple and kingship, when those ideas were already elaborately developed, from the more civilized Hamitic or Semitic people they conquered.

The greater importance of the gods and the priests in the earlier history of the Mesopotamian civilization is very apparent, but gradually the palace won its way until it was at last in a position to struggle definitely for the supreme power. At first, in the story, the palace is ignorant and friendless in the face of the temple; the priests alone read, the priests alone know, the people are afraid of him. But in the dissensions of the various cults comes the opportunity of the palace. From other cities, from among captives, from defeated or suppressed religious cults, the palace gets men who also can read and who can do magic things. The court also becomes a centre of writing and record; the king thinks for himself and becomes politic. Traders and foreigners drift to the court, and if the king has not the full records and the finished scholarship of the priests, he has a wider and fresher first-hand knowledge of many things. The priest comes into the temple when he is very young; he passes many years as a neophyte; the path of learning the clumsy letters of primitive times is slow and toilsome; he becomes erudite and prejudiced rather than a man of the world. Some of the more active-minded young priests may even cast envious eyes at the king's service. There are many

complications and variations in this ages-long drama of the struggle going on beneath the outward conflicts of priest and king, between the made man and the born man, between learning and originality, between established knowledge and settled usage on the one hand, and creative will and imagination on the other. It is not always, as we shall find later, the priest who is the conservative and unimaginative antagonist. Sometimes a king struggles against narrow and obstructive priesthoods; sometimes priesthoods uphold the standards of civilization against savage, egotistical, or reactionary kings.

One or two outstanding facts and incidents of the early stages of this fundamental struggle in political affairs are all that we can note here between 4000 B.C. and the days of Alexander.

§ 6

In the early days of Sumeria and Akkadia the city-kings were priests and medicine-men rather than kings, and it was only when foreign conquerors sought to establish their hold in relation to existing institutions that the distinction of priest and king became definite. But the god of the priests remained as the real overlord of the land and of priest and king alike. He was the universal landlord; the wealth and authority of his temples and establishments outshone those of the king. Especially was this the case within the city walls. Hammurabi, the founder of the first Babylonian Empire, is one of the earlier monarchs whom we find taking a firm grip upon the affairs of the community. He does it with the utmost politeness to the gods. In an inscription recording his irrigation work in Sumeria and Akkadia, he begins: "When Anu and Bel entrusted me with the rule of Sumer and Akkad —— ." We possess a code of laws made by this same Hammurabi — it is the earliest known code of law — and at the head of this code we see the figure of Hammurabi receiving the law from its nominal promulgator, the god Shamash.

An act of great political importance in the conquest of any city was the carrying off of its god to become a subordinate in the temple of its conqueror. This was far more important than the subjugation of king by king. Merodach, the Babylonian Jupiter, was carried off by the Elamites, and Babylon did not feel independent until its return.

But sometimes a conqueror was afraid of the god he had conquered. In the collection of letters addressed to Amenophis III and IV at Tel-Amarna in Egypt, to which allusion has already been made, is one from a certain king, Tushratta, King of Mitani, who has conquered Assyria and taken the statue of the goddess Ishtar. Apparently he has sent this statue into Egypt, partly to acknowledge the overlordship of Amenophis, but partly because he fears her anger. (Winckler.) In the Bible is related (Sam. i. v. 1) how the Ark of the Covenant of the God of the Hebrews was carried off by the Philistines, as a token of conquest, into the temple of the fish god, Dagon, at Ashdod, and how Dagon fell down and was broken, and how the people of Ashdod were smitten with disease. In the latter story particularly the gods and priests fill the scene; there is no king in evidence at all.

Right through the history of the Babylonian and Assyrian empires no monarch seems to have felt his tenure of power secure in Babylon until he had "taken the hand of Bel" — that is to say, that he had been adopted by the priesthood of "Bel" as the god's son and representative. As our knowledge of Assyrian and Babylonian history grows clearer, it becomes plainer that the politics of that world, the revolutions, usurpations, changes of dynasty, intrigues with foreign powers, turned largely upon issues between the great wealthy priesthoods and the growing but still inadequate power of the monarchy. The king relied on his army, and this was usually a mercenary army of foreigners, speedily mutinous if there was no pay or plunder, and easily bribed. We have already noted the name of Sennacherib, the son of Sargon II, among the monarchs of the Assyrian Empire. Sennacherib was involved in a violent quarrel with the priesthood of Babylon; he never "took the hand of Bel"; and finally struck at that power by destroying altogether the holy part of the city of Babylon (691 B.C.) and removing the statue of Bel-Marduk to Assyria. He was assassinated by one of his sons, and his successor, Esarhaddon (his son, but not the son who was his assassin), found it expedient to restore Bel-Marduk and rebuild his temple, and make his peace with the god.

Assurbanipal (Greek, Sardanapalus), the son of this Esarhaddon, is a particularly interesting figure from this point of view of the relationship of priesthood and king. His father's reconciliation with

the priests of Bel-Marduk went so far that Sardanapalus was given a Babylonian instead of a military Assyrian education. He became a great collector of the clay documents of the past, and his library, which has been unearthed, is now the most precious source of historical material in the world. But for all his learning he kept his grip on the Assyrian army; he made a temporary conquest of Egypt, suppressed a rebellion in Babylon, and carried out a number of successful expeditions. As we have already told in Chapter XVI, he was almost the last of the Assyrian monarchs. The Aryan tribes, who knew more of war than of priestcraft, and particularly the Scythians, the Medes and Persians, had long been pressing upon Assyria from the north and north-east. The Medes and Persians formed an alliance with the nomadic Semitic Chaldeans of the south for the joint undoing of Assyria. Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, fell to these Aryans in 606 B.C.

Sixty-seven years after the taking of Nineveh by the Aryans, which left Babylonia to the Semitic Chaldeans, the last monarch of the Chaldean Empire (the Second Babylonian Empire), Nabonidus, the father of Belshazzar, was overthrown by Cyrus, the Persian. This Nabonidus, again, was a highly educated monarch, who brought far too much intelligence and imagination and not enough of the short range wisdom of this world to affairs of state. He conducted antiquarian researches, and to his researches it is that we owe the date of 3750 B.C., assigned to Sargon I and still accepted by many authorities. He was proud of this determination, and left inscriptions to record it. It is clear he was a religious innovator; he built and rearranged temples and attempted to centralize religion in Babylon by bringing a number of local gods to the temple of Bel-Marduk. No doubt he realized the weakness and disunion of his empire due to these conflicting cults, and had some conception of unification in his mind.

Events were marching too rapidly for any such development. His innovation had manifestly raised the suspicion and hostility of the priesthood of Bel. They sided with the Persians. “The soldiers of Cyrus entered Babylon without fighting.” Nabonidus was taken prisoner, and Persian sentinels were set at the gates of the temple of Bel, “where the services continued without intermission.”

Cyrus did, in fact, set up the Persian Empire in Babylon with the blessing of Bel-Marduk. He gratified the conservative instincts of the priests by packing off the local gods back to their ancestral temples. He also restored the Jews to Jerusalem. These were merely matters of immediate policy to him. But in bringing in the irreligious Aryans, the ancient priesthood was paying too highly for the continuation of its temple services. It would have been wiser to have dealt with the innovations of Nabonidus, that earnest heretic, to have listened to his ideas, and to have met the needs of a changing world. Cyrus entered Babylon 539 B.C.; by 521 B.C. Babylon was in insurrection again, and in 520 B.C. another Persian monarch, Darius, was pulling down her walls. Within two hundred years the life had altogether gone out of those venerable rituals of Bel-Marduk, and the temple of Bel-Marduk was being used by builders as a quarry.

§ 7

The story of priest and king in Egypt is similar to, but by no means parallel with, that of Babylonia. The kings of Sumeria and Assyria were priests who had become kings; they were secularized priests. The Pharaoh of Egypt does not appear to have followed precisely that line. Already in the very oldest records the Pharaoh has a power and importance exceeding that of any priest. He is, in fact, a god, and more than either priest or king. We do not know how he got to that position. No monarch of Sumeria or Babylonia or Assyria could have induced his people to do for him what the great pyramid-building

Pharaohs of the IVth Dynasty made their people do in those vast erections. The earlier Pharaohs were not improbably regarded as incarnations of the dominant god. The falcon god Horus sits behind the head of the great statue of Chephren. So late a monarch as Rameses III (XIXth Dynasty) is represented upon his sarcophagus (now at Cambridge) bearing the distinctive symbols of the three great gods of the Egyptian system. He carries the two sceptres of Osiris, the god of Day and Resurrection; upon his head are the horns of the cow goddess Hathor, and also the sun ball and feathers of Ammon Ra. He is not merely wearing the symbols of these gods as a devout Babylonian might wear the symbols of Bel-Marduk; he is these three gods in one.

Ramses III as Osiris — between the goddesses Nephthys and Isis....

Relief on the cover of the sarcophagus (at Cambridge). After Sharpe.

Inscription (round the edges of cover), as far as decipherable.

“Osiris, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, lord of the two countries ... son of the Sun, beloved of the gods, lord of diadems, Rameses, prince of Heliopolis, triumphant! Thou art in the condition of a god, thou shalt arise as Usr, there is no enemy to thee, I give to thee triumph among them....” Budge, Catalogue, Egyptian

Collection, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

The student will find much more in Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* about the ancient use of human beings as well as statues to represent gods. Here we have merely to point to an apparent difference of idea between the Asiatic and African monarchies in this respect.

We find also a number of sculptures and paintings to enforce the idea that the Pharaohs were the actual sons of gods. The divine fathering and birth of Amenophis III, for instance (of the XVIIIth Dynasty), is displayed in extraordinary detail in a series of sculptures at Luxor. Moreover, it was held that the Pharaohs, being of so divine a strain, could not marry common clay, and consequently they were accustomed to marry blood relations within the degrees of consanguinity now prohibited, even marrying their sisters.

The struggle between palace and temple came into Egyptian history, therefore, at a different angle from that at which it came into Babylonia. Nevertheless, it came in. Professor Maspero (in his *New Light on Ancient Egypt*) gives a very interesting account of the struggle of Amenophis IV with the priesthoods, and particularly with priests of the great god, Ammon Ra, Lord of Karnak. The mother of Amenophis IV was not of the race of Pharaoh; it would seem that his father, Amenophis III, made a love match with a subject, a beautiful Syrian named Tii, and Professor Maspero finds in the possible opposition to and annoyance of this queen by the priests of Ammon Ra the beginnings of the quarrel. She may, he thinks, have inspired her son with a fanatical hatred of Ammon Ra. But Amenophis IV may have had a wider view. Like the Babylonian Nabonidus, who lived a thousand years later, he may have had in mind the problem of moral unity in his empire. We have already noted that Amenophis III ruled from Ethiopia to the Euphrates, and that the store of letters to himself and his son found at Tel Amarna show a very wide range of interest and influence. At any rate, Amenophis IV set himself to close all the Egyptian and Syrian temples, to put an end to all sectarian worship throughout his dominions, and to establish everywhere the worship of one god, Aton, the solar disk. He left his capital, Thebes, which was even more the city of Ammon Ra than later Babylon was the city of Bel-Marduk, and set up his capital at

Tel Amarna; he altered his name from “Amenophis,” which consecrated him to Ammon (Amen) to “Akhnaton,” the Sun’s Glory; and he held his own against all the priesthoods of his empire for eighteen years and died a Pharaoh.

Akhnaton (Amenophis IV)
[based on the cast at Cairo, & the reliefs in the Berlin Museum.]

Opinions upon Amenophis IV, or Akhnaton, differ very widely. There are those who regard him as the creature of his mother's hatred of Ammon and the uxorious spouse of a beautiful wife. Certainly he loved his wife very passionately; he showed her great honour —

Egypt honoured women, and was ruled at different times by several queens — and he was sculptured in one instance with his wife seated upon his knees, and in another in the act of kissing her in a chariot; but men who live under the sway of their womenkind do not sustain great empires in the face of the bitter hostility of the most influential organized bodies in their realm. Others write of him as a "gloomy fanatic." Matrimonial bliss is rare in the cases of gloomy fanatics. It is much more reasonable to regard him as the Pharaoh who refused to be a god. It is not simply his religious policy and his frank display of natural affection that seem to mark a strong and very original personality. His æsthetic ideas were his own. He refused to have his portrait conventionalized into the customary smooth beauty of the Pharaoh god, and his face looks out at us across an interval of thirty-four centuries, a man amidst ranks of divine insipidities.

A reign of eighteen years was not long enough for the revolution he contemplated, and his son-in-law who succeeded him went back to Thebes and made his peace with Ammon Ra.

To the very end of the story the divinity of kings haunted the Egyptian mind, and infected the thoughts of intellectually healthier races. When Alexander the Great reached Babylon, the prestige of Bel-Marduk was already far gone in decay, but in Egypt, Ammon Ra was still god enough to make a snob of the conquering Grecian. The priests of Ammon Ra, about the time of the XVIIIth or XIXth Dynasty (*circa* 1400 B.C.), had set up in an oasis of the desert a temple and oracle. Here was an image of the god which could speak, move its head, and accept or reject scrolls of inquiry. This oracle was still flourishing in 332 B.C. The young master of the world, it is related, made a special journey to visit it; he came into the sanctuary, and the image advanced out of the darkness at the back to meet him. There was an impressive exchange of salutations. Some such formula as this must have been used (says Professor Maspero): "Come, son of my loins, who loves me so that I give thee the royalty of Ra and the royalty of Horus! I give thee valiance, I give thee to hold all countries and all religions under thy feet; I give thee to strike all the peoples united together with thy arm!"

So it was that the priests of Egypt conquered their conqueror, and an Aryan monarch first became a god....

§ 8

The struggle of priest and king in China cannot be discussed here at any length. It was different again, as in Egypt it was different from Babylonia, but we find the same effort on the part of the ruler to break up tradition because it divides up the people. The Chinese Emperor, the "Son of Heaven," was himself a high-priest, and his chief duty was sacrificial; in the more disorderly phases of Chinese history he ceases to rule and continues only to sacrifice. The literary class was detached from the priestly class at an early date. It became a bureaucratic body serving the local kings and rulers. That is a fundamental difference between the history of China and any Western history. While Alexander was overrunning Western Asia, China, under the last priest-emperors of the Chow Dynasty, was sinking into a state of great disorder. Each province clung to its separate nationality and traditions, and the Huns spread from province to province. The King of Ts'in (who lived about eighty years after Alexander the Great), impressed by the mischief tradition was doing in the land, resolved to destroy the entire Chinese literature, and his son, Shi Hwang-ti, the "first universal Emperor," made a strenuous attempt to seek out and destroy all the existing classics. They vanished while he ruled, and he ruled without tradition, and welded China into a unity that endured for some centuries; but when he had passed, the hidden books crept out again. China remained united, though not under his descendants, but after a civil war under a fresh dynasty, the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.). The first Han monarch did not sustain this campaign of Shi Hwang-ti against the *literati*, and his successor made his peace with them and restored the texts of the classics.

SERFS, SLAVES, SOCIAL CLASSES, AND FREE INDIVIDUALS

§ 1. *The Common Man in Ancient Times.* § 2. *The Earliest Slaves.* § 3. *The first "Independent" Persons.* § 4. *Social Classes Three Thousand Years Ago.* § 5. *Classes Hardening into Castes.* § 6. *Caste in India.* § 7. *The System of the Mandarins.* § 8. *A Summary of Five Thousand Years.*

§ 1

WE have been sketching in the last four chapters the growth of civilized states out of the primitive Neolithic agriculture that began in Mesopotamia perhaps 15,000, perhaps 20,000, years ago. It was at first horticulture rather than agriculture; it was done with the hoe before the plough, and at first it was quite supplementary to the sheep, goat, and cattle tending that made the "living" of the family tribe. We have traced the broad outlines of the development in regions of exceptional fruitfulness of the first settled village communities into more populous towns and cities, and the growth of the village shrine and the village medicine-man into the city temple and the city priesthood. We have noted the beginnings of organized war, first as a bickering between villages, and then as a more disciplined struggle between the priest-king and god of one city and those of another. Our story has passed on rapidly from the first indications of conquest and empire in Sumer, perhaps 6000 or 7000 B.C., to the spectacle of great empires growing up, with roads and armies, with inscriptions and written documents, with educated priesthoods and kings and rulers sustained by a tradition already ancient. We have traced in broad outline the appearance and conflicts and replacements of these empires of the great rivers. We have directed attention, in particular, to the evidence of a development of still wider political ideas as we find it betrayed by the actions and utterances of such men as Nabonidus and Amenophis IV. It has been an outline of the accumulations of human experience for ten or fifteen thousand years, a vast space of time in comparison with all

subsequent history, but a brief period when we measure it against the succession of endless generations that intervenes between us and the first rude flint-using human creatures of the Pleistocene dawn. But for these last four chapters we have been writing almost entirely not about mankind generally, but only about the men who thought, the men who could draw and read and write, the men who were altering their world. Beneath their activities what was the life of the mute multitude?

The life of the common man was, of course, affected and changed by these things, just as the lives of the domestic animals and the face of the cultivated country were changed; but for the most part it was a change suffered and not a change in which the common man upon the land had any voice or will. Reading and writing were not yet for the likes of him. He went on cultivating his patch, loving his wife and children, beating his dog and tending his beasts, grumbling at hard times, fearing the magic of the priests and the power of the gods, desiring little more except to be left alone by the powers above him. So he was in 10,000 B.C.; so he was, unchanged in nature and outlook, in the time of Alexander the Great; so over the greater part of the world he remains to-day. He got rather better tools, better seeds, better methods, a slightly sounder house, he sold his produce in a more organized market as civilization progressed. A certain freedom and a certain equality passed out of human life when men ceased to wander. Men paid in liberty for safety, shelter, and regular meals. By imperceptible degrees the common man found the patch he cultivated was not his own; it belonged to the god; and he had to pay a fraction of his produce to the god. Or the god had given it to the king, who exacted his rent and tax. Or the king had given it to an official, who was the lord of the common man. And sometimes the god or the king or the noble had work to be done, and then the common man had to leave his patch and work for his master.

How far the patch he cultivated was his own was never very clear to him. In ancient Assyria the land seems to have been held as a sort of freehold and the occupier paid taxes; in Babylonia the land was the god's, and he permitted the cultivator to work thereon. In Egypt the temples or Pharaoh-the-god or the nobles under Pharaoh were the owners and rent receivers. But the cultivator was not a slave; he was

a peasant, and only bound to the land in so far that there was nothing else for him to do but cultivate, and nowhere else for him to go. He lived in a village or town, and went out to his work. The village, to begin with, was often merely a big household of related people under a patriarch headman, the early town a group of householders under its elders. There was no process of enslavement as civilization grew, but the headmen and leaderly men grew in power and authority, and the common men did not keep pace with them, and fell into a tradition of dependence and subordination.

On the whole, the common men were probably well content to live under lord or king or god and obey their bidding. It was safer. It was easier. All animals — and man is no exception — begin life as dependents. Most men never shake themselves loose from the desire for leading and protection.

§ 2

Egyptian peasants seized for non-payment of taxes ... (Pyramid Age)

The earlier wars did not involve remote or prolonged campaigns, and they were waged by levies of the common people. But war brought in a new source of possessions, plunder, and a new social factor, the captive. In the earlier, simpler days of war, the captive man was kept only to be tortured or sacrificed to the victorious god; the captive women and children were assimilated into the tribe. But later many captives were spared to be slaves because they had exceptional gifts or peculiar arts. It would be the kings and captains who would take these slaves at first, and it would speedily become apparent to them that these men were much more their own than

were the peasant cultivators and common men of their own race. The slave could be commanded to do all sorts of things for his master that the quasi-free common man would not do so willingly because of his attachment to his own patch of cultivation. From a very early period the artificer was often a household slave, and the manufacture of trade goods, pottery, textiles, metal ware, and so forth, such as went on vigorously in the household city of the Minos of Cnossos, was probably a slave industry from the beginning. Sayce, in his *Babylonians and Assyrians*, quotes Babylonian agreements for the teaching of trades to slaves, and dealing with the exploitation of slave products. Slaves produced slave children, enslavement in discharge of debts added to the slave population; it is probable that as the cities grew larger, a larger part of the new population consisted of these slave artificers and slave servants in the large households. They were by no means abject slaves; in later Babylon their lives and property were protected by elaborate laws. Nor were they all outlanders. Parents might sell their children into slavery, and brothers their orphan sisters. Free men who had no means of livelihood would even sell themselves into slavery. And slavery was the fate of the insolvent debtor. Craft apprenticeship, again, was a sort of fixed-term slavery. Out of the slave population, by a converse process, arose the freed-man and freed-woman, who worked for wages and had still more definite individual rights. Since in Babylon slaves could themselves own property, many slaves saved up and bought themselves. Probably the town slave was often better off and practically as free as the cultivator of the soil, and as the rural population increased, its sons and daughters came to mix with and swell the growing ranks of artificers, some bound, some free.

As the extent and complexity of government increased, the number of households multiplied. Under the king's household grew up the households of his great ministers and officials, under the temple grew up the personal households of temple functionaries; it is not difficult to realize how houses and patches of land would become more and more distinctly the property of the occupiers, and more and more definitely alienated from the original owner-god. The earlier empires in Egypt and China both passed into a feudal stage, in which families, originally official, became for a time independent noble

families. In the later stages of Babylonian civilization we find an increasing propertied class of people appearing in the social structure, neither slaves nor peasants nor priests nor officials, but widows and descendants of such people, or successful traders and the like, and all *masterless* folk. Traders came in from the outside. Babylon was full of Aramean traders, who had great establishments, with slaves, freed-men, employees of all sorts. (Their book-keeping was a serious undertaking. It involved storing a great multitude of earthenware tablets in huge earthenware jars.) Upon this gathering mixture of more or less free and detached people would live other people, traders, merchants, small dealers, catering for their needs. Sayce (*op. cit.*) gives the particulars of an agreement for the setting up and stocking of a tavern and beerhouse, for example. The passer-by, the man who happened to be about, had come into existence.

But another and far less kindly sort of slavery also arose in the old civilization, and that was gang slavery. If it did not figure very largely in the cities, it was very much in evidence elsewhere. The king was, to begin with, the chief *entrepreneur*. He made the canals and organized the irrigation (*e.g.* Hammurabi's enterprises noted in the previous chapter). He exploited mines. He seems (at Cnossos, *e.g.*) to have organized manufactures for export. The Pharaohs of the 1st Dynasty were already working the copper and turquoise mines in the peninsula of Sinai. For many such purposes gangs of captives were cheaper and far more controllable than levies of the king's own people. From an early period, too, captives may have tugged the oars of the galleys, though Torr (*Ancient Ships*) notes that up to the age of Pericles (450 B.C.) the free Athenians were not above this task. And the monarch also found slaves convenient for his military expeditions. They were uprooted men; they did not fret to go home, because they had no homes to go to. The Pharaohs hunted slaves in Nubia, in order to have black troops for their Syrian expeditions. Closely allied to such slave troops were the mercenary barbaric troops the monarchs caught into their service, not by positive compulsion, but by the bribes of food and plunder and under the pressure of need. As the old civilization developed, these mercenary armies replaced the national levies of the old order more and more, and servile gang labour became a more and more important and

significant factor in the economic system. From mines and canal and wall building, the servile gang spread into cultivation. Nobles and temples adopted the gang slave system for their works. Plantation gangs began to oust the patch cultivation of the labourer-serf in the case of some staple products....

§ 3

So, in a few paragraphs, we trace the development of the simple social structure of the early Sumerian cities to the complex city crowds, the multitude of individuals varying in race, tradition, education, and function, varying in wealth, freedom, authority, and usefulness, in the great cities of the last thousand years B.C. The most notable thing of all is the gradual increase amidst this heterogeneous multitude of what we may call *free individuals*, detached persons who are neither priests, nor kings, nor officials, nor serfs, nor slaves, who are under no great pressure to work, who have time to read and inquire. They appear side by side with the development of social security and private property. Coined money and monetary reckoning developed. The operations of the Arameans and such-like Semitic trading people led to the organization of credit and monetary security. In the earlier days almost the only property, except a few movables, consisted of rights in land and in houses; later, one could deposit and lend securities, could go away and return to find one's property faithfully held and secure. Towards the middle of the period of the Persian Empire there lived one free individual, Herodotus, who has a great interest for us because he was among the first writers of critical and intelligent history, as distinguished from a mere priestly or court chronicle. It is worth while to glance here very briefly at the circumstances of his life. Later on we shall quote from his history.

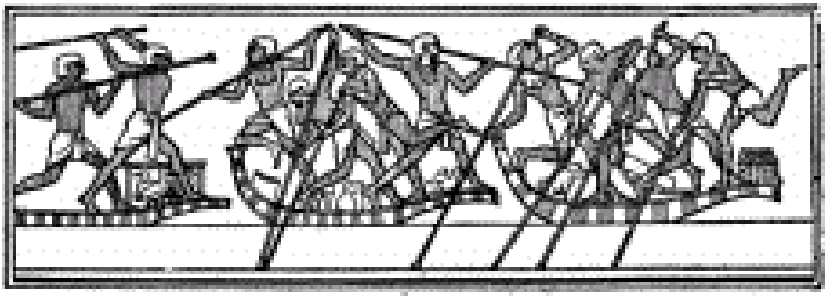

Brawl among boatmen ... (From tomb of Ptah-hetep —— Pyramid Age)

We have already noted the conquest of Babylonia by the Aryan Persians under Cyrus in 539 B.C. We have noted, further, that the Persian Empire spread into Egypt, where its hold was precarious; and it extended also over Asia Minor. Herodotus was born about 484 B.C. in a Greek city of Asia Minor, Halicarnassus, which was under the overlordship of the Persians, and directly under the rule of a political boss or tyrant. There is no sign that he was obliged either to work for a living or spend very much time in the administration of his property. We do not know the particulars of his affairs, but it is clear that in this minor Greek city, under foreign rule, he was able to obtain and read and study manuscripts of nearly everything that had been written in the Greek language before his time. He travelled, so far as one can gather, with freedom and comfort about the Greek archipelagoes; he stayed wherever he wanted to stay, and he seems to have found comfortable accommodation; he went to Babylon and to Susa, the new capital the Persians had set up in Babylonia to the east of the Tigris; he toured along the coast of the Black Sea, and accumulated a considerable amount of knowledge about the Scythians, the Aryan people who were then distributed over South Russia; he went to the south of Italy, explored the antiquities of Tyre, coasted Palestine, landed at Gaza, and made a long stay in Egypt. He went about Egypt looking at temples and monuments and gathering information. We know, not only from him, but from other evidence, that in those days the older temples and the pyramids (which were already nearly three thousand years old) were visited by strings of tourists, a special sort of priests acting as guides. The inscriptions the

sightseers scribbled upon the walls remain to this day, and many of them have been deciphered and published.

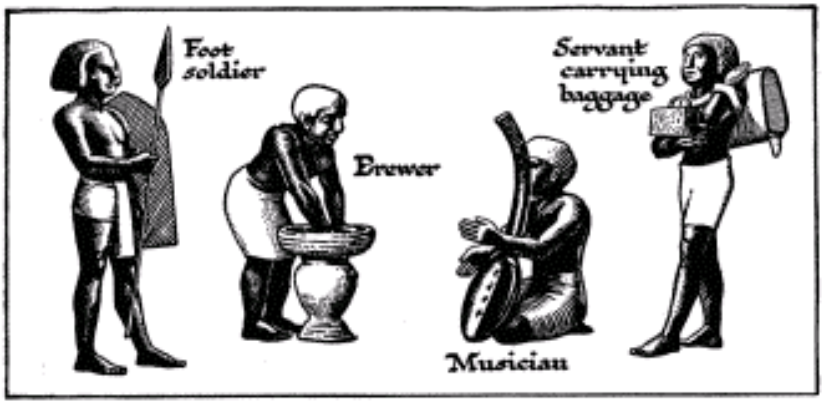

Statuettes from Middle-Class Egyptian Tombs showing Low Class Social Types in the Ancient Communities.

As his knowledge accumulated, he conceived the idea of writing a great history of the attempts of Persia to subdue Greece. But in order to introduce that history he composed an account of the past of Greece, Persia, Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Scythia, and of the geography and peoples of those countries. He then set himself, it is said, to make his history known among his friends in Halicarnassus by reciting it to them, but they failed to appreciate it; and he then betook himself to Athens, the most flourishing of all Greek cities at that time. There his work was received with applause. We find him in the centre of a brilliant circle of intelligent and active-minded people, and the city authorities voted him a reward of ten talents (a sum of money equivalent to £2,400) in recognition of his literary achievement....

But we will not complete the biography of this most interesting man, nor will we enter into any criticism of his garrulous, marvel-telling, and most entertaining history. It is a book to which all intelligent readers come sooner or later, abounding as it does in illuminating errors and Boswellian charm. We give these particulars

here simply to show that in the fifth century B.C. a new factor was becoming evident in human affairs. Reading and writing had already long escaped from the temple precincts and the ranks of the court scribes. Record was no longer confined to court and temple. A new sort of people, these people of leisure and independent means, were asking questions, exchanging knowledge and views, and developing ideas. So beneath the march of armies and the policies of monarchs, and above the common lives of illiterate and incurious men, we note the beginnings of what is becoming at last nowadays a dominant power in human affairs, the *free intelligence of mankind*.

Of that free intelligence we shall have more to say when in a subsequent chapter we tell of the Greeks.

§ 4

We may summarize the discussion of the last two chapters here by making a list of the chief elements in this complicated accumulation of human beings which made up the later Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations of from two thousand five hundred to three thousand years ago. These elements grew up and became distinct one from another in the great river valleys of the world in the course of five or six thousand years. They developed mental dispositions and traditions and attitudes of thought one to another. The civilization in which we live to-day is simply carrying on and still further developing and working out and rearranging these relationships. This is the world from which we inherit. It is only by the attentive study of their origins that we can detach ourselves from the prejudices and immediate ideas of the particular class to which we may belong, and begin to understand the social and political questions of our own time.

(1) First, then, came the priesthood, *the temple system*, which was the nucleus and the guiding intelligence about which the primitive civilizations grew. It was still in these later days a great power in the world, the chief repository of knowledge and tradition, an influence over the lives of every one, and a binding force to hold the community together. But it was no longer all-powerful, because its nature made it conservative and inadaptable. It no longer

monopolized knowledge nor initiated fresh ideas. Learning had already leaked out to other less pledged and controlled people, who thought for themselves. About the temple system were grouped its priests and priestesses, its scribes, its physicians, its magicians, its lay brethren, treasurers, managers, directors, and the like. It owned great properties and often hoarded huge treasures.

(2) Over against the priesthood, and originally arising out of it, was the *court system*, headed by a king or a "king of kings," who was in later Assyria and Babylonia a sort of captain and lay controller of affairs, and in Egypt a god-man, who had released himself from the control of his priests. About the monarch were accumulated his scribes, counsellors, record keepers, agents, captains, and guards. Many of his officials, particularly his provincial officials, had great subordinate establishments, and were constantly tending to become independent. The nobility of the old river valley civilizations arose out of the court system. It was, therefore, a different thing in its origins from the nobility of the early Aryans, which was a republican nobility of elders and leading men.

(3) At the base of the social pyramid was the large and most necessary class in the community, *the tillers of the soil*. Their status varied from age to age and in different lands; they were free peasants paying taxes, or serfs of the god, or serfs or tenants of king or noble, or of a private owner, paying him a rent; in most cases tax or rent was paid in produce. In the states of the river valleys they were high cultivators, cultivating comparatively small holdings; they lived together for safety in villages, and had a common interest in maintaining their irrigation channels and a sense of community in their village life. The cultivation of the soil is an exacting occupation; the seasons and the harvest sunsets will not wait for men; children can be utilized at an early age, and so the cultivator class is generally a poorly educated, close-toiling class, superstitious by reason of ignorance and the uncertainty of the seasons, ill-informed and easily put upon. It is capable at times of great passive resistance, but it has no purpose in its round but crops and crops, to keep out of debt and hoard against bad times. So it has remained to our own days over the greater part of Europe and Asia.

(4) Differing widely in origin and quality from the tillers of the

soil was *the artisan class*. At first, this was probably in part a town-slave class, in part it consisted of peasants who had specialized upon a craft. But in developing an art and mystery of its own, a technique that had to be learnt before it could be practised, each sort of craft probably developed a certain independence and a certain sense of community of its own. The artisans were able to get together and discuss their affairs more readily than the toilers on the land, and they were able to form guilds to restrict output, maintain rates of pay, and protect their common interest.

(5) As the power of the Babylonian rulers spread out beyond the original areas of good husbandry into grazing regions and less fertile districts, a class of *herdsmen* came into existence. In the case of Babylonia these were nomadic Semites, the Bedouin, like the Bedouin of to-day. They probably grazed their flocks over great areas much as the sheep ranchers of California do. They were paid and esteemed much more highly than the husbandmen.

(6) The first *merchants* in the world were shipowners, like the people of Tyre and Cnossos, or nomads who carried and traded goods as they wandered between one area of primitive civilization and another. In the Babylonian and Assyrian world the traders were predominantly the Semitic Arameans, the ancestors of the modern Syrians. They became a distinct factor in the life of the community; they formed great households of their own. Usury developed largely in the last thousand years B.C. Traders needed accommodation; cultivators wished to anticipate their crops. Sayce (*op. cit.*) gives an account of the Babylonian banking-house of Egibi, which lasted through several generations and outlived the Chaldean Empire.

(7) A class of *small retailers*, one must suppose, came into existence with the complication of society during the later days of the first empires, but it was not probably of any great importance. It is difficult to understand how there could be much active retailing without small change, and there is little evidence of small change to be found either in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Shekels and half-shekels of silver, weighing something between a quarter and half an ounce, are the lightest weights of stamped metal of which we find mention.

(8) A growing class of *independent property owners*.

(9) As the amenities of life increased, there grew up in the court,

temples, and prosperous private houses a class of *domestic servants*, slaves or freed slaves, or young peasants taken into the household.

(10) *Gang workers.* — These were prisoners of war or debt slaves, or impressed or deported men.

(11) *Mercenary soldiers.* — These also were often captives or impressed men. Sometimes they were enlisted from friendly foreign populations in which the military spirit still prevailed.

(12) *Seamen.*

In modern political and economic discussions we are apt to talk rather glibly of "labour." Much has been made of the *solidarity of labour* and its sense of community. It is well to note that in these first civilizations, what we speak of as "labour" is represented by five distinct classes dissimilar in origin, traditions, and outlook — namely, classes 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and the oar-tugging part of 12. The "solidarity of labour" is, we shall find when we come to study the mechanical revolution of the nineteenth century A.D., a new idea and a new possibility in human affairs.

§ 5

Let us, before we leave this discussion of the social classes that were developing in these first civilizations, devote a little attention to their fixity. How far did they stand aloof from each other, and how far did they intermingle? So far as the classes we have counted as 9, 10, 11, and 12 go, the servants, the gang labourers and slaves, the gang soldiers, and, to a lesser extent, the sailors, or at any rate the galley rowers among the sailors, they were largely recruited classes, they did not readily and easily form homes, they were not distinctively breeding classes; they were probably replenished generation after generation by captives, by the failures of other classes, and especially from the failures of the class of small retailers, and by persuasion and impressment from among the cultivators. But so far as the sailors go, we have to distinguish between the mere rower and the navigating and shipowning seamen of such ports as Tyre and Sidon. The shipowners pass, no doubt, by insensible gradations into the mercantile class, but the navigators must have made a peculiar community in the great seaports, having homes there and handing on

the secrets of seacraft to their sons. The eighth class we have distinguished was certainly a precarious class, continually increased by the accession of the heirs and dependents, the widows and retired members of the wealthy and powerful, and continually diminished by the deaths or speculative losses of these people and the dispersal of their properties. The priests and priestesses too, so far as all this world west of India went, were not a very reproductive class; many priesthoods were celibate, and that class, too, may also be counted as a recruited class. Nor are servants, as a rule, reproductive. They live in the households of other people; they do not have households and rear large families of their own. This leaves us as the really vital classes of the ancient civilized community:

(*a*) The royal and aristocratic class, officials, military officers, and the like;

(*b*) The mercantile class;

(*c*) The town artisans;

(*d*) The cultivators of the soil; and

(*e*) The herdsmen.

Each of these classes reared its own children in its own fashion, and so naturally kept itself more or less continuously distinct from the others. General education was not organized in those ancient states, education was mainly a household matter (as it is still in many parts of India to-day), and so it was natural and necessary for the sons to follow in the footsteps of their father and to marry women accustomed to their own sort of household. Except during times of great political disturbance therefore, there would be a natural and continuous separation of classes; which would not, however, prevent exceptional individuals from intermarrying or passing from one class to another. Poor aristocrats would marry rich members of the mercantile class; ambitious herdsmen, artisans, or sailors would become rich merchants. So far as one can gather, that was the general state of affairs in both Egypt and Babylonia. The idea was formerly entertained that in Egypt there was a fixity of classes, but this appears to be a misconception due to a misreading of Herodotus. The only exclusive class in Egypt which did not intermarry was, as in England to-day, the semi-divine royal family.

At various points in the social system there were probably

developments of exclusiveness, an actual barring out of interlopers. Artisans of particular crafts possessing secrets, for example, have among all races and in all ages tended to develop guild organizations restricting the practice of their craft and the marriage of members outside their guild. Conquering people have also, and especially when there were marked physical differences of race, been disposed to keep themselves aloof from the conquered peoples, and have developed an aristocratic exclusiveness. Such organizations of restriction upon free intercourse have come and gone in great variety in the history of all long-standing civilizations. The natural boundaries of function were always there, but sometimes they have been drawn sharply and laid stress upon, and sometimes they have been made little of. There has been a general tendency among the Aryan peoples to distinguish noble (patrician) from common (plebeian) families; the traces of it are evident throughout the literature and life of Europe to-day, and it has received a picturesque enforcement in the "science" of heraldry. This tradition is still active even in democratic America. Germany, the most methodical of European countries, had in the Middle Ages a very clear conception of the fixity of such distinctions. Below the princes (who themselves constituted an exclusive class which did not marry beneath itself) there were the:

(*a*) Knights, the military and official caste, with heraldic coats-of-arms;

(*b* and *c*) The Bürgerstand, the merchants, shipping people, and artisans; and

(*d*) The Bauernstand, the cultivating serfs or peasants.

Mediæval Germany went as far as any of the Western heirs of the first great civilizations towards a fixation of classes. The idea is far less congenial both to the English-speaking people and to the French and Italians, who, by a sort of instinct, favour a free movement from class to class. Such exclusive ideas began at first among, and were promoted chiefly by, the upper classes, but it is a natural response and a natural Nemesis to such ideas that the mass of the excluded should presently range themselves in antagonism to their superiors. It was in Germany, as we shall see in the concluding chapters of this story, that the conception of a natural and necessary conflict, "the

class war," between the miscellaneous multitudes of the disinherited ("the class-conscious proletariat" of the Marxist) and the rulers and merchants first arose. It was an idea more acceptable to the German mind than to the British or French.... But before we come to that conflict, we must traverse a long history of many centuries.

§ 6

If now we turn eastward from this main development of civilization in the world between Central Asia and the Atlantic, to the social development of India in the 2000 years next before the Christian era, we find certain broad and very interesting differences. The first of these is that we find such a fixity of classes in process of establishment as no other part of the world can present. This fixity of classes is known to Europeans as the institution of *caste*; its origins are still in complete obscurity, but it was certainly well rooted in the Ganges valley before the days of Alexander the Great. It is a complicated horizontal division of the social structure into classes or castes, the members of which may neither eat nor intermarry with persons of a lower caste under penalty of becoming outcasts, and who may also "lose caste" for various ceremonial negligences and defilements. By losing caste a man does not sink to a lower caste; he becomes outcast. The various subdivisions of caste are very complex; many are practically trade organizations. Each caste has its local organization which maintains discipline, distributes various charities, looks after its own poor, protects the common interests of its members, and examines the credentials of newcomers from other districts. (There is little to check the pretensions of a travelling Hindu to be of a higher caste than is legitimately his.) Originally, the four main castes seem to have been:

The Brahmins — the priests and teachers;

The Kshatriyas — the warriors;

The Vaisyas — herdsmen, merchants, money-lenders, and land-owners;

The Sudras;

And, outside the castes, the Pariahs.

But these primary divisions have long been superseded by the

disappearance of the second and third primary castes, and the subdivision of the Brahmins and Sudras into a multitude of minor castes, all exclusive, each holding its members to one definite way of living and one group of associates.

Next to this extraordinary fission and complication of the social body we have to note that the Brahmins, the priests and teachers of the Indian world, unlike so many Western priesthoods, are a reproductive and exclusive class, taking no recruits from any other social stratum.

Whatever may have been the original incentive to this extensive fixation of class in India, there can be little doubt of the rôle played by the Brahmins as the custodians of tradition and the only teachers of the people in sustaining it. By some it is supposed that the first three of the four original castes, known also as the "twice born," were the descendants of the Vedic Aryan conquerors of India, who established these hard-and-fast separations to prevent racial mixing with the conquered Sudras and Pariahs. The Sudras are represented as a previous wave of northern conquerors, and the Pariahs are the original Dravidian inhabitants of India. But those speculations are not universally accepted, and it is, perhaps, rather the case that the uniform conditions of life in the Ganges valley throughout long centuries served to stereotype a difference of classes that have never had the same steadfastness of definition under the more various and variable conditions of the greater world to the west.

However caste arose, there can be no doubt of its extraordinary hold upon the Indian mind. In the sixth century B.C. arose Gautama, the great teacher of Buddhism, proclaiming, "As the four streams that flow into the Ganges lose their names as soon as they mingle their waters in the holy river, so all who believe in Buddha cease to be Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras." His teaching prevailed in India for some centuries; it spread over China, Tibet, Japan, Burmah, Ceylon, Turkestan, Manchuria; it is to-day the religion of one-third of the human race, but it was finally defeated and driven out of Indian life by the vitality and persistence of the Brahmins and of their caste ideas....

In China we find a social system travelling along yet another and only a very roughly parallel line to that followed by the Indian and Western civilizations. The Chinese civilization even more than the Hindu is organized for peace, and the warrior plays a small part in its social scheme. As in the Indian civilization, the leading class is an intellectual one; less priestly than the Brahmin and more official. But unlike the Brahmins, the mandarins, who are the literate men of China, are not a caste; one is not a mandarin by birth, but by education; they are drawn by education and examination from all classes of the community, and the son of a mandarin has no prescriptive right to succeed his father. As a consequence of these differences, while the Brahmins of India are, as a class, ignorant even of their own sacred books, mentally slack, and full of a pretentious assurance, the Chinese mandarin has the energy that comes from hard mental work. But since his education so far has been almost entirely a scholarly study of the classical Chinese literature, his influence has been entirely conservative. Before the days of Alexander the Great, China had already formed itself and set its feet in the way in which it was still walking in the year 1900 A.D. Invaders and dynasties had come and gone, but the routine of life of the yellow civilization remained unchanged.

The traditional Chinese social system recognized four main classes below the priest-emperor.

(*a*) The literary class, which was equivalent partly to the officials of the Western world and partly to its teachers and clerics. In the time of Confucius its education included archery and horsemanship. Rites and music, history and mathematics completed the "Six Accomplishments."

(*b*) The cultivators of the land.

(*c*) The artisans.

(*d*) The mercantile class.

But since from the earliest times it has been the Chinese way to divide the landed possessions of a man among all his sons, there has never been in Chinese history any class of great land-owners, renting their land to tenants, such as most other countries have displayed. The Chinese land has always been cut up into small holdings, which are chiefly freeholds, and cultivated intensively. There are landlords

in China who own one or a few farms and rent them to tenants, but there are no great, permanent estates. When a patch of land, by repeated division, is too small to sustain a man, it is sold to some prospering neighbour, and the former owner drifts to one of the great towns of China to join the mass of wage-earning workers there. In China, for many centuries, there have been these masses of town population with scarcely any property at all, men neither serfs nor slaves, but held to their daily work by their utter impecuniousness. From such masses it is that the soldiers needed by the Chinese government are recruited, and also such gang labour as has been needed for the making of canals, the building of walls, and the like has been drawn. The war captive and the slave class play a smaller part in Chinese history than in any more westerly record of these ages before the Christian era.

One fact, we may note, is common to all these three stories of developing social structure, and that is the immense power exercised by the educated class in the early stages before the crown or the commonalty began to read and, consequently, to think for itself. In India, by reason of their exclusiveness, the Brahmins, the educated class, retain their influence to this day; over the masses of China, along entirely different lines and because of the complexities of the written language, the mandarinate has prevailed. The diversity of race and tradition in the more various and eventful world of the West has delayed, and perhaps arrested for ever, any parallel organization of the specially intellectual elements of society into a class ascendancy. In the Western world, as we have already noted, education early "slopped over," and soaked away out of the control of any special class; it escaped from the limitation of castes and priesthoods and traditions into the general life of the community. Writing and reading had been simplified down to a point when it was no longer possible to make a cult and mystery of them. It may be due to the peculiar elaboration and difficulty of the Chinese characters, rather than to any racial difference, that the same thing did not happen to the same extent in China.

§ 8

In these last six chapters we have traced in outline the whole process by which, in the course of 5000 or 6000 years — that is to say, in something between 150 and 200 generations — mankind passed from the stage of early Neolithic husbandry, in which the primitive skin-clad family tribe reaped and stored in their rude mud huts the wild-growing fodder and grain-bearing grasses with sickles of stone, to the days of the fourth century B.C., when all round the shores of the Mediterranean and up the Nile, and across Asia to India, and again over the great alluvial areas of China, spread the fields of human cultivation and busy cities, great temples, and the coming and going of human commerce. Galleys and lateen-sailed ships entered and left crowded harbours, and made their careful way from headland to headland and from headland to island, keeping always close to the land. Phœnician shipping under Egyptian owners was making its way into the East Indies and perhaps even further into the Pacific. Across the deserts of Africa and Arabia and through Turkestan toiled the caravans with their remote trade; silk was already coming from China, ivory from Central Africa, and tin from Britain to the centres of this new life in the world. Men had learnt to weave fine linen and delicate fabrics of coloured wool; they could bleach and dye; they had iron as well as copper, bronze, silver, and gold; they had made the most beautiful pottery and porcelain; there was hardly a variety of precious stone in the world that they had not found and cut and polished; they could read and write; divert the course of rivers, pile pyramids, and make walls a thousand miles long. The fifty or sixty centuries in which all this had to be achieved may seem a long time in comparison with the threescore and ten years of a single human life, but it is utterly inconsiderable in comparison with the stretches of geological time. Measuring backward from these Alexandrian cities to the days of the first stone implements, the *rostro-carinate* implements of the Pliocene Age, gives us an extent of time fully a hundred times as long.

We have tried in this account, and with the help of maps and figures and time charts, to give a just idea of the order and shape of these fifty or sixty centuries. Our business is with that outline. We have named but a few names of individuals; though henceforth the personal names must increase in number. But the content of this

outline that we have drawn here in a few diagrams and charts cannot but touch the imagination. If only we could look closelier, we should see through all these sixty centuries a procession of lives more and more akin in their fashion to our own. We have shown how the naked Palæolithic savage gave place to the Neolithic cultivator, a type of man still to be found in the backward places of the world. We have given an illustration of Sumerian soldiers copied from a carved stone that was set up long before the days when the Semitic Sargon I conquered the land. Day by day some busy brownish man carved those figures, and, no doubt, whistled as he carved. In those days the plain of the Egyptian delta was crowded with gangs of swarthy workmen unloading the stone that had come down the Nile to add a fresh course to the current pyramid. One might paint a thousand scenes from those ages: of some hawker merchant in Egypt spreading his stock of Babylonish garments before the eyes of some pretty, rich lady; of a miscellaneous crowd swarming between the pylons to some temple festival at Thebes; of an excited, dark-eyed audience of Cretans like the Spaniards of to-day, watching a bull-fight, with the bull-fighters in trousers and tightly girded, exactly like any contemporary bull-fighter; of children learning their cuneiform signs — at Nippur the clay exercise tiles of a school have been found; of a woman with a sick husband at home slipping into some great temple in Carthage to make a vow for his recovery. Or perhaps it is a wild Greek, skin-clad and armed with a bronze axe, standing motionless on some Illyrian mountain crest, struck with amazement at his first vision of a many-oared Cretan galley crawling like a great insect across the amethystine mirror of the Adriatic Sea. He went home to tell his folk a strange story of a monster, Briareus with his hundred arms. Of millions of such stitches in each of these 200 generations is the fabric of this history woven. But unless they mark the presence of a primary seam or join, we cannot pause now to examine any of these stitches.

BOOK IV. JUDEA, GREECE, AND INDIA

XXI

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES AND THE PROPHETS

§ 1. *The Place of the Israelites in History.* § 2. *Saul, David, and Solomon.* § 3. *The Jews a People of Mixed Origin.* § 4. *The Importance of the Hebrew Prophets.*

§ 1

WE are now in a position to place in their proper relationship to this general outline of human history the Israelites, and the most remarkable collection of ancient documents in the world, that collection which is known to all Christian peoples as the Old Testament. We find in these documents the most interesting and valuable lights upon the development of civilization, and the clearest indications of a new spirit that was coming into human affairs during the struggles of Egypt and Assyria for predominance in the world of men.

All the books that constitute the Old Testament were certainly in existence, and in very much their present form, at latest by the year 100 B.C. They were probably already recognized as sacred writings in the time of Alexander the Great (330 B.C.), and known and read with the utmost respect a hundred years before his time. At that time some of them were of comparatively recent composition; others were already of very considerable antiquity. They were the sacred literature of a people, the Jews, who, except for a small remnant of common people, had recently been deported to Babylonia from their own country in 587 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar II, the Chaldean. They had returned to their city, Jerusalem, and had rebuilt their temple there under the auspices of Cyrus, that Persian conqueror who, we have already noted, in 539 B.C. overthrew Nabonidus, the last of the Chaldean rulers in Babylon. The Babylonian Captivity had lasted about fifty years, and many authorities are of opinion that there was a considerable admixture during that period both of race and ideas with the Babylonians.

The position of the land of Judea and of Jerusalem, its capital, is a

peculiar one. The country is a band-shaped strip between the Mediterranean to the west and the desert beyond the Jordan to the east; through it lies the natural high road between the Hittites, Syria, Assyria, and Babylonia to the north and Egypt to the south. It was a country predestined, therefore, to a stormy history. Across it Egypt, and whatever power was ascendant in the north, fought for empire; against its people they fought for a trade route. It had itself neither the area, the agricultural possibilities, nor the mineral wealth to be important. The story of its people that these scriptures have preserved runs like a commentary to the greater history of the two systems of civilization to the north and south and of the sea peoples to the west.

These scriptures consist of a number of different elements. The first five books, the *Pentateuch*, were early regarded with peculiar respect. They begin in the form of a universal history with a double account of the Creation of the world and mankind, of the early life of the race, and of a great Flood by which, except for certain favoured individuals, mankind was destroyed. Excavations have revealed Babylonian versions of both the Creation story and the Flood story of prior date to the restoration of the Jews, and it is therefore argued by Biblical critics that these opening chapters were acquired by the Jews during their captivity. They constitute the first ten chapters of Genesis. There follows a history of the fathers and founders of the Hebrew nation, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are presented as patriarchal Bedouin chiefs, living the life of nomadic shepherds in the country between Babylonia and Egypt. The existing Biblical account is said by the critics to be made up out of several pre-existing versions; but whatever its origins, the story, as we have it to-day, is full of colour and vitality. What is called Palestine to-day was at that time the land of Canaan, inhabited by a Semitic people called the Canaanites, closely related to the Phœnicians who founded Tyre and Sidon, and to the Amorites who took Babylon and, under Hammurabi, founded the first Babylonian Empire. The Canaanites were a settled folk in the days — which were perhaps contemporary with the days of Hammurabi — when Abraham's flocks and herds passed through the land. The God of Abraham, says the Bible narrative, promised this smiling land of prosperous cities to him and to his children. To the book of Genesis the reader must go to read

how Abraham, being childless, doubted this promise, and of the births of Ishmael and Isaac. And in Genesis too, he will find the lives of Isaac and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, and of the twelve sons of Israel; and how in the days of a great famine they went down into Egypt. With that, Genesis, the first book of the Pentateuch, ends. The next book, Exodus, is concerned with the story of Moses.

The story of the settlement and slavery of the children of Israel in Egypt is a difficult one. There is an Egyptian record of a settlement of certain Semitic peoples in the land of Goshen by the Pharaoh Rameses II, and it is stated that they were drawn into Egypt by want of food. But of the life and career of Moses there is no Egyptian record at all; there is no account of any plagues of Egypt or of any Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea. There is much about the story of Moses that has a mythical flavour, and one of the most remarkable incidents in it, his concealment by his mother in an ark of bulrushes, has also been found in an ancient Sumerian inscription made at least a thousand years before his time by that Sargon I who founded the ancient Akkadian Sumerian Empire. It runs:

"Sargon, the powerful king, the king of Akkadia am I, my mother was poor, my father I knew not; the brother of my father lived in the mountains.... My mother, who was poor, secretly gave birth to me; she placed me in a *basket of reeds*, she shut up the mouth of it with bitumen, she abandoned me to the river, which did not overwhelm me. The river bore me away and brought me to Akki the irrigator. Akki the irrigator received me in the goodness of his heart. Akki the irrigator reared me to boyhood. Akki the irrigator made me a gardener. My service as a gardener was pleasing unto Istar and I became king."

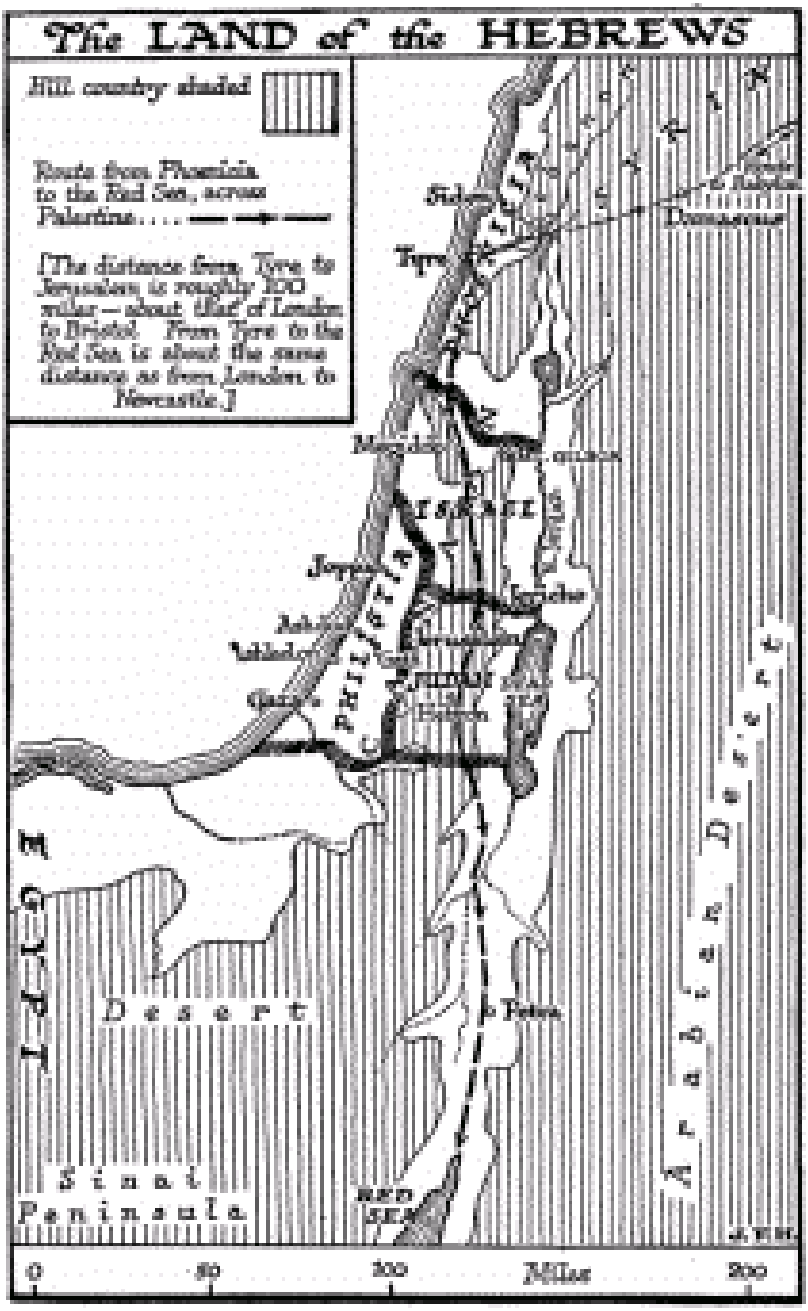
The LAND of the HEBREWS
Hill country shaded
Route from Phoenicia to the Red Sea, across Palestine
[The distance from Tyre to Jerusalem is roughly 100 miles—about half of London to Bristol. From Tyre to the Red Sea is about the same distance as from London to Newcastle.]
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Megiddo
Jaffa
Ashdod
Gaza
PHILISTIA
Jerusalem
Hebron
Petra
Egypt
Desert
Sinai Peninsula
RED SEA
Arabian Desert
0
50
100
Miles
200

This is perplexing. Still more perplexing is the discovery of a clay tablet written by the Egyptian governors of a city in Canaan to the Pharaoh Amenophis IV, who came in the XVIIIth Dynasty before Rameses II, apparently mentioning the Hebrews by name and declaring that they are overrunning Canaan. Manifestly, if the Hebrews were conquering Canaan in the time of the XVIIIth Dynasty, they could not have been made captive and oppressed, before they conquered Canaan, by Rameses II of the XIXth Dynasty. But it is quite understandable that the Exodus story, written long after the events it narrates, may have concentrated and simplified, and perhaps personified and symbolized, what was really a long and complicated history of tribal invasions. One Hebrew tribe may have drifted down into Egypt and become enslaved, while the others were already attacking the outlying Canaanite cities. It is even possible that the land of the captivity was not Egypt (Hebrew, Misraim), but Misrim in the north of Arabia, on the other side of the Red Sea. These questions are discussed fully and acutely in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* (articles *Moses* and *Exodus*), to which the curious reader must be referred.

Two other books of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy and Leviticus, are concerned with the Law and the priestly rules. The book of Numbers takes up the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert and their invasion of Canaan.

Whatever the true particulars of the Hebrew invasion of Canaan may be, there can be no doubt that the country they invaded had changed very greatly since the days of the legendary promise, made centuries before, to Abraham. Then it seems to have been largely a Semitic land, with many prosperous trading cities. But great waves of strange peoples had washed along this coast. We have already told how the dark Iberian or Mediterranean peoples of Italy and Greece, the peoples of that Ægean civilization which culminated at Cnossos, were being assailed by the southward movement of Aryan-speaking races, such as the Italians and Greeks, and how Cnossos was sacked about 1400 B.C., and destroyed altogether about 1000 B.C. It is now evident that the people of these Ægean seaports were crossing the sea in search of securer land nests. They invaded the Egyptian delta and the African coast to the west, they formed alliances with the Hittites

and other Aryan or Aryanized races. This happened after the time of Rameses II, in the time of Rameses III. Egyptian monuments record great sea fights, and also a march of these people along the coast of Palestine towards Egypt. Their transport was in the ox-carts characteristic of the Aryan tribes, and it is clear that these Cretans were acting in alliance with some early Aryan invaders. No connected narrative of these conflicts that went on between 1300 B.C. and 1000 B.C. has yet been made out, but it is evident from the Bible narrative, that when the Hebrews under Joshua pursued their slow subjugation of the promised land, they came against a new people, the Philistines, unknown to Abraham, who were settling along the coast in a series of cities of which Gaza, Gath, Ashdod, Ascalon, and Joppa became the chief, who were really, like the Hebrews, newcomers, and probably chiefly these Cretans from the sea and from the north. The invasion, therefore, that began as an attack upon the Canaanites, speedily became a long and not very successful struggle for the coveted and promised land with these much more formidable newcomers, the Philistines.

It cannot be said that the promised land was ever completely in the grasp of the Hebrews. Following after the Pentateuch in the Bible come the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth (a digression), Samuel I and II, and Kings I and II, with Chronicles repeating with variation much of the matter of Samuel II and Kings; there is a growing flavour of reality in most of this latter history, and in these books we find the Philistines steadfastly in possession of the fertile lowlands of the south, and the Canaanites and Phœnicians holding out against the Israelites in the north. The first triumphs of Joshua are not repeated. The book of Judges is a melancholy catalogue of failures. The people lose heart. They desert the worship of their own god Jehovah, and worship Baal and Ashtaroth (= Bel and Ishtar). They mixed their race with the Philistines, with the Hittites, and so forth, and became, as they have always subsequently been, a racially mixed people. Under a series of wise men and heroes they wage a generally unsuccessful and never very united warfare against their enemies. In succession they are conquered by the Moabites, the Canaanites, the Midianites, and the Philistines. The story of these conflicts, of Gideon and of Samson and the other heroes who now and then cast a gleam of hope

upon the distresses of Israel, is told in the book of Judges. In the first book of Samuel is told the story of their great disaster at Ebenezer in the days when Eli was judge.

This was a real pitched battle in which the Israelites lost 30,000 (!) men. They had previously suffered a reverse and lost 4000 men, and then they brought out their most sacred symbol, the Ark of the Covenant of God.

"And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, 'What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?' And they understood, that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, 'God is come into the camp,' And they said, 'Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.'

"And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

"And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, 'What meaneth the noise of this tumult?' And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, 'I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army.' And he said, 'What is there done, my son?' And the messenger answered and said, 'Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and

the ark of God is taken.' And it came to pass when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

"And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, 'Fear not; for thou hast born a son! But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child I-chabod, saying, 'The glory is departed from Israel:' because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband." (1 Sam., chap. iv.)

The successor of Eli and the last of the Judges was Samuel, and at the end of his rule came an event in the history of Israel which paralleled and was suggested by the experience of the greater nations around. A king arose. We are told in vivid language the plain issue between the more ancient rule of priestcraft and the newer fashion in human affairs. It is impossible to avoid a second quotation.

"Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him: 'Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.'

"But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, 'Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.'

"And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, 'This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some

shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectioners, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.'

"Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, 'Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.'" (I Sam., chap. viii.)

§ 2

But the nature and position of their land was against the Hebrews, and their first king Saul was no more successful than their judges. The long intrigues of the adventurer David against Saul are told in the rest of the first book of Samuel, and the end of Saul was utter defeat upon Mount Gilboa. His army was overwhelmed by the Philistine archers.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in Mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan." (I Sam., chap, xxxi.)

David (990 B.C. roughly) was more politic and successful than his predecessor, and he seems to have placed himself under the protection of Hiram, King of Tyre. This Phœnician alliance sustained him, and was the essential element in the greatness of his son

Solomon. His story, with its constant assassinations and executions, reads rather like the history of some savage chief than of a civilized monarch. It is told with great vividness in the second book of Samuel.

The first book of Kings begins with the reign of King Solomon (960 B.C. roughly). The most interesting thing in that story, from the point of view of the general historian, is the relationship of Solomon to the national religion and the priesthood, and his dealings with the tabernacle, the priest Zadok, and the prophet Nathan.

The opening of Solomon's reign is as bloody as his father's. The last recorded speech of David arranges for the murder of Shimei; his last recorded word is "blood." "But his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood," he says, pointing out that though old Shimei is protected by a vow David had made to the Lord so long as David lives, there is nothing to bind Solomon in that matter. Solomon proceeds to murder his brother, who has sought the throne but quailed and made submission. He then deals freely with his brother's party. The weak hold of religion upon the racially and mentally confused Hebrews at that time is shown by the ease with which he replaces the hostile chief priest by his own adherent Zadok, and still more strikingly by the murder of Joab by Benaiah, Solomon's chief ruffian, in the Tabernacle, while the victim is claiming sanctuary and holding to the very horns of Jehovah's altar. Then Solomon sets to work, in what was for that time a thoroughly modern spirit, to recast the religion of his people. He continues the alliance with Hiram, King of Sidon, who uses Solomon's kingdom as a high road by which to reach and build shipping upon the Red Sea, and a hitherto unheard-of wealth accumulates in Jerusalem as a result of this partnership. Gang labour appears in Israel; Solomon sends relays of men to cut cedarwood in Lebanon under Hiram, and organizes a service of porters through the land. (There is much in all this to remind the reader of the relations of some Central African chief to a European trading concern.) Solomon then builds a palace for himself, and a temple not nearly as big for Jehovah. Hitherto, the Ark of the Covenant, the divine symbol of these ancient Hebrews, had abode in a large tent, which had been shifted from one high place to another, and sacrifices had been offered to the God of Israel upon a number of

different high places. Now the ark is brought into the golden splendours of the inner chamber of a temple of cedar-sheathed stone, and put between two great winged figures of gilded olivewood, and sacrifices are henceforth to be made only upon the altar before it.

This centralizing innovation will remind the reader of both Akhnaton and Nabonidus. Such things as this are done successfully only when the prestige and tradition and learning of the priestly order has sunken to a very low level.

"And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required; the porters also by their courses at every gate; for so had David the man of God commanded. And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures."

Neither Solomon's establishment of the worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem upon this new footing, nor his vision of and conversation with his God at the opening of his reign, stood in the way of his developing a sort of theological flirtatiousness in his declining years. He married widely, if only for reasons of state and splendour, and he entertained his numerous wives by sacrificing to their national deities, to the Sidonian goddess Ashtaroth (Ishtar), to Chemosh (a Moabitish god), to Moloch, and so forth. The Bible account of Solomon does, in fact, show us a king and a confused people, both superstitious and mentally unstable, in no way more religious than any other people of the surrounding world.

A point of considerable interest in the story of Solomon, because it marks a phase in Egyptian affairs, is his marriage to a daughter of Pharaoh: This must have been one of the Pharaohs of the XXIst Dynasty: In the great days of Amenophis III, as the Tel Amarna letters witness, Pharaoh could condescend to receive a Babylonian princess into his harem, but he refused absolutely to grant so divine a creature as an Egyptian princess in marriage to the Babylonian monarch. It points to the steady decline of Egyptian prestige that now, three centuries later, such a petty monarch as Solomon could wed on equal terms with an Egyptian princess. There was, however, a revival with the next Egyptian dynasty (XXII); and the Pharaoh

Shishak, the founder, taking advantage of the cleavage between Israel and Judah, which had been developing through the reigns of both David and Solomon, took Jerusalem and looted the all-too-brief splendours both of the new temple and of the king's house.

Shishak seems also to have subjugated Philistia. From this time onward it is to be noted that the Philistines fade in importance. They had already lost their Cretan language and adopted that of the Semites they had conquered, and although their cities remain more or less independent, they merge gradually into the general Semitic life of Palestine.

There is evidence that the original rude but convincing narrative of Solomon's rule, of his various murders, of his association with Hiram, of his palace and temple building, and the extravagances that weakened and finally tore his kingdom in twain, has been subjected to extensive interpolations and expansions by a later writer, anxious to exaggerate his prosperity and glorify his wisdom. It is not the place here to deal with the criticism of Bible origins, but it is a matter of ordinary common sense rather than of scholarship to note the manifest reality and veracity of the main substance of the account of David and Solomon, an account explaining sometimes and justifying sometimes, but nevertheless relating facts, even the harshest facts, as only a contemporary or almost contemporary writer, convinced that they cannot be concealed, would relate them, and then to remark the sudden lapse into adulation when the inserted passages occur. It is a striking tribute to the power of the written assertion over realities in men's minds that this Bible narrative has imposed, not only upon the Christian, but upon the Moslim world, the belief that King Solomon was not only one of the most magnificent, but one of the wisest of men. Yet the first book of Kings tells in detail his utmost splendours, and beside the beauty and wonder of the buildings and organizations of such great monarchs as Thotmes III or Rameses II or half a dozen other Pharaohs, or of Sargon II or Sardanapalus or Nebuchadnezzar the Great, they are trivial. His temple, measured internally, was twenty cubits broad, about 35 feet — that is, the breadth of a small villa residence — and sixty cubits, say, 100 feet, long. And as for his wisdom and statescraft, one need go no further than the Bible to see that Solomon was a mere helper in the wide-reaching schemes of the

trader-king Hiram, and his kingdom a pawn between Phœnicia and Egypt. His importance was due largely to the temporary enfeeblement of Egypt, which encouraged the ambition of the Phœnician and made it necessary to propitiate the holder of the key to an alternate trade route to the East. To his own people Solomon was a wasteful and oppressive monarch, and already before his death his kingdom was splitting, visibly to all men.

With the reign of King Solomon the brief glory of the Hebrews ends; the northern and richer section of his kingdom, long oppressed by taxation to sustain his splendours, breaks off from Jerusalem to become the separate kingdom of Israel, and this split ruptures that linking connection between Sidon and the Red Sea by which Solomon's gleam of wealth was possible. There is no more wealth in Hebrew history. Jerusalem remains the capital of one tribe, the tribe of Judah, the capital of a land of barren hills, cut off by Philistia from the sea and surrounded by enemies.

The tales of wars, of religious conflicts, of usurpations, assassinations, and of fratricidal murders to secure the throne goes on for three centuries. It is a tale frankly barbaric. Israel wars with Judah and the neighbouring states; forms alliances first with one and then with the other. The power of Aramean Syria burns like a baleful star over the affairs of the Hebrews, and then there rises behind it the great and growing power of the last Assyrian Empire. For three centuries the life of the Hebrews was like the life of a man who insists upon living in the middle of a busy thoroughfare, and is consequently being run over constantly by omnibuses and motor-lorries.

"Pul" (apparently the same person as Tiglath Pileser III) is, according to the Bible narrative, the first Assyrian monarch to appear upon the Hebrew horizon, and Menahem buys him off with a thousand talents of silver (738 B.C.). But the power of Assyria is heading straight for the now aged and decadent land of Egypt, and the line of attack lies through Judea; Tiglath Pileser III returns and Shalmaneser follows in his steps, the King of Israel intrigues for help with Egypt, that "broken reed," and in 721 B.C., as we have already noted, his kingdom is swept off into captivity and utterly lost to history. The same fate hung over Judah, but for a little while it was

averted. The fate of Sennacherib's army in the reign of King Hezekiah (701 B.C.), and how he was murdered by his sons (II Kings xix. 37), we have already mentioned. The subsequent subjugation of Egypt by Assyria finds no mention in Holy Writ, but it is clear that before the reign of Sennacherib, King Hezekiah had carried on a diplomatic correspondence with Babylon (700 B.C.), which was in revolt against Sargon II of Assyria. There followed the conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon, and then for a time Assyria was occupied with her own troubles; the Scythians and Medes and Persians were pressing her on the north, and Babylon was in insurrection. As we have already noted, Egypt, relieved for a time from Assyrian pressure, entered upon a phase of revival, first under Psammetichus and then under Necho II.

Again the little country in between made mistakes in its alliances. But on neither side was there safety. Josiah opposed Necho, and was slain at the battle of Megiddo (608 B.C.). The king of Judah became an Egyptian tributary. Then when Necho, after pushing as far as the Euphrates, fell before Nebuchadnezzar II, Judah fell with him (604 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar, after a trial of three puppet kings, carried off the greater part of the people into captivity in Babylon (586 b.c.), and the rest, after a rising and a massacre of Babylonian officials, took refuge from the vengeance of Chaldea in Egypt.

"And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia." (II Chron. xxxvi. 18, 19, 20.)

So the four centuries of Hebrew kingship comes to an end. From first to last it was a mere incident in the larger and greater history of Egypt, Syria, Assyria, and Phœnicia. But out of it there were now to arise moral and intellectual consequences of primary importance to all mankind.

§ 3

The Jews who returned, after an interval of more than two generations, to Jerusalem from Babylonia in the time of Cyrus were a very different people from the warring Baal worshippers and Jehovah worshippers, the sacrificers in the high places and sacrificers at Jerusalem of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The plain fact of the Bible narrative is that the Jews went to Babylon barbarians and came back civilized. They went a confused and divided multitude, with no national self-consciousness; they came back with an intense and exclusive national spirit. They went with no common literature generally known to them, for it was only about forty years before the captivity that king Josiah is said to have discovered "a book of the law" in the temple (II Kings xxii.), and, besides that, there is not a hint in the record of any reading of books; and they returned with most of their material for the Old Testament. It is manifest that, relieved of their bickering and murderous kings, restrained from politics and in the intellectually stimulating atmosphere of that Babylonian world, the Jewish mind made a great step forward during the captivity.

It was an age of historical inquiry and learning in Babylonia. The Babylonian influences that had made Sardanapalus collect a great library of ancient writings in Nineveh were still at work. We have already told how Nabonidus was so preoccupied with antiquarian research as to neglect the defence of his kingdom against Cyrus. Everything, therefore, contributed to set the exiled Jews inquiring into their own history, and they found an inspiring leader in the prophet Ezekiel. From such hidden and forgotten records as they had with them, genealogies, contemporary histories of David, Solomon, and their other kings, legends and traditions, they made out and amplified their own story, and told it to Babylon and themselves. The story of the Creation and the Flood, much of the story of Moses, much of Samson, were probably incorporated from Babylonian sources. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem, only the Pentateuch had been put together into one book, but the grouping of the rest of the historical books was bound to follow.

The rest of their literature remained for some centuries as separate books, to which a very variable amount of respect was paid. Some of the later books are frankly post-captivity compositions. Over all this

literature were thrown certain leading ideas. There was an idea, which even these books themselves gainsay in detail, that all the people were pure-blooded children of Abraham; there was next an idea of a promise made by Jehovah to Abraham that he would exalt the Jewish race above all other races; and, thirdly, there was the belief first of all that Jehovah was the greatest and most powerful of tribal gods, and then that he was a god above all other gods, and at last that he was the only true god. The Jews became convinced at last, as a people, that they were the chosen people of the one God of all the earth.

And arising very naturally out of these three ideas, was a fourth, the idea of a coming leader, a saviour, a Messiah who would realize the long-postponed promises of Jehovah.

This welding together of the Jews into one tradition-cemented people in the course of the "seventy years" is the first instance in history of the new power of the written word in human affairs. It was a mental consolidation that did much more than unite the people who returned to Jerusalem. This idea of belonging to a chosen race predestined to pre-eminence was a very attractive one. It possessed also those Jews who remained in Babylonia. Its literature reached the Jews now established in Egypt. It affected the mixed people who had been placed in Samaria, the old capital of the kings of Israel when the ten tribes were deported to Media. It inspired a great number of Babylonians and the like to claim Abraham as their father, and thrust their company upon the returning Jews. Ammonites and Moabites became adherents. The book of Nehemiah is full of the distress occasioned by this invasion of the privileges of the chosen. The Jews were already a people dispersed in many lands and cities, when their minds and hopes were unified and they became an exclusive people. But at first their exclusiveness is merely to preserve soundness of doctrine and worship, warned by such lamentable lapses as those of King Solomon. To genuine proselytes of whatever race, Judaism long held out welcoming arms.

To Phœnicians after the falls of Tyre and Carthage, conversion to Judaism must have been particularly easy and attractive. Their language was closely akin to Hebrew. It is possible that the great majority of African and Spanish Jews are really of Phœnician origin.

There were also great Arabian accessions. In South Russia, as we shall note later, there were even Mongolian Jews.

§ 4

The historical books from Genesis to Nehemiah, upon which the idea of the promise to the chosen people had been imposed later, were no doubt the backbone of Jewish mental unity, but they by no means complete the Hebrew literature from which finally the Bible was made up. Of such books as Job, said to be an imitation of Greek tragedy, the Song of Solomon, the Psalms, Proverbs, and others, there is no time to write in this *Outline*, but it is necessary to deal with the books known as "the Prophets" with some fullness. For those books are almost the earliest and certainly the best evidence of the appearance of a new kind of leading in human affairs.

These prophets are not a new class in the community; they are of the most various origins — Ezekiel was of the priestly caste and of priestly sympathies, and Amos was a shepherd; but they have this in common, that they bring into life a religious force outside the sacrifices and formalities of priesthood and temple. The earlier prophets seem most like the earlier priests, they are oracular, they give advice and foretell events; it is quite possible that at first, in the days when there were many high places in the land and religious ideas were comparatively unsettled, there was no great distinction between priest and prophet. The prophets danced, it would seem, somewhat after the Dervish fashion, and uttered oracles. Generally they wore a distinctive mantle of rough goat-skin. They kept up the nomadic tradition as against the "new ways" of the settlement. But after the building of the temple and the organization of the priesthood, the prophetic type remains over and outside the formal religious scheme. They were probably always more or less of an annoyance to the priests. They became informal advisers upon public affairs, denouncers of sin and strange practices, "self-constituted," as we should say, having no sanction but an inner light. "Now the word of the Lord came unto" — so and so; that is the formula.

In the latter and most troubled days of the kingdom of Judah, as Egypt, North Arabia, Assyria, and then Babylonia closed like a vice

upon the land, these prophets became very significant and powerful. Their appeal was to anxious and fearful minds, and at first their exhortation was chiefly towards repentance, the pulling down of this or that high place, the restoration of worship in Jerusalem, or the like. But through some of the prophecies there runs already a note like the note of what we call nowadays a "social reformer." The rich are "grinding the faces of the poor"; the luxurious are consuming the children's bread; influential and wealthy people make friends with and imitate the splendours and vices of foreigners, and sacrifice the common people to these new fashions; and this is hateful to Jehovah, who will certainly punish the land.

But with the broadening of ideas that came with the Captivity, the tenour of prophecy broadens and changes. The jealous pettiness that disfigures the earlier tribal ideas of God give place to a new idea of a god of universal righteousness. It is clear that the increasing influence of prophets was not confined to the Jewish people; it was something that was going on in those days all over the Semitic world. The breaking down of nations and kingdoms to form the great and changing empires of that age, the smashing up of cults and priesthoods, the mutual discrediting of temple by temple in their rivalries and disputes — all these influences were releasing men's minds to a freer and wider religious outlook. The temples had accumulated great stores of golden vessels and lost their hold upon the imaginations of men. It is difficult to estimate whether, amidst these constant wars, life had become more uncertain and unhappy than it had ever been before, but there can be no doubt that men had become more conscious of its miseries and insecurities. Except for the weak and the women, there remained little comfort or assurance in the sacrifices, ritual and formal devotions of the temples. Such was the world to which the later prophets of Israel began to talk of the One God, and of a Promise that some day the world should come to peace and unity and happiness. This great God that men were now discovering lived in a temple "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There can be little doubt of a great body of such thought and utterance in Babylonia, Egypt, and throughout the Semitic east. The prophetic books of the Bible can be but specimens of the prophesyings of that time....

We have already drawn attention to the gradual escape of writing and knowledge from their original limitation to the priesthood and the temple precincts, from the shell in which they were first developed and cherished. We have taken Herodotus as an interesting specimen of what we have called the free intelligence of mankind. Now here we are dealing with a similar overflow of moral ideas into the general community. The Hebrew prophets, and the steady expansion of their ideas towards one God in all the world, is a parallel development of the free conscience of mankind. From this time onward there runs through human thought, now weakly and obscurely, now gathering power, the idea of one rule in the world, and of a promise and possibility of an active and splendid peace and happiness in human affairs. From being a temple religion of the old type, the Jewish religion becomes, to a large extent, a prophetic and creative religion of a new type. Prophet succeeds prophet. Later on, as we shall tell, there was born a prophet of unprecedented power, Jesus, whose followers founded the great universal religion of Christianity. Still later Muhammad, another prophet, appears in Arabia and founds Islam. In spite of very distinctive features of their own, these two teachers do in a manner arise out of, and in succession to these Jewish prophets. It is not the place of the historian to discuss the truth and falsity of religion, but it is his business to record the appearance of great constructive ideas. Two thousand four hundred years ago, and six or seven or eight thousand years after the walls of the first Sumerian cities arose, the ideas of the moral unity of mankind and of a world peace had come into the world.

XXII

THE GREEKS AND THE PERSIANS

§ 1. *The Hellenic Peoples.* § 2. *Distinctive Features of Hellenic Civilization.* § 3. *Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy in Greece.* § 4. *The Kingdom of Lydia.* § 5. *The Rise of the Persians in the East.* § 6. *The Story of Crœsus.* § 7. *Darius Invades Russia.* § 8. *The Battle of Marathon.* § 9. *Thermopylæ and Salamis.* § 10. *Platæa and Mycale.*

§ 1

AND now our history must go back again to those Aryan-speaking peoples of whose early beginnings we have given an account in Chapters XIV and XV. We must, for the sake of precision, repeat here two warnings we have already given the reader: first, that we use the word Aryan in its widest sense, to express all the early peoples who spoke languages of the "Indo-Germanic" or "Indo-European" group; and, secondly, that when we use the word Aryan we do not imply any racial purity.

The original speakers of the fundamental Aryan language, 2000 or 3000 years B.C., were probably a specialized and distinctive Nordic race of fair white men, accustomed to forests and cattle, who wandered east of the Rhine and through the forests of the Danube valley, the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor, and eastward to the north and west of the great Central Asian Sea; but very early they had encountered and mixed themselves extensively, and as they spread they continued to mix themselves with other races, with races of uncertain affinities in Asia Minor and with Iberian and Mediterranean peoples of the dark-haired white race. For instance, the Aryans, spreading and pressing westward in successive waves of Keltic-speaking peoples through Gaul and Britain and Ireland, mixed more and more with Iberian races, and were affected more and more by that Iberian blood and their speech by the characteristics of the language their Keltic tongue superseded. Other waves of Keltic peoples washed with diminishing force into Spain and Portugal, where to this day the pre-Keltic strain is altogether dominant

although the languages spoken are Aryan. Northward, in Europe, the Aryan peoples were spreading into hitherto uninhabited country, and so remaining racially more purely Nordic blonds. They had already reached Scandinavia many centuries B.C.

From their original range of wandering, other Aryan tribes spread to the north as well as to the south of the Black Sea, and ultimately, as these seas shrank and made way for them, to the north and east of the Caspian, and so began to come into conflict with and mix also with Mongolian peoples of the Ural-Altaic linguistic group, the horse-keeping people of the grassy steppes of Central Asia. From these Mongolian races the Aryans seem to have acquired the use of the horse for riding and warfare. There were three or four prehistoric varieties or sub-species of horse in Europe and Asia, but it was the steppe or semi-desert lands that first gave horses of a build adapted to other than food uses. All these peoples, it must be understood, shifted their ground rapidly, a succession of bad seasons might drive them many hundreds of miles, and it is only in a very rough and provisional manner that their "beats" can now be indicated. Every summer they went north, every winter they swung south again. This annual swing covered sometimes hundreds of miles. On our maps, for the sake of simplicity, we represent the shifting of nomadic peoples by a straight line; but really they moved in annual swings, as the broom of a servant who is sweeping out a passage swishes from side to side as she advances. Spreading round the north of the Black Sea, and probably to the north of the Caspian, from the range of the original Teutonic tribes of Central and North-central Europe to the Iranian peoples who became the Medes and Persians and (Aryan) Hindus, were the grazing lands of a confusion of tribes, about whom it is truer to be vague than precise, such as the Cimmerians, the Sarmatians, and those Scythians who, together with the Medes and Persians, came into effective contact with the Assyrian Empire by 1000 B.C. or earlier.

East and south of the Black Sea, between the Danube and the Medes and Persians, and to the north of the Semitic and Mediterranean peoples of the sea coasts and peninsulas, ranged another series of equally ill-defined Aryan tribes, moving easily from place to place and intermixing freely — to the great confusion of

historians. They seem, for instance, to have broken up and assimilated the Hittite civilization, which was probably pre-Aryan in its origin. They were, perhaps, not so far advanced along the nomadic line as the Scythians of the great plains.

The general characteristics of the original Aryan peoples we have already discussed in Chapter XV. They were a forest people, not a steppe people, and, consequently, wasteful of wood; they were a cattle people and not a horse people. The Greeks appear in the dim light before the dawn of history (say 1500 B.C.), as one of the wandering imperfectly nomadic Aryan peoples who were gradually extending the range of their pasturage southward into the Balkan peninsula and coming into conflict and mixing with that preceding Ægean civilization of which Cnossos was the crown.

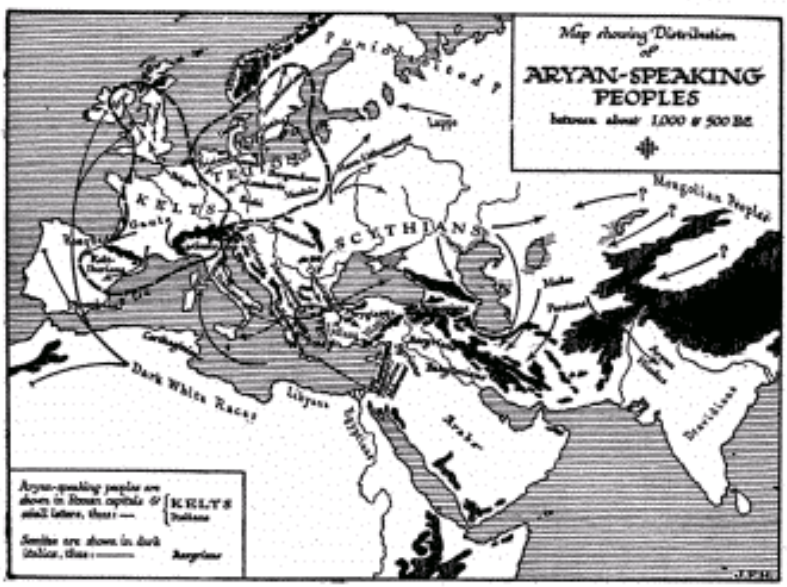

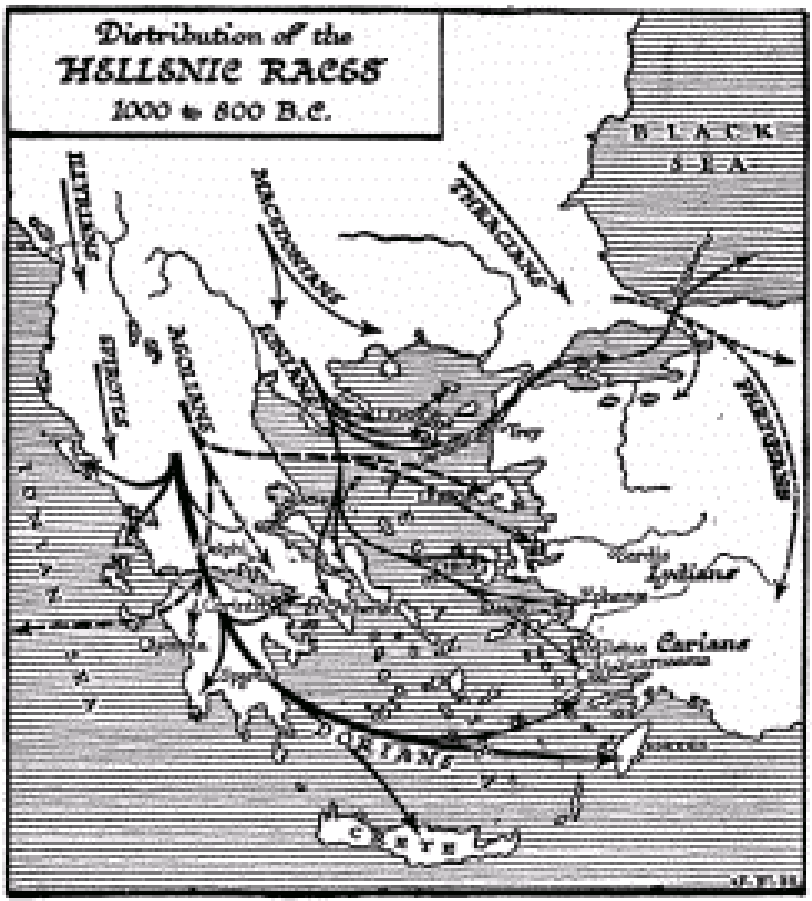

In the Homeric poems these Greek tribes speak one common language, and a common tradition upheld by the epic poems keeps them together in a loose unity; they call their various tribes by a common name, *Hellenes*. They probably came in successive waves. Three main variations of the ancient Greek speech are distinguished; the Ionic, the Æolic, and the Doric. There was a great variety of dialects in Greece, almost every city having its own output of literature. The Doric apparently constituted the last and most powerful wave of the migration. These Hellenic tribes conquered and largely destroyed the Ægean civilization that had preceded their arrival; upon its ashes they built up a civilization of their own. They took to the sea and crossed by way of the islands to Asia Minor; and,

sailing through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, spread their settlements along the south, and presently along the north borders of the Black Sea. They spread also over the south of Italy, which was called at last Magna Græcia, and round the northern coast of the Mediterranean. They founded the town of Marseilles on the site of an earlier Phœnician colony. They began settlements in Sicily in rivalry with the Carthaginians as early as 735 B.C.

In the rear of the Greeks proper came the kindred Macedonians and Thracians; on their left wing, the Phrygians crossed by the Bosphorus into Asia Minor.

An early Greek sea-fight. From a painted vase, about 550 B.C.

We find all this distribution of the Greeks effected before the beginnings of written history. By the seventh century B.C. — that is to say, by the time of the Babylonian captivity of the Jews — the landmarks of the ancient world of the pre-Hellenic civilization in Europe have been obliterated. Tiryns and Cnossos are unimportant sites; Mycenæ and Troy survive in legend; the great cities of this new Greek world are Athens, Sparta (the capital of Lacedemon), Corinth, Thebes, Samos, Miletus. The world our grandfathers called "Ancient Greece" had arisen on the forgotten ruins of a still more Ancient Greece, in many ways as civilized and artistic, of which to-day we are only beginning to learn through the labours of the excavator. But the newer Ancient Greece, of which we are now telling, still lives vividly in the imaginations and institutions of men because it spoke a beautiful and most expressive Aryan tongue akin to our own, and because it had taken over the Mediterranean alphabet and perfected it

by the addition of vowels, so that reading and writing were now easy arts to learn and practise, and great numbers of people could master them and make a record for later ages.

§ 2

Now this Greek civilization that we find growing up in South Italy and Greece and Asia Minor in the seventh century B.C., is a civilization differing in many important respects from the two great civilized systems whose growths we have already traced, that of the Nile and that of the Two Rivers of Mesopotamia. These civilizations grew through long ages where they are found; they grew slowly about a temple life out of a primitive agriculture; priest kings and god kings consolidated such early city states into empires. But the barbaric Greek herdsmen raiders came southward into a world whose civilization was already an old story. Shipping and agriculture, walled cities and writing, were already there. The Greeks did not grow a civilization of their own; they wrecked one and put another together upon and out of the ruins.

To this we must ascribe the fact that there is no temple-state stage, no stage of priest kings, in the Greek record. The Greeks got at once to the city organization that in the east had grown round the temple. They took over the association of temple and city; the idea was ready-made for them. What impressed them most about the city was probably its wall. It is doubtful if they took to city life and citizenship straight away. At first they lived in open villages outside the ruins of the cities they had destroyed, but there stood the model for them, a continual suggestion. They thought first of a city as a safe place in a time of strife, and of the temple uncritically as a proper feature of the city. They came into this inheritance of a previous civilization with the ideas and traditions of the woodlands still strong in their minds. The heroic social system of the *Iliad* took possession of the land, and adapted itself to the new conditions. As history goes on the Greeks became more religious and superstitious as the faiths of the conquered welled up from below.

We have already said that the social structure of the primitive Aryans was a two-class system of nobles and commoners, the classes

not very sharply marked off from each other, and led in warfare by a king who was simply the head of one of the noble families, *primus inter pares*, a leader among his equals. With the conquest of the aboriginal population and with the building of towns there was added to this simple social arrangement of two classes a lower stratum of farm-workers and skilled and unskilled workers, who were for the most part slaves. But all the Greek communities were not of this "conquest" type. Some were "refugee" cities representing smashed communities, and in these the aboriginal substratum would be missing.

In many of the former cases the survivors of the earlier population formed a subject class, slaves of the state as a whole, as, for instance, the Helots in Sparta. The nobles and commoners became landlords and gentlemen farmers; it was they who directed the shipbuilding and engaged in trade. But some of the poorer free citizens followed mechanic arts, and, as we have already noted, would even pull an oar in a galley for pay. Such priests as there were in this Greek world were either the guardians of shrines and temples or sacrificial functionaries; Aristotle, in his *Politics*, makes them a mere subdivision of his official class. The citizen served as warrior in youth, ruler in his maturity, priest in his old age. The priestly *class*, in comparison with the equivalent class in Egypt and Babylonia, was small and insignificant. The gods of the Greeks proper, the gods of the heroic Greeks, were, as we have already noted, glorified human beings, and they were treated without very much fear or awe; but beneath these gods of the conquering freemen lurked other gods of the subjugated peoples, who found their furtive followers among slaves and women. The original Aryan gods were not expected to work miracles or control men's lives. But Greece, like most of the Eastern world in the thousand years B.C., was much addicted to consulting *oracles* or soothsayers. Delphi was particularly famous for its oracle. "When the Oldest Men in the tribe could not tell you the right thing to do," says Gilbert Murray, "you went to the blessed dead. All oracles were at the tombs of Heroes. They told you what was 'Themis,' what was the right thing to do, or, as religious people would put it now, what was the Will of the God."

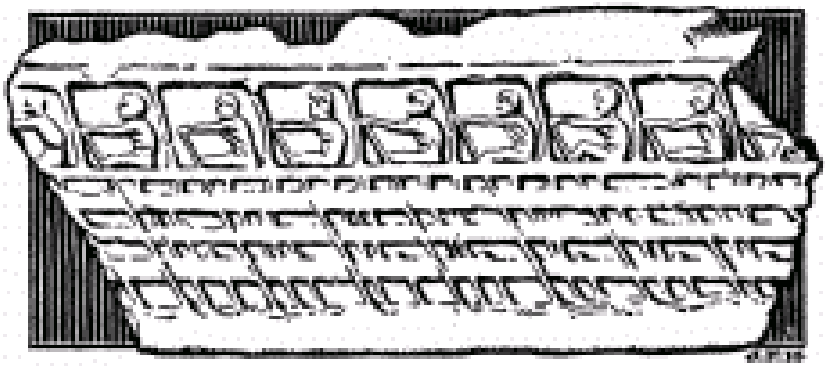

Rowers in an Athenian warship, about 400 B.C. (Fragment of relief found on the Acropolis)

The priests and priestesses of these temples were not united into one class, nor did they exercise any power as a class. It was the nobles and free commoners, two classes which, in some cases, merged into one common body of citizens, who constituted the Greek state. In many cases, especially in great city states, the population of slaves and unenfranchised strangers greatly outnumbered the citizens. But for them the state did not exist; it existed for the select body of citizens alone. It might or might not tolerate the outsider and the slave, but they had no legal voice in their treatment — any more than if it had been a despotism.

This is a social structure differing widely from that of the Eastern monarchies. The exclusive importance of the Greek citizen reminds one a little of the exclusive importance of the children of Israel in the later Jewish state, but there is no equivalent on the Greek side to the prophets and priests, nor to the idea of an over-ruling Jehovah.

Another contrast between the Greek states and any of the human communities to which we have hitherto given attention is their continuous and incurable division. The civilizations of Egypt, Sumeria, China, and no doubt North India, all began in a number of independent city states, each one a city with a few miles of dependent agricultural villages and cultivation around it, but out of

this phase they passed by a process of coalescence into kingdoms and empires. But to the very end of their independent history the Greeks did not coalesce. Commonly, this is ascribed to the geographical conditions under which they lived. Greece is a country cut up into a multitude of valleys by mountain masses and arms of the sea that render intercommunication difficult; so difficult that few cities were able to hold many of the others in subjection for any length of time. Moreover, many Greek cities were on islands and scattered along remote coasts. To the end the largest city states of Greece remained smaller than many English counties; and some had an area of only a few square miles. Athens, the largest of the Greek cities, at the climax of its power had a population of perhaps a third of a million. Hardly any other Greek cities ever exceeded 50,000. Of this, half or more were slaves and strangers, and two-thirds of the free body women and children.

§ 3

The government of these city states varied very widely in its nature. As they settled down after their conquests the Greeks retained for a time the rule of their kings, but these kingdoms drifted back more and more to the rule of the aristocratic class. In Sparta (Lacedemon) kings were still distinguished in the sixth century B.C. The Lacedemonians had a curious system of a double kingship; two kings, drawn from different royal families, ruled together. But most of the Greek city states had become aristocratic republics long before the sixth century. There is, however, a tendency towards slackness and inefficiency in most families that rule by hereditary right; sooner or later they decline; and as the Greeks got out upon the seas and set up colonies and commerce extended, new rich families arose to jostle the old and bring new personalities into power. These *nouveaux riches* became members of an expanded ruling class, a mode of government known as oligarchy — in opposition to aristocracy — though, strictly, the term oligarchy (= government by the few) should of course include hereditary aristocracy as a special case.

In many cities persons of exceptional energy, taking advantage of some social conflict or class grievance, secured a more or less

irregular power in the state. This combination of personality and opportunity has occurred in the United States of America, for example, where men exercising various kinds of informal power are called *bosses*. In Greece they were called *tyrants*. But the tyrant was rather more than a boss; he was recognized as a monarch, and claimed the authority of a monarch. The modern boss, on the other hand, shelters behind legal forms which he has "got hold of" and uses for his own ends. Tyrants were distinguished from kings, who claimed some sort of right, some family priority, for example, to rule. They were supported, perhaps, by the poorer class with a grievance; Peisistratus, for example, who was tyrant of Athens, with two intervals of exile, between 560 and 527 b.c., was supported by the poverty-struck Athenian hillmen. Sometimes, as in Greek Sicily, the tyrant stood for the rich against the poor. When, later on, the Persians began to subjugate the Greek cities of Asia Minor, they set up pro-Persian tyrants.

Aristotle, the great philosophical teacher, who was born under the hereditary Macedonian monarchy, and who was for some years tutor to the king's son, distinguishes in his *Politics* between kings who ruled by an admitted and inherent right, such as the King of Macedonia, whom he served, and tyrants who ruled without the consent of the governed. As a matter of fact, it is hard to conceive of a tyrant ruling without the consent of many, and the active participation of a substantial number of his subjects; and the devotion and unselfishness of your "true kings" has been known to rouse resentment and questioning. Aristotle was also able to say that while the king ruled for the good of the state, the tyrant ruled for his own good. Upon this point, as in his ability to regard slavery as a natural thing and to consider women unfit for freedom and political rights, Aristotle was in harmony with the trend of events about him.

A third form of government that prevailed increasingly in Greece in the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries B.C., was known as *democracy*. As the modern world nowadays is constantly talking of democracy, and as the modern idea of democracy is something widely different from the democracy of the Greek city states, it will be well to be very explicit upon the meaning of democracy in Greece. Democracy then was government by the commonalty, the

Demos; it was government by the whole body of the citizens, by the many as distinguished from the few. But let the modern reader mark that word "citizen." The slave was excluded, the freedman was excluded, the stranger; even the Greek born in the city, whose father had come eight or ten miles from the city beyond the headland, was excluded. The earlier democracies (but not all) demanded a property qualification from the citizen, and property in those days was land; this was subsequently relaxed, but the modern reader will grasp that here was something very different from modern democracy. At the end of the fifth century b.c. this property qualification had been abolished in Athens, for example; but Pericles, a great Athenian statesman of whom we shall have more to tell later, had established a law (451 B.C.) restricting citizenship to those who could establish Athenian descent on both sides. Thus, in the Greek democracies quite as much as in the oligarchies, the citizens formed a *close corporation*, ruling sometimes, as in the case of Athens in its great days, a big population of serfs, slaves, and "outlanders." A modern politician used to the idea, the entirely new and different idea, that democracy in its perfected form means that every adult man and woman shall have a voice in the government, would, if suddenly spirited back to the extremist Greek democracy, regard it as a kind of oligarchy. The only real difference between a Greek "oligarchy" and a Greek democracy was that in the former, the poorer and less important citizens had no voice in the government, and in the latter every citizen had. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, betrays very clearly the practical outcome of this difference. Taxation sat lightly on the rich in the oligarchies; the democracies, on the other hand, taxed the rich, and generally paid the impecunious citizen a maintenance allowance and special fees. In Athens fees were paid to citizens even for attending the general assembly. But the generality of people outside the happy order of citizens worked and did what they were told, and if one desired the protection of the law, one sought a citizen to plead for one. For only the citizen had any standing in the law courts. Greek democracy was, in fact, a sort of government by a swarm of hereditary barristers. Our modern idea, that any one in the state is a citizen, would have shocked the privileged democrats of Athens profoundly.

One obvious result of this monopolization of the state by the class of citizens was that the patriotism of these privileged people took an intense and narrow form. They would form alliances, but never coalesce with other city states. That would have obliterated every advantage by which they lived. There would have been no more fees, no more privileges. The narrow geographical limits of these Greek states added to the intensity of their feeling. A man's love for his country was reinforced by his love for his native town, his religion, and his home; for these were all one. Of course the slaves did not share in these feelings, and in the oligarchic states very often the excluded class got over its dislike of foreigners in its greater dislike of the class at home which oppressed it. But in the main, patriotism in the Greek was a personal passion of an inspiring and dangerous intensity. Like rejected love, it was apt to turn into something very like hatred. The Greek exile resembled the French or Russian *émigré* in being ready to treat his beloved country pretty roughly in order to save her from the devils in human form who had taken possession of her and turned *him* out.

In the fifth century B.C. Athens formed a system of relationships with a number of other Greek city states which is often spoken of by historians as the Athenian Empire. But all the other city states retained their own governments. One "new fact" added by the Athenian Empire was the complete and effective suppression of piracy; another was the institution of a sort of international law. The law, indeed, was Athenian law; but actions could now be brought and justice administered between citizens of the different states of the League, which of course had not been possible before. The Athenian Empire had really developed out of a league of mutual defence against Persia; its seat had originally been in the island of Delos, and the allies had contributed to a common treasure at Delos; the treasure of Delos was carried off to Athens because it was exposed to a possible Persian raid. Then one city after another offered a monetary contribution instead of military service, with the result that in the end Athens was doing almost all the work and receiving almost all the money. She was supported by one or two of the larger islands. The "League" in this way became gradually an "Empire," but the citizens of the allied states remained, except where there were special treaties

of intermarriage and the like, practically foreigners to one another. And it was chiefly the poorer citizens of Athens who sustained this empire by their most vigorous and incessant personal service. Every citizen was liable to military service at home or abroad between the ages of eighteen and sixty, sometimes on purely Athenian affairs and sometimes in defence of the cities of the Empire whose citizens had bought themselves off. There was probably no single man over twenty-five in the Athenian Assembly who had not served in several campaigns in different parts of the Mediterranean or Black Sea, and who did not expect to serve again. Modern imperialism is denounced by its opponents as the exploitation of the world by the rich; Athenian imperialism was the exploitation of the world by the poorer citizens of Athens.

Another difference from modern conditions, due to the small size of the Greek city states, was that in a democracy every citizen had the right to attend and speak and vote in the popular assembly. For most cities this meant a gathering of only a few hundred people; the greatest had no more than some thousands of citizens. Nothing of this sort is possible in a modern "democracy" with, perhaps, several million voters. The modern "citizen's" voice in public affairs is limited to the right to vote for one or other of the party candidates put before him. He, or she, is then supposed to have "assented" to the resultant government. Aristotle, who would have enjoyed the electoral methods of our modern democracies keenly, points out very subtly how the outlying farmer class of citizens in a democracy can be virtually disenfranchised by calling the popular assembly too frequently for their regular attendance. In the later Greek democracies (fifth century) the appointment of public officials, except in the case of officers requiring very special knowledge, was by casting lots. This was supposed to protect the general corporation of privileged citizens from the continued predominance of rich, influential, and conspicuously able men.

Some democracies (Athens and Miletus, *e.g.*) had an institution called the ostracism, by which in times of crisis and conflict the decision was made whether some citizen should go into exile for ten years. This may strike a modern reader as an envious institution, but that was not its essential quality. It was, says Gilbert Murray, a way

of arriving at a decision in a case when political feeling was so divided as to threaten a deadlock. There were in the Greek democracies parties and party leaders, but no regular government in office and no regular opposition. There was no way, therefore, of carrying out a policy, although it might be the popular policy, if a strong leader or a strong group stood out against it. But by the ostracism, the least popular or the least trusted of the chief leaders in the divided community was made to retire for a period without loss of honour or property. Professor Murray suggests that a Greek democracy, if it had found itself in such a position of deadlock as the British Empire did upon the question of Home Rule for Ireland in 1914, would have probably first ostracized Sir Edward Carson, and then proceeded to carry out the provisions of the Home Rule Bill.

This institution of the ostracism has immortalized one obscure and rather illiterate member of the democracy of Athens. A certain Aristides had gained a great reputation in the law court for his righteous dealing. He fell into a dispute with Themistocles upon a question of naval policy; Aristides was for the army, Themistocles was a "strong navy" man, and a deadlock was threatened. There was resort to an ostracism to decide between them. Plutarch relates that as Aristides walked through the streets while the voting was in progress, he was accosted by a strange citizen from the agricultural environs unaccustomed to the art of writing, and requested to write his own name on the proffered potsherd.

"But why?" he asked. "Has Aristides ever injured you?"

"No," said the citizen. "No. Never have I set eyes on him. But, oh! I am so *bored* by hearing him called Aristides the Just."

Whereupon, says Plutarch, without further parley Aristides wrote as the man desired....

When one understands the true meaning of these Greek constitutions, and in particular the limitation of all power, whether in the democracies or the oligarchies, to a locally privileged class, one realizes how impossible was any effective union of the hundreds of Greek cities scattered about the Mediterranean region, or even of any effective co-operation between them for a common end. Each city was in the hands of a few or a few hundred men, to whom its separateness meant everything that was worth having in life. Only

conquest from the outside could unite the Greeks, and until Greece was conquered they had no political unity. When at last they were conquered, they were conquered so completely that their unity ceased to be of any importance even to themselves; it was a unity of subjugation.

Yet there was always a certain tradition of unity between all the Greeks, based on a common language and script, on the common possession of the heroic epics, and on the continuous intercourse that the maritime position of the states made possible. And, in addition, there were certain religious bonds of a unifying kind. Certain shrines, the shrines of the god Apollo in the island of Delos and at Delphi, for example, were sustained not by single states, but by leagues of states or Amphictyonies (= League of neighbours), which in such instances as the Delphic amphictyony became very wide-reaching unions. The league protected the shrine and the safety of pilgrims, kept up the roads leading thereunto, secured peace at the time of special festivals, upheld certain rules to mitigate the usages of war among its members, and — the Delian league especially — suppressed piracy. A still more important link of Hellenic union was the Olympian games that were held every four years at Olympia. Foot races, boxing, wrestling, javelin throwing, quoit throwing, jumping, and chariot and horse racing were the chief sports, and a record of victors and distinguished visitors was kept. From the year 776 B.C. onward these games were held regularly for over a thousand years, and they did much to maintain that sense of a common Greek life (pan-Hellenic) transcending the narrow politics of the city states.

Such links of sentiment and association were of little avail against the intense "separatism" of the Greek political institutions. From the History of Herodotus the student will be able to gather a sense of the intensity and persistence of the feuds that kept the Greek world in a state of chronic warfare. In the old days (say, to the sixth century B.C.) fairly large families prevailed in Greece, and something of the old Aryan great household system (see Chap. XV), with its strong clan feeling and its capacity for maintaining an enduring feud, still remained. The history of Athens circles for many years about the feud of two great families, the Alcmæonidæ and the Peisistratidæ; the latter equally an aristocratic family, but founding its power on the

support of the poorer class of the populace and the exploitation of their grievances. Later on, in the sixth and fifth centuries, a limitation of births and a shrinkage of families to two or three members — a process Aristotle notes without perceiving its cause — led to the disappearance of the old aristocratic clans, and the later wars were due rather to trade disputes and grievances caused and stirred up by individual adventurers than to family vendettas.

It is easy to understand, in view of this intense separatism of the Greeks, how readily the Ionians of Asia and of the islands fell first under the domination of the kingdom of Lydia, and then under that of the Persians when Cyrus overthrew Crœsus, the king of Lydia. They rebelled only to be reconquered. Then came the turn of European Greece. It is a matter of astonishment, the Greeks themselves were astonished, to find that Greece itself did not fall under the dominion of the Persians, these barbaric Aryan masters of the ancient civilizations of Western Asia. But before we tell of this struggle we must give some attention to these Asiatics against whom they were pitted; and particularly to these Medes and Persians who, by 538 B.C., were already in possession of the ancient civilizations of Assyria, Babylonia, and about to subjugate Egypt.

§ 4

We have had occasion to mention the kingdom of Lydia, and it may be well to give a short note here upon the Lydians before proceeding with our story. The original population of the larger part of Asia Minor may perhaps have been akin to the original population of Greece and Crete. If so, it was of "Mediterranean" race. Or it may have been another branch of those still more generalized and fundamental darkish peoples from whom arose the Mediterranean race to the west and the Dravidians to the east. Remains of the same sort of art that distinguishes Cnossos and Mycenæ are to be found scattered over Asia Minor. But just as the Nordic Greeks poured southward into Greece to conquer and mix with the aborigines, so did other and kindred Nordic tribes pour over the Bosphorus into Asia Minor. Over some areas these Aryan peoples prevailed altogether, and became the bulk of the inhabitants and retained their

Aryan speech. Such were the Phrygians, a people whose language was almost as close to that of the Greeks as the Macedonian. But over other areas the Aryans did not so prevail. In Lydia the original race and their language held their own. The Lydians were a non-Aryan people speaking a non-Aryan speech, of which at the present time only a few words are known. Their capital city was Sardis.

Their religion was also non-Aryan. They worshipped a Great Mother goddess. The Phrygians also, though retaining their Greek-like language, became infected with mysterious religion, and much of the mystical religion and secret ceremonial that pervaded Athens at a later date was Phrygian (when not Thracian) in origin.

At first the Lydians held the western seacoast of Asia Minor, but they were driven back from it by the establishment of Ionian Greeks coming by the sea and founding cities. Later on, however, these Ionian Greek cities were brought into subjection by the Lydian kings.

The history of this country is not clearly known, and were it known it would scarcely be of sufficient importance to be related in this historical outline, but in the eighth century B.C. one monarch, named Gyges, becomes noteworthy. The country under his rule was subjected to another Aryan invasion; certain nomadic tribes called the Cimmerians came pouring across Asia Minor, and they were driven back with difficulty by Gyges and his son and grandson. Sardis was twice taken and burnt by these barbarians. And it is on record that Gyges paid tribute to Sardanapalus, which serves to link him up with our general ideas of the history of Assyria, Israel, and Egypt. Later, Gyges rebelled against Assyria, and sent troops to help Psammetichus I to liberate Egypt from its brief servitude to the Assyrians.

It was Alyattes, the grandson of Gyges, who made Lydia into a considerable power. He reigned for seven years, and he reduced most of the Ionian cities of Asia Minor to subjection. The country became the centre of a great trade between Asia and Europe; it had always been productive and rich in gold, and now the Lydian monarch was reputed the richest in Asia. There was a great coming and going between the Black and Mediterranean Seas, and between the East and West. We have already noted that Lydia was reputed to be the first country in the world to produce coined money, and to provide

the convenience of inns for travellers and traders. The Lydian dynasty seems to have been a trading dynasty of the type of Minos in Crete, with a banking and financial development.... So much we may note of Lydia by way of preface to the next section.

§ 5

Now while one series of Aryan-speaking invaders had developed along the lines we have described in Greece, Magna Græcia, and around the shores of the Black Sea, another series of Aryan-speaking peoples, whose originally Nordic blood was perhaps already mixed with a Mongolian element, were settling and spreading to the north and east of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires. We have already spoken of the arc-like dispersion of the Nordic Aryan peoples to the north of the Black and Caspian Seas; it was probably by this route that the Aryan-speaking races gradually came down into what is now the Persian country, and spread, on the one hand, eastward to India (? 2000 to 1000 B.C.), and on the other, increased and multiplied in the Persian uplands until they were strong enough to assail first Assyria (650 B.C.) and then Babylon (538 B.C.).

There is much that is not yet clear about the changes of climate that have been going on in Europe and Asia during the last 10,000 years. The ice of the last glacial age receded gradually, and gave way to a long period of steppe or prairie-like conditions over the great plain of Europe. About 12,000 or 10,000 years ago, as it is reckoned now, this state of affairs was giving place to forest conditions. We have already noted how, as a consequence of these changes, the Solutrian horse hunters gave place to Magdalenian fishers and forest deer hunters; and these, again, to the Neolithic herdsmen and agriculturists. For some thousands of years the European climate seems to have been warmer than it is to-day. A great sea spread from the coast of the Balkan peninsula far into Central Asia and extended northward into Central Russia, and the shrinkage of that sea and the consequent hardening of the climate of south Russia and Central Asia was going on contemporaneously with the development of the first civilizations in the river valleys. Many facts seem to point to a more genial climate in Europe and western Asia, and still more

strongly to a greater luxuriance of plant and vegetable life, 4000 to 3000 years ago, than we find to-day. There were forests then in south Russia and in the country which is now Western Turkestan, where now steppes and deserts prevail. On the other hand, between 1500 and 2000 years ago, the Aral-Caspian region was probably drier and those seas smaller than they are at the present time.

We may note in this connection that Thotmes III (say, the fifteenth century B.C.), in his expedition beyond the Euphrates, hunted a herd of 120 elephants in that region. Again, an Ægean dagger from Mycenæ, dating about 2000 B.C., shows a lion-hunt in progress. The hunters carry big shields and spears, and stand in rows one behind the other. The first man spears the lion, and when the wounded beast leaps at him, drops flat under the protection of his big shield, leaving the next man to repeat his stroke, and so on, until the lion is speared to death. This method of hunting is practised by the Masai to-day, and could only have been worked out by a people in a land where lions were abundant. But abundant lions imply abundant game, and that again means abundant vegetation. About 2000 B.C. the hardening of the climate in the central parts of the Old World, to which we have already referred, which put an end to elephants and lions in Asia Minor and Greece, was turning the faces of the nomadic Aryan peoples southward towards the fields and forests of the more settled and civilized nations.

These Aryan peoples come down from the East Caspian regions into history about the time that Mycenæ and Troy and Cnossos are falling to the Greeks. It is difficult to disentangle the different tribes and races that appear under a multitude of names in the records and inscriptions that record their first appearance, but, fortunately, these distinctions are not needed in an elementary outline such as this present history. A people called the Cimmerians appear in the districts of Lake Urumiya and Van, and shortly after Aryans have spread from Armenia to Elam. In the ninth century B.C. a people called the Medes, very closely related to the Persians to the east of them, appear in the Assyrian inscriptions. Tiglath Pileser III and Sargon II, names already familiar in this story, profess to have made them pay tribute. They are spoken of in the inscriptions as the "dangerous Medes." They are as yet a tribal people, not united under

one king.

About the ninth century b.c. Elam and the Elamites, whose capital was Susa, a people which possessed a tradition and civilization at least as old as the Sumerian, suddenly vanish from history. We do not know what happened. They seem to have been overrun and the population absorbed by the conquerors. Susa is in the hands of the Persians.

Scythians ... as portrayed by a Greek artist....
One of the Few Existing Representations of the Ancient Scythians.
From a Greek Electrum Vase.

A fourth people, related to these Aryan tribes, who appear at this time in the narrative of Herodotus, are the "Scythians." For a while the monarchs of Assyria play off these various kindred peoples, the Cimmerians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Scythians, against each other. Assyrian princesses (a daughter of Esarhaddon, *e.g.*) are married to Scythian chiefs. Nebuchadnezzar the Great, on the other hand, marries a daughter of Cyaxares, who has become king of all the Medes. The Aryan Scythians are for the Semitic Assyrians; the Aryan Medes for the Semitic Babylonians. It was this Cyaxares who took Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, in 606 B.C., and so released Babylon from the Assyrian yoke to establish, under Chaldean rule, the Second Babylonian Empire. The Scythian allies of Assyria drop out of the story after this. They go on living their own life away to the north without much interference with the peoples to the south. A glance at the map of this period shows how, for two-thirds of a century, the Second Babylonian Empire lay like a lamb within the embrace of the Median lion.

Into the internal struggles of the Medes and Persians, that ended at last in the accession of Cyrus “the Persian” to the throne of Cyaxares in 550 B.C., we will not enter. In that year Cyrus was ruling over an empire that reached from the boundaries of Lydia to Persia and perhaps to India. Nabonidus, the last of the Babylonian rulers, was, as we have already told, digging up old records and building temples in Babylonia.

§ 6

But one monarch in the world was alive to the threat of the new power that lay in the hands of Cyrus. This was Crœsus, the Lydian king. His son had been killed in a very tragic manner, which Herodotus relates, but which we will not describe here. Says Herodotus:

“For two years then, Crœsus remained quiet in great mourning, because he was deprived of his son; but after this period of time, the overt hrowing of the rule of the son of Cyaxares by Cyrus, and the growing greatness of the Persians, caused Crœsus to cease from his mourning, and led him to a care of cutting short the power of the Persians if by any means he might, while yet it was in growth and before they should have become great.”

He then made trial of the various oracles. His method of trial we will not relate here, but it led him to the belief that the Delphi Oracle was alone trustworthy. What follows is rather a lengthy passage, but it is so characteristic of the garrulousness and wonder-loving mind of the Father of History, and with such a pleasant touch of spite against the Lacedemonians, that it is impossible to resist the quotation.

"After this, with great sacrifices, he endeavoured to win the favour of the god at Delphi: for of all the animals that are fit for sacrifice he offered three thousand of each kind, and he heaped up couches overlaid with gold and overlaid with silver, and cups of gold, and robes of purple, and tunics, making of them a great pyre, and this he burnt up, hoping by these means the more to win over the god to the side of the Lydians; and he proclaimed to all the Lydians that every one of them should make sacrifice with that which each man had. And when he had finished the sacrifice, he melted down a vast quantity of gold, and of it he wrought half-plinths, making them six palms in length and three in breadth, and in height one palm; and their number was one hundred and seventeen. Of these four were of pure gold weighing two talents and a half each, and the others of gold alloyed with silver weighing two talents. And he caused to be made also an image of a lion of pure gold weighing ten talents; which lion, when the temple at Delphi was being burnt down, fell from off the half-plinths, for upon these it was set, and is placed now in the treasury of the Corinthians, weighing six talents and a half, for

three talents and a half were melted away from it. So Crœsus, having finished all these things, sent them to Delphi, and with them these besides: two mixing-bowls of great size, one of gold and the other of silver, of which the golden bowl was placed on the right hand as one enters the temple, and the silver on the left, but the places of these also were changed after the temple was burnt down.... Moreover, Crœsus sent four silver wine-jars, which stand in the treasury of the Corinthians, and two vessels for lustral water, one of gold and the other of silver, of which the gold one is inscribed 'from the Lacedemonians,' who say that it is their offering; therein, however, they do not speak rightly, for this also is from Crœsus, but one of the Delphians wrote the inscription upon it, desiring to gratify the Lacedemonians; and his name I know, but I will not make mention of it.... And many other votive offerings Crœsus sent with these, not specially distinguished, among which are certain castings of silver of a round shape, and also a golden figure of a woman three cubits high, which the Delphians say is a statue of the baker of Crœsus. Moreover, Crœsus dedicated the ornaments from his wife's neck and her girdles....

"To the Lydians who were to carry these gifts to the temples Crœsus gave charge that they should ask the Oracles this question also: whether Crœsus should march against the Persians, and, if so, whether he should join with himself any army of men as his friends. And when the Lydians had arrived at the places to which they had been sent and had dedicated the votive offerings, they inquired of the Oracles, and said: 'Crœsus, king of the Lydians and of other nations, considering that these are the only true Oracles among men, presents to you gifts such as your revelations deserve, and asks you again now whether he shall march against the Persians, and, if so, whether he shall join with himself any army of men as allies.' They inquired thus, and the answers of both the Oracles agreed in one, declaring to Crœsus that if he should march against the Persians he should destroy a great empire.... So when the answers were brought back and Crœsus heard them, he was delighted with the Oracles, and expecting that he would certainly destroy the kingdom of Cyrus, he sent again to Pytho, and presented to the men of Delphi, having ascertained the number of them, two staters of gold for each man:

and in return for this the Delphians gave to Crœsus and to the Lydians precedence in consulting the Oracle and freedom from all payments, and the right to front seats at the games, with this privilege also for all time, that any one of them who wished should be allowed to become a citizen of Delphi."

But here we may not run on as Herodotus loved to do. Suffice it to say that Crœsus made a defensive alliance both with the Lacedemonians and the Egyptians. We will not quote the story of how a great bronze mixing-bowl that the Lacedemonians sent to Crœsus went astray, but we will note a light on the life of the Medes and Persians of that time.

"Thus, then, it happened about the mixing-bowl; but meanwhile Crœsus, mistaking the meaning of the Oracle, was making a march into Cappadocia, expecting to overthrow Cyrus and the power of the Persians; and while Crœsus was preparing to march against the Persians, one of the Lydians, who even before this time was thought to be a wise man, but in consequence of this opinion got a very great name for wisdom among the Lydians, had advised Crœsus as follows: 'O king, thou art preparing to march against men who wear breeches of leather, and the rest of their clothing is of leather also; and they eat food not such as they desire, but such as they can obtain, dwelling in a land which is rugged; and, moreover, they make no use of wine but drink water; and no figs have they for dessert, nor any other good thing. On the one hand, if thou shalt overcome them, what wilt thou take away from them, seeing they have nothing? and, on the other hand, if thou shalt be overcome, consider how many good things thou wilt lose; for once having tasted our good things, they will cling to them fast, and it will not be possible to drive them away. I, for my own part, feel gratitude to the gods that they do not put it into the minds of the Persians to march against the Lydians.' Thus he spoke not persuading Crœsus; for it is true indeed that the Persians before they subdued the Lydians had no luxury nor any good thing."

Crœand Cyrus fought an indecisive battle at Pteria, from which Crœretreated. Cyrus followed him up, and he gave battle outside his capital town of Sardis. The chief strength of the Lydians lay in their cavalry; they were excellent, if undisciplined, horsemen, and fought

with long spears.

"Cyrus, when he saw the Lydians being arrayed for battle, fearing their horsemen, did on the suggestion of Harpagos, a Mede, as follows: All the camels which were in the train of his army carrying provisions and baggage he gathered together, and he took off their burdens and set men upon them provided with the equipment of cavalry; and, having thus furnished them, forth he appointed them to go in front of the rest of the army towards the horsemen of Crœsus; and after the camel-troop he ordered the infantry to follow; and behind the infantry he placed his whole force of cavalry. Then, when all his men had been placed in their several positions, he charged them to spare none of the other Lydians, slaying all who might come in their way, but Crœsus himself they were not to slay, not even if he should make resistance when he was being captured. Such was his charge: and he set the camels opposite the horsemen for this reason — because the horse has a fear of the camel and cannot endure either to see his form or to scent his smell; for this reason then the trick had been devised, in order that the cavalry of Crœsus might be useless, that very force wherewith the Lydian king was expecting most to shine. And as they were coming together to the battle, so soon as the horses scented the camels and saw them, they turned away back, and the hopes of Crœsus were at once brought to nought. The Lydians, however, for their part did not upon that act as cowards, but when they perceived what was coming to pass, they leapt from their horses and fought with the Persians on foot. At length, however, when many had fallen on either side, the Lydians turned to flight; and having been driven within the wall of their fortress, they were besieged by the Persians."

In fourteen days Sardis was stormed and Crœsus taken prisoner....

"So the Persians having taken him brought him into the presence of Cyrus; and he piled up a great pyre and caused Crœsus to go up upon it bound in fetters, and along with him twice seven sons of Lydians, whether it was that he meant to dedicate this offering as first-fruits of his victory to some god, or whether he desired to fulfil a vow, or else had heard that Crœsus was a god-fearing man, and so caused him to go up on the pyre because he wished to know if any one of the divine powers would save him, so that he should not be

burnt alive. He, they say, did this; but to Crœsus as he stood upon the pyre there came, although he was in such evil case, a memory of the saying of Solon, how he had said with divine inspiration that no one of the living might be called happy. And when this thought came into his mind, they say that he sighed deeply and groaned aloud, having been for long silent, and three times he uttered the name of Solon. Hearing this, Cyrus bade the interpreters ask Crœsus who was this person on whom he called; and they came near and asked. And Crœsus for a time, it is said, kept silence when he was asked this, but afterwards, being pressed, he said: 'One whom more than much wealth I should have desired to have speech with all monarchs.' Then, since his words were of doubtful import, they asked again of that which he said; and as they were urgent with him and gave him no peace, he told how once Solon, an Athenian, had come and having inspected all his wealth had made light of it, with such and such words; and how all had turned out for him according as Solon had said, not speaking at all especially with a view to Crœsus himself, but with a view to the whole human race, and especially those who seem to themselves to be happy men. And while Crœsus related these things, already the pyre was lighted and the edges of it round about were burning. Then they say that Cyrus, hearing from the interpreters what Crœsus had said, changed his purpose and considered that he himself also was but a man, and that he was delivering another man, who had been not inferior to himself in felicity, alive to the fire; and, moreover, he feared the requital, and reflected that there was nothing of that which men possessed which was secure; therefore, they say, he ordered them to extinguish as quickly as possible the fire that was burning, and to bring down Crœsus and those who were with him from the pyre; and they, using endeavours, were not able now to get the mastery of the flames. Then it is related by the Lydians that Crœsus, having learned how Cyrus had changed his mind, and seeing that every one was trying to put out the fire, but that they were no longer able to check it, cried aloud, entreating Apollo that if any gift had ever been given by him which was acceptable to the god, he would come to his aid and rescue him from the evil which was now upon him. So he with tears entreated the god, and suddenly, they say, after clear sky and calm weather

clouds gathered and a storm burst, and it rained with a very violent shower, and the pyre was extinguished. Then Cyrus, having perceived that Crœsus was a lover of the gods and a good man, caused him to be brought down from the pyre and asked him as follows: 'Crœsus, tell me who of all men was it who persuaded thee to march upon my land and so to become an enemy to me instead of a friend?' And he said: 'O king, I did this to thy felicity and to my own misfortune, and the causer of this was the god of the Hellenes, who incited me to march with my army. For no one is so senseless as to choose of his own will war rather than peace, since in peace the sons bury their fathers, but in war the fathers bury their sons. But it was pleasing, I suppose, to the divine powers that these things should come to pass thus.'"

But Herodotus is too alluring a companion for one who would write an Outline of History; and the rest of the life of Crœsus, and how he gave wise counsels to Cyrus, must be read in his ampler page.

When Lydia was subdued, Cyrus turned his attention to Nabonidus in Babylon. He defeated the Babylonian army, under Belshazzar, outside Babylon, and then laid siege to the town. He entered the town (538 B.C.), probably as we have already suggested, with the connivance of the priests of Bel.

§ 7

Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses, who took an army into Egypt (525 B.C.). There was a battle in the delta, in which Greek mercenaries fought on both sides. Herodotus declares that he saw the bones of the slain still lying on the field fifty or sixty years later, and comments on the comparative thinness of the Persian skulls. After this battle Cambyses took Memphis and most of Egypt.

In Egypt, we are told, Cambyses went mad. He took great liberties with the Egyptian temples, and remained at Memphis "opening ancient tombs and examining the dead bodies." He had already murdered both Crœsus, ex-king of Lydia, and his own brother Smerdis before coming to Egypt, and he died in Syria on the way back to Susa of an accidental wound, leaving no heirs to succeed

him. He was presently succeeded by Darius the Mede (521 B.C.), the son of Hystaspes, one of the chief councillors of Cyrus.

The empire of Darius I was larger than any one of the preceding empires whose growth we have traced. It included all Asia Minor and Syria, that is to say, the ancient Lydian and Hittite empires, all the old Assyrian and Babylonian empires, Egypt, the Caucasus and Caspian regions, Media, Persia, and it extended, perhaps, into India to the Indus. The nomadic Arabians alone of all the peoples of what is nowadays called the Near East, did not pay tribute to the satraps (provincial governors) of Darius. The organization of this great empire seems to have been on a much higher level of efficiency than any of its precursors. Great arterial roads joined province to province, and there was a system of royal posts; at stated intervals post horses stood always ready to carry the government messenger, or the traveller if he had a government permit, on to the next stage of his journey. Apart from this imperial right-of-way and the payment of tribute, the local governments possessed a very considerable amount of local freedom. They were restrained from internecine conflict, which was all to their own good. And at first the Greek cities of the mainland of Asia paid the tribute and shared in this Persian Peace.

Darius was first incited to attack the Greeks in Europe by a homesick Greek physician at his court, who wanted at any cost to be back in Greece. Darius had already made plans for an expedition into Europe, aiming not at Greece, but to the northward of Greece, across the Bosphorus and Danube. He wanted to strike at South Russia, which he believed to be the home country of the Scythian nomads who threatened him on his northern and north-eastern frontiers. But he lent an attentive ear to the tempter, and sent agents into Greece.

This great expedition of Darius opens out our view in this history. It lifts a curtain upon the Balkan country behind Greece about which we have said nothing hitherto; it carries us to and over the Danube. The nucleus of his army marched from Susa, gathering up contingents as they made their way to the Bosphorus. Here Greek allies (Ionian Greeks from Asia) had made a bridge of boats, and the army crossed over while the Greek allies sailed on in their ships to the Danube, and, two days' sail up from its mouth, landed to make

another floating bridge. Meanwhile, Darius and his host advanced along the coast of what is now Bulgaria, but which was then called Thrace. They crossed the Danube, and prepared to give battle to the Scythian army and take the cities of the Scythians.

But the Scythians had no cities, and they evaded a battle, and the war degenerated into a tedious and hopeless pursuit of more mobile enemies. Wells were stopped up and pastures destroyed by the nomads. The Scythian horsemen hung upon the skirts of the great army, which consisted mostly of foot soldiers, picking off stragglers and preventing foraging; and they did their best to persuade the Ionian Greeks, who had made and were guarding the bridge across the Danube, to break up the bridge, and so ensure the destruction of Darius. So long as Darius continued to advance, however, the loyalty of his Greek allies remained unshaken.

But privation, fatigue, and sickness hindered and crippled the Persian army; Darius lost many stragglers and consumed his supplies, and at last the melancholy conviction dawned upon him that a retreat across the Danube was necessary to save him from complete exhaustion and defeat.

In order to get a start in his retreat he sacrificed his sick and wounded. He had these men informed that he was about to attack the Scythians at nightfall, and under this pretence stole out of the camp with the pick of his troops and made off southward, leaving the camp fires burning and the usual noises and movements of the camp behind him. Next day the men left in the camp realized the trick their monarch had played upon them, and surrendered themselves to the mercy of the Scythians; but Darius had got his start, and was able to reach the bridge of boats before his pursuers came upon him. They were more mobile than his troops, but they missed their quarry in the darkness. At the river the retreating Persians “were brought to an extremity of fear,” for they found the bridge partially broken down and its northern end destroyed.

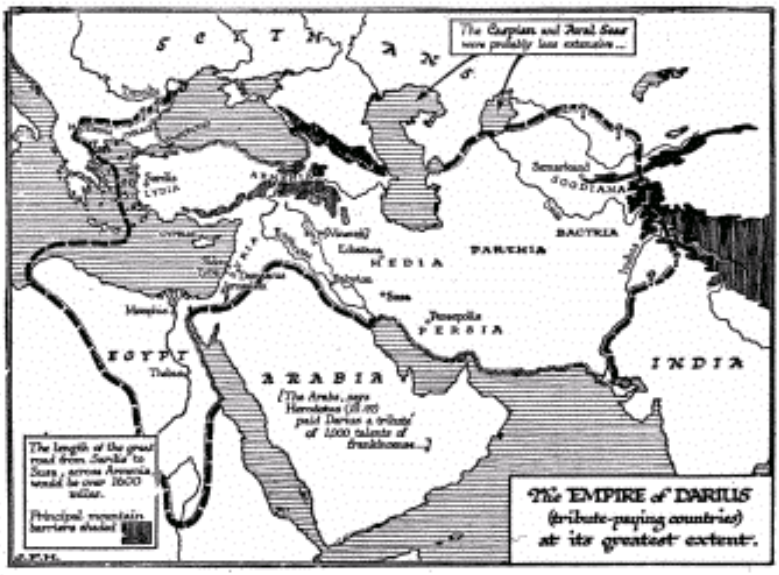

At this point a voice echoes down the centuries to us. We see a group of dismayed Persians standing about the Great King upon the bank of the streaming river; we see the masses of halted troops, hungry and war-worn; a trail of battered transport stretches away towards the horizon, upon which at any time the advance guards of the pursuers may appear. There is not much noise in spite of the multitude, but rather an inquiring silence. Standing out like a pier from the further side of the great stream are the remains of the bridge of boats, an enigma.... We cannot discern whether there are men over there or not. The shipping of the Ionian Greeks seems still to be drawn up on the further shore, but it is all very far away.

"Now there was with Darius an Egyptian who had a voice louder than that of any other man on earth, and this man Darius ordered to take his stand upon the bank of the Ister (Danube) and to call Histiæus of Miletus."

This worthy — a day is to come, as we shall presently tell, when his decapitated head will be sent to Darius at Susa — appears approaching slowly across the waters in a boat.

There is a parley, and we gather that it is "all right."

The explanation Histiæus has to make is a complicated one. Some

Scythians have been and have gone again. Scouts, perhaps, these were. It would seem there had been a discussion between the Scythians and the Greeks. The Scythians wanted the bridge broken down; they would then, they said, undertake to finish up the Persian army and make an end to Darius and his empire, and the Ionian Greeks of Asia could then free their cities again. Miltiades, the Athenian, was for accepting this proposal. But Histiæus had been more subtle. He would prefer, he said, to see the Persians completely destroyed before definitely abandoning their cause. Would the Scythians go back and destroy the Persians to make sure of them while the Greeks on their part destroyed the bridge? Anyhow, whichever side the Greeks took finally, it was clear to him that it would be wise to destroy the northern end of the bridge, because otherwise the Scythians might rush it. Indeed, even as they parleyed the Greeks set to work to demolish the end that linked them to the Scythians as quickly as possible. In accordance with the suggestions of Histiæus the Scythians rode off in search of the Persians, and so left the Greeks safe in either event. If Darius escaped they could be on his side; if he was destroyed, there was nothing of which the Scythians could complain.

Histiæus did not put it quite in that fashion to Darius. He had at least kept the shipping and most of the bridge. He represented himself as the loyal friend of Persia, and Darius was not disposed to be too critical. The Ionian ships came over. With a sense of immense relief the remnant of the wasted Persians were presently looking back at the steely flood of the Danube streaming wide between themselves and their pursuers....

The pleasure and interest had gone out of the European expedition for Darius. He returned to Susa, leaving an army in Thrace, under a trusted general Megabazus. This Megabazus set himself to the subjugation of Thrace, and among other states which submitted reluctantly to Darius was a kingdom, which thus comes into our history for the first time, the kingdom of Macedonia, a country inhabited by a people so closely allied to the Greeks that one of its princes had already been allowed to compete and take a prize in the Olympian games.

Darius was disposed to reward Histiæus by allowing him to build

a city for himself in Thrace, but Megabazus had a different opinion of the trustworthiness of Histiæus, and prevailed upon the king to take him to Susa, and, under the title of councillor, to keep him a prisoner there. Histiæus was at first flattered by this court position, and then realized its true meaning. The Persian court bored him, and he grew homesick for Miletus. He set himself to make mischief, and was able to stir up a revolt against the Persians among the Ionian Greeks on the mainland. The twistings and turnings of the story, which included the burning of Sardis by the Ionians and the defeat of a Greek fleet at the battle of Ladé (495 B.C.), are too complicated to follow here. It is a dark and intricate story of treacheries, cruelties, and hate, in which the death of the wily Histiæus shines almost cheerfully. The Persian governor of Sardis, through which town he was being taken on his way back to Susa as a prisoner, having much the same opinion of him as Megabazus had, and knowing his ability to humbug Darius, killed him there and then, and sent on the head only to his master.

Cyprus and the Greek islands were dragged into this contest that Histiæus had stirred up, and at last Athens. Darius realized the error he had made in turning to the right and not to the left when he had crossed the Bosphorus, and he now set himself to the conquest of all Greece. He began with the islands. Tyre and Sidon were subject to Persia, and ships of the Phœnician and of the Ionian Greeks provided the Persians with a fleet by means of which one Greek island after another was subjugated.

§ 8

The first attack upon Greece proper was made in 490 B.C. It was a sea attack upon Athens, with a force long and carefully prepared for the task, the fleet being provided with specially built transports for the conveyance of horses. This expedition made a landing near Marathon in Attica. The Persians were guided into Marathon by a renegade Greek, Hippias, the son of Peisistratus, who had been tyrant of Athens. If Athens fell, then Hippias was to be its tyrant, under the protection of the Persians. Meanwhile, so urgent was the sense of a crisis in the affairs of Hellas, that a man, a herald and runner, went

from Athens to Sparta, forgetful of all feuds, to say: "Lacedemonians, the Athenians make request of you to come to their help, and not to allow a city most anciently established among the Hellenes to fall into slavery by the means of Barbarians; for even now Eretria has been enslaved and Hellas has become the weaker by a city of renown." This man, Pheidippides, did the distance from Athens to Sparta, nearly a hundred miles as the crow flies, and much more if we allow for the contours and the windings of the way, in something under eight and forty hours.

But before the Spartans could arrive on the scene the battle was joined. The Athenians charged the enemy. They fought— "in a memorable fashion: for they were the first of all the Hellenes about whom we know who went to attack the enemy at a run, and they were the first also who endured to face the Median garments and the men who wore them, whereas up to this time the very name of the Medes was to the Hellenes a terror to hear."

The Persian wings gave before this impetuous attack, but the centre held. The Athenians, however, were cool as well as vigorous; they let the wings run and closed in on the flanks of the centre, whereupon the main body of the Persians fled to their ships. Seven vessels fell into the hands of the Athenians; the rest got away, and, after a futile attempt to sail round to Athens and seize the city before the army returned thither, the fleet made a retreat to Asia. Let Herodotus close the story with a paragraph that still further enlightens us upon the tremendous prestige of the Medes at this time:

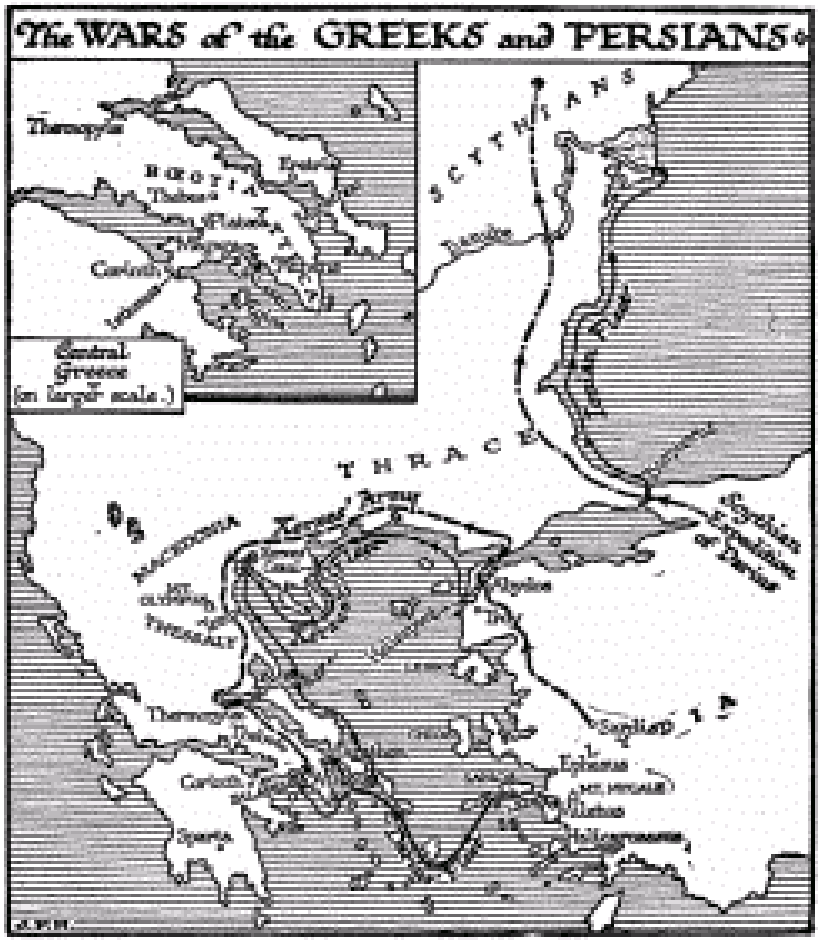

"Of the Lacedemonians there came to Athens two thousand after the full moon, making great haste to be in time, so that they arrived in Attica on the third day after leaving Sparta: and though they had come too late for the battle, yet they desired to behold the Medes; and accordingly they went on to Marathon and looked at the bodies of the slain: then afterwards they departed home, commending the Athenians and the work which they had done."

§ 9

So Greece, unified for a while by fear, gained her first victory over

Persia. The news came to Darius simultaneously with the news of a rebellion in Egypt, and he died while still undecided in which direction to turn. His son and successor, Xerxes, turned first to Egypt and set up a Persian satrap there; then for four years he prepared a second attack upon Greece. Says Herodotus, who was, one must remember, a patriotic Greek, approaching now to the climax of his History:

"For what nation did Xerxes not lead out of Asia against Hellas? and what water was not exhausted, being drunk by his host, except only the great rivers? For some supplied ships, and others were appointed to serve in the land-army; to some it was appointed to furnish cavalry, and to others vessels to carry horses, while they served in the expedition themselves also; others were ordered to furnish ships of war for the bridges, and others again ships with provisions."

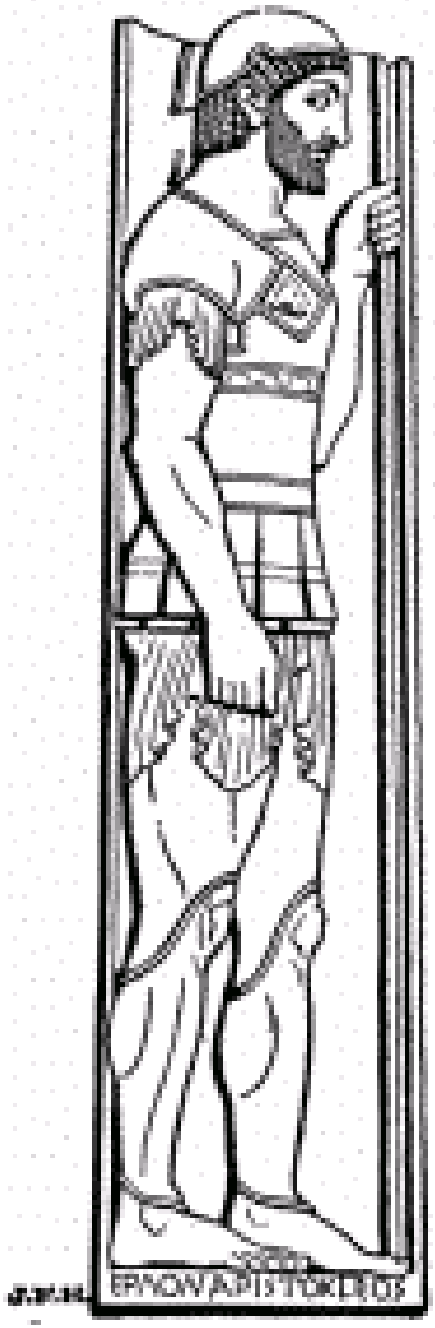

Monument of Athenian foot soldier, found near Marathon.

Xerxes passed into Europe, not as Darius did at the half-mile crossing of the Bosphorus, but at the Hellespont (the Dardanelles). In his account of the assembling of the great army, and its march from Sardis to the Hellespont, the poet in Herodotus takes possession of the historian. The great host passes in splendour by Troy, and Xerxes, who although a Persian and a Barbarian, seems to have had the advantages of a classical education, turns aside, says our historian, to visit the citadel of Priam. The Hellespont was bridged at Abydos, and upon a hill was set a marble throne from which Xerxes surveyed the whole array of his forces.

"And seeing all the Hellespont covered over with the ships and all the shores and the plains of Abydos full of men, then Xerxes pronounced himself a happy man, and after that he fell to weeping. Artabanus, his uncle, therefore perceiving him — the same who at first boldly declared his opinion advising Xerxes not to march against Hellas — this man, I say, having observed that Xerxes wept, asked as follows: 'O king, how far different from one another are the things which thou hast done now and a short while before now! for having pronounced thyself a happy man, thou art now shedding tears.' He said: 'Yea, for after I had reckoned up, it came into my mind to feel pity at the thought how brief was the whole life of man, seeing that of these multitudes not one will be alive when a hundred years have gone by.'"

This may not be exact history, but it is great poetry. It is as splendid as anything in *The Dynasts*.

The Persian fleet, coasting from headland to headland, accompanied this land multitude during its march southward; but a violent storm did the fleet great damage and 400 ships were lost, including much corn transport. At first the united Hellenes marched out to meet the invaders at the Vale of Tempe near Mount Olympus, but afterwards retreated through Thessaly, and chose at last to await the advancing Persians at a place called Thermopylæ, where at that time — 2300 years have altered these things greatly — there was a great cliff on the landward side and the sea to the east, with a track scarcely wide enough for a chariot between. The great advantage to the Greeks of this position at Thermopylæ was that it prevented the use of either cavalry or chariots, and narrowed the battle front so as

to minimize their numerical inequality. And there the Persians joined battle with them one summer day in the year 480 B.C.

For three days the Greeks held this great army, and did them much damage with small loss to themselves, and then on the third day a detachment of Persians appeared upon the rear of the Greeks, having learnt of a way over the mountains from a peasant. There were hasty discussions among the Greeks; some were for withdrawing, some for holding out. The leader of the whole force, Leonidas, was for staying; and with him he would keep, he said, 300 Spartans. The rest of the Greek army could, meanwhile, make good its retreat to the next defensible pass. The Thespian contingent of 700, however, refused to fall back. They preferred to stay and die with the Spartans. Also a contingent of 400 Thebans remained. As Thebes afterwards joined the Persians, there is a story that these Thebans were detained by force against their will, which seems on military as well as historical grounds improbable. These 1400 stayed, and were, after a conflict of heroic quality, slain to a man. Two Spartans happened to be away, sick with ophthalmia. When they heard the news, one was too ill to move; the other made his helot guide him to the battle, and there struck blindly until he was killed. The other, Aristodemus, was taken away with the retreating troops, and returned to Sparta, where he was not actually punished for his conduct, but was known as Tresas, "the man who retreated." It was enough to distinguish him from all other Spartans, and he got himself killed at the Battle of Platæa a year later, performing prodigies of reckless courage.... For a whole day this little band had held the pass, assailed in front and rear by the whole force of the Persians. They had covered the retreat of the main Greek army, they had inflicted great losses on the invaders, and they had raised the prestige of the Greek warrior over that of the Mede higher even than the victory of Marathon had done.

The Persian cavalry and transport filtered slowly through the narrow passage of Thermopylæ, and marched on towards Athens, while a series of naval encounters went on at sea. The Hellenic fleet retreated before the advance of the Persian shipping, which suffered seriously through its comparative ignorance of the intricate coasts and of the tricks of the local weather. Weight of numbers carried the

Persian army forward to Athens; now that Thermopylæ was lost, there was no line of defence nearer than the Isthmus of Corinth, and this meant the abandonment of all the intervening territory, including Athens. The population had either to fly or submit to the Persians. Thebes with all Bœotia submitted, and was pressed into the Persian army, except one town, Platæa, whose inhabitants fled to Athens. The turn of Athens came next, and great efforts were made to persuade her to make terms; but, instead, the whole population determined to abandon everything and take to the shipping. The women and non-combatants were carried to Salamis and various adjacent islands. Only a few people too old to move and a few dissentients remained in the town, which was occupied by the Persians and burnt. The sacred objects, statues, etc., which were burnt at this time, were afterwards buried in the Acropolis by the returning Athenians, and have been dug up in our own day with the marks of burning visible upon them. Xerxes sent off a mounted messenger to Susa with the news, and he invited the sons of Peisistratus, whom he had brought back with him, to enter upon their inheritance and sacrifice after the Athenian manner upon the Acropolis.

Meanwhile, the Hellenic confederate fleet had come round to Salamis, and in the council of war there were bitter differences of opinion. Corinth and the states behind the Isthmus wanted the fleet to fall back to that position, abandoning the cities of Megara and Ægina. Themistocles insisted with all his force on fighting in the narrows of Salamis. The majority was steadily in favour of retreat, when there suddenly arrived the news that retreat was cut off. The Persians had sailed round Salamis and held the sea on the other side. This news was brought by that Aristides the Just, of whose ostracism we have already told; his sanity and eloquence did much to help Themistocles to hearten the hesitating commanders. These two men had formerly been bitter antagonists; but with a generosity rare in those days, they forgot their differences before the common danger. At dawn the Greek ships pulled out to battle.

The fleet before them was a fleet more composite and less united than their own. But it was about three times as great. On one wing were the Phœnicians, on the other Ionian Greeks from Asia and the

Islands. Some of the latter fought stoutly; others remembered that they too were Greeks. The Greek ships, on the other hand, were mostly manned by freemen fighting for their homes. Throughout the early hours the battle raged confusedly. Then it became evident to Xerxes, watching the combat, that his fleet was attempting flight. The flight became disaster.

Xerxes had taken his seat to watch the battle. He saw his galleys rammed by the sharp prows of other galleys; his fighting-men shot down; his ships boarded. Much of the sea-fighting in those days was done by ramming; the big galleys bore down their opponents by superior weight of impact, or sheared off their oars and so destroyed their manœuvring power and left them helpless. Presently, Xerxes saw that some of his broken ships were surrendering. In the water he could see the heads of Greeks swimming to land; but "of the Barbarians the greater number perished in the sea, not knowing how to swim." The clumsy attempt of the hard-pressed first line of the Persian fleet to put about led to indescribable confusion. Some were rammed by the rear ships of their own side. This ancient shipping was poor, unseaworthy stuff by any modern standards. The west wind was blowing and many of the broken ships of Xerxes were now drifting away out of his sight to be wrecked on the coast beyond. Others were being towed towards Salamis by the Greeks. Others, less injured and still in fighting trim, were making for the beaches close beneath him that would bring them under the protection of his army. Scattered over the further sea, beyond the headlands, remote and vague, were ships in flight and Greek ships in pursuit. Slowly, incident by incident, the disaster had unfolded under his eyes. We can imagine something of the coming and going of messengers, the issuing of futile orders, the changes of plan, throughout the day. In the morning Xerxes had come out provided with tables to mark the most successful of his commanders for reward. In the gold of the sunset he beheld the sea power of Persia utterly scattered, sunken and destroyed, and the Greek fleet over against Salamis unbroken and triumphant, ordering its ranks, as if still incredulous of victory.

The Persian army remained as if in indecision for some days close to the scene of this sea fight, and then began to retreat to Thessaly, where it was proposed to winter and resume the campaign. But Xerxes, like Darius I before him, had conceived a disgust for European campaigns. He was afraid of the destruction of the bridge of boats. With part of the army he went on to the Hellespont, leaving the main force in Thessaly under a general, Mardonius. Of his own retreat the historian relates:

"Whithersoever they came on the march and to whatever nation

they seized the crops of that people and used them for provisions; and if they found no crops, then they took the grass which was growing up from the earth, and stripped off the bark from the trees and plucked down the leaves and devoured them; alike of the cultivated trees and of those growing wild; and they left nothing behind them: thus they did by reason of famine. Then plague too seized upon the army and dysentery, which destroyed them by the way, and some of them also who were sick the king left behind, laying charge upon the cities where at the time he chanced to be in his march, to take care of them and support them; of these he left some in Thessaly, and some at Siris in Paionia, and some in Macedonia.... When, passing on from Thrace they came to the passage, they crossed over the Hellespont in haste to Abydos by means of the ships, for they did not find the floating bridges still stretched across, but broken up by a storm. While staying there for a time they had distributed to them an allowance of food more abundant than they had had by the way, and from satisfying their hunger without restraint and also from the changes of water there died many of those in the army who had remained safe till then. The rest arrived with Xerxes at Sardis."

§ 10

The rest of the Persian army remained in Thessaly under the command of Mardonius, and for a year he maintained an aggressive campaign against the Greeks. Finally, he was defeated and killed in a pitched battle at Platæa (479 B.C.), and on the same day the Persian fleet and a land army met with joint disaster under the shadow of Mount Mycale on the Asiatic mainland, between Ephesus and Miletus. The Persian ships, being in fear of the Greeks, had been drawn up on shore and a wall built about them; but the Greeks disembarked and stormed this enclosure. They then sailed to the Hellespont to destroy what was left of the bridge of boats, so that later the Persian fugitives, retreating from Platæa, had to cross by shipping at the Bosphorus, and did so with difficulty.

Encouraged by these disasters of the imperial power, the Ionian cities in Asia began for a second time to revolt against the Persians.

With this the ninth book of the *History* of Herodotus comes to an end. He was born about 484 B.C., so that at the time of the battle of Platæa he was a child of five years old. Much of the substance of his story was gathered by him from actors in, and eye-witnesses of, the great events he relates. The war still dragged on for a long time; the Greeks supported a rebellion against Persian rule in Egypt, and tried unsuccessfully to take Cyprus; it did not end until about 449 B.C. Then the Greek coasts of Asia Minor and the Greek cities in the Black Sea remained generally free, but Cyprus and Egypt continued under Persian rule. Herodotus, who had been born a Persian subject in the Ionian city of Halicarnassus, was five and thirty years old by that time, and he must have taken an early opportunity after this peace of visiting Babylon and Persia. He probably went to Athens, with his History ready to recite, about 438 B.C.

The idea of a great union of Greece for aggression against Persia was not altogether strange to Herodotus. Some of his readers suspect him of writing to enforce it. It was certainly in the air at that time. He describes Aristagoras, the son-in-law of Histiæus, as showing the Spartans "a tablet of bronze on which was engraved a map of the whole earth with all the seas and rivers." He makes Aristagoras say: "These Barbarians are not valiant in fight. You, on the other hand, have now attained to the utmost skill in war. They fight with bows and arrows and a short spear: they go into battle wearing trousers and having caps on their heads. You have perfected your weapons and discipline. They are easily to be conquered. Not all the other nations of the world have what they possess: gold, silver, bronze, embroidered garments, beasts and slaves; *all this you might have for yourselves, if you so desired*."

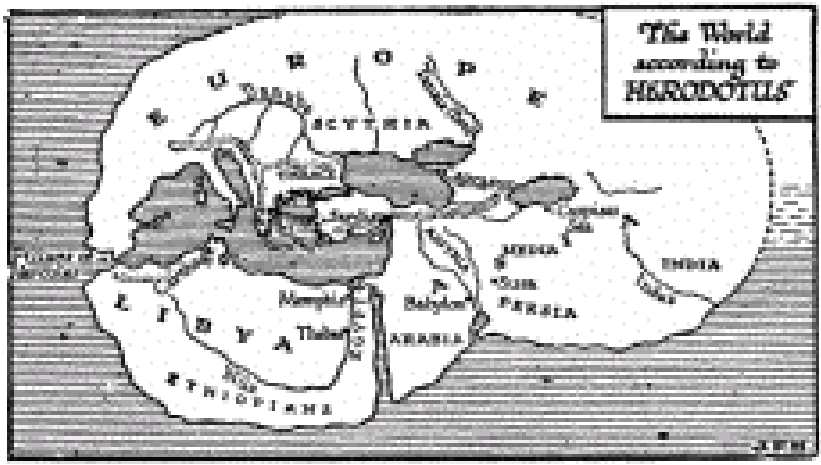

It was a hundred years before these suggestions bore fruit.

Xerxes was murdered in his palace about 465 B.C., and thereafter Persia made no further attempts at conquest in Europe. We have no such knowledge of the things that were happening in the empire of the Great King as we have of the occurrences in the little states of Central Greece. Greece had suddenly begun to produce literature, and put itself upon record as no other nation had ever done hitherto. After 479 B.C. (Platæa) the spirit seems to have gone out of the government of the Medes and Persians. The empire of the Great King enters upon a period of decay. An Artaxerxes, a second Xerxes, a second Darius, pass across the stage; there are rebellions in Egypt and Syria; the Medes rebel; a second Artaxerxes and a second Cyrus, his brother, fight for the throne. This history is even as the history of Babylonia, Assyria, and Egypt in the older times. It is autocracy reverting to its normal state of palace crime, blood-stained magnificence, and moral squalor. But the last-named struggle produced a Greek masterpiece, for this second Cyrus collected an army of Greek mercenaries and marched into Babylonia, and was there killed at the moment of victory over Artaxerxes II. Thereupon, the Ten Thousand Greeks, left with no one to employ them, made a retreat to the coast again (401 B.C.), and this retreat was immortalized in a book, one of the first of personal war books, the *Anabasis*, by their leader Xenophon.

Murders, revolts, chastisements, disasters, cunning alliances, and

base betrayals, and no Herodotus to record them. Such is the texture of Persian history. An Artaxerxes III, covered with blood, flourishes dimly for a time. “Artaxerxes III is said to have been murdered by Bagoas, who places Arses, the youngest of the king’s sons, on the throne only to slay him in turn when he seemed to be contemplating independent action.” So it goes on. Beneath the crimes and disorders of the palaces, the life of the city and country ran a similar course.

Justice was fitful and law venal. Wars that were unmeaning catastrophes swept down upon any little gleam of prosperity or decency to which this or that community clambered. Athens, prospering for a time after the Persian repulse, was smitten by the plague, in which Pericles, its greatest ruler, died (428 b.c.). But, as a noteworthy fact amidst these confusions, the Ten Thousand of Xenophon were scattering now among the Greek cities, repeating from their own experience the declaration of Aristagoras that the Persian empire was a rich confusion which it would be very easy to conquer.

XXIII

GREEK THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

§ 1. *The Athens of Pericles.* § 2. *Socrates.* § 3. *What was the Quality of the Common Athenians?* § 4. *Greek Tragedy and Comedy.* § 5. *Plato and the Academy.* § 6. *Aristotle and the Lyceum.* § 7. *Philosophy becomes Unworldly.* § 8. *The Quality and Limitations of Greek Thought.*

§ 1

GREEK history for the next forty years after Platæa and Mycale is a story of comparative peace and tranquillity. There were wars, but they were not intense wars. For a little while in Athens, for a section of the prosperous, there was leisure and opportunity. And by a combination of accidents and through the character of a small group of people, this leisure and opportunity produced the most remarkable and memorable results. A beautiful literature was produced; the plastic arts flourished, and the foundations of modern science were laid. Then, after an interlude of fifty odd years, the long-smouldering hostility between Athens and Sparta broke out into a fierce and exhausting war, which sapped at last the vitality of this creative movement.

This war is known in history as the Peloponnesian War; it went on for nearly thirty years, and wasted all the power of Greece. At first Athens was in the ascendant, then Sparta. Then arose Thebes, a city not fifty miles from Athens, to overshadow Sparta. Once more Athens flared into importance as the head of a confederation. The story must be told at considerable length or not told at all. It is a story of narrow rivalries and inexplicable hatreds that would have vanished long ago out of the memories of men, were it not that it is recorded and reflected in a great literature.

Through all this time Persia appears and reappears as the ally first of this league and then of that. About the middle of the fourth century B.C., Greece becomes aware of a new influence in its affairs, that of Philip, King of Macedonia. Macedonia does, indeed, arise in the background of this incurably divided Greece as the Medes and

Persians arose behind the Chaldean Empire. A time comes when the Greek mind turns round, so to speak, from its disputes, and stares in one united dismay at the Macedonian.

Planless and murderous squabbles are still planless and murderous squabbles even though Thucydides tells the story, even though the great beginnings of a new civilization are wrecked by their disorders; and in this general outline we can give no space at all to the particulars of these internecine feuds, to the fights and flights that sent first this Greek city and then that up to the sky in flames. Upon a one-foot globe Greece becomes a speck almost too small to recognize; and in a short history of mankind, all this century and more of dissension between the days of Salamis and Platæa and the rise of King Philip, shrinks to a little, almost inaudible clash of disputation, to a mere note upon the swift passing of opportunity for nations as for men.

But what does not shrink into insignificance, because it has entered into the intellectual process of all subsequent nations, because it is inseparably a part of our mental foundation, is the literature that Athens produced during such patches and gleams of tranquillity and security as these times afforded her.

Says Professor Gilbert Murray:

"Their outer political history, indeed, like that of all other nations, is filled with war and diplomacy, with cruelty and deceit. It is the inner history, the history of thought and feeling and character, that is so grand. They had some difficulties to contend with which are now almost out of our path. They had practically no experience, but were doing everything for the first time; they were utterly weak in material resources, and their emotions, their '*desires and fears and rages*,' were probably wilder and fiercer than ours. Yet they produced the Athens of Pericles and of Plato."

This remarkable outbreak of creative power, which for three and twenty centuries has been to men of intelligence a guiding and inspiring beacon out of the past, flared up after the battles of Marathon and Salamis had made Athens free and fearless, and, without any great excesses of power, predominant in her world. It was the work of a quite small group of men. A number of her citizens lived for the better part of a generation under conditions which, in all

ages, have disposed men to produce good and beautiful work; they were secure, they were free, and they had pride; and they were without that temptation of apparent and unchallenged power which disposes all of us to inflict wrongs upon our fellow men. When political life narrowed down again to the waste and crimes of a fratricidal war with Sparta, there was so broad and well-fed a flame of intellectual activity burning that it lasted through all the windy distresses of this war and beyond the brief lifetime of Alexander the Great, for a period altogether of more than a hundred years after the wars began.

Athens, it must be understood, was by far the largest of all the Greek city democracies. Flushed with victory and the sense of freedom fairly won, her people did for a time rise towards nobility. Under the guidance of a great demagogue, Pericles, the chief official of the Athenian general assembly, and a politician statesman rather of the calibre of Gladstone or Lincoln in modern history, they were set to the task of rebuilding their city and expanding their commerce. For a time they were capable of following a generous leader generously, and Fate gave them a generous leader. In Pericles there was mingled in the strangest fashion political ability with a real living passion for deep and high and beautiful things. He kept in power for over thirty years. He was a man of extraordinary vigour and liberality of mind. He stamped these qualities upon his time. As Winckler has remarked, the Athenian democracy had for a time "the face of Pericles." He was sustained by what was probably a very great and noble friendship. There was a woman of unusual education, Aspasia, from Miletus, whom he could not marry because of the law that restricted the citizenship of Athens to the home-born, but who was in effect his wife. She played a large part in gathering about him men of unusual gifts. All the great writers of the time knew her, and several have praised her wisdom. Plutarch, it is true, accuses her of instigating a troublesome and dangerous but finally successful war against Samos, but, as he himself shows later, this was necessitated by the naval hostility of the Samians, which threatened the overseas trade of Athens, upon which all the prosperity of the republic depended.

Men's ambitions are apt to reflect the standards of their intimates.

Pericles was content, at any rate, to serve as a leader in Athens rather than to dominate as a tyrant. Alliances were formed under his guidance, new colonies and trading stations were established from Italy to the Black Sea; and the treasures of the league at Delos were brought to Athens. Convinced of his security from Persia, Pericles spent the war hoard of the allies upon the beautification of his city. This was an unrighteous thing to do by our modern standards, but it was not a base or greedy thing to do. Athens had accomplished the work of the Delian League, and is not the labourer worthy of his hire? This sequestration made a time of exceptional opportunity for architects and artists. The Parthenon of Athens, whose ruins are still a thing of beauty, was but the crown set upon the clustering glories of the Athens Pericles rebuilt. Such sculptures as those of Phidias, Myron, and Polyclitus that still survive, witness to the artistic quality of the time.

The reader must bear in mind that illuminating remark of Winckler's, which says that this renascent Athens bore for a time the face of Pericles. It was the peculiar genius of this man and of his atmosphere that let loose the genius of men about him, and attracted men of great intellectual vigour to Athens. Athens wore his face for a time as one wears a mask, and then became restless and desired to put him aside. There was very little that was great and generous about the common Athenian. We have told of the spirit of one sample voter for the ostracism of Aristides, and Lloyd (in his *Age of Pericles*) declares that the Athenians would not suffer the name of Miltiades to be mentioned in connection with the battle of Marathon. The sturdy self-respect of the common voters revolted presently against the beautiful buildings rising about them; against the favours shown to such sculptors as Phidias over popular worthies in the same line of business; against the donations made to a mere foreigner like Herodotus of Halicarnassus; against the insulting preference of Pericles for the company and conversation of a Milesian woman. The public life of Pericles was conspicuously orderly, and that presently set the man in the street thinking that his private life must be very corrupt. One gathers that Pericles was "superior" in his demeanour; he betrayed at times a contempt for the citizens he served.

"Pericles acquired not only an elevation of sentiment, and a

loftiness and purity of style far removed from the low expression of the vulgar, but likewise a gravity of countenance which relaxed not into laughter, a firm and even tone of voice, an easy deportment, and a decency of dress which no vehemence of speaking ever put into disorder. These things, and others of a like nature, excited admiration in all that saw him. Such was his conduct, when a vile and abandoned fellow loaded him a whole day with reproaches and abuse; he bore it with patience and silence, and continued in public for the despatch of some urgent affairs. In the evening he walked softly home, this impudent wretch following, and insulting him all the way with the most scurrilous language. And as it was dark when he came to his own door, he ordered one of his servants to take a torch and light the man home. The poet Ion, however, says he was proud and supercilious in conversation, and that there was a great deal of vanity and contempt of others mixed with his dignity of manner.... He appeared not in the streets except when he went to the forum or the senate house. He declined the invitations of his friends, and all social entertainments and recreations; insomuch that in the whole time of his administration, which was a considerable length, he never went to sup with any of his friends but once, which was at the marriage of his nephew Euryptolemus, and he stayed there only until the ceremony of libation was ended. He considered that the freedom of entertainments takes away all distinction of office, and that dignity is but little consistent with familiarity....”

There was as yet no gutter journalism to tell the world of the vileness of the conspicuous and successful; but the common man, a little out of conceit with himself, found much consolation in the art of comedy, which flourished exceedingly. The writers of comedy satisfied that almost universal craving for the depreciation of those whose apparent excellence offends our self-love. They threw dirt steadily and industriously at Pericles and his friends. Pericles was portrayed in a helmet; a helmet became him, and it is to be feared he knew as much. This led to much joy and mirth over the pleasant suggestion of a frightfully distorted head, an onion head. The “goings on” of Aspasia were of course a fruitful vineyard for the inventions of the street....

Athene
of the
Parthenon

Dreaming souls, weary of the vulgarities of our time, have desired to be transferred to the sublime Age of Pericles. But, plumped down into that Athens, they would have found themselves in very much the atmosphere of the lower sort of contemporary music-hall, very much in the vein of our popular newspapers; the same hot blast of braying libel, foul imputation, greedy "patriotism," and general baseness would have blown upon them, the "modern note" would have pursued them. As the memories of Platæa and Salamis faded and the new buildings grew familiar, Pericles and the pride of Athens became more and more offensive to the homely humour of the crowd. He was never ostracized — his prestige with the quieter citizens saved him from that; but he was attacked with increasing boldness and steadfastness. He lived and died a poor man; he was perhaps the most honest of demagogues; but this did not save him from an abortive prosecution for peculation. Defeated in that, his enemies resorted to a more devious method; they began to lop away his friends.

Religious intolerance and moral accusations are the natural weapons of the envious against the leaders of men. His friend Damon was ostracized. Phidias was attacked for impiety. On the shield of the great statue of the goddess Athene, Phidias had dared to put, among the combatants in a fight between Greeks and Amazons, portraits of Pericles and himself. Phidias died in prison. Anaxagoras, a stranger welcomed to Athens by Pericles — when there were plenty of honest fellows already there quite willing to satisfy any reasonable curiosities — was saying the strangest things about the sun and stars, and hinting not obscurely that there were no gods, but only one animating spirit (*nous*) in the world. The comedy writers suddenly found they had deep religious feelings that could be profoundly and even dangerously shocked, and Anaxagoras fled the threat of a prosecution. Then came the turn of Aspasia. Athens seemed bent upon deporting her, and Pericles was torn between the woman who was the soul of his life and the ungracious city he had saved, defended, and made more beautiful and unforgettable than any other city in history. He stood up to defend Aspasia, he was seized by a storm of very human emotion, and as he spoke he wept — a gleeful thing for the rabble. His tears saved Aspasia for a time.

The Athenians were content to humiliate Pericles, but he had served them so long that they were indisposed to do without him. He had been their leader now for a third of a century.

In 431 B.C. came the war with Sparta. Plutarch accuses Pericles of bringing it on, because he felt his popularity waned so fast that a war was needed to make him indispensable.

"And as he himself was become obnoxious to the people upon Phidias's account, and was afraid of being called in question for it, he urged on the war, which as yet was uncertain, and blew up that flame which till then was stifled and suppressed. By this means he hoped to obviate the accusations that threatened him, and to mitigate the rage of envy, because such was his dignity and power, that in all important affairs, and in every great danger, the republic could place its confidence in him alone."

But the war was a slow and dangerous war, and the Athenian people were impatient. A certain Cleon arose, ambitious to oust Pericles from his leadership. There was a great clamour for a swift ending of the war. Cleon set out to be "the man who won the war." The popular poets got to work in this fashion:

"Thou king of satyrs ... why boast thy prowess,
Yet shudder at the sound of sharpened swords,
Spite of the flaming Cleon?"

An expedition under the leadership of Pericles was unsuccessful, and Cleon seized the opportunity for a prosecution. Pericles was suspended from his command and fined. The story goes that his oldest son — this was not the son of Aspasia, but of a former wife — turned against him, and pursued him with vile and incredible accusations. This young man was carried off by the plague. Then the sister of Pericles died, and then his last legitimate son. When, after the fashion of the time, he put the funeral garlands on the boy he wept aloud. Presently he himself took the contagion and died (428 B.C.).

The salient facts of this brief summary will serve to show how discordant Pericles was with the normal life of his time and city. This intellectual and artistic outbreak in Athens was no doubt favoured by

the conditions of the time, but it was also due in part to the appearance of some very unusual men. It was not a general movement; it was the movement of a small group of people exceptionally placed and gifted.

§ 2

Another leading figure in this Athenian movement, a figure still more out of harmony with the life around him, and quite as much an original source and stimulant of the enduring greatness of his age, was a man called Socrates, the son of a stone-mason. He was born about sixteen years later than Herodotus, and he was beginning to be heard of about the time when Pericles died. He himself wrote nothing, but it was his custom to talk in public places. There was in those days a great searching for wisdom going on; there was a various multitude of teachers called sophists who reasoned upon truth, beauty, and right living, and instructed the developing curiosities and imaginations of youth. This was so because there were no great priestly schools in Greece. And into these discussions this man came, a clumsy and slovenly figure, barefooted, gathering about him a band of admirers and disciples.

His method was profoundly sceptical; he believed that the only possible virtue was true knowledge; he would tolerate no belief, no hope that could not pass the ultimate acid test. For himself this meant virtue, but for many of his weaker followers it meant the loss of beliefs and moral habits that would have restrained their impulses. These weaklings became self-excusing, self-indulging scoundrels. Among his young associates were Plato, who afterwards immortalized his method in a series of philosophical dialogues, and founded the philosophical school of the Academy, which lasted nine hundred years, Xenophon, of the Ten Thousand, who described his death, and Isocrates, one of the wisest of Greek political thinkers; but there were also Critias, who, when Athens was utterly defeated by Sparta, was leader among the Thirty Tyrants appointed by the Spartans to keep the crushed city under; Charmides, who was killed beside Critias when the Thirty were overthrown; and Alcibiades, a brilliant and complex traitor, who did much to lead Athens into the

disastrous expedition against Syracuse which destroyed her strength, who betrayed her to the Spartans, and who was at last assassinated while on his way to the Persian court to contrive mischief against Greece. These latter pupils were not the only young men of promise whose vulgar faith and patriotism Socrates destroyed, to leave nothing in its place. His most inveterate enemy was a certain Anytus, whose son, a devoted disciple of Socrates, had become a hopeless drunkard. Through Anytus it was that Socrates was at last prosecuted for "corrupting" the youth of Athens, and condemned to death by drinking a poisonous draught made from hemlock (399 B.C.).

His death is described with great beauty in the dialogue of Plato called by the name of Phædo.

§ 3

The preceding section raised an interesting discussion between Professor Gilbert Murray and the writer upon the character and quality of the common Athenian citizen. Professor Murray thought several phrases used by the writer harsh and unjust. But what he had to say was so interesting and informing, and the writer was so entirely in agreement with his spirit, that it seemed better, instead of modifying what had been written in § 1, to leave that as it stood and to supplement it by quoting Professor Murray. He objected to the parallelism with a twentieth-century crowd. "What I want you to do," he wrote, "is to take them at the level of the people round them and before them and see how they differ. For example, the first thing that strikes one is that they use all their powers for a different purpose than most peoples: for intellectual and artistic things. No more enormous works here to glorify divine kings; no private splendour, no luxury, but a wonderful output of art, poetry, philosophy, and — within limits — science. Compare them with Rome.

"In the matter of slavery; all nations had slaves; some treated them very cruelly, some with moderate cruelty. The Greeks alone argued whether it was right to have them — and 'cranks' occasionally proposed emancipation. You get strong testimony, sometimes indignant testimony, that the Athenians were too soft altogether in

their treatment of slaves. As soon as you get to Carthaginian or Roman history you get appalling cruelty (the 6000 crucified by Crassus, the gladiatorial games, the habitual leg-breaking of slaves, etc.); such things seem never to have occurred in Greece. As soon as you get to Alexander you get, of course, the Oriental despotic touch — fantastic vanity and cruelty; and at length the recurrence of human sacrifice.

"The greatness of Greece comes out only in the art and literature and thought; not in the political and social history — except in dim flashes. By all means emphasize clearly to start with that the Greeks of, say, the ninth century, were practically savages, and those of even the sixth and in places right on to the fifth and fourth were in many things on the 'Lower Cultures' level. Clothes like Polynesians; tools very poor; religion ... fragments of the Polynesian all about, when you got outside the educated Attic world. But the *characteristic* is that, on this very low level, you have extraordinary flashes of very high inspiration, as the poetry and art and philosophy witness. Also, an actual achievement in social life — what one calls 'Hellenism,' *i.e.*, republicanism, simplicity of life, sobriety of thought, almost complete abolition of torture, mutilation, etc., and an amazing emancipation of the individual and of the human intellect. It is impossible to speak, really, of the 'Greek view' of anything. Because all the different views are put forward and represented: polytheism, monotheism, atheism; pro-slavery, anti-slavery; duty to animals, no duty to animals; democracy, monarchy, aristocracy. The characteristic is that *human thought got free*. (Not absolutely, of course; only to an amazing extent.) This emancipation was paid for by all sorts of instability; awful political instability, because stability in such things is produced exactly by the opposite — by long firm tradition and cohesiveness.

"It is not fair to say I idealize the Athenian mob; see, for example, my *Euripides and his Age*. But I don't think it was like our music-hall mob. It was much more artistic, much more intellectual and yet more primitive, more indecent but less lascivious; more capable of atrocious misconduct; also probably more capable of idealism. But we don't really know much about the crowd. It is only a hostile average-sensual-man background against which the philosophers and

poets stand out. There was no ‘city mob,’ as in Rome. They were nearly all small farmers or craftsmen. I can’t help thinking that their badness was more like the faults of a superior South Sea Islander than like the viler side of the ‘crowd’ to-day.”

§ 4

The most characteristic feature of the opening years of this brilliant century and a half (475 to 325 B.C.) of Greek intellectual life was the appearance of the great tragedies.

Before the age of Pericles the main literature of the Greek peoples had been their epic poetry, of which we have already said something in our account of the earlier nomadic Aryan life. It was made up of songs of free adventure, aristocratic and valiant in spirit. The main Greek epics were reduced to writing, and the text of the chief ones put in its present order in the time of the tyrant Peisistratus (*i.e.*, immediately before the first Persian wars). Chanted originally to the chiefs and leading men in hall, they were now recited at the public festivals. In addition, there were also poems of more homely character, love songs, war lyrics, and the like.

A third stream of poetry also ran into the Greek tradition, perhaps not of Aryan origin at all, but preserving the religious ideas of the dark whites whom the Greeks had conquered. There were religious chants and hymns associated with the secret religious practices of the worship of Demeter, the earth goddess, and of Orpheus and Dionysus. They are mixed up with ideas of self-abasement, self-mutilation, and the like, that were altogether foreign to the healthy directness of the hardy barbarians from the north. These ideas were creeping out from their hiding-places, and expressing themselves in Greek in Athens during this period in the Orphic religious poetry. It seems probable that in the Athenian population among all the Greek cities the pre-Aryan strain was unusually strong. This dark strain was subtle, artistic, creative — Cnossos witnesses to that; but it had no great courage of the mind; it was afraid of the stars and of life. Whenever that strain is found in any race, there are to be found also thoughts and legends of sacrificial murders.

And perhaps also indigenous to the Greek soil, rooted deeply

there in the time of the world-wide ancient heliolithic culture, were religious dances. Such dances we can trace from the Atlantic to Peru. There is a drawing in a Spanish cave at Cogul, near the Ebro, which is supposed to represent a later palæolithic ritual dance. There is little evidence of the primitive Aryans engaging in religious dances. But running through the rural life of Greece was the tradition of a dressing-up and a dancing and chanting associated with the worship of another god, who is killed and lives again as a part of the ceremonies, the god Dionysus. After the coming of the Aryans into Greece, the vocal element became stronger in these proceedings, and thrust into the dance came a recitation. There was first one reciter, then two, and then three, and the rest of the company became the chorus to the declamations of these principal actors. Out of the public performance at festivals and anniversaries of these choir songs or dithyrambs with one actor grew the great art of tragedy with three and more. Side by side with tragedy, comedy developed from another and merrier series of dressings-up and singing. Here we can but name those who were supreme in these arts who flourished in the days of Pericles, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the masters of tragedy, and Aristophanes, the writer of comedies. We can say nothing of the splendour and beauty of the former, nor of the fantastic invention and wit of the latter. Æschylus won his first prize for tragedy in the year that Herodotus was born (484 B.C.); Sophocles came some eighteen years later; Euripides was four years old when Æschylus was beginning his career. The mockery of Aristophanes broke out (427 B.C.) only when the days of great tragedy and sculpture and building were drawing to a close.

§ 5

The influence of Socrates also began to bear fruit after the days of Pericles and Aspasia. This old questioner, at whose touch faith, speculation, and illusion shrivelled together, was the centre of a group of young men who lived through and after the years of the Peloponnesian War. Of all these young men, one stands out as the greatest of them all, Plato. He was born 427 B.C., the year of the first performance of the work of Aristophanes, and he lived for eighty

years.

In mental temperament Plato was of an altogether different type from the older man. He was a most artistic and delicate writer, and Socrates could write nothing consecutive. He cared for beautiful things and Socrates despised them. He was supremely concerned with the ordering of public affairs and the scheming of happier human relationships, while Socrates, heedless of heat and cold and the opinion of his fellow creatures, concentrated his mind upon a serene disillusionment. Life, said Socrates, was deception; only the Soul lived. Plato had a very great affection for this rugged old teacher, he found his method of the utmost value in disentangling and cleaning up opinions, and he made him the central figure of his immortal dialogues; but his own thoughts and disposition turned him altogether away from the sceptical attitude. In many of the dialogues the voice is the voice of Socrates, but the thought is the thought of Plato. Plato was living in a time of doubt and questioning about all human relationships. In the great days of Pericles, before 450 B.C., there seems to have been a complete satisfaction in Athens with social and political institutions. Then there seemed no reason for questioning. Men felt free; the community prospered; one suffered chiefly from jealousy. The History of Herodotus displays little or no dissatisfaction with Athenian political institutions.

But Plato, who was born about the time Herodotus died, and who grew up in the atmosphere of a disastrous war and great social distress and confusion, was from the first face to face with human discord and the misfit of human institutions. To that challenge his mind responded. One of his earlier works and his latest are bold and penetrating discussions of the possible betterment of social relations. Socrates had taught him to take nothing for granted, not even the common relations of husband and wife or parent and child. His *Republic*, the first of all Utopian books, is a young man's dream of a city in which human life is arranged according to a novel and a better plan; his last unfinished work, the *Laws*, is a discussion of the regulation of another such Utopia. There is much in Plato at which we cannot even glance here, but it is a landmark in this history, it is a new thing in the development of mankind, this appearance of the idea of wilfully and completely recasting human conditions. So far

mankind has been living by tradition under the fear of the gods. Here is a man who says boldly to our race, and as if it were a quite reasonable and natural thing to say, "Take hold of your lives. Most of these things that distress you, you can avoid; most of these things that dominate you, you can overthrow. You can do as you will with them."

One other thing besides the conflicts of the time perhaps stimulated the mind of Plato in this direction. In the days of Pericles Athens had founded many settlements overseas, and the setting up of these settlements had familiarized men with the idea that a community need not grow, it could also be made.

Closely associated with Plato was a younger man, who later also maintained a school in Athens and lived to an even greater age. This was Isocrates. He was what we should call a publicist, a writer rather than an orator, and his peculiar work was to develop the idea of Herodotus, the idea of a unification of Greece against the Persian Empire, as a remedy for the baseness and confusion of her politics and the waste and destruction of her internecine wars. His political horizon was in some respects broader than Plato's, and in his later years he looked towards monarchy, and particularly towards the Macedonian monarchy of Philip, as a more unifying and broadening method of government than city democracy. The same drift to monarchist ideas had occurred in the case of that Xenophon whose *Anabasis* we have already mentioned. In his old age this retired mercenary wrote the *Cyropædia*, a "vindication both theoretically and practically of absolute monarchy as shown in the organization of the Persian Empire."

§ 6

Plato taught in the Academy. To him in his old age came a certain good-looking youngster from Stagira in Macedonia, Aristotle, who was the son of the Macedonian king's physician, and a man with a very different type of mind from that of the great Athenian. He was naturally sceptical of the imaginative will, and with a great respect for and comprehension of established fact. Later on, after Plato was dead, he set up a school at the Lyceum in Athens and taught,

criticizing Plato and Socrates with a certain hardness. When he taught, the shadow of Alexander the Great lay across the freedom of Greece, and he favoured slavery and constitutional kings. He had previously been the tutor of Alexander for several years at the court of Philip of Macedon. Intelligent men were losing heart in those days, their faith in the power of men to make their own conditions of life was fading. There were no more Utopias. The rush of events was manifestly too powerful for such organized effort as was then practicable between men of fine intelligence. It was possible to think of recasting human society when human society was a little city of a few thousand citizens, but what was happening about them was something cataclysmal; it was the political recasting of the whole known world, of the affairs of what even then must have amounted to something between fifty and a hundred million people. It was recasting upon a scale no human mind was yet equipped to grasp. It drove thought back upon the idea of a vast and implacable Fate. It made men snatch at whatever looked stable and unifying. Monarchy, for instance, for all its manifest vices, was a conceivable government for millions; it had, to a certain extent, *worked*; it imposed a ruling will where it would seem that a collective will was impossible. This change of the general intellectual mood harmonized with Aristotle's natural respect for existing fact. If, on the one hand, it made him approve of monarchy and slavery and the subjection of women as reasonable institutions, on the other hand it made him eager to understand fact and to get some orderly knowledge of these realities of nature and human nature that were now so manifestly triumphant over the creative dreams of the preceding generation. He is terribly sane and luminous, and terribly wanting in self-sacrificial enthusiasm. He questions Plato when Plato would exile poets from his Utopia, for poetry is a power; he directs his energy along a line diametrically opposed to Socrates' depreciation of Anaxagoras. He anticipates Bacon and the modern scientific movement in his realization of the importance of ordered knowledge. He set himself to the task of gathering together and setting down knowledge. He was the first natural historian. Other men before him had speculated about the nature of things, but he, with every young man he could win over to the task, set himself to classify and compare things. Plato says in

effect: “Let us take hold of life and remodel it;” this soberer successor: “Let us first know more of life and meanwhile serve the king.” It was not so much a contradiction as an immense qualification of the master.

The peculiar relation of Aristotle to Alexander the Great enabled him to procure means for his work such as were not available again for scientific inquiry for long ages. He could command hundreds of talents (a talent = about £240) for his expenses. At one time he had at his disposal a thousand men scattered throughout Asia and Greece, collecting matter for his natural history. They were, of course, very untrained observers, collectors of stories rather than observers; but nothing of the kind had ever been attempted, had even been thought of, so far as we know, before his time. Political as well as natural science began. The students of the Lyceum under his direction made an analysis of 158 political constitutions....

This was the first gleam of organized science in the world. The early death of Alexander and the breaking up of his empire almost before it had begun, put an end to endowments on this scale for 2000 years. Only in Egypt at the Alexandria Museum did any scientific research continue, and that only for a few generations. Fifty years after Aristotle’s death the Lyceum had already dwindled to insignificance.

§ 7

The general drift of thought in the concluding years of the fourth century B.C. was not with Aristotle, nor towards the laborious and necessary accumulation of ordered knowledge. It is possible that without his endowments from the king he would have made but a small figure in intellectual history. Through them he was able to give his splendid intelligence substance and effect. The ordinary man prefers easy ways so long as they may be followed, and is almost wilfully heedless whether they end at last in a cul-de-sac. Finding the stream of events too powerful to control at once, the generality of philosophical teachers drifted in those days from the scheming of model cities and the planning of new ways of living into the elaboration of beautiful and consoling systems of evasion.

Perhaps that is putting things coarsely and unjustly. But let Professor Gilbert Murray speak upon this matter.

"The Cynics cared only for virtue and the relation of the soul to God; the world and its learning and its honours were as dross to them. The Stoics and Epicureans, so far apart at first sight, were very similar in their ultimate aim. What they really cared about was ethics — the practical question how a man should order his life. Both, indeed, gave themselves to some science — the Epicureans to physics, the Stoics to logic and rhetoric — but only as a means to an end. The Stoic tried to win men's hearts and convictions by sheer subtlety of abstract argument and dazzling sublimity of thought and expression. The Epicurean was determined to make Humanity go its way without cringing to capricious gods and without sacrificing Free-Will. He condensed his gospel into four maxims: 'God is not to be feared; Death cannot be felt; the Good can be won; all that we dread can be borne and conquered.'"

And meanwhile the stream of events flowed on, with a reciprocal indifference to philosophy.

§ 8

If the Greek classics are to be read with any benefit by modern men, they must be read as the work of men like ourselves. Regard must be had to their traditions, their opportunities, and their limitations. There is a disposition to exaggeration in all human admiration; men will treat the rough notes of Thucydides or Plato for work they never put in order as miracles of style, and the errors of their transcribers as hints of unfathomable mysteries; most of our classical texts are very much mangled, and all were originally the work of human beings in difficulties, living in a time of such darkness and narrowness of outlook as makes our own age by comparison a period of dazzling illumination. What we shall lose in reverence by this familiar treatment, we shall gain in sympathy for that group of troubled, uncertain, and very modern minds. The Athenian writers were, indeed, the first of modern men. They were discussing questions that we still discuss; they began to struggle with the great problems that confront us to-day. Their writings are our dawn.

They began an inquiry, and they arrived at no solutions. We cannot pretend to-day that we have arrived at solutions to most of the questions they asked. The mind of the Hebrews, as we have already shown, awoke suddenly to the endless miseries and disorders of life, saw that these miseries and disorders were largely due to the lawless acts of men, and concluded that salvation could come only through subduing ourselves to the service of the one God who rules heaven and earth. The Greek, rising to the same perception, was not prepared with the same idea of a patriarchal deity; he lived in a world in which there was not God but the gods; if perhaps he felt that the gods themselves were limited, then he thought of Fate behind them, cold and impersonal. So he put his problem in the form of an enquiry as to what was right living, without any definite correlation of the right-living man with the will of God.... To us, looking at the matter from a standpoint purely historical, the common problem can now be presented in a form that, for the purposes of history, covers both the Hebrew and Greek way of putting it. We have seen our kind rising out of the unconsciousness of animals to a continuing racial self-consciousness, realizing the unhappiness of its wild diversity of aims, realizing the inevitable tragedy of individual self-seeking, and feeling its way blindly towards some linking and subordinating idea to save it from the pains and accidents of mere individuality. The gods, the god-king, the idea of the tribe, the idea of the city; here are ideas that have claimed and held for a time the devotion of men, ideas in which they have a little lost their individual selfishness and escaped to the realization of a more enduring life. Yet, as our wars and disasters prove, none of these greater ideas have yet been great enough. The gods have failed to protect, the tribe has proved itself vile and cruel, the city ostracized one's best and truest friends, the god-king made a beast of himself....

As we read over the speculative literature of this great period of the Greeks, we realize three barriers set about the Greek mind, from which it rarely escaped, but from which we now perhaps are beginning to escape.

The first of these limitations was the obsession of the Greek mind by the idea of the city as the ultimate state. In a world in which empire had followed empire, each greater than its predecessor, in a

world through which men and ideas drove ever more loosely and freely, in a world visibly unifying even then, the Greeks, because of their peculiar physical and political circumstances, were still dreaming impossibly of a compact little city state, impervious to outer influences, valiantly secure against the whole world. Plato's estimate of the number of citizens in a perfect state varied between 1000 (the *Republic*) and 5040 (the *Laws*) citizens. This state was to go to war and hold its own against other cities of the same size. And this was not a couple of generations after the hosts of Xerxes had crossed the Hellespont!

Perhaps these Greeks thought the day of world empires had passed for ever, whereas it was only beginning. At the utmost their minds reached out to alliances and leagues. There must have been men at the court of Artaxerxes thinking far away beyond these little ideas of the rocky creek, the island, and the mountain-encircled valley. But the need for unification against the greater powers that moved outside the Greek-speaking world, the Greek mind disregarded wilfully. These outsiders were barbarians, not to be needlessly thought about; they were barred out now from Greece for ever. One took Persian money; everybody took Persian money; what did it matter? Or one enlisted for a time in their armies (as Xenophon did) and hoped for his luck with a rich prisoner. Athens took sides in Egyptian affairs, and carried on minor wars with Persia, but there was no conception of a common policy or a common future for Greece.... Until at last a voice in Athens began to shout "Macedonia!" to clamour like a watch-dog, "Macedonia!" This was the voice of the orator and demagogue Demosthenes, hurling warnings and threats and denunciations at King Philip of Macedon, who had learnt his politics not only from Plato and Aristotle, but also from Isocrates and Xenophon, and from Babylon and Susa, and who was preparing quietly, ably, and steadfastly to dominate all Greece, and through Greece to conquer the known world....

There was a second thing that cramped the Greek mind, the institution of domestic slavery. Slavery was implicit in Greek life; men could conceive of neither comfort nor dignity without it. But slavery shuts off one's sympathy not only from a class of one's fellow subjects; it puts the slave-owner into a class and organization

against all stranger men. One is of an elect tribe. Plato, carried by his clear reason and the noble sanity of his spirit beyond the things of the present, would have abolished slavery; much popular feeling and the New Comedy were against it; the Stoics and Epicureans, many of whom were slaves, condemned it as unnatural, but finding it too strong to upset, decided that it did not affect the soul and might be ignored. With the wise there was no bound or free. To the matter-of-fact Aristotle, and probably to most practical men, its abolition was inconceivable. So they declared that there were in the world men "naturally slaves."...

Finally, the thought of the Greeks was hampered by a want of knowledge that is almost inconceivable to us to-day. They had no knowledge of the past of mankind at all; at best they had a few shrewd guesses. They had no knowledge of geography beyond the range of the Mediterranean basin and the frontiers of Persia. We know far more to-day of what was going on in Susa, Persepolis, Babylon, and Memphis in the time of Pericles than he did. Their astronomical ideas were still in the state of rudimentary speculations. Anaxagoras, greatly daring, thought the sun and moon were vast globes, so vast that the sun was probably "as big as all the Peloponnesus." The forty-seventh proposition of the first book of Euclid was regarded as one of the supreme triumphs of the human mind. Their ideas in physics and chemistry were the results of profound cogitation; it is wonderful that they did guess at atomic structure. One has to remember their extraordinary poverty in the matter of experimental apparatus. They had coloured glass for ornament, but no white glass; no accurate means of measuring the minor intervals of time, no really efficient numerical notation, no very accurate scales, no rudiments of telescope or microscope. A modern scientific man dumped down in the Athens of Pericles would have found the utmost difficulty in demonstrating the elements of his knowledge, however crudely, to the men he would have found there. He would have had to rig up the simplest apparatus under every disadvantage, while Socrates pointed out the absurdity of seeking Truth with pieces of wood and string and metal such as small boys use for fishing. And our professor of science would also have been in constant danger of a prosecution for impiety.

Our world to-day draws upon relatively immense accumulations of knowledge of fact. In the age of Pericles scarcely the first stone of our comparatively tremendous cairn of things recorded and proved had been put in place. When we reflect upon this difference, then it ceases to be remarkable that the Greeks, with all their aptitude for political speculation, were blind to the insecurities of their civilization from without and from within, to the necessity for effective unification, to the swift rush of events that was to end for long ages these first brief freedoms of the human mind.

It is not in the results it achieved, but in the attempts it made that the true value for us of this group of Greek talkers and writers lies. It is not that they answered questions, but that they dared to ask them. Never before had man challenged his world and the way of life to which he found his birth had brought him. Never had he said before that he could alter his conditions. Tradition and a seeming necessity had held him to life as he had found it grown up about his tribe since time immemorial. Hitherto he had taken the world as children still take the homes and habits in which they have been reared.

So in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. we perceive, most plainly in Judea and in Athens, but by no means confined to those centres, the beginnings of a moral and an intellectual process in mankind, an appeal to righteousness and an appeal to the truth from the passions and confusions and immediate appearances of existence. It is like the dawn of the sense of responsibility in a youth, who suddenly discovers that life is neither easy nor aimless. Mankind is growing up. The rest of history for three and twenty centuries is threaded with the spreading out and development and interaction and the clearer and more effective statement of these main leading ideas. Slowly more and more men apprehend the reality of human brotherhood, the needlessness of wars and cruelties and oppression, the possibilities of a common purpose for the whole of our kind. In every generation thereafter there is the evidence of men seeking for that better order to which they feel our world must come. But everywhere and wherever in any man the great constructive ideas have taken hold, the hot greeds, the jealousies, the suspicions and impatience that are in the nature of every one of us, war against the struggle towards greater and broader purposes. The last twenty-three centuries of history are

like the efforts of some impulsive, hasty immortal to think clearly and live rightly. Blunder follows blunder; promising beginnings end in grotesque disappointments; streams of living water are poisoned by the cup that conveys them to the thirsty lips of mankind. But the hope of men rises again at last after every disaster....

We pass on now to the story of one futile commencement, one glorious shattered beginning of human unity. There was in Alexander the Great knowledge and imagination, power and opportunity, folly, egotism, detestable vulgarity, and an immense promise broken by the accident of his early death while men were still dazzled by its immensity.

XXIV

THE CAREER OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

§ 1. *Philip of Macedonia.* § 2. *The Murder of King Philip.* § 3. *Alexander's First Conquests.* § 4. *The Wanderings of Alexander.* § 5. *Was Alexander Indeed Great?* § 6. *The Successors of Alexander.* § 7. *Pergamum a Refuge of Culture.* § 8. *Alexander as a Portent of World Unity.*

§ 1

THE true hero of the story of Alexander is not so much Alexander as his father Philip. The author of a piece does not shine in the limelight as the actor does, and it was Philip who planned much of the greatness that his son achieved, who laid the foundations and forged the tools, who had indeed already begun the Persian expedition at the time of his death. Philip, beyond doubting, was one of the greatest monarchs the world has ever seen; he was a man of the utmost intelligence and ability, and his range of ideas was vastly beyond the scope of his time. He made Aristotle his friend; he must have discussed with him those schemes for the organization of real knowledge which the philosopher was to realize later through Alexander's endowments. Philip, so far as we can judge, seems to have been Aristotle's "Prince"; to him Aristotle turned as men turn only to those whom they admire and trust. To Philip also Isocrates appealed as the great leader who should unify and ennoble the chaotic public life of Greece.

In many books it is stated that Philip was a man of incredible cynicism and of uncontrolled lusts. It is true that at feasts, like all the Macedonians of his time, he was a hard drinker and some times drunken — it was probably considered unamiable not to drink excessively at feasts; but of the other accusations there is no real proof, and for evidence we have only the railings of such antagonists as Demosthenes, the Athenian demagogue and orator, a man of reckless rhetoric. The quotation of a phrase or so will serve to show to what the patriotic anger of Demosthenes could bring him. In one of the *Philippics*, as his denunciations of Philip are called, he gives

vent in this style:

"Philip — a man who not only is no Greek, and no way akin to the Greeks, but is not even a barbarian from a respectable country — no, a pestilent fellow of Macedon, a country from which we never get even a decent slave." And so on and so on. We know, as a matter of fact, that the Macedonians were an Aryan people very closely akin to the Greeks, and that Philip was probably the best educated man of his time. This was the spirit in which the adverse accounts of Philip were written.

Philip of Macedon

When Philip became king of Macedonia in 359 B.C., his country was a little country without a seaport or industries or any

considerable city. It had a peasant population, Greek almost in language and ready to be Greek in sympathies, but more purely Nordic in blood than any people to the south of it. Philip made this little barbaric state into a great one; he created the most efficient military organization the world had so far seen, and he had brought most of Greece into one confederacy under his leadership at the time of his death. And his extraordinary quality, his power of thinking out beyond the current ideas of his time, is shown not so much in those matters as in the care with which he had his son trained to carry on the policy he had created. He is one of the few monarchs in history who cared for his successor. Alexander was, as few other monarchs have ever been, a specially educated king; he was educated for empire. Aristotle was but one of the several able tutors his father chose for him. Philip confided his policy to him, and entrusted him with commands and authority by the time he was sixteen. He commanded the cavalry at Chæronea under his father's eye. He was nursed into power — generously and unsuspiciously.

To any one who reads his life with care it is evident that Alexander started with an equipment of training and ideas of unprecedented value. As he got beyond the wisdom of his upbringing he began to blunder and misbehave — sometimes with a dreadful folly. The defects of his character had triumphed over his upbringing long before he died.

Philip was a king after the old pattern, a leader-king, first among his peers, of the ancient Nordic Aryan type. The army he found in Macedonia consisted of a general foot levy and a noble equestrian order called the "companions." The people were farmers and hunters and somewhat drunken in their habits, but ready for discipline and good fighting stuff. And if the people were homely, the government was intelligent and alert. For some generations the court language had been Attic (= Athenian) Greek, and the court had been sufficiently civilized to shelter and entertain such great figures as Euripides, who died there in 406 B.C., and Zeuxis the artist. Moreover, Philip, before his accession, had spent some years as a hostage in Greece. He had had as good an education as Greece could give at that time. He was, therefore, quite familiar with what we may call the idea of Isocrates — the idea of a great union of the Greek

states in Europe to dominate the Eastern world; and he knew, too, how incapable was the Athenian democracy, because of its constitution and tradition, of taking the opportunity that lay before it. For it was an opportunity that would have to be shared. To the Athenians or the Spartans it would mean letting in a "lot of foreigners" to the advantages of citizenship. It would mean lowering themselves to the level of equality and fellowship with Macedonians — a people from whom "we" do not get "even a decent slave."

There was no way to secure unanimity among the Greeks for the contemplated enterprise except by some revolutionary political action. It was no love of peace that kept the Greeks from such an adventure; it was their political divisions. The resources of the several states were exhausted in a series of internecine wars — wars arising out of the merest excuses and fanned by oratorical wind. The ploughing of certain sacred lands near Delphi by the Phocians was, for example, the pretext for a sanguinary Sacred War.

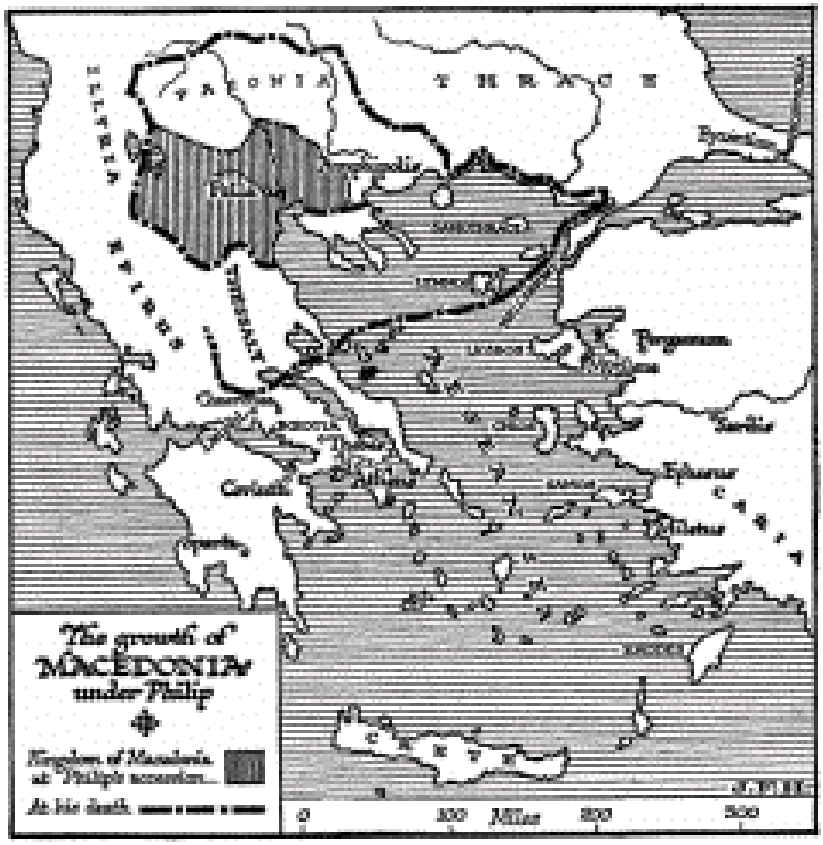

Philip's first years of kingship were devoted to the discipline of his army. Hitherto most of the main battle fighting in the world had been done by footmen in formation. In the very ancient Sumerian battle-pieces we see spearmen in close order forming the main battle, just as they did in the Zulu armies of the nineteenth century; the Greek troops of Philip's time were still fighting in that same style; the Theban phalanx was a mass of infantry holding spears, the hinder ranks thrusting their longer spears between the front-line men. Such a formation went through anything less disciplined that opposed it. Mounted archers could, of course, inflict considerable losses on such a mass of men, and accordingly, as the horse came into warfare, horsemen appeared on either side as an accessory to this main battle. The reader must remember that the horse did not come into very effective use in western war until the rise of the Assyrians, and then

at first only as a chariot horse. The chariots drove full tilt at the infantry mass and tried to break it. Unless its discipline was very solid they succeeded. The Homeric fighting is chariot fighting. It is not until the last thousand years B.C. that we begin to find mounted soldiers, as distinct from charioteers, playing a part in warfare. At first they appear to have fought in a scattered fashion, each man doing his personal feats. So the Lydians fought against Cyrus. It was Philip who seems to have created charging cavalry. He caused his "companions" to drill for a massed charge. And also he strengthened his phalanx by giving the rear men longer spears than had been used hitherto, and so deepening its mass. The Macedonian phalanx was merely a more solid version of the Theban phalanx. None of these massed infantry formations was flexible enough to stand a flank or rear attack. They had very slight manœuvring power. Both Philip's and his son's victories followed, therefore, with variations, one general scheme of co-operation between these two arms. The phalanx advanced in the centre and held the enemy's main body; on one wing or the other the cavalry charges swept away the enemy cavalry, and then swooped round upon the flank and rear of the enemy phalanx, the front of which the Macedonian phalanx was already smiting. The enemy main battle then broke and was massacred. As Alexander's military experience grew, he also added a use of catapults in the field, big stone-throwing affairs, to break up the enemy infantry. Before his time catapults had been used in sieges, but never in battles. He invented "artillery preparation."

With the weapon of his new army in his hand, Philip first turned his attention to the north of Macedonia. He carried expeditions into Illyria and as far as the Danube; he also spread his power along the coast as far as the Hellespont. He secured possession of a port, Amphipolis, and certain gold mines adjacent. After several Thracian expeditions he turned southward in good earnest. He took up the cause of the Delphic amphictyony against those sacrilegious Phocians, and so appeared as the champion of Hellenic religion.

There was a strong party of Greeks, it must be understood, a Pan-Hellenic party, in favour of the Greek headship of Philip. The chief writer of this Pan-Hellenic movement was Isocrates. Athens, on the other hand, was the head and front of the opposition to Philip, and

Athens was in open sympathy with Persia, even sending emissaries to the Great King to warn him of the danger to him of a united Greece. The comings and goings of twelve years cannot be related here. In 338 B.C. the long struggle between division and Pan-Hellenism came to a decisive issue, and at the battle of Chæronea Philip inflicted a crushing defeat upon Athens and her allies. He gave Athens peace upon astonishingly generous terms; he displayed himself steadfastly resolved to propitiate and favour that implacable city; and in 338 B.C. a congress of Greek states recognized him as captain-general for the war against Persia.

He was now a man of forty-seven. It seemed as though the world lay at his feet. He had made his little country into the leading state in a great Græco-Macedonian confederacy. That unification was to be the prelude to a still greater one, the unification of the Western world with the Persian empire into one world state of all known peoples. Who can doubt he had that dream? The writings of Isocrates convince us that he had it. Who can deny that he might have realized it? He had a reasonable hope of living for perhaps another quarter century of activity. In 336 B.C. his advanced guard crossed into Asia....

But he never followed with his main force. He was assassinated.

§ 2

It is necessary now to tell something of the domestic life of King Philip. The lives of both Philip and his son were pervaded by the personality of a restless and evil woman, Olympias, the mother of Alexander.

She was the daughter of the king of Epirus, a country to the west of Macedonia, and, like Macedonia, a semi-Greek land. She met Philip, or was thrown in his way, at some religious gathering in Samothrace. Plutarch declares the marriage was a love-match, and there seems to be at least this much in the charges against Philip that, like many energetic and imaginative men, he was prone to impatient love impulses. He married her when he was already a king, and Alexander was born to him three years later.

Macedonian warrior.
Bas-relief from Pella.

It was not long before Olympias and Philip were bitterly estranged. She was jealous of him, but there was another and graver source of trouble in her passion for religious mysteries. We have already noted that beneath the fine and restrained Nordic religion of the Greeks the land abounded with religious cults of a darker and more ancient kind, aboriginal cults with secret initiations, orgiastic celebrations, and often with cruel and obscene rites. These religions of the shadows, these practices of the women and peasants and slaves, gave Greece her Orphic, Dionysic, and Demeter cults; they have lurked in the tradition of Europe down almost to our own times. The witchcraft of the Middle Ages, with its resort to the blood of babes, scraps of executed criminals, incantations and magic circles, seems to have been little else than the lingering vestiges of these solemnities of the dark whites. In these matters Olympias was an expert and an enthusiast, and Plutarch mentions that she achieved considerable celebrity by a use of tame serpents in these pious exercises. The snakes invaded her domestic apartments, and history is not clear whether Philip found in them matter for exasperation or religious awe. These occupations of his wife must have been a serious inconvenience to Philip, for the Macedonian people were still in that sturdy stage of social development in which neither enthusiastic religiosity nor uncontrollable wives are admired.

The evidence of a bitter hostility between mother and father peeps out in many little things in the histories. She was evidently jealous of Philip's conquests; she hated his fame. There are many signs that Olympias did her best to set her son against his father and attach him wholly to herself. A story survives (in Plutarch's *Life*) that "whenever news was brought of Philip's victories, the capture of a city or the winning of some great battle, he never seemed greatly rejoiced to hear it; on the contrary he used to say to his play-fellows: 'Father will get everything in advance, boys; he won't leave any great task for me to share with you.'" ...

It is not a natural thing for a boy to envy his father in this fashion without some inspiration. That sentence sounds like an echo.

We have already pointed out how manifest it is that Philip planned the succession of Alexander, and how eager he was to thrust fame and power into the boy's hands. He was thinking of the political structure he was building — but the mother was thinking of the glory and pride of that wonderful lady Olympias. She masked her hatred of her husband under the cloak of a mother's solicitude for her son's future. When in 337 B.C. Philip, after the fashion of kings in those days, married a second wife who was a native Macedonian, Cleopatra, "of whom he was passionately enamoured," Olympias made much trouble.

Plutarch tells of a pitiful scene that occurred at Philip's marriage to Cleopatra. There was much drinking of wine at the banquet, and Attalus, the father of the bride, being "intoxicated with liquor," betrayed the general hostility to Olympias and Epirus by saying he hoped there would be a child by the marriage to give them a truly Macedonian heir. Whereupon Alexander, taut for such an insult, cried out, "What then am I?" and hurled his cup at Attalus. Philip, enraged, stood up and, says Plutarch, drew his sword, only to stumble and fall. Alexander, blind with rage and jealousy, taunted and insulted his father.

"Macedonians," he said. "See there the general who would go from Europe to Asia! Why! he cannot get from one table to another!"

How that scene lives still, the sprawl, the flushed faces, the angry voice of the boy! Next day Alexander departed with his mother — and Philip did nothing to restrain them. Olympias went home to Epirus; Alexander departed to Illyria. Thence Philip persuaded him to return.

Fresh trouble arose. Alexander had a brother of weak intellect, Aridæus, whom the Persian governor of Caria sought as a son-in-law. "Alexander's friends and his mother now infused notions into him again, though perfectly groundless, that by so noble a match, and the support consequent upon it, Philip designed the crown for Aridæus. Alexander, in the uneasiness these suspicions gave him, sent one Thessalus, a player, into Caria, to desire the grandee to pass by Aridæus, who was of spurious birth, and deficient in point of understanding, and to take the lawful heir to the crown into his alliance. Pixodarus was infinitely more pleased with this proposal.

But Philip no sooner had intelligence of it, than he went to Alexander's apartment, taking along with him Philotas, the son of Parmenio, one of his most intimate friends and companions, and, in his presence, reproached him with his degeneracy and meanness of spirit, in thinking of being son-in-law to a man of Caria, one of the slaves of a barbarian king. At the same time he wrote to the Corinthians, insisting that they should send Thessalus to him in chains. Harpalus and Niarchus, Phrygius and Ptolemy, some of the other companions of the prince, he banished. But Alexander afterwards recalled them, and treated them with great distinction."

There is something very touching in this story of the father pleading with the son he manifestly loved, and baffled by the web of mean suggestion which had been spun about the boy's imagination.

It was at the marriage of his daughter to her uncle, the king of Epirus and the brother of Olympias, that Philip was stabbed. He was walking in a procession into the theatre unarmed, in a white robe, and he was cut down by one of his bodyguard. The murderer had a horse waiting, and would have got away, but the foot of his horse caught in a wild vine and he was thrown from the saddle by the stumble and slain by his pursuers....

So at the age of twenty Alexander was at the end of his anxiety about the succession, and established king in Macedonia.

Olympias then reappeared in Macedonia, a woman proudly vindicated. It is said that she insisted upon paying the same funeral honours to the memory of the murderer as to Philip, and that she consecrated the fatal weapon to Apollo, inscribed with the name Myrtalis, by which Philip had been wont to address her when their loves first began. In Greece there were great rejoicings over this auspicious event, and Demosthenes, when he had the news, although it was but seven days after the death of his own daughter, went into the public assembly at Athens in gay attire wearing a chaplet.

Whatever Olympias may have done about her husband's assassin, history does not doubt about her treatment of her supplanter, Cleopatra. So soon as Alexander was out of the way — and a revolt of the hillmen in the north called at once for his attention — Cleopatra's newly born child was killed in its mother's arms, and Cleopatra — no doubt after a little taunting — was then strangled.

These excesses of womanly feeling are said to have shocked Alexander, but they did not prevent him from leaving his mother in a position of considerable authority in Macedonia. She wrote letters to him upon religious and political questions, and he showed a dutiful disposition in sending her always a large share of the plunder he made.

§ 3

These stories have to be told because history cannot be understood without them. Here was the great world of men between India and the Adriatic ready for union, ready as it had never been before for a unifying control. Here was the wide order of the Persian empire with its roads, its posts, its general peace and prosperity, ripe for the fertilizing influence of the Greek mind. And these stories display the quality of the human beings to whom those great opportunities came. Here was this Philip who was a very great and noble man, and yet he was drunken, he could keep no order in his household. Here was Alexander in many ways gifted above any man of his time, and he was vain, suspicious, and passionate, with a mind set awry by his mother.

We are beginning to understand something of what the world might be, something of what our race might become, were it not for our still raw humanity. It is barely a matter of seventy generations between ourselves and Alexander; and between ourselves and the savage hunters our ancestors, who charred their food in the embers or ate it raw, intervene some four or five hundred generations. There is not much scope for the modification of a species in four or five hundred generations. Make men and women only sufficiently jealous or fearful or drunken or angry, and the hot red eyes of the cavemen will glare out at us to-day. We have writing and teaching, science and power; we have tamed the beasts and schooled the lightning; but we are still only shambling towards the light. We have tamed and bred the beasts, but we have still to tame and breed ourselves.

From the very beginning of his reign the deeds of Alexander showed how well he had assimilated his father's plans, and how great were his own abilities. A map of the known world is needed to

show the course of his life. At first, after receiving assurances from Greece that he was to be captain-general of the Grecian forces, he marched through Thrace to the Danube; he crossed the river and burnt a village, the second great monarch to raid the Scythian country beyond the Danube; then recrossed it and marched westward and so came down by Illyria. By that time the city of Thebes was in rebellion, and his next blow was at Greece. Thebes — unsupported of course by Athens — was taken and looted; it was treated with extravagant violence; all its buildings, except the temple and the house of the poet Pindar, were razed, and thirty thousand people sold into slavery. Greece was stunned, and Alexander was free to go on with the Persian campaign.

This destruction of Thebes betrayed a streak of crazy violence in the new master of human destinies. It was too heavy a blow to have dealt. It was a barbaric thing to do. No Greeks would have gone so far with conquered Greeks. If the spirit of rebellion was killed, so also was the spirit of help. The Greek states remained inert thereafter, neither troublesome nor helpful. They would not support Alexander with their shipping, a thing which was to prove a very grave embarrassment to him.

There is a story told by Plutarch about this Theban massacre, as if it redounded to the credit of Alexander, but indeed it shows only how his saner and his crazy sides were in conflict. It tells of a Macedonian officer and a Theban lady. This officer was among the looters, and he entered this woman's house, inflicted unspeakable insults and injuries upon her, and at last demanded whether she had gold or silver hidden. She told him all her treasures had been put into the well, conducted him thither, and, as he stooped to peer down, pushed him suddenly in and killed him by throwing great stones upon him. Some allied soldiers came upon this scene and took her forthwith to Alexander for judgment.

She defied him. Already the extravagant impulse that had ordered the massacre was upon the wane, and he not only spared her, but had her family and property and freedom restored to her. This Plutarch makes out to be a generosity, but the issue is more complicated than that. It was Alexander who was outraging and plundering and enslaving all Thebes. That poor crumpled Macedonian brute in the

well had been doing only what he had been told he had full liberty to do. Is a commander first to give cruel orders, and then to forgive and reward those who slay his instruments? This gleam of remorse at the instance of one woman who was not perhaps wanting in tragic dignity and beauty, is a poor set-off to the murder of a great city.

Mixed with the craziness of Olympias in Alexander was the sanity of Philip and the teachings of Aristotle. This Theban business certainly troubled the mind of Alexander. Whenever afterwards he encountered Thebans, he tried to show them special favour. Thebes, to his credit, haunted him.

Yet the memory of Thebes did not save three other great cities from similar brain storms; Tyre he destroyed, and Gaza, and a city in India, in the storming of which he was knocked down in fair fight and wounded; and of the latter place not a soul, not a child, was spared. He must have been badly frightened to have taken so evil a revenge.

At the outset of the war the Persians had this supreme advantage, they were practically masters of the sea. The ships of the Athenians and their allies sulked unhelpfully. Alexander, to get at Asia, had to go round by the Hellespont; and if he pushed far into the Persian empire, he ran the risk of being cut off completely from his base. His first task, therefore, was to cripple the enemy at sea, and this he could only do by marching along the coast of Asia Minor and capturing port after port until the Persian sea bases were destroyed. If the Persians had avoided battle and hung upon his lengthening line of communications they could probably have destroyed him, but this they did not do. A Persian army not very much greater than his own gave battle on the banks of the Granicus (334 B.C.) and was destroyed. This left him free to take Sardis, Ephesus, Miletus, and, after a fierce struggle, Halicarnassus. Meanwhile the Persian fleet was on his right flank and between him and Greece, threatening much but accomplishing nothing.

In 333 B.C., pursuing this attack upon the sea bases, he marched along the coast as far as the head of the gulf now called the Gulf of Alexandretta. A huge Persian army, under the great king Darius III, was inland of his line of march, separated from the coast by mountains, and Alexander went right beyond this enemy force before

he or the Persians realized their proximity. Scouting was evidently very badly done by Greek and Persian alike. The Persian army was a vast, ill-organized assembly of soldiers, transport, camp followers, and so forth. Darius, for instance, was accompanied by his harem, and there was a great multitude of harem slaves, musicians, dancers, and cooks. Many of the leading officers had brought their families to witness the hunting down of the Macedonian invaders. The troops had been levied from every province in the empire; they had no tradition or principle of combined action. Seized by the idea of cutting off Alexander from Greece, Darius moved this multitude over the mountains to the sea; he had the luck to get through the passes without opposition, and he encamped on the plain of Issus between the mountains and the shore. And there Alexander, who had turned back to fight, struck him. The cavalry charge and the phalanx smashed this great brittle host as a stone smashes a bottle. It was routed. Darius escaped from his war chariot — that out-of-date instrument — and fled on horseback, leaving even his harem in the hands of Alexander.

All the accounts of Alexander after this battle show him at his best. He was restrained and magnanimous. He treated the Persian princesses with the utmost civility. And he kept his head; he held steadfastly to his plan. He let Darius escape, unpursued, into Syria, and he continued his march upon the naval bases of the Persians — that is to say, upon the Phœnician ports of Tyre and Sidon.

Sidon surrendered to him; Tyre resisted.

Here, if anywhere, we have the evidence of great military ability on the part of Alexander. His army was his father's creation, but Philip had never shone in the siege of cities. When Alexander was a boy of sixteen, he had seen his father repulsed by the fortified city of Byzantium upon the Bosphorus. Now he was face to face with an inviolate city which had stood siege after siege, which had resisted Nebuchadnezzar the Great for fourteen years. For the standing of sieges Semitic peoples hold the palm. Tyre was then an island half a mile from the shore, and her fleet was unbeaten. On the other hand, Alexander had already learnt much by the siege of the citadel of Halicarnassus; he had gathered to himself a corps of engineers from Cyprus and Phœnicia, the Sidonian fleet was with him, and presently

the king of Cyprus came over to him with a hundred and twenty ships, which gave him the command of the sea. Moreover, great Carthage, either relying on the strength of the mother city or being disloyal to her, and being furthermore entangled in a war in Sicily, sent no help.

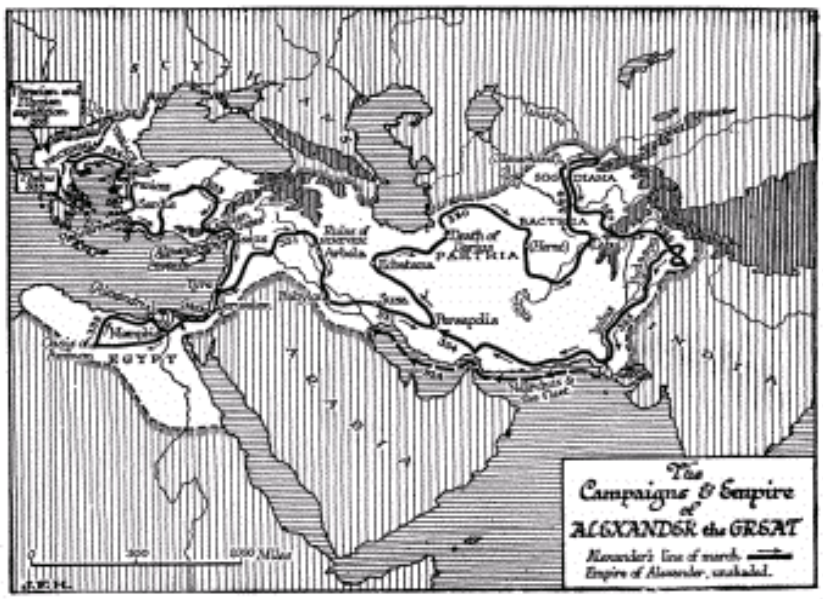

The first measure of Alexander was to build a pier from the mainland to the island, a dam which remains to this day; and on this, as it came close to the walls of Tyre, he set up his towers and battering-rams. Against the walls he also moored ships in which towers and rams were erected. The Tyrians used fire-ships against this flotilla, and made sorties from their two harbours. In a big surprise raid that they made on the Cyprian ships they were caught and badly mauled; many of their ships were rammed, and one big galley of five banks of oars and one of four were captured outright. Finally a breach in the walls was made, and the Macedonians, clambering up the débris from their ships, stormed the city.

The siege had lasted seven months. Gaza held out for two. In each

case there was a massacre, the plundering of the city, and the selling of the survivors into slavery. Then towards the end of 332 B.C. Alexander entered Egypt, and the command of the sea was assured. Greece, which all this while had been wavering in its policy, decided now at last that it was on the side of Alexander, and the council of the Greek states at Corinth voted its "captain-general" a golden crown of victory. From this time onward the Greeks were with the Macedonians.

The Egyptians also were with the Macedonians. But they had been for Alexander from the beginning. They had lived under Persian rule for nearly two hundred years, and the coming of Alexander meant for them only a change of masters; on the whole, a change for the better. The country surrendered without a blow. Alexander treated its religious feelings with extreme respect. He unwrapped no mummies as Cambyses had done; he took no liberties with Apis, the sacred bull of Memphis. Here in great temples, and upon a vast scale, Alexander found the evidences of a religiosity, mysterious and irrational, to remind him of the secrets and mysteries that had entertained his mother and impressed his childhood. During his four months in Egypt he flirted with religious emotions.

He was still a very young man, we must remember, divided against himself. The strong sanity he inherited from his father had made him a great soldier; the teaching of Aristotle had given him something of the scientific outlook upon the world. He had destroyed Tyre; in Egypt, at one of the mouths of the Nile, he now founded a new city, Alexandria, to replace that ancient centre of trade. To the north of Tyre, near Issus, he founded a second port, Alexandretta. Both of these cities flourish to this day, and for a time Alexandria was perhaps the greatest city in the world. The sites, therefore, must have been wisely chosen. But also Alexander had the unstable emotional imaginativeness of his mother, and side by side with such creative work he indulged in religious adventures. The gods of Egypt took possession of his mind. He travelled four hundred miles to the remote oasis of the oracle of Ammon. He wanted to settle certain doubts about his true parentage. His mother had inflamed his mind by hints and vague speeches of some deep mystery about his parentage. Was so ordinary a human being as Philip of Macedon

really his father?

For nearly four hundred years Egypt had been a country politically contemptible, overrun now by Ethiopians, now by Assyrians, now by Babylonians, now by Persians. As the indignities of the present became more and more disagreeable to contemplate, the past and the other world became more splendid to Egyptian eyes. It is from the festering humiliations of peoples that arrogant religious propagandas spring. To the triumphant the downtrodden can say, "It is naught in the sight of the true gods." So the son of Philip of Macedon, the master-general of Greece, was made to feel a small person amidst the gigantic temples. And he had an abnormal share of youth's normal ambition to impress everybody. How gratifying then for him to discover presently that he was no mere successful mortal, not one of these modern vulgar Greekish folk, but ancient and divine, the son of a god, the Pharaoh god, son of Ammon Ra!

Already in a previous chapter we have given a description of that encounter in the desert temple.

Not altogether was the young man convinced. He had his moments of conviction; he had his saner phases when the thing was almost a jest. In the presence of Macedonians and Greeks he doubted if he was divine. When it thundered loudly, the ribald Aristarchus could ask him: "Won't you do something of the sort, oh Son of Zeus?" But the crazy notion was, nevertheless, present henceforth in his brain, ready to be inflamed by wine or flattery.

Next spring (331 B.C.) he returned to Tyre, and marched thence round towards Assyria, leaving the Syrian desert on his right. Near the ruins of forgotten Nineveh he found a great Persian army, that had been gathering since the battle of Issus, awaiting him. It was another huge medley of contingents, and it relied for its chief force upon that now antiquated weapon, the war chariot. Of these Darius had a force of two hundred, and each chariot had scythes attached to its wheels and to the pole and body of the chariot. There seem to have been four horses to each chariot, and it will be obvious that if one of those horses was wounded by javelin or arrow, that chariot was incapacitated. Against broken footmen or a crowd of individualist fighters such vehicles might be formidable; but Darius began the battle by flinging these instruments against the cavalry and

light infantry. Few reached their objective, and those that did were readily disposed of. There was some manœuvring for position. The well-drilled Macedonians moved obliquely across the Persian front, keeping good order; the Persians, following this movement to the flank, opened gaps in their array. Then suddenly the disciplined Macedonian cavalry charged at one of these torn places and smote the centre of the Persian host. The infantry followed close upon their charge. The centre and left of the Persians crumpled up. For a while the light cavalry on the Persian right gained ground against Alexander's left, only to be cut to pieces by the cavalry from Thessaly, which by this time had become almost as good as its Macedonian model. The Persian forces ceased to resemble an army. They dissolved into a vast multitude of fugitives streaming under great dust clouds and without a single rally across the hot plain towards Arbela. Through the dust and the flying crowd rode the victors, slaying and slaying until darkness stayed the slaughter. Darius led the retreat.

Such was the battle of Arbela. It was fought on October the 1st, 331 B.C. We know its date so exactly, because it is recorded that, eleven days before it began, the soothsayers on both sides had been greatly exercised by an eclipse of the moon.

Darius fled to the north into the country of the Medes. Alexander marched on to Babylon. The ancient city of Hammurabi (who had reigned seventeen hundred years before) and of Nebuchadnezzar the Great and of Nabonidus, unlike Nineveh, was still a prosperous and important centre. Like the Egyptians, the Babylonians were not greatly concerned at a change of rule to Macedonian from Persian. The temple of Bel-Marduk was in ruins, a quarry for building material, but the tradition of the Chaldean priests still lingered, and Alexander promised to restore the building. Thence he marched on to Susa, once the chief city of the vanished and forgotten Elamites, and now the Persian capital. He went on to Persepolis, where, as the climax of a drunken carouse, he burnt down the great palace of the king of kings. This he afterwards declared was the revenge of Greece for the burning of Athens by Xerxes.

§ 4

And now begins a new phase in the story of Alexander. For the next seven years he wandered with an army chiefly of Macedonians in the north and east of what was then the known world. At first it was a pursuit of Darius. Afterwards it became —— ? Was it a systematic survey of a world he meant to consolidate into one great order, or was it a wild-goose chase? His own soldiers, his own intimates, thought the latter, and at last stayed his career beyond the Indus. On the map it looks very like a wild-goose chase; it seems to aim at nothing in particular and to get nowhere.

The pursuit of Darius III soon came to a pitiful end. After the battle of Arbela his own generals seem to have revolted against his weakness and incompetence; they made him a prisoner, and took him with them in spite of his desire to throw himself upon the generosity of his conqueror. Bessus, the satrap of Bactria, they made their leader. There was at last a hot and exciting chase of the flying caravan which conveyed the captive king of kings. At dawn, after an all-night pursuit, it was sighted far ahead. The flight became a headlong bolt. Baggage, women, everything was abandoned by Bessus and his captains; and one other impediment also they left behind. By the side of a pool of water far away from the road a Macedonian trooper presently found a deserted mule-cart with its mules still in the traces. In this cart lay Darius, stabbed in a score of places and bleeding to death. He had refused to go on with Bessus, refused to mount the horse that was brought to him. So his captains had run him through with their spears and left him.... He asked his captors for water. What else he may have said we do not know. The historians have seen fit to fabricate a quite impossible last dying speech for him. Probably he said very little....

When, a little after sunrise, Alexander came up, Darius was already dead....

To the historian of the world the wanderings of Alexander have an interest of their own quite apart from the light they throw upon his character. Just as the campaign of Darius I lifted the curtain behind Greece and Macedonia, and showed us something of the silent background to the north of the audible and recorded history of the early civilizations, so now Alexander's campaigns take us into regions about which there had hitherto been no trustworthy record

made.

We discover they were not desert regions, but full of a gathering life of their own.

He marched to the shores of the Caspian, thence he travelled eastward across what is now called Western Turkestan. He founded a city that is now known as Herat; whence he went northward by Cabul and by what is now Samarkand, right up into the mountains of Central Turkestan. He returned southward, and came down into India by the Khyber Pass. He fought a great battle on the Upper Indus against a very tall and chivalrous king, Porus, in which the Macedonian infantry encountered an array of elephants and defeated them. Possibly he would have pushed eastward across the deserts to the Ganges valley, but his troops refused to go further. Possibly, had they not done so, then or later he would have gone on until he vanished eastward out of history. But he was forced to turn about. He built a fleet and descended to the mouth of the Indus. There he divided his forces. The main army he took along the desolate coast back to the Persian Gulf, and on the way it suffered dreadfully and lost many men through thirst. The fleet followed him by sea, and rejoined him at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. In the course of this six-year tour he fought battles, received the submission of many strange peoples, and founded cities. He saw the dead body of Darius in June, 330 B.C.; he returned to Susa in 324 B.C. He found the empire in disorder: the provincial satraps raising armies of their own, Bactria and Media in insurrection, and Olympias making government impossible in Macedonia. Harpalus, the royal treasurer, had bolted with all that was portable of the royal treasure, and was making his way, bribing as he went, towards Greece. Some of the Harpalus money is said to have reached Demosthenes.

But before we deal with the closing chapter of the story of Alexander, let us say a word or so about these northern regions into which he wandered. It is evident that from the Danube region right across South Russia, right across the country to the north of the Caspian, right across the country to the east of the Caspian, as far as the mountain masses of the Pamir Plateau and eastward into the Tarim basin of Eastern Turkestan, there spread then a series of similar barbaric tribes and peoples all at about the same stage of

culture, and for the most part Aryan in their language and possibly Nordic in their race. They had few cities, mostly they were nomadic; at times they settled temporarily to cultivate the land. They were certainly already mingling in Central Asia with Mongolian tribes, but the Mongolian tribes were not then prevalent there.

An immense process of drying up and elevation has been going on in these parts of the world during the last ten thousand years. Ten thousand years ago there was probably a continuous water barrier between the basin of the Obi and the Aral-Caspian sea. As this had dried up and the marshy land had become steppe-like country, Nordic nomads from the west and Mongolian nomads from the east had met and mixed, and the riding horse had come back into the western world. It is evident this great stretch of country was becoming a region of accumulation for these barbaric peoples. They were very loosely attached to the lands they occupied. They lived in tents and wagons rather than houses. A brief cycle of plentiful and healthy years, or a cessation of tribal warfare under some strong ruler, would lead to considerable increases of population; then two or three hard years would suffice to send the tribes wandering again in search of food.

From before the dawn of recorded history this region of human accumulation between the Danube and China had been, as it were, intermittently *raining* out tribes southward and westward. It was like a cloud bank behind the settled landscape that accumulated and then precipitated invaders. We have noted how the Keltic peoples drizzled westward, how the Italians, the Greeks, and their Epirote, Macedonian, and Phrygian kindred came south. We have noted too the Cimmerian drive from the east, like a sudden driving shower of barbarians across Asia Minor, the southward coming of the Scythians and Medes and Persians, and the Aryan descent into India. About a century before Alexander there had been a fresh Aryan invasion of Italy by a Keltic people, the Gauls, who had settled in the valley of the Po. Those various races came down out of their northern obscurity into the light of history; and meanwhile beyond that light the reservoir accumulated for fresh discharges. Alexander's march in Central Asia brings now into our history names that are fresh to us; the Parthians, a race of mounted bowmen who were destined to play

an important rôle in history a century or so later, and the Bactrians who lived in the sandy native land of the camel. Everywhere he seems to have met Aryan-speaking peoples. The Mongolian barbarians to the north-eastward were still unsuspected, no one imagined there was yet another great cloud bank of population beyond the Scythians and their kind, in the north of China, that was presently also to begin a drift westward and southward, mixing as it came with the Nordic Scythians and every other people of kindred habits that it encountered. As yet only China knew of the Huns; there were no Turks in Western Turkestan or anywhere else then, no Tartars in the world.

This glimpse of the state of affairs in Turkestan in the fourth century B.C. is one of the most interesting aspects of the wanderings of Alexander; another is his raid through the Punjab. From the point of view of the teller of the human story it is provocative that he did not go on into the Ganges country, and that consequently we have no independent accounts by Greek writers of the life in ancient Bengal. But there is a considerable literature in various Indian languages dealing with Indian history and social life that still needs to be made accessible to European readers.

§ 5

Alexander the Great
(silver coin of Lysimachus, 321-281 B.C.)

Alexander had been in undisputed possession of the Persian empire for six years. He was now thirty-one. In those six years he had created very little. He had retained most of the organization of the Persian provinces, appointing fresh satraps or retaining the former ones; the roads, the ports, the organization of the empire was still as Cyrus, his greater predecessor, had left them; in Egypt he had merely replaced old provincial governors by new ones; in India he had defeated Porus, and then left him in power much as he found him, except that Porus was now called a satrap by the Greeks. Alexander had, it is true, planned out a number of towns, and some of them were to grow into great towns; seventeen Alexandrias he founded altogether; but he had destroyed Tyre, and with Tyre the

security of the sea routes which had hitherto been the chief westward outlet for Mesopotamia. Historians say that he Hellenized the east. But Babylonia and Egypt swarmed with Greeks before his time; he was not the cause, he was a part of the Hellenization. For a time the whole world, from the Adriatic to the Indus, was under one ruler; so far he had realized the dreams of Isocrates and Philip his father. But how far was he making this a permanent and enduring union? How far as yet was it anything more than a dazzling but transitory flourish of his own magnificent self?

He was making no great roads, setting up no sure sea communications. It is idle to accuse him of leaving education alone, because the idea that empires must be cemented by education was still foreign to human thought. But he was forming no group of statesmen about him; he was thinking of no successor; he was creating no tradition — nothing more than a personal legend. The idea that the world would have to go on after Alexander, engaged in any other employment than the discussion of his magnificence, seems to have been outside his mental range. He was still young, it is true, but well before Philip was one and thirty he had been thinking of the education of Alexander.

Was Alexander a statesman at all?

Some students of his career assure us that he was; that now at Susa he planned a mighty world empire, seeing it not simply as a Macedonian conquest of the world, but as a melting together of racial traditions. He did one thing, at any rate, that gives colour to this idea; he held a great marriage feast, in which he and ninety of his generals and friends were married to Persian brides. He himself married a daughter of Darius, though already he possessed an Asiatic wife in Roxana, the daughter of the king of Samarkand. This wholesale wedding was made a very splendid festival, and at the same time all of his Macedonian soldiers, to the number of several thousands, who had married Asiatic brides, were given wedding gifts. This has been called the Marriage of Europe and Asia; the two continents were to be joined, wrote Plutarch, “in lawful wedlock and by community of offspring.” And next he began to train recruits from Persia and the north, Parthians, Bactrians, and the like, in the distinctive disciplines of the phalanx and the cavalry. Was that also to assimilate Europe

and Asia, or was it to make himself independent of his Macedonians? They thought the latter, at any rate, and mutinied, and it was with some difficulty that he brought them to a penitent mood and induced them to take part in a common feast with the Persians. The historians have made a long and eloquent speech for him on this occasion, but the gist of it was that he bade his Macedonians begone, and gave no sign of how he proposed they should get home out of Persia. After three days of dismay they submitted to him and begged his forgiveness.

Here is the matter for a very pretty discussion. Was Alexander really planning a racial fusion or had he just fallen in love with the pomp and divinity of an Oriental monarch, and wished to get rid of these Europeans to whom he was only a king-leader? The writers of his own time, and those who lived near to his time, lean very much to the latter alternative. They insist upon his immense vanity. They relate how he began to wear the robes and tiara of a Persian monarch. "At first only before the barbarians and privately, but afterwards he came to wear it in public when he sat for the dispatch of business." And presently he demanded Oriental prostrations from his friends.

One thing seems to support the suggestion of great personal vanity in Alexander. His portrait was painted and sculptured frequently, and always he is represented as a beautiful youth, with wonderful locks flowing backward from a broad forehead. Previously most men had worn beards. But Alexander, enamoured of his own youthful loveliness, would not part with it; he remained a sham boy at thirty-two; he shaved his face, and so set a fashion in Greece and Italy that lasted many centuries.

The stories of violence and vanity in his closing years cluster thick upon his memory. He listened to tittle-tattle about Philotas, the son of Parmenio, one of his most trusted and faithful generals. Philotas, it was said, had boasted to some woman he was making love to that Alexander was a mere boy; that, but for such men as his father and himself, there would have been no conquest of Persia, and the like. Such assertions had a certain element of truth in them. The woman was brought to Alexander, who listened to her treacheries. Presently Philotas was accused of conspiracy, and, upon very insufficient evidence, tortured and executed. Then Alexander thought

of Parmenio, whose other two sons had died for him in battle. He sent swift messengers to assassinate the old man before he could hear of his son's death! Now Parmenio had been one of the most trusted of Philip's generals; it was Parmenio who had led the Macedonian armies into Asia before the murder of Philip. There can be little doubt of the substantial truth of this story, nor about the execution of Callisthenes, the nephew of Aristotle, who refused Alexander divine honours, and "went about with as much pride as if he had demolished a tyranny, while the young men followed him as the only freeman among thousands." Mixed with such incidents we have the very illuminating story of the drunken quarrel in which he killed Clitus. The monarch and his company had been drinking hard, and the drink had made the talk loud and free. There was much flattery of the "young god," much detraction of Philip, at which Alexander had smiled with satisfaction. Was he not the son of a god? This drunken self-complacency was more than the honest Macedonians could stand; it roused Clitus, his foster-brother, to a frenzy. Clitus reproached Alexander with his Median costume and praised Philip, there was a loud quarrel, and, to end it, Clitus was hustled out of the room by his friends. He was, however, in the obstinate phase of drunkenness, and he returned by another entrance. He was heard outside quoting Euripides "in a bold and disrespectful tone":

"Are these your customs? Is it thus that Greece
Rewards her combatants? Shall one man claim
The trophies won by thousands?"

Whereupon Alexander snatched a spear from one of his guards and ran Clitus through the body as he lifted the curtain to come in....

One is forced to believe that this was the real atmosphere of the young conqueror's life. Then the story of his frantic and cruel display of grief for Hephæstion can scarcely be all invention. If it is true, or in any part true, it displays a mind ill-balanced and altogether wrapped up in personal things, to whom empire was no more than opportunity for egoistic display, and all the resources of the world stuff for freaks of that sort of "generosity" which robs a thousand people to extort the admiration of one astounded recipient.

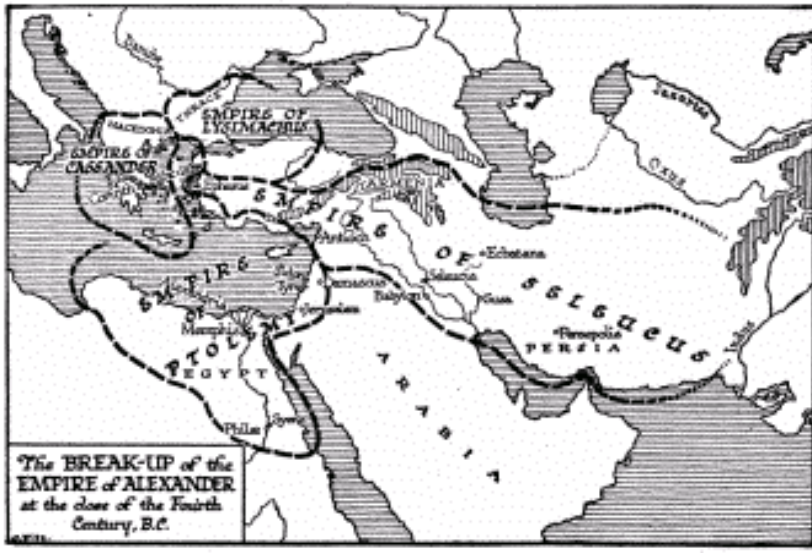

Hephæstion, being ill, was put upon a strict diet, but in the absence of his physician at the theatre he ate a roasted fowl and drank a flagon of iced wine, in consequence of which he died. Thereupon Alexander decided upon a display of grief. It was the grief of a lunatic. He had the physician crucified! He ordered every horse and mule in Persia to be shorn, and pulled down the battlements of the neighbouring cities. He prohibited all music in his camp for a long time, and, having taken certain villages of the Cusæans, he caused all the adults to be massacred, as a sacrifice to the manes of Hephæstion. Finally he set aside ten thousand talents (a talent = £240) for a tomb. For those days this was an enormous sum. None of which things did any real honour to Hephæstion, but they served to demonstrate to an awe-stricken world what a tremendous thing the sorrow of Alexander could be.

This last story and many such stories may be lies or distortions or exaggerations. But they have a vein in common. After a bout of hard drinking in Babylon a sudden fever came upon Alexander (323 B.C.), and he sickened and died. He was still only thirty-three years of age. Forthwith the world empire he had snatched at and held in his

hands, as a child might snatch at and hold a precious vase, fell to the ground and was shattered to pieces.

Whatever appearance of a world-wide order may have gleamed upon men's imaginations vanished at his death. The story becomes the story of a barbaric autocracy in confusion. Everywhere the provincial rulers set up for themselves. In the course of a few years the entire family of Alexander had been destroyed. Roxana, his barbarian wife, was prompt to murder, as a rival, the daughter of Darius. She herself presently bore Alexander a posthumous son, who was also called Alexander. He was murdered, with her, a few years later (311 B.C.). Hercules, the only other son of Alexander, was murdered also. So too was Aridæus, the weak-minded half-brother (see § 2). Plutarch gives a last glimpse of Olympias during a brief interval of power in Macedonia, accusing first this person and then that of poisoning her wonderful son. Many she killed in her fury. The bodies of some of his circle who had died after his death she caused to be dug up, but we do not know if any fresh light was shed upon his death by these disinterments. Finally Olympias was killed in Macedonia by the friends of those she had slain.

§ 6

Tetradrachm with head of Seleucus I.

From this welter of crime there presently emerged three leading figures. Much of the old Persian empire, as far as the Indus eastward and almost to Lydia in the west, was held by one general Seleucus, who founded a dynasty, the Seleucid Dynasty; Macedonia fell to another Macedonian general, Antigonus; a third Macedonian, Ptolemy, secured Egypt, and making Alexandria his chief city, established a sufficient naval ascendancy to keep also Cyprus and most of the coast of Phœnicia and Asia Minor. The Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires lasted for a considerable time: the forms of government in Asia Minor and the Balkans were more unstable. Two maps will help the reader to a sense of the kaleidoscopic nature of the political boundaries of the third century B.C. Antigonus was defeated and killed at the battle of Ipsus (301), leaving Lysimachus, the governor of Thrace, and Cassander, of Macedonia and Greece, as

equally transitory successors. Minor governors carved out smaller states. Meanwhile the barbarians swung down into the broken-up and enfeebled world of civilization from the west and from the east. From the west came the Gauls, a people closely related to the Kelts. They raided down through Macedonia and Greece to Delphi, and (227 B.C.) two sections of them crossed the Bosphorus into Asia Minor, being first employed as mercenaries and then setting up for themselves as independent plunderers; and after raiding almost to the Taurus, they settled in the old Phrygian land, holding the people about them to tribute. (These Gauls of Phrygia became the Galatians of St. Paul's Epistle.) Armenia and the southern shores of the Black Sea became a confusion of changing rulers. Kings with Hellenistic ideas appeared in Cappadocia, in Pontus (the south shore of the Black Sea), in Bithynia, and in Pergamum. From the east the Scythians and the Parthians and Bactrians also drove southward.... For a time there were Greek-ruled Bactrian states becoming more and more Orientalized; in the second century B.C. Greek adventurers from Bactria raided down into North India and founded short-lived kingdoms there, the last eastward fling of the Greek; then gradually barbarism fell again like a curtain between the Western civilizations and India.

§ 7

Amidst all these shattered fragments of the burst bubble of Hellenic empire one small state stands out and demands at least a brief section to itself, the kingdom of Pergamum. We hear first of this town as an independent centre during the struggle that ended in the battle of Ipsus. While the tide of the Gaulish invasion swirled and foamed to and fro about Asia Minor between the years 277 and 241, Pergamum for a time paid them tribute, but she retained her general independence, and at last, under Attalus I, refused her tribute and defeated them in two decisive battles. For more than a century thereafter (until 133 B.C.) Pergamum remained free, and was perhaps during that period the most highly civilized state in the world. On the hill of the Acropolis was reared a rich group of buildings, palaces, temples, a museum, and a library, rivals of those

of Alexandria of which we shall presently tell, and almost the first in the world. Under the princes of Pergamum, Greek art blossomed afresh, and the reliefs of the altar of the temple of Zeus and the statues of the fighting and dying Gauls which were made there, are among the great artistic treasures of mankind.

In a little while, as we shall tell later, the influence of a new power began to be felt in the Eastern Mediterranean, the power of the Roman republic, friendly to Greece and to Greek civilization; and in this power the Hellenic communities of Pergamum and Rhodes found a natural and useful ally and supporter against the Galatians and against the Orientalized Seleucid empire. We shall relate how at last the Roman power came into Asia, how it defeated the Seleucid empire at the battle of Magnesia (190 B.C.), and drove it out of Asia Minor and beyond the Taurus mountains, and how finally in 133 B.C. Attalus III, the last king of Pergamum, bowing to his sense of an inevitable destiny, made the Roman republic the heir to his kingdom, which became then the Roman province of "Asia."

§ 8

Nearly all historians are disposed to regard the career of Alexander the Great as marking an epoch in human affairs. It drew together all the known world, excepting only the western Mediterranean, into one drama. But the opinions men have formed of Alexander himself vary enormously. They fall, most of them, into two main schools. One type of scholar is fascinated by the youth and splendour of this young man. These Alexander-worshippers seem disposed to take him at his own valuation, to condone every crime and folly either as the mere ebullience of a rich nature or as the bitter necessity to some gigantic scheme, and to regard his life as framed upon a design, a scheme of statesmanship, such as all the wider knowledge and wider ideas of these later times barely suffice to bring into the scope of our understanding. On the other hand, there are those who see him only as a wrecker of the slowly maturing possibilities of a free and tranquil Hellenized world.

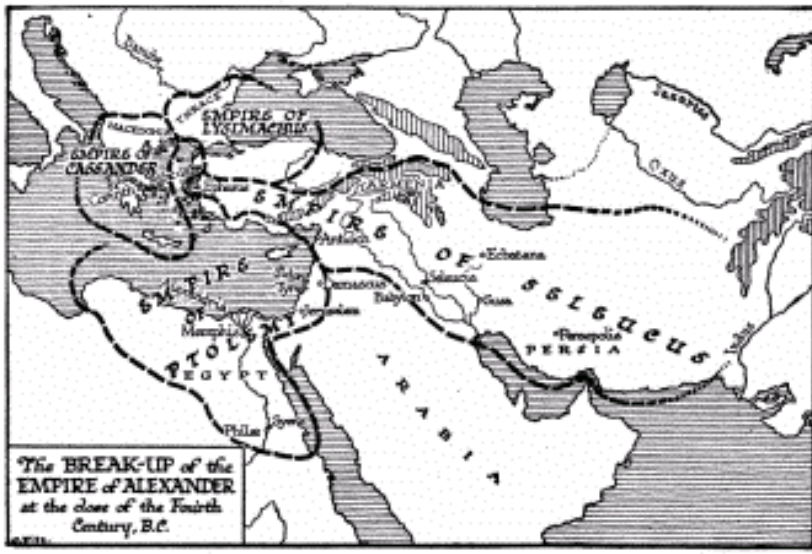

Before we ascribe to Alexander or to his father Philip schemes of world policy such as a twentieth-century historian-philosopher might approve, we shall do well to consider very carefully the utmost range of knowledge and thought that was possible in those days. The world of Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle had practically no historical perspective at all; there had not been such a thing as history in the world, history, that is, as distinguished from mere priestly chronicles, until the last couple of centuries. Even highly educated men had the most circumscribed ideas of geography and foreign countries. For most men the world was still flat and limitless. The only systematic political philosophy was based on the experiences of minute city states, and took no thought of empires. Nobody knew anything of the origins of civilization.

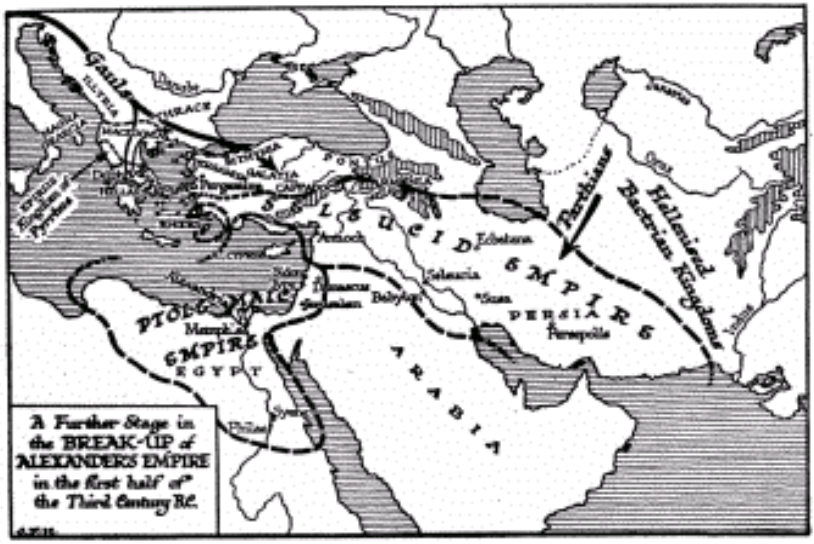

No one had speculated upon economics. No one had worked out the reaction of one social class upon another. We are too apt to consider the career of Alexander as the crown of some process that had long been afoot; as the climax of a crescendo. In a sense, no doubt, it was that; but much more true is it that it was not so much an end as a beginning; it was the first revelation to the human imagination of the oneness of human affairs. The utmost reach of the thought of Greece before his time was of a Persian empire Hellenized, a predominance in the world of Macedonians and Greeks. But before Alexander was dead, and much more after he was dead and there had been time to think him over, the conception of a world law and organization was a practicable and assimilable idea for the minds of men.

For some generations Alexander the Great was for mankind the symbol and embodiment of world order and world dominion. He became a fabulous being. His head, adorned with the divine symbols of the demi-god Hercules or the god Ammon Ra, appears on the coins of such among his successors as could claim to be his heirs. Then the idea of world dominion was taken up by another great people, a people who for some centuries exhibited considerable political genius, the Romans; and the figure of another conspicuous

adventurer, Cæsar, eclipsed for the western half of the old world the figure of Alexander.

So by the beginning of the third century B.C. we find already arisen in the Western civilization of the old world three of the great structural ideas that rule the mind of contemporary mankind. We have already traced the escape of writing and knowledge from the secrets and mysteries and initiations of the old-world priesthoods, and the development of the idea of a universal knowledge, of a universally understandable and communicable history and philosophy. We have taken the figures of Herodotus and Aristotle as typical exponents of this first great idea, the idea of *science* — using the word science in its widest and properest sense, to include history and signify a clear vision of man in relation to the things about him. We have traced also the generalization of religion among the Babylonians, Jews, and other Semitic peoples, from the dark worship in temples and consecrated places of some local or tribal god to the open service of *one universal God of Righteousness*, whose temple is the whole world. And now we have traced also the first germination of the idea of a *world polity*. The rest of the history of mankind is very largely the history of those three ideas of science, of a universal righteousness, and of a human commonweal, spreading out from the minds of the rare and exceptional persons and peoples in which they first originated, into the general consciousness of the race, and giving first a new colour, then a new spirit, and then a new direction to human affairs.

XXV

SCIENCE AND RELIGION AT ALEXANDRIA

§ 1. *The Science of Alexandria.* § 2. *Philosophy of Alexandria.* § 3. *Alexandria as a Factory of Religions.*

§ 1

ONE of the most prosperous fragments of the brief world empire of Alexander the Great was Egypt, which fell to the share of the Ptolemy whose name we have already noted as one of the associates of Alexander whom King Philip had banished. The country was at a secure distance from plundering Gaul or Parthian, and the destruction of Tyre and the Phœnician navy and the creation of Alexandria gave Egypt a temporary naval ascendancy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Alexandria grew to proportions that rivalled Carthage; eastward she had an overseas trade through the Red Sea with Arabia and India; and westward her traffic competed with the Carthaginian. In the Macedonian and Greek governors of the Ptolemies, the Egyptians found a government more sympathetic and tolerable than any they had ever known since they ceased to be a self-governing empire. Indeed it is rather that Egypt conquered and annexed the Ptolemies politically, than that the Macedonians ruled Egypt.

There was a return to Egyptian political ideas, rather than any attempt to Hellenize the government of the country. Ptolemy became Pharaoh, the god king, and his administration continued the ancient tradition of Pepi, Thotmes, Rameses, and Necho. Alexandria, however, for her town affairs, and subject to the divine overlordship of Pharaoh, had a constitution of the Greek city type. And the language of the court and administration was Attic Greek. Greek became so much the general language of educated people in Egypt that the Jewish community there found it necessary to translate their Bible into the Greek language; many men of their own people being no longer able to understand Hebrew, Attic Greek for some centuries before and after Christ was the language of all educated men from the Adriatic to the Persian Gulf.

Of all Alexander's group of young men, Ptolemy seems to have

done most to carry out those ideas of a systematic organization of knowledge with which Aristotle had no doubt familiarized the court of Philip of Macedon. Ptolemy was a man of very extraordinary intellectual gifts, at once creative and modest, with a certain understandable cynicism towards the strain of Olympias in the mind of Alexander. His contemporary history of Alexander's campaigns has perished; but it was a source to which all the surviving accounts are deeply indebted.

The Museum he set up in Alexandria was in effect the first university in the world. As its name implies, it was dedicated to the service of the Muses, which was also the case with the Peripatetic school at Athens. It was, however, a religious body only in form, in order to meet the legal difficulties of endowment in a world that had never foreseen such a thing as a secular intellectual process. It was essentially a college of learned men engaged chiefly in research and record, but also to a certain extent in teaching. At the outset, and for two or three generations, the Museum at Alexandria presented such a scientific constellation as even Athens at its best could not rival. Particularly sound and good was the mathematical and geographical work. The names of Euclid, familiar to every schoolboy, Eratosthenes, who measured the size of the earth and came within fifty miles of the true diameter, Apollonius, who wrote on conic sections, stand out. Hipparchus made the first attempt to catalogue and map the stars with a view to checking any changes that might be occurring in the heavens. Hero devised the first steam engine. Archimedes came to Alexandria to study, and remained a frequent correspondent of the Museum. The medical school of Alexandria was equally famous. For the first time in the world's history a standard of professional knowledge was set up. Herophilus, the greatest of the Alexandrian anatomists, is said to have conducted vivisections upon condemned criminals. Other teachers, in opposition to Herophilus, condemned the study of anatomy and developed the science of drugs. But this scientific blaze at Alexandria did not endure altogether for more than a century. The organization of the Museum was not planned to ensure its mental continuity. It was a "royal" college; its professors and fellows (as we may call them) were appointed and paid by Pharaoh. "The republican

character of the private corporations called the schools or academies at Athens was far more stable and independent." Royal patronage was all very well so long as Pharaoh was Ptolemy I, or Ptolemy II, but the strain degenerated, and the long tradition of Egyptian priestcraft presently swallowed up the Ptolemies — and destroyed the Aristotelian mentality of the Museum altogether. The Museum had not existed for a hundred years before its scientific energy was extinct.

Side by side with the Museum, Ptolemy I created a more enduring monument to himself in the great library. This was a combination of state library and state publishing upon a scale hitherto unheard of. It was to be altogether encyclopædic. If any stranger brought an unknown book to Egypt, he had to have it copied for the collection, and a considerable staff of copyists was engaged continually in making duplicates of all the more popular and necessary works. The library, like a university press, had an outward trade. It was a book-selling affair. Under Callimachus, the head of the library during the tune of Ptolemy II and III, the arrangement and cataloguing of the accumulations was systematically undertaken. In those days, it must be remembered, books were not in pages, but rolled like the music-rolls of the modern piano-player, and in order to refer to any particular passage, a reader had to roll back or roll forward very tediously, a process which wore out books and readers together. One thinks at once of a simple and obvious little machine by which such a roll could have been quickly wound to and fro for reference, but nothing of the sort seems to have been used. Every time a roll was read it was handled by two perspiring hands. It was to minimize the waste of time and trouble that Callimachus broke up long works, such as the History of Herodotus, into "books" or volumes, as we should call them, each upon a separate roll. The library of Alexandria drew a far vaster crowd of students than the teachers of the Museum. The lodging and catering for these visitors from all parts of the world became a considerable business interest for the Alexandrian population.

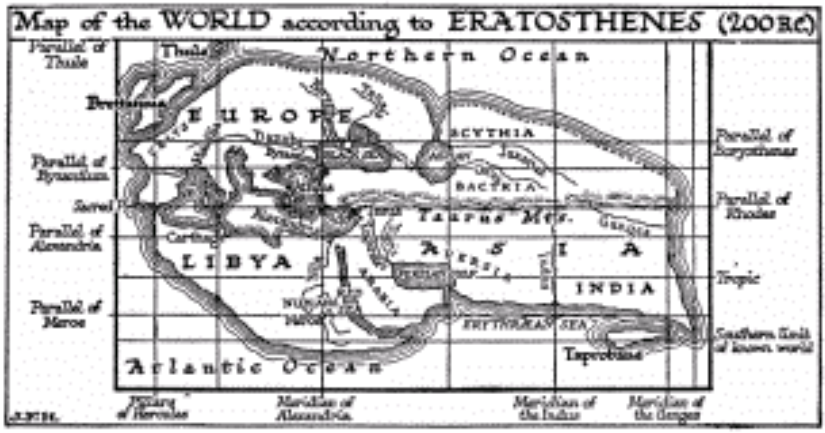
Map of the WORLD according to ERATOSTHENES (200 B.C.)
Parallel of Thule
Thule
Northern Ocean
Britannia
EUROPE
SCYTHIA
Parallel of Borysthenes
Parallel of Byzantium
BACTRIA
Parallel of Rhodes
Sacred
TAURUS MTS.
Parallel of Alexandria
Carthage
LIBYA
ASIA
INDIA
Tropic
Parallel of Meroe
ERYTHRAEAN SEA
Southern limit of known world
Taprobane
Atlantic Ocean
Pillars of Hercules
Meridian of Alexandria
Meridian of the Indus
Meridian of the Ganges

THE KNOWN WORLD
about 250 B.C.
Anciently unknown
Vaguely known

It is curious to note how slowly the mechanism of the intellectual life improves. Contrast the ordinary library facilities of a middle-class English home, such as the present writer is now working in, with the inconveniences and deficiencies of the equipment of an Alexandrian writer, and one realizes the enormous waste of time, physical exertion, and attention that went on through all the centuries during which that library flourished. Before the present writer lie half a dozen books, and there are good indices to three of them. He can pick up any one of these six books, refer quickly to a statement, verify a quotation, and go on writing. Contrast with that the tedious unfolding of a rolled manuscript. Close at hand are two encyclopædias, a dictionary, an atlas of the world, a biographical dictionary, and other books of reference. They have no marginal indices, it is true; but that perhaps is asking for too much at present. There were no such resources in the world in 300 B.C. Alexandria had still to produce the first grammar and the first dictionary. This present book is being written in manuscript; it is then taken by a typist and typewritten very accurately. It can then, with the utmost convenience, be read over, corrected amply, rearranged freely, retyped, and recorrected. The Alexandrian author had to dictate or recopy every word he wrote. Before he could turn back to what he had written previously, he had to dry his last words by waving them in the air or pouring sand over them; he had not even blotting-paper. Whatever an author wrote had to be recopied again and again before it could reach any considerable circle of readers, and every copyist introduced some new error. Whenever a need for maps or diagrams arose, there were fresh difficulties. Such a science as anatomy, for example, depending as it does upon accurate drawing, must have been enormously hampered by the natural limitations of the copyist. The transmission of geographical fact again must have been almost incredibly tedious. No doubt a day will come when a private library and writing-desk of the year A.D. 1919 will seem quaintly clumsy and difficult; but, measured by the standards of Alexandria, they are astonishingly quick, efficient, and economical of nervous and mental energy.

No attempt seems to have been made at Alexandria to print anything at all. That strikes one at first as a very remarkable fact. The

world was crying out for books, and not simply for books. There was an urgent public need for notices, proclamations, and the like. Yet there is nothing in the history of the Western civilizations that one can call printing until the fifteenth century A.D. It is not as though printing was a recondite art or dependent upon any precedent and preliminary discoveries. Printing is the most obvious of dodges. In principle it has always been known. As we have already stated, there is ground for supposing that the Palæolithic men of the Magdalenian period may have printed designs on their leather garments. The "seals" of ancient Sumeria again were printing devices. Coins are print. Illiterate persons in all ages have used wooden or metal stamps for their signatures; William I, the Norman Conqueror of England, for example, used such a stamp with ink to sign documents. In China the classics were being printed by the second century A.D. Yet either because of a complex of small difficulties about ink or papyrus or the form of books, or because of some protective resistance on the part of the owners of the slave copyists, or because the script was too swift and easy to set men thinking how to write it still more easily, as the Chinese character or the Gothic letters did, or because of a gap in the social system between men of thought and knowledge and men of technical skill, printing was not used — not even used for the exact reproduction of illustrations.

The chief reason for this failure to develop printing systematically lies, no doubt, in the fact that there was no abundant supply of printable material of a uniform texture and convenient form. The supply of papyrus was strictly limited, strip had to be fastened to strip, and there was no standard size of sheet. Paper had yet to come from China to release the mind of Europe. Had there been presses, they would have had to stand idle while the papyrus rolls were slowly made. But this explanation does not account for the failure to use block printing in the case of illustrations and diagrams.

These limitations enable us to understand why it was that Alexandria could at once achieve the most extraordinary intellectual triumphs — for such a feat as that of Eratosthenes, for instance, having regard to his poverty of apparatus, is sufficient to put him on a level with Newton or Pasteur — and yet have little or no effect upon the course of politics or the lives and thoughts of people round about

her. Her Museum and library were a centre of light, but it was light in a dark lantern hidden from the general world. There were no means of carrying its results even to sympathetic men abroad except by tedious letter-writing. There was no possibility of communicating what was known there to the general body of men. Students had to come at great cost to themselves to this crowded centre because there was no other way of gathering even scraps of knowledge. At Athens and Alexandria there were bookstalls where manuscript note-books of variable quality could be bought at reasonable prices, but any extension of education to larger classes and other centres would have produced at once a restrictive shortage of papyrus. Education did not reach into the masses at all; to become more than superficially educated one had to abandon the ordinary life of the times and come for long years to live a hovering existence in the neighbourhood of ill-equipped and overworked sages. Learning was not indeed so complete a withdrawal from ordinary life as initiation into a priesthood, but it was still something in that nature.

And very speedily that feeling of freedom, that openness and directness of statement which is the vital air of the true intellectual life, faded out of Alexandria. From the first the patronage even of Ptolemy I set a limit to political discussion. Presently the dissensions of the schools let in the superstitions and prejudices of the city mob to scholastic affairs.

Wisdom passed away from Alexandria and left pedantry behind. For the use of books was substituted the worship of books. Very speedily the learned became a specialized queer class with unpleasant characteristics of its own. The Museum had not existed for half a dozen generations before Alexandria was familiar with a new type of human being; shy, eccentric, unpractical, incapable of essentials, strangely fierce upon trivialities of literary detail, as bitterly jealous of the colleague within as of the unlearned without, the bent Scholarly Man. He was as intolerant as a priest, though he had no altar; as obscurantist as a magician, though he had no cave. For him no method of copying was sufficiently tedious and no rare book sufficiently inaccessible. He was a sort of by-product of the intellectual process of mankind. For many precious generations the new-lit fires of the human intelligence were to be seriously banked

down by this by-product.

Right thinking is necessarily an open process, and the only science and history of full value to men consist of what is generally and clearly known; this is surely a platitude, but we have still to discover how to preserve our centres of philosophy and research from the caking and darkening accumulations of narrow and dingy-spirited specialists. We have still to ensure that a man of learning shall be none the less a man of affairs, and that all that can be thought and known is kept plainly, honestly, and easily available to the ordinary men and women who are the substance of mankind.

§ 2

At first the mental activities of Alexandria centred upon the Museum, and were mainly scientific. Philosophy, which in a more vigorous age had been a doctrine of power over self and the material world, without abandoning these pretensions, became in reality a doctrine of secret consolation. The stimulant changed into an opiate. The philosopher let the world, as the vulgar say, rip, the world of which he was a part, and consoled himself by saying in very beautiful and elaborate forms that the world was illusion and that there was in him something quintessential and sublime, outside and above the world. Athens, politically insignificant, but still a great and crowded mart throughout the fourth century, decaying almost imperceptibly so far as outer seeming went, and treated with a strange respect that was half contempt by all the warring powers and adventurers of the world, was the fitting centre of such philosophical teaching. It was quite a couple of centuries before the schools of Alexandria became as important in philosophical discussion.

But of Philo the Jew in the first century A.D., and of Plotinus in the third, interesting as the thought and influence of these men were, the scale of this outline will not permit us to treat.

§ 3

If Alexandria was late to develop a distinctive philosophy, she was early prominent as a great factory and exchange of religious ideas.

The Museum and Library represented only one of the three sides of the triple city of Alexandria. They represented the Aristotelian, the Hellenic, and Macedonian element. But Ptolemy I had brought together two other factors to this strange centre. First there was a great number of Jews, brought partly from Palestine, but largely also from those settlements in Egypt which had never returned to Jerusalem; these latter were the Jews of the Diaspora or Dispersion, a race of Jews who, as we have already noted in Chapter XXI, had not shared the Babylonian Captivity, but who were nevertheless in possession of the Bible and in close correspondence with their co-religionists throughout the world. These Jews populated so great a quarter of Alexandria that the town became the largest Jewish city in the world, with far more Jews in it than there were in Jerusalem. We have already noted that they had found it necessary to translate their scriptures into Greek. And, finally, there was a great population of native Egyptians, also for the most part speaking Greek, but with the superstitious temperament of the dark whites and with the vast tradition of forty centuries of temple religion and temple sacrifices at the back of their minds. In Alexandria three types of mind and spirit met, the three main types of the white race, the clear-headed criticism of the Aryan Greek, the moral fervour and monotheism of the Semitic Jew, and the deep Mediterranean tradition of mysteries and sacrifices that we have already seen at work in the secret cults and occult practices of Greece, ideas which in Hamitic Egypt ruled proudly in great temples in the open light of day.

These three were the permanent elements of the Alexandrian blend. But in the seaport and markets mingled men of every known race, comparing their religious ideas and customs. It is even related that in the third century B.C. Buddhist missionaries came from the court of King Asoka in India. Aristotle remarks in his *Politics* that the religious beliefs of men are apt to borrow their form from political institutions, “men assimilate the lives no less than the bodily forms of the gods to their own,” and this age of Greek-speaking great empires under autocratic monarchs was bearing hardly upon those merely local celebrities, the old tribal and city deities. Men were requiring deities with an outlook at least as wide as the empires, and except where the interests of powerful priesthoods stood in the way,

a curious process of assimilation of gods was going on. Men found that though there were many gods, they were all very much alike. Where there had been many gods, men came to think there must be really only one god under a diversity of names. He had been everywhere — under an alias. The Roman Jupiter, the Greek Zeus, the Egyptian Ammon, the putative father of Alexander and the old antagonist of Amenophis IV., the Babylonian Bel-Marduk, were all sufficiently similar to be identified.

"Father of all in every age, in every clime adored
By saint, by savage and by sage, Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

Where there were distinct differences, the difficulty was met by saying that these were different *aspects* of the same god. Bel-Marduk, however, was now a very decadent god indeed, who hardly survived as a pseudonym; Assur, Dagon, and the like, poor old gods of fallen nations, had long since passed out of memory, and did not come into the amalgamation. Osiris, a god popular with the Egyptian commonalty, was already identified with Apis, the sacred bull in the temple of Memphis, and somewhat confused with Ammon. Under the name of Serapis he became the great god of Hellenic Alexandria. He was Jupiter-Serapis. The Egyptian cow goddess, Hathor or Isis, was also represented now in human guise as the wife of Osiris, to whom she bore the infant Horus, who grew up to be Osiris again. These bald statements sound strange, no doubt, to a modern mind, but these identifications and mixing up of one god with another are very illustrative of the struggle the quickening human intelligence was making to cling still to religion and its emotional bonds and fellowship, while making its gods more reasonable and universal.

This fusing of one god with another is called *theocrasia*, and nowhere was it more vigorously going on than in Alexandria. Only two peoples resisted it in this period: the Jews, who already had their faith in the One God of Heaven and Earth, Jehovah, and the Persians, who had a monotheistic sun worship.

It was Ptolemy I who set up not only the Museum in Alexandria, but the Serapeum, devoted to the worship of a trinity of gods which represented the result of a process of theocrasia applied more

particularly to the gods of Greece and Egypt.

Isis and Horus

This trinity consisted of the god Serapis (= Osiris + Apis), the goddess Isis (= Hathor, the cow-moon goddess), and the child-god Horus. In one way or another almost every other god was identified with one or other of these three aspects of the one God, even the sun god Mithras of the Persians. And they were each other; they were three, but they were also one. They were worshipped with great fervour, and the jangling of a peculiar instrument, the *sistrum*, a frame set with bells and used rather after the fashion of the tambourine in the proceedings of the modern Salvation Army, was a distinctive accessory to the ceremonies. And now for the first time we find the idea of immortality becoming the central idea of a religion that extended beyond Egypt. Neither the early Aryans nor the early Semites seem to have troubled very much about immortality, it has affected the Mongolian mind very little, but the continuation of the individual life after death had been from the earliest times an intense pre-occupation of the Egyptians. It played now a large part in the worship of Serapis. In the devotional literature of his cult he is spoken of as "the saviour and leader of souls, leading souls to the light and receiving them again." It is stated that "he raises the dead, he shows forth the longed-for light of the sun to those who see, whose holy tombs contain multitudes of sacred books"; and again, "we never can escape him, he will save us, after death we shall still be the care of his providence."

The ceremonial burning of candles and the offering of ex-votos, that is to say of small models of parts of the human body in need of succour, was a part of the worship of the Serapeum. Isis attracted many devotees, who vowed their lives to her. Her images stood in the temple, crowned as the Queen of Heaven and bearing the infant Horus in her arms. The candles flared and guttered before her, and the wax ex-votos hung about the shrine. The novice was put through a long and careful preparation, he took vows of celibacy, and when he was initiated his head was shaved and he was clad in a linen garment....

Serapis

In this worship of Serapis, which spread very widely throughout

the civilized world in the third and second centuries B.C., we see the most remarkable anticipations of usages and forms of expression that were destined to dominate the European world throughout the Christian era. The essential idea, the living spirit, of Christianity was, as we shall presently show, a new thing in the history of the mind and will of man; but the garments of ritual and symbol and formula that Christianity has worn, and still in many countries wears to this day, were certainly woven in the cult and temples of Jupiter, Serapis, and Isis that spread now from Alexandria throughout the civilized world in the age of theocrasia in the second and first centuries before Christ.

XXVI

THE RISE AND SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

§ 1. *The Story of Gautama.* § 2. *Teaching and Legend in Conflict.* § 3. *The Gospel of Gautama Buddha.* § 4. *Buddhism and Asoka.* § 5. *Two Great Chinese Teachers.* § 6. *The Corruptions of Buddhism.* § 7. *The Present Range of Buddhism.*

§ 1

IT is interesting to turn from the mental and moral activities of Athens and Alexandria, and the growth of human ideas in the Mediterranean world, to the almost entirely separate intellectual life of India. Here was a civilization which from the first seems to have grown up upon its own roots and with a character of its own. It was cut off from the civilizations to the west and to the east by vast mountain barriers and desert regions. The Aryan tribes who had come down into the peninsula soon lost touch with their kindred to the west and north, and developed upon lines of their own. This was more particularly the case with those who had passed on into the Ganges country and beyond. They found a civilization already scattered over India, the Dravidian civilization. This had arisen independently, just as the Sumerian, Cretan, and Egyptian civilizations seem to have arisen, out of that widespread development of the Neolithic culture, the heliolithic culture, whose characteristics we have already described. They revived and changed this Dravidian civilization much as the Greeks did the Ægean or the Semites the Sumerian.

These Indian Aryans were living under different conditions from those that prevailed to the north-west. They were living in a warmer climate, in which a diet of beef and fermented liquor was destructive; they were forced, therefore, to a generally vegetarian dietary, and the prolific soil, almost unasked, gave them all the food they needed. There was no further reason for them to wander; the crops and seasons were trustworthy. They wanted little clothing or housing. They wanted so little that trade was undeveloped. There was still land for every one who desired to cultivate a patch — and a little

patch sufficed. Their political life was simple and comparatively secure; no great conquering powers had arisen as yet in India, and her natural barriers sufficed to stop the early imperialisms to the west of her and to the east. Thousands of comparatively pacific little village republics and chieftainships were spread over the land. There was no sea life, there were no pirate raiders, no strange traders. One might write a history of India coming down to four hundred years ago and hardly mention the sea.

The history of India for many centuries had been happier, less fierce, and more dreamlike than any other history. The noblemen, the rajahs, hunted; life was largely made up of love stories. Here and there a maharajah arose amidst the rajahs and built a city, caught and tamed many elephants, slew many tigers, and left a tradition of his splendour and his wonderful processions.

It was somewhen between 500 and 600 B.C., when Crœsus was flourishing in Lydia and Cyrus was preparing to snatch Babylon from Nabonidus, that the founder of Buddhism was born in India. He was born in a small republican tribal community in the north of Bengal under the Himalayas, in what is now overgrown jungle country on the borders of Nepal. The little state was ruled by a family, the Sakya clan, of which this man, Siddhattha Gautama, was a member. Siddhattha was his personal name, like Caius or John; Gautama, or Gôtama, his family name, like Cæsar or Smith; Sakya his clan name, like Julius. The institution of caste was not yet fully established in India, and the Brahmins, though they were privileged and influential, had not yet struggled to the head of the system; but there were already strongly marked class distinctions and a practically impermeable partition between the noble Aryans and the darker common people. Gautama belonged to the former race. His teaching, we may note, was called the Aryan Path, the Aryan Truth.

It is only within the last half-century that the increasing study of the Pali language, in which most of the original sources were written, has given the world a real knowledge of the life and actual thought of Gautama. Previously his story was overlaid by monstrous accumulations of legend, and his teaching violently misconceived. But now we have a very human and understandable account of him.

He was a good-looking, capable young man of fortune, and until

he was twenty-nine he lived the ordinary aristocratic life of his time. It was not a very satisfying life intellectually. There was no literature except the oral tradition of the Vedas, and that was chiefly monopolized by the Brahmins; there was even less knowledge. The world was bound by the snowy Himalayas to the north and spread indefinitely to the south. The city of Benares, which had a king, was about a hundred miles away. The chief amusements were hunting and love-making. All the good that life seemed to offer, Gautama enjoyed. He was married at nineteen to a beautiful cousin. For some years they remained childless. He hunted and played and went about in his sunny world of gardens and groves and irrigated rice-fields. And it was amidst this life that a great discontent fell upon him. It was the unhappiness of a fine brain that seeks employment. He lived amidst plenty and beauty, he passed from gratification to gratification, and his soul was not satisfied. It was as if he heard the destinies of the race calling to him. He felt that the existence he was leading was not the reality of life, but a holiday — a holiday that had gone on too long.

While he was in this mood he saw four things that served to point his thoughts. He was driving on some excursion of pleasure, when he came upon a man dreadfully broken down by age. The poor bent, enfeebled creature struck his imagination. “Such is the way of life,” said Channa, his charioteer, and “to that we must all come.” While this was yet in his mind he chanced upon a man suffering horribly from some loathsome disease. “Such is the way of life,” said Channa. The third vision was of an unburied body, swollen, eyeless, mauled by passing birds and beasts and altogether terrible. “That is the way of life,” said Channa.

The sense of disease and mortality, the insecurity and the unsatisfactoriness of all happiness, descended upon the mind of Gautama. And then he and Channa saw one of those wandering ascetics who already existed in great numbers in India. These men lived under severe rules, spending much time in meditation and in religious discussion. For many men before Gautama in that land of uneventful sunshine had found life distressing and mysterious. These ascetics were all supposed to be seeking some deeper reality in life, and a passionate desire to do likewise took possession of Gautama.

He was meditating upon this project, says the story, when the news was brought to him that his wife had been delivered of his first-born son. “This is another tie to break,” said Gautama.

He returned to the village amidst the rejoicings of his fellow clansmen. There was a great feast and a Nautch dance to celebrate the birth of this new tie, and in the night Gautama awoke in a great agony of spirit, “like a man who is told that his house is on fire.” In the ante-room the dancing girls were lying in strips of darkness and moonlight. He called Channa, and told him to prepare his horse. Then he went softly to the threshold of his wife’s chamber, and saw her by the light of a little oil lamp, sleeping sweetly, surrounded by flowers, with his infant son in her arm. He felt a great craving to take up the child in one first and last embrace before he departed, but the fear of waking his wife prevented him, and at last he turned away and went out into the bright Indian moonshine to Channa waiting with the horses, and mounted and stole away.

As he rode through the night with Channa, it seemed to him that Mara, the Tempter of Mankind, filled the sky and disputed with him. “Return,” said Mara, “and be a king, and I will make you the greatest of kings. Go on, and you will fail. Never will I cease to dog your footsteps. Lust or malice or anger will betray you at last in some unwary moment; sooner or later you will be mine.”

Very far they rode that night, and in the morning he stopped outside the lands of his clan, and dismounted beside a sandy river. There he cut off his flowing locks with his sword, removed all his ornaments, and sent them and his horse and sword back to his house by Channa. Then going on he presently met a ragged man and exchanged clothes with him, and so having divested himself of all worldly entanglements, he was free to pursue his search after wisdom. He made his way southward to a resort of hermits and

teachers in a hilly spur running into Bengal northward from the Vindhya Mountains, close to the town of Rajgir. There a number of wise men lived in a warren of caves, going into the town for their simple supplies and imparting their knowledge by word of mouth to such as cared to come to them.

This instruction must have been very much in the style of the Socratic discussions that were going on in Athens a couple of centuries later. Gautama became versed in all the metaphysics of his age. But his acute intelligence was dissatisfied with the solutions offered him.

The Indian mind has always been disposed to believe that power and knowledge may be obtained by extreme asceticism, by fasting, sleeplessness, and self-torment, and these ideas Gautama now put to the test. He betook himself with five disciple companions to the jungle in a gorge in the Vindhya Mountains, and there he gave himself up to fasting and terrible penances. His fame spread, "like the sound of a great bell hung in the canopy of the skies." But it brought him no sense of truth achieved. One day he was walking up and down, trying to think in spite of his enfeebled state. Suddenly he staggered and fell unconscious. When he recovered, the preposterousness of these semi-magic ways of attempting wisdom was plain to him.

He amazed and horrified his five companions by demanding ordinary food and refusing to continue his self-mortifications. He had realized that whatever truth a man may reach is reached best by a nourished brain in a healthy body. Such a conception was absolutely foreign to the ideas of the land and age. His disciples deserted him, and went off in a melancholy state to Benares. The boom of the great bell ceased. Gautama the wonderful had fallen.

For a time Gautama wandered alone, the loneliest figure in history, battling for light.

When the mind grapples with a great and intricate problem, it makes its advances, it secures its positions step by step, with but little realization of the gains it has made, until suddenly, with an effect of abrupt illumination, it realizes its victory. So it would seem it happened to Gautama. He had seated himself under a great tree by the side of a river to eat, when this sense of clear vision came to him.

It seemed to him that he saw life plain. He is said to have sat all day and all night in profound thought, and then he rose up to impart his vision to the world.

§ 2

Such is the plain story of Gautama as we gather it from a comparison of early writings. But common men must have their cheap marvels and wonders.

It is nothing to them that this little planet should at last produce upon its surface a man thinking of the past and the future and the essential nature of existence. And so we must have this sort of thing by some worthy Pali scribe, making the most of it:

"When the conflict began between the Saviour of the World and the Prince of Evil a thousand appalling meteors fell.... Rivers flowed back towards their sources; peaks and lofty mountains where countless trees had grown for ages rolled crumbling to the earth.... the sun enveloped itself in awful darkness, and a host of headless spirits filled the air."

Of which phenomena history has preserved no authentication. Instead we have only the figure of a lonely man walking towards Benares.

Extraordinary attention has been given to the tree under which Gautama had this sense of mental clarity. It was a tree of the fig genus, and from the first it was treated with peculiar veneration. It was called the Bo Tree. It has long since perished, but close at hand lives another great tree which may be its descendant, and in Ceylon there grows to this day a tree, the oldest historical tree in the world, which we know certainly to have been planted as a cutting from the Bo Tree in the year 245 B.C. From that time to this it has been carefully tended and watered; its great branches are supported by pillars, and the earth has been terraced up about it so that it has been able to put out fresh roots continually. It helps us to realize the shortness of all human history to see so many generations spanned by the endurance of one single tree. Gautama's disciples unhappily have cared more for the preservation of his tree than of his thought, which from the first they misconceived and distorted.

At Benares Gautama sought out his five pupils, who were still leading the ascetic life. There is an account of their hesitation to receive him when they saw him approaching. He was a backslider. But there was some power of personality in him that prevailed over their coldness, and he made them listen to his new convictions. For five days the discussion was carried on. When he had at last convinced them that he was now enlightened, they hailed him as the Buddha. There was already in those days a belief in India that at long intervals Wisdom returned to the earth and was revealed to mankind through a chosen person known as the Buddha. According to Indian belief there have been many such Buddhas; Gautama Buddha is only the latest one of a series. But it is doubtful if he himself accepted that title or recognized that theory. In his discourses he never called himself the Buddha.

He and his recovered disciples then formed a sort of Academy in the Deer Park at Benares. They made themselves huts, and accumulated other followers to the number of threescore or more. In the rainy season they remained in discourse at this settlement, and during the dry weather they dispersed about the country, each giving his version of the new teachings. All their teaching was done, it would seem, by word of mouth. There was probably no writing yet in India at all. We must remember that in the time of Buddha it is doubtful if even the Iliad had been committed to writing. Probably the Mediterranean alphabet, which is the basis of most Indian scripts, had not yet reached India. The master, therefore, worked out and composed pithy and brief verses, aphorisms, and lists of "points," and these were expanded in the discourse of his disciples. It greatly helped them to have these points and aphorisms numbered. The modern mind is apt to be impatient of the tendency of Indian thought to a numerical statement of things, the Eightfold Path, the Four Truths, and so on, but this enumeration was a mnemonic necessity in an undocumented world.

§ 3

The fundamental teaching of Gautama, as it is now being made plain to us by the study of original sources, is clear and simple and in the

closest harmony with modern ideas. It is beyond all dispute the achievement of one of the most penetrating intelligences the world has ever known.

We have what are almost certainly the authentic heads of his discourse to the five disciples which embodies his essential doctrine. All the miseries and discontents of life he traces to insatiable selfishness. Suffering, he teaches, is due to the craving individuality, to the torment of greedy desire. Until a man has overcome every sort of personal craving his life is trouble and his end sorrow. There are three principal forms the craving of life takes, and all are evil. The first is the desire to gratify the senses, sensuousness. The second is the desire for personal immortality. The third is the desire for prosperity, worldliness. All these must be overcome — that is to say, a man must no longer be living for himself — before life can become serene. But when they are indeed overcome and no longer rule a man's life, when the first personal pronoun has vanished from his private thoughts, then he has reached the higher wisdom, Nirvana, serenity of soul. For Nirvana does not mean, as many people wrongly believe, extinction, but the extinction of the futile personal aims that necessarily make life base or pitiful or dreadful.

Now here, surely, we have the completest analysis of the problem of the soul's peace. Every religion that is worth the name, every philosophy, warns us to lose ourselves in something greater than ourselves. "Whosoever would save his life, shall lose it;" there is exactly the same lesson.

The teaching of history, as we are unfolding it in this book, is strictly in accordance with this teaching of Buddha. There is, as we are seeing, no social order, no security, no peace or happiness, no righteous leadership or kingship, unless men lose themselves in something greater than themselves. The study of biological progress again reveals exactly the same process — the merger of the narrow globe of the individual experience in a wider being (compare what has been said in Chaps. XII and XVIII). To forget oneself in greater interests is to escape from a prison.

The self-abnegation must be complete. From the point of view of Gautama, that dread of death, that greed for an endless continuation of his mean little individual life which drove the Egyptian and those

who learnt from him with propitiations and charms into the temples, was as mortal and ugly and evil a thing as lust or avarice or hate. The religion of Gautama is flatly opposite to the "immortality" religions. And his teaching is set like flint against asceticism, as a mere attempt to win personal power by personal pains.

But when we come to the rule of life, the Aryan Path, by which we are to escape from the threefold base cravings that dishonour human life, then the teaching is not so clear. It is not so clear for one very manifest reason, Gautama had no knowledge nor vision of history; he had no clear sense of the vast and many-sided adventure of life opening out in space and time. His mind was confined within the ideas of his age and people, and their minds were shaped into notions of perpetual recurrence, of world following world and of Buddha following Buddha, a stagnant circling of the universe. The idea of mankind as a great Brotherhood pursuing an endless destiny under the God of Righteousness, the idea that was already dawning upon the Semitic consciousness in Babylon at this time, did not exist in his world. Yet his account of the Eightfold Path is, nevertheless, within these limitations, profoundly wise.

Let us briefly recapitulate the eight elements of the Aryan Path. First, Right Views; Gautama placed the stern examination of views and ideas, the insistence upon *truth* as the first research of his followers. There was to be no clinging to tawdry superstitions. He condemned, for instance, the prevalent belief in the transmigration of souls. In a well-known early Buddhist dialogue there is a destructive analysis of the idea of an enduring individual soul. Next to Right Views came Right Aspirations; because nature abhors a vacuum, and since base cravings are to be expelled, other desires must be encouraged — love for the service of others, desire to do and secure justice and the like. Primitive and uncorrupted Buddhism aimed not at the destruction of desire, but at the change of desire. Devotion to science and art, or to the betterment of things manifestly falls into harmony with the Buddhistic Right Aspirations, provided such aims are free from jealousy or the craving for fame. Right Speech, Right Conduct, and Right Livelihood, need no expansion here. Sixthly in this list came Right Effort, for Gautama had no toleration for good intentions and slovenly application; the disciple had to keep a keenly

critical eye upon his activities. The seventh element of the path, Right Mindfulness, is the constant guard against a lapse into personal feeling or glory for whatever is done or not done. And, finally, comes Right Rapture, which seems to be aimed against the pointless ecstasies of the devout, such witless gloryings, for instance, as those that went to the jingle of the Alexandrian sistrum.

We will not discuss here the Buddhistic doctrine of *Karma*, because it belongs to a world of thought that is passing away. The good or evil of every life was supposed to determine the happiness or misery of some subsequent life, that was in some inexplicable way identified with its predecessor. Nowadays we realize that a life goes on in its consequences for ever, but we find no necessity to suppose that any particular life resumes again. The Indian mind was full of the idea of cyclic recurrence; everything was supposed to come round again. This is a very natural supposition for men to make; so things seem to be until we analyze them. Modern science has made clear to us that there is no such exact recurrence as we are apt to suppose; every day is by an infinitesimal quantity a little longer than the day before; no generation repeats the previous generation precisely; history never repeats itself; change, we realize now, is inexhaustible; all things are eternally new. But these differences between our general ideas and those Buddha must have possessed need not in any way prevent us from appreciating the unprecedented wisdom, the goodness, and the greatness of this plan of an emancipated life as Gautama laid it down somewhen in the sixth century before Christ.

And if he failed in theory to gather together all the wills of the converted into the one multifarious activity of our race battling against death and deadness in time and space, he did in practice direct his own life and that of all his immediate disciples into one progressive adventure, which was to preach and spread the doctrine and methods of Nirvana or soul-serenity throughout our fevered world. For them at least his teaching was complete and full. But all men cannot preach or teach; doctrine is but one of many of the functions of life that are fundamentally righteous. To the modern mind it seems at least equally acceptable that a man may, though perhaps against greater difficulties, cultivate the soil, rule a city,

make roads, build houses, construct engines, or seek and spread knowledge, in perfect self-forgetfulness and serenity. As much was inherent in Gautama's teaching, but the stress was certainly laid upon the teaching itself, and upon withdrawal from rather than upon the ennoblement of the ordinary affairs of men.

In certain other respects this primitive Buddhism differed from any of the religions we have hitherto considered. It was primarily a religion of conduct, not a religion of observances and sacrifices. It had no temples, and since it had no sacrifices it had no sacred order of priests. Nor had it any theology. It neither asserted nor denied the reality of the innumerable and often grotesque gods who were worshipped in India at that time. It passed them by.

§ 4

From the very first this new teaching was misconceived. One corruption was perhaps inherent in its teaching. Because the world of men had as yet no sense of the continuous progressive effort of life, it was very easy to slip from the idea of renouncing self to the idea of renouncing active life. As Gautama's own experiences had shown, it is easier to flee from this world than from self. His early disciples were strenuous thinkers and teachers, but the lapse into mere monastic seclusion was a very easy one, particularly easy in the climate of India, where an extreme simplicity of living is convenient and attractive, and exertion more laborious than anywhere else in the world.

And it was early the fate of Gautama, as it has been the fate of most religious founders since his days, to be made into a wonder by his less intelligent disciples in their efforts to impress the outer world. We have already noted how one devout follower could not but believe that the moment of the master's mental irradiation must necessarily have been marked by an epileptic fit of the elements. This is one small sample of the vast accumulation of vulgar marvels that presently sprang up about the memory of Gautama.

There can be no doubt that for the great multitude of human beings then as now the mere idea of an emancipation from self is a very difficult one to grasp. It is probable that even among the

teachers Buddha was sending out from Benares there were many who did not grasp it and still less were able to convey it to their hearers. Their teaching quite naturally took on the aspect of salvation not from oneself — that idea was beyond them — but from misfortunes and sufferings here and hereafter. In the existing superstitions of the people, and especially in the idea of the transmigration of the soul after death, though this idea was contrary to the Master's own teaching, they found stuff of fear they could work upon. They urged virtue upon the people lest they should live again in degraded or miserable forms, or fall into some one of the innumerable hells of torment with which the Brahminical teachers had already familiarized their minds. They represented Buddha as the saviour from almost unlimited torment.

There seems to be no limit to the lies that honest but stupid disciples will tell for the glory of their master and for what they regard as the success of their propaganda. Men who would scorn to tell a lie in everyday life will become unscrupulous cheats and liars when they have given themselves up to propagandist work; it is one of the perplexing absurdities of our human nature. Such honest souls, for most of them were indubitably honest, were presently telling their hearers of the miracles that attended the Buddha's birth — they no longer called him Gautama, because that was too familiar a name — of his youthful feats of strength, of the marvels of his everyday life, winding up with a sort of illumination of his body at the moment of death. Of course it was impossible to believe that Buddha was the son of a mortal father. He was miraculously conceived through his mother dreaming of a beautiful white elephant! Previously he had himself been a marvellous elephant with six tusks; he had generously given them all to a needy hunter — and even helped him to saw them off. And so on.

Moreover, a theology grew up about Buddha. He was discovered to be a god. He was one of a series of divine beings, the Buddhas. There was an undying "Spirit of all the Buddhas"; there was a great series of Buddhas past and Buddhas (or Buddisatvas) yet to come. But we cannot go further into these complications of Asiatic theology. "Under the overpowering influence of these sickly imaginations the moral teachings of Gautama have been almost hid

from view. The theories grew and flourished; each new step, each new hypothesis, demanded another; until the whole sky was filled with forgeries of the brain, and the nobler and simpler lessons of the founder of the religion were smothered beneath the glittering mass of metaphysical subtleties."

Hariti (painting from Chinese Turkestan, 6th Centy. A.D.)
after Foucher

In the third century B.C. Buddhism was gaining wealth and power, and the little groups of simple huts in which the teachers of the Order gathered in the rainy season were giving place to substantial monastic buildings. To this period belong the beginnings of Buddhistic art. Now if we remember how recent was the adventure of Alexander, that all the Punjab was still under Seleucid rule, that all India abounded with Greek adventurers, and that there was still quite open communication by sea and land with Alexandria, it is no great wonder to find that this early Buddhist art was strongly Greek in character, and that the new Alexandrian cult of Serapis and Isis was extraordinarily influential in its development.

The kingdom of Gandhara on the northwest frontier near Peshawar, which flourished in the third century B.C., was a typical meeting-place of the Hellenic and Indian worlds. Here are to be found the earliest Buddhist sculptures, and interwoven with them are figures which are recognizably the figures of Serapis and Isis and Horus already worked into the legendary net that gathered about Buddha. No doubt the Greek artists who came to Gandhara were loath to relinquish a familiar theme. But Isis, we are told, is no longer Isis but Hariti, a pestilence goddess whom Buddha converted and made benevolent. Foucher traces Isis from this centre into China, but here other influences were also at work and the story becomes too complex for us to disentangle in this *Outline*. China had a Taoist deity, the Holy Mother, the Queen of Heaven, who took on the name (originally a male name) of Kuan-yin and who came to resemble the Isis figure very closely. The Isis figures, we feel, must have influenced the treatment of Kuan-yin. Like Isis she was also Queen of the Seas, Stella Maris. In Japan she was called Kwannon. There seems to have been a constant exchange of the outer forms of religion between east and west. We read in Hue's Travels how perplexing he and his fellow missionary found this possession of a common tradition of worship. "The cross," he says, "the mitre, the dalmatica, the cope, which the Grand Lamas wear on their journeys, or when they are performing some ceremony out of the temple; the service with double choirs, the psalmody, the exorcisms, the censer, suspended from five chains, which you can open or close at pleasure; the benedictions given by the Lamas by extending the right hand

over the heads of the faithful; the chaplet, ecclesiastical celibacy, spiritual retirement, the worship of the saints, the fasts, the processions, the litanies, the holy water, all these are analogies between the Buddhists and ourselves."

Chinese Image of Kuan-yin.

The cult and doctrine of Gautama, gathering corruptions and variations from Brahminism and Hellenism alike, was spread throughout India by an increasing multitude of teachers in the fourth and third centuries B.C. For some generations at least it retained much of the moral beauty and something of the simplicity of the opening phase. Many people who have no intellectual grasp upon the meaning of self-abnegation and disinterestedness have nevertheless the ability to appreciate a splendour in the reality of these qualities. Early Buddhism was certainly producing noble lives, and it is not only through reason that the latent response to nobility is aroused in our minds. It spread rather in spite of than because of the concessions that it made to vulgar imaginations. It spread because many of the early Buddhists were sweet and gentle, helpful and noble and admirable people, who compelled belief in their sustaining faith.

Quite early in its career Buddhism came into conflict with the growing pretensions of the Brahmins. As we have already noted, this priestly caste was still only struggling to dominate Indian life in the days of Gautama. They had already great advantages. They had the monopoly of tradition and religious sacrifices. But their power was being challenged by the development of kingship, for the men who became clanleaders and kings were usually not of the Brahminical caste.

Kingship received an impetus from the Persian and Greek invasions of the Punjab. We have already noted the name of King Porus whom, in spite of his elephants, Alexander defeated and turned into a satrap. There came also to the Greek camp upon the Indus a certain low-caste adventurer named Chandragupta Maurya, whom the Greeks called Sandracottus, with a scheme for conquering the Ganges country. The scheme was not welcome to the Macedonians, who were in revolt against marching any further into India, and he had to fly the camp. He wandered among the tribes upon the north-west frontier, secured their support, and after Alexander had departed, overran the Punjab, ousting the Macedonian representatives. He then conquered the Ganges country (321 B.C.), waged a successful war (303 B.C.) against Seleucus (Seleucus I) when the latter attempted to recover the Punjab, and consolidated a

great empire reaching across all the plain of northern India from the western to the eastern sea. And this King Chandragupta came into much the same conflict with the growing power of the Brahmins, into the conflict between crown and priesthood, that we have already noted as happening in Babylonia and Egypt and China. He saw in the spreading doctrine of Buddhism an ally against the growth of priestcraft and caste. He supported and endowed the Buddhistic Order, and encouraged its teachings.

He was succeeded by his son, who conquered Madras and was in turn succeeded by Asoka (264 to 227 B.C.), one of the great monarchs of history, whose dominions extended from Afghanistan to Madras. He is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory. He had invaded Kalinga (255 B.C.), a country along the east coast of Madras, perhaps with some intention of completing the conquest of the tip of the Indian peninsula. The expedition was successful, but he was disgusted by what he saw of the cruelties and horrors of war. He declared, in certain inscriptions that still exist, that he would no longer seek conquest by war, but by religion, and the rest of his life was devoted to the spreading of Buddhism throughout the world.

He seems to have ruled his vast empire in peace and with great ability. He was no mere religious fanatic. But in the year of his one and only war he joined the Buddhist community as a layman, and some years later he became a full member of the Order, and devoted himself to the attainment of Nirvana by the Eightfold Path. How entirely compatible that way of living then was with the most useful and beneficent activities his life shows. Right Aspiration, Right Effort, and Right Livelihood distinguished his career. He organized a great digging of wells in India, and the planting of trees for shade. He appointed officers for the supervision of charitable works. He founded hospitals and public gardens. He had gardens made for the growing of medicinal herbs. Had he had an Aristotle to inspire him, he would no doubt have endowed scientific research upon a great scale. He created a ministry for the care of the aborigines and subject races. He made provision for the education of women. He made, he was the first monarch to make, an attempt to educate his people into a common view of the ends and way of life. He made vast

benefactions to the Buddhist teaching orders, and tried to stimulate them to a better study of their own literature. All over the land he set up long inscriptions rehearsing the teaching of Gautama, and it is the simple and human teaching and not the preposterous accretions. Thirty-five of his inscriptions survive to this day. Moreover, he sent missionaries to spread the noble and reasonable teaching of his master throughout the world, to Kashmir, to Ceylon, to the Seleucids, and the Ptolemies. It was one of these missions which carried that cutting of the Bo Tree, of which we have already told, to Ceylon.

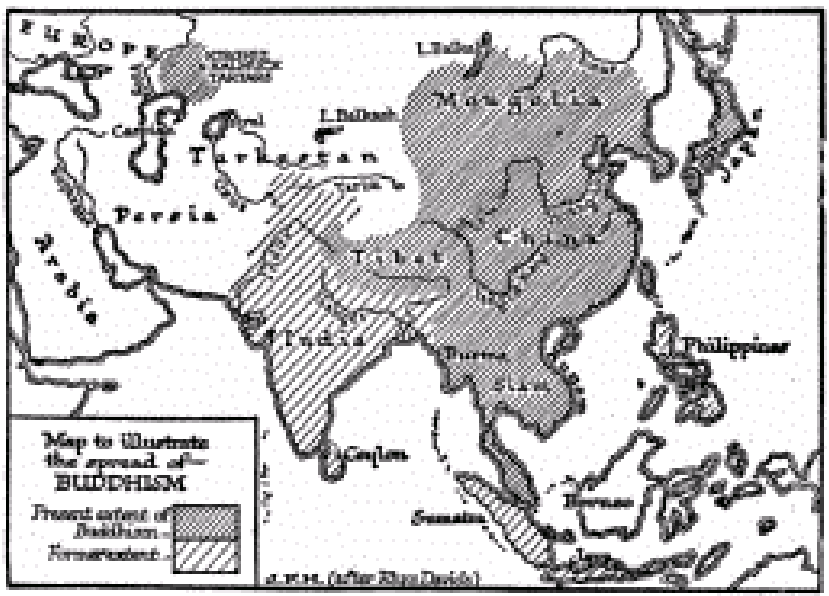

For eight and twenty years Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory to-day than have ever heard the names of

Constantine or Charlemagne.

§ 5

It is thought that the vast benefactions of Asoka finally corrupted Buddhism by attracting to its Order great numbers of mercenary and insincere adherents, but there can be no doubt that its rapid extension throughout Asia was very largely due to his stimulus.

It made its way into Central Asia through Afghanistan and Turkestan, and so reached China. Buddhist teaching had spread widely in China before 200 B.C. Buddhism found there a popular and prevalent religion, Taoism, a development of very ancient and primitive magic and occult practices. It was reorganized as a distinctive cult by Chang Daoling in the days of the Han dynasty. Tao means the Way, which corresponds closely with the idea of the Aryan Path. The two religions spread side by side and underwent similar changes, so that nowadays their outward practice is very similar. Buddhism also encountered Confucianism, which was even less theological and even more a code of personal conduct. And finally it encountered the teachings of Lao Tse, "anarchist, evolutionist, pacifist, and moral philosopher," which were not so much a religion as a philosophical rule of life. The teachings of this Lao Tse were later to become incorporated with the Taoist religion by Chen Tuan, the founder of modern Taoism.

Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, like Lao Tse, the great southern teacher (whom he met and admired), and Gautama, lived also in the sixth century B.C. His life has some interesting parallelisms with that of some of the more political of the Greek philosophers of the fifth and fourth. The sixth century B.C. falls into the period assigned by Chinese historians to the Chow Dynasty, but in those days the rule of that dynasty had become little more than nominal; the emperor conducted the traditional sacrifices of the Son of Heaven, and received a certain formal respect. Even his nominal empire was not a sixth part of the China of to-day. In Chapter XVI we have already glanced at the state of affairs in China at this time; practically China was a multitude of warring states open to the northern barbarians. Confucius was a subject in one of those states,

Lu; he was of aristocratic birth, but poor; and, after occupying various official positions, he set up a sort of Academy in Lu for the discovery and imparting of Wisdom. And we also find Confucius travelling from state to state in China, seeking a prince who would make him his counsellor and become the centre of a reformed world. Plato, two centuries later, in exactly the same spirit, went as advisor to the tyrant Dionysius of Syracuse, and we have already noted the attitudes of Aristotle and Isocrates towards Philip of Macedonia.

The teaching of Confucius centred upon the idea of a noble life which he embodied in a standard or ideal, the Aristocratic Man. This phrase is often translated into English as the Superior Person, but as "superior" and "person," like "respectable" and "genteel," have long become semi-humorous terms of abuse, this rendering is not fair to Confucianism. He did present to his time the ideal of a devoted public man. The public side was very important to him. He was far more of a constructive political thinker than Gautama or Lao Tse. His mind was full of the condition of China, and he sought to call the Aristocratic Man into existence very largely in order to produce the noble state. One of his sayings may be quoted here: "It is impossible to withdraw from the world, and associate with birds and beasts that have no affinity with us. With whom should I associate but with suffering men? The disorder that prevails is what requires my efforts. If right principles ruled through the kingdom, there would be no necessity for me to change its state."

The political basis of his teaching seems to be characteristic of Chinese moral ideas; there is a much directer reference to the State than is the case with most Indian and European moral and religious doctrine. For a time he was appointed magistrate in Chung-tu, a city of the dukedom of Lu, and here he sought to regulate life to an extraordinary extent, to subdue every relationship and action indeed to the rule of an elaborate etiquette. "Ceremonial in every detail, such as we are wont to see only in the courts of rulers and the households of high dignitaries, became obligatory on the people at large and all matters of daily life were subject to rigid rule. Even the food which the different classes of people might eat was regulated; males and females were kept apart in the streets; even the thickness of coffins and the shape and situation of graves were made the subject of

regulations."

This is all, as people say, very Chinese. No other people have ever approached moral order and social stability through the channel of manners. Yet in China, at any rate, the methods of Confucius have had an enormous effect, and no nation in the world to-day has such a universal tradition of decorum and self-restraint.

Later on the influence of Confucius over his duke was undermined, and he withdrew again into private life. His last days were saddened by the deaths of some of his most promising disciples. "No intelligent ruler," he said, "arises to take me as his master, and my time has come to die." ...

But he died to live. Says Hirth, "There can be no doubt that Confucius has had a greater influence on the development of the Chinese national character than many emperors taken together. He is, therefore, one of the essential figures to be considered in connection with any history of China. That he could influence his nation to such a degree was, it appears to me, due more to the peculiarity of the nation than to that of his own personality. Had he lived in any other part of the world, his name would perhaps be forgotten. As we have seen, he had formed his character and his personal views on man's life from a careful study of documents closely connected with the moral philosophy cultivated by former generations. What he preached to his contemporaries was, therefore, not all new to them; but, having himself, in the study of old records, heard the dim voice of the sages of the past, he became, as it were, the megaphone phonograph through which were expressed to the nation those views which he had derived from the early development of the nation itself.... The great influence of Confucius's personality on national life in China was due not only to his writings and his teachings as recorded by others, but also to his doings. His personal character, as described by his disciples and in the accounts of later writers, some of which may be entirely legendary, has become the pattern for millions of those who are bent on imitating the outward manners of a great man.... Whatever he did in public was regulated to the minutest detail by ceremony. This was no invention of his own, since ceremonial life had been cultivated many centuries before Confucius; but his authority and example did much to perpetuate what he

considered desirable social practices."

The Chinese speak of Buddhism and the doctrines of Lao Tse and Confucius as the Three Teachings. Together they constitute the basis and point of departure of all later Chinese thought. Their thorough study is a necessary preliminary to the establishment of any real intellectual and moral community between the great people of the East and the Western world.

There are certain things to be remarked in common of all these three teachers, of whom Gautama was indisputably the greatest and profoundest, whose doctrines to this day dominate the thought of the great majority of human beings; there are certain features in which their teaching contrasts with the thoughts and feelings that were soon to take possession of the western world. Primarily they are personal and tolerant doctrines; they are doctrines of a Way, of a Path, of a Nobility, and not doctrines of a church or a general rule. And they offer nothing either for or against the existence and worship of the current gods. The Athenian philosophers, it is to be noted, had just the same theological detachment; Socrates was quite willing to bow politely or sacrifice formally to almost any divinity, — reserving his private thoughts. This attitude is flatly antagonistic to the state of mind that was growing up in the Jewish communities of Judea, Egypt, and Babylonia, in which the thought of the one God was first and foremost. Neither Gautama nor Lao Tse nor Confucius had any inkling of this idea of a *jealous* God, a God who would have "none other gods," a God of terrible Truth, who would not tolerate any lurking belief in magic, witchcraft, or old customs, or any sacrificing to the god-king or any trifling with the stern unity of things.

§ 6

The intolerance of the Jewish mind did keep its essential faith clear and clean. The theological disregard of the great Eastern teachers, neither assenting nor denying, did on the other hand permit elaborations of explanation and accumulations of ritual from the very beginning. Except for Gautama's insistence upon Right Views, which was easily disregarded, there was no *self-cleansing* element in either Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism. There was no effective prohibition of superstitious practices, spirit raising, incantations, prostrations, and supplementary worships. At an early stage a process of encrustation began, and continued. The new faiths caught almost every disease of the corrupt religions they sought to replace; they took over the idols and the temples, the altars and the censers.

Tibet to-day is a Buddhistic country, yet Gautama, could he return to earth, might go from end to end of Tibet seeking his own teaching in vain. He would find that most ancient type of human ruler, a god-king, enthroned, the Dalai Lama, the "living Buddha." At Lhassa he would find a huge temple filled with priests, abbots, and lamas — he whose only buildings were huts and who made no priests — and above a high altar he would behold a huge golden idol, which he would learn was called "Gautama Buddha"! He would hear services

intoned before this divinity, and certain precepts, which would be dimly familiar to him, murmured as responses. Bells, incense, prostrations, would play their part in these amazing proceedings. At one point in the service a bell would be rung and a mirror lifted up, while the whole congregation, in an access of reverence, bowed lower....

About this Buddhist countryside he would discover a number of curious little mechanisms, little wind-wheels and water-wheels spinning, on which brief prayers were inscribed. Every time these things spin, he would learn, it counts as a prayer. "To whom?" he would ask. Moreover, there would be a number of flagstaffs in the land carrying beautiful silk flags, silk flags which bore the perplexing inscription, "*Om Mani padme hum*," "the jewel is in the lotus." Whenever the flag flaps, he would learn, it was a prayer also, very beneficial to the gentleman who paid for the flag and to the land generally. Gangs of workmen, employed by pious persons, would be going about the country cutting this precious formula on cliff and stone. And this, he would realize at last, was what the world had made of his religion! Beneath this gaudy glitter was buried the Aryan Way to serenity of soul.

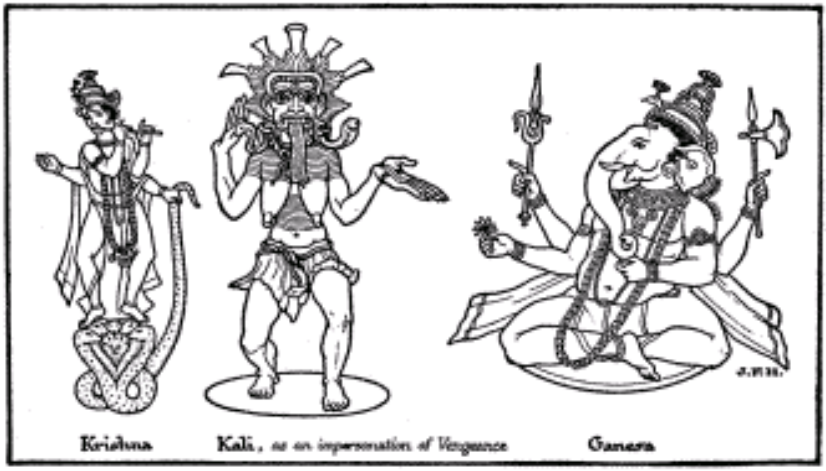

Krishna Kali, *as an impersonation of Vengeance* Ganesa

We have already noted the want of any progressive idea in

primitive Buddhism. In that again it contrasted with Judaism. The idea of a Promise gave to Judaism a quality no previous or contemporary religion displayed; it made Judaism historical and dramatic. It justified its fierce intolerance because it pointed to an aim. In spite of the truth and profundity of the psychological side of Gautama's teaching, Buddhism stagnated and corrupted for the lack of that directive idea. Judaism, it must be confessed, in its earlier phases, entered but little into the souls of men; it let them remain lustful, avaricious, worldly, or superstitious; but because of its persuasion of a promise and of a divine leadership to serve divine ends, it remained in comparison with Buddhism bright and expectant, like a cared-for sword.

§ 7

For some time Buddhism flourished in India. But Brahminism, with its many gods and its endless variety of cults, always flourished by its side, and the organization of the Brahmins grew more powerful, until at last they were able to turn upon this caste-denying cult and oust it from India altogether. The story of that struggle is not to be told here; there were persecutions and reactions, but by the eleventh century, except for Orissa, Buddhist teaching was extinct in India. Much of its gentleness and charity had, however, become incorporated with Brahminism.

Over great areas of the world, as our map has shown, it still survives; and it is quite possible that in contact with western science, and inspired by the spirit of history, the original teaching of Gautama, revived and purified, may yet play a large part in the direction of human destiny.

But with the loss of India the Aryan Way ceased to rule the lives of any Aryan peoples. It is curious to note that while the one great Aryan religion is now almost exclusively confined to Mongolian peoples, the Aryans themselves are under the sway of two religions, Christianity and Islam, which are, as we shall see, essentially Semitic. And both Buddhism and Christianity wear garments of ritual and formula that seem to be derived through Hellenistic channels from that land of temples and priestcraft, Egypt, and from

the mentality of the brown Hamitic peoples.

BOOK V. THE RISE AND COLLAPSE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

XXVII

THE TWO WESTERN REPUBLICS

§ 1. *The Beginnings of the Latins.* § 2. *A New Sort of State.* § 3. *The Carthaginian Republic of Rich Men.* § 4. *The First Punic War.* § 5. *Cato the Elder and the Spirit of Cato.* § 6. *The Second Punic War.* § 7. *The Third Punic War.* § 8. *How the Punic War Undermined Roman Liberty.* § 9. *Comparison of the Roman Republic with a Modern State.*

§ 1

IT is now necessary to take up the history of the two great republics of the Western Mediterranean, Rome and Carthage, and to tell how Rome succeeded in maintaining for some centuries an empire even greater than that achieved by the conquests of Alexander. But this new empire was, as we shall try to make clear, a political structure differing very profoundly in its nature from any of the great Oriental empires that had preceded it. Great changes in the texture of human society and in the conditions of social interrelations had been going on for some centuries. The flexibility and transferability of money was becoming a power and, like all powers in inexpert hands, a danger in human affairs. It was altering the relations of rich men to the state and to their poorer fellow citizens. This new empire, the Roman empire, unlike all the preceding empires, was not the creation of a great conqueror. No Sargon, no Thothmes, no Nebuchadnezzar, no Cyrus nor Alexander nor Chandragupta, was its fountain head. It was made by a republic. It grew by a kind of necessity through new concentrating and unifying forces that were steadily gathering power in human affairs.

But first it is necessary to give some idea of the state of affairs in Italy in the centuries immediately preceding the appearance of Rome in the world's story.

The WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN, 800-600 B.C.
ATLANTIC
Gaul
Alps
Po
Rhône
Illyrians
Basques
Corsica
Rome
Celtiberians
Sardinia
Sicily
Syracuse
MEDITERRANEAN
Carthage
AFRICA
Greeks...
Latins & other Italians..
Etruscans..
Carthaginians & Phoenicians..

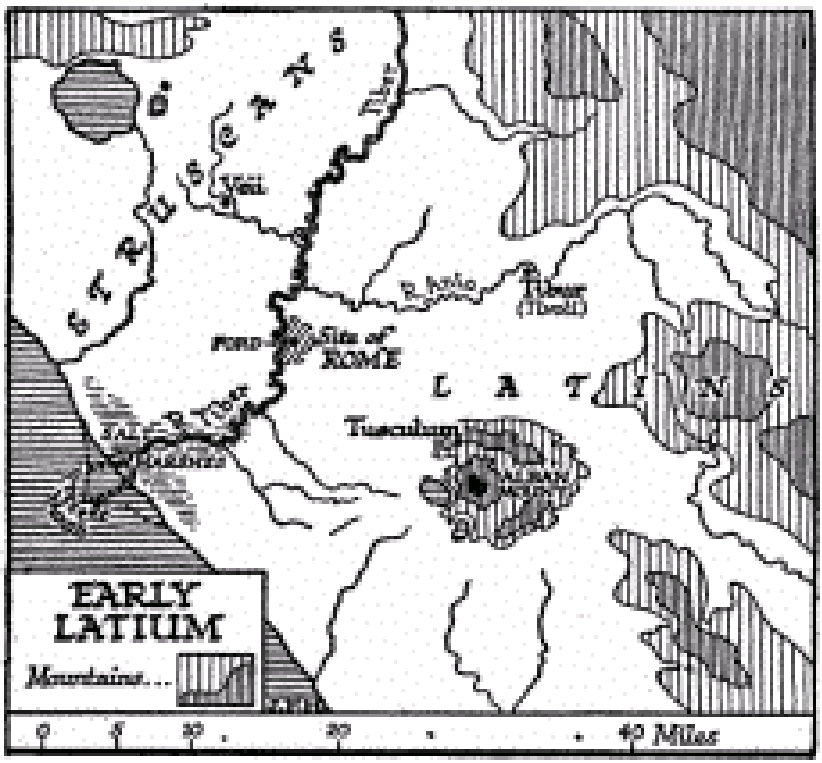

Before 1200 B.C., that is to say before the rise of the Assyrian empire, the siege of Troy, and the final destruction of Cnossos, but after the time of Amenophis IV, Italy, like Spain, was probably still inhabited mainly by dark white people of the more fundamental Iberian or Mediterranean race. This aboriginal population was probably a thin and backward one. But already in Italy, as in Greece, the Aryans were coming southward. By 1000 B.C. immigrants from the north had settled over most of the north and centre of Italy, and, as in Greece, they had inter-married with their darker predecessors and established a group of Aryan languages, the Italian group, more akin to the Keltic (Gaelic) than to any other, of which the most interesting from the historical point of view was that spoken by the Latin tribes in the plains south and east of the river Tiber. Meanwhile the Greeks had been settling down in Greece, and now they were taking to the sea and crossing over to South Italy and Sicily and establishing themselves there. Subsequently they established

colonies along the French Riviera and founded Marseilles upon the site of an older Phoenician colony. Another interesting people also had come into Italy by sea. These were a brownish sturdy people, to judge from the pictures they have left of themselves; very probably they were a tribe of those Ægean "dark whites" who were being driven out of Greece and Asia Minor and the islands in between by the Greeks. We have already told the tale of Cnossos (Chapter XVII) and of the settlement of the kindred Philistines in Palestine (Chapter XXI, § 1). These Etruscans, as they were called in Italy, were known even in ancient times to be of Asiatic origin, and it is tempting, but probably unjustifiable, to connect this tradition with the Æneid, the sham epic of the Latin poet Virgil, in which the Latin civilization is ascribed to Trojan immigrants from Asia Minor. (But the Trojans themselves were probably an Aryan people allied to the Phrygians.) These Etruscan people conquered most of Italy north of the Tiber from the Aryan tribes who were scattered over that country. Probably the Etruscans ruled over a subjugated Italian population, so reversing the state of affairs in Greece, in which the Aryans were uppermost.

Our map, which may be taken to represent roughly the state of affairs about 750 B.C., also shows the establishments of the Phœnician traders, of which Carthage was the chief, along the shores of Africa and Spain.

Of all the peoples actually in Italy, the Etruscans were by far the most civilized. They built sturdy fortresses of the Mycænean type of architecture; they had a metal industry; they used imported Greek pottery of a very fine type. The Latin tribes on the other side of the Tiber were by comparison barbaric.

The Latins were still a rude farming people. The centre of their worship was a temple to the tribal god Jupiter, upon the Alban Mount. There they gathered for their chief festivals very much after the fashion of the early tribal gathering we have already imagined at Avebury (Chapter XII). This gathering-place was not a town. It was a high place of assembly. There was no population permanently there. There were, however, twelve townships in the Latin league. At one point upon the Tiber there was a ford, and here there was a trade between Latins and Etruscans. At this ford Rome had its beginnings.

Traders assembled there, and refugees from the twelve towns found an asylum and occupation at this trading centre. Upon the seven hills near the ford a number of settlements sprang up, which finally amalgamated into one city.

Most people have heard the story of the two brothers Romulus and Remus, who founded Rome, and the legend of how they were exposed as infants and sheltered and suckled by a wolf. Little value is now attached to this tale by modern historians. The peninsula of Italy was not then the smiling land of vineyards and olive orchards it has since become. It was still a rough country of marsh and forest, in which the farmers grazed their cattle and made their clearings. Rome, on the boundary between Latin and Etruscan, was not in a very strong position for defence. At first there were perhaps Latin kings in Rome, then it would seem the city fell into the hands of Etruscan rulers whose tyrannous conduct led at last to their expulsion, and Rome became a Latin-speaking republic. The Etruscan kings were expelled from Rome in the sixth century B.C., while the successors of Nebuchadnezzar were ruling by the sufferance of the Medes in Babylon, while Confucius was seeking a king to reform the disorders of China, and while Gautama was teaching the Aryan Way to his disciples at Benares.

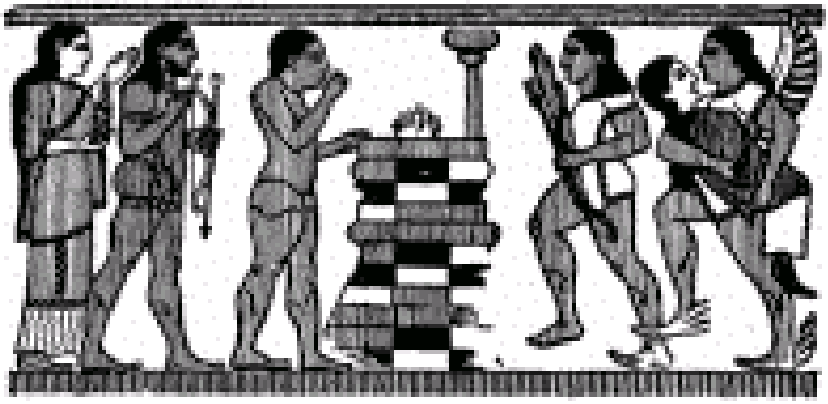

Etruscan painting of a Ceremonial Burning of the Dead

Of the struggle between the Romans and the Etruscans we cannot

tell in any detail here. The Etruscans were the better armed, the more civilized, and the more numerous, and it would probably have gone hard with the Romans if they had had to fight them alone. But two disasters happened to the Etruscans which so weakened them that the Romans were able at last to master them altogether. The first of these was a war with the Greeks of Syracuse in Sicily which destroyed the Etruscan fleet (474 B.C.), and the second was a great raid of the Gauls from the north into Italy. These latter people swarmed into North Italy and occupied the valley of the Po towards the end of the fifth century B.C., as a couple of centuries later their kindred were to swarm down into Greece and Asia Minor and settle in Galatia. The Etruscans were thus caught between hammer and anvil, and after a long and intermittent war the Romans were able to capture Veii, an Etruscan fortress, a few miles from Rome, which had hitherto been a great threat and annoyance to them.

It is to this period of struggle against the Etruscan monarchs, the Tarquins, that Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, familiar to every schoolboy, refer.

Greek statuette of a Gaul...

(From Myrina)

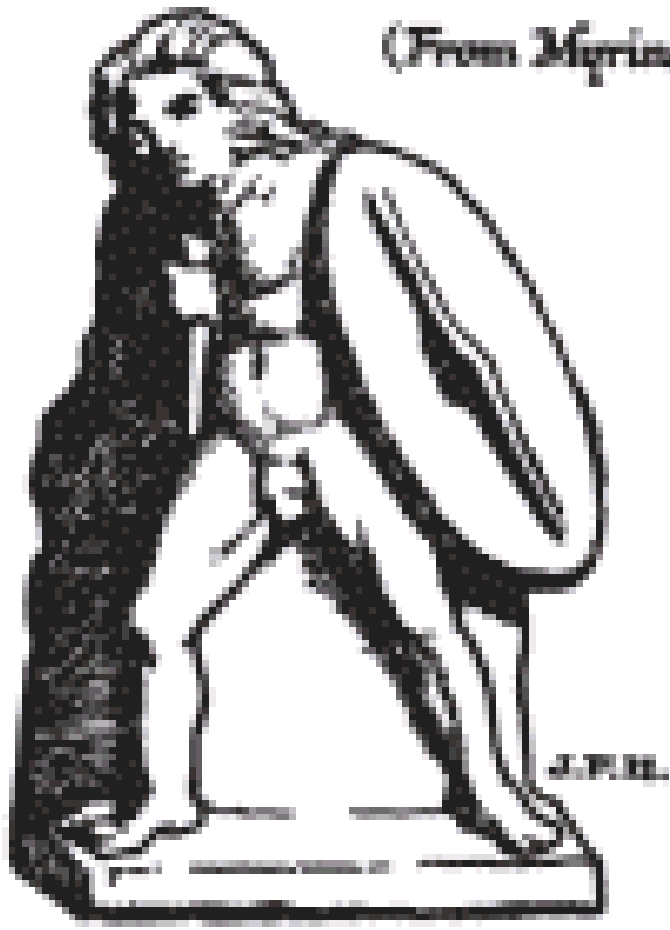

But the invasion of the Gauls was one of those convulsions of the nations that leave nothing as it has been before. They carried their raiding right down the Italian peninsula, devastating all Etruria. They took and sacked Rome (390 B.C.). According to Roman legends — on which doubt is thrown — the citadel on the Capitol held out, and this also the Gauls would have taken by surprise at night, if certain geese had not been awakened by their stealthy movements and set up

such a cackling as to arouse the garrison. After that the Gauls, who were ill-equipped for siege operations, and perhaps suffering from disease in their camp, were bought off, and departed to the northward again, and, though they made subsequent raids, they never again reached Rome.

The leader of the Gauls who sacked Rome was named Brennus. It is related of him that as the gold of the ransom was being weighed, there was some dispute about the justice of the counterpoise, whereupon he flung his sword into the scale, saying, "*Væ victis!*" ("Woe to the vanquished!") — a phrase that has haunted the discussions of all subsequent ransoms and indemnities down to the present time.

For half a century after this experience Rome was engaged in a series of wars to establish herself at the head of the Latin tribes. For the burning of the chief city seems to have stimulated rather than crippled her energies. However much she had suffered, most of her neighbours seem to have suffered more. By 290 B.C. Rome was the mistress city of all Central Italy from the Arno to south of Naples. She had conquered the Etruscans altogether, and her boundaries marched with those of the Gauls to the north and with the regions of Italy under Greek dominion (Magna Græcia) to the south. Along the Gaulish boundary she had planted garrisons and colonial cities, and no doubt it was because of that line of defence that the raiding enterprises of the Gauls were deflected eastward into the Balkans.

After what we have already told of the history of Greece and the constitutions of her cities, it will not surprise the reader to learn that the Greeks of Sicily and Italy were divided up into a number of separate city governments, of which Syracuse and Tarentum (the modern Taranto) were the chief, and that they had no common rule of direction or policy. But now, alarmed at the spread of the Roman power, they looked across the Adriatic for help, and found it in the ambitions of Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus. Between the Romans and Pyrrhus these Greeks of Magna Græcia were very much in the same position that Greece proper had been in, between the Macedonians and the Persians half a century before.

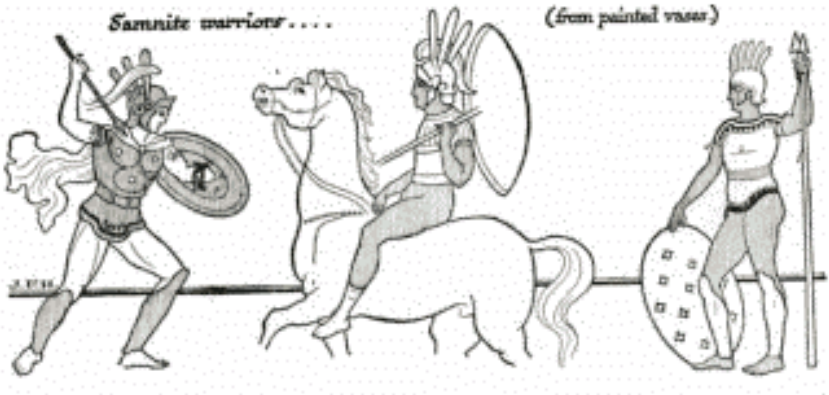

The reader will remember that Epirus, the part of Greece that is

closest to the heel of Italy, was the native land of Olympias, the mother of Alexander. In the kaleidoscopic changes of the map that followed the death of Alexander, Epirus was sometimes swamped by Macedonia, sometimes independent. This Pyrrhus was a kinsman of Alexander the Great, and a monarch of ability and enterprise, and he seems to have planned a career of conquest in Italy and Sicily. He commanded an admirable army, against which the comparatively inexpert Roman levies could at first do little. His army included all the established military devices of the time, an infantry phalanx, Thessalian cavalry and twenty fighting elephants from the east. He routed the Romans at Heraclea (280 B.C.), and, pressing after them, defeated them again at Ausculum (279 B.C.) in their own territory. Then, instead of pursuing the Romans further, he made a truce with them, turned his attention to the subjugation of Sicily, and so brought the sea power of Carthage into alliance against him. For Carthage could not afford to have a strong power established so close to her as Sicily. Rome in those days seemed to the Carthaginians a far less serious threat than the possibility of another Alexander the Great ruling Sicily. A Carthaginian fleet appeared off the mouth of the Tiber, therefore, to encourage or induce the Romans to renew the struggle, and Rome and Carthage were definitely allied against the invader.

This interposition of Carthage was fatal to Pyrrhus. Without any decisive battle his power wilted, and, after a disastrous repulse in an attack upon the Roman camp of Beneventum, he had to retire to Epirus (275 B.C.).

It is recorded that when Pyrrhus left Sicily, he said he left it to be the battleground of Rome and Carthage. He was killed three years later in a battle in the streets of Argos. The war against Pyrrhus was won by the Carthaginian fleet, and Rome reaped a full half of the harvest of victory. Sicily fell completely to Carthage, and Rome came down to the toe and heel of Italy, and looked across the Straits of Messina at her new rival. In eleven years' time (264 B.C.) the prophecy of Pyrrhus was fulfilled, and the first war with Carthage, the first of the three Punic Wars, had begun.

§ 2

But we write “Rome” and the “Romans,” and we have still to explain what manner of people these were who were playing a rôle of conquest that had hitherto been played only by able and aggressive monarchs.

Their state was, in the fifth century B.C., a republic of the Aryan type very similar to a Greek aristocratic republic. The earliest accounts of the social life of Rome give us a picture of a very primitive Aryan community. “In the second half of the fifth century before Christ, Rome was still an aristocratic community of free peasants, occupying an area of nearly 400 square miles, with a population certainly not exceeding 150,000, almost entirely dispersed over the country-side and divided into seventeen districts or rural tribes. Most of the families had a small holding and a cottage of their own, where father and sons lived and worked together, growing corn for the most part, with here and there a strip of vine or olive. Their few head of cattle were kept at pasture on the neighbouring common land; their clothes and simple implements of husbandry they made for themselves at home. Only at rare intervals and on special occasions would they make their way into the fortified town, which was the centre at once of their religion and their government. Here were the temples of the gods, the houses of the wealthy, and the shops of the artizans and traders, where corn, oil, or wine could be bartered in small quantities for salt or rough tools and weapons of iron.”

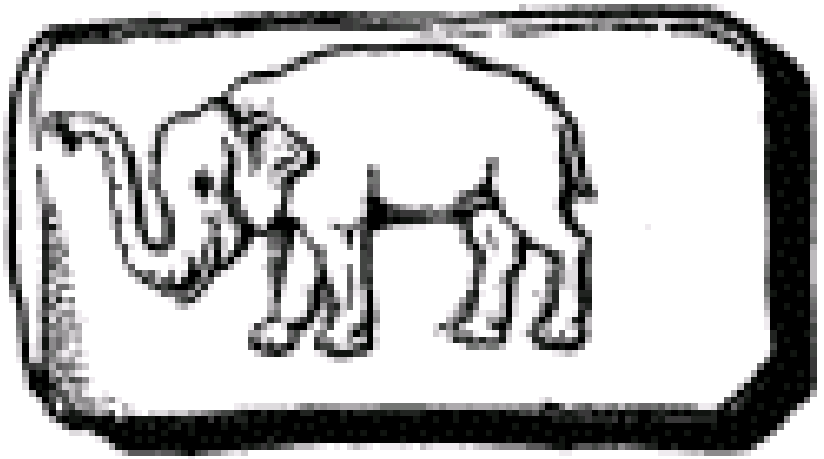

Roman Coin Struck to Commemorate the Victory over Pyrrhus and His Elephants.

This community followed the usual tradition of a division into aristocratic and common citizens, who were called in Rome patricians and plebeians. These were the citizens; the slave or outlander had no more part in the state than he had in Greece. But the constitution differed from any Greek constitution in the fact that a great part of the ruling power was gathered into the hands of a body called the Senate, which was neither purely a body of hereditary members nor directly an elected and representative one. It was a nominated one, and in the earlier period it was nominated solely from among the patricians. It existed before the expulsion of the kings, and in the time of the kings it was the king who nominated the senators. But after the expulsion of the kings (510 B.C.), the supreme government was vested in the hands of two elected rulers, the *consuls*; and it was the consuls who took over the business of appointing senators. In the early days of the Republic only patricians were eligible as consuls or senators, and the share of the plebeians in the government consisted merely in a right to vote for the *consuls* and other public officials. Even for that purpose their votes did not have the same value as those of their patrician fellow citizens. But their votes had at any rate sufficient weight to induce many of the patrician candidates to profess a more or less sincere concern for plebeian grievances. In the early phases of the Roman state,

moreover, the plebeians were not only excluded from public office, but from intermarriage with the patrician class. The administration was evidently primarily a patrician affair.

The early phase of Roman affairs was therefore an aristocracy of a very pronounced type, and the internal history of Rome for the two centuries and a half between the expulsion of the last Etruscan king, Tarquin the Proud, and the beginning of the first Punic War (264 B.C.), was very largely a struggle for mastery between those two orders, the patricians and the plebeians. It was, in fact, closely parallel with the struggle of aristocracy and democracy in the city states of Greece, and, as in the case of Greece, there were whole classes in the community, slaves, freed slaves, unpropertied free men, outlanders, and the like, who were entirely outside and beneath the struggle. We have already noted the essential difference of Greek democracy and what is called democracy in the world to-day. Another misused word is the Roman term *proletariat*, which in modern jargon means all the unpropertied people in a modern state. In Rome the *proletarii* were a voting division of fully qualified citizens whose property was less than 10,000 copper asses (= £275). They were an enrolled class; their value to the state consisted in their raising families of citizens (proles = offspring), and from their ranks were drawn the colonists who went to form new Latin cities or to garrison important points. But the proletarii were quite distinct in origin from slaves or freedmen or the miscellaneous driftage of a town slum, and it is a great pity that modern political discussion should be confused by an inaccurate use of a term which has no exact modern equivalent and which expresses nothing real in modern social classification.

The mass of the details of this struggle between patricians and plebeians we can afford to ignore in this outline. It was a struggle which showed the Romans to be a people of a curiously shrewd character, never forcing things to a destructive crisis, but being within the limits of their discretion grasping hard dealers. The patricians made a mean use of their political advantages to grow rich through the national conquests at the expense not only of the defeated enemy, but of the poorer plebeian, whose farm had been neglected and who had fallen into debt during his military service.

The plebeians were ousted from any share in the conquered lands, which the patricians divided up among themselves. The introduction of money probably increased the facilities of the usurer and the difficulties of the borrowing debtor.

Three sorts of pressure won the plebeians a greater share in the government of the country and the good things that were coming to Rome as she grew powerful. The first of these (1) was the general strike of plebeians; the plebeians seem to have invented the strike, which now makes its first appearance in history. Twice they actually marched right out of Rome, threatening to make a new city higher up the Tiber, and twice this threat proved conclusive. The second method of pressure (2) was the threat of a tyranny. Just as in Attica (the little state of which Athens was the capital), Peisistratus raised himself to power on the support of the poorer districts, so there was to be found in most periods of plebeian discontent some ambitious man ready to figure as a leader and wrest power from the senate. For a long time the Roman patricians were clever enough to beat every such potential tyrant by giving in to a certain extent to the plebeians. And finally (3) there were patricians big-minded and far-seeing enough to insist upon the need of reconciliation with the plebeians.

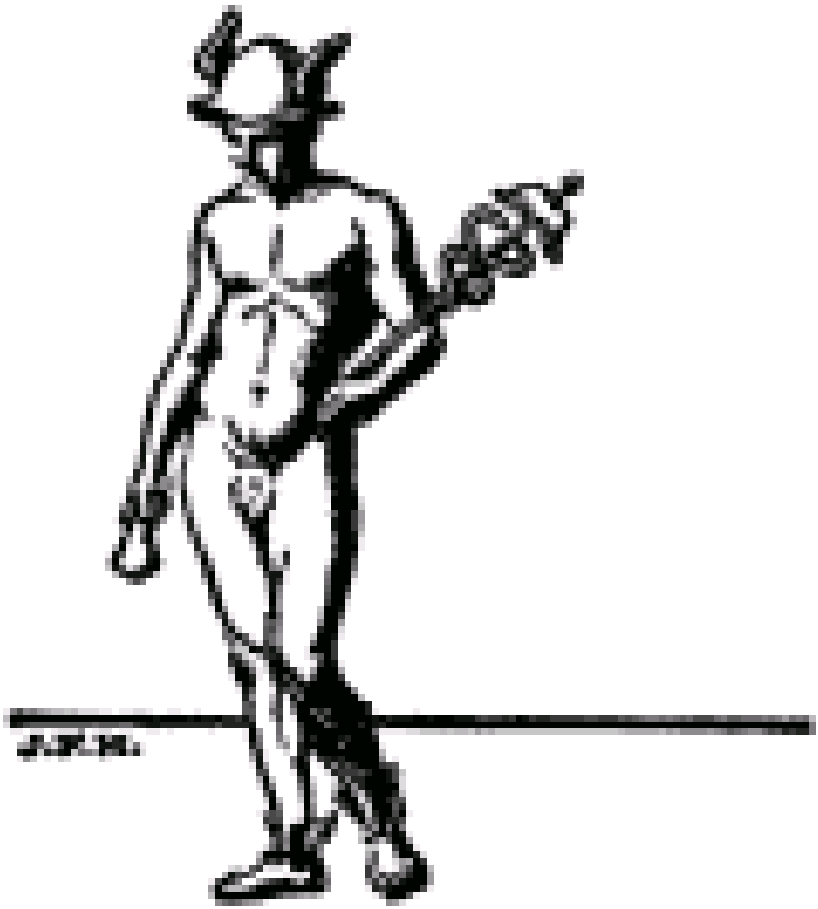

Thus in 509 B.C., Valerius Poplicola (3), the consul, enacted that whenever the life or rights of any citizen were at stake, there should be an appeal from the magistrates to the general assembly. This Lex Valeria was "the Habeas Corpus of Rome," and it freed the Roman plebeians from the worst dangers of class vindictiveness in the law courts.

In 494 B.C. occurred the first strike (1). "After the Latin war the pressure of debt had become excessive, and the plebeians saw with indignation their friends, who had often served the state bravely in the legions, thrown into chains and reduced to slavery at the demand

of patrician creditors. War was raging against the Volscians; but the legionaries, on their victorious return, refused any longer to obey the consuls, and marched, though without any disorder, to the Sacred Mount beyond the Anio (up the Tiber). There they prepared to found a new city, since the rights of citizens were denied to them in the old one. The patricians were compelled to give way, and the plebeians, returning to Rome from the "First Secession," received the privilege of having officers of their own, tribunes and ædiles."

In 486 B.C. arose Spurius Cassius (2), a consul who carried an Agrarian Law securing public land for the plebeians. But the next year he was accused of aiming at royal power, and condemned to death. His law never came into operation.

There followed a long struggle on the part of the plebeians to have the laws of Rome written down, so that they would no longer have to trust to patrician memories. In 451-450 B.C. the law of the Twelve Tables was published, the basis of all Roman law.

But in order that the Twelve Tables should be formulated, a committee of ten (the *decemvirate*) was appointed in the place of the ordinary magistrates. A second decemvirate, appointed in succession to the first, attempted a sort of aristocratic counter-revolution under Appius Claudius. The plebeians withdrew again a second time to the Sacred Mount, and Appius Claudius committed suicide in prison.

In 440 came a famine, and a second attempt to found a popular tyranny upon the popular wrongs, by Spurius Mælius, a wealthy plebeian, which ended in his assassination.

After the sack of Rome by the Gauls (390 B.C.), Marcus Manlius, who had been in command of the Capitol when the geese had saved it, came forward as a popular leader. The plebeians were suffering severely from the after-war usury and profiteering of the patricians, and were incurring heavy debts in rebuilding and restocking their farms. Manlius spent his fortune in releasing debtors. He was accused by the patricians of tyrannous intentions, condemned, and suffered the fate of condemned traitors in Rome, being flung from the Tarpeian Rock, the precipitous edge of that same Capitoline Hill he had defended.

In 376 B.C., Licinius, who was one of the ten tribunes for the people, began a long struggle with the patricians by making certain

proposals called the Licinian Rogations, that there should be a limit to the amount of public land taken by any single citizen, so leaving some for everybody, that outstanding debts should be forgiven without interest upon the repayment of the principal, and that henceforth one at least of the two consuls should be a plebeian. This precipitated a ten-year struggle. The plebeian power to stop business by the veto of their representatives, the tribunes, was fully exercised. In cases of national extremity it was the custom to set all other magistrates aside and appoint one leader, the Dictator. Rome had done such a thing during times of military necessity before, but now the patricians set up a Dictator in a time of profound peace, with the idea of crushing Licinius altogether. They appointed Camillus, who had besieged and taken Veii from the Etruscans. But Camillus was a wiser man than his supporters; he brought about a compromise between the two orders in which most of the demands of the plebeians were conceded (366 B.C.), dedicated a temple to Concord, and resigned his power.

Thereafter the struggle between the orders abated. It abated because, among other influences, the social differences between patricians and plebeians were diminishing. Trade was coming to Rome with increasing political power, and many plebeians were growing rich and many patricians becoming relatively poor. Intermarriage had been rendered possible by a change in the law, and social intermixture was going on. While the rich plebeians were becoming, if not aristocratic, at least oligarchic in habits and sympathy, new classes were springing up in Rome with fresh interests and no political standing. Particularly abundant were the freedmen, slaves set free, for the most part artisans, but some of them traders, who were growing wealthy. And the Senate, no longer a purely patrician body — since various official positions were now open to plebeians, and such plebeian officials became senators — was becoming now an assembly of all the wealthy, able, energetic, and influential men in the state. The Roman power was expanding, and as it expanded these old class oppositions of the early Latin community were becoming unmeaning. They were being replaced by new associations and new antagonisms. Rich men of all origins were being drawn together into a common interest against the

communistic ideas of the poor.

In 390 B.C. Rome was a miserable little city on the borders of Etruria, being sacked by the Gauls; in 275 B.C. she was ruling and unifying all Italy, from the Arno to the Straits of Messina. The compromise of Camillus (367 B.C.) had put an end to internal dissensions, and left her energies free for expansion. And the same queer combination of sagacity and aggressive selfishness that had distinguished the war of her orders at home and enabled her population to worry out a balance of power without any catastrophe, marks her policy abroad. She understood the value of allies; she could assimilate; abroad as at home she could in those days at least "give and take" with a certain fairness and sanity. There lay the peculiar power of Rome. By that it was she succeeded where Athens, for example, had conspicuously failed.

The Athenian democracy suffered much from that narrowness of "patriotism" which is the ruin of all nations. "Athens for the Athenians" was the guiding principle of her rule, and "tax the foreigner" her substitute for political wisdom. Even Pericles used the funds of the allies to beautify the capital city. So Athens was disliked and envied by her own empire; her disasters were not felt and shared as disasters by her subject-cities. The shrewder, nobler Roman senators of the great years of Rome, before the first Punic War overstrained her moral strength and began her degeneration, were not only willing in the last resort to share their privileges with the mass of their own people, but eager to incorporate their sturdiest antagonists upon terms of equality with themselves. They extended their citizenship cautiously but steadily. Some cities became Roman, with even a voting share in the government. Others had self-government and the right to trade or marry in Rome, without full Roman citizenship. Garrisons of full citizens were set up at strategic points, and colonies with variable privileges established amidst the purely conquered peoples. The need to keep communications open in this great and growing mass of citizenship was evident from the first. Printing and paper were not yet available for intercourse, but a system of high roads followed the Latin speech and the Roman rule. The first of these, the Appian Way, ran from Rome ultimately into the heel of Italy. It was begun by the censor Appius Claudius (who

must not be confused with the decemvir Appius Claudius of a century earlier) in 312 B.C.

According to a census made in 265 B.C., there were already in the Roman dominions, that is to say in Italy south of the Arno, 300,000 citizens. They all had a common interest in the welfare of the state; they were all touched a little with the diffused kingship of the republic. This was, we have to note, an absolutely new thing in the history of mankind. All considerable states and kingdoms and empires hitherto had been communities by mere obedience to some head, some monarch, upon whose moods and character the public welfare was helplessly dependent. No republic had hitherto succeeded in being anything more than a city state. The so-called Athenian "empire" was simply a city state directing its allies and its subjugated cities. In a few decades the Roman republic was destined to extend its citizenship into the valley of the Po, to assimilate the kindred Gauls, replacing their language by Latin, and to set up a Latin city, Aquileia, at the very head of the Adriatic Sea. In 89 B.C. all free inhabitants of Italy became Roman citizens; in 212 A.D. the citizenship was extended to all free men in the empire.

This extraordinary political growth was manifestly the precursor of all modern states of the western type. It is as interesting to the political student, therefore, as a carboniferous amphibian or an *archæopteryx* to the student of zoological development. It is the primitive type of the now dominant order. Its experiences throw light upon all subsequent political history.

One natural result of this growth of a democracy of hundreds of thousands of citizens scattered over the greater part of Italy was the growth in power of the Senate. There had been in the development of the Roman constitution a variety of forms of the popular assembly, the plebeian assembly, the assembly by tribes, the assembly by centuries, and the like, into which variety we cannot enter here with any fullness; but the idea was established that with the popular assembly lay the power of initiating laws. It is to be noted that there was a sort of parallel government in this system. The assembly by tribes or by centuries was an assembly of the *whole citizen body*, patrician and plebeian together; the assembly of the plebeians was of

course an assembly only of the plebeian class. Each assembly had its own officials; the former, the consuls, etc.; the latter, the tribunes. While Rome was a little state, twenty miles square, it was possible to assemble something like a representative gathering of the people, but it will be manifest that with the means of communication existing in Italy at that time, it was now impossible for the great bulk of the citizens even to keep themselves informed of what was going on at Rome, much less to take any effective part in political life there. Aristotle in his *Politics* had already pointed out the virtual disenfranchisement of voters who lived out of the city and were preoccupied with agricultural pursuits, and this sort of disenfranchisement by mechanical difficulties applied to the vast majority of Roman citizens. With the growth of Rome an unanticipated weakness crept into political life through these causes, and the popular assembly became more and more a gathering of political hacks and the city riffraff, and less and less a representation of the ordinary worthy citizens. The popular assembly came nearest to power and dignity in the fourth century B.C. From that period it steadily declined in influence, and the new Senate, which was no longer a patrician body, with a homogeneous and on the whole a noble tradition, but a body of rich men, ex-magistrates, powerful officials, bold adventurers, and the like, pervaded by a strong disposition to return to the idea of hereditary qualification, became for three centuries the ruling power in the Roman world.

There are two devices since known to the world which might have enabled the popular government of Rome to go on developing beyond its climax in the days of Appius Claudius the Censor, at the close of the fourth century B.C., but neither of them occurred to the Roman mind. The first of these devices was a proper use of print. In our account of early Alexandria we have already remarked upon the strange fact that printed books did not come into the world in the fourth or third century B.C. This account of Roman affairs forces us to repeat that remark. To the modern mind it is clear that a widespread popular government demands, as a necessary condition for health, a steady supply of correct information upon public affairs to all the citizens and a maintenance of interest. The popular governments in the modern states that have sprung up on either side

of the Atlantic during the last two centuries have been possible only through the more or less honest and thorough ventilation of public affairs through the press. But in Italy the only way in which the government at Rome could communicate with any body of its citizens elsewhere was by the antiquated device of sending a herald, and with the individual citizen it could hold no communication by any means at all.

The second device, for which the English are chiefly responsible in the history of mankind, which the Romans never used, was the almost equally obvious one of representative government. For the old Popular Assembly (in its threefold form) it would have been possible to have substituted a gathering of delegates. Later on in history, the English did, as the state grew, realize this necessity. Certain men, the Knights of the Shire, were called up to Westminster to speak and vote for local feeling, and were more or less formally elected for that end. The Roman situation seems to a modern mind to have called aloud for such a modification. It was never made.

The method of assembling the *comitia tributa* (one of the three main forms of the Popular Assembly) was by the proclamation of a herald, who was necessarily inaudible to most of Italy, seventeen days before the date of the gathering. The augurs, the priests of divination whom Rome had inherited from the Etruscans, examined the entrails of sacrificial beasts on the night before the actual assembly, and if they thought fit to say that these gory portents were unfavourable, the *comitia tributa* dispersed. But if the augurs reported that the livers were propitious, there was a great blowing of horns from the Capitol and from the walls of the city, and the assembly went on. It was held in the open air, either in the little Forum beneath the Capitol or in a still smaller recess opening out of the Forum, or in the military exercising ground, the Campus Martius, now the most crowded part of modern Rome, but then an open space. Business began at dawn with prayer. There were no seats, and this probably helped to reconcile the citizen to the rule that everything ended at sunset.

After the opening prayer came a discussion of the measures to be considered by the assembly, and the proposals before the meeting were read out. Is it not astonishing that there were no printed copies

distributed? If any copies were handed about, they must have been in manuscript, and each copy must have been liable to errors and deliberate falsification. No questions seem to have been allowed, but private individuals might address the gathering with the permission of the presiding magistrate.

The multitude then proceeded to go into enclosures like cattle-pens according to their tribes, and each tribe voted upon the measure under consideration. The decision was then taken not by the majority of the citizens, but by the majority of tribes, and it was announced by the heralds.

The Popular Assembly by centuries, *comitia centuriata*, was very similar in its character, except that instead of thirty-five tribes there were, in the third century B.C., 373 centuries, and there was a sacrifice as well as prayer to begin with. The centuries, originally military (like the "hundreds" of primitive English local government), had long since lost any connection with the number one hundred. Some contained only a few people; some very many. There were eighteen centuries of knights (equites), who were originally men in a position to maintain a horse and serve in the cavalry, though later the Roman knighthood, like knighthood in England, became a vulgar distinction of no military, mental, or moral significance. (These equites became a very important class as Rome traded and grew rich; for a time they were the real moving class in the community. There was as little chivalry left among them at last as there is in the "honours list" knights of England of to-day. The senators from about 200 B.C. were excluded from trade. The equites became, therefore, the great business men, *negotiatores*, and as *publicani* they farmed the taxes.) There were, in addition, eighty (!) centuries of wealthy men (worth over 100,000 asses), twenty-two of men worth over 75,000 asses, and so on. There were two centuries each of mechanics and musicians, and the *proletarii* made up one century. The decision in the *comitia centuriata* was by the majority of centuries.

Is it any wonder that with the growth of the Roman state and the complication of its business, power shifted back from such a Popular Assembly to the Senate, which was a comparatively compact body varying between three hundred as a minimum, and, at the utmost, nine hundred members (to which it was raised by Cæsar), men who

had to do with affairs and big business, who knew each other more or less, and had a tradition of government and policy? The power of nominating and calling up the senators vested in the Republic first with the consuls, and when, some time after, "censors" were created, and many of the powers of the consuls had been transferred to them, they were also given this power. Appius Claudius, one of the first of the censors to exercise it, enrolled freedmen in the tribes and called sons of freedmen to the Senate. But this was a shocking arrangement to the conservative instincts of the time; the consuls would not recognize his Senate, and the next censors (304 B.C.) set aside his invitations. His attempt, however, serves to show how far the Senate had progressed from its original condition as a purely patrician body. Like the contemporary British House of Lords, it had become a gathering of big business men, energetic politicians, successful adventurers, great landowners, and the like; its patrician dignity was a picturesque sham; but, unlike the British House of Lords, it was unchecked legally by anything but the inefficient Popular Assembly we have already described, and by the tribunes elected by the plebeian assembly. Its legal control over the consuls and proconsuls was not great; it had little executive power; but in its prestige and experience lay its strength and influence. The interests of its members were naturally antagonistic to the interests of the general body of citizens, but for some generations that great mass of ordinary men was impotent to express its dissent from the proceedings of this oligarchy. Direct popular government of a state larger than a city state had already failed therefore in Italy, because as yet there was no public education, no press, and no representative system; it had failed through these mere mechanical difficulties, before the first Punic War. But its appearance is of enormous interest, as the first appearance of a set of problems with which the whole political intelligence of the world wrestles at the present time.

The Senate met usually in a Senate House in the Forum, but on special occasions it would be called to meet in this or that temple; and when it had to deal with foreign ambassadors or its own generals (who were not allowed to enter the city while in command of the troops), it assembled in the Campus Martius outside the walls.

§ 3

It has been necessary to deal rather fully with the political structure of the Roman republic because of its immense importance to this day. The constitution of Carthage need not detain us long.

Italy under Rome was a republican country; Carthage was that much older thing, a republican city. She had an "empire," as Athens had an "empire," of tributary states which did not love her, and she had a great and naturally disloyal industrial slave population.

In the city there were two elected "kings," as Aristotle calls them, the *suffetes*, who were really equivalent to the Roman censors; their Semitic name was the same as that used for the Jewish *judges*. There was an impotent public assembly and a senate of leading personages; but two committees of this senate, nominally elected, but elected by easily controlled methods, the Hundred and Four and the Thirty, really constituted a close oligarchy of the richest and most influential men. They told as little as they could to their allies and fellow citizens, and consulted them as little as possible. They pursued schemes in which the welfare of Carthage was no doubt subordinated to the advantage of their own group. They were hostile to new men or novel measures, and confident that a sea ascendancy that had lasted two centuries must be in the very nature of things.

§ 4

It would be interesting, and not altogether idle, to speculate what might have happened to mankind if Rome and Carthage could have settled their differences and made a permanent alliance in the Western world. If Alexander the Great had lived, he might have come westward and driven these two powers into such a fusion of interests. But that would not have suited the private schemes and splendours of the Carthaginian oligarchy, and the new Senate of greater Rome was now growing fond of the taste of plunder and casting covetous eyes across the Straits of Messina upon the Carthaginian possessions in Sicily. They were covetous, but they were afraid of the Carthaginian sea-power. Roman popular "patriotism," however, was also jealous and fearful of these

Carthaginians, and less inclined to count the cost of a conflict. The alliance Pyrrhus had forced upon Rome and Carthage held good for eleven years, but Rome was ripe for what is called in modern political jargon an “offensive defensive” war. The occasion arose in 264 B.C.

At that time Sicily was not completely in Carthaginian hands. The eastward end was still under the power of the Greek king of Syracuse, Hiero, a successor of that Dionysius to whom Plato had gone as resident court philosopher. A band of mercenaries who had been in the service of Syracuse seized upon Messina (289 B.C.), and raided the trade of Syracuse so that at last Hiero was forced to take measures to suppress them (270 B.C.). Thereupon Carthage, which was also vitally concerned in the suppression of piracy, came to his aid, and put in a Carthaginian garrison at Messina. This was an altogether justifiable proceeding. Now that Tyre had been destroyed, the only capable guardian of sea law in the Mediterranean was Carthage, and the suppression of piracy was her task by habit and tradition.

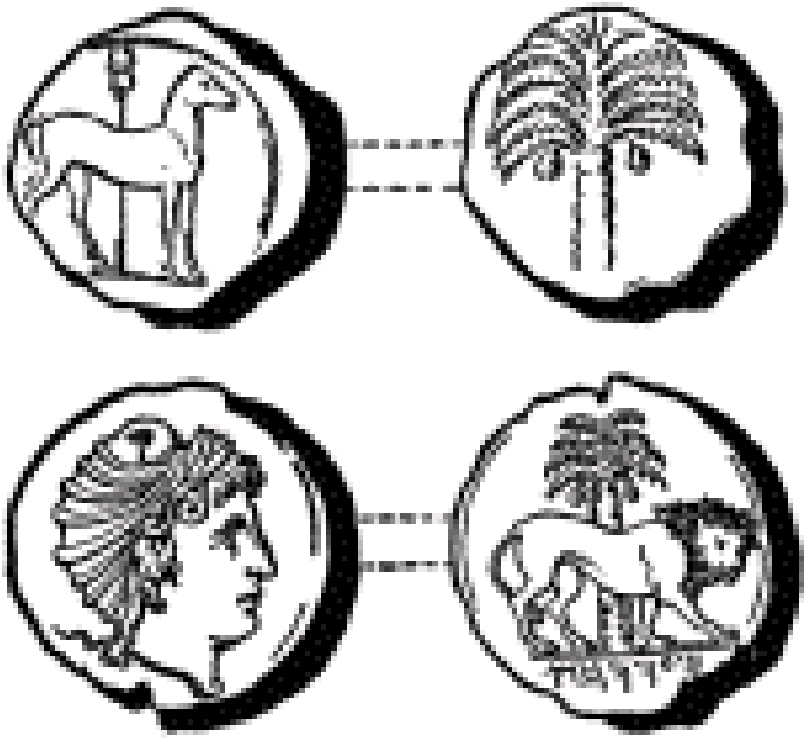

Carthaginian coins.

The pirates of Messina appealed to Rome, and the accumulating jealousy and fear of Carthage decided the Roman people to help them. An expedition was dispatched to Messina under the consul Appius Claudius (the third Appius Claudius we have had to mention in this history).

So began the first of the most wasteful and disastrous series of wars that has ever darkened the history of mankind. But this is how one historian, soaked with the fantastic political ideas of our times, is pleased to write of this evil expedition. “The Romans knew they were entering on war with Carthage; but the political instincts of the people were right, for a Carthaginian garrison on the Sicilian Straits would have been a dangerous menace to the peace of Italy.” So they protected the peace of Italy from this “menace” by a war that lasted nearly a quarter of a century. They wrecked their own slowly acquired political *moral* in the process.

The Romans captured Messina, and Hiero deserted from the Carthaginians to the Romans. Then for some time the struggle centred upon the town Agrigentum. This the Romans besieged, and a period of trench warfare ensued. Both sides suffered greatly from plague and irregular supplies; the Romans lost 30,000 men; but in the end (261 B.C.) the Carthaginians evacuated the place and retired to their fortified towns on the western coast of the island of which Lilybæum was the chief. These they could supply easily from the African mainland, and, as long as their sea ascendancy held, they could exhaust any Roman effort against them.

And now a new and very extraordinary phase of the war began. The Romans came out upon the sea, and to the astonishment of the Carthaginians and themselves defeated the Carthaginian fleet. Since the days of Salamis there had been a considerable development of naval architecture. Then the ruling type of battleship was a trireme, a galley with three banks (rows) of oars; now the leading Carthaginian battleship was a quinquereme, a much bigger galley with five banks of oars, which could ram or shear the oars of any feebler vessel. The Romans had come into the war with no such shipping. Now they set to work to build quinqueremes, being helped, it is said, in their designing by one of these Carthaginian vessels coming ashore. In two months they built a hundred quinqueremes and thirty triremes. But they had no skilled navigators, no experienced oarsmen, and these deficiencies they remedied partly with the assistance of their Greek allies and partly by the invention of new tactics. Instead of relying upon ramming or breaking the oars of the adversary, which demanded more seamanship than they possessed, they decided to board the enemy, and they constructed a sort of long drawbridge on their ships, held up to a mast by a pulley and with grappling-hooks and spikes at the end. They also loaded their galleys with soldiers. Then as the Carthaginian rammed or swept alongside, this *corvus*, as it was called, could be let down and the boarders could swarm aboard him.

Simple as this device was, it proved a complete success. It changed the course of the war and the fate of the world. The small amount of invention needed to counteract the *corvus* was not apparently within the compass of the Carthaginian rulers. At the

battle of Mylæ (260 B.C.) the Romans gained their first naval victory and captured or destroyed fifty vessels. At the great battle of Ecnomus (256 B.C.), "probably the greatest naval engagement of antiquity," in which seven or eight hundred big ships were engaged, the Carthaginians showed that they had learnt nothing from their former disaster. According to rule they out-manœuvred and defeated the Romans, but the *corvus* again defeated them. The Romans sank thirty vessels and captured sixty-four.

Thereafter the war continued with violent fluctuations of fortune, but with a continuous demonstration of the greater energy, solidarity, and initiative of the Romans. After Ecnomus the Romans invaded Africa by sea, and sent an insufficiently supported army, which after many successes and the capture of Tunis (within ten miles of Carthage) was completely defeated. They lost their sea ascendancy through a storm, and regained it by building a second fleet of two hundred and twenty ships within three months. They captured Palermo, and defeated a great Carthaginian army there (251 B.C.), capturing one hundred and four elephants, and making such a triumphal procession into Rome as that city had never seen before. They made an unsuccessful siege of Lilybæum, the chief surviving Carthaginian stronghold in Sicily. They lost their second fleet in a great naval battle at Drepanum (249 B.C.), losing one hundred and eighty out of two hundred and ten vessels; and a third fleet of one hundred and twenty battleships and eight hundred transports was lost in the same year partly in battle and partly in a storm.

For seven years a sort of war went on between the nearly exhausted combatants, a war of raids and feeble sieges, during which the Carthaginians had the best of it at sea. Then by a last supreme effort Rome launched a fourth fleet of two hundred keels, and defeated the last strength of the Carthaginians at the battle of the Ægatian Isles (241 B.C.), after which Carthage (240 B.C.) sued for peace.

By the terms of this peace, all Sicily, except for the dominions of Hiero of Syracuse, became an "estate" of the Roman people. There was no such process of assimilation as had been practised in Italy; Sicily became a conquered province, paying tribute and yielding profit like the provinces of the older empires. And, in addition,

Carthage paid a war indemnity of 3200 talents (£788,000).

§ 5

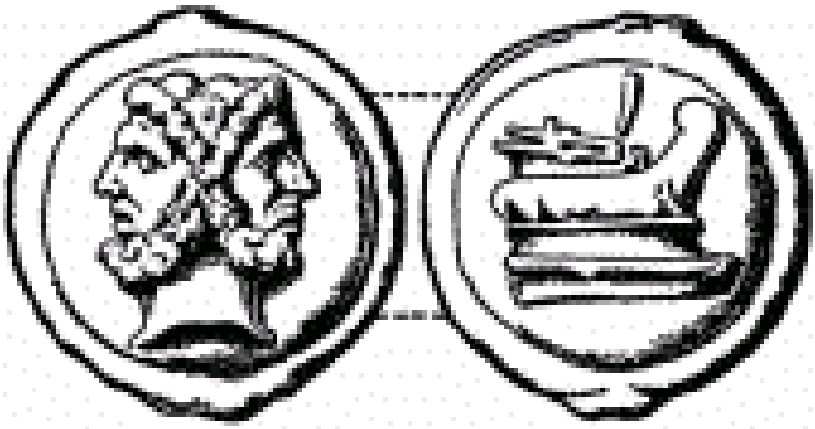

Roman As (bronze, 4th Cent. B.C. Half size.)

For twenty-two years there was peace between Rome and Carthage. It was peace without prosperity. Both combatants were suffering from the want and disorganization that follow naturally and necessarily upon all great wars. The territories of Carthage seethed with violent disorder; the returning soldiers could not get their pay, and mutinied and looted; the land went uncultivated. We read of horrible cruelties in the suppression of these troubles by Hamilcar, the Carthaginian general; of men being crucified by the thousand. Sardinia and Corsica revolted. The "peace of Italy" was scarcely happier. The Gauls rose and marched south; they were defeated, and 40,000 of them killed at Telamon. It is manifest that Italy was incomplete until it reached the Alps. Roman colonies were planted in the valley of the Po, and the great northward artery, the Via Flaminia, was begun. But it shows the moral and intellectual degradation of this post-war period that when the Gauls were threatening Rome, human sacrifices were proposed and carried out. The old Carthaginian sea law was broken up — it may have been selfish and monopolistic, but it was at least orderly — the Adriatic swarmed with Illyrian pirates, and as the result of a quarrel arising out of this state of affairs, Illyria, after two wars, had to be annexed as a second

"province." By sending expeditions to annex Sardinia and Corsica, which were Carthaginian provinces in revolt, the Romans prepared the way for the Second Punic War.

The First Punic War had tested and demonstrated the relative strength of Rome and Carthage. With a little more wisdom on either side, with a little more magnanimity on the part of Rome, there need never have been a renewal of the struggle. But Rome was an ungracious conqueror. She seized Corsica and Sardinia on no just grounds, she increased the indemnity by 1200 talents, she set a limit, the Ebro, to Carthaginian developments in Spain. There was a strong party in Carthage, led by Hanno, for the propitiation of Rome; but it was natural that many Carthaginians should come to regard their national adversary with a despairing hatred.

So began that age-long hostility between the lands north and south of the Mediterranean which lasts down to our own day, the conflict of the Semiticized Berber and the Aryanized south European, in spite of the fact that these two divisions of Mediterranean man have so much physically in common. Henceforth they took different sides in religion, in language, in costume, and culture.

Hatred is one of the passions that can master a life, and there is a type of temperament very prone to it, ready to see life in terms of vindictive melodrama, ready to find stimulus and satisfaction in frightful demonstrations of "justice" and revenge. The fears and jealousies of the squatting-place and the cave still bear their dark blossoms in our lives; we are not four hundred generations yet from the old Stone Age. Great wars, as all Europe knows, give this "hating" temperament the utmost scope, and the greed and pride and cruelty that the First Punic War had released were now producing a rich crop of anti-foreign monomania. The outstanding figure upon the side of Carthage was a great general and administrator, Hamilcar Barca, who now set himself to circumvent and shatter Rome. He was the father-in-law of Hasdrubal and the father of a boy Hannibal, destined to be the most dreaded enemy that ever scared the Roman Senate. The most obvious course before Carthage was the reconstruction of its fleet and naval administration, and the recovery of sea power, but this, it would seem, Hamilcar could not effect. As an alternative he resolved to organize Spain as the base of a land

attack upon Italy. He went to Spain as governor in 236 B.C., and Hannibal related afterwards that his father then — he was a boy of eleven — made him vow deathless hostility to the Roman power.

This quasi-insane concentration of the gifts and lives of the Barca family upon revenge is but one instance of the narrowing and embitterment of life that the stresses and universal sense of insecurity of this great struggle produced in the minds of men. A quarter of a century of war had left the whole western world miserable and harsh. While the eleven-year-old Hannibal was taking his vow of undying hatred, there was running about a farmhouse of Tusculum a small but probably very disagreeable child of two named Marcus Porcius Cato. This boy lived to be eighty-five years old, and his ruling passion seems to have been hatred for any human happiness but his own. He was a good soldier, and had a successful political career. He held a command in Spain, and distinguished himself by his cruelties. He posed as a champion of religion and public morality, and under this convenient cloak carried on a lifelong war against everything that was young, gracious, or pleasant. Whoever roused his jealousy incurred his moral disapproval. He was energetic in the support and administration of all laws against dress, against the personal adornment of women, against entertainments and free discussion. He was so fortunate as to be made censor, which gave him great power over the private lives of public people. He was thus able to ruin public opponents through private scandals. He expelled Manlius from the Senate for giving his wife a kiss in the daytime in the sight of their daughter. He persecuted Greek literature, about which, until late in life, he was totally ignorant. Then he read and admired Demosthenes. He wrote in Latin upon agriculture and the ancient and lost virtues of Rome. From these writings much light is thrown upon his qualities. One of his maxims was that when a slave was not sleeping he should be working. Another was that old oxen and slaves should be sold off. He left the war horse that had carried him through his Spanish campaigns behind him when he returned to Italy in order to save freight. He hated other people's gardens, and cut off the supply of water for garden use in Rome. After entertaining company, when dinner was over he would go out to correct any negligence in the service with a leather thong. He admired his own virtues very

greatly, and insisted upon them in his writings. There was a battle at Thermopylæ against Antiochus the Great, of which he wrote, "those who saw him charging the enemy, routing and pursuing them, declared that Cato owed less to the people of Rome, than the people of Rome owed to Cato." In his old age Cato became lascivious and misconducted himself with a woman slave. Finally, when his son protested against this disorder of their joint household, he married a young wife, the daughter of his secretary, who was not in a position to refuse his offer. (What became of the woman slave is not told. Probably he sold her.) This compendium of all the old Roman virtues died at an advanced age, respected and feared. Almost his last public act was to urge on the Third Punic War and the final destruction of Carthage. He had gone to Carthage as a commissioner to settle certain differences between Carthage and Numidia, and he had been shocked and horrified to find some evidences of prosperity and even of happiness in that country.

From the time of that visit onward Cato concluded every speech he made in the Senate by croaking out "*Delenda est Carthago*" ("Carthage must be destroyed").

Such was the type of man that rose to prominence in Rome during the Punic struggle, such was the protagonist of Hannibal and the Carthaginian *revanche*, and by him and by Hannibal we may judge the tone and quality of the age.

The two great western powers, and Rome perhaps more than Carthage, were strained mentally and morally by the stresses of the First War. The evil side of life was uppermost. The history of the Second and Third Punic Wars (219 to 201 and 149 to 146 B.C.), it is plain, is not the history of perfectly sane peoples. It is nonsense for historians to write of the "political instincts" of the Romans or Carthaginians. Quite other instincts were loose. The red eyes of the ancestral ape had come back into the world. It was a time when reasonable men were howled down or murdered; the true spirit of the age is shown in the eager examination for signs and portents of the still quivering livers of those human victims who were sacrificed in Rome during the panic before the battle of Telamon. The western world was indeed black with homicidal monomania. Two great peoples, both very necessary to the world's development, fell foul of

one another, and at last Rome succeeded in murdering Carthage.

§ 6

We can only tell very briefly here of the particulars of the Second and Third Punic Wars. We have told how Hamilcar began to organize Spain, and how the Romans forbade him to cross the Ebro. He died in 228 B.C., and was followed by his son-in-law Hasdrubal, who was assassinated in 221 B.C., and succeeded by Hannibal, who was now twenty-six. The actual war was precipitated by the Romans making a breach of their own regulations, and interfering with affairs south of the Ebro. Whereupon Hannibal marched straight through the south of Gaul, and crossed the Alps (218 B.C.) into Italy.

The history of the next fifteen years is the story of the most brilliant and futile raid in history. For fifteen years Hannibal held out in Italy, victorious and unconquered. The Roman generals were no match for the Carthaginian, and whenever they met him they were beaten. But one Roman general, P. Cornelius Scipio, had the strategic sense to take a course that robbed all Hannibal's victories of fruit. At the outbreak of the war he had been sent by sea to Marseilles to intercept Hannibal; he arrived three days late, and, instead of pursuing him, he sent on his army into Spain to cut up Hannibal's supplies and reinforcements. Throughout all the subsequent war there remained this Roman army of Spain between Hannibal and his base. He was left "in the air," incapable of conducting sieges or establishing conquests.

Whenever he met the Romans in open fight he beat them. He gained two great victories in North Italy, and won over the Gauls to his side. He pressed south into Etruria, and ambushed, surrounded, and completely destroyed a Roman army at Lake Trasimene. In 216 B.C. he was assailed by a vastly superior Roman force under Varro at Cannæ, and destroyed it utterly. Fifty thousand men are said to have been killed and ten thousand prisoners taken. He was, however, unable to push on and capture Rome because he had no siege equipment.

But Cannæ produced other fruits. A large part of Southern Italy came over to Hannibal, including Capua, the city next in size to

Rome, and the Macedonians allied themselves with him. Moreover, Hiero of Syracuse, the faithful ally of Rome, was now dead, and his successor Hieronymus turned over to the Carthaginians. The Romans carried on the war, however, with great toughness and resolution; they refused to treat with Hannibal after Cannæ, they pressed a slow but finally successful blockade and a siege of Capua, and a Roman army set itself to reduce Syracuse. The siege of Syracuse is chiefly memorable for the brilliant inventions of the philosopher Archimedes, which long held the Romans at bay. We have already named this Archimedes as one of the pupils and correspondents of the school of the Alexandrian Museum. He was killed in the final storm of the town. Tarentum (209 B.C.), Hannibal's chief port and means of supply from Carthage, at last followed Syracuse (212 B.C.) and Capua (211 B.C.), and his communications became irregular.

Spain also was wrested bit by bit from the Carthaginian grip. When at last reinforcements for Hannibal under his brother Hasdrubal (not to be confused with his brother-in-law of the same name who was assassinated) struggled through into Italy, they were destroyed at the battle of the Metaurus (207 B.C.), and the first news that came to Hannibal of the disaster was the hacked-off head of his brother thrown into his camp.

Thereafter Hannibal was blockaded into Calabria, the heel of Italy. He had no forces for further operations of any magnitude, and he returned at last to Carthage in time to command the Carthaginians in the last battle of the war.

This last battle, the battle of Zama (202 B.C.), was fought close to Carthage.

It was the first defeat Hannibal experienced, and so it is well to give a little attention to the personality of his conqueror, Scipio Africanus the Elder, who stands out in history as a very fine gentleman indeed, a great soldier and a generous man. We have already mentioned a certain P. Cornelius Scipio who struck at Hannibal's base in Spain; this was his son; until after Zama this son bore the same name of P. Cornelius Scipio, and then the surname of Africanus was given him. (The younger Scipio Africanus, Scipio Africanus Minor, who was later to end the Third Punic War, was the adopted son of this first Scipio Africanus the Elder.) Scipio

Africanus was everything that aroused the distrust, hatred, and opposition of old-fashioned Romans of the school of Cato. He was young, he was happy and able, he spent money freely, he was well versed in Greek literature, and inclined rather to Phrygian novelties in religion than to the sterner divinities of Rome. And he did not believe in the extreme discretion that then ruled Roman strategy.

After the early defeats of the Second Punic War, Roman military operations were dominated by the personality of a general, Fabius, who raised the necessity of avoiding battle with Hannibal into a kind of sacred principle. For ten years "Fabian tactics" prevailed in Italy. The Romans blockaded, cut up convoys, attacked stragglers, and ran away whenever Hannibal appeared. No doubt it was wise for a time after their first defeats to do this sort of thing, but the business of the stronger power, and Rome was the stronger power throughout the Second Punic War, is not to tolerate an interminable war, but to repair losses, discover able generals, train better armies, and destroy the enemy power. Decision is one of the duties of strength.

To such men as young Scipio, the sly, ineffective artfulness of Fabianism, which was causing both Italy and Carthage to bleed slowly to death, was detestable. He clamoured for an attack upon Carthage itself.

"But Fabius, on this occasion, filled the city with alarms, as if the commonwealth was going to be brought into the most extreme danger by a rash and indiscreet young man; in short, he scrupled not to do or say anything he thought likely to dissuade his countrymen from embracing the proposal. With the Senate he carried his point. But the people believed that his opposition to Scipio proceeded either from envy of his success, or from a secret fear that if this young hero should perform some signal exploit, put an end to the war, or even remove it out of Italy, his own slow proceedings through the course of so many years might be imputed to indolence or timidity.... He applied to Crassus, the colleague of Scipio, and endeavoured to persuade him not to yield that province to Scipio, but, if he thought it proper to conduct the war in that manner, to go himself against Carthage. Nay, he even hindered the raising of money for that expedition, so that Scipio was obliged to find the supplies as he could.... He endeavoured to prevent the young men who offered to go

as volunteers from giving in their names, and loudly declared, both in the Senate and Forum, 'That Scipio did not only himself avoid Hannibal, but intended to carry away with him the remaining strength of Italy, persuading the young men to abandon their parents, their wives, and native city, while an unsubdued and potent enemy was still at their doors.' With these assertions he so terrified the people, that they allowed Scipio to take with him only the legions that were in Sicily, and three hundred of those men who had served him with so much fidelity in Spain.... After Scipio was gone over into Africa, an account was soon brought to Rome of his glorious and wonderful achievements. This account was followed by rich spoils, which confirmed it. A Numidian king was taken prisoner; two camps were burned and destroyed; and in them a vast number of men, arms, and horses; and the Carthaginians sent orders to Hannibal to quit his fruitless hopes in Italy, and return home to defend his own country. Whilst every tongue was applauding these exploits of Scipio, Fabius proposed that his successor should be appointed, without any shadow of reason for it, except what this well-known maxim implies: viz., 'That it is dangerous to trust affairs of such importance to the fortune of one man, because it is not likely that he will be always successful.' ... Nay, even when Hannibal embarked his army and quitted Italy, Fabius ceased not to disturb the general joy and to damp the spirits of Rome, for he took the liberty to affirm, 'That the commonwealth was now come to her last and worst trial; that she had the most reason to dread the efforts of Hannibal when he should arrive in Africa, and attack her sons under the walls of Carthage; that Scipio would have to do with an army yet warm with the blood of so many Roman generals, dictators, and consuls.' The city was alarmed with these declamations, and though the war was removed into Africa, the danger seemed to approach nearer Rome than ever."

Before the battle of Zama there were a brief truce and negotiations, which broke down through the fault of the Carthaginians. As with the battle of Arbela, so the exact day of the battle of Zama can be fixed by an eclipse, which in this case occurred during the fighting. The Romans had been joined by the Numidians, the hinterland people of Carthage, under their king Massinissa, and this gave them — for the first time in any battle against Hannibal —

a great superiority of cavalry. Hannibal's cavalry wings were driven off, while at the same time the sounder discipline of Scipio's infantry enabled them to open lanes for the charge of the Carthaginian war elephants without being thrown into confusion. Hannibal attempted to extend his infantry line to envelop the Roman infantry mass, but while at Cannæ all the advantage of training and therefore of manœuvring power had been on his side, and he had been able to surround and massacre a crowd of infantry, he now found against him an infantry line better than his own. His own line broke as it extended, the Roman legion charged home, and the day was lost. The Roman cavalry came back from the pursuit of Hannibal's horse to turn what was already a defeat into a disastrous rout.

Carthage submitted without any further struggle. The terms were severe, but they left it possible for her to hope for an honourable future. She had to abandon Spain to Rome, to give up all her war fleet except ten vessels, to pay 10,000 talents (£2,400,000), and, what was the most difficult condition of all, to agree not to wage war without the permission of Rome. Finally a condition was added that Hannibal, as the great enemy of Rome, should be surrendered. But he saved his countrymen from this humiliation by flying to Asia.

These were exorbitant conditions, with which Rome should have been content. But there are nations so cowardly that they dare not merely conquer their enemies; they must *mak siccar* and destroy them. The generation of Romans that saw greatness and virtue in a man like Cato the Censor, necessarily made their country a mean ally and a cowardly victor.

§ 7

The history of Rome for the fifty-six years that elapsed between the battle of Zama and the last act of the tragedy, the Third Punic War, tells of a hard ungracious expansion of power abroad and of a slow destruction, by the usury and greed of the rich, of the free agricultural population at home.

The spirit of the nation had become harsh and base; there was no further extension of citizenship, no more generous attempts at the assimilation of congenial foreign populations. Spain was

administered badly, and settled slowly and with great difficulty. Complicated interventions led to the reduction of Illyria and Macedonia to the position of tribute-paying provinces; Rome, it was evident, was going to "tax the foreigner" now and release her home population from taxation. After 168 B.C. the old land tax was no longer levied in Italy, and the only revenue derived from Italy was from the state domains and through a tax on imports from overseas. The revenues from the province of "Asia" defrayed the expenses of the Roman state. At home men of the Cato type were acquiring farms by loans and foreclosure, often the farms of men impoverished by war service; they were driving the free citizens off their land, and running their farms with the pitilessly driven slave labour that was made cheap and abundant. Such men regarded alien populations abroad merely as unimported slaves. Sicily was handed over to the greedy enterprise of tax-farmers. Corn could be grown there by rich men using slaves, and imported very profitably into Rome, and so the home land could be turned over to cattle and sheep feeding. Consequently a drift of the uprooted Italian population to the towns, and particularly to Rome, began.

Of the first conflicts of the spreading power of Rome with the Seleucids, and how she formed an alliance with Egypt, we can tell little here, nor of the tortuous fluctuations of the Greek cities under the shadow of her advance until they fell into actual subjugation. A map must suffice to show the extension of her empire at this time.

The general grim baseness of the age was not without its protesting voices. We have already told how the wasting disease of the Second Punic War, a disease of the state which was producing avaricious rich men exactly as diseases of the body will sometimes produce great pustules, was ended by the vigour of Scipio Africanus. When it had seemed doubtful whether the Senate would let him go as the Roman general, he had threatened an appeal to the people. Thereafter he was a marked man for the senatorial gang, who were steadily changing Italy from a land of free cultivators to a land of slave-worked cattle ranches; they attempted to ruin him before ever he reached Africa; they gave him forces insufficient, as they hoped, for victory; and after the war they barred him strictly from office. Interest and his natural malice alike prompted Cato to attack him.

Scipio Africanus the Elder seems to have been of a generous and impatient temperament, and indisposed to exploit the popular discontent with current tendencies and his own very great popularity to his own advantage. He went as subordinate to his brother Lucius Scipio, when the latter commanded the first Roman army to pass into Asia. At Magnesia in Lydia a great composite army under Antiochus III, the Seleucid monarch, suffered the fate (190 B.C.) of the very similar Persian armies of a hundred and forty years before. This victory drew down upon Lucius Scipio the hostility of the Senate, and he was accused of misappropriating moneys received from

Antiochus. This filled Africanus with honest rage. As Lucius stood up in the Senate with his accounts in his hands ready for the badgering of his accusers, Africanus snatched the documents from him, tore them up, and flung the fragments down. His brother, he said, had paid into the treasury 200,000 sestertia (= £2,000,000). Was he now to be pestered and tripped up upon this or that item? When, later on, Lucius was prosecuted and condemned, Africanus rescued him by force. Being impeached, he reminded the people that the day was the anniversary of the battle of Zama, and defied the authorities amidst the plaudits of the crowd.

The Roman people seem to have liked and supported Scipio Africanus, and, after an interval of two thousand years, men must like him still. He was able to throw torn paper in the face of the Senate, and when Lucius was attacked again, one of the tribunes of the people interposed his veto and quashed the proceedings. But Scipio Africanus lacked that harder alloy which makes men great democratic leaders. He was no Cæsar. He had none of the qualities that subdue a man to the base necessities of political life. After these events he retired in disgust from Rome to his estates, and there he died in the year 183 b.c.

In the same year died Hannibal. He poisoned himself in despair. The steadfast fear of the Roman Senate had hunted him from court to court. In spite of the indignant protests of Scipio, Rome in the peace negotiations had demanded his surrender from Carthage, and she continued to make this demand of every power that sheltered him. When peace was made with Antiochus III, this was one of the conditions. He was run to earth at last in Bithynia; the king of Bithynia detained him in order to send him to Rome, but he had long carried the poison he needed in a ring, and by this he died.

It adds to the honour of the name of Scipio that it was another Scipio, Scipio Nasica, who parodied Cato's Delenda est Carthago by ending all his speeches in the Senate with "Carthage must stand." He had the wisdom to see that the existence and stimulus of Carthage contributed to the general prosperity of Rome.

Yet it was the second Scipio Africanus, the adopted grandson of Scipio Africanus the Elder, who took and destroyed Carthage. The

sole offence of the Carthaginians, which brought about the third and last Punic War, was that they continued to trade and prosper. Their trade was not a trade that competed with that of Rome; when Carthage was destroyed, much of her trade died with her, and North Africa entered upon a phase of economic retrogression; but her prosperity aroused that passion of envy which was evidently more powerful even than avarice in the "old Roman" type. The rich Equestrian order resented any wealth in the world but its own. Rome provoked the war by encouraging the Numidians to encroach upon Carthage until the Carthaginians were goaded to fight in despair. Rome then pounced upon Carthage, and declared she had broken the treaty! She had made war without permission.

The Carthaginians sent the hostages Rome demanded, they surrendered their arms, they prepared to surrender territory. But submission only increased the arrogance of Rome and the pitiless greed of the rich Equestrian order which swayed her counsels. She now demanded that Carthage should be abandoned, and the population remove to a spot at least ten miles from the sea. This demand they made to a population that subsisted almost entirely by overseas trade!

This preposterous order roused the Carthaginians to despair. They recalled their exiles and prepared for resistance. The military efficiency of the Romans had been steadily declining through a half-century of narrow-minded and base-spirited government, and the first attacks upon the town in 149 b.c. almost ended in disaster. Young Scipio, during these operations, distinguished himself in a minor capacity. The next year was also a year of failure for the incompetents of the Senate. That august body then passed from a bullying mood to one of extreme panic. The Roman populace was even more seriously scared. Young Scipio, chiefly on account of his name, although he was under the proper age, and in other respects not qualified for the office, was made consul, and bundled off to Africa to save his precious country.

There followed the most obstinate and dreadful of sieges. Scipio built a mole across the harbour, and cut off all supplies by land or sea. The Carthaginians suffered horribly from famine; but they held out until the town was stormed. The street fighting lasted for six

days, and when at last the citadel capitulated, there were fifty thousand Carthaginians left alive out of an estimated population of half a million. These survivors went into slavery, the whole city was burnt, the ruins were ploughed to express final destruction, and a curse was invoked with great solemnities upon anyone who might attempt to rebuild it.

In the same year (146 B.C.) the Roman Senate and Equestrians also *murdered* another great city that seemed to limit their trade monopolies, Corinth. They had a justification, for Corinth had been in arms against them, but it was an inadequate justification.

§ 8

We must note here, in a brief section, a change in the military system of Rome, after the Second Punic War, that was of enormous importance in her later development. Up to that period the Roman armies had been levies of free citizens. Fighting power and voting power were closely connected; the public assembly by centuries followed the paraphernalia of a military mobilization, and marched, headed by the Equestrian centuries, to the Campus Martius. The system was very like that of the Boers before the last war in South Africa. The ordinary Roman citizen, like the ordinary Boer, was a farmer; at the summons of his country he went "on commando." The Boers were, indeed, in many respects, the last survivors of Aryanism. They fought extraordinarily well, but at the back of their minds was an anxious desire to go back to their farms. For prolonged operations, such as the siege of Veii, the Romans reinforced and relieved their troops in relays; the Boers did much the same at the siege of Ladysmith.

The necessity for subjugating Spain after the Second Punic War involved a need for armies of a different type. Spain was too far off for periodic reliefs, and the war demanded a more thorough training than was possible with these on and off soldiers. Accordingly men were enlisted for longer terms and *paid*. So the paid soldier first appeared in Roman affairs. And to pay was added booty. Cato distributed silver treasure among his command in Spain; and it is also on record that he attacked Scipio Africanus for distributing

booty among his troops in Sicily. The introduction of military pay led on to a professional army, and this, a century later, to the disarmament of the ordinary Roman citizen, who was now drifting in an impoverished state into Rome and the larger towns. The great wars had been won, the foundations of the empire had been well and truly laid by the embattled farmers of Rome before 200 b.c. In the process the embattled farmers of Rome had already largely disappeared. The change that began after the Second Punic War was completed towards the close of the century in the reorganization of the army by Marius, as we will tell in its place. After his time we shall begin to write of "the army," and then of "the legions," and we shall find we are dealing with a new kind of army altogether, no longer held together in the solidarity of a common citizenship. As that tie fails, the legions discover another in *esprit de corps*, in their common difference from and their common interest against the general community. They begin to develop a warmer interest in their personal leaders, who secure them pay and plunder. Before the Punic Wars it was the tendency of ambitious men in Rome to court the plebeians; after that time they began to court the legions.

§ 9

The history of the Roman Republic thus far, is in many respects much more modern in flavour, especially to the American or Western European reader, than anything that has preceded it. For the first time we have something like a self-governing "nation," something larger than a mere city state, seeking to control its own destinies. For the first time we have a wide countryside under one conception of law. We get in the Senate and the popular assembly a conflict of groups and personalities, an argumentative process of control, far more stable and enduring than any autocracy can be, and far more flexible and adaptable than any priesthood. For the first time also we encounter social conflicts comparable to our own. Money has superseded barter, and financial capital has become fluid and free; not perhaps so fluid and free as it is to-day, but much more so than it had ever been before. The Punic Wars were wars of peoples, such as were no other wars we have yet recorded. Indubitably the broad lines

of our present world, the main ideas, the chief oppositions, were appearing in those days.

But, as we have already pointed out, certain of the elementary facilities and some of the current political ideas of our time were still wanting in the Rome of the Punic Wars. There were no newspapers, and there was practically no use of elected representatives in the popular assemblies. And another deficiency, very understandable to us nowadays, but quite beyond the scope of anyone then, was the absence of any general elementary political education at all. The plebeians of Rome had shown some glimmering of the idea that without knowledge votes cannot make men free, when they had insisted upon the publication of the law of the Twelve Tables; but they had never been able, it was beyond the possibilities of the time, to imagine any further extension of knowledge to the bulk of the people. It is only nowadays that men are beginning to understand fully the political significance of the maxim that "knowledge is power." Two British Trade Unions, for example, have recently set up a Labour College to meet the special needs of able working-men in history, political and social science, and the like. But education in republican Rome was the freak of the individual parent, and the privilege of wealth and leisure. It was mainly in the hands of Greeks, who were in many cases slaves. There was a thin small stream of very fine learning and very fine thinking up to the first century of the monarchy, let Lucretius and Cicero witness, but it did not spread into the mass of the people. The ordinary Roman was not only blankly ignorant of the history of mankind, but also of the conditions of foreign peoples; he had no knowledge of economic laws nor of social possibilities. Even his own interests he did not clearly understand.

Of course, in the little city states of Greece and in that early Roman state of four hundred square miles, men acquired by talk and observation a sufficient knowledge for the ordinary duties of citizenship, but by the beginning of the Punic Wars the business was already too big and complicated for illiterate men. Yet nobody seems to have observed the gap that was opening between the citizen and his state, and so there is no record at all of any attempt to enlarge the citizen by instruction to meet his enlarged duties. From the second century b.c. and onward everyone is remarking upon the ignorance of

the common citizen and his lack of political wisdom, everything is suffering from the lack of political solidarity due to this ignorance, but no one goes on to what we should now consider the inevitable corollary, no one proposes to destroy the ignorance complained of. There existed no means whatever for the instruction of the masses of the people in a common political and social ideal. It was only with the development of the great propagandist religions in the Roman world, of which Christianity was the chief and the survivor, that the possibility of such a systematic instruction of great masses of people became apparent in the world. That very great political genius, the Emperor Constantine the Great, six centuries later, was the first to apprehend and to attempt to use this possibility for the preservation and the mental and moral knitting-together of the world community over which he ruled.

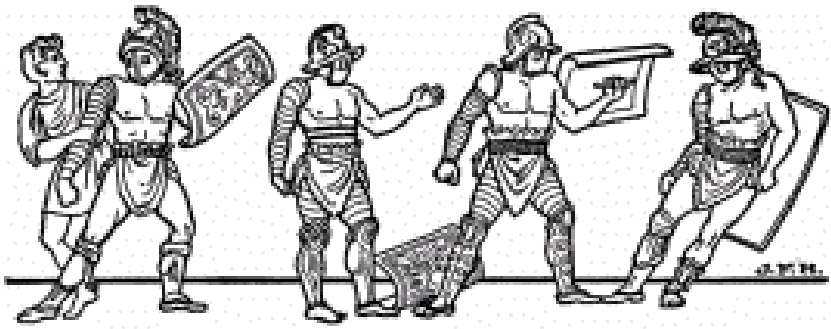

Gladiators (from a wall-painting at Pompeii)

But it is not only in these deficiencies of news and of education and of the expedient of representative government that this political system of Rome differed from our own. True, it was far more like a modern civilized state than any other state we have considered hitherto, but in some matters it was strangely primordial and "sub-civilized." Every now and then the reader of Roman history, reading it in terms of debates and measures, policies and campaigns, capital and labour, comes upon something that gives him much the same shock he would feel if he went down to an unknown caller in his

house and extended his hand to meet the misshapen hairy paw of *Homo Neanderthalensis* and looked up to see a chinless, bestial face. We have noted the occurrence of human sacrifice in the third century B.C., and much that we learn of the religion of republican Rome carries us far back beyond the days of decent gods, to the age of shamanism and magic. We talk of a legislative gathering, and the mind flies to Westminster; but how should we feel if we went to see the beginning of a session of the House of Lords, and discovered the Lord Chancellor, with bloody fingers, portentously fiddling about among the entrails of a newly killed sheep? The mind would recoil from Westminster to the customs of Benin. And the slavery of Rome was a savage slavery, altogether viler than the slavery of Babylon. We have had a glimpse of the virtuous Cato among his slaves in the second century B.C. Moreover, in the third century B.C., when King Asoka was ruling India in light and gentleness, the Romans were reviving an Etruscan sport, the setting on of slaves to fight for their lives. One is reminded of West Africa again in the origin of this amusement; it grew out of the prehistoric custom of a massacre of captives at the burial of a chief. There was a religious touch about this sport, the slaves with hooks, who dragged the dead bodies out of the arena, wore masks to represent the infernal ferry-man-god, Charon. In 264 B.C., the very year in which Asoka began to reign and the First Punic War began, the first recorded gladiatorial combat took place in the forum at Rome, to celebrate the funeral of a member of the old Roman family of Brutus. This was a modest display of three couples, but soon gladiators were fighting by the hundred. The taste for these combats grew rapidly, and the wars supplied an abundance of captives. The old Roman moralists, who were so severe upon kissing and women's ornaments and Greek philosophy, had nothing but good to say for this new development. So long as pain was inflicted, Roman morality, it would seem, was satisfied.

If republican Rome was the first of modern self-governing national communities, she was certainly the "Neanderthal" form of them.

In the course of the next two or three centuries the gladiatorial shows of Rome grew to immense proportions. To begin with, while

wars were frequent, the gladiators were prisoners of war. They came with their characteristic national weapons, tattooed Britons, Moors, Scythians, negroes, and the like, and there was perhaps some military value in these exhibitions. Then criminals of the lower classes condemned to death were also used. The ancient world did not understand that a criminal condemned to death still has rights, and at any rate the use of a criminal as a gladiator was not so bad as his use as "material" for the vivisectors of the Museum at Alexandria. But as the profits of this sort of show business grew and the demand for victims increased, ordinary slaves were sold to the trainers of gladiators, and any slave who had aroused his owner's spite might find himself in an establishment for letting out gladiators. And dissipated young men who had squandered their property, and lads of spirit, would go voluntarily into the trade for a stated time, trusting to their prowess to survive. As the business developed, a new use was found for gladiators as armed retainers; rich men would buy a band, and employ it as a bodyguard or hire it out for profit at the shows. The festivities of a show began with a ceremonial procession (*pompa*) and a sham fight (*prælusio*). The real fighting was heralded by trumpets. Gladiators who objected to fight for any reason were driven on by whips and hot irons. A wounded man would sometimes call for pity by holding up his forefinger. The spectators would then either wave their handkerchiefs in token of mercy, or condemn him to death by holding out their clenched fists with the thumbs down. The slain and nearly dead were dragged out to a particular place, the *spoliarium*, where they were stripped of their arms and possessions, and those who had not already expired were killed.

This organization of murder as a sport and show serves to measure the great gap in moral standards between the Roman community and our own. No doubt cruelties and outrages upon human dignity as monstrous as this still go on in the world, but they do not go on in the name of the law and without a single dissentient voice. For it is true that until the time of Seneca (first century A.D.) there is no record of any plain protest against this business. The conscience of mankind was weaker and less intelligent then than now. Presently a new power was to come into the human conscience through the spread of Christianity. The spirit of Jesus in Christianity

became the great antagonist in the later Roman state of these cruel shows and of slavery, and, as Christianity spread, these two evil things dwindled and disappeared.

XXVIII

FROM TIBERIUS GRACCHUS TO THE GOD EMPEROR IN ROME

§ 1. *The Science of Thwarting the Common Man.* § 2. *Finance in the Roman State.* § 3. *The Last Years of Republican Politics.* § 4. *The Era of the Adventurer Generals.* § 5. *The End of the Republic.* § 6. *The Coming of the Princeps.* § 7. *Why the Roman Republic Failed.*

§ 1

WE have already twice likened the self-governing community of Rome to a "Neanderthal" variety of the modern "democratic" civilized state, and we shall recur again to this comparison. In form the two things, the first great primitive essay and its later relations, are extraordinarily similar; in spirit they differ very profoundly. Roman political and social life, and particularly Roman political and social life in the century between the fall of Carthage and the rise of Cæsar and Cæsarism, has a very marked general resemblance to the political and social life in such countries as the United States of America or the British Empire to-day. The resemblance is intensified by the common use, with a certain inaccuracy in every case, of such terms as "senate," "democracy," "proletariat," and the like. But everything in the Roman state was earlier, cruder, and clumsier; the injustices were more glaring, the conflicts harsher. There was comparatively little knowledge and few general ideas. Aristotle's scientific works were only beginning to be read in Rome in the first century B.C.; Ferrero, it is true, makes Cæsar familiar with the Politics of Aristotle, and ascribes to him the dream of making a "Periclean Rome," but in doing so, Ferrero seems to be indulging in one of those lapses into picturesque romancing which are at once the joy and the snare of all historical writers.

Attention has already been drawn to the profound difference between Roman and modern conditions due to the absence of a press, of any popular education or of the representative idea in the popular assembly. Our world to-day is still far from solving the problem of representation and from producing a public assembly which will

really summarize, crystallize, and express the thought and will of the community; our elections are still largely an ingenious mockery of the common voter who finds himself helpless in the face of party organizations which reduce his free choice of a representative to the less unpalatable of two political hacks, but, even so, his vote, in comparison with the vote of an ordinary honest Roman citizen, is an effective instrument. Too many of our histories dealing with this period of Roman history write of "the popular party," and of the votes of the people and so forth, as though such things were as much working realities as they are to-day. But the senators and politicians of Rome saw to it that such things never did exist as clean and wholesome realities. These modern phrases are very misleading unless they are carefully qualified.

We have already described the gatherings of the popular comitia; but that clumsy assembly in sheep pens does not convey the full extent to which the gerrymandering of popular representation could be carried in Rome. Whenever there was a new enfranchisement of citizens in Italy, there would be the most elaborate trickery and counter-trickery to enrol the new voters into as few or as many of the thirty old "tribes" as possible, or to put them into as few as possible new tribes. Since the vote was taken by tribes, it is obvious that however great the number of new additions made, if they were all got together into one tribe, their opinion would only count for one tribal vote, and similarly if they were crowded into just a few tribes, old or new. On the other hand, if they were put into too many tribes, their effect in any particular tribe might be inconsiderable. Here was the sort of work to fascinate every smart knave in politics. The *comitia tributa*, could be *worked* at times so as to vote right counter to the general feeling of the people. And as we have already noted, the great mass of voters in Italy were also disenfranchised by distance. About the middle period of the Carthaginian wars there were upwards of 300,000 Roman citizens; about 100 B.C. there were more than 900,000, but in effect the voting of the popular assembly was confined to a few score thousand resident in and near Rome, and mostly men of a base type. And the Roman voters were "organized" to an extent that makes the Tammany machine of New York seem artless and honest. They belonged to clubs, *collegia sodalicia*, having

usually some elegant religious pretensions; and the rising politician working his way to office went first to the usurers and then with the borrowed money to these clubs. If the outside voters were moved enough by any question to swarm into the city, it was always possible to put off the voting by declaring the omens unfavourable. If they came in unarmed, they could be intimidated; if they brought in arms, then the cry was raised that there was a plot to overthrow the republic, and a massacre would be organized.

There can be no doubt that all Italy, all the empire, was festering with discomfort, anxiety, and discontent in the century after the destruction of Carthage; a few men were growing very rich, and the majority of people found themselves entangled in an inexplicable net of uncertain prices, jumpy markets, and debts; but yet there was no way at all of stating and clearing up the general dissatisfaction. There is no record of a single attempt to make the popular assembly a straightforward and workable public organ. Beneath the superficial appearances of public affairs struggled a mute giant of public opinion and public will, who sometimes made some great political effort, a rush to vote or such like, and sometimes broke into actual violence. So long as there was no actual violence, the Senate and the financiers kept on in their own disastrous way. Only when they were badly frightened would governing cliques or parties desist from some nefarious policy and heed the common good. The real method of popular expression in Italy in those days was not the *comitia tributa*, but the strike and insurrection, the righteous and necessary methods of all cheated or suppressed peoples. We have seen in our own days in Great Britain a decline in the prestige of parliamentary government and a drift towards unconstitutional methods on the part of the masses through exactly the same cause, through the incurable disposition of politicians to gerrymander the electoral machine until the community is driven to explosion.

For insurrectionary purposes a discontented population needs a leader, and the political history of the concluding century of Roman republicanism is a history of insurrectionary leaders and counter-revolutionary leaders. Most of the former are manifestly unscrupulous adventurers who try to utilize the public necessity and unhappiness for their own advancement. Many of the historians of

this period betray a disposition to take sides, and are either aristocratic in tone or fiercely democratic; but, indeed, neither side in these complex and intricate disputes has a record of high aims or clean hands. The Senate and the rich equestrians were vulgar and greedy spirits, hostile and contemptuous towards the poor mob; and the populace was ignorant, unstable, and at least equally greedy. The Scipios in all this record shine, by comparison, a group of gentlemen. To the motives of one or the other figures of the time, to Tiberius Gracchus, for example, we may perhaps extend the benefit of the doubt. But for the rest, they do but demonstrate how clever and cunning men may be, how subtle in contention, how brilliant in pretence, and how utterly wanting in wisdom or grace of spirit. "A shambling, hairy, brutish, but probably very cunning creature with a big brain behind;" so someone, I think it was Sir Harry Johnston, has described *Homo Neanderthalensis*.

To this day we must still use similar terms to describe the soul of the politician. The statesman has still to oust the politician from his lairs and weapon heaps. History has still to become a record of human dignity.

§ 2

Another respect in which the Roman system was a crude anticipation of our own, and different from any preceding political system we have considered, was that it was a cash and credit-using system. Money had been in the world as yet for only a few centuries. But its use had been growing; it was providing a fluid medium for trade and enterprise, and changing economic conditions profoundly. In republican Rome, the financier and the "money" interest began to play a part recognizably similar to their rôles to-day.

We have already noted — in our account of Herodotus — that a first effect of money was to give freedom of movement and leisure to a number of people who could not otherwise have enjoyed these privileges. And that is the peculiar value of money to mankind. Instead of a worker or helper being paid in kind and in such a way that he is tied as much in his enjoyment as in his labour, money leaves him free to do as he pleases amidst a wide choice of

purchasable aids, eases, and indulgences. He may eat his money or drink it or give it to a temple or spend it in learning something or save it against some foreseen occasion. That is the good of money, the freedom of its universal convertibility. But the freedom money gives the poor man is nothing to the freedom money has given the rich man. With money rich men ceased to be tied to lands, houses, stores, flocks, and herds. They could change the nature and locality of their possessions with an unheard-of freedom. In the third and second century b.c., this release, this untethering of wealth, began to tell upon the general economic life of the Roman and Hellenized world. People began to buy land and the like not for use, but to sell again at a profit; people borrowed to buy, speculation developed. No doubt there were bankers in the Babylon of 1000 b.c., but they lent in a far more limited and solid way, bars of metal and stocks of goods. That earlier world was a world of barter and payment in kind, and it went slowly — and much more staidly and stably — for that reason. In that state the vast realm of China has remained almost down to the present time.

The big cities before Rome were trading and manufacturing cities. Such were Corinth and Carthage and Syracuse. But Rome never produced a very considerable industrial population, and her warehouses never rivalled those of Alexandria. The little port of Ostia was always big enough for her needs. Rome was a political and financial capital, and in the latter respect, at least, she was a new sort of city. She imported profits and tribute, and very little went out from her in return. The wharves of Ostia were chiefly busy unloading corn from Sicily and Africa and loot from all the world.

After the fall of Carthage the Roman imagination went wild with the hitherto unknown possibilities of finance. Money, like most other inventions, had "happened" to mankind, and men had still to develop — to-day they have still to perfect — the science and morality of money. One sees the thing "catching on" in the recorded life and the writings of Cato the Censor. In his early days he was bitterly virtuous against usury; in his later he was devising ingenious schemes for safe usury.

In this curiously interesting century of Roman history we find man after man asking, "What has happened to Rome?" Various

answers are made — a decline in religion, a decline from the virtues of the Roman forefathers, Greek "intellectual poison," and the like. We who can look at the problem with a large perspective, can see that what had happened to Rome was "money" — the new freedoms and chances and opportunities that money opened out. Money floated the Romans off the firm ground, everyone was getting hold of money, the majority by the simple expedient of running into debt; the eastward expansion of the empire was very largely a hunt for treasure in strong rooms and temples to keep pace with the hunger of the new need. The Equestrian order, in particular, became the money power. Everyone was developing property. Farmers were giving up corn and cattle, borrowing money, buying slaves, and starting the more intensive cultivation of oil and wine. Money was young in human experience and wild, nobody had it under control. It fluctuated greatly. It was now abundant and now scarce. Men made sly and crude schemes to corner it, to hoard it, to send up prices by releasing hoarded metals. A small body of very shrewd men was growing immensely rich. Many patricians were growing poor and irritated and unscrupulous. Among the middle sort of peoples there was much hope, much adventure, and much more disappointment. The growing mass of the expropriated was permeated by that vague, baffled, and hopeless sense of being inexplicably bested, which is the preparatory condition for all great revolutionary movements.

§ 3

The first conspicuous leader to appeal to the gathering revolutionary feeling in Italy was Tiberius Gracchus. He looks more like an honest man than any other figure in this period of history, unless it be Scipio Africanus the Elder. At first Tiberius Gracchus was a moderate reformer of a rather reactionary type. He wished to restore the yeoman class to property, very largely because he believed that class to be the backbone of the army, and his military experience in Spain before and after the destruction of Carthage had impressed upon him the declining efficiency of the legions. He was what we should call nowadays a "Back-to-the-land" man. He did not understand, and few people understand to-day, how much easier it is to shift population

from the land into the towns, than to return it to the laborious and simple routines of agricultural life. He wanted to revive the Licinian laws, which had been established when Camillus built his temple of Concord nearly two centuries and a half before (see Chap. xxvii, § 2), so far as they broke up great estates and restrained slave labour.

These Licinian laws had repeatedly been revived and repeatedly lapsed to a dead letter again. It was only when the big proprietors in the Senate opposed this proposal that Tiberius Gracchus turned to the people and began a furious agitation for popular government. He created a commission to inquire into the title of all landowners. In the midst of his activities occurred one of the most extraordinary incidents in history. Attalus, the king of the rich country of Pergamum in Asia Minor, died (133 b.c.), and left his kingdom to the Roman people.

It is difficult for us to understand the motives of this bequest. Pergamum was a country allied to Rome, and so moderately secure from aggression; and the natural consequence of such a will was to provoke a violent scramble among the senatorial gangs and a dispute between them and the people for the spoils of the new acquisition. Practically Attalus handed over his country to be looted. The act is so amazing that one is driven towards the hypothesis of forgery. There were of course many Italian business people established in the country and a strong party of native rich men in close relations with Rome. To them, no doubt, a coalescence with the Roman system would have been acceptable. Josephus bears witness to such a desire for annexation among the rich men of Syria, a desire running counter to the wishes of both king and people. This Pergamum bequest, astonishing in itself, had the still more astonishing result of producing imitations in other quarters. In 96 B.C. Ptolemy Apion bequeathed Cyrenaica, in North Africa, to the Roman people; in 81 B.C. Alexander II, King of Egypt, followed suit with Egypt, a legacy too big for the courage if not for the appetite of the Senators, and they declined it; in 74 B.C. Nicomedes, King of Bithynia, demised Bithynia. Of these latter testamentary freaks we will say no more here. But it will be manifest how great an opportunity was given Tiberius Gracchus, by the bequest of Attalus, of accusing the rich of

greed and of proposing to decree the treasures of Attalus to the commonalty. He proposed to use this new wealth to provide seed, stock, and agricultural implements for the resettlement of the land.

His movement was speedily entangled in the complexities of the Roman electoral system — without a simple and straightforward electoral method, all popular movements in all ages necessarily become entangled and maddened in constitutional intricacies, and almost as necessarily lead to bloodshed. It was needed, if his work was to go on, that Tiberius Gracchus should continue to be tribune, and it was illegal for him to be tribune twice in succession. He overstepped the bounds of legality, and stood for the tribuneship a second time; the peasants who came in from the countryside to vote for him came in armed; the cry that he was aiming at a tyranny, the cry that had long ago destroyed Mælius and Manlius, was raised in the Senate, the friends of "law and order" went to the Capitol in state, accompanied by a rabble of dependents armed with staves and bludgeons; there was a conflict, or rather a massacre of the revolutionaries, in which nearly three hundred people were killed, and Tiberius Gracchus was beaten to death with the fragments of a broken bench by two Senators.

Thereupon the Senators attempted a sort of counter-revolution, and proscribed many of the followers of Tiberius Gracchus; but the state of public opinion was so sullen and threatening that this movement was dropped and Scipio Nasica, who was implicated in the death of Tiberius, though he occupied the position of pontifex maximus and should have remained in Rome for the public sacrifices which were the duties of that official, went abroad to avoid trouble.

The uneasiness of Italy next roused Scipio Africanus the Younger to propose the enfranchisement of all Italy. But he died suddenly before he could carry the proposal into effect.

Then followed the ambiguous career of Caius Gracchus, the brother of Tiberius, who followed some tortuous "policy" that still exercises the mind of historians. He increased the burthens of taxation laid upon the provinces, it is supposed with the idea of setting the modern financiers (the Equites) against the senatorial landowners. He gave the former the newly bequeathed taxes of Asia to farm, and, what is worse, he gave them control of the special

courts set up to prevent extortion. He started enormous public works and particularly the construction of new roads, and he is accused of making a political use of the contracts. He revived the proposal to enfranchise Italy. He increased the distribution of subsidized cheap corn to the Roman citizens.... Here we cannot attempt to disentangle his schemes, much less to judge him. But that his policy was offensive to the groups that controlled the Senate there can be no doubt whatever. He was massacred by the champions of "law and order," with about three thousand of his followers, in the streets of Rome in 121 b.c. His decapitated head was carried to the Senate on the point of a pike.

(A reward of its weight in gold, says Plutarch, had been offered for this trophy; and its captor, acting in the true spirit of a champion of "big business," filled the braincase with lead on its way to the scales.)

In spite of these prompt firm measures the Senate was not to enjoy the benefits of peace and the advantages of a control of the imperial resources for long. Within ten years the people were in revolt again.

In 118 B.C. the throne of Numidia, the semi-barbaric kingdom that had arisen in North Africa upon the ruins of the civilized Carthaginian power, was seized by a certain able Jugurtha, who had served with the Roman armies in Spain, and had a knowledge of the Roman character. He provoked the military intervention of Rome. But the Romans found that their military power, under a Senate of financiers and landlords, was very different from what it had been even in the days of the younger Scipio Africanus. "Jugurtha bought over the Commissioners sent out to watch him, the Senators charged with their prosecution, and the generals in command against him." There is a mistaken Roman proverb: "*pecunia non olet*" (money does not stink), for the money of Jugurtha stank even in Rome. There was an angry agitation; and a capable soldier of lowly origin, Marius, was carried to the consulship (107 B.C.) on the wave of popular indignation. Marius made no attempt on the model of the Gracchi to restore the backbone of the army by rehabilitating the yeoman class. He was a professional soldier with a high standard of efficiency and a disposition to take short cuts. He simply raised troops from among the poor, whether countrymen or townsmen, paid them well,

disciplined them thoroughly, and (106 B.C.) ended the seven years' war with Jugurtha by bringing that chieftain in chains to Rome. It did not occur to anybody that incidentally Marius had also created a professional army with no interest to hold it together but its pay. He then held on to the consulship more or less illegally for several years, and in 102 and 101 B.C. repelled a threatening move of the Germans (who thus appear in our history for the first time), who were raiding through Gaul towards Italy. He gained two victories; one on Italian soil. He was hailed as the saviour of his country, a second Camillus (100 B.C.).

The social tensions of the time mocked that comparison with Camillus. The Senate benefited by the greater energy in foreign affairs and the increased military efficiency that Marius had introduced, but the sullen, shapeless discontent of the mass of the people was still seeking some effective outlet. The rich grew richer and the poor poorer. It was impossible to stifle the consequences of that process for ever by political trickery. The Italian people were still unenfranchised. Two extreme democratic leaders, Saturninus and Glaucia, were assassinated, but that familiar senatorial remedy failed to assuage the populace on this occasion. In 92 B.C. an aristocratic official, Rutilius Rufus, who had tried to restrain the exactions of the financiers in Asia Minor, was condemned on a charge of corruption so manifestly trumped up that it deceived no one; and in 91 b.c., Livius Drusus, a newly elected tribune of the people, who was making capital out of the trial of Rutilius Rufus, was assassinated. He had proposed a general enfranchisement of the Italians, and he had foreshadowed not only another land law, but a general abolition of debts. Yet for all this vigour on the part of the senatorial usurers, landgrabbers, and forestallers, the hungry and the anxious were still insurgent. The murder of Drusus was the last drop in the popular cup; Italy blazed into a desperate insurrection.

There followed two years of bitter civil war, the Social War. It was a war between the idea of a united Italy and the idea of the rule of the Roman Senate. It was not a "social" war in the modern sense, but a war between Rome and her Italian allies (allies = Socii). "Roman generals, trained in the traditions of colonial warfare, marched

ruthlessly up and down Italy, burning farms, sacking towns, and carrying off men, women, and children, to sell them in the open market or work them in gangs upon their estates." Marius and an aristocratic general, Sulla, who had been with him in Africa and who was his bitter rival, both commanded on the side of Rome. But though the insurgents experienced defeats and looting, neither of these generals brought the war to an end. It was ended in a manner (89 b.c.) by the practical surrender of the Roman Senate to the idea of reform. The spirit was taken out of the insurrection by the concession of their demands "in principle"; and then as soon as the rebels had dispersed, the usual cheating of the new voters, by such methods as we have explained in § 1 of this chapter, was resumed.

By the next year (88 B.C.) the old round had begun again. It was mixed up with the personal intrigues of Marius and Sulla against each other; but the struggle had taken on another complexion through the army reforms of Marius, which had created a new type of legionary, a landless professional soldier with no interest in life but pay and plunder, and with no feeling of loyalty except to a successful general. A popular tribune, Sulpicius, was bringing forward some new laws affecting debt, and the consuls were dodging the storm by declaring a suspension of public business. Then came the usual resort to violence, and the followers of Sulpicius drove the consuls from the forum. But here it is that the new forces which the new army had made possible came into play. King Mithridates of Pontius, the Hellenized king of the southern shores of the Black Sea east of Bithynia, was pressing Rome into war. One of the proposed laws of Sulpicius was that Marius should command the armies sent against this Mithridates. Whereupon Sulla marched the army he had commanded throughout the Social War to Rome, Marius and Sulpicius fled, and a new age, an age of military pronunciamentos, began.

Of how Sulla had himself made commander against Mithridates and departed, and of how legions friendly to Marius then seized power, how Marius returned to Italy and enjoyed a thorough massacre of his political opponents and died, sated, of fever, we cannot tell in any detail. But one measure during the Marian reign of

terror did much to relieve the social tension, and that was the abolition of three-quarters of all outstanding debts. Nor can we tell here how Sulla made a discreditable peace with Mithridates (who had massacred a hundred thousand Italians in Asia Minor) in order to bring his legions back to Rome, defeat the Marians at the battle of the Colline Gate of Rome, and reverse the arrangements of Marius. Sulla restored law and order by the proscription and execution of over five thousand people. He desolated large parts of Italy, restored the Senate to power, repealed many of the recent laws, though he was unable to restore the cancelled burden of debt, and then, feeling bored by politics and having amassed great riches, he retired with an air of dignity into private life, gave himself up to abominable vices, and so presently died, eaten up with some disgusting disease produced by debauchery.

§ 4

Political life in Italy was not so much tranquillized as stunned by the massacres and confiscations of Marius and Sulla. The scale upon which this history is planned will not permit us to tell here of the great adventurers who, relying more and more on the support of the legions, presently began to scheme and intrigue again for dictatorial power in Rome. In 73 B.C. all Italy was terrified by a rising of the slaves, and particularly of the gladiators, led by a gladiator from Thessaly, Spartacus. He and seventy others had fled out from a gladiatorial “farm” at Capua. Similar risings had already occurred in Sicily. The forces under Spartacus necessarily became a miscellaneous band drawn from east and west, without any common idea except the idea of dispersing and getting home; nevertheless, he held out in southern Italy for two years, using the then apparently extinct crater of Vesuvius for a time as a natural fortress. The Italians, for all their love of gladiatorial display, failed to appreciate this conversion of the whole country into an arena, this bringing of the gladiatorial sword to the door, and when at last Spartacus was overthrown, their terror changed to frantic cruelty, six thousand of his captured followers were crucified — long miles of nailed and drooping victims — along the Appian Way.

Here we cannot deal at any length with Lucullus, who invaded Pontus and fought Mithridates, and brought the cultivated cherry-tree to Europe; nor can we tell how ingeniously Pompey the Great stole the triumph and most of the prestige Lucullus had won in Armenia beyond Pontus. Lucullus, like Sulla, retired into an opulent private life, but with more elegance and with a more gracious end. We cannot relate in any detail how Julius Cæsar accumulated reputation in the west, by conquering Gaul, defeating the German tribes upon the Rhine, and pushing a punitive raid across the Straits of Dover into Britain. More and more important grow the legions; less and less significant are the Senate and the assemblies of Rome. But there is a certain grim humour about the story of Crassus that we cannot altogether neglect.

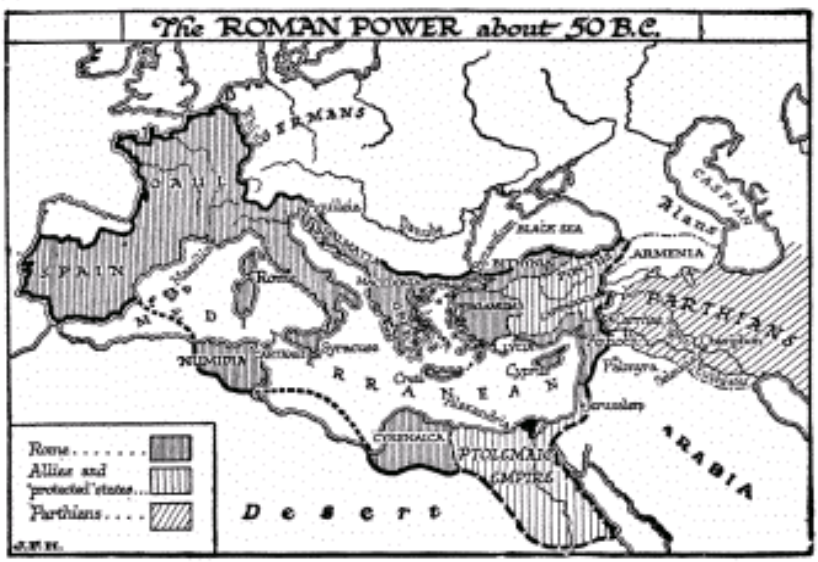

This Crassus was a great money-lender and forestaller. He was a typical man of the new Equestrian type, the social equivalent of a modern munition profiteer. He first grew rich by buying up the property of those proscribed by Sulla. His earliest exploits in the field were against Spartacus, whom finally he crushed by great payments

and exertions after a prolonged and expensive campaign. He then, as the outcome of complicated bargains, secured the command in the east and prepared to emulate the glories of Lucullus, who had pushed east from Pergamum and Bithynia into Pontus, and of Pompey, who had completed the looting of Armenia.

His experiences serve to demonstrate the gross ignorance with which the Romans were conducting their affairs at that time. He crossed the Euphrates, expecting to find in Persia another Hellenized kingdom like Pontus. But, as we have already intimated, the great reservoirs of nomadic peoples that stretched round from the Danube across Russia into Central Asia, had been raining back into the lands between the Caspian Sea and the Indus that Alexander had conquered for Hellenism. Crassus found himself against the "Scythian" again; against mobile tribes of horsemen led by a monarch in Median costume. The particular variety of "Scythian" he encountered was called the Parthian. It is possible that in the Parthians a Mongolian (Turanian) element was now mingled with the Aryan strain; but the campaign of Crassus beyond the Euphrates is curiously like the campaign of Darius beyond the Danube; there is the same heavy thrusting of an infantry force against elusive light horsemen. But Crassus was less quick than Darius to realize the need of withdrawal, and the Parthians were better bowmen than the Scythians Darius met. They seemed to have had some sort of noisy projectile of unusual strength and force, something different from an ordinary arrow. The campaign culminated in that two days' massacre of the hot, thirsty, hungry, and weary Roman legions, which is known as the battle of Carrhæ (53 B.C.). They toiled through the sand, charging an enemy who always evaded their charge and rode round them and shot them to pieces. Twenty thousand of them were killed, and ten thousand marched on eastward as prisoners into slavery in Iran.

What became of Crassus is not clearly known. There is a story, probably invented for our moral benefit and suggested by his usuries, that he fell alive into the hands of the Parthians and was killed by having molten gold poured down his throat.

But this disaster has a very great significance indeed to our general history of mankind. It serves to remind us that from the

Rhine to the Euphrates, all along to the north of the Alps and Danube and Black Sea, stretched one continuous cloud of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, whom the statescraft of imperial Rome was never able to pacify and civilize, nor her military science subdue. We have already called attention to a map showing how the Second Babylonian Empire, the Chaldean Empire, lay like a lamb in the embrace of the Median power. In exactly the same way the Roman Empire lay like a lamb in the embrace of this great crescent of outer barbarians. Not only was Rome never able to thrust back or assimilate that superincumbent crescent, but she was never able to organize the Mediterranean Sea into a secure and orderly system of communication between one part of her empire and another. Quite unknown as yet to Rome, the Mongolian tribes from northeastern Asia, the Huns and their kin, walled back and driven out from China by the Tsi and Han dynasties, were drifting and pressing westward, mixing with the Parthians, the Scythians, the Teutons and the like, or driving them before them.

Never at any time did the Romans succeed in pushing their empire beyond Mesopotamia, and upon Mesopotamia their hold was never very secure. Before the close of the republic that power of assimilation which had been the secret of their success was giving way to "patriotic" exclusiveness and "patriotic" greed. Rome plundered and destroyed Asia Minor and Babylonia, which were the necessary basis for an eastward extension to India, just as she had destroyed and looted Carthage and so had no foothold for extension into Africa, and just as she had destroyed Corinth and so cut herself off from an easy way into the heart of Greece. Western European writers, impressed by the fact that later on Rome Romanized and civilized Gaul and South Britain and restored the scene of her earlier devastations in Spain to prosperity, are apt to ignore that over far greater areas to the south and east her influence was to weaken and so restore to barbarism the far wider conquests of Hellenic civilization.

§ 5

But among the politicians of Italy in the first century b.c. there were

no maps of Germany and Russia, Africa and central Asia, and no sufficient intelligence to study them had they existed. Rome never developed the fine curiosities that sent Hanno and the sailors of Pharaoh Necho down the coasts of Africa. When, in the first century B.C., the emissaries of the Han dynasty reached the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea, they found only stories of a civilization that had receded. The memory of Alexander still lived in these lands, but of Rome men only knew that Pompey had come to the western shores of the Caspian and gone away again, and that Crassus had been destroyed. Rome was preoccupied at home. What mental energy remained over in the Roman citizen from the attempt to grow personally rich and keep personally safe was intent upon the stratagems and strokes and counter-strokes of the various adventurers who were now manifestly grappling for the supreme power.

It is the custom of historians to treat these struggles with extreme respect. In particular the figure of Julius Cæsar is set up as if it were a star of supreme brightness and importance in the history of mankind. Yet a dispassionate consideration of the known facts fails altogether to justify this demi-god theory of Cæsar. Not even that precipitate wrecker of splendid possibilities, Alexander the Great, has been so magnified and dressed up for the admiration of careless and uncritical readers. There is a type of scholar who, to be plain, sits and *invents* marvellous world policies for the more conspicuous figures in history with the merest scraps of justification or with no justification at all. We are told that Alexander planned the conquest of Carthage and Rome and the complete subjugation of India, and that only his death shattered these schemes. What we know for certain is that he conquered the Persian Empire, and never went far beyond its boundaries; and that when he was supposed to be making these vast and noble plans, he was in fact indulging in such monstrous antics as his mourning for his favourite Hephæstion, and as his main occupation he was drinking himself to death. So too Julius Cæsar is credited with the intention of doing just that one not impossible thing which would have secured the Roman Empire from its ultimate collapse — namely, the systematic conquest and civilization of Europe as far as the Baltic and the Dnieper. He was to have marched upon Germany, says Plutarch, through Parthia and

Scythia, round the north of the Caspian and Black Seas. Yet the fact we have to reconcile with this wise and magnificent project is that at the crest of his power, Cæsar, already a bald, middle-aged man, past the graces and hot impulses of youthful love, spent the better part of a year in Egypt, feasting and entertaining himself in amorous pleasantries with the Egyptian queen Cleopatra. And afterwards he brought her with him to Rome, where her influence over him was bitterly resented. Such complications with a woman mark the elderly sensualist or sentimentalist — he was fifty-four at the commencement of the *affaire* — rather than the master-ruler of men.

On the side of the superman idea of Cæsar, we have to count a bust in the Naples Museum. It represents a fine and intellectual face, very noble in its expression, and we can couple with that the story that his head, even at birth, was unusually large and finely formed. But there is really no satisfying evidence that this well-known bust does represent Cæsar, and it is hard to reconcile its austere serenity with the reputation for violent impulse and disorderliness that clung to him. Other busts of a quite different man are also, with more probability, ascribed to him.

There can be little doubt that he was a dissolute and extravagant young man — the scandals cluster thick about his sojourn in Bithynia, whither he fled from Sulla; he was the associate of the reprobate Clodius and the conspirator Catiline, and there is nothing in his political career to suggest any aim higher or remoter than his own advancement to power, and all the personal glory and indulgence that power makes possible. We will not attempt to tell here of the turns and devices of his career. Although he was of an old patrician family, he came into politics as the brilliant darling of the people. He spent great sums and incurred heavy debts to provide public festivals on the most lavish scale. He opposed the tradition of Sulla, and cherished the memory of Marius, who was his uncle by marriage. For a time he worked in conjunction with Crassus and Pompey, but after the death of Crassus he and Pompey came into conflict. By 49 B.C. he and Pompey, with their legions, he from the west and Pompey from the east, were fighting openly for predominance in the Roman state. He had broken the law by bringing his legions across the Rubicon, which was the boundary between his

command and Italy proper. At the battle of Pharsalos in Thessaly (48 B.C.) Pompey was routed, and, fleeing to Egypt, was murdered, leaving Cæsar more master of the Roman world than ever Sulla had been.

He was then created dictator for ten years in 46 B.C., and early in 45 B.C. he was made dictator for life. This was monarchy; if not hereditary monarchy, it was at least electoral life monarchy. It was unlimited opportunity to do his best for the world. And by the spirit and quality of his use of this dictatorial power during these four years we are bound to judge him. A certain reorganization of local administration he effected, and he seems to have taken up what was a fairly obvious necessity of the times, a project for the restoration of the two murdered seaports of Corinth and Carthage, whose destruction had wrecked the sea-life of the Mediterranean. But much more evident was the influence of Cleopatra and Egypt upon his mind. Like Alexander before him, his head seems to have been turned by the king-god tradition, assisted no doubt in his case by the adulation of that charming hereditary goddess, Cleopatra. We find evidence of exactly that same conflict upon the score of divine pretensions, between him and his personal friends, that we have already recorded in the case of Alexander. So far as the Hellenized east was concerned, the paying of divine honours to rulers was a familiar idea; but it was still repulsive to the lingering Aryanism of Rome.

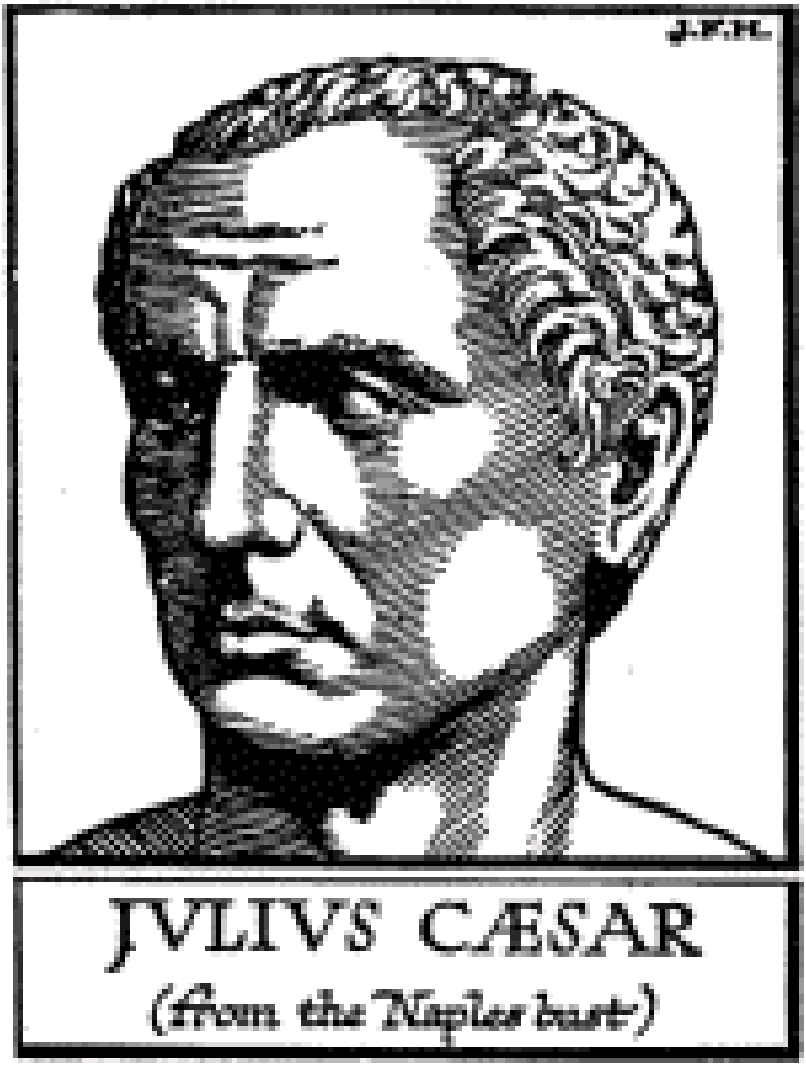

Antony, who had been his second in command at Pharsalos, was one of the chief of his flatterers. Plutarch describes a scene at the public games in which Antony tried to force a crown upon Cæsar, which Cæsar, after a little coyness and in face of the manifested displeasure of the crowd, refused. But he had adopted the ivory sceptre and throne, which were the traditional insignia of the ancient kings of Rome. His image was carried amidst that of the gods in the

opening *pompa* of the arena, and his statue was set up in a temple with an inscription, "To the Unconquerable God!" Priests even were appointed for his godhead. These things are not the symptoms of great-mindedness, but of a common man's megalomania. Cæsar's record of vulgar scheming for the tawdriest mockeries of personal worship is a silly and shameful record; it is incompatible with the idea that he was a wise and wonderful superman setting the world to rights.

Finally (44 B.C.) he was assassinated by a group of his own friends and supporters, to whom these divine aspirations had become intolerable. He was beset in the Senate, and stabbed in three and twenty places, dying at the foot of the statue of his fallen rival Pompey the Great. The scene marks the complete demoralization of the old Roman governing body. Brutus, the ringleader of the murderers, would have addressed the senators, but, confronted by this crisis, they were scuttling off in every direction. For the best part of a day Rome did not know what to make of this event; the murderers marched about with their bloody weapons through an undecided city, with no one gainsaying them and only a few joining them; then public opinion turned against them, some of their houses were attacked, and they had to hide and fly for their lives.

§ 6

But the trend of things was overwhelmingly towards monarchy. For thirteen years more the struggle of personalities went on. One single man is to be noted as inspired by broad ideas and an ambition not entirely egoistic, Cicero. He was a man of modest origin, whose eloquence and literary power had won him a prominent place in the Senate. He was a little tainted by the abusive tradition of Demosthenes, nevertheless he stands out, a noble and pathetically ineffective figure, pleading with the now utterly degenerate, base, and cowardly Senate for the high ideals of the Republic. He was a writer of great care and distinction, and the orations and private letters he has left us make him one of the most real and living figures of this period to the modern reader. He was proscribed and killed in 43 B.C., the year after the murder of Julius Cæsar, and his head and

hands were nailed up in the Roman forum. Octavian, who became at last the monarch of Rome, seems to have made an effort to save Cicero; that murder was certainly not his crime.

Here we cannot trace out the tangle of alliances and betrayals that ended in the ascendancy of this Octavian, the adopted heir of Julius Cæsar. The fate of the chief figures is interwoven with that of Cleopatra.

After the death of Cæsar, she set herself to capture the emotions and vanity of Antony, a much younger man than Cæsar, with whom she was probably already acquainted. For a time Octavian and Antony and a third figure, Lepidus, divided the Roman world just as Cæsar and Pompey had divided it before their final conflict. Octavian took the hardier west, and consolidated his power; Antony had the more gorgeous east — and Cleopatra. To Lepidus fell that picked bone, Carthaginian Africa. He seems to have been a good man of good traditions, set upon the restoration of Carthage rather than upon wealth or personal vanities. The mind of Antony succumbed to those same ancient ideas of divine kingship that had already proved too much for the mental equilibrium of Julius Cæsar. In the company of Cleopatra he gave himself up to love, amusements, and a dream of sensuous glory, until Octavian felt that the time was ripe to end these two Egyptian divinities.

In 32 B.C. Octavian induced the Senate to depose Antony from the command of the east, and proceeded to attack him. A great naval battle at Actium (31 B.C.) was decided by the unexpected desertion of Cleopatra with sixty ships in the midst of the fight. It is quite impossible for us to decide now whether this was due to premeditated treachery or to the sudden whim of a charming woman. The departure of these ships threw the fleet of Antony into hopeless confusion, which was increased by the headlong flight of this model lover in pursuit. He went off in a swift galley after her without informing his commanders. He left his followers to fight and die as they thought fit, and for a time they were incredulous that he had gone. The subsequent encounter of the two lovers and their reconciliation is a matter for ironical speculation on the part of Plutarch.

Octavian's net closed slowly round his rival. It is not improbable

that there was some sort of understanding between Octavian and Cleopatra, as perhaps in the time of Julius Cæsar there may have been between the queen and Antony. Antony gave way to much mournful posturing, varied by love scenes, during this last stage of his little drama. For a time he posed as an imitator of the cynic Timon, as one who had lost all faith in mankind, though one may think that his deserted sailors at Actium had better reason for such an attitude. Finally he found himself and Cleopatra besieged by Octavian in Alexandria. There were some sallies and minor successes, and Antony was loud with challenges to Octavian to decide the matter by personal combat. Being led to believe that Cleopatra had committed suicide, this star of romance stabbed himself, but so ineffectually as to die lingeringly, and he was carried off to expire in her presence (30 B.C.).

Plutarch's account of Antony, which was derived very largely from witnesses who had seen and known him, describes him as of heroic mould. He is compared to the demi-god Hercules, from whom indeed he claimed descent, and also to the Indian Bacchus. There is a disgusting but illuminating description of a scene in the Senate when he attempted to speak while drunk, and was overtaken by one of the least dignified concomitants of intoxication.

For a little while Cleopatra still clung to life, and perhaps to the hope that she might reduce Octavian to the same divine rôle that had already been played by Julius Cæsar and Antony. She had an interview with Octavian, in which she presented herself as beauty in distress and very lightly clad. But when it became manifest that Octavian lacked the godlike spark, and that his care for her comfort and welfare was dictated chiefly by his desire to exhibit her in a triumphal procession through the streets of Rome, she also committed suicide. An asp was smuggled to her past the Roman sentries, concealed in a basket of figs, and by its fangs she died.

Octavian seems to have been almost entirely free from the divine aspirations of Julius Cæsar and Antony. He was neither God nor romantic hero; he was a man. He was a man of far greater breadth and capacity than any other player in this last act of the Republican drama in Rome. All things considered, he was perhaps the best thing that could have happened to Rome at that time. He "voluntarily

resigned the extraordinary powers which he had held since 43, and, to quote his own words, 'handed over the republic to the control of the Senate and the people of Rome.' The old constitutional machinery was once more set in motion; the Senate, assembly, and magistrates resumed their functions, and Octavian himself was hailed as the 'restorer of the commonwealth and the champion of freedom.' It was not so easy to determine what relation he himself, the actual master of the Roman world, should occupy towards this revived republic. His abdication, in any real sense of the word, would have simply thrown everything back into confusion. The interests of peace and order required that he should retain at least the substantial part of his authority; and this object was in fact accomplished, and the rule of the emperors founded, in a manner which has no parallel in history. Any revival of the kingly title was out of the question, and Octavian himself expressly refused the dictatorship. Nor was any new office created or any new official title invented for his benefit. But by Senate and people he was invested according to the old constitutional forms with certain powers, as many citizens had been before him, and so took his place by the side of the lawfully appointed magistrates of the republic; only, to mark his pre-eminent dignity, as the first of them all, the Senate decreed that he should take as an additional cognomen that of 'Augustus,' while in common parlance he was henceforth styled Princeps, a simple title of courtesy, familiar to republican usage and conveying no other idea than that of a recognized primacy and precedence over his fellow-citizens. The ideal sketched by Cicero in his *De Republica*, of a constitutional president of a free republic, was apparently realized; but it was only in appearance. For in fact the special prerogatives conferred upon Octavian gave him back in substance the autocratic authority he had resigned, and as between the restored republic and its new *princeps* the balance of power was overwhelmingly on the side of the latter."

§ 7

In this manner it was that Roman republicanism ended in a *princeps* or ruling prince, and the first great experiment in a self-governing

community on a scale larger than that of tribe or city, collapsed and failed.

The essence of its failure was that it could not sustain unity. In its early stages its citizens, both patrician and plebeian, had a certain tradition of justice and good faith, and of the loyalty of all citizens to the law, and of the goodness of the law for all citizens; it clung to this idea of the importance of the law and of law-abidingness nearly into the first century B.C. But the unforeseen invention and development of money, the temptations and disruptions of imperial expansion, the entanglement of electoral methods, weakened and swamped this tradition by presenting old issues in new disguises under which the judgment did not recognize them, and by enabling men to be loyal to the professions of citizenship and disloyal to its spirit. The bond of the Roman people had always been a moral rather than a religious bond; their religion was sacrificial and superstitious; it embodied no such great ideas of a divine leader and of a sacred mission as Judaism was developing. As the idea of citizenship failed and faded before the new occasions, there remained no inner, that is to say no real, unity in the system at all. Every man tended more and more to do what was right in his own eyes.

Under such conditions there was no choice between chaos and a return to monarchy, to the acceptance of some chosen individual as the one unifying will in the state. Of course in that return there is always hidden the expectation that the monarch will become as it were magic, will cease to be merely a petty human being, and will think and feel as something greater and more noble, as indeed a state personage; and of course monarchy invariably fails to satisfy that expectation. We shall glance at the extent of this failure in the brief review we shall presently make of the emperors of Rome. We shall find at last one of the more constructive of these emperors, Constantine the Great, conscious of his own inadequacy as a unifying power, turning to the faith, the organization, and teaching network of one of the new religious movements in the empire, to supply just that permeating and correlating factor in men's minds that was so manifestly wanting.

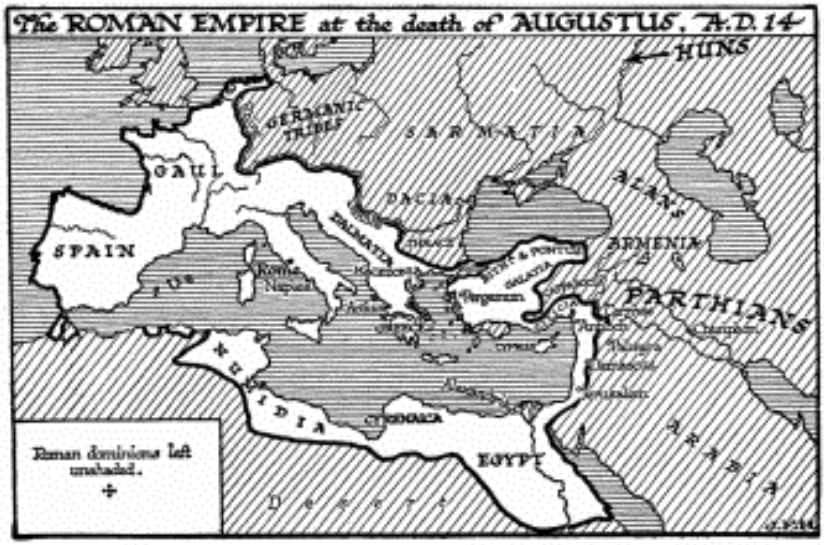

With Cæsar, the civilization of Europe and Western Asia went back to monarchy, and, through monarchy, assisted presently by organized Christianity, it sought to achieve peace, righteousness, happiness, and world order for close upon eighteen centuries. Then almost suddenly it began reverting to republicanism, first in one country and then in another, and, assisted by the new powers of printing and the press and of organized general education, and by the universalist religious ideas in which the world had been soaked for generations, it has now resumed again the effort to create a republican world-state and a world-wide scheme of economic righteousness which the Romans had made so prematurely and in which they had so utterly and disastrously failed.

Certain conditions, we are now beginning to perceive, are absolutely necessary to such a creation; conditions which it is inconceivable that any pre-Christian Roman could have regarded as possible. We may still think the attainment of these conditions a vastly laborious and difficult and uncertain undertaking, but we understand that the attempt must be made because no other prospect before us gives even a promise of happiness or self-respect or preservation of our kind. The first of these conditions is that there should be a common political idea in the minds of all men, an idea of

the state thought of as the personal possession of each individual and as the backbone fact of his scheme of duties. In the early days of Rome, when it was a little visible state, twenty miles square, such notions could be and were developed in children in their homes, and by what they saw and heard of the political lives of their fathers; but in a larger country such as Rome had already become before the war with Pyrrhus, there was a need of an organized teaching of the history, of the main laws, and of the general intentions of the state towards everyone if this moral unity was to be maintained. But the need was never realized, and no attempt at any such teaching was ever made. At the time it could not have been made. It is inconceivable that it could have been made. The knowledge was not there, and there existed no class from which the needed teachers could be drawn and no conception of an organization for any such systematic moral and intellectual training as the teaching organization of Christianity, with its creeds and catechisms and sermons and confirmations, presently supplied.

Moreover, we know nowadays that even a universal education of this sort supplies only the basis for a healthy republican state. Next to education there must come abundant, prompt, and truthful information of what is going on in the state, and frank and free discussion of the issues of the time. Even nowadays these functions are performed only very imperfectly and badly by the press we have and by our publicists and politicians; but badly though it is done, the thing is done, and the fact that it is done at all argues that it may ultimately be done well. In the Roman state it was not even attempted. The Roman citizen got his political facts from rumour and the occasional orator. He stood wedged in the forum, imperfectly hearing a distant speaker. He probably misconceived every issue upon which he voted.

And of the monstrous ineffectiveness of the Roman voting system we have already written.

Unable to surmount or remove these obstacles to a sane and effective popular government, the political instincts of the Roman mind turned towards monarchy. But it was not monarchy of the later European type, not hereditary monarchy, which was now installed in Rome. The *princeps* was really like an American war-time president

elected not for four years, but for life, able to appoint senators instead of being restrained by an elected senate, and with a rabble popular meeting in the place of the house of representatives. He was also *pontifex maximus*, chief of the sacrificial priests, a function unknown at Washington; and in practice it became usual for him to designate and train his successor and to select for that honour a son or an adopted son or a near relation whom he could trust. The power of the *princeps* was in itself enormous to entrust to the hands of a single man without any adequate checks, but it was further enhanced by the tradition of monarch-worship which had now spread out from Egypt over the entire Hellenized east, and which was coming to Rome in the head of every Oriental slave and immigrant. By natural and imperceptible degrees the idea of the god emperor came to dominate the whole Romanized world.

Only one thing presently remained to remind the god emperor that he was mortal, and that was the army. The god emperor was never safe upon the Olympus of the Palatine Hill at Rome. He was only secure while he was the beloved captain of his legions. And as a consequence only the hardworking emperors who kept their legions active and in close touch with themselves had long reigns. The sword overhung the emperor and spurred him to incessant activity. If he left things to his generals, one of those generals presently replaced him. This spur was perhaps the redeeming feature of the Roman Imperial system. In the greater, compacter, and securer empire of China there was not the same need of legions, and so there was not the same swift end for lazy or dissipated or juvenile monarchs that overtook such types in Rome.

XXIX

THE CÆSARS BETWEEN THE SEA AND THE GREAT PLAINS OF THE OLD WORLD

§ 1. *A Short Catalogue of Emperors.* § 2. *Roman Civilization at its Zenith.* § 3. *Limitations of the Roman Mind.* § 4. *The Stir of the Great Plains.* § 5. *The Western (true Roman) Empire crumples up.* § 6. *The Eastern (revived Hellenic) Empire.*

§ 1

WESTERN writers are apt, through their patriotic predispositions, to overestimate the organization, civilizing work, and security of the absolute monarchy that established itself in Rome after the accession of Augustus Cæsar. From it we derive the political traditions of Britain, France, Spain, Germany, and Italy, and these countries loom big in the perspectives of European writers. By the scale of a world history the Roman Empire ceases to seem so overwhelmingly important. It lasted about four centuries in all before it was completely shattered. The Byzantine Empire was no genuine continuation of it; it was a resumption of the Hellenic Empire of Alexander; it spoke Greek; its monarch had a Roman title no doubt, but so for that matter had the late Tsar of Bulgaria. During its four centuries of life the empire of Rome had phases of division and complete chaos; its prosperous years, if they are gathered together and added up, do not amount in all to a couple of centuries. Compared with the quiet steady expansion, the security, and the civilizing task of the contemporary Chinese Empire, or with Egypt between 4000 and 1000 B.C., orwith Sumeria before the Semitic conquest, this amounts to a mere incident in history. The Persian Empire of Cyrus, again, which reached from the Hellespont to the Indus, had as high a standard of civilization; and its homelands remained unconquered and fairly prosperous for over two hundred years. Its predecessor, the Median Empire, had endured for half a century. After a brief submergence by Alexander the Great, it rose again as the Seleucid Empire, which endured for some centuries. The Seleucid dominion shrank at last to the west of the Euphrates, and

became a part of the Roman Empire; but Persia, revived by the Parthians as a new Persian Empire, first under the Arsacids and then under the Sassanids, outlived the empire of Rome. The Sassanids repeatedly carried war into the Byzantine Empire, and held the line of the Euphrates steadfastly. In 616 A.D. under Chosroes II, they were holding Damascus, Jerusalem, and Egypt, and threatening the Hellespont. But there has been no tradition to keep alive the glories of the Sassanids. The reputation of Rome has flourished through the prosperity of her heirs. The tradition of Rome is greater than its reality.

History distinguishes two chief groups of Roman emperors who were great administrators. The first of these groups began with: —

Augustus Cæsar (27 B.C. to 14 A.D.), the Octavian of the previous section, who worked hard at the reorganization of the provincial governments and at financial reform. He established a certain tradition of lawfulness and honesty in the bureaucracy, and he restrained the more monstrous corruptions and tyrannies by giving the provincial citizen the right to appeal to Cæsar. But he fixed the European boundaries of the empire along the Rhine and Danube, so leaving Germany, which is the necessary backbone of a safe and prosperous Europe, to barbarism; and he made a similar limitation in the east at the Euphrates, leaving Armenia independent, to be a constant bone of contention with the Arsacids and Sassanids. It is doubtful whether he considered that he was fixing the final boundaries of the empire along these lines, or whether he thought it desirable to consolidate for some years before any further attempts at expansion.

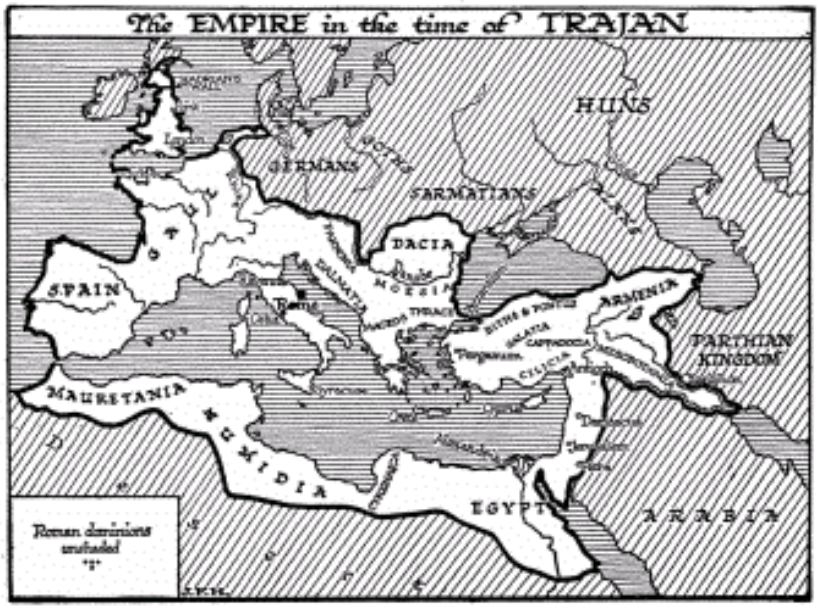

Tiberius (14 to 37 A.D.) is also described as a capable ruler, but he became intensely unpopular in Rome, and it would seem that he was addicted to gross and abominable vices. But his indulgence in these and his personal tyrannies and cruelties did not interfere with the general prosperity of the empire. It is difficult to judge him; nearly all our sources of information are manifestly hostile to him.

Caligula (37 to 41 A.D.) was insane, but the empire carried on during four years of eccentricity at its head. Finally he was murdered in his palace by his servants, and there seems to have been an attempt to restore the senatorial government, an attempt which was promptly suppressed by the household legions.

Claudius (41 to 54 A.D.), the uncle of Caligula, upon whom the choice of the soldiers fell, was personally uncouth, but he seems to have been a hardworking and fairly capable administrator. He advanced the westward boundary of the empire by annexing the southern half of Britain. He was poisoned by Agrippina, the mother of his adopted son, Nero, and a woman of great charm and force of character.

Nero (54 to 68 A.D.), like Tiberius, is credited with monstrous vices and cruelties, but the empire had acquired sufficient momentum

to carry on through his fourteen years of power. He certainly murdered his devoted but troublesome mother and his wife, the latter as a mark of devotion to a lady, Poppæa, who then married him; but the domestic infelicities of the Cæsars are no part of our present story. The reader greedy for criminal particulars must go to the classical source, Suetonius. These various Cæsars and their successors and their womenkind were probably no worse essentially than most weak and passionate human beings, but they had no real religion, being themselves gods; they had no wide knowledge on which to build high ambitions, their women were fierce and often illiterate, and they were under no restraints of law or custom. They were surrounded by creatures ready to stimulate their slightest wishes and to translate their vaguest impulses into action. What are mere passing black thoughts and angry impulses with most of us became therefore deeds with them. Before a man condemns Nero as a different species of being from himself, he should examine his own secret thoughts very carefully. Nero became intensely unpopular in Rome, and it is interesting to note that he became unpopular not because he murdered and poisoned his intimate relations, but because there was an insurrection in Britain under a certain Queen Boadicea, and the Roman forces suffered a great disaster (61 A.D.), and because there was a destructive earthquake in Southern Italy. The Roman population, true to its Etruscan streak, never religious and always superstitious, did not mind a wicked Cæsar, but it did object strongly to an unpropitious one. The Spanish legions rose in insurrection under an elderly general of seventy-three, Galba, whom they acclaimed emperor. He advanced upon Rome carried in a litter. Nero, hopeless of support, committed suicide (68 A.D.).

Galba, however, was only one of a group of would-be emperors. The generals in command of the Rhine legions, the Palatine troops, and the eastern armies, each attempted to seize power. Rome saw four emperors in a year, Galba, Otho, Vitellus, and Vespasian; the fourth, Vespasian (69-79 A.D.), from the eastern command, had the firmest grip, and held and kept the prize. But with Nero the line of Cæsars born or adopted ended. Cæsar ceased to be the family name of the Roman emperors, and became a title, Divus Cæsar, the Cæsar god. The monarchy took a step forward towards orientalism by an

increased insistence upon the worship of the ruler.

Vespasian (69 to 79 A.D.) and his sons Titus (79 A.D.) and Domitian (81 A.D.) constitute, as it were, a second dynasty, the Flavian; then after the assassination of Domitian came a group of emperors related to one another not by blood, but by adoption, the adoptive emperors. Nerva (96 A.D.) was the first of this line, and Trajan (98 A.D.) the second. They were followed by the indefatigable Hadrian (117 A.D.), Antoninus Pius (138 A.D.), and Marcus Aurelius (161 to 180 A.D.). Under both the Flavians and the Antonines the boundaries of the empire crept forward again. North Britain was annexed in 84 A.D., the angle of the Rhine and Danube was filled in, and what is now Transylvania was made into a new province, Dacia. Trajan also invaded Parthia and annexed Armenia, Assyria, and Mesopotamia. Under his rule the empire reached its maximum extent. Hadrian, his successor, was of a cautious and retractile disposition. He abandoned these new eastern conquests of Trajan's, and he also abandoned North Britain. He adopted the Chinese idea of the limiting wall against barbarism, an excellent idea so long as the pressure of population on the imperial side of the wall is greater than the pressure from without, but worthless otherwise. He built Hadrian's wall across Britain, and a palisade between the Rhine and the Danube. The full tide of Roman expansion was past, and in the reign of his successor the North European frontier was already actively on the defensive against the aggression of Teutonic and Slavic tribes.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus is one of those figures in history about which men differ widely and intensely. To some critics he seems to have been a priggish person; he dabbled in religions, and took a pleasure in conducting priestly ceremonies in priestly garments — a disposition offensive to common men — and they resent his alleged failure to restrain the wickedness of his wife Faustina. The stories of his domestic infelicity, however, rest on no very good foundations, though certainly his son Commodus was a startling person for a good home to produce. On the other hand, he was unquestionably a devoted and industrious emperor, holding social order together through a series of disastrous years of vile weather, great floods, failing harvests and famine, barbaric raids and

revolts, and at last a terrible universal pestilence. Says F. W. Farrar, quoted in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "He regarded himself as being, in fact, the servant of all. The registry of the citizens, the suppression of litigation, the elevation of public morals, the care of minors, the retrenchment of public expenses, the limitation of gladiatorial games and shows, the care of roads, the restoration of senatorial privileges, the appointment of none but worthy magistrates, even the regulation of street traffic, these and numberless other duties so completely absorbed his attention that, in spite of indifferent health, they often kept him at severe labour from early morning till long after midnight. His position, indeed, often necessitated his presence at games and shows; but on these occasions he occupied himself either in reading, or being read to, or in writing notes. He was one of those who held that nothing should be done hastily, and that few crimes were worse than waste of time."

But it is not by these industries that he is now remembered. He was one of the greatest exponents of the Stoical philosophy, and in his *Meditations*, jotted down in camp and court, he has put so much of a human soul on record as to raise up for himself in each generation a fresh series of friends and admirers.

With the death of Marcus Aurelius this phase of unity and comparatively good government came to an end, and his son Commodus inaugurated an age of disorder. Practically the empire had been at peace within itself for two hundred years. Now for a hundred years the student of Roman history must master the various criminology of a number of inadequate emperors, while the frontier crumbled and receded under barbarian pressure. One or two names only seem to be the names of able men: such were Septimius Severus, Aurelian, and Probus. Septimius Severus was a Carthaginian, and his sister was never able to master Latin. She conducted her Roman household in the Punic language, which must have made Cato the elder turn in his grave. The rest of the emperors of this period were chiefly adventurers too unimportant to the general scheme of things for us to note. At times there were separate emperors ruling in different parts of the distracted empire. From our present point of view the Emperor Decius, who was defeated and killed during a great raid of the Goths into Thrace in 251 A.D., and

the Emperor Valerian, who, together with the great city of Antioch, was captured by the Sassanid Shah of Persia in 260 A.D., are worthy of notice because they mark the insecurity of the whole Roman system, and the character of the outer pressure upon it. So too is Claudius, "the Conqueror of the Goths," because he gained a great victory over these people at Nish in Serbia (270 A.D.), and because he died, like Pericles, of the plague.

Through all these centuries intermittent pestilences were playing a part in weakening races and altering social conditions, a part that has still to be properly worked out by historians. There was, for instance, a great plague throughout the empire between the years 164 and 180 A.D. in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. It probably did much to disorganize social life and prepare the way for the troubles that followed the accession of Commodus. This same pestilence devastated China, as we shall note in § 4 of this chapter. Considerable fluctuations of climate had also been going on in the first and second centuries, producing stresses and shiftings of population, whose force historians have still to appraise. But before we go on to tell of the irruptions of the barbarians and the attempts of such later emperors as Diocletian (284 A.D.) and Constantine the Great (312 A.D.) to hold together the heaving and splitting vessel of the state we must describe something of the conditions of human life in the Roman Empire during its two centuries of prosperity.

§ 2

The impatient reader of history may be disposed to count the two centuries of order between 27 B.C. and 180 A.D. as among the wasted opportunities of mankind. It was an age of spending rather than of creation, an age of architecture and trade in which the rich grew richer and the poor poorer and the soul and spirit of man decayed. Looked at superficially, as a man might have looked at it from an aeroplane a couple of thousand feet in the air, there was a considerable flourish of prosperity. Everywhere, from York to Cyrene and from Lisbon to Antioch, he would have noted large and well-built cities, with temples, theatres, amphitheatres, markets, and

the like; thousands of such cities, supplied by great aqueducts and served by splendid high roads, whose stately remains astonish us to this day. He would have noted an abundant cultivation, and have soared too high to discover that this cultivation was the grudging work of slaves. Upon the Mediterranean and the Red Sea a considerable traffic would be visible; and the sight of two ships alongside each other would not at that altitude reveal the fact that one was a pirate and plundering the other.

And even if the observer came down to a closer scrutiny, there would still be much accumulated improvement to note. There had been a softening of manners and a general refinement since the days of Julius Cæsar. With this there had been a real increase of humane feeling. During the period of the Antonines, laws for the protection of slaves from extreme cruelty came into existence, and it was no longer permissible to sell them to the gladiatorial schools. Not only were the cities outwardly more splendidly built, but within the homes of the wealthy there had been great advances in the art of decoration. The gross feasting, animal indulgence, and vulgar display of the earlier days of Roman prosperity were now tempered by a certain refinement. Dress had become richer, finer, and more beautiful. There was a great trade in silk with remote China, for the mulberry tree and the silkworm had not yet begun to move west. By the time silk had ended its long and varied journey to Rome it was worth its weight in gold. Yet it was used abundantly, and there was a steady flow of the precious metals eastward in exchange. There had been very considerable advances in gastronomy and the arts of entertainment. Petronius describes a feast given by a wealthy man under the early Cæsars, a remarkable succession of courses, some delicious, some amazing, exceeding anything that even the splendours and imagination of modern New York could produce; and the festival was varied by music and by displays of tight-rope dancing, juggling, Homeric recitations, and the like. There was a considerable amount of what we may describe as “rich men’s culture” throughout the empire. Books were far more plentiful than they had been before the time of the Cæsars. Men prided themselves upon their libraries, even when the cares and responsibilities of property made them too busy to give their literary treasures much

more than a passing examination. The knowledge of Greek spread eastward and of Latin westward, and if the prominent men of this or that British or Gallic city lacked any profound Greek culture themselves, they could always turn to some slave or other, whose learning had been guaranteed of the highest quality by the slave-dealer, to supply the deficiency.

The generation of Cato had despised Greeks and the Greek language, but now all that was changed. The prestige of Greek learning of an approved and settled type was as high in the Rome of Antoninus Pius as it was in the Oxford and Cambridge of Victorian England. The Greek scholar received the same mixture of unintelligent deference and practical contempt. There was a very considerable amount of Greek scholarship, and of written criticism and commentary. Indeed there was so great an admiration for Greek letters as almost completely to destroy the Greek spirit; and the recorded observations of Aristotle were valued so highly as to preclude any attempt to imitate his organization of further inquiry. It is noteworthy that while Aristotle in the original Greek fell like seed upon stony soil in the Roman world, he was, in Syrian and Arabic translations, immensely stimulating to the Arabic civilization of a thousand years later. Nor were the æsthetic claims of Latin neglected in this heyday of Greek erudition. As Greece had her epics and so forth, the Romans felt that they too must have their epics. The age of Augustus was an age of imitative literature. Virgil in the Æneid set himself modestly but resolutely, and with an elegant sort of successfulness, to parallel Homer, just as Lord Tennyson, the poet laureate of Queen Victoria, using the mediæval literature about King Arthur as his material, did a similar service for Great Britain in his *Idylls of the King*.

All this wide-spread culture of the wealthy householder is to the credit of the early Roman Empire, and Gibbon makes the most of it in the sunny review of the age of the Antonines with which he opens his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. His design for that great work demanded a prelude of splendour and tranquillity. But he was far too shrewd and subtle not to qualify his apparent approval of the conditions he describes. “Under the Roman Empire,” he writes, “the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously but

incessantly employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of convenience, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride, or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent mechanic and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasure. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffuse energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome." And so on, with a sting of satire in every fold of the florid description.

If we look a little more widely than a hovering aeroplane can do at the movement of races upon the earth, or a little more closely than an inspection of streets, amphitheatres, and banquets goes, into the souls and thoughts of men, we shall find that this impressive display of material prosperity is merely the shining garment of a polity blind to things without and things within, and blind to the future. If, for instance, we compare the two centuries of Roman ascendancy and opportunity, the first and second centuries A.D., with the two centuries of Greek and Hellenic life beginning about 466 B.C. with the supremacy of Pericles in Athens, we are amazed by — we cannot call it an inferiority, it is a complete absence of science. The incuriousness of the Roman rich and the Roman rulers was more massive and monumental even than their architecture.

In one field of knowledge particularly we might have expected the Romans to have been alert and enterprising, and that was geography.

Their political interests demanded a steadfast inquiry into the state of affairs beyond their frontiers, and yet that inquiry was never made. There is practically no literature of Roman travel beyond the imperial limits, no such keen and curious accounts as Herodotus gives of the Scythians, the Africans, and the like. There is nothing in Latin to compare with the early descriptions of India and Siberia that are to be found in Chinese. The Roman legions went at one time into Scotland, yet there remains no really intelligent account of Picts or Scots, much less any glance at the seas beyond. Such explorations as those of Hanno or Pharaoh Necho seem to have been altogether beyond the scope of the Roman imagination. It is probable that after the destruction of Carthage the amount of shipping that went out into the Atlantic through the Straits of Gibraltar fell to inconsiderable proportions. Still more impossible in this world of vulgar wealth, enslaved intelligence, and bureaucratic rule was any further development of the astronomy and physiography of Alexandria. The Romans do not seem even to have inquired what manner of men wove the silk and prepared the spices or collected the amber and the pearls that came into their markets. Yet the channels of inquiry were open and easy; pathways led in every direction to the most convenient "jumping-off places" for explorers it is possible to imagine.

"The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forests of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought overland from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube, and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets and other manufactures of the East; but the most important branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of a hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon, was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet to

Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January, and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported, on the backs of camels, from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire."

Yet Rome was content to feast, exact, grow rich, and watch its gladiatorial shows without the slightest attempt to learn anything of India, China, Persia or Scythia, Buddha or Zoroaster, or about the Huns, the Negroes, the people of Scandinavia, or the secrets of the western sea.

When we realize the uninspiring quality of the social atmosphere which made this indifference possible, we are able to account for the failure of Rome during its age of opportunity to develop any physical or chemical science, and as a consequence to gain any increased control over matter. Most of the physicians in Rome were Greeks and many of them slaves — for the Roman wealthy did not even understand that a bought mind is a spoilt mind. Yet this was not due to any want of natural genius among the Roman people; it was due entirely to their social and economic conditions. From the Middle Ages to the present day Italy has produced a great number of brilliant scientific men. And one of the most shrewd and inspired of scientific writers was an Italian, Lucretius, who lived between the time of Marius and Julius Cæsar (about 100 B.C. to about 55 B.C.). This amazing man was of the quality of Leonardo da Vinci (also an Italian) or Newton. He wrote a long Latin poem about the processes of Nature, *De Rerum Natura*, in which he guessed with astonishing insight about the constitution of matter and about the early history of mankind. Osborn in his *Old Stone Age* quotes with admiration long passages from Lucretius about primitive man, so good and true are they to-day. But this was an individual display, a seed that bore no fruit. Roman science was stillborn, into a suffocating atmosphere of vile wealth and military oppression. The true figure to represent the classical Roman attitude to science is not Lucretius, but that Roman soldier who hacked Archimedes to death at the storming of Syracuse.

And if physical and biological science wilted and died on the stony soil of Roman prosperity, political and social science never had a chance to germinate. Political discussion would have been treason

to the emperor, social or economic inquiry would have threatened the rich. So Rome, until disaster fell upon her, never examined into her own social health, never questioned the ultimate value of her hard officialism. Consequently, there was no one who realized the gravity of her failure to develop any intellectual imagination to hold her empire together, any general education in common ideas that would make men fight and work for the empire as men will fight and work for a dear possession. But the rulers of the Roman Empire did not want their citizens to fight for anything in any spirit at all. The rich had eaten the heart out of their general population, and they were content with the meal they had made. The legions were filled with Germans, Britons, Numidians, and the like; and until the very end the wealthy Romans thought they could go on buying barbarians to defend them against the enemy without and the rebel poor within. How little was done in education by the Romans is shown by an account of what was done. Says Mr. H. Stuart Jones, "Julius Cæsar bestowed Roman citizenship on 'teachers of the liberal arts'; Vespasian endowed professorships of Greek and Latin oratory at Rome; and later emperors, especially Antoninus Pius, extended the same benefits to the provinces. Local enterprise and munificence were also devoted to the cause of education; we learn from the correspondence of the younger Pliny that public schools were founded in the towns of Northern Italy. But though there was a wide diffusion of knowledge under the empire, there was no true intellectual progress. Augustus, it is true, gathered about him;the most brilliant writers of his time, and the début of the new monarchy coincided with the Golden Age of Roman literature; but this was of brief duration, and the beginnings of the Christian era saw the triumph of classicism and the first steps in the decline which awaits all literary movements which look to the past rather than the future."

There is a diagnosis of the intellectual decadence of the age in a treatise upon the sublime by a Greek writer who wrote somewhen in the second, third, or fourth century A.D., and who may possibly have been Longinus Philologus, which states very distinctly one manifest factor in the mental sickness of the Roman world. He is cited by Gibbon: "The sublime Longinus, who, in somewhat a later period and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient

Athens, observes and laments the degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. 'In the same manner,' says he, 'as some children always remain pigmies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined, thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand themselves or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients; who, living under a popular government, wrote with all the same freedom as they acted.'"

But this critic grasped only one aspect of the restraints upon mental activity. The leading-strings that kept the Roman mind in a permanent state of infantilism constituted a double servitude; they were economic as well as political. The account Gibbon gives of the life and activities of a certain Herodes Atticus, who lived in the time of Hadrian, shows just how little was the share of the ordinary citizen in the outward magnificence of the time. This Atticus had an immense fortune, and he amused himself by huge architectural benefactions to various cities. Athens was given a racecourse and a theatre of cedar, curiously carved, was set up there to the memory of his wife; a theatre was built at Corinth, a racecourse was given to Delphi, baths to Thermopylæ, an aqueduct to Canusium, and so on and so on. One is struck by the spectacle of a world of slaves and common people who were not consulted and over whose heads, without any participation on their part, this rich man indulged in his displays of "taste." Numerous inscriptions in Greece and Asia still preserve the name of Herodes Atticus, "patron and benefactor," who ranged about the empire as though it was his private garden, commemorating himself by these embellishments. He did not confine himself to splendid buildings. He was also a philosopher, though none of his wisdom has survived. He had a large villa near Athens, and there philosophers were welcome guests so long as they convinced their patron of the soundness of their pretensions, received his discourses with respect, and did not offend him by insolent controversy.

The world, it is evident, was not progressing during these two centuries of Roman prosperity. But was it happy in its stagnation? There are signs of a very unmistakable sort that the great mass of

human beings in the empire, a mass numbering something between a hundred and a hundred and fifty millions, was not happy, was probably very acutely miserable, beneath its outward magnificence. True there were no great wars and conquests within the empire, little of famine or fire or sword to afflict mankind; but, on the other hand, there was a terrible restraint by government, and still more by the property of the rich, upon the free activities of nearly everyone. Life for the great majority who were neither rich nor official, nor the womankind and the parasites of the rich and official, must have been laborious, tedious, and lacking in interest and freedom to a degree that a modern mind can scarcely imagine.

Three things in particular may be cited to sustain the opinion that this period was a period of widespread unhappiness. The first of these is the extraordinary apathy of the population to political events. They saw one upstart pretender to empire succeed another with complete indifference. Such things did not seem to matter to them; hope had gone. When presently the barbarians poured into the empire, there was nothing but the legions to face them. There was no popular uprising against them at all. Everywhere the barbarians must have been outnumbered if only the people had resisted. But the people did not resist. It is manifest that to the bulk of its inhabitants the Roman Empire did not seem to be a thing worth fighting for. To the slaves and common people the barbarian probably seemed to promise more freedom and less indignity than the pompous rule of the imperial official and grinding employment by the rich. The looting and burning of palaces and an occasional massacre did not shock the folk of the Roman underworld as it shocked the wealthy and cultured people to whom we owe such accounts as we have of the breaking down of the imperial system. Great numbers of slaves and common people probably joined the barbarians, who knew little of racial or patriotic prejudices, and were openhanded to any promising recruit. No doubt in many cases the population found that the barbarian was a worse infliction even than the tax-gatherer and the slave-driver. But that discovery came too late for resistance or the restoration of the old order.

And as a second symptom that points to the same conclusion that life was hardly worth living for the poor and the slaves and the

majority of people during the age of the Antonines, we must reckon the steady depopulation of the empire. People refused to have children. They did so, we suggest, because their homes were not safe from oppression, because in the case of slaves there was no security that the husband and wife would not be separated, because there was no pride nor reasonable hope in children any more. In modern states the great breeding-ground has always been the agricultural countryside where there is a more or less secure peasantry; but under the Roman Empire the peasant and the small cultivator was either a worried debtor, or he was held in a network of restraints that made him a spiritless serf, or he had been ousted altogether by the gang production of slaves.

A third indication that this outwardly flourishing period was one of deep unhappiness and mental distress for vast multitudes, is to be found in the spread of new religious movements throughout the population. We have seen how in the case of the little country of Judea a whole nation may be infected by the persuasion that life is unsatisfactory and *wrong*, and that something is needed to set it right. The mind of the Jews, as we know, had crystallized about the idea of the Promise of the One True God and the coming of a Saviour or Messiah. Rather different ideas from these were spreading through the Roman Empire. They were but varying answers to one universal question: "What must we do for salvation?" A frequent and natural consequence of disgust with life as it is, is to throw the imagination forward to an after-life, which is to redeem all the miseries and injustices of this one. The belief in such compensation is a great opiate for present miseries. Egyptian religion had long been saturated with anticipations of immortality, and we have seen how central was that idea to the cult of Serapis and Isis at Alexandria. The ancient mysteries of Demeter and Orpheus, the mysteries of the Mediterranean race, revived and made a sort of *theocrasia* with these new cults.

A second great religious movement was Mithraism, a development of Zoroastrianism, a religion of very ancient Aryan origin, traceable back to the Indo-Iranian people before they split into Persians and Hindus. We cannot here examine its mysteries in any detail. Mithras was a god of light, a Sun of Righteousness, and in the

shrines of the cult he was always represented as slaying a sacred bull whose blood was the seed of life. Suffice it that, complicated with many added ingredients, this worship of Mithras came into the Roman Empire about the time of Pompey the Great, and began to spread very widely under the Cæsars and Antonines. Like the Isis religion, it promised immortality. Its followers were mainly slaves, soldiers, and distressed people. In its methods of worship, in the burning of candles before the altar and so forth, it had a certain superficial resemblance to the later developments of the ritual of the third great religious movement in the Roman world, Christianity.

Christianity also was a doctrine of immortality and salvation, and it too spread at first chiefly among the lowly and unhappy. Christianity has been denounced by modern writers as a "slave religion." It was. It took the slaves and the downtrodden, and it gave them hope and restored their self-respect, so that they stood up for righteousness like men and faced persecution and torment. But of the origins and quality of Christianity we will tell more fully in a later chapter.

§ 3

We have already shown reason for our statement that the Roman imperial system was a very unsound political growth indeed. It is absurd to write of its statecraft; it had none. At its best it had a bureaucratic administration which kept the peace of the world for a time and failed altogether to secure it.

Let us note here the main factors in its failure.

The clue to all its failure lies in the absence of any free mental activity and any organization for the increase, development, and application of knowledge. It respected wealth and it despised science. It gave government to the rich, and imagined that wise men could be bought and bargained for in the slave markets when they were needed. It was, therefore, a colossally ignorant and unimaginative empire. It foresaw nothing.

It had no strategic foresight, because it was blankly ignorant of geography and ethnology. It knew nothing of the conditions of Russia, Central Asia, and the East. It was content to keep the Rhine

and Danube as its boundaries, and to make no effort to Romanize Germany. But we need only look at the map of Europe and Asia showing the Roman Empire to see that a willing and incorporated Germany was absolutely essential to the life and security of Western Europe. Excluded, Germany became a wedge that needed only the impact of the Hunnish hammer to split up the whole system.

Moreover, this neglect to push the boundaries northward to the Baltic left that sea and the North Sea as a region of experiment and training and instruction in seamanship for the Northmen of Scandinavia, Denmark, and the Frisian coast. But Rome went on its way quite stupidly, oblivious to the growth of a newer and more powerful piracy in the north.

The same unimaginative quality made the Romans leave the seaways of the Mediterranean undeveloped. When presently the barbarians pressed down to the warm water, we read of no swift transport of armies from Spain or Africa or Asia to the rescue of Italy and the Adriatic coasts. Instead, we see the Vandals becoming masters of the western Mediterranean without so much as a naval battle.

The Romans had been held at the Euphrates by an array of mounted archers. It was clear that as the legion was organized it was useless in wide open country, and it should have been equally clear that sooner or later the mounted nomads of east Germany, south Russia, or Parthia were bound to try conclusions with the empire. But the Romans, two hundred years after Cæsar's time, were still marching about, the same drilled and clanking cohorts they had always been, easily ridden round and shot to pieces. The empire had learnt nothing even from Carrhæ.

The incapacity of the Roman imperialism for novelty in methods of transport again is amazing. It was patent that their power and unity depended upon the swift movement of troops and supplies from one part of the empire to another. The republic made magnificent roads; the empire never improved upon them. Four hundred years before the Antonines, Hero of Alexandria had made the first steam-engine. Beautiful records of such beginnings of science were among the neglected treasures of the rich men's libraries throughout the imperial domains. They were seed lying on stony ground. The armies

and couriers of Marcus Aurelius drudged along the roads exactly as the armies of Scipio Africanus had done three centuries before them.

The Roman writers were always lamenting the effeminacy of the age. It was their favourite cant. They recognized that the free men of the forest and steppes and desert were harder and more desperate fighters than their citizens, but the natural corollary of developing the industrial power of their accumulations of population to make a countervailing equipment never entered their heads. Instead they took the barbarians into their legions, taught them the arts of war, marched them about the empire, and returned them, with their lesson well learnt, to their own people.

In view of these obvious negligences, it is no wonder that the Romans disregarded that more subtle thing, the soul of the empire altogether, and made no effort to teach or train or win its common people into any conscious participation with its life. Such teaching or training would indeed have run counter to all the ideas of the rich men and the imperial officials. They had made a tool of religion; science, literature, and education they had entrusted to the care of slaves, who were bred and trained and sold like dogs or horses; ignorant, pompous, and base, the Roman adventurers of finance and property who created the empire lorded it with a sense of the utmost security while their destruction gathered without the empire and within.

By the second and third centuries A.D. the overtaxed and overstrained imperial machine was already staggering towards its downfall.

§ 4

And now it is necessary, if we are to understand clearly the true situation of the Roman Empire, to turn our eyes to the world beyond its northern and eastern borders, the world of the plains, that stretches, with scarcely a break, from Holland across Germany and Russia to the mountains of Central Asia and Mongolia, and to give a little attention to the parallel empire in China that was now consolidating and developing a far tougher and more enduring moral and intellectual unity than the Romans ever achieved.

"It is the practice," says Mr. E. H. Parker, "even amongst our most highly educated men in Europe, to deliver sonorous sentences about being 'masters of the world,' 'bringing all nations of the earth under her sway,' and so on, when in reality only some corner of the Mediterranean is involved, or some ephemeral sally into Persia and Gaul. Cyrus and Alexander, Darius and Xerxes, Cæsar and Pompey, all made very interesting excursions, but they were certainly not on a larger scale or charged with greater human interest than the campaigns which were going on at the other end of Asia. Western civilization possessed much in art and science for which China never cared, but, on the other hand, the Chinese developed a historical and critical literature, a courtesy of demeanour, a luxury of clothing, and an administrative system of which Europe might have been proud. In one word, the history of the Far East is quite as interesting as that of the Far West. It only requires to be able to read it. When we brush away contemptuously from our notice the tremendous events which took place on the plains of Tartary, we must not blame the Chinese too much for declining to interest themselves in the doings of what to them appear insignificant states dotted round the Mediterranean and Caspian, which, at this time, was practically all the world of which we knew in Europe."

We have already mentioned (in chap. xvi. and elsewhere) the name of Shi-Hwang-ti, who consolidated an empire much smaller, indeed, than the present limits of China, but still very great and populous, spreading from the valleys of the Hwang-ho and the Yang Tse. He became king of Ch'in in 246 B.C. and emperor in 220 B.C., and he reigned until 210 B.C., and during this third of a century he effected much the same work of consolidation that Augustus Cæsar carried out in Rome two centuries later. At his death there was dynastic trouble for four years, and then (206 B.C.) a fresh dynasty, the Han, established itself and ruled for two hundred and twenty-nine years. The opening quarter century of the Christian era was troubled by a usurper; then what is called the Later Han Dynasty recovered power and ruled for another century and a half, until China, in the time of the Antonines, was so devastated by an eleven-year pestilence as to fall into disorder. This same pestilence, we may note, also helped to

produce a century of confusion in the Western world (see § 1). But altogether, until this happened, for more than four hundred years Central China was generally at peace, and on the whole well governed, a cycle of strength and prosperity unparalleled by anything in the experience of the Western world.

Only the first of the Han monarchs continued the policy of Shi-Hwang-ti against the *literati*. His successor restored the classics, for the old separatist tradition was broken, and in the uniformity of learning throughout the empire lay, he saw, the cement of Chinese unity. While the Roman world was still blind to the need of any universal mental organization, the Han emperors were setting up a uniform system of education and of literary degrees throughout China that has maintained the intellectual solidarity of that great and always expanding country into modern times. The bureaucrats of Rome were of the most miscellaneous origins and traditions; the bureaucrats of China were, and are still, made in the same mould, all members of one tradition. Since the Han days China has experienced great vicissitudes of political fortune, but they have never changed her fundamental character; she has been divided, but she has always recovered her unity; she has been conquered, and she has always absorbed and assimilated her conquerors.

But from our present point of view, the most important consequences of this consolidation of China under Shi-Hwang-ti and the Hans was in its reaction upon the unsettled tribes of the northern and western border of China. Throughout the disordered centuries before the time of Shi-Hwang-ti, the Hiung-nu or Huns had occupied Mongolia and large portions of northern China, and had raided freely into China and interfered freely in Chinese politics. The new power and organization of the Chinese civilization began to change this state of affairs for good and all.

We have already, in our first account of Chinese beginnings, noted the existence of these Huns. It is necessary now to explain briefly who and what they were. Even in using this word Hun as a general equivalent for the Hiung-nu, we step on to controversial ground. In our accounts of the development of the Western world we have had occasion to name the Scythians, and to explain the difficulty of distinguishing clearly between Cimmerians, Sarmatians, Medes, Persians, Parthians, Goths, and other more or less nomadic, more or less Aryan peoples who drifted to and fro in a great arc between the Danube and Central Asia. While sections of the Aryans were moving south and acquiring and developing civilization, these other Aryan peoples were developing mobility and nomadism; they were learning the life of the tent, the wagon, and the herd. They were learning also to use milk as a food basis, and were probably becoming less agricultural, less disposed to take even snatch crops, than they had been. Their development was being aided by a slow change in climate that was replacing the swamps and forests and parklands of South Russia and Central Asia by steppes, by wide grazing lands that is, which favoured a healthy, unsettled life, and necessitated an annual movement between summer and winter pasture. These peoples had only the lowest political forms; they split

up, they mingled together; the various races had identical social habits; and so it is that the difficulty, the impossibility of sharp distinctions between them arises. Now the case of the Mongolian races to the north and north-west of the Chinese civilization is very parallel. There can be little doubt that the Hiung-nu, the Huns, and the later people called the Mongols, were all very much the same people, and that the Turks and Tartars presently branched off from this same drifting Mongolian population. Kalmucks and Buriats are later developments of the same strain. Here we shall favour the use of the word "Hun" as a sort of general term for these tribes, just as we have been free and wide in our use of "Scythian" in the West.

The consolidation of China was a very serious matter for these Hunnish peoples. Hitherto their overflow of population had gone adventuring southward into the disorders of divided China as water goes into a sponge. Now they found a wall built against them, a firm government, and disciplined armies cutting them off from the grass plains. And though the wall held them back, it did not hold back the Chinese. They were increasing and multiplying through these centuries of peace, and as they increased and multiplied, they spread steadily with house and plough wherever the soil permitted. They spread westward into Tibet and northward and north-westwardly, perhaps to the edge of the Gobi desert. They spread into the homes and pasturing and hunting-grounds of the Hunnish nomads, exactly as the white people of the United States spread westward into the hunting-grounds of the Red Indians. And in spite of raid and massacre they were just as invincible because they had the pressure of numbers and a strong avenging government behind them. Even without the latter support the cultivating civilization of China has enormous powers of permeation and extension. It has spread slowly and continuously for three thousand years. It is spreading in Manchuria and Siberia to-day. It roots deeply where it spreads.

Partly the Huns were civilized and assimilated by the Chinese. The more northerly Huns were checked and their super-abundant energies were turned westward. The southern Huns were merged into the imperial population.

If the reader will examine the map of Central Asia, he will see that very great mountain barriers separate the Southern, Western, and

Eastern peoples of Asia. (But he should be wary of forming his ideas from a map upon Mercator's projection, which enormously exaggerates the areas and distances of Northern Asia and Siberia.) He will find that from the central mountain masses three great mountain systems radiate eastward; the Himalayas going south-eastward, south of Tibet, the Kuen Lun eastward, north of Tibet, and the Thien Shan north-eastward to join the Altai mountains. Further to the north is the great plain, still steadily thawing and drying. Between the Thien Shan and the Kuen Lun is an area, the Tarim Basin (= roughly Eastern Turkestan), of rivers that never reach the sea, but end in swamps and intermittent lakes. This basin was much more fertile in the past than it is now. The mountain barrier to the west of this Tarim Basin is high, but not forbidding; there are many practicable routes downward into Western Turkestan, and it is possible to travel either along the northern foothills of the Kuen Lun or by the Tarim valley westward from China to Kashgar (where the roads converge), and so over the mountains to Kokand, Samarkand, and Bokhara. Here then is the natural meeting-place in history of Aryan and Mongolian. Here or round by the sea.

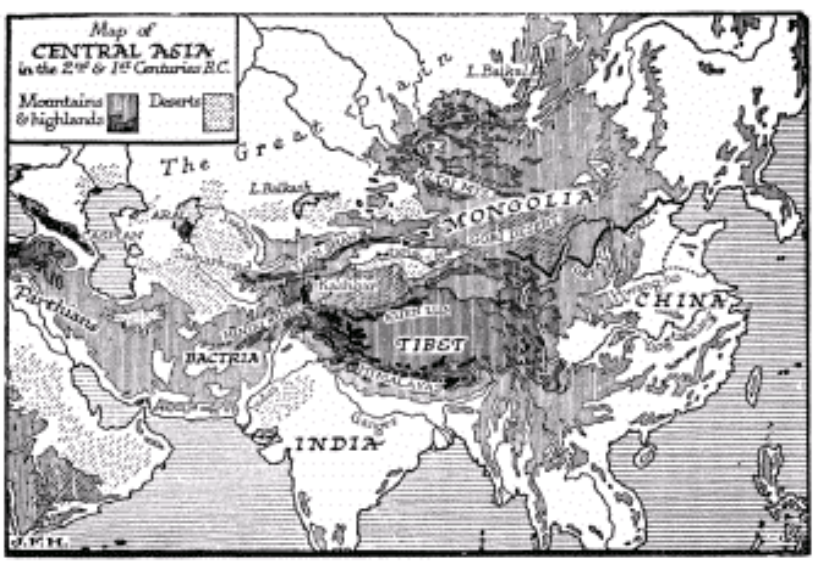

We have already noted how Alexander the Great came to one side of the barrier in 329 B.C. High among the mountains of Turkestan a lake preserves his name. Indeed, so living is the tradition of his great raid, that almost any stone ruin in Central Asia is still ascribed to "Iskander." After this brief glimpse, the light of history upon this region fades again, and when it becomes bright once more it is on the eastern and not upon the western side. Far away to the east Shi-Hwang-ti had routed the Huns and walled them out of China proper. A portion of these people remained in the north of China, a remnant which was destined to amalgamate with Chinese life under the Hans, but a considerable section had turned westward and (second and first centuries B.C.) driven before them a kindred people called the Yueh-Chi, driving them from the eastern to the western extremity of the Kuen Lun, and at last right over the barrier into the once Aryan region of Western Turkestan. These Yueh-Chi conquered the slightly Hellenized kingdom of Bactria, and mixed with Aryan people there. Later on these Yueh-Chi became, or were merged with Aryan elements into, a people called the Indo-Scythians, who went on down the Khyber Pass and conquered northern portions of India as far as Benares (100-150 A.D.), wiping out the last vestiges of Hellenic rule in India. This big splash over of the Mongolian races westward was probably not the first of such splashes, but it is the first recorded splash. In the rear of the Yueh-Chi were the Huns, and in the rear of the Huns and turning them now northward was the vigorous Han Dynasty of China. In the reign of the greatest of the Han monarchs, Wu-Ti (140-86 B.C.), the Huns had been driven northward out of the whole of Eastern Turkestan or subjugated, the Tarim Basin swarmed with Chinese settlers, and caravans were going over westward with silk and lacquer and jade to trade for the gold and silver of Armenia and Rome.

The splash over of the Yueh-Chi is recorded, but it is fairly evident that much westward movement of sections of the Hunnish peoples is not recorded. From 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. the Chinese Empire maintained a hard, resolute, advancing front towards nomadism, and the surplus of the nomads drifted steadily west. There was no such settling down behind a final frontier on the part of the Chinese as we see in the case of the Romans at the Rhine and

Danube. The drift of the nomads before this Chinese thrust, century by century, turned southward at first towards Bactria. The Parthians of the first century B.C. probably mingled Scythian and Mongolian elements. The "singing arrows" that destroyed the army of Crassus came, it would seem, originally from the Altai and the Tian Shan. After the first century B.C. the line of greater attraction and least resistance lay for a time towards the north of the Caspian. In a century or so all the country known as Western Turkestan was "Mongolized," and so it remains to this day. A second great thrust by China began about 75 A.D., and accelerated the westward drift of the nomads. In 102, Pan Chau, a great Chinese general, was sending explorers from his advanced camp upon the Caspian (or, as some authorities say, the Persian Gulf) to learn particulars of the Roman power. But their reports decided him not to proceed.

By the first century A.D. nomadic Mongolian peoples are in evidence upon the eastern boundaries of Europe, already greatly mixed with Aryan nomads and with uprooted Aryan elements from the Caspian-Pamir region. There are Hunnish peoples established between the Caspian Sea and the Urals. West of them were the Alans, probably also a Mongolian people with Aryan elements; they had fought against Pompey the Great when he was in Armenia in 65 B.C. These are as yet the furthest westward peoples of the new Mongolian advance, and they made no further westward push until the fourth century A.D. To the north-west the Finns, a Mongolian people, had long been established as far west as the Baltic.

West of the Huns, beyond the Don, there were Aryan tribes, the Goths. These Goths had spread south-eastward from their region of origin in Scandinavia. They were a Teutonic people, and we have already marked them crossing the Baltic in the map on page 301. They continued to move south-eastward across Russia, using the rivers and never forgetting their Baltic watercraft. No doubt they assimilated much Scythian population as they spread down to the Black Sea. In the first century A.D. they were in two main divisions, the Ostrogoths, the East Goths, who were between the Don and the Dnieper, and the Visigoths, or West Goths, west of the Dnieper. During the first century there was an air of quiescence over the great plains, but population was accumulating and the tribes were

fermenting. The second and third centuries seem to have been a phase of comparatively moist seasons and abundant grass. Presently in the fourth and fifth centuries the weather grew drier and the grass became scanty, and the nomads stirred afresh.

But it is interesting to note that in the opening century of the Christian era, the Chinese Empire was strong enough to expel and push off from itself the surplus of this Mongolian nomadism to the north of it which presently conquered North India and gathered force and mingled with Aryan nomadism, and fell at last like an avalanche upon the weak-backed Roman Empire.

Before we go on to tell of the blows that now began to fall upon the Roman Empire and of the efforts of one or two great men to arrest the collapse, we may say a few words about the habits and quality of these westward-drifting barbaric Mongolian peoples who were now spreading from the limits of China towards the Black and Baltic Seas. It is still the European custom to follow the lead of the Roman writers and write of these Huns and their associates as of something incredibly destructive and cruel. But such accounts as we have from the Romans were written in periods of panic, and the Roman could lie about his enemies with a freedom and vigour that must arouse the envy even of the modern propagandist. He could talk of "Punic faith" as a byword for perfidy while committing the most abominable treacheries against Carthage, and his railing accusations of systematic cruelty against this people or that were usually the prelude and excuse for some frightful massacre or enslavement or robbery on his own part. He had quite a modern passion for self-justification. We must remember that these accounts of the savagery and frightfulness of the Huns came from a people whose chief amusement was gladiatorial shows, and whose chief method of dealing with insurrection and sedition was nailing the offender to a cross to die. From first to last the Roman Empire must have killed hundreds of thousands of men in that way. A large portion of the population of this empire that could complain of the barbarism of its assailants consisted of slaves subject practically to almost any lust or caprice at the hands of their owners. It is well to bear these facts in mind before we mourn the swamping of the Roman Empire by the barbarians as though it was an extinction of all that is fine in life by

all that is black and ugly.

The facts seem to be that the Hunnish peoples were the eastern equivalent of the primitive Aryans of whom we have given an account in Chapter XV, and that, in spite of their profound racial and linguistic differences, they mixed with the nomadic and semi-nomadic residuum of the Aryan races north of the Danube and Persia very easily and successfully. Instead of killing, they enlisted and intermarried with the peoples they invaded. They had that necessary gift for all peoples destined to political predominance, tolerant assimilation. They came rather later in time, and their nomadic life was more highly developed than that of the primitive Aryans. The primitive Aryans were a forest and ox-wagon people who took to the horse later. The Hunnish peoples had grown up with the horse. Somewhen about 1200 or 1000 years B.C. they began to ride the horse. The bit, the saddle, the stirrup, these are not primitive things, but they are necessary if man and horse are to keep going for long stretches. It is well to bear in mind how modern a thing is riding. Altogether man has not been in the saddle for much more than three thousand years. We have already noted the gradual appearance of the war-chariot, the mounted man, and finally of disciplined cavalry in this history. It was from the Mongolian regions of Asia that these things came. To this day men in Central Asia go rather in the saddle than on their proper feet. Says Ratzel, "Strong, longnecked horses are found in enormous numbers on the steppes. For Mongols and Turcomans riding is not a luxury; even the Mongol shepherds tend their flocks on horseback. Children are taught to ride in early youth; and the boy of three years old often takes his first riding-lesson on a safe child's saddle and makes quick progress."

It is impossible to suppose that the Huns and the Alans could have differed very widely in character from the present nomads of the steppe regions, and nearly all observers are agreed in describing these latter as open and pleasant people. They are thoroughly honest and free-spirited. "The character of the herdsmen of Central Asia," says Ratzel, "when unadulterated, is ponderous eloquence, frankness, rough good-nature, pride, but also indolence, irritability, and a tendency to vindictiveness. Their faces show a considerable share of frankness combined with amusing naïveté.... Their courage is rather a

sudden blaze of pugnacity than cold boldness. Religious fanaticism they have none. Hospitality is universal." This is not an entirely disagreeable picture. Their personal bearing, he says further, is quieter and more dignified than that of the townsmen of Turkestan and Persia. Add to this that the nomadic life prevents any great class inequalities or any extensive development of slavery.

Of course these peoples out of Asia were totally illiterate and artistically undeveloped. But we must not suppose, on that account, that they were primitive barbarians, and that their state of life was at the level from which the agricultural civilization had long ago arisen. It was not. They too had developed, but they had developed along a different line, a line with less intellectual complication, more personal dignity perhaps, and certainly with a more intimate contact with wind and sky.

§ 5

The first serious irruptions of the German tribes into the Roman Empire began in the third century with the decay of the central power. We will not entangle the reader here with the vexed and intricate question of the names, identity, and inter-relationships of the various Germanic tribes. Historians find great difficulties in keeping them distinct, and these difficulties are enhanced by the fact that they themselves took little care to keep themselves distinct. We find in 236 A.D. a people called the Franks breaking bounds upon the Lower Rhine, and another, the Alamanni, pouring into Alsace. A much more serious push southward was that of the Goths. We have already noted the presence of these people in South Russia, and their division by the Dnieper into Western and Eastern Goths. They had become a maritime people again upon the Black Sea — probably their traditional migration from Sweden was along the waterways, for it is still possible to row a boat, with only a few quite practicable portages, from the Baltic right across Russia to either the Black or Caspian Sea — and they had wrested the command of the eastern seas from the control of Rome. They were presently raiding the shores of Greece. They also crossed the Danube in a great land raid in 247, and defeated and killed the Emperor Decius in what is now

Serbia. The province of Dacia vanished from Roman history. In 270 they were defeated at Nish in Serbia by Claudius, and in 276 they were raiding Pontus. It is characteristic of the invertebrate nature of the empire that the legions of Gaul found that the most effective method of dealing with the Franks and the Alamanni at this time was by setting up a separate emperor in Gaul and doing the job by themselves.

Then for a while the barbarians were held, and the Emperor Probus in 276 forced the Franks and the Alamanni back over the Rhine. But it is significant of the general atmosphere of insecurity created by these raids that Aurelian (270-275) fortified Rome, which had been an open and secure city for all the earlier years of the empire.

In 321 A.D. the Goths were again over the Danube, plundering what is now Serbia and Bulgaria. They were driven back by Constantine the Great, of whom we shall have more to tell in the next chapter. About the end of his reign (337 A.D.) the Vandals, a people closely kindred to the Goths, being pressed by them, obtained permission to cross the Danube into Pannonia, which is now that part of Hungary west of the river.

But by the middle of the fourth century the Hunnish people to the east were becoming aggressive again. They had long subjugated the Alani, and now they made the Ostrogoths, the east Goths, tributary. The Visigoths (or West Goths) followed the example of the Vandals, and made arrangements to cross the Danube into Roman territory. There was some dispute upon the terms of this settlement, and the Visigoths, growing fierce, assumed the offensive, and at Adrianople defeated the Emperor Valens, who was killed in this battle. They were then allowed to settle in what is now Bulgaria, and their army became nominally a Roman army, though they retained their own chiefs, the foremost of whom was Alaric. It exhibits the complete "barbarization" of the Roman empire that had already occurred, that the chief opponent of Alaric the Goth, Stilicho, was a Pannonian Vandal. The legions in Gaul were under the command of a Frank, and the Emperor Theodosius I (em-395) was a Spaniard chiefly supported by Gothic auxiliaries.

The empire was now splitting finally into an eastern (Greek-

speaking) and a western (Latin-speaking) half. Theodosius the Great was succeeded by his sons Arcadius at Constantinople and Honorius at Ravenna. Alaric made a puppet of the eastern monarch and Stilicho of the western. Huns now first appear within the empire as auxiliary troops enlisted under Stilicho. In this struggle of East and West, the frontier — if we can still speak of a frontier between the unauthorized barbarian without and the barbarian in possession within — gave way. Fresh Vandals, more Goths, Alans, Suevi, marched freely westward, living upon the country. Amidst this confusion occurred a crowning event. Alaric and Goth marched down Italy, and after a short siege captured Rome (410).

By 425 or so, the Vandals (whom originally we noted in East Germany) and a portion of the Alani (whom we first mentioned in South-east Russia) had traversed Gaul and the Pyrenees, and had amalgamated and settled in the south of Spain. There were Huns in possession of Pannonia and Goths in Dalmatia. Into Bohemia and Moravia came and settled a Slavic people, the Czechs (451). In Portugal and north of the Vandals in Spain were Visigoths and Suevi. Gaul was divided among Visigoths, Franks, and Burgundians. Britain was being invaded by Low German tribes, the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, before whom the Keltic British of the south-west were flying across the sea to what is now Brittany in France. The usual date given for this invasion is 449, but it was probably earlier. And as the result of intrigues between two imperial politicians, the Vandals of the south of Spain, under their king Genseric, embarked *en masse* for North Africa (429), became masters of Carthage (439), secured the mastery of the sea, raided, captured, and pillaged Rome (455), crossed into Sicily, and set up a kingdom in West Sicily, which endured there for a hundred years (up to 534). At the time of its greatest extent (477) this Vandal kingdom included also Corsica, Sardinia, and the Balearic Isles, as well as much of North Africa.

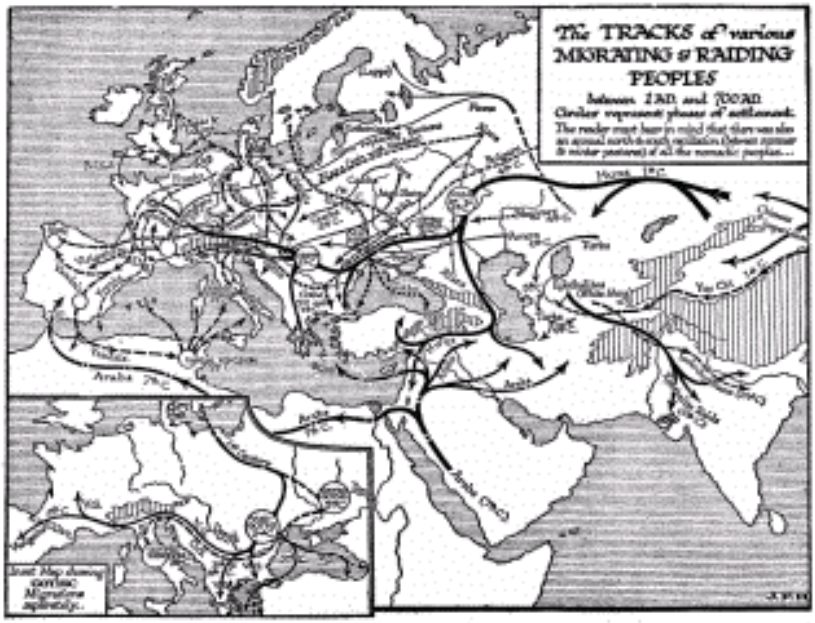

About this Vandal kingdom facts and figures are given that show very clearly the true nature of these barbarian irruptions. They were not really the conquest and replacement of one people or race by another; what happened was something very different, it was a social revolution started and masked by a superficial foreign conquest. The whole Vandal nation, men, women, and children, that came from Spain to Africa, for example, did not number more than eighty thousand souls. We know this because we have particulars of the transport problem. In their struggle for North Africa, Dr. Schurtz tells us, "there is no trace of any serious resistance offered by the inhabitants; Boniface (the Roman governor of North Africa) had defended Hippo with Gothic mercenaries, while the native population lent no appreciable assistance, and the nomad tribes of the country either adopted a dubious attitude or availed themselves of the difficulties of the Roman governor to make attacks and engage in predatory expeditions. This demoralization resulted from social conditions, which had perhaps developed more unfavourably in Africa than in other parts of the Roman Empire. The free peasants had long ago become the serfs of the great landed proprietors, and

were little superior in position to the masses of slaves who were everywhere to be found. And the great landowners had become in their turn easy victims of the policy of extortion followed by unscrupulous governors to an increasingly unprecedented extent in proportion as the dignity of the imperial power sank lower. No man who had anything to lose would now take a place in the senate of the large towns, which had once been the goal of the ambitious, for the senators were required to make up all deficiencies in the revenue, and such deficiencies were now frequent and considerable.... Bloody insurrections repeatedly broke out, always traceable ultimately to the pressure of taxation....”

Manifestly the Vandals came in as a positive relief to such a system. They exterminated the great landowners, wiped out all debts to Roman money-lenders, and abolished the last vestiges of military service. The cultivators found themselves better off; the minor officials kept their places; it was not so much a conquest as a liberation from an intolerable deadlock.

It was while the Vandals were still in Africa that a great leader, Attila, arose among the Huns. The seat of his government was in the plains east of the Danube. For a time he swayed a considerable empire of Hunnish and Germanic tribes, and his rule stretched from the Rhine into Central Asia. He negotiated on equal terms with the Chinese emperor. He bullied Ravenna and Constantinople for ten years. Honoria, the grand-daughter of Theodosius II, Emperor of the Eastern empire, one of those passionate young ladies who cause so much trouble in the world, having been put under restraint because of a love affair with a court chamberlain, sent her ring to Attila and called upon him to be her husband and deliverer. He was also urged to attack the Eastern empire by Genseric the Vandal, who was faced by an alliance of the Western and Eastern emperors. He raided southward to the very walls of Constantinople, completely destroying, says Gibbon, seventy cities in his progress, and forcing upon the emperor an onerous peace, which apparently did not involve the liberation of Honoria to her hero.

At this distance of time we are unable to guess at the motives for this omission. Attila continued to speak of her as his affianced bride, and to use the relationship as a pretext for aggressions. In the

subsequent negotiations a certain Priscus accompanied an embassy to the camp of the Hunnish monarch, and the fragments that still survive of the narrative he wrote give us a glimpse of the camp and way of living of the great conqueror.

The embassy was itself a curiously constituted body. Its head was Maximin, an honest diplomatist who went in good faith, Quite unknown to him and, at the time, to Priscus, Vigilius, the interpreter of the expedition, had also a secret mission from the court of Theodosius which was to secure by bribery the assassination of Attila. The little expedition went by way of Nish; it crossed the Danube in canoes, dug out of a single tree, and it was fed by contributions from the villages on the route. Differences in dietary soon attracted the attention of the envoys. Priscus mentions mead in the place of wine, millet for corn, and a drink either distilled or brewed from barley. The journey through Hungary will remind the reader in many of its incidents of the journeys of travellers in Central Africa during the Victorian period. The travellers were politely offered temporary wives.

Attila's capital was rather a vast camp and village than a town. There was only one building of stone, a bath constructed on the Roman model. The mass of the people were in huts and tents; Attila and his leading men lived in timber palaces in great stockaded enclosures with their numerous wives and ministers about them. There was a vast display of loot, but Attila himself affected a nomadic simplicity; he was served in wooden cups and platters, and never touched bread. He worked hard, kept open court before the gate of his palace, and was commonly in the saddle. The primitive custom of both Aryans and Mongols of holding great feasts in halls still held good, and there was much hard drinking. Priscus describes how bards chanted before Attila. They "recited the verses which they had composed, to celebrate his valour and his victories. A profound silence prevailed in the hall, and the attention of the guests was captivated by the vocal harmony, which revived and perpetuated the memory of their own exploits; a martial ardour flashed from the eyes of the warriors, who were impatient for battle; and the tears of the old men expressed their generous despair, that they could no longer partake the danger and glory of the field. This entertainment, which

might be considered as a school of military virtue, was succeeded by a farce that debased the dignity of human nature. A Moorish and Scythian buffoon successively excited the mirth of the rude spectators by their deformed figures, ridiculous dress, antic gestures, absurd speeches, and the strange, unintelligible confusion of the Latin, the Gothic, and the Hunnish languages, and the hall resounded with loud and licentious peals of laughter. In the midst of this intemperate riot, Attila alone, without change of countenance, maintained his steadfast and inflexible gravity."

Although Attila was aware, through the confession of the proposed assassin, of the secret work of Vigilius, he allowed this embassy to return in safety, with presents of numerous horses and the like, to Constantinople. Then he despatched an ambassador to Theodosius II to give that monarch, as people say, a piece of his mind. "Theodosius," said the envoy, "is the son of an illustrious and respectable parent; Attila, likewise, is descended from a noble race; and *he* has supported, by his actions, the dignity which he inherited from his father Munzuk. But Theodosius has forfeited his parental honours, and, by consenting to pay tribute, has degraded himself to the condition of a slave. It is therefore just that he should reverence the man whom fortune and merit have placed above him; instead of attempting, like a wicked slave, clandestinely to conspire against his master."

This straightforward bullying was met by abject submission. The emperor sued for pardon, and paid a great ransom.

In 451 Attila declared war on the western empire. He invaded Gaul. So far as the imperial forces were concerned, he had things all his own way, and he sacked most of the towns of France as far south as Orleans. Then the Franks and Visigoths and the imperial forces united against him, and a great and obstinate battle at Troyes (451), in which over 150,000 men were killed on both sides, ended in his repulse and saved Europe from a Mongolian overlord. This disaster by no means exhausted Attila's resources. He turned his attention southward, and overran North Italy. He burnt Aquileia and Padua, and looted Milan, but he made peace at the entreaty of Pope Leo I. He died in 453....

Hereafter the Huns, so far as that name goes in Europe, the Huns

of Attila, disappeared out of history. They dissolved into the surrounding populations. They were probably already much mixed, and rather Aryan than Mongolian. They did not become, as one might suppose, the inhabitants of Hungary, though they have probably left many descendants there. About a hundred years after came another Hunnish or mixed people, the Avars, out of the east into Hungary, but these were driven out eastward again by Charlemagne in 791-5. The Magyars, the modern Hungarians, came westward later. They were a Turko-Finnish people. The Magyar is a language belonging to the Finno-Ugrian division of the Ural-Altaic tongues. The Magyars were on the Volga about 550. They settled in Hungary about 900.... But we are getting too far on in our story, and we must return to Rome.

In 493 Theodoric, a Goth, became King of Rome, but already for seventeen years there had been no Roman emperor. So it was in utter social decay and collapse that the great slave-holding "world-ascendancy" of the God-Cæsars and the rich men of Rome came to an end.

§ 6

But though throughout the whole of Western Europe and North Africa the Roman imperial system had collapsed, though credit had vanished, luxury production had ceased, and money was hidden, though creditors were going unpaid and slaves masterless, the tradition of the Cæsars was still being carried on in Constantinople. We have already had occasion to mention as two outstanding figures among the late Cæsars, Diocletian (284) and Constantine the Great (312), and it was to the latter of these that the world owes the setting up of a fresh imperial centre at Constantinople. Very early during the imperial period the unsuitability of the position of Rome as a world capital, due to the Roman failure to use the sea, was felt. The destruction of Carthage and Corinth had killed the shipping of the main Mediterranean sea-routes. For a people who did not use the sea properly, having the administrative centre at Rome meant that every legion, every draft of officials, every order, had to travel northward for half the length of Italy before it could turn east or west.

Consequently nearly all the more capable emperors set up their headquarters at some subordinate centre in a more convenient position. Sirmium (on the River Save), Milan, Lyons, and Nicomedia (in Bithynia) were among such supplementary capitals. For a time under Diocletian, Durazzo was the imperial capital. Ravenna, near the head of the Adriatic, was the capital of the last Roman emperors in the time of Alaric and Stilicho.

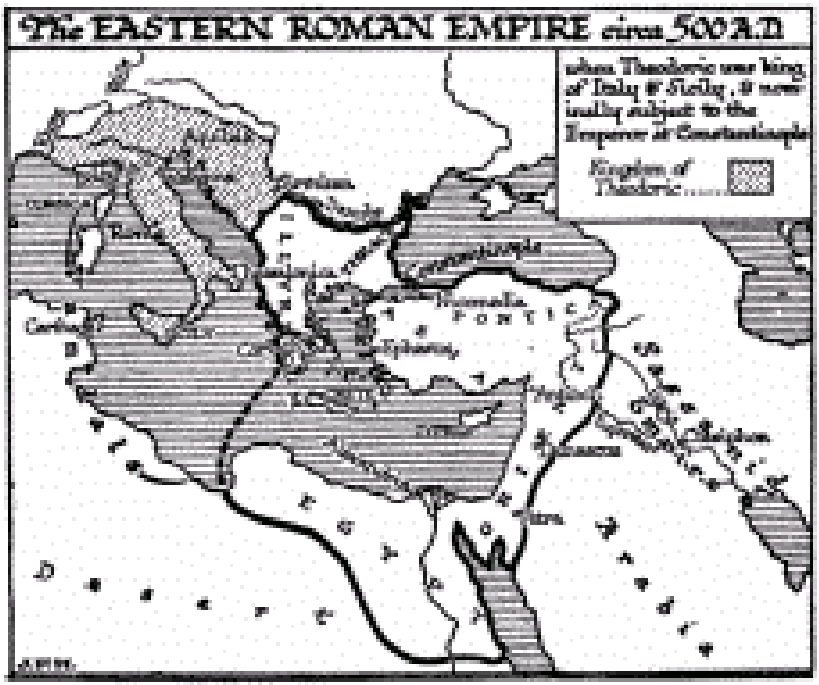

It was Constantine the Great who determined upon the permanent transfer of the centre of imperial power to the Bosphorus. We have already noted the existence of the city of Byzantium, which Constantine chose to develop into his new capital. It played a part in the story of the intricate Histiæus (chap. xxii, § 4); it repulsed Philip of Macedon (chap. xxiv, § 3). If the reader will examine its position, he will see that in the hands of a line of capable emperors, and as the centre of a people with some solidarity and spirit and seacraft

(neither of which things were vouchsafed to it), it was extraordinarily well placed. Its galleys could have penetrated up the rivers to the heart of Russia and outflanked every barbarian advance. It commanded practicable trade routes to the east, and it was within a reasonable striking distance of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and all the more prosperous and civilized regions of the world at that period. And even under the rule of a series of inept monarchs and under demoralized social conditions, the remains of the Roman Empire centring at Constantinople held out for nearly a thousand years.

It was the manifest intention of Constantine the Great that Constantinople should be the centre of an undivided empire. But having regard to the methods of travel and transport available at the time, the geographical conditions of Europe and Western Asia do not point to any one necessary centre of government. If Rome faced westward instead of eastward, and so failed to reach out beyond the Euphrates, Constantinople on the other hand was hopelessly remote from Gaul. The enfeebled Mediterranean civilization, after a certain struggle for Italy, did in fact let go of the west altogether and concentrated upon what were practically the central vestiges, the stump, of the empire of Alexander. The Greek language resumed its sway, which had never been very seriously undermined by the official use of Latin. This “Eastern” or Byzantine empire is generally spoken of as if it were a continuation of the Roman tradition. It is really far more like a resumption of Alexander’s.

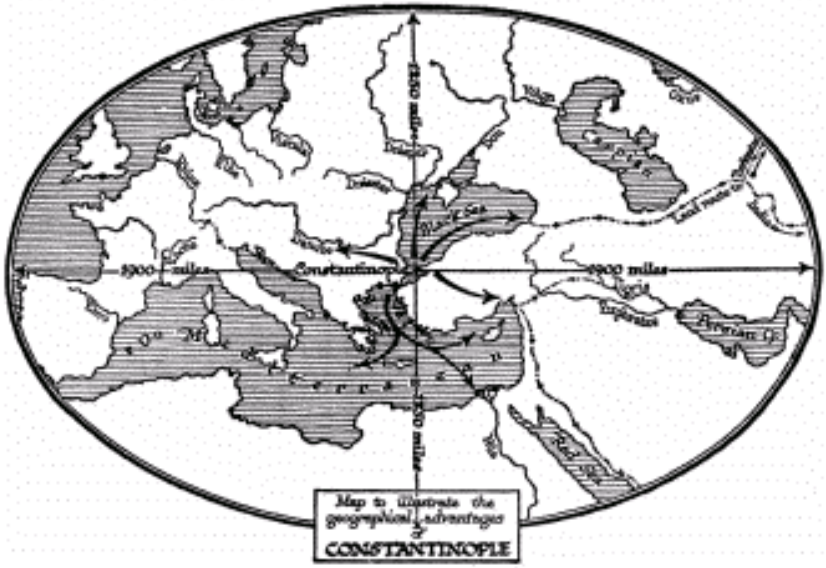

The Latin language had not the intellectual vigour behind it, it had not the literature and the science, to make it a necessity to intelligent men and so to maintain an ascendancy over the Greek. For no language, whatever officialdom may do, can impose itself in competition with another that can offer the advantages of a great literature or encyclopædic information. Aggressive languages must bring gifts, and the gifts of Greek were incomparably greater than the gifts of Latin. The Eastern empire was from the beginnings of its separation Greek-speaking, and a continuation, though a degenerate continuation, of the Hellenic tradition. Its intellectual centre was no longer in Greece, but Alexandria. Its mentality was no longer the mentality of free-minded plain-speaking citizens, of the Stagirite Aristotle and the Greek Plato; its mentality was the mentality of the pedants and of men politically impotent; its philosophy was a pompous evasion of real things, and its scientific impulse was dead. Nevertheless, it was Hellenic. The Roman had come, and he had gone again. Indeed he had gone very extensively from the west also. By the sixth century A.D. the populations of Europe and North Africa had been stirred up like sediment. When presently in the seventh and eighth centuries the sediment begins to settle down again and populations begin to take on a definite localized character, the

Roman is only to be found by name in the region about Rome. Over large parts of his Western empire we find changed and changing modifications of his Latin speech; in Gaul, where the Frank is learning a Gallic form of Latin and evolving French in the process; in Italy, where, under the influence of Teutonic invaders, the Lombards and Goths, Latin is being modified into various Italian dialects; in Spain and Portugal, where it is becoming Spanish and Portuguese. The fundamental Latinity of the languages in these regions serves to remind us of the numerical unimportance of the various Frankish, Vandal, Avar, Gothic, and the like German-speaking invaders, and serves to justify our statement that what happened to the Western empire was not so much conquest and the replacement of one population by another as a political and social revolution. The district of Valais in South Switzerland also retained a fundamentally Latin speech and so did the Canton Grisons; and, what is more curious and interesting, is that in Dacia and Mœsia Inferior, large parts of which to the north of the Danube became the modern Roumania (= Romania), although these regions were added late to the empire and lost soon, the Latin speech also remained.

In Britain Latin was practically wiped out by the conquering Anglo-Saxons, from among whose various dialects the root stock of English presently grew.

But while the smashing of the Roman social and political structure was thus complete, while in the east it was thrown off by the older and stronger Hellenic tradition, and while in the west it was broken up into fragments that began to take on a new and separate life of their own, there was one thing that did not perish, but grew, and that was the tradition of the world empire of Rome and of the supremacy of the Cæsars. When the reality was destroyed, the legend had freedom to expand. Removed from the possibility of verification, the idea of a serene and splendid Roman world-supremacy grew up in the imagination of mankind, and still holds it to this day.

Ever since the time of Alexander, human thought has been haunted by the possible political unity of the race. All the sturdy chiefs and leaders and kings of the barbarians, who raided through the prostrate but vast disorder of the decayed empire, were capable of conceiving of some mighty king of kings greater than themselves and

giving a real law for all men, and they were ready to believe that elsewhere in space and time and capable of returning presently to resume his supremacy, Cæsar had been such a king of kings. Far above their own titles, therefore, they esteemed and envied the title of Cæsar. The international history of Europe from this time henceforth is largely the story of kings and adventurers setting up to be Cæsar and Imperator (Emperor). We shall tell of some of them in their places. So universal did this "Cæsaring" become, that the Great War of 1914-18 mowed down no fewer than four Cæsars, the German Kaiser (= Cæsar), the Austrian Kaiser, the Tsar (= Cæsar) of Russia, and that fantastic figure, the Tsar of Bulgaria. The French "Imperator" (Napoleon III) had already fallen in 1871. There is now (1920) no one left in the world to carry on the Imperial title or the tradition of Divus Cæsar except the Turkish Sultan and the British monarch. The former commemorates his lordship over Constantinople as Kaisar-i-Roum; the latter is called the Cæsar of India (a country no real Cæsar ever looked upon), Kaisar-i-Hind.

BOOK VI. CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

XXX

THE BEGINNINGS, THE RISE, AND THE DIVISIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

§ 1. *Judea at the Christian Era.* § 2. *The Teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.* § 3. *The New Universal Religions.* § 4. *The Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth.* § 5. *Doctrines added to the Teachings of Jesus.* § 6. *The Struggles and Persecutions of Christianity.* § 7. *Constantine the Great.* § 8. *The Establishment of Official Christianity.* § 9. *The Map of Europe, A.D. 500.* § 10. *The Salvation of Learning by Christianity.*

§ 1

BEFORE we can understand the qualities of Christianity, which must now play a large part in our history, and which opened men's eyes to fresh aspects of the possibility of a unified world, we must go back some centuries and tell of the condition of affairs in Palestine and Syria, in which countries Christianity arose. We have already told in Chapter XXI the main facts about the origin of the Jewish nation and tradition, about the Diaspora, about the fundamentally scattered nature of Jewry even from the beginning, and the gradual development of the idea of one just God ruling the earth and bound by a special promise to preserve and bring to honour the Jewish people. The Jewish idea was and is a curious combination of theological breadth and an intense racial patriotism. The Jews looked for a special saviour, a Messiah, who was to redeem mankind by the agreeable process of restoring the fabulous glories of David and Solomon, and bringing the whole world at last under the benevolent but firm Jewish heel. As the political power of the Semitic peoples declined, as Carthage followed Tyre into the darkness and Spain became a Roman province, this dream grew and spread. There can be little doubt that the scattered Phœnicians in Spain and Africa and throughout the Mediterranean, speaking as they did a language closely akin to Hebrew and being deprived of their authentic political rights, became proselytes to Judaism. For phases of vigorous proselytism alternated with phases of exclusive jealousy in Jewish

history. On one occasion the Idumeans, being conquered, were all forcibly made Jews. There were Arab tribes who were Jews in the time of Muhammad, and a Turkish people who were mainly Jews in South Russia in the ninth century. Judaism is indeed the reconstructed political ideal of many shattered peoples — mainly Semitic. It is to the Phœnician contingent and to Aramean accessions in Babylon that the financial and commercial tradition of the Jews is to be ascribed. But as a result of these coalescences and assimilations, almost everywhere in the towns throughout the Roman Empire, and far beyond it in the east, Jewish communities traded and flourished, and were kept in touch through the Bible and through a religious and educational organization. The main part of Jewry never was in Judea and had never come out of Judea.

Manifestly this intercommunicating series of Judaized communities had very great financial and political facilities. They could assemble resources, they could stir up, they could allay. They were neither so abundant nor so civilized as the still more widely diffused Greeks, but they had a tradition of greater solidarity. Greek was hostile to Greek; Jew stood by Jew. Wherever a Jew went, he found men of like mind and like tradition with himself. He could get shelter, food, loans, and legal help. And by reason of this solidarity rulers had everywhere to take account of this people as a help, as a source of loans, or as a source of trouble. So it is that the Jews have persisted as a people while Hellenism has become a universal light for mankind.

We cannot tell here in any detail the history of that smaller part of Jewry that lived in Judea. These Jews had returned to their old position of danger; again they were seeking peace in, so to speak, the middle of a highway. In the old time they had been between Syria and Assyria to the north and Egypt to the south; now they had the Seleucids to the north and the Ptolemys to the south, and when the Seleucids went, then down came the Roman power upon them. The independence of Judea was always a qualified and precarious thing. The reader must go to the *Antiquities* and the *Wars of the Jews* of Flavius Josephus, a copious, tedious, and maddeningly patriotic writer, to learn of the succession of their rulers, of their high-priest monarchs, and of the Maccabæans, the Herods, and the like. These

rulers were for the most part of the ordinary eastern type, cunning, treacherous, and blood-stained. Thrice Jerusalem was taken and twice the temple was destroyed. It was the support of the far more powerful Diaspora that prevented the little country from being wiped out altogether, until 70 A.D., when Titus, the adopted son and successor of the Emperor Vespasian, after a siege that ranks in bitterness and horror with that of Tyre and Carthage, took Jerusalem and destroyed city and temple altogether. He did this in an attempt to destroy Jewry, but indeed he made Jewry stronger by destroying its one sensitive and vulnerable point.

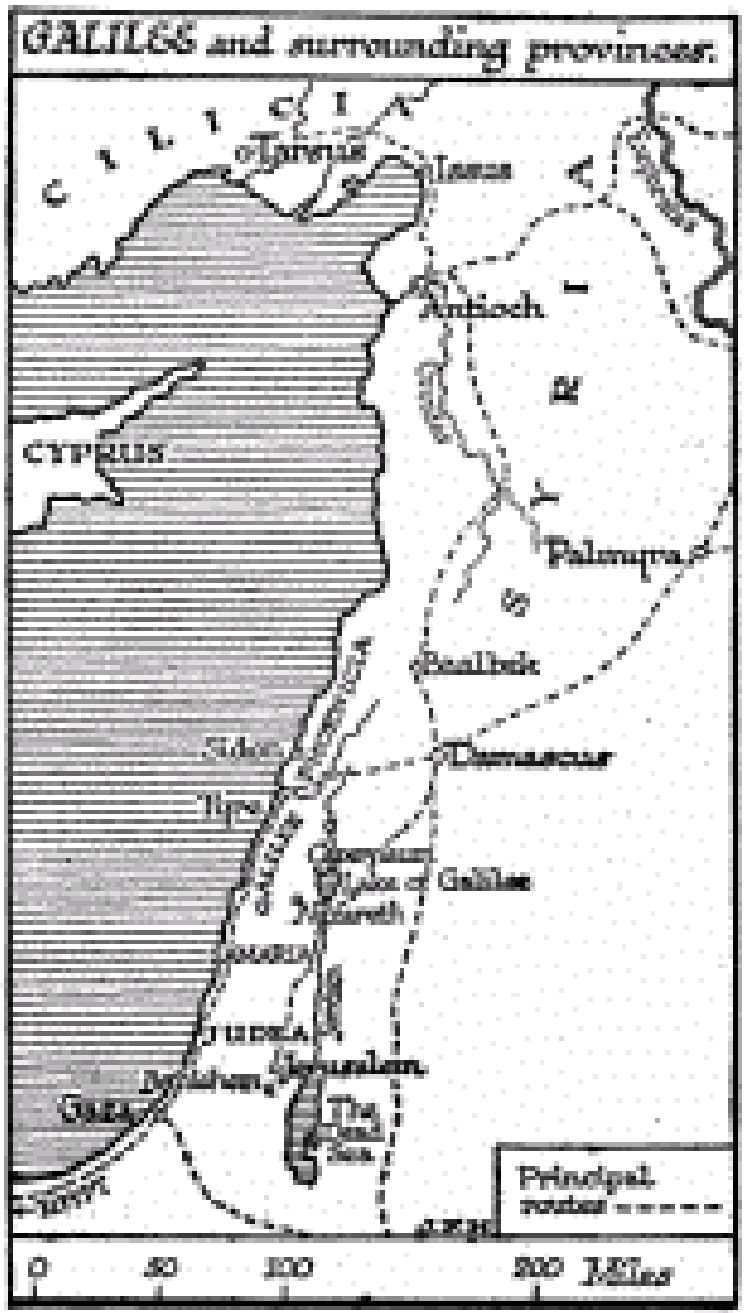
GALILEE and surrounding provinces.
CILICIA
Tarsus
Issus
Antioch
CYPRUS
Palmyra
Baalbek
Damascus
Tyre
Sea of Galilee
Nazareth
JUDEA
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
GAZA
The Dead Sea
Principal routes
0
50
100
200 Miles

Throughout a history of five centuries of war and civil commotion between the return from captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem, certain constant features of the Jew persisted. He remained obstinately monotheistic; he would have none other gods but the one true God. In Rome, as in Jerusalem, he stood out manfully against the worship of any god-Cæsar. And to the best of his ability he held to his covenants with his God. No graven images could enter Jerusalem; even the Roman standards with their eagles had to stay outside.

Two divergent lines of thought are traceable in Jewish affairs during these five hundred years. On the right, so to speak, are the high and narrow Jews, the Pharisees, very orthodox, very punctilious upon even the minutest details of the law, intensely patriotic and exclusive. Jerusalem on one occasion fell to the Seleucid monarch Antiochus IV because the Jews would not defend it on the Sabbath day, when it is forbidden to work; and it was because the Jews made no effort to destroy his siege train on the Sabbath that Pompey the Great was able to take Jerusalem. But against these narrow Jews were pitted the broad Jews, the Jews of the left, who were Hellenizers, among whom are to be ranked the Sadducees, who did not believe in immortality. These latter Jews, the broad Jews, were all more or less disposed to mingle with and assimilate themselves to the Greeks and Hellenized peoples about them. They were ready to accept proselytes, and so to share God and his promise with all mankind. But what they gained in generosity they lost in rectitude. They were the worldlings of Judea. We have already noted how the Hellenized Jews of Egypt lost their Hebrew, and had to have their Bible translated into Greek.

In the reign of Tiberius Cæsar a great teacher arose out of Judea who was to liberate the intense realization of the righteousness and unchallengeable oneness of God, and of man's moral obligation to God, which was the strength of orthodox Judaism, from that greedy and exclusive narrowness with which it was so extraordinarily intermingled in the Jewish mind. This was Jesus of Nazareth, the seed rather than the founder of Christianity.

§ 2

The audience to which this book will first be presented will be largely an audience of Christians, with perhaps a sprinkling of Jewish readers, and the former at least will regard Jesus of Nazareth as being much more than a human teacher, and his appearance in the world not as a natural event in history, but as something of a supernatural sort interrupting and changing that steady development of life towards a common consciousness and a common will, which we have hitherto been tracing in this book. But these persuasions, dominant as they are in Europe and America, are nevertheless not the persuasions of all men or of the great majority of mankind, and we are writing this outline of the story of life with as complete an avoidance of controversial matter as may be. We are trying to write as if this book was to be read as much by Hindus or Moslems or Buddhists as by Americans and Western Europeans. We shall therefore hold closely to the apparent facts, and avoid, without any disputation or denial, the theological interpretations that have been imposed upon them. We shall tell what men have believed about Jesus of Nazareth, but him we shall treat as being what he appeared to be, a man, just as a painter must needs paint him as a man. The documents that testify to his acts and teachings we shall treat as ordinary human documents. If the light of divinity shine through our recital, we will neither help nor hinder it. This is what we have already done in the case of Buddha, and what we shall do later with Muhammad. About Jesus we have to write not theology but history, and our concern is not with the spiritual and theological significance of his life, but with its effects upon the political and everyday life of men.

Almost our only sources of information about the personality of Jesus are derived from the four gospels, all of which were certainly in existence a few decades after his death, and from allusions to his life in the letters (epistles) of the early Christian propagandists. The first three gospels, the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, many suppose to be derived from some earlier documents; the gospel of St. John has more idiosyncrasy and is coloured by theology of a strongly Hellenic type. Critics are disposed to regard the gospel of St. Mark as being the most trustworthy account of the personality and actual words of Jesus. But all four agree in giving us a picture of a very

definite personality; they carry the same conviction of reality that the early accounts of Buddha do. In spite of miraculous and incredible additions, one is obliged to say, “Here was a man. This part of the tale could not have been invented.”

But just as the personality of Gautama Buddha has been distorted and obscured by the stiff squatting figure, the gilded idol of later Buddhism, so one feels that the lean and strenuous personality of Jesus is much wronged by the unreality and conventionality that a mistaken reverence has imposed upon his figure in modern Christian art. Jesus was a penniless teacher, who wandered about the dusty sun-lit country of Judea, living upon casual gifts of food; yet he is always represented clean, combed, and sleek, in spotless raiment, erect, and with something motionless about him as though he was gliding through the air. This alone has made him unreal and incredible to many people who cannot distinguish the core of the story from the ornamental and unwise additions of the unintelligently devout.

And it may be that the early parts of the gospels are accretions of the same nature. The miraculous circumstances of the birth of Jesus, the great star that brought wise men from the east to worship at his manger cradle, the massacre of the male infant children in the region of Bethlehem by Herod as a consequence of these portents, and the flight into Egypt, are all supposed to be such accretionary matter by many authorities. At the best they are events unnecessary to the teaching, and they rob it of much of the strength and power it possesses when we strip it of such accompaniment. So, too, do the discrepant genealogies given by Matthew and Luke, in which there is an endeavour to trace the direct descent of Joseph, his father, from King David, as though it was any honour to Jesus or to anyone to have such a man as an ancestor. The insertion of these genealogies is the more peculiar and unreasonable, because, according to the legend, Jesus was not the son of Joseph at all, but miraculously conceived.

We are left, if we do strip this record of these difficult accessories, with the figure of a being, very human, very earnest and passionate, capable of swift anger, and teaching a new and simple and profound doctrine — namely, the universal loving Fatherhood of God and the

coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was clearly a person — to use a common phrase — of intense personal magnetism. He attracted followers and filled them with love and courage. Weak and ailing people were heartened and healed by his presence. Yet he was probably of a delicate physique, because of the swiftness with which he died under the pains of crucifixion. There is a tradition that he fainted when, according to the custom, he was made to bear his cross to the place of execution. When he first appeared as a teacher he was a man of about thirty. He went about the country for three years spreading his doctrine, and then he came to Jerusalem and was accused of trying to set up a strange kingdom in Judea; he was tried upon this charge, and crucified together with two thieves. Long before they were dead, his sufferings were over.

Now it is a matter of fact that in the gospels all that body of theological assertion which constitutes Christianity finds little support. There is, as the reader may see for himself, no clear and emphatic assertion in these books of the doctrines which Christian teachers of all denominations find generally necessary to salvation. It is difficult to get any words that actually came from Jesus in which he claimed to be the Jewish Messiah (rendered in Greek by "the Christ") or to be a part of the godhead, or in which he explained the doctrine of the Atonement or urged any sacrifices or sacraments (that is to say, priestly offices) upon his followers. We shall see presently how later on all Christendom was torn by disputes about the Trinity. There is no evidence that the apostles of Jesus ever heard of the Trinity — at any rate from him. The observance of the Jewish Sabbath, again, transferred to the Mithraic Sun-day, is an important feature of many Christian cults; but Jesus deliberately broke the Sabbath, and said that it was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Nor did he say a word about the worship of his mother Mary, in the guise of Isis, the Queen of Heaven. All that is most characteristically Christian in worship and usage, he ignored. Sceptical writers have had the temerity to deny that Jesus can be called a Christian at all. For light upon these extraordinary gaps in his teaching, each reader must go to his own religious guides. Here we are bound to mention these gaps on account of the difficulties and controversies that arose out of them, and we are equally bound not to

enlarge upon them.

As remarkable is the enormous prominence given by Jesus to the teaching of what he called the Kingdom of Heaven, and its comparative insignificance in the procedure and teaching of most of the Christian churches.

This doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, and which plays so small a part in the Christian creeds, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought. It is small wonder if the world of that time failed to grasp its full significance, and recoiled in dismay from even a half apprehension of its tremendous challenges to the established habits and institutions of mankind. It is small wonder if the hesitating convert and disciple presently went back to the old familiar ideas of temple and altar, of fierce deity and propitiatory observance, of consecrated priest and magic blessing, and — these things being attended to — reverted then to the dear old habitual life of hates and profits and competition and pride. For the doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus seems to have preached it, was no less than a bold and uncompromising demand for a complete change and cleansing of the life of our struggling race, an utter cleansing, without and within. To the gospels the reader must go for all that is preserved of this tremendous teaching; here we are only concerned with the jar of its impact upon established ideas.

The Jews were persuaded that God, the one God of the whole world, was a righteous god, but they also thought of him as a trading god who had made a bargain with their Father Abraham about them, a very good bargain indeed for them, to bring them at last to predominance in the earth. With dismay and anger they heard Jesus sweeping away their dear securities. God, he taught, was no bargainer; there were no chosen people and no favourites in the Kingdom of Heaven. God was the loving father of all life, as incapable of showing favour as the universal sun. And all men were brothers — sinners alike and beloved sons alike of this divine father. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus cast scorn upon that natural tendency we all obey, to glorify our own people and to minimize the righteousness of other creeds and other races. In the parable of the labourers he thrust aside the obstinate claim of the

Jews to have a sort of first mortgage upon God. All whom God takes into the kingdom, he taught, God serves alike; there is no distinction in his treatment, because there is no measure to his bounty. From all, moreover, as the parable of the buried talent witnesses, and as the incident of the widow's mite enforces, he demands the utmost. There are no privileges, no rebates, and no excuses in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But it was not only the intense tribal patriotism of the Jews that Jesus outraged. They were a people of intense family loyalty, and he would have swept away all the narrow and restrictive family affections in the great flood of the love of God. The whole Kingdom of Heaven was to be the family of his followers. We are told that, "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

And not only did Jesus strike at patriotism and the bonds of family loyalty in the name of God's universal fatherhood and the brotherhood of all mankind, but it is clear that his teaching condemned all the gradations of the economic system, all private wealth, and personal advantages. All men belonged to the kingdom; all their possessions belonged to the kingdom; the righteous life for all men, the only righteous life, was the service of God's will with all that we had, with all that we were. Again and again he denounced private riches and the reservation of any private life.

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all

these things have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Moreover, in his tremendous prophecy of this kingdom which was to make all men one together in God, Jesus had small patience for the bargaining righteousness of formal religion. Another large part of his recorded utterances is aimed against the meticulous observance of the rules of the pious career. "Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honoureth me with their lips,

"But their heart is far from me.

"Howbeit in vain do they worship me,

"Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

"For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment

of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

So, too, we may note a score of places in which he flouted that darling virtue of the formalist, the observance of the Sabbath.

It was not merely a moral and a social revolution that Jesus proclaimed; it is clear from a score of indications that his teaching had a political bent of the plainest sort. It is true that he said his kingdom was not of this world, that it was in the hearts of men and not upon a throne; but it is equally clear that wherever and in what measure his kingdom was set up in the hearts of men, the outer world would be in that measure revolutionized and made new.

Whatever else the deafness and blindness of his hearers may have missed in his utterances, it is plain that they did not miss his resolve to revolutionize the world. Some of the questions that were brought to Jesus and the answers he gave enable us to guess at the drift of much of his unrecorded teaching. The directness of his political attack is manifest by such an incident as that of the coin —

"And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's" — which in view of all else that he had taught, left very little of a man or his possessions for Cæsar.

The whole tenor of the opposition to him and the circumstances of his trial and execution show clearly that to his contemporaries he seemed to propose plainly, and did propose plainly to change and fuse and enlarge all human life. But even his disciples did not grasp the profound and comprehensive significance of that proposal. They were ridden by the old Jewish dream of a king, a Messiah to overthrow the Hellenized Herods and the Roman overlord, and restore the fabled glories of David. They disregarded the substance of

his teaching, plain and direct though it was; evidently they thought it was merely his mysterious and singular way of setting about the adventure that would at last put him on the throne of Jerusalem. They thought he was just another king among the endless succession of kings, but of a quasi-magic kind, and making quasi-magic professions of an impossible virtue.

"And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

This was cold comfort for those who looked for a due reward for their services and hardships in his train. They could not believe this hard doctrine of a kingdom of service which was its own exceeding great reward. Even after his death upon the cross, they could still, after their first dismay, revert to the belief that he was nevertheless in the vein of the ancient world of pomps and privileges, that presently by some amazing miracle he would become undead again and return, and set up his throne with much splendour and graciousness in Jerusalem. They thought his life was a stratagem and his death a trick.

He was too great for his disciples. And in view of what he plainly said, is it any wonder that all who were rich and prosperous felt a horror of strange things, a swimming of their world at his teaching? Perhaps the priests and the rulers and the rich men understood him better than his followers. He was dragging out all the little private reservations they had made from social service into the light of a universal religious life. He was like some terrible moral huntsman digging mankind out of the snug burrows in which they had lived hitherto. In the white blaze of this kingdom of his there was to be no property, no privilege, no pride and precedence; no motive indeed and no reward but love. Is it any wonder that men were dazzled and blinded and cried out against him? Even his disciples cried out when he would not spare them the light. Is it any wonder that the priests realized that between this man and themselves there was no choice but that he or priestcraft should perish? Is it any wonder that the Roman soldiers, confronted and amazed by something soaring over their comprehension and threatening all their disciplines, should take refuge in wild laughter, and crown him with thorns and robe him in purple and make a mock Cæsar of him? For to take him seriously was to enter upon a strange and alarming life, to abandon habits, to control instincts and impulses, to essay an incredible happiness....

Is it any wonder that to this day this Galilean is too much for our small hearts?

§ 3

Yet be it noted that while there was much in the real teachings of Jesus that a rich man or a priest or a trader or an imperial official or any ordinary respectable citizen could not accept without the most revolutionary changes in his way of living, yet there was nothing that a follower of the actual teaching of Gautama Sakya might not receive very readily, nothing to prevent a primitive Buddhist from being also a Nazarene, and nothing to prevent a personal disciple of Jesus from accepting all the recorded teachings of Buddha.

Again consider the tone of this extract from the writings of a Chinaman, Mo Ti, who lived somewhere in the fourth century B.C.,

when the doctrines of Confucius and Lao Tse prevailed in China, before the advent of Buddhism to that country, and note how "Nazarene" it is.

"The mutual attacks of state on state; the mutual usurpations of family on family; the mutual robberies of man on man; the want of kindness on the part of the sovereign and of loyalty on the part of the minister; the want of tenderness and filial duty between father and son — these, and such as these, are the things injurious to the empire. All this has arisen from want of mutual love. If but that one virtue could be made universal, the princes loving one another would have no battle-fields; the chiefs of families would attempt no usurpations; men would commit no robberies; rulers and ministers would be gracious and loyal; fathers and sons would be kind and filial; brothers would be harmonious and easily reconciled. Men in general loving one another, the strong would not make prey of the weak; the many would not plunder the few, the rich would not insult the poor, the noble would not be insolent to the mean; and the deceitful would not impose upon the simple."

This is extraordinarily like the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth cast into political terms. The thoughts of Mo Ti came close to the Kingdom of Heaven.

This essential identity is the most important historical aspect of these great world religions. They were in their beginnings quite unlike the priest, altar and temple cults, those cults for the worship of definite finite gods that played so great and so essential a part in the earlier stages of man's development between 15000 B.C. and 600 B.C. These new world religions, from 600 B.C. onward, were essentially religions of the heart and of the universal sky. They swept away all those various and limited gods that had served the turn of human needs since the first communities were welded together by fear and hope. And presently when we come to Islam we shall find that for a third time the same fundamental new doctrine of the need of a universal devotion of all men to one Will reappears. Islam indeed is marred, as Judaism is marred, by a streak of primitive exclusiveness; its founder was manifestly of a commoner clay than either Jesus or Gautama, and he had to tack on to his assertion of the supremacy of God an assertion that Muhammad was in especial his

prophet, a queer little lapse into proprietorship, a touchingly baseless claim for the copyright of an idea which, as a matter of fact, he had picked up from the Jews and Christians about him. Yet, warned by the experiences of Christianity, Muhammad was very emphatic in insisting that he himself was merely a man. And the broad idea of human brotherhood under God that he preached, and the spirit in which his followers have carried it among black and fallen races, puts his essential teaching little lower than that of its two greater but far more abundantly corrupted and misrepresented rivals.

We speak of these great religions of mankind which arose between the Persian conquest of Babylon and the break-up of the Roman empire as rivals; but it is their defects, their accumulations and excrescences, their differences of language and phrase, that cause the rivalry; and it is not to one overcoming the other or to any new variant replacing them that we must look, but to the white truth in each being burnt free from its dross, and becoming manifestly the same truth — namely, that the hearts of men, and therewith all the lives and institutions of men, must be subdued to one common Will, ruling them all.

And though much has been written foolishly about the antagonism of science and religion, there is indeed no such antagonism. What all these world religions declare by inspiration and insight, history as it grows clearer and science as its range extends display, as a reasonable and demonstrable fact, that men form one universal brotherhood, that they spring from one common origin, that their individual lives, their nations and races, interbreed and blend and go on to merge again at last in one common human destiny upon this little planet amidst the stars. And the psychologist can now stand beside the preacher and assure us that there is no reasoned peace of heart, no balance and no safety in the soul, until a man in losing his life has found it, and has schooled and disciplined his interests and will beyond greeds, rivalries, fears, instincts, and narrow affections. The history of our race and personal religious experience run so closely parallel as to seem to a modern observer almost the same thing; both tell of a being at first scattered and blind and utterly confused, feeling its way slowly to the serenity and salvation of an

ordered and coherent purpose. That, in the simplest, is the outline of history; whether one have a religious purpose or disavow a religious purpose altogether, the lines of the outline remain the same.

§ 4

In the year 30 A.D., while Tiberius, the second emperor, was Emperor of Rome and Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea, a little while before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus of Nazareth came into Jerusalem. Probably he came then for the first time. Hitherto he had been preaching chiefly in Galilee, and for the most part round and about the town of Capernaum. In Capernaum he had preached in the synagogue.

His entry into Jerusalem was a pacific triumph. He had gathered a great following in Galilee — he had sometimes to preach from a boat upon the Lake of Galilee, because of the pressure of the crowd upon the shore — and his fame had spread before him to the capital. Great crowds came out to greet him. It is clear they did not understand the drift of his teaching, and that they shared the general persuasion that by some magic of righteousness he was going to overthrow the established order. He rode into the city upon the foal of an ass that had been borrowed by his disciples. The crowd accompanied him with cries of triumph and shouts of "Hosanna," a word of rejoicing.

He went to the temple. Its outer courts were cumbered with the tables of money-changers and with the stalls of those who sold doves to be liberated by pious visitors to the temple. These traders upon religion he and his followers cast out, overturning the tables. It was almost his only act of positive rule.

Then for a week he taught in Jerusalem, surrounded by a crowd of followers who made his arrest by the authorities difficult. Then officialdom gathered itself together against this astonishing intruder. One of his disciples, Judas, dismayed and disappointed at the apparent ineffectiveness of this capture of Jerusalem, went to the Jewish priests to give them his advice and help in the arrest of Jesus. For this service he was rewarded with thirty pieces of silver. The high priest and the Jews generally had many reasons for dismay at this gentle insurrection that was filling the streets with excited

crowds; for example, the Romans might misunderstand it or use it as an occasion to do some mischief to the whole Jewish people. Accordingly the high priest Caiaphas, in his anxiety to show his loyalty to the Roman overlord, was the leader in the proceedings against this unarmed Messiah, and the priests and the orthodox mob of Jerusalem the chief accusers of Jesus.

How he was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, how he was tried and sentenced by Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator, how he was scourged and mocked by the Roman soldiers and crucified upon the hill called Golgotha, is told with unsurpassable simplicity and dignity in the gospels.

The revolution collapsed utterly. The disciples of Jesus with one accord deserted him, and Peter, being taxed as one of them, said, "I know not the man." This was not the end they had anticipated in their great coming to Jerusalem. His last hours of aching pain and thirst upon the cross were watched only by a few women and near friends. Towards the end of the long day of suffering this abandoned leader roused himself to one supreme effort, cried out with a loud voice, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" and, leaving these words to echo down the ages, a perpetual riddle to the faithful, died.

It was inevitable that simple believers should have tried to enhance the stark terrors of this tragedy by foolish stories of physical disturbances similar to those which had been invented to emphasize the conversion of Gautama. We are told that a great darkness fell upon the earth, and that the veil of the temple was rent in twain; but if indeed these things occurred, they produced not the slightest effect upon the minds of people in Jerusalem at that time. It is difficult to believe nowadays that the order of nature indulged in any such meaningless comments. Far more tremendous is it to suppose a world apparently indifferent to those three crosses in the red evening twilight, and to the little group of perplexed and desolated watchers. The darkness closed upon the hill; the distant city set about its preparations for the Passover; scarcely anyone but that knot of mourners on the way to their homes troubled whether Jesus of Nazareth was still dying or already dead....

The souls of the disciples were plunged for a time into utter darkness. Then presently came a whisper among them and stories,

rather discrepant stories, that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb in which it had been placed, and that first one and then another had seen him alive. Soon they were consoling themselves with the conviction that he had risen from the dead, that he had shown himself to many, and had ascended visibly into heaven. Witnesses were found to declare that they had positively seen him go up, visibly in his body. He had gone through the blue — to God. Soon they had convinced themselves that he would presently come again, in power and glory, to judge all mankind. In a little while, they said, he would come back to them; and in these bright revivals of their old-time dream of an assertive and temporal splendour they forgot the greater measure, the giant measure, he had given them of the Kingdom of God.

§ 5

The story of the early beginnings of Christianity is the story of the struggle between the real teachings and spirit of Jesus of Nazareth and the limitations, amplifications, and misunderstandings of the very inferior men who had loved and followed him from Galilee, and who were now the bearers and custodians of his message to mankind. The gospels and the Acts of the Apostles present a patched and uneven record, but there can be little question that on the whole it is a quite honest record of those early days.

The early Nazarenes, as the followers of Jesus were called, present from the first a spectacle of a great confusion between these two strands, his teaching on the one hand, and the glosses and interpretations of the disciples on the other. They continued for a time his disciplines of the complete subjugation of self; they had their goods in common, they had no bond but love. Nevertheless, they built their faith upon the stories that were told of his resurrection and magical ascension, and the promised return. Few of them understood that the renunciation of self is its own reward, that it is itself the Kingdom of Heaven; they regarded it as a sacrifice that entitled them to the compensation of power and dominion when presently the second coming occurred. They had now all identified Jesus with the promised Christ, the Messiah so long expected by the

Jewish people. They found out prophecies of the crucifixion in the prophets — the Gospel of Matthew is particularly insistent upon these prophecies. Revived by these hopes, enforced by the sweet and pure lives of many of the believers, the Nazarene doctrine began to spread very rapidly in Judea and Syria.

And presently there arose a second great teacher, whom many modern authorities regard as the real founder of Christianity, Saul of Tarsus, or Paul. Saul apparently was his Jewish and Paul his Roman name; he was a Roman citizen, and a man of much wider education and a much narrower intellectuality than Jesus seems to have been. By birth he was probably a Jew, though some Jewish writers deny this; he had certainly studied under Jewish teachers. But he was well versed in the Hellenic theologies of Alexandria, and his language was Greek. Some classical scholars profess to find his Greek unsatisfactory; he did not use the Greek of Athens, but the Greek of Alexandria; but he used it with power and freedom. He was a religious theorist and teacher long before he heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and he appears in the New Testament narrative at first as the bitter critic and antagonist of the Nazarenes.

The present writer has been unable to find any discussion of the religious ideas of Paul before he became a follower of Jesus. There must have been a basis, if only a basis of departure, for his new views, and their phraseology certainly supplied the colour of his new doctrines. We are almost equally in the dark as to the teachings of Gamaliel, who is named as the Jewish teacher at whose feet he sat. Nor do we know what Gentile teachings had reached him. It is highly probable that he had been influenced by Mithraism. He uses phrases curiously like Mithraistic phrases. What will be clear to anyone who reads his various Epistles, side by side with the Gospels, is that his mind was saturated by an idea which does not appear at all prominently in the reported sayings and teaching of Jesus, the idea of a sacrificial person, who is offered up to God as an atonement for sin. What Jesus preached was a new birth of the human soul; what Paul preached was the ancient religion of priest and altar and propitiatory bloodshed. Jesus was to him the Easter lamb, that traditional human victim without spot or blemish who haunts all the religions of the dark white peoples. Paul came to the Nazarenes with overwhelming

force because he came to them with this completely satisfactory explanation of the disaster of the crucifixion. It was a brilliant elucidation of what had been utterly perplexing.

Paul had never seen Jesus. His knowledge of Jesus and his teaching must have been derived from the hearsay of the original disciples. It is clear that he apprehended much of the spirit of Jesus and his doctrine of a new birth, but he built this into a theological system, a very subtle and ingenious system, whose appeal to this day is chiefly intellectual. And it is clear that the faith of the Nazarenes, which he found as a doctrine of motive and a way of living, he made into a doctrine of *belief*. He found the Nazarenes with a spirit and hope, and he left them Christians with the beginning of a creed.

But we must refer the reader to the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles for an account of Paul's mission and teaching. He was a man of enormous energy, and he taught at Jerusalem, Antioch, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome.

Possibly he went into Spain. The manner of his death is not certainly known, but it is said that he was killed in Rome during the reign of Nero. A great fire had burnt a large part of Rome, and the new sect was accused of causing this. The rapid spread of Christian teaching certainly owes more to Paul than to any other single man. Within two decades of the crucifixion this new religion was already attracting the attention of the Roman rulers in several provinces. If it had acquired a theology in the hands of Saint Paul, it still retained much of the revolutionary and elementary quality of the teachings of Jesus. It had become somewhat more tolerant of private property; it would accept wealthy adherents without insisting upon the communization of their riches, and Saint Paul has condoned the institution of slavery ("Slaves, be obedient to your masters"), but it still set its face like flint against certain fundamental institutions of the Roman world. It would not tolerate the godhead of Cæsar; not even by a mute gesture at the altar would the Christians consent to worship the Emperor, though their lives were at stake in the matter. It denounced the gladiatorial shows. Unarmed, but possessing enormous powers of passive resistance, Christianity thus appeared at the outset plainly as rebellion, striking at the political if not at the economic essentials of the imperial system. The first evidences of

Christianity in non-Christian literature we find when perplexed Roman officials began to write to one another and exchange views upon the strange problem presented by this infectious rebellion of otherwise harmless people.

Much of the history of the Christians in the first two centuries of the Christian era is very obscure. They spread far and wide throughout the world, but we know very little of their ideas or their ceremonies and methods during that time. As yet they had no settled creeds, and there can be little doubt that there were wide local variations in their beliefs and disciplines during this formless period. But whatever their local differences, everywhere they seem to have carried much of the spirit of Jesus; and though everywhere they aroused bitter enmity and active counter-propaganda, the very charges made against them witness to the general goodness of their lives.

During this indefinite time a considerable amount of a sort of theocrasia seems to have gone on between the Christian cult and the almost equally popular and widely diffused Mithraic cult, and the cult of Serapis-Isis-Horus. From the former it would seem the Christians adopted Sun-day as their chief day of worship instead of the Jewish Sabbath, the abundant use of candles in religious ceremonies, the legend of the adoration by the shepherds, and probably also those ideas and phrases, so distinctive of certain sects to this day, about being "washed in the blood" of Christ, and of Christ being a blood sacrifice. For we have to remember that a death by crucifixion is hardly a more bloody death than hanging; to speak of Jesus shedding his blood for mankind is really a most inaccurate expression. But Mithraism centred upon some now forgotten mysteries about Mithras sacrificing a sacred and benevolent bull; all the Mithraic shrines seem to have contained a figure of Mithras killing this bull, which bleeds copiously, and from this blood a new life sprang. The Mithraist votary actually bathed in the blood of the sacrificial bull, and was "born again" thereby. At his initiation he went beneath a scaffolding on which the bull was killed, and the blood ran down on him.

The contributions of the Alexandrine cult to Christian thought and practices were even more considerable. In the personality of Horus,

who was at once the son of Serapis and identical with Serapis, it was natural for the Christians to find an illuminating analogue in their struggles with the Pauline mysteries. From that to the identification of Mary with Isis, and her elevation to a rank quasi-divine — in spite of the saying of Jesus about his mother and his brothers that we have already quoted — was also a very natural step. Natural, too, was it for Christianity to adopt, almost insensibly, the practical methods of the popular religions of the time. Its priests took on the head-shaving and the characteristic garments of the Egyptian priests, because that sort of thing seemed to be the right way of distinguishing a priest. One accretion followed another. Almost insensibly the originally revolutionary teaching was buried under these customary acquisitions. We have already tried to imagine Gautama Buddha returning to Tibet, and his amazement at the worship of his own image in Lhassa. We will but suggest the parallel amazement of some earnest Nazarene who had known and followed his dusty and travel-worn Master through the dry sunlight of Galilee, restored suddenly to this world and visiting, let us say, a mass in St. Peter's at Rome, at learning that the consecrated wafer upon the altar was none other than his crucified teacher.

Religion in a world community is not many things but one thing, and it was inevitable that all the living religious faiths in the world at the time, and all the philosophy and religious thought that came into contact with Christianity, should come to an account with Christianity and exchange phrases and ideas. The hopes of the early Nazarenes had identified Jesus with the Christ; the brilliant mind of Paul had surrounded his career with mystical significance. Jesus had called men and women to a giant undertaking, to the renunciation of self, to the new birth into the kingdom of love. The line of least resistance for the flagging convert was to intellectualize himself away from this plain doctrine, this stark proposition, into complicated theories and ceremonies — that would leave his essential self alone. How much easier is it to sprinkle oneself with blood than to purge oneself from malice and competition; to eat bread and drink wine and pretend one had absorbed divinity, to give candles rather than the heart, to shave the head and retain the scheming privacy of the brain inside it! The world was full of such

evasive philosophy and theological stuff in the opening centuries of the Christian era. It is not for us here to enlarge upon the distinctive features of Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, Philonism, and the like teachings which abounded in the Alexandrian world. But it was all one world with that in which the early Christians were living. The writings of such men as Origen, Plotinus, and Augustine witness to the inevitable give and take of the time.

Jesus called himself the Son of God and also the Son of Man; but he laid little stress on who he was or what he was, and much upon the teachings of the Kingdom. In declaring that he was more than a man and divine, Paul and his other followers, whether they were right or wrong, opened up a vast field of argument. Was Jesus God? Or had God created him? Was he identical with God or separate from God? It is not the function of the historian to answer such questions, but he is bound to note them, and to note how unavoidable they were, because of the immense influence they have had upon the whole subsequent life of western mankind. By the fourth century of the Christian Era we find all the Christian communities so agitated and exasperated by tortuous and elusive arguments about the nature of God as to be largely negligent of the simpler teachings of charity, service, and brotherhood that Jesus had inculcated.

The chief views that the historian notices are those of the Arians, the Sabellians, and the Trinitarians. The Arians followed Arius, who taught that Christ was less than God; the Sabellians taught that he was a mode or aspect of God; God was Creator, Saviour, and Comforter just as one man may be father, trustee, and guest; the Trinitarians, of whom Athanasius was the great leader, taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were three distinct Persons, but one God. The reader is referred to the Athanasian Creed for the exact expression of the latter mystery, and for the alarming consequences to him of any failure to grasp and believe it. To Gibbon he must go for a derisive statement of these controversies. The present writer can deal with them neither with awe nor derision; they seem to him, he must confess, a disastrous ebullition of the human mind entirely inconsistent with the plain account of Jesus preserved for us in the gospels. Orthodoxy became a test not only for Christian office, but for Christian trade and help. A small point of

doctrine might mean affluence or beggary to a man. It is difficult to read the surviving literature of the time without a strong sense of the dogmatism, the spites, rivalries, and pedantries of the men who tore Christianity to pieces for the sake of these theological refinements. Most of the Trinitarian disputants — for it is chiefly Trinitarian documents that survive — accuse their antagonists, probably with truth, of mean and secondary motives, but they do so in a manner that betrays their own base spirit very clearly. Arius, for example, is accused of heretical opposition because he was not appointed Bishop of Alexandria. Riots and excommunications and banishments punctuated these controversies, and finally came official persecutions. These fine differences about the constitution of the Deity interwove with politics and international disputes. Men who quarrelled over business affairs, wives who wished to annoy their husbands, developed antagonistic views upon this exalted theme. Most of the barbarian invaders of the empire were Arians; probably because their simple minds found the Trinitarian position incomprehensible.

It is easy for the sceptic to mock at these disputes. But even if we think that these attempts to say exactly how God was related to himself were presumptuous and intellectually monstrous, nevertheless we are bound to recognize that beneath these preposterous refinements of impossible dogmas there lay often a real passion for truth — even if it was truth ill conceived. Both sides produced genuine martyrs. And the zeal of these controversies, though it is a base and often malicious zeal, did at any rate make the Christian sects very energetically propagandist and educational. Moreover, because the history of the Christian body in the fourth and fifth centuries is largely a record of these unhappy disputes, that must not blind us to the fact that the spirit of Jesus did live and ennoble many lives among the Christians. The text of the gospels, though it was probably tampered with during this period, was not destroyed, and Jesus of Nazareth, in his own manifest inimitable greatness, still taught through that text. Nor did these unhappy quarrels prevent Christianity from maintaining a united front against gladiatorial shows and against slavery, and against the degrading worship of idols and of the god-Cæsar.

So far as it challenged the divinity of Cæsar and the characteristic institutions of the empire, Christianity is to be regarded as a rebellious and disintegrating movement, and so it was regarded by most of the emperors before Constantine the Great. It encountered considerable hostility, and at last systematic attempts to suppress it. Decius was the first emperor to organize an official persecution, and the great era of the martyrs was in the time of Diocletian (303 and following years). The persecution of Diocletian was indeed the crowning struggle of the old idea of the god-emperor against the already great and powerful organization that denied his divinity. Diocletian had reorganized the monarchy upon lines of extreme absolutism; he had abolished the last vestiges of republican institutions; he was the first emperor to surround himself completely with the awe-inspiring etiquette of an eastern monarch. He was forced by the logic of his assumptions to attempt the complete eradication of a system that flatly denied them. The test in the persecution was that the Christian was required to offer sacrifice to the emperor.

"Though Diocletian, still averse to the effusion of blood, had moderated the fury of Galerius, who proposed that everyone refusing to offer sacrifice should immediately be burnt alive, the penalties inflicted on the obstinacy of the Christians might be deemed sufficiently rigorous and effectual. It was enacted that their churches, in all the provinces of the empire, should be demolished to their foundations; and the punishment of death was denounced against all who should presume to hold any secret assemblies for the purpose of religious worship. The philosophers, who now assumed the unworthy office of directing the blind zeal of persecution, had diligently studied the nature and genius of the Christian religion; and as they were not ignorant that the speculative doctrines of the faith were supposed to be contained in the writings of the prophets, of the evangelists, and of the apostles, they most probably suggested the order, that the bishops and presbyters should deliver all their sacred books into the hands of the magistrates, who were commanded, under the severest penalties, to burn them in a public and solemn

manner. By the same edict, the property of the church was at once confiscated; and the several parts of which it might consist were either sold to the highest bidder, united to the imperial domain, bestowed on the cities or corporations, or granted to the solicitations of rapacious courtiers. After taking such effectual measures to abolish the worship, and to dissolve the government of the Christians, it was thought necessary to subject to the most intolerable hardships the condition of those perverse individuals who should still reject the religion of nature, of Rome, and of their ancestors. Persons of a liberal birth were declared incapable of holding any honours or employments; slaves were for ever deprived of the hopes of freedom; and the whole body of the Christians were put out of the protection of the law. The judges were authorized to hear and to determine every action that was brought against a Christian; but the Christians were not permitted to complain of any injury which they themselves had suffered; and those unfortunate sectaries were exposed to the severity, while they were excluded from the benefits, of public justice.... This edict was scarcely exhibited to the public view, in the most conspicuous place in Nicomedia, before it was torn down by the hands of a Christian, who expressed at the same time, by the bitterest of invectives, his contempt as well as abhorrence for such impious and tyrannical governors. His offence, according to the mildest laws, amounted to treason, and deserved death, and if it be true that he was a person of rank and education, those circumstances could serve only to aggravate his guilt. He was burnt, or rather roasted, by a slow fire; and his executioners, zealous to revenge the personal insult which had been offered to the emperors, exhausted every refinement of cruelty without being able to subdue his patience, or to alter the steady and insulting smile which in his dying agonies he still preserved in his countenance."

So with the death of this unnamed martyr the great persecution opened. But, as Gibbon points out, our information as to its severity is of very doubtful value. He estimates the total of victims as about two thousand, and contrasts this with the known multitudes of Christians martyred by their fellow Christians during the period of the Reformation. Gibbon was strongly prejudiced against

Christianity, and here he seems disposed to minimize the fortitude and sufferings of the Christians. In many provinces, no doubt, there must have been a great reluctance to enforce the edict. But there was a systematic hunt for the copies of Holy Writ, and in many places a systematic destruction of Christian churches. There were tortures and executions, as well as a great crowding of the gaols with Christian presbyters and bishops. We have to remember that the Christian community was now a very considerable element of the population, and that an influential proportion of the officials charged with the execution of the edict were themselves of the proscribed faith. Galerius, who was in control of the eastern provinces, was among the most vigorous of the persecutors, but in the end, on his deathbed (371), he realized the futility of his attacks upon this huge community, and granted toleration in an edict, the gist of which Gibbon translates as follows: —

"Among the important cares which have occupied our mind for the utility and preservation of the empire, it was our intention to correct and re-establish all things according to the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans. We were particularly desirous of reclaiming into the way of reason and nature the deluded Christians who had renounced the religion and ceremonies instituted by their fathers; and presumptuously despising the practice of antiquity, had invented extravagant laws and opinions according to the dictates of their fancy, and had collected a various society from the different provinces of our empire. The edicts which we have published to enforce the worship of the gods having exposed many of the Christians to danger and distress, many having suffered death, and many more who still persist in their impious folly, being left destitute of any public exercise of religion, we are disposed to extend to those unhappy men the effects of our wonted clemency. We permit them, therefore, freely to profess their private opinions and to assemble in their conventicles without fear or molestation, provided always that they preserve a due respect to the established laws and government. By another rescript we shall signify our intentions to the judges and magistrates; and we hope that our indulgence will engage the Christians to offer up their prayers to the deity whom they adore, for our safety and prosperity, for their own, and for that of the republic."

In a few years Constantine the Great was reigning, first as associated emperor (312) and then as the sole ruler (324), and the severer trials of Christianity were over. If Christianity was a rebellious and destructive force towards a pagan Rome, it was a unifying and organizing force within its own communion. This fact the genius of Constantine grasped. The spirit of Jesus, for all the doctrinal dissensions that prevailed, made a great freemasonry throughout and even beyond the limits of the empire. The faith was spreading among the barbarians beyond the border; it had extended into Persia and Central Asia. It provided the only hope of moral solidarity he could discern in the great welter of narrow views and self-seeking over which he had to rule. It, and it alone, had the facilities for organizing *will*, for the need of which the empire was falling to pieces like a piece of rotten cloth. In 312 Constantine had to fight for Rome and his position against Maxentius. He put the Christian monogram upon the shields and banners of his troops, and claimed that the God of the Christians had fought for him in his complete victory at the battle of the Milvian Bridge just outside Rome. By this act he renounced all those pretensions to divinity that the vanity of Alexander the Great had first brought into the western world, and with the applause and enthusiastic support of the Christians he established himself as a monarch more absolute even than Diocletian.

In a few years' time Christianity had become the official religion of the empire, and in A.D. 337 Constantine upon his deathbed was baptized as a Christian.

§ 7

The figure of Constantine the Great is at least as cardinal in history as that of Alexander the Great or Augustus Cæsar. We know very little of his personality or of his private life; no Plutarch, no Suetonius, has preserved any intimate and living details about him. Abuse we have of him from his enemies, and much obviously fulsome panegyric to set against it; but none of these writers give us a living character of him; he is a party symbol for them, a partisan

flag. It is stated by the hostile Zosimus that, like Sargon I, he was of illegitimate birth; his father was a distinguished general and his mother, Helena, an innkeeper's daughter of Nish in Serbia. Gibbon, however, is of opinion that there was a valid marriage. In any case it was a lowly marriage, and the personal genius of Constantine prevailed against serious disadvantages. He was comparatively illiterate, he knew little or no Greek. It appears to be true that he banished his eldest son Crispus, and caused him to be executed at the instigation of the young man's stepmother, Fausta; and it is also recorded that he was afterwards convinced of the innocence of Crispus, and caused Fausta to be executed — according to one account by being boiled to death in her bath, and according to another by being exposed naked to wild beasts on a desolate mountain — while there is also very satisfactory documentary evidence that she survived him. If she was executed, the fact remains that her three sons, together with two nephews, became the appointed heirs of Constantine. Clearly there is nothing solid to be got from this libellous tangle, and such soufflé as is possible with these scanty materials is to be found admirably done by Gibbon (chap. xviii.). Gibbon, because of his anti-Christian animus, is hostile to Constantine; but he admits that he was temperate and chaste. He accuses him of prodigality because of his great public buildings, and of being vain and dissolute (!) because in his old age he wore a wig — Gibbon wore his own hair tied with a becoming black bow — and a diadem and magnificent robes. But all the later emperors after Diocletian wore diadems and magnificent robes.

But if the personality of Constantine the Great remains phantom-like, if the particulars of his domestic life reveal nothing but a vague tragedy, we can still guess at much that was in his mind. It must, in the closing years of his life, have been a very lonely mind. He was more of an autocrat than any previous emperor had been — that is to say, he had less counsel and help. No class of public-spirited and trustworthy men remained; no senate nor council shared and developed his schemes. How much he apprehended the geographical weakness of the empire, how far he saw the complete disaster that was now so near, we can only guess. He made his real capital at Nicomedia in Bithynia; Constantinople across the Bosphorus was

still being built when he died. Like Diocletian, he seems to have realized the broken-backed outline of his dominions, and to have concentrated his attention on foreign affairs and more particularly on the affairs of Hungary, South Russia, and the Black Sea. He reorganized all the official machinery of the empire; he gave it a new constitution and sought to establish a dynasty. He was a restless remaker of things; the social confusion he tried to fix by assisting in the development of a caste system. This was following up the work of his great predecessor Diocletian. He tried to make a caste of the peasants and small cultivators, and to restrict them from moving from their holdings. In fact he sought to make them serfs. The supply of slave labour had fallen off because the empire was no longer an invading but an invaded power; he turned to serfdom as the remedy. His creative efforts necessitated unprecedentedly heavy taxation. All these things point to a lonely and forcible mind. It is in his manifest understanding of the need of some unifying moral force if the empire was to hold together that his claim to originality lies.

It was only after he had turned to Christianity that he seems to have realized the fierce dissensions of the theologians. He made a great effort to reconcile these differences in order to have one uniform and harmonious teaching in the community, and at his initiative a general council of the Church was held at Nicæa, a town near Nicomedia and over against Constantinople, in 325. Eusebius gives a curious account of this strange gathering, over which the Emperor, although he was not yet a baptized Christian, presided. It was not his first council of the Church, for he had already (in 313) presided over a council at Arles. He sat in the midst of the council of Nicæa upon a golden throne, and as he had little Greek, we must suppose he was reduced to watching the countenances and gestures of the debaters, and listening to their intonations. The council was a stormy one. When old Arius rose to speak, one Nicholas of Myra struck him in the face, and afterwards many ran out, thrusting their fingers into their ears in affected horror at the old man's heresies. One is tempted to imagine the great emperor, deeply anxious for the soul of his empire, firmly resolved to end these divisions, bending towards his interpreters to ask them the meaning of the uproar.

The views that prevailed at Nicæa are embodied in the Nicene

Creed, a strictly Trinitarian statement, and the Emperor sustained the Trinitarian position. But afterwards, when Athanasius bore too hardly upon the Arians, he had him banished from Alexandria; and when the church at Alexandria would have excommunicated Arius, he obliged it to readmit him to communion.

§ 8

This date, 325 A.D., is a very convenient date in our history. It is the date of the first complete general ("œcumenical") council of the entire Christian world. (That at Arles we have mentioned had been a gathering of only the western half.) It marks the definite entry upon the stage of human affairs of the Christian church and of Christianity as it is generally understood in the world to-day. It marks the exact definition of Christian teaching by the Nicene Creed.

It is necessary that we should recall the reader's attention to the profound differences between this fully developed Christianity of Nicæa and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. All Christians hold that the latter is completely contained in the former, but that is a question outside our province. What is clearly apparent is that the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth was a *prophetic teaching* of the new type that began with the Hebrew prophets. It was not priestly, it had no consecrated temple and no altar. It had no rites and ceremonies. Its sacrifice was "a broken and a contrite heart." Its only organization was an organization of preachers, and its chief function was the sermon. But the fully fledged Christianity of the fourth century, though it preserved as its nucleus the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, was mainly a *priestly religion* of a type already familiar to the world for thousands of years. The centre of its elaborate ritual was an altar, and the essential act of worship the sacrifice, by a consecrated priest, of the mass. And it had a rapidly developing organization of deacons, priests, and bishops.

But if Christianity had taken on an extraordinary outward resemblance to the cults of Serapis, Ammon, or Bel-Marduk, we must remember that even its priestcraft had certain novel features. Nowhere did it possess any quasi-divine image of God. There was no head temple containing the god, because God was everywhere. There

was no holy of holies. Its widespread altars were all addressed to the unseen universal Trinity. Even in its most archaic aspects there was in Christianity something new.

A very important thing for us to note is the rôle played by the Emperor in the fixation of Christianity. Not only was the council of Nicæa assembled by Constantine the Great, but all the great councils, the two at Constantinople (381 and 553), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451), were called together by the imperial power. And it is very manifest that in much of the history of Christianity at this time the spirit of Constantine the Great is as evident or more evident than the spirit of Jesus. He was, we have said, a pure autocrat. The last vestiges of Roman republicanism had vanished in the days of Aurelian and Diocletian. To the best of his lights he was trying to remake the crazy empire while there was yet time, and he worked without any councillors, any public opinion, or any sense of the need of such aids and checks. The idea of stamping out all controversy and division, stamping out all thought, by imposing one dogmatic creed upon all believers, is an altogether autocratic idea, it is the idea of the single-handed man who feels that to work at all he must be free from opposition and criticism. The history of the Church under his influence becomes now therefore a history of the violent struggles that were bound to follow upon his sudden and rough summons to unanimity. From him the Church acquired the disposition to be authoritative and unquestioned, to develop a centralized organization and run parallel to the empire.

A second great autocrat who presently contributed to the stamping upon Catholic Christianity of a distinctly authoritative character was Theodosius I, Theodosius the Great (379-395). He forbade the unorthodox to hold meetings, handed over all churches to the Trinitarians, and overthrew the heathen temples, throughout the empire, and in 390 he caused the great statue of Serapis at Alexandria to be destroyed. There was to be no rivalry, no qualification to the rigid unity of the Church.

Here we cannot tell of the vast internal troubles of the Church, its indigestions of heresy; of Arians and Paulicians, of Gnostics and Manicheans. Had it been less authoritative and more tolerant of intellectual variety, it might perhaps have been a still more powerful

body than it became. But in spite of all these disorders, it did for some time maintain a conception of human unity more intimate and far wider than was ever achieved before. By the fifth century Christendom was already becoming greater, sturdier, and more enduring than any empire had ever been because it was something not merely imposed upon them, but interwoven with the texture of their minds. It reached out far beyond the utmost limits of the empire, into Armenia, Persia, Abyssinia, Ireland, Germany, India, and Turkestan. "Though made up of widely scattered congregations, it was thought of as one body of Christ, one people of God. This ideal unity found expression in many ways. Inter-communication between the various Christian communities was very active. Christians upon a journey were always sure of a warm welcome and hospitable entertainment from their fellow-disciples. Messengers and letters were sent freely from one church to another. Missionaries and evangelists went continually from place to place. Documents of various kinds, including gospels and apostolic epistles, circulated widely. Thus in various ways the feeling of unity found expression, and the development of widely separated parts of Christendom conformed more or less closely to a common type."

Christendom retained at least the formal tradition of this general unity of spirit until 1054, when the Latin-speaking Western church and the main and original Greek-speaking church, the "Orthodox" church, severed themselves from one another, ostensibly upon the question of adding two words to the creed. The older creed had declared that the "Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father." The Latins wanted to add, and did add "*Filioque*" (=and from the son), and placed the Greeks out of their communion because they would not follow this lead. But already as early as the fifth century the Christians in Eastern Syria, Persia, Central Asia — there were churches at Merv, Herat, and Samarkand — and India had detached themselves on a similar score. These extremely interesting Asiatic Christians are known in history as the Nestorian Church, and their influence extended into China. The Egyptian and Abyssinian churches also detached themselves very early upon similarly inexplicable points. Long before this formal separation of the Latin and Greek-speaking halves of the main church, however, there was a

practical separation following upon the breaking up of the empire. Their conditions diverged from the first. While the Greek-speaking Eastern Empire held together and the emperor at Constantinople remained dominant in the Church, the Latin half of the empire, as we have already told, collapsed, and left the Church free of any such imperial control. Moreover, while ecclesiastical authority in the empire of Constantinople was divided between the high-bishops, or patriarchs, of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, authority in the West was concentrated in the patriarch, or Pope, of Rome. The Bishop of Rome had always been recognized as first among the patriarchs, and all these things conspired to justify exceptional pretensions upon his part to a quasi-imperial authority. With the final fall of the Western Empire, he took over the ancient title of *pontifex maximus* which the emperors had held, and so became the supreme sacrificial priest of the Roman tradition. Over the Christians of the West his supremacy was fully recognized, but from the beginning it had to be urged with discretion within the dominions of the Eastern emperor and the jurisdictions of the other four patriarchs.

Ideas of worldly rule by the Church were already prevalent in the fourth century. Saint Augustine, a citizen of Hippo in North Africa, who wrote between 354 and 430, gave expression to the developing political ideas of the Church in his book *The City of God. The City of God* represents the possibility of making the world into a theological and organized Kingdom of Heaven. The city, as Augustine puts it, is "a spiritual society of the predestined faithful," but the step from that to a political application was not a very wide one. The Church was to be the ruler of the world over all nations, the divinely led ruling power over a great league of terrestrial states. In later years these ideas developed into a definite political theory and policy. As the barbarian races settled and became Christian, the Pope began to claim an overlordship of their kings. In a few centuries the Pope had become in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, the high priest, censor, judge, and divine monarch of Christendom; his influence extended in the west far beyond the utmost range of the old empire, to Ireland, Norway, and Sweden, and over all Germany. For more than a thousand years this idea of the unity of Christendom, of

Christendom as a sort of vast Amphictyony, whose members even in war time were restrained from many extremities by the idea of a common brotherhood and a common loyalty to the Church, dominated Europe. The history of Europe from the fifth century onward to the fifteenth is very largely the history of the failure of this great idea of a divine world government to realize itself in practice.

§ 9

We have already given an account in the previous chapter of the chief irruptions of the barbarian races. We may now, with the help of a map, make a brief review of the political divisions of Europe at the close of the fifth century. No vestige of the Western Empire, the original Roman Empire, remained as such. Over many parts of Europe a sort of legendary overlordship of the Hellenic Eastern Empire held its place in men's minds. The emperor at Constantinople was, in theory at least, still emperor. In Britain, the quite barbaric Teutonic Angles, Saxons, and Jutes had conquered the eastern half of England; in the west of the island the Britons still held out, but were gradually being forced back into Wales and Cornwall. The Anglo-Saxons seem to have been among the most ruthless and effective of barbarian conquerors, for wherever they prevailed, their language completely replaced the Keltic or Latin speech — it is not certain which — used by the British. These Anglo-Saxons were as yet not Christianized. Most of Gaul, Holland, and the Rhineland was under the fairly vigorous, Christianized, and much more civilized kingdom of the Franks. But the Rhone Valley was under the separate kingdom of the Burgundians. Spain and some of the south of France were under the rule of the Visigoths, but the Suevi were in possession of the north-west corner of the peninsula. Of the Vandal kingdom in Africa we have already written; and Italy, still in its population and habits Roman, came under the rule of the Ostrogoths. There was no emperor in Rome, but Theodoric I ruled there as the first of a line of Gothic kings, and his rule extended across the Alps into Pannonia and down the Adriatic to Dalmatia and Serbia. To the east of the Gothic kingdom the emperors of Constantinople ruled definitely. The Bulgars were still at this time a Mongolian tribe of horse-riding

nomads in the region of the Volga; the Aryan Serbs had recently come southward to the shores of the Black Sea into the original home of the Visigoths; the Turko-Finnish Magyars were not yet in Europe. The Lombards were as yet north of the Danube.

The sixth century was marked by a phase of vigour on the part of the Eastern Empire under the Emperor Justinian (527-565). The Vandal kingdom was recovered in 534; the Goths were expelled from Italy in 553. So soon as Justinian was dead (565), the Lombards descended into Italy and settled in Lombardy, but they left Ravenna, Rome, Southern Italy, and North Africa under the rule of the Eastern Empire.

Such was the political condition of the world in which the idea of Christendom developed. The daily life of that time was going on at a very low level indeed physically, intellectually, and morally. It is frequently said that Europe in the sixth and seventh centuries relapsed into barbarism, but that does not express the reality of the case very well. Barbarism is a social order of an elementary type, orderly within its limits; the state of Europe beneath its political fragmentation was a social disorder. Its morale was not that of a kraal, but that of a slum. In a savage kraal a savage knows that he belongs to a community, and lives and acts accordingly; in a slum, the individual neither knows of nor acts in relation to any greater being.

Only very slowly and weakly did Christianity restore that lost sense of community and teach men to rally about the idea of Christendom. The social and economic structure of the Roman Empire was in ruins. That civilization had been a civilization of wealth and political power sustained by the limitation and slavery of the great mass of mankind. It had presented a spectacle of outward splendour and luxurious refinement, but beneath that brave outward show were cruelty, stupidity, and stagnation. It had to break down, it had to be removed before anything better could replace it.

We have already called attention to its intellectual deadness. For three centuries it had produced neither science nor literature. It is only where men are to be found neither too rich and powerful to be tempted into extravagant indulgences nor too poor and limited to care for anything beyond the daily need that those disinterested

curiosities and serene impulses can have play that give sane philosophy and science and great art to the world, and the plutocracy of Rome had made such a class impossible. When men and women are unlimited and unrestrained, the evidence of history shows clearly that they are all liable to become monsters of self-indulgence; when, on the other hand, they are driven and unhappy, then their impulse is towards immoderate tragical resorts, towards wild revolts or towards the austerities and intensities of religion.

It is not perhaps true to say that the world became miserable in these “dark ages” to which we have now come; much nearer the truth is it to say that the violent and vulgar fraud of Roman imperialism, that world of politicians, adventurers, landowners, and financiers, collapsed into a sea of misery that was already there. Our histories of

these times are very imperfect: there were few places where men could write, and little encouragement to write at all; no one was sure even of the safety of his manuscript or the possibility of its being read. But we know enough to tell that this age was an age not merely of war and robbery, but of famine and pestilence. No effective sanitary organization had yet come into the world, and the migrations of the time must have destroyed whatever hygienic balance had been established. Attila's ravages in North Italy were checked by an outbreak of fever in 452. There was a great epidemic of bubonic plague towards the end of the reign of Justinian (565) which did much to weaken the defence of Italy against the Lombards. In 543 ten thousand people had died in one day in Constantinople. (Gibbon says "each day.") Plague was raging in Rome in 590. The seventh century was also a plague-stricken century. The Englishman Bede, one of the few writers of the time, records pestilences in England in 664, 672, 678, and 683, no fewer than four in twenty years! Gibbon couples the Justinian epidemic with the great comet of 531, and with the very frequent and serious earthquakes of that reign. "Many cities of the east were left vacant, and in several districts of Italy the harvest and the vintage withered on the ground." He alleges "a visible decrease of the human species which has never been made good in some of the fairest countries of the globe." To many in those dark days it seemed that all learning and all that made life seemly and desirable was perishing.

How far the common lot was unhappier under these conditions of squalor and insecurity than it had been under the grinding order of the imperial system it is impossible to say. There was possibly much local variation, the rule of violent bullies here and a good-tempered freedom there, famine this year and plenty the next. If robbers abounded, tax-gatherers and creditors had disappeared. Such kings as those of the Frankish and Gothic kingdoms were really phantom rulers to most of their so-called subjects; the life of each district went on at a low level, with little trade or travel. Greater or lesser areas of country-side would be dominated by some able person, claiming with more or less justice the title of lord or count or duke from the tradition of the later empire or from the king. Such local nobles would assemble bands of retainers and build themselves strongholds.

Often they adapted pre-existing buildings. The Colosseum at Rome, for example, the arena of many great gladiatorial shows, was converted into a fortress, and so was the amphitheatre at Arles. So also was the great tomb of Hadrian at Rome. In the decaying and now insanitary towns and cities shrunken bodies of artisans would hold together and serve the needs of the cultivating villages about them by their industry, placing themselves under the protection of some adjacent noble.

§ 10

A very important share in the social recrystallization that went on in the sixth and seventh centuries after the breakdown and fusion of the fourth and fifth was taken by the Christian monastic orders that were now arising in the Western world.

Monasteries had existed in the world before Christianity. During the period of social unhappiness among the Jews before the time of Jesus of Nazareth, there was a sect of Essenes who lived apart in communities vowed to austere lives of solitude, purity, and self-denial. Buddhism, too, had developed its communities of men who withdrew from the general effort and commerce of the world to lead lives of austerity and contemplation. Indeed, the story of Buddha, as we have told it, shows that such ideas must have prevailed in India long before his time, and that at last he repudiated them. Quite early in the history of Christianity there arose a similar movement away from the competition and heat and stress of the daily life of men. In Egypt, particularly, great numbers of men and women went out into the desert and there lived solitary lives of prayer and contemplation, living in absolute poverty in caves or under rocks, and subsisting on the chance alms of those whom their holiness impressed. Such lives would signify little to the historian, they are indeed of their very nature lives withdrawn from history, were it not for the turn this monastic tendency presently took among the more energetic and practical Europeans.

One of the central figures in the story of the development of monasticism in Europe is Saint Benedict, who lived between 480 and 544. He was born at Spoleto in Italy, and he was a young man of

good family and ability. The shadow of the times fell upon him, and, like Buddha, he took to the religious life and at first set no limit to his austerities. Fifty miles from Rome is Subiaco, and there at the end of a gorge of the Anio, beneath a jungle growth of weeds and bushes, rose a deserted palace built by the Emperor Nero, overlooking an artificial lake that had been made in those days of departed prosperity by damming back the waters of the river. Here, with a hair shirt as his chief possession, Benedict took up his quarters in a cave in the high southward-looking cliff that overhangs the stream, in so inaccessible a position that his food had to be lowered to him on a cord by a faithful admirer. Three years he lived here, and his fame spread as Buddha's did nearly a thousand years before under similar circumstances.

As in the case of Buddha, the story of Benedict has been overlaid by foolish and credulous disciples with a mass of silly stories of miracles and manifestations. But presently we find him, no longer engaged in self-torment, but controlling a group of twelve monasteries, and the resort of a great number of people. Youths are brought to him to be educated, and the whole character of his life has changed.

From Subiaco he removed further southward to Monte Cassino, half-way between Rome and Naples, a lonely and beautiful mountain, in the midst of a great circle of majestic heights. Here, it is interesting to note that in the sixth century A.D. he found a temple of Apollo and a sacred grove and the country-side still worshipping at this shrine. His first labours had to be missionary labours, and it was with difficulty that he persuaded the simple pagans to demolish their temple and cut down their grove. The establishment upon Monte Cassino became a famous and powerful centre within the lifetime of its founder. Mixed up with the imbecile inventions of marvel-loving monks about demons exorcised, disciples walking on the water, and dead children restored to life, we can still detect something of the real spirit of Benedict. Particularly significant are the stories that represent him as discouraging extreme mortification. He sent a damping message to a solitary who had invented a new degree in saintliness by chaining himself to a rock in a narrow cave. "Break thy chain," said Benedict, "for the true servant of God is chained not to

rocks by iron, but to righteousness by Christ."

And next to the discouragement of solitary self-torture it is Benedict's distinction that he insisted upon hard work. Through the legends shines the clear indication of the trouble made by his patrician students and disciples who found themselves obliged to toil instead of leading lives of leisurely austerity under the ministrations of the lower class brethren. A third remarkable thing about Benedict was his political influence. He set himself to reconcile Goths and Italians, and it is clear that Totila, his Gothic king, came to him for counsel and was greatly influenced by him. When Totila retook Naples from the Greeks, the Goths protected the women from insult and treated even the captured soldiers with humanity. When Belisarius, Justinian's general, had taken the same place ten years previously, he had celebrated his triumph by a general massacre.

Now the monastic organization of Benedict was a very great beginning in the western world. One of his prominent followers was Pope Gregory the Great (540-604), the first monk to become Pope (590); he was one of the most capable and energetic of the popes, sending successful missions to the unconverted, and particularly to the Anglo-Saxons. He ruled in Rome like an independent king, organizing armies, making treaties. It is clear that Augustine's *City of God* was a very real thing to him. To his influence is due the imposition of the Benedictine rule upon nearly the whole of Latin monasticism.

Closely associated with these two names in the development of a civilizing monasticism out of the merely egotistic mortifications of the early recluses is that of Cassiodorus (490-585). He was evidently much senior to Pope Gregory, and younger by ten years than Benedict, and, like these two, he belonged to a patrician family, a Syrian family settled in Italy. He had a considerable official career under the Gothic kings; and when, between 545 and 553, the overthrow of those kings and the great pestilence paved the way for the new barbaric rule of the Lombards, he took refuge in a monastic career. He founded a monastery upon his private estates, and set the monks he gathered to work in quite the Benedictine fashion, though whether his monks actually followed the Benedictine rule that was being formulated about the same time from Monte Cassino we do not

know. But there can be no question of his influence upon the development of this great working, teaching, and studying order. It is evident that he was profoundly impressed by the universal decay of education and the possible loss of all learning and of the ancient literature by the world; and from the first he directed his brethren to the task of preserving and restoring these things. He collected ancient MSS. and caused them to be copied. He made sundials, water clocks, and similar apparatus, a little last gleam of experimental science in the gathering ignorance. He wrote a history of the Gothic kings, and, what is more significant of his sense of the needs of the time, he produced a series of school books on the liberal arts and a grammar. Probably his influence was even greater than that of Saint Benedict in making monasticism into a powerful instrument for the restoration of social order in the Western world.

The spread of monasteries of the Benedictine order or type in the seventh and eighth centuries was very considerable. Everywhere we find them as centres of light, restoring, maintaining, and raising the standard of cultivation, preserving some sort of elementary education, spreading useful arts, multiplying and storing books, and keeping before the eyes of the world the spectacle and example of a social backbone. For eight centuries thenceforth the European monastic system remained a system of patches and fibres of enlightenment in what might otherwise have been a wholly chaotic world. Closely associated with the Benedictine monasteries were the schools that grew presently into the medieval universities. The schools of the Roman world had been altogether swept away in the general social breakdown. There was a time when very few priests in Britain or Gaul could read the gospel or their service books. Only gradually was teaching restored to the world. But when it was restored, it came back not as the duty work of a learned slave, but as the religious service of a special class of devoted men.

In the east also there was a breach of educational continuity, but there the cause was not so much social disorder as religious intolerance, and the break was by no means so complete. Justinian closed and dispersed the schools of Athens (529), whose origins we have described in chap. xxiii, §§ 1 and 2; but he did this very largely

in order to destroy a rival to the new school he was setting up in Constantinople, which was more directly under imperial control. Since the new Latin learning of the developing western universities had no text-books and literature of its own, it had, in spite of its strong theological bias to the contrary, to depend very largely upon the Latin classics and the Latin translations of the Greek literature. It was obliged to preserve far more of that splendid literature than it had a mind to do.

XXXI

SEVEN CENTURIES IN ASIA (CIRCA 50 B.C. TO A.D. 650)

§ 1. *Justinian the Great.* § 2. *The Sassanid Empire in Persia.* § 3. *The Decay of Syria under the Sassanids.* § 4. *The First Message from Islam.* § 5. *Zoroaster and Mani.* § 6. *Hunnish Peoples in Central Asia and India.* § 7. *The Great Age of China.* § 8. *Intellectual Fetters of China.* § 9. *The Travels of Yuan Chwang.*

§ 1

IN the preceding two chapters we have concentrated our attention chiefly on the collapse in the comparatively short space of four centuries of the political and social order of the western part of the great Roman Empire of Cæsar and Trajan. We have dwelt upon the completeness of that collapse. To any intelligent and public-spirited mind living in the time and under the circumstances of St. Benedict or Cassiodorus, it must have seemed, indeed, as if the light of civilization was waning and near extinction. But with the longer views a study of universal history gives us, we can view those centuries of shadow as a phase, and probably a necessary phase, in the onward march of social and political ideas and understandings. And if, during that time, a dark sense of calamity rested upon Western Europe, we must remember that over large portions of the world there was no retrogression.

With their Western prepossessions European writers are much too prone to underrate the tenacity of the Eastern empire that centred upon Constantinople. This empire embodied a tradition much more ancient than that of Rome. If the reader will look at the map we have given of its extent in the sixth century, and if he will reflect that its official language had then become Greek, he will realize that what we are dealing with here is only nominally a branch of the Roman Empire; it is really the Hellenic Empire of which Herodotus dreamt and which Alexander the Great founded. True it called itself Roman and its people “Romans,” and to this day modern Greek is called “Romaic.” True also that Constantine the Great knew no Greek and

that Justinian's accent was bad. These superficialities of name and form cannot alter the fact that the empire was in reality Hellenic, with a past of six centuries at the time of Constantine the Great, and that while the real Roman Empire crumpled up completely in four centuries, this Hellenic "Roman Empire" held out for more than eleven, from 312, the beginning of the reign of Constantine the Great, to 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks.

And while we have had to tell of something like a complete social collapse in the west, there were no such equivalent breakdowns in the east. Towns and cities flourished, the countryside was well cultivated, trade went on. For many centuries Constantinople was the greatest and richest city in the world. We will not trouble ourselves here with the names and follies, the crimes and intrigues, of its tale of emperors. As with most monarchs of great states, they did not guide their empire; they were carried by it. We have already dealt at some length with Constantine the Great (312-337), we have mentioned Theodosius the Great (379-395), who for a little while reunited the empire, and Justinian I (527-565). Presently we shall tell something of Heraclius (610-641). Justinian, like Constantine, may have had Slav blood in his veins. He was a man of great ambition and great organizing power, and he had the good fortune to be married to a woman of equal or greater ability, the Empress Theodora, who had in her youth been an actress of doubtful reputation. But his ambitious attempts to restore the ancient greatness of the empire probably overtaxed its resources. As we have told, he reconquered the African province from the Vandals and most of Italy from the Goths. He also recovered the South of Spain. He built the great and beautiful church of Saint Sophia in Constantinople, founded a university, and codified the law. But against this we must set his closing of the schools of Athens. Meanwhile a great plague swept the world, and at his death this renewed and expanded empire of his crumpled up again like a blown-out bladder. The greater part of his Italian conquests was lost to the Lombards. Italy was indeed at that time almost a desert; the Lombard historians assert they came into an empty country. The Avars and Slavs struck down from the Danube country towards the Adriatic, Slav populations establishing themselves in what is now Serbia, Croatia, and Dalmatia, to become

the Yugo-Slavs of to-day. Moreover, a great and exhausting struggle began with the Sassanid Empire in Persia.

But before we say anything of this struggle, in which the Persians thrice came near to taking Constantinople, and which was decided by a great Persian defeat at Nineveh (627), it is necessary to sketch very briefly the history of Persia from the Parthian days.

§ 2

We have already drawn a comparison between the brief four centuries of Roman imperialism and the obstinate vitality of the imperialism of the Euphrates-Tigris country. We have glanced very transitorily at the Hellenized Bactrian and Seleucid monarchies that flourished in the eastern half of Alexander's area of conquest for three centuries, and told how the Parthians came down into Mesopotamia in the last century B.C. We have described the battle of Carrhæ and the end of Crassus. Thereafter for two centuries and a half the Parthian dynasty of the Arsacids ruled in the east and the Roman in the west, with Armenia and Syria between them, and the boundaries shifted east and west as either side grew stronger. We have marked the utmost eastward extension of the Roman Empire under Trajan (see map to chap. xxix., § 3), and we have noted that about the same time the Indo-Scythians (chap. xxix., § 4), poured down into India.

In 227 occurred a revolution, and the Arsacid dynasty gave way to a more vigorous line, the Sassanid, a national Persian line under Ardashir I. In one respect the empire of Ardashir I presented a curious parallelism with that of Constantine the Great a hundred years later. Ardashir attempted to consolidate it by insisting upon religious unity, and adopted as the state religion the old Persian faith of Zoroaster, of which we shall have more to say later.

This new Sassanid Empire immediately became aggressive, and under Sapor I, the son and successor of Ardashir, took Antioch. We have already noted how the Emperor Valerian was defeated (260) and taken prisoner. But as Sapor was retiring from a victorious march into Asia Minor, he was fallen upon and defeated by

Odenathus, the Arab king of a great desert-trading centre, Palmyra.

For a brief time under Odenathus, and then under his widow Zenobia, Palmyra was a considerable state, wedged between the two empires. Then it fell to the Emperor Aurelian, who carried off Zenobia in chains to grace his triumph at Rome (272).

We will not attempt to trace the fluctuating fortunes of the Sassanids during the next three centuries. Throughout that time war between Persia and the empire of Constantinople wasted Asia Minor like a fever. Christianity spread widely and was persecuted, for after the Christianization of Rome the Persian monarch remained the only god-monarch on earth, and he saw in Christianity merely the propaganda of his Byzantine rival. Constantinople became the protector of the Christians and Persia of the Zoroastrians; in a treaty of 422, the one empire agreed to tolerate Zoroastrianism and the other Christianity. In 483, the Christians of the east split off from the Orthodox church and became the Nestorian church; which, as we have already noted, spread its missionaries far and wide throughout Central and Eastern Asia. This separation from Europe, since it freed the Christian bishops of the east from the rule of the Byzantine patriarchs, and so lifted from the Nestorian church the suspicion of political disloyalty, led to a complete toleration of Christianity in Persia. With Chosroes I (531-579) came a last period of Sassanid vigour. He was the contemporary and parallel of Justinian. He reformed taxation, restored the orthodox Zoroastrianism, extended his power into Southern Arabia (Yemen), which he rescued from the rule of Abyssinian Christians, pushed his northern frontier into Western Turkestan, and carried on a series of wars with Justinian. His reputation as an enlightened ruler stood so high, that when Justinian closed the schools of Athens, the last Greek philosophers betook themselves to his court. They sought in him the philosopher king — that mirage which, as we have noted, Confucius and Plato had sought in their day. The philosophers found the atmosphere of orthodox Zoroastrianism even less to their taste than orthodox Christianity, and in 549 Chosroes had the kindness to insert a clause in an armistice with Justinian, permitting their return to Greece, and ensuring that they should not be molested for their pagan philosophy or their transitory pro-Persian behaviour.

It is in connection with Chosroes that we hear now of a new Hunnish people in Central Asia, the Turks, who are, we learn, first in alliance with him and then with Constantinople.

Chosroes II (590-628), the grandson of Chosroes I, experienced extraordinary fluctuations of fortune. At the outset of his career he achieved astonishing successes against the empire of Constantinople. Three times (in 608, 615, and 627) his armies reached Chalcedon, which is over against Constantinople; he took Antioch, Damascus, and Jerusalem (614), and from Jerusalem he carried off a cross, said to be the true cross on which Jesus was crucified, to his capital Ctesiphon. (But some of this or some other true cross had already got to Rome. It had been brought from Jerusalem, it was said, by the "Empress Helena," the idealized and canonized mother of Constantine, a story for which Gibbon displayed small respect.) In 619, Chosroes II conquered that facile country, Egypt. This career of conquest was at last arrested by the Emperor Heraclius (610), who set about restoring the ruined military power of Constantinople. For some time Heraclius avoided a great battle while he gathered his forces. He took the field in good earnest in 623. The Persians experienced a series of defeats culminating in the battle of Nineveh (627); but neither side had the strength for the complete defeat of the other. At the end of the struggle there was still an undefeated Persian army upon the Bosphorus, although there were victorious Byzantine forces in Mesopotamia. In 628 Chosroes II was deposed and murdered by his son. An indecisive peace was concluded between the two exhausted empires a year or so later, restoring their old boundaries; and the true cross was sent back to Heraclius, who replaced it in Jerusalem with much pomp and ceremony.

§ 3

So we give briefly the leading events in the history of the Persian as of the Byzantine Empire. What is more interesting for us and less easy to give are the changes that went on in the lives of the general population of those great empires during that time. The present writer can find little of a definite character about the great pestilences that we know swept the world in the second and sixth centuries of

this era. Certainly they depleted population, and probably they disorganized social order in these regions just as much as we know they did in the Roman and Chinese empires.

The late Sir Mark Sykes, whose untimely death in Paris during the influenza epidemic of 1919 was an irreparable loss to Great Britain, wrote in *The Caliph's Last Heritage* a vivid review of the general life of Nearer Asia during the period we are considering. In the opening centuries of the present era, he says: "the direction of military administration and imperial finance became entirely divorced in men's minds from practical government; and notwithstanding the vilest tyranny of sots, drunkards, tyrants, lunatics, savages, and abandoned women, who from time to time held the reins of government, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, and Syria contained enormous populations, huge canals and dykes were kept in repair, and commerce and architecture flourished, in spite of a perpetual procession of hostile armies and a continual changing of the nationality of the governor. Each peasant's interest was centred in his ruling town; each citizen's interest was in the progress and prosperity of his city; and the advent of an enemy's army may have sometimes been looked on even with satisfaction, if his victory was assured and the payment of his contracts a matter of certainty.

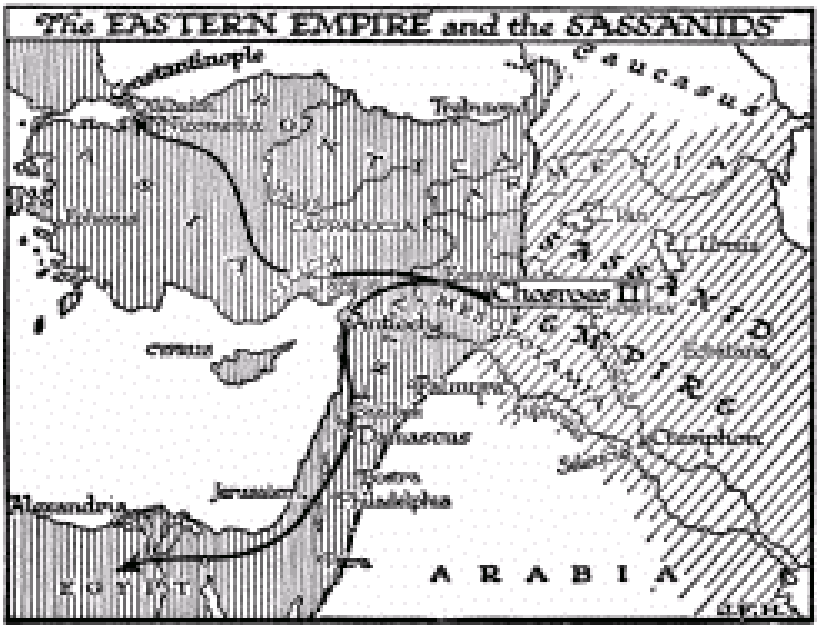

"A raid from the north, on the other hand, must have been a matter for dread. Then the villagers had need to take refuge behind the walls of the cities, from whence they could descry the smoke which told of the wreck and damage caused by the nomads. So long, however, as the canals were not destroyed (and, indeed, they were built with such solidity and caution that their safety was assured), no irreparable damage could be effected....

"In Armenia and Pontus the condition of life was quite otherwise. These were mountain districts, containing fierce tribes headed by powerful native nobility under recognized ruling kings, while in the valleys and plains the peaceful cultivator provided the necessary economic resources.... Cilicia and Cappadocia were now thoroughly subject to Greek influence, and contained numerous wealthy and highly civilized towns, besides possessing a considerable merchant marine. Passing from Cilicia to the Hellespont, the whole Mediterranean coast was crowded with wealthy cities and Greek colonies, entirely cosmopolitan in thought and speech, with those municipal and local ambitions which seem natural to the Grecian character. The Grecian Zone extended from Caria to the Bosphorus,

and followed the coast as far as Sinope on the Black Sea, where it gradually faded away.

"Syria was broken up into a curious quiltlike pattern of principalities and municipal kingdoms; beginning with the almost barbarous states of Commagene and Edessa (Urfa) in the north. South of these stood Bambyce, with its huge temples and priestly governors. Towards the coast a dense population in villages and towns clustered around the independent cities of Antioch, Apamea, and Emesa (Homs); while out in the wilderness the great Semitic merchant city of Palmyra was gaining wealth and greatness as the neutral trading-ground between Parthia and Rome. Between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon we find, at the height of its glory, Heliopolis (Baalbek), the battered fragments of which even now command our admiration.... Bending in towards Galilee we find the wondrous cities of Gerasa and Philadelphia (Amman) connected by solid roads of masonry and furnished with gigantic aqueducts.... Syria is still so rich in ruins and remains of the period that it is not difficult to picture to oneself the nature of its civilization. The arts of Greece, imported long before, had been developed into magnificence that bordered on vulgarity. The richness of ornamentation, the lavish expense, the flaunting wealth, all tell that the tastes of the voluptuous and artistic Semites were then as now. I have stood in the colonnades of Palmyra and I have dined in the Hotel Cecil, and, save that the latter is built of iron, daubed with sham wood, sham stucco, sham gold, sham velvet, and sham stone, the effect is identical. In Syria there were slaves in sufficient quantity to make real buildings, but the artistic spirit is as debased as anything made by machinery. Over against the cities the village folk must have dwelt pretty much as they do now, in houses of mud and dry stone wall; while out in the distant pastures the Bedouin tended their flocks in freedom under the rule of the Nabatean kings of their own race, or performed the office of guardians and agents of the great trading caravans.

"Beyond the herdsmen lay the parching deserts, which acted as the impenetrable barrier and defence of the Parthian Empire behind the Euphrates, where stood the great cities of Ctesiphon, Seleucia, Hatra, Nisibin, Harran, and hundreds more whose very names are forgotten. These great townships subsisted on the enormous cereal wealth of Mesopotamia, watered as it then was by canals, whose makers' names were even then already lost in the mists of antiquity. Babylon and Nineveh had passed away; the successors of Persia and Macedon had given place to Parthia; but the people and the cultivation were the same as when Cyrus the Conqueror had first subdued the land. The language of many of the towns was Greek, and the cultured citizens of Seleucia might criticize the philosophies and tragedies of Athens; but the millions of the agricultural population knew possibly no more of these things than does many an Essex peasant of to-day know of what passes in the metropolis."

Compare with this the state of affairs at the end of the seventh century.

"Syria was now an impoverished and stricken land, and her great cities, though still populated, must have been encumbered with ruins which the public funds were not sufficient to remove. Damascus and Jerusalem themselves had not recovered from the effects of long and terrible sieges; Amman and Gerash had declined into wretched villages under the sway and lordship of the Bedouin. The Hauran, perhaps, still showed signs of the prosperity for which it had been noted in the days of Trajan; but the wretched buildings and rude inscriptions of this date all point to a sad and depressing decline. Out in the desert, Palmyra stood empty and desolate save for a garrison in the castle. On the coasts and in the Lebanon a shadow of the former business and wealth was still to be seen; but in the north, ruin, desolation, and abandonment must have been the common state of the country, which had been raided with unfailing regularity for one hundred years and had been held by an enemy for fifteen. Agriculture must have declined, and the population notably decreased through the plagues and distresses from which it had suffered.

"Cappadocia had insensibly sunk into barbarism; and the great basilicas and cities, which the rude countrymen could neither repair nor restore, had been levelled with the ground. The Anatolian peninsula had been ploughed and harrowed by the Persian armies; the great cities had been plundered and sacked."

§ 4

It was while Heraclius was engaged in restoring order in this already desolated Syria after the death of Chosroes II and before the final peace with Persia, that a strange message was brought to him. The bearer had ridden over to the imperial outpost at Bostra in the wilderness south of Damascus. The letter was in Arabic, the obscure Semitic language of the nomadic peoples of the southern desert; and probably only an interpretation reached him — presumably with deprecatory notes by the interpreter.

It was an odd, florid challenge from someone who called himself "Muhammad the Prophet of God." This Muhammad, it appeared, called upon Heraclius to acknowledge the one true God and to serve him. Nothing else was definite in the document.

There is no record of the reception of this missive, and presumably it went unanswered. The emperor probably shrugged his shoulders, and was faintly amused at the incident.

But at Ctesiphon they knew more about this Muhammad. He was said to be a tiresome false prophet, who had incited Yemen, the rich province of Southern Arabia, to rebel against the King of Kings. Kavadh was much occupied with affairs. He had deposed and murdered his father Chosroes II, and he was attempting to reorganize the Persian military forces. To him also came a message identical with that sent to Heraclius. The thing angered him. He tore up the letter, flung the fragments at the envoy, and bade him begone.

When this was told to the sender far away in the squalid little town of Medina, he was very angry. "Even so, O Lord!" he cried; "rend Thou his kingdom from him." (A.D. 628.)

§ 5

But before we go on to tell of the rise of Islam in the world, it will be well to complete our survey of the condition of Asia in the dawn of the seventh century. And a word or so is due to religious developments in the Persian community during the Sassanid period.

From the days of Cyrus onward Zoroastrianism had prevailed over the ancient gods of Nineveh and Babylon. Zoroaster (the Greek spelling of the Iranian, "Zarathustra"), like Buddha, was an Aryan. We know nothing of the age in which he lived; some authorities make him as early as 1000 B.C., others make him contemporary with Buddha or Confucius; and as little do we know of his place of birth or his exact nationality. His teachings are preserved to us in the Zend Avesta, but here, since they no longer play any great part in the world's affairs, we cannot deal with them in any detail. The opposition of a good god, Ormuzd, the god of light, truth, frankness, and the sun, and a bad god, Ahriman, god of secrecy, cunning, diplomacy, darkness, and night, formed a very central part of his religion. As we find it in history, it is already surrounded by a ceremonial and sacerdotal system; it has no images, but it has priests, temples, and altars, on which burn a sacred fire and at which sacrificial ceremonies are performed. Among other distinctive

features is its prohibition of either the burning or the burial of the dead. The Parsees of India, the last surviving Zoroastrians, still lay their dead out within certain open towers, the Towers of Silence, to which the vultures come.

Under the Sassanid kings from Ardashir onward (227), this religion was the official religion; its head was the second person in the state next to the king, and the king in quite the ancient fashion was supposed to be divine or semi-divine and upon terms of peculiar intimacy with Ormuzd.

But the religious fermentation of the world did not leave the supremacy of Zoroastrianism undisputed in the Persian Empire. Not only was there a great eastward diffusion of Christianity, to which we have already given notice, but new sects arose in Persia, incorporating the novel ideas of the time. One early variant or branch of Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, we have already named. It had spread into Europe by the first century B.C., after the eastern campaigns of Pompey the Great. It became enormously popular with the soldiers and common people, and, until the time of Constantine the Great, continued to be a serious rival to Christianity. Indeed, one of his successors, the Emperor Julian (361-363), known in Christian history as "Julian the Apostate," made a belated attempt to substitute it for the accepted faith. Mithras was a god of light, "proceeding" from Ormuzd and miraculously born, in much the same way that the third person in the Christian Trinity proceeds from the first. Of this branch of the Zoroastrian stem we need say no more. In the third century A.D., however, another religion, Manichæism, arose, which deserves some notice now.

Mani, the founder of Manichæism, was born the son of a good family of Ecbatana, the old Median capital (A.D. 216). He was educated at Ctesiphon. His father was some sort of religious sectary, and he was brought up in an atmosphere of religious discussion. There came to him that persuasion that he at last had the complete light, which is the moving power of all religious initiators. He was impelled to proclaim his doctrine. In A.D. 242, at the accession of Sapor I, the second Sassanid monarch, he began his teaching.

It is characteristic of the way in which men's minds were moving in those days that his teaching included a sort of theocrasia. He was

not, he declared, proclaiming anything new. The great religious founders before him had all been right: Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus Christ — all had been true prophets, but to him it was appointed to clarify and crown their imperfect and confused teaching. This he did in Zoroastrian language. He explains the perplexities and contradictions of life as a conflict of light and darkness, Ormuzd was God and Ahriman Satan. But how man was created, how he fell from light into darkness, how he is being disentangled and redeemed from the darkness, and of the part played by Jesus in this strange mixture of religions we cannot explain here even if we would. Our interest with the system is historical and not theological.

But of the utmost historical interest is the fact that Mani not only went about Iran preaching these new and to him these finally satisfying ideas of his, but into Turkestan, into India, and over the passes into China. This freedom of travel is to be noted. It is interesting also because it brings before us the fact that Turkestan was no longer a country of dangerous nomads, but a country in which cities were flourishing and men had the education and leisure for theological argument. The ideas of Mani spread eastward and westward with great rapidity, and they were a most fruitful rootstock of heresies throughout the entire Christian world for nearly a thousand years.

Somewhen about A.D. 270 Mani came back to Ctesiphon and made many converts. This brought him into conflict with the official religion and the priesthood. In 277 the reigning monarch had him crucified and his body, for some unknown reason, flayed, and there began a fierce persecution of his adherents. Nevertheless, Manichæism held its own in Persia with Nestorian Christianity and orthodox Zoroastrianism (Mazdaism) for some centuries.

§ 6

It becomes fairly evident that in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. not merely Persia, but the regions that are now Turkestan and Afghanistan were far more advanced in civilization than were the French and English of that time. The obscurity of the history of these

regions has been lifted in the last two decades, and a very considerable literature written in languages of the Turkish group has been discovered. These extant manuscripts date from the seventh century onward. The alphabet is an adaptation of the Syrian, introduced by Manichæan missionaries, and many of the MSS. discovered — parchments have been found in windows in the place of glass — are as beautifully written as any Benedictine production. Mixed up with a very extensive Manichæan literature are translations of the Christian scriptures and Buddhistic writings. Much of this early Turkish material still awaits examination.

Everything points to the conclusion that those centuries, which were centuries of disaster and retrogression in Europe, were comparatively an age of progress in Middle Asia eastward into China.

A steady westward drift to the north of the Caspian of Hunnish peoples, who were now called Tartars and Turks, was still going on in the sixth century, but it must be thought of as an overflow rather than as a migration of whole peoples. The world from the Danube to the Chinese frontiers was still largely a nomadic world, with towns and cities growing up upon the chief trade routes. We need not tell in any detail here of the constant clash of the Turkish peoples of Western Turkestan with the Persians to the south of them, the age-long bickering of Turanian and Iranian. We hear nothing of any great northward marches of the Persians, but there were great and memorable raids to the south both by the Turanians to the east and the Alans to the west of the Caspian before the big series of movements of the third and fourth century westward that carried the Alans and Huns into the heart of Europe. There was a nomadic drift to the east of Persia and southward through Afghanistan towards India, as well as this drift to the north-west. These streams of nomads flowed by Persia on either side. We have already mentioned the Yueh-Chi (chap. xxix., § 4), who finally descended into India as the Indo-Scythians in the second century. A backward, still nomadic section of these Yueh-Chi remained in Central Asia, and became numerous upon the steppes of Turkestan, as the Ephthalites or White Huns. After being a nuisance and a danger to the Persians for three

centuries, they finally began raiding into India in the footsteps of their kinsmen about the year 470, about a quarter of a century after the death of Attila. They did not migrate into India; they went to and fro, looting in India and returning with their loot to their own country, just as later the Huns established themselves in the great plain of the Danube and raided all Europe.

The history of India during these seven centuries we are now reviewing is punctuated by these two invasions of the Yueh-Chi, the Indo-Scythians who, as we have said, wiped out the last traces of Hellenic rule, and the Ephthalites. Before the former of these, the Indo-Scythians, a wave of uprooted populations, the Sakas, had been pushed; so that altogether India experienced three waves of barbaric invasion, about A.D. 100, about A.D. 120, and about A.D. 470. But only the second of these invasions was a permanent conquest and settlement. The Indo-Scythians made their headquarters on the Northwest Frontier and set up a dynasty, the Kushan dynasty, which ruled most of North India as far east as Benares.

The chief among these Kushan monarchs was Kanishka (date unknown), who added to North India Kashgar, Yarkand, and Khotan. Like Asoka, he was a great and vigorous promoter of Buddhism, and these conquests, this great empire of the Northwest Frontier, must have brought India into close and frequent relations with China and Tibet.

We will not trouble to record here the divisions and coalescences of power in India, nor the dynasties that followed the Kushans, because these things signify very little to us from our present point of view. Sometimes all India was a patchwork quilt of states; sometimes such empires as that of the Guptas prevailed over great areas. These things made little difference in the ideas, the religion, and the ordinary way of life of the Indian peoples. Brahminism held its own against Buddhism, and the two religions prospered side by side. The mass of the population was living then very much as it lives to-day; dressing, cultivating, and building its houses in much the same fashion.

J.F.H
An Ephthalite Coin....

The irruption of the Ephthalites is memorable not so much because of its permanent effects as because of the atrocities perpetrated by the invaders. These Ephthalites very closely resembled the Huns of Attila in their barbarism; they merely raided, they produced no such dynasty as the Kushan monarchy; and their chiefs retained their headquarters in Western Turkestan. Mihiragula, their most capable leader, has been called the Attila of India. One of his favourite amusements, we are told, was the expensive one of rolling elephants down precipitous places in order to watch their sufferings. His abominations roused his Indian tributary princes to revolt, and he was overthrown (528). But the final ending of the Ephthalite raids into India was effected not by Indians, but by the destruction of the central establishment of the Ephthalites on the Oxus (565) by the growing power of the Turks, working in alliance with the Persians. After this break-up, the Ephthalites dissolved very rapidly and completely into the surrounding populations, much as the European Huns did after the death of Attila a hundred years earlier. Nomads without central grazing lands must disperse; nothing else is possible. Some of the chief Rajput clans of to-day in Rajputana in North India are descended, it is said, from these White Huns.

§ 7

These seven centuries which saw the beginning and the end of the emperors in Rome and the complete breakdown and recasting of the social, economic, political, and religious life of Western Europe, saw also very profound changes in the Chinese world. It is too commonly assumed by both Chinese, Japanese, and European historians, that the Han dynasty, under which we find China at the beginning of this period, and the Tang dynasty, with which it closed, were analogous ascendancies controlling a practically similar empire, and that the four centuries of division that elapsed between the end of the Han dynasty (220) and the beginning of the Tang period (619) were centuries of disturbance rather than essential change. The divisions of China are supposed to be merely political and territorial; and, deceived by the fact that at the close as at the commencement of these four centuries, China occupied much the same wide extent of Asia, and was still recognizably China, still with a common culture, a common script, and a common body of ideas, they ignore the very fundamental breaking down and reconstruction that went on, and the many parallelisms to the European experience that China displayed.

It is true that the social collapse was never so complete in the Chinese as in the European world. There remained throughout the whole period considerable areas in which the elaboration of the arts of life could go on. There was no such complete deterioration in cleanliness, decoration, artistic and literary production as we have to record in the West, and no such abandonment of any search for grace and pleasure. We note, for instance, that "tea" appeared in the world, and its use spread throughout China. China began to drink tea in the sixth century A.D. And there were Chinese poets to write delightfully about the effects of the first cup and the second cup and the third cup, and so on. China continued to produce beautiful paintings long after the fall of the Han rule. In the second, third, and fourth centuries some of the most lovely landscapes were painted that have ever been done by men. A considerable production of beautiful vases and carvings also continued. Fine building and decoration went on. Printing from wood blocks began about the same time as tea-drinking, and with the seventh century came a remarkable

revival of poetry.

Certain differences between the great empires of the East and West were all in favour of the stability of the former. China had no general coinage. The cash and credit system of the Western world, at once efficient and dangerous, had not strained her economic life. Not that the monetary idea was unknown. For small transactions the various provinces were using perforated zinc and brass "cash," but for larger there was nothing but stamped ingots of silver. This great empire was still carrying on most of its business on a basis of barter like that which prevailed in Babylon in the days of the Aramean merchants. And so it continued to do to the dawn of the twentieth century.

We have seen how under the Roman republic economic and social order was destroyed by the too great fluidity of property that money brought about. Money became abstract, and lost touch with the real values it was supposed to represent. Individuals and communities got preposterously into debt, and the world was saddled by a class of rich men who were creditors, men who did not handle and administer any real wealth, but who had the power to call up money. No such development of "finance" occurred in China. Wealth in China remained real and visible. And China had no need for any Licinian law, nor for a Tiberius Gracchus. The idea of property in China did not extend far beyond tangible things. There was no "labour" slavery, no gang servitude. The occupier and user of the land was in most instances practically the owner of it, subject to a land tax. There was a certain amount of small scale landlordism, but no great estates. Landless men worked for wages paid mostly in kind — as they were in ancient Babylon.

These things made for stability and the geographical form of China for unity; nevertheless, the vigour of the Han dynasty declined, and when at last at the close of the second century A.D. the world catastrophe of the great pestilence struck the system, the same pestilence that inaugurated a century of confusion in the Roman empire, the dynasty fell like a rotten tree before a gale. And the same tendency to break up into a number of warring states, and the same eruption of barbaric rulers, was displayed in East and West alike. In China, as in the Western empire, faith had decayed. Mr. Fu ascribes

much of the political nervelessness of China in this period to Epicureanism, arising, he thinks, out of the sceptical individualism of Lao Tse. This phase of division is known as the "Three Kingdom Period." The fourth century saw a dynasty of more or less civilized Huns established as rulers in the province of Shen-si. This Hunnish kingdom included not merely the north of China, but great areas of Siberia; its dynasty absorbed the Chinese civilization, and its influence carried Chinese trade and knowledge to the Arctic circle. Mr. Fu compares this Siberian monarchy to the empire of Charlemagne in Europe; it was the barbarian becoming "Chinized" as Charlemagne was a barbarian becoming Romanized. Out of a fusion of these Siberian with native north Chinese elements arose the Suy dynasty, which conquered the south. This Suy dynasty marks the beginning of a renascence of China. Under a Suy monarch the Lu-chu isles were annexed to China, and there was a phase of great literary activity. The number of volumes at this time in the imperial library was increased, we are told, to 54,000. The dawn of the seventh century saw the beginning of the great Tang dynasty, which was to endure for three centuries.

The renascence of China that began with Suy and culminated in Tang was, Mr. Fu insists, a real new birth. "The spirit," he writes, "was a new one; it marked the Tang civilization with entirely distinctive features. Four main factors had been brought together and fused: (1) Chinese liberal culture; (2) Chinese classicism; (3) Indian Buddhism; and (4) Northern bravery. A new China had come into being. The provincial system, the central administration and the military organization of the Tang dynasty, were quite different from those of their predecessors. The arts had been much influenced and revivified by Indian and Central Asiatic influences. The literature was no mere continuation of the old; it was a new production. The religious and philosophical schools of Buddhism were fresh features. It was a period of substantial change.

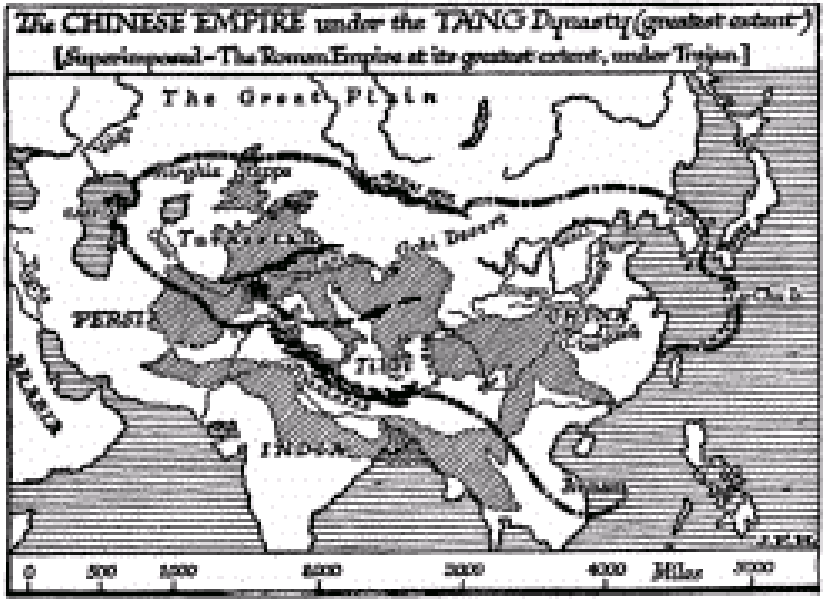

"It may be interesting to compare this making of China with the fate of the Roman Empire in her later days. As the Roman world was divided into the eastern and western halves, so was the Chinese world into the southern and the northern. The barbarians in the case of Rome and in the case of China made similar invasions. They established dominions of a similar sort. Charlemagne's empire corresponded to that of the Siberian dynasty (Later Wei), the temporary recovery of the Western empire by Justinian corresponded to the temporary recovery of the north by Liu Yu. The Byzantine line corresponded to the southern dynasties. But from this point the two worlds diverged. China recovered her unity; Europe has still to do so."

The dominions of the emperor Tai-tsung (627), the second Tang monarch, extended southward into Annam and westward to the Caspian Sea. His southern frontier in that direction marched with that of Persia. His northern ran along the Altai from the Kirghis steppe, north of the desert of Gobi. But it did not include Korea, which was conquered and made tributary by his son. This Tang dynasty civilized and incorporated into the Chinese race the whole of the southward population, and just as the Chinese of the north call

themselves the "men of Han," so the Chinese of the south call themselves the "men of Tang." The law was codified, the literary examination system was revised, and a complete and accurate edition of all the Chinese classics was produced. To the court of Tai-tsung came an embassy from Byzantium, and, what is more significant, from Persia came a company of Nestorian missionaries (631). These latter Tai-tsung received with great respect; he heard them state the chief articles of their creed, and ordered the Christian scriptures to be translated into Chinese for his further examination. In 638 he announced that he found the new religion entirely satisfactory, and that it might be preached within the empire. He also allowed the building of a church and the foundation of a monastery.

A still more remarkable embassy also came to the court of Tai-tsung in the year 628, three years earlier than the Nestorians. This was a party of Arabs, who came by sea to Canton in a trading vessel from Yanbu, the port of Medina in Arabia. (Incidentally it is interesting to know that there were such vessels engaged in an east and west trade at this time.) These Arabs had been sent by that Muhammad we have already mentioned, who styled himself "The Prophet of God," and the message they brought to Tai-tsung was probably identical with the summons which was sent in the same year to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius and to Kavadh in Ctesiphon. But the Chinese monarch neither neglected the message as Heraclius did, nor insulted the envoys after the fashion of the parricide Kavadh. He received them well, expressed great interest in their theological views, and assisted them, it is said, to build a mosque for the Arab traders in Canton — a mosque which survives to this day. It is one of the oldest mosques in the world.

§ 8

The urbanity, the culture, and the power of China under the early Tang rulers are in so vivid a contrast with the decay, disorder, and divisions of the Western world, as at once to raise some of the most interesting questions in the history of civilization. Why did not China keep this great lead she had won by her rapid return to unity and order? Why does she not to this day dominate the world culturally

and politically?

For a long time she certainly did keep ahead. It is only a thousand years later, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the discovery of America, the spread of printed books and education in the West, and the dawn of modern scientific discovery, that we can say with confidence that the Western world began to pull ahead of China. Under the Tang rule, her greatest period, and then again under the artistic but rather decadent Sung dynasty (960-1279), and again during the period of the cultured Mings (1358-1644), China presented a spectacle of prosperity, happiness, and artistic activity far in front of any contemporary state. And seeing that she achieved so much, why did she not achieve more? Chinese shipping was upon the seas, and there was a considerable overseas trade during that time. Why did the Chinese never discover America or Australia? There was much isolated observation, ingenuity, and invention. The Chinese knew of gunpowder in the sixth century, they used coal and gas heating centuries before these things were used in Europe; their bridge-building, their hydraulic engineering was admirable; the knowledge of materials shown in their enamel and lacquer ware is very great. Why did they never organize the system of record and co-operation in inquiry that has given the world modern science? And why, in spite of their general training in good manners and self-restraint, did intellectual education never soak down into the general mass of the population? Why are the masses of China to-day, and why have they always been, in spite of an exceptionally high level of natural intelligence, illiterate?

It is customary to meet such questions with rather platitudinous answers. We are told that the Chinaman is the most conservative of human beings, that, in contrast with the European races, his mind is twisted round towards the past, that he is the willing slave of etiquette and precedent to a degree inconceivable to Western minds. He is represented as having a mentality so distinct that one might almost expect to find a difference in brain structure to explain it. The appeals of Confucius to the wisdom of the ancients are always quoted to clinch this suggestion.

If, however, we examine this generalization more closely, it dissolves into thin air. The superior intellectual initiative, the liberal

enterprise, the experimental disposition that is supposed to characterize the Western mind, is manifest in the history of that mind only during certain phases and under exceptional circumstances. For the rest, the Western world displays itself as traditional and conservative as China. And, on the other hand, the Chinese mind has, under conditions of stimulus, shown itself quite as inventive and versatile as the European, and the very kindred Japanese mind even more so. For, take the case of the Greeks, the whole swing of their mental vigour falls into the period between the sixth century B.C. and the decay of the Alexandrian Museum under the later Ptolemies in the second century B.C. There were Greeks before that time and Greeks since, but a history of a thousand years of the Byzantine empire showed the Hellenic world at least as intellectually stagnant as China. Then we have already drawn attention to the comparative sterility of the Italian mind during the Roman period and its abundant fertility since the Renaissance of learning. The English mind again had a phase of brightness in the seventh and eighth centuries, and it did not shine again until the fifteenth. Again, the mind of the Arabs, as we shall presently tell, blazed out like a star for half a dozen generations after the appearance of Islam, having never achieved anything of importance before or since. On the other hand, there was always a great deal of scattered inventiveness in China, and the progress of Chinese art witnesses to new movements and vigorous innovations. We exaggerate the reverence of the Chinese for their fathers; parricide was a far commoner crime among the Chinese emperors than it was even among the rulers of Persia. Moreover, there have been several liberalizing movements in China, several recorded struggles against the "ancient ways."

It has already been suggested that phases of real intellectual progress in any community seem to be connected with the existence of a detached class of men, sufficiently free not to be obliged to toil or worry exhaustively about mundane needs, and not rich and powerful enough to be tempted into extravagances of lust, display, or cruelty. They must have a sense of security, but not a conceit of superiority. This class, we have further insinuated, must be able to talk freely and communicate easily. It must not be watched for heresy or persecuted for any ideas it may express. Such a happy state

of affairs certainly prevailed in Greece during its best days. A class of intelligent, free gentlefolk is indeed evident in history whenever there is a record of bold philosophy or effective scientific advances.

In the days of Tang and Sung and Ming there must have been an abundance of pleasantly circumstanced people in China of just the class that supplied most of the young men of the Academy at Athens, or the bright intelligences of Renaissance Italy, or the members of the London Royal Society, that mother society of modern science; and yet China did not produce in these periods of opportunity any such large beginnings of recorded and analyzed fact.

If we reject the idea that there is some profound racial difference between China and the West which makes the Chinese by nature conservative and the West by nature progressive, then we are forced to look for the operating cause of this difference in progressiveness in some other direction. Many people are disposed to find that operating cause which has, in spite of her original advantages, retarded China so greatly during the last four or five centuries, in the imprisonment of the Chinese mind in a script and in an idiom of thought so elaborate and so difficult that the mental energy of the country has been largely consumed in acquiring it. This view deserves examination.

We have already given an account in chap. xviii. of the peculiarities of Chinese writing and of the Chinese language. The Japanese writing is derived from the Chinese, and consists of a more rapidly written system of forms. A great number of these forms are ideograms taken over from the Chinese and used exactly as the Chinese ideograms are used, but also a number of signs are used to express syllables; there is a Japanese syllabary after the fashion of the Sumerian syllabary we have described in chap. xviii. The Japanese writing remains a clumsy system, as clumsy as cuneiform, though not so clumsy as Chinese; and there has been a movement in Japan to adopt a Western alphabet. Korea long ago went a step farther and developed a true alphabet from the same Chinese origins. With these exceptions all the great writing systems now in use in the world are based on the Mediterranean alphabets, and are beyond comparison more easily learnt and mastered than the Chinese. This means that while other peoples learn merely a comparatively simple

and straightforward method of setting down the language with which they are familiar, the Chinaman has to master a great multitude of complex word signs and word groups. He must not simply learn the signs, but the established grouping of those signs to represent various meanings. He must familiarize himself, therefore, with a number of exemplary classical works. Consequently in China, while you will find great numbers of people who know the significance of certain frequent and familiar characters, you discover only a few whose knowledge is sufficiently extensive to grasp the meaning of a newspaper paragraph, and still fewer who can read any subtlety of intention or fine shades of meaning. In a lesser degree this is true also of Japan. No doubt European readers, especially of such word-rich languages as English or Russian, vary greatly among themselves in regard to the extent of books they can understand and how far they understand them; their power varies according to their vocabularies; but the corresponding levels of understanding among the Chinese represent a far greater expenditure of time and labour upon their attainment. A mandarin's education in China is, mainly, learning to read.

And it may be that the consequent preoccupation of the educated class during its most susceptible years upon the Chinese classics gave it a bias in favour of this traditional learning upon which it had spent so much time and energy. Few men who have toiled to build up any system of knowledge in their minds will willingly scrap it in favour of something strange and new; this disposition is as characteristic of the West as of the East; it is shown as markedly by the scholars of the British and American universities as by any Chinese mandarins, and the British at the present time, in spite of the great and manifest advantages in popular education and national propaganda the change would give them, refuse to make any move from their present barbaric orthography towards a phonetic alphabet and spelling. The peculiarities of the Chinese script, and the educational system arising out of that script, must have acted age after age as an invincible filter that favoured the plastic and scholarly mind as against the restive and originating type, and kept the latter out of positions of influence and authority. There is much that is plausible in this explanation.

There have been several attempts to simplify the Chinese writing and to adopt an alphabetical system. In the early days of Buddhism in China, when there was a considerable amount of translation from Sanskrit, Indian influences came near to achieving this end; two Chinese alphabets were indeed invented, and each had some little use. But what hindered the general adoption of these, and what stands in the way of any phonetic system of Chinese writing to-day, is this, that while the literary script and phraseology is the same from one end of China to the other, the spoken language of the common people, both in pronunciation and in its familiar idioms, varies so widely that men from one province may be incomprehensible to men from another. There is, however, a "standard Chinese," a rather bookish spoken idiom, which is generally understood by educated people; and it is upon the possibility of applying an alphabetical system of writing to this standard Chinese that the hopes of modern educational reformers in China are based at the present time. For fresh attempts are now being made to release the Chinese mind from this ancient entanglement.

A Chinese alphabet has been formed; it is taught in the common schools, and newspapers and pamphlets are issued in it. And the rigid examination system that killed all intellectual initiatives has been destroyed.

The very success and early prosperity and general contentment of China in the past must have worked to justify in that land all the natural self-complacency and conservatism of mankind. No animal will change when its conditions are "good enough" for present survival. And in this matter man is still an animal. Until the nineteenth century, for more than two thousand years, there was little in the history of China that could cause any serious doubts in the mind of a Chinaman of the general superiority of his own civilization to that of the rest of the world, and there was no reason apparent therefore for any alteration. China produced a profusion of beautiful art, some delightful poetry, astonishing cookery, and thousands of millions of glowingly pleasant lives generation after generation. Her ships followed her marvellous inland waterways, and put to sea but rarely, and then only to India or Borneo as their utmost adventure. (Until the sixteenth century we must remember European seamen

never sailed out into the Atlantic Ocean. The Norse discovery of America, the Phœnician circumnavigation of Africa, were exceptional feats.) And these things were attained without any such general boredom, servitude, indignity, and misery as underlay the rule of the rich in the Roman Empire. There was much poverty, much discontent, but it was not massed poverty, it was not a necessary popular discontent. For a thousand years the Chinese system, though it creaked and swayed at times, seemed proof against decay. Dynastic changes there were, rebellions, phases of disorder, famines, pestilences; two great invasions that set foreign dynasties upon the throne of the Son of Heaven, but no such shock as to revolutionize the order of the daily round. The emperors and dynasties might come and go; the mandarins, the examinations, the classics, and the traditions and habitual life remained. China's civilization had already reached its culmination in the seventh century A.D., its crowning period was the Tang period; and though it continued to spread slowly and steadily into Annam, into Cambodia, into Siam, into Tibet, into Nepal, Korea, Mongolia, and Manchuria, there is henceforth little more than such geographical progress to record of it in this history for a thousand years.

§ 9

In the year 629, the year after the arrival of Muhammad's envoys at Canton and thirty odd years after the landing of Pope Gregory's missionaries in England, a certain learned and devout Buddhist named Yuan Chwang started out from Singan, Tai-tsung's capital, upon a great journey to India. He was away sixteen years, he returned in 645, and he wrote an account of his travels which is treasured as a Chinese classic. One or two points about his experiences are to be noted here because they contribute to our general review of the state of the world in the seventh century A.D.

Yuan Chwang was as eager for marvels and as credulous as Herodotus, and without the latter writer's fine sense of history; he could never pass a monument or ruin without learning some fabulous story about it; Chinese ideas of the dignity of literature perhaps

prevented him from telling us much detail of how he travelled, who were his attendants, how he was lodged, or what he ate and how he paid his expenses — details precious to the historian; nevertheless, he gives us a series of illuminating flashes upon China, Central Asia, and India in the period now under consideration.

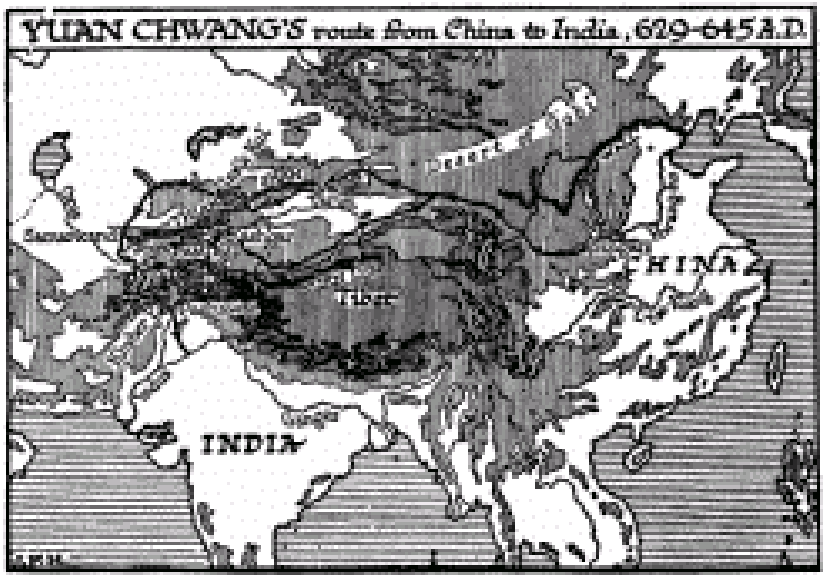

His journey was an enormous one. He went and came back by way of the Pamirs. He went by the northern route, crossing the desert of Gobi, passing along the southern slopes of the Thien Shan, skirting the great deep blue lake of Issik Kul, and so to Tashkend and Samarkand, and then more or less in the footsteps of Alexander the Great southward to the Khyber Pass and Peshawur. He returned by the southern route, crossing the Pamirs from Afghanistan to Kashgar, and so along the line of retreat the Yueh Chi had followed in the reverse direction seven centuries before, and by Yarkand, along the slopes of the Kuen Lun to rejoin his former route near the desert end of the Great Wall. Each route involved some hard mountaineering. His journeyings in India are untraceable; he was there fourteen years, and he went all over the peninsula from Nepal to Ceylon.

At that time there was an imperial edict forbidding foreign travel, so that Yuan Chwang started from Singan like an escaping criminal.

There was a pursuit to prevent him carrying out his project. How he bought a lean red-coloured horse that knew the desert paths from a strange grey-beard, how he dodged a frontier guard-house with the help of a "foreign person" who made him a bridge of brushwood lower down the river, how he crossed the desert guided by the bones of men and cattle, how he saw a mirage, and how twice he narrowly escaped being shot by arrows when he was getting water near the watch-towers on the desert track, the reader will find in the *Life*. He lost his way in the desert of Gobi, and for four nights and five days he had no water; when he was in the mountains among the glaciers, twelve of his party were frozen to death. All this is in the *Life*; he tells little of it in his own account of his travels.

He shows us the Turks, this new development of the Hun tradition, in possession not only of what is now Turkestan, but all along the northern route. He mentions many cities and considerable cultivation. He is entertained by various rulers, allies of or more or less nominally tributaries to China, and among others by the Khan of the Turks, a magnificent person in green satin, with his long hair tied with silk.

"The gold embroidery of this grand tent shone with a dazzling splendour; the ministers of the presence in attendance sat on mats in long rows on either side all dressed in magnificent brocade robes, while the rest of the retinue on duty stood behind. You saw that although it was a case of a frontier ruler, yet there was an air of distinction and elegance. The Khan came out from his tent about thirty paces to meet Yuan Chwang, who, after a courteous greeting, entered the tent.... After a short interval envoys from China and Kao-chang were admitted and presented their despatches and credentials, which the Khan perused. He was much elated, and caused the envoys to be seated; then he ordered wine and music for himself and them and grape-syrup for the pilgrim. Hereupon all pledged each other, and the filling and draining of the winecups made a din and bustle, while the mingled music of various instruments rose loud: although the airs were the popular strains of foreigners, yet they pleased the senses and exhilarated the mental faculties. After a little, piles of roasted beef and mutton were served for the others, and lawful food, such as cakes, milk, candy, honey, and grapes, for the pilgrim. After

the entertainment, grape-syrup was again served, and the Khan invited Yuan Chwang to improve the occasion, whereupon the pilgrim expounded the doctrines of the 'ten virtues,' compassion for animal life, and the paramitas and emancipation. The Khan, raising his hands, bowed, and gladly believed and accepted the teaching."

Yuan Chwang's account of Samarkand is of a large and prosperous city, "a great commercial entrepôt, the country about it very fertile, abounding in trees and flowers and yielding many fine horses. Its inhabitants were skilful craftsmen, smart and energetic." At that time we must remember there was hardly such a thing as a town in Anglo-Saxon England.

As his narrative approached his experiences in India, however, the pious and learned pilgrim in Yuan Chwang got the better of the traveller, and the book becomes congested with monstrous stories of incredible miracles. Nevertheless, we get an impression of houses, clothing, and the like, closely resembling those of the India of to-day. Then, as now, the kaleidoscopic variety of an Indian crowd contrasted with the blue uniformity of the multitude in China. In the time of Buddha it is doubtful if there were reading and writing in India; now reading and writing were quite common accomplishments. Yuan Chwang gives an interesting account of a great Buddhist university at Nalanda, where ruins have quite recently been discovered and excavated. Nalanda and Taxilla seem to have been considerable educational centres as early as the opening of the schools of Athens. The caste system Yuan Chwang found fully established in spite of Buddha, and the Brahmins were now altogether in the ascendant. He names the four main castes we have mentioned in chap. xx., § 4 (*q.v.*), but his account of their functions is rather different. The Sudras, he says, were the tillers of the soil. Indian writers say that their function was to wait upon the three "twice born" castes above them.

But, as we have already intimated, Yuan Chwang's account of Indian realities is swamped by his accumulation of legends and pious inventions. For these he had come, and in these he rejoiced. The rest, as we shall see, was a task that had been set him. The faith of Buddha

which in the days of Asoka, and even so late as Kanishka, was still pure enough to be a noble inspiration, we now discover absolutely lost in a wilderness of preposterous rubbish, a philosophy of endless Buddhas, tales of manifestations and marvels like a Christmas pantomime, immaculate conceptions by six-tusked elephants, charitable princes giving themselves up to be eaten by starving tigresses, temples built over a sacred nail-paring, and the like. We cannot give such stories here; if the reader likes that sort of thing, he must go to the publications of the Royal Asiatic Society or the India Society, where he will find a delirium of such imaginations. And in competition with this Buddhism, intellectually undermined as it now was and smothered in gilded decoration, Brahminism was everywhere gaining ground again, as Yuan Chwang notes with regret.

Side by side with these evidences of a vast intellectual decay in India we may note the repeated appearance in Yuan Chwang's narrative of ruined and deserted cities. Much of the country was still suffering from the ravages of the Ephthalites and the consequent disorders. Again and again we find such passages as this: "he went north-east through a great forest, the road being a narrow, dangerous path, with wild buffalo and wild elephants, and robbers and hunters always in wait to kill travellers, and emerging from the forest he reached the country of Kou-shih-na-ka-lo (Kúsinagara). The city walls were in ruins, and the towns and villages were deserted. The brick foundations of the 'old city' (that is, the city which had been the capital) were above ten *li* in circuit; there were very few inhabitants, the interior of the city being a wild waste." This ruin was, however, by no means universal; there is at least as much mention of crowded cities and villages and busy cultivations.

The *Life* tells of many hardships upon the return journey: he fell among robbers; the great elephant that was carrying the bulk of his possessions was drowned; he had much difficulty in getting fresh transport. Here we cannot deal with these adventures.

The return of Yuan Chwang to Singan, the Chinese capital, was, we gather, a triumph. Advance couriers must have told of his coming. There was a public holiday; the streets were decorated by gay banners and made glad with music. He was escorted into the city

with great pomp and ceremony. Twenty horses were needed to carry the spoils of his travels; he had brought with him hundreds of Buddhist books written in Sanskrit, and made of trimmed leaves of palm and birch bark strung together in layers; he had many images great and small of Buddha, in gold, silver, crystal, and sandalwood; he had holy pictures, and no fewer than one hundred and fifty well authenticated true relics of Buddha. Yuan Chwang was presented to the emperor, who treated him as a personal friend, took him into the palace, and questioned him day by day about the wonders of these strange lands in which he had stayed so long. But while the emperor asked about India, the pilgrim was disposed only to talk about Buddhism.

Buddhist writers thought very highly of Tai-tsung because of his reception of Yuan Chwang (645). But so did the Moslem historians, because of that mosque at Canton, and so did the Christian writers, because of the Nestorian envoys (631).

The subsequent history of Yuan Chwang contains two incidents that throw light upon the mental workings of this great monarch, Tai-tsung, who was probably quite as much a Moslem as he was a Christian or a Buddhist. The trouble about all religious specialists is that they know too much about their own religion and how it differs from others; the advantage, or disadvantage, of such creative statesmen as Tai-tsung and Constantine the Great is that they know comparatively little of such matters. Evidently the fundamental good of all these religions seemed to Tai-tsung to be much the same fundamental good. So it was natural to him to propose that Yuan Chwang should now give up the religious life and come into his foreign office, a proposal that Yuan Chwang would not entertain for a moment. The emperor then insisted at least upon a written account of the travels, and so got this classic we treasure. And finally Tai-tsung proposed to this highly saturated Buddhist that he should now use his knowledge of Sanskrit in translating the works of the great Chinese teacher, Lao Tse, so as to make them available for Indian readers. It seemed, no doubt, to the emperor a fair return and a useful service to the fundamental good that lies beneath all religions. On the whole, he thought Lao Tse might very well rank with or even a little above Buddha, and therefore that if his work was put before the

Brahmins, they would receive it gladly. In much the same spirit Constantine the Great had done his utmost to make Arius and Athanasius settle down amicably together. But naturally enough this suggestion was repulsed by Yuan Chwang. He retired to a monastery and spent the rest of his years translating as much as he could of the Buddhist literature he had brought with him into elegant Chinese writing.

BOOK VI (Continued)

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM (Continued)

XXXII

MUHAMMAD AND ISLAM

§ 1. *Arabia before Muhammad.* § 2. *Life of Muhammad to the Hegira.* § 3. *Muhammad becomes a Fighting Prophet.* § 4. *The Teachings of Islam.* § 5. *The Caliphs Abu Bekr and Omar.* § 6. *The Great Days of the Omayyads.* § 7. *The Decay of Islam under the Abbasids.* § 8. *The Intellectual Life of Arab Islam.*

§ 1

WE have already described how in A.D. 628 the courts of Heraclius, of Kavadh, and of Tai-tsung were visited by Arab envoys sent from a certain Muhammad, "The Prophet of God," at the small trading town of Medina in Arabia. We must tell now who this prophet was who had arisen among the nomads and traders of the Arabian desert.

From time immemorial Arabia, except for the fertile strip of the Yemen to the south, had been a land of nomads, the headquarters and land of origin of the Semitic peoples. From Arabia at various times waves of these nomads had drifted north, east, and west into the early civilizations of Egypt, the Mediterranean coast, and Mesopotamia. We have noted in this history how the Sumerians were swamped and overcome by such Semitic waves, how the Semitic Phœnicians and Canaanites established themselves along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, how the Babylonians and Assyrians were settled Semitic peoples, how the Hyksos conquered Egypt, how the Arameans established themselves in Syria with Damascus as their capital, and how the Hebrews partially conquered their "Promised Land." At some unknown date the Chaldeans drifted in from Eastern Arabia and settled in the old southern Sumerian lands. With each invasion first this and then that section of the Semitic peoples comes into history. But each of such swarmings still leaves a tribal nucleus behind to supply fresh invasions in the future.

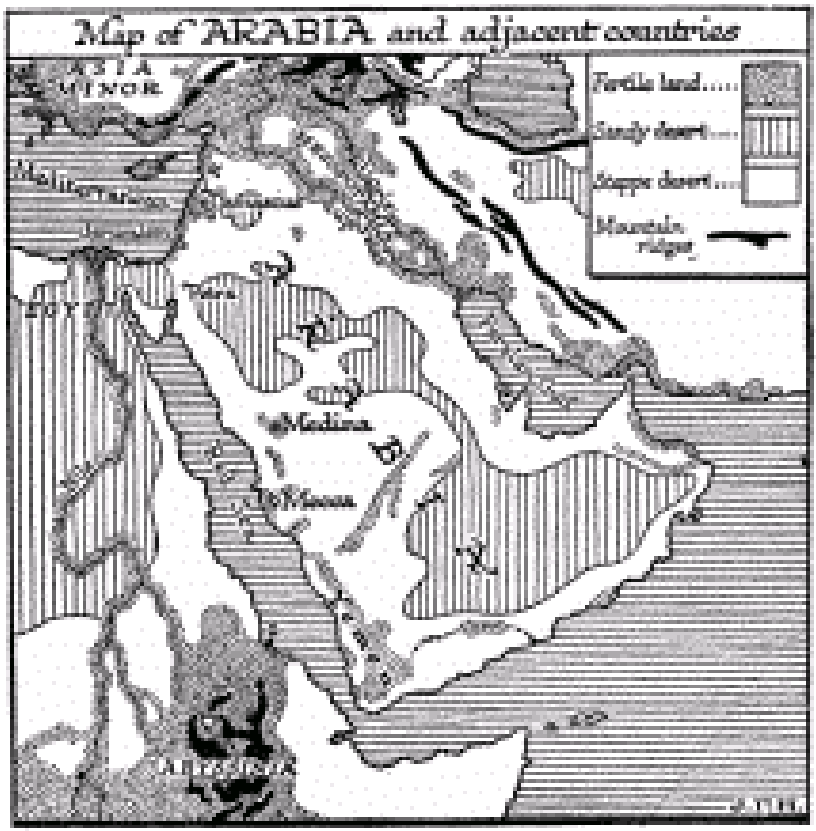

The history of the more highly organized empires of the horse and iron period, the empires of roads and writing, shows Arabia thrust like a wedge between Egypt, Palestine, and the Euphrates-Tigris country, and still a reservoir of nomadic tribes who raid and trade and exact tribute for the immunity and protection of caravans. There are temporary and flimsy subjugations. Egypt, Persia, Macedonia, Rome, Syria, Constantinople, and again Persia claim some unreal suzerainty in turn over Arabia, profess some unsubstantial protection. Under Trajan there was a Roman province of "Arabia," which included the then fertile region of the Hauran and extended as far as Petra. Now and then some Arab chief and his trading city rises to temporary splendour. Such was that Odenathus of Palmyra, whose brief career we have noted in chap. xxxi, § 2, and another such transitory desert city whose ruins still astonish the traveller was

Baalbek.

After the destruction of Palmyra, the desert Arabs began to be spoken of in the Roman and Persian records as Saracens.

In the time of Chosroes II., Persia claimed a certain ascendancy over Arabia, and maintained officials and tax collectors in the Yemen. Before that time the Yemen had been under the rule of the Abyssinian Christians for some years, and before that for seven centuries it had had native princes professing, be it noted, the Jewish faith.

Until the opening of the seventh century A.D. there were no signs of any unwonted or dangerous energy in the Arabian deserts. The life of the country was going on as it had gone on for long generations. Wherever there were fertile patches, wherever, that is, there was a spring or a well, a scanty agricultural population subsisted, living in walled towns because of the Bedouin who wandered with their sheep, cattle, and horses over the desert. Upon the main caravan routes the chief towns rose to a certain second-rate prosperity, and foremost among them were Medina and Mecca. In the beginning of the seventh century Medina was a town of about 15,000 inhabitants all told; Mecca may have had twenty or twenty-five thousand. Medina was a comparatively well-watered town, and possessed abundant date groves; its inhabitants were Yemenites, from the fertile land to the south. Mecca was a town of a different character, built about a spring of water with a bitter taste, and inhabited by recently settled Bedouin.

Mecca was not merely nor primarily a trading centre; it was a place of pilgrimage. Among the Arab tribes there had long existed a sort of Amphictyony (see chap. xxii, § 1) centring upon Mecca and certain other sanctuaries; there were months of truce to war and blood feuds, and customs of protection and hospitality for the pilgrim. In addition there had grown up an Olympic element in these gatherings; the Arabs were discovering possibilities of beauty in their language, and there were recitations of war poetry and love songs. The sheiks of the tribes, under a “king of the poets,” sat in judgment and awarded prizes; the prize songs were sung through all Arabia.

The Kaaba, the sanctuary at Mecca, was of very ancient date. It was a small square temple of black stones, which had for its corner-stone a meteorite. This meteorite was regarded as a god, and all the little tribal gods of Arabia were under his protection. The permanent inhabitants of Mecca were a tribe of Bedouin who had seized this temple and constituted themselves its guardians. To them there came in the months of truce a great incourse of people, who marched about the Kaaba ceremonially, bowed themselves, and kissed the stone, and also engaged in trade and poetical recitations. The Meccans profited much from these visitors.

All of this is very reminiscent of the religious and political state of affairs in Greece fourteen centuries earlier. But the paganism of these more primitive Arabs was already being assailed from several directions. There had been a great proselytizing of Arabs during the period of the Maccabeans and Herods in Judea; and, as we have already noted, the Yemen had been in succession under the rule of Jews (Arab proselytes to Judaism, *i.e.*), Christians, and Zoroastrians. It is evident that there must have been plenty of religious discussion during the pilgrimage fairs at Mecca and the like centres. Naturally enough Mecca was a stronghold of the old pagan cult which gave it its importance and prosperity; Medina, on the other hand, had Jewish proclivities, and there were Jewish settlements near by. It was inevitable that Mecca and Medina should be in a state of rivalry and bickering feud.

§ 2

It was in Mecca about the year A.D. 570 that Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born. He was born in considerable poverty, and even by the standards of the desert he was uneducated; it is doubtful if he ever learnt to write. He was for some years a shepherd's boy; then he became the servant of a certain Kadija, the widow of a rich merchant. Probably he had to look after her camels or help in her trading operations; and he is said to have travelled with caravans to the Yemen and to Syria. He does not seem to have been a very useful trader, but he had the good fortune to find favour in the lady's eyes, and she married him, to the great annoyance of her

family. He was then only twenty-five years old. It is uncertain if his wife was much older, though tradition declares she was forty. After the marriage he probably made no more long journeys. There were several children, one of whom was named Abd Manif — that is to say, the servant of the Meccan god Manif, which demonstrates that at that time Muhammad had made no religious discoveries.

Until he was forty he did indeed live a particularly undistinguished life in Mecca, as the husband of a prosperous wife. There may be some ground for the supposition that he became partner in a business in agricultural produce. To anyone visiting Mecca about A.D. 600 he would probably have seemed something of a loafer, a rather shy, good-looking individual, sitting about and listening to talk, a poor poet, and an altogether second-rate man.

About his internal life we can only speculate. Imaginative writers have supposed that he had great spiritual struggles, that he went out into the desert in agonies of doubt and divine desire. "In the silence of the desert night, in the bright heat of noontide desert day, he, as do all men, had known and felt himself alone yet not in solitude, for the desert is of God, and in the desert no man may deny Him." Maybe that was so, but there is no evidence of any such desert trips. Yet he was certainly thinking deeply of the things about him. Possibly he had seen Christian churches in Syria; almost certainly he knew much of the Jews and their religion, and he heard their scorn for this black stone of the Kaaba that ruled over the three hundred odd tribal gods of Arabia. He saw the pilgrimage crowds, and noted the threads of insincerity and superstition in the paganism of the town. It oppressed his mind. The Jews had perhaps converted him to a belief in the One True God, without his knowing what had happened to him.

At last he could keep these feelings to himself no longer. When he was forty he began to talk about the reality of God, at first apparently only to his wife and a few intimates. He produced certain verses, which he declared had been revealed to him by an angel. They involved an assertion of the unity of God and some acceptable generalizations about righteousness. He also insisted upon a future life, the fear of hell for the negligent and evil, and the reservation of paradise for the believer in the One God. Except for his claim to be a new prophet, there does not seem to have been anything very new

about these doctrines at the time, but this was seditious teaching for Mecca, which partly subsisted upon its polytheistic cult, and which was therefore holding on to idols when all the rest of the world was giving them up. Like Mani, Muhammad claimed that the prophets before him, and especially Jesus and Abraham, had been divine teachers, but that he crowned and completed their teaching. Buddhism, however, he did not name, probably because he had never heard of Buddha. Desert Arabia was in a theological backwater.

For some years the new religion was the secret of a small group of simple people, Kadija, the prophet's wife, Ali, an adopted son, Zeid, a slave, and Abu Bekr, a friend and admirer. For some years it was an obscure sect in a few households of Mecca, a mere scowl and muttering at idolatry, so obscure and unimportant that the leading men of the town did not trouble about it in the least. Then it gathered strength. Muhammad began to preach more openly, to teach the doctrine of a future life, and to threaten idolaters and unbelievers with hell fire. He seems to have preached with considerable effect. It appeared to many that he was aiming at a sort of dictatorship in Mecca, and drawing many susceptible and discontented people to his side; and an attempt was made to discourage and suppress the new movement.

Mecca was a place of pilgrimage and a sanctuary; no blood could be shed within its walls; nevertheless, things were made extremely disagreeable for the followers of the new teacher. Boycott and confiscation were used against them. Some were driven to take refuge in Christian Abyssinia. But the Prophet himself went unscathed because he was well connected, and his opponents did not want to begin a blood feud. We cannot follow the fluctuations of the struggle here, but it is necessary to note one perplexing incident in the new prophet's career, which, says Sir Mark Sykes, "proves him to have been an Arab of the Arabs." After all his insistence upon the oneness of God, he wavered. He came into the courtyard of the Kaaba, and declared that the gods and goddesses of Mecca might, after all, be real, might be a species of saints with a power of intercession.

His recantation was received with enthusiasm, but he had no sooner made it than he repented, and his repentance shows that he

had indeed the fear of God in him. His lapse from honesty proves him honest. He did all he could to repair the evil he had done. He said that the devil had possessed his tongue, and denounced idolatry again with renewed vigour. The struggle against the antiquated deities, after a brief interval of peace, was renewed again more grimly, and with no further hope of reconciliation.

For a time the old interests had the upper hand. At the end of ten years of prophesying, Muhammad found himself a man of fifty, and altogether unsuccessful in Mecca. Kadija, his first wife, was dead, and several of his chief supporters had also recently died. He sought a refuge at the neighbouring town of Tayf, but Tayf drove him out with stones and abuse. Then, when the world looked darkest to him, opportunity opened before him. He found he had been weighed and approved in an unexpected quarter. The city of Medina was much torn by internal dissension, and many of its people, during the time of pilgrimage to Mecca, had been attracted by Muhammad's teaching. Probably the numerous Jews in Medina had shaken the ancient idolatry of the people. An invitation was sent to him to come and rule in the name of his God in Medina.

He did not go at once. He parleyed for two years, sending a disciple to preach in Medina and destroy the idols there. Then he began sending such followers as he had in Mecca to Medina to await his coming there; he did not want to trust himself to unknown adherents in a strange city. This exodus of the faithful continued, until at last only he and Abu Bekr remained.

In spite of the character of Mecca as a sanctuary, he was very nearly murdered there. The elders of the town evidently knew of what was going on in Medina, and they realized the danger to them if this seditious prophet presently found himself master of a town on their main caravan route to Syria. Custom must bow to imperative necessity, they thought; and they decided that, blood feud or no blood feud, Muhammad must die. They arranged that he should be murdered in his bed; and in order to share the guilt of this breach of sanctuary they appointed a committee to do this, representing every family in the city except Muhammad's own. But Muhammad had already prepared his flight; and when in the night they rushed into his room, they found Ali, his adopted son, sleeping, or feigning sleep, on

his bed.

The flight (the Hegira) was an adventurous one, the pursuit being pressed hard. Expert desert trackers sought for the spoor to the north of the town, but Muhammad and Abu Bekr had gone south to certain caves where camels and provisions were hidden, and thence he made a great detour to Medina. There he and his faithful companion arrived, and were received with great enthusiasm on September 20, 622. It was the end of his probation and the beginning of his power.

§ 3

Until the Hegira, until he was fifty-one, the character of the founder of Islam is a matter of speculation and dispute. Thereafter he is in the light. We discover a man of great imaginative power but tortuous in the Arab fashion, and with most of the virtues and defects of the Bedouin.

The opening of his reign was "very Bedouin." The rule of the One God of all the earth, as it was interpreted by Muhammad, began with a series of raids — which for more than a year were invariably unsuccessful — upon the caravans of Mecca. Then came a grave scandal, the breaking of the ancient customary truce of the Arab Amphictyony in the sacred month of Rahab. A party of Moslems, in this season of profound peace, treacherously attacked a small caravan and killed a man. It was their only success, and they did it by the order of the Prophet.

Presently came a battle. A force of seven hundred men had come out from Mecca to convoy home another caravan, and they encountered a large raiding party of three hundred. There was a fight, the battle of Badr, and the Meccans got the worst of it. They lost about fifty or sixty killed and as many wounded. Muhammad returned in triumph to Medina, and was inspired by Allah and this success to order the assassination of a number of his opponents among the Jews in the town who had treated his prophetic claims with a disagreeable levity.

But Mecca resolved to avenge Badr, and at the battle of Uhud, near Medina, inflicted an indecisive defeat upon the Prophet's followers. Muhammad was knocked down and nearly killed, and

there was much running away among his followers. The Meccans, however, did not push their advantage and enter Medina.

For some time all the energies of the Prophet were concentrated upon rallying his followers, who were evidently much dispirited. The Koran records the chastened feelings of those days. "The *suras* of the Koran," says Sir Mark Sykes, "which are attributed to this period, excel nearly all the others in their majesty and sublime confidence." Here, for the judgment of the reader, is an example of these majestic utterances, from the recent orthodox translation by the Maulvi Muhammad Ali.

"Oh, you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will turn you back upon your heels, so you will turn back losers.

"Nay! Allah is your Patron, and He is the best of the helpers.

"We will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve, because they set up with Allah that for which He has sent down no authority, and their abode is the fire; and evil is the abode of the unjust.

"And certainly Allah made good to you His promise, when you slew them by His permission, until when you became weak-hearted and disputed about the affair and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you loved; of you were some who desired this world, and of you were some who desired the hereafter; then He turned you away from them that He might try you; and He has certainly pardoned you, and Allah is Gracious to the believers.

"When you ran off precipitately, and did not wait for anyone, and the Apostle was calling you from your rear, so He gave you another sorrow instead of your sorrow, so that you might not grieve at what had escaped you, nor at what befell you; and Allah is aware of what you do.

"Then after sorrow he sent down security upon you, a calm coming upon a party of you, and there was another party whom their own souls had rendered anxious; they entertained about Allah thoughts of ignorance quite unjustly, saying: We have no hand in this affair. Say, surely the affair is wholly in the hands of Allah. They conceal within their souls what they would not reveal to you. They say: Had we any hand in the affair, we would not have been slain here. Say: had you remained in your houses, those for whom

slaughter was ordained would certainly have gone forth to the places where they would be slain, and that Allah might test what was in your breasts and that He might purge what was in your hearts; and Allah knows what is in the breasts.

"As for those of you who turned back on the day when the two armies met, only the devil sought to cause them to make a slip on account of some deeds they had done, and certainly Allah has pardoned them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing."

Inconclusive hostilities continued for some years, and at last Mecca made a crowning effort to stamp out for good and all the growing power of Medina. A mixed force of no fewer than 10,000 men was scraped together, an enormous force for the time and country. It was, of course, an entirely undisciplined force of footmen, horsemen, and camel riders, and it was prepared for nothing but the usual desert scrimmage. Bows, spears, and swords were its only weapons. When at last it arrived amid a vast cloud of dust in sight of the hovels and houses of Medina, instead of a smaller force of the same kind drawn up for battle as it had expected, it found a new and entirely disconcerting phenomenon, a trench and a wall. Assisted by a Persian convert, Muhammad had entrenched himself in Medina!

This trench struck the Bedouin miscellany as one of the most unsportsmanlike things that had ever been known in the history of the world. They rode about the place. They shouted their opinion of the whole business to the besieged. They discharged a few arrows, and at last encamped to argue about this amazing outrage. They could arrive at no decision. Muhammad would not come out; the rains began to fall, the tents of the allies got wet, and the cooking difficult, views became divergent and tempers gave way, and at last this great host dwindled again into its constituent parts without ever having given battle (627). The bands dispersed north, east, and south, became clouds of dust, and ceased to matter. Near Medina was a castle of Jews, against whom Muhammad was already incensed because of their disrespect for his theology. They had shown a disposition to side with the probable victor in this last struggle, and Muhammad now fell upon them, slew all the men, nine hundred of them, and enslaved the women and children. Possibly many of their

late allies were among the bidders for these slaves. Never again after this quaint failure did Mecca make an effective rally against Muhammad, and one by one its leading men came over to his side.

We need not follow the windings of the truce and the treaty that finally extended the rule of the Prophet to Mecca. The gist of the agreement was that the faithful should turn towards Mecca when they prayed instead of turning towards Jerusalem, as they had hitherto done, and that Mecca should be the pilgrimage centre of the new faith. So long as the pilgrimage continued, the men of Mecca, it would seem, did not care very much whether the crowd assembled in the name of one god or many. Muhammad was getting more and more hopeless of any extensive conversion of the Jews and Christians, and he was ceasing to press his idea that all these faiths really worshipped the same One God. Allah was becoming more and more his own special God, tethered now by this treaty to the meteoric stone of the Kaaba, and less and less the father of all mankind. Already the Prophet had betrayed a disposition to make a deal with Mecca, and at last it was effected. The lordship of Mecca was well worth the concession. Of comings and goings and a final conflict we need not tell. In 629 Muhammad came to the town as its master. The image of Manif, the god after whom he had once named his son, was smashed under his feet as he entered the Kaaba.

Thereafter his power extended, there were battles, treacheries, massacres; but on the whole he prevailed, until he was master of all Arabia; and when he was master of all Arabia in 632, at the age of sixty-two, he died.

Throughout the concluding eleven years of his life after the Hegira, there is little to distinguish the general conduct of Muhammad from that of any other welder of peoples into a monarchy. The chief difference is his use of a religion of his own creation as his cement. He was diplomatic, treacherous, ruthless, or compromising as the occasion required and as any other Arab king might have been in his place; and there was singularly little spirituality in his kingship. Nor was his domestic life during his time of power and freedom one of exceptional edification. Until the death of Kadija, when he was fifty, he seems to have been the honest husband of one wife; but then, as many men do in their declining

years, he developed a disagreeably strong interest in women.

He married two wives after the death of Kadija, one being the young Ayesha, who became and remained his favourite and most influential partner; and subsequently a number of other women, wives and concubines, were added to his establishment. This led to much trouble and confusion, and in spite of many special and very helpful revelations on the part of Allah, these complications still require much explanation and argument from the faithful. There was, for example, a scandal about Ayesha; she was left behind on one occasion when the howdah and the camel went on, while she was looking for her necklace among the bushes; and so Allah had to intervene with some heat and denounce her slanderers. Allah also had to speak very plainly about the general craving among this household of women for "this world's life and its ornature" and for "finery." Then there was much discussion because the Prophet first married his young cousin Zainib to his adopted son Zaid, and afterwards, "when Zaid had accomplished his want of her," the Prophet took her and married her — but, as the inspired book makes clear, only in order to show the difference between an adopted and a real son. "We gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their want of them, and Allah's command shall be performed." Yet surely a simple statement in the Koran should have sufficed without this excessively practical demonstration. There was, moreover, a mutiny in the harem on account of the undue favours shown by the Prophet to an Egyptian concubine who had borne him a boy, a boy for whom he had a great affection, since none of Kadija's sons had survived. These domestic troubles mingle inextricably with our impression of the Prophet's personality. One of his wives was a Jewess, Safiyya, whom he had married on the evening of the battle in which her husband had been captured and executed. He viewed the captured women at the end of the day, and she found favour in his eyes and was taken to his tent.

These are salient facts in these last eleven years of Muhammad's career. Because he too founded a great religion, there are those who write of this evidently lustful and rather shifty leader as though he were a man to put beside Jesus of Nazareth or Gautama or Mani. But

it is surely manifest that he was a being of a commoner clay; he was vain, egotistical, tyrannous, and a self-deceiver; and it would throw all our history out of proportion if, out of an insincere deference to the possible Moslem reader, we were to present him in any other light.

Yet, unless we balance it, this insistence upon his vanity, egotism, self-deception, and hot desire does not complete the justice of the case. We must not swing across from the repudiation of the extravagant pretensions of the faithful to an equally extravagant condemnation. Can a man who has no good qualities hold a friend? Because those who knew Muhammad best believed in him most. Kadija for all her days believed in him — but she may have been a fond woman. Abu Bekr is a better witness, and he never wavered in his devotion. Abu Bekr believed in the Prophet, and it is very hard for anyone who reads the history of these times not to believe in Abu Bekr. Ali again risked his life for the Prophet in his darkest days. Muhammad was no impostor, at any rate, though at times his vanity made him behave as though Allah was at his beck and call, and as if his thoughts were necessarily God's thoughts. And if his bloodstained passion with Safiyya amazes and disgusts our modern minds, his love for little Ibrahim, the son of Mary the Egyptian, and his passionate grief when the child died, reinstate him in the fellowship of all those who have known love and loss.

He smoothed the earth over the little grave with his own hands. "This eases the afflicted heart," he said. "Though it neither profits nor injures the dead, yet it is a comfort to the living."

§ 4

But the personal quality of Muhammad is one thing and the quality of Islam, the religion he founded, is quite another. Muhammad was not pitted against Jesus or Mani, and his relative stature is only a very secondary question for us; it is Islam which was pitted against the corrupted Christianity of the seventh century and against the decaying tradition of the Zoroastrian Magi with which the historian has the greater concern. And whether it was through its Prophet, or whether it was in spite of its Prophet, and through certain accidents

in its origin and certain qualities of the desert from which it sprang, there can be no denying that Islam possesses many fine and noble attributes. It is not always through sublime persons that great things come into human life. It is the folly of the simple disciple which demands miraculous frippery on the majesty of truth and immaculate conceptions for righteousness.

A year before his death, at the end of the tenth year of the Hegira, Muhammad made his last pilgrimage from Medina to Mecca. He made then a great sermon to his people of which the tradition is as follows. There are, of course, disputes as to the authenticity of the words, but there can be no dispute that the world of Islam, a world still of three hundred million people, receives them to this day as its rule of life, and to a great extent observes it. The reader will note that the first paragraph sweeps away all plunder and blood feuds among the followers of Islam. The last makes the believing Negro the equal of the Caliph. They may not be sublime words, as certain utterances of Jesus of Nazareth are sublime; but they established in the world a great tradition of dignified fair dealing, they breathe a spirit of generosity, and they are human and workable. They created a society more free from widespread cruelty and social oppression than any society had ever been in the world before.

"Ye people: Hearken to my words; for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you here again. Your lives and property are sacred and inviolable amongst one another until the end of time.

"The Lord hath ordained to every man the share of his inheritance; a testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs.

"The child belongeth to the parent; and the violator of wedlock shall be stoned.

"Whoever claimeth falsely another for his father, or another for his master, the curse of God and the angels and of all mankind shall rest upon him.

"Ye people! Ye have rights demandable of your wives, and they have rights demandable of you. Upon them it is incumbent not to violate their conjugal faith nor commit any act of open impropriety; which things if they do, ye have authority to shut them up in separate apartments and to beat them with stripes, yet not severely. But if they

refrain therefrom, clothe them and feed them suitably. And treat your women well, for they are with you as captives and prisoners; they have not power over anything as regards themselves. And ye have verily taken them on the security of God, and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of God.

"And your slaves, see that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear. And if they commit a fault which ye are not inclined to forgive, then sell them, for they are the servants of the Lord, and are not to be tormented.

"Ye people! hearken to my speech and comprehend the same. Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are on the same equality."

This insistence upon kindliness and consideration in the daily life is one of the main virtues of Islam, but it is not the only one. Equally important is the uncompromising monotheism, void of any Jewish exclusiveness, which is sustained by the Koran. Islam from the outset was fairly proof against the theological elaborations that have perplexed and divided Christianity and smothered the spirit of Jesus. And its third source of strength has been in the meticulous prescription of methods of prayer and worship, and its clear statement of the limited and conventional significance of the importance ascribed to Mecca. All sacrifice was barred to the faithful; no loophole was left for the sacrificial priest of the old dispensation to come back into the new faith. It was not simply a new faith, a purely prophetic religion, as the religion of Jesus was in the time of Jesus, or the religion of Gautama in the lifetime of Gautama, but it was so stated as to remain so. Islam to this day has learned doctors, teachers, and preachers; but it has no priests.

It was full of the spirit of kindliness, generosity, and brotherhood; it was a simple and understandable religion; it was instinct with the chivalrous sentiment of the desert; and it made its appeal straight to the commonest instincts in the composition of ordinary men. Against it were pitted Judaism, which had made a racial hoard of God; Christianity talking and preaching endlessly now of trinities, doctrines, and heresies no ordinary man could make head or tail of; and Mazdaism, the cult of the Zoroastrian Magi, who had inspired the crucifixion of Mani. The bulk of the people to whom the

challenge of Islam came did not trouble very much whether Muhammad was lustful or not, or whether he had done some shifty and questionable things; what appealed to them was that this God, Allah, he preached, was by the test of the conscience in their hearts a God of righteousness, and that the honest acceptance of his doctrine and method opened the door wide in a world of uncertainty, treachery, and intolerable divisions to a great and increasing brotherhood of trustworthy men on earth, and to a paradise not of perpetual exercises in praise and worship, in which saints, priests, and anointed kings were still to have the upper places, but of equal fellowship and simple and understandable delights such as their souls craved for. Without any ambiguous symbolism, without any darkening of altars or chanting of priests, Muhammad had brought home those attractive doctrines to the hearts of mankind.

§ 5

The true embodiment of the spirit of Islam was not Muhammad, but his close friend and supporter Abu Bekr. There can be little doubt that if Muhammad was the mind and imagination of primitive Islam, Abu Bekr was its conscience and its will. Throughout their life together it was Muhammad who said the thing, but it was Abu Bekr who believed the thing. When Muhammad wavered, Abu Bekr sustained him. Abu Bekr was a man without doubts, his beliefs cut down to acts cleanly as a sharp knife cuts. We may feel sure that Abu Bekr would never have temporized about the minor gods of Mecca, or needed inspirations from Allah to explain his private life. When in the eleventh year of the Hegira (632) the Prophet sickened of a fever and died, it was Abu Bekr who succeeded him as Caliph and leader of the people (Kalifa = Successor), and it was the unflinching confidence of Abu Bekr in the righteousness of Allah which prevented a split between Medina and Mecca, which stamped down a widespread insurrection of the Bedouin against taxation for the common cause, and carried out a great plundering raid into Syria that the dead Prophet had projected. And then Abu Bekr, with that faith which moves mountains, set himself simply and sanely to organize the subjugation of the whole world to Allah — with little armies of

3000 or 4000 Arabs — according to those letters the Prophet had written from Medina in 628 to all the monarchs of the world.

And the attempt came near to succeeding. Had there been in Islam a score of men, younger men to carry on his work, of Abu Bekr's quality, it would certainly have succeeded. It came near to succeeding because Arabia was now a centre of faith and will, and because nowhere else in the world until China was reached, unless it was upon the steppes of Russia or Turkestan, was there another community of free-spirited men with any power of belief in their rulers and leaders. The head of the Byzantine Empire, Heraclius, the conqueror of Chosroes II, was past his prime and suffering from dropsy, and his empire was exhausted by the long Persian War. Nor had he at any time displayed such exceptional ability as the new occasion demanded. The motley of people under his rule knew little of him and cared less. Persia was at the lowest depths of monarchist degradation, the parricide Kavadh II had died after a reign of a few months, and a series of dynastic intrigues and romantic murders enlivened the palace but weakened the country. The war between Persia and the Byzantine Empire was only formally concluded about the time of the beginning of Abu Bekr's rule. Both sides had made great use of Arab auxiliaries; over Syria a number of towns and settlements of Christianized Arabs were scattered who professed a baseless loyalty to Constantinople; the Persian marches between Mesopotamia and the desert were under the control of an Arab tributary prince, whose capital was at Hira. Arab influence was strong in such cities as Damascus, where Christian Arab gentlemen would read and recite the latest poetry from the desert competitors. There was thus a great amount of easily assimilable material ready at hand for Islam.

And the military campaigns that now began were among the most brilliant in the world's history. Arabia had suddenly become a garden of fine men. The name of Khalid stands out as the brightest star in a constellation of able and devoted Moslem generals. Whenever he commanded he was victorious, and when the jealousy of the second Caliph, Omar, degraded him unjustly and inexcusably, he made no ado, but served Allah cheerfully and well as a subordinate to those over whom he had ruled. We cannot trace the story of this warfare

here; the Arab armies struck simultaneously at Byzantine Syria and the Persian frontier city of Hira, and everywhere they offered a choice of three alternatives: either pay tribute, or confess the true God and join us, or die. They encountered armies, large and disciplined but spiritless armies, and defeated them. And nowhere was there such a thing as a popular resistance. The people of the populous irrigation lands of Mesopotamia cared not a jot whether they paid taxes to Byzantium or Persepolis or to Medina; and of the two, Arabs or Persian court, the Arabs, the Arabs of the great years, were manifestly the cleaner people, more just and more merciful. The Christian Arabs joined the invaders very readily and so did many Jews. Just as in the west, so now in the east, an invasion became a social revolution. But here it was also a religious revolution with a new and distinctive mental vitality.

It was Khalid who fought the decisive battle (634) with the army of Heraclius upon the banks of the Yarmuk, a tributary of the Jordan. The legions, as ever, were without proper cavalry; for seven centuries the ghost of old Crassus had haunted the east in vain; the imperial armies relied upon Christian Arab auxiliaries, and these deserted to the Moslems as the armies joined issue. A great parade of priests, sacred banners, pictures, and holy relics was made by the Byzantine host, and it was further sustained by the chanting of monks. But there was no magic in the relics and little conviction about the chanting. On the Arab side the Emirs and sheiks harangued the troops, and after the ancient Arab fashion the shrill voices of women in the rear encouraged their men. The Moslem ranks were full of believers before whom shone victory or paradise. The battle

was never in doubt after the defection of the irregular cavalry. An attempt to retreat dissolved into a rout and became a massacre. The Byzantine army had fought with its back to the river, which was presently choked with its dead.

Thereafter Heraclius slowly relinquished all Syria, which he had so lately won back from the Persians, to his new antagonists. Damascus soon fell, and a year later the Moslems entered Antioch. For a time they had to abandon it again to a last effort from Constantinople, but they re-entered it for good under Khalid.

Meanwhile on the eastern front, after a swift initial success which gave them Hira, the Persian resistance stiffened. The dynastic struggle had ended at last in the coming of a king of kings, and a general of ability had been found in Rustam. He gave battle at Kadessia (637). His army was just such another composite host as Darius had led into Thrace or Alexander defeated at Issus; it was a medley of levies. He had thirty-three war elephants, and he sat on a golden throne upon a raised platform behind the Persian ranks, surveying the battle, which throne will remind the reader of Herodotus, the Hellespont, and Salamis more than a thousand years before. The battle lasted three days; each day the Arabs attacked and the Persian host held its ground until nightfall called a truce. On the third day the Arabs received reinforcements, and towards the evening the Persians attempted to bring the struggle to an end by a charge of elephants. At first the huge beasts carried all before them; then one was wounded painfully and became uncontrollable, rushing up and down between the armies. Its panic affected the others, and for a time both armies remained dumbfounded in the red light of sunset, watching the frantic efforts of these grey, squealing monsters to escape from the tormenting masses of armed men that hemmed them in. It was by the merest chance that at last they broke through the Persian and not through the Arab array, and that it was the Arabs who were able to charge home upon the resulting confusion. The twilight darkened to night, but this time the armies did not separate. All through the night the Arabs smote in the name of Allah, and pressed upon the shattered and retreating Persians. Dawn broke upon the vestiges of Rustam's army in flight far beyond the litter of the battlefield. Its path was marked by scattered weapons and war

material, abandoned transport, and the dead and dying. The platform and the golden throne were broken down, and Rustam lay dead among a heap of dead men....

Already in 634 Abu Bekr had died and given place to Omar, the Prophet's brother-in-law, as Caliph; and it was under Omar (634-643) that the main conquests of the Moslems occurred. The Byzantine Empire was pushed out of Syria altogether. But at the Taurus Mountains the Moslem thrust was held. Armenia was overrun, all Mesopotamia was conquered and Persia beyond the rivers. Egypt passed almost passively from Greek to Arab; in a few years the Semitic race, in the name of God and His Prophet, had recovered nearly all the dominions it had lost to the Aryan Persians a thousand years before. Jerusalem fell early, making a treaty without standing siege, and so the True Cross which had been carried off by the Persians a dozen years before, and elaborately restored by Heraclius, passed once more out of the rule of Christians. But it was still in Christian hands; the Christians were to be tolerated, paying only a poll tax; and all the churches and all the relics were left in their possession.

Jerusalem made a peculiar condition for its surrender. The city would give itself only to the Caliph Omar in person. Hitherto he had been in Medina organizing armies and controlling the general campaign. He came to Jerusalem (638), and the manner of his coming shows how swiftly the vigour and simplicity of the first Moslem onset was being sapped by success. He came the six-hundred-mile journey with only one attendant; he was mounted on a camel, and a bag of barley, another of dates, a waterskin, and a wooden platter were his provision for the journey. He was met outside the city by his chief captains, robed splendidly in silks and with richly caparisoned horses. At this amazing sight the old man was overcome with rage. He slipped down from his saddle, scrabbled up dirt and stones with his hands, and pelted these fine gentlemen, shouting abuse. What was this insult? What did this finery mean? Where were his warriors? Where were the desert men? He would not let these popinjays escort him. He went on with his attendant, and the smart Emirs rode afar off — well out of range of his stones. He met the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had apparently taken over the city

from its Byzantine rulers, alone. With the Patriarch he got on very well. They went round the Holy Places together, and Omar, now a little appeased, made sly jokes at the expense of his too magnificent followers.

Equally indicative of the tendencies of the time is Omar's letter ordering one of his governors who had built himself a palace at Kufa, to demolish it again.

"They tell me," he wrote, "you would imitate the palace of Chosroes, and that you would even use the gates that once were his. Will you also have guards and porters at those gates, as Chosroes had? Will you keep the faithful afar off and deny audience to the poor? Would you depart from the custom of our Prophet, and be as magnificent as those Persian emperors, and descend to hell even as they have done?"

§ 6

Abu Bekr and Omar I are the two master figures in the history of Islam. It is not within our scope here to describe the wars by which in a hundred and twenty-five years Islam spread itself from the Indus to the Atlantic and Spain, and from Kashgar on the borders of China to Upper Egypt. Two maps must suffice to show the limits to which the vigorous impulse of the new faith carried the Arab idea and the Arabic scriptures, before worldliness, the old trading and plundering spirit, and the glamour of the silk robe had completely recovered their paralyzing sway over the Arab intelligence and will. The reader will note how the great tide swept over the footsteps of Yuan Chwang, and how easily in Africa the easy conquests of the Vandals were repeated in the reverse direction. And if the reader entertains any delusions about a fine civilization, either Persian, Roman, Hellenic, or Egyptian, being submerged by this flood, the sooner he dismisses such ideas the better. Islam prevailed because it was the best social and political order the times could offer. It prevailed because everywhere it found politically apathetic peoples, robbed, oppressed, bullied, uneducated, and unorganized, and it found selfish and unsound governments out of touch with any people at all. It was the broadest, freshest, and cleanest political idea that had yet come

into actual activity in the world, and it offered better terms than any other to the mass of mankind. The capitalistic and slave-holding system of the Roman Empire and the literature and culture and social tradition of Europe had altogether decayed and broken down before Islam arose; it was only when mankind lost faith in the sincerity of its representatives that Islam too began to decay.

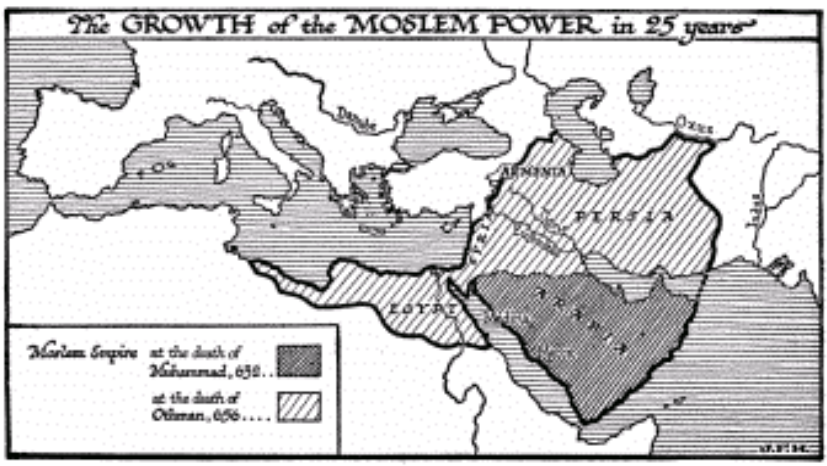

The larger part of its energy spent itself in conquering and assimilating Persia and Turkestan; its most vigorous thrusts were northwardly from Persia and westwardly through Egypt. Had it concentrated its first vigour upon the Byzantine Empire, there can be little doubt that by the eighth century it would have taken Constantinople and come through into Europe as easily as it reached the Pamirs. The Caliph Moawiya, it is true, besieged the capital for seven years (672 to 678), and Suleiman in 717 and 718; but the pressure was not sustained, and for three or four centuries longer the Byzantine Empire remained the crazy bulwark of Europe. In the newly Christianized or still pagan Avars, Bulgars, Serbs, Slavs, and Saxons, Islam would certainly have found as ready converts as it did in the Turks of Central Asia. And though, instead of insisting upon Constantinople, it first came round into Europe by the circuitous route of Africa and Spain, it was only in France, at the end of a vast line of communications from Arabia, that it encountered a power sufficiently vigorous to arrest its advance.

From the outset the Bedouin aristocrats of Mecca dominated the new empire. Abu Bekr, the first Caliph, was in an informal shouting way elected at Medina, and so were Omar I and Othman, the third Caliph, but all three were Meccans of good family. They were not men of Medina. And though Abu Bekr and Omar were men of stark simplicity and righteousness Othman was of a baser quality, a man quite in the vein of those silk robes, to whom conquest was not conquest for Allah but for Arabia, and especially for Mecca in Arabia, and more particularly for himself and for the Meccans and for his family, the Omayyads. He was a worthy man, who stood out for his country and his town and his "people." He was no early convert as his two predecessors had been; he had joined the Prophet for reasons of policy in fair give and take. With his accession the Caliph ceases to be a strange man of fire and wonder, and becomes an Oriental monarch like many Oriental monarchs before and since, a fairly good monarch by Eastern standards as yet, but nothing more.

The rule and death of Othman brought out the consequences of Muhammad's weaknesses as clearly as the lives of Abu Bekr and Omar had witnessed to the divine fire in his teaching. Muhammad had been politic at times when Abu Bekr would have been firm, and the new element of aristocratic greediness that came in with Othman was one fruit of those politic moments. And the legacy of that carelessly compiled harem of the Prophet, the family complications

and jealousies which had lurked in the background of Moslem affairs during the rule of the first two Caliphs, was now coming out into the light of day. Ali, who was the nephew, the adopted son, and the son-in-law of the Prophet — he was the husband of the Prophet's daughter Fatima — he had considered himself the rightful Caliph. His claims formed an undertow to the resentment of Medina and of the rival families of Mecca against the advancement of the Omayyads. But Ayesha, the favourite wife of the Prophet, had always been jealous of Fatima and hostile to Ali. She supported Othman.... The splendid opening of the story of Islam collapses suddenly into this squalid dispute and bickering of heirs and widows.

In 656 Othman, an old man of eighty, was stoned in the streets of Medina by a mob, chased to his house, and murdered; and Ali became at last Caliph, only to be murdered in his turn (661). In one of the battles in this civil war, Ayesha, now a gallant, mischievous old lady, distinguished herself by leading a charge, mounted on a camel. She was taken prisoner and treated well.

While the armies of Islam were advancing triumphantly to the conquest of the world, this sickness of civil war smote at its head. What was the rule of Allah in the world to Ayesha when she could score off the detested Fatima, and what heed were the Omayyads and the partisans of Ali likely to take of the unity of mankind when they had a good hot feud of this sort to entertain them, with the caliphate as a prize? The world of Islam was rent in twain by the spites, greeds, and partisan silliness of a handful of men and women in Medina. That quarrel still lives. To this day one main division of the Moslems, the Shiites, maintain the hereditary right of Ali to be Caliph *as an article of faith*! They prevail in Persia and India. But an equally important section, the Sunnites, with whom it is difficult for a disinterested observer not to agree, deny this peculiar addendum to Muhammad's simple creed. So far as we can gather at this length of time, Ali was an entirely commonplace individual.

To watch this schism creeping across the brave beginnings of Islam is like watching a case of softening of the brain. To the copious literature of the subject we must refer the reader who wishes to learn how Hasan, the son of Ali, was poisoned by his wife, and how Husein, his brother, was killed. We do but name them here because

they still afford a large section of mankind scope for sentimental partisanship and mutual annoyance. They are the two chief Shiite martyrs. Amidst the coming and going of their conflicts the old Kaaba at Mecca was burnt down, and naturally there began endless disputation whether it should be rebuilt in exactly its ancient form or on a much larger scale.

In this and the preceding sections we have seen once more the inevitable struggle of this newest and latest unifying impulse in the world's affairs against the everyday worldliness of mankind, and we have seen also how from the first the complicated household of Muhammad was like an evil legacy to the new faith. But as this history now degenerates into the normal crimes and intrigues of an Oriental dynasty, the student of history will realize a third fundamental weakness in the world reforms of Muhammad. He was an illiterate Arab, ignorant of history, totally ignorant of all the political experiences of Rome and Greece, and almost as ignorant of the real history of Judea; and he left his followers with no scheme for a stable government embodying and concentrating the general will of the faithful, and no effective form to express the very real spirit of democracy (using the word in its modern sense) that pervades the essential teaching of Islam. His own rule was unlimited autocracy, and autocratic Islam has remained. Politically Islam was not an advance, but a retrogression from the traditional freedoms and customary laws of the desert. The breach of the pilgrims' trace that led to the battle of Badr is the blackest mark against early Islam. Nominally Allah is its chief ruler — but practically its master has always been whatever man was vigorous and unscrupulous enough to snatch and hold the Caliphate — and, subject to revolts and assassinations, its final law has been that man's will.

For a time, after the death of Ali, the Omayyad family was in the ascendant, and for nearly a century they gave rulers to Islam.

The Arab historians are so occupied with the dynastic squabbles and crimes of the time, that it is difficult to trace the external history of the period. We find Moslem shipping upon the seas defeating the Byzantine fleet in a great sea fight off the coast of Lycia (A.D. 655), but how the Moslems acquired this victorious fleet thus early we do not clearly know. It was probably chiefly Egyptian. For some years

Islam certainly controlled the eastern Mediterranean, and in 662 and again in 672, during the reign of Muawiya (662-680), the first great Omayyad Caliph, made two sea attacks upon Constantinople. They had to be sea attacks because Islam, so long as it was under Arab rule, never surmounted the barrier of the Taurus Mountains. During the same period the Moslems were also pressing their conquests further and further into Central Asia. While Islam was already decaying at its centre, it was yet making great hosts of new adherents and awakening a new spirit among the hitherto divided and aimless Turkish peoples. Medina was no longer a possible centre for its vast enterprises in Asia, Africa, and the Mediterranean, and so Damascus became the usual capital of the Omayyad Caliphs.

Chief among these, as for a time the clouds of dynastic intrigue clear, are Abdal Malik (685-705) and Walid I (705-715), under whom the Omayyad line rose to the climax of its successes. The western boundary was carried to the Pyrenees, while to the east the domains of the Caliph marched with China. The son of Walid, Suleiman (715), carried out a second series of Moslem attacks upon Constantinople which his father had planned and proposed. As with the Caliph Muawiya half a century before, the approach was by sea — for Asia Minor, as we have just noted, was still unconquered — and the shipping was drawn chiefly from Egypt. The emperor, a usurper, Leo the Isaurian, displayed extraordinary skill and obstinacy in the defence; he burnt most of the Moslem shipping in a brilliant sortie, cut up the troops they had landed upon the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and after a campaign in Europe of two years (717-718), a winter of unexampled severity completed their defeat.

From this point onward the glory of the Omayyad line decays. The first tremendous impulse of Islam was now spent. There was no further expansion and a manifest decline in religious zeal. Islam had made millions of converts, and had digested those millions very imperfectly. Cities, nations, whole sects and races, Arab pagans, Jews, Christians, Manichæans, Zoroastrians, Turanian pagans, had been swallowed up into this new vast empire of Muhammad's successors. It has hitherto been the common characteristic of all the great unifying religious initiators of the world, the common oversight, that they have accepted the moral and theological ideals to

which the first appeal was made, as though they were universal ideals. Muhammad's appeal, for example, was to the traditional chivalry and underlying monotheistic feelings of the intelligent Arabs of his time. These things were latent in the mind and conscience of Mecca and Medina; he did but call them forth. Then, as the new teaching spread and stereotyped itself, it had to work on a continually more uncongenial basis, it had to grow in soil that distorted and perverted it. Its sole textbook was the Koran. To minds untuned to the melodies of Arabic, this book seemed to be, as it seems to many European minds to-day, a mixture of fine-spirited rhetoric with — to put it plainly — formless and unintelligent gabble. Countless converts missed the real thing in it altogether. To that we must ascribe the readiness of the Persian and Indian sections of the faith to join the Shiite schism upon a quarrel that they could at least understand and feel. And to the same attempt to square the new stuff with old prepossessions was due such extravagant theology as presently disputed whether the Koran was and always had been co-existent with God. We should be stupefied by the preposterousness of this idea if we did not recognize in it at once the well-meaning attempt of some learned Christian convert to Islamize his belief that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

None of the great unifying religious initiators of the world hitherto seems to have been accompanied by any understanding of the vast educational task, the vast work of lucid and varied exposition and intellectual organization involved in its propositions. They all present the same history of a rapid spreading, like a little water poured over a great area, and then of superficiality and corruption.

In a little while we hear stories of an Omayyad Caliph, Walid II (743-744), who mocked at the Koran, ate pork, drank wine, and did not pray. Those stories may have been true or they may have been circulated for political reasons. There began a puritan reaction in Mecca and Medina against the levity and luxury of Damascus. Another great Arab family, the Abbas family, the Abbasids, a thoroughly wicked line, had long been scheming for power, and was making capital out of the general discontent. The feud of the

Omayyads and the Abbasids was older than Islam; it had been going on before Muhammad was born. These Abbasids took up the tradition of the Shiite "martyrs," Ali and his sons Hasan and Husein, and identified themselves with it. The banner of the Omayyads was white; the Abbasid adopted a black banner, black in mourning for Hasan and Husein, black because black is more impressive than any colour; moreover, the Abbasids declared that all the Caliphs after Ali were usurpers. In 749 they accomplished a carefully prepared revolution, and the last of the Omayyad Caliphs was hunted down and slain in Egypt. Abul Abbas was the first of the Abbasid Caliphs, and he began his reign by collecting into one prison every living male of the Omayyad line upon whom he could lay hands and causing them all to be massacred. Their bodies were heaped together, a leathern carpet was spread over them, and on this gruesome table Abul Abbas and his councillors feasted. Moreover, the tombs of the Omayyad Caliphs were rifled, and their bones burnt and scattered to the four winds of heaven. So the grievances of Ali were avenged at last, and the Omayyad line passed out of history.

There was, it is interesting to note, a rising on behalf of the Omayyads in Khorasan which was assisted by the Chinese emperor.

§ 7

But the descendants of Ali were not destined to share in this triumph for long. The Abbasids were adventurers and rulers of an older school than Islam. Now that the tradition of Ali had served its purpose, the next proceeding of the new Caliph was to hunt down and slaughter the surviving members of his family, the descendants of Ali and Fatima.

Clearly the old traditions of Sassanid Persia and of Persia before the Greeks were returning to the world. With the accession of the Abbasids the control of the sea departed from the Caliph, and with it went Spain and North Africa, in which, under an Omayyad survivor in the former case, independent Moslem states now arose. The centre of gravity of Islam shifted across the desert from Damascus to Mesopotamia. Mansur, the successor of Abul Abbas, built himself a new capital at Bagdad near the ruins of Ctesiphon, the former

Sassanid capital. Turks and Persians as well as Arabs became Emirs, and the army was reorganized upon Sassanid lines. Medina and Mecca were now only of importance as pilgrimage centres, to which the faithful turned to pray. But because it was a fine language, and because it was the language of the Koran, Arabic continued to spread until presently it had replaced Greek and become the language of educated men throughout the whole Moslem world.

Of the Abbasid monarchs after Abul Abbas we need tell little here. A bickering war went on year by year in Asia Minor in which neither Byzantium nor Bagdad made any permanent gains, though once or twice the Moslems raided as far as the Bosphorus. A false prophet, Mokanna, who said he was God, had a brief but troublesome career. There were plots, there were insurrections; they lie flat and colourless now in the histories like dead flowers in an old book. One other Abbasid Caliph only need be named, and that quite as much for his legendary as for his real importance, Haroun-al-Raschid (786-809). He was not only the Caliph of an outwardly prosperous empire in the world of reality, but he was also the Caliph of an undying empire in the deathless world of fiction, he was the Haroun-al-Raschid of the *Arabian Nights*.

Sir Mark Sykes gives an account of the reality of his empire from which we will quote certain passages. He says: "The Imperial Court was polished, luxurious, and unlimitedly wealthy; the capital, Bagdad, a gigantic mercantile city surrounding a huge administrative fortress, wherein every department of state had a properly regulated and well-ordered public office; where schools and colleges abounded; whither philosophers, students, doctors, poets, and theologians flocked from all parts of the civilized globe.... The provincial capitals were embellished with vast public buildings, and linked together by an effective and rapid service of posts and caravans; the frontiers were secure and well garrisoned, the army loyal, efficient, and brave; the governors and ministers honest and forbearing. The empire stretched with equal strength and unimpaired control from the Cilician gates to Aden, and from Egypt to Central Asia. Christians, Pagans, Jews, as well as Moslems, were employed in the government service. Usurpers, rebellious generals, and false prophets seemed to have vanished from the Moslem dominions.

Traffic and wealth had taken the place of revolution and famine.... Pestilence and disease were met by Imperial hospitals and government physicians.... In government business the rough-and-ready methods of Arabian administration had given place to a complicated system of Divans, initiated partly from the Roman, but chiefly taken from the Persian system of government. Posts, Finance, Privy Seal, Crown Lands, Justice, and Military affairs were each administered by separate bureaux in the hands of ministers and officials; an army of clerks, scribes, writers, and accountants swarmed into these offices and gradually swept the whole power of the government into their own hands by separating the Commander of the Faithful from any direct intercourse with his subjects. The Imperial Palace and the entourage were equally based on Roman and Persian precedents. Eunuchs, closely veiled 'harems' of women, guards, spies, go-betweens, jesters, poets, and dwarfs clustered around the person of the Commander of the Faithful, each, in his degree, endeavouring to gain the royal favour and indirectly distracting the royal mind from affairs of business and state. Meanwhile the mercantile trade of the East poured gold into Bagdad, and supplemented the other enormous stream of money derived from the contributions of plunder and loot despatched to the capital by the commanders of the victorious raiding forces which harried Asia Minor, India, and Turkestan. The seemingly unending supply of Turkish slaves and Byzantine specie added to the richness of the revenues of Irak, and, combined with the vast commercial traffic of which Bagdad was the centre, produced a large and powerful moneyed class, composed of the sons of generals, officials, landed proprietors, royal favourites, merchants, and the like, who encouraged the arts, literature, philosophy, and poetry as the mood took them, building palaces for themselves, vying with each other in the luxury of their entertainments, suborning poets to sound their praises, dabbling in philosophy, supporting various schools of thought, endowing charities, and, in fact, behaving as the wealthy have always behaved in all ages.

"I have said that the Abbasid Empire in the days of Haroun-al-Raschid was weak and feeble to a degree, and perhaps the reader will consider this a foolish proposition when he takes into consideration

that I have described the Empire as orderly, the administration definite and settled, the army efficient, and wealth abundant. The reason I make the suggestion is that the Abbasid Empire had lost touch with everything original and vital in Islam, and was constructed entirely by the reunion of the fragments of the empires Islam had destroyed. There was nothing in the empire which appealed to the higher instincts of the leaders of the people; the holy war had degenerated into a systematic acquisition of plunder. The Caliph had become a luxurious Emperor or King of Kings; the administration had changed from a patriarchal system to a bureaucracy. The wealthier classes were rapidly losing all faith in the religion of the state; speculative philosophy and high living were taking the place of Koranic orthodoxy and Arabian simplicity. The solitary bond which could have held the empire together, the sternness and plainness of the Moslem faith, was completely neglected by both the Caliph and his advisers.... Haroun-al-Raschid himself was a wine-bibber, and his palace was decorated with graven images of birds and beasts and men....

"For a moment we stand amazed at the greatness of the Abbasid dominion; then suddenly we realize that it is but as a fair husk enclosing the dust and ashes of dead civilizations."

Haroun-al-Raschid died in 809. At his death his great empire fell immediately into civil war and confusion, and the next great event of unusual importance in this region of the world comes two hundred years later when the Turks, under the chiefs of the great family of the Seljuks, poured southward out of Turkestan, and not only conquered the empire of Bagdad, but Asia Minor also. Coming from the northeast as they did, they were able to outflank the great barrier of the Taurus Mountains, which had hitherto held back the Moslems. They were still much the same people as those of whom Yuan Chwang gave us a glimpse four hundred years earlier, but now they were Moslems, and Moslems of the primitive type, men whom Abu Bekr would have welcomed to Islam. They caused a great revival of vigour in Islam, and they turned the minds of the Moslem world once more in the direction of a religious war against Christendom. For there had been a sort of truce between these two great religions after the cessation of the Moslem advance and the decline of the

Omayyads. Such warfare as had gone on between Christianity and Islam had been rather border-bickering than sustained war. It became only a bitter fanatical struggle again in the eleventh century.

§ 8

But before we go on to tell of the Turks and the Crusaders, the great wars that began between Christendom and Islam, and which have left a quite insane intolerance between these great systems right down to the present time, it is necessary to give a little more attention to the intellectual life of the Arabic-speaking world which was now spreading more and more widely over the regions which Hellenism had once dominated. For some generations before Muhammad, the Arab mind had been, as it were, smouldering, it had been producing poetry and much religious discussion; under the stimulus of the national and racial successes it presently blazed out with a brilliance second only to that of the Greeks during their best period. From a new angle and with a fresh vigour it took up that systematic development of positive knowledge which the Greeks had begun and relinquished. It revived the human pursuit of science. If the Greek was the father, then the Arab was the foster-father of the scientific method of dealing with reality, that is to say, by absolute frankness, the utmost simplicity of statement and explanation, exact record, and exhaustive criticism. Through the Arabs it was and not by the Latin route that the modern world received that gift of light and power.

Their conquests brought the Arabs into contact with the Greek literary tradition, not at first directly, but through the Syrian translations of the Greek writers. The Nestorian Christians, the Christians to the east of orthodoxy, seem to have been much more intelligent and active-minded than the court theologians of Byzantium, and at a much higher level of general education than the Latin-speaking Christians of the west. They had been tolerated during the latter days of the Sassanids, and they were tolerated by Islam until the ascendancy of the Turks in the eleventh century. They had preserved much of the Hellenic medical science, and had even added to it. In the Omayyad times most of the physicians in the Caliph's dominions were Nestorians, and no doubt many learned

Nestorians professed Islam without any serious compunction or any great change in their work and thoughts. They had preserved much of Aristotle both in Greek and in Syrian translations. They had a considerable mathematical literature. Their equipment makes the contemporary resources of Saint Benedict or Cassiodorus seem very pitiful. To these Nestorian teachers came the fresh Arab mind out of the desert, keen and curious, and learnt much and improved upon its teaching.

But the Nestorians were not the only teachers available for the Arabs. Throughout all the rich cities of the east the kindred Jews were scattered with their own distinctive literature and tradition, and the Arab and the Jewish mind reacted upon one another to a common benefit. The Arab was informed and the Jew sharpened to a keener edge. The Jews have never been pedants in the matter of their language; we have already noted that a thousand years before Islam they spoke Greek in Hellenized Alexandria, and now all over this new Moslem world they were speaking and writing Arabic. Some of the greatest of Jewish literature was written in Arabic, the religious writings of Maimonides, for example. Indeed, it is difficult to say in the case of this Arabic culture where the Jew ends and the Arab begins, so important and essential were its Jewish factors.

Moreover, there was a third source of inspiration, more particularly in mathematical science, to which at present it is difficult to do justice — India. There can be little doubt that the Arab mind during its best period was in effective contact with Sanskrit literature and with Indian ideas, and that it derived much from this source.

The distinctive activities of the Arab mind were already manifest under the Omayyads, though it was during the Abbasid time that it made its best display. History is the beginning and core of all sound philosophy and all great literature, and the first Arab writers of distinction were historians, biographers, and quasi-historical poets. Romantic fiction and the short story followed as a reading public developed, willing to be amused. And as reading ceased to be a special accomplishment, and became necessary to every man of affairs and to every youth of breeding, came the systematic growth of an educational system and an educational literature. By the ninth and tenth centuries there are not only grammars, but great lexicons, and a

mass of philological learning in Islam.

And a century or so in advance of the west, there grew up in the Moslem world at a number of centres, at Basra, at Kufa, at Bagdad and Cairo, and at Cordoba, out of what were at first religious schools dependent upon mosques, a series of great universities. The light of these universities shone far beyond the Moslem world, and drew students to them from east and west. At Cordoba in particular there were great numbers of Christian students, and the influence of Arab philosophy coming by way of Spain upon the universities of Paris, Oxford, and North Italy and upon Western European thought generally, was very considerable indeed. The name of Averroes (Ibn-rushd) of Cordoba (1126-1198), stands out as that of the culminating influence of Arab philosophy upon European thought. He developed the teachings of Aristotle upon lines that made a sharp division between religious and scientific truth, and so prepared the way for the liberation of scientific research from the theological dogmatism that restrained it both under Christianity and under Islam. Another great name is that of Avicenna (Ibnsinā), the Prince of Physicians (980-1037), who was born at the other end of the Arabic world at Bokhara, and who travelled in Khorasan.... The book-copying industry flourished at Alexandria, Damascus, Cairo, and Bagdad, and about the year 970 there were twenty-seven free schools open in Cordoba for the education of the poor.

"In mathematics," say Thatcher and Schwill, "the Arabs built on the foundations of the Greek mathematicians. The origin of the so-called Arabic numerals is obscure. Under Theodoric the Great, Boethius made use of certain signs which were in part very like the nine digits which we now use. One of the pupils of Gerbert also used signs which were still more like ours, but the zero was unknown till the twelfth century, when it was invented by an Arab mathematician named Muhammad-Ibn-Musa, who also was the first to use the decimal notation, and who gave the digits the value of position. In geometry the Arabs did not add much to Euclid, but algebra is practically their creation; also they developed spherical trigonometry, inventing the sine, tangent, and cotangent. In physics they invented the pendulum, and produced work on optics. They made progress in the science of astronomy. They built several observatories, and

constructed many astronomical instruments which are still in use. They calculated the angle of the ecliptic and the precession of the equinoxes. Their knowledge of astronomy was undoubtedly considerable.

"In medicine they made great advances over the work of the Greeks. They studied physiology and hygiene, and their *materia medica* was practically the same as ours to-day. Many of their methods of treatment are still in use among us. Their surgeons understood the use of anæsthetics, and performed some of the most difficult operations known. At the time when in Europe the practice of medicine was forbidden by the Church, which expected cures to be effected by religious rites performed by the clergy, the Arabs had a real science of medicine. In chemistry they made a good beginning. They discovered many new substances, such as alcohol, potash, nitrate of silver, corrosive sublimate, and nitric and sulphuric acid.... In manufactures they outdid the world in variety and beauty of design and perfection of workmanship. They worked in all the metals — gold, silver, copper, bronze, iron, and steel. In textile fabrics they have never been surpassed. They made glass and pottery of the finest quality. They knew the secrets of dyeing, and they manufactured paper. They had many processes of dressing leather; and their work was famous throughout Europe. They made tinctures, essences, and syrups. They made sugar from the cane, and grew many fine kinds of wine. They practised farming in a scientific way, and had good systems of irrigation. They knew the value of fertilizers, and adapted their crops to the quality of the ground. They excelled in horticulture, knowing how to graft and how to produce new varieties of fruit and flowers. They introduced into the west many trees and plants from the east, and wrote scientific treatises on farming."

One item in this account must be underlined here because of its importance in the intellectual life of mankind, the manufacture of paper. This the Arabs seem to have learnt from the Chinese by way of Central Asia. The Europeans acquired it from the Arabs. Until that time books had to be written upon parchment or papyrus, and after the Arab conquest of Egypt Europe was cut off from the papyrus supply. Until paper became abundant, the art of printing was of little use, and newspapers and popular education by means of books was

impossible. This was probably a much more important factor in the relative backwardness of Europe during the dark ages than historians seem disposed to admit....

And all this mental life went on in the Moslem world in spite of a very considerable amount of political disorder. From first to last the Arabs never grappled with the problem, the still unsolved problem, of the stable progressive state; everywhere their form of government was absolutist and subject to the convulsions, changes, intrigues, and murders that have always characterized the extremer forms of monarchy. But for some centuries, beneath the crimes and rivalries of courts and camps, the spirit of Islam did preserve a certain general decency and restraint in life; the Byzantine Empire was impotent to shatter this civilization, and the Turkish danger in the north-east gathered strength only very slowly. Until the Turk fell upon it, the intellectual life of Islam continued. Perhaps it secretly flattered itself that it would always be able to go on in spite of the thread of violence and unreason in its political direction. Hitherto in all countries that has been the characteristic attitude of science and literature. The intellectual man has been loath to come to grips with the forcible man. He has generally been something of a courtier and time server. Possibly he has never yet been quite sure of himself. Hitherto men of reason and knowledge have never had the assurance and courage of the religious fanatic. But there can be little doubt that they have accumulated settled convictions and gathered confidence during the last few centuries; they have slowly found a means to power through the development of popular education and popular literature, and to-day they are far more disposed to say things plainly and to claim a dominating voice in the organization of human affairs than they have ever been before in the world's history.

XXXIII

CHRISTENDOM AND THE CRUSADES

§ 1. *The Western World at its Lowest Ebb.* § 2. *The Feudal System.* § 3. *The Frankish Kingdom of the Merovingians.* § 4. *The Christianization of the Western Barbarians.* § 5. *Charlemagne becomes Emperor of the West.* § 6. *The Personality of Charlemagne.* § 7. *The French and the Germans become Distinct.* § 8. *The Normans, the Saracens, the Hungarians, and the Seljuk Turks.* § 9. *How Constantinople Appealed to Rome.* § 10. *The Crusades.* § 11. *The Crusades a Test of Christianity.* § 12. *The Emperor Frederick II.* § 13. *Defects and Limitations of the Papacy.* § 14. *A List of Leading Popes.*

§ 1

LET us turn again now from this intellectual renascence in the cradle of the ancient civilizations to the affairs of the Western world. We have described the complete economic, social, and political break up of the Roman imperial system in the west, the confusion and darkness that followed in the sixth and seventh centuries, and the struggles of such men as Cassiodorus to keep alight the flame of human learning amidst these windy confusions. For a time it would be idle to write of states and rulers. Smaller or greater adventurers seized a castle or a countryside and ruled an uncertain area. The British Islands, for instance, were split up amidst a multitude of rulers; numerous Keltic chiefs in Ireland and Scotland and Wales and Cornwall fought and prevailed over and succumbed to each other; the English invaders were also divided into a number of fluctuating "kingdoms," Kent, Wessex, Essex, Sussex, Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia, which were constantly at war with one another. So it was over most of the Western world. Here a bishop would be the monarch, as Gregory the Great was in Rome; here a town or a group of towns would be under the rule of the duke or prince of this or that. Amidst the vast ruins of the city of Rome half-independent families of quasi-noble adventurers and their retainers maintained themselves. The Pope kept a sort of general predominance there, but he was

sometimes more than balanced by a "Duke of Rome." The great arena of the Colosseum had been made into a privately-owned castle, and so too had the vast circular tomb of the Emperor Hadrian; and the adventurers who had possession of these strongholds and their partisans waylaid each other and fought and bickered in the ruinous streets of the once imperial city. The tomb of Hadrian was known after the days of Gregory the Great as the Castle of St. Angelo, the Castle of the Holy Angel, because when he was crossing the bridge over the Tiber on his way to St. Peter's to pray against the great pestilence which was devastating the city, he had had a vision of a great angel standing over the dark mass of the mausoleum and sheathing a sword, and he had known then that his prayers would be answered. This Castle of St. Angelo played a very important part in Roman affairs during this age of disorder.

Spain was in much the same state of political fragmentation as Italy or France or Britain; and in Spain the old feud of Carthaginian and Roman was still continued in the bitter hostility of their descendants and heirs, the Jew and the Christian. So that when the power of the Caliph had swept along the North African coast to the Straits of Gibraltar, it found in the Spanish Jews ready helpers in its invasion of Europe. A Moslem army of Arabs and of Berbers, the nomadic Hamitic people of the African desert and mountain hinterland who had been converted to Islam, crossed and defeated the West Goths in a great battle in 711. In a few years the whole country was in their possession.

In 720 Islam had reached the Pyrenees, and had pushed round their eastern end into France; and for a time it seemed that the faith was likely to subjugate Gaul as easily as it had subjugated the Spanish peninsula. But presently it struck against something hard, a new kingdom of the Franks, which had been consolidating itself for some two centuries in the Rhineland and North France.

Of this Frankish kingdom, the precursor of France and Germany, which formed the western bulwark of Europe against the faith of Muhammad, as the Byzantine Empire behind the Taurus Mountains formed the eastern, we shall now have much to tell; but first we must give some account of the new system of social groupings out of which it arose.

§ 2

It is necessary that the reader should have a definite idea of the social condition of western Europe in the eighth century. It was not a barbarism. Eastern Europe was still barbaric and savage; things had progressed but little beyond the state of affairs described by Gibbon in his account of the mission of Priscus to Attila (see vol. i,). But western Europe was a shattered civilization, without law, without administration, with roads destroyed and education disorganized, but still with great numbers of people with civilized ideas and habits and traditions. It was a time of confusion, of brigandage, of crimes unpunished and universal insecurity. It is very interesting to trace how out of the universal mêlée, the beginnings of a new order appeared. In a modern breakdown there would probably be the formation of local vigilance societies, which would combine and restore a police administration and a roughly democratic rule. But in the broken-down western empire of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, men's ideas turned rather to leaders than to committees, and the centres about which affairs crystallized were here barbaric chiefs, here a vigorous bishop or some surviving claimant to a Roman official position, here a long-recognized landowner or man of ancient family, and here again some vigorous usurper of power. No solitary man was safe. So men were forced to link themselves with others, preferably people stronger than themselves. The lonely man chose the most powerful and active person in his district and became *his* man. The freeman or the weak lordling of a petty territory linked himself to some more powerful lord. The protection of that lord (or the danger of his hostility) became more considerable with every such accession. So very rapidly there went on a process of political crystallization in the confused and lawless sea into which the Western Empire had liquefied. These natural associations and alliances of protector and subordinates grew very rapidly into a system, *the feudal system*, traces of which are still to be found in the social structure of every European community west of Russia.

This process speedily took on technical forms and laws of its own. In such a country as Gaul it was already well in progress in the days of insecurity *before* the barbarian tribes broke into the empire as

conquerors. The Franks when they came into Gaul brought with them an institution, which we have already noted in the case of the Macedonians, and which was probably of very wide distribution among the Nordic people, the gathering about the chief or war king of a body of young men of good family, the companions or *comitatus*, his counts or captains. It was natural in the case of invading peoples that the relations of a weak lord to a strong lord should take on the relations of a count to his king, and that a conquering chief should divide seized and confiscated estates among his companions. From the side of the decaying empire there came to feudalism the idea of the grouping for mutual protection of men and estates; from the Teutonic side came the notions of knightly association, devotion, and personal service. The former was the economic side of the institution, the latter the chivalrous.

The analogy of the aggregation of feudal groupings with crystallization is a very close one. As the historian watches the whirling and eddying confusion of the fourth and fifth century in Western Europe, he begins to perceive the appearance of these pyramidal growths of heads and subordinates and sub-subordinates, which jostle against one another, branch, dissolve again, or coalesce. "We use the term 'feudal system' for convenience' sake, but with a degree of impropriety if it conveys the meaning 'systematic.' Feudalism in its most flourishing age was anything but systematic. It was confusion roughly organized. Great diversity prevailed everywhere, and we should not be surprised to find some different fact or custom in every lordship. Anglo-Norman feudalism attained in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a logical completeness and a uniformity of practice which, in the feudal age proper, can hardly be found elsewhere through so large a territory....

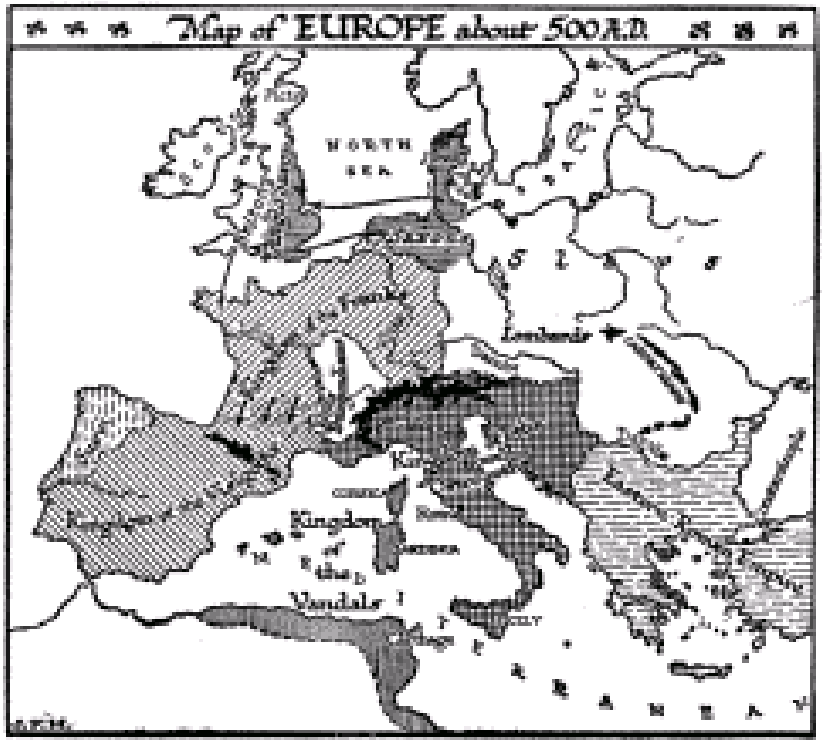

"The foundation of the feudal relationship proper was the *fief*, which was usually land, but might be any desirable thing, as an office, a revenue in money or kind, the right to collect a toll, or operate a mill. In return for the fief, the man became the *vassal* of his lord; he knelt before him, and, with his hands between his lord's hands, promised him fealty and service.... The faithful performance of all the duties he had assumed in homage constituted the vassal's right and title to his fief. So long as they were fulfilled, he, and his heir after him, held the fief as his property, practically and in relation to all under-tenants as if he were the owner. In the ceremony of homage and investiture, which is the creative contract of feudalism, the obligations assumed by the two parties were, as a rule, not specified in exact terms. They were determined by local custom.... In many points of detail the vassal's services differed widely in different parts of the feudal world. We may say, however, that they fall into two classes, general and specific. The general included all that might

come under the idea of loyalty, seeking the lord's interests, keeping his secrets, betraying the plans of his enemies, protecting his family, etc. The specific services are capable of more definite statement, and they usually received exact definition in custom and sometimes in written documents. The most characteristic of these was the military service, which included appearance in the field on summons with a certain force, often armed in a specified way, and remaining a specified length of time. It often included also the duty of guarding the lord's castle, and of holding one's own castle subject to the plans of the lord for the defence of his fief....

"Theoretically regarded, feudalism covered Europe with a network of these fiefs, rising in graded ranks one above the other from the smallest, the knight's fee, at the bottom, to the king at the top, who was the supreme landowner, or who held the kingdom from God...."

But this was the theory that was superimposed upon the established facts. The reality of feudalism was its voluntary co-operation.

"The feudal state was one in which, it has been said, private law had usurped the place of public law." But rather is it truer that public law had failed and vanished and private law had come in to fill the vacuum. Public duty had become private obligation.

§ 3

We have already mentioned various kingdoms of the barbarian tribes who set up a more or less flimsy dominion over this or that area amidst the débris of the empire, the kingdoms of the Suevi and West Goths in Spain, the East-Gothic kingdom in Italy, and the Italian Lombard kingdom which succeeded the Goths after Justinian had expelled the latter and after the great pestilence had devastated Italy. The Frankish kingdom was another such barbarian power which arose first in what is now Belgium, and which spread southward to the Loire, but it developed far more strength and solidarity than any of the others. It was the first real state to emerge from the universal wreckage. It became at last a wide and vigorous political reality, and from it are derived two great powers of modern Europe, France and the German Empire. Its founder was Clovis (481-511), who began as a small king in Belgium and ended with his southern frontiers nearly at the Pyrenees. He divided his kingdom among his four sons, but the Franks retained a tradition of unity in spite of this division, and for a time fraternal wars for a single control united rather than divided them. A more serious split arose, however, through the Latinization of the Western Franks, who occupied Romanized Gaul and who learnt to speak the corrupt Latin of the subject population, while the Franks of the Rhineland retained their Low German speech. At a low level of civilization, differences in language cause very powerful political strains. For a hundred and fifty years the Frankish world was split in two, Neustria, the nucleus of France, speaking a Latinish speech, which became at last the French language we know, and Austrasia, the Rhineland, which remained German.

We will not tell here of the decay of the dynasty, the Merovingian

dynasty, founded by Clovis; nor how in Austrasia a certain court official, the Mayor of the Palace, gradually became the king *de facto* and used the real king as a puppet. The position of Mayor of the Palace also became hereditary in the seventh century, and in 687 a certain Pepin of Heristhal, the Austrasian Mayor of the Palace, had conquered Neustria and reunited all the Franks. He was followed in 714 by his son, Charles Martel, who also bore no higher title than mayor of the palace. (His poor little Merovingian kings do not matter in the slightest degree to us here.) It was this Charles Martel who stopped the Moslems. They had pushed as far as Tours when he met them, and in a great battle between that place and Poitiers (732) utterly defeated them and broke their spirit. Thereafter the Pyrenees remained their utmost boundary; they came no further into Western Europe.

Charles Martel divided his power between two sons, but one resigned and went into a monastery, leaving his brother Pepin sole ruler. This Pepin it was who finally extinguished the descendants of Clovis. He sent to the Pope to ask who was the true king of the Franks, the man who held the power or the man who wore the crown; and the Pope, who was in need of a supporter, decided in favour of the Mayor of the Palace. So Pepin was chosen king at a gathering of the Frankish nobles in the Merovingian capital Soissons, and anointed and crowned. That was in 751. The Franco-Germany he united was consolidated by his son Charlemagne. It held together until the death of his grandson Louis (840), and then France and Germany broke away again — to the great injury of mankind. It was not a difference of race or temperament, it was a difference of language and tradition that split these Frankish peoples asunder.

That old separation of Neustria and Austrasia still works out in bitter consequences. In 1916 the ancient conflict of Neustria and Austrasia had broken out into war once more. In the August of that year the present writer visited Soissons, and crossed the temporary wooden bridge that had been built by the English after the Battle of the Aisne from the main part of the town to the suburb of Saint Médard. Canvas screens protected passengers upon the bridge from the observation of the German sharpshooters who were sniping from their trenches down the curve of the river. He went with his guides

across a field and along by the wall of an orchard in which a German shell exploded as he passed. So he reached the battered buildings that stand upon the site of the ancient abbey of Saint Médard, in which the last Merovingian was deposed and Pepin the Short was crowned in his stead. Beneath these ancient buildings there were great crypts, very useful as dug-outs — for the German advanced lines were not more than a couple of hundred yards away. The sturdy French soldier lads were cooking and resting in these shelters, and lying down to sleep among the stone coffins that had held the bones of their Merovingian kings.

§ 4

The populations over which Charles Martel and King Pepin ruled were at very different levels of civilization in different districts. To the west and south the bulk of the people consisted of Latinized and Christian Kelts; in the central regions these rulers had to deal with such more or less Christianized Germans as the Franks and Burgundians and Alemanni; to the northeast were still pagan Frisians and Saxons; to the east were the Bavarians, recently Christianized through the activities of St. Boniface; and to the east of them again pagan Slavs and Avars. The "Paganism" of the Germans and Slavs was very similar to the primitive religion of the Greeks; it was a manly religion in which temple, priest, and sacrifices played a small part, and its gods were like men, a kind of "school prefects" of more powerful beings who interfered impulsively and irregularly in human affairs. The Germans had a Jupiter in Odin, a Mars in Thor, a Venus in Freya, and so on. Throughout the seventh and eighth centuries a steady process of conversion to Christianity went on amidst these German and Slavonic tribes.

It will be interesting to English-speaking readers to note that the most zealous and successful missionaries among the Saxons and Frisians came from England. Christianity was twice planted in the British Isles. It was already there while Britain was a part of the Roman Empire; a martyr, St. Alban, gave his name to the town of St. Albans, and nearly every visitor to Canterbury has also visited little Old St. Martin's church, which was used during the Roman times. From Britain, as we have already said, Christianity spread beyond

the imperial boundaries into Ireland — the chief missionary was St. Patrick — and there was a vigorous monastic movement with which are connected the names of St. Columba and the religious settlements of Iona. Then in the fifth and sixth centuries came the fierce and pagan English, and they cut off the early Church of Ireland from the main body of Christianity. In the seventh century Christian missionaries were converting the English, both in the north from Ireland and in the south from Rome. The Rome mission was sent by Pope Gregory the Great just at the close of the sixth century. The story goes that he saw English boys for sale in the Roman slave market, though it is a little difficult to understand how they got there. They were very fair and good-looking. In answer to his inquiries, he was told that they were Angles. "Not Angles, but Angels," said he, "had they but the gospel."

The mission worked through the seventh century. Before that century was over, most of the English were Christians; though Mercia, the central English kingdom, held out stoutly against the priests and for the ancient faith and ways. And there was a swift progress in learning upon the part of these new converts. The monasteries of the kingdom of Northumbria in the north of England became a centre of light and learning. Theodore of Tarsus was one of the earliest archbishops of Canterbury (669-690). "While Greek was utterly unknown in the west of Europe, it was mastered by some of the pupils of Theodore. The monasteries contained many monks who were excellent scholars. Most famous of all was Bede, known as the Venerable Bede (673-735), a monk of Jarrow (on Tyne). He had for his pupils the six hundred monks of that monastery, besides the many strangers who came to hear him. He gradually mastered all the learning of his day, and left at his death forty-five volumes of his writings, the most important of which are 'The Ecclesiastical History of the English' and his translation of the Gospel of John into English. His writings were widely known and used throughout Europe. He reckoned all dates from the birth of Christ, and through his works the use of Christian chronology became common in Europe. Owing to the large number of monasteries and monks in Northumbria, that part of England was for a time far in advance of the south in civilization."

In the seventh and eighth centuries we find the English

missionaries active upon the eastern frontiers of the Frankish kingdom. Chief among these was St. Boniface (680-755), who was born at Crediton, in Devonshire, who converted the Frisians, Thuringians, and Hessians, and who was martyred in Holland.

Both in England and on the Continent the ascendant rulers seized upon Christianity as a unifying force to cement their conquests. Christianity became a banner for aggressive chiefs — as it did in Uganda in Africa in the bloody days before that country was annexed to the British Empire. After Pepin, who died in 768, came two sons, Charles and another, who divided his kingdom; but the brother of Charles died in 771, and Charles then became sole king (771-814) of the growing realm of the Franks. This Charles is known in history as Charles the Great, or Charlemagne. As in the case of Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar, posterity has enormously exaggerated his memory. He made his wars of aggression definitely religious wars. All the world of north-western Europe, which is now Great Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, and Norway and Sweden, was in the ninth century an arena of bitter conflict between the old faith and the new. Whole nations were converted to Christianity by the sword just as Islam in Arabia, Central Asia, and Africa had converted whole nations a century or so before.

With fire and sword Charlemagne preached the Gospel of the Cross to the Saxons, Bohemians, and as far as the Danube into what is now Hungary; he carried the same teaching down the Adriatic Coast through what is now Dalmatia, and drove the Moslems back from the Pyrenees as far as Barcelona.

Moreover, he it was who sheltered Egbert, an exile from Wessex in England, and assisted him presently to establish himself as King in Wessex (802). Egbert subdued the Britons in Cornwall, as Charlemagne conquered the Britons of Brittany, and, by a series of wars, which he continued after the death of his Frankish patron, made himself at last the first King of all England (828).

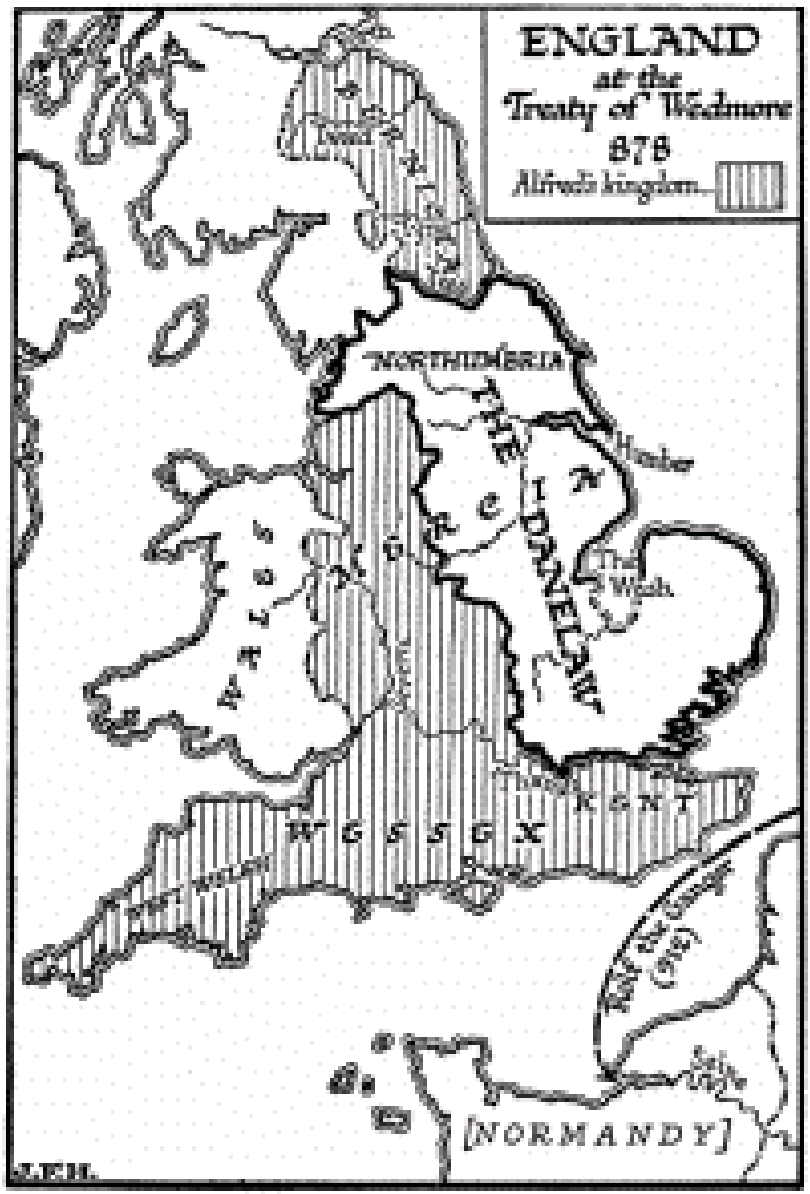

But the attacks of Charlemagne upon the last strongholds of paganism provoked a vigorous reaction on the part of the unconverted. The Christianized English had retained very little of the seamanship that had brought them from the mainland, and the Franks

had not yet become seamen. As the Christian propaganda of Charlemagne swept towards the shores of the North and Baltic seas, the pagans were driven to the sea. They retaliated for the Christian persecutions with plundering raids and expeditions against the northern coasts of France and against Christian England. These pagan Saxons and English of the mainland and their kindred from Denmark and Norway are the Danes and Northmen of our national histories. They were also called Vikings, which means "inlet-men," because they came from the deep inlets of the Scandinavian coast. They came in long black galleys, making little use of sails. Most of our information about these wars and invasions of the pagan Vikings is derived from Christian sources, and so we have abundant information of the massacres and atrocities of their raids and very little about the cruelties inflicted upon their pagan brethren, the Saxons, at the hands of Charlemagne. Their animus against the cross and against monks and nuns was extreme. They delighted in the burning of monasteries and nunneries and the slaughter of their inmates.

Throughout the period between the fifth and the ninth centuries these Vikings or Northmen were learning seamanship, becoming bolder, and ranging further. They braved the northern seas until the icy shores of Greenland were a familiar haunt, and by the ninth century they had settlements (of which Europe in general knew nothing) in America. In the tenth and eleventh centuries many of their sagas began to be written down in Iceland. They saw the world in terms of valiant adventure. They assailed the walrus, the bear, and the whale. In their imaginations a great and rich city to the south, a sort of confusion of Rome and Byzantium, loomed large. They called it "Miklagård" (Michael's court) or Micklegarth. The magnetism of Micklegarth was to draw the descendants of these Northmen down into the Mediterranean by two routes, by the west and also across Russia from the Baltic, as we shall tell later. By the Russian route went also the kindred Swedes.

So long as Charlemagne and Egbert lived, the Vikings were no more than raiders; but as the ninth century wore on, these raids developed into organized invasions. In several districts of England the hold of Christianity was by no means firm as yet. In Mercia in

particular the pagan Northmen found sympathy and help. By 886 the Danes had conquered a fair part of England and the English king, Alfred the Great, had recognized their rule over their conquests, the Dane-law, in the pact he made with Guthrum their leader. A little later, in 912, another expedition under Rolf the Ganger established itself upon the coast of France in the region that was known henceforth as Normandy (= Northman-dy). But of how there was presently a fresh conquest of England by the Danes and how finally the Duke of Normandy became King of England, we cannot tell at any length. There were very small racial and social differences between Angle, Saxon, Jute, Dane, or Norman; and though these changes loom large in the imaginations of the English, they are seen to be very slight rufflings indeed of the stream of history when we measure them by the standards of a greater world. The issue between Christianity and paganism vanished presently from the struggle. By the Treaty of Wedmore the Danes agreed to be baptized if they were assured of their conquests; and the descendants of Rolf in Normandy were not merely Christianized, but they learnt to speak French from the more civilized people about them, forgetting their own Norse tongue. Of much greater significance in the history of mankind are the relations of Charlemagne with his neighbours to the south and east, and to the imperial tradition.

§ 5

Through Charlemagne the tradition of the Roman Cæsar was revived in Europe. The Roman Empire was dead and decaying; the Byzantine Empire was far gone in decay; but the education and mentality of Europe had sunken to a level at which new creative political ideas were probably impossible. In all Europe there survived not a tithe of the speculative vigour that we find in the Athenian literature of the fifth century B.C. There was no power to postulate a new occasion or to conceive and organize a novel political method. Official Christianity had long overlaid and accustomed itself to ignore those strange teachings of Jesus of Nazareth from which it had arisen. The Roman Church, clinging tenaciously to its possession of the title of *pontifex maximus*, had long since abandoned its appointed task of achieving the Kingdom of Heaven. It was preoccupied with the revival of Roman ascendancy on earth, which it conceived of as its inheritance. It had become a political body, using the faith and needs of simple men to forward its schemes. Europe drifted towards a dreary imitation and revival of the misconceived failures of the past. For eleven centuries from Charlemagne onwards, "Emperors" and "Cæsars" of this line and that come and go in the history of

Europe like fancies in a disordered mind. We shall have to tell of a great process of mental growth in Europe, of enlarged horizons and accumulating power, but it was a process that went on independently of, and in spite of, the political forms of the time, until at last it shattered those forms altogether. Europe during those eleven centuries of the imitation Cæsars which began with Charlemagne, and which closed only in the monstrous bloodshed of 1914-1918, has been like a busy factory owned by a somnambulist, who is sometimes quite unimportant and sometimes disastrously in the way. Or rather than a somnambulist, let us say by a corpse that magically simulates a kind of life. The Roman Empire staggers, sprawls, is thrust off the stage, and reappears, and — if we may carry the image one step further — it is the Church of Rome which plays the part of the magician and keeps this corpse alive.

And throughout the whole period there is always a struggle going on for the control of the corpse between the spiritual and various temporal powers. We have already noted the spirit of St. Augustine's *City of God*. It was a book which we know Charlemagne read, or had read to him — for his literary accomplishments are rather questionable. He conceived of this Christian Empire as being ruled and maintained in its orthodoxy by some such great Cæsar as himself. He was to rule even the Pope. But at Rome the view taken of the revived empire differed a little from that. There the view taken was that the Christian Cæsar must be anointed and guided by the Pope — who would even have the power to excommunicate and depose him. Even in the time of Charlemagne this divergence of view was apparent. In the following centuries it became acute.

The idea of the empire dawned only very gradually upon the mind of Charlemagne. At first he was simply the ruler of his father's kingdom of the Franks, and his powers were fully occupied in struggles with the Saxons and Bavarians, and with the Slavs to the east of them, with the Moslem in Spain, and with various insurrections in his own dominions. And as the result of a quarrel with the King of Lombardy, his father-in-law, he conquered Lombardy and North Italy. We have noted the establishment of the Lombards in North Italy about 570 after the great pestilence, and after the overthrow of the East Gothic kings by Justinian. These

Lombards had always been a danger and a fear to the Popes, and there had been an alliance between Pope and Frankish King against them in the time of Pepin. Now Charlemagne completely subjugated Lombardy (774), sent his father-in-law to a monastery, and carried his conquests beyond the present north-eastern boundaries of Italy into Dalmatia in 776. In 781 he caused one of his sons, Pepin, who did not outlive him, to be crowned King of Italy in Rome.

There was a new Pope, Leo III, in 795, who seems from the first to have resolved to make Charlemagne emperor. Hitherto the court at Byzantium had possessed a certain indefinite authority over the Pope. Strong emperors like Justinian had bullied the Popes and obliged them to come to Constantinople; weak emperors had annoyed them ineffectively. The idea of a breach, both secular and religious, with Constantinople had long been entertained at the Lateran, and in the Frankish power there seemed to be just the support that was necessary if Constantinople was to be defied. So at his accession Leo III sent the keys of the tomb of St. Peter and a banner to Charlemagne as the symbols of his sovereignty in Rome as King of Italy. Very soon the Pope had to appeal to the protection he had chosen. He was unpopular in Rome; he was attacked and ill-treated in the streets during a procession, and obliged to fly to Germany (799). Eginhard says his eyes were gouged out and his tongue cut off; he seems, however, to have had both eyes and tongue again a year later. Charlemagne brought him back and reinstated him (800).

Then occurred a very important scene. On Christmas Day, in the year 800, as Charles was rising from prayer in the Church of St. Peter, the Pope, who had everything in readiness, clapped a crown upon his head and hailed him Cæsar and Augustus. There was great popular applause. But Eginhard, the friend and biographer of Charlemagne, says that the new emperor was by no means pleased by this coup of Pope Leo's. If he had known this was to happen, he said, "he would not have entered the church, great festival though it was." No doubt he had been thinking and talking of making himself emperor, but he had evidently not intended that the Pope should make him emperor. He had had some idea of marrying the Empress Irene, who at that time reigned in Constantinople, and so becoming monarch of both Eastern and Western Empires. He was now obliged

to accept the title in the manner that Leo III had adopted as a gift from the Pope, and in a way that estranged Constantinople and secured the separation of Rome from the Byzantine Church.

At first Byzantium was unwilling to recognize the imperial title of Charlemagne. But in 810 a great disaster fell upon the Byzantine Empire. The pagan Bulgarians, under their Prince Krum (802-814), defeated and destroyed the armies of the Emperor Nicephorus, whose skull became a drinking-cup for Krum. The greater part of the Balkan peninsula was conquered by these people. (The Bulgarian and the English nations thus became established as political unities almost simultaneously.) After this misfortune Byzantium was in no position to dispute this revival of the empire in the West, and in 812 Charlemagne was formally recognized by Byzantine envoys as Emperor and Augustus.

So the Empire of Rome, which had died at the hands of Odoacer in 476, rose again in 800 as the "Holy Roman Empire." While its physical strength lay north of the Alps, the centre of its idea was Rome. It was therefore from the beginning a divided thing of uncertain power, a claim and an argument rather than a necessary reality. The German sword was always clattering over the Alps into Italy, and missions and legates toiling over in the reverse direction. But the Germans could never hold Italy permanently, because they could not stand the malaria that the ruined, neglected, undrained country fostered. And in Rome, as well as in several other of the cities of Italy, there smouldered a more ancient tradition, the tradition of the aristocratic republic, hostile to both Emperor and Pope.

§ 6

In spite of the fact that we have a life of him written by his contemporary, Eginhard, the character and personality of Charlemagne are difficult to visualize. Eginhard lacks vividness; he tells many particulars, but not the particulars that make a man live again in the record. Charlemagne, he says, was a tall man, with a rather feeble voice; and he had bright eyes and a long nose. "The top of his head was round," whatever that may mean, and his hair was "white." He had a thick, rather short neck, and "his belly too

prominent." He wore a tunic with a silver border, and gartered hose. He had a blue cloak, and was always girt with his sword, hilt and belt being of gold and silver. He was evidently a man of great activity, one imagines him moving quickly, and his numerous love affairs did not interfere at all with his incessant military and political labours. He had numerous wives and mistresses. He took much exercise, was fond of pomp and religious ceremonies, and gave generously. He was a man of very miscellaneous activity and great intellectual enterprise, and with a self-confidence that is rather suggestive of William II, the ex-German Emperor, the last, perhaps for ever, of this series of imitation Cæsars in Europe which Charlemagne began.

The mental life that Eginhard records of him is interesting, because it not only gives glimpses of a curious character, but serves as a sample of the intellectuality of the time. He could read probably; at meals he "listened to music or reading," but we are told that he had not acquired the art of writing; "he used to keep his writing-book and tablets under his pillow, that when he had leisure he might practise his hand in forming letters, but he made little progress in an art begun too late in life." He had, however, a real respect for learning and a real desire for knowledge, and he did his utmost to attract men of learning to his court. Among others who came was Alcuin, a learned Englishman. All those learned men were, of course, clergymen, there being no other learned men, and naturally they gave a strongly clerical tinge to the information they imparted to their master. At his court, which was usually at Aix-la-Chapelle or Mayence, he maintained in the winter months a curious institution called his "school," in which he and his erudite associates affected to lay aside all thoughts of worldly position, assumed names taken from the classical writers or from Holy Writ, and discoursed upon theology and literature. Charlemagne himself was "David." He developed a considerable knowledge of theology, and it is to him that we must ascribe the addition of the words *filioque* to the Nicene Creed (see chap, xxx, § 8), an addition that finally split the Latin and Greek Churches asunder. But it is more than doubtful if he had any such separation in mind. He wanted to add a word or so to the creed, just as the Emperor William II wanted to write operas and paint

pictures, and he took up what was originally a Spanish innovation.

Of his organization of his empire there is little to be said here. He was far too restless and busy to consider the quality of his successor or the condition of political stability, and the most noteworthy thing in this relationship is that he particularly schooled his son and successor, Louis the Pious (814-840), to take the crown from the altar and *crown himself*. But Louis the Pious was too pious to adhere to those instructions when the Pope made an objection.

The legislation of Charlemagne was greatly coloured by Bible reading; he knew his Bible well, as the times went; and it is characteristic of him that after he had been crowned emperor he required every male subject above the age of twelve to renew his oath of allegiance, and to undertake to be not simply a good subject, but a good Christian. To refuse baptism or to retract after baptism was a crime punishable by death. He did much to encourage architecture, and imported many Italian architects, chiefly from Ravenna, to whom we owe that pleasant Byzantine style that still at Worms and Cologne and elsewhere delights the tourist in the Rhineland. He founded a number of cathedrals and monastic schools, did much to encourage the study of classical Latin, and was a distinguished amateur of church music. The possibility of his talking Latin and understanding Greek is open to discussion; probably he talked French-Latin. Frankish, however, was his habitual tongue. He made a collection of old German songs and tales, but these were destroyed by his successor Louis the Pious on account of their paganism.

He corresponded with Haroun-al-Raschid, the Abbasid Caliph at Bagdad, who was not perhaps the less friendly to him on account of his vigorous handling of the Omayyad Arabs in Spain. Gibbon supposes that this "public correspondence was founded on vanity," and that "their remote situation left no room for a competition of interest." But with the Byzantine Empire between them in the East, and the independent caliphate of Spain in the West, and a common danger in the Turks of the great plains, they had three very excellent reasons for cordiality. Haroun-al-Raschid, says Gibbon, sent Charlemagne by his ambassadors a splendid tent, a water clock, an

elephant, and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. The last item suggests that Charlemagne was to some extent regarded by the Saracen monarch as the protector of the Christians and Christian properties in his dominions. Some historians declare explicitly that there was a treaty to that effect.

§ 7

The Empire of Charlemagne did not outlive his son and successor, Louis the Pious. It fell apart into its main constituents. The Latinized Keltic and Frankish population of Gaul begins now to be recognizable as France, though this France was broken up into a number of dukedoms and principalities, often with no more than a nominal unity; the German-speaking peoples between the Rhine and the Slavs to the east similarly begin to develop an even more fragmentary intimation of Germany. When at length a real emperor reappears in Western Europe (962), he is not a Frank, but a Saxon; the conquered in Germany have become the masters.

It is impossible here to trace the events of the ninth and tenth centuries in any detail, the alliances, the treacheries, the claims and acquisitions. Everywhere there was lawlessness, war, and a struggle for power. In 987 the nominal kingdom of France passed from the hands of the Carlovingians, the last descendants of Charlemagne, into the hands of Hugh Capet, who founded a new dynasty. Most of his alleged subordinates were in fact independent, and willing to make war on the king at the slightest provocation. The dominions of the Duke of Normandy, for example, were more extensive and more powerful than the patrimony of Hugh Capet. Almost the only unity of this France over which the king exercised a nominal authority lay in the common resolution of its great provinces to resist incorporation in any empire dominated either by a German ruler or by the Pope. Apart from the simple organization dictated by that common will, France was a mosaic of practically independent nobles. It was an era of castle-building and fortification, and what was called “private war” throughout all Europe.

The state of Rome in the tenth century is almost indescribable. The

decay of the Empire of Charlemagne left the Pope without a protector, threatened by Byzantium and the Saracens (who had taken Sicily), and face to face with the unruly nobles of Rome. Among the most powerful of these were two women, Theodora and Marozia, mother and daughter, who in succession held the Castle of St. Angelo (§ 1), which Theophylact, the patrician husband of Theodora, had seized with most of the temporal power of the Pope; these two women were as bold, unscrupulous, and dissolute as any male prince of the time could have been, and they are abused by historians as though they were ten times worse. Marozia seized and imprisoned Pope John X (928), who speedily died under her care. She subsequently made her illegitimate son pope, under the title of John XI. After him her grandson, John XII, filled the chair of St. Peter. Gibbon's account of the manners and morals of John XII takes refuge at last beneath a veil of Latin footnotes. This Pope, John XII, was finally degraded by the new German Emperor Otto, who came over the Alps and down into Italy to be crowned in 962.

This new line of Saxon emperors, which thus comes into prominence, sprang from a certain Henry the Fowler, who was elected King of Germany by an assembly of German nobles, princes, and prelates in 919. In 936 he was succeeded as King by his son, Otto I, surnamed the Great, who was also elected to be his successor at Aix-la-Chapelle, and who finally descended upon Rome at the invitation of John XII, to be crowned emperor in 962. His subsequent degradation of John was forced upon him by that Pope's treachery. With his assumption of the imperial dignity, Otto I did not so much overcome Rome as restore the ancient tussle of Pope and Emperor for ascendancy to something like decency and dignity again. Otto I was followed by Otto II (973-983), and he again by a third Otto (983-1002).

The struggle between the Emperor and the Pope for ascendancy over the Holy Roman Empire plays a large part in the history of the early Middle Ages, and we shall have presently to sketch its chief phases. Though the Church never sank quite to the level of John XII again, nevertheless the story fluctuates through phases of great violence, confusion, and intrigue. Yet the outer history of

Christendom is not the whole history of Christendom. That the Lateran was as cunning, foolish, and criminal as most other contemporary courts has to be recorded; but, if we are to keep due proportions in this history, it must not be unduly emphasized. We must remember that through all those ages, leaving profound consequences, but leaving no conspicuous records upon the historian's page, countless men and women were touched by that Spirit of Jesus which still lived and lives still at the core of Christianity, that they led lives that were on the whole gracious and helpful, and that they did unselfish and devoted deeds. Through those ages such lives cleared the air and made a better world possible. Just as in the Moslem world the Spirit of Islam generation by generation produced its crop of courage, integrity, and kindliness.

§ 8

While the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdoms of France and England were thus appearing amidst the extreme political fragmentation of the civilization of Western Europe, both that civilization and the Byzantine Empire were being subjected to a threefold attack: from the Saracen powers, from the Northmen, and, more slowly developed and most formidable of all, from a new westward thrust of the Turkish peoples through South Russia, and also by way of Armenia and the Empire of Bagdad from Central Asia.

After the overthrow of the Omayyads by the Abbasid dynasty, the strength of the Saracenic impulse against Europe diminished. Islam was no longer united. Spain was under a separate Omayyad Caliph, North Africa, though nominally subject to the Abbasids, was really independent, and presently (969) Egypt became a separate power with a Shiite Caliph of its own, a pretender claiming descent from Ali and Fatima (the Fatimite Caliphate). These Egyptian Fatimites, the green flag Moslems, were fanatics in comparison with the Abbasids, and did much to embitter the genial relations of Islam and Christianity. They took Jerusalem, and interfered with the Christian access to the Holy Sepulchre. On the other side of the shrunken Abbasid domain there was also a Shiite kingdom in Persia. The chief

Saracen conquest in the ninth century was Sicily; but this was not overrun in the grand old style in a year or so, but subjugated tediously through a long century, and with many set-backs. The Spanish Saracens disputed in Sicily with the Saracens from Africa. In Spain the Saracens were giving ground before a renascent Christian effort. Nevertheless, the Byzantine Empire and Western Christendom were still so weak upon the Mediterranean Sea that the Saracen raiders and pirates from North Africa were able to raid almost unchallenged in South Italy and the Greek Islands.

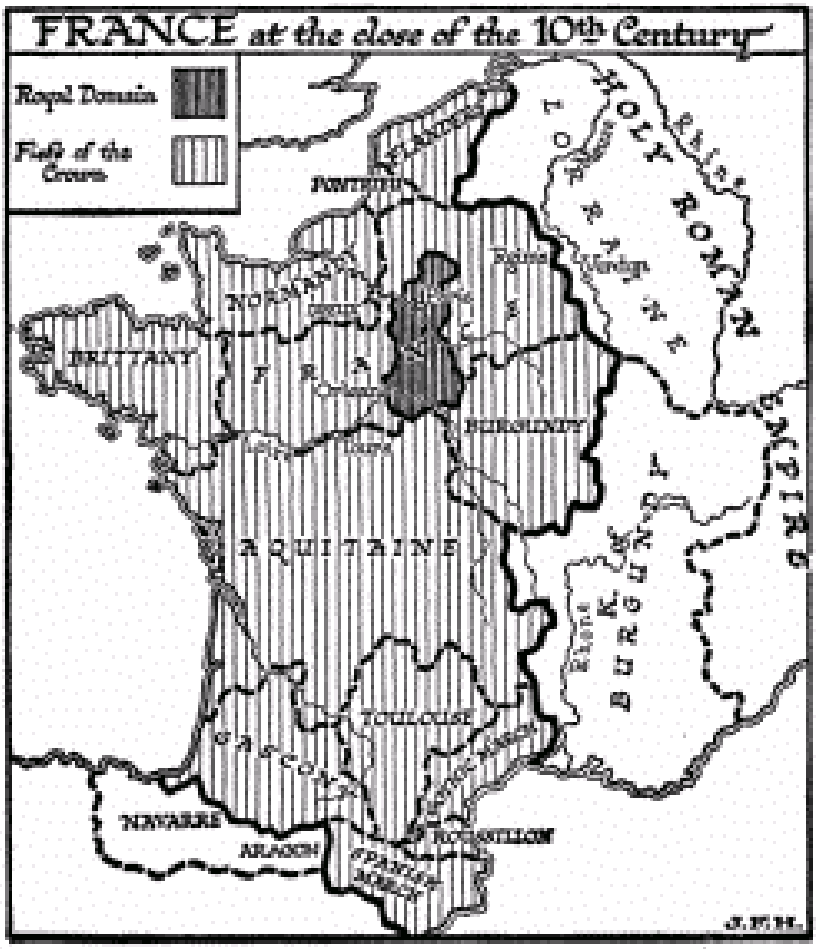

But now a new force was appearing in the Mediterranean. We have

already remarked that the Roman Empire never extended itself to the shores of the Baltic Sea, nor had ever the vigour to push itself into Denmark. The Nordic Aryan peoples of these neglected regions learnt much from the empire that was unable to subdue them; as we have already noted in § 4, they developed the art of shipbuilding and became bold seamen; they spread across the North Sea to the west, and across the Baltic and up the Russian rivers into the very heart of what is now Russia. One of their earliest settlements in Russia was Novgorod the Great. There is the same trouble and confusion for the student of history with these northern tribes as there is with the Scythians of classical times, and with the Hunnish Turkish peoples of Eastern and Central Asia. They appear under a great variety of names, they change and intermingle. In the case of Britain, for example, the Angles, the Saxons, and Jutes conquered most of what is now England in the fifth and sixth centuries; the Danes, a second wave of practically the same people, followed in the eighth and ninth; and in 1013 a Danish King, Canute, reigned in England, and not only over England, but over Denmark and Norway. For a time, under Canute and his sons, it seemed possible that a great confederation of the Northmen might have established itself. Then in 1066 a third wave of the same people flowed over England from the "Norman" state in France, where the Northmen had been settled since the days of Rolf the Ganger (912), and where they had learnt to speak French. William, Duke of Normandy, became the William the Conqueror (1066) of English history. Practically, from the standpoint of universal history, all these peoples were the same people, waves of one Nordic stock. These waves were not only flowing westward, but eastward. Already we have noted (chap, xxix, § 4), a very interesting earlier movement of the same peoples under the name of Goths from the Baltic to the Black Sea. We have traced the splitting of these Goths into the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths, and the adventurous wanderings that ended at last in the Ostrogoth kingdom in Italy and the Visigoth states in Spain. In the ninth century a second movement of the Northmen across Russia was going on at the same time that their establishments in England and their dukedom of Normandy were coming into existence. The populations of South Scotland, England, East Ireland, Flanders, Normandy, and the Russias have

more elements in common than we are accustomed to recognize. All are fundamentally Gothic and Nordic peoples. These "Russian" Norsemen travelled in the summer-time, using the river routes that abounded in Russia; they carried their ships by portages from the northward-running rivers to those flowing southward. They appeared as pirates, raiders, and traders both upon the Caspian and the Black Sea. The Arabic chroniclers note their apparition upon the Caspian, and give them the name of Russians. They raided Persia, and threatened Constantinople with a great fleet of small craft (in 865, 904, 941, and 1043). One of these Northmen, Rurik (*circa* 850), established himself as the ruler of Novgorod and Kief, and laid the foundations of modern Russia. The fighting qualities of the Russian Vikings were speedily appreciated at Constantinople; the Greeks called them Varangians, and an Imperial Varangian bodyguard was formed. After the conquest of England by the Normans (1066), a number of Danes and English were driven into exile and joined these Russian Varangians, apparently finding few obstacles to intercourse in their speech and habits.

Meanwhile the Normans from Normandy were also finding their way into the Mediterranean from the West. They came first as mercenaries, and later as independent invaders; and they came mainly, not, it is to be noted, by sea, but in scattered bands by land. They came through the Rhineland and Italy partly in the search for warlike employment and loot, partly as pilgrims. For the ninth and tenth centuries saw a great development of pilgrimage. These Normans, as they grew powerful, discovered themselves such rapacious and vigorous robbers that they forced the Eastern Emperor and the Pope into a feeble and ineffective alliance against them (1053). They defeated and captured and were pardoned by the Pope; they established themselves in Calabria and South Italy, conquered Sicily from the Saracens (1060-1090), and under Robert Guiscard, who had entered Italy as a pilgrim adventurer and began his career as a brigand in Calabria, threatened the Byzantine Empire itself (1081). His army, which contained a contingent of Sicilian Moslems, crossed from Brindisi to Epirus in the reverse direction to that in which Pyrrhus had crossed to attack the Roman Republic, thirteen centuries

before (275 B.C.). He laid siege to the Byzantine stronghold of Durazzo.

Robert captured Durazzo (1082), but the pressure of affairs in Italy recalled him, and ultimately put an end to this first Norman

attack upon the Empire of Byzantium leaving the way open for the rule of a comparatively vigorous Comnenian dynasty (1081-1204). In Italy, amidst conflicts too complex for us to tell here, it fell to Robert Guiscard to besiege and sack Rome (1084); and Gibbon notes with quiet satisfaction the presence of a large contingent of Sicilian Moslems amongst the looters. There were in the twelfth century three other Norman attacks upon the Eastern power, one by the son of Robert Guiscard, and the two others directly from Sicily by sea....

But neither the Saracens nor the Normans pounded quite so heavily against the old empire at Byzantium or against the Holy Roman Empire, the vamped-up Roman Empire of the West, as did the double thrust from the Turanian centres in Central Asia, of which we must now tell. We have already noted (chap. xxix, § 5) the westward movement of the Avars, and the Turkish Magyars who followed in their track. From the days of Pepin I onward, the Frankish power and its successors in Germany were in conflict with these Eastern raiders along all the Eastern borderlands. Charlemagne held and punished them, and established some sort of overlordship as far east as the Carpathians; but amidst the enfeeblement that followed his death, these peoples, more or less blended now in the accounts under the name of Hungarians, led by the Magyars, re-established their complete freedom again, and raided yearly, often as far as the Rhine. They destroyed, Gibbon notes, the monastery of St. Gall in Switzerland, and the town of Bremen. Their great raiding period was between 900 and 950. Their biggest effort, through Germany right into France, thence over the Alps and home again by North Italy, was in 938-9.

Thrust southward by these disturbances, and by others to be presently noted, the Bulgarians, as we have told in § 5, established themselves under Krum, between the Danube and Constantinople. Originally a Turkish people, the Bulgarians, since their first appearance in the east of Russia, had become by repeated admixture almost entirely Slavonic in race and language. For some time after their establishment in Bulgaria they remained pagan. Their king, Boris (852-884), entertained Moslem envoys, and seems to have

contemplated an adhesion to Islam, but finally he married a Byzantine princess, and handed himself and his people over to the Christian faith.

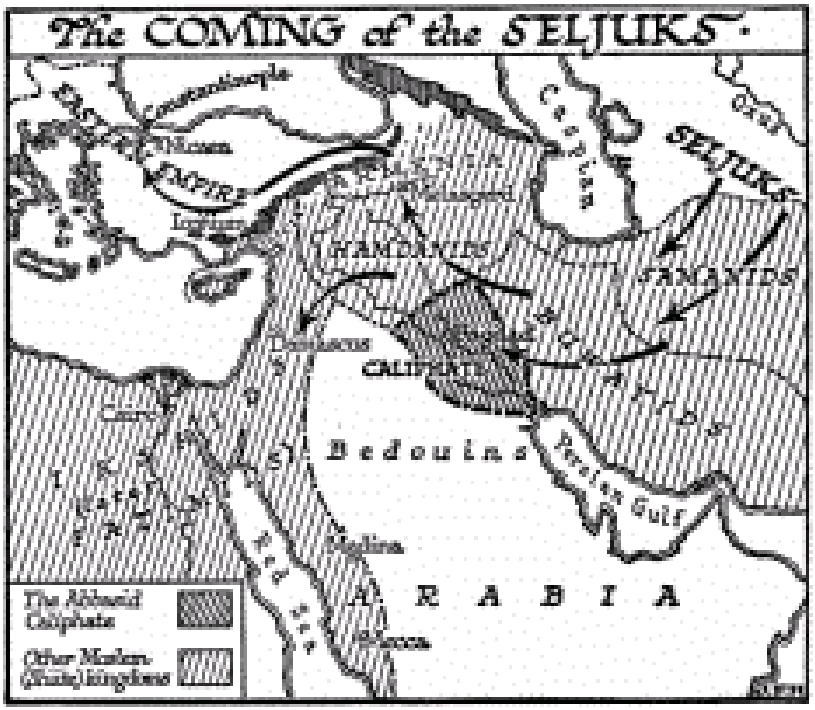

The Hungarians were drubbed into a certain respect for civilization by Henry the Fowler, the elected King of Germany, and Otto the First, the first Saxon emperor, in the tenth century. But they did not decide to adopt Christianity until about A.D. 1000. Though they were Christianized, they retained their own Turko-Finnic language (Magyar), and they retain it to this day.

Bulgarians and Hungarians do not, however, exhaust the catalogue of the peoples whose westward movements embodied the Turkish thrust across South Russia. Behind the Hungarians and Bulgarians thrust the Khazars, a Turkish people, with whom were mingled a very considerable proportion of Jews who had been expelled from Constantinople, and who had mixed with them and made many proselytes. To these Jewish Khazars are to be ascribed

the great settlements of Jews in Poland and Russia. Behind the Khazars again, and overrunning them, were the Petschenegs (or Patzinaks), a savage Turkish people who are first heard of in the ninth century, and who were destined to dissolve and vanish as the kindred Huns did five centuries before. And while the trend of all these peoples was westward, we have, when we are thinking of the present population of these South Russian regions, to remember also the coming and going of the Northmen between the Baltic and the Black Sea, who interwove with the Turkish migrants like warp and woof, and bear in mind also that there was a considerable Slavonic population, the heirs and descendants of Scythians, Sarmatians, and the like, already established in these restless, lawless, but fertile areas. All these races mixed with and reacted upon one another. The universal prevalence of Slavonic languages, except in Hungary, shows that the population remained predominantly Slav. And in what is now Roumania, for all the passage of peoples, and in spite of conquest after conquest, the tradition and inheritance of the Roman provinces of Dacia and Mœsia Inferior still kept a Latin speech and memory alive.

But this direct thrust of the Turkish peoples against Christendom to the north of the Black Sea was, in the end, not nearly so important as their indirect thrust south of it through the empire of the Caliph. We cannot deal here with the tribes and dissensions of the Turkish peoples of Turkestan, nor with the particular causes that brought to the fore the tribes under the rule of the Seljuk clan. In the eleventh century these Seljuk Turks broke with irresistible force not in one army, but in a group of armies, and under two brothers, into the decaying fragments of the Moslem Empire. For Islam had long ceased to be one empire. The orthodox Sunnite Abbasid rule had shrunken to what was once Babylonia; and even in Bagdad the Caliph was the mere creature of his Turkish palace guards. A sort of mayor of the palace, a Turk, was the real ruler. East of the Caliph, in Persia, and west of him in Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, were Shiite heretics. The Seljuk Turks were orthodox Sunnites; they now swept down upon and conquered the Shiite rulers and upstarts, and established themselves as the protectors of the Bagdad Caliph, taking over the temporal powers of the mayor of the palace. Very early they

conquered Armenia from the Greeks, and then, breaking the bounds that had restrained the power of Islam for four centuries, they swept on to the conquest of Asia Minor, almost to the gates of Constantinople. The mountain barrier of Cilicia that had held the Moslem so long had been turned by the conquest of Armenia from the northeast. Under Alp Arslan, who had united all the Seljuk power in his own hands, the Turks utterly smashed the Byzantine army at the battle of Manzikert, or Melasgird (1071). The effect of this battle upon people's imaginations was very great. Islam, which had appeared far gone in decay, which had been divided religiously and politically, was suddenly discovered to have risen again, and it was the secure old Byzantine Empire that seemed on the brink of dissolution. The loss of Asia Minor was very swift. The Seljuks established themselves at Iconium (Konia), in what is now Anatolia. In a little while they were in possession of the fortress of Nicæa over against the capital.

§ 9

We have already told of the attack of the Normans upon the Byzantine Empire from the west, and of the battle of Durazzo (1081); and we have noted that Constantinople had still vivid memories of the Russian sea raids (1043). Bulgaria, it is true, had been tamed, but there was heavy and uncertain warfare going on with the Petschenegs. North and west, the emperor's hands were full. This swift advance of the Turks into country that had been so long securely Byzantine must have seemed like the approach of final disaster. The Eastern Emperor, Michael VII, under the pressure of these convergent dangers, took a step that probably seemed both to himself and to Rome of the utmost political significance. He appealed to the Pope, Gregory VII, for assistance. His appeal was repeated still more urgently by his successor, Alexius Comnenus, to Pope Urban II.

To the counsellors of Rome this must have presented itself as a supreme opportunity for the assertion of the headship of the Pope over the entire Christian world.

In this history we have traced the growth of this idea of a religious government of Christendom — and through Christendom of mankind — and we have shown how naturally and how necessarily, because of the tradition of world empire, it found a centre at Rome. The Pope of Rome was the only Western patriarch; he was the religious head of a vast region in which the ruling tongue was Latin; the other patriarchs of the Orthodox Church spoke Greek, and so were inaudible throughout his domains; and the two words *Filioque*, which had been added to the Latin creed (see chap. xxx, § 8, and chap. xxxiii, § 6), had split off the Byzantine Christians by one of those impalpable and elusive doctrinal points upon which there is no reconciliation. (The final rupture was in 1054.) The life of the Lateran changed in its quality with every occupant of the chair of St. Peter: sometimes papal Rome was a den of corruption and uncleanness, as it had been in the days of John XII; sometimes it was pervaded by the influence of widely thinking and nobly thinking men. But behind the Pope was the assembly of the cardinals, priests, and a great number of highly educated officials, who never, even in the darkest and wildest days, lost sight altogether of the very grand idea of a divine world dominion, of a peace of Christ throughout the earth that St. Augustine had expressed. Through all the Middle Ages that idea was the guiding influence in Rome. For a time, perhaps, mean minds would prevail there, and in the affairs of the world Rome would play the part of a greedy, treacherous, and insanely cunning old woman; followed a phase of masculine and quite worldly astuteness perhaps, or a phase of exaltation. Came an interlude of fanaticism or pedantry, when all the pressure was upon exact doctrine. Or there was a moral collapse, and the Lateran became the throne of some sensuous or æsthetic autocrat, ready to sell every hope or honour the Church could give for money to spend upon pleasure or display. Yet, on the whole, the papal ship kept its course, and came presently into the wind again.

In this period to which we have now come, the period of the eleventh century, we discover a Rome dominated by the personality of an exceptionally great statesman, Hildebrand, who occupied various official positions under a succession of Popes, and finally became

Pope himself under the name of Gregory VII (1073-1085). We find that under his influence, vice, sloth, and corruption have been swept out of the Church, that the method of electing the Popes has been reformed, and that a great struggle has been waged with the Emperor upon the manifestly vital question of "investitures," the question whether Pope or temporal monarch should have the decisive voice in the appointment of the bishops in their domains. Hitherto the Roman clergy had been able to marry; but now, to detach them effectually from the world and to make them more completely the instruments of the church, celibacy was imposed upon all priests....

Gregory VII had been prevented by his struggle over the investitures from any effectual answer to the first appeal from Byzantium; but he had left a worthy successor in Urban II (1087-1099); and when the letter of Alexius came to hand, Urban seized at once upon the opportunity it afforded for drawing together all the thoughts and forces of Western Europe into one passion and purpose. Thereby he might hope to end the private warfare that prevailed, and find a proper outlet for the immense energy of the Normans. He saw, too, an opportunity of thrusting the Byzantine power and Church aside, and extending the influence of the Latin Church over Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The envoys of Alexius were heard at a church council, hastily summoned at Piacenza (= Placentia), and next year (1095), at Clermont, Urban held a second great council, in which all the slowly gathered strength of the Church was organized for a universal war propaganda against the Moslems. Private war, all war among Christians, was to cease until the infidel had been swept back and the site of the Holy Sepulchre was again in Christian hands.

The fervour of the response enables us to understand the great work of creative organization that had been done in Western Europe in the previous five centuries. In the beginning of the seventh century we saw Western Europe as a chaos of social and political fragments, with no common idea nor hope, a system shattered almost to a dust of self-seeking individuals. Now in the dawn of the eleventh century there is everywhere a common belief, a linking idea, to which men may devote themselves, and by which they can co-operate together in a universal enterprise. We realize that, in spite of much weakness and

intellectual and moral unsoundness, to this extent the Christian Church has *worked*. We are able to measure the evil phases of tenth-century Rome, the scandals, the filthiness, the murders and violence, at their proper value by the scale of this fact. No doubt also all over Christendom there had been many lazy, evil, and foolish priests; but it is manifest that this task of teaching and co-ordination that had been accomplished could have been accomplished only through a great multitude of right-living priests and monks and nuns. A new and greater amphictyony, the amphictyony of Christendom, had come into the world, and it had been built by thousands of anonymous, faithful lives.

And this response to the appeal of Urban the Second was not confined only to what we should call educated people. It was not simply knights and princes who were willing to go upon this crusade. Side by side with the figure of Urban we must put the figure of Peter the Hermit, a type novel to Europe, albeit a little reminiscent of the Hebrew prophets. This man appeared preaching the crusade to the common people. He told a story — whether truthful or untruthful hardly matters in this connection — of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, of the wanton destruction at the Holy Sepulchre by the Seljuk Turks, who took it in 1073, and of the exactions, brutalities, and deliberate cruelties practised upon the Christian pilgrims to the Holy Places. Barefooted, clad in a coarse garment, riding on an ass, and bearing a huge cross, this man travelled about France and Germany, and everywhere harangued vast crowds in church or street or market-place.

Here for the first time we discover Europe with an idea and a soul! Here is a universal response of indignation of the story of a remote wrong, a swift understanding of a common cause for rich and poor alike. You cannot imagine this thing happening in the Empire of Augustus Cæsar, or indeed in any previous state in the world's history. Something of the kind might perhaps have been possible in the far smaller world of Hellas, or in Arabia before Islam. But this movement affected nations, kingdoms, tongues, and peoples. It is clear that we are dealing with something new that has come into the world, a new clear connection of the common interest with the consciousness of the common man.

From the very first this flaming enthusiasm was mixed with baser elements. There was the cold and calculated scheme of the free and ambitious Latin Church to subdue and replace the emperor-ruled Byzantine Church; there was the freebooting instinct of the Normans, who were tearing Italy to pieces, which turned readily enough to a new and richer world of plunder; and there was something in the multitude who now turned their faces east, something deeper than love in the human composition, namely, fear-born hate, that the impassioned appeals of the propagandists and the exaggeration of the horrors and cruelties of the infidel had fanned into flame. And there were still other forces; the intolerant Seljuks and the intolerant Fatimites lay now an impassable barrier across the eastward trade of Genoa and Venice that had hitherto flowed through Bagdad and Aleppo, or through Egypt. They must force open these closed channels, unless Constantinople and the Black Sea route were to monopolize Eastern trade altogether. Moreover, in 1094 and 1095 there had been a pestilence and famine from the Scheldt to Bohemia, and there was great social disorganization. "No wonder," says Mr. Ernest Barker, "that a stream of emigration set towards the East, such as would in modern times flow towards a newly discovered goldfield — a stream carrying in its turbid waters much refuse, tramps and bankrupts, camp-followers and hucksters, fugitive monks and escaped villeins, and marked by the same motley grouping, the same fever of life, the same alternations of affluence and beggary, which mark the rush for a goldfield to-day."

But these were secondary contributory causes. The fact of predominant interest to the historian of mankind is this *will to crusade* suddenly revealed as a new mass possibility in human affairs.

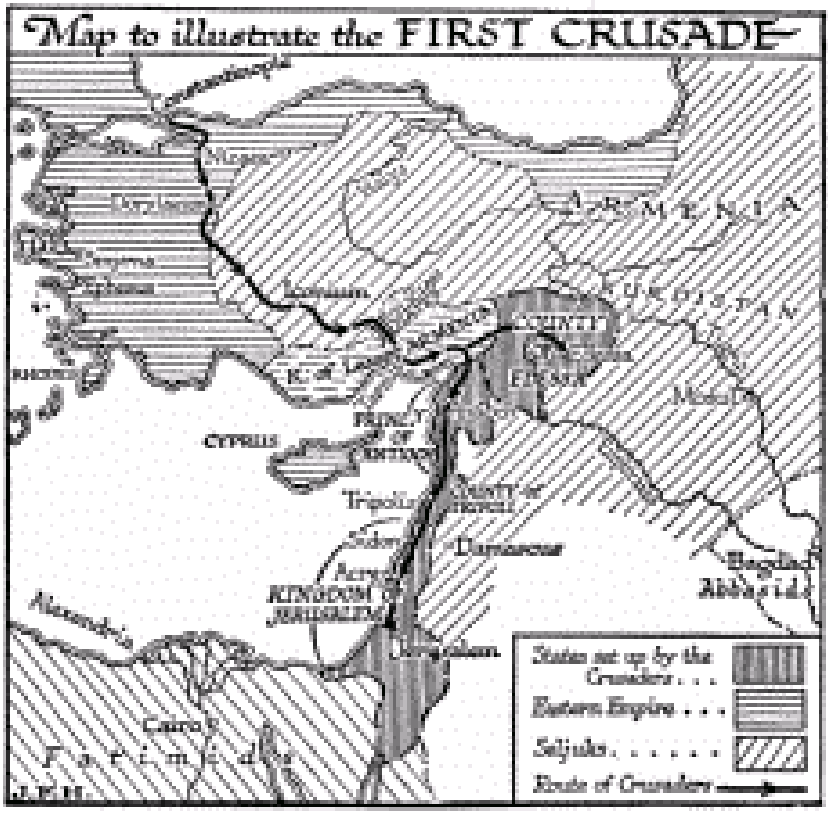

The story of the crusades abounds in such romantic and picturesque detail that the writer of an Outline of History must ride his pen upon the curb through this alluring field. The first forces to move eastward were great crowds of undisciplined people rather than armies, and they sought to make their way by the valley of the Danube, and thence southward to Constantinople.

This was the "people's crusade." Never before in the whole history of the world had there been such a spectacle as these masses of practically leaderless people moved by an idea. It was a very crude idea. When they got among foreigners, they do not seem to have realized that they were not already among the infidel. Two great mobs, the advance guard of the expedition, committed such excesses in Hungary, where the language must have been incomprehensible to them, as to provoke the Hungarians to destroy them. They were massacred. A third host began with a great pogrom of the Jews in the

Rhineland — for the Christian blood was up — and this multitude was also dispersed in Hungary. Two other hosts under Peter got through and reached Constantinople, to the astonishment and dismay of the Emperor Alexius. They looted and committed outrages as they came, and at last he shipped them across the Bosphorus, to be massacred rather than defeated by the Seljuks (1096).

This first unhappy appearance of the "people" as people in modern European history was followed in 1097 by the organized forces of the First Crusade. They came by diverse routes from France, Normandy, Flanders, England, Southern Italy, and Sicily, and the will and power of them were the Normans. They crossed the Bosphorus and captured Nicæa, which Alexius snatched away from them before they could loot it. They then went on by much the same route as Alexander the Great, through the Cilician Gates, leaving the Turks in Konia unconquered, past the battle-fields of the Issus, and so to Antioch, which they took after nearly a year's siege. Then they defeated a great relieving army from Mosul. A large part of the Crusaders remained in Antioch, a smaller force under Godfrey of Bouillon (in Belgium) went on to Jerusalem. "After a little more than a month's siege, the city was finally captured (July 15). The slaughter was terrible; the blood of the conquered ran down the streets, until men splashed in blood as they rode. At nightfall, 'sobbing for excess of joy,' the crusaders came to the Sepulchre from their treading of the wine-press, and put their blood-stained hands together in prayer. So, on that day of July, the First Crusade came to an end."

The authority of the Patriarch of Jerusalem was at once seized upon by the Latin clergy with the expedition, and the Orthodox Christians found themselves in rather a worse case under Latin rule than under the Turk. There were already Latin principalities established at Antioch and Edessa, and there began a struggle for ascendancy between these various courts and kings, and an unsuccessful attempt to make Jerusalem a property of the Pope. These are complications beyond our present scope.

Let us quote, however, a characteristic passage from Gibbon: —

"In a style less grave than that of history, I should perhaps compare the Emperor Alexius to the jackal, who is said to follow the

steps and to devour the leavings of the lion. Whatever had been his fears and toils in the passage of the First Crusade, they were amply recompensed by the subsequent benefits which he derived from the exploits of the Franks. His dexterity and vigilance secured their first conquest of Nicæa, and from this threatening station the Turks were compelled to evacuate the neighbourhood of Constantinople. While the Crusaders, with blind valour, advanced into the midland countries of Asia, the crafty Greek improved the favourable occasion when the emirs of the sea coast were recalled to the standard of the Sultan. The Turks were driven from the isles of Rhodes and Chios; the cities of Ephesus and Smyrna, of Sardes, Philadelphia, and Laodicea were restored to the empire, which Alexius enlarged from the Hellespont to the banks of the Mæander and the rocky shores of Pamphylia. The churches resumed their splendour; the towns were rebuilt and fortified; and the desert country was peopled with colonies of Christians, who were gently removed from the more distant and dangerous frontier. In these paternal cares we may forgive Alexius, if we forget the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre; but, by the Latins, he was stigmatized with the foul reproach of treason and desertion. They had sworn fidelity and obedience to his throne; but *he* had promised to assist their enterprise in person, or at least, with his troops and treasures; his base retreat dissolved their obligations; and the sword, which had been the instrument of their victory, was the pledge and title of their just independence. It does not appear that the emperor attempted to revive his obsolete claims over the kingdom of Jerusalem, but the borders of Cilicia and Syria were more recent in his possession and more accessible to his arms. The great army of the Crusaders was annihilated or dispersed; the principality of Antioch was left without a head, by the surprise and captivity of Bohemond; his ransom had oppressed him with a heavy debt; and his Norman followers were insufficient to repel the hostilities of the Greeks and Turks. In this distress, Bohemond embraced a magnanimous resolution, of leaving the defence of Antioch to his kinsman, the faithful Tancred; of arming the West against the Byzantine Empire, and of executing the design which he inherited from the lessons and example of his father Guiscard. His embarkation was clandestine; and if we may credit a tale of the

Princess Anna, he passed the hostile sea closely secreted in a coffin. (Anna Comnena adds, that to complete the imitation, he was shut up with a dead cock; and condescends to wonder how the barbarian could endure the confinement and putrefaction. This absurd tale is unknown to the Latins.) But his reception in France was dignified by the public applause and his marriage with the king's daughter; his return was glorious, since the bravest spirits of the age enlisted under his veteran command; and he repassed the Adriatic at the head of five thousand horse and forty thousand foot, assembled from the most remote climates of Europe. The strength of Durazzo and prudence of Alexius, the progress of famine and approach of winter, eluded his ambitious hopes; and the venal confederates were seduced from his standard. A treaty of peace suspended the fears of the Greeks."

We have dealt thus lengthily with the First Crusade, because it displays completely the quality of all these expeditions. The reality of the struggle between the Latin and the Byzantine system became more and more nakedly apparent. In 1101 came reinforcements, in which the fleet of the mercantile republics of Venice and Genoa played a prominent part, and the power of the kingdom of Jerusalem was extended. The year 1147 saw a Second Crusade, in which both the Emperor Conrad III and King Louis of France participated. It was a much more stately and far less successful and enthusiastic expedition than its predecessor. It had been provoked by the fall of Edessa to the Moslems in 1144. One large division of Germans, instead of going to the Holy Land, attacked and subjugated the still pagan Wends east of the Elbe. This, the Pope agreed, counted as crusading, and so did the capture of Lisbon, and the foundation of the Christian kingdom of Portugal by the Flemish and English contingents.

In 1169 a Kurdish adventurer, named Saladin, became ruler of Egypt, in which country the Shiite heresy had now fallen before a Sunnite revival. This Saladin reunited the efforts of Egypt and Bagdad, and preached a Jehad, a Holy War, a counter-crusade, of all the Moslems against the Christians. This Jehad excited almost as much feeling in Islam as the First Crusade had done in Christendom. It was now a case of crusader against crusader; and in 1187 Jerusalem was retaken. This provoked the Third Crusade (1189).

This also was a grand affair, planned jointly by the Emperor Frederick I (known better as Frederick Barbarossa), the King of France, and the King of England (who at that time owned many of the fairest French provinces). The papacy played a secondary part in this expedition; it was in one of its phases of enfeeblement; and the crusade was the most courtly, chivalrous, and romantic of all. Religious bitterness was mitigated by the idea of knightly gallantry, which obsessed both Saladin and Richard I (1189-1199) of England (Cœur-de-Lion), and the lover of romance may very well turn to the romances about this period for its flavour. The crusade saved the principality of Antioch for a time, but failed to retake Jerusalem. The Christians, however, remained in possession of the seacoast of Palestine.

By the time of the Third Crusade, the magic and wonder had gone out of these movements altogether. The common people had found them out. Men went, but only kings and nobles straggled back; and that often only after heavy taxation for a ransom. The idea of the crusades was cheapened by their too frequent and trivial use. Whenever the Pope quarrelled with anyone now, he called for a crusade, until the word ceased to mean anything but an attempt to give flavour to an unpalatable civil war. There was a crusade against the heretics in the south of France, one against John (King of England), one against the Emperor Frederick II. The Popes did not understand the necessity of dignity to the papacy. They had achieved a moral ascendancy in Christendom. Forthwith they began to fritter it away. They not only cheapened the idea of the crusades, but they made their tremendous power of excommunication, of putting people outside all the sacraments, hopes, and comforts of religion, ridiculous by using it in mere disputes of policy. Frederick II was not only crusaded against, but excommunicated — without visible injury. He was excommunicated again in 1239, and a third time in 1245.

The bulk of the Fourth Crusade never reached the Holy Land at all. It started from Venice (1202), captured Zara, encamped at Constantinople (1203), and finally, in 1204, stormed the city. It was frankly a combined attack on the Byzantine Empire. Venice took much of the coasts and islands of the empire, and a Latin, Baldwin of Flanders, was set up as emperor in Constantinople. The Latin and

Greek Churches were declared to be reunited, and Latin emperors ruled as conquerors in Constantinople from 1204 to 1261.

In 1212 occurred a dreadful thing, a children's crusade. An excitement that could no longer affect sane adults was spread among the children in the south of France and in the Rhone Valley. A crowd of many thousands of French boys marched to Marseilles; they were then lured on board ship by slave traders, who sold them into slavery in Egypt. The Rhineland children tramped into Italy, many perishing by the way, and there dispersed. Pope Innocent III made great capital out of this strange business. "The very children put us to shame," he said; and sought to whip up enthusiasm for a Fifth Crusade. This crusade aimed at the conquest of Egypt, because Jerusalem was now held by the Egyptian Sultan; its remnants returned in 1221, after an inglorious evacuation of its one capture, Damietta, with the Jerusalem vestiges of the True Cross as a sort of consolation concession on the part of the victor. We have already noted the earlier adventures of this venerable relic before the days of Muhammad in chap. xxxi, § 2, when it was carried off by Chosroes II to Ctesiphon, and recovered by the Emperor Heraclius. Fragments of the True Cross, however, had always been in Rome at the church of S. Croce-in-Gerusalemme, since the days of the Empress Helena (the mother of Constantine the Great) to whom, says the legend, its hiding-place had been revealed in a vision during her pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The Sixth Crusade (1229) was a crusade bordering upon absurdity. The Emperor Frederick II had promised to go upon a crusade, and evaded his vow. He had made a false start and returned. He was probably bored by the mere idea of a crusade. But the vow had been part of the bargain by which he secured the support of Pope Innocent III in his election as emperor. He busied himself in reorganizing the government of his Sicilian kingdom, though he had given the Pope to understand that he would relinquish these possessions if he became emperor; and the Pope was anxious to stop this process of consolidation by sending him to the Holy Land. The Pope did not want Frederick II, or any German emperor at all in Italy, because he

himself wished to rule Italy. As Frederick II remained evasive, Gregory IX excommunicated him, proclaimed a crusade against him, and invaded his dominions in Italy (1228). Whereupon the Emperor sailed with an army to the Holy Land. There he had a meeting with the Sultan of Egypt (the Emperor spoke six languages freely, including Arabic); and it would seem these two gentlemen, both of sceptical opinions, exchanged views of a congenial sort, discussed the Pope in a worldly spirit, debated the Mongolian rush westward, which threatened them both alike, and agreed finally to a commercial convention, and the surrender of a part of the kingdom of Jerusalem to Frederick. This indeed was a new sort of crusade, a crusade by private treaty. As this astonishing crusader had been excommunicated, he had to indulge in a purely secular coronation in Jerusalem, taking the crown from the altar with his own hand, in a church from which all the clergy had gone. Probably there was no one to show him the Holy Places; indeed these were presently all put under an interdict by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and locked up; manifestly the affair differed altogether in spirit from the red onslaught of the First Crusade. It had not even the kindly sociability of the Caliph Omar's visit six hundred years before. Frederick II rode out of Jerusalem almost alone, returned from this unromantic success to Italy, put his affairs there in order very rapidly, chased the papal armies out of his possessions, and obliged the Pope to give him absolution from his excommunication (1230). This Sixth Crusade was indeed not only the *reductio ad absurdum* of crusades, but of papal excommunications. Of this Frederick II we shall tell more in a later section, because he was very typical of certain new forces that were coming into European affairs.

The Christians lost Jerusalem again in 1244; it was taken from them very easily by the Sultan of Egypt when they attempted an intrigue against him. This provoked the Seventh Crusade, the Crusade of St. Louis, King of France (Louis IX), who was taken prisoner in Egypt and ransomed in 1250. Not until 1918, when it fell to a mixed force of French, British, and Indian troops, did Jerusalem slip once more from the Moslem grasp....

One more crusade remains to be noted, an expedition to Tunis by this same Louis IX, who died of fever there.

The essential interest of the crusades for the historian of mankind lies in the wave of emotion, of unifying feeling, that animated the first. Thereafter these expeditions became more and more an established process, and less and less vital events. The First Crusade was an occurrence like the discovery of America; the later ones were more and more like a trip across the Atlantic. In the eleventh century, the idea of the crusade must have been like a strange and wonderful light in the sky; in the thirteenth one can imagine honest burghers saying in tones of protest, "What! *another* crusade!" The experience of St. Louis in Egypt is not like a fresh experience for mankind; it is much more like a round of golf over some well-known links, a round that was dogged by misfortune. It is an insignificant series of events. The interest of life had shifted to other directions.

The beginning of the crusades displays all Europe saturated by a naïve Christianity, and ready to follow the leading of the Pope trustfully and simply. The scandals of the Lateran during its evil days, with which we are all so familiar now, were practically unknown outside Rome. And Gregory VII and Urban II had redeemed all that. But intellectually and morally their successors at the Lateran and the Vatican were not equal to their opportunities. The strength of the papacy lay in the faith men had in it, and it used that faith so carelessly as to enfeeble it. Rome has always had too much of the shrewdness of the priest and too little of the power of the prophet. So that while the eleventh century was a century of ignorant and confiding men, the thirteenth was an age of knowing and disillusioned men. It was a far more civilized and profoundly sceptical world.

The bishops, priests, and the monastic institutions of Latin Christendom before the days of Gregory VII had been perhaps rather loosely linked together and very variable in quality; but it is clear that they were, as a rule, intensely intimate with the people among whom they found themselves, and with much of the spirit of Jesus still alive in them; they were trusted, and they had enormous power *within the conscience of their followers*. The church, in comparison with its later state, was more in the hands of local laymen and the

local ruler; it lacked its later universality. The energetic bracing up of the church organization by Gregory VII, which was designed to increase the central power of Rome, broke many subtle filaments between priest and monastery on the one hand, and the country-side about them on the other. Men of faith and wisdom believe in growth and their fellow men; but priests, even such priests as Gregory VII, believe in the false "efficiency" of an imposed discipline. The squabble over investitures made every prince in Christendom suspicious of the bishops as agents of a foreign power; this suspicion filtered down to the parishes. The political enterprises of the papacy necessitated an increasing demand for money. Already in the thirteenth century it was being said everywhere that the priests were not good men, that they were always hunting for money.

In the days of ignorance there had been an extraordinary willingness to believe the Catholic priesthood good and wise. Relatively it was better and wiser in those days. Great powers beyond her spiritual functions had been entrusted to the church, and very extraordinary freedoms. Of this confidence the fullest advantage had been taken. In the Middle Ages the church had become a state within the state. It had its own law courts. Cases involving not merely priests, but monks, students, crusaders, widows, orphans, and the helpless, were reserved for the clerical courts; and whenever the rites or rules of the church were involved, there the church claimed jurisdiction over such matters as wills, marriages, oaths, and of course over heresy, sorcery, and blasphemy. There were numerous clerical prisons in which offenders might pine all their lives. The Pope was the supreme law-giver of Christendom, and his court at Rome the final and decisive court of appeal. And the church levied taxes; it had not only vast properties and a great income from fees, but it imposed a tax of a tenth, the tithe, upon its subjects. It did not call for this as a pious benefaction; it demanded it as a right. The clergy, on the other hand, were now claiming exemption from lay taxation.

This attempt to trade upon their peculiar prestige and evade their share in fiscal burdens was certainly one very considerable factor in the growing dissatisfaction with the clergy. Apart from any question of justice, it was impolitic. It made taxes seem ten times more

burthensome to those who had to pay. It made everyone feel the immunities of the church. And a still more extravagant and unwise claim made by the church was the claim to the power of *dispensation*. The Pope might in many instances set aside the laws of the church in individual cases; he might allow cousins to marry, permit a man to have two wives, or release anyone from a vow. But to do such things is to admit that the laws affected are not based upon necessity and an inherent righteousness; that they are in fact restrictive and vexatious. The law-giver, of all beings, most owes the law allegiance. He of all men should behave as though the law compelled him. But it is the universal weakness of mankind that what we are given to administer we presently imagine we own.

§ 12

The Emperor Frederick II is a very convenient example of the sort of doubter and rebel the thirteenth century could produce. It may be interesting to tell a little of this intelligent and cynical man. He was the son of the German Emperor, Henry VI, and grandson of Frederick Barbarossa, and his mother was the daughter of Roger I, the Norman King of Sicily. He inherited this kingdom in 1198, when he was four years old; his mother was his guardian for six months, and when she died, Pope Innocent III (1198 to 1216) became regent and guardian. He seems to have had an exceptionally good and remarkably mixed education, and his accomplishments earned him the flattering title of *Stupor mundi*, the amazement of the world. The result of getting an Arabic view of Christianity, and a Christian view of Islam, was to make him believe that all religions were impostures, a view held perhaps by many a stifled observer in the Age of Faith. But he talked about his views; his blasphemies and heresies are on record. Growing up under the arrogant rule of Innocent III, who never seems to have realized that his ward had come of age, he developed a slightly humorous evasiveness. It was the papal policy to prevent any fresh coalescence of the power of Germany and Italy, and it was equally Frederick's determination to get whatever he could. When presently opportunity offered him the imperial crown of Germany, he secured the Pope's support by agreeing, if he were

elected, to relinquish his possessions in Sicily and South Italy, and to put down heresy in Germany. For Innocent III was one of the great persecuting Popes, an able, grasping, and aggressive man. (For a Pope, he was exceptionally young. He became Pope at thirty-seven.) It was Innocent who had preached a cruel crusade against the heretics in the south of France, a crusade that presently became a looting expedition beyond his control. So soon as Frederick was elected emperor (1211), Innocent pressed for the performance of the vows and promises he had wrung from his dutiful ward. The clergy were to be freed from lay jurisdiction and from taxation, and exemplary cruelties were to be practised upon the heretics. None of which things Frederick did. As we have already told, he would not even relinquish Sicily. He liked Sicily as a place of residence better than he liked Germany.

Innocent III died baffled in 1216, and his successor, Honorius III, effected nothing. Honorius was succeeded by Gregory IX (1227), who evidently came to the papal throne with a nervous resolution to master this perplexing young man. He excommunicated him at once for failing to start upon his crusade, which was now twelve years overdue; and he denounced his vices, heresies, and general offences in a public letter (1227). To this Frederick replied in a far abler document addressed to all the princes of Europe, a document of extreme importance in history, because it is the first clear statement of the issue between the pretensions of the Pope to be absolute ruler of all Christendom, and the claims of the secular rulers. This conflict had always been smouldering; it had broken out here in one form, and there in another; but now Frederick put it in clear general terms upon which men could combine together.

Having delivered this blow, he departed upon the pacific crusade of which we have already told. In 1239, Gregory IX was excommunicating him for a second time, and renewing that warfare of public abuse in which the papacy had already suffered severely. The controversy was revived after Gregory IX was dead, when Innocent IV was Pope; and again a devastating letter, which men were bound to remember, was written by Frederick against the church. He denounced the pride and irreligion of the clergy, and ascribed all the corruptions of the time to their pride and wealth. He

proposed to his fellow princes a general confiscation of church property — for the good of the church. It was a suggestion that never afterwards left the imagination of the European princes.

We will not go on to tell of his last years or of the disaster at Parma, due to his carelessness, which cast a shadow of failure over his end. The particular events of his life are far less significant than its general atmosphere. It is possible to piece together something of his court life in Sicily. He is described towards the end of his life as "red, bald, and short-sighted"; but his features were good and pleasing. He was luxurious in his way of living, and fond of beautiful things. He is described as licentious. But it is clear that his mind was not satisfied by religious scepticism, and that he was a man of very effectual curiosity and inquiry. He gathered Jewish and Moslem as well as Christian philosophers at his court, and he did much to irrigate the Italian mind with Saracenic influences. Through him Arabic numerals and algebra were introduced to Christian students, and among other philosophers at his court was Michael Scott, who translated portions of Aristotle and the commentaries thereon of the great Arab philosopher Averroes (of Cordoba). In 1224 Frederick founded the University of Naples, and he enlarged and enriched the great medical school at Salerno University, the most ancient of universities. He also founded a zoological garden. He left a book on hawking, which shows him to have been an acute observer of the habits of birds, and he was one of the first Italians to write Italian verse. Italian poetry was indeed born at his court. He has been called by an able writer, "the first of the moderns," and the phrase expresses aptly the unprejudiced detachment of his intellectual side. His was an all-round originality. During a gold shortage he introduced and made a success of a coinage of stamped leather, bearing his promise to pay in gold, a sort of leather bank-note issue.

In spite of the torrent of abuse and calumny in which Frederick was drenched, he left a profound impression upon the popular imagination. He is still remembered in South Italy almost as vividly as is Napoleon I by the peasants of France; he is the "Gran Federigo." And German scholars declare that, in spite of Frederick's manifest dislike for Germany, it is he, and not Frederick I, Frederick Barbarossa, to whom that German legend originally attached — that

legend which represents a great monarch slumbering in a deep cavern, his beard grown round a stone table, against a day of awakening when the world will be restored by him from an extremity of disorder to peace. Afterwards, it seems, the story was transferred to the Crusader Barbarossa, the grandfather of Frederick II.

A difficult child was Frederick II for Mother Church, and he was only the precursor of many such difficult children. The princes and educated gentlemen throughout Europe read his letters and discussed them. The more enterprising university students found, marked, and digested the Arabic Aristotle he had made accessible to them in Latin. Salerno cast a baleful light upon Rome. All sorts of men must have been impressed by the futility of the excommunications and interdicts that were levelled at Frederick.

§ 13

We have said that Innocent III never seemed to realize that his ward, Frederick II, was growing up. It is equally true that the papacy never seemed to realize that Europe was growing up. It is impossible for an intelligent modern student of history not to sympathize with the underlying idea of the papal court, with the idea of one universal rule of righteousness keeping the peace of the earth, and not to recognize the many elements of nobility that entered into the Lateran policy. Sooner or later mankind must come to one universal peace, unless our race is to be destroyed by the increasing power of its own destructive inventions; and that universal peace must needs take the form of a government, that is to say a law-sustaining organization, in the best sense of the word religious; a government ruling men through the educated co-ordination of their minds in a common conception of human history and human destiny.

The papacy we must now recognize as the first clearly conscious attempt to provide such a government in the world. We cannot too earnestly examine its deficiencies and inadequacies, for every lesson we can draw from them is necessarily of the greatest value to us in forming our ideas of our own international relationships. We have tried to suggest the main factors in the breakdown of the Roman Republic, and it now behoves us to attempt a diagnosis of the failure

of the Roman Church to secure and organize the good will of mankind.

The first thing that will strike the student is the intermittence of the efforts of the church to establish the world City of God. The policy of the church was not whole-heartedly and continuously set upon that end. It was only now and then that some fine personality or some group of fine personalities dominated it in that direction. The kingdom of God that Jesus of Nazareth had preached was overlaid, as we have explained, almost from the beginning by the doctrines and ceremonial traditions of an earlier age, and of an intellectually inferior type. Christianity almost from its commencement ceased to be purely prophetic and creative. It entangled itself with archaic traditions of human sacrifice, with Mithraic blood-cleansing, with priestcraft as ancient as human society, and with elaborate doctrines about the structure of the divinity. The gory forefinger of the Etruscan pontifex maximus emphasized the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth; the mental complexity of the Alexandrian Greek entangled them. In the inevitable jangle of these incompatibles the church had become dogmatic. In despair of other solutions to its intellectual discords it had resorted to arbitrary authority. Its priests and bishops were more and more men moulded to creeds and dogmas and set procedures; by the time they became cardinals or popes they were usually oldish men, habituated to a politic struggle for immediate ends and no longer capable of world-wide views. They no longer wanted to see the Kingdom of God established in the hearts of men — they had forgotten about that; they wanted to see the power of the church, which was their own power, dominating men. They were prepared to bargain even with the hates and fears and lusts in men's hearts to ensure that power. And it was just because many of them probably doubted secretly of the entire soundness of their vast and elaborate doctrinal fabric, that they would brook no discussion of it. They were intolerant of questions or dissent, not because they were sure of their faith, but because they were not. They wanted conformity for reasons of policy. By the thirteenth century the church was evidently already morbidly anxious about the gnawing doubts that might presently lay the whole structure of its pretensions in ruins. It had no serenity of soul. It was hunting everywhere for

heretics as timid old ladies are said to look under beds and in cupboards for burglars before retiring for the night.

We have already mentioned (chap, xxxi, § 5) the Persian Mani who was crucified and flayed in the year 277. His way of representing the struggle between good and evil was as a struggle between a power of light which was, as it were, in rebellion against a power of darkness inherent in the universe. All these profound mysteries are necessarily represented by symbols and poetic expressions, and the ideas of Mani still find a response in many intellectual temperaments to-day. One may hear Manichæan doctrines from many Christian pulpits. But the orthodox Catholic symbol was a different one. These Manichæan ideas had spread very widely in Europe, and particularly in Bulgaria and the south of France. In the south of France the people who held them were called the Cathars or Albigenses. Their ideas jarred so little with the essentials of Christianity that they believed themselves to be devout Christians. As a body they lived lives of conspicuous virtue and purity in a violent, undisciplined, and vicious age. But they questioned the doctrinal soundness of Rome and the orthodox interpretation of the Bible. They thought Jesus was a rebel against the cruelty of the God of the Old Testament, and not his harmonious son. Closely associated with the Albigenses were the Waldenses, the followers of a man called Waldo, who seems to have been quite soundly Catholic in his theology, but equally offensive to the church because he denounced the riches and luxury of the clergy. This was enough for the Lateran, and so we have the spectacle of Innocent III preaching a crusade against these unfortunate sectaries, and permitting the enlistment of every wandering scoundrel at loose ends to carry fire and sword and rape and every conceivable outrage among the most peaceful subjects of the King of France. The accounts of the cruelties and abominations of this crusade are far more terrible to read than any account of Christian martyrdoms by the pagans, and they have the added horror of being indisputably true.

This black and pitiless intolerance was an evil spirit to be mixed into the project of a rule of God on earth. This was a spirit entirely

counter to that of Jesus of Nazareth. We do not hear of his smacking the faces or wringing the wrists of recalcitrant or unresponsive disciples. But the Popes during their centuries of power were always raging against the slightest reflection upon the intellectual sufficiency of the church.

And the intolerance of the church was not confined to religious matters. The shrewd, pompous, irascible, and rather malignant old men who manifestly constituted a dominant majority in the councils of the church, resented any knowledge but their own knowledge, and distrusted any thought at all that they did not correct and control. They set themselves to restrain science, of which they were evidently jealous. Any mental activity but their own struck them as being insolent. Later on they were to have a great struggle upon the question of the earth's position in space, and whether it moved round the sun or not. This was really not the business of the church at all. She might very well have left to reason the things that are reason's, but she seems to have been impelled by an inner necessity to estrange the intellectual conscience in men.

Had this intolerance sprung from a real intensity of conviction it would have been bad enough, but it was accompanied by a scarcely disguised contempt for the intelligence and mental dignity of the common man that makes it far less acceptable to our modern judgments, and which no doubt made it far less acceptable to the free spirits of the time. We have told quite dispassionately the policy of the Roman church towards her troubled sister in the East. Many of the tools and expedients she used were abominable. In her treatment of her own people a streak of real cynicism is visible. She destroyed her prestige by disregarding her own teaching of righteousness. Of dispensations we have already spoken (§ 11). Her crowning folly in the sixteenth century was the sale of *indulgences*, whereby the sufferings of the soul in purgatory could be commuted for a money payment. But the spirit that led at last to this shameless and, as it proved, disastrous proceeding, was already very evident in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Long before the seed of criticism that Frederick II had sown had

germinated in men's minds and produced its inevitable crop of rebellion, there was apparent a strong feeling in Christendom that all was not well with the spiritual atmosphere. There began movements, movements that nowadays we should call "revivalist," within the church, that implied rather than uttered a criticism of the sufficiency of her existing methods and organization. Men sought fresh forms of righteous living outside the monasteries and priesthood. One notable figure is that of St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). We cannot tell here in any detail of how this pleasant young gentleman gave up all the amenities and ease of his life and went forth to seek God; the opening of the story is not unlike the early experiences of Gautama Buddha. He had a sudden conversion in the midst of a life of pleasure, and, taking a vow of extreme poverty, he gave himself up to an imitation of the life of Christ, and to the service of the sick and wretched, and more particularly to the service of the lepers, who then abounded in Italy. He was joined by great multitudes of disciples, and so the first Friars of the Franciscan Order came into existence. An order of women devotees was set up beside the original confraternity, and in addition great numbers of men and women were brought into less formal association. He preached, unmolested by the Moslems, be it noted, in Egypt and Palestine, though the Fifth Crusade was then in progress. His relations with the church are still a matter for discussion. His work had been sanctioned by Pope Innocent III, but while he was in the East there was a reconstitution of his order, intensifying its discipline and substituting authority for responsive impulse, and as a consequence of these changes he resigned its headship. To the end he clung passionately to the ideal of poverty, but he was hardly dead before the order was holding property through trustees and building a great church and monastery to his memory at Assisi. The disciplines of the order that were applied after his death to his immediate associates are scarcely to be distinguished from a persecution; several of the more conspicuous zealots for simplicity were scourged, others were imprisoned, one was killed while attempting to escape, and Brother Bernard, the "first disciple," passed a year in the woods and hills, hunted like a wild beast.

This struggle within the Franciscan Order is a very interesting

one, because it foreshadows the great troubles that were coming to Christendom. All through the thirteenth century a section of the Franciscans were straining at the rule of the church, and in 1318 four of them were burnt alive at Marseilles as incorrigible heretics. There seems to have been little difference between the teaching and spirit of St. Francis and that of Waldo in the twelfth century, the founder of the murdered sect of Waldenses. Both were passionately enthusiastic for the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. But while Waldo rebelled against the church, St. Francis did his best to be a good child of the church, and his comment on the spirit of official Christianity was only implicit. But both were instances of an outbreak of conscience against authority and the ordinary procedure of the church. And it is plain that in the second instance, as in the first, the church scented rebellion.

A very different character to St. Francis was the Spaniard St. Dominic (1170-1221), who was, of all things, orthodox. He had a passion for the argumentative conversion of heretics, and he was commissioned by Pope Innocent III to go and preach to the Albigenses. His work went on side by side with the fighting and massacres of the crusade; whom Dominic could not convert, Innocent's crusader slew; yet his very activities and the recognition and encouragement of his order by the Pope witness to the rising tide of discussion, and to the persuasion even of the papacy that force was no remedy. In several respects the development of the Black Friars or Dominicans — the Franciscans were the Grey Friars — shows the Roman church at the parting of the ways, committing itself more and more deeply to organized dogma, and so to a hopeless conflict with the quickening intelligence and courage of mankind. She whose one duty was to lead, chose to compel. The last discourse of St. Dominic to the heretics he had sought to convert is preserved to us. It is a signpost in history. It betrays the fatal exasperation of a man who has lost his faith in the power of truth because *his* truth has not prevailed. "For many years," he said, "I have exhorted you in vain, with gentleness, preaching, praying, and weeping. But according to the proverb of my country, 'where blessing can accomplish nothing, blows may avail.' We shall rouse against you princes and prelates, who, alas! will arm nations and kingdoms against this land ... and

thus blows will avail where blessings and gentleness have been powerless."

The thirteenth century saw the development of a new institution in the church, the papal Inquisition. Before this time it had been customary for the Pope to make occasional inquests or inquiries into heresy in this region or that, but now Innocent III saw in the new order of the Dominicans a powerful instrument of suppression. The Inquisition was organized as a standing inquiry under their direction, and with fire and torment the church set itself, through this instrument, to assail and weaken the human conscience in which its sole hope of world dominion resided. Before the thirteenth century the penalty of death had been inflicted but rarely upon heretics and unbelievers. Now in a hundred market-places in Europe the dignitaries of the church watched the blackened bodies of its antagonists, for the most part poor and insignificant people, burn and sink pitifully, and their own great mission to mankind burn and sink with them into dust and ashes.

The beginnings of the Franciscans and the Dominicans were but two among many of the new forces that were arising in Christendom, either to help or shatter the church, as its own wisdom might decide. Those two orders the church did assimilate and use, though with a little violence in the case of the former. But other forces were more frankly disobedient and critical. A century and a half later came Wycliffe (1320-1384). He was a learned doctor at Oxford; for a time he was Master of Balliol; and he held various livings in the church. Quite late in his life he began a series of outspoken criticisms of the corruption of the clergy and the unwisdom of the church. He organized a number of poor priests, the Wycliffites, to spread his ideas throughout England; and in order that people should judge between the church and himself, he translated the Bible into English. He was a more learned and far abler man than either St. Francis or St. Dominic. He had supporters in high places and a great following among the people; and though Rome raged against him, and ordered his imprisonment, he died a free man, still administering the Sacraments as parish priest of Lutterworth. But the black and ancient spirit that was leading the Catholic church to its destruction would not let his bones rest in his grave. By a decree of the Council of

Constance in 1415, his remains were ordered to be dug up and burnt, an order which was carried out at the command of Pope Martin V by Bishop Fleming in 1428. This desecration was not the act of some isolated fanatic; it was the official act of the church.

§ 14

The history of the papacy is confusing to the general reader because of the multitude and abundance of the Popes. They mostly began to reign as old men, and their reigns were short, averaging less than two years each. But certain of the Popes stand out and supply convenient handles for the student to grasp. Such were Gregory I (590-604) the Great, the first monkish Pope, the friend of Benedict, the sender of the English mission. Other noteworthy Popes are Leo III (795-816), who crowned Charlemagne, the scandalous Popes John XI (931-936) and John XII (955-963), which latter was deposed by the Emperor Otto I, and the great Hildebrand, who ended his days as Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), and who did so much by establishing the celibacy of the clergy, and insisting upon the supremacy of the church over kings and princes, to centralize the power of the church in Rome. The next Pope but one after Gregory VII was Urban II (1087-1099), the Pope of the First Crusade. The period from the time of Gregory VII onward for a century and a half, was the great period of ambition and effort for the church. There was a real sustained attempt to unite all Christendom under a purified and reorganized church.

The setting up of Latin kingdoms in Syria and the Holy Land, in religious communion with Rome, after the First Crusade, marked the opening stage of a conquest of Eastern Christianity by Rome that reached its climax during the Latin rule in Constantinople (1204-1261).

In 1176, at Venice, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (Frederick I) knelt to the Pope Alexander III, recognized his spiritual supremacy, and swore fealty to him. But after the death of Alexander III, in 1181, the peculiar weakness of the papacy, its liability to fall to old and enfeebled men, became manifest. Five Popes tottered to the Lateran to die within the space of ten years. Only with Innocent

III (1198-1216) did another vigorous Pope take up the great policy of the City of God.

Under Innocent III, the guardian of that Emperor Frederick II, whose career we have already studied in §§ 10 and 12, and the five Popes who followed him, the Pope of Rome came nearer to being the monarch of a united Christendom than he had ever been before, and was ever to be again. The empire was weakened by internal dissensions, Constantinople was in Latin hands, from Bulgaria to Ireland and from Norway to Sicily and Jerusalem the Pope was supreme. Yet this supremacy was more apparent than real. For, as we have seen, while in the time of Urban the power of faith was strong in all Christian Europe, in the time of Innocent III the papacy had lost its hold upon the hearts of princes, and the faith and conscience of the common people was turning against a merely political and aggressive church.

The church in the thirteenth century was extending its legal power in the world, and losing its grip upon men's consciences. It was becoming less persuasive and more violent. No intelligent man can tell of this process or read of this process of failure without very mingled feelings. The church had sheltered and formed a new Europe throughout the long ages of European darkness and chaos; it had been the matrix in which the new civilization had been cast. But this new-formed civilization was impelled to grow by its own inherent vitality, and the church lacked sufficient power of growth and accommodation. The time was fast approaching when this matrix was to be broken.

The first striking intimation of the decay of the living and sustaining forces of the papacy appeared when presently the Popes came into conflict with the growing power of the French king. During the lifetime of the Emperor Frederick II, Germany fell into disunion, and the French king began to play the rôle of guard, supporter, and rival to the Pope that had hitherto fallen to the Hohenstaufen emperors. A series of Popes pursued the policy of supporting the French monarchs. French princes were established in the kingdom of Sicily and Naples, with the support and approval of

Rome, and the French kings saw before them the possibility of restoring and ruling the Empire of Charlemagne. When, however, the German interregnum after the death of Frederick II, the last of the Hohenstaufens, came to an end and Rudolf of Habsburg was elected first Habsburg Emperor (1273), the policy of the Lateran began to fluctuate between France and Germany, veering about with the sympathies of each successive Pope. In the East in 1261 the Greeks recaptured Constantinople from the Latin emperors, and the founder of the new Greek dynasty, Michael Palæologus, Michael VIII, after some unreal tentatives of reconciliation with the Pope, broke away from the Roman communion altogether, and with that, and the fall of the Latin kingdoms in Asia, the eastward ascendancy of the Popes came to an end.

In 1294 Boniface VIII became Pope. He was an Italian, hostile to the French, and full of a sense of the great traditions and mission of Rome. For a time he carried things with a high hand. In 1300 he held a jubilee, and a vast multitude of pilgrims assembled in Rome. "So great was the influx of money into the papal treasury, that two assistants were kept busy with rakes collecting the offerings that were deposited at the tomb of St. Peter." But this festival was a delusive triumph. It is easier to raise a host of excursionists than a band of crusaders. Boniface came into conflict with the French king in 1302, and in 1303, as he was about to pronounce sentence of excommunication against that monarch, he was surprised and arrested in his own ancestral palace, at Anagni, by Guillaume de Nogaret. This agent from the French king forced an entrance into the palace, made his way into the bedroom of the frightened Pope — he was lying in bed with a cross in his hands — and heaped threats and insults upon him. The Pope was liberated a day or so later by the townspeople, and returned to Rome; but there he was seized upon and again made prisoner by the Orsini family, and in a few weeks' time the shocked and disillusioned old man died a prisoner in their hands.

The people of Anagni did resent the first outrage, and rose against Nogaret to liberate Boniface, but then Anagni was the Pope's native town. The important point to note is that the French king, in this rough treatment of the head of Christendom, was acting with the full

approval of his people; he had summoned a council of the Three Estates of France (lords, church, and commons) and gained their consent before proceeding to extremities. Neither in Italy, Germany, nor England was there the slightest general manifestation of disapproval at this free handling of the sovereign pontiff. The idea of Christendom had decayed until its power over the minds of men had gone.

Throughout the fourteenth century the papacy did nothing to recover its moral sway. The next Pope elected, Clement V, was a Frenchman, the choice of King Philip of France. He never came to Rome. He set up his court in the town of Avignon, which then belonged not to France, but to the Papal See, though embedded in French territory, and there his successors remained until 1377, when Pope Gregory XI returned to the Vatican palace in Rome. But Gregory XI did not take the sympathies of the whole church with him. Many of the cardinals were of French origin, and their habits and associations were rooted deep at Avignon. When in 1378 Gregory XI died, and an Italian, Urban VI, was elected, these dissentient cardinals declared the election invalid, and elected another Pope, the anti-Pope, Clement VII. This split is called the Great Schism. The Popes remained in Rome, and all the anti-French powers, the Emperor, the King of England, Hungary, Poland, and the North of Europe were loyal to them. The anti-Popes, on the other hand, continued in Avignon, and were supported by the King of France, his ally the King of Scotland, Spain, Portugal, and various German princes. Each Pope excommunicated and cursed the adherents of his rival, so that by one standard or another all Christendom was damned during this time (1378-1417). The lamentable effect of this split upon the solidarity of Christendom it is impossible to exaggerate. Is it any marvel that such men as Wycliffe began to teach men to think on their own account when the fountain of truth thus squirted against itself? In 1417 the Great Schism was healed at the Council of Constance, the same council that dug up and burnt Wycliffe's bones, and which, as we shall tell later, caused the burning of John Huss; at this council, Pope and anti-Pope resigned or were swept aside, and Martin V became the sole Pope of a formally reunited but spiritually very badly strained Christendom.

How later on the Council of Basle (1437) led to a fresh schism, and to further anti-Popes, we cannot relate here.

Such, briefly, is the story of the great centuries of papal ascendancy and papal decline. It is the story of the failure to achieve the very noble and splendid idea of a unified and religious world. We have pointed out in the previous section how greatly the inheritance of a complex dogmatic theology encumbered the church in this its ambitious adventure. It had too much theology, and not enough religion. But it may not be idle to point out here how much the individual insufficiency of the Popes also contributed to the collapse of its scheme and dignity. There was no such level of education in the world as to provide a succession of cardinals and popes with the breadth of knowledge and outlook needed for the task they had undertaken; they were not sufficiently educated for their task, and only a few, by sheer force of genius, transcended that defect. And, as we have already pointed out, they were, when at last they got to power, too old to use it. Before they could grasp the situation they had to control, most of them were dead. It would be interesting to speculate how far it would have tilted the balance in favour of the church if the cardinals had retired at fifty, and if no one could have been elected Pope after fifty-five. This would have lengthened the average reign of each Pope, and enormously increased the continuity of the policy of the church. And it is perhaps possible that a more perfect system of selecting the cardinals, who were the electors and counsellors of the Pope, might have been devised. The rules and ways by which men reach power are of very great importance in human affairs. The psychology of the ruler is a science that has still to be properly studied. We have seen the Roman Republic wrecked, and here we see the church failing in its world mission very largely through ineffective electoral methods.

BOOK VII. THE MONGOL EMPIRES OF THE LAND WAYS AND THE NEW EMPIRES OF THE SEA WAYS

XXXIV

THE GREAT EMPIRE OF JENGIS KHAN AND HIS SUCCESSORS

(The Age of the Land Ways)

§ 1. *Asia at the end of the Twelfth Century.* § 2. *The Rise and Victories of the Mongols.* § 3. *The Travels of Marco Polo.* § 4. *The Ottoman Turks and Constantinople.* § 5. *Why the Mongols were not Christianized.* § 5A. *Kublai Khan founds the Yuan Dynasty.* § 5B. *The Mongols Revert to Tribalism.* § 5C. *The Kipchak Empire and the Tsar of Muscovy.* § 5D. *Timurlane.* § 5E. *The Mongol Empire of India.* § 5F. *The Mongols and the Gipsies.*

§ 1

WE have to tell now of the last and greatest of all the raids of nomadism upon the civilizations of the East and West. We have traced in this history the development side by side of these two ways of living, and we have pointed out that as the civilizations grew more extensive and better organized, the arms, the mobility, and the intelligence of the nomads also improved. The nomad was not simply an uncivilized man, he was a man specialized and specializing along his own line. From the very beginning of history the nomad and the settled people have been in reaction. We have told of the Semitic and Elamite raids upon Sumeria; we have seen the Western empire smashed by the nomads of the great plains and Persia conquered and Byzantium shaken by the nomads of Arabia. Whenever civilization seems to be choking amidst its weeds of wealth and debt and servitude, when its faiths seem rotting into cynicism and its powers of further growth are hopelessly entangled in effete formulæ, the nomad drives in like a plough to break up the festering stagnation and release the world to new beginnings. The Mongol aggression, which began with the thirteenth century, was the greatest, and so far it has been the last, of all these destructive reploughings of human association.

From entire obscurity the Mongols came very suddenly into

history towards the close of the twelfth century. They appeared in the country to the north of China, in the land of origin of the Huns and Turks, and they were manifestly of the same strain as these peoples. They were gathered together under a chief, with whose name we will not tax the memory of the reader; under his son Jengis Khan their power grew with extraordinary swiftness.

The reader will already have an idea of the gradual breaking up of the original unity of Islam. In the beginning of the thirteenth century there were a number of separate and discordant Moslem states in Western Asia. There was Egypt (with Palestine and much of Syria) under the successors of Saladin, there was the Seljuk power in Asia Minor, there was still an Abbasid caliphate in Bagdad, and to the east of this again there had grown up a very considerable empire, the Kharismian empire, that of the Turkish princes from Khiva who had conquered a number of fragmentary Seljuk principalities and reigned from the Ganges Valley to the Tigris. They had but an insecure hold on the Persian and Indian populations.

The state of the Chinese civilization was equally inviting to an enterprising invader. One last glimpse of China in this history was in the seventh century during the opening years of the Tang dynasty, when that shrewd and able emperor Tai-tsung was weighing the

respective merits of Nestorian Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and the teachings of Lao Tse, and on the whole inclining to the opinion that Lao Tse was as good a teacher as any. We have described his reception of the traveller Yuan Chwang. Tai-tsung tolerated all religions, but several of his successors conducted a pitiless persecution of the Buddhist faith; it flourished in spite of these persecutions, and its monasteries played a somewhat analogous part in at first sustaining learning and afterwards retarding it, that the Christian monastic organization did in the West. By the tenth century the great Tang dynasty was in an extreme state of decay; the usual degenerative process through a series of voluptuaries and incapables had gone on, and China broke up again politically into a variable number of contending states, "The age of the Ten States," an age of confusion that lasted through the first half of the tenth century. Then arose a dynasty, the Northern Sung (960-1127), which established a sort of unity, but which was in constant struggle with a number of Hunnish peoples from the north who were pressing down the eastern coast. For a time one of these peoples, the Khitan, prevailed. In the twelfth century these people had been subjugated and had given place to another Hunnish empire, the empire of the Kin, with its capital at Pekin and its southern boundary south of Hwangho. The Sung empire shrank before this Kin empire. In 1138 the capital was shifted from Nankin, which was now too close to the northern frontier, to the city of Han Chau on the coast. From 1127 onward to 1295, the Sung dynasty is known as the Southern Sung. To the northwest of its territories there was now the Tartar empire of the Hsia; to the north, the Kin empire, both states in which the Chinese population was under rulers in whom nomadic traditions were still strong. So that here on the east also the main masses of Asiatic mankind were under uncongenial rulers and ready to accept, if not to welcome, the arrival of a conqueror.

Northern India we have already noted was also a conquered country at the opening of the thirteenth century. It was at first a part of the Khivan empire, but in 1206 an adventurous ruler, Kutub, who had been a slave and who had risen as a slave to be governor of the Indian province, set up a separate Moslem state of Hindustan in Delhi. Brahminism had long since ousted Buddhism from India, but

the converts to Islam were still but a small ruling minority in the land.

Such was the political state of Asia when Jengis Khan began to consolidate his power among the nomads in the country between Lakes Balkash and Baikal in the beginning of the thirteenth century.

§ 2

The career of conquest of Jengis Khan and his immediate successors astounded the world, and probably astounded no one more than these Mongol Khans themselves.

The Mongols were in the twelfth century a tribe subject to those Kin who had conquered Northeast China. They were a horde of nomadic horsemen living in tents, and subsisting mainly upon mare's milk products and meat. Their occupations were pasturage and hunting, varied by war. They drifted northward as the snows melted for summer pasture, and southward to winter pasture after the custom of the steppes. Their military education began with a successful insurrection against the Kin. The empire of Kin had the resources of half China behind it, and in the struggle the Mongols learnt very much of the military science of the Chinese. By the end of the twelfth century they were already a fighting tribe of exceptional quality.

The opening years of the career of Jengis were spent in developing his military machine, in assimilating the Mongols and the associated tribes about them into one organized army. His first considerable extension of power was westward, when the Tartar Kirghis and the Uigurs (who were the Tartar people of the Tarim basin) were not so much conquered as induced to join his organization. He then attacked the Kin empire and took Pekin (1214). The Khitan people, who had been so recently subdued by the Kin, threw in their fortunes with his, and were of very great help to him. The settled Chinese population went on sowing and reaping and trading during this change of masters without lending its weight to either side.

We have already mentioned the very recent Kharismian empire of Turkestan, Persia, and North India. This empire extended eastward to

Kashgar, and it must have seemed one of the most progressive and hopeful empires of the time. Jengis Khan, while still engaged in this war with the Kin empire, sent envoys to Kharismia. They were put to death, an almost incredible stupidity. The Kharismian government, to use the political jargon of to-day, had decided not to "recognize" Jengis Khan, and took this spirited course with him. Thereupon (1218) the great host of horsemen that Jengis Khan had consolidated and disciplined swept over the Pamirs and down into Turkestan. It was well armed, and probably it had some guns and gunpowder for siege work — for the Chinese were certainly using gunpowder at this time, and the Mongols learnt its use from them. Kashgar, Khokand, Bokhara fell and then Samarkand, the capital of the Kharismian empire. Thereafter nothing held the Mongols in the Kharismian territories. They swept westward to the Caspian, and southward as far as Lahore. To the north of the Caspian a Mongol army encountered a Russian force from Kieff. There was a series of battles, in which the Russian armies were finally defeated and the Grand Duke of Kieff taken prisoner. So it was the Mongols appeared on the northern shores of the Black Sea. A panic swept Constantinople, which set itself to reconstruct its fortifications. Meanwhile other armies were engaged in the conquest of the empire of the Hsia in China. This was annexed, and only the southern part of the Kin empire remained unsubdued. In 1227 Jengis Khan died in the midst of a career of triumph. His empire reached already from the Pacific to the Dnieper. And it was an empire still vigorously expanding.

Like all the empires founded by nomads, it was, to begin with, purely a military and administrative empire, a framework rather than a rule. It centred on the personality of the monarch, and its relations with the mass of the populations over which it ruled was simply one of taxation for the maintenance of the horde. But Jengis Khan had called to his aid a very able and experienced administrator of the Kin empire, who was learned in all the traditions and science of the Chinese. This statesman, Yeliu Chutsai, was able to carry on the affairs of the Mongols long after the death of Jengis Khan, and there can be little doubt that he is one of the great political heroes of history. He tempered the barbaric ferocity of his masters, and saved innumerable cities and works of art from destruction. He collected

archives and inscriptions, and when he was accused of corruption, his sole wealth was found to consist of documents and a few musical instruments. To him perhaps quite as much as to Jengis is the efficiency of the Mongol military machine to be ascribed. Under Jengis, we may note further, we find the completest religious toleration established across the entire breadth of Asia.

At the death of Jengis the capital of the new empire was still in the great barbaric town of Karakorum in Mongolia. There an assembly of Mongol leaders elected Ogdai Khan, the son of Jengis, as his successor. The war against the vestiges of the Kin empire was prosecuted until Kin was altogether subdued (1234). The Chinese empire to the south under the Sung dynasty helped the Mongols in this task, so destroying their own bulwark against the universal conquerors. The Mongol hosts then swept right across Asia to Russia (1235), an amazing march. Kieff was destroyed in 1240, and nearly all Russia became tributary to the Mongols. Poland was ravaged, and a mixed army of Poles and Germans was annihilated at the battle of Liegnitz in Lower Silesia in 1241. The Emperor Frederick II does not seem to have made any great efforts to stay the advancing tide.

"It is only recently," says Bury, in his notes to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, "that European history has begun to

understand that the successes of the Mongol army which overran Poland and occupied Hungary in the spring of A.D. 1241 were won by consummate strategy and were not due to a mere overwhelming superiority of numbers. But this fact has not yet become a matter of common knowledge; the vulgar opinion which represents the Tartars as a wild horde carrying all before them solely by their multitude, and galloping through Eastern Europe without a strategic plan, rushing at all obstacles and overcoming them by mere weight, still prevails....

"It was wonderful how punctually and effectually the arrangements of the commander were carried out in operations extending from the Lower Vistula to Transylvania. Such a campaign was quite beyond the power of any European army of the time, and it was beyond the vision of any European commander. There was no general in Europe, from Frederick II downward, who was not a tyro in strategy compared to Subutai. It should also be noticed that the Mongols embarked upon the enterprise with full knowledge of the political situation of Hungary and the condition of Poland — they had taken care to inform themselves by a well-organized system of spies; on the other hand, the Hungarians and Christian powers, like childish barbarians, knew hardly anything about their enemies."

But though the Mongols were victorious at Liegnitz, they did not continue their drive westward. They were getting into woodlands and hilly country, which did not suit their tactics; and so they turned southward and prepared to settle in Hungary, massacring or assimilating the kindred Magyar, even as these had previously massacred and assimilated the mixed Scythians and Avars and Huns before them. From the Hungarian plain they would probably have made raids west and south as the Hungarians had done in the ninth century, the Avars in the seventh and eighth, and the Huns in the fifth. But in Asia the Mongols were fighting a stiff war of conquest against the Sung, and they were also raiding Persia and Asia Minor; Ogdai died suddenly, and in 1242 there was trouble about the succession, and recalled by this, the undefeated hosts of Mongols began to pour back across Hungary and Rumania towards the east.

To the great relief of Europe the dynastic troubles at Karakorum lasted for some years, and this vast new empire showed signs of

splitting up. Mangu Khan became the Great Khan in 1251, and he nominated his brother Kublai Khan as Governor-General of China. Slowly but surely the entire Sung empire was subjugated, and as it was subjugated the eastern Mongols became more and more Chinese in their culture and methods. Tibet was invaded and devastated by Mangu, and Persia and Syria invaded in good earnest. Another brother of Mangu, Hulagu, was in command of this latter war. He turned his arms against the caliphate and captured Bagdad, in which city he perpetrated a massacre of the entire population. Bagdad was still the religious capital of Islam, and the Mongols had become bitterly hostile to the Moslems. This hostility exacerbated the natural discord of nomad and townsman. In 1259 Mangu died, and in 1260 — for it took the best part of a year for the Mongol leaders to gather from the extremities of this vast empire, from Hungary and Syria and Scind and China — Kublai was elected Great Khan. He was already deeply interested in Chinese affairs; he made his capital Pekin instead of Karakorum, and Persia, Syria, and Asia Minor became virtually independent under his brother Hulagu, while the hordes of Mongols in Russia and Asia next to Russia, and various smaller Mongol groups in Turkestan became also practically separate. Kublai died in 1294, and with his death even the titular supremacy of the Great Khan disappeared.

At the death of Kublai there was a main Mongol empire, with Pekin as its capital, including all China and Mongolia; there was a second great Mongol empire, that of Kipchak in Russia; there was a third in Persia, that founded by Hulagu, the Ilkhan empire, to which the Seljuk Turks in Asia Minor were tributary; there was a Siberian state between Kipchak and Mongolia; and another separate state "Great Turkey" in Turkestan. It is particularly remarkable that India beyond the Punjab was never invaded by the Mongols during this period, and that an army under the Sultan of Egypt completely defeated Ketboga, Hulagu's general, in Palestine (1260), and stopped them from entering Africa. By 1260 the impulse of Mongol conquest had already passed its zenith. Thereafter the Mongol story is one of division and decay.

The Mongol dynasty that Kublai Khan had founded in China, the Yuan dynasty, lasted from 1280 until 1368. Later on a recrudescence

of Mongolian energy in Western Asia was destined to create a still more enduring monarchy in India.

§ 3

Now this story of Mongolian conquests is surely the most remarkable in all history. The conquests of Alexander the Great cannot compare with them in extent. And their effect in diffusing and broadening men's ideas, though such things are more difficult to estimate, is at least comparable to the spread of the Hellenic civilization which is associated with Alexander's adventure. For a time all Asia and Western Europe enjoyed an open intercourse; all the roads were temporarily open, and representatives of every nation appeared at the court of Karakorum. The barriers between Europe and Asia set up by the religious feud of Christianity and Islam were lowered. Great hopes were entertained by the papacy for the conversion of the Mongols to Christianity. Their only religion so far had been Shamanism, a primitive paganism. Envoys of the Pope, Buddhist priests from India, Parisian and Italian and Chinese artificers, Byzantine and Armenian merchants, mingled with Arab officials and Persian and Indian astronomers and mathematicians at the Mongol court. We hear too much in history of the campaigns and massacres of the Mongols, and not enough of their indubitable curiosity and zest for learning. Not perhaps as an originative people, but as transmitters of knowledge and method their influence upon the world's history has been enormous. And everything one can learn of the vague and romantic personalities of Jengis or Kublai tends to confirm the impression that these men were built upon a larger scale, and were at least as understanding and creative monarchs as either that flamboyant but egotistical figure Alexander the Great, or that raiser of political ghosts, that energetic but illiterate theologian, Charlemagne.

The missionary enterprises of the papacy in Mongolia ended in failure. Christianity was losing its persuasive power. The Mongols had no prejudice against Christianity; they evidently preferred it at first to Islam; but the missions that came to them were manifestly using the power in the great teachings of Jesus to advance the vast claims of the Pope to world dominion. Christianity so vitiated was not good enough for the Mongol mind. To make the empire of the Mongols part of the kingdom of God might have appealed to them; but not to make it a fief of a group of French and Italian priests, whose claims were as gigantic as their powers and outlook were feeble, who were now the creatures of the Emperor of Germany, now the nominees of the King of France, and now the victims of their own petty spites and vanities. In 1269 Kublai Khan sent a mission to the Pope with the evident intention of finding some common mode of action with Western Christendom. He asked that a hundred men of learning and ability should be sent to his court to establish an understanding. His mission found the Western world popeless, and engaged in one of those disputes about the succession that are so frequent in the history of the papacy. For two years there was no pope at all. When at last a pope was appointed, he despatched two Dominican friars to convert the greatest power in Asia to his rule!

Those worthy men were appalled by the length and hardship of the journey before them, and found an early excuse for abandoning the expedition.

But this abortive mission was only one of a number of attempts to communicate, and always they were feeble and feeble-spirited attempts, with nothing of the conquering fire of the earlier Christian missions. Innocent IV had already sent some Dominicans to Karakorum, and Saint Louis of France had also despatched missionaries and relics by way of Persia; Mangu Khan had numerous Nestorian Christians at his court, and subsequent papal envoys actually reached Pekin. We hear of the appointment of various legates and bishops to the East, but many of these seem to have lost themselves and perhaps their lives before they reached China. There was a papal legate in Pekin in 1346, but he seems to have been a mere papal diplomatist. With the downfall of the Mongolian (Yuan) dynasty (1368), the dwindling opportunity of the Christian missions passed altogether. The house of Yuan was followed by that of Ming, a strongly nationalist Chinese dynasty, at first very hostile to all foreigners. There may have been a massacre of the Christian missions. Until the later days of the Mings (1644) little more is heard of Christianity, whether Nestorian or Catholic, in China. Then a fresh and rather more successful attempt to propagate Catholic Christianity in China was made by the Jesuits, but this second missionary wave reached China by the sea.

In the year 1298 a naval battle occurred between the Genoese and the Venetians, in which the latter were defeated. Among the 7000 prisoners taken by the Genoese was a Venetian gentleman named Marco Polo, who had been a great traveller, and who was very generally believed by his neighbours to be given to exaggeration. He had taken part in that first mission to Kublai Khan, and had gone on when the two Dominicans turned back. While this Marco Polo was a prisoner in Genoa, he beguiled his tedium by talking of his travels to a certain writer named Rusticiano, who wrote them down. We will not enter here into the vexed question of the exact authenticity of Rusticiano's story — we do not certainly know in what language it was written — but there can be no doubt of the general truth of this remarkable narrative, which became enormously popular in the

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with all men of active intelligence. *The Travels of Marco Polo* is one of the great books of history. It opens this world of the thirteenth century, this century which saw the reign of Frederick II and the beginnings of the Inquisition, to our imaginations as no mere historian's chronicle can do. It led directly to the discovery of America.

It begins by telling of the journey of Marco's father, Nicolo Polo, and uncle, Maffeo Polo, to China. These two were Venetian merchants of standing, living in Constantinople, and somewhen about 1260 they went to the Crimea and thence to Kazan; from that place they journeyed to Bokhara, and at Bokhara they fell in with a party of envoys from Kublai Khan in China to his brother Hulagu in Persia. These envoys pressed them to come on to the Great Khan, who at that time had never seen men of the "Latin" peoples. They went on; and it is clear they made a very favourable impression upon Kublai, and interested him greatly in the civilization of Christendom. They were made the bearers of that request for a hundred teachers and learned men, "intelligent men acquainted with the Seven Arts, able to enter into controversy and able clearly to prove to idolaters and other kinds of folk that the Law of Christ was best," to which we have just alluded. But when they returned Christendom was in a phase of confusion, and it was only after a delay of two years that they got their authorization to start for China again in the company of those two faint-hearted Dominicans. They took with them young Marco, and it is due to his presence and the boredom of his subsequent captivity at Genoa that this most interesting experience has been preserved to us.

The three Polos started by way of Palestine and not by the Crimea, as in the previous expedition. They had with them a gold tablet and other indications from the Great Khan that must have greatly facilitated their journey. The Great Khan had asked for some oil from the lamp that burns in the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; and so thither they first went, and then by way of Cilicia into Armenia. They went thus far north because the Sultan of Egypt was raiding the Ilkhan domains at this time. Thence they came by way of Mesopotamia to Ormuz on the Persian Gulf, as if they contemplated a sea voyage. At Ormuz they met merchants from India. For some

reason they did not take ship, but instead turned northward through the Persian deserts, and so by way of Balkh over the Pamir to Kashgar, and by way of Kotan and the Lob Nor (so following in the footsteps of Yuan Chwang) into the Hwangho Valley and on to Pekin. Pekin Polo calls "Cambulac"; Northern China, "Cathay" (= Khitan); and Southern China of the former Sung dynasty, "Manzi." At Pekin was the Great Khan, and they were hospitably entertained. Marco particularly pleased Kublai; he was young and clever, and it is clear he had mastered the Tartar language very thoroughly. He was given an official position and sent on several missions, chiefly in South-west China. The tale he had to tell of vast stretches of smiling and prosperous country, "all the way excellent hostelries for travellers," and "fine vineyards, fields, and gardens," of "many abbeys" of Buddhist monks, of manufactures of "cloth of silk and gold and many fine taffetas," a "constant succession of cities and boroughs," and so on, first roused the incredulity and then fired the imagination of all Europe. He told of Burmah, and of its great armies with hundreds of elephants, and how these animals were defeated by the Mongol bowmen, and also of the Mongol conquest of Pegu. He told of Japan, and greatly exaggerated the amount of gold in that country. And, still more wonderful, he told of Christians and Christian rulers in China, and of a certain "Prester John," John the Priest, who was the "king" of a Christian people. Those people he had not seen. Apparently they were a tribe of Nestorian Tartars in Mongolia. An understandable excitement probably made Rusticiano over-emphasize what must have seemed to him the greatest marvel of the whole story, and Prester John became one of the most stimulating legends of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It encouraged European enterprise enormously to think that far away in China was a community of their co-religionists, presumably ready to welcome and assist them. For three years Marco ruled the city of Yang-chow as governor, and he probably impressed the Chinese inhabitants as being very little more of a foreigner than any Tartar would have been. He may also have been sent on a mission to India. Chinese records mention a certain Polo attached to the imperial council in 1277, a very valuable confirmation of the general truth of the Polo story.

The Polos had taken about three and a half years to get to China. They stayed there upwards of sixteen. Then they began to feel homesick. They were the protégés of Kublai, and possibly they felt that his favours roused a certain envy that might have disagreeable results after his death. They sought his permission to return. For a time he refused it, and then an opportunity occurred. Argon, the Ilkhan monarch of Persia, the grandson of Hulagu, Kublai's brother, had lost his Mongol wife, and on her deathbed had promised not to wed any other woman but a Mongol of her own tribe. He sent ambassadors to Pekin, and a suitable princess was selected, a girl of seventeen. To spare her the fatigues of the caravan route, it was decided to send her by sea with a suitable escort. The "Barons" in charge of her asked for the company of the Polos because these latter were experienced travellers and sage men, and the Polos snatched at this opportunity of getting homeward. The expedition sailed from some port on the east of South China; they stayed long in Sumatra and South India, and they reached Persia after a voyage of two years. They delivered the young lady safely to Argon's successor — for Argon was dead — and she married Argon's son. The Polos then went by Tabriz to Trebizond, sailed to Constantinople, and got back to Venice about 1295. It is related that the returned travellers, dressed in Tartar garb, were refused admission to their own house. It was some time before they could establish their identity. Many people who admitted that, were still inclined to look askance at them as shabby wanderers; and, in order to dispel such doubts, they gave a great feast, and when it was at its height they had their old padded suits brought to them, dismissed the servants, and then ripped open these garments, whereupon an incredible display of "rubies, sapphires, carbuncles, emeralds, and diamonds" poured out before the dazzled company. Even after this, Marco's accounts of the size and population of China were received with much furtive mockery. The wits nicknamed him *Il Milione*, because he was always talking of millions of people and millions of ducats.

Such was the story that raised eyebrows first in Venice and then throughout the Western world. The European literature, and especially the European romance of the fifteenth century, echoes with the names in Marco Polo's story, with Cathay and Cambulac

and the like.

§ 4

These travels of Marco Polo were only the beginning of a very considerable intercourse. That intercourse was to bring many revolutionary ideas and many revolutionary things to Europe, including a greatly extended use of paper and printing from blocks, the almost equally revolutionary use of gunpowder in warfare, and the mariner's compass which was to release the European shipping from navigation by coasting. The popular imagination has always been disposed to ascribe every such striking result to Marco Polo. He has become the type and symbol for all such interchanges. As a matter of fact, there is no evidence that he had any share in these three importations. There were many mute Marco Polos who never met their Rusticianos, and history has not preserved their names. Before we go on, however, to describe the great widening of the mental horizons of Europe that was now beginning, and to which this book of travels was to contribute very materially, it will be convenient first to note a curious side consequence of the great Mongol conquests, the appearance of the Ottoman Turks upon the Dardanelles, and next to state in general terms the breaking up and development of the several parts of the empire of Jengis Khan.

The Ottoman Turks were a little band of fugitives who fled southwesterly before the first invasion of Western Turkestan by Jengis. They made their long way from Central Asia, over deserts and mountains and through alien populations, seeking some new lands in which they might settle. "A small band of alien herdsmen," says Sir Mark Sykes, "wandering unchecked through crusades and counter-crusades, principalities, empires, and states. Where they camped, how they moved and preserved their flocks and herds, where they found pasture, how they made their peace with the various chiefs through whose territories they passed, are questions which one may well ask in wonder."

They found a resting-place at last and kindred and congenial neighbours on the tablelands of Asia Minor among the Seljuk Turks. Most of this country, the modern Anatolia, was now largely Turkish

in speech and Moslem in religion, except that there was a considerable proportion of Greeks, Jews, and Armenians in the town populations. No doubt the various strains of Hittite, Phrygian, Trojan, Lydian, Ionian Greek, Cimmerian, Galatian, and Italian (from the Pergamus times) still flowed in the blood of the people, but they had long since forgotten these ancestral elements. They were indeed much the same blend of ancient Mediterranean dark-whites, Nordic Aryans, Semites and Mongolians as were the inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula, but they believed themselves to be a pure Turanian race, and altogether superior to the Christians on the other side of the Bosphorus.

Gradually the Ottoman Turks became important, and at last dominant among the small principalities into which the Seljuk empire, the empire of "Roum," had fallen. Their relations with the dwindling empire of Constantinople remained for some centuries tolerantly hostile. They made no attack upon the Bosphorus, but they got a footing in Europe at the Dardanelles, and, using this route, the route of Xerxes and not the route of Darius, they pushed their way steadily into Macedonia, Epirus, Illyria, Yugo-Slavia, and Bulgaria. In the Serbs (Yugo-Slavs) and Bulgarians the Turks found people very like themselves in culture and, though neither side recognized it, probably very similar in racial admixture, with a little less of the dark Mediterranean and Mongolian strains than the Turks and a trifle more of the Nordic element. But these Balkan peoples were Christians, and bitterly divided among themselves. The Turks on the other hand spoke one language; they had a greater sense of unity, they had the Moslem habits of temperance and frugality, and they were on the whole better soldiers. They converted what they could of the conquered people to Islam; the Christians they disarmed, and conferred upon them the monopoly of tax-paying. Gradually the Ottoman princes consolidated an empire that reached from the Taurus mountains in the east to Hungary and Roumania in the west. Adrianople became their chief city. They surrounded the shrunken empire of Constantinople on every side.

The Ottomans organized a standing military force, the Janissaries, rather on the lines of the Mamelukes who dominated Egypt. "These troops were formed of levies of Christian youths to the extent of one

thousand per annum, who were affiliated to the Bektashi order of dervishes, and though at first not obliged to embrace Islam, were one and all strongly imbued with the mystic and fraternal ideas of the confraternity to which they were attached. Highly paid, well disciplined, a close and jealous secret society, the Janissaries provided the newly formed Ottoman state with a patriotic force of trained infantry soldiers, which, in an age of light cavalry and hired companies of mercenaries, was an invaluable asset....

"The relations between the Ottoman Sultans and the Emperors has been singular in the annals of Moslem and Christian states. The Turks had been involved in the family and dynastic quarrels of the Imperial City, were bound by ties of blood to the ruling families, frequently supplied troops for the defence of Constantinople, and on occasion hired parts of its garrison to assist them in their various campaigns; the sons of the Emperors and Byzantine statesmen even accompanied the Turkish forces in the field, yet the Ottomans never ceased to annex Imperial territories and cities both in Asia and Thrace. This curious intercourse between the House of Osman and

the Imperial government had a profound effect on both institutions; the Greeks grew more and more debased and demoralized by the shifts and tricks that their military weakness obliged them to adopt towards their neighbours, the Turks were corrupted by the alien atmosphere of intrigue and treachery which crept into their domestic life. Fratricide and parricide, the two crimes which most frequently stained the annals of the Imperial Palace, eventually formed a part of the policy of the Ottoman dynasty. One of the sons of Murad I embarked on an intrigue with Andronicus, the son of the Greek Emperor, to murder their respective fathers....

"The Byzantine found it more easy to negotiate with the Ottoman Pasha than with the Pope. For years the Turks and Byzantines had intermarried, and hunted in couples in strange by-paths of diplomacy. The Ottoman had played the Bulgar and the Serb of Europe against the Emperor, just as the Emperor had played the Asiatic Amir against the Sultan; the Greek and Turkish Royal Princes had mutually agreed to hold each other's rivals as prisoners and hostages; in fact, Turk and Byzantine policy had so intertwined that it is difficult to say whether the Turks regarded the Greeks as their allies, enemies, or subjects, or whether the Greeks looked upon the Turks as their tyrants, destroyers, or protectors...."

It was in 1453, under the Ottoman Sultan, Muhammad II, that Constantinople at last fell to the Moslems. He attacked it from the European side, and with a great power of artillery. The Greek Emperor was killed, and there was much looting and massacre. The great church of Saint Sophia which Justinian the Great had built (532) was plundered of its treasures and turned at once into a mosque. This event sent a wave of excitement throughout Europe, and an attempt was made to organize a crusade, but the days of the crusades were past.

Says Sir Mark Sykes: “To the Turks the capture of Constantinople was a crowning mercy and yet a fatal blow. Constantinople had been the tutor and polisher of the Turks. So long as the Ottomans could draw science, learning, philosophy, art, and tolerance from a living fountain of civilization in the heart of their dominions, so long had the Ottomans not only brute force, but intellectual power. So long as the Ottoman Empire had in Constantinople a free port, a market, a centre of world finance, a pool of gold, an exchange, so long did the Ottomans never lack for money and financial support. Muhammad was a great statesman, the moment he entered Constantinople he endeavoured to stay the damage his ambition had done; he supported the patriarch, he conciliated the Greeks, he did all he could to continue Constantinople the city of the Emperors ... but the fatal step had been taken; Constantinople as the city of the Sultans was Constantinople no more; the markets died away, the culture and civilization fled, the complex finance faded from sight; and the Turks had lost their governors and their support. On the other hand, the corruptions of Byzantium remained, the bureaucracy, the eunuchs, the palace guards, the spies, the bribers, go-betweens — all these the

Ottomans took over, and all these survived in luxuriant life. The Turks, in taking Stambul, let slip a treasure and gained a pestilence....”

Muhammad’s ambition was not sated by the capture of Constantinople. He set his eyes also upon Rome. He captured and looted the Italian town of Otranto, and it is probable that a very vigorous and perhaps successful attempt to conquer Italy — for the peninsula was divided against itself — was averted only by his death (1481). His sons engaged in fratricidal strife. Under Bayezid II (1481-1512), his successor, war was carried into Poland, and most of Greece was conquered. Selim (1512-1520), the son of Bayezid, extended the Ottoman power over Armenia and conquered Egypt. In Egypt, the last Abbasid Caliph was living under the protection of the Mameluke Sultan — for the Fatimite caliphate was a thing of the past. Selim bought the title of Caliph from this last degenerate Abbasid, and acquired the sacred banner and other relics of the Prophet. So the Ottoman Sultan became also Caliph of all Islam. Selim was followed by Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), who conquered Bagdad in the east and the greater part of Hungary in the west, and very nearly captured Vienna. His fleets also took Algiers, and inflicted a number of reverses upon the Venetians. In most of his warfare with the empire he was in alliance with the French. Under him the Ottoman power reached its zenith.

§ 5

Let us now very briefly run over the subsequent development of the main masses of the empire of the Great Khan. In no case did Christianity succeed in capturing the imagination of these Mongol states. Christianity was in a phase of moral and intellectual insolvency, without any collective faith, energy, or honour; we have told of the wretched brace of timid Dominicans which was the Pope’s reply to the appeal of Kublai Khan, and we have noted the general failure of the overland mission of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. That apostolic passion that could win whole nations to the Kingdom of Heaven was dead in the church.

In 1305, as we have told, the Pope became the kept pontiff of the

French king. All the craft and policy of the Popes of the thirteenth century to oust the Emperor from Italy had only served to let in the French to replace him. From 1305 to 1377 the Popes remained at Avignon; and such slight missionary effort as they made was merely a part of the strategy of Western European politics. In 1377 the Pope Gregory XI did indeed re-enter Rome and die there, but the French cardinals split off from the others at the election of his successor, and two Popes were elected, one at Avignon and one at Rome. This split, the Great Schism, lasted from 1378 to 1418. Each Pope cursed the other, and put all his supporters under an interdict. Such was the state of Christianity, and such were now the custodians of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. All Asia was white unto harvest, but there was no effort to reap it.

When at last the church was reunited and missionary energy returned with the foundation of the order of the Jesuits, the days of opportunity were over. The possibility of a world-wide moral unification of East and West through Christianity had passed away. The Mongols in China and Central Asia turned to Buddhism; in South Russia, Western Turkestan, and the Ilkhan Empire they embraced Islam.

§ 5A

In China the Mongols were already saturated with Chinese civilization by the time of Kublai. After 1280 the Chinese annals treat Kublai as a Chinese monarch, the founder of the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368). This Mongol dynasty was finally over-thrown by a Chinese nationalist movement which set up the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), a cultivated and artistic line of emperors, ruling until a northern people, the Manchus, who were the same as the Kin whom Jengis had overthrown, conquered China and established a dynasty which gave way only to a native republican form of government in 1912.

It was the Manchus who obliged the Chinese to wear pig-tails as a mark of submission. The pigtailed Chinaman is quite a recent, and now a vanished figure in history.

§ 5B

In the Pamirs, in much of Eastern and Western Turkestan, and to the north, the Mongols dropped back towards the tribal conditions from which they had been lifted by Jengis. It is possible to trace the dwindling succession of many of the small Kans who became independent during this period, almost down to the present time. The Kalmuks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries founded a considerable empire, but dynastic troubles broke it up before it had extended its power beyond Central Asia. The Chinese recovered Eastern Turkestan from them about 1757.

Tibet was more and more closely linked with China, and became the great home of Buddhism and Buddhist monasticism.

Over most of the area of Western Central Asia and Persia and Mesopotamia, the ancient distinction of nomad and settled population remains to this day. The townsmen despise and cheat the nomads, the nomads ill-treat and despise the townsfolk.

§ 5C

The Mongols of the great realm of Kipchak remained nomadic, and grazed their stock across the wide plains of South Russia and Western Asia adjacent to Russia. They became not very devout Moslems, retaining many traces of their earlier barbaric Shamanism. Their chief Khan was the Khan of the Golden Horde. To the west, over large tracts of open country, and more particularly in what is now known as Ukrainia, the old Scythian population, Slavs with a Mongol admixture, reverted to a similar nomadic life. These Christian nomads, the Cossacks, formed a sort of frontier screen against the Tartars, and their free and adventurous life was so attractive to the peasants of Poland and Lithuania that severe laws had to be passed to prevent a vast migration from the ploughlands to the steppes. The serf-owning landlords of Poland regarded the Cossacks with considerable hostility on this account, and war was as frequent between the Polish chivalry and the Cossacks as it was between the latter and the Tartars.

In the empire of Kipchak, as in Turkestan almost up to the present

time, while the nomads roamed over wide areas, a number of towns and cultivated regions sustained a settled population which usually paid tribute to the nomad Khan. In such towns as Kieff, Moscow, and the like, the pre-Mongol, Christian town life went on under Russian dukes or Tartar governors, who collected the tribute for the Khan of the Golden Horde. The Grand Duke of Moscow gained the confidence of the Khan, and gradually, under his authority, obtained an ascendancy over many of his fellow tributaries. In the fifteenth century, under its grand duke, Ivan III, Ivan the Great (1462-1505), Moscow threw off its Mongol allegiance and refused to pay tribute any longer (1480). The successors of Constantine no longer reigned in Constantinople, and Ivan took possession of the Byzantine double-headed eagle for his arms. He claimed to be the heir to Byzantium because of his marriage (1472) with Zoe Palæologus of the imperial line. This ambitious grand dukedom of Moscow assailed and subjugated the ancient Northman trading republic of Novgorod to the north, and so the foundations of the modern Russian Empire were laid and a link with the mercantile life of the Baltic established. Ivan III did not, however, carry his claim to be the heir of the Christian rulers of Constantinople to the extent of assuming the imperial title. This step was taken by his grandson, Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible, because of his insane cruelties; 1533-1584). Although the ruler of Moscow thus came to be called Tsar (Cæsar), his tradition was in many respects Tartar rather than European; he was autocratic after the unlimited Asiatic pattern, and the form of Christianity he affected was the Eastern, court-ruled, "orthodox" form, which had reached Russia long before the Mongol conquest, by means of Bulgarian missionaries from Constantinople.

To the west of the domains of Kipchak, outside the range of Mongol rule, a second centre of Slav consolidation had been set up during the tenth and eleventh centuries in Poland. The Mongol wave had washed over Poland, but had never subjugated it. Poland was not "orthodox," but Roman Catholic in religion; it used the Latin alphabet instead of the strange Russian letters, and its monarch never assumed an absolute independence of the Emperor. Poland was in fact in its origins an outlying part of Christendom and of the Holy Empire; Russia never was anything of the sort.

§ 5D

The nature and development of the empire of the Ilkhans in Persia, Mesopotamia, and Syria is perhaps the most interesting of all the stories of these Mongol powers, because in this region nomadism really did attempt, and really did to a very considerable degree succeed in its attempt to stamp a settled civilized system out of existence. When Jengis Khan first invaded China, we are told that there was a serious discussion among the Mongol chiefs whether all the towns and settled populations should not be destroyed. To these simple practitioners of the open-air life the settled populations seemed corrupt, crowded, vicious, effeminate, dangerous, and incomprehensible; a detestable human efflorescence upon what would otherwise have been good pasture. They had no use whatever for the towns. The early Franks and the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of South Britain had much the same feeling towards townsmen. But it was only under Hulagu in Mesopotamia that these ideas seem to have been embodied in a deliberate policy. The Mongols here did not only burn and massacre; they destroyed the irrigation system that had endured for at least eight thousand years, and with that the mother civilization of all the Western world came to an end. Since the days of the priest-kings of Sumeria there had been a continuous cultivation in these fertile regions, an accumulation of tradition, a great population, a succession of busy cities, Eridu, Nippur, Babylon, Nineveh, Ctesiphon, Bagdad. Now the fertility ceased. Mesopotamia became a land of ruins and desolation, through which great waters ran to waste, or overflowed their banks to make malarious swamps. Later on Mosul and Bagdad revived feebly as second-rate towns....

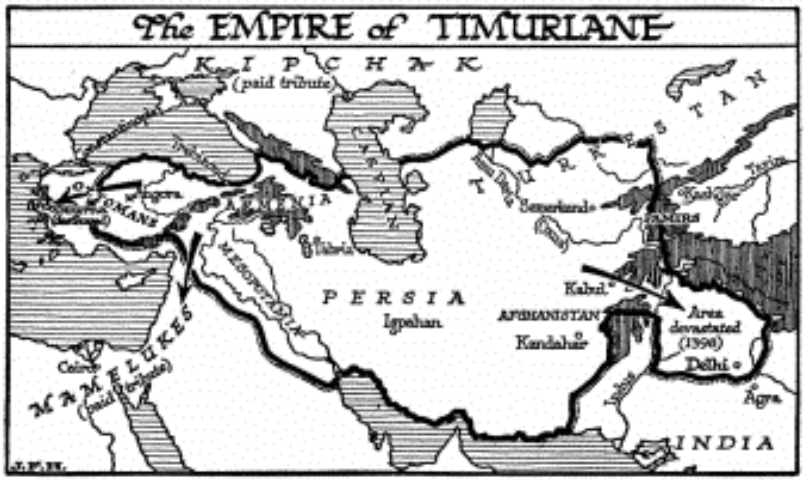

But for the defeat and death of Hulagu's general Kitboga in Palestine (1260), the same fate might have overtaken Egypt. But Egypt was now a Turkish sultanate; it was dominated by a body of soldiers, the Mamelukes, whose ranks, like those of their imitators, the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire, were recruited and kept vigorous by the purchase and training of boy slaves. A capable Sultan such men would obey; a weak or evil one they would replace. Under this ascendancy Egypt remained an independent power until 1517, when it fell to the Ottoman Turks.

The first destructive vigour of Hulagu's Mongols soon subsided, but in the fifteenth century a last tornado of nomadism arose in Western Turkestan under the leadership of a certain Timur the Lame, or Timurlane. He was descended in the female line from Jengis Khan. He established himself in Samarkand, and spread his authority over Kipchak (Turkestan to South Russia), Siberia, and southward as far as the Indus. He assumed the title of Great Khan in 1369. He was a nomad of the savage school, and he created an empire of desolation from North India to Syria. Pyramids of skulls were his particular architectural fancy; after the storming of Ispahan he made one of 70,000. His ambition was to restore the empire of Jengis Khan as he conceived it, a project in which he completely failed. He spread destruction far and wide; the Ottoman Turks — it was before the taking of Constantinople and their days of greatness — and Egypt

paid him tribute; the Punjab he devastated; and Delhi surrendered to him. After Delhi had surrendered, however, he made a frightful massacre of its inhabitants. At the time of his death (1405) very little remained to witness to his power but a name of horror, ruins, and desolated countries, and a shrunken and impoverished domain in Persia.

The dynasty founded by Timur in Persia was extinguished by another Turkoman horde fifty years later.

§ 5E

In 1505 a small Turkoman chieftain, Baber, a descendant of Timur and therefore of Jengis, was forced after some years of warfare and some temporary successes — for a time he held Samarkand — to fly with a few followers over the Hindu Kush to Afghanistan. There his band increased, and he made himself master of Cabul. He assembled an army, accumulated guns, and then laid claim to the Punjab, because Timur had conquered it a hundred and seven years before. He pushed his successes beyond the Punjab. India was in a state of division, and quite ready to welcome any capable invader who promised peace and order. After various fluctuations of fortune Baber met the Sultan of Delhi at Panipat (1525), ten miles north of that town, and though he had but 25,000 men, provided, however, with guns, against a thousand elephants and four times as many men — the numbers, by the by, are his own estimate — he gained a complete victory. He ceased to call himself King of Cabul, and assumed the title of Emperor of Hindustan. “This,” he wrote, “is quite a different world from our countries.” It was finer, more fertile, altogether richer. He conquered as far as Bengal, but his untimely death in 1530 checked the tide of Mongol conquest for a quarter of a century, and it was only after the accession of his grandson Akbar that it flowed again. Akbar subjugated all India as far as Berar, and his great-grandson Aurungzeb (1658-1707) was practically master of the entire peninsula. This great dynasty of Baber (1526-1530), Humayun (1530-1556), Akbar (1556-1605), Jehangir (1605-1628), Shah Jehan (1628-1658), and Aurungzeb (1658-1707), in which son succeeded father for six generations, this “Mogul (= Mongol)

dynasty," marks the most splendid age that had hitherto dawned upon India. Akbar next perhaps to Asoka, was one of the greatest of Indian monarchs, and one of the few royal figures that approach the stature of great men.

To Akbar it is necessary to give the same distinctive attention that we have shown to Charlemagne or Constantine the Great. He is one of the hinges of history. Much of his work of consolidation and organization in India survives to this day. It was taken over and continued by the British when they became the successors of the Mogul emperors. The British monarch, indeed, now uses as his Indian title the title of the Mogul emperors, *Kaisar-i-Hind*. All the other great administrations of the descendants of Jengis Khan, in Russia, throughout Western and Central Asia and in China, have long since dissolved away and given place to other forms of government. Their governments were indeed little more than taxing governments; a system of revenue-collecting to feed the central establishment of the ruler, like the Golden Horde in South Russia or the imperial city at Karakorum or Pekin. The life and ideas of the people they left alone, careless how they lived — so long as they paid. So it was that after centuries of subjugation, a Christian Moscow and Kieff, a Shiite Persia, and a thoroughly Chinese China rose again from their Mongol submergence. But Akbar made a new India. He gave the princes and ruling classes of India some inklings at least of a common interest. If India is now anything more than a sort of rag-bag of incoherent states and races, a prey to every casual raider from the north, it is very largely due to him.

His distinctive quality was his openness of mind. He set himself to make every sort of able man in India, whatever his race or religion, available for the public work of Indian life. His instinct was the true statesman's instinct for synthesis. His empire was to be neither a Moslem nor a Mongol one, nor was it to be Rajput or Aryan, or Dravidian, or Hindu, or high or low caste; it was to be *Indian*. "During the years of his training he enjoyed many opportunities of noting the good qualities, the fidelity, the devotion, often the nobility of soul, of those Hindu princes, whom, because they were followers of Brahma, his Moslem courtiers devoted mentally to eternal torments. He noted that these men, and men who

thought like them, constituted the vast majority of his subjects. He noted, further, of many of them, and those the most trustworthy, that though they had apparently much to gain from a worldly point of view by embracing the religion of the court, they held fast to their own. His reflective mind, therefore, was unwilling from the outset to accept the theory that because he, the conqueror, the ruler, happened to be born a Muhammadan, therefore Muhammadanism was true for all mankind. Gradually his thoughts found words in the utterance: 'Why should I claim to guide men before I myself am guided?' and, as he listened to other doctrines and other creeds, his honest doubts became confirmed, and, noting daily the bitter narrowness of sectarianism, no matter of what form of religion, he became more and more wedded to the principle of toleration for all."

"The son of a fugitive emperor," says Dr. Emil Schmit, "born in the desert, brought up in nominal confinement, he had known the bitter side of life from his youth up. Fortune had given him a powerful frame, which he trained to support the extremities of exertion. Physical exercise was with him a passion; he was devoted to the chase and especially to the fierce excitement of catching the wild horse or elephant or slaying the dangerous tiger. On one occasion, when it was necessary to dissuade the Raja of Jodhpore to abandon his intention of forcing the widow of his deceased son to mount the funeral pyre, Akbar rode two hundred and twenty miles in two days. In battle he displayed the utmost bravery. He led his troops in person during the dangerous part of a campaign, leaving to his generals the lighter task of finishing the war. In every victory he displayed humanity to the conquered, and decisively opposed any exhibition of cruelty. Free from all these prejudices which separate society and create dissension, tolerant to men of other beliefs, impartial to men of other races, whether Hindu or Dravidian, he was a man obviously marked out to weld the conflicting elements of his kingdom into a strong and prosperous whole.

"In all seriousness he devoted himself to the work of peace. Moderate in all pleasures, needing but little sleep and accustomed to divide his tune with the utmost accuracy, he found leisure to devote himself to science and art after the completion of his State duties. The famous personages and scholars who adorned the capital he had

built for himself at Fatehpur-Sikri were at the same time his friends; every Thursday evening a circle of these was collected for intellectual conversation and philosophical discussion. His closest friends were two highly talented brothers, Faizi and Abul Fazl, the sons of a learned free-thinker. The elder of these was a famous scholar in Hindu literature; with his help, and under his direction, Akbar had the most important of the Sanskrit works translated into Persian. Fazl, on the other hand, who was an especially close friend of Akbar, was a general, a statesman, and an organizer, and to his activity Akbar's kingdom chiefly owed the solidarity of its internal organization."

(Such was the quality of the circle that used to meet in the palaces of Fatehpur-Sikri, buildings which still stand in the Indian sunlight — but empty now and desolate. Fatehpur-Sikri, like the city of Ambar, is now a dead city. A few years ago the child of a British official was killed by a panther in one of its silent streets.)

All this that we have quoted reveals a pre-eminent monarch. But Akbar, like all men, great or petty, lived within the limitations of his period and its circles of ideas. And a Turkoman, ruling in India, was necessarily ignorant of much that Europe had been painfully learning for a thousand years. He knew nothing of the growth of a popular consciousness in Europe, and little or nothing of the wide educational possibilities that the church had been working out in the West. His upbringing in Islam and his native genius made it plain to him that a great nation in India could only be cemented by common ideas upon a religious basis, but the knowledge of how such a solidarity could be created and sustained by universal schools, cheap books, and a university system at once organized and free to think, to which the modern state is still feeling its way, was as impossible to him as a knowledge of steamboats or aeroplanes. The form of Islam he knew best was the narrow and fiercely intolerant form of the Turkish Sunnites. The Moslems were only a minority of the population. The problem he faced was indeed very parallel to the problem of Constantine the Great. But it had peculiar difficulties of its own. He never got beyond an attempt to adapt Islam to a wider appeal by substituting for "There is one God, and Muhammad is his prophet," the declaration, "There is one God, and the Emperor is his

vice-regent." This he thought might form a common platform for every variety of faith in India, that kaleidoscope of religions. With this faith he associated a simple ritual borrowed from the Persian Zoroastrians (the Parsees) who still survived, and survive to-day, in India. This new state religion, however, died with him, because it had no roots in the minds of the people about him.

The essential factor in the organization of a living state, the world is coming to realize, is the organization of an education. This Akbar never understood. And he had no class of men available who would suggest such an idea to him or help him to carry it out. The Moslem teachers in India were not so much teachers as conservators of an intense bigotry; they did not want a common mind in India, but only a common intolerance in Islam. The Brahmins, who had the monopoly of teaching among the Hindus, had all the conceit and slackness of hereditary privilege. Yet though Akbar made no general educational scheme for India, he set up a number of Moslem and Hindu schools. He knew less and he did more for India in these matters than the British who succeeded him. Some of the British viceroys have aped his magnificence, his costly tents and awnings, his palatial buildings and his elephants of state, but none have gone far enough beyond the political outlook of this mediæval Turkoman to attempt that popular education which is an absolute necessity to India before she can play her fitting part in the commonweal of mankind.

§ 5F

A curious side result of these later Mongol perturbations, those of the fourteenth century of which Timurlane was the head and centre, was the appearance of drifting batches of a strange refugee Eastern people in Europe, the Gipsies. They appeared somewhen about the end of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries in Greece, where they were believed to be Egyptians (hence Gipsy), a very general persuasion which they themselves accepted and disseminated. Their leaders, however, styled themselves "Counts of Asia Minor." They had probably been drifting about Western Asia for some centuries before the massacres of Timurlane drove them over the Hellespont.

They may have been dislodged from their original homeland — as the Ottoman Turks were — by the great cataclysm of Jengis or even earlier. They had drifted about as the Ottoman Turks had drifted about, but with less good fortune. They spread slowly westward across Europe, strange fragments of nomadism in a world of plough and city, driven off their ancient habitat of the Bactrian steppes to harbour upon European commons and by hedgerows and in wild woodlands and neglected patches. The Germans called them "Hungarians" and "Tartars," the French, "Bohemians." They do not seem to have kept the true tradition of their origin, but they have a distinctive language which indicates their lost history; it contains many North Indian words, and is probably in its origin North India. There are also considerable Armenian and Persian elements in their speech. They are found in all European countries to-day; they are tinkers, pedlars, horse-dealers, showmen, fortune-tellers, and beggars. To many imaginative minds their wayside encampments, with their smoking fires, their rounded tents, their hobbled horses, and their brawl of sunburnt children, have a very strong appeal. Civilization is so new a thing in history, and has been for most of the time so very local a thing, that it has still to conquer and assimilate most of our instincts to its needs. In most of us, irked by its conventions and complexities, there stirs the nomad strain. We are but half-hearted home-keepers. The blood in our veins was brewed on the steppes as well as on the ploughlands.

XXXV

THE RENASCENCE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

(Land Ways Give Place to Sea Ways)

§ 1. *Christianity and Popular Education.* § 2. *Europe begins to Think for Itself.* § 3. *The Great Plague and the Dawn of Communism.* § 4. *How Paper Liberated the Human Mind.* § 5. *Protestantism of the Princes and Protestantism of the Peoples.* § 6. *The Reawakening of Science.* § 7. *The New Growth of European Towns.* § 8. *America Comes into History.* § 9. *What Machiavelli Thought of the World.* § 10. *The Republic of Switzerland.* § 11A. *The Life of the Emperor Charles V.* § 11B. *Protestants if the Prince Wills it.* § 11C. *The Intellectual Under-tow.*

§ 1

JUDGED by the map, the three centuries from the beginning of the thirteenth to the end of the fifteenth century were an age of recession for Christendom. These centuries were the Age of the Mongolian peoples. Nomadism from Central Asia dominated the known world. At the crest of this period there were rulers of Mongol or the kindred Turkish race and nomadic tradition in China, India, Persia, Egypt, North Africa, the Balkan Peninsula, Hungary, and Russia. The Ottoman Turk had even taken to the sea, and fought the Venetian upon his own Mediterranean waters. In 1529 the Turks besieged Vienna, and were defeated rather by the weather than by the defenders. The Habsburg empire of Charles V paid the Sultan tribute. It was not until the battle of Lepanto in 1571, the battle in which Cervantes, the author of Don Quixote, lost his left arm, that Christendom, to use his words, "broke the pride of the Osmans and undeceived the world which had regarded the Turkish fleet as invincible." The sole region of Christian advance was Spain. A man of foresight surveying the world in the early sixteenth century might well have concluded that it was only a matter of a few generations before the whole world became Mongolian — and probably Moslem.

Just as to-day most people seem to take it for granted that European rule and a sort of liberal Christianity are destined to spread over the whole world. Few people seem to realize how recent a thing is this European ascendancy. It was only as the fifteenth century drew to its close that any indications of the real vitality of Western Europe became clearly apparent.

Our history is now approaching our own times, and our study becomes more and more a study of the existing state of affairs. The European or Europeanized system in which the reader is living is the same system that we see developing in the crumpled-up, Mongol-threatened Europe of the early fifteenth century. Its problems then were the embryonic form of the problems of to-day. It is impossible to discuss that time without discussing our own time. We become political in spite of ourselves. “Politics without history has no root,” said Sir J. R. Seeley; “history without politics has no fruit.”

Let us try, with as much detachment as we can achieve, to discover what the forces were that were dividing and holding back the energies of Europe during this tremendous outbreak of the Mongol peoples, and how we are to explain the accumulation of mental and physical energy that undoubtedly went on during this phase of apparent retrocession, and which broke out so impressively at its close.

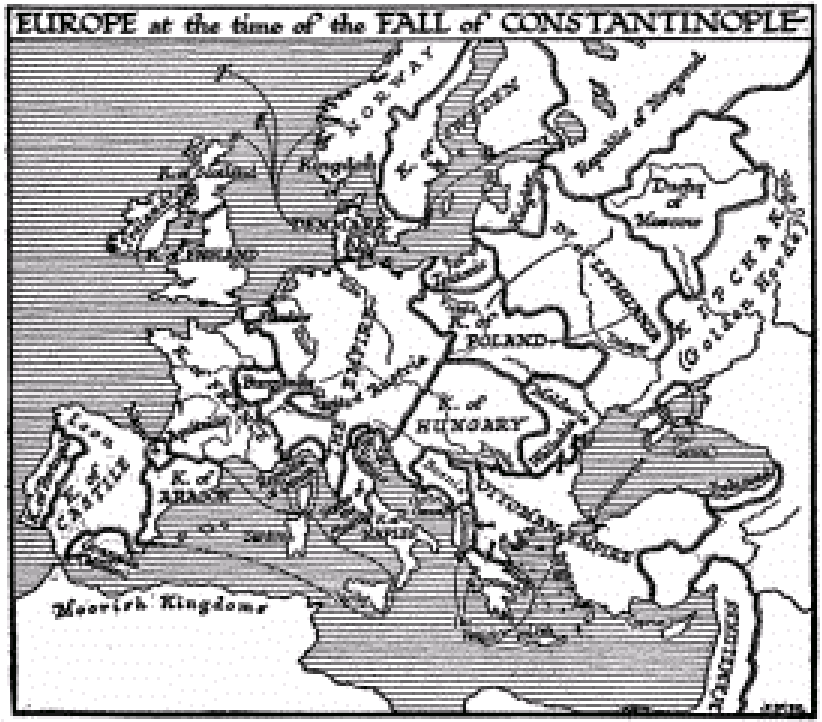

Now, just as in the Mesozoic Age, while the great reptiles lorded it over the earth, there were developing in odd out-of-the-way corners those hairy mammals and feathered birds who were finally to supersede that tremendous fauna altogether by another far more versatile and capable, so in the limited territories of Western Europe of the Middle Ages, while the Mongolian monarchies dominated the world from the Danube to the Pacific and from the Arctic seas to Madras and Morocco and the Nile, the fundamental lines of a new and harder and more efficient type of human community were being laid down. This type of community, which is still only in the phase of formation, which is still growing and experimental, we may perhaps speak of as the "modern state." This is, we must recognize, a vague expression, but we shall endeavour to get meaning into it as we proceed. We have noted the appearance of its main root ideas in the Greek republics and especially in Athens, in the great Roman republic, in Judaism, in Islam, and in the story of Western Catholicism. Essentially this modern state, as we see it growing

under our eyes to-day, is a tentative combination of two apparently contradictory ideas, the idea of a *community of faith and obedience*, such as the earliest civilizations undoubtedly were, and the idea of a *community of will*, such as were the primitive political groupings of the Nordic and Hunnish peoples. For thousands of years the settled civilized peoples, who were originally in most cases dark-white Caucasians, or Dravidian or Southern Mongolian peoples, seem to have developed their ideas and habits along the line of worship and personal subjection, and the nomadic peoples theirs along the line of personal self-reliance and self-assertion. Naturally enough under the circumstances the nomadic peoples were always supplying the civilizations with fresh rulers and new aristocracies. That is the rhythm of all early history. It was only after thousands of years of cyclic changes between refreshment by nomadic conquest, civilization, decadence, and fresh conquest that the present process of a mutual blending of "civilized" and "free" tendencies into a new type of community, that now demands our attention and which is the substance of contemporary history, began.

We have traced in this history the slow development of larger and larger "civilized" human communities from the days of such a Palæolithic family tribe as that described in Chapter IX. We have seen how the advantages and necessities of cultivation, the fear of tribal gods, the ideas of the priest-king and the god-king, played their part in consolidating continually larger and more powerful societies in regions of maximum fertility. We have watched the interplay of priest, who was usually native, and monarch, who was usually a conqueror, in these early civilizations, the development of a written tradition and its escape from priestly control, and the appearance of novel forces, at first apparently incidental and secondary, which we have called the free intelligence and the free conscience of mankind. We have seen the rulers of the primitive civilizations of the river valleys widening their area and extending their sway, and simultaneously over the less fertile areas of the earth we have seen mere tribal savagery develop into a more and more united and politically competent nomadism. Steadily and divergently mankind pursued one or other of these two lines. For long ages all the civilizations grew and developed along monarchist lines, upon lines

of absolute monarchy, and in every monarchy and dynasty we have watched, as if it were a necessary process, efficiency and energy give way to pomp, indolence, and decay, and finally succumb to some fresher lineage from the desert or the steppe. The story of the early cultivating civilizations and their temples and courts and cities bulks large in human history, but it is well to remember that the scene of that story was never more than a very small part of the land surface of the globe. Over the greater part of the earth until quite recently, until the last two thousand years, the hardier, less numerous tribal peoples of forest and parkland and the nomadic peoples of the seasonal grasslands maintained and developed their own ways of life.

The primitive civilizations were, we may say, "communities of obedience"; obedience to god-kings or kings under gods was their cement; the nomadic tendency on the other hand has always been towards a different type of association which we shall here call a "community of will." In a wandering, fighting community the individual must be at once self-reliant and disciplined. The chiefs of such communities must be chiefs who are followed, not masters who compel. This community of will is traceable throughout the entire history of mankind; everywhere we find the original disposition of all the nomads alike, Nordic, Semitic, or Mongolian, was individually more *willing* and more *erect* than that of the settled folk. The Nordic peoples came into Italy and Greece under leader kings; they did not bring any systematic temple cults with them, they found such things in the conquered lands and adapted as they adopted them. The Greeks and Latins lapsed very easily again into republics, and so did the Aryans in India. There was a tradition of election also in the early Frankish and German kingdoms. The early Caliphs were elected, the Judges of Israel and the "kings" of Carthage and Tyre were elected, and so was the Great Khan of the Mongols until Kublai became a Chinese monarch.... Equally constant in the settled lands do we find the opposite idea, the idea of a non-elective divinity in kings and of their natural and inherent right to rule.... As our history has developed we have noted the appearance of new and complicating elements in the story of human societies; we have seen that nomad turned go-between, the trader, appear, and we have noted the growing importance of shipping in the world. It seems as inevitable

that voyaging should make men free in their minds as that settlement within a narrow horizon should make men timid and servile.... But in spite of all such complications, the broad antagonism between the method of obedience and the method of will runs through history down into our own times. To this day their reconciliation is incomplete.

Civilization even in its most servile forms has always offered much that is enormously attractive, convenient, and congenial to mankind; but something restless and untamed in our race has striven continually to convert civilization from its original reliance upon unparticipating obedience into a community of participating wills. And to the lurking nomadism in our blood, and particularly in the blood of monarchs and aristocracies, we must ascribe also that incessant urgency towards a wider range that forces every state to extend its boundaries if it can, and to spread its interests to the ends of the earth. The power of nomadic restlessness that tends to bring all the earth under one rule, seems to be identical with the spirit that makes most of us chafe under direction and restraint, and seek to participate in whatever government we tolerate. And this natural, this temperamental struggle of mankind to reconcile civilization with freedom has been kept alive age after age by the military and political impotence of every "community of obedience" that has ever existed. Obedience, once men are broken to it, can be easily captured and transferred; witness the passive rôle of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India, the original and typical lands of submission, the "cradles of civilization," as they have passed from one lordship to another. A servile civilization is a standing invitation to predatory free men. But on the other hand a "community of will" necessitates a fusion of intractable materials; it is a far harder community to bring about, and still more difficult to maintain. The story of Alexander the Great displays the community of will of the Macedonian captains gradually dissolving before his demand that they should worship him. The incident of the murder of Clitus is quite typical of the struggle between the free and the servile tradition that went on whenever a new conqueror from the open lands and the open air found himself installed in the palace of an ancient monarchy.

In the case of the Roman Republic, history tells of the first big

community of will in the world's history, the first free community much larger than a city, and how it weakened with growth and spent itself upon success until at last it gave way to a monarchy of the ancient type, and decayed swiftly into one of the feeblest communities of servitude that ever collapsed before a handful of invaders. We have given some attention in this book to the factors in that decay, because they are of primary importance in human history. One of the most evident was the want of any wide organization of education to base the ordinary citizens' minds upon the idea of service and obligation to the republic, to keep them *willing*, that is; another was the absence of any medium of general information to keep their activities in harmony, to enable them to *will* as one body. The community of will is limited in size by the limitations set upon the possibilities of a community of knowledge. The concentration of property in a few hands and the replacement of free workers by slaves were rendered possible by the decay of public spirit and the confusion of the public intelligence that resulted from these limitations. There was, moreover, no efficient religious idea behind the Roman state; the dark Etruscan liver-peering cult of Rome was as little adapted to the political needs of a great community as the very similar Shamanism of the Mongols. It is in the fact that both Christianity and Islam, in their distinctive ways, did at least promise to supply, for the first time in human experience, this patent gap in the Roman republican system as well as in the nomadic system, to give a common moral education for a mass of people, and to supply them with a common history of the past and a common idea of a human purpose and destiny, that their enormous historical importance lies. Aristotle, as we have noted, had set a limit to the ideal community of a few thousand citizens, because he could not conceive how a larger multitude could be held together by a common idea. He had had no experience of any sort of education beyond the tutorial methods of his time. Greek education was almost purely *viva-voce* education; it could reach therefore only to a limited aristocracy. Both the Christian church and Islam demonstrated the unsoundness of Aristotle's limitation. We may think they did their task of education in their vast fields of opportunity crudely or badly, but the point of interest to us is that they did it at all. Both sustained

almost world-wide propagandas of idea and inspiration. Both relied successfully upon the power of the written word to link great multitudes of diverse men together in common enterprises. By the eleventh century, as we have seen, the idea of Christendom had been imposed upon all the vast warring miscellany of the smashed and pulverized Western empire, and upon Europe far beyond its limits, as a uniting and inspiring idea. It had made a shallow but effective community of will over an unprecedented area and out of an unprecedented multitude of human beings. Only one other thing at all like this had ever happened to any great section of mankind before, and that was the idea of a community of good behaviour that the *literati* had spread throughout China.

The Catholic Church provided what the Roman Republic had lacked, a system of popular teaching, a number of universities and methods of intellectual inter-communication. By this achievement it opened the way to the new possibilities of human government that now become apparent in this *Outline*, possibilities that are still being apprehended and worked out in the world in which we are living. Hitherto the government of states had been either authoritative, under some uncriticized and unchallenged combination of priest and monarch, or it had been a democracy, uneducated and uninformed, degenerating with any considerable increase of size, as Rome and Athens did, into a mere rule by mob and politician. But by the thirteenth century the first intimations had already dawned of an ideal of government which is still making its way to realization, the modern ideal, the ideal of a world-wide *educational government*, in which the ordinary man is neither the slave of an absolute monarch nor of a demagogue-ruled state, but an informed, inspired, and consulted part of his community. It is upon the word educational that stress must be laid, and upon the idea that information must precede consultation. It is in the practical realization of this idea that education is a collective function and not a private affair that one essential distinction of the "modern state" from any of its precursors lies. The modern citizen, men are coming to realize, must be informed first and then consulted. Before he can vote he must hear the evidence; before he can decide he must know. It is not by setting up polling booths, but by setting up schools and making literature

and knowledge and news universally accessible that the way is opened from servitude and confusion to that willingly co-operative state which is the modern ideal. Votes in themselves are worthless things. Men had votes in Italy in the time of the Gracchi. Their votes did not help them. Until a man has education, a vote is a useless and dangerous thing for him to possess. The ideal community towards which we move is not a community of will simply; it is *a community of knowledge and will*, replacing *a community of faith and obedience*. Education is the adapter which will make the nomadic spirit of freedom and self-reliance compatible with the co-operations and wealth and security of civilization.

§ 2

But though it is certain that the Catholic Church, through its propagandas, its popular appeals, its schools and universities, opened up the prospect of the modern educational state in Europe, it is equally certain that the Catholic Church never intended to do anything of the sort. It did not send out knowledge with its blessing; it let it loose inadvertently. It was not the Roman Republic whose heir the Church esteemed itself, but the Roman Emperor. Its conception of education was not release, not an invitation to participate, but the subjugation of minds. Two of the greatest educators of the Middle Ages were indeed not churchmen at all, but monarchs and statesmen, Charlemagne and Alfred the Great of England, who made use of the church organization. But it was the church that had provided the organization. Church and monarchs in their mutual grapple for power were both calling to their aid the thoughts of the common man. In response to these conflicting appeals appeared the common man, the unofficial outside independent man, thinking for himself.

Already in the thirteenth century we have seen Pope Gregory IX and the Emperor Frederick II engaging in a violent public controversy. Already then there was a sense that a new arbitrator greater than pope or monarchy had come into the world, that there were readers and a public opinion. The exodus of the Popes to Avignon, and the divisions and disorders of the Papacy during the

fourteenth century, stimulated this free judgment upon authority throughout Europe enormously.

At first the current criticism upon the church concerned only moral and material things. The wealth and luxury of the higher clergy and the heavy papal taxation were the chief grounds of complaint. And the earlier attempts to restore Christian simplicity, the foundation of the Franciscans for example, were not movements of separation, but movements of revival. Only later did a deeper and more distinctive criticism develop which attacked the central fact of the church's teaching and the justification of priestly importance, namely, the sacrifice of the mass.

We have sketched in broad outlines the early beginnings of Christianity, and we have shown how rapidly that difficult and austere conception of the Kingdom of God, which was the central idea of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, was overlaid by a revival of the ancient sacrificial idea, a doctrine more difficult indeed to grasp, but easier to reconcile with the habits and dispositions and acquiescences of everyday life in the Near East. We have noted how a sort of theocrasia went on between Christianity and Judaism and the cult of the Serapeum and Mithraism and other competing cults, by which the Mithraist Sun-day, the Jewish idea of blood as a religious essential, the Alexandrian importance of the Mother of God, the shaven and fasting priest, self-tormenting asceticism, and many other matters of belief and ritual and practice, became grafted upon the developing religion. These adaptations, no doubt, made the new teaching much more understandable and acceptable in Egypt and Syria and the like. There were things in the way of thought of the dark-white Mediterranean race; they were congenial to that type. But as we have shown in our story of Muhammad, these acquisitions did not make Christianity more acceptable to the Arab nomads; to them these features made it disgusting. And so, too, the robed and shaven monk and nun and priest seem to have roused something like an instinctive hostility in the Nordic barbarians of the North and West. We have noted the peculiar bias of the early Anglo-Saxons and Northmen against the monks and nuns. They seem to have felt that the lives and habits of these devotees were queer and unnatural.

The clash between what we may call the "dark-white" factors and

the newer elements in Christianity was no doubt intensified by Pope Gregory VII's imposition of celibacy upon the Catholic priests in the eleventh century. The East had known religious celibates for thousands of years; in the West they were regarded with the profoundest scepticism and suspicion.

And now in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as the lay mind of the Nordic peoples began to acquire learning, to read and write and express itself, and as it came into touch with the stimulating activities of the Arab mind, we find a much more formidable criticism of Catholicism beginning, an intellectual attack upon the priest as priest, and upon the ceremony of the mass as the central fact of the religious life, coupled with a demand for a return to the personal teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

We have already mentioned the career of the Englishman Wycliffe (*c.* 1320-1384), and how he translated the Bible into English in order to set up a counter authority to that of the Pope. He denounced the doctrines of the church about the mass as disastrous error, and particularly the teaching that the consecrated bread eaten in that ceremony becomes in some magical way the actual body of Christ. We will not pursue the question of transubstantiation, as this process of the mystical change of the elements in the sacrament is called, into its intricacies. These are matters for the theological specialist. But it will be obvious that any doctrine, such as the Catholic doctrine, which makes the consecration of the elements in the sacrament a miraculous process performed by the priest, and only to be performed by the priest, and which makes the sacrament the central necessity of the religious system, enhances the importance of the priestly order enormously. On the other hand, the view, which was the typical "Protestant" view, that this sacrament is a mere eating of bread and drinking of wine as a personal remembrance of Jesus of Nazareth, does away at last with any particular need for a consecrated priest at all. Wycliffe himself did not go to this extremity; he was a priest, and he remained a priest to the end of his life, but his doctrine raised a question that carried men far beyond his positions. From the point of view of the historian the struggle against Rome that Wycliffe opened became very speedily a struggle of what

one may call rational or layman's religion making its appeal to the free intelligence and the free conscience in mankind, against authoritative, traditional, ceremonial, and priestly religion. The ultimate tendency of this complicated struggle was to strip Christianity as bare as Islam of every vestige of ancient priestcraft, to revert to the Bible documents as authority, and to recover, if possible, the primordial teachings of Jesus. Most of its issues are still undecided among Christians to this day.

Wycliffe's writings had nowhere more influence than in Bohemia. About 1396 a learned Czech, John Huss, delivered a series of lectures in the university of Prague based upon the doctrines of the great Oxford teacher. Huss became rector of the university, and his teachings roused the church to excommunicate him (1412). This was at the time of the Great Schism, just before the Council of Constance (1414-1418) gathered to discuss the scandalous disorder of the church. We have already told (chap. xxxiii, § 13) how the schism was ended by the election of Martin V. The council aspired to reunite Christendom completely. But the methods by which it sought this reunion jar with our modern consciences. Wycliffe's bones were condemned to be burnt. Huss was decoyed to Constance under promise of a safe conduct, and he was then put upon his trial for heresy. He was ordered to recant certain of his opinions. He replied that he could not recant until he was convinced of his error. He was told that it was his duty to recant if his superiors required it of him, whether he was convinced or not. He refused to accept this view. In spite of the Emperor's safe conduct, he was burnt alive (1415), a martyr not for any specific doctrine, but for the free intelligence and free conscience of mankind.

It would be impossible to put the issue between priest and anti-priest more clearly than it was put at this trial of John Huss, or to demonstrate more completely the evil spirit in priestcraft. A colleague of Huss, Jerome of Prague, was burnt in the following year.

These outrages were followed by an insurrection of the Hussites in Bohemia (1419), the first of a series of religious wars that marked

the breaking-up of Christendom. In 1420, the Pope, Martin V, issued a bull proclaiming a crusade "for the destruction of the Wycliffites, Hussites, and all other heretics in Bohemia," and attracted by this invitation the unemployed soldiers of fortune, and all the drifting blackguardism of Europe converged upon that valiant country. They found in Bohemia, under its great leader Ziska, more hardship and less loot than crusaders were disposed to face. The Hussites were conducting their affairs upon extreme democratic lines, and the whole country was aflame with enthusiasm. The crusaders beleaguered Prague, but failed to take it, and they experienced a series of reverses that ended in their retreat from Bohemia. A second crusade (1421) was no more successful. Two other crusades failed. Then unhappily the Hussites fell into internal dissensions. Encouraged by this, a fifth crusade (1431) crossed the frontier under Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg.

The army of these crusaders, according to the lowest estimates, consisted of 90,000 infantry and 40,000 horsemen. Attacking Bohemia from the west, they first laid siege to the town of Tachov, but failing to capture the strongly fortified city, they stormed the little town of Most, and here, as well as in the surrounding country, committed the most horrible atrocities on a population a large part of which was entirely innocent of any form of theology whatever. The crusaders, advancing by slow marches, penetrated further into Bohemia, till they reached the neighbourhood of the town of Domazlice (Tauss). "It was at three o'clock on August 14th, 1431, that the crusaders, who were encamped in the plain between Domazlice and Horsuv Tyn, received the news that the Hussites, under the leadership of Prokop the Great, were approaching. Though the Bohemians were still four miles off, the rattle of their war-wagons and the song, 'All ye warriors of God,' which their whole host was chanting, could already be heard." The enthusiasm of the crusaders evaporated with astounding rapidity. Lützow describes how the papal representative and the Duke of Saxony ascended a convenient hill to inspect the battlefield. It was, they discovered, not going to be a battlefield. The German camp was in utter confusion. Horsemen were streaming off in every direction, and the clatter of empty wagons being driven off almost drowned the sound of that

terrible singing. The crusaders were abandoning even their loot. Came a message from the Margrave of Brandenburg advising flight; there was no holding any of their troops. They were dangerous now only to their own side, and the papal representative spent an unpleasant night hiding from them in the forest.... So ended the Bohemian crusade.

In 1434 civil war again broke out among the Hussites, in which the extreme and most valiant section was defeated, and in 1436 an agreement was patched up between the Council of Basle and the moderate Hussites, in which the Bohemian church was allowed to retain certain distinctions from the general Catholic practice, which held good until the German Reformation in the sixteenth century.

§ 3

The split among the Hussites was largely due to the drift of the extremer section towards a primitive communism, which alarmed the wealthier and more influential Czech noblemen. Similar tendencies had already appeared among the English Wycliffites. They seem to follow naturally enough upon the doctrines of equal human brotherhood that emerge whenever there is an attempt to reach back to the fundamentals of Christianity.

The development of such ideas had been greatly stimulated by a stupendous misfortune that had swept the world and laid bare the foundations of society, a pestilence of unheard-of virulence. It was called the Black Death, and it came nearer to the extirpation of mankind than any other evil has ever done. It was far more deadly than the plague of Pericles, or the plague of Marcus Aurelius, or the plague waves of the time of Justinian and Gregory the Great that paved the way for the Lombards in Italy. It arose in South Russia or Central Asia, and came by way of the Crimea and a Genoese ship to Genoa and Western Europe. It passed by Armenia to Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa. It reached England in 1348. Two thirds of the students at Oxford died, we are told; it is estimated that between a quarter and a half of the whole population of England perished at this time. Throughout all Europe there was as great a mortality. Hecker estimates the total as twenty-five million dead. It spread

eastward to China, where, the Chinese records say, thirteen million people perished. In China the social disorganization led to a neglect of the river embankments, and as a consequence great floods devastated the crowded agricultural lands.

Never was there so clear a warning to mankind to seek knowledge and cease from bickering, to unite against the dark powers of nature. All the massacres of Hulagu and Timurlane were as nothing to this. "Its ravages," says J. R. Green, "were fiercest in the greater towns, where filthy and undrained streets afforded a constant haunt to leprosy and fever. In the burial-ground which the piety of Sir Walter Manny purchased for the citizens of London, a spot whose site was afterwards marked by the Charter House, more than fifty thousand corpses are said to have been interred. Thousands of people perished at Norwich, while in Bristol the living were hardly able to bury the dead. But the Black Death fell on the villages almost as fiercely as on the towns. More than one half of the priests of Yorkshire are known to have perished; in the diocese of Norwich two thirds of the parishes changed their incumbents. The whole organization of labour was thrown out of gear. The scarcity of hands made it difficult for the minor tenants to perform the services due for their lands, and only a temporary abandonment of half the rent by the landowners induced the farmers to refrain from the abandonment of their farms. For a time cultivation became impossible. 'The sheep and cattle strayed through the fields and corn,' says a contemporary, 'and there were none left who could drive them.'"

"We have the payne and traveyle, rayne and wynd in the feldes" ...
John Ball's speech

It was from these distresses that the peasant wars of the fourteenth century sprang. There was a great shortage of labour and a great shortage of goods, and the rich abbots and monastic cultivators who owned so much of the land, and the nobles and rich merchants, were

too ignorant of economic laws to understand that they must not press upon the toilers in this time of general distress. They saw their property deteriorating, their lands going out of cultivation, and they made violent statutes to compel men to work without any rise in wages, and to prevent their straying in search of better employment. Naturally enough this provoked "a new revolt against the whole system of social inequality which had till then passed unquestioned as the divine order of the world. The cry of the poor found a terrible utterance in the words of 'a mad priest of Kent,' as the courtly Froissart calls him, who for twenty years (1360-1381) found audience for his sermons, in defiance of interdict and imprisonment, in the stout yeomen who gathered in the Kentish churchyards. 'Mad,' as the landowners called him, it was in the preaching of John Ball that England first listened to a declaration of natural equality and the rights of man. 'Good people,' cried the preacher, 'things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state.' A spirit fatal to the whole system of the Middle Ages breathed in the popular rhyme which condensed the levelling doctrine of John Ball: 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?'"

Wat Tyler, the leader of the English insurgents, was assassinated by the Mayor of London in the presence of the young King Richard II (1381), and his movement collapsed. The communist side of the Hussite movement was a part of the same system of disturbance. A little earlier than the English outbreak had occurred the French "Jacquerie" (1358), in which the French peasants had risen, burnt châteaux, and devastated the country-side. A century later the same

urgency was to sweep Germany into a series of bloody Peasant Wars. These began late in the fifteenth century. Economic and religious disturbance mingled in the case of Germany even more plainly than in England. One conspicuous phase of these German troubles was the Anabaptist outbreak. The sect of the Anabaptists appeared in Wittenberg in 1521 under three "prophets," and broke out into insurrection in 1525. Between 1532 and 1535 the insurgents held the town of Münster in Westphalia, and did their utmost to realize their ideas of a religious communism. They were besieged by the Bishop of Münster, and under the distresses of the siege a sort of insanity ran rife in the town; cannibalism is said to have occurred, and a certain John of Leyden seized power, proclaimed himself the successor of King David, and followed that monarch's evil example by practising polygamy. After the surrender of the city the victorious bishop had the Anabaptist leaders tortured very horribly and executed in the marketplace, their mutilated bodies being hung in cages from a church tower to witness to all the world that decency and order were now restored in Münster....

These upheavals of the common labouring men of the Western European countries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were more serious and sustained than anything that had ever happened in history before. The nearest previous approach to them were certain communistic Muhammadan movements in Persia. There was a peasant revolt in Normandy about A.D. 1000, and there were revolts of peasants (Bagaudæ) in the later Roman Empire, but these were not nearly so formidable. They show a new spirit growing in human affairs, a spirit altogether different from the unquestioning apathy of the serfs and peasants in the original regions of civilization or from the anarchist hopelessness of the serf and slave labour of the Roman capitalists. All these early insurrections of the workers that we have mentioned were suppressed with much cruelty, but the movement itself was never completely stamped out. From that time to this there has been a spirit of revolt in the lower levels of the pyramid of civilization. There have been phases of insurrection, phases of repression, phases of compromise and comparative pacification; but from that time until this, the struggle has never wholly ceased. We shall see it flaring out during the French Revolution at the end of the

eighteenth century, insurgent again in the middle and at the opening of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and achieving vast proportions in the world of to-day. The socialist movement of the nineteenth century was only one version of that continuing revolt.

In many countries, in France and Germany and Russia, for example, this labour movement has assumed at times an attitude hostile to Christianity, but there can be little doubt that this steady and, on the whole, growing pressure of the common man in the West against a life of toil and subservience is closely associated with Christian teaching. The church and the Christian missionary may not have intended to spread equalitarian doctrines, but behind the church was the unquenchable personality of Jesus of Nazareth, and even in spite of himself the Christian preacher brought the seeds of freedom and responsibility with him, and sooner or later they shot up where he had been.

This steady and growing upheaval of "Labour," its development of a consciousness of itself as a class and of a definite claim upon the world at large, quite as much as the presence of schools and universities, quite as much as abundant printed books and a developing and expanding process of scientific research, mark off our present type of civilization, the "modern civilization," from any pre-existing state of human society, and mark it, for all its incidental successes, as a thing unfinished and transitory. It is an embryo or it is something doomed to die. It may be able to solve this complex problem of co-ordinated toil and happiness, and so adjust itself to the needs of the human soul, or it may fail and end in a catastrophe as the Roman system did. It may be the opening phase of some more balanced and satisfying order of society, or it may be a system destined to disruption and replacement by some differently conceived method of human association. Like its predecessor, our present civilization may be no more than one of those crops farmers sow to improve their land by the fixation of nitrogen from the air; it may have grown only that, accumulating certain traditions, it may be ploughed into the soil again for better things to follow. Such questions as these are the practical realities of history, and in all that follows we shall find them becoming clearer and more important, until in our last chapter we shall end, as all our days and years end,

with a recapitulation of our hopes and fears — and a note of interrogation.

§ 4

The development of free discussion in Europe during this age of fermentation was enormously stimulated by the appearance of printed books. It was the introduction of paper from the East that made practicable the long latent method of printing. It is still difficult to assign the honour of priority in the use of the simple expedient of printing for multiplying books. It is a trivial question that has been preposterously debated. Apparently the glory, such as it is, belongs to Holland. In Haarlem, one Coster was printing from movable type somewhen before 1446. Gutenberg was printing at Mainz about the same time. There were printers in Italy by 1465, and Caxton set up his press in Westminster in 1477. But long before this time there had been a partial use of printing. Manuscripts as early as the twelfth century display initial letters that may have been printed from wooden stamps.

Far more important is the question of the manufacture of paper. It is scarcely too much to say that paper made the revival of Europe possible. Paper originated in China, where its use probably goes back to the second century B.C. In 751 the Chinese made an attack upon the Arab Moslems in Samarkand; they were repulsed, and among the prisoners taken from them were some skilled paper-makers, from whom the art was learnt. Arabic paper manuscripts from the ninth century onward still exist. The manufacture entered Christendom either through Greece or by the capture of Moorish paper-mills during the Christian reconquest of Spain. But under the Christian Spanish the product deteriorated sadly. Good paper was not made in Christian Europe until near the end of the thirteenth century, and then it was Italy which led the world. Only by the fourteenth century did the manufacture reach Germany, and not until the end of that century was it abundant and cheap enough for the printing of books to be a practicable business proposition. Thereupon printing followed naturally and necessarily, and the intellectual life of the world entered upon a new and far more vigorous phase. It ceased to be a

little trickle from mind to mind; it became a broad flood, in which thousands and presently scores and hundreds of thousands of minds participated.

One immediate result of this achievement of printing was the appearance of an abundance of Bibles in the world. Another was a cheapening of school-books. The knowledge of reading spread swiftly. There was not only a great increase of books in the world, but the books that were now made were plainer to read and so easier to understand. Instead of toiling at a crabbed text and then thinking over its significance, readers now could think unimpeded as they read. With this increase in the facility of reading, the reading public grew. The book ceased to be a highly decorated toy or a scholar's mystery. People began to write books to be read as well as looked at by ordinary people. With the fourteenth century the real history of the European literatures begins. We find a rapid development of standard Italian, standard English, standard French, standard Spanish, and standard German. These languages became literary languages; they were tried over, polished by use, and made exact and vigorous. They became at last as capable of the burden of philosophical discussion as Greek or Latin.

§ 5

Here we devote a section to certain elementary statements about the movement in men's religious ideas during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are a necessary introduction to the political history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that follows in Chapter XXXVI.

We have to distinguish clearly between two entirely different systems of opposition to the Catholic church. They intermingled very confusingly. The church was losing its hold upon the consciences of princes and rich and able people; it was also losing the faith and confidence of common people. The effect of its decline of spiritual power upon the former class was to make them resent its interference, its moral restrictions, its claims to overlordship, its claim to tax, and to dissolve allegiances. They ceased to respect its power and its property. This insubordination of princes and rulers

was going on throughout the Middle Ages, but it was only when in the sixteenth century the church began to side openly with its old antagonist the Emperor, when it offered him its support and accepted his help in its campaign against heresy, that princes began to think seriously of breaking away from the Roman communion and setting up fragments of a church. And they would never have done so if they had not perceived that the hold of the church upon the masses of mankind had relaxed.

The revolt of the princes was essentially an irreligious revolt against the world-rule of the church. The Emperor Frederick II, with his epistles to his fellow princes, was its forerunner. The revolt of the people against the church, on the other hand, was as essentially religious. They objected not to the church's power, but to its weaknesses. They wanted a deeply righteous and fearless church to help them and organize them against the wickedness of powerful men. Their movements against the church, within it and without, were movements not for release from a religious control, but for a fuller and more abundant religious control. They did not want less religious control, but more — but they wanted to be assured that it was religious. They objected to the Pope not because he was the religious head of the world, but because he was not; because he was a wealthy earthly prince when he ought to have been their spiritual leader.

The contest in Europe from the fourteenth century onward therefore was a three-cornered contest. The princes wanted to use the popular forces against the Pope, but not to let those forces grow too powerful for their own power and glory. For a long time the church went from prince to prince for an ally without realizing that the lost ally it needed to recover was popular veneration.

Because of this triple aspect of the mental and moral conflicts that were going on in the fourteenth and fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the series of ensuing changes, those changes that are known collectively in history as the Reformation, took on a threefold aspect. There was the Reformation according to the princes, who wanted to stop the flow of money to Rome and to seize the moral authority, the educational power, and the material possessions of the church within their dominions. There was the Reformation according to the people,

who sought to make Christianity a power against unrighteousness, and particularly against the unrighteousness of the rich and powerful. And finally there was the Reformation within the church, of which St. Francis of Assisi was the precursor, which sought to restore the goodness of the church and, through its goodness, to restore its power.

The Reformation according to the princes took the form of a replacement of the Pope by the prince as the head of the religion and the controller of the consciences of his people. The princes had no idea and no intention of letting free the judgments of their subjects more particularly with the object-lessons of the Hussites and the Anabaptists before their eyes; they sought to establish national churches dependent upon the throne. As England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, North Germany, and Bohemia broke away from the Roman communion, the princes and other ministers showed the utmost solicitude to keep the movement well under control. Just as much reformation as would sever the link with Rome they permitted; anything beyond that, any dangerous break towards the primitive teachings of Jesus or the crude direct interpretation of the Bible, they resisted. The Established Church of England is one of the most typical and successful of the resulting compromises. It is still sacramental and sacerdotal; but its organization centres in the Court and the Lord Chancellor, and though subversive views may, and do, break out in the lower and less prosperous ranks of its priesthood, it is impossible for them to struggle up to any position of influence and authority.

The Reformation according to the common man was very different in spirit from the Princely Reformation. We have already told something of the popular attempts at Reformation in Bohemia and Germany. The wide spiritual upheavals of the time were at once more honest, more confused, more enduring, and less immediately successful than the reforms of the princes. Very few religious-spirited men had the daring to break away or the effrontery to confess that they had broken away from all authoritative teaching, and that they were now relying entirely upon their own minds and consciences. That required a very high intellectual courage. The general drift of the common man in this period in Europe was to set

up his new acquisition, the Bible, as a counter authority to the church. This was particularly the case with the great leader of German Protestantism, Martin Luther (1483-1546). All over Germany, and indeed all over Western Europe, there were now men spelling over the black-letter pages of the newly translated and printed Bible, over the Book of Leviticus and the Song of Solomon and the Revelation of St. John the Divine — strange and perplexing books — quite as much as over the simple and inspiring record of Jesus in the Gospels. Naturally they produced strange views and grotesque interpretations. It is surprising that they were not stranger and grotesquer. But the human reason is an obstinate thing, and will criticize and select in spite of its own resolutions. The bulk of these new Bible students took what their consciences approved from the Bible and ignored its riddles and contradictions. All over Europe, wherever the new Protestant churches of the princes were set up, a living and very active residuum of Protestants remained who declined to have their religion made over for them in this fashion. These were the Nonconformists, a medley of sects, having nothing in common but their resistance to authoritative religion, whether of the Pope or the State. Most but not all of these Nonconformists held to the Bible as a divinely inspired and authoritative guide. This was a strategic rather than an abiding position, and the modern drift of Nonconformity has been onward away from this original Bibliolatry towards a mitigated and sentimentalized recognition of the bare teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Beyond the range of Nonconformity, beyond the range of professed Christianity at all, there is also now a great and growing mass of equalitarian belief and altruistic impulse in the modern civilizations, which certainly owes, as we have already asserted, its spirit to Christianity, which began to appear in Europe as the church lost its grip upon the general mind.

Let us say a word now of the third phase of the Reformation process, the Reformation within the church. This was already beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with the appearance of the Black and Grey Friars (chap. xxxiii, § 13). In the sixteenth century, and when it was most needed, came a fresh impetus of the same kind. This was

the foundation of the Society of the Jesuits by Inigo Lopez de Recalde, better known to the world to-day as Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

Loyola.

Ignatius began his career as a very tough and gallant young Spaniard. He was clever and dexterous and inspired by a passion for pluck, hardihood, and rather showy glory. His love affairs were free and picturesque. In 1521 the French took the town of Pampeluna in Spain from the Emperor Charles V, and Ignatius was one of the defenders. His legs were smashed by a cannon-ball, and he was taken prisoner. One leg was badly set and had to be broken again, and these painful and complex operations nearly cost him his life. He received the last sacraments. In the night, thereafter, he began to mend, and

presently he was convalescent and facing the prospect of a life in which he would perhaps always be a cripple. His thoughts turned to the adventure of religion. Sometimes he would think of a certain great lady, and how, in spite of his broken state, he might yet win her admiration by some amazing deed; and sometimes he would think of being in some especial and personal way the Knight of Christ. In the midst of these confusions, one night as he lay awake, he tells us, a new great lady claimed his attention; he had a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary carrying the Infant Christ in her arms. "Immediately a loathing seized him for the former deeds of his life." He resolved to give up all further thoughts of earthly women, and to lead a life of absolute chastity and devotion to the Mother of God. He projected great pilgrimages and a monastic life.

His final method of taking his vows marks him the countryman of Don Quixote. He had regained his strength, and he was riding out into the world rather aimlessly, a penniless soldier of fortune with little but his arms and the mule on which he rode, when he fell into company with a Moor. They went on together and talked, and presently disputed about religion. The Moor was the better educated man; he had the best of the argument, he said offensive things about the Virgin Mary that were difficult to answer, and he parted triumphantly from Ignatius. The young Knight of our Lady was boiling with shame and indignation. He hesitated whether he should go after the Moor and kill him or pursue the pilgrimage he had in mind. At a fork in the road he left things to his mule, which spared the Moor. He came to the Benedictine Abbey of Manresa near Montserrat, and here he imitated that peerless hero of the mediæval romance, Amadis de Gaul, and kept an all-night vigil before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin. He presented his mule to the abbey, he gave his worldly clothes to a beggar, he laid his sword and dagger upon the altar, and clothed himself in a rough sackcloth garment and hempen shoes. He then took himself to a neighbouring hospice and gave himself up to scourgings and austerities. For a whole week he fasted absolutely. Thence he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

For some years he wandered, consumed with the idea of founding a new order of religious knighthood, but not knowing clearly how to set about this enterprise. He became more and more aware of his own

illiteracy, and the Inquisition, which was beginning to take an interest in his proceedings, forbade him to attempt to teach others until he had spent at least four years in study. So much cruelty and intolerance is laid at the door of the Inquisition that it is pleasant to record that in its handling of this heady, imaginative young enthusiast it showed itself both sympathetic and sane. It recognized his vigour and possible uses; it saw the dangers of his ignorance. He studied at Salamanca and Paris, among other places. He was ordained a priest in 1538, and a year later his long-dreamt-of order was founded under the military title of the "Company of Jesus." Like the Salvation Army of modern England, it made the most direct attempt to bring the generous tradition of military organization and discipline to the service of religion.

This Ignatius of Loyola who founded the Order of Jesuits was a man of forty-seven; he was a very different man, much wiser and steadier, than the rather absurd young man who had aped Amadis de Gaul and kept vigil in the abbey of Manresa; and the missionary and educational organization he now created and placed at the disposal of the Pope was one of the most powerful instruments the church had ever handled. These men gave themselves freely and wholly to be used by the church. It was the Order of the Jesuits which carried Christianity to China again after the downfall of the Ming Dynasty, and Jesuits were the chief Christian missionaries in India and North America. To their civilizing work among the Indians in South America we shall presently allude. But their main achievement lay in raising the standard of Catholic education. Their schools became and remained for a long time the best schools in Christendom. Says Lord Verulam (= Sir Francis Bacon): "As for the pedagogic part ... consult the schools of the Jesuits, for nothing better has been put in practice." They raised the level of intelligence, they quickened the conscience of all Catholic Europe, they stimulated Protestant Europe to competitive educational efforts.... Some day it may be we shall see a new order of Jesuits, vowed not to the service of the Pope, but to the service of mankind.

And concurrently with this great wave of educational effort, the tone and quality of the church was also greatly improved by the clarification of doctrine and the reforms in organization and

discipline that were made by the Council of Trent. This council met intermittently either at Trent or Bologna between the years 1545 and 1563, and its work was at least as important as the energy of the Jesuits in arresting the crimes and blunders that were causing state after state to fall away from the Roman communion. The change wrought by the Reformation within the Church of Rome was as great as the change wrought in the Protestant churches that detached themselves from the mother body. There are henceforth no more open scandals or schisms to record. But if anything, there has been an intensification of doctrinal narrowness, and such phases of imaginative vigour as are represented by Gregory the Great, or by the group of Popes associated with Gregory VII and Urban II, or by the group that began with Innocent III, no longer enliven the sober and pedestrian narrative. The world war of 1914-1918 was a unique opportunity for the Papacy; the occasion was manifest for some clear strong voice proclaiming the universal obligation to righteousness, the brotherhood of men, the claims of human welfare over patriotic passion. No such moral lead was given. The Papacy seemed to be balancing its traditional reliance upon the faithful Habsburgs against its quarrel with republican France.

§ 6

The reader must not suppose that the destructive criticism of the Catholic Church and of Catholic Christianity, and the printing and study of the Bible, were the only or even the most important of the intellectual activities of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That was merely the popular and most conspicuous aspect of the intellectual revival of the time. Behind this conspicuous and popular awakening to thought and discussion, other less immediately striking but ultimately more important mental developments were in progress. Of the trend of these developments we must now give some brief indications. They had begun long before books were printed, but it was printing that released them from obscurity.

We have already told something of the first appearance of the free intelligence, the spirit of inquiry and plain statement, in human affairs. One name is central in the record of that first attempt at

systematic knowledge, the name of Aristotle. We have noted also the brief phase of scientific work at Alexandria. From that time onward the complicated economic and political and religious conflicts of Europe and Western Asia impeded further intellectual progress. These regions, as we have seen, fell for long ages under the sway of the Oriental type of monarchy and of Oriental religious traditions. Rome tried and abandoned a slave-system of industry. The first great capitalistic system developed and fell into chaos through its own inherent rottenness. Europe relapsed into universal insecurity. The Semite rose against the Aryan, and replaced Hellenic civilization throughout Western Asia and Egypt by an Arabic culture. All Western Asia and half of Europe fell under Mongolian rule. It is only in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that we find the Nordic intelligence struggling through again to expression.

We then find in the growing universities of Paris, Oxford, and Bologna an increasing amount of philosophical discussion going on. In form it is chiefly a discussion of logical questions. As the basis of this discussion we find part of the teachings of Aristotle, not the whole mass of writings he left behind him, but his logic only. Later on his work became better known through the Latin translations of the Arabic edition annotated by Averroes.

Except for these translations of Aristotle, very little of the Greek philosophical literature was read in Western Europe until the fifteenth century. The creative Plato — as distinguished from the scientific Aristotle — was almost unknown. Some neo-Platonic writers were known, but neo-Platonism had much the same relation to Plato that Christian Science has to Christ.

It has been the practice of recent writers to decry the philosophical discussion of the mediæval "schoolmen" as tedious and futile. It was nothing of the sort. It had to assume a severely technical form because the dignitaries of the church, ignorant and intolerant, were on the watch for heresy. It lacked the sweet clearness, therefore, of fearless thought. It often hinted what it dared not say. But it dealt with fundamentally important things, it was a long and necessary struggle to clear up and correct certain inherent defects of the human mind, and many people to-day blunder dangerously through their neglect of the issues the schoolmen discussed.

There is a natural tendency in the human mind to exaggerate the differences and resemblances upon which classification is based, to suppose that things called by different names are altogether different, and that things called by the same name are practically identical. This tendency to exaggerate classification produces a thousand evils and injustices. In the sphere of race or nationality, for example, a "European" will often treat an "Asiatic" almost as if he were a different animal, while he will be disposed to regard another "European" as necessarily as virtuous and charming as himself. He will, as a matter of course, take sides with Europeans against Asiatics. But, as the reader of this history must realize, there is no such difference as the opposition of these names implies. It is a phantom difference created by two names....

The main mediæval controversy was between the "Realists" and the "Nominalists," and it is necessary to warn the reader that the word "Realist" in mediæval discussion has a meaning almost diametrically opposed to "Realist" as it is used in the jargon of modern criticism. The modern "Realist" is one who insists on materialist details; the mediæval "Realist" was far nearer what nowadays we should call an Idealist, and his contempt for incidental detail was profound. The Realists outdid the vulgar tendency to exaggerate the significance of class. They held that there was something in a name, in a common noun that is, that was essentially real. For example, they held there was a typical "European," an ideal European, who was far more real than any individual European. Every European was, as it were, a failure, a departure, a flawed specimen of this profounder reality. On the other hand the Nominalist held that the only realities in the case were the individual Europeans, that the name "European" was merely a name and nothing more than a name applied to all these instances.

Nothing is quite so difficult as the compression of philosophical controversies, which are by their nature voluminous and various and tinted by the mental colours of a variety of minds. With the difference of Realist and Nominalist stated baldly, as we have stated it here, the modern reader unaccustomed to philosophical discussion may be disposed to leap at once to the side of the Nominalist. But the matter is not so simple that it can be covered by one instance, and

here we have purposely chosen an extreme instance. Names and classifications differ in their value and reality. While it is absurd to suppose that there can be much depth of class difference between men called Thomas and men called William, or that there is an ideal and quintessential Thomas or William, yet on the other hand there may be much profounder differences between a white man and a Hottentot, and still more between *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalensis*. While again the distinction between the class of pets and the class of useful animals is dependent upon very slight differences of habit and application, the difference of a cat and dog is so profound that the microscope can trace it in a drop of blood or a single hair. When this aspect of the question is considered, it becomes understandable how Nominalism had ultimately to abandon the idea that names were as insignificant as labels, and how, out of a revised and amended Nominalism, there grew up that systematic attempt to find the *true* — the most significant and fruitful — classification of things and substances which is called Scientific Research.

And it will be almost as evident that while the tendency of Realism, which is the natural tendency of every untutored mind, was towards dogma, harsh divisions, harsh judgments, and uncompromising attitudes, the tendency of earlier and later Nominalism was towards qualified statements, towards an examination of individual instances, and towards inquiry and experiment and scepticism. And it may not surprise the reader to learn that the philosophy of the Catholic Church was essentially a Realist philosophy.

So while in the market-place and the ways of the common life men were questioning the morals and righteousness of the clergy, the good faith and propriety of their celibacy, and the justice of papal taxation; while in theological circles their minds were set upon the question of transubstantiation, the question of the divinity or not of the bread and wine in the mass, in studies and lecture-rooms a wider-reaching criticism of the methods of thought upon which the very fundamentals of Catholic teaching rested was in progress. We cannot attempt here to gauge the significance in this process of such names

as Peter Abelard (1079-1142), Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). These men sought to reconstruct Catholicism on a sounder system of reasoning. Chief among their critics and successors were Duns Scotus (?-1308), an Oxford Franciscan and, to judge by his sedulous thought and deliberate subtleties, a Scotchman, and Occam, an Englishman (?-1347). Both these latter, like Averroes (see chap. xxxii, § 8), made a definite distinction between theological and philosophical truth; they placed theology on a pinnacle, but they placed it where it could no longer obstruct research. Duns Scotus declared that it was impossible to prove by reasoning the existence of God or of the Trinity or the credibility of the Act of Creation; Occam was still more insistent upon this separation — which manifestly released scientific inquiry from dogmatic control. A later generation, benefiting by the freedoms towards which these pioneers worked, and knowing not the sources of its freedom, had the ingratitude to use the name of Scotus as a term for stupidity, and so we have our English word "Dunce." Says Professor Pringle Pattison, "Occam, who is still a Scholastic, gives us the Scholastic justification of the spirit which had already taken hold upon Roger Bacon, and which was to enter upon its rights in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries."

Standing apart by himself because of his distinctive genius is this Roger Bacon (about 1210 to about 1293), who was also English. He was a Franciscan of Oxford, and a very typical Englishman indeed, irritable, hasty, honest, and shrewd. He was two centuries ahead of his world. Says H. O. Taylor of him:

"The career of Bacon was an intellectual tragedy, conforming to the old principles of tragic art: that the hero's character shall be large and noble, but not flawless, inasmuch as the fatal consummation must issue from character, and not happen through chance. He died an old man, as in his youth, so in his age, a devotee of tangible knowledge. His pursuit of a knowledge which was not altogether learning had been obstructed by the Order of which he was an unhappy and rebellious member; quite as fatally his achievement was deformed from within by the principles which he accepted from his time. But he was responsible for his acceptance of current opinions;

and as his views roused the distrust of his brother Friars, his intractable temper drew their hostility (of which we know very little) on his head. Persuasiveness and tact were needed by one who would impress such novel views as his upon his fellows or, in the thirteenth century, escape persecution for their divulgence. Bacon attacked dead and living worthies, tactlessly, fatuously, and unfairly. Of his life scarcely anything is known, save from his allusions to himself and others; and these are insufficient for the construction of even a slight consecutive narrative. Born; studied at Oxford; went to Paris, studied, experimented; is at Oxford again, and a Franciscan; studies, teaches, becomes suspect to his Order, is sent back to Paris, kept under surveillance, receives a letter from the Pope, writes, writes, writes — his three best-known works; is again in trouble, confined for many years, released, and dead, so very dead, body and frame alike, until partly unearthed after five centuries."

The bulk of these "three best-known works" is a hotly phrased and sometimes quite abusive, but entirely just attack on the ignorance of the times, combined with a wealth of suggestions for the increase of knowledge. In his passionate insistence upon the need of experiment and of collecting knowledge, the spirit of Aristotle lives again in him. "Experiment, experiment," that is the burthen of Roger Bacon. Yet of Aristotle himself Roger Bacon fell foul. He fell foul of him because men, instead of facing facts boldly, sat in rooms and pored over bad Latin translations of the master. "If I had my way," he wrote, in his intemperate fashion, "I should burn all the books of Aristotle, for the study of them can only lead to a loss of time, produce error, and increase ignorance," a sentiment that Aristotle would probably have echoed could he have returned to a world in which his works were not so much read as worshipped — and that, as Roger Bacon showed, in the most abominable translations.

Throughout his books, a little disguised by the necessity of seeming to square it all with orthodoxy for fear of the prison and worse, Roger Bacon shouted to mankind, "Cease to be ruled by dogmas and authorities; *look at the world*!" Four chief sources of ignorance he denounced: respect for authority, custom, the sense of the ignorant crowd, and the vain proud unteachableness of our

dispositions. Overcome but these, and a world of power would open to men: —

"Machines for navigating are possible without rowers, so that great ships suited to river or ocean, guided by one man, may be borne with greater speed than if they were full of men. Likewise cars may be made so that without a draught animal they may be moved cum *impetu inæstimabili*, as we deem the scythed chariots to have been from which antiquity fought. And flying machines are possible, so that a man may sit in the middle turning some device by which artificial wings may beat the air in the manner of a flying bird."

Occam, Roger Bacon, these are the early precursors of a great movement in Europe away from "Realism" towards reality. For a time the older influences fought against the naturalism of the new Nominalists. In 1339 Occam's books were put under a ban and Nominalism solemnly condemned. As late as 1473 an attempt was made to bind teachers of Paris by an oath to teach Realism. It was only in the sixteenth century with the printing of books and the increase of intelligence that the movement from absolutism towards experiment became massive, and that one investigator began to co-operate with another.

Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries experimenting with material things was on the increase, items of knowledge were being won by men, but there was no inter-related advance. The work was done in a detached, furtive, and inglorious manner. A tradition of isolated investigation came into Europe from the Arabs and a considerable amount of private and secretive research was carried on by the alchemists, for whom modern writers are a little too apt with their contempt. These alchemists were in close touch with the glass and metal workers and with the herbalists and medicine-makers of the times; they pried into many secrets of nature, but they were obsessed by "practical" ideas; they sought not knowledge, but power; they wanted to find out how to manufacture gold from cheaper materials, how to make men immortal by the elixir of life, and such-like vulgar dreams. Incidentally in their researches they learnt much about poisons, dyes, metallurgy, and the like; they discovered various refractory substances, and worked their way towards clear glass and so to lenses and optical instruments; but as scientific men

tell us continually, and as “practical” men still refuse to learn, it is only when knowledge is sought for her own sake that she gives rich and unexpected gifts in any abundance to her servants. The world of to-day is still much more disposed to spend money on technical research than on pure science. Half the men in our scientific laboratories still dream of patents and secret processes. We live to-day largely in the age of alchemists, for all our sneers at their memory. The “business man” of to-day still thinks of research as a sort of alchemy.

Closely associated with the alchemists were the astrologers, who were also a “practical” race. They studied the stars — to tell fortunes. They lacked that broader faith and understanding which induces men simply to study the stars.

Not until the fifteenth century did the ideas which Roger Bacon first expressed begin to produce their first-fruits in new knowledge and a widening outlook. Then suddenly, as the sixteenth century dawned, and as the world recovered from the storm of social trouble that had followed the pestilences of the fourteenth century, Western Europe broke out into a galaxy of names that outshine the utmost scientific reputations of the best age of Greece. Nearly every nation contributed, the reader will note, for science knows no nationality.

One of the earliest and most splendid in this constellation is the Florentine, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), a man with an almost miraculous vision for reality. He was a naturalist, an anatomist, an engineer, as well as a very great artist. He was the first modern to realize the true nature of fossils, he made note-books of observations that still amaze us, he was convinced of the practicability of mechanical flight. Another great name is that of Copernicus, a Pole (1473-1543), who made the first clear analysis of the movements of the heavenly bodies and showed that the earth moves round the sun. Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), a Dane working at the university of Prague, rejected this latter belief, but his observations of celestial movements were of the utmost value to his successors, and especially to the German, Kepler (1571-1630). Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was the founder of the science of dynamics. Before his time it was believed that a weight a hundred times greater than another would fall a hundred times as fast. Galileo denied this.

Instead of arguing about it like a scholar and a gentleman, he put it to the coarse test of experiment by dropping two unequal weights from an upper gallery of the leaning tower of Pisa — to the horror of all erudite men. He made what was almost the first telescope, and he developed the astronomical views of Copernicus; but the church, still struggling gallantly against the light, decided that to believe that the earth was smaller and inferior to the sun made man and Christianity of no account, and diminished the importance of the Pope; so Galileo, under threats of dire punishment, when he was an old man of sixty-nine, was made to recant this view and put the earth back in its place as the immovable centre of the universe. He knelt before ten cardinals in scarlet, an assembly august enough to overawe truth itself, while he amended the creation he had disarranged. The story has it that as he rose from his knees, after repeating his recantation, he muttered, "*Eppur si muove*"— "it moves nevertheless."

Newton (1642-1727) was born in the year of Galileo's death. By his discovery of the law of gravitation he completed the clear vision of the starry universe that we have to-day. But Newton carries us into the eighteenth century. He carries us too far for the present chapter. Among the earlier names, that of Dr. Gilbert (1540-1603), of Colchester, is pre-eminent. Roger Bacon had preached experiment, Gilbert was one of the first to practise it. There can be little doubt that his work, which was chiefly upon magnetism, helped to form the ideas of Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam (1561-1626), Lord Chancellor to James I of England. This Francis Bacon has been called the "Father of Experimental Philosophy," but of his share in the development of scientific work far too much has been made. He was, says Sir R. A. Gregory, "not the founder but the apostle" of the scientific method. His greatest service to science was a fantastic book, *The New Atlantis*. "In his *New Atlantis*, Francis Bacon planned in somewhat fanciful language a palace of invention, a great temple of science, where the pursuit of knowledge in all its branches was to be organized on principles of the highest efficiency."

From this Utopian dream arose the Royal Society of London, which received a Royal Charter from Charles II of England in 1662. The essential use and virtue of this society was and is *publication*. Its formation marks a definite step from isolated inquiry towards co-

operative work, from the secret and solitary investigations of the alchemist to the frank report and open discussion which is the life of the modern scientific process. For the true scientific method is this: to trust no statements without verification, to test all things as rigorously as possible, to keep no secrets, to attempt no monopolies, to give out one's best modestly and plainly, serving no other end but knowledge.

The long-slumbering science of anatomy was revived by Harvey (1578-1657), who demonstrated the circulation of the blood.... Presently the Dutchman, Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723) brought the first crude microscope to bear upon the hidden minutiæ of life.

These are but some of the brightest stars amidst that increasing multitude of men who have from the fifteenth century to our own time, with more and more collective energy and vigour, lit up our vision of the universe, and increased our power over the conditions of our lives.

§ 7

We have dealt thus fully with the beginnings of science in the Middle Ages because of its ultimate importance in human affairs. In the long run, Roger Bacon is of more significance to mankind than any monarch of his time. But the contemporary world, for the most part, knew nothing of this smouldering activity in studies and lecture-rooms and alchemist's laboratories that was presently to alter all the conditions of life. The church did indeed take notice of what was afoot, but only because of the disregard of her conclusive decisions. She had decided that the earth was the very centre of God's creation, and that the Pope was the divinely appointed ruler of the earth. Men's ideas on these essential points, she insisted, must not be disturbed by any contrary teaching. So soon, however, as she had compelled Galileo to say that the world did not move she was satisfied; she does not seem to have realized how ominous it was for her that, after all, the earth did move.

Very great social as well as intellectual developments were in progress in Western Europe throughout this period of the later Middle Ages. But the human mind apprehends events far more

vividly than changes; and men for the most part, then as now, kept on in their own traditions in spite of the shifting scene about them.

In an outline such as this it is impossible to crowd in the clustering events of history that do not clearly show the main process of human development, however bright and picturesque they may be. We have to record the steady growth of towns and cities, the reviving power of trade and money, the gradual re-establishment of law and custom, the extension of security, the supersession of private warfare that went on in Western Europe in the period between the First Crusade and the sixteenth century. Of much that looms large in our national histories we cannot tell anything. We have no space for the story of the repeated attempts of the English kings to conquer Scotland and set themselves up as kings of France, nor of how the Norman English established themselves insecurely in Ireland (twelfth century), and how Wales was linked to the English crown (1282). All through the Middle Ages the struggle of England with Scotland and France was in progress; there were times when it seemed that Scotland was finally subjugated and when the English king held far more land in France than its titular sovereign. In the English histories this struggle with France is too often represented as a single-handed and almost successful attempt to conquer France. In reality it was a joint enterprise undertaken in concert with the powerful French vassal state of Burgundy to conquer and divide the patrimony of Hugh Capet. Of the English rout by the Scotch at Bannockburn (1314), and of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, the Scottish national heroes, of the battles of Crecy (1346) and Poitiers (1356) and Agincourt (1415) in France, which shine like stars in the English imagination, little battles in which sturdy bowmen through some sunny hours made a great havoc among French knights in armour, of the Black Prince and Henry V of England, and of how a peasant girl, Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, drove the English out of her country again (1429-1430), this history relates nothing. For every country has such cherished national events. They are the ornamental tapestry of history, and no part of the building. Rajputana or Poland, Russia, Spain, Persia, and China can all match or outdo the utmost romance of western Europe, with equally adventurous knights and equally valiant princesses and

equally stout fights against the odds. Nor can we tell how Louis XI of France (1461-1483), the son of Joan of Arc's Charles VII, brought Burgundy to heel and laid the foundations of a centralized French monarchy. It signifies more that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, gunpowder, that Mongol gift, came to Europe so that the kings (Louis XI included) and the law, relying upon the support of the growing towns, were able to batter down the castles of the half-independent robber knights and barons of the earlier Middle Ages and consolidate a more centralized power. The fighting nobles and knights of the barbaric period disappear slowly from history during these centuries; the Crusades consumed them, such dynastic wars as the English Wars of the Roses killed them off, the arrows from the English long-bow pierced them and stuck out a yard behind, infantry so armed swept them from the stricken field; they became reconciled to trade and changed their nature. They disappeared in everything but a titular sense from the west and south of Europe before they disappeared from Germany. The knight in Germany remained a professional fighting man into the sixteenth century.

Between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries in western Europe, and particularly in France and England, there sprang up like flowers a multitude of very distinctive and beautiful buildings, cathedrals, abbeys, and the like, the Gothic architecture. This lovely efflorescence marks the appearance of a body of craftsmen closely linked in its beginnings to the church. In Italy and Spain too the world was beginning to build freely and beautifully again. At first it was the wealth of the church that provided most of these buildings; then kings and merchants also began to build.

From the twelfth century onward, with the increase of trade, there was a great revival of town life throughout Europe. Prominent among these towns were Venice, with its dependents Ragusa and Corfu, Genoa, Verona, Bologna, Pisa, Florence, Naples, Milan, Marseilles, Lisbon, Barcelona, Narbonne, Tours, Orleans, Bordeaux, Paris, Ghent, Bruges, Boulogne, London, Oxford, Cambridge, Southampton, Dover, Antwerp, Hamburg, Bremen, Cologne, Mayence, Nuremberg, Munich, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Breslau, Stettin, Dantzig, Königsberg, Riga, Pskof, Novgorod, Wisby, and Bergen.

“A West German town, between 1400 and 1500, embodied all the achievements of progress at that time, although from a modern standpoint much seems wanting.... The streets were mostly narrow and irregularly built, the houses chiefly of wood, while almost every burgher kept his cattle in the house, and the herd of swine which was driven every morning by the town herdsman to the pasture-ground formed an inevitable part of city life. In Frankfort-on-Main it was unlawful after 1481 to keep swine in the Altstadt, but in the Neustadt and in Sachsenhausen this custom remained as a matter of course. It was only in 1645, after a corresponding attempt in 1556 had failed, that the swine-pens in the inner town were pulled down at Leipzig. The rich burghers, who occasionally took part in the great trading companies, were conspicuously wealthy landowners and had extensive courtyards with large barns inside the town walls. The most opulent of them owned those splendid patrician houses which we still admire even to-day. But even in the older towns most houses of the fifteenth century have disappeared; only here and there a building with open timber-work and over-hanging storeys, as in Bacharach or Miltenburg, reminds us of the style of architecture then customary in the houses of burghers. The great bulk of the inferior population, who lived on mendicancy, or got a livelihood by the exercise of the inferior industries, inhabited squalid hovels outside the town; the town wall was often the only support for these wretched buildings. The internal fittings of the houses, even amongst the wealthy population, were very defective according to modern ideas; the Gothic style was as little suitable for the petty details of objects of luxury as it was splendidly adapted for the building of churches and town halls. The influence of the Renaissance added much to the comfort of the house.

“The fourteenth and fifteenth century saw the building of numerous Gothic town churches and town halls throughout Europe which still in many cases serve their original purpose. The power and prosperity of the towns find their best expression in these and in the fortifications with their strong towers and gateways. Every picture of a town of the sixteenth or later centuries shows conspicuously these latter erections for the protection and honour of the town. The town did many things which in our time are done by the State. Social

problems were taken up by town administration or the corresponding municipal organization. The regulation of trade was the concern of the guilds in agreement with the council, the care of the poor belonged to the church, while the council looked after the protection of the town walls and the very necessary fire brigades. The council, mindful of its social duties, superintended the filling of the municipal granaries, in order to have supplies in years of scarcity. Such store-houses were erected in almost every town during the fifteenth century. Tariffs of prices for the sale of all wares, high enough to enable every artisan to make a good livelihood, and to give the purchaser a guarantee for the quality of the wares, were maintained. The town was also the chief capitalist; as a seller of annuities on lives and inheritances it was a banker and enjoyed unlimited credit. In return it obtained means for the construction of fortifications or for such occasions as the acquisition of sovereign rights from the hand of an impecunious prince."

For the most part these European towns were independent or quasi-independent aristocratic republics. Most admitted a vague overlordship on the part of the church, or of the emperor or of a king. Others were parts of kingdoms, or even the capitals of dukes or kings. In such cases their internal freedom was maintained by a royal or imperial charter. In England the Royal City of Westminster on the Thames stood cheek by jowl with the walled city of London, into which the King came only with ceremony and permission. The entirely free Venetian republic ruled an empire of dependent islands and trading ports, rather after the fashion of the Athenian republic. Genoa also stood alone. The Germanic towns of the Baltic and North Sea from Riga to Middelburg in Holland, Dortmund, and Cologne were loosely allied in a confederation, the confederation of the Hansa towns, under the leadership of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, a confederation which was still more loosely attached to the empire. This confederation, which included over seventy towns in all, and which had dépôts in Novgorod, Bergen, London, and Bruges, did much to keep the northern seas clean of piracy, that curse of the Mediterranean and of the Eastern seas. The Eastern Empire throughout its last phase, from the Ottoman conquest of its European hinterland in the fourteenth and early fifteenth century until its fall in

1453, was practically only the trading town of Constantinople, a town state like Genoa or Venice, except that it was encumbered by a corrupt imperial court.

The fullest and most splendid developments of this city life of the later Middle Ages occurred in Italy. After the end of the Hohenstaufen line in the thirteenth century, the hold of the Holy Roman Empire upon North and Central Italy weakened, although, as we shall tell, German Emperors were still crowned as kings and emperors in Italy up to the time of Charles V (*circ.* 1530). There arose a number of quasi-independent city states to the north of Rome, the papal capital. South Italy and Sicily, however, remained under foreign dominion. Genoa and her rival, Venice, were the great trading seaports of this time; their noble palaces, their lordly paintings, still win our admiration. Milan, at the foot of the St. Gothard pass, revived to wealth and power. Inland was Florence, a trading and financial centre which, under the almost monarchical rule of the Medici family in the fifteenth century, enjoyed a second

“Periclean age.” But already before the time of these cultivated Medici “bosses,” Florence had produced much beautiful art. Giotto’s tower (Giotto, born 1266, died 1337) and the glorious Duomo (by Brunellesco, born 1377, died 1446) already existed. Towards the end of the fourteenth century Florence became the centre of the rediscovery, restoration, and imitation of antique art (the “Renaissance” in its narrower sense). Artistic productions, unlike philosophical thought and scientific discovery, are the ornaments and expression rather than the creative substance of history, and here we cannot attempt to trace the development of the art of Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Donatello (died 1466), Leonardo da Vinci (died 1519), Michelangelo (1475-1564), and Raphael (died 1520). Of the scientific speculation of Leonardo we have already had occasion to speak.

§ 8

In 1453, as we have related, Constantinople fell. Throughout the next century the Turkish pressure upon Europe was heavy and continuous. The boundary line between Mongol and Aryan, which had lain somewhere east of the Pamirs in the days of Pericles, had receded now to Hungary. Constantinople had long been a mere island of Christians in a Turk-ruled Balkan Peninsula. Its fall did much to interrupt the trade with the East.

Of the two rival cities of the Mediterranean, Venice was generally on much better terms with the Turks than Genoa. Every intelligent Genoese sailor fretted at the trading monopoly of Venice, and tried to invent some way of getting through it or round it. And there were now new peoples taking to the sea trade, and disposed to look for new ways to the old markets because the ancient routes were closed to them. The Portuguese, for example, were developing an Atlantic coasting trade. The Atlantic was waking up again after a vast period of neglect that dated from the Roman murder of Carthage. It is rather a delicate matter to decide whether the western European was pushing out into the Atlantic or whether he was being pushed out into it by the Turk, who lorded it in the Mediterranean until the Battle of Lepanto (1571). The Venetian and Genoese ships were

creeping round to Antwerp, and the Hansa town seamen were coming south and extending their range. And there were considerable developments of seamanship and shipbuilding in progress. The Mediterranean, as we have noted (chapter xvii) is a sea for galleys and coasting. But upon the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea winds are more prevalent, seas run higher, the shore is often a danger rather than a refuge. The high seas called for the sailing ship, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it appears, keeping its course by the compass and the stars.

By the thirteenth century the Hansa merchants were already sailing regularly from Bergen across the grey cold seas to the Northmen in Iceland. In Iceland men knew of Greenland, and adventurous voyagers had long ago found a further land beyond, Vinland, where the climate was pleasant and where men could settle if they chose to cut themselves off from the rest of human kind. This Vinland was either Nova Scotia or, what is more probable, New England.

All over Europe in the fifteenth century merchants and sailors were speculating about new ways to the East. The Portuguese, unaware that Pharaoh Necho had solved the problem ages ago, were asking whether it was not possible to go round to India by the coast of Africa. Their ships followed in the course that Hanno took to Cape Verde (1445). They put out to sea to the west and found the Canary Isles, Madeira, and the Azores. That was a fairly long stride across the Atlantic. In 1486 a Portuguese, Diaz, reported that he had rounded the south of Africa....

A certain Genoese, Christopher Columbus, began to think more and more of what is to us a very obvious and natural enterprise, but which strained the imagination of the fifteenth century to the utmost, a voyage due west across the Atlantic. At that time nobody knew of the existence of America as a separate continent. Columbus knew that the world was a sphere, but he under-estimated its size; the travels of Marco Polo had given him an exaggerated idea of the extent of Asia, and he supposed therefore that Japan, with its reputation for a great wealth of gold, lay across the Atlantic in about the position of Mexico. He had made various voyages in the Atlantic; he had been to Iceland and perhaps heard of Vinland, which must

have greatly encouraged these ideas of his, and this project of sailing into the sunset became the ruling purpose of his life. He was a penniless man, some accounts say he was a bankrupt, and his only way of securing a ship was to get someone to entrust him with a command. He went first to King John II of Portugal, who listened to him, made difficulties, and then arranged for an expedition to start without his knowledge, a purely Portuguese expedition. This highly diplomatic attempt to steal a march on an original man failed, as it deserved to fail; the crew became mutinous, the captain lost heart and returned (1483). Columbus then went to the Court of Spain.

At first he could get no ship and no powers. Spain was assailing Granada, the last foothold of the Moslems in western Europe. Most of Spain had been recovered by the Christians between the eleventh and the thirteenth century; then had come a pause; and now all Spain, united by the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, was setting itself to the completion of the Christian conquest. Despairing of Spanish help, Columbus sent his brother Bartholomew to Henry VII of England, but the adventure did not attract that canny monarch. Finally in 1492 Granada fell, and then, helped by some merchants of the town of Palos, Columbus got his ships, three ships, of which only one, the *Santa Maria*, of 100 tons burthen, was decked. The two other were open boats of half that tonnage.

The little expedition — it numbered altogether eighty-eight men! — went south to the Canaries, and then stood out across the unknown seas, in beautiful weather and with a helpful wind.

The story of that momentous voyage of two months and nine days must be read in detail to be appreciated. The crew was full of doubts and fears; they might, they feared, sail on for ever. They were comforted by seeing some birds, and later on by finding a pole worked with tools, and a branch with strange berries. At ten o'clock, on the night of October 11th, 1492, Columbus saw a light ahead; the next morning land was sighted, and, while the day was still young, Columbus landed on the shores of the new world, richly apparelled and bearing the royal banner of Spain....

Early in 1493 Columbus returned to Europe. He brought gold, cotton, strange beasts and birds, and two wild-eyed painted Indians to be baptized. He had not found Japan, it was thought, but India.

The islands he had found were called, therefore the West Indies. The same year he sailed again with a great expedition of seventeen ships and fifteen thousand men, with the express permission of the Pope to take possession of these new lands for the Spanish crown....

We cannot tell of his experiences as Governor of this Spanish colony, nor how he was superseded and put in chains. In a little while a swarm of Spanish adventurers were exploring the new lands. But it is interesting to note that Columbus died ignorant of the fact that he had discovered a new continent. He believed to the day of his death that he had sailed round the world to Asia.

The news of his discoveries caused a great excitement throughout western Europe. It spurred the Portuguese to fresh attempts to reach India by the South African route. In 1497, Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon to Zanzibar, and thence, with an Arab pilot, he struck across the Indian Ocean to Calicut in India. In 1515 there were Portuguese ships in Java and the Moluccas. In 1519 a Portuguese sailor, Magellan, in the employment of the Spanish King, coasted to the south of South America, passed through the dark and forbidding "Strait of Magellan," and so came into the Pacific Ocean, which had already been sighted by Spanish explorers who had crossed the Isthmus of Panama.

Magellan's expedition continued across the Pacific Ocean westward. This was a far more heroic voyage than that of Columbus; for *eight and ninety days* Magellan sailed unflinchingly over that vast, empty ocean, sighting nothing but two little desert islands. The crews were rotten with scurvy; there was little water and that bad, and putrid biscuit to eat. Rats were hunted eagerly; cowhide was gnawed and sawdust devoured to stay the pangs of hunger. In this state the expedition reached the Ladrones. They discovered the Philippines, and here Magellan was killed in a fight with the natives. Several other captains were murdered. Five ships had started with Magellan in August, 1519, and two hundred and eighty men; in July, 1522, the *Vittoria*, with a remnant of one and thirty men aboard, returned up the Atlantic to her anchorage near the Mole of Seville, in the river Guadalquivir — the first ship that ever circumnavigated this planet.

The English and French and Dutch and the sailors of the Hansa

towns came rather later into this new adventure of exploration. They had not the same keen interest in the eastern trade. And when they did come in, their first efforts were directed to sailing round the north of America as Magellan had sailed round the south, and to sailing round the north of Asia as Vasco da Gama had sailed round the south of Africa. Both these enterprises were doomed to failure by the nature of things. Both in America and the East, Spain and Portugal had half a century's start of England and France and Holland. And Germany never started. The King of Spain was Emperor of Germany in those crucial years, and the Pope had given the monopoly of America to Spain, and not simply to Spain, but to the kingdom of Castile. This must have restrained both Germany and Holland at first from American adventures. The Hansa towns were quasi-independent; they had no monarch behind them to support them, and no unity among themselves for so big an enterprise as oceanic exploration. It was the misfortune of Germany, and perhaps of the world, that, as we will presently tell, a storm of warfare exhausted her when all the Western powers were going to this newly opened school of trade and administration upon the high seas.

Slowly throughout the sixteenth century the immense good fortune of Castile unfolded itself before the dazzled eyes of Europe. She had found a new world, abounding in gold and silver and wonderful possibilities of settlement. It was all hers, because the Pope had said so. The Court of Rome, in an access of magnificence, had divided this new world of strange lands, which was now opening out to the European imagination, between the Spanish, who were to have everything west of a line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands, and the Portuguese, to whom everything east of this line was given.

At first the only people encountered by the Spaniards in America were savages of a Mongoloid type. Many of these savages were cannibals. It is a misfortune for science that the first Europeans to reach America were these rather incurious Spaniards, without any scientific passion, thirsty for gold, and full of the blind bigotry of a recent religious war. They made few intelligent observations of the native methods and ideas of these primordial people. They slaughtered them, they robbed them, they enslaved them, and

baptized them; but they made small note of the customs and motives that changed and vanished under their assault. They were as destructive and reckless as the British in Tasmania, who shot the last Palæolithic men at sight, and put out poisoned meat for them to find.

Great areas of the American interior were prairie land, whose nomadic tribes subsisted upon vast herds of the now practically extinct bison. In their manner of life, in their painted garments and their free use of paint, in their general physical characters, these prairie Indians showed remarkable resemblances to the Later Palæolithic men of the Solutrian age in Europe. But they had no horses. They seem to have made no very great advance from that primordial state, which was probably the state in which their ancestors had reached America. They had, however, a knowledge of metals, and most notably a free use of native copper, but no knowledge of iron. As the Spaniards penetrated into the continent, they found and they attacked, plundered, and destroyed two separate civilized systems that had developed in America, perhaps quite independently of the civilized systems of the old world. One of them was the Aztec civilization of Mexico; the other, that of Peru. They had arisen out of the heliolithic sub-civilization that had drifted across the Pacific from its region of origin round and about the Mediterranean. We have already noted one or two points of interest in these unique developments. Along their own lines these civilized peoples had reached to a state of affairs roughly parallel with the culture of pre-dynastic Egypt or the early Sumerian cities. Before the Aztecs and the Peruvians there had been still earlier civilized beginnings which had either been destroyed by their successors, or which had failed and relapsed of their own accord.

The Aztecs seem to have been a conquering, less civilized people, dominating a more civilized community, as the Aryans dominated Greece and North India. Their religion was a primitive, complex, and cruel system, in which human sacrifices and ceremonial cannibalism played a large part. Their minds were haunted by the idea of sin and the need for bloody propitiations.

The Aztec civilization was destroyed by an expedition under Cortez. He had eleven ships, four hundred Europeans, two hundred Indians, sixteen horses, and fourteen guns. But in Yucatan he picked

up a stray Spaniard who had been a captive with the Indians for some years, and who had more or less learnt various Indian languages, and knew that the Aztec rule was deeply resented by many of its subjects. It was in alliance with these that Cortez advanced over the mountains into the valley of Mexico, (1519). How he entered Mexico, how its monarch, Montezuma, was killed by his own people for favouring the Spaniards, how Cortez was besieged in Mexico, and escaped with the loss of his guns and horses, and how after a terrible retreat to the coast he was able to return and subjugate the whole land, is a romantic and picturesque story which we cannot even attempt to tell here. The population of Mexico to this day is largely of native blood, but Spanish has replaced the native languages, and such culture as exists is Catholic and Spanish.

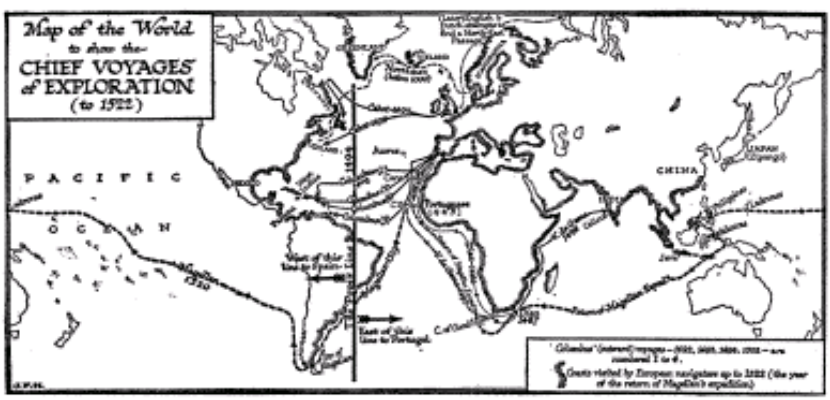

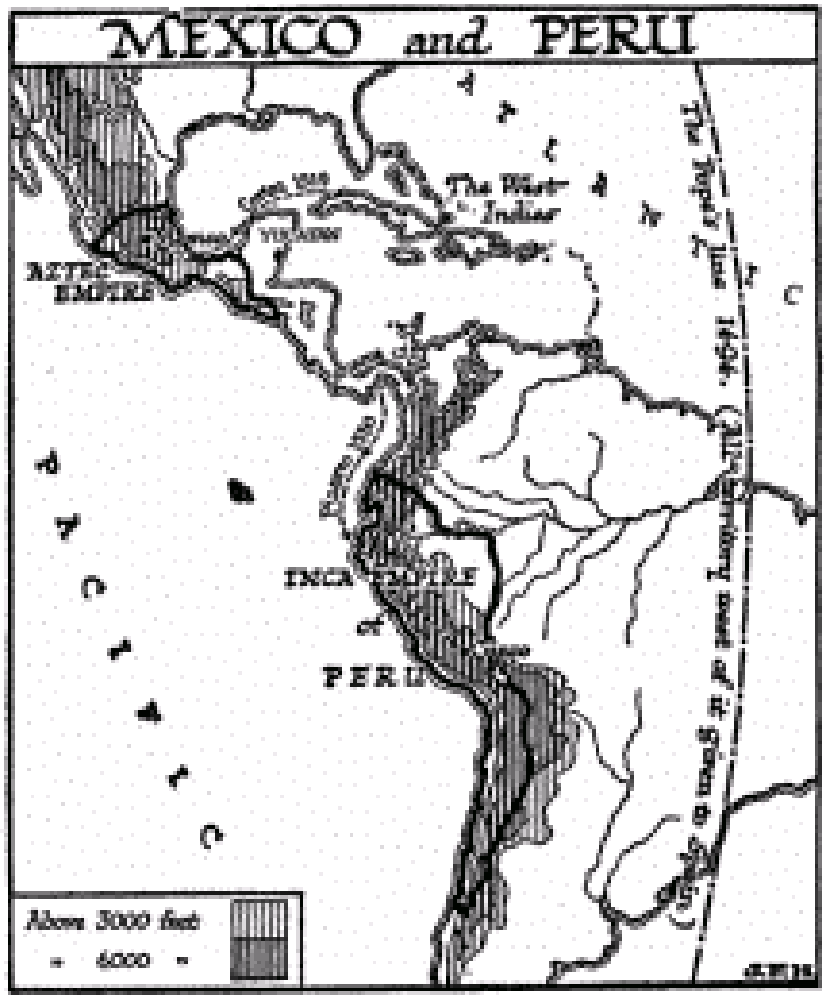

The still more curious Peruvian state fell a victim to another adventurer, Pizarro. He sailed from the Isthmus of Panama in 1530, with an expedition of a hundred and sixty-eight Spaniards. Like Cortez in Mexico, he availed himself of the native dissensions to secure possession of the doomed state. Like Cortez, too, who had made a captive and tool of Montezuma, he seized the Inca of Peru by treachery, and attempted to rule in his name. Here again we cannot do justice to the tangle of subsequent events, the ill-planned insurrections of the natives, the arrival of Spanish reinforcements

from Mexico, and the reduction of the state to a Spanish province. Nor can we tell much more of the swift spread of Spanish adventurers over the rest of America, outside the Portuguese reservation of Brazil. To begin with, each story is nearly always a story of adventurers and of cruelty and loot. The Spaniards ill-treated the natives, they quarrelled among themselves, the law and order of Spain were months and years away from them; it was only very slowly that the phase of violence and conquest passed into a phase of government and settlement. But long before there was much order in America, a steady stream of gold and silver began to flow across the Atlantic to the Spanish government and people.

After the first violent treasure hunt came plantation and the working of mines. With that arose the earliest labour difficulty in the new world. At first the Indians were enslaved with much brutality and injustice; but to the honour of the Spaniards this did not go uncriticized. The natives found champions, and very valiant champions, in the Dominican Order and in a secular priest Las Casas, who was for a time a planter and slave-owner in Cuba until his conscience smote him. An importation of negro slaves from West Africa also began quite early in the sixteenth century. After some retrogression, Mexico, Brazil, and Spanish South America began to develop into great slave-holding, wealth-producing lands....

We cannot tell here, as we would like to do, of the fine civilizing work done in South America, and more especially among the natives, by the Franciscans, and presently by the Jesuits, who came into America in the latter half of the sixteenth century (after 1549)....

So it was that Spain rose to a temporary power and prominence in the world's affairs. It was a very sudden and very memorable rise. From the eleventh century this infertile and corrugated peninsula had been divided against itself, its Christian population had sustained a perpetual conflict with the Moors; then by what seems like an accident it achieved unity just in time to reap the first harvest of benefit from the discovery of America. Before that time Spain had always been a poor country; it is a poor country to-day, almost its only wealth lies in its mines. For a century, however, through its monopoly of the gold and silver of America, it dominated the world. The east and centre of Europe were still overshadowed by the Turk

and Mongol; the discovery of America was itself a consequence of the Turkish conquests; very largely through the Mongolian inventions of compass and paper, and under the stimulus of travel in Asia and of the growing knowledge of eastern Asiatic wealth and civilization, came this astonishing blazing up of the mental, physical, and social energies of the "Atlantic fringe." For close in the wake of Portugal and Spain came France and England, and presently Holland, each in its turn taking up the rôle of expansion and empire overseas. The centre of interest for European history which once lay in the Levant shifts now from the Alps and the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic. For some centuries the Turkish Empire and Central Asia and China are relatively neglected by the limelight of the European historian. Nevertheless, these central regions of the world remain central, and their welfare and participation is necessary to the permanent peace of mankind.

§ 9

And now let us consider the political consequences of this vast release and expansion of European ideas in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with the new development of science, the exploration of the world, the great dissemination of knowledge through paper and printing, and the spread of a new craving for freedom and equality. How was it affecting the mentality of the courts and kings that directed the formal affairs of mankind? We have already shown how the hold of the Catholic church upon the consciences of men was weakening at this time. Only the Spaniards, fresh from a long and finally successful religious war against Islam, had any great enthusiasm left for the church. The Turkish conquests and the expansion of the known world robbed the Roman Empire of its former prestige of universality. The old mental and moral framework of Europe was breaking up. What was happening to the dukes, princes, and kings of the old dispensation during this age of change?

In England, as we shall tell later, very subtle and interesting tendencies were leading towards a new method in government, the method of parliament, that was to spread later on over nearly all the

world. But of these tendencies the world at large was as yet practically unconscious in the sixteenth century.

Few monarchs have left us intimate diaries; to be a monarch and to be frank are incompatible feats; monarchy is itself necessarily a pose. The historian is obliged to speculate about the contents of the head that wears a crown as best he can. No doubt regal psychology has varied with the ages. We have, however, the writings of a very able man of this period who set himself to study and expound the arts of kingcraft as they were understood in the later fifteenth century. This was the celebrated Florentine, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527). He was of good birth and reasonable fortune, and he had entered the public employment of the republic by the time he was twenty-five. For eighteen years he was in the Florentine diplomatic service; he was engaged upon a number of embassies, and in 1500 he was sent to France to deal with the French king. From 1502 to 1512 he was the right-hand man of the gonfalonier (the life president) of Florence, Soderini. Machiavelli reorganized the Florentine army, wrote speeches for the gonfalonier, was indeed the ruling intelligence in Florentine affairs. When Soderini, who had leant upon the French, was overthrown by the Medici family whom the Spanish supported, Machiavelli, though he tried to transfer his services to the victors, was tortured on the rack and expelled. He took up his quarters in a villa near San Casciano, twelve miles or so from Florence, and there entertained himself partly by collecting and writing salacious stories to a friend in Rome, and partly by writing books about Italian politics in which he could no longer play a part. Just as we owe Marco Polo's book of travels to his imprisonment, so we owe Machiavelli's *Prince*, his *Florentine History*, and *The Art of War* to his downfall and the boredom of San Casciano.

The enduring value of these books lies in the clear idea they give us of the quality and limitations of the ruling minds of this age. Their atmosphere was his atmosphere. If he brought an exceptionally keen intelligence to their business, that merely throws it into a brighter light.

His susceptible mind had been greatly impressed by the cunning, cruelty, audacity, and ambition of Cæsar Borgia, the Duke of Valentino, in whose camp he had spent some months as an envoy. In

his *Prince* he idealized this dazzling person. Cæsar Borgia (1476-1507), the reader must understand, was the son of Pope Alexander VI, Rodrigo Borgia (1492-1503). The reader will perhaps be startled at the idea of a Pope having a son, but this, we must remember, was a pre-reformation Pope. The Papacy at this time was in a mood of moral relaxation, and though Alexander was, as a priest, pledged to live unmarried, this did not hinder him from living openly with a sort of unmarried wife, and devoting the resources of Christendom to the advancement of his family. Cæsar was a youth of spirit even for the times in which he lived; he had early caused his elder brother to be murdered, and also the husband of his sister, Lucrezia. He had indeed betrayed and murdered a number of people. With his father's assistance he had become duke of a wide area of Central Italy when Machiavelli visited him. He had shown little or no military ability, but considerable dexterity and administrative power. His magnificence was of the most temporary sort. When presently his father died, it collapsed like a pricked bladder. Its unsoundness was not evident to Machiavelli. Our chief interest in Cæsar Borgia is that he realized Machiavelli's highest ideals of a superb and successful prince.

Much has been written to show that Machiavelli had wide and noble intentions behind his political writings, but all such attempts to ennoble him will leave the sceptical reader who insists on reading the lines instead of reading imaginary things between the lines of Machiavelli's work, cold towards him. This man manifestly had no belief in any righteousness at all, no belief in a God ruling over the world or in a God in men's hearts, no understanding of the power of conscience in men. Not for him were Utopian visions of world-wide human order, or attempts to realize the *City of God*. Such things he did not want. It seemed to him that to get power, to gratify one's desires and sensibilities and hates, to swagger triumphantly in the world, must be the crown of human desire. Only a prince could fully realize such a life. Some streak of timidity or his sense of the poorness of his personal claims had evidently made him abandon such dreams for himself; but at least he might hope to serve a prince, to live close to the glory, to share the plunder and the lust and the gratified malice. He might even make himself indispensable! He set

himself, therefore, to become an “expert” in prince-craft. He assisted Soderini to fail. When he was racked and rejected by the Medicis, and had no further hopes of being even a successful court parasite, he wrote these handbooks of cunning to show what a clever servant some prince had lost. His ruling thought, his great contribution to political literature, was that the moral obligations upon ordinary men cannot bind princes.

There is a disposition to ascribe the virtue of patriotism to Machiavelli because he suggested that Italy, which was weak and divided — she had been invaded by the Turks and saved from conquest only by the death of the Sultan Muhammad, and she was being fought over by the French and Spanish as though she was something inanimate — might be united and strong; but he saw in that possibility only a great opportunity for a prince. And he advocated a national army only because he saw the Italian method of carrying on war by hiring bands of foreign mercenaries was a hopeless one. At any time such troops might go over to a better paymaster or decide to plunder the state they protected. He had been deeply impressed by the victories of the Swiss over the Milanese, but he never fathomed the secret of the free spirit that made those victories possible. The Florentine militia he created was a complete failure. He was a man born blind to the qualities that make peoples free and nations great.

Yet this morally blind man was living in a little world of morally blind men. It is clear that his style of thought was the style of thought of the court of his time. Behind the princes of the new states that had grown up out of the wreckage of the empire and the failure of the Church, there were everywhere chancellors and secretaries and trusted ministers of the Machiavellian type. Cromwell, for instance, the minister of Henry VIII of England after his breach with Rome, regarded Machiavelli’s *Prince* as the quintessence of political wisdom. When the princes were themselves sufficiently clever they too were Machiavellian. They were scheming to outdo one another, to rob weaker contemporaries, to destroy rivals, so that they might for a brief interval swagger. They had little or no vision of any scheme of human destinies greater than this game they played against one another.

§ 10

It is interesting to note that this Swiss infantry which had so impressed Machiavelli was no part of the princely system of Europe. At the very centre of the European system there had arisen a little confederation of free states, the Swiss Confederation, which after some centuries of nominal adhesion to the Holy Roman Empire became frankly republican in 1499. As early as the thirteenth century, the peasant farmers of three valleys round about the Lake of Lucerne took it into their heads that they would dispense with an overlord and manage their own affairs in their own fashion. Their chief trouble came from the claims of a noble family of the Aar Valley, the Habsburg family. In 1245 the men of Schwyz burnt the castle of New Habsburg which had been set up near Lucerne to overawe them; its ruins are still to be seen there.

This Habsburg family was a growing and acquisitive one; it had lands and possessions throughout Germany; and in 1273, after the extinction of the Hohenstaufen house, Rudolf of Habsburg was elected Emperor of Germany, a distinction that became at last

practically hereditary in his family. None the less, the men of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden did not mean to be ruled by any Habsburg; they formed an Everlasting League in 1291, and they held their own among the mountains from that time onward to this day, first as free members of the empire and then as an absolutely independent confederation. Of the heroic legend of William Tell we have no space to tell here, nor have we room in which to trace the gradual extension of the confederation to its present boundaries. Romansh, Italian, and French-speaking valleys were presently added to this valiant little republican group. The red cross flag of Geneva has become the symbol of international humanity in the midst of warfare. The bright and thriving cities of Switzerland have been a refuge for free men from a score of tyrannies.

§ 11A

Most of the figures that stand out in history, do so through some exceptional personal quality, good or bad, that makes them more significant than their fellows. But there was born at Ghent in Belgium in 1500 a man of commonplace abilities and melancholy temperament, the son of a mentally defective mother who had been married for reasons of state, who was, through no fault of his own, to become the focus of the accumulating stresses of Europe. The historian must give him a quite unmerited and accidental prominence side by side with such marked individualities as Alexander and Charlemagne and Frederick II. This was the Emperor Charles V. For a time he had an air of being the greatest monarch in Europe since Charlemagne. Both he and his illusory greatness were the results of the matrimonial statecraft of his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian I (born 1459, died 1519).

Some families have fought, others have intrigued their way to world power; the Habsburgs married their way. Maximilian began his career with the inheritance of the Habsburgs, Austria, Styria, part of Alsace and other districts; he married — the lady's name scarcely matters to us — the Netherlands and Burgundy. Most of Burgundy slipped from him after his first wife's death, but the Netherlands he held. Then he tried unsuccessfully to marry Brittany. He became

Emperor in succession to his father, Frederick III, in 1493, and married the duchy of Milan. Finally he married his son to the weak-minded daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Ferdinand and Isabella of Columbus, who not only reigned over a freshly united Spain, and over Sardinia and the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but by virtue of the papal gifts to Castile, over all America west of Brazil. So it was that Charles, his grandson, inherited most of the American continent and between a third and a half of what the Turks had left of Europe. The father of Charles died in 1506, and Maximilian did his best to secure his grandson's election to the imperial throne.

Charles succeeded to the Netherlands in 1506; he became practically king of the Spanish dominions, his mother being imbecile, when his grandfather Ferdinand died in 1516; and his grandfather Maximilian dying in 1519, he was in 1520 elected Emperor at the still comparatively tender age of twenty.

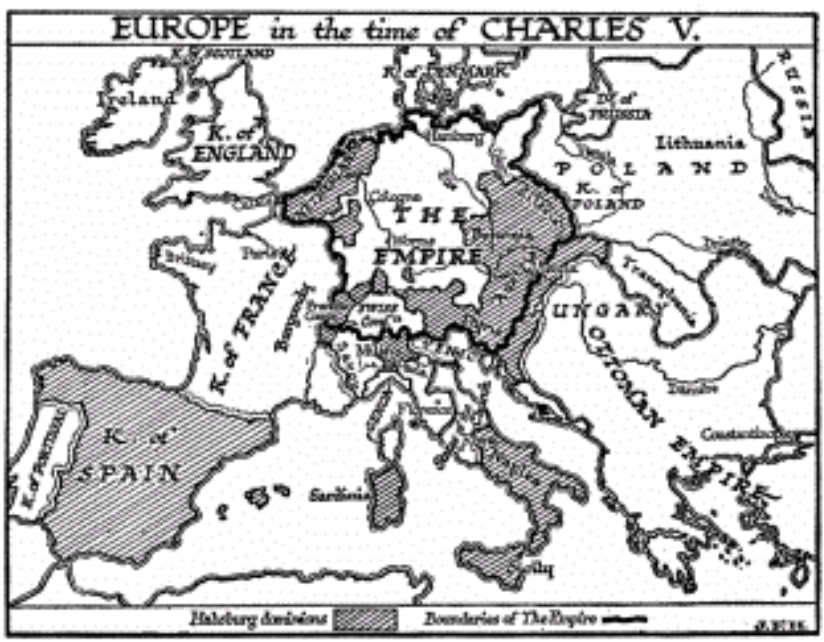

His election as Emperor was opposed by the young and brilliant French King, Francis I, who had succeeded to the French throne in 1515 at the age of twenty-one. The candidature of Francis was

supported by Leo X (1513), who also requires from us the epithet brilliant. It was indeed an age of brilliant monarchs. It was the age of Baber in India (1526-1530) and Suleiman in Turkey (1520). Both Leo and Francis dreaded the concentration of so much power in the hands of one man as the election of Charles threatened. The only other monarch who seemed to matter in Europe was Henry VIII, who had become King of England in 1509 at the age of eighteen. He also offered himself as a candidate for the empire, and the imaginative English reader may amuse himself by working out the possible consequences of such an election. There was much scope for diplomacy in this triangle of kings. Charles on his way from Spain to Germany visited England and secured the support of Henry against Francis by bribing his minister, Cardinal Wolsey. Henry also made a great parade of friendship with Francis, there was feasting, tournaments, and suchlike antiquated gallantries in France, in a courtly picnic known to historians as the Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520). Knighthood was becoming a picturesque affectation in the sixteenth century. The Emperor Maximilian I is still called "the last of the knights"; by German historians.

The election of Charles was secured, it is to be noted, by a vast amount of bribery. He had as his chief supporters and creditors the great German business house of the Fuggers. That large treatment of money and credit which we call finance, which had gone out of European political life with the collapse of the Roman Empire, was now coming back to power. This appearance of the Fuggers, whose houses and palaces outshone those of the emperors, marks the upward movement of forces that had begun two or three centuries earlier in Cahors in France and in Florence and other Italian towns. Money, public debts, and social unrest and discontent, re-enter upon the miniature stage of this *Outline*. Charles V was not so much a Habsburg as a Fugger emperor.

For a time this fair, not very intelligent-looking young man with the thick upper lip and long, clumsy chin — features which still afflict his descendants — was largely a puppet in the hands of his ministers. Able servants after the order of Machiavelli guided him at first in the arts of kingship. Then in a slow but effectual way he began to assert himself. He was confronted at the very outset of his

reign in Germany with the perplexing dissensions of Christendom. The revolt against the papal rule which had been going on since the days of Huss and Wycliffe had been recently exasperated by a new and unusually cynical selling of indulgences to raise money for the completion of St. Peter's at Rome. A monk named Luther, who had been consecrated as a priest, who had taken to reading the Bible, and who, while visiting Rome on the business of his order, had been much shocked by the levity and worldly splendour of the Papacy, had come forward against these papal expedients at Wittenberg (1517), offering disputation and propounding certain theses. An important controversy ensued. At first Luther carried on this controversy in Latin, but presently took to German, and speedily had the people in a ferment. Charles found this dispute raging when he came from Spain to Germany. He summoned an assembly or "diet" of the empire at Worms on the Rhine. To this, Luther, who had been asked to recant his views by Pope Leo X, and who had refused to do so, was summoned. He came, and, entirely in the spirit of Huss, refused to recant unless he was convinced of his error by logical argument or the authority of Scripture. But his protectors among the princes were too powerful for him to suffer the fate of John Huss.

Luther
(after Cranach)

Here was a perplexing situation for the young Emperor. There is reason to suppose that he was inclined at first to support Luther against the Pope. Leo X had opposed the election of Charles, and was friendly with his rival, Francis I. But Charles V was not a good Machiavellian, and he had acquired in Spain a considerable religious sincerity. He decided against Luther. Many of the German princes, and especially the Elector of Saxony, sided with the reformer. Luther went into hiding under the protection of the Saxon Elector, and Charles found himself in the presence of the opening rift that was to split Christendom into two contending camps.

Close upon these disturbances, and probably connected with them, came a widespread peasants' revolt throughout Germany. This outbreak frightened Luther very effectually. He was shocked by its

excesses, and from that time forth the Reformation he advocated ceased to be a Reformation according to the people and became a Reformation according to the princes. He lost his confidence in that free judgment for which he had stood up so manfully.

Francis I

Meanwhile Charles realized that his great empire was in very serious danger both from the west and from the east. On the west of him was his spirited rival, Francis I; to the east was the Turk in Hungary, in alliance with Francis and clamouring for certain arrears of tribute from the Austrian dominions. Charles had the money and army of Spain at his disposal, but it was extremely difficult to get any effective support in money from Germany. His grandfather had developed a German infantry on the Swiss model, very much upon

the lines expounded in Machiavelli's *Art of War*, but these troops had to be paid and his imperial subsidies had to be supplemented by unsecured borrowings, which were finally to bring his supporters, the Fuggers, to ruin.

On the whole, Charles, in alliance with Henry VIII, was successful against Francis I and the Turk. Their chief battlefield was north Italy; the generalship was dull on both sides; their advances and retreats depended chiefly on the arrival of reinforcements. The German army invaded France, failed to take Marseilles, fell back into Italy, lost Milan, and was besieged in Pavia. Francis I made a long and unsuccessful siege of Pavia, was caught by fresh German forces, defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner. He sent back a message to his queen that all was "lost but honour," made a humiliating peace, and broke it as soon as he was liberated so that even the salvage of honour was but temporary. Henry VIII and the Pope, in obedience to the rules of Machiavellian strategy, now went over to the side of France in order to prevent Charles becoming too powerful. The German troops in Milan, under the Constable of Bourbon, being unpaid, forced rather than followed their commander into a raid upon Rome. They stormed the city and pillaged it (1527). The Pope took refuge in the Castle of St. Angelo while the looting and slaughter went on. He bought off the German troops at last by the payment of four hundred thousand ducats. Ten years of such stupid and confused fighting impoverished all Europe and left the Emperor in possession of Milan. In 1530 he was crowned by the Pope — he was the last German Emperor to be crowned by the Pope — at Bologna. One thinks of the rather dull-looking blonde face, with its long lip and chin, bearing the solemn expression of one who endures a doubtful though probably honourable ceremony.

Meanwhile the Turks were making great headway in Hungary. They had defeated and killed the King of Hungary in 1526, they held Buda-Pesth, and in 1529, as we have already noted, Suleiman the Magnificent very nearly took Vienna. The Emperor was greatly concerned by these advances, and did his utmost to drive back the Turks, but he found the greatest difficulty in getting the German princes to unite, even with this formidable enemy upon their very borders. Francis I remained implacable for a time, and there was a

new French war; but in 1538 Charles won his rival over to a more friendly attitude by ravaging the south of France. Francis and Charles then formed an alliance against the Turk, but the Protestant princes, the German princes who were resolved to break away from Rome, had formed a league, the Schmalkaldic League (named after the little town of Schmalkalden in Hesse, at which its constitution was arranged), against the Emperor, and in the place of a great campaign to recover Hungary for Christendom Charles had to turn his mind to the gathering internal struggle in Germany. Of that struggle he saw only the opening war. It was a struggle, a sanguinary irrational bickering of princes for ascendancy, now flaming into war and destruction, now sinking back to intrigues and diplomacies; it was a snake's sack of Machiavellian policies, that was to go on writhing incurably right into the nineteenth century, and to waste and desolate Central Europe again and again.

The Emperor never seems to have grasped the true forces at work in these gathering troubles. He was for his time and station an exceptionally worthy man, and he seems to have taken the religious dissensions that were tearing Europe into warring fragments as genuine theological differences. He gathered diets and councils in futile attempts at reconciliation. Formulæ and confessions were tried over. The student of German history must struggle with the details of the Religious Peace of Nuremberg, the settlement at the diet of Ratisbon, the Interim of Augsburg, and the like. Here we do but mention them as details in the worried life of this culminating emperor. As a matter of fact, hardly one of the multifarious princes and rulers in Europe seems to have been acting in good faith. The widespread religious trouble of the world, the desire of the common people for truth and social righteousness, the spreading knowledge of the time, all those things were merely counters in the imaginations of princely diplomacy. Henry VIII of England, who had begun his career with a book written against heresy, and who had been rewarded by the Pope with the title of "Defender of the Faith," being anxious to divorce his first wife in favour of an animated young lady named Anne Boleyn, and wishing also to turn against the Emperor in favour of Francis I and to loot the vast wealth of the church in England, joined the company of Protestant princes in 1530. Sweden,

Denmark, and Norway had already gone over to the Protestant side.

Henry VIII.

The German religious war began in 1546, a few months after the death of Martin Luther. We need not trouble about the incidents of the campaign. The Protestant Saxon army was badly beaten at Lochau. By something very like a breach of faith Philip of Hesse, the Emperor's chief remaining antagonist, was caught and imprisoned, and the Turks were bought off by the payment of an annual tribute. In 1547, to the great relief of the Emperor, Francis I died. So by 1547 Charles got to a kind of settlement, and made his last efforts to effect peace where there was no peace. In 1552 all Germany was at war again, only a precipitate flight from Innsbruck saved Charles from capture, and in 1552, with the treaty of Passau, came another unstable equilibrium. Charles was now utterly weary of the cares and

splendours of empire; he had never had a very sound constitution, he was naturally indolent, and he was suffering greatly from gout. He abdicated. He made over all his sovereign rights in Germany to his brother Ferdinand, and Spain and the Netherlands he resigned to his son Philip. He then retired to a monastery at Yuste, among the oak and chestnut forests in the hills to the north of the Tagus valley, and there he died in 1558.

Charles V.

Much has been written in a sentimental vein of this retirement, this renunciation of the world by this tired majestic Titan, world-weary, seeking in an austere solitude his peace with God. But his retreat was neither solitary nor austere; he had with him nearly a hundred and fifty attendants; his establishment had all the

indulgences without the fatigues of a court, and Philip II was a dutiful son to whom his father's advice was a command. As for his austerities, let Prescott witness: "In the almost daily correspondence between Quixada, or Gaztelu, and the Secretary of State at Valladolid, there is scarcely a letter that does not turn more or less on the Emperor's eating or his illness. The one seems naturally to follow, like a running commentary, on the other. It is rare that such topics have formed the burden of communications with the department of state. It must have been no easy matter for the secretary to preserve his gravity in the perusal of despatches in which politics and gastronomy were so strangely mixed together. The courier from Valladolid to Lisbon was ordered to make a detour, so as to take Jarandilla in his route, and bring supplies for the royal table. On Thursdays he was to bring fish to serve for the *jour maigre* that was to follow. The trout in the neighbourhood Charles thought too small; so others, of a larger size, were to be sent from Valladolid. Fish of every kind was to his taste, as, indeed, was anything that in its nature or habits at all approached to fish. Eels, frogs, oysters, occupied an important place in the royal bill of fare. Potted fish, especially anchovies, found great favour with him; and he regretted that he had not brought a better supply of these from the Low Countries. On an eel-pasty he particularly doted."...

In 1554 Charles had obtained a bull from Pope Julius III granting him a dispensation from fasting, and allowing him to break his fast early in the morning even when he was to take the sacrament.

"That Charles was not altogether unmindful of his wearing apparel in Yuste, may be inferred from the fact that his wardrobe contained no less than sixteen robes of silk and velvet, lined with ermine, or eider down, or the soft hair of the Barbary goat. As to the furniture and upholstery of his apartments, how little reliance is to be placed on the reports so carelessly circulated about these may be gathered from a single glance at the inventory of his effects, prepared by Quixada and Gaztelu soon after their master's death. Among the items we find carpets from Turkey and Alcarez, canopies of velvet and other stuffs, hangings of fine black cloth, which since his mother's death he had always chosen for his own bedroom; while the remaining apartments were provided with no less than twenty-five

suits of tapestry, from the looms of Flanders, richly embroidered with figures of animals and with landscapes.... Among the different pieces of plate we find some of pure gold, and others especially noted for their curious workmanship; and as this was an age in which the art of working the precious metals was carried to the highest perfection, we cannot doubt that some of the finest specimens had come into the Emperor's possession. The whole amount of plate was estimated at between twelve and thirteen thousand ounces in weight."...

Charles had never acquired the habit of reading, but he would be read aloud to at meals after the fashion of Charlemagne, and would make what one narrator describes as a "sweet and heavenly commentary." He also amused himself with technical toys, by listening to music or sermons, and by attending to the imperial business that still came drifting in to him. The death of the Empress, to whom he was greatly attached, had turned his mind towards religion, which in his case took a punctilious and ceremonial form; every Friday in Lent he scourged himself with the rest of the monks with such good will as to draw blood. These exercises and the gout released a bigotry in Charles that had been hitherto restrained by considerations of policy. The appearance of Protestant teaching close at hand in Valladolid roused him to fury. "Tell the grand inquisitor and his council from me to be at their posts, and to lay the axe at the root of the evil before it spreads further."... He expressed a doubt whether it would not be well, in so black an affair, to dispense with the ordinary course of justice, and to show no mercy; "lest the criminal, if pardoned, should have the opportunity of repeating his crime." He recommended, as an example, his own mode of proceeding in the Netherlands, "where all who remained obstinate in their errors were burned alive, and those who were admitted to penitence were beheaded."

Among the chief pleasures of the Catholic monarch between meals during this time of retirement were funeral services. He not only attended every actual funeral that was celebrated at Yuste, but he had services conducted for the absent dead, he held a funeral service in memory of his wife on the anniversary of her death, and finally he celebrated his own obsequies. "The chapel was hung with

black, and the blaze of hundreds of wax-lights was scarcely sufficient to dispel the darkness. The brethren in their conventual dress, and all the Emperor's household clad in deep mourning, gathered round a huge catafalque, shrouded also in black, which had been raised in the centre of the chapel. The service for the burial of the dead was then performed; and, amidst the dismal wail of the monks, the prayers ascended for the departed spirit, that it might be received into the mansions of the blessed. The sorrowful attendants were melted to tears, as the image of their master's death was presented to their minds — or they were touched, it may be, with compassion by this pitiable display of weakness. Charles, muffled in a dark mantle, and bearing a lighted candle in his hand, mingled with his household, the spectator of his own obsequies; and the doleful ceremony was concluded by his placing the taper in the hands of the priest, in sign of his surrendering up his soul to the Almighty."

Other accounts make Charles wear a shroud and lie in the coffin, remaining there alone until the last mourner had left the chapel.

Within two months of this masquerade he was dead. And the greatness of the Holy Roman Empire died with him. The Holy Roman Empire struggled on indeed to the days of Napoleon, but as an invalid and dying thing.

§ 11B

Ferdinand, the brother of Charles V, took over his abandoned work and met the German princes at the diet of Augsburg in 1555. Again there was an attempt to establish a religious peace. Nothing could better show the quality of that attempted settlement and the blindness of the princes and statesmen concerned in it, to the deeper and broader processes of the time, than the form that settlement took. The recognition of religious freedom was to apply to the states and not to individual citizens; *cujus regio ejus religio*, "*the confession of the subject was to be dependent on that of the territorial lord*."

§ 11C

We have given as much attention as we have done to the writings of

Machiavelli and to the personality of Charles V because they throw a flood of light upon the antagonisms of the next period in our history. This present chapter has told the story of a vast expansion of human horizons and of a great increase and distribution of knowledge; we have seen the conscience of common men awakening and intimations of a new and profounder social justice spreading throughout the general body of the Western civilization. But this process of light and thought was leaving courts and the political life of the world untouched. There is little in Machiavelli that might not have been written by some clever secretary in the court of Chosroes I or Shi-Hwang-ti — or even of Sargon I or Pepi. While the world in everything else was moving forward, in political ideas, in ideas about the relationship of state to state and of sovereign to citizen, it was standing still. Nay, it was falling back. For the great idea of the Catholic Church as the world city of God had been destroyed in men's minds by the church itself, and the dream of a world imperialism had, in the person of Charles V, been carried in effigy through Europe to limbo. Politically the world seemed falling back towards personal monarchy of the Assyrian or Macedonian pattern.

It is not that the newly awakened intellectual energies of western European men were too absorbed in theological restatement, in scientific investigations, in exploration and mercantile development, to give a thought to the claims and responsibilities of rulers. Not only were common men drawing ideas of a theocratic or republican or communistic character from the now accessible Bible, but the renewed study of the Greek classics was bringing the creative and fertilizing spirit of Plato to bear upon the Western mind. In England Sir Thomas More produced a quaint imitation of Plato's *Republic* in his *Utopia*, setting out a sort of autocratic communism. In Naples, a century later, a certain friar Campanella was equally bold in his *City of the Sun*. But such discussions were having no immediate effect upon political arrangements. Compared with the massiveness of the task, these books do indeed seem poetical and scholarly and flimsy. (Yet later on the *Utopia* was to bear fruit in the English Poor Laws.) The intellectual and moral development of the Western mind and this drift towards Machiavellian monarchy in Europe were for a time going on concurrently in the same world, but they were going on

almost independently. The statesmen still schemed and manœuvred as if nothing grew but the power of wary and fortunate kings. It was only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that these two streams of tendency, the stream of general ideas and the drift of traditional and egoistic monarchical diplomacy, interfered and came into conflict.

BOOK VIII. THE AGE OF THE GREAT POWERS

XXXVI

PRINCES, PARLIAMENTS, AND POWERS

§ 1. *Princes and Foreign Policy.* § 2. *The English Republic.* § 3. *The Dutch Republic.* § 4. *The Break-up and Disorder of Germany.* § 5. *The Splendours of Grand Monarchy in Europe.* § 6. *The Growth of the Idea of Great Powers.* § 7. *The Crowned Republic of Poland and Its Fate.* § 8. *The First Scramble for Empire Overseas.* § 9. *Britain Dominates India.* § 10. *Russia's Ride to the Pacific.* §11. *What Gibbon Thought of the World in 1780.* § 12. *The Social Truce Draws to an End.*

§ 1

IN the preceding chapter we have traced the beginnings of a new civilization, the civilization of the "modern" type which becomes at the present time world-wide. It is still a vast unformed thing, still only in the opening phases of growth and development to-day. We have seen the mediæval ideas of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Roman Church, as forms of universal law and order, fade in its dawn. They fade out, as if it were necessary in order that these ideas of one law and one order for all men should be redrawn on world-wide lines. And while in nearly every other field of human interest there was advance, the effacement of these general political ideas of the Church and Empire led back for a time in things political towards merely personal monarchy and monarchist nationalism of the Macedonian type. There came an interregnum, as it were, in the consolidation of human affairs, a phase of the type the Chinese annalists would call an "Age of Confusion." This interregnum has lasted as long as that between the fall of the Western Empire and the crowning of Charlemagne in Rome. We are living in it to-day. It may be drawing to its close; we cannot tell yet. The old leading ideas had broken down, a medley of new and untried projects and suggestions perplexed men's minds and actions, and meanwhile the world at large had to fall back for leadership upon the ancient tradition of an individual prince. There was no new way clearly apparent for men to follow, and the prince was there.

All over the world the close of the sixteenth century saw monarchy prevailing and tending towards absolutism. Germany and Italy were patchworks of autocratic princely dominions, Spain was practically autocratic, the throne had never been so powerful in England, and as the seventeenth century drew on, the French monarchy gradually became the greatest and most consolidated power in Europe. The phases and fluctuations of its ascent we cannot record here.

At every court there were groups of ministers and secretaries who played a Machiavellian game against their foreign rivals. Foreign policy is the natural employment of courts and monarchies. Foreign offices are, so to speak, the leading characters in all the histories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They kept Europe in a fever of wars. And wars were becoming expensive. Armies were no longer untrained levies, no longer assemblies of feudal knights who brought their own horses and weapons and retainers with them; they needed more and more artillery; they consisted of paid troops who insisted on their pay; they were professional and slow and elaborate, conducting long sieges, necessitating elaborate fortifications. War expenditure increased everywhere and called for more and more taxation. And here it was that these monarchies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came into conflict with new and shapeless forces of freedom in the community. In practice the princes found they were not masters of their subjects' lives or property. They found an inconvenient resistance to the taxation that was necessary if their diplomatic aggressions and alliances were to continue. Finance became an unpleasant spectre in every council chamber. In theory the monarch owned his country. James I of England (1603) declared that "As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do; so it is presumption and high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or say that a king cannot do this or that." In practice, however, he found, and his son Charles I (1625) was to find still more effectually, that there were in his dominions a great number of landlords and merchants, substantial and intelligent persons, who set a very definite limit to the calls and occasions of the monarch and his ministers. They were prepared to tolerate his rule if they themselves might also be monarchs of their lands and businesses and trades and

what not. But not otherwise.

Everywhere in Europe there was a parallel development. Beneath the kings and princes there were these lesser monarchs, the private owners, noblemen, wealthy citizens, and the like, who were now offering the sovereign prince much the same resistance that the kings and princes of Germany had offered the Emperor. They wanted to limit taxation so far as it pressed upon themselves, and to be free in their own houses and estates. And the spread of books and reading and inter-communication was enabling these smaller monarchs, these monarchs of ownership, to develop such a community of ideas and such a solidarity of resistance as had been possible at no previous stage in the world's history. Everywhere they were disposed to resist the prince, but it was not everywhere that they found the same faculties for an organized resistance. The economic circumstances and the political traditions of the Netherlands and England made those countries the first to bring this antagonism of monarchy and private ownership to an issue.

At first this seventeenth-century "public," this public of property owners, cared very little for foreign policy. They did not perceive at first how it affected them. They did not want to be bothered with it; it was, they conceded, the affairs of kings and princes. They made no attempts therefore to control foreign entanglements. But it was with the direct consequences of these entanglements that they quarrelled; they objected to heavy taxation, to interference with trade, to arbitrary imprisonment, and to the control of consciences by the monarch. It was upon these questions that they joined issue with the Crown.

§ 2

The open struggle of the private property owner against the aggressions of the "Prince" begins in England far back in the twelfth century. The phase in this struggle that we have to study now is the phase that opened with the attempts of Henry VII and VIII and their successors, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, to make the government of England a "personal monarchy" of the continental type. It became more acute when, by dynastic accidents, James, King of Scotland,

became James I, King of both Scotland and England (1603), and began to talk in the manner we have already quoted of his "divine right" to do as he pleased. But never had the path of English monarchy been a smooth one. In all the monarchies of the Northmen and Germanic invaders of the empire there had been a tradition of a popular assembly of influential and representative men to preserve their general liberties, and in none was it more living than in England. France had her tradition of the assembly of the Three Estates, Spain her Cortes, but the English assembly was peculiar in two respects: that it had behind it a documentary declaration of certain elementary and universal rights, and that it contained elected "Knights of the Shire," as well as elected burghers from the towns. The French and Spanish assemblies had the latter, but not the former element.

These two features gave the English Parliament a peculiar strength in its struggle with the Throne. The document in question was *Magna Carta*, the Great Charter, a declaration which was forced from King John (1199-1216), the brother and successor of Richard Cœur de Lion (1189-99) after a revolt of the Barons in 1215. It rehearsed a number of fundamental rights that made England a legal and not a regal state. It rejected the power of the king to control the personal property and liberty of every sort of citizen — save with the consent of that man's equals.

The presence of the elected shire representatives in the English Parliament, the second peculiarity of the British situation, came about from very simple and apparently innocuous beginnings. From the shires, or county divisions, knights seem to have been summoned to the national council to testify to the taxable capacity of their districts. They were sent up by the minor gentry, freeholders and village elders of their districts as early as 1254, two knights from each shire. This idea inspired Simon de Montfort, who was in rebellion against Henry III, the successor of John, to summon to the national council two knights from each shire and two citizens from each city or borough. Edward I, the successor to Henry III, continued this practice because it seemed a convenient way of getting into financial touch with the growing towns. At first there was considerable reluctance on the parts of the knights and townsmen to

attend Parliament, but gradually the power they possessed of linking the redress of grievances with the granting of subsidies was realized. Quite early, if not from the first, these representatives of the general property owners in town and country, the Commons, sat and debated apart from the great Lords and Bishops. So there grew up in England a representative assembly, the Commons, beside an episcopal and patrician one, the Lords. There was no profound and fundamental difference between the personnel of the two assemblies; many of the knights of the shire were substantial men who might be as wealthy and influential as peers and also the sons and brothers of peers, but on the whole the Commons was the more plebeian assembly. From the first these two assemblies, and especially the Commons, displayed a disposition to claim the entire power of taxation in the land. Gradually they extended their purview of grievances to a criticism of all the affairs of the realm. We will not follow the fluctuations of the power and prestige of the English Parliament through the time of the Tudor monarchs (*i.e.*, Henry VII and VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth), but it will be manifest from what has been said that when at last James Stuart made his open claim to autocracy, the English merchants, peers, and private gentlemen found themselves with a tried and honoured traditional means of resisting him such as no other people in Europe possessed.

Another peculiarity of the English political conflict was its comparative detachment from the great struggle between Catholic and Protestant that was now being waged all over Europe. There were, it is true, very distinct religious issues mixed up in the English struggle, but upon its main lines it was a political struggle of King against the Parliament embodying the class of private-property-owning citizens. Both Crown and people were formally reformed and Protestant. It is true that many people on the latter side were Protestants of a Bible-respecting, non-sacerdotal type, representing the reformation according to the peoples, and that the king was the nominal head of a special sacerdotal and sacramental church, the established Church of England, representing the reformation according to the princes, but this antagonism never completely obscured the essentials of the conflict.

The struggle of King and Parliament had already reached an acute

phase before the death of James I (1625), but only in the reign of his son Charles I did it culminate in civil war. Charles did exactly what one might have expected a king to do in such a position, in view of the lack of Parliamentary control over foreign policy; he embroiled the country in a conflict with both Spain and France, and then came to the country for supplies in the hope that patriotic feeling would override the normal dislike to giving him money. When Parliament refused supplies, he demanded loans from various subjects, and attempted similar illegal exactions. This produced from Parliament in 1628 a very memorable document, the *Petition of Right*, citing the Great Charter and rehearsing the legal limitations upon the power of the English king, denying his right to levy charges upon, or to imprison, or punish anyone, or to quarter soldiers on the people, without due process of law. The Petition of Right stated the case of the English Parliament. The disposition to "state a case" has always been a very marked English characteristic. When President Wilson, during the Great War of 1914-18, prefaced each step in his policy by a "Note," he was walking in the most respectable traditions of the English. Charles dealt with this Parliament with a high hand, he dismissed it in 1629, and for eleven years he summoned no Parliament. He levied money illegally, but not enough for his purpose; and realizing that the church could be used as an instrument of obedience, he made Laud, an aggressive high churchman, very much of a priest and a very strong believer in "divine right," Archbishop of Canterbury, and so head of the Church of England.

In 1638 Charles tried to extend the half-Protestant, half-Catholic characteristics of the Church of England to his other kingdom of Scotland, where the secession from catholicism had been more complete, and where a non-sacerdotal, non-sacramental form of Christianity, Presbyterianism, had been established as the national church. The Scotch revolted, and the English levies Charles raised to fight them mutinied. Insolvency, at all tunes the natural result of a "spirited" foreign policy, was close at hand. Charles, without money or trustworthy troops, had to summon a Parliament at last in 1640. This Parliament, the Short Parliament, he dismissed in the same year; he tried a Council of Peers at York (1640), and then, in the November of that year, summoned his last Parliament.

This body, the Long Parliament, assembled in the mood for conflict. It seized Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and charged him with treason. It published a "Grand Remonstrance," which was a long and full statement of its case against Charles. It provided by a bill for a meeting of Parliament at least once in three years, whether the King summoned it or no. It prosecuted the King's chief ministers who had helped him to reign for so long without Parliament, and in particular the Earl of Strafford. To save Strafford the King plotted for a sudden seizure of London by the army. This was discovered, and the Bill for Strafford's condemnation was hurried on in the midst of a vast popular excitement. Charles I, who was probably one of the meanest and most treacherous occupants the English throne has ever known, was frightened by the London crowds. Before Strafford could die by due legal process, it was necessary for the King to give his assent. Charles gave it — and Strafford was beheaded. Meanwhile the King was plotting and looking for help in strange quarters — from the Catholic Irish, from treasonable Scotchmen. Finally he resorted to a forcible-feeble display of violence. He went down to the Houses of Parliament to arrest five of his most active opponents. He entered the House of Commons and took the Speaker's chair. He was prepared with some bold speech about treason, but when he saw the places of his five antagonists vacant, he was baffled, confused, and spoke in broken sentences. He learnt that they had departed from his royal city of Westminster and taken refuge in the city of London (see chap. xxv, § 7). London defied him. A week later the Five Members were escorted back in triumph to the Parliament House in Westminster by the Trained Bands of London, and the King, to avoid the noise and hostility of the occasion, left Whitehall for Windsor.

Both parties then prepared openly for war.

The King was the traditional head of the army, and the habit of obedience in soldiers is to the King. The Parliament had the greater resources. The King set up his standard at Nottingham on the eve of a dark and stormy August day in 1642. There followed a long and obstinate civil war, the King holding Oxford, the Parliament, London. Success swayed from side to side but the King could never close on London nor Parliament take Oxford. Each antagonist was

weakened by moderate adherents who "did not want to go too far." There emerged among the Parliamentary commanders a certain Oliver Cromwell, who had raised a small troop of horse and who rose to the position of general. Lord Warwick, his contemporary, describes him as a plain man, in a cloth suit "made by an ill country tailor." He was no mere fighting soldier, but a military organizer; he realized the inferior quality of many of the Parliamentary forces, and set himself to remedy it. The Cavaliers of the King had the picturesque tradition of chivalry and loyalty on their side; Parliament was something new and difficult — without any comparable traditions. "Your troops are most of them old decayed serving men and tapsters," said Cromwell. "Do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage and resolution in them?" But there is something better and stronger than picturesque chivalry in the world, religious enthusiasm. He set himself to get together a "godly" regiment. They were to be earnest, sober-living men. Above all, they were to be men of strong convictions. He disregarded all social traditions, and drew his officers from every class. "I had rather have a plain, russet-coated captain *that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows*, than what you call a gentleman and is nothing else." England discovered a new force, the Ironsides, in its midst, in which footmen, draymen, and ships' captains held high command, side by side with men of family. They became the type on which the Parliament sought to reconstruct its entire army. The Ironsides were the backbone of this "New Model." From Marston Moor to Naseby these men swept the Cavaliers before them. The King was at last a captive in the hands of Parliament.

There were still attempts at settlement that would have left the King a sort of king, but Charles was a man doomed to tragic issues, incessantly scheming, "so false a man that he is not to be trusted." The English were drifting towards a situation new in the world's history, in which a monarch should be formally tried for treason to his people and condemned.

Most revolutions are precipitated, as this English one was, by the excesses of the ruler, and by attempts at strength and firmness beyond the compass of the law; and most revolutions swing by a

kind of necessity towards an extremer conclusion than is warranted by the original quarrel. The English revolution was no exception. The English are by nature a compromising and even a vacillating people, and probably the great majority of them still wanted the King to be King and the people to be free, and all the lions and lambs to lie down together in peace and liberty. But the army of the New Model could not go back. There would have been scant mercy for these draymen and footmen who had ridden down the King's gentlemen if the King came back. When Parliament began to treat again with this regal trickster, the New Model intervened; Colonel Pride turned out eighty members from the House of Commons who favoured the King, and the illegal residue, the Rump Parliament, then put the King on trial.

But indeed the King was already doomed. The House of Lords rejected the ordinance for the trial, and the Rump then proclaimed "that the People are under God, the original of all just power," and that "the Commons of England ... have the supreme power in this nation," and — assuming that it was itself the Commons — proceeded with the trial. The King was condemned as a "tyrant, traitor, murderer, and enemy of his country." He was taken one January morning in 1649 to a scaffold erected outside the windows of his own banqueting-room at Whitehall. There he was beheaded. He died with piety and a certain noble self-pity — eight years after the execution of Strafford, and after six and a half years of a destructive civil war which had been caused almost entirely by his own lawlessness.

This was indeed a great and terrifying thing that Parliament had done. The like of it had never been heard of in the world before. Kings had killed each other times enough; parricide, fratricide, assassination, those are the privileged expedients of princes; but that a section of the people should rise up, try its king solemnly and deliberately for disloyalty, mischief, and treachery, and condemn and kill him, sent horror through every court in Europe. The Rump Parliament had gone beyond the ideas and conscience of its time. It was as if a committee of jungle deer had taken and killed a tiger — a crime against nature. The Tsar of Russia chased the English envoy from his court. France and Holland committed acts of open hostility.

England, confused and conscience-stricken at her own sacrilege, stood isolated before the world.

But for a time the personal quality of Oliver Cromwell and the discipline and strength of the army he had created maintained England in the republican course she had taken. The Irish Catholics had made a massacre of the Protestant English in Ireland, and now Cromwell suppressed the Irish insurrection with great vigour. Except for certain friars at the storm of Drogheda, none but men with arms in their hands were killed by his troops; but the atrocities of the massacre were fresh in his mind, no quarter was given in battle, and so his memory still rankles in the minds of the Irish, who have a long memory for their own wrongs. After Ireland came Scotland, where Cromwell shattered a Royalist army at the Battle of Dunbar (1650). Then he turned his attention to Holland, which country had rashly seized upon the divisions among the English as an excuse for the injury of a trade rival. The Dutch were then the rulers of the sea, and the English fleet fought against odds; but after a series of obstinate sea fights the Dutch were driven from the British seas and the English took their place as the ascendant naval power. Dutch and French ships must dip their flags to them. An English fleet went into the Mediterranean — the first English naval force to enter those waters; it put right various grievances of the English shippers with Tuscany and Malta, and bombarded the pirate nest of Algiers and destroyed the pirate fleet — which in the lax days of Charles had been wont to come right up to the coast of Cornwall and Devon to intercept ships and carry off slaves to Africa. The strong arm of England also intervened to protect the Protestants in the south of France, who were being hunted to death by the Duke of Savoy. France, Sweden, Denmark, all found it wiser to overcome their first distaste for regicide and allied themselves with England. Came a war with Spain, and the great English Admiral Blake destroyed the Spanish Plate Fleet at Teneriffe in an action of almost incredible daring. He engaged land batteries. He was the first man "that brought ships to contemn castles on the shore." (He died in 1657, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, but after the restoration of the monarchy his bones were dug out by the order of Charles II, and removed to St. Margaret's, Westminster.) Such was the figure that

England cut in the eyes of the world during her brief republican days.

On September 3rd, 1658, Cromwell died in the midst of a great storm that did not fail to impress the superstitious. Once his strong hand lay still, England fell away from this premature attempt to realize a righteous commonweal of free men. In 1660 Charles II, the son of Charles the "Martyr," was welcomed back to England with all those manifestations of personal loyalty dear to the English heart, and the country relaxed from its military and naval efficiency as a sleeper might wake and stretch and yawn after too intense a dream. The Puritans were done with. "Merrie England" was herself again, and in 1667 the Dutch, once more masters of the sea, sailed up the Thames to Gravesend and burnt an English fleet in the Medway. "On the night when our ships were burnt by the Dutch," says Pepys, in his diary, "the King did sup with my Lady Castelmaine, and there they were all mad, hunting a poor moth." Charles, from the date of his return, 1660, took control of the foreign affairs of the state, and in 1670 concluded a secret treaty with Louis XIV of France by which he undertook to subordinate entirely English foreign policy to that of France for an annual pension of £100,000. Dunkirk, which Cromwell had taken, had already been sold back to France. The King was a great sportsman; he had the true English love for watching horse races, and the racing centre at Newmarket is perhaps his most characteristic monument.

While Charles lived, his easy humour enabled him to retain the British crown, but he did so by wariness and compromise, and when in 1685 he was succeeded by his brother James II, who was a devout Catholic, and too dull to recognize the hidden limitation of the monarchy in Britain, the old issue between Parliament and Crown became acute. James set himself to force his country into a religious reunion with Rome. In 1688 he was in flight to France. But this time the great lords and merchants and gentlemen were too circumspect to let this revolt against the King fling them into the hands of a second Pride or a second Cromwell. They had already called in another king, William, Prince of Orange, to replace James. The change was made rapidly. There was no civil war — except in Ireland — and no release of the deeper revolutionary forces of the country.

Of William's claim to the throne, or rather of his wife Mary's

claim, we cannot tell here, its interest is purely technical, nor how William III and Mary ruled, nor how, after the widower William had reigned alone for a time, the throne passed on to Mary's sister Anne (1702-14). Anne seems to have thought favourably of a restoration of the Stuart line, but the Lords and the Commons, who now dominated English affairs, preferred a less competent king. Some sort of claim could be made out for the Elector of Hanover, who became King of England as George I (1714-27). He was entirely German, he could speak no English, and he brought a swarm of German women and German attendants to the English court; a dullness, a tarnish, came over the intellectual life of the land with his coming, the poetry, painting, architecture, and imaginative literature of later eighteenth-century England is immeasurably below that of the seventeenth century, but this isolation of the court from English life was his conclusive recommendation to the great landowners and the commercial interests who chiefly brought him over. England entered upon a phase which Lord Beaconsfield has called the "Venetian oligarchy" stage; the supreme power resided in Parliament, dominated now by the Lords, for the art of bribery and a study of the methods of working elections carried to a high pitch by Sir Robert Walpole had robbed the House of Commons of its original freedom and vigour. By ingenious devices the parliamentary vote was restricted to a shrinking number of electors, old towns with little or no population would return one or two members (old Sarum had one non-resident voter, no population, and two members), while newer populous centres had no representation at all. And by insisting upon a high property qualification for members, the chance of the Commons speaking in common accents of vulgar needs was still more restricted. George I was followed by the very similar George II (1727-60), and it was only at his death that England had again a king who had been born in England, and one who could speak English fairly well, his grandson George III. On this monarch's attempt to recover some of the larger powers of monarchy we shall have something to say in a later section.

Such briefly is the story of the struggle in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between the three main factors in the problem of the "modern state"; between the crown, the private

property owners, and that vague power, still blind and ignorant, the power of the quite common people. This latter factor appears as yet only at moments when the country is most deeply stirred; then it sinks back into the depths. But the end of the story, thus far, is a very complete triumph of the British private property owner over the dreams and schemes of Machiavellian absolutism. With the Hanoverian Dynasty England became — as the *Times* recently styled her — a "crowned republic." She had worked out a new method of government, Parliamentary government, recalling in many ways the Senate and Popular Assembly of Rome, but more steadfast and efficient because of its use, however restricted, of the representative method. Her assembly at Westminster was to become the "Mother of Parliaments" throughout the world. Towards the crown the English Parliament has held and still holds much the relation of the mayor of the palace to the Merovingian kings. The king is conceived of as ceremonial and irresponsible, a living symbol of the royal and imperial system. But much power remains latent in the tradition and prestige of the crown, and the succession of the four Hanoverian Georges, William IV (1830), Victoria (1837), Edward VII (1901), and the present king, George V (1910), is of a quite different strain from the feeble and short-lived Merovingian monarchs. In the affairs of the church, the military and naval organizations, and the foreign office, these sovereigns have all in various degrees exercised an influence which is none the less important because it is indefinable.

§ 3

The breaking away of the Netherlands from absolutist monarchy was on the face of it much more of a religious and national affair and much less economic and social than the English parliamentary revolution. In the twelfth century all the lower Rhine country was divided up among a number of small rulers, and the population was a Low German one on a Keltic basis, mixed with subsequent Danish ingredients very similar to the English admixture. The southeastern fringe of it spoke French dialects; the bulk, Frisian, Dutch, and other Low German languages. The Netherlands figured largely in the crusades. Godfrey of Bouillon, who took Jerusalem (First Crusade),

was a Belgian; and the founder of the so-called Latin Dynasty of emperors in Constantinople (Fourth Crusade) was Baldwin of Flanders. (They were called Latin emperors because they were on the side of the Latin church.) In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries considerable towns grew up in the Netherlands: Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, Utrecht, Leyden, Haarlem, and so forth; and these towns developed quasi-independent municipal governments and a class of educated townsmen. We will not trouble the reader with the dynastic accidents that linked the affairs of the Netherlands with Burgundy (Eastern France), and which finally made their overlordship the inheritance of the Emperor Charles V.

It was under Charles that the Protestant doctrines that now prevailed in Germany spread into the Netherlands. Charles persecuted with some vigour, but in 1556, as we have told, he handed over the task to his son Philip (Philip II). Philip's spirited foreign policy — he was carrying on a war with France — presently became a second source of trouble between himself and the Netherlandish noblemen and townsmen, because he had to come to them for supplies. The great nobles, led by William the Silent, Prince of Orange, and the Counts of Egmont and Horn, made themselves the heads of a popular resistance, in which it is now impossible to disentangle the objection to taxation from the objection to religious persecution. The great nobles were not at first Protestants. They became Protestants as the struggle grew in bitterness. The people were often bitterly Protestant.

Philip was resolved to rule both the property and consciences of his Netherlander. He sent picked Spanish troops into the country, and he made governor-general a nobleman named Alva, one of those ruthless "strong" men who wreck governments and monarchies. For a time he ruled the land with a hand of iron, but the hand of iron begets a soul of iron in the body it grips, and in 1567 — about eighty years, that is, before the English civil war — the Netherlands were in open revolt. Alva murdered, sacked, and massacred — in vain. Counts Egmont and Horn were executed. William the Silent became the great leader of the Dutch, a king *de facto*. For a long time, and with many complications, the struggle for liberty continued, and through it all it is noteworthy that the rebels continued to cling to the

plea that Philip II was their king — if only he would be a reasonable and limited king. But the idea of limited monarchy was distasteful to the crowned heads of Europe at that time, and at last Philip drove the United Provinces, for which we now use the name of Holland, to the republican form of government. Holland, be it noted — not all the Netherlands; the southern Netherlands, Belgium as we now call that country, remained at the end of the struggle a Spanish possession and Catholic.

The siege of Alkmaar (1573), as Motley describes it, may be taken as a sample of that long and hideous conflict between the little Dutch people and the still vast resources of Catholic Imperialism.

"'If I take Alkmaar,' Alva wrote to Philip, 'I am resolved not to leave a single creature alive; the knife shall be put to every throat.' ...

"And now, with the dismantled and desolate Haarlem before their eyes, a prophetic phantom, perhaps, of their own imminent fate, did the handful of people shut up within Alkmaar prepare for the worst. Their main hope lay in the friendly sea. The vast sluices called the Zyp, through which the inundation of the whole northern province could be very soon effected, were but a few miles distant. By opening these gates, and by piercing a few dykes, the ocean might be made to fight for them. To obtain this result, however, the consent of the inhabitants was requisite, as the destruction of all the standing crops would be inevitable. The city was so closely invested, that it was a matter of life and death to venture forth, and it was difficult, therefore, to find an envoy for this hazardous mission. At last, a carpenter in the city, Peter Van der Mey by name, undertook the adventure....

"Affairs soon approached a crisis within the beleaguered city. Daily skirmishes, without decisive results, had taken place outside the walls. At last, on the 18th of September, after a steady cannonade of nearly twelve hours, Don Frederick, at three in the afternoon, ordered an assault. Notwithstanding his seven months' experience at Haarlem, he still believed it certain that he should carry Alkmaar by storm. The attack took place at once upon the Frisian gate and upon the red tower on the opposite side. Two choice regiments, recently arrived from Lombardy, led the onset, rending the air with their shouts and confident of an easy victory. They were sustained by what

seemed an overwhelming force of disciplined troops. Yet never, even in the recent history of Haarlem, had an attack been received by more dauntless breasts. Every living man was on the walls. The storming parties were assailed with cannon, with musketry, with pistols. Boiling water, pitch and oil, molten lead, and unslaked lime were poured upon them every moment. Hundreds of tarred and burning hoops were skilfully quoited around the necks of the soldiers, who struggled in vain to extricate themselves from these fiery ruffs, while as fast as any of the invaders planted foot upon the breach, they were confronted face to face with sword and dagger by the burghers, who hurled them headlong into the moat below.

"Thrice was the attack renewed with ever-increasing rage — thrice repulsed with unflinching fortitude. The storm continued four hours long. During all that period not one of the defenders left his post, till he dropped from it dead or wounded.... The trumpet of recall was sounded, and the Spaniards, utterly discomfited, retired from the walls, leaving at least one thousand dead in the trenches, while only thirteen burghers and twenty-four of the garrison lost their lives.... Ensign Solis, who had mounted the breach for an instant, and miraculously escaped with life, after having been hurled from the battlements, reported that he had seen 'neither helmet nor harness' as he looked down into the city: only some plain-looking people, generally dressed like fishermen. Yet these plain-looking fishermen had defeated the veterans of Alva....

"Meantime, as Governor Sonoy had opened many of the dykes, the land in the neighbourhood of the camp was becoming plashy, although as yet the threatened inundation had not taken place. The soldiers were already very uncomfortable and very refractory. The carpenter-envoy had not been idle...."

He returned with despatches for the city. By accident or contrivance he lost these despatches as he made his way into the town, so that they fell into Alva's hands. They contained a definite promise from the Duke of Orange to flood the country so as to drown the whole Spanish army. Incidentally this would also have drowned most of the Dutch harvest and cattle. But Alva, when he had read these documents, did not wait for the opening of any more sluices. Presently the stout men of Alkmaar, cheering and jeering, watched

the Spaniards breaking camp....

The form assumed by the government of Holland was a patrician republic under the headship of the house of Orange. The States-General was far less representative of the whole body of citizens than was the English Parliament even in its "Venetian" days. Though the worst of the struggle was over after Alkmaar, Holland was not effectively independent until 1609, and its independence was only fully and completely recognized by the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. We have given this account of the origin of free Holland *after* our account of the English revolution because it was less representative of the essential triangle of forces in the developing modern state, and because it was complicated by the merely patriotic element of insurrection against the Spanish foreigner. But though we have told of it later, the reader must remember it came to its climax in the time of Queen Elizabeth of England, half a century earlier than the English civil war. As Motley says, the Dutch, the English, and the American revolution, of which latter we have presently to tell, "form but a single chapter in the great volume of human fate."

§ 4

Upon no part of Europe did the collapse of the idea of a unified Christendom bring more disastrous consequences than to Germany. Naturally one would have supposed that the Emperor, being by origin a German, both in the case of the earlier lines and in the case of the Habsburgs, would have developed into the national monarch of a united German-speaking state. It was the accidental misfortune of Germany that her Emperors never remained German. Frederick II, the last Hohenstaufen, was, as we have seen, a half-Orientalized Sicilian; the Habsburgs, by marriage and inclination, became in the person of Charles V, first Burgundian and then Spanish in spirit. After the death of Charles V, his brother Ferdinand took Austria and the empire, and his son Philip II took Spain, the Netherlands, and South Italy; but the Austrian line, obstinately Catholic, holding its patrimony mostly on the eastern frontiers, deeply entangled therefore with Hungarian affairs and paying tribute, as Ferdinand and his two successors did, to the Turk, retained no grip upon the north Germans

with their disposition towards Protestantism, their Baltic and westward affinities, and their ignorance of or indifference to the Turkish danger.

The sovereign princes, dukes, electors, prince bishops, and the like, whose domains cut up the map of the Germany of the Middle Ages into a crazy patchwork, were really not the equivalents of the kings of England and France. They were rather on the level of the great land-owning dukes and peers of France and England. Until 1701 none of them had the title of "King." Many of their dominions were less both in size and value than the larger estates of the British nobility. The German Diet was like the States-General or like a parliament without the presence of elected representatives. So that the great civil war in Germany that presently broke out, the Thirty

Years' War (1618-48), was in its essential nature much more closely akin to the civil war in England (1643-49) and to the war of the Fronde (1648-53), the league of feudal nobles against the Crown in France, than appears upon the surface. In all these cases the Crown was either Catholic or disposed to become Catholic, and the recalcitrant nobles found their individualistic disposition tending to a Protestant formula. But while in England and Holland the Protestant nobles and rich merchants ultimately triumphed and in France the success of the Crown was even more complete, in Germany neither was the Emperor strong enough, nor had the Protestant princes a sufficient unity and organization among themselves to secure a conclusive triumph. It ended there in a torn-up Germany. Moreover, the German issue was complicated by the fact that various non-German peoples, the Protestant Bohemians and the Protestant Swedes (who had a new Protestant monarchy which had arisen under Gustava Vasa as a direct result of the Reformation) were entangled in the struggle. Finally, the French monarchy, triumphant now over its own nobles, although it was Catholic, came in on the Protestant side with the evident intention of taking the place of the Habsburgs as the imperial line.

The prolongation of the war, and the fact that it was not fought along a determined frontier, but all over an empire of patches, Protestant here, Catholic there, made it one of the most cruel and destructive that Europe had known since the days of the barbarian raids. Its peculiar mischief lay not in the fighting, but in the concomitants of the fighting. It came at a time when military tactics had developed to a point that rendered ordinary levies useless against trained professional infantry. Volley firing with muskets at a range of a few score yards had abolished the individualistic knight in armour, but the charge of disciplined masses of cavalry could still disperse any infantry that had not been drilled into a mechanical rigidity. The infantry with their muzzle-loading muskets could not keep up a steady enough fire to wither determined cavalry before it charged home. They had, therefore, to meet the shock standing or kneeling behind a bristling wall of pikes or bayonets. For this they needed great discipline and experience. Iron cannon were still of small size and not very abundant, and they did not play a decisive part as yet in

warfare. They could "plough lanes" in infantry, but they could not easily smash and scatter it if it was sturdy and well drilled. War under these conditions was entirely in the hands of seasoned professional soldiers, and the question of their pay was as important a one to the generals of that time as the question of food or munitions. As the long struggle dragged on from phase to phase, and the financial distress of the land increased, the commanders of both sides were forced to fall back upon the looting of towns and villages, both for supply and to make up the arrears of their soldiers' pay. The soldiers became, therefore, more and more mere brigands living on the country, and the Thirty Years' War set up a tradition of looting as a legitimate operation in warfare and of outrage as a soldiers' privilege that has tainted the good name of Germany right down to the Great War of 1914. The earlier chapters of Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, with its vivid description of the massacre and burning of Magdeburg, will give the reader a far better idea of the warfare of this time than any formal history. So harried was the land that the farmers ceased from cultivation, what snatch crops could be harvested were hidden away, and great crowds of starving women and children became camp followers of the armies, and supplied a thievish tail to the rougher plundering. At the close of the struggle all Germany was ruined and desolate. Central Europe did not fully recover from these robberies and devastations for a century.

Here we can but name Tilly and Wallenstein, the great plunder captains on the Habsburg side, and Gustavus Adolphus, the King of Sweden, the Lion of the North, the champion of the Protestants, whose dream was to make the Baltic Sea a "Swedish Lake." Gustavus Adolphus was killed in his decisive victory over Wallenstein at Lützen (1632), and Wallenstein was murdered in 1634. In 1648 the princes and diplomatists gathered amidst the havoc they had made to patch up the affairs of Central Europe at the Peace of Westphalia. By that peace the power of the Emperor was reduced to a shadow, and the acquisition of Alsace brought France up to the Rhine. And one German prince, the Hohenzollern Elector of Brandenburg, acquired so much territory as to become the greatest German power next to the Emperor, a power that presently (1701) became the kingdom of Prussia. The Treaty also recognized two long

accomplished facts, the separation from the empire and the complete independence of both Holland and Switzerland.

§ 5

We have opened this chapter with the stories of two countries. Britain and the Netherlands, in which the resistance of the private citizen to this new type of monarchy, the Machiavellian monarchy, that was arising out of the moral collapse of Christendom, succeeded. But in France, Russia, in many states of Germany and of Italy — Saxony and Tuscany *e. g.* — personal monarchy was not so restrained and overthrown; it established itself indeed as the ruling European system during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

(In Poland conditions were peculiar, and they will be dealt with in a later section.)

In France there had been no Magna Carta, and there was no tradition of parliamentary rule. There was the same opposition of interests between the crown on the one hand and the landlords and merchants on the other, but the latter had no recognized and traditional gathering-place, and no dignified method of unity. They formed oppositions to the crown, they made leagues of resistance — such was the "Fronde," which was struggling against the young King Louis XIV and his great minister Mazarin, while Charles I was fighting for his life in England — but ultimately (1652), after a civil war, they were conclusively defeated; and while in England after the establishment of the Hanoverians the House of Lords and their subservient Commons ruled the country, in France, after 1652, the court entirely dominated the aristocracy. Cardinal Mazarin was himself building upon a foundation that Cardinal Richelieu, the contemporary of King James I of England, had prepared for him. After the time of Mazarin we hear of no great French nobles unless they are at court as court servants and officials. They have been tamed — but at a price, the price of throwing the burthen of taxation upon the voiceless mass of the common people. From many taxes both the clergy and the nobility — everyone indeed who bore a title — were exempt. In the end this injustice became intolerable, but for a while the French monarchy flourished like the Psalmist's green bay

tree. By the opening of the eighteenth century English writers are already calling attention to the misery of the French lower classes and the comparative prosperity, *at that time*, of the English poor.

On such terms of unrighteousness what we may call “Grand

Monarchy" established itself in France. Louis XIV, styled the Grand Monarque, reigned for the unparalleled length of seventy-two years (1643-1715), and set a pattern for all the kings of Europe. At first he was guided by his Machiavellian minister, Cardinal Mazarin; after the death of the Cardinal he himself in his own proper person became the ideal "Prince." He was, within his limitations, an exceptionally capable king; his ambition was stronger than his baser passions, and he guided his country towards bankruptcy through the complication of a spirited foreign policy, with an elaborate dignity that still extorts our admiration. His immediate desire was to consolidate and extend France to the Rhine and Pyrenees, and to absorb the Spanish Netherlands; his remoter view saw the French kings as the possible successors of Charlemagne in a recast Holy Roman Empire. He made bribery a state method almost more important than warfare. Charles II of England was in his pay, and so were most of the Polish nobility, presently to be described. His money, or rather the money of the tax-paying classes in France, went everywhere. But his prevailing occupation was splendour. His great palace at Versailles, with its salons, its corridors, its mirrors, its terraces and fountains and parks and prospects, was the envy and admiration of the world. He provoked a universal imitation. Every king and princelet in Europe was building his own Versailles as much beyond his means as his subjects and credits would permit. Everywhere the nobility rebuilt or extended their chateaux to the new pattern. A great industry of beautiful and elaborate fabrics and furnishings developed. The luxurious arts flourished everywhere; sculpture in alabaster, faience, gilt wood-work, metal work, stamped leather, much music, magnificent painting, beautiful printing and bindings, fine cookery, fine vintages. Amidst the mirrors and fine furniture went a strange race of "gentlemen" in vast powdered wigs, silks and laces, poised upon high red heels, supported by amazing canes; and still more wonderful "ladies," under towers of powdered hair and wearing vast expansions of silk and satin sustained on wire. Through it all postured the great Louis, the sun of his world, unaware of the meagre and sulky and bitter faces that watched him from those lower darknesses to which his sunshine did not penetrate.

We cannot give here at any length the story of the wars and

doings of this monarch. In many ways Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* is still the best and most wholesome account. He created a French navy fit to face the English and Dutch; a very considerable achievement. But because his intelligence did not rise above the lure of that Fata Morgana, that crack in the political wits of Europe, the dream of a world-wide Holy Roman Empire, he drifted in his later years to the propitiation of the Papacy, which had hitherto been hostile to him. He set himself against those spirits of independence and disunion, the Protestant princes, and he made war against Protestantism in France. Great numbers of his most sober and valuable subjects were driven abroad by his religious persecutions, taking arts and industries with them. The English silk manufacture, for instance, was founded by French Protestants. Under his rule were carried out the "dragonnades," a peculiarly malignant and effectual form of persecution. Rough soldiers were quartered in the houses of the Protestants, and were free to disorder the life of their hosts and insult their womankind as they thought fit. Men yielded to that sort of pressure who would not have yielded to rack and fire. The education of the next generation of Protestants was broken up, and the parents had to give Catholic instruction or none. They gave it, no doubt, with a sneer and an intonation that destroyed all faith in it. While more tolerant countries became mainly sincerely Catholic or sincerely Protestant, the persecuting countries, like France and Spain and Italy, so destroyed honest Protestant teaching that these peoples became mainly Catholic believers or Catholic atheists, ready to break out into blank atheism whenever the opportunity offered. The next reign, that of Louis XV, was the age of that supreme mocker, Voltaire (1694-1778), an age in which everybody in French society conformed to the Roman church and hardly anyone believed in it.

It was part — and an excellent part — of the pose of Grand Monarchy to patronize literature and the sciences. Louis XIV set up an academy of sciences in rivalry with the English Royal Society of Charles II and the similar association at Florence. He decorated his court with poets, playwrights, philosophers, and scientific men. If the scientific process got little inspiration from this patronage, it did at any rate acquire resources for experiment and publication, and a certain prestige in the eyes of the vulgar.

Louis XV was the great-grandson of Louis XIV, and an incompetent imitator of his predecessor's magnificence. He posed as a king, but his ruling passion was that common obsession of our kind, the pursuit of women, tempered by a superstitious fear of hell. How such women as the Duchess of Châteauroux, Madame de Pompadour, and Madame du Barry dominated the pleasures of the king, and how wars and alliances were made, provinces devastated, thousands of people killed, because of the vanities and spites of these creatures, and how all the public life of France and Europe was tainted with intrigue and prostitution and imposture because of them, the reader must learn from the memoirs of the time. The spirited foreign policy went on steadily under Louis XV towards its final smash. In 1774 this Louis, Louis the Well-Beloved, as his flatterers called him, died of smallpox, and was succeeded by his grandson, Louis XVI (1774-93), a dull, well-meaning man, an excellent shot, and an amateur locksmith of some ingenuity. Of how he came to follow Charles I to the scaffold we shall tell in a later section. Our present concern is with Grand Monarchy in the days of its glory.

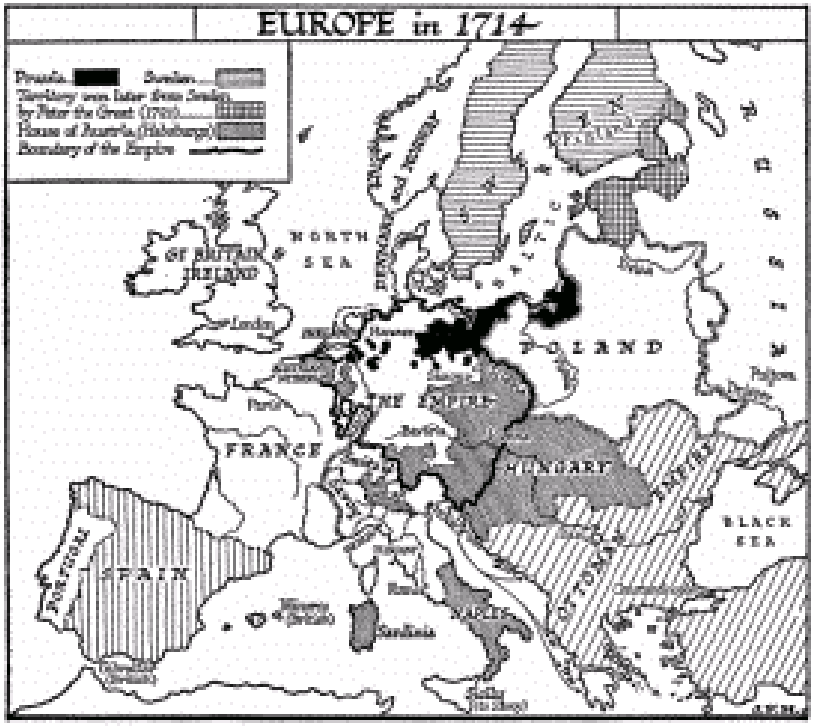

Among the chief practitioners of Grand Monarchy outside France we may note first the Prussian kings, Frederick William I (1713-40), and his son and successor, Frederick II, Frederick the Great (1740-86). The story of the slow rise of the Hohenzollern family, which ruled the kingdom of Prussia, from inconspicuous beginnings is too tedious and unimportant for us to follow here. It is a story of luck and violence, of bold claims and sudden betrayals. It is told with great appreciation in Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*. By the eighteenth century the Prussian kingdom was important enough to threaten the empire; it had a strong, well-drilled army, and its king was an attentive and worthy student of Machiavelli. Frederick the Great perfected his Versailles at Potsdam. There the park of Sans Souci, with its fountains, avenues, statuary, aped its model; there also was the New Palace, a vast brick building erected at enormous expense, the Orangery in the Italian style, with a collection of pictures, a Marble Palace, and so on. Frederick carried culture to the pitch of authorship, and corresponded with and entertained Voltaire,

to their mutual exasperation. The Austrian dominions were kept too busy between the hammer of the French and the anvil of the Turks to develop the real Grand Monarch style until the reign of Maria-Theresa (who, being a woman, did not bear the title of Empress) (1740-80). Joseph II, who was Emperor from 1765-92, succeeded to her palaces in 1780. With Peter the Great (1682-1725) the empire of Muscovy broke away from her Tartar traditions and entered the sphere of French attraction. Peter shaved the Oriental beards of his nobles and introduced Western costume. These were but the outward and visible symbols of his westering tendencies. To release himself from the Asiatic feeling and traditions of Moscow, which, like Pekin, has a sacred inner city, the Kremlin, he built himself a new capital, Petrograd, upon the swamp of the Neva. And of course he built his Versailles, the Peterhof, about eighteen miles from this new Paris, employing a French architect and having a terrace, fountains, cascades, picture gallery, park, and all the recognized features. His more distinguished successors were Elizabeth (1741-62) and Catherine the Great, a German princess, who, after obtaining the crown in sound Oriental fashion through the murder of her husband, the legitimate Tsar, reverted to advanced Western ideals and ruled with great vigour from 1762 to 1796. She set up an academy, and corresponded with Voltaire. And she lived to witness the end of the system of Grand Monarchy in Europe and the execution of Louis XVI.

We cannot even catalogue here the minor Grand Monarchs of the time in Florence (Tuscany) and Savoy and Saxony and Denmark and Sweden. Versailles, under a score of names, is starred in every volume of Bædeker, and the tourist gapes in their palaces. Nor can we deal with the war of the Spanish Succession. Spain, overstrained by the imperial enterprises of Charles V and Philip II, and enfeebled by a bigoted persecution of Protestants, Moslems, and Jews, was throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sinking down from her temporary importance in European affairs to the level of a secondary power again.

These European monarchs ruled their kingdoms as their noblemen ruled their estates: they plotted against one another, they were politic and far-seeing in an unreal fashion, they made wars, they spent the

substance of Europe upon absurd “policies” of aggression and resistance. At last there burst upon them a great storm out of the depths. That storm, the First French Revolution, the indignation of the common man in Europe, took their system unawares. It was but the opening outbreak of a great cycle of political and social storms that still continue, that will perhaps continue until every vestige of nationalist monarchy has been swept out of the world and the skies clear again for the great peace of the federation of mankind.

§ 6

We have seen how the idea of a world-rule and a community of mankind first came into human affairs, and we have traced how the failure of the Christian churches to sustain and establish those conceptions of its founder, led to a moral collapse in political affairs and a reversion to egotism and want of faith. We have seen how Machiavellian monarchy set itself up against the spirit of brotherhood in Christendom, and how Machiavellian monarchy developed throughout a large part of Europe into the Grand Monarchies and Parliamentary Monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But the mind and imagination of man is incessantly active, and beneath the sway of the grand monarchs, a complex of notions and traditions was being woven as a net is woven, to catch and entangle men’s minds, the conception of international politics not as a matter of dealings between princes, but as a matter of dealings between a kind of immortal Beings, the Powers. The Princes came and went; a Louis XIV would be followed by a petticoat-hunting Louis XV, and he again by that dull-witted amateur locksmith, Louis XVI. Peter the Great gave place to a succession of empresses; the chief continuity of the Habsburgs after Charles V, either in Austria or Spain, was a continuity of thick lips, clumsy chins, and superstition; the amiable scoundrelism of a Charles II would make a mock of his own pretensions. But what remained much more steadfast were the secretariats of the foreign ministeries and the ideas of people who wrote of state concerns. The ministers maintained a continuity of policy during the “off days” of their monarchs, and between one monarch and another.

So we find that the prince gradually became less important in men's minds than the "Power" of which he was the head. We begin to read less and less of the schemes and ambitions of King This or That, and more of the "Designs of France" or the "Ambitions of Prussia." In an age when religious faith was declining, we find men displaying a new and vivid belief in the reality of these personifications. These vast vague phantoms, the "Powers," crept insensibly into European political thought, until in the later eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries they dominated it entirely. To this day they dominate it. European life remained nominally Christian, but to worship one God in spirit and in truth is to belong to one community with all one's fellow worshippers. In practical reality Europe does not do this, she has given herself up altogether to the worship of this strange state mythology. To these sovereign deities, to the unity of "Italy," to the hegemony of "Prussia," to the glory of "France," and the destinies of "Russia," she has sacrificed many generations of possible unity, peace, and prosperity and the lives of millions of men.

To regard a tribe or a state as a sort of personality is a very old disposition of the human mind. The Bible abounds in such personifications. Judah, Edom, Moab, Assyria figure in the Hebrew Scriptures as if they were individuals; it is sometimes impossible to say whether the Hebrew writer is dealing with a person or with a nation. It is manifestly a primitive and natural tendency. But in the case of modern Europe it is a retrocession. Europe, under the idea of Christendom, had gone far towards unification. And while such tribal persons as "Israel" or "Tyre" did represent a certain community of blood, a certain uniformity of type, and a homogeneity of interest, the European powers which arose in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were entirely fictitious unities. Russia was in truth an assembly of the most incongruous elements, Cossacks, Tartars, Ukrainians, Muscovites, and, after the time of Peter, Esthonians and Lithuanians; the France of Louis XV comprehended German Alsace and freshly assimilated regions of Burgundy; it was a prison of suppressed Huguenots and a sweating-house for peasants. In "Britain," England carried on her back the Hanoverian dominions in Germany, Scotland, the profoundly alien Welsh and the hostile and

Catholic Irish. Such powers as Sweden, Prussia, and still more so Poland and Austria, if we watch them in a series of historical maps, contract, expand, thrust out extensions, and wander over the map of Europe like amœbæ under the microscope....

If we consider the psychology of international relationship as we see it manifested in the world about us, and as it is shown by the development of the "Power" idea in modern Europe, we shall realize certain historically very important facts about the nature of man. Aristotle said that man is a political animal, but in our modern sense of the word politics, which now covers world-politics, he is nothing of the sort. He has still the instincts of the family tribe, and beyond that he has a disposition to attach himself and his family to something larger, to a tribe, a city, a nation, or a state. But that disposition, left to itself, is a vague and very uncritical disposition. If anything, he is inclined to fear and dislike criticism of this something larger that encloses his life and to which he has given himself, and to avoid such criticism. Perhaps he has a subconscious fear of the isolation that may ensue if the system is broken or discredited. He takes the *milieu* in which he finds himself for granted; he accepts his city or his government, just as he accepts the nose or the digestion which fortune has bestowed upon him. But men's loyalties, the sides they take in political things, are not innate, they are educational results. For most men their education in these matters is the silent, continuous education of things about them. Men find themselves a part of Merry England or Holy Russia; they grow up into these devotions; they accept them as a part of their nature.

It is only slowly that the world is beginning to realize how profoundly the tacit education of circumstances can be supplemented, modified, or corrected by positive teaching, by literature, discussion, and properly criticized experience. The real life of the ordinary man is his everyday life, his little circle of affections, fears, hungers, lusts, and imaginative impulses. It is only when his attention is directed to political affairs as something vitally affecting this personal circle, that he brings his reluctant mind to bear upon them. It is scarcely too much to say that the ordinary man thinks as little about political matters as he can, and stops thinking about them as soon as possible. It is still only very curious and exceptional

minds, or minds that have by example or good education acquired the scientific habit of wanting to know why, or minds shocked and distressed by some public catastrophe and roused to wide apprehensions of danger, that will not accept governments and institutions, however preposterous, that do not directly annoy them, as satisfactory. The ordinary human being, until he is so aroused, will acquiesce in any collective activities that are going on in this world in which he finds himself, and any phrasing or symbolization that meets his vague need for something greater to which his personal affairs, his individual circle, can be anchored.

If we keep these manifest limitations of our nature in mind, it no longer becomes a mystery how, as the idea of Christianity as a world brotherhood of men sank into discredit because of its fatal entanglement with priestcraft and the Papacy on the one hand and with the authority of princes on the other, and the age of faith passed into our present age of doubt and disbelief, men shifted the reference of their lives from the kingdom of God and the brotherhood of mankind to these apparently more living realities, France and England, Holy Russia, Spain, Prussia, which were at least embodied in active courts, which maintained laws, exerted power through armies and navies, waved flags with a compelling solemnity, and were self-assertive and insatiably greedy in an entirely human and understandable fashion. Certainly such men as Cardinal Richelieu and Cardinal Mazarin thought of themselves as serving greater ends than their own or their monarch's; they served the quasi-divine France of their imaginations. And as certainly these habits of mind percolated down from them to their subordinates and to the general body of the population. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the general population of Europe was religious and only vaguely patriotic; by the nineteenth it had become wholly patriotic. In a crowded English or French or German railway carriage of the later nineteenth century it would have aroused far less hostility to have jeered at God than to have jeered at one of those strange beings, England or France or Germany. To these things men's minds clung, and they clung to them because in all the world there appeared nothing else so satisfying to cling to. They were the real and living gods of Europe.

(Yet in the background of the consciousness of the world, waiting as the silence and moonlight wait above the flares and shouts, the hurdy-gurdys and quarrels of a village fair, is the knowledge that all mankind is one brotherhood, that God is the universal and impartial Father of mankind, and that only in that universal service can mankind find peace, or peace be found for the troubles of the individual soul....)

This idealization of governments and foreign offices, this mythology of "Powers" and their loves and hates and conflicts, has so obsessed the imaginations of Europe and Western Asia as to provide it with its "forms of thought." Nearly all the histories, nearly all the political literature of the last two centuries in Europe, have been written in its phraseology. Yet a time is coming when a clearer-sighted generation will read with perplexity how in the community of western Europe, consisting everywhere of very slight variations of a common racial mixture of Nordic and Iberian peoples and immigrant Semitic and Mongolian elements, speaking nearly everywhere modifications of the same Aryan speech, having a common past in the Roman Empire, common religious forms, common social usages, and a common art and science, and intermarrying so freely that no one could tell with certainty the "nationality" of any of his great-grand-children, men could be moved to the wildest excitement upon the question of the ascendancy of "France," the rise and unification of "Germany," the rival claims of "Russia" and "Greece" to possess Constantinople. These conflicts will seem then as reasonless and insane as those dead, now incomprehensible feuds of the "greens" and "blues" that once filled the streets of Byzantium with shouting and bloodshed.

Tremendously as these phantoms, the Powers, rule our minds and lives to-day, they are, as this history shows clearly, things only of the last few centuries, a mere hour, an incidental phase, in the vast deliberate history of our kind. They mark a phase of relapse, a backwater, as the rise of Machiavellian monarchy marks a backwater; they are part of the same eddy of faltering faith, in a process altogether greater and altogether different in its general tendency, the process of the moral and intellectual reunion of mankind. For a time men have relapsed upon these national or

imperial gods of theirs; it is but for a time. The idea of the world state, the universal kingdom of righteousness of which every living soul shall be a citizen, was already in the world two thousand years ago never more to leave it. Men know that it is present even when they refuse to recognize it. In the writings and talk of men about international affairs to-day, in the current discussions of historians and political journalists, there is an effect of drunken men growing sober, and terribly afraid of growing sober. They still talk loudly of their "love" for France, of their "hatred" of Germany, of the "traditional ascendancy of Britain at sea," and so on and so on, like those who sing of their cups in spite of the steadfast onset of sobriety and a headache. These are dead gods they serve. By sea or land men want no Powers ascendant, but only law and service. That silent unavoidable challenge is in all our minds like dawn breaking slowly, shining between the shutters of a disordered room.

§ 7

The seventeenth century in Europe was the century of Louis XIV; he and French ascendancy and Versailles are the central motif of the story. The eighteenth century was equally the century of the "rise of Prussia as a great power," and the chief figure in the story is Frederick II, Frederick the Great. Interwoven with his history is the story of Poland.

The condition of affairs in Poland was peculiar. Unlike its three neighbours, Prussia, Russia, and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy of the Habsburgs, Poland had not developed a Grand Monarchy. Its system of government may be best described as republican with a king, an elected life-president. Each king was separately elected. It was in fact rather more republican than Britain, but its republicanism was more aristocratic in form. Poland had little trade and few manufactures; she was agricultural and still with great areas of grazing, forest, and waste; she was a poor country, and her landowners were poor aristocrats. The mass of her population was a downtrodden and savagely ignorant peasantry, and she also harboured great masses of very poor Jews. She had remained Catholic. She was, so to speak, a poor Catholic inland Britain,

entirely surrounded by enemies instead of by the sea. She had no definite boundaries at all, neither sea nor mountain. And it added to her misfortunes that some of her elected kings had been brilliant and aggressive rulers. Eastward her power extended weakly into regions inhabited almost entirely by Russians; westward she overlapped a German subject population.

Because she had no great trade, she had no great towns to compare with those of western Europe, and no vigorous universities to hold her mind together. Her noble class lived on their estates, without much intellectual intercourse. They were patriotic, they had an aristocratic sense of freedom — which was entirely compatible with the systematic impoverishment of their serfs — but their patriotism and freedom were incapable of effective co-operation. While warfare was a matter of levies of men and horses, Poland was a comparatively strong power; but it was quite unable to keep pace with the development of military art that was making standing forces of professional soldiers the necessary weapon in warfare. Yet divided and disabled as she was, she could yet count some notable victories to her credit. The last Turkish attack upon Vienna (1683) was defeated by the Polish cavalry under King John Sobiesky, King John III. (This same Sobiesky, before he was elected king, had been in the pay of Louis XIV, and had also fought for the Swedes against his native country.) Needless to say, this weak aristocratic republic, with its recurrent royal elections, invited aggression from all three of its neighbours. "Foreign money," and every sort of exterior interference, came into the country at each election. And like the Greeks of old, every disgruntled Polish patriot flew off to some foreign enemy to wreak his indignation upon his ungrateful country.

Even when the King of Poland was elected, he had very little power because of the mutual jealousy of the nobles. Like the English peers, they preferred a foreigner, and for much the same reason, because he had no roots of power in the land; but, unlike the British, their own government had not the solidarity which the periodic assembling of Parliament in London, the "coming up to town," gave the British peers. In London there was "Society," a continuous intermingling of influential persons and ideas. Poland had no London and no "Society." So practically Poland had no central government at

all. The King of Poland could not make war nor peace, levy a tax nor alter the law, without the consent of the Diet, and *any single member of the Diet had the power of putting a veto upon any proposal before it*. He had merely to rise and say, "I disapprove," and the matter dropped. He could even carry his free veto, his *liberum veto*, further. He could object to the assembly of the Diet, and the Diet was thereby dissolved. Poland was not simply a crowned aristocratic republic like the British, it was a paralyzed crowned aristocratic republic.

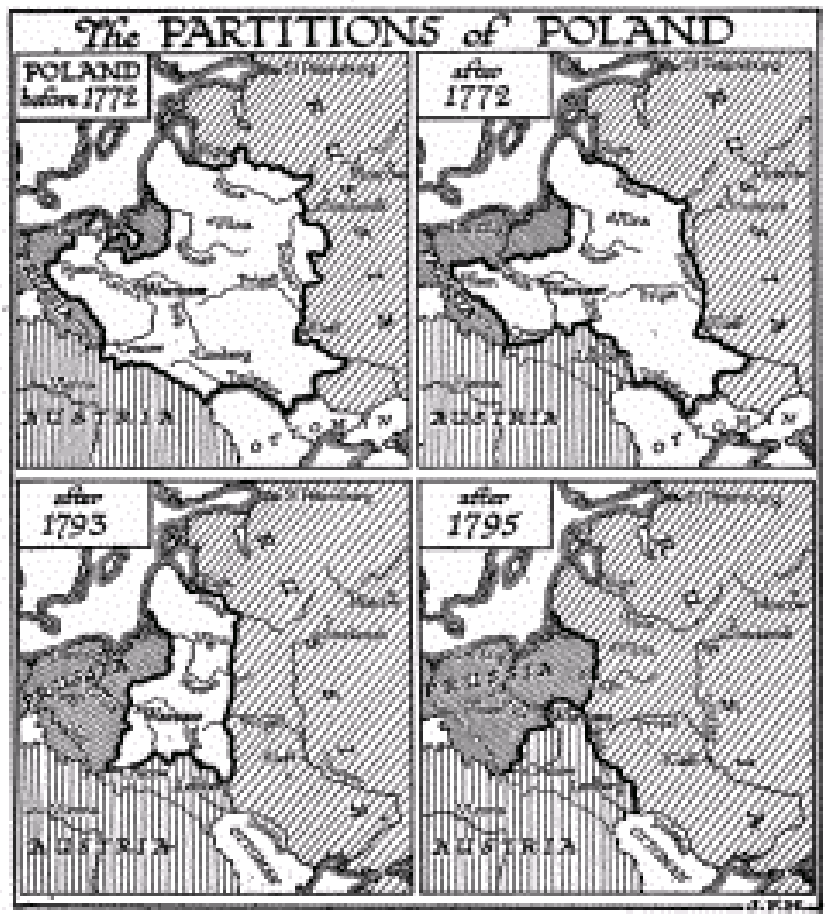

To Frederick the Great the existence of Poland was particularly provocative because of the way in which an arm of Poland reached out to the Baltic at Dantzig and separated his ancestral dominions in

East Prussia from his territories within the empire. It was he who incited Catherine the Second of Russia and Maria Theresa of Austria, whose respect he had earned by depriving her of Silesia, to a joint attack upon Poland.

Let four maps of Poland tell the tale.

After this first outrage of 1772 Poland underwent a great change of heart. Poland was indeed born as a nation on the eve of her dissolution. There was a hasty but very considerable development of education, literature, and art; historians and poets sprang up, and the impossible constitution that had made Poland impotent was swept aside. The free veto was abolished, the crown was made hereditary to save Poland from the foreign intrigues that attended every election, and a Parliament in imitation of the British was set up. There were, however, lovers of the old order in Poland who resented these necessary changes, and these obstructives were naturally supported by Prussia and Russia, who wanted no Polish revival. Came the second partition, and, after a fierce patriotic struggle that began in the region annexed by Prussia and found a leader and national hero in Kosciusko, the final obliteration of Poland from the map. So for a time ended this Parliamentary threat to Grand Monarchy in Eastern Europe. But the patriotism and republican passion of the Poles grew stronger and clearer with suppression. For a hundred and twenty years Poland grew in spirit, and struggled like a submerged creature beneath the political and military net that held her down. She rose again in 1918, at the end of the Great War.

§ 8

We have given some account of the ascendancy of France in Europe, the swift decay of the sappy growth of Spanish power and its separation from Austria, and the rise of Prussia. So far as Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, and Holland were concerned, their competition for ascendancy in Europe was extended and complicated by a struggle for dominion overseas.

The discovery of the huge continent of America, thinly inhabited, undeveloped, and admirably adapted for European settlement and exploitation, the simultaneous discovery of great areas of unworked

country south of the torrid equatorial regions of Africa that had hitherto limited European knowledge, and the gradual realization of vast island regions in the Eastern seas, as yet untouched by Western civilization, was a presentation of opportunity to mankind unprecedented in all history. It was as if the peoples of Europe had come into some splendid legacy. Their world had suddenly quadrupled. There was more than enough for all; they had only to take these lands and continue to do well by them, and their crowded poverty would vanish like a dream. And they received this glorious legacy like ill-bred heirs; it meant no more to them than a fresh occasion for atrocious disputes. But what community of human beings has ever yet preferred creation to conspiracy? What nation in all our story has ever worked with another when, at any cost to itself, it could contrive to do that other an injury? The Powers of Europe began by a frantic "claiming" of the new realms. They went on to exhausting conflicts. Spain, who claimed first and most, and who was for a time "mistress" of two-thirds of America, made no better use of her possession than to bleed herself nearly to death therein.

We have told how the Papacy in its last assertion of world dominion, instead of maintaining the common duty of all Christendom to make a great common civilization in the new lands, divided the American continent between Spain and Portugal. This naturally roused the hostility of the excluded nations. The seamen of England showed no respect for either claim, and set themselves particularly against the Spanish; the Swedes turned their Protestantism to a similar account. The Hollanders, so soon as they had shaken off their Spanish masters, also set their sails westward to flout the Pope and share in the good things of the new world. His Most Catholic Majesty of France hesitated as little as any Protestant. All these powers were soon busy pegging out claims in North America and the West Indies.

Neither the Danish kingdom (which at that time included Norway and Iceland) nor the Swedes secured very much in the scramble. The Danes annexed some of the West Indian islands. Sweden got nothing. Both Denmark and Sweden at this time were deep in the affairs of Germany. We have already named Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant "Lion of the North," and mentioned his campaigns in

Germany, Poland, and Russia. These Eastern European regions are great absorbents of energy, and the strength that might have given Sweden a large share in the new world reaped a barren harvest of glory in Europe. Such small settlements as the Swedes made in America presently fell to the Dutch.

The Hollanders too, with the French monarchy under Cardinal Richelieu and under Louis XIV eating its way across the Spanish Netherlands towards their frontier, had not the undistracted resources that Britain, behind her "silver streak" of sea, could put into overseas adventures.

Moreover, the absolutist efforts of James I and Charles I, and the restoration of Charles II, had the effect of driving out from England a great number of sturdy-minded, republican-spirited Protestants, men of substance and character, who set up in America, and particularly in New England, out of reach, as they supposed, of the king and his taxes. The *Mayflower* was only one of the pioneer vessels of a stream of emigrants. It was the luck of Britain that they remained, though dissentient in spirit, under the British flag. The Dutch never sent out settlers of the same quantity and quality, first because their Spanish rulers would not let them, and then because they had got possession of their own country. And though there was a great emigration of Protestant Huguenots from the dragonnades and persecution of Louis XIV, they had Holland and England close at hand as refuges, and their industry, skill, and sobriety went mainly to strengthen those countries, and particularly England. A few of them founded settlements in Carolina, but these did not remain French; they fell first to the Spanish and finally to the English.

The Dutch settlements, with the Swedish, also succumbed to Britain; Nieuw Amsterdam became British in 1674, and its name was changed to New York, as the reader may learn very cheerfully in Washington Irving's *Knickerbocker's History of New York*. The state of affairs in North America in 1750 is indicated very clearly by a map we have adapted from one in Robinson's *Medieval and Modern Times*. The British power was established along the east coast from Savannah to the St. Lawrence River, and Newfoundland and considerable northern areas, the Hudson Bay Company territories, had been acquired by treaty from the French. The British occupied

Barbados (almost our oldest possession) in 1605, and acquired Jamaica, the Bahamas, and British Honduras from the Spaniards. But France was pursuing a very dangerous and alarming game, a game even more dangerous and alarming on the map than in reality. She had made real settlements in Quebec and Montreal to the north and at New Orleans in the south, and her explorers and agents had pushed south and north, making treaties with the American Indians of the great plains and setting up claims — without setting up towns — right across the continent behind the British. But the realities of the case are not adequately represented in this way. The British colonies were being very solidly settled by a good class of people; they already numbered a population of over a million; the French at that time hardly counted a tenth of that. They had a number of brilliant travellers and missionaries at work, but no substance of population behind them.

Many old maps of America in this period are still to be found, maps designed to scare and "rouse" the British to a sense of the "designs of France" in America. War broke out in 1754, and in 1759 the British and Colonial forces under General Wolfe took Quebec and completed the conquest of Canada in the next year. In 1763 Canada was finally ceded to Britain. (But the western part of the rather indefinite region of Louisiana in the south, named after Louis XIV, remained outside the British sphere. It was taken over by Spain; and in 1800 it was recovered by France. Finally, in 1803, it was bought from France by the United States government.) In this Canadian war the American colonists gained a considerable experience of the military art, and a knowledge of British military organization that was to be of great use to them a little later.

§ 9

Britain, France & Spain in America, 1750.
N.B.- Shading does not indicate areas actually settled (cf. later maps) but general extent of territories claimed.
Hudson's Bay
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY
NEWFOUNDLAND
NOVA SCOTIA
Boston
New York
LOUISIANA
Savannah
New Orleans
BAHAMAS (SPAIN)
Gulf of Mexico
CUBA
HAITI
JAMAICA (SPAIN)
Mexico
S. AMERICA
British
French
Spanish

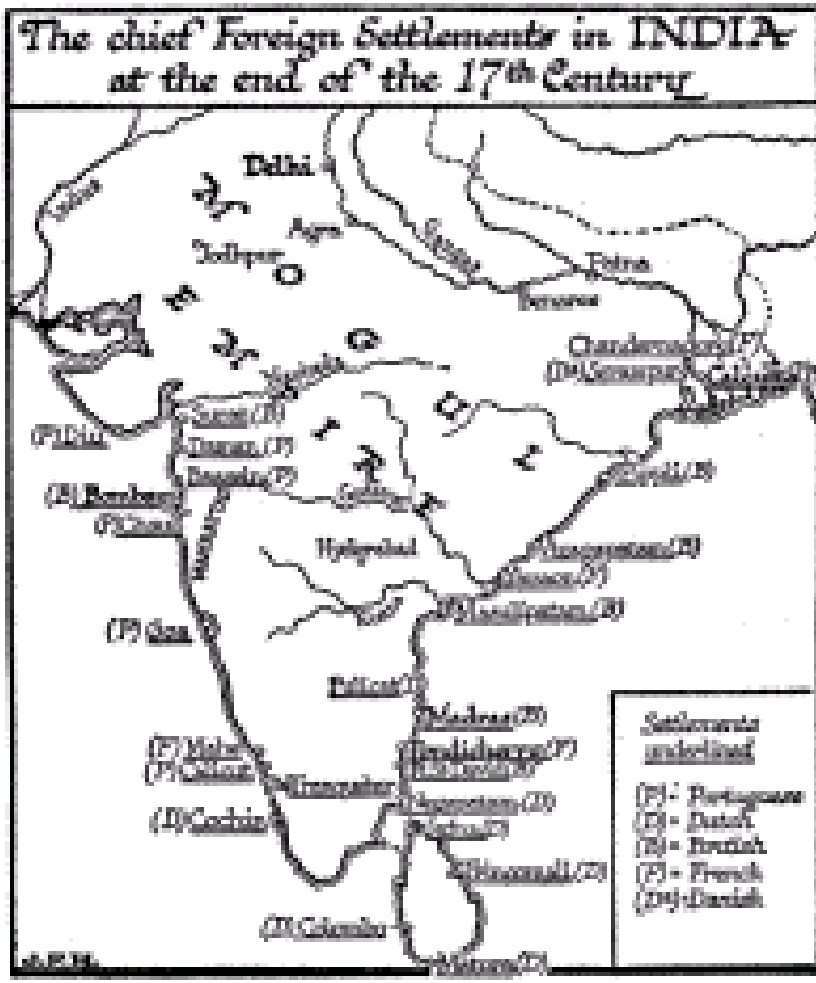

It was not only in America that the French and British powers clashed. The condition of India at this time was one very interesting and attractive to European adventurers. The great Mongol Empire of Baber, Akbar, and Aurangzeb was now far gone in decay. What had happened to India was very parallel to what had happened to Germany. The Great Mogul at Delhi in India, like the Holy Roman Emperor in Germany, was still legally overlord, but after the death of Aurangzeb he exerted only a nominal authority except in the immediate neighbourhood of his capital. In the southwest a Hindu people, the Mahrattas, had risen against Islam, restored Brahminism

as the ruling religion, and for a time extended their power over the whole southern triangle of India. In Rajputana also the rule of Islam was replaced by Brahminism, and at Bhurtpur and Jaipur there ruled powerful Rajput princes. In Oudh there was a Shiite kingdom, with its capital at Lucknow, and Bengal was also a separate (Moslem) kingdom. Away in the Punjab to the north had arisen a very interesting religious body, the Sikhs, proclaiming the universal rule of one God and assailing both the Hindu Vedas and the Moslem Koran. Originally a pacific sect, the Sikhs presently followed the example of Islam, and sought — at first very disastrously to themselves — to establish the kingdom of God by the sword. And into this confused and disordered India there presently (1738) came an invader from the north, Nadir Shah (1736-47), the Turcoman ruler of Persia, who swept down through the Khyber pass, broke every army that stood in his way, and captured and sacked Delhi, carrying off an enormous booty. He left the north of India so utterly broken, that in the next twenty years there were no less than six other successful plundering raids into North India from Afghanistan, which had become an independent state at the death of Nadir Shah. For a time Mahrattas fought with Afghans for the rule of North India; then the Mahratta power broke up into a series of principalities, Indore, Gwalior, Baroda, and others....

This was the India into which the French and English were thrusting during the eighteenth century. A succession of other European powers had been struggling for a commercial and political footing in India and the east ever since Vasco da Gama had made his memorable voyage round the Cape to Calicut. The sea trade of India had previously been in the hands of the Red Sea Arabs, and the Portuguese won it from them in a series of sea fights. The Portuguese ships were the bigger, and carried a heavier armament. For a time the Portuguese held the Indian trade as their own, and Lisbon outshone Venice as a mart for oriental spices; the seventeenth century, however, saw the Dutch grasping at this monopoly. At the crest of their power the Dutch had settlements at the Cape of Good Hope, they held Mauritius, they had two establishments in Persia, twelve in India, six in Ceylon, and all over the East Indies they had dotted their fortified stations. But their selfish resolution to exclude traders of any

other European nationality forced the Swedes, Danes, French, and English into hostile competition. The first effectual blows at their overseas monopoly were struck in European waters by the victories of Blake, the English republican admiral; and by the opening of the eighteenth century both the English and French were in vigorous competition with the Dutch for trade and privileges throughout India. At Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta the English established their headquarters; Pondicherry and Chandernagore were the chief French settlements.

At first all these European powers came merely as traders, and the only establishments they attempted were warehouses; but the unsettled state of the country, and the unscrupulous methods of their rivals, made it natural for them to fortify and arm their settlements, and this armament made them attractive allies of the various warring princes who now divided India. And it was entirely in the spirit of the new European nationalist politics that when the French took one side, the British should take another. The great leader upon the English side was Robert Clive, who was born in 1725, and went to India in 1743. His chief antagonist was Dupleix. The story of this struggle throughout the first half of the eighteenth century is too long and intricate to be told here. By 1761 the British found themselves completely dominant in the Indian peninsula. At Plassey (1757) and at Buxar (1764) their armies gained striking and conclusive victories over the army of Bengal and the army of Oudh. The great Mogul, nominally their overlord, became in effect their puppet. They levied taxes over great areas; they exacted indemnities for real or fancied opposition.

These successes were not gained directly by the forces of the King of England; they were gained by the East India Trading Company, which had been originally, at the time of its incorporation under Queen Elizabeth, no more than a company of sea adventurers. Step by step they had been forced to raise troops and arm their ships. And now this trading company, with its tradition of gain, found itself dealing not merely in spices and dyes and tea and jewels, but in the revenues and territories of princes and the destinies of India. It had come to buy and sell, and it found itself achieving a tremendous piracy. There was no one to challenge its proceedings. Is it any

wonder that its captains and commanders and officials, nay, even its clerks and common soldiers, came back to England loaded with spoils? Men under such circumstances, with a great and wealthy land at their mercy, could not determine what they might or might not do. It was a strange land to them, with a strange sunlight; its brown people were a different race, outside their range of sympathy; its temples and buildings seemed to sustain fantastic standards of behaviour. Englishmen at home were perplexed when presently these generals and officials came back to make dark accusations against each other of extortions and cruelties. Upon Clive Parliament passed a vote of censure. He committed suicide in 1774. In 1788 Warren Hastings, a second great Indian administrator, was impeached and acquitted (1792). It was a strange and unprecedented situation in the world's history. The English Parliament found itself ruling over a London trading company, which in its turn was dominating an empire far greater and more populous than all the domains of the British crown. To the bulk of the English people India was a remote, fantastic, almost inaccessible land, to which adventurous poor young men went out, to return after many years very rich and very choleric old gentlemen. It was difficult for the English to conceive what the life of these countless brown millions in the eastern sunshine could be. Their imaginations declined the task. India remained romantically unreal. It was impossible for the English, therefore, to exert any effective supervision and control over the company's proceedings.

§ 10

And while the great peninsula of the south of Asia was thus falling under the dominion of the English sea traders, an equally remarkable reaction of Europe upon Asia was going on in the north. We have told in chap. xxxiv, § 5C, how the Christian states of Russia recovered their independence from the Golden Horde, and how the Tsar of Moscow became master of the republic of Novgorod; and in § 5 of this chapter we have told of Peter the Great joining the circle of Grand Monarchs and, as it were, dragging Russia into Europe. The rise of this great central power of the old world, which is neither

altogether of the East nor altogether of the West, is one of the utmost importance to our human destiny. We have also told in the same chapter of the appearance of a Christian steppe people, the Cossacks, who formed a barrier between the feudal agriculture of Poland and Hungary to the west and the Tartar to the east. The Cossacks were the wild east of Europe, and in many ways not unlike the wild west of the United States in the middle nineteenth century. All who had made Russia too hot to hold them, criminals as well as the persecuted innocent, rebellious serfs, religious sectaries, thieves, vagabonds, murderers, sought asylum in the southern steppes, and there made a fresh start and fought for life and freedom against Pole, Russian, and Tartar alike. Doubtless fugitives from the Tartars to the east also contributed to the Cossack mixture. Chief among these new nomad tribes were the Ukraine Cossacks on the Dnieper and the Don Cossacks on the Don. Slowly these border folk were incorporated in the Russian imperial service, much as the Highland clans of Scotland were converted into regiments by the British government. New lands were offered them in Asia. They became a weapon against the dwindling power of the Mongolian nomads, first in Turkestan and then across Siberia as far as the Amur.

The decay of Mongol energy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is very difficult to explain. Within two or three centuries from the days of Jengis and Timurlane, Central Asia had relapsed from a period of world ascendancy to extreme political impotence. Changes of climate, unrecorded pestilences, infections of a malarial type, may have played their part in this recession — which may be only a temporary recession measured by the scale of universal history — of the Central Asian peoples. Some authorities think that the spread of Buddhist teaching from China also had a pacifying influence upon them. At any rate, by the sixteenth century the Mongol Tartar and Turkish peoples were no longer pressing outward, but were being invaded, subjugated, and pushed back both by Christian Russia in the west and by China in the east.

All through the seventeenth century the Cossacks were spreading eastward from European Russia, and settling wherever they found agricultural conditions. Cordons of forts and stations formed a

moving frontier to these settlements to the south, where the Turkomans were still strong and active; to the north-east, however, Russia had no frontier until she reached right to the Pacific....

At the same time China was in a phase of expansion. In 1644 the Ming Dynasty, in a state of artistic decay and greatly weakened by a Japanese invasion, fell to Manchu conquerors, a people apparently identical with the former Kin Dynasty, which had ruled at Pekin over North China until the days of Jengis. It was the Manchus who imposed the pigtail as a mark of political loyalty upon the Chinese population. They brought a new energy into Chinese affairs, and their northern interests led to a considerable northward expansion of the Chinese civilization and influence into Manchuria and Mongolia. So it was that by the middle of the eighteenth century the Russians and Chinese were in contact in Mongolia. At this period China ruled eastern Turkestan, Tibet, Nepal, Burmah, and Annam....

We have mentioned a Japanese invasion of China (or rather of Korea). Except for this aggression upon China, Japan plays no part in our history before the nineteenth century. Like China under the Mings, Japan had set her face resolutely against the interference of foreigners in her affairs. She was a country leading her own civilized life, magically sealed against intruders. We have told little of her hitherto because there was little to tell. Her picturesque and romantic history stands apart from the general drama of human affairs. Her population was chiefly a Mongolian population, with some very interesting white people of a Nordic type, the Hairy Ainu, in the northern islands. Her civilization seems to have been derived almost entirely from Korea and China; her art is a special development of Chinese art, her writing an adaptation of the Chinese script.

§ 11

In these preceding ten sections we have been dealing with an age of division, of separated nationalities. We have already described this period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as an interregnum in the progress of mankind towards a worldwide unity. Throughout this period there was no ruling unifying idea in men's minds. The impulse of the empire had failed until the Emperor was no more than

one of a number of competing princes, and the dream of Christendom also was a fading dream. The developing "powers" jostled one another throughout the world; but for a time it seemed that they might jostle one another indefinitely without any great catastrophe to mankind. The great geographical discoveries of the sixteenth century had so enlarged human resources that, for all their divisions, for all the waste of their wars and policies, the people of Europe enjoyed a considerable and increasing prosperity. Central Europe recovered steadily from the devastation of the Thirty Years War.

Looking back upon this period, which came to its climax in the eighteenth century, looking back, as we can begin to do nowadays, and seeing its events in relation to the centuries that came before it and to the great movements of the present time, we are able to realize how transitory and provisional were its political forms and how unstable its securities. Provisional it was as no other age has been provisional, an age of assimilation and recuperation, a political pause, a gathering up of the ideas of men and the resources of science for a wider human effort. But the contemporary mind did not see it in that light. The failure of the great creative ideas as they had been formulated in the Middle Ages, had left human thought for a time destitute of the guidance of creative ideas; even educated and imaginative men saw the world undramatically; no longer as an interplay of effort and destiny, but as the scene in which a trite happiness was sought and the milder virtues were rewarded. It was not simply the contented and conservative-minded who, in a world of rapid changes, were under the sway of this assurance of an achieved fixity of human conditions. Even highly critical and insurgent intelligences, in default of any sustaining movements in the soul of the community, betrayed the same disposition. Political life, they felt, had ceased to be the urgent and tragic thing it had once been; it had become a polite comedy. The eighteenth was a century of comedy — which at the end grew grim. It is inconceivable that that world of the middle eighteenth century could have produced a Jesus of Nazareth, a Gautama, a Francis of Assisi, an Ignatius of Loyola. If one may imagine an eighteenth-century John Huss, it is impossible to imagine anyone with sufficient passion to burn him. Until the

stirrings of conscience in Britain that developed into the Methodist revival began, we can detect scarcely a suspicion that there still remained great tasks in hand for our race to do, that enormous disturbances were close at hand, or that the path of man through space and time was dark with countless dangers, and must to the end remain a high and terrible enterprise.

We have quoted again and again in this history from Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Now we shall quote from it for the last time and bid it farewell, for we have come to the age in which it was written. Gibbon was born in 1737,

and the last volume of his history was published in 1787, but the passage we shall quote was probably written in the year 1780. Gibbon was a young man of delicate health and fairly good fortune; he had a partial and interrupted education at Oxford, and then he completed his studies in Geneva; on the whole his outlook was French and cosmopolitan rather than British, and he was much under the intellectual influence of that great Frenchman who is best known under the name of Voltaire (François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, 1694-1778). Voltaire was an author of enormous industry; seventy volumes of him adorn the present writer's shelves, and another edition of Voltaire's works runs to ninety-four; he dealt largely with history and public affairs, and he corresponded with Catherine the Great of Russia, Frederick the Great of Prussia, Louis XV, and most of the prominent people of the time. Both Voltaire and Gibbon had the sense of history strong in them; both have set out very plainly and fully their visions of human life; and it is clear that to both of them the system in which they lived, the system of monarchy, of leisurely and privileged gentlefolks, of rather despised industrial and trading people and of down-trodden and negligible labourers and poor and common people, seemed the most stably established way of living that the world has ever seen. They postured a little as republicans, and sneered at the divine pretensions of monarchy; but the republicanism that appealed to Voltaire was the crowned republicanism of the Britain of those days, in which the king was simply the official head, the first and greatest of the gentlemen.

The ideal they sustained was the ideal of a polite and polished world in which men — men of quality that is, for no others counted

— would be ashamed to be cruel or gross or enthusiastic, in which the appointments of life would be spacious and elegant, and the fear of ridicule the potent auxiliary of the law in maintaining the decorum and harmonies of life. Voltaire had in him the possibility of a passionate hatred of injustice, and his interventions on behalf of persecuted or ill-used men are the high lights of his long and complicated life-story. And this being the mental disposition of Gibbon and Voltaire, and of the age in which they lived, it is natural that they should find the existence of religion in the world, and in particular the existence of Christianity, a perplexing and rather unaccountable phenomenon. The whole of that side of life seemed to them a kind of craziness in the human make-up. Gibbon's great history is essentially an attack upon Christianity as the operating cause of the decline and fall. He idealized the crude and gross plutocracy of Rome into a world of fine gentlemen upon the eighteenth-century model, and told how it fell before the Barbarian from without because of the decay through Christianity within. In our history here we have tried to set that story in a better light. To Voltaire official Christianity was "*l'infâme*"; something that limited people's lives, interfered with their thoughts, persecuted harmless dissentients. And indeed in that period of the interregnum there was very little life or light in either the orthodox Christianity of Rome or in the orthodox tame churches of Russia and of the Protestant princes. In an interregnum incommoded with an abundance of sleek parsons and sly priests it was hard to realize what fires had once blazed in the heart of Christianity, and what fires of political and religious passion might still blaze in the hearts of men.

At the end of his third volume Gibbon completed his account of the breaking up of the Western Empire. He then raised the question whether civilization might ever undergo again a similar collapse. This led him to review the existing state of affairs (1780) and to compare it with the state of affairs during the decline of imperial Rome. It will be very convenient to our general design to quote some passages from that comparison here, for nothing could better illustrate the state of mind of the liberal thinkers of Europe at the crest of the political interregnum of the age of the Great Powers, before the first intimations of those profound political and social

forces of disintegration that have produced at length the dramatic interrogations of our own times.

"This awful revolution," wrote Gibbon of the Western collapse, "may be usefully applied to the useful instruction of the present age. It is the duty of a patriot to prefer and promote the exclusive interest and glory of his native country; but a philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as one great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own or the neighbouring kingdoms may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies. The savage nations of the globe are the common enemies of civilized society; and we may enquire with anxious curiosity whether Europe is still threatened with a repetition of those calamities which formerly oppressed the arms and institutions of Rome. Perhaps the same reflections will illustrate the fall of that mighty empire and explain the probable causes of our actual security.

"The Romans were ignorant of the extent of their danger, and the number of their enemies. Beyond the Rhine and Danube, the northern countries of Europe and Asia were filled with innumerable tribes of hunters and shepherds, poor, voracious, and turbulent; bold in arms, and impatient to ravish the fruits of industry. The Barbarian world was agitated by the rapid impulse of war; and the peace of Gaul or Italy was shaken by the distant revolutions of China. The Huns, who fled before a victorious enemy, directed their march towards the west; and the torrent was swelled by the gradual accession of captives and allies. The flying tribes who yielded to the Huns assumed in their turn the spirit of conquest; the endless column of barbarians pressed on the Roman Empire with accumulated weight and, if the foremost were destroyed, the vacant space was instantly replenished by new assailants. Such formidable emigrations can no longer issue from the North; and the long repose, which has been imputed to the decrease of population, is the happy consequence of the progress of arts and agriculture. Instead of some rude villages,

thinly scattered among its woods and morasses, Germany now produces a list of two thousand three hundred walled towns; the Christian kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Poland have been successively established; and the Hanse merchants, with the Teutonic knights, have extended their colonies along the coast of the Baltic, as far as the Gulf of Finland. From the Gulf of Finland to the Eastern Ocean, Russia now assumes the form of a powerful and civilized empire. The plough, the loom, and the forge are introduced on the banks of the Volga, the Oby, and the Lena; and the fiercest of the Tartar hordes have been taught to tremble and obey....

"The Empire of Rome was firmly established by the singular and perfect coalition of its members.... But this union was purchased by the loss of national freedom and military spirit; and the servile provinces, destitute of life and motion, expected their safety from the mercenary troops and governors, who were directed by the orders of a distant court. The happiness of a hundred millions depended on the personal merit of one or two men, perhaps children, whose minds were corrupted by education, luxury, and despotic power. Europe is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent, states; the chances of royal and ministerial talents are multiplied, at least with the number of its rulers; and a Julian or Semiramis may reign in the north, while Arcadius and Honorius again slumber on the thrones of the House of Bourbon. The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame; republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at least, of moderation; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals: in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests. If a savage conqueror should issue from the deserts of Tartary, he must repeatedly vanquish the robust peasants of Russia, the numerous armies of Germany, the gallant nobles of France, and the intrepid freemen of Britain; who, perhaps, might confederate for their common defence. Should the victorious Barbarians carry slavery and desolation as far as the

Atlantic Ocean, ten thousand vessels would transport beyond their pursuit the remains of civilized society; and Europe would revive and flourish in the American world which is already filled with her colonies and institutions.

"Cold, poverty, and a life of danger and fatigue fortify the strength and courage of Barbarians. In every age they have oppressed the polite and peaceful nations of China, India, and Persia, who neglected, and still neglect, to counterbalance these natural powers by the resources of military art. The warlike states of antiquity, Greece, Macedonia, and Rome, educated a race of soldiers; exercised their bodies, disciplined their courage, multiplied their forces by regular evolutions, and converted the iron which they possessed into strong and serviceable weapons. But this superiority insensibly declined with their laws and manners; and the feeble policy of Constantine and his successors armed and instructed, for the ruin of the empire, the rude valour of the Barbarian mercenaries. The military art has been changed by the invention of gunpowder; which enables man to command the two most powerful agents of nature, air and fire. Mathematics, chemistry, mechanics, architecture, have been applied to the service of war; and the adverse parties oppose to each other the most elaborate modes of attack and of defence. Historians may indignantly observe that the preparations of a siege would found and maintain a flourishing colony; yet we cannot be displeased that the subversion of a city should be a work of cost and difficulty, or that an industrious people should be protected by those arts, which survive and supply the decay of military virtue. Cannon and fortifications now form an impregnable barrier against the Tartar horse; and Europe is secure from any future irruption of Barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous....

"Should these speculations be found doubtful or fallacious, there still remains a more humble source of comfort and hope. The discoveries of ancient and modern navigators, and the domestic history, or tradition, of the most enlightened nations, represent the *human savage*, naked both in mind and body, and destitute of laws, of arts, of ideas, and almost of language. From this abject condition, perhaps the primitive and universal state of man, he has gradually arisen to command the animals, to fertilize the earth, to traverse the

ocean, and to measure the heavens. His progress in the improvement and exercise of his mental and corporeal faculties has been irregular and various, infinitely slow in the beginning, and increasing by degrees with redoubled velocity; ages of laborious ascent have been followed by a moment of rapid downfall; and the several climates of the globe have felt the vicissitudes of light and darkness. Yet the experience of four thousand years should enlarge our hopes, and diminish our apprehensions; we cannot determine to what height the human species may aspire in their advances towards perfection; but it may safely be presumed that no people, unless the face of nature is changed, will relapse into their original barbarism.

"Since the first discovery of the arts, war, commerce, and religious zeal have diffused, among the savages of the Old and New World, those inestimable gifts, they have been successively propagated; they can never be lost. We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race."

§ 12

One of the most interesting aspects of this story of Europe in the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth century during the phase of the Grand and Parliamentary Monarchies, is the comparative quiescence of the peasants and workers. The insurrectionary fires of the fourteenth and fifteenth and sixteenth centuries seem to have died down. The acute economic clashes of the earlier period had been mitigated by rough adjustments. The discovery of America had revolutionized and changed the scale of business and industry, had brought a vast volume of precious metal for money into Europe, had increased and varied employment. For a time life and work ceased to be intolerable to the masses of the poor. This did not, of course, prevent much individual misery and discontent; the poor we have always had with us, but this misery and discontent was divided and scattered. It became inaudible.

In the earlier period the common people had had an idea to crystallize upon, the idea of Christian communism. They had found

an educated leadership in the dissentient priests and doctors of the Wycliffe type. As the movement for a revival in Christianity spent its force, as Lutheranism fell back for leadership from Jesus upon the Protestant Princes, this contact and reaction of the fresher minds of the educated class upon the illiterate mass was interrupted. However numerous a downtrodden class may be, and however extreme its miseries, it will never be able to make an effective protest until it achieves solidarity by the development of some common general idea. Educated men and men of ideas are more necessary to a popular political movement than to any other political process. A monarchy learns by ruling, and an oligarchy of any type has the education of affairs; but the common man, the peasant or toiler, has no experience in large matters, and can exist politically only through the services, devotion, and guidance of educated men. The Reformation, the Reformation that succeeded, the Reformation that is of the Princes, by breaking up educational facilities, largely destroyed the poor scholar and priest class whose persuasion of the crowd had rendered the Reformation possible.

The Princes of the Protestant countries when they seized upon the national churches early apprehended the necessity of gripping the universities also. Their idea of education was the idea of capturing young clever people for the service of their betters. Beyond that they were disposed to regard education as a mischievous thing. The only way to an education, therefore, for a poor man was through patronage. Of course there was a parade of encouragement towards learning in all the Grand Monarchies, a setting up of Academies and Royal Societies, but these benefited only a small class of subservient scholars. The church also had learnt to distrust the educated poor man. In the great aristocratic "crowned republic" of Britain there was the same shrinkage of educational opportunity. "Both the ancient universities," says Hammond, in his account of the eighteenth century, "were the universities of the rich. There is a passage in Macaulay describing the state and pomp of Oxford at the end of the seventeenth century, 'when her Chancellor, the Venerable Duke of Ormonde, sat in his embroidered mantle on his throne under the painted ceiling of the Sheldonian theatre, surrounded by hundreds of graduates robed according to their rank, while the noblest youths of

England were solemnly presented to him as candidates for academical honours.' The university was a power, not in the sense in which that could be said of a university like the old university of Paris, whose learning could make Popes tremble, but in the sense that the university was part of the recognized machinery of aristocracy. What was true of the universities was true of the public schools. Education in England was the nursery not of a society, but of an order; not of a state, but of a race of owner-rulers." The missionary spirit had departed from education throughout Europe. To that quite as much as to the amelioration of things by a diffused prosperity, this phase of quiescence among the lower classes is to be ascribed. They had lost brains and speech, and they were fed. The community was like a pithed animal in the hands of the governing class.

Moreover, there had been considerable changes in the proportions of class to class. One of the most difficult things for the historian to trace is the relative amount of the total property of the community held at any time by any particular class in that community. These things fluctuate very rapidly. The peasant wars of Europe indicate a phase of comparatively concentrated property when large masses of people could feel themselves expropriated and at a common disadvantage, and so take mass action. This was the time of the rise and prosperity of the Fuggers and their like, a time of international finance. Then with the vast importation of silver and gold and commodities into Europe from America, there seems to have been a restoration of a more diffused state of wealth. The poor were just as miserable as ever, but there were perhaps not so many poor relatively, and they were broken up into a variety of types without any ideas in common. In Great Britain the agricultural life which had been dislocated by the confiscations of the Reformation had settled down again into a system of tenant fanning under great landowners. Side by side with the large estates there was still, however, much common land for pasturing the beasts of the poorer villagers, and much land cultivated in strips upon communal lines. The middling sort of man, and even the poorer sort of man upon the land, were leading an endurable existence in 1700. The standard of life, the idea, that is, of what is an endurable existence, was, however, rising during

the opening phase of Grand Monarchy; after a time the process of the upward concentration of wealth seems to have been resumed, the larger landowners began to acquire and crowd out the poorer free cultivators, and the proportion of poor people and of people who felt they were leading impoverished lives increased again. The bigger men were unchallenged rulers of Great Britain, and they set themselves to enact laws, the Enclosure Acts, that practically confiscated the unenclosed and common lands, mainly for the benefit of the larger landowners. The smaller men sank to the level of wage workers upon the land over which they had once possessed rights of cultivation and pasture.

The peasant in France and upon the Continent generally was not so expropriated; his enemy was not the landlord, but the tax-gatherer; he was squeezed on his land instead of being squeezed off it.

As the eighteenth century progressed, it is apparent in the literature of the time that what to do with "the poor" was again exercising men's thoughts. We find such active-minded English writers as Defoe (1659-1731) and Fielding (1707-54) deeply exercised by this problem. But as yet there is no such revival of the communistic and equalitarian ideas of primitive Christianity as distinguished the time of Wycliffe and John Huss. Protestantism in breaking up the universal church had for a time broken up the idea of a universal human solidarity. Even if the universal church of the Middle Ages had failed altogether to realize that idea, it had at any rate been the symbol of that idea.

Defoe and Fielding were men of a livelier practical imagination than Gibbon, and they realized something of the economic processes that were afoot in their time. So did Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74); his *Deserted Village* (1770) is a pamphlet on enclosures disguised as a poem. But Gibbon's circumstances had never brought economic facts very vividly before his eyes; he saw the world as a struggle between barbarism and civilization, but he perceived nothing of that other struggle over which he floated, the mute, unconscious struggle of the commonalty against able, powerful, rich, and selfish men. He did not perceive the accumulation of stresses that were presently to strain and break up all the balance of his "twelve powerful, though unequal, kingdoms," his "three respectable commonwealths," and their rag,

tag, and bobtail of independent minor princes, reigning dukes, and so forth. Even the civil war that had begun in the British colonies in America did not rouse him to the nearness of what we now call "Democracy."

From what we have been saying hitherto, the reader may suppose that the squeezing of the small farmer and the peasant off the land by the great landowners, the mere grabbing of commons and the concentration of property in the hands of a powerful privileged and greedy class, was all that was happening to the English land in the eighteenth century. So we do but state the worse side of the change. Concurrently with this change of ownership there was going on a great improvement in agriculture. There can be little doubt that the methods of cultivation pursued by the peasants, squatters, and small farmers were antiquated, wasteful, and comparatively unproductive, and that the larger private holdings and estates created by the Enclosure Acts were much more productive (one authority says twenty times more productive) than the old ways. The change was perhaps a necessary one and the evil of it was not that it was brought about, but that it was brought about so as to increase both wealth and the numbers of the poor. Its benefits were intercepted by the bigger private owners. The community was injured to the great profit of this class.

And here we come upon one of the chief problems of our lives at the present time, the problem of the deflection of the profits of progress. For two hundred years there has been, mainly under the influence of the spirit of science and enquiry, a steady improvement in the methods of production of almost everything that humanity requires. If our sense of community and our social science were equal to the tasks required of them, there can be little question that this great increment in production would have benefited the whole community, would have given everyone an amount of education, leisure and freedom such as mankind had never dreamt of before. But though the common standard of living has risen, the rise has been on a scale disproportionately small. The rich have developed a freedom and luxury unknown in the world hitherto, and there has been an increase in the proportion of rich people and stagnantly prosperous and unproductive people in the community; but that also

fails to account for the full benefit. There has been much sheer waste. Vast accumulations of material and energy have gone into warlike preparations and warfare. Much has been devoted to the futile efforts of unsuccessful business competition. Huge possibilities have remained undeveloped because of the opposition of owners, forestallers, and speculators to their economical exploitation. The good things that science and organization have been bringing within the reach of mankind have not been taken methodically and used to their utmost, but they have been scrambled for, snatched at, seized upon by gambling adventurers and employed upon selfish and vain ends. The eighteenth century in Europe, and more particularly in Great Britain and Poland, was the age of private ownership. "Private enterprise," which meant in practice that everyone was entitled to get everything he could out of the business of the community, reigned supreme. No sense of obligation to the state in business matters is to be found in the ordinary novels, plays, and such like representative literature of the time. Everyone is out "to make his fortune," there is no recognition that it is wrong to be an unproductive parasite on the community, and still less that a financier or merchant or manufacturer can ever be overpaid for his services to mankind. This was the moral atmosphere of the time, and those lords and gentlemen who grabbed the people's commons, assumed possession of the mines under their lands, and crushed down the yeoman farmers and peasants to the status of pauper labourers, had no idea that they were living anything but highly meritorious lives.

Concurrently with this change in Great Britain from traditional patch agriculture and common pasture to large and more scientific agriculture, very great changes were going on in the manufacture of commodities. In these changes Great Britain was, in the eighteenth century, leading the world. Hitherto, throughout the whole course of history from the beginnings of civilization, manufactures, building, and industries generally had been in the hands of craftsmen and small masters who worked in their own houses. They had been organized in guilds, and were mostly their own employers. They formed an essential and permanent middle class. There were capitalists among them, who let out looms and the like, supplied material, and took the finished product, but they were not big capitalists. There had been no

rich manufacturers. The rich men of the world before this time had been great landowners or money-lenders and money manipulators or merchants. But in the eighteenth century, workers in certain industries began to be collected together into factories in order to produce things in larger quantities through a systematic division of labour, and the employer, as distinguished from the master worker, began to be a person of importance. Moreover, mechanical invention was producing machines that simplified the manual work of production, and were capable of being driven by water power and presently by steam. In 1765 Watt's steam engine was constructed, a very important date in the history of industrialism.

The cotton industry was one of the first to pass into factory production (originally with water-driven machinery). The woollen industry followed. At the same time iron smelting, which had been restrained hitherto to small methods by the use of charcoal, resorted to coke made from coal, and the coal and iron industries also began to expand. The iron industry shifted from the wooded country of Sussex and Surrey to the coal districts. By 1800 this change-over of industry from a small scale business with small employers to a large scale production under big employers was well in progress. Everywhere there sprang up factories using first water then steam power. It was a change of fundamental importance in human economy. From the dawn of history the manufacturer and craftsman had been, as we have said, a sort of middle-class townsman. The machine and the employer now superseded his skill, and he either became an employer of his fellows, and grew towards wealth and equality with the other rich classes, or he remained a worker and sank very rapidly to the level of a mere labourer. This great change in human affairs is known as the Industrial Revolution. Beginning in Great Britain, it spread during the nineteenth century throughout the world.

As the Industrial Revolution went on, a great gulf opened between employer and employed. In the past every manufacturing worker had the hope of becoming an independent master. Even the slave craftsmen of Babylon and Rome were protected by laws that enabled them to save and buy their freedom and to set up for themselves. But now a factory and its engines and machines became a vast and costly

thing, measured by the scale of the worker's pocket. Wealthy men had to come together to create an enterprise; credit and plant, that is to say, "Capital," were required. "Setting up for oneself" ceased to be a normal hope for an artisan. The worker was henceforth a worker from the cradle to the grave. Besides the landlords and merchants and the money-dealers who financed trading companies and lent their money to the merchants and the state, there arose now this new wealth of industrial capital — a new sort of power in the state.

Of the working out of these beginnings we shall tell later. The immediate effect of the industrial revolution upon the countries to which it came was to cause a vast, distressful shifting and stirring of the mute, uneducated, leaderless, and now more and more propertyless common population. The small cultivators and peasants, ruined and dislodged by the Enclosure Acts, drifted towards the new manufacturing regions, and there they joined the families of the impoverished and degraded craftsmen in the factories. Great towns of squalid houses came into existence. Nobody seems to have noted clearly what was going on at the time. It is the keynote of "private enterprise" to mind one's own business, secure the utmost profit, and disregard any other consequences. Ugly great factories grew up, built as cheaply as possible, to hold as many machines and workers as possible. Around them gathered the streets of workers' homes, built at the cheapest rate, without space, without privacy, barely decent, and let at the utmost rent that could be exacted. These new industrial centres were at first without schools, without churches.... The English gentleman of the closing decades of the eighteenth century read Gibbon's third volume and congratulated himself that there was henceforth no serious fear of the Barbarians, with this new barbarism growing up, with this metamorphosis of his countrymen into something dark and desperate, in full progress, within an easy walk perhaps of his door.

XXXVII

THE NEW DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICS OF AMERICA AND FRANCE

§ 1. *Inconveniences of the Great Power System.* § 2. *The Thirteen Colonies before Their Revolt.* § 3. *Civil War is Forced upon the Colonies.* § 4. *The War of Independence.* § 5. *The Constitution of the United States.* § 6. *Primitive Features of the United States Constitution.* § 7. *Revolutionary Ideas in France.* § 8. *The Revolution of the Year 1789.* § 9. *The French "Crowned Republic" of '89-91.* § 10. *The Revolutions of the Jacobins.* § 11. *The Jacobin Republic, 1792-94.* § 12. *The Directory.* § 13. *The Pause in Reconstruction and the Dawn of Modern Socialism.*

§ 1

WHEN Gibbon, nearly a century and a half ago, was congratulating the world of refined and educated people that the age of great political and social catastrophes was past, he was neglecting many signs which we — in the wisdom of accomplished facts — could have told him portended far heavier jolts and dislocations than any he foresaw. We have told how the struggle of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century princes for ascendancies and advantages developed into a more cunning and complicated struggle of foreign offices, masquerading as idealized "Great Powers," as the eighteenth century wore on. The intricate and pretentious art of diplomacy developed. The "Prince" ceased to be a single and secretive Machiavellian schemer, and became merely the crowned symbol of a Machiavellian scheme. Prussia, Russia, and Austria fell upon and divided Poland. France was baffled in profound schemes against Spain. Britain circumvented the "designs of France" in America and acquired Canada, and got the better of France in India. And then a remarkable thing occurred, a thing very shocking to European diplomacy. The British colonies in America flatly refused to have further part or lot in this game of "Great Powers." They objected that they had no voice and no great interest in these European schemes and conflicts, and they refused to bear any portion of the burthen of

taxation these foreign policies entailed.

Of course this decision did not flash out complete and finished from the American mind at the beginning of these troubles. In America in the eighteenth century, just as in England in the seventeenth, there was an entire willingness, indeed a desire on the part of ordinary men, to leave foreign affairs in the hands of the king and his ministers. But there was an equally strong desire on the part of ordinary men to be neither taxed nor interfered with in their ordinary pursuits. These are incompatible wishes. Common men cannot shirk world politics and at the same time enjoy private freedom; but it has taken them countless generations to learn this. The first impulse in the American revolt against the government in Great Britain was therefore simply a resentment against the taxation and interference that followed necessarily from "foreign policy" without any clear recognition of what was involved in that objection. It was only when the revolt was consummated that the people of the American colonies recognized at all clearly that they had repudiated the Great Power view of life. The sentence in which that repudiation was expressed was Washington's injunction to "avoid entangling alliances." From his time until the year 1917 the united colonies of Great Britain in North America, liberated and independent as the United States of America, stood apart altogether from the blood-stained intrigues and conflicts of the European foreign offices. Soon after (1810-1823) they were able to extend their principle of detachment to the rest of the continent, and to make all the New World "out of bounds" for the scheming expansionists of the old. When at length, in 1917, they were obliged to re-enter the arena of world politics, it was to bring the new spirit and new aims their aloofness had enabled them to develop into the tangle of international relationships. They were not, however, the first to stand aloof. Since the treaty of Westphalia (1648), the confederated states of Switzerland, in their mountain fastnesses, had sustained their right to exclusion from the schemes of kings and empires.

But since the North American peoples are now to play an increasingly important part in our history, it will be well to devote a little more attention than we have hitherto given to their

development. We have already glanced at this story in § 8 of the preceding chapter. We will now tell a little more fully — though still in the barest outline — what these colonies were, whose recalcitrance was so disconcerting to the king and ministers of Great Britain in their diplomatic game against the rest of mankind.

§ 2

The extent of the British colonies in America in the early half of the eighteenth century is shown in the accompanying map. The darker shading represents the districts settled in 1700, the lighter the growth of the settlements up to 1760. It will be seen that the colonies were a mere fringe of population along the coast, spreading gradually inland and finding in the Alleghany and Blue Mountains a very serious barrier. Among the oldest of these settlements was the colony of Virginia, the name of which commemorates Queen Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen of England. The first expedition to found a colony in Virginia was made by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1584, but there was no permanent settlement at that time; and the real beginnings of Virginia date from the foundation of the Virginia Company in 1606 in the reign of James I (1603-25). The story of John Smith and the early founders of Virginia, and of how the Indian "princess" Pocahontas married one of his gentlemen, is an English classic. In growing tobacco the Virginians found the beginning of prosperity. At the same time that the Virginian Company was founded, the Plymouth Company obtained a charter for the settlement of the country to the north of Long Island Sound, to which the English laid claim. But it was only in 1620 that the northern region began to be settled, and that under fresh charters. The settlers of the northern region (New England), which became Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, were men of a different stamp to the Virginia people. They were Protestants discontented with the Anglican Church compromise, and republican-spirited men hopeless of resistance to the Grand Monarchy of James I and Charles I. Their pioneer ship was the *Mayflower*, which founded New Plymouth in 1620. The dominant northern colony was Massachusetts. Differences in religious method and in ideas of toleration led to the separation of

the three other Puritan colonies from Massachusetts. It illustrates the scale upon which things were done in those days that the whole state of New Hampshire was claimed as belonging to a certain Captain John Mason, and that he offered to sell it to the king (King Charles II in 1671) in exchange for the right to import 300 tons of French wine free of duty — an offer which was refused. The present state of Maine was bought by Massachusetts from its alleged owner for twelve hundred and fifty pounds.

In the Civil War that ended with the decapitation of Charles I the sympathies of New England were for the Parliament, and Virginia was Cavalier; but two hundred and fifty miles separated these settlements, and there were no serious hostilities. With the return of the monarchy in 1660, there was a vigorous development of British colonization in America. Charles II and his associates were greedy for gain, and the British crown had no wish to make any further experiments in illegal taxation at home. But the undefined relations of the colonies to the crown and the British government seemed to afford promise of financial adventure across the Atlantic. There was a rapid development of plantations and proprietary colonies. Lord Baltimore had already in 1632 set up a colony that was to be a home of religious freedom for Catholics under the attractive name of Maryland, to the north and east of Virginia; and now the Quaker Penn (who was nevertheless a very good friend of Charles II) established himself to the north at Philadelphia and founded the colony of Pennsylvania. Its main boundary with Maryland and Virginia was delimited by two men, Mason and Dixon, whose "Mason and Dixon line" was destined to become a very important line indeed in the later affairs of the United States. Carolina, which was originally an unsuccessful French Protestant establishment, and which owed its name not to Charles (Carolus) II of England, but to Charles IX of France, had fallen into English hands and was settled at several points. Between Maryland and New England stretched a number of small Dutch and Swedish settlements, of which the chief town was New Amsterdam. These settlements were captured from the Dutch by the British in 1664, lost again in 1673, and restored by treaty when Holland and England made peace in 1674. Thereby the whole coast from Maine to Carolina became in some form or other a

British possession. To the south the Spanish were established; their headquarters were at Fort St. Augustine in Florida, and in 1732 the town of Savannah was settled by a philanthropist Oglethorpe from England, who had taken pity on the miserable people imprisoned for debt in England, and rescued a number of them from prison to become the founders of a new colony, Georgia, which was to be a bulwark against the Spanish. So by the middle of the eighteenth century we have these settlements along the American coastline: the New England group of Puritans and free Protestants, Maine (belonging to Massachusetts), New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts; the captured Dutch group, which was now divided up into New York (New Amsterdam rechristened), New Jersey, and Delaware (Swedish before it was Dutch, and in its earliest British phase attached to Pennsylvania); then came catholic Maryland; Cavalier Virginia; Carolina (which was presently divided into North and South), and Oglethorpe's Georgia. Later on a number of Tyrolese Protestants took refuge in Georgia, and there was a considerable immigration of a good class of German cultivators into Pennsylvania.

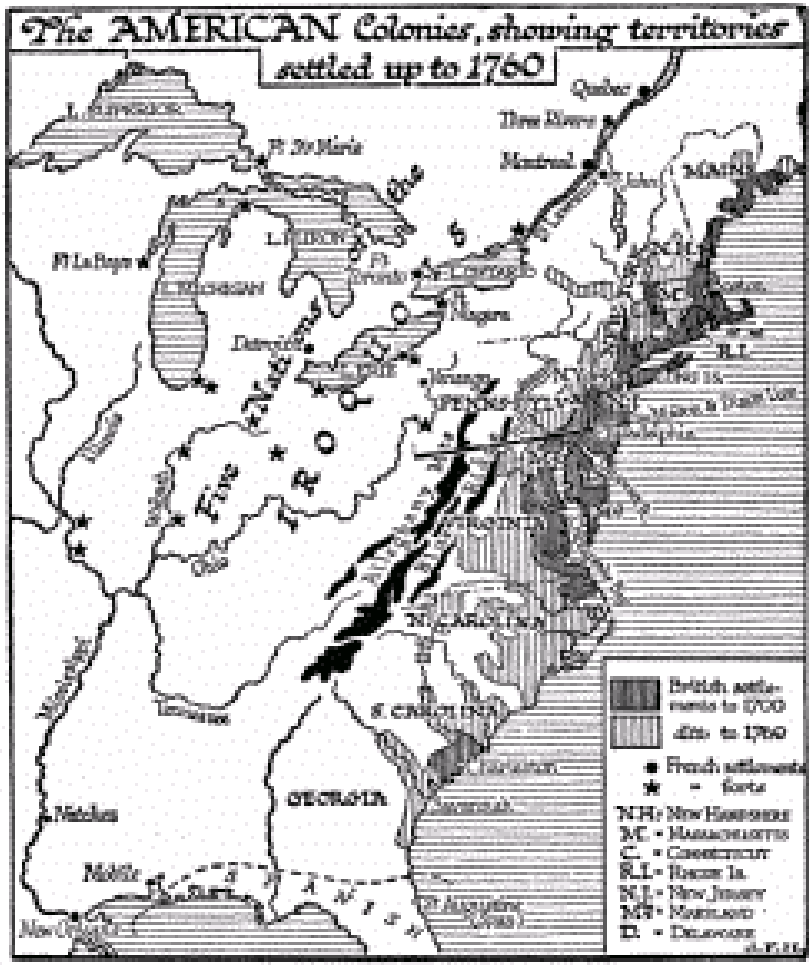

Such were the miscellaneous origins of the citizens of the Thirteen Colonies. The possibility of their ever becoming closely united would have struck an impartial observer in 1760 as being very slight. Superadded to the initial differences of origin, fresh differences were created by climate. North of the Mason and Dixon line farming was practised mainly upon British or Central European lines by free white cultivators. The settled country of New England took on a likeness to the English countryside; considerable areas of Pennsylvania developed fields and farmhouses like those of South

Germany. The distinctive conditions in the north had, socially, important effects. Masters and men had to labour together as backwoodsmen, and were equalized in the process. They did not start equally; many "servants" are mentioned in the roster of the *Mayflower*. But they rapidly became equal under colonial conditions; there was, for instance, a vast tract of land to be had for the taking, and the "servant" went off and took land like his master. The English class system disappeared. Under colonial conditions there arose equality "in the faculties both of body and mind," and an individual independence of judgment impatient of interference from England. But south of the Mason and Dixon line tobacco growing began, and the warmer climate encouraged the establishment of plantations with gang labour. Red Indian captives were employed; Cromwell sent Irish prisoners of war to Virginia, which did much to reconcile the Royalist planters to republicanism; convicts were sent out, and there was a considerable trade in kidnapped children, who were "spirited away" to America to become apprentices or bond slaves. But the most convenient form of gang labour proved to be that of negro slaves. The first negro slaves were brought to Jamestown in Virginia by a Dutch ship as early as 1620. By 1700 negro slaves were scattered all over the states, but Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas were their chief regions of employment, and while the communities to the north were communities of not very rich and not very poor farming men, the south developed a type of large proprietor and a white community of overseers and professional men subsisting on slave labour. Slave labour was a necessity to the social and economic system that had grown up in the south; in the north the presence of slaves was unnecessary and in some respects inconvenient. Conscientious scruples about slavery were more free, therefore, to develop and flourish in the northern atmosphere. To this question of the revival of slavery in the world we must return when we come to consider the perplexities of American Democracy. Here we note it simply as an added factor in the heterogeneous mixture of the British Colonies.

But if the inhabitants of the Thirteen Colonies were miscellaneous in their origins and various in their habits and sympathies, they had three very strong antagonisms in common. They had a common

interest against the Red Indians. For a time they shared a common dread of French conquest and dominion. And thirdly, they were all in conflict with the claims of the British crown and the commercial selfishness of the narrow oligarchy who dominated the British Parliament and British affairs.

So far as the first danger went, the Indians were a constant evil, but never more than a threat of disaster. They remained divided against themselves. Yet they had shown possibilities of combination upon a larger scale. The Five Nations of the Iroquois (see map,) was a very important league of tribes. But it never succeeded in playing off the French against the English to secure itself, and no Red Indian Jengis Khan ever arose among these nomads of the new world. The French aggression was a more serious threat. The French never made settlements in America on a scale to compete with the English, but their government set about the encirclement of the colonies and their subjugation in a terrifyingly systematic manner. The English in America were colonists; the French were explorers, adventurers, agents, missionaries, merchants, and soldiers. Only in Canada did they strike root. French statesmen sat over maps and dreamt dreams, and their dreams are to be seen in our map in the chain of forts creeping southward from the Great Lakes and northward up the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. The struggle of France and Britain was a worldwide struggle. It was decided in India, in Germany, and on the high seas. In the Peace of Paris (1763) the French gave England Canada, and relinquished Louisiana to the inert hands of declining Spain. It was the complete abandonment of America by France. The lifting of the French danger left the colonists unencumbered to face their third common antagonist — the crown and government of their mother land.

§ 3

We have noted in the previous chapter how the governing class of Great Britain steadily acquired the land and destroyed the liberty of the common people throughout the eighteenth century, and how greedily and blindly the new industrial revolution was brought about. We have noted also how the British Parliament, through the decay of

the representative methods of the House of Commons, had become both in its upper and lower houses merely the instrument of government through the big landowners. Both these big property-holders and the crown were deeply interested in America; the former as private adventurers, the latter partly as representing the speculative exploitations of the Stuart kings, and partly as representing the state in search of funds for the expenses of foreign policy, and neither lords nor crown were disposed to regard the traders, planters, and common people of the colonies with any more consideration than they did the yeomen and small cultivators at home. At bottom the interests of the common man in Great Britain, Ireland, and America were the same. Each was being squeezed by the same system. But while in Britain oppressor and oppressed were closely tangled up in one intimate social system, in America the crown and the exploiter were far away, and men could get together and develop a sense of community against their common enemy.

Moreover, the American colonist had the important advantage of possessing a separate and legal organ of resistance to the British government in the assembly or legislature of his colony that was necessary for the management of local affairs. The common man in Britain, cheated out of his proper representation in the Commons, had no organ, no centre of expression and action for his discontents.

It will be evident to the reader, bearing in mind the variety of the colonies, that here was the possibility of an endless series of disputes, aggressions, and counter-aggressions. The story of the development of irritations between the colonies and Britain is a story far too intricate, subtle, and lengthy for the scheme of this *Outline*. Suffice it that the grievances fell under three main heads: attempts to secure for British adventurers or the British government the profits of the exploitation of new lands; systematic restrictions upon trade designed to keep the foreign trade of the colonies entirely in British hands, so that the colonial exports all went through Britain and only British-made goods were used in America; and finally attempts at taxation through the British Parliament as the supreme taxing authority of the empire. Under the pressure of this triple system of annoyances, the American colonists were forced to do a very considerable amount of hard political thinking. Such men as Patrick

Henry and James Otis began to discuss the fundamental ideas of government and political association very much as they had been discussed in England in the great days of Cromwell's Commonweal. They began to deny both the divine origin of kingship and the supremacy of the British Parliament, and (James Otis, 1762) to say such things as: —

"God made all men naturally equal.

"Ideas of earthly superiority are educational, not innate.

"Kings were made for the good of the people, and not the people for them.

"No government has a right to make slaves of its subjects.

"Though most governments are *de facto* arbitrary, and consequently the curse and scandal of human nature, yet none are *de jure* arbitrary."

Some of which propositions reach far.

This ferment in the political ideas of the Americans was started by English leaven. One very influential English writer was John Locke (1632-1704), whose *Two Treatises on Civil Government* may be taken, as much as any one single book can be taken in such cases, as the point of departure for modern democratic ideas. He was the son of a Cromwellian soldier, he was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, during the republican ascendancy, he spent some years in Holland in exile, and his writings form a bridge between the bold political thinking of those earlier republican days and the revolutionary movement both in America and France.

But men do not begin to act upon theories. It is always some real danger, some practical necessity, that produces action; and it is only after action has destroyed old relationships and produced a new and perplexing state of affairs that theory comes to its own. Then it is that theory is put to the test. The discord in interests and ideas between the colonists was brought to a fighting issue by the obstinate resolve of the British Parliament after the peace of 1763 to impose taxation upon the American colonies. Britain was at peace and flushed with successes; it seemed an admirable opportunity for settling accounts with these recalcitrant settlers. But the great British property-owners found a power beside their own, of much the same mind with them, but a little divergent in its ends — the reviving crown. King George

III, who had begun his reign in 1760, was resolved to be much more of a king than his two German predecessors. He could speak English; he claimed to "glory in the name of Briton" — and indeed it is not a bad name for a man without a perceptible drop of English, Welsh, or Scotch blood in his veins. In the American colonies and the overseas possessions generally, with their indefinite charters or no charters at all, it seemed to him that the crown might claim authority and obtain resources and powers absolutely denied to it by the strong and jealous aristocracy in Britain. This inclined many of the Whig noblemen to a sympathy with the colonists that they might not otherwise have shown. They had no objection to the exploitation of the colonies in the interests of British "private enterprise," but they had very strong objections to the strengthening of the crown by that exploitation so as to make it presently independent of themselves.

The war that broke out was therefore in reality not a war between Britain and the colonists, it was a war between the British government and the colonists, with a body of Whig noblemen and a considerable amount of public feeling in England on the side of the latter. An early move after 1763 was an attempt to raise revenue for Britain in the colonies by requiring that newspapers and documents of various sorts should be stamped. This was stiffly resisted, the British crown was intimidated, and the Stamp Acts were repealed (1766). Their repeal was greeted by riotous rejoicings in London, more hearty even than those in the colonies.

But the Stamp Act affair was only one eddy in a turbulent stream flowing towards civil war. Upon a score of pretexts, and up and down the coast, the representatives of the British government were busy asserting their authority and making British government intolerable. The quartering of soldiers upon the colonists was a great nuisance. Rhode Island was particularly active in defying the trade restrictions; the Rhode Islanders were "free traders," — that is to say, smugglers; a government schooner, the *Gaspee*, ran aground off Providence; she was surprised, boarded, and captured by armed men in boats, and burnt. In 1773, with a total disregard of the existing colonial tea trade, special advantages for the importation of tea into America were given by the British Parliament to the East India Company. It was resolved by the colonists to refuse and boycott this

tea. When the tea importers at Boston showed themselves resolute to land their cargoes, a band of men disguised as Indians, in the presence of a great crowd of people, boarded the three tea ships and threw the tea overboard (December 16th, 1773).

All 1774 was occupied in the gathering up of resources on either side for the coming conflict. It was decided by the British Parliament in the spring of 1774 to punish Boston by closing her port. Her trade was to be destroyed unless she accepted that tea. It was a quite typical instance of that silly "firmness" which shatters empires. In order to enforce this measure, British troops were concentrated at Boston under General Gage. The colonists took counter-measures. The first colonial Congress met at Philadelphia in September, at which twelve colonies were represented: Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. Georgia was not present. True to the best English traditions, the Congress documented its attitude by a "Declaration of Rights." Practically this Congress was an insurrectionary government, but no blow was struck until the spring of 1775. Then came the first shedding of blood.

Two of the American leaders, Hancock and Samuel Adams, had been marked down by the British Government for arrest and trial for treason; they were known to be at Lexington, about eleven miles from Boston; and in the night of April 18th, 1775, Gage set his forces in motion for their arrest.

That night was a momentous one in history. The movement of Gage's troops had been observed, signal lanterns were shown from a church tower in Boston, and two men, Dawes and Paul Revere, stole away in boats across the Back Bay to take horse and warn the countryside. The British were also ferried over the water, and as they marched through the night towards Lexington, the firing of signal cannon and the ringing of church bells went before them. As they entered Lexington at dawn, they saw a little company of men drawn up in military fashion. It seems that the British fired first. There was a single shot and then a volley, and the little handful decamped, apparently without any answering shots, leaving eight dead and nine wounded upon the village green.

The British then marched on to Concord, ten miles further, occupied the village, and stationed a party on the bridge at that place. The expedition had failed in its purpose of arresting Hancock and Adams, and the British commander seems to have been at a loss what to do next. Meanwhile the colonial levies were coming up from all directions, and presently the picket upon the bridge found itself subjected to an increasing fire from a gathering number of assailants firing from behind trees and fences. A retreat to Boston was decided upon. It was a disastrous retreat. The country had risen behind the British; all the morning the colonials had been gathering. Both sides of the road were now swarming with sharpshooters firing from behind rock and fence and building; the soldiers were in conspicuous scarlet uniforms, with yellow facings and white gaiters and cravats; this must have stood out very vividly against the cold sharp colours of the late New England spring; the day was bright, hot, and dusty, and they were already exhausted by a night march. Every few yards a man fell, wounded or killed. The rest tramped on, or halted to fire an ineffectual volley. No counter-attack was possible. Their assailants lurked everywhere. At Lexington there were British reinforcements and two guns, and after a brief rest the retreat was resumed in better order. But the sharpshooting and pursuit was pressed to the river, and after the British had crossed back into Boston, the colonial levies took up their quarters in Cambridge and prepared to blockade the city.

§ 4

So the war began. It was not a war that promised a conclusive end. The colonists had no one vulnerable capital; they were dispersed over a great country, with a limitless wilderness behind it, and so they had great powers of resistance. They had learnt their tactics largely from the Indians; they could fight well in open order, and harry and destroy troops in movement. But they had no disciplined army that could meet the British in a pitched battle, and little military equipment; and their levies grew impatient at a long campaign, and tended to go home to their farms. The British, on the other hand, had a well-drilled army, and their command of the sea gave them the

power of shifting their attack up and down the long Atlantic seaboard. They were at peace with all the world. But the king was stupid and greedy to interfere in the conduct of affairs; the generals he favoured were stupid "strong men" or flighty men of birth and fashion; and the heart of England was not in the business. He trusted rather to being able to blockade, raid, and annoy the colonists into submission than to a conclusive conquest and occupation of the land. But the methods employed, and particularly the use of hired German troops, who still retained the cruel traditions of the Thirty Years' War, and of Indian auxiliaries, who raped and scalped the outlying settlers, did not so much weary the Americans of the war as of the British. The Congress, meeting for the second time in 1775, endorsed the actions of the New England colonists, and appointed George Washington the American commander-in-chief. In 1777, General Burgoyne, in an attempt to get down to New York from Canada, was defeated at Freeman's Farm on the Upper Hudson, and surrounded and obliged to capitulate at Saratoga with his whole army. This disaster encouraged the French and Spanish to come into the struggle on the side of the colonists. The French sent an army to the States under General Lafayette, and their fleet did much to minimize the advantage of the British at sea. General Cornwallis was caught in the Yorktown peninsula in Virginia in 1781, and capitulated with his army. The British Government, now heavily engaged with France and Spain in Europe, was at the end of its resources.

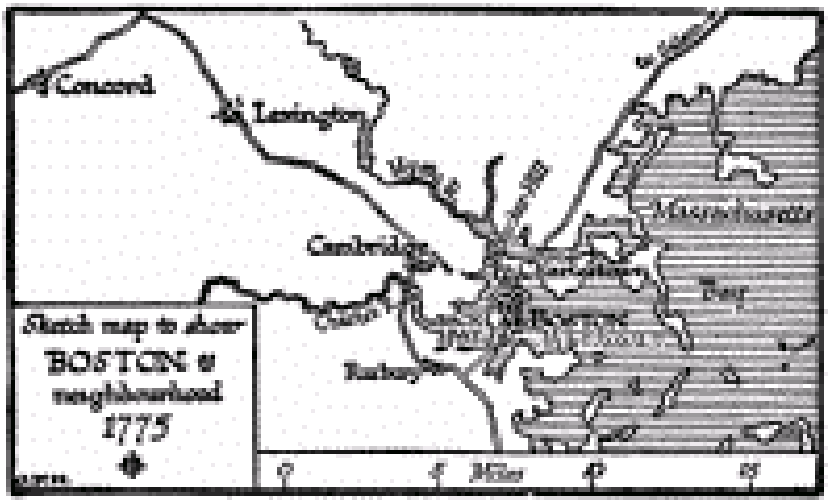

At the outset of the war the colonists in general seem to have been as little disposed to repudiate monarchy and claim complete independence as were the Hollanders in the opening phase of Philip II's persecutions and follies. The separatists were called radicals; they were mostly extremely democratic, as we should say in England to-day, and their advanced views frightened many of the steadier and wealthier colonists, for whom class privileges and distinctions had considerable charm. But early in 1776 an able and persuasive Englishman, Tom Paine, published a pamphlet at Philadelphia with the title of *Common Sense*, which had an enormous effect on public opinion. Its style was rhetorical by modern standards. "The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of Nature cries, ''Tis time to part,'" and so forth. But its effects were very great. It converted thousands to the necessity of separation. The turn-over of opinion, once it had begun, was rapid.

Only in the summer of 1776 did Congress take the irrevocable step of declaring for separation. "The Declaration of Independence," another of those exemplary documents which it has been the peculiar service of the English to produce for mankind, was drawn up by Thomas Jefferson; and after various amendments and modifications it was made the fundamental document of the United States of America. There were two noteworthy amendments to Jefferson's draft. He had denounced the slave trade fiercely, and blamed the

home government for interfering with colonial attempts to end it. This was thrown out, and so too was a sentence about the British: "we must endeavour to forget our former love for them ... we might have been a free and a great people together."

(But for the British crown and great proprietors and the mutual ignorance of the common men in the two countries.)

Towards the end of 1782, the preliminary articles of the treaty in which Britain recognized the complete independence of the United States were signed at Paris. The end of the war was proclaimed on April 19th, 1783, exactly eight years after Paul Revere's ride, and the retreat of Gage's men from Concord to Boston. The Treaty of Peace was finally signed at Paris in September.

§ 5

From the point of view of human history, the way in which the Thirteen States became independent is of far less importance than the fact that they did become independent. And with the establishment of their independence came a new sort of community into the world. It was like something coming out of an egg. It was a western European civilization that had broken free from the last traces of Empire and Christendom; it had not a vestige of monarchy left and no state religion. It had no dukes, princes, counts, nor any sort of title-bearers claiming to ascendancy or respect as a right. Even its unity was as yet a mere unity for defence and freedom. It was in these respects such a clean start in political organization as the world had not seen before. The absence of any binding religious tie is especially noteworthy. It had a number of forms of Christianity, its spirit was indubitably Christian; but as a state document of 1796 explicitly declared, "The government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." The new community had in fact gone right down to the bare and stripped fundamentals of human association, and it was building up a new sort of society and a new sort of state upon those foundations.

Here were about four million people scattered over vast areas with very slow and difficult means of inter-communication, poor as yet, but with the potentiality of limitless wealth, setting out to do in

reality on a huge scale such a feat of construction as the Athenian philosophers twenty-two centuries before had done in imagination and theory.

This situation marks a definite stage in the release of man from precedent and usage, and a definite step forward towards the conscious and deliberate reconstruction of his circumstances to suit his needs and aims. It was a new method becoming practical in human affairs. The modern states of Europe have been evolved institution by institution slowly and planlessly out of preceding things. The United States were planned and made.

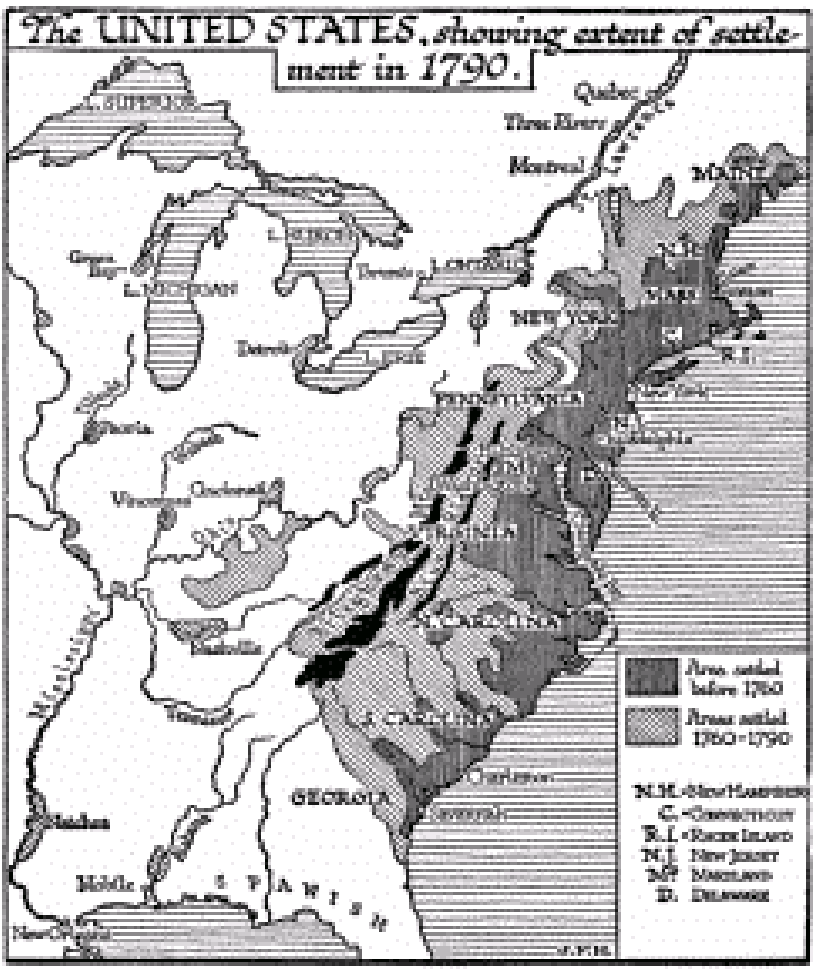

In one respect, however, the creative freedom of the new nation was very seriously restricted. This new sort of community and state was not built upon a cleared site. It was not even so frankly an artificiality as some of the later Athenian colonies, which went out from the mother city to plan and build brand new city states with brand new constitutions. The thirteen colonies by the end of the war had all of them constitutions either like that of Connecticut and Rhode Island dating from their original charters (1662) or, as in the case of the rest of the states, where a British governor had played a large part in the administration, re-made during the conflict. But we may well consider these reconstructions as contributory essays and experiments in the general constructive effort.

Upon the effort certain ideas stood out very prominently. One is the idea of political and social equality. This idea, which we saw coming into the world as an extreme and almost incredible idea in the age between Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth, is now asserted in the later eighteenth century as a practical standard of human relationship. Says the fundamental statement of Virginia: "All men are by nature equally free and independent," and it proceeds to rehearse their "rights," and to assert that all magistrates and governors are but "trustees and servants"; of the commonweal. All men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion. The king by right, the aristocrat, the "natural slave," the god king, and the god have all vanished from this political scheme — so far as these declarations go. Most of the states produced similar preludes to government. The Declaration of Independence said that "all men are born equal." It is everywhere asserted in eighteenth-century terms that the new community is to be — to use the phraseology we have introduced in an earlier chapter — a community of will and not a community of obedience. But the thinkers of that time had a rather clumsier way of putting the thing, they imagined a sort of individual choice of and assent to citizenship that never in fact occurred — the so-called Social Contract. The Massachusetts preamble, for instance, asserts that the state is a voluntary association, "by which the whole people covenants with each citizen and each citizen with the whole people that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good."

Now it will be evident that most of these fundamental statements are very questionable statements. Men are not born equal, they are not born free; they are born a most various multitude enmeshed in an ancient and complex social net. Nor is any man invited to sign the social contract or, failing that, to depart into solitude. These statements, literally interpreted, are so manifestly false that it is impossible to believe that the men who made them intended them to be literally interpreted. They made them in order to express certain elusive but profoundly important ideas — ideas that after another century and a half of thinking the world is in a better position to express. Civilization, as this outline has shown, arose as a community of obedience, and was essentially a community of obedience. But generation after generation the spirit was abused by priests and rulers. There was a continual influx of masterful will from the forests, parklands, and steppes. The human spirit had at last rebelled altogether against the blind obediences of the common life; it was seeking — and at first it was seeking very clumsily — to achieve a new and better sort of civilization that should also be a community of will. To that end it was necessary that every man should be treated as the sovereign of himself; his standing was to be one of fellowship and not of servility. His real use, his real importance depended upon his individual quality.

The method by which these creators of political America sought to secure this community of will was an extremely simple and crude one. They gave what was for the time, and in view of American conditions, a very wide franchise. Conditions varied in the different states; the widest franchise was in Pennsylvania, where every adult male taxpayer voted, but, compared with Britain, all the United States were well within sight of manhood suffrage by the end of the eighteenth century. These makers of America also made efforts, considerable for their times, but puny by more modern standards, to secure a widely diffused common education. The information of the citizens as to what was going on at home and abroad, they left, apparently without any qualms of misgiving, to public meetings and the privately owned printing press.

The story of the various state constitutions, and of the constitution of the United States as a whole, is a very intricate one, and we can

only deal with it here in the broadest way. The most noteworthy point in a modern view is the disregard of women as citizens. The American community was a simple, largely agricultural community, and most women were married; it seemed natural that they should be represented by their men folk. But New Jersey admitted a few women to vote on a property qualification. Another point of great interest is the almost universal decision to have two governing assemblies, confirming or checking each other, on the model of the Lords and Commons of Britain. Only Pennsylvania had a single representative chamber, and that was felt to be a very dangerous and ultra-democratic state of affairs. Apart from the argument that legislation should be slow as well as sure, it is difficult to establish any necessity for this "bi-cameral" arrangement. It seems to have been a fashion with constitution planners in the eighteenth century rather than a reasonable imperative. The British division was an old one; the Lords, the original parliament, was an assembly of "notables," the leading men of the kingdom; the House of Commons came in as a new factor, as the elected spokesmen of the burghers and the small landed men. It was a little too hastily assumed in the eighteenth century that the commonalty would be given to wild impulses and would need checking; opinion was for democracy, but for democracy with powerful brakes always on, whether it was going up hill or down. About all the upper houses there was therefore a flavour of selectness; they were elected on a more limited franchise. This idea of making an upper chamber which shall be a stronghold for the substantial man does not appeal to modern thinkers so strongly as it did to the men of the eighteenth century, but the bi-cameral idea in another form still has its advocates. They suggest that a community may with advantage consider its affairs from two points of view — through the eyes of a body elected to represent trades, industries, professions, public services, and the like, a body representing *function*, and through the eyes of a second body elected by localities to represent *communities*. For the members of the former a man would vote by his calling, for the latter by his district of residence. They point out that the British House of Lords is in effect a body representing function, in which the land, the law, and the church are no doubt disproportionately represented, but in which

industrialism, finance, the great public services, art, science, and medicine, also find places; and that the British House of Commons is purely geographical in its reference. It has even been suggested in Britain that there should be "labour peers," selected from among the leaders of the great industrial trade unions. But these are speculations beyond our present scope.

The Central Government of the United States was at first a very feeble body, a congress of representatives of the thirteen governments, held together by certain Articles of Confederation. This Congress was little more than a conference of sovereign representatives; it had no control, for instance, over the foreign trade of each state, it could not coin money nor levy taxes by its own authority. When John Adams, the first minister from the United States to England, went to discuss a commercial treaty with the British foreign secretary, he was met by a request for thirteen representatives, one from each of the states concerned. He had to confess his inadequacy to make binding arrangements. The British presently began dealing with each state separately over the head of Congress, and they retained possession of a number of posts in the American territory about the great lakes because of the inability of

Congress to hold these regions effectually. In another urgent matter Congress proved equally feeble. To the west of the thirteen states stretched limitless lands into which settlers were now pushing in ever-increasing numbers. Each of the states had indefinable claims to expansion westward. It was evident to every clear-sighted man that the jostling of these claims must lead in the long run to war, unless the Central Government could take on their apportionment. The feebleness of the Central Government, its lack of concentration, became so much of an inconvenience and so manifest a danger that there was some secret discussion of a monarchy, and Nathaniel Gorham of Massachusetts, the president of Congress, caused Prince Henry of Prussia, the brother of Frederick the Great, to be approached on the subject. Finally a constitutional convention was called in 1787 at Philadelphia, and there it was that the present constitution of the United States was in its broad lines hammered out. A great change of spirit had gone on during the intervening years, a widespread realization of the need of unity.

When the Articles of Confederation were drawn up, men had thought of the people of Virginia, the people of Massachusetts, the people of Rhode Island, and the like; but now there appears a new conception, "the people of the United States." The new government, with the executive President, the senators, congressmen, and the Supreme Court, that was now created, was declared to be the government of "the people of the United States"; it was a synthesis and not a mere assembly. It said "we the people," and not "we the states," as Lee of Virginia bitterly complained. It was to be a "federal" and not a confederate government.

State by state the new constitution was ratified, and in the spring of 1788 the first congress upon the new lines assembled at New York, under the presidency of George Washington, who had been the national commander-in-chief throughout the War of Independence. The constitution then underwent considerable revision, and Washington upon the Potomac was selected as the Federal capital.

§ 6

In an earlier chapter we have described the Roman republic, and its

mixture of modern features with dark superstition and primordial savagery, as the Neanderthal anticipation of the modern democratic state. A time may come when people will regard the contrivances and machinery of the American constitution as the political equivalents of the implements and contrivances of Neolithic man. They have served their purpose well, and under their protection the people of the States have grown into one of the greatest, most powerful, and most civilized communities that the world has yet seen; but there is no reason in that for regarding the American constitution as a thing more final and inalterable than the pattern of street railway that overshadows many New York thoroughfares, or the excellent and homely type of house architecture that still prevails in Philadelphia. These things also have served a purpose well, they have their faults, and they can be improved. Our political contrivances, just as much as our domestic and mechanical contrivances, need to undergo constant revision as knowledge and understanding grow.

Since the American constitution was planned, our conception of history and our knowledge of collective psychology has undergone very considerable development. We are beginning to see many things in the problem of government to which the men of the eighteenth century were blind; and, courageous as their constructive disposition was in relation to whatever political creation had gone before, it fell far short of the boldness which we in these days realize to be needful if this great human problem of establishing a civilized community of will in the earth is to be solved. They took many things for granted that now we know need to be made the subject of the most exacting scientific study and the most careful adjustment. They thought it was only necessary to set up schools and colleges, with a grant of land for maintenance, and that they might then be left to themselves. But education is not a weed that will grow lustily in any soil, it is a necessary and delicate crop that may easily wilt and degenerate. We learn nowadays that the under-development of universities and educational machinery is like some under-development of the brain and nerves, which hampers the whole growth of the social body. By European standards, by the standard of any state that has existed hitherto, the level of the common education of America is high; but

by the standard of what it might be, America is an uneducated country. And those fathers of America thought also that they had but to leave the press free, and everyone would live in the light. They did not realize that a free press could develop a sort of constitutional venality due to its relations with advertisers, and that large newspaper proprietors could become buccaneers of opinion and insensate wreckers of good beginnings. And, finally, the makers of America had no knowledge of the complexities of vote manipulation. The whole science of elections was beyond their ken, they knew nothing of the need of the transferable vote to prevent the "working" of elections by specialized organizations, and the crude and rigid methods they adopted left their political system the certain prey of the great party machines that have robbed American democracy of half its freedom and most of its political soul. Politics became a trade, and a very base trade; decent and able men, after the first great period, drifted out of politics and attended to "business," and what I have called elsewhere the "sense of the state" declined. Private enterprise ruled in many matters of common concern, because political corruption made collective enterprise impossible.

Yet the defects of the great political system created by the Americans of the revolutionary period did not appear at once. For several generations the history of the United States was one of rapid expansion and of an amount of freedom, homely happiness, and energetic work unparalleled in the world's history. And the record of America for the whole last century and a half, in spite of many reversions towards inequality, in spite of much rawness and much blundering, is nevertheless as bright and honourable a story as that of any other contemporary people.

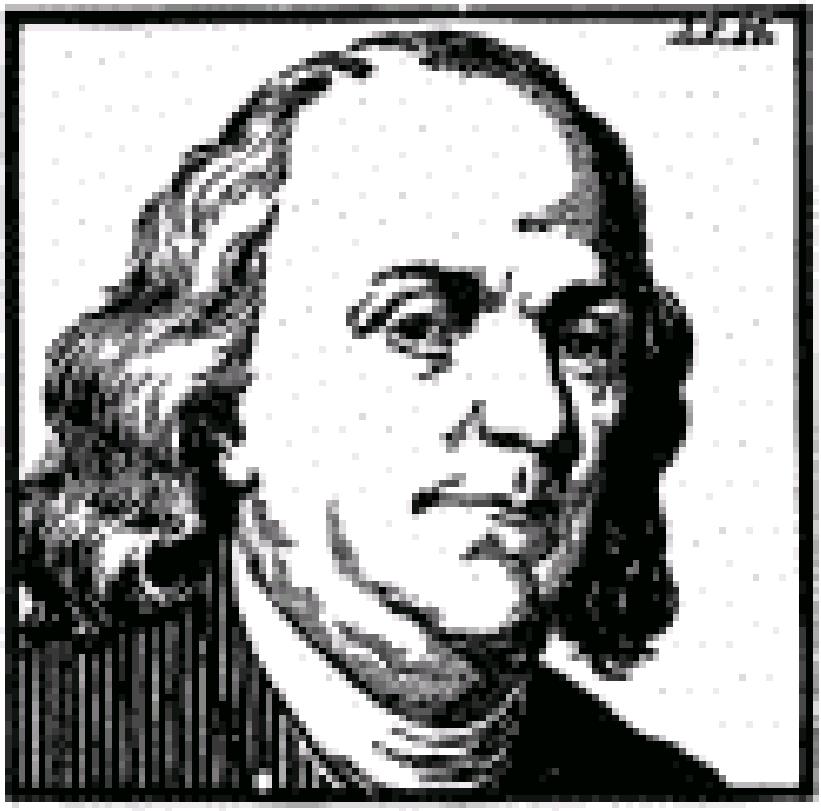

Benjamin Franklin

In this brief account of the creation of the United States of America we have been able to do little more than mention the names of some of the group of great men who made this new departure in human history. We have named casually or we have not even named such men as Tom Paine, Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, the Adams brothers, Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington. It is hard to measure the men of one period of history with those in another. Some writers, even American writers, impressed by the artificial splendours of the European courts and by the tawdry and destructive exploits of a Frederick the Great or a Great Catherine, display a snobbish shame of something homespun about these makers of America. They feel that Benjamin Franklin at the court of Louis XVI, with his long hair, his plain clothes, and his

pawky manner, was sadly lacking in aristocratic distinction. But stripped to their personalities, Louis XVI was hardly gifted enough or noble-minded enough to be Franklin's valet. If human greatness is a matter of scale and glitter, then no doubt Alexander the Great is at the apex of human greatness. But is greatness that? Is not a great man rather one who, in a great position or amidst great opportunities — and great gifts are no more than great opportunities — serves God and his fellows with a humble heart? And quite a number of these Americans of the revolutionary time do seem to have displayed much disinterestedness and devotion. They were limited men, fallible men; Washington was, for example, a conspicuously indolent man; but on the whole they seem to have cared more for the commonweal they were creating than for any personal end or personal vanity.

Washington

They were all limited men. They were limited in knowledge and outlook; they were limited by the limitations of the time. And there was no perfect man among them. They were, like all of us, men of mixed motives; good impulses arose in their minds, great ideas swept through them, and also they could be jealous, lazy, obstinate, greedy, vicious. If one were to write a true, full, and particular history of the making of the United States, it would have to be written with charity and high spirits as a splendid comedy. And in no other regard do we find the rich tortuous humanity of the American story so finely displayed as in regard to slavery. Slavery, having regard to the general question of labour, is the test of this new soul in the world's history, the American soul.

Slavery began very early in the European history of America, and no European people who went to America can be held altogether innocent in the matter. At a time when the German is still the moral whipping-boy of Europe, it is well to note that the German record is in this respect the best of all. Almost the first outspoken utterances against negro slavery came from German settlers in Pennsylvania. But the German settler was working with free labour upon a temperate countryside, well north of the plantation zone; he was not under serious temptation in this matter. American slavery began with the enslavement of Indians for gang work in mines and upon plantations, and it is curious to note that it was a very good and humane man indeed, Las Casas, who urged that negroes should be brought to America to relieve his tormented Indian protégés. The need for labour upon the plantations of the West Indies and the south was imperative. When the supply of Indian captives proved inadequate, the planters turned not only to the negro, but to the jails and poor-houses of Europe for a supply of toilers. The reader of Defoe's *Moll Flanders* will learn how the business of Virginian white slavery looked to an intelligent Englishman in the early eighteenth century. But the negro came very early. The year (1620) that saw the Pilgrim Fathers landing at Plymouth in New England saw a Dutch sloop disembarking the first cargo of negroes at Jamestown in Virginia. Negro slavery was as old as New England; it had been an American institution for over a century and a half before the War of Independence. It was to struggle on for the better part of a

century more.

But the conscience of thoughtful men in the colonies was never quite easy upon this score, and it was one of the accusations of Thomas Jefferson against the crown and lords of Great Britain that every attempt to ameliorate or restrain the slave trade on the part of the colonists had been checked by the great proprietary interests in the mother country. With the moral and intellectual ferment of the revolution, the question of negro slavery came right into the foreground of the public conscience. The contrast and the challenge glared upon the mind. “All men are by nature free and equal,” said the Virginia Bill of Rights, and outside in the sunshine, under the whip of the overseer, toiled the negro slave.

It witnesses to the great change in human ideas since the Roman Imperial system dissolved under the barbarian inrush, that there could be this heart-searching. Conditions of industry, production, and land tenure had long prevented any recrudescence of gang slavery; but now the cycle had come round again, and there were enormous immediate advantages to be reaped by the owning and ruling classes in the revival of that ancient institution in mines, upon plantations, and upon great public works. It was revived — but against great opposition. From the beginning of the revival there were protests, and they grew. The revival was counter to the new conscience of mankind. In some respects the new gang slavery was worse than anything in the ancient world. Peculiarly horrible was the provocation by the trade of slave wars and man hunts in Western Africa, and the cruelties of the long transatlantic voyage. The poor creatures were packed on the ships often with insufficient provision of food and water, without proper sanitation, without medicines. Many who could tolerate slavery upon the plantations found the slave trade too much for their moral digestions. Three European nations were chiefly concerned in this dark business, Britain, Spain, and Portugal, because they were the chief owners of the new lands in America. The comparative innocence of the other European powers is to be ascribed largely to their lesser temptations. They were similar communities; in parallel circumstances they would have behaved similarly.

Throughout the middle part of the eighteenth century there was an

active agitation against negro slavery in Great Britain as well as in the States. It was estimated that in 1770 there were fifteen thousand slaves in Britain, mostly brought over by their owners from the West Indies and Virginia. In 1771 the issue came to a conclusive test in Britain before Lord Mansfield. A negro named James Somersett had been brought to England from Virginia by his owner. He ran away, was captured, and violently taken on a ship to be returned to Virginia. From the ship he was extracted by a writ of *habeas corpus*. Lord Mansfield declared that slavery was a condition unknown to English law, an "odious" condition, and Somersett walked out of the court a free man.

The Massachusetts constitution of 1780 had declared that "all men are born free and equal." A certain negro, Quaco, put this to the test in 1783, and in that year the soil of Massachusetts became like the soil of Britain, intolerant of slavery; to tread upon it was to become free. At that time no other state in the Union followed this example. At the census of 1790, Massachusetts, alone of all the states, returned "no slaves."

The state of opinion in Virginia is remarkable, because it brings to light the peculiar difficulties of the southern states. The great Virginian statesmen, such as Washington and Jefferson, condemned the institution, yet because there was no other form of domestic service, Washington owned slaves. There was in Virginia a strong party in favour of emancipating slaves. But they demanded that the emancipated slaves should leave the state within a year or be outlawed! They were naturally alarmed at the possibility that a free barbaric black community, many of its members African-born and reeking with traditions of cannibalism and secret and dreadful religious rites, should arise beside them upon Virginian soil. When we consider that point of view, we can understand why it was that a large number of Virginians should be disposed to retain the mass of blacks in the country under control as slaves, while at the same time they were bitterly opposed to the slave trade and the importation of any fresh blood from Africa. The free blacks, one sees, might easily become a nuisance; indeed the free state of Massachusetts presently closed its borders to their entry.... The question of slavery, which in the ancient world was usually no more than a question of status

between individuals racially akin, merged in America with the different and profounder question of relationship between two races at opposite extremes of the human species and of the most contrasted types of tradition and culture. If the black man had been white, there can be little doubt that negro slavery, like white servitude, would have vanished from the United States within a generation of the Declaration of Independence as a natural consequence of the statements in that declaration.

§ 7

We have told of the War of Independence in America as the first great break away from the system of European monarchies and foreign offices, as the repudiation by a new community of Machiavellian statescraft as the directive form of human affairs. Within a decade there came a second and much more portentous revolt against this strange game of Great Powers, this tangled interaction of courts and policies which obsessed Europe. But this time it was no breaking away at the outskirts. In France, the nest and home of Grand Monarchy, the heart and centre of Europe, came this second upheaval. And, unlike the American colonists, who simply repudiated a king, the French, following in the footsteps of the English revolution, beheaded one.

Like the British revolution and like the revolution in the United States, the French revolution can be traced back to the ambitious absurdities of the French monarchy. The schemes of aggrandizement, the aims and designs of the Grand Monarch, necessitated an expenditure upon war equipment throughout Europe out of all proportion to the taxable capacity of the age. And even the splendours of monarchy were enormously costly, measured by the productivity of the time. In France, just as in Britain and in America, the first resistance was made not to the monarch as such and to his foreign policy as such, nor with any clear recognition of these things as the roots of the trouble, but merely to the inconveniences and charges upon the individual life caused by them. The practical taxable capacity of France must have been relatively much less than that of England because of the various exemptions of the nobility and

clergy. The burthen resting directly upon the common people was heavier. That made the upper classes the confederates of the court instead of the antagonists of the court as they were in England, and so prolonged the period of waste further; but when at last the bursting-point did come, the explosion was more violent and shattering.

During the years of the American War of Independence there were few signs of any impending explosion in France. There was much misery among the lower classes, much criticism and satire, much outspoken liberal thinking, but there was little to indicate that the thing as a whole, with all its customs, usages, and familiar discords, might not go on for an indefinite time. It was consuming beyond its powers of production, but as yet only the inarticulate classes were feeling the pinch. Gibbon, the historian, knew France well; Paris was as familiar to him as London; but there is no suspicion to be detected in the passage we have quoted that days of political and social dissolution were at hand. No doubt the world abounded in absurdities and injustices, yet nevertheless, from the point of view of a scholar and a gentleman, it was fairly comfortable, and it seemed fairly secure.

There was much liberal thought, speech, and sentiment in France at this time. Parallel with and a little later than John Locke in England, Montesquieu (1689-1755) in France, in the earlier half of the eighteenth century, had subjected social, political, and religious institutions to the same searching and fundamental analysis, especially in his *Esprit des Lois*. He had stripped the magical prestige from the absolutist monarchy in France. He shares with Locke the credit for clearing away many of the false ideas that had hitherto prevented deliberate and conscious attempts to reconstruct human society. It was not his fault if at first some extremely unsound and impermanent shanties were run up on the vacant site. The generation that followed him in the middle and later decades of the eighteenth century was boldly speculative upon the moral and intellectual clearings he had made. A group of brilliant writers, the "Encyclopædists," mostly rebel spirits from the excellent schools of the Jesuits, set themselves under the leadership of Diderot to scheme out, in a group of works, a new world (1766). The glory of the

Encyclopædists, says Mallet, lay "in their hatred of things unjust, in their denunciation of the trade in slaves, of the inequalities of taxation, of the corruption of justice, of the wastefulness of wars, in their dreams of social progress, in their sympathy with the rising empire of industry which was beginning to transform the world." Their chief error seems to have been an indiscriminate hostility to religion. They believed that man was naturally just and politically competent, whereas his impulse to social service and self-forgetfulness is usually developed only through an education essentially religious, and sustained only in an atmosphere of honest co-operation. Unco-ordinated human initiatives lead to nothing but social chaos.

Side by side with the Encyclopædists were the Economists or Physiocrats, who were making bold and crude inquiries into the production and distribution of food and goods. Morally, the author of the *Code de la Nature*, denounced the institution of private property and proposed a communistic organization of society. He was the precursor of that large and various school of collectivist thinkers in the nineteenth century who are lumped together as Socialists.

Both the Encyclopædists and the various Economists and Physiocrats demanded a considerable amount of hard thinking in their disciples. An easier and more popular leader to follow was that eloquent sentimentalist, Rousseau (1712-78). He preached the alluring doctrine that the primitive state of man was one of virtue and happiness, from which he had declined through the rather inexplicable activities of priests, kings, lawyers, and the like. (We have tried to convey to our readers in chap, ix, § 2, primitive man's state of virtue and happiness, as the vivid vision of Mr. Worthington Smith has realized it; and we have done our best to show both the necessity of priests and kings to early civilization, and the possible inconveniences of their later rô1es in human affairs.) Rousseau's work was essentially demoralizing. It struck not only at the existing social fabric, but at any social organization. When he wrote of the *Social Contract*, he did so rather to excuse breaches of the covenant than to emphasize its necessity. Man is so far from perfect, that a writer who could show that the almost universal disposition, against

which we all have to fortify ourselves, to repudiate debts, misbehave sexually, and evade the toil and expenses of education for ourselves and others, is not after all a delinquency, but a fine display of Natural Virtue, was bound to have a large following in every class that could read him. Rousseau's tremendous vogue did much to swamp the harder, clearer thinkers of this time, and to prepare a sentimental, declamatory, and insincere popular psychology for the great trials that were now coming upon France.

We have already remarked that hitherto no human community has begun to act upon theory. There must first be some breakdown and necessity for direction that lets theory into her own. Up to 1788 the republican and anarchist talk and writing of French thinkers must have seemed as ineffective and politically unimportant as the æsthetic socialism of William Morris at the end of the nineteenth century. There was the social and political system going on with an effect of an invincible persistence, the king hunting and mending his clocks, the court and the world of fashion pursuing their pleasures, the financiers conceiving continually more enterprising extensions of credit, business blundering clumsily along its ancient routes, much incommoded by taxes and imposts, the peasants worrying, toiling, and suffering, full of a hopeless hatred of the nobleman's château. Men talked — and felt they were merely talking. Anything might be said, because nothing would ever happen.

§ 8

The first jar to this sense of the secure continuity of life in France came in 1787. Louis XVI (1774-92) was a dull, ill-educated monarch, and he had the misfortune to be married to a silly and extravagant woman, Marie Antoinette, the sister of the Austrian emperor. The question of her virtue is one of profound interest to a certain type of historical writer, but we need not discuss it here. She lived, as Paul Wiriath puts it, "side by side, but not at the side" of her husband. She was rather heavy-featured, but not so plain as to prevent her posing as a beautiful, romantic, and haughty queen. When the exchequer was exhausted by the war in America (an

enterprise to weaken England of the highest Machiavellian quality), when the whole country was uneasy with discontents, she set her influence to thwart the attempts at economy of the king's ministers, to encourage every sort of aristocratic extravagance, and to restore the church and the nobility to the position they had held in the great days of Louis XIV. Non-aristocratic officers were to be weeded from the army; the power of the church over private life was to be extended. She found in an upper-class official, Calonne, her ideal minister of finance. From 1783-87 this wonderful man produced money as if by magic — and as if by magic it disappeared again. Then in 1787 he collapsed. He had piled loan on loan, and now he declared that the monarchy, the Grand Monarchy that had ruled France since the days of Louis XIV, was bankrupt. No more money could be raised. There must be a gathering of the Notables of the kingdom to consider the situation.

To the gathering of notables, a summoned assembly of leading men, Calonne propounded a scheme for a subsidy to be levied upon all landed property. This roused the aristocrats to a pitch of great indignation. They demanded the summoning of a body roughly equivalent to the British parliament, the States General, which had not met since 1610. Regardless of the organ of opinion they were creating for the discontents below them, excited only by the proposal that they should bear part of the weight of the financial burthens of the country, the French notables insisted. And in May, 1789, the States General met.

It was an assembly of the representatives of three orders, the nobles, the clergy, and the Third Estate, the commons. For the Third Estate the franchise was very wide, nearly every tax-payer of twenty-five having a vote. (The parish priests voted as clergy, the small noblesse as nobles.) The States General was a body without any tradition of procedure. Enquiries were sent to the antiquarians of the Academy of Inscriptions in that matter. Its opening deliberations turned on the question whether it was to meet as one body or as three, each estate having an equal vote. Since the Clergy numbered 308, the Nobles 285, and the Deputies 621, the former arrangement would put the Commons in an absolute majority, the latter gave them one vote in three. Nor had the States General any meeting-place.

Should it meet in Paris or in some provincial city? Versailles was chosen, "because of the hunting."

It is clear that the king and queen meant to treat this fuss about the national finance as a terrible bore, and to allow it to interfere with their social routine as little as possible. We find the meetings going on in salons that were not wanted, in orangeries and tennis-courts, and so forth.

The question whether the voting was to be by the estates or by head was clearly a vital one. It was wrangled over for six weeks. The Third Estate, taking a leaf from the book of the English House of Commons, then declared that it alone represented the nation, and that no taxation must be levied henceforth without its consent. Whereupon the king closed the hall in which it was sitting, and intimated that the deputies had better go home. Instead, the deputies met in a convenient tennis-court, and there took oath, the Oath of the Tennis Court, not to separate until they had established a constitution in France.

The king took a high line, and attempted to disperse the Third Estate by force. The soldiers refused to act. On that the king gave in with a dangerous suddenness, and accepted the principle that the Three Estates should all deliberate and vote together as one National Assembly. Meanwhile, apparently at the queen's instigation, foreign regiments in the French service, who could be trusted to act against the people, were brought up from the provinces under the Marshal de Broglie, and the king prepared to go back upon his concessions. Whereupon Paris and France revolted. Broglie hesitated to fire on the crowds. A provisional city government was set up in Paris and in most of the other large cities, and a new armed force, the National Guard, a force designed primarily and plainly to resist the forces of the crown, was brought into existence by these municipal bodies.

The revolt of July, 1789 was really the effective French revolution. The grim-looking prison of the Bastille was stormed by the people of Paris, and the insurrection spread rapidly throughout France. Everywhere châteaux belonging to the nobility were burnt by the peasants, their title-deeds carefully destroyed, and the nobles murdered or driven away. In a month the ancient and decayed system of the aristocratic order had collapsed. Many of the leading princes

and courtiers of the queen's party fled abroad. The National Assembly found itself called upon to create a new political and social system for a new age.

§ 9

The French National Assembly was far less fortunate in the circumstances of its task than the American Congress. The latter had half a continent to itself, with no possible antagonist but the British Government. Its religious and educational organizations were various, collectively not very powerful, and on the whole friendly. King George was far away in England, and sinking slowly towards an imbecile condition. Nevertheless, it took the United States several years to hammer out a working constitution. The French, on the other hand, were surrounded by aggressive neighbors with Machiavellian ideas, they were encumbered by a king and court resolved to make mischief, and the church was one single great organization inextricably bound up with the ancient order. The queen was in close correspondence with the Count of Artois, the Duke of Bourbon, and the other exiled princes who were trying to induce Austria and Prussia to attack the new French nation. Moreover, France was already a bankrupt country, while the United States had limitless undeveloped resources; and the revolution, by altering the conditions of land tenure and marketing, had produced an economic disorganization that has no parallel in the case of America.

These were the unavoidable difficulties of the situation. But in addition the Assembly made difficulties for itself. There was no orderly procedure. The English House of Commons had had more than five centuries of experience in its work, and Mirabeau, one of the great leaders of the early Revolution, tried in vain to have the English rules adopted. But the feeling of the times was all in favour of outcries, dramatic interruptions, and such-like manifestations of Natural Virtue. And the disorder did not come merely from the assembly. There was a great gallery, much too great a gallery, for strangers; but who would restrain the free citizens from having a voice in the national control? This gallery swarmed with people eager for a "scene," ready to applaud or shout down the speakers

below. The abler speakers were obliged to play to the gallery, and take a sentimental and sensational line. It was easy at a crisis to bring in a mob to kill debate.

So encumbered, the Assembly set about its constructive task. On the Fourth of August it achieved a great dramatic success. Led by several of the nobles, it made a clean sweep, in a series of resolutions, of serfdom, privileges, tax exemptions, tithes, feudal courts. Titles followed. Long before France was a republic it was an offence for a nobleman to sign his name with his title. For six weeks the Assembly devoted itself, with endless opportunities for rhetoric, to the formulation of a Declaration of the Rights of Man — on the lines of the Bills of Rights that were the English preliminaries to organized change. Meanwhile the court plotted for reaction, and the people felt that the court was plotting. The story is complicated here by the scoundrelly schemes of the king's cousin, Philip of Orleans, who hoped to use the discords of the time to replace Louis on the French throne. His gardens at the Palais Royal were thrown open to the public, and became a great centre of advanced discussion. His agents did much to intensify the popular suspicion of the king. And things were exacerbated by a shortage of provisions — for which the king's government was held guilty.

Presently the loyal Flanders regiment appeared at Versailles. The royal family was scheming to get farther away from Paris — in order to undo all that had been done, to restore tyranny and extravagance. Such constitutional monarchists as General Lafayette were seriously alarmed. And just at this time occurred an outbreak of popular indignation at the scarcity of food, that passed by an easy transition into indignation against the threat of royalist reaction. It was believed that there was an abundance of provisions at Versailles; that food was being kept there away from the people. The public mind had been much disturbed by reports, possibly by exaggerated reports, of a recent banquet at Versailles, hostile to the nation. Here are some extracts from Carlyle descriptive of that unfortunate feast.

"The Hall of the Opera is granted; the Salon d'Hercule shall be drawing-room. Not only the Officers of Flandre, but of the Swiss, of the Hundred Swiss; nay of the Versailles National Guard, such of them as have any loyalty, shall feast; it will be a Repast like few.

"And now suppose this Repast, the solid part of it, transacted; and the first bottle over. Suppose the customary loyal toasts drunk; the King's health, the Queen's with deafening vivats; that of the nation 'omitted,' or even 'rejected.' Suppose champagne flowing; with pot-valorous speech, with instrumental music; empty featherheads growing ever the noisier, in their own emptiness, in each other's noise. Her Majesty, who looks unusually sad to-night (His Majesty sitting dulled with the day's hunting), is told that the sight of it would cheer her. Behold! She enters there, issuing from her State-rooms, like the Moon from clouds, this fairest unhappy Queen of Hearts; royal Husband by her side, young Dauphin in her arms! She descends from the Boxes, amid splendour and acclaim; walks queen-like round the Tables; gracefully nodding; her looks full of sorrow, yet of gratitude and daring, with the hope of France on her mother-bosom! And now, the band striking up, *O Richard, O mon Roi, l'univers t'abandonne* (Oh Richard, O my king, the world is all forsaking thee), could man do other than rise to height of pity, of loyal valour? Could feather-headed young ensigns do other than, by white Bourbon Cockades, handed them from fair fingers; by waving of swords, drawn to pledge the Queen's health; by trampling of National Cockades; by scaling the Boxes, whence intrusive murmurs may come; by vociferation, sound, fury and distraction, within doors and without — testify what tempest-tost state of vacuity they are in?...

"A natural Repast; in ordinary times, a harmless one: now fatal.... Poor ill-advised Marie Antoinette; with a woman's vehemence, not with a sovereign's foresight! It was so natural, yet so unwise. Next day, in public speech of ceremony, her Majesty declares herself 'delighted with Thursday.'"

And here to set against this is Carlyle's picture of the mood of the people.

"In squalid garret, on Monday morning Maternity awakes, to hear children weeping for bread. Maternity must forth to the streets, to the herb-makers and bakers'-queues; meets there with hunger-stricken Maternity, sympathetic, exasperative. O we unhappy women! But, instead of bakers'-queues, why not to Aristocrats' palaces, the root of the matter? *Allons!* Let us assemble. To the Hôtel-de-Ville; to

Versailles....”

There was much shouting and coming and going in Paris before this latter idea realized itself. One Maillard appeared with organizing power, and assumed a certain leadership. There can be little doubt that the revolutionary leaders, and particularly General Lafayette, used and organized this outbreak to secure the king, before he could slip away — as Charles I did to Oxford — to begin a civil war. As the afternoon wore on, the procession started on its eleven mile tramp....

Again we quote Carlyle:

“Maillard has halted his draggled Menads on the last hill-top; and now Versailles, and the Château of Versailles, and far and wide the inheritance of Royalty opens to the wondering eye. From far on the right, over Marly and Saint-Germain-en-Laye; round towards Rambouillet, on the left, beautiful all; softly embosomed; as if in sadness, in the dim moist weather! And near before us is Versailles, New and Old; with that broad frondent *Avenue de Versailles* between — stately frondent, broad, three hundred feet as men reckon, with its four rows of elms; and then the Château de Versailles, ending in royal parks and pleasances, gleaming lakelets, arbours, labyrinths, the *Ménagerie*, and Great and Little Trianon. High-towered dwellings, leafy pleasant places; where the gods of this lower world abide: whence, nevertheless, black care cannot be excluded; whither Menadic hunger is even now advancing, armed with pike-thyrsi!”

Rain fell as the evening closed.

“Behold the Esplanade, over all its spacious expanse, is covered with groups of squalid dripping women; of lank-haired male rascality, armed with axes, rusty pikes, old muskets, iron-shod clubs (*batons ferrés*, which end in knives or swordblades, a kind of extempore billhook); looking nothing but hungry revolt. The rain pours; Gardes-du-Corps go caracoling through the groups ‘amid hisses’; irritating and agitating what is but dispersed here to reunite there....

“Innumerable squalid women beleaguer the President and Deputation; insist on going with him: has not his Majesty himself, looking from the window, sent out to ask, What we wanted? ‘Bread, and speech with the King,’ that was the answer. Twelve women are

clamorously added to the deputation; and march with it, across the Esplanade; through dissipated groups, caracoling bodyguards and the pouring rain."

"Bread and not too much talking!" Natural demands.

"One learns also that the royal Carriages are getting yoked, as if for Metz. Carriages, royal or not, have verily showed themselves at the back gates. They even produced, or quoted, a written order from our Versailles Municipality — which is a monarchic not a democratic one. However, Versailles patrols drove them in again; as the vigilant Lecointre had strictly charged them to do....

"So sink the shadows of night, blustering, rainy; and all paths grow dark. Strangest night ever seen in these regions; perhaps since the Bartholomew Night, when Versailles, as Bassompierre writes of it, was a *chetif château*.

"O for the lyre of some Orpheus, to constrain, with touch of melodious strings, these mad masses into Order! For here all seems fallen asunder, in wide-yawning dislocation. The highest, as in down-rushing of a world, is come in contact with the lowest: the rascality of France beleaguering the royalty of France; 'iron-shod batons' lifted round the diadem, not to guard it! With denunciations of bloodthirsty anti-national bodyguards, are heard dark growlings against a queenly name.

"The Court sits tremulous, powerless: varies with the varying temper of the Esplanade, with the varying colour of the rumours from Paris. Thick-coming rumours; now of peace, now of war. Necker and all the Ministers consult; with a blank issue. The Œil-de-Bœuf is one tempest of whispers: We will fly to Metz; we will not fly. The royal carriages again attempt egress — though for trial merely; they are again driven in by Lecointres patrols."

But we must send the reader to Carlyle to learn of the coming of the National Guard in the night under General Lafayette himself, the bargaining between the Assembly and the King, the outbreak of fighting in the morning between the bodyguard and the hungry besiegers, and how the latter stormed into the palace and came near to a massacre of the royal family. Lafayette and his troops turned out in time to prevent that, and timely cart-loads of loaves arrived from Paris for the crowd.

At last it was decided that the king should come to Paris.

"Processional marches not a few our world has seen; Roman triumphs and ovations, Cabiric cymbal-beatings, Royal progresses, Irish funerals; but this of the French Monarchy marching to its bed remained to be seen. Miles long, and of breadth losing itself in vagueness, for all the neighbouring country crowds to see. Slow: stagnating along, like shoreless Lake, yet with a noise like Niagara, like Babel and Bedlam. A splashing and a tramping; a hurrahing, uproaring, musket-volleying; the truest segment of Chaos seen in these latter Ages! Till slowly it disembogue itself in the thickening dusk, into expectant Paris, through a double row of faces all the way from Passy to the Hôtel-de-Ville.

"Consider this: Vanguard of National troops; with trains of artillery; of pikemen and pikewomen, mounted on cannons, on carts, hackney-coaches, or on foot.... Loaves stuck on the points of bayonets, green boughs stuck in gun-barrels. Next, as main-march, 'fifty cart-loads of corn,' which have been lent, for peace, from the stores of Versailles. Behind which follow stragglers of the Garde-du-Corps; all humiliated, in Grenadier bonnets. Close on these comes the royal carriage; come royal carriages; for there are a hundred national deputies too, among whom sits Mirabeau — his remarks not given. Then finally, pell-mell, as rear-guard, Flandre, Swiss, Hundred Swiss, other bodyguards, brigands, whosoever cannot get before. Between and among all which masses flows without limit Saint-Antoine and the Menadic cohort. Menadic especially about the royal carriage.... Covered with tricolor; singing 'allusive songs'; pointing with one hand to the royal carriage, which the allusions hit, and pointing to the provision-wagons with the other hand, and these words: 'Courage, Friends! We shall not want bread now; we are bringing you the Baker, the Bakeress, and Baker's boy.' ...

"The wet day draggles the tricolor, but the joy is unextinguishable. Is not all well now? '*Ah Madame, notre bonne Reine*,' said some of these Strong-women some days hence, 'Ah, Madame, our good Queen, don't be a traitor any more and we will all love you!' ..."

This was October the sixth, 1789. For nearly two years the royal family dwelt unmolested in the Tuileries. Had the court kept

common faith with the people, the king might have died there, a king.

From 1789 to 1791 the early Revolution held its own; France was a limited monarchy, the king kept a diminished state in the Tuileries, and the National Assembly ruled a country at peace. The reader who will glance back to the maps of Poland we have given in the previous chapter will realize what occupied Russia, Prussia, and Austria at this time. While France experimented with a crowned republic in the west, the last division of the crowned republic of the east was in progress. France could wait.

When we consider its inexperience, the conditions under which it worked, and the complexities of its problems, one must concede that the Assembly did a very remarkable amount of constructive work. Much of that work was sound and still endures, much was experimental and has been undone. Some was disastrous. There was a clearing up of the penal code; torture, arbitrary imprisonment, and persecutions for heresy were abolished; and the ancient provinces of France, Normandy, Burgundy, and the like gave place to eighty departments. Promotion to the highest ranks in the army was laid open to men of every class. An excellent and simple system of law courts was set up, but its value was much vitiated by having the judges appointed by popular election for short periods of time. This made the crowd a sort of final court of appeal, and the judges, like the members of the Assembly, were forced to play to the gallery. And the whole vast property of the church was seized and administered by the state; religious establishments not engaged in education or works of charity were broken up, and the salaries of the clergy made a charge upon the nation. This in itself was not a bad thing for the lower clergy in France, who were often scandalously underpaid in comparison with the richer dignitaries. But in addition the choice of priests and bishops was made elective, which struck at the very root idea of the Roman church, which centred everything upon the Pope, and in which all authority is from above downward. Practically the National Assembly wanted at one blow to make the church in France Protestant, in organization if not in doctrine. Everywhere there were disputes and conflicts between the state priests of the republic and the recalcitrant (non-juring) priests who

were loyal to Rome....

One curious thing the National Assembly did which greatly weakened its grip on affairs. It decreed that no member of the Assembly should be an executive minister. This was in imitation of the American constitution, where also ministers are separated from the legislature. The British method has been to have all ministers in the legislative body, ready to answer questions and account for their interpretation of the laws and their conduct of the nation's business. If the legislature represents the sovereign people, then it is surely necessary for the ministers to be in the closest touch with their sovereign. This severance of the legislature and executive in France caused misunderstandings and mistrust; the legislature lacked control and the executive lacked moral force. This led to such an ineffectiveness in the central government that in many districts at this time, communes and towns were to be found that were practically self-governing communities; they accepted or rejected the commands of Paris as they thought fit, declined the payment of taxes, and divided up the church lands according to their local appetites.

§ 10

It is quite possible that with the loyal support of the crown and a reasonable patriotism on the part of the nobility, the National Assembly, in spite of its noisy galleries, its Rousseauism, and its inexperience, might have blundered through to a stable form of parliamentary government for France. In Mirabeau it had a statesman with clear ideas of the needs of the time; he knew the strength and the defects of the British system, and apparently he had set himself to establish in France a parallel political organization upon a wider, more honest franchise. He had, it is true, indulged in a sort of Ruritanian flirtation with the queen, seen her secretly, pronounced her very solemnly the "only *man*" about the king, and made rather a fool of himself in that matter, but his schemes were drawn upon a much larger scale than the scale of the back stairs of the Tuileries. By his death in 1791 France certainly lost one of her most constructive statesmen, and the National Assembly its last chance of any co-operation with the king. When there is a court there is usually a

conspiracy, and royalist schemes and royalist mischief-making were the last straw in the balance against the National Assembly. The royalists did not care for Mirabeau, they did not care for France; they wanted to be back in their lost paradise of privilege, haughtiness, and limitless expenditure, and it seemed to them that if only they could make the government of the National Assembly impossible, then by a sort of miracle the dry bones of the ancient régime would live again. They had no sense of the other possibility, the gulf of the republican extremists, that yawned at their feet.

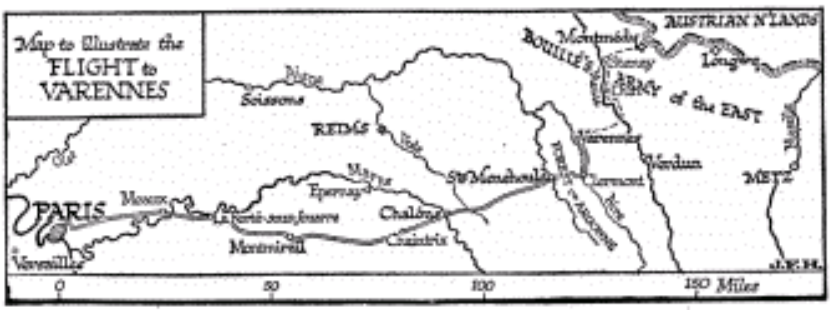

One June night in 1791, between eleven o'clock and midnight, the king and queen and their two children slipped out of the Tuileries disguised, threaded their palpitating way through Paris, circled round from the north of the city to the east, and got at last into a travelling-carriage that was waiting upon the road to Chalons. They were flying to the army of the east. The army of the east was "loyal," that is to say, its general and officers at least were prepared to betray France to the king and court. Here was adventure at last after the queen's heart, and one can understand the pleasurable excitement of the little party as the miles lengthened between themselves and Paris. Away over the hills were reverence, deep bows, and the kissing of hands. Then back to Versailles. A little shooting of the mob in Paris — artillery, if need be. A few executions — but not of the sort of people who matter. A White Terror for a few months. Then all would be well again. Perhaps Calonne might return too, with fresh financial expedients. He was busy just then gathering support among the German princes. There were a lot of chateaux to rebuild, but the people who burnt them down could hardly complain if the task of

rebuilding them pressed rather heavily upon their grimy necks....

All such bright anticipations were cruelly dashed that night at Varennes. The king had been recognized at Sainte Menehould by the landlord of the post house, and as the night fell, the eastward roads clattered with galloping messengers rousing the country, and trying to intercept the fugitives. There were fresh horses waiting in the upper village of Varennes — the young officer in charge had given the king up for the night and gone to bed — while for half an hour in the lower village the poor king, disguised as a valet, disputed with his postillions, who had expected reliefs in the lower village and refused to go further. Finally they consented to go on. They consented too late. The little party found the postmaster from Sainte Menehould, who had ridden past while the postillions wrangled, and a number of worthy republicans of Varennes whom he had gathered together, awaiting them at the bridge between the two parts of the town. The bridge was barricaded. Muskets were thrust into the carriage: "Your passports?"

The king surrendered without a struggle. The little party was taken into the house of some village functionary. "Well," said the king, "here you have me!" Also he remarked that he was hungry. At dinner he commended the wine, "quite excellent wine." What the queen said is not recorded. There were royalist troops at hand, but they attempted no rescue. The tocsin began to ring, and the village "illuminated itself," to guard against surprise....

A very crestfallen coachload of royalty returned to Paris and was received by vast crowds — *in silence*. The word had gone forth that whoever insulted the king should be thrashed, and whoever applauded him should be killed....

It was only after this foolish exploit that the idea of a republic took hold of the French mind. Before this flight to Varennes there was no doubt much abstract republican sentiment, but there was scarcely any expressed disposition to abolish monarchy in France. Even in July, a month after the flight, a great meeting in the Champ de Mars, supporting a petition for the dethronement of the king, was dispersed by the authorities, and many people were killed. But such displays of firmness could not prevent the lesson of that flight soaking into men's minds. Just as in England in the days of Charles

I, so now in France men realized that the king could not be trusted — he was dangerous. The Jacobins, the extreme republican party, grew rapidly in strength. Their leaders, Robespierre, Danton, Marat, who had hitherto been a group of impossibles on the extreme left, began to dominate the National Assembly.

These Jacobins were the equivalents of the American radicals, men with untrammelled advanced ideas. Their strength lay in the fact that they were unencumbered and downright. They were poor men with nothing to lose. The party of moderation, of compromise with the relics of the old order, was led by such men of established position as General Lafayette, the general who had commanded the French troops in America, and Mirabeau, an aristocrat who was ready to model himself on the rich and influential aristocrats of England. But Robespierre was a needy but clever young lawyer from Arras, whose most precious possession was his faith in Rousseau; Danton was a scarcely more wealthy barrister in Paris, one of those big roaring gesticulating Frenchmen who are in normal times the heroic loud-talkers of provincial cafés; Marat was an older man, a Swiss of very great scientific distinction, but equally unembarrassed by possessions. On Marat's scientific standing it is necessary to lay stress because there is a sort of fashion among English writers to misrepresent the leaders of great revolutionary movements as ignorant men. This gives a false view of the mental processes of revolution; and it is the task of the historian to correct it. Marat, we find, was conversant with English, Spanish, German, and Italian; he had spent several years in England, he was made an honorary M.D. of St. Andrew's, and had published some valuable contributions to medical science in English. Both Benjamin Franklin and Goethe were greatly interested in his work in physics. This is the man who is called by Carlyle "rabid dog," "atrocious," "squalid," and "Dog-leech" — this last by way of tribute to his science.

The revolution called Marat to politics, and his earliest contributions to the great discussion were fine and sane. There was a prevalent delusion in France that England was a land of liberty. His *Tableau des vices de la constitution d'Angleterre* showed the realities of the English position. His last years were maddened by an almost intolerable skin disease which he caught while hiding in the

sewers of Paris to escape the consequences of his denunciation of the king as a traitor after the flight to Varennes. Only by sitting in a hot bath could he collect his mind to write. He had been treated hardly and suffered, and he became hard; nevertheless he stands out in history as a man of rare, unblemished honesty. His poverty seems particularly to have provoked the scorn of Carlyle.

"What a road he has travelled; and sits now, about half-past seven of the clock, stewing in slipper-bath; sore afflicted; ill of Revolution Fever.... Excessively sick and worn, poor man: with precisely elevenpence half penny of ready-money, in paper; with slipper-bath; strong three-footed stool for writing on, the while: and a squalid Washerwoman for his sole household ... that is his civic establishment in Medical-School Street; thither and not elsewhere has his road led him.... Hark, a rap again! A musical woman's voice, refusing to be rejected: it is the Citoyenne who would do France a service. Marat, recognizing from within, cries, Admit her. Charlotte Corday is admitted."

The young heroine — for republican leaders are fair game, and their assassins are necessarily heroines and their voices "musical" — offered to give him some necessary information about the counter-revolution at Caen, and as he was occupied in making a note of her facts, she stabbed him with a large sheath knife (1792)....

Such was the quality of most of the leaders of the Jacobin party. They were men of no property — untethered men. They were more dissociated and more elemental, therefore, than any other party; and they were ready to push the ideas of freedom and equality to a logical extremity. Their standards of patriotic virtue were high and harsh. There was something inhuman even in their humanitarian zeal. They saw without humour the disposition of the moderates to ease things down, to keep the common folk just a little needy and respectful, and royalty (and men of substance) just a little respected. They were blinded by the formulæ of Rousseauism to the historical truth that man is by nature oppressor and oppressed, and that it is only slowly by law, education, and the spirit of love in the world that men can be made happy and free.

And while in America the formulæ of eighteenth-century democracy were on the whole stimulating and helpful because it was

already a land of open-air practical equality so far as white men were concerned, in France these formulæ made a very heady and dangerous mixture for the town populations, because considerable parts of the towns of France were slums full of dispossessed, demoralized, degraded, and bitter-spirited people. The Parisian crowd was in a particularly desperate and dangerous state, because the industries of Paris had been largely luxury industries, and much of her employment parasitic on the weaknesses and vices of fashionable life. Now the fashionable world had gone over the frontier, travellers were restricted, business disordered, and the city full of unemployed and angry people.

But the royalists, instead of realizing the significance of these Jacobins with their dangerous integrity and their dangerous grip upon the imagination of the mob, had the conceit to think they could make tools of them. The time for the replacement of the National Assembly under the new-made constitution by the "Legislative Assembly" was drawing near; and when the Jacobins, with the idea of breaking up the moderates, proposed to make the members of the National Assembly ineligible for the Legislative Assembly, the royalists supported them with great glee, and carried the proposal. They perceived that the Legislative Assembly, so clipped of all experience, must certainly be a politically incompetent body. They would "extract good from the excess of evil," and presently France would fall back helpless into the hands of her legitimate masters. So they thought. And the royalists did more than this. They backed the election of a Jacobin as Mayor of Paris. It was about as clever as if a man brought home a hungry tiger to convince his wife of her need of him. There stood another body ready at hand with which these royalists did not reckon, far better equipped than the court to step in and take the place of an ineffective Legislative Assembly, and that was the strongly Jacobin Commune of Paris installed at the Hôtel de Ville.

So far France had been at peace. None of her neighbours had attacked her, because she appeared to be weakening herself by her internal dissensions. It was Poland that suffered by the distraction of France. But there seemed no reason why they should not insult and threaten her, and prepare the way for a later partition at their

convenience. At Pillnitz, in 1791, the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria met, and issued a declaration that the restoration of order and monarchy in France was a matter of interest to all sovereigns. And an army of emigrés, French nobles and gentlemen, an army largely of officers, was allowed to accumulate close to the frontier.

It was France that declared war against Austria. The motives of those who supported this step were conflicting. Many republicans wanted it because they wished to see the kindred people of Belgium liberated from the Austrian yoke. Many royalists wanted it because they saw in war a possibility of restoring the prestige of the crown. Marat opposed it bitterly in his paper *L'Ami du Peuple*, because he did not want to see republican enthusiasm turned into war fever. His instinct warned him of Napoleon. On April 20th, 1792, the king came down to the Assembly and proposed war amidst great applause.

The war began disastrously. Three French armies entered Belgium, two were badly beaten, and the third, under Lafayette, retreated. Then Prussia declared war in support of Austria, and the allied forces, under the Duke of Brunswick, prepared to invade France. The duke issued one of the most foolish proclamations in history; he was, he said, invading France to restore the royal authority. Any further indignity shown the king he threatened to visit upon the Assembly and Paris with "military execution." This was surely enough to make the most royalist Frenchman a republican — at least for the duration of the war.

The new phase of revolution, the Jacobin revolution, was the direct outcome of this proclamation. It made the Legislative Assembly, in which orderly republicans (Girondins) and royalists prevailed, it made the government which had put down that republican meeting in the Champ de Mars and hunted Marat into the sewers, impossible. The insurgents gathered at the Hôtel de Ville, and on the tenth of August the Commune launched an attack on the palace of the Tuileries.

The king behaved with a clumsy stupidity, and with that disregard for others which is the prerogative of kings. He had with him a Swiss guard of nearly a thousand men as well as National Guards of uncertain loyalty. He held out vaguely until firing began, and then he

went off to the adjacent Assembly to place himself and his family under its protection, leaving his Swiss fighting. No doubt he hoped to antagonize Assembly and Commune, but the Assembly had none of the fighting spirit of the Hôtel de Ville. The royal refugees were placed in a box reserved for journalists (out of which a small room opened), and there they remained for sixteen hours while the Assembly debated their fate. Outside there were the sounds of a considerable battle; every now and then a window would break. The unfortunate Swiss were fighting with their backs to the wall because there was now nothing else for them to do....

The Assembly had no stomach to back the government's action of July in the Champ de Mars. The fierce vigour of the Commune dominated it. The king found no comfort whatever in the Assembly. It scolded him and discussed his "suspension." The Swiss fought until they received a message from the king to desist, and then — the crowd being savagely angry at the needless bloodshed and out of control — they were for the most part massacred.

The long and tedious attempt to "Merovingianize" Louis, to make an honest crowned republican out of a dull and inadaptable absolute monarch, was now drawing to its tragic close. The Commune of Paris was practically in control of France. The Legislative Assembly — which had apparently undergone a change of heart — decreed that the king was suspended from his office, confined him in the Temple, replaced him by an executive commission, and summoned a National Convention to frame a new constitution.

The tension of patriotic and republican France was now becoming intolerable. Such armies as she had were rolling back helplessly toward Paris. Longwy had fallen, the great fortress of Verdun followed, and nothing seemed likely to stop the march of the allies upon the capital. The sense of royalist treachery rose to panic cruelty. At any rate the royalists had to be silenced and stilled and scared out of sight. The Commune set itself to hunt out every royalist that could be found, until the prisons of Paris were full. Danton incited the crowd against the prisoners, Marat saw the danger of a massacre. Before it was too late Marat tried to secure the establishment of emergency tribunals to filter the innocent from the guilty in this miscellaneous collection of schemers, suspects, and harmless

gentlefolk. He was disregarded, and early in September the inevitable massacre occurred.

Suddenly, first at one prison and then at others, bands of insurgents took possession. A sort of rough court was constituted, and outside gathered a wild mob armed with sabres, pikes, and axes. One by one the prisoners, men and women alike, were led out from their cells, questioned briefly, pardoned with the cry of "Vive la Nation," or thrust out to the mob at the gates. There the crowd jostled and fought to get a slash or thrust at a victim. The condemned were stabbed, hacked, and beaten to death, their heads hewn off, stuck on pikes, and carried about the town, their torn bodies thrust aside. Among others, the Princesse de Lamballe, whom the king and queen had left behind in the Tuileries, perished. Her head was carried on a pike to the Temple for the queen to see.

In the queen's cell were two National Guards. One would have had her look out and see this grisly sight. The other, in pity, would not let her do so.

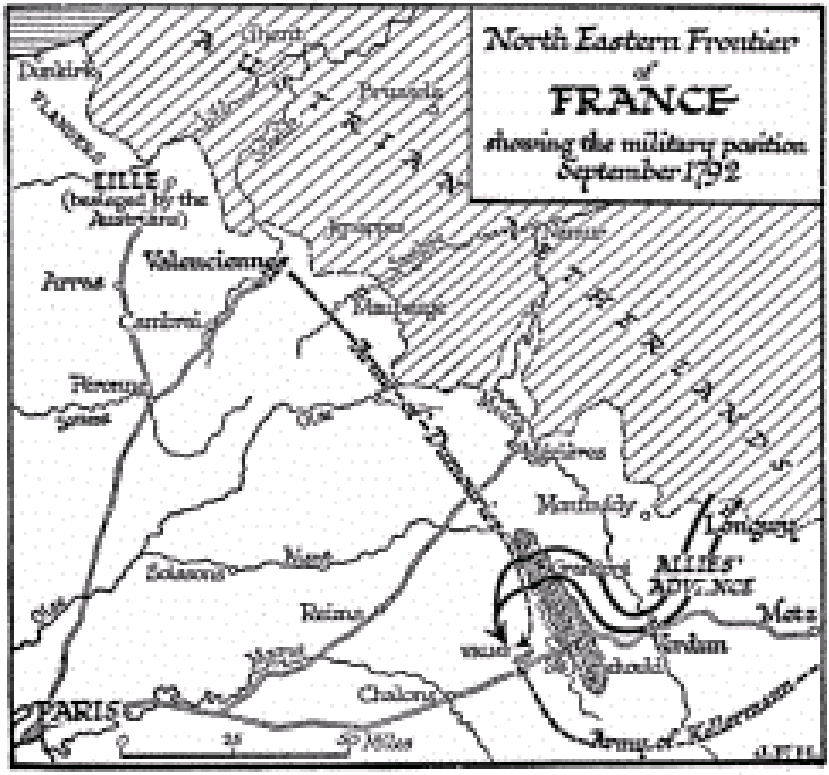

Even as this red tragedy was going on in Paris, the French general Dumouriez, who had rushed an army from Flanders into the forests of the Argonne, was holding up the advance of the allies beyond Verdun. On September 20th occurred a battle, mainly an artillery encounter, at Valmy. A not very resolute Prussian advance was checked, the French infantry stood firm, their artillery was better than the allied artillery. For ten days after this repulse the Duke of Brunswick hesitated, and then he began to fall back towards the Rhine. This battle at Valmy — it was little more than a cannonade — was one of the decisive battles in the world's history. The Revolution was saved. The National Convention met on September 21st, 1792, and immediately proclaimed a republic. The trial and execution of the king followed with a sort of logical necessity upon these things. He died rather as a symbol than as a man. There was nothing else to be done with him; poor man, he cumbered the earth. France could

not let him go to hearten the emigrants, could not keep him harmless at home; his existence threatened her. Marat had urged this trial relentlessly, yet with that acid clearness of his he would not have the king charged with any offence committed before he signed the constitution, because before then he was a real monarch, super-legal, and so incapable of being illegal. Nor would Marat permit attacks upon the king's counsel.... Throughout Marat played a bitter and yet often a just part; he was a great man, a fine intelligence, in a skin of fire; wrung with that organic hate in the blood that is not a product of the mind but of the body.

Louis was beheaded in January, 1793. He was guillotined — for since the previous August the guillotine had been in use as the official instrument in French executions.

Danton, in his leonine rôle, was very fine upon this occasion. "The kings of Europe would challenge us," he roared. "We throw them the head of a king!"

§ 11

And now followed a strange phase in the history of the French people. There arose a great flame of enthusiasm for France and the Republic. There was to be an end to compromise at home and abroad; at home royalists and every form of disloyalty were to be stamped out; abroad France was to be the protector and helper of all revolutionaries. All Europe, all the world, was to become republican. The youth of France poured into the Republican armies; a new and wonderful song spread through the land, a song that still warms the blood like wine, the Marseillaise. Before that chant and the leaping columns of French bayonets and their enthusiastically served guns the foreign armies rolled back; before the end of 1792 the French armies had gone far beyond the utmost achievements of Louis XIV; everywhere they stood on foreign soil. They were in Brussels, they had overrun Savoy, they had raided to Mayence; they had seized the Scheldt from Holland. Then the French Government did an unwise thing. It had been exasperated by the expulsion of its representative from England upon the execution of Louis, and it declared war against England. It was an unwise thing to do, because the revolution

which had given France a new enthusiastic infantry and a brilliant artillery, released from its aristocratic officers and many cramping traditions, had destroyed the discipline of its navy, and the English were supreme upon the sea. And this provocation united all England against France, whereas there had been at first a very considerable liberal movement in Great Britain in sympathy with the revolution. It robbed France of her one prospective ally.

Of the fight that France made in the next few years against a European coalition we cannot tell in any detail. She drove the Austrians for ever out of Belgium, and made Holland a republic. The Dutch fleet, frozen in the Texel, surrendered to a handful of cavalry without firing its guns. For some time the French thrust towards Italy was hung up, and it was only in 1796 that a new general, Napoleon Bonaparte, led the ragged and hungry republican armies in triumph across Piedmont to Mantua and Verona. An *Outline of History* cannot map out campaigns; but of the new quality that had come into war, it is bound to take note. The old professional armies had fought for the fighting, as slack as workers paid by the hour; these wonderful new armies fought hungry and thirsty, for victory. Their enemies called them the "New French." Says C. F. Atkinson, "What astonished the Allies most of all was the number and the velocity of the Republicans. These improvised armies had in fact nothing to delay them. Tents were unprocurable for want of money, untransportable for want of the enormous number of wagons that would have been required, and also unnecessary, for the discomfort that would have caused wholesale desertion in professional armies was cheerfully borne by the men of 1793-4. Supplies for armies of then unheard-of size could not be carried in convoys, and the French soon became familiar with 'living on the country.' Thus 1793 saw the birth of the modern system of war — rapidity of movement, full development of national strength, bivouacs, requisitions and force as against cautious manœuvring, small professional armies, tents and full rations, and chicane. The first represented the decision-compelling spirit, the second the spirit of risking little to gain a little...."

And while these ragged hosts of enthusiasts were chanting the Marseillaise and fighting for *la France*, manifestly never quite clear

in their minds whether they were looting or liberating the countries into which they poured, the republican enthusiasm in Paris was spending itself in a far less glorious fashion. Marat, the one man of commanding intelligence among the Jacobins, was now frantic with an incurable disease, and presently he was murdered; Danton was a series of patriotic thunderstorms; the steadfast fanaticism of Robespierre dominated the situation. This man is difficult to judge; he was a man of poor physique, naturally timid, and a prig. But he had that most necessary gift for power, faith. He believed not in a god familiar to men, but in a certain Supreme Being, and that Rousseau was his prophet. He set himself to save the Republic as he conceived it, and he imagined it could be saved by no other man than he. So that to keep in power was to save the republic. The living spirit of the republic, it seemed, had sprung from a slaughter of royalists and the execution of the king. There were insurrections: one in the west, in the district of La Vendée, where the people rose against the conscription and against the dispossession of the orthodox clergy, and were led by noblemen and priests; one in the south, where Lyons and Marseilles had risen and the royalists of Toulon had admitted an English and Spanish garrison. To which there seemed no more effectual reply than to go on killing royalists.

Nothing could have better pleased the fierce heart of the Paris slums. The Revolutionary Tribunal went to work, and a steady slaughtering began. The invention of the guillotine was opportune to this mood. The queen was guillotined, most of Robespierre's antagonists were guillotined, atheists who argued that there was no Supreme Being were guillotined, Danton was guillotined because he thought there was too much guillotine; day by day, week by week, this infernal new machine chopped off heads and more heads and more. The reign of Robespierre lived, it seemed, on blood, and needed more and more, as an opium-taker needs more and more opium.

Danton was still Danton, leonine and exemplary upon the guillotine. "Danton," he said, "no weakness!"

And the grotesque thing about the story is that Robespierre was indubitably honest. He was far more honest than any of the group of men who succeeded him. He was inspired by a consuming passion

for a new order of human life. So far as he could contrive it, the Committee of Public Safety, the emergency government of twelve which had now thrust aside the Convention, *constructed*. The scale on which it sought to construct was stupendous. All the intricate problems with which we still struggle to-day were met by swift and shallow solutions. Attempts were made to equalize property. "Opulence," said St. Just, "is infamous." The property of the rich was taxed or confiscated in order that it should be divided among the poor. Every man was to have a secure house, a living, a wife and children. The labourer was worthy of his hire, but not entitled to an advantage. There was an attempt to abolish *profit* altogether, the rude incentive of most human commerce since the beginning of society. Profit is the economic riddle that still puzzles us to-day. There were harsh laws against "profiteering" in France in 1793 — England in 1919 found it necessary to make quite similar laws. And the Jacobin government not only replanned — in eloquent outline — the economic, but also the social system. Divorce was made as easy as marriage; the distinction of legitimate and illegitimate children was abolished.... A new calendar was devised, with new names for the months, a week of ten days, and the like — that has long since been swept away; but also the clumsy coinage and the tangled weights and measures of old France gave place to the simple and lucid decimal system that still endures.... There was a proposal from one extremist group to abolish God among other institutions altogether, and to substitute the worship of Reason. There was, indeed, a Feast of Reason in the cathedral of Notre-Dame, with a pretty actress as the goddess of Reason. But against this Robespierre set his face; he was no atheist. "Atheism," he said, "is aristocratic. The idea of a Supreme Being who watches over oppressed innocence and punishes triumphant crime is essentially the idea of the people."

So he guillotined Hébert, who had celebrated the Feast of Reason, and all his party.

A certain mental disorder became perceptible in Robespierre as the summer of 1794 drew on. He was deeply concerned with his religion. (The arrests and executions of suspects were going on now as briskly as ever. Through the streets of Paris every day rumbled the Terror with its carts full of condemned people.) He induced the

Convention to decree that France believed in a Supreme Being, and in that comforting doctrine, the immortality of the soul. In June he celebrated a great festival, the festival of his Supreme Being. There was a procession to the Champ de Mars, which he headed, brilliantly arrayed, bearing a great bunch of flowers and wheat ears. Figures of inflammatory material, representing Atheism and Vice, were solemnly burnt; then, by an ingenious mechanism, and with some slight creakings, an incombustible statue of Wisdom rose in their place. There were discourses — Robespierre delivered the chief one — but apparently no worship....

Thereafter Robespierre displayed a disposition to brood aloof from affairs. For a month he kept away from the Convention.

One day in July he reappeared and delivered a strange speech that clearly foreshadowed fresh prosecutions. "Gazing on the multitude of vices which the torrent of Revolution has rolled down," he cried, in his last great speech in the Convention, "I have sometimes trembled lest I should be soiled by the impure neighbourhood of wicked men.... I know that it is easy for the leagued tyrants of the world to overwhelm a single individual; but I know also what is the duty of a man who can die in the defence of humanity."...

And so on to vague utterances that seemed to threaten everyone.

The Convention heard this speech in silence; then when a proposal was made to print and circulate it, broke into a resentful uproar and refused permission. Robespierre went off in bitter resentment to the club of his supporters, and *reread his speech to them*!

That night was full of talk and meetings and preparations for the morrow, and the next morning the Convention turned upon Robespierre. One Tallien threatened him with a dagger. When he tried to speak, he was shouted down, and the President jingled the bell at him. "President of Assassins," cried Robespierre, "I demand speech!" It was refused him. His voice deserted him; he coughed and spluttered. "The blood of Danton chokes him," cried someone.

He was accused and arrested there and then with his chief supporters.

Whereupon the Hôtel de Ville, still stoutly Jacobin, rose against the Convention, and Robespierre and his companions were snatched

out of the hands of their captors. There was a night of gathering, marching, counter-marching; and at last, about three in the morning, the forces of the Convention faced the forces of the Commune outside the Hôtel de Ville. Henriot, the Jacobin commander, after a busy day was drunk upstairs; a parley ensued, and then, after some indecision, the soldiers of the Commune went over to the Government. There was a shouting of patriotic sentiments, and someone looked out from the Hôtel de Ville. Robespierre and his last companions found themselves betrayed and trapped.

Two or three of these men threw themselves out of a window, and injured themselves frightfully on the railings below without killing themselves. Others attempted suicide. Robespierre, it seems, was shot in the lower jaw by a gendarme. He was found, his eyes staring from a pale face whose lower part was blood.

Followed seventeen hours of agony before his end. He spoke never a word during that time; his jaw being bound up roughly in dirty linen. He and his companions, and the broken, dying bodies of those who had jumped from the windows, twenty-two men altogether, were taken to the guillotine instead of the condemned appointed for that day. Mostly, his eyes were closed, but, says Carlyle, he opened them to see the great knife rising above him, and struggled. Also it would seem he screamed when the executioner removed his bandages. Then the knife came down, swift and merciful.

The Terror was at an end. From first to last there had been condemned and executed about four thousand people.

§ 12

It witnesses to the immense vitality and the profound rightness of the flood of new ideals and intentions that the French Revolution had released into the world of practical endeavour, that it could still flow in a creative torrent after it had been caricatured and mocked in the grotesque personality and career of Robespierre. He had shown its deepest thoughts, he had displayed anticipations of its methods and conclusions, through the green and distorting lenses of his preposterous vanity and egotism, he had smeared and blackened all

its hope and promise with blood and horror, and the power of these ideas was not destroyed. They stood the extreme tests of ridiculous and horrible presentation. After his downfall, the Republic still ruled unassailable. Leaderless, for his successors were a group of crafty or commonplace men, the European republic struggled on, and presently fell and rose again, and fell and rose and still struggles, entangled but invincible.

And it is well to remind the reader here of the real dimensions of this phase of the Terror, which strikes so vividly upon the imagination and which has therefore been enormously exaggerated relatively to the rest of the revolution. From 1789 to late in 1791 the French Revolution was an orderly process, and from the summer of 1794 the Republic was an orderly and victorious state. The Terror was not the work of the whole country, but of the town mob which owed its existence and its savagery to the misrule and social injustice of the ancient régime; and the explosion of the Terror could have happened only through the persistent treacherous disloyalty of the royalists which, while it raised the extremists to frenzy, disinclined the mass of moderate republicans from any intervention. The best men were busy fighting the Austrians and royalists on the frontier. Altogether, we must remember, the total of the killed in the Terror amounted to a few thousands, and among those thousands there were certainly a great number of active antagonists whom the Republic, by all the standards of that time, was entitled to kill. It included such traitors and mischief-makers as Philip, Duke of Orleans, of the Palais Royal, who had voted for the death of Louis XVI. More lives were wasted by the British generals alone on the opening day of what is known as the Somme offensive of July, 1916, than in the whole French revolution from start to finish. We hear so much about the martyrs of the French Terror because they were notable, well-connected people, and because there has been a sort of propaganda of their sufferings. But let us balance against them in our minds what was going on in the prisons of the world generally at that time. In Britain and America, while the Terror ruled in France, far more people were slaughtered for offences — very often quite trivial offences — against property than were condemned by the Revolutionary Tribunal for treason against the State. Of course, they

were very common people indeed, but in their rough way they suffered. A girl was hung in Massachusetts in 1789 for forcibly taking the hat, shoes, and buckles of another girl she had met in the street. Again, Howard the philanthropist (about 1773) found a number of perfectly innocent people detained in the English prisons who had been tried and acquitted, but were unable to pay the gaoler's fees. And these prisons were filthy places under no effective control. Torture was still in use in the Hanoverian dominions of his Britannic majesty King George III. It had been in use in France up to the time of the National Assembly. These things mark the level of the age. It is not on record that anyone was deliberately tortured by the French revolutionaries during the Terror. Those few hundreds of French gentlefolk fell into a pit that most of them had been well content should exist for others. It was tragic, but not, by the scale of universal history, a great tragedy. The common man in France was more free, better off, and happier during the "Terror" than he had been in 1787.

The story of the Republic after the summer of 1794 becomes a tangled story of political groups aiming at everything from a radical republic to a royalist reaction, but pervaded by a general desire for some definite working arrangement even at the price of considerable concessions. There was a series of insurrections of the Jacobins and of the royalists, there seems to have been what we should call nowadays a hooligan class in Paris which was quite ready to turn out to fight and loot on either side; nevertheless the Convention produced a government, the Directory of five members, which held France together for five years. The last, most threatening revolt of all, in October, 1795, was suppressed with great skill and decision by a rising young general, Napoleon Bonaparte.

The Directory was victorious abroad, but uncreative at home; its members were far too anxious to stick to the sweets and glories of office to prepare a constitution that would supersede them, and far too dishonest to handle the task of financial and economic reconstruction demanded by the condition of France. We need only note two of their names, Carnot, who was an honest republican, and Barras, who was conspicuously a rogue. Their reign of five years formed a curious interlude in this history of great changes. They took

things as they found them. The propagandist zeal of the revolution carried the French armies into Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, south Germany, and north Italy. Everywhere kings were expelled and republics set up. But such propagandist zeal as animated the Directorate did not prevent the looting of the treasures of the liberated peoples to relieve the financial embarrassment of the French Government. Their wars became less and less the holy war of freedom, and more and more like the aggressive wars of the ancient régime. The last feature of Grand Monarchy that France was disposed to discard was her tradition of foreign policy, grasping, aggressive, restless, French-centred. One discovers it still as vigorous under the Directorate as if there had been no revolution.

§ 13

The ebb of this tide of Revolution in the world, this tide which had created the great Republic of America and threatened to submerge all European monarchies, was now at hand. It is as if something had thrust up from beneath the surface of human affairs, made a gigantic effort, and spent itself. It swept many obsolescent and evil things away, but many evil and unjust things remained. It solved many problems, and it left the desire for fellowship and order face to face with much vaster problems that it seemed only to have revealed. Privilege of certain types had gone, many tyrannies, much religious persecution. When these things of the ancient régime had vanished, it seemed as if they had never mattered. What did matter was that for all their votes and enfranchisement, and in spite of all their passion and effort, common men were still not free and not enjoying an equal happiness; that the immense promise and air of a new world with which the Revolution had come, remained unfulfilled.

Yet, after all, this wave of revolution had realized nearly everything that had been clearly thought out before it came. It was not failing now for want of impetus, but for want of finished ideas. Many things that had oppressed mankind were swept away for ever. Now that they were swept away it became apparent how unprepared men were for the creative opportunities this clearance gave them. And periods of revolution are periods of action; in them men reap the

harvests of ideas that have grown during phases of interlude, and they leave the fields cleared for a new season of growth, but they cannot suddenly produce ripened new ideas to meet an unanticipated riddle.

The sweeping away of king and lord, of priest and inquisitor, of landlord and tax-gatherer and task-master, left the mass of men face to face for the first time with certain very fundamental aspects of the social structure, relationships they had taken for granted, and had never realized the need of thinking hard and continuously about before. Institutions that had seemed to be in the nature of things, and matters that had seemed to happen by the same sort of necessity that brought round the dawn and springtime, were discovered to be artificial, controllable, were they not so perplexingly intricate, and — now that the old routines were abolished and done away with — in urgent need of control. The New Order found itself confronted with three riddles which it was quite unprepared to solve: Property, Currency, and International Relationship.

Let us take these three problems in order, and ask what they are and how they arose in human affairs. Every human life is deeply entangled in them, and concerned in their solution. The rest of this history becomes more and more clearly the development of the effort to solve these problems; that is to say, so to interpret property, so to establish currency, and so to control international reactions as to render possible a world-wide, progressive and happy community of will. They are the three riddles of the sphinx of fate, to which the human commonweal must find an answer or perish.

The idea of property arises out of the combative instincts of the species. Long before men were men, the ancestral ape was a proprietor. Primitive property is what a beast will fight for. The dog and his bone, the tigress and her lair, the roaring stag and his herd, these are proprietorship blazing. No more nonsensical expression is conceivable in sociology than the term "primitive communism." The Old Man of the family tribe of early palæolithic times insisted upon his proprietorship in his wives and daughters, in his tools, in his visible universe. If any other man wandered into his visible universe he fought him, and if he could he slew him. The tribe grew in the course of ages, as Atkinson showed convincingly in his *Primal Law*,

by the gradual toleration by the Old Man of the existence of the younger men, and of their proprietorship in the wives they captured from outside the tribe, and in the tools and ornaments they made and the game they slew. Human society grew by a compromise between this one's property and that. It was largely a compromise and an alliance forced upon men by the necessity of driving some other tribe out of its visible universe. If the hills and forests and streams were not *your* land or *my* land, it was because they had to be our land. Each of us would have preferred to have it *my* land, but that would not work. In that case the other fellows would have destroyed us. Society, therefore, is from its beginnings the mitigation of ownership. Ownership in the beast and in the primitive savage was far more intense a thing than it is in the civilized world to-day. It is rooted more strongly in our instincts than in our reason.

In the natural savage and in the untutored man to-day — for it is well to keep in mind that no man to-day is more than four hundred generations from the primordial savage — there is no limitation to the sphere of ownership. Whatever you can fight for, you can own; women-folk, spared captive, captured beast, forest glade, stone pit, or what not. As the community grew and a sort of law came to restrain internecine fighting, men developed rough and ready methods of settling proprietorship. Men could own what they were the first to make or capture or claim. It seemed natural that a debtor who could not pay up should become the property of his creditor. Equally natural was it that, after claiming a patch of land ("Bags I," as the schoolboy says), a man should exact payments and tribute from anyone else who wanted to use it. It was only slowly, as the possibilities of organized life dawned on men, that this unlimited property in anything whatever began to be recognized as a nuisance. Men found themselves born into a universe all owned and claimed, nay! they found themselves born, owned, and claimed. The secial struggles of the earlier civilization are difficult to trace now, but the history we have told of the Roman republic shows a community waking up to the idea that they may become a public inconvenience and should then be repudiated, and that the unlimited ownership of land is also an inconvenience. We find that later Babylonia severely limited the rights of property in slaves. Finally, we find in the

teaching of that great revolutionist, Jesus of Nazareth, such an attack upon property as had never been before. Easier it was, he said, for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the owner of great possessions to enter the kingdom of heaven. A steady, continuous criticism of the permissible scope of property seems to have been going on in the world for the last twenty-five or thirty centuries. Nineteen hundred years after Jesus of Nazareth we find all the world that has come under the Christian teaching persuaded that there could be no property in persons. There has been a turn over in the common conscience in that matter. And also the idea that "a man may do what he likes with his own" was clearly very much shaken in relation to other sorts of property. But this world of the closing eighteenth century was still only in the interrogative stage in this matter. It had got nothing clear enough, much less settled enough, to act upon. One of its primary impulses was to protect property against the greed and waste of kings and the exploitation of noble adventurers. It was to protect private property that the Revolution began. But its equalitarian formulæ carried it into a criticism of the very property it had risen to protect. How can men be free and equal when numbers of them have no ground to stand upon and nothing to eat, and the owners will neither feed nor lodge them unless they toil? Excessively — the poor complained.

To which riddle the Jacobin reply was to set about "dividing up." They wanted to intensify and universalize property. Aiming at the same end by another route, there were already in the eighteenth century certain primitive socialists — or, to be more exact, communists — who wanted to "abolish" private property altogether. The state (a democratic state was of course understood) was to own all property. It was only as the nineteenth century developed that men began to realize that property was not one simple thing, but a great complex of ownerships of different values and consequences, that many things (such as human beings, the implements of an artist, clothing, toothbrushes) are very profoundly and incurably personal property, and that there is a very great range of things, railways, machinery of various sorts, homes, cultivated gardens, pleasure-boats, for example, which need each to be considered very particularly to determine how far and under what limitations it may

come under private ownership, and how far it falls into the public domain and may be administered and let out by the state in the collective interest. On the practical side these questions pass into politics, and the problem of making and sustaining efficient state administration. They open up issues in social psychology, and interact with the enquiries of educational science. We have to-day the advantage of a hundred and thirty years of discussion over the first revolutionary generation, but even now this criticism of property is still a vast and passionate ferment rather than a science. Under the circumstances it was impossible that eighteenth-century France should present any other spectacle than that of vague and confused popular movements seeking to dispossess owners, and classes of small and large owners holding on grimly, demanding, before everything else, law, order, and security, and seeking to increase their individual share of anything whatever that could be legally possessed.

Closely connected with the vagueness of men's ideas about property was the vagueness of their ideas about currency. Both the American and the French republics fell into serious trouble upon this score. Here, again, we deal with something that is not simple, a tangle of usages, conventions, laws, and prevalent mental habits, out of which arise problems which admit of no solution in simple terms, and which yet are of vital importance to the everyday life of the community. The validity of the acknowledgement a man is given for a day's work is manifestly of quite primary importance to the working of the social machine. The growth of confidence in the precious metals and of coins, until the assurance became practically universal that good money could be trusted to have its purchasing power anywhere, must have been a gradual one in human history. And being fairly established, this assurance was subjected to very considerable strains and perplexities by the action of governments in debasing currency and in substituting paper promises to pay for the actual metallic coins. Every age produced a number of clever people intelligent enough to realize the opportunities for smart operations afforded by the complex of faiths and fictions upon which the money system rested, and sufficiently unsound morally to give their best energies to growing rich and so getting people to work for them,

through tricks and tampering with gold, coinage, and credit. So soon as serious political and social dislocation occurred, the money mechanism began to work stiffly and inaccurately. The United States and the French Republic both started their careers in a phase of financial difficulty. Everywhere governments had been borrowing and issuing paper promises to pay interest, more interest than they could conveniently raise. Both revolutions led to much desperate public spending and borrowing, and at the same time to an interruption of cultivation and production that further diminished real taxable wealth. Both governments, being unable to pay their way in gold, resorted to the issue of paper money, promising to pay upon the security of undeveloped land (in America) or recently confiscated church lands (France). In both cases the amount of issue went far beyond the confidence of men in the new security. Gold was called in, hidden by the cunning ones, or went abroad to pay for imports; and people found themselves with various sorts of bills and notes in the place of coins, all of uncertain and diminishing value.

However complicated the origins of currency, its practical effect and the end it has to serve in the community may be stated roughly in simple terms. The money a man receives for his work (mental or bodily) or for relinquishing his property in some consumable good, must ultimately be able to purchase for him for his use a fairly equivalent amount of consumable goods. ("Consumable goods" is a phrase we would have understood in the widest sense to represent even such things as a journey, a lecture or theatrical entertainment, housing, medical advice, and so forth.) When everyone in a community is assured of this, and assured that the money will not deteriorate in purchasing power, then currency — and the distribution of goods by trade — is in a healthy and satisfactory state. Then men will work cheerfully, and only then. The imperative need for that steadfastness and security of currency is the fixed datum from which the scientific study and control of currency must begin. But under the most stable conditions there will always be fluctuations in currency value. The sum total of saleable consumable goods in the world and in various countries varies from year to year and from season to season; autumn is probably a time of plenty in comparison with spring; with an increase the purchasing power of currency will

increase, unless there is also an increase in the amount of currency. On the other hand, if there is a diminution in the production of consumable goods or a great and unprofitable destruction of consumable goods, such as occurs in a war, the share of the total of consumable goods represented by a sum of money will diminish and prices and wages will rise. In modern war the explosion of a single big shell, even if it hits nothing, destroys labour and material roughly equivalent to a comfortable cottage or a year's holiday for a man. If the shell hits anything, then that further destruction has to be added to the diminution of consumable goods. Every shell that burst in the recent war diminished by a little fraction the purchasing value of every coin in the whole world. If there is also an increase of currency during a period when consumable goods are being used up and not fully replaced — and the necessities of revolutionary and war-making governments almost always require this — then the enhancement of prices and the fall in the value of the currency paid in wages is still greater. Usually also governments under these stresses borrow money, that is to say, they issue interest-bearing paper, secured on the willingness and ability of the general community to endure taxation. Such operations would be difficult enough if they were carried out frankly by perfectly honest men, in the full light of publicity and scientific knowledge. But hitherto this has never been the case; at every point the clever egotist, the bad rich man, is trying to deflect things a little to his own advantage. Everywhere too one finds the stupid egotist ready to take fright and break into panic. Consequently we presently discover the state encumbered by an excess of currency, which is in effect a non-interest-paying debt, and also with a great burthen of interest upon loans. Both credit and currency begin to fluctuate wildly with the evaporation of public confidence. They are, we say, demoralized.

The ultimate consequence of an entirely demoralized currency would be to end all work and all trade that could not be carried on by payment in kind and barter. Men would refuse to work except for food, clothing, housing, and payment in kind. The immediate consequence of a partially demoralized currency is to drive up prices and make trading feverishly adventurous and workers suspicious and irritable. A sharp man wants under such conditions to hold money for

as brief a period as possible; he demands the utmost for his reality, and buys a reality again as soon as possible in order to get this perishable stuff, the currency paper, off his hands. All who have fixed incomes and saved accumulations suffer by the rise in prices, and the wage-earners find, with a gathering fury, that the real value of their wages is continually less. Here is a state of affairs where the duty of every clever person is evidently to help adjust and reassure. But all the traditions of private enterprise, all the ideas of the later eighteenth century, went to justify the action of acute-minded and dexterous people who set themselves to accumulate claims, titles, and tangible property in the storms and dislocations of this currency breakdown. The number of understanding people in the world who were setting themselves sincerely and simply to restore honest and workable currency and credit conditions were few and ineffectual. Most of the financial and speculative people of the time were playing the part of Cornish wreckers — not apparently with any conscious dishonesty, but with the completest self-approval and the applause of their fellow men. The aim of every clever person was to accumulate as much as he could of really negotiable wealth, and then, and only then, to bring about some sort of stabilizing political process that would leave him in advantageous possession of his accumulation. Here were the factors of a bad economic atmosphere, suspicious, feverish, greedy, and speculative....

In the third direction in which the Revolution had been unprepared with clear ideas, the problem of international relationships, developments were to occur that interacted disastrously with this state of financial and economic adventure, this scramble and confusion, this pre-occupation of men's minds with the perplexing slipperiness of their private property and their monetary position at home. The Republic at its birth found itself at war. For a time that war was waged by the new levies with a patriotism and a zeal unparalleled in the world's history. But that could not go on. The Directory found itself at the head of a conquering country, intolerably needy and embarrassed at home, and in occupation of rich foreign lands, full of seizable wealth and material and financial opportunity. We have all double natures, and the French in particular seem to be developed logically and symmetrically on both sides. Into

these conquered regions France came as a liberator, the teacher of Republicanism to mankind. Holland and Belgium became the Batavian Republic, Genoa and its Riviera the Ligurian Republic, north Italy the Cisalpine Republic, Switzerland was rechristened the Helvetian Republic, Mülhausen, Rome, and Naples were designated republics. Grouped about France, these republics were to be a constellation of freedom leading the world. That was the ideal side. At the same time the French government, and French private individuals in concert with the government, proceeded to a complete and exhaustive exploitation of the resources of these liberated lands.

So within ten years of the meeting of the States General, New France begins to take on a singular likeness to the old. It is more flushed, more vigorous; it wears a cap of liberty instead of a crown; it has a new army — but a damaged fleet; it has new rich people instead of the old rich people, a new peasantry working even harder than the old and yielding more taxes, a new foreign policy curiously like the old foreign policy disrobed, and — there is no Millennium.

XXXVIII

THE CAREER OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

§ 1. *The Bonaparte Family in Corsica.* § 2. *Bonaparte as a Republican General.* § 3. *Napoleon First Consul, 1799-1804.* § 4. *Napoleon I, Emperor, 1804-14.* § 5. *The Hundred Days.* § 6. *The Cult of the Napoleonic.* § 7. *The Map of Europe in 1815.*

§ 1

AND now we come to one of the most illuminating figures in modern history, the figure of an adventurer and a wrecker, whose story seems to display with an extraordinary vividness the universal subtle conflict of egotism, vanity, and personality with the weaker, wider claims of the common good. Against this background of confusion and stress and hope, this strained and heaving France and Europe, this stormy and tremendous dawn, appears this dark little archaic personage, hard, compact, capable, unscrupulous, imitative, and neatly vulgar. He was born (1769) in the still half-barbaric island of Corsica, the son of a rather prosaic father, a lawyer who had been first a patriotic Corsican against the French monarchy which was trying to subjugate Corsica, and who had then gone over to the side of the invader. His mother was of sturdier stuff, passionately patriotic and a strong and managing woman. (She birched her sons; on one occasion she birched Napoleon when he was sixteen.) There were numerous brothers and sisters, and the family pursued the French authorities with importunities for rewards and jobs. Except for Napoleon it seems to have been a thoroughly commonplace, "hungry" family. He was clever, bad-tempered, and overbearing. From his mother he had acquired a romantic Corsican patriotism.

Through the patronage of the French governor of Corsica he got an education first at the military school of Brienne and then at the military school of Paris, from which he passed into the artillery in 1785. He was an industrious student both of mathematics and history, his memory was prodigiously good, and he made copious note-books which still exist. These note-books show no very exceptional intelligence, and they contain short pieces of original

composition — upon suicide and similar adolescent topics. He fell early under the spell of Rousseau; he developed sensibility and a scorn for the corruptions of civilization. In 1786 he wrote a pamphlet against a Swiss pastor who had attacked Rousseau. It was a very ordinary adolescent production, rhetorical and imitative. He dreamt of an independent Corsica, freed from the French. With the revolution, he became an ardent republican and a supporter of the new French régime in Corsica. For some years, until the fall of Robespierre, he remained a Jacobin.

§ 2

He soon gained the reputation of a useful and capable officer, and it was through Robespierre's younger brother that he got his first chance of distinction at Toulon. Toulon had been handed over to the British and Spanish by the Royalists, and an allied fleet occupied its harbour. Bonaparte was given the command of the artillery, and under his direction the French forced the allies to abandon the port and town.

He was next appointed commander of the artillery in Italy, but he had not taken up his duties when the death of Robespierre seemed likely to involve his own; he was put under arrest as a Jacobin, and for a time he was in danger of the guillotine. That danger passed. He was employed as artillery commander in an abortive raid upon Corsica, and then went to Paris (1795) rather down at heel. Madame Junot in her Memoirs describes his lean face and slovenly appearance at this time, "his ill-combed, ill-powdered hair hanging down over his grey overcoat," his gloveless hands and badly blacked boots. It was a time of exhaustion and reaction after the severities of the Jacobite republic. "In Paris," says Holland Rose, "the star of Liberty was paling before Mercury, Mars, and Venus" — finance, uniforms, and social charm. The best of the common men were in the armies, away beyond the frontiers. We have already noted the last rising of the royalists in this year (1795). Napoleon had the luck to be in Paris, and found his second opportunity in this affair. He saved the Republic — of the Directory.

His abilities greatly impressed Carnot, the most upright of the

Directors. Moreover, he married a charming young widow, Madame Josephine de Beauharnais, who had great influence with Barras. Both these things probably helped him to secure the command in Italy.

We have no space here for the story of his brilliant campaigns in Italy (1796-7), but of the spirit in which that invasion of Italy was conducted we must say a word or two, because it illustrates so vividly the double soul of France and of Napoleon, and how revolutionary idealism was paling before practical urgencies. He proclaimed to the Italians that the French were coming to break their chains — *and they were*! He wrote to the Directory: "We will levy 20,000,000 francs in exactions in this country; it is one of the richest in the world." To his soldiers he said, "You are famished and nearly naked.... I lead you into the most fertile plain in the world. There you will find great towns, rich provinces, honour, glory, riches...."

We are all such mixed stuff as this; in all of us the intimations of a new world and a finer duty struggle to veil and control the ancient greeds and lusts of our inherited past; but these passages, written by a young man of twenty-seven, seem to show the gilt of honourable idealism rubbed off at an unusually early age. These are the bribes of an adventurer who has brought whatever impulse of devotion to a great cause once stirred within him, well under the control of his self love.

His successes in Italy were brilliant and complete; they enormously stimulated his self-confidence and his contempt for the energy and ability of his fellow creatures. He had wanted to go into Italy because there lay the most attractive task — he had risked his position in the army by refusing to take up the irksome duties of a command against the rebels in La Vendée — and there are clear signs of a vast expansion of his vanity with his victories. He had been a great reader of Plutarch's Lives and of Roman history, and his extremely active but totally uncreative imagination was now busy with dreams of a revival of the eastern conquests of the Roman Empire. He got the republic of Venice out of his way by cutting it up between the French and Austria, securing the Ionian Islands and the Venetian fleet for France. This peace, the peace of Campo Formio, was for both sides a thoroughly scoundrelly and ultimately a disastrous bargain. The new republic of France assisted in the murder

of an ancient republic — Napoleon carried his point against a considerable outcry in France — and Austria got Venetia, in which land in 1918 she was destined to bleed to death. There were also secret clauses by which both France and Austria were later to acquire south German territory. And it was not only the Roman push eastward that was now exciting Napoleon's brain. This was the land of Cæsar — and Cæsar was a bad example for the successful general of a not very stable republic.

Cæsar had come back to Rome from Gaul a hero and conqueror. His new imitator would come back from Egypt and India — Egypt and India were to be his Gaul. There was really none of the genius about which historians write so glibly in this decision. It was a tawdry and ill-conceived imitation. The elements of failure stared him in the face. The way to Egypt and India was by sea, and the British, in spite of two recent naval mutinies, whose importance Napoleon exaggerated, were stronger than the French at sea. Moreover, Egypt was a part of the Turkish empire, by no means a contemptible power in those days. Nevertheless he persuaded the Directory, which was dazzled by his Italian exploits, to let him go. An Armada started from Toulon in May, 1798, captured Malta, and had the good luck to evade the British fleet and arrive at Alexandria. He landed his troops hurriedly, and the battle of the Pyramids made him master of Egypt.

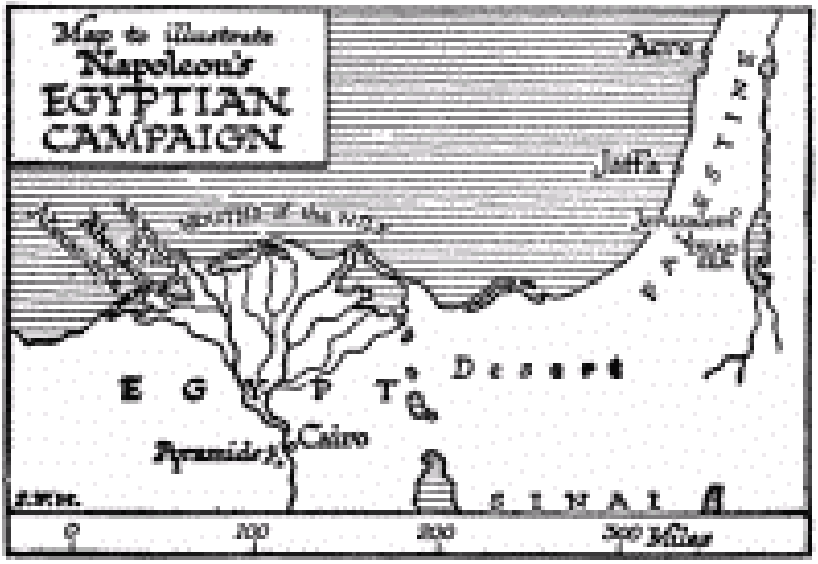

The main British fleet at that time was in the Atlantic outside Cadiz, but the admiral had detached a force of his best ships, under Vice-Admiral Nelson — a man certainly as great a genius in naval affairs as was Napoleon in things military — to chase and engage the French flotilla. For a time Nelson sought the French fleet in vain; finally, on the evening of the first of August, he found it at anchor in Aboukir Bay. He had caught it unawares; many of the men were ashore and a council was being held in the flagship. He had no charts, and it was a hazardous thing to sail into the shallow water in a bad light. The French admiral concluded, therefore, that he would not attack before morning, and so made no haste in recalling his men aboard until it was too late to do so. Nelson struck at once — against the advice of some of his captains. One ship only went aground. She marked the shoal for the rest of the fleet. He sailed to the attack in a double line about sundown, putting the French between two fires. Night fell as the battle was joined; the fight thundered and crashed in the darkness, until it was lit presently by the flames of burning French ships, and then by the flare of the French flag-ship, the Orient, blowing up.... Before midnight the battle of the Nile was over, and Napoleon's fleet was destroyed. Napoleon was cut off from France.

Says Holland Rose, quoting Thiers, this Egyptian expedition was "the rashest attempt history records." Napoleon was left in Egypt with the Turks gathering against him and his army infected with the plague. Nevertheless, with a stupid sort of persistence, he went on for a time with this Eastern scheme. He gained a victory at Jaffa, and, being short of provisions, *massacred all his prisoners*. Then he tried to take Acre, where his own siege artillery, just captured at sea by the English, was used against him. Returning baffled to Egypt, he gained a brilliant victory over a Turkish force at Aboukir, and then, deserting the army of Egypt — it held on until 1801, when it capitulated to a British force — made his escape back to France (1799), narrowly missing capture by a British cruiser off Sicily.

Here was muddle and failure enough to discredit any general — had it been known. But the very British cruisers which came so near to catching him, helped him by preventing any real understanding of the Egyptian situation from reaching the French people. He could make a great flourish over the battle of Aboukir and conceal the shame and loss of Acre. Things were not going well with France just then. There had been military failures at several points; much of Italy had been lost, Bonaparte's Italy, and this turned men's minds to him as the natural saviour of that situation; moreover, there had been much peculation, and some of it was coming to light; France was in one of her phases of financial scandal, and Napoleon had not filched; the public was in that state of moral fatigue when a strong and honest man is called for, a wonderful, impossible healing man who will do everything for everybody. People, poor lazy souls, persuaded themselves that this specious young man with the hard face, so providentially back from Egypt, was the strong and honest man required — another Washington.

With Julius Cæsar rather than Washington at the back of his mind, Napoleon responded to the demand of his time. A conspiracy was carefully engineered to replace the Directory by three "Consuls" — everybody seems to have been reading far too much Roman history just then — of whom Napoleon was to be the chief. The working of that conspiracy is too intricate a story for our space; it involved a Cromwell-like dispersal of the Lower House (the Council of Five Hundred), and in this affair Napoleon lost his nerve. The deputies

shouted at him and hustled him, and he seems to have been very much frightened. He nearly fainted, stuttered, and could say nothing, but the situation was saved by his brother Lucien, who brought in the soldiers and dispersed the council. This little hitch did not affect the final success of the scheme. The three Consuls were installed at the Luxembourg palace, with two commissioners, to reconstruct the constitution.

With all his confidence restored and sure of the support of the people, who supposed him to be honest, patriotic, republican, and able to bring about a good peace, Napoleon took a high hand with his colleagues and the commissioners. A constitution was produced in which the chief executive officer was to be called the First Consul, with enormous powers. He was to be Napoleon; this was part of the constitution. He was to be re-elected or replaced at the end of ten years. He was to be assisted by a Council of State, appointed by himself, which was to initiate legislation and send its proposals to two bodies, the Legislative Body (which could vote, but not discuss) and the Tribunate (which could discuss, but not vote), which were *selected* by an appointed Senate from a special class, the "notabilities of France," who were elected by the "notabilities of the departments," who were elected by the "notabilities of the commune," who were elected by the common voters. The suffrage for the election of the notabilities of the commune was universal. This was the sole vestige of democracy in the astounding pyramid. This constitution was chiefly the joint production of a worthy philosopher Sieyès, who was one of the three consuls, and Bonaparte. But so weary was France with her troubles and efforts, and so confident were men in the virtue and ability of this adventurer from Corsica, that when, at the birth of the nineteenth century, this constitution was submitted to the country, it was carried by 3,011,007 votes to 1,562. France put herself absolutely in Bonaparte's hands, and prepared to be peaceful, happy, and glorious.

§ 3

Now surely here was opportunity such as never came to man before. Here was a position in which a man might well bow himself in fear

of himself, and search his heart and serve God and man to the utmost. The old order of things was dead or dying; strange new forces drove through the world seeking form and direction; the promise of a world republic and an enduring world peace whispered in a multitude of startled minds. Had this man any profundity of vision, any power of creative imagination, had he been accessible to any disinterested ambition, he might have done work for mankind that would have made him the very sun of history. All Europe and America, stirred by the first promise of a new age, was waiting for him. Not France alone. France was in his hand, his instrument, to do with as he pleased, willing for peace, but tempered for war like an exquisite sword. There lacked nothing to this great occasion but a noble imagination. And failing that, Napoleon could do no more than strut upon the crest of this great mountain of opportunity like a cockerel on a dunghill. The figure he makes in history is one of almost incredible self-conceit, of vanity, greed, and cunning, of callous contempt and disregard of all who trusted him, and of a grandiose aping of Cæsar, Alexander, and Charlemagne which would be purely comic if it were not caked over with human blood. Until, as Victor Hugo said in his tremendous way, "God was bored by him," and he was kicked aside into a corner to end his days, explaining and explaining how very clever his worst blunders had been, prowling about his dismal hot island shooting birds and squabbling meanly with an underbred gaoler who failed to show him proper "respect."

His career as First Consul was perhaps the least dishonourable phase in his career. He took the crumbling military affairs of the Directory in hand, and after a complicated campaign in North Italy brought matters to a head in the victory of Marengo, near Alessandria (1800). It was a victory that at some moments came very near disaster. In the December of the same year General Moreau, in the midst of snow, mud, and altogether abominable weather, inflicted an overwhelming defeat upon the Austrian army at Hohenlinden. If Napoleon had gained this battle, it would have counted among his most characteristic and brilliant exploits. These things made the hoped-for peace possible. In 1801 the preliminaries of peace with England and Austria were signed. Peace with England, the Treaty of

Amiens, was concluded in 1802, and Napoleon was free to give himself to the creative statecraft of which France, and Europe through France, stood in need. The war had given the country extended boundaries, the treaty with England restored the colonial empire of France and left her in a position of security beyond the utmost dreams of Louis XIV. It was open to Napoleon to work out and consolidate the new order of things, to make a modern state that should become a beacon and inspiration to Europe and all the world.

He attempted nothing of the sort. He did not realize that there were such things as modern states in the scheme of possibility. His little imitative imagination was full of a deep cunning dream of being Cæsar over again — as if this universe would ever tolerate anything of that sort over again! He was scheming to make himself a real emperor, with a crown upon his head and all his rivals and schoolfellows and friends at his feet. This could give him no fresh power that he did not already exercise, but it would be more splendid — it would astonish his mother. What response was there in a head of that sort for the splendid creative challenge of the time? But first France must be prosperous. France hungry would certainly not endure an emperor. He set himself to carry out an old scheme of roads that Louis XV had approved; he developed canals in imitation of the English canals; he reorganized the police and made the country safe; and, preparing the scene for his personal drama, he set himself to make Paris look like Rome, with classical arches, with classical columns. Admirable schemes for banking development were available, and he made use of them. In all these things he moved with the times, they would have happened — with less autocracy, with less centralization, if he had never been born. And he set himself to weaken the republicans whose fundamental convictions he was planning to outrage. He recalled the émigrés, provided they gave satisfactory assurances to respect the new régime. Many were very willing to come back on such terms, and let Bourbons be bygones. And he worked out a great reconciliation, a Concordat, with Rome. Rome was to support him, and he was to restore the authority of Rome in the parishes. France would never be obedient and manageable, he thought; she would never stand a new monarchy, without religion. “How can you have order in a state,” he said,

“without religion? Society cannot exist without inequality of fortunes, which cannot endure apart from religion. When one man is dying of hunger near another who is ill of surfeit, he cannot resign himself to this difference, unless there is an authority which declares — ‘God wills it thus: there must be poor and rich in the world: but hereafter and during all eternity the division of things will take place differently.’” Religion — especially of the later Roman brand — was, in fact, excellent stuff for keeping the common people quiet. In his early honest Jacobin days he had denounced it for that very reason.

Another great achievement which marks his imaginative scope and his estimate of human nature was the institution of the Legion of Honour, a scheme for decorating Frenchmen with bits of ribbon which was admirably calculated to divert ambitious men from subversive proceedings. (Washington, when he became President of the United States, abolished the only order that has ever adorned any citizen of the American republic, the Order of Cincinnatus, because he had no use for the snob in his fellow man.)

And also Napoleon interested himself in Christian propaganda. Here is the Napoleonic view of the political uses of Christ, a view that has tainted all French missions from that time forth. “It is my wish to re-establish the institution for foreign missions; for the religious missionaries may be very useful to me in Asia, Africa, and America, as I shall make them reconnoitre all the lands they visit. The sanctity of their dress will not only protect them, but serve to conceal their political and commercial investigations. The head of the missionary establishment shall reside no longer at Rome, but in Paris.”

These are the ideas of a roguish merchant rather than a statesman. His treatment of education shows the same narrow vision, the same blindness to the realities of the dawn about him. Elementary education he neglected almost completely; he left it to the conscience of the local authorities, and he provided that the teachers should be paid out of the fees of the scholars; it is clear he did not want the common people to be educated; he had no glimmering of any understanding why they should be; but he interested himself in the provision of technical and higher schools because his state needed

the services of clever, self-seeking, well-informed men. This was an astounding retrogression from the great scheme, drafted by Condorcet, for the Republic in 1792, for a complete system of free education for the entire nation. Slowly but steadfastly the project of Condorcet comes true; the great nations of the world are being compelled to bring it nearer and nearer to realization, and the cheap devices of Napoleon pass out of our interest. As for the education of the mothers and wives of our race, this was the quality of Napoleon's wisdom: "I do not think that we need trouble ourselves with any plan of instruction for young females, they cannot be better brought up than by their mothers. Public education is not suitable for them, because they are never called upon to act in public. Manners are all in all to them, and marriage is all they look to."

The First Consul was no kinder to women in the Code Napoleon. A wife, for example, had no control over her own property; she was in her husband's hands. This code was the work very largely of the Council of State. Napoleon seems rather to have hindered than helped its deliberations. He would invade the session without notice, and favour its members with lengthy and egotistical monologues, frequently quite irrelevant to the matter in hand. The Council listened with profound respect; it was all the Council could do. He would keep his councillors up to unearthly hours, and betray a simple pride in his superior wakefulness. He recalled these discussions with peculiar satisfaction in his later years, and remarked on one occasion that his glory consisted not in having won forty battles, but in having created the Code Napoleon.... So far as it substituted plain statements for inaccessible legal mysteries his Code was a good thing; it gathered together, revised and made clear a vast disorderly accumulation of laws, old and new. Like all his constructive work, it made for immediate efficiency, it defined things and relations so that men could get to work upon them without further discussion. It was of less immediate practical importance that it frequently defined them wrongly. There was no intellectual power, as distinguished from intellectual energy, behind this codification. It took everything that existed for granted. ("Sa Majesté ne croit que ce qui est.") The fundamental ideas of the civilized community and of the terms of human co-operation were in a process of reconstruction all about

Napoleon — and he never perceived it. He accepted a phase of change, and tried to fix it for ever. To this day France is cramped by this early nineteenth-century strait-waistcoat into which he clapped her. He fixed the status of women, the status of labourers, the status of the peasant; they all struggle to this day in the net of his hard definitions.

So briskly and forcibly Napoleon set his mind, hard, clear, narrow, and base, to brace up France. That bracing up was only a part of the large egotistical schemes that dominated him. His imagination was set upon a new Cæsarism. In 1802 he got himself made First Consul for life with the power of appointing a successor, and his clear intention of annexing Holland and Italy, in spite of his treaty obligations to keep them separate, made the Peace of Amiens totter crazily from the very beginning. Since his schemes were bound to provoke a war with England, he should, at any cost, have kept quiet until he had brought his navy to a superiority over the British navy. He had the control of great resources for ship-building, the British government was a weak one, and three or four years would have sufficed to shift that balance. But in spite of his rough experiences in Egypt, he had never mastered the importance of sea power, and he had not the mental steadfastness for a waiting game and long preparation. In 1803 his occupation of Switzerland precipitated a crisis, and war broke out again with England. The weak Addington in England gave place to the greater Pitt. The rest of Napoleon's story turns upon that war.

During the period of the Consulate, the First Consul was very active in advancing the fortunes of his brothers and sisters. This was quite human, very clannish and Corsican, and it helps us to understand just how he valued his position and the opportunities before him. Few of us can live without an audience, and the first audience of our childhood is our family; most of us to the end of our days are swayed by the desire to impress our parents and brothers and sisters. Few "letters home" of successful men or women display the graces of modesty and self-forgetfulness. Only souls uplifted, as the soul of Jesus of Nazareth was uplifted, can say of all the world, "Behold my mother and my brethren!" A large factor in the making of Napoleon was the desire to amaze, astonish, and subdue the minds

of the Bonaparte family, and their neighbours. He promoted his brothers ridiculously — for they were the most ordinary of men. The hungry Bonapartes were in luck. Surely all Corsica was open-mouthed! But one person who knew him well was neither amazed nor subdued. This was his mother. He sent her money to spend and astonish the neighbours; he exhorted her to make a display, to live as became the mother of so marvellous, so world-shaking, a son. But the good lady, who had birched the Man of Destiny at the age of sixteen for grimacing at his grandmother, was neither dazzled nor deceived by him at the age of thirty-two. All France might worship him, but she had no illusions. She put by the money he sent her; she continued her customary economies. "When it is all over," she said, "you will be glad of my savings."

Napoleon as Emperor

We will not detail the steps by which Napoleon became Emperor. His coronation was the most extraordinary revival of stale history that it is possible to imagine. Cæsar was no longer the model; Napoleon was playing now at being Charlemagne. He was crowned emperor, not indeed at Rome, but in the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris; the Pope (Pius VII) had been brought from Rome to perform the ceremony; and at the climax Napoleon I seized the crown, waved the Pope aside, and crowned himself. The attentive reader of this *Outline* will know that a thousand years before this would have had considerable significance; in 1804 it was just a ridiculous scene. In 1806 Napoleon revived another venerable antiquity, and, following still the footsteps of Charlemagne, crowned himself with the iron crown of Lombardy in the cathedral of Milan. All this mummery was to have a wonderful effect upon the imagination of western Germany, which was to remember that it too had been a part of the empire of Charlemagne.

The four daughter republics of France were now to become kingdoms; in 1806 he set up brother Louis in Holland and brother Joseph in Naples. But the story of the subordinate kingdoms he created in Europe, helpful though this free handling of frontiers was towards the subsequent unification of Italy and Germany, is too complex and evanescent for this *Outline*.

The pact between the new Charlemagne and the new Leo did not hold good for very long. In 1807 he began to bully the Pope, and in 1811 he made him a close prisoner at Fontainebleau. There does not seem to have been much reason in these proceedings. They estranged all Catholic opinion, as his coronation had estranged all liberal opinion. He ceased to stand either for the old or the new. The new he had betrayed; the old he had failed to win. He stood at last for nothing but himself.

There seems to have been as little reason in the foreign policy that now plunged Europe into a fresh cycle of wars. Having quarreled with Great Britain too soon, he (1804) assembled a vast army at Boulogne for the conquest of England, regardless of the naval situation. He even struck a medal and erected a column at Boulogne

to commemorate the triumph of this projected invasion. In some "Napoleonic" fashion the British fleet was to be decoyed away, this army of Boulogne was to be smuggled across the Channel on a flotilla of rafts and boats, and London was to be captured before the fleet returned. At the same time his aggressions in south Germany forced Austria and Russia steadily into a coalition with Britain against him. In 1805 two fatal blows were struck at any hope he may have entertained of ultimate victory, by the British Admirals Calder and Nelson. In July the former inflicted a serious reverse upon the French fleet in the Bay of Biscay; in October the latter destroyed the joint fleets of France and Spain at the battle of Trafalgar. Nelson died splendidly upon the *Victory*, victorious. Thereafter Napoleon was left with Britain in pitiless opposition, unattainable and unconquerable, able to strike here or there against him along all the coasts of Europe.

But for a while the mortal wound of Trafalgar was hidden from the French mind altogether. They heard merely that "storms have caused us to lose some ships of the line after an imprudent fight." After Calder's victory he had snatched his army from Boulogne, rushed it across half Europe, and defeated the Austrian and Russian armies at Ulm and Austerlitz. Under these inauspicious circumstances Prussia came into the war against him, and was utterly defeated and broken at the battle of Jena (1806). Although Austria and Prussia were broken, Russia was still a fighting power, and the next year was devoted to this unnecessary antagonist of the French, against whom an abler and saner ruler would never have fought at all. We cannot trace in any detail the difficulties of the Polish campaign against Russia; Napoleon was roughly handled at Pultusk — which he announced in Paris as a brilliant victory — and again at Eylau. Then the Russians were defeated at Friedland (1807). As yet he had never touched Russian soil, the Russians were still as unbeaten as the British; but now came an extraordinary piece of good fortune for Napoleon. By a mixture of boasting, subtlety, and flattery he won over the young and ambitious Tsar, Alexander I — he was just thirty years old — to an alliance. The two emperors met on a raft in the middle of the Niemen at Tilsit, and there came to an understanding.

Tsar Alexander I.

This meeting was an occasion for sublime foolishness on the part of both the principal actors. Alexander had imbibed much liberalism during his education at the court of Catherine II, and was all for freedom, education, and the new order of the world — subject to his own pre-eminence. “He would gladly have everyone free,” said one of his early associates, “provided that everyone was prepared to do freely exactly what he wished.” And he declared that he would have abolished serfdom if it had cost him his head — if only civilization had been more advanced. He made war against France, he said, because Napoleon was a tyrant, to free the French people. After Friedland he saw Napoleon in a different light. These two men met eleven days after that rout; Alexander no doubt in the state of explanatory exaltation natural to his type during a mood of change.

To Napoleon the meeting must have been extremely gratifying. This was his first meeting with an emperor upon terms of equality. Like all men of limited vision, this man was a snob to the bone, his continual solicitude for his titles shows as much, and here was a real emperor, a born emperor, taking his three-year-old dignities as equivalent to the authentic imperialism of Moscow. Two imaginations soared together upon the raft at Tilsit. "What is Europe?" said Alexander. "*We* are Europe." They discussed the affairs of Prussia and Austria in that spirit, they divided Turkey in anticipation, they arranged for the conquest of India, and indeed of most of Asia, and that Russia should take Finland from the Swedes; and they disregarded the disagreeable fact that the greater part of the world's surface is sea, and that on the seas the British fleets sailed now unchallenged. Close at hand was Poland, ready to rise up and become the passionate ally of France had Napoleon but willed it so. But he was blind to Poland. It was a day of visions without vision. Napoleon even then, it seems, concealed the daring thought that he might one day marry a Russian princess, a real princess. But that, he was to learn in 1810, was going a little too far.

After Tilsit there was a perceptible deterioration in Napoleon's quality; he became rasher, less patient of obstacles, more and more the fated master of the world, more and more intolerable to everyone he encountered.

In 1808 he committed a very serious blunder. Spain was his abject ally, completely under his control, but he saw fit to depose its Bourbon king in order to promote his brother Joseph from the crown of the two Sicilies. Portugal he had already conquered, and the two kingdoms of Spain and Portugal were to be united. Thereupon the Spanish arose in a state of patriotic fury, surrounded a French army at Baylen, and compelled it to surrender. It was an astonishing break in the French career of victory.

The British were not slow to seize the foothold this insurrection gave them. A British army under Sir Arthur Wellesley (afterwards the Duke of Wellington) landed in Portugal, defeated the French at Vimiero, and compelled them to retire into Spain. The news of these reverses caused a very great excitement in Germany and Austria, and the Tsar assumed a more arrogant attitude towards his ally.

There was another meeting of these two potentates at Erfurt, in which the Tsar was manifestly less amenable to the dazzling tactics of Napoleon than he had been. Followed four years of unstable "ascendancy" for France, while the outlines on the map of Europe waved about like garments on a clothesline on a windy day. Napoleon's personal empire grew by frank annexations to include Holland, much of western Germany, much of Italy, and much of the eastern Adriatic coast. But one by one the French colonies were falling to the British, and the British armies in the Spanish peninsula, with the Spanish auxiliaries, slowly pressed the French northward. All Europe was getting very weary of Napoleon and very indignant with him; his antagonists now were no longer merely monarchs and ministers, but whole peoples also. The Prussians, after the disaster of Jena in 1807, had set to work to put their house in order. Under the leadership of Freiherr von Stein they had swept aside their feudalism, abolished privilege and serfdom, organized popular education and popular patriotism, accomplished, in fact, without any internal struggle nearly everything that France had achieved in 1789. By 1810 a new Prussia existed, the nucleus of a new Germany. And now Alexander, inspired it would seem by dreams of world ascendancy even crazier than his rival's, was posing again as the friend of liberty. In 1810 fresh friction was created by Alexander's objection to Napoleon's matrimonial ambitions. For he was now divorcing his old helper Josephine, because she was childless, in order to secure the "continuity" of his "dynasty." Napoleon, thwarted of a Russian princess, snubbed indeed by Alexander, turned to Austria, and married the arch-duchess Marie Louise. The Austrian statesmen read him aright. They were very ready to throw him their princess. By that marriage Napoleon was captured for the dynastic system; he might have been the maker of a new world, he preferred to be the son-in-law of the old.

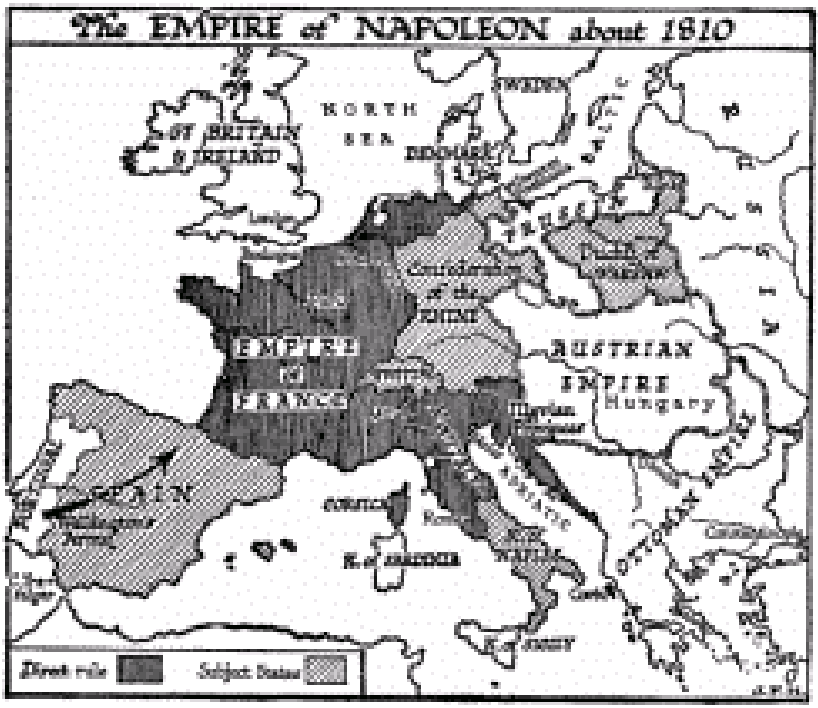

In the next two years this adventurer's affairs crumbled apace. Nobody believed in his pretensions any more. He was no longer the leader and complement of the revolution; no longer the embodied spirit of a world reborn; he was just a new and nastier sort of autocrat. He had estranged all free-spirited men, and he had antagonized the church. Kings and Jacobins were at one, when it came to the question of his overthrow. Only base and self-seeking people supported him, because he seemed to have the secret of success. Britain was now his inveterate enemy, Spain was blazing with a spirit that surely a Corsican should have understood; it needed only a breach with Alexander I to set this empire of bluff and stage scenery swaying towards its downfall. The quarrel came. Alexander's feelings for Napoleon had always been of a very mixed sort; he envied Napoleon as a rival, and despised him as an underbred upstart. Moreover, there was a kind of vague and sentimental greatness about Alexander; he was given to mystical religiosity, he had the conception of a mission for Russia and himself

to bring peace to Europe and the world — by destroying Napoleon. In that respect he had an imaginative greatness Napoleon lacked. But bringing peace to Europe seemed to him quite compatible with the annexation of Finland, of most of Poland, and of great portions of the Turkish empire. This man's mind moved in a luminous fog. And particularly he wanted to resume trading with Britain, against which Napoleon had set his face. For all the trade of Germany had been dislocated and the mercantile classes embittered by the Napoleonic "Continental System," which was to ruin Britain by excluding British goods from every country in Europe. Russia had suffered more even than Germany.

The breach came in 1811, when Alexander withdrew from the "Continental System." In 1812 a great mass of armies, amounting altogether to 600,000 men, began to move towards Russia under the supreme command of the new emperor. About half this force was French; the rest was drawn from the French allies and subject peoples. It was a conglomerate army like the army of Darius or the army of Kavadh. The Spanish war was still going on; Napoleon made no attempt to end it. Altogether, it drained away a quarter of a million men from France. He fought his way across Poland and Russia to Moscow before the winter — for the most part the Russian armies declined battle — and even before the winter closed in upon him his position became manifestly dangerous. He took Moscow, expecting that this would oblige Alexander to make peace. Alexander would not make peace, and Napoleon found himself in much the same position as Darius had been in 2,300 years before in South Russia. The Russians, still unconquered in a decisive battle, raided his communications, wasted his army — disease helped them; even before Napoleon reached Moscow 150,000 men had been lost. But he lacked the wisdom of Darius, and would not retreat. The winter remained mild for an unusually long time — he could have escaped; but instead he remained in Moscow, making impossible plans, at a loss. He had been marvellously lucky in all his previous flounderings; he had escaped undeservedly from Egypt, he had been saved from destruction in Britain by the British naval victories; but now he was in the net again, and this time he was not to escape. Perhaps he would have wintered in Moscow, but the Russians

smoked him out; they set fire to and burnt most of the city.

It was late in October, too late altogether, before he decided to return. He made an ineffectual attempt to break through to a fresh line of retreat to the southwest, and then turned the faces of the survivors of his Grand Army towards the country they had devastated in their advance. Immense distances separated them from any friendly territory. The winter was in no hurry. For a week the Grand Army struggled through mud; then came sharp frosts, and then the first flakes of snow, and then snow and snow....

Slowly discipline dissolved. The hungry army spread itself out in search of supplies until it broke up into mere bands of marauders. The peasants, if only in self-defence, rose against them, waylaid them, and murdered them; a cloud of light cavalry — Scythians still — hunted them down. That retreat is one of the great tragedies of history.

At last Napoleon and his staff and a handful of guards and attendants reappeared in Germany, bringing no army with him, followed only by straggling and demoralized bands. The Grand Army, retreating under Murat, reached Königsberg in a disciplined state, but only about a thousand strong out of six hundred thousand. From Königsberg Murat fell back to Posen. The Prussian contingent had surrendered to the Russians; the Austrians had gone homeward to the south. Everywhere scattered fugitives, ragged, lean, and frost-bitten, spread the news of the disaster.

Napoleon's magic was nearly exhausted. He did not dare to stay with his troops in Germany; he fled post haste to Paris. He began to order new levies and gather fresh armies amidst the wreckage of his world empire. Austria turned against him (1813); all Europe was eager to rise against this defaulting trustee of freedom, this mere usurper. He had betrayed the new order; the old order he had saved and revived now destroyed him. Prussia rose, and the German "War of Liberation" began. Sweden joined his enemies. Later Holland revolted. Murat had rallied about 14,000 Frenchmen round his disciplined nucleus in Posen, and this force retreated through Germany, as a man might retreat who had ventured into a cageful of drugged lions and found that the effects of the drug were evaporating. Napoleon, with fresh forces, took up the chief command

in the spring, won a great battle at Dresden, and then for a time he seems to have gone to pieces intellectually and morally. He became insanely irritable, with moods of inaction. He did little or nothing to follow up the Battle of Dresden. In September the "Battle of the Nations" was fought round and about Leipzig, after which the Saxons, who had hitherto followed his star, went over to the allies. The end of the year saw the French beaten back into France.

1814 was the closing campaign. France was invaded from the east and the south; Swedes, Germans, Austrians, Russians, crossed the Rhine; British and Spanish came through the Pyrenees. Once more Napoleon fought brilliantly, but now he fought ineffectually. The eastern armies did not so much defeat him as push past him, and Paris capitulated in March. A little later at Fontainebleau the emperor abdicated.

In Provence, on his way out of the country, his life was endangered by a royalist mob.

§ 5

This was the natural and proper end of Napoleon's career. So this raid of an intolerable egotist across the disordered beginnings of a new time should have closed. At last he was suppressed. And had there been any real wisdom in the conduct of human affairs, we should now have to tell of the concentration of human science and will upon the task his treachery and vanity had interrupted, the task of building up a world system of justice and free effort in the place of the bankrupt ancient order. But we have to tell of nothing of the sort. Science and wisdom were conspicuously absent from the great council of the allies. Came the vague humanitarianism and dreamy vanity of the Tsar Alexander, came the shaken Habsburgs of Austria, the resentful Hohenzollerns of Prussia, the aristocratic traditions of Britain, still badly frightened by the revolution and its conscience all awry with stolen commons and sweated factory children. No peoples came to the Congress, but only monarchs and foreign ministers; and though you bray a foreign office in the bloodiest of war mortars, yet will its diplomatic habits not depart from it. The Congress had hardly assembled before the diplomatists set to work making secret bargains and treaties behind each other's backs. Nothing could exceed the pompous triviality of the Congress which gathered at Vienna after a magnificent ceremonial visit of the allied sovereigns to London. The social side of the congress was very strong, pretty ladies abounded, there was a galaxy of stars and uniforms, endless dinners and balls, a mighty flow of bright anecdotes and sparkling wit. Whether the two million dead men upon the battle-fields laughed at the jokes, admired the assemblies, and marvelled at the diplomatists is beyond our knowledge. It is to be hoped their poor wraiths got something out of the display. The brightest spirit of the gathering was a certain Talleyrand, one of Napoleon's princes, a very brilliant man indeed, who had been a pre-revolutionary cleric, who had proposed the revolutionary confiscation of the church estates, and who was now for bringing back the Bourbons.

The allies, after the fashion of Peace Congresses, frittered away precious time in more and more rapacious disputes; the Bourbons returned to France. Back came all the remainder of the émigrés with them, eager for restitution and revenge. One great egotism had been swept aside — only to reveal a crowd of meaner egotists. The new

king was the brother of Louis XVI; he had taken the title of Louis XVIII very eagerly so soon as he learnt that his little nephew (Louis XVII) was dead in the Temple. He was gouty and clumsy, not perhaps ill-disposed, but the symbol of the ancient system; all that was new in France felt the heavy threat of reaction that came with him. This was no liberation, only a new tyranny, a heavy and inglorious tyranny instead of an active and splendid one. Was there no hope for France but this? The Bourbons showed particular malice against the veterans of the Grand Army, and France was now full of returned prisoners of war, who found themselves under a cloud. Napoleon had been packed off to a little consolation empire of his own, upon the island of Elba. He was still to be called Emperor and keep a certain state. The chivalry or whim of Alexander had insisted upon this treatment of his fallen rival. The Habsburgs, who had toadied to his success, had taken away his Habsburg empress — she went willingly enough — to Vienna, and he never saw her again.

After eleven months at Elba Napoleon judged that France had had enough of the Bourbons; he contrived to evade the British ships that watched his island, and reappeared at Cannes in France for his last gamble against fate. His progress to Paris was a triumphal procession; he walked on white Bourbon cockades. For a hundred days, "the Hundred Days," he was master of France again.

His return created a perplexing position for any honest Frenchman. On the one hand there was this adventurer who had betrayed the republic; on the other the dull weight of old kingship restored. The allies would not hear of any further experiments in republicanism; it was the Bourbons or Napoleon. Is it any wonder that on the whole France was with Napoleon? And he came back professing to be a changed man; there was to be no more despotism; he would respect the constitution régime....

He gathered an army, he made some attempts at peace with the allies; when he found these efforts ineffectual, he struck swiftly at the British, Dutch, and Prussians in Belgium, hoping to defeat them before the Austrians and Russians could come up. He did very nearly manage this. He beat the Prussians at Ligny, but not sufficiently; and then he was hopelessly defeated by the tenacity of the British under Wellington at Waterloo (1815), the Prussians, under Blücher, coming

in on his right flank as the day wore on. Waterloo ended in a rout; it left Napoleon without support and without hope. France fell away from him again. Everyone who had joined him was eager now to attack him, and so efface that error. A provisional government in Paris ordered him to leave the country; was for giving him twenty-four hours to do it in.

He tried to get to America, but Rochefort, which he reached, was watched by British cruisers. France, now disillusioned and uncomfortably royalist again, was hot in pursuit of him. He went aboard a British frigate, the *Bellerophon*, asking to be received as a refugee, but being treated as a prisoner. He was taken to Plymouth, and from Plymouth straight to the lonely tropical island of St. Helena.

There he remained until his death from cancer in 1821, devoting himself chiefly to the preparation of his memoirs, which were designed to exhibit the chief events of his life in a misleading and attractive light and to minimize his worst blunders. One or two of the men with him recorded his conversations and set down their impressions of him.

These works had a great vogue in France and Europe. The Holy Alliance of the monarchs of Russia, Austria, and Prussia (to which other monarchs were invited to adhere) laboured under the delusion that in defeating Napoleon they had defeated the Revolution, turned back the clock of fate, and restored Grand Monarchy — on a sanctified basis for evermore. The cardinal document of the scheme of the Holy Alliance is said to have been drawn up under the inspiration of the Baroness von Krüdener, who seems to have been a sort of spiritual director to the Russian emperor. It opened, "In the name of the Most Holy and Indivisible Trinity," and it bound the participating monarchs "regarding themselves towards their subjects and armies as fathers of families," and "considering each other as fellow-countrymen," to sustain each other, protect true religion, and urge their subjects to strengthen and exercise themselves in Christian duties. Christ, it was declared, was the real king of all Christian peoples, a very Merovingian king, one may remark, with these reigning sovereigns as his mayors of the palace. The British king had no power to sign this document, the Pope and the sultan were not

asked; the rest of the European monarchs, including the king of France, adhered. But the king of Poland did not sign because there was no king in Poland; Alexander, in a mood of pious abstraction, was sitting on the greater part of Poland. The Holy Alliance never became an actual legal alliance of states; it gave place to a real league of nations, the Concert of Europe, which France joined in 1818, and from which Britain withdrew in 1822.

There followed a period of peace and dull oppression in Europe over which Alexander brooded in attitudes of orthodoxy, piety, and unquenchable self-satisfaction. Many people in those hopeless days were disposed to regard even Napoleon with charity, and to accept his claim that in some inexplicable way he had, in asserting himself, been asserting the revolution and France. A cult of him as of something mystically heroic grew up after his death.

§ 6

In the long perspectives of history the cult of Napoleon, and his peculiar effect upon certain types of mind, is of far more interest and far more importance than his actual adventures. The world has largely recovered from the mischief he did; perhaps that amount of mischief had to be done by some agency; perhaps his career, or some such career, was a necessary consequence of the world's mental unpreparedness for the crisis of the revolution. But that his peculiar personality should dominate the imaginations of great numbers of people, throws a light upon factors of enduring significance in our human problem.

It would be difficult to find a human being less likely to arouse affection. One reads in vain through the monstrous accumulations of Napoleonic literature for a single record of self-forgetfulness. Laughter is one great difference between man and the lower animals, one method of our brotherhood, and there is no evidence that Napoleon ever laughed. Nor can we imagine another of the most beautiful of human expressions upon the face of this saturnine egotist, that expression of disinterested interest that one sees in the face of an artist or artisan "lost," as we say, in his work. Out of his portraits he looks at us with a thin scorn upon his lips, the scorn of

the criminal who believes that he can certainly cheat such fools as we are, and withal with a certain uneasiness in his eyes. That uneasiness haunts all his portraits. Are we really convinced he is quite right? Are his laurels straight? He had a vast contempt for man in general and men in particular, a contempt that took him at last to St. Helena, that same contempt that fills our jails with forgers, poisoners, and the like victims of self-conceit. There is no proof that this unbrotherly, unhumorous egotist was ever sincerely loved by any human being. The Empress Josephine was unfaithful to him as he to her. His young Austrian wife would not accompany him to Elba. A certain Polish countess followed him thither, but not, it would seem, for love, but on account of the son she had borne him. She wanted settlements. She stayed only two days with him. He had never even a dog to love him. He estranged most of his colleagues and fellow generals. He had no familiar friend. No one who knew him felt safe with him. In his intimacy, his unflinching self-concentration must have been a terrible bore. His personal habits were unpleasant; the moodiness of bad health came to him early. True it is that his soldiers, who, save for a few rare melodramatic encounters, saw nothing of him, idolized their "Little Corporal." But it was not him they idolized, but a carefully fostered legend of an incredibly clever, recklessly brave little man, a little pet of a man, who was devoted to France and them.

Why, then, is there an enormous cult of Napoleon, an endless writing of books about him, an insatiable collecting of relics and documents, a kind of worship of his memory? Marat was a far more noble, persistent, subtle, and pathetic figure; Talleyrand a greater statesman and a much more amusing personality; Moreau and Hoche abler leaders of armies; his rival, the Tsar Alexander, as egotistical, more successful, more emotional, and with a finer imagination. Are men dazzled simply by the scale of his flounderings, by the mere vastness of his notoriety?

No doubt scale has something to do with the matter; he was a "record," the record plunger; but there is something more in it than that. There is an appeal in Napoleon to something deeper and more fundamental in human nature than mere astonishment at bigness. His very deficiencies bring out starkly certain qualities that lurk suppressed and hidden in us all. He was unhampered. He had never a

gleam of religion or affection or the sense of duty. He was, as few men are or dare to be, a scoundrel, bright and complete. Most of us are constrained more or less and now and then to serve God or our fellow men, to do things disinterestedly, to behave decently when no one is watching us. He was not so constrained. Most men do a little regret and resent their good deeds, and find a secret satisfaction in their unpunished bad ones. The early palæolithic strain is still strong in us; we are being made over, slowly and reluctantly, into social and fraternal creatures. Few of us thoroughly enjoy being good citizens. Our moral conflicts, therefore, are intricate and comic; the constant effort to explain to ourselves and others that there is a fine moral purpose in this shirking of our duty or in that self-seeking act. We are all regretfully of the race of Tsar Alexander, who destroyed the freedom of Poland, annexed Finland, and secured his imperial predominance piously, "in the name of the most Holy and Indivisible Trinity" — when it would have been far more agreeable to have done it in the name of the most Holy and Magnificent Alexander. There was none of this robing of greed and crime about Napoleon. His self-conceit and his instinctive and fundamental atheism made him at least magnificently direct. What we all want to do secretly, more or less, he did in the daylight.

Directness was his distinctive and immortalizing quality. He had no brains to waste in secondary considerations. He flung his armies across Europe straight at their mark, there never were such marches before; he fought to win; when he struck he struck with all his might. And what he wanted, he wanted simply and completely, and got — if he could.

There lies his fascination. Since his time his name has been one of the utmost reassurance to great multitudes of doubting men; to the business man hesitating over a more than shady transaction, to the clerk fingering a carelessly written cheque that could so easily be altered, to the trustee in want of ready money, to the manufacturer meditating the pros and cons of an adulteration, to thousands of such people the word "Napoleonic" has come with an effect of decisive relief. We live in a world full of would-be Napoleons of finance, of the press, of the turf; half the cells in our jails and many in our mad-houses are St. Helenas. He was the very embodiment of that sound,

clear, self-centred common sense, without sentiment or scruples or reflection, that struggles with our feebler better nature, that may ultimately destroy mankind. In all history there is no figure so completely antithetical to the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, whose pitiless and difficult doctrine of self-abandonment and self-forgetfulness we can neither disregard nor yet bring ourselves to obey. That summons to a new way of life haunts our world to-day, haunts wealth and comfort and every sort of success. It is a trouble to us all. Our uneasiness grows. Napoleon was free from it. The cultivation of the Napoleonic legend seems to offer a kind of refuge. From salvation.

In that antithesis lies the essential historical importance of Napoleon. His career marks the beginning of a new phase in the elations of strong and able and energetic and advantageously placed men to the main mass of mankind. They are robbed of Self-deception; they must either serve or openly defy the idea of service. They must be humble or Napoleonic; there is no more service with privilege and pride. Napoleon adorned himself with ancient titles and antiquated robes, but the more he brought himself into contact with tradition, the more manifestly he displayed himself as something new. In the Tsar Alexander I, who was never direct, this direct new imperialism met the old. Hitherto the kings and potentates of the world had taken themselves in good faith, had had the support of religion in their consciences, had believed they were serving God in their kingship, and that they were necessary to mankind and beneficial to mankind. In many cases they were no doubt swayed by very mixed motives, his majesty had "weaknesses," his majesty almost always had a sensitive personal vanity. Sometimes, indeed, a born rascal like Charles II of England would have the grace or the gracelessness to laugh at himself, but the generality of kings and tyrants had the profoundest faith in themselves, and were sustained by the sincere faith of their loyal supporters. The emperor Charles V and his son Philip II, Charles I of England, Louis XIV, and the Tsar Alexander were all inspired by a complete assurance of their own righteousness, were convinced that opposition to them was sheer wickedness, wickedness to be overcome in any way and punished with the utmost severity. But Napoleon knew himself for what he

was, an individual man getting the better of his fellow men. He had small doubt in his struggle with the republicans, where the moral superiority lay. With Napoleon, we note the beginning of a clearer-headed age. The self-deceptions of wealth, power, and prominence wear thin. His new imperialism reflected upon the old.

For a time the Concert of Europe struggled valiantly to carry on upon the old lines, but the French Revolution had shrivelled the heart of monarchy. In 1830, and again in 1848, the evaporation of the simple old royalist faith became very evident. Alexander I and his narrow-minded successor, Nicholas I, could still sustain the delusion of divine right in Russia — that did not perish until 1917 — the idea hung on in Prussia in spite of much muttered criticism, but for the rest of Europe the days of the unchallenged claim of kingship had gone. "What good are you?" said the world to monarchs; "and what do you do for us?"

So challenged, many of the monarchs became apologetic and fussily useful. One or two, as we shall have to tell, became "Napoleonic." But so far no European monarch has betrayed any disposition to waive the remnant of his ancient trappings, to cease his passive and traditional opposition to political readjustment, and to move of his own accord towards that more broadly conceived government of human affairs as one world-wide community of will, which the future welfare of mankind demands.

§ 7

For nearly forty years the idea of the Holy Alliance, the Concert of Europe which arose out of it, and the series of congresses and conferences that succeeded the concert, kept an insecure peace in war-exhausted Europe. Two main things prevented that period from being a complete social and international peace, and prepared the way for the cycle of wars between 1854 and 1871. The first of these was the tendency of the royal courts concerned, towards the restoration of unfair privilege and interference with freedom of thought and writing and teaching. The second was the impossible system of boundaries drawn by the diplomatists of Vienna.

The obstinate disposition of monarchy to march back towards past

conditions was first and most particularly manifest in Spain. Here even the Inquisition was restored. Across the Atlantic the Spanish colonies had followed the example of the United States and revolted against the European Great Power system, when Napoleon set up his brother Joseph upon the Spanish throne in 1810. The Washington of South America was General Bolivar. Spain was unable to suppress this revolt, it dragged on much as the United States War of Independence had dragged on, and at last the suggestion was made by Austria in accordance with the spirit of the Holy Alliance, that the European monarchs should assist Spain in this struggle. This was opposed by Britain in Europe, but it was the prompt action of President Monroe of the United States in 1823 which conclusively warned off this projected monarchist restoration. He announced that the United States would regard any extension of the European system in the Western Hemisphere as a hostile act. Thus arose the Monroe Doctrine, which has kept the Great Power System out of America for nearly a hundred years, and permitted the new states of Spanish America to work out their destinies along their own lines. But if Spanish monarchism lost its colonies, it could at least, under the protection of the Concert of Europe, do what it chose in Europe. A popular insurrection in Spain was crushed by a French army in 1823, with a mandate from a European congress, and simultaneously Austria suppressed a revolution in Naples. The moving spirit in this conspiracy of governments against peoples was the Austrian statesman, Metternich.

In 1824 Louis XVIII died, and was succeeded by that Count d'Artois whom we have seen hovering as an émigré on the French frontiers in 1789; he took the title of Charles X. Charles set himself to destroy the liberty of the press and universities, and to restore absolute government; the sum of a billion francs was voted to compensate the nobles for the château burnings and sequestrations of 1789. In 1830 Paris rose against this embodiment of the ancient régime, and replaced him by the son of that sinister Philip, Duke of Orleans, whose execution was one of the brightest achievements of the Terror. The other continental monarchies, in face of the open approval of the revolution by Great Britain and a strong liberal ferment in Germany and Austria, did not interfere in this affair. After

all, France was still a monarchy. This young man, Louis Philippe (1830-48), remained the constitutional king of France for eighteen years. He went down in 1848, a very eventful year for Europe, of which we shall tell in the next chapter.

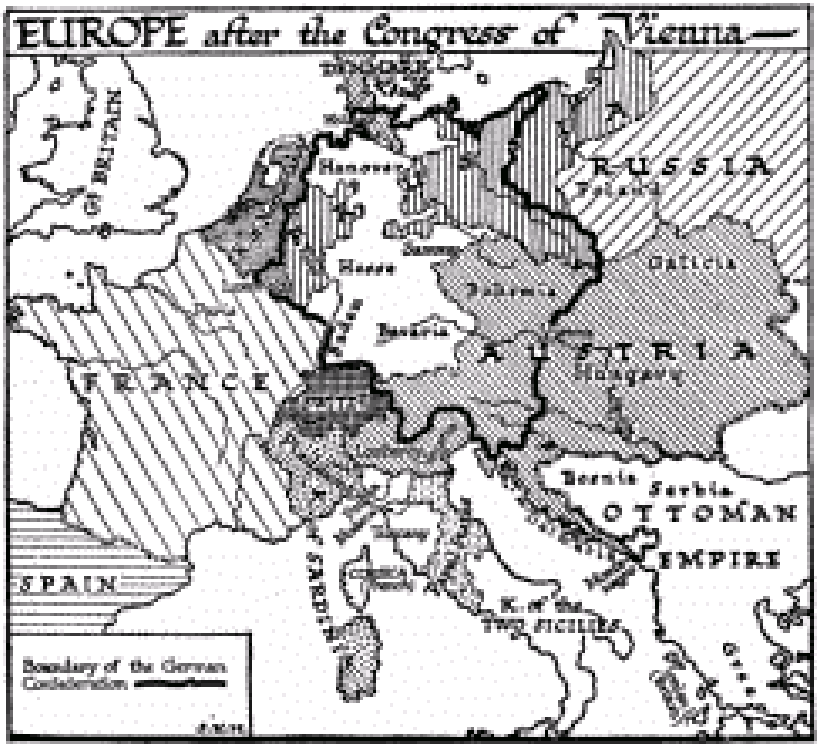

Such were the uneasy swayings of the peace of the Congress of Vienna, which were provoked by the reactionary proceedings to which, sooner or later, all monarchist courts seem by their very nature to gravitate. The stresses that arose from the unscientific map-making of the diplomatists gathered force more deliberately, but they were even more dangerous to the peace of mankind. It is extraordinarily inconvenient to administer together the affairs of peoples speaking different languages and so reading different literatures and having different general ideas, especially if those differences are exacerbated by religious disputes. Only some strong mutual interest, such as the common defensive needs of the Swiss

mountaineers, can justify a close linking of peoples of dissimilar languages and faiths; and even in Switzerland there is the utmost local autonomy. Ultimately, when the Great Power tradition is certainly dead and buried, those Swiss populations may gravitate towards their natural affinities in Germany, France, and Italy. When, as in Macedonia, populations are mixed in a patchwork of villages and districts, the cantonal system is imperatively needed. But if the reader will look at the map of Europe as the Congress of Vienna drew it, he will see that this gathering seems almost as if it had planned the maximum of local exasperation. It destroyed the Dutch Republic, quite needlessly, it lumped together the Protestant Dutch with the French-speaking Catholics of the old Spanish (Austrian) Netherlands, and set up a kingdom of the Netherlands. It handed over not merely the old republic of Venice, but all of North Italy as far as Milan to the German-speaking Austrians. French-speaking Savoy it combined with pieces of Italy to restore the kingdom of Sardinia. Austria and Hungary, already a sufficiently explosive mixture of discordant nationalities, Germans, Hungarians, Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, Roumanians, and now Italians, was made still more impossible by confirming Austria's Polish acquisitions of 1772 and 1795. The Polish people, being catholic and republican-spirited, were chiefly given over to the less civilized rule of the Greek-orthodox Tsar, but important districts went to Protestant Russia. The Tsar was also confirmed in his acquisition of the entirely alien Finns. The very dissimilar Norwegian and Swedish peoples were bound together under one king. Germany, the reader will see, was left in a particularly dangerous state of muddle. Prussia and Austria were both partly in and partly out of a German confederation, which included a multitude of minor states. The King of Denmark came into the German confederation by virtue of certain German-speaking possessions in Holstein. Luxembourg was included in the German Confederation, though its ruler was also King of the Netherlands, and though many of its peoples talked French. Here was a crazy tangle, an outrage on the common sense of mankind, a preposterous disregard of the fact that the people who talk German and base their ideas on German literature, the people who talk Italian and base their ideas on Italian literature, and the people who talk Polish and base

their ideas on Polish literature, will all be far better off and most helpful and least obnoxious to the rest of mankind if they conduct their own affairs in their own idiom within the ring-fence of their own speech. Is it any wonder that one of the most popular songs in Germany during this period declared that wherever the German tongue was spoken, there was the German Fatherland?

Even to-day men are still reluctant to recognize that areas of government are not matters for the bargaining and interplay of tsars and kings and foreign offices. There is *a natural and necessary political map of the world* which transcends these things. There is *a best way possible* of dividing any part of the world into administrative areas, and a best possible kind of government for every area, having regard to the speech and race of its inhabitants, and it is the common concern of all men of intelligence to secure those divisions and establish those forms of government quite irrespective of diplomacies and flags, "claims" and melodramatic "loyalties" and the existing political map of the world. The natural political map of the world insists upon itself. It heaves and frets beneath the artificial political map like some misfitted giant. In 1830 French-speaking Belgium, stirred up by the current revolution in France, revolted against its Dutch association in the kingdom of the Netherlands. The Powers, terrified at the possibility of a republic and of annexation to France, hurried in to pacify this situation, and gave the Belgians a monarch from that rich breeding-ground of monarchs, Germany, Leopold I of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. There were also ineffectual revolts in Italy and Germany in 1830, and a much more serious one in Russian Poland. A republican government held out in Warsaw for a year against Nicholas I (who succeeded Alexander in 1825), and was then stamped out of existence with great violence and cruelty. The Polish language was banned, and the Greek Orthodox church was substituted for the Roman Catholic as the State religion....

An outbreak of the natural political map of the world, which occurred in 1821, ultimately secured the support of England, France, and Russia. This was the insurrection of the Greeks against the Turks. For six years they fought a desperate war, while the governments of Europe looked on. Liberal opinion protested against

this inactivity; volunteers from every European country joined the insurgents, and at last Britain, France, and Russia took joint action. The Turkish fleet was destroyed by the French and English at the Battle of Navarino (1827), and the Tsar invaded Turkey. By the treaty of Adrianople (1829) Greece was declared free, but she was not permitted to resume her ancient republican traditions. There is a sort of historical indecency in a Greek monarchy. But a Greek republic would have been dangerous to all monarchy in a Europe that fretted under the ideas of the Holy Alliance. One monarch makes many. A German king was found for Greece, one Prince Otto of Bavaria, slightly demented, but quite royal — he gave way to delusions about his divine right, and was ejected in 1862 — and Christian governors were set up in the Danubian provinces (which are now Roumania) and Serbia (a part of the Jugo-Slav region). This was a partial concession to the natural political map, but much blood had still to run before the Turk was altogether expelled from these lands. A little later the natural political map was to assert itself in Italy and Germany.

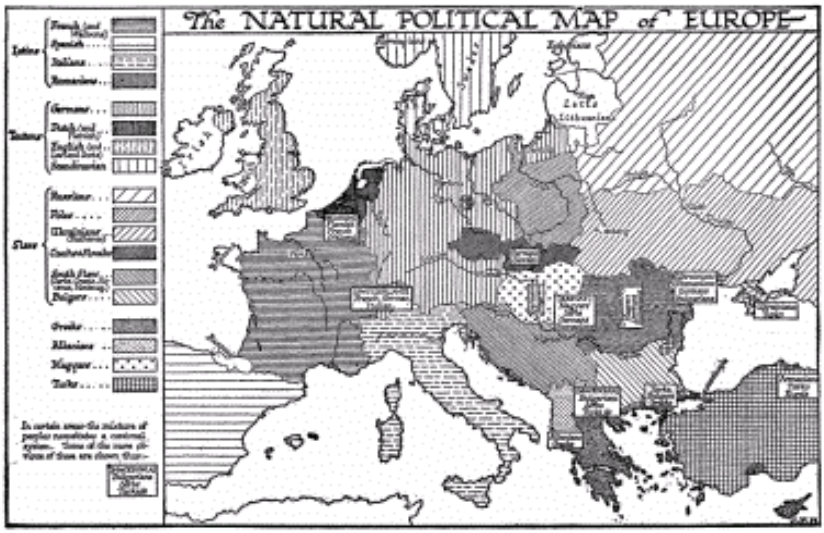

THE REALITIES AND IMAGINATIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

§ 1. *The Mechanical Revolution.* § 2. *Relation of the Mechanical to the Industrial Revolution.* § 3. *The Fermentation of Ideas, 1848.* § 4. *The Development of the Idea of Socialism.* § 5. *Shortcomings of Socialism as a Scheme of Human Society.* § 6. *How Darwinism Affected Religious and Political Ideas.* § 7. *Mr. Gladstone and the Idea of Nationalism.* § 8. *Europe between 1848 and 1878.* § 9. *The (Second) Scramble for Overseas Empires.* § 10. *The Indian Precedent in Asia.* § 11. *The History of Japan.* § 12. *Close of the Period of Overseas Expansion.* § 13. *The British Empire in 1914.*

§ 1

THE career and personality of Napoleon I bulks disproportionately in the nineteenth century histories. He was of little significance to the broad onward movement of human affairs; he was an interruption, a reminder of latent evils, a thing like the bacterium of some pestilence. Even regarded as a pestilence, he was not of supreme rank; he killed far fewer people than the influenza epidemic of 1918, and produced less political and social disruption than the plague of Justinian. Some such interlude had to happen, and some such patched-up settlement of Europe as the Concert of Europe, because there was no worked-out system of ideas upon which a new world could be constructed. And even the Concert of Europe had in it an element of progress. It did at least set aside the individualism of Machiavellian monarchy and declare that there was a human or at any rate a European commonweal. If it divided the world among the kings, it made respectful gestures towards human unity and the service of God and man.

The permanently effective task before mankind which had to be done before any new and enduring social and political edifice was possible, the task upon which the human intelligence is, with many interruptions and amidst much anger and turmoil, still engaged, was, and is, the task of working out and applying a Science of Property as

a basis for freedom and social justice, a Science of Currency to ensure and preserve an efficient economic medium, a Science of Government and Collective Operations whereby in every community men may learn to pursue their common interests in harmony, a Science of World Politics, through which the stark waste and cruelty of warfare between races, peoples, and nations may be brought to an end and the common interests of mankind brought under a common control, and, above all, a world-wide System of Education to sustain the will and interest of men in their common human adventure. The real makers of history in the nineteenth century, the people whose consequences will be determining human life a century ahead, were those who advanced and contributed to this fivefold constructive effort. Compared to them, the foreign ministers and "statesmen" and politicians of this period were no more than a number of troublesome and occasionally incendiary schoolboys — and a few metal thieves — playing about and doing transitory mischief amidst the accumulating materials upon the site of a great building whose nature they did not understand.

And while throughout the nineteenth century the mind of Western civilization, which the Renascence had released, gathered itself to the task of creative social and political reconstruction that still lies before it, there swept across the world a wave of universal change in human power and the material conditions of life that the first scientific efforts of that liberated mind had made possible. The prophecies of Roger Bacon began to live in reality. The accumulating knowledge and confidence of the little succession of men who had been carrying on the development of science, now began to bear fruit that common men could understand. The most obvious firstfruit was the steam-engine. The first steam-engines in the eighteenth century were pumping engines used to keep water out of the newly opened coal mines. These coal mines were being worked to supply coke for iron smelting, for which wood-charcoal had previously been employed. It was James Watt, a mathematical instrument maker of Glasgow, who improved this steam-pumping engine and made it available for the driving of machinery. The first engine so employed was installed in a cotton mill in Nottingham in 1785. In 1804 Trevithick adapted the Watt engine to transport, and made the first locomotive. In 1830 the

first railway, between Liverpool and Manchester, was opened, and Stephenson's "Rocket," with a thirteen-ton train, got up to a speed of forty-four miles per hour. From 1830 onward railways multiplied. By the middle of the century a network of railways had spread all over Europe.

Here was a sudden change in what had long been a fixed condition of human life, the maximum rate of land transport. After the Russian disaster, Napoleon travelled from near Vilna to Paris in 312 hours. This was a journey of about 1,400 miles. He was travelling with every conceivable advantage, and he averaged under five miles an hour. An ordinary traveller could not have done this distance in twice the time. These were about the same maximum rates of travel as held good between Rome and Gaul in the first century A.D., or between Sardis and Susa in the fourth century B.C. Then suddenly came a tremendous change. The railways reduced this journey for any ordinary traveller to less than forty-eight hours. That is to say, they reduced the chief European distances to about a tenth of what they had been. They made it possible to carry out administrative work in areas ten times as great as any that had hitherto been workable under one administration. The full significance of that possibility in Europe still remains to be realized. Europe is still netted in boundaries drawn in the horse and road era. In America the effects were immediate. To the United States of America, sprawling westward, it meant the possibility of a continuous access to Washington, however far the frontier travelled across the continent. It meant unity, sustained on a scale that would otherwise have been impossible.

The steamboat was, if anything, a little ahead of the steam-engine in its earlier phases. There was a steamboat, the *Charlotte Dundas*, on the Firth of Clyde Canal in 1802, and in 1807 an American named Fulton had a paying steamer, *The Clermont*, with British-built engines, upon the Hudson River above New York. The first steamship to put to sea was also an American, the *Phœnix*, which went from New York (Hoboken) to Philadelphia. So, too, was the first ship using steam (she also had sails) to cross the Atlantic, the *Savannah* (1819). All these were paddle-wheel boats, and paddle-wheel boats are not adapted to work in heavy seas. The paddles

smash too easily, and the boat is then disabled. The screw steamship followed rather slowly. Many difficulties had to be surmounted before the screw was a practicable thing. Not until the middle of the century did the tonnage of steamships upon the sea begin to overhaul that of sailing-ships. After that the evolution in sea transport was rapid. For the first time men began to cross the seas and oceans with some certainty as to the date of their arrival. The transatlantic crossing, which had been an uncertain adventure of several weeks — which might stretch to months — was accelerated, until in 1910 it was brought down, in the case of the fastest boats, to under five days, with a practically notifiable hour of arrival. All over the oceans there was the same reduction in the time and the same increase in the certainty of human communications.

Concurrently with the development of steam transport upon land and sea a new and striking addition to the facilities of human intercourse arose out of the investigations of Volta, Galvani, and Faraday into various electrical phenomena. The electric telegraph came into existence in 1835. The first underseas cable was laid in 1851 between France and England. In a few years the telegraph system had spread over the civilized world, and news which had hitherto travelled slowly from point to point became practically simultaneous throughout the earth.

These things, the steam railway and the electric telegraph, were to the popular imagination of the middle nineteenth century the most striking and revolutionary of inventions, but they were only the most conspicuous and clumsy firstfruits of a far more extensive process. Technical knowledge and skill were developing with an extraordinary rapidity, and to an extraordinary extent measured by the progress of any previous age. Far less conspicuous at first in everyday life, but finally far more important, was the extension of man's power over various structural materials. Before the middle of the eighteenth century iron was reduced from its ores by means of wood-charcoal, was handled in small pieces, and hammered and wrought into shape. It was material for a craftsman. Quality and treatment were enormously dependent upon the experience and sagacity of the individual iron worker. The largest masses of iron that could be dealt with under those conditions amounted at most (in the

sixteenth century) to two or three tons. (There was a very definite upward limit, therefore, to the size of cannon.) The blast furnace arose in the eighteenth century, and developed with the use of coke. Not before the eighteenth century do we find rolled sheet iron (1728) and rolled rods and bars (1783). Nasmyth's steam hammer came as late as 1838. The ancient world, because of its metallurgical inferiority, could not use steam. The steam engine, even the primitive pumping engine, could not develop before sheet iron was available. The early engines seem to the modern eye very pitiful and clumsy bits of ironmongery, but they were the utmost that the metallurgical science of the time could do. As late as 1856 came the Bessemer process, and presently (1864) the open-hearth process, in which steel and every sort of iron could be melted, purified, and cast in a manner and upon a scale hitherto unheard of. To-day in the electric furnace one may see tons of incandescent steel swirling about like boiling milk in a saucepan. Nothing in the previous practical advances of mankind is comparable in its consequences to the complete mastery over enormous masses of steel and iron and over their texture and quality which man has now achieved. The railways and early engines of all sorts were the mere first triumphs of the new metallurgical methods. Presently came ships of iron and steel, vast bridges, and a new way of building with steel upon a gigantic scale. Men realized too late that they had planned their railways with far too timid a gauge, that they could have organized their travelling with far more steadiness and comfort upon a much bigger scale.

Before the nineteenth century there were no ships in the world much over 2,000 tons burthen; now there is nothing wonderful about a 50,000-ton liner. There are people who sneer at this kind of progress as being a progress in "mere size," but that sort of sneering merely marks the intellectual limitations of those who indulge in it. The great ship or the steel-frame building is not, as they imagine, a magnified version of the small ship or building of the past; it is a thing different in kind, more lightly and strongly built, of finer and stronger materials; instead of being a thing of precedent and rule-of-thumb, it is a thing of subtle and intricate calculation. In the old house or ship, matter was dominant — the material and its needs had to be slavishly obeyed; in the new, matter has been captured,

changed, coerced. Think of the coal and iron and sand dragged out of the banks and pits, wrenched, wrought, molten and cast, to be flung at last, a slender, glittering pinnacle of steel and glass, six hundred feet above the crowded city!

We have given these particulars of the advance in man's knowledge of the metallurgy of steel and its results by way of illustration. A parallel story could be told of the metallurgy of copper and tin, and of a multitude of metals, nickel and aluminium to name but two, unknown before the nineteenth century dawned. It is in this great and growing mastery over substances, over different sorts of glass, over rocks and plasters and the like, over colours and textures, that the main triumphs of the mechanical revolution have thus far been achieved. Yet we are still in the stage of the firstfruits in the matter. We have the power, but we have still to learn how to use our power. Many of the first employments of these gifts of science have been vulgar, tawdry, stupid, or horrible. The artist and the adaptor have still hardly begun to work with the endless variety of substances now at their disposal.

Concurrently with this extension of mechanical possibilities the new science of electricity grew up. It was only in the eighties of the nineteenth century that this body of inquiry began to yield results to impress the vulgar mind. Then suddenly came electric light and electric traction; and the transmutation of forces, the possibility of sending *power*, that could be changed into mechanical motion or light or heat as one chose, along a copper wire, as water is sent along a pipe, began to come through to the ideas of ordinary people....

The British and the French were at first the leading peoples in this great proliferation of knowledge; but presently the German, who had learnt humility under Napoleon, showed such zeal and pertinacity in scientific inquiry as to overhaul these leaders. British science was largely the creation of Englishmen and Scotchmen working outside the ordinary centres of erudition. We have told how in England the universities after the reformation ceased to have a wide popular appeal, how they became the educational preserve of the nobility and gentry, and the strongholds of the established church. A pompous and unintelligent classical pretentiousness dominated them, and they dominated the schools of the middle and upper classes. The only

knowledge recognized was an uncritical textual knowledge of a selection of Latin and Greek classics, and the test of a good style was its abundance of quotations, allusions, and stereotyped expressions. The early development of British science went on, therefore, in spite of the formal educational organization, and in the teeth of the bitter hostility of the teaching and clerical professions. French education, too, was dominated by the classical tradition of the Jesuits, and consequently it was not difficult for the Germans to organize a body of investigators, small indeed in relation to the possibilities of the case, but large in proportion to the little band of British and French inventors and experimentalists. And though this work of research and experiment was making Britain and France the most rich and powerful countries in the world, it was not making scientific and inventive men rich and powerful. There is a necessary unworldliness about a sincere scientific man; he is too preoccupied with his research to plan and scheme how to make money out of it. The economic exploitation of his discoveries falls very easily and naturally, therefore, into the hands of a more acquisitive type; and so we find that the crops of rich men which every fresh phase of scientific and technical progress has produced in Great Britain, though they have not displayed quite the same passionate desire to insult and kill the goose that laid the national golden eggs as the scholastic and clerical professions, have been quite content to let that profitable creature starve. Inventors and discoverers came by nature, they thought, for cleverer people to profit by.

In this matter the Germans were a little wiser. The German "learned" did not display the same vehement hatred of the new learning. They permitted its development. The German business man and manufacturer again had not quite the same contempt for the man of science as had his British competitor. Knowledge, these Germans believed, might be a cultivated crop, responsive to fertilizers. They did concede, therefore, a certain amount of opportunity to the scientific mind; their public expenditure on scientific work was relatively greater, and this expenditure was abundantly rewarded. By the latter half of the nineteenth century the German scientific worker had made German a necessary language for every science student who wished to keep abreast with the latest work in his department,

and in certain branches, and particularly in chemistry, Germany acquired a very great superiority over her western neighbours. The scientific effort of the sixties and seventies in Germany began to tell after the eighties, and the Germans gained steadily upon Britain and France in technical and industrial prosperity.

In an *Outline of History* such as this it is impossible to trace the network of complex mental processes that led to the incessant extension of knowledge and power that is now going on; all we can do here is to call the reader's attention to the most salient turning-points that finally led the toboggan of human affairs into its present swift ice-run of progress. We have told of the first release of human curiosity and of the beginnings of systematic inquiry and experiment. We have told, too, how, when the plutocratic Roman system and its resultant imperialism had come and gone again, this process of inquiry was renewed. We have told of the escape of investigation from ideas of secrecy and personal advantage to the idea of publication and a brotherhood of knowledge, and we have noted the foundation of the British Royal Society, the Florentine Society, and their like as a consequence of this socializing of thought. These things were the roots of the mechanical revolution, and so long as the root of pure scientific inquiry lives, that revolution will progress. The mechanical revolution itself began, we may say, with the exhaustion of the wood supply for the ironworks of England. This led to the use of coal, the coal mine led to the simple pumping engine, the development of the pumping engine by Watt into a machine-driving engine led on to the locomotive and the steamship. This was the first phase of a great expansion in the use of steam. A second phase in the mechanical revolution began with the application of electrical science to practical problems and the development of electric lighting, power-transmission, and traction.

A third phase is to be distinguished when in the eighties a new type of engine came into use, an engine in which the expansive force of an explosive mixture replaced the expansive force of steam. The light, highly efficient engines that were thus made possible were applied to the automobile, and developed at last to reach such a pitch of lightness and efficiency as to render flight — long known to be possible — a practical achievement. A successful flying-machine —

but not a machine large enough to take up a human body — was made by Professor Langley of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington as early as 1897. By 1909 the aeroplane was available for human locomotion. There had seemed to be a pause in the increase of human speed with the perfection of railways and automobile road traction, but with the flying-machine came fresh reductions in the effective distance between one point of the earth's surface and another. In the eighteenth century the distance from London to Edinburgh was an eight days' journey; in 1918 the British Civil Air Transport Commission reported that the journey from London to Melbourne, half-way round the earth, would probably, in a few years' time, be accomplished in that same period of eight days.

Too much stress must not be laid upon these striking reductions in the time distances of one place from another. They are merely one aspect of a much profounder and more momentous enlargement of human possibility. The science of agriculture and agricultural chemistry, for instance, made quite parallel advances during the nineteenth century. Men learnt so to fertilize the soil as to produce quadruple and quintuple the crops got from the same area in the seventeenth century. There was a still more extraordinary advance in medical science; the average duration of life rose, the daily efficiency increased, the waste of life through ill-health diminished.

Now here altogether we have such a change in human life as to constitute a fresh phase of history. In a little more than a century this mechanical revolution has been brought about. In that time man made a stride in the material conditions of his life vaster than he had done during the whole long interval between the palæolithic stage and the age of cultivation, or between the days of Pepi in Egypt and those of George III. A new gigantic material framework for human affairs has come unto existence. Clearly it demands great readjustments of our social, economical, and political methods. But these readjustments have necessarily waited upon the development of the mechanical revolution, and they are still only in their opening stage to-day.

§ 2

There is a tendency in many histories to confuse together what we have here called the *mechanical revolution*, which was an entirely new thing in human experience arising out of the development of organized science, a new step like the invention of agriculture or the discovery of metals, with something else, quite different in its origins, something for which there was already an historical precedent, the social and financial development which is called the *industrial revolution*. The two processes were going on together, they were constantly reacting upon each other, but they were in root and essence different. There would have been an industrial revolution of sorts if there had been no coal, no steam, no machinery; but in that case it would probably have followed far more closely upon the lines of the social and financial developments of the later years of the Roman republic. It would have repeated the story of dispossessed free cultivators, gang labour, great estates, great financial fortunes, and a socially destructive financial process. Even the factory method came before power and machinery. Factories were the product not of machinery, but of the "division of labour." Drilled and sweated workers were making such things as millinery, cardboard boxes, and furniture, and colouring maps and book illustrations, and so forth, before even water-wheels had been used for industrial processes. There were factories in Rome in the days of Augustus. New books, for instance, were dictated to rows of copyists in the factories of the booksellers. The attentive student of Defoe and of the political pamphlets of Fielding will realize that the idea of herding poor people into establishments to work collectively for their living was already current in Britain before the close of the seventeenth century. There are intimations of it even as early as More's *Utopia* (1516). It was a social and not a mechanical development.

Up to past the middle of the eighteenth century the social and economic history of western Europe was in fact retreading the path along which the Roman State had gone in the three last centuries B.C. America was in many ways a new Spain, and India and China a new Egypt. But the political disunions of Europe, the political convulsions against monarchy, the recalcitrance of the common folk and perhaps also the greater accessibility of the western European intelligence to mechanical ideas and inventions, turned the process

into quite novel directions. Ideas of human solidarity, thanks to Christianity, were far more widely diffused in this newer European world, political power was not so concentrated, and the man of energy anxious to get rich turned his mind, therefore, very willingly from the ideas of the slave and of gang labour to the idea of mechanical power and the machine.

The mechanical revolution, the process of mechanical invention and discovery, was a new thing in human experience, and it went on regardless of the social, political, economic, and industrial consequences it might produce. The industrial revolution, on the other hand, like most other human affairs, was and is more and more profoundly changed and deflected by the constant variation in human conditions caused by the mechanical revolution. And the essential difference between the amassing of riches, the extinction of small farmers and small business men, and the phase of big finance in the latter centuries of the Roman republic on the one hand, and the very similar concentration of capital in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the other, lies in the profound difference in the character of labour that the mechanical revolution was bringing about. The power of the old world was human power; everything depended ultimately upon the driving power of human muscle, the muscle of ignorant and subjugated men. A little animal muscle, supplied by draft oxen, horse traction, and the like, contributed. Where a weight had to be lifted, men lifted it; where a rock had to be quarried, men chipped it out; where a field had to be ploughed, men and oxen ploughed it; the Roman equivalent of the steamship was the galley with its banks of sweating rowers. A vast proportion of mankind in the early civilizations was employed in purely mechanical drudgery. At its onset, power-driven machinery did not seem to promise any release from such unintelligent toil. Great gangs of men were employed in excavating canals, in making railway cuttings and embankments, and the like. The number of miners increased enormously. But the extension of facilities and the output of commodities increased much more. And as the nineteenth century went on, the plain logic of the new situation asserted itself more clearly. Human beings were no longer wanted as a source of mere indiscriminated power. What could be done mechanically by a

human being could be done faster and better by a machine. The human being was needed now only where choice and intelligence had to be exercised. Human beings were wanted only as human beings. The *drudge*, on whom all the previous civilizations had rested, the creature of mere obedience, the man whose brains were superfluous, had become unnecessary to the welfare of mankind.

This was as true of such ancient industries as agriculture and mining as it was of the newest metallurgical processes. For ploughing, sowing, and harvesting, swift machines came forward to do the work of scores of men. The Roman civilization was built upon cheap and degraded human beings; modern civilization is being rebuilt upon cheap mechanical power. For a hundred years power has been getting cheaper and labour dearer. If for a generation or so machinery has had to wait its turn in the mine, it is simply because for a time men were cheaper than machinery.

Now here was a change-over of quite primary importance in human affairs. The chief solicitude of the rich and of the ruler in the old civilization had been to keep up a supply of drudges. As the nineteenth century went on, it became more and more plain to the intelligent directive people that the common man had now to be something better than a drudge. He had to be educated — if only to secure "industrial efficiency." He had to understand what he was about. From the days of the first Christian propaganda, popular education had been smouldering in Europe, just as it has smouldered in Asia wherever Islam has set its foot, because of the necessity of making the believer understand a little of the belief by which he is saved, and of enabling him to read a little in the sacred books by which his belief is conveyed. Christian controversies, with their competition for adherents, ploughed the ground for the harvest of popular education. In England, for instance, by the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century, the disputes of the sects and the necessity of catching adherents young had produced an abundance of night schools, Sunday schools, and a series of competing educational organizations for children, the dissenting British schools, the church National Schools, and even Roman Catholic elementary schools. The earlier, less enlightened manufacturers, unable to take a broad view of their own interests, hated and opposed these schools. But here

again needy Germany led her richer neighbours. The religious teacher found the profit-seeker at his side, unexpectedly eager to get the commonalty, if not educated, at least "trained." The student of the English magazines of the middle and later Victorian period may trace the steadily spreading recognition of the new necessity for popular education. The upper and middle classes of England, themselves by no means well educated, for a generation or so regarded popular education with a sort of tittering hostility. In the middle Victorian period it was thought to be extraordinarily funny that a shop assistant should lean across the counter and ask two lady customers not to speak French, as he "understood the langwidge." This was a "joke" in that monumental record of British humour, *Punch*. It was almost as amusing to the Victorian English as the story of Balaam's ass. The German competitor later on robbed that joke of its fun. Before the death of Queen Victoria, English shop assistants were being badgered to attend evening classes to learn French.

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of rapid advance in popular education throughout all the Westernized world. There was no parallel advance in the education of the upper classes, some advance no doubt, but nothing to correspond, and so the great gulf that had divided that world hitherto into the readers and the non-reading mass became little more than a slightly perceptible difference in educational level. At the back of this process was the mechanical revolution, apparently regardless of social conditions, but really insisting inexorably upon the complete abolition of a totally illiterate class throughout the world.

The economic revolution of the Roman republic had never been clearly apprehended by the common people of Rome. The ordinary Roman citizen never saw the changes through which he lived, clearly and comprehensively as we see them. But the industrial revolution, as it went on towards the end of the nineteenth century, was more and more distinctly *seen* as one whole process by the common people it was affecting, because presently they could read and discuss and communicate, and because they went about and saw things as no commonalty had ever done before.

In this Outline of History we have been careful to indicate the gradual appearance of the ordinary people as a class with a will and

ideas in common. It is the writer's belief that massive movements of the "ordinary people" over considerable areas only became possible as a result of the propagandist religions, Christianity and Islam, and their insistence upon individual self-respect. We have cited the enthusiasm of the commonalty for the First Crusade as marking a new phase in social history. But before the nineteenth century even these massive movements were comparatively restricted. The equalitarian insurrections of the peasantry, from the Wycliffe period onward, were confined to the peasant communities of definite localities, they spread only slowly into districts affected by similar forces. The town artisan rioted indeed, but only locally. The château-burning of the French revolution was not the act of a peasantry who had overthrown a government, it was the act of a peasantry released by the overthrow of a government. The Commune of Paris was the first effective appearance of the town artisan as a political power, and the Parisian crowd of the First Revolution was a very mixed, primitive-thinking, and savage crowd compared with any Western European crowd after 1830.

But the mechanical revolution was not only pressing education upon the whole population, it was leading to a big-capitalism and to a large-scale reorganization of industry that was to produce a new and distinctive system of ideas in the common people in the place of the mere uncomfortable recalcitrance and elemental rebellions of an illiterate commonalty. We have already noted how the industrial revolution had split the manufacturing class, which had hitherto been a middling and various sort of class, into two sections, the employers, who became rich enough to mingle with the financial, merchandizing, and landowning classes, and the employees, who drifted to a status closer and closer to that of mere gang and agricultural labour. As the manufacturing employee sank, the agricultural labourer, by the introduction of agricultural machinery and the increase in his individual productivity, rose. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Karl Marx (1818-83), a German Jew of great scholarly attainments, who did much of his work in the British Museum library in London, was pointing out that the organization of the working classes by the steadily concentrating group of capitalist

owners, was developing a new social classification to replace the more complex class systems of the past (see chapter xx, §§ 4, 5, and 6). Property, so far as it was power, was being gathered together into relatively few hands, the hands of the big rich men, the capitalist class; while there was a great mingling of workers with little or no property, whom he called the "expropriated," or "proletariat" — a misuse of this word (see chap. xxvii, § 2) — who were bound to develop a common "class consciousness" of the conflict of their interests with those of the rich men. Differences of education and tradition between the various older social elements which were in process of being fused up into the new class of the expropriated, seemed for a time to contradict this sweeping generalization; the traditions of the professions, the small employers, the farmer peasant and the like were all different from one another and from the various craftsman traditions of the workers; but with the spread of education and the cheapening of literature, this "Marxian" generalization becomes now more and more acceptable. These classes, who were linked at first by nothing but a common impoverishment, were and are being reduced or raised to the same standard of life, forced to read the same books and share the same inconveniences. A sense of solidarity between all sorts of poor and propertyless men, as against the profit-amassing and wealth-concentrating class, is growing more and more evident in our world. Old differences fade away, the difference between craftsman and open-air worker, between black coat and overall, between poor clergyman and elementary schoolmaster, between policeman and bus-driver. They must all buy the same cheap furnishings and live in similar cheap houses; their sons and daughters will all mingle and marry; success at the upper levels becomes more and more hopeless for the rank and file. Marx, who did not so much advocate the class-war, the war of the expropriated mass against the appropriating few, as foretell it, is being more and more justified by events.

§ 3

To trace any broad outlines in the fermentation of ideas that went on during the mechanical and industrial revolution of the nineteenth

century is a very difficult task. But we must attempt it if we are to link what has gone before in this history with the condition of our world to-day.

It will be convenient to distinguish two main periods in the hundred years between 1814 and 1914. First came the period 1814-48, in which there was a very considerable amount of liberal thinking and writing *in limited circles*, but during which there were no great changes or development of thought in the general mass of the people. Throughout this period the world's affairs were living, so to speak, on their old intellectual capital, they were going on in accordance with the leading ideas of the Revolution and the counter-revolution. The dominant liberal ideas were freedom and a certain vague equalitarianism; the conservative ideas were monarchy, organized religion, social privilege, and obedience.

Until 1848 the spirit of the Holy Alliance, the spirit of Metternich, struggled to prevent a revival of the European revolution that Napoleon had betrayed and set back. In America, both North and South, on the other hand, the revolution had triumphed and nineteenth-century liberalism ruled unchallenged. Britain was an uneasy country, never quite loyally reactionary nor quite loyally progressive, neither truly monarchist nor truly republican, the land of Cromwell and also of the Merry Monarch, Charles; anti-Austrian, anti-Bourbon, anti-papal, yet weakly repressive. We have told of the first series of liberal storms in Europe in and about the year 1830; in Britain in 1832 a Reform Bill, greatly extending the franchise and restoring something of its representative character to the House of Commons, relieved the situation. Round and about 1848 came a second and much more serious system of outbreaks, that overthrew the Orleans monarchy and established a second Republic in France (1848-52), raised North Italy and Hungary against Austria, and the Poles in Posen against the Germans, and sent the Pope in flight from the republicans of Rome. A very interesting Pan-Slavic conference held at Prague foreshadowed many of the territorial readjustments of 1919. It dispersed after an insurrection at Prague had been suppressed by Austrian troops.

Ultimately all these insurrections failed; the current system staggered, but kept its feet. There were no doubt serious social

discontents beneath these revolts, but as yet, except in the case of Paris, these had no very clear form; and this 1848 storm, so far as the rest of Europe was concerned, may be best described, in a phrase, as a revolt of the natural political map against the artificial arrangements of the Vienna diplomatists, and the system of suppressions those arrangements entailed.

The history of Europe, then, from 1815 to 1848 was, generally speaking, a sequel to the history of Europe from 1789 to 1814. There were no really new *motifs* in the composition. The main trouble was still the struggle, though often a blind and misdirected struggle, of the interests of ordinary men against the Great Powers system which cramped and oppressed the life of mankind.

But after 1848, from 1848 to 1914, though the readjustment of the map still went on towards a free and unified Italy and a unified Germany, there began a fresh phase in the process of mental and political adaptation to the new knowledge and the new material powers of mankind. Came a great irruption of new social, religious, and political ideas into the general European mind. In the next three sections we will consider the origin and quality of these irruptions. They laid the foundations upon which we base our political thought to-day, but for a long time they had no very great effect on contemporary politics. Contemporary politics continued to run on in the old lines, but with a steadily diminishing support in the intellectual convictions and consciences of men. We have already described the way in which a strong intellectual process undermined the system of Grand Monarchy in France before 1789. A similar undermining process was going on throughout Europe during the Great Power period of 1848-1914. Profound doubts of the system of government and of the liberties of many forms of property in the economic system spread throughout the social body. Then came the greatest and most disorganizing war in history, so that it is still impossible to estimate the power and range of the accumulated new ideas of those sixty-six years. We have been through a greater catastrophe even than the Napoleonic catastrophe, and we are in a slack-water period, corresponding to the period 1815-30. Our 1830 and our 1848 are still to come and show us where we stand.

§ 4

We have traced throughout this history the gradual restriction of the idea of property from the first unlimited claim of the strong man to possess everything and the gradual realization of brotherhood as something transcending personal self-seeking (see especially chap. xxxvii, § 13). Men were first subjugated into more than tribal societies by the fear of monarch and deity. It is only within the last three or at most four thousand years that we have any clear evidence that voluntary self-abandonment to some greater end, without fee or reward, was an acceptable idea to men, or that anyone had propounded it. Then we find spreading over the surface of human affairs, as patches of sunshine spread and pass over the hillsides upon a windy day in spring, the idea that there is a happiness in self-devotion greater than any personal gratification or triumph, and a life of mankind different and greater and more important than the sum of all the individual lives within it. We have seen that idea become vivid as a beacon, vivid as sunshine caught and reflected dazzlingly by some window in the landscape, in the teaching of Buddha, Lao Tse, and, most clearly of all, of Jesus of Nazareth. Through all its variations and corruptions Christianity has never completely lost the suggestion of a devotion to God's commonweal that makes the personal pomps of monarchs and rulers seem like the insolence of an over-dressed servant and the splendours and gratifications of wealth like the waste of robbers. No man living in a community which such a religion as Christianity or Islam has touched can be altogether a slave; there is an ineradicable quality in these religions that compels men to judge their masters and to realize their own responsibility for the world.

As men have felt their way towards this new state of mind from the fierce self-centred greed and instinctive combativeness of the early Palæolithic family group, they have sought to express the drift of their thoughts and necessities very variously. They have found themselves in disagreement and conflict with old-established ideas, and there has been a natural tendency to contradict these ideas flatly, to fly over to the absolute contrary. Faced by a world in which rule

and classes and order seem to do little but give opportunity for personal selfishness and unrighteous oppression, the first impatient movement was to declare for a universal equality and a practical anarchy. Faced by a world in which property seemed little more than a protection for selfishness and a method of enslavement, it was as natural to repudiate all property. Our history shows an increasing impulse to revolt against rulers and against ownership. We have traced it in the middle ages burning the rich man's châteaux and experimenting in theocracy and communism. In the French revolutions this double revolt is clear and plain. In France we find side by side, inspired by the same spirit and as natural parts of the same revolutionary movement, men who, with their eyes on the ruler's taxes, declared that property should be inviolable, and others who, with their eyes on the employer's hard bargains, declared that property should be abolished. But what they are really revolting against in each case is that the ruler and the employer, instead of becoming servants of the community, still remain, like most of mankind, self-seeking, oppressive individuals.

Throughout the ages we find this belief growing in men's minds that there can be such a rearrangement of laws and powers as to give rule and order while still restraining the egotism of any ruler and of any ruling class that may be necessary, and such a definition of property as will give freedom without oppressive power. We begin to realize nowadays that these ends are only to be attained by a complex constructive effort; they arise through the conflict of new human needs against ignorance and old human nature; but throughout the nineteenth century there was a persistent disposition to solve the problem by some simple formula. (And be happy ever afterwards, regardless of the fact that all human life, all life, is throughout the ages nothing but the continuing solution of a continuous synthetic problem.)

The earlier half of the nineteenth century saw a number of experiments in the formation of trial human societies of a new kind. One of these, the Oneida Community (1845-79), under the leadership of a man of very considerable genius and learning, John Humphry Noyes, did for a number of decades succeed in realizing many of the most striking proposals of Plato's *Republic*; it became wealthy and

respected; but it broke up in 1879 largely because of the disposition of the younger generation to leave its peculiar limitations in order to play a part in the larger community of the world outside. A powerful business corporation still preserves its industrial tradition. But the Oneida experiment was too bold and strange a departure to influence the general development of modern civilization. Far more important historically were the experiments and ideas of Robert Owen (1771-1858), a Manchester cotton-spinner. He is very generally regarded as the founder of modern Socialism; it was in connection with his work that the word "socialism" first arose (about 1835).

He seems to have been a thoroughly competent business man; he made a number of innovations in the cotton-spinning industry, and acquired a fair fortune at an early age. He was distressed by the waste of human possibilities among his workers, and he set himself to improve their condition and the relations of employer and employed. This he sought to do first at his Manchester factory and afterwards at New Lanark, where he found himself in practical control of works employing about two thousand people. Between 1800 and 1828 he achieved very considerable things: he reduced the hours of labour, made his factory sanitary and agreeable, abolished the employment of very young children, improved the training of his workers, provided unemployment pay during a period of trade depression, established a system of schools, and made New Lanark a model of a better industrialism, while at the same time sustaining its commercial prosperity. He wrote vigorously to defend the mass of mankind against the charges of intemperance and improvidence which were held to justify the economic iniquities of the time. He held that men and women are largely the product of their educational environment, a thesis that needs no advocacy to-day. And he set himself to a propaganda of the views that New Lanark had justified. He attacked the selfish indolence of his fellow manufacturers, and in 1819, largely under his urgency, the first Factory Act was passed, the first attempt to restrain employers from taking the most stupid and intolerable advantages of their workers' poverty. Some of the restrictions of that Act amaze us to-day. It seems incredible now that it should ever have been necessary to protect little children of *nine* (!) from work in factories, or to limit the nominal working day of such

employees to *twelve hours*!

People are perhaps too apt to write of the industrial revolution as though it led to the enslavement and overworking of poor children who had hitherto been happy and free. But this misinterprets history. From the very beginnings of civilization the little children of the poor had always been obliged to do whatever work they could do. But the factory system gathered up all this infantile toil and made it systematic, conspicuous, and scandalous. The factory system challenged the quickening human conscience on that issue. The British Factory Act of 1819, weak and feeble though it seems to us, was the Magna Carta of childhood; thereafter the protection of the children of the poor, first from toil and then from bodily starvation and ignorance, began.

We cannot tell here in any detail the full story of Owen's life and thought. His work at New Lanark had been, he felt, only a trial upon a small working model. What could be done for one industrial community could be done, he held, for every industrial community in the country; he advocated a resettlement of the industrial population in townships on the New Lanark plan. For a time he seemed to have captured the imagination of the world. The *Times* and *Morning Post* supported his proposals; among the visitors to New Lanark was the Grand Duke Nicholas who succeeded Alexander I as Tsar; a fast friend was the Duke of Kent, son of George III and father of Queen Victoria. But all the haters of change and all — and there are always many such — who were jealous of the poor, and all the employers who were likely to be troubled by his projects, were waiting for an excuse to counter-attack him, and they found it in the expression of his religious opinions, which were hostile to official Christianity, and through those he was successfully discredited. But he continued to develop his projects and experiments, of which the chief was a community at New Harmony in Indiana (U. S. A.), in which he sank most of his capital. His partners bought him out of the New Lanark business in 1828.

Owen's experiments and suggestions ranged very widely, and do not fall under any single formula. There was nothing doctrinaire about him. His New Lanark experiment was the first of a number of "benevolent businesses" in the world; Lord Leverhulme's Port

Sunlight, the Cadburys' Bournville, and the Ford businesses in America are contemporary instances; it was not really a socialist experiment at all; it was a "paternal" experiment. But his proposals for state settlements were what we should call state socialism to-day. His American experiment and his later writings point to a completer form of socialism, a much wider departure from the existing state of affairs. It is clear that the riddle of currency exercised Owen. He understood that we can no more hope for real economic justice while we pay for work with money of fluctuating value than we could hope for a punctual world if there was a continual inconstant variability in the length of an hour. One of his experiments was an attempt at a circulation of labour notes representing one hour, five hours, or twenty hours of work. The co-operative societies of to-day, societies of poor men which combine for the collective buying and distribution of commodities or for collective manufacture or dairying or other forms of agriculture, arose directly out of his initiatives, though the pioneer co-operative societies of his own time ended in failure. Their successors have spread throughout the whole world, and number to-day some thirty or forty million of adherents.

A point to note about this early socialism of Owen's is that it was not at first at all "democratic." Its initiative was benevolent, its early form patriarchal; it was something up to which the workers were to be educated by liberally disposed employers and leaders. The first socialism was not a worker's movement; it was a master's movement.

Concurrently with this work of Owen's, another and quite independent series of developments was going on in America and Britain which was destined to come at last into reaction with his socialistic ideas. The English law had long prohibited combinations in restraint of trade, combinations to raise prices or wages by concerted action. There had been no great hardship in these prohibitions before the agrarian and industrial changes of the eighteenth century let loose a great swarm of workers living from hand to mouth and competing for insufficient employment. Under these new conditions, the workers in many industries found themselves intolerably squeezed. They were played off one against another; day by day and hour by hour none knew what concession

his fellow might not have made, and what further reduction of pay or increase of toil might not ensue. It became vitally necessary for the workers to make agreements — illegal though they were — against such underselling. At first these agreements had to be made and sustained by secret societies. Or clubs, established ostensibly for quite other purposes, social clubs, funeral societies, and the like, served to mask the wage-protecting combination. The fact that these associations were illegal disposed them to violence; they were savage against "blacklegs" and "rats" who would not join them, and still more savage with traitors. In 1824 the House of Commons recognized the desirability of relieving tension in these matters by conceding the right of workmen to form combinations for "collective bargaining" with the masters. This enabled Trade Unions to develop with a large measure of freedom. At first very clumsy and primitive organizations and with very restricted freedoms, the Trade Unions have risen gradually to be a real Fourth Estate in the country, a great system of bodies representing the mass of industrial workers.

Arising at first in Britain and America, they have, with various national modifications, and under varying legal conditions, spread to France, Germany, and all the westernized communities.

Organized originally to sustain wages and restrict intolerable hours, the Trade Union movement was at first something altogether distinct from socialism. The Trade Unionist tried to make the best for himself of the existing capitalism and the existing conditions of employment; the socialist proposed to change the system. It was the imagination and generalizing power of Karl Marx which brought these two movements into relationship. He was a man with the sense of history very strong in him; he was the first to perceive that the old social classes that had endured since the beginning of civilization were in process of dissolution and regrouping. His racial Jewish commercialism made the antagonism of property and labour very plain to him. And his upbringing in Germany — where, as we have pointed out, the tendency of class to harden into caste was more evident than in any other European country — made him conceive of labour as presently becoming "class conscious" and collectively antagonistic to the property-concentrating classes. In the Trade Union movement which was spreading over the world, he believed

he saw this development of class-conscious labour.

What, he asked, would be the outcome of the "class war" of the capitalist and proletariat? The capitalist adventurers, he alleged, because of their inherent greed and combativeness, would gather power over capital into fewer and fewer hands, until at last they would concentrate all the means of production, transit, and the like into a form seizable by the workers, whose class consciousness and solidarity would be developed *pari passu* by the process of organizing and concentrating industry. They would seize this capital and work it for themselves. This would be the social revolution. Then individual property and freedom would be restored, based upon the common ownership of the earth and the management by the community as a whole of the great productive services which the private capitalist had organized and concentrated. This would be the end of the "capitalist" system, but not the end of the system of capitalism. State capitalism would replace private owner capitalism.

This marks a great stride away from the socialism of Owen. Owen (like Plato) looked to the common sense of men of any or every class to reorganize the casual and faulty political, economic, and social structure. Marx found something more in the nature of a driving force in his class hostility based on expropriation and injustice. And he was not simply a prophetic theorist; he was also a propagandist of the revolt of labour, the revolt of the so-called "proletariat." Labour, he perceived, had a common interest against the capitalist everywhere, though under the test of the Great Power wars of the time, and particularly of the liberation of Italy, he showed that he failed to grasp the fact that labour everywhere has a common interest in the peace of the world. But with the social revolution in view he did succeed in inspiring the formation of an international league of workers, the First International.

The subsequent history of socialism is chequered between the British tradition of Owen and the German class feeling of Marx. What is called Fabian Socialism, the exposition of socialism by the London Fabian Society, makes its appeal to reasonable men of all classes. What are called "Revisionists" in German Socialism incline in the same direction. But on the whole, it is Marx who has carried the day against Owen, and the general disposition of socialists

throughout the world is to look to the organization of labour and labour only to supply the fighting forces that will disentangle the political and economic organization of human affairs from the hands of the more or less irresponsible private owners and adventurers who now control it.

These are the broad features of the project which is called Socialism. We will discuss its incompletenesses and inadequacies in our next section. It was perhaps inevitable that socialism should be greatly distraught and subdivided by doubts and disputes and sects and schools; they are growth symptoms like the spots on a youth's face. Here we can but glance at the difference between state socialism, which would run the economic business of the country through its political government, and the newer schools of syndicalism and guild socialism which would entrust a large measure in the government of each industry to the workers of every grade — including the directors and managers — engaged in that industry. This "guild socialism" is really a new sort of capitalism with a committee of workers and officials in each industry taking the place of the free private capitalists of that industry. The *personnel* becomes the collective capitalist. Nor can we discuss the undemocratic idea of the Russian leader Lenin, that a population cannot judge of socialism before it has experienced it, and that a group of socialists are therefore justified in seizing and socializing, if they can, the life of a country without at first setting up any democratic form of general government at all, for which sort of seizure he uses the Marxian phrase, a very incompetent phrase, the "dictatorship of the proletariat." All Russia now is a huge experiment in that dictatorship (August, 1920). The "proletariat" is supposed to be dictating through committees of workmen and soldiers, the Soviets, but at present we have no means of ascertaining how far Russian affairs are under the direction of a genuine mass intelligence and will, and how far the activities of the Soviets are restrained and directed by the group of vigorous personalities which leads the revolution. Nor do we know if the methods of election used for the Soviets are any improvement upon the unsatisfactory methods in use in the Atlantic democracies. Non-workers have no representation in this new Russian state.

§ 5

We are all socialists nowadays, said Sir William Harcourt years ago, and that is loosely true to-day. There can be few people who fail to realize the provisional nature and the dangerous instability of our present political and economic system, and still fewer who believe with the doctrinaire individualists that profit-hunting "go as you please" will guide mankind to any haven of prosperity and happiness. Great rearrangements are necessary, and a systematic legal subordination of personal self-seeking to the public good. So far most reasonable men are socialists. But these are only preliminary propositions. How far has socialism and modern thought generally gone towards working out the conception of this new political and social order, of which our world admittedly stands in need? We are obliged to answer that there is no clear conception of the new state towards which we vaguely struggle, that our science of human relationships is still so crude and speculative as to leave us without definite guidance upon a score of primarily important issues. In 1920 we are no more in a position to set up a scientifically conceived political system in the world than were men to set up an electric power station in 1820. They could not have done that then to save their lives.

The Marxist system points us to an accumulation of revolutionary forces in the modern world. These forces will continually tend towards revolution. But Marx assumed too hastily that a revolutionary impulse would necessarily produce an ordered state of a new and better kind. A revolution may stop half way in mere destruction. No socialist sect has yet defined its projected government clearly; the Bolsheviks in their Russian experiment seem to have been guided by a phrase, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in practice, we are told, Trotsky and Lenin have proved as autocratic as the less intelligent but equally well-meaning Tsar, Alexander I. We have been at some pains to show from our brief study of the French revolution that a revolution can establish nothing permanent that has not already been thought out beforehand and apprehended by the general mind. The French republic, confronted with unexpected difficulties in economics, currency, and

international relationships, collapsed to the egotisms of the newly rich people of the Directory, and finally to the egotism of Napoleon. Law and a plan, steadily upheld, are more necessary in revolutionary times than in ordinary hum-drum times, because in revolutionary times society degenerates much more readily into a mere scramble under the ascendancy of the forcible and cunning.

If in general terms we take stock of the political and social science of our age, we shall measure something of the preliminary intellectual task still to be done by mankind before we can hope to see any permanent constructive achievements emerging from the mere traditionalism and adventuring that rule our collective affairs to-day. This Socialism, which professes to be a complete theory of a new social order, we discover, when we look into it, to be no more than a partial theory — very illuminating, so far as it goes — about property. We have already discussed the relationship of social development to the restriction of the idea of property (chap. xxxvii, § 13). There are various schools of thought which would restrict property more or less completely. Communism is the proposal to abolish property altogether, or, in other words, to hold all things in common. Modern Socialism, on the other hand — or, to give it a more precise name, "Collectivism" — does clearly distinguish between personal property and collective property. The gist of the socialist proposal is that land and all the natural means of production, transit, and distribution should be collectively owned. Within these limits there is to be much free private ownership and unrestricted personal freedom. Given efficient administration, it may be doubted whether many people nowadays would dispute that proposal. But socialism has never gone on to a thorough examination of that proviso for efficient administration.

Again, what community is it that is to own the collective property; is it to be the sovereign or the township or the county or the nation or mankind? Socialism makes no clear answer. Socialists are very free with the word "nationalize," but we have been subjecting the ideas of "nations" and "nationalism" to some destructive criticism in this *Outline*. If socialists object to a single individual claiming a mine or

a great stretch of agricultural land as his own individual property, with a right to refuse or barter its use and profit to others, why should they permit a single nation to monopolize the mines or trade routes or natural wealth of the territories in which it lives, against the rest of mankind? There seems to be great confusion in socialist theory in this matter. And unless human life is to become a mass meeting of the race in permanent session, how is the community to appoint its officers to carry on its collective concerns? After all, the private owner of land or of a business or the like is a sort of public official in so far as his ownership is sanctioned and protected by the community. Instead of being paid a salary or fees, he is allowed to make a profit. The only valid reason for dismissing him from his ownership is that the new control to be substituted will be more efficient and profitable and satisfactory to the community. And, being dismissed, he has at least the same claim to consideration from the community that he himself has shown in the past to the worker thrown out of employment by a mechanical invention.

This question of administration, the sound and adequate bar to much immediate socialization, brings us to the still largely unsolved problem of human association; how are we to secure the best direction of human affairs and the maximum of willing co-operation with that direction? This is ultimately a complex problem in psychology, but it is absurd to pretend that it is an insoluble one. There must be a definite best, which is the right thing, in these matters. But if it is not insoluble, it is equally unreasonable to pretend that it has been solved. The problem in its completeness involves the working out of the best methods in the following departments, and their complete correlation: —

(i) *Education.* — The preparation of the individual for an understanding and willing co-operation in the world's affairs.

(ii) *Information.* — The continual truthful presentation of public affairs to the individual for his judgment and approval. Closely connected with this need for current information is the codification of the law, the problem of keeping the law plain, clear, and accessible to all.

(iii) *Representation.* — The selection of representatives and agents to act in the collective interest in harmony with the general

will based on this education and plain information.

(iv) *The Executive.* — The appointment of executive agents and the maintenance of means for keeping them responsible to the community, without at the same time hampering intelligent initiatives.

(v) *Thought and Research.* — The systematic criticism of affairs and laws to provide data for popular judgments, and through those judgments to ensure the secular improvement of the human organization.

These are the five heads under which the broad problem of human society presents itself to us. In the world around us we see makeshift devices at work in all those branches, ill co-ordinated one with another and unsatisfactory in themselves. We see an educational system meanly financed and equipped, badly organized and crippled by the interventions and hostilities of religious bodies; we see popular information supplied chiefly by a venal press dependent upon advertisements and subsidies; we see farcical methods of election returning politicians to power as unrepresentative as any hereditary ruler or casual conqueror; everywhere the executive is more or less influenced or controlled by groups of rich adventurers, and the pursuit of political and social science and of public criticism is still the work of devoted and eccentric individuals rather than a recognized and honoured function in the state. There is a gigantic task before right-thinking men in the cleansing and sweetening of the politician's stable; and until it is done, any complete realization of socialism is impossible. While private adventurers control the political life of the State it is ridiculous to think of the state taking over collective economic interests from private adventurers.

Not only has the socialist movement failed thus far to produce a scientifically reasoned scheme for the correlation of education, law, and the exercise of public power, but even in the economic field, as we have already pointed out, creative forces wait for the conception of a right organization of credit and a right method of payment and interchange. It is a truism that the willingness of the worker depends, among other things, upon his complete confidence in the purchasing power of the currency in which he is paid. As this confidence goes, work ceases, except in so far as it can be rewarded by payment in

goods. But there is no sufficient science of currency and business psychology to restrain governments from the most disturbing interferences with the public credit and with the circulation. And such interferences lead straight to the cessation of work, that is, of the production of necessary things. Upon such vital practical questions it is scarcely too much to say that the mass of those socialists who would recast the world have no definite ideas at all. Yet in a socialist world quite as much as in any other sort of world, people must be paid money for their work rather than be paid in kind if any such thing as personal freedom is to continue. Here too there must be an ascertainable right thing to do. Until that is determined, history in these matters will continue to be not so much a record of experiments as of flounderings.

And in another direction the social and political thinking of the nineteenth century was, in the face of the vastness of the mechanical revolution, timid, limited, and insufficient, and that was in regard to international relations. The reader of socialistic literature will find the socialists constantly writing and talking of the "State," and never betraying any realization that the "State" might be all sorts of organizations in all sorts of areas, from the republic of San Marino to the British Empire. It is true that Karl Marx had a conception of a solidarity of interests between the workers in all the industrialized countries, but there is little or no suggestion in Marxist socialism of the logical corollary of this, the establishment of a democratic world federal government (with national or provincial "state" governments) as a natural consequence of his projected social revolution. At most there is a vague aspiration. But if there is any logic about the Marxist, it should be his declared political end for which he should work without ceasing. Put to the test of the war of 1914, the socialists of almost all the European countries showed that their class-conscious internationalism was veneered very thinly indeed over their patriotic feelings, and had to no degree replaced them. Everywhere during the German war socialists denounced that war as made by capitalist governments, but it produces little or no permanent effect to denounce a government or a world system unless you have a working idea of a better government and a better system to replace it.

We state these things here because they are facts, and a living and necessary part of a contemporary survey of human history. It is not our task either to advocate or controvert socialism. But it is in our picture to note that political and social life are, and must remain, chaotic and disastrous without the development of some such constructive scheme as socialism *sketches*, and to point out clearly how far away the world is at present from any such scheme. An enormous amount of intellectual toil and discussion and education and many years — whether decades or centuries, no man can tell — must intervene before a new order, planned as ships and railways are planned, runs, as the cables and the postal deliveries run, over the whole surface of our earth. And until such a new order draws mankind together with its net, human life, as we shall presently show by the story of the European wars since 1854, must become more and more casual, dangerous, miserable, anxious, and disastrous because of the continually more powerful and destructive war methods the continuing mechanical revolution produces.

§ 6

While the mechanical revolution which the growth of physical science had brought about was destroying the ancient social classification of the civilized state which had been evolved through thousands of years, and producing new possibilities and new ideals of a righteous human community and a righteous world order, a change at least as great and novel was going on in the field of religious thought. That same growth of scientific knowledge from which sprang the mechanical revolution was the moving cause of these religious disturbances.

In the opening chapters of this *Outline* we have given the main story of the Record of the Rocks; we have shown life for the little beginning of consciousness that it is in the still waiting vastness of the void of space and time. But before the end of the eighteenth century, this enormous prospect of the past which fills a modern mind with humility and illimitable hope, was hidden from the general consciousness of our race. It was veiled by the curtain of a Sumerian legend. The heavens were no more than a stage

background to a little drama of kings. Men had been too occupied with their own private passions and personal affairs to heed the intimations of their own great destiny that lay about them everywhere.

They learnt their true position in space long before they placed themselves in time. We have already named the earlier astronomers, and told how Galileo was made to recant his assertion that the earth moved round the sun. He was made to do so by the church, and the church was stirred to make him do so because any doubt that the world was the centre of the universe seemed to strike fatally at the authority of Christianity.

Now, upon that matter the teller of modern history is obliged to be at once cautious and bold. He has to pick his way between cowardly evasion on the one hand, and partisanship on the other. As far as possible he must confine himself to facts and restrain his opinions. Yet it is well to remember that no opinions can be altogether restrained. The writer has his own very strong and definite persuasions, and the reader must bear that in mind. It is a fact in history that the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth had in it something profoundly new and creative; he preached a new Kingdom of Heaven in the hearts and in the world of men. There was nothing in his teaching, so far as we can judge it at this distance of time, to clash or interfere with any discovery or expansion of the history of the world and mankind. But it is equally a fact in history that St. Paul and his successors added to or completed or imposed upon or substituted another doctrine for — as you may prefer to think — the plain and profoundly revolutionary teachings of Jesus by expounding a subtle and complex theory of salvation, a salvation which could be attained very largely by belief and formalities, without any serious disturbance of the believer's ordinary habits and occupations, and that this Pauline teaching did involve very definite beliefs about the history of the world and man. It is not the business of the historian to controvert or explain these matters; the question of their ultimate significance depends upon the theologian; the historian's concern is merely with the fact that official Christianity throughout the world adopted St. Paul's view so plainly expressed in his epistles and so untraceable in the gospels, that the meaning of religion lay not in the

future, but in the past, and that Jesus was not so much a teacher of wonderful new things, as a predestinate divine blood sacrifice of deep mystery and sacredness made in atonement of a particular historical act of disobedience to the Creator committed by our first parents, Adam and Eve, in response to the temptation of a serpent in the Garden of Eden. Upon the belief in that Fall as a fact, and not upon the personality of Jesus of Nazareth, upon the theories of Paul, and not upon the injunctions of Jesus, doctrinal Christianity built itself.

We have already noted that this story of the special creation of the world and of Adam and Eve and the serpent was also an ancient Babylonian story, and probably a still more ancient Sumerian story, and that the Jewish sacred books were the medium by which this very ancient and primitive "heliolithic" serpent legend entered Christianity. Wherever official Christianity has gone, it has taken this story with it. It has tied itself up to that story. Until a century and less ago the whole Christianized world felt bound to believe and did believe, that the universe had been specially created in the course of six days by the word of God a few thousand years before — according to Bishop Ussher, 4004 B.C. (The *Universal History*, in forty-two volumes, published in 1779 by a group of London booksellers, discusses whether the precise date of the first day of Creation was March 21st or September 21st, 4004 B.C., and inclines to the view that the latter was the more probable season.)

Upon this historical assumption rested the religious fabric of the Western and Westernized civilization, and yet the whole world was littered, the hills, mountains, deltas, and seas were bursting with evidence of its utter absurdity. The religious life of the leading nations, still a very intense and sincere religious life, was going on in a house of history built upon sand.

There is frequent recognition in classical literature of a sounder cosmogony. Aristotle was aware of the broad principles of modern geology, they shine through the speculations of Lucretius, and we have noted also Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) lucid interpretation of fossils. A Frenchman, Descartes (1596-1650), speculated boldly upon the incandescent beginnings of our globe, and an Italian, Steno (1631-87), began the collection of fossils and the description of

strata. But it was only as the eighteenth century drew to its close that the systematic study of geology assumed such proportions as to affect the general authority of the Bible version of that ancient Sumerian narrative. Contemporaneously with the *Universal History* quoted above, a great French naturalist, Buffon, was writing upon the Epochs of Nature (1778), and boldly extending the age of the world to 70,000 or 75,000 years. He divided his story into six epochs to square with the six days of the Creation story. These days, it was argued, were figurative days; they were really ages. There was a general disposition to do this on the part of the new science of geology. By that accommodating device, geology contrived to make a peace with orthodox religious teaching that lasted until the middle of the nineteenth century.

We cannot trace here the contributions of such men as Hutton and Playfair and Sir Charles Lyell, and the Frenchmen Lamarck and Cuvier, in unfolding and developing the record of the rocks. It was only slowly that the general intelligence of the Western world was awakened to two disconcerting facts: firstly, that the succession of life in the geological record did not correspond to the acts of the six days of creation; and, secondly, that the record, in harmony with a mass of biological facts, pointed away from the Bible assertion of a separate creation of each species straight towards a genetic relation between all forms of life, *in which even man was included*! The importance of this last issue to the existing doctrinal system was manifest. If all the animals and man had been evolved in this ascendant manner, then there had been no first parents, no Eden, and no Fall. And if there had been no fall, then the entire historical fabric of Christianity, the story of the first sin and the reason for an atonement, upon which the current teaching based Christian emotion and morality, collapsed like a house of cards.

It was with something like horror, therefore, that great numbers of honest and religious-spirited men followed the work of the great English naturalist, Charles Darwin (1809-82); in 1859 he published his *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, a powerful and permanently valuable exposition of that conception of the change and development of species which we have sketched briefly in Chapter III; and in 1871 he completed the outline of his work with the

Descent of Man, which brought man definitely into the same scheme of development with the rest of life.

Many men and women are still living who can remember the dismay and distress among ordinary intelligent people in the Western communities as the invincible case of the biologists and geologists against the orthodox Christian cosmogony unfolded itself. The minds of many quite honest men resisted the new knowledge instinctively and irrationally. Their whole moral edifice was built upon false history; they were too old and set to rebuild it; they felt the practical truth of their moral convictions, and this new truth seemed to them to be incompatible with that. They believed that to assent to it would be to prepare a moral collapse for the world. And so they produced a moral collapse by not assenting to it. The universities in England particularly, being primarily clerical in their constitution, resisted the new learning very bitterly. During the seventies and eighties a stormy controversy raged throughout the civilized world. The quality of the discussions and the fatal ignorance of the church may be gauged by a description in Hackett's *Commonplace Book* of a meeting of the British Association in 1860, at which Bishop Wilberforce assailed Huxley, the great champion of the Darwinian views, in this fashion.

Facing "Huxley with a smiling insolence, he begged to know, *was it through his grandfather or grandmother that he claimed his descent from a monkey*? Huxley turned to his neighbour, and said, 'The Lord hath delivered him into my hands.' Then he stood before us and spoke these tremendous words, 'He was not ashamed to have a monkey for his ancestor; but he would be ashamed to be connected with a man who used great gifts to obscure the truth.'" (Another version has it: "I have certainly said that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel ashamed in recalling, it would rather be a man of restless and versatile intellect who plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric and distract the attention of his audience from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to prejudice.") These words were certainly spoken with passion. The scene was one of great excitement. A lady fainted, says

Hackett.... Such was the temper of this controversy.

The Darwinian movement took formal Christianity unawares, suddenly. Formal Christianity was confronted with a clearly demonstrable error in her theological statements. The Christian theologians were neither wise enough nor mentally nimble enough to accept the new truth, modify their formulæ, and insist upon the living and undiminished vitality of the religious reality those formulæ had hitherto sufficed to express. For the discovery of man's descent from sub-human forms does not even remotely touch the teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet priests and bishops raged at Darwin; foolish attempts were made to suppress Darwinian literature and to insult and discredit the exponents of the new views. There was much wild talk of the "antagonism" of religion and science. Now in all ages there have been sceptics in Christendom. The Emperor Frederick II was certainly a sceptic; in the eighteenth century Gibbon and Voltaire were openly anti-Christian, and their writings influenced a number of scattered readers. But these were exceptional people.... Now the whole of Christendom became as a whole sceptical. This new controversy touched everybody who read a book or heard intelligent conversation. A new generation of young people grew up, and they found the defenders of Christianity in an evil temper, fighting their cause without dignity or fairness. It was the orthodox theology that the new scientific advances had compromised, but the angry theologians declared that it was religion.

In the end men may discover that religion shines all the brighter for the loss of its doctrinal wrappings, but to the young it seemed as if indeed there had been a conflict of science and religion, and that in that conflict science had won.

The immediate effect of this great dispute upon the ideas and methods of people in the prosperous and influential classes throughout the westernized world was very detrimental indeed. The new biological science was bringing nothing constructive as yet to replace the old moral stand-bys. A real de-moralization ensued. The general level of social life in those classes was far higher in the early twentieth than in the early seventeenth century, but in one respect, in respect to disinterestedness and conscientiousness in these classes, it is probable that the tone of the earlier age was better than the latter.

In the owning and active classes of the seventeenth century, in spite of a few definite "infidels," there was probably a much higher percentage of men and women who prayed sincerely, who searched their souls to find if they had done evil, and who were prepared to suffer and make great sacrifices for what they conceived to be right, than in the opening years of the twentieth century. There was a real loss of faith after 1859. The true gold of religion was in many cases thrown away with the worn-out purse that had contained it for so long, and it was not recovered. Towards the close of the nineteenth century a crude misunderstanding of Darwinism had become the fundamental mindstuff of great masses of the "educated" everywhere. The seventeenth-century kings and owners and rulers and leaders had had the idea at the back of their minds that they prevailed by the will of God; they really feared Him, they got priests to put things right for them with Him; when they were wicked, they tried not to think of Him. But the old faith of the kings, owners, and rulers of the opening twentieth century had faded under the actinic light of scientific criticism. Prevalent peoples at the close of the nineteenth century believed that they prevailed by virtue of the Struggle for Existence, in which the strong and cunning get the better of the weak and confiding. And they believed further that they had to be strong, energetic, ruthless, "practical," egotistical, because God was dead, and had always, it seemed, been dead — which was going altogether further than the new knowledge justified.

They soon got beyond the first crude popular misconception of Darwinism, the idea that every man is for himself alone. But they stuck at the next level. Man, they decided, is a social animal like the Indian hunting dog. He is much more than a dog — but this they did not see. And just as in a pack it is necessary to bully and subdue the younger and weaker for the general good, so it seemed right to them that the big dogs of the human pack should bully and subdue. Hence a new scorn for the ideas of democracy that had ruled the earlier nineteenth century, and a revived admiration for the overbearing and the cruel. It was quite characteristic of the times that Mr. Kipling should lead the children of the middle and upper-class British public back to the Jungle, to learn "the law," and that in his book *Stalky and Co.* he should give an appreciative description of the torture of two

boys by three others, who have by a subterfuge tied up their victims helplessly before revealing their hostile intentions.

It is worth while to give a little attention to this incident in *Stalky and Co.*, because it lights up the political psychology of the British Empire at the close of the nineteenth century very vividly. The history of the last half century is not to be understood without an understanding of the mental twist which this story exemplifies. The two boys who are tortured are "bullies," that is the excuse of their tormentors, and these latter have further been incited to the orgy by a clergyman. Nothing can restrain the gusto with which they (and Mr. Kipling) set about the job. Before resorting to torture, the teaching seems to be, see that you pump up a little justifiable moral indignation, and all will be well. If you have the authorities on your side, then you cannot be to blame. Such, apparently, is the simple doctrine of this typical imperialist. But every bully has to the best of his ability followed that doctrine since the human animal developed sufficient intelligence to be consciously cruel.

Another point in the story is very significant indeed. The head master and his clerical assistant are both represented as being privy to the affair. They want this bullying to occur. Instead of exercising their own authority, they use these boys, who are Mr. Kipling's heroes, to punish the two victims. Head master and clergyman turn a deaf ear to the complaints of an indignant mother. All this Mr. Kipling represents as a most desirable state of affairs. In this we have the key to the ugliest, most retrogressive, and finally fatal idea of modern imperialism; the idea of a *tacit conspiracy between the law and illegal violence*. Just as the Tsardom wrecked itself at last by a furtive encouragement of the ruffians of the Black Hundreds, who massacred Jews and other people supposed to be inimical to the Tsar, so the good name of the British Imperial Government has been tainted — and is still tainted — by an illegal raid made by Doctor Jameson into the Transvaal before the Boer War, and by the adventures, which we shall presently describe, of Sir Edward Carson and Mr. F. E. Smith (now Lord Birkenhead) in Ireland. By such treasons against their subjects, empires destroy themselves. The true strength of rulers and empires lies not in armies and emotions, but in the belief of men that they are inflexibly open and truthful and legal.

So soon as a government departs from that standard, it ceases to be anything more than "the gang in possession," and its days are numbered.

It was just this dignity of government which the crude Darwinism and the Kiplingism of the later Victorian years were destroying. Competition and survival were accepted as the basal facts of life. "War is the natural state of nations," said a popular London men's weekly the other day, with an air of repeating something universally known. "Peace is only the interval of rest and preparation between wars." In accordance with such ideas the growing boy was exhorted to be "loyal" to his school and contemptuous of other schools, "loyal" to his class against other classes, "loyal" to his nation and contemptuous and fierce towards other nations, "loyal" to the English-speaking peoples and contemptuous and hostile to the German or French-speaking. His instinct for brotherhood was narrowed and debased. The universal brotherhood of mankind was laughed to scorn. All life was bickering, he was taught; and yet the whole course of history has shown that the bickering nations perish, and that the alliances and coalescences of peoples and nations ensure the life they comprehend.

So the Darwinian crisis continued that destruction of Christian prestige which the narrowness of priestcraft and the consequent division of Christendom among the monarchist and national Protestant churches of the Reformation had begun, and at a time when man's need for pacifying and unifying ideas was greater than it had ever been. Just when men of different races and languages and political ideas were being brought by the mechanical revolution to a closeness of contact and a power of mutual injury undreamt of before, the authority of the doctrines by which men had hitherto transcended tribal and local limitations was undermined. Just when different classes were being aroused to a fierce realization of mutual economic antagonism, the fundamental teaching of brotherhood was discredited and a pseudo-scientific sanction given to self-seeking and oppression. From this stage onward the historian can tell no longer of ordinary clerical Christianity as a power in men's affairs. In politics and social questions the appeal to its standards ceased. Yet never was there so imperative a demand in the world of men for a common

basis upon which they could work together, a common conception of aim in which they could lose themselves. We shall find great masses of people inspired to passionate devotion, by ideas of nationalism, of imperialism, of class-conscious socialism. But official and orthodox Christianity no longer inspired. Men would no longer live by it or die for it.

This paradoxical final decline of a universal faith in the Westernized world, just when men were being drawn together by the mechanical revolution into one inseparable political and economic system, may have been due entirely to the coincidence of that revolution with destructive scientific discovery, or it may also have been accelerated by the irritations produced by the sudden close clashing with unfamiliar peoples and races. It may have been a merely temporary decline due to the need for a sloughing-off of the out-worn theology and antique sacerdotalism which confined its appeal to the western world, preparatory to a reconstruction of religious statement upon simpler world-wide lines. It may have been merely a cleansing of the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth from theological and ceremonial accretions. Upon such "may have beens" we can speculate here, but we cannot decide. History can deal with the small beginnings in the past of the great things of the present, but in the present only with what is plain and obvious. We cannot tell what seeds of the future may not be germinating already amidst our present confusions.

§ 7

The vast changes we have been recording in the range of human power and intercourse constitute the fundamental realities of nineteenth-century history. But the atlas and political history of a time do not show what is being made, but what has been made, and what is still going on. The formal history of the latter half of the nineteenth century is not so much concerned with these permanent changes in human affairs, as with the schemes of Foreign Offices and the continuing exploits of the Great Powers. The men who were discovering, inventing, developing inventions and working out ideas were far too busy and far too few for effective interference in public

affairs. The diplomatists, politicians, and statesmen, on the other hand, were far too occupied with their established interplay of nations and parties to heed what the contemporary mind was doing. The Earl of Beaconsfield (1804-81), a leading British statesman, remarked (of the Darwinian controversy) that it seemed to be a dispute whether men were descended from apes or angels, and that for his part, he was "on the side of the angels" — a sprightly saying which added greatly to his reputation. His rival, Gladstone (1809-98), was of a more serious quality, and in the habit of plunging during his vacations heavily and conspicuously into intellectual affairs; among other such exploits he joined in public controversy with Huxley upon Huxley's own subject. He revealed ideas derived from Buffon (died 1788) uncontaminated by any later influence. The whole field of modern discovery, says Lecky in his *Democracy and Liberty* was outside his range.

When this Mr. Gladstone was taken by Sir John Lubbock to see Charles Darwin, he talked all the time of Bulgarian politics, and was evidently quite unaware of the real importance of the man he was visiting. Darwin, Lord Morley records, expressed himself as deeply sensible of the honour done him by the visit of "such a great man," but he offered no comments on the Bulgarian discourse. Faraday, the English electrician, whose work lives wherever a dynamo spins, who is in the aeroplane, the deep-sea cable, the lights that light the ways of the world, and wherever electricity serves our kind, was also visited by Gladstone when the latter was Chancellor of the Exchequer. The man of science tried in vain to explain some simple piece of apparatus to this fine flower of the parliamentary world. "But," said Mr. Gladstone, "after all, what *good* is it?" "Why, sir," said Faraday, doing his best to bring things home to him, "presently you will be able to tax it."

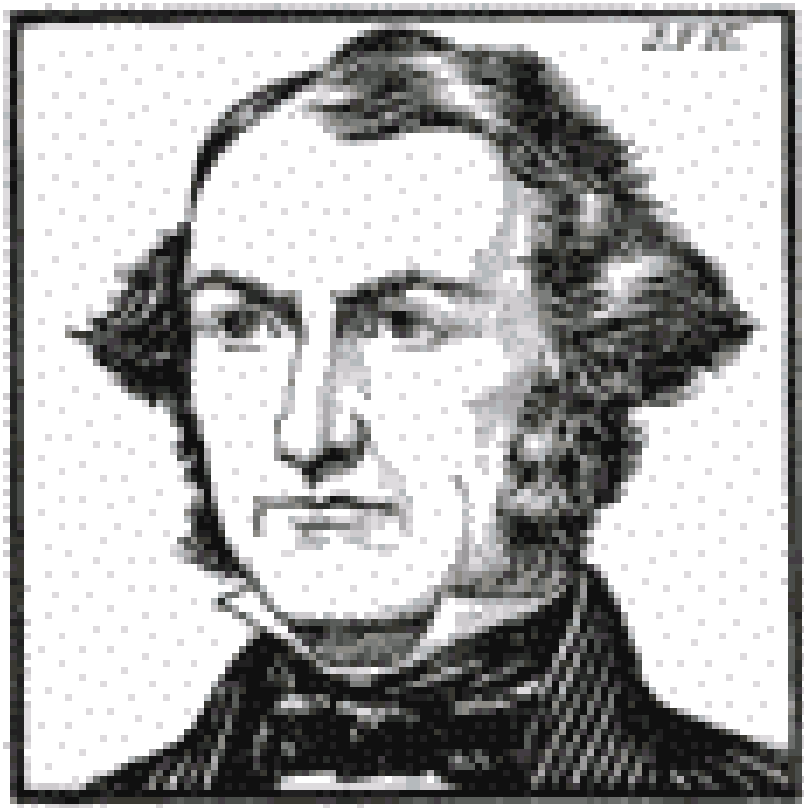

Mr. Gladstone

Mr. Gladstone was one of the most central and representative politician statesmen of the later nineteenth century, and it will be worth while to devote a paragraph or so to his ideas and intellectual limitations. They will help us to understand better the astonishing irrelevance of the political life of this period to the realities that rose about it. He was a person of exceptional intellectual vigour; he had flashes of real insight; but his circumstances and temperament conspired against his ever attaining any real vision of the world in which he lived.

He was the son of Sir John Gladstone, a West Indian slave-holder, the mortality among whose slaves was a matter of debate in the House of Commons; he was educated at Eton College, and at Christ

Church, Oxford, and his mind never recovered from the process. We have already told how after the Reformation the English universities ceased to be the organs of the general intellectual life, and shrank to be merely the educational preserves of the aristocracy and the church. Jews, Roman Catholics, dissenters, sceptics, and all forms of intellectual activity were carefully barred out from those almost extinguished lamps of learning. Their mathematical work was poor, a series of exercises in the mere patience-games and formulæ-writing of lower mathematics; science they despised and excluded, and their staple training was the study, without any archæology or historical perspective, of the more rhetorical and "poetic" of the Latin and Greek classics. Such a training prepared men not so much to tackle and solve the problems of life, as to plaster them over with more or less apt quotations. It turned the mind away from living contemporary things; it showed the world reflected in a distorting mirror of bad historical analogies; all the fated convergences of history were refracted into false parallels. The British Parliament was thought of as a Senate, statesmen postured as patricians and equestrians; the new industrial population, now learning to read and think for itself, was transfigured into the likeness of the illiterate savage and privileged citizen mob of later republican Rome. It was natural, therefore, that at the Oxford Union Society young Gladstone should distinguish himself by an eloquent speech against the threatened reform of the worst electoral abuses (see chap. xxxiv, § 2), should contest the immediate emancipation of the parental slaves — slavery, he said, was "sanctioned by Holy Scripture" — and should oppose on religious grounds the removal of the disabilities of the Jews. He was returned to Parliament as Tory member for Newark in 1832, promising to resist "that growing desire for change" which threatened to produce, "along with partial good, a melancholy preponderance of mischief." In his first Parliament he distinguished himself by his opposition to the admission of religious dissenters to the universities.

Here we have a mind manifestly of a tradition and make-up akin to that of the framers of the Holy Alliance, a mind set steadfastly against all the vast creative tendencies of the nineteenth-century

world, as though they were no more than a mere mischievous restlessness of slaves and lower-class persons that would presently be allayed. But because of the streak of insight in his composition, Gladstone did not remain set in a course of pure conservatism, he presently began to realize the strength of the stream upon which things were being carried forward; his intelligence, in spite of its perversion, set itself to grasp the real forms of the torrent of change about him. He was a man of great ambitions and immense energy; his animosity against his brilliant and flippant Jewish rival Disraeli (afterwards Lord Beaconsfield), who was becoming a leader amid the shifting of groups and parties, swung this man who had been the "rising hope of the stern unbending Tories" more and more into a liberal attitude. He began to express belief in the people, to support extensions of the franchise, to cultivate the esteem of the dissenters, and, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to shift the burthen of taxation from the food and comforts of the new classes of needy voters, that the franchise extensions were bringing into the political world. It is clear that for some years he was profoundly perplexed by the deep forces that evidently lay beneath the stir and thrust of international politics; then he became a great exponent of a half-true theory, the theory of Nationalism, that has played and still plays an intensely mischievous part in the world.

We have already pointed out that there must be a natural political map of the world which gives the best possible geographical divisions for human administrations. Any other political division of the world than this natural political map will necessarily be a misfit, and must produce stresses of hostility and insurrection tending to shift boundaries in the direction indicated by the natural political map. These would seem to be self-evident propositions were it not that the diplomatists at Vienna evidently neither believed nor understood anything of the sort, and thought themselves as free to carve up the world as one is free to carve up such a boneless structure as a cheese. Nor were these propositions evident to Mr. Gladstone. Most of the upheavals and conflicts that began in Europe as the world recovered from the exhaustion of the Napoleonic wars were quite obviously attempts of the ordinary common men to get rid of governments that were such misfits as to be in many cases

intolerable. Generally the existing governments were misfits throughout Europe because they were not socially representative, and so they were hampering production and wasting human possibilities; but when there were added to these universal annoyances differences of religion and racial culture between rulers and ruled (as in most of Ireland), differences in race and language (as in Austrian North Italy and throughout most of the Austrian Empire), or differences in all these respects (as in Poland and the Turkish Empire in Europe), the exasperation drove towards bloodshed. Europe was a system of governing machines abominably adjusted. But Mr. Gladstone was no patient mechanic set upon easing and righting the clumsy injuries of those stupid adjustments. He was a white-faced, black-haired man of incredible energy, with eyes like an eagle's, wrath almost divine, and the "finest baritone voice in Europe." He apprehended these things romantically, therefore, in a manner suitable for passionate treatment in large halls.

He was blind to the pitiful and wonderful reality of mankind, to these millions and millions of ill-informed, ill-equipped, inexpressive, and divided human beings, mostly very willing, could they but do it, to live righteously and well. He fixed his eagle eye on a fantastic vision of "nations rightly struggling to be free."

What is a nation? What is nationality? He never paused to ask. No one under the spell of that fine baritone paused to ask. But historians must stand to the questions a politician can evade. If our story of the world has demonstrated anything, it has demonstrated the mingling of races and peoples, the instability of human divisions, the swirling variety of human groups and human ideas of association. A nation, it has been said, is an accumulation of human beings who think they are one people; but we are told that Ireland is a nation, and Protestant Ulster certainly does not share that idea; and Italy did not think it was one people until long after its unity was accomplished. When the writer was in Italy in 1916, people were saying: "This war will make us one nation." Again, are the English a nation or have they merged into a "British nationality"? Scotchmen do not seem to believe very much in this British nationality. It cannot be a community of race or language that constitutes a nation, because the Gaels and the

Lowlanders make up the Scotch "nation"; it cannot be a common religion, for England has scores; nor a common literature, or why is Britain separated from the United States, and the Argentine Republic from Spain? We may suggest that a nation is in effect any assembly, mixture, or confusion of people which is either afflicted by or wishes to be afflicted by a foreign office of its own, in order that it should behave collectively as if it alone constituted humanity. We have already in Chapter XXXVI, § 6, traced the development of the Machiavellian monarchies into the rule of their foreign offices, playing the part of "Powers." The "nationality" which Mr. Gladstone made his guiding political principle, is really no more than the romantic and emotional exaggeration of the stresses produced by the discord of the natural political map with unsuitable political arrangements. These stresses could be used for the benefit of this power or the detriment of that.

Throughout the nineteenth century, and particularly throughout its latter half, there has been a great working up of this nationalism in the world. All men are by nature partisans and patriots, but the natural tribalism of men in the nineteenth century was unnaturally exaggerated, it was fretted and over-stimulated and inflamed and forced into the nationalist mould. Nationalism was taught in schools, emphasized by newspapers, preached and mocked and sung into men. Men were brought to feel that they were as improper without a nationality as without their clothes in a crowded assembly. Oriental

peoples who had never heard of nationality before, took to it as they took to the cigarettes and bowler hats of the west. India, a galaxy of contrasted races, religions, and cultures, Dravidian, Mongolian, and Aryan, became a "nation." There were perplexing cases, of course, as when a young Whitechapel Jew had to decide whether he belonged to the British or the Jewish nation. Caricature and political cartoons played a large part in this elevation of the cult of these newer and bigger tribal gods — for such indeed the modern "nations" are — to their ascendancy over the imagination of the nineteenth century. If one turns over the pages of *Punch*, that queer contemporary record of the British soul, which has lasted now since 1841, one finds the figures of Britannia, Hibernia, France, and Germania embracing, disputing, reproving, rejoicing, grieving. It greatly helped the diplomatists to carry on their game of Great Powers to convey politics in this form to the doubting general intelligence. To the common man, resentful that his son should be sent abroad to be shot, it was made clear that instead of this being merely the result of the obstinacy and greed of two foreign offices, it was really a necessary part of a righteous inevitable gigantic struggle between two of these dim vast divinities. France had been wronged by Germania, or Italia was showing a proper spirit to Austria. The boy's death ceased to appear an outrage on common sense; it assumed a sort of mythological dignity. And insurrection could clothe itself in the same romantic habiliments as diplomacy. Ireland became a Cinderella goddess, Cathleen ni Houlihan, full of heart-rending and unforgivable wrongs, and young India transcended its realities in the worship of Bande Mataram.

The essential idea of nineteenth-century nationalism was the "legitimate claim" of every nation to complete sovereignty, the claim of every nation to manage all its affairs within its own territory, regardless of any other nation. The flaw in this idea is that the affairs and interests of every modern community extend to the uttermost parts of the earth. The assassination of Sarajevo in 1914, for example, which caused the great war, produced the utmost distress among the Indian tribes of Labrador because that war interrupted the marketing of the furs upon which they relied for such necessities as ammunition, without which they could not get sufficient food. A

world of independent sovereign nations means, therefore, a world of perpetual injuries, a world of states constantly preparing for or waging war. But concurrently and discordantly with the preaching of this nationalism of which Gladstone was the outstanding exponent, there was, among the stronger nationalities, a vigorous propagation of another set of ideas, the ideas of imperialism, in which a powerful and advanced nation was conceded the right to dominate a group of other less advanced nations or less politically developed nations or peoples whose nationality was still undeveloped, who were expected by the dominating nation to be grateful for its protection and dominance. This use of the word empire was evidently a different one from its former universal significance. The new empires did not even pretend to be a continuation of the world empire of Rome. The leading spirit in British imperialism was Lord Beaconsfield, Gladstone's antagonist. These two ideas of nationality and, as the crown of national success, "empire," ruled European political thought, ruled indeed the political thought of the world, throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, and ruled it to the practical exclusion of any wider conception of a common human welfare. They were plausible and dangerously unsound working ideas. They represented nothing fundamental and inalterable in human nature, and they failed to meet the new needs of world controls and world security that the mechanical revolution was every day making more imperative. They were accepted because people in general had neither the sweeping views that a scientific study of history can give, nor had they any longer the comprehensive charity of a world religion. Their danger to all the routines of ordinary life was not realized until it was too late.

§ 8

After the middle of the nineteenth century, this world of new powers and old ideas, this fermenting new wine in the old bottles of diplomacy, broke out through the flimsy restraints of the Treaty of Vienna into a series of wars. By an ironical accident the new system of disturbances was preceded by a peace festival in London, the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The moving spirit in this exhibition was Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the nephew of Leopold I, the German king who had been placed upon the Belgian throne in 1831, and who was also the maternal uncle of the young Queen Victoria of England. She had become queen in 1837 at the age of eighteen. The two young cousins — they were of the same age — had married in 1840 under their uncle's auspices, and Prince Albert was known to the British as the "Prince Consort." He was a young man of sound intelligence and exceptional education, and he seems to have been greatly shocked by the mental stagnation into which England had sunken. Oxford and Cambridge, those once starry centres, were still recovering but slowly from the intellectual ebb of the later eighteenth century. At neither university did the annual matriculations number more than four hundred. The examinations were for the most part mere *viva voce* ceremonies. Except for two colleges in London (the University of London) and one in Durham, this was all the education on a university footing that England had to offer. It was very largely the initiative of this scandalized young German who had married the British queen which produced the university commission of 1850, and it was with a view to waking up England further that he promoted the first International Exhibition which was to afford some opportunity for a comparison of the artistic and industrial products of the various European nations.

The project was bitterly opposed. In the House of Commons it was prophesied that England would be overrun by foreign rogues and revolutionaries who would corrupt the morals of the people and destroy all faith and loyalty in the country.

The exhibition was held in Hyde Park in a great building of glass and iron — which afterwards was re-erected as the Crystal Palace. Financially it was a great success. It made many English people realize for the first time that theirs was not the only industrial country in the world, and that commercial prosperity was not a divinely appointed British monopoly. There was the clearest evidence of a Europe recovering steadily from the devastation of the Napoleonic wars, and rapidly overtaking the British lead in trade and manufacture. It was followed directly by the organization of a Science and Art Department (1853), to recover, if possible, the

educational leeway that Britain had lost.

The exhibition released a considerable amount of international talk and sentiment. It had already found expression in the work of such young poets as Tennyson, who had glanced down the vista of the future.

"Till the war-drums throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world."

There was much shallow optimism on the part of comfortable people just then. Peace seemed to be more secure than it had been for a long time. The social gales of 1848 had blown, and, it seemed, blown themselves out. Nowhere had the revolution succeeded. In France it had been betrayed a second time by a Bonaparte, a nephew of the first Napoleon, but a much more supple and intelligent man. He had posed as a revolutionary while availing himself of the glamour of his name; he had twice attempted raids on France during the Orleans monarchy. He had written a manual of artillery to link himself to his uncle's prestige, and he had also published an account of what he alleged to be Napoleonic views, *Des Idées Napoléoniennes*, in which he jumbled up socialism, socialistic reform, and pacificism with the Napoleonic legend. The republic of 1848 was soon in difficulties with crude labour experiments, and in October he was able to re-enter the country and stand for election as President. He took an oath as President to be faithful to the democratic republic, and to regard as enemies all who attempted to change the form of government. In two years' time (December, 1852) he was Emperor of the French.

At first he was regarded with considerable suspicion by Queen Victoria, or rather by Baron Stockmar, the friend and servant of King Leopold of Belgium, and the keeper of the international conscience of the British queen and her consort. All this group of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha people had a reasonable and generous enthusiasm for the unity and well-being of Germany — upon liberal lines — and they were disposed to be alarmed at this Bonapartist revival. Lord Palmerston, the British foreign minister, was, on the other hand, friendly with the

usurper from the outset; he offended the queen by sending amiable despatches to the French President without submitting them for her examination and so giving her sufficient time to consult Stockmar upon them, and he was obliged to resign. But subsequently the British Court veered round to a more cordial attitude to the new adventurer. The opening years of his reign promised a liberal monarchy rather than a Napoleonic career; a government of "cheap bread, great public works, and holidays," and he expressed himself warmly in favour of the idea of nationalism, which was naturally a very acceptable idea to any liberal German intelligence. There had been a brief all-German parliament at Frankfort in 1848, which was overthrown in 1849 by the Prussian monarchy.

(This conflict between Palmerston and the Crown is interesting because it shows the way in which the aristocratic ruling class of the

crowned republic of the Britain of the early Georges was now, with an uneasy democracy below it, an educated royal consort above, and an education which had not kept pace with the times, losing power to the renascent energy of the Crown. A Stockmar would have been impossible in the reigns of George I or George II, or in a nineteenth-century Great Britain with a reasonably well-educated peerage.)

Before 1848 all the great European courts of the Vienna settlement had been kept in a kind of alliance by the fear of a second and more universal democratic revolution. After the revolutionary failures of 1848 this fear was lifted, and they were free to resume the scheming and counter-scheming of the days before 1789 — with the vastly more powerful armies and fleets the first Napoleonic phase had given them. The game of Great Powers was resumed with zest, after an interval of sixty years, and it continued until it produced the catastrophe of 1914.

The Tsar of Russia, Nicholas I, was the first to move towards war. He resumed the traditional thrust of Peter the Great towards Constantinople. Nicholas invented the phrase of the "sick man of Europe" for the Sultan, and, finding an excuse in the misgovernment of the Christian population of the Turkish empire, he occupied the Danubian principalities in 1853. European diplomatists found themselves with a question of quite the eighteenth-century pattern. The designs of Russia were understood to clash with the designs of France in Syria, and to threaten the Mediterranean route to India of Great Britain, and the outcome was an alliance of France and England to bolster up Turkey and a war, the Crimean War, which ended in the repulse of Russia. One might have thought that the restraint of Russia was rather the business of Austria and Germany, but the passion of the foreign offices of France and England for burning their fingers in Russian affairs has always been very difficult to control.

The next phase of interest in this revival of the Great Power drama was the exploitation by the Emperor Napoleon III and the king of the small kingdom of Sardinia in North Italy, of the inconveniences and miseries of the divided state of Italy, and particularly of the Austrian rule in the north. The King of Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel, made an old-time bargain for Napoleon's help in

return for the provinces of Nice and Savoy. The war between France and Sardinia on the one hand, and Austria on the other, broke out in 1859, and was over in a few weeks. The Austrians were badly beaten at Magenta and Solferino. Then, being threatened by Prussia on the Rhine, Napoleon made peace, leaving Sardinia the richer for Lombardy.

The next move in the game of Victor Emmanuel, and of his chief minister Cavour, was an insurrectionary movement in Sicily led by the great Italian patriot Garibaldi. Sicily and Naples were liberated, and all Italy, except only Rome (which remained loyal to the Pope)

and Venetia, which was held by the Austrians, fell to the king of Sardinia. A general Italian parliament met at Turin in 1861, and Victor Emmanuel became the first king of Italy.

But now the interest in this game of European diplomacy shifted to Germany. Already the common sense of the natural political map had asserted itself. In 1848 all Germany, including, of course, German Austria, was for a time united under the Frankfort parliament. But that sort of union was particularly offensive to all the German courts and foreign offices; they did not want a Germany united by the will of its people, they wanted Germany united by regal and diplomatic action — as Italy was being united. In 1848 the German parliament had insisted that the largely German provinces of Schleswig-Holstein, which had been in the German Bund, must belong to Germany. It had ordered the Prussian army to occupy them, and the king of Prussia had refused to take his orders from the German parliament, and so had precipitated the downfall of that body. Now the King of Denmark, Christian IX, for no conceivable motive except the natural folly of kings, embarked upon a campaign of annoyance against the Germans in these two duchies. Prussian affairs were then very much in the hands of a minister of the seventeenth-century type, Von Bismarck (count in 1865, prince in 1871), and he saw brilliant opportunities in this trouble. He became the champion of the German nationality in these duchies — it must be remembered that the King of Prussia had refused to undertake this rôle for democratic Germany in 1848 — and he persuaded Austria to side with Prussia in a military intervention. Denmark had no chance against these Great Powers; she was easily beaten and obliged to relinquish the duchies. Then Bismarck picked a quarrel with Austria for the possession of these two small states. So he brought about a needless and fratricidal war of Germans for the greater glory of Prussia and the ascendancy of the Hohenzollern dynasty in Germany. German writers of a romantic turn of mind represent Bismarck as a great statesman planning the unity of Germany; but indeed he was doing nothing of the kind. The unity of Germany was a reality in 1848. It was and is in the nature of things. The Prussian monarchy was simply delaying the inevitable in order to seem to achieve it in Prussian fashion. That is why, when at last Germany was unified,

instead of bearing the likeness of a modern civilized people, it presented itself to the world with the face of this archaic Bismarck, with a fierce moustache, huge jack boots, a spiked helmet, and a sword.

In this war between Prussia and Austria, Prussia had for an ally Italy; most of the smaller German states, who dreaded the schemes of Prussia, fought on the side of Austria. The reader will naturally want to know why Napoleon III did not grasp this admirable occasion for statecraft and come into the war to his own advantage. All the rules of the Great Power game required that he should. But Napoleon, unhappily for himself, had got his fingers in a trap on the other side of the Atlantic, and was in no position to intervene.

Bismarck

In order to understand the entanglement of this shifty gentleman, it is

necessary to explain that the discord in interests between the northern and southern states of the American union, due to the economic differences based on slavery, had at last led to open civil war. The federal system established in 1789 had to fight the secessionist efforts of the confederated slave-holding states. We have traced the causes of that great struggle in Chapter XXXVII, §6; its course we cannot relate here, nor tell how President Lincoln (born 1809, died 1865, president from 1861) rose to greatness, how the republic was cleansed from the stain of slavery, and how the federal government of the union was preserved.

For four long years (1861-65) this war swung to and fro, through the rich woods and over the hills of Virginia between Washington and Richmond, until at last the secessionist left was thrust back and broken, and Sherman, the unionist general, swept across Georgia to the sea in the rear of the main confederate (secessionist) armies. All the elements of reaction in Europe rejoiced during the four years of republican dissension; the British aristocracy openly sided with the confederate states, and the British Government permitted several privateers, and particularly the *Alabama*, to be launched in England to attack the federal shipping. Napoleon III was even more rash in his assumption that after all the new world had fallen before the old. The sure shield of the Monroe Doctrine, it seemed to him, was thrust aside for good, the Great Powers might meddle again in America, and the blessings of an adventurous monarchy be restored there. A pretext for interference was found in certain liberties taken with the property of foreigners by the Mexican president. A joint expedition of French, British, and Spanish occupied Vera Cruz, but Napoleon's projects were too bold for his allies, and they withdrew when it became clear that he contemplated nothing less than the establishment of a Mexican empire. This he did, after much stiff fighting, making the Archduke Maximilian of Austria, Emperor of Mexico in 1864. The French forces, however, remained in effectual possession of the country, and a crowd of French speculators poured into Mexico to exploit its mines and resources.

But in April, 1865, the civil war in the United States was brought to an end by the surrender of the great southern commander, General

Lee, at Appomattox Court House, and the little group of eager Europeans in possession of Mexico found themselves faced by the victorious federal government, in a thoroughly grim mood, with a large, dangerous-looking army in hand. The French imperialists were bluntly given the alternative of war with the United States or clearing out of America. In effect this was an instruction to go. This was the entanglement which prevented Napoleon III from interference between Prussia and Austria in 1866, and this was the reason why Bismarck precipitated his struggle with Austria.

While Prussia was fighting Austria, Napoleon III was trying to escape with dignity from the briars of Mexico. He invented a shabby quarrel upon financial grounds with Maximilian and withdrew the French troops. Then, by all the rules of kingship, Maximilian should have abdicated. But instead he made a fight for his empire; he was defeated by his recalcitrant subjects, caught, and shot as a public nuisance in 1867. So the peace of President Monroe was restored to the new world. There remained only one monarchy in America, the empire of Brazil, where a branch of the Portuguese royal family continued to reign until 1889. In that year the emperor was quietly packed off to Paris, and Brazil came into line with the rest of the continent.

But while Napoleon was busy with his American adventure, Prussia and Italy were snatching victory over the Austrians (1866). Italy was badly beaten at Custozza and in the naval battle of Lissa, but the Austrian army was so crushed by the Prussian at the battle of Sadow, that Austria made an abject surrender. Italy gained the province of Venetia, so making one more step towards unity — only Rome and Trieste and a few small towns on the north and north-western frontiers remained — and Prussia became the head of a North German Confederation, from which Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, Hesse, and Austria were excluded.

Four years later came the next step towards the natural political map of Europe, when Napoleon III plunged into war against Prussia. A kind of self-destroying foolishness urged him to do this. He came near to this war in 1867 so soon as he was free from Mexico, by demanding Luxembourg for France; he embarked upon it in 1870, when a cousin of the king of Prussia became a candidate for the

vacant throne of Spain. Napoleon had some theory in his mind that Austria, Bavaria, Württemberg, and the other states outside the North German Confederation would side with him against Prussia. He probably thought this would happen because he wanted it to happen. But since 1848 the Germans, so far as foreign meddling was concerned, had been in spirit a united people; Bismarck was merely imposing the Hohenzollern monarchy, with pomp, ceremony, and bloodshed, upon accomplished facts. All Germany sided with Prussia.

Early in August, 1870, the united German forces invaded France. After the battles of Wörth and Gravelotte, one French army under Bazaine was forced into Metz and surrounded there, and, on September 1st, a second, with which was Napoleon, was defeated and obliged to capitulate at Sedan. Paris found herself bare to the invader. For a second time the promises of Napoleonism had failed France disastrously. On September 4th, France declared herself a republic again, and thus regenerated, prepared to fight for existence against triumphant Prussianism. For though it was a united Germany that had overcome French imperialism, it had Prussia in the saddle. The army in Metz capitulated in October; Paris, after a siege and bombardment, surrendered in January, 1871.

With pomp and ceremony, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, amidst a great array of military uniforms, the King of Prussia was declared German Emperor, and Bismarck and the sword of the Hohenzollerns claimed the credit for that German unity which a common language and literature had long since assured.

The peace of Frankfort was a Hohenzollern peace. Bismarck had availed himself of the national feeling of Germany to secure the aid of the South German states, but he had no grasp of the essential forces that had given victory to him and to his royal master. The power that had driven Prussia to victory was the power of the natural political map of Europe insisting upon the unity of the German-speaking peoples. In the east, Germany was already sinning against that natural map by her administration of Posen and other Polish districts. Now greedy for territory, and particularly for iron mines, she annexed a considerable area of French-speaking Lorraine, including Metz, and Alsace, which, in spite of its German speech,

was largely French in sympathy. Inevitably there was a clash between German rulers and French subjects in these annexed provinces; inevitably the wrongs and bitterness of the subjugated France of Lorraine echoed in Paris and kept alive the passionate resentment of the French....

The natural map had already secured political recognition in the Austrian Empire after Sadowa (1866). Hungary, which had been subordinated to Austria, was erected into a kingdom on an equal footing with Austria, and the Empire of Austria had become the dual "monarchy" of Austria-Hungary. But in the southeast of this empire, and over the Turkish empire, the boundaries and subjugations of the conquest period still remained.

A fresh upthrust of the natural map began in 1875, when the Christian races in the Balkans, and particularly the Bulgarians, became restless and insurgent. The Turks adopted violent repressive measures, and embarked upon massacres of Bulgarians on an enormous scale. Thereupon Russia intervened (1877), and after a year of costly warfare obliged the Turks to sign the treaty of San Stefano, which was, on the whole, a sensible treaty, breaking up the artificial Turkish Empire, and to a large extent establishing the natural map. But it had become the tradition of British policy to thwart "the designs of Russia" — heaven knows why! — whenever Russia appeared to have a design, and the British foreign office, under the premiership of Lord Beaconsfield, intervened with a threat of war if a considerable restoration of the Turks' facilities for exaction, persecution, and massacre was not made. For a time war seemed very probable. The British music-halls, those lamps to British foreign policy, were lit with patriotic fire, and the London errand-boy on his rounds was inspired to chant, with the simple dignity of a great people conscious of its high destinies, a song declaring that:

"We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do,
We got the ships, we got the men, we got the munn-aye too"....

and so on to a climax:
"The Russ'ns shall not 'ave Con-stan-te-no - - - ple."

In consequence of this British opposition, a conference was assembled in 1878 at Berlin to revise the treaty of San Stefano, chiefly in the interests of the Turkish and Austrian monarchies, the British acquired the island of Cyprus, to which they had no sort of right whatever, and which has never been of the slightest use to them, and Lord Beaconsfield returned triumphantly from the Berlin Conference, to the extreme exasperation of Mr. Gladstone, with what the British were given to understand at the time was "Peace with Honour."

This treaty of Berlin was the second main factor, the peace of Frankfort being the first, in bringing about the great war of 1914-18.

These thirty years after 1848 are years of very great interest to the student of international political methods. Released from their terror of a world-wide insurrection of the common people, the governments of Europe were doing their best to resume the game of Great Powers that had been so rudely interrupted by the American and French revolutions. But it looked much more like the old game than it was in reality. The mechanical revolution was making war a far more complete disturbance of the general life than it had ever been before, and the proceedings of the diplomatists were ruled, in spite of their efforts to disregard the fact, by imperatives that Charles V and Louis XIV had never known. Irritation with misgovernment was capable of far better organization and far more effective expression than it had ever been before. Statesmen dressed this up as the work of the spirit of Nationalism, but there were times and occasions when that costume wore very thin. The grand monarchs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had seemed to be free to do this or that, to make war or to keep the peace, to conquer this province or cede that as they willed; but such a ruler as Napoleon III went from one proceeding to another with something of the effect of a man who feels his way among things unseen.

None of these European governments in the nineteenth century was in fact a free agent. We look to-day at the maps of Europe since 1814, we compare them with the natural map, and we see that the game the Great Powers played was indeed a game of foregone conclusions. Whatever arrangements they made that were in accordance with the natural political map of the world, and the trend towards educational democracy, held, and whatever arrangements they made contrary to these things, collapsed. We are forced, therefore, to the conclusion, that all the diplomatic fussing, posturing, and scheming, all the intrigue and bloodshed of these

years, all the monstrous turmoil and waste of kings and armies, all the wonderful attitudes, deeds, and schemes of the Cavours, Bismarcks, Disraelis, Bonapartes, and the like "great men," might very well have been avoided altogether had Europe but had the sense to instruct a small body of ordinarily honest ethnologists, geographers, and sociologists to draw out its proper boundaries and prescribe suitable forms of government in a reasonable manner. The romantic phase in history had come to an end. A new age was beginning with new and greater imperatives, and these nineteenth-century statesmen were but pretending to control events.

§ 9

We have suggested that in the political history of Europe between 1848 and 1878, the mechanical revolution was not yet producing any very revolutionary changes. The post-revolutionary Great Powers were still going on within boundaries of practically the same size and with much the same formalities as they had done in pre-revolutionary times. But where the increased speed and certainty of transport and telegraphic communications were already producing very considerable changes of condition and method, was in the overseas enterprises of Britain and the other European powers, and in the reaction of Asia and Africa to Europe.

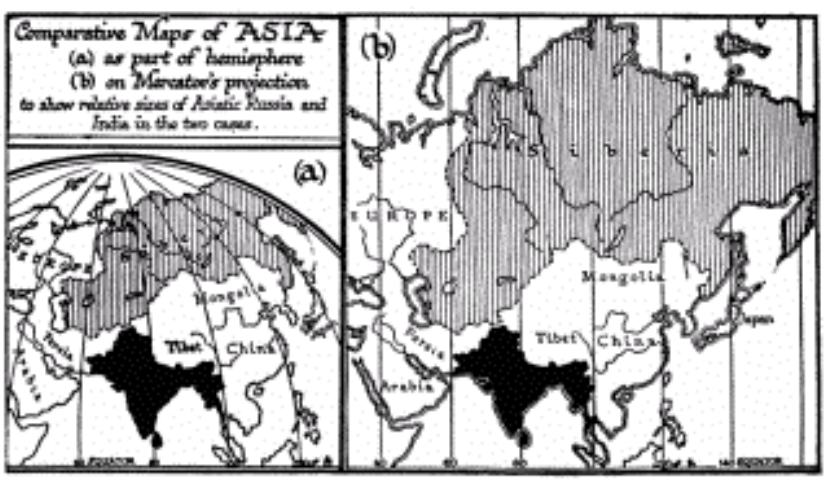

The end of the eighteenth century was a period of disrupting empires and disillusioned expansionists. The long and tedious journey between Britain and Spain and their colonies in America prevented any really free coming and going between the home land and the daughter lands, and so the colonies separated into new and distinct communities, with distinctive ideas and interests and even modes of speech. As they grew they strained more and more at the feeble and uncertain link of shipping that joined them. Weak trading-posts in the wilderness, like those of France in Canada, or trading establishments in great alien communities, like those of Britain in India, might well cling for bare existence to the nation which gave them support and a reason for their existence. That much and no more seemed to many thinkers in the early part of the nineteenth century to be the limit set to overseas rule. In 1820 the sketchy great European "empires" outside of Europe that had figured so bravely in the maps of the middle eighteenth century, had shrunken to very small dimensions. Only the Russian sprawled as large as ever across Asia. It sprawled much larger in the imaginations of many Europeans than in reality, because of their habit of studying the geography of the world upon Mercator's projection, which enormously exaggerated the size of Siberia.

The British Empire in 1815 consisted of the thinly populated coastal river and lake regions of Canada, and a great hinterland of wilderness in which the only settlements as yet were the fur-trading stations of the Hudson Bay Company, about a third of the Indian peninsula, under the rule of the East India Company, the coast districts of the Cape of Good Hope inhabited by blacks and rebellious-spirited Dutch settlers; a few trading stations on the coast of West Africa, the rock of Gibraltar, the island of Malta, Jamaica, a few minor slave-labour possessions in the West Indies, British Guiana in South America, and, on the other side of the world, two dumps for convicts at Botany Bay in Australia and in Tasmania. Spain retained Cuba and a few settlements in the Philippine Islands. Portugal had in Africa some vestiges of her ancient claims. Holland had various islands and possessions in the East Indies and Dutch Guiana, and Denmark an island or so in the West Indies. France had one or two West Indian Islands and French Guiana. This seemed to

be as much as the European powers needed, or were likely to acquire of the rest of the world. Only the East Indian Company showed any spirit of expansion.

In India, as we have already told, a peculiar empire was being built up, not by the British peoples, nor by the British Government, but by this company of private adventurers with their monopoly and royal charter. The company had been forced to become a military and political power during the years of Indian division and insecurity that followed the break-up of India after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. It had learnt to trade in states and peoples during the eighteenth century. Clive founded, Warren Hastings organized, this strange new sort of empire; French rivalry was defeated, as we have already told; and by 1798, Lord Mornington, afterwards the Marquis Wellesley, the elder brother of that General Wellesley who became the Duke of Wellington, became Governor-General of India, and set the policy of the company definitely upon the line of replacing the fading empire of the Grand Mogul by its own rule. Napoleon's expedition to Egypt was a direct attack upon the empire of this British company. While Europe was busy with the Napoleonic wars, the East India Company, under a succession of governors-general, was playing much the same rôle in India that had been played before by Turkoman and such-like invaders from the north. And after the

peace of Vienna it went on, levying its revenues, making wars, sending ambassadors to Asiatic powers, a quasi-independent state, a state, however, with a marked disposition to send wealth westward.

In Chapter XXXVI, § 9, we have sketched the break-up of the empire of the Great Mogul and the appearance of the Mahratta states, the Rajput principalities, the Moslem kingdoms of Oudh and Bengal, and the Sikhs. We cannot tell here in any detail how the British company made its way to supremacy sometimes as the ally of this power, sometimes as that, and finally as the conqueror of all. Its power spread to Assam, Sind, Oudh. The map of India began to take on the outlines familiar to the English schoolboy of to-day, a patchwork of native states embraced and held together by the great provinces under direct British rule....

Now as this strange unprecedented empire of the company grew in the period between 1800 and 1858, the mechanical revolution was quietly abolishing the great distance that had once separated India and Britain. In the old days the rule of the company had interfered little in the domestic life of the Indian states; it had given India foreign overlords, but India was used to foreign overlords, and had hitherto assimilated them; these Englishmen came into the country young, lived there most of their lives, and became a part of its system. But now the mechanical revolution began to alter this state of affairs. It became easier for the British officials to go home and to have holidays in Europe, easier for them to bring out wives and families; they ceased to be Indianized; they remained more conspicuously foreign and western — and there were more of them. And they began to interfere more vigorously with Indian customs. Magical and terrible things like the telegraph and the railway arrived. Christian missions became offensively busy. If they did not make very many converts, at least they made sceptics among the adherents of the older faiths. The young men in the towns began to be "Europeanized" to the great dismay of their elders.

India had endured many changes of rulers before, but never the sort of changes in her ways that these things portended. The Moslem teachers and the Brahmins were alike alarmed, and the British were

blamed for the progress of mankind. Conflicts of economic interests grew more acute with the increasing nearness of Europe; Indian industries, and particularly the ancient cotton industry, suffered from legislation that favoured the British manufacturer. A piece of incredible folly on the part of the company precipitated an outbreak. To the Brahmin a cow is sacred; to the Moslem the pig is unclean. A new rifle, needing greased cartridges — which the men had to bite — was served out to the company's Indian soldiers; the troops discovered that their cartridges were greased with the fat of cows and swine. This discovery precipitated a revolt of the company's Indian army, the Indian mutiny (1857). First the troops mutinied at Meerut. Then Delhi rose to restore the empire of the Great Mogul....

The British public suddenly discovered India. They became aware of that little garrison of British people, far away in that strange land of fiery dust and weary sunshine, fighting for life against dark multitudes of assailants. How they got there and what right they had there, the British public did not ask. The love of one's kin in danger overrides such questions. 1857 was a year of passionate anxiety in Great Britain. With mere handfuls of troops the British leaders, and notably Lawrence and Nicholson, did amazing things. They did not sit down to be besieged while the mutineers organized and gathered prestige; that would have lost them India for ever. They attacked often against overwhelming odds. "Clubs, not spades, are trumps," said Lawrence. The Sikhs, the Gurkhas, the Punjab troops stuck to the British. The south remained tranquil. Of the massacres of Cawnpore and Lucknow in Oudh, and how a greatly outnumbered force of British troops besieged and stormed Delhi, other histories must tell. By April, 1859, the last embers of the blaze had been stamped out, and the British were masters of India again. In no sense had the mutiny been a popular insurrection; it was a mutiny merely of the Bengal Army, due largely to the unimaginative rule of the company officials. Its story abounds in instances of Indian help and kindness to British fugitives. But it was a warning.

The direct result of the mutiny was the annexation of the Indian Empire to the British Crown. By the act entitled *An Act for the Better Government of India*, the Governor-General became a Viceroy representing the Sovereign, and the place of the company was taken

by a Secretary of State for India responsible to the British Parliament. In 1877, Lord Beaconsfield, to complete this work, caused Queen Victoria to be proclaimed Empress of India.

Upon these extraordinary lines India and Britain are linked at the present time. India is still the empire of the Great Mogul, but the Great Mogul has been replaced by the "crowned republic" of Great Britain. India is an autocracy without an autocrat. Its rule combines the disadvantage of absolute monarchy with the impersonality and irresponsibility of democratic officialdom. The Indian with a complaint to make has no visible monarch to go to; his Emperor is a golden symbol; he must circulate pamphlets in England or inspire a question in the British House of Commons. The more occupied Parliament is with British affairs, the less attention India will receive, and the more she will be at the mercy of her small group of higher officials.

This is manifestly impossible as a permanent state of affairs. Indian life, whatever its restraints, is moving forward with the rest of the world; India has an increasing service of newspapers, an increasing number of educated people affected by Western ideas, and an increasing sense of a common grievance against her government. There had been little or no corresponding advance in the education and quality of the British official in India during the century. His tradition is a high one; he is often a man of exceptional quality, but the system is unimaginative and inflexible. Moreover, the military power that stands behind these officials has developed neither in character nor intelligence during the last century. No other class has been so stagnant intellectually as the British military caste. Confronted with a more educated India, the British military man, uneasily aware of his educational defects and constantly apprehensive of ridicule, has in the last few years displayed a disposition towards spasmodic violence that has had some very lamentable results. For a time the great war altogether diverted what small amount of British public attention was previously given to India, and drew away the more intelligent military men from her service. During those years, and the feverish years of unsettlement that followed, things occurred in India, the massacre of an unarmed political gathering at Amritzar in which nearly two thousand people

were killed or wounded, floggings and humiliating outrages, a sort of official's Terror, that produced a profound moral shock when at last the Hunter Commission of 1919 brought them before the home public. In liberal-minded Englishmen, who have been wont to regard their empire as an incipient league of free peoples, this revelation, of the barbaric quality in its administrators produced a very understandable dismay....

But the time has not yet come for writing the chapter of history that India is opening for herself.... We cannot discuss here in detail the still unsettled problems of the new India that struggles into being. Already in the Government of India Act of 1919 we may have the opening of a new and happier era that may culminate in a free and willing group of Indian peoples taking an equal place among the confederated states of the world....

The growth of the British Empire in directions other than that of India was by no means so rapid during the earlier half of the nineteenth century. A considerable school of political thinkers in Britain was disposed to regard overseas possessions as a source of weakness to the kingdom. The Australian settlements developed slowly until in 1842 the discovery of valuable copper mines, and in 1851 of gold, gave them a new importance. Improvements in transport were also making Australian wool an increasingly marketable commodity in Europe. Canada too was not remarkably progressive until 1849; it was troubled by dissensions between its French and British inhabitants, there were several serious revolts, and it was only in 1867 that a new constitution creating a Federal Dominion of Canada relieved its internal strains. It was the railway that altered the Canadian outlook. It enabled Canada, just as it enabled the United States, to expand westward, to market its corn and other produce in Europe, and in spite of its swift and extensive growth, to remain in language and sympathy and interests one community. The railway, the steamship, and the telegraphic cable were indeed changing all the conditions of colonial development.

Before 1840, English settlements had already begun in New Zealand, and a new Zealand Land Company had been formed to exploit the possibilities of the island. In 1840 New Zealand also was added to the colonial possessions of the British Crown.

Canada, as we have noted, was the first of the British possessions to respond richly to the new economic possibilities the new methods of transport were opening. Presently the republics of South America, and particularly the Argentine Republic, began to feel, in their cattle trade and coffee growing, the increased nearness of the European market. Hitherto the chief commodities that had attracted the European powers into unsettled and barbaric regions had been gold or other metals, spices, ivory, or slaves. But in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century the increase of the European populations was obliging their governments to look abroad for staple foods; and the growth of scientific industrialism was creating a demand for new raw materials, fats and greases of every kind, rubber, and other hitherto disregarded substances. It was plain that Great Britain and Holland and Portugal were reaping a great and growing commercial advantage from their very considerable control of tropical and semi-tropical products. After 1871 Germany and presently France and later Italy began to look for unannexed raw-material areas, or for Oriental countries capable of profitable modernization.

Algeria
Barbary
Sahara
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Guinea
Chad
Abyssinia
Niger
Mts. of the Moon
Unexplored
Zanzibar
Portuguese E. Africa
Cape Colony
Port Natal
AFRICA
about the middle of the 19th Century

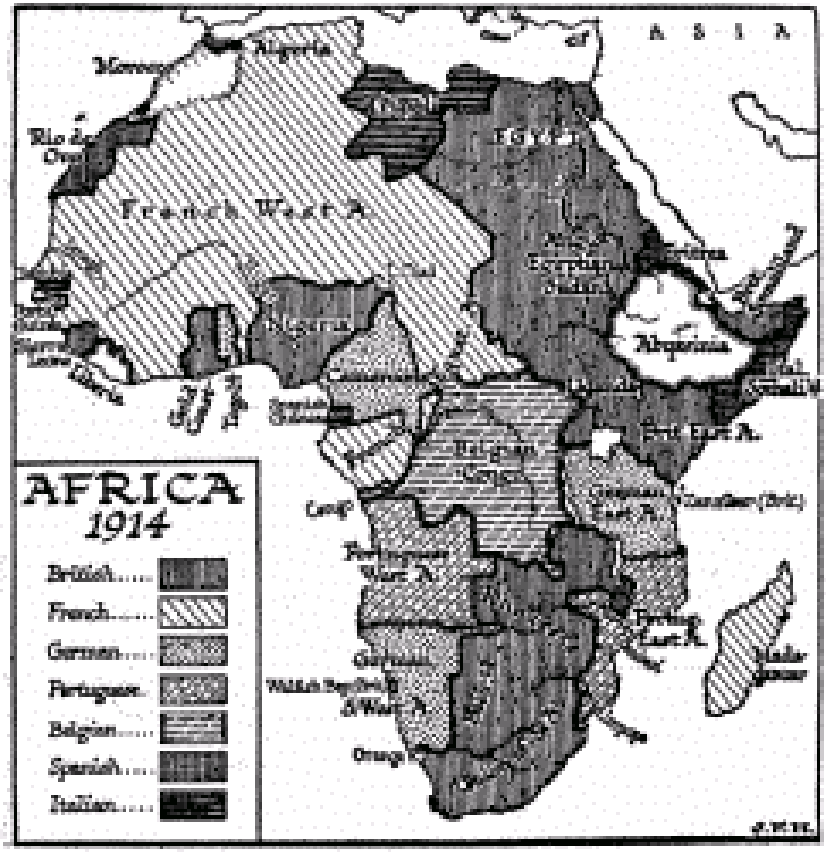

So began a fresh scramble all over the world, except in the American region where the Monroe Doctrine now barred such adventures, for politically unprotected lands. Close to Europe was the continent of Africa, full of vaguely known possibilities. In 1850 it was a continent of black mystery; only Egypt and the coast were known. A map must show the greatness of the European ignorance at that time. It would need a book as long as this Outline to do justice to the amazing story of the explorers and adventurers who first pierced this cloud of darkness, and to the political agents, administrators, traders, settlers, and scientific men who followed in their track. Wonderful races of men like the pigmies, strange beasts like the okapi, marvellous fruits and flowers and insects, terrible diseases, astounding scenery of forest and mountain, enormous inland seas,

and gigantic rivers and cascades were revealed; a whole new world. Even remains (at Zimbabwe) of some unrecorded and vanished civilization, the southward enterprise of an early people, were discovered. Into this new world came the Europeans, and found the rifle already there in the hands of the Arab slave-traders, and negro life in disorder. By 1900, as our second map must show, all Africa was mapped, explored, estimated, and divided between the European powers, divided with much snarling and disputation into portions that left each power uneasy or discontented. Little heed was given to the welfare of the natives in this scramble. The Arab slaver was indeed curbed rather than expelled, but the greed for rubber, which was a wild product collected under compulsion by the natives in the Belgian Congo, a greed exacerbated by the pitiless avarice of the King of the Belgians, and the clash of inexperienced European administrators with the native population in many other annexations, led to horrible atrocities. No European power has perfectly clean hands in this matter.

We cannot tell here in any detail how Great Britain got possession of Egypt in 1883, and remained there in spite of the fact that Egypt was technically a part of the Turkish Empire, nor how nearly this scramble led to war between France and Great Britain in 1898, when a certain Colonel Marchand, crossing Central Africa from the west coast, tried at Fashoda to seize the Upper Nile. In Uganda the French Catholic and the British Anglican missionaries disseminated a form of Christianity so heavily charged with the spirit of Napoleon, and so finely insistent upon the nuances of doctrine, that a few years after its first glimpse of European civilization, Mengo, the capital of Uganda, was littered with dead "Protestants" and "Catholics" extremely difficult to distinguish from the entirely unspiritual warriors of the old régime.

Nor can we tell how the British Government first let the Boers, or Dutch settlers, of the Orange River district and the Transvaal set up independent republics in the inland parts of South Africa, and then repented and annexed the Transvaal Republic in 1877; nor how the Transvaal Boers fought for freedom and won it after the Battle of Majuba Hill (1881). Majuba Hill was made to rankle in the memory of the English people by a persistent press campaign. A war with

both republics broke out in 1899, a three years' war enormously costly to the British people, which ended at last in the surrender of the two republics.

Their period of subjugation was a brief one. In 1907, after the downfall of the imperialist government which had conquered them, the Liberals took the South African problem in hand, and these former republics became free and fairly willing associates with Cape Colony and Natal in a confederation of all the states of South Africa as one self-governing republic under the British Crown.

In a quarter of a century the partition of Africa was completed. There remained unannexed three comparatively small countries: Liberia, a settlement of liberated negro slaves on the west coast; Morocco, under a Moslem Sultan; and Abyssinia, a barbaric country, with an ancient and peculiar form of Christianity, which had successfully maintained its independence against Italy at the Battle of Adowa in 1896.

§ 10

It is difficult to believe that any large number of people really accepted this headlong painting of the map of Africa in European colours as a permanent new settlement of the world's affairs, but it is the duty of the historian to record that it was so accepted. There was but a shallow historical background to the European mind in the nineteenth century, hardly any sense of what constitutes an enduring political system, and no habit of penetrating criticism. The quite temporary advantages that the onset of the mechanical revolution in the west had given the European great powers over the rest of the old world were regarded by people, blankly ignorant of the great Mongol conquests of the thirteenth and following centuries, as evidences of a permanent and assured leadership. They had no sense of the transferability of science and its fruits. They did not realize that Chinamen and Indians could carry on the work of research as ably as Frenchmen or Englishmen. They believed that there was some innate intellectual drive in the west, and some innate indolence and conservatism in the east, that assured the Europeans a world predominance for ever.

The consequence of this infatuation was that the various European foreign offices set themselves not merely to scramble with the British for the savage and undeveloped regions of the world's surface, but also to carve up the populous and civilized countries of Asia as though these peoples also were no more than raw material for European exploitation. The inwardly precarious but outwardly splendid imperialism of the British ruling class in India, and the extensive and profitable possessions of the Dutch in the East Indies, filled the ruling and mercantile classes of the rival great powers with dreams of similar glories in Persia, in the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, and in Further India, China, and Japan. In the closing years of the nineteenth century it was assumed, as the reader may verify by an examination of the current literature of the period, to be a natural and inevitable thing that all the world should fall under European dominion. With a hypocritical pretence of reluctant benevolent effort the European mind prepared itself to take up what Mr. Rudyard Kipling called "the White Man's Burthen" — that is to say, the loot and lordship of the earth. The Powers set themselves to this enterprise in a mood of jostling rivalry, with half-educated or illiterate populations at home, with a mere handful of men, a few thousand at most, engaged in scientific research, with their internal political systems in a state of tension or convulsive change, with a creaking economic system of the most provisional sort, and with their religions far gone in decay. They really believed that the vast populations of eastern Asia could be permanently subordinated to such a Europe.

Even to-day there are many people who fail to grasp the essential facts of this situation. They do not realize that in Asia the average brain is not one whit inferior in quality to the average European brain; that history shows Asiatics to be as bold, as vigorous, as generous, as self-sacrificing, and as capable of strong collective action as Europeans, and that there are and must continue to be a great many more Asiatics than Europeans in the world. It has always been difficult to restrain the leakage of knowledge from one population to another, and now it becomes impossible. Under modern conditions world-wide economic and educational equalization is in the long run inevitable. An intellectual and moral

rally of the Asiatics is going on at the present time. The slight leeway of a century or so, a few decades may recover. At the present time, for example, for one Englishman who knows Chinese thoroughly, or has any intimate knowledge of Chinese life and thought, there are hundreds of Chinamen conversant with everything the English know. The balance of knowledge in favour of India may be even greater. To Britain, India sends students; to India, Britain sends officials. There is no organization whatever for the sending of European students, as students, to examine and inquire into Indian history, archæology, and current affairs.

Since the year 1898, the year of the seizure of Kiau-Chau by Germany and of Wei-hai-wei by Britain, and the year after the Russian taking of Port Arthur, events in China have moved more rapidly than in any other country except Japan. A great hatred of Europeans swept like a flame over China, and a political society for the expulsion of Europeans, the Boxers, grew up and broke out into violence in 1900. This was an outbreak of rage and mischief on quite old-fashioned lines. In 1900 the Boxers murdered 250 Europeans and, it is said, nearly 30,000 Christians. China, not for the first time in history, was under the sway of a dowager empress, who, like the Empress Theodora of Constantinople, had once, it is said, been a woman of no repute. She was an ignorant woman, but of great force of character and in close sympathy with the Boxers. She supported them, and protected those who perpetrated outrages on the Europeans. All that again is what might have happened in 500 B.C. or thereabouts against the Huns.

Things came to a crisis in 1900. The Boxers became more and more threatening to the Europeans in China. Attempts were made to send up additional European guards to the Peking legations, but this only precipitated matters. The German ambassador was shot down in the streets of Peking by a soldier of the imperial guard. The rest of the foreign ambassadors gathered together and made a fortification of the more favourably situated embassies and stood a siege of two months. A combined allied force of 20,000 under a German general then marched up to Peking and relieved the legations, and the old Empress fled northwestward. Some of the European troops committed grave atrocities upon the Chinese civil population. That

brings one up to about the level of 1850, let us say.

There followed the practical annexation of Manchuria by Russia, a squabble among the powers, and in 1904 a British invasion of Tibet, hitherto a forbidden country. But what did not appear on the surface of these events, and what made all these events fundamentally different, was that China now contained a considerable number of able people who had a European education and European knowledge. The Boxer Insurrection subsided, and then the influence of this new factor began to appear in talk of a constitution (1906), in the suppression of opium-smoking, and in educational reforms. A constitution of the Japanese type came into existence in 1909, making China a limited monarchy. But China is not to be moulded to the Japanese pattern, and the revolutionary stir continued. Japan, in her own reorganization, and in accordance with her temperament, had turned her eyes to the monarchist west, but China was looking across the Pacific. In 1911 the essential Chinese revolution began. In 1912 the emperor abdicated, and the greatest community in the world became a republic. The overthrow of the emperor was also the overthrow of the Manchus, and the Mongolian pigtail, which had been compulsory for the Chinese since 1644, vanished again from the land.

At the present time it is probable that there is more good brain matter and more devoted men working out the modernization and the reorganization of the Chinese civilization than we should find directed to the welfare of any single European people. China will presently have a modernized practicable script, a press, new and vigorous modern universities, a reorganized industrial system, and a growing body of scientific and economic inquiry. The natural industry and ingenuity of her vast population will be released to co-operate upon terms of equality with the Western world. She may have great internal difficulties ahead of her yet; of that no man can judge. Nevertheless, the time may not be very distant when the Federated States of China may be at one with the United States of America and a pacified and reconciled Europe in upholding the organized peace of the world.

The pioneer country, however, in the recovery of the Asiatic peoples was not China, but Japan. We have outrun our story in telling of China. Hitherto Japan has played but a small part in this history; her secluded civilization has not contributed very largely to the general shaping of human destinies; she has received much, but she has given little. The original inhabitants of the Japanese Islands were probably a northern people with remote Nordic affinities, the Hairy Ainu. But the Japanese proper are of the Mongolian race. Physically they resemble the Amerindians, and there are many curious resemblances between the prehistoric pottery and so forth of Japan and similar Peruvian products. It is not impossible that they are a back-flow from the trans-Pacific drift of the early heliolithic culture, but they may also have absorbed from the south a Malay and even a Negrito element.

Whatever the origin of the Japanese, there can be no doubt that their civilization, their writing, and their literary and artistic traditions are derived from the Chinese. They were emerging from barbarism in the second and third century of the Christian Era, and one of their earliest acts as a people outside their own country was an invasion of Korea under a queen Jingo, who seems to have played a large part in establishing their civilization. Their history is an interesting and romantic one; they developed a feudal system and a tradition of chivalry; their attacks upon Korea and China are an Eastern equivalent of the English wars in France. Japan was first brought into contact with Europe in the sixteenth century; in 1542 some Portuguese reached it in a Chinese junk, and in 1549 a Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, began his teaching there. The Jesuit accounts describe a country greatly devastated by perpetual feudal war. For a time Japan welcomed European intercourse, and the Christian missionaries made a great number of converts. A certain William Adams, of Gillingham, in Kent, became the most trusted European adviser of the Japanese, and showed them how to build big ships. There were voyages in Japanese-built ships to India and Peru. Then arose complicated quarrels between the Spanish Dominicans, the Portuguese Jesuits, and the English and Dutch Protestants, each warning the Japanese against the evil political designs of the others. The Jesuits, in a phase of ascendancy, persecuted and insulted the

Buddhists with great acrimony. These troubles interwove with the feudal conflicts of the time. In the end the Japanese came to the conclusion that the Europeans and their Christianity were an intolerable nuisance, and that Catholic Christianity in particular was a mere cloak for the political dreams of the Pope and the Spanish monarchy — already in possession of the Philippine Islands; there was a great and conclusive persecution of the Christians, and in 1638 Japan was absolutely closed to Europeans, and remained closed for over 200 years. During those two centuries the Japanese remained as completely cut off from the rest of the world as though they lived upon another planet. It was forbidden to build any ship larger than a mere coasting boat. No Japanese could go abroad, and no European enter the country.

For two centuries Japan remained outside the main current of history. She lived on in a state of picturesque feudalism enlivened by blood feuds, in which about five per cent. of the population, the samurai, or fighting men, and the nobles and their families, tyrannized without restraint over the rest of the population. All common men knelt when a noble passed; to betray the slightest disrespect was to risk being slashed to death by his *samurai*. The elect classes lived lives of romantic adventure without one redeeming gleam of novelty; they loved, murdered, and pursued fine points of honour — which probably bored the intelligent ones extremely. We can imagine the wretchedness of a curious mind, tormented by the craving for travel and knowledge, cooped up in these islands of empty romance.

Meanwhile the great world outside went on to wider visions and new powers. Strange shipping became more frequent, passing the Japanese headlands; sometimes ships were wrecked and sailors brought ashore. Through the Dutch settlement at Deshima, their one link with the outer universe, came warnings that Japan was not keeping pace with the power of the Western world. In 1837 a ship sailed into Yedo Bay flying a strange flag of stripes and stars, and carrying some Japanese sailors she had picked up far adrift in the Pacific. She was driven off by a cannon shot. This flag presently reappeared on other ships. One in 1849 came to demand the liberation of eighteen shipwrecked American sailors. Then in 1853

came four American warships under Commodore Perry, and refused to be driven away. He lay at anchor in forbidden waters, and sent messages to the two rulers who at that time shared the control of Japan. In 1854 he returned with ten ships, amazing ships propelled by steam, and equipped with big guns, and he made proposals for trade and intercourse that the Japanese had no power to resist. He landed with a guard of 500 men to sign the treaty. Incredulous crowds watched this visitation from the outer world, marching through the streets.

Russia, Holland, and Britain followed in the wake of America. Foreigners entered the country, and conflicts between them and Japanese gentlemen of spirit ensued. A British subject was killed in a street brawl, and a Japanese town was bombarded by the British (1863). A great nobleman whose estates commanded the Straits of Shimonoseki saw fit to fire on foreign vessels, and a second bombardment by a fleet of British, French, Dutch, and American warships destroyed his batteries and scattered his swordsmen. Finally an allied squadron (1865), at anchor off Kioto, imposed a ratification of the treaties which opened Japan to the world.

The humiliation of the Japanese by these events was intense, and it would seem that the salvation of peoples lies largely in such humiliations. With astonishing energy and intelligence they set themselves to bring their culture and organization up to the level of the European powers. Never in all the history of mankind did a nation make such a stride as Japan then did. In 1866 she was a mediæval people, a fantastic caricature of the extremist romantic feudalism; in 1899 hers was a completely Westernized people, on a level with the most advanced European powers, and well in advance of Russia. She completely dispelled the persuasion that Asia was in some irrevocable way hopelessly behind Europe. She made all European progress seem sluggish and tentative by comparison.

We cannot tell here in any detail of Japan's war with China in 1894-95. It demonstrated the extent of her Westernization. She had an efficient Westernized army and a small but sound fleet. But the significance of her renascence, though it was appreciated by Britain and the United States, who were already treating her as if she were a European state, was not understood by the other great powers

engaged in the pursuit of new Indias in Asia. Russia was pushing down through Manchuria to Korea, France was already established far to the south in Tonkin and Annam, Germany was prowling hungrily on the look-out for some settlement. The three powers combined to prevent Japan reaping any fruits from the Chinese war, and particularly from establishing herself on the mainland at the points commanding the Japan sea. She was exhausted by her war with China, and they threatened her with war.

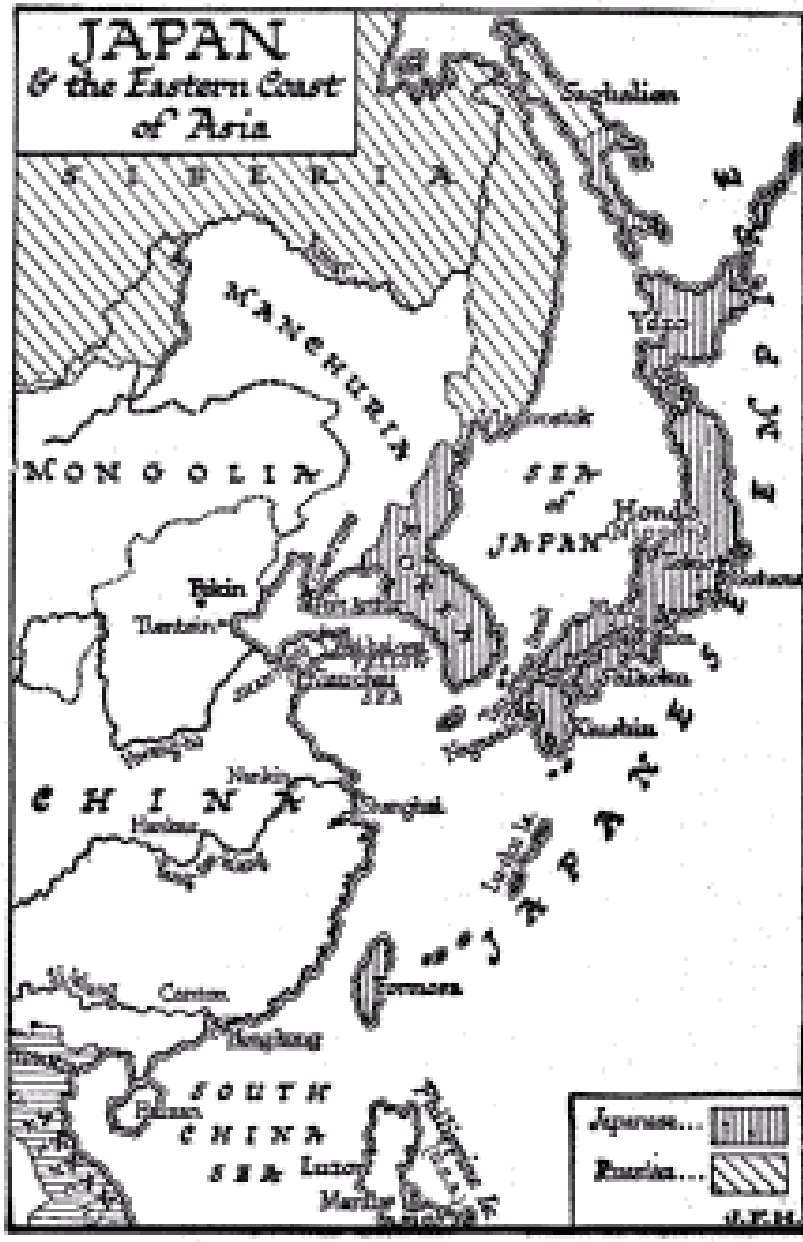

In 1898 Germany descended upon China, and, making the murder of two missionaries her excuse, annexed a portion of the province of

Shang-tung. Thereupon Russia seized the Liao-tung peninsula, and extorted the consent of China to an extension of her trans-Siberian railway to Port Arthur; and in 1900 she occupied Manchuria. Britain was unable to resist the imitative impulse, and seized the port of Wei-hai-wei (1898). How alarming these movements must have been to every intelligent Japanese a glance at the map will show. They led to a war with Russia which marks an epoch in the history of Asia, the close of the period of European arrogance. The Russian people were, of course, innocent and ignorant of this trouble that was being made for them half-way round the world, and the wiser Russian statesmen were against these foolish thrusts; but a gang of financial adventurers surrounded the Tsar, including the Grand Dukes, his cousins. They had gambled deeply in the prospective looting of Manchuria and China, and they would suffer no withdrawal. So there began a transportation of great armies of Japanese soldiers across the sea to Port Arthur and Korea, and the sending of endless train-loads of Russian peasants along the Siberian railway to die in those distant battlefields.

The Russians, badly led and dishonestly provided, were beaten on sea and land alike. The Russian Baltic Fleet sailed round Africa to be utterly destroyed in the Straits of Tshu-shima. A revolutionary movement among the common people of Russia, infuriated by this remote and reasonless slaughter, obliged the Tsar to end the war (1905); he returned the southern half of Saghalien, which had been seized by Russia in 1875, evacuated Manchuria, resigned Korea to Japan. The White Man was beginning to drop his "Burthen" in eastern Asia. For some years, however, Germany remained in uneasy possession of Kiau-Chau.

§ 12

We have already noted how the enterprise of Italy in Abyssinia had been checked at the terrible battle of Adowa (1896), in which over 3000 Italians were killed and more than 4000 taken prisoner. The phase of imperial expansion at the expense of organized non-European states was manifestly drawing to a close. It had entangled the quite sufficiently difficult political and social problems of Great

Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Russia with the affairs of considerable alien, unassimilable, and resentful populations; Great Britain had Egypt (not formally annexed as yet), India, Burmah, and a variety of such minor problems as Malta and Shanghai; France had cumbered herself with Tonkin and Annam in addition to Algiers and Tunis; Spain was newly entangled in Morocco; Italy had found trouble for herself in Tripoli; and German overseas imperialism, though its "place in the sun" seemed a poor one, derived what satisfaction it could from the thought of a prospective war with Japan over Kiau-Chau. All these "subject" lands had populations at a level of intelligence and education very little lower than those of the possessing country; the development of a native press, of a collective self-consciousness, and of demands for self-government was in each case inevitable, and the statesmen of Europe had been far too busy achieving these empires to have any clear ideas of what they would do with them when they got them.

The Western democracies, as they woke up to freedom, discovered themselves "imperial," and were considerably embarrassed by the discovery. The East came to the Western capitals with perplexing demands. In London the common Englishman, much preoccupied by strikes, by economic riddles, by questions of nationalization, municipalization, and the like, found that his path was crossed and his public meetings attended by a large and increasing number of swarthy gentlemen in turbans, fezzes, and other strange headgear, all saying in effect: "You have got us. The people who represent your government have destroyed our own government, and prevent us from making a new one. What are you going to do with us?"

(A question whose answer still lies beyond the frontiers of history.)

§ 13

We may note here briefly the very various nature of the constituents of the British Empire in 1914. It was and is a quite unique political combination; nothing of the sort has ever existed before.

First and central to the whole system was the "crowned republic"

of the United British Kingdoms, including (against the will of a considerable part of the Irish people) Ireland. The majority of the British Parliament, made up of the three united parliaments of England, Scotland, and Ireland, determines the headship, the quality, and policy of the ministry, and determines it largely on considerations arising out of British domestic politics. It is this ministry which is the effective supreme government, with powers of peace and war, over all the rest of the empire;

Next in order of political importance to the British States were the "crowned republics" of Australia, Canada, Newfoundland (the oldest British possession, 1583), New Zealand, and South Africa, all practically independent and self-governing states in alliance with Great Britain, but each with a representative of the Crown appointed by the Government in office;

Next the Indian Empire, an extension of the empire of the Great Mogul, with its dependent and "protected" states reaching now from Baluchistan to Burmah, and including Aden, in all of which empire the British Crown and the Indian Office (under Parliamentary control) played the rôle of the original Turkoman dynasty;

Then the ambiguous possession of Egypt, still nominally a part of the Turkish Empire and still retaining its own monarch, the Khedive, but under almost despotic British official rule;

Then the still more ambiguous "Anglo-Egyptian" Sudan province, occupied and administered jointly by the British and by the (British controlled) Egyptian Government;

Then a number of partially self-governing communities, some British in origin and some not, with elected legislatures and an appointed executive, such as Malta, Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Bermuda;

Then the Crown colonies, in which the rule of the British Home Government (through the Colonial Office), verged on autocracy, as in Ceylon, Trinidad, and Fiji (where there was an appointed council), and Gibraltar and St. Helena (where there was a governor);

Then great areas of (chiefly) tropical lands, raw-product areas, with politically weak and under-civilized native communities, which were nominally protectorates, and administered either by a High Commissioner set over native chiefs (as in Basutoland) or over a

chartered company (as in Rhodesia). In some cases the Foreign Office, in some cases the Colonial Office, and in some cases the India Office had been concerned in acquiring the possessions that fell into this last and least definite class of all, but for the most part the Colonial Office was now responsible for them.

It will be manifest, therefore, that no single office and no single brain had ever comprehended the British Empire as a whole. It was a mixture of growths and accumulations entirely different from anything that has ever been called an empire before. It guaranteed a wide peace and security; that is why it was endured and sustained by many men of the "subject" races — in spite of official tyrannies and insufficiencies, and of much negligence on the part of the "home" public. Like the "Athenian empire," it was an overseas empire; its ways were sea ways, and its common link was the British Navy. Like all empires, its cohesion was dependent physically upon a method of communication; the development of seamanship, ship-building, and steamships between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries had made it a possible and convenient Pax — the "Pax Britannica," and fresh developments of air or swift land transport might at any time make it inconvenient.

Air transport may indeed be already opening the way to a still more extensive and universal "Pax," in which the British system may of its own accord merge. It is impossible to say whether this unprecedented imperialism will obstruct or help forward that final unification of the world's affairs towards which all history is pointing. A system so various in its structure has many contradictory aspects, some very attractive, and some very repellent to a liberal intelligence. The conversion of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa from mere administered dependencies into quasi-independent allies, has been a very fine feat of statescraft. But in these cases the British Government had to deal with largely kindred and sympathetic populations, very ready to renew the methods of the old country upon a distant soil. In the case of mainly alien peoples the record is not so good, and, for reasons we have already partly analyzed (§ 6), it has been worse during the last few decades than it was before. There has been a deterioration in the quality of British imperialism in

relation to “subject peoples.” Whether that is a temporary deterioration or whether it is a fated drift towards disruption is a question of the profoundest moment to an English writer, but it is one that it is impossible to discuss properly within the limits of this Outline. But even at its worst it is open to question whether the British rule in India does not compare favourably with any other domination of one entirely remote and alien civilization by another. What is wrong is not so much that Britain rules India and Egypt, but that any civilized country should be ruled by the legislature of another, and that there should be no impartial court of appeal in the world yet to readjust this arrangement.

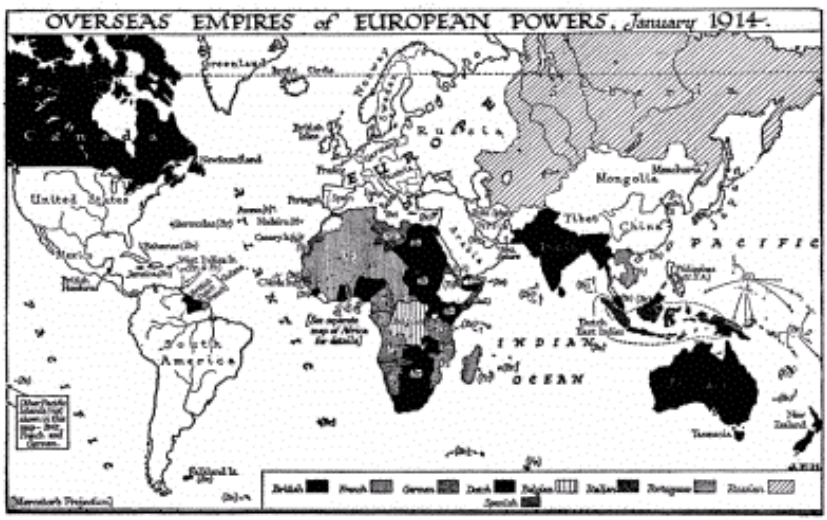

THE INTERNATIONAL CATASTROPHE OF 1914

§ 1. *The Armed Peace before the Great War.* § 2. *Imperial Germany.* § 3. *The Spirit of Imperialism in Britain and Ireland.* § 4. *Imperialism in France, Italy, and the Balkans.* § 5. *Russia a Grand Monarchy.* § 6. *The United States and the Imperial Idea.* § 7. *The Immediate Causes of the Great War.* § 8. *A Summary of the Great War up to 1917.* § 9. *The Great War from the Russian Collapse to the Armistice.* § 10. *The Political, Economical, and Social Disorganization Caused by the War.* § 11. *President Wilson and the Problems of Versailles.* § 12. *Summary of the First Covenant of the League of Nations.* § 13. *A General Outline of the Treaties of 1919 and 1920.* § 14. *A Forecast of the "Next War."* § 15. *The State of Men's Minds in 1920.*

§ 1

FOR thirty-six years after the Treaty of San Stefano and the Berlin Conference, Europe maintained an uneasy peace within its borders; there was no war between any of the leading states during this period. They jostled, browbeat, and threatened one another, but they did not come to actual hostilities. There was a general realization after 1871 that modern war was a much more serious thing than the professional warfare of the eighteenth century, an effort of peoples as a whole that might strain the social fabric very severely, an adventure not to be rashly embarked upon. The mechanical revolution was giving constantly more powerful (and expensive) weapons by land and sea, and more rapid methods of transport; and making it more and more impossible to carry on warfare without a complete dislocation of the economic life of the community. Even the foreign offices felt the fear of war.

But though war was dreaded as it had never been dreaded in the world before, nothing was done in the way of setting up a federal control to prevent human affairs drifting towards war. In 1898, it is true, the young Tsar Nicholas II (1894-1917) issued a rescript

inviting the other Great Powers to a conference of states "seeking to make the great idea of universal peace triumph over the elements of trouble and discord." His rescript recalls the declaration of his predecessor, Alexander I, which gave its tone to the Holy Alliance, and it is vitiated by the same assumption that peace can be established between sovereign governments rather than by a broad appeal to the needs and rights of the one people of mankind. The lesson of the United States of America, which showed that there could be neither unity of action nor peace until the thought of the "people of Virginia" and the "people of Massachusetts" had been swept aside by the thought of the "people of the United States," went entirely disregarded in the European attempts at pacification. Two conferences were held at The Hague in Holland, one in 1899 and another in 1907, and at the second nearly all the sovereign states of the world were represented. They were represented diplomatically, there was no direction of the general intelligence of the world to their deliberations, the ordinary common man did not even know that these conferences were sitting, and for the most part the assembled representatives haggled cunningly upon points of international law affecting war, leaving aside the abolition of war as a chimæra. These Hague Conferences did nothing to dispel the idea that international life is necessarily competitive. They accepted that idea. They did nothing to develop the consciousness of a world commonweal overriding sovereigns and foreign offices. The international lawyers and statesmen who attended these gatherings were as little disposed to hasten on a world commonweal on such a basis as were the Prussian statesmen of 1848 to welcome an all-German parliament overriding the rights and "policy" of the King of Prussia.

In America a series of three Pan-American conferences in 1889, 1901, and 1906 went some way towards the development of a scheme of international arbitration for the whole American continent.

The character and good faith of Nicholas II, who initiated these Hague gatherings, we will not discuss at any length here. He may have thought that time was on the side of Russia. But of the general unwillingness of the Great Powers to face the prospect of a merger of sovereign powers, without which permanent peace projects are absurd, there can be no sort of doubt whatever. It was no cessation of

international competition with its acute phase of war that they desired, but rather a cheapening of war, which was becoming too costly. Each wanted to economize the wastage of minor disputes and conflicts, and to establish international laws that would embarrass its more formidable opponents in wartime without incommoding itself. These were the practical ends they sought at the Hague Conference. It was a gathering they attended to please Nicholas II, just as the monarchs of Europe had subscribed to the evangelical propositions of the Holy Alliance to please Alexander I; and as they had attended it, they tried to make what they conceived to be some use of it.

§ 2

The peace of Frankfort had left Germany Prussianized and united, the most formidable of all the Great Powers of Europe. France was humiliated and crippled. Her lapse into republicanism seemed likely to leave her without friends in any European court. Italy was as yet a mere stripling. Austria sank now rapidly to the position of a confederate in German policy. Russia was vast, but undeveloped; and the British Empire was mighty only on the sea. Beyond Europe the one power to be reckoned with by Germany was the United States of America, growing now into a great industrial nation, but with no army nor navy worth considering by European standards.

The new Germany which was embodied in the empire that had been created at Versailles was a complex and astonishing mixture of the fresh intellectual and material forces of the world, with the narrowest political traditions of the European system. She was vigorously educational; she was by far the most educational state in the world; she made the educational pace for all her neighbours and rivals. In this time of reckoning for Germany, it may help the British reader to a balanced attitude to recall the educational stimulation for which his country has to thank first the German Prince Consort and then German competition. That mean jealousy of the educated common man on the part of the British church and ruling class, which no patriotic pride or generous impulse had ever sufficed to overcome, went down before a growing fear of German efficiency. And Germany took up the organization of scientific research and of

the application of scientific method to industrial and social development with such a faith and energy as no other community had ever shown before. Throughout all this period of the armed peace she was reaping and sowing afresh and reaping again the harvests, the unfailing harvests, of freely disseminated knowledge. She grew swiftly to become a great manufacturing and trading power; her steel output outran the British; in a hundred new fields of production and commerce, where intelligence and system was of more account than mere trader's cunning, in the manufacture of optical glass, of dyes, and of a multitude of chemical products and in endless novel processes, she led the world.

To the British manufacturer who was accustomed to see inventions come into his works, he knew not whence nor why, begging to be adopted, this new German method of keeping and paying scientific men seemed abominably unfair. It was compelling fortune, he felt. It was packing the cards. It was encouraging a nasty class of intellectuals to interfere in the affairs of sound business men. Science went abroad from its first home like an unloved child. The splendid chemical industry of Germany was built on the work of the Englishman Perkins, who could find no "practical" English business man to back him. And Germany also led the way in many forms of social legislation. Germany realized that labour is a national asset, that it deteriorates through unemployment, and that, for the common good, it has to be taken care of outside the works. The British employer was still under the delusion that labour had no business to exist outside the works, and that the worse such exterior existence was, the better somehow for him. Moreover, because of his general illiteracy, he was an intense individualist: his was the insensate rivalry of the vulgar mind; he hated his fellow manufacturers about as much as he hated his labour and his customers. German producers, on the other hand, were persuaded of the great advantages of combination and civility; their enterprises tended to flow together and assume more and more the character of national undertakings.

This educating, scientific, and organizing Germany was the natural development of the liberal Germany of 1848; it had its roots far back in the recuperative effort after the shame of the Napoleonic conquest. All that was good, all that was great in this modern

Germany, she owed indeed to her schoolmasters. But this scientific organizing spirit was only one of the two factors that made up the new German Empire. The other factor was the Hohenzollern monarchy which had survived Jena, which had tricked and bested the revolution of 1848, and which, under the guidance of Bismarck, had now clambered to the legal headship of all Germany outside Austria. Except the Tsardom, no other European state had so preserved the tradition of the Grand Monarchy of the eighteenth century as the Prussian. Through the tradition of Frederick the Great, Machiavelli now reigned in Germany. In the head of this fine new modern state, therefore, there sat no fine modern brain to guide it to a world predominance in world service, but an old spider lusting for power. Prussianized Germany was at once the newest and the most antiquated thing in Western Europe. She was the best and the wickedest state of her time.

The psychology of nations is still but a rudimentary science. Psychologists have scarcely begun to study the citizen side of the individual man. But it is of the utmost importance to our subject that the student of universal history should give some thought to the mental growth of the generations of Germans educated since the victories of 1871. They were naturally inflated by their sweeping unqualified successes in war, and by their rapid progress from comparative poverty to wealth. It would have been more than human in them if they had not given way to some excesses of patriotic vanity. But this reaction was deliberately seized upon and fostered and developed by a systematic exploitation and control of school and college, literature and press, in the interests of the Hohenzollern dynasty. A teacher, a professor, who did not teach and preach, in and out of season, the racial, moral, intellectual, and physical superiority of the Germans to all other peoples, their extraordinary devotion to war and their dynasty, and their inevitable destiny under that dynasty to lead the world, was a marked man, doomed to failure and obscurity. German historical teaching became an immense systematic falsification of the human past, with a view to the Hohenzollern future. All other nations were represented as incompetent and decadent; the Prussians were the leaders and regenerators of mankind. The young German read this in his school-

books, heard it in church, found it in his literature, had it poured into him with passionate conviction by his professor. It was poured into him by all his professors; Hueffer (*op. cit.*) says that lectures in biology or mathematics would break off from their proper subject to indulge in long passages of royalist patriotic rant. Only minds of extraordinary toughness and originality could resist such a torrent of suggestion. Insensibly there was built up in the German mind a conception of Germany and its emperor as of something splendid and predominant as nothing else had ever been before, a godlike nation in "shining armour" brandishing the "good German sword" in a world of inferior — and very badly disposed — peoples. We have told our story of Europe; the reader may judge whether the glitter of the German sword is exceptionally blinding. Germania was deliberately intoxicated, she was systematically kept drunk, with this sort of patriotic rhetoric. It is the greatest of the Hohenzollern crimes that the Crown constantly and persistently tampered with education, and particularly with historical teaching. No other modern state has so sinned against education. The oligarchy of the crowned republic of Great Britain may have crippled and starved education, but the Hohenzollern monarchy corrupted and prostituted it.

It cannot be too clearly stated, it is the most important fact in the history of the last half century, that the German people was methodically indoctrinated with the idea of a German world-predominance based on might, and with the theory that war was a necessary thing in life. The key to German historical teaching is to be found in Count Moltke's dictum: "Perpetual peace is a dream, and it is not even a beautiful dream. War is an element in the order of the world ordained by God." (Gladstone, we have noted, in his Tory days showed the same pious acquiescence in the family slave-holding.) "Without war the world would stagnate and lose itself in materialism." And the anti-Christian German philosopher, Nietzsche, found himself quite at one with the pious field-marshal. "It is mere illusion and pretty sentiment," he observes, "to expect much (even anything at all) from mankind if it forgets how to make war. As yet no means are known which call so much into action as a great war that rough energy born of the camp, that deep impersonality born of hatred, that conscience born of murder and cold-bloodedness, that

fervour born of effort in the annihilation of the enemy, that proud indifference to loss, to one's own existence, to that of one's fellows, that earthquake-like soul-shaking which a people needs when it is losing its vitality."

This sort of teaching, which pervaded the German Empire from end to end, was bound to be noted abroad, bound to alarm every other power and people in the world, bound to provoke an anti-German confederation; and it was accompanied by a parade of military, and presently of naval preparation, that threatened France, Russia, and Britain alike. It affected the thoughts, the manners, and morals of the entire German people — for they are a plastic people, and not refractory under instruction like the Irish and English. After 1871, the German abroad thrust out his chest and raised his voice. He threw a sort of trampling quality even into the operations of commerce. His machinery came on the markets of the world, his shipping took the seas with a splash of patriotic challenge. His very merits he used as a means of offence. (And probably most other peoples, if they had had the same experiences and undergone the same training, would have behaved in a similar manner.)

The Emperor William II.

By one of those accidents in history that personify and precipitate catastrophes, the ruler of Germany, the emperor William II,

embodied the new education of his people and the Hohenzollern tradition in the completest form. He came to the throne in 1888 at the age of twenty-nine; his father, Frederick III, had succeeded his grandfather, William I, in the March, to die in the June of that year. William II was the grandson of Queen Victoria on his mother's side, but his temperament showed no traces of the liberal German tradition that distinguished the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha family. His head was full of the frothy stuff of the new imperialism. He signalized his accession by an address to his army and navy; his address to his people followed three days later. A high note of contempt for democracy was sounded: "The soldier and the army, not parliamentary majorities, have welded together the German Empire. My trust is placed in the army." So the patient work of the German schoolmasters was disowned, and the Hohenzollern declared himself triumphant.

The next exploit of the young monarch was to quarrel with the old Chancellor, Bismarck, who had made the new German Empire, and to dismiss him (1890). There were no profound differences of opinion between them, but, as Bismarck said, the Emperor intended to be his own chancellor.

These were the opening acts of an active and aggressive career. This William II meant to make a noise in the world, a louder noise than any other monarch had ever made. The whole of Europe was soon familiar with the figure of the new monarch, invariably in military uniform of the most glittering sort, staring valiantly, fiercely moustached, and with a withered left arm ingeniously minimized. He affected silver shining breastplates and long white cloaks. A great restlessness was manifest. It was clear he conceived himself destined for great things, but for a time it was not manifest what particular great things these were. There was no oracle at Delphi now to tell him that he was destined to destroy a great empire.

The note of theatricality about him and the dismissal of Bismarck alarmed many of his subjects, but they were presently reassured by the idea that he was using his influence in the cause of peace and to consolidate Germany. He travelled much, to London, Vienna, Rome — where he had private conversations with the Pope — to Athens, where his sister married the king in 1889, and to Constantinople. He

was the first Christian sovereign to be a Sultan's guest. He also went to Palestine. A special gate was knocked through the ancient wall of Jerusalem so that he could ride into that place; it was beneath his dignity to walk in. He induced the Sultan to commence the reorganization of the Turkish Army upon German lines and under German officers. In 1895 he announced that Germany was a "world power," and that "the future of Germany lay upon the water" — regardless of the fact that the British considered that they were there already — and he began to interest himself more and more in the building up of a great navy. He also took German art and literature under his care; he used his influence to retain the distinctive and blinding German blackletter against the Roman type used by the rest of western Europe, and he supported the Pan-German movement, which claimed the Dutch, the Scandinavians, the Flemish Belgians and the German Swiss as members of a great German brotherhood — as in fact good assimilable stuff for a hungry young empire which meant to grow. All other monarchs in Europe paled before him.

He used the general hostility against Britain aroused throughout Europe by the war against the Boer Republics to press forward his schemes for a great navy, and this, together with the rapid and challenging extension of the German colonial empire in Africa and the Pacific Ocean, alarmed and irritated the British extremely. British liberal opinion in particular found itself under the exasperating necessity of supporting an ever-increasing British Navy. "I will not rest," he said, "until I have brought my navy to the same height at which my army stands." The most peace-loving of the islanders could not ignore that threat.

In 1890 he had acquired the small island of Heligoland from Britain. This he made into a great naval fortress.

As his navy grew, his enterprise increased. He proclaimed the Germans "the salt of the earth." They must not "weary in the work of civilization; Germany, like the spirit of Imperial Rome, must expand and impose itself." This he said on Polish soil, in support of the steady efforts the Germans were making to suppress the Polish language and culture, and to Germanize their share of Poland. God he described as his "Divine Ally." In the old absolutisms the monarch was either God himself or the adopted agent of God; the

Kaiser took God for his trusty henchman. “Our old God,” he said affectionately. When the Germans seized Kiau-Chau, he spoke of the German “mailed fist.” When he backed Austria against Russia, he talked of Germany in her “shining armour.”

The disasters of Russia in Manchuria in 1905 released the spirit of German imperialism to bolder aggressions. The fear of a joint attack from France and Russia seemed lifting. The emperor made a kind of regal progress through the Holy Land, landed at Tangier to assure the Sultan of Morocco of his support against the French, and inflicted upon France the crowning indignity of compelling her by a threat of war to dismiss Delcassé, her foreign minister. He drew tighter the links between Austria and Germany, and in 1908, Austria, with his support, defied the rest of Europe by annexing from the Turk the Yugo-Slav provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. So by his naval challenge to Britain and these aggressions upon France and the Slavs he forced Britain, France, and Russia into a defensive understanding against him. The Bosnian annexation had the further effect of estranging Italy, which had hitherto been his ally.

Such was the personality that the evil fate of Germany set over her to stimulate, organize, and render intolerable to the rest of the world the natural pride and self-assertion of a great people who had at last, after long centuries of division and weakness, escaped from a jungle of princes to unity and the world’s respect. It was natural that the commercial and industrial leaders of this new Germany who were now getting rich, the financiers intent upon overseas exploits, the officials and the vulgar, should find this leader very much to their taste. Many Germans who thought him rash or tawdry in their secret hearts, supported him publicly because he had so taking an air of success. *Hoch der Kaiser!*

Yet Germany did not yield itself without a struggle to the strong-flowing tide of imperialism. Important elements in German life struggled against this swaggering new autocracy. The old German nations, and particularly the Bavarians, refused to be swallowed up in Prussianism. And with the spread of education and the rapid industrialization of Germany, organized labour developed its ideas and a steady antagonism to the military and patriotic clattering of its ruler. A new political party was growing up in the state, the Social

Democrats, professing the doctrines of Marx. In the teeth of the utmost opposition from the official and clerical organizations, and of violently repressive laws against its propaganda and against combinations, this party grew. The Kaiser denounced it again and again; its leaders were sent to prison or driven abroad. Still it grew. When he came to the throne it polled not half a million votes; in 1907 it polled over three million. He attempted to concede many things, old age and sickness insurance, for example, as a condescending gift, things which it claimed for the workers as their right. His conversion to socialism was noted, but it gained no converts to imperialism. His naval ambitions were ably and bitterly denounced; the colonial adventures of the new German capitalists were incessantly attacked by this party of the common sense of the common man. But to the army, the Social Democrats accorded a moderate support, because, much as they detested their home-grown autocrat, they hated and dreaded the barbaric and retrogressive autocracy of Russia on their eastern frontier more.

The danger plainly before Germany was that this swaggering imperialism would compel Britain, Russia, and France into a combined attack upon her, an offensive-defensive. The Kaiser wavered between a stiff attitude towards Britain and clumsy attempts to propitiate her, while his fleet grew and while he prepared for a preliminary struggle with Russia and France. When in 1913 the British government proposed a cessation on either hand of naval construction for a year, it was refused. The Kaiser was afflicted with a son and heir more Hohenzollern, more imperialistic, more Pan-Germanic than his father. He had been nurtured upon imperialist propaganda. His toys had been soldiers and guns. He snatched at a premature popularity by outdoing his father's patriotic and aggressive attitudes. His father, it was felt, was growing middle-aged and over-careful. The Crown Prince renewed him. Germany had never been so strong, never so ready for a new great adventure and another harvest of victories. The Russians, he was instructed, were decayed, the French degenerate, the British on the verge of civil war. This young Crown Prince was but a sample of the abounding upper-class youth of Germany in the spring of 1914. They had all drunken from the same cup. Their professors and teachers, their speakers and

leaders, their mothers and sweethearts, had been preparing them for the great occasion that was now very nearly at hand. They were full of the tremulous sense of imminent conflict, of a trumpet call to stupendous achievements, of victory over mankind abroad, triumph over the recalcitrant workers at home. The country was taut and excited like an athletic competitor at the end of his training.

§ 3

Throughout the period of the armed peace Germany was making the pace and setting the tone for the rest of Europe. The influence of her new doctrines of aggressive imperialism was particularly strong upon the British mind, which was ill-equipped to resist a strong intellectual thrust from abroad. The educational impulse the Prince Consort had given had died away after his death; the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were hindered in their task of effective revision of upper-class education by the fears and prejudices the so-called "conflict of science and religion" had roused in the clergy who dominated them through Convocation; popular education was crippled by religious squabbling, by the extreme parsimony of the public authorities, by the desire of employers for child labour, and by individualistic objection to "educating other people's children." The old tradition of the English, the tradition of plain statement, legality, fair play, and a certain measure of republican freedom had faded considerably during the stresses of the Napoleonic Wars; romanticism, of which Sir Walter Scott, the great novelist, was the chief promoter, had infected the national imagination with a craving for the florid and picturesque. "Mr. Briggs," the comic Englishman of *Punch* in the fifties and sixties, getting himself into highland costume and stalking deer, was fairly representative of the spirit of the new movement. It presently dawned upon Mr. Briggs as a richly coloured and creditable fact he had hitherto not observed, that the sun never set on his dominions. The country which had once put Clive and Warren Hastings on trial for their unrighteous treatment of Indians, was now persuaded to regard them as entirely chivalrous and devoted figures. They were "empire builders." Under the spell of Disraeli's Oriental imagination, which had made Queen Victoria an

“empress,” the Englishman turned readily enough towards the vague exaltations of modern imperialism.

The perverted ethnology and distorted history which was persuading the mixed Slavic, Keltic, and Teutonic Germans that they were a wonderful race apart, was imitated by English writers who began to exalt a new ethnological invention, the “Anglo-Saxon.” This remarkable compound was presented as the culmination of humanity, the crown and reward of the accumulated effort of Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Assyrian, Jew, Mongol, and such-like lowly precursors of its white splendour. The senseless legend of German superiority did much to exacerbate the irritations of the Poles in Posen and the French in Lorraine. The even more ridiculous legend of the superior Anglo-Saxon did not merely increase the irritations of English rule in Ireland, but it lowered the tone of British dealings with “subject” peoples throughout the entire world. For the cessation of respect and the cultivation of “superior” ideas are the cessation of civility and justice. In the early days of British rule in India, British officials went out modestly as to a wonderful country to learn and live; now they went out absurdly, as samples of a wonderful people, as lights to a great darkness, to profit and prevail.

The imitation of German patriotic misconceptions did not end with this “Anglo-Saxon” fabrication. The clever young men at the British universities in the eighties and nineties, bored by the flatness and insincerities of domestic politics, were moved to imitation and rivalry by this new teaching of an arrogant, subtle, and forceful nationalist imperialism, this combination of Machiavelli and Attila, which was being imposed upon the thought and activities of young Germany. Britain, too, they thought, must have her shining armour and wave her good sword. The new British imperialism found its poet in Mr. Kipling and its practical support in a number of financial and business interests whose way to monopolies and exploitations was lighted by its glow. These Prussianizing Englishmen carried their imitation of Germany to the most extraordinary lengths. Central Europe is one continuous economic system, best worked as one; and the new Germany had achieved a great customs union, a Zollverein of all its constituents. It became naturally one compact system, like a clenched fist. The British Empire sprawled like an open hand

throughout the world, its members different in nature, need, and relationship, with no common interest except the common guarantee of safety. But the new Imperialists were blind to that difference. If new Germany had a Zollverein, then the British Empire must be in the fashion; and the natural development of its various elements must be hampered everywhere by "imperial preferences" and the like....

Yet the imperialist movement in Great Britain never had the authority nor the unanimity it had in Germany. It was not a natural product of any of the three united but diverse British peoples. It was not congenial to them. Queen Victoria and her successors, Edward VII and George V, were indisposed, either by temperament or tradition, to wear "shining armour," shake "mailed fists," and flourish "good swords" in the Hohenzollern fashion. They had the wisdom to refrain from any overt meddling with public ideas. And this "British" imperialist movement had from the first aroused the hostility of the large number of English, Welsh, Irish, and Scotch writers who refused to recognize this new "British" nationality or to accept the theory that they were these "Anglo-Saxon" supermen. And many great interests in Britain, and notably the shipping interest, had been built up upon free trade, and regarded the fiscal proposals of the new imperialists, and the new financial and mercantile adventurers with whom they were associated, with a justifiable suspicion. On the other hand, these ideas ran like wildfire through the military class, through Indian officialdom and the like. Hitherto there had always been something apologetic about the army man in England. He was not native to that soil. Here was a movement that promised to make him as splendidly important as his Prussian brother in arms. And the imperialist idea also found support in the cheap popular press that was now coming into existence to cater for the new stratum of readers created by elementary education. This press wanted plain, bright, simple ideas adapted to the needs of readers who had scarcely begun to think.

In spite of such support, and its strong appeal to national vanity, British imperialism never saturated the mass of the British peoples. The English are not a mentally docile people, and the noisy and rather forced enthusiasm for imperialism and higher tariffs of the old Tory Party, the army class, the country clergy, the music-halls, the

assimilated aliens, the vulgar rich, and the new large employers, inclined the commoner sort, and particularly organized labour, to a suspicious attitude. If the continually irritated sore of the Majuba defeat permitted the country to be rushed into the needless, toilsome, and costly conquest of the Boer republics in South Africa, the strain of that adventure produced a sufficient reaction towards decency and justice to reinstate the Liberal Party in power, and to undo the worst of that mischief by the creation of a South African confederation. Considerable advances continued to be made in popular education, and in the recovery of public interests and the general wealth from the possession of the few. And in these years of the armed peace, the three British peoples came very near to a settlement, on fairly just and reasonable lines, of their long-standing misunderstanding with Ireland. The great war, unluckily for them, overtook them in the very crisis of this effort.

Like Japan, Ireland has figured but little in this *Outline of History*, and for the same reason, because she is an extreme island country, receiving much, but hitherto giving but little back into the general drama. Her population is a very mixed one, its basis, and probably its main substance, being of the dark "Mediterranean" strain, pre-Nordic and pre-Aryan, like the Basques and the people of Portugal and south Italy. These people reached the island in Neolithic times; no Palæolithic remains have been found in Ireland. Over this original basis there flowed, about the sixth century B.C. — we do not know to what degree of submergence — a wave of Keltic peoples, in at least sufficient strength to establish a Keltic language, the Irish Gaelic. There were comings and goings, invasions and counter-invasions of this and that Keltic or Kelticized people between Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England. The island was Christianized in the fifth century. Later on the east coast was raided and settled by Northmen, but we do not know to what extent they altered the racial quality. The Norman-English came in 1169, in the time of Henry II and onward. The Teutonic strain may be as strong or stronger than the Keltic in modern Ireland. Hitherto Ireland had been a tribal and barbaric country, with a few centres of security wherein the artistic tendencies of the more ancient race found scope in metal-work and the illumination of holy books. Now, in the twelfth century, there

was an imperfect conquest by the English Crown, and scattered settlements by Normans and English in various parts of the country. From the outset profound temperamental differences between the Irish and English were manifest, differences exacerbated by a difference of language, and these became much more evident after the Protestant Reformation. The English were naturally a non-sacerdotal people; they had the Northman's dislike for and disbelief in priests; the share of Englishmen in the European Reformation was a leading one. The Irish found the priest congenial, and resisted the Reformation obstinately and bitterly.

The English rule in Ireland had been from the first an intermittent civil war due to the clash of languages and the different laws of land tenure and inheritance of the two peoples. It was further embittered at the Reformation by this religious incompatibility. The rebellions, massacres, and subjugations of the unhappy island during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I we cannot tell of here; but under James came a new discord with the confiscation of large areas of Ulster and their settlement with Presbyterian Scotch colonists. They formed a Protestant community in necessary permanent conflict with the Catholic remainder of Ireland.

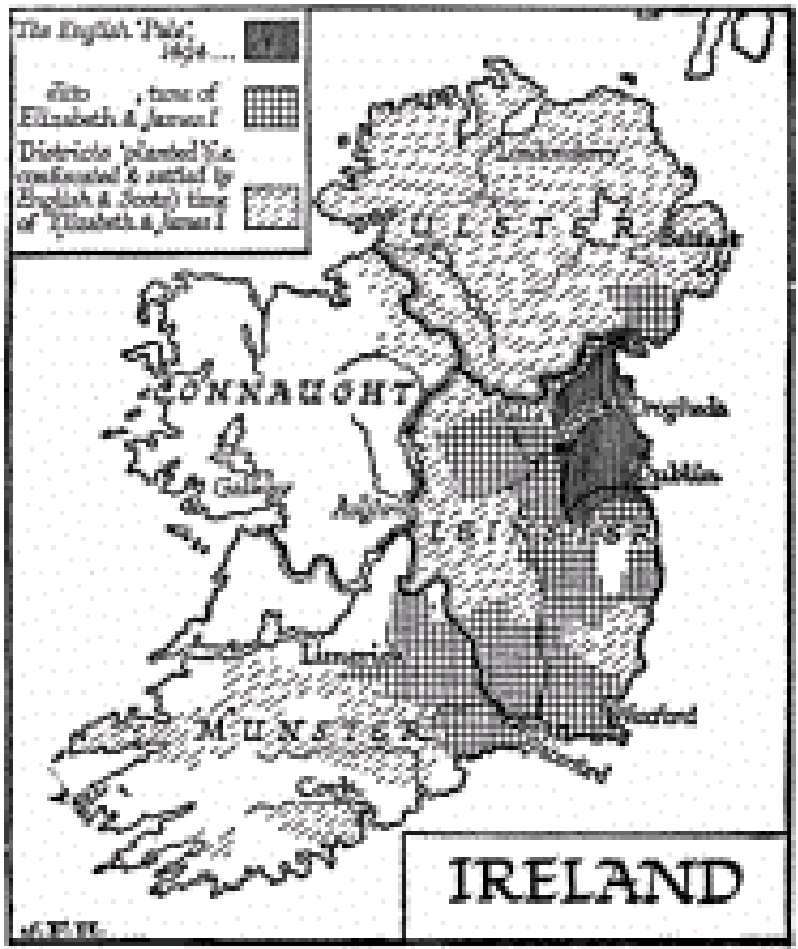

In the political conflicts during the reign of Charles I and the Commonweal, and of James II and William and Mary, the two sides in English affairs found sympathizers and allies in the Irish parties. There is a saying in Ireland that England's misfortune is Ireland's opportunity, and the English civil trouble that led to the execution of Strafford enabled the Irish Catholics to perpetrate a ferocious massacre of the English in Ireland (1641) — a very cruel and barbaric massacre in which neither women nor little children were spared. Later on Cromwell was to avenge that massacre by giving no quarter to any men actually found under arms, a severity remembered

by the Irish Catholics with extravagant bitterness. Between 1689 and 1691 Ireland was again torn by civil war. James II sought the support of the Irish Catholics against William III, and his adherents were badly beaten at the battles of the Boyne (1690) and Aughrim (1691).

There was a settlement, the Treaty of Limerick, a disputed settlement in which the English Government promised much in the way of tolerance for Catholics and the like, and failed to keep its promises. Limerick is still a cardinal memory in the long story of Irish embitterment. Comparatively few English people have even heard of this Treaty of Limerick; in Ireland it rankles to this day.

The eighteenth century was a century of accumulating grievance. English commercial jealousy put heavy restraints upon Irish trade, and the development of a wool industry was destroyed in the south and west. The Ulster Protestants were treated little better than the Catholics in these matters, and they were the chief of the rebels. There was more agrarian revolt in the north than in the south; the Steel Boys, and later the Peep-o'-Day Boys, were Ulster terrorists. There was a parliament in Ireland, but it was a Protestant parliament, even more limited and corrupt than the contemporary British Parliament; there was a considerable civilization in and about Dublin, and much literary and scientific activity, conducted in English and centring upon the Protestant university of Trinity College. This was the Ireland of Swift, Goldsmith, Burke, Berkeley, and Boyle. It was essentially a part of the English culture. The Catholic religion and the Irish language were outcast and persecuted things in the darkness.

It was from this Ireland of the darkness that the recalcitrant Ireland of the twentieth century arose. The Irish Parliament, its fine literature, its science, all its culture, gravitated naturally enough to London, because they were inseparably a part of that world. The more prosperous landlords went to England to live, and had their children educated there. The increasing facilities of communication enhanced this tendency and depleted Dublin. The Act of Union (January 1st, 1801) was the natural coalescence of two entirely kindred systems, of the Anglo-Irish Parliament with the British Parliament, both oligarchic, both politically corrupt in the same fashion. There was a vigorous opposition on the part, not so much of

the outer Irish as of Protestants settled in Ireland, and a futile insurrection under Robert Emmet in 1803. Dublin, which had been a fine Anglo-Irish city in the middle eighteenth century, was gradually deserted by its intellectual and political life, and invaded by the outer Irish of Ireland. Its fashionable life became more and more official, centring upon the Lord Lieutenant in Dublin Castle; its chief social occasion is now a horse show. But while the Ireland of Swift and Goldsmith was part and lot with the England of Pope, Dr. Johnson, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, while there has never been and is not now any real definable difference except one of geography between the "governing class" in Ireland and in Britain, the Irish underworld and the English underworld were essentially dissimilar. The upward struggle of the English "democracy" to education, to political recognition, had no Irish counterpart. Britain was producing a great industrial population, Protestant or sceptical; she had agricultural labourers indeed, but no peasants. Ireland had become a land of peasants, blankly ignorant and helplessly priest-ridden. Their cultivation degenerated more and more into a growing of potatoes and a feeding of pigs. The people married and bred; except for the consumption of whisky when it could be got, and a little fighting, family life was their only amusement. This was the direct result of orthodox Catholic teaching; the priests were all-powerful with the people and they taught them nothing; not even washing or drainage; they forbade them to seek any Protestant learning, they allowed their agricultural science to sink to mere potato-growing, and they preyed upon their poverty. Here are the appalling consequences. The population of Ireland

in 1785 was 2,845,932,
in 1803 was 5,536,594,
in 1845 was 8,295,061,

at which date the weary potato gave way under its ever-growing burthen and there was a frightful famine. Many died, many emigrated, especially to the United States; an outflow of emigration began that made Ireland for a time a land of old people and empty nests.

Now because of the Union of the Parliaments, the enfranchisement of the English and Irish populations went on simultaneously. Catholic enfranchisement in England meant Catholic enfranchisement in Ireland. The British got votes because they wanted them; the Irish commonalty got votes because the English did. Ireland was over-represented in the Union Parliament, because originally Irish seats had been easier for the governing class to manipulate than English; and so it came about that this Irish and Catholic Ireland, which had never before had any political instrument at all, and which had never sought a political instrument, found itself with the power to thrust a solid body of members into the legislature of Great Britain. After the general election of 1874, the newly enfranchised "democracy" of Britain found itself confronted by a strange and perplexing Irish "democracy," different in its religion, its traditions, and its needs, telling a tale of wrongs, of which the common English had never heard, clamouring passionately for separation which they could not understand and which impressed them chiefly as being needlessly unfriendly. The national egotism of the Irish is intense; their circumstances have made it intense; they were incapable of considering the state of affairs in England; the new Irish party came into the British Parliament to obstruct and disorder English business until Ireland became free, and to make themselves a nuisance to the English. This spirit was only too welcome to the oligarchy which still ruled the British Empire; they allied themselves with the "loyal" Protestants in the north of Ireland — loyal that is to the Imperial Government because of their dread of a Catholic predominance in Ireland — and they watched and assisted the gradual exasperation of the British common people by this indiscriminate hostility of the common people of Ireland.

The story of the relation of Ireland to Britain for the last half-century is one that reflects the utmost discredit upon the governing class of the British Empire, but it is not one of which the English commons need be ashamed. Again and again they have given evidences of goodwill. British legislation in relation to Ireland for nearly half a century shows a series of clumsy attempts on the part of liberal England, made in the face of a strenuous opposition from the Conservative Party and the Ulster Irish, to satisfy Irish complaints

and get to a footing of fellowship. In 1886 Gladstone, in pursuit of his idea of nationality, brought political disaster upon himself by introducing the first Irish Home Rule Bill, a genuine attempt to give over Irish affairs *for the first time in history* to the Irish people. In many respects it was a faulty and dangerous proposal, and it provided no satisfactory assurance to the Protestant Irish, and especially the Ulster Protestants, of protection against possible injuries from the priest-ridden illiterates of the south. This may have been a fancied danger, but these fears should have been respected. The bill broke the Liberal Party asunder; and a coalition government, the Unionist Government, replaced that of Mr. Gladstone.

This digression into the history of Ireland now comes up to the time of infectious imperialism in Europe. The Unionist Government which ousted Mr. Gladstone had a predominantly Tory element, and was in spirit "imperialist" as no previous British Government had been. The British political history of the subsequent years is largely a history of the conflict of the new imperialism, through which an arrogant "British" nationalism sought to override the rest of the empire against the temperamental liberalism and reasonableness of the English, which tended to develop the empire into a confederation of free and willing allies. Naturally the "British" imperialists wanted a subjugated Irish; naturally the English Liberals wanted a free, participating Irish. In 1892 Gladstone struggled back to power with a small Home Rule majority; and in 1893 his second Home Rule Bill passed the Commons, and was rejected by the Lords. It was not, however, until 1895 that an imperialist government took office. The party which sustained it was called not Imperialist, but "Unionist" — an odd name when we consider how steadily and strenuously it has worked to destroy any possibility of an Empire commonweal. These Imperialists remained in power for ten years. We have already noted their conquest of South Africa. They were defeated in 1905 in an attempt to establish a tariff wall on the Teutonic model. The ensuing Liberal Government then turned the conquered South African Dutch into contented fellow-subjects by creating the self-governing Dominion of South Africa. After which it embarked upon a long-impending struggle with the persistently imperialist House of Lords.

This was a very fundamental struggle in British affairs. On the

one hand were the Liberal majority of the people of Great Britain honestly and wisely anxious to put this Irish affair upon a new and more hopeful footing, and, if possible, to change the vindictive animosity of the Irish into friendship; on the other were all the factors of this new British Imperialism resolved at any cost and in spite of every electoral verdict, legally, if possible, but if not, illegally, to maintain their ascendancy over the affairs of the English, Scotch, and Irish and all the rest of the empire alike. It was, under new names, the age-long internal struggle of the English community; that same conflict of a free and liberal-spirited commonalty against powerful "big men" and big adventures and authoritative persons which we have already dealt with in our account of the liberation of America. Ireland was merely a battleground as America had been. In India, in Ireland, in England, the governing class and their associated adventurers were all of one mind; but the Irish people, thanks to their religious difference, had little sense of solidarity with the English. Yet such Irish statesmen as Redmond, the leader of the Irish party in the House of Commons, transcended this national narrowness for a time, and gave a generous response to English good intentions. Slowly yet steadily the barrier of the House of Lords was broken down, and a third Irish Home Rule Bill was brought in by Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, in 1912. Throughout 1913 and the early part of 1914 this bill was fought and re-fought through Parliament. At first it gave Home Rule to all Ireland; but an Amending Act, excluding Ulster on certain conditions, was promised. This struggle lasted right up to the outbreak of the Great War. The royal assent was given to this bill after the actual outbreak of war, and also to a bill suspending the coming into force of Irish Home Rule until after the end of the war. These bills were put upon the Statute Book.

But from the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill onward the opposition to it had assumed a violent and extravagant form. Sir Edward Carson, a Dublin lawyer who had become a member of the English Bar, and who had held a legal position in the ministry of Mr. Gladstone (before the Home Rule split) and in the subsequent imperialist government, was the organizer and leader of this resistance to a reconciliation of the two peoples. In spite of his Dublin origin, he set up to be a leader of the Ulster Protestants; and

he brought to the conflict that contempt for law which is all too common a characteristic of the successful barrister, and those gifts of persistent, unqualified, and uncompromising hostility which distinguish a certain type of Irishman. He was the most "un-English" of men, dark, romantic, and violent; and from the opening of the struggle he talked with gusto of armed resistance to this freer reunion of the English and Irish which the third Home Rule Bill contemplated. The excitement intensified throughout 1913. A body of volunteers was organized in Ulster, arms were smuggled into the country, and Sir Edward Carson and a rising lawyer named F. E. Smith, trapped up in semi-military style, toured Ulster, inspecting these volunteers and inflaming local passion. The arms of these prospective rebels were obtained from Germany, and various utterances of Sir Edward Carson's associates hinted at support from "a great Protestant monarch." The first bloodshed occurred at Londonderry in August, 1913. Contrasted with Ulster, the rest of Ireland was at that time a land of order and decency, relying upon its great leader Redmond and the good faith of the three British peoples.

Now these threats of civil war from Ireland were not in themselves anything very exceptional in the record of that unhappy island; what makes them exceptional and significant in the world's history is the vehement support they found among the English military and governing classes, and the immunity from punishment and restraint of Sir Edward Carson and his friends. The virus of reaction which came from the success and splendour of German imperialism had spread widely, as we have explained, throughout the prevalent and prosperous classes in Great Britain. A generation had grown up forgetful of the mighty traditions of their forefathers, and ready to exchange the greatness of English freedom for the tawdriest of imperialisms. A fund of a million pounds was raised, chiefly in England, to support the Ulster Rebellion, an Ulster Provisional Government was formed, prominent English people mingled in the fray and careered about Ulster in automobiles, assisting in the gun-running, and there is evidence that a number of British officers and generals were prepared for a pronunciamento upon South American lines rather than obedience to the law. The natural result of all this upper-class disorderliness was to alarm the main part of Ireland,

never a ready friend to England. That Ireland also began in its turn to organize "National Volunteers" and to smuggle arms. The military authorities showed themselves much keener in the suppression of the Nationalist than of the Ulster gun importation, and in July, 1914, an attempt to run guns at Howth, near Dublin, led to fighting and bloodshed in the Dublin streets. The British Isles were on the verge of civil war.

Such in outline is the story of the imperialist revolutionary movement in Great Britain up to the eve of the great war. For revolutionary this movement of Sir Edward Carson and his associates was. It was plainly an attempt to set aside parliamentary government and the slow-grown, imperfect liberties of the British peoples, and, with the assistance of the army, to substitute a more Prussianized type of rule, using the Irish conflict as the point of departure. It was the reactionary effort of a few score thousand people to arrest the world movement towards democratic law and social justice, strictly parallel to and closely sympathetic with the new imperialism of the German junkers and rich men. But in one very important respect British and German imperialism differed. In Germany it centred upon the crown; its noisiest, most conspicuous advocate was the heir-apparent. In Great Britain the king stood aloof. By no single public act did King George V betray the slightest approval of the new movement, and the behaviour of the Prince of Wales, his son and heir, has been equally correct.

In August, 1914, the storm of the great war burst upon the world. In September, Sir Edward Carson was denouncing the placing of the Home Rule Bill upon the Statute Book. On the same day, Mr. John Redmond was calling upon the Irish people to take their equal part in the burthen and effort of the war. For a time Ireland played her part in the war side by side with England faithfully and well, until in 1915 the Liberal Government was replaced by a coalition, in which this Sir Edward Carson, with the bloodshed at Londonderry and Howth upon his head, figured as Attorney-General (with a salary of £7000 and fees), to be replaced presently by his associate in the Ulster sedition, Sir F. E. Smith.

Grosser insult was never offered to a friendly people. The work of reconciliation, begun by Gladstone in 1886, and brought so near to

completion in 1914, was completely and finally wrecked.

In the spring of 1916 Dublin revolted unsuccessfully against this new government. The ringleaders of this insurrection, many of them mere boys, were shot with a deliberate and clumsy sternness that, in view of the treatment of the Ulster rebel leaders, impressed all Ireland as atrociously unjust. A traitor, Sir Roger Casement, who had been knighted for previous services to the empire, was tried and executed, no doubt deservedly, but his prosecutor was Sir F. E. Smith of the Ulster insurrection, a shocking conjunction. The Dublin revolt had had little support in Ireland generally, but thereafter the movement for an independent republic grew rapidly to great proportions. Against this strong emotional drive there struggled the more moderate ideas of such Irish statesmen as Sir Horace Plunkett, who wished to see Ireland become a Dominion, a "crowned republic" that is, within the empire, on an equal footing with Canada and Australia.

When in December, 1919, Mr. Lloyd George introduced his Home Rule Bill into the Imperial Parliament there were no Irish members, except Sir Edward Carson and his followers, to receive it. The rest of Ireland was away. It refused to begin again that old dreary round of hope and disappointment. Let the British and their pet Ulstermen do as they would, said the Irish....

§ 4

Our studies of modern imperialism in Germany and Britain bring out certain forces common to the two countries, and we shall find these same forces at work in variable degrees and with various modifications in the case of the other great modern communities at which we shall now glance. This modern imperialism is not a synthetic uniting movement like the older imperialism; it is essentially a *megalomaniac nationalism*, a nationalism made aggressive by prosperity; and always it finds its strongest support in the military and official castes, and in the enterprising and acquisitive strata of society, in new money, that is, and big business; its chief critics in the educated poor, and its chief opponents in the peasantry and the labour masses. It accepts monarchy where it finds it, but it is

not necessarily a monarchist movement. It does, however, need a foreign office of the traditional type for its full development. Its origin, which we have traced very carefully in this book of our history, makes this clear. Modern imperialism is the natural development of the Great Power system which arose, with the foreign office method of policy, out of the Machiavellian monarchies after the break-up of Christendom. It will only come to an end when the intercourse of nations and peoples through embassies and foreign offices is replaced by an assembly of elected representatives in direct touch with their peoples.

French imperialism during the period of the Armed Peace in Europe was naturally of a less confident type than the German. It called itself "nationalism" rather than imperialism, and it set itself, by appeals to patriotic pride, to thwart the efforts of those socialists and rationalists who sought to get into touch with liberal elements in German life. It brooded upon the *Revanche*, the return match with Prussia. But in spite of that pre-occupation, it set itself to the adventure of annexation and exploitation in the Far East and in Africa, narrowly escaping a war with Britain upon the Fashoda clash

(1898), and it never relinquished a dream of acquisitions in Syria. Italy too caught the imperialist fever; the blood letting of Adowa cooled her for a time, and then she resumed in 1911 with a war upon Turkey and the annexation of Tripoli.

The Italian imperialists exhorted their countrymen to forget Mazzini and remember Julius Cæsar; for were they not the heirs of the Roman Empire? Imperialism touched the Balkans; little countries not a hundred years from slavery began to betray exalted intentions; King Ferdinand of Bulgaria assumed the title of Tsar, the latest of the pseudo-Cæsars, and in the shop-windows of Athens the curious student could study maps showing the dream of a vast Greek empire in Europe and Asia.

In 1913 the three states of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece fell upon Turkey, already weakened by her war with Italy, and swept her out of all her European possessions except the country between Adrianople and Constantinople; later in that year they quarrelled among themselves over the division of the spoils. Roumania joined in the game and helped to crush Bulgaria. Turkey recovered Adrianople. The greater imperialisms of Austria, Russia, and Italy watched that conflict and one another....

§ 5

While all the world to the west of her was changing rapidly, Russia throughout the nineteenth century changed very slowly indeed. At the end of the nineteenth century, as at its beginning, she was still a Grand Monarchy, of the later seventeenth-century type standing on a basis of barbarism, she was still at a stage where court intrigues and imperial favourites could control her international relations. She had driven a great railway across Siberia to find the disasters of the Japanese war at the end of it; she was using modern methods and modern weapons so far as her undeveloped industrialism and her small supply of sufficiently educated people permitted; such writers as Dostoievski had devised a sort of mystical imperialism based on the idea of Holy Russia and her mission, colored by racial illusions and anti-Semitic passion; but, as events were to show, this had not

sunken very deeply into the imagination of the Russian masses. A vague, very simple Christianity pervaded the illiterate peasant life, mixed with much superstition. It was like the pre-Reformation peasant life of France or Germany. The Russian moujik was supposed to worship and revere his Tsar and to love to serve a gentleman; in 1913 reactionary English writers were still praising his simple and unquestioning loyalty. But, as in the case of the western European peasant of the days of peasant revolts, this reverence for the monarchy was mixed up with the idea that the monarch and the nobleman had to be good and beneficial, and this simple loyalty could, under sufficient provocation, be turned into the same pitiless intolerance of social injustice that burnt the châteaux in the Jacquerie (see CHAPTER XXXV, § 3) and set up the theocracy in Münster (chapter xxxv, § 3). Once the commons were moved to anger, there were no links of understanding in a generally diffused education in Russia to mitigate the fury of the outbreak. The upper classes were as much beyond the sympathy of the lower as a different species of animal. These Russian masses were three centuries away from such nationalist imperialism as Germany displayed.

And in another respect Russia differed from modern Western Europe and paralleled its mediæval phase, and that was in the fact that her universities were the resort of many very poor students quite out of touch and out of sympathy with the bureaucratic autocracy. Before 1917 the significance of the proximity of these two factors of revolution, the fuel of discontent and the match of free ideas, was not recognized in European thought, and few people realized that in Russia more than in any other country lay the possibilities of a fundamental revolution.

§ 6

When we turn from these European Great Powers, with their inheritance of foreign offices and national policies, to the United States of America, which broke away completely from the Great Power System in 1776, we find a most interesting contrast in the operation of the forces which produced the expansive imperialism of

Europe. For America as for Europe the mechanical revolution had brought all the world within the range of a few days' journey. The United States, like the Great Powers, had worldwide financial and mercantile interests; a great industrialism had grown up and was in need of overseas markets; the same crises of belief that had shaken the moral solidarity of Europe had occurred in the American world. Her people were as patriotic and spirited as any. Why then did not the United States develop armaments and an aggressive policy? Why was not the stars and stripes waving over Mexico, and why was there not a new Indian system growing up in China under that flag? It was the American who had opened up Japan. After doing so, he had let that power Europeanize itself and become formidable without a protest. That alone was enough to make Machiavelli, the father of modern foreign policy, turn in his grave. If a Europeanized Great Power had been in the place of the United States, Great Britain would have had to fortify the Canadian frontier from end to end — it is now absolutely unarmed — and to maintain a great arsenal in the St. Lawrence. All the divided states of Central and South America would long since have been subjugated and placed under the disciplinary control of United States officials of the "governing class." There would have been a perpetual campaign to Americanize Australia and New Zealand, and yet another claimant for a share in tropical Africa.

And by an odd accident America had produced in President Roosevelt (President 1901-1908) a man of an energy as restless as the German Kaiser's, as eager for large achievements, as florid and eloquent, an adventurous man with a turn for world politics and an instinct for armaments, the very man, we might imagine, to have involved his country in the scramble for overseas possession.

There does not appear to be any other explanation of this general restraint and abstinence on the part of the United States except in their fundamentally different institutions and traditions. In the first place the United States Government has no foreign office and no diplomatic corps of the European type, no body of "experts" to maintain the tradition of an aggressive policy. The president has great powers, but they are subject to the control of the senate, which again is responsible to the state legislatures and the people. The

foreign relations of the country are thus under open and public control. Secret treaties are impossible under such a system, and foreign powers complain of the difficulty and uncertainty of "understandings" with the United States, a very excellent state of affairs. The United States are constitutionally incapacitated, therefore, from the kind of foreign policy that has kept Europe for so long constantly on the verge of war.

And, secondly, there has hitherto existed in the States no organization for and no tradition of what one may call non-assimilable possessions. Where there is no crown there cannot be crown colonies. In spreading across the American continent, the United States had developed a quite distinctive method of dealing with new territories, admirably adapted for unsettled lands, but very inconvenient if applied too freely to areas already containing an alien population. This method was based on the idea that there cannot be in the United States system a permanently subject people. The first stage of the ordinary process of assimilation had been the creation of a "territory" under the federal government, having a considerable measure of self-government, sending a delegate (who could not vote) to congress, and destined, in the natural course of things, as the country became settled and population increased, to flower at last into full statehood. This had been the process of development of all the latter states of the Union; the latest territories to become states being Arizona and New Mexico in 1910. The frozen wilderness of Alaska, bought from Russia, remained politically undeveloped simply because it had an insufficient population for state organization. As the annexations of Germany and Great Britain in the Pacific threatened to deprive the United States navy of coaling stations in that ocean, a part of the Samoan Islands (1889) and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) were annexed (1898). Here for the first time the United States had real subject populations to deal with. But in the absence of any class comparable to the Anglo-Indian officials who sway British opinion, the American procedure followed the territorial method. Every effort was made to bring the educational standards of Hawaii up to the American level, and a domestic legislature on the territorial pattern was organized so that these dusky islanders seem destined ultimately to obtain full United States

citizenship. (The small Samoan Islands are taken care of by a United States naval administrator.)

In 1895 occurred a quarrel between the United States and Britain upon the subject of Venezuela, and the Monroe Doctrine was upheld stoutly by President Cleveland. Then Mr. Olney made this remarkable declaration: "To-day the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." This, together with the various Pan-American congresses that have been held, points to a real open "foreign policy" of alliance and mutual help throughout America. Treaties of arbitration hold good over all that continent, and the future seems to point to a gradual development of inter-state organization, a Pax Americana, of the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking peoples, the former in the rôle of elder brother. Here is something we cannot even call an empire, something going far beyond the great alliance of the British Empire in the open equality of its constituent parts.

Consistently with this idea of a common American welfare, the United States in 1898 intervened in the affairs of Cuba, which had been in a state of chronic insurrection against Spain for many years. A brief war ended in the acquisition of Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands. Cuba is now an independent self-governing republic. Porto Rico and the Philippines have, however, a special sort of government, with a popularly elected lower house and an upper body containing members appointed by the United States senate. It is improbable that either Porto Rico or the Philippines will become states in the Union. They are much more likely to become free states in some comprehensive alliance with both English-speaking and Latin America.

Both Cuba and Porto Rico welcomed the American intervention in their affairs, but in the Philippine Islands there was a demand for complete and immediate freedom after the Spanish war, and a considerable resistance to the American military administration. There it was the United States came nearest to imperialism of the Great Power type, and that her record is most questionable. There was much sympathy with the insurgents in the states. Here is the point of view of ex-President Roosevelt as he wrote it in his

Autobiography (1913): —

"As regards the Philippines, my belief was that we should train them for self-government as rapidly as possible, and then leave them free to decide their own fate. I did not believe in setting the time-limit within which we would give them independence, because I did not believe it wise to try to forecast how soon they would be fit for self-government; and once having made the promise, I would have felt that it was imperative to keep it. Within a few months of my assuming office we had stamped out the last armed resistance in the Philippines that was not of merely sporadic character; and as soon as peace was secured, we turned our energies to developing the islands in the interests of the natives. We established schools everywhere; we built roads; we administered an even-handed justice; we did everything possible to encourage agriculture and industry; and in constantly increasing measure we employed natives to do their own governing, and finally provided a legislative chamber.... We are governing, and have been governing, the islands in the interests of the Filipinos themselves. If after due time the Filipinos themselves decide that they do not wish to be thus governed, then I trust that we will leave; but when we do leave, it must be distinctly understood that we retain no protectorate — and above all that we take part in no joint protectorate — over the islands, and give them no guarantee, of neutrality or otherwise; that in short, we are absolutely quit of responsibility for them, of every kind and description."

This is an entirely different outlook from that of a British or French foreign office or colonial office official. But it is not very widely different from the spirit that created the Dominions of Canada, South Africa, and Australia, and brought forward the three Home Rule Bills for Ireland. It is in the older and more characteristic English tradition from which the Declaration of Independence derives. It sets aside, without discussion, the detestable idea of "subject peoples."

Here we will not enter into political complications attendant upon the making of the Panama Canal, for they introduce no fresh light upon this interesting question of the American method in world politics. The history of Panama is American history purely. But manifestly just as the political structure of the Union was a new thing

in the world, so too were its relations with the world beyond its borders.

§ 7

We have been at some pains to examine the state of mind of Europe and of America in regard to international relations in the years that led up to the world tragedy of 1914 because, as more and more people are coming to recognize, that great war or some such war was a necessary consequence of the mentality of the period. All the things that men and nations do are the outcome of instinctive motives reacting upon the ideas which talk and books and newspapers and schoolmasters and so forth have put into people's heads. Physical necessities, pestilences, changes of climate, and the like outer things may deflect and distort the growth of human history, but its living root is thought.

All human history is fundamentally a history of ideas. Between the man of to-day and the Cro-Magnard the physical and mental differences are very slight; their essential difference lies in the extent and content of the mental background which we have acquired in the five or six hundred generations that intervene.

We are too close to the events of the Great War to pretend that this *Outline* can record the verdict of history thereupon, but we may hazard the guess that when the passions of the conflict have faded, it will be Germany that will be most blamed for bringing it about, and she will be blamed not because she was morally and intellectually very different from her neighbours, but because she had the common disease of imperialism in its most complete and energetic form. No self-respecting historian, however superficial and popular his aims may be, can countenance the legend, produced by the stresses of the war, that the German is a sort of human being more cruel and abominable than any other variety of men. All the great states of Europe before 1914 were in a condition of aggressive nationalism and drifting towards war; the government of Germany did but lead the general movement. She fell into the pit first, and she floundered deepest. She became the dreadful example at which all her fellow

sinners could cry out.

For long, Germany and Austria had been plotting an extension of German influence eastward through Asia Minor to the East. The German idea was crystallized in the phrase "Berlin to Bagdad." Antagonized to the German dreams were those of Russia, which was scheming for an extension of the Slav ascendancy to Constantinople and through Serbia to the Adriatic. These lines of ambition lay across one another and were mutually incompatible. The feverish state of affairs in the Balkans was largely the outcome of the intrigues and propagandas sustained by the German and Slav schemes. Turkey turned for support to Germany, Serbia to Russia. Roumania and Italy, both Latin in tradition, both nominally allies of Germany, pursued remoter and deeper schemes in common. Ferdinand, the Tsar of Bulgaria, was following still darker ends; and the squalid mysteries of the Greek court, whose king was the German Kaiser's brother-in-law, are beyond our present powers of inquiry.

But the tangle did not end with Germany on the one hand and Russia on the other. The greed of Germany in 1871 had made France her inveterate enemy. The French people, aware of their inability to recover their lost provinces by their own strength, had conceived exaggerated ideas of the power and helpfulness of Russia. The French people had subscribed enormously to Russian loans. France was the ally of Russia. If the German powers made war upon Russia, France would certainly attack them.

Now the short eastern French frontier was very strongly defended. There was little prospect of Germany repeating the successes of 1870-71 against that barrier. But the Belgian frontier of France was longer and less strongly defended. An attack in overwhelming force on France through Belgium might repeat 1870 on a larger scale. The French left might be swung back south-eastwardly on Verdun, as a pivot, and crowded back upon its right, as one shuts an open razor. This scheme the German strategists had worked out with great care and elaboration. Its execution involved an outrage upon the law of nations, because Prussia had undertaken to guarantee the neutrality of Belgium and had no quarrel with her, and it involved the risk of bringing in Great Britain (which power was also pledged to protect Belgium) against Germany. Yet the Germans believed that their fleet

had grown strong enough to make Great Britain hesitate to interfere, and with a view to possibilities they had constructed a great system of strategic railways to the Belgian frontier, and made every preparation for the execution of this scheme. So they might hope to strike down France at one blow, and deal at their leisure with Russia.

In 1914 all things seemed moving together in favour of the two Central Powers. Russia, it is true, had been recovering since 1906, but only very slowly; France was distracted by financial scandals. The astounding murder of M. Calmette, the editor of the *Figaro*, by the wife of M. Caillaux, the minister of finance, brought these to a climax in March; Britain, all Germany was assured, was on the verge of a civil war in Ireland. Repeated efforts were made both by foreign and English people to get some definite statement of what Britain would do if Germany and Austria assailed France and Russia; but the British Foreign Secretary maintained a front of heavy ambiguity up to the very day of the British entry into the war. As a consequence, there was a feeling on the continent that Britain would either not fight or delay fighting, and this may have encouraged Germany to go on threatening France. Events were precipitated on June 28th by the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian Empire, when on a state visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. Here was a timely excuse to set the armies marching. "It is now or never," said the German Emperor. Serbia was accused of instigating the murderers, and notwithstanding the fact that Austrian commissioners reported that there was no evidence to implicate the Serbian government, the Austro-Hungarian government contrived to press this grievance towards war. On July 23rd Austria discharged an ultimatum at Serbia, and, in spite of a practical submission on the part of Serbia, and of the efforts of Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, to call a conference of the powers, declared war against Serbia on July 28th.

Russia mobilized her army on July 30th, and on August 1st Germany declared war upon her. German troops crossed into French territory next day, and, simultaneously with the delivery of an ultimatum to the unfortunate Belgians, the big flanking movement through Luxembourg and Belgium began. Westward rode the scouts and advanced guards. Westward rushed a multitude of automobiles

packed with soldiers. Enormous columns of grey-clad infantry followed; round-eyed, fair young Germans they were for the most part — law-abiding, educated youngsters who had never yet seen a shot fired in anger. “This was war,” they were told. They had to be bold and ruthless. Some of them did their best to carry out these militarist instructions at the expense of the ill-fated Belgians.

A disproportionate fuss has been made over the detailed atrocities in Belgium, disproportionate, that is, in relation to the fundamental atrocity of August, 1914, which was the invasion of Belgium. Given that, the casual shootings and lootings, the wanton destruction of property, the plundering of inns and of food and drink shops by hungry and weary men, and the consequent rapes and incendiarism, follow naturally enough. Only very simple people believe that an army in the field can maintain as high a level of honesty, decency, and justice as a settled community at home. And the tradition of the Thirty Years War still influenced the Prussian army. It has been customary in the countries allied against Germany to treat all this vileness and bloodshed of the Belgian months as though nothing of the sort had ever happened before, and as if it were due to some distinctively evil strain in the German character. They were nicknamed “Huns.” But nothing could be less like the systematic destructions of the nomads (who once proposed to exterminate the entire Chinese population in order to restore China to pasture) than the German crimes in Belgium. Much of that crime was the drunken brutality of men who for the first time in their lives were free to use lethal weapons, much of it was the hysterical violence of men shocked at their own proceedings and in deadly fear of the revenge of the people whose country they had outraged, and much of it was done under duress because of the theory that men should be terrible in warfare and that populations are best subdued by fear. The German common people were bundled from an orderly obedience into this war in such a manner that atrocities were bound to ensue. They certainly did horrible and disgusting things. But any people who had been worked up for war and led into war as the Germans were, would have behaved in a similar manner.

On the night of August 2nd, while most of Europe, still under the tranquil inertias of half a century of peace, still in the habitual

enjoyment of such a widely diffused plenty and cheapness and freedom as no man living will ever see again, was thinking about its summer holidays, the little Belgian village of Visé was ablaze, and stupefied rustics were being led out and shot because it was alleged someone had fired on the invaders. The officers who ordered these acts, the men who obeyed, must surely have felt scared at the strangeness of the things they did. Most of them had never yet seen a violent death. And they had set light not to a village, but a world. It was the beginning of the end of an age of comfort, confidence, and gentle and seemly behaviour in Europe.

So soon as it was clear that Belgium was to be invaded, Great Britain ceased to hesitate, and (at eleven at night on August 4th) declared war upon Germany. The following day a German mine-laying vessel was caught off the Thames mouth by the cruiser *Amphion* and sunk, — the first time that the British and Germans had ever met in conflict under their own national flags upon land or water....

All Europe still remembers the strange atmosphere of those eventful sunny August days, the end of the Armed Peace. For nearly half a century the Western world had been tranquil and had seemed safe. Only a few middle-aged and ageing people in France had had any practical experience of warfare. The newspapers spoke of a world catastrophe, but that conveyed very little meaning to those for whom the world had always seemed secure, who were indeed almost incapable of thinking of it as otherwise than secure. In Britain particularly for some weeks the peace-time routine continued in a slightly dazed fashion. It was like a man still walking about the world unaware that he has contracted a fatal disease which will alter every routine and habit in his life. People went on with their summer holidays; shops reassured their customers with the announcement, “business as usual.” There was much talk and excitement when the newspapers came, but it was the talk and excitement of spectators who have no vivid sense of participation in the catastrophe that was presently to involve them all.

§ 8

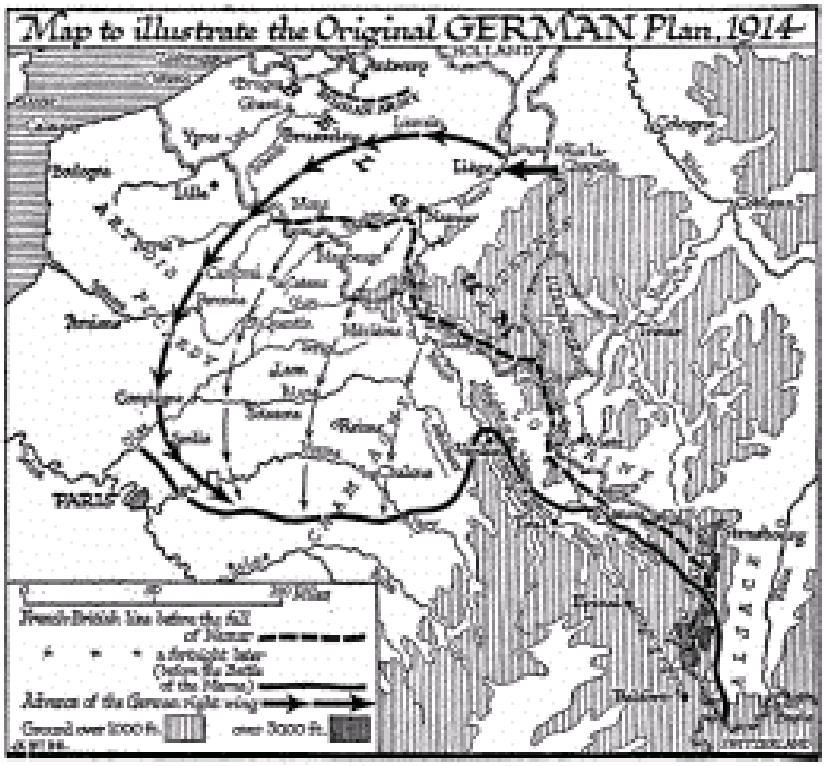

We will now review very briefly the main phases of the world struggle which had thus commenced. Planned by Germany, it began with a swift attack designed to "knock out" France while Russia was still getting her forces together in the East. For a time all went well. Military science is never up to date under modern conditions, because military men are as a class unimaginative, there are always at any date undeveloped inventions capable of disturbing current tactical and strategic practice which the military intelligence has declined. The German plan had been made for some years; it was a stale plan; it could probably have been foiled at the outset by a proper use of entrenchments and barbed wire and machine guns, but the French were by no means as advanced in their military science as the Germans, and they trusted to methods of open warfare that were at least fourteen years behind the times. They had a proper equipment neither of barbed wire nor machine guns, and there was a ridiculous tradition that the Frenchman did not fight well behind

earthworks. The Belgian frontier was defended by the fortress of Liège, ten or twelve years out of date, with forts whose armament had been furnished and fitted in many cases by German contractors; and the French north-eastern frontier was very badly equipped. Naturally the German armament firm of Krupp had provided nutcrackers for these nuts in the form of exceptionally heavy guns firing high explosive shells. These defences proved therefore to be mere traps for their garrisons. The French attacked and failed in the southern Ardennes. The German hosts swung round the French left with an effect of being irresistible; Liège fell on August 9th, Brussels was reached on August 20th, and the small British army of about 70,000, which had arrived in Belgium, was struck at Mons (August 22nd) in overwhelming force, and driven backward in spite of the very deadly rifle tactics it had learnt during the South African War. (The German troops could not believe that the British were using rifles and not machine guns against them.) The little British force was pushed aside westward, and the German right swept down so as to leave Paris to the west and crumple the entire French army back upon itself.

So confident was the German higher command at this stage of having won the war, that by the end of August German troops were already being withdrawn for the Eastern front, where the Russians were playing havoc in East and West Prussia. And then came the French counter-attack, strategically a very swift and brilliant counter-attack. The French struck back on their centre, they produced an unexpected army on their left, and the small British army, shaken but reinforced, was still fit to play a worthy part in the counter-stroke. The German right overran itself, lost its cohesion, and was driven back from the Marne to the Aisne (Battle of the Marne, September 6th to 10th). It would have been driven back farther had it not had the art of entrenchment in reserve. Upon the Aisne it stood and dug itself in. The heavy guns, the high explosive shell, the tanks, needed by the allies to smash up these entrenchments, did not yet exist.

The Battle of the Marne shattered the original German plan. For a time France was saved. But the German was not defeated; he had still a great offensive superiority in men and equipment. His fear of the Russian in the east had been relieved by a tremendous victory at

Tannenberg. His next phase was a headlong, less elaborately planned campaign to outflank the left of the allied armies and to seize the Channel ports and cut off supplies coming from Britain to France. Both armies extended to the west in a sort of race to the coast. Then the Germans, with a great superiority of guns and equipment, struck at the British round and about Ypres. They came very near to a break through, but the British held them.

The war on the Western front settled down to trench warfare. Neither side had the science and equipment needed to solve the problem of breaking through modern entrenchments and entanglements, and both sides were now compelled to resort to scientific men, inventors, and such-like unmilitary persons for counsel and help in their difficulty. At that time the essential problem of trench warfare had already been solved; there existed in England, for instance, the model of a tank, which would have given the allies a swift and easy victory before 1916; but the professional military mind is by necessity an inferior and unimaginative mind; no man of high intellectual quality would willingly imprison his gifts in such a calling; nearly all supremely great soldiers have been either inexperienced fresh-minded young men like Alexander, Napoleon, and Hoche, politicians turned soldiers like Julius Cæsar, nomads like the Hun and Mongol captains, or amateurs like Cromwell and Washington; whereas this war after fifty years of militarism was a hopelessly professional war; from first to last it was impossible to get it out of the hands of the regular generals, and neither the German nor allied headquarters was disposed to regard an invention with toleration that would destroy their traditional methods. The tank was not only disagreeably strange to these military gentlemen, but it gave an unprofessional protection to the common soldiers within it. The Germans, however, did make some innovations. In February (28th) they produced a rather futile novelty, the flame projector, the user of which was in constant danger of being burnt alive, and in April, in the midst of a second grave offensive upon the British (second Battle of Ypres, April 17th to May 17th), they employed a cloud of poison gas. This horrible device was used against Algerian and Canadian troops; it shook them by the physical torture it inflicted, and by the anguish of those who died, but it failed to break through them. For

some weeks chemists were of more importance than soldiers on the allied front, and within six weeks the defensive troops were already in possession of protective methods and devices.

For a year and a half, until July, 1916, the Western front remained in a state of indecisive tension. There were heavy attacks on either side that ended in bloody repulses. The French made costly but glorious thrusts at Arras and in Champagne in 1915, the British at Loos. From Switzerland to the North Sea there ran two continuous lines of entrenchment, sometimes at a distance of a mile or more, sometimes at a distance of a few feet (at Arras, *e.g.*), and in and behind these lines of trenches millions of men toiled, raided their enemies, and prepared for sanguinary and foredoomed offensives. In any preceding age these stagnant masses of men would have engendered a pestilence inevitably, but here again modern science

had altered the conditions of warfare. Certain novel diseases appeared, trench feet for instance, caused by prolonged standing in cold water, new forms of dysentery, and the like, but none developed to an extent to disable either combatant force. Behind this front the whole life of the belligerent nations was being turned more and more to the task of maintaining supplies of food, munitions, and, above all, men to supply the places of those who day by day were killed or mangled. The Germans had had the luck to possess a considerable number of big siege guns intended for the frontier fortresses; these were now available for trench smashing with high explosive, a use no one had foreseen for them. The Allies throughout the first years were markedly inferior in their supply of big guns and ammunition, and their losses were steadily greater than the German. Mr. Asquith, the British Prime Minister, though a very fine practitioner in all the arts of Parliament, was wanting in creative ability; and it is probably due to the push and hustle of Mr. Lloyd George (who presently ousted him in December, 1916) and the clamour of the British press that this inferiority of supplies was eventually rectified.

There was a tremendous German onslaught upon the French throughout the first half of 1916 round and about Verdun. The Germans suffered enormous losses and were held, after pushing in the French lines for some miles. The French losses were as great or greater. "*Ils ne passeront pas*," said and sang the French infantry — and kept their word.

The Eastern German front was more extended and less systematically entrenched than the Western. For a time the Russian armies continued to press westward in spite of the Tannenberg disaster. They conquered nearly the whole of Galicia from the Austrians, took Lemberg on September 2nd, 1914, and the great fortress of Przemysl on March 22nd, 1915. But after the Germans had failed to break the Western front of the Allies, and after an ineffective allied offensive made without proper material, they turned to Russia, and a series of heavy blows, with a novel use of massed artillery, were struck first in the south and then at the north of the Russian front. On June 22nd, Przemysl was retaken, and the whole Russian line was driven back until Vilna (September 2nd) was in German hands.

In May, 1915 (23rd), Italy joined the allies, and declared war upon Austria. (Not until a year later did she declare war on Germany.) She pushed over her eastern boundary towards Goritzia (which fell in the summer of 1916), but her intervention was of little use at that time to either Russia or the two Western powers. She merely established another line of trench warfare among the high mountains of her picturesque north-eastern frontier.

While the main fronts of the chief combatants were in this state of exhaustive deadlock, both sides were attempting to strike round behind the front of their adversaries. The Germans made a series of Zeppelin, and later of aeroplane, raids upon Paris and the east of England. Ostensibly these aimed at depôts, munition works, and the like targets of military importance, but practically they bombed promiscuously at inhabited places. At first these raiders dropped not very effective bombs, but later the size and quality of these missiles increased, considerable numbers of people were killed and injured, and very much damage was done. The English people were roused to a pitch of extreme indignation by these outrages. Although the Germans had possessed Zeppelins for some years, no one in authority in Great Britain had thought out the proper methods of dealing with them, and it was not until late in 1916 that an adequate supply of anti-aircraft guns was brought into play and that these raiders were systematically attacked by aeroplanes. Then came a series of Zeppelin disasters, and after the spring of 1917 they ceased to be used for any purpose but sea scouting, and their place as raiders was taken by large aeroplanes (the Gothas). The visits of these latter machines to London and the east of England became systematic after the summer of 1917. All through the winter of 1917-18, London on every moonlight night became familiar with the banging of warning maroons, the shrill whistles of the police alarm, the hasty clearance of the streets, the distant rumbling of scores and hundreds of anti-aircraft guns growing steadily to a wild uproar of thuds and crashes, the swish of flying shrapnel, and at last, if any of the raiders got through the barrage, with the dull heavy bang of the bursting bombs. Then presently, amidst the diminuendo of the gun fire, would come the inimitable rushing sound of the fire brigade engines and the hurry of the ambulances.... War was brought home to every Londoner by

these experiences.

While the Germans were thus assailing the nerve of their enemy home population through the air, they were also attacking the overseas trade of the British by every means in their power. At the outset of the war they had various trade destroyers scattered over the world, and a squadron of powerful modern cruisers in the Pacific, namely, the *Scharnhorst*, the *Gneisenau*, the *Leipzig*, the *Nürnberg*, and the *Dresden*. Some of the detached cruisers, and particularly the *Emden*, did a considerable amount of commerce destroying before they were hunted down, and the main squadron caught an inferior British force off the coast of Chile and sank the *Good Hope* and the *Monmouth* on November 1st, 1914. A month later these German ships were themselves pounced upon by a British force, and all (except the *Dresden*) sunk by Admiral Sturdee in the Battle of the Falkland Isles. After this conflict the allies remained in undisputed possession of the surface of the sea, a supremacy which the great naval Battle of Jutland (May 1st, 1916) did nothing to shake. The Germans concentrated their attention more and more upon submarine warfare. From the beginning of the war they had had considerable submarine successes. On one day, September 22nd, 1914, they sank three powerful cruisers, the *Aboukir*, the *Hogue*, and the *Cressy*, with 1473 men. They continued to levy a toll upon British shipping throughout the war; at first they hailed and examined passenger and mercantile shipping, but this practice they discontinued for fear of traps, and in the spring of 1915 they began to sink ships without notice. In May, 1915, they sank the great passenger liner, the *Lusitania*, without any warning, drowning a number of American citizens. This embittered American feeling against them, but the possibility of injuring and perhaps reducing Britain by a submarine blockade was so great, that they persisted in a more and more intensified submarine campaign, regardless of the danger of dragging the United States into the circle of their enemies.

Meanwhile, Turkish forces, very ill equipped, were making threatening gestures at Egypt across the desert of Sinai.

And while the Germans were thus striking at Britain, their least accessible and most formidable antagonist, through the air and under the sea, the French and British were also embarking upon a

disastrous flank attack in the east upon the Central Powers through Turkey. The Gallipoli campaign was finely imagined, but disgracefully executed. Had it succeeded, the Allies would have captured Constantinople in 1915. But the Turks were given two months' notice of the project by a premature bombardment of the Dardanelles in February, the scheme was also probably betrayed through the Greek Court, and when at last British and French forces were landed upon the Gallipoli peninsula in April, they found the Turks well entrenched and better equipped for trench warfare than themselves. The Allies trusted for heavy artillery to the great guns of the ships, which were comparatively useless for battering down entrenchments, and among every other sort of thing that they had failed to foresee, they had not foreseen hostile submarines. Several great battleships were lost; they went down in the same clear waters over which the ships of Xerxes had once sailed to their fate at Salamis. The story of the Gallipoli campaign from the side of the Allies is at once heroic and pitiful, a story of courage and incompetence, and of life, material, and prestige wasted, culminating in a withdrawal in January, 1916.

This failure was due in part to the refusal of the Greeks to co-operate in the adventure. For a year and a half the Greek king, the brother-in-law of the Kaiser, being protected by friends in high quarters on the Allied side, tricked and misled the Allies, and wasted the lives of great numbers of common British and French soldiers. In June, 1917, he was forced to abdicate, but instead of permitting the Greeks, under their proper leader Venizelos, to follow their natural and traditional republican disposition, his son, Alexander, the Kaiser's nephew, was made king in his place — *by the Allies!* This Greek chapter in the story of the great war still awaits the investigations of the historian. It is at present a quite inexplicable story, and we give these preposterous facts with no attempt to rationalize them.

Linked up closely with this Greek vacillation was the entry of Bulgaria into the war (October 12th, 1915). The king of Bulgaria had hesitated for more than a year to make any decision between the two sides. Now the manifest failure of the British at Gallipoli, coupled with a strong Austro-German attack in Serbia, swung him over to the

Central Powers. While the Serbs were hotly engaged with the Austro-German invaders upon the Danube he attacked Serbia in the rear, and in a few weeks the country had been completely overrun. The Serbian army made a terrible retreat through the mountains of Albania to the coast, where its remains were rescued by an Allied fleet.

An Allied force landed at Salonika in Greece, and pushed inland towards Monastir, but was unable to render any effectual assistance to the Serbians. It was the Salonika plan which sealed the fate of the Gallipoli expedition.

To the east, in Mesopotamia, the British, using Indian troops chiefly, made a still remoter flank attack upon the Central Powers. An army, very ill provided for the campaign, was landed at Basra in the November of 1914, and pushed up towards Bagdad in the following year. It gained a victory at Ctesiphon, the ancient Arsacid and Sassanid capital within twenty-five miles of Bagdad, but the Turks were heavily reinforced, there was a retreat to Kut, and there the British army, under General Townshend, was surrounded and starved into surrender on April 29th, 1916.

All these campaigns in the air, under the seas, in Russia, Turkey, and Asia, were subsidiary to the main front, the front of decision, between Switzerland and the sea; and there the main millions lay entrenched, slowly learning the necessary methods of modern scientific warfare. There was a rapid progress in the use of the aeroplane. At the outset of the war this had been used chiefly for scouting, and by the Germans for the dropping of marks for the artillery. Such a thing as aerial fighting was unheard of. In 1916 the aeroplanes carried machine guns and fought in the air; their bombing work was increasingly important, they had developed a wonderful art of aerial photography, and all the aerial side of artillery work, both with aeroplanes and observation balloons, had been enormously developed. But the military mind was still resisting the use of the tank, the obvious weapon for decision in trench warfare.

Many intelligent people outside military circles understood this quite clearly. The use of the tank against trenches was an altogether obvious expedient. Leonardo da Vinci invented an early tank, but what military “expert” has ever had the wits to study Leonardo?

Soon after the South African War, in 1903, there were stories in magazines describing imaginary battles in which tanks figured, and a complete working model of a tank was shown to the British military authorities — who of course rejected it — in 1912. Tanks had been invented and re-invented before the war began. But had the matter rested entirely in the hands of the military, there would never have been any use of tanks. It was Mr. Winston Churchill, at that time at the British Admiralty, who insisted upon the manufacture of the first tanks, and it was in the teeth of the grimmest opposition that they were sent to France. To the British navy, and not to the army, military science owes the use of these devices. The German military authorities were equally set against them. In July, 1916, Sir Douglas Haig, the British commander-in-chief, began a great offensive which failed to break through the German line. In some places he advanced a few miles; in others he was completely repulsed. There was a huge slaughter of the new British armies. And he did not use tanks.

In September, when the season was growing too late for a sustained offensive, tanks first appeared in warfare. A few were put into action by the British in a not very intelligent fashion. Their effect upon the German was profound, they produced something like a panic, and there can be little doubt that had they been used in July in sufficient numbers and handled by a general of imagination and energy, they would have ended the war there and then. At that time the Allies were in greater strength than the Germans upon the Western front. Russia, though fast approaching exhaustion, was still fighting, Italy was pressing the Austrians hard, and Roumania was just entering the war on the side of the allies. But the waste of men in this disastrous July offensive, coupled with the obstinate neglect of the possibilities of the tanks by the military authorities, brought the Allied cause to the very brink of disaster.

Directly the British failure of July had reassured the Germans, they turned on the Roumanians, and the winter of 1916 saw the same fate overtake Roumania that had fallen upon Serbia in 1915. The year that had begun with the retreat from Gallipoli and the surrender of Kut, ended with the crushing of Roumania and with volleys fired at a landing party of French and British marines by a royalist crowd in the port of Athens. It looked as though King Constantine of

Greece, that protégé of the Allied foreign offices, meant to lead his people in the footsteps of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. But the coast line of Greece is one much exposed to naval action. Greece was blockaded, and a French force from Salonika joined hands with an Italian force from Valona to cut the king of Greece off from his Central European friends.

On the whole, things looked much less dangerous for the Hohenzollern imperialism at the end of 1916 than they had done after the failure of the first great rush at the Marne. The Allies had wasted two years of opportunity. Belgium, Serbia, and Roumania, and large areas of France and Russia, were occupied by Austro-German troops. Counterstroke after counterstroke had failed, and Russia was now tottering towards a collapse. Had Germany been ruled with any wisdom, she might have made a reasonable peace at this time. But the touch of success had intoxicated her imperialists. They wanted not safety, but triumph, not world welfare, but world empire. "World power or downfall" was their formula; it gave their antagonists no alternative but a fight to a conclusive end.

§ 9

Early in 1917 Russia collapsed.

By this time the enormous strain of the war was telling hardly upon all the European populations. There had been a great disorganization of transport everywhere, a discontinuance of the normal repairs and replacements of shipping, railways, and the like, a using-up of material of all sorts, a dwindling of food production, a withdrawal of greater and greater masses of men from industry, a cessation of educational work, and a steady diminution of the ordinary securities and honesties of life. Nowhere was the available directive ability capable of keeping a grip upon affairs in the face of the rupture of habitual bonds and the replacement of the subtle disciplines of peace by the clumsy brutalities of military "order." More and more of the European population was being transferred from surroundings and conditions to which it was accustomed, to novel circumstances which distressed, stimulated, and demoralized it. But Russia suffered first and most from this universal pulling up of

civilization from its roots. The Russian autocracy was dishonest and incompetent. The Tsar, like several of his ancestors, had now given way to a crazy pietism, and the court was dominated by a religious impostor, Rasputin, whose cult was one of unspeakable foulness, a reeking scandal in the face of the world. Beneath the rule of this dirty mysticism, indolence and scoundrelism mismanaged the war. The Russian common soldiers were sent into battle without guns to support them, without even rifle ammunition; they were wasted by their officers and generals in a delirium of militarist enthusiasm. For a time they seemed to be suffering mutely as the beasts suffer; but there is a limit to the endurance even of the most ignorant. A profound disgust for the Tsardom was creeping through these armies of betrayed and wasted men. From the close of 1915 onwards Russia was a source of deepening anxiety to her Western allies. Throughout 1916 she remained largely on the defensive, and there were rumours of a separate peace with Germany. She gave little help to Roumania.

On December 29th, 1916, the monk Rasputin was murdered at a dinner-party in Petrograd, and a belated attempt was made to put the Tsardom in order. By March things were moving rapidly; food riots in Petrograd developed into a revolutionary insurrection; there was an attempted suppression of the Duma, the representative body, attempted arrests of liberal leaders, the formation of a provisional government under Prince Lvoff, and an abdication (March 15th) by the Tsar. For a time it seemed that a moderate and controlled revolution might be possible — perhaps under a new Tsar. Then it became evident that the destruction of confidence in Russia had gone too far for any such adjustments. The Russian people were sick to death of the old order of things in Europe, of Tsars and of wars and great powers; it wanted relief, and that speedily, from unendurable miseries. The Allies had no understanding of Russian realities; their diplomatists were ignorant of Russian; genteel persons, with their attention directed to the Russian Court rather than Russia, they blundered steadily with the new situation. There was little goodwill among the diplomatists for republicanism, and a manifest disposition to embarrass the new government as much as possible. At the head of the Russian republican government was an eloquent and picturesque leader, Kerensky, who found himself assailed by the deep forces of a

profounder revolutionary movement, the "social revolution," at home and cold-shouldered by the Allied governments abroad. His allies would neither let him give the Russian people land nor peace beyond their frontiers. The French and the British press pestered their exhausted ally for a fresh offensive, but when presently the Germans made a strong attack by sea and land upon Riga, the British Admiralty quailed before the prospect of a Baltic expedition in relief. The new Russian republic had to fight unsupported. In spite of their great naval predominance and the bitter protests of the great English admiral, Lord Fisher (1841-1920), it is to be noted that the Allies, except for some submarine attacks, left the Germans the complete mastery of the Baltic throughout the war.

The Russian masses were resolute to end the war. There had come into existence in Petrograd a body representing the workers and common soldiers, the Soviet, and this body clamoured for an international conference of socialists at Stockholm. Food riots were occurring in Berlin at this time, war weariness in Austria and Germany was profound, and there can be little doubt, in the light of subsequent events, that such a conference would have precipitated a reasonable peace on democratic lines in 1917 and a German revolution. Kerensky implored his Western allies to allow this conference to take place, but, fearful of a worldwide outbreak of socialism and republicanism, they refused, in spite of the favourable response of a small majority of the British Labour Party. Without either moral or physical help from the Allies, the "moderate" Russian republic still fought on and made a last desperate offensive effort in July. It failed after some preliminary successes and another great slaughtering of Russians.

The limit of Russian endurance was reached. Mutinies broke out in the Russian armies, and particularly upon the northern front, and upon November 7th, 1917, Kerensky's government was overthrown and power was seized by the Soviet Government, dominated by the Bolshevik socialists under Lenin, and pledged to make peace regardless of the Western powers. Russia passed definitely "out of the war."

In the spring of 1917 there had been a costly and ineffective French attack upon the Champagne front which had failed to break

through and sustained enormous losses. Here, then, by the end of 1917, was a phase of events altogether favourable to Germany, had her government been fighting for security and well-being rather than for pride and victory. But to the very end, to the pitch of final exhaustion, the people of the Central Powers were held to the effort to realize an impossible world imperialism.

To that end it was necessary that Britain should be not merely resisted, but subjugated, and in order to do that Germany had already dragged America into the circle of her enemies. Throughout 1916 the submarine campaign had been growing in intensity, but hitherto it had respected neutral shipping. In January, 1917, a complete "blockade" of Great Britain and France was proclaimed, and all neutral powers were warned to withdraw their shipping from the British seas. An indiscriminate sinking of the world's shipping began which compelled the United States to enter the war in April (6th), 1917. Throughout 1917, while Russia was breaking up and becoming impotent, the American people were changing swiftly and steadily into a great military nation. And the unrestricted submarine campaign, for which the German imperialists had accepted the risk of this fresh antagonist, was far less successful than had been hoped. The British navy proved itself much more inventive and resourceful than the British army; there was a rapid development of anti-submarine devices under water, upon the surface, and in the air; and after a month or so of serious destruction, the tale of submarine sinkings declined. The British found it necessary to put themselves upon food rations; but the regulations were well framed and ably administered, the public showed an excellent spirit and intelligence, and the danger of famine and social disorder was kept at arm's length.

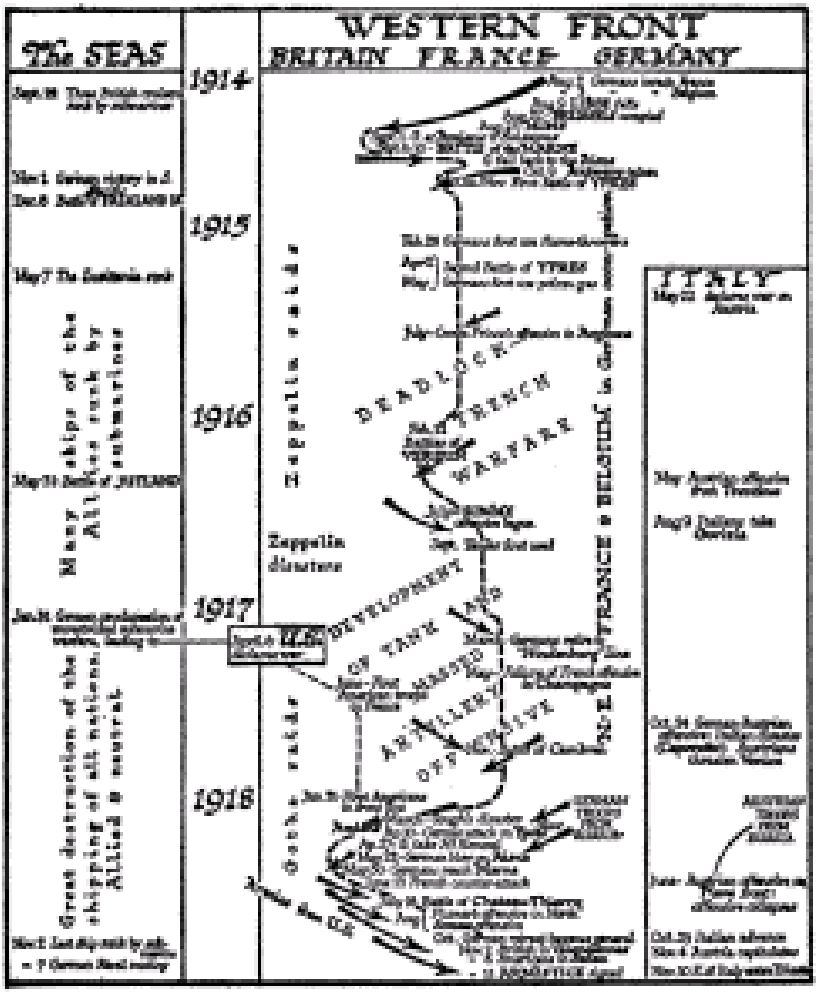
The SEAS
WESTERN FRONT
BRITAIN FRANCE GERMANY
1914
1915
1916
1917
1918
Many ships of the Allies sunk by submarines
Great destruction of the shipping of all nations, Allied & neutral
Zeppelin raids
Zeppelin disasters
Gotha raids
DEADLOCK
TRENCH WARFARE
DEVELOPMENT OF TANK AND MASSED ARTILLERY OFFENSIVE
FRANCE & BELGIUM in German hands
ITALY

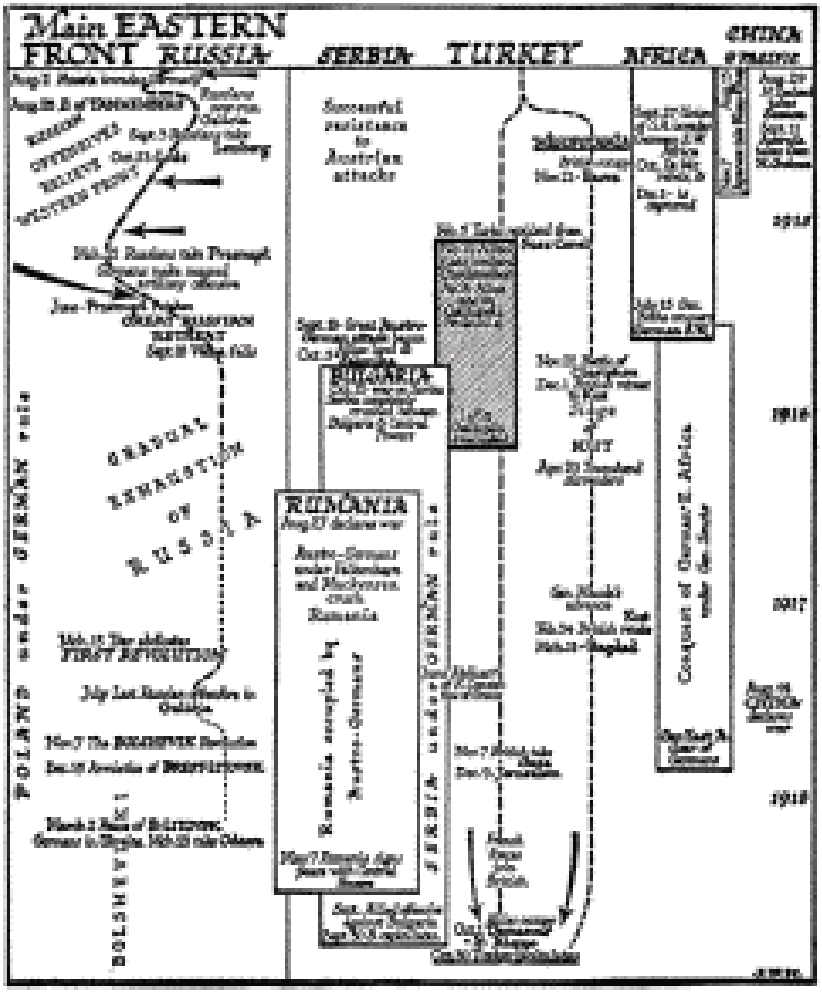

Yet the German imperial government persisted in its course. If the submarine was not doing all that had been expected, and if the armies of America gathered like a thunder-cloud, yet Russia was definitely down; and in October the same sort of Autumn offensive that had overthrown Serbia in 1915 and Roumania in 1916 was now turned with crushing effect against Italy. The Italian front collapsed after the Battle of Caporetto, and the Austro-German armies poured down into Venetia and came almost within gunfire of Venice. Germany felt justified, therefore, in taking a high line with the Russian peace proposals, and the peace of Brest Litovsk (March 2nd, 1918) gave

the Western allies some intimation of what a German victory would mean to them. It was a crushing and exorbitant peace, dictated with the utmost arrogance of confident victors.

All through the winter German troops had been shifting from the Eastern to the Western front, and now, in the spring of 1918, the jaded enthusiasm of hungry, weary, and bleeding Germany was lashed up for the one supreme effort that was really and truly to end the war. For some months American troops had been in France, but the bulk of the American army was still across the Atlantic. It was high time for the final conclusive blow upon the Western front, if such a blow was ever to be delivered. The first attack was upon the British in the Somme region. The not very brilliant cavalry generals who were still in command of a front upon which cavalry was a useless encumbrance, were caught napping; and on March 21st, in "Gough's Disaster," a British army was driven back in such disorder as no British army had ever known before. Thousands of guns were lost, and scores of thousands of prisoners. Many of these losses were due to the utter incompetence of the higher command. No less than a hundred tanks were abandoned *because they ran out of petrol*! The British were driven back almost to Amiens. Throughout April and May the Germans rained offensives on the Allied front. They came near to a break through in the north, and they made a great drive back to the Marne, which they reached again on May 30th, 1918.

This was the climax of the German effort. Behind it was nothing but an exhausted homeland. Fresh troops were hurrying from Britain across the Channel, and America was now pouring men into France by the hundred thousand. In June the weary Austrians made a last effort in Italy, and collapsed before an Italian counter-attack. Early in June the French began to develop a counter-attack in the Marne angle. By July the tide was turning and the Germans were reeling back. The Battle of Château Thierry (July 18th) proved the quality of the new American armies. In August the British opened a great and successful thrust into Belgium, and the bulge of the German lines towards Amiens wilted and collapsed. Germany had finished. The fighting spirit passed out of her army, and October was a story of defeat and retreat along the entire Western front. Early in November British troops were in Valenciennes and Americans in Sedan. In Italy

also the Austrian armies were in a state of disorderly retreat. But everywhere now the Hohenzollern and Habsburg forces were collapsing. The smash at the end was amazingly swift. Frenchmen and Englishmen could not believe their newspapers as day after day they announced the capture of more hundreds of guns and more thousands of prisoners.

In September a great allied offensive against Bulgaria had produced a revolution in that country and peace proposals. Turkey had followed with a capitulation at the end of October, and Austro-Hungary on November 4th. There was an attempt to bring out the German Fleet for a last fight, but the sailors mutinied (November 7th).

The Kaiser and the Crown Prince bolted hastily, and without a scrap of dignity, into Holland. It was like welshers bolting from a racecourse to escape a ducking. On November 11th an armistice was signed, and the war was at an end....

For four years and a quarter the war had lasted, and gradually it had drawn nearly everyone, in the Western world at least, into its vortex. Upwards of ten millions of people had been actually killed through the fighting, another twenty or twenty-five million had died through the hardships and disorders entailed. Scores of millions were suffering and enfeebled by under-nourishment and misery. A vast proportion of the living were now engaged in war work, in drilling and armament, in making munitions, in hospitals, in working as substitutes for men who had gone into the armies and the like. Business men had been adapting themselves to the more hectic methods necessary for profit in a world in a state of crisis. The war had become, indeed, an atmosphere, a habit of life, a new social order. Then suddenly it ended.

In London the armistice was proclaimed about midday on November 11th. It produced a strange cessation of every ordinary routine. Clerks poured out of their offices and would not return, assistants deserted their shops, omnibus drivers and the drivers of military lorries set out upon journeys of their own devising with picked-up loads of astounded and cheering passengers going nowhere in particular and careless whither they went. Vast vacant crowds presently choked the streets, and every house and shop that

possessed such adornments hung out flags. When night came, many of the main streets, which had been kept in darkness for many months because of the air raids, were brightly lit. It was very strange to see thronging multitudes assembled in an artificial light again. Everyone felt aimless, with a kind of strained and aching relief. It was over at last. There would be no more killing in France, no more air raids — and things would get better. People wanted to laugh, and weep — and could do neither. Youths of spirit and young soldiers on leave formed thin noisy processions that shoved their way through the general drift, and did their best to make a jollification. A captured German gun was hauled from the Mall, where a vast array of such trophies had been set out, into Trafalgar Square, and its carriage burnt. Squibs and crackers were thrown about. But there was little concerted rejoicing. Nearly everyone had lost too much and suffered too much to rejoice with any fervour.

§ 10

The world in the year after the great war was like a man who has had some vital surgical operation very roughly performed, and who is not yet sure whether he can now go on living or whether he has not been so profoundly shocked and injured that he will presently fall down and die. It was a world dazed and stunned. German militarist imperialism had been defeated, but at an overwhelming cost. It had come very near to victory. Everything went on, now that the strain of the conflict had ceased, rather laxly, rather weakly, and with a gusty and uncertain temper. There was a universal hunger for peace, a universal desire for the lost safety and liberty and prosperity of pre-war times, without any power of will to achieve and secure these things.

Just as with the Roman Republic under the long strain of the Punic War, so now there had been a great release of violence and cruelty, and a profound deterioration in financial and economic morality. Generous spirits had sacrificed themselves freely to the urgent demands of the war, but the sly and base of the worlds of business and money had watched the convulsive opportunities of the time and secured a firm grip upon the resources and political power

of their countries. Everywhere men who would have been regarded as shady adventurers before 1914 had acquired power and influence while better men toiled unprofitably. Such men as Lord Rhondda, the British food controller, killed themselves with hard work, while the war profiteer waxed rich and secured his grip upon press and party organization.

In the course of the war there had been extraordinary experiments in collective management in nearly all the belligerent countries. It was realized that the common expedients of peacetime commerce, the higgling of the market, the holding out for a favourable bargain, were incompatible with the swift needs of warfare. Transport, fuel, food supply, and the distribution of the raw materials not only of clothing, housing, and the like, but of everything needed for war munitions, had been brought under public control. No longer had farmers been allowed to under-farm; cattle had been put upon deer-parks and grass-lands ploughed up, with or without the owner's approval. Luxury building and speculative company promotion had been restrained. In effect, a sort of emergency socialist state had been established throughout belligerent Europe. It was rough-and-ready and wasteful, but it was more effective than the tangled incessant profit-seeking, the cornering and forestalling and incoherent productiveness of "private enterprise."

In the earlier years of the war there was a very widespread feeling of brotherhood and the common interest in all the belligerent states. The common men were everywhere sacrificing life and health for what they believed to be the common good of the state. In return, it was promised, there would be less social injustice after the war, a more universal devotion to the common welfare. In Great Britain, for instance, Mr. Lloyd George was particularly insistent upon his intention to make the after-war Britain "a land fit for heroes." He foreshadowed the continuation of this new war communism into the peace period in discourses of great fire and beauty. In Great Britain there was created a Ministry of Reconstruction, which was understood to be planning a new and more generous social order, better labour conditions, better housing, extended education, a complete and scientific revision of the economic system. Similar hopes of a better world sustained the common soldiers of France and

Germany and Italy. It was premature disillusionment that caused the Russian collapse. So that two mutually dangerous streams of anticipation were running through the minds of men in Western Europe towards the end of the war. The rich and adventurous men, and particularly the new war profiteers, were making their plans to prevent such developments as that air transport should become a state property, and to snatch back manufactures, shipping, land transport, the public services generally, and the trade in staples from the hands of the commonweal into the grip of private profit; they were securing possession of newspapers and busying themselves with party caucuses and the like to that end; while the masses of common men were looking forward naïvely to a new state of society planned almost entirely in their interest and according to generous general ideas. The history of 1919 is largely the clash of these two streams of anticipation. There was a hasty selling off, by the "business" government in control, of every remunerative public enterprise to private speculators.... By the middle of 1919 the labour masses throughout the world were manifestly disappointed and in a thoroughly bad temper. The British "Ministry of Reconstruction" and its foreign equivalents were exposed as a soothing sham. The common man felt he had been cheated. There was to be no reconstruction, but only a restoration of the old order — in the harsher form necessitated by the poverty of the new time.

For four years the drama of the war had obscured the social question which had been developing in the Western civilizations throughout the nineteenth century. Now that the war was over, this question reappeared gaunt and bare, as it had never been seen before.

And the irritations and hardships and the general insecurity of the new time were exacerbated by a profound disturbance of currency and credit. Money, a complicated growth of conventions rather than a system of values, had been deprived within the belligerent countries of the support of a gold standard. Gold had been retained only for international trade, and every government had produced excessive quantities of paper money for domestic use. With the breaking down of the war-time barriers the international exchange became a wildly fluctuating confusion, a source of distress to everyone except a few gamblers and wily speculators. Prices rose

and rose — with an infuriating effect upon the wage-earner. On the one hand was the employer resisting his demands for more pay; on the other hand, food, house-room, and clothing were being steadily cornered against him. And, which was the essential danger of the situation, *he had lost any confidence he had ever possessed that any patience or industrial willingness he displayed would really alleviate the shortages and inconveniences by which he suffered.*

In the speeches of politicians towards the close of 1919 and the spring of 1920, there was manifest an increasing recognition of the fact that what is called the capitalist system — the private ownership system that is, in which private profit is the working incentive — was on its trial. It had to produce general prosperity, they admitted, or it had to be revised. It is interesting to note such a speech as that of Mr. Lloyd George, the British premier, delivered on Saturday, December 6th, 1919. Mr. Lloyd George had had the education and training of a Welsh solicitor; he entered politics early, and in the course of a brilliant parliamentary career he had had few later opportunities for reading and thought. But being a man of great natural shrewdness, he was expressing here very accurately the ideas of the more intelligent of the business men and wealthy men and ordinary citizens who supported him.

"There is a new challenge to civilization," he said. "What is it? It is fundamental. It affects the whole fabric of society as we know it; its commerce, its trade, its industry, its finance, its social order — all are involved in it. There are those who maintain that the prosperity and strength of the country have been built up by the stimulating and invigorating appeal to individual impulse, to individual action. That is one view. The State must educate; the State must assist where necessary; the State must control where necessary; the State must shield the weak against the arrogance of the strong; but the life springs from individual impulse and energy. (Cheers.) That is one view. What is the other? That private enterprise is a failure, tried, and found wanting — a complete failure, a cruel failure. It must be rooted out, and the community must take charge as a community, to produce, to distribute, as well as to control.

"Those are great challenges for us to decide. *We* say that the ills of private enterprise can be averted. *They* say, 'No, they cannot. No

ameliorative, no palliative, no restrictive, no remedial measure will avail. These evils are inherent in the system. They are the fruit of the tree, and you must cut it down.' That is the challenge we hear ringing through the civilized world to-day, from ocean to ocean, through valley and plain. You hear it in the whining and maniacal shrieking of the Bolshevists. You hear it in the loud, clear, but more restrained tones of Congresses and Conferences. The Bolshevists would blow up the fabric with high explosive, with horror. Others would pull down with the crowbars and with cranks — especially cranks. (Laughter.)

"Unemployment, with its injustice for the man who seeks and thirsts for employment, who begs for labour and cannot get it, and who is punished for failure he is not responsible for by the starvation of his children — that torture is *something that private enterprise ought to remedy for its own sake*. (Cheers.) Sweating, slums, the sense of semi-slavery in labour, must go. We must cultivate a sense of manhood by treating men as men. If I — and I say this deliberately — if I had to choose between this fabric I believe in, and allowing millions of men and women and children to rot in its cellars, I would not hesitate one hour. That is not the choice. Thank God it is not the choice. Private enterprise can produce more, so that all men get a fair share of it...."

Here, put into quasi-eloquent phrasing, and with a jest adapted to the mental habits of the audience, we have the common-sense view of the ordinary prosperous man not only of Great Britain, but of America or France or Italy or Germany. In quality and tone it is a fair sample of British political thought in 1919. The prevailing economic system has made us what we are, is the underlying idea; and we do not want any process of social destruction to precede a renascence of society, we do not want to experiment with the fundamentals of our social order. Let us accept that. Adaptation, Mr. Lloyd George admitted, there had to be. Now this occasion of his speaking was a year and a month after the Armistice, and for all that period private enterprise had been failing to do all that Mr. Lloyd George was so cheerfully promising it would do. The community was in urgent need of houses. Throughout the war there had been a cessation not only of building, but of repairs. The shortage of houses in the last months of

1919 amounted to scores of thousands in Britain alone. Multitudes of people were living in a state of exasperating congestion, and the most shameless profiteering in apartments and houses was going on. It was a difficult, but not an impossible situation. Given the same enthusiasm and energy and self-sacrifice that had tided over the monstrous crisis of 1916, the far easier task of providing a million houses could have been performed in a year or so. But there had been corners in building materials, transport was in a disordered state, and it did not *pay* private enterprise to build houses at any rents within the means of the people who needed them. Private enterprise, therefore, so far from bothering about the public need of housing, did nothing but corner and speculate in rents and sub-letting. It now demanded grants in aid from the State — in order to build at a profit. And there was a great crowding and dislocation of goods at the dépôts because there was insufficient road transport. There was an urgent want of cheap automobiles to move about goods and workers. But private enterprise in the automobile industry found it far more profitable to produce splendid and costly cars for those whom the war had made rich. The munition factories built with public money could have been converted very readily into factories for the mass production of cheap automobiles, but private enterprise had insisted upon these factories being sold by the State, and would neither meet the public need itself nor let the State do so. So, too, with the world, in the direst discomfort for need of shipping, private enterprise insisted upon the shutting down of the newly constructed State shipyards. Currency was dislocated everywhere, but private enterprise was busy buying and selling francs or marks and intensifying the trouble. While Mr. George was making the very characteristic speech we have quoted, the discontent of the common man was gathering everywhere, and little or nothing was being done to satisfy his needs. It was becoming very evident that unless there was to be some profound change in the spirit of business, under an unrestrained private enterprise system there was little or no hope, in Europe at any rate, of decent housing, clothing, or education for the workers for two or three generations.

These are facts that the historian of mankind is obliged to note with

as little comment as possible. Private enterprise in Europe in 1919 displayed neither will nor capacity for meeting the crying needs of the time. So soon as it was released from control, it ran naturally into speculation, cornering, and luxury production. It followed the line of maximum profit. It displayed no sense of its own dangers; and it resisted any attempt to restrain and moderate its profits and make itself serviceable, even in its own interest. And this went on in the face of the most striking manifestations of the extreme recalcitrance on the part of the European masses to the prolonged continuance of the privations and inconveniences they suffered. In 1913 these masses were living as they had lived since birth; they were habituated to the life they led. The masses of 1919, on the other hand, had been uprooted everywhere, to go into the armies, to go into munition factories, and so on. They had lost their habits of acquiescence, and they were hardier and more capable of desperate action. Great multitudes of men had gone through such brutalizing training as, for instance, bayonet drill; they had learnt to be ferocious, and to think less either of killing or being killed. Social unrest had become, therefore, much more dangerous. Everything seemed to point to a refusal to tolerate the current state of affairs for many years. Unless the educated and prosperous and comfortable people of Europe could speedily get their private enterprise under sufficient restraint to make it work well and rapidly for the common good, unless they could develop the idea of business as primarily a form of public service and not primarily a method of profit-making, unless they could in their own interest achieve a security of peace that would admit of a cessation not only of war preparation, but of international commercial warfare, strike and insurrection promised to follow strike and insurrection up to a complete social and political collapse. It was not that the masses had or imagined that they had the plan of a new social, political, and economic system. They had not, and they did not believe they had. The defects we have pointed out in the socialist scheme (chapter xxxix, § 5) were no secret from them. It was a much more dangerous state of affairs than that. It was that they were becoming so disgusted with the current system, with its silly luxury, its universal waste, and its general misery, that they did not care what happened afterwards so long as they could destroy it. It

was a return to a state of mind comparable to that which had rendered possible the debacle of the Roman Empire.

Already in 1919 the world had seen one great community go that way, the Russian people. The Russians overturned the old order and submitted to the autocratic rule of a small group of doctrinaire Bolshevik socialists, because these men seemed to have something new to try. They wrecked the old system, and at any cost they would not have it back. The information available from Russia at the time of writing this summary is still too conflicting and too obviously tainted by propagandist aims for us to form any judgment upon the proceedings and methods of the Soviet Government, but it is very plain that from November, 1917, Russia has not only endured that government and its mainly socialistic methods, but has fought for it successfully against anything that seemed to threaten a return to the old régime.

We have already (§ 5) pointed out the very broad differences between the Russian and the Western communities, and the strong reasons there are for doubting that they will move upon parallel lines and act in similar ways. The Russian masses were cut off by want of education and sympathy from the small civilized community of prosperous and educated people which lived upon them. These latter were a little separate nation. The masses below have thrown that separate nation off and destroyed it and begun again, so to speak, upon a new sort of society which, whether it succeed or collapse, cannot fail to be of intense interest to all mankind. But there is much more unity of thought and feeling between class and class in the West than in Russia, and particularly in the Atlantic communities. Even if they wrangle, classes can talk together and understand each other. There is no unbroken stratum of illiterates. The groups of rich and speculative men, the “bad men” in business and affairs, whose freedoms are making the very name of “private enterprise” stink in the nostrils of the ordinary man, are only the more active section of very much larger classes, guilty perhaps of indolence and self-indulgence, but capable of being roused to a sense not merely of the wickedness but of the danger of systematic self-seeking in a strained,

impoverished, and sorely tried world. Many of these more reasonable and moral people have shown themselves clearly aware of the nature of the present situation, and some of them have made speeches and delivered sermons and written books — often addressed to the working classes — expressing very generous and unselfish views. Speeches and sermons and books will in themselves do little to allay the gathering wrath of classes ill housed, ill fed, and unhealthy, and angry because they believe things are so through the reckless greed of others; but such utterances are valuable as admissions, and if these good intentions, encouraged perhaps and aided by a certain pressure from below, presently develop into a resolute combining and direction of the energies of private enterprise — for a time at least — towards socially necessary work and a restriction of speculation and luxury, and if there begin a rapid provision, even at some cost to the hoards and satisfactions of the successful classes, of the decent homes and gardens, of the pleasant public surroundings, the health services and the education and leisure needed to tranquillize the fiercer discontents, it is still possible that readjustment rather than revolution will be the method of the Atlantic communities. But that readjustment cannot be indefinitely delayed; it must come soon.

In one way or another it seems inevitable now that the new standard of well-being which the mechanical revolution of the last century has rendered possible, should become the general standard of life. Revolution is conditional upon public discomfort. Social peace is impossible without a rapid amelioration of the needless discomforts of the present time. A rapid resort to willing service and social reconstruction on the part of those who own and rule, or else a worldwide social revolution leading towards an equalization of conditions and an attempt to secure comfort on new and untried lines, seem now to be the only alternatives before mankind. The choice which route shall be taken lies, we believe, in western Europe, and still more so in America, with the educated, possessing, and influential classes. The former route demands much sacrifice, for prosperous people in particular, a voluntary assumption of public duties and a voluntary acceptance of class discipline and self-denial; the latter may take an indefinite time to traverse, it will certainly be a

very destructive and bloody process, and whether it will lead to a new and better state of affairs at last is questionable. A social revolution, if ultimately the western European States blunder into it, may prove to be a process extending over centuries; it may involve a social breakdown as complete as that of the Roman Empire, and it may necessitate as slow a recuperation.

Let us add to what has been written above a short passage from an abler and far more authoritative pen. It approaches this question of economic disorganization from a different angle, but the drift of its implications is the same. It says as plainly to the private capitalist system: "Mend, show more understanding, and a better and a stronger will for the common welfare, or go."

"In the latter stages of the war all the belligerent governments practised, from necessity or incompetence, what a Bolshevist might have done from design. Even now, when the war is over, most of them continue out of weakness the same malpractices. But further, the Governments of Europe, being many of them at this moment reckless in their methods as well as weak, seek to direct on to a class known as 'profiteers' the popular indignation against the more obvious consequences of their vicious methods. These profiteers are, broadly speaking, the entrepreneur class of capitalists, that is to say, the active and constructive element in the whole capitalist society, who in a period of rapidly rising prices cannot but get rich quick whether they wish it or desire it or not. If prices are continually rising, every trader who has purchased for stock or owns property and plant inevitably makes profits. By directing hatred against this class, therefore, the European Governments are carrying a step further the fatal process which the subtle mind of Lenin had consciously conceived. The profiteers are a consequence and not a cause of rising prices. By combining a popular hatred of the class of *entrepreneurs* with the blow already given to social security by the violent and arbitrary disturbance of contract and of the established equilibrium of wealth which is the inevitable result of inflation, these governments are fast rendering impossible a continuance of the social and economic order of the nineteenth century. But they have no plan for replacing it.

"We are thus faced in Europe with the spectacle of an

extraordinary weakness, on the part of the great capitalist class, which has emerged from the industrial triumphs of the nineteenth century and seemed a very few years ago our all-powerful master. The terror and personal timidity of the individuals of this class is now so great, their confidence in their place in society and in their necessity to the social organism so diminished, that they are the easy victims of intimidation. This was not so in England twenty-five years ago, any more than it is now in the United States. Then the capitalists believed in themselves, in their value to society, in the propriety of their continued existence in the full enjoyment of their riches and the unlimited exercise of their power. Now they tremble before every insult. Call them pro-Germans, international financiers, or profiteers, and they will give you any ransom you choose to ask not to speak of them so harshly. They allow themselves to be ruined and altogether undone by their own instruments, governments of their own making, and a press of which they are the proprietors. Perhaps it is historically true that no order of society ever perished save by its own hand."

§ 11

We have dealt with the social and economic disorder of the European communities, and the rapid return of the "class-war" to the foreground of attention, before giving any account of the work of world settlement that centred on the Peace Conference at Paris, because the worried and preoccupied state of everyone concerned with private problems of income, prices, employment, and the like goes far to explain the jaded atmosphere in which that Conference addressed itself to the vast task before it.

The story of the Conference turns very largely upon the adventure of one particular man, one of those men whom accident or personal quality picks out as a type to lighten the task of the historian. We have in the course of this history found it very helpful at times to focus our attention upon some individual, Buddha, Alexander the Great, Yuan Chwang, the Emperor Frederick II and Charles V and Napoleon I for example, and to let him by reflection illuminate the period in which he lived. The conclusion of the Great War can be

seen most easily as the rise of the American President, President Wilson, to predominant importance in the world's hopes and attention, and his failure to justify that predominance.

President Wilson (born 1856) had previously been a prominent student and teacher of history, constitutional law, and the political sciences generally. He had held various professorial chairs, and had been President of Princeton University (New Jersey). There is a long list of books to his credit, and they show a mind rather exclusively directed to American history and American politics. There is no evidence that he had at any time in his life made a general study of the world problem outside the very peculiar and exceptional American case. He was mentally the new thing in history, negligent of and rather ignorant of the older things out of which his new world had arisen. He retired from academic life, and was elected Democratic Governor of New Jersey in 1910. In 1913 he became the Democratic presidential candidate, and as a consequence of a violent quarrel between ex-President Roosevelt and President Taft, which split the dominant Republican party, he became President of the United States.

The events of August 1914 seem to have taken President Wilson, like the rest of his fellow-countrymen, by surprise. We find him cabling an offer of his services as a mediator on August 3rd. Then, for a time, he and America watched the conflict. At first neither the American people nor their President seem to have had a very clear or profound understanding of that long-gathered catastrophe. Their tradition for a century had been to disregard the problems of the Old World, and it was not to be lightly changed. The imperialistic arrogance of the German Court and the stupid inclination of the German military authorities towards melodramatic "frightfulness," their invasion of Belgium, their cruelties there, their use of poison gas, and the nuisance of their submarine campaign created a deepening hostility to Germany in the States as the war proceeded; but the tradition of political abstinence and the deep-rooted persuasion that America possessed a political morality altogether superior to European conflicts restrained the President from active intervention. He adopted a lofty tone. He professed to be unable to judge the causes and justice of the Great War. It was largely his high

pacific attitude that secured his re-election as President for a second term. But the world is not to be mended by merely regarding evil-doers with an expression of rather undiscriminating disapproval. By the end of 1916 the Germans had been encouraged to believe that under no circumstances whatever would the United States fight, and in 1917 they began their unrestricted submarine warfare and the sinking of American ships without notice. President Wilson and the American people were dragged into the war by this supreme folly. And also they were dragged into a reluctant attempt to define their relations to Old-World politics in some other terms than those of mere aloofness. Their thoughts and temper changed very rapidly. They came into the war side by side with the Allies, but not in any pact with the Allies. They came into the war, in the name of their own modern civilization, to punish and end an intolerable political and military situation.

Slow and belated judgments are sometimes the best judgments. In a series of "notes," too long and various for detailed treatment in this *Outline*, thinking aloud, as it were, in the hearing of all mankind, President Wilson sought to state the essential differences of the American State from the Great Powers of the Old World. We have been at some pains in this history to make plain the development of these differences. He unfolded a conception of international relationships that came like a gospel, like the hope of a better world, to the whole eastern hemisphere. Secret agreements were to cease, "nations" were to determine their own destinies, militarist aggression was to cease, the sea-ways were to be free to all mankind. These commonplaces of American thought, these secret desires of every sane man, came like a great light upon the darkness of anger and conflict in Europe. At last, men felt, the ranks of diplomacy were broken, the veils of Great Power "policy" were rent in twain. Here with authority, with the strength of a powerful new nation behind it, was the desire of the common man throughout the world, plainly said.

Manifestly there was needed some over-riding instrument of government to establish world law and maintain these broad and liberal generalizations upon human intercourse. A number of schemes had floated in men's minds for the attainment of that end. In

particular there was a movement for some sort of world league, a "League of Nations." The American President adopted this phrase and sought to realize it. An essential condition of the peace he sought through the overthrow of German imperialism was, he declared, to be this federal organ. This League of Nations was to be the final court of appeal in international affairs. It was to be the substantial realization of the peace. Here again he awakened a tremendous echo.

President Wilson was the spokesman of a new age. Throughout the war, and for some little time after it had ended, he held, so far as the Old World was concerned, that exalted position. But in America, where they knew him better, there were doubts. And writing as we do now with the wisdom of subsequent events, we can understand these doubts. America, throughout a century and more of detachment and security, had developed new ideals and formulæ of political thought, without realizing with any intensity that, under conditions of stress and danger, these ideals and formulæ might have to be passionately sustained. To her community many things were platitudes that had to the Old World communities, entangled still in ancient political complications, the quality of a saving gospel. President Wilson was responding to the thought and conditions of his own people and his own country, based on a liberal tradition that had first found its full expression in English speech; but to Europe and Asia he seemed to be thinking and saying, for the first time in history, things hitherto undeveloped and altogether secret. And that misconception he may have shared.

We are dealing here with an able and successful professor of political science, who did not fully realize what he owed to his contemporaries and the literary and political atmosphere he had breathed throughout his life; and who passed very rapidly, after his re-election as President, from the mental attitudes of a political leader to those of a Messiah. His "notes" are a series of explorations of the elements of the world situation. When at last, in his address to Congress of January 8th, 1918, he produced his Fourteen Points as a definite statement of the American peace intentions, they were, as a statement, far better in their spirit than in their arrangement and matter.

Yet, since the Fourteen Points certainly mark a new epoch in

human affairs, and since it was in the belief that they would determine and limit the pains and penalties of the peace treaty that Germany capitulated, it may be well to summarize them here, with a word or so of explanation.

(I) The First Point was the most vital of all. It summarizes and dismisses the essential evils of the Great Power system. It demands: "Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view."

(II) "Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants."

(III) "The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance."

(IV) "Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety."

There are four points of universal importance, admirably stated. But II is insufficient. Why should the sea-ways alone be free? What of the air-ways above three thousand feet? What of the great international land routes? Why, if Switzerland is at war with Germany and Italy, should those powers be able to stop air and land transit and the passage of peaceful people between France and Constantinople?

After IV, the Fourteen Points embark upon the consideration of particular cases, for which one general statement should have sufficed.

(V) provides for "A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined."... This is hopelessly vague. What, for instance, is this about claims and title? There is no definition, no standard here.

The drop towards particular current issues continues in the next eight points, which betray clearly how limited and accidental was the President's vision of European affairs.

(VI) is a vague demand for the evacuation of Russian territory (then occupied by Germany), and the "assistance" (undefined) of the Russian people.

(VII) Evacuation and restoration of Belgium.

(VIII) Evacuation and restoration of all French territory, and the "righting" of the wrong done to France by Prussia in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine.

(IX) The readjustment of the Italian frontier "on the lines of nationality."

(X) "Autonomy" of the Austrian "subject nations."

(XI) The Balkans to be evacuated, Serbia to be granted an outlet to the sea, and the independence of the Balkan States to be guaranteed.

(XII) Turkish subject nations to be assured of "undoubted security of life and unmolested opportunity of autonomous development." The Dardanelles to be internationalized, and Ottoman sovereignty to be recognized only in Turkish districts.

(XIII) Poland to be independent.

Finally the Fourteenth Point arises again to the Great Charter level out of this peddling with special cases.

(XIV) "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political and territorial independence for great and small States alike."

So far the Fourteen Points. But some of the utterances of President Wilson after this epoch-making address went much further and much higher than this first statement. On September 27th, 1918, at New York, he said some very important things:

"As I see it, the constitution of that League of Nations and the clear definition of its objects must be a part, in a sense the most essential part, of the peace settlement itself. It cannot be formed now. If formed now, it would be merely a new alliance confined to the nations associated against a common enemy....

"But these general terms do not disclose the whole matter. Some

details are needed to make them sound less like a thesis and more like a practical programme. These, then, are some of the particulars, and I state them with the greater confidence because I can state them authoritatively as representing this Government's interpretation of its own duty with regard to peace.

"First, the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that has no favourites and knows no standards but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.

"Second, no special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.

"Third, there can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations.

"Fourth, and more specifically, there can be no special selfish economic combinations within the League, and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion, except as the power of economic penalty, by exclusion from the markets of the world, may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.

"Fifth, all international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world....

"In the same sentence in which I say that the United States will enter into no special arrangements or understandings with particular nations, let me say also that the United States is prepared to assume its full share of responsibility for the maintenance of the common covenants and understandings upon which peace must henceforth rest.

"We still read Washington's immortal warning against entangling alliances with full comprehension and an answering purpose. But only special and limited alliances entangle; and we recognize and accept the duty of a new day in which we are permitted to hope for a general alliance, which will avoid entanglements and clear the air of the world for common understandings and the maintenance of common rights."

These Fourteen Points and their significant later addenda had an immense reception throughout the world. Here at last seemed a peace for reasonable men everywhere, as good and acceptable to honest and decent Germans and Russians, as to honest and decent Frenchmen and Englishmen and Belgians; and for some months the whole world was lit by faith in Wilson. Could they have been made the basis of a world settlement in 1919, they would forthwith have opened a new and more hopeful era in human affairs.

But, as we must tell, they did not do that. There was about President Wilson a certain narrowness of mind, a certain suspicion of egotism; there was in the generation of people in the United States to whom this great occasion came, a generation born in security, reared in plenty and, so far as history goes, in ignorance, a generation remote from the tragic issues that had made Europe grave, a certain superficiality and lightness of mind. It was not that the American people were superficial by nature and necessity, but that they had never been deeply stirred by the idea of a human community larger than their own. It was an intellectual but not a moral conviction, with them. One had on the one hand these new people of the new world, with their new ideas, their finer and better ideas, of peace and world righteousness, and on the other the old, bitter, deeply entangled peoples of the Great Power system and the former were crude and rather childish in their immense inexperience, and the latter were seasoned and bitter and intricate. The theme of this clash of the raw idealist youthfulness of a new age with the experienced ripeness of the old, was treated years ago by that great novelist, Henry James, in a very typical story called *Daisy Miller*. It is the pathetic story of a frank, trustful, high-minded, but rather simple-minded American girl, with a real disposition towards righteousness and a great desire for a "good time" and how she came to Europe and was swiftly entangled and put in the wrong, and at last driven to welcome death by the complex tortuousness and obstinate limitations of the older world. There have been a thousand variants of that theme in real life, a thousand such trans-Atlantic tragedies, and the story of President Wilson is one of them. But it is not to be supposed, because the new thing succumbs to the old infections, that is the final condemnation of the new thing.

Probably no fallible human being manifestly trying to do his best amidst overwhelming circumstances has been subjected to such minute, searching, and pitiless criticism as President Wilson. He is blamed, and it would seem that he is rightly blamed, for conducting the war and the ensuing peace negotiations on strictly party lines. He remained the President representing the American Democratic Party, when circumstances conspired to make him the representative of the general interests of mankind. He made no attempt to forget party issues for a time, and to incorporate with himself such great American leaders as ex-President Roosevelt, ex-President Taft, and the like. He did not draw fully upon the moral and intellectual resources of the States; he made the whole issue too personal, and he surrounded himself with merely personal adherents. And a still graver error was his decision to come to the Peace Conference himself. Nearly every experienced critic seems to be of opinion that he should have remained in America, in the rôle of America, speaking occasionally as if a nation spoke. Throughout the concluding years of the war he had achieved an unexampled position in the world.

President Wilson

Says Doctor Dillon: “Europe, when the President touched its shores, was as clay ready for the creative potter. Never before were the nations so eager to follow a Moses who would take them to the long-promised land where wars are prohibited and blockades unknown. And to their thinking he was that great leader. In France men bowed down before him with awe and affection. Labour leaders in Paris told me that they shed tears of joy in his presence, and that their comrades would go through fire and water to help him to realize his noble schemes. To the working classes in Italy his name was a heavenly clarion at the sound of which the earth would be renewed. The Germans regarded him and his humane doctrine as their sheet-anchor of safety. The fearless Herr Muehlon said: ‘If President

Wilson were to address the Germans, and pronounce a severe sentence upon them, they would accept it with resignation and without a murmur and set to work at once.' In German-Austria his fame was that of a saviour, and the mere mention of his name brought balm to the suffering and surcease of sorrow to the afflicted...."

Such was the overpowering expectation of the audience to which President Wilson prepared to show himself. He reached France on board the *George Washington* in December, 1918.

He brought his wife with him. That seemed no doubt a perfectly natural and proper thing to an American mind. Quite a number of the American representatives brought their wives. Unhappily a social quality, nay, almost a tourist quality, was introduced into the world settlement by these ladies. Transport facilities were limited, and most of them arrived in Europe with a radiant air of privilege. They came as if they came to a treat. They were, it was intimated, seeing Europe under exceptionally interesting circumstances. They would visit Chester, or Warwick, or Windsor *en route* — for they might not have a chance of seeing these celebrated places again. Important interviews would be broken off to get in a visit to some "old historical mansion." This may seem a trivial matter to note in a History of Mankind, but it was such small human things as this that threw a miasma of futility over the Peace Conference of 1919. In a little while one discovered that Wilson, the Hope of Mankind, had vanished, and that all the illustrated fashion papers contained pictures of a delighted tourist and his wife, grouped smilingly with crowned heads and such-like enviable company.... It is so easy to be wise after the event, and to perceive that he should not have come over.

M. Clemenceau

The men he had chiefly to deal with, for example M. Clemenceau (France), Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Balfour (Britain), Baron Sonnino and Signor Orlando (Italy), were men of widely dissimilar historical traditions. But in one respect they resembled him and appealed to his sympathies. They, too, were party politicians, who had led their country through the war. Like himself they had failed to grasp the necessity of entrusting the work of settlement to more specially qualified men. “They were the merest novices in international affairs. Geography, ethnology, psychology, and political history were sealed books to them. Like the Rector of Louvain University, who told Oliver Goldsmith that, as he had become the head of that institution without knowing Greek, he failed to see why it should be taught there, the chiefs of State, having obtained the

highest position in their respective countries without more than an inkling of international affairs, were unable to realize the importance of mastering them or the impossibility of repairing the omission as they went along....”

“What they lacked, however, might in some perceptible degree have been supplied by enlisting as their helpers men more happily endowed than themselves. But they deliberately chose mediocrities. It is a mark of genial spirits that they are well served, but the plenipotentiaries of the Conference were not characterized by it. Away in the background some of them had familiars or casual prompters to whose counsels they were wont to listen, but many of the adjoints who moved in the limelight of the world-stage were gritless and pithless.

"As the heads of the principal Governments implicitly claimed to be the authorized spokesmen of the human race, and endowed with unlimited powers, it is worth noting that this claim was boldly challenged by the people's organs in the Press. Nearly all the journals read by the masses objected from the first to the dictatorship of the group of Premiers, Mr. Wilson being excepted...."

The restriction upon our space in this *Outline* will not allow us to tell here how the Peace Conference shrank from a Council of Ten to a Council of Four (Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando), and how it became a conference less and less like a frank and open discussion of the future of mankind, and more and more like some old-fashioned diplomatic conspiracy. Great and wonderful had been the hopes that had gathered to Paris. "The Paris of the Conference," says Dr. Dillon, "ceased to be the capital of France. It became a vast cosmopolitan caravanserai teeming with unwonted aspects of life and turmoil, filled with curious samples of the races, tribes, and tongues of four continents who came to watch and wait for the mysterious to-morrow.

"An Arabian Nights' touch was imparted to the dissolving panorama by strange visitants from Tartary and Kurdistan, Corea and Aderbeijan, Armenia, Persia, and the Hedjaz — men with patriarchal beards and scimitar-shaped noses, and others from desert and oasis, from Samarkand and Bokhara. Turbans and fezzes, sugar-loaf hats and head-gear resembling episcopal mitres, old military uniforms devised for the embryonic armies of new states on the eve of perpetual peace, snowy-white burnouses, flowing mantles, and graceful garments like the Roman toga, contributed to create an atmosphere of dreamy unreality in the city where the grimmest of realities were being faced and coped with.

"Then came the men of wealth, of intellect, of industrial enterprise, and the seed-bearers of the ethical new ordering, members of economic committees from the United States, Britain, Italy, Poland, Russia, India, and Japan, representatives of naphtha industries and far-off coal mines, pilgrims, fanatics and charlatans from all climes, priests of all religions, preachers of every doctrine,

who mingled with princes, field-marshals, statesmen, anarchists, builders-up and pullers-down. All of them burned with desire to be near to the crucible in which the political and social systems of the world were to be melted and recast. Every day, in my walks in my apartment, or at restaurants, I met emissaries from lands and peoples whose very names had seldom been heard of before in the West. A delegation from the Pont-Euxine Greeks called on me, and discoursed of their ancient cities of Trebizond, Samsoun, Tripoli, Kerassund, in which I resided many years ago, and informed me that they, too, desired to become welded into an independent Greek Republic, and had come to have their claims allowed. The Albanians were represented by my old friend Turkhan Pasha, on the one hand, and by my friend Essad Pasha on the other — the former desirous of Italy's protection, the latter demanding complete independence. Chinamen, Japanese, Coreans, Hindus, Kirghizes, Lesghiens, Circassians, Mingrelians, Buryats, Malays, and Negroes and Negroids from Africa and America were among the tribes and tongues foregathered in Paris to watch the rebuilding of the political world system and to see where they 'came in.' ..."

To this thronging, amazing Paris, agape for a new world, came President Wilson, and found its gathering forces dominated by a personality narrower, in every way more limited and beyond comparison more forcible than himself: the French Premier, M. Clemenceau. At the instance of President Wilson, M. Clemenceau was elected President of the Conference. "It was," said President Wilson, "a special tribute to the sufferings and sacrifices of France." And that, unhappily, sounded the keynote of the Conference, whose sole business should have been with the future of mankind.

Georges Benjamin Clemenceau was an old journalist politician, a great denouncer of abuses, a great upsetter of governments, a doctor who had, while a municipal councillor, kept a free clinic, and a fierce, experienced duellist. None of his duels ended fatally, but he faced them with great intrepidity. He had passed from the medical school to republican journalism in the days of the Empire. In those days he was an extremist of the left. He was for a time a teacher in America, and he married and divorced an American wife. He was thirty in the eventful year 1871. He returned to France after Sedan,

and flung himself into the stormy politics of the defeated nation with great fire and vigour. Thereafter France was his world, the France of vigorous journalism, high-spirited personal quarrels, challenges, confrontations, scenes, dramatic effects, and witticisms at any cost. He was what people call "fierce stuff," he was nicknamed the "Tiger," and he seems to have been rather proud of his nickname. Professional patriot rather than statesman and thinker, this was the man whom the war had flung up to misrepresent the fine mind and the generous spirit of France. His limitations had a profound effect upon the conference, which was further coloured by the dramatic resort for the purpose of signature to the very Hall of Mirrors at Versailles in which Germany had triumphed and proclaimed her unity. There the Germans were to sign. To M. Clemenceau and to France, in that atmosphere, the war ceased to seem a world war; it was merely the sequel of the previous conflict of the Terrible Year, the downfall and punishment of offending Germany. "The world had to be made safe for democracy," said President Wilson. That from M. Clemenceau's expressed point of view was "talking like Jesus Christ." The world had to be made safe for Paris. "Talking like Jesus Christ" seemed a very ridiculous thing to many of those brilliant rather than sound diplomatists and politicians who made the year 1919 supreme in the history of human insufficiency.

(Another flash of the "Tiger's" wit, it may be noted, was that President Wilson with his fourteen points was "worse" than God Almighty. "Le bon Dieu" only had ten....)

M. Clemenceau sat with Signor Orlando in the more central chairs of a semicircle of four in front of the fire, says Keynes. He wore a black frock-coat and grey suede gloves, which he never removed during these sessions. He was, it is to be noted, the only one of these four reconstructors of the world who could understand and speak both French and English.

The aims of M. Clemenceau were simple and in a manner attainable. He wanted all the settlement of 1871 undone. He wanted Germany punished as though she was a uniquely sinful nation and France a sinless martyr land. He wanted Germany so crippled and devastated as never more to be able to stand up to France. He wanted to hurt and humiliate Germany more than France had been hurt and

humiliated in 1871. He did not care if in breaking Germany Europe was broken; his mind did not go far enough beyond the Rhine to understand that possibility. He accepted President Wilson's League of Nations as an excellent proposal if it would guarantee the security of France whatever she did, but he preferred a binding alliance of the United States and England to maintain, uphold, and glorify France under practically any circumstances. He wanted wider opportunities for the exploitation of Syria, north Africa, and so forth by Parisian financial groups. He wanted indemnities to recuperate France, loans, gifts, and tributes to France, glory and homage to France. France had suffered, and France had to be rewarded. Belgium, Russia, Serbia, Poland, Armenia, Britain, Germany, and Austria had all suffered too, all mankind had suffered, but what would you? that was not his affair. These were the supers of a drama in which France was for him the star.... In much the same spirit Signor Orlando seems to have sought the welfare of Italy.

Mr. Lloyd George brought to the Council of Four the subtlety of a Welshman, the intricacy of a European, and an urgent necessity for respecting the nationalist egotism of the British imperialists and capitalists who had returned him to power. Into the secrecy of that council went President Wilson (leaving Point I at the door) with the very noblest aims for his newly discovered American world policy, his rather hastily compiled Fourteen (now reduced to Thirteen) Points, and a project rather than a scheme for a League of Nations.

The Second Point was presently observed to be missing. It may have fallen into the Atlantic on the way over. It may have been thrown into the sea as an offering to the British Admiralty.

"There can seldom have been a statesman of the first rank more incompetent than the President in the agilities of the Council Chamber." From the whispering darknesses and fireside disputes of that council, and after various comings and goings we cannot here describe, he emerged at last with his Fourteen Points pitifully torn and dishevelled, but with a little puling infant of a League of Nations, which might die or which might live and grow — no one could tell. This history cannot tell. We are at the end of our term. But that much, at least, he had saved....

Let us now consider briefly this Covenant of the League of

Nations, and recapitulate the terms of the quasi-settlement of the world's affairs of 1919-20; and let us indicate here and there where the latter departs from the promised standard of the Fourteen Points, and where it is most dangerous to the future peace and most manifestly contrary to the welfare of mankind. Because just as the history of Europe in the nineteenth century was largely the undoing of the Treaty of Vienna, and as the Great War was the necessary outcome of the Treaty of Frankfort and the Treaty of Berlin, so the general history of the twentieth century henceforth will be largely the amendment or reversal of the more ungenerous and unscientific arrangements of the Treaty of 1919, and a struggle to establish those necessary impartial world controls of which the League of Nations is the first insufficient and unsatisfactory sketch.

§ 12

This homunculus in a bottle which it was hoped might become at last Man ruling the Earth, this League of Nations as it was embodied in the Covenant of April 28th, 1919, was not a league of peoples at all; it was a league of "states, dominions, or colonies." It was stipulated that these should be "fully self-governing," but there was no definition whatever of this phrase. There was no bar to a limited franchise and no provision for any direct control by the people of any state. India figured — presumably as a "fully self-governing state!" An autocracy would no doubt have been admissible as a "fully self-governing" democracy with a franchise limited to one person. The League of the Covenant of 1919 was, in fact, a league of "representatives" of foreign offices, and it did not even abolish the nonsense of embassies at every capital. The British Empire appeared once as a whole, and then India (!) and the four dominions of Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand appeared as separate sovereign states. The Indian representative was, of course, sure to be merely a British nominee; the other four would be colonial politicians. But if the British Empire was to be thus dissected, a representative of Great Britain should have been substituted for the Imperial representative, and Ireland and Egypt should also have been given representation. Moreover, either New York State or Virginia

was historically and legally almost as much a sovereign state as New Zealand or Canada. The inclusion of India raised logical claims for French Africa and French Asia. One French representative did propose a separate vote for the little principality of Monaco.

There was to be an assembly of the League in which every member state was to be represented and to have an equal voice, but the working directorate of the league was to vest in a Council, which was to consist of the representatives of the United States, Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, with four other members elected by the Assembly. The Council was to meet once a year; the gatherings of the Assembly were to be at "stated intervals," not stated.

Except in certain specified instances the league of this Covenant could make only unanimous decisions. One dissentient on the council could bar any proposal — on the lines of the old Polish *liberum veto* (chapter xxxvi, § 7). This was a quite disastrous provision. To many minds it made the Covenant League rather less desirable than no league at all. It was a complete recognition of the unalienable sovereignty of states, and a repudiation of the idea of an over-riding commonweal of mankind. This provision practically barred the way to all amendments to the league constitution in future except by the clumsy expedient of a simultaneous withdrawal of the majority of member states desiring a change, to form the league again on new lines. The covenant made inevitable such a final winding-up of the league it created, and that was perhaps the best thing about it.

The following powers, it was proposed, should be excluded from the original league: Germany, Austria, Russia, and whatever remains there were of the Turkish Empire. But any of these might subsequently be included with the assent of two thirds of the Assembly. The original membership of the league as specified in the projected Covenant was: the United States of America, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, the British Empire (Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and India), China, Cuba, Ecuador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, the Hedjas, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, the Serb-

Croat-Slovene State, Siam, Czecho-Slovakia, and Uruguay. To which were to be added by invitation the following powers which had been neutral in the war: the Argentine Republic, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Paraguay, Persia, Salvador, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

Such being the constitution of the league, it is scarcely to be wondered at that its powers were special and limited. It was given a seat at Geneva and a secretariat. It had no powers even to inspect the military preparations of its constituent states, or to instruct a military and naval staff to plan out the armed co-operation needed to keep the peace of the world. The French representative in the League of Nations Commission, M. Leon Bourgeois, insisted lucidly and repeatedly on the logical necessity of such powers. As a speaker he was rather copious and lacking in "spice" of the Clemenceau quality. The final scene in the plenary session of April 28th, before the adoption of the Covenant, is described compactly by Mr. Wilson Harris, the crowded Banqueting Hall at the Quai d'Orsay, with its "E" of tables for the delegates, with secretaries and officials lining the walls and a solid mass of journalists at the lower end of the room. "At the head of the room the 'Big Three' *diverted themselves in undertones* at the expense of the worthy M. Bourgeois, now launched, with the help of what must have been an entirely superfluous sheaf of notes, on the fifth rendering of his speech in support of his famous amendments."

They were so often "diverting themselves in undertones," those three men whom God had mocked with the most tremendous opportunity in history. Keynes (*op. cit.*) gives other instances of the levities, vulgarities, disregards, inattentions, and inadequacies of these meetings.

This poor Covenant arrived at in this fashion returned with President Wilson to America, and there it was subjected to an amount of opposition, criticism, and revision which showed, among other things, how relatively unimpaired was the mental energy of the United States. It was manifest that the people of America had no mind to a compact that was virtually little more than a league of allied imperialisms for mutual insurance. The Senate refused to ratify the covenant, and the first meeting of the League Council was held

therefore without American representatives. The close of 1919 and the opening months of 1920 saw a very curious change come over American feeling after the pro-French and pro-British enthusiasms of the war period. The peace negotiations reminded the Americans, in a confused and very irritating way, of their profound differences in international outlook from any European power that the war had for a time helped them to forget. They felt they had been "rushed" into many things without due consideration. They experienced a violent revulsion towards that policy of isolation that had broken down in 1917. The close of 1919 saw a phase, a very understandable phase, of passionate and even violent "Americanism," in which European imperialism and European socialism were equally anathema. There may have been a sordid element in the American disposition to "cut" the moral responsibilities the United States had incurred in the affairs of the Old World, and to realize the enormous financial and political advantages the war had given the new world; but the broad instinct of the American people seems to have been sound in its distrust of the proposed settlement.

§ 13

The main terms of the Treaties of 1919-20 with which the Conference of Paris concluded its labours can be stated much more vividly by a few maps than by a written abstract. We need scarcely point out how much those treaties left unsettled, but we may perhaps enumerate some of the more salient breaches of the Twelve that survived out of the Fourteen Points at the opening of the Conference.

One initial cause of nearly all those breaches lay, we believe, in the complete unpreparedness and unwillingness of that pre-existing league of nations, subjected states and exploited areas, the British Empire, to submit to any dissection and adaptation of its system or to any control of its naval and aerial armament. A kindred contributory cause was the equal unpreparedness of the American mind for any interference with the ascendancy of the United States in the New World (compare Secretary Olney's declaration in this chapter, § 6). Neither of those Great Powers, who were necessarily dominant and leading Powers at Paris, had properly thought out the implications of a League of Nations in relation to these older arrangements, and so their support of that project had to most European observers a curiously hypocritical air; it was as if they wished to retain and ensure their own vast predominance and security while at the same time restraining any other power from such expansions, annexations, and alliances as might create a rival and competitive imperialism. Their failure to set an example of international confidence destroyed all possibility of international confidence in the other nations represented at Paris.

Even more unfortunate was the refusal of the Americans to assent to the Japanese demand for a recognition of racial equality.

Moreover, the foreign offices of the British, the French, and the Italians were haunted by traditional schemes of aggression entirely incompatible with the new ideas. A League of Nations that is to be of any appreciable value to mankind must supersede imperialisms; it is either a super-imperialism, a liberal world-empire of united states, participant or in tutelage, or it is nothing; but few of the people at the Paris Conference had the mental vigour even to assert this obvious consequence of the League proposal. They wanted to be at the same time bound and free, to ensure peace for ever, but to keep their weapons in their hands. Accordingly the old annexation projects of the Great Power period were hastily and thinly camouflaged as proposed acts of this poor little birth of April 28th. The newly born and barely animate League was represented to be distributing, with all the reckless munificence of a captive pope, “mandates” to the old imperialisms that, had it been the young Hercules we desired, it would certainly have strangled in its cradle. Britain was to have extensive “mandates” in Mesopotamia and East Africa; France was

to have the same in Syria; Italy was to have all her holdings to the west and southeast of Egypt consolidated as mandatory territory. Clearly, if the weak thing that was being nursed by its Secretary in its cradle at Geneva into some semblance of life, did presently succumb to the infantile weakness of all institutions born without passion, all these "mandates" would become frank annexations. Moreover, all the powers fought tooth and nail at the Conference for "strategic" frontiers — the ugliest symptom of all. Why should a state want a strategic frontier unless it contemplates war? If on that plea Italy insisted upon a subject population of Germans in the southern Tyrol and a subject population of Yugo-Slavs in Dalmatia, and if little Greece began landing troops in Asia Minor, neither France nor Britain was in a position to rebuke these outbreaks of pre-millennial method.

We will not enter here into any detailed account of how President Wilson gave way to the Japanese and consented to their replacing the Germans at Kiau Chau, which is Chinese property, how the almost purely German city of Dantzig was practically, if not legally,

annexed to Poland, and how the powers disputed over the claims of the Italian imperialists, a claim strengthened by these instances, to seize the Yugo-Slav part of Fiume and deprive the Yugo-Slavs of a good Adriatic outlet. Nor will we do more than note the complex arrangements and justifications that put the French in possession of the Saar valley, which is German territory, or the entirely iniquitous breach of the right of "self-determination" which practically forbade German Austria to unite — as it is natural and proper that she should unite — with the rest of Germany. These burning questions of 1919-20, which occupied the newspapers and the minds of statesmen and politicians, and filled all our waste paper baskets with propaganda literature, may seem presently very incidental things in the larger movement of these times. All these disputes, like the suspicions and tetchy injustices of a weary and irritated man, may lose their importance as the tone of the world improves, and the still inadequately apprehended lessons of the Great War and the Petty Peace that followed it begin to be digested by the general intelligence of mankind.

It is worth while for the reader to compare the treaty maps we give with what we have called the natural political map of Europe. The new arrangements do approach this latter more closely than any previous system of boundaries. It may be a necessary preliminary to any satisfactory league of peoples, that each people should first be in something like complete possession of its own household.

It is absurd to despair of mankind because of these treaties, or to regard them as anything more than feeble first sketches of a world settlement. To do so would be to suppose that there is nothing in France — that land of fine imaginations — better than M. Clemenceau, nothing in America stronger and wiser than President Wilson, and nothing in Britain to steady the Keltic traits of Mr. Lloyd George. The attention we have given to these three personalities in this *Outline* is intended less to enhance their importance than to emphasize their unimportance, and to make it clear to the reader how provisional and incidental all that they did must be in the world's affairs. On no statesmen, on no particular men or groups of men, on no state or organization indeed, and on no Covenant or Treaty, does the future of our race now depend. The

year 1919 was not a year of creation and decision, it was just the first cheerless dawn of a long day of creative effort. The conferences of the Ten, of the Four, of the Big Three, had no trace of creative power; there was no light in the men of Versailles; the dawn was manifest rather as a grey light of critical disapproval that broke through the shutters and staled the guttering candles of the old diplomacy as the conference yawned and drawled to its end. Creation was not there. But a great process of thought spreads throughout the world; many thousands of men and women, in every country, for the most part undistinguished and unknown people, are awakening to their responsibility, are studying, thinking, writing, and teaching, getting together, correcting false impressions, challenging foolish ideas, trying to find out and tell the truth; and upon them it is that we must rest our hope, such hope as we can entertain, of a saner plan to take the place of this first flimsy League and this patched and discomforting garment of treaties that has been flung for a while over the naked distresses of our world.

§ 14

The failure to produce a more satisfactory world settlement in 1919-20 was, we have suggested, a symptom of an almost universal intellectual and moral lassitude, resulting from the overstrain of the Great War. A lack of fresh initiative is characteristic of a fatigue phase; everyone, from sheer inability to change, drifts on for a time along the lines of mental habit and precedent.

Nothing could be more illustrative of this fatigue inertia than the expressed ideas of military men at this time. It will round off this chapter in an entirely significant way, and complete our picture of the immense world interrogation on which our history must end, if we give here the briefest summary of a lecture that was delivered to a gathering of field-marshals, generals, major-generals, and the like by Major-General Sir Louis Jackson, at the Royal United Service Institution in London one day in December, 1919. Lord Peel, the British Under-Secretary for War, presided, and the reader must picture to himself the not too large and quite dignified room of assembly in that building, and all these fine, grave, soldierly figures

quietly intent upon the lecturer's words. He is describing, with a certain subdued enthusiasm, the probable technical developments of military method in the "next war."

Outside, through the evening twilight of Whitehall, flows the London traffic, not quite so abundant as in 1914, but still fairly abundant; the omnibuses all overcrowded because there are now not nearly enough of them, and the clothing of people generally shabbier. Some little way down Whitehall is a temporary erection, the Cenotaph, with its base smothered with a vast, pathetic heap of decaying wreaths, bunches of flowers, and the like, a cenotaph to commemorate the eight hundred thousand young men of the Empire who have been killed in the recent struggle. A few people are putting fresh flowers and wreaths there. One or two are crying.

The prospect stretches out beyond this gathering into the grey vastness of London, where people are now crowded as they have never been crowded before, whose food is dear and employment more uncertain than it has ever been. But let not the spectacle be one of unrelieved gloom; Regent Street, Oxford Street, and Bond Street are bright with shoppers and congested with new automobiles, because we must remember that everybody does not lose by a war. Beyond London the country sinks into night, and across the narrow sea are North France and Belgium devastated, Germany with scores of thousands of her infants dwindling and dying for want of milk, all Austria starving. Half the population of Vienna, it is believed, unless American relief comes quickly, is doomed to die of hardship before the spring. Beyond that bleak twilight stretches the darkness of Russia. There, at least, no rich people are buying anything, and no military men are reading essays on the next war. But in icy Petrograd is little food, little wood, and no coal. All the towns of Russia southward as far as the snow reaches are in a similar plight, and in the Ukraine and to the south a ragged and dingy war drags to its end. Europe is bankrupt, and people's pockets rustle with paper money whose purchasing power dwindles as they walk about with it.

But now we will return to Sir Louis in the well-lit room at the United Service Institution.

He was of opinion — we follow the report in next morning's *Times* — that we were merely on the eve of the most extensive

modifications of the art of war known to history. It behoved us, therefore — us being, of course, the British and not the whole of mankind — to get on with our armaments and to keep ahead; a fine opening generalization. “It was necessary to develop new arms.... The nation which best did so would have a great advantage in the next war. There were people who were crying aloud for a reduction of armaments — —”

(But there the Director of Trench Warfare and Supplies was wrong. They were just crying at the cenotaph, poor, soft, and stupid souls, because a son or a brother or a father was dead.)

Sir Louis believed that one of the greatest developments in the art of warfare would be brought about in mechanical transport. The tank he treated with ingratitude. These military gentlemen are ungrateful to an invention which shoved and butted them into victory almost in spite of themselves. The tank, said Sir Louis, was “a freak.... The outstanding feature” of the tank, he said, was that it made mechanical transport independent of the roads. Hitherto armies on the march had only been able to spoil the roads; now their transport on caterpillar wheels would advance in open order on a broad front carrying guns, munitions, supplies, bridging equipment, rafts, and men — and incidentally ploughing up and destroying hedges, ditches, fields, and cultivation generally. Armies would wallow across the country, leaving nothing behind but dust and mud.

So our imaginations are led up to the actual hostilities.

Sir Louis was in favour of gas. For punitive expeditions particularly, gas was to be recommended. And here he startled and disconcerted his hearers by a gleam of something approaching sentimentality. “It might be possible,” he said, “to come to some agreement that no gas should be used which caused unnecessary suffering.” But there his heart spoke rather than his head; it should have been clear to him that if law can so far override warfare as to prohibit any sort of evil device whatever, it can override warfare to the extent of prohibiting it altogether. And where would Sir Louis Jackson and his audience be then? War is war; its only law is the law that the maximum destruction of the forces of the enemy is necessary. To that law in warfare all considerations of humanity and justice are subordinate.

From gas Sir Louis passed to the air. Here he predicted "most important advances.... We need not trouble ourselves yet with flying destroyers or flying concrete forts, but in twenty years' time the Air Force Estimates might be the most important part of our preparations for war." He discussed the conversion of commercial flying machines to bombing and reconnaissance uses, and the need for special types of fighting machine in considerable numbers and always ready. He gave reasons for supposing that the bombers in the next war would not have the same targets near the front of the armies, and would secure better results by going further afield and bombing the centres "where stores are being manufactured and troops trained." As everyone who stayed in London or the east of England in 1917-18 knows, this means the promiscuous bombing of any and every centre of population. But, of course, the bombing of those 'prentice days would be child's play to the bombing of the "next war." There would be countless more aeroplanes, bigger and much nastier bombs....

Sir Louis, proceeding with his sketch, mentioned the "destruction of the greater part of London" as a possible incident in the coming struggle. And so on to the culminating moral, that the highest pay, the utmost importance, the freest expenditure, must be allowed to military gentlemen. "The expense entailed is in the nature of an absolutely necessary insurance." With which his particular audience warmly agreed. And a certain Major-General Stone, a little forgetful of the source of his phrases, said he hoped that this lecture "may be the beginning not of trusting in the League of Nations, but in *our own* right hand and *our* stretched-out arm!"

But we will not go on with the details of this dream. For indeed no Utopia was ever so impossible as this forecast of a world in which scarcely anything but very carefully sandbagged and camouflaged G. H. Q. would be reasonably safe, in which countless bombers would bomb the belligerent lands incessantly and great armies with lines of caterpillar transport roll to and fro, churning the fields of the earth into blood-streaked mud. There is not energy enough and no will whatever left in the world for such things. Generals who cannot foresee tanks cannot be expected to foresee or understand world bankruptcy; still less are they likely to understand the limits imposed

upon military operations by the fluctuating temper of the common man. Apparently these military authorities of the United Service Institution did not even know that warfare aims at the production of states of mind in the enemy, and is sustained by states of mind. The chief neglected factor in the calculations of Sir Louis is the fact that no people whatever will stand such warfare as he contemplates, not even the people on the winning side. For as northern France, south-eastern Britain, and north Italy now understand, the victor in the "next war" may be bombed and starved almost as badly as the loser. A phase is possible in which a war-tormented population may cease to discriminate between military gentlemen on this side or that, and may be moved to destroy them as the common enemies of the race. The Great War of 1914-18 was the culmination of the military energy of the western populations, and they fought and fought well because they believed they were fighting "the war to end war." They were. German imperialism, with its organized grip upon education and its close alliance with an aggressive commercialism, was beaten and finished. The militarism and imperialism of Britain and France and Italy are by comparison feeble, disorganized, and disorganizing survivals. They are things "left over" by the great war. They have no persuasive power. They go on — for sheer want of wits to leave off. No European Government will ever get the same proportion of its people into the ranks and into its munition works again as the governments of 1914-18 did. Our world is very weak and feeble still (1920), but its war fever is over. Its temperature is, if anything, sub-normal. It is doubtful if it will take the fever again for a long time. The alterations in the conditions of warfare are already much profounder than such authorities as Sir Louis Jackson suspect.

§ 15

This *Outline* of our history would not be complete without at least a few words by way of a stock-taking of the state of mind in which we leave mankind to-day. For the history of our race for the last few thousand years is no more than a history of the development and succession of states of mind and of acts arising out of them. Human

history is in essence a history of ideas, and these tremendous experiences of the war constitute a crowning epoch. In the past six years there must have been a destruction of fixed ideas, prejudices, and mental limitations unparalleled in all history. Never before can there have been so great and so universal an awakening from assumed and accepted things. Never before have men stood so barely face to face with the community of their interests and their common destiny. We do not begin to realize yet how much of the pre-war world is done with for good and all, and how much that is new is beginning. Few of us have attempted to measure yet the change in our own minds.

And on the whole and in spite of much eddying and backwash of motives and thought, there does seem to have been a step forward towards the consciousness of a collective need and of the possibility of a collective effort embracing all mankind. Death, waste, hunger, and disease are very rife to-day; the world is full of physical evils, but there is this mental awakening to set against them.

In all material things the year 1913 seems now, to a European at least, a year of amazing and unattainable plenty. But it was a year of great social discontent and of waste, of vice and an extravagant search for personal indulgence on the part of the free and wealthy classes. The Great War was visibly approaching; yet there was neither will nor understanding to prevent the catastrophe; smart and fashionable life capered to nigger dance tunes, and that hectic generation was disposed to welcome even a universal war as a fresh and crowning excitement. War did not seem real to the moods of that time; nothing seemed real to the moods of that time. It was a world of lost or faded beliefs. It did not believe even in the florid nationalisms and imperialisms which waved their flags and filled half the world with the stir and glitter of great armies. But it set itself in the form of these things because they trampled and glittered very entertainingly and because they promised sensational adventures. The catastrophe of the war was not an unnecessary disaster; it was a necessary fulfilment of such an age of drift. Only through a catastrophe, it may be, could a new phase of human thought and will have become possible.

This graver world of 1920 does seem to be awakening to the truth

that there are realities worth seeking and evils not to be tolerated. The mental and moral backgrounds of hundreds of millions of minds have been altered and are being altered by the stern lessons of this age. Brotherhood through sorrow, sorrow for common sufferings and for irreparable mutual injuries, is spreading and increasing throughout the world. There are no doubt great countervailing evils, a wild scramble for the diminishing surplus of wealth, a propaganda, but a failing propaganda, of division and hatred. The dominating fact, nevertheless, is a new sanity....

What a wonderful and moving spectacle is this of our kind to-day! Would that we could compress into one head and for the use of one right hand the power of ten thousand novelists and playwrights and biographers and the quintessence of a thousand histories, to render the endless variety, the incessant multitudinous adventure, and at the same time the increasing unity of this display. Everywhere, with a mysterious individual difference, we see youth growing to adolescence and the interplay of love, desire, curiosities, passionate impulses, rivalries. As the earth spins from darkness into the light, the millions wake again to a new day in their life of toil, anxiety, little satisfactions, little chagrins, rivalries, spites, generosities. From tropic to the bleakest north, the cocks crow before the advancing margin of dawn. The early toiler hurries to his work, the fox and the thief slink home, the tramp stretches his stiff limbs under the haystack, and springs up alert before the farmer's man discovers him, the ploughman is already in the field with his horses, the fires are lit in the cottage and the kettle sings. The hours warm as the day advances; the crowded trains converge upon the city centres, the traffic thickens in the streets, the breakfast-table of the prosperous home is spread, the professor begins his lecture, the shop assistants greet their first customers.... Outwardly it is very like the world before the war. And yet it is profoundly different. The sense of inevitable routines that held all the world in thrall six years ago has gone. And the habitual assurance of security has gone too. The world has been roused — for a time at least — to great dangers and great desires. These minds, this innumerable multitude of minds, are open to fresh ideas of association and duty and relationship as they were never open before. The old confused and divided world is

condemned; it is going on provisionally under a sentence of great and as yet incalculable change.

Every one of these hundred of millions of human beings is in some form seeking happiness, is driven by complex and conflicting motives, is guided by habits, is swayed by base cravings, by endless suggestions, by passions and affections, by vague exalted ideas. Every one of them is capable of cruelties and fine emotions, of despairs and devotions and self-forgetful effort. All of them forget; all of them become slack with fatigue and fearful or mean or incapable under a sufficient strain. The follies of vanity entrap them all into absurdities. Not one is altogether noble nor altogether trustworthy nor altogether consistent; and not one is altogether vile. Every one of them can be unhappy, every one can feel disappointment and remorse. Not a single one but has at some time wept. And in every one of them is a streak of divinity. Each one for all the obsessions of self is yet dimly aware of something in common, of something that could make a unity out of our infinite diversity. And they are everyone more aware of this than in 1913. Through all the world grows the realization that there can be no securely happy individual life without a righteous general life. Through all the world spreads the suspicion that this scheme of things might be remade, and remade better, and that our present evils need not be. Our lives, we see with a growing certitude, are fretted and shadowed and spoilt because there is as yet no worldwide law, no certain justice. Yet there is nothing absolutely unattainable in world law and world justice. More men are capable of realizing this than was ever possible at any previous time. And to be aware of a need is to be half-way towards its satisfaction. We call this stir towards a new order, this refusal to drift on in the old directions, unrest, but rather is it hope which disturbs the world.

What real driving force is there in all this aspiration towards a new and wider order? What directive forces are these stirring millions likely to encounter? What accidents and subtle suggestions may not waylay them and cheat them? An age is closing and an age begins. This chapter of history which tells of the Great Powers into which Christendom broke up and of the unbridled national and individual self-seeking which ensued, has culminated in a world

catastrophe and is at its end. What will be the next stage in history?

BOOK IX. THE NEXT STAGE IN HISTORY

XLI

THE POSSIBLE UNIFICATION OF THE WORLD INTO ONE COMMUNITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND WILL

§1. *The Possible Unification of Men's Wills in Political Matters.* §2. *How a Federal World Government may come about.* §3. *Some Fundamental Characteristics of a Modern World State.* §4. *What this World might be were it under one Law and Justice.* §5. *The Stages Beyond.*

§ 1

WE have brought this *Outline of History* up to our own times, but we have brought it to no conclusion. It breaks off at a dramatic phase of expectation. The story of life which began inestimable millions of years ago, the adventure of mankind which was already afoot half a million years ago, rises to a crisis in the immense interrogation of to-day. The drama becomes ourselves. It is you, it is I, it is all that is happening to us and all that we are doing which will supply the next chapter of this continually expanding adventure.

Our history has traced a steady growth of the social and political units into which men have combined. In the brief period of ten thousand years these units have grown from the small family tribe of the early neolithic culture to the vast united realms — vast yet still too small and partial — of the present time. And this change in size of the state — a change manifestly incomplete — has been accompanied by profound changes in its nature. Compulsion and servitude have given way to ideas of associated freedom, and the sovereignty that was once concentrated in an autocratic king and god has been widely diffused throughout the community. Until the Roman republic extended itself to all Italy, there had been no free community larger than a city state; all great communities were communities of obedience under a monarch. The great united republic of the United States would have been impossible before the printing press and the railway. The telegraph and telephone, the

aeroplane, the continual progress of land and sea transit, are now insisting upon a still larger political organization.

If our *Outline* has been faithfully drawn, and if these brief conclusions are sound, it follows that we are engaged upon an immense task of adjustment to these great lines upon which our affairs are moving. Our wars, our social conflict, our enormous economic stresses, are all aspects of that adjustment. The loyalties and allegiances to-day are at best provisional loyalties and allegiances. Our true State, this state that is already beginning, this state to which every man owes his utmost political effort, must be now this nascent Federal World State to which human necessities point. Our true God now is the God of all men. Nationalism as a God must follow the tribal gods to limbo. Our true nationality is mankind.

How far will modern men lay hold upon and identify themselves with this necessity and set themselves to revise their ideas, remake their institutions, and educate the coming generations to this final extension of citizenship? How far will they remain dark, obdurate, habitual, and traditional, resisting the convergent forces that offer them either unity or misery? Sooner or later that unity must come or else plainly men must perish by their own inventions. We, because we believe in the power of reason and in the increasing good-will in men, find ourselves compelled to reject the latter possibility. But the way to the former may be very long and tedious, very tragic and wearisome, a martyrdom of many generations, or it may be travelled over almost swiftly in the course of a generation or so. That depends upon forces whose nature we understand to some extent now, but not their power. There has to be a great process of education, by precept and by information and by experience, but there are as yet no quantitative measures of education to tell us *how much* has to be learnt or *how soon* that learning can be done. Our estimates vary with our moods; the time may be much longer than our hopes and much shorter than our fears.

The terrible experiences of the Great War have made very many men who once took political things lightly take them now very gravely. To a certain small number of men and women the attainment of a world peace has become the supreme work in life, has become a religious self-devotion. To a much greater number it

has become at least a ruling motive. Many such people now are seeking ways of working for this great end, or they are already working for this great end, by pen and persuasion, in schools and colleges and books, and in the highways and byways of public life. Perhaps now most human beings in the world are well-disposed towards such efforts, but rather confusedly disposed; they are without any clear sense of what must be done and what ought to be prevented, that human solidarity may be advanced. The world-wide outbreak of faith and hope in President Wilson, before he began to wilt and fail us, was a very significant thing indeed for the future of mankind. Set against these motives of unity indeed are other motives entirely antagonistic, the fear and hatred of strange things and peoples, love of and trust in the old traditional thing, patriotisms, race prejudices, suspicions, distrusts — and the elements of spite, scoundrelism, and utter selfishness that are so strong still in every human soul.

The overriding powers that hitherto in the individual soul and in the community have struggled and prevailed against the ferocious, base, and individual impulses that divide us from one another, have been the powers of religion and education. Religion and education, those closely interwoven influences, have made possible the greater human societies whose growth we have traced in this *Outline*; they have been the chief synthetic forces throughout this great story of enlarging human coöperations that we have traced from its beginnings. We have found in the intellectual and theological conflicts of the nineteenth century the explanation of that curious exceptional disentanglement of religious teaching from formal education which is a distinctive feature of our age, and we have traced the consequences of this phase of religious disputation and confusion in the reversion of international politics towards a brutal nationalism and in the backward drift of industrial and business life towards harsh, selfish, and uncreative profit-seeking. There has been a slipping off of ancient restraints; a real *de-civilization* of men's minds. We would lay stress here on the suggestion that this divorce of religious teaching from organized education is necessarily a temporary one, a transitory dislocation, and that presently education must become again in intention and spirit religious, and that the

impulse to devotion, to universal service and to a complete escape from self, which has been the common underlying force in all the great religions of the last five and twenty centuries, an impulse which ebbed so perceptibly during the prosperity, laxity, disillusionment, and scepticism of the past seventy or eighty years, will reappear again, stripped and plain, as the recognized fundamental structural impulse in human society.

Education is the preparation of the individual for the community, and his religious training is the core of that preparation. With the great intellectual restatements and expansions of the nineteenth century, and educational break-up, a confusion and loss of aim in education was inevitable. We can no longer prepare the individual for a community when our ideas of a community are shattered and undergoing reconstruction. The old loyalties, the old too limited and narrow political and social assumptions, the old too elaborate religious formulæ, have lost their power of conviction, and the greater ideas of a world state and of an economic commonweal have been winning their way only very slowly to recognition. So far they have swayed only a minority of exceptional people. But out of the trouble and tragedy of this present time there may emerge a moral and intellectual revival, a religious revival, of a simplicity and scope to draw together men of alien races and now discrete traditions into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service. We cannot foretell the scope and power of such a revival; we cannot even produce evidence of its onset. The beginnings of such things are never conspicuous. Great movements of the racial soul come at first "like a thief in the night," and then suddenly are discovered to be powerful and world-wide. Religious emotion — stripped of corruptions and freed from its last priestly entanglements — may presently blow through life again like a great wind, bursting the doors and flinging open the shutters of the individual life, and making many things possible and easy that in these present days of exhaustion seem almost too difficult to desire.

§ 2

If we suppose a sufficient righteousness and intelligence in men to

produce presently, from the tremendous lessons of history, an effective will for a world peace — that is to say, an effective will *for a world law under a world government* — for in no other fashion is a secure world peace conceivable — in what manner may we expect things to move towards this end? That movement will certainly not go on equally in every country, nor is it likely to take at first one uniform mode of expression. Here it will find a congenial and stimulating atmosphere, here it will find itself antagonistic to deep tradition or racial idiosyncrasy or well-organized base oppositions. In some cases those to whom the call of the new order has come will be living in a state almost ready to serve the ends of the greater political synthesis, in others they will have to fight like conspirators against the rule of evil laws. There is little in the political constitution of such countries as the United States or Switzerland that would impede their coalescence upon terms of frank give and take with other equally civilized confederations; political systems involving dependent areas and "subject peoples" such as the Turkish Empire was before the Great War, seem to require something in the nature of a breaking up before they can be adapted to a federal world system. Any state obsessed by traditions of an aggressive foreign policy will be difficult to assimilate into a world combination. But though here the government may be helpful, and here dark and hostile, the essential task of men of goodwill in all states and countries remains the same; it is an educational task, and its very essence is to bring to the minds of all men everywhere, as a necessary basis for world coöperation, *a new telling and interpretation, a common interpretation, of history*.

Does this League of Nations which has been created by the covenant of 1919 contain within it the germ of any permanent federation of human effort? Will it grow into something for which, as Stallybrass says, men will be ready to "work whole-heartedly and, if necessary, *fight*" — as hitherto they have been willing to fight for their country and their own people? There are few intimations of any such enthusiasm for the League at the present time. The League does not even seem to know how to talk to common men. It has gone into official buildings, and comparatively few people in the world

understand or care what it is doing there. It may be that the League is no more than a first project of union, exemplary only in its insufficiencies and dangers, destined to be superseded by something closer and completer as were the United States Articles of Confederation by the Federal Constitution (see chapter xxxvii, § 5). The League is at present a mere partial league of governments and states. It emphasizes nationality; it defers to sovereignty. What the world needs is no such league of nations as this nor even a mere league of peoples, but *a world league of men*. The world perishes unless sovereignty is merged and nationality subordinated. And for that the minds of men must first be prepared by experience and knowledge and thought. The supreme task before men at the present time is political education.

It may be that several partial leagues may precede any world league. The common misfortunes and urgent common needs of Europe and Asia may be more efficacious in bringing the European and Asiatic states to reason and a sort of unity, than the mere intellectual and sentimental ties of the United States and Great Britain and France. A United States of the Old World is a possibility to set against the possibility of an Atlantic union. Moreover, there is much to be said for an American experiment, a Pan-American league, in which the New World European colonies would play an in-and-out part as Luxembourg did for a time in the German confederation.

We will not attempt to weigh here what share may be taken in the recasting and consolidation of human affairs by the teachings and propaganda of labour internationalism, by the studies and needs of international finance, or by such boundary-destroying powers as science and art and historical teaching. All these things may exert a combined pressure, in which it may never be possible to apportion the exact shares. Opposition may dissolve, antagonistic cults flatten out to a common culture, almost imperceptibly. The bold idealism of to-day may seem mere common sense to-morrow. And the problem of a forecast is complicated by the possibilities of interludes and backwaters. History has never gone simply forward. More particularly are the years after a great war apt to be years of apparent retrocession; men are too weary to see what has been done, what has

been cleared away, and what has been made possible.

Among the things that seem to move commandingly towards an adequate world control at the present time are these: —

(1) The increasing destructiveness and intolerableness of war waged with the new powers of science.

(2) The inevitable fusion of the world's economic affairs into one system, leading necessarily, it would seem, to some common control of currency, and demanding safe and uninterrupted communications, and a free movement of goods and people by sea and land throughout the whole world. The satisfaction of these needs will require a world control of very considerable authority and powers of enforcement.

(3) The need, because of the increasing mobility of peoples, of effectual controls of health everywhere.

(4) The urgent need of some equalization of labour conditions, and of the minimum standard of life throughout the world. This seems to carry with it, as a necessary corollary, the establishment of some minimum standard of education for everyone.

(5) The impossibility of developing the enormous benefits of flying without a world control of the air-ways.

The necessity and logic of such diverse considerations as these push the mind irresistibly, in spite of the clashes of race and tradition and the huge difficulties created by differences in language, towards the belief that a conscious struggle to establish or prevent a political world community will be the next stage in human history. The things that require that world community are permanent *needs*, one or other of these needs appeals to nearly everyone, and against their continuing persistence are only mortal difficulties, great no doubt, but mortal; prejudices, passions, animosities, delusions about race and country, egotisms, and such-like fluctuating and evanescent things, set up in men's minds by education and suggestion; none of them things that make now for the welfare and survival of the individuals who are under their sway nor of the states and towns and associations in which they prevail.

§ 3

Our *Outline of History* has been ill written if it has failed to convey

our conviction of the character of the state towards which the world is moving. Let us summarize here, very briefly, the main lines to which the developments of history seem to point as the necessary lines of that world organization. The attainment of this world state may be impeded and may be opposed to-day by many apparently vast forces; but it has, urging it on, a much more powerful force, that of the free and growing common intelligence of mankind. To-day there is in the world a small but increasing number of men, historians, archæologists, ethnologists, economists, sociologists, psychologists, educationists, and the like, who are doing for human institutions that same task of creative analysis which the scientific men of the seventeenth and eighteenth century did for the materials and mechanism of human life; and just as these latter, almost unaware of what they were doing, made telegraphy, swift transit on sea and land, flying and a thousand hitherto impossible things possible, so the former may be doing more than the world suspects, or than they themselves suspect, to clear up and make plain the thing to do and the way to do it, in the greater and more urgent human affairs.

Let us ape Roger Bacon in his prophetic mood, and set down what we believe will be the broad fundamentals of the coming world state.

(i) It will be based upon a common world religion, very much simplified and universalized and better understood. This will not be Christianity nor Islam nor Buddhism nor any such specialized form of religion, but religion itself pure and undefiled; the Eightfold Way, the Kingdom of Heaven, brotherhood, creative service, and self-forgetfulness. Throughout the world men's thoughts and motives will be turned by education, example, and the circle of ideas about them, from the obsession of self to the cheerful service of human knowledge, human power, and human unity.

(ii) And this world state will be sustained by a universal education, organized upon a scale and of a penetration and quality beyond all present experience. The whole race, and not simply classes and peoples, will be *educated*. Most parents will have a technical knowledge of teaching. Quite apart from the duties of parentage, perhaps ten per cent. or more of the adult population will, at some time or other in their lives, be workers in the world's

educational organization. And education, as the new age will conceive it, will go on throughout life; it will not cease at any particular age. Men and women will simply become self-educators and individual students and student teachers as they grow older.

(iii) There will be no armies, no navies, and no classes of unemployed people, wealthy or poor.

(iv) The world-state's organization of scientific research and record compared with that of to-day will be like an ocean liner beside the dug-out canoe of some early heliolithic wanderer.

(v) There will be a vast free literature of criticism and discussion.

(vi) The world's political organization will be democratic, that is to say, the government and direction of affairs will be in immediate touch with and responsive to the general thought of the educated whole population.

(vii) Its economic organization will be an exploitation of all natural wealth and every fresh possibility science reveals, by the agents and servants of the common government for the common good. Private enterprise will be the servant — a useful, valued, and well-rewarded servant — and no longer the robber master of the commonweal.

(viii) And this implies two achievements that seem very difficult to us to-day. They are matters of mechanism, but they are as essential to the world's well-being as it is to a soldier's, no matter how brave he may be, that his machine gun should not jam, and to an aeronaut's that his steering-gear should not fail him in mid-air. Political well-being demands that electoral methods shall be used, and economic well-being requires that a currency shall be used, safeguarded or proof against the contrivances and manipulations of clever, dishonest men.

§ 4

There can be little question that the attainment of a federation of all humanity, together with a sufficient measure of social justice, to insure health, education, and a rough equality of opportunity to most of the children born into the world, would mean such a release and increase of human energy as to open a new phase in human history.

The enormous waste caused by military preparation and the mutual annoyance of competing great powers, and the still more enormous waste due to the under-productiveness of great masses of people, either because they are too wealthy for stimulus or too poor for efficiency, would cease. There would be a vast increase in the supply of human necessities, a rise in the standard of life and in what is considered a necessity, a development of transport and every kind of convenience; and a multitude of people would be transferred from low-grade production to such higher work as art of all kinds, teaching, scientific research, and the like. All over the world there would be a setting free of human capacity, such as has occurred hitherto only in small places and through precious limited phases of prosperity and security. Unless we are to suppose that spontaneous outbreaks of super-men have occurred in the past, it is reasonable to conclude that the Athens of Pericles, the Florence of the Medici, Elizabethan England, the great deeds of Asoka, the Tang and Ming periods in art, are but samples of what a whole world of sustained security would yield continuously and cumulatively. Without supposing any change in human quality, but merely its release from the present system of inordinate waste, history justifies this expectation.

We have seen how, since the liberation of human thought in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a comparatively few curious and intelligent men, chiefly in western Europe, have produced a vision of the world and a body of science that is now, on the material side, revolutionizing life. Mostly these men have worked against great discouragement, with insufficient funds and small help or support from the mass of mankind. It is impossible to believe that these men were the maximum intellectual harvest of their generation. England alone in the last three centuries must have produced scores of Newtons who never learnt to read, hundreds of Daltons, Darwins, Bacons, and Huxleys, who died stunted in hovels, or never got a chance of proving their quality. All the world over, there must have been myriads of potential first-class investigators, splendid artists, creative minds, who never caught a gleam of inspiration or opportunity, for every one of that kind who has left his mark upon the world. In the trenches of the Western front alone during the late

war thousands of potential great men died unfulfilled. But a world with something like a secure international peace and something like social justice, will fish for capacity with the fine net of universal education, and may expect a yield beyond comparison greater than any yield of able and brilliant men that the world has known hitherto.

It is such considerations as this indeed which justify the concentration of effort in the near future upon the making of a new world state of righteousness out of our present confusions. War is a horrible thing, and constantly more horrible and dreadful, so that unless it is ended it will certainly end human society; social injustice, and the sight of the limited and cramped human beings it produces, torment the soul; but the strongest incentive to constructive political and social work for an imaginative spirit lies not so much in the mere hope of escaping evils as in the opportunity for great adventures that their suppression will open to our race. We want to get rid of the militarist not simply because he hurts and kills, but because he is an intolerable thick-voiced blockhead who stands hectoring and blustering in our way to achievement. We want to abolish many extravagances of private ownership just as we should want to abolish some idiot guardian who refused us admission to a studio in which there were fine things to do.

There are people who seem to imagine that a world order and one universal law of justice would end human adventure. It would but begin it. But instead of the adventure of the past, the "romance" of the cinematograph world, the perpetual reiterated harping upon the trite reactions of sex and combat and the hunt for gold, it would be an unending exploration upon the edge of experience. Hitherto man has been living in a slum, amidst quarrels, revenges, vanities, shames and taints, hot desires, and urgent appetites. He has scarcely tasted sweet air yet and the great freedoms of the world that science has enlarged for him.

To picture to ourselves something of the wider life that world unity would open to men is a very attractive speculation. Life will certainly go with a stronger pulse, it will breathe a deeper breath, because it will have dispelled and conquered a hundred infections of body and mind that now reduce it to invalidism and squalor. We have already laid stress on the vast elimination of drudgery from

human life through the creation of a new race of slaves, the machines. This — and the disappearance of war and the smoothing out of endless restraints and contentions by juster social and economic arrangements — will lift the burthen of toilsome work and routine work, that has been the price of human security since the dawn of the first civilizations, from the shoulders of our children. Which does not mean that they will cease to work, but that they will cease to do irksome work under pressure, and will work freely, planning, making, creating, according to their gifts and instincts. They will fight nature no longer as dull conscripts of the pick and plough, but for a splendid conquest. Only the spiritlessness of our present depression blinds us to the clear intimations of our reason that in the course of a few generations every little country town could become an Athens, every human being could be gentle in breeding and healthy in body and mind, the whole solid earth man's mine and its uttermost regions his playground.

In this *Outline* we have sought to show two great systems of development interacting in the story of human society. We have seen, growing out of that later special neolithic culture, the heliolithic culture, and arising out of this in the warmer alluvial parts of the world, the great primordial civilizations, fecund systems of subjugation and obedience, vast multiplications of industrious and subservient men. We have shown the necessary relationship of these early civilizations to the early temples and to king-gods and god-kings. At the same time we have traced the development from a simpler neolithic level of the wanderer peoples, who became the nomadic peoples, in those great groups the Aryans and the Hun-Mongol peoples of the north-west and the north-east and (from a heliolithic phase) the Semites of the Arabian deserts. Our history has told of a repeated overrunning and refreshment of the originally brunet civilizations by these hardier, bolder, free-spirited peoples of the steppes and desert. We have pointed out how these constantly recurring nomadic injections have steadily altered the primordial civilizations both in blood and in spirit; and how the world religions of to-day, and what we now call democracy, the boldness of modern scientific inquiry and a universal restlessness, are due to this "nomadization" of civilization. The old civilizations created

tradition, and lived by tradition. To-day the power of tradition is destroyed. The body of our state is civilization still, but its spirit is the spirit of the nomadic world. It is the spirit of the great plains and the high seas.

So that it is difficult to resist the persuasion that so soon as one law runs in the earth and the fierceness of frontiers ceases to distress us, that urgency in our nature that stirs us in spring and autumn to be up and travelling, will have its way with us. We shall obey the call of the summer pastures and the winter pastures in our blood, the call of the mountains, the desert, and the sea. For some of us also, who may be of a different lineage, there is the call of the forest, and there are those who would hunt in the summer and return to the fields for the harvest and the plough. But this does not mean that men will have become homeless and all adrift. The normal nomadic life is not a homeless one, but a movement between homes. The Kalmucks to-day, like the swallows, go yearly a thousand miles from one home to another. The beautiful and convenient cities of the coming age, we conclude, will have their seasons when they will be full of life and seasons when they will seem asleep. Life will ebb and flow to and from every region seasonally as the interest of that region rises or declines.

There will be little drudgery in this better-ordered world. Natural power harnessed in machines will be the general drudge. What drudgery is inevitable will be done as a service and duty for a few years or months out of each life; it will not consume nor degrade the whole life of anyone. And not only drudges, but many other sorts of men and ways of living which loom large in the current social scheme will necessarily have dwindled in importance or passed away altogether. There will be few professional fighting men or none at all, no custom-house officers; the increased multitude of teachers will have abolished large police forces and large jail staffs, mad-houses will be rare or non-existent; a worldwide sanitation will have diminished the proportion of hospitals, nurses, sick-room attendants, and the like; a world-wide economic justice, the floating population of cheats, sharpers, gamblers, forestallers, parasites, and speculators generally. But there will be no diminution of adventure or romance in this world of the days to come. Sea fisheries and the incessant

insurrection of the sea, for example, will call for their own stalwart types of men; the high air will clamour for manhood, the deep and dangerous secret places of nature. Men will turn again with renewed interest to the animal world. In these disordered days a stupid, uncontrollable massacre of animal species goes on — from certain angles of vision it is a thing almost more tragic than human miseries; in the nineteenth century dozens of animal species, and some of them very interesting species, were exterminated; but one of the first fruits of an effective world state would be the better protection of what are now wild beasts. It is a strange thing in human history to note how little has been done since the Bronze Age in taming, using, befriending, and appreciating the animal life about us. But that mere witless killing which is called sport to-day, would inevitably give place in a better educated world community to a modification of the primitive instincts that find expression in this way, changing them into an interest not in the deaths, but in the lives of beasts, and leading to fresh and perhaps very strange and beautiful attempts to befriend these pathetic, kindred lower creatures we no longer fear as enemies, hate as rivals, or need as slaves. And a world state and universal justice does not mean the imprisonment of our race in any bleak institutional orderliness. There will still be mountains and the sea, there will be jungles and great forests, cared for indeed and treasured and protected; the great plains will still spread before us and the wild winds blow. But men will not hate so much, fear so much, nor cheat so desperately — and they will keep their minds and bodies cleaner.

There are unhopeful prophets who see in the gathering together of men into one community the possibility of violent race conflicts, conflicts for "ascendancy," but that is to suppose that civilization is incapable of adjustments by which men of different qualities and temperaments and appearances will live side by side, following different rôles and contributing diverse gifts. The weaving of mankind into one community does not imply the creation of a homogeneous community, but rather the reverse; the welcome and the adequate utilization of distinctive quality in an atmosphere of understanding. It is the almost universal bad manners of the present age which make race intolerable to race. The community to which

we may be moving will be more mixed — which does not necessarily mean more interbred — more various and more interesting than any existing community. Communities all to one pattern, like boxes of toy soldiers, are things of the past rather than the future.

But one of the hardest, most impossible tasks a writer can set himself, is to picture the life of people better educated, happier in their circumstances, more free and more healthy than he is himself. We know enough to-day to know that there is infinite room for betterment in every human concern. Nothing is needed but collective effort. Our poverty, our restraints, our infections and indigestions, our quarrels and misunderstandings, are all things controllable and removable by concerted human action, but we know as little how life would feel without them as some poor dirty, ill-treated, fierce-souled creature born and bred amidst the cruel and dingy surroundings of a European back street can know what it is to bathe every day, always to be clad beautifully, to climb mountains for pleasure, to fly, to meet none but agreeable, well-mannered people, to conduct researches or make delightful things. Yet a time when all such good things will be for all men may be coming more nearly than we think. Each one who believes that brings the good time nearer; each heart that fails delays it.

One cannot foretell the surprises or disappointments the future has in store. Before this chapter of the World State can begin fairly in our histories, other chapters as yet unsuspected may still need to be written, as long and as full of conflict as our account of the growth and rivalries of the Great Powers. There may be tragic economic struggles, grim grapplings of race with race and class with class. We do not know; we cannot tell. These are unnecessary disasters, but they may be unavoidable disasters. Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe. Against the unifying effort of Christendom and against the unifying influence of the mechanical revolution, catastrophe won. New falsities may arise and hold men in some unrighteous and fated scheme of order for a time, before they collapse amidst the misery and slaughter of generations. Yet, clumsily or smoothly, the world, it seems, progresses and will progress. In this *Outline*, in our account of

Palæolithic men, we have borrowed a description from Mr. Worthington Smith of the very highest life in the world some fifty thousand years ago. It was a bestial life. We have sketched too the gathering for a human sacrifice, some fifteen thousand years ago. That scene again is almost incredibly cruel to a modern civilized reader. Yet it is not more than five hundred years since the great empire of the Aztecs still believed that it could live only by the shedding of blood. Every year in Mexico hundreds of human victims died in this fashion: the body was bent like a bow over the curved stone of sacrifice, the breast was slashed open with a knife of obsidian, and the priest tore out the beating heart of the still living victim. The day may be close at hand when we shall no longer tear out the hearts of men, even for the sake of our national gods. Let the reader but refer to the earlier time charts we have given in this history, and he will see the true measure and transitoriness of all the conflicts, deprivations, and miseries of this present period of painful and yet hopeful change.

§ 5

History is and must always be no more than an account of beginnings. We can venture to prophesy that the next chapters to be written will tell, though perhaps with long interludes of set-back and disaster, of the final achievement of world-wide political and social unity. But when that is attained, it will mean no resting stage, nor even a breathing stage, before the development of a new struggle and of new and vaster efforts. Men will unify only to intensify the search for knowledge and power, and live as ever for new occasions. Animal and vegetable life, the obscure processes of psychology, the intimate structure of matter and the interior of our earth, will yield their secrets and endow their conqueror. Life begins perpetually. Gathered together at last under the leadership of man, the student-teacher of the universe, unified, disciplined, armed with the secret powers of the atom and with knowledge as yet beyond dreaming, Life, for ever dying to be born afresh, for ever young and eager, will presently stand upon this earth as upon a footstool, and stretch out its realm amidst the stars.

TIME CHARTS AND CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

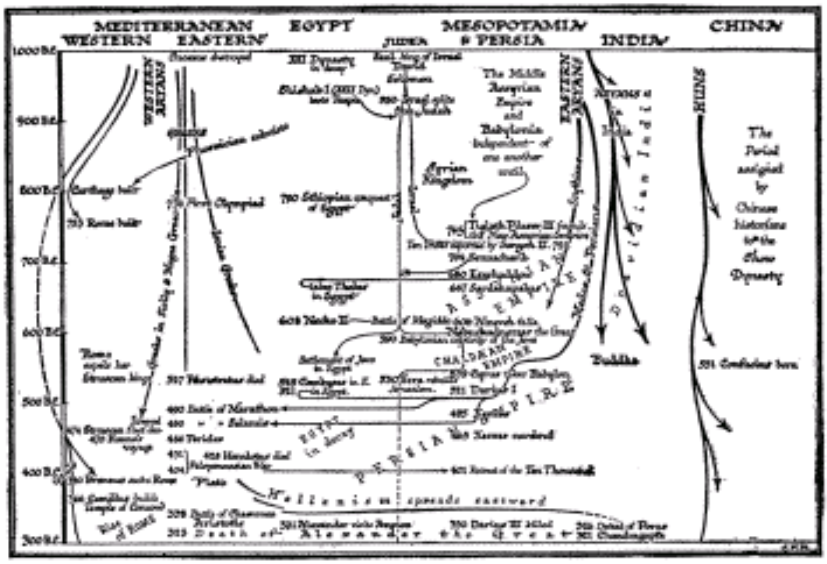

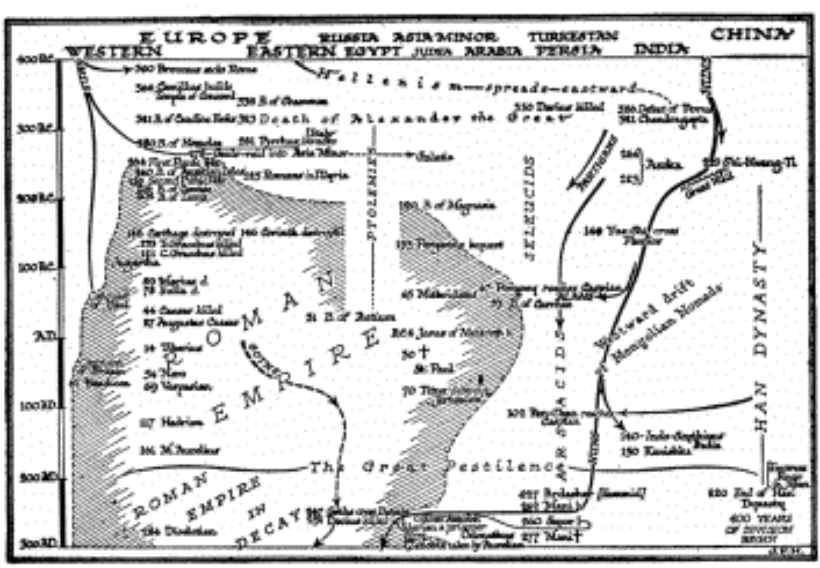

EUROPE
WESTERN
EASTERN
RUSSIA in ASIA
ARABIA
WESTERN
ASIA
INDIA
CHINA
EASTERN
SPREAD OF
CHRISTIANITY
Attila
Empire
Justinian
Mohammad
CHRISTIANITY RECEDES
UMAYYAD CALIPHATE
Harun al Rashid
FIRST PERIOD OF DECAY IN ISLAM
INDIA DIVIDED AMONG MANY PRINCES
400 YEARS OF DIVISION & CONFUSION
North and South China separate
TANG DYNASTY

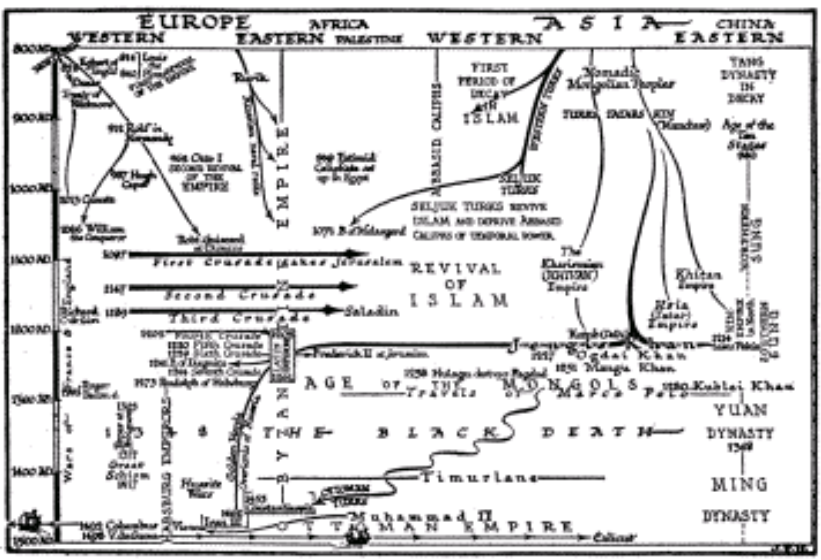
EUROPE
WESTERN
EASTERN
AFRICA
PALESTINE
WESTERN
ASIA
CHINA
EASTERN
EMPIRE
FIRST PERIOD OF DECAY IN ISLAM
Nomadic Mongolian Empire
TANG DYNASTY IN DECAY
SELJUK TURKS REVIVE ISLAM AND DEPRIVE ABBASID CALIPHS OF TEMPORAL POWER
First Crusade
Second Crusade
Third Crusade
Saladin
REVIVAL OF ISLAM
Khitan Empire
Hsia (Tangut) Empire
Genghis Khan
Mongol Empire
Kublai Khan
AGE OF TRAVELS
MONGOLS
Marco Polo
THE BLACK DEATH
YUAN DYNASTY
Timurlane
MING DYNASTY
Muhammad II
OTTOMAN EMPIRE

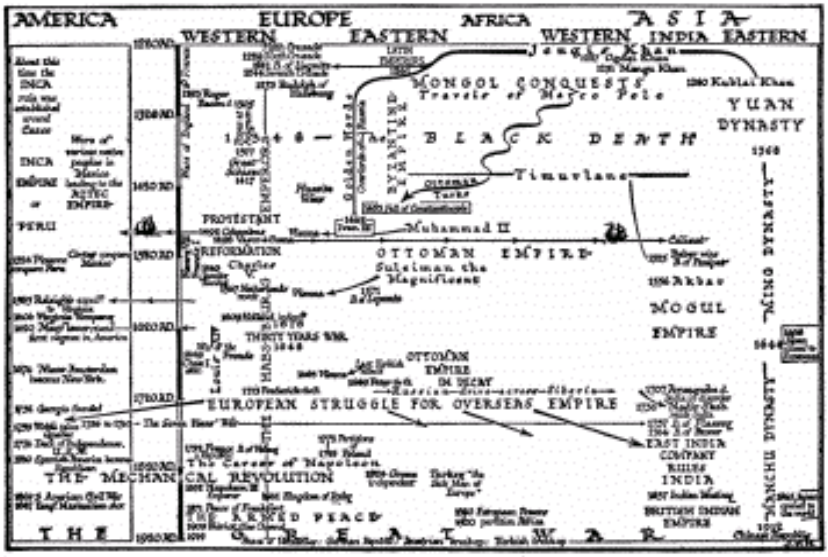
AMERICA
EUROPE
AFRICA
ASIA
WESTERN
EASTERN
WESTERN
INDIA
EASTERN
Jenghiz Khan
MONGOL CONQUESTS
Travels of Marco Polo
YUAN DYNASTY
BLACK DEATH
Timurlane
Muhammad II
OTTOMAN EMPIRE
Suleiman the Magnificent
MOGUL EMPIRE
Akbar
INCA EMPIRE
AZTEC EMPIRE
PERU
PROTESTANT REFORMATION
THIRTY YEARS WAR
OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN DECAY
EUROPEAN STRUGGLE FOR OVERSEAS EMPIRE
EAST INDIA COMPANY RULES INDIA
BRITISH INDIAN EMPIRE
The Career of Napoleon
THE MECHANICAL REVOLUTION
THE ARMED PEACE
MING DYNASTY
MANCHU DYNASTY

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

TO conclude this *Outline*, we give here a Table of Leading Events from the year 800 B.C. to 1920 A.D. With it we give five time diagrams covering the period from 1000 B.C. onward, which present the trend of events in a graphic form.

It is well that the reader should keep in mind an idea of the true proportions of historical to geological time. The scale of these five diagrams is such that by it the time diagram on page 196, vol. i, would be about 8½ times as long, that is to say about 4 feet; that on page 97, showing the length of time since the first true men, about 55 feet long; that on page 60, showing the interval since the Eoliths, 555 feet; and that on page 14, representing the whole of geological time, would be somewhere between 12 and, at the longest and most probable estimate, 260 miles! Let the reader therefore take one of these chronological tables we give, and imagine it extended upon a long strip of paper to a distance of 55 feet. He would have to get up and walk about that distance to note the date of the painting of the Altamira caves, and he would have to go ten times that distance by the side of the same narrow strip to reach the earlier Neanderthalers. A mile or so from home, but probably much further away, the strip might be recording the last of the dinosaurs. And this on a scale which represents the time from Columbus to ourselves by three inches of space!

Chronology only begins to be precise enough to specify the exact year of any event after the establishment of the eras of the First Olympiad and the building of Rome.

About the year 1000 B.C. the Aryan peoples were establishing themselves in the peninsulas of Spain, Italy, and the Balkans, and they were established in North India, Cnossos was already destroyed and the spacious times of Egypt, of Thothmes III, Amenophis III, and Rameses II were three or four centuries away. Weak monarchs of the XXIst Dynasty were ruling in the Nile Valley. Israel was united under her early kings; Saul or David or possibly even Solomon may have been reigning. Sargon I (2750 B.C.) of the Akkadian Sumerian Empire was a remote memory in Babylonian

history, more remote than is Constantine the Great from the world of the present day. Hammurabi had been dead a thousand years. The Assyrians were already dominating the less military Babylonians. In 1100 B.C. Tiglath Pileser I had taken Babylon. But there was no permanent conquest; Assyria and Babylonia were still separate empires. In China the new Chow Dynasty was flourishing. Stonehenge in England was already a thousand years old.

The next two centuries saw a renascence of Egypt under the XXIInd Dynasty, the splitting up of the brief little Hebrew kingdom of Solomon, the spreading of the Greeks in the Balkans, South Italy, and Asia Minor, and the days of Etruscan predominance in Central Italy. We may begin our list of ascertainable dates with —

B.C.

800.
The building of Carthage.

790.
The Ethiopian conquest of Egypt (founding the XXVth Dynasty).

776.
First Olympiad.

753.
Rome built.

745.
Tiglath Pileser III conquered Babylonia and founded the New Assyrian Empire.

738.
Menahem, king of Israel, bought off Tiglath Pileser III.

735.
Greeks settling in Sicily.

722.
Sargon II armed the Assyrians with iron weapons.

721.
He deported the Israelites.

704.
Sennacherib.

701.
His army destroyed by pestilence on its way to Egypt.

680.
Esarhaddon took Thebes in Egypt (overthrowing the Ethiopian XXVth Dynasty).

667.
Sardanapalus.

664.
Psammetichus I restored the freedom of Egypt and founded the XXVIth Dynasty (to 610). He was assisted against Assyria by Lydian troops sent by Gyges.

608.
Necho of Egypt defeated Josiah, king of Judah, at the Battle of Megiddo.

606.
Capture of Nineveh by the Chaldeans and Medes. Foundation of the Chaldean Empire.

604.
Necho pushed to the Euphrates and was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar II. Josiah fell with him.

586.

Nebuchadnezzar carried off the Jews to Babylon. Many fled to Egypt and settled there.

550.
Cyrus the Persian succeeded Cyaxares the Mede. Cyrus conquered Crœsus. Buddha lived about this time. So also did Confucius and Lao Tse.

539.
Cyrus took Babylon and founded the Persian Empire.

527.
Peisistratus died.

525.
Cambyses conquered Egypt.

521.
Darius I, the son of Hystaspes, ruled from the Hellespont to the Indus. His expedition to Scythia.

490.
Battle of Marathon.

484.
Herodotus born. Æschylus won his first prize for tragedy.

480.
Battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis.

479.
The Battles of Platæa and Mycale completed the repulse of Persia.

474.
Etruscan fleet destroyed by the Sicilian Greeks.

470.

Voyage of Hanno.

466.
Pericles.

465.
Xerxes murdered.

438.
Herodotus recited his History in Athens.

431.
Peloponnesian War began (to 404).

428.
Pericles died. Herodotus died.

427.
Aristophanes began his career. Plato born. He lived to 347.

401.
Retreat of the Ten Thousand.

390.
Brennus sacked Rome.

366.
Camillus built the Temple of Concord.

359.
Philip became king of Macedonia.

338.
Battle of Chæronea.

336.
Macedonian troops crossed into Asia. Philip murdered.

334.
Battle of the Granicus.

333.
Battle of Issus.

332.
Alexander in Egypt.

331.
Battle of Arbela.

330.
Darius III killed.

323.
Death of Alexander the Great.

321.
Rise of Chandragupta in the Punjab. The Romans completely beaten by the Samnites at the battle of the Caudine Forks.

303.
Chandragupta repulsed Seleucus.

285.
Ptolemy Soter died.

281.
Pyrrhus invaded Italy.

280.
Battle of Heraclea.

279.
Battle of Ausculum.

278.
Gauls' raid into Asia Minor and settlement in Galatia.

275.
Pyrrhus left Italy.

264.
First Punic War. (Asoka began to reign in Behar — to 227.) First gladiatorial games in Rome.

260.
Battle of Mylæ.

256.
Battle of Ecnomus.

246.
Shi-Hwang-ti became king of Ch'in.

242.
Battle of Ægatian Isles.

241.
End of First Punic War.

225.
Battle of Telamon. Roman armies in Illyria.

220.
Shi-Hwang-ti became emperor of China.

219.
Second Punic War.

216.
Battle of Cannæ.

214.
Great Wall of China begun.

210.
Death of Shi-Hwang-ti.

202.
Battle of Zama.

201.
End of Second Punic War.

200-197.
Rome at war with Macedonia.

192.
War with the Seleucids.

190.
Battle of Magnesia.

149.
Third Punic War. (The Yueh-Chi came into Western Turkestan.)

146.
Carthage destroyed. Corinth destroyed.

133.
Attalus bequeathed Pergamum to Rome. Tiberius Gracchus killed.

121.
Caius Gracchus killed.

118.
War with Jugurtha.

106.
War with Jugurtha ended.

102.
Marius drove back Germans.

100.
Triumph of Marius. (Wu-ti conquering the Tarim Valley.)

91.
Social war.

89.
All Italians became Roman citizens.

86.
Death of Marius.

78.
Death of Sulla.

73.
The revolt of the slaves under Spartacus.

71.
Defeat and end of Spartacus.

66.
Pompey led Roman troops to the Caspian and Euphrates. He encountered the Alani.

64.
Mithridates of Pontus died.

53.
Crassus killed at Carrhæ. Mongolian elements with Parthians.

48.
Julius Cæsar defeated Pompey at Pharsalos.

44.
Julius Cæsar assassinated.

31.
Battle of Actium.

27.
Augustus Cæsar princeps (until 14 A.D.). 4. True date of birth of Jesus of Nazareth.

A.D. Christian Era began.

6.
Province of Mœsia established. 9. Province of Pannonia established. Imperial boundary carried to the Danube.

14.
Augustus died. Tiberius emperor.

30.
Jesus of Nazareth crucified.

37.
Caligula succeeded Tiberius.

41.
Claudius (the first emperor of the legions) made emperor by pretorian guard after murder of Caligula.

54.
Nero succeeded Claudius.

61.
Boadicea massacred Roman garrison in Britain.

68.
Suicide of Nero. (Galba, Otho, Vitellus, emperors in succession.)

69.
Vespasian began the so-called Flavian dynasty.

79.
Titus succeeded Vespasian.

81.
Domitian.

84.
North Britain annexed.

96.
Nerva began the so-called dynasty of the Antonines.

98.
Trajan succeeded Nerva.

102.
Pan Chau on the Caspian Sea. (Indo-Scythians invading North India.)

117.
Hadrian succeeded Trajan. Roman Empire at its greatest extent.

138.
Antoninus Pius succeeded Hadrian. (The Indo-Scythians at this time were destroying the last traces of Hellenic rule in India.)

150.
[About this time Kanishka reigned in India, Kashgar, Yarkand, and Kotan.]

161.
Marcus Aurelius succeeded Antoninus Pius.

164.
Great plague began, and lasted to the death of M. Aurelius (180). This also devastated all Asia.

180.
Death of Marcus Aurelius. (Nearly a century of war and disorder began in the Roman Empire.)

220.
End of the Han dynasty. Beginning of four hundred years of division in China.

227.
Ardashir I (first Sassanid shah) put an end to Arsacid line in Persia.

242.
Mani began his teaching.

247.
Goths crossed Danube in a great raid.

251.
Great victory of Goths. Emperor Decius killed.

260.
Sapor I, the second Sassanid shah, took Antioch, captured the Emperor Valerian, and was cut up on his return from Asia Minor by Odenathus of Palmyra.

269.
The Emperor Claudius defeated the Goths at Nish.

270.

Aurelian became emperor.

272.
Zenobia carried captive to Rome. End of the brief glories of Palmyra.

275.
Probus succeeded Aurelian.

276.
Goths in Pontus. The Emperor Probus forced back Franks and Alemanni.

277.
Mani crucified in Persia.

284.
Diocletian became emperor.

303.
Diocletian persecuted the Christians.

311.
Galerius abandoned the persecution of the Christians.

312.
Constantine the Great became emperor.

313.
Constantine presided over a Christian Council at Arles.

321.
Fresh Gothic raids driven back.

323.
Constantine presided over the Council of Nicæa.

337.
Vandals driven by Goths obtained leave to settle in Pannonia. Constantine baptized on his death-bed.

354.
St. Augustine born.

361-3.
Julian the Apostate attempted to substitute Mithraism for Christianity.

379.
Theodosius the Great (a Spaniard) emperor.

390.
The statue of Serapis at Alexandria broken up.

392.
Theodosius the Great, emperor of east and west.

395.
Theodosius the Great died. Honorius and Arcadius redivided the empire with Stilicho and Alaric as their masters and protectors.

410.
The Visigoths under Alaric captured Rome.

425.
Vandals settling in south of Spain. Huns in Pannonia, Goths in Dalmatia. Visigoths and Suevi in Portugal and North Spain. English invading Britain.

429.
Vandals under Genseric invaded Africa.

439.
Vandals took Carthage.

448.
Priscus visited Attila.

451.
Attila raided Gaul and was defeated by Franks, Alemanni, and Romans at Troyes.

453.
Death of Attila.

455.
Vandals sacked Rome.

470.
Ephthalites' raid into India.

476.
Odoacer, king of a medley of Teutonic tribes, informed Constantinople that there was no emperor in the West. End of the Western Empire.

480.
St. Benedict born.

481.
Clovis in France. The Merovingians.

483.
Nestorian church broke away from the Orthodox Christian church.

493.
Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, conquered Italy and became King of Italy, but was nominally subject to Constantinople. (Gothic kings in Italy. Goths settled on special confiscated lands as a garrison.)

527.

Justinian emperor.

528.
Mihiragula, the (Ephthalite) Attila of India, overthrown.

529.
Justinian closed the schools at Athens, which had flourished nearly a thousand years. Belisarius (Justinian's general) took Naples.

531.
Chosroes I began to reign.

543.
Great plague in Constantinople.

544.
St. Benedict died.

553.
Goths expelled from Italy by Justinian. Cassiodorus founded his monastery.

565.
Justinian died. The Lombards conquered most of North Italy (leaving Ravenna and Rome Byzantine). The Turks broke up the Ephthalites in Western Turkestan.

570.
Muhammad born.

579.
Chosroes I died. (The Lombards dominant in Italy.)

590.
Plague raged in Rome. (Gregory the Great — Gregory I — and the vision of St. Angelo.) Chosroes II began to reign.

610.
Heraclius began to reign.

619.
Chosroes II held Egypt, Jerusalem, Damascus, and had armies on Hellespont. Tang dynasty began in China.

622.
The Hegira.

623.
Battle of Badr.

627.
Great Persian defeat at Nineveh by Heraclius. The Meccan Allies besieged Medina. Tai-tsung became Emperor of China.

628.
Kavadh II murdered and succeeded his father, Chosroes II. Muhammad wrote letters to all the rulers of the earth.

629.
Yuan Chwang started for India. Muhammad entered Mecca.

631.
Tai-tsung received Nestorian missionaries.

632.
Muhammad died. Abu Bekr Caliph.

634.
Battle of the Yarmuk. Moslems took Syria. Omar second Caliph.

637.
Battle of Kadessia.

638.

Jerusalem surrendered to Omar.

642.
Heraclius died.

643.
Othman third Caliph.

645.
Yuan Chwang returned to Singan.

655.
Defeat of the Byzantine fleet by the Moslems.

656.
Othman murdered at Medina.

661.
Ali murdered.

662.
Moawija Caliph. (First of the Omayyad caliphs.)

668.
The Caliph Moawija attacked Constantinople by sea — Theodore of Tarsus became Archbishop of Canterbury.

675.
Last of the sea attacks by Moawija on Constantinople.

687.
Pepin of Heristhal, mayor of the palace, reunited Austrasia and Neustria.

711.
Moslem army invaded Spain from Africa.

714.
Charles Martel mayor of the palace.

715.
The domains of the Caliph Walid I extended from the Pyrenees to China.

717-18.
Suleiman, son and successor of Walid, failed to take Constantinople. The Omayyad line passed its climax.

732.
Charles Martel defeated the Moslems near Poitiers.

735.
Death of the Venerable Bede.

743.
Walid II Caliph, — the unbelieving Caliph.

749.
Overthrow of the Omayyads. Abdul Abbas, the first Abbasid Caliph. Spain remained Omayyad. Beginning of the break-up of the Arab Empire.

751.
Pepin crowned King of the French.

755.
Martyrdom of St. Boniface.

768.
Pepin died.

771.
Charlemagne sole king.

774.
Charlemagne conquered Lombardy.

776.
Charlemagne in Dalmatia.

786.
Haroun al Raschid Abbasid Caliph in Bagdad (to 809).

795.
Leo III became Pope (to 816).

800.
Leo crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the West.

802.
Egbert, formerly an English refugee at the court of Charlemagne, established himself as King of Wessex.

810.
Krum of Bulgaria defeated and killed the Emperor Nicephorus.

814.
Charlemagne died, Louis the Pious succeeds him.

828.
Egbert became first King of England.

843.
Louis the Pious died, and the Carlovingian Empire went to pieces. Until 962 there was no regular succession of Holy Roman Emperors, though the title appeared intermittently.

850.
About this time Rurik (a Northman) became ruler of Novgorod and Kieff.

852.
Boris first Christian King of Bulgaria (to 884).

865.
The fleet of the Russians (Northmen) threatened Constantinople.

886.
The Treaty of Alfred of England and Guthrum the Dane, establishing the Danes in the Danelaw.

904.
Russian (Northmen) fleet off Constantinople.

912.
Rolf the Ganger established himself in Normandy.

919.
Henry the Fowler elected King of Germany.

928.
Marozia imprisoned Pope John X.

931.
John XI Pope (to 936).

936.
Otto I became King of Germany in succession to his father, Henry the Fowler.

941.
Russian fleet again threatened Constantinople.

955.
John XII Pope.

960.
Northern Sung Dynasty began in China.

962.
Otto I, King of Germany, crowned Emperor (first Saxon Emperor) by John XII.

963.
Otto deposed John XII.

969.
Separate Fatimite Caliphate set up in Egypt.

973.
Otto II.

983.
Otto III.

987.
Hugh Capet became King of France. End of the Carlovingian line of French kings.

1013.
Canute became King of England, Denmark, and Norway.

1037.
Avicenna of Bokhara, the Prince of Physicians, died.

1043.
Russian fleet threatened Constantinople.

1066.
Conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy.

1071.
Revival of Islam under the Seljuk Turks. Battle of Melasgird.

1073.

Hildebrand became Pope (Gregory VII) to 1085.

1082.
Robert Guiscard captured Durazzo.

1084.
Robert Guiscard sacked Rome.

1087-99.
Urban II Pope.

1094.
Pestilence.

1095.
Urban II at Clermont summoned the First Crusade.

1096.
Massacre of the People's Crusade.

1099.
Godfrey of Bouillon captured Jerusalem. Paschal II Pope (to 1118).

1138.
Kin Empire flourished. The Sung capital shifted from Nanking to Hang Chau.

1147.
The Second Crusade. Foundation of the Christian Kingdom of Portugal.

1169.
Saladin Sultan of Egypt.

1176.
Frederick Barbarossa acknowledged supremacy of the Pope

(Alexander III) at Venice.

1187.
Saladin captured Jerusalem.

1189.
The Third Crusade.

1198.
Averroes of Cordoba, the Arab philosopher, died. Innocent III Pope (to 1216). Frederick II (aged four), King of Sicily, became his ward.

1202.
The Fourth Crusade attacked the Eastern Empire.

1204.
Capture of Constantinople by the Latins.

1206.
Kutub founded Moslem state at Delhi.

1212.
The Children's Crusade.

1214.
Jengis Khan took Peking.

1215.
Magna Carta signed.

1216.
Honorius III Pope.

1218.
Jengis Khan invaded Kharismia.

1221.
Failure and return of the Fifth Crusade. St. Dominic died. (The Dominicans.)

1226.
St. Francis of Assisi died. (The Franciscans.)

1227.
Jengis Khan died, Khan from the Caspian to the Pacific, and was succeeded by Ogdai Khan.

1227.
Gregory IX Pope.

1228.
Frederick II embarked upon the Sixth Crusade, and acquired Jerusalem.

1234.
Mongols completed conquest of the Kin Empire with the help of the Sung Empire.

1239.
Frederick II excommunicated for the second time.

1240.
Mongols destroyed Kieff. Russia tributary to the Mongols.

1241.
Mongol victory at Liegnitz in Silesia.

1244.
The Egyptian Sultan recaptured Jerusalem. This led to the Seventh Crusade.

1245.
Frederick II re-excommunicated. The men of Schwyz burnt the

castle of New Habsburg.

1250.
St. Louis of France ransomed. Frederick II, the last Hohenstaufen Emperor, died. German interregnum until 1273.

1251.
Mangu Khan became Great Khan. Kublai Khan governor of China.

1258.
Hulagu Khan took and destroyed Bagdad.

1260.
Kublai Khan became Great Khan. Ketboga defeated in Palestine.

1261.
The Greeks recaptured Constantinople from the Latins.

1269.
Kublai Khan sent a message of inquiry to the Pope by the older Polos.

1271.
Marco Polo started upon his travels.

1273.
Rudolf of Habsburg elected Emperor. The Swiss formed their Everlasting League.

1280.
Kublai Khan founded the Yuan Dynasty in China.

1292.
Death of Kublai Khan.

1293.

Roger Bacon, the prophet of experimental science, died.

1294.
Boniface VIII Pope (to 1303).

1295.
Marco Polo returned to Venice.

1303.
Death of Pope Boniface VIII after the outrage of Anagni by Guillaume de Nogaret.

1305.
Clement V Pope. The papal court set up at Avignon.

1308.
Duns Scotus died.

1318.
Four Franciscans burnt for heresy at Marseilles.

1347.
Occam died.

1348.
The Great Plague, the Black Death.

1358.
The Jacquerie in France.

1360.
In China the Mongol (Yuan) Dynasty fell, and was succeeded by the Ming Dynasty (to 1644).

1367.
Timurlane assumed the title of Great Khan.

1377.
Pope Gregory XI returned to Rome.

1378.
The Great Schism. Urban VI in Rome, Clement VII at Avignon.

1381.
Peasant revolt in England. Wat Tyler murdered in the presence of King Richard II.

1384.
Wycliffe died.

1398.
Huss preached Wycliffism at Prague.

1405.
Death of Timurlane.

1414-18.
The Council of Constance. Huss burnt (1415).

1417.
The Great Schism ended, Martin V Pope.

1420.
The Hussites revolted. Martin V preached a crusade against them.

1431.
The Catholic Crusaders dissolved before the Hussites at Domazlice. The Council of Basle met.

1436.
The Hussites came to terms with the church.

1439.
Council of Basle created a fresh schism in the church.

1445.
Discovery of Cape Verde by the Portuguese.

1446.
First printed books (Coster in Haarlem).

1449.
End of the Council of Basle.

1453.
Ottoman Turks under Muhammad II took Constantinople.

1480.
Ivan III, Grand-duke of Moscow, threw off the Mongol allegiance.

1481.
Death of the Sultan Muhammad II while preparing for the conquest of Italy. Bayazid II Turkish Sultan (to 1512).

1486.
Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

1492.
Columbus crossed the Atlantic to America. Rodrigo Borgia, Alexander VI, Pope (to 1503).

1493.
Maximilian I became Emperor.

1498.
Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape to India.

1499.
Switzerland became an independent republic.

1500.

Charles V born.

1509.
Henry VIII King of England.

1512.
Selim Sultan (to 1520). He bought the title of Caliph. Fall of Soderini (and Machiavelli) in Florence.

1513.
Leo X Pope.

1515.
Francis I King of France.

1517.
Selim annexed Egypt. Luther propounded his theses at Wittenberg.

1519.
Leonardo da Vinci died. Magellan's expedition started to sail round the world. Cortez entered Mexico city.

1520.
Suleiman the Magnificent, Sultan (to 1566), who ruled from Bagdad to Hungary. Charles V Emperor.

1521.
Luther at the Diet of Worms. Loyola wounded at Pampeluna.

1525.
Baber won the battle of Panipat, captured Delhi, and founded the Mogul Empire.

1527.
The German troops in Italy, under the Constable of Bourbon, took and pillaged Rome.

1529.
Suleiman besieged Vienna.

1530.
Pizarro invaded Peru. Charles V crowned by the Pope. Henry VIII began his quarrel with the Papacy.

1532.
The Anabaptists seized Münster.

1535.
Fall of the Anabaptist rule in Münster.

1539.
The Company of Jesus founded.

1543.
Copernicus died.

1545.
The Council of Trent (to 1563) assembled to put the church in order.

1546.
Martin Luther died.

1547.
Ivan IV (the Terrible) took the title of Tsar of Russia. Francis I died.

1549.
First Jesuit missions arrived in South America.

1552.
Treaty of Passau. Temporary pacification of Germany.

1556.
Charles V abdicated. Akbar Great Mogul (to 1605). Ignatius of Loyola died.

1558.
Death of Charles V.

1563.
End of the Council of Trent and the reform of the Catholic Church.

1564.
Galileo born.

1566.
Suleiman the Magnificent died.

1567.
Revolt of the Netherlands.

1568.
Execution of Counts Egmont and Horn.

1571.
Kepler born.

1573.
Siege of Alkmaar.

1578.
Harvey born.

1583.
Sir Walter Raleigh’s expedition to Virginia.

1601.
Tycho Brahe died.

1603.
James I King of England and Scotland. Dr. Gilbert died.

1605.
Jehangir Great Mogul.

1606.
Virginia Company founded.

1609.
Holland independent.

1618.
Thirty Years War began.

1620.
Mayflower expedition founded New Plymouth. First negro slaves landed at Jamestown (Va.).

1625.
Charles I of England.

1626.
Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam) died.

1628.
Shah Jehan Great Mogul. The English Petition of Right.

1629.
Charles I of England began his eleven years of rule without a parliament.

1630.
Kepler died.

1632.

Leeuwenhoek born. Gustavus Adolphus killed at the Battle of Lützen.

1634.
Wallenstein murdered.

1638.
Japan closed to Europeans (until 1865).

1640.
Charles I of England summoned the Long Parliament.

1641.
Massacre of the English in Ireland.

1642.
Galileo died. Newton born.

1643.
Louis XIV began his reign of seventy-two years.

1644.
The Manchus ended the Ming dynasty.

1645.
Swine pens in the inner town of Leipzig pulled down.

1648.
Treaty of Westphalia. Thereby Holland and Switzerland were recognized as free republics and Prussia became important. The treaty gave a complete victory neither to the Imperial Crown nor to the Princes. War of the Fronde; it ended in the complete victory of the French crown.

1649.
Execution of Charles I of England.

1658.
Aurungzeb Great Mogul. Cromwell died.

1660.
Charles II of England.

1674.
Nieuw Amsterdam finally became British by treaty and was renamed New York.

1683.
The last Turkish attack on Vienna defeated by John III of Poland.

1688.
The British Revolution. Flight of James II. William and Mary began to reign.

1689.
Peter the Great of Russia (to 1725).

1690.
Battle of the Boyne in Ireland.

1694.
Voltaire born.

1701.
Frederick I first King of Prussia.

1704.
John Locke, the father of modern democratic theory, died.

1707.
Death of Aurungzeb. The empire of the Great Mogul disintegrated.

1713.

Frederick the Great of Prussia born.

1714.
George I of Britain.

1715.
Louis XV of France.

1727.
Newton died. George II of Britain.

1732.
Oglethorpe founded Georgia.

1736.
Nadir Shah raided India. (The beginning of twenty years of raiding and disorder in India.)

1740.
Maria-Theresa began to reign. (Being a woman, she could not be empress. Her husband, Francis I, was emperor until his death in 1765, when her son, Joseph II, succeeded him.)

1740.
Accession of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

1741.
The Empress Elizabeth of Russia began to reign.

1755-63.
Britain and France struggled for America and India. France in alliance with Austria and Russia against Prussia and Britain (1756-63); the Seven Years' War.

1757.
Battle of Plassey.

1759.
The British general Wolfe took Quebec.

1760.
George III of Britain.

1762.
The Empress Elizabeth of Russia died. Murder of the Tsar Paul, and accession of Catherine the Great of Russia (to 1796).

1763.
Peace of Paris; Canada ceded to Britain. British dominant in India.

1764.
Battle of Buxar.

1769.
Napoleon Bonaparte born.

1774.
Louis XVI began his reign. Suicide of Clive. The American revolutionary drama began.

1775.
Battle of Lexington.

1776.
Declaration of Independence by the United States of America.

1778.
J. J. Rousseau, the creator of modern democratic sentiment, died.

1780.
End of the reign of Maria-Theresa. The Emperor Joseph (1765 to 1790) succeeded her in the hereditary Habsburg dominions.

1783.
Treaty of Peace between Britain and the new United States of America. Quaco set free in Massachusetts.

1787.
The Constitutional Convention of Philadelphia set up the Federal Government of the United States. France discovered to be bankrupt. The Assembly of the Notables.

1788.
First Federal Congress of the United States at New York.

1789.
The French States-General assembled. Storming of the Bastille.

1791.
The Jacobin Revolution. Flight to Varennes.

1792.
France declared war on Austria; Prussia declared war on France. Battle of Valmy. France became a republic.

1793.
Louis XVI beheaded.

1794.
Execution of Robespierre and end of the Jacobin republic. Rule of the Convention.

1795.
The Directory. Bonaparte suppressed a revolt and went to Italy as commander-in-chief.

1797.
By the Peace of Campo Formio Bonaparte destroyed the Republic of Venice.

1798.
Bonaparte went to Egypt. Battle of the Nile.

1799.
Bonaparte returned. He became First Consul with enormous powers.

1800.
Legislative union of Ireland and England enacted January 1st, 1801.

1800.
Napoleon's campaign against Austria. Battles of Marengo (in Italy) and Hohenlinden (Moreau's victory).

1801.
Preliminaries of peace between France, England, and Austria signed.

1803.
Bonaparte occupied Switzerland, and so precipitated war.

1804.
Bonaparte became Emperor. Francis II took the title of Emperor of Austria in 1805, and in 1806 he dropped the title of Holy Roman Emperor. So the "Holy Roman Empire" came to an end.

1805.
Battle of Trafalgar. Battles of Ulm and Austerlitz.

1806.
Prussia overthrown at Jena.

1807.
Battles of Eylau and Friedland and Treaty of Tilsit.

1808.

Napoleon made his brother Joseph King of Spain.

1810.
Spanish America became republican.

1811.
Alexander withdrew from the “Continental System.”

1812.
Moscow.

1814.
Abdication of Napoleon. Louis XVIII.

1815.
The Waterloo campaign. The Treaty of Vienna.

1819.
The First Factory Act passed through the efforts of Robert Owen.

1821.
The Greek revolt.

1824.
Charles X of France.

1825.
Nicholas I of Russia.

1827.
Battle of Navarino.

1829.
Greece independent.

1830.
A year of disturbance. Louis Philippe ousted Charles X. Belgium

broke away from Holland. Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha became king of this new country, Belgium. Russian Poland revolted ineffectually. First railway (Liverpool to Manchester).

1832.
The First Reform Bill in Britain restored the democratic character of the British Parliament.

1835.
The word socialism first used.

1837.
Queen Victoria.

1840.
Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

1848.
Another year of disturbance. Republics in France and Rome. The Pan-slavic conference at Prague. All Germany united in a parliament at Frankfort. German unity destroyed by the King of Prussia.

1851.
The Great Exhibition of London.

1852.
Napoleon III Emperor of the French.

1854.
Perry (second expedition) landed in Japan. Nicholas I occupied the Danubian provinces of Turkey.

1854-56.
Crimean War.

1856.
Alexander II of Russia.

1857.
The Indian Mutiny.

1858.
Robert Owen died.

1859.
Franco-Austrian war. Battles of Magenta and Solferino.

1861.
Victor Emmanuel First King of Italy. Abraham Lincoln became President U.S.A. The American Civil War began.

1863.
British bombarded a Japanese town.

1864.
Maximilian became Emperor of Mexico.

1865.
Surrender of Appomattox Court House. Japan opened to the world.

1866.
Prussia and Italy attacked Austria (and the south German states in alliance with her). Battle of Sadowa.

1867.
The Emperor Maximilian shot.

1870.
Napoleon III declared war against Prussia.

1871.
Paris surrendered (January). The King of Prussia became William I, “German Emperor.” The Hohenzollern Peace of Frankfort.

1875.
The “Bulgarian atrocities.”

1877.
Russo-Turkish War. Treaty of San Stefano. Queen Victoria became Empress of India.

1878.
The Treaty of Berlin. The Armed Peace of forty-six years began in western Europe.

1881.
The Battle of Majuba Hill. The Transvaal free.

1883.
Britain occupied Egypt.

1886.
Gladstone’s first Irish Home Rule Bill.

1888.
Frederick II (March), William II (June), German Emperors.

1890.
Bismarck dismissed. Heligoland ceded to Germany by Lord Salisbury.

1894-95.
Japanese war with China.

1895.
“Unionist” (Imperialist) government in Britain.

1896.
Battle of Adowa.

1898.
The Fashoda quarrel between France and Britain. Germany acquired Kiau-Chau.

1899.
The war in South Africa began (Boer war).

1900.
The Boxer risings in China. Siege of the Legations at Peking.

1904.
The British invaded Tibet.

1904-5.
Russo-Japanese war.

1906.
The “Unionist” (Imperialist) party in Great Britain defeated by the Liberals upon the question of tariffs.

1907.
The Confederation of South Africa established.

1908.
Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1909.
M. Bleriot flew in an aeroplane from France to England.

1911.
Italy made war on Turkey and seized Tripoli.

1912.
China became a republic.

1913.
The Balkan league made war on Turkey. Bloodshed at

Londonderry in Ireland caused by “Unionist” gun running.

1914.
The Great War in Europe began (for which see special time chart on p-29).

1917.
The two Russian revolutions. Establishment of the Bolshevik régime in Russia.

1919-20.
The Clemenceau Peace of Versailles.

RUSSIA IN THE SHADOWS

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I. — PETERSBURG IN COLLAPSE

In January 1914 I visited Petersburg and Moscow for a couple of weeks; in September 1920 I was asked to repeat this visit by Mr. Kamenev, of the Russian Trade Delegation in London. I snatched at this suggestion, and went to Russia at the end of September with my son, who speaks a little Russian. We spent a fortnight and a day in Russia, passing most of our time in Petersburg, where we went about freely by ourselves, and were shown nearly everything we asked to see. We visited Moscow, and I had a long conversation with Mr. Lenin, which I shall relate. In Petersburg I did not stay at the Hotel International, to which foreign visitors are usually sent, but with my old friend, Maxim Gorky. The guide and interpreter assigned to assist us was a lady I had met in Russia in 1914, the niece of a former Russian Ambassador to London. She was educated at Newnham, she has been imprisoned five times by the Bolshevist Government, she is not allowed to leave Petersburg because of an attempt to cross the frontier to her children in Esthonia, and she was, therefore, the last person likely to lend herself to any attempt to hoodwink me. I mention this because on every hand at home and in Russia I had been told that the most elaborate camouflage of realities would go on, and that I should be kept in blinkers throughout my visit.

As a matter of fact, the harsh and terrible realities of the situation in Russia cannot be camouflaged. In the case of special delegations, perhaps, a certain distracting tumult of receptions, bands, and speeches may be possible, and may be attempted. But it is hardly possible to dress up two large cities for the benefit of two stray visitors, wandering observantly often in different directions. Naturally, when one demands to see a school or a prison one is not shown the worst. Any country would in the circumstances show the best it had, and Soviet Russia is no exception. One can allow for that.

Our dominant impression of things Russian is an impression of a vast irreparable breakdown. The great monarchy that was here in 1914, the administrative, social, financial, and commercial systems connected with it have, under the strains of six years of incessant

war, fallen down and smashed utterly. Never in all history has there been so great a *débâcle* before. The fact of the Revolution is, to our minds, altogether dwarfed by the fact of this downfall. By its own inherent rottenness and by the thrusts and strains of aggressive imperialism the Russian part of the old civilised world that existed before 1914 fell, and is now gone. The peasant, who was the base of the old pyramid, remains upon the land, living very much as he has always lived. Everything else is broken down, or is breaking down. Amid this vast disorganisation an emergency Government, supported by a disciplined party of perhaps 150,000 adherents — the Communist Party — has taken control. It has — at the price of much shooting — suppressed brigandage, established a sort of order and security in the exhausted towns, and set up a crude rationing system.

It is, I would say at once, the only possible Government in Russia at the present time. It is the only idea, it supplies the only solidarity, left in Russia. But it is a secondary fact. The dominant fact for the Western reader, the threatening and disconcerting fact, is that a social and economic system very like our own and intimately connected with our own has crashed.

Nowhere in all Russia is the fact of that crash so completely evident as it is in Petersburg. Petersburg was the artificial creation of Peter the Great; his bronze statue in the little garden near the Admiralty still prances amid the ebbing life of the city. Its palaces are still and empty, or strangely refurnished with the typewriters and tables and plank partitions of a new Administration which is engaged chiefly in a strenuous struggle against famine and the foreign invader. Its streets were streets of busy shops. In 1914 I loafed agreeably in the Petersburg streets — buying little articles and watching the abundant traffic. All these shops have ceased. There are perhaps half a dozen shops still open in Petersburg. There is a Government crockery shop where I bought a plate or so as a souvenir, for seven or eight hundred roubles each, and there are a few flower shops. It is a wonderful fact, I think, that in this city, in which most of the shrinking population is already nearly starving, and hardly any one possesses a second suit of clothes or more than a single change of worn and patched linen, flowers can be and are still bought and sold. For five thousand roubles, which is about six and

eightpence at the current rate of exchange, one can get a very pleasing bunch of big chrysanthemums.

I do not know if the words "all the shops have ceased" convey any picture to the Western reader of what a street looks like in Russia. It is not like Bond Street or Piccadilly on a Sunday, with the blinds neatly drawn down in a decorous sleep, and ready to wake up and begin again on Monday. The shops have an utterly wretched and abandoned look; paint is peeling off, windows are cracked, some are broken and boarded up, some still display a few fly-blown relics of stock in the window, some have their windows covered with notices; the windows are growing dim, the fixtures have gathered two years' dust. They are dead shops. They will never open again.

All the great bazaar-like markets are closed, too, in Petersburg now, in the desperate struggle to keep a public control of necessities and prevent the profiteer driving up the last vestiges of food to incredible prices. And this cessation of shops makes walking about the streets seem a silly sort of thing to do. Nobody "walks about" any more. One realises that a modern city is really nothing but long alleys of shops and restaurants and the like. Shut them up, and the meaning of a street has disappeared. People hurry past — a thin traffic compared with my memories of 1914. The electric street cars are still running and busy — until six o'clock. They are the only means of locomotion for ordinary people remaining in town — the last legacy of capitalist enterprise. They became free while we were in Petersburg. Previously there had been a charge of two or three roubles — the hundredth part of the price of an egg. Freeing them made little difference in their extreme congestion during the homegoing hours. Every one scrambles on the tramcar. If there is no room inside you cluster outside. In the busy hours festoons of people hang outside by any handhold; people are frequently pushed off, and accidents are frequent. We saw a crowd collected round a child cut in half by a tramcar, and two people in the little circle in which we moved in Petersburg had broken their legs in tramway accidents.

The roads along which these tramcars run are in a frightful condition. They have not been repaired for three or four years; they are full of holes like shell-holes, often two or three feet deep. Frost has eaten out great cavities, drains have collapsed, and people have

torn up the wood pavement for fires. Only once did we see any attempt to repair the streets in Petrograd. In a side street some mysterious agency had collected a load of wood blocks and two barrels of tar. Most of our longer journeys about the town were done in official motor-cars — left over from the former times. A drive is an affair of tremendous swerves and concussions. These surviving motor-cars are running now on kerosene. They disengage clouds of pale blue smoke, and start up with a noise like a machine-gun battle. Every wooden house was demolished for firing last winter, and such masonry as there was in those houses remains in ruinous gaps, between the houses of stone.

Every one is shabby; every one seems to be carrying bundles in both Petersburg and Moscow. To walk into some side street in the twilight and see nothing but ill-clad figures, all hurrying, all carrying loads, gives one an impression as though the entire population was setting out in flight. That impression is not altogether misleading. The Bolshevik statistics I have seen are perfectly frank and honest in the matter. The population of Petersburg has fallen from 1,200,000 (before 1919) to a little over 700,000, and it is still falling. Many people have returned to peasant life in the country, many have gone abroad, but hardship has taken an enormous toll of this city. The death-rate in Petersburg is over 81 per 1,000; formerly it was high among European cities at 22. The birth-rate of the underfed and profoundly depressed population is about 15. It was formerly about 30.

These bundles that every one carries are partly the rations of food that are doled out by the Soviet organisation, partly they are the material and results of illicit trade. The Russian population has always been a trading and bargaining population. Even in 1914 there were but few shops in Petersburg whose prices were really fixed prices. Tariffs were abominated; in Moscow taking a droshky meant always a haggle, ten kopecks at a time. Confronted with a shortage of nearly every commodity, a shortage caused partly by the war strain, — for Russia has been at war continuously now for six years — partly by the general collapse of social organisation, and partly by the blockade, and with a currency in complete disorder, the only possible way to save the towns from a chaos of cornering,

profiteering, starvation, and at last a mere savage fight for the remnants of food and common necessities, was some sort of collective control and rationing.

The Soviet Government rations on principle, but any Government in Russia now would have to ration. If the war in the West had lasted up to the present time London would be rationing too — food, clothing, and housing. But in Russia this has to be done on a basis of uncontrollable peasant production, with a population temperamentally indisciplined and self-indulgent. The struggle is necessarily a bitter one. The detected profiteer, the genuine profiteer who profiteers on any considerable scale, gets short shrift; he is shot. Quite ordinary trading may be punished severely. All trading is called "speculation," and is now illegal. But a queer street-corner trading in food and so forth is winked at in Petersburg, and quite openly practised in Moscow, because only by permitting this can the peasants be induced to bring in food.

There is also much underground trade between buyers and sellers who know each other. Every one who can supplements his public rations in this way. And every railway station at which one stops is an open market. We would find a crowd of peasants at every stopping-place waiting to sell milk, eggs, apples, bread, and so forth. The passengers clamber down and accumulate bundles. An egg or an apple costs 300 roubles.

The peasants look well fed, and I doubt if they are very much worse off than they were in 1914. Probably they are better off. They have more land than they had, and they have got rid of their landlords. They will not help in any attempt to overthrow the Soviet Government because they are convinced that while it endures this state of things will continue. This does not prevent their resisting whenever they can the attempts of the Red Guards to collect food at regulation prices. Insufficient forces of Red Guards may be attacked and massacred. Such incidents are magnified in the London Press as peasant insurrections against the Bolsheviks. They are nothing of the sort. It is just the peasants making themselves comfortable under the existing *régime*.

But every class above the peasants — including the official class — is now in a state of extreme privation. The credit and industrial

system that produced commodities has broken down, and so far the attempts to replace it by some other form of production have been ineffective. So that nowhere are there any new things. About the only things that seem to be fairly well supplied are tea, cigarettes, and matches. Matches are more abundant in Russia than they were in England in 1917, and the Soviet State match is quite a good match. But such things as collars, ties, shoelaces, sheets and blankets, spoons and forks, all the haberdashery and crockery of life, are unattainable. There is no replacing a broken cup or glass except by a sedulous search and illegal trading. From Petersburg to Moscow we were given a sleeping car de luxe, but there were no water-bottles, glasses, or, indeed, any loose fittings. They have all gone. Most of the men one meets strike one at first as being carelessly shaven, and at first we were inclined to regard that as a sign of a general apathy, but we understood better how things were when a friend mentioned to my son quite casually that he had been using one safety razor blade for nearly a year.

Drugs and any medicines are equally unattainable. There is nothing to take for a cold or a headache; no packing off to bed with a hot-water bottle. Small ailments develop very easily therefore into serious trouble. Nearly everybody we met struck us as being uncomfortable and a little out of health. A buoyant, healthy person is very rare in this atmosphere of discomforts and petty deficiencies.

If any one falls into a real illness the outlook is grim. My son paid a visit to the big Obuchovskaya Hospital, and he tells me things were very miserable there indeed. There was an appalling lack of every sort of material, and half the beds were not in use through the sheer impossibility of dealing with more patients if they came in. Strengthening and stimulating food is out of the question unless the patient's family can by some miracle procure it outside and send it in. Operations are performed only on one day in the week, Dr. Federoff told me, when the necessary preparations can be made. On other days they are impossible, and the patient must wait.

Hardly any one in Petersburg has much more than a change of raiment, and in a great city in which there remains no means of communication but a few overcrowded tramcars, old, leaky, and ill-fitting boots are the only footwear. At times one sees astonishing

makeshifts by way of costume. The master of a school to which we paid a surprise visit struck me as unusually dapper. He was wearing a dinner suit with a blue serge waistcoat. Several of the distinguished scientific and literary men I met had no collars and wore neck-wraps. Gorky possesses only the one suit of clothes he wears.

[Footnote 1: I saw one passenger steamboat on the Neva crowded with passengers. Usually the river was quite deserted except for a rare Government tug or a solitary boatman picking up drift timber.]

At a gathering of literary people in Petersburg, Mr. Amphiteatroff, the well-known writer, addressed a long and bitter speech to me. He suffered from the usual delusion that I was blind and stupid and being hoodwinked. He was for taking off the respectable-looking coats of all the company present in order that I might see for myself the rags and tatters and pitiful expedients beneath. It was a painful and, so far as I was concerned, an unnecessary speech, but I quote it here to emphasise this effect of general destitution. And this underclad town population in this dismantled and ruinous city is, in spite of all the furtive trading that goes on, appallingly underfed. With the best will in the world the Soviet Government is unable to produce a sufficient ration to sustain a healthy life. We went to a district kitchen and saw the normal food distribution going on. The place seemed to us fairly clean and fairly well run, but that does not compensate for a lack of material. The lowest grade ration consisted of a basinful of thin skilly and about the same quantity of stewed apple compote. People have bread cards and wait in queues for bread, but for three days the Petersburg bakeries stopped for lack of flour. The bread varies greatly in quality; some was good coarse brown bread, and some I found damp, clay-like, and uneatable.

I do not know how far these disconnected details will suffice to give the Western reader an idea of what ordinary life in Petersburg is at the present time. Moscow, they say, is more overcrowded and shorter of fuel than Petersburg, but superficially it looked far less grim than Petersburg. We saw these things in October, in a particularly fine and warm October. We saw them in sunshine in a setting of ruddy and golden foliage. But one day there came a chill, and the yellow leaves went whirling before a drive of snowflakes. It was the first breath of the coming winter. Every one shivered and

looked out of the double windows — already sealed up — and talked to us of the previous year. Then the glow of October returned.

It was still glorious sunshine when we left Russia. But when I think of that coming winter my heart sinks. The Soviet Government in the commune of the north has made extraordinary efforts to prepare for the time of need. There are piles of wood along the quays, along the middle of the main streets, in the courtyards, and in every place where wood can be piled. Last year many people had to live in rooms below the freezing point; the water-pipes froze up, the sanitary machinery ceased to work. The reader must imagine the consequences. People huddled together in the ill-lit rooms, and kept themselves alive with tea and talk. Presently some Russian novelist will tell us all that this has meant to heart and mind in Russia. This year it may not be quite so bad as that. The food situation also, they say, is better, but this I very much doubt. The railways are now in an extreme state of deterioration; the wood-stoked engines are wearing out; the bolts start and the rails shift as the trains rumble along at a maximum of twenty-five miles per hour. Even were the railways more efficient, Wrangel has got hold of the southern food supplies. Soon the cold rain will be falling upon these 700,000 souls still left in Petersburg, and then the snow. The long nights extend and the daylight dwindles.

And this spectacle of misery and ebbing energy is, you will say, the result of Bolshevist rule! I do not believe it is. I will deal with the Bolshevist Government when I have painted the general scenery of our problem. But let me say here that this desolate Russia is not a system that has been attacked and destroyed by something vigorous and malignant. It is an unsound system that has worked itself out and fallen down. It was not communism which built up these great, impossible cities, but capitalism. It was not communism that plunged this huge, creaking, bankrupt empire into six years of exhausting war. It was European imperialism. Nor is it communism that has pestered this suffering and perhaps dying Russia with a series of subsidised raids, invasions, and insurrections, and inflicted upon it an atrocious blockade. The vindictive French creditor, the journalistic British oaf, are far more responsible for these deathbed miseries than any communist. But to these questions I will return after I have given

a little more description of Russia as we saw it uring our visit. It is only when one has some conception of the physical and mental realities of the Russian collapse that one can see and estimate the Bolshevist Government in its proper proportions.

II. — DRIFT AND SALVAGE

Among the things I wanted most to see amid this tremendous spectacle of social collapse in Russia was the work of my old friend Maxim Gorky. I had heard of this from members of the returning labour delegation, and what they told me had whetted my desire for a closer view of what was going on. Mr. Bertrand Russell's description of Gorky's health had also made me anxious on his own account; but I am happy to say that upon that score my news is good. Gorky seems as strong and well to me now as he was when I knew him first in 1906. And as a personality he has grown immensely. Mr. Russell wrote that Gorky is dying and that perhaps culture in Russia is dying too. Mr. Russell was, I think, betrayed by the artistic temptation of a dark and purple concluding passage. He found Gorky in bed and afflicted by a fit of coughing, and his imagination made the most of it.

Gorky's position in Russia is a quite extraordinary and personal one. He is no more of a communist than I am, and I have heard him argue with the utmost freedom in his flat against the extremist positions with such men as Bokaiev, recently the head of the Extraordinary Commission in Petersburg, and Zalutsky, one of the rising leaders of the Communist party. It was a very reassuring display of free speech, for Gorky did not so much argue as denounce — and this in front of two deeply interested English enquirers.

But he has gained the confidence and respect of most of the Bolshevik leaders, and he has become by a kind of necessity the semi-official salvage man under the new *régime*. He is possessed by a passionate sense of the value of Western science and culture, and by the necessity of preserving the intellectual continuity of Russian life through these dark years of famine and war and social stress, with the general intellectual life of the world. He has found a steady supporter in Lenin. His work illuminates the situation to an extraordinary degree because it collects together a number of significant factors and makes the essentially catastrophic nature of the Russian situation plain.

The Russian smash at the end of 1917 was certainly the

completest that has ever happened to any modern social organisation. After the failure of the Kerensky Government to make peace and of the British naval authorities to relieve the situation upon the Baltic flank, the shattered Russian armies, weapons in hand, broke up and rolled back upon Russia, a flood of peasant soldiers making for home, without hope, without supplies, without discipline. That time of *débâcle* was a time of complete social disorder. It was a social dissolution. In many parts of Russia there was a peasant revolt. There was château-burning, often accompanied by quite horrible atrocities. It was an explosion of the very worst side of human nature in despair, and for most of the abominations committed the Bolsheviks are about as responsible as the Government of Australia. People would be held up and robbed even to their shirts in open daylight in the streets of Petersburg and Moscow, no one interfering. Murdered bodies lay disregarded in the gutters sometimes for a whole day, with passengers on the footwalk going to and fro. Armed men, often professing to be Red Guards, entered houses and looted and murdered. The early months of 1918 saw a violent struggle of the new Bolshevik Government not only with counter-revolutions but with robbers and brigands of every description. It was not until the summer of 1918, and after thousands of looters and plunderers had been shot, that life began to be ordinarily safe again in the streets of the Russian great towns. For a time Russia was not a civilisation, but a torrent of lawless violence, with a weak central Government of inexperienced rulers, fighting not only against unintelligent foreign intervention but against the completest internal disorder. It is from such chaotic conditions that Russia still struggles to emerge.

Art, literature, science, all the refinements and elaboration of life, all that we mean by "civilisation," were involved in this torrential catastrophe. For a time the stablest thing in Russian culture was the theatre. There stood the theatres, and nobody wanted to loot them or destroy them; the artists were accustomed to meet and work in them and went on meeting and working; the tradition of official subsidies held good. So quite amazingly the Russian dramatic and operatic life kept on through the extremest storms of violence, and keeps on to this day. In Petersburg we found there were more than forty shows going on every night; in Moscow we found very much the same state

of affairs. We heard Shalyapin, greatest of actors and singers, in *The Barber of Seville* and in *Chovanchina*; the admirable orchestra was variously attired, but the conductor still held out valiantly in swallow tails and a white tie; we saw a performance of *Sadko*, we saw Monachof in *The Tsarevitch Alexei* and as Iago in *Othello* (with Madame Gorky — Madame Andreievna — as Desdemona). When one faced the stage, it was as if nothing had changed in Russia; but when the curtain fell and one turned to the audience one realised the revolution. There were now no brilliant uniforms, no evening dress in boxes and stalls. The audience was an undifferentiated mass of people, the same sort of people everywhere, attentive, good-humoured, well-behaved and shabby. Like the London Stage Society, one's place in the house is determined by ballot. And for the most part there is no paying to enter the theatre. For one performance the tickets go, let us say, to the professional unions, for another to the Red Army and their families, for another to the school children, and so on. A certain selling of tickets goes on, but it is not in the present scheme of things.

I had heard Shalyapin in London, but I had not met him personally there. We made his acquaintance this time in Petersburg, we dined with him and saw something of his very jolly household. There are two stepchildren almost grown up, and two little daughters, who speak a nice, stiff, correct English, and the youngest of whom dances delightfully. Shalyapin is certainly one of the most wonderful things in Russia at the present time. He is the Artist, defiant and magnificent. Off the stage he has much the same vitality and abounding humour that made an encounter with Beerbohm Tree so delightful an experience. He refuses absolutely to sing except for pay — 200,000 roubles a performance, they say, which is nearly £15 — and when the markets get too tight, he insists upon payment in flour or eggs or the like. What he demands he gets, for Shalyapin on strike would leave too dismal a hole altogether in the theatrical world of Petersburg. So it is that he maintains what is perhaps the last fairly comfortable home in Russia. And Madame Shalyapin we found so unbroken by the revolution that she asked us what people were wearing in London. The last fashion papers she had seen — thanks to the blockade — dated from somewhere early in 1918.

But the position of the theatre among the arts is peculiar. For the rest of the arts, for literature generally and for the scientific worker, the catastrophe of 1917-18 was overwhelming. There remained no one to buy books or pictures, and the scientific worker found himself with a salary of roubles that dwindled rapidly to less than the five-hundredth part of their original value. The new crude social organisation, fighting robbery, murder, and the wildest disorder, had no place for them; it had forgotten them. For the scientific men at first the Soviet Government had as little regard as the first French revolution, which had "no need for chemists." These classes of worker, vitally important to every civilised system, were reduced, therefore, to a state of the utmost privation and misery. It was to their assistance and salvation that Gorky's first efforts were directed. Thanks very largely to him and to the more creative intelligences in the Bolshevik Government, there has now been organised a group of salvage establishments, of which the best and most fully developed is the House of Science in Petersburg, in the ancient palace of the Archduchess Marie Pavlova. Here we saw the headquarters of a special rationing system which provides as well as it can for the needs of four thousand scientific workers and their dependants — in all perhaps for ten thousand people. At this centre they not only draw their food rations, but they can get baths and barber, tailoring, cobbling and the like conveniences. There is even a small stock of boots and clothing. There are bedrooms, and a sort of hospital accommodation for cases of weakness and ill-health.

It was to me one of the strangest of my Russian experiences to go to this institution and to meet there, as careworn and unprosperous-looking figures, some of the great survivors of the Russian scientific world. Here were such men as Oldenburg the orientalist, Karpinsky the geologist, Pavloff the Nobel prizeman, Radloff, Bielopolsky, and the like, names of world-wide celebrity. They asked me a multitude of questions about recent scientific progress in the world outside Russia, and made me ashamed of my frightful ignorance of such matters. If I had known that this would happen I would have taken some sort of report with me. Our blockade has cut them off from all scientific literature outside Russia. They are without new instruments, they are short of paper, the work they do has to go on in

unwarmed laboratories. It is amazing they do any work at all. Yet they are getting work done; Pavloff is carrying on research of astonishing scope and ingenuity upon the mentality of animals; Manuchin claims to have worked out an effectual cure for tuberculosis, even in advanced cases; and so on. I have brought back abstracts of Manuchin's work for translation and publication here and they are now being put into English. The scientific spirit is a wonderful spirit. If Petersburg starves this winter, the House of Science — unless we make some special effort on its behalf — will starve too, but these scientific men said very little to me about the possibility of sending them in supplies. The House of Literature and Art talked a little of want and miseries, but not the scientific men. What they were all keen about was the possibility of getting scientific publications; they value knowledge more than bread. Upon that matter I hope I may be of some help to them. I got them to form a committee to make me out a list of all the books and publications of which they stood in need, and I have brought this list back to the Secretary of the Royal Society of London, which had already been stirring in this matter. Funds will be needed, three or four thousand pounds perhaps (the address of the Secretary of the Royal Society is Burlington House, W.), but the assent of the Bolshevik Government and our own to this mental provisioning of Russia has been secured, and in a little time I hope the first parcel of books will be going through to these men, who have been cut off for so long from the general mental life of the world.

If I had no other reason for satisfaction about this trip to Russia, I should find quite enough in the hope and comfort our mere presence evidently gave to many of these distinguished men in the House of Science and in the House of Literature and Art. Upon many of them there had settled a kind of despair of ever seeing or hearing anything of the outer world again. They had been living for three years, very grey and long years indeed, in a world that seemed sinking down steadily through one degree of privation after another into utter darkness. Possibly they had seen something of one or two of the political deputations that have visited Russia — I do not know; but manifestly they had never expected to see again a free and independent individual walk in, with an air of having come quite

easily and unofficially from London, and of its being quite possible not only to come but to go again into the lost world of the West. It was like an unexpected afternoon caller strolling into a cell in a gaol.

All musical people in England know the work of Glazounov; he has conducted concerts in London and is an honorary doctor both of Oxford and Cambridge. I was very deeply touched by my meeting with him. He used to be a big florid man, but now he is pallid and much fallen away, so that his clothes hang loosely on him. He came and talked of his friends Sir Hubert Parry and Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. He told me he still composed, but that his stock of music paper was almost exhausted. "Then there will be no more." I said there would be much more, and that soon. He doubted it. He spoke of London and Oxford; I could see that he was consumed by an almost intolerable longing for some great city full of life, a city with abundance, with pleasant crowds, a city that would give him stirring audiences in warm, brightly-lit places. While I was there, I was a sort of living token to him that such things could still be. He turned his back on the window which gave on the cold grey Neva, deserted in the twilight, and the low lines of the fortress prison of St. Peter and St. Paul. "In England there will be no revolution — no? I had many friends in England — many good friends in England...." I was loth to leave him, and he was very loth to let me go.

Seeing all these distinguished men living a sort of refugee life amidst the impoverished ruins of the fallen imperialist system has made me realise how helplessly dependent the man of exceptional gifts is upon a securely organised civilisation. The ordinary man can turn from this to that occupation; he can be a sailor or a worker in a factory or a digger or what not. He is under a general necessity to work, but he has no internal demon which compels him to do a particular thing and nothing else, which compels him to be a particular thing or die. But a Shalyapin must be Shalyapin or nothing, Pavloff is Pavloff and Glazounov, Glazounov. So long as they can go on doing their particular thing, such men will live and nourish. Shalyapin still acts and sings magnificently — in absolute defiance of every Communist principle; Pavloff still continues his marvellous researches — in an old coat and with his study piled up with the potatoes and carrots he grows in his spare time; Glazounov

will compose until the paper runs out. But many of the others are evidently stricken much harder. The mortality among the intellectually distinguished men of Russia has been terribly high. Much, no doubt, has been due to the general hardship of life, but in many cases I believe that the sheer mortification of great gifts become futile has been the determining cause. They could no more live in the Russia of 1919 than they could have lived in a Kaffir kraal.

Science, art, and literature are hothouse plants demanding warmth and respect and service. It is the paradox of science that it alters the whole world and is produced by the genius of men who need protection and help more than any other class of worker. The collapse of the Russian imperial system has smashed up all the shelters in which such things could exist. The crude Marxist philosophy which divides all men into bourgeoisie and proletariat, which sees all social life as a stupidly simple "class war," had no knowledge of the conditions necessary for the collective mental life. But it is to the credit of the Bolshevik Government that it has now risen to the danger of a universal intellectual destruction in Russia, and that, in spite of the blockade and the unending struggle against the subsidised revolts and invasions with which we and the French plague Russia, it is now permitting and helping these salvage organisations. Parallel with the House of Science is the House of Literature and Art. The writing of new books, except for some poetry, and the painting of pictures have ceased in Russia. But the bulk of the writers and artists have been found employment upon a grandiose scheme for the publication of a sort of Russian encyclopaedia of the literature of the world. In this strange Russia of conflict, cold, famine and pitiful privations there is actually going on now a literary task that would be inconceivable in the rich England and the rich America of to-day. In England and America the production of good literature at popular prices has practically ceased now— "because of the price of paper." The mental food of the English and American masses dwindles and deteriorates, and nobody in authority cares a rap. The Bolshevik Government is at least a shade above that level. In starving Russia hundreds of people are working upon translations, and the books they translate are being set

up and printed, work which may presently give a new Russia such a knowledge of world thought as no other people will possess. I have seen some of the books and the work going on. “May” I write, with no certainty. Because, like everything else in this ruined country, this creative work is essentially improvised and fragmentary. How this world literature is to be distributed to the Russian people I do not know. The bookshops are closed and bookselling, like every other form of trading, is illegal. Probably the books will be distributed to schools and other institutions.

In this matter of book distribution the Bolshevik authorities are clearly at a loss. They are at a loss upon very many such matters. In regard to the intellectual life of the community one discovers that Marxist Communism is without plans and without ideas. Marxist Communism has always been a theory of revolution, a theory not merely lacking in creative and constructive ideas, but hostile to creative and constructive ideas. Every Communist orator has been trained to contemn “Utopianism,” that is to say, has been trained to contemn intelligent planning. Not even a British business man of the older type is quite such a believer in things righting themselves and in “muddling through” as these Marxists. The Russian Communist Government now finds itself face to face, among a multiplicity of other constructive problems, with the problem of sustaining scientific life, of sustaining thought and discussion, of promoting artistic creation. Marx the Prophet and his Sacred Book supply it with no lead at all in the matter. Bolshevism, having no schemes, must improvise therefore — clumsily, and is reduced to these pathetic attempts to salvage the wreckage of the intellectual life of the old order. And that life is very sick and unhappy and seems likely to die on its hands.

It is not simply scientific and literary work and workers that Maxim Gorky is trying to salvage in Russia. There is a third and still more curious salvage organisation associated with him. This is the Expertise Commission, which has its headquarters in the former British Embassy. When a social order based on private property crashes, when private property is with some abruptness and no qualification abolished, this does not abolish and destroy the things which have hitherto constituted private property. Houses and their

gear remain standing, still being occupied and used by the people who had them before — except when those people have fled. When the Bolshevik authorities requisition a house or take over a deserted palace, their find themselves faced by this problem of the gear. Any one who knows human nature will understand that there has been a certain amount of quiet annexation of desirable things by inadvertent officials and, perhaps less inadvertently, by their wives. But the general spirit of Bolshevism is quite honest, and it is set very stoutly against looting and suchlike developments of individual enterprise. There has evidently been comparatively little looting either in Petersburg or Moscow since the days of the *débâcle*. Looting died against the wall in Moscow in the spring of 1918. In the guest houses and suchlike places we noted that everything was numbered and listed. Occasionally we saw odd things astray, fine glass or crested silver upon tables where it seemed out of place, but in many cases these were things which had been sold for food or suchlike necessities on the part of the original owners. The sailor courier who attended to our comfort to and from Moscow was provided with a beautiful little silver teapot that must once have brightened a charming drawing-room. But apparently it had taken to a semi-public life in a quite legitimate way.

For greater security there has been a gathering together and a cataloguing of everything that could claim to be a work of art by this Expertise Commission. The palace that once sheltered the British Embassy is now like some congested second-hand art shop in the Brompton Road. We went through room after room piled with the beautiful lumber of the former Russian social system. There are big rooms crammed with statuary; never have I seen so many white marble Venuses and sylphs together, not even in the Naples Museum. There are stacks of pictures of every sort, passages choked with inlaid cabinets piled up to the ceiling; a room full of cases of old lace, piles of magnificent furniture. This accumulation has been counted and catalogued. And there it is. I could not find out that any one had an idea of what was ultimately to be done with all this lovely and elegant litter. The stuff does not seem to belong in any way to the new world, if it is indeed a new world that the Russian Communists are organising. They never anticipated that they would have to deal

with such things. Just as they never really thought of what they would do with the shops and markets when they had abolished shopping and marketing. Just as they had never thought out the problem of converting a city of private palaces into a Communist gathering-place. Marxist theory had led their minds up to the "dictatorship of the class-conscious proletariat" and their intimated — we discover now how vaguely — that there would be a new heaven and a new earth. Had that happened it would indeed have been a revolution in human affairs. But as we saw Russia there is still the old heaven and the old earth, covered with the ruins, littered with the abandoned furnishings and dislocated machinery of the former system, with the old peasant tough and obstinate upon the soil — and Communism, ruling in the cities quite pluckily and honestly, and yet, in so many matters, like a conjurer who has left his pigeon and his rabbit behind him, and can produce nothing whatever from the hat.

Ruin; that is the primary Russian fact at the present time. The revolution, the Communist rule, which I will proceed to describe in my next paper, is quite secondary to that. It is something that has happened in the ruin and because of the ruin. It is of primary importance that people in the West should realise that. If the Great War had gone on for a year or so more, Germany and then the Western Powers would probably have repeated, with local variations, the Russian crash. The state of affairs we have seen in Russia is only the intensification and completion of the state of affairs towards which Britain was drifting in 1918. Here also there are shortages such as we had in England, but they are relatively monstrous; here also is rationing, but it is relatively feeble and inefficient; the profiteer in Russia is not fined but shot, and for the English D.O.R.A. you have the Extraordinary Commission. What were nuisances in England are magnified to disasters in Russia. That is all the difference. For all I know, Western Europe may be still drifting even now towards a parallel crash. I am not by any means sure that we have turned the corner. War, self-indulgence, and unproductive speculation may still be wasting more than the Western world is producing; in which case our own crash — currency failure, a universal shortage, social and political collapse and all the rest of it — is merely a question of time. The shops of Regent Street will

follow the shops of the Nevsky Prospect, and Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Bennett will have to do what they can to salvage the art treasures of Mayfair. It falsifies the whole world situation, it sets people altogether astray in their political actions, to assert that the frightful destitution of Russia to-day is to any large extent the result merely of Communist effort; that the wicked Communists have pulled down Russia to her present plight, and that if you can overthrow the Communists every one and everything in Russia will suddenly become happy again. Russia fell into its present miseries through the world war and the moral and intellectual insufficiency of its ruling and wealthy people. (As our own British State — as presently even the American State — may fall.) They had neither the brains nor the conscience to stop warfare, stop waste of all sorts, and stop taking the best of everything and leaving every one else dangerously unhappy, until it was too late. They ruled and wasted and quarrelled, blind to the coming disaster up to the very moment of its occurrence. And then, as I describe in the next chapters, the Communist came in....

III. — THE QUINTESSENCE OF BOLSHEVISM

In the two preceding chapters I have tried to give the reader my impression; of Russian life as I saw it in Petersburg and Moscow, as a spectacle of collapse, as the collapse of a political, social, and economic system, akin to our own but weaker and more rotten than our own, which has crashed under the pressure of six years of war and misgovernment. The main collapse occurred in 1917 when Tsarism, brutishly incompetent, became manifestly impossible. It had wasted the whole land, lost control of its army and the confidence of the entire population. Its police system had degenerated into a *régime* of violence and brigandage. It fell inevitably.

And there was no alternative government. For generations the chief energies of Tsarism had been directed to destroying any possibility of an alternative government. It had subsisted on that one fact that, bad as it was, there was nothing else to put in its place. The first Russian Revolution, herefore, turned Russia into a debating society and a political scramble.

The liberal forces of the country, unaccustomed to action or responsibility, set up a clamorous discussion whether Russia was to be a constitutional monarchy, a liberal republic, a socialist republic, or what not. Over the confusion gesticulated Kerensky in attitudes of the finest liberalism. Through it loomed various ambiguous adventurers, "strong men," sham strong men, Russian Monks and Russian Bonapartes. What remained of social order collapsed. In the closing months of 1917 murder and robbery were common street incidents in Petersburg and Moscow, as common as an automobile accident in the streets of London, and less heeded. On the Reval boat was an American who had formerly directed the affairs of the American Harvester Company in Russia. He had been in Moscow during this phase of complete disorder. He described hold-ups in open daylight in busy streets, dead bodies lying for hours in the gutter — as a dead kitten might do in a western town — while

crowds went about their business along the side-walk.

Through this fevered and confused country went the representatives of Britain and France, blind to the quality of the immense and tragic disaster about them, intent only upon *the* war, badgering the Russians to keep on fighting and make a fresh offensive against Germany. But when the Germans made a strong thrust towards Petersburg through the Baltic provinces and by sea, the British Admiralty, either through sheer cowardice or through Royalist intrigues, failed to give any effectual help to Russia. Upon this matter the evidence of the late Lord Fisher is plain. And so this unhappy country, mortally sick and, as it were, delirious, staggered towards a further stage of collapse.

From end to end of Russia, and in the Russian-speaking community throughout the world, there existed only one sort of people who had common general ideas upon which to work, a common faith and a common will, and that was the Communist party. While all the rest of Russia was either apathetic like the peasantry or garrulously at sixes and sevens or given over to violence or fear, the Communists believed and were prepared to act. Numerically they were and are a very small part of the Russian population. At the present time not one per cent. of the people in Russia are Communists; the organised party certainly does not number more than 600,000 and has probably not much more than 150,000 active members. Nevertheless, because it was in those terrible days the only organisation which gave men a common idea of action, common formulæ, and mutual confidence, it was able to seize and retain control of the smashed empire. It was and it is the only sort of administrative solidarity possible in Russia. These ambiguous adventurers who have been and are afflicting Russia, with the support of the Western Powers, Deniken, Kolchak, Wrangel and the like, stand for no guiding principle and offer no security of any sort upon which men's confidence can crystallise. They are essentially brigands. The Communist party, however one may criticise it, does embody an idea and can be relied upon to stand by its idea. So far it is a thing morally higher than anything that has yet come against it. It at once secured the passive support of the peasant mass by permitting them to take land from the estates and by making

peace with Germany. It restored order — after a frightful lot of shooting — in the great towns. For a time everybody found carrying arms without authority was shot. This action was clumsy and bloody but effective. To retain its power this Communist Government organised Extraordinary Commissions, with practically unlimited powers, and crushed out all opposition by a Red Terror. Much that that Red Terror did was cruel and frightful, it was largely controlled by narrow-minded men, and many of its officials were inspired by social hatred and the fear of counter-revolution, but if it was fanatical it was honest. Apart from individual atrocities it did on the whole kill for a reason and to an end. Its bloodshed was not like the silly aimless butcheries of the Deniken *régime*, which would not even recognise, I was told, the Bolshevik Red Cross. And to-day the Bolshevik Government sits, I believe, in Moscow as securely established as any Government in Europe, and the streets of the Russian towns are as safe as any streets in Europe.

It not only established itself and restored order, but — thanks largely to the genius of that ex-pacifist Trotsky — it re-created the Russian army as a fighting force. That we must recognise as a very remarkable achievement. I saw little of the Russian army myself, it was not what I went to Russia to see, but Mr. Vanderlip, the enterprising American financier, whom I found in Moscow engaged in some mysterious negotiations with the Soviet Government, had been treated to a review of several thousand troops, and was very enthusiastic about their spirit and equipment. My son and I saw a number of drafts going to the front, and also bodies of recruits joining up, and our impression is that the spirit of the men was quite as good as that of similar bodies of British recruits in London in 1917-18.

Now who are these Bolsheviki who have taken such an effectual hold upon Russia? According to the crazier section of the British Press they are the agents of a mysterious racial plot, a secret society, in which Jews, Jesuits, Freemasons, and Germans are all jumbled together in the maddest fashion. As a matter of fact, nothing was ever quite less secret than the ideas and aims and methods of the Bolsheviks, nor anything quite less like a secret society than their organisation. But in England we cultivate a peculiar style of thinking,

so impervious to any general ideas that it must needs fall back upon the notion of a conspiracy to explain the simplest reactions of the human mind. If, for instance, a day labourer in Essex makes a fuss because he finds that the price of his children's boots has risen out of all proportion to the increase in his weekly wages, and declares that he and his fellow-workers are being cheated and underpaid, the editors of *The Times* and of the *Morning Post* will trace his resentment to the insidious propaganda of some mysterious society at Konigsberg or Pekin. They cannot conceive how otherwise he should get such ideas into his head. Conspiracy mania of this kind is so prevalent that I feel constrained to apologise for my own immunity. I find the Bolsheviks very much what they profess to be. I find myself obliged to treat them as fairly straightforward people. I do not agree with either their views or their methods, but that is another question.

The Bolsheviks are Marxist Socialists. Marx died in London nearly forty years ago; the propaganda of his views has been going on for over half a century. It has spread over the whole earth and finds in nearly every country a small but enthusiastic following. It is a natural result of worldwide economic conditions. Everywhere it expresses the same limited ideas in the same distinctive phrasing. It is a cult, a world-wide international brotherhood. No one need learn Russian to study the ideas of Bolshevism. The enquirer will find them all in the London *Plebs* or the New York *Liberator* in exactly the same phrases as in the Russian *Pravda*. They hide nothing. They say everything. And just precisely what these Marxists write and say, so they attempt to do.

It will be best if I write about Marx without any hypocritical deference. I have always regarded him as a Bore of the extremest sort. His vast unfinished work, *Das Kapital*, a cadence of wearisome volumes about such phantom unrealities as the *bourgeoisie* and the *proletariat*, a book for ever maundering away into tedious secondary discussions, impresses me as a monument of pretentious pedantry. But before I went to Russia on this last occasion I had no active hostility to Marx. I avoided his works, and when I encountered Marxists I disposed of them by asking them to tell me exactly what people constituted the proletariat. None of them knew. No Marxist knows. In Gorky's flat I listened with attention while Bokaiev

discussed with Shalyapin the fine question of whether in Russia there was a proletariat at all, distinguishable from the peasants. As Bokaiev has been head of the Extraordinary Commission of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in Petersburg, it was interesting to note the fine difficulties of the argument. The "proletarian" in the Marxist jargon is like the "producer" in the jargon of some political economists, who is supposed to be a creature absolutely distinct and different from the "consumer." So the proletarian is a figure put into flat opposition to something called capital. I find in large type outside the current number of the *Plebs*, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Apply this to a works foreman who is being taken in a train by an engine-driver to see how the house he is having built for him by a building society is getting on. To which of these immiscibles does he belong, employer or employed? The stuff is sheer nonsense.

In Russia I must confess my passive objection to Marx has changed to a very active hostility. Wherever we went we encountered busts, portraits, and statues of Marx. About two-thirds of the face of Marx is beard, a vast solemn woolly uneventful beard that must have made all normal exercise impossible. It is not the sort of beard that happens to a man, it is a beard cultivated, cherished, and thrust patriarchally upon the world. It is exactly like *Das Kapital* in its inane abundance, and the human part of the face looks over it owlishly as if it looked to see how the growth impressed mankind. I found the omnipresent images of that beard more and more irritating. A gnawing desire grew upon me to see Karl Marx shaved. Some day, if I am spared, I will take up shears and a razor against *Das Kapital*; I will write *The Shaving of Karl Marx*.

But Marx is for the Marxists merely an image and a symbol, and it is with the Marxist and not with Marx that we are now dealing. Few Marxists have read much of *Das Kapital*. The Marxist is very much the same sort of person in all modern communities, and I will confess that by my temperament and circumstances I have the very warmest sympathy for him. He adopts Marx as his prophet simply because he believes that Marx wrote of the class war, an implacable war of the employed against the employer, and that he prophesied a triumph for the employed person, a dictatorship of the world by the

leaders of these liberated employed persons (dictatorship of the proletariat), and a Communist millennium arising out of that dictatorship. Now this doctrine and this prophecy have appealed in every country with extraordinary power to young persons, and particularly to young men of energy and imagination who have found themselves at the outset of life imperfectly educated, ill-equipped, and caught into hopeless wages slavery in our existing economic system. They realise in their own persons the social injustice, the stupid negligence, the colossal incivility of our system; they realise that they are insulted and sacrificed by it; and they devote themselves to break it and emancipate themselves from it. No insidious propaganda is needed to make such rebels; it is the faults of a system that half-educates and then enslaves them which have created the Communist movement wherever industrialism has developed. There would have been Marxists if Marx had never lived. When I was a boy of fourteen I was a complete Marxist, long before I had heard the name of Marx. I had been cut off abruptly from education, caught in a detestable shop, and I was being broken in to a life of mean and dreary toil. I was worked too hard and for such long hours that all thoughts of self-improvement seemed hopeless. I would have set fire to that place if I had not been convinced it was over-insured. I revived the spirit of those bitter days in a conversation I had with Zorin, one of the leaders of the Commune of the North. He is a young man who has come back from unskilled work in America, a very likeable human being and a humorous and very popular speaker in the Petersburg Soviet. He and I exchanged experiences, and I found that the thing that rankled most in his mind about America was the brutal incivility he had encountered when applying for a job as packer in a big dry goods store in New York. We told each other stories of the way our social system wastes and breaks and maddens decent and willing men. Between us was the freemasonry of a common indignation.

It is that indignation of youth and energy, thwarted and misused, it is that and no mere economic theorising, which is the living and linking inspiration of the Marxist movement throughout the world. It is not that Marx was profoundly wise, but that our economic system has been stupid, selfish, wasteful, and anarchistic. The Communistic

organisation has provided for this angry recalcitrance certain shibboleths and passwords; "Workers of the World unite," and so forth. It has suggested to them an idea of a great conspiracy against human happiness concocted by a mysterious body of wicked men called capitalists. For in this mentally enfeebled world in which we live to-day conspiracy mania on one side finds its echo on the other, and it is hard to persuade a Marxist that capitalists are in their totality no more than a scrambling disorder of mean-spirited and short-sighted men. And the Communist propaganda has knitted all these angry and disinherited spirits together into a world-wide organisation of revolt — and hope — formless though that hope proves to be on examination. It has chosen Marx for its prophet and red for its colour.... And so when the crash came in Russia, when there remained no other solidarity of men who could work together upon any but immediate selfish ends, there came flowing back from America and the West to rejoin their comrades a considerable number of keen and enthusiastic young and youngish men, who had in that more bracing Western world lost something of the habitual impracticability of the Russian and acquired a certain habit of getting things done, who all thought in the same phrases and had the courage of the same ideas, and who were all inspired by the dream of a revolution that should bring human life to a new level of justice and happiness. It is these young men who constitute the living force of Bolshevism. Many of them are Jews, because most of the Russian emigrants to America were Jews; but few of them have any strong racial Jewish feeling. They are not out for Jewry but for a new world. So far from being in continuation of the Jewish tradition the Bolsheviks have put most of the Zionist leaders in Russia in prison, and they have proscribed the teaching of Hebrew as a "reactionary" language. Several of the most interesting Bolsheviks I met were not Jews at all, but blond Nordic men. Lenin, the beloved leader of all that is energetic in Russia to-day, has a Tartar type of face and is certainly no Jew.

This Bolshevik Government is at once the most temerarious and the least experienced governing body in the world. In some directions its incompetence is amazing. In most its ignorance is profound. Of the diabolical cunning of "capitalism" and of the

subtleties of reaction it is ridiculously suspicious, and sometimes it takes fright and is cruel. But essentially it is honest. It is the most simple-minded Government that exists in the world to-day.

Its simple-mindedness is shown by one question that I was asked again and again during this Russian visit. “When is the social revolution going to happen in England?” Lenin asked me that, Zenovieff, who is the head of the Commune of the North, Zorin, and many others.

Because it is by the Marxist theory all wrong that the social revolution should happen first in Russia. That fact is bothering every intelligent man in the movement. According to the Marxist theory the social revolution should have happened first in the country with the oldest and most highly developed industrialism, with a large, definite, mainly propertyless, mainly wages- earning working class (proletariat). It should have begun in Britain, and spread to France and Germany, then should have come America’s turn and so on. Instead they find Communism in power in Russia, which really possesses no specialised labouring class at all, which has worked its factories with peasant labourers who come and go from the villages, and so has scarcely any “proletariat” — to unite with the workers of the world and so forth — at all. Behind the minds of many of these Bolsheviks with whom I talked I saw clearly that there dawns now a chill suspicion of the reality of the case, a realisation that what they have got in Russia is not truly the promised Marxist social revolution at all, that in truth they have not captured a State but got aboard a derelict. I tried to assist the development of this novel and disconcerting discovery. And also I indulged in a little lecture on the absence of a large “class-conscious proletariat” in the Western communities. I explained that in England there were two hundred different classes at least, and that the only “class-conscious proletarians” known to me in the land were a small band of mainly Scotch workers kept together by the vigorous leadership of a gentleman named MacManus. Their dearest convictions struggled against my manifest candour. They are clinging desperately to the belief that there are hundreds of thousands of convinced Communists in Britain, versed in the whole gospel of Marx, a proletarian solidarity, on the eve of seizing power and proclaiming a British

Soviet Republic. They hold obstinately to that after three years of waiting — but their hold weakens.

Among the most amusing things in this queer intellectual situation are the repeated scoldings that come by wireless from Moscow to Western Labour because it does not behave as Marx said it would behave. It isn't red — and it ought to be. It is just yellow.

My conversation with Zenovieff was particularly curious. He is a man with the voice and animation of Hilaire Belloc, and a lot of curly coal-black hair. "You have civil war in Ireland," he said. "Practically," said I. "Which do you consider are the proletarians, the Sinn Feiners or the Ulstermen?" We spent some time while Zenovieff worked like a man with a jigsaw puzzle trying to get the Irish situation into the class war formula. That jigsaw puzzle remained unsolved, and we then shifted our attention to Asia. Impatient at the long delay of the Western proletarians to emerge and declare themselves, Zenovieff, assisted by Bela Kun, our Mr. Tom Quelch, and a number of other leading Communists, has recently gone on a pilgrimage to Baku to raise the Asiatic proletariat. They went to beat up the class-conscious wages slaves of Persia and Turkestan. They sought out factory workers and slum dwellers in the tents of the steppes. They held a congress at Baku, at which they gathered together a quite wonderful accumulation of white, black, brown, and yellow people, Asiatic costumes and astonishing weapons. They had a great assembly in which they swore undying hatred of Capitalism and British imperialism; they had a great procession in which I regret to say certain batteries of British guns, which some careless, hasty empire-builder had left behind him, figured; they disinterred and buried again thirteen people whom this British empire-builder seems to have shot without trial, and they burnt Mr. Lloyd George, M. Millerand, and President Wilson in effigy. I not only saw a five-part film of this remarkable festival when I visited the Petersburg Soviet, but, thanks to Zorin, I have brought the film back with me. It is to be administered with caution and to adults only. There are parts of it that would make Mr. Gwynne of the *Morning Post* or Mr. Rudyard Kipling scream in their sleep. If so be they ever slept again after seeing it.

I did my best to find out from Zenovieff and Zorin what they

thought they were doing in the Baku Conference. And frankly I do not think they know. I doubt if they have anything clearer in their minds than a vague idea of hitting back at the British Government through Mesopotamia and India, because it has been hitting them through Kolchak, Deniken, Wrangel, and the Poles. It is a counter-offensive almost as clumsy and stupid as the offensives it would counter. It is inconceivable that they can hope for any social solidarity with the miscellaneous discontents their congress assembled. One item "featured" on this Baku film is a dance by a gentleman from the neighbourhood of Baku. He is in fact one of the main features of this remarkable film. He wears a fur-trimmed jacket, high boots, and a high cap, and his dancing is a very rapid and dexterous step dancing. He produces two knives and puts them between his teeth, and then two others which he balances perilously with the blades dangerously close to his nose on either side of it. Finally he poises a fifth knife on his forehead, still stepping it featly to the distinctly Oriental music. He stoops and squats, arms akimbo, sending his nimble boots flying out and back like the Cossacks in the Russian ballet. He circles slowly as he does this, clapping his hands. He is now rolled up in my keeping, ready to dance again when opportunity offers. I tried to find out whether he was a specimen Asiatic proletarian or just what he symbolised, but I could get no light on him. But there are yards and yards of film of him. I wish I could have resuscitated Karl Marx, just to watch that solemn stare over the beard, regarding him. The film gives no indication of the dancer's reception by Mr. Tom Quelch.

I hope I shall not offend Comrade Zorin, for whom I have a real friendship, if I thus confess to him that I cannot take his Baku Conference very seriously. It was an excursion a pageant, a Beano. As a meeting of Asiatic proletarians it was preposterous. But if it was not very much in itself, it was something very important in its revelation of shifting intentions. Its chief significance to me is this, that it shows a new orientation of the Bolshevik mind as it is embodied in Zenovieff. So long as the Bolsheviki held firmly with unshaken conviction to the Marxist formula they looked westward, a little surprised that the "social revolution" should have begun so far to the east of its indicated centre. Now as they begin to realise that it

is not that prescribed social revolution at all but something quite different which has brought them into power, they are naturally enough casting about for a new system of relationships. The ideal figure of the Russian republic is still a huge western "Worker," with a vast hammer or a sickle. A time may come, if we maintain the European blockade with sufficient stringency and make any industrial recuperation impossible, when that ideal may give place altogether to a nomadic-looking gentleman from Turkestan with a number of knives. We may drive what will remain of Bolshevik Russia to the steppes and the knife. If we help some new Wrangel to pull down the by no means firmly established Government in Moscow, under the delusion that thereby we shall bring about "representative institutions" and a "limited monarchy," we may find ourselves very much out in our calculations. Any one who destroys the present law and order of Moscow will, I believe, destroy what is left of law and order in Russia. A brigand monarchist government will leave a trail of fresh blood across the Russian scene, show what gentlemen can do when they are roused, in a tremendous pogrom and White Terror, flourish horribly for a time, break up and vanish. Asia will resume. The simple ancient rhythm of the horseman plundering the peasant and the peasant waylaying the horseman will creep back across the plains to the Niemen and the Dniester. The cities will become clusters of ruins in the waste; the roads and railroads will rot and rust; the river traffic will decay....

This Baku Conference has depressed Gorky profoundly. He is obsessed by a nightmare of Russia going east. Perhaps I have caught a little of his depression.

IV. — THE CREATIVE EFFORT IN RUSSIA

In the previous three chapters I have tried to give my impression of the Russian spectacle as that of a rather ramshackle modern civilisation completely shattered and overthrown by misgovernment, under-education, and finally six years of war strain. I have shown science and art starving and the comforts and many of the decencies of life gone. In Vienna the overthrow is just as bad; and there too such men of science as the late Professor Margules starve to death. If London had had to endure four more years of war, much the same sort of thing would be happening in London. We should have now no coal in our grates and no food for our food tickets, and the shops in Bond Street would be as desolate as the shops in the Nevsky Prospect. Bolshevik government in Russia is neither responsible for the causation nor for the continuance of these miseries.

I have also tried to get the facts of Bolshevik rule into what I believe is their proper proportions in the picture. The Bolsheviks, albeit numbering less than five per cent, of the population, have been able to seize and retain power in Russia because they were and are the only body of people in this vast spectacle of Russian ruin with a common faith and a common spirit. I disbelieve in their faith, I ridicule Marx, their prophet, but I understand and respect their spirit. They are — with all their faults, and they have abundant faults — the only possible backbone now to a renascent Russia. The recivilising of Russia must be done with the Soviet Government as the starting phase. The great mass of the Russian population is an entirely illiterate peasantry, grossly materialistic and politically indifferent. They are superstitious, they are for ever crossing themselves and kissing images, — in Moscow particularly they were at it — but they are not religious. They have no will in things political and social beyond their immediate satisfactions. They are roughly content with Bolshevik rule. The Orthodox priest is quite unlike the Catholic priest in Western Europe; he is himself typically a dirty and illiterate peasant with no power over the wills and consciences of his people. There is no constructive quality in either peasant or Orthodoxy. For the rest there is a confusion of more or less civilised Russians, in and

out of Russia, with no common political ideas and with no common will. They are incapable of producing anything but adventurers and disputes.

The Russian refugees in England are politically contemptible. They rehearse endless stories of "Bolshevik outrages"; château-burnings by peasants, burglaries and murders by disbanded soldiers in the towns, back street crimes — they tell them all as acts of the Bolshevik Government. Ask them what government they want in its place, and you will get rubbishy generalities — usually adapted to what the speaker supposes to be your particular political obsession. Or they sicken you with the praise of some current super-man, Deniken or Wrangel, who is to put everything right — God knows how. They deserve nothing better than a Tsar, and they are incapable even of deciding which Tsar they desire. The better part of the educated people still in Russia are — for the sake of Russia — slowly drifting into a reluctant but honest co-operation with Bolshevik rule.

The Bolsheviks themselves are Marxists and Communists. They find themselves in control of Russia, in complete contradiction, as I have explained, to the theories of Karl Marx. A large part of their energies have been occupied in an entirely patriotic struggle against the raids, invasions, blockades, and persecutions of every sort that our insensate Western Governments have rained upon their tragically shattered country. What is left over goes in the attempt to keep Russia alive, and to organise some sort of social order among the ruins. These Bolsheviks are, as I have explained, extremely inexperienced men, intellectual exiles from Geneva and Hampstead, or comparatively illiterate manual workers from the United States. Never was there so amateurish a government since the early Moslim found themselves in control of Cairo, Damascus, and Mesopotamia.

I believe that in the minds of very many of them there is a considerable element of dismay at the tremendous tasks they find before them. But one thing has helped them and Russia enormously, and that is their training in Communistic ideas. As the British found out during the submarine war, so far as the urban and industrial population goes there is nothing for it during a time of tragic scarcity but collapse or collective control. We in England had to control and

ration, we had to suppress profiteering by stringent laws. These Communists came into power in Russia and began to do at once, on principle, the first most necessary thing in that chaos of social wreckage. Against all the habits and traditions of Russia, they began to control and ration — exhaustively. They have now a rationing system that is, on paper, admirable beyond cavil; and perhaps it works as well as the temperament and circumstances of Russian production and consumption permit. It is easy to note defects and failures, but not nearly so easy to show how in this depleted and demoralised Russia they could be avoided. And things are in such a state in Russia now that even if we suppose the Bolsheviks overthrown and any other Government in their place, it matters not what, that Government would have to go on with the rationing the Bolsheviks have organised, with the suppression of vague political experiments, and the punishment and shooting of profiteers. The Bolsheviki in this state of siege and famine have done upon principle what any other Government would have had to do from necessity.

And in the face of gigantic difficulties they are trying to rebuild a new Russia among the ruins. We may quarrel with their principles and methods, we may call their schemes Utopian and so forth, we may sneer at or we may dread what they are doing, but it is no good pretending that there is no creative effort in Russia at the present time. A certain section of the Bolsheviks are hard-minded, doctrinaire and unteachable men, fanatics who believe that the mere destruction of capitalism, the disuse of money and trading, the effacement of all social differences, will in itself bring about a sort of bleak millennium. There are Bolsheviki so stupid that they would stop the teaching of chemistry in schools until they were assured it was "proletarian" chemistry, and who would suppress every decorative design that was not an elaboration of the letters R.S.F.S.R. (Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic) as reactionary an. I have told of the suppression of Hebrew studies because they are "reactionary"; and while I was with Gorky I found him in constant bitter disputes with extremist officials who would see no good in any literature of the past except the literature of revolt. But there were other more liberal minds in this new Russian world, minds which, given an opportunity, will build and will probably build well. Among

men of such constructive force I would quote such names as Lenin himself, who has developed wonderfully since the days of his exile, and who has recently written powerfully against the extravagances of his own extremists; Trotsky, who has never been an extremist, and who is a man of very great organising ability; Lunacharsky, the Minister for Education; Rikoff, the head of the Department of People's Economy; Aladame Lilna of the Petersburg Child Welfare Department; and Krassin, the head of the London Trade Delegation. These are names that occur to me; it is by no means an exhaustive list of the statesmanlike elements in the Bolshevik Government. Already they have achieved something, in spite of blockade and civil and foreign war. It is not only that they work to restore a country depleted of material to an extent almost inconceivable to English and American readers, but they work with an extraordinarily unhelpful personnel. Russia to-day stands more in need of men of the foreman and works-manager class than she does of medicaments or food. The ordinary work in the Government offices of Russia is shockingly done; the slackness and inaccuracy are indescribable. Everybody seems to be working in a muddle of unsorted papers and cigarette ends. This again is a state of affairs no counter-revolution could change. It is inherent in the present Russian situation. If one of these military adventurers the Western Powers patronise were, by some disastrous accident, to get control of Russia, his success would only add strong drink, embezzlement, and a great squalour of kept mistresses to the general complication. For whatever else we may say to the discredit of the Bolshevik leaders, it is undeniable that the great majority lead not simply laborious but puritanical lives.

I write of this general inefficiency in Russia with the more asperity because it was the cause of my not meeting Lunacharsky. About eighty hours of my life were consumed in travelling, telephoning, and waiting about in order to talk for about an hour and a half with Lenin and for the same time with Tchitcherin. At that rate, and in view of the intermittent boat service from Reval to Stockholm, to see Lunacharsky would have meant at least a week more in Russia. The whole of my visit to Moscow was muddled in the most irritating fashion. A sailor-man carrying a silver kettle who did not know his way about Moscow was put in charge of my

journey, and an American who did not know enough Russian to telephone freely was set to make my appointments in the town. Although I had heard Gorky arrange for my meeting with Lenin by long-distance telephone days before, Moscow declared that it had had no notice of my coming. Finally I was put into the wrong train back to Petersburg, a train which took twenty-two hours instead of fourteen for the journey. These may seem petty details to relate, but when it is remembered that Russia was really doing its best to impress me with its vigour and good order, they are extremely significant. In the train, when I realised that it was a slow train and that the express had gone three hours before while we had been pacing the hall of the guest house with our luggage packed and nobody coming for us, the spirit came upon me and my lips were unsealed. I spoke to my guide, as one mariner might speak to another, and told him what I thought of Russian methods. He listened with the profoundest respect to my rich incisive phrases. When at last I paused, he replied — in words that are also significant of certain weaknesses of the present Russian state of mind. "You see," he said, "the blockade—"

But if I saw nothing of Lunacharsky personally, I saw something of the work he has organised. The primary material of the educationist is human beings, and of these at least there is still no shortage in Russia, so that in that respect Lunacharsky is better off than most of his colleagues. And beginning with an initial prejudice and much distrust, I am bound to confess that, in view of their enormous difficulties, the educational work of the Bolsheviks impresses me as being astonishingly good.

Things started badly. Directly I got to Petersburg I asked to see a school, and on the second day of my visit I was taken to one that impressed me very unfavourably. It was extremely well equipped, much better than an ordinary English grammar school, and the children were bright and intelligent; but our visit fell in the recess. I could witness no teaching, and the behaviour of the youngsters I saw indicated a low standard of discipline. I formed an opinion that I was probably being shown a picked school specially prepared for me, and that this was all that Petersburg had to offer. The special guide who was with us then began to question these children upon the subject of

English literature and the writers they liked most. One name dominated all others. My own. Such comparatively trivial figures as Milton, Dickens, Shakespeare ran about intermittently between the feet of that literary colossus. Being questioned further, these children produced the titles of perhaps a dozen of my books. I said I was completely satisfied by what I had seen and heard, that I wanted to see nothing more — for indeed what more could I possibly require? — and I left that school smiling with difficulty and thoroughly cross with my guides.

Three days later I suddenly scrapped my morning's engagements and insisted upon being taken at once to another school — any school close at hand. I was convinced that I had been deceived about the former school, and that now I should see a very bad school indeed. Instead I saw a much better one than the first I had seen. The equipment and building were better, the discipline of the children was better, and I saw some excellent teaching in progress. Most of the teachers were women, very competent-looking middle-aged women, and I chose elementary geometrical teaching to observe because that on the blackboard is in the universal language of the diagram. I saw also a heap of drawings and various models the pupils had done, and they were very good. The school was supplied with abundant pictures. I noted particularly a well- chosen series of landscapes to assist the geographical teaching. There was plenty of chemical and physical apparatus, and it was evidently put to a proper use. I also saw the children's next meal in preparation — for children eat at school in Soviet Russia — and the food was excellent and well cooked, far above the standard of the adult rations we had seen served out. All this was much more satisfactory. Finally by a few questions we tested the extraordinary vogue of H. G. Wells among the young people of Russia. None of these children had ever heard of him. The school library contained none of his books. This did much to convince me that I was seeing a quite normal school. I had, I now begin to realise, been taken to the previous one not, as I had supposed in my wrath, with any elaborate intention of deceiving me about the state of education in the country, but after certain kindly intrigues and preparations by a literary friend, Mr. Chukovsky the critic, affectionately anxious to make me feel myself beloved in

Russia, and a little oblivious of the real gravity of the business I had in hand.

Subsequent enquiries and comparison of my observations with those of other visitors to Russia, and particularly those of Dr. Haden Guest, who also made surprise visits to several schools in Moscow, have convinced me that Soviet Russia, in the face of gigantic difficulties, has made and is making very great educational efforts, and that in spite of the difficulties of the general situation the quality and number of the schools *in the towns* has risen absolutely since the Tsarist *régime*. (The peasant, as ever, except in a few "show" localities, remains scarcely touched by these things.) The schools I saw would have been good middle schools in England. They are open to all, and there is an attempt to make education compulsory. Of course Russia has its peculiar difficulties. Many of the schools are understaffed, and it is difficult to secure the attendance of unwilling pupils. Numbers of children prefer to keep out of the schools and trade upon the streets. A large part of the illicit trading in Russia is done by bands of children. They are harder to catch than adults, and the spirit of Russian Communism is against punishing them. And the Russian child is, for a northern child, remarkably precocious.

The common practice of co-educating youngsters up to fifteen or sixteen, in a country as demoralised as Russia is now, has brought peculiar evils in its train. My attention was called to this by the visit of Bokaiev, the former head of the Petersburg Extraordinary Commission, and his colleague Zalutsky to Gorky to consult him in the matter. They discussed their business in front of me quite frankly, and the whole conversation was translated to me as it went on. The Bolshevik authorities have collected and published very startling, very shocking figures of the moral condition of young people in Petersburg, which I have seen. How far they would compare with the British figures — if there are any British figures — of such bad districts for the young as are some parts of East London or such towns of low type employment as Reading I do not know. (The reader should compare the Fabian Society's report on prostitution, *Downward Paths*, upon this question.) Nor do I know how they would show in comparison with preceding Tsarist conditions. Nor can I speculate how far these phenomena in Russia are the

mechanical consequence of privation and overcrowding in a home atmosphere bordering on despair. But there can be no doubt that in the Russian towns, concurrently with increased educational effort and an enhanced intellectual stimulation of the young, there is also an increased lawlessness on their part, especially in sexual matters, and that this is going on in a phase of unexampled sobriety and harsh puritanical decorum so far as adult life is concerned. This hectic moral fever of the young is the dark side of the educational spectacle in Russia. I think it is to be regarded mainly as an aspect of the general social collapse; every European country has noted a parallel moral relaxation of the young under the war strain; but the revolution itself, in sweeping a number of the old experienced teachers out of the schools and in making every moral standard a subject of debate, has no doubt contributed also to an as yet incalculable amount in the excessive disorder of these matters in present-day Russia.

Faced with this problem of starving and shattered homes and a social chaos, the Bolshevik organisers are *institutionalising* the town children of Russia. They are making their schools residential. The children of the Russian urban population are going, like the children of the British upper class, into boarding schools. Close to this second school I visited stood two big buildings which are the living places of the boys and of the girls respectively. In these places they can be kept under some sort of hygienic and moral discipline. This again happens to be not only in accordance with Communist doctrine, but with the special necessities of the Russian crisis. Entire towns are sinking down towards slum conditions, and the Bolshevik Government has had to play the part of a gigantic Dr. Barnardo.

We went over the organisation of a sort of reception home to which children are brought by their parents who find it impossible to keep them clean and decent and nourished under the terrible conditions outside. This reception home is the old Hotel de l'Europe, the scene of countless pleasant little dinner-parties under the old *régime*. On the roof there is still the summertime roof garden, where the string quartette used to play, and on the staircase we passed a frosted glass window still bearing in gold letters the words *Coiffure des Dames*.

Slender gilded pointing hands directed us to the "Restaurant,"

long vanished from the grim Petersburg scheme of things. Into this place the children come; they pass into a special quarantine section for infectious diseases and for personal cleanliness — nine-tenths of the newcomers harbour unpleasant parasites — and then into another section, the moral quarantine, where for a time they are watched for bad habits and undesirable tendencies. From this section some individuals may need to be weeded out and sent to special schools for defectives. The rest pass on into the general body of institutionalised children, and so on to the boarding schools.

Here certainly we have the "break-up of the family" in full progress, and the Bolshevik net is sweeping wide and taking in children of the most miscellaneous origins. The parents have reasonably free access to their children in the daytime, but little or no control over their education, clothing, or the like. We went among the children in the various stages of this educational process, and they seemed to us to be quite healthy, happy, and contented children. But they get very good people to look after them. Many men and women, politically suspects or openly discontented with the existing political conditions, and yet with a desire to serve Russia, have found in these places work that they can do with a good heart and conscience. My interpreter and the lady who took us round this place had often dined and supped in the Hotel de I'Europe in its brilliant days, and they knew each other well. This lady was now plainly clad, with short cut hair and a grave manner; her husband was a White and serving with the Poles; she had two children of her own in the institution, and she was mothering some scores of little creatures. But she was evidently keenly proud of the work of her organisation, and she said that she found life — in this city of want, under the shadow of a coming famine — more interesting and satisfying than it had ever been in the old days.

I have no space to tell of other educational work we saw going on in Russia. I can give but a word or so to the Home of Rest for Workmen in the Kamenni Ostrof. I thought that at once rather fine and not a little absurd. To this place workers are sent to live a life of refined ease for two or three weeks. It is a very beautiful country house with big gardens, an orangery, and subordinate buildings. The meals are served on white cloths with flowers upon the table and so

forth. And the worker has to live up to these elegant surroundings. It is a part of his education. If in a forgetful moment he clears his throat in the good old resonant peasant manner and spits upon the floor, an attendant, I was told, chalks a circle about his defilement and obliges him to clean the offended parquetry. The avenue approaching this place has been adorned with decoration in the futurist style, and there is a vast figure of a "worker" at the gates resting on his hammer, done in gypsum, which was obtained from the surgical reserves of the Petersburg hospitals.... But after all, the idea of civilising your workpeople by dipping them into pleasant surroundings is, in itself, rather a good one....

I find it difficult to hold the scales of justice upon many of these efforts of Bolshevism. Here are these creative and educational things going on, varying between the admirable and the ridiculous, islands at least of cleanly work and, I think, of hope, amidst the vast spectacle of grisly want and wide decay. Who can weigh the power and possibility of their thrust against the huge gravitation of this sinking system? Who can guess what encouragement and enhancement they may get if Russia can win through to a respite from civil and foreign warfare and from famine and want? It was of this re-created Russia, this Russia that may be, that I was most desirous of talking when I went to the Kremlin to meet Lenin. Of that conversation I will tell in my final chapter.

V. — THE PETERSBURG SOVIET

On Thursday the 7th of October we attended a meeting of the Petersburg Soviet. We were told that we should find this a very different legislative body from the British House of Commons, and we did. Like nearly everything else in the arrangements of Soviet Russia it struck us as extraordinarily unpremeditated and improvised. Nothing could have been less intelligently planned for the functions it had to perform or the responsibilities it had to undertake.

The meeting was held in the old Winter Garden of the Tauride Palace, the former palace of Potemkin, the favourite of Catherine the Second. Here the Imperial Duma met under the Tsarist *régime*, and I visited it in 1914 and saw a languid session in progress. I went then with Mr. Maurice Baring and one of the Benckendorffs to the strangers' gallery, which ran round three sides of the hall. There was accommodation for perhaps a thousand people in the hall, and most of it was empty. The president with his bell sat above a rostrum, and behind him was a row of women reporters. I do not now remember what business was in hand on that occasion; it was certainly not very exciting business. Baring, I remember, pointed out the large proportion of priests elected to the third Dumas; their beards and cassocks made a distinctive feature of that scattered gathering.

On this second visit we were no longer stranger onlookers, but active participants in the meeting; we came into the body of the hall behind the president's bench, where on a sort of stage the members of the Government, official visitors, and so forth find accommodation. The presidential bench, the rostrum, and the reporters remained, but instead of an atmosphere of weary parliamentarianism, we found ourselves in the crowding, the noise, and the peculiar thrill of a mass meeting. There were, I should think, some two hundred people or more packed upon the semi-circular benches round about us on the platform behind the president, comrades in naval uniforms and in middle-class and working-class costume, numerous intelligent-looking women, one or two Asiatics and a few unclassifiable visitors, and the body of the hall beyond the presidential bench was densely packed with people who filled not

only the seats but the gangways and the spaces under the galleries. There may have been two or three thousand people down there, men and women. They were all members of the Petersburg Soviet, which is really a sort of conjoint meeting of its constituent Soviets. The visitors' galleries above were equally full. Above the rostrum, with his back to us, sat Zenovieff, his right-hand man Zorin, and the president. The subject under discussion was the proposed peace with Poland. The meeting was smarting with the sense of defeat and disposed to resent the Polish terms. Soon after we came in Zenovieff made a long and, so far as I could judge, a very able speech, preparing the minds of this great gathering for a Russian surrender. The Polish demands were outrageous, but for the present Russia must submit. He was followed by an oldish man who made a bitter attack upon the irreligion of the people and government of Russia; Russia was suffering for her sins, and until she repented and returned to religion she would continue to suffer one disaster after another. His opinions were not those of the meeting, but he was allowed to have his say without interruption. The decision to make peace with Poland was then taken by a show of hands. Then came my little turn. The meeting was told that I had come from England to see the Bolshevik *régime*; I was praised profusely; I was also exhorted to treat that *régime* fairly and not to emulate those other recent visitors (these were Mrs. Snowden and Guest and Bertrand Russell) who had enjoyed the hospitality of the republic and then gone away to say unfavourable things of it. This exhortation left me cold; I had come to Russia to judge the Bolshevik Government and not to praise it. I had then to take possession of the rostrum and address this big crowd of people. This rostrum I knew had proved an unfortunate place for one or two previous visitors, who had found it hard to explain away afterwards the speeches their translators had given the world through the medium of the wireless reports. Happily, I had had some inkling of what was coming. To avoid any misunderstanding I had written out a short speech in English, and I had had this translated carefully into Russian. I began by saying clearly that I was neither Marxist nor Communist, but a Collectivist, and that it was not to a social revolution in the West that Russians should look for peace and help in their troubles, but to the liberal opinion of the moderate mass of

Western people. I declared that the people of the Western States were determined to give Russia peace, so that she might develop upon her own lines. Their own line of development might be very different from that of Russia. When I had done I handed a translation of my speech to my interpreter, Zorin, which not only eased his task but did away with any possibility of a subsequent misunderstanding. My speech was reported in the *Pravda* quite fully and fairly.

Then followed a motion by Zorin that Zenovieff should have leave to visit Berlin and attend the conference of the Independent Socialists there. Zorin is a witty and humorous speaker, and he got his audience into an excellent frame of mind. His motion was carried by a show of hands, and then came areport and a discussion upon the production of vegetables in the Petersburg district. It was a practical question upon which feeling ran high. Here speakers rose in the body of the hall, discharging brief utterances for a minute or so and subsiding again. There were shouts and interruptions. The debate was much more like a big labour mass meeting in the Queen's Hall than anything that a Western European would recognise as a legislature.

This business disposed of, a still more extraordinary thing happened. We who sat behind the rostrum poured down into the already very crowded body of the hall and got such seats as we could find, and a white sheet was lowered behind the president's seat. At the same time a band appeared in the gallery to the left. A five-part cinematograph film was then run, showing the Baku Conference to which I have already alluded. The pictures were viewed with interest but without any violent applause. And at the end the band played the *Internationale*, and the audience — I beg its pardon! — the Petersburg Soviet dispersed singing that popular chant. It was in fact a mass meeting incapable of any real legislative activities; capable at the utmost of endorsing or not endorsing the Government in control of the platform. Compared with the British Parliament it has about as much organisation, structure, and working efficiency as a big bagful of miscellaneous wheels might have, compared to an old-fashioned and inaccurate but still going clock.

VI. — THE DREAMER IN THE KREMLIN

My chief purpose in going from Petersburg to Moscow was to see and talk to Lenin. I was very curious to see him, and I was disposed to be hostile to him. I encountered a personality entirely different from anything I had expected to meet.

Lenin is not a writer; his published work does not express him. The shrill little pamphlets and papers issued from Moscow in his name, full of misconceptions of the labour psychology of the West and obstinately defensive of the impossible proposition that it is the prophesied Marxist social revolution which has happened in Russia, display hardly anything of the real Lenin mentality as I encountered it. Occasionally there are gleams of an inspired shrewdness, but for the rest these publications do no more than rehearse the set ideas and phrases of doctrinaire Marxism. Perhaps that is necessary. That may be the only language Communism understands; a break into a new dialect would be disturbing and demoralising. Left Communism is the backbone of Russia to-day; unhappily it is a backbone without flexible joints, a backbone that can be bent only with the utmost difficulty and which must be bent by means of flattery and deference.

Moscow under the bright October sunshine, amidst the fluttering yellow leaves, impressed us as being altogether more lax and animated than Petersburg. There is much more movement of people, more trading, and a comparative plenty of droshkys. Markets are open. There is not the same general ruination of streets and houses. There are, it is true, many traces of the desperate street fighting of early 1918. One of the domes of that absurd cathedral of St. Basil just outside the Kremlin gate was smashed by a shell and still awaits repair. The tramcars we found were not carrying passengers; they were being used for the transport of supplies of food and fuel. In these matters Petersburg claims to be better prepared than Moscow.

The ten thousand crosses of Moscow still glitter in the afternoon light. On one conspicuous pinnacle of the Kremlin the imperial eagles spread their wings; the Bolshevik Government has been too busy or too indifferent to pull them down. The churches are open, the kissing of ikons is a flourishing industry, and beggars still woo casual

charity at the doors. The celebrated miraculous shrine of the Iberian Madonna outside the Redeemer Gate was particularly busy. There were many peasant women, unable to get into the little chapel, kissing the stones outside.

Just opposite to it, on a plaster panel on a house front, is that now celebrated inscription put up by one of the early revolutionary administrations in Moscow: "Religion is the Opium of the People." The effect this inscription produces is greatly reduced by the fact that in Russia the people cannot read.

About that inscription I had a slight but amusing argument with Mr. Vanderlip, the American financier, who was lodged in the same guest house as ourselves. He wanted to have it effaced. I was for retaining it as being historically interesting, and because I think that religious toleration should extend to atheists. But Mr. Vanderlip felt too strongly to see the point of that.

The Moscow Guest House, which we shared with Mr. Vanderlip and an adventurous English artist who had somehow got through to Moscow to execute busts of Lenin and Trotsky, was a big, richly-furnished house upon the Sofiskaya Naberezhnaya (No. 17), directly facing the great wall of the Kremlin and all the clustering domes and pinnacles of that imperial inner city. We felt much less free and more secluded here than in Petersburg. There were sentinels at the gates to protect us from casual visitors, whereas in Petersburg all sorts of unauthorised persons could and did stray in to talk to me. Mr. Vanderlip had been staying here, I gathered, for some weeks, and proposed to stay some weeks more. He was without valet, secretary, or interpreter. He did not discuss his business with me beyond telling me rather carefully once or twice that it was strictly financial and commercial and in no sense political. I was told that he had brought credentials from Senator Harding to Lenin, but I am temperamentally incurious and I made no attempt whatever to verify this statement or to pry into Mr. Vanderlip's affairs. I did not even ask how it could be possible to conduct business or financial operations in a Communist State with any one but the Government, nor how it was possible to deal with a Government upon strictly non-political lines. These were, I admitted, mysteries beyond my understanding. But we ate, smoked, drank our coffee and conversed together in an atmosphere of

profound discretion. By not mentioning Mr. Vanderlip's "mission," we made it a portentous, omnipresent fact.

The arrangements leading up to my meeting with Lenin were tedious and irritating, but at last I found myself under way for the Kremlin in the company of Mr. Rothstein, formerly a figure in London Communist circles, and an American comrade with a large camera who was also, I gathered, an official of the Russian Foreign Office.

The Kremlin as I remembered it in 1914 was a very open place, open much as Windsor Castle is, with a thin trickle of pilgrims and tourists in groups and couples flowing through it. But now it is closed up and difficult of access. There was a great pother with passes and permits before we could get through even the outer gates. And we were filtered and inspected through five or six rooms of clerks and sentinels before we got into the presence. This may be necessary for the personal security of Lenin, but it puts him out of reach of Russia, and, what perhaps is more serious, if there is to be an effectual dictatorship, it puts Russia out of his reach. If things must filter up to him, they must also filter down, and they may undergo very considerable changes in the process.

We got to Lenin at last and found him, a little figure at a great desk in a well-lit room that looked out upon palatial spaces. I thought his desk was rather in a litter. I sat down on a chair at a corner of the desk, and the little man — his feet scarcely touch the ground as he sits on the edge of his chair — twisted round to talk to me, putting his arms round and over a pile of papers. He spoke excellent English, but it was, I thought, rather characteristic of the present condition of Russian affairs that Mr. Rothstein chaperoned the conversation, occasionally offering footnotes and other assistance. Meanwhile the American got to work with his camera, and unobtrusively but persistently exposed plates. The talk, however, was too interesting for that to be an annoyance. One forgot about that clicking and shifting about quite soon.

I had come expecting to struggle with a doctrinaire Marxist. I found nothing of the sort. I had been told that Lenin lectured people; he certainly did not do so on this occasion. Much has been made of his laugh in the descriptions, a laugh which is said to be pleasing at

first and afterwards to become cynical. This laugh was not in evidence. His forehead reminded me of someone else — I could not remember who it was, until the other evening I saw Mr. Arthur Balfour sitting and talking under a shaded light. It is exactly the same domed, slightly one-sided cranium. Lenin has a pleasant, quick-changing, brownish face, with a lively smile and a habit (due perhaps to some defect in focussing) of screwing up one eye as he pauses in his talk; he is not very like the photographs you see of him because he is one of those people whose change of expression is more important than their features; he gesticulated a little with his hands over the heaped papers as he talked, and he talked quickly, very keen on his subject, without any posing or pretences or reservations, as a good type of scientific man will talk.

Our talk was threaded throughout and held together by two — what shall I call them? — *motifs*. One was from me to him: "What do you think you are making of Russia? What is the state you are trying to create?" The other was from him to me: "Why does not the social revolution begin in England? Why do you not work for the social revolution? Why are you not destroying Capitalism and establishing the Communist State?" These *motifs* interwove, reacted on each other, illuminated each other. The second brought back the first: "But what are you making of the social revolution? Are you making a success of it?" And from that we got back to two again with: "To make it a success the Western world must join in. Why doesn't it?"

In the days before 1918 all the Marxist world thought of the social revolution as an end. The workers of the world were to unite, overthrow Capitalism, and be happy ever afterwards. But in 1918 the Communists, to their own surprise, found themselves in control of Russia and challenged to produce their millennium. They have a colourable excuse for a delay in the production of a new and better social order in their continuation of war conditions, in the blockade and so forth, nevertheless it is clear that they begin to realise the tremendous unpreparedness which the Marxist methods of thought involve. At a hundred points — I have already put a finger upon one or two of them — they do not know what to do. But the commonplace Communist simply loses his temper if you venture to

doubt whether everything is being done in precisely the best and most intelligent way under the new *régime*. He is like a tetchy housewife who wants you to recognise that everything is in perfect order in the middle of an eviction. He is like one of those now forgotten suffragettes who used to promise us an earthly paradise as soon as we escaped from the tyranny of "man-made laws." Lenin, on the other hand, whose frankness must at times leave his disciples breathless, has recently stripped off the last pretence that the Russian revolution is anything more than the inauguration of an age of limitless experiment. "Those who are engaged in the formidable task of overcoming capitalism," he has recently written, "must be prepared to try method after method until they find the one which answers their purpose best."

We opened our talk with a discussion of the future of the great towns under Communism. I wanted to see how far Lenin contemplated the dying out of the towns in Russia. The desolation of Petersburg had brought home to me a point I had never realised before, that the whole form and arrangement of a town is determined by shopping and marketing, and that the abolition of these things renders nine-tenths of the buildings in an ordinary town directly or indirectly unmeaning and useless. "The towns will get very much smaller," he admitted. "They will be different. Yes, quite different." That, I suggested, implied a tremendous task. It meant the scrapping of the existing towns and their replacement. The churches and great buildings of Petersburg would become presently like those of Novgorod the Great or like the temples of Paestum. Most of the town would dissolve away. He agreed quite cheerfully. I think it warmed his heart to find someone who understood a necessary consequence of collectivism that many even of his own people fail to grasp. Russia has to be rebuilt fundamentally, has to become a new thing....

And industry has to be reconstructed — as fundamentally?

Did I realise what was already in hand with Russia? The electrification of Russia?

For Lenin, who like a good orthodox Marxist denounces all "Utopians," has succumbed at last to a Utopia, the Utopia of the electricians. He is throwing all his weight into a scheme for the development of great power stations in Russia to serve whole

provinces with light, with transport, and industrial power. Two experimental districts he said had already been electrified. Can one imagine a more courageous project in a vast flat land of forests and illiterate peasants, with no water power, with no technical skill available, and with trade and industry at the last gasp? Projects for such an electrification are in process of development in Holland and they have been discussed in England, and in those densely-populated and industrially highly-developed centres one can imagine them as successful, economical, and altogether beneficial. But their application to Russia is an altogether greater strain upon the constructive imagination. I cannot see anything of the sort happening in this dark crystal of Russia, but this little man at the Kremlin can; he sees the decaying railways replaced by a new electric transport, sees new roadways spreading throughout the land, sees a new and happier Communist industrialism arising again. While I talked to him he almost persuaded me to share his vision.

"And you will go on to these things with the peasants rooted in your soil?"

But not only are the towns to be rebuilt; every agricultural landmark is to go.

"Even now," said Lenin, "all the agricultural production of Russia is not peasant production. We have, in places, large scale agriculture. The Government is already running big estates with workers instead of peasants, where conditions are favourable. That can spread. It can be extended first to one province, then another. The peasants in the other provinces, selfish and illiterate, will not know what is happening until their turn comes...."

It may be difficult to defeat the Russian peasant *en masse*; but in detail there is no difficulty at all. At the mention of the peasant Lenin's head came nearer to mine; his manner became confidential. As if after all the peasant *might* overhear.

It is not only the material organisation of society you have to build, I argued, it is the mentality of a whole people. The Russian people are by habit and tradition traders and individualists; their very souls must be remoulded if this new world is to be achieved. Lenin asked me what I had seen of the educational work afoot. I praised some of the things I had seen. He nodded and smiled with pleasure.

He has an unlimited confidence in his work.

"But these are only sketches and beginnings," I said.

"Come back and see what we have done in Russia in ten years' time," he answered.

In him I realised that Communism could after all, in spite of Marx, be enormously creative. After the tiresome class-war fanatics I had been encountering among the Communists, men of formulæ as sterile as flints, after numerous experiences of the trained and empty conceit of the common Marxist devotee, this amazing little man, with his frank admission of the immensity and complication of the project of Communism and his simple concentration upon its realisation, was very refreshing. He at least has a vision of a world changed over and planned and built afresh.

He wanted more of my Russian impressions. I told him that I thought that in many directions, and more particularly in the Petersburg Commune, Communism was pressing too hard and too fast, and destroying before it was ready to rebuild. They had broken down trading before they were ready to ration; the co-operative organisation had been smashed up instead of being utilised, and so on. That brought us to our essential difference, the difference of the Evolutionary Collectivist and Marxist, the question whether the social revolution is, in its extremity, necessary, whether it is necessary to over throw one economic system completely before the new one can begin. I believe that through a vast sustained educational campaign the existing Capitalist system can be *civilised* into a Collectivist world system; Lenin on the other hand tied himself years ago to the Marxist dogmas of the inevitable class war, the downfall of Capitalist order as a prelude to reconstruction, the proletarian dictatorship, and so forth. He had to argue, therefore, that modern Capitalism is incurably predatory, wasteful, and unteachable, and that until it is destroyed it will continue to exploit the human heritage stupidly and aimlessly, that it will fight against and prevent any administration of natural resources for the general good, and that, because essentially it is a scramble, it will inevitably make wars.

I had, I will confess, a very uphill argument. He suddenly produced Chiozza Money's new book, *The Triumph of Nationalisation*, which he had evidently been reading very carefully.

“But you see directly you begin to have a good working collectivist organisation of any public interest, the Capitalists smash it up again. They smashed your national shipyards; they won’t let you work your coal economically.” He tapped the book. “It is all here.”

And against my argument that wars sprang from nationalist imperialism and not from a Capitalist organisation of society he suddenly brought: “But what do you think of this new Republican Imperialism that comes to us from America?”

Here Mr. Rothstein intervened in Russian with an objection that Lenin swept aside.

And regardless of Mr. Rothstein’s plea for diplomatic reserve, Lenin proceeded to explain the projects with which one American at least was seeking to dazzle the imagination of Moscow. There was to be economic assistance for Russia and recognition of the Bolshevik Government. There was to be a defensive alliance against Japanese aggression in Siberia. There was to be an American naval station on the coast of Asia, and leases for long terms of sixty or fifty years of the natural resources of Khamskhatka and possibly of other large regions of Russian Asia. Well, did I think that made for peace? Was it anything more than the beginning of a new world scramble? How would the British Imperialists like this sort of thing?

Always, he insisted, Capitalism competes and scrambles. It is the antithesis of collective action. It cannot develop into social unity or into world unity.

But some industrial power had to come in and help Russia, I said. She cannot reconstruct now without such help....

Our multifarious argumentation ended indecisively. We parted warmly, and I and my companion were filtered out of the Kremlin through one barrier after another in much the same fashion as we had been filtered in.

“He is wonderful,” said Mr. Rothstein. “But it was an indiscretion __”

I was not disposed to talk as we made our way, under the glowing trees that grow in the ancient moat of the Kremlin, back to our Guest House. I wanted to think Lenin over while I had him fresh in my mind, and I did not want to be assisted by the expositions of my companion. But Mr. Rothstein kept on talking.

He was still pressing me not to mention this little sketch of the Russian- American outlook to Mr. Vanderlip long after I assured him that I respected Mr. Vanderlip's veil of discretion far too much to pierce it by any careless word.

And so back to No. 17 Sofiskaya Naberezhnaya, and lunch with Mr. Vanderlip and the young sculptor from London. The old servant of the house waited on us, mournfully conscious of the meagreness of our entertainment and reminiscent of the great days of the past when Caruso had been a guest and had sung to all that was brilliant in Moscow in the room upstairs. Mr Vanderlip was for visiting the big market that afternoon — and later going to the Ballet, but my son and I were set upon returning to Petersburg that night and so getting on to Reval in time for the Stockholm boat.

VII. — THE ENVOY

In the preceding chapters I have written in the first person and in a familiar style because I did not want the reader to lose sight for a moment of the shortness of our visit to Russia and of my personal limitations. Now in conclusion, if the reader will have patience with me for a few final words, I would like in less personal terms and very plainly to set down my main convictions about the Russian situation. They are deep-seated convictions, and they concern not merely Russia but the whole present outlook of our civilisation. They are merely one man's opinion, but as I feel them strongly, so I put them without weakening qualifications.

First, then, Russia, which was a modern civilisation of the Western type, least disciplined and most ramshackle of all the Great Powers, is now a modern civilisation *in extremis*. The direct cause of its downfall has been modern war leading to physical exhaustion. Only through that could the Bolsheviks have secured power. Nothing like this Russian downfall has ever happened before. If it goes on for a year or so more the process of collapse will be complete. Nothing will be left of Russia but a country of peasants; the towns will be practically deserted and in ruins, the railways will be rusting in disuse. With the railways will go the last vestiges of any general government. The peasants are absolutely illiterate and collectively stupid, capable of resisting interference but incapable of comprehensive foresight and organisation. They will become a sort of human swamp in a state of division, petty civil war, and political squalour, with a famine whenever the harvests are bad; and they will be breeding epidemics for the rest of Europe. They will lapse towards Asia.

The collapse of the civilised system in Russia into peasant barbarism means that Europe will be cut off for many years from all the mineral wealth of Russia, and from any supply of raw products from this area, from its corn, flax, and the like. It is an open question whether the Western Powers can get along without these supplies. Their cessation certainly means a general impoverishment of Western Europe.

The only possible Government that can stave off such a final collapse of Russia now is the present Bolshevik Government, if it can be assisted by America and the Western Powers. There is now no alternative to that Government possible. There are of course a multitude of antagonists — adventurers and the like — ready, with European assistance, to attempt the overthrow of that Bolshevik Government, but there are no signs of any common purpose and moral unity capable of replacing it. And moreover there is no time now for another revolution in Russia. A year more of civil war will make the final sinking of Russia out of civilisation inevitable. We have to make what we can, therefore, of the Bolshevik Government, whether we like it or not.

The Bolshevik Government is inexperienced and incapable to an extreme degree; it has had phases of violence and cruelty; but it is on the whole honest. And it includes a few individuals of real creative imagination and power, who may with opportunity, if their hands are strengthened, achieve great reconstructions. The Bolshevik Government seems on the whole to be trying to act up to its professions, which are still held by most of its supporters with a quite religious passion. Given generous help, it may succeed in establishing a new social order in Russia of a civilised type with which the rest of the world will be able to deal. It will probably be a mitigated Communism, with a large-scale handling of transort, industry, and (later) agriculture.

It is necessary that we should understand and respect the professions and principles of the Bolsheviks if we Western peoples are to be of any effectual service to humanity in Russia. Hitherto these professions and principles have been ignored in the most extraordinary way by the Western Governments. The Bolshevik Government is, and says it is, a Communist Government. And it means this, and will make this the standard of its conduct. It has suppressed private ownership and private trade in Russia, not as an act of expediency but as an act of right; and in all Russia there remain now no commercial individuals and bodies with whom we can deal who will respect the conventions and usages of Western commercial life. The Bolshevik Government, we have to understand, has, by its nature, an invincible prejudice against individual business

men; it will not treat them in a manner that they will consider fair and honourable; it will distrust them and, as far as it can, put them at the completest disadvantage. It regards them as pirates — or at best as privateers. It is hopeless and impossible therefore for individual persons and firms to think of going into Russia to trade. There is only one being in Russia with whom the Western world can deal, and that is the Bolshevik Government itself, and there is no way of dealing with that one being safely and effectually except through some national or, better, some international Trust. This latter body, which might represent some single Power or group of Powers, or which might even have some titular connection with the League of Nations, would be able to deal with the Bolshevik Government on equal terms. It would have to recognise the Bolshevik Government and, in conjunction with it, to set about the now urgent task of the material restoration of civilised life in European and Asiatic Russia. It should resemble in its general nature one of the big buying and controlling trusts that were so necessary and effectual in the European States during the Great War. It should deal with its individual producers on the one hand, and the Bolshevik Government would deal with its own population on the other. Such a Trust could speedily make itself indispensable to the Bolshevik Government. This indeed is the only way in which a capitalist State can hold commerce with a Communist State. The attempts that have been made during the past year and more to devise some method of private trading in Russia without recognition of the Bolshevik Government were from the outset as hopeless as the search for the North-West passage from England to India. The channels are frozen up.

Any country or group of countries with adequate industrial resources which goes into Bolshevik Russia with recognition and help will necessarily become the supporter, the right hand, and the consultant of the Bolshevik Government. It will react upon that Government and be reacted upon. It will probably become more collectivist in its methods, and, on the other hand, the rigours of extreme Communism in Russia will probably be greatly tempered through its influence.

The only Power capable of playing this *rôle* of eleventh-hour helper to Russia single-handed is the United States of America. That

is why I find the adventure of the enterprising and imaginative Mr. Vanderlip very significant. I doubt the conclusiveness of his negotiations; they are probably only the opening phase of a discussion of the Russian problem upon a new basis that may lead it at last to a comprehensive world treatment of this situation. Other Powers than the United States will, in the present phase of world-exhaustion, need to combine before they can be of any effective use to Russia. Big business is by no means antipathetic to Communism. The larger big business grows the more it approximates to Collectivism. It is the upper road of the few instead of the lower road of the masses to Collectivism.

The only alternative to such a helpful intervention in Bolshevik Russia is, I firmly believe, the final collapse of all that remains of modern civilisation throughout what was formerly the Russian Empire. It is highly improbable that the collapse will be limited to its boundaries. Both eastward and westward other great regions may, one after another, tumble into the big hole in civilisation thus created. Possibly all modern civilisation may tumble in.

These propositions do not refer to any hypothetical future; they are an attempt to state the outline facts and possibilities of what is going on — and going on with great rapidity — in Russia and in the world generally now, as they present themselves to my mind. This in general terms is the frame of circumstance in which I would have the sketches of Russia that have preceded this set and read. So it is I interpret the writing on the Eastern wall of Europe.

THE END

THE SALVAGING OF CIVILIZATION

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THE PROBABLE FUTURE OF MANKIND[A]

§ 1

The present outlook of human affairs is one that admits of broad generalizations and that seems to require broad generalizations. We are in one of those phases of experience which become cardinal in history. A series of immense and tragic events have shattered the self-complacency and challenged the will and intelligence of mankind. That easy general forward movement of human affairs which for several generations had seemed to justify the persuasion of a necessary and invincible progress, progress towards greater powers, greater happiness, and a continual enlargement of life, has been checked violently and perhaps arrested altogether. The spectacular catastrophe of the Great War has revealed an accumulation of destructive forces in our outwardly prosperous society, of which few of us had dreamt; and it has also revealed a profound incapacity to deal with and restrain these forces. The two years of want, confusion, and indecision that have followed the Great War in Europe and Asia, and the uncertainties that have disturbed life even in the comparatively untouched American world, seem to many watchful minds even more ominous to our social order than the war itself. What is happening to our race? they ask. Did the prosperities and confident hopes with which the twentieth century opened, mark nothing more than a culmination of fortuitous good luck? Has the cycle of prosperity and progress closed? To what will this staggering and blundering, the hatreds and mischievous adventures of the present time, bring us? Is the world in the opening of long centuries of confusion and disaster such as ended the Western Roman Empire in Europe or the Han prosperity in China? And if so, will the debacle extend to America? Or is the American (and Pacific?) system still sufficiently removed and still sufficiently autonomous to maintain a progressive movement of its own if the Old World collapse?

Some sort of answer to these questions, vast and vague though they are, we must each one of us have before we can take an

intelligent interest or cast an effective vote in foreign affairs. Even though a man formulate no definite answer, he must still have an implicit persuasion before he can act in these matters. If he have no clear conclusions openly arrived at, then he must act upon subconscious conclusions instinctively arrived at. Far better is it that he should bring them into the open light of thought.

The suppression of war is generally regarded as central to the complex of contemporary problems. But war is not a new thing in human experience, and for scores of centuries mankind has managed to get along in spite of its frequent recurrence. Most states and empires have been intermittently at war throughout their periods of stability and prosperity. But their warfare was not the warfare of the present time. The thing that has brought the rush of progressive development of the past century and a half to a sudden shock of arrest is not the old and familiar warfare, but warfare strangely changed and exaggerated by novel conditions. It is this change in conditions, therefore, and not war itself, which is the reality we have to analyse in its bearing upon our social and political ideas. In 1914 the European Great Powers resorted to war, as they had resorted to war on many previous occasions, to decide certain open issues. This war flamed out with an unexpected rapidity until all the world was involved; and it developed a horror, a monstrosity of destructiveness, and, above all, an inconclusiveness quite unlike any preceding war. That unlikeness was the essence of the matter. Whatever justifications could be found for its use in the past, it became clear to many minds that under the new conditions war was no longer a possible method of international dealing. The thing lay upon the surface. The idea of a League of Nations sustaining a Supreme World Court to supersede the arbitrament of war, did not so much arise at any particular point as break out simultaneously wherever there were intelligent men.

Now what was this change in conditions that had confronted mankind with the perplexing necessity of abandoning war? For perplexing it certainly is. War has been a ruling and constructive idea in all human societies up to the present time; few will be found to deny it. Political institutions have very largely developed in relation to the idea of war; defence and aggression have shaped the outer

form of every state in the world, just as co-operation sustained by compulsion has shaped its inner organization. And if abruptly man determines to give up the waging of war, he may find that this determination involves the most extensive and penetrating modifications of political and social conceptions that do not at the first glance betray any direct connection with belligerent activities at all.

It is to the general problem arising out of this consideration, that this and the three following essays will be addressed; the question: What else has to go if war is to go out of human life? and the problem of what has to be done if it is to be banished and barred out for ever from the future experiences of our race. For let us face the truth in this matter; the abolition of war is no casting of ancient, barbaric, and now obsolete traditions, no easy and natural progressive step; the abolition of war, if it can be brought about, will be a reversal not only of the general method of human life hitherto but of the general method of nature, the method, that is, of conflict and survival. It will be a new phase in the history of life, and not simply an incident in the history of man. These brief essays will attempt to present something like the true dimensions of the task before mankind if war is indeed to be superseded, and to show that the project of abolishing war by the occasional meeting of some Council of a League of Nations or the like, is, in itself, about as likely to succeed as a proposal to abolish thirst, hunger, and death by a short legislative act.

Let us first examine the change in the conditions of human life that has altered war from a normal aspect of the conflict for existence of human societies into a terror and a threat for the entire species. The change is essentially a change in the amount of power available for human purposes, and more particularly in the amount of material power that can be controlled by one individual. Human society up to a couple of centuries ago was essentially a man-power and horse-power system. There was in addition a certain limited use of water power and wind power, but that was not on a scale to affect the general truth of the proposition. The first intimation of the great change began seven centuries ago with the appearance of explosives. In the thirteenth century the Mongols made a very effective military

use of the Chinese discovery of gunpowder. They conquered most of the known world, and their introduction of a low-grade explosive in warfare rapidly destroyed the immunity of castles and walled cities, abolished knighthood, and utterly wrecked and devastated the irrigation system of Mesopotamia, which had been a populous and civilized region since before the beginnings of history. But the restricted metallurgical knowledge of the time set definite limits to the size and range of cannon. It was only with the nineteenth century that the large scale production of cast steel and the growth of chemical knowledge made the military use of a variety of explosives practicable. The systematic extension of human power began in the eighteenth century with the utilization of steam and coal. That opened a crescendo of invention and discovery which thrust rapidly increasing quantities of material energy into men's hands. Even now that crescendo may not have reached its climax.

We need not rehearse here the familiar story of the abolition of distance that ensued; how the radiogram and the telegram have made every event of importance a simultaneous event for the minds of everyone in the world, how journeys which formerly took months or weeks now take days or hours, nor how printing and paper have made possible a universally informed community, and so forth. Nor will we describe the effect of these things upon warfare. The point that concerns us here is this, that before this age of discovery communities had fought and struggled with each other much as naughty children might do in a crowded nursery, *within the measure of their strength*. They had hurt and impoverished each other, but they had rarely destroyed each other completely. Their squabbles may have been distressing, but they were tolerable. It is even possible to regard these former wars as healthy, hardening and invigorating conflicts. But into this nursery has come Science, and has put into the fists of these children razor blades with poison on them, bombs of frightful explosive, corrosive fluids and the like. The comparatively harmless conflicts of these infants are suddenly fraught with quite terrific possibilities, and it is only a question of sooner or later before the nursery becomes a heap of corpses or is blown to smithereens. A real nursery invaded by a reckless person distributing such gifts, would be promptly saved by the intervention

of the nurse; but humanity has no nurse but its own poor wisdom. And whether that poor wisdom can rise to the pitch of effectual intervention is the most fundamental problem in mundane affairs at the present time.

The deadly gifts continue. There was a steady increase in the frightfulness and destructiveness of belligerence from 1914 up to the beginning of 1918, when shortage of material and energy checked the process; and since the armistice there has been an industrious development of military science. The next well-organized war, we are assured, will be far more swift and extensive in its destruction — more particularly of the civilian population. Armies will advance no longer along roads but extended in line, with heavy tank transport which will plough up the entire surface of the land they traverse; aerial bombing, with bombs each capable of destroying a small town, will be practicable a thousand miles beyond the military front, and the seas will be swept clear of shipping by mines and submarine activities. There will be no distinction between combatants and non-combatants, because every able-bodied citizen, male or female, is a potential producer of food and munitions; and probably the safest, and certainly the best supplied shelters in the universal cataclysm, will be the carefully buried, sandbagged, and camouflaged general-headquarters of the contending armies. There military gentlemen of limited outlook and high professional training will, in comparative security, achieve destruction beyond their understanding. The hard logic of war which gives victory always to the most energetic and destructive combatant, will turn warfare more and more from mere operations for loot or conquest or predominance into operations for the conclusive destruction of the antagonists. A relentless thrust towards strenuousness is a characteristic of belligerent conditions. War is war, and vehemence is in its nature. You must hit always as hard as you can. Offensive and counter-offensive methods continue to prevail over merely defensive ones. The victor in the next great war will be bombed from the air, starved, and depleted almost as much as the loser. His victory will be no easy one; it will be a triumph of the exhausted and dying over the dead.

It has been argued that such highly organized and long prepared warfare as the world saw in 1914-18 is not likely to recur again for a

considerable time because of the shock inflicted by it upon social stability. There may be spasmodic wars with improvised and scanty supplies, these superficially more hopeful critics admit, but there remain no communities now so stable and so sure of their people as to prepare and wage again a fully elaborated scientific war. But this view implies no happier outlook for mankind. It amounts to this, that so long as men remain disordered and impoverished they will not rise again to the full height of scientific war. But manifestly this will only be for so long as they remain disordered and impoverished. When they recover they will recover to repeat again their former disaster with whatever modern improvements and intensifications the ingenuity of the intervening time may have devised. This new phase of disorder, conflict, and social unravelling upon which we have entered, this phase of decline due to the enhanced and increasing powers for waste and destruction in mankind, is bound, therefore, to continue so long as the divisions based upon ancient ideas of conflict remain; and if for a time the decadence seems to be arrested, it will only be to accumulate under the influence of those ideas a fresh war-storm sufficiently destructive and disorganizing to restore the decadent process.

Unless mankind can readjust its political and social ideas to this essential new fact of its enormously enlarged powers, unless it can eliminate or control its pugnacity, no other prospect seems open to us but decadence, at least to such a level of barbarism as to lose and forget again all the scientific and industrial achievements of our present age. Then, with its powers shrunken to their former puny scale, our race may recover some sort of balance between the injuries and advantages of conflict. Or, since our decadent species may have less vitality and vigour than it had in its primitive phases, it may dwindle and fade out altogether before some emboldened animal antagonist, or through some world-wide disease brought to it perhaps by rats and dogs and insects and what not, who may be destined to be heirs to the rusting and mouldering ruins of the cities and ports and ways and bridges of to-day.

Only one alternative to some such retrogression seems possible, and that is the conscious, systematic reconstruction of human society to avert it. The world has been brought into one community, and the

human mind and will may be able to recognize and adapt itself to this fact — in time. Men, as a race, may succeed in turning their backs upon the method of warfare and the methods of conflict and in embarking upon an immense world-wide effort of co-operation and mutual toleration and salvage. They may have the vigour to abandon their age-long attempt to live in separate sovereign states, and to grapple with and master the now quite destructive force that traditional hostility has become, and bring their affairs together under one law and one peace. These new vast powers over nature which have been given to them, and which will certainly be their destruction if their purposes remain divergent and conflicting, will then be the means by which they may set up a new order of as yet scarcely imaginable interest and happiness and achievement. But is our race capable of such an effort, such a complete reversal of its instinctive and traditional impulses? Can we find premonitions of any such bold and revolutionary adaptations as these, in the mental and political life of to-day? How far are we, reader and writer, for example, working for these large new securities? Do we even keep them steadfastly in our minds? How is it with the people around us? Are not we and they and all the race still just as much adrift in the current of circumstances as we were before 1914? Without a great effort on our part (or on someone's part) that current which swirled our kind into a sunshine of hope and opportunity for a while will carry our race on surely and inexorably to fresh wars, to shortages, hunger, miseries, and social debacles, at last either to complete extinction or to a degradation beyond our present understanding.

§ 2

The urgent need for a great creative effort has become apparent in the affairs of mankind. It is manifest that unless some unity of purpose can be achieved in the world, unless the ever more violent and disastrous incidence of war can be averted, unless some common control can be imposed on the headlong waste of man's limited inheritance of coal, oil, and moral energy that is now going on, the history of humanity must presently culminate in some sort of disaster, repeating and exaggerating the disaster of the great war,

producing chaotic social conditions, and going on thereafter in a degenerative process towards extinction. So much all reasonable men seem now prepared to admit. But upon the question of how and in what form a unity of purpose and a common control of human affairs is to be established, there is still a great and lamentable diversity of opinion and, as a consequence, an enfeeblement and wasteful dispersal of will. At present nothing has been produced but the manifestly quite inadequate League of Nations at Geneva, and a number of generally very vague movements for a world law, world disarmament, and the like, among the intellectuals of the various civilized countries of the world.

The common failings of all these initiatives are a sort of genteel timidity and a defective sense of the scale of the enterprise before us. A neglect of the importance of scale is one of the gravest faults of contemporary education. Because a world-wide political organ is needed, it does not follow that a so-called League of Nations without representative sanctions, military forces, or authority of any kind, a League from which large sections of the world are excluded altogether, is any contribution to that need. People have a way of saying it is better than nothing. But it may be worse than nothing. It may create a feeling of disillusionment about world-unifying efforts. If a mad elephant were loose in one's garden, it would be an excellent thing to give one's gardener a gun. But it would have to be an adequate gun, an elephant gun. To give him a small rook-rifle and tell him it was better than nothing, and encourage him to face the elephant with that in his hand, would be the directest way of getting rid not of the elephant but of the gardener.

It is, if people will but think steadfastly, inconceivable that there should be any world control without a merger of sovereignty, but the framers of these early tentatives towards world unity have lacked the courage of frankness in this respect. They have been afraid of outbreaks of bawling patriotism, and they have tried to believe, and to make others believe, that they contemplate nothing more than a league of nations, when in reality they contemplate a subordination of nations and administrations to one common law and rule. The elementary necessity of giving the council of any world-peace organization which is to be more than a sentimental international

gesture, not only a complete knowledge but an effective control of all the military resources and organizations in the world, appalled them. They did not even ask for such a control. The frowning solidity of existing things was too much for them. They wanted to change them, but when it came to laying hands on them — No! They decided to leave them alone. They wanted a new world — and it is to contain just the same things as the old.

But are these intellectuals right in their estimate of the common man? Is he such a shallow and vehement fool as they seem to believe? Is he so patriotic as they make out? If mankind is to be saved from destruction there must be a world control; a world control means a world government, it is only another name for it, and manifestly that government must have a navy that will supersede the British navy, artillery that will supersede the French artillery, air forces superseding all existing air forces, and so forth. For many flags there must be one sovereign flag; *orbis terrarum*. Unless a world control amounts to that it will be ridiculous, just as a judge supported by two or three unarmed policemen, a newspaper reporter and the court chaplain, proposing to enforce his decisions in a court packed with the heavily armed friends of the plaintiff and defendant would be ridiculous. But the common man is supposed to be so blindly and incurably set upon his British navy or his French army, or whatever his pet national instrument of violence may be, that it is held to be impossible to supersede these beloved and adored forces. If that is so, then a world law is impossible, and the wisest course before us is to snatch such small happiness as we may hope to do and leave the mad elephant to work its will in the garden.

But is it so? If the mass of common men are incurably patriotic and belligerent why is there a note of querulous exhortation in nearly all patriotic literature? Why, for instance, is Mr. Rudyard Kipling's "History of England" so full of goading and scolding? And very significant indeed to any student of the human outlook was the world-response to President Wilson's advocacy of the League of Nations idea, in its first phase in 1918, before the weakening off and disillusionment of the Versailles Conference. Just for a little while it seemed that President Wilson stood for a new order of things in the world, that he had the wisdom and will and power to break the net of

hatreds and nationalisms and diplomacies in which the Old World was entangled. And while he seemed to be capable of that, while he promised most in the way of change and national control, then it was that he found his utmost support in every country in the world. In the latter half of 1918 there was scarcely a country anywhere in which one could not have found men ready to die for President Wilson. A great hopefulness was manifest in the world. It faded, it faded very rapidly again. But that brief wave of enthusiasm, which set minds astir with the same great idea of one peace of justice throughout the earth in China and Bokhara and the Indian bazaars, in Iceland and Basutoland and Ireland and Morocco, was indeed a fact perhaps more memorable in history even than the great war itself. It displayed a possibility of the simultaneous operation of the same general ideas throughout the world quite beyond any previous experience. It demonstrated that the generality of men are as capable of being cosmopolitan and pacifist as they are of being patriotic and belligerent. Both moods are extensions and exaltations beyond the everyday life, which itself is neither one thing nor the other. And both are transitory moods, responses to external suggestion.

It is to that first wave of popular feeling for a world law transcending and moving counter to all contemporary diplomacies, and not to the timid legalism of the framers of the first schemes for a League of Nations that we must look, if we are to hope at all for the establishment of a new order in human affairs. It is upon the spirit of that transitory response to the transitory greatness of President Wilson that we have to seize; we have to lay hold of that, to recall it and confirm it and enlarge and strengthen it, to make it a flux of patriotisms and a creator of new loyalties and devotions, and out of the dead dust of our present institutions to build up for it and animate with it the body of a true world state.

We have already stated the clear necessity, if mankind is not to perish by the hypertrophy of warfare, for the establishment of an armed and strong world law. Here in this spirit that has already gleamed upon the world is the possible force to create and sustain such a world law. What is it that intervenes between the universal human need and its satisfaction? Why, since there are overwhelming reasons for it and a widespread disposition for it, is there no world-

wide creative effort afoot now in which men and women by the million are participating — and participating with all their hearts? Why is it that, except for the weak gestures of the Geneva League of Nations and a little writing of books and articles, a little pamphleteering, some scattered committee activities on the part of people chiefly of the busybody class, an occasional speech and a diminishing volume of talk and allusion, no attempts are apparent to stay the plain drift of human society towards new conflicts and the sluices of final disaster?

The answer to that Why, probes deep into the question of human motives.

It must be because we are all creatures of our immediate surroundings, because our minds and energies are chiefly occupied by the affairs of every day, because we are all chiefly living our own lives, and very few of us, except by a kind of unconscious contribution, the life of mankind. In moments of mental activity, in the study or in contemplation, we may rise to a sense of the dangers and needs of human destiny, but it is only a few minds and characters of prophetic quality that, without elaborate artificial assistance, seem able to keep hold upon and guide their lives by such relatively gigantic considerations. The generality of men and women, so far as their natural disposition goes, are scarcely more capable of apprehending and consciously serving the human future than a van full of well-fed rabbits would be of grasping the fact that their van was running smoothly and steadily down an inclined plane into the sea. It is only as the result of considerable educational effort and against considerable resistance that our minds are brought to a broader view. In every age for many thousands of years men of exceptional vision have spent their lives in passionate efforts to bring us ordinary men into some relation of response and service to the greater issues of life. It is these pioneers of vision who have given the world its religions and its philosophical cults, its loyalties and observances; and who have imposed ideas of greatness and duty on their fellows. In every age the ordinary man has submitted reluctantly to such teachings, has made his peculiar compromises with them, has reduced them as far as possible to formula and formality, and got back as rapidly as possible to the eating and drinking and desire, the

personal spites and rivalries and glories which constitute his reality. The mass of men to-day do not seem to care, nor want to care, whither the political and social institutions to which they are accustomed are taking them. Such considerations overstrain us. And it is only by the extremest effort of those who are capable of a sense of racial danger and duty that the collective energies of men can ever be gathered together and organized and orientated towards the common good. To nearly all men and women, unless they are in the vein for it, such discussion as this in these essays does not appeal as being right or wrong; it does not really interest them, rather it worries them; and for the most part they would be glad to disregard it as completely as a lecture on wheels and gravitation and the physiological consequences of prolonged submergence would be disregarded by those rabbits in the van.

But man is a creature very different in his nature from a rabbit, and if he is less instinctively social, he is much more consciously social. Chief among his differences must be the presence of those tendencies which we call conscience, that haunting craving to be really right and to do the really right thing which is the basis of the moral and perhaps also of most of the religious life. In this lies our hope for mankind. Man hates to be put right, and yet also he wants to be right. He is a creature divided against himself, seeking both to preserve and to overcome his egotism. It is upon the presence of the latter strand in man's complex make-up that we must rest our hopes of a developing will for the world state which will gradually gather together and direct into a massive constructive effort the now quite dispersed chaotic and traditional activities of men.

As we have examined this problem it has become clear that the task of bringing about that consolidated world state which is necessary to prevent the decline and decay of mankind is not primarily one for the diplomatists and lawyers and politicians at all. It is an educational one. It is a moral based on an intellectual reconstruction. The task immediately before mankind is to find release from the contentious loyalties and hostilities of the past which make collective world-wide action impossible at the present time, in a world-wide common vision of the history and destinies of the race. On that as a basis, and on that alone, can a world control be

organized and maintained. The effort demanded from mankind, therefore, is primarily and essentially a bold reconstruction of the outlook upon life of hundreds of millions of minds. The idea of a world commonweal has to be established as the criterion of political institutions, and also as the criterion of general conduct in hundreds of millions of brains. It has to dominate education everywhere in the world. When that end is achieved, then the world state will be achieved, and it can be achieved in no other way. And unless that world state can be achieved, it would seem that the outlook before mankind is a continuance of disorder and of more and more destructive and wasteful conflicts, a steady process of violence, decadence, and misery towards extinction, or towards modifications of our type altogether beyond our present understanding and sympathy.

§ 3

In framing an estimate of the human future two leading facts are dominant. The first is the plain necessity for a political reorganization of the world as a unity, to save our race from the social disintegration and complete physical destruction which war, under modern conditions, must ultimately entail, and the second is the manifest absence of any sufficient will in the general mass of mankind at the present time to make such a reorganization possible. There appear to be the factors of such a will in men, but they are for the most part unawakened, or they are unorganized and ineffective. And there is a very curious incapacity to grasp the reality of the human situation, a real resistance to seeing things as they are — for man is an effort-shirking animal — which greatly impedes the development of such a will. Failing the operation of such a sufficient will, human affairs are being directed by use and wont, by tradition and accidental deflections. Mankind, after the tragic concussion of the great war, seems now to be drifting again towards new and probably more disastrous concussions.

The catastrophe of the Great War did more or less completely awaken a certain limited number of intelligent people to the need of some general control replacing this ancient traditional driftage of

events. But they shrank from the great implications of such a world control. The only practicable way to achieve a general control in the face of existing governments, institutions and prejudices, interested obstruction and the common disregard, is by extending this awakening to great masses of people. This means an unprecedented educational effort, an appeal to men's intelligence and men's imagination such as the world has never seen before. Is it possible to rationalize the at present chaotic will of mankind? That possibility, if it is a possibility, is the most important thing in contemporary human affairs.

We are asking here for an immense thing, for a change of ideas, a vast enlargement of ideas, and for something very like a change of heart in hundreds of millions of human beings. But then we are dealing with the fate of the entire species. We are discussing the prevention of wars, disorders, shortages, famines and miseries for centuries ahead. The initial capital we have to go upon is as yet no more than the aroused understanding and conscience of a few thousands, at most of a few score thousands of people. Can so little a leaven leaven so great a lump? Is a response to this appeal latent in the masses of mankind? Is there anything in history to justify hope for so gigantic a mental turnover in our race?

A consideration of the spread of Christianity in the first four centuries A.D. or of the spread of Islam in the seventh century will, we believe, support a reasonable hope that such a change in the minds of men, whatever else it may be, is a practicable change, that it can be done and that it may even probably be done. Consider our two instances. The propagandas of those two great religions changed and changed for ever the political and social outlook over vast areas of the world's surface. Yet while the stir for world unity begins now simultaneously in many countries and many groups of people, those two propagandas each radiated from a single centre and were in the first instance the teachings of single individuals; and while to-day we can deal with great reading populations and can reach them by press and printed matter, by a universal distribution of books, by great lecturing organizations and the like, those earlier great changes in human thought were achieved mainly by word of mouth and by crabbed manuscripts, painfully copied and passed slowly from hand

to hand. So far it is only the trader who has made any effectual use of the vast facilities the modern world has produced for conveying a statement simultaneously to great numbers of people at a distance. The world of thought still hesitates to use the means of power that now exist for it. History and political philosophy in the modern world are like bashful dons at a dinner party; they crumble their bread and talk in undertones and clever allusions to their nearest neighbour, abashed at the thought of addressing the whole table. But in a world where Mars can reach out in a single night and smite a city a thousand miles away, we cannot suffer wisdom to hesitate in an inaudible gentility. The knowledge and vision that is good enough for the best of us is good enough for all. This gospel of human brotherhood and a common law and rule for all mankind, the attempt to meet this urgent necessity of a common control of human affairs, which indeed is no new religion but only an attempt to realize practically the common teaching of all the established religions of the world, has to speak with dominating voice everywhere between the poles and round about the world.

And it must become part of the universal education. It must speak through the school and university. It is too often forgotten, in America, perhaps, even more than in Europe, that education exists for the community, and for the individual only so far as it makes him a sufficient member of the community. The chief end of education is to subjugate and sublimate for the collective purposes of our kind the savage egotism we inherit. Every school, every college, teaches directly and still more by implication, relationship to a community and devotion to a community. In too many cases that community we let our schools and colleges teach to our children is an extremely narrow one; it is the community of a sect, of a class, or of an intolerant, greedy and unrighteous nationalism. Schools have increased greatly in numbers throughout the world during the last century, but there has been little or no growth in the conception of education in schools. Education has been extended, but it has not been developed. If man is to be saved from self-destruction by the organization of a world community, there must be a broadening of the reference of the teaching in the schools of all the world to that community of the world. World-wide educational development and

reform are the necessary preparations for and the necessary accompaniments of a political reconstruction of the world. The two are the right and left hands of the same thing. Neither can effect much without the other.

Now it is manifest that this reorganization of the world's affairs and of the world's education which we hold to be imperatively dictated by the change in warfare, communications and other conditions of human life brought about by scientific discovery during the last hundred years, carries with it a practical repudiation of the claims of every existing sovereign government in the world to be final and sovereign, to be anything more than provisional and replaceable. There is the difficulty that has checked hundreds of men after their first step towards this work for a universal peace. It involves, it cannot but involve, a revision of their habitual allegiances. At best existing governments are to be regarded as local trustees and caretakers for the coming human commonweal.

If they are not that, then they are necessarily obstructive and antagonistic. But few rulers, few governments, few officials, will have the greatness of mind to recognize and admit this plain reality. By a kind of necessity they force upon their subjects and publics a conflict of loyalties. The feeble driftage of human affairs from one base or greedy arrangement or cowardly evasion to another, since the Armistice of 1918, is very largely due to the obstinate determination of those who are in positions of authority and responsibility to ignore the plain teachings of the great war and its sequelæ. They are resisting adjustments; their minds are fighting against the sacrifices of pride and authority that a full recognition of their subordination to the world commonweal will involve. They are prepared, it would seem, to fight against the work of human salvation basely and persistently, whenever their accustomed importance is threatened.

Even in the schools and in the world of thought the established thing will make its unrighteous fight for life. The dull and the dishonest in high places will suppress these greater ideas when they can, and ignore when they dare not suppress. It seems too much to hope for that there should be any willingness on the part of any established authority to admit its obsolescence and prepare the way for its merger in a world authority. It is not creative minds that

produce revolutions, but the obstinate conservatism of established authority. It is the blank refusal to accept the idea of an orderly evolution towards new things that gives a revolutionary quality to every constructive proposal. The huge task of political and educational reconstruction which is needed to arrest the present drift of human affairs towards catastrophe, must be achieved, if it is to be achieved at all, mainly by voluntary and unofficial effort; and for the most part in the teeth of official opposition.

There are one or two existing states to which men have looked for some open recognition of their duty to mankind as a whole, and of the necessarily provisional nature of their contemporary constitutions. The United States of America constitute a political system, profoundly different in its origin and in its spirit, from any old-world state; it was felt that here at least might be an evolutionary state; and in the palmy days of President Wilson it did seem for a brief interval as if the New World was indeed coming to the rescue of the old, as if America was to play the rôle of a propagandist continent, bringing its ideas of equality and freedom, and extending the spirit of its union to all the nations of the earth. From that expectation, the world opinion is now in a state of excessive and unreasonable recoil. President Wilson fell away from his first intimations of that world-wide federal embrace; his mind and will were submerged by the clamour of contending patriotisms and the subtle expedients of old-world diplomacy in Paris; but American accessibility to the idea of a federalized world neither began with him nor will it end with his failure. America is still a hopeful laboratory of world-unifying thought. A long string of arbitration treaties stands to the credit of America, and a series of developing Pan-American projects, pointing clearly to at least a continental synthesis within a measurable time. There has been, and there still is, a better understanding of, and a greater receptivity to, ideas of international synthesis in America than in any European state.

And the British Empire, which according to many of its liberal apologists is already a league of nations linked together in a mutually advantageous peace, to that too men have looked for some movement of adaptation to this greater synthesis which is the world's pre-eminent need. But so far the British Empire has failed to respond to

such expectations. The war has left it strained and bruised and with its affairs very much in the grip of the military class, the most illiterate and dangerous class in the community. They have done, perhaps, irreparable mischief to the peace of the empire in Ireland, India and Egypt, and they have made the claim of the British system to be an exemplary unification of dissimilar peoples seem now to many people incurably absurd. It is a great misfortune for mankind that the British Empire, which played so sturdy and central a part in the great war, could at its close achieve no splendid and helpful gesture towards a generous reconstruction.

Since the armistice there has been an extraordinary opportunity for the British monarchy to have displayed a sense of the new occasions before the world, and to have led the way towards the efforts and renunciations of an international renascence. It could have taken up a lead that the President of the United States had initiated and relinquished; it could have used its peculiar position to make an unexampled appeal to the whole world. It could have created a new epoch in history. The Prince of Wales has been touring the world-wide dominions of which, some day, he is to be the crowned head. He has received addresses, visited sights, been entertained, shaken hands with scores of thousands of people and submitted himself to the eager, yet unpenetrating gaze of vast multitudes. His smallest acts have been observed with premeditated admiration, his lightest words recorded. He is not now a boy; he saw something of the great war, even if his exalted position denied him any large share of its severer hardships and dangers; he cannot be blind to the general posture of the world's affairs. Here, surely, was a chance of saying something that would be heard from end to end of the earth, something kingly and great-minded. Here was the occasion for a fine restatement of the obligations and duties of empire. But from first to last the prince has said nothing to quicken the imaginations of the multitude of his future subjects to the gigantic possibilities of these times, nothing to reassure the foreign observer that the British Empire embodies anything more than the colossal national egotism and impenetrable self-satisfaction of the British peoples. "Here we are," said the old order in those demonstrations, "and here we mean to stick. Just as we have been, so we remain. British! — we are Bourbons." These

smiling tours of the Prince of Wales in these years of shortage, stress, and insecurity, constitute a propaganda of inanity unparalleled in the world's history.

Nor do we find in the nominal rulers and official representatives of other countries any clear admission of the necessity for a great and fundamental change in the scope and spirit of government. These official and ruling people, more than any other people, are under the sway of that life of use and wont which dominates us all. They are often trained to their positions, or they have won their way to their positions of authority through a career of political activities which amounts to a training. And that training is not a training in enterprise and change; it is a training in sticking tight and getting back to precedent. We can expect nothing from them. We shall be lucky if the resistance of the administrative side of existing states to the conception of a world commonweal is merely passive. There is little or no prospect of any existing governing system, unless it be such a federal system as Switzerland or the United States, passing directly and without extensive internal changes into combination with other sovereign powers as part of a sovereign world system. At some point the independent states will as systems resist, and unless an overwhelming world conscience for the world state has been brought into being and surrounds them with an understanding watchfulness, and invades the consciences of their supporters and so weakens their resisting power, they will resist violently and disastrously. But it will be an incoherent resistance because the very nature of the sovereign states of to-day is incoherence. There can be no world-wide combination of sovereign states to resist the world state, because that would be to create the world state in the attempt to defeat it.

§ 4

In the three preceding essays an attempt has been made to state the pass at which mankind has arrived, the dangers and mischiefs that threaten our race, and the need there is and the opportunities there are for a strenuous attempt to end the age-long bickerings of nations and

empires and establish one community of law and effort throughout the whole world. Stress has been laid chiefly upon the monstrous evils and disasters a continuation of our present divisions, our nationalisms and imperialisms and the like, will certainly entail. These considerations of evil however are only the negative argument for this creative effort; they have been thrust forward because war, disorder, insufficiency, and the ill health, the partings, deprivations, boredom and unhappiness that arise out of these things are well within our experience and entirely credible; the positive argument for a world order demands at once more faith and imagination.

Given a world law and world security, a release from the net of bickering frontiers, world-wide freedom of movement, and world-wide fellowship, a thousand good things that are now beyond hope or dreaming would come into the ordinary life. The whole world would be our habitation, and the energies of men, released from their preoccupation with contention, would go more and more abundantly into the accumulation and application of scientific knowledge, that is to say into the increase of mental and bodily health, of human power, of interest and happiness. Even to-day the most delightful possibilities stand waiting, inaccessible to nearly all of us because of the general insecurity, distrust and anger. Flying, in a world safely united in peace, could take us now to the ends of the earth smoothly, securely through the sweet upper air, in five or six days. In two or three years there could again be abundance of food and pleasant clothing for everyone throughout the whole world. Men could be destroying their slums and pestilential habitations and rebuilding spacious and beautiful cities. Given only peace and confidence and union we could double our yearly production of all that makes life desirable and still double our leisure for thought and growth. We could live in a universal palace and make the whole globe our garden and playground.

But these are not considerations that sway people to effort. Fear and hate, not hope and desire, have been hitherto the effective spurs for men. The most popular religions are those which hold out the widest hopes of damnation. Our lives are lives of use and wont, we distrust the promise of delightful experience and achievements beyond our accustomed ways; it offends our self-satisfaction even to

regard them as possibilities; we do not like the implied cheapening of familiar things. We are all ready to sneer at "Utopias," as elderly invalids sneer at the buoyant hopes of youth and do their best to think them sure of frustration. The aged and disillusioned profess a keen appreciation of the bath chair and the homely spoonful of medicine, and pity a crudity that misses the fine quality of those ripe established things. Most people are quite ready to dismiss the promise of a full free life for all mankind with a sneer. That would rob the world of romance, they say, the romance of passport offices, custom houses, shortages of food, endless petty deprivations, slums, pestilence, under-educated stunted children, youths dying in heaps in muddy trenches, an almost universal lack of vitality, and all the picturesque eventfulness of contemporary conditions. So that we have not dwelt here upon the life-giving aspect of a possible world state, but only on its life-saving aspects. We have not argued that our present life of use and wont could be replaced by an infinitely better way of living. We have rather pointed out that if things continue to drift as they are doing, the present life of use and wont will become intolerably insecure. It is the thought of the large bombing aeroplane and not the hope of swift travelling across the sky that will move the generality of men, if they are to be moved at all, towards a world peace.

But whether the lever that moves them is desire or fear the majority of men, unless the species is to perish, must be brought within a measurable time to an understanding of, and a will for, a single world government. And since at first existing institutions, established traditions, educational organizations and the like, will all be passively if not actively resistant to the spread of this saving idea, and much more so to any attempts to realize this saving idea, there remains nothing for us to look to, at the present time, for the first organization of this immense effort of mental reversal, but the zeal and devotion and self-sacrifice of convinced individuals. The world state must begin; it can only begin, as a propagandist cult, or as a group of propagandist cults, to which men and women must give themselves and their energies, regardless of the consequences to themselves. Laying the foundations of a world state upon a site already occupied by a muddle of buildings is an undertaking which

will almost necessarily bring its votaries into conflict with established authority and current sentiment; they will have to face the possibility of lives of conflict, misunderstanding, much thankless exertion; they must count on little honour and considerable active dislike; and they will have to find what consolation they can in the interest of the conflict itself and in the thought of a world, made at last by such efforts as theirs, peaceful and secure and vigorous, a world they can never hope to see. So stated it seems a bad bargain that the worker for the world state is invited to make, yet the world has never lacked people prepared to make such a bargain and they will not fail it now. There are worse things than conflict without manifest victory and effort without apparent reward. To the finer kind of mind it is infinitely more tragic and distressing to find that existence bears a foolish aimless face. Many people, tormented by the discontent of conscience, and wanting, more than they can ever want any satisfaction, some satisfying rule of life, some criterion of conduct, will find in this cult of the world state just that sustaining reality they need. And their number will grow. Because it is a practical and reasonable shape for a life, arising naturally out of a proper understanding of history and physical science, and embodying in a unifying plan the teaching of all the great religions of the world. It comes to us not to destroy but to fulfil.

The activities of a cult which set itself to bring about the world state would at first be propagandist, they would be intellectual and educational, and only as a sufficient mass of opinion and will had accumulated would they become to a predominant extent politically constructive. Such a cult must direct itself particularly to the teaching of the young. So far the propaganda for a world law, the League of Nations propaganda, since it has sought immediate political results, has been addressed almost entirely to adults; and as a consequence it has had to adapt itself as far as possible to their preconceptions about the history and outlook of their own nationality, and to the general absence as yet in the world of any vision of the welfare of mankind as one whole. It is because of this acceptance of current adult ideas about patriotism and nationality that the movement has adopted the unsatisfactory phrase, a League of Nations, when what is contemplated is much more than a league and a very considerable

subordination of national sovereignty. And a large share in the current ineffectiveness of the League of Nations is evidently due to the fact that men interpret the phrase and the proposition of the League of Nations differently in accordance with the different fundamental historical ideas they possess, ideas that propaganda has hitherto left unassailed. The worker for the world state will look further and plough deeper. It is these fundamental ideas which are the vitally important objective of a world-unifying movement, and they can only be brought into that world-wide uniformity which is essential to the enduring peace of mankind, by teaching children throughout all the earth the common history of their kind, and so directing their attention to the common future of their descendants. The driving force that makes either war or peace is engendered where the young are taught. The teacher, whether mother, priest, or schoolmaster, is the real maker of history; rulers, statesmen and soldiers do but work out the possibilities of co-operation or conflict the teacher creates. This is no rhetorical flourish; it is a sober fact. The politicians and masses of our time dance on the wires of their early education.

Teaching then is the initial and decisive factor in the future of mankind, and the first duty of everyone who has the ability and opportunity, is to teach, or to subserve the teaching of, the true history of mankind and of the possibilities of this vision of a single world state that history opens out to us. Men and women can help the spread of the saving doctrine in a thousand various ways; for it is not only in homes and schools that minds are shaped. They can print and publish books, endow schools and teaching, organize the distribution of literature, insist upon the proper instruction of children in world wide charity and fellowship, fight against every sort of suppression or restrictive control of right education, bring pressure through political and social channels upon every teaching organization to teach history aright, sustain missions and a new sort of missionary, the missionaries to all mankind of knowledge and the idea of one world civilization and one world community; they can promote and help the progress of historical and ethnological and political science, they can set their faces against every campaign of hate, racial suspicion, and patriotic falsehood, they can refuse, they are bound to

refuse, obedience to any public authority which oppresses and embitters class against class, race against race, and people against people. A belligerent government as such, they can refuse to obey; and they can refuse to help or suffer any military preparations that are not directed wholly and plainly to preserving the peace of the world. This is the plain duty of every honest man to-day, to judge his magistrate before he obeys him, and to render unto Cæsar nothing that he owes to God and mankind. And those who are awakened to the full significance of the vast creative effort now before mankind will set themselves particularly to revise the common moral judgment upon many acts and methods of living that obstruct the way of the world state. Blatant, aggressive patriotism and the incitements against foreign peoples that usually go with it, are just as criminal and far more injurious to our race than, for example, indecent provocations and open incitements to sexual vice; they produce a much beastlier and crueller state of mind, and they deserve at least an equal condemnation. Yet you will find even priests and clergymen to-day rousing the war passions of their flocks and preaching conflict from the very steps of the altar.

So far the movement towards a world state has lacked any driving power of passion. We have been passing through a phase of intellectual revision. The idea of a world unity and brotherhood has come back again into the world almost apologetically, deferentially, asking for the kind words of successful politicians and for a gesture of patronage from kings. Yet this demand for one world-empire of righteousness was inherent in the teachings of Buddha, it flashed for a little while behind the sword of Islam, it is the embodiment in earthly affairs of the spirit of Christ. It is a call to men for service as of right, it is not an appeal to them that they may refuse, not a voice that they may disregard. It is too great a thing to hover for long thus deferentially on the outskirts of the active world it has come to save. To-day the world state says “Please listen; make way for me.” To-morrow it will say: “Make way for me, little people.” The day is not remote when disregardful “patriotic” men hectoring in the crowd will be twisted round perforce to the light they refuse to see. First comes the idea and then slowly the full comprehension of the idea, comes realization, and with that realization will come a kindling anger at the

vulgarity, the meanness, the greed and baseness and utter stupidity that refuses to attend to this clear voice, this definite demand of our racial necessity. To-day we teach, but as understanding grows we must begin to act. We must put ourselves and our rulers and our fellow men on trial. We must ask: "What have you done, what are you doing to help or hinder the peace and order of mankind?" A time will come when a politician who has wilfully made war and promoted international dissension will be as sure of the dock and much surer of the noose than a private homicide. It is not reasonable that those who gamble with men's lives should not stake their own. The service of the world state calls for much more than passive resistance to belligerent authorities, for much more than exemplary martyrdoms. It calls for the greater effort of active interference with mischievous men. "I will believe in the League of Nations," one man has written, "when men will fight for it." For this League of Nations at Geneva, this little corner of Balfourian jobs and gentility, no man would dream of fighting, but for the great state of mankind, men will presently be very ready to fight and, as the thing may go, either to kill or die. Things must come in their order; first the idea, then the kindling of imaginations, then the world wide battle. We who live in the bleak days after a great crisis, need be no more discouraged by the apparent indifference of the present time than are fields that are ploughed and sown by the wet days of February and the cold indifference of the winds of early March. The ploughing has been done, and the seed is in the ground, and the world state stirs in a multitude of germinating minds.

II

THE PROJECT OF A WORLD STATE[B]

In this paper, I want to tell you of the idea that now shapes and dominates my public life — the idea of a world politically united — of a world securely and permanently at peace. And I want to say what I have to say, so far as regards the main argument of it, as accurately and plainly as possible, without any eloquence or flourishes.

When I first planned this paper, I chose as the title *The Utopia of a World State*. Well, there is something a little too flimsy and unpracticable about that word Utopia. To most people Utopia conveys the idea of a high-toned political and ethical dream — agreeable and edifying, no doubt, but of no practical value whatever. What I have to talk about this evening is not a bit dreamlike, it is about real dangers and urgent necessities. It is a Project and not a Utopia. It may be a vast and impossible project. It may be a hopeless project. But if it fails our civilization fails. And so I have called this paper not the Utopia but *The Project of a World State.* There are some things that it is almost impossible to tell without seeming to scream and exaggerate, and yet these things may be in reality the soberest matter of fact. I want to say that this civilization in which we are living is tumbling down, and I think tumbling down very fast; that I think rapid enormous efforts will be needed to save it; and that I see no such efforts being made at the present time. I do not know if these words convey any concrete ideas to the reader's mind. There are statements that can open such unfamiliar vistas as to seem devoid of any real practical meaning at all, and this I think may be one of them.

In the past year I have been going about Europe. I have had glimpses of a new phase of this civilization of ours — a new phase that would have sounded like a fantastic dream if one had told about it ten years ago. I have seen a great city that had over two million inhabitants, dying, and dying with incredible rapidity. In 1914 I was in the city of St. Petersburg and it seemed as safe and orderly a great city as yours. I went thither in comfortable and punctual trains. I stayed in an hotel as well equipped and managed as any American

hotel. I went to dine with and visit households of cultivated people. I walked along streets of brilliantly lit and well-furnished shops. It was, in fact, much the same sort of life that you are living here to-day — a part of our (then) world-wide modern civilization.

I revisited these things last summer. I found such a spectacle of decay that it seems almost impossible to describe it to those who have never seen the like. Streets with great holes where the drains had fallen in. Stretches of roadway from which the wood paving had been torn for firewood. Lampposts that had been knocked over lying as they were left, without an attempt to set them up again. Shops and markets deserted and decayed and ruinous. Not closed shops but abandoned shops, as abandoned-looking as an old boot or an old can by the wayside. The railways falling out of use. A population of half a million where formerly there had been two. A strangely homeless city, a city of discomforts and anxieties, a city of want and ill-health and death. Such was Petersburg in 1920.

I know there are people who have a quick and glib explanation of this vast and awe-inspiring spectacle of a great empire in collapse. They say it is Bolshevism has caused all this destruction. But I hope to show here, among other more important things, that Bolshevism is merely a part of this immense collapse — that the overthrow of a huge civilized organization needs some more comprehensive explanation than that a little man named Lenin was able to get from Geneva to Russia at a particular crisis in Russian history. And particularly is it to be noted that this immense destruction of civilized life has not been confined to Russia or to regions under Bolshevik rule. Austria and Hungary present spectacles hardly less desolating than Russia. There is a conspicuous ebb in civilization in Eastern Germany. And even when you come to France and Italy and Ireland there are cities, townships, whole wide regions, where you can say: This has gone back since 1914 and it is still going back in material prosperity, in health, in social order.

Even in England and Scotland, in Holland and Denmark and Sweden, it is hard to determine whether things are stagnant or moving forward or moving back — they are certainly not going ahead as they were before 1913-14. The feeling in England is rather like the feeling of a man who is not quite sure whether he has caught

a slight chill or whether he is in the opening stage of a serious illness.

Now what I want to do here is to theorize about this shadow, this chill and arrest, that seems to have come upon the flourishing and expanding civilization in which all of us were born and reared. I want to put a particular view of what is happening before you, and what it is that we are up against. I want to put before you for your judgment the view that this overstrain and breaking down and stoppage of the great uprush of civilization that has gone on for the past three centuries is due to the same forces and is the logical outcome of the same forces that led to that uprush, to that tremendous expansion of human knowledge and power and life. And that that breaking up is an inevitable thing unless we meet it by a very great effort of a particular kind.

Now the gist of my case is this: That the civilization of the past three centuries has produced a great store of scientific knowledge, and that this scientific knowledge has altered the material scale of human affairs and enormously enlarged the physical range of human activities, but that there has been no adequate adjustment of men's political ideas to the new conditions.

This adjustment is a subtle and a difficult task. It is also a greatly neglected task. And upon the possibility of our making this adjustment depends the issue whether the ebb of civilizing energy, the actual smashing and breaking down of modern civilization, which has already gone very far indeed in Russia and which is going on in most of Eastern and Central Europe, extends to the whole civilized world.

Let me make a very rough and small scale analysis of what is happening to the world to-day. And let us disregard many very important issues and concentrate upon the chief, most typical issue, the revolution in the facilities of locomotion and communication that has occurred to the world and the consequences of that revolution. For the international problem to-day is essentially dependent upon the question of transport and communication — all others are subordinate to that. I shall particularly call your attention to certain wide differences between the American case and the old-world case in this matter.

It is not understood clearly enough at the present time how

different is the American international problem from the European international problem, and how inevitable it is that America and Europe should approach international problems from a different angle and in a different spirit. Both lines of thought and experience do, I believe, lead at last to the world state, but they get there by a different route and in a different manner.

The idea that the government of the United States can take its place side by side with the governments of the old world on terms of equality with those governments in order to organize the peace of the world, is, I believe, a mistaken and unworkable idea. I shall argue that the government of the United States and the community of the United States are things different politically and mentally from those of the states of the old world, and that the rôle they are destined to play in the development of a world state of mankind is essentially a distinctive one. And I shall try to show cause for regarding the very noble and splendid project of a world-wide League of Nations that has held the attention of the world for the past three years, as one that is, at once, a little too much for complete American participation, and not sufficient for the urgent needs of Europe. It is not really so practicable and reasonable a proposition as it seemed at first.

The idea of a world state, though it looks a far greater and more difficult project, is, in the long run, a sounder and more hopeful proposition.

Now let me make myself as clear as I can be about the central idea upon which the whole of the arguments in this lecture rests. It is this: forgive me for a repetition — that there has been a complete alteration in the range and power of human activities in the last hundred years. Men can react upon men with a rapidity and at a distance inconceivable a hundred years ago. This is particularly the case with locomotion and methods of communication generally. I will not remind you in any detail of facts with which you are familiar; how that in the time of Napoleon the most rapid travel possible of the great conqueror himself did not average all over as much as four and a half miles an hour. A hundred and seven miles a day for thirteen days — the pace of his rush from Vilna to Paris after the Moscow disaster — was regarded as a triumph of speed. In those days, too, it was a marvel that by means of semaphores it was

possible to transmit a short message from London to Portsmouth in the course of an hour or so.

Since then we have seen a development of telegraphy that has at last made news almost simultaneous about the world, and a steady increase in the rate of travel until, as we worked it out in the Civil Air Transport Committee in London, it is possible, if not at present practicable, to fly from London to Australia, half way round the earth, in about eight days. I say possible, but not practicable, because at present properly surveyed routes, landing grounds and adequate supplies of petrol and spare parts do not exist. Given those things, that journey could be done now in the time I have stated. This tremendous change in the range of human activities involves changes in the conditions of our political life that we are only beginning to work out to their proper consequences to-day.

It is a curious thing that America, which owes most to this acceleration in locomotion, has felt it least. The United States have taken the railway, the river steamboat, the telegraph and so forth as though they were a natural part of their growth. They were not. These things happened to come along just in time to save American unity. The United States of to-day were made first by the river steamboat, and then by the railway. Without these things, the present United States, this vast continental nation, would have been altogether impossible. The westward flow of population would have been far more sluggish. It might never have crossed the great central plains. It took, you will remember, nearly two hundred years for effective settlement to reach from the coast to the Missouri, much less than half-way across the continent. The first state established beyond the river was the steamboat state of Missouri in 1821. But the rest of the distance to the Pacific was done in a few decades.

If we had the resources of the cinema it would be interesting to show a map of North America year by year from 1600 onward, with little dots to represent hundreds of people, each dot a hundred, and stars to represent cities of a hundred thousand people.

For two hundred years you would see that stippling creeping slowly along the coastal districts and navigable waters, spreading still more gradually into Indiana, Kentucky, and so forth. Then somewhere about 1810 would come a change. Things would get

more lively along the river courses. The dots would be multiplying and spreading. That would be the steamboat. The pioneer dots would be spreading soon from a number of jumping-off places along the great rivers over Kansas and Nebraska.

Then from about 1830 onward would come the black lines of the railways, and after that the little black dots would not simply creep but run. They would appear now so rapidly, it would be almost as though they were being put on by some sort of spraying machine. And suddenly here and then there would appear the first stars to indicate the first great cities of a hundred thousand people. First one or two and then a multitude of cities — each like a knot in the growing net of the railways.

This is a familiar story. I recall it to you now to enforce this point — that the growth of the United States is a process that has no precedent in the world's history; it is a new kind of occurrence. Such a community could not have come into existence before, and if it had it would, without railways, have certainly dropped to pieces long before now. Without railways or telegraph it would be far easier to administer California from Pekin than from Washington. But this great population of the United States of America has not only grown outrageously; it has kept uniform. Nay, it has become more uniform. The man of San Francisco is more like the man of New York to-day than the man of Virginia was like the man of New England a century ago. And the process of assimilation goes on unimpeded. The United States is being woven by railway, by telegraph, more and more into one vast human unity, speaking, thinking, and acting harmoniously with itself. Soon aviation will be helping in the work.

Now this great community of the United States is, I repeat, an altogether new thing in history. There have been great empires before with populations exceeding 100 millions, but these were associations of divergent peoples; there has never been one single people on this scale before. We want a new term for this new thing. We call the United States a country, just as we call France or Holland a country. But really the two things are as different as an automobile and a one-horse shay. They are the creations of different periods and different conditions; they are going to work at a different pace and in an entirely different way. If you propose — as I gather some of the

League of Nations people propose — to push the Peace of the World along on a combination of these two sorts of vehicle, I venture to think the Peace of the World will be subjected to some very considerable strains.

Let me now make a brief comparison between the American and the European situation in relation to these vital matters, locomotion and the general means of communicating. I said just now that the United States of America owe most to the revolution in locomotion and have felt it least. Europe on the other hand owes least to the revolution in locomotion and has felt it most. The revolution in locomotion found the United States of America a fringe of population on the sea margins of a great rich virgin empty country into which it desired to expand, and into which it was free to expand. The steamboat and railway seemed to come as a natural part of that expansion. They came as unqualified blessings. But into Western Europe they came as a frightful nuisance.

The States of Europe, excepting Russia, were already a settled, established and balanced system. They were living in final and conclusive boundaries with no further possibility of peaceful expansion. Every extension of a European state involved a war; it was only possible through war. And while the limits to the United States have been set by the steamship and the railroad, the limits to the European sovereign states were drawn at a much earlier time. They were drawn by the horse, and particularly the coach-horse travelling along the high road. If you will examine a series of political maps of Europe for the last two thousand years, you will see that there has evidently been a definite limit to the size of sovereign states through all that time, due to the impossibility of keeping them together because of the difficulty of intercommunication if they grew bigger. And this was in spite of the fact that there were two great unifying ideas present in men's minds in Europe throughout that period, namely, the unifying idea of the Roman Empire, and the unifying idea of Christendom. Both these ideas tended to make Europe one, but the difficulties of communication defeated that tendency. It is quite interesting to watch the adventures of what is called first the Roman Empire and afterwards the Holy Roman Empire, in a series of historical maps. It keeps expanding and then

dropping to pieces again. It is like the efforts of someone who is trying to pack up a parcel which is much too big, in wet blotting paper. The cohesion was inadequate. And so it was that the eighteenth century found Europe still divided up into what I may perhaps call these high-road and coach-horse states, each with a highly developed foreign policy, each with an intense sense of national difference and each with intense traditional antagonisms.

Then came this revolution in the means of locomotion, which has increased the normal range of human activity at least ten times. The effect of that in America was opportunity; the effect of it in Europe was congestion. It is as if some rather careless worker of miracles had decided suddenly to make giants of a score of ordinary men, and chose the moment for the miracle when they were all with one exception strap-hanging in a street car. The United States was that fortunate exception.

Now this is what modern civilization has come up against, and it is the essential riddle of the modern sphinx which must be solved if we are to live. All the European boundaries of to-day are impossibly small for modern conditions. And they are sustained by an intensity of ancient tradition and patriotic passion.... That is where we stand.

The citizens of the United States of America are not without their experience in this matter. The crisis of the national history of the American community, the war between Union and Secession, was essentially a crisis between the great state of the new age and the local feeling of an earlier period. But Union triumphed. Americans live now in a generation that has almost forgotten that there once seemed a possibility that the map of North America might be broken up at last into as many communities as the map of Europe. Except by foreign travel, the present generation of Americans can have no idea of the net of vexations and limitations in which Europeans are living at the present time because of their political disunion.

Let me take a small but quite significant set of differences, the inconveniences of travel upon a journey of a little over a thousand miles. They are in themselves petty inconveniences, but they will serve to illustrate the net that is making free civilized life in Europe more and more impossible.

Take first the American case. An American wants to travel from

New York to St. Louis. He looks up the next train, packs his bag, gets aboard a sleeper and turns out at St. Louis next day ready for business.

Take now the European parallel. A European wants to travel from London to Warsaw. Now that is a shorter distance by fifty or sixty miles than the distance from New York to St. Louis. Will he pack his bag, get aboard a train and go there? He will not. He will have to get a passport, and getting a passport involves all sorts of tiresome little errands. One has to go to a photographer, for example, to get photographs to stick on the passport. The good European has then to take his passport to the French representative in London for a French visa, or, if he is going through Belgium, for a Belgian visa. After that he must get a German visa. Then he must go round to the Czecho-Slovak office for a Czechoslovak visa. Finally will come the Polish visa.

Each of these endorsements necessitates something vexatious, personal attendance, photography, stamps, rubber stamps, mysterious signatures and the like, and always the payment of fees. Also they necessitate delays. The other day I had occasion to go to Moscow, and I learnt that it takes three weeks to get a visa for Finland and three weeks to get a visa for Esthonia. You see you can't travel about Europe at all without weeks and weeks of preparation. The preparations for a little journey to Russia the other day took three whole days out of my life, cost me several pounds in stamps and fees, and five in bribery.

Ultimately, however, the good European is free to start. Arriving at the French frontier in an hour or so, he will be held up for a long customs' examination. Also he will need to change some of his money into francs. His English money will be no good in France. The exchange in Europe is always fluctuating, and he will be cheated on the exchange. All European countries, including my own, cheat travellers on the exchange — that is apparently what the exchange is for.

He will then travel for a few hours to the German frontier. There he will be bundled out again. The French will investigate him closely to see that he is not carrying gold or large sums of money out of France. Then he will be handed over to the Germans. He will go

through the same business with the customs and the same business with the money. His French money is no further use to him and he must get German. A few more hours and he will arrive on the frontier of Bohemia. Same search for gold. Then customs' examination and change of money again. A few hours more and he will be in Poland. Search for gold, customs, fresh money.

As most of these countries are pursuing different railway policies, he will probably have to change trains and rebook his luggage three or four times. The trains may be ingeniously contrived not to connect so as to force him to take some longer route politically favoured by one of the intervening states. He will be lucky if he gets to Warsaw in four days.

Arrived in Warsaw, he will probably need a permit to stay there, and he will certainly need no end of permits to leave.

Now here is a fuss over a fiddling little journey of 1,100 miles. Is it any wonder that the bookings from London to Warsaw are infinitesimal in comparison with the bookings from New York to St. Louis? But what I have noted here are only the normal inconveniences of the traveller. They are by no means the most serious inconveniences.

The same obstructions that hamper the free movement of a traveller, hamper the movement of foodstuffs and all sorts of merchandise in a much greater degree. Everywhere in Europe trade is being throttled by tariffs and crippled by the St. Vitus' dance of the exchanges. Each of these European sovereign states turns out paper money at its own sweet will. Last summer I went to Prague and exchanged pounds for kroners. They ought to have been 25 to the pound. On Monday they were 180 to the pound: on Friday 169. They jump about between 220 and 150, and everybody is inconvenienced except the bankers and money changers. And this uncertain exchange diverts considerable amounts of money that should be stimulating business enterprise into a barren and mischievous gambling with the circulation.

Between each one of these compressed European countries the movement of food or labour is still more blocked and impeded. And in addition to these nuisances of national tariffs and independent national coinages at every few score miles, Europe is extraordinarily

crippled by its want of any central authority to manage the most elementary collective interests; the control of vice, for example; the handling of infectious diseases; the suppression of international criminals.

Europe is now confronted by a new problem — the problem of air transport. So far as I can see, air transport is going to be strangled in Europe by international difficulties. One can fly comfortably and safely from London to Paris in two or three hours. But the passport preliminaries will take days beforehand.

The other day I wanted to get quickly to Reval in Esthonia from England and back again. The distance is about the same as from Boston to Minneapolis, and it could be done comfortably in 10 or 12 hours' flying. I proposed to the Handley Page Company that they should arrange this for me. They explained that they had no power to fly beyond Amsterdam in Holland; thence it might be possible to get a German plane to Hamburg, and thence again a Danish plane to Copenhagen — leaving about 500 miles which were too complicated politically to fly. Each stoppage would involve passport and other difficulties. In the end it took me five days to get to Reval and seven days to get back. In Europe, with its present frontiers, flying is not worth having. It can never be worth having — it can never be worked successfully — until it is worked as at least a pan-European affair.

All these are the normal inconveniences of the national divisions of Europe in peace time. By themselves they are strangling all hope of economic recovery. For Europe is *not* getting on to its feet economically. Only a united effort can effect that. But along each of the ridiculously restricted frontiers into which the European countries are packed, lies also the possibility of war. National independence means the right to declare war. And so each of these packed and strangulated European countries is obliged, by its blessed independence, to maintain as big an army and as big a military equipment as its bankrupt condition — for we are all bankrupt — permits.

Since the end of the Great War, nothing has been done of any real value to ensure any European country against the threat of war, and nothing will be done, and nothing can be done to lift that threat, so

long as the idea of national independence overrides all other considerations.

And again, it is a little difficult for a mind accustomed to American conditions, to realize what modern war will mean in Europe.

Not one of these sovereign European states I have named between London and Warsaw is any larger than the one single American state of Texas, and not one has a capital that cannot be effectively bombed by aeroplane raiders from its frontier within five or six hours of a declaration of war. We can fly from London to Paris in two or three hours. And the aerial bombs of to-day, I can assure you, will make the biggest bombs of 1918 seem like little crackers. Over all these European countries broods this immediate threat of a warfare that will strain and torment the nerves of every living man, woman or child in the countries affected. Nothing of the sort can approach the American citizen except after a long warning. The worst war that could happen to any North American country would merely touch its coasts.

Now I have dwelt on these differences between America and Europe because they involve an absolute difference in outlook towards world peace projects, towards leagues of nations, world states and the like, between the American and the European.

The American lives in a political unity on the big modern scale. He can go on comfortably for a hundred years yet before he begins to feel tight in his political skin, and before he begins to feel the threat of immediate warfare close to his domestic life. He believes by experience in peace, but he feels under no passionate urgency to organize it. So far as he himself is concerned, he has got peace organized for a good long time ahead. I doubt if it would make any very serious difference for some time in the ordinary daily life of Kansas City, let us say, if all Europe were reduced to a desert in the next five years.

But on the other hand, the intelligent European is up against the unity of Europe problem night and day. Europe cannot go on. European civilization cannot go on, unless that net of boundaries which strangles her is dissolved away. The difficulties created by language differences, by bitter national traditions, by bad political

habits and the like, are no doubt stupendous. But stupendous though they are, they have to be faced. Unless they are overcome, and overcome in a very few years, Europe — entangled in this net of boundaries, and under a perpetual fear of war, will, I am convinced, follow Russia and slide down beyond any hope of recovery into a process of social dissolution as profound and disastrous as that which closed the career of the Western Roman Empire.

The American intelligence and the European intelligence approach this question of a world peace, therefore, from an entirely different angle and in an entirely different spirit. To the American in the blessed ease of his great unbroken territory, it seems a matter simply of making his own ample securities world-wide by treaties of arbitration and such-like simple agreements. And my impression is that he thinks of Europeans as living under precisely similar conditions.

Nothing of that sort will meet the problem of the Old World. The European situation is altogether more intense and tragic than the American. Europe needs not treaties but a profound change in its political ideas and habits. Europe is saturated with narrow patriotism like a body saturated by some evil inherited disease. She is haunted by narrow ambitions and ancient animosities.

It is because of this profound difference of situation and outlook that I am convinced of the impossibility of any common political co-operation to organize a world peace between America and Europe at the present time.

The American type of state and the European type of state are different things, incapable of an effectual alliance; the steam tractor and the ox cannot plough this furrow together. American thought, American individuals, may no doubt play a very great part in the task of reconstruction that lies before Europe, but not the American federal government as a sovereign state among equal states.

The United States constitute a state on a different scale and level from any old world state. Patriotism and the national idea in America is a different thing and a bigger scale thing than the patriotism and national idea in any old world state.

Any League of Nations aiming at stability now, would necessarily be a league seeking to stereotype existing boundaries and existing

national ideas. Now these boundaries and these ideas are just what have to be got rid of at any cost. Before Europe can get on to a level and on to equal terms with the United States, the European communities have to go through a process that America went through — under much easier conditions — a century and a half ago. They have to repeat, on a much greater scale and against profounder prejudices, the feat of understanding and readjustment that was accomplished by the American people between 1781 and 1788.

As you will all remember, these States after they had decided upon Independence, framed certain Articles of Confederation; they were articles of confederation between thirteen nations, between the people of Massachusetts, the people of Virginia, the people of Georgia, and so forth — thirteen distinct and separate sovereign peoples. They made a Union so lax and feeble that it could neither keep order at home nor maintain respect abroad. Then they produced another constitution. They swept aside all that talk about the people of Massachusetts, the people of Virginia, and the rest of their thirteen nations. They based their union on a wider idea: the people of the United States.

Now Europe, if it is not to sink down to anarchy, has to do a parallel thing. If Europe is to be saved from ultimate disaster, Europe has to stop thinking in terms of the people of France, the people of England, the people of Germany, the French, the British, the Germans, and so forth. Europe has to think at least of the people of Europe, if not of the civilized people of the world. If we Europeans cannot bring our minds to that, there is no hope for us. Only by thinking of all peoples can any people be saved in Europe. Fresh wars will destroy the social fabric of Europe, and Europe will perish as nations, fighting.

There are many people who think that there is at least one political system in the old world which, like the United States, is large enough and world wide enough to go on by itself under modern conditions for some considerable time. They think that the British Empire can, as it were, stand out of the rest of the Old World as a self-sufficient system. They think that it can stand out freely as the United States can stand out, and that these two English-speaking powers have merely to agree together to dominate and keep the peace

of the world.

Let me give a little attention to this idea. It is I believe a wrong idea, and one that may be very disastrous to our common English-speaking culture if it is too fondly cherished.

There can be no denying that the British Imperial system is a system different in its nature and size from a typical European state, from a state of the horse and road scale, like France, let us say, or Germany. And equally it is with the United States a new growth. The present British Empire is indeed a newer growth than the United States. But while the United States constitute a homogeneous system and grow more homogeneous, the British Empire is heterogeneous and shows little or no assimilative power. And while the United States are all gathered together and are still very remote from any serious antagonist, the British Empire is scattered all over the world, entangled with and stressed against a multitude of possible antagonists.

I have been arguing that the size and manageability of all political states is finally a matter of transport and communications. They grow to a limit strictly determined by these considerations. Beyond that limit they are unstable. Let us now apply these ideas to the British Empire.

I have shown that the great system of the United States is the creation of the river steamboat and the railway. Quite as much so is the present British Empire the creation of the ocean-going steamship — protected by a great navy.

The British Empire is a modern ocean state just as the United States is a modern continental state. The political and economic cohesion of the British Empire rests upon this one thing, upon the steamship remaining the dominant and secure means of world transport in the future. If the British Empire is to remain sovereign and secure and independent of the approval and co-operation of other states, it is necessary that steamship transport (ocean transport) should remain dominant in peace and invulnerable in war.

Well, that brings us face to face with two comparatively new facts that throw a shadow upon both that predominance and upon that invulnerability. One is air transport; the other the submarine. The possibilities of the ocean-going submarine I will not enlarge upon

now. They will be familiar to everyone who followed the later phases of the Great War.

It must be clear that sea power is no longer the simple and decisive thing it was before the coming of the submarine. The sea ways can no longer be taken and possessed completely. To no other power, except Japan, is this so grave a consideration as it is to Britain.

And if we turn to the possibilities of air-transport in the future we are forced towards the same conclusion, that the security of the British Empire must rest in the future not on its strength in warfare, but on its keeping the peace within and without its boundaries.

I was a member of the British Civil Air Transport Committee, and we went with care and thoroughness into the possibilities and probabilities of the air. My work on that committee convinced me that in the near future the air may be the chief if not the only highway for long-distance mails, for long-distance passenger traffic, and for the carriage of most valuable and compact commodities. The ocean ways are likely to be only the ways for slow travel and for staple and bulky trade.

And my studies on that committee did much to confirm my opinion that in quite a brief time the chief line of military attack will be neither by sea nor land but through the air. Moreover, it was borne in upon me that the chief air routes of the world will lie over the great plains of the world, that they will cross wide stretches of sea or mountainous country only very reluctantly.

Now think of how the British Empire lies with relation to the great sea and land masses of the world. There has been talk in Great Britain of what people have called “all-red air routes,” that is to say, all-British air routes. There are no all-red air routes. You cannot get out of Britain to any other parts of the Empire, unless perhaps it is Canada, without crossing foreign territory. That is a fact that British people have to face and digest, and the sooner they grasp it the better for them. Britain cannot use air ways even to develop her commerce in peace time without the consent and co-operation of a large number of her intervening neighbours. If she embarks single-handed on any considerable war she will find both her air and her sea communications almost completely cut.

And so the British Empire, in spite of its size and its modernity, is not much better off now in the way of standing alone than the other European countries. It is no exception to our generalization that (apart from all other questions) the scale and form of the European states are out of harmony with contemporary and developing transport conditions, and that all these powers are, if only on this account, under one urgent necessity to sink those ideas of complete independence that have hitherto dominated them. It is a life and death necessity. If they cannot obey it they will all be destroyed.

III

THE ENLARGEMENT OF PATRIOTISM TO A WORLD STATE

In my opening argument I have shown the connexion between the present intense political troubles of the world and more particularly of Europe, and the advance in mechanical knowledge during the past hundred and fifty years. I have shown that without a very drastic readjustment of political ideas and habits, there opens before Europe and the world generally, a sure prospect of degenerative conflicts; that without such a readjustment, our civilization has passed its zenith and must continue the process of collapse that has been in progress since August, 1914.

Now this readjustment means an immediate conflict with existing patriotism. We have embarked here upon a discussion in which emotion and passion seem quite unavoidable, the discussion of nationality. At the very outset we bump violently against patriotism as any European understands that word. And it is, I hold, impossible not to bump against European patriotisms. We cannot temporize with patriotism, as one finds it in Europe, and get on towards a common human welfare. The two things are flatly opposed. One or other must be sacrificed. The political and social muddle of Europe at the present time is very largely due to the attempt to compromise between patriotism and the common good of Europe.

Do we want to get rid of patriotism altogether?

I do not think we want to get rid of patriotism, and I do not think we could, even if we wanted to do so. It seems to be necessary to his moral life, that a man should feel himself part of a community, belonging to it, and it belonging to him. And that this community should be a single and lovable reality, inspired by a common idea, with a common fashion and aim.

But a point I have been trying to bring out throughout all this argument so far is this — that when a European goes to the United States of America he finds a new sort of state, materially bigger and materially less encumbered than any European state. And he also finds an intensely patriotic people whose patriotism isn't really the

equivalent of a European patriotism. It is historically and practically a synthesis of European patriotisms. It is numerically bigger. It is geographically ten times as big. That is very important indeed from the point of view of this discussion. And it is synthetic; it is a thing made out of something smaller. People, I believe, talk of 100 per cent. Americans. There is no 100 per cent. American except the Red Indian. There isn't a white man in the United States from whose blood a large factor of European patriotism hasn't been washed out to make way for his American patriotism.

Upon this fact of American patriotism, as a larger different thing than European patriotism, I build. The thing can be done. If it can be done in the Europeans and their descendants who have come to America, it can conceivably be done in the Europeans who abide in Europe. And how can we set about doing it?

America, the silent, comprehensive continent of America, did the thing by taking all the various nationalities who have made up her population and obliging them to live together.

Unhappily we cannot take the rest of our European nations now and put them on to a great virgin continent to learn a wider political wisdom. There are no more virgin continents. Europe must stay where she is....

Now I am told it sometimes helps scientific men to clear up their ideas about a process by imagining that process reversed and so getting a view of it from a different direction. Let us then, for a few moments, instead of talking of the expansion and synthesis of patriotism in Europe, imagine a development of narrow patriotism in America and consider how that case could be dealt with.

Suppose, for instance, there was a serious outbreak of local patriotism in Kentucky. Suppose you found the people of Kentucky starting a flag of their own and objecting to what they would probably call the "vague internationalism" of the stars and stripes. Suppose you found them wanting to set up tariff barriers to the trade of the states round about them. Suppose you found they were preparing to annex considerable parts of the state of Virginia by force, in order to secure a proper strategic frontier among the mountains to the east, and that they were also talking darkly of their need for an outlet to the sea of their very own.

What would an American citizen think of such an outbreak? He would probably think that Kentucky had gone mad. But this, which seems such fantastic behaviour when we imagine it occurring in Kentucky, is exactly what is happening in Europe in the case of little states that are hardly any larger than Kentucky. They have always been so. They have not gone mad; if this sort of thing is madness then they were born mad. And they have never been cured. A state of affairs that is regarded in Europe as normal would be regarded in the United States as a grave case of local mental trouble.

And what would the American community probably do in such a case? It would probably begin by inquiring where Kentucky had got these strange ideas. They would look for sources of infection. Somebody must have been preaching there or writing in the newspapers or teaching mischief in the school. And I suppose the people of the United States would set themselves very earnestly to see that sounder sense was talked and taught to the people of Kentucky about these things.

Now that is precisely what has to be done in the parallel European case. Everywhere in Europe there goes on in the national schools, in the patriotic churches, in the national presses, in the highly nationalized literatures, a unity-destroying propaganda of patriotism. The schools of all the European countries at the present time with scarcely an exception, teach the most rancid patriotism; they are centres of an abominable political infection. The children of Europe grow up with an intensity of national egotism that makes them, for all practical international purposes, insane. They are not born with it, but they are infected with it as soon as they can read and write. The British learn nothing but the glories of Britain and the British Empire; the French are, if possible, still more insanely concentrated on France; the Germans are just recovering from the bitter consequences of forty years of intensive nationalist education. And so on. Every country in Europe is its own *Sinn Fein*, cultivating that ugly and silly obsession of "ourselves alone." "Ourselves alone" is the sure guide to conflict and disaster, to want, misery, violence, degradation and death for our children and our children's children — until our race is dead.

The first task before us in Europe is, at any cost, to release our

children from this nationalist obsession, to teach the mass of European people a little truthful history in which each one will see the past and future of his own country in their proper proportions, and a little truthful ethnology in which each country will get over the delusion that its people are a distinct and individual race. The history teaching in the schools of Europe is at the very core of this business.

But that is only, so to speak, the point of application of great complex influences, the influences that mould us in childhood, the teachings of literature, of the various religious bodies, and the daily reiteration of the press. Before Europe can get on, there has to be a colossal turnover of these moral and intellectual forces in the direction of creating an international mind. If that can be effected then there is hope for Europe and the Old World. If it cannot be effected, then certainly Europe will go down — with its flags nailed to its masts. We are on a sinking ship that only one thing can save. We have to oust these European patriotisms by some greater idea or perish.

What is this greater idea to be?

Now I submit that this greater idea had best be the idea of the World State of All Mankind.

I will admit that so far I have made a case only for teaching the idea of a United States of Europe in Europe. I have concentrated our attention upon that region of maximum congestion and conflict. But as a matter of fact there are no real and effective barriers and boundaries in the Old World between Europe and Asia and Africa. The ordinary Russian talks of "Europe" as one who is outside it. The European political systems flow over and have always overflowed into the greater areas to the east and south. Remember the early empires of Macedonia and Rome. See how the Russian language runs to the Pacific, and how Islam radiates into all three continents. I will not elaborate this case.

When you bear such things in mind, I think you will agree with me that if we are to talk of a United States of Europe, it is just as easy and practicable to talk of a United States of the Old World. And are we to stop at a United States of the Old World?

No doubt the most evident synthetic forces in America at the present time point towards some sort of pan-American unification.

That is the nearest thing. That may come first.

But are we to contemplate a sort of dual world — the New World against the Old?

I do not think that would be any very permanent or satisfactory stopping-place. Why make two bites at a planet? If we work for unity on the large scale we are contemplating, we may as well work for world unity.

Not only in distance but in a score of other matters are London and Rome nearer to New York than is Patagonia, and San Francisco is always likely to be more interesting to Japan than Paris or Madrid. I cannot see any reason for supposing that the mechanical drawing together of the peoples of the world into one economic and political unity is likely to cease — unless our civilization ceases. I see no signs that our present facilities for transport and communication are the ultimate possible facilities. Once we break away from current nationalist limitations in our political ideas, then there is no reason and no advantage in contemplating any halfway house to a complete human unity.

Now after what I have been saying it is very easy to explain why I would have this idea of human unity put before people's minds in the form of a World State and not of a League of Nations.

Let me first admit the extraordinary educational value of the League of Nations propaganda, and of the attempt that has been made to create a League of Nations. It has brought before the general intelligence of the world the proposition of a world law and a world unity that could not perhaps have been broached in any other way.

But is it a league of nations that is wanted?

I submit to you that the word "nations" is just the word that should have been avoided — that it admits and tends to stereotype just those conceptions of division and difference that we must at any cost minimize and obliterate if our species is to continue. And the phrase has a thin and legal and litigious flavour. What loyalty and what devotion can we expect this multiple association to command? It has no unity — no personality. It is like asking a man to love the average member of a woman's club instead of loving his wife.

For the idea of Man, for human unity, for our common blood, for the one order of the world, I can imagine men living and dying, but

not for a miscellaneous assembly that will not mix — even in its name. It has no central idea, no heart to it, this League of Nations formula. It is weak and compromising just where it should be strong — in defining its antagonism to separate national sovereignty. For that is what it aims at, if it means business. If it means business it means at least a super-state overriding the autonomy of existing states, and if it does not mean business then we have no use for it whatever.

It may seem a much greater undertaking to attack nationality and nationalism instead of patching up a compromise with these things, but along the line of independent nationality lies no hope of unity and peace and continuing progress for mankind. We cannot suffer these old concentrations of loyalty because we want that very loyalty which now, concentrates upon them to cement and sustain the peace of all the world. Just as in the past provincial patriotisms have given place to national patriotisms, so now we need to oust these still too narrow devotions by a new unity and a new reigning idea, the idea of one state and one flag in all the earth.

The idea of the World State stands to the idea of the League of Nations much as the idea of the one God of Earth and Heaven stands to a Divine Committee composed of Wodin and Baal and Jupiter and Amon Ra and Mumbo Jumbo and all the other national and tribal gods. There is no compromise possible in the one matter as in the other. There is no way round. The task before mankind is to substitute the one common idea of an overriding world commonweal for the multitudinous ideas of little commonweals that prevail everywhere to-day. We have already glanced at the near and current consequences of our failure to bring about that substitution.

Now this is an immense proposal. Is it a preposterous one? Let us not shirk the tremendous scale upon which the foundations of a world state of all mankind must be laid. But remember, however great that task before us may seem, however near it may come to the impossible, nevertheless, in the establishment of one world rule and one world law lies the only hope of escape from an increasing tangle of wars, from social overstrain, and at last a social dissolution so complete as to end for ever the tale of mankind as we understand mankind.

Personally I am appalled by the destruction already done in the world in the past seven years. I doubt if any untravelled American can realize how much of Europe is already broken up. I do not think many people realize how swiftly Europe is still sinking, how urgent it is to get European affairs put back upon a basis of the common good if civilization is to be saved.

And now, as to the immensity of this project of substituting loyalty to a world commonweal for loyalty to a single egotistical belligerent nation. It is a project to invade hundreds of millions of minds, to attack certain ideas established in those minds and either to efface those ideas altogether or to supplement and correct them profoundly by this new idea of a human commonweal. We have to get not only into the at present intensely patriotic minds of Frenchmen, Germans, English, Irish and Japanese, but into the remote and difficult minds of Arabs and Indians and into the minds of the countless millions of China. Is there any precedent to justify us in hoping that such a change in world ideas is possible?

I think there is. I would suggest that the general tendency of thought about these things to-day is altogether too sceptical of what teaching and propaganda can do in these matters. In the past there have been very great changes in human thought. I need scarcely remind you of the spread of Christianity in Western Europe. In a few centuries the whole of Western Europe was changed from the wild confusion of warring tribes that succeeded the breakdown of the Roman Empire, into the unity of Christendom, into a community with such an idea of unity that it could be roused from end to end by the common idea of the Crusades.

Still more remarkable was the swift transformation in less than a century of all the nations and peoples to the south and west of the Mediterranean, from Spain to Central Asia, into the unity of Islam, a unity which has lasted to this day. In both these cases, what I may call the mental turnover was immense.

I think if you will consider the spread of these very complex and difficult religions, and compare the means at the disposal of their promoters with the means at the disposal of intelligent people to-day, you will find many reasons for believing that a recasting of people's ideas into the framework of a universal state is by no means an

impossible project.

Those great teachings of the past were spread largely by word of mouth. Their teachers had to travel slowly and dangerously. People were gathered together to hear with great difficulty, except in a few crowded towns. Books could be used only sparingly. Few people could read, fewer still could translate, and MSS. were copied with extreme slowness upon parchment. There was no printing, no paper, no post. And except for a very few people there were no schools. Both Christendom and Islam had to create their common schools in order to preserve even a minimum of their doctrine intact from generation to generation. All this was done in the teeth of much bitter opposition and persecution.

Now to-day we have means of putting ideas and arguments swiftly and effectively before people all over the world at the same time, such as no one could have dreamt of a hundred years ago. We have not only books and papers, but in the cinema we have a means of rapid, vivid presentation still hardly used. We have schools nearly everywhere. And here in the need for an overruling world state, and the idea of world service replacing combative patriotism, we have an urgent, a commanding human need. We have an invincible case for this world state and an unanswerable objection to the nationalisms and patriotisms that would oppose it.

Is it not almost inevitable that some of us should get together and begin a propaganda upon modern lines of this organized world peace, without which our race must perish? The world perishes for the want of a common political idea. It is still quite possible to give the world this common political idea, the idea of a federal world state. We cannot help but set about doing it.

So I put it to you that the most important work before men and women to-day is the preaching and teaching, the elaboration and then at last the realization of this Project of the World State. We have to create a vision of it, to make it seem first a possibility and then an approaching reality. This is a task that demands the work and thought of thousands of minds. We have to spread the idea of a Federal World State, as an approaching reality, throughout the world. We can do this nowadays through a hundred various channels. We can do it through the press, through all sorts of literary expression, in our

schools, colleges, and universities, through political mouthpieces, by special organizations, and last, but not least, through the teaching of the churches. For remember that all the great religions of the world are in theory universalist; they may tolerate the divisions of men but they cannot sanction them. We propose no religious revolution, but at most a religious revival. We can spread ideas and suggestions now with a hundred times the utmost rapidity of a century ago.

This movement need not at once intervene in politics. It is a prospective movement, and its special concern will be with young and still growing minds. But as it spreads it will inevitably change politics. The nations, states, and kingdoms of to-day, which fight and scheme against each other as though they had to go on fighting and scheming for ever, will become more and more openly and manifestly merely guardian governments, governments playing a waiting part in the world, while the world state comes of age. For this World State, for which the world is waiting, must necessarily be a fusion of all governments, and heir to all the empires.

So far I have been occupied by establishing a case for the World State. It has been, I fear, rather an abstract discussion. I have kept closely to the bare hard logic of the present human situation.

But now let me attempt very briefly, in the barest outline, some concrete realization of what a World State would mean. Let us try and conceive for ourselves the form a World State would take. I do not care to leave this discussion with nothing to it but a phrase which is really hardly more than a negative phrase until we put some body to it. As it stands World State means simply a politically undivided world. Let us try and carry that over to the idea of a unified organized state throughout the world.

Let us try to imagine what a World Government would be like. I find that when one speaks of a World State people think at once of some existing government and magnify it to world proportions. They ask, for example, where will the World Congress meet; and how will you elect your World President? Won't your World President, they say, be rather a tremendous personage? How are we to choose him? Or will there be a World King? These are very natural questions, at the first onset. But are they sound questions? May they not be a little affected by false analogies? The governing of the whole of the world

may turn out to be *not* a magnified version of governing a part of the world, but a different sort of job altogether. These analogies that people draw so readily from national states may not really work in a world state.

And first with regard to this question of a king or president. Let us ask whether it is probable that the world state will have any single personal head at all?

Is the world state likely to be a monarchy — either an elective short term limited monarchy such as is the United States, or an inherited limited monarchy like the British Empire?

Many people will say, you *must* have a head of the state. But *must* you? Is not this idea a legacy from the days when states were small communities needing a leader in war and diplomacy?

In the World State we must remember there will be no war — and no diplomacy as such.

I would even question whether in such a great modern state as the U.S.A. the idea and the functions of the president may not be made too important. Indeed I believe that question has been asked by many people in the States lately, and has been answered in the affirmative.

The broad lines of the United States constitution were drawn in a period of almost universal monarchy. American affairs were overshadowed by the personality of George Washington, and as you know, monarchist ideas were so rife that there was a project, during the years of doubt and division that followed the War of Independence, for importing a German King, a Prussian Prince, in imitation of the British Monarchy. But if the United States were beginning again to-day on its present scale, would it put so much power and importance upon a single individual as it put upon George Washington and his successors in the White House? I doubt it very much.

There may be a limit, I suggest, to the size and complexity of a community that can be directed by a single personal head. Perhaps that limit may have been passed by both the United States and by the British Empire at the present time. It may be possible for one person to be leader and to have an effect of directing personality in a community of millions or even of tens of millions. But is it possible for one small short-lived individual to get over and affect and make

any sort of contact with hundreds of millions in thousands of towns and cities?

Recently we have watched with admiration and sympathy the heroic efforts of the Prince of Wales to shake hands with and get his smile well home into the hearts of the entire population of the British Empire of which he is destined to become the "golden link." After tremendous exertions a very large amount of the ground still remains to be covered.

I will confess I cannot see any single individual human head in my vision of the World State.

The linking reality of the World State is much more likely to be not an individual but an idea — such an idea as that of a human commonweal under the God of all mankind.

If at any time, for any purpose, some one individual had to step out and act for the World State as a whole, then I suppose the senior judges of the Supreme Court, or the Speaker of the Council, or the head of the Associated Scientific Societies, or some such person, could step out and do what had to be done.

But if there is to be no single head person, there must be at least some sort of assembly or council. That seems to be necessary. But will it be a gathering at all like Congress or the British Parliament, with a Government side and an opposition ruled by party traditions and party ideas?

There again, I think we may be too easily misled by existing but temporary conditions. I do not think it is necessary to assume that the council of the World State will be an assembly of party politicians. I believe it will be possible to have it a real gathering of representatives, a fair sample of the thought and will of mankind at large, and to avoid a party development by a more scientific method of voting than the barbaric devices used for electing representatives to Congress or the British Parliament, devices that play directly into the hands of the party organizer who trades upon the defects of political method.

Will this council be directly elected? That, I think, may be found to be essential. And upon a very broad franchise. Because, *firstly*, it is before all things important that every adult in the world should feel a direct and personal contact between himself and the World State,

and that he is an assenting and participating citizen of the world; and *secondly*, because if your council is appointed by any intermediate body, all sorts of local and national considerations, essential in the business of the subordinate body, will get in the way of a simple and direct regard for the world commonweal.

And as to this council: Will it have great debates and wonderful scenes and crises and so forth — the sort of thing that looks well in a large historical painting? There again we may be easily misled by analogy. One consideration that bars the way to anything of that sort is that its members will have no common language which they will be all able to speak with the facility necessary for eloquence. Eloquence is far more adapted to the conditions of a Red Indian pow-wow than to the ordering of large and complicated affairs. The World Council may be a very taciturn assembly. It may even meet infrequently. Its members may communicate their views largely by *notes* which may have to be very clear and explicit, because they will have to stand translation, and short — to escape neglect.

And what will be the chief organs and organizations and works and methods with which this Council of the World State will be concerned?

There will be a Supreme Court determining *not* International Law, but World Law. There will be a growing Code of World Law.

There will be a world currency.

There will be a ministry of posts, transport and communications generally.

There will be a ministry of trade in staple products and for the conservation and development of the natural resources of the earth.

There will be a ministry of social and labour conditions.

There will be a ministry of world health.

There will be a ministry, the most important ministry of all, watching and supplementing national educational work and taking up the care and stimulation of backward communities.

And instead of a War Office and Naval and Military departments, there will be a *Peace Ministry* studying the belligerent possibilities of every new invention, watching for armed disturbances everywhere, and having complete control of every armed force that remains in the world. All these world ministries will be working in co-operation

with local authorities who will apply world-wide general principles to local conditions.

These items probably comprehend everything that the government of a World State would have to do. Much of its activity would be merely the co-ordination and adjustment of activities already very thoroughly discussed and prepared for it by local and national discussions. I think it will be a mistake for us to assume that the work of a world government will be vaster and more complex than that of such governments as those of the United States or the British Empire. In many respects it will have an enormously simplified task. There will be no foreign enemy, no foreign competition, no tariffs, so far as it is concerned, or tariff wars. It will be keeping order; it will not be carrying on a contest. There will be no necessity for secrecy; it will not be necessary to have a Cabinet plotting and planning behind closed doors; there will be no general policy except a steady attention to the common welfare. Even the primary origin of a World Council must necessarily be different from that of any national government. Every existing government owes its beginnings to force and is in its fundamental nature militant. It is an offensive-defensive organ. This fact saturates our legal and social tradition more than one realizes at first. There is, about civil law everywhere, a faint flavour of a relaxed state of siege. But a world government will arise out of different motives and realize a different ideal. It will be primarily an organ for keeping the peace.

And now perhaps we may look at this project of a World State mirrored in the circumstances of the life of one individual citizen. Let us consider very briefly the life of an ordinary young man living in a World State and consider how it would differ from a commonplace life to-day.

He will have been born in some one of the United States of the World — in New York or California, or Ontario or New Zealand, or Portugal or France or Bengal or Shan-si; but wherever his lot may fall, the first history he will learn will be the wonderful history of mankind, from its nearly animal beginnings, a few score thousand years ago, with no tools, but implements of chipped stone and hacked wood, up to the power and knowledge of our own time. His education will trace for him the beginnings of speech, of writing, of

cultivation and settlement.

He will learn of the peoples and nations of the past, and how each one has brought its peculiar gifts and its distinctive contribution to the accumulating inheritance of our race.

He will know, perhaps, less of wars, battles, conquests, massacres, kings and the like unpleasant invasions of human dignity and welfare, and he will know more of explorers, discoverers and stout outspoken men than our contemporary citizen.

While he is still a little boy, he will have the great outlines of the human adventure brought home to his mind by all sorts of vivid methods of presentation, such as the poor poverty-struck schools of our own time cannot dream of employing.

And on this broad foundation he will build up his knowledge of his own particular state and nation and people, learning not tales of ancient grievances and triumphs and revenges, but what his particular race and countryside have given and what it gives and may be expected to give to the common welfare of the world. On such foundations his social consciousness will be built.

He will learn an outline of all that mankind knows and of the fascinating realms of half knowledge in which man is still struggling to know. His curiosity and his imagination will be roused and developed.

He will probably be educated continuously at least until he is eighteen or nineteen, and perhaps until he is two or three and twenty. For a world that wastes none of its resources upon armaments or soldiering, and which produces whatever it wants in the regions best adapted to that production, and delivers them to the consumer by the directest route, will be rich enough not only to spare the first quarter of everybody's life for education entirely, but to keep on with some education throughout the whole lifetime.

Of course the school to which our young citizen of the world will go will be very different from the rough and tumble schools of to-day, understaffed with underpaid assistants, and having bare walls. It will have benefited by some of the intelligence and wealth we lavish to-day on range-finders and submarines.

Even a village school will be in a beautiful little building costing as much perhaps as a big naval gun or a bombing-aeroplane costs to-

day. I know this will sound like shocking extravagance to many contemporary hearers, but in the World State the standards will be different.

I don't know whether any of us really grasp what we are saying when we talk of greater educational efficiency in the future. That means — if it means anything — teaching more with much less trouble. It will mean, for instance, that most people will have three or four languages properly learnt; that they will think about things mathematical with a quickness and clearness that puzzles us; that about all sorts of things their minds will move in daylight where ours move in a haze of ignorance or in an emotional fog.

This clear-headed, broad-thinking young citizen of the World State will not be given up after his educational years to a life of toil — there will be very little toil left in the world. Mankind will have machines and power enough to do most of the toil for it. Why, between 1914 and 1918 we blew away enough energy and destroyed enough machinery and turned enough good grey matter into stinking filth to release hundreds of millions of toilers from toil for ever!

Our young citizen will choose some sort of interesting work — perhaps creative work. And he will be free to travel about the whole world without a passport or visa, without a change of money; everywhere will be his country; he will find people everywhere who will be endlessly different, but none suspicious or hostile. Everywhere he will find beautiful and distinctive cities, freely expressive of the spirit of the land in which they have arisen. Strange and yet friendly cities.

The world will be a far healthier place than it is now — for mankind as a whole will still carry on organized wars — no longer wars of men against men, but of men against malarias and diseases and infections. Probably he will never know what a cold is, or a headache. He will be able to go through the great forests of the tropics without shivering with fever and without saturating himself with preventive drugs. He will go freely among great mountains; he will fly to the Poles of the earth if he chooses, and dive into the cold, now hidden, deep places of the sea.

But it is very difficult to fill in the picture of his adult life so that it will seem real to our experience. It is hard to conceive and still more

difficult to convey. We live in this congested, bickering, elbowing, shoving world, and it has soaked into our natures and made us a part of itself. Hardly any of us know what it is to be properly educated, and hardly any what it is to be in constant general good health.

To talk of what the world may be to most of us is like talking of baths and leisure and happy things to some poor hopeless, gin-soaked drudge in a slum. The creature is so devitalized; the dirt is so ingrained, so much a second nature, that a bath really isn't attractive. Clean and beautiful clothes sound like a mockery or priggishness. To talk of spacious and beautiful places only arouses a violent desire in the poor thing to get away somewhere and hide. In squalor and misery, quarrelling and fighting make a sort of nervous relief. To multitudes of slum-bred people the prospect of no more fighting is a disagreeable prospect, a dull outlook.

Well, all this world of ours may seem a slum to the people of a happier age. They will feel about our world just as we feel about the ninth or tenth century, when we read of its brigands and its insecurities, its pestilences, its miserable housing, its abstinence from ablutions.

But our young citizen will not have been inured to our base world. He will have little of our ingrained dirt in his mind and heart. He will love. He will love beautifully. As most of us once hoped to do in our more romantic moments. He will have ambitions — for the world state will give great scope to ambition. He will work skilfully and brilliantly, or he will administer public services, or he will be an able teacher, or a mental or physical physician, or he will be an interpretative or creative artist; he may be a writer or a scientific investigator, he may be a statesman in his state, or even a world statesman. If he is a statesman he may be going up perhaps to the federal world congress. In the year 2020 there will still be politics, but they will be great politics. Instead of the world's affairs being managed in a score of foreign offices, all scheming meanly and cunningly against each other, all planning to thwart and injure each other, they will be managed under the direction of an educated and organized common intelligence intent only upon the common good.

Dear! Dear! Dear! Does it sound like rubbish to you? I suppose it does. You think I am talking of a dreamland, of an unattainable

Utopia? Perhaps I am! This dear, jolly old world of dirt, war, bankruptcy, murder and malice, thwarted lives, wasted lives, tormented lives, general ill health and a social decadence that spreads and deepens towards a universal smash — how can we hope to turn it back from its course? How priggish and impracticable! How impertinent! How preposterous! I seem to hear a distant hooting....

Sometimes it seems to me that the barriers that separate man and man are nearly insurmountable and invincible, that we who talk of a world state now are only the pioneers of a vast uphill struggle in the minds and hearts of men that may need to be waged for centuries — that may fail in the end.

Sometimes again, in other moods, it seems to me that these barriers and nationalities and separations are so illogical, so much a matter of tradition, so plainly mischievous and cruel, that at any time we may find the common sense of our race dissolving them away....

Who can see into that darkest of all mysteries, the hearts and wills of mankind? It may be that it is well for us not to know of the many generations who will have to sustain this conflict.

Yes, that is one mood, and there is the other. Perhaps we fear too much. Even before our lives run out we may feel the dawn of a greater age perceptible among the black shadows and artificial glares of these unhappy years.

IV

THE BIBLE OF CIVILIZATION. Part One

§ 1

In my next two papers I am going to discuss and — what shall I say? — experiment with an old but neglected idea, an idea that was first broached I believe about the time when the State of Connecticut was coming into existence and while New York was still the Dutch city of New Amsterdam.

The man who propounded this idea was a certain great Bohemian, Komensky, who is perhaps better known in our western world by his Latinized name Comenius. He professed himself the pupil of Bacon. He was the friend of Milton. He travelled from one European country to another with his political and educational ideas. For a time he thought of coming to America. It is a great pity that he never came. And his idea, the particular idea of his we are going to discuss, was the idea of a common book, a book of history, science and wisdom, which should form the basis and framework for the thoughts and imaginations of every citizen in the world.

In many ways the thinkers and writers of the early seventeenth century seem more akin to us and more sympathetic with the world of to-day, than any intervening group of literary figures. They strike us as having a longer vision than the men of the eighteenth century, and as being bolder — and, how shall I put it? — more desperate in their thinking than the nineteenth century minds. And this closer affinity to our own time arises, I should think, directly and naturally, out of the closer resemblance of their circumstances. Between 1640 and 1650, just as in our present age, the world was tremendously unsettled and distressed. A century and more of expansion and prosperity had given place to a phase of conflict, exhaustion and entire political unsettlement. Britain was involved in the bitter political struggle that culminated in the execution of King Charles I. Ireland was a land of massacre and counter-massacre. The Thirty Years War in Central Europe was in its closing, most dreadful stages of famine and plunder. In France the crown and the nobles were striving desperately for ascendancy in the War of the Fronde. The

Turk threatened Vienna. Nowhere in Western Europe did there remain any secure and settled political arrangements. Everywhere there was disorder, everywhere it seemed that anything might happen, and it is just those disordered and indeterminate times that are most fruitful of bold religious and social and political and educational speculations and initiatives.

This was the period that produced the Quakers and a number of the most vigorous developments of Puritanism, in which the foundations of modern republicanism were laid, and in which the project of a world league of nations — or rather of a world state — received wide attention. And the student of Comenius will find in him an active and sensitive mind responding with a most interesting similarity to our own responses, to the similar conditions of his time. He has been distressed and dismayed — as most of us have been distressed and dismayed — by a rapid development of violence, by a great release of cruelty and suffering in human affairs. He felt none of the security that was felt in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the *certainty* of progress. He realized as we do that the outlook for humanity is a very dark and uncertain one unless human effort is stimulated and organized. He traced the evils of his time to human discords and divisions, to our political divisions, and the mutual misconceptions due to our diversity of languages and leading ideas. In all that he might be writing and thinking in 1921. And his proposed remedies find an echo in a number of our contemporary movements. He wanted to bring all nations to form one single state. He wanted to have a universal language as the common medium of instruction and discussion, and he wanted to create a common Book of Necessary Knowledge, a sort of common basis of wisdom, for all educated men in the world.

Now this last is the idea I would like to develop now. I would like to discuss whether our education — which nowadays in our modern states reaches everyone — whether our education can include and ought to include such a Book of Necessary Knowledge and Wisdom; and (having attempted to answer that enquiry in the affirmative) I shall then attempt a sketch of such a book.

But to begin with perhaps I may meet an objection that is likely to arise. I have called this hypothetical book of ours the Bible of

Civilization, and it may be that someone will say: Yes, but you have a sufficient book of that sort already; you have the Bible itself and that is all you need. Well, I am taking the Bible as my model. I am taking it because twice in history — first as the Old Testament and then again as the Old and New Testament together — it has formed a culture, and unified and kept together through many generations great masses of people. It has been the basis of the Jewish and Christian civilizations alike. And even in the New World the State of Connecticut did, I believe, in its earliest beginnings take the Bible as its only law. Nevertheless, I hope I shall not offend any reader if I point out that the Bible is not all that we need to-day, and that also in some respects it is redundant. Its very virtues created its limitations. It served men so well that they made a Canon of it and refused to alter it further. Throughout the most vital phases of Hebrew history, throughout the most living years of Christian development the Bible changed and grew. Then its growth ceased and its text became fixed. But the world went on growing and discovering new needs and new necessities.

Let me deal first with its redundancy. So far as redundancy goes, a great deal of the Book of Leviticus, for example, seems not vitally necessary for the ordinary citizen of to-day; there are long explicit directions for temple worship and sacrificial procedure. There is again, so far as the latter day citizen is concerned, an excess of information about the minor Kings of Israel and Judah. And there is more light than most of us feel we require nowadays upon the foreign policies of Assyria and Egypt. It stirs our pulses feebly, it helps us only very indirectly to learn that Attai begat Nathan and Nathan begat Zabad, or that Obed begat Jehu and Jehu begat Azariah, and so on for two or three hundred verses.

And so far as deficiencies go, there is a great multitude of modern problems — problems that enter intimately into the moral life of all of us, with which the Bible does not deal, the establishment of American Independence, for example, and the age-long feud of Russia and Poland that has gone on with varying fortunes for four centuries. That is much more important to our modern world than the ancient conflict of Assyria and Egypt which plays so large a part in the old Bible record. And there are all sorts of moral problems

arising out of modern conditions on which the Bible sheds little or no direct light: the duties of a citizen at an election, or the duties of a shareholder to the labour employed by his company, for example. For these things we need at least a supplement, if we are still to keep our community upon one general basis of understanding, upon one unifying standard of thought and behaviour.

We are so brought up upon the Bible, we are so used to it long before we begin to think hard about it, that all sorts of things that are really very striking about it, the facts that the history of Judah and Israel is told twice over and that the gospel narrative is repeated four times over for example, do not seem at all odd to us. How else, we ask, could you have it? Yet these are very odd features if we are to regard the Bible as the compactest and most perfect statement of essential truth and wisdom.

And still more remarkable, it seems to me, is it that the Bible breaks off. One could understand very well if the Bible broke off with the foundation of Christianity. Now this event has happened, it might say, nothing else matters. It is the culmination. But the Bible does not do that. It goes on to a fairly detailed account of the beginnings and early politics of the Christian Church. It gives the opening literature of theological exposition. And then, with that strange and doubtful book, the Revelation of St. John the Divine, it comes to an end. As I say, it leaves off. It leaves off in the middle of Roman imperial and social conflicts. But the world has gone on and goes on — elaborating its problems, encountering fresh problems — until now there is a gulf of upwards of eighteen hundred years between us and the concluding expression of the thought of that ancient time.

I make these observations in no spirit of detraction. If anything, these peculiarities of the Bible add to the wonder of its influence over the lives and minds of men. It has been The Book that has held together the fabric of western civilization. It has been the handbook of life to countless millions of men and women. The civilization we possess could not have come into existence and could not have been sustained without it. It has explained the world to the mass of our people, and it has given them moral standards and a form into which their consciences could work. But does it do that to-day? Frankly, I

do not think it does. I think that during the last century the Bible has lost much of its former hold. It no longer grips the community. And I think it has lost hold because of those sundering eighteen centuries, to which every fresh year adds itself, because of profound changes in the methods and mechanisms of life, and because of the vast extension of our ideas by the development of science in the last century or so.

It has lost hold, but nothing has arisen to take its place. That is the gravest aspect of this matter. It was the cement with which our western communities were built and by which they were held together. And the weathering of these centuries and the acids of these later years have eaten into its social and personal influence. It is no longer a sufficient cement. And — this is the essence of what I am driving at — *our modern communities are no longer cemented*, they lack organized solidarity, they are not prepared to stand shocks and strains, they have become dangerously loose mentally and morally. That, I believe, is the clue to a great proportion of the present social and political troubles of the world. We need to get back to a cement. We want a Bible. We want a Bible so badly that we cannot afford to put the old Bible on a pinnacle out of daily use. We want it re-adapted for use. If it is true that the old Bible falls short in its history and does not apply closely to many modern problems, then we need a revised and enlarged Bible in our schools and homes to restore a common ground of ideas and interpretations if our civilization is to hold together.

Now let us see what the Bible gave a man in the days when it could really grip and hold and contain him; and let us ask if it is impossible to restore and reconstruct a Bible for the needs of these great and dangerous days in which we are living. Can we re-cement our increasingly unstable civilization? I will not ask now whether there is still time left for us to do anything of the sort.

The first thing the Bible gave a man was a Cosmogony. It gave him an account of the world in which he found himself and of his place in it. And then it went on to a general history of mankind. It did not tell him that history as a string of facts and dates, but as a moving and interesting story into which he himself finally came, a story of promises made and destinies to be fulfilled. It gave him a dramatic

relationship to the schemes of things. It linked him to all mankind with a conception of relationships and duties. It gave him a place in the world and put a meaning into his life. It explained him to himself and to other people, and it explained other people to him. In other words, out of the individual it made a citizen with a code of duties and expectations.

Now I take it that both from the point of view of individual happiness and from the point of view of the general welfare, this development of the citizenship of a man, this placing of a man in his own world, is of primary importance. It is the necessary basis of all right education; it is the fundamental purpose of the school, and I do not believe an individual can be happy or a community be prosperous without it. The Bible and the religions based on it gave that idea of a place in the world to the people it taught. But do we provide that idea of a place in the world for our people to-day? I suggest that we do not. We do not give them a clear vision of the universe in which they live, and we do not give them a history that invests their lives with meaning and dignity.

The cosmogony of the Bible has lost grip and conviction upon men's minds, and the ever-widening gulf of years makes its history and its political teaching more and more remote and unhelpful amidst the great needs of to-day. Nothing has been done to fill up these widening gaps. We have so great a respect for the letter of the Bible that we ignore its spirit and its proper use. We do not rewrite and retell Genesis in the light and language of modern knowledge, and we do not revise and bring its history up to date and so apply it to the problems of our own time. So we have allowed the Bible to become antiquated and remote, venerable and unhelpful.

There has been a great extension of what we call education in the past hundred years, but while we have spread education widely, there has been a sort of shrinkage and enfeeblement of its aims. Education in the past set out to make a Christian and a citizen and afterwards a gentleman out of the crude, vulgar, self-seeking individual. Does education even pretend to do as much to-day? It does nothing of the sort. Our young people are taught to read and write. They are taught bookkeeping and languages that are likely to be useful to them. They are given a certain measure of technical education, and *they are*

taught to shove. And then we turn them out into the world to get on. Our test of a college education is — Does it make a successful business man?

Well, this, I take it, is the absolute degradation of education. It is a modern error that education exists for the individual. Education exists for the community and the race; it exists to subdue the individual for the good of the world and his own ultimate happiness.

But we have been letting the essentials of education slip back into a secondary place in our pursuit of mere equipment, and we see the results to-day throughout all the modern states of the world, in a loss of cohesion, discipline and co-operation. Men will not co-operate except to raise prices on the consumer or wages on the employer, and everyone scrambles for a front place and a good time. And they do so, partly no doubt by virtue of an ineradicable factor in them known as Original Sin, but also very largely because the vision of life that was built up in their minds at school and in their homes was fragmentary and uninspiring; it had no commanding appeal for their imaginations, and no imperatives for their lives.

So I put it, that for the opening books of our Bible of Civilization, our Bible translated into terms of modern knowledge, and as the basis of all our culture, we shall follow the old Bible precedent exactly. We shall tell to every citizen of our community, as plainly, simply and beautifully as we can, the New Story of Genesis, the tremendous spectacle of the Universe that science has opened to us, the flaming beginnings of our world, the vast ages of its making and the astounding unfolding, age after age, of Life. We shall tell of the changing climates of this spinning globe and the coming and going of great floras and faunas, mighty races of living things, until out of the vast, slow process our own kind emerged. And we shall tell the story of our race. How through hundreds of thousands of years it won power over nature, hunted and presently sowed and reaped. How it learnt the secrets of the metals, mastered the riddle of the seasons, and took to the seas. That story of our common inheritance and of our slow upward struggle has to be taught throughout our entire community, in the city slums and in the out-of-the-way farmsteads most of all. By teaching it, we restore again to our people the lost basis of a community, a common idea of their place in space and

time.

Then, still following the Bible precedent, we must tell a universal history of man. And though on the surface it may seem to be a very different history from the Bible story, in substance it will really be very much the same history, only robbed of ancient trappings and symbols, and made real and fresh again for our present ideas. It will still be a story of conditional promises, the promises of human possibility, a record of sins and blunders and lost opportunities, of men who walked not in the ways of righteousness, of stiff-necked generations, and of merciful renewals of hope. It will still point our lives to a common future which will be the reward and judgment of our present lives.

You may say that no such book exists — which is perfectly true — and that no such book could be written. But there I think you underrate the capacity of our English-speaking people. It would be quite possible to get together a committee that would give us the compact and clear cosmogony of history that is needed. Some of the greatest, most inspiring books and documents in the world have been produced by Committees: Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the English Translation of the Bible, and the Prayer Book of the English Church are all the productions of committees, and they are all fine and inspiring compilations. For the last three years I have been experimenting with this particular task, and, with the help of six other people, I have sketched out and published an outline of our world's origins and history to show the sort of thing I mean. That *Outline* is, of course, a corrupting mass of faults and minor inaccuracies, but it does demonstrate the possibility of doing what is required. And its reception both in America and England has shown how ready, how greedy many people are, on account of themselves and on account of their children, for an ordered general account of the existing knowledge of our place in space and time. For want of anything better they have taken my *Outline* very eagerly. Far more eagerly would they have taken a finer, sounder and more authoritative work.

In England this *Outline* was almost the first experiment of the kind that has been made — the only other I know of in England, was a very compact General History of the World by Mr. Oscar

Browning published in 1913. But there are several educationists in America who have been at work on the same task. In this matter of a more generalized history teaching, the New World is decidedly leading the Old. The particular problems of a population of mixed origins have forced it upon teachers in the United States.

My friend — I am very happy to be able to call him my friend — Professor Breasted, in conjunction with that very able teacher Professor Robinson, has produced two books, *Ancient Times* and *Mediæval and Modern Times*, which together make a very complete history of civilized man. They do not, however, give a history of life before man, nor very much of human pre-history. Another admirable American summary of history is Doctor Hutton Webster's *History of the Ancient World* together with his *Mediæval and Modern History*. This again is very sparing of the story of primitive man.

But the work of these gentlemen confirms my own experience that it is quite possible to tell in a comprehensible and inspiring outline the whole history of life and mankind in the compass of a couple of manageable volumes. Neither Browning nor Breasted and Robinson, nor Hutton Webster, nor my own effort are very much longer than twice the length of Dickens' novel of *Bleak House*. So there you have it. There is the thing shown to be possible. If it is possible for us isolated workers to do as much then why should not the thing be done in a big and authoritative manner? Why should we not have a great educational conference of teachers, scientific men and historians from all the civilized peoples of the world, and why should they not draft out a standard World History for general use in the world's schools? Why should that draft not be revised by scores of specialists? Discussed and re-discussed? Polished and finished, and made the opening part of a new Bible of Civilization, a new common basis for a world culture?

At intervals it would need to be revised, and it could be revised and brought up to date in the same manner.

Now such a book and such a book alone would put the people of the world upon an absolutely new footing with regard to social and international affairs. They would be told a history coming right up to the Daily Newspaper. They would see themselves and the news of to-day as part of one great development. It would give their lives

significance and dignity. It would give the events of the current day significance and dignity. It would lift their imaginations up to a new level. I say lift, but I mean restore their imaginations to a former level. Because if you look back into the lives of the Pilgrim Fathers, let us say, or into those of the great soldiers and statesmen of Cromwellian England, you will find that these men had a sense of personal significance, a sense of destiny, such as no one in politics or literature seems to possess to-day. They were still in touch with the old Bible. To-day if life seems adventurous and fragmentary and generally aimless it is largely because of this one thing. We have lost touch with history. We have ceased to see human affairs as one great epic unfolding. And only by the universal teaching of Universal History can that epic quality be restored.

You see then the first part of my project for a Bible of Civilization, a rewriting of Genesis and Exodus and Judges and Chronicles in terms of World History. It would be a quite possible thing to do....

Is it worth doing?

And let me add here that when we do get our New Genesis and our new historical books, they will have a great number of illustrations as a living and necessary part of them. For nowadays we can not only have a canonical text, but canonical maps and illustrations. The old Hebrew Bible was merely the written word. Indeed it was not even that, for it was written without vowels. That was not a merit, nor a precedent for us; it was an unavoidable limitation in those days; but under modern conditions there is no reason whatever why we should confine our Bible to words when a drawing or a map can better express the thing we wish to convey. It is one of the great advantages of the modern book over the ancient book that because of printing it can use pictures as well as words. When books had to be reproduced by copyists the use of pictures was impossible. They would have varied with each copying until they became hopelessly distorted....

§ 2

But the cosmological and historical part of the old Bible was merely

the opening, the groundwork upon which the rest was built. Let us now consider what else the Bible gave a man and a community, and what would be the modern form of the things it gave.

The next thing in order that the Bible gave a man and the community to which he belonged was the Law. Rules of Life. Rules of Health. Prescriptions — often very detailed and intimate — of permissible and unpermissible conduct. This also the modern citizen needs and should have: he and she need a book of personal wisdom.

First as to Health. One of the first duties of a citizen is to keep himself in mental and bodily health in order to be fit for the rest of his duties. Now the real Bible, our model, is extremely explicit upon a number of points, upon what constitutes cleanness or uncleanness, upon ablutions, upon what a man or woman may eat and what may not be eaten, upon a number of such points. It was for its times and circumstances a directory of healthy practice. Well, I do not see why the Bible of a Modern Civilization should not contain a book of similarly clear injunctions and warnings — why we should not tell every one of our people what is to be known about self-care.

And closely connected with the care of one's mental and bodily health is sexual morality, upon which again Deuteronomy and Leviticus are most explicit, leaving very little to the imagination. I am all for imitating the wholesome frankness of the ancient book. Where there are no dark corners there is very little fermentation, there is very little foulness or infection. But in nearly every detail and in method and manner, the Bible of our Civilization needs to be fuller and different from its prototype upon these matters. The real Bible dealt with an oriental population living under much cruder conditions than our own, engaged mainly in agriculture, and with a far less various dietary than ours. They had fermented but not distilled liquors; they had no preserved nor refrigerated foods; they married at adolescence; many grave diseases that prevail to-day were unknown to them, and their sanitary problems were entirely different. Generally our New Leviticus will have to be much fuller. It must deal with exercise — which came naturally to those Hebrew shepherds. It must deal with the preservation of energy under conditions of enervation of which the prophets knew nothing. On the other hand our New Leviticus can afford to give much less attention

to leprosy — which almost dominates the health instructions of the ancient law-giver.

I do not know anything very much about the movements in America that aim at the improvement of the public health and at the removal of public ignorance upon vital things. In Britain we have a number of powerful organizations active in disseminating knowledge to counteract the spread of this or that infectious or contagious disease. The War has made us in Europe much more outspoken and fearless in dealing with lurking hideous evils. We believe much more than we did in the curative value of light and knowledge. And we have a very considerable literature of books on — what shall I call it? on Sex Wisdom, which aim to prevent some of that great volume of misery, deprivation and nervous disease due to the prevailing ignorance and secrecy in these matters. For in these matters great multitudes of modern people still live in an ignorance that would have been inconceivable to an ancient Hebrew. In England now the books of such a writer as Dr. Marie Stopes are enormously read, and — though they are by no means perfect works — do much to mitigate the hidden disappointments, discontents, stresses and cruelties of married life. Now I believe that it would be possible to compile a modern Leviticus and Deuteronomy to tell our whole modern community decently and plainly — just as plainly as the old Hebrew Bible instructed its Hebrew population — what was to be known and what had to be done, and what had not to be done in these intimate matters.

But Health and Sex do not exhaust the problems of conduct. There are also the problems of Property and Trade and Labour. Upon these also the old Bible did not hesitate to be explicit. For example, it insisted meticulously upon the right of labour to glean and upon the seller giving a "full measure brimming over," and it prohibited usury. But here again the Bible is extraordinarily unhelpful when we come to modern issues, because its rules and regulations were framed for a community and for an economic system altogether cruder, more limited and less complicated than our own. Much of the Old Testament we have to remember was already in existence before the free use of coined metal. The vast credit system of our days, joint-stock company enterprise and the like, were beyond the imagination

of that time. So too was any anticipation of modern industrialism. And accordingly we live to-day in a world in which neither property nor employment have ever been properly moralized. The bulk of our present social and economic troubles is due very largely to that.

In no matter is this muddled civilization of ours more hopelessly at sixes and sevens than in this matter of the rights and duties of property. Manifestly property is a trust for the community varying in its responsibilities with the nature of the property. The property one has in one's toothbrush is different from the property one has in ten thousand acres of land; the property one has in a photograph of a friend is different from the property one has in some irreplaceable masterpiece of portraiture. The former one may destroy with a good conscience, but not the latter. At least so it seems to me.

But opinions vary enormously on these matters because we have never really worked them out. On the one hand, in this matter of property, we have the extreme individualist who declares that a man has an unlimited right to do what he likes with his own — so that a man who owns a coal mine may just burn it out to please himself or spite the world, or raise the price of coal generally — and on the other hand we have the extreme communist who denies all property and in practice — so far as I can understand his practice — goes on the principle that everything belongs to somebody else or that one is entitled to exercise proprietary rights over everything that does not belong to oneself. (I confess that communistic practice is a little difficult to formulate.) Between these extremists you can find every variety of idea about what one may do and about what one may not do with money and credit and property generally. Is it an offence to gamble? Is it an offence to speculate? Is it an offence to hold fertile fields and not cultivate them? Is it an offence to hold fertile fields and undercultivate them? Is it an offence to use your invested money merely to live pleasantly without working? Is it an offence to spend your money on yourself and refuse your wife more than bare necessities? Is it an offence to spend exorbitant sums that might otherwise go in reproductive investments, to gratify the whims and vanities of your wife? You will find different people answering any of these questions with Yes or No. But it cannot be both Yes and No. There must be a definable Right or Wrong upon all these issues.

Almost all the labour trouble in the world springs directly from our lack of an effective detailed moral code about property. The freedom that is claimed for all sorts of property and exercised by all sorts of property to waste or withhold is the clue to that savage resentment which flares out nowadays in every great labour conflict. Labour is a rebel because property is a libertine.

Now this untilled field of conduct, this moral wilderness of the rights and duties and limitations of property, the Books of the Law in a modern Bible could clear up in the most lucid and satisfying way. I want to get those parts of Deuteronomy and Leviticus written again, more urgently than any other part of the modern Bible. I want to see it at work in the schools and in the law-courts. I admit that it would be a most difficult book to write and that we should raise controversial storms over every verse. But what an excellent thing to have it out, once for all, with some of these rankling problems! What an excellent thing if we could get together a choice group of representative men — strictly rationed as to paper — and get them to set down clearly and exactly just what classes of property they recognized and what limitations the community was entitled to impose upon each sort.

Every country in the world does impose limitations. In Italy you may not export an ancient work of art, although it is your own. In England you may not maltreat your own dog or cat. In the United States, I am told, you may not use your dollars to buy alcohol. Why should we not make all this classification of property and the restraints upon each class of property, systematic and world-wide? If we could so moralize the use of property, if we could arrive at a clear idea of just what use an owner could make of his machinery, or a financier could make of his credit, would there be much left of the incessant labour conflicts of the present time? For if you will look into it, you will find there is hardly ever a labour conflict into which some unsettled question of principle, some unsettled question of the permissible use of property, does not enter as the final and essential dispute.

V

THE BIBLE OF CIVILIZATION. Part Two

§ 3

In the preceding sections we have discussed Genesis and the Historical Books generally as they would appear in a modernized Bible, and we have dealt with the Law. But these are only the foundations and openings of the Bible as we know it. We come now to the Psalms and Proverbs, the Song of Songs, the Book of Job — and the Prophets. What are the modern equivalents of these books?

Well, what were they?

They were the entire Hebrew literature down to about the time of Ezra; they include sacred songs, love songs, a dramatic dialogue, a sort of novel in the Books of Ruth and Esther, and so forth. What would be our equivalent of this part of the Bible to-day? What would be the equivalent for the Bible of a world civilization?

I suppose that it would be the whole world literature.

That, I admit, is a rather tremendous proposition. Are we to contemplate the prospect of a modern Bible in twenty or thirty thousand volumes? Such a vast Bible would defeat its own end. We want a Bible that everyone will know, which will be grasped by the mind of everyone. That is essential to our idea of a Bible as a social cement.

Fortunately our model Bible, as we have it to-day, gives us a lead in this matter. Its contents are classified. We have first of all the canonical books, which are treated as the vitally important books; they are the books, to quote the phrase used in the English prayer book, which are "necessary to salvation." And then we have a collection of other books, the Apocrypha, the books set aside, books often admirable and beautiful, but not essential, good to be read for "example of life and instruction of manners," yet books that everyone need not read and know. Let us take this lead and let us ask whether we can — with the whole accumulated literature of the world as our material — select a bookful or so of matter, of such exceptional value that it would be well for all mankind to read it and know it. This will be our equivalent for the canonical Books. I will

return to that in a moment.

And outside this canonical Book or Books, shall we leave all the rest of literature in a limitless Apocrypha? I am doubtful about that. I would suggest that we make a second intermediate class between the canonical books that everyone in our civilization ought to read and the outer Apocrypha that you may read or not as you choose. This intermediate class I would call the Great Books of the World. It would not be a part of our Bible, but it would come next to our Bible. It would not be what one must read but only what it is desirable the people should read.

Now this canonical literature we are discussing is to be the third vital part of our modern Bible. I conceive of it as something that would go into the hands of every man and woman in that coming great civilization which is the dream of our race. Together with the Book of World History and the Book of Law and Righteousness and Wisdom that I have sketched out to you, and another Book of which I shall have something to say later, this canonical literature will constitute the intellectual and moral cement of the World Society, that intellectual and moral cement for the want of which our world falls into political and social confusion and disaster to-day. Upon such a basis, upon a common body of ideas, a common moral teaching and the world-wide assimilation of the same emotional and æsthetic material, it may still be possible to build up humanity into one co-operative various and understanding community.

Now if we bear this idea of a cementing function firmly in mind, we shall have a criterion by which to judge what shall be omitted from and what shall be included in the Books of Literature in this modern Bible of ours. We shall begin, of course, by levying toll upon the Old and New Testaments. I do not think I need justify that step. I suppose that there will be no doubt of the inclusion of many of the Psalms — but I question if we should include them all — and of a number of splendid passages from the Prophets. Should we include the Song of Songs? I am inclined to think that the compilers of a new Bible would hesitate at that. Should we include the Book of Job? That I think would be a very difficult question indeed for our compilers. The Book of Job is a very wonderful and beautiful discussion of the profound problem of evil in the world. It is a

tremendous exercise to read and understand, but is it universally necessary? I am disposed to think that the Book of Job, possibly with the illustrations of Blake, would not make a part of our Canon but would rank among our Great Books. It is a part of a very large literature of discussion, of which I shall have more to say in a moment. So too I question if we should make the story of Ruth or the story of Esther fundamental teaching for our world civilization. Daniel, again, I imagine relegated to the Apocrypha. But to this I will return later.

The story of the Gospels would, of course, have been incorporated in our Historical Book, but in addition as part of our first canon, each of the four gospels — with the possible omission of the genealogies — would have a place, for the sake of their matchless directness, simplicity and beauty. They give a picture, they convey an atmosphere of supreme value to us all, incommunicable in any other form or language. Again there is a great wealth of material in the Epistles. It is, for example, inconceivable that such a passage as that of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians— "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not charity I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal" — the whole of that wonderful chapter — should ever pass out of the common heritage of mankind.

So much from the Ancient Bible for our modern Bible, all its inspiration and beauty and fire. And now what else?

Speaking in English to an English-speaking audience one name comes close upon the Bible, Shakespear. What are we going to do about Shakespear? If you were to waylay almost any Englishman or American and put this project of a modern Bible before him, and then begin your list of ingredients with the Bible and the whole of Shakespear, he would almost certainly say, "Yes, Yes."

But would he be right?

On reflection he might perhaps recede and say "Not the whole of Shakespear," but well, *Hamlet*, *The Tempest*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. But even these! Are they "generally necessary to salvation"? We run our minds through the treasures of Shakespear as we might run our fingers through the contents of a box of very precious and beautiful jewels — before equipping a youth for battle.

No. These things are for ornament and joy. I doubt if we could have a single play — a single scene of Shakespear's in our Canon. He goes altogether into the Great Books, all of him; he joins the aristocracy of the Apocrypha. And, I believe, nearly all the great plays of the world would have to join him there. Euripides and Sophocles, Schiller and Ibsen. Perhaps some speeches and such-like passages might be quoted in the Canon, but that is all.

Our Canon, remember, is to be the essential cementing stuff of our community and nothing more. If once we admit merely beautiful and delightful things, then I see an overwhelming inrush of jewels and flowers. If we admit *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, then I must insist that we also admit such lovely nonsense as

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan A stately pleasure dome decree, Where Alph the sacred river ran Through caverns measureless to man Down to a sunless sea....

Our Canon I am afraid cannot take in such things, and with the plays we must banish also all the novels; the greater books of such writers as Cervantes, Defoe, Dickens, Fielding, Tolstoi, Hardy, Hamsun, that great succession of writers — they are all good for "example of life and instruction of manners," and to the Apocrypha they must go. And so it is that since I would banish *Romeo and Juliet*, I would also banish the Song of Songs, and since I must put away *Vanity Fair* and the *Shabby Genteel Story*, I would also put away *Esther* and *Ruth*. And I find myself most reluctant to exclude not any novels written in English, but one or two great sweeping books by non-English writers. It seems to me that Tolstoi's *War and Peace* and Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil* are books on an almost Biblical scale, that they deal with life so greatly as to come nearest to the idea of a universally inspiring and illuminating literature which underlies the idea of our Canon. If we put in any whole novels into the Canon I would plead for these. But I will not plead now even for these. I do not think any novels at all can go into our modern Bible, as whole works. The possibility of long passages going in, is of course, quite a different matter.

And passing now from great plays and great novels and romances, we come to the still more difficult problem of great philosophical and critical works. Take *Gulliver's Travels* — an intense, dark, stirring

criticism of life and social order — and the *Dialogues of Plato*, full of light and inspiration. In these latter we might quarry for beautiful passages for our Canon, but I do not think we could take them in as wholes, and if we do not take them in as complete books, then I think that Semitic parallel to these Greek dialogues, The Book of Job, must stand not in our Canon, but in the Great Book section of our Apocrypha.

And next we have to consider all the great Epics in the world. There again I am for exclusion. This Bible we are considering must be universally available. If it is too bulky for universal use it loses its primary function of a moral cement. We cannot include the *Iliad*, the Norse Sagas, the *Æneid* or *Paradise Lost* in our Canon. Let them swell the great sack of our Apocrypha, and let the children read them if they will.

When one glances in this fashion over the accumulated literary resources of mankind it becomes plain that our canonical books of literature in this modern Bible of ours can be little more than an Anthology or a group of Anthologies. Perhaps they might be gathered under separate heads, as the 'Book of Freedom,' the 'Book of Justice,' the 'Book of Charity.' And now having done nothing as yet but reject, let me begin to accept. Let me quote a few samples of the kind of thing that I imagine would best serve the purpose of our Bible and that should certainly be included.

Here are words that every American knows by heart already — I would like every man in the world to know them by heart and to repeat them. It is Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and I will not spare you a word of it:

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave

men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion. That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

And here is something that might perhaps make another short chapter in the same Book of Freedom — but it deals with Freedom of a different sort:

Out of the night that covers me Black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be For my unconquerable soul. In the fell clutch of circumstance I have not winced nor cried aloud, Under the bludgeonings of Chance, My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this Place of wrath and tears, Looms but the Horror of the Shade, And yet the Menace of the years Finds and shall find me Unafraid. It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the Master of my Fate, I am the Captain of my Soul.

That, as you know, was Henley's, and as I turned up his volume of poems to copy out that poem I came again on these familiar lines:

The ways of Death are soothing and serene, And all the words of Death are grave and sweet, From camp and church, the fireside and the street, She beckons forth — and strife and song have been.

A summer's night descending cool and green, And dark on daytime's dust and stress and heat, The ways of Death are soothing and serene, And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

There seems something in that also which I could spare only very reluctantly from a new Bible in the world. Yet I tender those lines very doubtfully. For I am not a very cultivated and well-read person, and note only the things that have struck upon my mind; but I quite understand that there must be many things of the same sort, but

better, that I have never encountered, or that I have not heard or read under circumstances that were favourable to their proper appreciation. I would rather say about what I am quoting in this section, not positively "this thing," but merely "this sort of thing."

And in the vein of "this sort of thing" let me quote you — again for the Book of Freedom — a passage from Milton, defending the ancient English tradition of free speech and free decision and praising London and England. This London and England of which he boasts have broadened out as the idea of Jerusalem has broadened out, to world-wide comprehensions. Let no false modesty blind us to our great tradition; you and I are still thinking in Milton's city; we continue, however unworthily, the great inheritance of the world-wide responsibility and service, of His Englishmen. Here is my passage:

"Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in His Church, even to the reforming of reformation itself; what does He then but reveal Himself to His servants, and as His manner is, first to His Englishmen? I say, as His manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of His counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with His protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers working, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.

"What could a man require more from a nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a nation of prophets, of sages, and of worthies? We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much

writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding, which God hath stirred up in this city. What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-deputed care of their religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligencies to join and unite into one general and brotherly search after truth; could we but forego this prelatical tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as Pyrrhus did, admiring the Roman docility and courage: 'If such were my Epirots, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a church or kingdom happy.'

"Yet these are the men cried out against for schismatics and sectaries, as if, while the temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort of irrational men, who could not consider there must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world: neither can every piece of the building be of one form; nay, rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportional, arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure."

But I will not go on turning over the pages of books and reciting prose and poetry to you. I cannot even begin to remind you of the immense treasure of noble and ennobling prose and verse that this world has accumulated in the past three thousand years. Not one soul in ten thousand that is born into this world even tastes from that store. For most of mankind now that treasure is as if it had never

been. Is it too much to suggest that we should make some organized attempt to gather up the quintessence of literature now, and make it accessible to the masses of our race? Why should we not on a large scale with a certain breadth and dignity set about compiling the Poetic Books, the Books of Inspiration for a renewed Bible, for a Bible of Civilization? It seems to me that such a Book made universally accessible, made a basis of teaching everywhere could set the key of the whole world's thought.

§ 4 Today

There remains one other element if we are to complete the parallelism of the old Bible and the new. The Christian Bible ends with a forecast, the Book of Revelation; the Hebrew Bible ended also with forecasts, the Prophets. To that the old Bible owed much of its magic power over men's imaginations and the inspiration it gave them. It was not a dead record, not an accumulation of things finished and of songs sung. It pointed steadily and plainly to the Days to Come as the end and explanation of all that went before. So too our Modern Bible, if it is to hold and rule the imagination of men, must close I think with a *Book of Forecasts*. We want to make our world think more than it does about the consequences of the lives it leads and the political deeds that it does and that it permits to be done. We want to turn the human imagination round again towards the future which our lives create. We want a collection and digest of forecasts and warnings to complete this modern Bible of ours. Now here I think you will say — and I admit with perfect reason — that I am floating away from any reasonable possibility at all. How can we have forecasts and prophecies of things that are happening now? Well, I will make a clean breast of it, and admit that I am asking for something that may be impossible. Nevertheless it is something that is very necessary if men are to remain indeed intelligent co-operating communities. In the past you will find where there have been orderly and successful communities the men in them had an idea of a Destiny, of some object, something that would amount to a criterion and judgment upon their collective conduct. Well, I believe that we

have to get back to something of that sort.

We have statesmen and politicians who profess to guide our destinies. Whither are they guiding our destinies?

Surely they have some idea. The great American statesmen and the great European statesmen are making To-morrow. What is the To-morrow they are making?

They must have some idea of it. Otherwise they must be imposters. I am loth to believe them imposters, mere adventurers who have blundered into positions of power and honour with no idea of what they are doing to the world. But if they have an idea of what they are doing to the world, they foresee and intend a Future. That, I take it, is sound reasoning and the inference is plain.

They ought to write down their ideas of this Future before us. It would be helpful to all of us. It might be a very helpful exercise for them. It is, I think, reasonable for Americans to ask the great political personages of America, the president and so forth, for example: whether they think the United States will stand alone in twenty-five years' time as they stand alone now? Or whether they think that there will be a greater United States — of all America — or of all the world? They must know their own will about that. And it is equally reasonable to ask the great political personages of the British Empire: what will Ireland be in twenty-five years' time? What will India be? There must be a plan, an intended thing. Otherwise these men have no intentions; otherwise they must be, in two words, dangerous fools. The sooner we substitute a type of man with a sufficient foresight and capable of articulate speech in the matter, the better for our race.

And again every statesman and every politician throughout the world says that the relations of industrial enterprise to the labour it employs are unsatisfactory. Yes. But how are those relations going to develop? How do they mean them to develop?

Are we just drifting into an unknown darkness in all these matters with blind leaders of our blindness? Or cannot a lot of these things be figured out by able and intelligent people? I put it to you that they can. That it is a reasonable and proper thing to ask our statesmen and politicians: what is going to happen to the world? What sort of better social order are you making for? What sort of world order are you creating? Let them open their minds to us, let them put upon

permanent record the significance of all their intrigues and manœuvres. Then as they go on we can check their capacity and good faith. We can establish a control at last that will rule presidents and kings.

Now the answer to these questions for statesmen is what I mean by a *Book of Forecasts*. Such a book I believe is urgently needed to help our civilization. It is a book we ought all to possess and read. I know you will say that such a *Book of Forecasts* will be at first a preposterously insufficient book — that every year will show it up and make it more absurd. I quite agree. The first *Book of Forecasts* will be a poor thing. Miserably poor. So poor that people will presently clamour to have it thoroughly revised.

The revised *Book of Forecasts* will not be quite so bad. It will have been tested against realities. It will form the basis of a vast amount of criticism and discussion.

When again it comes to be revised, it will be much nearer possible realities.

I put it to you that the psychology, the mentality of a community that has a *Book of Forecasts* in hand and under watchful revision will be altogether steadier and stronger and clearer than that of a community which lives as we do to-day, mere adventurers, without foresight, in a world of catastrophies and accidents and unexpected things. We shall be living again in a plan. Our lives will be shaped to certain defined ends. We shall fall into place in a great scheme of activities. We shall recover again some or all of the steadfastness and dignity of the old religious life.

§ 5 Today

Let me with this *Book of Forecasts* round off my fantasy. I would picture to you this modern Bible, perhaps two or three times as bulky as the old Bible, and consisting first of

The Historical Books with maps and the like;

The Books of Conduct and Wisdom;

The Anthologies of Poetry and Literature; and finally the

Book of Forecasts, taking the place of the Prophets and

Revelations.

I would picture this revivified Bible to you as most carefully done and printed and made accessible to all, the basis of education in every school, the common platform of all discussion — just as in the past the old Bible used to be. I would ask you to imagine it translated into every language, a common material of understanding throughout all the world.

And furthermore, I imagine something else about this — quite unlike the old Bible — I imagine all of it periodically revised. The historical books would need to be revised and brought up to date, there would be new lights on health and conduct, there would be fresh additions to the anthologies, and there would be Forecasts that would have to be struck out because they were realized or because they were shown to be hopeless or undesirable, and fresh Forecasts would be added to replace them. It would be a Bible moving forward and changing and gaining with human experience and human destiny....

Well, that is my dream of a Bible of Civilization. Have I in any way carried my vision out to you of this little row of four or five volumes in every house, in every life, throughout the world, holding the lives and ideas and imaginations of men together in a net of common familiar phrases and common established hopes?

And is this a mere fantastic talk, or is this a thing that could be done and that ought to be done?

I do not know how it will appear to you, but to me it seems that this book I have been talking about, the Bible of to-day's civilization, is not simply a conceivable possibility, it is a great and urgent need. Our education is, I think, pointless without it, a shell without a core. Our social life is aimless without it, we are a crowd without a common understanding. Only by means of some such unifying instrument, I believe, can we hope to lift human life out of its present dangerous drift towards confusion and disaster.

It is, I think therefore, an urgently desirable undertaking.

It is also a very practicable one. The creation of such a Bible, its printing and its translation, and a propaganda that would carry it into the homes and schools of most of the world, could I think all be achieved by a few hundred resolute and capable people at a cost of

thirty or forty million dollars. That is a less sum than that the United States — in a time when they have no enemy to fear in all the world — are prepared to spend upon the building of what is for them an entirely superfluous and extravagant toy, a great navy.

You may, you probably will, differ very widely upon much that I have here put before you. Let me ask you not to let any of the details of my sketching set you against the fundamental idea, that old creative idea of the Bohemian educationist who was the pupil of Bacon and the friend of Milton, the idea of Komensky, the idea of creating and using a common book, a book of knowledge and wisdom, as the necessary foundation for any enduring human unanimity.

VI

THE SCHOOLING OF THE WORLD

And now I am going on to a review of the broad facts of the educational organization of our present world.

I am myself a very under-educated person. It is a constant trouble to me. Like seeks like in this world. I propose to ask the question whether the whole world is not under-educated, and I warn you in advance that I am going to answer in the affirmative.

I am going to discuss the possibility of raising the general educational level very considerably, and I am going to consider what such a raising of the educational level would mean in human life.

I propose to adopt rather a vulgar, business-like tone about all this. I am going to apply to the human community much the same sort of tests that a manufacturer applies to his factory. His factory has some distinctive product, and when he looks into his affairs he tries to find out whether he gets the utmost quantity of the product, whether he gets the best possible quality of the product, whether he gets it as efficiently and inexpensively as possible, and constantly how he can improve his factory and his processes in all these matters.

Now the human community may be regarded as a concern engaged in the production of human life. And it may be judged very largely by the question whether the human life it produces is abundant and full and intense and beautiful.

Most of the tests that we apply to a state or a city or a period or a nation resolve themselves, you will find, into these questions: —

What was the life it produced? What is the life it produces?

Now I will further assume that as yet the community has little or no control over the raw product, over the life, that is to say, that comes into it. I admit that from at least the time of Plato onward the possibility has been discussed of *breeding* human beings as we do horses and dogs. There is an enormous amount of what is called eugenic literature and discussion to-day. But I will set all that sort of thing aside from our present discussion because I do not think anything of the kind is practicable at the present time.

Quite apart from any other considerations, one has to remember one entire difference between the possible breeding of human beings

and the actual breeding of dogs and horses. We breed dogs and horses for uniformity, for certain very limited specified *points* — speed, scent and the like. But human beings we should have to breed for variety: we cannot specify any particular *points* we want. We want statesmen and poets and musicians and philosophers and swift men and strong men and delicate men and brave men. The qualities of one would be the weaknesses of another.

It is really a false analogy, that between the breeding of men and the breeding of horses and dogs. In the case of human beings we want much more subtle and delicate combinations of qualities. For any practical purposes we do not know what we want nor do we know how to get it. So let us rule that theme out of our present discussion altogether.

And I also propose to rule out another set of topics from this discussion — simply because if we don't do so we shall have more matter than we can handle conveniently in the time at our disposal. I propose to leave out all questions of health and physical welfare. There is, as you know, a vast literature now in existence, concerned with the health and welfare of children before and after birth, concerned with infantile life, with social conditions and social work directed to the production of a vigorous population. I am going to assume here that all that sort of thing is seen to — that it is all right, that somebody is doing that, that we need not trouble for the present about any of those things.

This leaves us with the mental life only of our community and its individuals to consider. On that I propose to concentrate this discussion.

Now the human mind in its opening stages in a civilized community passes through a process which may best be named as *schooling*. And under schooling I would include not only the sort of things that we do to a prospective citizen in the school and the infant school but also anything in the nature of a school-like lesson that is done by the mother or nurse or tutor at home, or by playmates and companions anywhere. Out of this schooling arises the general mental life. It is the structural ground-stuff of all education and thought.

Now what is this *schooling* to do — what is it doing to the new

human being?

Let us recall what our own schooling was.

It fell into two pretty clearly defined parts. We learnt reading and writing, we made a certain study of grammar, the method of language, perhaps we learnt the beginnings of some other language than our own; we learnt some arithmetic and perhaps a little geometry and algebra; we did some drawing. All these things were ways of expression, means of expressing ourselves, means of comprehending our thoughts in terms of other people's minds, and of understanding the expressions of others. That was the basis and substance of our schooling; a training in mental elucidation and in communication with other minds. But also as our schooling went on there was something more; we learnt a little history, some geography, the beginnings of science. This second part of education was not so much expression as *wisdom*. We learnt what was generally known of the world about us and of its past. We entered into the common knowledge and common ideas of the world.

Now, obviously, this *schooling* is merely a specialization and expansion of a parental function.

In the primitive ages of our race the parent, and particularly the mother, out of an instinctive impulse and practical necessity, restrained and showed and taught, and the child, with an instinctive imitativeness and docility, obeyed and learnt. And as the primitive family grew into a tribe, as functions specialized and the range of knowledge widened, this primitive schooling by the mother was supplemented and extended by the showing of things by companions and by the maxims and initiations of old men.

It was only with the development of early civilizations, as the mysteries of writing and reading began to be important in life, that the school, *qua* school, became a thing in itself. And as the community expanded, the scope of instruction expanded with it. Schooling is, in fact, and always has been, the expansion and development of the primitive savage mind, which is still all that we inherit, to adapt it to the needs of a larger community. It makes out of the savage raw material which is our basal mental stuff, a citizen. It is a necessary process of fusion if a civilized community is to keep in being. Without at least a network of schooled persons, able to

communicate its common ideas and act in intelligent co-operation, no community beyond a mere family group can ever hold together.

As the human community expands, therefore, the range of schooling must expand to keep pace with it.

I want to base my inquiry upon that proposition. If it is sound, certain very interesting conclusions follow.

I have already shown in the preceding discussions that the *range* of the modern state has increased at least ten times in the past century, and that the scale of our community of intercourse has increased correspondingly. I want now to ask if there has been any corresponding enlargement of the scope of the schooling — either of the community as a whole or of any special governing classes in the community — to keep pace with this tremendous extension of range. I am going to argue that there has not been such an enlargement, and that a large factor in our present troubles is the failure of education and educational method to keep pace with the new demands made upon them.

Now I will first ask what would one like one's son or daughter to get at school to make him or her a full living citizen of this modern world. And at first I will not take into consideration the question of expense or any such practical difficulties. I will suppose that for the education of this fortunate young citizen whose case we are considering we have limitless means, the best possible tutors, the best apparatus and absolutely the most favourable conditions. The only limits to the teaching of this young citizen are his or her own limitations. We suppose a pupil of fair average intelligence only.

Now first we shall want our pupil to understand, speak, read and write the mother tongue well. To do this thoroughly in English involves a fairly sound knowledge of Latin grammar and at least some slight knowledge of the elements of Greek. Latin and Greek, which are disappearing as distinct and separate subjects from many school curricula, are returning as necessary parts of the English course.

But nowadays a full life is not to be lived with a single language. The world becomes polyglot. Even if we do not want to live among foreigners, we want to read their books and newspapers and understand and follow their thought. Few of us there are who would

not gladly read and speak several more languages if we had the chance of doing so. I would therefore set down as a desirable part of this ideal education we are planning, two or three other languages in addition to the mother tongue learnt early and thoroughly. These additional languages can be acquired easily if they are learnt in the right way. The easiest way to learn a language is to learn it when you are quite young. Many prosperous people in Europe nowadays contrive to bring up their children with two or three foreign languages, by employing foreign nurses and nursery governesses who never speak to the children except in the foreign languages. In many cases what is known as the alternate week system prevails. The governess is Swiss and for one week she talks nothing but French and for another nothing but German. In this way the children at the age of eight or nine can be made to talk all three languages with a perfect accent and an easy idiom.

Now, if this can be done for some children it could be done for all children — provided we could find the nurses and governesses or some equivalent for the nurses and governesses, and if we can organize the business efficiently. That point I will defer. I note here simply that the thing is possible, if not practicable.

Children, however, who have made this much start with languages are unable, in England and America at least, to go on properly with the learning of languages when they pass into a school. Our schools are so badly organized that it is rare to find even French well taught, and there is rarely any teaching at all of modern languages other than French or German. Often the two foreign languages are taught by different teachers employing different methods, and both employing a different grammatical nomenclature from that used in studying the mother tongue. The classes are encumbered with belated beginners. The child who has got languages from its governess, therefore, marks time — that is to say, wastes time in these subjects at school. The child well grounded in some foreign tongue is often a source of irritation to the teacher, and gets into trouble because it uses idiomatic expressions with which the teacher is unfamiliar, or seems to reflect upon the teacher's accent. These are the limitations of the school and not the limitations of the pupil. *Given facilities*, there is no reason why there should not be a rapid expansion of the language

syllabus at thirteen or fourteen, and why language generally should not be studied. Some Slavonic language could be taken up — Russian or Czech — and a beginning made with some non-Aryan tongue — Arabic, for example.

The object of language teaching in a civilized state is twofold: to give a thorough, intimate, usable knowledge of the mother tongue and of certain key languages. But if teaching were systematic and no time were wasted, if schooling joined on and were continuous instead of being catastrophically disconnected, there is another side of language teaching altogether — now entirely disregarded — and that is the acquisition *in skeleton* of quite a number of languages clustering round the key languages. If at the end of his schooling a boy knows English, French and German very well and nothing more, he is still a helpless foreigner in relation to large parts of the world. But if, in addition, he has an outline knowledge of Russian and Arabic or Turkish or Hindustani — it need only be a quite bare outline — and if he has had a term or so of Spanish in relation to his French, or Swedish in relation to his German, then he has the key in his hands for almost any language he may want. If he has not the language in his head, he has it very conveniently on call — he needs but a sensible conversation dictionary and in a little while he can possess himself of it.

You may think this a large order; you may think I am demanding linguistic prodigies; but remember that I am upon my own ground here; I am a trained teacher and a student of pedagogic science, and I am a watchful parent; I know how time and opportunity are wasted in school, and particularly in language teaching. Languages are not things that exist in water-tight compartments; each one illuminates the other and — unless it is taught with stupefying stupidity — leads on to others. A child can acquire the polyglot habit almost unawares. This widening grasp of languages is or was within the capacity of nearly everyone born into the world — given the facilities.

I ask you to note that qualification— “given the facilities.”

And now let us turn from the language side to the rest of schooling. A second main division of our schooling was mathematical instruction of a sort. It fell into the three more or less isolated subjects of arithmetic, algebra and Euclid. We carried on in

these closed cells what was, I now perceive, a needlessly laborious and needlessly muddled struggle to comprehend quantity, series and form.

In all these matters, looking back upon what I was taught, comparing it with what I now know, and comparing my mind with the minds of more fortunate individuals, I cannot resist the persuasion that I was very badly done indeed in this section. And it is small consolation to me to note that most people's minds seem to be no better done than mine.

My arithmetic, for instance, is mediocre. It is pervaded by inaccuracy. You may say that this is probably want of aptitude. Partly, no doubt, but not altogether. What is want of aptitude? Bad as my arithmetic is now it is not so bad as it was when I left school. When I was about twenty I held a sort of inquest upon it and found out a number of things. I found that I had been allowed to acquire certain bad habits and besetting sins — most people do. For instance, when I ran up a column of figures to add them I would pass from nine to seven quite surely and say sixteen; but if I went from seven to nine I had a vicious disposition to make it eighteen. Endless additions went wrong through that one error. I had fumbled into this vice and — this is my point — my school had no apparatus, and no system of checks, to discover that this had occurred. I used to get my addition wrong and I used to be punished — stupidly — by keeping me in from exercise. Time after time this happened; there was no investigation and no improvement. Nobody ever put me through a series of test sums that would have analysed my errors and discovered these besetting sins of mine that led to my inaccurate arithmetic.

And another thing that made my arithmetic wrong was a defect in eyesight. My two eyes haven't quite the same focal length and this often puts me out of the straight with a column of figures. But there was nothing in my school to discover that, and my school never did discover it.

My geometrical faculties are also very poor and undeveloped. Euclid's elements, indeed, I have always found simple and straightforward, but when it comes to anything in solid geometry — the intersection of a sphere by a cone, let us say, or something of that

sort — I am hopelessly at sea. Deep-seated habits of faulting and fogging, which were actually developed by my schooling, prevent my forming any conception of the surfaces involved.

Here again, just as with the language teaching, hardly any of us are really fully educated. We suffer, nearly all of us, from a lack of quantitative grasp and from an imperfect grasp of form. Few of us have acquired such a grasp. Few of us ever made a proper use of models, and nearly all of us have miserably trained hands. *Given proper facilities* — and here again I ask you to note that proviso — given proper educational facilities, most of us would not only be able to talk with most people in the world but we should also have a conception of form and quantity far more subtle than that possessed by any but a few mathematicians and mechanical geniuses to-day.

Let me now come to a third main division of what we call *schooling*. In our schooling there was an attempt to give us a view of the world about us and a view of our place in it, under the headings of History and Geography.

It would be impossible to imagine a feebler attempt. The History and Geography I had was perhaps, in one respect, the next best thing to a good course. It was so thoroughly and hopelessly bad that it left me with a vivid sense of ignorance. I read, therefore, with great avidity during my adolescence.

In English schools now I doubt if the teaching of history is much better than it was in my time, but geography has grown and improved — largely through the vigorous initiative of Professor Huxley, who replaced the old dreary topography by a vivid description of the world and mingled with it a sort of *general elementary science* under the name of Physiography. This subject, with the addition of some elementary Biology and Physiology does now serve to give many young people in Great Britain something like a general view of the world as a whole. We need now to make a parallel push with the teaching of history. Upon this matter of the teaching of history I am a fanatic. I cannot think of an education as even half done until there has been a fairly sound review of the whole of the known past, from the beginnings of the geological record up to our own time. Until that is done, the pupil has not been *placed* in the world. He is incapable of understanding his relationship

to and his rôle in the scheme of things. He is, whatever else he may have learnt, essentially an ignorant person.

And now let me recapitulate these demands I have made upon the process of schooling — this process of teaching that begins in the nursery and ends about the age of sixteen or seventeen. I have asked that it should involve a practical mastery of three or four languages, including the mother tongue, and that perhaps four or five other additional languages shall have been studied, so to speak, in skeleton. I have added mathematics carried much higher and farther than most of our schools do to-day. I have demanded a sound knowledge of universal history, a knowledge of general physical and general biological science, and I have thrown in, with scarcely a word of apology, a good training of the eyes and hands in drawing and manual work.

So far as the pupil goes, I submit this is an entirely practicable proposal. It can be done, I am convinced, with any ordinary pupil of average all-round ability, given — what is now almost universally wanting — the proper educational facilities. And now I will go on to examine the question of why these facilities are wanting. I want to ask why a large class, if not the whole of our population, is not educated up to the level of wide understanding and fully developed capacity such a schooling as I have sketched out implies.

Well, the first fact obvious to every parent who has ever enquired closely into the educational outlook of his offspring, the first fact we have to face is this: there are not enough properly equipped schools and, still more, not enough good teachers, to do the job. It is proclaiming no very profound secret to declare that there is hardly such a thing in the world to-day as a fully equipped school, that is to say a school having all the possible material and apparatus and staffed sufficiently with a bright and able teacher, a really live and alert educationist, in every necessary subject, such as would be needed to give this ideal education. That is the great primary obstacle, that is the core of our present problem. We cannot get our modern community educated to anything like its full possibilities as yet because we have neither the teachers nor the schools.

Now is this a final limitation?

For a moment I will leave the question of the possibilities of more

and better equipped schools on one side. I will deal with the supply of teachers. At present we do not even attempt to get good teachers; we do not offer any approach to a tolerable life for an ordinary teacher; we compel them to lead mean and restricted lives; we underpay them shockingly; we do not deserve nearly such good teachers as we get. But even supposing we were to offer reasonable wages for teachers; an average all-round wage of £1,000 a year or so, and respect and dignity; it does not follow that we should get as many as we should need — using the methods that are in use to-day — to provide this ideal schooling for most of our population, or, indeed, for any large section of our population.

You will note a new proviso creeping in at this point— "using the methods that are used to-day."

Because you must remember it is not simply a matter of payment that makes the teacher. Teachers are born and not made. Good teaching requires a peculiar temperament and distinctive aptitudes. I doubt very much, even if you could secure the services of every human being who had the natural gifts needed in a good teacher, if you could disregard every question of cost and payment, I doubt whether even then you would command the services of more than one passable teacher for a hundred children and of more than one really inspired and inspiring teacher for five hundred children. No doubt you could get *a sort of teacher* for every score or even for every dozen children, a commonplace person who could be trained to do a few simple educational things, but I am speaking now of good teachers who have the mental subtlety, the sympathy and the devotion necessary for efficient teaching by the individualistic methods in use to-day. And since, *using the methods that are used to-day*, you can only hope to secure fully satisfactory results with one teacher to every score of pupils, or fewer, and since it is unlikely we shall ever be able to command the services of more than a tithe of the people who could teach well, it seems that we come up here against an insurmountable obstacle to an educated population.

Now I want to press home the idea of that difficulty. I am an old and seasoned educationist; most of my earliest writings are concealed in the anonymity of the London educational papers of a quarter of a century ago, and my knowledge of educational literature is fairly

extensive. I know in particular the literature of educational reform. And I do not recall that I have ever encountered any recognition of this fundamental difficulty in the way of educational development. The literature of educational reform is always assuming parents of limitless intelligence, sympathy and means, employing teachers of limitless energy and capacity. And that to an extreme degree is what we haven't got and what we can never hope to have.

Educational reformers seem always to be looking at education from the point of view of the individual scholastic enterprise and of the individual pupil, and hardly ever from the point of view of a public task dealing with the community as a whole. For all practical purposes this makes waste paper of a considerable proportion of educational literature. This literature, the reader will find, is pervaded by certain fixed ideas. There is a sort of standing objection to any *machining* of education. There is, we are constantly told, to be no syllabus of instruction, no examinations and no controls, no prescribed text-books or diagrams because these things limit the genius of the teacher. And this goes on with a blissful invincible disregard of the fact that in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of the thousand the genius of the teacher isn't and can't be there. And also of the fact that this affair of elementary education has in its essentials been done over and over and over again for thousands of millions of times. There ought to be as much scope left for genius and originality in ordinary teaching as there is for genius and originality in a hen laying an ordinary egg.

These educational idealists are always disregarding the fundamental problem of educational organization altogether, the problem of economy, economy of the most precious thing of all, *teaching power*. It is the problem of stretching the competent teacher over the maximum number of pupils, and that can be done only by the same methods of economy that are practised in every other large-scale production — by the standardization of everything that can be standardized, and by the use of every possible time and labour-saving device and every possible replacement of human effort, not in order to dispense with originality and initiative but in order to conserve them for application at their points of maximum efficiency.

I have said that a disregard of the possibilities of wide

organization and its associated economy of effort is characteristic of most "advanced" educational literature. You will, if you will examine them, find that disregard working out to its natural consequences in what are called the "advanced" schools that appeal to educationally anxious parents nowadays. You will find that these places, often very picturesque and pleasing-looking places, are rarely prosperous enough to maintain more than one or two good teachers. The rest of the staff shrinks from scrutiny. You will find these schools adorned with attractive diagrams drawn by the teachers, and strikingly original models and apparatus made by the teachers, and if you look closely into the matter or consult an intelligent pupil, you will find there are never enough diagrams and apparatus to see a course through. If you press that matter you will find that they haven't had time to make them so far. And they will never get so far. No school, however rich and prosperous and however enthusiastically run, can hope to make for itself all the plant and diagrams and apparatus needed for a fully efficient modern education such as we have sketched out. As well might a busy man hope to array himself, by his own efforts, with hats, suits and boots made by himself out of wool and raw hides.

But now I think you will begin to see what I am driving at. It is this: that if the general level of education is to be raised in our modern community, and if that better education is to be spread over most of our community, it is necessary to reorganize education in the world upon entirely bolder, more efficient, and more economical lines. We are inexorably limited as to the number of good teachers we can get into the educational organization, and we are limited as inexorably as to the quality of the rank and file of our teaching profession; but we are not limited in the equipment and systematic organization of teaching methods and apparatus. That is what I want particularly to enlarge upon now.

Think of the ordinary schoolhouse — a mere empty brick building with a few hat-pegs, a stale map or so, half a dozen plaster casts, a few hundred tattered books, a blackboard, and some broken chemical apparatus: think of it as the dingy insufficiency it is! In such a place the best teacher must needs waste three-fourths of his energies. In such a place staff and pupils meet chiefly to waste each other's time.

This is the first and principal point at which we can stanch the wastage of teaching energy that now goes on. Everywhere about the world nowadays, the schoolhouse is set up and equipped by a private person or a local authority in more or less complete ignorance of educational possibilities, in more or less complete disconnectedness, without any of the help or any of the economy that comes from a centralized mass production. Let us now consider what we might have in the place of this typical schoolhouse of to-day.

Let me first suggest that every school should have a complete library of very full and explicit lesson notes, properly sorted and classified. All the ordinary subjects in schools have been taught over and over again millions and millions of times. Few people, I think, realize that, and fewer still realize the reasonable consequences of that. Human minds are very much the same everywhere, and the best way of teaching every ordinary school subject, the best possible lesson and the best possible succession of lessons, ought to have been worked out to the last point, and the courses ought to have been stereotyped long ago. Yet if you go into any school to-day, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred you will find an inexpert and ill-prepared young teacher giving a clumsy, vamped-up lesson as though it had never been given before. He or she will have no proper notes and no proper diagrams, and a halting and faulty discourse will be eked out by feeble scratchings with chalk on a blackboard, by querulous questioning of the pupils, and irrelevancies. The thing is preposterous.

And linked up with this complete equipment of proper lesson notes upon which the teacher will give the lessons, there should be a thing which does not exist at present in any school and which ought to exist in every school, a collection of some hundreds of thousands of pictures and diagrams, properly and compactly filed; a copious supply of maps, views of scenery, pictures of towns, and so forth for teaching geography, diagrams and tables for scientific subjects, and so on and so on. You must remember that if the schools of the world were thought of as a whole and dealt with as a whole, these things could be produced wholesale at a cost out of comparison cheaper than they are made to-day. There is no reason whatever why school equipment should not be a world market. A lesson upon the

geography of Sweden needs precisely the same maps, the same pictures of scenery, types of people, animals, cities, and so forth, whether that lesson is given in China or Peru or Morocco or London. There is no reason why these pictures and maps should not be printed from the same blocks and distributed from the same centre for the schools of all mankind. If the government of any large country had the vigour and intelligence to go right ahead and manufacture a proper equipment of notes and diagrams for its own use in all its own schools, it would probably be able to recoup itself for most of the outlay by dominating the map and diagram markets of the rest of the world.

And next to this full and manageable collection of pictures and diagrams, which the teacher would whip out, with the appropriate notes, five minutes before his lesson began, the modern school would have quite a considerable number of gramophones. These would be used not only to supply music for drill and so forth, and for the analytical study of music, but for the language teaching. Instead of the teacher having to pretend, as he usually pretends now, to a complete knowledge of the foreign language he can really only smatter, he would become the honest assistant of the real teaching instrument — the gramophone. Here, again, it is a case for big methods or none — a case for mass production. A mass production of gramophone records for language teaching throughout the world would so reduce the cost that every school could quite easily be equipped with a big repertory of language records. For the first year of any language study, at any rate, the work would go always to the accompaniment of the proper accent and intonation. And all over the world each language would be taught with the same accent and quantities and idioms — a very desirable thing indeed.

And now let me pass on to another requirement for an efficient school that our educational organization has still to discover — the method of using the cinematograph. I ask for half a dozen projectors or so in every school, and for a well-stocked storehouse of films. The possibilities of certain branches of teaching have been altogether revolutionized by the cinematograph. In nearly every school nowadays you will find a lot of more or less worn and damaged scientific apparatus which is supposed to be used for demonstrating

the elementary facts of chemistry, physics and the like. There is a belief that the science teachers — and they do their best with the time and skill and material at their disposal — rig up experimental displays of the more illuminating experimental facts with this damaged litter. Many of us can recall the realities of the sort of demonstration I mean. The performance took two or three hours to prepare, an hour to deliver and an hour or so to clear away; it was difficult to follow, impossible to repeat, it usually went wrong, and almost invariably the teacher lost his temper. These practical demonstrations occurred usually in the opening enthusiasm of the term. As the weeks wore on, the pretence of practical teaching was quietly dropped, and we crammed our science out of the text-book.

Now that is the sort of thing that still goes on. But it ought to be entirely out of date. All that scientific bric-a-brac in the cupboard had far better be thrown away. All the demonstration experiments that science teachers will require in the future can be performed once for all — before a cinematograph. They can be done *finally*; they need never be done again. You can get the best and most dexterous teacher in the world — he can do what has to be done with the best apparatus, in the best light; anything that is very minute or subtle you can magnify or repeat from another point of view; anything that is intricate you can record with extreme slowness; you can show the facts a mile off or six inches off, and all that your actual class teacher need do now is to spend five minutes on getting out the films he wants, ten minutes in reading over the corresponding lecture notes, and then he can run the film, give the lesson, question his class upon it, note what they miss and how they take it, run the film again for a second scrutiny, and get out for the subsequent study of the class the ample supply of diagrams and pictures needed to fix the lesson. Can there be any comparison between the educational efficiency of the two methods?

So I put it to you, that it is possible now to make — and that the world needs badly that we should make — a new sort of school, a standardized school, a school richly equipped with modern apparatus and economizing the labour of teaching to an extent at present undreamt of, in which, all over the world, the same stereotyped lessons, leading the youth of the whole world through a parallel

course of schooling, can be delivered.

I know that in putting this before you I challenge some of the most popular affectations of cultivated people. I know that many people will be already writhing with a genteel horror at the idea of the same lesson being given in identical terms to everybody in turn throughout the world. It sounds monotonous. It will rob the world of variety — and so on and so on. But indeed it will not be monotonous at all. That lesson will be new and fresh and good to every pupil who receives it. And remember it is by our hypothesis the best possible form and arrangement of that lesson. It is to take the place of a sham lesson or no lesson at all. There is an eternal freshness in learning as in all the other main things in life. It will be no more monotonous than having one's seventh birthday or falling in love for the first time.

And as for variety, I for one do not care how soon every possible variety of ignorance and misconception is banished from the world. The sun shines on the whole world and it is the same sun. I have still to be persuaded that our planet would be more various and interesting if it were lit by two or three thousand uncertain, spasmodic and differently coloured searchlights directed upon it from every direction. I am pleading for a clear white light of education that shall go like the sun round the whole world.

You see that in all this I am driving at — what shall I call it? — syndicated schools, syndicated lesson notes, and, so far as equipment goes, mass production. I want to see the sort of thing happening to schools that has already happened to many sorts of retail shops. In the place of little ill-equipped schools, each run by its own teacher and buying its own books and diagrams and material and so forth in small quantities at high prices, I want to see a great central organization, employing teachers of genius, working in consultation and co-operation and producing lesson notes, diagrams, films, phonograph records, cheaply, abundantly, on a big scale for a nation, or a group of nations, or, if you like, for all the world, just as America produces watches and alarum clocks and cheap automobiles for all the world. And I want to see the schools of the world being run, so far as the intellectual training goes, not by local committees but by that *central organization*.

It is only by this reorganization of schooling upon the lines of big production that we can hope to get a civilized community in the world at an educational level very markedly higher than the existing educational level.

But if we could so economize teaching energy — if we made our really great teachers, by the use of modern appliances, teachers not of handfuls but of millions; if we insisted upon a universal application of the best and most effective methods of teaching, just as we insist upon the best and most effective methods of street traction and town lighting — then I believe it would be possible to build the civilization of the years to come on a foundation of mental preparation incomparably sounder and higher than anything we know of to-day.

VII

COLLEGE, NEWSPAPER AND BOOK

And now let us go on to the next stages of education.

The schooling process is a natural phase in human development — it is our elaboration of the natural learning of boyhood and girlhood and of adolescence. There was schooling before schools; there was schooling before humanity. I have watched a cat schooling her kittens. Schooling is a part of being young. And we grow up. So there comes a time when schooling is over, when the process of equipment gives place to an increasing share in the activities and decisions of adult life.

Nevertheless for us education must still go on.

I suppose that the savage or the barbarian or the peasant in any part of the world or the uneducated man anywhere would laugh if you told him that the adult must still learn. But in our modern world — I mean the more or less civilized world of the last twenty-five centuries or so — there has grown up a new idea — new, I mean, in the sense that it runs counter to the life scheme of primitive humanity and of most other living things — and that is *the idea that one can go on learning right up to the end of life*. It marks off modern man from all animals, that in his adult life he can display a sense that there remains something still to be investigated and wisdom still to be acquired.

I do not know enough history to tell you with any confidence when adult men, instead of just going about the business of life after they had grown up, continued to devote themselves to learning, to a deliberate prolongation of what is for all other animals an adolescent phase. But by the time of Buddha in India and Confucius in China and the schools of the philosophers in the Greek world the thing was in full progress. That was twenty-six centuries ago or more.

Something of the sort may have been going on in the temples of Egypt or Samaria a score of centuries before. I do not know. You must ask some such great authority as Professor Breasted about that. It may be fifty or a hundred centuries since men, although they were fully grown up, still went on trying to learn.

The idea of adult learning has spread ever since. To-day I suppose

most educated people would agree that so long as we live we learn and ought to learn — that we ought to develop our ideas and enlarge, correct and change our ideas.

But even to-day you will find people who have not yet acquired this view. You will find even teachers and doctors and business men who are persuaded that they had learnt all that there was to learn by twenty-five or thirty. It is only quite recently that this idea has passed beyond a special class and pervaded the world generally — the idea of everyone being a life-long student and of the whole world becoming, as it were, a university for those who have passed beyond the schooling stage.

It has spread recently because in recent years the world has changed so rapidly that the idea of settling down for life has passed out of our minds, has given place to a new realization of the need of continuous adaptation to the very end of our days. It is no good settling down in a world that, on its part, refuses to do anything of the sort.

But hitherto, before these new ideas began to spread in our community, the mass of men and women definitely *settled down*. At twelve, or fifteen, or sixteen, or twenty it was decided that they should stop learning. It has only been a rare and exceptional class hitherto that has gone on learning throughout life. The scene and field of that learning hitherto has been, in our Western communities, the University. Essentially the University is and has been an organization of adult learning as distinguished from preparatory and adolescent learning.

But between the phase of schooling and the phase of adult learning there is an intermediate stage.

In Scotland and America that is distinguished and thought of clearly as the *college stage*. But in England, where we do not think so clearly, this college stage is mixed up with and done partly at school and partly in the University. It is not marked off so definitely from the stage of general preparation that precedes it or from the stage of free intellectual enterprise that follows it.

Now what should college give the young citizen, male or female, upon the foundation of schooling we have already sketched out? In practice we find a good deal of technical study comes into the college

stage. The budding lawyer begins to read law, the doctor starts his professional studies, the future engineer becomes technical, and the young merchant sets to work, or should do, to study the great movements of commerce and business method and organization.

As the college stage of those who do not, as a matter of fact, go to college, we have now in every civilized country the evening continuation school, the evening technical school and the works school.

But important as these things are from the point of view of service, they are not the *soul* — not the real meaning of the college stage.

The soul of the college stage, the most important value about it, is that in it is a sort of preparatory pause and inspection of the whole arena of life. It is the educational concomitant of the stage of adolescence.

The young man and the young woman begin to think for themselves, and the college education is essentially the supply of stimulus and material for that process.

It was in the college stage that most of us made out our religion and made it real for ourselves. It was then we really took hold of social and political ideas, when we became alive to literature and art, when we began the delightful and distressful enterprise of finding ourselves.

And I think most of us will agree when we look back that the most real thing in our college life was not the lecturing and the lessons — very much of that stuff could very well have been done in the schooling stage — but the arguments of the debating society, the discussions that broke out in the classroom or laboratory, the talks in one's rooms about God and religion, about the state and freedom, about art, about every possible and impossible social relationship.

Now in addition to that I had something else in my own college course — something of the same sort of thing but better.

I have spoken of myself as under-educated. My schooling was shocking but, as a blessed compensation, my college stage was rather exceptionally good. My schooling ended when I was thirteen. My father, who was a professional cricketer, was smashed up by an accident, and I had three horrible years in employment in shops.

Then my luck changed and I found myself under one of the very greatest teachers of his time, Professor Huxley. I worked at the Royal College of Science in London for one year under him in his great course in zoology, and for a year and a half under a very good but rather uninspiring teacher, Professor Judd, the geologist. I did also physics and astronomy. Altogether I had three full years of science study. And the teaching of biology at that time, as Huxley had planned it, was a continuing, systematic, illuminating study of life, of the forms and appearances of life, of the way of life, of the interplay of life, of the past of life and the present prospect of life. It was a tremendous training in the sifting of evidence and the examination of appearances.

Every man is likely to be biassed, I suppose, in favour of his own educational course. Yet it seems to me that those three years of work were educational — that they gave a vision of the universe as a whole and a discipline and a power such as no other course, no classical or mathematical course I have ever had a chance of testing, could do.

I am so far a believer in a biological backbone for the college phase of education that I have secured it for my sons and I have done all I can to extend it in England. Nevertheless, important as that formal college work was to me, it still seems to me that the informal part of our college life — the talk, the debates, the discussion, the scampering about London to attend great political meetings, to hear William Morris on Socialism, Auberon Herbert on Individualism, Gladstone on Home Rule, or Bradlaugh on Atheism — for those were the lights of my remote student days — was about equally important.

If schooling is a training in expression and communication, college is essentially the establishment of broad convictions. And in order that they may be established firmly and clearly, it is necessary that the developing young man or woman should hear all possible views and see the medal of truth not only from the obverse but from the reverse side.

Now here again I want to put the same sort of questions I have put about schooling.

Is the college stage of our present educational system anywhere

near its maximum possible efficiency? And could it not be extended from its present limited range until it reached practically the whole adolescent community?

Let me deal with the first of these questions first.

Could we not do much more than we do to make the broad issues of various current questions plain and accessible to our students in the college stage?

For example, there is a vast discussion afoot upon the questions that centre upon Property, its rights and its limitations. There is a great literature of Collectivist Socialism and Guild Socialism and Communism. About these things our young people must know. They are very urgent questions; our sons and daughters will have to begin to deal with them from the moment they leave college. Upon them they must form working opinions, and they must know not only what they themselves believe but, if our public affairs are not to degenerate into the squalid, obstinate, hopeless conflicts of prejudiced adherents, they must know also what is believed by other people whose convictions are different from theirs.

You may want to hush these matters up. Many elderly people do. You will fail.

All our intelligent students will insist upon learning what they can of these discussions and forming opinions for themselves. And if the college will not give them the representative books, a fair statement of the facts and views, and some guidance through the maze of these questions, it means merely that they will get a few books in a defiant or underhand way and form one-sided and impassioned opinions.

Another great set of questions upon which the adolescent want to judge for themselves, and ought to judge for themselves, are the religious questions.

And a third group are those that determine the principles of sexual conduct.

I know that in all these matters, on both sides of the Atlantic, a great battle rages between dogma and concealment on the one hand and open ventilation on the other.

Upon the issue I have no doubt. I find it hard even to imagine the case for the former side.

So long as *schooling* goes on, the youngster is immature, needs to

be protected, is not called upon for judgments and initiatives, and may well be kept under mental limitations. I do not care very much how you censor or select the reading and talking and thinking of the schoolboy or schoolgirl. But it seems to me that with adolescence comes the right to knowledge and the right of judgment. And that it is the *task and duty* of the college to give matters of opinion in the solid — to let the student walk round and see them from every side.

Now how is this to be done?

I suggest that to begin with we open wide our colleges to propaganda of every sort. There is still a general tendency in universities on both sides of the Atlantic to treat propaganda as infection. For the adolescent it is not — it is a stimulating drug.

Let me instance my own case. I am a man of Protestant origins and with a Protestant habit of mind. But it is a matter of great regret to me that there is no good Roman Catholic propaganda available for my sons in their college life. I would like to have the old Mother Church giving my boys an account of herself and of the part she has played in the history of the world, telling them what she stands for and claims to be, giving her own account of the Mass. These things are interwoven with our past; they are part of us. I do not like them to go into a church and stare like foreigners and strangers at the altar.

And side by side with that Catholic propaganda I would like them to hear an interpretation of religious origins and church history by some non-catholic or sceptical ethnologist. He, too, should be free to tell his story and drive his conclusions home.

But you will find most colleges and most college societies bar religious instruction and discussion. What do they think they are training? Some sort of genteel recluse — or men and women?

So, too, with the discussion of Bolshevism. I do not know how things are in America but in England there has been a ridiculous attempt to suppress Bolshevik propaganda. I have seen a lot of Bolshevik propaganda and it is not very convincing stuff. But by suppressing it, by police seizures of books and papers and the like, it has been invested with a quality of romantic mystery and enormous significance. Our boys and girls, especially the brighter and more imaginative, naturally enough think it must be tremendous stuff to agitate the authorities in this fashion.

At our universities, moreover, the more loutish types of student have been incited to attack and smash up the youths suspected of such reading. This gives it the glamour of high intellectual quality.

The result is that every youngster in the British colleges with a spark of mental enterprise and self-respect is anxious to be convinced of Bolshevik doctrine. He believes in Lenin — because he has been prevented from reading him. Sober collectivists like myself haven't a chance with him.

But you see my conception of the college course? Its backbone should be the study of biology and its substance should be the threshing out of the burning questions of our day.

You may object to this that I am proposing the final rejection of that discipline in classical philosophy which is still claimed as the highest form of college education in the world —— the sort of course that the men take in what is called *Greats* at Oxford. You will accuse me of wanting to bury and forget Aristotle and Plato, Heraclitus and Lucretius, and so forth and so on.

But I don't want to do that — *so far as their thought is still alive*. So far as their thought is still alive these men will come into the discussion of living questions now. If they are Ancients and dead then let them be buried and left to the archæological excavator. If they are still Moderns and alive, I defy you to bury them if you are discussing living questions in a full and honest way. But don't go hunting after them, there are still modern Immortals in the darkness of a forgotten language. Don't make a superstition of them. Let them come hunting after you. Either they are unavoidable if your living questions are fully discussed, or they are irrelevant and they do not matter. That there is a wisdom and beauty in the classics which is incommunicable in any modern language, which obviously neither ennobles nor empowers, but which is nevertheless supremely precious, is a kind of nonsense dear to the second-rate classical don, but it has nothing endearing about it for any other human beings. I will not bother you further with that sort of affectation here.

And this college course I have sketched should, in the modern state, pass insensibly into adult mental activities.

Concurrently with it there will be going on, as I have said, a man's special technical training. He will be preparing himself for a

life of industrialism, commerce, engineering, agriculture, medicine, administration, education or what not. And as with the man, so with the woman. That, too, is a process which in this changing new world of ours can never be completed. Neither of these college activities will ever really leave off. All through his life a man or woman should be confirming, fixing or modifying his or her general opinions; and all the time his or her technical knowledge and power should be consciously increased.

And now let me come to the second problem we opened up in connection with college education — the problem of its extension.

Can we extend it over most or all of a modern population?

I don't think we can, if we are to see it in terms of college buildings, class rooms, tutors, professors and the like. Here again, just as in the case of schooling, we have to raise the neglected problem — neglected so far as education goes — of economy of effort; and we have to look once more at the new facilities that our educational institutions have so far refused to utilize. Our European colleges and universities have a long and honourable tradition that again owes much to the educational methods of the Roman Empire and the Hellenic world. This tradition was already highly developed before the days of printing from movable type, and long before the days when maps or illustrations were printed. The higher education, therefore, was still, as it was in the Stone Age, largely vocal. And the absence of paper and so forth, rendering notebooks costly and rare, made a large amount of memorizing necessary. For that reason the mediæval university teacher was always dividing his subject into firstly and secondly and fourthly and sixthly and so on, so that the student could afterwards tick off and reproduce the points on his fingers — a sort of thumb and finger method of thought — still to be found in perfection in the discourses of that eminent Catholic apologist, Mr. Hilaire Belloc. It is a method that destroys all sense of proportion between the headings; main considerations and secondary and tertiary points get all catalogued off as equivalent numbers, but it was a mnemonic necessity of those vanished days.

And they have by no means completely vanished. We still use the lecture as the normal basis of instruction in our colleges, we still hear discourses in the firstly, secondly and thirdly form, and we still

prefer even a second-rate professor on the spot to the printed word of the ablest teacher at a distance. Most of us who have been through college courses can recall the distress of hearing a dull and inadequate view of a subject being laboriously unfolded in a long series of tedious lectures, in spite of the existence of full and competent text-books. And here again it would seem that the time has come to centralize our best teaching, to create a new sort of wide teaching professor who will teach not in one college but in many, and to direct the local professor to the more suitable task of ensuring by a commentary, by organized critical work, and so forth, that the text-book is duly read, discussed and compared with the kindred books in the college library.

This means that the great teaching professors will not lecture, or that they will lecture only to try over their treatment of a subject before an intelligent audience as a prelude to publication. They may perhaps visit the colleges under their influence, but their basis instrument of instruction will be not a course of lectures but a book. They will carry out the dictum of Carlyle that the modern university is a university of books.

Now the frank recognition of the book and not the lecture as the substantial basis of instruction opens up a large and interesting range of possibilities. It releases the process of learning from its old servitude to place and to time. It is no longer necessary for the student to go to a particular room, at a particular hour, to hear the golden words drop from the lips of a particular teacher. The young man who reads at eleven o'clock in the morning in luxurious rooms in Trinity College, Cambridge, will have no very marked advantage over another young man, employed during the day, who reads at eleven o'clock at night in a bed-sitting-room in Glasgow. The former, you will say, may get commentary and discussion, but there is no particular reason why the latter should not form some sort of reading society with his fellows, and discuss the question with them in the dinner hour and on the way to the works. Nor is there any reason why he should not get tutorial help as a university extension from the general educational organization, as good in quality as any other tutorial help.

And this release of the essentials of a college education from

limitations of locality and time brought about by modern conditions, not only makes it unnecessary for a man to come "up" to college to be educated, but abolishes the idea that his educational effort comes to an end when he goes "down." Attendance at college no longer justifies a claim to education; inability to enter a college is no longer an excuse for illiteracy.

I do not think that our educational and university authorities realize how far the college stage of education has already escaped from the local limitations of colleges; they do not understand what a great and growing volume of adolescent learning and thought, of college education in the highest and best sense of the word, goes on outside the walls of colleges altogether; and on the other they do not grasp the significant fact that, thanks to the high organization of sports and amusements and social life in our more prosperous universities, a great proportion of the youngsters who come in to their colleges never get the realities of a college education at all, and go out into the world again as shallow and uneducated as they came in. And this failure to grasp the great change in educational conditions brought about, for the most part, in the last half-century, accounts for the fact that when we think of any extension of higher education in the modern community we are all too apt to think of it as a great proliferation of expensive, pretentious college buildings and a great multiplication of little teaching professorships, and a further segregation of so many hundreds or thousands of our adolescents from the general community, when as a matter of fact the reality of education has ceased to lie in that direction at all. The modern task is not to multiply teachers *but to exalt and intensify exceptionally good teachers*, to recognize their close relationship with the work of university research — which it is their business to digest and interpret — and to secure the production and wide distribution of books throughout the community.

I am inclined to think that the type of adolescent education, very much segregated in out-of-the-way colleges and aristocratic in spirit, such as goes on now at Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, Holloway, Wellesley and the like, has probably reached and passed its maximum development. I doubt if the modern community can afford to continue it; it certainly cannot afford to extend it very widely.

But as I have pointed out, there has always been a second strand to college education — the technical side, the professional training or apprenticeship. Here there are sound reasons that the student should go to a particular place, to the special museums and laboratories, to the institutes of research, to the hospitals, factories, works, ports, industrial centres and the like where the realities he studies are to be found, or to the studios or workshops or theatres where they practise the art to which he aspires. Here it seems we have natural centres of aggregation in relation to which the college stage of a civilized community, the general adolescent education, the vision of the world as a whole and the realization of the individual place in it, can be organized most conveniently.

You see that what I am suggesting here is in effect that we should take our colleges, so far as they are segregations of young people for general adolescent education, and break them as a cook breaks eggs — and stir them up again into the general intellectual life of the community.

Coupled with that there should, of course, be a proposal to restrict the hours of industrial work or specialized technical study up to the age of twenty, at least, in order to leave time for this college stage in the general education of every citizen of the world.

The idea has already been broached that men and women in the modern community are no longer inclined to consider themselves as ever completely adult and finished; there is a growing disposition and a growing necessity to keep on learning throughout life. In the worlds of research, of literature and art and economic enterprise, that adult learning takes highly specialized forms which I will not discuss now; but in the general modern community the process of continuing education after the college stage is still evidently only at a primitive level of development. There are a certain number of literary societies and societies for the study of particular subjects; the pulpit still performs an educational function; there are public lectures and in America there are the hopeful germs of what may become later on a very considerable organization of adult study in the Lyceum Chautauqua system; but for the generality of people the daily newspaper, the Sunday newspaper, the magazine and the book constitute the only methods of mental revision and enlargement after

the school or college stage is past.

Now we have to remember that the bulk of this great organization of newspapers and periodicals and all the wide distribution of books that goes on to-day are extremely recent things. This new nexus of print has grown up in the lifetime of four or five generations, and it is undergoing constant changes. We are apt to forget its extreme newness in history and to disregard the profound difference in mental conditions it makes between our own times and any former period. It is impossible to believe that thus far it is anything but a sketch and intimation of what it will presently be. It has grown. No man foresaw it; no one planned it. We of this generation have grown up with it and are in the habit of behaving as though this nexus had always been with us and as though it would certainly remain with us. The latter conclusion is almost wilder than the former.

By what we can only consider a series of fortunate accidents, the press and the book world have provided and do provide a necessary organ in the modern world state, an organ for swift general information upon matters of fact and for the rapid promulgation and diffusion of ideas and interpretations. The newspaper grew, as we know, out of the news-letter which in a manuscript form existed before the Roman Empire; it owes its later developments largely to the advertisement possibilities that came with the expansion of the range of trading as the railways and suchlike means of communication developed. Modern newspapers have been described, not altogether inaptly, as sheets of advertisements with news and discussions printed on the back. The extension of book reading from a small class, chiefly of men, to the whole community has also been largely a response to new facilities; though it owes something also to the religious disputes of the last three centuries. The population of Europe, one may say with a certain truth, first learnt to read the Bible, and only afterwards to read books in general. A large proportion of the book publishing in the English language in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries still consisted of sermons and controversial theological works.

Both newspaper and book production began in a small way as the enterprise of free individuals, without anyone realizing the dimensions to which the thing would grow. Our modern press and

book trade, in spite of many efforts to centralize and control it, in spite of Defence of the Realm Acts and the like, is still the production of an unorganized multitude of persons. It is not centralized; it is not controlled. To this fact the nexus of print owes what is still its most valuable quality. Thoughts and ideas of the most varied and conflicting sort arise and are developed and worked out and fought out in this nexus, just as they do in a freely thinking vigorous mind.

I am not, you will note, saying that this freedom is perfect or that the thought process of the print nexus could not go very much better than it does, but I am saying that it has a very considerable freedom and vigour and that so far as it has these qualities it is a very fine thing indeed.

Now many people think that we are moving in the direction of world socialism to-day. Collectivism is perhaps a better, more definite word than socialism, and, so far as keeping the peace goes, and in matters of transport and communication, trade, currency, elementary education, the production and distribution of staples and the conservation of the natural resources of the world go, I believe that the world and the common sense of mankind move steadily towards a world collectivism. But the more co-operation we have in our common interests, the more necessary is it to guard very jealously the freedom of the mind, that is to say, the liberty of discussion and suggestion.

It is here that the Communist regime in Russia has encountered its most fatal difficulty. A catastrophic unqualified abolition of private property has necessarily resulted in all the paper, all the printing machinery, all the libraries, all the news-stalls and book shops, becoming Government property. It is impossible to print anything without the consent of the Government. One cannot buy a book or newspaper; one must take what the Government distributes. Free discussion — never a very free thing in Russia — has now on any general scale become quite impossible. It was a difficulty foreseen long ago in Socialist discussions, but never completely met by the thorough-paced Communist. At one blow the active mental life of Russia has been ended, and so long as Russia remains completely and consistently communist it cannot be resumed. It can only be

resumed by some surrender of paper, printing and book distribution from absolute Government ownership to free individual control. That can only be done by an abandonment of the full rigours of communist theory.

In our western communities the dangers to the intellectual nexus lie rather on the other side. The war period produced considerable efforts at Government control and as a consequence considerable annoyance to writers, much concealment and some interference with the expression of opinion; but on the whole both newspapers and books held their own. There is to-day probably as much freedom of publishing as ever there was. It is not from the western governments that mischief is likely to come to free intellectual activity in the western communities but from the undisciplined individual, and from the incitements to mob violence by propagandist religions and cults against free discussion.

About the American press I know and can say little. I will speak only of things with which I am familiar. I am inclined to think that there has been a considerable increase of deliberate lying in the British press since 1914, and a marked loss of journalistic self-respect. Particular interests have secured control of large groups of papers and pushed their particular schemes in entire disregard of the general mental well-being. For instance, there has recently been a remarkable boycott in the London press of a very able collectivist book, Sir Leo Money's *Triumph of Nationalization*, because it would have interfered with the operation of very large groups which were concerned in getting back public property into private hands on terms advantageous to the latter. It is a book not only important as a statement of a peculiar economic view, but because of the statesmanlike gravity and clearness of its exposition. I do not think it would have been possible to stand between the public and a writer in this way in the years before 1914. A considerable proportion of the industrial and commercial news is now written to an end. The British press has also suffered greatly from the outbreak of social and nationalist rancour arising out of the great war, the inability of the European mind to grasp the Bolshevik issue, and the clumsy blunderings of the Versailles settlement. Quite half the news from Eastern Europe that appears in the London press is now deliberate

fabrication, and a considerable proportion of the rest is rephrased and mutilated to give a misleading impression to the reader.

But people cannot be continuously deceived in this way, and the consequence of this press demoralization has been a great loss of influence for the daily paper. A diminishing number of people now believe the news as it is given them, and fewer still take the unsigned portions of the newspaper as written in good faith. And there has been a consequent enhancement of the importance of signed journalism. Men of manifest honesty, men with names to keep clean, have built up reputations and influence upon the ruins of editorial prestige. The exploitation of newspapers by the adventurers of "private enterprise" in business, has carried with it this immense depreciation in the power and honour of the newspaper.

I am inclined to think that this swamping of a large part of the world's press by calculated falsehood and partisan propaganda is a temporary phase in the development of the print nexus: nevertheless, it is a very great inconvenience and danger to the world. It stands very much in the way of that universal adult education which is our present concern. Reality is horribly distorted. Men cannot see the world clearly and they cannot, therefore, begin to think about it rightly.

We need a much better and more trustworthy press than we possess. We cannot get on to a new and better world without it. The remedy is to be found not, I believe, in any sort of Government control, but in a legal campaign against the one thing harmful — the lie. It would be in the interests of most big advertisers, for most big advertisement is honest; it would be, in the long run, in the interests of the Press; and it would mean an enormous step forward in the general mental clarity of the world if a deliberate lie, whether in an advertisement or in the news or other columns of the press, was punishable — punishable whether it did or did not involve anything that is now an actionable damage. And it would still further strengthen the print nexus and clear the mind of the world if it were compulsory to correct untrue statements in the periodical press, whether they had been made in good faith or not, at least as conspicuously and lengthily as the original statement. I can see no impossibility in the realization of either of these proposals, and no

objection that a really honest newspaper proprietor or advertiser could offer to them. It would make everyone careful, of course, but I fail to see any grievance in that. The sanitary effect upon the festering disputes of our time would be incalculably great. It would be like opening the windows upon a stuffy, overcrowded and unventilated room of disputing people.

Given adequate laws to prevent the cornering of paper or the partisan control of the means of distribution of books and printed matter, I believe that the present freedoms and the unhampered individualism of the world of thought, discussion and literary expression are and must remain conditions essential to the proper growth and activity of a common world mind. On the basis of that sounder education I have sketched in a preceding paper, there is possible such an extension of understanding, such an increase of intelligent co-operations and such a clarification of wills as to dissolve away half the difficulties and conflicts of the present time and to provide for the other half such a power of solution as we, in the heats, entanglements and limitations of our present ignorance, doubt and misinformation can scarcely begin to imagine.

I do not know how far I have conveyed to you in the last two papers my underlying idea of an education not merely intensive but extensive, planned so economically and so ably as to reach every man and woman in the world.

It is a dream not of *individuals educated* — we have thought too much of the individual educated *for* the individual — but of a *world educated* to a pitch of understanding and co-operation far beyond anything we know of to-day, for the sake of all mankind.

I have tried to show that, given organization, given the will for it, such a world-wide education is possible.

I wish I had the gift of eloquence so that I could touch your wills in this matter. I do not know how this world of to-day strikes upon you. I am not ungrateful for the gift of life. While there is life and a human mind, it seems to me there must always be excitements and beauty, even if the excitements are fierce and the beauty terrible and tragic. Nevertheless, this world of mankind to-day seems to me to be a very sinister and dreadful world. It has come to this — that I open my newspaper every morning with a sinking heart, and usually I find

little to console me. Every day there is a new tale of silly bloodshed. Every day I read of anger and hate, oppression and misery and want — stupid anger and oppression, needless misery and want — the insults and suspicions of ignorant men, and the inane and horrible self-satisfaction of the well-to-do. It is a vile world because it is an under-educated world, unreasonable, suspicious, base and ferocious. The air of our lives is a close and wrathful air; it has the closeness of a prison — the indescribable offence of crowded and restricted humanity.

And yet I know that there is a way out.

Up certain steps there is a door to this dark prison of ignorance, prejudice and passion in which we live — and that door is only locked on the inside. It is within our power, given the will for it, given the courage for it — it is within our power to go out. The key to all our human disorder is organized education, comprehensive and universal. The watchword of conduct that will clear up all our difficulties is, the *plain truth*. Rely upon that watchword, use that key with courage and we can go out of the prison in which we live; we can go right out of the conditions of war, shortage, angry scrambling, mutual thwarting and malaise and disease in which we live; we and our kind can go out into sunlight, into a sweet air of understanding, into confident freedoms and a full creative life — for ever.

I do not know — I do not dare to believe — that I shall live to hear that key grating in the lock. It may be our children and our children's children will still be living in this jail. But a day will surely come when that door will open wide and all our race will pass out from this magic prison of ignorance, suspicion and indiscipline in which we now all suffer together.

VIII

THE ENVOY

In the preceding papers I have, with some repetition and much stumbling, set out a fairly complete theory of what men and women have to do at the present time if human life is to go on hopefully to any great happiness and achievement in the days to come. Much of this material was first prepared to be delivered to a lecture audience, and I regret that ill-health has prevented a complete re-writing of these portions. There is more of the uplifted forefinger and the reiterated point than I should have allowed myself in an essay. But this is a loss of grace rather than of clearness. And since I am stating a case and not offering the reader anything professing to be a literary work, I shall not apologise for finally summing up and underlining the chief points of this book.

They are, firstly: that a great change in human conditions has been brought about during the past century, and secondly that a vast task of adaptation, which must be, initially and fundamentally, *mental* adaptation, has to be undertaken by our race. It is a task which politicians, who live from day to day, and statesmen, who live from event to event, may hinder or aid very greatly, but which they cannot be expected to conduct or control. Politicians and statesmen perforce live and work in the scheme of ideas they find about them; the conditions of their activities are made for them. They can be compelled by the weight of public opinion to help it, but the driving force for this great task must come not from official sources but from the steadfast educational pressure of a great and growing multitude of convinced people. In times of fluctuation and dissolving landmarks, the importance of the teacher — using the word in its widest sense — rises with the progressive dissolution of the established order.

The creative responsibility for the world to-day passes steadily into the hands of writers and school teachers, students of social and economic science, professors and poets, editors and journalists, publishers and newspaper proprietors, preachers, every sort of propagandist and every sort of disinterested person who can give time and energy to the reconstruction of the social idea. Human life

will continue to be more and more dangerously chaotic until a world social idea crystallizes out. That — and no existing institution and no current issue — is the primary concern of the present age.

We need, therefore, before all other sorts of organization, educational organizations; we need, before any other sort of work, work of education and enlightenment; we need everywhere active societies pressing for a better, more efficient conduct of public schooling, for a wider, more enlightening school curriculum, for a world-wide linking-up of educational systems, for a ruthless subordination of naval, military and court expenditure to educational needs, and for a systematic discouragement of mischief-making between nation and nation and race and race and class and class. I could wish to see Educational Societies, organized as such, springing up everywhere, watching local bodies in order to divert economies from the educational starvation of a district to other less harmful saving; watching for obscurantism and reaction and mischievous nationalist teaching in the local schools and colleges and in the local press; watching members of parliament and congressmen for evidences of educational good-will or malignity; watching and getting control of the administration of public libraries; assisting, when necessary, in the supply of sound literature in their districts; raising funds for invigorating educational propaganda in poor countries like China and in atrociously educated countries like Ireland, and corresponding with kindred societies throughout the world. I believe such societies would speedily become much more influential than the ordinary political party clubs and associations that now use up so much human energy in the western communities. Subordinating all vulgar political considerations to educational development as the supreme need in the world's affairs, even quite small societies could exercise a powerful decisive voice in a great number of political contests. And an educational movement is more tenacious than any other sort of social or political movement whatever. It trains its adherents. What it wins it holds.

I know that in thus putting all the importance upon educational needs at the present time I shall seem to many readers to be ignoring quite excessively the profound racial, social and economic conflicts that are in progress. I do. I believe we shall never get on with human

affairs until we do ignore them. I offer no suggestion whatever as to what sides people should take in such an issue as that between France and Germany or between Sinn Fein and the British Government, or in the class war. I offer no such suggestion because I believe that all these conflicts and all such current conflicts are so irrational and destructive that it is impossible for a sane man who wishes to serve the world to identify himself with either side in any of them. These conflicts are mere aspects of the gross and passionate stupidity and ignorance and sectionalism of our present world. The class war, the push for and the resistance to some vague reorganization called the Social Revolution — such things are the natural inevitable result of the sordid moral and intellectual muddle of our common ideas about property. The capitalist, the employer, the property-owning class, as a class, have neither the intelligence nor the conscience to comprehend any moral limitations, any limitations whatever but the strong arm of the law, upon what they do with their property. Their black and obstinate ignorance, the clumsy adventurousness they call private enterprise, their unconscious insolence to poor people, their stupidly conspicuous self-indulgence, produce as a necessary result the black hatred of the employed and the expropriated. On one side we have greed, insensibility and incapacity, on the other envy and suffering stung to vindictive revolt: on neither side light nor generosity nor creative will. Neither side has any power to give us any reality we need. Neither side is more than a hate and an aggression. How can one take sides between them?

The present system, *unless it can develop a better intelligence and a better heart*, is manifestly destined to foster fresh wars and to continue wasting what is left of the substance of mankind, until absolute social disaster overtakes us all. And manifestly the revolutionary communist, *at his present level of education*, has neither the plans nor the capacity to substitute any more efficient system for this crazy edifice of ill-disciplined private enterprise that is now blundering to destruction. But at a higher level of intelligence, at a level at which it is possible to define the limitations of private property clearly and to ensure a really loyal and effectual co-operation between individual and state, this issue — this wholly

destructive conflict between the property manipulator and the communist fanatic which is now rapidly wrecking our world — disappears. It disappears as completely as the causes of a murderous conflict between two drunken men will disappear when they are separated and put under a stream of clear cold water.

So it is that, in spite of their apparent urgency, I ask the reader to detach himself from these present conflicts of national politics, of political parties and of the class war as completely as he can; or, if he cannot detach himself completely, then to play such a part in them, regardless of any other consideration, as may be most conducive to a wide-thinking, wide-ranging education upon which we can base a new world order. A resolute push for quite a short period now might reconstruct the entire basis of our collective human life.

In this book I have tried to show what form that push should take, to show that it has a reasonable hope of an ultimate success, and that unless it is made, the outlook for mankind is likely to become an entirely dismal prospect. I put these theses before the reader for his consideration. They are not discursive criticisms of life, not haphazard grumblings at our present discontents, they are offered as the fundamental propositions of an ordered constructive project in which he can easily find a part to play commensurate with his ability and opportunities.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WORLD

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THE WORLD IN SPACE

THE story of our world is a story that is still very imperfectly known. A couple of hundred years ago men possessed the history of little more than the last three thousand years. What happened before that time was a matter of legend and speculation. Over a large part of the civilized world it was believed and taught that the world had been created suddenly in 4004 B.C., though authorities differed as to whether this had occurred in the spring or autumn of that year. This fantastically precise misconception was based upon a too literal interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, and upon rather arbitrary theological assumptions connected therewith. Such ideas have long since been abandoned by religious teachers, and it is universally recognized that the universe in which we live has to all appearances existed for an enormous period of time and possibly for endless time. Of course there may be deception in these appearances, as a room may be made to seem endless by putting mirrors facing each other at either end. But that the universe in which we live has existed only for six or seven thousand years may be regarded as an altogether exploded idea.

The earth, as everybody knows nowadays, is a spheroid, a sphere slightly compressed, orange fashion, with a diameter of nearly 8,000 miles. Its spherical shape has been known at least to a limited number of intelligent people for nearly 2,500 years, but before that time it was supposed to be flat, and various ideas which now seem fantastic were entertained about its relations to the sky and the stars and planets. We know now that it rotates upon its axis (which is about 24 miles shorter than its equatorial diameter) every twenty-four hours, and that this is the cause of the alternations of day and night, that it circles about the sun in a slightly distorted and slowly variable oval path in a year. Its distance from the sun varies between ninety-one and a half millions at its nearest and ninety-four and a half million miles.

"LUMINOUS SPIRAL CLOUDS OF MATTER"
(Nebula photographed 1910)
Photo: G. W. Ritchey

About the earth circles a smaller sphere, the moon, at an average

distance of 239,000 miles. Earth and moon are not the only bodies to travel round the sun. There are also the planets, Mercury and Venus, at distances of thirty-six and sixty-seven millions of miles; and beyond the circle of the earth and disregarding a belt of numerous smaller bodies, the planetoids, there are Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune at mean distances of 141, 483, 886, 1,782, and 1,793 millions of miles respectively. These figures in millions of miles are very difficult for the mind to grasp. It may help the reader's imagination if we reduce the sun and planets to a smaller, more conceivable scale.

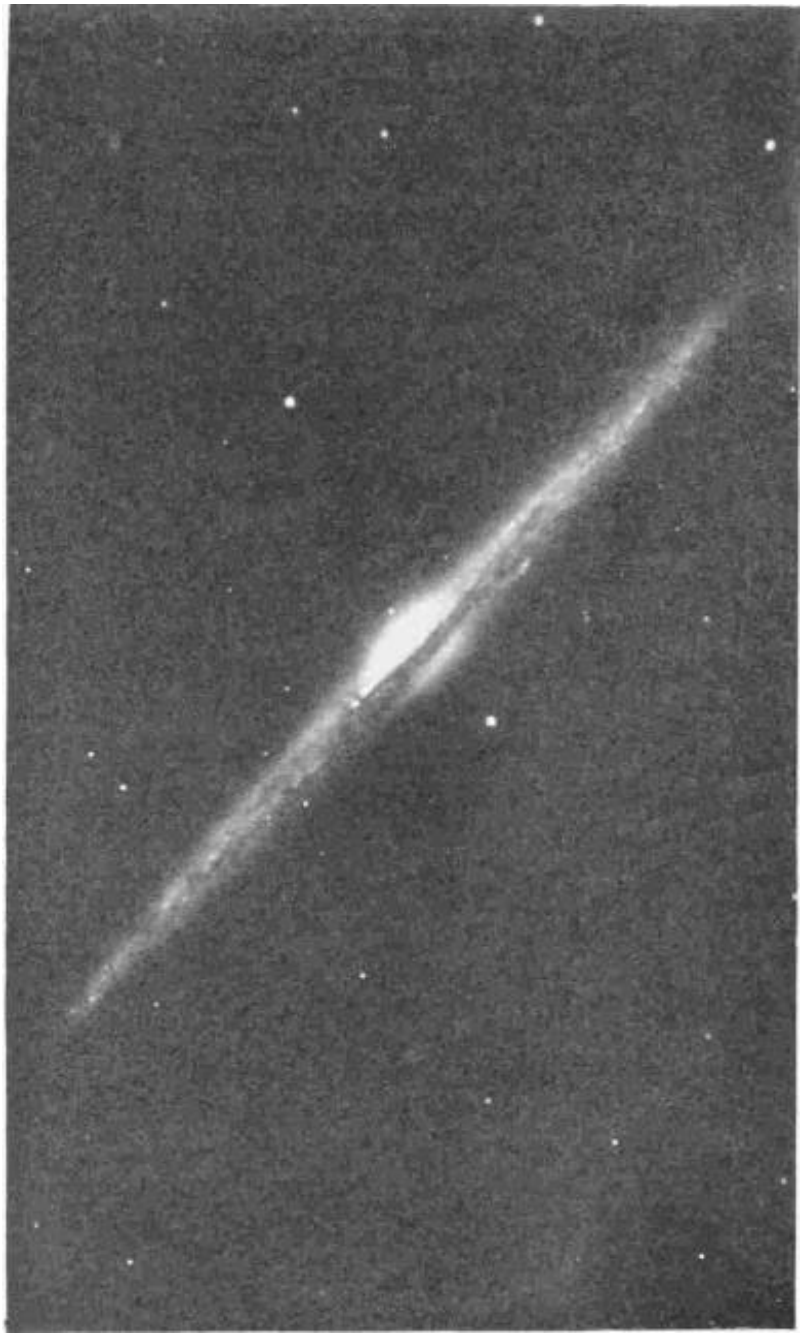

THE NEBULA SEEN EDGE-ON

Note the central core which, through millions of years, is cooling to solidity
Photo: G. W. Ritchey

If, then, we represent our earth as a little ball of one inch diameter, the sun would be a big globe nine feet across and 323 yards away, that is about a fifth of a mile, four or five minutes' walking. The moon would be a small pea two feet and a half from the world. Between earth and sun there would be the two inner planets, Mercury and Venus, at distances of one hundred and twenty-five and two hundred and fifty yards from the sun. All round and about these bodies there would be emptiness until you came to Mars, a hundred and seventy-five feet beyond the earth; Jupiter nearly a mile away, a foot in diameter; Saturn, a little smaller, two miles off; Uranus four miles off and Neptune six miles off. Then nothingness and nothingness except for small particles and drifting scraps of attenuated vapour for thousands of miles. The nearest star to earth on this scale would be 40,000 miles away.

These figures will serve perhaps to give one some conception of the immense emptiness of space in which the drama of life goes on.

For in all this enormous vacancy of space we know certainly of life only upon the surface of our earth. It does not penetrate much more than three miles down into the 4,000 miles that separate us from the centre of our globe, and it does not reach more than five miles above its surface. Apparently all the limitlessness of space is otherwise empty and dead.

The deepest ocean dredgings go down to five miles. The highest recorded flight of an aeroplane is little more than four miles. Men have reached to seven miles up in balloons, but at a cost of great suffering. No bird can fly so high as five miles, and small birds and insects which have been carried up by aeroplanes drop off insensible far below that level.

II

THE WORLD IN TIME

IN the last fifty years there has been much very fine and interesting speculation on the part of scientific men upon the age and origin of our earth. Here we cannot pretend to give even a summary of such speculations because they involve the most subtle mathematical and physical considerations. The truth is that the physical and astronomical sciences are still too undeveloped as yet to make anything of the sort more than an illustrative guesswork. The general tendency has been to make the estimated age of our globe longer and longer. It now seems probable that the earth has had an independent existence as a spinning planet flying round and round the sun for a longer period than 2,000,000,000 years. It may have been much longer than that. This is a length of time that absolutely overpowers the imagination.

Before that vast period of separate existence, the sun and earth and the other planets that circulate round the sun may have been a great swirl of diffused matter in space. The telescope reveals to us in various parts of the heavens luminous spiral clouds of matter, the spiral nebulæ, which appear to be in rotation about a centre. It is supposed by many astronomers that the sun and its planets were once such a spiral, and that their matter has undergone concentration into its present form. Through majestic æons that concentration went on until in that vast remoteness of the past for which we have given figures, the world and its moon were distinguishable. They were spinning then much faster than they are spinning now; they were at a lesser distance from the sun; they travelled round it very much faster, and they were probably incandescent or molten at the surface. The sun itself was a much greater blaze in the heavens.

THE GREAT SPIRAL NEBULA
Photo: G. W. Ritchey

If we could go back through that infinitude of time and see the earth in this earlier stage of its history, we should behold a scene more like the interior of a blast furnace or the surface of a lava flow before it cools and cakes over than any other contemporary scene. No water would be visible because all the water there was would still be superheated steam in a stormy atmosphere of sulphurous and

metallic vapours. Beneath this would swirl and boil an ocean of molten rock substance. Across a sky of fiery clouds the glare of the hurrying sun and moon would sweep swiftly like hot breaths of flame.

A DARK NEBULA

Taken in 1920 with the aid of the largest telescope in the world. One of the first photographs taken by the Mount Wilson telescope.
There are dark nebulæ and bright nebulæ. Prof. Henry Norris Russell, against the British theory, holds that the dark nebulæ preceded the bright nebulæ.
Photo: Prof. Hale

Slowly by degrees as one million of years followed another, this fiery scene would lose its eruptive incandescence. The vapours in the sky would rain down and become less dense overhead; great slaggy cakes of solidifying rock would appear upon the surface of the molten sea, and sink under it, to be replaced by other floating masses. The sun and moon growing now each more distant and each smaller, would rush with diminishing swiftness across the heavens. The moon now, because of its smaller size, would be already cooled far below incandescence, and would be alternately obstructing and reflecting the sunlight in a series of eclipses and full moons.

ANOTHER SPIRAL NEBULA
Photo: G. W. Ritchey

And so with a tremendous slowness through the vastness of time, the earth would grow more and more like the earth on which we live, until at last an age would come when, in the cooling air, steam would begin to condense into clouds, and the first rain would fall hissing upon the first rocks below. For endless millenia the greater part of the earth's water would still be vaporized in the atmosphere, but there would now be hot streams running over the crystallizing rocks below and pools and lakes into which these streams would be carrying detritus and depositing sediment.

LANDSCAPE BEFORE LIFE

"Great lava-like masses of rock without traces of soil"

At last a condition of things must have been attained in which a man might have stood up on earth and looked about him and lived. If we could have visited the earth at that time we should have stood on great lava-like masses of rock without a trace of soil or touch of living vegetation, under a storm-rent sky. Hot and violent winds, exceeding the fiercest tornado that ever blows, and downpours of rain such as our milder, slower earth to-day knows nothing of, might have assailed us. The water of the downpour would have rushed by us,

muddy with the spoils of the rocks, coming together into torrents, cutting deep gorges and canyons as they hurried past to deposit their sediment in the earliest seas. Through the clouds we should have glimpsed a great sun moving visibly across the sky, and in its wake and in the wake of the moon would have come a diurnal tide of earthquake and upheaval. And the moon, which nowadays keeps one constant face to earth, would then have been rotating visibly and showing the side it now hides so inexorably.

The earth aged. One million years followed another, and the day lengthened, the sun grew more distant and milder, the moon's pace in the sky slackened; the intensity of rain and storm diminished and the water in the first seas increased and ran together into the ocean garment our planet henceforth wore.

But there was no life as yet upon the earth; the seas were lifeless, and the rocks were barren.

III

THE BEGINNINGS OF LIFE

AS everybody knows nowadays, the knowledge we possess of life before the beginnings of human memory and tradition is derived from the markings and fossils of living things in the stratified rocks. We find preserved in shale and slate, limestone, and sandstone, bones, shells, fibres, stems, fruits, footmarks, scratchings and the like, side by side with the ripple marks of the earliest tides and the pittings of the earliest rain-falls. It is by the sedulous examination of this Record of the Rocks that the past history of the earth's life has been pieced together. That much nearly everybody knows to-day. The sedimentary rocks do not lie neatly stratum above stratum; they have been crumpled, bent, thrust about, distorted and mixed together like the leaves of a library that has been repeatedly looted and burnt, and it is only as a result of many devoted lifetimes of work that the record has been put into order and read. The whole compass of time represented by the record of the rocks is now estimated as 1,600,000,000 years.

The earliest rocks in the record are called by geologists the Azoic rocks, because they show no traces of life. Great areas of these Azoic rocks lie uncovered in North America, and they are of such a thickness that geologists consider that they represent a period of at least half of the 1,600,000,000 which they assign to the whole geological record. Let me repeat this profoundly significant fact. Half the great interval of time since land and sea were first distinguishable on earth has left us no traces of life. There are ripplings and rain marks still to be found in these rocks, but no marks nor vestiges of any living thing.

MARINE LIFE IN THE CAMBRIAN PERIOD

1 and 8, Jellyfishes; 2, Hyolithes (swimming snail); 3, Humenocaris; 4, Protospongia; 5, Lampshells (Obolella); 6, Orthoceras; 7, Trilobite (Paradoxides) — see fossil on page 13; 9, Coral (Archæocyathus); 10, Bryograptus; 11, Trilobite (Olenellus); 12, Palesterina

Then, as we come up the record, signs of past life appear and

increase. The age of the world's history in which we find these past traces is called by geologists the Lower Palæozoic age. The first indications that life was astir are vestiges of comparatively simple and lowly things: the shells of small shellfish, the stems and flowerlike heads of zoophytes, seaweeds and the tracks and remains of sea worms and crustacea. Very early appear certain creatures rather like plant-lice, crawling creatures which could roll themselves up into balls as the plant-lice do, the trilobites. Later by a few million years or so come certain sea scorpions, more mobile and powerful creatures than the world had ever seen before.

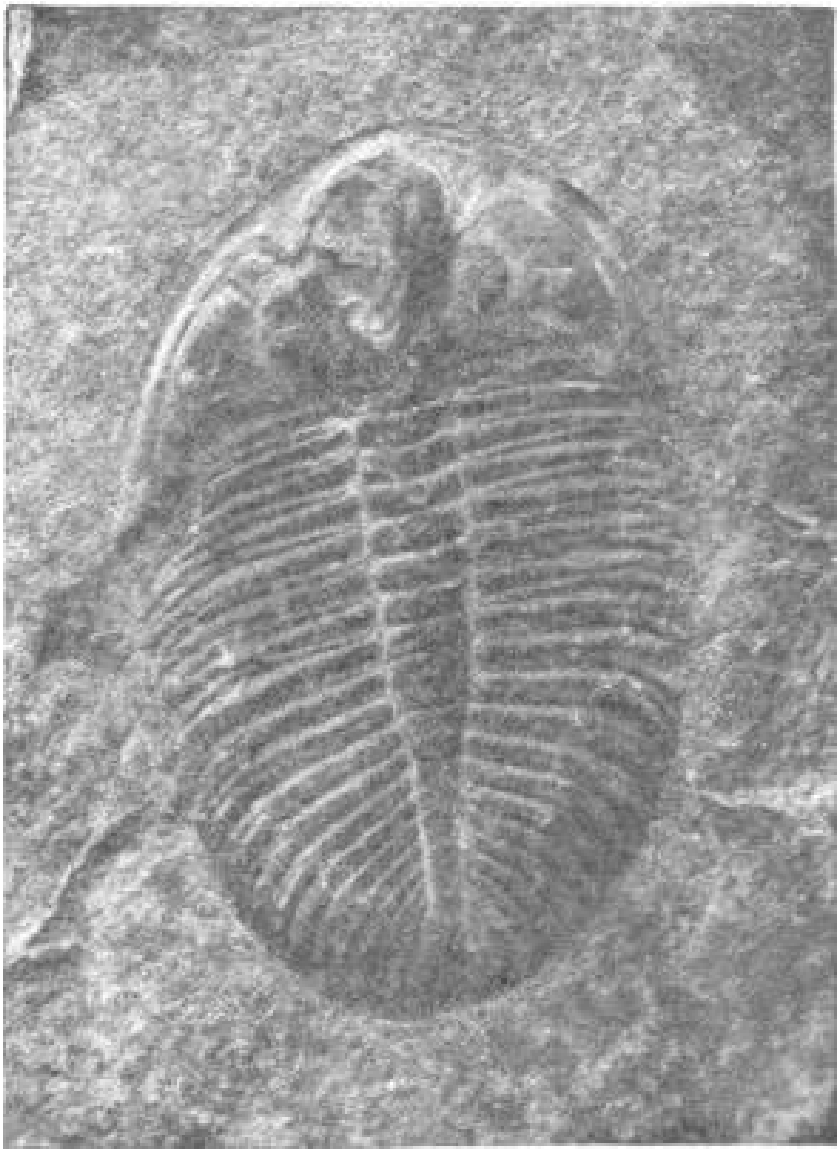

FOSSIL TRILOBITE (SLIGHTLY MAGNIFIED)
Photo: John J. Ward, F.E.S.

None of these creatures were of very great size. Among the largest were certain of the sea scorpions, which measured nine feet in length. There are no signs whatever of land life of any sort, plant or

animal; there are no fishes nor any vertebrated creatures in this part of the record. Essentially all the plants and creatures which have left us their traces from this period of the earth's history are shallow-water and intertidal beings. If we wished to parallel the flora and fauna of the Lower Palæozoic rocks on the earth to-day, we should do it best, except in the matter of size, by taking a drop of water from a rock pool or scummy ditch and examining it under a microscope. The little crustacea, the small shellfish, the zoophytes and algæ we should find there would display a quite striking resemblance to these clumsier, larger prototypes that once were the crown of life upon our planet.

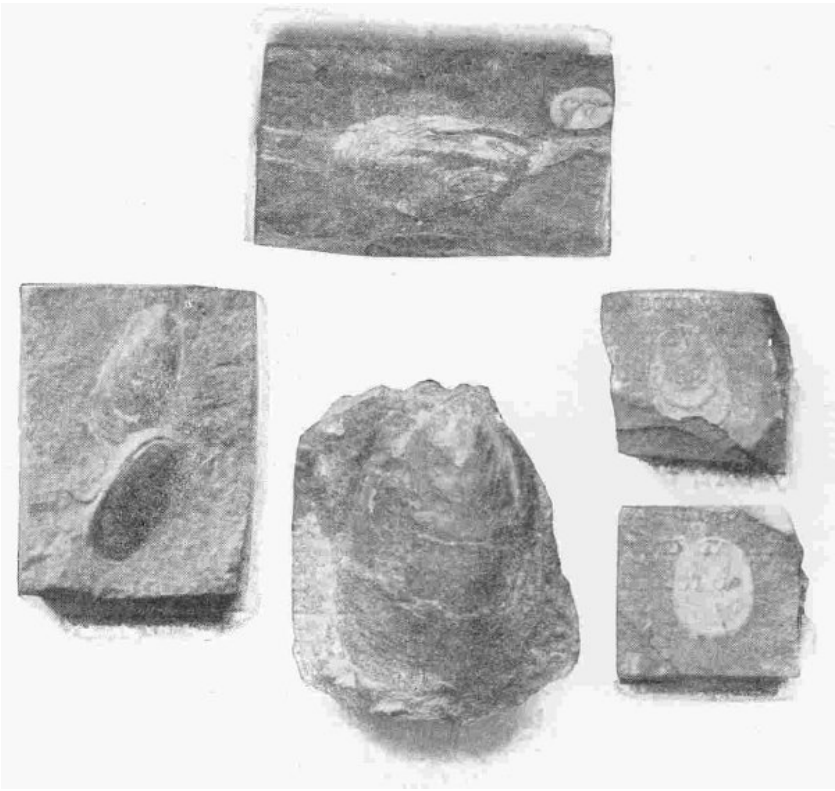

EARLY PALÆOLITHIC FOSSILS OF VARIOUS SPECIES OF LINGULA
Species of this most ancient genus of shellfish still live to-day
(In Natural History Museum, London)

It is well, however, to bear in mind that the Lower Palæozoic rocks probably do not give us anything at all representative of the first beginnings of life on our planet. Unless a creature has bones or other hard parts, unless it wears a shell or is big enough and heavy enough to make characteristic footprints and trails in mud, it is unlikely to leave any fossilized traces of its existence behind. To-day there are hundreds of thousands of species of small soft-bodied creatures in our world which it is inconceivable can ever leave any mark for future geologists to discover. In the world's past, millions of millions of species of such creatures may have lived and multiplied and flourished and passed away without a trace remaining. The waters of the warm and shallow lakes and seas of the so-called Azoic period may have teemed with an infinite variety of lowly, jelly-like, shell-less and boneless creatures, and a multitude of green scummy plants may have spread over the sunlit intertidal rocks and beaches. The Record of the Rocks is no more a complete record of life in the past than the books of a bank are a record of the existence of everybody in the neighbourhood. It is only when a species begins to secrete a shell or a spicule or a carapace or a lime-supported stem, and so put by something for the future, that it goes upon the Record. But in rocks of an age prior to those which bear any fossil traces, graphite, a form of uncombined carbon, is sometimes found, and some authorities consider that it may have been separated out from combination through the vital activities of unknown living things.

FOSSILIZED FOOTPRINTS OF A LABYRINTHODONT

CHEIROTHERIUM
(In Natural History Museum, London)

IV

THE AGE OF FISHES

IN the days when the world was supposed to have endured for only a few thousand years, it was supposed that the different species of plants and animals were fixed and final; they had all been created exactly as they are to-day, each species by itself. But as men began to discover and study the Record of the Rocks this belief gave place to the suspicion that many species had changed and developed slowly through the course of ages, and this again expanded into a belief in what is called Organic Evolution, a belief that all species of life upon earth, animal and vegetable alike, are descended by slow continuous processes of change from some very simple ancestral form of life, some almost structureless living substance, far back in the so-called Azoic seas.

This question of Organic Evolution, like the question of the age of the earth, has in the past been the subject of much bitter controversy. There was a time when a belief in organic evolution was for rather obscure reasons supposed to be incompatible with sound Christian, Jewish and Moslem doctrine. That time has passed, and the men of the most orthodox Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and Mohammedan belief are now free to accept this newer and broader view of a common origin of all living things. No life seems to have happened suddenly upon earth. Life grew and grows. Age by age through gulfs of time at which imagination reels, life has been growing from a mere stirring in the intertidal slime towards freedom, power and consciousness.

Life consists of individuals. These individuals are definite things, they are not like the lumps and masses, nor even the limitless and motionless crystals, of non-living matter, and they have two characteristics no dead matter possesses. They can assimilate other matter into themselves and make it part of themselves, and they can reproduce themselves. They eat and they breed. They can give rise to other individuals, for the most part like themselves, but always also a little different from themselves. There is a specific and family resemblance between an individual and its offspring, and there is an individual difference between every parent and every offspring it

produces, and this is true in every species and at every stage of life.

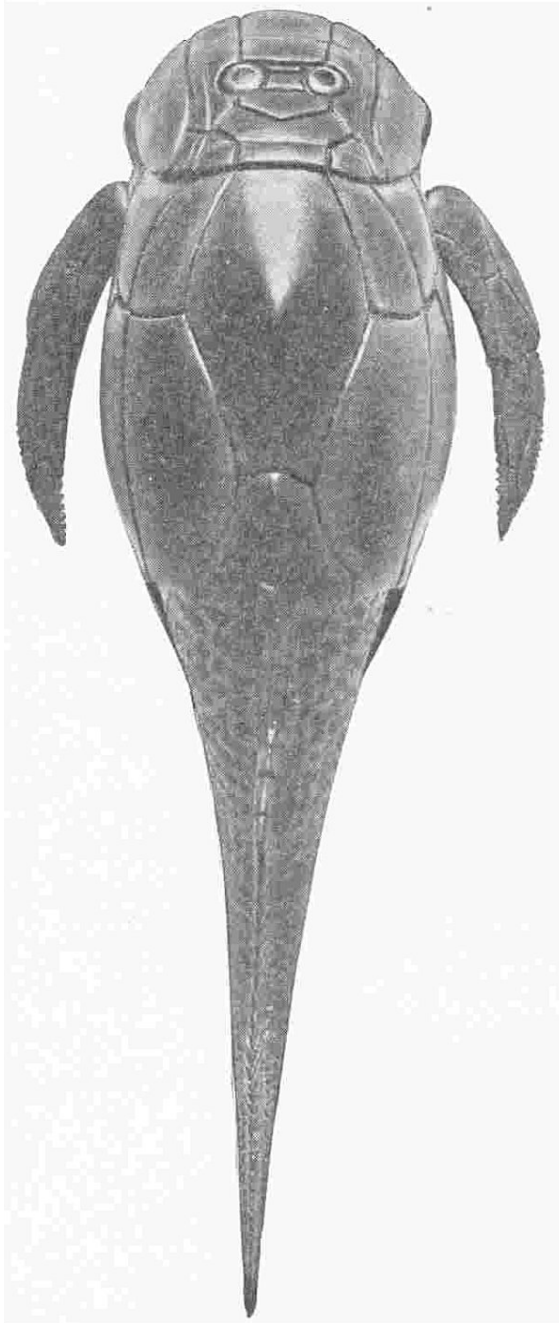

SPECIMEN OF THE PTERICHTHYS MILLERI OR SEA SCORPION SHOWING BODY ARMOUR

Now scientific men are not able to explain to us either why offspring should resemble nor why they should differ from their parents. But seeing that offspring do at once resemble and differ, it is a matter rather of common sense than of scientific knowledge that, if the conditions under which a species live are changed, the species should undergo some correlated changes. Because in any generation of the species there must be a number of individuals whose individual differences make them better adapted to the new conditions under which the species has to live, and a number whose individuals whose individual differences make it rather harder for them to live. And on the whole the former sort will live longer, bear more offspring, and reproduce themselves more abundantly than the latter, and so generation by generation the average of the species will change in the favourable direction. This process, which is called Natural Selection, is not so much a scientific theory as a necessary deduction from the facts of reproduction and individual difference. There may be many forces at work varying, destroying and preserving species, about which science may still be unaware or undecided, but the man who can deny the operation of this process of natural selection upon life since its beginning must be either ignorant of the elementary facts of life or incapable of ordinary thought.

Many scientific men have speculated about the first beginning of life and their speculations are often of great interest, but there is absolutely no definite knowledge and no convincing guess yet of the way in which life began. But nearly all authorities are agreed that it probably began upon mud or sand in warm sunlit shallow brackish water, and that it spread up the beaches to the intertidal lines and out to the open waters.

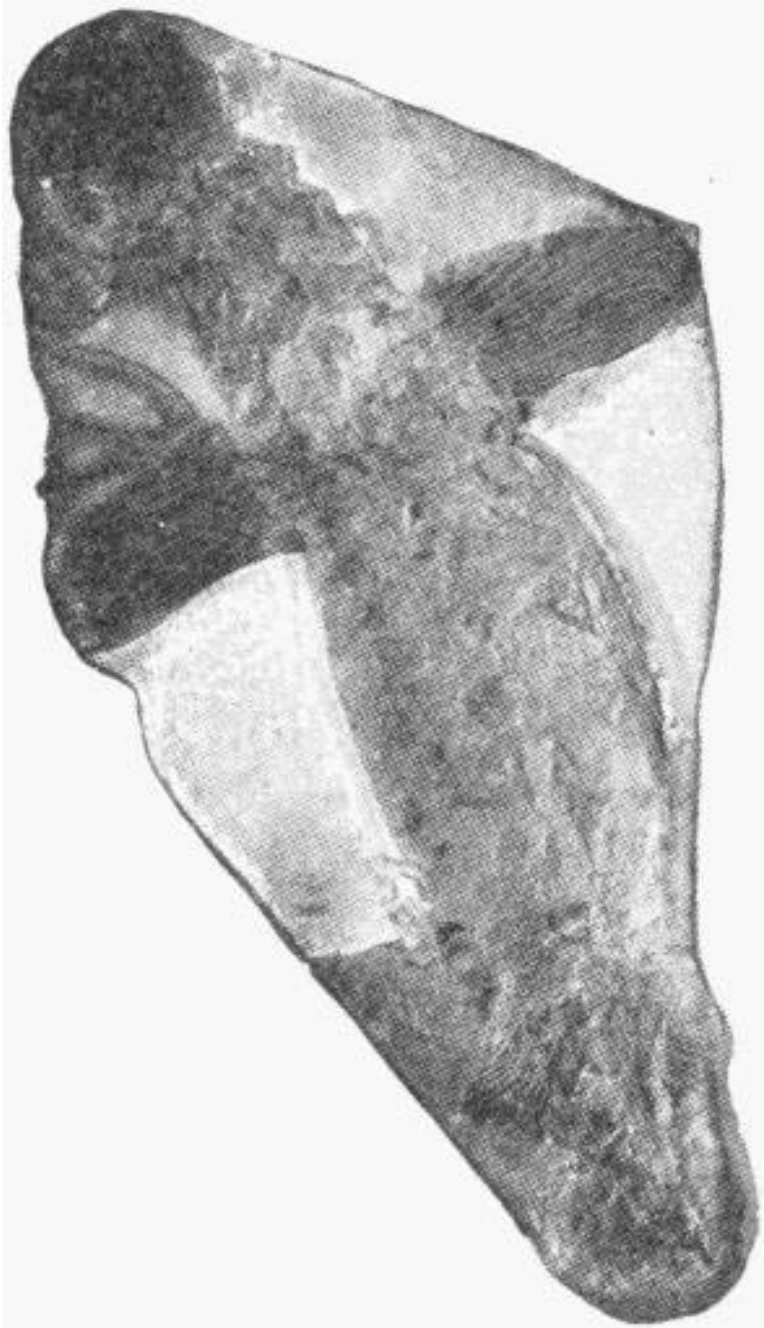

FOSSIL OF THE CLADOSELACHE, A DEVONIAN SHARK

Nat. Hist. Mus.

That early world was a world of strong tides and currents. An incessant destruction of individuals must have been going on through their being swept up the beaches and dried, or by their being swept out to sea and sinking down out of reach of air and sun. Early conditions favoured the development of every tendency to root and hold on, every tendency to form an outer skin and casing to protect the stranded individual from immediate desiccation. From the very earliest any tendency to sensitiveness to taste would turn the individual in the direction of food, and any sensitiveness to light would assist it to struggle back out of the darkness of the sea deeps and caverns or to wriggle back out of the excessive glare of the dangerous shallows.

Probably the first shells and body armour of living things were protections against drying rather than against active enemies. But tooth and claw come early into our earthly history.

We have already noted the size of the earlier water scorpions. For long ages such creatures were the supreme lords of life. Then in a division of these Palæozoic rocks called the Silurian division, which many geologists now suppose to be as old as five hundred million years, there appears a new type of being, equipped with eyes and teeth and swimming powers of an altogether more powerful kind. These were the first known backboned animals, the earliest fishes, the first known Vertebrata.

SHARKS AND GANOIDS OF THE DEVONIAN PERIOD
By Alice Woodward

These fishes increase greatly in the next division of rocks, the rocks known as the Devonian system. They are so prevalent that this

period of the Record of the Rocks has been called the Age of Fishes. Fishes of a pattern now gone from the earth, and fishes allied to the sharks and sturgeons of to-day, rushed through the waters, leapt in the air, browsed among the seaweeds, pursued and preyed upon one another, and gave a new liveliness to the waters of the world. None of these were excessively big by our present standards. Few of them were more than two or three feet long, but there were exceptional forms which were as long as twenty feet.

We know nothing from geology of the ancestors of these fishes. They do not appear to be related to any of the forms that preceded them. Zoologists have the most interesting views of their ancestry, but these they derive from the study of the development of the eggs of their still living relations, and from other sources. Apparently the ancestors of the vertebrata were soft-bodied and perhaps quite small swimming creatures who began first to develop hard parts as teeth round and about their mouths. The teeth of a skate or dogfish cover the roof and floor of its mouth and pass at the lip into the flattened toothlike scales that encase most of its body. As the fishes develop these teeth scales in the geological record, they swim out of the hidden darkness of the past into the light, the first vertebrated animals visible in the record.

V

THE AGE OF THE COAL SWAMPS

THE land during this Age of Fishes was apparently quite lifeless. Crags and uplands of barren rock lay under the sun and rain. There was no real soil — for as yet there were no earthworms which help to make a soil, and no plants to break up the rock particles into mould; there was no trace of moss or lichen. Life was still only in the sea.

Over this world of barren rock played great changes of climate. The causes of these changes of climate were very complex and they have still to be properly estimated. The changing shape of the earth's orbit, the gradual shifting of the poles of rotation, changes in the shapes of the continents, probably even fluctuations in the warmth of the sun, now conspired to plunge great areas of the earth's surface into long periods of cold and ice and now again for millions of years spread a warm or equable climate over this planet. There seem to have been phases of great internal activity in the world's history, when in the course of a few million years accumulated upthrusts would break out in lines of volcanic eruption and upheaval and rearrange the mountain and continental outlines of the globe, increasing the depth of the sea and the height of the mountains and exaggerating the extremes of climate. And these would be followed by vast ages of comparative quiescence, when frost, rain and river would wear down the mountain heights and carry great masses of silt to fill and raise the sea bottoms and spread the seas, ever shallower and wider, over more and more of the land. There have been "high and deep" ages in the world's history and "low and level" ages. The reader must dismiss from his mind any idea that the surface of the earth has been growing steadily cooler since its crust grew solid. After that much cooling had been achieved, the internal temperature ceased to affect surface conditions. There are traces of periods of superabundant ice and snow, of "Glacial Ages," that is, even in the Azoic period.

It was only towards the close of the Age of Fishes, in a period of extensive shallow seas and lagoons, that life spread itself out in any effectual way from the waters on to the land. No doubt the earlier types of the forms that now begin to appear in great abundance had

already been developing in a rare and obscure manner for many scores of millions of years. But now came their opportunity.

A CARBONIFEROUS SWAMP
A Coal Seam in the Making

Plants no doubt preceded animal forms in this invasion of the

land, but the animals probably followed up the plant emigration very closely. The first problem that the plant had to solve was the problem of some sustaining stiff support to hold up its fronds to the sunlight when the buoyant water was withdrawn; the second was the problem of getting water from the swampy ground below to the tissues of the plant, now that it was no longer close at hand. The two problems were solved by the development of woody tissue which both sustained the plant and acted as water carrier to the leaves. The Record of the Rocks is suddenly crowded by a vast variety of woody swamp plants, many of them of great size, big tree mosses, tree ferns, gigantic horsetails and the like. And with these, age by age, there crawled out of the water a great variety of animal forms. There were centipedes and millipedes; there were the first primitive insects; there were creatures related to the ancient king crabs and sea scorpions which became the earliest spiders and land scorpions, and presently there were vertebrated animals.

SKULL OF A LABYRINTHODONT, CAPITOSAURUS
Nat. Hist. Mus.

Some of the earlier insects were very large. There were dragon flies in this period with wings that spread out to twenty-nine inches.

In various ways these new orders and genera had adapted themselves to breathing air. Hitherto all animals had breathed air dissolved in water, and that indeed is what all animals still have to do. But now in divers fashions the animal kingdom was acquiring the power of supplying its own moisture where it was needed. A man

with a perfectly dry lung would suffocate to-day; his lung surfaces must be moist in order that air may pass through them into his blood. The adaptation to air breathing consists in all cases either in the development of a cover to the old-fashioned gills to stop evaporation, or in the development of tubes or other new breathing organs lying deep inside the body and moistened by a watery secretion. The old gills with which the ancestral fish of the vertebrated line had breathed were inadaptable to breathing upon land, and in the case of this division of the animal kingdom it is the swimming bladder of the fish which becomes a new, deep-seated breathing organ, the lung. The kind of animals known as amphibia, the frogs and newts of to-day, begin their lives in the water and breathe by gills; and subsequently the lung, developing in the same way as the swimming bladder of many fishes do, as a baglike outgrowth from the throat, takes over the business of breathing, the animal comes out on land, and the gills dwindle and the gill slits disappear. (All except an outgrowth of one gill slit, which becomes the passage of the ear and ear-drum.) The animal can now live only in the air, but it must return at least to the edge of the water to lay its eggs and reproduce its kind.

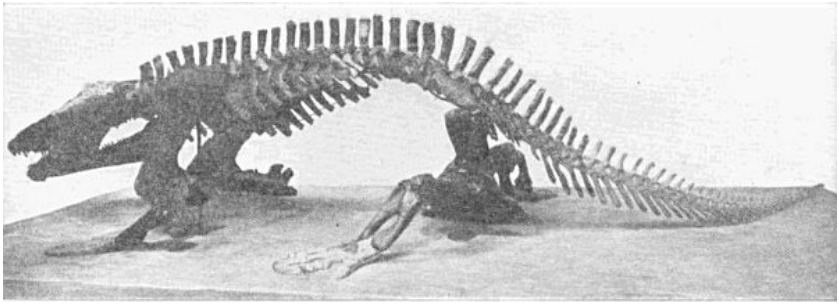

SKELETON OF A LABYRINTHODONT: THE ERYOPS
Nat. Hist. Mus.

All the air-breathing vertebrata of this age of swamps and plants belonged to the class amphibia. They were nearly all of them forms related to the newts of to-day, and some of them attained a considerable size. They were land animals, it is true, but they were land animals needing to live in and near moist and swampy places, and all the great trees of this period were equally amphibious in their

habits. None of them had yet developed fruits and seeds of a kind that could fall on land and develop with the help only of such moisture as dew and rain could bring. They all had to shed their spores in water, it would seem, if they were to germinate.

It is one of the most beautiful interests of that beautiful science, comparative anatomy, to trace the complex and wonderful adaptations of living things to the necessities of existence in air. All living things, plants and animals alike, are primarily water things. For example all the higher vertebrated animals above the fishes, up to and including man, pass through a stage in their development in the egg or before birth in which they have gill slits which are obliterated before the young emerge. The bare, water-washed eye of the fish is protected in the higher forms from drying up by eyelids and glands which secrete moisture. The weaker sound vibrations of air necessitate an ear-drum. In nearly every organ of the body similar modifications and adaptations are to be detected, similar patchings-up to meet aerial conditions.

This Carboniferous age, this age of the amphibia, was an age of life in the swamps and lagoons and on the low banks among these waters. Thus far life had now extended. The hills and high lands were still quite barren and lifeless. Life had learnt to breathe air indeed, but it still had its roots in its native water; it still had to return to the water to reproduce its kind.

VI

THE AGE OF REPTILES

THE abundant life of the Carboniferous period was succeeded by a vast cycle of dry and bitter ages. They are represented in the Record of the Rocks by thick deposits of sandstones and the like, in which fossils are comparatively few. The temperature of the world fluctuated widely, and there were long periods of glacial cold. Over great areas the former profusion of swamp vegetation ceased, and, overlaid by these newer deposits, it began that process of compression and mineralization that gave the world most of the coal deposits of to-day.

But it is during periods of change that life undergoes its most rapid modifications, and under hardship that it learns its hardest lessons. As conditions revert towards warmth and moisture again we find a new series of animal and plant forms established, We find in the record the remains of vertebrated animals that laid eggs which, instead of hatching out tadpoles which needed to live for a time in water, carried on their development before hatching to a stage so nearly like the adult form that the young could live in air from the first moment of independent existence. Gills had been cut out altogether, and the gill slits only appeared as an embryonic phase.

These new creatures without a tadpole stage were the Reptiles. Concurrently there had been a development of seed-bearing trees, which could spread their seed, independently of swamp or lakes. There were now palmlike cycads and many tropical conifers, though as yet there were no flowering plants and no grasses. There was a great number of ferns. And there was now also an increased variety of insects. There were beetles, though bees and butterflies had yet to come. But all the fundamental forms of a new real land fauna and flora had been laid down during these vast ages of severity. This new land life needed only the opportunity of favourable conditions to flourish and prevail.

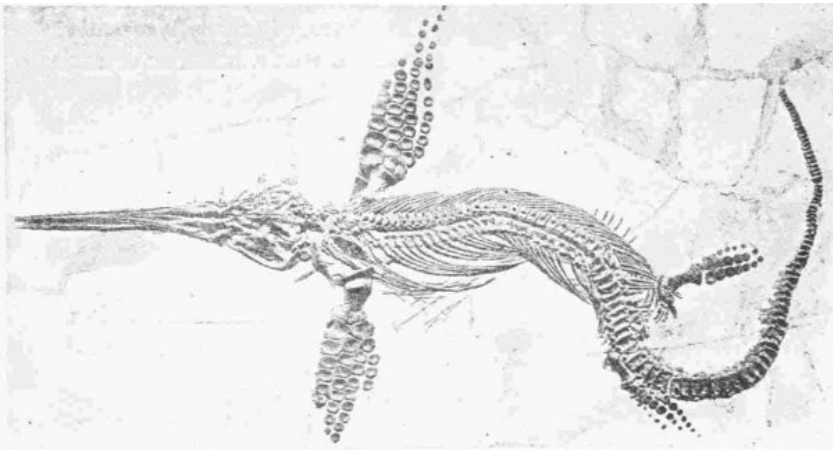

A FOSSIL ICHTHYOSAURUS, A MESOZOIC FISH-LIZARD
Found in the Lower Lias in Somersetshire
Nat. Hist. Mus.

Age by age and with abundant fluctuations that mitigation came. The still incalculable movements of the earth's crust, the changes in its orbit, the increase and diminution of the mutual inclination of orbit and pole, worked together to produce a great spell of widely diffused warm conditions. The period lasted altogether, it is now supposed, upwards of two hundred million years. It is called the Mesozoic period, to distinguish it from the altogether vaster Palæozoic and Azoic periods (together fourteen hundred millions) that preceded it, and from the Cainozoic or new life period that intervened between its close and the present time, and it is also called the Age of Reptiles because of the astonishing predominance and variety of this form of life. It came to an end some eighty million years ago.

In the world to-day the genera of Reptiles are comparatively few and their distribution is very limited. They are more various, it is true, than are the few surviving members of the order of the amphibia which once in the Carboniferous period ruled the world. We still have the snakes, the turtles and tortoises (the Chelonia), the alligators and crocodiles, and the lizards. Without exception they are creatures requiring warmth all the year round; they cannot stand exposure to

cold, and it is probable that all the reptilian beings of the Mesozoic suffered under the same limitation. It was a hothouse fauna, living amidst a hothouse flora. It endured no frosts. But the world had at least attained a real dry land fauna and flora as distinguished from the mud and swamp fauna and flora of the previous heyday of life upon earth.

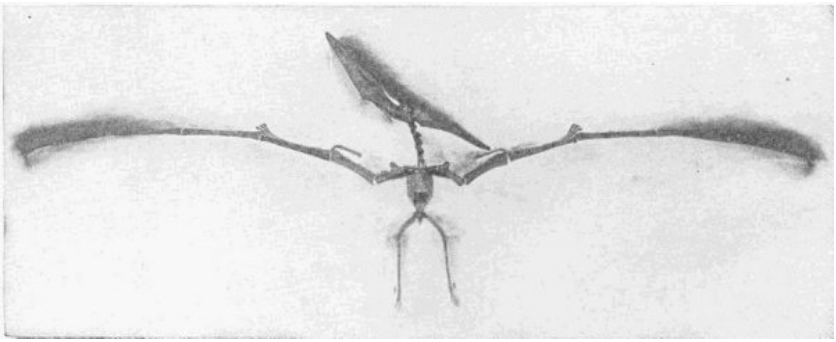

A PTERODACTYL
Nat. Hist. Mus.

All the sorts of reptile we know now were much more abundantly represented then, great turtles and tortoises, big crocodiles and many lizards and snakes, but in addition there was a number of series of wonderful creatures that have now vanished altogether from the earth. There was a vast variety of beings called the Dinosaurs. Vegetation was now spreading over the lower levels of the world, reeds, brakes of fern and the like; and browsing upon this abundance came a multitude of herbivorous reptiles, which increased in size as the Mesozoic period rose to its climax. Some of these beasts exceeded in size any other land animals that have ever lived; they were as large as whales. The *Diplodocus Carnegii* for example measured eighty-four feet from snout to tail; the Gigantosaurus was even greater; it measured a hundred feet. Living upon these monsters was a swarm of carnivorous Dinosaurs of a corresponding size. One of these, the Tyrannosaurus, is figured and described in many books as the last word in reptilian frightfulness.

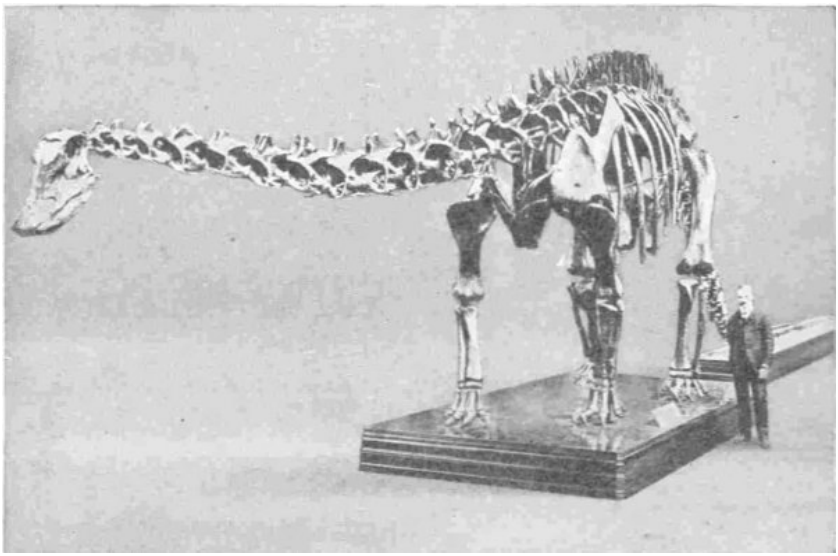

A BIG SWAMP-INHABITING DINOSAUR, THE DIPLODOCUS, OVER EIGHTY FEET FROM SNOUT TO TAIL-TIP
Nat. Hist. Mus.

While these great creatures pastured and pursued amidst the fronds and evergreens of the Mesozoic jungles, another now vanished tribe of reptiles, with a bat-like development of the fore limbs, pursued insects and one another, first leapt and parachuted and presently flew amidst the fronds and branches of the forest trees. These were the Pterodactyls. These were the first flying creatures with backbones; they mark a new achievement in the growing powers of vertebrated life.

Moreover some of the reptiles were returning to the sea waters. Three groups of big swimming beings had invaded the sea from which their ancestors had come: the Mososaurs, the Plesiosaurs, and Ichthyosaurs. Some of these again approached the proportions of our present whales. The Ichthyosaurs seem to have been quite seagoing creatures, but the Plesiosaurs were a type of animal that has no cognate form to-day. The body was stout and big with paddles, adapted either for swimming or crawling through marshes, or along the bottom of shallow waters. The comparatively small head was poised on a vast snake of neck, altogether outdoing the neck of the

swan. Either the Plesiosaur swam and searched for food under the water and fed as the swan will do, or it lurked under water and snatched at passing fish or beast.

Such was the predominant land life throughout the Mesozoic age. It was by our human standards an advance upon anything that had preceded it. It had produced land animals greater in size, range, power and activity, more "vital" as people say, than anything the world had seen before. In the seas there had been no such advance but a great proliferation of new forms of life. An enormous variety of squid-like creatures with chambered shells, for the most part coiled, had appeared in the shallow seas, the Ammonites. They had had predecessors in the Palæozoic seas, but now was their age of glory. To-day they have left no survivors at all; their nearest relation is the pearly Nautilus, an inhabitant of tropical waters. And a new and more prolific type of fish with lighter, finer scales than the plate-like and tooth-like coverings that had hitherto prevailed, became and has since remained predominant in the seas and rivers.

VII

THE FIRST BIRDS AND THE FIRST MAMMALS

IN a few paragraphs a picture of the lush vegetation and swarming reptiles of that first great summer of life, the Mesozoic period, has been sketched. But while the Dinosaurs lorded it over the hot selvas and marshy plains and the Pterodactyls filled the forests with their flutterings and possibly with shrieks and croakings as they pursued the humming insect life of the still flowerless shrubs and trees, some less conspicuous and less abundant forms upon the margins of this abounding life were acquiring certain powers and learning certain lessons of endurance, that were to be of the utmost value to their race when at last the smiling generosity of sun and earth began to fade.

A group of tribes and genera of hopping reptiles, small creatures of the dinosaur type, seem to have been pushed by competition and the pursuit of their enemies towards the alternatives of extinction or adaptation to colder conditions in the higher hills or by the sea. Among these distressed tribes there was developed a new type of scale — scales that were elongated into quill-like forms and that presently branched into the crude beginnings of feathers. These quill-like scales layover one another and formed a heat-retaining covering more efficient than any reptilian covering that had hitherto existed. So they permitted an invasion of colder regions that were otherwise uninhabited. Perhaps simultaneously with these changes there arose in these creatures a greater solicitude for their eggs. Most reptiles are apparently quite careless about their eggs, which are left for sun and season to hatch. But some of the varieties upon this new branch of the tree of life were acquiring a habit of guarding their eggs and keeping them warm with the warmth of their bodies.

With these adaptations to cold other internal modifications were going on that made these creatures, the primitive birds, warm-blooded and independent of basking. The very earliest birds seem to have been seabirds living upon fish, and their fore limbs were not wings but paddles rather after the penguin type. That peculiarly primitive bird, the New Zealand Ki-Wi, has feathers of a very simple

sort, and neither flies nor appears to be descended from flying ancestors. In the development of the birds, feathers came before wings. But once the feather was developed the possibility of making a light spread of feathers led inevitably to the wing. We know of the fossil remains of one bird at least which had reptilian teeth in its jaw and a long reptilian tail, but which also had a true bird's wing and which certainly flew and held its own among the pterodactyls of the Mesozoic time. Nevertheless birds were neither varied nor abundant in Mesozoic times. If a man could go back to typical Mesozoic country, he might walk for days and never see or hear such a thing as a bird, though he would see a great abundance of pterodactyls and insects among the fronds and reeds.

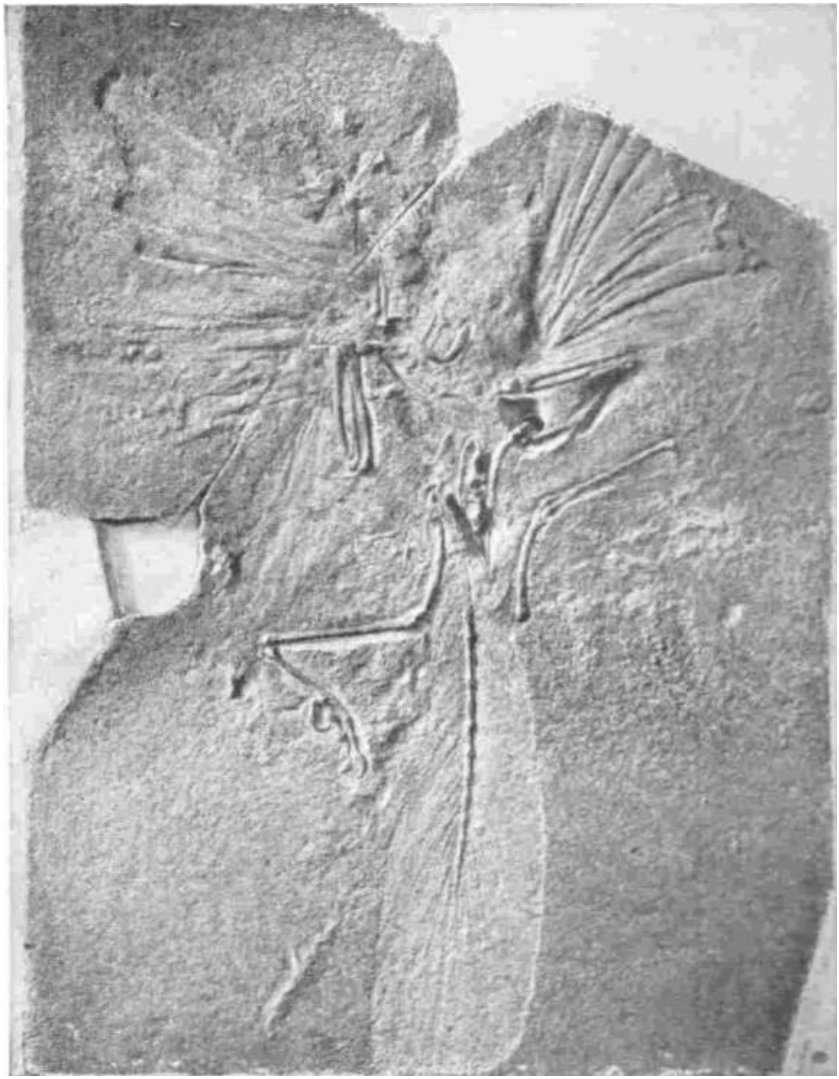

FOSSIL OF THE ARCHEOPTERYX; ONE OF THE EARLIEST BIRDS
Nat. Hist. Mus.

And another thing he would probably never see, and that would be any sign of a mammal. Probably the first mammals were in existence millions of years before the first thing one could call a bird, but they were altogether too small and obscure and remote for

attention.

HESPERORNIS IN ITS NATIVE SEAS

The earliest mammals, like the earliest birds, were creatures driven

by competition and pursuit into a life of hardship and adaptation to cold. With them also the scale became quill-like, and was developed into a heat-retaining covering; and they too underwent modifications, similar in kind though different in detail, to become warm-blooded and independent of basking. Instead of feathers they developed hairs, and instead of guarding and incubating their eggs they kept them warm and safe by retaining them inside their bodies until they were almost mature. Most of them became altogether vivaparous and brought their young into the world alive. And even after their young were born they tended to maintain a protective and nutritive association with them. Most but not all mammals to-day have mammæ and suckle their young. Two mammals still live which lay eggs and which have not proper mammæ, though they nourish their young by a nutritive secretion of the under skin; these are the duck-billed platypus and the echidna. The echidna lays leathery eggs and then puts them into a pouch under its belly, and so carries them about warm and safe until they hatch.

But just as a visitor to the Mesozoic world might have searched for days and weeks before finding a bird, so, unless he knew exactly where to go and look, he might have searched in vain for any traces of a mammal. Both birds and mammals would have seemed very eccentric and secondary and unimportant creatures in Mesozoic times.

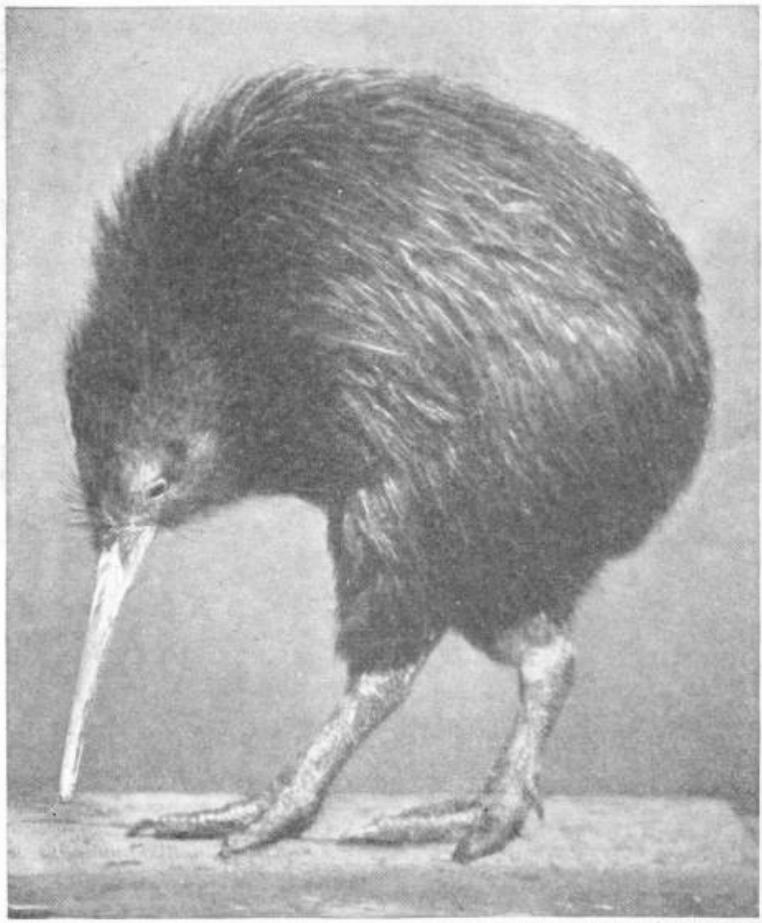

THE KI-WI, APTERYX, STILL FOUND IN NEW ZEALAND
Photo: Autotype Fine Art Co.

SLAB OF LOWER PLIOCENE MARL
Discovered in Greece; it is rich in fossilized bones of early mammals

The Age of Reptiles lasted, it is now guessed, eighty million years. Had any quasi-human intelligence been watching the world through that inconceivable length of time, how safe and eternal the sunshine and abundance must have seemed, how assured the wallowing prosperity of the dinosaurs and the flapping abundance of

the flying lizards! And then the mysterious rhythms and accumulating forces of the universe began to turn against that quasi-eternal stability. That run of luck for life was running out. Age by age, myriad of years after myriad of years, with halts no doubt and retrogressions, came a change towards hardship and extreme conditions, came great alterations of level and great redistributions of mountain and sea. We find one thing in the Record of the Rocks during the decadence of the long Mesozoic age of prosperity that is very significant of steadily sustained changes of condition, and that is a violent fluctuation of living forms and the appearance of new and strange species. Under the gathering threat of extinction the older orders and genera are displaying their utmost capacity for variation and adaptation. The Ammonites for example in these last pages of the Mesozoic chapter exhibit a multitude of fantastic forms. Under settled conditions there is no encouragement for novelties; they do not develop, they are suppressed; what is best adapted is already there. Under novel conditions it is the ordinary type that suffers, and the novelty that may have a better chance to survive and establish itself....

There comes a break in the Record of the Rocks that may represent several million years. There is a veil here still, over even the outline of the history of life. When it lifts again, the Age of Reptiles is at an end; the Dinosaurs, the Plesiosaurs and Ichthyosaurs, the Pterodactyls, the innumerable genera and species of Ammonite have all gone absolutely. In all their stupendous variety they have died out and left no descendants. The cold has killed them. All their final variations were insufficient; they had never hit upon survival conditions. The world had passed through a phase of extreme conditions beyond their powers of endurance, a slow and complete massacre of Mesozoic life has occurred, and we find now a new scene, a new and hardier flora, and a new and hardier fauna in possession of the world.

It is still a bleak and impoverished scene with which this new volume of the book of life begins. The cycads and tropical conifers have given place very largely to trees that shed their leaves to avoid destruction by the snows of winter and to flowering plants and

shrubs, and where there was formerly a profusion of reptiles, an increasing variety of birds and mammals is entering into their inheritance.

VIII

THE AGE OF MAMMALS

THE opening of the next great period in the life of the earth, the Cainozoic period, was a period of upheaval and extreme volcanic activity. Now it was that the vast masses of the Alps and Himalayas and the mountain backbone of the Rockies and Andes were thrust up, and that the rude outlines of our present oceans and continents appeared. The map of the world begins to display a first dim resemblance to the map of to-day. It is estimated now that between forty and eighty million years have elapsed from the beginnings of the Cainozoic period to the present time.

At the outset of the Cainozoic period the climate of the world was austere. It grew generally warmer until a fresh phase of great abundance was reached, after which conditions grew hard again and the earth passed into a series of extremely cold cycles, the Glacial Ages, from which apparently it is now slowly emerging.

But we do not know sufficient of the causes of climatic change at present to forecast the possible fluctuations of climatic conditions that lie before us. We may be moving towards increasing sunshine or lapsing towards another glacial age; volcanic activity and the upheaval of mountain masses may be increasing or diminishing; we do not know; we lack sufficient science.

With the opening of this period the grasses appear; for the first time there is pasture in the world; and with the full development of the once obscure mammalian type, appear a number of interesting grazing animals and of carnivorous types which prey upon these.

At first these early mammals seem to differ only in a few characters from the great herbivorous and carnivorous reptiles that ages before had flourished and then vanished from the earth. A careless observer might suppose that in this second long age of warmth and plenty that was now beginning, nature was merely repeating the first, with herbivorous and carnivorous mammals to parallel the herbivorous and carnivorous dinosaurs, with birds replacing pterodactyls and so on. But this would be an altogether superficial comparison. The variety of the universe is infinite and incessant; it progresses eternally; history never repeats itself and no

parallels are precisely true. The differences between the life of the Cainozoic and Mesozoic periods are far profounder than the resemblances.

A MAMMAL OF THE EARLY CAINOZOIC PERIOD
The Titanotherum (Brontops) Robustum

The most fundamental of all these differences lies in the mental life of the two periods. It arises essentially out of the continuing contact of parent and offspring which distinguishes mammalian and in a lesser degree bird life, from the life of the reptile. With very few exceptions the reptile abandons its egg to hatch alone. The young reptile has no knowledge whatever of its parent; its mental life, such as it is, begins and ends with its own experiences. It may tolerate the existence of its fellows but it has no communication with them; it never imitates, never learns from them, is incapable of concerted action with them. Its life is that of an isolated individual. But with the suckling and cherishing of young which was distinctive of the new mammalian and avian strains arose the possibility of learning by imitation, of communication, by warning cries and other concerted action, of mutual control and instruction. A teachable type of life had come into the world.

The earliest mammals of the Cainozoic period are but little superior in brain size to the more active carnivorous dinosaurs, but as we read on through the record towards modern times we find, in every tribe and race of the mammalian animals, a steady universal increase in brain capacity. For instance we find at a comparatively early stage that rhinoceros-like beasts appear. There is a creature, the Titanotherium, which lived in the earliest division of this period. It was probably very like a modern rhinoceros in its habits and needs. But its brain capacity was not one tenth that of its living successor.

The earlier mammals probably parted from their offspring as soon as suckling was over, but, once the capacity for mutual understanding has arisen, the advantages of continuing the association are very great; and we presently find a number of mammalian species displaying the beginnings of a true social life and keeping together in herds, packs and flocks, watching each other, imitating each other, taking warning from each other's acts and cries. This is something that the world had not seen before among vertebrated animals. Reptiles and fish may no doubt be found in swarms and shoals; they have been hatched in quantities and similar conditions have kept them together, but in the case of the social and gregarious mammals the association arises not simply from a community of external forces, it is sustained by an inner impulse. They are not merely like one another and so found in the same places at the same times; they like one another and so they keep together.

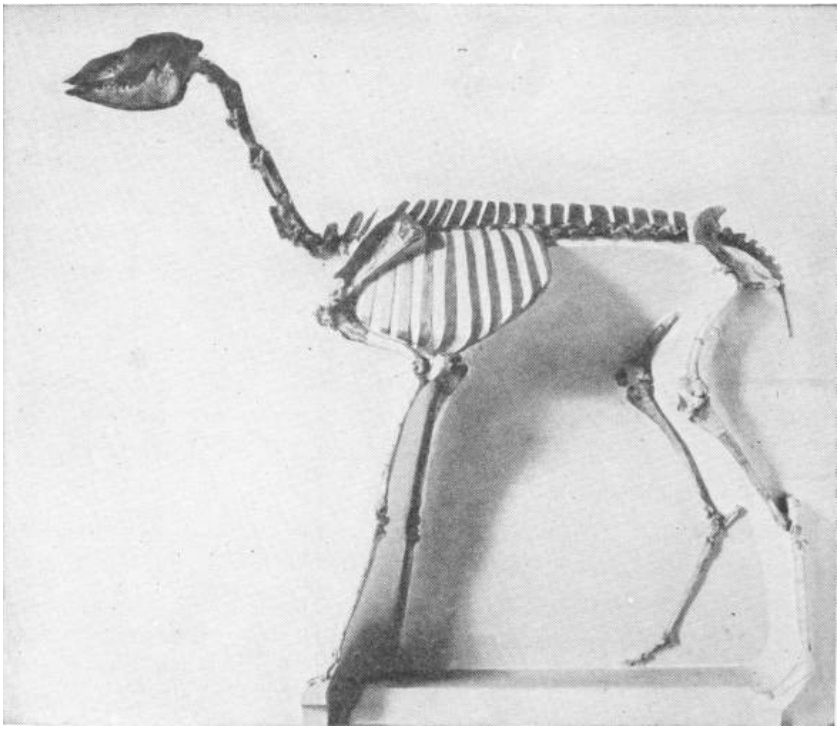

STENOMYLUS HITCHCOCKI — A GIRAFFE-CAMEL
Nat. Hist. Mus.

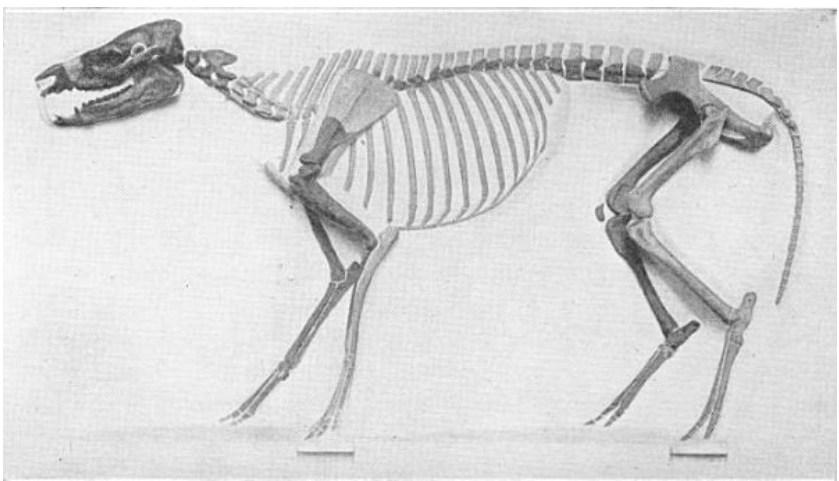

SKELETON OF PROTOHIPPUS VENTICOLUS — EARLY

HORSE
Nat. Hist. Mus.

This difference between the reptile world and the world of our human minds is one our sympathies seem unable to pass. We cannot conceive in ourselves the swift uncomplicated urgency of a reptile's instinctive motives, its appetites, fears and hates. We cannot understand them in their simplicity because all our motives are complicated; our's are balances and resultants and not simple urgencies. But the mammals and birds have self-restraint and consideration for other individuals, a social appeal, a self- control that is, at its lower level, after our own fashion. We can in consequence establish relations with almost all sorts of them. When they suffer they utter cries and make movements that rouse our feelings. We can make understanding pets of them with a mutual recognition. They can be tamed to self-restraint towards us, domesticated and taught.

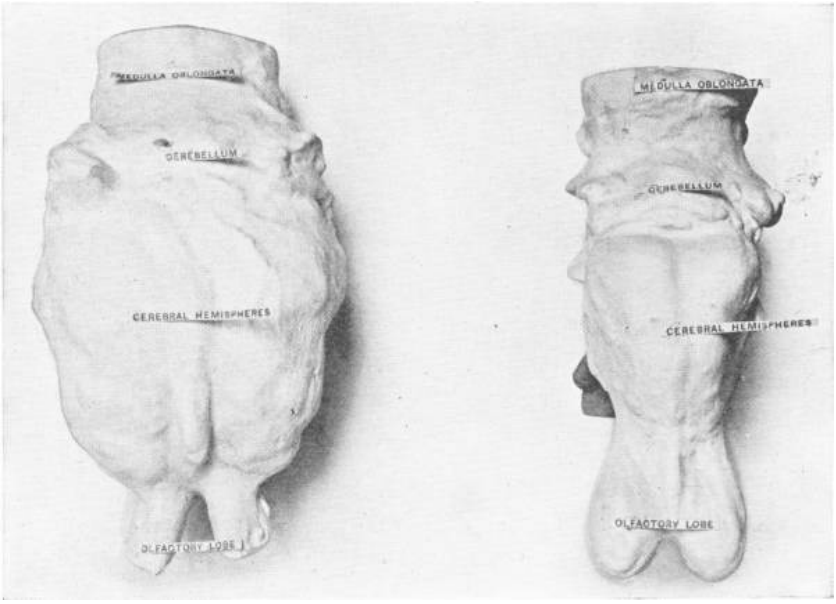

COMPARATIVE SIZES OF BRAINS OF RHINOCEROS AND DINOCERAS
Nat. Hist. Mus.

That unusual growth of brain which is the central fact of Cainozoic times marks a new communication and interdependence of individuals. It foreshadows the development of human societies of which we shall soon be telling.

As the Cainozoic period unrolled, the resemblance of its flora and fauna to the plants and animals that inhabit the world to-day increased. The big clumsy Uintatheres and Titanotheres, the Entelodonts and Hyracodons, big clumsy brutes like nothing living, disappeared. On the other hand a series of forms led up by steady degrees from grotesque and clumsy predecessors to the giraffes, camels, horses, elephants, deer, dogs and lions and tigers of the existing world. The evolution of the horse is particularly legible upon the geological record. We have a fairly complete series of forms from a small tapir-like ancestor in the early Cainozoic. Another line of development that has now been pieced together with some precision is that of the llamas and camels.

IX

MONKEYS, APES AND SUB-MEN

NATURALISTS divide the class *Mammalia* into a number of orders. At the head of these is the order *Primates*, which includes the lemurs, the monkeys, apes and man. Their classification was based originally upon anatomical resemblances and took no account of any mental qualities.

Now the past history of the Primates is one very difficult to decipher in the geological record. They are for the most part animals which live in forests like the lemurs and monkeys or in bare rocky places like the baboons. They are rarely drowned and covered up by sediment, nor are most of them very numerous species, and so they do not figure so largely among the fossils as the ancestors of the horses, camels and so forth do. But we know that quite early in the Cainozoic period, that is to say some forty million years ago or so, primitive monkeys and lemuroid creatures had appeared, poorer in brain and not so specialized as their later successors.

The great world summer of the middle Cainozoic period drew at last to an end. It was to follow those other two great summers in the history of life, the summer of the Coal Swamps and the vast summer of the Age of Reptiles. Once more the earth spun towards an ice age. The world chilled, grew milder for a time and chilled again. In the warm past hippopotami had wallowed through a lush sub-tropical vegetation, and a tremendous tiger with fangs like sabres, the sabre-toothed tiger, had hunted its prey where now the journalists of Fleet Street go to and fro. Now came a bleaker age and still bleaker ages. A great weeding and extinction of species occurred. A woolly rhinoceros, adapted to a cold climate, and the mammoth, a big woolly cousin of the elephants, the Arctic musk ox and the reindeer passed across the scene. Then century by century the Arctic ice cap, the wintry death of the great Ice Age, crept southward. In England it came almost down to the Thames, in America it reached Ohio. There would be warmer spells of a few thousand years and relapses towards a bitterer cold.

Geologists talk of these wintry phases as the First, Second, Third and Fourth Glacial Ages, and of the interludes as Interglacial periods.

We live to-day in a world that is still impoverished and scarred by that terrible winter. The First Glacial Age was coming on 600,000 years ago; the Fourth Glacial Age reached its bitterest some fifty thousand years ago. And it was amidst the snows of this long universal winter that the first man-like beings lived upon our planet.

A MAMMOTH

By the middle Cainozoic period there have appeared various apes with many quasi-human attributes of the jaws and leg bones, but it is only as we approach these Glacial Ages that we find traces of creatures that we can speak of as "almost human." These traces are not bones but implements. In Europe, in deposits of this period, between half a million and a million years old, we find flints and stones that have evidently been chipped intentionally by some handy creature desirous of hammering, scraping or fighting with the sharpened edge. These things have been called "Eoliths" (dawn stones). In Europe there are no bones nor other remains of the creature which made these objects, simply the objects themselves. For all the certainty we have it may have been some entirely un-human but intelligent monkey. But at Trinil in Java, in accumulations

of this age, a piece of a skull and various teeth and bones have been found of a sort of ape man, with a brain case bigger than that of any living apes, which seems to have walked erect. This creature is now called *Pithecanthropus erectus*, the walking ape man, and the little trayful of its bones is the only help our imaginations have as yet in figuring to, ourselves the makers of the Eoliths.

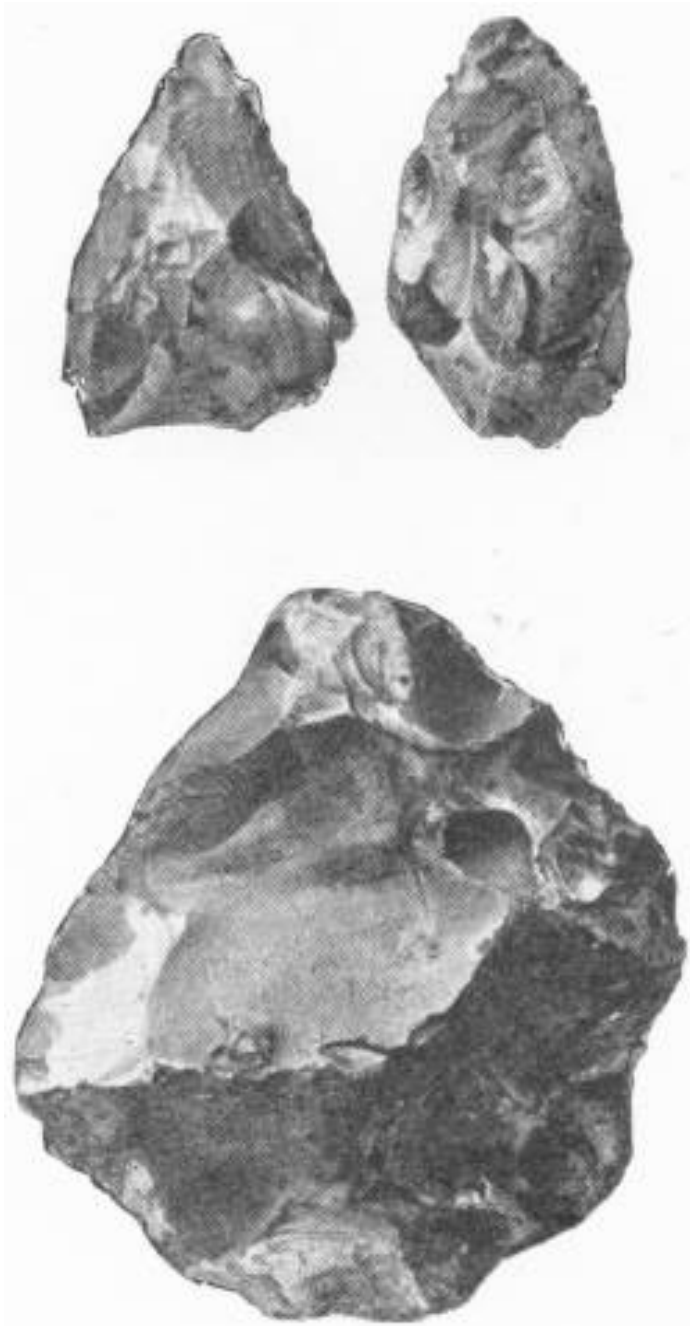

FLINT IMPLEMENTS FOUND IN PILTDOWN REGION

Nat. Hist. Mus.

It is not until we come to sands that are almost a quarter of a million years old that we find any other particle of a sub- human being. But there are plenty of implements, and they are steadily improving in quality as we read on through the record. They are no longer clumsy Eoliths; they are now shapely instruments made with considerable skill. *And they are much bigger than the similar implements afterwards made by true man.* Then, in a sandpit at Heidelberg, appears a single quasi-human jaw-bone, a clumsy jaw-bone, absolutely chinless, far heavier than a true human jaw-bone and narrower, so that it is improbable the creature's tongue could have moved about for articulate speech. On the strength of this jaw-bone, scientific men suppose this creature to have been a heavy, almost human monster, possibly with huge limbs and hands, possibly with a thick felt of hair, and they call it the Heidelberg Man.

A THEORETICAL RESTORATION OF THE
PITHECANTHROPUS ERECTUS BY PROF. RUTOT

This jaw-bone is, I think, one of the most tormenting objects in the world to our human curiosity. To see it is like looking through a defective glass into the past and catching just one blurred and tantalizing glimpse of this Thing, shambling through the bleak wilderness, clambering to avoid the sabre- toothed tiger, watching the woolly rhinoceros in the woods. Then before we can scrutinize the monster, he vanishes. Yet the soil is littered abundantly with the indestructible implements he chipped out for his uses.

THE HEIDELBERG MAN
The Heidelberg Man, as modelled under the supervision of Prof. Rutot

Still more fascinatingly enigmatical are the remains of a creature found at Piltdown in Sussex in a deposit that may indicate an age between a hundred and a hundred and fifty thousand years ago, though some authorities would put these particular remains back in time to before the Heidelberg jaw- bone. Here there are the remains of a thick sub-human skull much larger than any existing ape's, and a chimpanzee-like jaw-bone which may or may not belong to it, and, in addition, a bat-shaped piece of elephant bone evidently carefully manufactured, through which a hole had apparently been bored.

There is also the thigh-bone of a deer with cuts upon it like a tally. That is all.

THE PILTDOWN SKULL, AS RECONSTRUCTED FROM ORIGINAL FRAGMENT
Nat. Hist. Mus.

What sort of beast was this creature which sat and bored holes in bones?

Scientific men have named him Eoanthropus, the Dawn Man. He stands apart from his kindred; a very different being either from the Heidelberg creature or from any living ape. No other vestige like him

is known. But the gravels and deposits of from one hundred thousand years onward are increasingly rich in implements of flint and similar stone. And these implements are no longer rude “Eoliths.” The archæologists are presently able to distinguish scrapers, borers, knives, darts, throwing stones and hand axes ....

We are drawing very near to man. In our next section we shall have to describe the strangest of all these precursors of humanity, the Neanderthalers, the men who were almost, but not quite, true men.

But it may be well perhaps to state quite clearly here that no scientific man supposes either of these creatures, the Heidelberg Man or *Eoanthropus*, to be direct ancestors of the men of to-day. These are, at the closest, related forms.

X

THE NEANDERTHALER AND THE RHODESIAN MAN

ABOUT fifty or sixty thousand years ago, before the climax of the Fourth Glacial Age, there lived a creature on earth so like a man that until a few years ago its remains were considered to be altogether human. We have skulls and bones of it and a great accumulation of the large implements it made and used. It made fires. It sheltered in caves from the cold. It probably dressed skins roughly and wore them. It was right-handed as men are.

Yet now the ethnologists tell us these creatures were not true men. They were of a different species of the same genus. They had heavy protruding jaws and great brow ridges above the eyes and very low foreheads. Their thumbs were not opposable to the fingers as men's are; their necks were so poised that they could not turn back their heads and look up to the sky. They probably slouched along, head down and forward. Their chinless jaw-bones resemble the Heidelberg jaw-bone and are markedly unlike human jaw-bones. And there were great differences from the human pattern in their teeth. Their cheek teeth were more complicated in structure than ours, more complicated and not less so; they had not the long fangs of our cheek teeth; and also these quasi-men had not the marked canines (dog teeth) of an ordinary human being. The capacity of their skulls was quite human, but the brain was bigger behind and lower in front than the human brain. Their intellectual faculties were differently arranged. They were not ancestral to the human line. Mentally and physically they were upon a different line from the human line.

Skulls and bones of this extinct species of man were found at Neanderthal among other places, and from that place these strange proto-men have been christened Neanderthal Men, or Neanderthalers. They must have endured in Europe for many hundreds or even thousands of years.

THE NEANDERTHALER, ACCORDING TO PROF. RUTOT

At that time the climate and geography of our world was very different from what they are at the present time. Europe for example was covered with ice reaching as far south as the Thames and into Central Germany and Russia; there was no Channel separating Britain from France; the Mediterranean and the Red Sea were great valleys, with perhaps a chain of lakes in their deeper portions, and a great inland sea spread from the present Black Sea across South Russia and far into Central Asia. Spain and all of Europe not actually under ice consisted of bleak uplands under a harder climate than that of Labrador, and it was only when North Africa was reached that one would have found a temperate climate. Across the cold steppes of Southern Europe with its sparse arctic vegetation, drifted such hardy

creatures as the woolly mammoth, and woolly rhinoceros, great oxen and reindeer, no doubt following the vegetation northward in spring and southward in autumn.

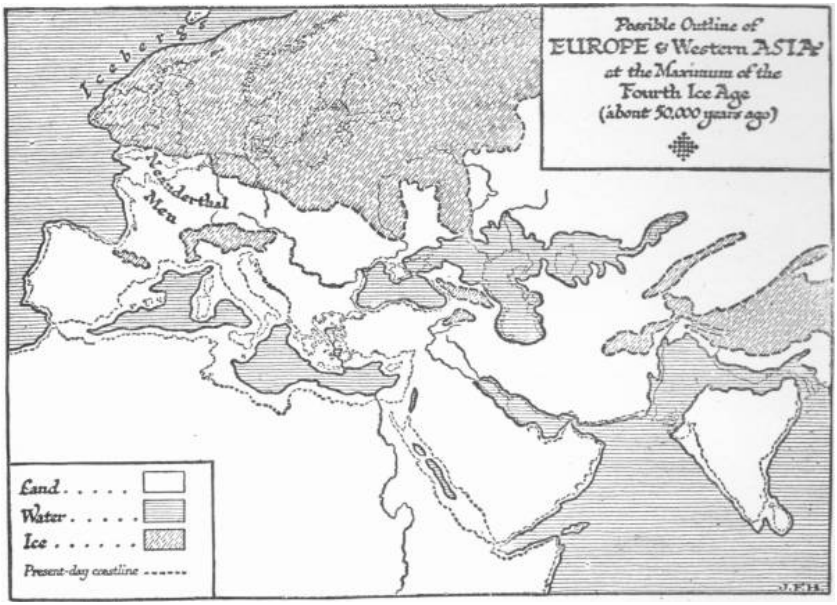

Such was the scene through which the Neanderthaler wandered, gathering such subsistence as he could from small game or fruits and berries and roots. Possibly he was mainly a vegetarian, chewing twigs and roots. His level elaborate teeth suggest a largely vegetarian dietary. But we also find the long marrow bones of great animals in his caves, cracked to extract the marrow. His weapons could not have been of much avail in open conflict with great beasts, but it is supposed that he attacked them with spears at difficult river crossings and even constructed pitfalls for them. Possibly he followed the herds and preyed upon any dead that were killed in fights, and perhaps he played the part of jackal to the sabre-toothed tiger which still survived in his day. Possibly in the bitter hardships of the Glacial Ages this creature had taken to attacking animals after long ages of vegetarian adaptation.

We cannot guess what this Neanderthal man looked like. He may have been very hairy and very unhuman-looking indeed. It is even

doubtful if he went erect. He may have used his knuckles as well as his feet to hold himself up. Probably he went about alone or in small family groups. It is inferred from the structure of his jaw that he was incapable of speech as we understand it.

For thousands of years these Neanderthalers were the highest animals that the European area had ever seen; and then some thirty or thirty-five thousand years ago as the climate grew warmer a race of kindred beings, more intelligent, knowing more, talking and co-operating together, came drifting into the Neanderthaler's world from the south. They ousted the Neanderthalers from their caves and squatting places; they hunted the same food; they probably made war upon their grisly predecessors and killed them off. These newcomers from the south or the east — for at present we do not know their region of origin — who at last drove the Neanderthalers out of existence altogether, were beings of our own blood and kin, the first True Men. Their brain-cases and thumbs and necks and teeth were anatomically the same as our own. In a cave at Cro-Magnon and in another at Grimaldi, a number of skeletons have been found, the earliest truly human remains that are so far known.

So it is our race comes into the Record of the Rocks, and the story of mankind begins.

COMPARISON OF (1) MODERN SKULL AND (2) RHODESIAN SKULL
Nat. Hist. Mus.

The world was growing liker our own in those days though the

climate was still austere. The glaciers of the Ice Age were receding in Europe; the reindeer of France and Spain presently gave way to great herds of horses as grass increased upon the steppes, and the mammoth became more and more rare in southern Europe and finally receded northward altogether ....

We do not know where the True Men first originated. But in the summer of 1921, an extremely interesting skull was found together with pieces of a skeleton at Broken Hill in South Africa, which seems to be a relic of a third sort of man, intermediate in its characteristics between the Neanderthaler and the human being. The brain-case indicates a brain bigger in front and smaller behind than the Neanderthaler's, and the skull was poised erect upon the backbone in a quite human way. The teeth also and the bones are quite human. But the face must have been ape-like with enormous brow ridges and a ridge along the middle of the skull. The creature was indeed a true man, so to speak, with an ape- like, Neanderthaler face. This Rhodesian Man is evidently still closer to real men than the Neanderthal Man.

This Rhodesian skull is probably only the second of what in the end may prove to be a long list of finds of sub-human species which lived on the earth in the vast interval of time between the beginnings of the Ice Age and the appearance of their common heir, and perhaps their common exterminator, the True Man. The Rhodesian skull itself may not be very ancient. Up to the time of publishing this book there has been no exact determination of its probable age. It may be that this sub-human creature survived in South Africa until quite recent times.

XI

THE FIRST TRUE MEN

THE earliest signs and traces at present known to science, of a humanity which is indisputably kindred with ourselves, have been found in western Europe and particularly in France and Spain. Bones, weapons, scratchings upon bone and rock, carved fragments of bone, and paintings in caves and upon rock surfaces dating. it is supposed. from 30,000 years ago or more, have been discovered in both these countries. Spain is at present the richest country in the world in these first relics of our real human ancestors.

Of course our present collections of these things are the merest beginnings of the accumulations we may hope for in the future, when there are searchers enough to make a thorough examination of all possible sources and when other countries in the world, now inaccessible to archæologists, have been explored in some detail. The greater part of Africa and Asia has never even been traversed yet by a trained observer interested in these matters and free to explore, and we must be very careful therefore not to conclude that the early true men were distinctively inhabitants of western Europe or that they first appeared in that region.

In Asia or Africa or submerged beneath the sea of to-day there may be richer and much earlier deposits of real human remains than anything that has yet come to light. I write in Asia or Africa, and I do not mention America because so far there have been no finds at all of any of the higher Primates, either of great apes, sub-men, Neanderthalers nor early true men. This development of life seems to have been an exclusively old world development, and it was only apparently at the end of the Old Stone Age that human beings first made their way across the land connexion that is now cut by Behring Straits, into the American continent.

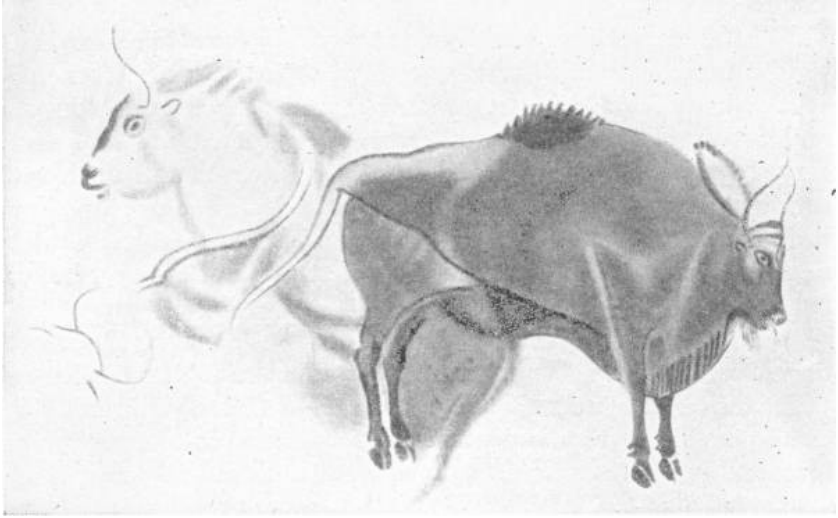

ONE OF THE MARVELLOUS CAVE PAINTINGS OF ALTAMIRA, NORTH SPAIN
The Walls of the Caves are covered in these representations of Bulls, etc., painted in the soft tones of red shaded to black. They may be fifteen or twenty thousand years old

These first real human beings we know of in Europe appear already to have belonged to one or other of at least two very distinct races. One of these races was of a very high type indeed; it was tall and big brained. One of the women's skulls found exceeds in capacity that of the average man of to-day. One of the men's skeletons is over six feet in height. The physical type resembled that of the North American Indian. From the Cro-Magnon cave in which the first skeletons were found these people have been called Cro-Magnards. They were savages, but savages of a high order. The second race, the race of the Grimaldi cave remains, was distinctly negroid in its characters. Its nearest living affinities are the Bushmen and Hottentots of South Africa. It is interesting to find at the very outset of the known human story, that mankind was already racially divided into at least two main varieties; and one is tempted to such unwarrantable guesses as that the former race was probably brownish rather than black and that it came from the East or North, and that the latter was blackish rather than brown and came from the equatorial

south.

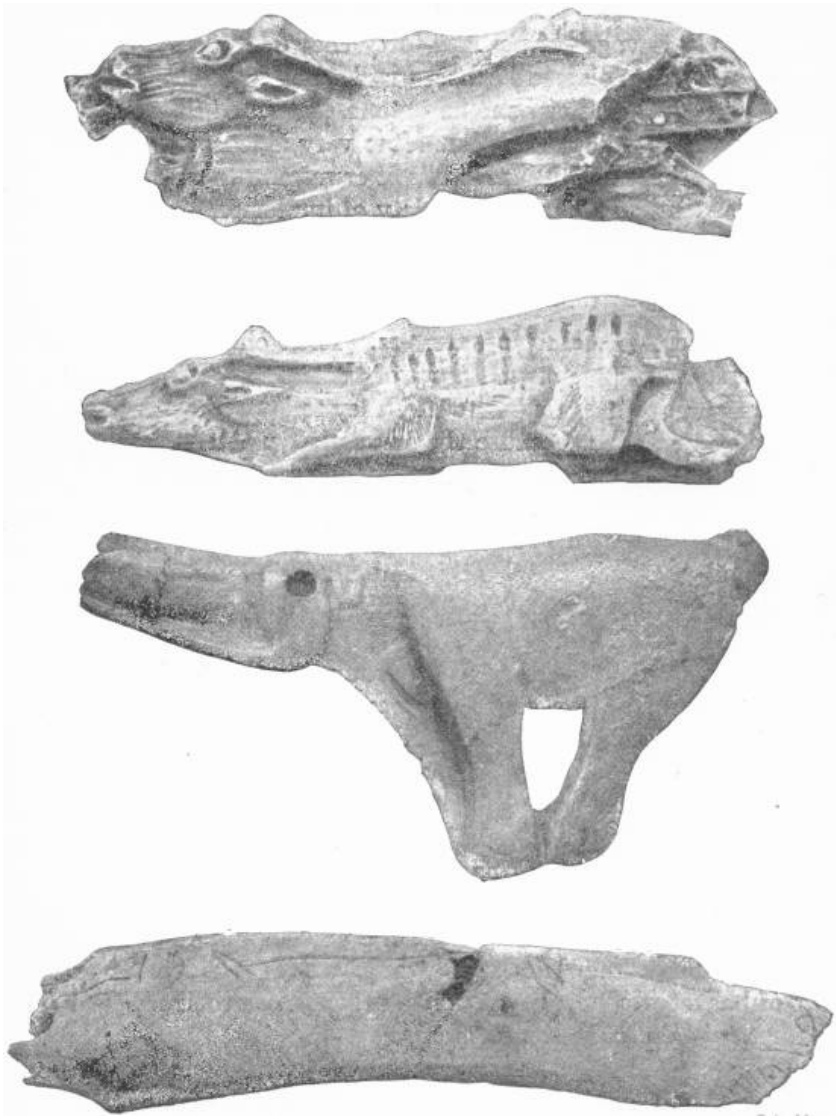

BONE CARVINGS OF THE PALÆOLITHIC PERIOD
(1 and 2) Mammoth tusk carved to shape of Reindeer, (3) Dagger Handle representing Mammoth, and (4) Bone engraved with Horses' Heads
Brit. Mus.

And these savages of perhaps forty thousand years ago were so human that they pierced shells to make necklaces, painted themselves, carved images of bone and stone, scratched figures on rocks and bones, and painted rude but often very able sketches of beasts and the like upon the smooth walls of caves and upon inviting rock surfaces. They made a great variety of implements, much smaller in scale and finer than those of the Neanderthal men. We have now in our museums great quantities of their implements, their statuettes, their rock drawings and the like.

The earliest of them were hunters. Their chief pursuit was the wild horse, the little bearded pony of that time. They followed it as it moved after pasture. And also they followed the bison. They knew the mammoth, because they have left us strikingly effective pictures of that creature. To judge by one rather ambiguous drawing they trapped and killed it.

They hunted with spears and throwing stones. They do not seem to have had the bow, and it is doubtful if they had yet learnt to tame any animals. They had no dogs. There is one carving of a horse's head and one or two drawings that suggest a bridled horse, with a twisted skin or tendon round it. But the little horses of that age and region could not have carried a man, and if the horse was domesticated it was used as a led horse. It is doubtful and improbable that they had yet learnt the rather unnatural use of animal's milk as food.

They do not seem to have erected any buildings though they may have had tents of skins, and though they made clay figures they never rose to the making of pottery. Since they had no cooking implements their cookery must have been rudimentary or nonexistent. They knew nothing of cultivation and nothing of any sort of basket work or woven cloth. Except for their robes of skin or fur they were naked painted savages.

These earliest known men hunted the open steppes of Europe for a hundred centuries perhaps, and then slowly drifted and changed before a change of climate. Europe, century by century, was growing milder and damper. Reindeer receded northward and eastward, and bison and horse followed. The steppes gave way to forests, and red

deer took the place of horse and bison. There is a change in the character of the implements with this change in their application. River and lake fishing becomes of great importance to men, and fine implements of bone increased. “The bone needles of this age,” says de Mortillet, “are much superior to those of later, even historical times, down to the Renaissance. The Romans, for example, never had needles comparable to those of this epoch.”

THE RUTOT BUST OF A CRO-MAGNON MAN

Almost fifteen or twelve thousand years ago a fresh people drifted

into the south of Spain, and left very remarkable drawings of themselves upon exposed rock faces there. These were the Azilians (named from the Mas d'Azil cave). They had the bow; they seem to have worn feather headdresses; they drew vividly; but also they had reduced their drawings to a sort of symbolism — a man for instance would be represented by a vertical dab with two or three horizontal dabs — that suggest the dawn of the writing idea. Against hunting sketches there are often marks like tallies. One drawing shows two men smoking out a bees' nest.

THE HONEY GATHERER AMONG THE BEES
He is on a rope-ladder

FIGHT OF BOWMEN

Among the most recent discoveries of Palæolithic Art are these specimens found in 1920 in Spain. They are probably ten or twelve thousand years old

These are the latest of the men that we call Palæolithic (Old Stone Age) because they had only chipped implements. By ten or twelve thousand years a new sort of life has dawned in Europe, men have learnt not only to chip but to polish and grind stone implements, and

they have begun cultivation. The Neolithic Age (New Stone Age) was beginning.

It is interesting to note that less than a century ago there still survived in a remote part of the world, in Tasmania, a race of human beings at a lower level of physical and intellectual development than any of these earliest races of mankind who have left traces in Europe. These people had long ago been cut off by geographical changes from the rest of the species, and from stimulation and improvement. They seem to have degenerated rather than developed. They lived a base life subsisting upon shellfish and small game. They had no habitations but only squatting places. They were real men of our species, but they had neither the manual dexterity nor the artistic powers of the first true men.

XII

PRIMITIVE THOUGHT

AND now let us indulge in a very interesting speculation; how did it feel to be a man in those early days of the human adventure? How did men think and what did they think in those remote days of hunting and wandering four hundred centuries ago before seed time and harvest began. Those were days long before the written record of any human impressions, and we are left almost entirely to inference and guesswork in our answers to these questions.

The sources to which scientific men have gone in their attempts to reconstruct that primitive mentality are very various. Recently the science of psycho-analysis, which analyzes the way in which the egotistic and passionate impulses of the child are restrained, suppressed, modified or overlaid, to adapt them to the needs of social life, seems to have thrown a considerable amount of light upon the history of primitive society; and another fruitful source of suggestion has been the study of the ideas and customs of such contemporary savages as still survive. Again there is a sort of mental fossilization which we find in folk-lore and the deep-lying irrational superstitions and prejudices that still survive among modern civilized people. And finally we have in the increasingly numerous pictures, statues, carvings, symbols and the like, as we draw near to our own time, clearer and clearer indications of what man found interesting and worthy of record and representation.

Primitive man probably thought very much as a child thinks, that is to say in a series of imaginative pictures. He conjured up images or images presented themselves to his mind, and he acted in accordance with the emotions they aroused. So a child or an uneducated person does to-day. Systematic thinking is apparently a comparatively late development in human experience; it has not played any great part in human life until within the last three thousand years. And even to-day those who really control and order their thoughts are but a small minority of mankind. Most of the world still lives by imagination and passion.

Probably the earliest human societies, in the opening stages of the true human story, were small family groups. Just as the flocks and

herds of the earlier mammals arose out of families which remained together and multiplied, so probably did the earliest tribes. But before this could happen a certain restraint upon the primitive egotisms of the individual had to be established. The fear of the father and respect for the mother had to be extended into adult life, and the natural jealousy of the old man of the group for the younger males as they grew up had to be mitigated. The mother on the other hand was the natural adviser and protector of the young. Human social life grew up out of the reaction between the crude instinct of the young to go off and pair by themselves as they grew up, on the one hand, and the dangers and disadvantages of separation on the other. An anthropological writer of great genius, J. J. Atkinson, in his *Primal Law*, has shown how much of the customary law of savages, the *Tabus*, that are so remarkable a fact in tribal life, can be ascribed to such a mental adjustment of the needs of the primitive human animal to a developing social life, and the later work of the psychoanalysts has done much to confirm his interpretation of these possibilities.

Some speculative writers would have us believe that respect and fear of the Old Man and the emotional reaction of the primitive savage to older protective women, exaggerated in dreams and enriched by fanciful mental play, played a large part in the beginnings of primitive religion and in the conception of gods and goddesses. Associated with this respect for powerful or helpful personalities was a dread and exaltation of such personages after their deaths, due to their reappearance in dreams. It was easy to believe they were not truly dead but only fantastically transferred to a remoteness of greater power.

The dreams, imaginations and fears of a child are far more vivid and real than those of a modern adult, and primitive man was always something of a child. He was nearer to the animals also, and he could suppose them to have motives and reactions like his own. He could imagine animal helpers, animal enemies, animal gods. One needs to have been an imaginative child oneself to realize again how important, significant, portentous or friendly, strangely shaped rocks, lumps of wood, exceptional trees or the like may have appeared to the men of the Old Stone Age, and how dream and fancy would

create stories and legends about such things that would become credible as they told them. Some of these stories would be good enough to remember and tell again. The women would tell them to the children and so establish a tradition. To this day most imaginative children invent long stories in which some favourite doll or animal or some fantastic semi-human being figures as the hero, and primitive man probably did the same — with a much stronger disposition to believe his hero real.

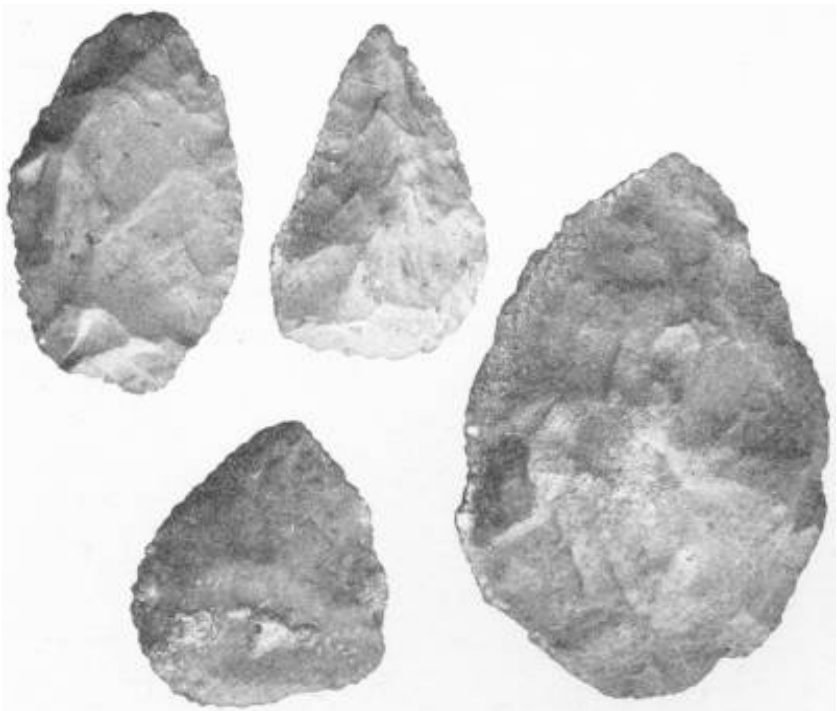

RELICS OF THE STONE AGE
Chert implements from Somaliland. In general form they are similar to those found in Western and Northern Europe
Brit. Mus.

For the very earliest of the true men that we know of were probably quite talkative beings. In that way they have differed from the Neanderthalers and had an advantage over them. The Neanderthaler may have been a dumb animal. Of course the

primitive human speech was probably a very scanty collection of names, and may have been eked out with gestures and signs.

There is no sort of savage so low as not to have a kind of science of cause and effect. But primitive man was not very critical in his associations of cause with effect; he very easily connected an effect with something quite wrong as its cause. "You do so and so," he said, "and so and so happens." You give a child a poisonous berry and it dies. You eat the heart of a valiant enemy and you become strong. There we have two bits of cause and effect association, one true one false. We call the system of cause and effect in the mind of a savage, Fetish; but Fetish is simply savage science. It differs from modern science in that it is totally unsystematic and uncritical and so more frequently wrong.

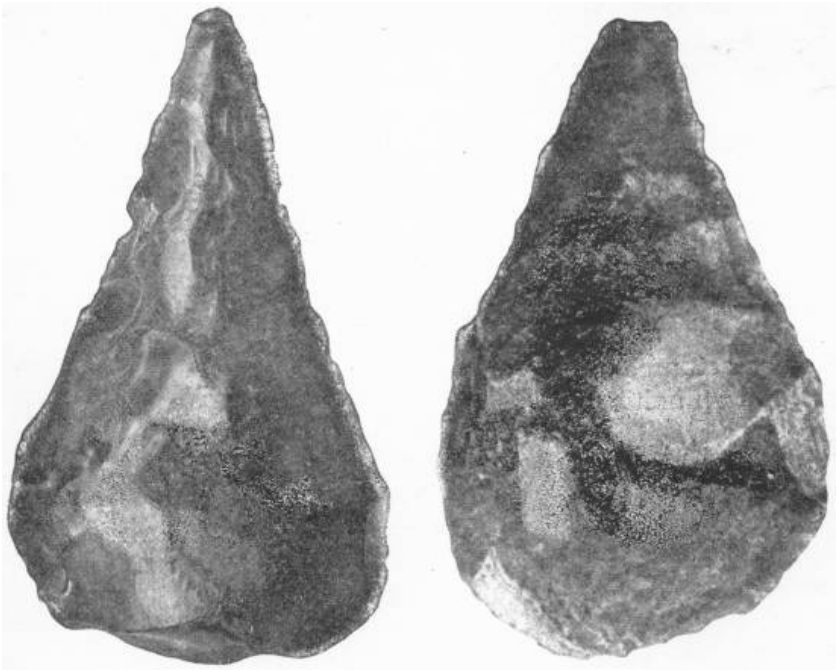

WIDESPREAD SIMILARITY OF MEN OF THE STONE AGE
On the left is a flint implement excavated in Gray's Inn Lane, London; on the right one of similar form chipped by primitive men of Somaliland
Brit. Mus.

In many cases it is not difficult to link cause and effect, in many others erroneous ideas were soon corrected by experience; but there was a large series of issues of very great importance to primitive man, where he sought persistently for causes and found explanations that were wrong but not sufficiently wrong nor so obviously wrong as to be detected. It was a matter of great importance to him that game should be abundant or fish plentiful and easily caught, and no doubt he tried and believed in a thousand charms, incantations and omens to determine these desirable results. Another great concern of his was illness and death. Occasionally infections crept through the land and men died of them. Occasionally men were stricken by illness and died or were enfeebled without any manifest cause. This too must have given the hasty, emotional mind of primitive man much feverish exercise. Dreams and fantastic guesses made him blame this, or appeal for help to that man or beast or thing. He had the child's aptitude for fear and panic.

Quite early in the little human tribe, older, steadier minds sharing the fears, sharing the imaginations, but a little more forceful than the others, must have asserted themselves, to advise, to prescribe, to command. This they declared unpropitious and that imperative, this an omen of good and that an omen of evil. The expert in Fetish, the Medicine Man, was the first priest. He exhorted, he interpreted dreams, he warned, he performed the complicated hocus pocus that brought luck or averted calamity. Primitive religion was not so much what we now call religion as practice and observance, and the early priest dictated what was indeed an arbitrary primitive practical science.

XIII

THE BEGINNINGS OF CULTIVATION

WE are still very ignorant about the beginnings of cultivation and settlement in the world although a vast amount of research and speculation has been given to these matters in the last fifty years. All that we can say with any confidence at present is that somewhen about 15,000 and 12,000 B.C. while the Azilian people were in the south of Spain and while the remnants of the earlier hunters were drifting northward and eastward, somewhere in North Africa or Western Asia or in that great Mediterranean valley that is now submerged under the waters of the Mediterranean sea, there were people who, age by age, were working out two vitally important things; they were beginning cultivation and they were domesticating animals. They were also beginning to make, in addition to the chipped implements of their hunter forebears, implements of polished stone. They had discovered the possibility of basketwork and roughly woven textiles of plant fibre, and they were beginning to make a rudely modelled pottery.

They were entering upon a new phase in human culture, the Neolithic phase (New Stone Age) as distinguished from the Palæolithic (Old Stone) phase of the Cro-Magnards, the Grimaldi people, the Azilians and their like. Slowly these Neolithic people spread over the warmer parts of the world; and the arts they had mastered, the plants and animals they had learnt to use, spread by imitation and acquisition even more widely than they did. By 10,000 B.C., most of mankind was at the Neolithic level.

Now the ploughing of land, the sowing of seed, the reaping of harvest, threshing and grinding, may seem the most obviously reasonable steps to a modern mind just as to a modern mind it is a commonplace that the world is round. What else could you do? people will ask. What else can it be? But to the primitive man of twenty thousand years ago neither of the systems of action and reasoning that seem so sure and manifest to us to-day were at all obvious. He felt his way to effectual practice through a multitude of trials and misconceptions, with fantastic and unnecessary elaborations and false interpretations at every turn. Somewhere in the

Mediterranean region, wheat grew wild; and man may have learnt to pound and then grind up its seeds for food long before he learnt to sow. He reaped before he sowed.

And it is a very remarkable thing that throughout the world wherever there is sowing and harvesting there is still traceable the vestiges of a strong primitive association of the idea of sowing with the idea of a blood sacrifice, and primarily of the sacrifice of a human being. The study of the original entanglement of these two things is a profoundly attractive one to the curious mind; the interested reader will find it very fully developed in that monumental work, Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*. It was an entanglement, we must remember, in the childish, dreaming, myth-making primitive mind; no reasoned process will explain it. But in that world of 12,000 to 20,000 years ago, it would seem that whenever seed time came round to the Neolithic peoples there was a human sacrifice. And it was not the sacrifice of any mean or outcast person; it was the sacrifice usually of a chosen youth or maiden, a youth more often who was treated with profound deference and even worship up to the moment of his immolation. He was a sort of sacrificial god-king, and all the details of his killing had become a ritual directed by the old, knowing men and sanctioned by the accumulated usage of ages.

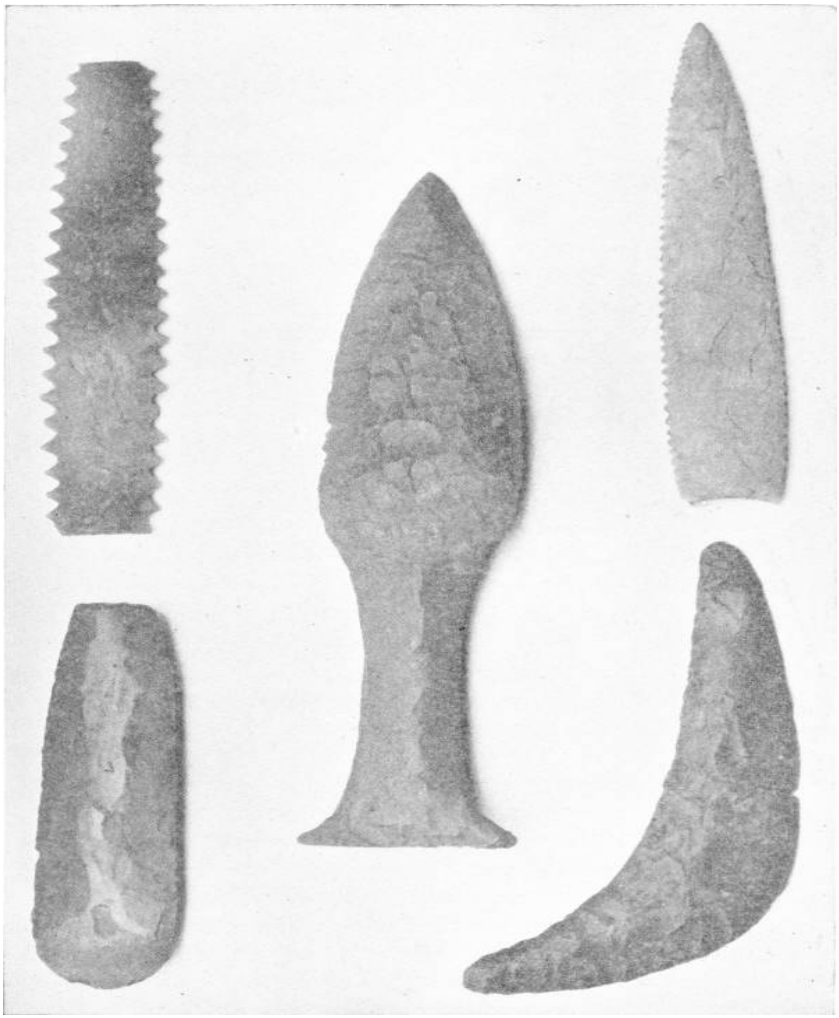

NEOLITHIC FLINT IMPLEMENTS
Brit. Mus.

At first primitive men, with only a very rough idea of the seasons, must have found great difficulty in determining when was the propitious moment for the seed-time sacrifice and the sowing. There is some reason for supposing that there was an early stage in human experience when men had no idea of a year. The first chronology was in lunar months; it is supposed that the years of the Biblical patriarchs are really moons, and the Babylonian calendar shows

distinct traces of an attempt to reckon seed time by taking thirteen lunar months to see it round. This lunar influence upon the calendar reaches down to our own days. If usage did not dull our sense of its strangeness we should think it a very remarkable thing indeed that the Christian Church does not commemorate the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ on the proper anniversaries but on dates that vary year by year with the phases of the moon.

It may be doubted whether the first agriculturalists made any observation of the stars. It is more likely that stars were first observed by migratory herdsmen, who found them a convenient mark of direction. But once their use in determining seasons was realized, their importance to agriculture became very great. The seed-time sacrifice was linked up with the southing or northing of some prominent star. A myth and worship of that star was for primitive man an almost inevitable consequence.

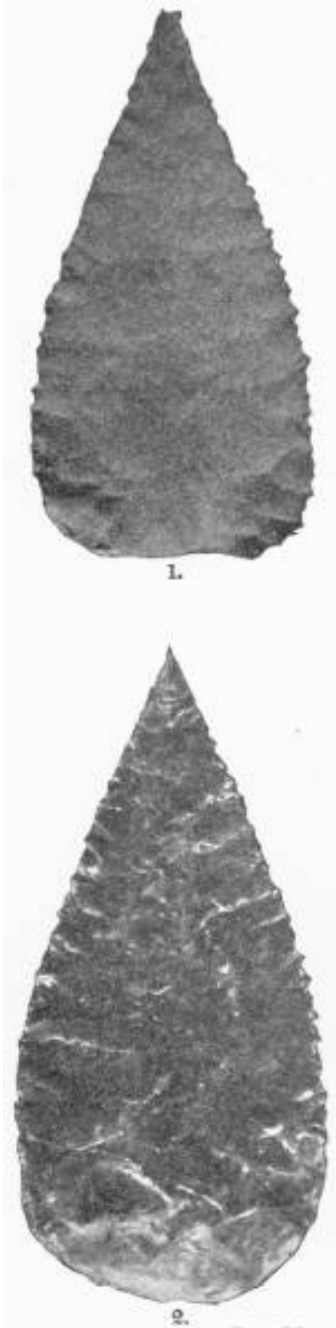

NEOLITHICISM OF TO-DAY

Spearheads, exactly as in the true Neolithic days, but made recently by Australian Natives,
(1) Made from a telegraph insulator;
(2) from a piece of broken bottle glass.
Brit. Mus.

It is easy to see how important the man of knowledge and experience, the man who knew about the blood sacrifice and the stars, became in this early Neolithic world.

The fear of uncleanness and pollution, and the methods of cleansing that were advisable, constituted another source of power for the knowledgeable men and women. For there have always been witches as well as wizards, and priestesses as well as priests. The early priest was really not so much a religious man as a man of applied science. His science was generally empirical and often bad; he kept it secret from the generality of men very jealously; but that does not alter the fact that his primary function was knowledge and that his primary use was a practical use.

SPECIMEN OF NEOLITHIC POTTERY

Dug up at Mortlake from the Thames Bed
Brit. Mus.

Twelve or fifteen thousand years ago, in all the warm and fairly well-watered parts of the Old World these Neolithic human communities, with their class and tradition of priests and priestesses and their cultivated fields and their development of villages and little walled cities, were spreading. Age by age a drift and exchange of ideas went on between these communities. Eliot Smith and Rivers have used the term "Heliolithic culture" for the culture of these first agricultural peoples. "Heliolithic" (Sun and Stone) is not perhaps the best possible word to use for this, but until scientific men give us a better one we shall have to use it. Originating somewhere in the Mediterranean and western Asiatic area, it spread age by age eastward and from island to island across the Pacific until it may even have reached America and mingled with the more primitive ways of living of the Mongoloid immigrants coming down from the North.

Wherever the brownish people with the Heliolithic culture went they took with them all or most of a certain group of curious ideas and practices. Some of them are such queer ideas that they call for the explanation of the mental expert. They made pyramids and great mounds, and set up great circles of big stones, perhaps to facilitate the astronomical observation of the priests; they made mummies of some or all of their dead; they tattooed and circumcized; they had the old custom, known as the *couvade*, of sending the *father* to bed and rest when a child was born, and they had as a luck symbol the well-known Swastika.

If we were to make a map of the world with dots to show how far these group practices have left their traces, we should make a belt along the temperate and sub-tropical coasts of the world from Stonehenge and Spain across the world to Mexico and Peru. But Africa below the equator, north central Europe, and north Asia would show none of these dottings; there lived races who were developing along practically independent lines.

The term Palæolithic we may note is also used to cover the Neanderthaler and even the Eolithic implements. The pre-human age

is called the “Older Palæolithic;” the age of true men using unpolished stones in the “Newer Palæolithic.”

XIV

PRIMITIVE NEOLITHIC CIVILIZATIONS

ABOUT 10,000 B.C. the geography of the world was very similar in its general outline to that of the world to-day. It is probable that by that time the great barrier across the Straits of Gibraltar that had hitherto banked back the ocean waters from the Mediterranean valley had been eaten through, and that the Mediterranean was a sea following much the same coastlines as it does now. The Caspian Sea was probably still far more extensive than it is at present, and it may have been continuous with the Black Sea to the north of the Caucasus Mountains. About this great Central Asian sea lands that are now steppes and deserts were fertile and habitable. Generally it was a moister and more fertile world. European Russia was much more a land of swamp and lake than it is now, and there may still have been a land connexion between Asia and America at Behring Straits.

It would have been already possible at that time to have distinguished the main racial divisions of mankind as we know them to-day. Across the warm temperate regions of this rather warmer and better-wooded world, and along the coasts, stretched the brownish peoples of the Heliolithic culture, the ancestors of the bulk of the living inhabitants of the Mediterranean world, of the Berbers, the Egyptians and of much of the population of South and Eastern Asia. This great race had of course a number of varieties. The Iberian or Mediterranean or "dark-white" race of the Atlantic and Mediterranean coast, the "Hamitic" peoples which include the Berbers and Egyptians, the Dravidians; the darker people of India, a multitude of East Indian people, many Polynesian races and the Maoris are all divisions of various value of this great main mass of humanity. Its western varieties are whiter than its eastern.

In the forests of central and northern Europe a more blonde variety of men with blue eyes was becoming distinguishable, branching off from the main mass of brownish people, a variety which many people now speak of as the Nordic race. In the more open regions of northeastern Asia was another differentiation of this brownish humanity in the direction of a type with more oblique eyes,

high cheek-bones, a yellowish skin, and very straight black hair, the Mongolian peoples. In South Africa, Australia, in many tropical islands in the south of Asia were remains of the early negroid peoples. The central parts of Africa were already a region of racial intermixture. Nearly all the coloured races of Africa to-day seem to be blends of the brownish peoples of the north with a negroid substratum.

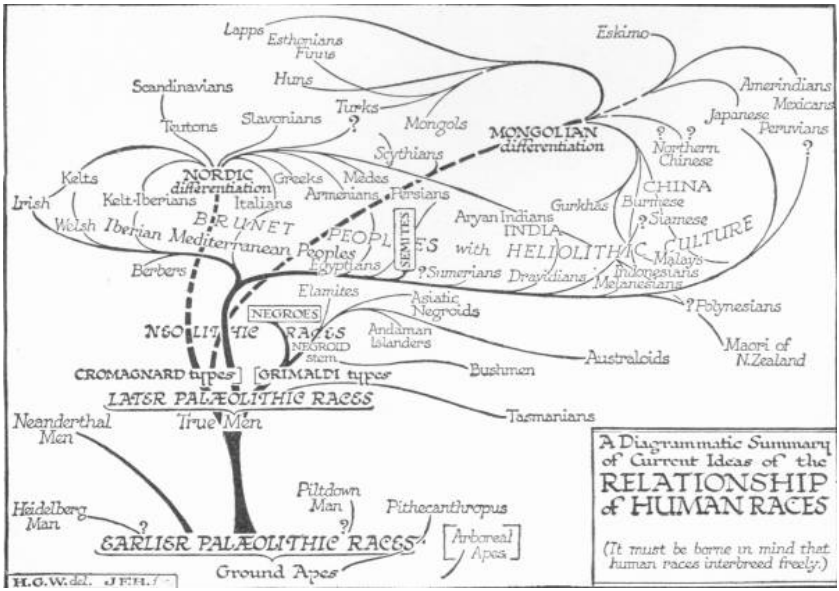

We have to remember that human races can all interbreed freely and that they separate, mingle and reunite as clouds do. Human races do not branch out like trees with branches that never come together again. It is a thing we need to bear constantly in mind, this remingling of races at any opportunity. It will save us from many cruel delusions and prejudices if we do so. People will use such a word as race in the loosest manner, and base the most preposterous generalizations upon it. They will speak of a “British” race or of a “European” race. But nearly all the European nations are confused mixtures of brownish, dark-white, white and Mongolian elements.

A MAYA STELE
Showing a worshipper and a Serpent God. Note the grotesque faces in the writing
Brit. Mus.

It was at the Neolithic phase of human development that peoples of the Mongolian breed first made their way into America. Apparently they came by way of Behring Straits and spread southward. They found caribou, the American reindeer, in the north and great herds of bison in the south. When they reached South America there were still living the Glyptodon, a gigantic armadillo, and the Megatherium, a monstrous clumsy sloth as high as an

elephant. They probably exterminated the latter beast, which was as helpless as it was big.

The greater portion of these American tribes never rose above a hunting nomadic Neolithic life. They never discovered the use of iron, and their chief metal possessions were native gold and copper. But in Mexico, Yucatan and Peru conditions existed favourable to settled cultivation, and here about 1000 B.C. or so arose very interesting civilizations of a parallel but different type from the old-world civilization. Like the much earlier primitive civilizations of the old world these communities displayed a great development of human sacrifice about the processes of seed time and harvest; but while in the old world, as we shall see, these primary ideas were ultimately mitigated, complicated and overlaid by others, in America they developed and were elaborated, to a very high degree of intensity. These American civilized countries were essentially priest-ruled countries; their war chiefs and rulers were under a rigorous rule of law and omen.

These priests carried astronomical science to a high level of accuracy. They knew their year better than the Babylonians of whom we shall presently tell. In Yucatan they had a kind of writing, the Maya writing, of the most curious and elaborate character. So far as we have been able to decipher it, it was used mainly for keeping the exact and complicated calendars upon which the priests expended their intelligence. The art of the Maya civilization came to a climax about 700 or 800 A.D. The sculptured work of these people amazes the modern observer by its great plastic power and its frequent beauty, and perplexes him by a grotesqueness and by a sort of insane conventionality and intricacy outside the circle of his ideas. There is nothing quite like it in the old world. The nearest approach, and that is a remote one, is found in archaic Indian carvings. Everywhere there are woven feathers and serpents twine in and out. Many Maya inscriptions resemble a certain sort of elaborate drawing made by lunatics in European asylums, more than any other old-world work. It is as if the Maya mind had developed upon a different line from the old-world mind, had a different twist to its ideas, was not, by old-world standards, a rational mind at all.

This linking of these aberrant American civilizations to the idea of

a general mental aberration finds support in their extraordinary obsession by the shedding of human blood. The Mexican civilization in particular ran blood; it offered thousands of human victims yearly. The cutting open of living victims, the tearing out of the still beating heart, was an act that dominated the minds and lives of these strange priesthoods. The public life, the national festivities all turned on this fantastically horrible act.

NEOLITHIC WARRIOR
Modelled from drawing by Prof. Rutot

The ordinary existence of the common people in these communities was very like the ordinary existence of any other barbaric peasantry. Their pottery, weaving and dyeing was very good. The Maya writing was not only carven on stone but written and painted upon skins and the like. The European and American museums contain many enigmatical Maya manuscripts of which at present little has been deciphered except the dates. In Peru there were beginnings of a similar writing but they were superseded by a method of keeping records by knotting cords. A similar method of mnemonics was in use in China thousands of years ago.

In the old world before 4000 or 5000 B.C., that is to say three or four thousand years earlier, there were primitive civilizations not unlike these American civilizations; civilizations based upon a temple, having a vast quantity of blood sacrifices and with an intensely astronomical priesthood. But in the old world the primitive civilizations reacted upon one another and developed towards the conditions of our own world. In America these primitive civilizations never progressed beyond this primitive stage. Each of them was in a little world of its own. Mexico it seems knew little or nothing of Peru, until the Europeans came to America. The potato, which was the principal food stuff in Peru, was unknown in Mexico.

Age by age these peoples lived and marvelled at their gods and made their sacrifices and died. Maya art rose to high levels of decorative beauty. Men made love and tribes made war. Drought and plenty, pestilence and health, followed one another. The priests elaborated their calendar and their sacrificial ritual through long centuries, but made little progress in other directions.

SUMERIA, EARLY EGYPT AND WRITING

THE old world is a wider, more varied stage than the new. By 6000 or 7000 B.C. there were already quasi-civilized communities almost at the Peruvian level, appearing in various fertile regions of Asia and in the Nile valley. At that time north Persia and western Turkestan and south Arabia were all more fertile than they are now, and there are traces of very early communities in these regions. It is in lower Mesopotamia however and in Egypt that there first appear cities, temples, systematic irrigation, and evidences of a social organization rising above the level of a mere barbaric village-town. In those days the Euphrates and Tigris flowed by separate mouths into the Persian Gulf, and it was in the country between them that the Sumerians built their first cities. About the same time, for chronology is still vague, the great history of Egypt was beginning.

These Sumerians appear to have been a brownish people with prominent noses. They employed a sort of writing that has been deciphered, and their language is now known. They had discovered the use of bronze and they built great tower-like temples of sun-dried brick. The clay of this country is very fine; they used it to write upon, and so it is that their inscriptions have been preserved to us. They had cattle, sheep, goats and asses, but no horses. They fought on foot, in close formation, carrying spears and shields of skin. Their clothing was of wool and they shaved their heads.

Each of the Sumerian cities seems generally to have been an independent state with a god of its own and priests of its own. But sometimes one city would establish an ascendancy over others and exact tribute from their population. A very ancient inscription at Nippur records the “empire,” the first recorded empire, of the Sumerian city of Erech. Its god and its priest-king claimed an authority from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea.

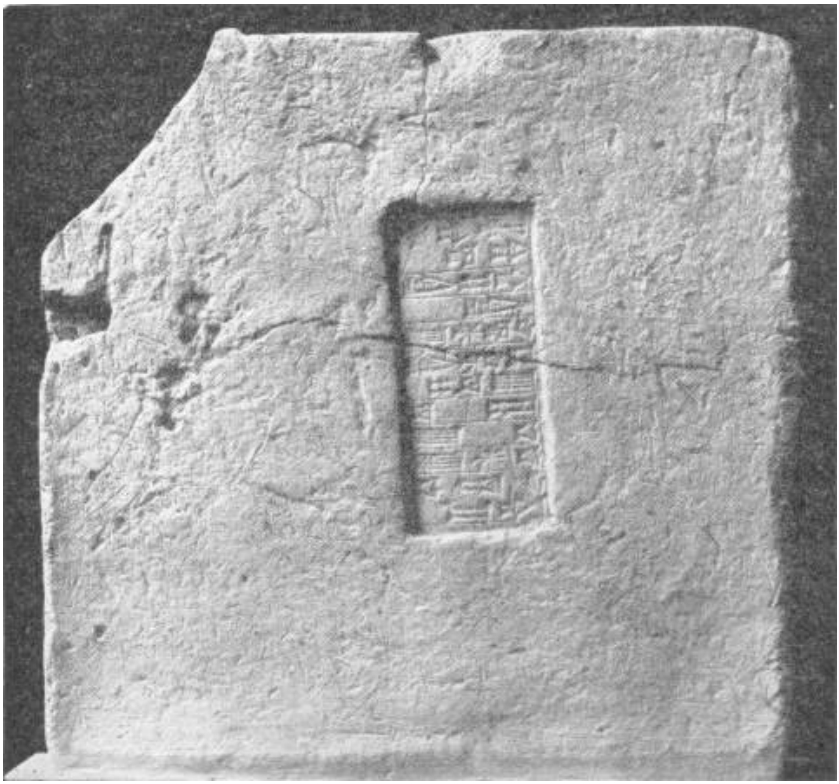

BRICK OF HAMMURABI, KING OF BABYLON ABOUT 2200 B.C.
Note the cuneiform characters of the inscription, which records the building of a temple to a Sun God

At first writing was merely an abbreviated method of pictorial record. Even before Neolithic times men were beginning to write. The Azilian rock pictures to which we have already referred show the beginning of the process. Many of them record hunts and expeditions, and in most of these the human figures are plainly drawn. But in some the painter would not bother with head and limbs; he just indicated men by a vertical and one or two transverse strokes. From this to a conventional condensed picture writing was an easy transition. In Sumeria, where the writing was done on clay with a stick, the dabs of the characters soon became unrecognizably unlike the things they stood for, but in Egypt where men painted on

walls and on strips of the papyrus reed (the first paper) the likeness to the thing imitated remained. From the fact that the wooden styles used in Sumeria made wedge-shaped marks, the Sumerian writing is called cuneiform (= wedge-shaped).

EBONY CYLINDER SEALS OF FIRST EGYPTIAN DYNASTY
Recovered from the Tombs at Abydos in 1921 by the British School

of Archæology. They give evidence of early form of block printing

An important step towards writing was made when pictures were used to indicate not the thing represented but some similar thing. In the rebus dear to children of a suitable age, this is still done to-day. We draw a camp with tents and a bell, and the child is delighted to guess that this is the Scotch name Campbell. The Sumerian language was a language made up of accumulated syllables rather like some contemporary Amerindian languages, and it lent itself very readily to this syllabic method of writing words expressing ideas that could not be conveyed by pictures directly. Egyptian writing underwent parallel developments. Later on, when foreign peoples with less distinctly syllabled methods of speech were to learn and use these picture scripts they were to make those further modifications and simplifications that developed at last into alphabetical writing. All the true alphabets of the later world derived from a mixture of the Sumerian cuneiform and the Egyptian hieroglyphic (priest writing). Later in China there was to develop a conventionalized picture writing, but in China it never got to the alphabetical stage.

The invention of writing was of very great importance in the development of human societies. It put agreements, laws, commandments on record. It made the growth of states larger than the old city states possible. It made a continuous historical consciousness possible. The command of the priest or king and his seal could go far beyond his sight and voice and could survive his death. It is interesting to note that in ancient Sumeria seals were greatly used. A king or a nobleman or a merchant would have his seal often very artistically carved, and would impress it on any clay document he wished to authorize. So close had civilization got to printing six thousand years ago. Then the clay was dried hard and became permanent. For the reader must remember that in the land of Mesopotamia for countless years, letters, records and accounts were all written on comparatively indestructible tiles. To that fact we owe a great wealth of recovered knowledge.

THE SAKHARA PYRAMIDS
The Pyramid to the right, the step Pyramid, is the oldest stone building in the world
Photo: F. Boyer

Bronze, copper, gold, silver and, as a precious rarity, meteoric iron were known in both Sumeria and Egypt at a very early stage.

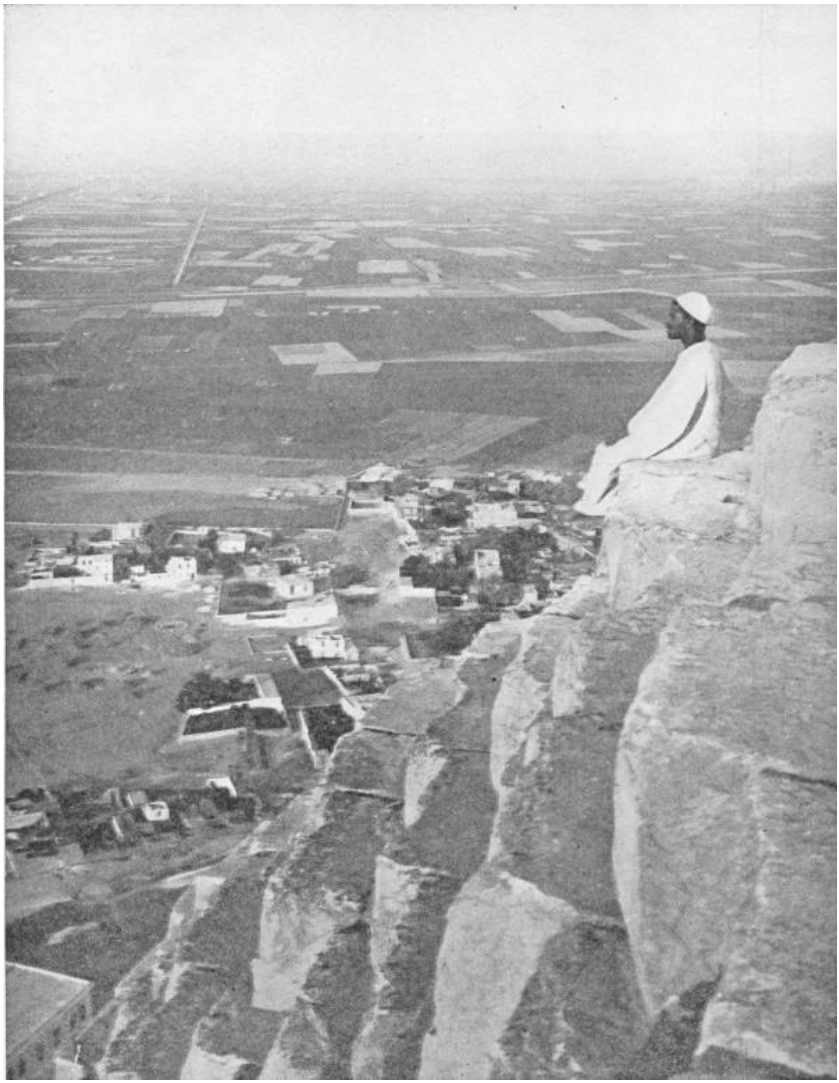

VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE GREAT PYRAMID OF CHEOPS
Showing how these great monuments dominate the plain
Photo: D. McLeish

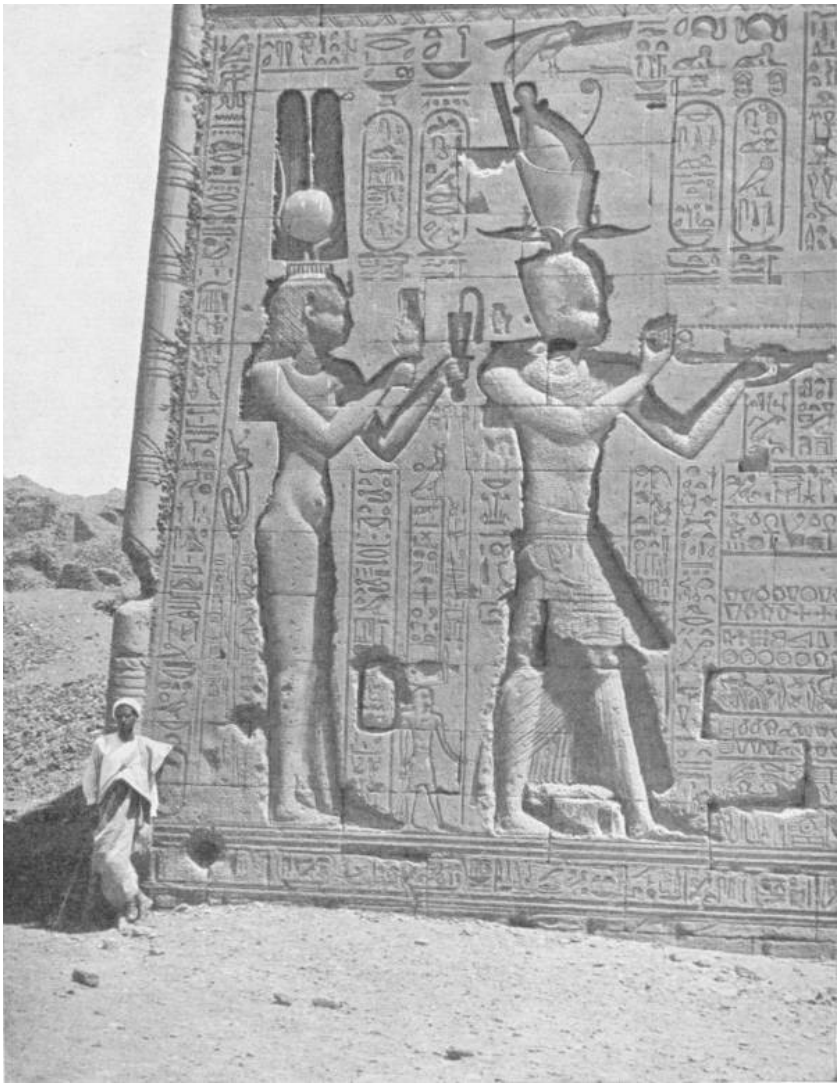

THE TEMPLE OF HATHOR AT DENDEREH
Photo: D. McLeish

Daily life in those first city lands of the old world must have been very similar in both Egypt and Sumeria. And except for the asses and cattle in the streets it must have been not unlike the life in the Maya cities of America three or four thousand years later. Most of the people in peace time were busy with irrigation and cultivation —

except on days of religious festivity. They had no money and no need for it. They managed their small occasional trades by barter. The princes and rulers who alone had more than a few possessions used gold and silver bars and precious stones for any incidental act of trade. The temple dominated life; in Sumeria it was a great towering temple that went up to a roof from which the stars were observed; in Egypt it was a massive building with only a ground floor. In Sumeria the priest ruler was the greatest, most splendid of beings. In Egypt however there was one who was raised above the priests; he was the living incarnation of the chief god of the land, the Pharaoh, the god king.

There were few changes in the world in those days; men's days were sunny, toilsome and conventional. Few strangers came into the land and such as did fared uncomfortably. The priest directed life according to immemorial rules and watched the stars for seed time and marked the omens of the sacrifices and interpreted the warnings of dreams. Men worked and loved and died, not unhappily, forgetful of the savage past of their race and heedless of its future. Sometimes the ruler was benign. Such was Pepi II, who reigned in Egypt for ninety years. Sometimes he was ambitious and took men's sons to be soldiers and sent them against neighbouring city states to war and plunder, or he made them toil to build great buildings. Such were Cheops and Chephren and Mycerinus, who built those vast sepulchral piles, the pyramids at Gizeh. The largest of these is 450 feet high and the weight of stone in it is 4,883,000 tons. All this was brought down the Nile in boats and lugged into place chiefly by human muscle. Its erection must have exhausted Egypt more than a great war would have done.

XVI

PRIMITIVE NOMADIC PEOPLES

IT was not only in Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley that men were settling down to agriculture and the formation of city states in the centuries between 6000 and 8000 B.C. Wherever there were possibilities of irrigation and a steady all-the-year-round food supply men were exchanging the uncertainties and hardships of hunting and wandering for the routines of settlement. On the upper Tigris a people called the Assyrians were founding cities; in the valleys of Asia Minor and on the Mediterranean shores and islands, there were small communities growing up to civilization. Possibly parallel developments of human life were already going on in favourable regions of India, and China. In many parts of Europe where there were lakes well stocked with fish, little communities of men had long settled in dwellings built on piles over the water, and were eking out agriculture by fishing and hunting. But over much larger areas of the old world no such settlement was possible. The land was too harsh, too thickly wooded or too arid, or the seasons too uncertain for mankind, with only the implements and science of that age to take root.

For settlement under the conditions of the primitive civilizations men needed a constant water supply and warmth and sunshine. Where these needs were not satisfied, man could live as a transient, as a hunter following his game, as a herdsman following the seasonal grass, but he could not settle. The transition from the hunting to the herding life may have been very gradual. From following herds of wild cattle or (in Asia) wild horses, men may have come to an idea of property in them, have learnt to pen them into valleys, have fought for them against wolves, wild dogs and other predatory beasts.

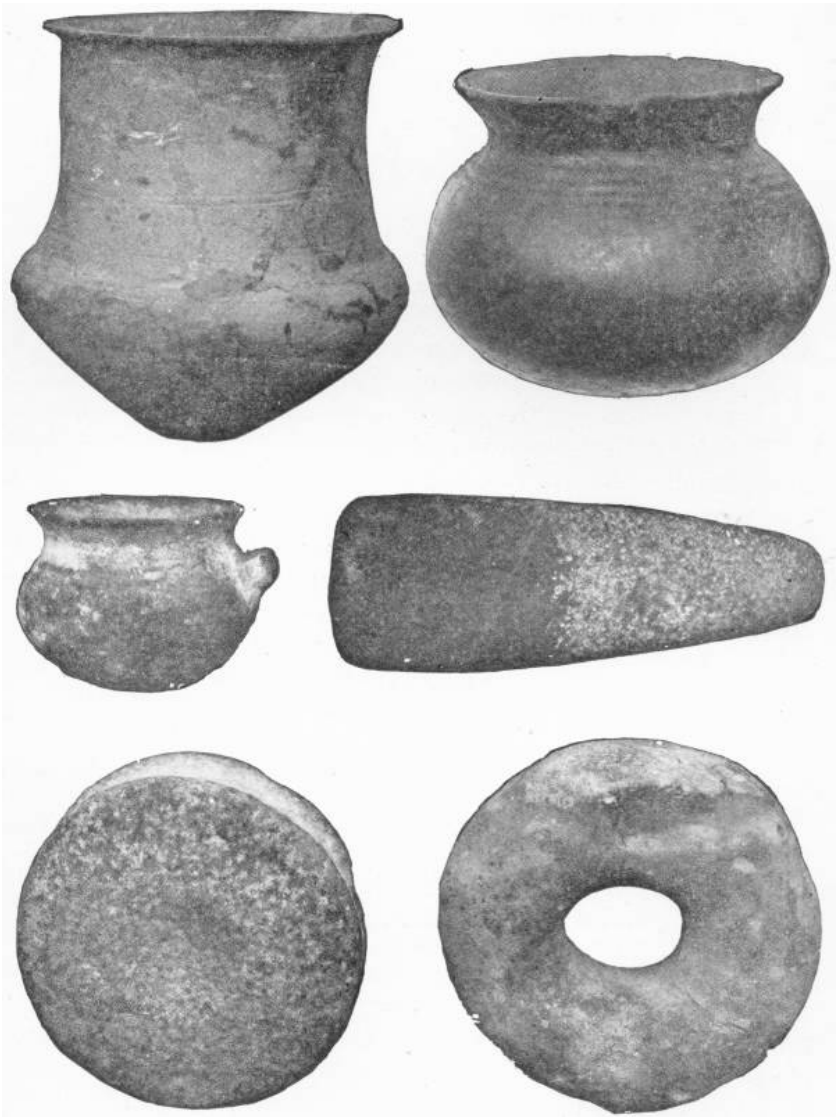

POTTERY AND IMPLEMENTS OF THE LAKE DWELLERS
Brit. Mus.

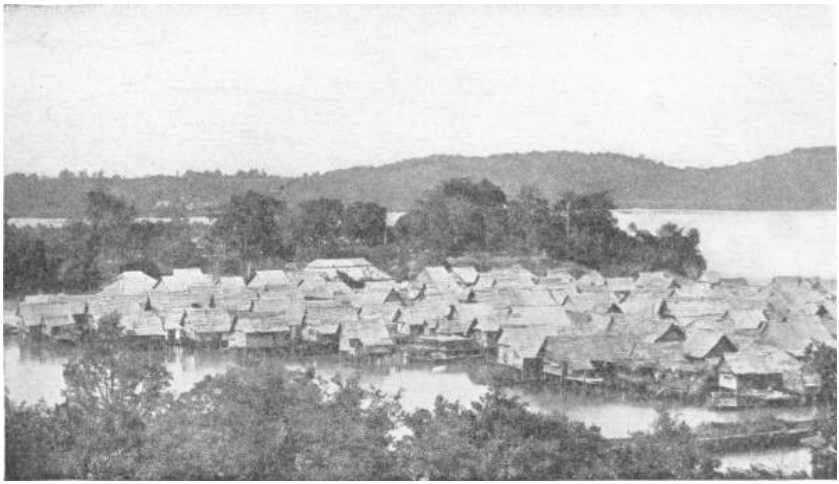

A CONTEMPORARY LAKE VILLAGE
These Borneo dwellings are practically counterparts of the homes of European neolithic communities 6000 B.C.

So while the primitive civilizations of the cultivators were growing up chiefly in the great river valleys, a different way of living, the nomadic life, a life in constant movement to and fro from winter pasture to summer pasture, was also growing up. The nomadic peoples were on the whole hardier than the agriculturalists; they were less prolific and numerous, they had no permanent temples and no highly organized priesthood; they had less gear; but the reader must not suppose that theirs was necessarily a less highly developed way of living on that account. In many ways this free life was a fuller life than that of the tillers of the soil. The individual was more self-reliant; less of a unit in a crowd. The leader was more important; the medicine man perhaps less so.

NOMADS IN EGYPT
Egyptian wall painting in a tomb near ancient Beni Hassan, middle Egypt. It depicts the arrival of a tribe of Semitic Nomads in Egypt about the year of 1895 B.C.

Moving over large stretches of country the nomad took a wider view of life. He touched on the confines of this settled land and that. He was used to the sight of strange faces. He had to scheme and treat for pasture with competing tribes. He knew more of minerals than the folk upon the plough lands because he went over mountain passes and into rocky places. He may have been a better metallurgist. Possibly bronze and much more probably iron smelting were nomadic discoveries. Some of the earliest implements of iron reduced from its ores have been found in Central Europe far away from the early civilizations.

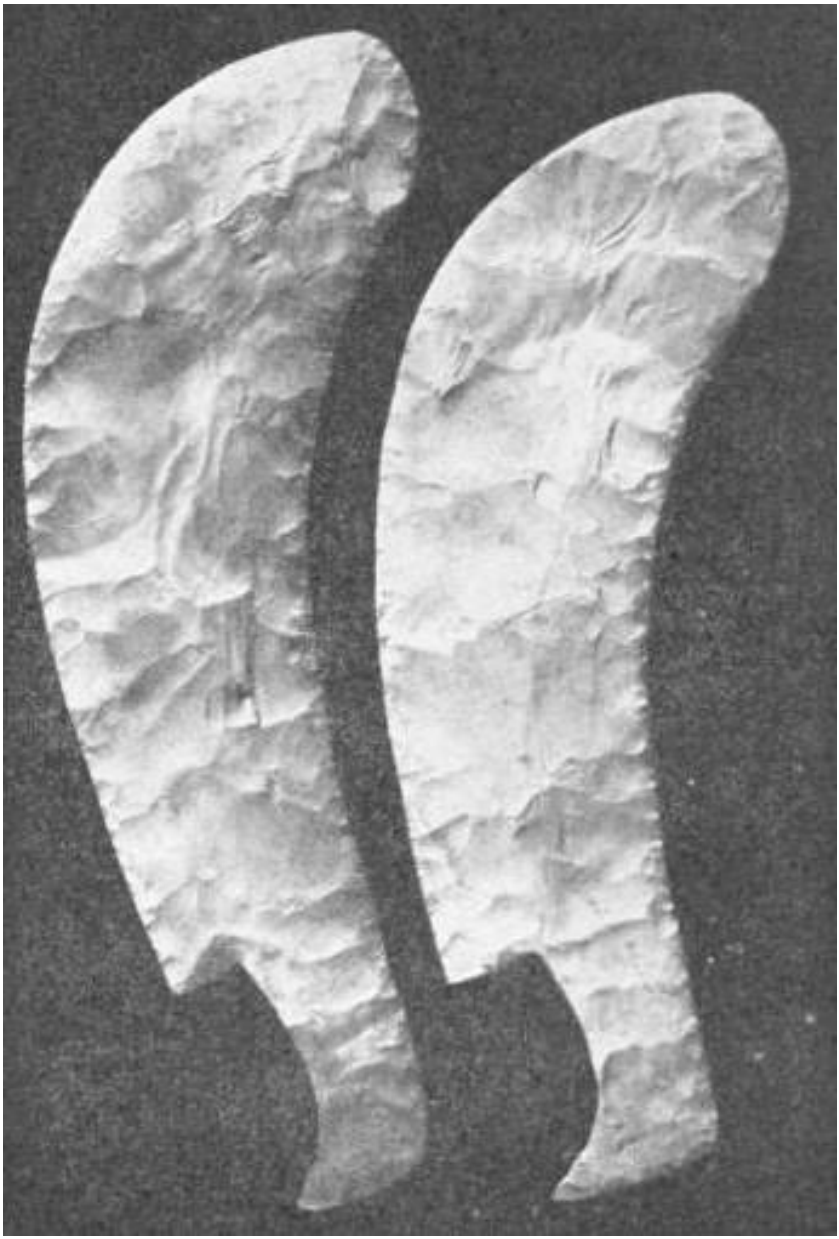

FLINT KNIVES OF 4500 B.C.
Excavated 1922 by the British School of Archæology in Egypt from First Dynasty Tombs

On the other hand the settled folk had their textiles and their pottery and made many desirable things. It was inevitable that as the two sorts of life, the agricultural and the nomadic differentiated, a certain amount of looting and trading should develop between the two. In Sumeria particularly which had deserts and seasonal country on either hand it must have been usual to have the nomads camping close to the cultivated fields, trading and stealing and perhaps tinkering, as gipsies do to this day. (But hens they would not steal, because the domestic fowl — an Indian jungle fowl originally was not domesticated by man until about 1000 B.C.) They would bring precious stones and things of metal and leather. If they were hunters they would bring skins. They would get in exchange pottery and beads and glass, garments and suchlike manufactured things.

EGYPT PEASANTS GOING TO WORK
From an ancient and curiously painted model in the British Museum

Three main regions and three main kinds of wandering and imperfectly settled people there were in those remote days of the first civilizations in Sumeria and early Egypt. Away in the forests of Europe were the blonde Nordic peoples, hunters and herdsmen, a lowly race. The primitive civilizations saw very little of this race before 1500 B.C. Away on the steppes of eastern Asia various Mongolian tribes, the Hunnish peoples, were domesticating the horse

and developing a very wide sweeping habit of seasonal movement between their summer and winter camping places. Possibly the Nordic and Hunnish peoples were still separated from one another by the swamps of Russia and the greater Caspian Sea of that time. For very much of Russia there was swamp and lake. In the deserts, which were growing more arid now, of Syria and Arabia, tribes of a dark white or brownish people, the Semitic tribes, were driving flocks of sheep and goats and asses from pasture to pasture. It was these Semitic shepherds and certain more negroid people from southern Persia, the Elamites, who were the first nomads to come into close contact with the early civilizations. They came as traders and as raiders. Finally there arose leaders among them with bolder imaginations, and they became conquerors.

STELE GLORIFYING KING NARAM SIN, OF AKKAD
This monarch, son of Sargon I, was a great architecht as well as a famous conqueror. Discovered in 1898 among the ruins of Susa, Persia

About 2750 B.C. a great Semitic leader, Sargon, had conquered

the whole Sumerian land and was master of all the world from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. He was an illiterate barbarian and his people, the Akkadians, learnt the Sumerian writing and adopted the Sumerian language as the speech of the officials and the learned. The empire he founded decayed after two centuries, and after one inundation of Elamites a fresh Semitic people, the Amorites, by degrees established their rule over Sumeria. They made their capital in what had hitherto been a small up-river town, Babylon, and their empire is called the first Babylonian Empire. It was consolidated by a great king called Hammurabi (circa 2100 B.C.) who made the earliest code of laws yet known to history.

The narrow valley of the Nile lies less open to nomadic invasion than Mesopotamia, but about the time of Hammurabi occurred a successful Semitic invasion of Egypt and a line of Pharaohs was set up, the Hyksos or "shepherd kings," which lasted for several centuries. These Semitic conquerors never assimilated themselves with the Egyptians; they were always regarded with hostility as foreigners and barbarians; and they were at last expelled by a popular uprising about 1600 B.C.

But the Semites had come into Sumeria for good and all, the two races assimilated and the Babylonian Empire became Semitic in its language and character.

XVII

THE FIRST SEAGOING PEOPLES

THE earliest boats and ships must have come into use some twenty-five or thirty thousand years ago. Man was probably paddling about on the water with a log of wood or an inflated skin to assist him, at latest in the beginnings of the Neolithic period. A basketwork boat covered with skin and caulked was used in Egypt and Sumeria from the beginnings of our knowledge. Such boats are still used there. They are used to this day in Ireland and Wales and in Alaska; sealskin boats still make the crossing of Behring Straits. The hollow log followed as tools improved. The building of boats and then ships came in a natural succession.

Perhaps the legend of Noah's Ark preserves the memory of some early exploit in shipbuilding, just as the story of the Flood, so widely distributed among the peoples of the world, may be the tradition of the flooding of the Mediterranean basin.

There were ships upon the Red Sea long before the pyramids were built, and there were ships on the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf by 7000 B.C. Mostly these were the ships of fishermen, but some were already trading and pirate ships — for knowing what we do of mankind we may guess pretty safely that the first sailors plundered where they could and traded where they had to do so.

The seas on which these first ships adventured were inland seas on which the wind blew fitfully and which were often at a dead calm for days together, so that sailing did not develop beyond an accessory use. It is only in the last four hundred years that the well-rigged, ocean-going, sailing ship has developed. The ships of the ancient world were essentially rowing ships which hugged the shore and went into harbour at the first sign of rough weather. As ships grew into big galleys they caused a demand for war captives as galley slaves.

We have already noted the appearance of the Semitic people as wanderers and nomads in the region of Syria and Arabia, and how they conquered Sumeria and set up first the Akkadian and then the first Babylonian Empire. In the west these same Semitic peoples were taking to the sea. They set up a string of harbour towns along

the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean, of which Tyre and Sidon were the chief; and by the time of Hammurabi in Babylon, they had spread as traders, wanderers and colonizers over the whole Mediterranean basin. These sea Semites were called the Phœnicians, They settled largely in Spain, pushing back the old Iberian Basque population and sending coasting expeditions through the straits of Gibraltar; and they set up colonies upon the north coast of Africa. Of Carthage, one of these Phœnician cities, we shall have much more to tell later.

But the Phœnicians were not the first people to have galleys in the Mediterranean waters. There was already a series of towns and cities among the islands and coasts of that sea belonging to a race or races apparently connected by blood and language with the Basques to the west and the Berbers and Egyptians to the south, the Ægean peoples. These peoples must not be confused with the Greeks, who come much later into our story; they were pre-Greek, but they had cities in Greece and Asia Minor; Mycenæ and Troy for example, and they had a great and prosperous establishment at Cnossos in Crete.

It is only in the last half century that the industry of excavating archæologists has brought the extent and civilization of the Ægean peoples to our knowledge. Cnossos has been most thoroughly explored; it was happily not succeeded by any city big enough to destroy its ruins, and so it is our chief source of information about this once almost forgotten civilization.

The history of Cnossos goes back as far as the history of Egypt; the two countries were trading actively across the sea by 4000 B.C. By 2500 B.C., that is between the time of Sargon I and Hammurabi, Cretan civilization was at its zenith.

Cnossos was not so much a town as a great palace for the Cretan monarch and his people. It was not even fortified. It was only fortified later as the Phœnicians grew strong, and as a new and more terrible breed of pirates, the Greeks, came upon the sea from the north.

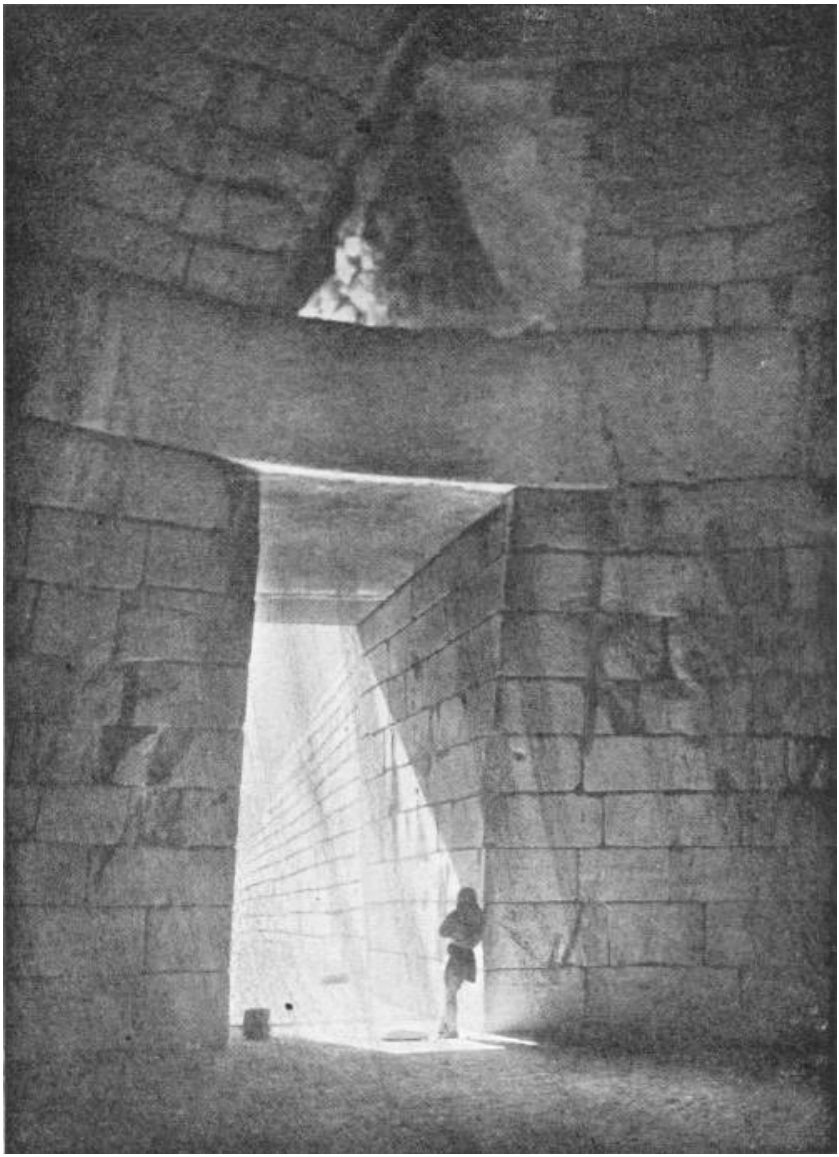

THE TREASURE HOUSE AT MYCENÆ
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

The monarch was called Minos, as the Egyptian monarch was called Pharaoh; and he kept his state in a palace fitted with running water, with bathrooms and the like conveniences such as we know of

in no other ancient remains. There he held great festivals and shows. There was bull-fighting, singularly like the bull-fighting that still survives in Spain; there was resemblance even in the costumes of the bull-fighters; and there were gymnastic displays. The women's clothes were remarkably modern in spirit; they wore corsets and flounced dresses. The pottery, the textile manufactures, the sculpture, painting, jewellery, ivory, metal and inlay work of these Cretans was often astonishingly beautiful. And they had a system of writing, but that still remains to be deciphered.

This happy and sunny and civilized life lasted for some score of centuries. About 2000 B.C. Cnossos and Babylon abounded in comfortable and cultivated people who probably led very pleasant lives. They had shows and they had religious festivals, they had domestic slaves to look after them and industrial slaves to make a profit for them. Life must have seemed very secure in Cnossos for such people, sunlit and girdled by the blue sea. Egypt of course must have appeared rather a declining country in those days under the rule of her half-barbaric shepherd kings, and if one took an interest in politics one must have noticed how the Semitic people seemed to be getting everywhere, ruling Egypt, ruling distant Babylon, building Nineveh on the upper Tigris, sailing west to the Pillars of Hercules (the straits of Gibraltar) and setting up their colonies on those distant coasts.

There were some active arid curious minds in Cnossos, because later on the Greeks told legends of a certain skilful Cretan artificer, Dædalus, who attempted to make some sort of flying machine, perhaps a glider, which collapsed and fell into the sea.

It is interesting to note some of the differences as well as the resemblances between the life of Cnossos and our own. To a Cretan gentleman of 2500 B.C. iron was a rare metal which fell out of the sky and was curious rather than useful — for as yet only meteoric iron was known, iron had not been obtained from its ores. Compare that with our modern state of affairs pervaded by iron everywhere. The horse again would be a quite legendary creature to our Cretan, a sort of super-ass which lived in the bleak northern lands far away beyond the Black Sea. Civilization for him dwelt chiefly in Ægean Greece and Asia Minor, where Lydians and Carians and Trojans

lived a life and probably spoke languages like his own. There were Phœnicians and Ægeans settled in Spain and North Africa, but those were very remote regions to his imagination. Italy was still a desolate land covered with dense forests; the brown-skinned Etruscans had not yet gone there from Asia Minor. And one day perhaps this Cretan gentleman went down to the harbour and saw a captive who attracted his attention because he was very fair-complexioned and had blue eyes. Perhaps our Cretan tried to talk to him and was answered in an unintelligible gibberish. This creature came from somewhere beyond the Black Sea and seemed to be an altogether benighted savage. But indeed he was an Aryan tribesman, of a race and culture of which we shall soon have much to tell, and the strange gibberish he spoke was to differentiate some day into Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, German, English and most of the chief languages of the world.

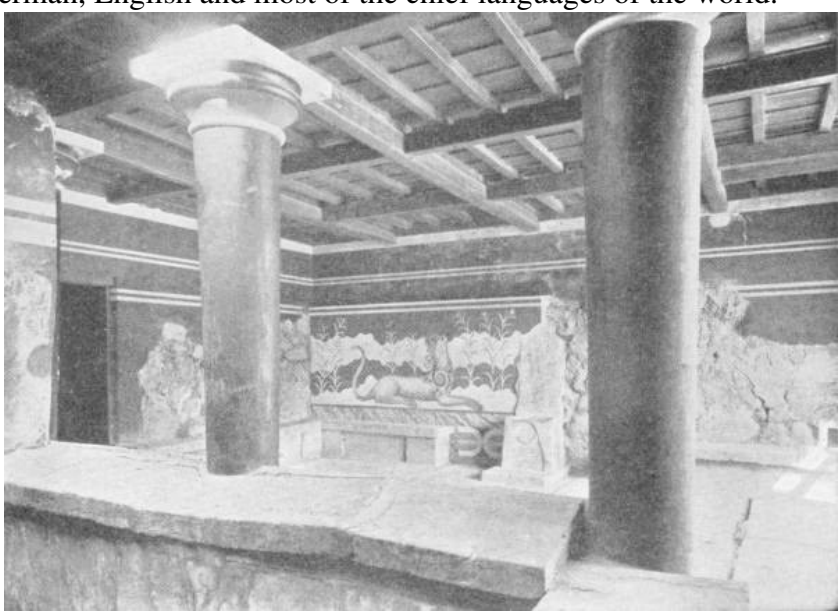

THE PALACE AT CNOSSOS
The painted walls of the Throne Room
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

Such was Cnossos at its zenith, intelligent, enterprising, bright and happy. But about 1400 B.C. disaster came perhaps very suddenly

upon its prosperity. The palace of Minos was destroyed, and its ruins have never been rebuilt or inhabited from that day to this. We do not know how this disaster occurred. The excavators note what appears to be scattered plunder and the marks of the fire. But the traces of a very destructive earthquake have also been found. Nature alone may have destroyed Cnossos, or the Greeks may have finished what the earthquake began.

XVIII

EGYPT, BABYLON AND ASSYRIA

THE Egyptians had never submitted very willingly to the rule of their Semitic shepherd kings and about 1600 A.D. a vigorous patriotic movement expelled these foreigners. Followed a new phase or revival for Egypt, a period known to Egyptologists as the New Empire. Egypt, which had not been closely consolidated before the Hyksos invasion, was now a united country; and the phase of subjugation and insurrection left her full of military spirit. The Pharaohs became aggressive conquerors. They had now acquired the war horse and the war chariot, which the Hyksos had brought to them. Under Thothmes III and Amenophis III Egypt had extended her rule into Asia as far as the Euphrates.

We are entering now upon a thousand years of warfare between the once quite separated civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Nile. At first Egypt was ascendant. The great dynasties, the Seventeenth Dynasty, which included Thothmes III and Amenophis III and IV and a great queen Hatasu, and the Nineteenth, when Rameses II, supposed by some to have been the Pharaoh of Moses, reigned for sixty-seven years, raised Egypt to high levels of prosperity. In between there were phases of depression for Egypt, conquest by the Syrians and later conquest by the Ethiopians from the South. In Mesopotamia Babylon ruled, then the Hittites and the Syrians of Damascus rose to a transitory predominance; at one time the Syrians conquered Egypt; the fortunes of the Assyrians of Nineveh ebbed and flowed; sometimes the city was a conquered city; sometimes the Assyrians ruled in Babylon and assailed Egypt. Our space is too limited here to tell of the comings and goings of the armies of the Egyptians and of the various Semitic powers of Asia Minor, Syria and Mesopotamia. They were armies now provided with vast droves of war chariots, for the horse — still used only for war and glory — had spread by this time into the old civilizations from Central Asia.

TEMPLE AT ABU SIMBEL
Showing the statues of Rameses II at entrance

Great conquerors appear in the dim light of that distant time and pass, Tushratta, King of Mitanni, who captured Nineveh, Tiglath Pileser I of Assyria who conquered Babylon. At last the Assyrians became the greatest military power of the time. Tiglath Pileser III conquered Babylon in 745 B.C. and founded what historians call the New Assyrian Empire. Iron had also come now into civilization out of the north; the Hittites, the precursors of the Armenians, had it first and communicated its use to the Assyrians, and an Assyrian usurper, Sargon II, armed his troops with it. Assyria became the first power to expound the doctrine of blood and iron. Sargon's son Sennacherib led an army to the borders of Egypt, and was defeated not by military strength but by the plague. Sennacherib's grandson Assurbanipal (who is also known in history by his Greek name of Sardanapalus) did actually conquer Egypt in 670 B.C. But Egypt was already a conquered country then under an Ethiopian dynasty. Sardanapalus simply replaced one conqueror by another.

AVENUE OF SPHINXES
Leading from the Nile to the great Temple of Karnak
Photo: D. McLeish

If one had a series of political maps of this long period of history, this interval of ten centuries, we should have Egypt expanding and contracting like an amœba under a microscope, and we should see these various Semitic states of the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Hittites and the Syrians coming and going, eating each other up and disgorging each other again. To the west of Asia Minor there would be little Ægean states like Lydia, whose capital was Sardis, and Caria. But after about 1200 B.C. and perhaps earlier, a new set of names would come into the map of the ancient world from the north-east and from the north- west. These would be the names of certain barbaric tribes, armed with iron weapons and using horse-chariots, who were becoming a great affliction to the Ægean and Semitic civilizations on the northern borders. They all spoke variants of what once must have been the same language, Aryan.

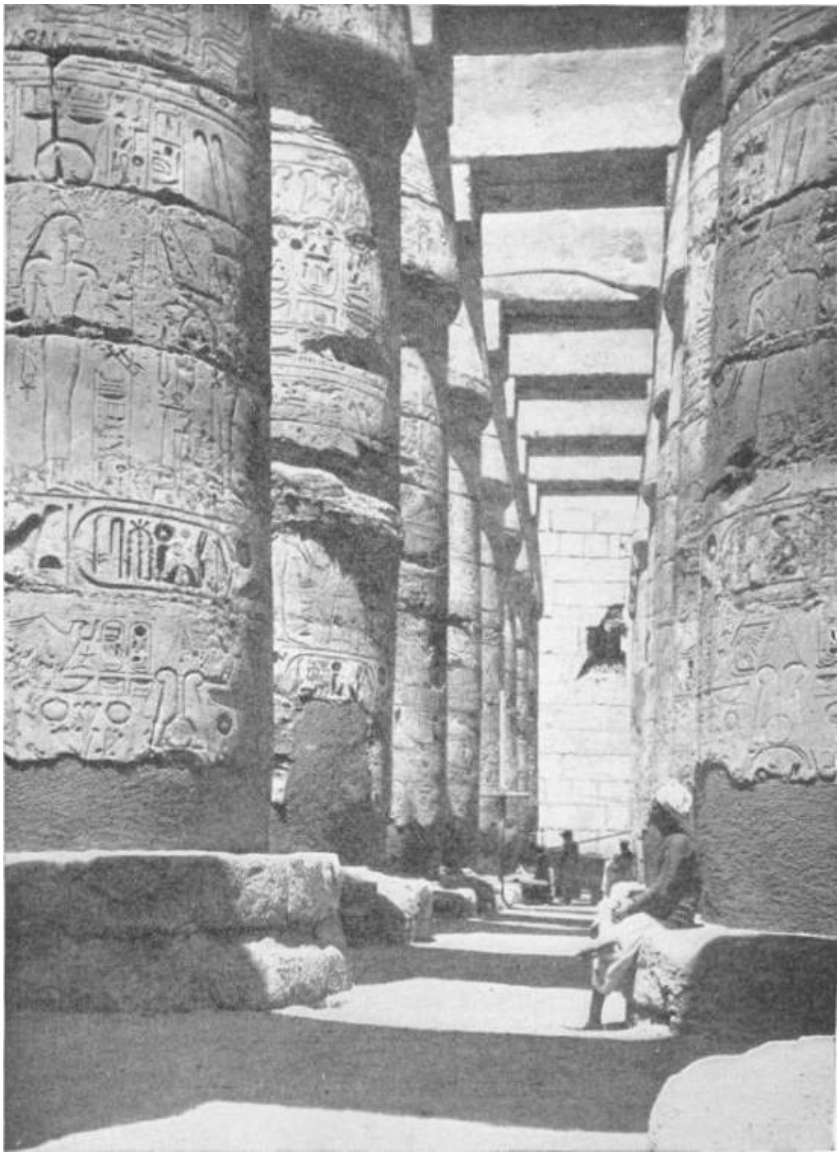

THE GREAT HYPOSTYLE HALL AT KARNAK
Photo: D. McLeish

Round the north-east of the Black and Caspian Seas were coming the Medes and Persians. Confused with these in the records of the time were Scythians and Samatians. From north-east or north-west

came the Armenians, from the north- west of the sea-barrier through the Balkan peninsula came Cimmerians, Phrygians and the Hellenic tribes whom now we call the Greeks. They were raiders and robbers and plunderers of cities, these Ayrans, east and west alike. They were all kindred and similar peoples, hardy herdsmen who had taken to plunder. In the east they were still only borderers and raiders, but in the west they were taking cities and driving out the civilized Ægean populations. The Ægean peoples were so pressed that they were seeking new homes in lands beyond the Aryan range. Some were seeking a settlement in the delta of the Nile and being repulsed by the Egyptians; some, the Etruscans, seem to have sailed from Asia Minor to found a state in the forest wildernesses of middle Italy; some built themselves cities upon the south- east coasts of the Mediterranean and became later that people known in history as the Philistines.

Of these Aryans who came thus rudely upon the scene of the ancient civilizations we will tell more fully in a later section. Here we note simply all this stir and emigration amidst the area of the ancient civilizations, that was set up by the swirl of the gradual and continuous advance of these Aryan barbarians out of the northern forests and wildernesses between 1600 and 600 B.C.

And in a section to follow we must tell also of a little Semitic people, the Hebrews, in the hills behind the Phœnician and Philistine coasts, who began to be of significance in the world towards the end of this period. They produced a literature of very great importance in subsequent history, a collection of books, histories, poems, books of wisdom and prophetic works, the Hebrew Bible.

In Mesopotamia and Egypt the coming of the Aryans did not cause fundamental changes until after 600 B.C. The flight of the Ægeans before the Greeks and even the destruction of Cnossos must have seemed a very remote disturbance to both the citizens of Egypt and of Babylon. Dynasties came and went in these cradle states of civilization, but the main tenor of human life went on, with a slow increase in refinement and complexity age by age. In Egypt the accumulated monuments of more ancient times — the pyramids were already in their third thousand of years and a show for visitors just as they are to- day — were supplemented by fresh and splendid

buildings, more particularly in the time of the seventeenth and nineteenth dynasties. The great temples at Karnak and Luxor date from this time. All the chief monuments of Nineveh, the great temples, the winged bulls with human heads, the reliefs of kings and chariots and lion hunts, were done in these centuries between 1600 and 600 B.C., and this period also covers most of the splendours of Babylon.

FRIEZE SHOWING EGYPTIAN FEMALE SLAVES CARRYING LUXURIOUS FOODS
Photo: Jacques Boyer

Both from Mesopotamia and Egypt we now have abundant public records, business accounts, stories, poetry and private correspondence. We know that life, for prosperous and influential people in such cities as Babylon and the Egyptian Thebes, was already almost as refined and as luxurious as that of comfortable and prosperous people to-day. Such people lived an orderly and ceremonious life in beautiful and beautifully furnished and decorated houses, wore richly decorated clothing and lovely jewels; they had feasts and festivals, entertained one another with music and dancing, were waited upon by highly trained servants, were cared for by doctors and dentists. They did not travel very much or very far, but boating excursions were a common summer pleasure both on the Nile and on the Euphrates. The beast of burthen was the ass; the horse was still used only in chariots for war and upon occasions of state. The mule was still novel and the camel, though it was known in Mesopotamia, had not been brought into Egypt. And there were few utensils of iron; copper and bronze remained the prevailing metals. Fine linen and cotton fabrics were known as well as wool.

But there was no silk yet. Glass was known and beautifully coloured, but glass things were usually small. There was no clear glass and no optical use of glass. People had gold stoppings in their teeth but no spectacles on their noses.

One odd contrast between the life of old Thebes or Babylon and modern life was the absence of coined money. Most trade was still done by barter. Babylon was financially far ahead of Egypt. Gold and silver were used for exchange and kept in ingots; and there were bankers, before coinage, who stamped their names and the weight on these lumps of precious metal. A merchant or traveller would carry precious stones to sell to pay for his necessities. Most servants and workers were slaves who were paid not money but in kind. As money came in slavery declined.

A modern visitor to these crowning cities of the ancient world would have missed two very important articles of diet; there were no hens and no eggs. A French cook would have found small joy in Babylon. These things came from the East somewhere about the time of the last Assyrian empire.

Religion like everything else had undergone great refinement. Human sacrifice for instance had long since disappeared; animals or bread dummies had been substituted for the victim. (But the Phœnicians and especially the citizens of Carthage, their greatest settlement in Africa, were accused, later of immolating human beings.) When a great chief had died in the ancient days it had been customary to sacrifice his wives and slaves and break spear and bow at his tomb so that he should not go unattended and unarmed in the spirit world. In Egypt there survived of this dark tradition the pleasant custom of burying small models of house and shop and servants and cattle with the dead, models that give us to-day the liveliest realization of the safe and cultivated life of these ancient people, three thousand years and more ago.

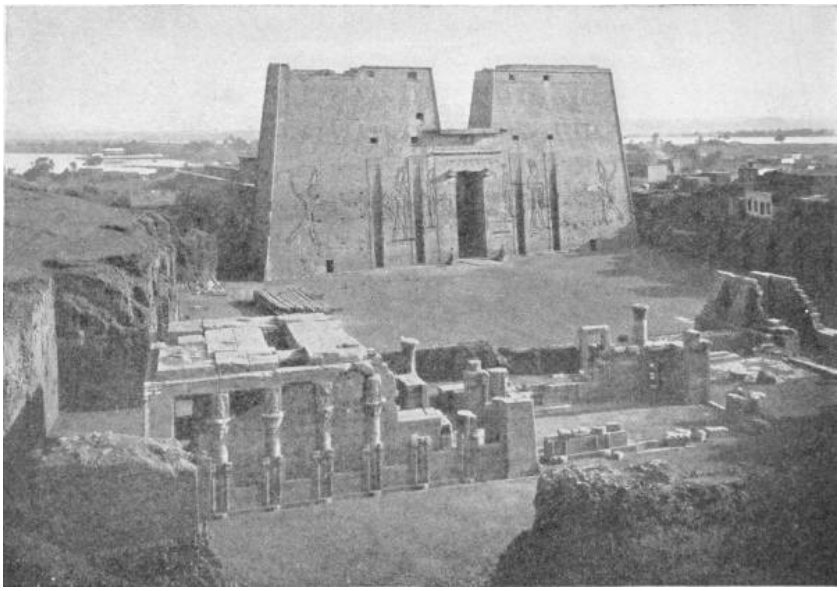

THE TEMPLE OF HORUS AT EDFU

Such was the ancient world before the coming of the Aryans out of the northern forests and plains. In India and China there were parallel developments. In the great valleys of both these regions agricultural city states of brownish peoples were growing up, but in India they do not seem to have advanced or coalesced so rapidly as the city states of Mesopotamia or Egypt. They were nearer the level of the ancient Sumerians or of the Maya civilization of America. Chinese history has still to be modernized by Chinese scholars and cleared of much legendary matter. Probably China at this time was in advance of India. Contemporary with the seventeenth dynasty in Egypt, there was a dynasty of emperors in China, the Shang dynasty, priest emperors over a loose-knit empire of subordinate kings. The chief duty of these early emperors was to perform the seasonal sacrifices. Beautiful bronze vessels from the time of the Shang dynasty still exist, and their beauty and workmanship compel us to recognize that many centuries of civilization must have preceded their manufacture.

THE PRIMITIVE ARYANS

FOUR thousand years ago, that is to say about 2000 B.C., central and south-eastern Europe and central Asia were probably warmer, moister and better wooded than they are now. In these regions of the earth wandered a group of tribes mainly of the fair and blue-eyed Nordic race, sufficiently in touch with one another to speak merely variations of one common language from the Rhine to the Caspian Sea. At that time they may not have been a very numerous people, and their existence was unsuspected by the Babylonians to whom Hammurabi was giving laws, or by the already ancient and cultivated land of Egypt which was tasting in those days for the first time the bitterness of foreign conquest.

These Nordic people were destined to play a very important part indeed in the world's history. They were a people of the parklands and the forest clearings; they had no horses at first but they had cattle; when they wandered they put their tents and other gear on rough ox waggons; when they settled for a time they may have made huts of wattle and mud. They burnt their important dead; they did not bury them ceremoniously as the brunette peoples did. They put the ashes of their greater leaders in urns and then made a great circular mound about them. These mounds are the "round barrows" that occur all over north Europe. The brunette people, their predecessors, did not burn their dead but buried them in a sitting position in elongated mounds; the "long barrows."

The Aryans raised crops of wheat, ploughing with oxen, but they did not settle down by their crops; they would reap and move on. They had bronze, and somewhen about 1500 B.C. they acquired iron. They may have been the discoverers of iron smelting. And somewhen vaguely about that time they also got the horse — which to begin with they used only for draught purposes. Their social life did not centre upon a temple like that of the more settled people round the Mediterranean, and their chief men were leaders rather than priests. They had an aristocratic social order rather than a divine and regal order; from a very early stage they distinguished certain families as leaderly and noble.

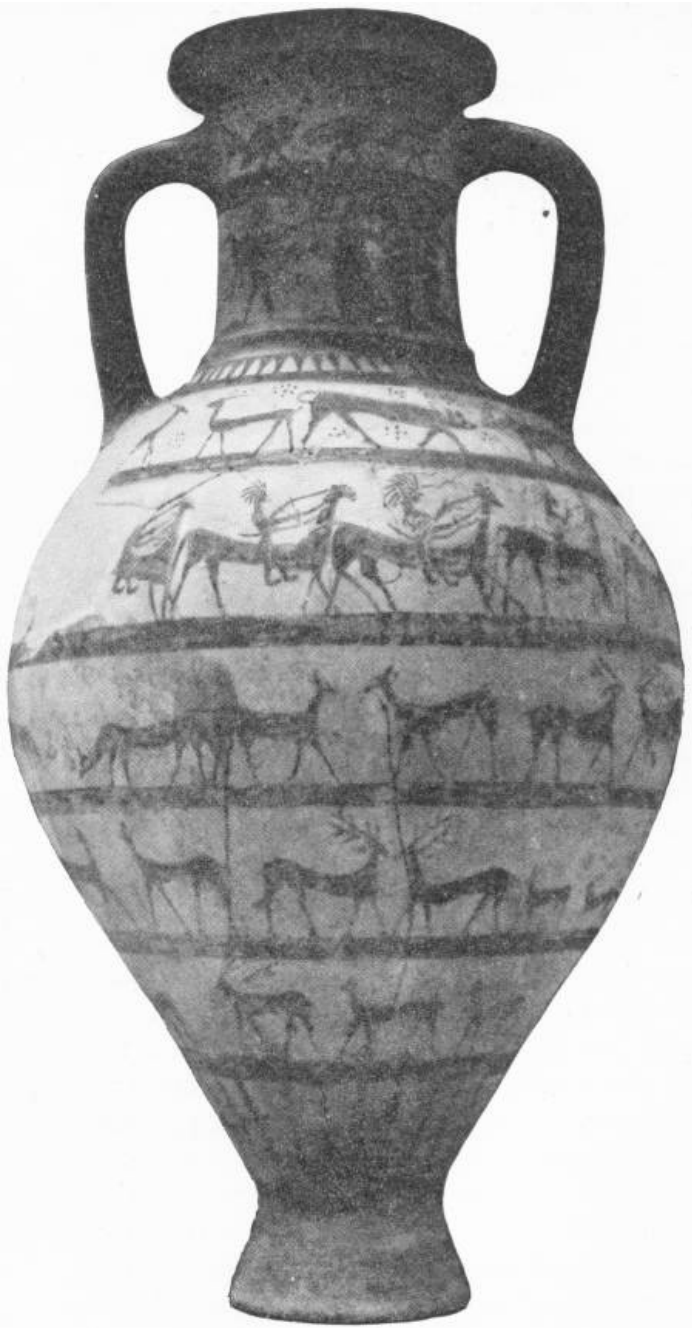

A BEAUTIFUL ARCHAIC AMPHORA
Compare the horses and other animals with the Altamira drawing on , and also with the Greek frieze,

They were a very vocal people. They enlivened their wanderings by feasts, at which there was much drunkenness and at which a special sort of man, the bards, would sing and recite. They had no writing until they had come into contact with civilization, and the memories of these bards were their living literature. This use of recited language as an entertainment did much to make it a fine and beautiful instrument of expression, and to that no doubt the subsequent predominance of the languages derived from Aryan is, in part, to be ascribed. Every Aryan people had its legendary history crystallized in bardic recitations, epics, sagas and vedas, as they were variously called.

The social life of these people centred about the households of their leading men. The hall of the chief where they settled for a time was often a very capacious timber building. There were no doubt huts for herds and outlying farm buildings; but with most of the Aryan peoples this hall was the general centre, everyone went there to feast and hear the bards and take part in games and discussions. Cowsheds and stabling surrounded it. The chief and his wife and so forth would sleep on a dais or in an upper gallery; the commoner sort slept about anywhere, as people still do in Indian households. Except for weapons, ornaments, tools and suchlike personal possessions there was a sort of patriarchal communism in the tribe. The chief owned the cattle and grazing lands in the common interest; forest and rivers were the wild.

This was the fashion of the people who were increasing and multiplying over the great spaces of central Europe and west central Asia during the growth of the great civilization of Mesopotamia and the Nile, and whom we find pressing upon the heliolithic peoples everywhere in the second millennium before Christ. They were coming into France and Britain and into Spain. They pushed westward in two waves. The first of these people who reached Britain and Ireland were armed with bronze weapons. They exterminated or subjugated the people who had made the great stone

monuments of Carnac in Brittany and Stonehenge and Avebury in England. They reached Ireland. They are called the Goidelic Celts. The second wave of a closely kindred people, perhaps intermixed with other racial elements, brought iron with it into Great Britain, and is known as the wave of Brythonic Celts. From them the Welsh derive their language.

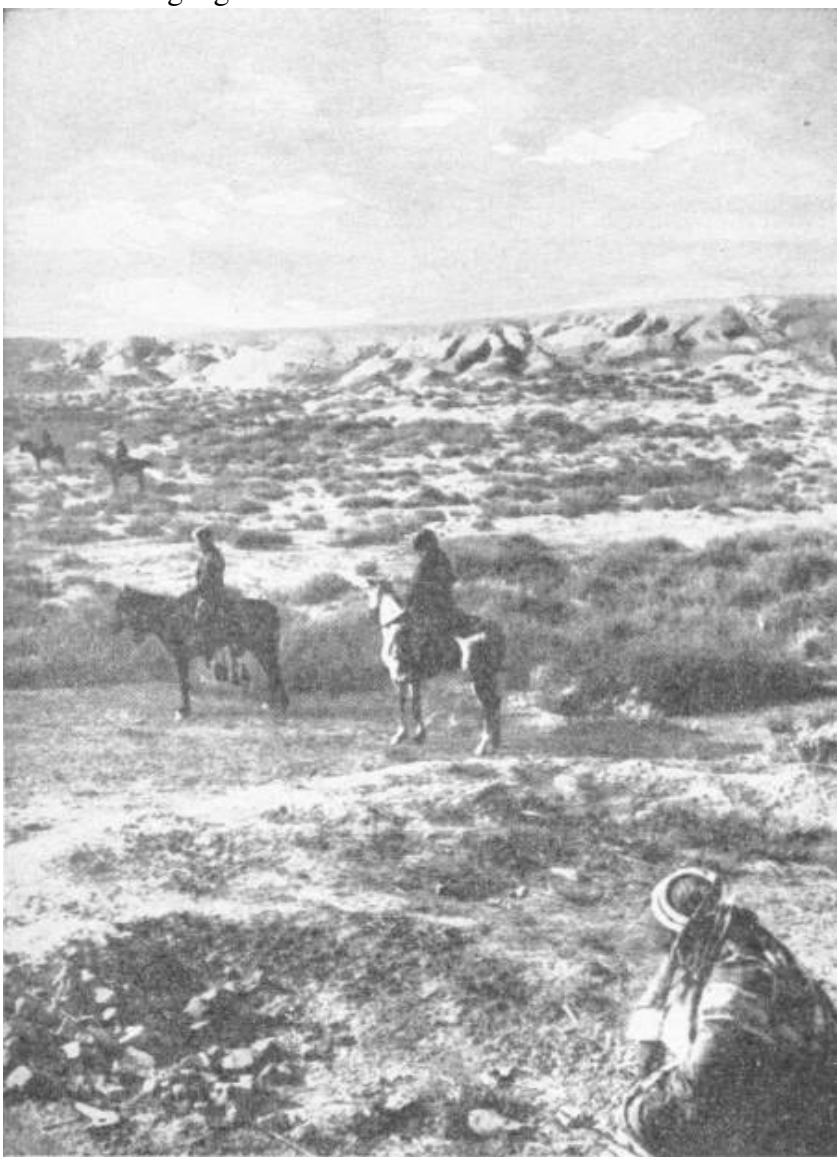

THE MOUND OF NIPPUR
The site of a city which recent excavations have proved to date from at least as early as 5000 B.C., and probably 1000 years earlier
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

Kindred Celtic peoples were pressing southward into Spain and coming into contact not only with the heliolithic Basque people who still occupied the country but with the Semitic Phœnician colonies of the sea coast. A closely allied series of tribes, the Italians, were making their way down the still wild and wooded Italian peninsula. They did not always conquer. In the eighth century B.C. Rome appears in history, a trading town on the Tiber, inhabited by Aryan Latins but under the rule of Etruscan nobles and kings.

At the other extremity of the Aryan range there was a similar progress southward of similar tribes. Aryan peoples, speaking Sanskrit, had come down through the western passes into North India long before 1000 B.C. There they came into contact with a primordial brunette civilization, the Dravidian civilization, and learnt much from it. Other Aryan tribes seem to have spread over the mountain masses of Central Asia far to the east of the present range of such peoples. In Eastern Turkestan there are still fair, blue-eyed Nordic tribes, but now they speak Mongolian tongues.

Between the Black and Caspian Seas the ancient Hittites had been submerged and "Aryanized" by the Armenians before 1000 B.C., and the Assyrians and Babylonians were already aware of a new and formidable fighting barbarism on the north-eastern frontiers, a group of tribes amidst which the Scythians, the Medes and the Persians remain as outstanding names.

But it was through the Balkan peninsula that Aryan tribes made their first heavy thrust into the heart of the old-world civilization. They were already coming southward and crossing into Asia Minor many centuries before 1000 B.C. First came a group of tribes of whom the Phrygians were the most conspicuous, and then in succession the Æolic, the Ionic and the Dorian Greeks. By 1000 B.C. they had wiped out the ancient Ægean civilization both in the mainland of Greece and in most of the Greek islands; the cities of Mycenæ and Tiryns were obliterated and Cnossos was nearly

forgotten. The Greeks had taken to the sea before 1000 A.D., they had settled in Crete and Rhodes, and they were founding colonies in Sicily and the south of Italy after the fashion of the Phœnician trading cities that were dotted along the Mediterranean coasts.

So it was, while Tiglath Pileser III and Sargon II and Sardanapalus were ruling in Assyria and fighting with Babylonia and Syria and Egypt, the Aryan peoples were learning the methods of civilization and making it over for their own purposes in Italy and Greece and north Persia. The theme of history from the ninth century B.C. A.D. onward for six centuries is the story of how these Aryan peoples grew to power and enterprise and how at last they subjugated the whole Ancient World, Semitic, Ægean and Egyptian alike. In form the Aryan peoples were altogether victorious; but the struggle of Aryan, Semitic and Egyptian ideas and methods was continued long after the sceptre was in Aryan hands. It is indeed a struggle that goes on through all the rest of history and still in a manner continues to this day.

XX

THE LAST BABYLONIAN EMPIRE AND THE EMPIRE OF DARIUS I

WE have already mentioned how Assyria became a great military power under Tiglath Pileser III and under the usurper Sargon II. Sargon was not this man's original name; he adopted it to flatter the conquered Babylonians by reminding them of that ancient founder of the Akkadian Empire, Sargon I, two thousand years before his time. Babylon, for all that it was a conquered city, was of greater population and importance than Nineveh, and its great god Bel Marduk and its traders and priests had to be treated politely. In Mesopotamia in the eighth century B.C. A.D. we are already far beyond the barbaric days when the capture of a town meant loot and massacre. Conquerors sought to propitiate and win the conquered. For a century and a half after Sargon the new Assyrian empire endured and, as we have noted, Assurbanipal (Sardanapalus) held at least lower Egypt.

But the power and solidarity of Assyria waned rapidly. Egypt by an effort threw off the foreigner under a Pharoah Psammetichus I, and under Necho II attempted a war of conquest in Syria. By that time Assyria was grappling with foes nearer at hand, and could make but a poor resistance. A Semitic people from south-east Mesopotamia, the Chaldeans, combined with Aryan Medes and Persians from the north-east against Nineveh, and in 606 B.C. — for now we are coming down to exact chronology — took that city.

There was a division of the spoils of Assyria. A Median Empire was set up in the north under Cyaxares. It included Nineveh, and its capital was Ecbatana. Eastward it reached to the borders of India. To the south of this in a great crescent was a new Chaldean Empire, the Second Babylonian Empire, which rose to a very great degree of wealth and power under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar the Great (the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible). The last great days, the greatest days of all, for Babylon began. For a time the two Empires remained at peace, and the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar was married to Cyaxares.

Meanwhile Necho II was pursuing his easy conquests in Syria. He

had defeated and slain King Josiah of Judah, a small country of which there is more to tell presently, at the battle of Megiddo in 608 B.C., and he pushed on to the Euphrates to encounter not a decadent Assyria but a renascent Babylonia. The Chaldeans dealt very vigorously with the Egyptians. Necho was routed and driven back to Egypt, and the Babylonian frontier pushed down to the ancient Egyptian boundaries.

From 606 until 589 B.C. the Second Babylonian Empire flourished insecurely. It flourished so long as it kept the peace with the stronger, hardier Median Empire to the north. And during these sixty-seven years not only life but learning flourished in the ancient city.

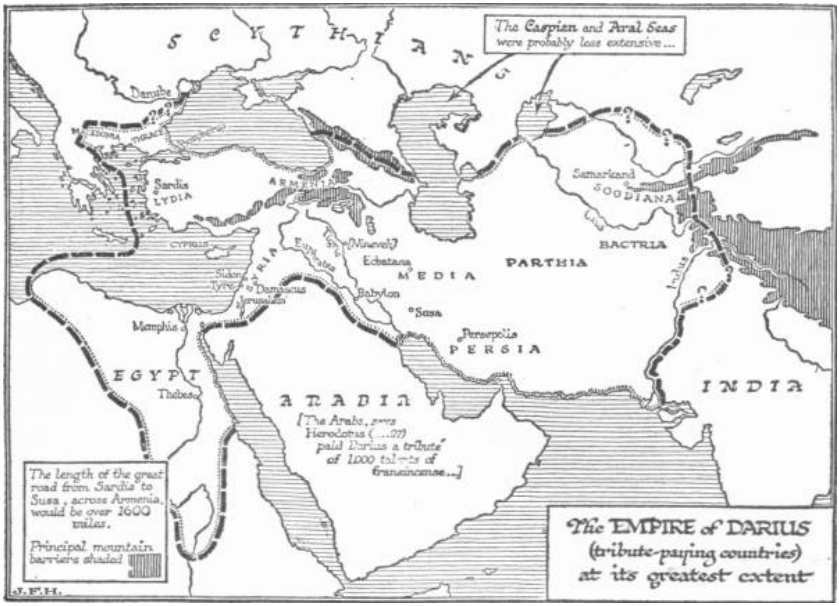

Even under the Assyrian monarchs and especially under Sardanapalus, Babylon had been a scene of great intellectual activity. Sardanapalus, though an Assyrian, had been quite Babylon-ized. He made a library, a library not of paper but of the clay tablets that were used for writing in Mesopotamia since early Sumerian days. His collection has been unearthed and is perhaps the most precious store of historical material in the world. The last of the Chaldean line of Babylonian monarchs, Nabonidus, had even keener literary tastes. He patronized antiquarian researches, and when a date was worked out by his investigators for the accession of Sargon I he commemorated the fact by inscriptions. But there were many signs of disunion in his empire, and he sought to centralize it by bringing a number of the various local gods to Babylon and setting up temples to them there. This device was to be practised quite successfully by the Romans in later times, but in Babylon it roused the jealousy of the powerful priesthood of Bel Marduk, the dominant god of the Babylonians. They cast about for a possible alternative to Nabonidus and found it in Cyrus the Persian, the ruler of the adjacent Median Empire. Cyrus had already distinguished himself by conquering Croesus, the rich king of Lydia in Eastern Asia Minor. He came up against Babylon, there was a battle outside the walls, and the gates of the city were

opened to him (538 B.C.). His soldiers entered the city without fighting. The crown prince Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, was feasting, the Bible relates, when a hand appeared and wrote in letters of fire upon the wall these mystical words: *"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,"* which was interpreted by the prophet Daniel, whom he summoned to read the riddle, as "God has numbered thy kingdom and finished it; thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting and thy kingdom is given to the Medes and Persians." Possibly the priests of Bel Marduk knew something about that writing on the wall. Belshazzar was killed that night, says the Bible. Nabonidus was taken prisoner, and the occupation of the city was so peaceful that the services of Bel Marduk continued without intermission.

PERSIAN MONARCH

From the ruins of Persepolis
Photo: Miss F. Biggs

Thus it was the Babylonian and Median empires were united. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, subjugated Egypt. Cambyses went mad and was accidentally killed, and was presently succeeded by Darius the Mede, Darius I, the son of Hystaspes, one of the chief councillors of Cyrus.

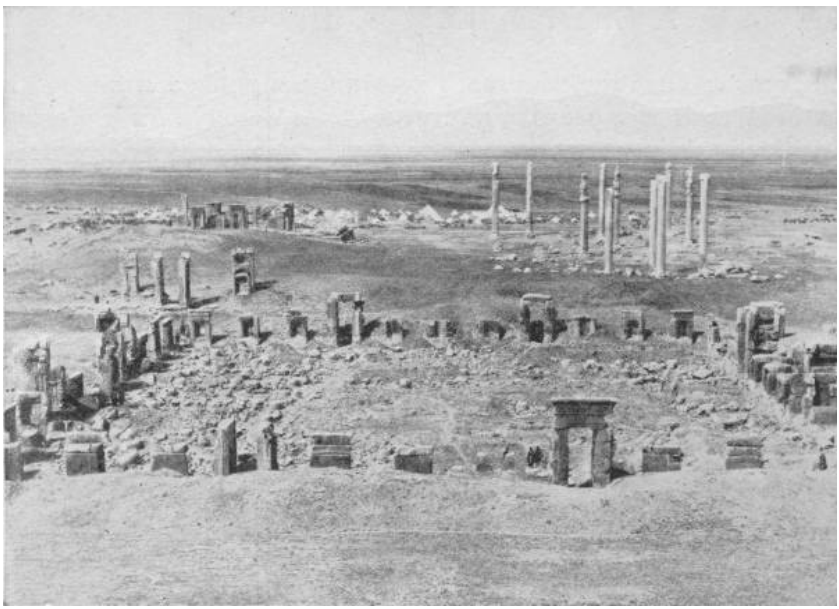

THE RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS
The capital city of the Persian Empire; burnt by Alexander the Great
Photo: Major W. F. P. Rodd

THE GREAT PORCH OF XERXES, AT PERSEPOLIS
Photo: Major W. F. P. Rodd

The Persian Empire of Darius I, the first of the new Aryan empires in the seat of the old civilizations, was the greatest empire the world had hitherto seen. It included all Asia Minor and Syria, all the old Assyrian and Babylonian empires, Egypt, the Caucasus and Caspian regions, Media, Persia, and it extended into India as far as the Indus. Such an empire was possible because the horse and rider and the chariot and the made-road had now been brought into the world. Hitherto the ass and ox and the camel for desert use had afforded the swiftest method of transport. Great arterial roads were made by the Persian rulers to hold their new empire, and post horses were always in waiting for the imperial messenger or the traveller with an official permit. Moreover the world was now beginning to use coined money, which greatly facilitated trade and intercourse. But the capital of this vast empire was no longer Babylon. In the long run the priesthood of Bel Marduk gained nothing by their treason. Babylon though still important was now a declining city, and the great cities of the new empire were Persepolis and Susa and Ecbatana. The

capital was Susa. Nineveh was already abandoned and sinking into ruins.

XXI

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE JEWS

AND now we can tell of the Hebrews, a Semitic people, not so important in their own time as in their influence upon the later history of the world. They were settled in Judea long before 1000 B.C., and their capital city after that time was Jerusalem. Their story is interwoven with that of the great empires on either side of them, Egypt to the south and the changing empires of Syria, Assyria and Babylon to the north. Their country was an inevitable high road between these latter powers and Egypt.

Their importance in the world is due to the fact that they produced a written literature, a world history, a collection of laws, chronicles, psalms, books of wisdom, poetry and fiction and political utterances which became at last what Christians know as the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible. This literature appears in history in the fourth or fifth century B.C.

Probably this literature was first put together in Babylon. We have already told how the Pharaoh, Necho II, invaded the Assyrian Empire while Assyria was fighting for life against Medes, Persians and Chaldeans. Josiah King of Judah opposed him, and was defeated and slain at Megiddo (608 B.C.). Judah became a tributary to Egypt, and when Nebuchadnezzar the Great, the new Chaldean king in Babylon, rolled back Necho into Egypt, he attempted to manage Judah by setting up puppet kings in Jerusalem. The experiment failed, the people massacred his Babylonian officials, and he then determined to break up this little state altogether, which had long been playing off Egypt against the northern empire. Jerusalem was sacked and burnt, and the remnant of the people was carried off captive to Babylon.

There they remained until Cyrus took Babylon (538 B.C.). He then collected them together and sent them back to resettle their country and rebuild the walls and temple of Jerusalem.

Before that time the Jews do not seem to have been a very civilized or united people. Probably only a very few of them could read or write. In their own history one never hears of the early books of the Bible being read; the first mention of a book is in the time of

Josiah. The Babylonian captivity civilized them and consolidated them. They returned aware of their own literature, an acutely self-conscious and political people.

Their Bible at that time seems to have consisted only of the Pentateuch, that is to say the first five books of the Old Testament as we know it. In addition, as separate books they already had many of the other books that have since been incorporated with the Pentateuch into the present Hebrew Bible, Chronicles, the Psalms and Proverbs for example.

The accounts of the Creation of the World, of Adam and Eve and of the Flood, with which the Bible begins, run closely parallel with similar Babylonian legends; they seem to have been part of the common beliefs of all the Semitic peoples. So too the stories of Moses and of Samson have Sumerian and Babylonian parallels. But with the story of Abraham and onward begins something more special to the Jewish race.

Abraham may have lived as early as the days of Hammurabi in Babylon. He was a patriarchal Semitic nomad. To the book of Genesis the reader must go for the story of his wanderings and for the stories of his sons and grandchildren and how they became captive in the Land of Egypt. He travelled through Canaan, and the God of Abraham, says the Bible story, promised this smiling land of prosperous cities to him and to his children.

And after a long sojourn in Egypt and after fifty years of wandering in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses, the children of Abraham, grown now to a host of twelve tribes, invaded the land of Canaan from the Arabian deserts to the East. They may have done this somewhen between 1600 B.C. and 1300 B.C.; there are no Egyptian records of Moses nor of Canaan at this time to help out the story. But at any rate they did not succeed in conquering any more than the hilly backgrounds of the promised land. The coast was now in the hands, not of the Canaanites but of newcomers, those Ægean peoples, the Philistines; and their cities, Gaza, Gath, Ashdod, Ascalon and Joppa successfully withstood the Hebrew attack. For many generations the children of Abraham remained an obscure people of the hilly back country engaged in incessant bickerings with the Philistines and with the kindred tribes about them, the Moabites,

the Midianites and so forth. The reader will find in the book of Judges a record of their struggles and disasters during this period. For very largely it is a record of disasters and failures frankly told.

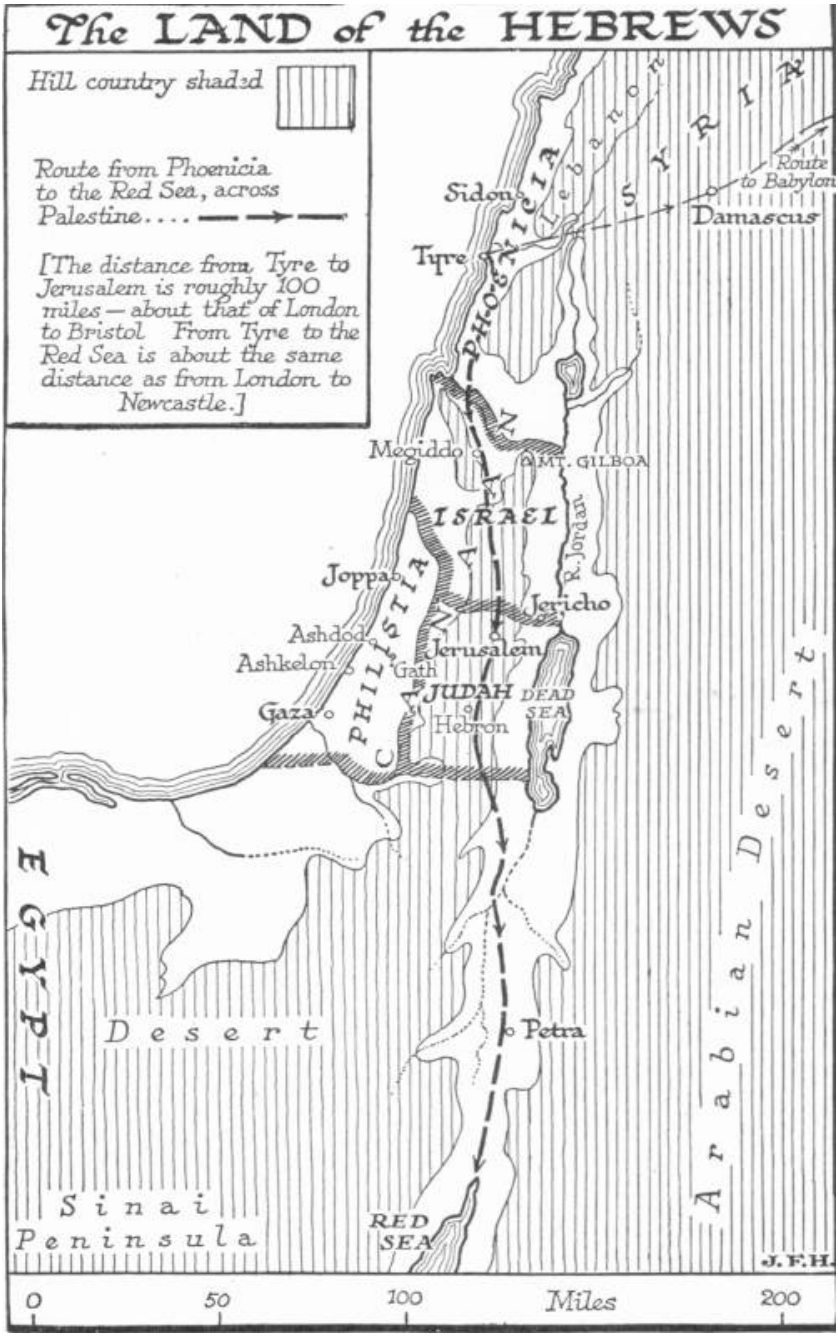

For most of this period the Hebrews were ruled, so far as there was any rule among them, by priestly judges selected by the elders of

the people, but at last somewhen towards 1000 B.C. they chose themselves a king, Saul, to lead them in battle. But Saul's leading was no great improvement upon the leading of the Judges; he perished under the hail of Philistine arrows at the battle of Mount Gilboa, his armour went into the temple of the Philistine Venus, and his body was nailed to the walls of Beth-shan.

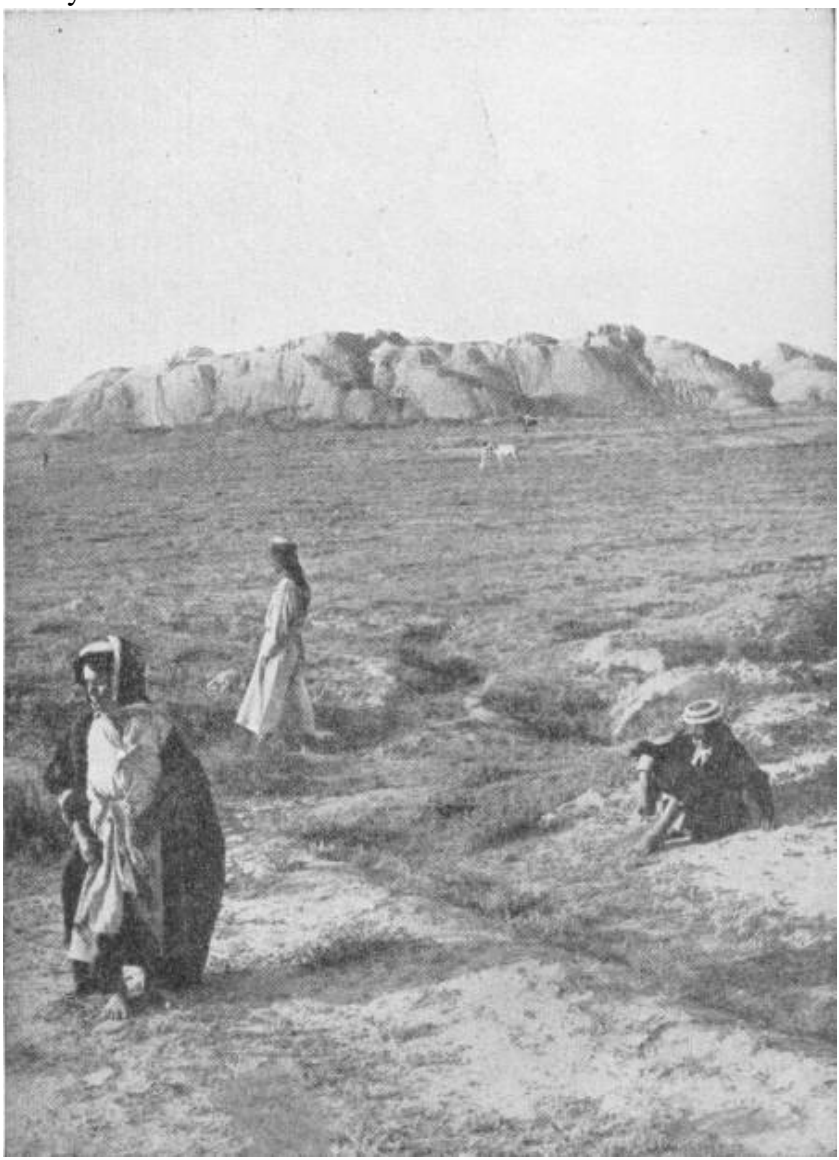

THE MOUND AT BABYLON
Beneath which are the remains of a great palace of Nebuchadnezzar
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

His successor David was more successful and more politic. With David dawned the only period of prosperity the Hebrew peoples were ever to know. It was based on a close alliance with the Phœnician city of Tyre, whose King Hiram seems to have been a man of very great intelligence and enterprise. He wished to secure a trade route to the Red Sea through the Hebrew hill country. Normally Phœnician trade went to the Red Sea by Egypt, but Egypt was in a state of profound disorder at this time; there may have been other obstructions to Phœnician trade along this line, and at any rate Hiram established the very closest relations both with David and with his son and successor Solomon. Under Hiram's auspices the walls, palace and temple of Jerusalem arose, and in return Hiram built and launched his ships on the Red Sea. A very considerable trade passed northward and southward through Jerusalem. And Solomon achieved a prosperity and magnificence unprecedented in the experience of his people. He was even given a daughter of Pharaoh in marriage.

But it is well to keep the proportion of things in mind. At the climax of his glories Solomon was only a little subordinate king in a little city. His power was so transitory that within a few years of his death, Shishak the first Pharaoh of the twenty-second dynasty, had taken Jerusalem and looted most of its splendours. The account of Solomon's magnificence given in the books of Kings and Chronicles is questioned by many critics. They say that it was added to and exaggerated by the patriotic pride of later writers. But the Bible account read carefully is not so overwhelming as it appears at the first reading. Solomon's temple, if one works out the measurements, would go inside a small suburban church, and his fourteen hundred chariots cease to impress us when we learn from an Assyrian monument that his successor Ahab sent a contingent of two thousand to the Assyrian army. It is also plainly manifest from the Bible narrative that Solomon spent himself in display and overtaxed and overworked his people. At his death the northern part of his kingdom broke off from Jerusalem and became the independent kingdom of

Israel. Jerusalem remained the capital city of Judah.

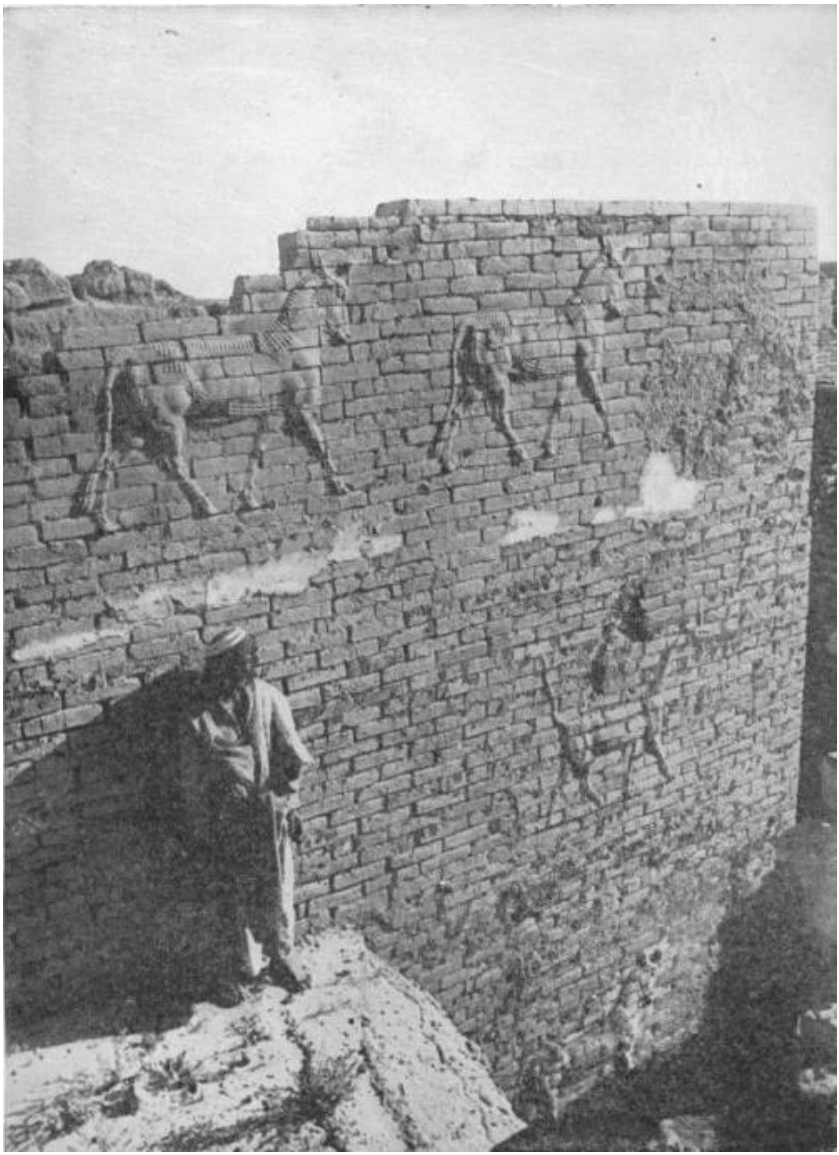

THE ISHTAR GATEWAY, BABYLON
The bulls are in richly coloured enamel on baked brick
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

The prosperity of the Hebrew people was short-lived. Hiram died, and the help of Tyre ceased to strengthen Jerusalem. Egypt grew strong again. The history of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah becomes a history of two little states ground between, first, Syria, then Assyria and then Babylon to the north and Egypt to the south. It is a tale of disasters and of deliverances that only delayed disaster. It is a tale of barbaric kings ruling a barbaric people. In 721 B.C. the kingdom of Israel was swept away into captivity by the Assyrians and its people utterly lost to history. Judah struggled on until in 604 B.C., as we have told, it shared the fate of Israel. There may be details open to criticism in the Bible story of Hebrew history from the days of the Judges onward, but on the whole it is evidently a true story which squares with all that has been learnt in the excavation of Egypt and Assyria and Babylon during the past century.

It was in Babylon that the Hebrew people got their history together and evolved their tradition. The people who came back to Jerusalem at the command of Cyrus were a very different people in spirit and knowledge from those who had gone into captivity. They had learnt civilization. In the development of their peculiar character a very great part was played by certain men, a new sort of men, the Prophets, to whom we must now direct our attention. These Prophets mark the appearance of new and remarkable forces in the steady development of human society.

XXII

PRIESTS AND PROPHETS IN JUDEA

THE fall of Assyria and Babylon were only the first of a series of disasters that were to happen to the Semitic peoples. In the seventh century B.C. it would have seemed as though the whole civilized world was to be dominated by Semitic rulers. They ruled the great Assyrian empire and they had conquered Egypt; Assyria, Babylon, Syria were all Semitic, speaking languages that were mutually intelligible. The trade of the world was in Semitic hands. Tyre, Sidon, the great mother cities of the Phœnician coast, had thrown out colonies that grew at last to even greater proportion in Spain, Sicily and Africa. Carthage, founded before 800 B.C., had risen to a population of more than a million. It was for a time the greatest city on earth. Its ships went to Britain and out into the Atlantic. They may have reached Madeira. We have already noted how Hiram co-operated with Solomon to build ships on the Red Sea for the Arabian and perhaps for the Indian trade. In the time of the Pharaoh Necho, a Phœnician expedition sailed completely round Africa.

At that time the Aryan peoples were still barbarians. Only the Greeks were reconstructing a new civilization of the ruins of the one they had destroyed, and the Medes were becoming "formidable," as an Assyrian inscription calls them, in central Asia. In 800 B.C. no one could have prophesied that before the third century B.C. every trace of Semitic dominion would be wiped out by Aryan-speaking conquerors, and that everywhere the Semitic peoples would be subjects or tributaries or scattered altogether. Everywhere except in the northern deserts of Arabia, where the Bedouin adhered steadily to the nomadic way of life, the ancient way of life of the Semites before Sargon I and his Akkadians went down to conquer Sumeria. But the Arab Bedouin were never conquered by Aryan masters.

Now of all these civilized Semites who were beaten and overrun in these five eventful centuries one people only held together and clung to its ancient traditions and that was this little people, the Jews, who were sent back to build their city of Jerusalem by Cyrus the Persian. And they were able to do this, because they had got together this literature of theirs, their Bible, in Babylon. It is not so much the

Jews who made the Bible as the Bible which made the Jews. Running through this Bible were certain ideas, different from the ideas of the people about them, very stimulating and sustaining ideas, to which they were destined to cling through five and twenty centuries of hardship, adventure and oppression.

Foremost of these Jewish ideas was this, that their God was invisible and remote, an invisible God in a temple not made with hands, a Lord of Righteousness throughout the earth. All other peoples had national gods embodied in images that lived in temples. If the image was smashed and the temple razed, presently that god died out. But this was a new idea, this God of the Jews, in the heavens, high above priests and sacrifices. And this God of Abraham, the Jews believed, had chosen them to be his peculiar people, to restore Jerusalem and make it the capital of Righteousness in the World. They were a people exalted by their sense of a common destiny. This belief saturated them all when they returned to Jerusalem after the captivity in Babylon.

Is it any miracle that in their days of overthrow and subjugation many Babylonians and Syrians and so forth and later on many Phœnicians, speaking practically the same language and having endless customs, habits, tastes and traditions in common, should be attracted by this inspiring cult and should seek to share in its fellowship and its promise? After the fall of Tyre, Sidon, Carthage and the Spanish Phœnician cities, the Phœnicians suddenly vanish from history; and as suddenly we find, not simply in Jerusalem but in Spain, Africa, Egypt, Arabia, the East, wherever the Phœnicians had set their feet, communities of Jews. And they were all held together by the Bible and by the reading of the Bible. Jerusalem was from the first only their nominal capital; their real city was this book of books. This is a new sort of thing in history. It is something of which the seeds were sown long before, when the Sumerians and Egyptians began to turn their hieroglyphics into writing. The Jews were a new thing, a people without a king and presently without a temple (for as we shall tell Jerusalem itself was broken up in 70 A.D.), held together and consolidated out of heterogeneous elements by nothing but the power of the written word.

And this mental welding of the Jews was neither planned nor

foreseen nor done by either priests or statesmen. Not only a new kind of community but a new kind of man comes into history with the development of the Jews. In the days of Solomon the Hebrews looked like becoming a little people just like any other little people of that time clustering around court and temple, ruled by the wisdom of the priest and led by the ambition of the king. But already, the reader may learn from the Bible, this new sort of man of which we speak, the Prophet, was in evidence.

As troubles thicken round the divided Hebrews the importance of these Prophets increases.

THE BLACK OBELISK OF SHALMANESER II
This obelisk (in the British Museum) of the King of Assyria mentions, in cuneiform, "Jehu the son of Omri." Panel showing Jewish captives bringing tribute

What were these Prophets? They were men of the most diverse origins. The Prophet Ezekiel was of the priestly caste and the Prophet Amos wore the goatskin mantle of a shepherd, but all had this in common, that they gave allegiance to no one but to the God of Righteousness and that they spoke directly to the people. They came without licence or consecration. "Now the word of the Lord came unto me;" that was the formula. They were intensely political. They exhorted the people against Egypt, "that broken reed," or against Assyria or Babylon; they denounced the indolence of the priestly order or the flagrant sins of the King. Some of them turned their

attention to what we should now call "social reform." The rich were "grinding the faces of the poor," the luxurious were consuming the children's bread; wealthy people made friends with and imitated the splendours and vices of foreigners; and this was hateful to Jehovah, the God of Abraham, who would certainly punish this land.

ANOTHER PANEL OF THE BLACK OBELISK
Captive Princes making obeisance to Shalmaneser II

These fulminations were written down and preserved and studied. They went wherever the Jews went, and wherever they went they spread a new religious spirit. They carried the common man past priest and temple, past court and king and brought him face to face with the Rule of Righteousness. That is their supreme importance in the history of mankind. In the great utterances of Isaiah the prophetic voice rises to a pitch of splendid anticipation and foreshadows the whole earth united and at peace under one God. Therein the Jewish prophecies culminate.

All the Prophets did not speak in this fashion, and the intelligent reader of the prophetic books will find much hate in them, much prejudice, and much that will remind him of the propaganda pamphlets of the present time. Nevertheless it is the Hebrew Prophets of the period round and about the Babylonian captivity who mark the appearance of a new power in the world, the power of individual moral appeal, of an appeal to the free conscience of mankind against the fetish sacrifices and slavish loyalties that had hitherto bridled and harnessed our race.

XXIII

THE GREEKS

NOW while after Solomon (whose reign was probably about 960 B.C.) the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah were suffering destruction and deportation, and while the Jewish people were developing their tradition in captivity in Babylon, another great power over the human mind, the Greek tradition, was also arising. While the Hebrew prophets were working out a new sense of direct moral responsibility between the people and an eternal and universal God of Right, the Greek philosophers were training the human mind in a new method and spirit of intellectual adventure.

The Greek tribes as we have told were a branch of the Aryan-speaking stem. They had come down among the Ægean cities and islands some centuries before 1000 B.C. They were probably already in southward movement before the Pharaoh Thothmes hunted his first elephants beyond the conquered Euphrates. For in those days there were elephants in Mesopotamia and lions in Greece.

It is possible that it was a Greek raid that burnt Cnossos, but there are no Greek legends of such a victory though there are stories of Minos and his palace (the Labyrinth) and of the skill of the Cretan artificers.

STATUE OF MELEAGER

Note the progress in plastic power from the earlier wooden statue on left
Photo: Sebah & Foaillier

Like most of the Aryans these Greeks had singers and reciters whose performances were an important social link, and these handed down from the barbaric beginnings of their people two great epics, the *Iliad*, telling how a league of Greek tribes besieged and took and sacked the town of Troy in Asia Minor, and the *Odyssey*, being a long adventure story of the return of the sage captain, Odysseus, from Troy to his own island. These epics were written down somewhen in the eighth or seventh century B.C., when the Greeks had acquired the use of an alphabet from their more civilized neighbours, but they are supposed to have been in existence very much earlier. Formerly they were ascribed to a particular blind bard, Homer, who was supposed to have sat down and composed them as Milton composed Paradise Lost. Whether there really was such a poet, whether he composed or only wrote down and polished these epics and so forth, is a favourite quarrelling ground for the erudite. We need not concern ourselves with such bickerings here. The thing that matters from our point of view is that the Greeks were in possession of their epics in the eighth century B.C., and that they were a common possession and a link between their various tribes, giving them a sense of fellowship as against the outer barbarians. They were a group of kindred peoples linked by the spoken and afterwards by the written word, and sharing common ideals of courage and behaviour.

The epics showed the Greeks a barbaric people without iron, without writing, and still not living in cities. They seem to have lived at first in open villages of huts around the halls of their chiefs outside the ruins of the Ægean cities they had destroyed. Then they began to wall their cities and to adopt the idea of temples from the people they had conquered. It has been said that the cities of the primitive civilizations grew up about the altar of some tribal god, and that the wall was added; in the cities of the Greeks the wall preceded the temple. They began to trade and send out colonies. By the seventh century B.C. a new series of cities had grown up in the valleys and

islands of Greece, forgetful of the Ægean cities and civilization that had preceded them; Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, Samos, Miletus among the chief. There were already Greek settlements along the coast of the Black Sea and in Italy and Sicily. The heel and toe of Italy was called Magna Græcia. Marseilles was a Greek town established on the site of an earlier Phœnician colony.

Now countries which are great plains or which have as a chief means of transport some great river like the Euphrates or Nile tend to become united under some common rule. The cities of Egypt and the cities of Sumeria, for example, ran together under one system of government. But the Greek peoples were cut up among islands and mountain valleys; both Greece and Magna Græcia are very mountainous; and the tendency was all the other way. When the Greeks come into history they are divided up into a number of little states which showed no signs of coalescence. They are different even in race. Some consist chiefly of citizens of this or that Greek tribe, Ionic, Æolian or Doric; some have a mingled population of Greeks and descendants of the pre-Greek "Mediterranean" folk; some have an unmixed free citizenship of Greeks lording it over an enslaved conquered population like the "Helots" in Sparta. In some the old leaderly Aryan families have become a close aristocracy; in some there is a democracy of all the Aryan citizens; in some there are elected or even hereditary kings, in some usurpers or tyrants.

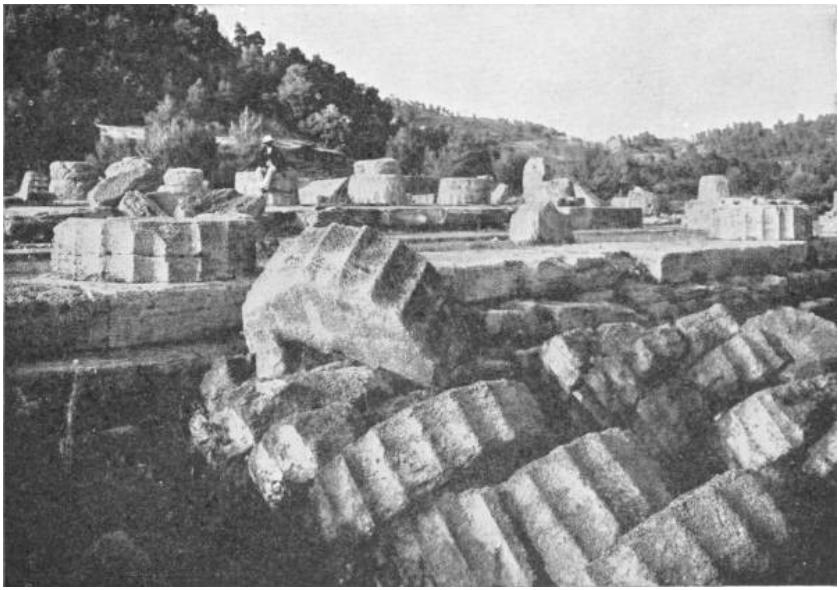

RUINS OF THE GREAT TEMPLE OF ZEUS AT OLYMPIA
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

And the same geographical conditions that kept the Greek states divided and various, kept them small. The largest states were smaller than many English counties, and it is doubtful if the population of any of their cities ever exceeded a third of a million. Few came up even to 50,000. There were unions of interest and sympathy but no coalescences. Cities made leagues and alliances as trade increased, and small cities put themselves under the protection of great ones. Yet all Greece was held together in a certain community of feeling by two things, by the epics and by the custom of taking part every fourth year in the athletic contests at Olympia. This did not prevent wars and feuds, but it mitigated something of the savagery of war between them, and a truce protected all travellers to and from the games. As time went on the sentiment of a common heritage grew and the number of states participating in the Olympic games increased until at last not only Greeks but competitors from the closely kindred countries of Epirus and Macedonia to the north were admitted.

The Greek cities grew in trade and importance, and the quality of

their civilization rose steadily in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Their social life differed in many interesting points from the social life of the Ægean and river valley civilizations. They had splendid temples but the priesthood was not the great traditional body it was in the cities of the older world, the-repository of all knowledge, the storehouse of ideas. They had leaders and noble families, but no quasi- divine monarch surrounded by an elaborately organized court. Rather their organization was aristocratic, with leading families which kept each other in order. Even their so- called "democracies" were aristocratic; every citizen had a share in public affairs and came to the assembly in a democracy, *but everybody was not a citizen*. The Greek democracies were not like our modern "democracies" in which everyone has a vote. Many of the Greek democracies had a few hundred or a few thousand citizens and then many thousands of slaves, freedmen and so forth, with no share in public affairs. Generally in Greece affairs were in the hands of a community of substantial men. Their kings and their tyrants alike were just men set in front of other men or usurping a leadership; they were not quasi-divine overmen like Pharaoh or Minos or the monarchs of Mesopotamia. Both thought and government therefore had a freedom under Greek conditions such as they had known in none of the older civilizations. The Greeks had brought down into cities the individualism, the personal initiative of the wandering life of the northern parklands. They were the first republicans of importance in history.

THE TEMPLE OF NEPTUNE (POSEIDON), PÆSTUM, SICILY
Photo: Alinari

And we find that as they emerge from a condition of barbaric warfare a new thing becomes apparent in their intellectual life. We find men who are not priests seeking and recording knowledge and enquiring into the mysteries of life and being, in a way that has hitherto been the sublime privilege of priesthood or the presumptuous amusement of kings. We find already in the sixth century B.C. — perhaps while Isaiah was still prophesying in Babylon — such men as Thales and Anaximander of Miletus and Heraclitus of Ephesus, who were what we should now call independent gentlemen, giving their minds to shrewd questionings of the world in which we live, asking what its real nature was, whence it came and what its destiny might be, and refusing all ready-made or evasive answers. Of these questionings of the universe by the Greek mind, we shall have more to say a little later in this history. These Greek enquirers who begin to be remarkable in the sixth century B.C. are the first philosophers, the first "wisdom-lovers," in the world.

And it may be noted here how important a century this sixth century B.C. was in the history of humanity. For not only were these Greek philosophers beginning the research for clear ideas about this universe and man's place in it and Isaiah carrying Jewish prophecy to its sublimest levels, but as we shall tell later Gautama Buddha was then teaching in India and Confucius and Lao Tse in China. From Athens to the Pacific the human mind was astir.

XXIV

THE WARS OF THE GREEKS AND PERSIANS

WHILE the Greeks in the cities in Greece, South Italy and Asia Minor were embarking upon free intellectual enquiry and while in Babylon and Jerusalem the last of the Hebrew prophets were creating a free conscience for mankind, two adventurous Aryan peoples, the Medes and the Persians, were in possession of the civilization of the ancient world and were making a great empire, the Persian empire, which was far larger in extent than any empire the world had seen hitherto. Under Cyrus, Babylon and the rich and ancient civilization of Lydia had been added to the Persian rule; the Phœnician cities of the Levant and all the Greek cities in Asia Minor had been made tributary, Cambyses had subjected Egypt, and Darius I, the Mede, the third of the Persian rulers (521 B.C.), found himself monarch as it seemed of all the world. His couriers rode with his decrees from the Dardanelles to the Indus and from Upper Egypt to Central Asia.

The Greeks in Europe, it is true, Italy, Carthage, Sicily and the Spanish Phœnician settlements, were not under the Persian Peace; but they treated it with respect and the only people who gave any serious trouble were the old parent hordes of Nordic people in South Russia and Central Asia, the Scythians, who raided the northern and north-eastern borders.

Of course the population of this great Persian empire was not a population of Persians, The Persians were only the small conquering minority of this enormous realm. The rest of the population was what it had been before the Persians came from time immemorial, only that Persian was the administrative language. Trade and finance were still largely Semitic, Tyre and Sidon as of old were the great Mediterranean ports and Semitic shipping plied upon the seas. But many of these Semitic merchants and business people as they went from place to place already found a sympathetic and convenient common history in the Hebrew tradition and the Hebrew scriptures. A new element which was increasing rapidly in this empire was the Greek element. The Greeks were becoming serious rivals to the Semites upon the sea, and their detached and vigorous intelligence made them useful and, unprejudiced officials.

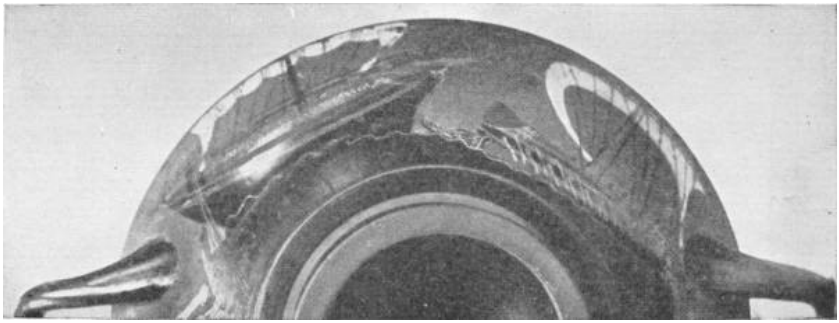

FINE PIECE OF ATHENIAN POTTERY
Showing Greek merchant vesselswith sails and oars statue on left
Brit. Mus.

It was on account of the Scythians that Darius I invaded Europe. He wanted to reach South Russia, the homeland of the Scythian horsemen. He crossed the Bosphorus with a great army and marched through Bulgaria to the Danube, crossed this by a bridge of boats and pushed far northward. His army suffered terribly. It was largely an infantry force and the mounted Scythians rode all round it, cut off its supplies, destroyed any stragglers and never came to a pitched battle. Darius was forced into an inglorious retreat.

He returned himself to Susa but he left an army in Thrace and Macedonia, and Macedonia submitted to Darius. Insurrections of the Greek cities in Asia followed this failure, and the European Greeks were drawn into the contest. Darius resolved upon the subjugation of the Greeks in Europe. With the Phœnician fleet at his disposal he was able to subdue one island after another, and finally in 490 B.C. he made his main attack upon Athens. A considerable Armada sailed from the ports of Asia Minor and the eastern Mediterranean, and the expedition landed its troops at Marathon to the north of Athens. There they were met and signally defeated by the Athenians.

An extraordinary thing happened at this time. The bitterest rival of Athens in Greece was Sparta, but now Athens appealed to Sparta, sending a herald, a swift runner, imploring the Spartans not to let Greeks become slaves to barbarians. This runner (the prototype of all "Marathon" runners) did over a hundred miles of broken country in less than two days. The Spartans responded promptly and

generously; but when, in three days, the Spartan force reached Athens, there was nothing for it to do but to view the battlefield and the bodies of the defeated Persian soldiers. The Persian fleet had returned to Asia. So ended the first Persian attack on Greece.

The next was much more impressive. Darius died soon after the news of his defeat at Marathon reached him, and for four years his son and successor, Xerxes, prepared a host to crush the Greeks. For a time terror united all the Greeks. The army of Xerxes was certainly the greatest that had hitherto been assembled in the world. It was a huge assembly of discordant elements. It crossed the Dardanelles, 480 B.C., by a bridge of boats; and along the coast as it advanced moved an equally miscellaneous fleet carrying supplies. At the narrow pass of Thermopylæ a small force of 1400 men under the Spartan Leonidas resisted this multitude, and after a fight of unsurpassed heroism was completely destroyed. Every man was killed. But the losses they inflicted upon the Persians were enormous, and the army of Xerxes pushed on to Thebes and Athens in a chastened mood. Thebes surrendered and made terms. The Athenians abandoned their city and it was burnt.

Greece seemed in the hands of the conqueror, but again came victory against the odds and all expectations. The Greek fleet, though not a third the size of the Persian, assailed it in the bay of Salamis and destroyed it. Xerxes found himself and his immense army cut off from supplies and his heart failed him. He retreated to Asia with one half of his army, leaving the rest to be defeated at Platea (479 B.C.) what time the remnants of the Persian fleet were hunted down by the Greeks and destroyed at Mycalæ in Asia Minor.

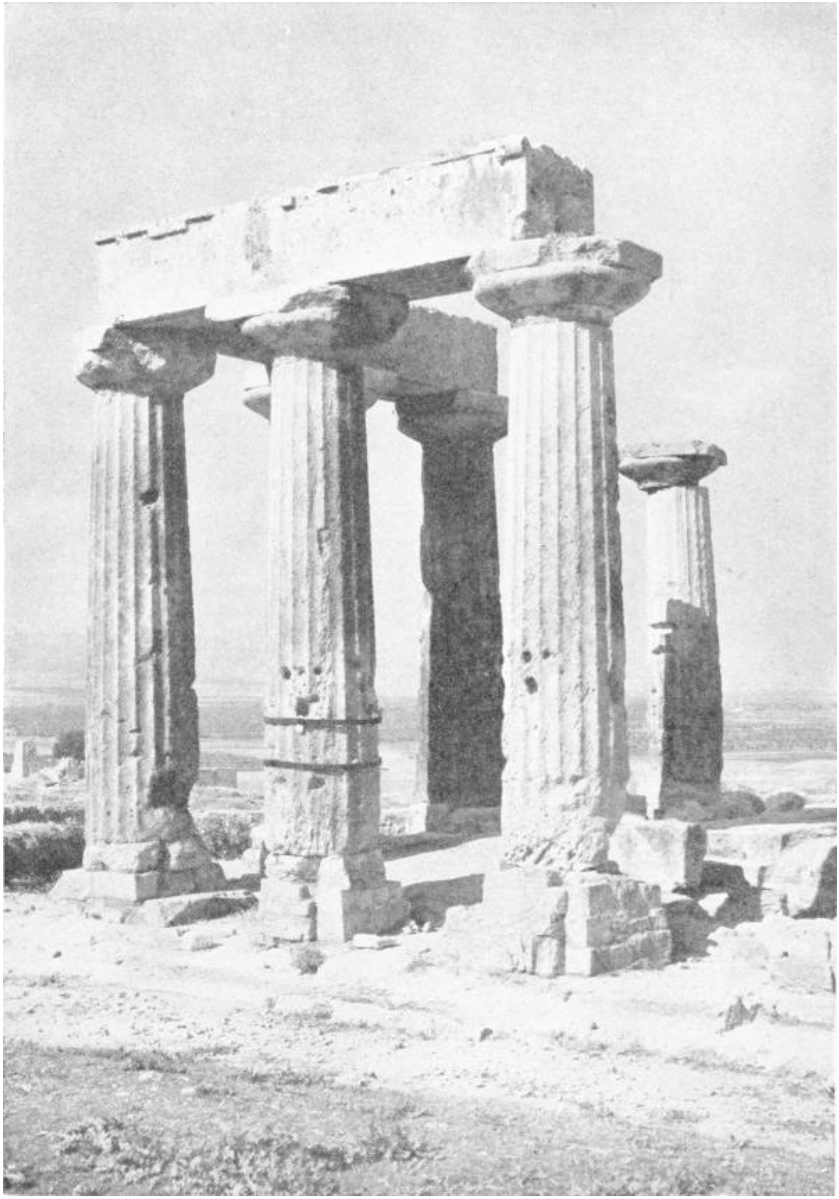

ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE GREAT TEMPLE OF CORINTH
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

The Persian danger was at an end. Most of the Greek cities in Asia became free. All this is told in great detail and with much

picturesqueness in the first of written histories, the *History* of Herodotus. This Herodotus was born about 484 B.C. in the Ionian city of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor, and he visited Babylon and Egypt in his search for exact particulars. From Mycalæ onward Persia sank into a confusion of dynastic troubles. Xerxes was murdered in 465 B.C. and rebellions in Egypt, Syria and Media broke up the brief order of that mighty realm. The history of Herodotus lays stress on the weakness of Persia. This history is indeed what we should now call propaganda — propaganda for Greece to unite and conquer Persia. Herodotus makes one character, Aristagoras, go to the Spartans with a map of the known world and say to them: "These Barbarians are not valiant in fight. You on the other hand have now attained the utmost skill in war .... No other nations in the world have what they possess: gold, silver, bronze, embroidered garments, beasts and slaves. *All this you might have for yourselves, if you so desired*."

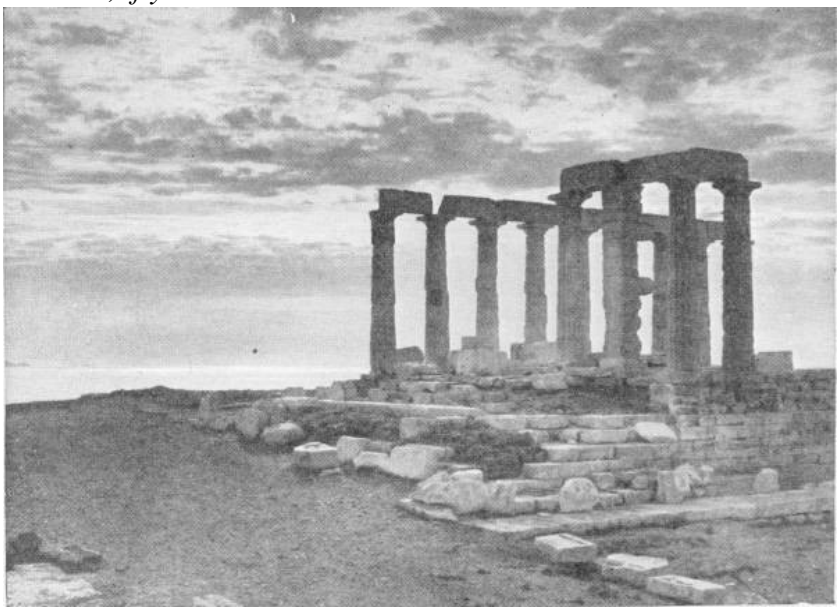

THE TEMPLE OF NEPTUNE (POSEIDON) AT CAPE SUNIUM
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

THE SPLENDOUR OF GREECE

THE century and a half that followed the defeat of Persia was one of very great splendour for the Greek civilization. True that Greece was torn by a desperate struggle for ascendancy between Athens, Sparta and other states (the Peloponnesian War 431 to 404 B.C.) and that in 338 B.C. the Macedonians became virtually masters of Greece; nevertheless during this period the thought and the creative and artistic impulse of the Greeks rose to levels that made their achievement a lamp to mankind for all the rest of history.

The head and centre of this mental activity was Athens. For over thirty years (466 to 428 B.C.) Athens was dominated by a man of great vigour and liberality of mind, Pericles, who set himself to rebuild the city from the ashes to which the Persians had reduced it. The beautiful ruins that still glorify Athens to-day are chiefly the remains of this great effort. And he did not simply rebuild a material Athens. He rebuilt Athens intellectually. He gathered about him not only architects and sculptors but poets, dramatists, philosophers and teachers. Herodotus came to Athens to recite his history (438 B.C.). Anaxagoras came with the beginnings of a scientific description of the sun and stars. Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides one after the other carried the Greek drama to its highest levels or beauty and nobility.

The impetus Pericles gave to the intellectual life of Athens lived on after his death, and in spite of the fact that the peace of Greece was now broken by the Peloponnesian War and a long and wasteful struggle for "ascendancy" was beginning. Indeed the darkling of the political horizon seems for a time to have quickened rather than discouraged men's minds.

Already long before the time of Pericles the peculiar freedom of Greek institutions had given great importance to skill in discussion. Decision rested neither with king nor with priest but in the assemblies of the people or of leading men. Eloquence and able argument became very desirable accomplishments therefore, and a class of teachers arose, the Sophists, who undertook to strengthen young men in these arts. But one cannot reason without matter, and

knowledge followed in the wake of speech. The activities and rivalries of these Sophists led very naturally to an acute examination of style, of methods of thought and of the validity of arguments. When Pericles died a certain Socrates was becoming prominent as an able and destructive critic of bad argument — and much of the teaching of the Sophists was bad argument. A group of brilliant young men gathered about Socrates. In the end Socrates was executed for disturbing people's minds (399 B.C.), he was condemned after the dignified fashion of the Athens of those days to drink in his own house and among his own friends a poisonous draught made from hemlock, but the disturbance of people's minds went on in spite of his condemnation. His young men carried on his teaching.

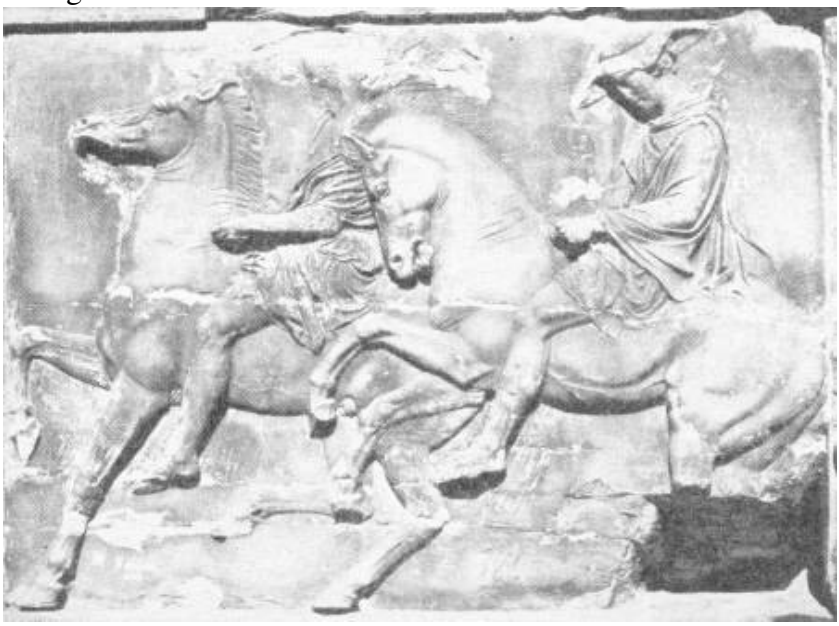

PART OF THE FAMOUS FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON, ATHENS
A specimen of Grecian sculpture in its finest expression. Compare the advance of art with that seen in the animals shown on
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

THE ACROPOLIS, ATHENS
The marvellous group of Temples and monuments built under the inspriration of Pericles
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

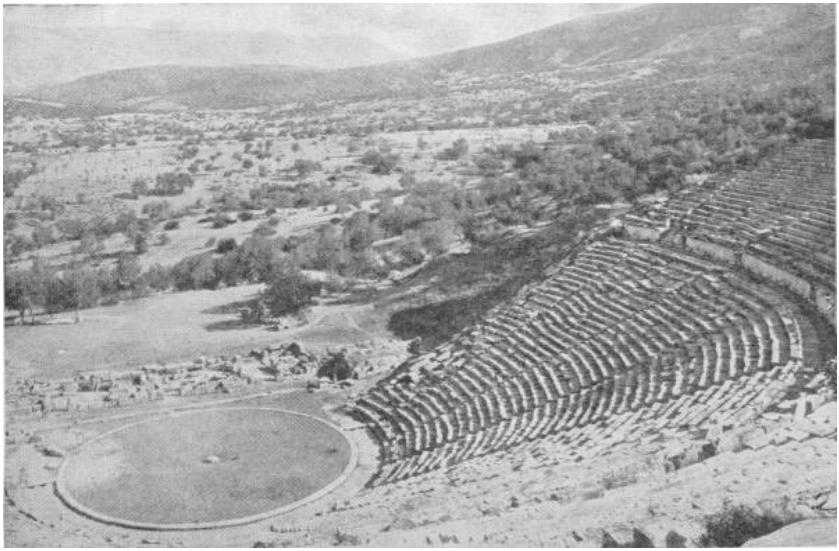

THE THEATRE AT EPIDAUROS, GREECE

A wonderfully preserved specimen showing the vast auditorium
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

Chief among these young men was Plato (427 to 347 B.C.) who presently began to teach philosophy in the grove of the Academy. His teaching fell into two main divisions, an examination of the foundations and methods of human thinking and an examination of political institutions. He was the first man to write a Utopia, that is to say the plan of a community different from and better than any existing community. This shows an altogether unprecedented boldness in the human mind which had hitherto accepted social traditions and usages with scarcely a question. Plato said plainly to mankind: "Most of the social and political ills from which you suffer are under your control, given only the will and courage to change them. You can live in another and a wiser fashion if you choose to think it out and work it out. You are not awake to your own power." That is a high adventurous teaching that has still to soak in to the common intelligence of our race. One of his earliest works was the Republic, a dream of a communist aristocracy; his last unfinished work was the Laws, a scheme of regulation for another such Utopian state.

THE CARYATIDES OF THE ERECHTHEUM
The ancient sanctuary on the Acropolis at Athens
Photo: Fred Boissonnas

ATHENE OF THE PARTHENON
Photo: Alinart

The criticism of methods of thinking and methods of government was carried on after Plato's death by Aristotle, who had been his pupil and who taught in the Lyceum. Aristotle came from the city of Stagira in Macedonia, and his father was court physician to the Macedonian king. For a time Aristotle was tutor to Alexander, the king's son, who was destined to achieve very great things of which we shall soon be telling. Aristotle's work upon methods of thinking carried the science of Logic to a level at which it remained for fifteen hundred years or more, until the mediæval schoolmen took up the ancient questions again. He made no Utopias. Before man could really control his destiny as Plato taught, Aristotle perceived that he needed far more knowledge and far more accurate knowledge than he possessed. And so Aristotle began that systematic collection of knowledge which nowadays we call Science. He sent out explorers to collect *facts*. He was the father of natural history. He was the founder of political science. His students at the Lyceum examined and compared the constitutions of 158 different states ....

Here in the fourth century B.C. we find men who are practically "modern thinkers." The child-like, dream-like methods of primitive thought had given way to a disciplined and critical attack upon the problems of life. The weird and monstrous symbolism and imagery of the gods and god monsters, and all the taboos and awes and restraints that have hitherto encumbered thinking are here completely set aside. Free, exact and systematic thinking has begun. The fresh and unencumbered mind of these newcomers out of the northern forests has thrust itself into the mysteries of the temple and let the daylight in.

XXVI

THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

FROM 431 to 404 B.C. the Peloponnesian War wasted Greece. Meanwhile to the north of Greece, the kindred country of Macedonia was rising slowly to power and civilization. The Macedonians spoke a language closely akin to Greek, and on several occasions Macedonian competitors had taken part in the Olympic games. In 359 B.C. a man of very great abilities and ambition became king of this little country — Philip. Philip had previously been a hostage in Greece; he had had a thoroughly Greek education and he was probably aware of the ideas of Herodotus — which had also been developed by the philosopher Isocrates — of a possible conquest of Asia by a consolidated Greece.

He set himself first to extend and organize his own realm and to remodel his army. For a thousand years now the charging horse-chariot had been the decisive factor in battles, that and the close-fighting infantry. Mounted horsemen had also fought, but as a cloud of skirmishers, individually and without discipline. Philip made his infantry fight in a closely packed mass, the Macedonian phalanx, and he trained his mounted gentlemen, the knights or companions, to fight in formation and so invented cavalry. The master move in most of his battles and in the battles of his son Alexander was a cavalry charge. The phalanx *held* the enemy infantry in front while the cavalry swept away the enemy horse on his wings and poured in on the flank and rear of his infantry. Chariots were disabled by bowmen, who shot the horses.

With this new army Philip extended his frontiers through Thessaly to Greece; and the battle of Chæronia (338 B.C.), fought against Athens and her allies, put all Greece at his feet. At last the dream of Herodotus was bearing fruit. A congress of all the Greek states appointed Philip captain-general of the Græco- Macedonian confederacy against Persia, and in 336 B.C. his advanced guard crossed into Asia upon this long premeditated adventure. But he never followed it. He was assassinated; it is believed at the instigation of his queen Olympias, Alexander's mother. She was jealous because Philip had married a second wife.

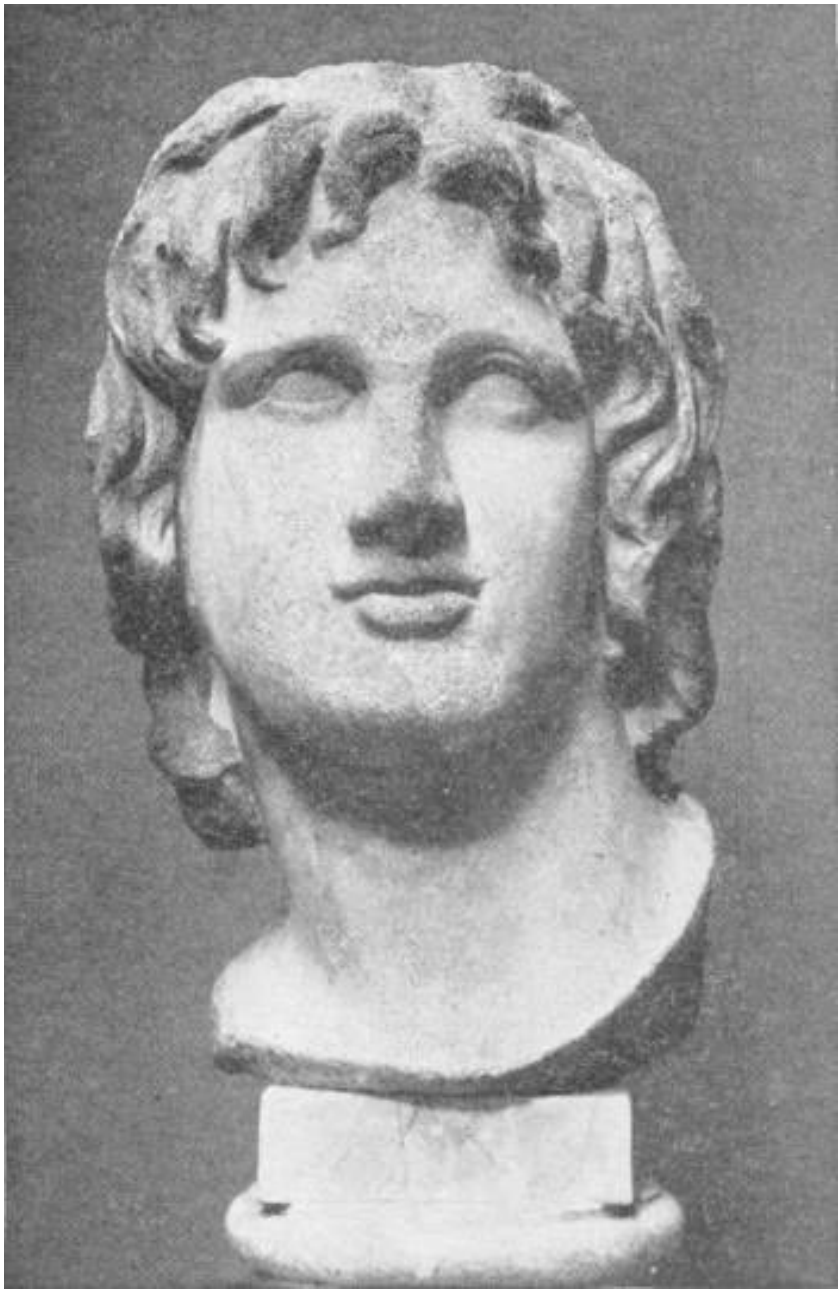

BUST OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT
(As in the British Museum)

But Philip had taken unusual pains with his son's education. He had not only secured Aristotle, the greatest philosopher in the world, as this boy's tutor, but he had shared his ideas with him and thrust military experience upon him. At Chæronia Alexander, who was then only eighteen years old, had been in command of the cavalry. And so it was possible for this young man, who was still only twenty years old at the time of his accession, to take up his father's task at once and to proceed successfully with the Persian adventure.

In 334 B.C. — for two years were needed to establish and confirm his position in Macedonia and Greece — he crossed into Asia, defeated a not very much bigger Persian army at the battle of the Granicus and captured a number of cities in Asia Minor. He kept along the sea-coast. It was necessary for him to reduce and garrison all the coast towns as he advanced because the Persians had control of the fleets of Tyre and Sidon and so had command of the sea. Had he left a hostile port in his rear the Persians might have landed forces to raid his communications and cut him off. At Issus (333 B.C.) he met and smashed a vast conglomerate host under Darius III. Like the host of Xerxes that had crossed the Dardanelles a century and a half before, it was an incoherent accumulation of contingents and it was encumbered with a multitude of court officials, the harem of Darius and many camp followers. Sidon surrendered to Alexander but Tyre resisted obstinately. Finally that great city was stormed and plundered and destroyed. Gaza also was stormed, and towards the end of 332 B.C. the conqueror entered Egypt and took over its rule from the Persians.

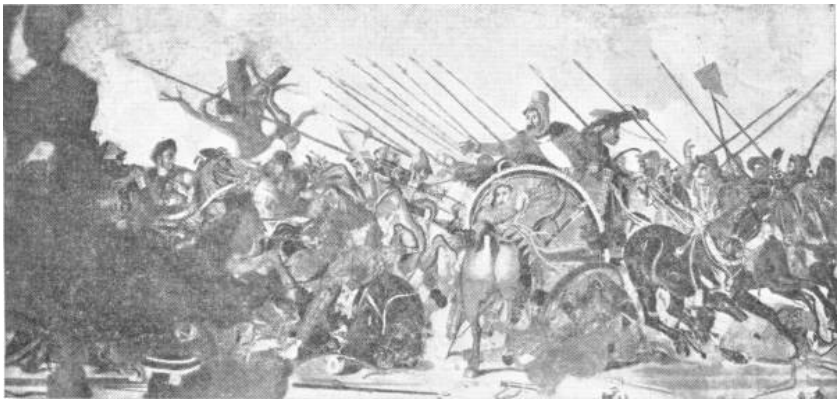

ALEXANDER'S VICTORY OVER THE PERSIANS AT ISSUS
(From the Pompeian Mosaic)
Alexander charges in on the left, Darius is in the chariot to the right

At Alexandretta and at Alexandria in Egypt he built great cities, accessible from the land and so incapable of revolt. To these the trade of the Phœnician cities was diverted. The Phœnicians of the western Mediterranean suddenly disappear from history — and as immediately the Jews of Alexandria and the other new trading cities created by Alexander appear.

In 331 B.C. Alexander marched out of Egypt upon Babylon as Thothmes and Rameses and Necho had done before him. But he marched by way of Tyre. At Arbela near the ruins of Nineveh, which was already a forgotten city, he met Darius and fought the decisive battle of the war. The Persian chariot charge failed, a Macedonian cavalry charge broke up the great composite host and the phalanx completed the victory. Darius led the retreat. He made no further attempt to resist the invader but fled northward into the country of the Medes. Alexander marched on to Babylon, still prosperous and important, and then to Susa and Persepolis. There after a drunken festival he burnt down the palace of Darius, the king of kings.

THE APOLLO BELVEDERE
(In the Vatican Museum)

Thence Alexander presently made a military parade of central Asia, going to the utmost bounds of the Persian empire. At first he turned northward. Darius was pursued; and he was overtaken at dawn dying in his chariot, having been murdered by his own people. He was still living when the foremost Greeks reached him. Alexander

came up to find him dead. Alexander skirted the Caspian Sea, he went up into the mountains of western Turkestan, he came down by Herat (which he founded) and Cabul and the Khyber Pass into India. He fought a great battle on the Indus with an Indian king, Porus, and here the Macedonian troops met elephants for the first time and defeated them. Finally he built himself ships, sailed down to the mouth of the Indus, and marched back by the coast of Beluchistan, reaching Susa again in 324 B.C. after an absence of six years. He then prepared to consolidate and organize this vast empire he had won. He sought to win over his new subjects. He assumed the robes and tiara of a Persian monarch, and this roused the jealousy of his Macedonian commanders. He had much trouble with them. He arranged a number of marriages between these Macedonian officers and Persian and Babylonian women: the "Marriage of the East and West." He never lived to effect the consolidation he had planned. A fever seized him after a drinking bout in Babylon and he died in 323 B.C.

Immediately this vast dominion fell to pieces. One of his generals, Seleucus, retained most of the old Persian empire from the Indus to Ephesus; another, Ptolemy, seized Egypt, and Antigonus secured Macedonia. The rest of the empire remained unstable, passing under the control of a succession of local adventurers. Barbarian raids began from the north and grew in scope and intensity. Until at last, as we shall tell, a new power, the power of the Roman republic, came out of the west to subjugate one fragment after another and weld them together into a new and more enduring empire.

XXVII

THE MUSEUM AND LIBRARY AT ALEXANDRIA

BEFORE the time of Alexander Greeks had already been spreading as merchants, artists, officials, mercenary soldiers, over most of the Persian dominions. In the dynastic disputes that followed the death of Xerxes, a band of ten thousand Greek mercenaries played a part under the leadership of Xenophon. Their return to Asiatic Greece from Babylon is described in his *Retreat of the Ten Thousand*, one of the first war stories that was ever written by a general in command. But the conquests of Alexander and the division of his brief empire among his subordinate generals, greatly stimulated this permeation of the ancient world by the Greeks and their language and fashions and culture. Traces of this Greek dissemination are to be found far away in central Asia and in north-west India. Their influence upon the development of Indian art was profound.

For many centuries Athens retained her prestige as a centre of art and culture; her schools went on indeed to 529 A.D., that is to say for nearly a thousand years; but the leadership in the intellectual activity of the world passed presently across the Mediterranean to Alexandria, the new trading city that Alexander had founded. Here the Macedonian general Ptolemy had become Pharaoh, with a court that spoke Greek. He had become an intimate of Alexander before he became king, and he was deeply saturated with the ideas of Aristotle. He set himself, with great energy and capacity, to organize knowledge and investigation. He also wrote a history of Alexander's campaigns which, unhappily, is lost to the world.

Alexander had already devoted considerable sums to finance the enquiries of Aristotle, but Ptolemy I was the first person to make a permanent endowment of science. He set up a foundation in Alexandria which was formerly dedicated to the Muses, the Museum of Alexandria. For two or three generations the scientific work done at Alexandria was extraordinarily good. Euclid, Eratosthenes who measured the size of the earth and came within fifty miles of its true diameter, Apollonius who wrote on conic sections, Hipparchus who

made the first star map and catalogue, and Hero who devised the first steam engine are among the greater stars of an extraordinary constellation of scientific pioneers. Archimedes came from Syracuse to Alexandria to study, and was a frequent correspondent of the Museum. Herophilus was one of the greatest of Greek anatomists, and is said to have practised vivisection.

For a generation or so during the reigns of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II there was such a blaze of knowledge and discovery at Alexandria as the world was not to see again until the sixteenth century A.D. But it did not continue. There may have been several causes of this decline. Chief among them, the late Professor Mahaffy suggested, was the fact that the Museum was a "royal" college and all its professors and fellows were appointed and paid by Pharaoh. This was all very well when Pharaoh was Ptolemy I, the pupil and friend of Aristotle. But as the dynasty of the Ptolemies went on they became Egyptianized, they fell under the sway of Egyptian priests and Egyptian religious developments, they ceased to follow the work that was done, and their control stifled the spirit of enquiry altogether. The Museum produced little good work after its first century of activity.

Ptolemy I not only sought in the most modern spirit to organize the finding of fresh knowledge. He tried also to set up an encyclopædic storehouse of wisdom in the Library of Alexandria. It was not simply a storehouse, it was also a book-copying and book-selling organization. A great army of copyists was set to work perpetually multiplying copies of books.

Here then we have the definite first opening up of the intellectual process in which we live to-day; here we have the systematic gathering and distribution of knowledge. The foundation of this Museum and Library marks one of the great epochs in the history of mankind. It is the true beginning of Modern History.

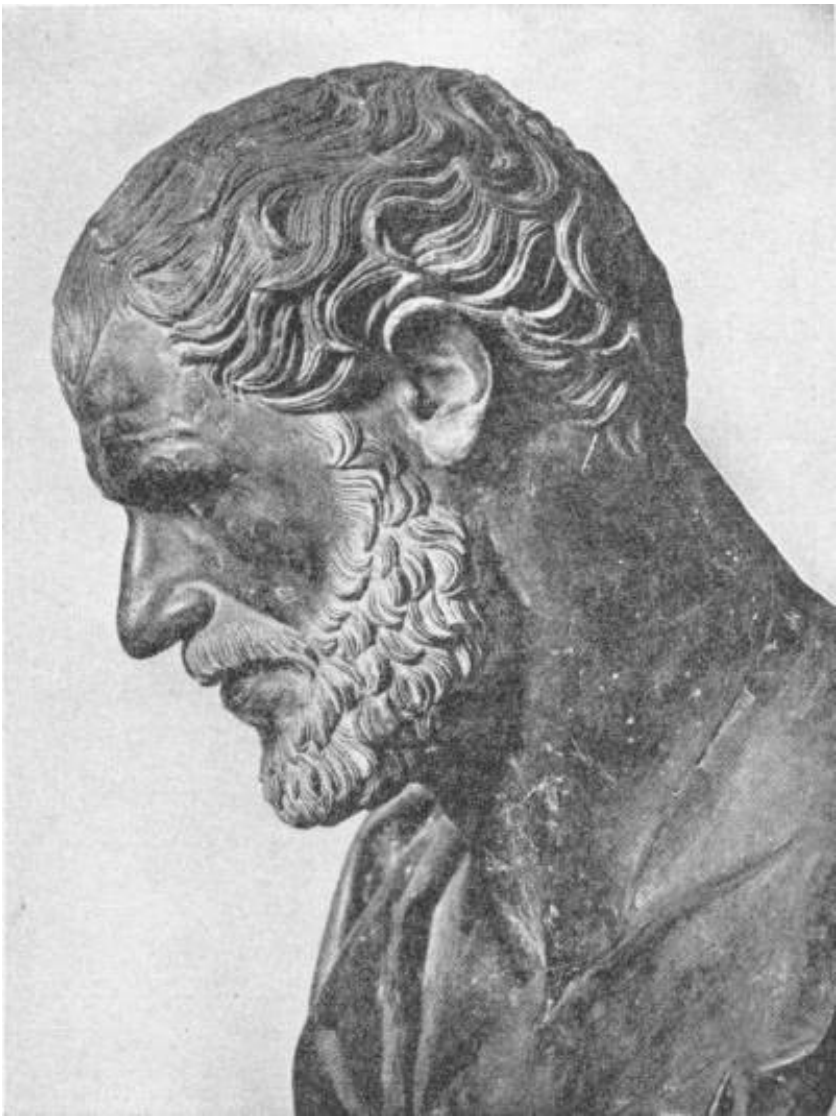

ARISTOTLE
From Herculaneum, probably Fourth Century B.C.
Photo: Dr. Singer

Both the work of research and the work of dissemination went on under serious handicaps. One of these was the great social gap that separated the philosopher, who was a gentleman, from the trader and

the artisan. There were glass workers and metal workers in abundance in those days, but they were not in mental contact with the thinkers. The glass worker was making the most beautifully coloured beads and phials and so forth, but he never made a Florentine flask or a lens. Clear glass does not seem to have interested him. The metal worker made weapons and jewellery but he never made a chemical balance. The philosopher speculated loftily about atoms and the nature of things, but he had no practical experience of enamels and pigments and philters and so forth. He was not interested in substances. So Alexandria in its brief day of opportunity produced no microscopes and no chemistry. And though Hero invented a steam engine it was never set either to pump or drive a boat or do any useful thing. There were few practical applications of science except in the realm of medicine, and the progress of science was not stimulated and sustained by the interest and excitement of practical applications. There was nothing to keep the work going therefore when the intellectual curiosity of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II was withdrawn. The discoveries of the Museum went on record in obscure manuscripts and never, until the revival of scientific curiosity at the Renascence, reached out to the mass of mankind.

Nor did the Library produce any improvements in book making. That ancient world had no paper made in definite sizes from rag pulp. Paper was a Chinese invention and it did not reach the western world until the ninth century A.D. The only book materials were parchment and strips of the papyrus reed joined edge to edge. These strips were kept on rolls which were very unwieldy to wind to and fro and read, and very inconvenient for reference. It was these things that prevented the development of paged and printed books. Printing itself was known in the world it would seem as early as the Old Stone Age; there were seals in ancient Sumeria; but without abundant paper there was little advantage in printing books, an improvement that may further have been resisted by trades unionism on the part of the copyists employed. Alexandria produced abundant books but not cheap books, and it never spread knowledge into the population of the ancient world below the level of a wealthy and influential class.

STATUETTE OF MAITREYA: THE BUDDHA TO COME

A Græco-Buddhist sculpture of the Third Century A.D.
(From Malakand, N. W. Province, now in the India Museum)

So it was that this blaze of intellectual enterprise never reached beyond a small circle of people in touch with the group of philosophers collected by the first two Ptolemies. It was like the light in a dark lantern which is shut off from the world at large. Within the blaze may be blindingly bright, but nevertheless it is unseen. The rest of the world went on its old ways unaware that the seed of scientific knowledge that was one day to revolutionize it altogether had been sown. Presently a darkness of bigotry fell even upon Alexandria. Thereafter for a thousand years of darkness the seed that Aristotle had sown lay hidden. Then it stirred and began to germinate. In a few centuries it had become that widespread growth of knowledge and clear ideas that is now changing the whole of human life.

THE DEATH OF BUDDHA
Græco-Buddhist carving from Sivat Valley, N. W. Province, probably A.D. 350
India Mus.

Alexandria was not the only centre of Greek intellectual activity in

the third century B.C. There were many other cities that displayed a brilliant intellectual life amidst the disintegrating fragments of the brief empire of Alexander. There was, for example, the Greek city of Syracuse in Sicily, where thought and science flourished for two centuries; there was Pergamum in Asia Minor, which also had a great library. But this brilliant Hellenic world was now stricken by invasion from the north. New Nordic barbarians, the Gauls, were striking down along the tracks that had once been followed by the ancestors of the Greeks and Phrygians and Macedonians. They raided, shattered and destroyed. And in the wake of the Gauls came a new conquering people out of Italy, the Romans, who gradually subjugated all the western half of the vast realm of Darius and Alexander. They were an able but unimaginative people, preferring law and profit to either science or art. New invaders were also coming down out of central Asia to shatter and subdue the Seleucid empire and to cut off the western world again from India. These were the Parthians, hosts of mounted bowmen, who treated the Græco-Persian empire of Persepolis and Susa in the third century B.C. in much the same fashion that the Medes and Persians had treated it in the seventh and sixth. And there were now other nomadic peoples also coming out of the northeast, peoples who were not fair and Nordic and Aryan- speaking but yellow-skinned and black-haired and with a Mongolian speech. But of these latter people we shall tell more in a subsequent chapter.

XXVIII

THE LIFE OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA

BUT now we must go back three centuries in our story to tell of a great teacher who came near to revolutionizing the religious thought and feeling of all Asia. This was Gautama Buddha, who taught his disciples at Benares in India about the same time that Isaiah was prophesying among the Jews in Babylon and Heraclitus was carrying on his speculative enquiries into the nature of things at Ephesus. All these men were in the world at the same time, in the sixth century B.C. — unaware of one another.

This sixth century B.C. was indeed one of the most remarkable in all history. Everywhere — for as we shall tell it was also the case in China — men's minds were displaying a new boldness. Everywhere they were waking up out of the traditions of kingships and priests and blood sacrifices and asking the most penetrating questions. It is as if the race had reached a stage of adolescence — after a childhood of twenty thousand years.

The early history of India is still very obscure. Somewhen perhaps about 2000 B.C., an Aryan- speaking people came down from the north-west into India either in one invasion or in a series of invasions; and was able to spread its language and traditions over most of north India. Its peculiar variety of Aryan speech was the Sanskrit. They found a brunette people with a more elaborate civilization and less vigour of will, in possession of the country of the Indus and Ganges. But they do not seem to have mingled with their predecessors as freely as did the Greeks and Persians. They remained aloof. When the past of India becomes dimly visible to the historian, Indian society is already stratified into several layers, with a variable number of sub-divisions, which do not eat together nor intermarry nor associate freely. And throughout history this stratification into castes continues. This makes the Indian population something different from the simple, freely inter-breeding European or Mongolian communities. It is really a community of communities.

Siddhattha Gautama was the son of an aristocratic family which ruled a small district on the Himalayan slopes. He was married at nineteen to a beautiful cousin. He hunted and played and went about

in his sunny world of gardens and groves and irrigated rice-fields. And it was amidst this life that a great discontent fell upon him. It was the unhappiness of a fine brain that seeks employment. He felt that the existence he was leading was not the reality of life, but a holiday — a holiday that had gone on too long.

The sense of disease and mortality, the insecurity and the unsatisfactoriness of all happiness, descended upon the mind of Gautama. While he was in this mood he met one of those wandering ascetics who already existed in great numbers in India. These men lived under severe rules, spending much time in meditation and in religious discussion. They were supposed to be seeking some deeper reality in life, and a passionate desire to do likewise took possession of Gautama.

He was meditating upon this project, says the story, when the news was brought to him that his wife had been delivered of his first-born son. "This is another tie to break," said Gautama.

He returned to the village amidst the rejoicings of his fellow clansmen. There was a great feast and a Nautch dance to celebrate the birth of this new tie, and in the night Gautama awoke in a great agony of spirit, "like a man who is told that his house is on fire." He resolved to leave his happy aimless life forthwith. He went softly to the threshold of his wife's chamber, and saw her by the light of a little oil lamp, sleeping sweetly, surrounded by flowers, with his infant son in her arms. He felt a great craving to take up the child in one first and last embrace before he departed, but the fear of waking his wife prevented him, and at last he turned away and went out into the bright Indian moonshine and mounted his horse and rode off into the world.

TIBETAN BUDDHA
Gilt Brass Casting in India Museum, showing Gautama Buddha in the "earth witness" attitude
India Mus.

Very far he rode that night, and in the morning he stopped outside the lands of his clan, and dismounted beside a sandy river. There he cut off his flowing locks with his sword, removed all his ornaments and sent them and his horse and sword back to his house. Going on

he presently met a ragged man and exchanged clothes with him, and so having divested himself of all worldly entanglements he was free to pursue his search after wisdom. He made his way southward to a resort of hermits and teachers in a hilly spur of the Vindhya Mountains. There lived a number of wise men in a warren of caves, going into the town for their simple supplies and imparting their knowledge by word of mouth to such as cared to come to them. Gautama became versed in all the metaphysics of his age. But his acute intelligence was dissatisfied with the solutions offered him.

A BURMESE BUDDHA
Marble Figure from Mandalay, eighteenth century work, now in the India Museum

The Indian mind has always been disposed to believe that power and knowledge may be obtained by extreme asceticism, by fasting, sleeplessness, and self-torment, and these ideas Gautama now put to the test. He betook himself with five disciple companions to the jungle and there he gave himself up to fasting and terrible penances. His fame spread, “like the sound of a great bell hung in the canopy of the skies.” But it brought him no sense of truth achieved. One day he was walking up and down, trying to think in spite of his enfeebled state. Suddenly he fell unconscious. When he recovered, the preposterousness of these semi-magical ways to wisdom was plain to him.

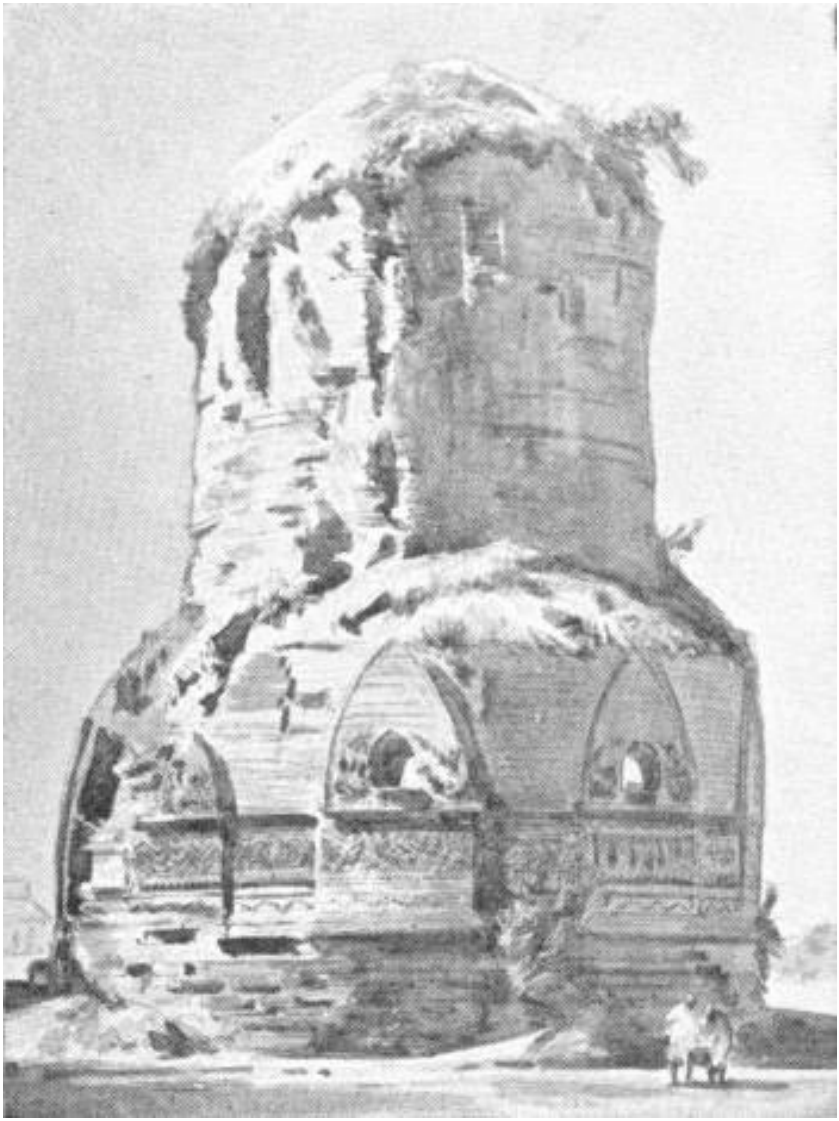

THE DHAMÊKH TOWER
In the Deer Park at Sarnath. Sixth Century A.D.
(From a Painting in the India Museum)

He horrified his companions by demanding ordinary food and refusing to continue his mortifications. He had realized that whatever truth a man may reach is reached best by a nourished brain in a

healthy body. Such a conception was absolutely foreign to the ideas of the land and age. His disciples deserted him, and went off in a melancholy state to Benares. Gautama wandered alone.

When the mind grapples with a great and intricate problem, it makes its advances step by step, with but little realization of the gains it has made, until suddenly, with an effect of abrupt illumination, it realizes its victory. So it happened to Gautama. He had seated himself under a great tree by the side of a river to eat, when this sense of clear vision came to him. It seemed to him that he saw life plain. He is said to have sat all day and all night in profound thought, and then he rose up to impart his vision to the world.

He went on to Benares and there he sought out and won back his lost disciples to his new teaching. In the King's Deer Park at Benares they built themselves huts and set up a sort of school to which came many who were seeking after wisdom.

The starting point of his teaching was his own question as a fortunate young man, "Why am I not completely happy?" It was an introspective question. It was a question very different in quality from the frank and self-forgetful *externalized* curiosity with which Thales and Heraclitus were attacking the problems of the universe, or the equally self-forgetful burthen of moral obligation that the culminating prophets were imposing upon the Hebrew mind. The Indian teacher did not forget self, he concentrated upon self and sought to destroy it. All suffering, he taught, was due to the greedy desires of the individual. Until man has conquered his personal cravings his life is trouble and his end sorrow. There were three principal forms that the craving for life took and they were all evil. The first was the desire of the appetites, greed and all forms of sensuousness, the second was the desire for a personal and egotistic immortality, the third was the craving for personal success, worldliness, avarice and the like. All these forms of desire had to be overcome to escape from the distresses and chagrins of life. When they were overcome, when self had vanished altogether, then serenity of soul, Nirvana, the highest good was attained.

This was the gist of his teaching, a very subtle and metaphysical teaching indeed, not nearly so easy to understand as the Greek injunction to see and know fearlessly and rightly and the Hebrew

command to fear God and accomplish righteousness. It was a teaching much beyond the understanding of even Gautama's immediate disciples, and it is no wonder that so soon as his personal influence was withdrawn it became corrupted and coarsened. There was a widespread belief in India at that time that at long intervals Wisdom came to earth and was incarnate in some chosen person who was known as the Buddha. Gautama's disciples declared that he was a Buddha, the latest of the Buddhas, though there is no evidence that he himself ever accepted the title. Before he was well dead, a cycle of fantastic legends began to be woven about him. The human heart has always preferred a wonder story to a moral effort, and Gautama Buddha became very wonderful.

Yet there remained a substantial gain in the world. If Nirvana was too high and subtle for most men's imaginations, if the myth-making impulse in the race was too strong for the simple facts of Gautama's life, they could at least grasp something of the intention of what Gautama called the Eight-fold way, the Aryan or Noble Path in life. In this there was an insistence upon mental uprightness, upon right aims and speech, right conduct and honest livelihood. There was a quickening of the conscience and an appeal to generous and self-forgetful ends.

KING ASOKA

FOR some generations after the death of Gautama, these high and noble Buddhist teachings, this first plain teaching that the highest good for man is the subjugation of self, made comparatively little headway in the world. Then they conquered the imagination of one of the greatest monarchs the world has ever seen.

We have already mentioned how Alexander the Great came down into India and fought with Porus upon the Indus. It is related by the Greek historians that a certain Chandragupta Maurya came into Alexander's camp and tried to persuade him to go on to the Ganges and conquer all India. Alexander could not do this because of the refusal of his Macedonians to go further into what was for them an unknown world, and later on (303 B.C.) Chandragupta was able to secure the help or various hill tribes and realize his dream without Greek help. He built up an empire in North India and was presently (303 B.C.) able to attack Seleucus I in the Punjab and drive the last vestige of Greek power out of India. His son extended this new empire. His grandson, Asoka, the monarch of whom we now have to tell, found himself in 264 B.C. ruling from Afghanistan to Madras.

Asoka was at first disposed to follow the example of his father and grandfather and complete the conquest of the Indian peninsula. He invaded Kalinga (255 B.C.), a country on the east coast of Madras, he was successful in his military operations and — alone among conquerors — he was so disgusted by the cruelty and horror of war that he renounced it. He would have no more of it. He adopted the peaceful doctrines of Buddhism and declared that henceforth his conquests should be the conquests of religion.

A LOHAN OR BUDDHIST APOSTLE (Tang Dynasty)
(From the statue in the British Museum)

His reign for eight-and-twenty years was one of the brightest interludes in the troubled history of mankind. He organized a great digging of wells in India and the planting of trees for shade. He founded hospitals and public gardens and gardens for the growing of medicinal herbs. He created a ministry for the care of the aborigines and subject races of India. He made provision for the education of women. He made vast benefactions to the Buddhist teaching orders,

and tried to stimulate them to a better and more energetic criticism of their own accumulated literature. For corruptions and superstitious accretions had accumulated very speedily upon the pure and simple teaching of the great Indian master. Missionaries went from Asoka to Kashmir, to Persia, to Ceylon and Alexandria.

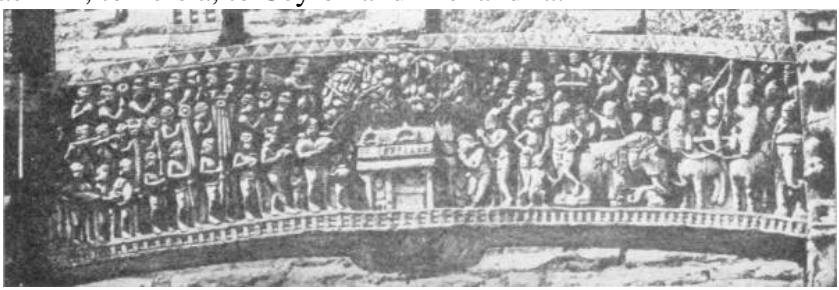

TRANSOME SHOWING THE COURT OF ASOKA
India Mus.

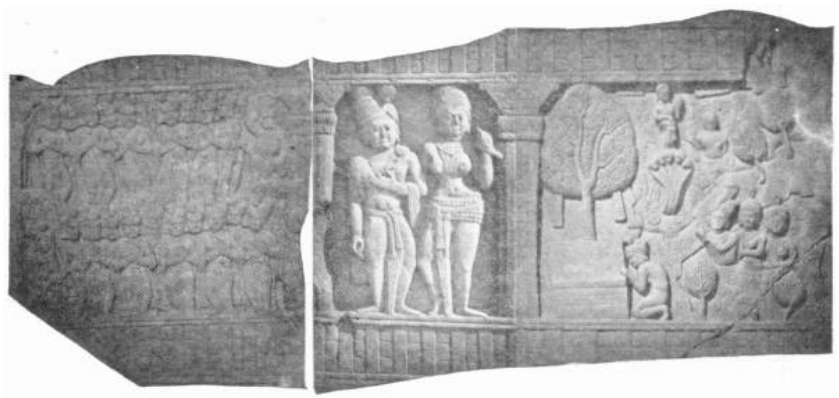

ASOKA PANEL FROM BHARHUT
India Mus.

Such was Asoka, greatest of kings. He was far in advance of his age. He left no prince and no organization of men to carry on his work, and within a century of his death the great days of his reign had become a glorious memory in a shattered and decaying India. The priestly caste of the Brahmins, the highest and most privileged caste in the Indian social body, has always been opposed to the frank and open teaching of Buddha. Gradually they undermined the

Buddhist influence in the land. The old monstrous gods, the innumerable cults of Hinduism, resumed their sway. Caste became more rigorous and complicated. For long centuries Buddhism and Brahminism flourished side by side, and then slowly Buddhism decayed and Brahminism in a multitude of forms replaced it. But beyond the confines of India and the realms of caste Buddhism spread — until it had won China and Siam and Burma and Japan, countries in which it is predominant to this day.

THE PILLAR OF LIONS
Capital of the Pillar (column lying on side) erected in Deer Park in the time of Asoka, where Buddha preached his first sermon
(From a print in the India Museum)

CONFUCIUS AND LAO TSE

WE have still to tell of two other great men, Confucius and Lao Tse, who lived in that wonderful century which began the adolescence of mankind, the sixth century B.C. In this history thus far we have told very little of the early story of China. At present that early history is still very obscure, and we look to Chinese explorers and archæolologists in the new China that is now arising to work out their past as thoroughly as the European past has been worked out during the last century. Very long ago the first primitive Chinese civilizations arose in the great river valleys out of the primordial heliolithic culture. They had, like Egypt and Sumeria, the general characteristics of that culture, and they centred upon temples in which priests and priest kings offered the seasonal blood sacrifices. The life in those cities must have been very like the Egyptian and Sumerian life of six or seven thousand years ago and very like the Maya life of Central America a thousand years ago.

If there were human sacrifices they had long given way to animal sacrifices before the dawn of history. And a form of picture writing was growing up long before a thousand years B.C.

And just as the primitive civilizations of Europe and western Asia were in conflict with the nomads of the desert and the nomads of the north, so the primitive Chinese civilizations had a great cloud of nomadic peoples on their northern borders. There was a number of tribes akin in language and ways of living, who are spoken of in history in succession as the Huns, the Mongols, the Turks and Tartars. They changed and divided and combined and re-combined, just as the Nordic peoples in north Europe and central Asia changed and varied in name rather than in nature. These Mongolian nomads had horses earlier than the Nordic peoples, and it may be that in the region of the Altai Mountains they made an independent discovery of iron somewhen after 1000 B.C. And just as in the western case so ever and again these eastern nomads would achieve a sort of political unity, and become the conquerors and masters and revivers of this or that settled and civilized region.

It is quite possible that the earliest civilization of China was not

Mongolian at all any more than the earliest civilization of Europe and western Asia was Nordic or Semitic. It is quite possible that the earliest civilization of China was a brunette civilization and of a piece with the earliest Egyptian, Sumerian and Dravidian civilizations, and that when the first recorded history of China began there had already been conquests and intermixture. At any rate we find that by 1750 B.C. China was already a vast system of little kingdoms and city states, all acknowledging a loose allegiance and paying more or less regularly, more or less definite feudal dues to one great priest emperor, the "Son of Heaven." The "Shang" dynasty came to an end in 1125 B.C. A "Chow" dynasty succeeded "Shang," and maintained China in a relaxing unity until the days of Asoka in India and of the Ptolemies in Egypt. Gradually China went to pieces during that long "Chow" period. Hunnish peoples came down and set up principalities; local rulers discontinued their tribute and became independent. There was in the sixth century B.C., says one Chinese authority, five or six thousand practically independent states in China. It was what the Chinese call in their records an "Age of Confusion."

But this Age of Confusion was compatible with much intellectual activity and with the existence of many local centres of art and civilized living. When we know more of Chinese history we shall find that China also had her Miletus and her Athens, her Pergamum and her Macedonia. At present we must be vague and brief about this period of Chinese division simply because our knowledge is not sufficient for us to frame a coherent and consecutive story.

CONFUCIUS

Copy of stone carving in the Temple of Confucius at K'iu Fu
(From the records of the Archæological Mission to North China (Chavannes))

And just as in divided Greece there were philosophers and in shattered and captive Jewry prophets, so in disordered China there were philosophers and teachers at this time. In all these cases insecurity and uncertainty seemed to have quickened the better sort of mind. Confucius was a man of aristocratic origin and some official importance in a small state called Lu. Here in a very parallel mood to the Greek impulse he set up a sort of Academy for discovering and teaching Wisdom. The lawlessness and disorder of China distressed him profoundly. He conceived an ideal of a better government and a better life, and travelled from state to state seeking a prince who would carry out his legislative and educational ideas. He never found his prince; he found a prince, but court intrigues undermined the influence of the teacher and finally defeated his reforming proposals. It is interesting to note that a century and a half later the Greek philosopher Plato also sought a prince, and was for a time adviser to the tyrant Dionysius who ruled Syracuse in Sicily.

Confucius died a disappointed man. "No intelligent ruler arises to take me as his master," he said, "and my time has come to die." But his teaching had more vitality than he imagined in his declining and hopeless years, and it became a great formative influence with the Chinese people. It became one of what the Chinese call the Three Teachings, the other two being those of Buddha and of Lao Tse.

The gist of the teaching of Confucius was the way of the noble or aristocratic man. He was concerned with personal conduct as much as Gautama was concerned with the peace of self-forgetfulness and the Greek with external knowledge and the Jew with righteousness. He was the most public-minded of all great teachers. He was supremely concerned by the confusion and miseries of the world, and he wanted to make men noble in order to bring about a noble world. He sought to regulate conduct to an extraordinary extent; to provide sound rules for every occasion in life. A polite, public- spirited gentleman, rather sternly self-disciplined, was the ideal he found already developing in the northern Chinese world and one to which

he gave a permanent form.

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA
As it crosses the mountains in Manchuria
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

The teaching of Lao Tse, who was for a long time in charge of the

imperial library of the Chow dynasty, was much more mystical and vague and elusive than that of Confucius. He seems to have preached a stoical indifference to the pleasures and powers of the world and a return to an imaginary simple life of the past. He left writings very contracted in style and very obscure. He wrote in riddles. After his death his teachings, like the teachings of Gautama Buddha, were corrupted and overlaid by legends and had the most complex and extraordinary observances and superstitious ideas grafted upon them. In China just as in India primordial ideas of magic and monstrous legends out of the childish past of our race struggled against the new thinking in the world and succeeded in plastering it over with grotesque, irrational and antiquated observances. Both Buddhism and Taoism (which ascribes itself largely to Lao Tse) as one finds them in China now, are religions of monk, temple, priest and offering of a type as ancient in form, if not in thought, as the sacrificial religions of ancient Sumeria and Egypt. But the teaching of Confucius was not so overlaid because it was limited and plain and straightforward and lent itself to no such distortions.

EARLY CHINESE BRONZE BELL

Inscribed in archaic characters: “made for use by the elder of Hing village in Ting district;” latter half of the Chou Dynasty, Sixth Century B.C.
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

North China, the China of the Hwang-ho River, became Confucian in thought and spirit; south China, Yang-tse-Kiang China, became Taoist. Since those days a conflict has always been traceable in Chinese affairs between these two spirits, the spirit of the north and the spirit of the south, between (in latter times) Pekin and Nankin, between the official- minded, upright and conservative north, and the sceptical, artistic, lax and experimental south.

The divisions of China of the Age of Confusion reached their worst stage in the sixth century B.C. The Chow dynasty was so enfeebled and so discredited that Lao Tse left the unhappy court and retired into private life.

Three nominally subordinate powers dominated the situation in those days, Ts’i and Ts’in, both northern powers, and Ch’u, which was an aggressive military power in the Yangtse valley. At last Ts’i and Ts’in formed an alliance, subdued Ch’u and imposed a general treaty of disarmament and peace in China. The power of Ts’in became predominant. Finally about the time of Asoka in India the Ts’in monarch seized upon the sacrificial vessels of the Chow emperor and took over his sacrificial duties. His son, Shi-Hwang-ti (king in 246 B.C., emperor in 220 B.C.), is called in the Chinese Chronicles “the First Universal Emperor.”

More fortunate than Alexander, Shi-Hwang-ti reigned for thirty-six years as king and emperor. His energetic reign marks the beginning of a new era of unity and prosperity for the Chinese people. He fought vigorously against the Hunnish invaders from the northern deserts, and he began that immense work, the Great Wall of China, to set a limit to their incursions.

ROME COMES INTO HISTORY

THE reader will note a general similarity in the history of all these civilizations in spite of the effectual separation caused by the great barriers of the Indian north-west frontier and of the mountain masses of Central Asia and further India. First for thousands of years the heliolithic culture spread over all the warm and fertile river valleys of the old world and developed a temple system and priest rulers about its sacrificial traditions. Apparently its first makers were always those brunette peoples we have spoken of as the central race of mankind. Then the nomads came in from the regions of seasonal grass and seasonal migrations and superposed their own characteristics and often their own language on the primitive civilization. They subjugated and stimulated it, and were stimulated to fresh developments and made it here one thing and here another. In Mesopotamia it was the Elamite and then the Semite, and at last the Nordic Medes and Persians and the Greeks who supplied the ferment; over the region of the Ægean peoples it was the Greeks; in India it was the Aryan-speakers; in Egypt there was a thinner infusion of conquerors into a more intensely saturated priestly civilization; in China, the Hun conquered and was absorbed and was followed by fresh Huns. China was Mongolized just as Greece and North India were Aryanized and Mesopotamia Semitized and Aryanized. Everywhere the nomads destroyed much, but everywhere they brought in a new spirit of free enquiry and moral innovation. They questioned the beliefs of immemorial ages. They let daylight into the temples. They set up kings who were neither priests nor gods but mere leaders among their captains and companions.

THE DYING GAUL
The statue in the National Museum, Rome, depicting a Gaul stabbing himself, after killing his wife, in the presence of his enemies
Photo: Anderson

In the centuries following the sixth century B.C. we find everywhere a great breaking down of ancient traditions and a new spirit of moral and intellectual enquiry awake, a spirit never more to

be altogether stilled in the great progressive movement of mankind. We find reading and writing becoming common and accessible accomplishments among the ruling and prosperous minority; they were no longer the jealously guarded secret of the priests. Travel is increasing and transport growing easier by reason of horses and roads. A new and easy device to facilitate trade has been found in coined money.

Let us now transfer our attention back from China in the extreme east of the old world to the western half of the Mediterranean. Here we have to note the appearance of a city which was destined to play at last a very great part indeed in human affairs, Rome.

Hitherto we have told very little about Italy in our story. It was before 1000 B.C. a land of mountain and forest and thinly populated. Aryan-speaking tribes had pressed down this peninsula and formed little towns and cities, and the southern extremity was studded with Greek settlements. The noble ruins of Pæstum preserve for us to this day something of the dignity and splendour of these early Greek establishments. A non-Aryan people, probably akin to the Ægean peoples, the Etruscans, had established themselves in the central part of the peninsula. They had reversed the usual process by subjugating various Aryan tribes. Rome, when it comes into the light of history, is a little trading city at a ford on the Tiber, with a Latin-speaking population ruled over by Etruscan kings. The old chronologies gave 753 B.C. as the date of the founding of Rome, half a century later than the founding of the great Phœnician city of Carthage and twenty-three years after the first Olympiad. Etruscan tombs of a much earlier date than 753 B.C. have, however, been excavated in the Roman Forum.

In that red-letter century, the sixth century B.C., the Etruscan kings were expelled (510 B.C.) and Rome became an aristocratic republic with a lordly class of "patrician" families dominating a commonalty of "plebeians." Except that it spoke Latin it was not unlike many aristocratic Greek republics.

For some centuries the internal history of Rome was the story of a long and obstinate struggle for freedom and a share in the government on the part of the plebeians. It would not be difficult to find Greek parallels to this conflict, which the Greeks would have

called a conflict of aristocracy with democracy. In the end the plebeians broke down most of the exclusive barriers of the old families and established a working equality with them. They destroyed the old exclusiveness, and made it possible and acceptable for Rome to extend her citizenship by the inclusion of more and more "outsiders." For while she still struggled at home, she was extending her power abroad.

REMAINS OF THE ANCIENT ROMAN CISTERNS AT CARTHAGE
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

The extension of Roman power began in the fifth century B.C. Until that time they had waged war, and generally unsuccessful war, with the Etruscans. There was an Etruscan fort, Veii, only a few miles from Rome which the Romans had never been able to capture. In 474 B.C., however, a great misfortune came to the Etruscans. Their fleet was destroyed by the Greeks of Syracuse in Sicily. At the same time a wave of Nordic invaders came down upon them from the north, the Gauls. Caught between Roman and Gaul, the Etruscans

fell — and disappear from history. Veii was captured by the Romans, The Gauls came through to Rome and sacked the city (390 B.C.A.D.) but could not capture the Capitol. An attempted night surprise was betrayed by the cackling of some geese, and finally the invaders were bought off and retired to the north of Italy again.

The Gaulish raid seems to have invigorated rather than weakened Rome. The Romans conquered and assimilated the Etruscans, and extended their power over all central Italy from the Arno to Naples. To this they had reached within a few years of 300 B.C. Their conquests in Italy were going on simultaneously with the growth of Philip's power in Macedonia and Greece, and the tremendous raid of Alexander to Egypt and the Indus. The Romans had become notable people in the civilized world to the east of them by the break-up of Alexander's empire.

To the north of the Roman power were the Gauls; to the south of them were the Greek settlements of Magna Græcia, that is to say of Sicily and of the toe and heel of Italy. The Gauls were a hardy, warlike people and the Romans held that boundary by a line of forts and fortified settlements. The Greek cities in the south headed by Tarentum (now Taranto) and by Syracuse in Sicily, did not so much threaten as fear the Romans. They looked about for some help against these new conquerors.

We have already told how the empire of Alexander fell to pieces and was divided among his generals and companions. Among these adventurers was a kinsman of Alexander's named Pyrrhus, who established himself in Epirus, which is across the Adriatic Sea over against the heel of Italy. It was his ambition to play the part of Philip of Macedonia to Magna Græcia, and to become protector and master-general of Tarentum, Syracuse and the rest of that part of the world. He had what was then it very efficient modern army; he had an infantry phalanx, cavalry from Thessaly — which was now quite as good as the original Macedonian cavalry — and twenty fighting elephants; he invaded Italy and routed the Romans in two considerable battles, Heraclea (280 B.C.) and Ausculum (279 B.C.), and having driven them north, he turned his attention to the subjugation of Sicily.

But this brought against him a more formidable enemy than were

the Romans at that time, the Phœnician trading city of Carthage, which was probably then the greatest city in the world. Sicily was too near Carthage for a new Alexander to be welcome there, and Carthage was mindful of the fate that had befallen her mother city Tyre half a century before. So she sent a fleet to encourage or compel Rome to continue the struggle, and she cut the overseas communications of Pyrrhus. Pyrrhus found himself freshly assailed by the Romans, and suffered a disastrous repulse in an attack he had made upon their camp at Beneventum between Naples and Rome.

And suddenly came news that recalled him to Epirus. The Gauls were raiding south. But this time they were not raiding down into Italy; the Roman frontier, fortified and guarded, had become too formidable for them. They were raiding down through Illyria (which is now Serbia and Albania) to Macedonia and Epirus. Repulsed by the Romans, endangered at sea by the Carthaginians, and threatened at home by the Gauls, Pyrrhus abandoned his dream of conquest and went home (275 B.C.), and the power of Rome was extended to the Straits of Messina.

On the Sicilian side of the Straits was the Greek city of Messina, and this presently fell into the hands of a gang of pirates. The Carthaginians, who were already practically overlords of Sicily and allies of Syracuse, suppressed these pirates (270 B.C.) and put in a Carthaginian garrison there. The pirates appealed to Rome and Rome listened to their complaint. And so across the Straits of Messina the great trading power of Carthage and this new conquering people, the Romans, found themselves in antagonism, face to face.

XXXII

ROME AND CARTHAGE

IT was in 264 B.C. that the great struggle between Rome and Carthage, the Punic Wars, began. In that year Asoka was beginning his reign in Behar and Shi- Hwang-ti was a little child, the Museum in Alexandria was still doing good scientific work, and the barbaric Gauls were now in Asia Minor and exacting a tribute from Pergamum. The different regions of the world were still separated by insurmountable distances, and probably the rest of mankind heard only vague and remote rumours of the mortal fight that went on for a century and a half in Spain, Italy, North Africa and the western Mediterranean, between the last stronghold of Semitic power and Rome, this newcomer among Aryan-speaking peoples.

That war has left its traces upon issues that still stir the world. Rome triumphed over Carthage, but the rivalry of Aryan and Semite was to merge itself later on in the conflict of Gentile and Jew. Our history now is coming to events whose consequences and distorted traditions still maintain a lingering and expiring vitality in, and exercise a complicating and confusing influence upon, the conflicts and controversies of to-day.

The First Punic War began in 264 B.C. about the pirates of Messina. It developed into a struggle for the possession of all Sicily except the dominions of the Greek king of Syracuse. The advantage of the sea was at first with the Carthaginians. They had great fighting ships of what was hitherto an unheard-of size, quinqueremes, galleys with five banks of oars and a huge ram. At the battle of Salamis, two centuries before, the leading battleships had only been triremes with three banks. But the Romans, with extraordinary energy and in spite of the fact that they had little naval experience, set themselves to outbuild the Carthaginians. They manned the new navy they created chiefly with Greek seamen, and they invented grappling and boarding to make up for the superior seamanship of the enemy. When the Carthaginian came up to ram or shear the oars of the Roman, huge grappling irons seized him and the Roman soldiers swarmed aboard him. At Mylæ (260 B.C.) and at Ecnomus (256 B.C.) the Carthaginians were disastrously beaten. They repulsed a

Roman landing near Carthage but were badly beaten at Palermo, losing one hundred and four elephants there — to grace such a triumphal procession through the Forum as Rome had never seen before. But after that came two Roman defeats and then a Roman recovery. The last naval forces of Carthage were defeated by it last Roman effort at the battle of the Ægatian Isles (241 B.C.) and Carthage sued for peace. All Sicily except the dominions of Hiero, king of Syracuse, was ceded to the Romans.

HANNIBAL
Bust in the National Museum at Naples
Photo: Mansell

For twenty-two years Rome and Carthage kept the peace. Both had trouble enough at home. In Italy the Gauls came south again, threatened Rome — *which in a state of panic offered human*

sacrifices to the Gods! — and were routed at Telamon. Rome pushed forward to the Alps, and even extended her dominions down the Adriatic coast to Illyria. Carthage suffered from domestic insurrections and from revolts in Corsica and Sardinia, and displayed far less recuperative power. Finally, an act of intolerable aggression, Rome seized and annexed the two revolting islands.

Spain at that time was Carthaginian as far north as the river Ebro. To that boundary the Romans restricted them. Any crossing of the Ebro by the Carthaginians was to be considered an act of war against the Romans. At last in 218 B.C. the Carthaginians, provoked by new Roman aggressions, did cross this river under a young general named Hannibal, one of the most brilliant commanders in the whole of history. He marched his army from Spain over the Alps into Italy, raised the Gauls against the Romans, and carried on the Second Punic War in Italy itself for fifteen years. He inflicted tremendous defeats upon the Romans at Lake Trasimere and at Cannæ, and throughout all his Italian campaigns no Roman army stood against him and escaped disaster. But a Roman army had landed at Marseilles and cut his communications with Spain; he had no siege train, and he could never capture Rome. Finally the Carthaginians, threatened by the revolt of the Numidians at home, were forced back upon the defence of their own city in Africa, a Roman army crossed into Africa, and Hannibal experienced his first defeat under its walls at the battle of Zama (202 B.C. at the hands of Scipio Africanus the Elder. The battle of Zama ended this Second Punic War. Carthage capitulated; she surrendered Spain and her war fleet; she paid an enormous indemnity and agreed to give up Hannibal to the vengeance of the Romans. But Hannibal escaped and fled to Asia where later, being in danger of falling into the hands of his relentless enemies, he took poison and died.

For fifty-six years Rome and the shorn city of Carthage were at peace. And meanwhile Rome spread her empire over confused and divided Greece, invaded Asia Minor, and defeated Antiochus III, the Seleucid monarch, at Magnesia in Lydia. She made Egypt, still under the Ptolemies, and Pergamum and most of the small states of Asia Minor into “Allies,” or, as we should call them now, “protected states.”

Meanwhile Carthage, subjugated and enfeebled, had been slowly regaining something of her former prosperity. Her recovery revived the hate and suspicion of the Romans. She was attacked upon the most shallow and artificial of quarrels (149 B.C.), she made an obstinate and bitter resistance, stood a long siege and was stormed (146 B.C.). The street fighting, or massacre, lasted six days; it was extraordinarily bloody, and when the citadel capitulated only about fifty thousand of the Carthaginian population remained alive out of a quarter of a million. They were sold into slavery, and the city was burnt and elaborately destroyed. The blackened ruins were ploughed and sown as a sort of ceremonial effacement.

So ended the Third Punic War. Of all the Semitic states and cities that had flourished in the world five centuries before only one little country remained free under native rulers. This was Judea, which had liberated itself from the Seleucids and was under the rule of the native Maccabean princes. By this time it had its Bible almost complete, and was developing the distinctive traditions of the Jewish world as we know it now. It was natural that the Carthaginians, Phoenicians and kindred peoples dispersed about the world should find a common link in their practically identical language and in this literature of hope and courage. To a large extent they were still the traders and bankers of the world. The Semitic world had been submerged rather than replaced.

Jerusalem, which has always been rather the symbol than the

centre of Judaism, was taken by the Romans in 65 B.C.; and after various vicissitudes of quasi- independence and revolt was besieged by them in 70 A.D. and captured after a stubborn struggle. The Temple was destroyed. A later rebellion in 132 A.D. completed its destruction, and the Jerusalem we know to-day was rebuilt later under Roman auspices. A temple to the Roman god, Jupiter Capitolinus, stood in the place of the Temple, and Jews were forbidden to inhabit the city.

THE GROWTH OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

NOW this new Roman power which arose to dominate the western world in the second and first centuries B.C. was in several respects a different thing from any of the great empires that had hitherto prevailed in the civilized world. It was not at first a monarchy, and it was not the creation of any one great conqueror. It was not indeed the first of republican empires; Athens had dominated a group of Allies and dependents in the time of Pericles, and Carthage when she entered upon her fatal struggle with Rome was mistress of Sardinia and Corsica, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and most of Spain and Sicily. But it was the first republican empire that escaped extinction and went on to fresh developments.

The centre of this new system lay far to the west of the more ancient centres of empire, which had hitherto been the river valleys of Mesopotamia and Egypt. This westward position enabled Rome to bring in to civilization quite fresh regions and peoples. The Roman power extended to Morocco and Spain, and was presently able to thrust north-westward over what is now France and Belgium to Britain and north-eastward into Hungary and South Russia. But on the other hand it was never able to maintain itself in Central Asia or Persia because they were too far from its administrative centres. It included therefore great masses of fresh Nordic Aryan- speaking peoples, it presently incorporated nearly all the Greek people in the world, and its population was less strongly Hamitic and Semitic than that of any preceding empire.

For some centuries this Roman Empire did not fall into the grooves of precedent that had so speedily swallowed up Persian and Greek, and all that time it developed. The rulers of the Medes and Persians became entirely Babylonized in a generation or so; they took over the tiara of the king of kings and the temples and priesthoods of his gods; Alexander and his successors followed in the same easy path of assimilation; the Seleucid monarchs had much the same court and administrative methods as Nebuchadnezzar; the Ptolemies became Pharaohs and altogether Egyptian. They were assimilated just as before them the Semitic conquerors of the

Sumerians had been assimilated. But the Romans ruled in their own city, and for some centuries kept to the laws of their own nature. The only people who exercised any great mental influence upon them before the second or third century A.D. were the kindred and similar Greeks. So that the Roman Empire was essentially a first attempt to rule a great dominion upon mainly Aryan lines. It was so far a new pattern in history, it was an expanded Aryan republic. The old pattern of a personal conqueror ruling over a capital city that had grown up round the temple of a harvest god did not apply to it. The Romans had gods and temples, but like the gods of the Greeks their gods were quasi-human immortals, divine patricians. The Romans also had blood sacrifices and even made human ones in times of stress, things they may have learnt to do from their dusky Etruscan teachers; but until Rome was long past its zenith neither priest nor temple played a large part in Roman history.

The Roman Empire was a growth, an unplanned novel growth; the Roman people found themselves engaged almost unawares in a vast administrative experiment. It cannot be called a successful experiment. In the end their empire collapsed altogether. And it changed enormously in form and method from century to century. It changed more in a hundred years than Bengal or Mesopotamia or Egypt changed in a thousand. It was always changing. It never attained to any fixity.

In a sense the experiment failed. In a sense the experiment remains unfinished, and Europe and America to-day are still working out the riddles of world-wide statescraft first confronted by the Roman people.

It is well for the student of history to bear in mind the very great changes not only in political but in social and moral matters that went on throughout the period of Roman dominion. There is much too strong a tendency in people's minds to think of the Roman rule as something finished and stable, firm, rounded, noble and decisive. Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, S.P.Q.R. the elder Cato, the Scipios, Julius Cæsar, Diocletian, Constantine the Great, triumphs, orations, gladiatorial combats and Christian martyrs are all mixed up together in a picture of something high and cruel and dignified. The items of that picture have to be disentangled. They are collected at

different points from a process of change profounder than that which separates the London of William the Conqueror from the London of to-day.

We may very conveniently divide the expansion of Rome into four stages. The first stage began after the sack of Rome by the Goths in 390 B.C. and went on until the end of the First Punic War (240 B.C,). We may call this stage the stage of the Assimilative Republic. It was perhaps the finest, most characteristic stage in Roman history. The age-long dissensions of patrician and plebeian were drawing to it close, the Etruscan threat had come to an end, no one was very rich yet nor very poor, and most men were public-spirited. It was a republic like the republic of the South African Boers before 1900 or like the northern states of the American union between 1800 and 1850; a free- farmers republic. At the outset of this stage Rome was a little state scarcely twenty miles square. She fought the sturdy but kindred states about her, and sought not their destruction but coalescence. Her centuries of civil dissension had trained her people in compromise and concessions. Some of the defeated cities became altogether Roman with a voting share in the government, some became self-governing with the right to trade and marry in Rome; garrisons full of citizens were set up at strategic points and colonies of varied privileges founded among the freshly conquered people. Great roads were made. The rapid Latinization of all Italy was the inevitable consequence of such a policy. In 89 B.C. all the free inhabitants of Italy became citizens of the city of Rome. Formally the whole Roman Empire became at last an extended city. In 212 A.D. every free man in the entire extent of the empire was given citizenship; the right, if he could get there, to vote in the town meeting in Rome.

This extension of citizenship to tractable cities and to whole countries was the distinctive device of Roman expansion. It reversed the old process of conquest and assimilation altogether. By the Roman method the conquerors assimilated the conquered.

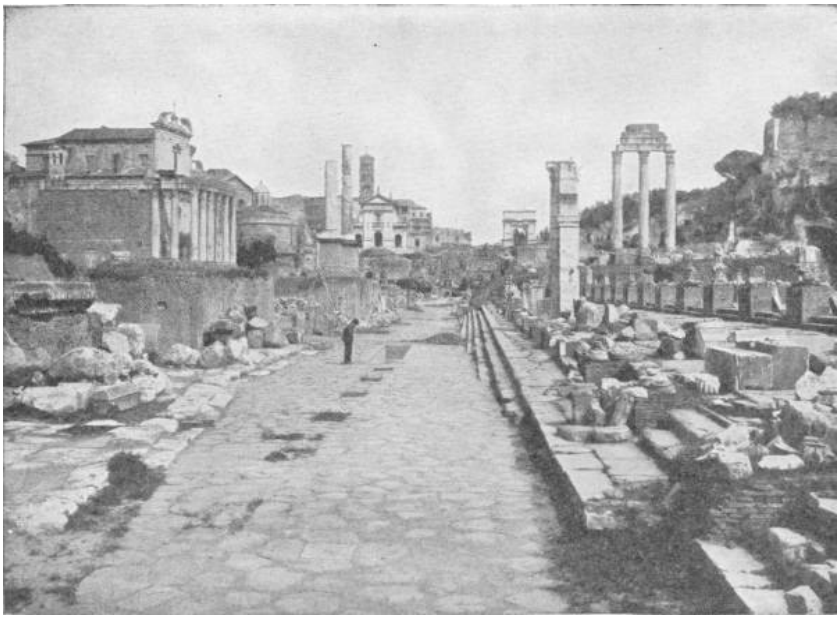

THE FORUM AT ROME AS IT IS TO-DAY

But after the First Punic War and the annexation of Sicily, though the old process of assimilation still went on, another process arose by its side. Sicily for instance was treated as a conquered prey. It was declared an "estate" of the Roman people. Its rich soil and industrious population was exploited to make Rome rich. The patricians and the more influential among the plebeians secured the major share of that wealth. And the war also brought in a large supply of slaves. Before the First Punic War the population of the republic had been largely a population of citizen farmers. Military service was their privilege and liability. While they were on active service their farms fell into debt and a new large-scale slave agriculture grew up; when they returned they found their produce in competition with slave-grown produce from Sicily and from the new estates at home. Times had changed. The republic had altered its character. Not only was Sicily in the hands of Rome, the common man was in the hands of the rich creditor and the rich competitor. Rome had entered upon its second stage, the Republic of Adventurous Rich Men.

For two hundred years the Roman soldier farmers had struggled for freedom and a share in the government of their state; for a hundred years they had enjoyed their privileges. The First Punic War wasted them and robbed them of all they had won.

RELICS OF ROMAN RULE
Ruins of Coliseum in Tunis
Photo: Jacques Boyer

The value of their electoral privileges had also evaporated. The governing bodies of the Roman republic were two in number. The first and more important was the Senate. This was a body originally of patricians and then of prominent men of all sorts, who were summoned to it first by certain powerful officials, the consuls and censors. Like the British House of Lords it became a gathering of great landowners, prominent politicians, big business men and the like. It was much more like the British House of Lords than it was like the American Senate. For three centuries, from the Punic Wars onward, it was the centre of Roman political thought and purpose. The second body was the Popular Assembly. This was supposed to be an assembly of *all* the citizens of Rome. When Rome was a little

state twenty miles square this was a possible gathering. When the citizenship of Rome had spread beyond the confines in Italy, it was an altogether impossible one. Its meetings, proclaimed by horn-blowing from the Capitol and the city walls, became more and more a gathering of political hacks and city riff-raff. In the fourth century B.C. the Popular Assembly was a considerable check upon the Senate, a competent representation of the claims and rights of the common man. By the end of the Punic Wars it was an impotent relic of a vanquished popular control. No effectual legal check remained upon the big men.

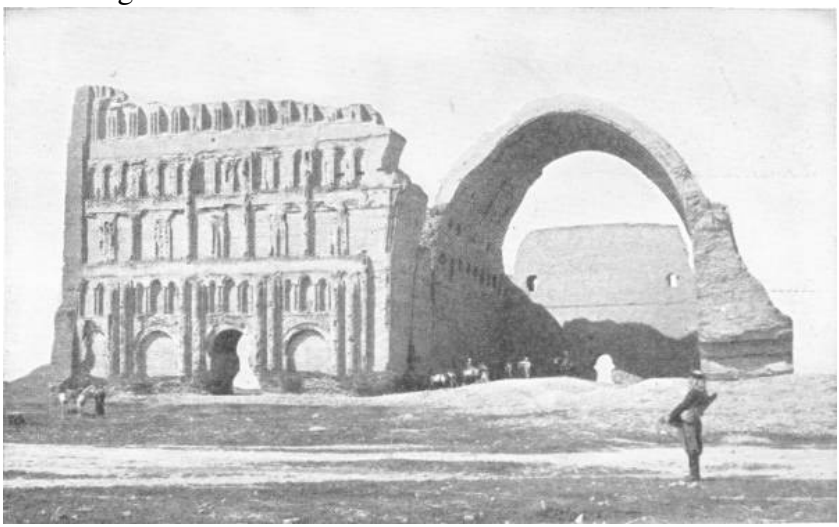

THE GREAT ROMAN ARCH AT CTESIPHON NEAR BAGDAD

Nothing of the nature of representative government was ever introduced into the Roman republic. No one thought of electing delegates to represent the will of the citizens. This is a very important point for the student to grasp. The Popular Assembly never became the equivalent of the American House of Representatives or the British House of Commons. In theory it was all the citizens; in practice it ceased to be anything at all worth consideration.

The common citizen of the Roman Empire was therefore in a very poor case after the Second Punic War; he was impoverished, he had often lost his farm, he was ousted from profitable production by slaves, and he had no political power left to him to remedy these

things. The only methods of popular expression left to a people without any form of political expression are the strike and the revolt. The story of the second and first centuries B.C., so far as internal politics go, is a story of futile revolutionary upheaval. The scale of this history will not permit us to tell of the intricate struggles of that time, of the attempts to break up estates and restore the land to the free farmer, of proposals to abolish debts in whole or in part. There was revolt and civil war. In 73 B.C., the distresses of Italy were enhanced by a great insurrection, of the slaves under Spartacus. The slaves of Italy revolted with some effect, for among them were the trained fighters of the gladiatorial shows. For two years Spartacus held out in the crater of Vesuvius, which seemed at that time to be an extinct volcano. This insurrection was defeated at last and suppressed with frantic cruelty. Six thousand captured Spartacists were crucified along the Appian Way, the great highway that runs southward out of Rome (71 B.C.).

The common man never made head against the forces that were subjugating and degrading him. But the big rich men who were overcoming him were even in his defeat preparing a new power in the Roman world over themselves and him, the power of the army.

Before the Second Punic War the army of Rome was a levy of free farmers, who, according to their quality, rode or marched afoot to battle. This was a very good force for wars close at hand, but not the sort of army that will go abroad and bear long campaigns with patience. And moreover as the slaves multiplied and the estates grew, the supply of free- spirited fighting farmers declined. It was a popular leader named Marius who introduced a new factor. North Africa after the overthrow of the Carthaginian civilization had become a semi-barbaric kingdom, the kingdom of Numidia. The Roman power fell into conflict with Jugurtha, king of this state, and experienced enormous difficulties in subduing him. Marius was made consul, in a phase of public indignation, to end this discreditable war. This he did by raising *paid troops* and drilling them hard. Jugurtha was brought in chains to Rome (106 B.C.) and Marius, when his time of office had expired, held on to his consulship illegally with his newly created legions. There was no power in Rome to restrain him.

With Marius began the third phase in the development of the

Roman power, the Republic of the Military Commanders. For now began a period in which the leaders of the paid legions fought for the mastery of the Roman world. Against Marius was pitted the aristocratic Sulla who had served under him in Africa. Each in turn made a great massacre of his political opponents. Men were proscribed and executed by the thousand, and their estates were sold. After the bloody rivalry of these two and the horror of the revolt of Spartacus, came a phase in which Lucullus and Pompey the Great and Crassus and Julius Cæsar were the masters of armies and dominated affairs. It was Crassus who defeated Spartacus. Lucullus conquered Asia Minor and penetrated to Armenia, and retired with great wealth into private life. Crassus thrusting further invaded Persia and was defeated and slain by the Parthians. After a long rivalry Pompey was defeated by Julius Cæsar (48 B.C.) and murdered in Egypt, leaving Julius Cæsar sole master of the Roman world.

The figure of Julius Cæsar is one that has stirred the human imagination out of all proportion to its merit or true importance. He has become a legend and a symbol. For us he is chiefly important as marking the transition from the phase of military adventurers to the beginning of the fourth stage in Roman expansion, the Early Empire. For in spite of the profoundest economic and political convulsions, in spite of civil war and social degeneration, throughout all this time the boundaries of the Roman state crept outward and continued to creep outward to their maximum about 100 A.D. There had been something like an ebb during the doubtful phases of the Second Punic War, and again a manifest loss of vigour before the reconstruction of the army by Marius. The revolt of Spartacus marked a third phase. Julius Cæsar made his reputation as a military leader in Gaul, which is now France and Belgium. (The chief tribes inhabiting this country belonged to the same Celtic people as the Gauls who had occupied north Italy for a time, and who had afterwards raided into Asia Minor and settled down as the Galatians.) Cæsar drove back a German invasion of Gaul and added all that country to the empire, and he twice crossed the Straits of Dover into Britain (55 and 54 B.C.), where however he made no permanent conquest. Meanwhile Pompey the Great was consolidating Roman conquests that reached in the east to the Caspian Sea.

THE COLUMN OF TRAJAN AT ROME
Representing his conquests at Dacia and elsewhere

At this time, the middle of the first century B.C., the Roman Senate was still the nominal centre of the Roman government, appointing consuls and other officials, granting powers and the like; and a number of politicians, among whom Cicero was an outstanding figure, were struggling to preserve the great traditions of republican Rome and to maintain respect for its laws. But the spirit of citizenship had gone from Italy with the wasting away of the free farmers; it was a land now of slaves and impoverished men with neither the understanding nor the desire for freedom. There was nothing whatever behind these republican leaders in the Senate, while behind the great adventurers they feared and desired to control were the legions. Over the heads of the Senate Crassus and Pompey and Cæsar divided the rule of the Empire between them (The First Triumvirate). When presently Crassus was killed at distant Carrhæ by the Parthians, Pompey and Cæsar fell out. Pompey took up the republican side, and laws were passed to bring Cæsar to trial for his breaches of law and his disobedience to the decrees of the Senate.

It was illegal for a general to bring his troops out of the boundary of his command, and the boundary between Cæsar's command and Italy was the Rubicon. In 49 B.C. he crossed the Rubicon, saying "The die is cast" and marched upon Pompey and Rome.

It had been the custom in Rome in the past, in periods of military extremity, to elect a "dictator" with practically unlimited powers to rule through the crisis. After his overthrow of Pompey, Cæsar was made dictator first for ten years and then (in 45 B.C.) for life. In effect he was made monarch of the empire for life. There was talk of a king, a word abhorrent to Rome since the expulsion of the Etruscans five centuries before. Cæsar refused to be king, but adopted throne and sceptre. After his defeat of Pompey, Cæsar had gone on into Egypt and had made love to Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies, the goddess queen of Egypt. She seems to have turned his head very completely. He had brought back to Rome the Egyptian idea of a god-king. His statue was set up in a temple with an inscription "To the Unconquerable God." The expiring republicanism of Rome flared up in a last protest, and Cæsar was stabbed to death in the Senate at the foot of the statue of his murdered rival, Pompey the Great.

Thirteen years more of this conflict of ambitious personalities followed. There was a second Triumvirate of Lepidus, Mark Antony and Octavian Cæsar, the latter the nephew of Julius Cæsar. Octavian like his uncle took the poorer, hardier western provinces where the best legions were recruited. In 31 B.C., he defeated Mark Antony, his only serious rival, at the naval battle of Actium, and made himself sole master of the Roman world. But Octavian was a man of different quality altogether from Julius Cæsar. He had no foolish craving to be God or King. He had no queen-lover that he wished to dazzle. He restored freedom to the Senate and people of Rome. He declined to be dictator. The grateful Senate in return gave him the reality instead of the forms of power. He was to be called not King indeed, but "Princeps" and "Augustus." He became Augustus Cæsar, the first of the Roman emperors (27 B.C. to 14 A.D.).

He was followed by Tiberius Cæsar (14 to 37 A.D.) and he by others, Caligula, Claudius, Nero and so on up to Trajan (98 A.D.), Hadrian (117 A.D.), Antonius Pius (138 A.D.) and Marcus Aurelius

(161- 180 A.D.). All these emperors were emperors of the legions. The soldiers made them, and some the soldiers destroyed. Gradually the Senate fades out of Roman-history, and the emperor and his administrative officials replace it. The boundaries of the empire crept forward now to their utmost limits. Most of Britain was added to the empire, Transylvania was brought in as a new province, Dacia; Trajan crossed the Euphrates. Hadrian had an idea that reminds us at once of what had happened at the other end of the old world. Like Shi-Hwang-ti he built walls against the northern barbarians; one across Britain and a palisade between the Rhine and the Danube. He abandoned some of the acquisitions of Trajan.

The expansion of the Roman Empire was at an end.

XXXIV

BETWEEN ROME AND CHINA

THE second and first centuries B.C. mark a new phase in the history of mankind. Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean are no longer the centre of interest. Both Mesopotamia and Egypt were still fertile, populous and fairly prosperous, but they were no longer the dominant regions of the world. Power had drifted to the west and to the east. Two great empires now dominated the world, this new Roman Empire and the renascent Empire of China. Rome extended its power to the Euphrates, but it was never able to get beyond that boundary. It was too remote. Beyond the Euphrates the former Persian and Indian dominions of the Seleucids fell under a number of new masters. China, now under the Han dynasty, which had replaced the Ts'in dynasty at the death of Shi-Hwang-ti, had extended its power across Tibet and over the high mountain passes of the Pamirs into western Turkestan. But there, too, it reached its extremes. Beyond was too far.

China at this time was the greatest, best organized and most civilized political system in the world. It was superior in area and population to the Roman Empire at its zenith. It was possible then for these two vast systems to flourish in the same world at the same time in almost complete ignorance of each other. The means of communication both by sea and land was not yet sufficiently developed and organized for them to come to a direct clash.

Yet they reacted upon each other in a very remarkable way, and their influence upon the fate of the regions that lay between them, upon central Asia and India, was profound. A certain amount of trade trickled through, by camel caravans across Persia, for example, and by coasting ships by way of India and the Red Sea. In 66 B.C. Roman troops under Pompey followed in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, and marched up the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea. In 102 A.D. a Chinese expeditionary force under Pan Chau reached the Caspian, and sent emissaries to report upon the power of Rome. But many centuries were still to pass before definite knowledge and direct intercourse were to link the great parallel worlds of Europe and Eastern Asia.

To the north of both these great empires were barbaric wildernesses. What is now Germany was largely forest lands; the forests extended far into Russia and made a home for the gigantic aurochs, a bull of almost elephantine size. Then to the north of the great mountain masses of Asia stretched a band of deserts, steppes and then forests and frozen lands. In the eastward lap of the elevated part of Asia was the great triangle of Manchuria. Large parts of these regions, stretching between South Russia and Turkestan into Manchuria, were and are regions of exceptional climatic insecurity. Their rainfall has varied greatly in the course of a few centuries They are lands treacherous to man. For years they will carry pasture and sustain cultivation, and then will come an age of decline in humidity and a cycle of killing droughts.

A CHINESE COVERED JAR OF GREEN-GLAZED EARTHENWARE
Han Dynasty (contemporary with the late Roman republic and early Empire)
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

The western part of this barbaric north from the German forests to South Russia and Turkestan and from Gothland to the Alps was the region of origin of the Nordic peoples and of the Aryan speech. The eastern steppes and deserts of Mongolia was the region of origin of the Hunnish or Mongolian or Tartar or Turkish peoples — for all these several peoples were akin in language, race, and way of life. And as the Nordic peoples seem to have been continually overflowing their own borders and pressing south upon the developing civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean coast, so the Hunnish tribes sent their surplus as wanderers, raiders and conquerors into the settled regions of China. Periods of plenty in the north would mean an increase in population there; a shortage of grass, a spell of cattle disease, would drive the hungry warlike tribesmen south.

For a time there were simultaneously two fairly effective Empires in the world capable of holding back the barbarians and even forcing forward the frontiers of the imperial peace. The thrust of the Han empire from north China into Mongolia was strong and continuous. The Chinese population welled up over the barrier of the Great Wall. Behind the imperial frontier guards came the Chinese farmer with horse and plough, ploughing up the grass lands and enclosing the winter pasture. The Hunnish peoples raided and murdered the settlers, but the Chinese punitive expeditions were too much for them. The nomads were faced with the choice of settling down to the plough and becoming Chinese tax-payers or shifting in search of fresh summer pastures. Some took the former course and were absorbed. Some drifted north-eastward and eastward over the mountain passes down into western Turkestan.

VASE OF BRONZE FORM, UNGLAZED STONEWARE

Han Dynasty (B.C. 206 - A.D. 220)
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

This westward drive of the Mongolian horsemen was going on from 200 B.C. onward. It was producing a westward pressure upon the Aryan tribes, and these again were pressing upon the Roman frontiers ready to break through directly there was any weakness apparent. The Parthians, who were apparently a Scythian people with some Mongolian admixture, came down to the Euphrates by the first century B.C. They fought against Pompey the Great in his eastern raid. They defeated and killed Crassus. They replaced the Seleucid monarchy in Persia by a dynasty of Parthian kings, the Arsacid dynasty.

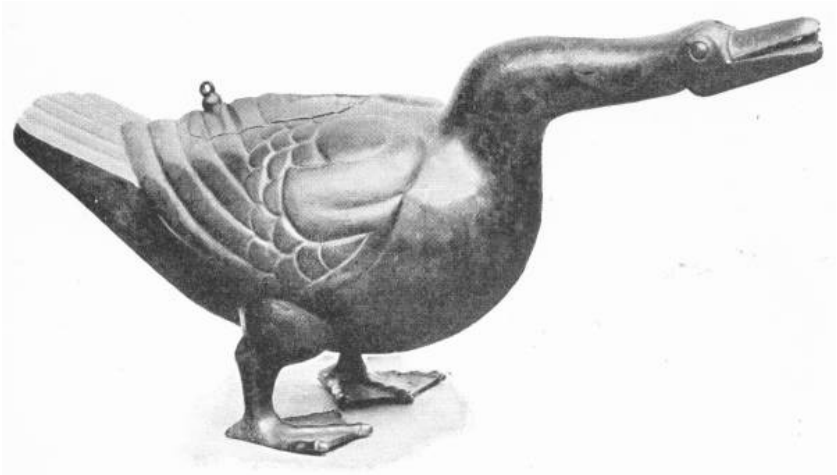

CHINESE VESSEL IN BRONZE, IN FORM OF A GOOSE
Dating from before the time of Shi-Hwang-ti. Such a piece of work indicates a high level of comfort and humour
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

But for a time the line of least resistance for hungry nomads lay neither to the west nor the east but through central Asia and then south-eastward through the Khyber Pass into India. It was India which received the Mongolian drive in these centuries of Roman and Chinese strength. A series of raiding conquerors poured down through the Punjab into the great plains to loot and destroy. The

empire of Asoka was broken up, and for a time the history of India passes into darkness. A certain Kushan dynasty founded by the "Indo- Scythians" — one of the raiding peoples — ruled for a time over North India and maintained a certain order. These invasions went on for several centuries. For a large part of the fifth century A.D. India was afflicted by the Ephthalites or White Huns, who levied tribute on the small Indian princes and held India in terror. Every summer these Ephthalites pastured in western Turkestan, every autumn they came down through the passes to terrorize India.

In the second century A.D. a great misfortune came upon the Roman and Chinese empires that probably weakened the resistance of both to barbarian pressure. This was a pestilence of unexampled virulence. It raged for eleven years in China and disorganized the social framework profoundly. The Han dynasty fell, and a new age of division and confusion began from which China did not fairly recover until the seventh century A.D. with the coming of the great Tang dynasty.

The infection spread through Asia to Europe. It raged throughout the Roman Empire from 164 to 180 A.D. It evidently weakened the Roman imperial fabric very seriously. We begin to hear of depopulation in the Roman provinces after this, and there was a marked deterioration in the vigour and efficiency of government. At any rate we presently find the frontier no longer invulnerable, but giving way first in this place and then in that. A new Nordic people, the Goths, coming originally from Gothland in Sweden, had migrated across Russia to the Volga region and the shores of the Black Sea and taken to the sea and piracy. By the end of the second century they may have begun to feel the westward thrust of the Huns. In 247 they crossed the Danube in a great land raid, and defeated and killed the Emperor Decius in a battle in what is now Serbia. In 236 another Germanic people, the Franks, had broken bounds upon the lower Rhine, and the Alemanni had poured into Alsace. The legions in Gaul beat back their invaders, but the Goths in the Balkan peninsula raided again and again. The province of Dacia vanished from Roman history.

A chill had come to the pride and confidence of Rome. In 270-275

Rome, which had been an open and secure city for three centuries, was fortified by the Emperor Aurelian.

XXXV

THE COMMON MAN'S LIFE UNDER THE EARLY ROMAN EMPIRE

BEFORE we tell of how this Roman empire which was built up in the two centuries B.C., and which flourished in peace and security from the days of Augustus Cæsar onward for two centuries, fell into disorder and was broken up, it may be as well to devote some attention to the life of the ordinary people throughout this great realm. Our history has come down now to within 2000 years of our own time; and the life of the civilized people, both under the Peace of Rome and the Peace of the Han dynasty, was beginning to resemble more and more clearly the life of their civilized successors to-day.

In the western world coined money was now in common use; outside the priestly world there were many people of independent means who were neither officials of the government nor priests; people travelled about more freely than they had ever done before, and there were high roads and inns for them. Compared with the past, with the time before 500 B.C., life had become much more loose. Before that date civilized men had been bound to a district or country, had been bound to a tradition and lived within a very limited horizon; only the nomads traded and travelled.

But neither the Roman Peace nor the Peace of the Han dynasty meant a uniform civilization over the large areas they controlled. There were very great local differences and great contrasts and inequalities of culture between one district and another, just as there are to-day under the British Peace in India. The Roman garrisons and colonies were dotted here and there over this great space, worshipping Roman gods and speaking the Latin language; but where there had been towns and cities before the coming of the Romans, they went on, subordinated indeed but managing their own affairs, and, for a time at least, worshipping their own gods in their own fashion. Over Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt and the Hellenized East generally, the Latin language never prevailed. Greek ruled there invincibly. Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul, was a Jew

and a Roman citizen; but he spoke and wrote Greek and not Hebrew. Even at the court of the Parthian dynasty, which had overthrown the Greek Seleucids in Persia, and was quite outside the Roman imperial boundaries, Greek was the fashionable language. In some parts of Spain and in North Africa, the Carthaginian language also held on for a long time in spite of the destruction of Carthage. Such a town as Seville, which had been a prosperous city long before the Roman name had been heard of, kept its Semitic goddess and preserved its Semitic speech for generations, in spite of a colony of Roman veterans at Italica a few miles away. Septimius Severus, who was emperor from 193 to 211 A.D., spoke Carthaginian as his mother speech. He learnt Latin later as a foreign tongue; and it is recorded that his sister never learnt Latin and conducted her Roman household in the Punic language.

In such countries as Gaul and Britain and in provinces like Dacia (now roughly Roumania) and Pannonia (Hungary south of the Danube), where there were no pre-existing great cities and temples and cultures, the Roman empire did however "Latinize." It civilized these countries for the first time. It created cities and towns where Latin was from the first the dominant speech, and where Roman gods were served and Roman customs and fashions followed. The Roumanian, Italian, French and Spanish languages, all variations and modifications of Latin, remain to remind us of this extension of Latin speech and customs. North-west Africa also became at last largely Latin-speaking. Egypt, Greece and the rest of the empire to the east were never Latinized. They remained Egyptian and Greek in culture

and spirit. And even in Rome, among educated men, Greek was learnt as the language of a gentleman and Greek literature and learning were very, properly preferred to Latin.

In this miscellaneous empire the ways of doing work and business were naturally also very miscellaneous. The chief industry of the settled world was still largely agriculture. We have told how in Italy the sturdy free farmers who were the backbone of the early Roman republic were replaced by estates worked by slave labour after the Punic wars. The Greek world had had very various methods of cultivation, from the Arcadian plan, wherein every free citizen toiled with his own hands, to Sparta, wherein it was a dishonour to work and where agricultural work was done by a special slave class, the Helots. But that was ancient history now, and over most of the Hellenized world the estate system and slave-gangs had spread. The agricultural slaves were captives who spoke many different languages so that they could not understand each other, or they were born slaves; they had no solidarity to resist oppression, no tradition of rights, no knowledge, for they could not read nor write. Although they came to form a majority of the country population they never made a successful insurrection. The insurrection of Spartacus in the first century B.C. was an insurrection of the special slaves who were trained for the gladiatorial combats. The agricultural workers in Italy in the latter days of the Republic and the early Empire suffered frightful indignities; they would be chained at night to prevent escape or have half the head shaved to make it difficult. They had no wives of their own; they could be outraged, mutilated and killed by their masters. A master could sell his slave to fight beasts in the arena. If a slave slew his master, all the slaves in his household and not merely the murderer were crucified. In some parts of Greece, in Athens notably, the lot of the slave was never quite so frightful as this, but it was still detestable. To such a population the barbarian invaders who presently broke through the defensive line of the legions, came not as enemies but as liberators.

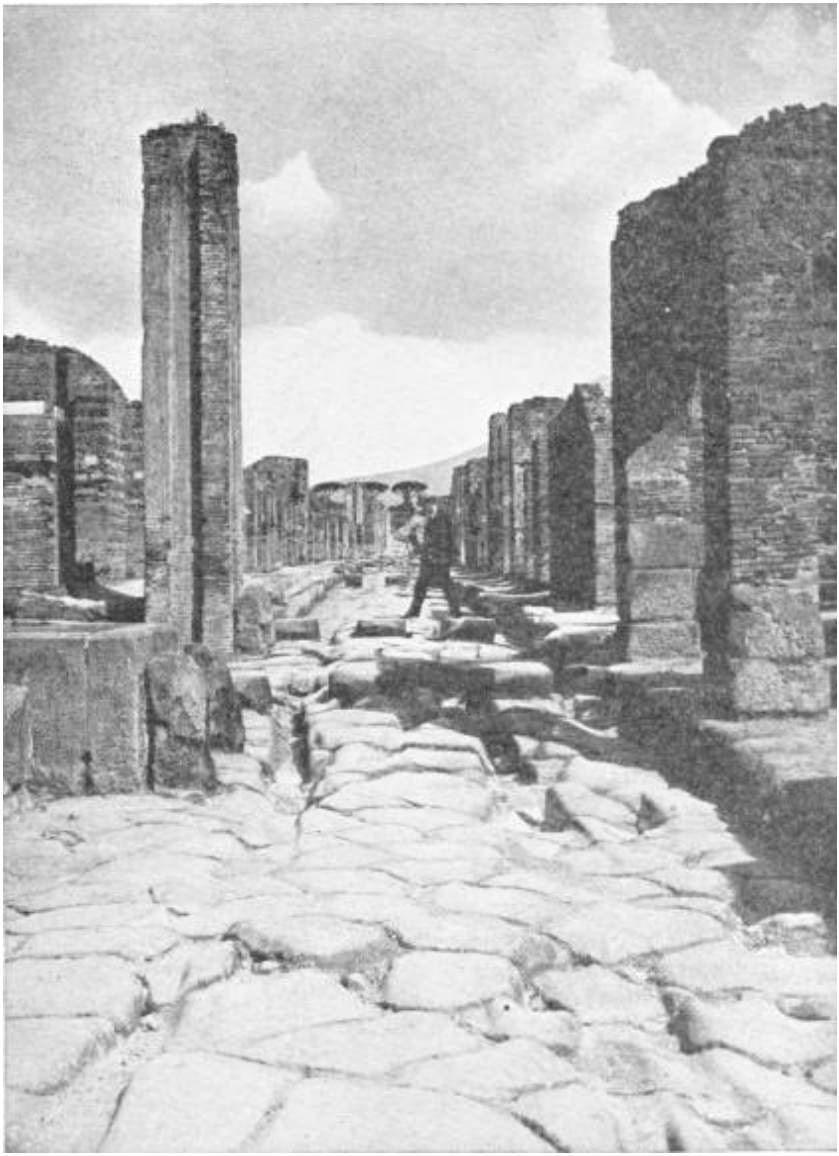

POMPEII
"Note the ruts in roadway worn by chariot wheels."

The slave system had spread to most industries and to every sort of work that could be done by gangs. Mines and metallurgical operations, the rowing of galleys, road-making and big building

operations were all largely slave occupations. And almost all domestic service was performed by slaves. There were poor free-men and there were freed-men in the cities and upon the country side, working for themselves or even working for wages. They were artizans, supervisors and so forth, workers of a new money- paid class working in competition with slave workers; but we do not know what proportion they made of the general population. It probably varied widely in different places and at different periods. And there were also many modifications of slavery, from the slavery that was chained at night and driven with whips to the farm or quarry, to the slave whose master found it advantageous to leave him to cultivate his patch or work his craft and own his wife like a free-man, provided he paid in a satisfactory quittance to his owner.

There were armed slaves. At the opening of the period of the Punic wars, in 264 B.C., the Etruscan sport of setting slaves to fight for their lives was revived in Rome. It grew rapidly fashionable; and soon every great Roman rich man kept a retinue of gladiators, who sometimes fought in the arena but whose real business it was to act as his bodyguard of bullies. And also there were learned slaves. The conquests of the later Republic were among the highly civilized cities of Greece, North Africa and Asia Minor; and they brought in many highly educated captives. The tutor of a young Roman of good family was usually a slave. A rich man would have a Greek slave as librarian, and slave secretaries and learned men. He would keep his poet as he would keep a performing dog. In this atmosphere of slavery the traditions of modern literary criticism were evolved. The slaves still boast and quarrel in our reviews. There were enterprising people who bought intelligent boy slaves and had them educated for sale. Slaves were trained as book copyists, as jewellers, and for endless skilled callings.

THE COLISEUM, ROME
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

INTERIOR OF THE COLISEUM AT IT APPEARS TO-DAY

But there were very considerable changes in the position of a slave during the four hundred years between the opening days of conquest

under the republic of rich men and the days of disintegration that followed the great pestilence. In the second century B.C. war-captives were abundant, manners gross and brutal; the slave had no rights and there was scarcely an outrage the reader can imagine that was not practised upon slaves in those days. But already in the first century A.D. there was a perceptible improvement in the attitude of the Roman civilization towards slavery. Captives were not so abundant for one thing, and slaves were dearer. And slave- owners began to realize that the profit and comfort they got from their slaves increased with the self-respect of these unfortunates. But also the moral tone of the community was rising, and a sense of justice was becoming effective. The higher mentality of Greece was qualifying the old Roman harshness. Restrictions upon cruelty were made, a master might no longer sell his slave to fight beasts, a slave was given property rights in what was called his *peculium*, slaves were paid wages as an encouragement and stimulus, a form of slave marriage was recognized. Very many forms of agriculture do not lend themselves to gang working, or require gang workers only at certain seasons. In regions where such conditions prevailed the slave presently became a serf, paying his owner part of his produce or working for him at certain seasons.

When we begin to realize how essentially this great Latin and Greek-speaking Roman Empire of the first two centuries A.D. was a slave state and how small was the minority who had any pride or freedom in their lives, we lay our hands on the clues to its decay and collapse. There was little of what we should call family life, few homes of temperate living and active thought and study; schools and colleges were few and far between. The free will and the free mind were nowhere to be found. The great roads, the ruins of splendid buildings, the tradition of law and power it left for the astonishment of succeeding generations must not conceal from us that all its outer splendour was built upon thwarted wills, stifled intelligence, and crippled and perverted desires. And even the minority who lorded it over that wide realm of subjugation and of restraint and forced labour were uneasy and unhappy in their souls; art and literature, science and philosophy, which are the fruits of free and happy minds, waned

in that atmosphere. There was much copying and imitation, an abundance of artistic artificers, much slavish pedantry among the servile men of learning, but the whole Roman empire in four centuries produced nothing to set beside the bold and noble intellectual activities of the comparatively little city of Athens during its one century of greatness. Athens decayed under the Roman sceptre. The science of Alexandria decayed. The spirit of man, it seemed, was decaying in those days.

XXXVI

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE

THE soul of man under that Latin and Greek empire of the first two centuries of the Christian era was a worried and frustrated soul. Compulsion and cruelty reigned; there were pride and display but little honour; little serenity or steadfast happiness. The unfortunate were despised and wretched; the fortunate were insecure and feverishly eager for gratifications. In a great number of cities life centred on the red excitement of the arena, where men and beasts fought and were tormented and slain. Amphitheatres are the most characteristic of Roman ruins. Life went on in that key. The uneasiness of men's hearts manifested itself in profound religious unrest.

From the days when the Aryan hordes first broke in upon the ancient civilizations, it was inevitable that the old gods of the temples and priesthoods should suffer great adaptations or disappear. In the course of hundreds of generations the agricultural peoples of the brunette civilizations had shaped their lives and thoughts to the temple-centred life. Observances and the fear of disturbed routines, sacrifices and mysteries, dominated their minds. Their gods seem monstrous and illogical to our modern minds because we belong to an Aryanized world, but to these older peoples these deities had the immediate conviction and vividness of things seen in an intense dream. The conquest of one city state by another in Sumeria or early Egypt meant a change or a renaming of gods or goddesses, but left the shape and spirit of the worship intact. There was no change in its general character. The figures in the dream changed, but the dream went on and it was the same sort of dream. And the early Semitic conquerors were sufficiently akin in spirit to the Sumerians to take over the religion of the Mesopotamian civilization they subjugated without any profound alteration. Egypt was never indeed subjugated to the extent of a religious revolution. Under the Ptolemies and under the Cæsars, her temples and altars and priesthoods remained essentially Egyptian.

So long as conquests went on between people of similar social and religious habits it was possible to get over the clash between the god of this temple and region and the god of that by a process of grouping or assimilation. If the two gods were alike in character they were identified. It was really the same god under another name, said the priests and the people. This fusion of gods is called theocrasia; and the age of the great conquests of the thousand years B.C. was an age of theocrasia. Over wide areas the local gods were displaced by, or rather they were swallowed up in, a general god. So that when at last Hebrew prophets in Babylon proclaimed one God of Righteousness in all the earth men's minds were fully prepared for that idea.

But often the gods were too dissimilar for such an assimilation, and then they were grouped together in some plausible relationship. A female god - and the Ægean world before the coming of the Greek was much addicted to Mother Gods — would be married to a male god, and an animal god or a star god would be humanized and the animal or astronomical aspect, the serpent or the sun or the star, made into an ornament or a symbol. Or the god of a defeated people would become a malignant antagonist to the brighter gods. The history of theology is full of such adaptations, compromises and rationalizations of once local gods.

As Egypt developed from city states into one united kingdom there was much of this theocrasia. The chief god so to speak was Osiris, a sacrificial harvest god of whom Pharaoh was supposed to be the earthly incarnation. Osiris was represented as repeatedly dying and rising again; he was not only the seed and the harvest but also by a natural extension of thought the means of human immortality. Among his symbols was the wide-winged scarabeus beetle which buries its eggs to rise again, and also the effulgent sun which sets to rise. Later on he was to be identified with Apis, the sacred bull. Associated with him was the goddess Isis. Isis was also Hathor, a cow-goddess, and the crescent moon and the Star of the sea. Osiris dies and she bears a child, Horus, who is also a hawk-god and the dawn, and who grows to become Osiris again. The effigies of Isis represent her as bearing the infant Horus in her arms and standing on the crescent moon. These are not logical relationships, but they were

devised by the human mind before the development of hard and systematic thinking and they have a dream-like coherence. Beneath this triple group there are other and darker Egyptian gods, bad gods, the dog-headed Anubis, black night and the like, devourers, tempters, enemies of god and man.

MITHRAS SACRIFICING A BULL, ROMAN
(In the British Museum)

Every religious system does in the course of time fit itself to the shape of the human soul, and there can be no doubt that out of these illogical and even uncouth symbols, Egyptian people were able to fashion for themselves ways of genuine devotion and consolation. The desire for immortality was very strong in the Egyptian mind, and the religious life of Egypt turned on that desire. The Egyptian religion was an immortality religion as no other religion had ever been. As Egypt went down under foreign conquerors and the Egyptian gods ceased to have any satisfactory political significance, this craving for a life of compensations here-after, intensified.

ISIS AND HORUS

After the Greek conquest, the new city of Alexandria became the centre of Egyptian religious life, and indeed of the religious life of the whole Hellenic world. A great temple, the Serapeum, was set up by Ptolemy I at which a sort of trinity of gods was worshipped. These were Serapis (who was Osiris-Apis rechristened), Isis and Horus. These were not regarded as separate gods but as three aspects of one god, and Serapis was identified with the Greek Zeus, the Roman Jupiter and the Persian sun-god. This worship spread

wherever the Hellenic influence extended, even into North India and Western China. The idea of immortality, an immortality of compensations and consolation, was eagerly received by a world in which the common life was hopelessly wretched. Serapis was called "the saviour of souls." "After death," said the hymns of that time, "we are still in the care of his providence." Isis attracted many devotees. Her images stood in her temples, as Queen of Heaven, bearing the infant Horus in her arms. Candles were burnt before her, votive offerings were made to her, shaven priests consecrated to celibacy waited on her altar.

The rise of the Roman empire opened the western European world to this growing cult. The temples of Serapis-Isis, the chanting of the priests and the hope of immortal life, followed the Roman standards to Scotland and Holland. But there were many rivals to the Serapis-Isis religion. Prominent among these was Mithraism. This was a religion of Persian origin, and it centred upon some now forgotten mysteries about Mithras sacrificing a sacred and benevolent bull. Here we seem to have something more primordial than the complicated and sophisticated Serapis-Isis beliefs. We are carried back directly to the blood sacrifices of the heliolithic stage in human culture. The bull upon the Mithraic monuments always bleeds copiously from a wound in its side, and from this blood springs new life. The votary to Mithraism actually bathed in the blood of the sacrificial bull. At his initiation he went beneath a scaffolding upon which a bull was killed so that the blood could actually run down on him.

Both these religions, and the same is true of many other of the numerous parallel cults that sought the allegiance of the slaves and citizens under the earlier Roman emperors, are personal religions. They aim at personal salvation and personal immortality. The older religions were not personal like that; they were social. The older fashion of divinity was god or goddess of the city first or of the state, and only secondarily of the individual. The sacrifices were a public and not a private function. They concerned collective practical needs in this world in which we live. But the Greeks first and now the Romans had pushed religion out of politics. Guided by the Egyptian tradition religion had retreated to the other world.

BUST OF THE EMPEROR COMMODUS, A.D. 180-192
Represented as the God Mithras, Roman, Circa A.D. 190
(In the British Museum)

These new private immortality religions took all the heart and emotion out of the old state religions, but they did not actually replace them. A typical city under the earlier Roman emperors would have a number of temples to all sorts of gods. There might be a temple to Jupiter of the Capitol, the great god of Rome, and there would probably be one to the reigning Cæsar. For the Cæsars had learnt from the Pharaohs the possibility of being gods. In such

temples a cold and stately political worship went on; one would go and make an offering and burn a pinch of incense to show one's loyalty. But it would be to the temple of Isis, the dear Queen of Heaven, one would go with the burthen of one's private troubles for advice and relief. There might be local and eccentric gods. Seville, for example, long affected the worship of the old Carthaginian Venus. In a cave or an underground temple there would certainly be an altar to Mithras, attended by legionaries and slaves. And probably also there would be a synagogue where the Jews gathered to read their Bible and uphold their faith in the unseen God of all the Earth.

Sometimes there would be trouble with the Jews about the political side of the state religion. They held that their God was a jealous God intolerant of idolatry, and they would refuse to take part in the public sacrifices to Cæsar. They would not even salute the Roman standards for fear of idolatry.

In the East long before the time of Buddha there had been ascetics, men and women who gave up most of the delights of life, who repudiated marriage and property and sought spiritual powers and an escape from the stresses and mortifications of the world in abstinence, pain and solitude. Buddha himself set his face against ascetic extravagances, but many of his disciples followed a monkish life of great severity. Obscure Greek cults practised similar disciplines even to the extent of self-mutilation. Asceticism appeared in the Jewish communities of Judea and Alexandria also in the first century B.C. Communities of men abandoned the world and gave themselves to austerities and mystical contemplation. Such was the sect of the Essenes. Throughout the first and second centuries A.D. there was an almost world-wide resort to such repudiations of life, a universal search for "salvation" from the distresses of the time. The old sense of an established order, the old confidence in priest and temple and law and custom, had gone. Amidst the prevailing slavery, cruelty, fear, anxiety, waste, display and hectic self-indulgence, went this epidemic of self- disgust and mental insecurity, this agonized search for peace even at the price of renunciation and voluntary suffering. This it was that filled the Serapeum with weeping penitents and brought the converts into the gloom and gore of the Mithraic

cave.

XXXVII

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

IT was while Augustus Cæsar, the first of the Emperors, was reigning in Rome that Jesus who is the Christ of Christianity was born in Judea. In his name a religion was to arise which was destined to become the official religion of the entire Roman Empire.

Now it is on the whole more convenient to keep history and theology apart. A large proportion of the Christian world believes that Jesus was an incarnation of that God of all the Earth whom the Jews first recognized. The historian, if he is to remain historian, can neither accept nor deny that interpretation. Materially Jesus appeared in the likeness of a man, and it is as a man that the historian must deal with him.

He appeared in Judea in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar. He was a prophet. He preached after the fashion of the preceding Jewish prophets. He was a man of about thirty, and we are in the profoundest ignorance of his manner of life before his preaching began.

Our only direct sources of information about the life and teaching of Jesus are the four Gospels. All four agree in giving us a picture of a very definite personality. One is obliged to say, "Here was a man. This could not have been invented."

But just as the personality of Gautama Buddha has been distorted and obscured by the stiff squatting figure, the gilded idol of later Buddhism, so one feels that the lean and strenuous personality of Jesus is much wronged by the unreality and conventionality that a mistaken reverence has imposed upon his figure in modern Christian art. Jesus was a penniless teacher, who wandered about the dusty sun-bit country of Judea, living upon casual gifts of food; yet he is always represented clean, combed and sleek, in spotless raiment, erect and with something motionless about him as though he was gliding through the air. This alone has made him unreal and incredible to many people who cannot distinguish the core of the story from the ornamental and unwise additions of the unintelligently devout.

We are left, if we do strip this record of these difficult accessories,

with the figure of a being, very human, very earnest and passionate, capable of swift anger, and teaching a new and simple and profound doctrine — namely, the universal loving Fatherhood of God and the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. He was clearly a person — to use a common phrase — of intense personal magnetism. He attracted followers and filled them with love and courage. Weak and ailing people were heartened and healed by his presence. Yet he was probably of a delicate physique, because of the swiftness with which he died under the pains of crucifixion. There is a tradition that he fainted when, according to the custom, he was made to bear his cross to the place of execution. He went about the country for three years spreading his doctrine and then he came to Jerusalem and was accused of trying to set up a strange kingdom in Judea; he was tried upon this charge, and crucified together with two thieves. Long before these two were dead his sufferings were over.

The doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought. It is small wonder if the world of that time failed to grasp its full significance, and recoiled in dismay from even a half apprehension of its tremendous challenges to the established habits and institutions of mankind. For the doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus seems to have preached it, was no less than a bold and uncompromising demand for a complete change and cleansing of the life of our struggling race, an utter cleansing, without and within. To the gospels the reader must go for all that is preserved of this tremendous teaching; here we are only concerned with the jar of its impact upon established ideas.

The Jews were persuaded that God, the one God of the whole world, was a righteous god, but they also thought of him as a trading god who had made a bargain with their Father Abraham about them, a very good bargain indeed for them, to bring them at last to predominance in the earth. With dismay and anger they heard Jesus sweeping away their dear securities. God, he taught, was no bargainer; there were no chosen people and no favourites in the Kingdom of Heaven. God was the loving father of all life, as incapable of showing favour as the universal sun. And all men were brothers — sinners alike and beloved sons alike — of this divine

father. In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus cast scorn upon that natural tendency we all obey, to glorify our own people and to minimize the righteousness of other creeds and other races. In the parable of the labourers he thrust aside the obstinate claim of the Jews to have a special claim upon God. All whom God takes into the kingdom, he taught, God serves alike; there is no distinction in his treatment, because there is no measure to his bounty. From all moreover, as the parable of the buried talent witnesses, and as the incident of the widow's mite enforces, he demands the utmost. There are no privileges, no rebates and no excuses in the Kingdom of Heaven.

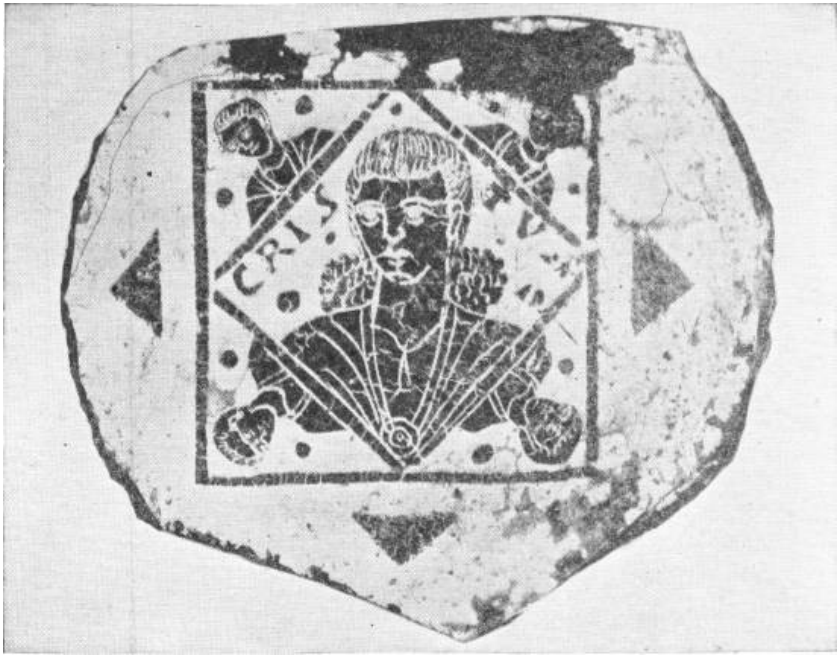

EARLY IDEAL PORTRAIT, IN GILDED GLASS, OF JESUS CHRIST IN WHICH THE TRADITIONAL BEARD IS NOT SHOWN

But it is not only the intense tribal patriotism of the Jews that Jesus outraged. They were a people of intense family loyalty, and he would have swept away all the narrow and restrictive family affections in the great flood of the love of God. The whole kingdom of Heaven

was to be the family of his followers. We are told that, “While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.?

THE ROAD FROM NAZARETH TO TIBERIAS
Photo: Fannaway

And not only did Jesus strike at patriotism and the bonds of family loyalty in the name of God’s universal fatherhood and brotherhood of all mankind, but it is clear that his teaching condemned all the gradations of the economic system, all private wealth, and personal advantages. All men belonged to the kingdom; all their possessions belonged to the kingdom; the righteous life for all men, the only righteous life, was the service of God’s will with all that we had, with all that we were. Again and again he denounced private riches and the reservation of any private life.

DAVID'S TOWER AND WALL OF JERUSALEM
Photo: Fannaway

"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God. Thou

knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions.

A STREET IN JERUSALEM
Along such a thoroughfare Christ carried his cross to the place of execution
Photo: Fannaway

"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

Moreover, in his tremendous prophecy of this kingdom which was to make all men one together in God, Jesus had small patience for the bargaining righteousness of formal religion. Another large part of his recorded utterances is aimed against the meticulous observance of the rules of the pious career. "Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honoureth me with their lips,

"But their heart is far from me.

"Howbeit in vain do they worship me,

"Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

"For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

It was not merely a moral and a social revolution that Jesus proclaimed; it is clear from a score of indications that his teaching had a political bent of the plainest sort. It is true that he said his kingdom was not of this world, that it was in the hearts of men and not upon a throne; but it is equally clear that wherever and in what measure his kingdom was set up in the hearts of men, the outer world would be in that measure revolutionized and made new.

Whatever else the deafness and blindness of his hearers may have missed in his utterances, it is plain they did not miss his resolve to revolutionize the world. The whole tenor of the opposition to him and the circumstances of his trial and execution show clearly that to his contemporaries he seemed to propose plainly, and did propose plainly, to change and fuse and enlarge all human life.

In view of what he plainly said, is it any wonder that all who were rich and prosperous felt a horror of strange things, a swimming of

their world at his teaching? He was dragging out all the little private reservations they had made from social service into the light of a universal religious life. He was like some terrible moral huntsman digging mankind out of the snug burrows in which they had lived hitherto. In the white blaze of this kingdom of his there was to be no property, no privilege, no pride and precedence; no motive indeed and no reward but love. Is it any wonder that men were dazzled and blinded and cried out against him? Even his disciples cried out when he would not spare them the light. Is it any wonder that the priests realized that between this man and themselves there was no choice but that he or priestcraft should perish? Is it any wonder that the Roman soldiers, confronted and amazed by something soaring over their comprehension and threatening all their disciplines, should take refuge in wild laughter, and crown him with thorns and robe him in purple and make a mock Cæsar of him? For to take him seriously was to enter upon a strange and alarming life, to abandon habits, to control instincts and impulses, to essay an incredible happiness. . . .

Matt. xii, 46-50.

Mark x, 17-25.

Mark vii, 1-9.

XXXVIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINAL CHRISTIANITY

IN the four gospels we find the personality and teachings of Jesus but very little of the dogmas of the Christian church. It is in the epistles, a series of writings by the immediate followers of Jesus, that the broad lines of Christian belief are laid down.

Chief among the makers of Christian doctrine was St. Paul. He had never seen Jesus nor heard him preach. Paul's name was originally Saul, and he was conspicuous at first as an active persecutor of the little band of disciples after the crucifixion. Then he was suddenly converted to Christianity, and he changed his name to Paul. He was a man of great intellectual vigour and deeply and passionately interested in the religious movements of the time. He was well versed in Judaism and in the Mithraism and Alexandrian religion of the day. He carried over many of their ideas and terms of expression into Christianity. He did very little to enlarge or develop the original teaching of Jesus, the teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven. But he taught that Jesus was not only the promised Christ, the promised leader of the Jews, but also that his death was a sacrifice, like the deaths of the ancient sacrificial victims of the primordial civilizations, for the redemption of mankind.

When religions flourish side by side they tend to pick up each other's ceremonial and other outward peculiarities. Buddhism, for example, in China has now almost the same sort of temples and priests and uses as Taoism, which follows in the teachings of Lao Tse. Yet the original teachings of Buddhism and Taoism were almost flatly opposed. And it reflects no doubt or discredit upon the essentials of Christian teaching that it took over not merely such formal things as the shaven priest, the votive offering, the altars, candles, chanting and images of the Alexandrian and Mithraic faiths, but adopted even their devotional phrases and their theological ideas. All these religions were flourishing side by side with many less prominent cults. Each was seeking adherents, and there must have been a constant going and coming of converts between them.

Sometimes one or other would be in favour with the government. But Christianity was regarded with more suspicion than its rivals because, like the Jews, its adherents would not perform acts of worship to the God Cæsar. This made it a seditious religion, quite apart from the revolutionary spirit of the teachings of Jesus himself.

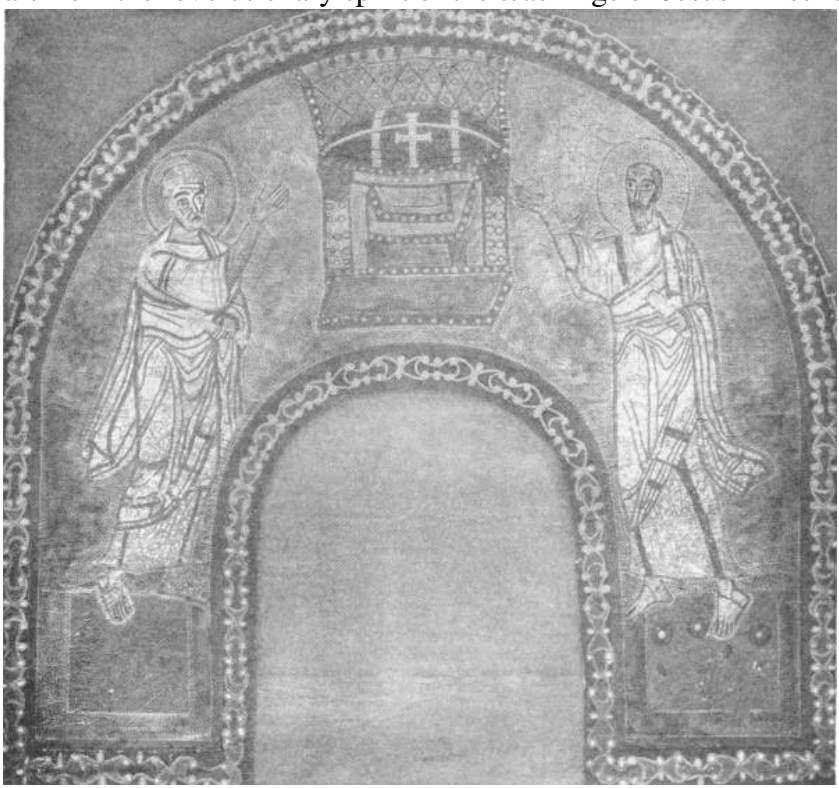

MOSAIC OF SS. PETER AND PAUL POINTING TO A THRONE, ON GOLD BACKGROUND
From the Ninth Century original, in the Church of Sta. Prassede, Rome
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

St. Paul familiarized his disciples with the idea that Jesus, like Osiris, was a god who died to rise again and give men immortality. And presently the spreading Christian community was greatly torn by complicated theological disputes about the relationship of this God Jesus to God the Father of Mankind. The Arians taught that

Jesus was divine, but distant from and inferior to the Father. The Sabellians taught that Jesus was merely an aspect of the Father, and that God was Jesus and Father at the same time just as a man may be a father and an artificer at the same time; and the Trinitarians taught a more subtle doctrine that God was both one and three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For a time it seemed that Arianism would prevail over its rivals, and then after disputes, violence and wars, the Trinitarian formula became the accepted formula of all Christendom. It may be found in its completest expression in the Athanasian Creed.

We offer no comment on these controversies here. They do not sway history as the personal teaching of Jesus sways history. The personal teaching of Jesus does seem to mark a new phase in the moral and spiritual life of our race. Its insistence upon the universal Fatherhood of God and the implicit brotherhood of all men, its insistence upon the sacredness of every human personality as a living temple of God, was to have the profoundest effect upon all the subsequent social and political life of mankind. With Christianity, with the spreading teachings of Jesus, a new respect appears in the world for man as man. It may be true, as hostile critics of Christianity have urged, that St.. Paul preached obedience to slaves, but it is equally true that the whole spirit of the teachings of Jesus preserved in the gospels was against the subjugation of man by man. And still more distinctly was Christianity opposed to such outrages upon human dignity as the gladiatorial combats in the arena.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

(Sixth Century Ivory Panel in the British Museum)

Throughout the first two centuries after Christ, the Christian religion spread throughout the Roman Empire, weaving together an ever-growing multitude of converts into a new community of ideas and will. The attitude of the emperors varied between hostility and toleration. There were attempts to suppress this new faith in both the second and third centuries; and finally in 303 and the following years a great persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. The considerable accumulations of Church property were seized, all bibles and religious writings were confiscated and destroyed, Christians were put out of the protection of the law and many executed. The destruction of the books is particularly notable. It shows how the power of the written word in holding together the new faith was appreciated by the authorities. These "book religions," Christianity and Judaism, were religions that educated. Their continued existence depended very largely on people being able to read and understand their doctrinal ideas. The older religions had made no such appeal to the personal intelligence. In the ages of barbaric confusion that were now at hand in western Europe it was the Christian church that was mainly instrumental in preserving the tradition of learning.

The persecution of Diocletian failed completely to suppress the growing Christian community. In many provinces it was ineffective because the bulk of the population and many of the officials were Christian. In 317 an edict of toleration was issued by the associated Emperor Galerius, and in 324 Constantine the Great, a friend and on his deathbed a baptized convert to Christianity, became sole ruler of the Roman world. He abandoned all divine pretensions and put Christian symbols on the shields and banners of his troops.

In a few years Christianity was securely established as the official religion of the empire. The competing religions disappeared or were absorbed with extraordinary celerity, and in 300 Theodosius the Great caused the great statue of Jupiter Serapis at Alexandria to be destroyed. From the outset of the fifth century onward the only priests or temples in the Roman Empire were Christian priests and temples.

XXXIX

THE BARBARIANS BREAK THE EMPIRE INTO EAST AND WEST

THROUGHOUT the third century the Roman Empire, decaying socially and disintegrating morally, faced the barbarians. The emperors of this period were fighting military autocrats, and the capital of the empire shifted with the necessities of their military policy. Now the imperial headquarters would be at Milan in north Italy, now in what is now Serbia at Sirmium or Nish, now in Nicomedia in Asia Minor. Rome halfway down Italy was too far from the centre of interest to be a convenient imperial seat. It was a declining city. Over most of the empire peace still prevailed and men went about without arms. The armies continued to be the sole repositories of power; the emperors, dependent on their legions, became more and more autocratic to the rest of the empire and their state more and more like that of the Persian and other oriental monarchs. Diocletian assumed a royal diadem and oriental robes.

All along the imperial frontier, which ran roughly along the Rhine and Danube, enemies were now pressing. The Franks and other German tribes had come up to the Rhine. In north Hungary were the Vandals; in what was once Dacia and is now Roumania, the Visigoths or West Goths. Behind these in south Russia were the East Goths or Ostrogoths, and beyond these again in the Volga region the Alans. But now Mongolian peoples were forcing their way towards Europe. The Huns were already exacting tribute from the Alans and Ostrogoths and pushing them to the west.

In Asia the Roman frontiers were crumpling back under the push of a renascent Persia. This new Persia, the Persia of the Sassenid kings, was to be a vigorous and on the whole a successful rival of the Roman Empire in Asia for the next three centuries.

A glance at the map of Europe will show the reader the peculiar weakness of the empire. The river Danube comes down to within a couple of hundred miles of the Adriatic Sea in the region of what is now Bosnia and Serbia. It makes a square re-entrant angle there. The Romans never kept their sea communications in good order, and this

two hundred mile strip of land was their line of communication between the western Latin-speaking part of the empire and the eastern Greek-speaking portion. Against this square angle of the Danube the barbarian pressure was greatest. When they broke through there it was inevitable that the empire should fall into two parts.

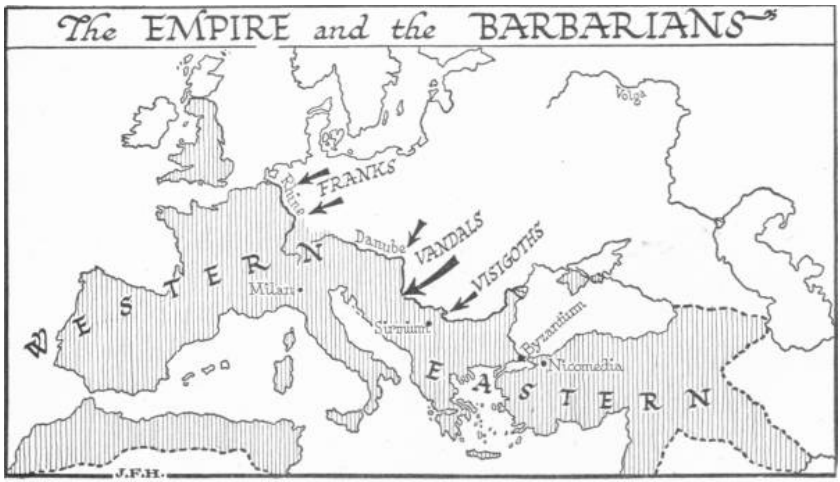

A more vigorous empire might have thrust forward and reconquered Dacia, but the Roman Empire lacked any such vigour. Constantine the Great was certainly a monarch of great devotion and intelligence. He beat back a raid of the Goths from just these vital Balkan regions, but he had no force to carry the frontier across the Danube. He was too pre-occupied with the internal weaknesses of the empire. He brought the solidarity and moral force of Christianity to revive the spirit of the declining empire, and he decided to create a new permanent capital at Byzantium upon the Hellespont. This new-made Byzantium, which was re-christened Constantinople in his honour, was still building when he died. Towards the end of his reign occurred a remarkable transaction. The Vandals, being pressed by the Goths, asked to be received into the Roman Empire. They were assigned lands in Pannonia, which is now that part of Hungary west of the Danube, and their fighting men became nominally legionaries. But these new legionaries remained under their own chiefs. Rome failed to digest them.

Constantine died working to reorganize his great realm, and soon

the frontiers were ruptured again and the Visigoths came almost to Constantinople. They defeated the Emperor Valens at Adrianople and made a settlement in what is now Bulgaria, similar to the settlement of the Vandals in Pannonia. Nominally they were subjects of the emperor, practically they were conquerors.

CONSTANTINE'S PILLAR, CONSTANTINOPLE

Photo: Sebah & Foaillier

From 379 to 395 A.D. reigned the Emperor Theodosius the Great, and while he reigned the empire was still formally intact. Over the armies of Italy and Pannonia presided Stilicho, a Vandal, over the armies in the Balkan peninsula, Alaric, a Goth. When Theodosius died at the close of the fourth century he left two sons. Alaric supported one of these, Arcadius, in Constantinople, and Stilicho the other, Honorius, in Italy. In other words Alaric and Stilicho fought for the empire with the princes as puppets. In the course of their struggle Alaric marched into Italy and after a short siege took Rome (410 A.D.).

The opening half of the fifth century saw the whole of the Roman Empire in Europe the prey of robber armies of barbarians. It is difficult to visualize the state of affairs in the world at that time. Over France, Spain, Italy and the Balkan peninsula, the great cities that had flourished under the early empire still stood, impoverished, partly depopulated and falling into decay. Life in them must have been shallow, mean and full of uncertainty. Local officials asserted their authority and went on with their work with such conscience as they had, no doubt in the name of a now remote and inaccessible emperor. The churches went on, but usually with illiterate priests. There was little reading and much superstition and fear. But everywhere except where looters had destroyed them, books and pictures and statuary and such-like works of art were still to be found.

The life of the countryside had also degenerated. Everywhere this Roman world was much more weedy and untidy than it had been. In some regions war and pestilence had brought the land down to the level of a waste. Roads and forests were infested with robbers. Into such regions the barbarians marched, with little or no opposition, and set up their chiefs as rulers, often with Roman official titles. If they were half civilized barbarians they would give the conquered districts tolerable terms, they would take possession of the towns, associate and intermarry, and acquire (with an accent) the Latin speech; but the Jutes, the Angles and Saxons who submerged the Roman province of Britain were agriculturalists and had no use for towns, they seem to

have swept south Britain clear of the Romanized population and they replaced the language by their own Teutonic dialects, which became at last English.

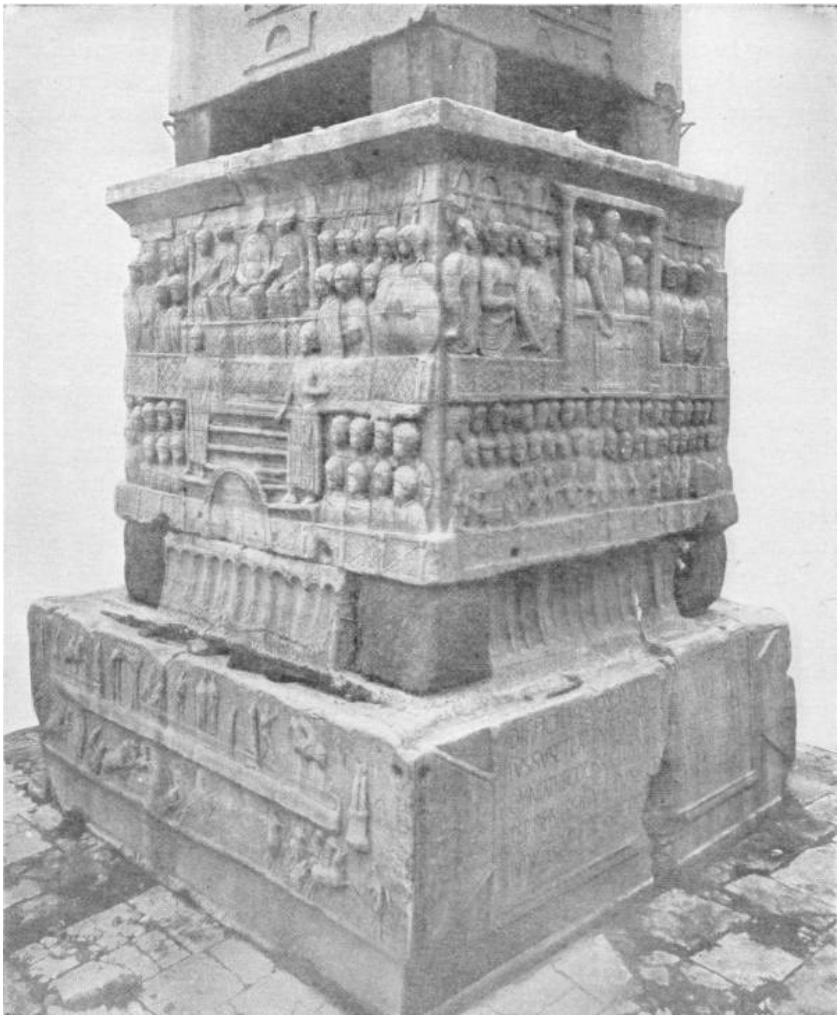

BASE OF THE “OBELISK OF THEODOSIUS,” CONSTANTINOPLE
The obelisk of Thothmes, taken from Egypt to Constantinople by Theodosius and placed upon the pedestal her shown; an interesting example of early Byzantine art. The complete obelisk is seen on page

239.
Photo: Sebah & Foaillier

It is impossible in the space at our disposal to trace the movements of all the various German and Slavonic tribes as they went to and fro in the disorganized empire in search of plunder and a pleasant home. But let the Vandals serve as an example. They came into history in east Germany. They settled as we have told in Pannonia. Thence they moved somewhen about 425 A.D. through the intervening provinces to Spain. There they found Visigoths from South Russia and other German tribes setting up dukes and kings. From Spain the Vandals under Genseric sailed for North Africa (429), captured Carthage (439), and built a fleet. They secured the mastery of the sea and captured and pillaged Rome (455), which had recovered very imperfectly from her capture and looting by Alaric half a century earlier. Then the Vandals made themselves masters of Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia and most of the other islands of the western Mediterranean. They made, in fact, a sea empire very similar in its extent to the sea empire of Carthage seven hundred odd years before. They were at the climax of their power about 477. They were a mere handful of conquerors holding all this country. In the next century almost all their territory had been reconquered for the empire of Constantinople during a transitory blaze of energy under Justinian I.

The story of the Vandals is but one sample of a host of similar adventures. But now there was coming into the European world the least kindred and most redoubtable of all these devastators, the Mongolian Huns or Tartars, a yellow people active and able, such as the western world had never before encountered.

THE HUNS AND THE END OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE

THIS appearance of a conquering Mongolian people in Europe may be taken to mark a new stage in human history. Until the last century or so before the Christian era, the Mongol and the Nordic peoples had not been in close touch. Far away in the frozen lands beyond the northern forests the Lapps, a Mongolian people, had drifted westward as far as Lapland, but they played no part in the main current of history. For thousands of years the western world carried on the dramatic interplay of the Aryan, Semitic and fundamental brunette peoples with very little interference (except for an Ethiopian invasion of Egypt or so) either from the black peoples to the south or from the Mongolian world in the far East.

It is probable that there were two chief causes for the new westward drift of the nomadic Mongolians. One was the consolidation of the great empire of China, its extension northward and the increase of its population during the prosperous period of the Han dynasty. The other was some process of climatic change; a lesser rainfall that abolished swamps and forests perhaps, or a greater rainfall that extended grazing over desert steppes, or even perhaps both these processes going on in different regions but which anyhow facilitated a westward migration. A third contributary cause was the economic wretchedness, internal decay and falling population of the Roman Empire. The rich men of the later Roman Republic, and then the tax-gatherers of the military emperors had utterly consumed its vitality. So we have the factors of thrust, means and opportunity. There was pressure from the east, rot in the west and an open road.

The Hun had reached the eastern boundaries of European Russia by the first century A.D., but it was not until the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. that these horsemen rose to predominance upon the steppes. The fifth century was the Hun's century. The first Huns to come into Italy were mercenary bands in the pay of Stilicho the Vandal, the master of Honorius. Presently they were in possession of Pannonia, the empty nest of the Vandals.

By the second quarter of the fifth century a great war chief had arisen among the Huns, Attila. We have only vague and tantalizing glimpses of his power. He ruled not only over the Huns but over a conglomerate of tributary Germanic tribes; his empire extended from the Rhine cross the plains into Central Asia. He exchanged ambassadors with China. His head camp was in the plain of Hungary east of the Danube. There he was visited by an envoy from Constantinople, Priscus, who has left us an account of his state. The way of living of these Mongols was very like the way of living of the primitive Aryans they had replaced. The common folk were in huts and tents; the chiefs lived in great stockaded timber halls. There were feasts and drinking and singing by the bards. The Homeric heroes and even the Macedonian companions of Alexander would probably have felt more at home in the camp-capital of Attila than they would have done in the cultivated and decadent court of Theodosius II, the son of Arcadius, who was then reigning in Constantinople.

For a time it seemed as though the nomads under the leadership of the Huns and Attila would play the same part towards the Græco-Roman civilization of the Mediterranean countries that the barbaric Greeks had played long ago to the Ægean civilization. It looked like history repeating itself upon a larger stage. But the Huns were much more wedded to the nomadic life than the early Greeks, who were rather migratory cattle farmers than true nomads. The Huns raided and plundered but did not settle.

For some years Attila bullied Theodosius as he chose. His armies devastated and looted right down to the walls of Constantinople, Gibbon says that he totally destroyed no less than seventy cities in the Balkan peninsula, and Theodosius bought him off by payments of tribute and tried to get rid of him for good by sending secret agents to assassinate him. In 451 Attila turned his attention to the remains of the Latin- speaking half of the empire and invaded Gaul. Nearly every town in northern Gaul was sacked. Franks, Visigoths and the imperial forces united against him and he was defeated at Troyes in a vast dispersed battle in which a multitude of men, variously estimated as between 150,000 and 300,000, were killed. This checked him in Gaul, but it did not exhaust his enormous military resources. Next year he came into Italy by way of Venetia, burnt

Aquileia and Padua and looted Milan.

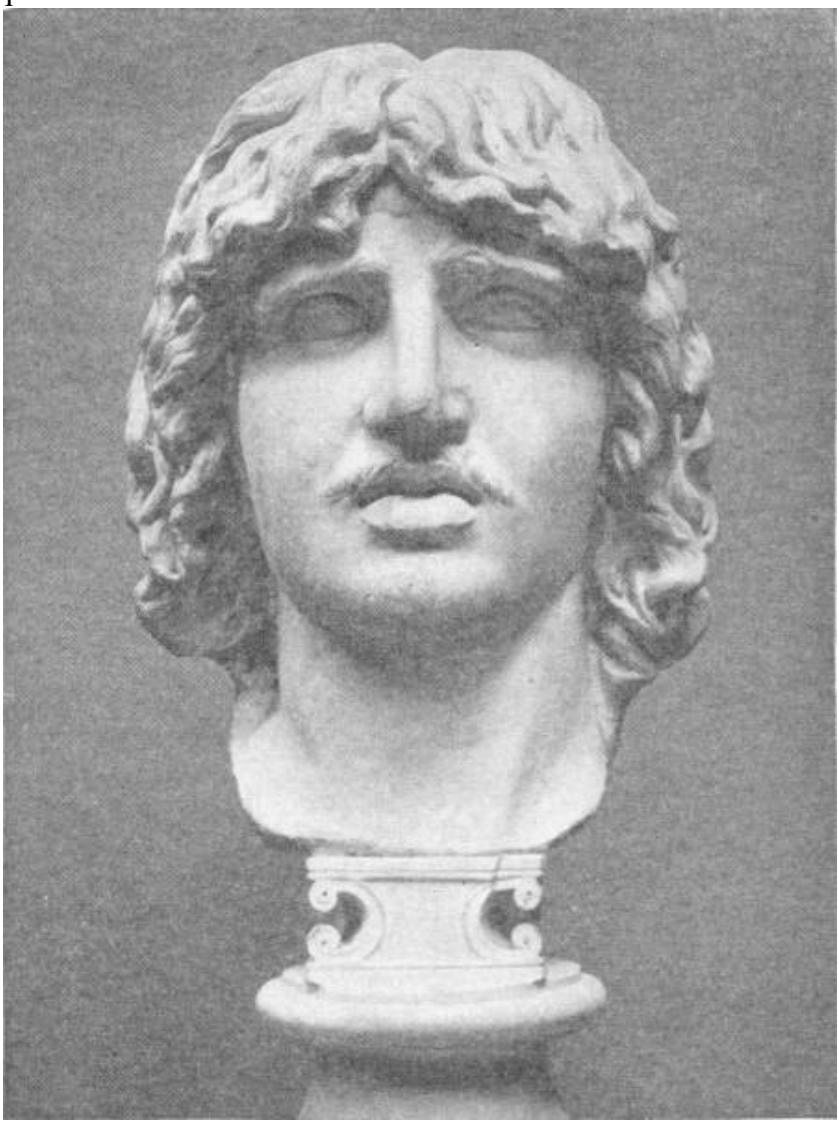

HEAD OF BARBARIAN CHIEF
(In the British Museum)

Numbers of fugitives from these north Italian towns and particularly from Padua fled to islands in the lagoons at the head of the Adriatic and laid there the foundations of the city state of Venice,

which was to become one of the greatest or the trading centres in the middle ages.

In 453 Attila died suddenly after a great feast to celebrate his marriage to a young woman, and at his death this plunder confederation of his fell to pieces. The actual Huns disappear from history, mixed into the surrounding more numerous Aryan-speaking populations. But these great Hun raids practically consummated the end of the Latin Roman Empire. After his death ten different emperors ruled in Rome in twenty years, set up by Vandal and other mercenary troops. The Vandals from Carthage took and sacked Rome in 455. Finally in 476 Odoacer, the chief of the barbarian troops, suppressed a Pannonian who was figuring as emperor under the impressive name of Romulus Augustulus, and informed the Court of Constantinople that there was no longer an emperor in the west. So ingloriously the Latin Roman Empire came to an end. In 493 Theodoric the Goth became King of Rome.

All over western and central Europe now barbarian chiefs were reigning as kings, dukes and the like, practically independent but for the most part professing some sort of shadowy allegiance to the emperor. There were hundreds and perhaps thousands of such practically independent brigand rulers. In Gaul, Spain and Italy and in Dacia the Latin speech still prevailed in locally distorted forms, but in Britain and east of the Rhine languages of the German group (or in Bohemia a Slavonic language, Czech) were the common speech. The superior clergy and a small remnant of other educated men read and wrote Latin. Everywhere life was insecure and property was held by the strong arm. Castles multiplied and roads fell into decay. The dawn of the sixth century was an age of division and of intellectual darkness throughout the western world. Had it not been for the monks and Christian missionaries Latin learning might have perished altogether.

Why had the Roman Empire grown and why had it so completely decayed? It grew because at first the idea of citizenship held it together. Throughout the days of the expanding republic, and even into the days of the early empire there remained a great number of men conscious of Roman citizenship, feeling it a privilege and an obligation to be a Roman citizen, confident of their rights under the

Roman law and willing to make sacrifices in the name of Rome. The prestige of Rome as of something just and great and law- upholding spread far beyond the Roman boundaries. But even as early as the Punic wars the sense of citizenship was being undermined by the growth of wealth and slavery. Citizenship spread indeed but not the idea of citizenship.

The Roman Empire was after all a very primitive organization; it did not educate, did not explain itself to its increasing multitudes of citizens, did not invite their co-operation in its decisions. There was no network of schools to ensure a common understanding, no distribution of news to sustain collective activity. The adventurers who struggled for power from the days of Marius and Sulla onward had no idea of creating and calling in public opinion upon the imperial affairs. The spirit of citizenship died of starvation and no one observed it die. All empires, all states, all organizations of human society are, in the ultimate, things of understanding and will. There remained no will for the Roman Empire in the World and so it came to an end.

But though the Latin-speaking Roman Empire died in the fifth century, something else had been born within it that was to avail itself enormously of its prestige and tradition, and that was the Latin-speaking half of the Catholic Church. This lived while the empire died because it appealed to the minds and wills of men, because it had books and a great system of teachers and missionaries to hold it together, things stronger than any law or legions. Throughout the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. while the empire was decaying, Christianity was spreading to a universal dominion in Europe. It conquered its conquerors, the barbarians. When Attila seemed disposed to march on Rome, the patriarch of Rome intercepted him and did what no armies could do, turning him back by sheer moral force.

The Patriarch or Pope of Rome claimed to be the head of the entire Christian church. Now that there were no more emperors, he began to annex imperial titles and claims. He took the title of *pontifex maximus*, head sacrificial priest of the Roman dominion, the most ancient of all the titles that the emperors had enjoyed.

THE BYZANTINE AND SASSANID EMPIRES

THE Greek-speaking eastern half of the Roman Empire showed much more political tenacity than the western half. It weathered the disasters of the fifth century A.D., which saw a complete and final breaking up of the original Latin Roman power. Attila bullied the Emperor Theodosius II and sacked and raided almost to the walls of Constantinople, but that city remained intact. The Nubians came down the Nile and looted Upper Egypt, but Lower Egypt and Alexandria were left still fairly prosperous. Most of Asia Minor was held against the Sassanid Persians.

The sixth century, which was an age of complete darkness for the West, saw indeed a considerable revival of the Greek power. Justinian I (527-565) was a ruler of very great ambition and energy, and he was married to the Empress Theodora, a woman of quite equal capacity who had begun life as an actress. Justinian reconquered North Africa from the Vandals and most of Italy from the Goths. He even regained the south of Spain. He did not limit his energies to naval and military enterprises. He founded a university, built the great church of Sta. Sophia in Constantinople and codified the Roman law. But in order to destroy a rival to his university foundation he closed the schools of philosophy in Athens, which had been going on in unbroken continuity from the days of Plato, that is to say for nearly a thousand years.

From the third century onwards the Persian Empire had been the steadfast rival of the Byzantine. The two empires kept Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt in a state of perpetual unrest and waste. In the first century A.D., these lands were still at a high level of civilization, wealthy and with an abundant population, but the continual coming and going of armies, massacres, looting and war taxation wore them down steadily until only shattered and ruinous cities remained upon a countryside of scattered peasants. In this melancholy process of impoverishment and disorder lower Egypt fared perhaps less badly than the rest of the world. Alexandria, like Constantinople, continued a dwindling trade between the east and the west.

THE CHURCH (NOW A MOSQUE) OF S. SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE
The obelisk of Theodosius in in the foreground statue on left
Photo: Sebah & Foaillier

Science and political philosophy seemed dead now in both these warring and decaying empires. The last philosophers of Athens, until their suppression, preserved the texts of the great literature of the past with an infinite reverence and want of understanding. But there remained no class of men in the world, no free gentlemen with bold and independent habits of thought, to carry on the tradition of frank statement and enquiry embodied in these writings. The social and political chaos accounts largely for the disappearance of this class, but there was also another reason why the human intelligence was sterile and feverish during this age. In both Persia and Byzantium it was all age of intolerance. Both empires were religious empires in a new way, in a way that greatly hampered the free activities of the human mind.

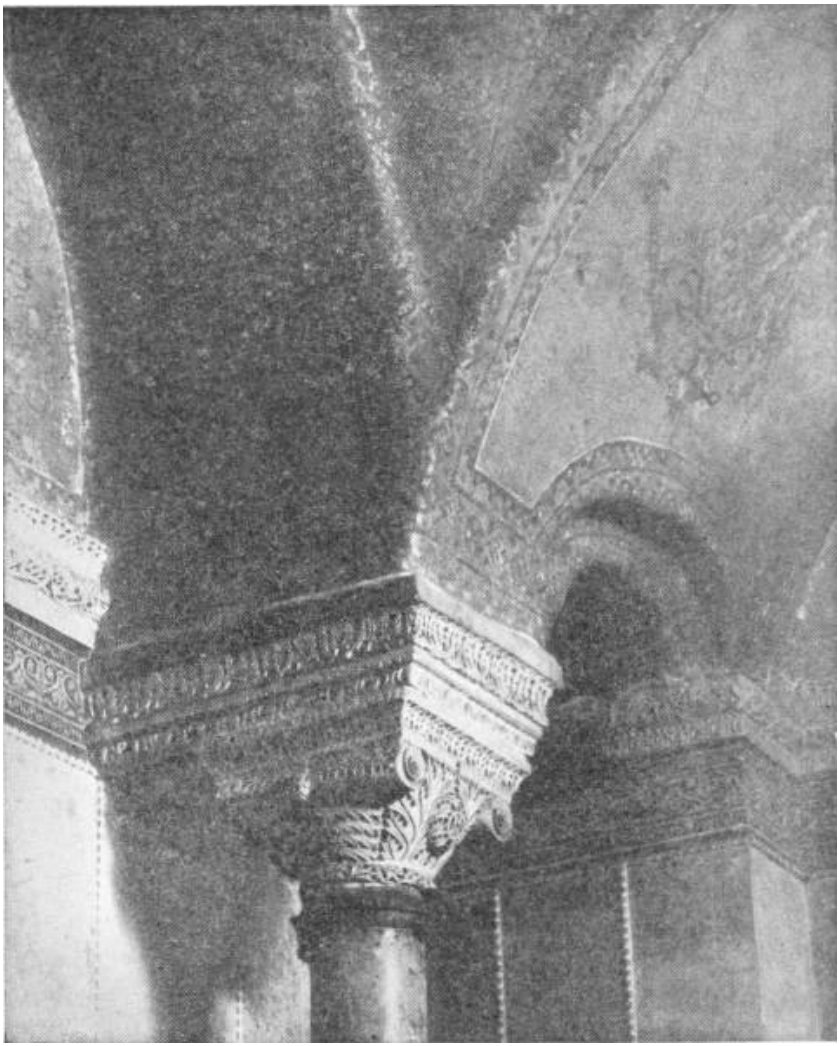

THE MAGNIFICENT ROOF-WORK IN S. SOPHIA
Photo: Sebah & Foaillier

Of course the oldest empires in the world were religious empires, centring upon the worship of a god or of a god-king. Alexander was treated as a divinity and the Cæsars were gods in so much as they had altars and temples devoted to them and the offering of incense was made a test of loyalty to the Roman state. But these older religions were essentially religions of act and fact. They did not

invade the mind. If a man offered his sacrifice and bowed to the god, he was left not only to think but to say practically whatever he liked about the affair. But the new sort of religions that had come into the world, and particularly Christianity, turned inward. These new faiths demanded not simply conformity but understanding belief. Naturally fierce controversy ensued upon the exact meaning of the things believed. These new religions were creed religions. The world was confronted with a new word, Orthodoxy, and with a stern resolve to keep not only acts but speech and private thought within the limits of a set teaching. For to hold a wrong opinion, much more to convey it to other people, was no longer regarded as an intellectual defect but a moral fault that might condemn a soul to everlasting destruction.

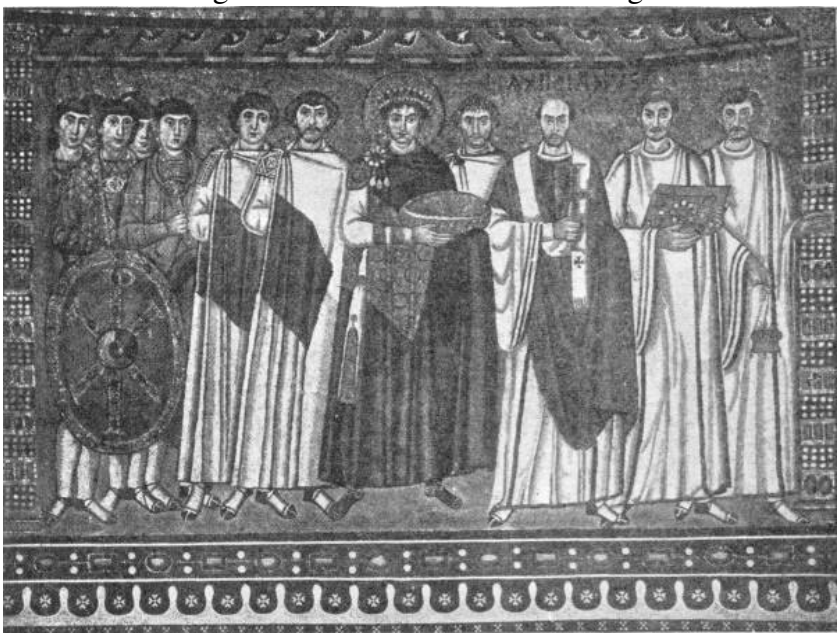

THE RAVENNA PANEL, DEPICTING JUSTINIAN AND HIS COURT
Photo: Alinari

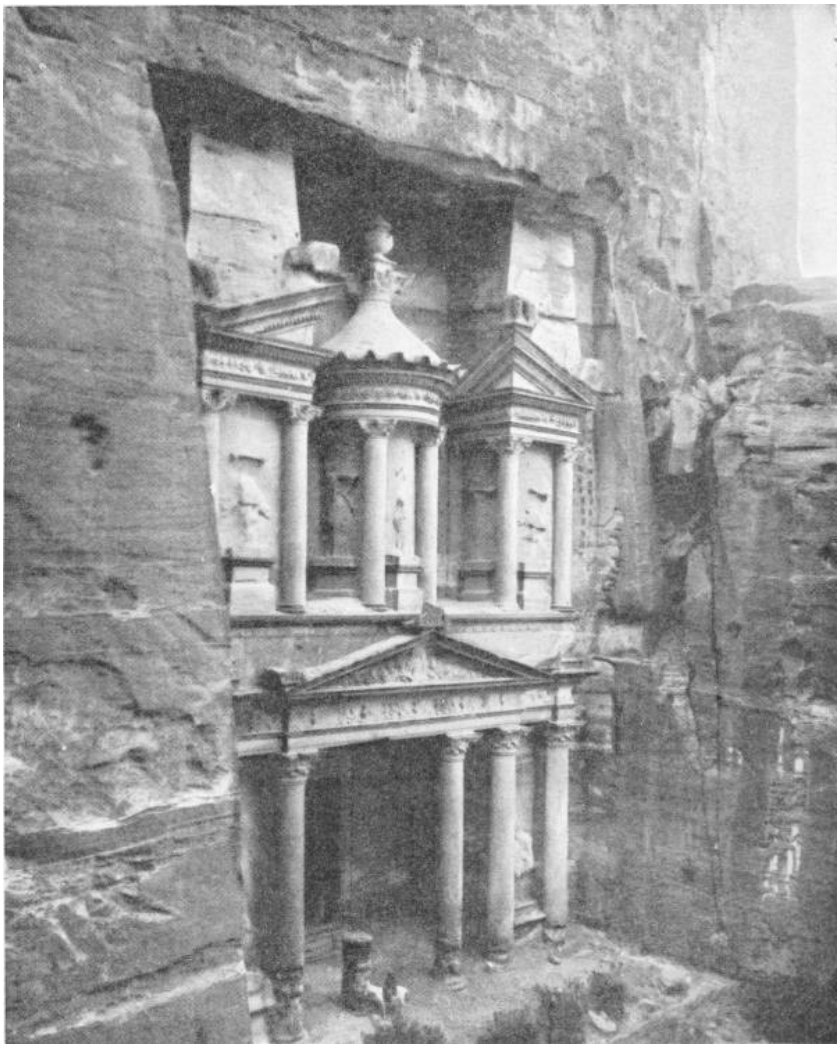

THE ROCK HEWN TEMPLE AT PETRA
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

Both Ardashir I who founded the Sassanid dynasty in the third century A.D., and Constantine the Great who reconstructed the Roman Empire in the fourth, turned to religious organizations for help, because in these organizations they saw a new means of using and controlling the wills of men. And already before the end of the fourth century both empires were persecuting free talk and religious

innovation. In Persia Ardashir found the ancient Persian religion of Zoroaster (or Zarathushtra) with its priests and temples and a sacred fire that burnt upon its altars, ready for his purpose as a state religion. Before the end of the third century Zoroastrianism was persecuting Christianity, and in 277 A.D. Mani, the founder of a new faith, the Manichæans, was crucified and his body flayed. Constantinople, on its side, was busy hunting out Christian heresies. Manichæan ideas infected Christianity and had to be fought with the fiercest methods; in return ideas from Christianity affected the purity of the Zoroastrian doctrine. All ideas became suspect. Science, which demands before all things the free action of an untroubled mind, suffered a complete eclipse throughout this phase of intolerance.

War, the bitterest theology, and the usual vices of mankind constituted Byzantine life of those days. It was picturesque, it was romantic; it had little sweetness or light. When Byzantium and Persia were not fighting the barbarians from the north, they wasted Asia Minor and Syria in dreary and destructive hostilities. Even in close alliance these two empires would have found it a hard task to turn back the barbarians and recover their prosperity. The Turks or Tartars first come into history as the allies first of one power and then of another. In the sixth century the two chief antagonists were Justinian and Chosroes I; in the opening of the seventh the Emperor Heraclius was pitted against Chosroes II (580).

At first and until after Heraclius had become Emperor (610) Chosroes II carried all before him. He took Antioch, Damascus and Jerusalem and his armies reached Chalcedon, which is in Asia Minor over against Constantinople. In 619 he conquered Egypt. Then Heraclius pressed a counter attack home and routed a Persian army at Nineveh (627), although at that time there were still Persian troops at Chalcedon. In 628 Chosroes II was deposed and murdered by his son, Kavadh, and an inconclusive peace was made between the two exhausted empires.

Byzantium and Persia had fought their last war. But few people as yet dreamt of the storm that was even then gathering in the deserts to put an end for ever to this aimless, chronic struggle.

While Heraclius was restoring order in Syria a message reached him. It had been brought in to the imperial outpost at Bostra south of

Damascus; it was in Arabic, an obscure Semitic desert language, and it was read to the Emperor, if it reached him at all, by an interpreter. It was from someone who called himself "Muhammad the Prophet of God." It called upon the Emperor to acknowledge the One True God and to serve him. What the Emperor said is not recorded.

A similar message came to Kavadh at Ctesiphon. He was annoyed, tore up the letter, and bade the messenger begone.

This Muhammad, it appeared, was a Bedouin leader whose headquarters were in the mean little desert town of Medina. He was preaching a new religion of faith in the One True God.

"Even so, O Lord!" he said; "rend thou his Kingdom from Kavadh."

XLII

THE DYNASTIES OF SUY AND TANG IN CHINA

THROUGHOUT the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, there was a steady drift of Mongolian peoples westward. The Huns of Attila were merely precursors of this advance, which led at last to the establishment of Mongolian peoples in Finland, Esthonia, Hungary and Bulgaria, where their descendants, speaking languages akin to Turkish, survive to this day. The Mongolian nomads were, in fact, playing a role towards the Aryanized civilizations of Europe and Persia and India that the Aryans had played to the Ægean and Semitic civilizations ten or fifteen centuries before.

In Central Asia the Turkish peoples had taken root in what is now Western Turkestan, and Persia already employed many Turkish officials and Turkish mercenaries. The Parthians had gone out of history, absorbed into the general population of Persia. There were no more Aryan nomads in the history of Central Asia; Mongolian people had replaced them. The Turks became masters of Asia from China to the Caspian.

The same great pestilence at the end of the second century A.D. that had shattered the Roman Empire had overthrown the Han dynasty in China. Then came a period of division and of Hunnish conquests from which China arose refreshed, more rapidly and more completely than Europe was destined to do. Before the end of the sixth century China was reunited under the Suy dynasty, and this by the time of Heraclius gave place to the Tang dynasty, whose reign marks another great period of prosperity for China.

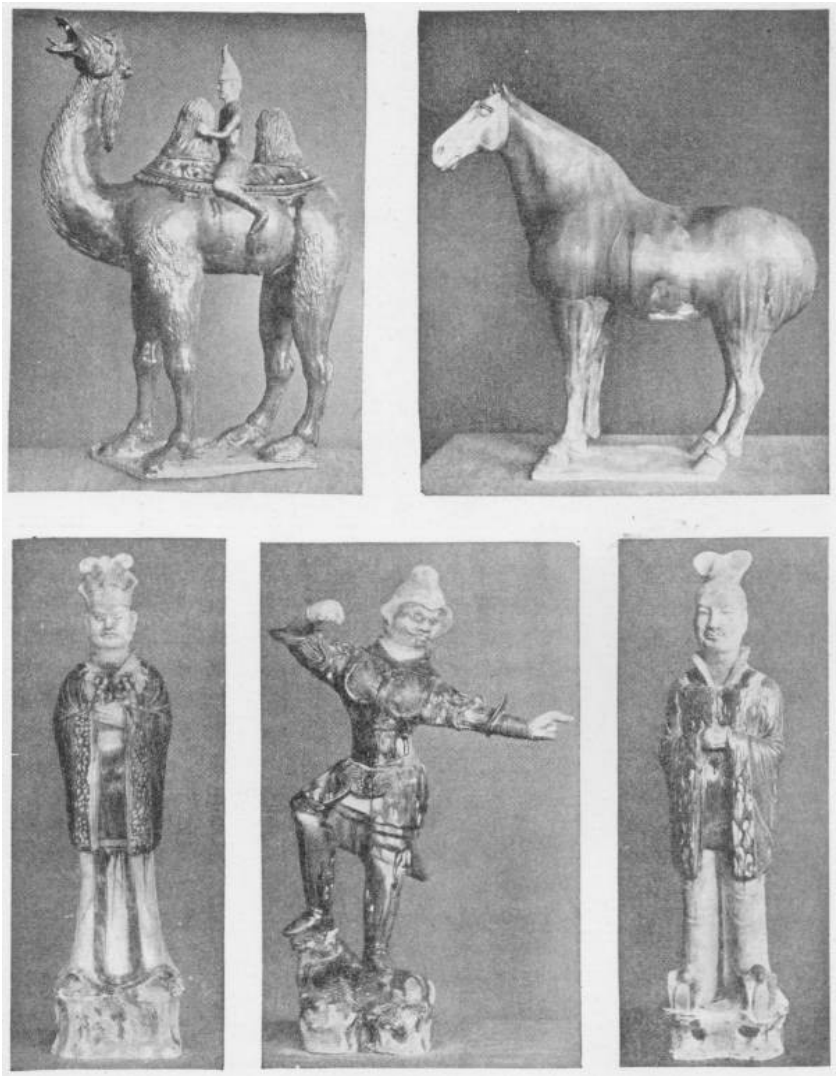

CHINESE EARTHENWARE ART OF THE TANG DYNASTY, 616-906
Specimens in glazed earthenware, in brown, green and buff, discovered in tombs in China
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

Throughout the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries China was the most secure and civilized country in the world. The Han dynasty had

extended her boundaries in the north; the Suy and Tang dynasties now spread her civilization to the south, and China began to assume the proportions she has to-day. In Central Asia indeed she reached much further, extending at last, through tributary Turkish tribes, to Persia and the Caspian Sea.

The new China that had arisen was a very different land from the old China of the Hans. A new and more vigorous literary school appeared, there was a great poetic revival; Buddhism had revolutionized philosophical and religious thought. There were great advances in artistic work, in technical skill and in all the amenities of life. Tea was first used, paper manufactured and wood-block printing began. Millions of people indeed were leading orderly, graceful and kindly lives in China during these centuries when the attenuated populations of Europe and Western Asia were living either in hovels, small walled cities or grim robber fortresses. While the mind of the west was black with theological obsessions, the mind of China was open and tolerant and enquiring.

One of the earliest monarchs of the Tang dynasty was Tai- tsung, who began to reign in 627, the year of the victory of Heraclius at Nineveh. He received an embassy from Heraclius, who was probably seeking an ally in the rear of Persia. From Persia itself came a party of Christian missionaries (635). They were allowed to explain their creed to Tai-tsung and he examined a Chinese translation of their Scriptures. He pronounced this strange religion acceptable, and gave permission for the foundation of a church and monastery.

To this monarch also (in 628) came messengers from Muhammad. They came to Canton on a trading ship. They had sailed the whole way from Arabia along the Indian coasts. Unlike Heraclius and Kavadh, Tai-Tsung gave these envoys a courteous hearing. He expressed his interest in their theological ideas and assisted them to build a mosque in Canton, a mosque which survives, it is said, to this day, the oldest mosque in the world.

MUHAMMAD AND ISLAM

A PROPHETIC amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell under Mongolian domination. There were no signs of order or union in Western Europe, and the Byzantine and Persian Empires were manifestly bent upon a mutual destruction. India also was divided and wasted. On the other hand China was a steadily expanding empire which probably at that time exceeded all Europe in population, and the Turkish people who were growing to power in Central Asia were disposed to work in accord with China. And such a prophecy would not have been an altogether vain one. A time was to come in the thirteenth century when a Mongolian overlord would rule from the Danube to the Pacific, and Turkish dynasties were destined to reign over the entire Byzantine and Persian Empires, over Egypt and most of India.

Where our prophet would have been most likely to have erred would have been in under-estimating the recuperative power of the Latin end of Europe and in ignoring the latent forces of the Arabian desert. Arabia would have seemed what it had been for times immemorial, the refuge of small and bickering nomadic tribes. No Semitic people had founded an empire now for more than a thousand years.

Then suddenly the Bedouin flared out for a brief century of splendour. They spread their rule and language from Spain to the boundaries of China. They gave the world a new culture. They created a religion that is still to this day one of the most vital forces in the world.

The man who fired this Arab flame appears first in history as the young husband of the widow of a rich merchant of the town of Mecca, named Muhammad. Until he was forty he did very little to distinguish himself in the world. He seems to have taken considerable interest in religious discussion. Mecca was a pagan city at that time worshipping in particular a black stone, the Kaaba, of great repute throughout all Arabia and a centre of pilgrimages; but

there were great numbers of Jews in the country — indeed all the southern portion of Arabia professed the Jewish faith — and there were Christian churches in Syria.

About forty Muhammad began to develop prophetic characteristics like those of the Hebrew prophets twelve hundred years before him. He talked first to his wife of the One True God, and of the rewards and punishments of virtue and wickedness. There can be no doubt that his thoughts were very strongly influenced by Jewish and Christian ideas. He gathered about him a small circle of believers and presently began to preach in the town against the prevalent idolatry. This made him extremely unpopular with his fellow townsmen because the pilgrimages to the Kaaba were the chief source of such prosperity as Mecca enjoyed. He became bolder and more definite in his teaching, declaring himself to be the last chosen prophet of God entrusted with a mission to perfect religion. Abraham, he declared, and Jesus Christ were his forerunners. He had been chosen to complete and perfect the revelation of God's will.

He produced verses which he said had been communicated to him by an angel, and he had a strange vision in which he was taken up through the Heavens to God and instructed in his mission.

AT PRAYER IN THE DESERT

Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

As his teaching increased in force the hostility of his fellow townsmen increased also. At last a plot was made to kill him; but he escaped with his faithful friend and disciple, Abu Bekr, to the friendly town of Medina which adopted his doctrine. Hostilities followed between Mecca and Medina which ended at last in a treaty. Mecca was to adopt the worship of the One True God and accept Muhammad as his prophet, *but the adherents of the new faith were still to make the pilgrimage to Mecca* just as they had done when they were pagans. So Muhammad established the One True God in Mecca without injuring its pilgrim traffic. In 629 Muhammad returned to Mecca as its master, a year after he had sent out these envoys of his to Heraclius, Tai-tsung, Kavadh and all the rulers of the earth.

LOOKING ACROSS THE SEA OF SAND
Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

Then for four years more until his death in 632, Muhammad spread his power over the rest of Arabia. He married a number of wives in his declining years, and his life on the whole was by modern standards unedifying. He seems to have been a man compounded of very considerable vanity, greed, cunning, self-deception and quite sincere religious passion. He dictated a book of injunctions and expositions, the Koran, which he declared was communicated to him from God. Regarded as literature or philosophy the Koran is certainly

unworthy of its alleged Divine authorship.

Yet when the manifest defects of Muhammad's life and writings have been allowed for, there remains in Islam, this faith he imposed upon the Arabs, much power and inspiration. One is its uncompromising monotheism; its simple enthusiastic faith in the rule and fatherhood of God and its freedom from theological complications. Another is its complete detachment from the sacrificial priest and the temple. It is an entirely prophetic religion, proof against any possibility of relapse towards blood sacrifices. In the Koran the limited and ceremonial nature of the pilgrimage to Mecca is stated beyond the possibility of dispute, and every precaution was taken by Muhammad to prevent the deification of himself after his death. And a third element of strength lay in the insistence of Islam upon the perfect brotherhood and equality before God of all believers, whatever their colour, origin or status.

These are the things that made Islam a power in human affairs. It has been said that the true founder of the Empire of Islam was not so much Muhammad as his friend and helper, Abu Bekr. If Muhammad, with his shifty character, was the mind and imagination of primitive Islam, Abu Bekr was its conscience and its will. Whenever Muhammad wavered Abu Bekr sustained him. And when Muhammad died, Abu Bekr became Caliph (= successor), and with that faith that moves mountains, he set himself simply and sanely to organize the subjugation of the whole world to Allah — with little armies of 3,000 or 4,000 Arabs — according to those letters the prophet had written from Medina in 628 to all the monarchs of the world.

THE GREAT DAYS OF THE ARABS

THERE follows the most amazing story of conquest in the whole history of our race. The Byzantine army was smashed at the battle of the Yarmuk (a tributary of the Jordan) in 634; and the Emperor Heraclius, his energy sapped by dropsy and his resources exhausted by the Persian war, saw his new conquests in Syria, Damascus, Palmyra, Antioch, Jerusalem and the rest fall almost without resistance to the Moslim. Large elements in the population went over to Islam. Then the Moslim turned east. The Persians had found an able general in Rustam; they had a great host with a force of elephants; and for three days they fought the Arabs at Kadessia (637) and broke at last in headlong rout.

The conquest of all Persia followed, and the Moslem Empire pushed far into Western Turkestan and eastward until it met the Chinese. Egypt fell almost without resistance to the new conquerors, who full of a fanatical belief in the sufficiency of the Koran, wiped out the vestiges of the book-copying industry of the Alexandria Library. The tide of conquest poured along the north coast of Africa to the Straits of Gibraltar and Spain. Spain was invaded in 710 and the Pyrenees Mountains were reached in 720. In 732 the Arab advance had reached the centre of France, but here it was stopped for good at the battle of Poitiers and thrust back as far as the Pyrenees again. The conquest of Egypt had given the Moslim a fleet, and for a time it looked as though they would take Constantinople. They made repeated sea attacks between 672 and 718 but the great city held out against them.

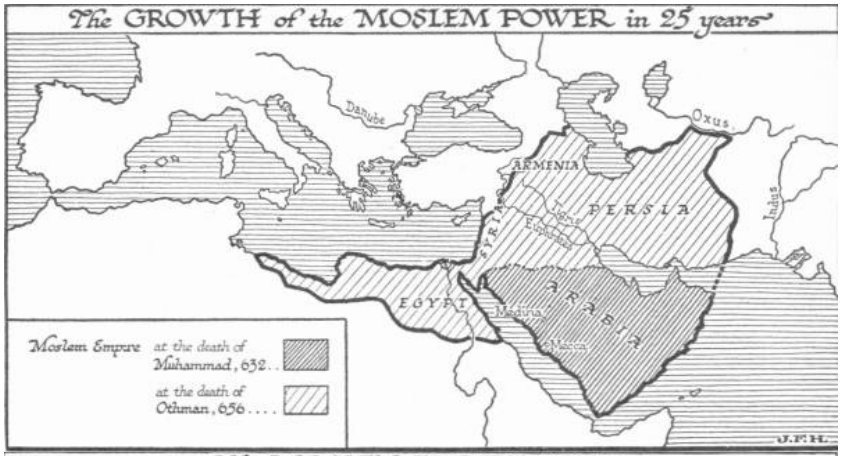

The Arabs had little political aptitude and no political experience, and this great empire with its capital now at Damascus, which stretched from Spain to China, was destined to break up very speedily. From the very beginning doctrinal differences undermined its unity. But our interest here lies not with the story of its political disintegration but with its effect upon the human mind and upon the general destinies of our race. The Arab intelligence had been flung across the world even more swiftly and dramatically than had the Greek a thousand years before. The intellectual stimulation of the whole world west of China, the break-up of old ideas and development of new ones, was enormous.

In Persia this fresh excited Arabic mind came into contact not only with Manichæan, Zoroastrian and Christian doctrine, but with the scientific Greek literature, preserved not only in Greek but in

Syrian translations. It found Greek learning in Egypt also. Everywhere, and particularly in Spain, it discovered an active Jewish tradition of speculation and discussion. In Central Asia it met Buddhism and the material achievements of Chinese civilization. It learnt the manufacture of paper — which made printed books possible — from the Chinese. And finally it came into touch with Indian mathematics and philosophy.

JERUSALEM, SHOWING THE MOSQUE OF OMAR
Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

Very speedily the intolerant self-sufficiency of the early days of faith, which made the Koran seem the only possible book, was dropped. Learning sprang up everywhere in the footsteps of the Arab conquerors. By the eighth century there was an educational organization throughout the whole "Arabized" world. In the ninth learned men in the schools of Cordoba in Spain were corresponding with learned men in Cairo, Bagdad, Bokhara and Samarkand. The Jewish mind assimilated very readily with the Arab, and for a time the two Semitic races worked together through the medium of

Arabic. Long after the political break-up and enfeeblement of the Arabs, this intellectual community of the Arab-speaking world endured. It was still producing very considerable results in the thirteenth century.

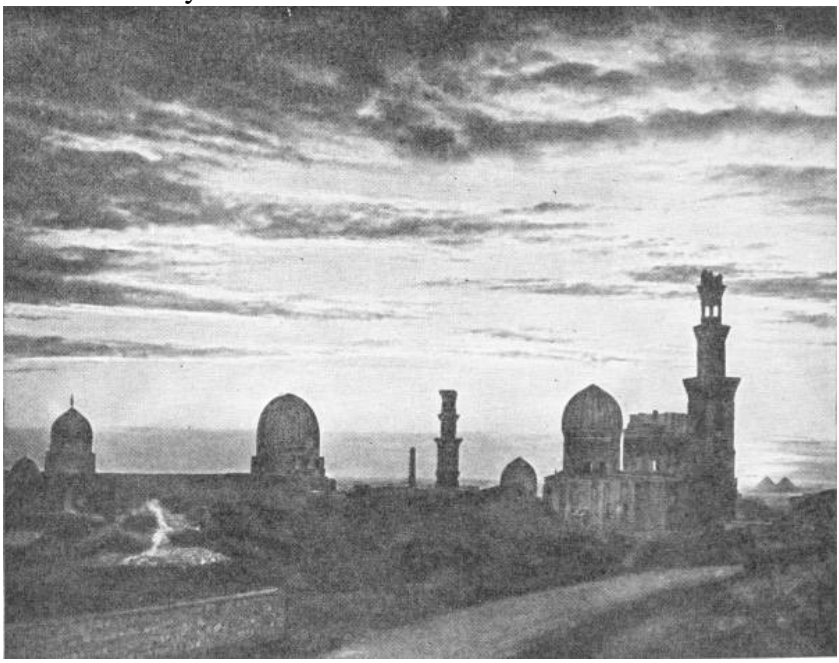

VIEW OF CAIRO MOSQUES
Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

So it was that the systematic accumulation and criticism of facts which was first begun by the Greeks was resumed in this astonishing renascence of the Semitic world. The seed of Aristotle and the museum of Alexandria that had lain so long inactive and neglected now germinated and began to grow towards fruition. Very great advances were made in mathematical, medical and physical science. The clumsy Roman numerals were ousted by the Arabic figures we use to this day and the zero sign was first employed. The very name algebra is Arabic. So is the word chemistry. The names of such stars as Algol, Aldebaran and Boötes preserve the traces of Arab conquests in the sky. Their philosophy was destined to reanimate the medieval philosophy of France and Italy and the whole Christian

world.

The Arab experimental chemists were called alchemists, and they were still sufficiently barbaric in spirit to keep their methods and results secret as far as possible. They realized from the very beginning what enormous advantages their possible discoveries might give them, and what far-reaching consequences they might have on human life. They came upon many metallurgical and technical devices of the utmost value, alloys and dyes, distilling, tinctures and essences, optical glass; but the two chief ends they sought, they sought in vain. One was "the philosopher's stone" — a means of changing the metallic elements one into another and so getting a control of artificial gold, and the other was the *elixir vitæ*, a stimulant that would revivify age and prolong life indefinitely. The crabbed patient experimenting of these Arab alchemists spread into the Christian world. The fascination of their enquiries spread. Very gradually the activities of these alchemists became more social and co-operative. They found it profitable to exchange and compare ideas. By insensible gradations the last of the alchemists became the first of the experimental philosophers.

The old alchemists sought the philosopher's stone which was to transmute base metals to gold, and an elixir of immortality; they found the methods of modern experimental science which promise in the end to give man illimitable power over the world and over his own destiny.

XLV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LATIN CHRISTENDOM

IT is worth while to note the extremely shrunken dimensions of the share of the world remaining under Aryan control in the seventh and eighth centuries. A thousand years before, the Aryan-speaking races were triumphant over all the civilized world west of China. Now the Mongol had thrust as far as Hungary, nothing of Asia remained under Aryan rule except the Byzantine dominions in Asia Minor, and all Africa was lost and nearly all Spain. The great Hellenic world had shrunken to a few possessions round the nucleus of the trading city of Constantinople, and the memory of the Roman world was kept alive by the Latin of the western Christian priests. In vivid contrast to this tale of retrogression, the Semitic tradition had risen again from subjugation and obscurity after a thousand years of darkness.

Yet the vitality of the Nordic peoples was not exhausted. Confined now to Central and North-Western Europe and terribly muddled in their social and political ideas, they were nevertheless building up gradually and steadily a new social order and preparing unconsciously for the recovery of a power even more extensive than that they had previously enjoyed.

We have told how at the beginning of the sixth century there remained no central government in Western Europe at all. That world was divided up among numbers of local rulers holding their own as they could. This was too insecure a state of affairs to last; a system of co-operation and association grew up in this disorder, the feudal system, which has left its traces upon European life up to the present time. This feudal system was a sort of crystallization of society about power. Everywhere the lone man felt insecure and was prepared to barter a certain amount of his liberty for help and protection. He sought a stronger man as his lord and protector; he gave him military services and paid him dues, and in return he was confirmed in his possession of what was his. His lord again found safety in vassalage to a still greater lord. Cities also found it convenient to have feudal protectors, and monasteries and church estates bound themselves by

similar ties. No doubt in many cases allegiance was claimed before it was offered; the system grew downward as well as upward. So a sort of pyramidal system grew up, varying widely in different localities, permitting at first a considerable play of violence and private warfare but making steadily for order and a new reign of law. The pyramids grew up until some became recognizable as kingdoms. Already by the early sixth century a Frankish kingdom existed under its founder Clovis in what is now France and the Netherlands, and presently Visigothic and Lombard and Gothic kingdoms were in existence.

The Moslim when they crossed the Pyrenees in 720 found this Frankish kingdom under the practical rule of Charles Martel, the Mayor of the Palace of a degenerate descendant of Clovis, and experienced the decisive defeat of Poitiers (732) at his hands. This Charles Martel was practically overlord of Europe north of the Alps from the Pyrenees to Hungary. He ruled over a multitude of subordinate lords speaking French- Latin, and High and Low German languages. His son Pepin extinguished the last descendants of Clovis and took the kingly state and title. His grandson Charlemagne, who began to reign in 768, found himself lord of a realm so large that he could think of reviving the title of Latin Emperor. He conquered North Italy and made himself master of Rome.

Approaching the story of Europe as we do from the wider horizons of a world history we can see much more distinctly than the mere nationalist historian how cramping and disastrous this tradition of the Latin Roman Empire was. A narrow intense struggle for this phantom predominance was to consume European energy for more than a thousand years. Through all that period it is possible to trace certain unquenchable antagonisms; they run through the wits of Europe like the obsessions of a demented mind. One driving force was this ambition of successful rulers, which Charlemagne (Charles the Great) embodied, to become Cæsar. The realm of Charlemagne consisted of a complex of feudal German states at various stages of barbarism. West of the Rhine, most of these German peoples had learnt to speak various Latinized dialects which fused at last to form French. East of the Rhine, the racially similar German peoples did not lose their German speech. On account of this, communication was difficult between these two groups of barbarian conquerors and a

split easily brought about. The split was made the more easy by the fact that the Frankish usage made it seem natural to divide the empire of Charlemagne among his sons at his death. So one aspect of the history of Europe from the days of Charlemagne onwards is a history of first this monarch and his family and then that, struggling to a precarious headship of the kings, princes, dukes, bishops and cities of Europe, while a steadily deepening antagonism between the French and German speaking elements develops in the medley. There was a formality of election for each emperor; and the climax of his ambition was to struggle to the possession of that worn-out, misplaced capital Rome and to a coronation there.

The next factor in the European political disorder was the resolve of the Church at Rome to make no temporal prince but the Pope of Rome himself emperor in effect. He was already pontifex maximus; for all practical purposes he held the decaying city; if he had no armies he had at least a vast propaganda organization in his priests throughout the whole Latin world; if he had little power over men's bodies he held the keys of heaven and hell in their imaginations and could exercise much influence upon their souls. So throughout the middle ages while one prince manœuvred against another first for equality, then for ascendancy, and at last for the supreme prize, the Pope of Rome, sometimes boldly, sometimes craftily, sometimes feebly — for the Popes were a succession of oldish men and the average reign of a Pope was not more than two years — manœuvred for the submission of all the princes to himself as the ultimate overlord of Christendom.

But these antagonisms of prince against prince and of Emperor against Pope do not by any means exhaust the factors of the European confusion. There was still an Emperor in Constantinople speaking Greek and claiming the allegiance of all Europe. When Charlemagne sought to revive the empire, it was merely the Latin end of the empire he revived. It was natural that a sense of rivalry between Latin Empire and Greek Empire should develop very readily. And still more readily did the rivalry of Greek-speaking Christianity and the newer Latin-speaking version develop. The Pope of Rome claimed to be the successor of St. Peter, the chief of the apostles of Christ, and the head of the Christian community

everywhere. Neither the emperor nor the patriarch in Constantinople were disposed to acknowledge this claim. A dispute about a fine point in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity consummated a long series of dissensions in a final rupture in 1054. The Latin Church and the Greek Church became and remained thereafter distinct and frankly antagonistic. This antagonism must be added to the others in our estimate of the conflicts that wasted Latin Christendom in the middle ages.

STATUE OF CHARLEMAGNE IN FRONT OF NOTRE DAME, PARIS
The figure is entirely imaginary and romantic. There is no contemporary portrait of Charlemagne
Photo: Rischgitz

Upon this divided world of Christendom rained the blows of three sets of antagonists. About the Baltic and North Seas remained a series of Nordic tribes who were only very slowly and reluctantly Christianized; these were the Northmen. They had taken to the sea and piracy, and were raiding all the Christian coasts down to Spain. They had pushed up the Russian rivers to the desolate central lands and brought their shipping over into the south-flowing rivers. They had come out upon the Caspian and Black Seas as pirates also. They set up principalities in Russia; they were the first people to be called Russians. These Northmen Russians came near to taking Constantinople. England in the early ninth century was a Christianized Low German country under a king, Egbert, a protégé and pupil of Charlemagne. The Northmen wrested half the kingdom from his successor Alfred the Great (886), and finally under Canute (1016) made themselves masters of the whole land. Under Rolph the Ganger (912) another band of Northmen conquered the north of France, which became Normandy.

Canute ruled not only over England but over Norway and Denmark, but his brief empire fell to pieces at his death through that political weakness of the barbaric peoples — division among a ruler's sons. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if this temporary union of the Northmen had endured. They were a race of astonishing boldness and energy. They sailed in their galleys even to Iceland and Greenland. They were the first Europeans to land on American soil. Later on Norman adventurers were to recover Sicily from the Saracens and sack Rome. It is a fascinating thing to imagine what a great northern sea-faring power might have grown out of Canute's kingdom, reaching from America to Russia.

To the east of the Germans and Latinized Europeans was a medley of Slav tribes and Turkish peoples. Prominent among these were the Magyars or Hungarians who were coming westward throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. Charlemagne held them for a time, but after his death they established themselves in what is now Hungary; and after the fashion of their kindred predecessors, the Huns, raided every summer into the settled parts of Europe. In 938 they went through Germany into France, crossed the Alps into North Italy, and so came home, burning, robbing and destroying.

Finally pounding away from the south at the vestiges of the Roman Empire were the Saracens. They had made themselves largely masters of the sea; their only formidable adversaries upon the water were the Northmen, the Russian Northmen out of the Black Sea and the Northmen of the west.

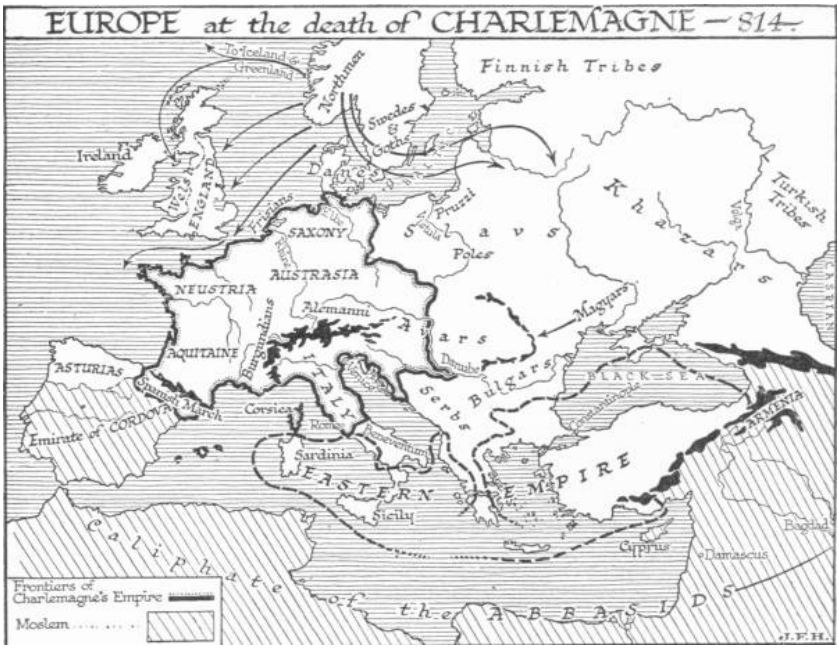

Hemmed in by these more vigorous and aggressive peoples, amidst forces they did not understand and dangers they could not estimate, Charlemagne and after him a series of other ambitious spirits took up the futile drama of restoring the Western Empire under the name of the Holy Roman Empire. From the time of Charlemagne onward this idea obsessed the political life of Western Europe, while in the East the Greek half of the Roman power decayed and dwindled until at last nothing remained of it at all but the corrupt trading city of Constantinople and a few miles of territory about it. Politically the continent of Europe remained traditional and uncreative from the time of Charlemagne onward for a thousand years.

The name of Charlemagne looms large in European history but his personality is but indistinctly seen. He could not read nor write, but he had a considerable respect for learning; he liked to be read

aloud to at meals and he had a weakness for theological discussion. At his winter quarters at Aix-la- Chapelle or Mayence he gathered about him a number of learned men and picked up much from their conversation. In the summer he made war, against the Spanish Saracens, against the Slavs and Magyars, against the Saxons, and other still heathen German tribes. It is doubtful whether the idea of becoming Cæsar in succession to Romulus Augustulus occurred to him before his acquisition of North Italy, or whether it was suggested to him by Pope Leo III, who was anxious to make the Latin Church independent of Constantinople.

There were the most extraordinary manœuvres at Rome between the Pope and the prospective emperor in order to make it appear or not appear as if the Pope gave him the imperial crown. The Pope succeeded in crowning his visitor and conqueror by surprise in St. Peter's on Christmas Day 800 A.D. He produced a crown, put it on the head of Charlemagne and hailed him Cæsar and Augustus. There was great applause among the people. Charlemagne was by no means pleased at the way in which the thing was done, it rankled in his mind as a defeat; and he left the most careful instructions to his son that he was not to let the Pope crown him emperor; he was to seize the crown into his own hands and put it on his own head himself. So at the very outset of this imperial revival we see beginning the age-long dispute of Pope and Emperor for priority. But Louis the Pious, the son of Charlemagne, disregarded his father's instructions and was entirely submissive to the Pope.

The empire of Charlemagne fell apart at the death of Louis the Pious and the split between the French-speaking Franks and the German-speaking Franks widened. The next emperor to arise was Otto, the son of a certain Henry the Fowler, a Saxon, who had been elected King of Germany by an assembly of German princes and prelates in 919. Otto descended upon Rome and was crowned emperor there in 962. This Saxon line came to an end early in the eleventh century and gave place to other German rulers. The feudal princes and nobles to the west who spoke various French dialects did not fall under the sway of these German emperors after the Carlovingian line, the line that is descended from Charlemagne, had come to an end, and no part of Britain ever came into the Holy

Roman Empire. The Duke of Normandy, the King of France and a number of lesser feudal rulers remained outside. In 987 the Kingdom of France passed out of the possession of the Carlovingian line into the hands of Hugh Capet, whose descendants were still reigning in the eighteenth century. At the time of Hugh Capet the King of France ruled only a comparatively small territory round Paris.

In 1066 England was attacked almost simultaneously by an invasion of the Norwegian Northmen under King Harold Hardrada and by the Latinized Northmen under the Duke of Normandy. Harold King of England defeated the former at the battle of Stamford Bridge, and was defeated by the latter at Hastings. England was conquered by the Normans, and so cut off from Scandinavian, Teutonic and Russian affairs, and brought into the most intimate relations and conflicts with the French. For the next four centuries the English were entangled in the conflicts of the French feudal princes and wasted upon the fields of France.

THE CRUSADES AND THE AGE OF PAPAL DOMINION

IT is interesting to note that Charlemagne corresponded with the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, the Haroun-al-Raschid of the *Arabian Nights*. It is recorded that Haroun-al-Raschid sent ambassadors from Bagdad — which had now replaced Damascus as the Moslem capital — with a splendid tent, a water clock, an elephant and the keys of the Holy Sepulchre. This latter present was admirably calculated to set the Byzantine Empire and this new Holy Roman Empire by the ears as to which was the proper protector of the Christians in Jerusalem.

These presents remind us that while Europe in the ninth century was still a weltering disorder of war and pillage, there flourished a great Arab Empire in Egypt and Mesopotamia, far more civilized than anything Europe could show. Here literature and science still lived; the arts flourished, and the mind of man could move without fear or superstition. And even in Spain and North Africa where the Saracenic dominions were falling into political confusion there was a vigorous intellectual life. Aristotle was read and discussed by these Jews and Arabs during these centuries of European darkness. They guarded the neglected seeds of science and philosophy.

North-east of the Caliph's dominions was a number of Turkish tribes. They had been converted to Islam, and they held the faith much more simply and fiercely than the actively intellectual Arabs and Persians to the south. In the tenth century the Turks were growing strong and vigorous while the Arab power was divided and decaying. The relations of the Turks to the Empire of the Caliphate became very similar to the relations of the Medes to the last Babylonian Empire fourteen centuries before. In the eleventh century a group of Turkish tribes, the Seljuk Turks, came down into Mesopotamia and made the Caliph their nominal ruler but really their captive and tool. They conquered Armenia. Then they struck at the remnants of the Byzantine power in Asia Minor. In 1071 the Byzantine army was utterly smashed at the battle of Melasgird, and the Turks swept forward until not a trace of Byzantine rule remained

in Asia. They took the fortress of Nicæa over against Constantinople, and prepared to attempt that city.

The Byzantine emperor, Michael VII, was overcome with terror. He was already heavily engaged in warfare with a band of Norman adventurers who had seized Durazzo, and with a fierce Turkish people, the Petschenegs, who were raiding over the Danube. In his extremity he sought help where he could, and it is notable that he did not appeal to the western emperor but to the Pope of Rome as the head of Latin Christendom. He wrote to Pope Gregory VII, and his successor Alexius Comnenus wrote still more urgently to Urban II.

CRUSADER TOMBS IN EXETER CATHEDRAL
Photo: Mansell

This was not a quarter of a century from the rupture of the Latin and Greek churches. That controversy was still vividly alive in men's minds, and this disaster to Byzantium must have presented itself to the Pope as a supreme opportunity for reasserting the supremacy of the Latin Church over the dissentient Greeks. Moreover this occasion gave the Pope a chance to deal with two other matters that troubled western Christendom very greatly. One was the custom of "private war" which disordered social life, and the other was the superabundant fighting energy of the Low Germans and Christianized Northmen and particularly of the Franks and Normans. A religious war, the Crusade, the War of the Cross, was preached against the Turkish captors of Jerusalem, and a truce to all warfare amongst Christians (1095). The declared object of this war was the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre from the unbelievers. A man called Peter the Hermit carried on a popular propaganda throughout France and Germany on broadly democratic lines. He went clad in a coarse

garment, barefooted on an ass, he carried a huge cross and harangued the crowd in street or market-place or church. He denounced the cruelties practised upon the Christian pilgrims by the Turks, and the shame of the Holy Sepulchre being in any but Christian hands. The fruits of centuries of Christian teaching became apparent in the response. A great wave of enthusiasm swept the western world, and popular Christendom discovered itself.

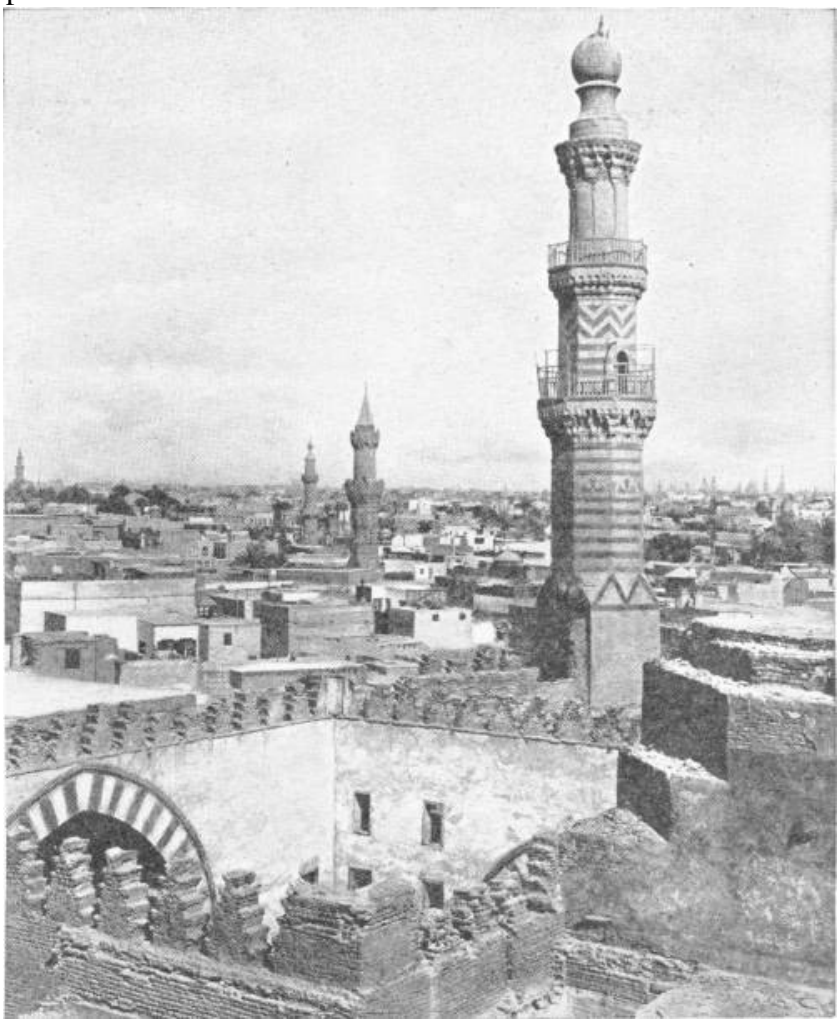

VIEW OF CAIRO
Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

Such a widespread uprising of the common people in relation to a single idea as now occurred was a new thing in the history of our race. There is nothing to parallel it in the previous history of the Roman Empire or of India or China. On a smaller scale, however, there had been similar movements among the Jewish people after their liberation from the Babylonian captivity, and later on Islam was to display a parallel susceptibility to collective feeling. Such movements were certainly connected with the new spirit that had come into life with the development of the missionary- teaching religions. The Hebrew prophets, Jesus and his disciples, Mani, Muhammad, were all exhorters of men's individual souls. They brought the personal conscience face to face with God. Before that time religion had been much more a business of fetish, of pseudoscience, than of conscience. The old kind of religion turned upon temple, initiated priest and mystical sacrifice, and ruled the common man like a slave by fear. The new kind of religion made a man of him.

The preaching of the First Crusade was the first stirring of the common people in European history. It may be too much to call it the birth of modern democracy, but certainly at that time modern democracy stirred. Before very long we shall find it stirring again, and raising the most disturbing social and religious questions.

Certainly this first stirring of democracy ended very pitifully and lamentably. Considerable bodies of common people, crowds rather than armies, set out eastward from France and the Rhineland and Central Europe without waiting for leaders or proper equipment to rescue the Holy Sepulchre. This was the "people's crusade." Two great mobs blundered into Hungary, mistook the recently converted Magyars for pagans, committed atrocities and were massacred. A third multitude with a similarly confused mind, after a great pogrom of the Jews in the Rhineland, marched eastward, and was also destroyed in Hungary. Two other huge crowds, under the leadership of Peter the Hermit himself, reached Constantinople, crossed the Bosphorus, and were massacred rather than defeated by the Seljuk Turks. So began and ended this first movement of the European people, as people.

Next year (1097) the real fighting forces crossed the Bosphorus.

Essentially they were Norman in leadership and spirit. They stormed Nicæa, marched by much the same route as Alexander had followed fourteen centuries before, to Antioch. The siege of Antioch kept them a year, and in June 1099 they invested Jerusalem. It was stormed after a month's siege. The slaughter was terrible. Men riding on horseback were splashed by the blood in the streets. At nightfall on July 15th the Crusaders had fought their way into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and overcome all opposition there: blood-stained, weary and "sobbing from excess of joy" they knelt down in prayer.

THE HORSES OF S. MARK, VENICE
Originally on the arch of Trajan at Constantinople, the Doge Dandalo V took them after the Fourth Crusade, to Venice, whence Napoleon I removed them to Paris, but in 1815 they were returned to Venice. During the Great War of 1914-18 they were hidden away for fear of air raids.
Photo: D. McLeish

Immediately the hostility of Latin and Greek broke out again. The Crusaders were the servants of the Latin Church, and the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem found himself in a far worse case under the triumphant Latins than under the Turks. The Crusaders discovered themselves between Byzantine and Turk and fighting both. Much of Asia Minor was recovered by the Byzantine Empire, and the Latin princes were left, a buffer between Turk and Greek, with Jerusalem and a few small principalities, of which Edessa was one of the chief, in Syria. Their grip even on these possessions was precarious, and in 1144 Edessa fell to the Moslim, leading to an ineffective Second Crusade, which failed to recover Edessa but saved Antioch from a similar fate.

In 1169 the forces of Islam were rallied under a Kurdish adventurer named Saladin who had made himself master of Egypt. He preached a Holy War against the Christians, recaptured Jerusalem in 1187, and so provoked the Third Crusade. This failed to recover Jerusalem. In the Fourth Crusade (1202-4) the Latin Church turned frankly upon the Greek Empire, and there was not even a pretence of fighting the Turks. It started from Venice and in 1204 it stormed Constantinople. The great rising trading city of Venice was the leader in this adventure, and most of the coasts and islands of the Byzantine Empire were annexed by the Venetians. A “Latin” emperor (Baldwin of Flanders) was set up in Constantinople and the Latin and Greek Church were declared to be reunited. The Latin emperors ruled in Constantinople from 1204 to 1261 when the Greek world shook itself free again from Roman predominance.

The twelfth century then and the opening of the thirteenth was the age of papal ascendancy just as the eleventh was the age of the ascendancy of the Seljuk Turks and the tenth the age of the

Northmen. A united Christendom under the rule of the Pope came nearer to being a working reality than it ever was before or after that time.

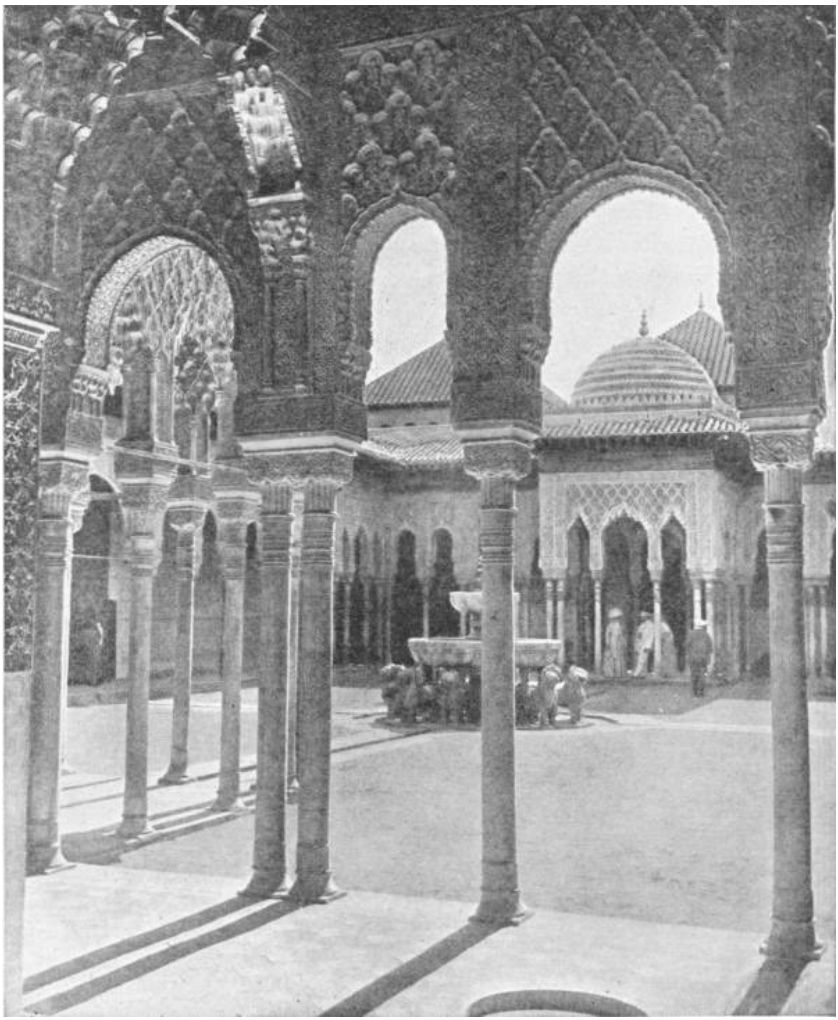

A COURTYARD IN THE ALHAMBRA
Photo: Lehnert & Landrock

In those centuries a simple Christian faith was real and widespread over great areas of Europe. Rome itself had passed through some dark and discreditable phases; few writers can be

found to excuse the lives of Popes John XI and John XII in the tenth century; they were abominable creatures; but the heart and body of Latin Christendom had remained earnest and simple; the generality of the common priests and monks and nuns had lived exemplary and faithful lives. Upon the wealth of confidence such lives created rested the power of the church. Among the great Popes of the past had been Gregory the Great, Gregory I (590-604) and Leo III (795-816) who invited Charlemagne to be Cæsar and crowned him in spite of himself. Towards the close of the eleventh century there arose a great clerical statesman, Hildebrand, who ended his life as Pope Gregory VII (1073- 1085). Next but one after him came Urban II (1087-1099), the Pope of the First Crusade. These two were the founders of this period of papal greatness during which the Popes lorded it over the Emperors. From Bulgaria to Ireland and from Norway to Sicily and Jerusalem the Pope was supreme. Gregory VII obliged the Emperor Henry IV to come in penitence to him at Canossa and to await forgiveness for three days and nights in the courtyard of the castle, clad in sackcloth and barefooted to the snow. In 1176 at Venice the Emperor Frederick (Frederick Barbarossa), knelt to Pope Alexander III and swore fealty to him.

The great power of the church in the beginning of the eleventh century lay in the wills and consciences of men. It failed to retain the moral prestige on which its power was based. In the opening decades of the fourteenth century it was discovered that the power of the Pope had evaporated. What was it that destroyed the naive confidence of the common people of Christendom in the church so that they would no longer rally to its appeal and serve its purposes?

The first trouble was certainly the accumulation of wealth by the church. The church never died, and there was a frequent disposition on the part of dying childless people to leave lands to the church. Penitent sinners were exhorted to do so. Accordingly in many European countries as much as a fourth of the land became church property. The appetite for property grows with what it feeds upon. Already in the thirteenth century it was being said everywhere that the priests were not good men, that they were always hunting for money and legacies.

The kings and princes disliked this alienation of property very

greatly. In the place of feudal lords capable of military support, they found their land supporting abbeys and monks and nuns. And these lands were really under foreign dominion. Even before the time of Pope Gregory VII there had been a struggle between the princes and the papacy over the question of "investitures," the question that is of who should appoint the bishops. If that power rested with the Pope and not the King, then the latter lost control not only of the consciences of his subjects but of a considerable part of his dominions. For also the clergy claimed exemption from taxation. They paid their taxes to Rome. And not only that, but the church also claimed the right to levy a tax of one-tenth upon the property of the layman in addition to the taxes he paid his prince.

The history of nearly every country in Latin Christendom tells of the same phase in the eleventh century, a phase of struggle between monarch and Pope on the issue of investitures and generally it tells of a victory for the Pope. He claimed to be able to excommunicate the prince, to absolve his subjects from their allegiance to him, to recognize a successor. He claimed to be able to put a nation under an interdict, and then nearly all priestly functions ceased except the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and penance; the priests could neither hold the ordinary services, marry people, nor bury the dead. With these two weapons it was possible for the twelfth century Popes to curb the most recalcitrant princes and overawe the most restive peoples. These were enormous powers, and enormous powers are only to be used on extraordinary occasions. The Popes used them at last with a frequency that staled their effect. Within thirty years at the end of the twelfth century we find Scotland, France and England in turn under an interdict. And also the Popes could not resist the temptation to preach crusades against offending princes — until the crusading spirit was extinct.

It is possible that if the Church of Rome had struggled simply against the princes and had had a care to keep its hold upon the general mind, it might have achieved a permanent dominion over all Christendom. But the high claims of the Pope were reflected as arrogance in the conduct of the clergy. Before the eleventh century the Roman priests could marry; they had close ties with the people among whom they lived; they were indeed a part of the people.

Gregory VII made them celibates; he cut the priests off from too great an intimacy with the laymen in order to bind them more closely to Rome, but indeed he opened a fissure between the church and the commonalty. The church had its own law courts. Cases involving not merely priests but monks, students, crusaders, widows, orphans and the helpless were reserved for the clerical courts, and so were all matters relating to wills, marriages and oaths and all cases of sorcery, heresy and blasphemy. Whenever the layman found himself in conflict with the priest he had to go to a clerical court. The obligations of peace and war fell upon his shoulders alone and left the priest free. It is no great wonder that jealousy and hatred of the priests grew up in the Christian world.

Never did Rome seem to realize that its power was in the consciences of common men. It fought against religious enthusiasm, which should have been its ally, and it forced doctrinal orthodoxy upon honest doubt and aberrant opinion. When the church interfered in matters of morality it had the common man with it, but not when it interfered in matters of doctrine. When in the south of France Waldo taught a return to the simplicity of Jesus in faith and life, Innocent III preached a crusade against the Waldenses, Waldo's followers, and permitted them to be suppressed with fire, sword, rape and the most abominable cruelties. When again St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) taught the imitation of Christ and a life of poverty and service, his followers, the Franciscans, were persecuted, scourged, imprisoned and dispersed. In 1318 four of them were burnt alive at Marseilles. On the other hand the fiercely orthodox order of the Dominicans, founded by St. Dominic (1170-1221) was strongly supported by Innocent III, who with its assistance set up an organization, the Inquisition, for the hunting of heresy and the affliction of free thought.

So it was that the church by excessive claims, by unrighteous privileges, and by an irrational intolerance destroyed that free faith of the common man which was the final source of all its power. The story of its decline tells of no adequate foemen from without but continually of decay from within.

XLVII

RECALCITRANT PRINCES AND THE GREAT SCHISM

ONE very great weakness of the Roman Church in its struggle to secure the headship of all Christendom was the manner in which the Pope was chosen.

If indeed the papacy was to achieve its manifest ambition and establish one rule and one peace throughout Christendom, then it was vitally necessary that it should have a strong, steady and continuous direction. In those great days of its opportunity it needed before all things that the Popes when they took office should be able men in the prime of life, that each should have his successor-designate with whom he could discuss the policy of the church, and that the forms and processes of election should be clear, definite, unalterable and unassailable. Unhappily none of these things obtained. It was not even clear who could vote in the election of a Pope, nor whether the Byzantine or Holy Roman Emperor had a voice in the matter. That very great papal statesman Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085) did much to regularize the election. He confined the votes to the Roman cardinals and he reduced the Emperor's share to a formula of assent conceded to him by the church, but he made no provision for a successor-designate and he left it possible for the disputes of the cardinals to keep the See vacant, as in some cases it was kept vacant, for a year or more.

MILAN CATHEDRALA COURTYARD IN THE ALHAMBRA
View showing the exquisite carvings characteristic of the 98 spires of the edifice

The consequences of this want of firm definition are to be seen in the whole history of the papacy up to the sixteenth century. From quite early times onward there were disputed elections and two or more men each claiming to be Pope. The church would then be

subjected to the indignity of going to the Emperor or some other outside arbiter to settle the dispute. And the career of everyone of the great Popes ended in a note of interrogation. At his death the church might be left headless and as ineffective as a decapitated body. Or he might be replaced by some old rival eager only to discredit and undo his work. Or some enfeebled old man tottering on the brink of the grave might succeed him.

It was inevitable that this peculiar weakness of the papal organization should attract the interference of the various German princes, the French King, and the Norman and French Kings who ruled in England; that they should all try to influence the elections, and have a Pope in their own interest established in the Lateran Palace at Rome. And the more powerful and important the Pope became in European affairs, the more urgent did these interventions become. Under the circumstances it is no great wonder that many of the Popes were weak and futile. The astonishing thing is that many of them were able and courageous men.

One of the most vigorous and interesting of the Popes of this great period was Innocent III (1198-1216) who was so fortunate as to become Pope before he was thirty-eight. He and his successors were pitted against an even more interesting personality, the Emperor Frederick II; *Stupor mundi* he was called, the Wonder of the world. The struggle of this monarch against Rome is a turning place in history. In the end Rome defeated him and destroyed his dynasty, but he left the prestige of the church and Pope so badly wounded that its wounds festered and led to its decay.

Frederick was the son of the Emperor Henry VI and his mother was the daughter of Roger I, the Norman King of Sicily. He inherited this kingdom in 1198 when he was a child of four years. Innocent III had been made his guardian. Sicily in those days had been but recently conquered by the Normans; the Court was half oriental and full of highly educated Arabs; and some of these were associated in the education of the young king. No doubt they were at some pains to make their point of view clear to him. He got a Moslem view of Christianity as well as a Christian view of Islam, and the unhappy result of this double system of instruction was a view, exceptional in that age of faith, that all religions were impostures. He talked freely

on the subject; his heresies and blasphemies are on record.

As the young man grew up he found himself in conflict with his guardian. Innocent III wanted altogether too much from his ward. When the opportunity came for Frederick to succeed as Emperor, the Pope intervened with conditions. Frederick must promise to put down heresy in Germany with a strong hand. Moreover he must relinquish his crown in Sicily and South Italy, because otherwise he would be too strong for the Pope. And the German clergy were to be freed from all taxation. Frederick agreed but with no intention of keeping his word. The Pope had already induced the French King to make war upon his own subjects in France, the cruel and bloody crusade against the Waldenses; he wanted Frederick to do the same thing in Germany. But Frederick being far more of a heretic than any of the simple pietists who had incurred the Pope's animosity, lacked the crusading impulse. And when Innocent urged him to crusade against the Moslim and recover Jerusalem he was equally ready to promise and equally slack in his performance.

A TYPICAL CRUSADER: DON RODRIGO DE CARDENAS

From the Church of S. Pedro at Ocana, Spain
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

Having secured the imperial crown Frederick II stayed in Sicily, which he greatly preferred to Germany as a residence, and did nothing to redeem any of his promises to Innocent III, who died baffled in 1216.

Honorius III, who succeeded Innocent, could do no better with Frederick, and Gregory IX (1227) came to the papal throne evidently resolved to settle accounts with this young man at any cost. He excommunicated him. Frederick II was denied all the comforts of religion. In the half-Arab Court of Sicily this produced singularly little discomfort. And also the Pope addressed a public letter to the Emperor reciting his vices (which were indisputable), his heresies, and his general misconduct. To this Frederick replied in a document of diabolical ability. It was addressed to all the princes of Europe, and it made the first clear statement of the issue between the Pope and the princes. He made a shattering attack upon the manifest ambition of the Pope to become the absolute ruler of all Europe. He suggested a union of princes against this usurpation. He directed the attention of the princes specifically to the wealth of the church.

Having fired off this deadly missile Frederick resolved to perform his twelve-year-old promise and go upon a crusade. This was the Sixth Crusade (1228). It was as a crusade, farcical. Frederick II went to Egypt and met and discussed affairs with the Sultan. These two gentlemen, both of sceptical opinions, exchanged congenial views, made a commercial convention to their mutual advantage, and agreed to transfer Jerusalem to Frederick. This indeed was a new sort of crusade, a crusade by private treaty. Here was no blood splashing the conqueror, no "weeping with excess of joy." As this astonishing crusader was an excommunicated man, he had to be content with a purely secular coronation as King of Jerusalem, taking the crown from the altar with his own hand — for all the clergy were bound to shun him. He then returned to Italy, chased the papal armies which had invaded his dominions back to their own territories, and obliged the Pope to grant him absolution from his excommunication. So a prince might treat the Pope in the thirteenth century, and there was

now no storm of popular indignation to avenge him. Those days were past.

In 1239 Gregory IX resumed his struggle with Frederick, excommunicated him for a second time, and renewed that warfare of public abuse in which the papacy had already suffered severely. The controversy was revived after Gregory IX was dead, when Innocent IV was Pope; and again a devastating letter, which men were bound to remember, was written by Frederick against the church. He denounced the pride and irreligion of the clergy, and ascribed all the corruptions of the time to their pride and wealth. He proposed to his fellow princes a general confiscation of church property — for the good of the church. It was a suggestion that never afterwards left the imagination of the European princes.

We will not go on to tell of his last years. The particular events of his life are far less significant than its general atmosphere. It is possible to piece together something of his court life in Sicily. He was luxurious in his way of living, and fond of beautiful things. He is described as licentious. But it is clear that he was a man of very effectual curiosity and inquiry. He gathered Jewish and Moslem as well as Christian philosophers at his court, and he did much to irrigate the Italian mind with Saracenic influences. Through him the Arabic numerals and algebra were introduced to Christian students, and among other philosophers at his court was Michael Scott, who translated portions of Aristotle and the commentaries thereon of the great Arab philosopher Averroes (of Cordoba). In 1224 Frederick founded the University of Naples, and he enlarged and enriched the great medical school at Salerno University. He also founded a zoological garden. He left a book on hawking, which shows him to have been an acute observer of the habits of birds, and he was one of the first Italians to write Italian verse. Italian poetry was indeed born at his court. He has been called by an able writer, “the first of the moderns,” and the phrase expresses aptly the unprejudiced detachment of his intellectual side.

A still more striking intimation of the decay of the living and sustaining forces of the papacy appeared when presently the Popes came into conflict with the growing power of the French King. During the lifetime of the Emperor Frederick II, Germany fell into

disunion, and the French King began to play the rôle of guard, supporter and rival to the Pope that had hitherto fallen to the Hohenstaufen Emperors. A series of Popes pursued the policy of supporting the French monarchs. French princes were established in the kingdom of Sicily and Naples, with the support and approval of Rome, and the French Kings saw before them the possibility of restoring and ruling the Empire of Charlemagne. When, however, the German interregnum after the death of Frederick II, the last of the Hohenstaufens, came to all end and Rudolf of Habsburg was elected first Habsburg Emperor (1273), the policy of Rome began to fluctuate between France and Germany, veering about with the sympathies of each successive Pope. In the East in 1261 the Greeks recaptured Constantinople from the Latin emperors, and the founder of the new Greek dynasty, Michael Palæologus, Michael VIII, after some unreal tentatives of reconciliation with the Pope, broke away from the Roman communion altogether, and with that, and the fall of the Latin kingdoms in Asia, the eastward ascendancy of the Popes came to an end.

COSTUMES OF THE BURGUNDIAN NOBILITY: FLEMISH WORK OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

In 1294 Boniface VIII became Pope. He was an Italian, hostile to the French, and full of a sense of the great traditions and mission of Rome. For a time he carried things with a high hand. In 1300 he held a jubilee, and a vast multitude of pilgrims assembled in Rome. "So great was the influx of money into the papal treasury, that two assistants were kept busy with the rakes collecting the offerings that were deposited at the tomb of St. Peter." But this festival was a delusive triumph. Boniface came into conflict with the French King in 1302, and in 1303, as he was about to pronounce sentence of excommunication against that monarch, he was surprised and arrested in his own ancestral palace at Anagni, by Guillaume de Nogaret. This agent from the French King forced an entrance into the palace, made his way into the bedroom of the frightened Pope — he was lying in bed with a cross in his hands — and heaped threats and insults upon him. The Pope was liberated a day or so later by the townspeople, and returned to Rome; but there he was seized upon and again made prisoner by the Orsini family, and in a few weeks' time the shocked and disillusioned old man died a prisoner in their hands.

COSTUMES OF THE BURGUNDIAN NOBILITY: FLEMISH

WORK OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY
This series is from casts in the Victoria and Albert Museum of the original brass statuettes in the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam

The people of Anagni did resent the first outrage, and rose against Nogaret to liberate Boniface, but then Anagni was the Pope's native town. The important point to note is that the French King in this rough treatment of the head of Christendom was acting with the full approval of his people; he had summoned a council of the Three Estates of France (lords, church and commons) and gained their consent before proceeding to extremities. Neither in Italy, Germany nor England was there the slightest general manifestation of disapproval at this free handling of the sovereign pontiff. The idea of Christendom had decayed until its power over the minds of men had gone.

Throughout the fourteenth century the papacy did nothing to recover its moral sway. The next Pope elected, Clement V, was a Frenchman, the choice of King Philip of France. He never came to Rome. He set up his court in the town of Avignon, which then belonged not to France but to the papal See, though embedded in French territory, and there his successors remained until 1377, when Pope Gregory XI returned to the Vatican palace in Rome. But Gregory XI did not take the sympathies of the whole church with him. Many of the cardinals were of French origin and their habits and associations were rooted deep at Avignon. When in 1378 Gregory XI died, and an Italian, Urban VI, was elected, these dissentient cardinals declared the election invalid, and elected another Pope, the anti-Pope, Clement VII. This split is called the Great Schism. The Popes remained in Rome, and all the anti-French powers, the Emperor, the King of England, Hungary, Poland and the North of Europe were loyal to them. The anti-Popes, on the other hand, continued in Avignon, and were supported by the King of France, his ally the King of Scotland, Spain, Portugal and various German princes. Each Pope excommunicated and cursed the adherents of his rival (1378-1417).

Is it any wonder that presently all over Europe people began to think for themselves in matters of religion?

The beginnings of the Franciscans and the Dominicans, which we have noted in the preceding chapters, were but two among many of the new forces that were arising in Christendom, either to hold or shatter the church as its own wisdom might decide. Those two orders the church did assimilate and use, though with a little violence in the case of the former. But other forces were more frankly disobedient and critical. A century and a half later came Wycliffe (1320-1384). He was a learned Doctor at Oxford. Quite late in his life he began a series of outspoken criticisms of the corruption of the clergy and the unwisdom of the church. He organized a number of poor priests, the Wycliffites, to spread his ideas throughout England; and in order that people should judge between the church and himself, he translated the Bible into English. He was a more learned and far abler man than either St. Francis or St. Dominic. He had supporters in high places and a great following among the people; and though Rome raged against him, and ordered his imprisonment, he died a free man. But the black and ancient spirit that was leading the Catholic Church to its destruction would not let his bones rest in the grave. By a decree of the Council of Constance in 1415, his remains were ordered to be dug up and burnt, an order which was carried out at the command of Pope Martin V by Bishop Fleming in 1428. This desecration was not the act of some isolated fanatic; it was the official act of the church.

J. H. Robinson.

THE MONGOL CONQUESTS

BUT in the thirteenth century, while this strange and finally ineffectual struggle to unify Christendom under the rule of the Pope was going on in Europe, far more momentous events were afoot upon the larger stage of Asia. A Turkish people from the country to the north of China rose suddenly to prominence in the world's affairs, and achieved such a series of conquests as has no parallel in history. These were the Mongols. At the opening of the thirteenth century they were a horde of nomadic horsemen, living very much as their predecessors, the Huns, had done, subsisting chiefly upon meat and mare's milk and living in tents of skin. They had shaken themselves free from Chinese dominion, and brought a number of other Turkish tribes into a military confederacy. Their central camp was at Karakorum in Mongolia.

At this time China was in a state of division. The great dynasty of Tang had passed into decay by the tenth century, and after a phase of division into warring states, three main empires, that of Kin in the north with Pekin as its capital and that of Sung in the south with a capital at Nankin, and Hsia in the centre, remain. In 1214 Jengis Khan, the leader of the Mongol confederates, made war on the Kin Empire and captured Pekin (1214). He then turned westward and conquered Western Turkestan, Persia, Armenia, India down to Lahore, and South Russia as far as Kieff. He died master of a vast empire that reached from the Pacific to the Dnieper.

His successor, Ogdai Khan, continued this astonishing career of conquest. His armies were organized to a very high level of efficiency; and they had with them a new Chinese invention, gunpowder, which they used in small field guns. He completed the conquest of the Kin Empire and then swept his hosts right across Asia to Russia (1235), an altogether amazing march. Kieff was destroyed in 1240, and nearly all Russia became tributary to the Mongols. Poland was ravaged, and a mixed army of Poles and Germans was annihilated at the battle of Liegnitz in Lower Silesia in 1241. The Emperor Frederick II does not seem to have made any great efforts to stay the advancing tide.

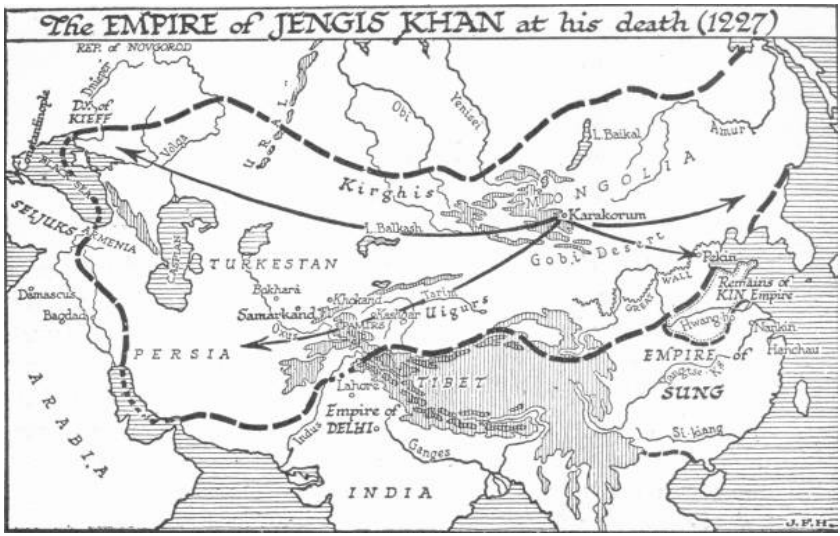

"It is only recently," says Bury in his notes to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, "that European history has begun to understand that the successes of the Mongol army which overran Poland and occupied Hungary in the spring of A.D. 1241 were won by consummate strategy and were not due to a mere overwhelming superiority of numbers. But this fact has not yet become a matter of common knowledge; the vulgar opinion which represents the Tartars as a wild horde carrying all before them solely by their multitude, and galloping through Eastern Europe without a strategic plan, rushing at all obstacles and overcoming them by mere weight, still prevails. . . .

"It was wonderful how punctually and effectually the arrangements were carried out in operations extending from the Lower Vistula to Transylvania. Such a campaign was quite beyond the power of any European army of the time, and it was beyond the vision of any European commander. There was no general in Europe, from Frederick II downward, who was not a tyro in strategy compared to Subutai. It should also be noticed that the Mongols embarked upon the enterprise with full knowledge of the political situation of Hungary and the condition of Poland — they had taken care to inform themselves by a well-organized system of spies; on the other hand, the Hungarians and the Christian powers, like childish barbarians, knew hardly anything about their enemies."

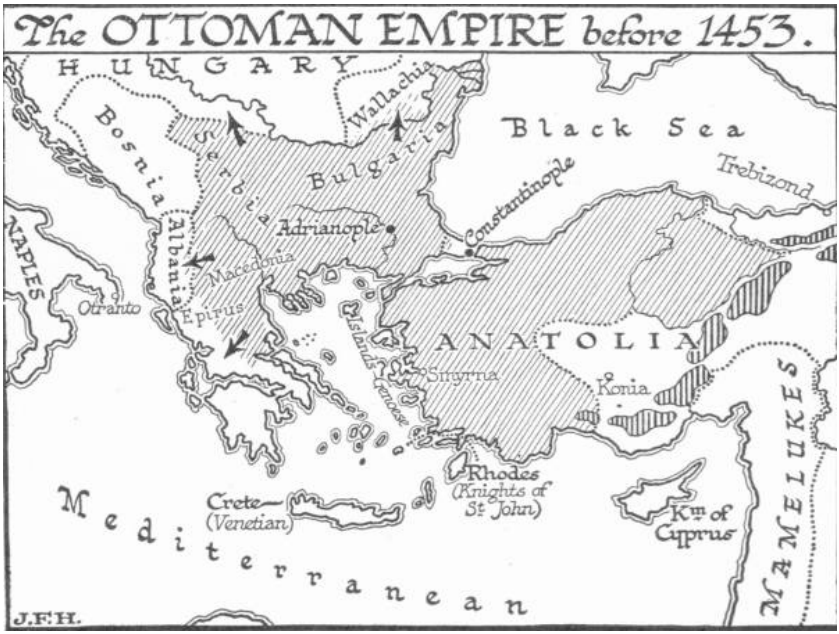

But though the Mongols were victorious at Liegnitz, they did not continue their drive westward. They were getting into woodlands and hilly country, which did not suit their tactics; and so they turned southward and prepared to settle in Hungary, massacring or assimilating the kindred Magyar, even as these had previously massacred and assimilated the mixed Scythians and Avars and Huns before them. From the Hungarian plain they would probably have made raids west and south as the Hungarians had done in the ninth century, the Avars in the seventh and eighth and the Huns in the fifth. But Ogdai died suddenly, and in 1242 there was trouble about the succession, and recalled by this, the undefeated hosts of Mongols began to pour back across Hungary and Roumania towards the east.

Thereafter the Mongols concentrated their attention upon their Asiatic conquests. By the middle of the thirteenth century they had conquered the Sung Empire. Mangu Khan succeeded Ogdai Khan as Great Khan in 1251, and made his brother Kublai Khan governor of China. In 1280 Kublai Khan had been formally recognized Emperor of China, and so founded the Yuan dynasty which lasted until 1368. While the last ruins of the Sung rule were going down in China, another brother of Mangu, Hulagu, was conquering Persia and Syria.

The Mongols displayed a bitter animosity to Islam at this time, and not only massacred the population of Bagdad when they captured that city, but set to work to destroy the immemorial irrigation system which had kept Mesopotamia incessantly prosperous and populous from the early days of Sumeria. From that time until our own Mesopotamia has been a desert of ruins, sustaining only a scanty population. Into Egypt the Mongols never penetrated; the Sultan of Egypt completely defeated an army of Hulagu's in Palestine in 1260.

After that disaster the tide of Mongol victory ebbed. The dominions of the Great Khan fell into a number of separate states. The eastern Mongols became Buddhists, like the Chinese; the western became Moslim. The Chinese threw off the rule of the Yuan dynasty in 1368, and set up the native Ming dynasty which flourished from 1368 to 1644. The Russians remained tributary to the Tartar hordes upon the south-east steppes until 1480, when the Grand Duke of Moscow repudiated his allegiance and laid the foundation of modern Russia.

TARTAR HORSEMEN

(From a Chinese Print in the British Museum)

In the fourteenth century there was a brief revival of Mongol vigour under Timurlane, a descendant of Jengis Khan. He established himself in Western Turkestan, assumed the title of Grand Khan in 1369, and conquered from Syria to Delhi. He was the most savage and destructive of all the Mongol conquerors. He established an empire of desolation that did not survive his death. In 1505, however, a descendant of this Timur, an adventurer named Baber, got together an army with guns and swept down upon the plains of India. His grandson Akbar (1556-1605) completed his conquests, and this Mongol (or "Mogul" as the Arabs called it) dynasty ruled in Delhi over the greater part of India until the eighteenth century.

One of the consequences of the first great sweep of Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century was to drive a certain tribe of Turks, the Ottoman Turks, out of Turkestan into Asia Minor. They extended and consolidated their power in Asia Minor, crossed the Dardanelles and conquered Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria, until at last Constantinople remained like an island amongst the Ottoman dominions. In 1453 the Ottoman Sultan, Muhammad II, took

Constantinople, attacking it from the European side with a great number of guns. This event caused intense excitement in Europe and there was talk of a crusade, but the day of the crusades was past.

In the course of the sixteenth century the Ottoman Sultans conquered Bagdad, Hungary, Egypt and most of North Africa, and their fleet made them masters of the Mediterranean. They very nearly took Vienna, and they exacted it tribute from the Emperor. There were but two items to offset the general ebb of Christian dominion in the fifteenth century. One was the restoration of the independence of Moscow (1480); the other was the gradual reconquest of Spain by the Christians. In 1492, Granada, the last Moslem state in the peninsula, fell to King Ferdinand of Aragon and his Queen Isabella of Castile.

But it was not until as late as 1571 that the naval battle of Lepanto broke the prick of the Ottomans, and restored the Mediterranean waters to Christian ascendancy.

THE INTELLECTUAL REVIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS

THROUGHOUT the twelfth century there were many signs that the European intelligence was recovering courage and leisure, and preparing to take up again the intellectual enterprises of the first Greek scientific enquiries and such speculations as those of the Italian Lucretius. The causes of this revival were many and complex. The suppression of private war, the higher standards of comfort and security that followed the crusades, and the stimulation of men's minds by the experiences of these expeditions were no doubt necessary preliminary conditions. Trade was reviving; cities were recovering ease and safety; the standard of education was arising in the church and spreading among laymen. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were a period of growing, independent or quasi-independent cities; Venice, Florence, Genoa, Lisbon, Paris, Bruges, London, Antwerp, Hamburg, Nuremberg, Novgorod, Wisby and Bergen for example. They were all trading cities with many travellers, and where men trade and travel they talk and think. The polemics of the Popes and princes, the conspicuous savagery and wickedness of the persecution of heretics, were exciting men to doubt the authority of the church and question and discuss fundamental things.

We have seen how the Arabs were the means of restoring Aristotle to Europe, and how such a prince as Frederick II acted as a channel through which Arabic philosophy and science played upon the renascent European mind. Still more influential in the stirring up of men's ideas were the Jews. Their very existence was a note of interrogation to the claims of the church. And finally the secret, fascinating enquiries of the alchemists were spreading far and wide and setting men to the petty, furtive and yet fruitful resumption of experimental science.

And the stir in men's minds was by no means confined now to the independent and well educated. The mind of the common man was awake in the world as it had never been before in all the experience

of mankind. In spite of priest and persecution, Christianity does seem to have carried a mental ferment wherever its teaching reached. It established a direct relation between the conscience of the individual man and the God of Righteousness, so that now if need arose he had the courage to form his own judgment upon prince or prelate or creed.

As early as the eleventh century philosophical discussion had begun again in Europe, and there were great and growing universities at Paris, Oxford, Bologna and other centres. There medieval "schoolmen" took up again and thrashed out a series of questions upon the value and meaning of words that were a necessary preliminary to clear thinking in the scientific age that was to follow. And standing by himself because of his distinctive genius was Roger Bacon (circa 1210 to circa 1293), a Franciscan of Oxford, the father of modern experimental science. His name deserves a prominence in our history second only to that of Aristotle.

His writings are one long tirade against ignorance. He told his age it was ignorant, an incredibly bold thing to do. Nowadays a man may tell the world it is as silly as it is solemn, that all its methods are still infantile and clumsy and its dogmas childish assumptions, without much physical danger; but these peoples of the middle ages when they were not actually being massacred or starving or dying of pestilence, were passionately convinced of the wisdom, the completeness and finality of their beliefs, and disposed to resent any reflections upon them very bitterly. Roger Bacon's writings were like a flash of light in a profound darkness. He combined his attack upon the ignorance of his times with a wealth of suggestion for the increase of knowledge. In his passionate insistence upon the need of experiment and of collecting knowledge, the spirit of Aristotle lives again in him. "Experiment, experiment," that is the burthen of Roger Bacon.

Yet of Aristotle himself Roger Bacon fell foul. He fell foul of him because men, instead of facing facts boldly, sat in rooms and pored over the bad Latin translations which were then all that was available of the master. "If I had my way," he wrote, in his intemperate fashion, "I should burn all the books of Aristotle, for the study of them can only lead to a loss of time, produce error, and increase

ignorance," a sentiment that Aristotle would probably have echoed could he have returned to a world in which his works were not so much read as worshipped — and that, as Roger Bacon showed, in these most abominable translations.

AN EARLY PRINTING PRESS
(From an old print)

Throughout his books, a little disguised by the necessity of

seeming to square it all with orthodoxy for fear of the prison and worse, Roger Bacon shouted to mankind, "Cease to be ruled by dogmas and authorities; *look at the world!*" Four chief sources of ignorance he denounced; respect for authority, custom, the sense of the ignorant crowd, and the vain, proud unteachableness of our dispositions. Overcome but these, and a world of power would open to men: —

"Machines for navigating are possible without rowers, so that great ships suited to river or ocean, guided by one man, may be borne with greater speed than if they were full of men. Likewise cars may be made so that without a draught animal they may be moved *cum impetu inæstimable*, as we deem the scythed chariots to have been from which antiquity fought. And flying machines are possible, so that a man may sit in the middle turning some device by which artificial wings may beat the air in the manner of a flying bird."

So Roger Bacon wrote, but three more centuries were to elapse before men began any systematic attempts to explore the hidden stores of power and interest he realized so clearly existed beneath the dull surface of human affairs.

But the Saracenic world not only gave Christendom the stimulus of its philosophers and alchemists; it also gave it paper. It is scarcely too much to say that paper made the intellectual revival of Europe possible. Paper originated in China, where its use probably goes back to the second century B.C. In 751 the Chinese made an attack upon the Arab Moslems in Samarkand; they were repulsed, and among the prisoners taken from them were some skilled papermakers, from whom the art was learnt. Arabic paper manuscripts from the ninth century onward still exist. The manufacture entered Christendom either through Greece or by the capture of Moorish paper-mills during the Christian reconquest of Spain. But under the Christian Spanish the product deteriorated sadly. Good paper was not made in Christian Europe until the end of the thirteenth century, and then it was Italy which led the world. Only by the fourteenth century did the manufacture reach Germany, and not until the end of that century was it abundant and cheap enough for the printing of books to be a practicable business proposition. Thereupon printing followed naturally and necessarily, for printing is the most obvious of

inventions, and the intellectual life of the world entered upon a new and far more vigorous phase. It ceased to be a little trickle from mind to mind; it became a broad flood, in which thousands and presently scores and hundreds of thousands of minds participated.

One immediate result of this achievement of printing was the appearance of an abundance of Bibles in the world. Another was a cheapening of school-books. The knowledge of reading spread swiftly. There was not only a great increase of books in the world, but the books that were now made were plainer to read and so easier to understand. Instead of toiling at a crabbed text arid then thinking over its significance, readers now could think unimpeded as they read. With this increase in the facility of reading, the reading public grew. The book ceased to be a highly decorated toy or a scholar's mystery. People began to write books to be read as well as looked at by ordinary people. They wrote in the ordinary language and not in Latin. With the fourteenth century the real history of the European literature begins.

So far we have been dealing only with the Saracenic share in the European revival. Let us turn now to the influence of the Mongol conquests. They stimulated the geographical imagination of Europe enormously. For a time under the Great Khan, all Asia and Western Europe enjoyed an open intercourse; all the roads were temporarily open, and representatives of every nation appeared at the court of Karakorum. The barriers between Europe and Asia set up by the religious feud of Christianity and Islam were lowered. Great hopes were entertained by the papacy for the conversion of the Mongols to Christianity. Their only religion so far had been Shumanism, a primitive paganism. Envoys of the Pope, Buddhist priests from India, Parisian and Italian and Chinese artificers, Byzantine and Armenian merchants, mingled with Arab officials and Persian and Indian astronomers and mathematicians at the Mongol court. We hear too much in history of the campaigns and massacres of the Mongols, and not enough of their curiosity and desire for learning. Not perhaps as an originative people, but as transmitters of knowledge and method their influence upon the world's history has been very great. And everything one can learn of the vague and romantic personalities of Jengis or Kublai tends to confirm the impression that these men were

at least as understanding and creative monarchs as either that flamboyant but egotistical figure Alexander the Great or that raiser of political ghosts, that energetic but illiterate theologian Charlemagne.

One of the most interesting of these visitors to the Mongol Court was a certain Venetian, Marco Polo, who afterwards set down his story in a book. He went to China about 1272 with his father and uncle, who had already once made the journey. The Great Khan had been deeply impressed by the elder Polos; they were the first men of the "Latin" peoples he had seen; and he sent them back with enquiries for teachers and learned men who could explain Christianity to him, and for various other European things that had aroused his curiosity. Their visit with Marco was their second visit.

ANCIENT BRONZE FIGURE FROM BENIN, W. AFRICA

Note evidence in attire of knowledge of early European explorers
(In the British Museum)

The three Polos started by way of Palestine and not by the Crimea, as in their previous expedition. They had with them a gold tablet and other indications from the Great Khan that must have greatly facilitated their journey. The Great Khan had asked for some oil from the lamp that burns in the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; and so thither they first went, and then by way of Cilicia into Armenia. They went thus far north because the Sultan of Egypt was raiding the Mongol domains at this time. Thence they came by way of Mesopotamia to Ormuz on the Persian Gulf, as if they contemplated a sea voyage. At Ormuz they met merchants from India. For some reason they did not take ship, but instead turned northward through the Persian deserts, and so by way of Balkh over the Pamir to Kashgar, and by way of Kotan and the Lob Nor into the Hwang-ho valley and on to Pekin. At Pekin was the Great Khan, and they were hospitably entertained.

ANOTHER ANCIENT NEGRO BRONZE OF A EUROPEAN

(In the British Museum)

Marco particularly pleased Kublai; he was young and clever, and it is clear he had mastered the Tartar language very thoroughly. He was given an official position and sent on several missions, chiefly in south-west China. The tale he had to tell of vast stretches of smiling and prosperous country, "all the way excellent hostelries for travellers," and "fine vineyards, fields, and gardens," of "many abbeys" of Buddhist monks, of manufactures of "cloth of silk and gold and many fine taffetas," a "constant succession of cities and boroughs," and so on, first roused the incredulity and then fired the imagination of all Europe. He told of Burmah, and of its great armies with hundreds of elephants, and how these animals were defeated by the Mongol bowmen, and also of the Mongol conquest of Pegu. He told of Japan, and greatly exaggerated the amount of gold in that country. For three years Marco ruled the city of Yang-chow as governor, and he probably impressed the Chinese inhabitants as being little more of a foreigner than any Tartar would have been. He may also have been sent on a mission to India. Chinese records mention a certain Polo attached to the imperial council in 1277, a very valuable confirmation of the general truth of the Polo story.

The publication of Marco Polo's travels produced a profound effect upon the European imagination. The European literature, and especially the European romance of the fifteenth century, echoes with the names in Marco Polo's story, with Cathay (North China) and Cambulac (Pekin) and the like.

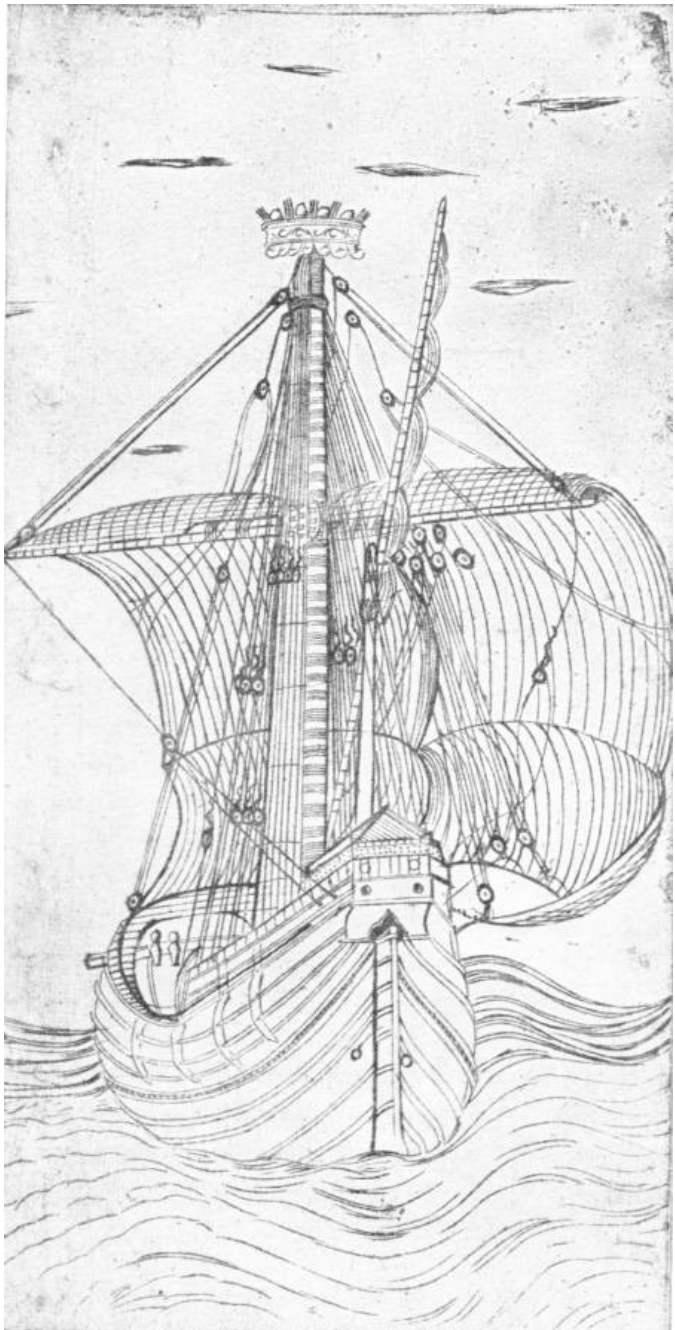

EARLY ITALIAN ENGRAVING OF A SAILING SHIP

(In the British Museum)

Two centuries later, among the readers of the Travels of Marco Polo was a certain Genoese mariner, Christopher Columbus, who conceived the brilliant idea of sailing westward round the world to China. In Seville there is a copy of the Travels with marginal notes by Columbus. There were many reasons why the thought of a Genoese should be turned in this direction. Until its capture by the Turks in 1453 Constantinople had been an impartial trading mart between the Western world and the East, and the Genoese had traded there freely. But the "Latin" Venetians, the bitter rivals of the Genoese, had been the allies and helpers of the Turks against the Greeks, and with the coming of the Turks Constantinople turned an unfriendly face upon Genoese trade. The long forgotten discovery that the world was round had gradually resumed its sway over men's minds. The idea of going westward to China was therefore a fairly obvious one. It was encouraged by two things. The mariner's compass had now been invented and men were no longer left to the mercy of a fine night and the stars to determine the direction in which they were sailing, and the Normans, Catalonians and Genoese and Portuguese had already pushed out into the Atlantic as far as the Canary Isles, Madeira and the Azores.

Yet Columbus found many difficulties before he could get ships to put his idea to the test. He went from one European Court to another. Finally at Granada, just won from the Moors, he secured the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and was able to set out across the unknown ocean in three small ships. After a voyage of two months and nine days he came to a land which he believed to be India, but which was really a new continent, whose distinct existence the old world had never hitherto suspected. He returned to Spain with gold, cotton, strange beasts and birds, and two wild- eyed painted Indians to be baptized. They were called Indians because, to the end of his days, he believed that this land he had found was India. Only in the course of several years did men begin to realize that the whole new continent of America was added to the world's resources.

The success of Columbus stimulated overseas enterprise enormously. In 1497 the Portuguese sailed round Africa to India, and

in 1515 there were Portuguese ships in Java. In 1519 Magellan, a Portuguese sailor in Spanish employment, sailed out of Seville westward with five ships, of which one, the *Vittoria*, came back up the river to Seville in 1522, the first ship that had ever circumnavigated the world. Thirty-one men were aboard her, survivors of two-hundred-and- eighty who had started. Magellan himself had been killed in the Philippine Isles.

Printed paper books, a new realization of the round world as a thing altogether attainable, a new vision of strange lands, strange animals and plants, strange manners and customs, discoveries overseas and in the skies and in the ways and materials of life burst upon the European mind. The Greek classics, buried and forgotten for so long, were speedily being printed and studied, and were colouring men's thoughts with the dreams of Plato and the traditions of an age of republican freedom and dignity. The Roman dominion had first brought law and order to Western Europe, and the Latin Church had restored it; but under both Pagan and Catholic Rome curiosity and innovation were subordinate to and restrained by organization. The reign of the Latin mind was now drawing to an end. Between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century the European Aryans, thanks to the stimulating influence of Semite and Mongol and the rediscovery of the Greek classics, broke away from the Latin tradition and rose again to the intellectual and material leadership of mankind.

THE REFORMATION OF THE LATIN CHURCH

THE Latin Church itself was enormously affected by this mental rebirth. It was dismembered; and even the portion that survived was extensively renewed.

We have told how nearly the church came to the autocratic leadership of all Christendom in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and how in the fourteenth and fifteenth its power over men's minds and affairs declined. We have described how popular religious enthusiasm which had in earlier ages been its support and power was turned against it by its pride, persecutions and centralization, and how the insidious scepticism of Frederick II bore fruit in a growing insubordination of the princes. The Great Schism had reduced its religious and political prestige to negligible proportions. The forces of insurrection struck it now from both sides.

The teachings of the Englishman Wycliffe spread widely throughout Europe. In 1398 a learned Czech, John Huss, delivered a series of lectures upon Wycliffe's teachings in the university of Prague. This teaching spread rapidly beyond the educated class and aroused great popular enthusiasm. In 1414-18 a Council of the whole church was held at Constance to settle the Great Schism. Huss was invited to this Council under promise of a safe conduct from the emperor, seized, put on trial for heresy and burnt alive (1415). So far from tranquillizing the Bohemian people, this led to an insurrection of the Hussites in that country, the first of a series of religious wars that inaugurated the break-up of Latin Christendom. Against this insurrection Pope Martin V, the Pope specially elected at Constance as the head of a reunited Christendom, preached a Crusade.

Five Crusades in all were launched upon this sturdy little people and all of them failed. All the unemployed ruffianism of Europe was turned upon Bohemia in the fifteenth century, just as in the thirteenth it had been turned upon the Waldenses. But the Bohemian Czechs, unlike the Waldenses, believed in armed resistance. The Bohemian Crusade dissolved and streamed away from the battlefield at the

sound of the Hussites' waggons and the distant chanting of their troops; it did not even wait to fight (battle of Domazlice, 1431). In 1436 an agreement was patched up with the Hussites by a new Council of the church at Basle in which many of the special objections to Latin practice were conceded.

PORTRAIT OF LUTHER
(From an early German engraving in the British Museum)

In the fifteenth century a great pestilence had produced much

social disorganization throughout Europe. There had been extreme misery and discontent among the common people, and peasant risings against the landlords and the wealthy in England and France. After the Hussite Wars these peasant insurrections increased in gravity in Germany and took on a religious character. Printing came in as an influence upon this development. By the middle of the fifteenth century there were printers at work with movable type in Holland and the Rhineland. The art spread to Italy and England, where Caxton was printing in Westminster in 1477. The immediate consequence was a great increase and distribution of Bibles, and greatly increased facilities for widespread popular controversies. The European world became a world of readers, to an extent that had never happened to any community in the past. And this sudden irrigation of the general mind with clearer ideas and more accessible information occurred just at a time when the church was confused and divided and not in a position to defend itself effectively, and when many princes were looking for means to weaken its hold upon the vast wealth it claimed in their dominions.

In Germany the attack upon the church gathered round the personality of an ex-monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546), who appeared in Wittenberg in 1517 offering disputations against various orthodox doctrines and practices. At first he disputed in Latin in the fashion of the Schoolmen. Then he took up the new weapon of the printed word and scattered his views far and wide in German addressed to the ordinary people. An attempt was made to suppress him as Huss had been suppressed, but the printing press had changed conditions and he had too many open and secret friends among the German princes for this fate to overtake him.

For now in this age of multiplying ideas and weakened faith there were many rulers who saw their advantage in breaking the religious ties between their people and Rome. They sought to make themselves in person the heads of a more nationalized religion. England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, North Germany and Bohemia, one after another, separated themselves from the Roman Communion. They have remained separated ever since.

A MAJOLICA DISH PAINED IN COLOURS
An allegory of the Church triumphant over heretics and infidels.
Italian (Urbino), dated 1543
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

The various princes concerned cared very little for the moral and intellectual freedom of their subjects. They used the religious doubts and insurgence of their peoples to strengthen them against Rome, but they tried to keep a grip upon the popular movement as soon as that rupture was achieved and a national church set up under the control of the crown. But there has always been a curious vitality in the teaching of Jesus, a direct appeal to righteousness and a man's self-respect over every loyalty and every subordination, lay or ecclesiastical. None of these princely churches broke off without also

breaking off a number of fragmentary sects that would admit the intervention of neither prince nor Pope between a man and his God. In England and Scotland, for example, there was a number of sects who now held firmly to the Bible as their one guide in life and belief. They refused the disciplines of a state church. In England these dissentients were the Non- conformists, who played a very large part in the polities of that country in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In England they carried their objection to a princely head to the church so far as to decapitate King Charles I (1649), and for eleven prosperous years England was a republic under Non-conformist rule.

The breaking away of this large section of Northern Europe from Latin Christendom is what is generally spoken of as the Reformation. But the shock and stress of these losses produced changes perhaps as profound in the Roman Church itself. The church was reorganized and a new spirit came into its life. One of the dominant figures in this revival was a young Spanish soldier, Inigo Lopez de Recalde, better known to the world as St. Ignatius of Loyola. After some romantic beginnings he became a priest (1538) and was permitted to found the Society of Jesus, a direct attempt to bring the generous and chivalrous traditions of military discipline into the service of religion. This Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, became one of the greatest teaching and missionary societies the world has ever seen. It carried Christianity to India, China and America. It arrested the rapid disintegration of the Roman Church. It raised the standard of education throughout the whole Catholic world; it raised the level of Catholic intelligence and quickened the Catholic conscience everywhere; it stimulated Protestant Europe to competitive educational efforts. The vigorous and aggressive Roman Catholic Church we know to-day is largely the product of this Jesuit revival.

THE EMPEROR CHARLES V

THE Holy Roman Empire came to a sort of climax in the reign of the Emperor Charles V. He was one of the most extraordinary monarchs that Europe has ever seen. For a time he had the air of being the greatest monarch since Charlemagne.

His greatness was not of his own making. It was largely the creation of his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian I (1459- 1519). Some families have fought, others have intrigued their way to world power; the Habsburgs married their way. Maximilian began his career with Austria, Styria, part of Alsace and other districts, the original Habsburg patrimony; he married — the lady's name scarcely matters to us — the Netherlands and Burgundy. Most of Burgundy slipped from him after his first wife's death, but the Netherlands he held. Then he tried unsuccessfully to marry Brittany. He became Emperor in succession to his father, Frederick III, in 1493, and married the duchy of Milan. Finally he married his son to the weak-minded daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Ferdinand and Isabella of Columbus, who not only reigned over a freshly united Spain and over Sardinia and the kingdom of the two Sicilies, but over all America west of Brazil. So it was that this Charles V, his grandson, inherited most of the American continent and between a third and a half of what the Turks had left of Europe. He succeeded to the Netherlands in 1506. When his grandfather Ferdinand died in 1516, he became practically king of the Spanish dominions, his mother being imbecile; and his grandfather Maximilian dying in 1519, he was in 1520 elected Emperor at the still comparatively tender age of twenty.

He was a fair young man with a not very intelligent face, a thick upper lip and a long clumsy chin. He found himself in a world of young and vigorous personalities. It was an age of brilliant young monarchs. Francis I had succeeded to the French throne in 1515 at the age of twenty-one, Henry VIII had become King of England in 1509 at eighteen. It was the age of Baber in India (1526-1530) and Suleiman the Magnificent in Turkey (1520), both exceptionally capable monarchs, and the Pope Leo X (1513) was also a very

distinguished Pope. The Pope and Francis I attempted to prevent the election of Charles as Emperor because they dreaded the concentration of so much power in the hands of one man. Both Francis I and Henry VIII offered themselves to the imperial electors. But there was now a long established tradition of Habsburg Emperors (since 1273), and some energetic bribery secured the election for Charles.

At first the young man was very much a magnificent puppet in the hands of his ministers. Then slowly he began to assert himself and take control. He began to realize something of the threatening complexities of his exalted position. It was a position as unsound as it was splendid.

From the very outset of his reign he was faced by the situation created by Luther's agitations in Germany. The Emperor had one reason for siding with the reformers in the opposition of the Pope to his election. But he had been brought up in Spain, that most Catholic of countries, and he decided against Luther. So he came into conflict with the Protestant princes and particularly the Elector of Saxony. He found himself in the presence of an opening rift that was to split the outworn fabric of Christendom into two contending camps. His attempts to close that rift were strenuous and honest and ineffective. There was an extensive peasant revolt in Germany which interwove with the general political and religious disturbance. And these internal troubles were complicated by attacks upon the Empire from east and west alike. On the west of Charles was his spirited rival, Francis I; to the east was the ever advancing Turk, who was now in Hungary, in alliance with Francis and clamouring for certain arrears of tribute from the Austrian dominions. Charles had the money and army of Spain at his disposal, but it was extremely difficult to get any effective support in money from Germany. His social and political troubles were complicated by financial distresses. He was forced to ruinous borrowing.

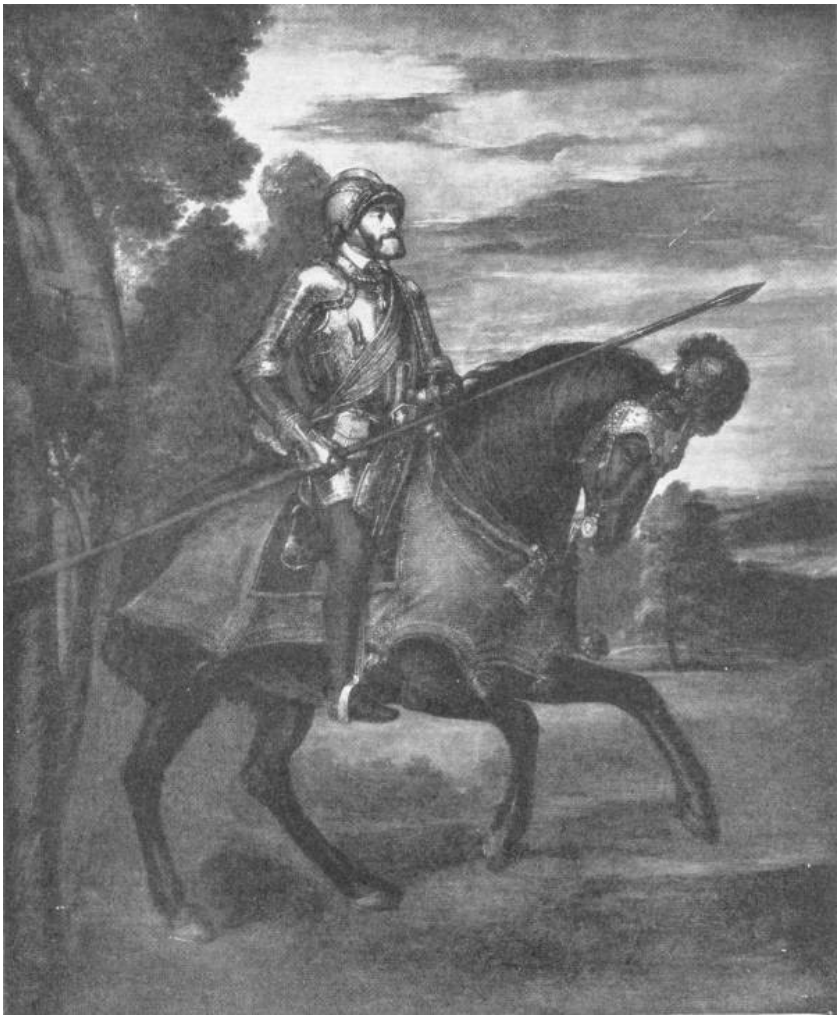

THE CHARLES V PORTRAIT BY TITIAN
(In the Gallery del Prado, Madrid)
Photo: Anderson

On the whole, Charles, in alliance with Henry VIII, was successful against Francis I and the Turk. Their chief battlefield was North Italy; the generalship was dull on both sides; their advances and retreats depended mainly on the arrival of reinforcements. The German army invaded France, failed to take Marseilles, fell back into Italy, lost Milan, and was besieged in Pavia. Francis I made a long

and unsuccessful siege of Pavia, was caught by fresh German forces, defeated, wounded and taken prisoner. But thereupon the Pope and Henry VIII, still haunted by the fear of his attaining excessive power, turned against Charles. The German troops in Milan, under the Constable of Bourbon, being unpaid, forced rather than followed their commander into a raid upon Rome. They stormed the city and pillaged it (1527). The Pope took refuge in the Castle of St. Angelo while the looting and slaughter went on. He bought off the German troops at last by the payment of four hundred thousand ducats. Ten years of such confused fighting impoverished all Europe. At last the Emperor found himself triumphant in Italy. In 1530, he was crowned by the Pope — he was the last German Emperor to be so crowned — at Bologna.

Meanwhile the Turks were making great headway in Hungary. They had defeated and killed the king of Hungary in 1526, they held Buda-Pesth, and in 1529 Suleiman the Magnificent very nearly took Vienna. The Emperor was greatly concerned by these advances, and did his utmost to drive back the Turks, but he found the greatest difficulty in getting the German princes to unite even with this formidable enemy upon their very borders. Francis I remained implacable for a time, and there was a new French war; but in 1538 Charles won his rival over to a more friendly attitude after ravaging the south of France. Francis and Charles then formed an alliance against the Turk. But the Protestant princes, the German princes who were resolved to break away from Rome, had formed a league, the Schmalkaldic League, against the Emperor, and in the place of a great campaign to recover Hungary for Christendom Charles had to turn his mind to the gathering internal struggle in Germany. Of that struggle he saw only the opening war. It was a struggle, a sanguinary irrational bickering of princes, for ascendancy, now flaming into war and destruction, now sinking back to intrigues and diplomacies; it was a snake's sack of princely policies that was to go on writhing incurably right into the nineteenth century and to waste and desolate Central Europe again and again.

The Emperor never seems to have grasped the true forces at work in these gathering troubles. He was for his time and station an exceptionally worthy man, and he seems to have taken the religious

dissensions that were tearing Europe into warring fragments as genuine theological differences. He gathered diets and councils in futile attempts at reconciliation. Formulæ and confessions were tried over. The student of German history must struggle with the details of the Religious Peace of Nuremberg, the settlement at the Diet of Ratisbon, the Interim of Augsburg, and the like. Here we do but mention them as details in the worried life of this culminating Emperor. As a matter of fact, hardly one of the multifarious princes and rulers in Europe seems to have been acting in good faith. The widespread religious trouble of the world, the desire of the common people for truth and social righteousness, the spreading knowledge of the time, all those things were merely counters in the imaginations of princely diplomacy. Henry VIII of England, who had begun his career with a book against heresy, and who had been rewarded by the Pope with the title of "Defender of the Faith," being anxious to divorce his first wife in favour of a young lady named Anne Boleyn, and wishing also to loot the vast wealth of the church in England, joined the company of Protestant princes in 1530. Sweden, Denmark and Norway had already gone over to the Protestant side.

The German religious war began in 1546, a few months after the death of Martin Luther. We need not trouble about the incidents of the campaign. The Protestant Saxon army was badly beaten at Lochau. By something very like a breach of faith Philip of Hesse, the Emperor's chief remaining antagonist, was caught and imprisoned, and the Turks were bought off by the promise of an annual tribute. In 1547, to the great relief of the Emperor, Francis I died. So by 1547 Charles got to a kind of settlement, and made his last efforts to effect peace where there was no peace. In 1552 all Germany was at war again, only a precipitate flight from Innsbruck saved Charles from capture, and in 1552, with the treaty of Passau, came another unstable equilibrium ....

Such is the brief outline of the politics of the Empire for thirty-two years. It is interesting to note how entirely the European mind was concentrated upon the struggle for European ascendancy. Neither Turks, French, English nor Germans had yet discovered any political interest in the great continent of America, nor any significance in the new sea routes to Asia. Great things were

happening in America; Cortez with a mere handful of men had conquered the great Neolithic empire of Mexico for Spain, Pizarro had crossed the Isthmus of Panama (1530) and subjugated another wonder-land, Peru. But as yet these events meant no more to Europe than a useful and stimulating influx of silver to the Spanish treasury.

It was after the treaty of Passau that Charles began to display his distinctive originality of mind. He was now entirely bored and disillusioned by his imperial greatness. A sense of the intolerable futility of these European rivalries came upon him. He had never been of a very sound constitution, he was naturally indolent and he was suffering greatly from gout. He abdicated. He made over all his sovereign rights in Germany to his brother Ferdinand, and Spain and the Netherlands he resigned to his son Philip. Then in a sort of magnificent dudgeon he retired to a monastery at Yuste, among the oak and chestnut forests in the hills to the north of the Tagus valley. There he died in 1558.

Much has been written in a sentimental vein of this retirement, this renunciation of the world by this tired majestic Titan, world-weary, seeking in an austere solitude his peace with God. But his retreat was neither solitary nor austere; he had with him nearly a hundred and fifty attendants: his establishment had all the splendour and indulgences without the fatigues or a court, and Philip II was a dutiful son to whom his father's advice was a command.

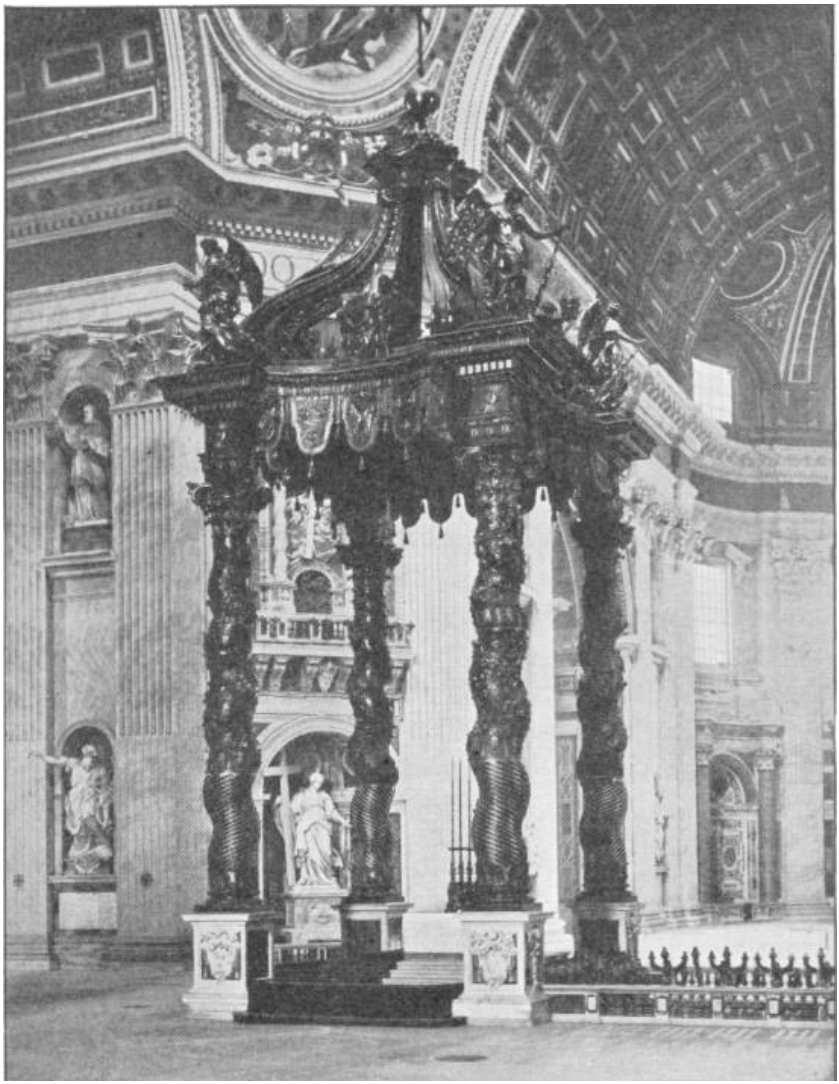

INTERIOR OF ST. PETER'S, ROME, SHOWING THE HIGH ALTAR
Photo: Alinari

And if Charles had lost his living interest in the administration of European affairs, there were other motives of a more immediate sort to stir him. Says Prescott: "In the almost daily correspondence between Quixada, or Gaztelu, and the Secretary of State at

Valladolid, there is scarcely a letter that does not turn more or less on the Emperor's eating or his illness. The one seems naturally to follow, like a running commentary, on the other. It is rare that such topics have formed the burden of communications with the department of state. It must have been no easy matter for the secretary to preserve his gravity in the perusal of despatches in which politics and gastronomy were so strangely mixed together. The courier from Valladolid to Lisbon was ordered to make a detour, so as to take Jarandilla in his route, and bring supplies to the royal table. On Thursdays he was to bring fish to serve for the jour maigre that was to follow. The trout in the neighbourhood Charles thought too small, so others of a larger size were to be sent from Valladolid. Fish of every kind was to his taste, as, indeed, was anything that in its nature or habits at all approached to fish. Eels, frogs, oysters, occupied an important place in the royal bill of fare. Potted fish, especially anchovies, found great favour with him; and he regretted that he had not brought a better supply of these from the Low Countries. On an eel-pasty he particularly doted." ...

In 1554 Charles had obtained a bull from Pope Julius III granting him a dispensation from fasting, and allowing him to break his fast early in the morning even when he was to take the sacrament.

Eating and doctoring! it was a return to elemental things. He had never acquired the habit of reading, but he would be read aloud to at meals after the fashion of Charlemagne, and would make what one narrator describes as a "sweet and heavenly commentary." He also amused himself with mechanical toys, by listening to music or sermons, and by attending to the imperial business that still came drifting in to him. The death of the Empress, to whom he was greatly attached, had turned his mind towards religion, which in his case took a punctilious and ceremonial form; every Friday in Lent he scourged himself with the rest of the monks with such good will as to draw blood. These exercises and the gout released a bigotry in Charles that had hitherto been restrained by considerations of policy. The appearance of Protestant teaching close at hand in Valladolid roused him to fury. "Tell the grand inquisitor and his council from me to be at their posts, and to lay the axe at the root of the evil before it spreads further." . .. He expressed a doubt whether it would not be

well, in so black an affair, to dispense with the ordinary course of justice, and to show no mercy; “lest the criminal, if pardoned, should have the opportunity of repeating his crime.” He recommended, as an example, his own mode or proceeding in the Netherlands, “where all who remained obstinate in their errors were burned alive, and those who were admitted to penitence were beheaded.”

And almost symbolical of his place and role in history was his preoccupation with funerals. He seems to have had an intuition that something great was dead in Europe and sorely needed burial, that there was a need to write Finis, overdue. He not only attended every actual funeral that was celebrated at Yuste, but he had services conducted for the absent dead, he held a funeral service in memory of his wife on the anniversary of her death, and finally he celebrated his own obsequies.

“The chapel was hung with black, and the blaze of hundreds of wax-lights was scarcely sufficient to dispel the darkness. The brethren in their conventual dress, and all the Emperor’s household clad in deep mourning, gathered round a huge catafalque, shrouded also in black, which had been raised in the centre of the chapel. The service for the burial of the dead was then performed; and, amidst the dismal wail of the monks, the prayers ascended for the departed spirit, that it might be received into the mansions of the blessed. The sorrowful attendants were melted to tears, as the image of their master’s death was presented to their minds — or they were touched, it may be, with compassion by this pitiable display of weakness. Charles, muffled in a dark mantle, and bearing a lighted candle in his hand, mingled with his household, the spectator of his own obsequies; and the doleful ceremony was concluded by his placing the taper in the hands of the priest, in sign of his surrendering up his soul to the Almighty.”

Within two months of this masquerade he was dead. And the brief greatness of the Holy Roman Empire died with him. His realm was already divided between his brother and his son. The Holy Roman Empire struggled on indeed to the days of Napoleon I but as an invalid and dying thing. To this day its unburied tradition still poisons the political air.

Prescott’s Appendix to Robertson’s *History of Charles V*.

THE AGE OF POLITICAL EXPERIMENTS; OF GRAND MONARCHY AND PARLIAMENTS AND REPUBLICANISM IN EUROPE

THE Latin Church was broken, the Holy Roman Empire was in extreme decay; the history of Europe from the opening of the sixteenth century onward is a story of peoples feeling their way darkly to some new method of government, better adapted to the new conditions that were arising. In the Ancient World, over long periods of time, there had been changes of dynasty and even changes of ruling race and language, but the form of government through monarch and temple remained fairly stable, and still more stable was the ordinary way of living. In this modern Europe since the sixteenth century the dynastic changes are unimportant, and the interest of history lies in the wide and increasing variety of experiments in political and social organization.

The political history of the world from the sixteenth century onward was, we have said, an effort, a largely unconscious effort, of mankind to adapt its political and social methods to certain new conditions that had now arisen. The effort to adapt was complicated by the fad that the conditions themselves were changing with a steadily increasing rapidity. The adaptation, mainly unconscious and almost always unwilling (for man in general hates voluntary change), has lagged more and more behind the alterations in conditions. From the sixteenth century onward the history of mankind is a story of political and social institutions becoming more and more plainly misfits, less comfortable and more vexatious, and of the slow reluctant realization of the need for a conscious and deliberate reconstruction of the whole scheme of human societies in the face of needs and possibilities new to all the former experiences of life.

What are these changes in the conditions of human life that have disorganized that balance of empire, priest, peasant and trader, with periodic refreshment by barbaric conquest, that has held human affairs in the Old World in a sort of working rhythm for more than a

hundred centuries?

They are manifold and various, for human affairs are multitudinously complex; but the main changes seem all to turn upon one cause, namely the growth and extension of a knowledge of the nature of things, beginning first of all in small groups of intelligent people and spreading at first slowly, and in the last five hundred years very rapidly, to larger and larger proportions of the general population.

But there has also been a great change in human conditions due to a change in the spirit of human life. This change has gone on side by side with the increase and extension of knowledge, and is subtly connected with it. There has been an increasing disposition to treat a life based on the common and more elementary desires and gratifications as unsatisfactory, and to seek relationship with and service and participation in a larger life. This is the common characteristic of all the great religions that have spread throughout the world in the last twenty odd centuries, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam alike. They have had to do with the spirit of man in a way that the older religions did not have to do. They are forces quite different in their nature and effect from the old fetishistic blood-sacrifice religions of priest and temple that they have in part modified and in part replaced. They have gradually evolved a self-respect in the individual and a sense of participation and responsibility in the common concerns of mankind that did not exist among the populations of the earlier civilizations.

The first considerable change in the conditions of political and social life was the simplification and extended use of writing in the ancient civilizations which made larger empires and wider political understandings practicable and inevitable. The next movement forward came with the introduction of the horse, and later on of the camel as a means of transport, the use of wheeled vehicles, the extension of roads and the increased military efficiency due to the discovery of terrestrial iron. Then followed the profound economic disturbances due to the device of coined money and the change in the nature of debt, proprietorship and trade due to this convenient but dangerous convention. The empires grew in size and range, and men's ideas grew likewise to correspond with these things. Came the

disappearance of local gods, the age of theocrasia, and the teaching of the great world religions. Came also the beginnings of reasoned and recorded history and geography, the first realization by man of his profound ignorance, and the first systematic search for knowledge.

For a time the scientific process which began so brilliantly in Greece and Alexandria was interrupted. The raids of the Teutonic barbarians, the westward drive of the Mongolian peoples, convulsive religious reconstruction and great pestilences put enormous strains upon political and social order. When civilization emerged again from this phase of conflict and confusion, slavery was no longer the basis of economic life; and the first paper-mills were preparing a new medium for collective information and co-operation in printed matter. Gradually at this point and that, the search for knowledge, the systematic scientific process, was resumed.

And now from the sixteenth century onward, as an inevitable by-product of systematic thought, appeared a steadily increasing series of inventions and devices affecting the intercommunication and interaction of men with one another. They all tended towards wider range of action, greater mutual benefits or injuries, and increased co-operation, and they came faster and faster. Men's minds had not been prepared for anything of the sort, and until the great catastrophes at the beginning of the twentieth century quickened men's minds, the historian has very little to tell of any intelligently planned attempts to meet the new conditions this increasing flow of inventions was creating. The history of mankind for the last four centuries is rather like that of an imprisoned sleeper, stirring clumsily and uneasily while the prison that restrains and shelters him catches fire, not waking but incorporating the crackling and warmth of the fire with ancient and incongruous dreams, than like that of a man consciously awake to danger and opportunity.

Since history is the story not of individual lives but of communities, it is inevitable that the inventions that figure most in the historical record are inventions affecting communications. In the sixteenth century the chief new things that we have to note are the appearance of printed paper and the sea-worthy, ocean-going sailing ship using the new device of the mariner's compass. The former

cheapened, spread, and revolutionized teaching, public information and discussion, and the fundamental operations of political activity. The latter made the round world one. But almost equally important was the increased utilization and improvement of guns and gunpowder which the Mongols had first brought westward in the thirteenth century. This destroyed the practical immunity of barons in their castles and of walled cities. Guns swept away feudalism. Constantinople fell to guns. Mexico and Peru fell before the terror of the Spanish guns.

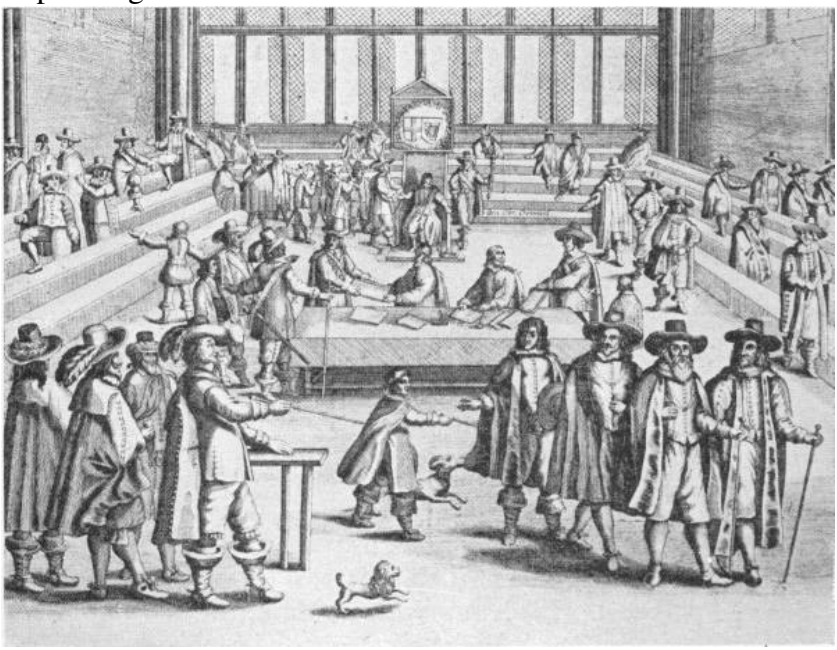

CROMWELL DISSOLVES THE LONG PARLIAMENT AND SO BECOMES AUTOCRAT OF THE ENGLISH REPUBLIC
(From a contemporary satirical print in the British Museum)

The seventeenth century saw the development of systematic scientific publication, a less conspicuous but ultimately far more pregnant innovation. Conspicuous among the leaders in this great forward step was Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) afterwards Lord Verulam, Lord Chancellor of England. He was the pupil and perhaps the mouthpiece of another Englishman; Dr. Gilbert, the experimental

philosopher of Colchester (1540-1603). This second Bacon, like the first, preached observation and experiment, and he used the inspiring and fruitful form of a Utopian story, *The New Atlantis*, to express his dream of a great service of scientific research.

Presently arose the Royal Society of London, the Florentine Society, and later other national bodies for the encouragement of research and the publication and exchange of knowledge. These European scientific societies became fountains not only of countless inventions but also of a destructive criticism of the grotesque theological history of the world that had dominated and crippled human thought for many centuries.

Neither the seventeenth nor the eighteenth century witnessed any innovations so immediately revolutionary in human conditions as printed paper and the ocean-going ship, but there was a steady accumulation of knowledge and scientific energy that was to bear its full fruits in the nineteenth century. The exploration and mapping of the world went on. Tasmania, Australia, New Zealand appeared on the map. In Great Britain in the eighteenth century coal coke began to be used for metallurgical purposes, leading to a considerable cheapening of iron and to the possibility of casting and using it in larger pieces than had been possible before, when it had been smelted with wood charcoal. Modern machinery dawned.

Like the trees of the celestial city, science bears bud and flower and fruit at the same time and continuously. With the onset of the nineteenth century the real fruition of science — which indeed henceforth may never cease — began. First came steam and steel, the railway, the great liner, vast bridges and buildings, machinery of almost limitless power, the possibility of a bountiful satisfaction of every material human need, and then, still more wonderful, the hidden treasures of electrical science were opened to men ....

We have compared the political and social life of man from the sixteenth century onward to that of a sleeping prisoner who lies and dreams while his prison burns about him. In the sixteenth century the European mind was still going on with its Latin Imperial dream, its dream of a Holy Roman Empire, united under a Catholic Church. But just as some uncontrollable element in our composition will insist at times upon introducing into our dreams the most absurd and

destructive comments, so thrust into this dream we find the sleeping face and craving stomach of the Emperor Charles V, while Henry VIII of England and Luther tear the unity of Catholicism to shreds.

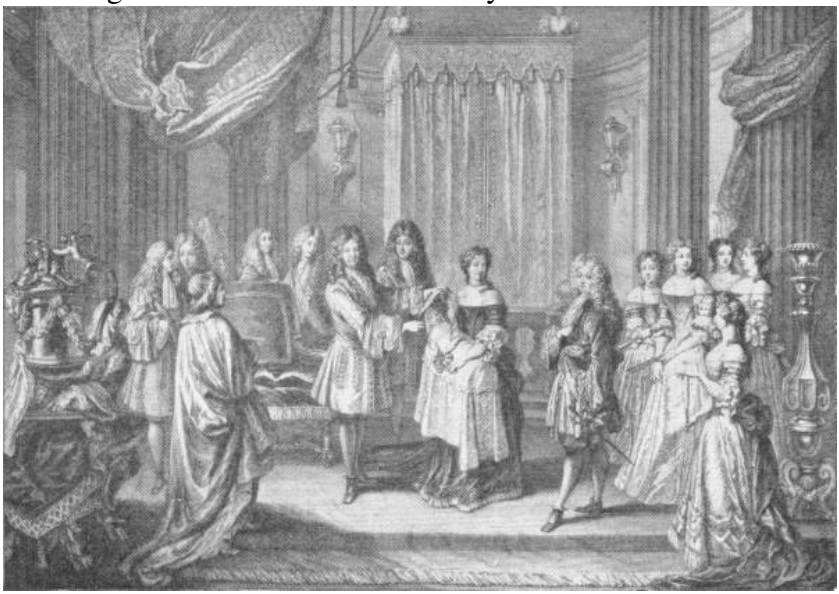

THE COURT AT VERSAILLES
(From the print after Watteau in the British Museum)

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the dream turned to personal monarchy. The history of nearly all Europe during this period tells with variations the story of an attempt to consolidate a monarchy, to make it absolute and to extend its power over weaker adjacent regions, and of the steady resistance, first of the landowners and then with the increase of foreign trade and home industry, of the growing trading and moneyed class, to the exaction and interference of the crown. There is no universal victory of either side; here it is the King who gets the upper hand while there it is the man of private property who beats the King. In one case we find a King becoming the sun and centre of his national world, while just over his borders a sturdy mercantile class maintains a republic. So wide a range of variation shows how entirely experimental, what local accidents, were all the various governments of this period.

A very common figure in these national dramas is the King's

minister, often in the still Catholic countries a prelate, who stands behind the King, serves him and dominates him by his indispensable services.

Here in the limits set to us it is impossible to tell these various national dramas in detail. The trading folk of Holland went Protestant and republican, and cast off the rule of Philip II of Spain, the son of the Emperor Charles V. In England Henry VIII and his minister Wolsey, Queen Elizabeth and her minister Burleigh, prepared the foundations of an absolutism that was wrecked by the folly of James I and Charles I. Charles I was beheaded for treason to his people (1649), a new turn in the political thought of Europe. For a dozen years (until 1660) Britain was a republic; and the crown was an unstable power, much overshadowed by Parliament, until George III (1760-1820) made a strenuous and partly successful effort to restore its predominance. The King of France, on the other hand, was the most successful of all the European Kings in perfecting monarchy. Two great ministers, Richelieu (1585-1642) and Mazarin (1602-1661), built up the power of the crown in that country, and the process was aided by the long reign and very considerable abilities of King Louis XIV, "the Grand Monarque" (1643-1715).

Louis XIV was indeed the pattern King of Europe. He was, within his limitations, an exceptionally capable King; his ambition was stronger than his baser passions, and he guided his country towards bankruptcy through the complication of a spirited foreign policy with an elaborate dignity that still extorts our admiration. His immediate desire was to consolidate and extend France to the Rhine and Pyrenees, and to absorb the Spanish Netherlands; his remoter view saw the French Kings as the possible successors of Charlemagne in a recast Holy Roman Empire. He made bribery a state method almost more important than warfare. Charles II of England was in his pay, and so were most of the Polish nobility, presently to be described. His money, or rather the money of the tax- paying classes in France, went everywhere. But his prevailing occupation was splendour. His great palace at Versailles with its salons, its corridors, its mirrors, its terraces and fountains and parks and prospects, was the envy and admiration of the world.

THE SACK OF A VILLAGE DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
(From Callot's "Miseres de la Guerre")

He provoked a universal imitation. Every king and princelet in Europe was building his own Versailles as much beyond his means as his subjects and credits would permit. Everywhere the nobility rebuilt or extended their chateaux to the new pattern. A great industry of beautiful and elaborate fabrics and furnishings developed. The luxurious arts flourished everywhere; sculpture in alabaster, faience, gilt woodwork, metal work, stamped leather, much music, magnificent painting, beautiful printing and bindings, fine crockery, fine vintages. Amidst the mirrors and fine furniture went a strange race of "gentlemen" in tall powdered wigs, silks and laces, poised upon high red heels, supported by amazing canes; and still more wonderful "ladies," under towers of powdered hair and wearing vast expansions of silk and satin sustained on wire. Through it all postured the great Louis, the sun of his world, unaware of the meagre and sulky and bitter faces that watched him from those lower darknesses to which his sunshine did not penetrate.

The German people remained politically divided throughout this period of the monarchies and experimental governments, and a considerable number of ducal and princely courts aped the splendours of Versailles on varying scales. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48), a devastating scramble among the Germans, Swedes and Bohemians for fluctuating political advantages, sapped the energies of Germany for a century. A map must show the crazy patchwork in which this struggle ended, a map of Europe according to the peace of Westphalia (1648). One sees a tangle of principalities, dukedoms, free states and the like, some partly in and partly out of the Empire. Sweden's arm, the reader will note, reached far into Germany; and except for a few islands of territory within the imperial boundaries France was still far from the Rhine. Amidst this patchwork the Kingdom of Prussia — it became a Kingdom in 1701 — rose steadily to prominence and sustained a series of successful wars.

Frederick the Great of Prussia (1740-86) had his Versailles at Potsdam, where his court spoke French, read French literature and rivalled the culture of the French King.

In 1714 the Elector of Hanover became King of England, adding one more to the list of monarchies half in and half out of the empire.

The Austrian branch of the descendants of Charles V retained the title of Emperor; the Spanish branch retained Spain. But now there was also an Emperor of the East again. After the fall of Constantinople (1453), the grand duke of Moscow, Ivan the Great (1462-1505), claimed to be heir to the Byzantine throne and adopted the Byzantine double-headed eagle upon his arms. His grandson, Ivan IV, Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584), assumed the imperial title of Cæsar (Tsar). But only in the latter half of the seventeenth century did Russia cease to seem remote and Asiatic to the European mind. The Tsar Peter the Great (1682-1725) brought Russia into the arena of Western affairs. He built a new capital for his empire, Petersburg upon the Neva, that played the part of a window between Russia and Europe, and he set up his Versailles at Peterhof eighteen miles away, employing a French architect who gave him a terrace, fountains, cascades, picture gallery, park and all the recognized appointments of Grand Monarchy. In Russia as in Prussia French became the language of the court.

Unhappily placed between Austria, Prussia and Russia was the Polish kingdom, an ill-organized state of great landed proprietors too jealous of their own individual grandeur to permit more than a nominal kingship to the monarch they elected. Her fate was division among these three neighbours, in spite of the efforts of France to retain her as an independent ally. Switzerland at this time was a group of republican cantons; Venice was a republic; Italy like so much of Germany was divided among minor dukes and princes. The Pope ruled like a prince in the papal states, too fearful now of losing the allegiance of the remaining Catholic princes to interfere between them and their subjects or to remind the world of the commonweal of Christendom. There remained indeed no common political idea in Europe at all; Europe was given over altogether to division and diversity.

All these sovereign princes and republics carried on schemes of aggrandizement against each other. Each one of them pursued a "foreign policy" of aggression against its neighbours and of aggressive alliances. We Europeans still live to-day in the last phase of this age of the multifarious sovereign states, and still suffer from the hatreds, hostilities and suspicions it engendered. The history of this time becomes more and more manifestly "gossip," more and more unmeaning and wearisome to a modern intelligence. You are told of how this war was caused by this King's mistress, and how the jealousy of one minister for another caused that. A tittle-tattle of bribes and rivalries disgusts the intelligent student. The more permanently significant fact is that in spite of the obstruction of a score of frontiers, reading and thought still spread and increased and inventions multiplied. The eighteenth century saw the appearance of a literature profoundly sceptical and critical of the courts and policies of the time. In such a book as Voltaire's *Candide* we have the expression of an infinite weariness with the planless confusion of the European world.

THE NEW EMPIRES OF THE EUROPEANS IN ASIA AND OVERSEAS

WHILE Central Europe thus remained divided and confused, the Western Europeans and particularly the Dutch, the Scandinavians, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the French and the British were extending the area of their struggles across the seas of all the world. The printing press had dissolved the political ideas of Europe into a vast and at first indeterminate fermentation, but that other great innovation, the ocean-going sailing ship, was inexorably extending the range of European experience to the furthermost limits of salt water.

The first overseas settlements of the Dutch and Northern Atlantic Europeans were not for colonization but for trade and mining. The Spaniards were first in the field; they claimed dominion over the whole of this new world of America. Very soon however the Portuguese asked for a share. The Pope — it was one of the last acts of Rome as mistress of the world — divided the new continent between these two first-comers, giving Portugal Brazil and everything else east of a line 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde islands, and all the rest to Spain (1494). The Portuguese at this time were also pushing overseas enterprise southward and eastward. In 1497 Vasco da Gama had sailed from Lisbon round the Cape to Zanzibar and then to Calicut in India. In 1515 there were Portuguese ships in Java and the Moluccas, and the Portuguese were setting up and fortifying trading stations round and about the coasts of the Indian Ocean. Mozambique, Goa, and two smaller possessions in India, Macao in China and a part of Timor are to this day Portuguese possessions.

The nations excluded from America by the papal settlement paid little heed to the rights of Spain and Portugal. The English, the Danes and Swedes, and presently the Dutch, were soon staking out claims in North America and the West Indies, and his Most Catholic Majesty of France heeded the papal settlement as little as any Protestant. The wars of Europe extended themselves to these claims

and possessions.

In the long run the English were the most successful in this scramble for overseas possessions. The Danes and Swedes were too deeply entangled in the complicated affairs of Germany to sustain effective expeditions abroad. Sweden was wasted upon the German

battlefields by a picturesque king, Gustavus Adolphus, the Protestant "Lion of the North." The Dutch were the heirs of such small settlements as Sweden made in America, and the Dutch were too near French aggressions to hold their own against the British. In the far East the chief rivals for empire were the British, Dutch and French, and in America the British, French and Spanish. The British had the supreme advantage of a water frontier, the "silver streak" of the English Channel, against Europe. The tradition of the Latin Empire entangled them least.

EUROPEANS TIGER HUNTING IN INDIA
(From the engraving of the picture by Zoffany in the British Museum)

France has always thought too much in terms of Europe. Throughout the eighteenth century she was wasting her opportunities of expansion in West and East alike in order to dominate Spain, Italy and the German confusion. The religious and political dissensions of Britain in the seventeenth century had driven many of the English to seek a permanent home in America. They struck root and increased and multiplied, giving the British a great advantage in the American

struggle. In 1756 and 1760 the French lost Canada to the British and their American colonists, and a few years later the British trading company found itself completely dominant over French, Dutch and Portuguese in the peninsula of India. The great Mongol Empire of Baber, Akbar and their successors had now far gone in decay, and the story of its practical capture by a London trading company, the British East India Company, is one of the most extraordinary episodes in the whole history of conquest.

THE LAST EFFORT AND FALL OF TIPPOO SULTAN
(From the engraving of the picture by Singleton in the British Museum)

This East India Company had been originally at the time of its incorporation under Queen Elizabeth no more than a company of sea adventurers. Step by step they had been forced to raise troops and arm their ships. And now this trading company, with its tradition of gain, found itself dealing not merely in spices and dyes and tea and jewels, but in the revenues and territories of princes and the destinies of India. It had come to buy and sell, and it found itself achieving a tremendous piracy. There was no one to challenge its proceedings. Is it any wonder that its captains and commanders and officials, nay,

even its clerks and common soldiers, came back to England loaded with spoils?

Men under such circumstances, with a great and wealthy land at their mercy, could not determine what they might or might not do. It was a strange land to them, with a strange sunlight; its brown people seemed a different race, outside their range of sympathy; its mysterious temples sustained fantastic standards of behaviour. Englishmen at home were perplexed when presently these generals and officials came back to make dark accusations against each other of extortions and cruelties. Upon Clive Parliament passed a vote of censure. He committed suicide in 1774. In 1788 Warren Hastings, a second great Indian administrator, was impeached and acquitted (1792). It was a strange and unprecedented situation in the world's history. The English Parliament found itself ruling over a London trading company, which in its turn was dominating an empire far greater and more populous than all the domains of the British crown. To the bulk of the English people India was a remote, fantastic, almost inaccessible land, to which adventurous poor young men went out, to return after many years very rich and very choleric old gentlemen. It was difficult for the English to conceive what the life of these countless brown millions in the eastern sunshine could be. Their imaginations declined the task. India remained romantically unreal. It was impossible for the English, therefore, to exert any effective supervision and control over the company's proceedings.

And while the Western European powers were thus fighting for these fantastic overseas empires upon every ocean in the world, two great land conquests were in progress in Asia. China had thrown off the Mongol yoke in 1360, and flourished under the great native dynasty of the Mings until 1644. Then the Manchus, another Mongol people, reconquered China and remained masters of China until 1912. Meanwhile Russia was pushing East and growing to greatness in the world's affairs. The rise of this great central power of the old world, which is neither altogether of the East nor altogether of the West, is one of the utmost importance to our human destiny. Its expansion is very largely due to the appearance of a Christian steppe people, the Cossacks, who formed a barrier between the feudal agriculture of Poland and Hungary to the west and the Tartar to the

east. The Cossacks were the wild east of Europe, and in many ways not unlike the wild west of the United States in the middle nineteenth century. All who had made Russia too hot to hold them, criminals as well as the persecuted innocent, rebellious serfs, religious secretaries, thieves, vagabonds, murderers, sought asylum in the southern steppes and there made a fresh start and fought for life and freedom against Pole, Russian and Tartar alike. Doubtless fugitives from the Tartars to the east also contributed to the Cossack mixture. Slowly these border folk were incorporated in the Russian imperial service, much as the highland clans of Scotland were converted into regiments by the British government. New lands were offered them in Asia. They became a weapon against the dwindling power of the Mongolian nomads, first in Turkestan and then across Siberia as far as the Amur.

The decay of Mongol energy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is very difficult to explain. Within two or three centuries from the days of Jengis and Timurlane Central Asia had relapsed from a period of world ascendancy to extreme political impotence. Changes of climate, unrecorded pestilences, infections of a malarial type, may have played their part in this recession — which may be only a temporary recession measured by the scale of universal history — of the Central Asian peoples. Some authorities think that the spread of Buddhist teaching from China also had a pacifying influence upon them. At any rate, by the sixteenth century the Mongol, Tartar and Turkish peoples were no longer pressing outward, but were being invaded, subjugated and pushed back both by Christian Russia in the west and by China in the east.

All through the seventeenth century the Cossacks were spreading eastward from European Russia, and settling wherever they found agricultural conditions. Cordons of forts and stations formed a moving frontier to these settlements to the south, where the Turkomans were still strong and active; to the north-east, however, Russia had no frontier until she reached right to the Pacific ....

THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

THE third quarter of the eighteenth century thus saw the remarkable and unstable spectacle of a Europe divided against itself, and no longer with any unifying political or religious idea, yet through the immense stimulation of men's imaginations by the printed book, the printed map, and the opportunity of the new ocean-going shipping, able in a disorganized and contentious manner to dominate all the coasts of the world. It was a planless, incoherent ebullition of enterprise due to temporary and almost accidental advantages over the rest of mankind. By virtue of these advantages this new and still largely empty continent of America was peopled mainly from Western European sources, and South Africa and Australia and New Zealand marked down as prospective homes for a European population.

The motive that had sent Columbus to America and Vasco da Gama to India was the perennial first motive of all sailors since the beginning of things — trade. But while in the already populous and productive East the trade motive remained dominant, and the European settlements remained trading settlements from which the European inhabitants hoped to return home to spend their money, the Europeans in America, dealing with communities at a very much lower level of productive activity, found a new inducement for persistence in the search for gold and silver. Particularly did the mines of Spanish America yield silver. The Europeans had to go to America not simply as armed merchants but as prospectors, miners, searchers after natural products, and presently as planters. In the north they sought furs. Mines and plantations necessitated settlements. They obliged people to set up permanent overseas homes. Finally in some cases, as when the English Puritans went to New England in the early seventeenth { 336}century to escape religious persecution, when in the eighteenth Oglethorpe sent people from the English debtors' prisons to Georgia, and when in the end of the eighteenth the Dutch sent orphans to the Cape of Good Hope, the Europeans frankly crossed the seas to find new homes for good. In the nineteenth century, and especially after the coming of the

steamship, the stream of European emigration to the new empty lands of America and Australia rose for some decades to the scale of a great migration.

So there grew up permanent overseas populations of Europeans, and the European culture was transplanted to much larger areas than those in which it had been developed. These new communities bringing a ready-made civilization with them to these new lands grew up, as it were, unplanned and unperceived; the statecraft of Europe did not foresee them, and was unprepared with any ideas about their treatment. The politicians and ministers of Europe continued to regard them as essentially expeditionary establishments, sources of revenue, "possessions" and "dependencies," long after their peoples had developed a keen sense of their separate social life. And also they continued to treat them as helplessly subject to the mother country long after the population had spread inland out of reach of any effectual punitive operations from the sea.

Because until right into the nineteenth century, it must be remembered, the link of all these overseas empires was the oceangoing sailing ship. On land the swiftest thing was still the horse, and the cohesion and unity of political systems on land was still limited by the limitations of horse communications.

Now at the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century the northern two-thirds of North America was under the British crown. France had abandoned America. Except for Brazil, which was Portuguese, and one or two small islands and areas in French, British, Danish and Dutch hands, Florida, Louisiana, California and all America to the south was Spanish. It was the British colonies south of Maine and Lake Ontario that first demonstrated the inadequacy of the sailing ship to hold overseas populations together in one political system.

These British colonies were very miscellaneous in their origin and character. There were French, Swedish and Dutch settlements as well as British; there were British Catholics in Maryland and British ultra-Protestants in New England, and while the New Englanders farmed their own land and denounced slavery, the British in Virginia and the south were planters employing a swelling multitude of imported negro slaves. There was no natural common unity in such states. To

get from one to the other might mean a coasting voyage hardly less tedious than the transatlantic crossing. But the union that diverse origin and natural conditions denied the British Americans was forced upon them by the selfishness and stupidity of the British government in London. They were taxed without any voice in the spending of the taxes; their trade was sacrificed to British interests; the highly profitable slave trade was maintained by the British government in spite of the opposition of the Virginians who — though quite willing to hold and use slaves — feared to be swamped by an ever-growing barbaric black population.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
(From a painting by Gilbert Stuart)

Britain at that time was lapsing towards an intenser form of monarchy, and the obstinate personality of George III (1760- 1820) did much to force on a struggle between the home and the colonial governments.

The conflict was precipitated by legislation which favoured the London East India Company at the expense of the American shipper. Three cargoes of tea which were imported under the new conditions were thrown overboard in Boston harbour by a band of men disguised as Indians (1773). Fighting only began in 1775 when the British government attempted to arrest two of the American leaders at Lexington near Boston. The first shots were fired in Lexington by the British; the first fighting occurred at Concord.

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL, NEAR BOSTON
(From the engraving of the picture by John Trumbull in the British Museum)

So the American War of Independence began, though for more than a year the colonists showed themselves extremely unwilling to sever their links with the mother land. It was not until the middle of 1776 that the Congress of the insurgent states issued "The Declaration of Independence." George Washington, who like many of the leading colonists of the time had had a military training in the

wars against the French, was made commander-in-chief. In 1777 a British general, General Burgoyne, in an attempt to reach New York from Canada, was defeated at Freemans Farm and obliged to surrender at Saratoga. In the same year the French and Spanish declared war upon Great Britain, greatly hampering her sea communications. A second British army under General Cornwallis was caught in the Yorktown peninsula in Virginia and obliged to capitulate in 1781. In 1783 peace was made in Paris, and the Thirteen Colonies from Maine to Georgia became a union of independent sovereign States. So the United States of America came into existence. Canada remained loyal to the British flag.

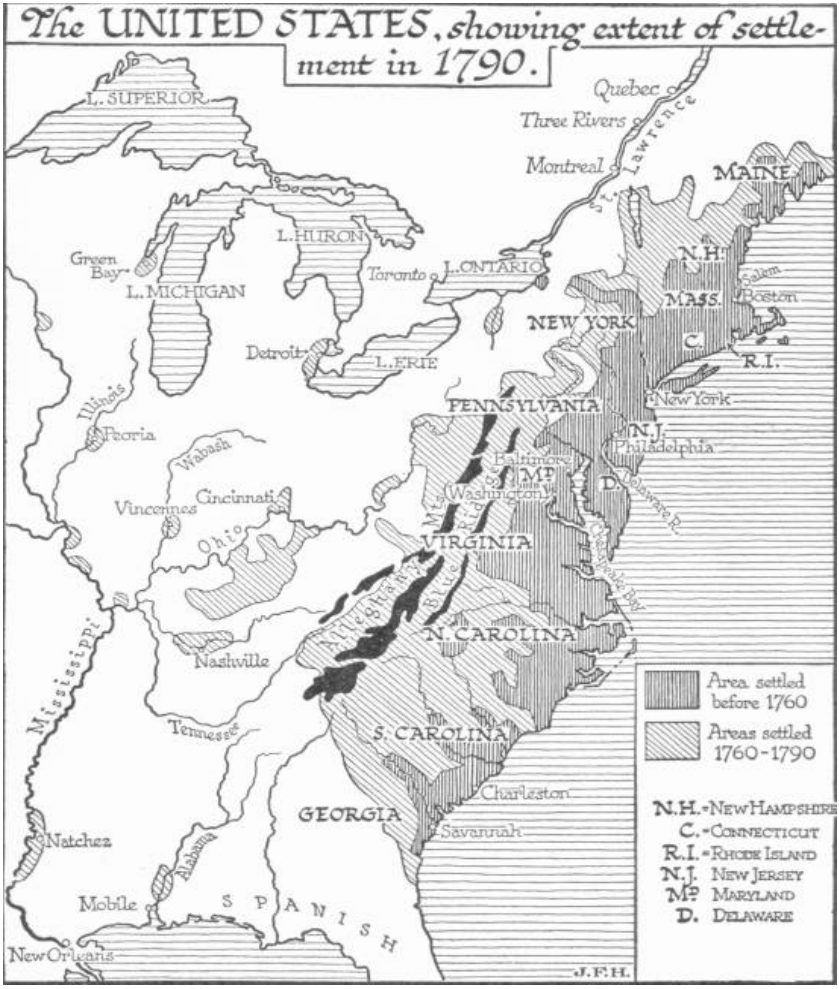

For four years these States had only a very feeble central government under certain Articles of Confederation, and they seemed destined to break up into separate independent communities. Their immediate separation was delayed by the hostility of the British and a certain aggressiveness on the part of the French which brought home to them the immediate dangers of division. A Constitution was drawn up and ratified in 1788 establishing a more efficient Federal government with a President holding very considerable powers, and the weak sense of national unity was invigorated by a second war with Britain in 1812. Nevertheless the area covered by the States was so wide and their interests so diverse at that time, that — given only the means of communication then available — a disintegration of the Union into separate states on the European scale of size was merely a question of time. Attendance at Washington meant a long, tedious and insecure journey for the senators and congressmen of the remoter districts, and the mechanical impediments to the diffusion of a common education and a common literature and intelligence were practically insurmountable. Forces were at work in the world however that were to arrest the process of differentiation altogether. Presently came the river steamboat and then the railway and the telegraph to save the United States from fragmentation, and weave its dispersed people together again into the first of great modern nations.

Twenty-two years later the Spanish colonies in America were to follow the example of the Thirteen and break their connection with Europe. But being more dispersed over the continent and separated by great mountainous chains and deserts and forests and by the Portuguese Empire of Brazil, they did not achieve a union among themselves. They became a constellation of republican states, very prone at first to wars among themselves and to revolutions.

Brazil followed a rather different line towards the inevitable separation. In 1807 the French armies under Napoleon had occupied the mother country of Portugal, and the monarchy had fled to Brazil. From that time on until they separated, Portugal was rather a dependency of Brazil than Brazil of Portugal. In 1822 Brazil declared itself a separate Empire under Pedro I, a son of the Portuguese King.

But the new world has never been very favourable to monarchy. In 1889 the Emperor of Brazil was shipped off quietly to Europe, and the United States of Brazil fell into line with the rest of republican America.

LV

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE RESTORATION OF MONARCHY IN FRANCE

BRITAIN had hardly lost the Thirteen Colonies in America before a profound social and political convulsion at the very heart of Grand Monarchy was to remind Europe still more vividly of the essentially temporary nature of the political arrangements of the world.

We have said that the French monarchy was the most successful of the personal monarchies in Europe. It was the envy and model of a multitude of competing and minor courts. But it flourished on a basis of injustice that led to its dramatic collapse. It was brilliant and aggressive, but it was wasteful of the life and substance of its common people. The clergy and nobility were protected from taxation by a system of exemption that threw the whole burden of the state upon the middle and lower classes. The peasants were ground down by taxation; the middle classes were dominated and humiliated by the nobility.

In 1787 this French monarchy found itself bankrupt and obliged to call representatives of the different classes of the realm into consultation upon the perplexities of defective income and excessive expenditure. In 1789 the States General, a gathering of the nobles, clergy and commons, roughly equivalent to the earlier form of the British Parliament, was called together at Versailles. It had not assembled since 1610. For all that time France had been an absolute monarchy. Now the people found a means of expressing their long fermenting discontent. Disputes immediately broke out between the three estates, due to the resolve of the Third Estate, the Commons, to control the Assembly. The Commons got the better of these disputes and the States General became a National Assembly, clearly resolved to keep the crown in order, as the British Parliament kept the British crown in order. The king (Louis XVI) prepared for a struggle and brought up troops from the provinces. Whereupon Paris and France revolted.

The collapse of the absolute monarchy was very swift. The grim-looking prison of the Bastille was stormed by the people of Paris,

and the insurrection spread rapidly throughout France. In the east and north-west provinces many chateaux belonging to the nobility were burnt by the peasants, their title-deeds carefully destroyed, and the owners murdered or driven away. In a month the ancient and decayed system of the aristocratic order had collapsed. Many of the leading princes and courtiers of the queen's party fled abroad. A provisional city government was set up in Paris and in most of the other large cities, and a new armed force, the National Guard, a force designed primarily and plainly to resist the forces of the crown, was brought into existence by these municipal bodies. The National Assembly found itself called upon to create a new political and social system for a new age.

It was a task that tried the powers of that gathering to the utmost. It made a great sweep of the chief injustices of the absolutist regime; it abolished tax exemptions, serfdom, aristocratic titles and privileges and sought to establish a constitutional monarchy in Paris. The king abandoned Versailles and its splendours and kept a diminished state in the palace of the Tuileries in Paris.

For two years it seemed that the National Assembly might struggle through to an effective modernized government. Much of its work was sound and still endures, if much was experimental and had to be undone. Much was ineffective. There was a clearing up of the penal code; torture, arbitrary imprisonment and persecutions for heresy were abolished. The ancient provinces of France, Normandy, Burgundy and the like gave place to eighty departments. Promotion to the highest ranks in the army was laid open to men of every class. An excellent and simple system of law courts was set up, but its value was much vitiated by having the judges appointed by popular election for short periods of time. This made the crowd a sort of final court of appeal, and the judges, like the members of the Assembly, were forced to play to the gallery. And the whole vast property of the church was seized and administered by the state; religious establishments not engaged in education or works of charity were broken up, and the salaries of the clergy made a charge upon the nation. This in itself was not a bad thing for the lower clergy in France, who were often scandalously underpaid in comparison with the richer dignitaries. But in addition the choice of priests and

bishops was made elective, which struck at the very root idea of the Roman Church, which centred everything upon the Pope, and in which all authority is from above downward. Practically the National Assembly wanted at one blow to make the church in France Protestant, in organization if not in doctrine. Everywhere there were disputes and conflicts between the state priests created by the National Assembly and the recalcitrant (non-juring) priests who were loyal to Rome.

In 1791 the experiment of Constitutional monarchy in France was brought to an abrupt end by the action of the king and queen, working in concert with their aristocratic and monarchist friends abroad. Foreign armies gathered on the Eastern frontier and one night in June the king and queen and their children slipped away from the Tuileries and fled to join the foreigners and the aristocratic exiles. They were caught at Varennes and brought back to Paris, and an France flamed up into a passion of patriotic republicanism. A Republic was proclaimed, open war with Austria and Prussia ensued, and the king was tried and executed (January, 1793) on the model already set by England, for treason to his people.

And now followed a strange phase in the history of the French people. There arose a great flame of enthusiasm for France and the Republic. There was to be an end to compromise at home and abroad; at home royalists and every form of disloyalty were to be stamped out; abroad France was to be the protector and helper of all revolutionaries. All Europe, all the world, was to become Republican. The youth of France poured into the Republican armies; a new and wonderful song spread through the land, a song that still warms the blood like wine, the Marseillaise. Before that chant and the leaping columns of French bayonets and their enthusiastically served guns the foreign armies rolled back; before the end of 1792 the French armies had gone far beyond the utmost achievements of Louis XIV; everywhere they stood on foreign soil. They were in Brussels, they had overrun Savoy, they had raided to Mayence; they had seized the Scheldt from Holland. Then the French Government did an unwise thing. It had been exasperated by the expulsion of its representative from England upon the execution of Louis, and it declared war against England. It was an unwise thing to do, because

the revolution which had given France a new enthusiastic infantry and a brilliant artillery released from its aristocratic officers and many cramping conditions had destroyed the discipline of the navy, and the English were supreme upon the sea. And this provocation united all England against France, whereas there had been at first a very considerable liberal movement in Great Britain in sympathy with the revolution.

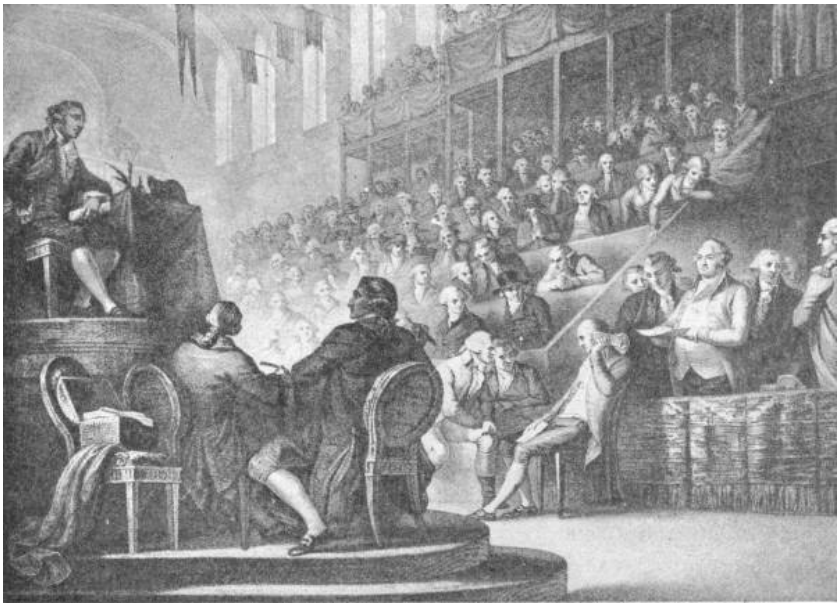

THE TRIAL OF LOUIS XVI
(From a print in the British Museum)

Of the fight that France made in the next few years against a European coalition we cannot tell in any detail. She drove the Austrians for ever out of Belgium, and made Holland a republic. The Dutch fleet, frozen in the Texel, surrendered to a handful of cavalry without firing its guns. For some time the French thrust towards Italy was hung up, and it was only in 1796 that a new general, Napoleon Bonaparte, led the ragged and hungry republican armies in triumph across Piedmont to Mantua and Verona. Says C. F. Atkinson, "What astonished the Allies most of all was the number and the velocity of the Republicans. These improvised armies had in fact nothing to

delay them. Tents were unprocurable for want of money, untransportable for want of the enormous number of wagons that would have been required, and also unnecessary, for the discomfort that would have caused wholesale desertion in professional armies was cheerfully borne by the men of 1793- 94. Supplies for armies of then unheard-of size could not be carried in convoys, and the French soon became familiar with 'living on the country.' Thus 1793 saw the birth of the modern system of war — rapidity of movement, full development of national strength, bivouacs, requisitions and force as against cautious manœuvring, small professional armies, tents and full rations, and chicane. The first represented the decision-compelling spirit, the second the spirit of risking little to gain a little ... ."

And while these ragged hosts of enthusiasts were chanting the Marseillaise and fighting for *la France*, manifestly never quite clear in their minds whether they were looting or liberating the countries into which they poured, the republican enthusiasm in Paris was spending itself in a far less glorious fashion. The revolution was now under the sway of a fanatical leader, Robespierre. This man is difficult to judge; he was a man of poor physique, naturally timid, and a prig. But he had that most necessary gift for power, faith. He set himself to save the Republic as he conceived it, and he imagined it could be saved by no other man than he. So that to keep in power was to save the Republic. The living spirit of the Republic, it seemed, had sprung from a slaughter of royalists and the execution of the king. There were insurrections; one in the west, in the district of La Vendée, where the people rose against the conscription and against the dispossession of the orthodox clergy, and were led by noblemen and priests; one in the south, where Lyons and Marseilles had risen and the royalists of Toulon had admitted an English and Spanish garrison. To which there seemed no more effectual reply than to go on killing royalists.

The Revolutionary Tribunal went to work, and a steady slaughtering began. The invention of the guillotine was opportune to this mood. The queen was guillotined, most of Robespierre's antagonists were guillotined, atheists who argued that there was no Supreme Being were guillotined; day by day, week by week, this

infernal new machine chopped off heads and more heads and more. The reign of Robespierre lived, it seemed, on blood; and needed more and more, as an opium-taker needs more and more opium.

THE EXECUTION OF MARIE ANTOINETTE, QUEEN OF FRANCE, OCTOBER 16, 1793
(From a print in the British Museum)

Finally in the summer of 1794 Robespierre himself was overthrown and guillotined. He was succeeded by a Directory of five men which carried on the war of defence abroad and held France together at home for five years. Their reign formed a curious interlude in this history of violent changes. They took things as they found them. The propagandist zeal of the revolution carried the French armies into Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, south Germany and north Italy. Everywhere kings were expelled and republics set up. But such propagandist zeal as animated the Directorate did not prevent the looting of the treasures of the liberated peoples to relieve the financial embarrassment of the French Government. Their wars became less and less the holy wars of freedom, and more and more like the aggressive wars of the ancient regime. The last feature of

Grand Monarchy that France was disposed to discard was her tradition of foreign policy. One discovers it still as vigorous under the Directorate as if there had been no revolution.

Unhappily for France and the world a man arose who embodied in its intensest form this national egotism of the French. He gave that country ten years of glory and the humiliation of a final defeat. This was that same Napoleon Bonaparte who had led the armies of the Directory to victory in Italy.

Throughout the five years of the Directorate he had been scheming and working for self-advancement. Gradually he clambered to supreme power. He was a man of severely limited understanding but of ruthless directness and great energy. He had begun life as an extremist of the school of Robespierre; he owed his first promotion to that side; but he had no real grasp of the new forces that were working in Europe. His utmost political imagination carried him to a belated and tawdry attempt to restore the Western Empire. He tried to destroy the remains of the old Holy Roman Empire, intending to replace it by a new one centring upon Paris. The Emperor in Vienna ceased to be the Holy Roman Emperor and became simply Emperor of Austria. Napoleon divorced his French wife in order to marry an Austrian princess.

He became practically monarch of France as First Consul in 1799, and he made himself Emperor of France in 1804 in direct imitation of Charlemagne. He was crowned by the Pope in Paris, taking the crown from the Pope and putting it upon his own head himself as Charlemagne had directed. His son was crowned King of Rome.

For some years Napoleon's reign was a career of victory. He conquered most of Italy and Spain, defeated Prussia and Austria, and dominated all Europe west of Russia. But he never won the command of the sea from the British and his fleets sustained a conclusive defeat inflicted by the British Admiral Nelson at Trafalgar (1805). Spain rose against him in 1808 and a British army under Wellington thrust the French armies slowly northward out of the peninsula. In 1811 Napoleon came into conflict with the Tsar Alexander I, and in 1812 he invaded Russia with a great conglomerate army of 600,000 men, that was defeated and largely destroyed by the Russians and the Russian winter. Germany rose

against him, Sweden turned against him. The French armies were beaten back and at Fontainebleau Napoleon abdicated (1814). He was exiled to Elba, returned to France for one last effort in 1815 and was defeated by the allied British, Belgians and Prussians at Waterloo. He died a British prisoner at St. Helena in 1821.

The forces released by the French revolution were wasted and finished. A great Congress of the victorious allies met at Vienna to restore as far as possible the state of affairs that the great storm had rent to pieces. For nearly forty years a sort of peace, a peace of exhausted effort, was maintained in Europe.

In his article, "French Revolutionary Wars," in the Encyclopædia Britannica.

LVI

THE UNEASY PEACE IN EUROPE THAT FOLLOWED THE FALL OF NAPOLEON

TWO main causes prevented that period from being a complete social and international peace, and prepared the way for the cycle of wars between 1854 and 1871. The first of these was the tendency of the royal courts concerned, towards the restoration of unfair privilege and interference with freedom of thought and writing and teaching. The second was the impossible system of boundaries drawn by the diplomatists of Vienna.

The inherent disposition of monarchy to march back towards past conditions was first and most particularly manifest in Spain. Here even the Inquisition was restored. Across the Atlantic the Spanish colonies had followed the example of the United States and revolted against the European Great Power System, when Napoleon set his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne in 1810. The George Washington of South America was General Bolivar. Spain was unable to suppress this revolt, it dragged on much as the United States War of Independence had dragged on, and at last the suggestion was made by Austria, in accordance with the spirit of the Holy Alliance, that the European monarch should assist Spain in this struggle. This was opposed by Britain in Europe, but it was the prompt action of President Monroe of the United States in 1823 which conclusively warned off this projected monarchist restoration. He announced that the United States would regard any extension of the European system in the Western Hemisphere as a hostile act. Thus arose the Monroe Doctrine, the doctrine that there must be no extension of extra- American government in America, which has kept the Great Power system out of America for nearly a hundred years and permitted the new states of Spanish America to work out their destinies along their own lines.

But if Spanish monarchism lost its colonies, it could at least, under the protection of the Concert of Europe, do what it chose in Europe. A popular insurrection in Spain was crushed by a French army in 1823, with a mandate from a European congress, and

simultaneously Austria suppressed a revolution in Naples.

In 1824 Louis XVIII died, and was succeeded by Charles X. Charles set himself to destroy the liberty of the press and universities, and to restore absolute government; the sum of a billion francs was voted to compensate the nobles for the chateau burnings and sequestrations of 1789. In 1830 Paris rose against this embodiment of the ancient regime, and replaced him by Louis Philippe, the son of that Philip, Duke of Orleans, who was executed during the Terror. The other continental monarchies, in face of the open approval of the revolution by Great Britain and a strong liberal ferment in Germany and Austria, did not interfere in this affair. After all, France was still a monarchy. This man Louis Philippe (1830-48) remained the constitutional King of France for eighteen years.

Such were the uneasy swayings of the peace of the Congress of Vienna, which were provoked by the reactionary proceedings of the monarchists. The stresses that arose from the unscientific boundaries planned by the diplomatists at Vienna gathered force more deliberately, but they were even more dangerous to the peace of mankind. It is extraordinarily inconvenient to administer together the affairs of peoples speaking different languages and so reading different literatures and having different general ideas, especially if those differences are exacerbated by religious disputes. Only some strong mutual interest, such as the common defensive needs of the Swiss mountaineers, can justify a close linking of peoples of dissimilar languages and faiths; and even in Switzerland there is the utmost local autonomy. When, as in Macedonia, populations are mixed in a patchwork of villages and districts, the cantonal system is imperatively needed. But if the reader will look at the map of Europe as the Congress of Vienna drew it, he will see that this gathering seems almost as if it had planned the maximum of local exasperation.

It destroyed the Dutch Republic, quite needlessly, it lumped together the Protestant Dutch with the French-speaking Catholics of the old Spanish (Austrian) Netherlands, and set up a kingdom of the Netherlands. It handed over not merely the old republic of Venice, but all of North Italy as far as Milan to the German-speaking Austrians. French-speaking Savoy it combined with pieces of Italy to restore the kingdom of Sardinia. Austria and Hungary, already a

sufficiently explosive mixture of discordant nationalities, Germans, Hungarians, Czecho-Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs, Roumanians, and now Italians, was made still more impossible by confirming Austria's Polish acquisitions of 1772 and 1795. The Catholic and republican-spirited Polish people were chiefly given over to the less civilized rule of the Greek-orthodox Tsar, but important districts went to Protestant Prussia. The Tsar was also confirmed in his acquisition of the entirely alien Finns. The very dissimilar Norwegian and Swedish peoples were bound together under one king. Germany, the reader will see, was left in a particularly dangerous state of muddle. Prussia and Austria were both partly in and partly out of a German confederation, which included a multitude of minor states. The King of Denmark came into the German confederation by virtue of certain German-speaking possessions in Holstein. Luxembourg was included in the German confederation, though its ruler was also King of the Netherlands, and though many of its peoples talked French.

Here was a complete disregard of the fact that the people who talk German and base their ideas on German literature, the people who talk Italian and base their ideas on Italian literature, and the people who talk Polish and base their ideas on Polish literature, will all be far better off and most helpful and least obnoxious to the rest of mankind if they conduct their own affairs in their own idiom within the ring-fence of their own speech. Is it any wonder that one of the most popular songs in Germany during this period declared that wherever the German tongue was spoken, there was the German Fatherland!

PORTRAIT OF NAPOLEON (CORONATION)
(From a print in the British Museum)

In 1830 French-speaking Belgium, stirred up by the current revolution in France, revolted against its Dutch association in the kingdom of the Netherlands. The powers, terrified at the possibilities

of a republic or of annexation to France, hurried in to pacify this situation, and gave the Belgians a monarch, Leopold I of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. There were also ineffectual revolts in Italy and Germany in 1830, and a much more serious one in Russian Poland. A republican government held out in Warsaw for a year against Nicholas I (who succeeded Alexander in 1825), and was then stamped out of existence with great violence and cruelty. The Polish language was banned, and the Greek Orthodox church was substituted for the Roman Catholic as the state religion ....

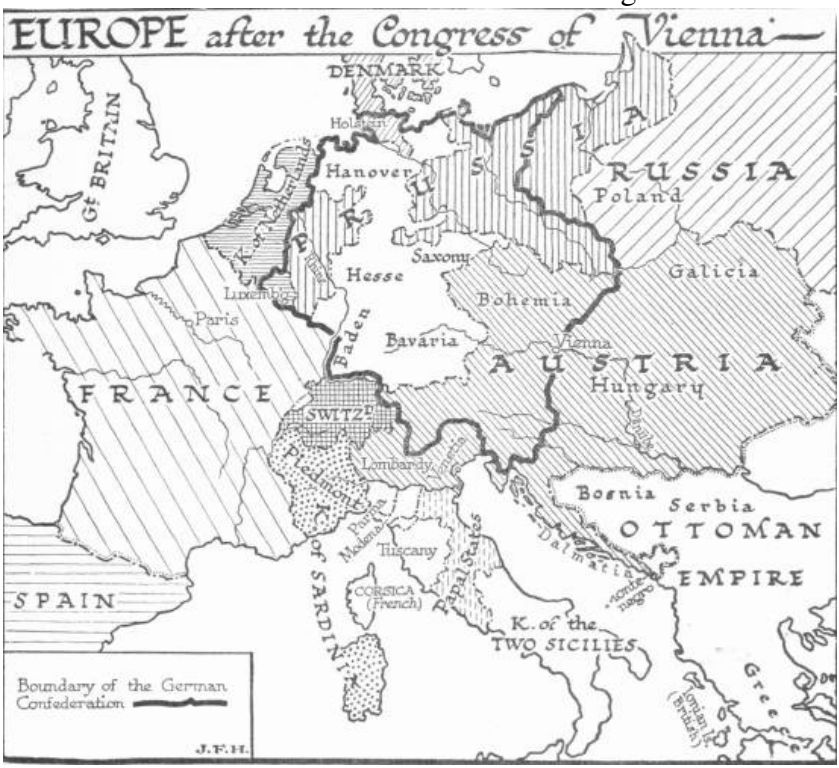

In 1821 there was an insurrection of the Greeks against the Turks. For six years they fought a desperate war, while the governments of Europe looked on. Liberal opinion protested against this inactivity; volunteers from every European country joined the insurgents, and at last Britain, France and Russia took joint action. The Turkish fleet was destroyed by the French and English at the battle of Navarino (1827), and the Tsar invaded Turkey. By the treaty of Adrianople

(1829) Greece was declared free, but she was not permitted to resume her ancient republican traditions. A German king was found for Greece, one Prince Otto of Bavaria, and Christian governors were set up in the Danubian provinces (which are now Roumania) and Serbia (a part of the Jugo-Slav region). Much blood had still to run however before the Turk was altogether expelled from these lands.

LVII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIAL KNOWLEDGE

THROUGHOUT the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the opening years of the nineteenth century, while these conflicts of the powers and princes were going on in Europe, and the patchwork of the treaty of Westphalia (1648) was changing kaleidoscopically into the patchwork of the treaty of Vienna (1815), and while the sailing ship was spreading European influence throughout the world, a steady growth of knowledge and a general clearing up of men's ideas about the world in which they lived was in progress in the European and Europeanized world.

It went on disconnected from political life, and producing throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries no striking immediate results in political life. Nor was it affecting popular thought very profoundly during this period. These reactions were to come later, and only in their full force in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was a process that went on chiefly in a small world of prosperous and independent-spirited people. Without what the English call the "private gentleman," the scientific process could not have begun in Greece, and could not have been renewed in Europe. The universities played a part but not a leading part in the philosophical and scientific thought of this period. Endowed learning is apt to be timid and conservative learning, lacking in initiative and resistent to innovation, unless it has the spur of contact with independent minds.

We have already noted the formation of the Royal Society in 1662 and its work in realizing the dream of Bacon's *New Atlantis*. Throughout the eighteenth century there was much clearing up of general ideas about matter and motion, much mathematical advance, a systematic development of the use of optical glass in microscope and telescope, a renewed energy in classificatory natural history, a great revival of anatomical science. The science of geology — foreshadowed by Aristotle and anticipated by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) — began its great task of interpreting the Record of the

Rocks.

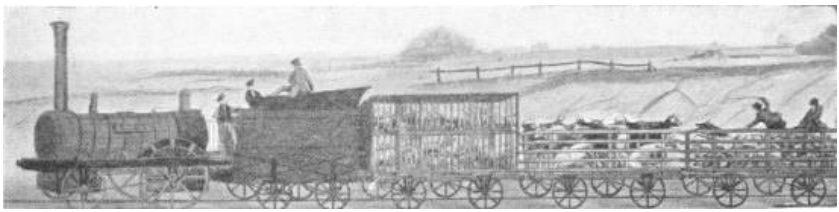

EARLY ROLLING STOCK ON THE LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER RAILWAY IN THE FIRST DAYS OF THE RAILWAY

The progress of physical science reacted upon metallurgy. Improved metallurgy, affording the possibility of a larger and bolder handling of masses of metal and other materials, reacted upon practical inventions. Machinery on a new scale and in a new abundance appeared to revolutionize industry.

In 1804 Trevithick adapted the Watt engine to transport and made the first locomotive. In 1825 the first railway, between Stockton and Darlington, was opened, and Stephenson's "Rocket," with a thirteen-ton train, got up to a speed of forty-four miles per hour. From 1830 onward railways multiplied. By the middle of the century a network of railways had spread all over Europe.

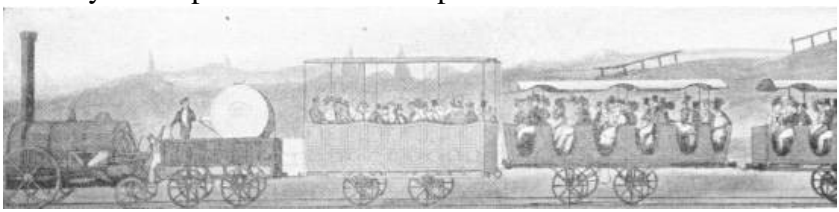

EARLY TRAVELLING ON THE LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER RAILWAY, 1833

Here was a sudden change in what had long been a fixed condition of human life, the maximum rate of land transport. After the Russian disaster, Napoleon travelled from near Vilna to Paris in 312 hours. This was a journey of about 1,400 miles. He was travelling with every conceivable advantage, and he averaged under 5 miles an hour. An ordinary traveller could not have done this distance in twice the

time. These were about the same maximum rates of travel as held good between Rome and Gaul in the first century A.D. Then suddenly came this tremendous change. The railways reduced this journey for any ordinary traveller to less than forty-eight hours. That is to say, they reduced the chief European distances to about a tenth of what they had been. They made it possible to carry out administrative work in areas ten times as great as any that had hitherto been workable under one administration. The full significance of that possibility in Europe still remains to be realized. Europe is still netted in boundaries drawn in the horse and road era. In America the effects were immediate. To the United States of America, sprawling westward, it meant the possibility of a continuous access to Washington, however far the frontier travelled across the continent. It meant unity, sustained on a scale that would otherwise have been impossible.

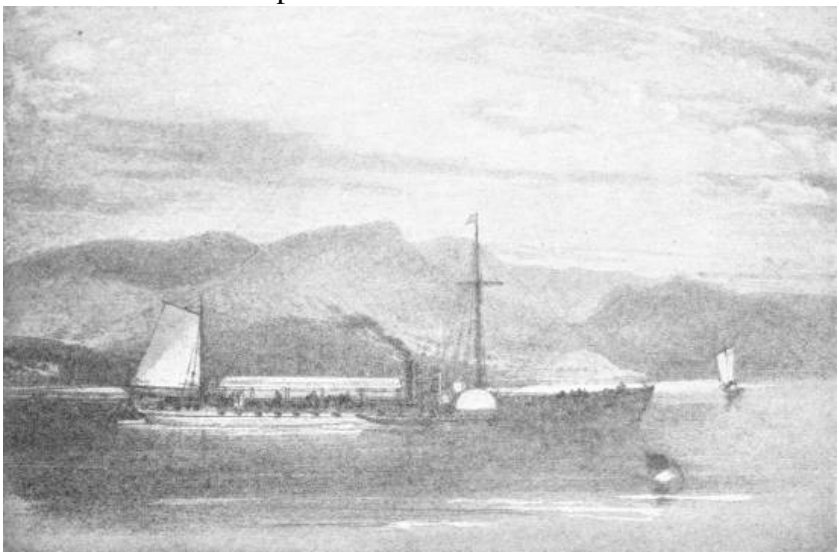

THE STEAMBOAT: *CLERMONT*, 1807, U.S.A.

The steamboat was, if anything, a little ahead of the steam engine in its earlier phases. There was a steamboat, the *Charlotte Dundas*, on the Firth of Clyde Canal in 1802, and in 1807 an American named Fulton had a steamer, the Clermont, with British-built engines, upon the Hudson River above New York. The first steamship to put to sea

was also an American, the Phœnix, which went from New York (Hoboken) to Philadelphia. So, too, was the first ship using steam (she also had sails) to cross the Atlantic, the Savannah (1819). All these were paddle-wheel boats and paddle-wheel boats are not adapted to work in heavy seas. The paddles smash too easily, and the boat is then disabled. The screw steamship followed rather slowly. Many difficulties had to be surmounted before the screw was a practicable thing. Not until the middle of the century did the tonnage of steamships upon the sea begin to overhaul that of sailing ships. After that the evolution in sea transport was rapid. For the first time men began to cross the seas and oceans with some certainty as to the date of their arrival. The transatlantic crossing, which had been an uncertain adventure of several weeks — which might stretch to months — was accelerated, until in 1910 it was brought down, in the case of the fastest boats, to under five days, with a practically notifiable hour of arrival.

Concurrently with the development of steam transport upon land and sea a new and striking addition to the facilities of human intercourse arose out of the investigations of Volta, Galvani and Faraday into various electrical phenomena. The electric telegraph came into existence in 1835. The first underseas cable was laid in 1851 between France and England. In a few years the telegraph system had spread over the civilized world, and news which had hitherto travelled slowly from point to point became practically simultaneous throughout the earth.

These things, the steam railway and the electric telegraph, were to the popular imagination of the middle nineteenth century the most striking and revolutionary of inventions, but they were only the most conspicuous and clumsy first fruits of a far more extensive process. Technical knowledge and skill were developing with an extraordinary rapidity, and to an extraordinary extent measured by the progress of any previous age. Far less conspicuous at first in everyday life, but finally far more important, was the extension of man's power over various structural materials. Before the middle of the eighteenth century iron was reduced from its ores by means of wood charcoal, was handled in small pieces, and hammered and wrought into shape. It was material for a craftsman. Quality and

treatment were enormously dependent upon the experience and sagacity of the individual iron-worker. The largest masses of iron that could be dealt with under those conditions amounted at most (in the sixteenth century) to two or three tons. (There was a very definite upward limit, therefore, to the size of cannon.) The blast-furnace rose in the eighteenth century and developed with the use of coke. Not before the eighteenth century do we find rolled sheet iron (1728) and rolled rods and bars (1783). Nasmyth's steam hammer came as late as 1838.

The ancient world, because of its metallurgical inferiority, could not use steam. The steam engine, even the primitive pumping engine, could not develop before sheet iron was available. The early engines seem to the modern eye very pitiful and clumsy bits of ironmongery, but they were the utmost that the metallurgical science of the time could do. As late as 1856 came the Bessemer process, and presently (1864) the open-hearth process, in which steel and every sort of iron could be melted, purified and cast in a manner and upon a scale hitherto unheard of. To-day in the electric furnace one may see tons of incandescent steel swirling about like boiling milk in a saucepan. Nothing in the previous practical advances of mankind is comparable in its consequences to the complete mastery over enormous masses of steel and iron and over their texture and quality which man has now achieved. The railways and early engines of all sorts were the mere first triumphs of the new metallurgical methods. Presently came ships of iron and steel, vast bridges, and a new way of building with steel upon a gigantic scale. Men realized too late that they had planned their railways with far too timid a gauge, that they could have organized their travelling with far more steadiness and comfort upon a much bigger scale.

Before the nineteenth century there were no ships in the world much over 2,000 tons burthen; now there is nothing wonderful about a 50,000-ton liner. There are people who sneer at this kind of progress as being a progress in "mere size," but that sort of sneering merely marks the intellectual limitations of those who indulge in it. The great ship or the steel-frame building is not, as they imagine, a magnified version of the small ship or building of the past; it is a thing different in kind, more lightly and strongly built, of finer and

stronger materials; instead of being a thing of precedent and rule-of-thumb, it is a thing of subtle and intricate calculation. In the old house or ship, matter was dominant — the material and its needs had to be slavishly obeyed; in the new, matter had been captured, changed, coerced. Think of the coal and iron and sand dragged out of the banks and pits, wrenched, wrought, molten and cast, to be flung at last, a slender glittering pinnacle of steel and glass, six hundred feet above the crowded city!

We have given these particulars of the advance in man's knowledge of the metallurgy of steel and its results by way of illustration. A parallel story could be told of the metallurgy of copper and tin, and of a multitude of metals, nickel and aluminium to name but two, unknown before the nineteenth century dawned. It is in this great and growing mastery over substances, over different sorts of glass, over rocks and plasters and the like, over colours and textures, that the main triumphs of the mechanical revolution have thus far been achieved. Yet we are still in the stage of the first fruits in the matter. We have the power, but we have still to learn how to use our power. Many of the first employments of these gifts of science have been vulgar, tawdry, stupid or horrible. The artist and the adaptor have still hardly begun to work with the endless variety of substances now at their disposal.

Parallel with this extension of mechanical possibilities the new science of electricity grew up. It was only in the eighties of the nineteenth century that this body of enquiry began to yield results to impress the vulgar mind. Then suddenly came electric light and electric traction, and the transmutation of forces, the possibility of sending power, that could be changed into mechanical motion or light or heat as one chose, along a copper wire, as water is sent along a pipe, began to come through to the ideas of ordinary people....

The British and French were at first the leading peoples in this great proliferation of knowledge; but presently the Germans, who had learnt humility under Napoleon, showed such zeal and pertinacity in scientific enquiry as to overhaul these leaders. British science was largely the creation of Englishmen and Scotchmen working outside the ordinary centres of erudition.

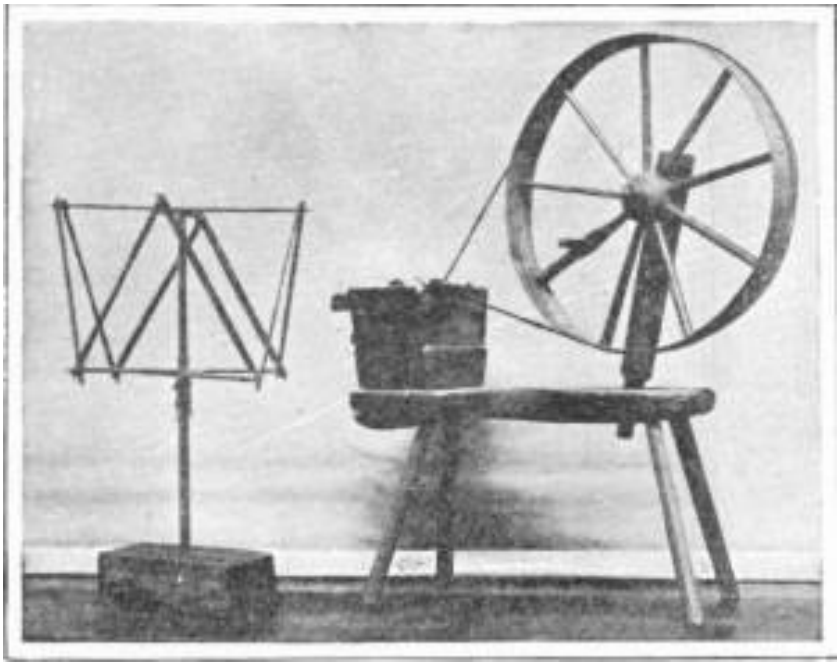

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SPINNING WHEEL
In the Ipswich Museum

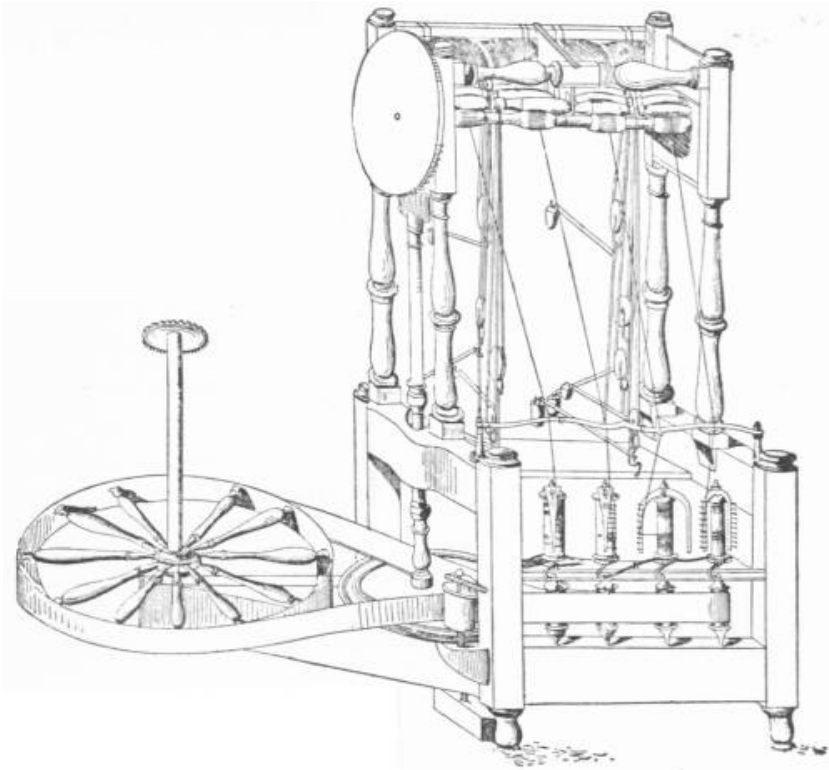

MODEL OF ARKWRIGHT'S SPINNING JENNY, 1769
From the specifications in the Patent Office

The universities of Britain were at this time in a state of educational retrogression, largely given over to a pedantic conning of the Latin and Greek classics. French education, too, was dominated by the classical tradition of the Jesuit schools, and consequently it was not difficult for the Germans to organize a body of investigators, small indeed in relation to the possibilities of the case, but large in proportion to the little band of British and French inventors and experimentalists. And though this work of research and experiment was making Britain and France the most rich and powerful countries in the world, it was not making scientific and inventive men rich and powerful. There is a necessary unworldliness about a sincere scientific man; he is too preoccupied with his research to plan and scheme how to make money out of it. The economic exploitation of

his discoveries falls very easily and naturally, therefore, into the hands of a more acquisitive type; and so we find that the crops of rich men which every fresh phase of scientific and technical progress has produced in Great Britain, though they have not displayed quite the same passionate desire to insult and kill the goose that laid the national golden eggs as the scholastic and clerical professions, have been quite content to let that profitable creature starve. Inventors and discoverers came by nature, they thought, for cleverer people to profit by.

In this matter the Germans were a little wiser. The German "learned" did not display the same vehement hatred of the new learning. They permitted its development. The German business man and manufacturer again had not quite the same contempt for the man of science as had his British competitor. Knowledge, these Germans believed, might be a cultivated crop, responsive to fertilizers. They did concede, therefore, a certain amount of opportunity to the scientific mind; their public expenditure on scientific work was relatively greater, and this expenditure was abundantly rewarded. By the latter half of the nineteenth century the German scientific worker had made German a necessary language for every science student who wished to keep abreast with the latest work in his department, and in certain branches, and particularly in chemistry, Germany acquired a very great superiority over her western neighbours. The scientific effort of the sixties and seventies in Germany began to tell after the eighties, and the German gained steadily upon Britain and France in technical and industrial prosperity.

A fresh phase in the history of invention opened when in the eighties a new type of engine came into use, an engine in which the expansive force of an explosive mixture replaced the expansive force of steam. The light, highly efficient engines that were thus made possible were applied to the automobile, and developed at last to reach such a pitch of lightness and efficiency as to render flight — long known to be possible — a practical achievement. A successful flying machine — but not a machine large enough to take up a human body — was made by Professor Langley of the Smithsonian Institute of Washington as early as 1897. By 1909 the aeroplane was available for human locomotion. There had seemed to be a pause in

the increase of human speed with the perfection of railways and automobile road traction, but with the flying machine came fresh reductions in the effective distance between one point of the earth's surface and another. In the eighteenth century the distance from London to Edinburgh was an eight days' journey; in 1918 the British Civil Air Transport Commission reported that the journey from London to Melbourne, halfway round the earth, would probably in a few years' time be accomplished in that same period of eight days.

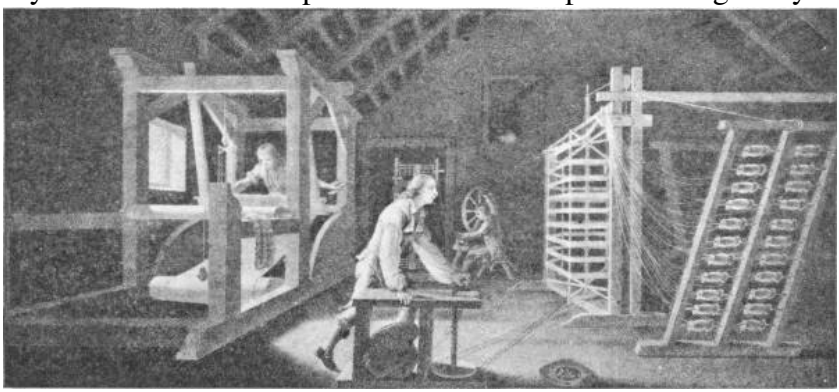

AN EARLY WEAVING MACHINE
From an engraving by W. Hincks in the British Museum

Too much stress must not be laid upon these striking reductions in the time distances of one place from another. They are merely one aspect of a much profounder and more momentous enlargement of human possibility. The science of agriculture and agricultural chemistry, for instance, made quite parallel advances during the nineteenth century. Men learnt so to fertilize the soil as to produce quadruple and quintuple the crops got from the same area in the seventeenth century. There was a still more extraordinary advance in medical science; the average duration of life rose, the daily efficiency increased, the waste of life through ill-health diminished.

Now here altogether we have such a change in human life as to constitute a fresh phase of history. In a little more than a century this mechanical revolution has been brought about. In that time man made a stride in the material conditions of his life vaster than he had

done during the whole long interval between the palæolithic stage and the age of cultivation, or between the days of Pepi in Egypt and those of George III. A new gigantic material framework for human affairs has come into existence. Clearly it demands great readjustments of our social, economical and political methods. But these readjustments have necessarily waited upon the development of the mechanical revolution, and they are still only in their opening stage to-day.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

THERE is a tendency in many histories to confuse together what we have here called the mechanical revolution, which was an entirely new thing in human experience arising out of the development of organized science, a new step like the invention of agriculture or the discovery of metals, with something else, quite different in its origins, something for which there was already an historical precedent, the social and financial development which is called the *industrial revolution*. The two processes were going on together, they were constantly reacting upon each other, but they were in root and essence different. There would have been an industrial revolution of sorts if there had been no coal, no steam, no machinery; but in that case it would probably have followed far more closely upon the lines of the social and financial developments of the later years of the Roman Republic. It would have repeated the story of dispossessed free cultivators, gang labour, great estates, great financial fortunes, and a socially destructive financial process. Even the factory method came before power and machinery. Factories were the product not of machinery, but of the "division of labour." Drilled and sweated workers were making such things as millinery cardboard boxes and furniture, and colouring maps and book illustrations and so forth, before even water-wheels had been used for industrial purposes. There were factories in Rome in the days of Augustus. New books, for instance, were dictated to rows of copyists in the factories of the book-sellers. The attentive student of Defoe and of the political pamphlets of Fielding will realize that the idea of herding poor people into establishments to work collectively for their living was already current in Britain before the close of the seventeenth century. There are intimations of it even as early as More's *Utopia* (1516). It was a social and not a mechanical development.

Up to past the middle of the eighteenth century the social and economic history of western Europe was in fact retreading the path along which the Roman state had gone in the last three centuries B.C. But the political disunions of Europe, the political convulsions against monarchy, the recalcitrance of the common folk and perhaps

also the greater accessibility of the western European intelligence to mechanical ideas and inventions, turned the process into quite novel directions. Ideas of human solidarity, thanks to Christianity, were far more widely diffused in the newer European world, political power was not so concentrated, and the man of energy anxious to get rich turned his mind, therefore, very willingly from the ideas of the slave and of gang labour to the idea of mechanical power and the machine.

The mechanical revolution, the process of mechanical invention and discovery, was a new thing in human experience and it went on regardless of the social, political, economic and industrial consequences it might produce. The industrial revolution, on the other hand, like most other human affairs, was and is more and more profoundly changed and deflected by the constant variation in human conditions caused by the mechanical revolution. And the essential difference between the amassing of riches, the extinction of small farmers and small business men, and the phase of big finance in the latter centuries of the Roman Republic on the one hand, and the very similar concentration of capital in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the other, lies in the profound difference in the character of labour that the mechanical revolution was bringing about. The power of the old world was human power; everything depended ultimately upon the driving power of human muscle, the muscle of ignorant and subjugated men. A little animal muscle, supplied by draft oxen, horse traction and the like, contributed. Where a weight had to be lifted, men lifted it; where a rock had to be quarried, men chipped it out; where a field had to be ploughed, men and oxen ploughed it; the Roman equivalent of the steamship was the galley with its bank of sweating rowers. A vast proportion of mankind in the early civilizations were employed in purely mechanical drudgery. At its onset, power-driven machinery did not seem to promise any release from such unintelligent toil. Great gangs of men were employed in excavating canals, in making railway cuttings and embankments, and the like. The number of miners increased enormously. But the extension of facilities and the output of commodities increased much more. And as the nineteenth century went on, the plain logic of the new situation asserted itself more clearly. Human beings were no longer wanted as a source of mere

indiscriminated power. What could be done mechanically by a human being could be done faster and better by a machine. The human being was needed now only where choice and intelligence had to be exercised. Human beings were wanted only as human beings. The drudge, on whom all the previous civilizations had rested, the creature of mere obedience, the man whose brains were superfluous, had become unnecessary to the welfare of mankind.

INCIDENT IN THE DAYS OF THE SLAVE TRADE
From a print after Morland in the British Museum

This was as true of such ancient industries as agriculture and mining as it was of the newest metallurgical processes. For ploughing, sowing and harvesting, swift machines came forward to do the work of scores of men. The Roman civilization was built upon cheap and degraded human beings; modern civilization is being rebuilt upon cheap mechanical power. For a hundred years power has been getting cheaper and labour dearer. If for a generation or so machinery has had to wait its turn in the mine, it is simply because for a time men were cheaper than machinery.

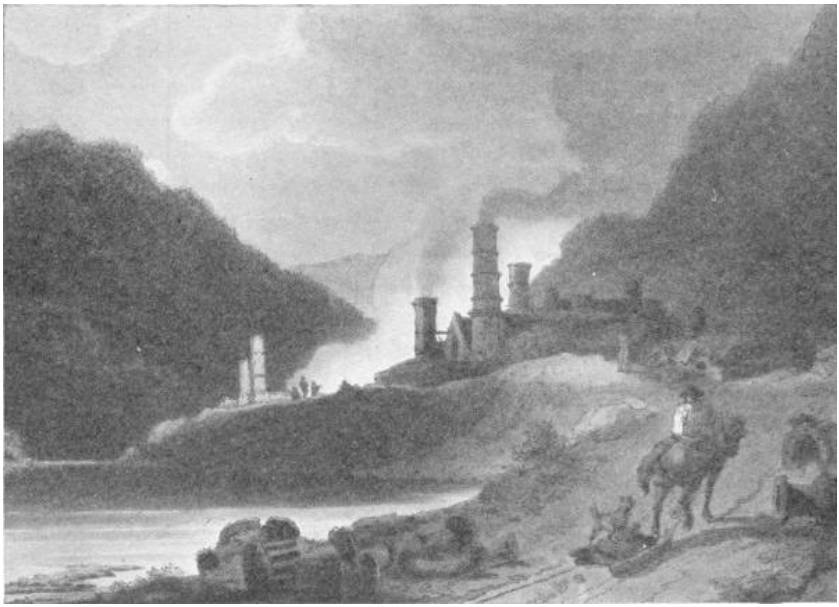

EARLY FACTORY, IN COLEBROOKDALE
From a print the British Museum

Now here was a change-over of quite primary importance in human affairs. The chief solicitude of the rich and of the ruler in the old civilization had been to keep up a supply of drudges. As the nineteenth century went on, it became more and more plain to the intelligent directive people that the common man had now to be something better than a drudge. He had to be educated — if only to secure "industrial efficiency." He had to understand what he was about. From the days of the first Christian propaganda, popular education had been smouldering in Europe, just as it had smouldered in Asia wherever Islam has set its foot, because of the necessity of making the believer understand a little of the belief by which he is saved, and of enabling him to read a little in the sacred books by which his belief is conveyed. Christian controversies, with their competition for adherents, ploughed the ground for the harvest of popular education. In England, for instance, by the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century, the disputes of the sects and the necessity of catching adherents young had produced a series of competing

educational organizations for children, the church "National" schools, the dissenting "British" schools, and even Roman Catholic elementary schools. The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of rapid advance in popular education throughout all the Westernized world. There was no parallel advance in the education of the upper classes — some advance, no doubt, but nothing to correspond — and so the great gulf that had divided that world hitherto into the readers and the non-reading mass became little more than a slightly perceptible difference in educational level. At the back of this process was the mechanical revolution, apparently regardless of social conditions, but really insisting inexorably upon the complete abolition of a totally illiterate class throughout the world.

The economic revolution of the Roman Republic had never been clearly apprehended by the common people of Rome. The ordinary Roman citizen never saw the changes through which he lived, clearly and comprehensively as we see them. But the industrial revolution, as it went on towards the end of the nineteenth century, was more and more distinctly *seen* as one whole process by the common people it was affecting, because presently they could read and discuss and communicate, and because they went about and saw things as no commonalty had ever done before.

LIX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IDEAS

THE institutions and customs and political ideas of the ancient civilizations grew up slowly, age by age, no man designing and no man foreseeing. It was only in that great century of human adolescence, the sixth century B.C., that men began to think clearly about their relations to one another, and first to question and first propose to alter and rearrange the established beliefs and laws and methods of human government.

We have told of the glorious intellectual dawn of Greece and Alexandria, and how presently the collapse of the slave- holding civilizations and the clouds of religious intolerance and absolutist government darkened the promise of that beginning. The light of fearless thinking did not break through the European obscurity again effectually until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We have tried to show something of the share of the great winds of Arab curiosity and Mongol conquest in this gradual clearing of the mental skies of Europe. And at first it was chiefly material knowledge that increased. The first fruits of the recovered manhood of the race were material achievements and material power. The science of human relationship, of individual and social psychology, of education and of economics, are not only more subtle and intricate in themselves but also bound up inextricably with much emotional matter. The advances made in them have been slower and made against greater opposition. Men will listen dispassionately to the most diverse suggestions about stars or molecules, but ideas about our ways of life touch and reflect upon everyone about us.

And just as in Greece the bold speculations of Plato came before Aristotle's hard search for fact, so in Europe the first political enquiries of the new phase were put in the form of "Utopian" stories, directly imitated from Plato's *Republic* and his *Laws*. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* is a curious imitation of Plato that bore fruit in a new English poor law. The Neapolitan Campanella's *City of the Sun* was more fantastic and less fruitful.

By the end of the seventeenth century we find a considerable and growing literature of political and social science was being produced. Among the pioneers in this discussion was John Locke, the son of an English republican, an Oxford scholar who first directed his attention to chemistry and medicine. His treatises on government, toleration and education show a mind fully awake to the possibilities of social reconstruction. Parallel with and a little later than John Locke in England, Montesquieu (1689-1755) in France subjected social, political and religious institutions to a searching and fundamental analysis. He stripped the magical prestige from the absolutist monarchy in France. He shares with Locke the credit for clearing away many of the false ideas that had hitherto prevented deliberate and conscious attempts to reconstruct human society.

The generation that followed him in the middle and later decades of the eighteenth century was boldly speculative upon the moral and intellectual clearings he had made. A group of brilliant writers, the "Encyclopædists," mostly rebel spirits from the excellent schools of the Jesuits, set themselves to scheme out a new world (1766). Side by side with the Encyclopædists were the Economists or Physiocrats, who were making bold and crude enquiries into the production and distribution of food and goods. Morelly, the author of the *Code de La Nature*, denounced the institution of private property and proposed a communistic organization of society. He was the precursor of that large and various school of collectivist thinkers in the nineteenth century who are lumped together as Socialists.

What is Socialism? There are a hundred definitions of Socialism and a thousand sects of Socialists. Essentially Socialism is no more and no less than a criticism of the idea of property in the light of the public good. We may review the history of that idea through the ages very briefly. That and the idea of internationalism are the two cardinal ideas upon which most of our political life is turning.

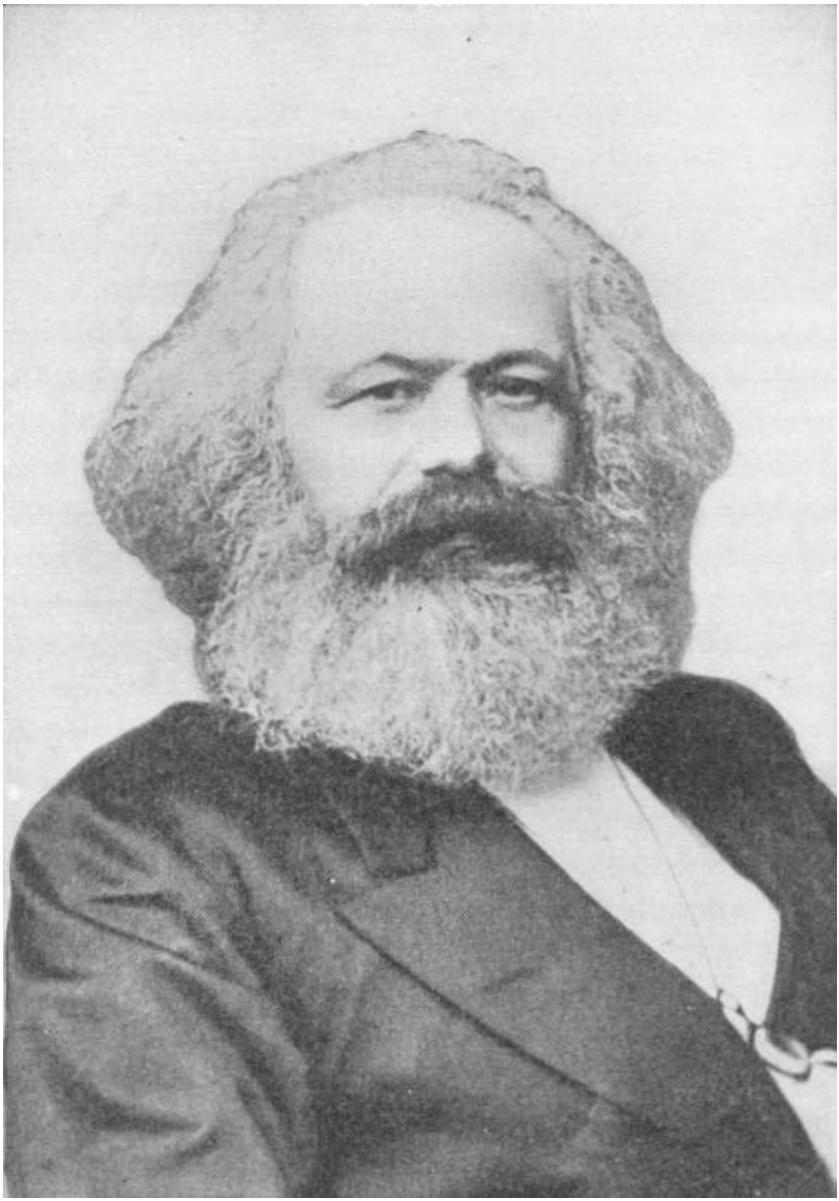

CARL MARX
Photo: Linde & Co.

The idea of property arises out of the combative instincts of the species. Long before men were men, the ancestral ape was a

proprietor. Primitive property is what a beast will fight for. The dog and his bone, the tigress and her lair, the roaring stag and his herd, these are proprietorship blazing. No more nonsensical expression is conceivable in sociology than the term "primitive communism." The Old Man of the family tribe of early palæolithic times insisted upon his proprietorship in his wives and daughters, in his tools, in his visible universe. If any other man wandered into his visible universe he fought him, and if he could he slew him. The tribe grew in the course of ages, as Atkinson showed convincingly in his *Primal Law*, by the gradual toleration by the Old Man of the existence of the younger men, and of their proprietorship in the wives they captured from outside the tribe, and in the tools and ornaments they made and the game they slew. Human society grew by a compromise between this one's property and that. It was a compromise with instinct which was forced upon men by the necessity of driving some other tribe out of its visible universe. If the hills and forests and streams were not *your* land or *my* land, it was because they had to be our land. Each of us would have preferred to have it *my* land, but that would not work. In that case the other fellows would have destroyed us. Society, therefore, is from its beginning a *mitigation of ownership*. Ownership in the beast and in the primitive savage was far more intense a thing than it is in the civilized world to- day. It is rooted more strongly in our instincts than in our reason.

In the natural savage and in the untutored man to-day there is no limitation to the sphere of ownership. Whatever you can fight for, you can own; women-folk, spared captive, captured beast, forest glade, stone-pit or what not. As the community grew, a sort of law came to restrain internecine fighting, men developed rough-and-ready methods of settling proprietorship. Men could own what they were the first to make or capture or claim. It seemed natural that a debtor who could not pay should become the property of his creditor. Equally natural was it that after claiming a patch of land a man should exact payments from anyone who wanted to use it. It was only slowly, as the possibilities of organized life dawned on men, that this unlimited property in anything whatever began to be recognized as a nuisance. Men found themselves born into a universe all owned and claimed, nay! they found themselves born owned and

claimed. The social struggles of the earlier civilization are difficult to trace now, but the history we have told of the Roman Republic shows a community waking up to the idea that debts may become a public inconvenience and should then be repudiated, and that the unlimited ownership of land is also an inconvenience. We find that later Babylonia severely limited the rights of property in slaves. Finally, we find in the teaching of that great revolutionist, Jesus of Nazareth, such an attack upon property as had never been before. Easier it was, he said, for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the owner of great possessions to enter the kingdom of heaven. A steady, continuous criticism of the permissible scope of property seems to have been going on in the world for the last twenty-five or thirty centuries. Nineteen hundred years after Jesus of Nazareth we find all the world that has come under the Christian teaching persuaded that there could be no property in human beings. And also the idea that a man may "do what he likes with his own" was very much shaken in relation to other sorts of property.

But this world of the closing eighteenth century was still only in the interrogative stage in this matter. It had got nothing clear enough, much less settled enough, to act upon. One of its primary impulses was to protect property against the greed and waste of kings and the exploitation of noble adventurers. It was largely to protect private property from taxation that the French Revolution began. But the equalitarian formulæ of the Revolution carried it into a criticism of the very property it had risen to protect. How can men be free and equal when numbers of them have no ground to stand upon and nothing to eat, and the owners will neither feed nor lodge them unless they toil? Excessively — the poor complained.

To which riddle the reply of one important political group was to set about "dividing up." They wanted to intensify and universalize property. Aiming at the same end by another route, there were the primitive socialists — or, to be more exact, communists — who wanted to "abolish" private property altogether. The state (a democratic state was of course understood) was to own all property.

It is paradoxical that different men seeking the same ends of liberty and happiness should propose on the one hand to make property as absolute as possible, and on the other to put an end to it

altogether. But so it was. And the clue to this paradox is to be found in the fact that ownership is not one thing but a multitude of different things.

It was only as the nineteenth century developed that men began to realize that property was not one simple thing, but a great complex of ownerships of different values and consequences, that many things (such as one's body, the implements of an artist, clothing, toothbrushes) are very profoundly and incurably one's personal property, and that there is a very great range of things, railways, machinery of various sorts, homes, cultivated gardens, pleasure boats, for example, which need each to be considered very particularly to determine how far and under what limitations it may come under private ownership, and how far it falls into the public domain and may be administered and let out by the state in the collective interest. On the practical side these questions pass into politics, and the problem of making and sustaining efficient state administration. They open up issues in social psychology, and interact with the enquiries of educational science. The criticism of property is still a vast and passionate ferment rather than a science. On the one hand are the Individualists, who would protect and enlarge our present freedoms with what we possess, and on the other the Socialists who would in many directions pool our ownerships and restrain our proprietory acts. In practice one will find every gradation between the extreme individualist, who will scarcely tolerate a tax of any sort to support a government, and the communist who would deny any possessions at all. The ordinary socialist of to-day is what is called a collectivist; he would allow a considerable amount of private property but put such affairs as education, transport, mines, land-owning, most mass productions of staple articles, and the like, into the hands of a highly organized state. Nowadays there does seem to be a gradual convergence of reasonable men towards a moderate socialism scientifically studied and planned. It is realized more and more clearly that the untutored man does not co-operate easily and successfully in large undertakings, and that every step towards a more complex state and every function that the state takes over from private enterprise, necessitates a corresponding educational advance and the organization of a proper criticism and control. Both the press

and the political methods of the contemporary state are far too crude for any large extension of collective activities.

But for a time the stresses between employer and employed and particularly between selfish employers and reluctant workers, led to a world-wide dissemination of the very harsh and elementary form of communism which is associated with the name of Marx. Marx based his theories on a belief that men's minds are limited by their economic necessities, and that there is a necessary conflict of interests in our present civilization between the prosperous and employing classes of people and the employed mass. With the advance in education necessitated by the mechanical revolution, this great employed majority will become more and more class-conscious and more and more solid in antagonism to the (class- conscious) ruling minority. In some way the class-conscious workers would seize power, he prophesied, and inaugurate a new social state. The antagonism, the insurrection, the possible revolution are understandable enough, but it does not follow that a new social state or anything but a socially destructive process will ensue. Put to the test in Russia, Marxism, as we shall note later, has proved singularly uncreative.

SCIENCE IN THE COAL MINE
Portable Electric Loading Conveyor

Photo: Jeffrey Manufacturing Company, Columbus, Ohio

Marx sought to replace national antagonism by class antagonisms; Marxism has produced in succession a First, a Second and a Third Workers' International. But from the starting point of modern individualistic thought it is also possible to reach international ideas. From the days of that great English economist, Adam Smith, onward there has been an increasing realization that for world-wide prosperity free and unencumbered trade about the earth is needed. The individualist with his hostility to the state is hostile also to tariffs and boundaries and all the restraints upon free act and movement that national boundaries seem to justify. It is interesting to see two lines of thought, so diverse in spirit, so different in substance as this class-war socialism of the Marxists and the individualistic free-trading philosophy of the British business men of the Victorian age heading at last, in spite of these primary differences, towards the same intimations of a new world-wide treatment of human affairs outside the boundaries and limitations of any existing state. The logic of reality triumphs over the logic of theory. We begin to perceive that from widely divergent starting points individualist theory and socialist theory are part of a common search, a search for more spacious social and political ideas and interpretations, upon which men may contrive to work together, a search that began again in Europe and has intensified as men's confidence in the ideas of the Holy Roman Empire and in Christendom decayed, and as the age of discovery broadened their horizons from the world of the Mediterranean to the whole wide world.

To bring this description of the elaboration and development of social, economic and political ideas right down to the discussions of the present day, would be to introduce issues altogether too controversial for the scope and intentions of this book. But regarding these things, as we do here, from the vast perspectives of the student of world history, we are bound to recognize that this reconstruction of these directive ideas in the human mind is still an unfinished task — we cannot even estimate yet how unfinished the task may be. Certain common beliefs do seem to be emerging, and their influence is very perceptible upon the political events and public acts of to-

day; but at present they are not clear enough nor convincing enough to compel men definitely and systematically towards their realization. Men's acts waver between tradition and the new, and on the whole they rather gravitate towards the traditional. Yet, compared with the thought of even a brief lifetime ago, there does seem to be an outline shaping itself of a new order in human affairs. It is a sketchy outline, vanishing into vagueness at this point and that, and fluctuating in detail and formulæ, yet it grows steadfastly clearer, and its main lines change less and less.

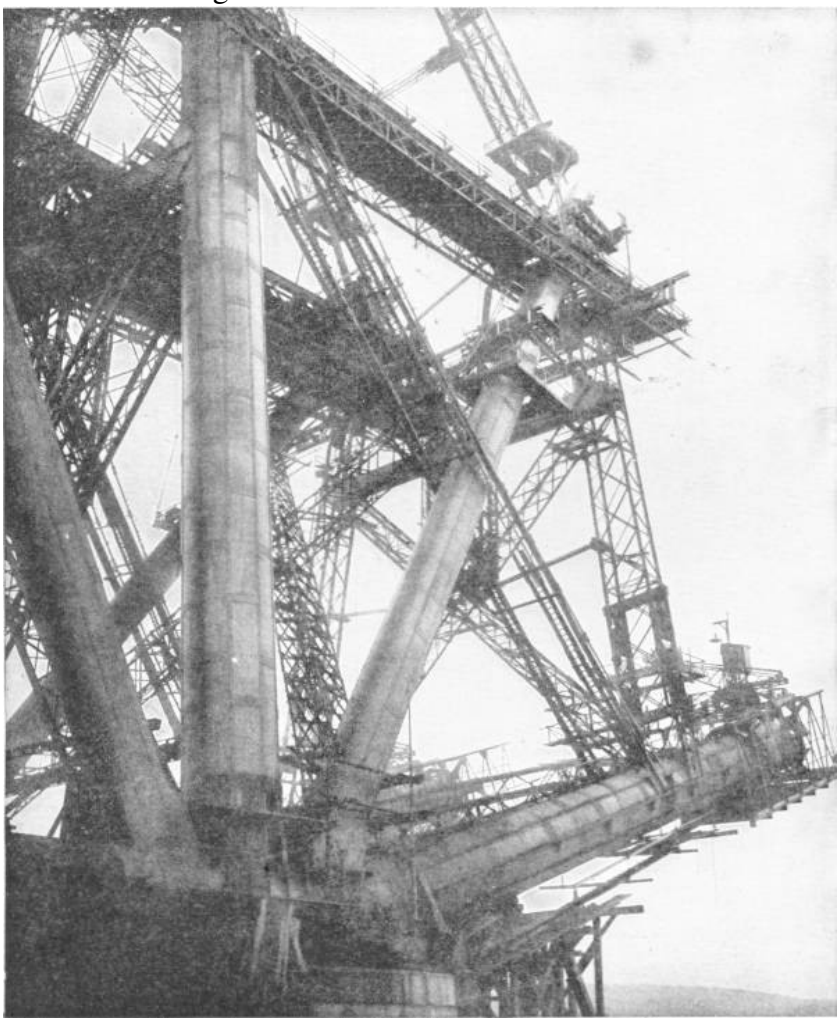

CONSTRUCTIONAL DETAIL OF THE FORTH BRIDGE
Photo: Baker & Hurtzig

It is becoming plainer and plainer each year that in many respects and in an increasing range of affairs, mankind is becoming one community, and that it is more and more necessary that in such matters there should be a common world-wide control. For example, it is steadily truer that the whole planet is now one economic community, that the proper exploitation of its natural resources demands one comprehensive direction, and that the greater power and range that discovery has given human effort makes the present fragmentary and contentious administration of such affairs more and more wasteful and dangerous. Financial and monetary expedients also become world-wide interests to be dealt with successfully only on world-wide lines. Infectious diseases and the increase and migrations of population are also now plainly seen to be world-wide concerns. The greater power and range of human activities has also made war disproportionately destructive and disorganizing, and, even as a clumsy way of settling issues between government and government and people and people, ineffective. All these things clamour for controls and authorities of a greater range and greater comprehensiveness than any government that has hitherto existed.

But it does not follow that the solution of these problems lies in some super-government of all the world arising by conquest or by the coalescence of existing governments. By analogy with existing institutions men have thought of the Parliament of Mankind, of a World Congress, of a President or Emperor of the Earth. Our first natural reaction is towards some such conclusion, but the discussion and experiences of half a century of suggestions and attempts has on the whole discouraged belief in that first obvious idea. Along that line to world unity the resistances are too great. The drift of thought seems now to be in the direction of a number of special committees or organizations, with world-wide power delegated to them by existing governments in this group of matters or that, bodies concerned with the waste or development of natural wealth, with the equalization of labour conditions, with world peace, with currency, population and health, and so forth.

The world may discover that all its common interests are being managed as one concern, while it still fails to realize that a world government exists. But before even so much human unity is attained, before such international arrangements can be put above patriotic suspicions and jealousies, it is necessary that the common mind of the race should be possessed of that idea of human unity, and that the idea of mankind as one family should be a matter of universal instruction and understanding.

For a score of centuries or more the spirit of the great universal religions has been struggling to maintain and extend that idea of a universal human brotherhood, but to this day the spites, angers and distrusts of tribal, national and racial friction obstruct, and successfully obstruct, the broader views and more generous impulses which would make every man the servant of all mankind. The idea of human brotherhood struggles now to possess the human soul, just as the idea of Christendom struggled to possess the soul of Europe in the confusion and disorder of the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. The dissemination and triumph of such ideas must be the work of a multitude of devoted and undistinguished missionaries, and no contemporary writer can presume to guess how far such work has gone or what harvest it may be preparing.

Social and economic questions seem to be inseparably mingled with international ones. The solution in each case lies in an appeal to that same spirit of service which can enter and inspire the human heart. The distrust, intractability and egotism of nations reflects and is reflected by the distrust, intractability and egotism of the individual owner and worker in the face of the common good. Exaggerations of possessiveness in the individual are parallel and of a piece with the clutching greed of nations and emperors. They are products of the same instinctive tendencies, and the same ignorances and traditions. Internationalism is the socialism of nations. No one who has wrestled with these problems can feel that there yet exists a sufficient depth and strength of psychological science and a sufficiently planned-out educational method and organization for any real and final solution of these riddles of human intercourse and cooperation. We are as incapable of planning a really effective peace organization of the world to-day as were men in 1820 to plan an

electric railway system, but for all we know the thing is equally practicable and may be as nearly at hand.

No man can go beyond his own knowledge, no thought can reach beyond contemporary thought, and it is impossible for us to guess or foretell how many generations of humanity may have to live in war and waste and insecurity and misery before the dawn of the great peace to which all history seems to be pointing, peace in the heart and peace in the world, ends our night of wasteful and aimless living. Our proposed solutions are still vague and crude. Passion and suspicion surround them. A great task of intellectual reconstruction is going on, it is still incomplete, and our conceptions grow clearer and more exact — slowly, rapidly, it is hard to tell which. But as they grow clearer they will gather power over the minds and imaginations of men. Their present lack of grip is due to their lack of assurance and exact rightness. They are misunderstood because they are variously and confusingly presented. But with precision and certainty the new vision of the world will gain compelling power. It may presently gain power very rapidly. And a great work of educational reconstruction will follow logically and necessarily upon that clearer understanding.

LX

THE EXPANSION OF THE UNITED STATES

THE region of the world that displayed the most immediate and striking results from the new inventions in transport was North America. Politically the United States embodied, and its constitution crystallized, the liberal ideas of the middle eighteenth century. It dispensed with state-church or crown, it would have no titles, it protected property very jealously as a method of freedom, and — the exact practice varied at first in the different states — it gave nearly every adult male citizen a vote. Its method of voting was barbarically crude, and as a consequence its political life fell very soon under the control of highly organized party machines, but that did not prevent the newly emancipated population developing an energy, enterprise and public spirit far beyond that of any other contemporary population.

Then came that acceleration of locomotion to which we have already called attention. It is a curious thing that America, which owes most to this acceleration in locomotion, has felt it least. The United States have taken the railway, the river steamboat, the telegraph and so forth as though they were a natural part of their growth. They were not. These things happened to come along just in time to save American unity. The United States of to-day were made first by the river steamboat, and then by the railway. Without these things, the present United States, this vast continental nation, would have been altogether impossible. The westward flow of population would have been far more sluggish. It might never have crossed the great central plains. It took nearly two hundred years for effective settlement to reach from the coast to Missouri, much less than halfway across the continent. The first state established beyond the river was the steamboat state of Missouri in 1821. But the rest of the distance to the Pacific was done in a few decades.

If we had the resources of the cinema it would be interesting to show a map of North America year by year from 1600 onward, with little dots to represent hundreds of people, each dot a hundred, and stars to represent cities of a hundred thousand people.

For two hundred years the reader would see that stippling

creeping slowly along the coastal districts and navigable waters, spreading still more gradually into Indiana, Kentucky and so forth. Then somewhere about 1810 would come a change. Things would get more lively along the river courses. The dots would be multiplying and spreading. That would be the steamboat. The pioneer dots would be spreading soon over Kansas and Nebraska from a number of jumping-off places along the great rivers.

Then from about 1850 onward would come the black lines of the railways, and after that the little black dots would not simply creep but run. They would appear now so rapidly, it would be almost as though they were being put on by some sort of spraying machine. And suddenly here and then there would appear the first stars to indicate the first great cities of a hundred thousand people. First one or two and then a multitude of cities — each like a knot in the growing net of the railways.

The growth of the United States is a process that has no precedent in the world's history; it is a new kind of occurrence. Such a community could not have come into existence before, and if it had, without railways it would certainly have dropped to pieces long before now. Without railways or telegraph it would be far easier to administer California from Pekin than from Washington. But this great population of the United States of America has not only grown outrageously; it has kept uniform. Nay, it has become more uniform. The man of San Francisco is more like the man of New York to-day than the man of Virginia was like the man of New England a century ago. And the process of assimilation goes on unimpeded. The United States is being woven by railway, by telegraph, more and more into one vast unity, speaking, thinking and acting harmoniously with itself. Soon aviation will be helping in the work.

This great community of the United States is an altogether new thing in history. There have been great empires before with populations exceeding 100 millions, but these were associations of divergent peoples; there has never been one single people on this scale before. We want a new term for this new thing. We call the United States a country just as we call France or Holland a country. But the two things are as different as an automobile and a one-horse shay. They are the creations of different periods and different

conditions; they are going to work at a different pace and in an entirely different way. The United States in scale and possibility is halfway between a European state and a United States of all the world.

But on the way to this present greatness and security the American people passed through one phase of dire conflict. The river steamboats, the railways, the telegraph, and their associate facilities, did not come soon enough to avert a deepening conflict of interests and ideas between the southern and northern states of the Union. The former were slave-holding states; the latter, states in which all men were free. The railways and steamboats at first did but bring into sharper conflict an already established difference between the two sections of the United States. The increasing unification due to the new means of transport made the question whether the southern spirit or the northern should prevail an ever more urgent one. There was little possibility of compromise. The northern spirit was free and individualistic; the southern made for great estates and a conscious gentility ruling over a dusky subject multitude.

Every new territory that was organized into a state as the tide of population swept westward, every new incorporation into the fast growing American system, became a field of conflict between the two ideas, whether it should become a state of free citizens, or whether the estate and slavery system should prevail. From 1833 an American anti-slavery society was not merely resisting the extension of the institution but agitating the whole country for its complete abolition. The issue flamed up into open conflict over the admission of Texas to the Union. Texas had originally been a part of the republic of Mexico, but it was largely colonized by Americans from the slave-holding states, and it seceded from Mexico, established its independence in 1835, and was annexed to the United States in 1844. Under the Mexican law slavery had been forbidden in Texas, but now the South claimed Texas for slavery and got it.

Meanwhile the development of ocean navigation was bringing a growing swarm of immigrants from Europe to swell the spreading population of the northern states, and the raising of Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Oregon, all northern farm lands, to state level, gave the anti-slavery North the possibility of predominance both in the

Senate and the House of Representatives. The cotton- growing South, irritated by the growing threat of the Abolitionist movement, and fearing this predominance in Congress, began to talk of secession from the Union. Southerners began to dream of annexations to the south of them in Mexico and the West Indies, and of great slave state, detached from the North and reaching to Panama.

The return of Abraham Lincoln as an anti-extension President in 1860 decided the South to split the Union. South Carolina passed an "ordinance of secession" and prepared for war. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas joined her, and a convention met at Montgomery in Alabama, elected Jefferson Davis president of the "Confederated States" of America, and adopted a constitution specifically upholding "the institution of negro slavery."

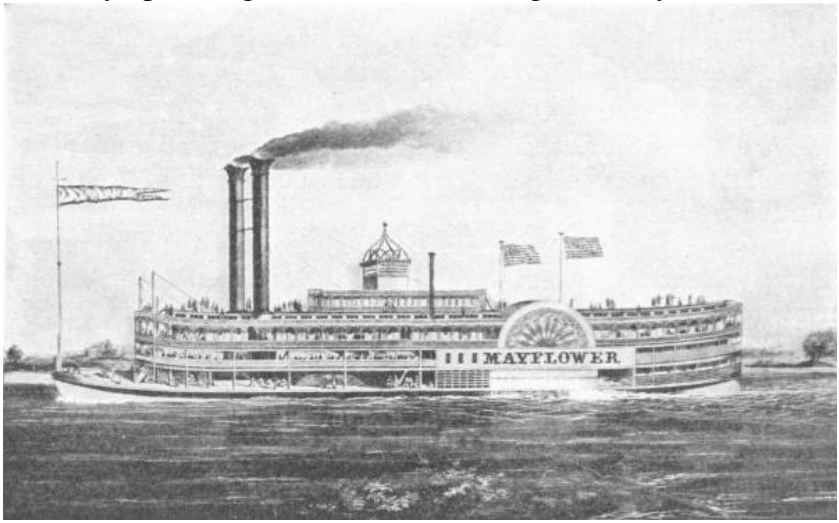

ONE OF THE FIRST AMERICAN RIVER STEAMERS

Abraham Lincoln was, it chanced, a man entirely typical of the new people that had grown up after the War of Independence. His early years had been spent as a drifting particle in the general westward flow of the population. He was born in Kentucky (1809), was taken to Indiana as a boy and later on to Illinois. Life was rough in the backwoods of Indiana in those days; the house was a mere log cabin in the wilderness, and his schooling was poor and casual. But his mother taught him to read early, and he became a voracious reader.

At seventeen he was a big athletic youth, a great wrestler and runner. He worked for a time as clerk in a store, went into business as a storekeeper with a drunken partner, and contracted debts that he did not fully pay off for fifteen years. In 1834, when he was still only five and twenty, he was elected member of the House of Representatives for the State of Illinois. In Illinois particularly the question of slavery flamed because the great leader of the party for the extension of slavery in the national Congress was Senator Douglas of Illinois. Douglas was a man of great ability and prestige, and for some years Lincoln fought against him by speech and pamphlet, rising steadily to the position of his most formidable and finally victorious antagonist. Their culminating struggle was the presidential campaign of 1860, and on the fourth of March, 1861, Lincoln was inaugurated President, with the southern states already in active secession from the rule of the federal government at Washington, and committing acts of war.

This civil war in America was fought by improvised armies that grew steadily from a few score thousands to hundreds of thousands — until at last the Federal forces exceeded a million men; it was fought over a vast area between New Mexico and the eastern sea, Washington and Richmond were the chief objectives. It is beyond our scope here to tell of the mounting energy of that epic struggle that rolled to and fro across the hills and woods of Tennessee and Virginia and down the Mississippi. There was a terrible waste and killing of men. Thrust was followed by counter thrust; hope gave way to despondency, and returned and was again disappointed. Sometimes Washington seemed within the Confederate grasp; again the Federal armies were driving towards Richmond. The Confederates, outnumbered and far poorer in resources, fought under a general of supreme ability, General Lee. The generalship of the Union was far inferior. Generals were dismissed, new generals appointed; until at last, under Sherman and Grant, came victory over the ragged and depleted South. In October, 1864, a Federal army under Sherman broke through the Confederate left and marched down from Tennessee through Georgia to the coast, right across the Confederate country, and then turned up through the Carolinas, coming in upon the rear of the Confederate armies. Meanwhile Grant

held Lee before Richmond until Sherman closed on him. On April 9th, 1865, Lee and his army surrendered at Appomattox Court House, and within a month all the remaining secessionist armies had laid down their arms and the Confederacy was at an end.

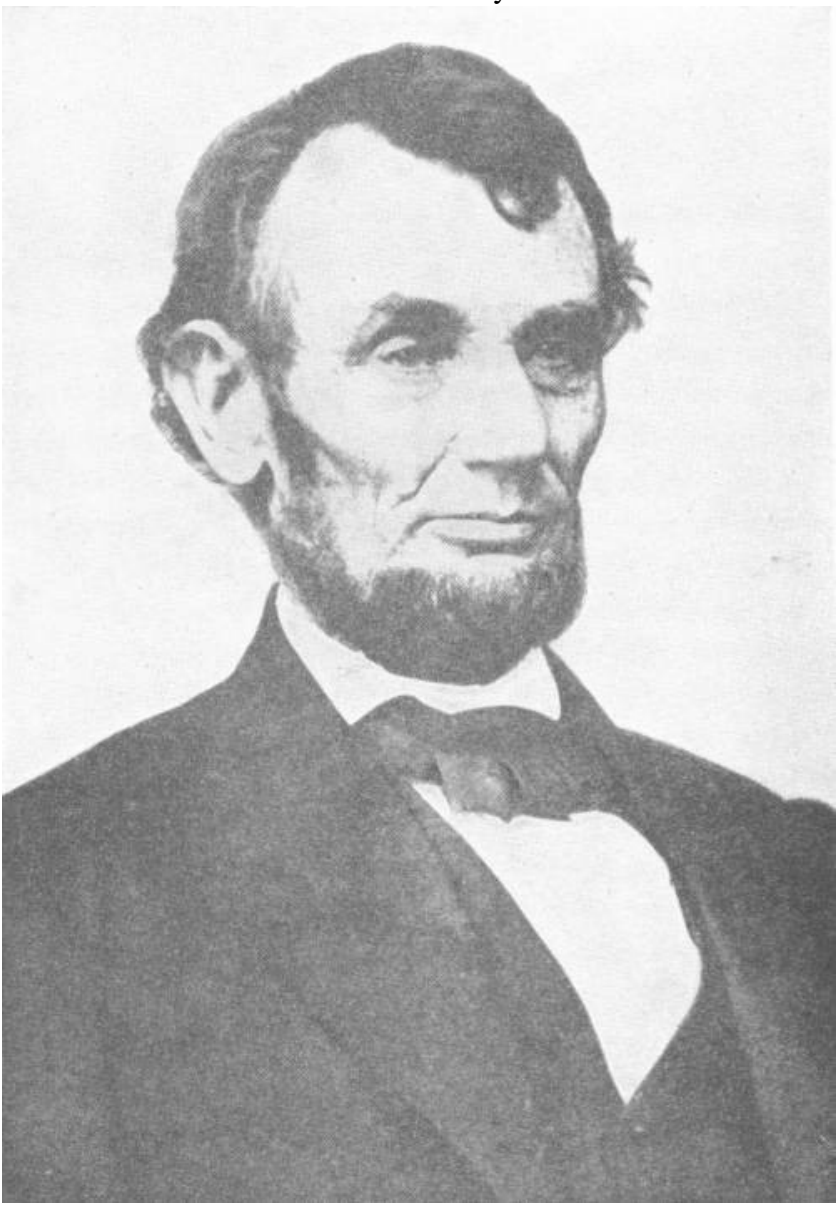

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

This four years' struggle had meant an enormous physical and moral strain for the people of the United States. The principle of state autonomy was very dear to many minds, and the North seemed in effect to be forcing abolition upon the South. In the border states brothers and cousins, even fathers and sons, would take opposite sides and find themselves in antagonistic armies. The North felt its cause a righteous one, but for great numbers of people it was not a full-bodied and unchallenged righteousness. But for Lincoln there was no doubt. He was a clear-minded man in the midst of much confusion. He stood for union; he stood for the wide peace of America. He was opposed to slavery, but slavery he held to be a secondary issue; his primary purpose was that the United States should not be torn into two contrasted and jarring fragments.

When in the opening stages of the war Congress and the Federal generals embarked upon a precipitate emancipation, Lincoln opposed and mitigated their enthusiasm. He was for emancipation by stages and with compensation. It was only in January, 1865, that the situation had ripened to a point when Congress could propose to abolish slavery for ever by a constitutional amendment, and the war was already over before this amendment was ratified by the states.

As the war dragged on through 1862 and 1863, the first passions and enthusiasms waned, and America learnt all the phases of war weariness and war disgust. The President found himself with defeatists, traitors, dismissed generals, tortuous party politicians, and a doubting and fatigued people behind him and uninspired generals and depressed troops before him; his chief consolation must have been that Jefferson Davis at Richmond could be in little better case. The English government misbehaved, and permitted the Confederate agents in England to launch and man three swift privateer ships — the *Alabama* is the best remembered of them — which chased United States shipping from the seas. The French army in Mexico was trampling the Monroe Doctrine in the dirt. Came subtle proposals from Richmond to drop the war, leave the issues of the war for subsequent discussion, and turn, Federal and Confederate in alliance, upon the French in Mexico. But Lincoln would not listen to such proposals unless the supremacy of the Union was maintained. The Americans might do such things as one people but not as two.

He held the United States together through long weary months of reverses and ineffective effort, through black phases of division and failing courage; and there is no record that he ever faltered from his purpose. There were times when there was nothing to be done, when he sat in the White House silent and motionless, a grim monument of resolve; times when he relaxed his mind by jesting and broad anecdotes.

He saw the Union triumphant. He entered Richmond the day after its surrender, and heard of Lee's capitulation. He returned to Washington, and on April 11th made his last public address. His theme was reconciliation and the reconstruction of loyal government in the defeated states. On the evening of April 14th he went to Ford's theatre in Washington, and as he sat looking at the stage, he was shot in the back of the head and killed by an actor named Booth who had some sort of grievance against him, and who had crept into the box unobserved. But Lincoln's work was done; the Union was saved.

At the beginning of the war there was no railway to the Pacific coast; after it the railways spread like a swiftly growing plant until now they have clutched and held and woven all the vast territory of the United States into one indissoluble mental and material unity — the greatest real community — until the common folk of China have learnt to read — in the world.

LXI

THE RISE OF GERMANY TO PREDOMINANCE IN EUROPE

WE have told how after the convulsion of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic adventure, Europe settled down again for a time to an insecure peace and a sort of modernized revival of the political conditions of fifty years before. Until the middle of the century the new facilities in the handling of steel and the railway and steamship produced no marked political consequences. But the social tension due to the development of urban industrialism grew. France remained a conspicuously uneasy country. The revolution of 1830 was followed by another in 1848. Then Napoleon III, a nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, became first President, and then (in 1852) Emperor.

He set about rebuilding Paris, and changed it from a picturesque seventeenth century insanitary city into the spacious Latinized city of marble it is to-day. He set about rebuilding France, and made it into a brilliant-looking modernized imperialism. He displayed a disposition to revive that competitiveness of the Great Powers which had kept Europe busy with futile wars during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Tsar Nicholas I of Russia (1825- 1856) was also becoming aggressive and pressing southward upon the Turkish Empire with his eyes on Constantinople.

After the turn of the century Europe broke out into a fresh cycle of wars. They were chiefly "balance-of- power" and ascendancy wars. England, France and Sardinia assailed Russia in the Crimean war in defence of Turkey; Prussia (with Italy as an ally) and Austria fought for the leadership of Germany, France liberated North Italy from Austria at the price of Savoy, and Italy gradually unified itself into one kingdom. Then Napoleon III was so ill advised as to attempt adventures in Mexico, during the American Civil War; he set up an Emperor Maximilian there and abandoned him hastily to his fate — he was shot by the Mexicans — when the victorious Federal Government showed its teeth.

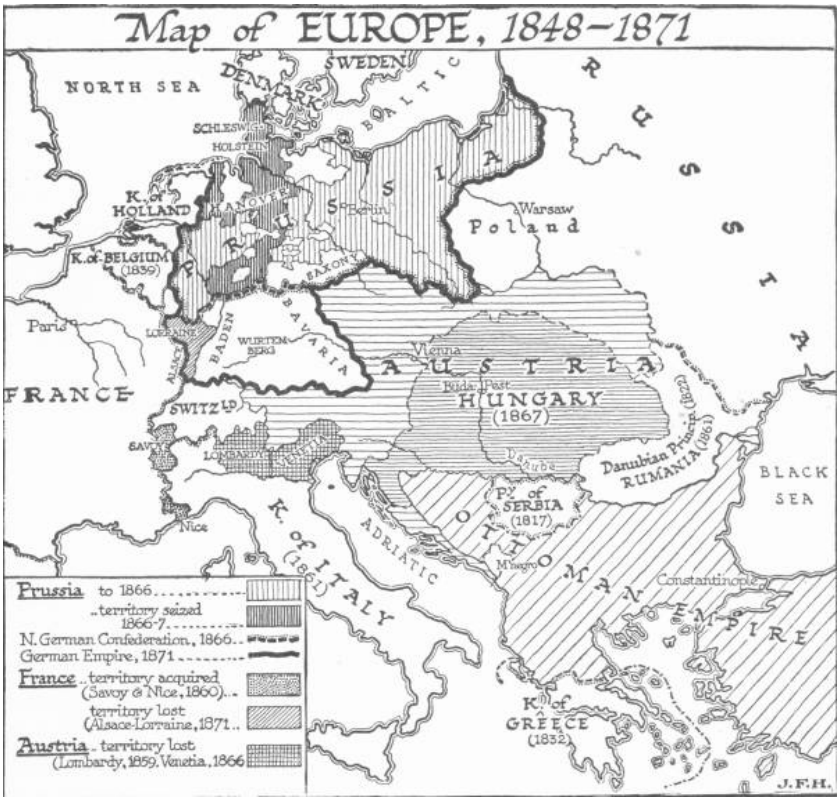

In 1870 came a long-pending struggle for predominance in Europe between France and Prussia. Prussia had long foreseen and prepared for this struggle, and France was rotten with financial corruption. Her defeat was swift and dramatic. The Germans invaded France in August, one great French army under the Emperor capitulated at Sedan in September, another surrendered in October at Metz, and in January 1871, Paris, after a siege and bombardment, fell into German hands. Peace was signed at Frankfort surrendering the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to the Germans. Germany, excluding Austria, was unified as an empire, and the King of Prussia was added to the galaxy of European Cæsars, as the German Emperor.

For the next forty-three years Germany was the leading power upon the European continent. There was a Russo-Turkish war in 1877-8, but thereafter, except for certain readjustments in the Balkans,

European frontiers remained uneasily stable for thirty years.

LXII

THE NEW OVERSEAS EMPIRES OF STEAMSHIP AND RAILWAY

THE end of the eighteenth century was a period of disrupting empires and disillusioned expansionists. The long and tedious journey between Britain and Spain and their colonies in America prevented any really free coming and going between the home land and the daughter lands, and so the colonies separated into new and distinct communities, with distinctive ideas and interests and even modes of speech. As they grew they strained more and more at the feeble and uncertain link of shipping that had joined them. Weak trading-posts in the wilderness, like those of France in Canada, or trading establishments in great alien communities, like those of Britain in India, might well cling for bare existence to the nation which gave them support and a reason for their existence. That much and no more seemed to many thinkers in the early part of the nineteenth century to be the limit set to overseas rule. In 1820 the sketchy great European "empires" outside of Europe that had figured so bravely in the maps of the middle eighteenth century, had shrunken to very small dimensions. Only the Russian sprawled as large as ever across Asia.

The British Empire in 1815 consisted of the thinly populated coastal river and lake regions of Canada, and a great hinterland of wilderness in which the only settlements as yet were the fur-trading stations of the Hudson Bay Company, about a third of the Indian peninsula, under the rule of the East India Company, the coast districts of the Cape of Good Hope inhabited by blacks and rebellious-spirited Dutch settlers; a few trading stations on the coast of West Africa, the rock of Gibraltar, the island of Malta, Jamaica, a few minor slave-labour possessions in the West Indies, British Guiana in South America, and, on the other side of the world, two dumps for convicts at Botany Bay in Australia and in Tasmania. Spain retained Cuba and a few settlements in the Philippine Islands. Portugal had in Africa some vestiges of her ancient claims. Holland had various islands and possessions in the East Indies and Dutch

Guiana, and Denmark an island or so in the West Indies. France had one or two West Indian islands and French Guiana. This seemed to be as much as the European powers needed, or were likely to acquire of the rest of the world. Only the East India Company showed any spirit of expansion.

While Europe was busy with the Napoleonic wars the East India Company, under a succession of Governors-General, was playing much the same role in India that had been played before by Turkoman and such-like invaders from the north. And after the peace of Vienna it went on, levying its revenues, making wars, sending ambassadors to Asiatic powers, a quasi- independent state, however, with a marked disposition to send wealth westward.

We cannot tell here in any detail how the British Company made its way to supremacy sometimes as the ally of this power, sometimes as that, and finally as the conqueror of all. Its power spread to Assam, Sind, Oudh. The map of India began to take on the outlines familiar to the English schoolboy of to-day, a patchwork of native states embraced and held together by the great provinces under direct British rule. . . .

In 1859, following upon a serious mutiny of the native troops in India, this empire of the East India Company was annexed to the British Crown. By an Act entitled *An Act for the Better Government of India*, the Governor-General became a Viceroy representing the Sovereign, and the place of the Company was taken by a Secretary of State for India responsible to the British Parliament. In 1877, Lord Beaconsfield, to complete the work, caused Queen Victoria to be proclaimed Empress of India.

Upon these extraordinary lines India and Britain are linked at the present time. India is still the empire of the Great Mogul, but the Great Mogul has been replaced by the "crowned republic" of Great Britain. India is an autocracy without an autocrat. Its rule combines the disadvantage of absolute monarchy with the impersonality and irresponsibility of democratic officialdom. The Indian with a complaint to make has no visible monarch to go to; his Emperor is a golden symbol; he must circulate pamphlets in England or inspire a question in the British House of Commons. The more occupied Parliament is with British affairs, the less attention India will receive,

and the more she will be at the mercy of her small group of higher officials.

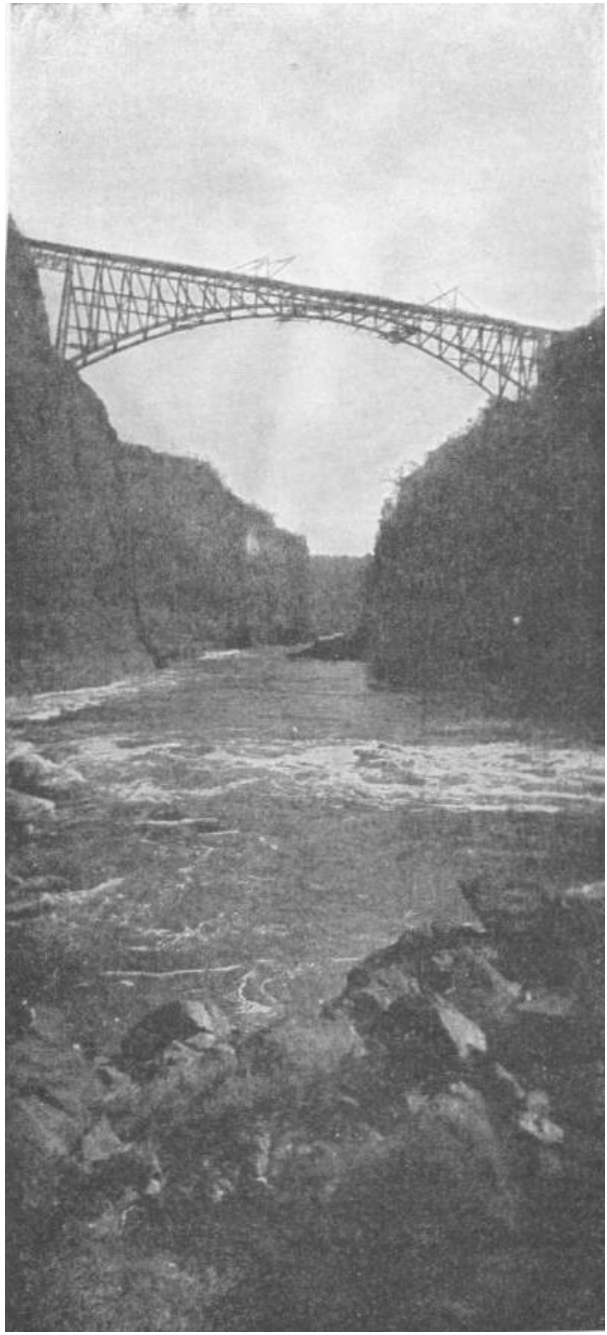

RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER THE GORGE, VICTORIA FALLS, OF THE ZAMBESI, SOUTHERN RHODESIA
Photo: British South African Co.

Apart from India, there was no great expansion of any European Empire until the railways and the steamships were in effective action. A considerable school of political thinkers in Britain was disposed to regard overseas possessions as a source of weakness to the kingdom. The Australian settlements developed slowly until in 1842 the discovery of valuable copper mines, and in 1851 of gold, gave them a new importance. Improvements in transport were also making Australian wool an increasingly marketable commodity in Europe. Canada, too, was not remarkably progressive until 1849; it was troubled by dissensions between its French and British inhabitants, there were several serious revolts, and it was only in 1867 that a new constitution creating a Federal Dominion of Canada relieved its internal strains. It was the railway that altered the Canadian outlook. It enabled Canada, just as it enabled the United States, to expand westward, to market its corn and other produce in Europe, and in spite of its swift and extensive growth, to remain in language and sympathy and interests one community. The railway, the steamship and the telegraph cable were indeed changing all the conditions of colonial development.

Before 1840, English settlements had already begun in New Zealand, and a New Zealand Land Company had been formed to exploit the possibilities of the island. In 1840 New Zealand also was added to the colonial possessions of the British Crown.

Canada, as we have noted, was the first of the British possessions to respond richly to the new economic possibilities that the new methods of transport were opening. Presently the republics of South America, and particularly the Argentine Republic, began to feel in their cattle trade and coffee growing the increased nearness of the European market. Hitherto the chief commodities that had attracted the European powers into unsettled and barbaric regions had been gold or other metals, spices, ivory, or slaves. But in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century the increase of the European populations was obliging their governments to look abroad for staple foods; and

the growth of scientific industrialism was creating a demand for new raw materials, fats and greases of every kind, rubber, and other hitherto disregarded substances. It was plain that Great Britain and Holland and Portugal were reaping a great and growing commercial advantage from their very considerable control of tropical and sub-tropical products. After 1871 Germany, and presently France and later Italy, began to look for unannexed raw-material areas, or for Oriental countries capable of profitable modernization.

So began a fresh scramble all over the world, except in the American region where the Monroe Doctrine now barred such adventures, for politically unprotected lands.

Close to Europe was the continent of Africa, full of vaguely known possibilities. In 1850 it was a continent of black mystery; only Egypt and the coast were known. Here we have no space to tell the amazing story of the explorers and adventurers who first pierced the African darkness, and of the political agents, administrators, traders, settlers and scientific men who followed in their track. Wonderful races of men like the pygmies, strange beasts like the okapi, marvellous fruits and flowers and insects, terrible diseases, astounding scenery of forest and mountain, enormous inland seas and gigantic rivers and cascades were revealed; a whole new world. Even remains (at Zimbabwe) of some unrecorded and vanished civilization, the southward enterprise of an early people, were discovered. Into this new world came the Europeans, and found the rifle already there in the hands of the Arab slave-traders, and negro life in disorder.

By 1900, in half a century, all Africa was mapped, explored, estimated and divided between the European powers. Little heed was given to the welfare of the natives in this scramble. The Arab slaver was indeed curbed rather than expelled, but the greed for rubber, which was a wild product collected under compulsion by the natives in the Belgian Congo, a greed exacerbated by the clash of inexperienced European administrators with the native population, led to horrible atrocities. No European power has perfectly clean hands in this matter.

We cannot tell here in any detail how Great Britain got possession of Egypt in 1883 and remained there in spite of the fact that Egypt was technically a part of the Turkish Empire, nor how nearly this scramble led to war between France and Great Britain in 1898, when a certain Colonel Marchand, crossing Central Africa from the west coast, tried at Fashoda to seize the Upper Nile.

Nor can we tell how the British Government first let the Boers, or Dutch settlers, of the Orange River district and the Transvaal set up independent republics in the inland parts of South Africa, and then repented and annexed the Transvaal Republic in 1877; nor how the Transvaal Boers fought for freedom and won it after the battle of Majuba Hill (1881). Majuba Hill was made to rankle in the memory of the English people by a persistent press campaign. A war with both republics broke out in 1899, a three years' war enormously costly to the British people, which ended at last in the surrender of the two republics.

Their period of subjugation was a brief one. In 1907, after the downfall of the imperialist government which had conquered them, the Liberals took the South African problem in hand, and these former republics became free and fairly willing associates with Cape Colony and Natal in a Confederation of all the states of South Africa as one self- governing republic under the British Crown.

In a quarter of a century the partition of Africa was completed. There remained unannexed three comparatively small countries: Liberia, a settlement of liberated negro slaves on the west coast; Morocco, under a Moslem Sultan; and Abyssinia, a barbaric country, with an ancient and peculiar form of Christianity, which had successfully maintained its independence against Italy at the battle of Adowa in 1896.

LXIII

EUROPEAN AGGRESSION IN ASIA AND THE RISE OF JAPAN

IT is difficult to believe that any large number of people really accepted this headlong painting of the map of Africa in European colours as a permanent new settlement of the worlds affairs, but it is the duty of the historian to record that it was so accepted. There was but a shallow historical background to the European mind in the nineteenth century, and no habit of penetrating criticism. The quite temporary advantages that the mechanical revolution in the west had given the Europeans over the rest of the old world were regarded by people, blankly ignorant of such events as the great Mongol conquests, as evidences of a permanent and assured European leadership of mankind. They had no sense of the transferability of science and its fruits. They did not realize that Chinamen and Indians could carry on the work of research as ably as Frenchmen or Englishmen. They believed that there was some innate intellectual drive in the west, and some innate indolence and conservatism in the east, that assured the Europeans a world predominance for ever.

The consequence of this infatuation was that the various European foreign offices set themselves not merely to scramble with the British for the savage and undeveloped regions of the world's surface, but also to carve up the populous and civilized countries of Asia as though these people also were no more than raw material for exploitation. The inwardly precarious but outwardly splendid imperialism of the British ruling class in India, and the extensive and profitable possessions of the Dutch in the East Indies, filled the rival Great Powers with dreams of similar glories in Persia, in the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, and in Further India, China and Japan.

In 1898 Germany seized Kiau Chau in China. Britain responded by seizing Wei-hai-wei, and the next year the Russians took possession of Port Arthur. A flame of hatred for the Europeans swept through China. There were massacres of Europeans and Christian converts, and in 1900 an attack upon and siege of the European

legations in Pekin. A combined force of Europeans made a punitive expedition to Pekin, rescued the legations, and stole an enormous amount of valuable property. The Russians then seized Manchuria, and in 1904, the British invaded Tibet....

But now a new Power appeared in the struggle of the Great Powers, Japan. Hitherto Japan has played but a small part in this history; her secluded civilization has not contributed very largely to the general shaping of human destinies; she has received much, but she has given little. The Japanese proper are of the Mongolian race. Their civilization, their writing and their literary and artistic traditions are derived from the Chinese. Their history is an interesting and romantic one; they developed a feudal system and a system of chivalry in the earlier centuries of the Christian era; their attacks upon Korea and China are an Eastern equivalent of the English wars in France. Japan was first brought into contact with Europe in the sixteenth century; in 1542 some Portuguese reached it in a Chinese junk, and in 1549 a Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier, began his teaching there. For a time Japan welcomed European intercourse, and the Christian missionaries made a great number of converts. A certain William Adams became the most trusted European adviser of the Japanese, and showed them how to build big ships. There were voyages in Japanese-built ships to India and Peru. Then arose complicated quarrels between the Spanish Dominicans, the Portuguese Jesuits, and the English and Dutch Protestants, each warning the Japanese against the political designs of the others. The Jesuits, in a phase of ascendancy, persecuted and insulted the Buddhists with great acrimony. In the end the Japanese came to the conclusion that the Europeans were an intolerable nuisance, and that Catholic Christianity in particular was a mere cloak for the political dreams of the Pope and the Spanish monarchy — already in possession of the Philippine Islands; there was a great persecution of the Christians, and in 1638 Japan was absolutely closed to Europeans, and remained closed for over 200 years. During those two centuries the Japanese were as completely cut off from the rest of the world as though they lived upon another planet. It was forbidden to build any ship larger than a mere coasting boat. No Japanese could go abroad, and no European enter the country.

JAPANESE SOLDIER ON THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

(In the Victoria and Albert Museum)

For two centuries Japan remained outside the main current of history. She lived on in a state of picturesque feudalism in which about five per cent of the population, the *samurai*, or fighting men, and the nobles and their families, tyrannized without restraint over the rest of the population. Meanwhile the great world outside went on to wider visions and new powers. Strange shipping became more frequent, passing the Japanese headlands; sometimes ships were wrecked and sailors brought ashore. Through the Dutch settlement in the island of Deshima, their one link with the outer universe, came warnings that Japan was not keeping pace with the power of the Western world. In 1837 a ship sailed into Yedo Bay flying a strange flag of stripes and stars, and carrying some Japanese sailors she had picked up far adrift in the Pacific. She was driven off by cannon shot. This flag presently reappeared on other ships. One in 1849 came to demand the liberation of eighteen shipwrecked American sailors. Then in 1853 came four American warships under Commodore Perry, and refused to be driven away. He lay at anchor in forbidden waters, and sent messages to the two rulers who at that time shared the control of Japan. In 1854 he returned with ten ships, amazing ships propelled by steam, and equipped with big guns, and he made proposals for trade and intercourse that the Japanese had no power to resist. He landed with a guard of 500 men to sign the treaty. Incredulous crowds watched this visitation from the outer world, marching through the streets.

Russia, Holland and Britain followed in the wake of America. A great nobleman whose estates commanded the Straits of Shimonoseki saw fit to fire on foreign vessels, and a bombardment by a fleet of British, French, Dutch and American warships destroyed his batteries and scattered his swordsmen. Finally an allied squadron (1865), at anchor off Kioto, imposed a ratification of the treaties which opened Japan to the world.

The humiliation of the Japanese by these events was intense. With astonishing energy and intelligence they set themselves to bring their culture and organization to the level of the European Powers. Never in all the history of mankind did a nation make such a stride as Japan

then did. In 1866 she was a medieval people, a fantastic caricature of the extremest romantic feudalism; in 1899 hers was a completely Westernized people, on a level with the most advanced European Powers. She completely dispelled the persuasion that Asia was in some irrevocable way hopelessly behind Europe. She made all European progress seem sluggish by comparison.

We cannot tell here in any detail of Japan's war with China in 1894-95. It demonstrated the extent of her Westernization. She had an efficient Westernized army and a small but sound fleet. But the significance of her renascence, though it was appreciated by Britain and the United States, who were already treating her as if she were a European state, was not understood by the other Great Powers engaged in the pursuit of new Indias in Asia. Russia was pushing down through Manchuria to Korea. France was already established far to the south in Tonkin and Annam, Germany was prowling hungrily on the look-out for some settlement. The three Powers combined to prevent Japan reaping any fruits from the Chinese war. She was exhausted by the struggle, and they threatened her with war.

A STREET IN TOKIO

Japan submitted for a time and gathered her forces. Within ten years she was ready for a struggle with Russia, which marks an epoch in the history of Asia, the close of the period of European arrogance. The Russian people were, of course, innocent and ignorant of this trouble that was being made for them halfway round the world, and the wiser Russian statesmen were against these foolish thrusts; but a gang of financial adventurers, including the Grand Dukes, his cousins, surrounded the Tsar. They had gambled deeply in the prospective looting of Manchuria and China, and they would suffer no withdrawal. So there began a transportation of great armies of Japanese soldiers across the sea to Port Arthur and Korea, and the sending of endless trainloads of Russian peasants along the Siberian railway to die in those distant battlefields.

The Russians, badly led and dishonestly provided, were beaten on sea and land alike. The Russian Baltic Fleet sailed round Africa to be utterly destroyed in the Straits of Tshushima. A revolutionary movement among the common people of Russia, infuriated by this remote and reasonless slaughter, obliged the Tsar to end the war (1905); he returned the southern half of Saghalien, which had been seized by Russia in 1875, evacuated Manchuria, resigned Korea to Japan. The European invasion of Asia was coming to an end and the retraction of Europe's tentacles was beginning.

LXIV

THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1914

WE may note here briefly the varied nature of the constituents of the British Empire in 1914 which the steamship and railway had brought together. It was and is a quite unique political combination; nothing of the sort has ever existed before.

First and central to the whole system was the "crowned republic" of the United British Kingdom, including (against the will of a considerable part of the Irish people) Ireland. The majority of the British Parliament, made up of the three united parliaments of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, determines the headship, the quality and policy of the ministry, and determines it largely on considerations arising out of British domestic politics. It is this ministry which is the effective supreme government, with powers of peace and war, over all the rest of the empire.

Next in order of political importance to the British States were the "crowned republics" of Australia, Canada, Newfoundland (the oldest British possession, 1583), New Zealand and South Africa, all practically independent and self-governing states in alliance with Great Britain, but each with a representative of the Crown appointed by the Government in office;

Next the Indian Empire, an extension of the Empire of the Great Mogul with its dependent and "protected" states reaching now from Beluchistan to Burma, and including Aden, in all of which empire the British Crown and the India Office (under Parliamentary control) played the role of the original Turkoman dynasty;

Then the ambiguous possession of Egypt, still nominally a part of the Turkish Empire and still retaining its own monarch, the Khedive, but under almost despotic British official rule;

Then the still more ambiguous "Anglo-Egyptian" Sudan province, occupied and administered jointly by the British and by the (British controlled) Egyptian Government;

Then a number of partially self-governing communities, some British in origin and some not, with elected legislatures and an appointed executive, such as Malta, Jamaica, the Bahamas and Bermuda;

Then the Crown colonies, in which the rule of the British Home Government (through the Colonial Office) verged on autocracy, as in Ceylon, Trinidad and Fiji (where there was an appointed council), and Gibraltar and St. Helena (where there was a governor);

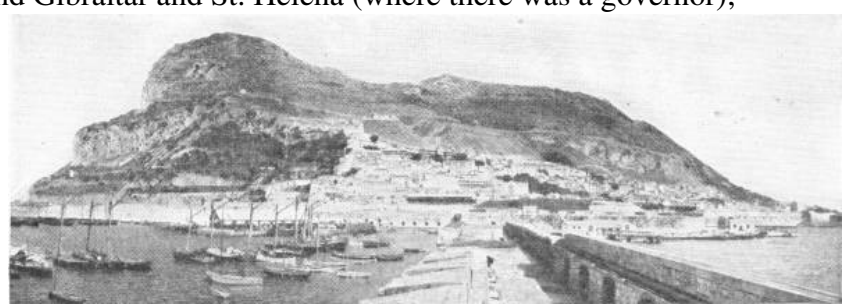

GIBRALTAR
Photo: C. Sinclair

Then great areas of (chiefly) tropical lands, raw-product areas,

with politically weak and under-civilized native communities which were nominally protectorates, and administered either by a High Commissioner set over native chiefs (as in Basutoland) or over a chartered company (as in Rhodesia). In some cases the Foreign Office, in some cases the Colonial Office, and in some cases the India Office, has been concerned in acquiring the possessions that fell into this last and least definite class of all, but for the most part the Colonial Office was now responsible for them.

It will be manifest, therefore, that no single office and no single brain had ever comprehended the British Empire as a whole. It was a mixture of growths and accumulations entirely different from anything that has ever been called an empire before. It guaranteed a wide peace and security; that is why it was endured and sustained by many men of the "subject" races — in spite of official tyrannies and insufficiencies, and of much negligence on the part of the "home" public. Like the Athenian Empire, it was an overseas empire; its ways were sea ways, and its common link was the British Navy. Like all empires, its cohesion was dependent physically upon a method of communication; the development of seamanship, ship-building and steamships between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries had made it a possible and convenient Pax — the "Pax Britannica," and fresh developments of air or swift land transport might at any time make it inconvenient.

STREET IN HONG KONG
Photo: Underwood & Underwood

THE AGE OF ARMAMENT IN EUROPE, AND THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-18

THE progress in material science that created this vast steamboat-and-railway republic of America and spread this precarious British steamship empire over the world, produced quite other effects upon the congested nations upon the continent of Europe. They found themselves confined within boundaries fixed during the horse-and-high-road period of human life, and their expansion overseas had been very largely anticipated by Great Britain. Only Russia had any freedom to expand eastward; and she drove a great railway across Siberia until she entangled herself in a conflict with Japan, and pushed south-eastwardly towards the borders of Persia and India to the annoyance of Britain. The rest of the European Powers were in a state of intensifying congestion. In order to realize the full possibilities of the new apparatus of human life they had to rearrange their affairs upon a broader basis, either by some sort of voluntary union or by a union imposed upon them by some predominant power. The tendency of modern thought was in the direction of the former alternative, but all the force of political tradition drove Europe towards the latter.

The downfall of the "empire" of Napoleon III, the establishment of the new German Empire, pointed men's hopes and fears towards the idea of a Europe consolidated under German auspices. For thirty-six years of uneasy peace the polities of Europe centred upon that possibility. France, the steadfast rival of Germany for European ascendancy since the division of the empire of Charlemagne, sought to correct her own weakness by a close alliance with Russia, and Germany linked herself closely with the Austrian Empire (it had ceased to be the Holy Roman Empire in the days of Napoleon I) and less successfully with the new kingdom of Italy. At first Great Britain stood as usual half in and half out of continental affairs. But she was gradually forced into a close association with the Franco-Russian group by the aggressive development of a great German navy. The grandiose imagination of the Emperor William II (1888-1918) thrust

Germany into premature overseas enterprise that ultimately brought not only Great Britain but Japan and the United States into the circle of her enemies.

BRITISH TANK IN THE BATTLE OF THE MENIN ROAD
The crew came out for a breath of fresh air during a lull
Photo: British Official

All these nations armed. Year after year the proportion of national production devoted to the making of guns, equipment, battleships and the like, increased. Year after year the balance of things seemed trembling towards war, and then war would be averted. At last it came. Germany and Austria struck at France and Russia and Serbia; the German armies marching through Belgium, Britain immediately came into the war on the side of Belgium, bringing in Japan as her ally, and very soon Turkey followed on the German side. Italy

entered the war against Austria in 1915, and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers in the October of that year. In 1916 Rumania, and in 1917 the United States and China were forced into war against Germany. It is not within the scope of this history to define the exact share of blame for this vast catastrophe. The more interesting question is not why the Great War was begun but why the Great War was not anticipated and prevented. It is a far graver thing for mankind that scores of millions of people were too "patriotic," stupid, or apathetic to prevent this disaster by a movement towards European unity upon frank and generous lines, than that a small number of people may have been active in bringing it about.

THE RUINS OF YPRES (ONCE A DELIGHTFUL OLD FLEMISH TOWN)
To show the complete destructiveness of modern war
Photo: Topical

THE DEVASTATION OF MODERN WAR
Wire entanglements in the foreground
Photo: Photopress

It is impossible within the space at our command here to trace the intricate details of the war. Within a few months it became apparent that the progress of modern technical science had changed the nature of warfare very profoundly. Physical science gives power, power over steel, over distance, over disease; whether that power is used well or ill depends upon the moral and political intelligence of the world. The governments of Europe, inspired by antiquated policies of hate and suspicion, found themselves with unexampled powers both of destruction and resistance in their hands. The war became a consuming fire round and about the world, causing losses both to victors and vanquished out of all proportion to the issues involved. The first phase of the war was a tremendous rush of the Germans upon Paris and an invasion of East Prussia by the Russians. Both attacks were held and turned. Then the power of the defensive developed; there was a rapid elaboration of trench warfare until for a time the opposing armies lay entrenched in long lines right across Europe, unable to make any advance without enormous losses. The armies were millions strong, and behind them entire populations were organized for the supply of food and munitions to the front. Then was a cessation of nearly every sort of productive activity except such as contributed to military operations. All the able-bodied

manhood of Europe was drawn into the armies or navies or into the improvised factories that served them. There was an enormous replacement of men by women in industry. Probably more than half the people in the belligerent countries of Europe changed their employment altogether during this stupendous struggle. They were socially uprooted and transplanted. Education and normal scientific work were restricted or diverted to immediate military ends, and the distribution of news was crippled and corrupted by military control and "propaganda" activities.

The phase of military deadlock passed slowly into one of aggression upon the combatant populations behind the fronts by the destruction of food supplies and by attacks through the air. And also there was a steady improvement in the size and range of the guns employed and of such ingenious devices as poison-gas shells and the small mobile forts known as tanks, to break down the resistance of troops in the trenches. The air offensive was the most revolutionary of all the new methods. It carried warfare from two dimensions into three. Hitherto in the history of mankind war had gone on only where the armies marched and met. Now it went on everywhere. First the Zeppelin and then the bombing aeroplane carried war over and past the front to an ever- increasing area of civilian activities beyond. The old distinction maintained in civilized warfare between the civilian and combatant population disappeared. Everyone who grew food, or who sewed a garment, everyone who felled a tree or repaired a house, every railway station and every warehouse was held to be fair game for destruction. The air offensive increased in range and terror with every month in the war. At last great areas of Europe were in a state of siege and subject to nightly raids. Such exposed cities as London and Paris passed sleepless night after sleepless night while the bombs burst, the anti-aircraft guns maintained an intolerable racket, and the fire engines and ambulances rattled headlong through the darkened and deserted streets. The effects upon the minds and health of old people and of young children were particularly distressing and destructive.

Pestilence, that old follower of warfare, did not arrive until the very end of the fighting in 1918. For four years medical science staved off any general epidemic; then came a great outbreak of

influenza about the world which destroyed many millions of people. Famine also was staved off for some time. By the beginning of 1918 however most of Europe was in a state of mitigated and regulated famine. The production of food throughout the world had fallen very greatly through the calling off of peasant mankind to the fronts, and the distribution of such food as was produced was impeded by the havoc wrought by the submarine, by the rupture of customary routes through the closing of frontiers, and by the disorganization of the transport system of the world. The various governments took possession of the dwindling food supplies, and, with more or less success, rationed their populations. By the fourth year the whole world was suffering from shortages of clothing and housing and of most of the normal gear of life as well as of food. Business and economic life were profoundly disorganized. Every-one was worried, and most people were leading lives of unwonted discomfort.

The actual warfare ceased in November, 1918. After a supreme effort in the spring of 1918 that almost carried the Germans to Paris, the Central Powers collapsed. They had come to an end of their spirit and resources.

LXVI

THE REVOLUTION AND FAMINE IN RUSSIA

BUT a good year and more before the collapse of the Central Powers the half oriental monarchy of Russia, which had professed to be the continuation of the Byzantine Empire, had collapsed. The Tsardom had been showing signs of profound rottenness for some years before the war; the court was under the sway of a fantastic religious impostor, Rasputin, and the public administration, civil and military, was in a state of extreme inefficiency and corruption. At the outset of the war there was a great flare of patriotic enthusiasm in Russia. A vast conscript army was called up, for which there was neither adequate military equipment nor a proper supply of competent officers, and this great host, ill supplied and badly handled, was hurled against the German and Austrian frontiers.

There can be no doubt that the early appearance of Russian armies in East Prussia in September, 1914, diverted the energies and attention of the Germans from their first victorious drive upon Paris. The sufferings and deaths of scores of thousands of ill-led Russian peasants saved France from complete overthrow in that momentous opening campaign, and made all western Europe the debtors of that great and tragic people. But the strain of the war upon this sprawling, ill-organized empire was too heavy for its strength. The Russian common soldiers were sent into battle without guns to support them, without even rifle ammunition; they were wasted by their officers and generals in a delirium of militarist enthusiasm. For a time they seemed to be suffering mutely as the beasts suffer; but there is a limit to the endurance even of the most ignorant. A profound disgust for Tsardom was creeping through these armies of betrayed and wasted men. From the close of 1915 onward Russia was a source of deepening anxiety to her Western Allies. Throughout 1916 she remained largely on the defensive, and there were rumours of a separate peace with Germany.

On December 29th, 1916, the monk Rasputin was murdered at a dinner party in Petrograd, and a belated attempt was made to put the Tsardom in order. By March things were moving rapidly; food riots in Petrograd developed into a revolutionary insurrection; there was

an attempted suppression of the Duma, the representative body, there were attempted arrests of liberal leaders, the formation of a provisional government under Prince Lvoff, and an abdication (March 15th) by the Tsar. For a time it seemed that a moderate and controlled revolution might be possible — perhaps under a new Tsar. Then it became evident that the destruction of popular confidence in Russia had gone too far for any such adjustments. The Russian people were sick to death of the old order of things in Europe, of Tsars and wars and of Great Powers; it wanted relief, and that speedily, from unendurable miseries. The Allies had no understanding of Russian realities; their diplomatists were ignorant of Russian, genteel persons with their attention directed to the Russian Court rather than to Russia, they blundered steadily with the new situation. There was little goodwill among these diplomatists for republicanism, and a manifest disposition to embarrass the new government as much as possible. At the head of the Russian republican government was an eloquent and picturesque leader, Kerensky, who found himself assailed by the forces of a profounder revolutionary movement, the "social revolution," at home and cold-shouldered by the Allied governments abroad. His Allies would neither let him give the Russian peasants the land for which they craved nor peace beyond their frontiers. The French and the British press pestered their exhausted ally for a fresh offensive, but when presently the Germans made a strong attack by sea and land upon Riga, the British Admiralty quailed before the prospect of a Baltic expedition in relief. The new Russian Republic had to fight unsupported. In spite of their naval predominance and the bitter protests of the great English admiral, Lord Fisher (1841-1920), it is to be noted that the British and their Allies, except for some submarine attacks, left the Germans the complete mastery of the Baltic throughout the war.

The Russian masses, however, were resolute to end the war. At any cost. There had come into existence in Petrograd a body representing the workers and common soldiers, the Soviet, and this body clamoured for an international conference of socialists at Stockholm. Food riots were occurring in Berlin at this time, war weariness in Austria and Germany was profound, and there can be

little doubt, in the light of subsequent events, that such a conference would have precipitated a reasonable peace on democratic lines in 1917 and a German revolution. Kerensky implored his Western allies to allow this conference to take place, but, fearful of a worldwide outbreak of socialism and republicanism, they refused, in spite of the favourable response of a small majority of the British Labour Party. Without either moral or physical help from the Allies, the unhappy "moderate" Russian Republic still fought on and made a last desperate offensive effort in July. It failed after some preliminary successes, and there came another great slaughtering of Russians.

The limit of Russian endurance was reached. Mutinies broke out in the Russian armies, and particularly upon the northern front, and on November 7th, 1917, Kerensky's government was overthrown and power was seized by the Soviets, dominated by the Bolshevik socialists under Lenin, and pledged to make peace regardless of the Western powers. On March 2nd, 1918, a separate peace between Russia and Germany was signed at Brest-Litovsk.

A VIEW IN PETERSBURG UNDER BOLSHEVIK RULE
A wooden house has been demolished for firewood

By courtesy of Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton

It speedily became evident that these Bolshevik socialists were men of a very different quality from the rhetorical constitutionalists and revolutionaries of the Kerensky phase. They were fanatical Marxist communists. They believed that their accession to power in Russia was only the opening of a world-wide social revolution, and they set about changing the social and economic order with the thoroughness of perfect faith and absolute inexperience. The western European and the American governments were themselves much too ill-informed and incapable to guide or help this extraordinary experiment, and the press set itself to discredit and the ruling classes to wreck these usurpers upon any terms and at any cost to themselves or to Russia. A propaganda of abominable and disgusting inventions went on unchecked in the press of the world; the Bolshevik leaders were represented as incredible monsters glutted with blood and plunder and living lives of sensuality before which the realities of the Tsarist court during the Rasputin regime paled to a white purity. Expeditions were launched at the exhausted country, insurgents and raiders were encouraged, armed and subsidized, and no method of attack was too mean or too monstrous for the frightened enemies of the Bolshevik regime. In 1919, the Russian Bolsheviks, ruling a country already exhausted and disorganized by five years of intensive warfare, were fighting a British Expedition at Archangel, Japanese invaders in Eastern Siberia, Roumanians with French and Greek contingents in the south, the Russian Admiral Koltchak in Siberia and General Deniken, supported by the French fleet, in the Crimea. In July of that year an Esthonian army, under General Yudenitch, almost got to Petersburg. In 1920 the Poles, incited by the French, made a new attack on Russia; and a new reactionary raider, General Wrangel, took over the task of General Deniken in invading and devastating his own country. In March, 1921, the sailors at Cronstadt revolted. The Russian Government under its president, Lenin, survived all these various attacks. It showed an amazing tenacity, and the common people of Russia sustained it unswervingly under conditions of extreme hardship. By the end of 1921 both Britain and Italy had made a sort of recognition of the communist rule.

But if the Bolshevik Government was successful in its struggle against foreign intervention and internal revolt, it was far less happy in its attempts to set up a new social order based upon communist ideas in Russia. The Russian peasant is a small land-hungry proprietor, as far from communism in his thoughts and methods as a whale is from flying; the revolution gave him the land of the great landowners but could not make him grow food for anything but negotiable money, and the revolution, among other things, had practically destroyed the value of money. Agricultural production, already greatly disordered by the collapse of the railways through war-strain, shrank to a mere cultivation of food by the peasants for their own consumption. The towns starved. Hasty and ill-planned attempts to make over industrial production in accordance with communist ideas were equally unsuccessful. By 1920 Russia presented the unprecedented spectacle of a modern civilization in complete collapse. Railways were rusting and passing out of use, towns were falling into ruin, everywhere there was an immense mortality. Yet the country still fought with its enemies at its gates. In 1921 came a drought and a great famine among the peasant cultivators in the war-devastated south-east provinces. Millions of people starved.

But the question of the distresses and the possible recuperation of Russia brings us too close to current controversies to be discussed here.

LXVII

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD

THE scheme and scale upon which this History is planned do not permit us to enter into the complicated and acrimonious disputes that centre about the treaties, and particularly of the treaty of Versailles, which concluded the Great War. We are beginning to realize that that conflict, terrible and enormous as it was, ended nothing, began nothing and settled nothing. It killed millions of people; it wasted and impoverished the world. It smashed Russia altogether. It was at best an acute and frightful reminder that we were living foolishly and confusedly without much plan or foresight in a dangerous and unsympathetic universe. The crudely organized egotisms and passions of national and imperial greed that carried mankind into that tragedy, emerged from it sufficiently unimpaired to make some other similar disaster highly probable so soon as the world has a little recovered from its war exhaustion and fatigue. Wars and revolutions make nothing; their utmost service to mankind is that, in a very rough and painful way, they destroy superannuated and obstructive things. The great war lifted the threat of German imperialism from Europe, and shattered the imperialism of Russia. It cleared away a number of monarchies. But a multitude of flags still waves in Europe, the frontiers still exasperate, great armies accumulate fresh stores of equipment.

The Peace Conference at Versailles was a gathering very ill adapted to do more than carry out the conflicts and defeats of the war to their logical conclusions. The Germans, Austrians, Turks and Bulgarians were permitted no share in its deliberations; they were only to accept the decisions it dictated to them. From the point of view of human welfare the choice of the place of meeting was particularly unfortunate. It was at Versailles in 1871 that, with every circumstance of triumphant vulgarity, the new German Empire had been proclaimed. The suggestion of a melodramatic reversal of that scene, in the same Hall of Mirrors, was overpowering.

Whatever generosities had appeared in the opening phases of the

Great War had long been exhausted. The populations of the victorious countries were acutely aware of their own losses and sufferings, and entirely regardless of the fact that the defeated had paid in the like manner. The war had arisen as a natural and inevitable consequence of the competitive nationalisms of Europe and the absence of any Federal adjustment of these competitive forces; war is the necessary logical consummation of independent sovereign nationalities living in too small an area with too powerful an armament; and if the great war had not come in the form it did it would have come in some similar form — just as it will certainly return upon a still more disastrous scale in twenty or thirty years' time if no political unification anticipates and prevents it. States organized for war will make wars as surely as hens will lay eggs, but the feeling of these distressed and war-worn countries disregarded this fact, and the whole of the defeated peoples were treated as morally and materially responsible for all the damage, as they would no doubt have treated the victor peoples had the issue of war been different. The French and English thought the Germans were to blame, the Germans thought the Russians, French and English were to blame, and only an intelligent minority thought that there was anything to blame in the fragmentary political constitution of Europe. The treaty of Versailles was intended to be exemplary and vindictive; it provided tremendous penalties for the vanquished; it sought to provide compensations for the wounded and suffering victors by imposing enormous debts upon nations already bankrupt, and its attempts to reconstitute international relations by the establishment of a League of Nations against war were manifestly insincere and inadequate.

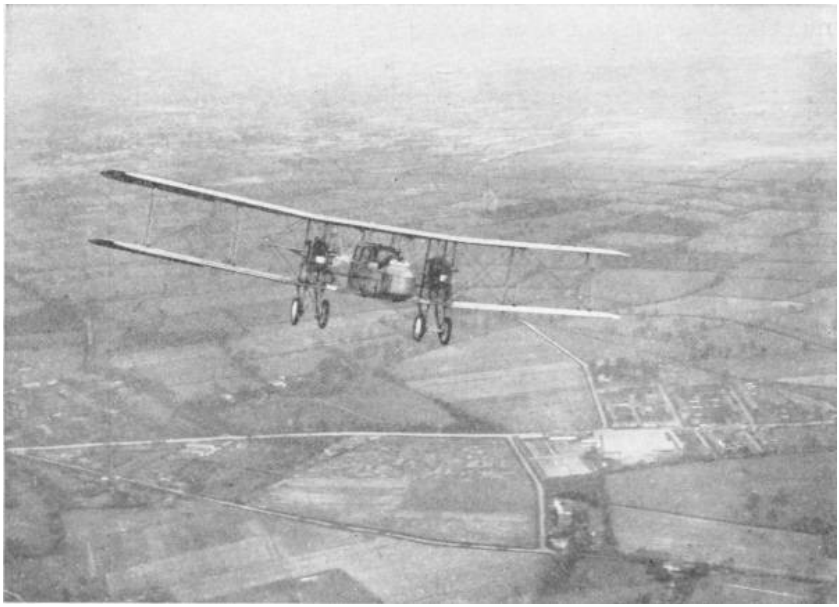

PASSENGER AEROPLANE FLYING OVER NORTHOLT
(Photo taken by another 'plane by the Central Aerophoto Co.)

So far as Europe was concerned it is doubtful if there would have been any attempt whatever to organize international relations for a permanent peace. The proposal of the League of Nations was brought into practical politics by the President of the United States of America, President Wilson. Its chief support was in America. So far the United States, this new modern state, had developed no distinctive ideas of international relationship beyond the Monroe Doctrine, which protected the new world from European interference. Now suddenly it was called upon for its mental contribution to the vast problem of the time. It had none. The natural disposition of the American people was towards a permanent world peace. With this however was linked a strong traditional distrust of old-world polities and a habit of isolation from old-world entanglements. The Americans had hardly begun to think out an American solution of world problems when the submarine campaign of the Germans dragged them into the war on the side of the anti-German allies. President Wilson's scheme of a League of Nations

was an attempt at short notice to create a distinctively American world project. It was a sketchy, inadequate and dangerous scheme. In Europe however it was taken as a matured American point of view. The generality of mankind in 1918-19 was intensely weary of war and anxious at almost any sacrifice to erect barriers against its recurrence, but there was not a single government in the old world willing to waive one iota of its sovereign independence to attain any such end. The public utterances of President Wilson leading up to the project of a World League of Nations seemed for a time to appeal right over the heads of the governments to the peoples of the world; they were taken as expressing the ripe intentions of America, and the response was enormous. Unhappily President Wilson had to deal with governments and not with peoples; he was a man capable of tremendous flashes of vision and yet when put to the test egotistical and limited, and the great wave of enthusiasm he evoked passed and was wasted.

Says Dr. Dillon in his book, *The Peace Conference:* "Europe, when the President touched its shores, was as clay ready for the creative potter. Never before were the nations so eager to follow a Moses who would take them to the long-promised land where wars are prohibited and blockades unknown. And to their thinking he was just that great leader. In France men bowed down before him with awe and affection. Labour leaders in Paris told me that they shed tears of joy in his presence, and that their comrades would go through fire and water to help him to realize his noble schemes. To the working classes in Italy his name was a heavenly clarion at the sound of which the earth would be renewed. The Germans regarded him and his doctrine as their sheet-anchor of safety. The fearless Herr Muehlon said: 'If President Wilson were to address the Germans and pronounce a severe sentence upon them, they would accept it with resignation and without a murmur and set to work at once.' In German-Austria his fame was that of a saviour, and the mere mention of his name brought balm to the suffering and surcease of sorrow to the afflicted ... ."

Such were the overpowering expectations that President Wilson raised. How completely he disappointed them and how weak and futile was the League of Nations he made is too long and too

distreesful a story to tell here. He exaggerated in his person our common human tragedy, he was so very great in his dreams and so incapable in his performance. America dissented from the acts of its President and would not join the League Europe accepted from him. There was a slow realization on the part of the American people that it had been rushed into something for which it was totally unprepared. There was a corresponding realization on the part of Europe that America had nothing ready to give to the old world in its extremity. Born prematurely and crippled at its birth, that League has become indeed, with its elaborate and unpractical constitution and its manifest limitations of power, a serious obstacle in the way of any effective reorganization of international relationships. The problem would be a clearer one if the League did not yet exist. Yet that world-wide blaze of enthusiasm that first welcomed the project, that readiness of men everywhere round and about the earth, of men, that is, as distinguished from governments, for a world control of war, is a thing to be recorded with emphasis in any history. Behind the short-sighted governments that divide and mismanage human affairs, a real force for world unity and world order exists and grows.

From 1918 onward the world entered upon an age of conferences. Of these the Conference at Washington called by President Harding (1921) has been the most successful and suggestive. Notable, too, is the Genoa Conference (1922) for the appearance of German and Russian delegates at its deliberations. We will not discuss this long procession of conferences and tentatives in any detail. It becomes more and more clearly manifest that a huge work of reconstruction has to be done by mankind if a crescendo of such convulsions and world massacres as that of the great war is to be averted. No such hasty improvisation as the League of Nations, no patched-up system of Conferences between this group of states and that, which change nothing with an air of settling everything, will meet the complex political needs of the new age that lies before us. A systematic development and a systematic application of the sciences of human relationship, of personal and group psychology, of financial and economic science and of education, sciences still only in their infancy, is required. Narrow and obsolete, dead and dying moral and political ideas have to be replaced by a clearer and a simpler

conception of the common origins and destinies of our kind.

A PEACEFUL GARDEN IN ENGLAND
Given wisdom, all mankind might live in such gardens

But if the dangers, confusions and disasters that crowd upon man in these days are enormous beyond any experience of the past, it is

because science has brought him such powers as he never had before. And the scientific method of fearless thought, exhaustively lucid statement, and exhaustively criticized planning, which has given him these as yet uncontrollable powers, gives him also the hope of controlling these powers. Man is still only adolescent. His troubles are not the troubles of senility and exhaustion but of increasing and still undisciplined strength. When we look at all history as one process, as we have been doing in this book, when we see the steadfast upward struggle of life towards vision and control, then we see in their true proportions the hopes and dangers of the present time. As yet we are hardly in the earliest dawn of human greatness. But in the beauty of flower and sunset, in the happy and perfect movement of young animals and in the delight of ten thousand various landscapes, we have some intimations of what life can do for us, and in some few works of plastic and pictorial art, in some great music, in a few noble buildings and happy gardens, we have an intimation of what the human will can do with material possibilities. We have dreams; we have at present undisciplined but ever increasing power. Can we doubt that presently our race will more than realize our boldest imaginations, that it will achieve unity and peace, that it will live, the children of our blood and lives will live, in a world made more splendid and lovely than any palace or garden that we know, going on from strength to strength in an ever widening circle of adventure and achievement? What man has done, the little triumphs of his present state, and all this history we have told, form but the prelude to the things that man has got to do.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

About the year 1000 B.C. the Aryan peoples were establishing themselves in the peninsulas of Spain, Italy and the Balkans, and they were established in North India; Cnossos was already destroyed and the spacious times of Egypt, of Thothmes III, Amenophis III and

Rameses II were three or four centuries away. Weak monarchs of the XXIst Dynasty were ruling in the Nile Valley. Israel was united under her early kings; Saul or David or possibly even Solomon may have been reigning. Sargon I (2750 B.C.) of the Akkadian Sumerian Empire was a remote memory in Babylonian history, more remote than is Constantine the Great from the world of the present day. Hammurabi had been dead a thousand years. The Assyrians were already dominating the less military Babylonians. In 1100 B.C. Tiglath Pileser I had taken Babylon. But there was no permanent conquest; Assyria and Babylonia were still separate empires. In China the new Chow dynasty was flourishing. Stonehenge in England was already some hundreds of years old.

The next two centuries saw a renascence of Egypt under the XXIInd Dynasty, the splitting up of the brief little Hebrew kingdom of Solomon, the spreading of the Greeks in the Balkans, South Italy and Asia Minor, and the days of Etruscan predominance in Central Italy. We begin our list of ascertainable dates with

B.C.

800. The building of Carthage.

790. The Ethiopian conquest of Egypt (founding the XXVth Dynasty).

776. First Olympiad.

753. Rome built.

745. Tiglath Pileser III conquered Babylonia and founded the New Assyrian Empire.

722. Sargon II armed the Assyrians with iron weapons.

721. He deported the Israelites.

680. Esarhaddon took Thebes in Egypt (overthrowing the Ethiopian XXVth Dynasty).

664. Psammetichus I restored the freedom of Egypt and founded the XXVIth Dynasty (to 610).

608. Necho of Egypt defeated Josiah, king of Judah, at the battle of Megiddo.

606. Capture of Nineveh by the Chaldeans and Medes.

Foundation of the Chaldean Empire.

604. Necho pushed to the Euphrates and was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar II.

(Nebuchadnezzar carried off the Jews to Babylon.)
550. Cyrus the Persian succeeded Cyaxares the Mede.
Cyrus conquered Crœsus.
Buddha lived about this time.
So also did Confucius and Lao Tse.
539. Cyrus took Babylon and founded the Persian Empire.
521. Darius I, the son of Hystaspes, ruled from the Hellespont to the Indus.
His expedition to Scythia.

490. Battle of Marathon.
480. Battles of Thermopylï and Salamis.
479. The battles of Platea and Mycale completed the repulse of Persia.
474. Etruscan fleet destroyed by the Sicilian Greeks.
431. Peloponnesian War began (to 404)
401. Retreat of the Ten Thousand.
359. Philip became king of Macedonia.
338. Battle of Chïronia.
336. Macedonian troops crossed into Asia. Philip murdered.
334. Battle of the Granicus.
333. Battle of Issus.
331. Battle of Arbela.
330. Darius III killed.
323. Death of Alexander the Great.
321. Rise of Chandragupta in the Punjab.
The Romans completely beaten by the Samnites at the battle of the Caudine Forks.
281. Pyrrhus invaded Italy.
280. Battle of Heraclea.
279. Battle of Ausculum.
278. Gauls raided into Asia Minor and settled in Galatia.
275. Pyrrhus left Italy.
264. First Punic War. (Asoka began to reign in Behar — to 227.)
260. Battle of Mylï.
256. Battle of Ecnomus.
246. Shi-Hwang-ti became King of Ts'in.

220. Shi-Hwang-ti became Emperor of China.
214. Great Wall of China begun.
210. Death of Shi-Hwang-ti.
202. Battle of Zama.
146. Carthage destroyed.
133. Attalus bequeathed Pergamum to Rome.
102. Marius drove back Germans.
100. Triumph of Marius. (Chinese conquering the Tarim valley.)
89. All Italians became Roman citizens.
73. The revolt of the slaves under Spartacus.
71. Defeat and end of Spartacus.
66. Pompey led Roman troops to the Caspian and Euphrates. He encountered the Alani.
48. Julius Cïsar defeated Pompey at Pharsalos.
44. Julius Cïsar assassinated.
27. Augustus Cïsar princeps (until 14 A.D.).
4. True date of birth of Jesus of Nazareth.
A.D. Christian Era began.
14. Augustus died. Tiberius emperor.
30. Jesus of Nazareth crucified.
41. Claudius (the first emperor of the legions) made emperor by pretorian guard after murder of Caligula.
68. Suicide of Nero. (Galba, Otho, Vitellus, emperors in succession.)
69. Vespasian.
102. Pan Chau on the Caspian Sea.
117. Hadrian succeeded Trajan. Roman Empire at its greatest extent.
138. (The Indo-Scythians at this time were destroying the last traces of Hellenic rule in India.)
161. Marcus Aurelius succeeded Antoninus Pius.
164. Great plague began, and lasted to the death of M. Aurelius (180). This also devastated all Asia.

(Nearly a century of war and disorder began in the Roman Empire.)

220. End of the Han dynasty. Beginning of four hundred years of division in China.

227. Ardashir I (first Sassanid shah) put an end to Arsacid line in Persia.
242. Mani began his teaching.
247. Goths crossed Danube in a great raid.
251. Great victory of Goths. Emperor Decius killed.
260. Sapor I, the second Sassanid shah, took Antioch, captured the Emperor Valerian, and was cut up on his return from Asia Minor by Odenathus of Palmyra.

277. Mani crucified in Persia.
284. Diocletian became emperor.
303. Diocletian persecuted the Christians.
311. Galerius abandoned the persecution of the Christians.
312. Constantine the Great became emperor.
323. Constantine presided over the Council of Nicïa.
337. Constantine baptized on his deathbed.
361-3. Julian the Apostate attempted to substitute Mithraism for Christianity.
392. Theodosius the Great emperor of east and west.
395. Theodosius the Great died. Honorius and Arcadius redivided the empire with Stilicho and Alaric as their masters and protectors.
410. The Visigoths under Alaric captured Rome.
425. Vandals settling in south of Spain. Huns in Pannonia, Goths in Dalmatia. Visigoths and Suevi in Portugal and North Spain. English invading Britain.
439. Vandals took Carthage.
451. Attila raided Gaul and was defeated by Franks, Alemanni and Romans at Troyes.
453. Death of Attila.
455. Vandals sacked Rome.
470. Odoacer, king of a medley of Teutonic tribes, informed Constantinople that there was no emperor in the West. End of the Western Empire.
493. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, conquered Italy and became King of Italy, but was nominally subject to Constantinople. (Gothic kings in Italy. Goths settled on special confiscated lands as a garrison.)
527. Justinian emperor.

529. Justinian closed the schools at Athens, which had flourished nearly a thousand years. Belisarius (Justinian's general) took Naples.
531. Chosroes I began to reign.
543. Great plague in Constantinople.
553. Goths expelled from Italy by Justinian. Justinian died. The Lombards conquered most of North Italy (leaving Ravenna and Rome Byzantine).
570. Muhammad born.
579. Chosroes I died.
(The Lombards dominant in Italy.)
590. Plague raged in Rome. Chosroes II began to reign.
610. Heraclius began to reign.
619. Chosroes II held Egypt, Jerusalem, Damascus, and armies on Hellespont. Tang dynasty began in China.
622. The Hegira.
627. Great Persian defeat at Nineveh by Heraclius. Tai-tsung became Emperor of China.
628. Kavadh II murdered and succeeded his father, Chosroes II.
Muhammad wrote letters to all the rulers of the earth.
629. Muhammad returned to Mecca.
632. Muhammad died. Abu Bekr Caliph.
634. Battle of the Yarmuk. Moslems took Syria. Omar second Caliph.
635. Tai-tsung received Nestorian missionaries.
637. Battle of Kadessia.
638. Jerusalem surrendered to the Caliph Omar.
642. Heraclius died.
643. Othman third Caliph.
655. Defeat of the Byzantine fleet by the Moslems.
668. The Caliph Moawija attacked Constantinople by sea.
687. Pepin of Hersthal, mayor of the palace, reunited Austrasia and Neustria.
711. Moslem army invaded Spain from Africa.

715. The domains of the Caliph Walid I extended from the Pyrenees to China.

717-18. Suleiman, son and successor of Walid, failed to take Constantinople.
732. Charles Martel defeated the Moslems near Poitiers.
751. Pepin crowned King of the French.
768. Pepin died.
771. Charlemagne sole king.
774. Charlemagne conquered Lombardy.
786. Haroun-al-Raschid Abbasid Caliph in Bagdad (to 809).
795. Leo III became Pope (to 816).
800. Leo crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the West.
802. Egbert, formerly an English refugee at the court of Charlemagne, established himself as King of Wessex.
810. Krum of Bulgaria defeated and killed the Emperor Nicephorus.
814. Charlemagne died.
828. Egbert became first King of England.
843. Louis the Pious died, and the Carlovingian Empire went to pieces. Until 962 there was no regular succession of Holy Roman Emperors, though the title appeared intermittently.
850. About this time Rurik (a Northman) became ruler of Novgorod and Kieff.
852. Boris first Christian King of Bulgaria (to 884).
865. The fleet of the Russians (Northmen) threatened Constantinople.
904. Russian (Northmen) fleet off Constantinople.
912. Rolf the Ganger established himself in Normandy.
919. Henry the Fowler elected King of Germany.
936. Otto I became King of Germany in succession to his father, Henry the Fowler.
941. Russian fleet again threatened Constantinople.
962. Otto I, King of Germany, crowned Emperor (first Saxon Emperor) by John XII.
987. Hugh Capet became King of France. End of the Carlovingian line of French kings.
1016. Canute became King of England, Denmark and Norway.
1043. Russian fleet threatened Constantinople.
1066. Conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy.

1071. Revival of Islam under the Seljuk Turks. Battle of Melasgird.
1073. Hildebrand became Pope (Gregory VII) to 1085.
1084. Robert Guiscard, the Norman, sacked Rome.
1087-99. Urban II Pope.
1095. Urban II at Clermont summoned the First Crusade.
1096. Massacre of the People's Crusade.
1099. Godfrey of Bouillon captured Jerusalem.
1147. The Second Crusade.
1169. Saladin Sultan of Egypt.
1176. Frederick Barbarossa acknowledged supremacy of the Pope (Alexander III) at Venice.
1187. Saladin captured Jerusalem.
1189. The Third Crusade.
1198. Innocent III Pope (to 1216). Frederick II (aged four), King of Sicily, became his ward.
1202. The Fourth Crusade attacked the Eastern Empire.
1204. Capture of Constantinople by the Latins.
1214. Jengis Khan took Pekin.
1226. St. Francis of Assisi died. (The Franciscans.)
1227. Jengis Khan died. Khan from the Caspian to the Pacific, and was succeeded by Ogdai Khan.
1228. Frederick II embarked upon the Sixth Crusade, and acquired Jerusalem.
1240. Mongols destroyed Kieff. Russia tributary to the Mongols.

1241. Mongol victory in Liegnitz in Silesia.
1250. Frederick II, the last Hohenstaufen Emperor, died. German interregnum until 1273.
1251. Mangu Khan became Great Khan. Kublai Khan governor of China.
1258. Hulagu Khan took and destroyed Bagdad.
1260. Kublai Khan became Great Khan.
1261. The Greeks recaptured Constantinople from the Latins.
1273. Rudolf of Habsburg elected Emperor. The Swiss formed their Everlasting League.
1280. Kublai Khan founded the Yuan dynasty in China.

1292. Death of Kublai Khan.
1293. Roger Bacon, the prophet of experimental science, died.
1348. The Great Plague, the Black Death.
1360. In China the Mongol (Yuan) dynasty fell, and was succeeded by the Ming dynasty (to 1644).
1377. Pope Gregory XI returned to Rome.
1378. The Great Schism. Urban VI in Rome, Clement VII at Avignon.
1398. Huss preached Wycliffism at Prague.
1414-18. The Council of Constance.
Huss burnt (1415).
1417. The Great Schism ended.
1453. Ottoman Turks under Muhammad II took Constantinople.
1480. Ivan III, Grand Duke of Moscow, threw off the Mongol allegiance.
1481. Death of the Sultan Muhammad II while preparing for the conquest of Italy.
1486. Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope.
1492. Columbus crossed the Atlantic to America.
1498. Maximilian I became Emperor.
1498. Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape to India.
1499. Switzerland became an independent republic.
1500. Charles V born.
1509. Henry VIII King of England.
1513. Leo X Pope.
1515. Francis I King of France.
1520. Suleiman the Magnificent, Sultan (to 1566), who ruled from Bagdad to Hungary. Charles V Emperor.
1525. Baber won the battle of Panipat, captured Delhi, and founded the Mogul Empire.
1527. The German troops in Italy, under the Constable of Bourbon, took and pillaged Rome.
1529. Suleiman besieged Vienna.
1530. Charles V crowned by the Pope.
Henry VIII began his quarrel with the Papacy.
1539. The Society of Jesus founded.
1546. Martin Luther died.

1547. Ivan IV (the Terrible) took the Title of Tsar of Russia.
1556. Charles V abdicated. Akbar, Great Mogul (to 1605). Ignatius of Loyola died.
1558. Death of Charles V.
1566. Suleiman the Magnificent died.
1603. James I King of England and Scotland.
1620. Mayflower expedition founded New Plymouth. First negro slaves landed at Jamestown (Va.).
1625. Charles I of England.
1626. Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam) died.
1643. Louis XIV began his reign of seventy-two year's.
1644. The Manchus ended the Ming dynasty.
1648. Treaty of Westphalia. There-by Holland and Switzerland were recognized as free republics and Prussia became important. The treaty gave a complete victory neither to the Imperial Crown nor to the Princes.

War of the Fronde; it ended in the complete victory of the French crown.
1649. Execution of Charles I of England.
1658. Aurungzeb Great Mogul. Cromwell died.
1660. Charles II of England.
1674. Nieuw Amsterdam finally became British by treaty and was renamed New York.
1683. The last Turkish attack on Vienna defeated by John III of Poland.
1689. Peter the Great of Russia. (To 1725.)
1701. Frederick I first King of Prussia.
1707. Death of Aurungzeb. The empire of the Great Mogul disintegrated.
1713. Frederick the Great of Prussia born.
1715. Louis XV of France.
1755-63. Britain and France struggled for America and India. France in alliance with Austria and Russia against Prussia and Britain (1756-63); the Seven Years' War.
1759. The British general, Wolfe, took Quebec.
1760. George III of Britain.

1763. Peace of Paris; Canada ceded to Britain. British dominant in India.
1769. Napoleon Bonaparte born.
1774. Louis XVI began his reign.
1776. Declaration of Independence by the United States of America.
1783. Treaty of Peace between Britain and the new United States of America.
1787. The Constitutional Convention of Philadelphia set up the Federal Government of the United States. France discovered to be bankrupt.
1788. First Federal Congress of the United States at New York.
1789. The French States-General assembled. Storming of the Bastille.
1791. Flight to Varennes.
1792. France declared war on Austria. Prussia declared war on France. Battle of Valmy. France became a republic.
1793. Louis XVI beheaded.
1794. Execution of Robespierre and end of the Jacobin republic.
1795. The Directory. Bonaparte suppressed a revolt and went to Italy as commander-in-chief.
1798. Bonaparte went to Egypt. Battle of the Nile.
1799. Bonaparte returned to France. He became First Consul with enormous powers.
1804. Bonaparte became Emperor. Francis II took the title of Emperor of Austria in 1805, and in 1806 he dropped the title of Holy Roman Emperor. So the "Holy Roman Empire" came to an end.
1806. Prussia overthrown at Jena.
1808. Napoleon made his brother Joseph King of Spain.
1810. Spanish America became republican.
1812. Napoleon's retreat from Moscow.
1814. Abdication of Napoleon. Louis XVIII.
1824. Charles X of France.
1825. Nicholas I of Russia. First railway, Stockton to Darlington.
1827. Battle of Navarino.
1829. Greece independent.
1830. A year of disturbance. Louis Philippe ousted Charles X.

Belgium broke away from Holland. Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha became king of this new country, Belgium. Russian Poland revolted ineffectually.

1835. The word "socialism" first used.

1837. Queen Victoria.

1840. Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

1852. Napoleon III Emperor of the French.

1854-56. Crimean War.

1856. Alexander II of Russia.

1861. Victor Emmanuel First King of Italy. Abraham Lincoln became President, U. S. A. The American Civil War began.

1865. Surrender of Appomattox Court House. Japan opened to the world.

1870. Napoleon III declared war against Prussia.

1871. Paris surrendered (January). The King of Prussia became "German Emperor." The Peace of Frankfort.

1878. The Treaty of Berlin. The Armed Peace of forty-six years began in western Europe.

1888. Frederick II (March), William II (June), German Emperors.

1912. China became a republic.

1914. The Great War in Europe began.

1917. The two Russian revolutions. Establishment of the Bolshevik regime in Russia.

1918. The Armistice.

1920. First meeting of the League of Nations, from which Germany, Austria, Russia and Turkey were excluded and at which the United States was not represented.

1921. The Greeks, in complete disregard of the League of Nations, make war upon the Turks.

1922. Great defeat of the Greeks in Asia Minor by the Turks.

WASHINGTON AND THE HOPE OF PEACE

OR, WASHINGTON AND THE RIDDLE OF PEACE

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I. — INTRODUCTION

THESE twenty-nine papers do not profess to be a record or description of the Washington Conference. They give merely the impressions and fluctuating ideas of one visitor to that conference. They show the reaction of that gathering upon a mind keenly set upon the idea of an organized world peace; they record phases of enthusiasm, hope, doubt, depression and irritation. They have scarcely been touched, except to correct a word or a phrase here or there; they are dated; in all essentials they are the articles just as they appeared in the *New York World*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the other American and European papers which first gave them publicity. It is due to the enterprise and driving energy of the *New York World*, be it noted, that they were ever written at all. But in spite of the daily change and renewal of mood and attitude, inevitable under the circumstances, they do tell a consecutive story; they tell of the growth and elaboration of a conviction of how things can be done, and of how they need to be done, if our civilization is indeed to be rescued from the dangers that encompass it and set again upon the path of progress. They record — and in a very friendly and appreciative spirit — the birth and unfolding of the "Association of Nations'' idea, the Harding idea, of world pacification, they note some of the peculiar circumstances of that birth, and they study the chief difficulties on its way to realization. It is, the writer believes, the most practical and hopeful method of attacking this riddle of the Sphinx that has hitherto been proposed.

But such a world effort to restore business and prosperity is only possible between govern-ments sincerely at peace, and because of the failure of Versailles there is no such sincere peace. Everywhere the Governments, and notably Japan and France, arm. Amidst the steady disintegration of the present system of things, they prepare for fresh wars, wars that can have only one end — an extension of the famine and social collapse that have already engulfed Russia to the rest of the world.

In Russia, in Austria, in many parts of Germany, this social decay is visible in actual ruins, in broken down railways and suchlike

machinery falling out of use. But even in Western Europe, in France and England, there is a shabbiness, there is a decline visible to any one with a keen memory.

The other day my friend Mr. Charlie Chaplin brought his keen observant eyes back to London, after an absence of ten years.

"People are not laughing and careless here as they used to be," he told me. "It isn 't the London I remember. They are anxious. Something hangs over them."

Coming as I do from Europe to America, I am amazed at the apparent buoyancy and abundance of New York. The place seems to possess an inexhaustible vitality. But this towering, thundering, congested city, with such a torrent of traffic and such a concourse of people as I have never seen before, is, after all, the European door of America; it draws this superabundant and astounding life from trade, from a trade whose roots are dying.

When one looks at New York its assurance is amazing; when one reflects we realize its tremendous peril. It is going on — as London is going on — by accumulated inertia. With the possible exception of London, the position of New York seems to me the most perilous of that of any city in the world. What is to happen to this immense crowd of people if the trade that feeds it ebbs? As assuredly it will ebb unless the decline of European money and business can be arrested, unless, that is, the world problem of trade and credit can be grappled with as a world affair.

The world's economic life, its civilization, embodied in its great towns, is disintegrating and collapsing through the strains of the modern war threat and of the disunited control of modern affairs.

This in general terms is the situation of mankind today; this is the situation, the tremendous and crucial situation, that President Harding, the head and spokesman of what is now the most powerful and influential state in the world, has called representatives from most of the states in the world to Washington to discuss.

Whatever little modifications and limitations the small cunning of diplomatists may impose upon the terms of reference of the conference, the plain common sense of mankind will insist that its essential inquiry is, "What are we to do, if anything can possibly be done, to arrest and reverse the slide toward continuing war

preparation and war and final social collapse?" And you would imagine that this momentous conference would gather in a mood of exalted responsibility, with every conceivable help and every conceivable preparation to grasp the enormous issues involved.

Let us dismiss any such delusion from our minds.

Let us face a reality too often ignored in the dignfied discussion of such business as this Washington Conference, and that is this: that the human mind takes hold of such very big questions as the common peace of the earth and the general security of mankind with very great reluctance and that it leaves go with extreme alacrity.

We are all naturally trivial creatures. We do not live from year to year; we live from day to day. Our minds naturally take short views and are distracted by little, immediate issues. We forget with astonishing facility. And this is as true of the high political persons who will gather at Washington as it is of any overworked clerk who will read about the conference in a street car or on the way home to supper and bed. These big questions affect everybody, and also they are too big for anybody. A great intellectual and moral effect is required if they are to be dealt with in any effectual manner.

I find the best illustration of this incurable drift toward triviality in myself. In the world of science the microscope helps the telescope and the infinitely little illuminates the infinitely great.

Let me put myself under the lens: Exhibit 1 — If any one has reason to focus the whole of his mental being upon this Washington Conference it is I. It is my job to attend to it and to think of it and of nothing else. Whatever I write about it, wise or foolish, will be conspicuously published in a great number of newspapers and will do much to make or mar my reputation. Intellectually, I am convinced of the supreme possibilities of the occasion. It may make or mar mankind. The smallest and the greatest of motives march together; therefore my self-love and my care for mankind. And the occasion touches all my future happiness.

If this downward drift toward disorder and war is not arrested, in a few years' time it will certainly catch my sons and probably mutilate or kill them; and my wife and I, instead of spending our declining years in comfort, will be involved in the general wretchedness and possibly perish in some quite miserable fashion, as thousands of just

our sort of family have already perished in Austria and Russia. This is indeed the outlook for most of us if these efforts to secure permanent peace which are now being concentrated at Washington fail.

Here surely are reasons enough, from the most generous to the most selfish, for putting my whole being, with the utmost concentration, into this business. You might imagine I think nothing but conference, do nothing but work upon the conference.

Well, I find I don't.

Before such evils as now advance upon hu^ manity, man's imagination seems scarcely more adequate than that of the park deer I have seen feeding contentedly beside the body of a shot companion.

I am, when I recall my behavior in the last few weeks, astonished at my own levity. I have been immensely interested by the voyage across the Atlantic; I have been tremendously amused by the dissertations of a number of fellow-travellers upon the little affair of Prohibition; I have been looking up old friends and comparing the New York City of to-day with the New York City#f fifteen years ago. I spent an afternoon loitering along Fifth Avenue, childishly pleased by the shops and the crowd, I find myself tempted to evade luncheon where I shall hear a serious discussion of the Pacific question, because I want to explore the mysteries of a chop suey without outside assistance.

Yet no one knows better than I do that this very attractive, glitteringly attractive, thundering, towering city is in the utmost danger. Within a very few years the same chill wind of economic disaster that has wrecked Petersburg and brought death to Vienna and Warsaw may be rusting and tarnishing all this glistening, bristling vitality. In a little while, within my lifetime, New York City may stand even more gaunt, ruinous, empty and haunted than that stricken and terrible ruin, Petersburg.

My mind was inadequate against the confident reality of a warm October afternoon, against bright clothes and endless automobiles, against the universal suggestion that everything would shine on forever. And my mind is something worse than thus inadequate; I find it is deliberately evasive. It tries to run away from the task I have set it. I find my mind, at the slightest pretext, slipping off from this

difficult tangle of problems through which the Washington Conference has to make its way.

For instance, I have got it into my head that I shall owe it to myself to take a holiday after the conference, and two beautiful words have taken possession of my mind — Florida and the Everglades. A vision of exploration amidst these wonderful sun-soaked swamps haunts me. I consult a guide book for information about Washington and the procedure of Congress, and I discover myself reading about Miami or Indian River.

So it is we are made. A good half of those who read this and who have been pulling themselves together to think about the hard tasks and heavy dangers of international affairs will brighten up at this mention of a holiday in the Everglades — either because they have been there or because they would like to go. They will want to offer experiences and suggestions and recommend hotels and guides.

And apart from this triviality of the attention, this pathetic disposition to get as directly as possible to the nearest agreeable thoughts which I am certain every statesman and politician at the conference shares in some measure with the reader and myself, we are also encumbered, every one of us, with prejudices and prepossessions.

There is patriotism — the passion that makes us see human affairs as a competitive game instead of a common interest; a game in which "our side," by fair means or foul, has to get the better — inordinately — of the rest of mankind. For my own part, though I care very little for the British Empire, which I think a temporary, patched-up thing, I have a passionate pride in being of the breed that produced such men as Shakespeare, Milton, Bacon, Cromwell, Newton, Washington, Darwin, Nelson and Lincoln. And I love the peculiar humor and kindly temper of an English crowd and the soft beauty of an English countryside with a strong, possessive passion.

I find it hard to think that other peoples matter quite as much as the English. I want to serve the English and to justify the English. Intellectually I know better, but no man's intelligence is continually dominant; fatigue him or surprise him, and habits and emotions take control. And not only that I have this bias which will always tend to make me run crooked in favor of my own people, but also I come to

Washington with deep, irrational hostilities.

For example: Political events have exasperated me with the present Polish Government. It is an unhappy thing that Poland should rise from being the unwilling slave of German and Russian reaction to become the willing tool of French reaction. But that is no reason why one should drift into a dislike of Poland and all things Polish, and because Poland is so ill-advised as to grab more than she is entitled to, that one should be disposed to give her less than she is entitled to. Yet' I do find a drift in that direction.

And prejudice soon breaks away into downright quarrelsomeness. It is amusing or dis-tressing, as you will, to find how easily I, as a professional peacemaker, can be tempted into a belligerent attitude. "Of course," I say, ruffed by some argument, "if Japan chooses to be unreasonable" —

I make no apologies for this autobiographical tone. It is easier and less contentious to dissect one's self than to set to work on any one else for anatomical ends. This is Exhibit No. 1. We are all like this. There are no demigods or supermen in our world superior to such trivialities, limitations, prejudices and patriotisms. We have all got them, as we have all got livers.

Every soul that gathers in Washington will have something of that disposition to get away to the immediately pleasant, will be disposed to take a personal advantage, will have a bias for race and country, will have imperfectly suppressed racial and national animosities, will be mentally hurried and crowded. That mental hurrying and crowding has to be insisted upon.

This will be a great time for Washington, no doubt, to have a very gay and exciting time. It becomes the focus of the worlds affairs. All sorts of interesting people are heading for Washington, bright-eyed and expectant. There will be lunches, dinners, receptions and such like social occasions in great abundance, dramatic, and encounters, flirtations, scandals, jealousies and quarrels. Quiet thought, reconsideration — will Washington afford any hole or cover for such things? A most distracting time it will be and it will be extraordinarily difficult to keep its real significance in mind.

So let us repeat here its real significance.

The great war has struck a blow at the very foundations of our

civilization; it has shattered the monetary system which is the medium of all our economic life. A rotting down of civilization is spreading now very rapidly and nothing is being done to arrest it. Production stagnates and dwindles. This can only be restored by the frank collective action of the chief powers of the world.

At present the chief powers of the world show no signs of the collective action demanded. They are still obsessed by old-fashioned ideas of national sovereignty and national competition, and though all verge on bankruptcy, they maintain and develop fresh armies and fleets. That is to say, they are in the preparatory stage of another war. So long as this divided and threatening state of affairs continues there can be no stability, no real general recovery; shortages will increase, famine will spread; towns, cities, communications will decay; increasing masses of starving unemployed will resort to more and more desperate and violent protests, until they assume a quasi-revolutionary character. Education will ebb, and social security dwindle and fade into anarchy. Civilization as we know it will go under and a new Dark Age begin.

And this fate is not threatening civilization; it is happening to civilization before our eyes. The ship of civilization is not going to sink in five years 7 time or in fifty years' time. It is sinking now. Russia is under the water line; she has ceased to produce, she starves; large areas of Eastern Europe and Asia sink toward the same level; the industrial areas of Germany face a parallel grim decline; the winter will be the worst on record for British labor. The pulse of American business weakens.

To face which situation in the world's affairs, this crowd of hastily compiled representatives, and their associates, dependents and satellites, now gathers at Washington. They are all, from President Harding down to the rawest stenographer girl, human beings. That is to say, they are all inattentive, moody, trivial, selfish, evasive, patriotic, prejudiced creatures, unable to be intelligently selfish even, for more than a year or so ahead, after the nature of our Exhibit No. 1.

Every one has some sort of blinding personal interest to distort the realities that he has to face. Politicians have to think of their personal prestige and their party associations; naval and military experts have

to think of their careers.

One may argue it is as good a gathering as our present circumstances permit. Probably there is some good will for all mankind in every one who comes. Probably not one is altogether blind to the tremendous disaster that towers over us, but all are forgetful.

And yet this Washington Conference may prove to be the nearest approach the human will and intelligence has yet made to a resolute grapple against fate upon this planet. We cannot make ourselves wiser than we are, but in this phase of universal danger we can at least school ourselves to the resolve to be

charitable and frank with one another to the best of our ability, to be forgiving debtors, willing to retreat from hasty and impossible assumptions, seeking patience in hearing and generosity in action. High aims and personal humility may yet save mankind.

II. — ARMAMENTS: THE FUTILITY OF MERE LIMITATION

Washington, November 8

IT would seem that the peculiar circumstances of its meeting demand that the Washington Conference should begin with a foregone futility, the discussion of the limitation of armaments and of the restrictions of warfare in certain directions, while nations are still to remain sovereign and free to make war and while there exists no final and conclusive court of decision for international disputes except warfare.

A number of people do really seem to believe that we can go on with all the various states of the earth still as sovereign and independent of each other as wild beasts in a jungle, with no common rule and no common law, and yet that

we can contrive it that they will agree to make war only in a mild and mitigated fashion, after due notice and according to an approved set of regulations. Such ideas are quite seriously entertained and they are futile and dangerous ideas. A committee of the London League of Nations Union, for example, has been debating with the utmost gravity whether the use of poison gas and the sinking of neutral ships to enforce a blockade should be permitted and whether "all modern developments 99 in warfare should not be abolished. " The feasibility of preventing secret preparations and the advantages of surprise were also considered. 9 ' It is as if warfare was a game.

It is a little difficult to reason respectfully against that sort of project. One is moved rather to add helpful suggestions in the same vein. As for example, that no hostilities shall be allowed to begin or continue except in the presence of a League of Nations referee, who shall be marked plainly on the chest and pants with the red cross of Geneva and who — for the convenience of aircraft — shall carry an open sunshade similarly adorned. He shall be furnished with a powerful whistle or hand trumpet audible above the noise of modern artillery, and military operations shall be at once arrested when this whistle is blown. Contravention of the rules laid down by the League

of Nations shall be penalized according to the gravity of the offense, with penalties ranging from, let us say, an hour's free bombardment of the offender's position to the entire forces of the enemy being addressed very severely by the referee and ordered off the field.

In the event of either combatant winning the war, outright by illegitimate means, it might further be provided that such combatant should submit to a humiliating peace, just as if the war had been lost.

Unhappily war is not a game but the grimmest of realities, and no power on earth exists to prevent a nation which is fighting for existence against another nation from resorting to any expedient however unfair, cruel and barbarous to enforce victory or avert disaster. Success justifies every expedient in warfare, and you

cannot prevent that being so. A nation, hoping to win and afterward make friends with its enemy or solicitous for the approval of some powerful neutral, may conceivably refrain from effective but objectionable expedients, but that is a voluntary and strategic restraint. The fact remains that war is an ultimate and illimitable thing; a war that can be controlled is a war that could have been stopped or prevented. If our race can really bar the use of poison gas it can bar the use of any kind of weapon. It is indeed easier to enforce peace altogether than any lesser limitation of war.

But it is argued that this much may be true nevertheless, that if the nations of the world will agree beforehand not to prepare for particular sorts of war or if they will agree to reduce their military and naval equipment to a minimum, that this will operate powerfully in preventing contraventions and in a phase of popular excitement arresting the rush toward war. The only objection to this admirable proposal is that no power which has desires or rights that can only be satisfied or defended, so far as it knows, by war, will ever enter into such a disarmament agreement in good faith. Of course countries contemplating war and having no serious intention of disarming effectually will enter quite readily into conferences upon disarmament, but they will do so partly because of the excellent propaganda value of such a participation and mainly because of the chance it gives them of some restriction which will hamper a possible antagonist much more than it will hamper themselves. For instance, Japan would probably be very pleased to reduce her

military expenditure to quite small figures if the United States reduced theirs to the same amount, because the cost per head of maintaining soldiers under arms is much less in Japan than in America; and she would be still more ready to restrict naval armament to ships with a radius of action of 2,000 miles or less because that would give her a free hand with China and the Philippines. That sort of haggling was going on between Britain and Germany at The Hague at intervals before the great war. Neither party believed in the peaceful intentions of the other nor regarded these negotiations as anything but strategic moves. And as things were in Europe it was difficult to regard them in any other way.

No, the limitation of armaments quite as much as the mitigation of warfare is impossble until war has been made impossible, and then the complete extinction of armaments follows without discussion; and war can only be made impossible when the powers of the world have done what the thirteen original States of American Union found they had to do after their independence was won, and that is set up a common law and rule over themselves. Such a project is a monstrously difficult one no doubt, and it flies in the face of great masses of patriotic cant and of natural prejudices and natural suspicion, but it is a thing that can be done. It is the only thing that can be done to avert the destruction of civilization through war and war preparation. Disarmament and the limitation of warfare without such a merging of sovereignty look, at the first glance, easier and more modest proposals, but they suffer from the fatal defect of absolute impracticability. They are things that cannot be made working realities. A world that could effectually disarm would be a world already at one, and disarmament would be of no importance whatever. Given stable international relations, the world would put aside its armaments as naturally as a man takes off his coat in winter on entering a warm house.

And as a previous article has pointed out, wars, preparations for war and the threat of war are only the more striking aspect of human disunion at the present time. The smashing up of the world's currency system and the progressive paralysis of industry that follows on that is a much more immediate disaster. That is rushing upon us. This war talk between Japan and America may end as

abruptly as the snarling of two dogs overtaken by a flood. There may not be another great war after all, because both in Japan and America social disruption may come first. Upon financial and economic questions the powers of the earth must get together very quickly now or perish; the signs get more imperative every day; and if they get together upon these common issues, then they will have little reason or excuse for not taking up the merely international issues at the same time.

There is a curious exaggeration of respect for patriotism and patriotic excesses in all these projects for disarmament and the mitigation of warfare. We have to "consider patriotic susceptibilities"; that is the stereotyped formula of objection to the plain necessity of overriding the present barbaric sovereignty of separate states by a world rule and a world law protecting the common interests of the common people of the world. In practice these "patriotic susceptibilities" will often be found to resolve themselves into nothing more formidable than the conceit and self-importance of some foreign office official. In general they are little more than a snarling suspiciousness of foreign people. Most people are patriotically excitable, it is in our human nature, but that no more excuses this excessive deference to patriotism than it would excuse a complete tolerance of boozing and of filthy vices and drunken and lustful outrages because we are all more or less susceptible to thirst and desire. And while there is all this deference for the most ramshackle and impromptu of nationalisms there is a complete disregard of the influence and of the respect due to one of the greatest and most concentrated interests of our modern world, the finance, the science, the experts, the labor, often very specialized and highly skilled, of the armament and munitions and associated trades and industries.

So far as I can ascertain, the advocates of what I may call mere disarmament propose to scrap this mass of interests more or less completely, to put its tremendous array of factories, arsenals, dockyards and so forth out of action, to obliterate its wide-reaching net of financial relationships, to break up its carefully gathered staffs, and to pour all its labor, its trained engineers and sailors and gunners and so forth into the great flood of unemployment into which our

civilization is already sinking. And they do not seem to grasp how subtle, various and effective the resistance of this great complex of capable human beings to any such treatment is likely to be. In my supply of League of Nations literature I find only two intimations of this real obstacle to the world common weal. One is a suggestion that there should be no private enterprise in the production of war material at all, and the other that armament concerns shall not own newspapers. As a Socialist I am charmed by the former proposal, which would in effect nationalize, among others, the iron and steel and chemical industries, but as a practical man I have to confess that the organization of no existing state is yet at the level of efficiency necessary if the transfer is to be a hopeful one, and so far as the newspaper restriction goes, it would surely pass the wit of man to devise rules that would prevent a great banking combination from controlling armament firms on the one hand while it financed newspapers on the other.

Yet the fact remains that this great complex of interests, round and about the armaments interest, is the most real of all the oppositions to a world federation. It supplies substance, direction and immediate rewards to the frothy emotions of patriotism; it rules by dividing us and it realizes that its existence in its present form is conditional upon the continuance of our suspicions and divisions. It does not positively want or seek war, but it wants a continuing expectation of and preparation for war. On the other hand its ruling intelligences must be coming to understand that in the end it cannot escape sharing in the economic and social smash down to which we are all now sliding so rapidly. It is too high a type of organization to be altogether blind and obdurate. It will not, of course, be represented officially at Washington for what it is, but in the form of pseudo-patriotic, naval, military and financial experts it will be better represented than any other side of human nature. One of the most interesting things to do at the conference will be to watch its activities.

How much can we common men ask for and hope for from this great power? Self extinction is too much — even if it were desirable.

But it is reasonable to demand a deflection of its activities to meet the urgent needs of our present dangers. We do not want the

extinction of this great body of business, metallurgical, chemical, engineering and disciplined activities, but we do want its rapid diversion from all too easily attained destructive ends to creative purposes now. A world peace scheme that does not open out an immediate prospect for the release of financial and engineering energy upon world-wide undertakings is a hopeless peace scheme. Enterprise must out. Were this world one federated state concerned about our common welfare there would be no over-whelming difficulty in canalizing all this force now spent upon armament in the direction of improved transport and communications generally into the making of great bridges, tunnels and the like, into the rebuilding of our cities upon better lines, into the irrigation and fertilization of the earth's deserts and so forth. The way to world peace lies not in fighting and destroying the armament interests but in turning them to world service.

But to do such a thing requires a united financial and economic effort; it cannot be done nationally by little groups of patriots all scheming against one another. It must be big business for world interests, unencumbered by national frontiers, or it is impossible.

All these considerations you see converge on the conclusion that there is no solution of the problem of war, no possibility of a world recovery, no possibility of arresting the rapid disintegration of our civilization, except a Pax Mundi, a federated world control, sufficiently authoritative to keep any single nation in order and sufficiently coherent to express a world idea. We need an effective world "Association of Nations," to use President Harding's phrase, or we shall perish. And even in this fantastic dream of Mere Disarmament, of a world of little independent states, all sovereign, all competing against each other and all carrying on a mean financial and commercial warfare against each other to the common impoverishment, all standing in the way of any large modern-spirited handling of modern needs, yet all remaining magically disarmed and never making actual war on each other — even if this dream were possible, it is still utterly detestable — more detestable even than our present dangers and miseries. For if there are any things in life worse than pain, fear and destruction, they are boredom, pettiness and inanity, and such would be the quality of such a world. However

much the diplomatists at Washington may seek to ignore the fact, may fence their discussion within narrowly phrased agenda, and rule this, that and the other vital aspect outside the scope of the conference, the fact remains that there is no way out, no way of escape for mankind from the monstrous miseries and far more monstrous dangers of the present time except an organized international co-operation, based upon a frank and bold resolve to turn men's minds from ancient jealousies and animosities to the common aims and the common future of our race.

If the Washington Conference cannot rise to the level of that idea, then it were better that the Conference never gathered together.

III. — THE TRAIL OF VERSAILLES:. TWO GBEAT POWERS ARE SILENT AND ABSENT

WASHINGTON, the guide books say, was planned by Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant in imitation of Versailles. If so, it has broken away from his intentions. I know Versailles pretty well, and I have gone about Washington looking vainly for anything more than the remotest resemblance. There is something European about Washington, I admit, an Italianate largeness, as though a Eoman design has been given oxygen and limitless space. It is a capital in the expanded Latin style. It has none of the vertical uplift of a real American city. But Versailles!

Versailles was the home and embodiment of the old French Grand Monarchy and of a Foreign Policy that sought to dominate, Frenchify and "Versaillize" the world. A visit to Versailles is part of one's world education, a visit to the rather faded, rather pretentious magnificence of its terraces, to that Hall of Mirrors, all plastered over with little oblongs of looking-glass, which was once considered so wonderful, to the stuffy, secretive royal apartments with their convenient back stairs, to the poor foolishness of the Queen's toy village, the Little Trianon. A century and a half ago the people of France, wasted and worn by incessant wars of aggression, weary of a Government that was an intolerable burden to them and a nuisance to all Europe, went to Versailles in a passion and dragged French Policy out of Versailles for a time.

Unhappily it went back there.

In 1871, when Germany struck down the tawdry imperialism of Napoleon III (who was also for setting up Emperors in the New World) the Germans had the excessive bad taste to proclaim a New German Empire in the Hall of Mirrors. So that Versailles became more than ever the symbol of the age-long, dreary, pitiful quarrel of the French and Germans for the inheritance of "the Empire" that has gone on ever since the death of Charlemagne. There the glory of France had shone; there the glory of France had been eclipsed. I visited Versailles one autumnal day in 1912, and it was then a rather mouldy, disheartened, empty, picturesque show place, pervaded by memories of flounces, furbelows, wigs and red heels and also by the stronger, less pleasant flavor of that later Prussian triumph.

It was surely the least propitious place in the whole world for the making of a world peace in 1919. It was inevitable that there the Ehine frontier should loom larger than all Asia and that the German people should be kept waiting outside to learn what vindictive punishment victorious France designed for them.

The Peace of Versailles was not a settlement of the world, it was the crowning of the French revanche. And since Russia had always been below the horizon of Versailles it was as inevitable that the Russian people, who had saved France from utter defeat in 1914, who had given far more dead to the war than France and America put together, and who had collapsed at last, utterly exhausted by their stupendous war efforts, should be considered merely as the defaulting debtors of France. Their Government had incurred vast liabilities chiefly in preparation for this very war which had restored France to her former glorious ascendancy over Germany. And now a new, ungracious Government in Russia not only declared it could not pay up but refused to pretend that it had ever meant to perform this impossible feat. There could be no dealing with such a Government. The German people and the Russian people alike had no voice at Versailles, and the affairs of the world were settled with a majestic disregard of these outcast and fallen powers.

They were settled so magnificently and badly that now the Washington Conference, whatever limitations it may propose to set upon itself, has in effect to review and, if it can, mend or replace that

appalling settlement. The Washington conference has practically to revise the verdicts of Versailles, in a fresher air and with a wider outlook.

I do not know how near future historians may come to saying that the Washington conference was planned in imitation pf that Versailles conference, but it certainly does start out with one most unfortunate resemblance. There seems to be the same tacit assumption that it is possible to come to some permanent settlement of the world's affairs with no representation of either the German or the Russian people at the conference. The Japanese, the Italians, the French, the Americans and the British, assisted by modest suggestions from such small sections of humanity as China and Spanish America, are sitting down to arrangements that will amount practically to a settlement of the world's affairs, and they are doing so without consulting these two great peoples, and quite without their consent and assistance. This surely runs counter to the fundamental principle of both American and British political life — that is to say, the principle of government with the consent of the governed — and it is indeed an altogether deplorable intention. In some form these two great peoples will have to be associated with any permanent settlement, and it will be much more difficult to secure their assent to any arrangement arrived at without even their formal co-operation.

It is necessary to remind ourselves of certain elementary facts about Germany and Russia and their position in the world today. They are facts within the knowledge of all, and yet they seem to be astonishingly forgotten in very much of the discussion of the Washington conference.

First, let us recall certain points about Germany. The German people occupy the most central position in Europe; they exceed in numbers any other European people except the Russians; their educational level has been as high or higher than any other people in the world; they are, as a people, honest, industrious, and intelligent; upon their social and political well-being and economic prosperity the prosperity of Britain, Scandinavia, Russia, Italy — and in a lesser degree France — depends. It is impossible to destroy such a people, it is impossible to wipe them off the map, but it is possible to ruin them economically and socially. And if Germany is ruined most of

Europe is ruined.

Germany has been overthrown in a great war and it will be well to recall here certain elementary facts about that war. Under a particularly aggressive and offensive imperialism system the Germans were plunged into conflict with most of the rest of the civilized world. But it was repeatedly declared by the British and by the Americans, if not by others of the combatants, that they fought not against the German people but against this German imperialism. The British war propaganda in particular did its utmost to saturate Germany with that assurance and to hold out the promise of generous treatment and a complete restoration of friendship *provided there was a German renunciation of imperialism and militarism.*

Germany, exhausted and beaten, surrendered in 1918 upon the strength of these promises and upon the similar promises implied in President Wilson's Fourteen Points. The declared ends of the war had been achieved. The Kaiser bolted, and Germany repented of him publicly and unequivocally.

But the conference at Versailles treated these promises that had been made to Germany as mere "scraps of paper." The peace imposed upon the young German republic was a punitive peace, exactly as punitive as though there were still a Kaiser in Berlin; it was a vindicative reversal of the Franco-German treaty of 1871 without a shred of recognition or tolerance for the chastened Germany that faced her conquerors. The Germans were dealt with as a race of moral monsters, though no one in his senses really believes they are very different, man for man, from English, French or American people; every German was held to be individually responsible for the war, though every Frenchman, Englishman and American knows that when one's country fights one has to fight, and it is quite natural to fight for it whether it is in the right or not; and a sustained attack of oppressive occupations, dismemberment, and impossible demands was begun and still goes on upon the shattered German civilization — which is at least as vitally necessary to the world as the French. The British and French nationalist press openly confess that they do not intend to give Germany a chance of recovery. The European Allies have now been kicking the prostrate body of Germany for three years; in a little while they will be

kicking a dead body; and since they are linked geographically to their victim almost as closely as the Siamese twins were linked together, they will share that victim's decay.

It is high time that this barbaric insanity, this prolongation of the combat after surrender, should cease and that the best minds and wills of Germany and the very reasonable republican government she has set up for herself should be called into consultation. I could wish that Washington could so far rise above Versailles as presently to make that invitation. Sooner or later it will have to be made if the peace of the world is to be secured.

The absence of Russia from the Washington conference is an even graver weakness. People seem to have forgotten altogether how the Russians bore the brunt of the opening years of the great war. Their rapid offensive in 1914 saved Paris and saved the little British Army from a disastrous retreat to the sea. The debt of gratitude Britain and France owe to Russia's "Unknown Warrior," that poor unhonored hero and martyr, is incalculable. But for Russia Germany would probably have won the war outright before the end of 1916. It was the blood and suffering of the Russian people saved victory for the Allies; those incredible soldiers fought often without artillery support, without rifle ammunition, without boots or food, under conditions almost inconceivable to the well-supplied French and British and Americans of the western front. And their tale of killed and wounded exceeds enormously that of any other combatant. In 1917 Russia collapsed; she was bled white, and she remained collapsed in spite of the sedulous kicking of her allies to rouse her to further efforts. The intolerable Rasputin-Czarism went down in the disaster. After a phase of extreme disorder, and very largely because of the British hesitation to support the Kerensky Government by bold naval action in the Baltic, the hard, tyrannous, doctrinaire government of the Bolsheviki took control.

That government is a bad government; its faults are indeed of a different order but on the whole, I will admit, it is almost as bad as the former Czarist Government it superseded. Yet let us remember certain plain facts about it. It has remained in power to this day because it is a Russian-speaking government standing for a whole and undivided Russia, and the Russian people support it because it

has defended Russia against the subsidized raiders of France and Britain, against the Poles and against the Estonians and against the Japanese and against every sort of outside interference with their prostrate country. They prefer fanatics to foreigners and Bolsheviks to brigands. Frenchmen or Americans in the same horrible position would probably make the same choice. The Entente, the Poles, a miscellany of adventurers, have given the Russians no breathing time to deal with their own Government in their own fashion. And now, caught by the misadventure of an unprecedented drought, millions of Russians in the regions disorganized by Kol-chak, Denikene and Wrangel, are starving to death — while Canada and America have wheat and corn to burn. There is even food to spare in some parts of Russia, but no adequate means of getting it to the starving provinces without outside assistance. And the Western World is letting these Russian millions starve because of the argumentative obstinacy of the Moscow Government, which hesitated for a time to acknowledge debts incurred by Russia — very largely for the military preparations which saved Europe — debts it is now inconceivable that Russia can ever under any circumstances pay, because of the pitiless resentment of the creditors of Russia. Yet the suffering of Russia cannot help the western money lender; they merely give him his revenge.

But even if some millions of Russian men, women and children die this winter and are added to the count of those who have already perished through the war — the war that saved Paris from Berlin — it does not follow that Russia will die. Peoples are not killed in this fashion. These distresses will not alter the fact that the Russians are the most numerous people in Europe, and a people of unexampled gifts and tenacity. Their magnificent resistance to outside interference since 1914 and their toleration of the Bolshevik Government when division would have been as fatal to them as it has been in China, is a proof of their solidarity and instinctive political wisdom. There are as many Russians as there are people in the United States of America, and they occupy an area as great and far richer in undeveloped resources. In spite of the monstrous Czarist Government which treated elementary education as an offense against the State, the prose literature, the drama, the music, the pictorial art — even the science of the Russians during the last

hundred years — all this compares favorably with that of the United States. These Russians are indeed one of the very greatest of people a;nd they have survived tragic experiences that might well have destroyed any other race. And Washington, I gather, proposes to settle the peace of Europe, Asia and the Pacific without them.

There is, I know, a very strong case to excuse Washington from sending an invitation to the existing Russian Government. I would be the last person in the world to minimize the difficulties the Bolshevik Government puts in the way of any fair dealings with the western powers; it is bound by its Communist theory not to recognize them fairly and to make gestures of preparation for their overthrow. In addition to its general theoretical obduracy Moscow is also afflicted with a particularly obdurate, pedantic, argumentative and disastrous Foreign Minister, Chicherin. But practical necessity knows no theories and the Bolshevik Government, if only it can save its face, is now extraordinarily anxious for recognition from and dealings with the western Governments.

I do not see why the western Governments, having regard to the needs of Russia, should try to outdo the Bolsheviks in obstinacy, pedantry and cruelty, nor why they should not make an honest attempt to get along with the de facto government until it develops naturally into something else. For such a development only a rough working peace is wanted. Given that, and a release from impossible debts, Russia, relieved forever from the black curse of Czar-ism, will go right on to become a land of restored cultivation, of resuscitated mines and presently of reawakening towns, a democratic land of common people more like the free, poor, farming, prospecting and developing United States of 1840 than anything else in history.

So long as Russia suffers the Bolshevik Government I think Washington ought to suffer it, but perhaps in that opinion I go beyond the possibilities of the case. Then I suggest that at least Washington ought to set up some well-informed lawyer, some bureau, to play the part of the Russian advocate at the conference. If Russia is not to be allowed a vote in the decision of things, let her at least be heard.

Consider what the future must hold for this great people, and mark the amazing folly of the insults and evils we heap upon their

land. Look it up in an atlas or encyclopaedia. Measure what it is we ignore. In a score of years Russia may be a renascent land as vigorous as the United States in 1840. In a century she may be as great and powerful and civilized as any state on earth. For such powers as France and Britain and Japan to sit in council upon the fate of the world without her is as if, in the dark years of 1863 and 1864, they had sat in council upon the future of America without the United States. Indeed, something of the sort did happen in those dark years; France, I recall, sent troops and munitions into Mexico, as recently she has sent them into Poland and South Russia. And somewhere in the world there is a grave, the grave of a "white hope," a reactionary puppet who was to have restored Mexico to the European system — the friend of the Emperor Napoleon the Third, the Emperor Maximilian.

When I was a small boy learning.the rudiments of geography, the earth was presented to me in two hemispheres, the Old World and the new. Not once or twice only has America vindicated her right to that title. Will Washington confirm that great tradition and open a way of escape now from the tangled narrowness of Versailles f Are Germany and Russia to perish amid the incurable quarrels of the Old World or find their salvation in the New?

IV. — THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER OF THE GREAT WAR

Washington, November 11

BRITAIN, France, Italy and now the people of the United States, have honored and buried the bodies of certain Unknown Soldiers, each according to their national traditions and circumstances. Canada, I hear, is to follow suit.

So the world expresses its sense that in the great war the only hero was the common man. Poor Hans and poor Ivan lie rotting yet under the soil of a hundred battlefields, bones and decay, rags of soiled uniform and fragments of accoutrements, still waiting for monuments and speeches. Yet they too were mothers' sons, kept step, obeyed orders, went singing into battle, and knew the strange intoxication of soldierly fellowship and the sense of devotion to something much greater than themselves.

In Arlington Cemetery soldiers of the Confederate South lie honored equally with the Federal dead, the right or wrong of their cause altogether forgotten and only their sacrifice remembered. A time will come when we shall cease to visit the crimes and blunders and misfortunes of their Governments upon the common soldiers and poor folk of Germany and Russia, when our bitterness will die out and we shall mourn them as we mourn our own, as souls who gave their lives and suffered greatly in one universal misfortune.

A time will come when these vast personifications of conflict, the Unknown British Soldier, the Unknown American Soldier, the Unknown French Soldier, etc., will merge into the thought of a still greater personality, the embodiment of 20,000,000 separate bodies and of many million broken lives, the Unknown Soldier of the great war.

It would be possible, I suppose, to work out many things concerning him. We could probably find out his age and his height and his weight and such like particulars very nearly.

We could average figures and estimates that would fix such matters within a very narrow range of uncertainty. In race and

complexion, I suppose he would be mainly North European; North Russian, German, Frankish, North Italian, British and American elements would all have the same trend toward a tallish, fairish, possibly blue-eyed type; but also there would be a strong Mediterranean streak in him, Indian and Turkish elements, a fraction of Mongolian and an infusion of African blood — brought in not only through the American colored troops but by the free use by the French of their Senegalese.

None of these factors would be strong enough to prevent his being mainly Northern and much the same mixture altogether as the American citizen of 1950 is likely to be. He would be a white man with a touch of Asia and a touch of color. And he would be young — I should guess about twenty-one or twenty- two — still boyish, probably unmarried rather than married, with a father and mother alive and with the memories and imaginations of the home he was born in still fresh and vivid in his mind when he died. We could even, I suppose, figure in general terms how he died. He was struck in daylight amid the strange noises and confusion of a modern battlefield by something out of the unknown — bullet, shell fragment or the like. At the moment he had been just a little scared — every one is a little scared on a battlefield — but much more excited than scared and trying hard to remember his training and do his job properly. When he was hit he was not so much hurt at first as astonished. I should guess that the first sensation of a man hard hit on a battlefield is not so much pain as an immense chagrin.

I suppose it would be possible to go on and work out how long it was before he died after he was hit, how long he suffered and wondered, how long he lay before his ghost fell in with that immense still muster in the shades, those millions of his kind who had no longer country to serve nor years of life before them, who had been cut off as he had been cut off suddenly from sights and sounds and hopes and passions. But rather let us think of the motives and feelings that had brought him, in so gallant and cheerful a frame of mind, to this complete sacrifice.

What did the Unknown Soldier of the great war think he was doing when he died? What did we, we people who got him into the great war and who are still in possession of this world of his, what

did we persuade him to think he was doing and what is the obligation we have incurred to him to atone for his death, for the life and sunlight he will know no more?

He was still too young a man to have his motives very clear. To conceive what moved him and what he desired is a difficult and disputable task. M. George Nobelmaire at a recent meeting of the League of Nations Assembly declared that he had heard French lads whisper'" Vive la France I" and die. He suggested that German boys may have died saying, ' i Colonel, say to my mother, 'Vive PAllemagne! , Possibly. But the French are trained harder in patriotism than any other people. I doubt if it was the common mood. It was certainly not the common mood among the British.

I cannot imagine many English boys using their last breath to say "Rule Britannia!" or "King George for Merry England!" Some of our young men swore out of vexation and fretted; some, and it was not always the youngest, became childish again and cried touchingly for their mothers; many maintained the ironical flippancy of our people to the end; many died in the vein of a young miner from Durham with whom I talked one morning in the trenches near Martinpuich, trenches which had been badly "strafed" overnight. War, he said, was a beastly job, "but we've got to clean this up." That is the spirit of the lifeboat man or fireman. That is the great spirit. I believe that was far nearer to the true mind of the Unknown Soldier than any tinpot Viva-ing of any flag, nation or empire whatever.

I believe that when we generalize the motives that took the youth who died in the great war out of the light of life and took them out at precisely the age when life is most desirable, we shall find that the dominating purpose was certainly no narrow devotion to the "glory" or "expansion" of any particular country, but a wide-spirited hostility to wrong and oppression. That is clearly shown by the nature of the appeals that were made in every country to sustain the spirit of its soldiers.

If national glory and patriotism had been the ruling motive of these young men, then manifestly their propaganda would have concerned themselves mainly with national honor and flag idolatry. But they did not do so. Nowadays flags fly better on parades and stoop fronts than on battlefields. The war propagandas dwelt steadily

and insistently upon the wickedness and unrighteousness of the enemy, upon the dangers of being overwhelmed by foreign tyranny, and particularly upon the fact that the enemy had planned and made the war. These boys fought best on that — everywhere.

So far as the common men in every belligerent country went, therefore, the great war was a war against wrong, against force, against war itself. Whatever it was in the thoughts of the diplomatists, it was that in the minds of the boys who died. In the minds of these young and generous millions who are personified in the Unknown Soldier of the great war, in the minds of the Germans and Russians who fought so stoutly, quite as much as the Americans, British, French or Italians, the war was a war to end war.

And that marks our obligation.

Every speech that is made beside the graves of these Unknown Soldiers who lie now in the comradeship of youthful death, every speech which exalts patriotism above peace, which hints at reparations and revenges, which cries for mean alliances to sustain the traditions of the conflict, which exalts national security over the common welfare, which wags the "glorious flag" of this nation or that in the face of the universal courage and tragedy of mankind, is an insult and an outrage upon the dead youth who lies below. He sought justice and law in the world as he conceived these things, and whoever approaches his resting place unprepared to serve the establishment of a world law and world justice, breathing the vulgar cants and catchwords of a patriotism outworn and of conflicts that he died to end, commits a monstrous sacrilege and sins against all mankind.

V. — THE PRESIDENT AT ARLINGTON

Washington, November 11

I AM writing this just after my return from the funeral, in the National Cemetery, of the American Unknown Soldier at Arlington, a very stately and moving ceremony, under the bright blue sky and the cold, keen air of a Virginia November day. The body had been lying in state at the Capitol and it was carried through Washington to the cemetery at the head of a great procession in which the Supreme Court, the Cabinet, Senators, members of the House of Representatives, war veterans and a multitude of societies marched on foot, a march of nearly two hours and a half duration. Much of this gathering was of the substance of all such processions, but one or two of the contingents were rich with association and suggestion.

There were fifty or sixty, I should guess, very old men, bent, white- headed — one with a conspicuous long, white beard — veterans of a civil war that was fought out to an end before I was born. They came close to a contingent of men who had been specially decorated in the great war, erect and eager, still on the better side of the prime of life. These older men had fought in a great fight against a division, a separation that today, thanks to their sacrifice, has become inconceivable. They had fought to seal the Federal Union of what were else warring States. The young men who marched before them had fought in a war upon the greater stage of the whole world. Some day the tale of those abundant heroes will have shrunken to the dimensions of that little band of pathetic and glorious old men. Will they live to as complete an assurance that their cause also has been won forever, the newer veterans of the greater union that has yet to come?

There were many points of contrast between the ceremony I have just witnessed in the graceful marble amphitheatre in the beautiful Virginian open country and the burials that have taken place in the very hearts of London, Paris and Rome. In the face of a common identity of idea, they mark an essential difference in the nature of the occasion.

Thursday I went to see the people who were filing past the flag-covered coffin. It was a crowd fairly representative, I thought, of the Washington population as one sees it on the streets; all classes were represented, but chiefly it consisted of that well-dressed, healthy looking middle class sort of people who predominate in the streets of most American cities. They came to honor a national hero, the personification of American courage and loyalty. Few, I think, were actual mourners of a dead soldier. The couples and groups of people I saw hurrying up the sloping paths to the entrance of the Capitol, filing up the steps to the rotunda or dispersing on the other side were characterized by a sort of bright eagerness and approval.

They contrasted very strongly with my memory of the great column of still and mournful people under the dark London sky, eight deep, stretching all up Whitehall and down Northumberland Avenue and along the Embankment for a great distance, a column which moved on slowly, step by step, and which faded away at night to be replaced by fresh mourners on the morrow to do honor to the Unknown Warrior in London. That crowd, with its wreaths and flowers, represented the families, the lovers, the sisters and friends of perhaps a quarter of a million of dead men from London and the south and centre of England; the massed, mute tragedy of its loss was overwhelming. It reduced all the ceremony that had gathered it to comparative unimportance. But the remote distances of America forbade any such concentration of sorrow. There may have been the relations and friends of perhaps a thousand men upon the scene at Arlington. The loss to the District of Columbia itself was less than six hundred killed. A group of wounded men in the amphitheatre struck the most intimate note. The rest of the gathering at Arlington shared a less personal grief. They were sympathizers rather than sufferers.

Because of this emotional difference, the Arlington ceremony presented itself primarily as a ceremony. For most there it was a holiday, a fine and noble holiday, but a holiday. By it, America did not so much mourn the tragedy of war as seek to arouse itself to that tragedy. Everywhere the Stars and Stripes, the most decorative and exhilarating of national flags, waved and fluttered, and an irresistible expression of America's private life and buoyant well-being mingled

in the proceedings. For most of the gathering that coffin under the great flag held nothing they had ever touched personally; it was not America's lost treasure of youth, but rather a warning of the fate that may yet overtake the youth of America if war is not to end. At Arlington, throughout the length and breadth of America, when for two minutes at mid-day all work and movement stopped and America stood still, an innumerable host of fathers and mothers and wives and friends could whisper thanks to God in their hearts that their sons and their beloved remained alive.

And I suppose it is largely because America is still so much less war- stricken than any of the other belligerents of the great war that so much more powerful a sense of will was apparent in all these proceedings. The burial of the Unknown Soldier in America was not a thing in itself as it was in London, in Paris or Rome; it was a solemn prelude to action, the action of the great conference which is to seek peace and enduring peace for all mankind. This note was struck even in the Chaplain's opening invocation. He said:

"Facing the events of the morrow, when from the workbench of the world there will be taken an unusual task, we ask that Thou wilt accord exceptional judgment, foresight and tactfulness of approach to those who seek to bring about a better understanding among men and nations to the end that discord, which provokes war, may disappear and that there may be world tranquillity."

And the very fine oration of President Harding, following closely upon this line.

I saw the President for the first time at Arlington. He is a very big, fine-looking man and his voice is a wonderful instrument. He spoke slowly and very distinctly, his gestures admirably controlled. He is — how can I say it? — more statuesque than any of the American Presidents of recent times, but without a trace in his movements or appearance of posturing or vanity. Men say he is a sincerely modest man, determined to do the best that is in him and at once appalled and inspired by the world situation in which he finds himself among the most prominent figures. Not only in its main circumstances but in many of its incidents is the position of the President of the United States appalling. The President stood in the apse to the right of the Unknown Soldier and to the other side of him was a black box upon

a stand, a box perhaps two feet by one. This was the receiver that was to carry his voice, intensely amplified, to still greater gatherings in New York, in San Francisco and over the whole United States. Never was human utterance so magnified. Every syllable, every slip was recorded. He slipped once at an antithesis and was obliged to repeat. From the Atlantic to the Pacific that slip was noted.

I have heard much detraction of the President both before I came to America and since I have been here, but here I have found also a growing and spreading belief in him. And this address of his, rhetorical though it was in a simple and popular American way, was nevertheless a very dignified address and one inspired by a spirit that is undeniably great. Here is a fine saying:

"His patriotism was none less if he craved more than triumph of country; rather, it was greater if he hoped for a victory for all human kind. Indeed, I revere that citizen whose confidence in the righteousness of his country inspired belief that its triumph is the victory of humanity.

"This American soldier went forth to battle with no hatred for any people in the world, but hating war and hating the purpose of every war for conquest."

We are to seek "the rule under which reason and righteousness shall prevail." There is to be "the commanding voice of a conscious civilization against armed warfare," "a new and lasting era of peace on earth." And with a fine instinct for effect the President ended his oration with the Lord's Prayer, with its appeal for one universal law for mankind: "Thy kingdom come on earth...."

Every other gossip tells you that President Harding comes from Main Street and repeats the story of Mrs. Harding saying: "We're just folk." If President Harding is a fair sample of Main Street, Sinclair Lewis has not told us the full story and Main Street is destined to save the world.

VI. — THE FIRST MEETING

Washington, November 13

IT was difficult at first to imagine the conference as anything more than an admirably well managed social occasion.

Continental Hall is a quite charming building, not too big for intimacy, not too small for a sufficient gathering of people. The chief members of the delegations had still to assemble; they were to sit at green baize covered tables in the body of the hall. About this central arena sat the massed attaches, and under the galleries the press representatives. In the boxes clustered the ladies of the diplomatic world. Members of the House of Representatives, the Senators, their friends and a sprinkling of privileged people occupied the big galleries above.

There was a great chatter of conversation when I entered. Everybody was greeting friends, flitting from group to group. It was one of those gatherings where everybody seemed to know everybody. Socially, it was extraordinarily like a very smart first night in a prominent London theatre.

"Last time I came to America," I found myself saying, "I brought a silk hat and morning coat, and never wore them once. Now everybody seems to be wearing a morning coat and a silk hat." It was the sort of occasion one dresses for. And that was the tone of the conversation.

It was difficult to believe that this gathering could be the beginning of anything of supreme historical importance.

Came a slight hush in the conversation. The delegates appeared, all with tremendously familiar faces taken out of the illustrated papers. They disposed themselves in their seats in leisurely fashion. One seat remained vacant for a time — the seat of the President. Then appeared President Harding, and there was a great clappifig of hands. It became more and more like a first night. Then a hushing of enthusiasm, and silence, and he spoke.

It was a fine speech, less ornate and more direct than the Arlington oration. And the galleries above, behaving more and more

like a first night audience, interrupted with rounds of applause whenever there were definite allusions to disarmament. He finished and declared the conference open and departed. Mr. Balfour followed, echoing the President's sentiments in a few well chosen words and proposing Secretary Hughes for the Chairman of the conference.

The Hall became aware of a check in the onward flow of the proceedings. An interpreter got up and repeated Mr. Balfour's speech in French for the benefit of the French delegation. He had made a shorthand note as Mr. Balfour spoke. This, we learned, was to be the procedure throughout the conference. Every speech, question and interruption was to be dealt with in this interlinear manner. Fortunately, it was not necessary to do this in the case of the President's address, nor was it necessary in the case of the address of Secretary Hughes, which was now impending because these had already been printed and distributed and a translation made of them.

Their linguistic isolation is likely to prove unfortunate for the French. The Belgian, the Dutch, the Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese delegations all speak in English and listen to the English speeches. Consequently, the French are in a position in which they seem to be the most foreign people present. This must be disconcerting to them now.

It will be much more disconcerting if, at a later stage, German delegates speaking English should appear upon some extension or side committee of the conference. But I do not see how it can be avoided. The French are a little out of touch in the conference because of this; they must be much more out of touch with the incessant conversation in clubs and at dinner tables and everywhere in Washington, which makes the atmosphere in which the conference is working.

This, however, is a note by the way. Secretary Hughes took the chair and delivered his address. It was a very carefully arranged surprise and its effect was really dramatical. It jumped the conference abruptly from the fine generalizations that had hitherto engaged it to immediately practical things. Secretary Hughes sketched out what was evidently a carefully worked out scheme, a most explicit scheme, for the complete cessation of naval armament competition.

America wanted at the very outset, he said, to convince the world that she meant business in the conference, and so she had taken this unexpected step of putting immediate practical proposals upon the table. She would scrap completely all the ships she had still under construction and all her older ships and she would discontinue all naval construction for ten years if Britain and Japan would do the same.

She proposed that the naval strength of the three powers concerned should remain for ten years in the ratio of: Britain, 22; America, 18, and Japan, 10. In other words, she proposed so to fix things that no two of these three powers can wage a conclusive naval war against each other, but with America and Britain in a position to do so jointly against Japan and with Japan at a great disadvantage against America, even if she were to risk an inconclusive war with America on the chance of Britain's not coming in. And having unfolded this scheme, Secretary Hughes concluded.

We were a little stunned. We had expected the opening meeting to be preliminary, to stick to generalities. After Secretary Hughes had finished, there was a feeling that we wanted to go away and think. But.the members of the House of Eepresentatives were enjoying an unwonted sense of being in the gallery, quite irresponsibly in the gallery, with somebody else upon the floor. They burst in upon our statesmanlike thoughts below with loud cries for "Briand!"

The atmosphere of friendly festival was reestablished. M. Briand spoke eloquently — saying nothing whatever about the proposals of Secretary Hughes — and sat down, and his still quite abstract praises of peace were translated into English.

"Japan!" shouted the members of the House of Representatives, a theatre gallery now in full cry. Japan spoke in English and its sentiments were translated into French for the benefit of the foreigners. Japan expressed admirable sentiments and said nothing whatever about the proposals of Secretary Hughes.

Thereafter it would have been discourteous not to call for something from Italy, China, Belgium, Holland and Portugal. They all spoke in English, even Belgium spoke in English, and what they said was translated into French. Nobody said anything whatever about the proposals of Secretary Hughes. The gallery applauded each

speech heartily and the atmosphere of a first night was completely restored. We dispersed to luncheons and tea parties and to talk before we wrote about it. And as we tried to get it into focus in our minds it became clear that much more than a ceremonial opening of the conference had occurred.

Secretary Hughes has made proposals that challenge the whole situation in the Pacific. For if Japan accepts them — I do not see how they could be otherwise than acceptable to the British — it puts Japan to so definite and permanent a disadvantage that it amounts to an abandonment on the part of Japan of the idea of fighting a war on the Pacific except as the last desperate defensive resort under the pressure of an unavoidable attack, and Japan can abandon that idea only if she can see her way clearly without a war to all that she believes to be vitally necessary to her.

It is possible to say that Secretary Hughes has narrowed down the work of the conference by this sudden focusing of attention upon naval warfare and Japan. But I do not think that is the case. The challenge he has made cannot be taken up until a number of associated issues are settled. Certainly his proposals have precipitated the work of the conference from the clouds and beautiful generalities to the earth and very concrete realities.

"You accept these proposals," America says in effect. "If not, why not?"

Japan must accept or reply so and so. So from armaments we shall get to the aims behind armaments; for no battleship is launched except against a specific antagonist and for a specific end. And in the matter of aims also the conference will presently have to consider what each power must scrap for the common good and what it may be permitted to keep for its own satisfaction.

Since Secretary Hughes made it clear that the conference is to approach the inevitable general discussion of world peace by way of the sea and the Pacific, since for a time France and Europe generally will sit somewhat out of the limelight, it will be well, perhaps, if in my next article I discuss a few elementary considerations about Japan.

VII. — WHAT IS JAPAN?

Washington, November 15

OF ALL the national delegations assembled here in Washington, the most acutely scrutinized, the most discussed and probably the least understood is the Japanese. The limelight gravitates toward it, moved, one feels, not so much by an extreme respect as by an inordinate curiosity.

Of only one other people — I write as a spectator from overseas — does one feel the same sense of the possibility of dramatically unexpected things, and that is the Americans. The Japanese, we feel, we have not found out, and the Americans, we feel, have not found out themselves. Already the Americans have sprung one great surprise upon the conference. Britain, France, Italy and the other powers in attendance are comparatively calculable — so far as their representation goes. But Japan is different; it is not built upon the same lines, it follows different laws.

I went on Sunday night to the press reception at the Japanese headquarters. The Ambassador is a buoyant man of the world, speaking excellent English and thoroughly acclimatized to an American press gathering. But many of the Japanese faces about him set my imagination busy, putting them back into the voluminous robes and the sashes holding the double swords with which I had first met them long ago in Japanese prints, and which would have become them so much better.

Admiral Kato spoke in Japanese and Prince Tokugawa in English; they welcomed the Hughes proposals with warm generalities and hopes for peace — as we all hope for peace — with insufficient particulars. I got no conversation with any Japanese; they were not talking to us; they did not want to talk; it was a reception of hearty politeness and no exchanges. I found myself falling back upon an earlier impression.

Some weeks ago I had a very illuminating talk in my garden at home with two Japanese visitors, Mr. Mashiko and Mr. Negushi, who had come to discuss various educational ideas with me. And

they told me things that seem to me to be fundamentally important in this question. “We build up our children,” said Mr. Mushiko, “upon a diametrically different plan from yours. We turn them the other way round. Obedience and devotion are our leading thoughts. All our sentiment, all our stories and poetry, the traditions of centuries, teach loyalty, blind, unquestioning loyalty, of wife to husband, of man to his lord, of every one to the monarch.

“The loyalty is religious. So far as political and social questions go, it is fundamental. But your training cultivates independence, free thought, the unsparing criticism of superiors, institutions, relationships. Perhaps it is better in the end and more invigorating; but it seems to us wild and dangerous. ...We begin to have a sort of public opinion, but it is still diffident and timid.”

An American and an Englishman, he said, cared for his country because he believed it belonged to him. A Japanese cared for his country because he believed he belonged to it. One could not pass from one habit of mind to the other, he thought, without grave risks and dangers. It is easier to destroy obedience than to create responsibility.

I was reminded of that conversation the other day by a remark made by a fellow journalist on the train to Washington:

“A Chinese will tell you what he thinks — like an American — but a Japanese always feels he is an agent, even if he isn’t an accredited one.”

Now, this is very interesting and probably a very fundamental comparison. This difference in spirit will make the Japanese people a very different instrument from the American and English or French people. It will make the Japanese Government a different thing from the Governments it will be meeting in Washington. A people built up on obedience can be held and wielded as no modern democratic people can be held and wielded. It is different in kind.

Unless this point is kept in mind, there are certain to be great and possibly dangerous misunderstandings in the Washington discussions. There have possibly been very dangerous misunderstandings already of the European powers by the Japanese. The Japanese are likely to think the Atlantic Governments are more free to decide than they really are, and that what they say is more

conclusive than it really is, and the Atlantic peoples are likely to think too much of the appearance of a liberal public opinion in Japan and to imagine that a Japanese Government may be thrown out and its policy changed much more easily than is the case. But indeed Japan is a Government, a military Government, holding its people in its hand like a staff or a weapon, while America and France and Britain are people operating the Governments, more or less imperfectly. In no relationship is confusion upon this point more probable and more dangerous than between Japan and Britain or France at the present time, and in no connection is there greater need of perfectly plain statement.

Seeing that Britain is still a monarchy with many aristocratic forms, it is fatally easy for a Japanese statesman to fall into the belief that the British Government is as completely in control, and its officials as able to bind or loose, as the Japanese Government and officials, and because of this belief to trust to the private assurance and general attitude of personages in high places far more than they are justified in doing. The British democracy is very like the American democracy in its inability to keep watching what is happening overseas; it is preoccupied by domestic questions and things that are near to it. You cannot expect a Wiltshire farmer or a Lancashire cotton spinner to keep up, day by day, with the concession-hunting game in Persia or South China. But if that game of concession hunting piles up to sufficiently serious consequences, these democracies are likely to wake up in a manner quite outside the Japanese range of pos-sibilities. And to a large extent the same is true of France.

It is the blessed privilege of an irresponsible

journalist to say things that no diplomatist could ever say, and upon the relations of Japan, America and England there are certain truths that seem to need saying very plainly at the present time. But though I am an irresponsible journalist, it is also to be noted that I am a very English Englishman and that I know the way of thinking of my people.

The British people have been sleeping happily upon the belief that war with America is impossible. And for them it is impossible. In this matter the British have a speeial and extraordinary instinct. They

will not fight the United States of America. I will not go into the peculiar feelings that produce this disposition; they are feelings great numbers of Americans do not understand and have indeed taken great pains not to understand. But to the common British, fighting Americans would have much the same relation to fighting other peoples that cannibalism would have to eating meat.

I hear a certain type of American over here slowly and heavily debating the Hughes proposals on the assumption that there may be a war of America against Britain and Japan. Such an assumption is — if I may be permitted the word — idiotic. As a people, the British have not been thinking very much about the Pacific question. They have been preoccupied by Ireland and their own economic troubles. But if that question presently moves toward a level of intensity where war is possible, let there be no mistake about it in Japan, the ordinary English will be thinking with the Americans. They will read much the same stuff because they have the same language, and think in the same way because they have kindred habits of thought.

It will not matter then what assurances and sentiments the Japanese may have had for official personages in Great Britain. For we are dealing here not with a matter of agreements but with a kind of moral gravitation. If there is a conflict the British masses will want to come in on the American side, and if it seems likely to be in the least an inconclusive conflict they will certainly come in. If the rulers of the Japanese dream that any other combination is possible in the Pacific they are under as dangerous a delusion as ever lured a great nation to disaster.

But there are many signs that if ever the ruling people of Japan entertained this delusion they are being disillusionized and that they begin to realize that a war with America in the Pacific will mean a war with America, Britain, and possibly — to judge from the recent astonishing remark by that able writer "Pertinax" — France. France may use her influence at Washington on behalf of Japan in certain matters, but that is all Japan will get from France. The Japanese, I believe, now fully realize this, and the trend of recent Japanese utterances is all in the direction of discussion and the disavowal of any belligerent dreams.

Yet, Japan continues to arm, and though she now disavows war as

her method, she sits very proudly and stiffly in her weapons at the parley. She may have limited and restrained her dreams, but there is still some minimum in her mind beyond which she will not retreat without a struggle. What is that minimum which will satisfy her without war? Will it satisfy her for good, will it seem so permanently satisfactory to her that she will be willing not only to set aside the thought of and preparation for an immediate war, but — what is of far more importance — enter into such a binding contract for her future international relationships as will enable her to beat the swords of her Samurai into ploughshares for good and all?

Is Japan peculiarly an obstacle to the practical, if informal, federation of the world to which we all hope that things are moving?

When I try to frame a hopeful answer to that question, it occurs to me with added force that Japan is not a people trying to express itself through a Government as we Atlantic peoples are, but a Government, a small ruling class, in effective possession of an obedience-loving people. And I remember that that small ruling class has a long tradition of romantic and chivalrous swordsmanship. Is that ruling class going to keep its power and is it going to preserve its tradition? No one would be more urgent than I for the complete disarmament of the entire world, but no one could be more convinced of the unwisdom of disarmament by America or any other power while any single country in the world maintains a spirit that must lead at last to a resumption of warfare.

TO DISARM IN SUCH A SITUATION IS TO LEAVE THE TROUBLE TO ACCUMULATE UPON OUR GRAND-CHILDREN; TO PATCH UP A TEMPORARY PEACE BASED ON THE PERMITTED "EXPANSION" OF SUCH A POWER IS SIMPLY TO PREPARE FOR AN EXPANDED WAR IN THE FUTURE.

But is that Japanese ruling class resolved at any cost, ev§n at the cost of another World War and at the risk of destroying Japan, to hold onto its present power and to adhere rigidly to its tradition? In the last hundred years Japan, because of her aristocracy and because of her general obedience, has achieved feats of adaptation to new conditions that are unparalleled in history. As we have noted, there have recently been indications of further changes in the spirit of

Japan.

She is said to be pressing forward with the education of the common people and the liberation of thought and discussion. In the long run, what is happening in the schools of Japan is of more importance to mankind than what is happening in her dockyards. But at present we do not know what is happening in the schools of Japan. One hears much of New Japan and Liberal Japan, and there is even an unofficial representative of the Japanese Opposition in Washington. But, so far as we can judge at this distance, we must be guided by the policy and methods of the Japanese Government.

Before we can judge these we must consider the nature of the field in which they seem to clash most with American ideas and with American and European interests, namely, China and Eastern Asia generally. In my next paper I will ask, "What is China?" and consider the nature of the needs and claims of Japan in regard to China and the prohibitions and the renunciations the Western powers want to impose upon her. For it is on account of these restrictions and prohibitions that Japan has been building her battleships. Her fighting fleet is to secure her a free hand in China and Siberia; it can have no other purpose. And I shall take up the question whether the prohibitions and renunciations we want to force upon Japan are not prohibitions and restrictions that we are bound in fairness to impose equally upon all powers concerned with China and the Far East. If the other powers are not prepared for extreme general retractions and renunciation in China; if they want to bar out Japan from aggressive practices and exclusive advantages that other powers retain; if we cling to any sort of racial distinction in these matters, then I shall submit, we are asking impossible things from Japan and we are forcing her toward what must must be indeed a very desperate gamble for her, a refusal to enter into this proposed disarmament agreement — and that means war.

VIII. — CHINA IN THE BACKGROUND

Washington, November 16

The Chinese propaganda in America and Western Europe seems on the whole to be conducted more efficiently than the Japanese. And the Chinese student, it seems to me, gets into closer touch with the educated American and European because his is a democratic and not an aristocratic habit of mind. He has an intensely Western sense of public opinion.

The masses of China may be destitute, ignorant and disordered, but in their mental habits they are modern and not mediaeval, in the same sense that the Japanese are mediaeval and not modern. The Chinese seem to "get on" with their Western social equivalents better than any of the Asiatic people. And increasing multitudes of Chinese are learning English to-day; it is the second language in China.

Now, if Japan is the figure in the limelight at Washington to-day, China is the giant in the background and scene of the present Pacific drama. We have had so much in the papers lately about these two countries, we have been treated to such a feast of particulars about them, that most of us have long since forgotten very thoroughly the broad facts of the case, and it will be refreshing to recall them here and now.

Let us remind ourselves that China is a country with a population amounting at the lowest estimate to between twice and three times the population of the United States, or of France and England put together. This population has the longest unbroken tradition of peaceful industry in the world. It is essentially civilized; it respects learning and civility profoundly. A common literature and ancient traditions keep its people one.

In the past China has been divided again and again — always to reunite. But it has become "old-fashioned," dangerously old-fashioned, perhaps by reason of its very stability; it has lagged behind most of the world in the development of its transport and economic possibilities. In mineral deposits and other natural resources and in the industrial capability of its sturdy and intelligent

population it has more undeveloped wealth than any other single people in the world. It is only in the last century or so that China has lagged behind.

Only a few centuries ago China was as civilized as Europe and politically more stable. In a century or so she may be again the most civilized and intelligent power in the world, flourishing in fellowship and perfect understanding with the great states of America and Europe.

She may be — if she is not torn to pieces and kept in a state of enf eeblement and disorder by the hostile action of external powers.

But at present China is in a state of political impotence. Her Manchu imperialism has proved itself to be hopelessly inefficient and China is now struggling to reconstruct upon modern republican lines, obviously suggested by the American example. A few decades ago Japan astonished the world by Europeanizing herself upon Prussian lines. China now, under far less favorable conditions and with a vaster country and a less disciplined people, is struggling to Americanize herself.

But it is no easy task to make over a people at one stride from a mediaeval autocracy to a modern democracy. It is far easier to Prussianize than to Americanize, for in the one case you have only to train an official class and in the other you must educate a whole people. China is torn by dissensions; the south jars with the north; she has two or more Governments, each claiming to be THE Chinese Government, and whole provinces have fallen under the sway of military adventurers. It is a distressing spectacle, but it was probably an inevitable phase in the development of New China.

Before we fall a prey to anti-Chinese propaganda it is well to recall how long it has always taken to build up the necessary understandings and habits of association upon which a new political system rests.

France, for example, was a land of revolutions and political instability for nearly a century after the Great Eevolution. America wrangled feebly and dangerously for several years after the War of Independence, before she established her Federal Government; she only cemented her union after a colossal struggle; she was not really and securely one until a century had elapsed.

During these long decades of probation foreign observers preached endlessly about the fickleness of the French and the political inefficiency of the Americans and foretold the certainty of a break-up of the United States, just as to-day they sneer at Young China and foretell the political disintegration of the Chinese. And we have to bear in mind that the forces of reorganization and renewal in China struggle against peculiar difficulties and interferences quite outside the happier experiences of France and America. In particular, they struggle against an intolerable and paralyzing amount of foreign interference.

The brilliant series of adventures and accidents by which a London trading company added the Empire of Great Mogul as a picturesque but incongruously big jewel to the British Crown set an extraordinarily bad precedent in Asiatic affairs. It obsessed European political thought with the impossible dream of carving up all Asia into similar domains. The Mogul's empire was itself an empire of conquest in a land saturated by ideas of caste, and this gave all these European adventurers the attitude of high caste men benevolently consuming inferior races.

In that spirit, Europe — with Japan coming in presently as a hopeful student of European methods — had been trying to cook, carve up and fight for the portions of China for nearly a century, treating these wonderful people as an inferior race. The very worst that can be said about Japan with regard to China is that she has been too vigorously European.

Consider how it would have been with the United States in the years of discord that led up to the Civil War if these difficulties had been complicated by three such embarrassments as these: First, that most foreigners, except now the Germans and Austrians, are outside the reach of the native courts, that their disputes with Chinese go before special foreign courts, that they are specially favored in regard to property and shipping; secondly, that the Chinese Government is restricted from raising revenue by any tariff above a flat rate of 5 per cent., and that they are also strictly restricted to 2½ per cent, in their interior dues upon foreign (but not Chinese) trade, so that they are in fact unable to raise enough revenue to maintain an efficient Government; and thirdly, that nearly all the Chinese railways — and

as every American knows, transport is the very life of modern state — are in the grip of this foreign country or that.

These are the open and manifest inconveniences of the situation, but behind these more open aspects there is a vast tangle of intervention between Chinamen and Chinese affairs — schemes for further exploitation, financial entanglements, vast concession plans and projects for "spheres of influence" for this aggressive foreign nation or that. And this foreign influence is not the influence of one foreign power pursuing a single and consistent policy but a number of competing powers, all pursuing different ends and pulling things this way and that. How could any country reconstruct itself while it was entangled in such a net of interference? No people on earth could do such a thing.

The plain fact is that if China is to reconstruct herself that net has to be cut away. It is not enough to warn Japan out of China or to say " open door" for China. The open door is good for the ventilation of that great apartment, but what is also needed is a clearing out of the encumbrance inside. These encumbrances are not primarily Japanese.

The five great powers sit at a green table in the form of a horseshoe in the conference and the four lesser powers are at a straight table like the armature of a horseshoe magnet. At the left hand corner, next the Japanese, are the three Chinese representatives. I gather they will be allowed to say "Shantung" at the conference in moderation but not Tibet nor Tonkin nor the East China — or indeed any — railway. I doubt if either Mr. Balfour or M. Briand will nerve himself to say these forbidden words. But an irresponsible journalist may write them.

If there is to be a real end to war and disarmament there has to be release of China to free Chinese control, and that means a self-denying ordinance from ALL the great powers. It will be an easy one for America and Italy to accept, but it will be a difficult sacrifice indeed for those two hoary leaders in the breakup of China, Great Britain and France. Neither country has a bad heart, but long ago in the East they acquired some very bad habits. This is a time when bad habits lead very quickly to disaster.

The real test of the quality of the conference will appear when some issue arises which involves an assertion or denial of the

principle of “Unhand and keep your hands off China.” If the Chinese are worth while, the conference has to establish that principle. It cannot be gracefully advanced by America because America has so little to relinquish. It CAN be established at the initiative of either Britain or France.

It seems plain to me that official America is waiting for some move in this direction from either or both of these powers. If that principle of a free China is established at the Washington Conference the way will have been opened in the not very remote future to a healthy and vigorous United States of China, a great modern, pacific and progressive power. And when I write “China” I mean what any sensible man means when he writes “China” — I mean all those parts of Asia in which the Chinese people and the Chinese culture prevail. I include at least South Manchuria, which is as surely Chinese as Texas is American, and which can no more be GIVEN to any other power without the consent of China than my overcoat can be given by one passerby to another.

The plain alternative to a released and renascent China is the cutting up of China among the aggressive powers to the tune of that popular American air “The Open Door,” the demoralization and disintegration of the Chinese, international elbowing, competition, quarrels among the powers who have “shared” China, and, at last, the next great war — which it will be just as easy for America to keep out of as the great war of 1914-1918.

IX. — THE FUTURE OF JAPAN

Washington, November 18

If we adopt as our guiding principle that China is "worth while," if we make up our minds — and it seems to me that the American public at least is making up its mind — that China is to bring itself up to date and to reorganize itself as a great union of states under purely Chinese control, and that it is to be protected by mutual agreement among the powers from outside interference during the age of reorganization, then it is clear that all dreams of empire in China or any fragments of China on the part of any other power must cease.

This building up of a united, peaceful China by the conscious, self-denying action of the chief powers of the world is evidently, under present conditions, the only sane policy before the powers assembled at Washington, but it is, unhappily, quite diametrically opposed to all traditions of competitive nationality. And I find a most extraordinary conflict going on in men's minds here in Washington between the manifest sanities of the world situation and those habits of thought and action in which we have all been bred. Competitive nationalism and the long established competitive traditions of European diplomacy have gone far toward wrecking the world; and they may yet go far toward wrecking the Washington Conference. We have all got these traditions strong in us, every one of us. These traditions, these ideas of international intercourse as a sort of game to beat the other fellow, have as tough a vitality as the appetite of the wasp, which will go on eating greedily after its abdomen has been cut off. Indeed, some of the representatives of the powers at Washington seem still to be clinging to the ambition of finally devouring China, or large parts of China — a feast which they will not have the remotest prospect of digesting.

If that sort of thing goes on, a continuation of war preparation, a renewal of war and the consummation of the social smash now in progress is inevitable. Yet, on the face of that plain, inevitable consequence, my diplomatic friends in Washington go on talking

about such insane projects as that of ceding Manchuria to Japan right down the Great Wall; of giving Japan practical possession of the mines of China; of giving ‘ l compensation” in the matter of Chinese railways to France; of getting this “advantage” or that for Great Britain, and so forth and so on. I remain permanently astounded before the Foreign Office officials. They have such excellent, brilliant minds, but, alas! so highly specialized — so highly specialized — that at times one doubts whether they have, in the general sense of the word, any minds at all.

In the face of the universal hopefulness for satisfactory results from the conference I find myself full of doubts. The naval disarmament proposal of Secretary Hughes was obviously meant only as the opening proposition, the quite splendid opening proposition, of the conference. The second meeting, I felt, would find Mr. Balfour and Admiral Kato and M. Briand in eloquent sympathy, saying: “Certainly. All this and more also we can do on the understanding that a stable, explicit, exhaustive, permanent Pacific agreement can be framed by this conference that will remove all causes of war whatever/ ‘ But the second meeting was disappointing. One nation after another agreed, as Mr. Balfour, that “old parliamentary hand,” put it, “in principle. But” —

And now we are all playing four-handed chess with reservations about dockyards, naval stations, cruisers, large submarines, and the like. We are all trying to put the effective disarmament onto the other fellow. Meanwhile the nine powers are sitting in secret session on the Pacific question, and it is clear from the rumors that nine-handed chess is in progress there.

Yet the fact, plain enough to any one who is not lost in the game of diplomacy, is that this conference is an occasion for generosity and renunciation. There is no way out of the Pacific imbroglio except to disentangle China and form a self-denying ordinance of all the powers concerned to leave her alone while she reconstructs. I submit that even Japan, most intent of all the chess players, will do best to fall in line with such a plan.

Would a world covenant to protect China from aggression and to concede her the progressive abolition of extra-territorial privileges and the same unlimited rights over her own railways and soil and

revenue that are enjoyed by the Americans and Japanese over theirs be any serious harm to Japan? Would it not release Japan from her imitative career as a pseudo-Britain or a pseudo-Germany and enable her to get on with her own proper business, which is to be, to the fullest, completest and richest extent, Japan?

For what, after all, is it that Japan wants? She wants safety, she declares — just as France wants safety. She wants safety to be Japan, just as France wants safety to be France and England wants safety to be England. And she makes these declarations with considerable justification. For 300 years she believed she had that safety, and we must admit she was the least dangerous state in the whole world. For 300 years Japan waged no foreign wars; she was a peaceful, self-contained hermit. It was American enterprise that dragged her out of her seclusion and fear of Europe that drove her to the practices of modern imperialism. They are not natural Japanese practices. She fought China and grabbed Korea, because otherwise Russia would have held it like a pistol at her throat; she fought Russia, because otherwise Russia would have held Manchuria and Port Arthur against her; she fought in the Great War to oust Germany from Shantung. She is now pursuing an entirely "European" policy in China, intriguing to get a free hand in Manchuria and Eastern Siberia; scheming for concessions, privileges and the creation of obedient puppet governments in a dismembered China; planning to divert the natural resources of China to her own use, primarily because she fears that otherwise these things will be done by rival powers and she will be cut off from trade, from raw materials and all prosperity until at last, when she is sufficiently starved and enfeebled, she will be attacked and India-ized. These are reasonable, honorable fears. They oblige her to keep armed and aggressive; hers is an "offensive defensive." There is no other way of allaying her reasonable, just fears except by a permanent binding association of world powers to put an end forever to the headlong scramble for Asia that began a century and a half ago in India between the French and English, to recognize frankly and to put it upon record that that phase of history has closed, and to provide some effective means of restoration now and the prevention of fresh aggressions in the future.

No doubt there is a military caste in Japan loving war and not

even dreading modern war. We have to reckon with that. When we ask Japan to release China, we ask for something very much against Japanese habits of thought. Her dominant military note is due both to ancient traditions and recent experience. Japan had most of the fun and little of the bitterness of the Great War and her people may conceivably have a lighter attitude toward aggressive war than any European nation. But if the alternatives presented to her were on the one hand disarmament and a self-denying ordinance of the powers in relation to China, and on the other war against the other chief powers of the world, I doubt if the patriotism of even the most war-loving Japanese would not outbalance his war lust. And I cannot imagine any other permanent settlement of the Pacific situation except a self-denying ordinance to which Japan, America and the European powers can ever possibly agree.

Now, Japan, disarmed and pledged and self-restrained by treaties and associations against aggression on the mainland of Asia, would nevertheless reap enormous benefits from the liberation of China. Given just and reasonable treaties, she can do very well without armaments. Her geographical position would make her naturally and properly the first merchant and the first customer of a renascent China. She would have the first bid for all the coal and ore and foodstuffs she needed. American goods and European goods would have to come past her over thousands of miles of sea. Chinese goods that didn't come to her would go elsewhere up a steep hill of freight charges. It is a preposterous imagination that China would refuse to sell to her nearest and best customer. Moreover, Japan's artistic and literary culture, at once so distinctive and so sympathetic with that of China, would receive enormous stimulation, as it has done in the past, by a Chinese revival. Japan would be able to keep in the van of nations not by that headlong imitation and adoption of European devices into which circumstances have forced her hitherto, but by a natural and orderly development of her own idiosyticracies in the face of the enhanced power that modern resources supply. An association of Japan with other nations to insure uninterrupted development to China would insure that to Japan also. It would be a mutual assurance of peace and security.

But there is one set of facts, and one only, that militates against

this idea of a pacific and progressive Japan, a splendid leader in civilization amidst a brotherhood of nations, and that is this, that Japan is already overpopu-lated, she has to import not only food but industrial raw material, and that her population increases now by the tremendous figure of half a million a year. That is the reality that gives substance to the aggressive imperialism of Japan. That is why she casts about for such regions for expansion as Eastern Siberia — a region not represented at the conference, and so beyond its purview, and that is why she covets some preferential control in Chinese metals and minerals and food. Were it not for this steady invasion of the world by hungry lives, the principle of Japan for the Japanese, China for the Chinese, England for the English, Eastern Siberia for its own people, would give us the simplest, most satisfactory principle for international peace. But Japan teems. Has any country a right to slop its population over and beyond its boundaries or to claim trade and food because of its heedless self-congestion? Diplomacy is curiously mealy mouthed about many things; I have made a British official here blush at the words of birth control, but it is a fact that this aggressive fecundity of peoples is something that can be changed and restrained within a country, and that this sort of modesty and innocence that leads to a morbid development of population and to great wars calls for intelligent discouragement in international relations.

Japan has modernized itself in many respects, but its social organization, its family system, is a very ancient and primitive one, involving an extreme domestication of women and a maximum of babies. While the sanitation and hygiene of Japan were still mediaeval, a sufficient proportion of these babies died soon and prevented any overpressure of population, but now that Japan has modernized itself in most respects it needs to modernize itself in this respect also.

I submit that the troubles arising from excessive fecundity within a country justify not an aggressive imperialism on the part of that country, but a sufficient amount of birth control within its proper boundaries.

X.— "SECURITY" — THE NEW AND BEAUTIFUL CATCHWORD

Washington, November 20

The new and really quite beautiful catchword that dominates the Washington Conference is "security." The word was produced originally, I believe, in France. France wants nothing in the world now but security; she has abandoned all dreams of conquest or glory, all aggressive economic intentions; she is the white lamb of international affairs, washed and redeemed by the Great War. Only — she must be secure.

Great Britain, Japan are in complete unison with France on this subject. Great Britain asks for nothing but a predominant fleet and naval arsenals in perfect going order. Mr. Balfour's eloquent speech at the second session of the conference made the necessity of this for security incontrovertible. Japan wants East Siberia, the special control of raw material in Manchuria, a grip upon China, because she is driven by the same passionate craving for peace and rest. We have had this explained to us very clearly here in Washington by representative Japanese.

All these powers will accept every proposal Secretary Hughes makes, or is prepared to make, eloquently and sincerely— "in principle." They then proceed to state their minimum requirements for that feeling of security which is the goal of all peoples at the present time. When these requirements have been stated it becomes plain that these states are not to be so much disarmed as stripped for action, with highly efficient instead of unwieldy and overwhelmingly expensive equipment. They do not so much propose to give up war as to bring it back by a gentlemanly agreement within the restricted possibilities of their austere bankruptcy.

The French conception of security is particularly attractive. France stipulates, I gather, for a dominant army upon the Continent of Europe, for a Germany retained permanently by agreement among the powers at the extrem-est pitch of wretchedness and feebleness, for an outcast Russia, or a series of alliances by which such countries

as Poland will be militarized in the French interest rather than industrialized in their own. And France, in further pursuit of the idea of perfect peace (for France), is training great masses of barbaric Senegalese for war, with the view of using them to police white populations and sustain their millennium in Europe. They can have no other use now.

If they return to Africa, these trained soldiers will accumulate as a new and interesting element in African life until some black Napoleon arises to demand "security" for Africa.

At present France displays an astonishing confidence in the British, but no doubt, if her amazing peasants and her wonderful soil presently lead to partial recuperation, she will realize the need of bringing her now neglected fleet up to "security" standards also. And it is axiomatic among the experts that no power with a coast line is really secure unless it has a fleet at least the double of any other fleet that can possibly operate upon that coast.

These statements are not the facetious inventions of an irresponsible writer; they are fair samples of the sort of thing that the various deputations have brought with them to Washington. These are the things we talk of and are gradually talking out of sight. And if the Washington Conference served no other purpose at all in the world, it would have been quite worth while in order to get together all these totally incomparable conceptions of security and by that approximation to demonstrate their utter absurdity. Along the lines of either unregulated or regulated armament there can be no security for any race or people.

The only security for a modern state now is *a binding and mutually satisfactory* alliance with the power or powers that might otherwise attack. The only real security for France against a German revenge is a generous and complete understanding between the French and German Bepublics so that they will have a mutual interest in each other's prosperity. Germany is naturally a rather bigger country than France, and nothing on earth can alter that. Other powers or all the powers may come into such a treaty as guarantors, but the essential thing for peace between France and Germany is peace made good and clear between them, a cessation of mutual injuries and hostile preparations.

The only effectual security for the communications of the British Empire is the recognition by all mankind that this great system of English-speaking states round and about the world is a good thing for all mankind and a resolute effort of these states to keep to that level. There is no other real security.

This is not "lofty idealism"; it is common sense; and the idea of "security" by armament and by the enfeeblement of possible rivals is not a "practical recognition of present limitations," but a feeble surrender to entirely vicious tendencies of the human mind.

I believe that for a little while yet Washington will continue its researches into the meaning of armed "security," and that then it will turn its attention to the alternative idea, with which the nimble French mind has also been playing, and that is security by treaty. The French have been disposed in the past to welcome an Anglo-American-French treaty to guarantee France against attack. The idea in that form is dead, but the possibility of a far more comprehensive agreement, a loose-fitting but effectual association of all the nations of the world to keep the peace and arrange their differences by conference, is bound to recur again as the impossibility of disarmament without settlement becomes increasingly apparent. There drifts into my memory here a curious feast of "security" which occurred long ago in some Eastern equivalent of Versailles. The great Abbassid family had suffered many things from the Ommayyad Caliphs, and at last it rose against them and overcame them and secured the leadership of Islam. The remnants of the Ommayyad clan were sumoned to witness and celebrate the new peace. But some of the Abbassids, inspired by quite modern ideas of "security," had all the Ommayyads massacred before the banquet began. A beautiful carpet was spread over the dead and dying and the Abbassids feasted thereon. Here was "security" to satisfy the most exacting modern European ideals. Yet the Abbassids made little of their security. They never rose to the glory of the Ommayyads; the drive and strength seemed to have gone out of Arab Islam; their history for all this "security" is one of division, decline, decay. It takes all men to make a world.

Let us get through with this futile haggling for national advantages and securities and let us get on to the organization of that

brotherhood which can alone save the world.

XI. — FRANCE IN THE LIMELIGHT

Washington, November 21

The first session of the Washington Conference featured, as the cinematograph people say, President Harding and Mr. Secretary Hughes; the second day was Mr. Balfour's day; this third, from which I have just come, was the session of M. Briand.

The four personalities contrast very strikingly. President Harding was a stately figure making a very noble oration in the best American fashion; Mr. Hughes was hard, exact, clear-cut, very earnest and explicit; Mr. Balfour slender and stooping, silvery-haired and urbane, made his carefully worded impromptu speech with a care that left no ragged end to a sentence and no gap for applause. All three are taller and neater men than M. Briand, whose mane of hair flows back from his face in leonine style, whose mobile face and fluent gestures reinforce the stirring notes of his wonderful voice. His eloquence was so great that many Congressmen in the gallery above, quite innocent of French, were moved to applause by the sheer grace and music of the performance.

Eloquence could not save the day or the occasion. M. Briand spoke to a gathering that was saturated with scepticism for the cause he had to plead. I watched the quiet, scrutinizing countenances of the six men he turned about to face as he spoke — Eoot, Lodge and Hughes, as immobile as judges; Balfour trying to look like a sympathetic ally in the face of a discourse that insultingly ignored Great Britain as a factor of the European situation; Lord Lee, obliquely prostrate and judicial; Geddes, with that faintly smiling face of his, the mask of an unbeliever.

The voice of the orator rose and fell, boomed at them, pleaded, sought to stir them — like seas breaking over rocks. Their still implacable faces, hardly or politely, retained the effect of listening to a special pleader — a special pleader doing his best, his foamy best, with an intolerably bad case.

M. Briand put before the conference no definite proposals at all. After Mr. Hughes, with that magnificent discourse of his, punctuated

by “we propose to scrap,” M. Briand was an anticlimax. France proposed to scrap nothing. France does not know how to scrap. She learns nothing and forgets nothing. It is her supreme misfortune. He explained the position of France in a melodious discourse of apologetics and excuses. The French contribution to the Disarmament Conference is that France has not the slightest intention of disarming. She is reducing her term of service with the colors from three years to two. In a Europe of untrained men this is not disarmament, but economy.

The great feature of M. Briand’s discourse was his pretense of the absolute unimportance of England in European affairs. France, for whom, as Mr. Balfour in a few words of infinite gentleness reminded M. Briand, France, for whom the British Empire lost a million dead — very nearly as many men as France herself lost; France, to whose rescue from German attack came Britain, Russia and presently Italy and America; France, M. Briand declared, was alone in the world, friendless and terribly threatened by Germany and Russia. And on the nonsensical assumption of French isolation, M. Briand unfolded a case that was either — I hesitate to consider which — and how shall I put that old alternative? — deficient in its estimate of reality, or else — just special pleading.

The plain fact of the case is that France is maintaining a vast army in the face of a disarmed world and she is preparing energetically for fresh warlike operations in Europe and for war under sea against Great Britain. To excuse this line of action M. Briand unfolded a fabulous account of the German preparation for a renewal of hostilities; every soldier in the small force of troops allowed to Germany is an officer or non-commissioned officer, so that practically the German Army can expand at any moment to millions, and Germany is not morally disarmed because Ludendorff — M. Briand quoted him at some length — is still writing and talking militant nonsense.

Even M. Briand has to admit that the present German Government is honest and well meaning, but it is a weak Government. It is not the real thing. The real Germany is the Germany necessary for M. Briand’s argument. And behind Germany is Russia. He conjured up a great phantom of Soviet Russia which would have conquered all

Europe but for the French Armies and Poland. That iniquitous attack of Poland upon Russia last May was, he assured his six quiet-eyed auditors and the rest of us, a violent invasion of Western civilization by Russia.

"There were those in Germany," he said in a voice to make our flesh creep, "who beckoned them on." The French had saved us from that. The French Army, with its gallant Senegalese, was the peacemaker and guardian of all Europe.

One listened incredulous. One waited still incredulous to hear it over again from the interpreter. Yes, we were confirmed; he really had said that. Poor, exhausted Russia, who saved Paris, desiring nothing but to be left alone; bled white, starving, invaded by a score of subsidized adventurers; invaded from Es-thonia, from Poland, from Japan, in Murmansk, in the Crimea, in the Ukraine, on the Volga, incessantly invaded, it is this Russia which has put France on the offensive-defensive!

One is reminded of the navvy who kicked his wife to death to protect himself from her violence.

(It is interesting to recall here that one of the Kaiser's favorite excuses for German armament, when it was Germany and not France which aspired to dominate Europe, was his acute dread of the Yellow Peril.)

When he talked to the journalists in preparation for this display, M. Briand excused France for wanting submarines in quantity because, he said, she was liable to attack upon three coasts, but maturer reflection omitted this aspect of the French case from M. Briand's attention. It was too thick even for an American audience. And even Mr. Balfour, with all his charming tenderness for a fellow-statesman, could not well have avoided the plain question, "From whom does France anticipate a sea attack!"

France is in about as much danger of an attack upon her three coasts as the United States of America is upon her Canadian frontier. Her ships are as safe upon the sea as a wayfarer on Fifth Avenue. If she builds submarines now, she builds them to attack British commerce and for no other reason whatever. All the Ludendorffs and Soviets in the world do not justify a single submarine. Every submarine she launches is almost as direct a breach of the peace with

Britain as though she were to start target practice at Dover Harbor across . the straits, and every one in England will understand the aim of her action as clearly. As M. Briand, in his discourse to the journalists, argued that the empire of France was as far-flung as that of Britain, her need to protect her communication was as great. This was in the face of Mr. Balfour's reminder that Britain can feed its people only for seven weeks if its overseas supplies are cut off. France can feed from her own soil all the year round. The argument was not good enough for a boys' debating society, and M. Briand, who is prepared to scrap nothing else, was at least well advised to scrap that.

I will confess that I am altogether perplexed by the behavior of France at the present time. I do not understand what she believes she is doing in Europe and I do not understand her position in this conference. Why could she not have co-operated in this conference instead of making it a scene of special pleading? I have already said that the French here seem to be more foreign than any other people and least in touch with the general feeling of the assembly. They seem to have come here as national advocates, as special pleaders, without any of that passionate desire to lay the foundations of a world settlement that certainly animates nearly every other delegation. They do not seem to understand how people here regard either the conference or France.

There is indeed a great and enduring enthusiasm for France in America. Marshal Foch has gone about in America as the greatest of heroes and the most popular figure. He has been overwhelmed by hospitality and smothered by every honor America could heap upon him. The French flag is far more in evidence than the British in both New York and Washington. This may easily give French visitors the idea that they are exceptional favorites here and that France can count upon American backing in any quarrels she chooses to pick with the British or the Germans or Russians.

There could be no greater error. The enthusiasm for Foch is largely personal; he was the General of all the Allies. The enthusiasm for France is largely traditional and it does not extend to the French nationals or the present day. America loves, as all liberal and intelligent men throughout the world must love, France the great

liberator of men's minds; France of the great Revolution; the France of art and light, France, the beautiful and the gallant. It is hard to write bitterly of a country that can give the world an Anatole France, sane and smiling, or so brave and balanced a gentleman as the late Robert d'Humiers. But where is that France today? None of that France has come to the Washington Conference, but only an impenitent apologist for three years of sins against the peace of the world, an apologist for national aggression posturing as fear, and reckless greed disguised as discretion. Here in New York and Washington I find just the same steady change of opinion about. France that is going on in London. I want to write it down as plainly as I can. I want to get it over to my friends in France, because I have loved France greatly, and I do not think the French people realize what is going on among the English-speaking peoples. People here want to see Europe recuperating, and they are beginning to realize that the chief obstacle to a recuperating Europe is the obstinate French resolve to dominate the Continent, to revive and carry out the antiquated and impossible policy of Louis XIV, maintaining an ancient and intolerable quarrel, setting Pole against German and brewing mischief everywhere in order to divide and rule, instead of entering frankly into a European brotherhood.

Feeling about Germany and Austria is changing here, even more rapidly than in England, to pity and indignation; feeling about Russia is drifting the same way. One detects these undercurrents in the minds of the most unlikely people. People are recalling the France of Napoleon III., that restless and mischievous France, which came so near to a conflict with America in Mexico and which kept Europe in a fever for a quarter of a century. It is an enormous loss to the Washington Conference, it is a misfortune to all the world, that the great qualities of the French people, their clear-headedness, their powerful and yet practical imaginations seem at present to be entirely subordinated to the merely rhetorical and emotional side of the French character.

XII. — THUS FAR

Washington, November 22

HOW are we getting on in Washington?

The general mood is hopefulness tempered by congestion, mental and physical, and by sheer fatigue. There is no rest in Washington, no cessation. Last winter I was a happy invalid at Amalfi, I sat in the Italian sunshine, the hours were vast globes of golden time, my mind and my soul were my own. Now I live to the tune of a telephone bell and the little feverish American hours slip through my hot, dry hands before I can turn my thoughts around. I wish I could attend to everything.

The conference has evolved two committees, one on disarmament and one on Pacific affairs, which meet behind closed doors, so that one has three or four divergent reports of what has happened to choose from; delegates at all hours and in devious ways call together the press men to make more or less epoch-making statements; there are particular conferences with representative business men of this country and educationists of that, and so forth; one is called upon by a multitude of well informed people insistent upon this fact or that point of view, eloquent sidelights from South China, Albania, Czecho-Slovakia clamor for attention. And there is a terrible multitude of mere pesterers who want to do something — they know not what. The weather here is unusually warm and inclined to be cloudy, a brewhouse atmosphere, due entirely, one humorist declares, to the tremendous fermentation that is going on.

The fermenting vat overflows with the press of all the world. All the world, we feel, is present in spirit at Washington.

Three questions stand out as of importance and significance. The naval disarmament discussion, as one could have foretold, becomes a haggle for advantages. Each power seeks to disarm the other fellow. Great Britain detests the big raider submarine and wants none of it; it is America's only effective long range weapon. A clamor comes to us from across the ocean from the French Senate for unlimited submarines. These will be to attack Great Britain; there can be no

other possible use for them. Perhaps the French Senate does not really want war with Britain, but this is the way to get it.

Japan is asking for a seven to ten instead of a six to ten basis for herself. And so on. So long as unsettled differences remain, disarmament discussions are bound to degenerate in this fashion. Settlements and sincere disarmament are inseparably interwoven. The French, however, have led in an important pronouncement, promising evacuations and renunciations in the Chinese area on the part of France, provided Britain and Japan follow suit. Lord Riddle, on behalf of Britain, has followed suit; Britain is ready to relinquish everything, with the justifiable exception of Hongkong, a purely British creation. And M. Briand has explained why France must have an awful army to over-awe Europe, but that still leaves certain possibilities of military restraint open for consideration. We are still discussing whether we may not hope to see conscription banished from the> earth.

When such things swim up through the boiling activities of the Washington vat, not merely as passing suggestions and happy ideas but embodied in more or less concrete proposals, we cannot fail, however jaded we may feel, from also feeling hopeful. The conference has got only to its third session and we already seem further from war in the Pacific and nearer security there than at any time in the last two years.

And these intimations of success in this world discussion, of which Washington is the controlling nucleus, turn our minds naturally enough to the continuation and final outcome of this great initiative of President Harding's. The more fruitful the conference seems likely to be in agreements and understandings the more evident is the necessity for something permanent arising out of it, to hold and maintain, in spirit and in fact, this accumulation of agreements and understandings.

The Washington Conference before it breaks up and disperses must in some way lay an egg to reproduce itself. In some fashion it must presently return. Because we have had to bear in mind that in the final and conclusive sense of the word the conference can decide nothing. It has produced a fine and generous atmosphere about it; it will probably arrive at an effectual temporary solution of a large

group of problems, but the power of final decision rests with Governments and Legislatures far away.

The American proposals are only suggestive and they have no value as a treaty, unless they are accepted by the powers and until the American Senate has confirmed them by a two-thirds majority. M. Briand may have wished to be generous and broadminded here, but in Paris is this French Senate, inspired by a mad patriotism that would even now begin to arm France for an "inevitable" war with Britain. The French Senate has made a warlike gesture directly at England, has set its feet in a path than can end only in a supreme disaster for both France and England, and it did so, one guesses, in order to remind M. Briand that if he dared to be reasonable, if he dared to be pacific, if he acted for Great France and mankind, instead of at the dictates of Nationalist France, he did so at his peril. He would have been accused of betraying his country. "Conspuez Briand!" they would have cried in their pretty way. So M. Briand has played the patriot's role.

In Tokio and in London it is an open secret that the same conflict goes on; the cables are busy with the struggle between reason and fierce patriotism. ...Every concession made by every country at Washington will go back to the home land to be challenged as "weakness," as "want of patriotism," as "treason."

In America and Britain the ugly side of this business has still to come, the outbreak of the patriotic fanatics, of the disappointed politicians who wanted to come here, of the wrecker journalists, the dealers in suspicion, the evil minds of a thousand types. And the lassitude that follows great expectations has also to be reckoned with. What Washington decides will not be the ultimate outcome; what the world will get at last in treaties ratified and things accomplished will be the mangled and tangled remains of the Washington decisions.

For that reason it is imperative that the Washington Conference should meet again. Its work is not done until its decisions are realized. After it has sent over its reports to the Goverments and Parliaments it will adjourn, but it must not cease. With perhaps rather fuller powers, with perhaps a wider or a different representation of the world, it must come again to a renewed invitation, to restore once

more that atmosphere of international good will that has been created here, and to go over the attempts to realize, or the failures to realize, the settlement it has already worked out. And there will be many questions ripening then for solution that it cannot deal with now.

Much remains to be done by the Washington Conference, most of its work, indeed, is still to be done, but enough has been demonstrated already here to convince any reasonable man that a new thing, a new instrument, a new organ, has come into human affairs and that it is a thing that the world needs and cannot do without again. This thing has to recur, has to grow. It has to become a recurrent world conference. And this being clear, it is time that public discussion, public opinion, direct itself to the problem of the renewal of the conference in order that before it disperses we may be assured that it will meet again.

As a temporary, transitory thing, it will presently fade out of men's memories and imaginations; but as a thing going on and living, which has gone, but which, like the King in circuit, will come again to try the new issues that have arisen and to try again the experiments that have fallen short of expectation, it may become the symbol and rallying point of all that vast amount of sane, humanitarian feeling and all that devotion to mankind as a whole, and to peace and justice, that has hitherto been formless and ineffectual in the world, for the need of such a banner.

XIII. — THE LARGER QUESTION BEHIND THE CONFERENCE

Washington, November 23

The Washington Conference, after its tremendous opening, seems now to be running into slack water. It has had its three great days, in which Secretary Hughes and Mr. Balfour and M. Briand have respectively played the leading parts. The broad lines of a possible naval reduction and of a possible Chinese and Pacific settlement are shaping themselves in men's minds.

M. Briand has spoken and now departs. France will not disarm until she has a binding treaty which her former allies are not yet prepared to give her. She ignores the assurances of her proved allies and the experiences of the Great War. She goes in fear of desolate Russia and bankrupt Germany and she is "assailable on three coasts." So she retains her great armies, and especially her "colonial" army. M. Briand's departure has something of the effect of France shaking the dust from her feet and departing from the conference.

But France cannot step out of her share in the leadership of peace in this fashion. France has not finished with the conference yet. She will speak now at Washington with a voice perhaps less romantically impressive but more practically helpful. She has explained the terrors of her position and the assembled delegates have said "There! There!" to her as politely and soothingly as possible. But nobody really believes in the terrors of her position. Mr. Hughes is a man of great tenacity of purpose, and his chief reply to M. Briand's speech is to keep military disarmament upon the agenda. A third committee of five powers has been added to the two already is existence to deal with land disarmament. It is doubtful if it can get very far unless it can bring in German and Russian representatives to reply to the alarmist charges of M. Briand.

With the formation of this third committee the Washington Conference would seem to have got as much before it as it is likely to handle. The Hughes impetus has done its work and done its work well. The conference has followed his rigorous lead almost too

rigorously. It has cut off a manageable part of the vast problem of world peace and seems well on the way to manage it. That is exemplary — if limited. To manage a sample is to go some way toward demonstrating that the whole is manageable. A war on the Pacific has been averted, I think, at least for some years. But the more general problem of world peace as one whole, the problem of ending war for good, still remains untouched, and it is well to bear in mind that that is so.

It is impossible not to contrast this phase in the life of the Washington Conference with the great propositions of the opening days, when President Harding was speaking at Arlington and in the Continental Building of making an end to offensive — and with that of defensive — war forever in the world. It is impossible to ignore this shrinkage of aim and to refrain from measuring the vast omissions. That prelude, one perceives, was the prelude to something greater than this present conference, and more than this conference must ensue from it. The haggling and adjustment that is now going on in the committee of five powers on naval limitation and in the committee of nine powers on the Pacific settlement I will not attempt to follow. It is a matter for the experts and diplomatists; the public is concerned not with the methods of the wrangle but with the general purport and practical outcome.

We of the general public are incapable of judging upon the merits of battle cruisers and the possible limits to the size of submarines. Our concern is to see such things grow rarer and rarer until they disappear. I will not apologize, therefore, for going outside the conference chamber for the matter of my next few papers. I will go back from Mr. Secretary Hughes and his proposals and their consequences to President Harding and to the great expectations with which the conference assembled.

These expectations looked not merely to an arrest of international competition on the Pacific, and to giving threatened China a breathing time to bring itself up to modern conditions j they looked frankly toward the establishment of a world peace. But so far as Europe goes, where as M. Briand's speech reminded us, the nations are locked together in a state of extreme danger, the conference has as yet done nothing. It is quite possible to believe that it. will do very

little. It is doubtful if the peace of Europe can ever be dealt with effectually in Washington. The troubles of the European Continent are an old, intricate story, and I believe the attitude ascribed here to the American Centre and West, the attitude of "let Europe solve her own international problems and not bother us with them," is a thoroughly sound and wise one. America has neither the time and attention to spare nor the particular understandings needed to grasp the tangled difficulties of Europe. Such initiatives as those of President Wilson about Danzig and Fiume settle nothing and leave rankling sores. It is up to Europe to clear up and simplify itself before it comes into the world arena with America.

It is just within the range of possibility, therefore, that some sort of European conference may arise out of the Washington gathering. Such a conference is becoming necessary. The divergence in spirit and aim of France and Britain that Washington has brought out is not a divergence to be smoothed over. Better it should flare now than smoulder later. I have done my own small best to exacerbate it, because I believe that a brisk quarrel and some plain speaking may clear the air for a better understanding. Europe needs ventilation. When France, Britain, Italy and Germany meet together to discuss their common interests, cut through their impossible entanglements and get rid of their mutual suspicions and precautions with the frankness of this Washington gathering, with as open and free a discussion and as ample a public participation, European affairs will be on the mend.

But there is another issue which America cannot keep out of as she can keep out of the Franco-German-British situation, and upon this second issue the world looks to her for some sort of leadership. So far the Washington Conference has excluded any consideration of the economic and financial disorder of the world. But that consideration cannot be indefinitely delayed; it is becoming pressingly necessary. All the while we are debating here about Japanese autocracy and ambitions, and what we really mean by the "open door," and whether we shall have 40,000 or 90,000 tons of submarines, and so on, the economic dissolution of the world goes on.

The immediate effect of partial disarmament, indeed, both in

Britain and Japan, may be even to increase the economic difficulties of these countries by throwing considerable masses of skilled labor out of work. I propose in my next paper to discuss this process of economic and social dissolution which is now going on throughout the world, beneath the surface of our formal international relations. It is the larger reality of the present world situation which the brighter, more dramatic incidents of the earlier sessions at Washington have for a time thrust out of our attention.

XIV. — THE REAL THREAT TO CIVILIZATION

Washington, November 25

In the opening paper of this series I said that Western civilization was undergoing a very rapid process of disorganization, a process that was already nearly complete in Russia and that was spreading out to the whole world. It is a huge secular process demanding unprecedented collective action among the nations if it is to be arrested and I welcome the Washington Conference as the most hopeful beginning of such concerted action.

Now that the Washington Conference has defined its scope and limitations and got down to a definite scheme of work it will be well to return to this ampler question of the decline in the world's affairs.

Now there are great numbers of people, more particularly in America, who still refuse to recognize this intermittent and variable process, which resumes and goes on again and rests steady for a time and then hurries, which is taking all that we know as civilization in Europe toward a final destruction. The mere statement that this is going on they call "pessimism," and with a sort of genial hostility they oppose any attempt to consider the possibility of any action to turn back the evil process.

I suppose they would call the note of a fire alarm or the toot of a motor horn "pessimism" — until the thing hit them good and hard. It would have the same effect of a disagreeable warning and interruption to the even tenor of their ways. They argue that this alleged decadence is not going on, or, what is from a soundly practical point of view the same thing, that it is never going to reach them or anything that they really care for.

The starvation of Russia down to an empty shell, the break up of China, the retrogression of Southeastern Europe to barbarism, the sinking of Constantinople to the level of a drunken brothel, the steadily approaching collapse of Germany, is nothing to these "optimists." America is all right, anyhow, and am I my brother's keeper? It is just a phase of misfortune "over there" and the people

must get out of it as they can.

Wait for the swing of the pendulum, the turn of the tide. Things will come right again — over the heaps of dead. There have been such slumps before in those countries away over there, notoriously less favored by God, as they are, than America.

It may be well therefore to go over this matter a little more fully and to give my grounds for supposing that there is a rot, a coming undone, going on in our system, that will not necessarily recover — that the movement isn't the swing of a pendulum, nor this ebb an ebb that will turn again. And further, that this rotting process is bound to affect not merely Europe and Asia, but ultimately America.

Now let us recapitulate in the most general terms what has happened and is happening at the present time to impoverish and disorganize the world. First, there has been a very great destruction of life through the war, especially in Europe. Mostly this has been the killing of young men who would otherwise have been the flower of the working mass of these countries at the present time. This in itself is a great loss of energy, but it is a recoverable loss. A new generation is already growing up to replace these millions of dead and to efface the economic loss of this tragic and sorrowful destruction.

Nor is the extraordinary waste of property, of energy and raw material spent in mere destruction, an irreplaceable loss. Given toil, given courage, devastated areas can be restored, fresh energies found to replenish the countless millions and millions of foot pounds of work wasted upon explosives. Many beautiful things, buildings, works of art and the like have gone, never to be gotten again, but their place may conceivably be taken by new efforts of creative, artistic energy, given toil, given confidence and hope.

Far more serious, from the point of view of the future, than the destruction of either things or lives, are certain subtler destructions, because they strike at that toil, that courage and hope and confidence which are essential to any sort of recuperation.

And foremost is the fact of debt, everywhere, but particularly in the European countries. All the billions worth of material that was smashed up and blown to pieces on the front had to be bought from its owners and to secure it every belligerent Government had to incur

debts. Lives cost little, but material much. The European combatants are overwhelmed with debts, every European worker and toiler, every European business man, is a debtor; every European enterprise goes on under a crushing burden of taxation because of these debts. An attempt has been made to shift this unendurable burden from the victors to the vanquished, but the vanquished already had as much as they could carry.

Now when first mankind began to experiment with money and credit the lot of the debtor was an intolerable one. He might become the slave of his creditor, he might be subjected to imprisonment and frightful punishments. But it was early discovered that it was not to the general advantage, it was not even to the advantage of the creditor, to drive the debtor to despair. Processes of bankruptcy were devised to clear him up, get what was possible from him and then release him to a fresh start and hope.

But we have not yet extended the same leniency to national bankruptcy because national insolvencies have been rare. And so we have whole nations in Europe so loaded with debts and punitive charges that every worker, every business man, will be under his share in this burden from the cradle to the grave. He will be a debt serf to the domestic or foreign creditor and all his enterprises will be weighed and discouraged by this obligation. Debt is one immense and universal discouragement now throughout all Europe.

But even that might not prevent the recovery of Europe. There is yet another and pro-founder evil in operation to prevent people "getting to work" to reconstruct their shattered economic life. That is the increasing failure of money to do its work. Europe cannot get to work, cannot get things going again, because over a large part of the world the medium of exchange has become untrustworthy and unusable. That is the immediate thing that is destroying civilization in the Old World.

We have to remember that our whole economic order is based on money. We do not know any way of working a big business, a manufactory, a large farm, a mine, except by money payments. Payment in kind, barter and the like are ancient and clumsy expedients; you cannot imagine a great city like New York getting along with its industrial and business life on any such clumsy basis.

Every modern city, London, Paris, Berlin, is built on a money basis and will collapse into utter ruin, as Petersburg has already collapsed, if money fails. But over large and increasing areas of Europe money is now of such fluctuating value, its purchasing power is so uncertain, that men will neither work for it, nor attempt to save it, nor make any monetary bargains ahead.

Such a thing has never occurred to anything like the same extent in all history, and it is killing business enterprise altogether and throwing whole masses of working people out of employment.

Europe without trustworthy money is as paralyzed as a brain without wholesome blood. She cannot act, she cannot move. Employment becomes impossible and production dies away. The towns move steadily toward the starvation that has overtaken Petersburg and the peasants and cultivators cease to grow anything except to satisfy their own needs. To go to market with produce, except to barter, is a mockery. The schools are not working, the hospitals, the public services; the teachers and doctors and officials cannot live upon their pay, they starve or go away.

This state of affairs has been brought about by the reckless manufacture of paper money by nearly every European Government; we can measure their recklessness roughly by comparing their pre-war and post-war exchanges. It is only now that we are beginning to realize the enormity of the disaster which this demoralization of money is bringing upon the world.

We have weakened the link of cash payments, which has hitherto held civilization together, to the breaking point. As the link breaks, the machine stops. The modern city will become a formless mob of unemployed men and the countryside will become a wilderness of food-hoarding peasants — and since the urban masses will have no food and no means of commanding it, we may expect the most violent perturbations before they are persuaded to accept their fate in a philosophical spirit.

Eevolutionary social outbreaks are not the results of plots; they are symptoms of social disease. They are not causes but effects. This is what I mean when I write of a breakdown of civilization. I mean the death of town life, which cannot go on without money and the cessation of organized communications. I mean a breakdown of the

organizations for keeping the peace. I mean an end to organized education.

I mean the smashing of this social order in which we live, through the smashing of money, which has already occurred to a large extent in Kussia, which is going on in many parts of Eastern Europe, which seems likely to occur within a few months in Germany, which may spread into Italy and France, and so to Britain, and even to the American continent, and which can only be arrested by the most vigorous collection action to restore validity to money.

Of which vigorous collective action there is in Washington at the present moment no sign.

XV. — THE POSSIBLE BREAKDOWN OF CIVILIZATION

Washington, November 26

In a previous paper I have set out the plain facts of the condition of Central and Eastern Europe. It is a break-up of the modern civilization system, due to the smashing up of money, without which organized town life, factory production, education and systematic communications are unworkable. If it goes on unchecked to its natural conclusion, Central and Eastern Europe will follow Russia to a condition in which the towns will be dying or dead, empty and ruinous, the railroads passing out of use, and in which few people will be left alive except uneducated and degenerating peasants and farmers, growing their own food and keeping a rough order among themselves in their own fashion. We are faced, indeed with a return to barbarism over all these areas. They are going back to the conditions of rural Asia Minor or the Balkans.

How far is this degeneration going to spread?

Let us recognize at once that it need spread no further. It is not an inevitable process. It could be arrested, it could be turned back and a rapid restoration of our shattered civilization could be set going right away if the leading powers of the world, sinking their political ambitions for a time, could meet frankly to work out a bankruptcy arrangement that would release the impoverished nations from debt and give them again a valid money, a stable money with a trustworthy exchange value, that could be accepted with confidence and saved without deterioration. Upon that things could be set going again quite hopefully. Education has not so degenerated as yet, habits of work and trading and intercourse are still strong enough to make such a recovery possible.

Except perhaps in Russia. Russia, for all we know, may have sunken very deep.

But if there is no vigorous world effort made soon the trading class, the foreman class, the technically educated class, the professional class, the teachers, and so forth, will have been broken

up and dispersed. These classes are comparatively easy to destroy, extremely hard to reconstruct. Modern civilization will really have been destroyed, if not for good, for a long period, over great areas if these classes go.

And the process is at present still spreading rapidly. If it gets Germany — and it seems to be getting Germany — then Italy may follow. Italy is linked very closely to Germany economically and financially. The death of Germany will chill the economic blood of Italy. Italy is passionately anxious to disarm on land and sea. But Italy cannot disarm while France maintains a great army and makes great naval preparations. France's refusal to disarm pre-vents Italy from disarming. The lira sways and sinks; its value fluctuates not perhaps so widely as do marks and kronen but much too widely for healthy industrial life and social security. And Italy is troubled by its restless nationalists, a whooping flag-waving crew of posturing adventurers without foresight or any-genuine love of country. If nothing is done, I think I would give Germany about six months and North Italy two years before a revolutionary collapse occurs.

And France?

This new rhetorical France which remains heavily armed while no man threatens, which builds new ships to fight non-existent German armies and guards itself against the threats of long dead German Generals — one of M. Briand's hair-raising quotations is to be found in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and must be nearly twenty years stale — the renascent France which jostles against Italy and England and believes that it can humbug America for good and all while it does these things, will it pull through amid the general disaster of Europe! Will it achieve its manifest ambition and remain dominant in Europe, the dominance of the last survivor, the cock upon the dunghill of a general decay? I doubt it.

Watch the franc upon the exchange as the true meaning of the French search for "security" dawns upon the world. Watch the subscription to the next French loan to pay for more submarines and more Senegalese. It may prove to be too difficult a feat, after all, for France to wreck the rest of Europe, to destroy her commerce by destroying her customers, and yet to save herself. When France begins to break, she may break very quickly. Under the surface of

this exuberant French patriotism runs a deep tide of Communism, raw and red and insanely logical.

We talk of the saner, graver France, the substantial France, that is masked by the rhetoric of M. Briand and the flag-waving French nationalists, of a France generous enough to help a fallen foe and great enough to think of the welfare of mankind. I wish we could hear more of that saner France. And soon. I can see nothing but a warlike orator, empty and mischievous, leading France and all Europe to destruction. I do not see that it is possible for a France of armaments and adventures to dance along the edge of the abyss without falling in.

When we pass out of the Continental to the Atlantic system and consider the case of Britain we find a country with a stabler exchange and a tradition of social give and take stronger and deeper than that of any other country in Europe. But she is not a self-maintaining country. Her millions live very largely on overseas trade. She is helplessly dependent upon the prosperity of other countries, and particularly of Europe; the ebb of prosperity abroad means ebb for her at home. No other country feels so acutely the economic prostration of Germany; no other country suffers so greatly from the restless activities of France. She is struggling along now with unprecedented masses of unemployed workers, and the state of affairs abroad offers no hope of any diminution of this burden. The housing of her great population has degenerated greatly since the war began; she cannot continue to feed, clothe nor educate her people as she used to do unless the decay of Continental Europe is arrested.

I do not know what political form of expression a great distress in Britain might take. The tendency toward revolutionary violence is not very evident in the British temperament, but people who are slow to move are often slow to stop. The slow violence of the English might not find expression in revolution and might not expend itself internally. They might get resentful about France — and perhaps G-ermany might be feeling resentful about France too. But I will confess that I cannot yet imagine what an acutely distressed Britain might or might not do. Yet it is plain to me that the shadow that lies so dark over. Petrograd stretches as far as London.

Such, compactly, is the condition of Europe today. I submit to the

reader that it is a fair statement of facts in common knowledge. This is not the Europe of the diplomatists and publicists; it is the Europe of reality and the common man. It is a process of decline and fall going on under our eyes, swifter and more extensive than the decline and fall of the Boman Empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. Its immediate cause is the destruction of the monetary system under the burden of war expenditure and war debts. And the only possible hope that it may be arrested lies in a prompt and vigorous world conference to put an end to war expenditures, including even these French war expenditures that M. Briand's admirers find so justifiable; to extinguish debts and reinstate stable and trustworthy money in the world.

There is no evidence yet that the Washington Conference will take up this task or will even contemplate this task. I find myself in the trough of the waves today and less confident of the outcome, even the limited outcome, of things here. I am increasingly doubtful whether the conference will get as far in the direction of a stabilized Pacific as I hoped a few days ago.

XVI. — WHAT OF AMERICA?

Washington, November 28

In my next article I will report progress of the Washington Conference; in this I will go on with my account in general terms of what is happening in the world.

I have written of a progressive rapid dissolution of our civilized organization as the dominant fact of the present time. It is very hard indeed to keep it in one's mind here in this city of plenty and lavish light that anything of the sort is going on. It is amazing how they splash light about here; the Capitol shines all night like a full moon, an endless stream of light pours down the Washington Obelisk, light blinks and glitters and spins about and spills all over the city.

I find it hard to realize the reality of the collapse here myself, and yet I have seen the streets of one great European city in full daylight as dead and empty as a skull. I have sought my destination in the chief thoroughfare of another European capital at night by means of a pocket electric torch. I at least ought to keep these memories of desolation clear before me.

I do not see how Americans who have never seen anything of the wrecked state of Eastern Europe and the shabbiness and privation of the Centre can be expected to feel and see the vision I find it so hard to keep vivid in my thoughts. Here is a country where money is still good; the $10 notes in my pocket assure me I can go down to the Treasury here and get gold for them whenever I think fit. (I believe them so thoroughly that I do not even think fit.) My intimations of the progressive dissolution over there must read like a gloomy fiction. And it is the hardest, most important fact in the world.

Everywhere here there is festival. I go to splendid balls, to glittering receptions; I am whirled off to a most hilarious barbecue, an ox in chains, roasts and drips over a wood fire — think of that in Russia! Thanksgiving Day-was an inordinate feast. The portions of food they give you in hotels, clubs and restaurants are enormous, by present European standards; one seems always to be eating little bits and throwing the rest away.

Neither New York nor Washington shows a trace yet, that I can see, of the European shadow. There is much unemployment, but not enough yet to alarm people. Nothing of it has struck upon my perceptions either here or in New York. In the midst of this gay prosperity comes a letter from my wife describing how the police had to censor the bitter inscriptions upon the wreaths that were laid upon the London cenotaph on Armistice Day and how the veterans of the Great War who marched in the unemployed processions in London wore pawn tickets in the place of their medals.

I am forced by these contrasts to the question: "Suppose America patches up a fairly stable peace with Japan; lets Japan accumulate in Manchuria, Siberia, and finally China; cuts her naval expenditure to nothing, and allows the rest of the world, including the old English-speaking home, to slide and go over into the abyss — apart from the moral loss, will she suffer very greatly!"

That is a very interesting speculation.

I think she may adjust herself to a self-contained system and, in a sense, pull through. It may involve some very severe stresses. At present she grows more food than she can eat or waste; she exports foodstuffs. The American farmer sells so much of his produce for export, not a very great percentage, but enough to form an important item in his affairs. Given a Europe and Asia too impoverished and broken up to import food stuffs, that trade goes. The American farmer will have to sell to a shrunken demand; he will have either to shrink himself or undersell his fellow farmer. This will mean bad times for the American farmer as Europe sinks; farmers will be unable to buy as freely as usual; many agriculturists will be going out of business.

Firms like Ford will be ambarrassed by overproduction. American manufacturers are also, to a very marked but not overwhelming extent, exporters and much of their internal trade is to the farmers — whose purchasing power will be diminishing. Bad times for the industrial regions also will follow the European disaster, perhaps even very bad times. New York and the Eastern cities, so far as the overseas traffic goes, may suffer exceptionally. For them there may be less power of recovery, for with the fall of Europe into barbarism, the centre of American interests will shift to the interior. But after a

series of crises, a lot of business failures and so on, I do not see why the United States — if there is no war with Japan — very little reduced from the large splendor of its present habits, should not still be getting along in a fashion. America is not tied up to the European system, to live and die with it, as France or Britain is tied.

And there is a limit also to the areas of the Old World affected by the collapse of the cash and credit system in Europe. Outside the European seacoast towns, Asia Minor is not likely to go much lower than it is at present, though most of Europe sink to the level of the Balkans and Asia Minor. The dissolution of Asia Minor resulted from the great wars of the Eastern Empire and Persia; all that land was ruined country before the days of Islam. It has never recovered and Europe may never recover.

Given an enfeebled Britain, there will probably be a collapse into conflict and discord throughout most of India; and China, unhelped, may continue in a state of confusion which is steadily destroying her ancient educated class and her ancient traditions without replacing them by any modernized educational organization. But here again upon the Western Pacific there may be regions which need not go the whole way down to citylessness, illiteracy and the peasant life.

Japan is still solvent and energetic, the war has probably strained her very little more than it has strained America, and her participation in the world credit system is still so recent that, like America, she may be able to draw herself together and maintain herself and expand her rule and culture, unimpeded, over the whole of Eastern Asia. She will be the more able to do this if a phase of disarmament gives her time to rest and consolidate before her expansion is resumed. A war between Japan and America would be a long and costly affair and it would no doubt topple both powers into the same process of dissolution in which Europe now welters, but I am assuming that America takes no risk of such a war for the sake of China or suchlike remote cause and that Japan is not eager for California. An America indifferent to the fall of Europe would probably not trouble itself seriously if presently Australia came under Japanese domination. It would not trouble — until the Monroe Doctrine was invaded. And it would get along very comfortably and happily.

So far as material considerations go, therefore, there is not much force in an appeal to the ordinary plain man in America to interest himself, much less to exert himself, in the tangled troubles of Europe and Asia now. He can remain as proudly "isolated" as his fathers; he can refuse help, he can "avoid entangling alliances," and rely on his own strength; he can weather the smash, insist on pressing any sparks of recovery out of the European debtor, and so far as he and his children, and possibly even his children's children, are concerned, America can expect to go on living an extremely tolerable life. There will still be plenty of Fords, plenty of food, movies and other amusing inventions; seed time, harvest and thanksgiving; no armament and very light taxation and as high a percentage of moral, well-regulated lives as any community has ever shown upon this planet. Until that long-distant time when the great Asiatic Empire of Japan turns its attention seriously to expansion in the New World. So far as present material considerations go....

But I belong to one of the races that have populated America. I know the imagination of my own people and something of most of the peoples who have sent their best to this land, I have watched the people here, and listened to them and read about them; there has been no degeneration here but progress and invigor-ation, and I will not believe that the American spirit, distilled from all the best of Europe, will tolerate this surrender of the future, this quite hoggish abandonment of the leadership of mankind that continuing isolation implies.

The American people has grown great unawares; it still does not realize its immense predominance now in wealth, in strength, in hope, happiness and unbroken courage among the children of men. The cream of all the white races did not come to this continent to reap and sow and eat and waste, smoke in its shirtsleeves in a rocking-chair, and let the great world from which its fathers came go hang. It did not come here for sluggish ease. It came here for liberty and to make the new beginning of a greater civilization upon our globe. The years of America's growth and training are coming to an end, the phase of world action has begun. All America is too small a world for the American people; the world of their interest now is the whole round world.

I have no doubt of the heart and enterprise of America — if America understands.

But does America understand the scale and urgency of the present situation? Is she prepared to act now? This decadence of Europe is urgent — urgent. So far, this Washington Conference has not touched more than the outer threads of the writhing international tangle that has to be dealt with if European civilization is to be saved.

So far, these economic and financial troubles which are already at a crisis of disaster in Europe have been treated as though they did not exist. But they are the very heart of the trouble across the Atlantic, and with America, the rich creditor of all Europe and the holder of most of the gold in the world, lie enormous possibilities of salvation. The political situation becomes more and more subordinated to the economic.

If America is willing, America is able to reinstate Europe and turn back the decline, and she is in so strong a position that she can make the effectual permanent disarmament of Europe a primary condition of her assistance. If she have the clearness of mind to set aside the eloquent apologetics of that one power that is still militant, adventurous and malignant among the ruins, she can oblige the remnant of Europe to get together and settle outstanding differences by the sheer strength of her financial controls. She can demand a "League to Enforce Peace" and she can enforce it.

Will she do that now, or will she let this occasion pass from her — never to return?

XVII. — EBB TIDE AT WASHINGTON

Washington, November 28

The League of Nations was the first American initiative toward an organized world peace. Its beginning, the world-wide enthusiasm evoked by its early promise, its struggle to exist, its abandonment by America, its blunders and omissions and the useful, incomplete body that now represents it at Geneva, are the material of an immense conflicting literature. For a time at least the League is in the background. It has not kept hold of the popular imagination of the world.

I will not touch here upon the mistakes and disputes, the possible arrogance, the possible jealousies, the inadvisable compromises, the unnecessary concessions that made the League a lesser thing than it promised to be. I will not discuss why so entirely American a project, into which many nations came mainly to please America, failed to retain the official support of the American Government. Of such things the historian or the novelist may write but not the journalist. The fact remains that the project was a project noble and hopeful in its beginnings, a very great thing indeed in human history, a dawn in the darkness of international conflict and competition, an adventure which threw a halo of greatness about the Nation that produced it and about that splendid and yet so humanly limited man who has been chiefly identified with its promise and its partial failure.

It was, I insist, very largely an American idea, and only America, because of her freedom from the complex and bitter-spirited traditions of the European Foreign Offices, could have brought such a proposal into the arena of practical politics. The American Nation is exceptionally free from ancient traditions of empire, ascendancy, expansion, glory and the like. It is haunted by a dream, an obstinate recurrent dream, of a whole world organized for peace. It comes back to that with a notable persistence.

The League of Nations stands now, as it were, on the shelf, an experiment not wholly satisfactory, not wholly a failure, destined for searching reconsideration at no distant date. Meanwhile, the

American mind, with much freshness and boldness, has produced this second experiment, in a widely different direction, the First Washington Conference for the Limitation of Armaments. The League of Nations was too definite and cramped in its constitution, too wide in its powers. It was a premature superstate. One standard objection, and a very reasonable one, was that America might be outvoted by quite minor powers and be obliged to undertake responsibilities for which it had no taste. The second experiment, therefore, has been tried, very properly, with the loosest of constitutions, and the most severely defined and limited of aims. We are beginning to see that it too is an experiment, likely to be successful within its limits but again not wholly satisfactory. Instead of a world constitution we have had a world conversation.

That conversation has passed from the open sessions of the conference to the two commit^ tees of five upon the limitation of land and sea armaments and the Pacific Committee of nine. In all these committees there are wide fluctuations of thought and temper. There are daily communications to the press from this committee or that, from this delegation or that, from a score of propagandas. It is really not worth the while of the ordinary citizen to follow these squabbles and flights and recriminations and excitements. Certain broad principles have been established. The ordinary citizen will be advised to hold firmly to these and see that he gets them carried through.

And now there has been a decided ebb in the high spirit of the conference. These disputes about details have produced a considerable amount of fatigue, attention is fatigued and the exploit of M. Briand has for a time shattered and confused the general mentality. The American public was in a state of pure and simple enthusiasm for peace and disarmament and quite unprepared for the exploit of M. Briand. Like all serious shocks, it did not at first produce its full result.

The mood was so amiable here, so eager for cheering and emotional human brotherhood, that when France, in the person of M. Briand, snapped her fingers at the mere idea of disarmament and quoted a twenty-year-old passage from a dead German Field Marshal to justify a vast army and an aggressive naval programme in the face

of an exhausted Europe, there was a touching disposition on the part of a considerable section of the American press to greet this display as in some way conducive to our millennial efforts. Only a few of us called a spade a spade right away and declined to pretend that the irony and restrained indignation of Mr. Balfour and Signor Schanzer were "indorsements" of M. Briand's stupendous claim that France with her submarines and Senegalese might do as she pleased in Europe.

The facts that the caustic and restrained utterances of these gentlemen could be so construed, and that the London *Daily Mail* should attempt to break and mutilate my comments on the French attitude, demonstrate beyond doubt the need there was for the utmost outspokenness in this matter. But the situation is now better realized. The air is already clearer for the outburst. France, we realize, has to stop bullying Germany and threatening Italy; Europe can only be saved by the honest and unreserved co-operation of Italy, France and Britain for mutual aid and reassurance.

The repercussion of the Franco-British clash was immediately evident upon the other issues of the conference. The practical refusal of France to join in the generous renunciations of America and Britain, the feeling of insecurity created in Western Europe weakened Britain in her ability to work with America on the Pacific for a secure China and for restraint upon the possible imperialism of Japan. Britain, cannot do that with a hostile neighbor behind her and an uncertain America at her side, and the prospects of a free China and for an effective limitation of the Japanese naval strength were greatly imperilled. Japanese demands stiffened. "Ten to six," said America, "Ten to seven," answered Japan.

The effect upon what I might call the Washington state of mind throughout the world was depressing. The easy onrush of the opening days was checked. Here was hard work ahead, complications, the traditions and mental habits of two great European peoples were in conflict and had somewhat to be adjusted if we were to get on. The Anglo-French Entente, we discovered, was in a very unsatisfactory state; it had suddenly to be sent to the wash and the washing had to be done in public, and this happened at a phase of lassitude. In the ebb of the great enthusiasm all sorts of buried rocks

and shoals became apparent again. Party politics reappeared — and remained showing.

I am an innocent child in American politics; I know that I make my artless remarks upon these things at considerable peril. But I gather from the self- betrayals of one or two influential people that things are somewhat in this frame. The Democrats feel that so far they have been almost supernaturally "good" about the conference. They haven't said a word by way of criticism; they have hailed and helped and smiled and cheered. Still If things should so turn out that a kind of insufficiency should appear, and if people's minds should revert thereupon toward the Democratic League of Nations idea, so much under a cloud at present, it would be rather more than human not to feel a faint gleam of pleasure and perhaps even to give the gentlest of pushes to the process of disillusionment.

And on the other hand, there betrays itself now and then a slight nervous eagerness on the part of loyal rather than good Eepublicans to call anything that happens a success and to become indignant when, as in the case of the Briand oration, a spade is called a spade. And that childish, undignified and dwindling tendency of certain American types to regard all foreign powers in general, and Britain in particular, as forever engaged in diabolical machinations against the peace and purity of American life is also incresingly evident. There is an open, if incoherent, press campaign against disarmament, against the British, against foreigners generally, against — any troublesome thing you like.

These are ebb tide phenomena. These are the limitations of our poor humanity under fatigue. None the less, matters have to be thrashed out and will be thrashed out. As I said in the beginning, it is hard to keep hold.

And so it was high time that the President, who embodies so much of the simplicity and strength of that real America, in which I am a profound and obstinate believer, should come back into the limelight from which he receded after delivering his great speech and leaving the chair on the opening day of the conference. In the indirect way customary with Presidents here he has been making some very important pronouncements.

My friend Mr. Michelson some days ago published a sketch of

very important proposals that had already received wide support in the informal discussions that pervade Washington — for partial rescinding of the Allied debts, subject to disarmament conditions, to be considered by a second conference to be presently assembled. Following on this news the President has been talking for publication of a third experiment in the form of a second Washington Conference to take up these issues. And he has also been talking of a third conference to confirm and go on with the disarmament arrangements, a conference at which Germany and the Spanish-speaking powers, if not Russia, are apparently to have a voice. Such a periodic repetition of the conference would presently organize itself for a continuing life and so develop gradually and naturally into that Association of Nations we are all seeking.

These are refreshing promises in these days of ebb; they show that the impulse that began so splendidly two weeks ago is not dead, that the tide rises toward world discussion and world organized peace will flow again presently, wider and stronger than its previous flow. And meanwhile these frank discussions of attitude and detail must go on; they cannot be ignored, but at the same time they must not be magnified into incurable quarrels and insurmountable difficulties. They are unavoidable and necessary things, but not the big things, the main things. While the tide is out our main projects, stranded in this estuary that leads perhaps to the ocean of peace, must needs keel over and look askew; we must scrape our keels, calk leaks and wait for the great waters to return.

XVIII. — AMERICA AND ENTANGLING ALLIANCES

Washington, November 30

The power of the American impulse toward a world peace is undeniable. It has produced in succession the great dream of a League of Nations and now this second great dream of a gradually developing Association of Nations arising out of a series of such conferences as this one. No other nation could have raised such hopes and no other political system has the freedom of action needed to give these projects the substance and dignity which the initiative of the head of the state involves.

But if these projects are to carry through into the world of accomplished realities, if in a lifetime or so this glorious dream of a world peace — going on, as a world at peace must now inevitably do, from achievement to achievement — if that dream is to be realized, certain peculiarities of the American people and the American situation have at no very distant date to be faced.

All such gatherings and conferences as this are haunted by a peculiar foggy ghost called "Tact," which is constantly seeking to cover up and conceal and obliterate some vitally important but rather troublesome reality in the matter. "Tact" is apparently a modern survival of the ancient "Tabu." For example, a pleasant Indian gentleman sits among the British delegates at the conference; "Tact" demands that no one shall ever ask him or of him, "What do you conceive will be the place of India in that great World Association half a century ahead? Will it still be a British appendix?" And "Tact" becomes hysterical at the slightest whisper of the word "Senegalese," or any inquiry about the possible uses of the French submarine. And a third question, hitherto veiled by "Tact" under the very thickest wrappings of fog, to which, greatly daring, I propose to address myself now, is: "How far is America really prepared to fix and adhere to any wide schemes for the permanent adjustment of the worlds affairs that may be arrived at by this conference or its successors?"

The other day a friend of mine in New York made a profoundly wise remark to me. “I have found,” she said, “that one can have nothing and do nothing without paying for it. If you do well or if you do ill, just the same you have to pay for it. If a mother wants to do her best by her children, she must pay for it, in giving up personal ambitions, dreams of writing or art, throughout the best years of life. If a man wants to do his best in business or politics, he must sacrifice dreams of travel and adventure.” And whatever America does with herself in the next few years, she too must be prepared to pay.

If she desires isolation, moral exaltation, irresponsibility and self-sufficiency, “America for the Americans and never mind the consequences,” she must be prepared to witness the decline and fall of the white civilization in Europe and the consolidation of a profoundly alien system across the Pacific. If, on the other hand, she now takes up this task for which she seems so inclined, as the leader and helper of white civilization, the task of organizing the permanent peace of the world upon the lines of the system of civilization to which she belongs, then for that nobler role also there is a price to be paid. She has to assume not only the dignity but the responsibilities of leadership. She has not merely to express noble sentiments, but to lay hold upon the difficulties and intricacies of the problem before her. She has not merely to criticise but to consider and sympathize and help, and she has to make decisions and abide by them.

When America really makes decisions, she abides by them — vigorously. The Monroe Doctrine was such a decision. It has saved South America for South Americans; it has saved Europe from a ruinous scramble for the Spanish inheritance. It was the first great feat of Americanism in world politics. The exponents of “Tact” will, I know, be outraged by the reminder that for a long time tacit approval of Britain and the existence of the British fleet provided a support and shield to the Monroe Doctrine, and also by the further reminder that the one serious attack upon it was made by Napoleon III. during the American Civil War — at which time, I admit, the attitude of Great Britain to the disunited States was also far from impeccable. But helped or assailed, the Monroe Doctrine held good.

The Washington Conference has developed a position with regard to the Pacific that calls for an American decision of equal vigor. It is

as plain as daylight that Japanese liberal tendencies can be supported and the aggressive ambitions of Japanese imperialism can be restrained, that China can be saved for the Chinese and Eastern Siberia from foreign conquest, provided America places herself unequivocally side by side with Great Britain and France in framing and sustaining a definite system of guarantees and prohibitions in Eastern Asia. The Anglo-Japanese agreement could be ended in favor of such a new peace-pact and an enormous step forward toward world peace be made. It would mark an epoch in world statecraft.

But this means an agreement of the nature of a treaty; a mere Presidential declaration, which means some later President might set aside or some newly elected Senate reverse, is not enough. If the reader will study the position of Australia and of the British commitments in Eastern Asia, he will see why it is not enough. Britain is not strong enough to risk being left alone as the chivalrous protector of a weak, if renascent, China. She has her own people in Australia to consider. And besides, Britain alone — as the protector of China — after all that has happened in the past.... It is moral as well as material help in sustaining the new understanding that the British will require.

The plain fact of the Pacific situation is that there are only three courses before the world — either unchallenged Japanese domination in Eastern Asia from now on, or a war to prevent it soon, or an alliance of America, Britain and Japan, with whatever government China may develop, and with the other powers concerned, though perhaps less urgently concerned — an alliance of all these, for mutual restraint and mutual protection. And it is an equally plain fact, though "Tact" cries "Hush!" at the words, that the tradition of America for a hundred years, a tradition which was sustained in her refusal to come into the League of Nations, has been against any such alliance.

George Washington's advice to his countrymen to avoid "permanent alliances" for the balance of power and suchlike ends, and Jefferson^ reiterated council to his countrymen to avoid "entangling alliances" have been interpreted too long as injunctions to avoid any alliances whatever, entangling or disentangling. The habit of avoiding association in balance-of-power schemes and the

like has broadened out into a general habit of non-association. But alliances which are not aimed at a common enemy but only at a common end were not, I submit, within the intention of George Washington.

At any rate, I do not see how the disarmament proposals of Mr. Secretary Hughes can possibly be accepted without a Pacific settlement, nor how that settlement can be sustained except by some sort of alliance, meeting periodically in conference to apply or adapt the settlement to such particular issues as may arise. If America is not prepared to go as far as that, then I do not understand the enthusiasm of America for the Washington Conference. I do not understand the mentality that can contemplate world disarmament without at least that much provision for the prevention of future conflicts.

And similarly, I do not see how any effectual disarmament is possible in Europe or how any dealing with the economic and financial situation there can be possible unless America is prepared to bind itself in an alliance of mutual protection and accommodation with at least France, Germany, Britain and Italy to sustain a similar series of conferences and adjustments. At the back of the French refusal to disarm there is a suppressed demand for a protective alliance. That is an entirely reasonable demand. The form of this alliance that the French have demanded hitherto is an entangling alliance, an alliance of America and Britain and France against, at least, Germany and Russia. The necessary alliance to which France and Britain will presently assent, and which America will come to recognize as the only way to its peacemaking aims, will be against no one; it is an alliance of an entirely beneficial character, an alliance not to entangle but to release.

The disposition of the European delegations and of the British and foreign writers at Washington to treat the idea of America making treaties of alliance as outside the range of possibility, as indeed an idea tabu, seems to me a profoundly mistaken one. It is “Tact” in its extremest form. I have heard talk of the “ immense inertia” of political dogmas held for a hundred years. For “immense inertia” I would rather write “expiring impulse.” The policy of non-interference in affairs outside America was an excellent thing, no

doubt, for a young Republic in the self-protective state; it is a policy entirely unworthy of a Republic which has now become the predominant state in the world.

XIX. — AN ASSOCIATION OF NATIONS

The futility of the idea of a limitation of armaments or any limitation of warfare as a possible remedy for the present distresses of mankind, without some sort of permanent settlement of the conflicts of interest and ambition which lie at the root of warfare, has grown clearer and clearer with each day's work of the "Washington Conference. And the conviction that no permanent settlement is conceivable without a binding alliance to sustain it also grows stronger each day. For security and peace in the Pacific an alliance of at least America, Britain and Japan is imperative, and Britain cannot play her part therein unless Europe is safe also, through a binding alliance of at least France, Germany, Britain and America. To arrest the economic decadence of the world a still wider bond is needed.

So the inflexible logic of the situation brings ns back to the problem of a world alliance and a world guarantee, the problem of which the League of Nations was the first attempted solution. The conference is being forced toward that ampler problem again, in spite of the severe restrictions of its agenda. After President Wilson's "League" comes President Harding's "Association." Senator Borah, in alarm, emerges from the silence he has hitherto kept during the conference to declare that this "Association" is only another name for the "League." On that we may differ from him. Association and League are alike in seeking to organize the peace of the world but in every other respect they are different schemes, differing in aims, scope and spirit.

The primary difference is that, while the League was a very clearly defined thing, planned complete from the outset, a thing as precise and inalterable as the United States Constitution, the Harding project is a tentative, experimental thing, capable of great adaptations by trial and corrected error, a flexible and living thing that is intended to grow and change in response to the needs of our perplexing and incalculable world.

The Harding idea, as it is growing up in peopled minds in Washington, seems to be something after this fashion: That this present conference shall be followed by others having a sort of genetic relationship to it, varying in their scope, in their terms of reference, in the number of states invited to participate. A successor to the present one seems to be already imminent in the form of a conference on the economic and financial disorder of the world. Such a conference would probably include German and Spanish, and possibly Russian, representatives, and it might take on in addition to its economic discussion any issues that this present conference may leave outstanding.

These Washington Conferences, it is hoped, will become a sort of international habit, will grow into a world institution in which experience will determine usages and usage harden into a customary rule. They will become by insensible degrees a World Parliament, with an authority that will grow or decline with the success or failure of the recommendations.

One advantage of having experiments made, will occur at once to those who have been present at the plenary sittings of the present conference. The method of trial and error will afford an opportunity of working out the grave inconveniences of the language difficulty. It is plain that, with only three languages going, French, Japanese and English, proceedings may easily become very tedious; there is no true debate, no possibility of interpolating a question or a comment, no real and vivid discussion. The real debating goes on in notes and counter notes, in prearranged speeches, communications to the press representatives, and so forth.

The plenary sessions exist only to announce or confirm. They are essentially ceremonial. In any polyglot gathering it seems inevitable that this should be so. The framers of the League of Nations constitution, with its Council and Assembly, seem to have been far too much influenced by the analogy of single language governing bodies in which spontaneous discussion is frequent and free. World conferences are much more likely to do their work by translated correspondence and by private sessions of preparatory committees, and to use the general meeting only for announcement, indorsement and confirmation.

But the preparatory committees are only the first organs developed by the conference. Certain other organs are also likely to arise out of it as necessary to its complete function. Whatever agreements are arrived at here about either the limitation of armaments or the permanent regulation of the affairs of China and the Pacific, it is clear that they will speedily become seed beds of troublesome misunderstanding and divergent interpretation unless some sort of permanent body is created in each case, with very wide powers intrusted to it by the treaty making authorities of all the countries concerned to interpret, defend and apply the provisions of the agreement. Such permanent commissions seem to me to be dictated by the practical logic of the situation. Quite apart from the later conferences that President Harding has promised, a standing Naval Armament Commission and a Pacific Commission, with very considerable powers to fix things, seems to be a necessary outcome of the First Washington Conference.

But these two commissions will not cover all the ground involved. This conference cannot leave European disarmament and the European situation with its present ragged and raw ends. Nothing has been more remarkable, nothing deserves closer study by the thoughtful Americans, than the fluctuations of the British delegation at this conference with regard to a Pacific settlement. I see that able writer upon Chinese affairs, Dr. John Dewey, comments upon these changes of front and hints at some profound disingenuousness on the part of the British. But the reasons for these fluctuations lie on the surface of things. They are to be found in the European situation.

Britain, secure in Europe, unthreatened on her Mediterranean routes, can play the part of a strong supporter of American ideals in China. She seems, indeed, willing and anxious to do so — in spite of her past. But threatened in Europe, she can do nothing of the sort. She cannot extend an arm to help shield China while a knife is held at her throat. So the Pacific is entangled with the Mediterranean and the coasts of France, and it becomes plain that a Peace Commission for Europe is a third necessary consequence of this conference, if this conference is to count as a success.

Suppose now that this present conference produces the first two commissions I have sketched and gives way to a second conference,

with an ampler representation of the European powers, which will direct its attention mainly to the reassurance and disarmament of France and Germany and Britain, a second conference whose findings may be finally embodied in this third commission I have suggested; and suppose, further, that an International Debt and Currency Conference presently gets to effective work, surely we may claim that the promised Association of Nations is well on its way towards crystallization.

Simply and naturally, step by step, the President of the United States will have become the official summoner of a rudimentary World Parliament. By the time that stage is reached a series of important questions of detailed organization will have arisen. Each executive commission, as the successive conference brings these commissions into being, will require in its several spheres agents, officials, a secretariat, a home for its archives, a budget. These conferences cannot go on meeting without the development of such a living and continuing body of world administration through the commissions they must needs create. Presumably that body of commissions will grow up mainly in and about Washington. If it does, it will be the most amazing addition to Congress conceivable; it will be the voluntary and gradual aggregation of a sort of loose World Empire round the monument of George Washington.

But I do not see that all these commissions and Parliaments need sit in Washington or that it is desirable that they should. A world commission for land disarmament might function in Paris or Borne, a world commission for finance in New York or London. And meanwhile, at Geneva or in Vienna, to which place there is some project of removal, the League of Nations, that first concrete realization of the American spirit, will be going on in its own rather cramped, rather too strictly defined lines.

It also will have thrown out world organizations in connection with health, with such world interests as the white slave traffic, and so forth. It will be conducting European arbitrations and it will be providing boundary commissions and the like. And somewhere there will also be a sort of World Supreme Court getting to work upon judicial international differences.

Now this, I submit, is the way that world unity is likely to arise

out of our dreams into reality, and this partial, dispersed, experimenting way of growth is perhaps the only way in which it can come about. It is not so splendid and impressive a vision as that of some World Parliament, some perfected League, suddenly flashing into being and assuming the leadership of the world. It will not be set up like a pavilion but it will grow like a tree. But it is a reality and it comes. The Association of Nations grows before our eyes.

And meanwhile there is an immense task before teachers and writers, before parents and talkers and all who instruct and make and change opinion, and that is the task of building up a new spirit in the hearts of men and a new dream in their minds, the spirit of fellowship to all men, the dream of a great world released forever from the obsession of warfare and international struggle; a great world of steadily developing unity in which all races and all kinds of men will be free to make their distintive contributions to the gathering achievements of the race.

XX. — FRANCE AND ENGLAND — . THE PLAIN FACTS OF THE CASE

If we are to have any fundamental improvements in the present relations of nations, if we are to achieve that change of heart which is needed as the fundamental thing for the establishment of a world peace, then we must look the facts of international friction squarely in the face. It is no good pretending there is. no jar when there is a jar. This business of the world peace effort, of which the Washington Conference is now the centre, is not to smooth over international difficulties; it is to expose, examine, diagnose and cure them.

Now here is this Franco-British clash, a plain quarrel and one very disturbing to the American audience. The Americans generally don't like this quarrel. They are torn between a very strong traditional affection for the French and a kind of liking for at least one or two congenial things abont the British. They would like to hear no more of it, therefore. They just simply want peace. But there the quarrel is. Was it an avoidable quarrel? Or was it inevitable? Perhaps it is something very fundamental to the European situation. Perhaps if we analyze it and probe right down to the final causes of it we may learn

something worth while for the aims and ends of the Washington Conference.

Now, let us get a firm hold upon one very important fact, indeed. This clash is a clash between the present French Government and the present British Government, but it is not a clash between all the French and all the British. It is not an outbreak of national antipathy or any horrible, irreconcilable thing of that sort. There are elements in France strongly opposed to the French Government upon the issues raised in this dispute. There is a section of the English press fantastically on the "French" side and bitterly opposed even to the public criticism of the public speeches of the French Premier in English. The party politics of both France and Britain and, what is worse, those bitter animosities that centre upon political personalities have got into this dispute.

It may help to clear the issue if we disregard the attitude of the two Governments in naming the sides to the dispute, and if instead of speaking of the "French" or the "British" sides we speak of the " Keep-Germany-down " and the" Give-Germany-a-chance" sides, or better, if we call them the " Insisters," who insist upon the uttermost farthing of repayment and penitence from Germany, and the "Believers," who don't. For it is upon Germany that the whole dispute turns.

There is a very powerful "Insister" party in Great Britain; there is a growing "Believer" party in France. And while France has been steadily "Insister" since the armistice, Britain and the British Government have changed round from "Insister" to "Believer" in the last year or so. This change has produced extraordinary strains and recriminations between French and British political groups and individuals, as such changes of front must always do. Such disputes often make far more noise than deep and vital national misunderstandings, and it is well that the intelligent observer, and particularly the American observer, should distinguish the note of the disconcerted party man in a rage from the note of genuine patriotic anger.

The beginnings of the present trouble are to be found in the Versailles Conference. There the only "Believers" seem to have been the American representatives. Those were the days of the British

Khaki election, when “Hang the Kaiser!” and “Make the Germans Pay!” were the slogans that carried Mr. Lloyd George to power. For about four months the dispute went on between moderation and overwhelming demands. America stood alone for moderation. The British insisted upon the uttermost farthing, at least as strenously as the French, and it was Gen. Smuts, of all people, who added the last straw to the intolerable burden of indebtedness that was then piled upon vanquished and ruined Germany. And both America and Britain were parties to the arrangements that give France the power, the Shylock right, of carving into Germany and disintegrating her more and more if Germany fail to keep up with the impossible payments that were then fixed upon her.

The position of the French Government in this business is therefore a perfectly legal and logical one. France can adhere, as M. Briand says she will, to the Treaty of Versailles, she can flout and disregard any disposition of the Washington Conference to qualify or revise that treaty, and the British Government, in a hopelessly embarrassed and illogical position, can appeal only to the hard logic of reality.

Britain is much more dependent upon her overseas trade than France, and so the British have earlier realized the enormous injury that the social and economic breakdown of Russia has done and the still more enormous injury that the breaking up of Central European civilization will do.

“You are quite within your rights,” these newly converted “Relievers” say to the obdurate “Insisters,” “but you will wreck all Europe.”

That idea that the possible destruction of civilization has not yet entered so many minds in France as it has in Britain. Germany is nearer to France than to Britain, and the fear of a renascent and vindictive Germany is greater in France than in Britain. In the French mind, the possibility of a German invasion for revenge twenty years hence still overshadows the possibility of an economic breakdown in a year or two years* time. The British are nearer the breakdown and further from the Germans. That is the reality of this Franco-British clash.

Upon that reality bad temper, party feeling, personal spites,

irrational prejudices, are building up a great mass of nasty, quarrelsome matter. And the French Government and the French nationalist majority are pressing on to naval and military preparations that distinctly threaten Britain. It is no good pretending that they do not do so when they do. The French submarines are aimed at Britain.

Empty civilities between France and Britain are of no value in a case of this sort. Both countries are being worried by their infernal politicians and both are in a state of financial distress and raw nerves. It is not a time when deliberation and clear reasoning are easy. But when we get down to the fundamentals of the case we find that the antagonism comes out to these two propositions that are not necessarily arreconciliable:

(I) That Germany, for the good of the whole world, must not be destroyed further, but, instead, assisted to keep upon her feet ("Relievers"), and

(II) That Germany must nevermore become a danger to France {"Insisters"). And these two propositions are completely reconciliable, and this particular clash can be entirely cured and ended by one thing and by one thing only, a binding alliance, watched and sustained by a standing commission of France, Germany, Britain, America, and possibly Italy and Spain, to guarantee France and Germany from further invasions and internal interference, if France follows the dictates of her better nature and the advice of her wiser citizens, foregoes her impossible claims and lets up on Germany from now on.

And from no country can the initiative of such an alliance come more effectively them from the United States of America, the universal creditor, who can bring home to France, as no other power can, the beauty and desirability of financial mercifulness.

I submit that these are the broad lines, the elements, the A B C of the present situation and that there is nothing whatever between France and Britain that is not entirely secondary and subordinate to this issue between Insistence and Relief.

And moreover the issue between France in general and Britain in general is an issue that is going on in parallel forms all over the world. Old Japan insists upon the Versailles treaty; young Japan

would relieve China, — how much is not yet clear. The American scene is a conflict between those who insist fiercely upon the British debt and those who would devise relieving conditions. It is nowhere a struggle between peoples and races, it is everywhere a struggle between logic and reason, between the stipulated thing, the traditional thing and the humane and helpful thing, between old ways of thinking and new, between the letter and the spirit. Old Shylock was the supreme in-sister, and since Portia was the triumphant reliever, we may reasonably look to the woman voter and the women's organizations of Britain and America for a particular impetus towards relief. And the sooner relief comes the better, for once Shylock's knife has cut down sufficiently to the living flesh, the cause of the reliever and of civilization will have been lost forever.

XXI. — A BEMINDER ABOUT WAR

Washington, December 5

An examination of the situation. that has arisen in Europe between France, England and Germany brings us out to exactly the same conclusion as an examination of the Pacific situation. There is no other alternative than this: Either to fight it out and establish the definite ascendancy of some one power or to form an alliance based on an explicit settlement, an alliance, indeed, sustaining a common executive commission to watch and maintain the observance of that settlement. There is no way out of war but an organized peace. Washington illuminates that point. We must be prepared to see an Association of Nations in conference growing into an organic system of world controls for world affairs and the keeping of the world's peace, or we must be prepared for — a continuation of war. So it is worth considering what that continuation of war will be like. If you will not organize pea^e through some such association, then organize for war, for certainly war will come again to you, or to your children.

And for reasons set out in my earlier papers, reasons amply confirmed by the experiences of the Washington gathering, a mere limitation of armaments can be little more than a strategic truce., It may indeed even cut out expensive items and so cheapen and facilitate war.

Let me note here in passing that the case for some Association of Nations to discuss and control the common interests of mankind rests on a wider basis than the mere prevention of war; the economic and social divisions and discords of mankind provide, perhaps, in the long run, a stronger and more conclusive argument for human unitv than the mere war evil, but in this paper I will narrow the issue down to war, simply, and ask the reader to consider the probable nature of war in the future if the development of warfare is not checked by deliberate human effort.

And I will not deal with the ill-equipped cutthroat war that has been going on, and, thanks to the divisions and rivalries of France and Britain, is likely still to go on in Eastern Europe for some time to

come; the wars of the little, self-determined nations that the Treaty of Versailles set loose upon each other; the raids of Poland into Ukrainia, and of Bou-mania into Hungary; and of Serbia into Albania; the old-fashioned game enlivened by rape and robbery that was brought to its highest perfection long ago in the Thirty Years' War. These are not so much wars as spasms of energy, phases of accelerated destruction, in the rotting body of East European civilization.

But I mean the sort of war that will come if presently France attacks England, or if America and Japan start in for a good, long, mutually destructive struggle. You may say that war between France and England is unthinkable, but so far from that being the case, certain worthy souls in France have been thinking about it hard. Hard but not intelligently. They do not understand the moral impossibility of Britain fighting America, they have never heard of Canada, they have never examined the text of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and so they dream of a wonderful time when America will be fighting England and Japan, and when France, with magnificent gestures and with submarines and Senegalese at last gloriously justified, will " come to her aid." So France will divide and rule and clamber to dizzy destinies. Blushing and embarrassed American statesmen have already had to listen, I guess, to some insidious whispers. Even among our distresses there is something amusing in the thought of this hot breath of Old World diplomacy on the fresh American cheek. I do not say that these are the thoughts and acts of France, or of any great section of the French people, but they are certainly the thoughts and proceedings of a noisy Nationalist minority in France which is at present in a position of dangerous ascendancy there.

Still, apart from the fact that the British will always refuse to fight America, there does seem to be no real reason why, in the absence of a developing peace alliance to prevent it, either of the other two matches I have cited should not be played. In the long run, you cannot avoid fighting if you avoid comprehensive alliances and standing arrangements for the settlement of differences with the people you may otherwise fight.

So let us try and imagine a war between a pair of these four powers, five or ten years ahead. They have avoided any entangling

alliances, or agreements, or settlements, kept their freedom of action and are thoroughly — *prepared*.

Let us not fall into the trap of supposing that these wars will follow the lines of the Great War of 1914-18 and that we shall have a rapid line-up of great entrenched armies, with massed parks of artillery behind them, tank attacks and all the rest of it. That sort of war is already out of fashion, and the fact that these wars that we are considering will be overseas wars puts any possibility of such a dead-lock of land armies out of the case. The combatants will have to set about getting at each other in quite other fashions.

Let us recall the maxim that the object of all fighting is to produce a state of mind in the adversary, a state of mind conducive to a discontinuance of the struggle and to submission and acquiescence to the will of the victor. Old-time wars aimed simply at the small antagonist army and at the antagonist Govenment, but in these democatic days the will for peace or war has descended among the people and diffused itself among them, and it is the state of mind of the whole enemy population that has become the objective in war. The old idea of an invading army marching on a capital, gives place, therefore, to a new conception of an attack through propaganda, through operations designed to produce acute economic distress, and through the air, upon the enemy population.

I will take the latter branch first. Few people have any clear ideas at present of the possibilities of air warfare. The closing years of the Great War gave the world only a very slight experience of what aerial offensives can be. Always, air operations were subsidiary to the vast surface engagements of the European belligerents; they were scouting, irritating, raiding operations; there were neither the funds nor the energy available to work them out thoroughly. In these possible overseas wars we are considering, the land armies and the big guns will not be the main factors and the air and sea forces will. The powers we have considered will therefore push their air equipment on a quite different scale; they will be bound to deliver their chief blows with it; we may certainly reckon on the biggest long-range airplanes possible, on the largest bombs and the deadliest contents for them. We may certainly reckon that, within three or four hours of a declaration of war between France and England, huge

bombs of high explosive, or poison gas, or incendiary stuff, will have got through the always ineffectual barrage and be livening up the streets of Paris and London. Because it is the peculiarity of air warfare that there are no fronts and no effectual perries. You bomb the other fellow almost anywhere, and similarly he bombs you.

Many people seem to think that America and Japan are too far from each other for this sort of thing, but I believe there is nothing insurmountable in these distances for an air offensive. It will be a question of days instead of hours, that is all, before the babies of Tokio or San Francisco get their whiffs of the last thing in gas. The job will be a little more elaborate; it will involve getting the air material to a convenient distance from the desired objective by means of a submersible cruiser; that is all the difference.

All the fleets in the world could not prevent a properly prepared Japan from pouncing upon some unprotected point of the California or Mexican coast, setting up a temporary air base there, and getting to work over a radius of a thousand miles. She might even keep an air base at sea. And it would be equally easy for America to do likewise to Japan. The citizen of Los Angeles, as he blew to pieces, or coughed up his lungs and choked to death or was crushed under the falling, burning buildings, could at least console himself by the thought that America was so thoroughly prepared that his fellow man in Tokio was certainly getting it worse, and that he blew to pieces on the soundest American lines unentangled by any alliances with decadent Old World powers. And an air war between America and Japan need not be confined to the Pacific Slope. I do not see anything to prevent Japan, if she wanted to do so, with the aid of a venial neutral or so, getting around into the Atlantic to New York and testing the stability of the great buildings downtown with a few five-ton bombs. The submarine would certainly be able to prevent any armies landing on either side of the Pacific to stop the preparation and launching of such expeditions.

I do not know how American populations! would stand repeated bombing. In the late war there was not a single intrusion of air warfare into American home life. The hum of the Gotha and the long crescendo of the barrage as the thing gets near were not in the list of familiar American war sounds. Some of the European populations

subjected to that kind of thing got very badly "rattled." And yet, as I have noted, the whole force of the combatants was not in the air operations in Europe. One result in nearly every country was an outbreak of spy mania; everybody with a foreign name or a foreign look in England, for example, was suspected of "signalling." There was much mental trouble; London possesses now a considerable number of air raid lunatics and air raid defective children, and these are only the extreme instances of a widespread overstrain. As the war went on, air stress interwoven with the acute stresses produced in public life by the development of propaganda. Public life in France, Germany and England got more and more crazy about propaganda; there was a fear of insidious whispering mischief afoot, more like the fear of witchcraft than anything else; until at last it became dangerous and ineffective to make any utterance at all except the most ferocious threats and accusations against the enemy. And a kind of paralysis of suspicion even affected the adoption of inventions. All this mental and moral confusion and deterioration is bound to happen in any highly organized community that goes into a well prepared war again. The only difference will be that it will all be larger, and intenser, and bitterer, and worse. And I will not even attempt to elaborate the consequences of the economic attack by submarines, upon shipping, and by raids of airplane fleets, assisted possibly by spies and traitors, upon the bridges, factories, depots, grain stores, ports and so forth, of the combatant countries.

If such things are not practicable across the Pacific now they will be practicable in ten years' time.

But my subject at Washington is peace, and not war. I think it was Nevinson's recent account of the new things in poison gas that set my imagination wandering into these possibilities of the Great Alternative to entangling treaties and difficult settlements. I will return to certain neglected problems of the Peace Conference in my next article.

XXII. — SOME STIFLED VOICES

Washington, December 6

I do not think my outline sketch of the Washington Conference will be complete if I do not give an account of certain figures and groups in this simmering Washington gathering who have no official standing whatever and who are here in the unpopular role of qualifications and complications of the simpler conception of the Washington issues. They are not conspicuous absentees as are Germany and Russia. They come upon the scene but they come rather like that young woman with the baby who stands reproachfully at the church door watching the wedding in the melodramatic picture. They are full of reproaches — and intimations of troubles yet in store.

The other evening, for example, I found myself dining with a comfortably housed Korean delegation and listening to the tale of a nation overwhelmed.

Korea is as much of a nation as — Ireland. She had so recent an independence that she has treaties with the United States recognizing and promising to respect her independence. Yet she is now gripped, held down and treated as Posen was in the days of Prussian possession. She is being "assimilated" by Japan. "What is to be done about us?" my hosts asked.

One fellow guest thought nothing could be done because the Korean vote in the United States is not strong enough to affect an election.

Amid the tumult of voices here one hears ever and again an appeal for something to be done for Korea. Such appeals are addressed chiefly to American public opinion, but it is also felt to be worth while to let Britain know, at least to the extent of letting me in on this occasion. I was introduced to an editor of a Korean paper which had recently been suppressed, and I listened to an account, an amazing account, of the freedom of the press as it is understood in Korea under Japanese rule.

Yet it sounded very familiar to me. Indeed, I had listened to much

the same story of suppressions, rather worse suppressions, the night before. Then I had been the host of two friends of mine, Mr. Houssain and Mr. Sapre, who have had extensive experiences of suppression in India. They are both here in much the same spirit as the Koreans.

Whenever I talk to Mr. Houssain we alwavs get to a sort of polite quarrel in which he treats me more and more like the Indian Government in its defense, and I become more and more like the British ascendancy. I adopt, almost inadvertently, as much as is adoptable of the manner and tone of the late Lord Cromer and say: "Yes, yes. But are you ripe for self -government?" These gentlemen say frankly that the British rule in India has displayed so much stupidity in such cases as the Amritsar massacre, and the recent suffocation of the Moplah prisoners, and that its complete suppression of any frank public discussion of Indian affairs in India is so intolerable, that it is becoming unendurable.

Everybody is talking of insurrection in India now; nobody talked of it three years ago. These have been three years of stupid "firmness." Now that that dinner party is past and gone, I can confess that I think Mr. Houssain's argument that under British rule India has no chance of getting politically educated, because she is prevented from airing her ideas, and that if her discontent is incoherent and disorderly it is because of the complete suppression, completer now than ever before, of discussion, is a very strong argument indeed.

India and Britain cannot talk together about their common future if India remains gagged and without ever a chance of learning to talk. If a break comes in India it is likely to be a bad and hopeless one, because of her lack of worked-out political conceptions, due to her long mental restraint, while all the rest of the world from Korea to Peru has been trying over political self-expression.

But it is interesting and perhaps not quite so pathetically hopeless as it seems at the first glance to find these two men in this city, side by side with the Koreans, trying to get "something done about it " at the Washington assembly. And a day or so ago I had a call from another unofficial delegate, a Syrian Moslem who wanted to talk over the education of his people, also fretting beneath the wide surfaces of the Treaty of Versailles, with the ambition to manage the

affairs of Syria for themselves.

And as another case of the stifled voice here are the representatives of the Cantonese Chinese Government, who made a scene the other day when the Peking representatives went into secret session with the Japanese. There was an assembly of hostile Chinese shouting “Traitor!” and things — apparently very disagreeable things — in Chinese. Here again there is a clamor for attention that gets short drift from the official conference.

And, lest these stifled outcries should fill the American reader with self-righteousness, I will note in passing that the entrance to the second plenary conference was besieged by an array of banners reminding us that that evidently most gentle and worthy man, Mr. Debs, is still in prison for saying his honest thought about conscription, and also that I have received, I suppose, over twenty letters about an unfortunate young Englishman, a minor poet named Mr. Charles Ashleigh, who seems to have come into America looking like a person of advanced views, to have done some publicity work for the I.W.W., and to have been caught in a gale of indiscriminate suppression and given a sentence of ten years for nothing at all. The offense of Mr. Debs and the alleged offense of Mr. Ashleigh, I may note further, were a premature craving for universal peace which might have weakened the will for war.

All these suppressions of opinion strike me as black sins against civilization, which can only maintain itself and grow and flourish through the free expression and discussion of ideas. The temptation to ride off from the main business of the conference upon some Quixotic championship of Korea or India or Mr. Ashleigh is therefore very considerable. But when we consider that all these particular injustices are incidents in that general disorder which permits the aggression of nation upon nation and which blinds justice with cruel passion and urgent necessities of war, these cases appear in a different light.

Korea and the suppressed and imprisoned Indian Liberals and Mr. Ashleigh are like people hit casually in a great combat, and the immediate work of the ordinary combatant is surely not to specialize upon these special cases but to go on with the general fight for world peace which will render the atmosphere that created these particular

wrongs impossible. Japan is attempting to crush and assimilate Korea because Japan wants to be bigger and stronger, and she wants to be bigger and stronger because of the fear of war and humiliation. Britain holds down India and is reluctant to loose her hold on Ireland for the same cause; if she relax, some one else may seize and use. America also crushes out the anti-con-scriptionist because otherwise he may embarrass the conduct of the next war.

In the present conference the liberal forces of the world may be able to establish a precedent that will at once reflect upon the position of both Korea and India, and to open stich a prospect of peace as will make the release of Messrs. Debs and Ashleigh inevitable. But that can only be if we stick to the main business of the conference and do not fuss thing3 up at present with too much focusing upon Korea or India or the case of Mr. Debs.

The precedent that may be established through the conference is the liberation of China, when China is militarily impotent and politically disordered, not only from fresh foreign aggression but from existing foreign domination. The establishment of such a precedent is a thing of supreme importance to all men. If the conference does not get so far as that — so far as to establish the principle that an Asiatic people has a right to control its own destinies and to protection while it adjusts these destinies, in spite of the fact that it cannot as an efficient power defend that right — it will have made a very wide step indeed not only toward world peace but toward a general liberation of Asiatic peoples held in tutelage.

It is so important to mankind that that step should be made that I grudge any diversion of energy to minor injustices, however glaring, or any complication of the issue whatever. So far as the conference goes, I am convinced that “Stick to the freedom of China” is the watchword for all liberal thinkers. By the extent to which China is liberated and secured the conference will have to be judged. Even the vast problem of India cannot overshadow that issue.

XXIII. — INDIA, THE BRITISH EMPIRE. AND THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONS

Washington, December 7

It is difficult to think of any subject more completely out of the agenda of the Washington Conference than the future of India. But none demands our attention more urgently, if we are to build up anything like a working conception of an Association of Nations.

Some days ago Senator Johnson declared he had received assurances from President Harding that no further steps toward a definite organization of an Association of Nations were to be taken for the present; but these assurances will not hinder the drift of thoughts and events toward such a developing system of understandings as must at last, in fact if not in name, constitute a World Association. Indeed, the less we try to fix such a thing at present, and the more we think it out, the more probable and safe is its coming.

Let the President go on, therefore, taking no steps directly toward his Association btit proceeding, as he must do very soon, with some sort of international conference upon the economic disorders of the world, and also with the creation of some arrangement, permanent understanding or whatever other name may be given to that commission which is inevitable if the peace of the Pacific is to be made secure. Let us who are dealers in the flimsier preparatory stuff of ideas and public opinion get on with our discussion of the wider stabilizing understanding that looms behind.

I have already said that from every country world peace and universal prosperity will demand a price. The price America will need to pay if she is to impose her conception of a universal peace upon the world is a great intellectual effort — an effort of sympathy, an abandonment of some venerated traditions. And in addition she must nerve herself to what may seem at first very great financial generosities.

France must pay by laying aside an ancient and cherished quarrel, her glorious and tragic militarism and the last vestige of her imperial

ambition. The thought of predominance and the thought of revenge must be the German sacrifice. And Britain also must pay in an altered attitude to those wide “possessions” of hers inhabited by alien peoples that have hitherto constituted the bulk of her empire.

The destiny of all the English speaking democracies that have risen now from being British colonies to semi-independent states seems fairly clear. They will go on to nationhood; their links to Great Britain, continually less formal and legal and more and more strongly sympathetic, will be supplemented by their attraction toward America, due to affinity and a common character. All the mischief makers in the world cannot, I think, prevent the Dutch-English of South Africa, the English-French of Canada, the English-French of Australia, the English-Scotch of New Zealand, the Americans, this new emancipated Ireland and Britain, being drawn together at last by all their common habits of thought and speech, and even by the mellowed memories of their past conflicts, into a conscious brotherhood of independent but cooperative nations.

The day has come for the Irish to recognize that the future is of more value than the past. Even without any other states, this girdle of English speaking states about the globe could be of a great predominant association. Within this English speaking circle of peoples a whole series of experiments in separation, independent action, readjustment, co-operation and federation have been made in the last century and a half, and are still going on, of the utmost significance in the problem of human association.

No other series of communities have had such experiences. No other communities have so much to give mankind in these matters. The German coalescences have been marred by old methods of force, methods which have usually failed in the English cases. Spain and Latin America are at least half a century behind the English speaking world in the arts and experience of political co-operation.

But when we turn to India we tnrn to something absolutely outside the English speaking world girdle.

One of the many manifest faults of thati most premature project the League of Nations was the fiction that brought in India as a self-governing nation, as if she were the same sort of thing as these self-governing Western states. It was indeed a most amazing assumption.

India is not a nation, or anything like a nation. India is a confused variety of states, languages and races, and so far from being self-governing, her peoples are under an amount of political repression which is now perhaps greater there than anywhere else in the world.

Politically she is a profound mystery. We do not know what the political thoughts of these peoples are, nor indeed whether they have in the mass any political concepts at all parallel to those of the Western civilizations. The Indian representative at the Washington Conference, Mr. Srinivastra Sastri, is obviously a British nominee; he is not so much a representative as a specimen Indian gentleman. We do not know what national forces there are behind him, or indeed if there is any collective will behind him at all. But it would be hard to substitute for him anything very much more representative.

What constituency is there, what Electoral College, to send any one? India is not in fact so constituted as to send a real representative to a conference or an Association of Nations at the present time. She is a thing of a different kind, a different sort of human accumulation* She belongs to a different order of creature from the English speaking and European states and from Japan. She is as little fitted to deal on equal terms with them as a jungle deer, let us say, is to join a conference of the larger Cetacea in the North Polar seas.

India is far less able to play an effective and genuine part as a member of an Association of Nations even than China. She has no real democratic institutions and she may never develop them in forms familiar to European and American minds. We American and English are too apt to suppose that our own democratic methods, our voting and elections and debates and press campaigns and parliamentary methods, which have grown up through long ages to suit our peculiar idiosyncrasies, are necessarily adaptable to all the world. In India they may prove altogether misfitting.

India, were she given freedom of self-government, under the stimulus of modern appliances and modern thought, would probably induce an entirely different series of institutions from those of Europe, institutions perhaps equally conducive to freedom and development but different in kind. And China also, with untrammelled initiatives, may invent methods of freedom and co-operation at once dissimilar and parallel to Western institutions.

But the mention of China brings us back to the possibility of applying the precedent of China to India. The discussions and perplexities of the last two or three years which have culminated in the Washington Conference have slowly worked out and made clear the possibility of a new method in Asia. This is the method of concerted abstinence and withdrawal, the idea of a binding agreement of all the nations interested in China and tempted to make aggressions upon China to come out of and to keep out of that country while it consolidated itself and develops upon its own lines.

This new method, which has had its first trial at the Washington Conference, is a complete reversal of the method of dealing with politically confused or impotent countries and regions adopted at Versailles. It is an altogether more civilized and more hopeful method.

Versailles and the League of Nations were ridden by the idea of mandates. All over the world where disorder or weakness reigned a single mandatory power was to go in, making vague promises of good behavior, to rule and exploit that country. It was the thinnest, cheapest camouflage for annexation; it was a hopeless attempt to continue the worst territory-seizing traditions of the nineteenth century while seeming to abandon them. It was Pecksniff imperialism. So we had the snatching of Syria, of Mesopotamia, and so forth.

But any soundly constituted League or Association of Nations should render that sort of thing unnecessary and inexcusable.

The reason lying at the base of the British occupation of India, of the Japanese occupation of Korea, of the French in Indo-China, and so forth, is a perfectly sound reason so long as there is no Association of Nations, and it is an entirely worthless one when there is such an association — it is that some other power may otherwise come into the occupied and dominated country and use it for purposes of offense. The case of the British in India, that they have kept an imperial peace for all the peoples of that land, that they warded off the Afghan raiders who devastated India in the early eighteenth century and afterward the long arm of Russia, is a very good one indeed. The British have little cause to be ashamed of their past in India and many things to be proud of. But they have very

good cause, indeed, for being ashamed of their disregard of any Indian future. They have sat tight and turned peace into paralysis. They have not educated enough or released enough. Always the excuse for suppression has been that fear of the rival.

Well, the whole purpose of an Association of Nations is to eliminate that fear of a rival and all that that fear entails in war possibilities.

The Asiatic “empires” over alien peoples, these “possessions” of other people’s lands and lives, have played their part in the world’s development. They have become tyrannies and exasperations and tawdry grounds for rivalry. A real Association of Nations can have no place for “possessions,” “mandates” or “subject peoples” within its scheme.

XXIV. — THE OTHER END OF PENNSYLVANIA. AVENUE — THE SIEVE FOR GOOD INTENTIONS

Washington, December 9

I went to hear the President address Congress on its reassembling on Tuesday. He spoke to a joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives held, as is customary, in the chamber of Representatives because it is the larger of the two chambers.

Hitherto my observations have centred upon the Continental Building and the Pan-American Building, up by the White House, and they have concerned the good intentions and great projects that glow and expand like great iridescent bubbles about the conference that is going on in this region.

But the conference, whatever freedom it has to think and discuss, has no power to act. Until the Senate by a two-thirds majority has indorsed the recommendations of the President, the United States cannot be committed to any engagement with the outside world. This Is a fact that needs to be written in large letters as a perpetual reminder in the editorial rooms and diplomatic offices of all those Europeans who write about or deal with the foreign relations of the United States. For the Constitution of the United States is as carelessly read over there as the Anglo-Japanese alliance has been read here, and it is as dangerously misconceived. Through that first disastrous year of the peace Europe imagined that the President was the owner rather than the leader of the United States.

It was with great interest and curiosity, therefore, that I went down to this assembly at the Capitol to see the President dealing with his Legislature. Here was the place not of suggestions but of decisions. What goes through here is accomplished and done — subject only to one thing, the recognition by the Supreme Court, if it is challenged, that the thing is constitutional.

I went down with — what shall I say? — some prejudiced expectations. The Americans resemble the English very closely in

one particular — they abuse their own institutions continually. Prohibition and the police — but these are outside my scope! I have heard scarcely a good word for Congress since I landed here, and the Senate, by the unanimous testimony of the conversationalists of the United States, combines the ignoble with the diabolical in a peculiarly revolting mixture. Even individual Senators have admitted as much — with a sinister pride.

It is exactly how we talk about Parliament in London — though with more justice. But this sort of talk soaks into the innocent from abroad, and, though one takes none of it seriously, the whole of it produces an effect. I had the feeling that I was going to see a gathering of wreckers, a barrier, perhaps an insurmountable barrier, in the way to the realization of any dream of America taking her place as the leading power in the world, as the first embodiment of the New Thing in international affairs.

It puts all this sort of feeling right to see these two bodies in their proper home and to talk to these creatures of legend, the Bepresentatives and the Senators. One perceives they are not a malignant sub-species of mankind; one discovers a concourse of men very interested about and unexpectedly open-minded upon foreign policy. They are critical but not hostile to the new projects and ideas. One realizes that Congress is not a blank barrier but a sieve, and probably a very necessary sieve, for the new international impulse in America.

The ceremonial of the gathering was simple and with the dignity of simplicity. The big galleries for visitors, which always impress the British observer by their size, were full of visitors after their kind, ladies predominating, and particularly full was the press gallery, which overhangs the Speaker and the Presidential chair. Some faint vestige of a sound religious upbringing had reminded me that the first are sometimes last and the last first; I had fallen into the tail of the procession of my fellow newspaper men from their special room to the House of Representatives, and so I found myself with the overflow of the journalists, not with everything under my chin but very conveniently seated on the floor of the House behind the Representatives, and feeling much more like a Congressman than I could otherwise have done.

Away to the right were the members of the Cabinet — the British

visitor always has to remind himself that they cannot be either Representatives or Senators. Presently the ninety-odd Senators came in by the central door, two by two, and were distributed upon the seats in front of their hosts, the Representatives.

There was applause, and I saw Sir Auckland Geddes, with that large, bare smile of his, and the rest of the British delegation entering from behind the Chair, for the delegations had also been invited to come down from the unrealities of the conference and had been assigned the front row of seats. Other delegations followed and seated themselves. At last came a hush and the clapping of hands, and the President entered and went to his place, looking extremely like a headmaster coming in to address the school assembly at the beginning of the term. He is more like George Washington in appearance, I perceive, than any intervening President.

He read his address in that effective voice of his which seems to get everywhere without an effort. I listened attentively to every sentence of it, although I knew that upstairs there would be a printed copy of it for me as soon as the delivery was over. Yet, although I was listening closely, I also found I was thinking a great deal about this most potent gathering, for potent it is, which has been raised up now to a position of quite cardinal importance in human affairs.

President Harding is on what are nowadays for a President exceptionally good terms with Congress. He means to keep so. In his address he reiterated his point that even the full constitutional powers of the President are too great and that he has no intention to use them, much less to strain them. Nevertheless, or even in consequence of that, he is very manifestly the leader of his Legislature. The atmosphere was non-contentious. He was not like a party leader speaking to his supporters and the opposition. He was much more like America soliloquizing. His address was a statement of intentions.

I think the President feels that officially he is not so much the elect of America as the voice of America, and instead of wanting to make that voice say characteristic and epoch-making things, he tries to get as close as he can to the national thought and will. What President Harding says today America will do tomorrow. One human and amusing thing he did — he was careful to drag in that much-disputed

word of his, “normalcy,” which he has resolved, apparently, shall oust out “normality” from current English.

And from the point of view of those who are concerned about the dark troubles of the world outside America it was, I think, a very hopeful address. It reinforced the impression I had already received of President Harding as of a man feeling his way carefully but steadily towards great ends. America’s growing recognition of her “inescapable relationship to world finance and trade” came early and his little lecture on the need to give and take in foreign trade was a lecture that is being repeated in every main street in America.

He spoke of Russia and returned to that topic. “We do not forget the tradition of Russian friendship” was a good sentence that some countries in Europe may well mark. The growing belief in America of the possibility of going into Russia through the agency of the American Relief Administration and of getting to dealing with the revived co-operative organizations of Russia is very notable. And though there was no mention of the Association of Nations as such, there were allusions to the “world hope centered upon this capital city” and to the universal desire for permanent peace.

And while I listened I was also thinking of all these men immediately before me, between four and five hundred men, including the ninety-six Senators, with whom rested the power of decision upon the role America will play in the world. I have met and talked now with a number of them, and particularly with quite a fair sample of the Senatorial body. And I think now that it is going to be a much better body for international purposes than my reading about it before I came to Washington has led me to suppose.

We hear too much in Europe of the rule of “jobs” and “interests” in Washington. No doubt that sort of thing goes on here, as in every Legislature, but it has to be borne in mind that it has very little bearing upon the international situation. It is not a matter affecting the world generally. I doubt if there is t nearly as much business and financial intrigue in the lobbies of Washington as in the lobbies of Westminster; but, anyhow, what there is here is essentially a domestic question. Both Eepresentatives and Senators approach international questions as comparatively free — if rather inexperienced — men.

Probably the only strong permanent force hitherto in international affairs here has been the anti-British vote, based on the Irish hate of Britain. If the Irish settlement weakens or abolishes that, Congress will deal with the world's affairs without any perceptible bias at all. The average Senator is a prosperous, intelligent, American-thinking man, elected to the Senate upon political grounds that have no bearing whatever upon international affairs. He is an amateur in matters international.

A bitter political issue at home may make him do any old thing with international affairs, and that was the situation during the last years of President Wilson. Poor, war-battered Europe became a pawn in a constitutional struggle. But the Harding regime is to be one of co-operation with the Senate, and the dignity of the Senate is restored. This very various assembly of vigorous-minded Americans, for that and other reasons, is getting to grips now with international questions with all the freshness and vigor of good amateurs, with a detached disinterestedness, a growing sense of responsibility and the old peace-enforcing traditions of America strong in it.

If only it does not delay things too long; I doubt if those who desire to see the peace of the world organized and secure are likely to have any quarrel with the Senate of the United States. The worst evil I fear from the American Senate, now that I have seen something of it individually and collectively, is the impartial leisureliness of the detached in its dealings with international affairs.

The President finished his discourse and the stir of dispersal began. I had assisted at America reviewing her position in the world. I thought the occasion simple and fine and dignified. I found myself leaving the Capitol in a mood of quite unanticipated respect.

XXV. — AFRICA AND THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONS

Washington, December 9

IN a previous paper I wrote of certain "stifled voices" at Washington. There is yet another stifled voice here that I have heard, and to speak of it opens up another great group of questions that stand in the way to any effectual organization of world peace through an Association of Nations. Until we get some provisional decision about this set of issues the Association of Nations remains a project in the air.

This stifled voice of which I am now writing is the voice of the colored people. As a novelist — a novelist in my spare time — and as a man very curious by nature, about human reactions, the peculiar situations created by "color" in America have always appealed to me. I do not understand why American fiction does not treat of them more frequently. It is the educated, highly intelligent colored people who get my interest and sympathy. I cannot get up any race feeling about them.

I am particularly proud to have known Booker T. Washington and to know Mr. Dubois, and this time, in spite of a great pressure of engagements, I was able to spend two hours last Sunday 1 listening to the proceedings of the Washington Correspondence Club, an organization which battles by letter and interview and appeal against the harsh exclusions from theatres, schools, meetings, restaurants, libraries and the like, that prevail here.

I will not discuss here the rights and wrongs of a bar that cuts off most of the intellectual necessities and conveniences of life from many people who would pass as refined and cultivated whites in any European country. I mention this gathering merely to note a very interesting topic upon which I was called to account thereat.

Once or twice in these papers — I do not know if the reader has noted it — I have mentioned the French training of Senegalese troops and the objection felt by other European peoples to their extensive employment in Europe. I was asked at the Correspondence Club whether the objections I had made to this were not "fostering

race prejudice," and some interesting exchanges followed.

I was inclined to argue that the importation of African negroes into Europe for military purposes was as objectionable as their importation to America for economic services, but some of my hosts, some of the younger men, did not see it in that light. They are warmed toward the French by the notable absence of racial exclusiveness in France, and they see the ideals of that epoch-making book, "La France Negre," from an entirely different angle. Why not a black France as big or bigger than white France and a new people who have learned military discipline, military service and united action from Europe?

"Why not an African Napoleon presently?" said the young man, a little wanting, I thought, in that abject meekness which is the American ideal of colored behavior.

He was imagining, I suppose, something happening in Africa rather after the fashion of the emancipation of Haiti and of great African armies pushing their former rulers back to the sea. But Col. Taylor has recently suggested another possibility, namely, that of France finding herself in the grip of a black Pretorian Guard. It is a just, conceivable fancy — a Pretorian Guard, French-speaking and ultra-patriotic, keeping French Socialists and pacifists and Bolsheviks in their proper place.

I do not believe veiy much in either of these possibilities nor even in the third possibility of European powers fighting each other with black armies in Africa, but I do perceive that dreams of a world peace will remain very insubstantial dreams, indeed, until we can work out a scheme or at least general principles of action for the treatment of Africa between the Sahara and the Zambesi River, a scheme that will give some sort of a quietus to the jealousies and hostilities evoked by the economic and political exploitations of annexed and mandatory territories upon nationalist and competitive lines in this region of the earth.

For it seems to be the fact that tropical and sub-tropical Africa has another function in the world than to be the home of the great family of negro peoples. Africa is economically necessary to European civilization as the chief source of vegetable oils and fats and various other products of no great value to the native population. European

civilization can scarcely get along without these natural resources of Africa.

Now here we are up against a problem entirely different from the problem that arises in the case of India, Indo-China and China, which is the problem of a politically powerless but essentially civilized population which can be trusted to modernize itself and come into line with the existing efficient powers if only it is protected from, oppressive and disintegrating forces while it adjusts itself.

Africa is quite incapable of anything of the sort. Negro Africa is mainly still in a state of tribal barbarism; in the latter half of the nineteenth century its peoples were in a condition of deepening disorder and misery due to the spread of European diseases and to the raiding of the Arab and native adventurers who had obtained possession of modern firearms. The small village communities of tropical Africa were quite unable to stand up against the brigand enterprises of mere bands of ruffians armed with rifles.

The scramble for Africa on the part of the European great powers toward the close of the nineteenth century — a scramble largely dictated by economic appetites — did a little to mitigate the miseries and destruction in progress by establishing a sort of order through large areas of Africa, a sort of order that in some regions was scarcely less cruel than the disorders it replaced. But if continuing access to the resources of Africa is to be maintained, and if a return to the Arab raider and general chaos and massacres is to be avoided, it is clear that in some form the control of the central parts of Africa by the modern civilized world must continue.

But we must be clear upon one point. If that control is to be maintained, as at present it is maintained by various European powers acting independently of one another and competing against one another, in the not very remote future Central Africa is bound to become a cause of war. Central Africa was one of the great prizes before the German imagination in 1914, and it is now held in a state of unstable equilibrium by the chief European victors in the Great War.

As they recuperate the African danger will increase. Africa, next after Eastern Europe and the Near East, is likely to become in the course of a dozen years or so the chief danger region of the world.

It behooves all those who are dreaming of an organized world peace through an Association of Nations to keep this African rock ahead in mind and to think out the possible method of linking this great region with the rest of the world in a universal peace scheme.

I submit that it is not premature for those who are concerned with the future of our race to consider the necessity of three chief things:

(1) The complete abandonment and prohibition now of the enlistment and military use of the African native population.

(2) The application of the principle of the "open door" and equal trading opportunities for all comers in the regions between the Sahara and the Zambesi.

(3) A more organized care of the native African population by a tightening up of the existing restrictions upon the arms and drink trades and the development of some sort of elementary education throughout Africa that will give these very various and largely still untried peoples a chance of showing what latent abilities they have for self-government and participation in the general human common weal.

For my own part, it seems to me that any real "League of Nations," any effective "Association of Nations," must necessarily supersede the existing "empires" and imperial systems and take over their alien "possessions"

and that one commission embodying the collective will of all the efficient civilized nations of the world is the only practicable form of security for all those parts of Africa incapable or not yet capable of self-government.

XXVI. — THE FOURTH PLENARY SESSION

Washington, December 12

The reader will have seen verbatim reports of the speeches at the fourth plenary session of the Washington Conference and he will know already what decisions were handed out to us from the more or less secret session that prepared them for us.

There has been a good deal of discussion here about the secret sessions and a certain indignation at their secrecy that I do not share. It is a matter of decency rather than concealment that men speaking various languages, representing complicated interests and feeling their way toward understandings, should not be exposed to embarrassing observation and comment until they have properly hammered out what they have to say. It is far better to digest conclusions under cover and to present the agreed-upon conclusion. This is no offense against democracy, no conspiracy against publicity. The mischief of secrecy lies in secret treaties and secret understandings and not in protected interchanges. There is no sound objection to secret bargaining in committee provided that finally the public is informed of the agreement arrived at and *of all the considerations in the bargain*.

The conclusions announced are important enough in themselves; but to all who care for the peace of the world they are far more important in the vista of possibilities they open up. Certain notable precedents are established. The four Root resolutions do put very clearly those ideals of withdrawal and abstinence which must become the universal rule of conduct between efficient and politically confused or enfeebled states if the peace of the world is to be preserved. That is the new way in international politics. *It is the beginning of the end of all Asiatic imperialisms*.

And, following upon its assent to those resolutions, the conference voted upon certain special applications of them. The abolitions of the extra territorial grievance, the right of China as a neutral power to escape the fate of Belgium and the right of China to be informed on the article of any treaty affecting her were established as far as a

resolution of the conference could establish them.

And then came Senator Lodge. For the fourth plenary session "featured" Senator Lodge just as previous ones had "featured" Secretary Hughes, Mr. Balfour and M. Briand. Fifteen years ago I came to Washington and Senator Lodge showed me a collection of prehistoric objects from Central America and talked very delightfully about them. Fifteen years have changed Washington very greatly but they have not changed Senator Lodge.

He seems perhaps just a little slenderer and neater than before, but that may be a change in my own standards, and it was entirely in character with my former impressions of him that in putting the four-power treaty before the conference he should indulge himself and his hearers in a vision of the realities of the Pacific, the multitudinous interests of its innumerable islands, its infinite variety of races, customs, climates and atmospheres.

It was a most curious and attractive phase of the always-interesting conference to have this gray-headed, cultivated gentleman breaking through all the abstract jargon of diplomacy and militarism, all the talk of powers, radii of action, fortifications, spheres of influence, and so forth, in his attempt to make us realize the physical loveliness and intellectual charm of this enormous area of the world's surface that the four-power treaty may perhaps save now and forevermore from the fear and horrors of war.

The proposed four-power treaty which thus starts upon its uncertain but hopeful journey toward ratification by the Senates, Legislatures and Governments of the world is essentially a departure from the normal tradition of the treaties of the nineteenth century. It is the first attempt to realize — what shall I call it? — the American way or the new way in international affairs. Its distinctive feature is the participation of two possible antagonists, America and Japan. Instead of a war they make a treaty and call in Britain and France to assist. It is a treaty for peace and not against an antagonist.

I think that the difference between "treaties for" and "treaties against" is one that needs to be stressed. The Anglo-Japanese treaty was a "treaty against," a treaty against first Russia, then Germany and then against some vaguely conceived assailant. It is a great thing to have Japan and England cordially immolating that treaty now that

this four-power treaty of the new spirit may be born.

After Senator Lodge came M. Viviani with a very fine, if guarded, speech. M. Viviani is a great speaker but he is not merely eloquent, and I find people here saying little about his wonderful voice or his overtones and undertones or his romantic charm but much about the subtle things he said. In a gathering that is tense with attention one is apt, perhaps, to transfer one's own thoughts and expectations to the gathering as a whole, but it seems to me that when M. Viviani rose to welcome this great beginning on the Pacific, we were all thinking: "And how much further and to what other regions of the world are yon prepared to extend this spirit and method of this Pacific bond! There is another rather threadbare 'treaty against' or at least an 'understanding against,' known as the Anglo-French entente. Is the time due yet for the merger of that also in another and greater bond of peace?"

I do not know how far the question that was in his mind was in the mind of the meeting, but I think that M. Viviani made it very plain that it was in the background of his own mind. His speech was designed to bring the simplicity, the easiness of the Pacific problem into sharp contrast with the tortured complexity of the Atlantic — the Afro-European problem. He spoke of the freedom of the Pacific from long established hate traditions. He reminded us of the twenty centuries of war and trampled frontiers and outrages and counter-outrages that had left Europe and North Africa scarred and festering.

He conjured up no bogies; he had nothing to say about those 7,000,000 phantom Germans ready to extract their hidden rifles from 7,000,-000 mattresses and haylofts and rush upon France; but he reminded the conference, gravely and wisely, of the relative complexity of the European problem, of the new untried nationalities that had been liberated, of the vast heritage of tradition and suspicion that had to be overcome. He addressed not only the conference but the impatient liberal aspirations of the world. "I ask yon for forbearance," he said, and repeated that— "I ask for forbearance."

Now that was a great speech, and M. Viviani is manifestly the sort of Frenchman with whom the new spirit can deal. "Forbearance" might well serve now as the watchword of Europe. And I wish that Mr. Balfour could have shown a fuller recognition of what M.

Viviani had said. Mr. Balfour had been so fine on several occasions at this conference that I felt it is a little ungracious to him to confess, as I must do, that twice in this day of the fourth plenary session, once in the conference and also in the evening when he replied for the Allies at the Gridiron Club, he seemed to be missing an opportunity — the opportunity of holding out a hand of friendship to liberal France.

For the reactionary France, for the France of submarines and Senegalese and inflated army and navy estimates, neither Britain nor America nor any other part of the world has any use, and the more often we say that and the more distinctly we say it the better for every one; but toward a France that can teach and practice forbearance and come into great associations for the common welfare of mankind we ought to hold out both hands. Most of the bitterness that has been directed towards France of late is not the bitterness of any natural hatred; it is the bitterness of acute disappointment that France, the generous leader of freedom upon both the American and European Continents, no longer leads, seems to care no longer for either freedom or generosity. And twice I have seen opportunities lost for an appropriate gesture of reconciliation.

Sooner or later France and England have to say to each other: "We have been sore and sick and exasperated and suspicious and narrow. Let us take a lesson from this American plan and set about discussing an Atlantic treaty, an Afro-European treaty, worthy to put beside this Pacific treaty."

And since this has to be said, it was a pity that Mr. Balfour could not take up M. Viviani's half lead and begin to say it at the fourth plenary session of the Washington Conference.

XXVII. — ABOUT THE WAR DEBTS

Washington, December 13

In the official proceedings of the Washington Conference the war debts are never mentioned. It is an improper subject.

In the talks and discussions and the journalistic writings round and about the Washington Conference the war debts are perpetually debated. The nature of the discussion is so curious and interesting, it throws so strong a light upon the difficulties that impede our path to any settlement of the world ‘s affairs upon the sound democratic basis of a world-wide will, that some brief analysis of it is necessary if this outline of the peace situation is to be complete.

In private talk almost universally, in the weekly and monthly publications that are here called “highbrow,” I find a very general agreement that the bulk of these war debts and war preparation debts as between Russia and France, and between the European allies and Britain, and between Britain and America, and the bulk of the indemnity and reparation debt of Germany to the Allies, cannot be paid and ought not to be paid, and that the sooner that this legend of indebtedness is swept out of men’s imaginations the sooner we shall get on to the work of world reconstruction.

Only one of these debts is even remotely payable and that is the British debt to America. But with regard to that debt the situation rises to a high level of absurdity. The British authorities — it is an open secret — have been offering to begin the liquidation of their debt now. They cannot pay in gold, because most of the gold in the world is already sleeping uselessly in American vaults; but they offer what gold they have and, in addition, they are willing to get their factories to work and supply manufactured goods to the American creditor — clothes, boots, automobiles, ships, agricultural and other machinery, crockery, and so on, and so on.

Nothing could be fairer. Britain is full of unemployed — they must be fed anyhow — and if America insists upon her industries being buried under a pyramid of gold and manufactured articles, the British bankers and manufacturers believe they can, with an effort,

manage the job and pull through. The exchange may take some strange flights and dives in the process, the British system may collapse even as the German system seems to be collapsing, but it is a strained situation anyhow. The British think the effort worth trying and the risk worth taking. And so behind the scenes it is Washington rather than London that wants at present to hold up the payment of the British debt.

Only one other of the outstanding debts looks at all payable at the present time, and that is so much of the reparation debts of Germany to France as can be paid in kind, in building material and manufactured goods not produced in France. The idea of any other European debt payments in full is just nonsense. The gold is not there and the stuff is not there, and there is no ability to produce anything like sufficient stuff under present conditions.

Now the interesting thing about the situation here is that the understanding people in America do not seem to be explaining this very simple situation as frankly as they might do to the mass of American people or at least that this explanation has not got through to the American people. There is a widespread conviction, which is sedulously sustained by the less intelligent or less scrupulous organs of the American press, that the wicked old European countries, and particularly Britain, that arch deceiver, are trying very meanly and cunningly to evade the payment of a righteous obligation.

Every effort to present the financial and economic disorder of the world as a world task in which the prosperous and fortunate American people may reasonably play a leading, intelligent and helpful part is misrepresented in this fashion. There is a vast vague clamor for repayment — aimed at Britain. Dealers in the old Irish hate business and the German hate business, now a little out of their original stock of grievances, join with shrill but syndicated Hindus in warning the simple citizen against counsels of financial sanity as though they were insidious propaganda. Until at last an Englishman is sorely tempted to an exasperated, “Well, take your debt!” — which does no justice to the patience and intelligence of either England or America.

Let us be clear upon one point. So far as the British debt goes, the Americans can have it if they prefer to take that line. The British here

in Washington and the British writers herie are here because the Americans invited them to come to discuss the world situation and the possibilities of world peace. They are not here to beg. The time is not likely to arrive when one English speaking community will beg from another. It certainly has not arrived now.

However, I am an obstinate believer in the common sense and good will of the American people, and I do not believe that a press campaign, designed to make a great people behave after the fashion of some hysterical back-street Oriental usurer who has struck a bad debt, is likely to do anything but recoil severely on the heads of those who have set it going. And I am not a believer in that sort of "tact" which would avoid reminding the American public of the circumstances under which these war debts were incurred.

The Russian debt to France was spent largely upon war and war preparations while Russia was the ally and helper of France; the war debts of the European Allies to Britain and America and the British debt to America were spent upon war material All these debts are for efforts spent upon a common cause. Each country spent according to its resources, as good allies should. Russia gave life and blood — and blood. She gave 4,000,000 men; she smashed up her own social fabric. France and Britain gave the lives of men beyond the million mark. Also they gave much material, an enormous industrial effort. So also did Italy, according to her power.

The British developed a vast production of munitions as the war went on, using great supplies of material from America, for which they paid high prices and on which great profits were made in America. At last America joined the war, with her enormous reserves and strength, and gave not only great stores of material but the lives of between 50,000 and 75,000 men. And so, altogether, America and the Allied Powers, giving their lives and substance as they could, saved civilization from imperialism.

The British do not grudge the contribution they have made and all that they have still to contribute for their share in that colossal victory, but some of us English here are growing a little irritated at being dunned as defaulters when we are not going to default, and at having our attempts to work in co-operation with the Americans for the rehabilitation of a strained and collapsing civilization explained

as the interested approaches of a cadging poor relation.

I wish that Americans would think of the Europeans more frequently as people like themselves. The boys who came to Europe saw the European armies in ranks like their own, good stuff and kindred stuff. They were their comrades in arms; they fought and died beside them. They saw countries and a common life very like the American country life; they discovered that the French and British and Italians were also "just folk."

But these American papers of the hostile sort write of France or Britain as if they were wicked old spiders. They write of Britain as a monster with a crown and an eyeglass and such like concomitants loathsome to all sound democratic instincts. They write of the "designs" of France and Italy and Britain as if these horrid monsters were all playing a fearsome game with each other for the soul and body of America. It is easy enough then to clamor for repayments of war debts. It is easy then to excite people by a clamor for a war bonus for the veterans of the Great War to be saddled upon the European debtor.

But let me remind the American soldier that the real European debtor, the fellow on whom it will fall, the fellow who will have to toil and pay and want, if you can realize that dream of pitiless exaction, is no legendary monster France or Britain; it is that other fellow over there you fought beside, it is the wounded man in blue or khaki you passed by as you went into action, it is the man who smiled his courage at you as you blundered against him in the din and confusion of battle.

If you listen to these stay-at-home patriots and these exotic advisers of yours, it is he who will pay, he and his wife and his child; they will all pay in toil and privation and worry and stunted lives. It is they who will pay-but you will not receive. You too will pay in disorganized business, in restricted production, in underemployment. You will get nothing else out of it except whatever satisfaction you may feel in having made those other fellows over there in Europe pay — and pay bitterly.

XVIII. — THE FOUNDATION STONE AND THE BUILDING

Washington, December 14.

Beginning with the fourth plenary session of the Washington Conference, the registration of " results' * in the Pacific, in disarmament, in China, has begun. They are good results, assembled on a basis of broad principles, that may sustain at last an organized permanent peace for the whole world. If there is one thing to be noted more than another about the work that has led up to this settlement it is the adaptability, the intelligent and sympathetic understanding shown by Japan in these transactions. The Japanese seem to be the most flexible minded of peoples. They win my respect more and more.

In the days of imperialistic competition they stiffened to a conscientious selfishness and a splendid fighting energy. Now that a new spirit of discussion, compromise and the desire for brotherhood spreads about the world, they catch the new note and they sound it with obvious sincerity and good will. No people has been under such keen and suspicious observation here as the Japanese. The idea of them as of a people insanely patriotic, patriotically subtle and treacherous, mysterious and mentally inaccessible has been largely dispelled. I myself have tried that view over in my mind and dismissed it, and multitudes of the commonplace men have gone through the same experience here. Our Western world, I am convinced, can work with the Japanese and understand and trust them.

It will be for other and abler pens to record the detailed working out of the results of this great conference, this new experiment in human reasonableness, as far as it affects Shantung and Tap and Hongkong and Port Arthur and so forth. My time in Washington is drawing to an end, and I will confine myself now rather to that broader and vaguer question in which I am more interested — the question of what lies behind and beyond this most successful and hopeful beginning in open international co-operation.

Great and important as the conference is, the growth of a real and understandable project for the steady, systematic development of an effective international world peace, which has been going on in men's minds here and in the world generally in the last two months is a much greater thing. It is a quite amazing mental growth;

something very quiet and simple and yet astonishing, like a clear crystallization out of a turbid solution. Before the conference gathered, civilized people throughout the world were, I think, quite confused about how the peace of the world could ever be organized and rather hopeless about its being done.

Now I think there is a widespread and spreading unanimity that there is a way, a practicable way and a hopeful way, by successive conferences, by widening peace agreements, by the establishment of permanent joint commissions, by systematic education and the sedulous cultivation of confidence, along which humanity may struggle and will struggle out of its present miseries and dangers toward the dawn of a new life.

The next conferences that are indicated will gather in a mood of hopefulness and experience that will be the most precious legacy of the present conference. One that must follow very soon must deal with the economic rehabilitation of Europe. Here, it seems to me, America, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia at least must meet. And soon. In the Christmas mood, in the phase of relief that radiates from Washington and Ireland now, we must not let our elation blind us to the fact that, for all the light that breaks in upon us, we are not yet out of the woods. Millions are starving today, great masses of men degenerate physically and morally in unemployment, European industrialism crawls and staggers still.

We have laid the foundations of a new era, but the building has scarcely begun. And in addition to the world economic conference there is also need of another conference to face the still more difficult task of military disarmament and the re-examination of the factors of conflict in the Afro-European area. Personally, I want to see America in that conference also, because I do recognize that the freshness of mind, the deliberate diplomatic inexperience of America, is a factor of priceless value in these discussions. I would like to see tttat conference also held in an American atmosphere and before an American audience — if only for the sake of Europe. And if America can be interested in Kwangtung, I don't see why America should not also be interested in Silesia, or Cilicia, or Senegal, or the Congo, which are all very much nearer.

The appetite for conferences, the belief in conferences, will grow

with what it feeds upon. One sees these gatherings, with their accessory commissions, permanent secretariats and increasing world services, becoming a customary and necessary peace control of the earth.

And the peace control, growing in this natural fashion, will consist always and solely of the efficient and willing nations of the world.

There will be no forced conclusions and no premature admission of incompetent and feeble peoples. The pedantry that would give every sovereign power, however little or rotten, a vote, a nice, saleable vote, in the management of the world's affairs will play no part in this evolution.

The Association of Nations will be a growing brotherhood of strong and healthy and understanding peoples, bound only by a bond of self-denial and mutual restraint toward the weaker folk of the earth. The co-operation of the English speaking peoples, and particularly the American will for peace, must needs play a very conspicuous part in the crystallization of this Association, and so it is inevitable that a certain sort of international "expert" will be screaming that the world is threatened by an Anglo-American imperialism. It may be worth while to say a word or so to dispel this idea.

Let us bear in mind that the Washington Conference, whose results may be the cornerstone of the organized peace of the world, is a conference of withdrawal and abstinence, self-restraint and mutual restraint, with regard to China and the Pacific; its key idea is the cessation of aggressions upon weaker or less advantageously circumstanced people. If America and her kindred nations are most active in pressing for such results, it is not that they are moved by any thoughts of world predominance but by liberal ideas that are the monopoly of no race and people. It is their fortunate lot to have been most accessible to such ideas and to be able now to play the leading, most powerful part in establishing them in the world. But these ideas have a broader basis and claim a wider allegiance than merely that of the English speaking peoples.

Liberalism, the idea of great nations of free citizens held together by bonds of mutual confidence, roots very wide and deep in

humanity. It derives from the great traditions of the Greek and Eoman Eepublics and from the traditions of freedom of the Scandinavian and Teutonic peoples. The America of today did not grow from American seed. Let America bear that in mind. The American idea is the embodiment particularly of the liberal thought of England and France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. France cannot destroy the greatness of her past or the greatness of her future by a phase of momentary folly with her submarines and Senegalese, her Polish ally and all the rest of it.

All peoples have such lapses. A few years ago Britain was disgusting with her jingoistic imperialism. Let us forget our lapses and get back to our more enduring selves. Latin America, quite as much as English speaking America, belongs to that great tradition of Franco-British liberalism. Liberal Germany in 1848 and again today struggles to take its fitting place among the emancipated peoples, as Italy did half a century ago. These are the peoples who can best understand now and help now. They are all in our system of ideas; they can be brought together into one purpose.

It is natural and necessary that the peoples most saturated in that great tradition of European liberalism should be the first full members of the coming Association and should be prepared to lead the rest of the world toward the new order. All peoples are not equally prepared. It is not a question of ascendancy; it is a question of those who are able doing the task that they alone are prepared to perform.

When I think of an Association of Nations I think, therefore, of a sort of club or brotherhood, not of every state in the world but of the peoples who speak English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Japanese, as the big brotherhood of the world, with such states as Holland and Norway and Bohemia, and so forth, great in quality if not great in power and entirely sympathetic by training and tradition, associated with them in a great bond for two ends; for peace among themselves and for restraint and patience toward the rest of mankind. I think of such a brotherhood as the brain and backbone of the organized peace of the world, and I cannot see how it is possible to take in the other peoples of the world as helpers until they respond to the same ideals.

I think first of a recovered Russia and then of a unified and educated China and a freed and reconstructed India and of many other states which can claim to be of a civilized quality, such as Egypt, gradually winning their way from a non-participating to a participating level. The relationship of China to Japan in a developing Association of Nations will be something rather analogous to the relationship of a Territory to a State in the Constitution of the United States of America.

Unless there is a strong, well organized collective mentality in a nation or state, I do not see how there can be anything but a sham representation of it upon an Association of Nations, nor how it can be anything but a responsibility and weakness to such an Association.

And outside the system of participating states, and non-participating states, there are great regions of the earth — tropical Africa is the most typical case — which must necessarily have a sort of order imposed upon them from without and for which a joint control by interested associated nations is probably the best method of government at the present time.

That, I think, is the vision of the political future of mankind that is opening out before us; a great system of associated states, locked and interlocked together by fourfold and sixfold and tenfold treaties, open treaties, of peace and co-operation, ruling jointly the still barbaric regions of the earth and pledged to respect and to keep and at last to welcome to their own ranks the now politically enfeebled regions of old civilization. Such an Association must necessarily supersede the "empires" of the nineteenth century and put an end forever to the imperialistic idea. Of such an Association the fourfold treaty may be the foundation stone. And within the security of such an edifice of peace mankind will be able to go on to achievements such as we at present can scarcely imagine.

XXIX. — WHAT A STABLY ORGANIZED. WORLD PEACE MEANS FOR MANKIND

I have now come to the last paper I shall write about the Washington Conference. I have tried to give the reader some idea of

the nature of that gathering and a broad view of the issues involved. I have tried to prevent the sharp discussions of the foreground, the dramatic moments and eloquent passages, from blinding us to the dark and darkening background of Old World affairs. I have tried to show that even the horrors of war are not the whole or the main disaster which results from human disunion and disorder in the presence of increasing mechanical power. I have stressed the theme of economic and social dissolution. Necessarily, I have had to write much of dangers impending and miseries which gather and increase, and of hates, suspicions and failures to comprehend. And on the other hand, when one has turiied to the possibilities and methods of escape from the present conflicts and apprehensions, necessarily one has been very largely in the thin and unattractive atmosphere of unrealized projects. I have written of the defects of the League of Nations scheme, its premature explicitness, its thinly theoretical and imitative forms, its frequent mere camouflage, as in the mandatory system, of existing wrongs, and I have brought into contrast with it this newer and I think more natural and hopeful project of successive Conferences, throwing off Committees, embodying their results in treaties and Standing Commissions, and growing at last not so much into a World Parliament, which I perceive more and more clearly is an improbable dream, as into a living, growing, organic network of World Government.

But now in conclusion I will ask the reader to turn his mind from this necessary discussion of political devices and administrative contrivances, these bleak inventions that may form the ladder of escape from the divisions and bitterness of the present time, and to join in an attempt to realize what the world may become if men do struggle through these tiresome and perplexing problems to a working solution, if our race really does get from these wearisome yet hopeful wranglings and dealings to an organized world peace, to a disarmed world, to a steady reduction of racial and national antipathies and distrusts, to a growing confidence in the permanence of peace and the prevalence of good will throughout our planet, to a comprehensive system of world controls of the common interests of mankind. Suppose that after these present darknesses of famine and almost universal insecurity, these confused and often conflicting

efforts we are making; suppose that in ten, or twenty, or thirty years we shall begin to realize that the thing is, after all, getting done, that we are indeed pushing through, moving towards the light, that human affairs are on the up-grade again and on new and greater and safer lines; let us suppose that and then let us ask what sort of world it will be for our kind that we shall be moving towards!

Let us go back to one fundamental fact in the present break-up in human affairs. That break-up is not a result of debility; *it is a result of ill- regulated power*. It is important to bear that in mind. Disproportionate development of energy and overstrain are the immediate causes of our present troubles; the scale of modern economic enterprise has outgrown the little boundaries of the European States; science and invention have made war so monstrously destructive and disintegrative that victory is swallowed up in disaster; we are in a world of little nations wielding world-wide powers to the general destruction. And it follows that if, after all, we do struggle out of our old-fashioned and now altogether disastrous rivalries and hatreds before they destroy us, we shall still have all this science and power, which are things that seem now to increase by a sort of inner necessity, on our hands. So that getting through to an organized world peace does not mean simply avoiding death and destruction and getting back to "as you were." It means getting hold of power by the right end instead of the wrong end and going right ahead. We are not struggling simply to escape, we are struggling for the opportunity to achieve.

Personally, I do not think I would have bothered to come to Washington or to interest myself in this peace business, and to work and blunder and feel incompetent and be worried and distressed here, if it meant working for just peace, flat, empty, simple peace. I do not see why the killing of a few score millions of human beings a few years before they would naturally and ingloriously die, or the smashing up of a lot of ordinary, rather ugly, rather uncomfortable towns, or, if it comes to that sort of thing, the complete depopulation of the earth, or the prospect of being killed myself presently by a bomb or a shot or a pestilence, should move me to any great exertions. Why bother to exchange suffering for flatness? The worst, least endurable of miseries is boredom. One must die somewhere;

few deaths are as painful as a first-class toothache or as depressing as a severe fit of indigestion; yon can suffer more on a comfortable death bed than on a battlefield; and meanwhile, there is a very good chance of sunshine and snatched happiness here or there. But what does stir me is my invincible belief that the life I lead and the human life about me are not anything like the good thing that could be and might be. I am not so much frightened and distressed by these wars and national clashes and all the rest of this silly flag-wagging, bragging, shoving busi-ness as bored and irritated by these things. I have had some vision of what science and education can do for life and I am haunted by the fine uses that might be made of men and of our splendid possibilities. I do not think of war as a tragic necessity but as a blood-stained mess. When I think of my Europe now, I do not feel like a weakling whose world has been invaded by stupendous and cruel powers; I feel like a man whose promising garden has been invaded by hogs. There is the pacificism of love, the pacificism of pity, the pacificism of commercialism, but also there is the pacificism of utter contempt. This is not a doomed world we live in or anything so tragically dignified; it is a world idiotically spoilt.

Do any of us fully realize the promise of that garden, the promise that can still be rescued from the trampling dullness of old animosities and rivalries~which is wrecking it?. Given unity of purpose throughout the world, given a surcease of mutual thwarting and destruction, do we realize what science has made possible now and here for mankind?

I shall not indulge in any imaginative anticipations of things still undiscovered in the scientific realm, I will only suppose that things already known and tested are systematically used all over the world, that the good knowledge we have already stored in our laboratories and libraries is really applied with some thoroughness and with some community of purpose to the needs and enlargement of life.

And first let us deal with the commoner material aspects of life in which there have been great changes and improvements in recent times and in which, therefore, it is easiest to imagine still further betterment, given only an assuagement of strife and blind struggle and a spreading out of generosity and the feeling of community from international to social affairs.

Take transport, that very fundamental social concern. It is ripe for great advances. There is all the labor needed in the world, all the skill and knowledge needed, and all the material needed, for these advances. There is everything needed but peace and the recognition of a common purpose. At present, there are railways only over a part of the inhabited world; there are vast areas of Asia and Africa and South America with no railway nor road communication at all and with enormous natural resources scarcely tapped, in consequence. Roads are as yet not nearly so widespread as railways, abundant good roads are founded indeed only in Western Europe and the better developed regions of the United States; there are a few good main roads in such countries as India, South Africa, and so forth. And in many parts of Europe now, and especially in Russia roads and railways are going out of use. Large parts of the world are still only to be reached by a specially equipped expedition; they are as inaccessible to ordinary travelling people as the other side of the moon. And if you will probe into the reasons why road and rail transport fails to develop and is even over wide areas undergoing degradation, you will come in nearly every case upon a political bar, a national or an imperial rivalry. These are the things that close half our world to us and may presently close most of the world to us. And consider even the railroads and roads we have; even those of America or Britain, how poor and uncomfortable they are in comparison with what we know they might be.

And then take housing. I have been motoring about a little in Maryland and Virginia and I am astounded at the many miserable wood houses I see, hovels rather than houses, the abodes very often of white men. I am astounded at the wretched fences about the ill-kept patches of cultivation and by the extreme illiteracy of many of the poorer folk, white as well as colored, with whom I have had a chance of talking. I have to remind myself that I am in what is now the greatest, richest, most powerful country in the world. But with this country now as with every country, army, navy, contentious service, war debt charges and the rest of the legacy of past wars consume the national revenue. America is not spending a tithe of what she ought to be spending upon schools, upon the maintenance of a housing standard and upon roads and transport. She improves in

all these things, but at no great pace, because of the disunion of the world and the threat of war. England and France, which were once far ahead of her in these respects of housing, transport and popular education, are now on the whole declining, through the excessive fiscal burthens they are under to pay for the late war and prepare for fresh ones. But I ask you to think what would happen to a world from which that burthen of preparedness was lifted. The first result of that relief would be a diversion of the huge maintenance allowance of the war-God to just these starved and neglected things.

Stanch that waste throughout the earth, and the saved wealth and energy will begin at once to flow in the direction of better houses, towards a steady increase in the order and gra-ciousness of our unkempt and slovenly countrysides, to making better roads throughout the globe, until the globe is accessible, and to a huge enrichment and invigoration of education.

How fair and lovely such countries as France and Germany and Italy might be today if the dark threat of war that keeps them so gaunt and poverty-struck could be lifted from them. Think of the abundant and various loveliness of France and the wit and charm of its varied peoples, now turned sour by the toil and trouble, the fears and bitter suspicions the threat of further war holds over them. Think of France, fearless and at last showing the world what France can do and be. And Italy at last Italy, and Japan, Japan. Think of the green hills of Virginia, covered with stately homes and cheerful houses. Think of a world in which travel is once more free and in which every country in absolute security has been able to resume its own peace-time development of its architecture, its music and all its arts in its own atmosphere upon the foundations of its own past. Because world unity does not mean uniformity; it means security to be different. It is war that forces all men into the same khaki and iron-clad moulds.

But all this recovery of the visible idiosyncracies of nations, all this confident activity and progressive enrichment which will inevitably ensue upon the diversion of human attention from war and death and conflict and mutual thwarting to peace and development, will be but the outer indication of much profounder changes. Believed of our war burthens, it will be possible to take hold of

education as educationists have been longing to do for many years.

They tell us now that every one could be educated up to sixteen or seventeen and that most people may be kept learning and growing mentally all their lives, that no country in world has enough schools, or properly equipped schools, nor enough properly educated teachers in the schools we have. The supply of university resources is still more meager. There is hardly anyone alive who has not a sense of things that he could know but cannot attain and of powers he can never develop. The number of fully educated and properly nurtured people in the world, people who can be said to have come reasonably near to realizing their full birth possibilities, is almost infinitesimal. The rest of mankind are either physically or mentally stunted, or both. This insolvent, slovenly old world has begotten them, and starved them. Our lives, in strength, in realized capacity, in achievement and happiness are perhaps 20% or 30% of what they ought to be. But if only we could sweep aside these everlast ing contentions, these hates and disputes that waste our earth, and get to work upon this educational proposition as a big business man gets to work upon a mineral deposit or the develop ment of an invention, instead of a 20% result we might clamber to an 80% or a 90% in educated efficiency. I ask you to go through the crowded streets of a town and note the many under-grown and ill-grown, the under sized, the ill-behaved; to note the appeals to childish, prejudiced and misshapen minds in the shop windows, in the advertisements, in the newspaper headlines at the street corners, and then to try and think of what might be there even now in the place of that street and that crowd.

The wealth and energy were there to make schools and give physical and mental training to all these people, and they have gone to burst shells and smash up the work of men, the or ganizing power has been wasted upon barren disputes ; the science was there and it has been cramped and misused; even the will was there, but it was not organized to effective application. And scarcely a man in the crowd who begets a child, or a woman who bears one, but will dream of its growing to something better than the twarted hope it will become.

Have you ever examined an aeroplane or a submarine,, and

realized the thousand beautiful adjustments and devices that have produced its wonderful perfection? Have you ever looked at a street corner loafer and thought of the ten thousand opportunities that have been cast away of saving him from what he has become?

When we follow this line of thought, it becomes clear that our first vision of a world-wide net of fine roads, great steady trains on renewed and broader tracks, long distance aeroplane flights of the securest sort, splendid and beautiful towns, a parklike countryside, studded with delightful homes, was merely the scene and frame for a population of well-grown, well-trained, fully adult human begins. All the world will be accessible to them, mountains to climb, deserts to be alone in, tropics to explore in wonder, beautiful places for rest And they will be healthy, and happy in the way that only health makes possible. For surely it is no news to any one that a score of horrible tints and diseases that weaken and cripple us, a number of infections, a multitude of ill-nourished and un-dernourished states of body, can be completely controlled and banished from life, they and all the misery they entail given only a common effort, given only human co-operation instead of discussion. The largest visible material harvest of peace is the least harvest of peace. The great harvest will be health and human vigor.

And happiness! Think of the mornings that will some day come, when men will wake to read in the papers of something better than the great 5-5-3 wrangle, of the starvation and disorder of half the world, of the stupid sexual crimes and greedy dishonesties committed by the adults with the undeveloped intelligence of vicious children, of suggestions of horrible plots and designs against our threadbare security, of the dreary necessity for "preparedness." Think of a morning when the newspaper has mainly *good* news, of things discovered, of fine things done; think of the common day of a common citizen in a world where debt is no longer a universal burthen, where there is constant progress and no retrogression, where it is the normal thing to walk out of a beautiful house into a clean and splendid street, to pass and meet happy and interesting adults instead of aged children obsessed by neglected spites and jealousies and mean anxieties, to go to some honorable occupation that helps the world forward to a still greater and finer life. You may say that a

world may be prosperous and men and women healthy and free and yet there will still be spites and jealousies and all the bitterness of disputation, but that is no more true than that there will still be toothache. A mind educated and cared for, quite as well as a body, can be healed and kept clean and sweet and free from these maddening humiliations and suppressions that now fester in so many souls. There is no real necessity about either physical or mental miserableness in human life. Given, that is, a sufficient release of human energy to bring a proper care within the reach of all. And consider the quality of interest in such a world. Think of the mental quality of a world in which each day the thought and research of a great host of intelligences turns more and more the opaque and confused riddles of yesteryear into transparent lucidity. Think of the forces of personal and national idiosyncracy, of patriotic and racial assertion, seeking and finding their expression not in vile mutual thwarting and a brutish destructiveness, but in the distinctive architecture of cities, in the cultivated and intensified beauty of the country-side, in a hundred forms of art, in costume and custom. Think of the freedom, the abundance, the harmonious differences of such a world!

This is not idle prophecy, this is no dream. Such a world is ours today if we could but turn the minds of men to realize that it is here for the having. These things can be done, this finer world is within reach. I can write that as confidently today as I wrote in 1900 that men could fly. But whether we are to stop this foolery of international struggle, this moral and mental childishness of patriotic aggressions, this continual bloodshed and squalor, and start out for a world of adult sanity in ten years, or in twenty years, or a hundred years, or never, is more than I can say. In Washington, I have met and seen hopes that seemed invincible, and stupidities and habits and prejudices that seemed insurmountable; I have lived for six weeks in a tangled conflict of great phrases, mean ends, inspiration, illogicality, forgetfulness, f lashes of greatness and flashes of grossness. I am no moral accountant to cast a balance and estimate a date. My moods have fluctuated between hope and despair.

But I know that I believe so firmly in this great World at Peace that lies so close to our own, ready to come into being as our wills

turn towards it, that I must needs go about this present world of disorder and darkness like an exile doing such feeble things as I can towards the world of my desire, now hopefully, now bitterly, as the moods may happen, until I die.

THE END

THE STORY OF A GREAT SCHOOLMASTER

BEING A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND IDEAS OF SANDERSON OF OUNDLE

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Frederick William Sanderson

I. — SANDERSON THE MAN

§ 1

Of all the men I have met — and I have now had a fairly long and active life and have met a very great variety of interesting people — one only has stirred me to a biographical effort. This one exception is F.W. Sanderson, for many years the headmaster of Oundle School. I think him beyond question the greatest man I have ever known with any degree of intimacy, and it is in the hope of conveying to others something of my sense not merely of his importance, but of his peculiar genius and the rich humanity of his character, that I am setting out to write this book. He was in himself a very delightful mixture of subtlety and simplicity, generosity, adventurousness, imagination and steadfast purpose, and he approached the general life of our time at such an angle as to reflect the most curious and profitable lights upon it. To tell his story is to reflect upon all the main educational ideas of the last half-century, and to revise our conception of the process and purpose of the modern community in relation to education. For Sanderson had a mind like an octopus, it seemed always to have a tentacle free to reach out beyond what was already held, and his tentacles grew and radiated farther and farther. Before his end he had come to a vision of the school as a centre for the complete reorganisation of civilised life.

I knew him personally only during the last eight years of his life; I met him for the first time in 1914, when I was proposing to send my sons to his school. But our thoughts and interests drew us very close to one another, I never missed an opportunity of meeting and talking to him, and I was the last person he spoke to before his sudden death. He was sixty-six years of age when he died. Those last eight years were certainly the richest and most productive of his whole career; he grew most in those years; he travelled farthest. I think I saw all the best of him. It is, I think, no disadvantage to have known him only in his boldest and most characteristic phase. It saves me from confusion between his maturer and his earlier phases. He was a much stratified man. He had grown steadfastly all his life, he had shaken off many

habitual inhibitions and freed himself from once necessary restraints and limitations. He would go discreetly while his convictions accumulated and then break forward very rapidly. He had a way of leaving people behind, and if I had fallen under his spell earlier, I, too, might have been left far behind. He was, I recall, a rock-climber; he was a mental rock-climber also, and though he was very wary of recalcitrance, there were times when his pace became so urgent that even his staff and his own family were left tugging, breathless and perplexed, at the rope.

Out of a small country grammar-school he created something more suggestive of those great modern teaching centres of which our world stands in need than anything else that has yet been attempted. By all ordinary standards the Oundle School of his later years was a brilliant success; it prospered amazingly, there was an almost hopeless waiting-list of applicants; boys had to be entered five years ahead; but successful as it was, it was no more than a sketch and demonstration of the great schools that are yet to be. I saw my own sons get an education there better than I had ever dared hope for them in England, but from the first my interest in the intention and promise of Oundle went far beyond its working actualities. And all the educational possibilities that I had hitherto felt to be unattainable dreams, matters of speculation, things a little too extravagant even to talk about in our dull age, I found being pushed far towards realisation by this bold, persistent, humorous and most capable man.

Let me first try to give you a picture of his personality as he lives in my memory. Then I will try to give an account of his beginnings, as far as I have been able to learn about them, and so we will come to our main theme, *Sanderson contra Mundum,* the schoolmaster who set out to conquer the world. For, as I shall show, that and no less was what he was trying to do in the last years of his life.

'Ruddy' and 'jolly' are the adjectives that come first to mind when I think of describing him. He had been a slender, energetic young man his early photographs witness; but long before I met him he had become plump and energetic, with a twinkling appreciation for most of the good things of life. His complexion had a reddish fairness; he had well-modelled features, thick eyebrows and thick moustache touched with grey, and he wore spectacles through and

over and beside which his active eyes took stock of you. About his eyes were kindly wrinkles, and generally I remember him as smiling — often with a touch of roguery in the smile. Quick movements of his head caused animating flashes of his glasses. He was carrying a little too much body for his heart, and that made him short of breath. His voice was in his chest, there was a touch of his native Northumbria in his accent, and he had a habit of speaking in incomplete sentences with a frequent use of the interrogative form. His manner was confidential; he would bend towards his hearer and drop his voice a little. 'Now what do you think of —— ?' he would say, or 'I've been thinking of — —' so and so. At times his confidential manner became endearingly suggestive of a friendly conspirator. This, as yet, he seemed to say, was not for too careless a publication. You and he understood, but those other fellows — they were difficult fellows. It might not be practicable to attempt everything at once.

That reservation, that humorous discretion, is very essential in my memory of him. It is essential to the whole educational situation of the world. He was an exceptionally bold and creative man, and he was a schoolmaster, and that is perhaps as near as one can come to a complete incompatibility of quality and conditions. In no part of our social life is dull traditionalism so powerfully entrenched as it is in our educational organisation. We have still to realise the evil of mental heaviness in scholastic concerns. We take, very properly, the utmost precautions to exclude men and women of immoral character not only from actual teaching but also from any exercise of educational authority. But no one ever makes the least objection to the far more deadly influences of stupidity and unteachable ignorance. Our conceptions of morality are still grossly physical. The heavier and slower a man's mind seems to be, the more addicted he is to intellectual narcotics, the more people trust him as a schoolmaster. He will 'stay put.'

A timid obstructiveness is the atmosphere in which almost all educational effort has to work, and schoolmasters are denied a liberty of thought and speech conceded to very other class of respectable men. They must still be mealy mouthed about Darwin, fatuously conventional in politics, and emptily orthodox in religion. If they

stimulate their boys they must stimulate as a brass trumpet does, without words or ideas. They may be great leaders of men — provided they lead backwards or no whither. Sanderson in his latter days broke into unexampled freedom, but for the greater part of his life he was — like most of his profession— 'wading hips-deep in fools,' and equally resolved to work out his personal impulse and retain the great opportunities that the governing body of Oundle School had, almost unwittingly, put into his hands. He was therefore not only a great revolutionary but something of a Vicar of Bray. A large part of the amusing subtlety of his personality was the result of the balanced course he had to pursue. In all he did, in all he said, he was feeling his way. No other schoolmaster — and there must be many a rebellious heart lying still in the graves of dead schoolmasters and many a stifled rebel in the schoolrooms of to-day — no other schoolmaster has ever felt his way so discreetly, so far and, at last, so triumphantly.

I remember as a very characteristic thing that he said one day when I asked for his opinion of a particularly progressive and hopeful addition to his board of governors: 'He does not know much about schools yet, but he will learn. Oundle will teach him.' And in his last great lecture, he flung out a general 'aside' — that lecture was full of astonishing 'asides'— 'I turned round on the boys and the parents,' he said, *'both are my business.'*

Never was schoolmaster so emancipated as he in his latter years from the ancient servility of the pedagogue. Not for him the handing on of mellow traditions and genteel gestures of the mind, not for him the obedient administration of useful information to employers' sons by the docile employee. He saw the modern teacher in university and school plainly for what he has to be, the anticipator, the planner, and the foundation-maker of the new and greater order of human life that arises now visibly amidst the decaying structures of the old.

§ 2

Sanderson was born and brought up outside the British public-school system that he was to affect so profoundly. His early education was

obtained in a parish school. His father was employed in the estate office of Lord Boyne at Brancepeth in Durham. There were several brothers but they all died before manhood, and the scanty indications one can glean of those early years suggest a slender, studious, and probably rather delicate youngster. He was never very proficient in any out-of-door games. In the early days at Oundle he careered about on a bicycle; in later years he played tennis; his vacation exercise was rock-srambling. He became a 'student-teacher,' so the official Life phrases it, at a school at Tudhoe, but whether there was any difference between being a student-teacher at a school at Tudhoe and being an ordinary pupil-teacher in an ordinary elementary school under the English Education Department I have been unable to ascertain. He was already notable in his village world as exceptionally intelligent, industrious, and ambitious, and with a little encouragement from the local vicar and one or two friends he effected an escape from the strangling limitations of elementary teaching.

He may have aimed at the church at that time. At any rate he gained a scholarship and entered Durham University as a theological student. He did well in Durham University both in theology and mathematics; he was made a Fellow and he was able to go on as a scholar from Durham to the wider and more strenuous academic life of Cambridge. At Cambridge theology drops out of the foreground of the picture. He took a fairly good degree in mathematics, and he worked for the Natural Science Tripos. He did not fight his way up into that select class which secures Cambridge fellowships, but he had made a reputation as an able, hard, and honest worker; he was much sought after as a coach, and he was given a lectureship in the woman's college of Girton. From this he went as senior physics master to the big school for boys at Dulwich.

A photograph of him in the early Dulwich period shows him slender and keen-looking, already bespectacled and with a thick moustache; except for the glasses not unlike another ruddy north-countryman I once knew, the novelist George Gissing. Both were what one might call Scandinavian in type. But Gissing was as despondent as Sanderson was buoyant. In those days, an old Dulwich associate tells me, Sander.. son was in a state of great mental

fermentation. He loved long walks in his spare time, and along the pebbly paths and roads and up and down the little hills of that corner of Kent, the two of them talked out a hundred aspects and issues of the perplexing changing world in which they found themselves.

It was the world of the eighteen-eighties they were looking at, before the first Jubilee of Queen Victoria, and it may be worth while to devote a paragraph or so to a reconstruction of the moral and intellectual landscape this lean and eager young man was confronting.

Upon the surface and in its general structure that British world of the eighties had a delusive air of final establishment. Queen Victoria had been reigning for close upon half a century and seemed likely to reign for ever. The economic system of unrestricted private enterprise with privately owned capital had yielded a great harvest of material prosperity, and few people suspected how rapidly it was exhausting the soil of willing service in which it grew. Production increased every year; population increased every year; there was a steady progress of invention and discovery, comfort, and convenience. Wars went on, a marginal stimulation of the empire, but since the collapse of Napoleon I no war had happened to frighten England for its existence as a country; no threat of warfare that could touch English life or English soil troubled men's imagination. Ruskin and Carlyle had criticised English ideals and the righteousness of English commerce and industrialism, but they were regarded generally as eccentric and unaccountable men; there was already a conflict of science and theology, but it affected the national life very little outside the world of the intellectuals; a certain amount of trade competition from the United States and from other European countries was developing, but at most it ruffled the surface of the national self-confidence. There was a socialist movement, but it was still only a passionless criticism of trade and manufacturers, a criticism poised between aesthetic fastidiousness and benevolence. People played with that Victorian socialism as they would have played with a very young tiger-cub. The labour movement was a gentle insistence upon rather higher wages and rather shorter hours; it had still to discover Socialism. In a world of certainties the rate of interest fell by minute but perceptible degrees, and as a consequence

money for investment went abroad until all the world was under tribute to Britain. History seemed to be over, entirely superseded by the daily paper; tragedy and catastrophe were largely eliminated from human life. One read of famines in India and civil chaos in China, but one felt that these were diminishing distresses; the missionaries were at work there and railways spreading.

It was indeed a mild and massive Sphynx of British life that confronted our young man at Dulwich and his friend, an amoeboid Sphynx which enveloped and assimilated rather than tore and devoured. It had not been stricken for a generation, and so it felt assured of the ages. But beneath its tranquil-looking surfaces many ferments were actively at work, and its serene and empty visage masked extensive processes of decay. The fifty-year-old faith on which the social and political fabric rested — for all social and political fabrics must in the last resort rest upon faith — was being corroded and dissolved and removed. Britain in the mid-Victorian time stood strong and sturdy in the world because a great number of its people, its officials, employers, professional men and workers honestly believed in the rightness of its claims and professions, believed in its state theology, in the justice of its economic relationships, in the romantic dignity of its monarchy, and in the real beneficence and righteousness of its relations to foreigners and the subject-races of the Empire. They did what they understood to be their duty in the light of that belief, simply, directly, and with self-respect and mutual confidence. If some of its institutions fell short of perfection, few people doubted that they led towards it. But from the middle of the century onward this assurance of the prosperous British in their world was being subjected to a more and more destructive criticism, spreading slowly from intellectual circle into the general consciousness.

It is interesting to note one or two dates in relation to Sanderson's life. He was born in the year 1857. This was two years before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species.* He was growing up through boyhood as the application of the Darwinian criticism of life to current theology was made, and as the great controversy between Science and orthodox beliefs came to a head. Huxley's challenging book, *Man's Place in Nature,* was published in 1863; Darwin

became completely explicit about human origins only in 1871 with *The Descent of Man.* Sanderson, then a bright and forward boy of fourteen, was probably already beginning to take notice of these disputes about the fundamentals, as they were then considered, of sound Christianity.

He was already at college when Huxley was pounding Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll upon such issues as whether the first chapter of Genesis was strictly parallel with the known course of evolution, and whether the miracle of the Gadarene swine was a just treatment of the Gadarene swineherds. Sanderson's Durham and Cambridge studies and talks went on amidst the thunder of these debates, and there can be little doubt that his early theology underwent much bending and adaptation to the new realisations of the past of man, and of human destiny that these discussions opened out. He did not take holy orders but he remained in the Anglican Church; manifestly he could still find a meaning in the Fall and in the scheme of Salvation. Many other promising teachers of his generation found this impossible; such men as Graham Wall as, for example, felt compelled for conscience' sake to abandon the public-school teaching to which they had hoped to give their lives. Wallas found scope for his very great gifts of suggestion and inspiration in the London School of Economics, but many others of these Victorian non-jurors were lost to education altogether.

The criticism of the economic life and social organisation of that age was going on almost parallel with the destruction of its cosmogony. Ruskin's *Unto this Last* was issued when Sanderson was four years old; *Fors Clavigera* was appearing in the seventies and the early eighties. William Morris was a little later with *News from Nowhere* and *The Dream of John Ball;* they must have still been vividl y new books in Sanderson's Cambridge days. Marx was little heard of then in England. He was already a power in German socialism in the seventies, but he did not reach the reader of English until the eighties were nearly at an end. When Sanderson discussed socialism during those Dulwich walks, it must have been Ruskin and Morris rather than Marx who figured in his talk. Al though there remains no account of those early conversations, it is easy to guess that this stir of social reconstruction and religious readjustment must

have played a large part in them. Sanderson meant to teach and wanted to teach; he was quite unlike that too common sort of schoolmaster who has fallen back into teaching after the collapse of other ambitions; like all really sincere teachers he was eager to learn, open to every new and stimulating idea, and free altogether from the malignant conservatism of the disappointed type.

He kept that adolescent power of mental growth throughout life. I remember my pleased astonishment on my first visit to Oundle to find in his library — I had drifted to his bookshelves while I awaited him — a row of the works of Nietzsche (who came into the English-speaking world in the late nineties) and recent books by Bertrand Russell and Shaw. Here was a schoolmaster, a British public schoolmaster, aware that the world was still going on! It seemed too good to be true. But it was true, and in the end Sanderson was to die, ten years, shall we say? — or twenty, ahead of his time.

And while we are placing Sanderson in relation to the intellectual stir of the age let us note, too, the general shape of human affairs as it was presented to his mind. It was an age of steadily accelerated political change, and of a vast increase in the population of the world. The fifties and sixties of the nineteenth century had seen the world-wide spread of the railway and telegraph network, and a consequent opening up of vast regions of production that had hitherto lain fallow. The screw was replacing the ineffective paddle-wheel of the earlier steamships and revolutionising ocean transport. There was a great increase in mechanical and agricultural efficiency. We still call that time the mid-Victorian period, but the history teacher of the future, more sensible than we are of the innocence of good Queen Victoria in any concern of importance to mankind, is more likely to distinguish it as the Advent of the New Communications. These new inventions were 'abolishing distance.' They were demanding a political synthesis of mankind. But there was little understanding as yet of this now manifest truth. One hardly notes a sign of any such awareness in literature and public discussions until the end of the century; and failing a clear understanding of their nature the new expansive forces operated through the cheap and unsound interpretations first of sentimental nationalism and then of romantic imperialism.

Sanderson's boyhood saw the differences of the cultures of north and south in the United States of America at first exacerbated by the new means of communication and then, after four years of civil war, resolved into a stabler unity. The straggling peninsula of Italy under the sway of the new synthetic forces recovered a unity it had lost with the decay of the Roman roads; the internal tension of the continental powers culminated in the Franco-German war. But these were insufficient adjustments, and a renewed growth of armaments upon land and sea alike, betrayed the growing mutual pressure of the great powers. All dreamt of expansion and none of coalescence. The dominant political fact in Europe while Sanderson was a young man, was the rise of Germany to political and economic predominance. German energy, restrained from geographical release, drove upward along the lines of scientific and technical progress, and the outward thrust of its pent-up imperialism took the form of a gathering military threat. Germany first and then the United States, released and renewed after their escape from the fragmentation that had threatened them, made the economic pace for the rest of the world throughout the eighties and the nineties. They stirred the British manufacturer and parent to indignant inquiries; they forced the drowsy schools of Great Britain into a reluctant admission of scientific and technical teaching. But they awakened as yet no profounder heart-searchings.

The young science-master at Dulwich talked, no doubt, as we all did in those days, of Evolution and Socialism, of the rights of labour and the Christianisation of industry, of the progress of science and the scandal of the increasing expenditure upon armaments, with the illusion of an immense general stability in the background of his mind. It was an illusion that needed not only the Great War of 1914-18 but its illuminating sequelae to shatter and destroy.

§ 3

Accounts of Sanderson's work in Dulwich school differ very widely. At one time it would seem that he had troubles about discipline, and it is quite conceivable that his methods there were experimental and fluctuating. No doubt he was trying over at Dulwich many of the

things that were to establish his success at Oundle. On the whole the Dulwich work was good work, and it gave him sufficient reputation to secure the headmastership of Oundle School when presently the governing body of that school sought a man of energy and character to modernise it.

The most valuable result of his Dulwich period was the demonstration of the interestingness of practical work in physical science for boys who remained apathetic under the infliction of the stereotyped classical curriculum. He was not getting the pick of the boys there but the residue, but he was getting an alertness and interest out of this second-grade material that surprised even himself. The interest of the classical teaching was largely the interest of a spirited competition which demanded not only a special sort of literary ability but a special sort of competitive disposition. But there are quite clever boys of an amiable type to whom competition does not appeal, and some of these were among the most interesting of the youngsters who were awakened to industrious work by his laboratory instruction.

It is clear that before Sanderson went to Oundle he had already developed a firm faith in the possibility of a school with a new and more varied curriculum, in which a far greater proportion of the boys could be interested in their work than was the case in the contemporary classical and (formal) mathematical school, and also that he had conceived the idea of replacing the competitive motive, which had ruled the schools of Europe since the establishment of the great Jesuit schools three hundred years before, by the more vital stimulus of interest in the work itself. He also took to Oundle a proved and tested conception of the need for the utmost possible personal participation by every boy in every collective function of the school. Quite early in his Oundle career he came into conflict with his boys and carried his point upon the issue whether every boy was to sing in the school singing or whether that was to be left to the specialised choir of boys who had voices and a taste for that sort of thing. That was an essential issue for him. From the very first he was working for the rank and file and against the star system of school work by which a few boys sing or work or play with distinction and encouragement, against a background of neglected shirkers and

defeated and discouraged competitors.

Sanderson married soon after he went to Dulwich. His wife came from Cumberland and she excelled in all those domestic matters that make a successful headmaster's wife. Throughout all the rest of his life she was his loyal and passionate partisan. His friends were her friends, and his critics and opponents were her enemies, and if she had a fault it was that she found it difficult to forgive anyone who had seemed ever to differ from him. Two sons were born during the seven years that passed in the little home in Dulwich. It must have been a very brisk and happy little home. One can imagine the tall young man with his gown a little powdered with blackboard chalk, flying out behind him, striding along the school corridors to some fresh and successful experiment in laboratory work, or in homely tweeds walking along the Kentish lanes with his friend, or snatching a delightful half-hour in the nursery to see Master Roy's first attempts to walk, or reading some new and stirring book with the lamp of those days before electric lighting at his elbow. He was thirty-five when he achieved his last step in the upward career of a secondary schoolmaster and was appointed headmaster of Oundle. That success probably came as a surprise, for Sanderson's modest origins and the fact that he was not in holy orders must have been a serious handicap upon his application. It must have been a very elated young couple who packed their household belongings for the unknown town of Oundle.

II. — THE MODERNISATION OF OUNDLE SCHOOL

§ 1

Oundle School, which was to be the material of Sanderson's life work, which was to teach him so much and profit so richly by the reaction, was one of comparatively old standing. It was a pre-reformation foundation; a certain Joan Wyatt having endowed a schoolmaster in the place in 1485. Its main revenues, however, derived from Sir William Laxton, Lord Mayor of London and Master of the Grocers' Company, who in 1556 left considerable property to that body on condition that it supported a school in his native town of Oundle. The Grocers' Company took over the Joan Wyatt school and schoolmaster, and has discharged its obligations to Oundle with intermittent energy and honesty to this day.

Oundle has always been a school of fluctuating fortunes. The district round and about does not sustain a sufficient population to maintain full classes and an efficient staff, and only when the prestige of the school was great enough to attract boys from a distance had it any chance of flourishing. Time after time an energetic head with more or less support from the distant governing body would push it into prominence and prosperity only to pass away and leave it to an equally rapid decline. The London Grocers' Company is a very unsuitable body for educational work. It is not organised for any such work. It was originally a chartered association of city wholesalers, spice dealers, and so forth, who maintained a certain standard of honest trading and protected their common interests in the middle ages; it commended itself to the spiritual care of St. Anthony, and built a great hall and acted as almoner for its impoverished members and their widows and orphans; its normal function to-day is the entertainment of princes and politicians. It is now a fortuitous collection of merchants, business-men, and prosperous persons, and it is only by chance that now and then a group of its members have had the conscience and intelligence to rise above the normal indifference of such people to the full possibilities of the Laxton

bequest. Generally the Company's conduct of the school has varied between half-hearted help and negligence and the diversion of the funds to other ends; it has no tradition of competent governorship, and the ups and downs of Oundle have been dependent mainly upon the personal qualities of the masters who have chanced to be appointed.

There was a period of prosperity during the second quarter of the seventeenth century which was brought to an end by the plague, and by the impoverishment of the school through the fire of London in which various Laxton properties were destroyed. Throughout a large part of the eighteenth century the school was completely effaced, and the entire revenues of the Laxton bequest were no doubt expended in hospitality. There was a revival in 1796. In the seventies of the nineteenth century the school was doing well in mathematics under a certain Dr. Stansbury, and in the eighties it had as many as two hundred boys under the Rev. H. St. J. Reade. Then it declined again until the numbers sank below a hundred. It was a time of quickened consciences in educational matters, and some of the more energetic and able members of the Grocers' Company determined to make a drastic change of conditions at Oundle. They found Sanderson ready to their hands.

§ 2

The world is changing so rapidly that it may be well to say a few words about the type of school Sanderson was destined to renovate. Even in the seventies and eighties these smaller 'classical' schools had a quaint old-fashioned air amidst the surrounding landscape. They were staffed by the less vigorous men of the university-scholar type; men of the poorer educated classes in origin, not able enough to secure any of the prizes reserved for university successes, and not courageous enough to strike out into the great world on their own account. They protected themselves from the sense of inferiority by an exaggeration of the value of the schooling and disciplines through which they had gone, and they ignored their lack of grasp in a worship of the petty accuracies within their capacity. Their ambition

soared at its highest to holy orders and a headmastership, a comfortable house, a competent wife, dignity, security, ease, and a certain celebrity in equation-dodging or the imitation of Latin and Greek compositions. Contemporary life and thought these worthy dominies regarded with a lofty scorn. The formal mathematical work, it is true, was not older than a century or a century and a half, but the classical training had come down in an unbroken tradition from the seventeenth century. One of the staff of Oundle when Sanderson took it over is described as a 'wonderful' classical master. 'His master passion,' we are told, 'for Latin elegiacs and Greek iambics fired many of his pupils, whose best efforts were copied into a book that bore the title *Inscribatur.'* These exercises in stereotyped expression were going on at Oundle right into the eighteen-nineties. They had their justification. From the school the boys passed on to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where sympathetic examining authorities awarded the greater prizes at their disposal to the more proficient of these victims. The Civil Service Commissioners by a mark-rigging system that would have won the respect of an American election boss, kept the Higher Division of the Civil Service as a preserve for ignorance 'classically' adorned. So that the school could boast of 'an almost uninterrupted stream of scholarship successes at Cambridge' even in its decline in the late eighties, when its real educational value to the country it served was a negative quantity.

This seventeenth century 'classical' grind constituted the main work of the school, and no other subject seems to have been pursued with any industry. Most of the staff could not draw or use their hands properly; like most secondary teachers of that time they were innocent of educational science, and no attempt was made to teach every boy to draw. Drawing was still regarded as a 'gift' in those days. The normally intelligent boy without the peculiar aptitudes and plasticity needed to take Latin elegiacs seriously, had no educational alternative whatever. There was no mathematical teaching beyond low-grade formal stuff of a very boring sort, and the only science available was a sort of science teaching put in to silence the complaints of progressive-minded parents rather than with any educational intention, science teaching that was very properly called

‘stinks.’ It was a stinking imposture. The boy of good ordinary quality was driven therefore to games or ‘hobbies’ or mischief as an outlet for his energies, as chance might determine. The school buildings before Sanderson was appointed were as cramped as the curriculum; old boys recall the ‘redolent’ afternoon class-rooms; the Grocers’ Company in its wisdom had built a new Schoolhouse during the brief boom under St. John Reade, between a public house on either side and a slum at the back. It must have been pleasant for master and boys alike to escape from the stuffiness of general teaching upon these premises, and from the priggish exploits in versification of the ‘inspired’ minority, to the cricket field. There one had scope; there was life. The Rev. H. St. J. Reade, the headmaster in the eighties, had been Captain of the Oxford Eleven, and drove the ball hard and far, to the admiration of all beholders.

The Rev. Mungo J. Park, who immediately preceded Sanderson, is described as a man of considerable personal dignity, aloof and leisurely, and greatly respected by the boys. Under him the number of the boys in the school declined to fewer than a hundred. That dwindling band led the normal life of boys at any small public school in England. Most of them were frightfully bored by the teaching of the bored masters; the wonderful classical master lashed himself periodically up to the infectious level of enthusiasm for his amazing exercises; there was cribbing and ragging and loafing, festering curiosities and emotional experimenting, and, thank Heaven! games a fellow could understand. If these boys learnt anything of the marvellous new vision of the world that modern science was unfolding, they learnt it by their own private reading and against the wishes of their antiquated teachers. They learnt nothing in school of the outlook of contemporary affairs, nothing of contemporary human work, nothing of the social and economic system in which many of them were presently to play the part of captains. If they learnt anything about their bodies it was secretly, furtively, and dirtily. The gentlemen in holy orders upon the staff, and the sermons in the Oundle parish church, had made souls incredible. There has been much criticism of the devotion to games in these dens of mental dinginess, but games were the only honest and conclusive exercises to be found in them. From the sunshine and reality of the swimming-

pool, the boats, the cricket or football field, the boys came back into the ill-ventilated class-rooms to pretend, or not even to pretend, an interest in languages not merely dead, but now, through a process of derivation and imitation from one generation to another, excessively decayed. The memory of school taken into after life from these establishments was a memory of going from games and sunshine and living interest into class-rooms of twilight, bad air, and sham enthusiasm for exhausted things.

§ 3

Sanderson made his application 'for the headmastership of Oundle at an unusually favourable time. There were several men of exceptional enlightenment and intelligence upon the governing body of the school, and they were resolved to modernise Oundle thoroughly and well. To the innovators the very unorthodoxy of Sanderson's upbringing and qualifications was a recommendation, to their opponents they made him a shocking candidate, and the Grocers' Company was rent in twain over his application. It requires a little effort nowadays for us to understand just how undesirable a candidate this spectacled young man from Dulwich must have appeared to many of the older and riper 'grocers.'

In the first place he was not in holy orders, and it was a fixed belief of many people — in spite of the fact that few of the clerically-ruled English public schools of that time could be described as hotbeds of chastity — that only clergymen in holy orders could maintain a satisfactory moral and religious tone. On the other hand, he had been a distinguished theological student. That, however, might involve heresy; English people have an instinctive perception of the corrosive effect of knowledge and intelligence upon sound dogma. Then he was not a public-school boy, and this might involve a loss of social atmosphere more important even than religion or morals. The almost natural grace of deportment that has endeared the English traveller and the English official to the foreigner, and particularly to the subject-races throughout the world, might fail under his direction. Moreover, he was no cricketer. He had no

athletic distinction; a terrible come-down after the Rev. H. St. J. Reade. These were all grave considerations in those days. Against them weighed the growing dread of German efficiency that was already spreading a wholesome modesty throughout the commercial world of Britain. This young man from Dulwich might bring to Oundle, it was thought, the base but valuable gifts of technical science. And there was apparent in him a liveliness and energy uncommon among scholastic applicants. His seemed to be a bracing personality, and Oundle was in serious need of a bracing regime. The members who liked him liked him warmly, and he roused prejudices as warm; feeling seems to have run high at the decision, and he was appointed by a majority of one.

The little world of Oundle heard of the new appointment with mixed and various feelings, in which there was no doubt a considerable amount of resentment. No man becomes headmaster of an established school without facing many difficulties. If he is promoted from among the staff of his predecessor old disputes and rivalries are apt to take on an exaggerated importance, and if he comes in from outside he finds a staff disposed to a meticulous defence of established usage. And the young couple from Dulwich came to the place in direct condemnation of its current condition and its best traditions. There can be no doubt that at the outset the school and town bristled defensively and unpleasantly to the newcomers.

In one respect the old educational order had a great advantage over the new that Sanderson was to inaugurate. It had a completed tradition, and it provided the standards by which the new was tried. Whatever it taught was held to be necessary to education, and all that it did not know was not knowledge. By such tests the equipment of Sanderson was exhibited as both defective and superfluous. Moreover, the new system was confessedly undeveloped and experimental. It could not be denied that Sanderson might be making blunders, and that he might have to retrace his steps. People had been teaching the classics for three centuries; the routine had become so mechanical that it was done best by men who were intellectually and morally half asleep. It led to nothing; except in very exceptional cases it did not even lead to a competent use of either the Latin or Greek languages; it involved no intelligent realisation of history, it

detached the idea of philosophy from current life, and it produced the dreariest artistic Philistinism, but there was a universal persuasion that in some mystical way it *educated.* The methods of teaching science, on the other hand, were still in the experimental stage, and had still to convince the world that even at the lowest levels of failure they constituted a highly beneficent discipline.

I do not propose to disentangle here the story of Sanderson's first seven years of difficulty. He found the school and the town sullen and hostile, and he was young, eager, and irascible. The older boys had all been promoted upon classical qualifications, they were saturated with the old public-school tradition that Sanderson had come to destroy, and behind them were various members of a hostile and resentful staff inciting them to obstruction and mischief. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Sanderson was old enough or wise enough to disregard slights or to ignore mere gestures of hostility.

Reminiscences of old boys in the official life give us glimpses of the way in which the old order fought against the new. Everything was done to emphasise the fact that Sanderson was 'no gentleman,' 'no sportsman,' 'no cricketer,' 'no scholar.' It is the dearest delusion of snobs everywhere that able men who have made their way in the world are incapable of acquiring a valet's knowledge of what is correct in dress and deportment, and the dark legend was spread that he wore a flannel shirt with a sort of false front called a 'dicky' and detachable cuffs, in place of the evening shirt of the genteel. Moreover, his dress tie was reported to be a made-up tie. Unless he is to undress in public I do not see how a man under suspicion is to rebut such sinister scandals. The boys, with the help and encouragement of several members of the staff, made up a satirical play full of the puns and classical tags and ancient venerable turns of humour usual in such compositions, against this Barbarian invader and his new laboratories. It was the mock trial of an incendiary found trying to burn down the new laboratories. It was 'full of envenomed and insulting references' to all the new headmaster was supposed to hold dear. Finally it was rehearsed before him. He sat brooding over it thoughtfully, as shaft after shaft was launched against him. 'It didn't seem so funny then,' said my informant, 'as it had done when we prepared it.' It went to a 'ragged and unconvinced applause.' At

the end ‘came a pause — a stillness that could be felt.’ The headmaster sat with downcast face, thinking.

I suppose he was chiefly busy reckoning how soon he would be rid of this hostile generation of elder boys. They had to go. It was a pity, but nothing was to be done with them. The school had to grow out of them, as it had to grow out of its disloyal staff.

He rose slowly in his seat. ‘Boys, we will regard this as the final performance,’ he said, and departed thoughtfully, making no further comment. He took no action in the matter, attempted neither reproof nor punishment. He dropped the matter with a magnificent contempt. And, says the old boy who tells the story, from that time the spirit of the school seemed to change in his favour. The old order had discharged its venom. The boys began to real ise the true value of the forces of spite and indolent obstructiveness with which their youth was in alliance.

§ 4

Not always did Sanderson carry things off with an equal dignity. His temperament was choleric, and ever and again his smouldering indignation at the obstinate folly and jealousy that hampered his work blazed out violently. Dignified silence is impossible as a permanent pose for a teacher whose duty is to express and direct. Sanderson’s business was to get ideas into resisting heads; he was not a born orator but a confused, abundant speaker, and he had to scold, to thrust strange sayings at them, to force their inattention, to beat down an answering ridicule. He was often simply and sincerely wrathful with them, and in his early years he thrashed a great deal. He thrashed hard and clumsily in a white-heat of passion— ‘a hail of swishing strokes that seemed almost to envelop one.’ A newspaper or copybook at the normal centre of infliction availed but little. Cuts fell everywhere on back or legs or fingers. He had been sorely tried, he had been overtried. It was a sort of heartbreak of blows.

The boys argued mightily about these unorthodox swishings. It was all a part of Sanderson being a strange creature and not in the tradition. It was lucky no one was ever injured. But they found

something in their own unregenerate natures that made them understand and sympathise with this eager, thwarted stranger and his thunderstorms of anger. Generally he was a genial person, and that, too, they recognised. It is manifest quite early in the story that Sanderson interested his boys as his predecessor had never done. They discussed his motives, his strange sayings, his peculiar locutions with accumulating curiosity. Two sorts of schoolmasters boys respect: those who are completely dignified and opaque to them, and those who are transparent enough to show honesty at the core. Sanderson was transparently honest. If he was not pompously dignified he was also extraordinarily free from vanity; and if he thrust work and toil upon his boys it was at any rate not to spare himself that he did so. And he won them also by his wonderful teaching. In the early days he did a lot of the science teaching himself; later on the school grew too big for him to do any of this. All the old boys I have been able to consult agree that his class instruction was magnificent.

Every year in the history of Sanderson's headmastership shows a growing understanding between the boys and himself. 'Beans,' they called him, but every year it was less and less necessary to 'Give 'm Beans,' as the vulgar say. The tale of storms and thrashings dwindles until it vanishes from the story. In the last decade of his rule there was hardly any corporal punishment at all. The whole school as time went on grew into a humorous affectionate appreciation of his genius. It was a sunny, humorous school when I knew it; there was little harshness and no dark corners. No boy had been expelled for a long time.

§ 5

The official life gives a diagram and particulars of the growth of the school during Sanderson's time, and there is no need to repeat those particulars here. From 1892 to 1900 there was no very remarkable increase in the number of boys; it rose from ninety-odd to a hundred and twenty or so. Then as Sanderson's grip became sure there followed a rapid expansion.

From 1900 onwards Oundle grew about as fast as it was possible to grow. New laboratories were built, new subjects introduced so as to furnish a wider and wider variety of courses to meet such intellectual types as the school had hitherto failed to interest. There was a great development of biological and agricultural work from about 1909 onward. The attention given to art increased, and there was a great change and revolution in the history teaching. By 1920 the numbers of the school were soaring up towards six hundred. He wanted them to go to eight hundred, because he still wanted to increase the variety of courses, and the larger numbers gave a better prospect of classifying out the boys effectively and making I sure that each course of studies was sufficiently attended to keep it active and efficient.

The prestige of the school grew even more rapidly than its size. From 1905 onward the inquiring parent who wanted something more than school games and *esprit de corps* was sure to hear of Oundle.

And Sanderson was growing with his school. Every installment of success stimulated him to new experiments and fresh innovations. No one learnt so muc h at Oundle as he did, and it is with that growth of his conception of school method and his widening vision of the schoolmaster's role in the world that we must now proceed to deal.

III. — THE REPLACEMENT OF COMPETITION BY GROUP WORK

§ 1

When Sanderson first came to Oundle his ideas seem to have differed from the normal scholastic opinion of his time mainly in his conviction of the interestingness and attractiveness of real scientific work for many types of boys that the established classical and stylistic mathematical teaching failed to grip. He developed these new aspects of school work, and his earliest success lay in the fact that he got a higher percentage of boys interested and active in school work than was usual elsewhere, and that the report of this and the report of his wholesome and stimulating personality spread into the world of anxious parents. But it early became evident to him that the new subjects necessitated methods of handling in vivid contrast to the methods stereotyped for the classical and mathematical courses.

There have been three chief phases in the history of educational method in the last five centuries, the phase of compulsion, the phase of competition, and the phase of natural interest. They overlap and mingle. Medieval teaching being largely in the hands of celibates, who had acquired no natural understanding of children and young people, and who found them extremely irritating, irksome, or exciting, was stupid and brutal in the extreme. Young people were driven along a straight and narrow road to a sort of prison of dusty knowledge by teachers almost as distressed as themselves. The medieval school went on to the chant of rote-learning with an accompaniment of blows, insults, and degradations of the dunce-cap type. The Jesuit schools, to which the British public schools owe so much, sought a human motive in vanity and competition; they turned to rewards, distinctions, and competitions. Sir Francis Bacon recommended them justly as the model schools of his time. The class-list with its pitiless relegation of two-thirds of the class to self-conscious mediocrity and dufferdom was the symbol of this second, slightly more enlightened phase. The school of the rod gave place to

the school of the class-list. An aristocracy of leading boys made the pace and the rest of the school found its compensation in games or misbehaviour. So long as the sole subjects of instruction remained two dead languages and formal mathematics, subjects essentially unappetising to sanely constituted boys, there was little prospect of getting school method beyond this point.

By the end of the eighteenth century schoolmasters were beginning to realise what most mothers know by instinct, that there is in all young people a curiosity, a drive to know, an impulse to learn, that is available for educational ends, and has still to be properly exploited for educational ends. It is not within our present scope to discuss Pestalozzi, Froebel, and the other great pioneers in this third phase of education. Nearly all children can be keenly interested in some subject, and there are some subjects that appeal to nearly all children. Directly you cease to insist upon a particular type of achievement in a particular line of attainment, directly your school gets out of the narrow lane and moves across open pasture, it goes forward of its own accord. The class-list and the rod, so necessary in the dusty fury of the lane, cease to be necessary. In the effective realisation of this Sanderson was a leader.

For a time he let the classical and literary work of the school run on upon the old competition compulsion, class-list lines. For some years he does not seem to have realised the possibility of changes in these fields. But from the first in his mechanical teaching and very ‘soon in ma thematics the work ceased to have the form of a line of boys all racing to acquire an identical parcel of knowledge, and took on the form more and more of clusters of boys surrounding an attractive problem. There grew up out of the school Science a periodic display, the Science Conversazione, in which groups of youngsters displayed experiments and collections they had co-operated to produce. Later on a Junior Conversazione developed. These conversaziones show the Oundle spirit in its most typical expression. Sanderson derived much from the zeal and interest these groups of boys displayed. He realised how much finer and how much more fruitful was the mutual stimulation of a common end than the vulgar effort for a class place. The clever boy under a class-list system loves the shirker and the dullard who make the running easy,

but a group of boys working for a common end display little patience with shirking. The stimulus is much more intimate, and it grows. Jones minor is told to play up, exactly as he is told to play up in the playing field.

In the summer term the conversazione in its fully developed form took up a large part of the energy of the school. Says the official life:

'All the senior boys in the school were eligible for this work, the only qualification necessary being a willingness to work and to sacrifice some, at least, of one's free time. There was never any dearth of willing workers, the total number often exceeding two hundred. The chief divisions of the conversazione were: Physics and Mechanics; Chemistry; Biology; anti Workshops. A boy who volunteered to help was left free to choose which branch he would adopt. Having chosen, he gave his name to the master in charge; if he had any particular experiment in view, he mentioned it, and if suitable, it was allotted to him. If he had no suggestion, an experiment was suggested, and he was told where information could be obtained. As a general rule two or three boys worked together at anyone experiment.

'Some of the experiments chosen required weeks of preparation; there was apparatus to be made and fitted up, information to be sought and absorbed, so that on the final day an intelligent account could be given to any visitor watching the experiment. This work was all done out of school hours. Four or five days before Speech Day, ordinary school lessons ceased for those taking part in the conversazione; the laboratories, class-rooms, and workshops were portioned out so that each boy knew exactly where he was to work, and how much space he had. The setting up of the experiments began. To anyone visiting the school on these particular days it must have seemed in a state of utter confusion, boys wandering about in all directions apparently under no supervision, and often to all appearances with no purpose. A party might be met with a jam-jar and fishing-net near the river; others might be found miles away on bicycles, going to a place where some particular flower might be found. Three or four boys would appear to be smashing up an engine and scattering its parts in all directions, while others could be seen wheeling a barrow-load of bricks or trying to mix a hod of mortar.

Gradually a certain amount of order appeared, some experiments were tried and found to work satisfactorily, others failed, and investigation into the cause of failure had to be carried out. As the final day approached excitement increased, frantic telegrams were sent to know, for example, if the liquid air had been despatched, frequent visits to the railway-station were made in the hopes of finding some parcel had arrived; sometimes it was even necessary to motor to Peterborough to pick up material which otherwise would arrive too late. A programme giving a short description of the experiment or exhibit had to pass through the printer's hands. At last everything would be ready; occasionally, but very seldom, an experiment had to be abandoned or another substituted at the last moment.'

The year 1905 marked a phase in the co-operative system of work on the mechanical side with the machining and erection of a six-horse-power reversing engine, designed for a marine engine of 3500 horse-power. Castings and drawings were supplied by the North Eastern Marine Engineering Works. The engine was a triumphant success, and thereafter a number of engines has been built by groups of boys. Concurrently with this steady replacement of the instructional-exercise system by the group-activity system, the mathematical work became less and less a series of exercises in style and more and more an attack upon problems needing solution in the workshops and laboratories, with the solution as the real incentive to the work. These dips into practical application gave a great stimulus to the formal mathematical teaching, for the boys realised as they could never have done otherwise the value of such work as a 'tool-sharpening' exercise of ultimately real value.

§ 2

Quite early in his Oundle days Sanderson displayed his disposition towards collective as against solitary activity in his dealings with the school music. When he came to the school the 'musical' boys were segregated from the non-musical in a choir; the rest listened in conscious exclusion and inferiority. But from the outset he set

himself to make the whole school sing and attend to music. The few boys with bad ears were carried along with the general flood; the discord they made was lost in the mass effect. Towards the end a very great proportion of the boys were keen listeners to and acute critics of music. They would crowd into the Great Hall on Sunday evenings to listen to the organ recital with which that day usually concluded.

§ 3

Presently Sanderson began to apply the lessons he had learnt from grouping boys for scientific work to literature and history. Most of us can still recall the extraordinary dreariness of school literature teaching; the lesson that was a third-rate lecture, the note-taking, the rehearsal of silly opinions about books unread and authors unknown, the horrible annotated editions, the still more horrible text-books of literature. Sanderson set himself to sweep all this away. A play, he held, was primarily to be played, and the way to know and understand it was to play it. The boys must be cast for parts and learn about the other characters in relation to the one they had taken. Questions of language and syntax, questions of interpretation, could be dealt with best in relation to the production. But most classes had far too many boys to be treated as a single theatrical company, so small groups of boys were cast for each part. There would be three or four Othellos, three or four Desdemonas or Iagos. They would act their parts simultaneously or successively. The thing might or might not ripen into a chosen cast giving a costume performance in public. The important thing is that the boys were brought into the most active contact possible with the reality of the work they studied. The groups discussed stage ‘business’ and gesture and the precise stress to lay on this or that phrase. The master stood like a producer in the auditorium of the Great Hall. Let anyone compare the vitality of that sort of thing with the ordinary lesson from an annotated text-book.

The group system was extended with increasing effectiveness into more and more of the literary and historical work. Here the School Library took the place of the laboratory and was indeed as necessary

to the effective development of the group method. The official life of Sanderson gives a typical scheme of operations pursued in the case of a form studying the period 1783-1905. The subject was first divided up into parts, such as the state of affairs preceding the French Revolution; the French Revolution in relation to England; the industrial system and economic problems generally; and so on. The form divided up into groups and each group selected a part or a section of a part for its study. The objective of each group was the preparation of a report, illustrated by maps, schedules, and so forth, upon the section it had studied. After a preliminary survey of the whole field under the direction of a master, each boy followed up the particular matter assigned to him by individual reading for a term, supplemented when necessary by consultation with the master. Then came the preparation of maps and other material, the assembling of illuminating quotations from the books studied, the drafting of the group's report, the discussion of the report. In some cases where the group was in disagreement there would be a minority report.

In this way there was scarcely a boy in the form who did not feel himself contributing and necessary to the general result, and who was not called upon not merely by his master but by his colleagues, for some special exertion. It might be thought that the departmentalising of the subject among groups would mean that the knowledge would accumulate in pockets, but this was not the case. Boys of separate groups talked with one another of their work and found a lively interest in their different points of view. It is rare that boys who have received the same lesson can find much in it to talk about, unless it is a comparison of who has retained most, but a boy who has been preparing maps of the Napoleonic military campaigns may find the liveliest interest in another who has been following the history of the same period from the point of view of sea power. There was indeed a very considerable amount of interchange, and when it came to facing external examiners and testing the general knowledge attained, the Oundle boys were found to compare favourably with boys who had been drummed in troops through complete histories of the chosen period.

This group system of work had arisen naturally out of the conditions of the new laboratory teaching, and it had been developed

for the sake of its educational effectiveness; but as it grew it became more and more evident to Sanderson that its effects went far beyond mere intellectual attainment. It marked a profound change in the spirit of the school. It was not only that the spirit of co-operation had come in. That had already been present on the cricket and football fields. But the boys were working to make something or to state something and not to gain something. It was the spirit of creation that now pervaded the school.

And he perceived, too, that the boys he would now be sending out into the world must needs carry that creative spirit with them and play a very different part from the ambitious star boys who went on from a training under the older methods. They would play an as yet incalculable part in redeeming the world from the wild orgy of competition that was now afflicting it. In one of his very characteristic sermons he gave his ripened conception of this side of his work. He had been speaking, perhaps with a certain idealisation, of the old craftsmen's guilds — with a glance or so at the Grocers' Company. The school, he declared, was to be no longer an arena but a guild. For what was a guild?

'A community of co-workers and no competition, that was its idea. It is all based on the system of apprenticeships and co-workers. The apprentices helped the masters in every way they could; even the masters were grouped together for mutual assistance and were called assistants. The Company was a mystery or guild of craftsmen and dealers, and their aim was to produce good craftsmen and good dealers.

'To-day, in these days of renascence, we return to the aim and methods of the guilds. Boys are to be apprentices and master-workers and co-workers. In a community this needs must be. We are called to a definite work, all who are privileged to attend here, staff and boys alike — the work of infusing life into the boys committed to our care. Nor can anyone stand out of this and seek work elsewhere. Nemesis sets in for all who try to live for themselves alone. They may try to work — but their work is sterile. The community calls for the energies and activities of all. We are beginning to learn something of what this means. It does not mean an abandonment of the best methods of the past. But it does mean that we have to

concern ourselves with the pressing needs and problems of to-day, and join in the work. I do not dwell on this now. My mind goes off to the possible effect of these ideas on the general life of the school.

'The working of these ideas is well seen already in the outdoor life of the school. We see it when houses are getting their teams together to join a competition for a shield, say. We see the mutual help, the voluntary practice, the consultations of the captain with others. We see it in the work in the Cadet Corps. We see it in the preparation for a play — this time, the *Midsummer Night's Dream.* We see it in the new work in the library, and we see it as clearly as in anything in the preparation for a conversazione. No more valuable training can be given than this last-well worth all the many kinds of sacrifice it entails. From it, at any rate, the spirit of competition is, I think, altogether removed. Boys, we believe, set forth to do their work as well as they possibly can — but not to beat one another...I dwell upon these things because we hope that all boys will become workers at last, with interest and zeal, in some part of the field of creation and inquiry, which is the true life of the world. It is from such workers, investigators, searchers, the soul of the nation is drawn. We will first of all transform the life of the school, then the boys, grown into men — and girls from their schools grown into women — whom their schools have enlisted into this service, will transform the life of the nation and of the whole world.'

IV. — THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND REALITY

§ 1

In the previous chapter I have told how Sanderson was taught by his laboratories and library the possibility of a new type of school with a new spirit, and how he grew to realise that an organisation of such new schools, a multiplication of Oundles, must necessarily produce a new spirit in social and industrial life. Concurrently with that, the obvious implications of applied science were also directing his mind to the close reaction between schools and the organisation of the economic life of the community.

It is amusing to reflect that Sanderson probably owed his appointment at Oundle to the simple desire of various members of the Grocers' Company for a good school of technical science. They did not want any change in themselves, they did not want any change in the world nor in the methods of trading and employment, but they did want to see their sons and directors and managers equipped with the sharper, more modern edge of a technical scientific training. Germany had frightened them. If this new training could be technical without science and modern without liberality, so much the better. So the business man brought his ideas to bear upon Oundle, to produce quite beyond his expectation a counter-offensive of the school upon business organisation and methods. Oundle built its engines, organised itself as an efficient munitions factory during the war, made useful chemical inquiries, extended its work into agriculture, analysed soils and manures for the farmers of its district, ran a farm and did much able competent technical work, but it also set itself to find out what were the aims and processes of business and what were the reactions of these processes upon the life of the community. From the laboratory a boy would go to a careful examination of labour conditions under the light of Ruskin's *Unto This Last;* he was brought to a balanced and discriminating attitude towards strikes and

lock-outs; he was constantly reminded that the end of industry is not profits but life a more abundant life for men.

As one reads through the sermons and addresses that are given in *Sanderson of Oundle* one finds a steadily growing consciousness of the fact that there was a considerable and increasing proportion of Oundle boys destined to become masters, managers, and leaders in industrial and business life, and with that growing consciousness there is a growing determination that the school work they do shall be something very far beyond the acquisition of money-getting dodges and devices and commercialised views of science. More and more does he see the school not as a training ground of smart men for the world that is, but as a preliminary working model of the world that is to be.

Two quotations from two of Sanderson's sermons will serve to mark how vigorously he is tugging back the English schools from the gentlemanly aloofness of scholarship and school-games to a real relationship to the current disorder of life, and how high he meant to carry them to dominance over that disorder.

The first extract is from a sermon on Faraday. Under Sanderson, it has been remarked, Faraday ousted St. Anthony from being the patron saint of Oundle School. 'With what abundant prodigality,' Sanderson exclaims, 'has Nature given up of her secrets since his day!'

'A hundred years ago Man and Nature as we think of them to-day were unexplored by science; to-day a new world, a new creation. Industrial life has developed, machinery, discoveries, inventions — steam engine, gas engine, dynamo — electrical machinery, telegraphy, radioactive bodies, tremendous openings out of chemistry, biology, economics, ethics. All new. These are Thy works, O God, and tell of Thee. Not now only may we search for Thy Presence in the places where Thou wert wont in days of old to come to man. Not there only. Not only now in the stars of heaven; or by the seashore, or in the waters of the river, or of the springs; among the trees, the flowers, the corn and wine, on the mountain or in the plain; not now only dost Thou come to man in Thy works of art, in music, in literature; but Thou, O God, dost reveal Thyself in all the multitude of Thy works; in the workshop, the factory, the mine, the

laboratory, in industrial life. No symbolism here, but the Divine God. A new Muse is here:

'Mightier than Egypt's tombs, Fairer than Grecia's, Roma's temples. Prouder than Milan's statued, spired cathedral, More picturesque than Rhenish castle-keeps, We plan even now to raise, beyond them all, Thy great cathedral, sacred industry, no tomb — A keep for Life.'

'And the builders, a mighty host of men: Homeric heroes, fighting against a foe, and yet not a foe, but an invisible, impalpable thing wherein the combatant is the shadow of the assailant.

'Mighty men of science and mighty deeds. A Newton who binds the universe together in uniform law; Lagrange, Laplace, Leibnitz with their wondrous mathematical harmonies; Coulomb measuring out electricity; Oversted with the brilliant flash of insight "that the electric conflict acts in a revolving manner"; Faraday, Ohm, Ampere, Joule, Maxwell, Hertz, Rontgen; and in another branch of science, Cavendish, Davy, Dalton, Dewar; and in another, Darwin, Mendel, Pasteur, Lister, Sir Ronald Ross. All these and many others, and some whose names have no memorial, form a great host of heroes, an army of soldiers — fit companions of those of whom the poets have sung; all, we may be sure, living daily in the presence of God, bending like the reed before His will; fit companions of the knights of old of whom the poets sing, fit companions of the men whose names are renowned in history, fit companions of the great statesmen and warriors whose names resound through the world.

'There is the great Newton at the head of this list comparing himself to a child playing on the seashore gathering pebbles, whilst he could see with prophetic vision the immense ocean of truth yet unexplored before him. At the end is the discoverer Sir Ronald Ross, who had gone out to India in the medical service of the Army, and employed his leisure in investigating the ravishing diseases which had laid India low and stemmed its development. In twenty years of labour he discovers how malaria is transmitted and brings the disease wi thin the hold of man.'

The second is from a sermon called 'The Garden of Life.'

'As Canon Driver says, "Man is not made simply to enjoy life; his end is not pleasure; nor are the things he has to do necessarily to give

pleasure or lead to what men call happiness." This is not the biological purpose of man. His purpose or instinctive end is to develop the capacities of the garden in the wilderness of nature; to adapt it to his own ends, i.e. to the ends of the races of men. Or, as we would now say, his aim is to take his part in the making of his kind; and he is to "keep it," or guard it — i.e. he is to conquer the jungle in it, to prevent it from roving wild again, from reverting to the jungle, from losing law and order, from becoming unruly and disorderly, from breaking loose and running amok. He is to bring and maintain order out of the tangle of things, he is to diagnose diseases; he is to co-ordinate the forces of nature; he is above all things to reveal the spirit of God in all the works of God.

'And in all this we read the duty and service of schools. The business of schools is through and by the use of a common service to get at the true spiritual nature of the ordinary things we have to deal with. The spirit of the true active life does not come to us *only* in those experiences we have been so accustomed to think of as beautiful and revealing. The active spirit of life is not revealed simply by the arts-the beautiful arts as they may be thought-of music or painting, or literature. These indeed may be only and abundantly *material,* and the eye and ear may be blind and deaf to the active, creative, discovering, revealing spirit. "Painting, or art generally, as such," says Ruskin in his *Modern Painters,* "with all its technicalities, difficulties, executive skills, pleasant and agreeable sensations, and its particular ends, is nothing but an expressive language, invaluable if we know it as we might know it as the vehicle of thought, but by itself nothing." He who has learnt what is commonly considered as the whole art of painting, that is the art of representing any natural object faithfully, has as yet only learnt the language by which his thoughts are to be expressed. One language or mode of expression may be more difficult than another; but it is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by the greatness, the awakening, the transmuting and transfiguring conception and knowledge of the thought presented, that the gift cometh, that man is created. Awkward, discordant, stammering attempts may be the burning message of a new hope. But this "voice" of art is too often drowned. It is drowned by executive skill — as is the history of all

art-when this skill stretches itself to present things that are static, motionless, dead...

'It is especially our duty to reveal the spirit of God in the things of science and of the practical life. Herein lies a new revelation, a new language, a direct symbolism. Science, just like art and music, can be materialistic — science can aim only at mechanical advancement and worldly wealth, which is not wealth at all — just as art can aim only at pleasure, desire, and drawing-room appreciation. But this need not be so. Certainly no one in a responsible position can teach science for long without the coming of the revelation of a new voice, a new method of expression, a new art — revealing quite changed standards of value, quite new significances of what we speak of as culture, beauty, love, justice. A new voice speaks to the souls of men and women calling for a new age with all its altered relationships and adventures of life.

'With eyes opened to this new art you can wander through the science block and find in it all a new Bible, a new book of Genesis. So we believe. This is our duty and our faith. Into this Paradise have you been placed to dress it and to keep it.'

Let me turn from these two passages of talk to his boys — they are rescued from a mass of pencil notes in his study — to a passage from an address delivered in the Great Hall in Leeds in 1920. It shows very plainly the quality of his conception of what I have called the return of schools to reality.

'Schools should be miniature copies of the world. We often find that methods adopted in school are just the methods we should like applied in the state. We should, in fact, direct school life so that the spirit of it may be the spirit which will tend to alleviate social and industrial conditions. I will give an example of the kind of influence the ideals and methods of a school can exert upon the working life. I will take a condition of labour which is now recognised as probably the greatest of tragedies. It is the slow decay of the faculties of crowds of men and women, caused by the nature of their employment — the tragedy of the unstretched faculties. So common is it, and ordinary, that we pass it by on one side; but no one can go into a factory without seeing workers engaged in work which is far below their capacities. Decay sets in, and the death of talent and

enthusiasm, the inspirer of creative work. A little thought will convince us that the process of decay of such a delicate and vital organism as the brain is bound to set up violent, destructive, anarchic forces which go on for several years. A recent writer in the *Times Educational Supplement* (and this paper cannot be called revolutionary) says that the tragedy of undeveloped talent is being seen more and more to be a gigantic waste of potentiality and an unpardonable cruelty. It is a tragic disease and produces in early life startling intellectual and moral disturbances, which are the natural sources of unrest. As years go on a mental stupor sets in, and there is peace, but peace on a low plane of life. The loss to the community by this waste is colossal, and it is not too much to say that the output of man could be multiplied beyond conception.

'Schools should send boys out into the industrial world whose aim should be to study these tragedies, and by experiments, by new inventions, by organisation, try, we may hope, by some of their own school experience, to alleviate the disease. To my mind this is the supreme aim of schools in the new era.'

V. — THE GROWTH OF SANDERSON SHOWN IN HIS SERMONS AND SCRIPTURE LESSONS

§ 1

Before I go on to a discussion of the latest, broadest, and most interesting phase of Sanderson's mental life, I would like to give my readers as vivid a picture as I can of his personality and his methods of delivery. I have tried to convey an impression of his stout and ruddy presence, his glancing spectacles, his short, compact but allusive delivery, his general personal jolliness. I will give now a sketch of one of his Scripture lessons made by two of the boys in the school. Nothing I think could convey so well his rich discursiveness nor the affectionate humour he inspired throughout the school. Here it is.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Delivered by F. W. Sanderson on Sunday, 25th May 1919, and taken down word for word by X and Y, and subsequently written up by them.

Limitations of space and time have prevented them from including all the lesson. Omissions have been indicated. They apologise for the lapses of the speaker into inaudibility, which were not their fault. They do not hold themselves in any way responsible for the opinions expressed herein.

'ANALYSIS'

'of the portions copied.

'Characteristic portions in the Gospel of St. Matthew.

'Obstinacy of the Oxford and Cambridge Schools Examination Board.

'Character of the devil, according to some modern writers.

'First act of our Lord on beginning the Galilean Ministry.

'Empire Day.

'Subject of the Scripture lesson: — St. Matthew, chaps. iv and v.

('The Temptations, the commencement of the Galilean Ministry,

the first portion of the Sermon on the Mount.')

'(The headmaster enters, worries his gown, sits down, adjusts his waistcoat, and coughs once.)

'The — um — er — I am taking you through the Gospel of St. Matthew. I think, as a matter of fact, we got to the end of the third chapter. We won't spend much time over the fourth. The fourth, I think, is the — er — er — Temptations, which I have already taken with you — a rather — er — very interesting — ah — very interesting — er — survival. That the Temptation Narrative should have survived shows that there is probably something of value in it or I do not think it would have survived. There are two incidents of very similar character of — er — very — er — similar character and — ah — different to a certain extent from everything else — er — ah — There is a boy in that corner not listening to me. Who is that boy in the corner there? No, not you — two rows in front. I will come down to you later, my boy. There are two incidents in the Gospel Narrative which are similar in — er — character and which I have for the moment called "Survivals" — very characteristic, namely, the somewhat surprising narrative of the Temptation of our Lord, and the other the account of the Transfiguration. These are different in form and character from other narratives, just in the same way as the account of our Lord sending messages to the Baptist differs from others. Er — yes — that last one. I should put them together as coming from a similar source (lapse into inaudibility — bow wow wow. Unique in characteristic — bow wow wow-Somewhat subtle — bow wow). One remarks that the Temptations are always looked at from the personal point of view, which I have put down in my synopsis. Has anybody here got my synopsis? lend it to me a moment. I don't think the personal significance of the Gospel stories has importance nowadays. We needn't consider it. That's what I think about things in general. Personal importance giving place to universal needs. We are not so much concerned with whether boys do evil or not. Of course it annoys me if I find a boy doing evil. Leading others astray. Shockingly annoying. Oughtn't to be. Like continuous mathematics not enabling a boy to pass in arithmetic — bow wow wow — screw loose. See what I mean, K —— ? Not referring to you, my boy (laughter). Hunt me up something in Plato

about all these things. During the last generation —

‘(Half a page omitted.)

‘Just in the same way from another point of view shall we live for own advancement, which we are continually tempted to do? It’s awfully annoying if you do certain things and people won’t recognise them. I was pretty heftily annoyed myself at a meeting of the Oxford and Cambridge Board. Professor Barker — great man — I nearly always agree with him. Professor Barker. They had made science compulsory for the school certificate. Bow wow wow. I don’t want boys turned aside from their main purpose to have to get up scraps and snippets of science. Literary pursuits and so on. I wouldn’t have it at any price. Bow wow wow. Modern languages are compulsory too. By looking at a boy’s French set I can tell whether he can pass or not. Bow wow. Professor Barker proposed that science should be voluntary. I seconded him, but I said that languages should be voluntary as well. He didn’t see that at all. Isn’t it enough to make a man angry?

‘(Half a dozen lines omitted from our note as incomprehensible.)

‘Now I am inclined to think that Satan in this Gospel is not intended to be the Satan of our minds — the prince of evil. He is in tended to be more like the Satan in the book of Job. He is the devil’s advocate. He argues for the other side. For the opposition. He is put up to create opposition. This may in itself be a valuable thing. I don’t know that I need go further into it. I would just like to tell you this, boys. Some modern writers, especially Bernard Shaw, have a very high esteem for the devil. He[*] prefers hell to heaven. So he says. Of course he hasn’t been there, so he can’t tell. So he is voted a dangerous personage because, dear souls, they don’t know what he means. What *he* means is that heaven as it has been run down to and God as He has been run down to — everything placid and simple and inactive and non-creative and sleepy. People don’t worship God. They worship (burble burble). They don’t disturb their minds and think about things. That’s what he means. Yes. Man and Superman. Activity of intellect. That’s more or less what he has in mind. He prefers people doing something outrageously wrong than doing nothing at all. I don’t know if it’s true; it’s all expressed in Greek thought.

[* Mr. Shaw]

‘(Four pages omitted on running with the tide, Lloyd George, the importance of French in examinations, and the correct way of getting a true national spirit.)

‘Well, our Lord now proceeded to found His Galilean Ministry. And what was the first thing He did, L —— ? It’s quite obvious. What did He do? Obvious. Were you thinking of what I said just now? No, sir. My stream of words goes over you, not through you. Obvious. Now what was the first thing He did? What is obviously the first thing He did? Why, it’s painfully obvious, even to L —— . What was it? What? Where are we, L —— ? L —— has lost the place. Which paragraph do I mean, L —— ? Read the paragraph I mean. No. I have finished that. Next one. Obvious. What is it about? Yes, what is it about? What is it about? Two or four? Yes, four! Now what is obvious? Obvious! Now you’ve just got it, and you’re ten minutes behind. Of course. The first obvious thing He had to do was to get a band of faithful disciples. Very first thing He did. What did H call them to be? To be what? Fishers of Men. Obvious.

‘(Five pages omitted on Empire Day, Medical Study, and Cancer.)

‘Now the — er — the Sermon on the Mount. You have heard this ever since you were on your mother’s knee. At least I hope so. Beyond the historical times of your memory. For you, the Sermon on the Mount is as old as the ages. And yet I dare trespass on the Sermon on the Mount. “I’ve heard of it before,” you say. “I’m tired of it. Do something fresh.” Boys, you must go and read old things and breathe into them the new Spirit of Life. Now what is that chapter in Ezekiel, boys? Do you know the number of the page, and the paragraph, and the chapter? No. What am I talking about? Why, the valley of dry bones. Never heard of it! No. Is it in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or where, or Habakkuk? Is it in Ezekiel 1? No.36? No.37? Yes. Dry Bones. Bones. Yes. That’s what. I am going to take you to a valley of dry bones. Dry Bones. Bones. It is your business to go into the dry bones of the past and cover them with flesh, and breathe into them the new Spirit. I often read the Sermon on the Mount. It never bores me. I have more excuse to be bored than you. I learned it, gracious goodness, how long ago! Beyond Historic times. I loved it as a boy. Dry Bones.

‘(Three pages on the Sermon on the Mount.)

‘Now yesterday was Empire Day. Why did you want me to put the flag up? Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves! Is not that it? (Yes, sir.) Dear boys! I wouldn’t throw cold water on it for worlds. Well, you had your flag. It didn’t fly. There was no wind behind it. There was no devil to blow it. Dear boys, you wanted that flag for a reason I think a shade wrong. It wouldn’t be within the-what’s the word I want? — suited for our modern gauges. The new world won’t come until we give up the idea of Conquest and Extension of Empire — no new kingdom until its members are imbued with the principles that competition is wrong, that conquest is wrong, that co-operativeness is right, and sacrifice a law of nature. Now, how do the seven Beatitudes read with *Rule Britannia?* Now you say you believe in your Bibles. You say you are Christians. Pious Christians. You would be most annoyed if I called you heathens. Well, if so, you believe that these are right: —

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Rule Britannia!

‘Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Rule Britannia!

‘Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Rule Britannia!

‘Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Britannia rules the waves!

‘Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Rule Britannia!

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see all that is worth seeing and living for. Wave your flag! Rule Britannia!

‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Rule Britannia!

‘Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness sake. Rule Britannia! It is incongruous...

‘Dear souls! My dear souls! I wouldn’t lead you astray for anything. I can’t explain it...this national spirit of yours. Beneath it all there is a spirit of great righteousness. I wouldn’t tamper with it for thousands of pounds. But you must just see the other side...

‘(Starts on the Salt of the Earth, but is interrupted by time. Sets a

heavy prep., and goes.)'

§ 2

Now that was the key in which Sanderson dealt with his boys and in which he gave his message to the world. And that is also the key in which they dealt with him. I want to clear out of the reader's mind any idea that this great teacher of men was a solemn and superior person, clear, exact, and exalted, and that his boys had any vague sentimental worship for him. They laughed at him, loved him, understood him, assimilated his ideas, and worked with him. He was much more like a sweating, panting, burly leader pushing a way for himself and others through a thorny thicket. And when I sat in his study and read over the notes of his sermons and scripture lessons I got the same impression of a sturdy fighter thrusting through a tangle.

Al together there were several hundred of these sermon-memoranda. He would take a quire of manuscript paper and write down his notes, not headings merely but sentences, writing very fast, missing out halves of words, leaving phrases incomplete. The result would be a little book with perhaps a title and a date scribbled on the back page. The dozen specimen sermons in the official Life were mostly taken from these rough drafts. There was also a quantity of printed sermons dating from his earliest days at Oundle. So that it was possible to trace his development from the days when every heretical utterance was jealously noted, to the days of complete freedom of thought and expression.

He came into the interlaced briars and brakes of modern religious thought, a trained theological student, but already a very broad one, far from the trite materialistic superstitions of the narrowly orthodox. 'Of what is termed "definite religious teaching" his boys received little,' says one of his clerical assistants. 'The Head fought shy of anything which he felt might cramp a boy's tendency to think for himself and develop his own views.'

This is far from the old days of salvation by belief.

He took Christ as the central figure in his teaching. In his early

days he had prepared a parallel arrangement of the gospels, and this developed into his *Synopsis of the Life of Christ.* He seems to have clung stoutly to the authenticity of the recorded sayings of Christ, but he held himself free to doubt whether we have as yet 'got to the bottom of many sayings of the Master.' And, says the same witness, at once rather vaguely and rather illuminatingly: 'He brushed aside impatiently doubts as to the feasibility of this miracle or that. To any who seemed to be worrying about the actual turning of water into wine at Cana he would urge that they were missing the whole point; cold, lifeless water was turned into warm, life-giving wine — and this was the work of the Master and His new teaching. Could they doubt that? He seemed to feel acutely that the passing of the centuries is liable to bring a distortion as well as an enrichment of the Christian revelation, and for that reason he was always trying to meditate himself, and to get others to meditate, on the true characteristics of the Master in the earliest portraits of Him handed down to us in the Gospels.'

Like all religious teachers he emphasised some aspects of the general doctrine in preference to others, but his accent was never on the sacramental or ceremonial side. The root ideas of orthodox Christianity, the ideas of sin and an atonement, never very prominent in his teaching, faded more and more from his discourses as the years went on. He never seems to have had much sense of sin, and he laid an increasing stress on action, on courage and experiment. One saying he repeated endlessly, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give into your bosom.' Still more frequently he quoted, 'I came that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly.' In his later days that had become a new motto for Oundle School; it ousted 'God grant Grace' from the boys' thoughts in much the same way that Faraday for all spiritual purposes ousted St. Anthony as the patron saint of the school. And in the later sermons one would find side by side with Gospel sayings, exhortations from quite another quarter. The boys were told to 'live dangerously.' The Christ of later Oundle became indeed a very Nietzschean Christ.

§ 3

Orthodox Christianity is built upon the doctrine of the Fall of Man and the damnation of mankind, but I could find only the rarest and remotest allusions to this ground beneath the Christian corner-stone of salvation in the bale of sermons I examined. There is no evidence that Sanderson ever denied the fallen state of man, but he never alluded to it, and the general effect of his teaching went far beyond a mere avoidance. As his teaching developed, another word, a word infrequent in the gospels, became dominant, the word 'creative.' For any mention of 'salvation' you will find twenty repetitions of 'creative.' So far as I can gather he took the word from a hitherto unrecognised Christian father, St. Bertrand Russell. And I should submit the following passage from a sermon on The Garden of Life, to any competent theological body with very grave doubts whether they would accept it as consistent with the teaching of any recognised Christian Church.

'God had created man, and had moulded and fashioned him, and had breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul, possessed of the divine and eternal indestructible spirit, the God-like spirit which would fill him with the glorious and life-giving spirit of unrest, of unsatisfied longings and desire, of the instinctive natural urge to have more of life. A mighty power, a dynamic creative force, a daemonic increasing urge — against which the forces of hell, of destructiveness, of caprice, of lawlessness, of the jungle, cannot prevail. Under this power man and the races of man progress: but without this mental fight, this constant struggle, no life can come. I dwelt on this fact last time I spoke to you, having in mind the mental or intellectual aspect of it, especially for those of you who are working for some searching examinations: for without a persistent, painful, and often enough disappointing effort the understanding of things will not come to you, or to any of us.

'Be true to yourselves, suffer no artifice, or artificial understanding, to throw dust in your eyes. Do not struggle for a static victory. Be true to yourselves. Do not struggle for your recognition, as it were, or for the mere appearance of knowledge — rather struggle to enter into the kingdom, the kingdom of service.

‘And where can you find the inspiration and urge of life The source is wonderfully drawn out for us in the illuminating and suggestive commentary on Genesis you have the advantage to study. A great human book is Canon Driver’s *Commentary,* digging out for us the deep truths of life embedded in the ancient myths of Genesis. A study in the use of words; of what we can learn from words; a new form of text-book. Such a text-book as we should have for the new era. This picture of the coming and making of man tells us a story of the widest applicability. It is found in all the works of God; it is found in all our surroundings; it is found in all our work and toil; it is found most fully and actively in all our daily working life. God, we are told, made a garden for man, and there He placed him and gave him charge of it; and there the Lord God came and walked with man, and communed with man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And there He gave him his chief aim of life, his one purpose. And the Lord God took man, and put him in the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. And then with the memory and order of that garden in his mind He permitted him to receive knowledge, and then sent him out into the great wilderness to find his garden there.’

And here is another passage from a sermon entitled ‘Creative.’

‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was waste and void. The world was in chaos, darkness, and gloom. But it was not to be left in this state. All this condition of anarchy, this waste and void, was the material out of which a new world was to be created. Confused and impossible though everything appeared, yet there was something present that made steadfastly and incessantly for order. So we believe it is now, in the present state of things. All the conflicts and strifes of to-day are the breaking up of the fallow ground. They are the effort to create life. The: are the messengers of the coming of the Son of Man. In storm and tempest cometh the Son of Man. Over all this lawless, shapeless, impossible material of chaos there brooded, we are told, the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God was brooding over the waters like a bird over its nest, and in due time, in the order of creation, a new life was to take shape, and a new world was to rise up. In stately, ordered, majestic manner with all the certainty and irresistible power of gravitation, step by step, stage by stage, out of the welter of anarchy, a life — a new life

— was to come into the world. A new life came.

'And at each stage we hear the words of the Lord God, "Let there be," and "there was." And then: "God saw tha tit was good." There was evening, and there was morning — darkness changed into light — and the day's work was done. And God saw that it was good.

'So, too, it is and will be in the history of the human race. The uplifting of mankind, the coming of fuller life to nations, to man, to classes and sections of men, has come in epochs of change. Such stages in history are like the stages in the life history of a plant. There seem to be resting phases, epochs of apparent quiescence, the cessation of struggle.

'The fact is that some new freedom, some new principle of life, some desire to grow, has for a long time been taking root in the minds and souls of men. The urge to become more creative — to gain more of life and give more of life — becomes at last intense. And there is an immense desire to satisfy the great urge of nature. The old order passes. The gathered forces seek release. The pangs of birth are upon us.'

The further one goes with Sanderson, the stronger is one's sense of new wine fermenting in the old bottle of orthodox Christian formulae. In one of the late sermons he deliberately sets aside the Epistles of the New Testament as of less account than the gospels. He was still diverging when he died. In the last year or so of his life a new word crept into his talk and played an increasingly important part in it. That word was 'syncretism.' He spoke of it more and more plainly as an evil thing. And I cannot but believe, knowing his sources of knowledge and the angle at which he approached history, that he must have been aware that doctrinal Christianity — as detached from the personal teaching of Jesus — is, with its Mithraic blood sacrifice and Sabbath keeping, its Alexandrine trinity, its Egyptian priests, shaven and celibate, its Stella Maris and infant Horus, the completest example of a syncretic religion in the world. My impression is that if he had lived another two years he would have shed his last vestiges of theological paraphernalia and gone straight back to the teaching of the Nazarene, openly and plainly. And that would have created a very embarrassing situation for the members of the Grocers' Company, in the school at Oundle.

§ 4

And what creed was taking the place of the old theological tangle? What interpretation was Sanderson putting upon this ever-new teaching of Christ in the world, that he was stripping so steadily out of its irrelevant casings of dogma and superstition? I cannot do better in answer to that than quote from one of his latest sermons, a sermon delivered on the reassembly of the school at the opening of a new school year.

'The fundamental instinct of life is to create, to make, to discover, to grow, to progress. Every on in some form or other has experience of this joy of creating; the joy of seeing the growth, the building, the change, the coming. The instinct of those in authority has recognised — without perhaps knowing it — the love to create, when they devised punishment — the treadmill, prisons, routine, all thwarting that free creative impulse to the point of torture. Or on a minor scale the trivial school stupidities and idlenesses of 'lines'; detentions without labour or sacrifice or both; or even the cheap and easy physical punishment. Such punishment, if not all inflicted punishment, springs out of the distinctive protective aim of slavery. Creative life comes slowly.

'Life, this beautiful, creative life, comes slowly through the ages, but it comes. Slowly mankind is emerging out of slavery into the beautiful freedom of creative life. Slowly mankind is realising the natural desire, the instinctive natural urge, the essential need for life-of each individual to be free. Free — i.e. free to strive, to endeavour, to reach on wards, to create, to make, to beget. The economic freedom of the individual has been slowly escaping throughout history. It burst into a new vigorous life through the hammering blows of the French Revolution. During the last century or more this principle of freedom has been changing our political relationships and values. This economic escape may be said to have reacted on science, and the modern developments of evolution have benefited by the spreading change in the temper of mind, and by the influx of workers and creative thinkers from the enslaved order.

‘And this raises a large question which I have in mind this morning. Everyone can see to-day the immensity of the problems before the world. It does not need much reflection, or foresight, or knowledge, to see that the organisation of the intercourse of races is hurrying on to becoming a dangerous problem. As has been said, and as anyone I think with powers of sight can see, it is in a large sense a race between education and catastrophe. And the question we in schools have to ask is, Can we in schools be outside all this Can we confine our work, our play, our necessary work, our necessary play, to the recognised, traditional work or play of schools We here think not. We believe that schools should move on towards becoming always a microcosm of the new world. A microcosm, and experiment, of the standards of value, of the commandments, the statutes and judgments, of the organisation, of the visions and aims of a coming world. We must not get into our heads that these are theoretical things, it may be pure idealistic sort of things, or, it may be new and dangerous things. They are none of these things — they can be expressed in very everyday, homely, matter-of-fact things and in the doing of our ordinary work. Of course they do mean thought, a tendency to believe, a faith in boys — and they do mean labour, and sacrifice-as they are called or thought of at first — until both pass on into the beautiful life.

‘Such aims and urges become terrific powers for prolonging the life of man; and as the stream of life goes on it becomes more and more like a vast river moving slowly forward with great power, receiving more and more of tributaries, slowly, strongly, surely flowing on “unto the estuary that enlarges, and spreads itself grandly as it pours its waters into the great ocean of sea.”

‘But the beginnings are here: and here boys must find themselves in the great stream of true life. They must find themselves in the land of the great vision, of faith, of service. No beating or marking of time here. No easy static state. No satisfaction with conventional static comfort. Here they will join in this great world-life. They came from their homes to join the great world-lif here. Even these tiny boys here will feel that something is before them that matters, something of true life and true intent. They will get the germs of life from some of those things we are perpetually trying to do, and never succeeding in

doing. They will catch the contagion of effort. For learning is not our object here, but doing. They may learn things in a deadly static way, they may learn much in a static way and gain nothing of life. Not here, I hope. No, the germs of life come from the spirit; from the incessant travail of the soul; from high intent; they come from the burning desire to know of the things that are coming into the world...'

VI. — THE WAR AND SANDERSON'S AND PROPAGANDA OF RECONSTRUCTION

§ 1

The disaster of the great war came to Sanderson as a tremendous distressful stimulant, a monstrous and tragic turn in human affairs that he had to square with his aims and teaching. He had had our common awareness of its possibility, and yet when the crash came it took him, as it took most of us, by surprise. At first he accepted the war as a dire heroic necessity. This aggression of a military imperialism had to be faced valiantly. That was how he saw it. Both his sons joined up at the earliest possible moment, and the school braced itself up to train its senior boys as officers, to help in the production of munitions, to produce aviators, gunners and engineers for the great service of the war.

The practical quality of the old boys from Oundle became apparent at once. They stepped from laboratory and factory and office into commissions; they returned from all over the world to prepare for the battlefields. By 1918 over a thousand Oundle boys had gone into the fighting services, three had V.C.'s, many had been mentioned in despatches, awarded the Military Cross and the like.

He did his best to find God and creative force in the world convulsion. Here is a part of an address to the Church Parade of the Cadet Corps which shows his very fine and very human struggle to impose a nobility of interpretation upon the grim distressful last stages of the war.

'It is a pleasant thing to wander about these fields and watch the cadets who are told off to instruct their squads. It is a splendid illustration of the power of co-operation in education-where boys and men, or where a community work together, teaching one another, learning one from the other, where all are teachers and scholars, a body of co-workers, helping, encouraging, stimulating each other. This community method is dominant wherever there is a great stirring, e.g. a great call, a great pressing into a new kingdom; wherever there is a great discovery and a new need. The war will

establish it in schools.

'And just one word when you go forth from here. You will carry this mutual co-operative spirit with you. You will love your men, take care of their interests, making full use of their individual faculties, and learn to be co-workers with them.

'It is often said that wars will never cease that they are a necessity — and in a sense this is true. One thing we know quite well, that in all affairs of life *peace* may be simply the peace of death. There is the peace of lifelessness, of inactivity, notwithstanding all its autumnal beauty. There is the quiet peace which changes not, the conventional belief, the conventional kind of round of work, with lack of initiative, of experiment, of testing and trials. There is the peace which follows on contentment with things as they are, the peace of death. The land of peace and of convention, and of cruel contentment. The land of dark Satanic mills — as in Blake's imagery. War may come to break up this deathful peace. So said John Ruskin. I have a letter written to me just when the war broke out. In July 1914 the O.T.C. was inspected by General Birkbeck, and in his speech he expressed his belief that war was coming. On 2nd August, 1914, he wrote to me:

'"DEAR MR. SANDERSON, — We little thought when I spoke to those boys of yours how near we were to our trial!" and he adds: "These are the words of a peaceful philosopher, Mr. Ruskin, when concluding a series of lectures on War at Woolwich Royal Academy Institution, which may give you comfort. Men talk of peace and plenty, of peace and learning, of peace and civilisation; but I found that those are not the words which the muse of history has coupled together! On her lips the words are Peace and Selfishness, Peace and Sensuality, Peace and Death!!! I learned, in short, that all great nations learned their truth of word and strength of thought in war; that they were taught by war and betrayed by peace — trained by war and deceived by peace — nourished in war and decayed in peace; in a word, that they were born in war and expired in peace."

'This is the prophet's call to arise and awaken out of sleep; to abandon the easy life of routine and routine's belief. It is a call to rise up and breathe life into the dry bones of the past; it is the trumpet blast for active warfare against all things that have become lifeless and dead. It is the herald call for a new army, to build up a new

world of active, creative, dynamic Peace.'

§ 2

In April 1918 his eldest son, Roy, died of wounds at Estaires after the battle of the Lys. Loss after loss of boys and trusted colleagues had grieved and distressed him; now came this culminating blow. There had been the closest understanding between father and son; Roy had left engineering to become a master at the Royal Naval College, Osborne, which Sanderson had helped to reconstruct, and more and more had the father looked to his boy as his chosen disciple and possible successor.

On the Whitsunday following Sanderson preached a sermon on the text: 'I will not leave you desolate, I will come unto you.' The notes of the sermon were untidy, and have had to be carefully pieced together, but I think they rise to a very high level of poetry. And when 1 copy them out I think how the dear sturdy man in his academic gown must have stood up and clung to his desk, after his manner, full of grief and sorrowful memories of the one 'gentle soul,' in particular, and of many other gentle souls, he had lost — clinging to his desk with both hands as he clung to his faith and speaking stoutly.

'Whitsunday — White Sunday — white, pure, untainted — day of consolation — day of inspiration — perhaps the most joyous time of all the year. Spring in its power, life, Spirit of Peace, joy. Everywhere joy — sanctified, subdued. Joy, and peace, and new life in the music, the harmonies and discords, of Nature — here, in the country. The singing of the birds, their twittering, chattering, calling; their excitement; their restful chirping, abandon of joy, peace without alloy — they are friends of the soul. The atmosphere too — the gentleness of it, the life within it and soft warmth of it: freedom, imagination, inspiration are in the air; the wind bloweth whereit listeth. Joy, innocent, white, pure, and happy. Happiness too. Life steeped in the sunshine of happiness. The spring, the elasticity, the eutrophy of life: life-creating life; life-giving life. Happiness on every hand mystic, elusive as the forces of Nature. "The wind

bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth." Happiness! Not freedom from care, or from sorrow, or from sleepless anguish; not freedom from abasement, not even from dark gloom — the accidie of depression — yet nevertheless the increasing sense of the life of love and service, the power of service, the completeness of it. The happiness which breaks ever and again through the clouds of uncertainties, doubts, darknesses of life-revealing it may be, for a moment, the signs of long years of effort-for as life goes on it is given to catch glimpses of the growth of the soul, something of the part the soul has taken in the building of the kingdom. It is in this life of love and service the words of the Master come to us: "I will not leave you desolate, I will come unto you."'

Followed praise of the beauty of work with which his congregation must have been familiar. And then came this concluding passage: —

'And when these days of wrath are passed away, there will be a great battlefield for a new birth. Days of wrath and then a new revelation. When God came down on the first Pentecost on Mount Sinai, He came amid thunders and lightnings, and in a thick dark cloud-and when the Holy Spirit of God came to the waiting disciples there was a sound of a rushing mighty wind. And it must be so. New birth comes through much sorrow. So we may hope that new theories of life which for a century have been growing towards birth will spring forth out of this great contest in all the lands of the earth. Vast work there will be, and the labourers sadly fewer. The nation is now sending of her very best into the battlefield. There will be great call for new recruits to restore the countries which are devastated — great calls, too, for investigators in all branches of knowledge. Pioneers are now leading the way in research, in mathematics, in science, in industry, in the laws of logic and thought, with new ways of expression in language and art.

'There is the great pressing need of revolution in the laws and relationships in the social life. We may have visions of a regenerated social state, in which courtesy, justice, mercy, the spirit of the gentle knight, will show themselves in change of thought, of belief; we may have visions of communities guided by principles which we hope

and believe rule in our great school. Care for the weak; clothing, feeding, housing, medical care for all; a crime to be poor; to be diseased, to be underfed; these regenerations controlled by the true and public spirit at the cost of the community. Laws for reform and redemption, and not for punishment. Each member of the state cared for, as it is our hope each boy of this school is. Great changes-essential to the well-being of a state, and to each member of it. We may have visions that the spirit of chivalry, of kindness, of courtesy, of gentleness, of all that goes to make the "gentle soul" will bring this redemption to the people.'

§ 3

The war turned Sanderson from a successful schoolmaster into an amateur statesman. Life had become intolerable for him unless he could interpret all its present disorders as the wreckage and confusion of the house-breakers preparing the site for a far nobler and better building. He shows himself at times by no means certain that this would ever prove to be the case, but he had the brave man's assurance that with luck and courage there was nothing impossible in the hope that a more splendid human order might be built at last upon this troubled and distressful planet. But for that to happen every possible soul must be stirred, no latent will for order but must be roused and brought into active service. He had no belief in hopeless and irremediable vulgarity. People are mean, base, narrow, implacable, unforgiving, contentious, selfish, competitive, because they have still to see the creative light. Let that but shine upon them and seize them and they would come into their places in that creative treatment of life which ennobles the servant and enriches the giver, which is the true salvation of souls.

He became a propagandist. He felt he had now made good sufficiently in his school. He had established a claim as an able and successful man to go out to able men, to business men, to influential men of all sorts, and tell them the significance of this school of his, this hand-specimen, this assay sample, of what could be done with the world. He went to Chambers of Commerce, to Rotary Clubs, to

Civic Assemblies, to Luncheon gatherings of business men, to tell them of this idea of organisation for service, instead of for profit and possession. He tried to find industrial magnates who would take up the methods of Oundle in productive organisation. He corresponded extensively with such men as, for example, Lord Weir and Sir Alfred Yarrow and Lord Bledisloe. He wanted to see them doing for industrial and agricultural production what he had done for education, reconstructing it upon a basis of corporate service, aiming primarily at creative achievement, setting aside altogether competitive success or the amassing of private wealth as the ends of human activity. Surely they would see how much finer this new objective was, how much fuller and richer it must make their own lives!

When I tell of this search for a kindred spirit among iron masters and great landlords and the like I am reminded of Confucius and his search for a duke in China, or of Plato or Machiavelli looking for a prince. There is the same belief in the power of a leader and the need of a personal will; the same utter scepticism in any automatic or crowd achievement of good order; once again the schoolmaster sets out to conquer the world. Perhaps some day that perennial attempt will come to fruition, and the schoolmaster will then indeed conquer the world. Perhaps the seeds that Sanderson has sown will presently be germinating in a crop of masterful business men of a new creative type. Perhaps there are Sandersons yet to come, men of energy; each with his individual difference, but all alight with the new conception of man's creative life. Perhaps Oundle may, after all, prove to be the egg of a new world. Oundle may relapse, probably will relapse, but other, more enduring Oundles may follow in other parts of the world. At present all that I can tell is of the message Sanderson was preaching during the last six years of his life.

Here he is, talking to the textile manufacturers of Bradford. This that follows is from his printed address, restrained and pruned, but for the manner of his delivery, the reader should think rather of that sample sermon and the other descriptions I have given of his personal quality.

'I am very much honoured by your invitation to address this important congress, and I am honoured, too, in being permitted to

speak on education in this great city of Bradford. For your city stands out very prominently in the annals of education, and its work is well known by all who have watched educational progress.

'You, gentlemen, are concerned with education: you are much concerned with the education which will promote the welfare of the leaders and workers in your industry; and the welfare of the people in your districts. Industrialism has tumbled upon us, and it is an untamed, unruly being, the laws of which are not yet known, and need study. For some thirty-five years-a long spell-I have, in places removed far away from the voices of industry, devoted my time towards the introduction into Public Schools of those Scientific and Technical studies which, as I understand it, lie at the basis of industrial life. I have always had before me the work of organising Technical Subjects so that they might give all that is best to give of spiritual and intellectual training. And our object is to send forth from school boys that will be in sympathy with the work that they have to do, that they will be privileged to do, and to send them forth equipped for it. You have the same purpose. Your wish is that the boys and girls of your country should have every chance of developing into effective workers in the community, and that they should take a zealous intellectual interest in their work — that they should love their work, love to do it well, ever anxious to mount to higher things.

'And one of the difficulties of the immediate future will be to reorganise industrial conditions so that each worker may have the chance of stretching his faculties and of getting the work that will give him reasonably full play for his abilities. The fact that able and clever men are, in the present system, kept too long at work which does not stretch their brains, is a cause of unrest. Fortunately there is a growing consensus of opinion that more freedom for opportunity and for advancement is seriously necessary, and this sympathetic opinion will lead towards a solution. It is also well within the work of a school to promote this sympathy by sending out boys with those intellectual and scientific tastes and knowledge which will react upon themselves and attract them to the workers.

'There are two other questions which I will mention before I come to the actual work which may be done in schools. One of the main

aims of a good school is to see that each boy and girl is cared for, that each one has every opportunity for development. We must not cast out, or send our weak ones away, we must keep them in school — we must find out what kind of work will appeal to them, so that they, too, may move upwards, gain in self-respect, and love their life. And we claim that this is what we would have done in all factories, or in any occupation. It is the essential duty of every nation. We are anxious that no worker should be stunted mentally or physically by the kind of work he has to do. This again is a difficult as it is an urgent problem. It is one which can be studied in schools, and there is no doubt that the attempts of a school to provide avenues of advance for all kinds of boys will tend to bring the right spirit into industrial and agricultural life...'

§ 4

So much for the Bradford discourse. Here is the gist of a discourse given to the Reconstruction Council in London a year later..

'The object of this paper is to describe in practical working terms an organisation of schools which shall be based on a close association with the manifold needs and labours of the community life. At the outset I may say that the proposals will refer — even if not specifically so stated — to all types of schools, from the elementary to the Public Schools. It will be seen that the change needs a change in the ideals which have usually prevailed in schools of the past. In the community life the one urgent thing to be done to-day is to reorganise industry and the conditions of labour. This reorganisation may require quite organic or even anarchic changes — and for these changes the ideals of boys and girls must be changed, and to prepare for this change is the urgent work of the schools.

'Before I come to the proposals for reconstruction of schools, I will state very briefly some facts in industry which are now meeting with acceptance:

'1. Modern industrial life has come in with a tumultuous rush, in a haphazard, ungoverned way, through the activities of forceful, capable, and industrious leaders who have made use of the scientific

discoveries of another type of men.

‘2. The shrinkage of the world, and the growth of population which followed, has led to fierce competition; and this spirit of competition has ruled everywhere.

‘3. In the ungoverned rush for production all sorts of methods are adopted which seem to be justified by their effectiveness. An example is the modern system of efficiency, at first sight captivating to the intellect and the desires, but yet a method which needs very careful study.

‘4. Now men are beginning to believe that the first product of industry must be for the worker; that the worker should grow physically, intellectually, spiritually by his work.

‘I shall claim that the work in schools should be permeated by Science and by the scientific method and outlook, and it will be found that Science itself does not set all this store on efficiency. Efficiency, I believe, is entirely contained within the first, or quantitative law of Thermo-dynamics. But eutrophy based on the more elusive qualitative law is concerned with the quality which leads to the giving up of life to others. We must see to it that whatever the efficiency may be, the eutrophy of industry be high.

‘The principle that the first product of industry must be the worker leads to great organic changes. It will lead to no less a thing than closing down certain productions, certain classes of occupations, certain industries or processes. It will lead to a modification in repetition work; and to adjustmets in organisation. I hope to show the bearing of this on our educational methods, and how the ideals implied may bring some help in diagnosing Labour unrest.

‘It will be seen that most of the changes needed to-day depend upon international agreements; and a league of nations is essential, not, I think, to end wars, but to make the change from competition to co-operation possible.

‘We are concerned to-day with the part education must take in this change of ideals of life. It is not too much to say that without the influence of a reconstructed education the way to change in the ideals of men will be hard to find. The change has to be made from competitive methods and ideals to co-operative methods; from the spirit of dominance to creativeness; and the present system of

aristocraticism in schools must give way to democratisation.

‘Competition holds sway to-day in industrial life with disastrous results. Every employer of labour feels this, and wrestles, and would be glad of a change, but he is held in the grip of a system. Every one feels that competition destroys the creative, inventive life — and is the seat of unrest. And yet the spirit of competition holds sway, not in commerce only nor in diplomacy, but in the schools. Our public schools are professedly schools for training a dominant class; the aims, the educational methods, the school subjects and their relative values, the books read, the life led — are all based on this spirit. The methods are largely competitive, possessive. With, as I believe, tragic results in industrial life this same system, with the ideals behind it, has been unwittingly impressed on the working class in the elementary schools...

‘The change which I am advocating will demand a new organisation, and will call for a new type of school buildings, and new values of subjects. The new-comer Science, and with it organised industry, which springs out of it, must take a prominent and inspiriting place in school, and in every part of school work. It is not sufficient to say that Science should be taught in schools. The time has gone by for this. We claim that scientific thought should be the inspiring spirit in school life. Science is essentially creative and co-operative, its outlook is onwards towards change, it means searching for the truth, it demands research and experiment, and does not rest on authority. Under this new spirit all history, literature, art, and even languages should be rewritten.

‘A new type of school buildings and requirements will arise. No longer buildings comprised only of class-rooms, but large and spacious workrooms. Class-rooms are places where boys go to be taught. They are tool-sharpening rooms — necessary, but subsidiary. For research and cooperative creative work the larger halls are needed. Spacious engineering and wood-working shops, well supplied with all kinds of machine tools, a smithy, a foundry, a carpenter’s shop, a drawing office — all carried on for manufacturing purposes. Plenty of work which will employ boys of all ages will be found to do.

‘There will be a corresponding spacious literary and historical

workshop with a really spacious library full of books: books on modern subjects, as well as reference books. The building should have wings in it for foreign books — modern as well as classic, history, economics, literary, scientific. As many as possible of the foreign languages should be represented here, that boys may grow up with knowledge and sympathy and respect for other nations, and thus aid in promoting wider and deeper ideals of life. Another gallery for geography, and natural history, travels, ethnology.

'Here is full scope for a large number of boys of all ages to be engaged in research. It is all of a co-operative character. They can study the various social and economic systems — from co-partnership to syndicalism; or the Liberation of Slaves; or the League of Nations; or the Liberation of Italy.

'Another block will be a science block with an engineering laboratory, machinery hall, physical, chemical, and biological laboratories — well supplied with apparatus and plant for applied science; plant, too, to lead to the investigations of the day; testing machine, ship tank, air tunnel; a miniature standardising laboratory; and with this a botanical garden and an experimental farm.

'Another would be an art-room, music-room, theatre, a home of industry for studying industrial development and industrial life.

'This is not a Utopian scheme, but one within possibility in town and country. To each large central high school should be associated groups of elementary schools, and there should be free highways between them, neither barred by examinations nor barred by expense...

'Another change must also come. Books on modern problems, strangely enough, are not yet read in schools. For example, the time is overdue for a change in the English books: Burke's *Reflections* and Pitt's *War Speeches,* or Addison, to Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and *Time and Tide,* or to Bernard Shaw, Wells, Galsworthy, and the modern poets. Some would go so far as to give Shakespeare a rest. It is astonishing how the newer books bearing on the large questions of the day, and bearing on the actual life of the boy, strike the imagination of boys — even quite young boys of the upper elementary school age. They stir up the faculties and appeal to a less used kind of imagination. It is surprising, too, what open and live

views young boys will reach.

And one thing the study of these books possesses, which I hope to dwell upon later, is that they bring the schools into close touch with the everyday life of their homes and of the community.

'Creative education demands that schools should be brought into harmony with the community life, and should take part in the industrial and economic life. When boys and girls go home from school (even to the humblest home) the parents should find there is something their children have done at school which will help them in their work. This means that technical and vocational training should hold a prominent, and not a subsidiary, place in the schools. It is not difficult to see that this kind of work contains within it the spirit and genius of Science. We claim that education should be turned in this direction, with confidence and inspiration. The divorce of industrial life from the life of the spirit is one of the tragedies of the age. It produces calamitous results. A man's work may be of an impossible kind, it may be sordid and destructive of life — and the cure proposed is that he should have shorter hours and more pay. This leads to bad diagnosis of the cause of the Labour difficulty, and prevents necessary reforms in the industries...

'Creativeness, the co-operative spirit and method, the vision, the experimental method of searching for the truth, form the unique gift Science and Industry have to give to the "New Education." Under the influence of this new outlook all other departments of knowledge must be restudied. Under its influence the life of school will become active, the workers self reliant, love abounding. It will make good craftsmen and make the school of use in the community — whether in the manufacturing life or in the investigation of economic conditions. Incidentally it will give rise to a new body of men capable of going wholly or in part to teaching, and the school will be thus linked up with the life of the place.

'It may be well to state that with an education of this kind based fundamentally on Science a capable boy will leave a secondary school with a good knowledge of Science and of its application, with a research attitude towards history and modern problems, and with a good working knowledge of two, or three, or even four languages...

'The study of social questions is seriously needed. Industries

would then have a close connection with the boys and girls, and yet boys and girls would be free to follow the best of their own talents and inclinations — the industrial life would not be separated from the spiritual life and we may hope that some part of this ideal would pass over into the workshops and factories; so that the labourer would learn to love his work better than his wage — for so indeed he would wish to do. And the faculties of the worker would grow. The method of the work would follow the method of the school, as it is doing more and more in our own land and in many a workshop. For the spirit is with these ideals; the practice difficult for any single firm to carry out. Hence is the need for radical change in schools. Firms are being driven to start trade schools of their own, when they would prefer the work to be done with all the wider scope of a school. And the same enlightened firms endeavour to "promote" their men.

'And here we come to what is probably the natural source of all labour "unrest" — the unstretched faculties of the worker. Men there are in any great shops who have intellectual faculties of the highest order, and these faculties are not used, so the greatest possession a man has, and the greatest his country has — the "faculties" of its owners — is allowed to dissipate. And in the feeling of the mental want of equilibrium, in the slow frittering away of life, there arrives the turbulent spirit. The study of these questions is the problem for our coming international university. The industrial and economic problems involved can only be approached under international agreement. All that has been possible at present in the way of making industrial life pure and holy is by legislative restrictions, often enough rankling to the worker even when needed for his amelioration. Such legislation (Factory Acts, Insurance Acts, wages, hours) does not remove the source of the disease; at best it only mitigates the worst results. More drastic changes may be needed in the nature of the work-to the ruling out certain manufacturing processes until new discoveries can be made.

'So with the work in the shops. Men do not want wages, or shorter hours; these demands are only symptoms of a disease; short cuts to amelioration. They are doctoring. What men want is that their work may be such that they can love it, and want more of it. They do not want slaves' work in the shops and a "dose" of the spiritual life out

of it. So we believe.

'Parents, too, would let their children remain at school. As a class there is no one more unselfish and self-sacrificing and co-operative than the working-class parent. Boys want to leave school because of the natural urge for making something and getting to business-as they see it at home. To remain at school without joining in some work is unthinkable when they see the life their parents lead.

'I may be permitted to insert one paragraph on the unfortunate opposition to this new position which is claimed for Science in the schools. The opposition springs from the belief that vocational work is simply material, having no spiritual outlook. But the truth is all the other way. Unfortunately the present studies of history, art, economy, literature, are biassed by "possessive" instincts and education, and we claim that Science and its methods are seriously demanded for a new reading of these things. However, the opposition finds expression in high quarters. The Workers' Educational Union, acting in sympathy with the Labour view — that vocational studies are to be avoided — practically taboos technical studies. This is reasonable as things are to-day, when a man's work is too often for the profit of others, and for this reason the workers are not in love with their work, and when the day is over they have seen plenty of it; so the best of them go elsewhere for the springs of the spiritual life. But this is all disastrous to individuals and disastrous to progress. What the workers should do is to watch for the spirit in their daily work, for it is the work itself which will hold a man to God — nothing else will.'

§ 5

I have quoted from this London Reconstruction discourse very fully. In the official Life there are a number of such addresses in which the student will find the main doctrines of that particular address repeated, varied, amplified, but as my object in this book is to strip Sanderson's views down to his essential ideas, I will make only one further quotation from this propaganda material here. This is from the notes he arranged for an address to the Newcastle Rotary Club. His favourite contrast between the possessive instincts and the

creative instincts comes out very clearly here. Like all the great religious teachers, Sanderson aims quite clearly at an ultimate communism, to be achieved not by revolution but by the steady development of a creative spirit in the world.

'Schools should be miniature copies of the world we should love to have. Hence our outlooks and methods must have these aims in mind. Schoolmasters have great responsibilities. We should be able to say to a boy, we have endeavoured to do such things for you, and we ask you to go forth, it may be, into your father's business or factory and do the same to the workers. Let me illustrate from the workshops. Workshops in a school are by far the most difficult things to carry on along the lines I have in mind. Here are three conditions which must be kept in the shops: —

'(a) The work boys are doing should not be for themselves, or exercises to learn by; it must always be work required by the community.

'(b) Each boy must have the opportunity of doing all the main operations, and all the operations should be going on in the workshops.

'(c) Whenever a boy goes into the shop he should find himself set to work which is up to the hilt of his capacity. There is no "slithering" down to work which is easy, no unnecessary and automatic repetition, no working for himself but 'for the community.

'And we can say, and are entitled to say, to the boy, when you go forth into life, perhaps into your father's work or business or profession, you must try to do for your apprentices and workers what we have tried to do for you. You, too, will try to see that everyone has work which exacts their faculties — by which they will grow and develop; you will see to it that they are working directly on behalf of and for the welfare of the community, and not for yourself.

'This is your real duty towards your neighbour. It is a vastly hard thing to do. This duty of believing that others are of the same blood with yourself, and have the same feelings, and loves, and desires and needs, and natural elementary rights; this duty of setting them free to exercise their faculties spaciously that they, too, may get more of life-is the real duty towards your neighbour. It is a hard thing. If you think of the works, the factory, the office, it is a hard thing. It

involves vast sacrifice-the hardest sacrifice — the sacrifice of belief and economic tradition. We need not be surprised that Christianity has "slithered down" to an easier and softer level of culture and duty towards our neighbours. But whether the workers know it or not, this hard duty is essential in considering the relationships of our community system and our international system to-day.

'It is a hard duty, and boys must be immersed in it in school. The outlook, values, and organisation of a school should be based on the fundamental fact of the community service. By habit of mind, and by the activity of the schools, boys should be imbued with this high duty. It means a reorganisation of methods and aims.

'It is a hard duty, this duty towards your neighbour — the hardest part being to believe that he has like feelings with yourself and equal rights. The young man went away sorrowful, for he had great riches — riches intellectual or other. Yet the young man went away sorrowful, and there is no doubt that he eventually sold all that he had. This is Watts' version of it. The young man was at heart a follower of Jesus; he did not say that the commandment was an old one and well known, that it had been said before in the Hagadah and by Moses; he did not say that the language was the language of Plato or Philo; he did not say that it was too difficult and could not be true for everyone — he went away sorrowful. We have no doubt that he sold all that he had.

'The system of education in the past has been based on training for leadership, i.e. for a master class, and its method has been a training of the faculties. But the sharply defined line between the leaders and the led has been broken down. The whole mass of people has been aroused towards intellectual creative efforts. The struggle going on in all communities and amongst all races is a struggle to grow and have more of life.. Whether at home amongst our workers, or in India, or Egypt, or Ireland; or between China and Europe — the struggle is the same. It is a struggle to make progress, and have more of life. This urge to grow is a biological fact. We cannot tell why it is or what creates it — but everything around us has this urge to grow, and to grow in its own particular way. One seed grows into a tulip, another into wheat. We know not how, but we recognise it. And it is precisely the same urge to grow that is causing all this apparent

conflict. It is the fundamental creative instinct — the most powerful instinct of the human race, by which the race is preserved. Deep down in human nature lies this instinct; it is never forgotten, it is always present in the mind. It is voluptuous, anarchic, joyful, violent, powerful.

'The other instinct is called the fighting, aggressive, acquisitive, possessive instinct. It is the instinct to acquire, to overcome. It is distinct from the creative instinct even in the biological growth, but the distinction manifests itself more clearly in the community or herd relationships. It has none of the beautiful and life-giving qualities of the creative urge. It is essentially, even in its romance (of which we have plenty), dull, selfish, destructive. It varies its forms from sheer animal force to the dialectical methods which have assumed the names of talent and culture. The same characteristics are seen in the force of the slave-driver, in the forces of the wage-nexus, and in the dialectical force of the council. These are hard sayings, but for the solution of the problems of the present times it is wise, and necessary, to look facts in the face. At any rate it is well to know of the possibilities, feelings, and loves of the uprising mass...

'But what has this to do with schools? My answer is that if we are to deal with the problems thrown up by science in our industrial system, and our close national and international contacts, the schools must be the seed grounds of the new thought and visions...'

VII. — THE HOUSE OF VISION AND THE SCHOOL CHAPEL

§ 1

I come now to one of the most curious and characteristic things in Sanderson's later life, a conflict and interaction that went on between two closely related and yet in many ways intensely competitive ideas, the idea on the one hand of a new sort of building unprecedented among schools, a building which should symbolise and embody the whole aim of the school and the renewed community of which it is the germ, and on the other hand the idea of a great memorial chapel to commemorate the sacrifice of those who had fallen in the war. These ideas assumed protean forms in his mind, they grew, they blended and separated again. I will call the first, for reasons that will appear later, the House of Vision; the second, the school chapel. For though Oundle had thrown up a great cluster of houses, halls, laboratories, and other buildings during its quarter of a century of growth, it had never yet produced anything more than a corrugated-iron meeting-house for its religious services. The want of some more dignified chapel had long been evident, and even before the war was very much in Sanderson's mind.

The idea of a House of Vision was therefore the later of the two. Very early in the war a boy of great promise, Eric Yarrow, the son of Sir Alfred Yarrow, the great shipbuilder, was killed at Ypres, and parent and schoolmaster met at the house of the former to mourn their common loss. Sanderson and Eric Yarrow had been close friends; they had discussed and developed the idea of a creative reconstruction of industry together; Eric Yarrow was to have played a part in the industrial world similar to the part that Roy Sanderson was to have played in the educational world.

The two men sat late at night and talked of these vanished hopes. Could not something be done, they asked, to record at least the spirit of these fine intentions, and they sketched out a project for a memorial building that should be a symbol and incitement to effort for the reorganised industrial state. It should be in a sense a museum

containing a record of human effort and invention in the past; a museum of the development of work and production and a statement of the economic problems before mankind. Sir Alfred produced a cheque more than sufficient to cover the building of such a memorial as they had planned, and Sanderson returned to Oundle to put the realisation of the project in hand. Probably the two of them also discussed the need for a memorial chapel and probably neither of them realised a possible clash between that older project and the new one they were now starting.

It was in the early stage when the Eric Yarrow memorial was to be nothing more than a museum of industrial history and organisation that Sanderson set afoot the building at Oundle which is now known by that name. Apparently he did not get much inspiration over to the architect, and at any rate the edifice that presently rose was a very weak and dull-looking one, more suitable for a herbarium or a minor lecture-hall than for a temple of creative dreams. It was a premature materialisation, done in the stress and under the cramping limitations of war time. Long before it was finished Sanderson's imaginations had outgrown it. I think this unconfessed architectural disappointment probably played a large part in the subsequent development of the idea of the school chapel, still to be planned, still capable of being made a spacious and beautiful building. To the latter dream he transferred more and more of the ideas that arose properly out of the germ of the Eric Yarrow memorial.

At first the House of Vision was to have been no more than an industrial museum. It was not to be used as a class-room or lecture-room. It was to be empty of chairs, desks, and the like, and clear for anyone to go in to think and dream. About its walls, diagrams and charts were to display the progress of man from the sub-human to his present phase of futile power and hope. There were to be time-charts of the whole process of history, and a few of these have been made. As his idea ripened it broadened. The memorial ceased to be a symbol merely of industrial reorganisation and progress, and became a temple to the whole human adventure. He began to stress first social and then imaginative growth. The charts were to be full and accurate, everything shown was to be precisely true, but there was to be no teaching in the building, no direction beyond the form and

spirit of the place.

And so while the scaffolds of the workmen rose about the commonplace little erection in the school fields, the schoolmaster in his day-dreams realised more and more the full measure of the opportunity he was missing.

The realisation of the past is the realisation of the future, and it was an easy transition to pass to the idea of this building as an expression of tile creative will in man. In it the individual boy was to realise the aim of the school and of schooling and living. It was to be the eye of the school, its soul, its headlight.

The idea of this 'House of Vision' was still growing in his mind when he died. He had not yet settled upon a name for it, though he had tried over a number of names — a House of Vision, which is the name we have taken for it here, the Home of Silence, the Hall of Industry, the Anthropaeum, the Making of Man, the Life Creative, the Soul of the School. All these names converge upon the end he was seeking. This approach by trial, by leaving the idea to shape itself for a time and then taking it up again, by talking it over with this man and that, was very characteristic of his mental processes.

A member of the staff recalls a stage in the development of the idea. 'I talked with the headmaster about the Yarrow Memorial in October 1920,' he says. 'He then seemed to dally with a suggestion to name it the "Temple of the World" — he expressed his hatred of the tendency to call it the "Museum." I gathered that his idea was to fill it with charts of all things and all ages, including pictures of at least all the world's great men — then to turn a boy loose in it, thereby to realise his position in the world as a unit of its time, as opposed to the inculcation of any idea of his having a part in his nationality only. His root idea seemed to be that it should be a place for meditation — restful as well as invigorating.'

Here is a passage written by Sanderson himself a little later. The idea ripens and broadens out very manifestly.

'Every school, every locality and industry,' he writes, 'might build within their boundaries a new kind of chapel, a heritage, a temple-a beautiful building in which are gathered together and exhibited the records of man's great deeds and of man's progress, and the records of his needs. It is such a "Hall of Needs" that we

regard the Yarrow Memorial, and to this end it is being equipped.'

And here Sanderson speaks again in a sermon preached upon the text of Moses' withdrawal to the mount.

'A school will grow into a book. It will take upon itself the form of a Bible. Within it will appear the stages in the life of the soul— "the coming of a kingdom"; the foundations, the building, the furniture, the complex apparatus, the organised beauty. A school — its buildings, workshops, class-rooms, and all that goes towards a great school — can take on the form of a parable. As we wander from one place to another all that speaks of life will manifest itself before us. How life begins, what is needed for its growth; what shall be its standards, its ideals; what the nature of its proof-plate; the craftsman and what he is; the craftsman in languages, in mathematics, in science, in art; the secrets of nature revealing themselves; progress, change, vision.

'And boys will go out into the factory, or mine, or business, or profession, imbued with the spirit of the active love of humanity. Some will be called to lead, as Moses was called. They, too, will plant the "Tent of Meeting," the "Temple of Vision." A return with a new view-point will be made to the temple of ages gone by. The Assyrian frescoed his walls with sculptures of the deeds of his hero-kings; the Franciscans frescoed the walls of their chapels with the life of Jesus as told in the Gospels — the life of the Divine builder, of Him who came to restore a kingdom, by whose life and death a new world was created.

'But the Temple of Vision of to-day; the new Tent of Meeting. What of it? The new home of vision will be frescoed with the thoughts of to-day, changing in to the thoughts of to-morrow. Generations of workers will go up into the mount, and to them, too, will be shown the pattern. "See that thou make them after their pattern which hath been shown thee in the mount."'

§ 2

Now this is a very great and novel idea, the idea of a modern temple set like a miner's lantern in the forefront of school or college to light

its task in the world. It rounds off and completes Sanderson's vision of a modern school; it is logically essential to that vision. But meanwhile what was happening to the school-chapel project?

For, after all, in the older type of school, the chapel with its matins and evensong, its *Onward Christian Soldiers* and suchlike stirring hymns, its confirmations and first communions, was in a rather dreamy, formless mechanical way undertaking to do precisely what the new House of Vision was also to do, that is, to give a direction to the whole subsequent life. But was it the same direction? The normal school-chapel points up — not very effectively one feels; the House of Vision was to point onward. Sanderson had a crowded, capacious mind, but sooner or later the question behind these two discrepant objectives, whether men are to live for heaven or for creation, was bound to have come to an issue.

His mental process was at first syncretic. He began to think of a school-chapel, not as a place for formal services but as a place of meditation and resolve. He began to speak of the chapel also as though it was to be 'the tent on the mount,' the place of vision. He betrayed a growing hostility to the intoned prayers, the trite responses, the tuneful empty hymns, the Anglican vacuity of the normal chapel procedure. Had he lived to guide the building of Oundle chapel I believe it would have diverged more and more from any precedent, more and more in the direction of that House of Vision, that the premature and insufficient Eric Yarrow building had so pitifully failed to realise.

Here is evidence of that divergence in a passage from a sermon preached after a gathering of parents and old boys in the Court Room at the London Grocers' Hall to discuss the chapel project. I ask anyone trained in the services of the Church of England and accustomed to enter, pray into a silk hat, deposit it under the seat, sit down, stand up, bow, genuflect, kneel decorously on a hassock, sing, repeat responses, and go through the simple and wholesome Swedish exercises of the Anglican prayer book, what is to be thought of this project of a chapel with hardly a sitting in it? And what is to be thought of this suggestion of wandering round the aisles? And what is this talk of young gentlemen who have died 'for king and country,' casting down their lives for the rescue of man?

‘For the years to come, when the war is over, it will be well to have some visible memorial; some symbol of the redemption of the Great War, and of the heroic part old boys have taken in it; some record of the great struggle from out of which the new spirit will rise; some record of the part the whole school took in this; some record of the boys who have fallen; some thanksgiving symbol for all who have given their service. And for this it is proposed to build a chapel. But when the time comes we shall be sad to leave our present building. It is a poor building, but it is very rich in its associations. The services in this temporary chapel have taken a large part in the building of the school. Simple as is the Tent in the Wilderness, yet we have hoped that the Spirit of God would come and dwell in it. We have hoped that the Divine Spirit would come into all the activities and outlook of the school in its diverse occupations, whether they be literary or whether they be scientific or technical. And we have always looked onward to the day when a permanent chapel should be built, symbolic of the Divine Omnipresence for worship and for sacrifice.

‘And this is what is in mind to do — and yet I confess to a certain amount of fear. A lofty, spacious chapel I have had no doubt would at the right moment be built by the Grocers’ Company. Just before the war the building of this chapel was emerging as the next great building to undertake — a chapel, such as a college chapel with stalls, as for private service. But now we look beyond this. We want something different, more open. A lofty, spacious chapel to form the nave — no fixed seats, the clear open space; quiet, still, “urgent with beauty.” Joined to this the choir and sanctuary, with aisles round the three sides of it, forming an ambulatory. Round these aisles, on the walls and in the windows, the recorded memory of the boys who have fallen. An east window, a reredos, stalls, altar. A chapel, abundant in space, not for the mind to sit down in, but for the mind to move about in, for contemplation, for dwelling in the infinite, for piercing through the night, for vision, for the clear spirit of thankfulness, for communion with the saints, our own young saints among them. So we hope. As you wander round the aisles there will pass before you the memorial of those boys who have cast down their lives for the rescue of man.’

§ 3

I cannot guess how Sanderson, had he lived, would have resolved this conflict between his House of Vision and his Great Chapel, just as I can hazard no opinion of the ultimate form his interpretation of Christianity would have taken. But the recognition of these conflicts is fundamental to my conception of the man and his significance.

He stands for a great multitude reluctant to abandon many of the familiar phrases of the Christian use and eager to read new and deeper meanings into them. But he never took 'holy orders'; he knew the days of the priest, except for evil, were past, and it is only by its being born again as a House of Vision that he could anticipate his chapel with contentment. The time has come for mankind to choose plainly between the priest and the teacher.

Some six months after Sanderson's death I went to Oundle and visited the Yarrow Memorial, that abortive first House of Vision. Except for a bronze statue of a boy by Lady Scott that Sanderson had liked and bought, it was as I had seen it with Sanderson a year before. It was still, deserted, and I suppose I must count it dead. The time-charts had not been carried on. The collection of inventions, the display of humanity's growth, were still represented by empty cases. The statue was intended for the school chapel, but meanwhile it had been dumped in the House of Vision as a convenient vacant place for such dumping. The bronze boy is in an eager pose; there is duty to be done and danger to be faced and a great creative effort to be made. 'Send me!' he said, in that empty, neglected House of Vision. But the hand that would have put that dart to the bowstring and aimed it at work and service was there no more.

Building operations upon the chapel were proceeding slow I y. The rising walls were very like the rising walls of the sort of church for respectable people that gets built in Surbiton or Beckenham. I gather that in all probability it will even carry the debt customary in such cases. The new headmaster was, I found, a thoroughly pleasant man who came not from an elementary school but from Eton, and had never met Sanderson in his life and knew nothing of his work.

He seemed disposed to regard Sanderson as a bit of a crank and to be intelligently puzzled by his originalities. I felt assured that when at last that old corrugated-iron building is abandoned for the new chapel there would be pews in the new nave in spite of Sanderson, and services of an altogether normal type and no nonsense of walking about and thinking or anything of that sort.

But though I have seen the House of Vision at Oundle dead and vacant as a museum skull, yet I know surely that neither Sanderson nor his House of Vision are in any real sense dead at all. A day will certainly come when his name will be honoured above all other contemporary schoolmasters as the precursor of a new age in education and human affairs. In that age of realisation every village will be dominated by its school, with its library and theatre, its laboratories and gymnasium, every town will converge upon its cluster of schools and colleges, its research buildings and the like, and it will have its Great Chapel, its House of Vision as its crown and symbol even as the cathedral was the crown and symbol of the being and devotion of the medieval city. And therein Sanderson's stout hopefulness and pioneer thrustings will be kept in remembrance by generations that have come up to the pitch of understanding him.

VIII. — THE LAST LECTURE

§ 1

Sanderson's propaganda of this idea of the possible reorganisation of the world through schools came to an abrupt end in the summer of 1922. He died suddenly of heart failure in the Botanical Theatre of University College, London, at the end of an address to the National Union of Scientific Workers. He had chosen as the title of the address, 'The Duty and Service of Science in the New Era,' and it was in effect a recapitulation of his most characteristic views. He attached considerable importance to the delivery and he made unusual preparations for it.

Upon his desk after his death seven separate drafts, and they were all very full drafts, of this address were found. In the margins of the pages little sums have been worked out — so many pages at three hundred words a page, four thousand, five thousand words; a full hour's talking, and still so much to say! There are little notes framed in a sort of Oxford frame of lines reminding him, for example, to 'say more of bringing scientific method into all parts of school.' On the reverse of the pages of manuscript are trial restatements. He tried back several times to a fresh beginning. There is a page headed 'The New School,' and giving three headings: the first, which he afterwards marked as second, is, 'The faculty of each member shall be developed'; the second, which became the first, is 'Community service-no competition'; the third is, '*Outlook — aim*, more value than ability. Service. All are equal. The Spirit an the Bride say, Come. Let all that will, come.'

Then we find him trying over his ideas about science under a heading, 'What we claim for science.' Under that are a number of interesting subheads: —

'Its own value in the great discoveries.

'That its spirit is that of life, giving, changing, searching. (Marginal note: — without being deterred by any of the results which may follow.)

'It is "natural" to the vast number of boys.

‘Very directly applicable to needs.

‘That it has a language and a message.

(Marginal note: — it seeks to test, to create new standards, to fearlessly rewrite knowledge.)

‘The same spirit. (? as Christianity: Editor.)

Finally he produced a draft which was at least his eighth. This he had printed and this he may have intended to read to the meeting. But h did not do so. In the end he spoke from a fresh set of notes, which must have been at least the ninth draft. That eighth draft is given in full in the official Life.

His health had not been good for some time, and he kept this lecture and his exceptional interest in it more or less secret from his wife. He spent a long and interested morning at the experimental farm at Rothamsted, and in the afternoon he went to the opticians to get a new pair of spectacles and attended to other small businesses. He met a small party of us at the London University Club in Gower Street to take tea before lecturing. Sir Richard Gregory, the editor of *Nature,* was present, Major Church, the secretary of the National Union of Scientific Workers, and Dr. Charles Singer, the historian of classical science. Sanderson was evidently hot and rather tired, but he did not seem to be ill; he gossiped pleasantly with us and showed us his new spectacles. They were made of a recently discovered glass, opaque to ultra-violet rays and he betrayed the pride and interest of a boy in possessing them.

University College was not very far away, but he asked for a cab thither because he felt fagged. The audience was already assembled and he went straight on to the platform. The present writer made a few introductory remarks, and the lecture began. It is a matter of keen regret to all of us that we allowed him to stand throughout his discourse. It would have been so easy to have arranged for him to talk from a chair; the Botanical Theatre is not a large one and it is quite conceivable that he might be alive now, if one of us could have had that much thoughtfulness for him. We had thought of it — ten minutes af ter his death.

But we were all so used to the quality of effort in his voice, so accustomed to its sudden fall into almost inaudible asides, that we did not mark what hung over us until the very moment of

catastrophe. His sentences seemed to me a little more broken than usual; he was rather more disconnected, he was leaving rather more than usual to the intelligence of his audience, and as he talked I watched the faces before me rather anxiously to see just how much they missed of what he was trying to get over to them. He got over much more than I supposed, for I have since talked with many who were present. A fairly full shorthand note was made at the trifle, and on this the following rendering of the last address is based. Like everything that has been printed of his here, it has been clipped and shorn, little distracting side glances have been eliminated and broken sentences filled in and rounded off.

§ 2

'It is a great honour,' he began, 'to come and address scientific workers (I have only recently discovered my claim to be a scientific worker), and to describe to you what has turned out to be a scientific experiment. I hope to show the results of an experiment carried on, not in a scientific laboratory so-called — physical, chemical, biological, or anthropological — but in a school for boys.

'Before doing that, I should like to say that we scientific workers do very much depend on having a number of us together. One scientific worker placed in charge of any great work finds it difficult; scientific workers do not get the chance of appointing men in sympathy with themselves often enough; so it is frequently said that scientific men placed in command of a factory in industry or a department of state at home or in the colonies fail. Well, if so, they fail because scientific men have not often got the opportunity of getting men of like sympathy to work with them. I take it that the object of the National Union of Scientific Workers is to get scientific men with scientific views of life and experimental experience to join together in some great work. When I speak of the duty and service of science in the new era, I mean that I want scientific men to claim justly a larger share in the work of the world, and not to confine themselves to what is called purely scientific work. We want them to expand themselves over a wider area. As a matter of fact, that is what

two distinguished writers have suggested: that the time has come when the ordinary discoveries and inventions of science should be closed down in order to enable scientific minds to do this simple thing. Practically everything that exists now is the work of scientific men, their discoveries and their inventions. The whole world teems with the results of the work of science. The great machines we see used in industry-the industrial machine itself-have been created by men of science. Now, I put it to you that when motor cars came in, the nobility of the land found their coachmen of little use. The scientific machine requires scientific men to manage it. Our industrial life is imperfectly organised; all our troubles are due to the fact that we have a process created by science, but organised in the old way by men of a different outlook. The discoveries of science have rushed into the world a considerable amount of unexpected ability. Working men engaged in industrial pursuits have had their intelligence discovered and brought out, and it is one thing to control a mass of human beings who are not thus inspired with the knowledge of their own possibilities, and another to control those who are. It is like trying to control a set of live molecules. It is one thing to control a hard atom and another to control a live electron.

'So that the duty and service of science would seem to lie in scientific men bringing their ideal of life, their standards, their vision, their outlook, and their methods to organise the great machine that their inventions have created. You cannot have a world half scientific and the other half nothing of the sort.

'That is to say, scientific workers will have to consider the whole question, for instance, of economics. I heard yesterday a distinguished member of the Government saying that we cannot change economics. Of course, that is one thing scientific men have got to do, to change economics so that the system of our industry shall be recreated. The system of management by dual control of the master and the slave will not work when the slave becomes an alive, active, intelligent, anarchic being. He will not be governed by the rein but by a system which the magnet can influence. However, the last hundred years has resulted in a race between the changed conditions that science has brought about and the organisation required to control them, in what has been called by Mr. Wells a race

between education and catastrophe. In scientific language, it has produced a serious stress because of the hurrying on of change of conditions and the lagging behind of the methods of controlling them. It is this stress, I think, which has broken up the system. You may even say that the war itself is no cause of anything, but a result of the purely automatic action of shearing forces, as when a testing machine breaks a metal bar.

'The end of the war has left us with a whole host of individuals set free, and the business before science men is to organise this new body. It is a big problem, and requires scientific thought, temperament, and outlook to rewrite practically the whole of our knowledge. It reminds me of the tremendous rush there was amongst scientific men to provide workers to overhaul practically very thing in biology (and theology) and other parts of human knowledge after the doctrines of Darwin were well established. I take it that all the departments of human life have to be re-written by men under the influence of the spirit of science. Our books have to be rewritten, our very dictionaries. I have often amused myself with the *Oxford Dictionary,* or found it necessary to send a boy to that authority for a definition, and it has pretty nearly always been false. Take such a simple case as the word "democracy." The *Oxford Dictionary* hasn't a thing to tell you about the meaning of "democracy" as we use it to-day. It tells you nothing of the living use of words. That is one of the terrible dangers of leaving our books in the hands of men who have not got that outlook which experiment in science brings to the individual. Consequently I say that the duty of scientific men is to scour the whole area of knowledge and rewrite it to bring out new standards, new values, by means of which labour and industry itself, in the first instance, can be reorganised (the schools first should be reorganised), and then you can extend it into the wider area of international affairs.

'They tell us that economics cannot change our human nature. That is the great duty and service of science — to change human nature. Scientific men have to collect a band of disciples and make a new world. As far as I can gather, from a long connection with boys, the only scientific quality which is constant is inertia in response to change. The actual change itself, when it has arrived, no one objects

to, and every one says, “Why didn’t we do that before?” Scientific workers rarely have their opportunity in industry. To have their full opportunity they are to set forth in the spirit of the Great Master to found a new kingdom: not to manage industry by the standards and values of the present, but to transform them. And they must do what our Master Himself did — collect a faithful band of disciples imbued with the same belief. I know it is freely said (I have been corresponding with some of the leaders in industry) that scientific men cannot do this thing. They can, if only they are true to themselves and their vision; they can absolutely change the whole system under which industry is worked, and change the world to their ideals.

‘“Come, and I will make you fishers of men...” The great work that lies before scientific workers to-day is to extend the area of their labours, to become not fishers of facts but fishers of men. There will always be a distinguished band of purely scientific men devoted to pure science, who will abide devoted to pure science; but with the present number trained in science, we claim them also to organise the machinery that science has created. They must leave their ships and nets and become fishers of men...I dare say even scientific workers know that is from the Bible. One of the greatest tragedies scientific men have allowed is for others to steal the Bible from them. The Old and New Testaments, with their record of progressive revelation, form the most scientific book ever seen. Yet scientific men have allowed a certain type of men to steal it from them. Bible stealing is an old thing, and one favourite method is to bind it in morocco and to put it on a top shelf...

‘But I must return to my scientific business. When I was at Cambridge I was not regarded as scientific. I was amongst those who took mathematics, and those who took mathematics and classics were respectable and had to attend chapel. But if you inclined at all towards science, or even ethics, you were not supposed to attend chapel...

‘I said that I have recently discovered I am a scientific worker, that I have been working a scientific experiment, though not of the kind accepted for report to the Royal Society. It has been worked by being headmaster of a school for thirty years and by having taught

for forty years. When I became a headmaster I began by introducing engineering into the school — applied science. The first effect was that a large number of boys who could not do other things could do that. They began to like their work in school. They began to like school. That led on to introducing a large number of other sciences, such as agricultural chemistry, horse-shoeing (if that is a science), metallurgical chemistry, bio-chemistry, agriculture; and, of course, these new sorts of work interested a large number of other boys of a type different from the type interested in the old work, so we got an exceptional number of boys, curiously enough, unexpectedly liking w ha t they had to do in school. Then I ventured to do something daring; it is most daring to introduce the scientific method of finding out the truth — a dangerous thing — by the process of experiment and research. We began to replace explicit teaching by finding out. We did this first with these newly introduced sciences. Then we began to impress the aims and outlook of science on to other departments of school life. History, for instance: we began to replace the old class-room teaching and learning by a laboratory for history, full of books and other things required in abundance, so that boys in all parts of the school could, for some specific purpose (not to learn; to go into school to learn was egotistical), find out the things we required for to-day. We set them to find out things for the service of science, the service of literature, modern languages, music.

'This began to change the whole organisation of the school, its aims and methods. It was no use organising boys in forms by the ordinary methods of promotion for this sort of work. You have to make up your mind what you have to do, and then go about and collect .anybody who would be of service to that particular work. You would require boys of one characteristic and boys of another. You make them up into teams for the particular work they have to do. The boys who do not fit into this or that particular work must have some other particular work found for them. You begin to design the work of the school for them. You must have all the apparatus you want for it, and you must organise for it, but you begin by organising the work for the boys and what they need to find out, and not by putting the boys into the organisation. Now, presently you discover, when you do this, that not a single boy exists who is not wanted for

some particular work; to carry out your object every boy is fundamentally equal. One does this, one does that. Each boy has his place in the team, and in his place he is as important as any other boy. Placing them in order of meri t does not work any more. The scientific method absolutely changed the position towards class lists and order of merit. That was an astonishing result.

'Another astonishing result was that we could not have anybody who was not working. If a boy was not working, you could see that he was not working. You could see that he was doing nothing. He could not sit at the back of a class-room and seem to be working. Everybody was working. You can manage that in school, but what about the world? All sorts of people may seem to be working and not be working at all. The curate may be doing nothing! (*Chuckle and something inaudible*.) This seems to land us into the extraordinary fact that no community if it is scientifically organised can carry anyone who does not do service. I hope you will agree with me that that is scientific.

'A little farther on I turned round on the boys and the parents. (Both are my business.) I said, "I have and the school has tried all it could to see to it that your boy got the right kind of work to do. We spared no trouble or expense to see to it that he might be able to perform his service in the school and to the community...When you go forth to your father's works, keep in mind that it is your business to see to it that every person that comes within your influence has a like opportunity." That is totally different from your duty to your neighbour as taught in the Church Catechism. We have landed ourselves hopelessly in the position of having a practical community definition of our duty towards our neighbour. You remember the rich young ruler who came to ask what his duty was, and went away sorrowful because he had great possessions. Some of these possessions were perhaps intellectual. I like to think of Watts' picture of that man and I like Watts' idea that he came back. I hope if any of our boys go a way they will come back.

'Another step. This actual love of work spreads, and ultimately every one comes within its influence, and they begin to like the service they are rendering. Finally, competition dwindles and passes away, so that we have reached what appears to be a change in human

nature. It is not really a change, but by care and attention calling out what has always been ready there in human nature, namely, a first instinctive love to create. I have always held that competition is a secondary interest and creation a primary instinct. Competition dwindles and passes away. Competition is a very feeble incentive to live. It is cheap and easy to arouse the motive, it is a swift motive and on the surface of things ready for you, but it is not even a powerful motive. Half the boys it dispirits and leaves idle and useless.

'The passing of competition leads on to another thing passing away, which is this: you soon find that a body of workers that as a community has attempted to provide for itself, as a community adapts itself to the community spirit, and punishment is totally unnecessary. It was a long time before that dawned on me. I have not, as a headmaster, taken any part in any shape in punishing boys directly, either by the easy methods supposed to train them for after life or by the other methods that have sprung from the fertile brains of a dominant order. Punishment, I declare from years of experience in this experiment, is a crime: not only a crime but a blunder. Why? Because it is a cheap and easy thing. If you punish it is easy, but if a community has so to arrange itself and adapt itself as to produce the reaction on the individual not to do objectionable things, that is hard. It is complicated. It requires an abundance of real sacrifice. It demands readjustment of everything upon a basis of service. I have been much impressed recently by the effect of having punishment organised in removing any activity on the part of the community itself towards adjusting itself so that punishment should not be necessary. I used to flatter myself, "I don't punish that boy, my prefects do; they keep me right." But I have been convinced by my thirty years of experiment that that was all wrong. These things come slowly. Now, without any action on my part, the prefects have stopped punishing, and a good thing for them. If they leave their boots about, the small boys will too, and they will have to punish them for doing so. To leave your own boots about like a lord is a fine thing, and to punish the small boy who does so is also a fine thing! But it is easy. The hard thing is never to leave your own boots about...

‘The reactions that we have been taught to make in the world are weakly static. What is the good of static methods? There is friction; we are told how to overcome frictional resistance. We can put an end to friction by stopping the machine. That is the static method of dealing with friction. Or we can go on working the machine, with oil and care...which is not so cheap and easy, but which gets somewhere...If we try to remove friction by the static methods of punishment we are removing the incentive to live a dangerous life. “The secret of a joyful life is to live dangerously.” You only live dangerously if you are perpetually trying to overcome your own inertia and trying to get the capacity to do great things. If you are only defensive, static, it is a waste of time. Yet those defences and resistances are securely placed in the governance of the state. What a curious thing is the form of government! Its characteristics include no repentance, no regret, otherwise it would acknowledge itself less than the governed. Its ideal is a perpetual static calm. *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.* It is the method of people who perform the confidence trick. It is the method of “If you want peace, prepare for war.”...’

For some minutes Mr. Sanderson paused. He looked at his notes. He was obviously very fatigued, but very resolute to continue. He read: —

‘Acquisitiveness leads to these glorified things: general science, general knowledge, national history, scholarships, examinations, advanced courses, “interesting” things (whoever wanted to be interested), the theological thing called syncretism, tact, Swindling...’

Mr. Sanderson stopped and smiled in a breathless manner, half panting, half laughing, very characteristic of him. His glasses gleamed at the audience. His smile meant: ‘We are going a little too fast, boys. Where are we getting to Where are we getting to’ He affected to refer to his notes and then broke away upon a new line.

‘Out of all these things I have been telling you, out of all these considerations, evolves the modern school. The modern school is not made by the very simple and easy method of abandoning Greek. (Laughter.) Nor is it made by introducing science or engineering. The modern school’s business is to impress into the service of man every branch of human knowledge we can get hold of. The modern

method in the modern school does not depend on any method of teaching. We hear a great deal about methods of teaching languages, mathematics, science; they are all trivial. The great purpose is to enlist the boys or girls in the service of man to-day and man to-morrow. The method which makes learning easy is waste of time. What boy will succumb to the entreaty: "Come, I will make you clever; it will be so easy for you; you will be able to learn it without an effort"? What they succumb to is service for the community. I have tested that in the workshops. They don't want to make things for themselves; they soon cease to have any longing desire to make anything even for their mothers. What they love to do is to take part in some great work that must be done for the community; some work that goes on beyond them, some great spacious work. You can spread them out into all sorts of spacious things, in all departments, such things as taking part in investigating the truth. The truth, for instance, of the actual condition of the coal-miners or of any miners. An important question which we have been concerned with for at least three years is "*What is China?* What is it like?" You may say, "Methods of teaching geography." But who ever learned anything from geography — as geography? Who wants to know geography — as geography? Books exist for it, maps, plasticine exists for it. We want to know about China. If we are going to see to it that everyone of our working men has the same opportunities that in our school we give to our boys we shall have some difficulty with China. We shall never be able to give our working people these opportunities unless the Chinese give them too. Scientific men must find themselves dominant in the Foreign Office and Colonial Service so as to know what is the nature of the people in these distant places, how we can bring to them what we are able to give to our sons — the opportunity of making the highest and best use of their faculties. We shall not get that sort of thing from geography books. You will have to take the boys and let them find out what men have done who have been in China: to get products from China; to know its geology, and whether, after all, the Chinese do so deeply love rice that they want to live on a very little a day. Do the Chinese love rice? Do they love underselling white labour? Do they want to? That is real geography, but not class-room geography. That extension of interest, until China

is brought into the class-room and the boys are finding out about it, is, I claim, one of the deepest and greatest tasks to be undertaken. China-India-the Durham miners — spacious undertakings...

'Schools must be equipped spaciously, *spaciously*, and they must have a spacious staff. I have the list of our staff here. We have masters for mathematics, physics, chemistry, mechanics, biology, zoology, anthropology, botany, geology, architecture, classics, history, literature, geography, archaeology, economics, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Eastern languages, art, applied art, handicrafts, and music.

'"Impossible," some people say. There is no great school in the land but could quite well afford it...

'We must send out workers imbued with the determination to seek and investigate truth — truth that will make them free — and to take great care that in the search for truth they will never take part in or sympathise with those methods by which the edge of truth is blunted.'

§ 3

The voice beside me stopped. Some one pushed up a chair for Sanderson and he sat down. There was applause. I stood up and then struck by a thought, whispered: 'Would you like to answer a few questions?'

'Yes, yes. Certainly,' he said.

'Not too tired to answer them?'

'No — no.'

I had a little strip of notes In my hand and I thought of underlining one or two points in this tremendous project of a school he had spread before his audience before I let in the questioners. I began by saying that the lecture had been a little hard to follow but that it would repay following into the remotest corners of its meaning. Then I heard a little commotion behind me and turned round to see what was the matter. Sanderson had slipped from his chair on to the platform and was lying on his back breathing hoarsely. His collar and tie were removed forthwith. There were several doctors on the

platform with us and they set to work upon him. I hesitated for a moment and then declared the meeting at an end, and asked the audience to disperse as speedily as possible. I thought it was an epileptic fit and I had no sense of Sanderson's impending death. I had never seen anything of the sort before. I could not believe it when they told me he was dead.

The windows of the hot and sultry room were opened and most of the people made their way out, but the reporters remained and one or two persons of the curious type who hung about vaguely with an affectation of decorous sympathy. The lecture had been a very difficult one for the newspaper men, and they came now with a certain eagerness to ask questions about Oundle and Sanderson's career. I answered them as well as I could. Sanderson lay across the back of the platform, bare-chested and still. It became evident that I had to seek out Mrs. Sanderson and tell her of this disaster.

There was a little difficulty in ascertaining at which hotel Mr. and Mrs. Sanderson had been staying, and when I got there I found she was out shopping, and I waited some time for her return. Meanwhile her daughter and her daughter-in-law at Oundle were called up by telephone to come to her at once in London. I told her at first that her husband was ill, and then, as we went together in a cab to University College, dangerously ill. She was fully prepared to hear from the doctors at the hospital that the end had come. The poor lady took the news very simply and bravely.

In the Mortuary Chapel of University College Hospital I saw my friend's face for the last time, in all the irresponsive dignity of death. We took Mrs. Sanderson to him and left her for a time alone with him. Four years before in the same London hotel at which she was now solitary, he and she had shared the bitter grief of their eldest son's death together.

§ 4

An event of this sort produces the most various reactions in people, and I recall with a distressful amusement two unknown persons who accosted me as I went out from University College to find a taxi to

take me to 1rs. Sanderson. One was a young woman who came up to me and said: ‘Don’t be grieved for your friend, Mr. Wells. It was a splendid thing to die like that in the midst of life, after giving his message.’

I did not accept these congratulations and I made no reply to her. I was thinking that a little acute observation, a little more consideration on my part, a finer sense of the labour I was putting upon my friend, might have averted his death al together. And I was by no means convinced that his message was delivered, that it had reached the people I had hoped it would reach and a waken. I had counted on much more from Sanderson. This death seemed to me and still seems far more like frustration than release.

Then presently as I gesticulated for a cab near Gower Street Station, I found a pale-faced, earnest-looking man beside me asking for a moment’s speech. ‘Mr. Wells,’ he said, ‘does not this sudden event give you new views of immortality, new lights upon spiritual realities?’

I stared at a sort of greedy excitement in his face. ‘None whatever!’ I said at last and got into my taxi.

I must confess that to this day I can find in Sanderson’s death nothing but irreparable loss. He left much of his work in a state so incomplete that I cannot see how his successors can carry it on. In matters educational he was before all things a practical artist, and education is altogether too much the prey of theories. He filled me — a mere writer, with envious admiration when I saw how he could control and shape things to his will, how he could experiment and learn and how he could use his boys, his governors, his staff, to try out and shape his creative dreams.

He was a strong man and in a very profound and simple way a good man, and it was a very helpful thing to feel oneself his ally. But now that he is gone, now that all his later projects and intentions shrivel and fade and his great school recedes visibly towards the commonplace, I do not know where to turn to do an effective stroke for education. It is only schoolmasters and school-mistresses and educational authorities and school governors and school promoters and university teachers who can really carry on the work that he began. In this book I have tried to set out as clearly as possible, and

largely in his own words, his fundamental ideas of the suppression of competition by co-operation, of the return of schools to real service and of a House of Vision, a Temple of History and the Future, as the brain and centre of community life. This present book is, as it were, a simplified diagram of the teachings less luminously and more fully set out in the official Life.

One thing I shared with Sanderson altogether, and that was our conviction that the present common life of men, at once dull and disorderly, competitive, uncreative, cruelly stupid and stupidly cruel, unless it is to be regarded merely as a necessary phase in the development of a nobler existence, is a thing not worth having, that it does not matter who drops dead or how soon we drop dead out of such a world. Unless there is a more abundant life before mankind, this scheme of space and time is a bad joke beyond our understanding, a flare of vulgarity, an empty laugh, braying across the mysteries. But we two shared the belief that latent in men and perceptible in men is a greater mankind, great enough to make every effort to realise it fully worth while, and to make the whole business of living worth while.

And the way to that realisation lies, we both believed, through thought and through creative effort, through science and art and the school.

THE END

A YEAR OF PROPHESYING

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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. AND THE FEDERATION OF MANKIND

22.9.1923

I AM one of those people who believe that if human affairs are to go on without decay and catastrophe, there must be an end to the organisation of war. I believe that the power to prepare for war and make war must be withdrawn from separate States, as already it has been withdrawn from separate cities and from districts and from private individuals, and that ultimately there must be a Confederation of all mankind to keep one peace throughout the world.

The United States of America is but the first instance of a federating process which will, I believe, extend at last to the whole world. Since 1917 I have given much more of my waking life to that vision of a confederated mankind than I have given to any other single interest or subject. And yet I am not a supporter of the League of Nations in its present form, and I do not think that the League of Nations at Geneva is ever likely to develop into an effective World Confederation. It is much more likely to develop into a serious obstacle to such a Confederation. The sooner now that it is scrapped and broken up the better, I think, for mankind. I am hostile to the present League of Nations because I desire the Confederation of Mankind.

I do not think that the obstructive possibilities of the existing League of Nations are sufficiently understood by liberal-minded people throughout the world. I do not think they realise how effectively it may be used as a consumer and waster of the creative energy that would otherwise carry us forward toward World Confederation.

The League of Nations that we saw in our visions in those distressful and yet creative years, 1917-18, was to have been a real step forward in human affairs. It was to have been a repetition on a gigantic scale of that magnificent turning-point in the history of America when it was decided that the conferring representatives of the liberated colonies should talk no longer of the people of Virginia,

the people of Georgia, and the people of Massachusetts, but instead of the people of the United States. So in a wider stride we were to begin to forget the particular interests of the people of Germany and of the people of France and of the people of England in a new realisation of the common needs and dangers and sacrifices of the people of the world. So we hoped. So we still try to hope.

But that was far too wide a stride for humanity to take all at once. The League we desired was to have been the first loose conference that would have ended in a federal government for the whole earth. It was to have controlled war establishments from the start, constricted or abolished all private armament firms, created and maintained a world standard of currency, of labour legislation, of health and education, watched the world production of staple articles for the common good, restricted malignant tariff hostilities, negotiated and regulated the migrations of populations, and made the ways of the world, the high seas, and the international land routes alike open and safe for all decent men. So we saw it as a new, brave assertion of human sanity and of the right of all men to a certain fullness of life, against old hates, old prejudices, old debts and claims and limitations.

And there seemed to some of us to be sufficient will in the world then for so bold and great a beginning. I wonder — empty speculation though it is now — if we were indeed so wrong in thinking that — if some man or group of men of supreme genius might not have achieved a real world peace even in 1919. All over the world there were millions of people, prepared by immense sufferings and fears for so drastic a change. There were great masses of people everywhere mentally ready for that League. For many months President Wilson, simply because he had said "League of Nations" plainly and clearly, was the greatest man on earth. He overshadowed Kings and Emperors.

Most of us can still recall that false dawn, that phase of hope. When the first great gathering to inaugurate the English League of Nations Union met in Westminster, people were turned away from the dangerously packed hall, not by the hundred but by the thousand. But it is easier to assemble crowds of enthusiastic people than to give them faithful leaders and capable Ministers. The First Crusade might

have taught us that. The new movement had no leaders worth considering, and into the vacuum poured all the eager stuff of the old order. I remember how my heart sank that day when I saw the brightest bishops and the best-advertised Nonconformist leaders, politicians needing a new line of goods, the rising Bar and the social collectors, Mrs. Asquith and her set, all the much-photographed and the much-talked-about, swarming up upon the Westminster platform, pushing well into the limelight, nodding and gesticulating to each other, as gay as if they were at a fashionable wedding, before dear Lord Grey, that dignified image of British statesmanship, read out the platitudes he had prepared for the occasion. The common folk of the earth might want a new organisation of peace in the world, but these people of all people I realised would never give it them.

Things come not so swiftly to suffering mankind. The order has indeed gone forth, men know their need, but the master artisan that will fulfil it has still to learn his business and make his tools. Perhaps he has still to be born. And, meanwhile, in the light of this false dawn, a League of Nations, that hardly pretended even to look like what we desired, was planned in Paris hurriedly and cheaply, and run up at Geneva. It has provided a job for Sir Eric Drummond, a British Foreign Office official unknown to the generality of mankind, and Lord Robert Cecil, hitherto prominent chiefly as the inveterate enemy of unsectarian education in England, secured political resuscitation as its leading advocate. With the permission of France and Great Britain this League has negotiated one or two minor settlements that were not too deeply entangled in the policy of these Great Powers, and it has afforded a number of Spanish-American politicians agreeable, if expensive, holidays in Europe. And whenever one wants to talk of the Confederation of Mankind now, it gets in the way.

We had thought that the League of Nations would abolish diplomacy. We found it had merely added another piece, and a very ineffective piece at that, to the already crowded diplomatic game upon the European board.

That great Confederation of Mankind that we desire, that great peace with variety round and about the earth, cannot arise out of such a beginning. This League of Nations at Geneva is not even the germ

of such a thing. Rather it is the instinctive effort of the old European order to stifle this creative idea on its birth by encysting it in a tradition of futility and diplomatic methods. The way to human confederation is by a longer route, and the end is not to be attained by any such hasty constitution as that of the League. The Confederation of Man is a task for generations. Tens of thousands of leaderly men and women must serve that idea and live and die for it before it can approach realisation. Millions must respond to the service of their leadership. The idea must become the fundamental political idea of hundreds of millions, ousting kings and flags from men's imaginations. Then we can begin to get together an effective ruling body. A stupendous task, you say, but not an impossible one. A day will come, I believe, when this great dream will be realised, when all the paraphernalia of war or of national sovereignty — it is the same thing — will have followed the stone gods and human sacrifices to limbo, and when a new phase of human experience will begin.

So far there has been no real civilisation of the world; civilisation is still only an occasional incident, a passing gleam of promise in the lives of a handful of people here and there. But civilisation will come at last for all. It is about that coming of a world confederation and of the world civilisation it will make possible, that I shall be writing chiefly in this series of weekly articles. Now and then I shall diverge to other topics, but that will be my main theme, the realisation of civilisation. I shall consider scientific progress, educational and social work, political happenings, and the general trend of current events, and almost always I shall consider them in direct relation to that new age that lies before mankind. I shall write about the signs of the times and about typical men and women just as they seem to be making or marring these creative hopes. I do not expect my readers to agree with me always. I shall write about contentious things, and my last thought will be of pleasing or propitiating. At times I shall certainly irritate. But I hope to interest. And some few of my younger readers, at least, I hope to infect with that same idea of creative service for the new civilisation which possesses my own life.

THE BEAUTY OF FLYING

29.9.1923

THIS last summer I had a number of aeroplane journeys about Europe. I had flights in several of the big omnibus aeroplanes that fly on the more or less regular European services, and also I flew as the single passenger in smaller open machines. There is a delight and wonder in the latter sort of flying altogether lost in the boxed-in aeroplane.

International jealousies, commercial rivalries, and the meanness of outlook universally prevalent in Europe at the present time are muddling away most of the possible freedom and happiness of air travel. I flew from London to Amsterdam, but I had to get my money back for the rest of the journey to Berlin, and take a night train, because of some hitch in the German arrangements, and similarly the Franco-Rumanian service from Vienna via Prague and Strassburg to Paris, so triumphantly inaugurated a little while ago, was in a state of dislocation, and I had to make that journey round by way of Holland to avoid the inconveniences and delays due to the fooleries of French "policy" upon the Rhine. But I flew, when there was a machine to fly in and no patriotic idiocy to prevent it, and I have renewed and strengthened my sense of the sweetness and beauty of air travel — in the small open machine.

As I hung in the crystalline air above the mountains of Slovakia, far above the wooded hills and deep green gorges, with the culminating masses of the Little Carpathians heaped up to the right of me and the line of the White Carpathians away to the left, and ahead of me, still dim and distant, the striped fields and villages of the plain of Bratislava; and as I turned about and looked at the blue Moravian lands behind me, with every stream and pool picked out in molten silver by the afternoon sun, I was as near the summit of felicity as I have been in all my very pleasant life. Ever and again we overtook some little puff of cloud. There were little troops of bright white cloudlets that raced with us eastward, swift and noiseless; their shadows raced our own little shadow up the slopes and across the forest crests below, and their whiteness and their transitory cool

embrace as we passed through them, enhanced by contrast the sunlit clearness and brightness of the outspread world.

For the first part of my flight that day I was accompanied by three other Czech machines. They were fighting aeroplanes. They came up abreast of me in the liquid air, and their aviators signalled to me, and then, suddenly, they dived and swept over in a loop and fell down like dead leaves for a thousand feet or so and righted themselves and flew home again to Prague. I have seen such manoeuvres before from the ground, but they are far more graceful and lovely when one floats above them and watches the aeroplane drop down like a falling kite, almost, it seems, to the spires and tree-tops.

At last we began to descend, and circled down to Nitra, a place I had never heard of before, a wonderfully beautiful and, I should think, a very prosperous town, with a great church and many spires, and from the aerodrome at Nitra I started again two days later to return to Prague. The weather was unsettled, and the most hopeful time for flying was the early morning. I left Topol'cany, where I had been staying, at dawn, therefore, with a full moon shining brightly in a rain-washed sky, and after a little misadventure and a cut head in a ditch, for automobiles are much less safe than aeroplanes, and the roads that morning were wet mire, reached Nitra at sunrise and rose with the red blaze of the sun above the hills.

Sun and aeroplane seemed to soar up together. Never before had I been up in the air so early in the morning. All the little trees below were blobs and dots, but they cast shadows hundreds of feet long, and in the deep blue nooks and crannies of the gold-lit hills the white mists huddled.

The wind rose against us as we returned and blew a gale. We took four hours to make a journey that the other way, before the wind, had taken little more than two. Between Brunn and Prague the aeroplane swayed and danced like a kite on its string, and ever and again found an air pocket and dropped a few score feet. But though I am but a moderate sailor, I do not get air-sick; and to sit loose and lax and unafraid, strapped into an open aeroplane, drenched in sweet air, is altogether different from being enclosed in an air omnibus. I had rather be four hours in an open aeroplane in a high wind than two in an automobile on a bad road or one in a Channel steamboat on a

rough day.

Those two flights in Slovakia are among the very happiest experiences I have ever had in my life. And it irks me to think that, because of the incoherent muddle of human affairs, things go so slowly that I shall probably never be able to go round the world in the same delightful fashion, and fly over the deserts of Arabia and the plains of India, and down the gorges of the Yang-tse-Kiang. All these things I might do in a saner world. The places exist, the discoveries have been made, but a magic net of rivalries, obstructions, and vile preoccupations, delays the consummation of these bright possibilities. A happier generation will have all these pleasures within its reach. Such an aeroplane as the one I flew in need not cost more than a Ford car, even now, and it is almost as easy to fly as it is to drive an automobile.

But, of course, all such things must wait, and civilisation must wait, until M. Poincaré has collected the claims of France upon Germany or smashed up Europe. It is so much more important, you understand, to collect these legendary, impossible debts, that one little scrap of Europe has figured up against another little scrap of Europe, than to get on with living. The Germans must not be allowed to develop their air services; that would never do for the politicians; and, indeed, every European country must do all it can to restrain the air development of every other country. We must all get in each other's way; that is the "common sense" of national "policy." Why else are we all boxed up in little separate sovereign States? And so you and I, Dear Reader, will never get more than such brief samples and intimations of the happiness we might have in the air, and most people now alive in the world will never get to flying at all. They will die and never know. They will grub along the earth's surface and die with this great delight almost within their reach, taunting them by its humming passage across their sky.

THE TRIUMPH OF FRANCE

6.10.1923

THE long-spun-out passive resistance in the Ruhr is over, and the controlled, instructed, and disciplined French Press, and the more than French Press which serves the national interests of France in Great Britain and Holland and other European countries, is cock-a-hoop with the clamour of this empty victory. Let us consider what it means for civilisation and the world at large.

Men's memories are short, and it may be well to remind them of the broad facts that have led up to this outrageous, pitiful struggle of the Ruhr. In November 1918 the German people, after an unexampled struggle of four years, surrendered to the Allied Powers arrayed against them. They surrendered on the promises held out to them by the Fourteen Points of President Wilson and by the British propaganda of Crewe House. They surrendered, and they were disarmed and placed in a position in which it was impossible for them to resume resistance. The Americans and British, at any rate, were bound in honour to see that the virtual pact of the surrender was observed, and they did not do so. A peace was put over the German peoples having no relation to the clear understanding of the virtual pact of the surrender, and the bill for damages and reparations was figured up against them utterly beyond their capacity to pay. The Germans signed the Peace Treaty only after the most strenuous protests and because they were then powerless to do anything else. The Treaty was not a bargain to which they agreed, it was a monstrous and impossible obligation rammed down their throats.

There can be only two judgments about this overcharge. Either it was made out of sheer ignorance and levity, or it was made with the deliberate intention of keeping Germany henceforth in arrears and in the wrong, so that at any sign of economic or political revival she could be at once claimed against and stricken down again. Possibly ignorance and levity mingled with foreseeing malignity in the counsels at Versailles. But the temptations created by the situation have proved irresistible. Throughout the years immediately following this Treaty France has never faltered from her conception that the

new peace was only the continuation and completion of her ages-long feud against Germany. She has been quietly and steadfastly strangling Germany in the name of her debt. At Washington she refused to discuss the question of land disarmament — some of us can still recall M. Briand's preposterous speech about the concealed arms and hidden armies of Germany — and across the amiable, foolish face of the Geneva League of Nations she has woven a net of armed alliances, heaping guns and dull and overwhelming expense upon the insolvent peasant States of Eastern Europe, and dissipating the money she owes to Britain and America upon fresh military adventures. She is now indisputably in military control of Europe. Great Britain has displayed no such fixity of intention as France, and, particularly since the downfall of Mr. Lloyd George, has just rolled about in an uneasy, protesting manner. America has withdrawn in a state of virtuous indignation from the mess she helped so carelessly and generously to make.

Until the spring of this year Germany continued to make very considerable but insufficient payments to her conquerors. There seemed, indeed, a possibility that she might presently muddle back to a tolerable and honourable position in European affairs. France perceived that the hour had come for effective action; and Mr. Lloyd George being by that time out of her way, she occupied the Ruhr, the industrial heart of Germany. She occupied it without the consent of her Allies, and so illegally; and with an utter disregard of the interests of Britain, who came to her rescue when she was faint with terror in 1914. She occupied it with every circumstance of petty insolence. Most of us have seen photographs and cinema films of the French troops strutting through the disarmed, defenceless German towns, and the French officers hitting off the hats and smacking the faces of any bystanders who did not display sufficient reverence for their intrusive flag.

I cannot imagine what black murder would not spring up in the hearts of an American or British population treated as the Germans were treated this spring. The behaviour of the Germans has indeed been amazingly patient. The rest of Germany has wrecked itself financially in a desperate attempt to sustain the Ruhr workers in an attitude of passive resistance, and now at last these overwhelming

payments have to cease. For the better part of a year the trade and industry of Central Europe has been dislocated. A year of human life and human production has been frittered away in this struggle. The great economic machine of Western Germany is now like some complex piece of apparatus that has been fought for by infuriated children. How deep the physical and moral wounds inflicted on the war-exhausted, depleted being of Germany may be we can as yet only speculate.

But France has achieved a great victory in this new war, for war it is, against an unarmed antagonist. She is victorious, and the tricolour triumphs over Europe. The passive resistance of the Ruhr has been abandoned and the German Government has been unable to get any conditions from France in exchange for this surrender. The debt looms as large as ever, the possibility of effective payments is much remoter than it has been before, and France is in a stronger position argumentatively than she has even been. She can still go on counting her steadily accumulating claim. She can proceed, whenever she wishes to do so, to fresh seizures, further occupations, and further humiliations for her defeated enemy. There is no boundary set, by anything that has happened, to the systematic disintegration of the great civilisation of Germany. Germans may be found vile enough and foolish enough to assist in the political fragmentation of their own people. Presently we may see Germany broken up into half a dozen nasty little retrogressive States, all played off against each other to their mutual enfeeblement by France.

Then, except for an ambiguous Italy, there will be nothing left upon the Continent of Europe but a victorious France and her smashed and broken antagonists and her servile and uncertain allied peasant States, Europe Balkanised from the Rhine to the Black Sea. It will be a realisation of the great dreams of Napoleon I, a hundred and twenty years later. True, Russia will loom rather dark and rather neglected in the background of the French millennium, but the French think that from a military or political point of view Russia is to be counted out for the next fifty years. And, as the happy achievement of “security” in Europe becomes more certain, France will be able to turn her attention to her old rival and temporary ally across the Channel. French ideas of trade and economics have always

been nationalist and monopolistic, and at last she will be in a position to apply to Britain with real effect that system of exclusion from the markets of Europe, the Continental system, which failed when Napoleon I first devised and tried it a century or more ago. Moreover, she will be at last able to reopen the discussion of the proper ownership of the vast natural resources of Central Africa, at present largely shared by the British. The victory of the Ruhr is a considerable victory, a great hungry victory, but it is only one in a sustained campaign in the realisation of a policy centuries old, the policy of French predominance in the European world. France has had revolutions and reverses, but her nationalism is the intensest of all nationalism, and her conception of international policy has been the same under Bourbon, Bonaparte, or Republic. She seems to be incapable of any such ideas as co-operation, coalescence, union, pooling, reconciliation, reconstruction on a broader basis, brotherhood of nations or the like. There is no stopping her. She will thrust her fluttering tricolour, her brave little men in horizon blue and steel helmets, her intrigues and her claims, farther and farther over a suffering, disorganised world — until she becomes by common consent impossible.

The Ruhr is a great victory for France, and it has won her nothing. What next will she do after the Ruhr?

THE SINGAPORE ARSENAL

13.10.1923

IT is proposed that Great Britain, which is too shabbily poor to give the mass of its own children more than half an elementary education, which cannot house its workers with comfort or decency, which has over a million unemployed, shall spend great sums of money upon a naval establishment at Singapore. This undertaking is just not within the positive prohibitions of the Washington Agreement. It is a few hundred miles west of the area involved in that Agreement. But it is flatly contrary to the spirit of the Washington gathering. It is a frank provocation to crippled and devastated Japan; it dominates the route of the French to Tonkin; it is a contemptuous gesture at any American notions about the "freedom of the seas."

Provided cruisers and battleships are to play a part in the "next war," it is an admirably chosen position. Let the reader look it up in any atlas and see how its submarines will be able to radiate over the adjacent seas and how all India supports it. It is fairly well placed for air war also. On the supposition that the world is still to go on divided among aggressive sovereign States, with phases of war preparation called peace and acute phases of more and more destructive war, it is quite a good move in the game. On the supposition that the world is growing up to any age of reason and that a world civilisation is attainable, it is a monstrously stupid crime.

When I was at the Washington Conference upon the Limitation of Armaments I denounced the French with what many people thought was an extreme bitterness for their reliance upon submarines and Senegalese troops. This British feat at Singapore deserves an equal denunciation. These preparations of the French and British are equally acts of war against the general peace of mankind. It is no good treating the French as though they alone were outraging the unity of mankind with their great armies and equipments. Great Britain, we now see by this crime at Singapore, is just as mischievously and criminally disposed. Both Powers are disturbers

of the peace and destroyers of human hope.

But when the thing is done by one's own country and by people we know, one sees more of it and more of the humanity of it than when it happens abroad; and I find a particular figure floating before my mind now whenever I hear or read the word Singapore. He will serve as my type specimen for this aggressive and troublesome British imperialism, and very probably the essential wickedness of French policy finds its embodiment in some quite similar personalities.

In which case we are not up against wickedness, but against — what shall I say? — a retardation of mental development.

My type specimen is the First Lord of the Admiralty in the present * British Government, Mr. Amery. He is a pleasantly smiling, short, thick-set lad of fifteen. He was born in 1873, but in 1889, when he should have become sixteen, he was living the life of an exceptionally clever boy at Harrow, and somehow just became fifteen again, and he has remained fifteen ever since. Every year his birthday comes round without the slightest effect upon him. He may be a little more substantial, but his bland, clean-shaven face is the same that confronted the Harrow masters. He has just the same smile. He went on to a brilliant career at Balliol College, Oxford, always famous for its retardation of adolescence, and emerged a devotee of the British Empire and of the games of Foreign Policy and War. Kipling was new to men then, and that generation was drunken with him. Cecil Rhodes was a great inspiration in the land. He could not have preached salvation by Anglo-Saxons more earnestly if he had been Mr. Lothrop Stoddard. Mr. Amery, under these influences and by a natural inclination, dedicated his life to the British Empire, any British Empire apparently and whatever it did, and he has been so busy serving it ever since that he has never had time to think what it is at all.

He is one of a group of interesting youths of fifteen who focussed upon Balliol College. But most of the others have become portly or bald, or they have grown whiskers or such-like disguises; none of them still show their fifteen-ness as engagingly as Mr. Amery.

Now the mind of a boy of fifteen is a very interesting sort of mind. Imagination is awake and lively, but it is still a narrow imagination.

Many of the emotions and social devotions are still undeveloped. A boy of fifteen is still capable of making a volcano in the garden with all the available explosives; he likes mixing chemicals to see what will happen; he thinks the loveliest possession in the world is a gun. If you give him a toy railway system he will take great pains to arrange for a really smashing collision. Towards women he is a Spartan — a Red Indian. Something of fifteen still lingers in my own composition, though most of me is a little older, and before the war I used to play a great war-game on my barn floor with lead soldiers, realistic scenery and guns that hit, with other boys, actually and sometimes even chronologically fifteen. Unflinching fellows those lead soldiers were; they left no widows and orphans, and if one got disabled there was no pension. You melted him down.

Now both Mr. Amery and I would like to play soldiers with the world. But while Mr. Amery has remained fifteen through and through, large parts of me have gone on growing older. This older section of me can see men as something more than lead soldiers, and realise war in terms of spilled human life and utter waste and as a stupid massacre of boys and young men. Even that war-game we used to play in our barn left the floor in a weary-looking muddle, and was a bore to put away. But the highest expression of Mr. Amery's being is, I perceive, to play soldiers and battleships with mankind.

And the amazing thing is that we let him!

We are disposed to let this man with the soul of a fifteen-year-old kid spend money for which our schools are being starved, upon this solemn childishness at Singapore. And there may be thousands of us doomed to wounds and blood and tears under the plump hands and knees of Mr. Amery and his little friends and their antagonists as they crawl about their game on the floor of the world.

But if I can see Mr. Amery, not as a black devotee of blood-lust but as an innocent perennial juvenile, then I am bound if I can to see the same thing in France. Those people over there who are opening new boxes of African soldiers and setting them down in Germany, and who are so secret and busy with their submarines, are probably just such innocents as Mr. Amery — just as solemnly fifteen. They have not yet learnt to see the world in terms of life. And, if so, the cure for war is not so much for the world to grow better as for the

world to grow up.

Mr. Amery is not a bit terrible personally, but it is terrible that he should have any sort of control of the serious things of life. I think he ought to be kept out of mischief — just as I think another lad of the same age, Mr. Winston Churchill, ought to be kept out of mischief, in some sort of institution where he can play Kriegsspiel for the rest of his existence without endangering human life. And I ask reasonable adult men in France whether the time is not ripe for a similar segregation of puerility from their Foreign Office and War Office out of the reach of mischief. Perhaps the 1924 electors will do something in that direction. If these lads presently get a game of war going between France and England we shall have the whole fabric of civilisation so entirely in ruins before it is over that I doubt if it will be reconstructed for many centuries.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AGAIN

20.10.1923

I OPENED this series of articles with an attack on the existing League of Nations at Geneva. This attack provoked a very considerable correspondence in reply. Hardly anyone was disposed to defend the League as perfect or satisfactory, but it was urged that it was a beginning, a germ, a young thing that might accumulate power and prestige, that its intentions were admirable, that it embodied and sustained an ideal, and that if it were destroyed there would be nothing to stand between the nations at all. I was reproached because — after an advocacy of world unity for a quarter of a century — I refused to recognise this poor diplomatic changeling as the birth of my desires.

It is perhaps desirable that I should answer these criticisms and state a little more explicitly why I think this affair at Geneva is worse than no league of mankind at all. I do not think it can ever develop into a serviceable organ for world civilisation, because I think that it was planned from the outset upon the wrong lines; and that it is as reasonable to support it in the hope of its growing to meet the world's needs as it would be to buy a broken-down perambulator in the hope that it would presently develop into a much needed automobile.

The Geneva League of Nations is a start, I admit, but it is a start in the wrong direction; and before we can get upon the way to any real collective organisation of world affairs we have to retrace our steps to the starting- point before there was any League. The League is malformed in such a way that it can never hope to grow straight and strong.

One primary fault in the structure of this existing League is its complete abandonment to the idea of national sovereignty in its intensest and most mischievous form. Any little bundle of human beings, however small, illiterate, and unimportant, provided only that it was a law unto itself and waved a flag about and insisted upon a cantankerous independence, was regarded as a possible unit by the pedants who devised the League. Any body of people, however

numerous, intelligent, and significant in human affairs, provided it had grouped itself into any other larger political aggregation, ceased, on the other hand, to be anything but a merged participator in the League's affairs. So Abyssinia, in which there are probably not two hundred people capable of understanding the rudiments of world politics, could be considered seriously as a member of this absurd association, while Scotland, the best educated country in Europe, was not to appear except as a button or collar-stud, so to speak, upon the figure of the British representative.

The manifest consequences of such a preposterous recognition of separatism, the inevitable feebleness and disingenuousness of a League based upon such ideas, were pointed out as early as May 1918 in a memorandum issued by the official propaganda organisation of the British Government at Crewe House. Crewe House was rather a thorn in the side of the dear old British Foreign Office; in 1918 it was asking for a definition of Allied war aims and all sorts of inconvenient, honest questions. The memorandum was treated according to the best diplomatic precedents. Although we v/ ere making it the basis of extravagant promises to Germany, it was never communicated, as it should have been, to the French and Italians. At the end of the war the promises of Crewe House dropped out of the victorious picture. The reasoning and the warnings of this memorandum were entirely ignored by the hasty gentlemen at Versailles who threw together the Geneva League of Nations.

These gentlemen seem to have been profoundly influenced by an infantile analogy between a sovereign State and an individual man. This is the age of democracy; and the League, most marvellous formula! was ''to make the world safe for democracy." Modern democracy is taken to mean so much political equality between adult and adult as may be achieved by giving each individual a vote.

What more easy or — if you think it out — more fallacious than to transfer this idea to sovereign States and give each of them a vote in a wonderful congress of mankind? But one sovereign State is not like another sovereign State, as one individual man is like another; the difference between this sovereign State and that is far profounder even than the difference between animals of different classes. The difference in structure, complexity, function, and destiny, for

example, between the organisation known as the United States of America and that known as Nicaragua is a difference as wide as that between the whole plant of a great industrial district and a small domestic mangle. But in the original Covenant of the League both were treated as individuals differing only a little in size and importance. Liberia, Belgium, France, Haiti, and the Hedjaz were all to be — and they are! — citizens in this marvellous republic of States. It is like treating a jar of pickles, an opera house, a battleship, a bundle of sugar-cane, and a small travelling bag as equivalent things. Any old thing with a flag on it — that is the rule.

Can you expect the debates and divisions of a body so constituted to have any restraining influence upon the policies and practices of the Great Powers? It is treated with open contempt in France and Italy, and if there is a sort of support for it in Great Britain it is largely because there is a feeling that with Lord Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil to the fore and with its British Foreign Office Secretary and so forth its procedure can be manipulated in the interests of the — I won't say British, for that is too good a word to use — the "Anglican" Empire.

Now my case is that this constitution of the League is for the reasons I have stated bad beyond all patching. There is, I hold, no need at all to base the thing we need upon a sham Parliament of a miscellany of sovereign States, big or little, civilised or savage. What civilisation needs are open, efficient, and authoritative controls of certain universal interests, controls representing the great mass of civilised people and their common world interests. For all practical ends it would be infinitely better to let Liberia, Haiti, the Hedjaz, and the like go hang. Such little, such parochial States ought to learn to combine up with kindred organisations — or' hold their peace in world affairs. Not one of them contains as many people educated up to ideas of world policy as, let us say, any outlying suburb of Amsterdam. If half a dozen of the bigger political systems of the world, or even two or three, could get together to sustain a common monetary standard, a common transport control, a common law court, a tariff union, a mutual defence system, and a common guarantee of disarmament, they would achieve something beyond the uttermost possibilities of this Geneva affair.

So much political coalescence on the part — to take an example boldly — of the United States, the British system, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries would form a nucleus so large and influential that upon it the rest of the world, however fiercely nationalist at heart, would in the end be obliged to crystallise. I believe all these countries I have named, and Latin America and Spain and Portugal to boot, could pool their foreign policies — for that is what any genuine League of Nations means — without encountering insuperable difficulties. The worst barrier would be tariffs, but I do not believe that would be an invincible barrier. Such a club of civilised peoples would very speedily have all the rest of the world on its waiting list. And I do not see why its achievement should be any more difficult than, or indeed nearly as difficult as, bolstering up this ineffective pretence, the present League of Nations. I contend that instead of there being no alternative to the League of Nations the way would open quite naturally to such alternatives, directly it was cleared out of the way. It would, for instance — if only on account of the United States — be much easier to set up a great International Court of Justice with proper sanctions without the League than with it.

It is not as though the present League had accumulated any honour or prestige during its four years of life in Geneva. In the case of the Polish attack on Russia, in the case of the Greek aggressions on Turkey, in regard to the occupation of the Ruhr, the murderous bombardment of Corfu, and the stealing of the Greek deposit by the Council of Ambassadors to bring the Italians to evacuate Corfu, it has shown itself trivial, useless, and ridiculous. It is either silent before such outrages or it speaks with a quavering voice and nobody listens. It is a blind alley for good intentions, it is a weedy dump for all the weaknesses of European liberalism. Its past is contemptible, and the briefer the future of its present constitution the better for mankind.

THE AVIATION OF THE HALF-CIVILISED

27.10.1923

IT is probable that the first adequate and successful inauguration of air transport will be in North and South America, but it is in Europe that the needs and possibilities are greatest; and were it not for the short-sightedness and petty competitiveness of the Europeans it is in Europe that flying might first become the usual method of travel for distances of over three hundred miles. Europe is so cut up by channels, sands, bays, Zuyder Zees, Adriatics and Baltic Seas and the like, she has so clumsy and ill-planned a railway network, planned upon national lines to restrict too ready movements across frontiers, that she calls aloud for the aeroplane to soar over these wet obstacles and tangled confusions. But the chief intent and occupation of European administrators nowadays lies in spoiling the efforts of and making life insupportable for other Europeans, and naturally flying presents itself to them chiefly as a provocation to international sabotage. Most of the air services we hear about in Europe are hopelessly inadequate to the needs of civilised people who want to travel conveniently and beautifully. They are uncomfortable, unpunctual, dangerous, ridiculous, and — in view of what might be — pitiful.

It is as absurd to think of an air tour of Western Europe as it would be to think of an automobile tour of the Balkans and Asia Minor. The countries concerned are not sufficiently civilised to allow of such methods of transport.

Occasionally one sees maps in the newspapers showing the most wonderful network of air routes all over Europe: London to Moscow, Manchester to Constantinople, and the like. Any travel bureau will hand the credulous inquirer neat little handbills of air services, showing how he may breakfast in London and dine in Berlin, and so forth. Let the credulous inquirer try these services. He will find a few tired and badly overhauled machines run by companies with entirely insufficient supplies, plying in a mood of hectic uncertainty over some of these routes. On others the only thing he will find soaring will be soaring promises. And he will find very little hope in the

future of any better services.

I tried an air tour of Europe this summer. I did not warn any of the new companies concerned that I meant to write about them. I went as an ordinary passenger. Let me tell my experiences very briefly.

I started with a ticket for Berlin from London, and my first flight was to Amsterdam. I started on a perfect day for flying. But as we approached the Channel it became evident that we were not going to cross the water, but that we were swerving round to Lympne. Something had gone wrong. We landed at Lympne. The aviator apologised; he had an oil leakage. Matters were patched up, and we got up again and flew to Amsterdam. There the oil leakage was worse than ever, and we could not have gone much farther. A head-wind or a sudden storm might have got us into serious trouble. We had been flying in a machine that had not been sedulously overhauled, an overworked machine.

Next day I should have flown on to Berlin. When I went to the Amsterdam office to start, I learned that no aeroplane had come from Berlin for two days — though it was admirable flying weather — and the office could not tell me when a machine would be available. Apparently there had been some financial dislocation of the German service. I had to get round to various European towns I wanted to visit by means of the shabby, disheartened railway services of Central Europe. Returning, I did secure tickets for Paris from Prague by the Franco-Rumanian Air Company, which professes to run a swift and regular service from Bucharest to Paris. At the Prague aerodrome there is a vainglorious monument, an obelisk, to commemorate the foundation of this company. That and the office in Prague, where I got my money back, was as much as I saw of the Franco-Rumanian Company. Thanks to certain fortunate chances, which made me independent of private enterprise aeroplane companies, I had had some beautiful flying in Czecho-Slovakia. I made three delightful flights on three separate days, and on two of these days the French machines were not going to Strassburg "on account of the weather."

The real trouble of that particular company, however, was not the weather, but a shortage of machines. The company has no understanding with the German Government, and its route lies over

German territory from Czecho-Slovakia to Strassburg. Badly overhauled machines are never safe to get to their destination, and, I was told, eleven Franco-Rumanian aeroplanes, forced to descend on German territory, had been seized by the Germans.

'Planes were coming to Prague from Warsaw and Vienna and depositing passengers there to get through to their destinations as well as they could, but there was nothing going on to Strassburg. I got to Paris from Prague by train via Amsterdam! That is the present route between these two places, and I suppose it will remain so until our great grandchildren, if any, see what is left of the French removed from what is left of the Ruhr Valley.

From Paris I started by an English service for London. We started with an air of tremendous punctuality and efficiency from the Hotel Crillon at three in the afternoon. I reckoned we should be up by 3.30, and that I should dine in London at half-past seven or eight. But we muddled about at the aerodrome of Le Bourget until nearly five, booking luggage, fooling with passports, packing the all too big and clumsy omnibus machine. I sat in a seat with a lot of valises and hat boxes, tied precariously with string, swaying in front of my nose. The saloon had a worn and weary look; it was not nearly so pretty as it is in the advertisement pictures. We made a fairly good flight to the coast except that now and then the engine popped a little. We rose over the water, as usual, to about five thousand feet. Then as we came within distant sight of Dungeness, one engine began to miss badly. I noticed that we were dropping rapidly. However, we escaped a ducking. We crossed the coast-line while still at nearly two thousand feet and landed at Lympne. Apologies. The defective engine, we were told, was in a hopeless condition, and the company must send us passengers on in cars to a rural railway station and so by slow train to London, to arrive at heaven knows what hour. There was no attempt whatever to bring up a reserve aeroplane from Croydon; I presume because the company has no reserve aeroplanes available. I had the good luck to find a friend at Lympne who took me to his house for the night and turned my misfortune into pleasure, but my fellow-passengers were not so fortunate.

Luckily I was not a passenger in the French Goliath which crashed at West Mailing in August last. I have flown successfully on

one occasion from Paris to London in a French Goliath, and on another have started from London to Paris and had a forced landing at Lympne. These Goliaths are quite good machines, but they seem to be unlucky ones. That West Mailing disaster was only another such story of "private enterprise" flying as I have told, but carried to the pitch of tragedy. The unfortunate machine must have been in a shocking condition of maladjustment. It had already been down at Lympne for patching, and was going on to Croydon. The radiator of the port engine had been leaking. Then as it went on to Croydon the starboard engine failed completely. But we have always been told, perhaps untruthfully, that even if one engine of these double engine machines fails the other suffices to carry on to a safe landing. The port engine was still going. The aviator declared at first that there was a panic among the passengers, and that is why he crashed in a nut plantation. I doubt about the panic. But at any rate, here again was a machine in use in a condition quite unfit for passenger traffic, so that it needed only a momentary nervous failure to destroy it.

The moral I draw here to-day is to repeat exactly what I maintained upon the British Civil Air Transport Commission in 1918. "Private enterprise" cannot run successful European air services. Moreover, it is impossible to control the air services of Europe on nationalist lines. You cannot have nearly forty sovereign countries each trying to wreck the air service of the other thirty-nine. Europe must be one area for air transport under one control, or there can be nothing but a few ferry services in operation. One comprehensive European air trust, with hundreds and presently thousands of aeroplanes in daily flight and two or three in reserve and under overhaul for every one in the air, would have in the end an enormously profitable organisation. But Europe to-day is as morally incapable of producing such an organisation as Central Africa. These risky trips in dud machines and these flowery prospectuses of defective services are as much organised public flying as this generation is likely to see in Europe.

WILL GERMANY BREAK INTO PIECES?

3.11.1923

WILL GERMANY break into pieces and become a group of divergent and mutually hostile States?

To some readers this will seem to be an entirely useless question. They will declare that the thing is happening. Germany is breaking up visibly, they will say. Germany has attempted a democratic republic and failed. The daily news is kaleidoscopic. It varies with the day and the political bias of one's paper. Sometimes Germany is breaking in this way and sometimes in that. But few people seem to have much faith in the final emergence of a united Germany from this sea of disaster and misery in Central Europe.

Perhaps I believe too much in the things of the mind and imagination, in language and writing and literature as a link and a sustaining power in human affairs, but I do not share this belief in the break-up of Germany. I believe she will keep together as Russian-speaking Russia has kept together, and become again a great nation and a great people playing a leading part in the world's destinies.

It is true that her new democratic institutions have worked feebly and disastrously. But just at present what we call democratic institutions, our old clumsy system of voting and representative government that is, are not working particularly well in any European country. One cannot congratulate either Great Britain or France or Italy upon its triumphant democracy just at the present time. The duly elected British Government is unable to carry out its obvious foreign policy effectively because it is shouted down by a millionaire newspaper-owner suffering from Napoleonic mania, and in France the expression of public opinion is not so much shouted down as battened down under a centralised and all-powerful Press combine. France behaves with the concentrated vigour of monomania, and Great Britain with the self-regardful evasiveness of the feebleminded, and the common citizen of neither country is really justified in an attitude of superiority towards the distraught and leaderless German.

Distraught and leaderless the Germans are, and — which is

perhaps the greatest misfortune that can happen to a people in the face of a steadfast enemy — without a leading idea to hold them together. We have to remember that this great people, the Germans, lost their way in 1848, and have still to recover it. At that tune there was a reasonable prospect of a Republican United States of Germany. It was wrecked by the habitual particularism of Germany, and by the self-seeking treason of the Hohenzollerns. Germany was unified later, but from above and not from below, by a crown and dynasty and not by education and an educated popular will, and Germany is still reaping the consequences of that misfortune.

It is not the least among the endless inconveniences of monarchy that it substitutes an unreal symbol for real ideas of unity. Instead of a cult of brotherhood, instead of a pride in the achievements of one's own people in science and art and social progress and the service of mankind, there is substituted, more or less completely, an idiot adulation of the crowned head and his womankind and their offspring. The school children of a monarchist country are trained up to a worship of these glorified individuals; the flag becomes a carpet beneath the feet of their deities, and their attention is diverted from their own pride and honour as future members of a great community. Many people never grow up out of the obsessions of a royalist training, and so it is that the collapse of the Hohenzollern system has left great masses of the German people imaginatively bankrupt and utterly confused. Any people who had had the same training and the same experience would be equally at a loss and helpless. The idea of a great German republic, one and indivisible, has to be built up now in an atmosphere of unparalleled storm, confusion, and disaster.

It cannot be built up all at once, and meanwhile anything superficial in the way of separations may happen to Germany. I will not attempt to discuss the bubblings of separatism and monarchist extremism that are going on. But one probability is very present in my mind. It is one of the paradoxes of the Russian situation that the Communist Government of Moscow survives there very largely because under the stress of foreign invasions and the foreign-subsidised devastations of White adventurers it became a patriotic Government. In Germany now, neither the big industrials, the old Junkers, nor the ruling classes generally seem to have the wit and

generosity to think of their civilisation as a whole. The Communists do — after their fashion. At present the Communists are showing no overwhelming strength in German affairs, but a time may come when great numbers of the German people, trained in hardship, ruined and desperate, may turn to this one party which tells the same story in the Rhineland and Bavaria and Saxony and Prussia.

We have, I think, to count it among the possibilities of the present situation that a Communist Government may presently be fighting for German integrity against foreign domination in Berlin, and that great masses of the German people, like the Russians, may prefer even Communism to the certain shames and indignities of separatism. In which case Monsieur Poincaré will, I suppose, beat up his armies of blacks and whites and march on Berlin. With an "extension" trip to Moscow to follow.

Yet even after that Germany will survive. Twice before in her history Germany has arisen out of desolation and defeat. I believe she will rise again out of her present darkness and end at last the central and leading Power, the very keystone, it may be, of a reconstructed Europe. I believe in the German schoolmaster, the German student, in German persistency, and the patient strength of the German brain. I hated and hate that bastard imitative Byzantine-German Imperialism and German Junkerism, and I believe that our war to shatter these things was a necessary war. But I have never faltered in my belief in the greatness and soundness of the German people, and in my appreciation of all that we owe in intellectual, social, and industrial stimulus to Germany.

Her present situation is unparalleled. Every attempt she makes to get to her feet is thwarted by her pitiless, senseless foe. Our English-speaking peoples, in our slow, oafish way, are looking on, are assisting, at an attempt to waste and torment to death a great community as civilised as our own. We never came into the war for any such objective, and I do not believe that we shall stand by to the end in the face of this iniquity.

But anyhow, I believe that Germany will come back. Her common language and now her common miseries will keep her one. She has many enemies, but on her side now is the long reach and the long memory of the printed word. Bohemia, Czechoslovakia as we

call it now, rose again after an almost complete extinction of three hundred years. Dark years are before Germany and a terrible winter, but in two years or ten years Germany will have found her Masaryk and her Benes and be on her way to recovery.

I would not like to be a German separatist in the days to come.

THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Empire Review. October 1923

THE EMPIRE REVIEW has, I perceive, been born again and displays a constellation of gifted contributors writing about subjects of which their knowledge approaches saturation point. Commander Locker Lampson is alive to the need of variety, and for an incidental change he asks me to write upon a topic that he must feel is by no means my specialty. He wants my views about the British Empire. I more than suspect he counts upon my taking a Radical view of that great system. He selects me, an obscure supporter of the Labour Party, as a sample of what men are thinking on that side of the political arena. But I can write only as a man in that street. The official attitude of the party is to be found plainly and simply stated in the publications of the party headquarters.

Yielding to the Editor's persuasiveness, I will set down a few notes and a few generalities that occur to me. They may offend some of those peculiar people who are all out for the British Empire, any old British Empire whatever it is and whatever it does, but I think that they may be of interest to many — what shall I call them? — Imperialists, and I take it most of the readers of the Empire Review are such, who are prepared for the idea that support of the British Empire may be a conditional support and not a fanaticism.

Let me begin with something that is more than a mere verbal quibble. I wish that this political system could have some other name than Empire, because it is not properly an Empire at all. It is a complex association of at least three different types of territory, and the word "Empire" is endlessly misleading and mischievous in connection with it.

In the last few years, for purposes that need not now concern us, I have had to study a certain amount of history and a number of historians. Many men of commanding intelligence have been historians, and I offer no comparison between the intellectual quality of historians and that of scientific men as such. But trained as I was in the clear, subtle and beautiful disciplines of comparative anatomy, I found myself amazed at the easy carelessness of the average

historian's habitual terminology, his slovenly parallelisms and reckless assumptions. A large part of his work is the study of human communities and political associations. Yet I found him without any intelligible classification of political combinations, any real sense of grades and structural differences between one community and another. He slops the word "Empire" over the whole face of history; Athenian Empire and Aztec Empire, Shang Empire and Sung Empire, Empire of Alexander and Roman Empire, Mongol Empire and Hittite Empire, British Empire and Brazilian Empire; it's all the same to him. "Cats is dogs," as the porter said, "rabbits is poultry, but a parrot is a passenger." As a consequence, the historian argues from the most atrocious analogies. And, though there is a considerable and pretentious literature of political science, there does not yet exist in all political and historical literature any attempt at a clear analysis of the differences and affInities of all these various human complexes. Yet to make such an analysis would be a most attractive and fruitful task. Historical and political science has still to find its Linnaeus. History, until that happens, remains a slough of terminological confusion, and the ideas of the ordinary educated man drown in that mud.

The word "Empire" came into the world with the expansion of the Roman Republic. The Roman Empire was a thing different in many fundamentals from the so-called "Empires" that preceded it, the "Shah-doms," if I may create a sort of temporary word, of Asia and the "Pharaoh-doms" of Egypt, for example. It differed from them at least as widely in its possibilities, structure and range as a species of Tertiary mammals differs from a species of Mesozoic reptiles. It was unprecedented in arising out of an aristocratic republic instead of a conquering monarchy, and in having a legal tradition of a strength and prestige unknown to any previous community. It was unprecedented in its disposition to extend its citizenship beyond its initial boundaries. Its expansion was concurrent with an increasing use of coined money and of credit based upon coined money; its economic and financial system had a quite novel facility and instability. The Empire was held together by a road- system that made the road-system of the Persians seem a mere preliminary experiment. Its extent was far greater than that of any preceding form

of political administration. Reading and writing, already raised to new levels of simplicity and convenience by the Greeks and Hebrews, brought what we should think nowadays a small proportion, but which was in those days a quite unprecedented proportion, of the population into an intelligent participation in public affairs. Iron had become widespread for tools and implements as well as weapons, and the horse was now no longer a war-beast but, with its bastard child the mule, a universally available means of transport. All these things made the Roman Imperial System as new a thing in human experience as the United States of America or the present British "Empire," both of which, I hold, are new species, fresh beginnings without any true affinities in the past.

There is in all history only one rough parallel to the Roman Empire, and that is its contemporary Chinese Empire. But I will restrain my encyclopaedic impulse and leave that out of our present discussion.

Now as Gibbon's great history shows, the history of all Europe and Western Asia since that time is really the story of this unique thing, the Empire, the Roman Empire, and its struggle to exist, to remain one, and to restore itself, when broken, to complete existence. It was broken naturally by the Adriatic crack, running in towards that fatal wedge out of the great plains of the nomads, Hungary; it was broken by the general incapacity of the Italians for navigation, due perhaps to characteristics of the Italian coast; it was broken by the intellectual inadequacies of a plutocracy. But the Empires that sprang from it. West and East, were only the results of a fission that left the idea of reunion perpetually alive; the Holy Roman Empire, the Tzardom, the Imperialism of Napoleon, even the Austrian Empire and the Hohenzollern Empire, were all logically and legitimately the products of the original Empire, legitimately Empires in origin and intention, attempts to recover a universal sway; parts in a great dreary, futile European drama on which at last in these days the curtain falls.

There has indeed only been one real Empire in the world, this that centred upon Rome and the Mediterranean. Britain played a certain part in this Empire; Henry VIII, for example, was Imperial candidate against Charles V and the King of France; but the role of Britain

therein has generally been a marginal one. The importance of England to mankind began only when it turned its face from the Empire and from thoughts of the Empire to the ocean. What we call to-day the British Empire is a new thing and a different thing from the Roman Empire, created by new and greater forces, and deserving an entirely distinctive name.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw the opening phases of a great process of change in human conditions that has been going on until the present time. From the point of view of one who discusses political or economic agglomerations, the most important thing in that great revolution has been the development of new means of communication between man and man. That revolution began with the appearance of the ocean-going sailing ship and of printed paper; it reaches its climax nowadays in wireless telegraphy and the aeroplane. It is now a commonplace, though for many historians and scholars it is quite a recent discovery, that any change in communications involves new economic, strategic and political adjustments. For a score of centuries the horse, the horse-drawn vehicle, the hand-made high-road, the parchment document, the public speaker and vocal teacher and a feeble coastal shipping had been the limiting conditions of all statecraft. Under these conditions the idea of the Empire had been the highest political idea in men's minds. Now, however, in that age of Renascence, the ocean which had been an ultimate barrier became almost suddenly a highway; and the printed book, and, presently, the newspaper quickened masses in the community, hitherto politically ineffective, into informed activity. The politics and statecraft of Europe, obsessed — still to this day obsessed — by the doomed Imperial tradition, began nevertheless a clumsy slow adaptation to this process of material change, unable to ignore its pressures and compulsions, but evidently indisposed to recognise its nature.

I use this word "indisposed" deliberately. The political mind, like the legal mind to which it is so closely akin, looks backward habitually, prefers precedents to Utopias, clings to the old and is pushed along by the new. Europe clings still to the Imperial tradition four centuries after it became impracticable; its kindred peoples are divided and they destroy one another in the feuds of a dead issue.

Frenchman and German waste Europe, as Asia Minor was wasted by Byzantine and Persian, in a futile search for a kind of supremacy that can never return to this world. They are like rivals who fight for a woman already dead and decayed.

Continental Europe is being desolated and destroyed by imaginative incapacity, by the failure to recognise the obsolescence of its political ideas and traditions. But Europe is not the world, nor will its decline and fall be the end of the human story. In the United States of America, in this so-called British Empire, and now in the United States of Russia, we must recognise a breaking away from tradition as complete as when the Roman Empire broke away from the forms and traditions of any previous political synthesis. These new systems arise not to inherit, but to supersede.

It is this conception of the history of the world during the last four centuries as being essentially, in its broadest aspects, a belated, forced, and largely unconscious process of political adaptation to changing conditions, of vast subconscious and unwilling trials and experiments in new and greater political associations to replace that formerly dominant Imperial idea, that I wish to put before the readers of the Empire Review. It carries us on to the further realisation that since the process of change in communications is only now approaching some sort of limiting completion, the new political systems that have appeared cannot be considered as anything but preliminary and transitory systems. The United States of America, the Spanish, Dutch and British colonial empires of the eighteenth century, the Russian Asiatic Empire and the second British Empire of the nineteenth century, the British Empire of the Empire Review and of this present discussion, must all from the angle of this conception be seen as things experimental and transient, destined to the most extensive coalescences, readjustments and modifications in a few score years. The form to which these synthetic material forces, this constant abolition of distance between State and State and man and man, are driving us all, even in spite of ourselves, is a common Pax Mundi, a World Commonweal, a federal suppression of armaments, a federal money system, a federal postal system, a federal control of the production and distribution of staple products, a federal direction of main-line sea and land transport and of the

movements of population. To these things it seems to me human affairs trend now inexorably. The economic and financial world net grows tighter and closer; war becomes so intimate and inconclusive and destructive as to become impossible. The old ideas may hold our race in a bloody and wasteful subjection for two or three centuries yet; but the Pax Mundi waits at the end of the passage.

A man holding these opinions must necessarily judge the present British Empire without any fanatical loyalty, critically as a possible half-way house or a possible obstacle to a more comprehensive and enduring synthesis. It is not really the same thing as the British "Empire" of 1823, which was a string of trading posts and areas of economic predominance about the world, plus John Company's fantastic acquisition of the derelict rule of the Great Mogul. The bulk of the present British "Empire" was created and held together by the steamship. This rendered possible the transfer of considerable masses of population to new territories and the importation of bulky staples, of such things as wheat and cattle, across great stretches of ocean. The Dominions were made by the steamship and the telegraphic cable, and they constitute the freshest, most peculiar feature of the present British Imperial system. Colonies the world has known before, but neither the Greek and Phoenician colonies of the old world nor the American colonies of the eighteenth century were linked closely and abundantly enough to the mother country to prevent a final estrangement and detachment. The British Dominions to-day are, on the contrary, kept in touch, and more and more effectively kept in touch, with each other and the mother country. Their mutual relationships are unprecedented. Their unity may be enduring.

But when we turn to the relationship of Great Britain and these Dominions on the one hand, to India on the other, we find something entirely different, a new association also, but of absolutely different structure and different capabilities, something accidental and precarious and manifestly provisional. A London company running a system of trading stations, acquired almost inadvertently amidst a wild political welter in India, the heritage of the Great Mogul. Great Britain has taken over this company's possessions, enlarged them, given India peace and a certain unity, educated her people, but not

widely nor sufficiently, developed her resources, but not very generously, and manifestly has but the vaguest ideas of her future. The educational and intellectual development of the British people has not kept pace with this rapid expansion of British responsibilities. Our world responsibilities have increased a hundredfold in the last century, but our educated class, our supply of potential rulers, directors and the like, our university organisations have not increased tenfold.

It is an open question whether on the whole we have most hampered or benefited India. Or vice versa. But at any rate it must be clear that the association of the Indian system with the Dominion system is an accidental and transitory association. They both happen to be parts of the British system, but there is no necessary connection. The two move at different rates and in divergent directions. A man may be — I know Australians w^ho are — what I may call a Dominion-imperialist, but not an Indian-imperialist. He may believe, as I do, in the need for a sedulous preservation and intensification of the intellectual community of the English-speaking peoples, and in an attentive care for every possibility of understanding and sympathetic co-operation with the United States of America, and at the same time he may be as convinced as I am of our duty and obligation to educate and organise India as speedily as possible for separation, for a friendly independent existence within the world commonweal of peoples.

We British have not sufficient natural moral and intellectual superiority to the Indian peoples, we have not a sufficiently organised educational system nor a sufficient surplus of highly educated men, to justify our continued usurpation of India's right to think out and work out its own role in the confederation of mankind. And we are different from these dusky peoples; we do not work with them easily; we hamper them and they hamper us intolerably. But released from our entanglement with a population six or seven times as numerous as our own, our entanglement with this great mix-up of temperamentally alien peoples, the British and the associated English-speaking communities scattered round the earth, extending their educational organisation and developing their still crude intellectual and political possibilities, may play a reasonable and yet

leading part in the great synthesis which will ultimately give the world enduring peace. “Disentangle from India, draw near to America, come out of and keep out of ententes and alliances upon the continent of Europe;” these are the broad lines upon which I conceive the British system may best serve itself and mankind.

So far I have considered the British Empire only from the point of view of the English-speaking Dominions and of India. I will leave Egypt and Palestine, as they ought to be left, outside the discussion. They are, I take it, relaxing protectorates. Nor will I say more than a word or so about purely strategic possessions, Malta, Gibraltar and so forth; they are part of our armament, and their destiny is dependent upon the possibility of a world association sufficiently convincing to make disarmament possible. But there still remain great areas that are neither populated by kindred communities nor subject civilisations, barbaric regions that have been taken over in order to exploit their natural resources and prevent their being monopolised and closed against us by some hostile power. The great overseas “Empire” of Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was of this type. Such areas of economic subjugation are a very ancient type of foreign possession. In such a spirit Carthage once held Corsica, Sardinia and a large part of Spain. In our own lives we have witnessed the sharing-out of tropical Africa among competing European powers. Behind such division and ownership lies the conception of bitterly competitive, monopolistic trading States as the supreme form of human association. That again is an obsolescent conception.

The Americans decided a century and a half ago that one necessary condition of existence for a federal union of sovereign States was universal free trade. All interference with the free movement of another community’s trade, all tariff barriers and the like, are a mild form of war. It must be plain to everyone that the present division of Africa is extremely unstable, and that if the system of competitive powers in Europe is to go on, it is only a question of how long it will take France to feel secure enough against Germany to set about fighting for the whole of raw-material Africa. The organised peace of the world, the coming world civilisation, demands not only a cessation of armaments, but a cessation of

commercial discrimination and such-like material injuries.

But these areas of undeveloped natural resources of unexploited forests and minerals and the like, sustaining only a sparse or undercivilised population, must have administration and development from without. If that is not to be the dangerous task and privilege of a single exploiting State it must be the task of some as yet non-existent body acting in the common interest. Until that federal body can be developed and equipped with forces and resources of its own — it is the most urgent of all necessary precautions against a future great war — there is nothing for us to do but to go on holding these possessions of the third order, without trading discrimination or settlement discrimination, against any other race or people.

It is part of the fantastic nationalism that still plays so astonishing a role in the political life of the world, to hold that every definable region of the earth's surface belongs, from sky to centre, to the inhabitants it supports. But with ever increasing facilities of movement this becomes constantly more impossible. It would, for example, place the vast mineral wealth of Labrador at the disposal of a few hundred wandering Red Indians. The conception of a federated world system carries with it the idea that all the land and sea of the world, all the natural resources of the world, animal, vegetable or mineral, belong to all the people of the world, and that any assignation, reservation, mandate or monopolisation of this or that region is entirely a temporary arrangement to be superseded by that inevitable world control. The British "Empire" in respect to this class of possession is, therefore, in the position of a trustee for an unborn but inevitable heir. Any Federation of Peoples or League of Nations or whatnot that really undertakes the organisation of a world peace must, as a necessary function, inherit all the overseas and alien possessions that are not yet capable of an intelligent participation in world government, whether they are now "owned" by Great Britain or by any other State in the world.

In any world federation that may arise in the course of the next century or so, the English-speaking communities, which already number over two hundred million people, must necessarily play a leading part. How far it will be the leading part, depends very much

upon the educational and general creative energy of these communities during the years immediately before us and upon their power of casting aside crippling prejudices and outworn ideas.

It needs no impossible effort to make the English language even now the lingua franca of India and China, and the creative imagination embodied in English literature a fertilising power throughout the earth. If I as a consistent republican find little joy in being a subject of a King-Emperor, and if I find much of our British Imperialism repulsively base, narrow, short-sighted and suicidal, that is rather because I overestimate than underestimate the share that our English language and civilisation and peoples may play in the future of mankind.

WINSTON

10.11.1923

IN this tragic and confused world it has been my undeserved lot to lead an amused life. All sorts of bright and entertaining and likable things have been given me and paraded before me. And among others is my friend, Mr. Winston Churchill: not the American Winston but the British Winston. Our relations are relations of intermittent but I trust affectionate controversy. We had a great slanging match some years ago about Russia, and if I remember rightly Mr. Churchill took the count. That is my pleasant impression of the affair. His may be different, of course. Then, in a little book called Men Like Gods, one of the characters got out of my control and began to speak and act in a way so like Mr. Churchill's that even I could see the resemblance. I was shocked and alarmed. I had to stun that character and hustle it out of the way, but not before it had made a long characteristic speech and started a war....

Now Mr. Churchill has taken the opportunity afforded by an article I wrote about the British Empire for the British Empire Review to open up a fight again. My article, more or less abbreviated, in some cases shorn of its chief arguments, and adorned with the unsolicited crossheads so dear to editors of spirit, has been extensively syndicated in America, and will no doubt be followed round the earth by flying fragments of his reply. It is a spirited and amusing reply. He calls me Citizen Hoopdriver, which is a fair return for the misbehaviour of my fictitious character, and he laments my discursiveness because I will not stick to my proper occupation of imaginative fiction — which from a gentleman much younger than myself who has danced in turn through Admiralty, War Office, Munitions Ministry, Air Ministry, Colonies and Board of Trade, who has been a brilliant cavalry officer and a still more brilliant newspaper correspondent, who has written eight or nine large but entertaining books and painted some excellent pictures, is pretty considerable cheek. But let that pass.

My original article on the British Empire which appeared in the Empire Review pointed out things that are manifest to everyone but

the most besotted Imperialist; that the present British Empire is a thing of yesterday, that it is excessively unstable, and that it is bound to undergo great changes and reconstructions in the near future. An Imperial Conference has been struggling in London with the most urgent aspects of these pressing changes. And I should have thought that anyone above the level of a patriotic schoolboy would have seen that any rational constructive change must be in the direction of knitting up the sprawling British system with its kindred civilisations, and especially with the United States of America, in some form of mutual support and co-operation. But Mr. Churchill, regardless of the article he is pretending to criticise, and of all my attacks on the present League of Nations, pretends that I want to put the British Empire forthwith under a world federation upon which Belgians, Chinese, Peruvians, Hottentots, and so forth are to be in a crushing majority. "In this sublime conception," he writes in his caustic way, "the British inheritance accumulated by the thrift and effort of so many centuries would be liquidated and generously shared with all nations."

Now this is the poorest of platform nonsense. It is not only nonsense about my proposals, but nonsense about the Empire. The sooner we clear our minds of such cant about thrift and age-long development the better. Putting it as gently as possible, the present British Empire is not an inheritance but a series of — shall we say acquisitions? — and mostly very recent acquisitions. What is the good of canting in the face of facts? We didn't save up India; Australia wasn't the reward of abstinence.

The British Empire of a hundred years ago was a mere set of scattered trading-stations and a bit of the present Indian Empire. The present British Empire has been assembled by means of the oceangoing steamship and the railway in the last hundred years, and much of it in the last fifty. Beside the Dutch colonial empire it is a thing of yesterday. The steamship made it and maintains it. It is cemented by steamships. If the steamship is presently superseded by the air-liner the British Empire will become like a wall whose mortar has decayed. But Mr. Churchill will hear nothing of new buttresses and sounder binding for this adventitious band of States.

He goes on to a denunciation of my republicanism. Ignoring

steamships, banking, Imperial Preference, and a common language, he declares the only sure link of the Empire is "the golden circle of an ancient crown." I would hate to say anything in detraction of a devoted and indefatigable royal family, but I do not believe that there is any effective imperial binding force in the cult of snobbery and sentiment, of which its members are at once the divinities and the sacrificial victims. The healthy natural man is a republican, and has a stiff backbone. Nobody really loves or respects a courtier. One of the chief troubles in the Irish settlement has been the excessive distaste of many Irishmen for the forms of royalty. One of the chief barriers between the British and closer co-operation with America is this king-business. The true cement of our communities must be the sense of equal brotherhood and common aims.

After that Mr. Churchill lapses into sheer naughtiness. There are times when the evil spirit comes upon him and when I can think of him only as a very intractable little boy, a mischievous, dangerous little boy, a knee-worthy little boy. Only by thinking of him in that way can one go on liking him. Suddenly he breaks out about Russia, and I am reminded that he has been one of the chief afflictions of that unfortunate country, that he was largely responsible for the waste of scores of million pounds of British money, in arming first one brigand chief and then another to attack and further devastate our war-exhausted ally.

He is still unrepentant. He declares that I was a passionate and am now a disappointed pro-Bolshevik, although I have always been an austere critic and witness of Bolshevik incompetence and unpracticalness. But I have also borne my witness to the fact that the Bolshevik leaders are mainly honest men, fighting against stupendous difficulties and leading hard lives, and that the Russian people would far rather have them as its rulers than any of the vicious, plundering, pogromming White Hopes and Czarist reactionaries patronised by Mr. Churchill. These Russians have fought against tremendous difficulties against invading Japanese, Poles, Estonians, French-subsidised invaders and British-subsidised invaders, and against famine and a pitiless blockade, and against their own ignorance and the atrociously rough and cruel legacy of Czarism, and it seems as if after all they will pull through and lay the

foundations of a renascent Russia.

And this is the handful of mud this English statesman hurls at the struggling rulers of this great land with which we are at peace. “They are just a selfish, plundering crew of tyrants and parasites who descended upon an unhappy land and enslaved or slaughtered its people, soiled its honour, ruined its prosperity, devoured its substance, and enriched themselves and their female belongings.”

That about the “female belongings” isn’t at all the little gentleman. It is not even honest abuse. He knows better. Indeed, we all know better, and why Mr. Churchill keeps up this sort of thing defeats my imagination. Russia is a strained and needy country to-day, but it is bleakly moral; for a time there was no prostitution at all there, and probably even to-day there is less prostitution in Russia than in any other country in the world; the age when getting rich and “feminine belongings” played a large part in its affairs ended with Rasputin and the Czardom. But Mr. Churchill has assumed this attitude of vehement hostility to the present Russian Government, and he persists in it with puerile obstinacy, while that great country passes slowly out of the shadows he helped to darken into the dawn of a new age.

THE OTHER SIDE IN FRANCE

17.11.1923

IN several recent articles I have been girding at France, at the destructive egotism of France, at the relentless political cruelty of France. Let me now look at France from another aspect.

Many of us, I suspect, are excessively bitter with France just now because we love France. We are angry because we are jealous about her. She has seen fit to embody herself in the dull, relentless Poincaré; she has set her face like flint harshly and pitilessly against the recovery and peace of Europe, and it is more than we can endure.

A few months ago I made a little tour in Europe, and outside the boundaries of France everywhere I found the name of France the name of division and mischief. The mark had not yet reached its final degradation, but I went about in a very miserable Germany. Every attempt that Germany made to get to her feet and breathe was met by a thrust that sent her back into the black waters that are drowning her. It was natural for Germany to be resentful. But in the farther countries, also, resentment smouldered; they were carrying great armies — the Czech Army is now greater than the British — they were subjected to a propaganda of an intense and dangerous nationalism, their future was dark with war possibilities, and it was all the work of France. I came back to France through a Europe dying of entangled nationalist policies, and my heart was very black against France.

I went about Paris for some days astonished to see that it did not look consciously wicked. After all — much as I love my native London and much as I delight in the tall vigour of New York — Paris is the Queen of Cities, so gracious and so fine, so hospitably friendly and yet so little meretricious in her quality. I met French friends and talked with them abundantly. I went into Burgundy and into Touraine to meet old friends and new ones, and gradually my nightmare conception of France as an evil spider, stretching its poison claws all over Europe, was mitigated.

That spider is there. It is the old spider of French foreign policy that has lived on through revolutions and empires since the days of

the Grand Monarch, but within its limbs it holds so great a literary man as Anatole France, so modern and bold an adventurer in statecraft as Joseph Caillaux, so gentle and sincere a liberalism as that of the gatherings of the Abbaye de Pontigny, and, indeed, a whole inarticulate France of thought, doubt, and righteous intention. It is a France that may at any time thrust Poincaré aside and break through to speech and action and become the France. It is an essential and leading part of that world-wide republic of reasonable men which may yet save the world.

I wanted very much to look at and talk to M. Joseph Caillaux. He has always interested me deeply. I had to make a four-hour automobile journey to see him. I went past Chartres Cathedral, and the roads were gay with blue flowers. He is living in his pleasant house and garden in a little brown and white and green provincial town, and there he is stifled and silenced. He may not go within a hundred kilometres of Paris, nor may he go abroad. What he has got to say is not reported in the Press. Only by way of the bookshop can he get anything through to the public. Imagine our British Foreign Office sending my Lord Rothermere into exile and original authorship at Llandrindod Wells or Matlock on account of his interference with its policy! Imagine Mr. Lloyd George or Lord Birkenhead restrained from excursions to America, and deprived altogether of reverberation!

I lunched with M. and Madame Caillaux and some pleasant neighbours, and we talked of books and flowers and such-like agreeable topics. We exchanged telegraphic greetings with M. Anatole France, whom I had hoped to meet there. M. Caillaux, I learnt incidentally, can take walks and play tennis, but he may not go shooting. He is far too dangerous a man, the French Government thinks, to be entrusted with a shot-gun.

Afterwards we two walked about the garden and talked about the state of Europe. M. Caillaux is neither Anglophile nor Anglophobe, but he thinks, as I do, that Western Europe can only do its full duty to the rest of the world when it is worked as a unity. Reconciliation of the Frenchman and the German has been the dominant idea of all his statecraft. We discussed the riddle why Big Business and the big industrialists are the fiercest, most mischievous of all patriots. We

concluded it was due to the fact that they work for profits and not for service, and that a flag means a tariff and such an artificial enhancement of profits as no unified working could give. And finance which is international in outlook is by its nature not creative and revolutionary but watchful, statistical, and extractive. Then also I broached the question whether, if private capital in industry and finance could not give us peace, we must prepare for a harder road to internationalism through the social revolution. And so to other topics.

He asked me not to be hard against France. "You think," he said, "that this fear of Germany coming back again is a false fear — an excuse for aggression. It isn't. It's in the blood of our people. Think! Here we are in the heart of France, and within a little more than a hundred years this countryside has heard the guns of an invader four times, in 1814, 1815, 1871, and again in 1914."

M. Caillaux stood before his house and watched me get into the automobile that would take me to the Paris he may not visit, and waved his friendly "Good-bye." Next year, perhaps, they will let him return, he hopes — or the year after. But he is already sixty....

But the most interesting man from my present point of view that I met in France was a man under no outward restraint at all. This was the late M. Philippe Millet, the editor of the *Petit Parisien*, one of the big official papers. We have been friends for many years, we saw a good deal of each other at the Washington Conference, and we had talked to each other very freely and frankly on many occasions about international relations. For long he had maintained an entirely civilised attitude towards the European settlement; he had supported various schemes of economic reconciliation, and he had opposed the occupation of the Ruhr very vigorously, I took him to task for his support of M. Poincaré.

His apologetics went in this fashion, and I think they are typical of the attitude of a considerable section of Frenchmen. He admitted the Ruhr occupation was an outrage, but he argued that once it was done it closed the door on any possibility of an understanding with Germany. Germany had been so antagonised that there was now nothing left for a Frenchman but to go on destroying her. He was like a man on an omnibus that was running away downhill. You must do

your best to get control of the thing, but — there is no going back to the top of the hill, France has got Germany by the throat, and such a level of hate and despair has been reached that she dares not let go.

Of course, M. Poincaré does not want to let go. But I believe the middling mass of Frenchmen, of whom Philippe Millet was so typical, a mass which, with the parties of the Left, probably constitutes a majority of the French, would welcome any outside help that would enable them to discontinue the strangulation and dismemberment of Central Europe. An American Government and a British Government united enough, understanding enough, and tactful enough, to intervene wisely and generously could swing all that central mass away from Poincaré. A foolish intervention might very easily throw it into a passion of patriotic fear. Its incalculable behaviour is a riddle all Europe is guessing at. The hope of European civilisation rests largely on this central body of French opinion getting to some sort of effective expression before it is too late. The French elections in 1924 will be a very crucial time in human history.

THE LAST OF THE VICTORIANS

24.11.1923

MR. ASQUITH is now, to use the phrase he coined for a contemporary, the last of the Victorian "giants." He is the leader of some sort of Liberal Party in England, the oldest and the ripest, I am told, though I confess I am quite unable to make head or tail of these various Liberal parties in England nowadays, and he is always trying to lead his little band back to the nineteenth century, when there were ever so many "giants" in the land, not to mention the Grand Old Man, and when political life made up for its complete want of seriousness by a pompous solemnity and vast personal enthusiasms. Prime Ministers in those days loomed vast; they were none of your little chaps who can hide behind bull-dog pipes and say muffin. Our Leaders, figures of Pantomimic size, filled the stage and said — floods. They were practically all that there was on the stage. The crumbling peace of Europe and the world, the conflict of labour and order with adventurous capital, were not staged in those days. At most one heard of these things in the Legislature as one sometimes catches a rumble of vans and cabs in a London theatre. In the House they dealt with only the thin shadows of great issues; with the Free Breakfast Table, Unsectarian Religious Teaching, Leasehold Enfranchisement, and the like.

One of the most pleasing traits of the Victorian giants was their tremendous scholarly evasion of all complete statement. The vulgarity of a plain assignment of a thing to its broad roots and general principles was never committed. In such matters Mr. Asquith is finely representative of his period. He has to perfection that ability to deal with a part of an issue as if it were the whole which was characteristic of the great Victorian scholars and gentlemen. If Mr. Asquith were a mechanic, and you asked him to make you an automobile, he would presently produce two wheels, a clutch, and a radiator with so perfect and dignified a manner that you would hardly realise that you had not the complete car until you stepped through it. You would feel it ungracious to complain. When Mr. Asquith drew the sword and threw away the scabbard, he did it with so fine a

gesture that you scarcely noted that most of the sword wasn't there. If Mr. Asquith were a domestic hen he would lay eggs consisting of about two-thirds of a shell and as much yolk as would cover a sixpence, but he would cluck so bravely that you would credit him with a complete omelette. I do not blame him, it was the style of his time; but his time has passed, and this is a world too urgent and dangerous for the ample deficiencies of those spaciously empty years.

These remarks are provoked by the fact that Mr. Asquith and his associated and rival Liberal leaders — I can never tell which is which — are now engaged in unfurling the Banner of Free Trade in Great Britain. Encumbered with an immense and growing burden of unemployed workmen Britain is thinking of all sorts of eleventh-hour expedients. Schemes of preference within the Empire, leading towards an Empire *Zollverein*, are very much to the fore. And in reply this old Free Trade, which figured so largely in the political history of Victorian times, is to be brought out of the shed again, and furbished up and sent round the country to see what it will do for Liberalism.

Now nothing could be more typical than Free Trade of this peculiar incompleteness of the political methods of the "giants" of the "heroic" Victorian Age to which I have already called attention. It is a one-wheeled, engineless, body-less Liberal automobile. It is a project to keep down one's natural frontier in respect to inward and outward trade, and it ignores all the correlated measures that should go with this most desirable abolition. It ignores the fact that nearly all the separate sovereign competitive States into which the world is divided are always actively engaged in mutual injury, sometimes frankly in open warfare but always by fiscal trickery, monetary tactics, diversion of trade, and the like amiable activities. True Free Trade must be mutual. One-sided Free Trade is like disarmament in the face of malignant military preparation. And if there is to be real Free Trade between any two countries then certain other things follow necessarily, though they never appear on the party programmes and banners.

Production will tend to gravitate to the regions of maximum advantage, and so there must also be a free movement of population

over the frontiers to the regions of most advantageous employment. If there is not such free movement, then one of the States may suffer from unemployment in this or that industry and social degeneration while the other is enjoying high wages. But movement of population and the shifting of many industries across frontiers will affect military efficiency, and so there can be no real Free Trade between any two countries unless they are ensured not only against mutual attack but by a mutual guarantee against attack.

Free Trade is, in fact, only a practical proposal between countries prepared also for free movements of population between each other and for a pooling of their defensive resources and foreign policy. The way to permanent and satisfactory Free Trade lies in a steady extension of leagues between friendly peoples prepared for that much waiver of their sovereign independence. But only peoples near the same educational level and with closely similar standards of comfort and behaviour can contemplate so intimate a union as this. There might be such a league of the Latin-American States, or of the English-speaking and Scandinavian and other North-European States, but not of any much more extensive coalescences at present. So long as a State remains potentially at war with any other State, Free Trade between them is a dream.

Great Britain in the Victorian period had a practical monopoly of modern industrial production and benefited by an open frontier that gave her workers cheap food and so kept labour cheap. That was a temporary and now vanished condition of affairs. So long as States insist on their sovereign independence they must be prepared to use tariffs just as they must be prepared to use armies. It is the price of the flag.

Tariffs corrupt. That is true, just as war contracts do. But the way to escape from these diseases of conflict does not lie in the maintenance of fiscal non-resistance by this or that independent, irresponsible State, but in a creative foreign policy that seeks union and coalescence, and aims, openly and educationally, through coalescence in a broadening series, to reach at last world Free Trade, world freedom of movement, and an organised world peace.

But Mr. Asquith will never tell us he means anything so intelligible as that. He will just wave the banner of Free Trade as

though it meant anything the imagination of the voter might like. That was how the giants did their business in the grand old days, and he will never do his business in any other way. And it is because of these splendid old traditions of pompous vagueness that more and more of the liberal-minded people of Britain drift towards the Labour camp.

POLITICS AS A PUBLIC NUISANCE

1.12.1923

IN the United States of America they know when their elections are coming, and prepare for them; in Great Britain they come unheralded, like earthquakes and tidal waves. They may come and come again; there is no period of immunity.

It is only yesterday that in Great Britain we were all speculating about this Mr. Baldwin, who had become Prime Minister. What was he? Where had he come from? Nobody knew. From the first he seemed to share our doubts about himself. He hid as much as possible behind a big, big, manly pipe, and made wise little speeches about nothing in particular at colleges and boys' schools. He claimed to be a cousin of Mr. Rudyard Kipling. Now he seems to have given way to panic at the conspicuousness of his position. The European situation is frightful, and the state of affairs at home is miserable; and I think he has plunged this country into all the expense and confusion of a General Election, in the hope of getting back to the old smoking-room at home, wherever it is, and tranquillity.

Except in Tasmania and Ireland, where they have Proportional Representation and an approach to political sanity, all the elections of the English-speaking democracies are profoundly silly affairs. The common voter hasn't a dog's chance of expressing his real opinion of things. Some organisations or other put up a couple of candidates for his constituency, and he votes for the one associated with the political leaders he dislikes and distrusts least. When the issues are manifold, as they are in Britain now, the results may be preposterous. They may fail altogether to indicate the feeling of the country about any public question at all. The voter is generally in the case of a man who wants to go shooting, and is confronted with the choice of taking the family Bible and some cartridges, or a boiled fowl and a gun.

The cardinal fact of the contest is that France is destroying the economic life of Central Europe, with which the prosperity of Great Britain is bound up. Great Britain is congested with unemployed, before whom there does not seem to be any prospect of employment.

In the face of this Mr. Baldwin proposes tariffs to make food and everything dearer without increasing the purchasing power of any but the very rich; and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald proposes a levy on large fortunes. Mr. Asquith, to whom Mr. Churchill the anti-Bolshevik and Mr. Lloyd George have rallied, raises, as I have already noted in these articles, the banner of Free Trade — although Free Trade is already in operation in Great Britain without conspicuous success. And nobody says anything in particular about France.

Under these circumstances anything may happen. Exaggerated estimates of the effect of the tariff upon food prices will be used to scare the struggling voter, and particularly the women, against Protection, and ¦ — as the Labour Party has no Press worth talking about — tremendous lies will be told about the Capital Levy. It will be represented as a raid upon the savings bank deposits of the servant girl and the children's money-boxes, although as a matter of fact it is not to touch any fortune under five thousand pounds, and only begins to press heavily upon twenty thousand and upward. The Labour leaders, being for the most part respectable but inaudible men, will never get that over to the public in time. And in the ensuing panic and scrimmage it is quite possible that that extraordinary old omnibus, the Liberal Party, with Mr. Asquith the elder statesman, Mr. Churchill the junker, Mr. Lloyd George the rather world- stained democrat, Sir John Simon, Mr. Asquith's once prospective successor, and a miscellany of other people, pledged really to no more than the negative policy of no Protection and no Capital Levy, will make quite a respectable run and get quite a large proportion of its four hundred odd passengers into Westminster. And what they will do there Heaven knows. Possibly fight among themselves, and have another dissolution.

Meanwhile, as the struggle for the wheel goes on, the British ship of state will drift through the winter as it has drifted through the autumn, and M. Poincaré will continue to do what he likes with Europe.

Now this is really too preposterous a way of running the affairs of a great people. It is bound to end in some great disaster. These spasmodic appeals to the country whenever a Prime Minister gets frightened by the aspect of the skies or whenever a quarrelsome

group has to be reunited somehow, produce a terrible vacillation and ineffectiveness in the national conduct. It is time Great Britain came up to date with a triennial or quadrennial election of the Legislature, after the American and French fashion, and then stayed put. And it is time, too, that Great Britain went beyond, and gave a lead to America and most of the world by abandoning the present method of voting with a single vote in a limited constituency, which absolutely destroys any real choice of representation by the common man. The only civilised method of democracy is Proportional Representation; in large constituencies returning many members there is no other method which gives the individual voter a reasonable opportunity of expressing his real preference. It is the right way, and all other ways are wrong and bad. This present election in Great Britain is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the current system. In the seething mass of British opinion there are:

- Out-and-out Protectionists hostile to Russia and France.
- Ditto friendly to Russia but hostile to France.
- Ditto hostile to Russia but abject to France.
- Protectionists for industry but not for food, hostile to France.
- Ditto, but "Hats off to France."
- Anti-Bolshevik Free Traders like Mr. Churchill.
- Free Traders friendly to Russia.

Any of the above may or may not be in frantic opposition to an imaginary Capital Levy upon everybody's savings.

- Labourite Free Traders weak on the Capital Levy.
- Labourite Free Traders strong on the Capital Levy.
- Labourites strong on the Capital Levy, but weak on Free Trade.

All of the above may be weak or strong or hostile about the present League of Nations.

All of the above may be strong for the new education, or they may be anti- educational.

And the poor mutt of a voter in any particular constituency has to

indicate his opinion of things by voting for one of three gentlemen or ladies selected by the three local political clubs. As candidates they will do as little as possible in the way of positive statements and pledges. They will engage chiefly in hostile noises against the other parties. We shall never get any clear indication from this election upon any issue of any importance at all. We shall get no clear mandate either to deal with France or submit to France. We shall get no clear indication of the feelings of the people about Protection or Free Trade. We shall have only a slight measure of the panic about the Capital Levy caused by its misrepresentation. The thing is silly. It is a monstrous foolery in the face of the needs and dangers of the present time. The new Parliament will be just as feeble and insecure as the old Parliament, just as uncertain of popular support, and just as incapable of taking a strong line in the tragic pass to which British affairs are coming.

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF MR. LLOYD GEORGE

8.12.1923

That muddle-headed process, the General Election, is over in Great Britain; the votes have been counted and the results are out — and everybody now is free to speculate what it was that the British Demos was trying to say to the world.

The idiotic simplicity of the voting method employed leaves the intelligent observer entirely free to put whatever interpretation he likes upon these results, and the British and foreign Press are taking the fullest advantage of this freedom. Confronted by a complex of issues and two or three usually very unpalatable candidates, the poor voter has voted anyhow or abstained from voting. Poor Demos might just as well have stayed away from the polls altogether for any chance he has had of expressing himself about France or about Russia or about the Singapore dockyards or anything of positive importance in the outer world. The single nontransferable vote system which prevails in the British communities and in America is almost as good a political gag as the old Russian autocracy, and may in the end provoke as violent a reaction. One may conclude that a great number of women voters were scared by the thought of high prices under a Tariff, and that the Capital Levy is not the bogy it promised to be. We shall have no Tariff. Beyond that there are no clear indications of the Will of the People.

So instructed, Parliament reassembles.

The chief result of the convulsion is that Mr. Lloyd George is back in the middle of the limelight in his original role of a great Liberal leader. Gestures of reconciliation of an almost scandalous warmth have characterised all the chief Liberal gatherings, and it is a wonder to the rest of mankind that British Liberalism ever permitted even an appearance of dissension. And Mr. Lloyd George has completely and triumphantly come back. It is his victory as much as it is anybody's victory.

Like nearly all Welshmen and many Englishmen, I have a strong

but qualified affection for Mr. Lloyd George. How far that affection is due to Mr. Lloyd George's own merits, and how far it is due to the endearing caricatures of Low, I will not attempt to determine. But we like his go and we like his bounce and we like his smile. Unless he is caught vociferating a speech, all his photographs, even the most casual snapshots, show him smiling the most disarming of smiles. All Englishmen, except perhaps the Duke of Northumberland, are radicals, subverters, equalitarians, and revolutionaries, though very many of us restrain and conceal these qualities, and in some they are altogether subconscious. (I say "Englishmen" here, and I do not add "Englishwomen.") In Mr. Lloyd George — particularly when he smiles or makes a peer — we recognise our dearest suppressions. His creations roused the elder peerage at last to open revolt, and that amused us. Were it not for him and the new newspaper adventurers of the last quarter-century, Britain would still be ruled by the Cecils and Society.

America, I suspect, feels much the same about him. In the United States they pick him out from among all other figures in British politics as theirs. He is much more in the American than the British tradition. Ever so many American statesmen began as provincial lawyers. The journey from that Welsh solicitor's office to Whitehall is the nearest parallel British political life has yet given to the Log Cabin to White House adventure.

And Mr. Lloyd George has never had a classical education. He can quote Welsh but not Greek. A contempt for learning — that is to say, for classical learning — is another of the hidden things in the soul of every ordinary Englishman and every plain American. We know secretly that stuff is an imposture. But we never argue about it — even when Mr. President Coolidge betrays a belief that an ordinary classical education involves an understanding of human history. We know in our bones that it does not. It is not that we despise knowledge, but that we do not believe that a little Greek and Latin and a few worn quotations are knowledge. And on the whole Mr. Lloyd George is a very knowledgeable man.

In no sense of the word, of course, is he an educated man. Lincoln was. Starting from an almost illiterate adolescence, Lincoln, by an industrious self-education, achieved wisdom, achieved a profound

and comprehensive perception of world realities; his mind could handle at last anything the mind of a President of men ever had to handle with supreme mastery. But Mr. Lloyd George has never built up a strong and comprehensive body of ideas in that fashion. He has never realised the need. His mind has not the solid substance of Lincoln's mind. It is a quick feminine mind, with extremely rapid intuitions. His judgments are apt to be as just as they are quick, but he has never got them together into any system. They are immediate and superficial. He is mentally disconnected. He retains the prejudices and general ideas of his upbringing. He has no vision or sense of the world as a whole, no worked -out conception of the part he might play in the human story. So it was that opportunity caught him at Versailles and laid him bare.

Within two years of the signing of that treaty, for which he was mainly responsible, he had learnt better and was trying in his quite feminine indirect way to mitigate and undo it. He will go on trying.

He means well — always. And he was almost the first statesman of the Coalition Government to realise the folly of an inveterate quarrel with New Russia. In dealing with Russia he will be unhampered by that violent anti-Bolshevik, Mr. Winston Churchill, who is again among the "outs." His inconsistencies trouble the common British voter hardly at all. The logical Frenchman points to his broken pledges. This from the French point of view constitutes dishonesty. The Anglo-Saxon mind realises that to be honest one must be inconsistent. We have all made our mistakes, and muddled back out of them. Life is a puzzling thing full of surprises. The one thing the British will never understand is the tremendous persistence of M. Poincaré. It impresses them as invincible stupidity.

Both Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill denounced Socialism, but while Mr. Churchill really meant Socialism by Socialism, Mr. Lloyd George only meant a tendency to vote for Labour instead of for Lloyd George. By nature and tradition Mr. Lloyd George is on the Left side in politics, and his experience of Tories and rich men during the last few years has probably restored his leftward tendencies to their primitive vigour. As his record in the Ministry of Munitions shows, he has no respect for money: he throws it about, he can be careless and rough with it, it is a means to an end,

and he has probably accumulated very little. Returned to power and faced by a spectacle of economic debacle, he is capable of taxing, levying upon, and confiscating the property of the rich to an extent that would make Mr. Henderson white with terror and throw Mr. Ramsay MacDonald into convulsions of Scotch caution. (But mark you, it won't be Socialism. He is against Socialism.)

So Mr. Lloyd George emerges again from his temporary eclipse seated on the back of a united Liberal Party and already leaning a little to the Left. As the world situation develops he will probably lean more and more to the Left. Until he leans right over the Socialist programme. He has with him the affectionate distrust of a great multitude of his countrymen. They like his smile, have a profound sympathy for his tendencies, and wish they knew more of his intentions. He is by far the most vigorous and popular personality in the new House. He may do anything. This election that has reunited the Liberal Party in his interest has cost the country over two million pounds. We trust him to give us a show for our money.

SPAIN AND ITALY WHISPER TOGETHER

15.12.1923

The noise of the British General Election subsides, and we realise that a crisis of supreme insignificance to the world in general is over. The affair has had much the same importance as a wayside epileptic fit. The patient falls into convulsive movements, emits strange noises. Presently it is all over, and the patient seems very little the worse for it. Britain's herself again, and nobody can tell what it meant at all. One can only hope that there will not be another fit for some time. But there is no knowing. Great Britain is subject to these fits.

The space and attention that long-established custom has directed to these manifestations has a little distracted attention from an event of much greater significance: the coming together of Spain and Italy.

It became inevitable when President Poincaré made his speech about Black France, probably the most stupid speech ever made by a responsible statesman. There were Frenchmen who saw in his policy the certainty of a final isolation face to face with a Germany driven to desperation. He rebuked them for their fears. There were not forty million Frenchmen, he said, but a hundred million. He called in sixty million Africans to redress the balance of the population in Europe. He directed the attention of all the world to the steady progress of the Black French policy. For this the French were building their submarines, to protect their transports on their way from Africa to France. That was admitted even in 1921 at Washington. But now all Europe turns its eyes to the great railway developments of France in Africa, and sees the material confirmation of President Poincaré's threat. These railways are plainly not development railways; they are strategic railways. They are as surely strategic railways as the lines the German Imperialists made to the Belgian frontier.

That White France that so many Americans and English love like a second motherland, the White France of the Great Revolution, of Lafayette and Mirabeau, of Voltaire and Pasteur and Anatole France, France the propagandist of liberty, equality, and fraternity throughout the world, France the guardian of art and of personal freedom and of

the gracious life, passes into eclipse beneath this black shadow. Black France is ousting her from men's imaginations and sympathies.

It was impossible for Italy and Spain to see this scheme coming into reality under their eyes without an intense repulsion. Response on their part followed almost automatically. The French organisation of North Africa jostles both Italy and Spain intolerably. The fragmentation of Germany, the impoverishment of England, will leave both these countries, if they remain disunited, in a position of helplessness under the domination of what all Europe is coming to regard as the most egoistic of nations. Any reasonably intelligent boy of sixteen who had followed the course of events could have told President Poincaré that the necessary result of his Black French policy and his Black France speech would be an understanding between Italy and Spain for joint preparations to cut the umbilical cord between France in Europe and France in Africa whenever a due occasion might arise.

A glance at a map of Europe will show how comparatively easy it would be to do that. The Balearic Isles of Spain are less than two hundred miles from Italian Sardinia. Across that line the transports bringing the Africans to Europe must go — four hundred miles of open sea. Confronted with the map that stream of transports pouring black troops into France is seen to be the most foolish dream that has ever corrupted the policy of a great nations. Neither Spain nor Italy nor Britain, nor, indeed, mankind at large, can allow it. They cannot afford to allow it.

Yet it is upon this project, doomed beforehand, that the whole forward policy of France has rested and rests to-day. Two virtual dictators, Mussolini and General de Rivera, talk quietly together and look at it, and it begins to fade.

That is the obvious significance of this recent visit of King Alfonso with his minister to Rome. But more than that one paramount question seems to have been discussed. Both Spain and Italy are still in form constitutional monarchies modelled or remodelled in the nineteenth century on the not very congenial British pattern — which in that time was the political fashion everywhere. Recent events have thrust the monarchs of both

countries a little aside in favour of virtual dictators. Except for the persistence of the crown, both Italy and Spain have taken on a new resemblance to the republics of Latin America. Those countries seem to find their natural form of political expression neither in royal rule nor in parliamentary forms, but in some sort of dictator-president. The social and intellectual life and probably the political thought of Latin America may be in as close touch and may even be in closer touch with the European mother countries than is the case between Great Britain and her Dominions. There is a great Italian population in several South American States; and everywhere in Italy and the Spanish Peninsula one comes upon the houses of rich "Americanos" — from the Argentine and Brazil, and so forth. And it is quite easy to believe the rumours that the conversations in Rome went beyond the Mediterranean and considered the possibility of still greater alliances and understandings in support of the Latin idea, from which France, which is neither northern with the British and Germans nor Latin with the Italians, but half and half between them, and incurably and self-centredly France, may be excluded.

I will not write here now of how an understanding of that sort might affect the relationship of its participants to the League of Nations, nor will I speculate how the United States and the Monroe doctrine would be touched by such a coalescence of old and new world Latinism. The first, most obvious reaction of this new move towards a higher unity is upon France. I do not know how far the newspaper consortium in France will allow the news of what has happened to reach the white population of France. For long the European French have been kept in profound ignorance of the gathering British distrust of their foreign policy, and in still profounder ignorance of the reasons for that distrust. I believe attempts are now being made in France to represent this coming together of Spain and Italy as an alliance to keep Britain out of the Mediterranean. It is nothing of the sort. It is an alliance to restrain French Africa. But there have been signs since King Alfonso's visit to Rome of a dim realisation even on the part of M. Poincaré of the circle of dismay and disapproval that is closing in slowly and steadily upon France.

I wish Frenchmen travelled more. I wish they were more receptive

of unflattering news. I wish they could realise the enormous distress with which civilised men everywhere, in New York and London as in Rome and Madrid, watch their fantastic dance over the broken body of Germany to absolute isolation in the world's affairs.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE LEAGUE

22.12.1923

In my previous article I discussed the visit of King Alfonso to Rome, and the profound significance to France and the world in general of the conversations that must have taken place there between the Spanish and Italian dictators. Among other issues was the possibility of a Latin League, comprehending the two European peninsulas and Latin America. I return to this idea.

At the least it is an imaginative gesture on the parts of General de Rivera and Signor Mussolini on a higher creative level than anything we have had from European statecraft for some time. At the best it may be an opening of a way towards a real league of peoples for the preservation of the world's peace.

It is suggested that all these Latin peoples, who have so much in common, who are so admirably equipped for a common understanding and the achievement of a common destiny, should withdraw from that lamentable cul-de-sac of good intentions, the existing League of Nations, in order to group themselves together for collective action in the world's affairs. Now that is a very hopeful idea. Let us see just how it might be extended. Suppose the British Empire also presently came out of the League in order to be free for a parallel and still more potent grouping with the United States of the English-speaking communities. It seems to me that in these rearrangements we should have two great steps made towards a real conference of the peoples of the earth.

The next step would be the entry of France into an association with these two groups. France, half northern and half Latin, would be free to relieve the world of its nightmare dream of La France Nègre, because it could find its security in a new Atlantic Association. It could deal with these two agglomerations as a necessary associate and link and intermediary; and Paris, so balanced, could remain a world centre instead of sinking to the level of a mere nationalist capital. That threefold grouping need have no fear of a Germany restored and a Russia reborn.

It is of supreme importance, if we are to get on to any real and

effective world confederation, that it should be a gathering of linguistic, racial, and cultural groups rather than of nationalist governments — trailing their infernal "foreign" policies into its deliberations. That is the most obvious defect of the Geneva situation; it is not a gathering of world representatives, but a bargain- and alliance-hunting place for diplomatists. One of the most obvious consequences of such larger aggregations of kindred peoples would be that in them the old nationalist and imperialist policies that still divide and afflict the world would be dissolved and lost. Spain and Italy linked up to Latin America would find little support for adventures in North Africa. Great Britain, tied a little closer to the United States, would be under a new restraint towards Mesopotamia or Asia Minor.

This idea of a league of peoples into which the Powers of the world would come not as "national" sovereign States, but as great groups of States, each group with something like a common culture, is not a new one. It was suggested in the memorandum of 1918 upon which the British propaganda against Germany was based. But President Wilson and the British Foreign Office ignored that, and indeed most other documents and facts, when the existing League of Nations was brought into being — and so we have this preposterous body at Geneva, which is, and must be, I maintain, for any large and grave international occasions, a hopelessly useless body.

I use the word "preposterous." That may seem a harsh, excessive epithet to many readers. They believe in this sham. They give it their love and enthusiasm. They burn indignantly at my criticisms and treat me as an enemy to Peace and mankind. But I would put before them, mainly in the words of Mr. H. Wilson Harris, a little story of what happened at Geneva this year, and I would ask them to remember that this is an assembly from which the sixty millions of Germany and the hundred odd millions of Russia are inexorably barred out — presumably as unfit for representation.

Abyssinia is not barred out. Abyssinia is now taking its part with France, Sweden, Britain, and the other great nations of the world — in whatever the League of Nations is permitted to do. Here is the account of the coming of Abyssinia. It must surely fill the citizens of the United States with envious admiration. "The delegation consisted

of two dark-skinned native representatives and a French adviser," Count Robert Linant de Bellefonds, bearing a letter of authorisation from "Her Majesty the Queen of the Kings of Ethiopia." A few minor questions had to be settled by telegram between the Queen's Court and Geneva. Ethiopia renounced the slave trade and one or two other little domestic oddities by cable, and on September 28,

"amid resounding cheers, an impressive Ethiopian, clad in a black silk cape over a kind of surplice, and with white duck trousers gathered in at the ankles, slowly mounted the tribune, and, settling a pair of gold-rimmed glasses with much deliberation on his swarthy nose, proceeded to repeat an incomprehensible declaration in his native tongue"

— of the best intentions in the world.

The assembly presently proceeded to re-elect the non-permanent members of the Council. China was dropping out, and Poland, the closest ally of France in Europe, was put forward. Abyssinia, now a seasoned member of upward a week's standing, became a passionate supporter of Poland. Cablegrams suddenly appeared from the Queen of the Kings, "intimating that the Government of that distant and dusky realm was earnest in its support of Poland's candidature on account of the historic ties which bound the two countries to one another."

I wish I could have heard Count Robert de Belle-fonds on these historic ties. I think that justifies my "preposterous" up to the hilt. I think, too, it justifies my reiterated assertion that the constitution of the League is so hopeless, so childish, so diplomatically conceived and useless, that nothing but reorganisation from the ground upward can give us a proper organ for the expression of the real need and desire for unity in the world.

Of course, Count Robert Linant de Bellefonds has led this tame vote for France into the ring partly in emulation and partly in derision of the British troupe of young lions, and the absolutely domesticated Indian elephant. France scored a point against Britain. To this the League has come in four brief years. Anyone but a pedant could have foretold this sort of thing, as the necessary fruit of the principle of one sovereign State one vote.

I hope the full significance of the Abyssinian turn has not been

lost on the Latin American States. It may help them to realise why there should be this feeling in Spain and Italy against the League, and the excellent reasons there are for setting up some new association for the working out and expression of the will of the Latin civilisation as a whole in the world's affairs. It may help their decision towards a creative withdrawal. For the world is in urgent need of a real League of Nations and a real conference of peoples — this costume parade at Geneva is a mere mockery of its hopes.

COSMOPOLITAN AND INTERNATIONAL

29.12.1923

Sometimes words for quite unaccountable reasons get down on their luck. They lose caste, they drop out of society, nobody will be seen about with them.

A word for which I have the greatest sympathy is "Cosmopolitan." I want to see it restored to a respectable use. It is a fine word and it embodies a fine idea. But for more than half the English-speaking people who hear it, I suppose, it carries with it the quality of a shady, illicit individual with a bad complexion, a falsified passport and a police record. This creature to be typical should be mixed up with the drug traffic and a danger to the inexperienced and honest everywhere; Monte Carlo is the idea of heaven for such a Cosmopolitan, and Ellis Island the corresponding hell. I don't know how it has come about that this good word Cosmopolitan has got so firmly attached to the trunks of such gentry, for the proper term that should be there is surely "extreme individualist." Even "Internationalist" would be a better word for a man or woman who passes between country and country and belongs to none. But I do not see why we should punish a word because it has been stupidly misapplied.

For what is Cosmopolis but the City of the World, and what can a Cosmopolitan be but a good citizen wherever he goes? That is what I want to be and not International — which seems to me an altogether homeless adjective. It means, I take it, "in between nations" — in between the substantial things of life. The only truly international thing is the ocean outside territorial waters. Trying to be International is like trying to walk about on the cracks between the boards, instead of walking on the floor; you could only do it if you had feet like skates, and I cannot understand why we tack this dismal adjective nowadays on to all our current attempts to get human brotherhood put upon a broader basis than parochial or national feeling. I am an Englishman and a Cosmopolitan, a good Englishman, and I hope a good Cosmopolitan; I do not see why I should repudiate my own original plank or any other planks because

I want to go freely over all the floor.

My emotional equipment as a faithful son of England I claim to be sound and complete. To the end of my days I shall think of England, the kindly England of the south-east, London and Essex, Kent and Sussex, as my own very particular region of the world. London is mine, as no other city can ever be; I have seen it grow and change and become ever more wonderful and beautiful and dear to me since first I came up to it, to the stupendous gloomy-vault of Cannon Street Station, half a century ago. But Paris also, open and elegant, with a delicate excitement in its air; New York, the towering and beautiful; many a prim South German town; Venice; Rome, as I remember it, before reviving prosperity and that vile monument to Victor Emmanuel vulgarised it so hopelessly; frosty and sullen Petersburg, have charmed me, and I want a share in their happiness and welfare, I want to possess them also and to care for them, and I am ready to barter the welcome of my London in exchange. Cosmopolis is all these cities and a thousand others, and I want to be free of them all.

But the world is full of stupid people who will not let me be free of Cosmopolis. They make my England almost a gaol for me by inventing a thousand inconveniences if I want to go out of it. There are passport offices and tariff offices stuck across every path of travel and desire; there are differences in coinage and a multitude of petty restrictions to exasperate every attempt I make at holiday in my Europe, The streets of Cosmopolis are up and barricaded; I want to break down these barricades.

There is not a reasonable and honest man in the world who does not want a uniform coinage about the earth. Only the greedy, cunning exchange speculator — and idiot collectors — want either varied coinages or a variety of stamps in this world. If the League of Nations at Geneva wasn't the dismal-lest sham on the earth, it would insist upon running the posts of Europe and having a mint of its own. Wherever one goes in Europe one finds oneself loaded up with foreign money that ceases to be current after a day's journey, and with useless postage stamps. And every silly little scrap of Europe is pretending to be a separate economic system — in mysterious conflict with other economic systems. Every hundred miles or so in

Europe there is a fresh tariff barrier.

Everybody, except for a few monopolists and officials, loses by tariffs. They are devices for gaining a little for some particular section of mankind at the cost of an infinitely greater loss to Cosmopolis. Mean and narrow in conception, they are abominable in action. It is an intolerable nuisance to be searched for tobacco and matches by some sedulous eater of garlic before one may enter France from England — they even turn out your pockets now — and to have one's portmanteau locks broken and one or two minor possessions stolen whenever one goes into Italy. At Dover they read the books you have with you to see if they are improper. The quays of New York again, after the arrival of a liner, are a grossly indecent spectacle. They go half-way back from civilisation to the barbecue of a foreign sailor by cannibal wreckers. Much as I like New York, I never miss a thrill of intense anger when the large hand of the Customs officer routs among my under-clothes.

And these are only the minor inconveniences of not living in Cosmopolis; they are just the superficial indications that the world one moves about in is a thin crust hanging insecurely above the abyss of war. I do not believe that any mere Internationalism and League of Nations that leaves the coinages separate, and the Customs Houses on the frontiers, and the passport officials busy at their little wickets with their nasty rubber stamps, which leaves the mean profits of tariff manipulation possible for influential people, which denies by all these things our common ownership and common responsibility for all the world, can ever open the way to world peace.

I am for world-control of production and of trade and transport, for a world coinage, and the confederation of mankind. I am for the super-State, and not for any League. Cosmopolis is my city, and I shall die cut off from it. When I die I shall have lived only a part of my possible life, a sort of life in a corner. And this is true of nearly all the rest of mankind alive at the present time. The world is a patchwork of various sized internment camps called Independent Sovereign States, and we are each caught in our bit of the patchwork and cannot find a way of escape. Because most of us have still to realise, as I do, a passionate desire to escape. But a day will come when Custom House officers will be as rare as highwaymen in

Sussex, and when the only passports in the world will be found alongside of Aztec idols and instruments of torture and such-like relics of superstition in our historical museums.

THE PARLIAMENTARY TRIANGLE

5.1.1924

That profoundly absurd body the British Parliament will meet on January 8, and the recondite and fascinating game of party politics will be resumed under novel conditions with three parties, none of which have a majority, and with a Labour Party in sight, not of power, but of office.

I call the British Parliament an absurd body with set and measured intention. It is twice as big as it ought to be for efficient government; it carries a load, a fatty encumbrance, of more than three hundred undistinguished and useless members; much of its procedure, its method of taking divisions for example, is idiotically wasteful of the nation's time; and it is elected by methods so childishly crude that it represents neither the will nor the energy nor the intelligence of the country. It dissipates and caricatures the national consciousness. Assembled, it will have nothing definite to say to France, Germany, Russia, America, or to the festering mass of British unemployed. From the Parliamentary point of view that sort of thing is subsidiary. Its party leaders will engage at once in the primary business of party leaders, which is, of course, to secure the sweets of office as speedily and securely as possible.

The broad lines of the game to be played this year are now fairly evident. They raise a number of profoundly interesting questions. The Conservative Party is the strongest of the three, but the Government it supports can be and will be turned out of office by a vote of "no confidence," in which the Liberals, the smallest party of all, will support the Labour motion. The King will then send for Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the Opposition, and ask him to form a Government. This Mr. MacDonald says he intends to do. He will have the qualified support of the Liberal Party. Almost immediately the Labour Party will have to produce its Budget.

The prophets foretell two alternatives. The Labour Government will produce a weak, individualistic Budget, an apologetic, compromising, imitative affair; it will drop or reserve almost all its Socialistic ideas, and it will be permitted to continue in office under

the distinguished patronage — gracefully and frequently reiterated — of Mr. Asquith, so long as its good behaviour continues. Everyone will praise Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's statesmanlike moderation, and when at last the Party has to face the constituencies. But it will have no face left for the constituencies. A mass of votes will drift back to Liberalism, which by that time will be seen to be just as good as Labour or better, and the crowd of unemployed, the poor, the disinherited, and all who are really weary and angry with the exploits and adventures of the untrammelled rich, will turn their faces away from the Labour Party and Parliamentary methods towards revolution. But the Liberal politicians will take little heed of the latter drift because it is outside the scope of Parliamentary procedure.

Or secondly, the prophets think that Labour may produce very bold and far- reaching Socialist proposals. They may stick to the Capital Levy, and so forth. They may put up their entire election programme. Then the Liberal Party will withdraw its support. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald will be obliged to resign, and the clever little, brave little Liberal group will form a Government, and with the assistance of a large part of the Conservatives carry on and — with large benevolent gestures— "save the country" by doing nothing. So that on the second alternative also the Liberal Party stands to win.

But then Mr. Ramsay MacDonald may advise the King to dissolve Parliament; he may ask the country to decide upon his Budget and legislative programme. And here comes the most delicate issue of all. The Liberal prophets tell us the King will refuse a dissolution. Will he in fact refuse to follow the advice of his Ministers, and become active instead of passive in party affairs? When Mr. Baldwin asked for a dissolution the King protested and granted it. Will he behave differently towards Mr. MacDonald? The Liberal prophets have most attractive arguments to show that such a course is constitutional. No doubt it is. Mr. Baldwin had a majority; Mr. MacDonald has not. Nevertheless, would such a refusal, from the point of view of the Court, be a wise thing? The common man in the country is not going to see the thing from the lawyer's standpoint. He is going to conclude that the King favours the Conservatives and Liberals against Labour. From the point of view of the monarchy that is a very undesirable conclusion, even if it is an unjust conclusion, to

spread about the country in a period of unemployment and social stress.

It is a polite convention in Great Britain that there is no Republican feeling in the land. That convention is not in accordance with the facts. There is much dormant Republicanism, but so long as the monarchy remains "the golden link of empire," so long as the conditions of a "crowned republic" are observed, Republicanism sleeps. But it sleeps much more lightly than many people suppose, and the crown cannot afford to make mistakes.

When the other day the Duke of York allowed himself to be associated with what appears to be a British imitation of the Ku Klux Klan, the sleeping spirit stirred. It raised an eyebrow, even if it did not open an eye. It may prove a great misfortune for the British crown if presently it is led by the assurances of eager Liberals into even the appearance of hostility to the party of the workers. The now latent Republicanism of the British people, once roused to activity, may be very difficult to lull again. The Labour Party may become a Republican party. And since the British crown is manifestly wary and discreet, I am not so certain as the Liberal lawyers that that dissolution will be refused. I may be wrong, and so among other possibilities we may see a "safety" Liberal Government sitting on the safety-valve in Britain for some years.

But do these alternatives exhaust the possibilities of the case? Suppose the coming Labour Government neither abandons nor carries out its Capital Levy, but refers it to a delaying committee of inquiry, and suppose it goes on in grim earnest to realise all of the fine promises of the Liberal programme. Where will the Liberals be then? Suppose, pending the decision of the committee upon the Capital Levy, it piles up the super-tax on large incomes, puts an almost confiscatory tax upon underdeveloped land and mineral resources, abolishes the game laws and rids England of the fox, cuts expenditure upon armaments and military and naval display ruthlessly — puts, for example, the Guards into reasonable and comfortable inexpensive uniforms — replaces doles by public employment, organises agricultural marketing, produces a comprehensive housing scheme, and quadruples the estimate for education and scientific research; what are the Liberals going to say

to it?

I know what the dinner parties will say about it, but the Liberal Party, if it is to go on existing, must save its face with the country. Perhaps a third of the Liberal Party might be genuinely disposed to back such a Labour programme; another third might feel constrained to do so. Mr. Lloyd George would move leftward, quite helpfully. And the Labour Government might struggle along insecurely and valiantly for much longer than most of the prophets suppose.

And the party managers, of all three parties, will be scheming some new electoral law before the next election. None of them will hear of honest proportional representation with large constituencies and a smaller, more efficient House of Commons; but they will all be planning something that will look fair and honest, leave the party system intact, and advantage the Parliamentary party to which each belongs. In this matter the Labour Party is no more honest than any other. Its party organs discuss the question entirely from the party point of view, and are quite disposed to consider "the alternative vote" or any other shabby evasion of proper electoral methods. So that at the end of our vista we must reckon with an election faked perhaps in some novel way but just as absurd as the last one.

And so Great Britain muddles through the years of destiny.

MODERN GOVERNMENT: PARLIAMENT AND REAL ELECTORAL REFORM

22.1.1924

We are assured that a reform of the electoral system is now imminent in Great Britain. The oldest and most respectable of the world's democratic governments is declared to be in need of repair and reconstruction. It has produced three parties without a majority, and it threatens to jam. Immediate legislation is promised. This must needs be a matter of lively interest to every intelligent person from China to Peru.

For the British Parliament is the Mother of Parliaments. This is the proud boast of the conventional teacher of British history (as distinguished from history), and — subject to a footnote by Mr. Belloc — it is reasonably true. The prevalent type of governing body in the world has been constructed more or less in imitation or as a variation of the respected British pattern; there is an Upper House whose members are supposed to be more select and genteel and important, and a Lower House which, generally speaking, wrangles more, is more representative of and more in the spirit of the common people, has taxing power, and is more conspicuously and fussily elected by the general population. The reasons commonly alleged for this double chamber system are pedantic and ridiculous, but the States that have been organised or modernised in the past three centuries have followed one another in the matter with all that unquestioning readiness which distinguishes man and the sheep and the processional caterpillar from most other of God's animated creatures.

The members of one or both of these chambers or houses are elected, and the system of election remains so primitive and stupid as to leave a large minority, or even a majority, of the electors not even represented in the House. The procedure is infantile — in the British Parliament the members vote by sprinting past a teller and through a lobby and along passages and so forth back to their seats — and generally these Parliaments, Congresses, and Legislative Chambers

are about as well fitted to serve the needs of our complicated modern communities as a battleship of Queen Elizabeth's navy is fitted to encounter modern artillery.

But they are difficult to scrap and reconstruct because the only people legally capable of scrapping and reconstructing them are the politicians they have created, and who are completely adapted to their necessities. You cannot expect "Old Parliamentary Hands" and such-like gentry to modify or even to realise the disastrous inefficiency of the political devices by which they live and move and have their being. Most of the Latin communities, which are logical to the pitch of violence, have solved the problem of Parliamentary incompetence in their hasty way by accepting dictators who treat all elected representatives with a scarcely veiled contempt; and even the English, in the face of a supreme national crisis, acquiesced in Cromwell.... Of course, after I have written that last sentence nothing will prevent the world-wide society of the muddle-headed from running away with the idea that I advocate dictatorships, just as it was impossible to prevent them from declaring that I had "embraced Protection" after I had pointed out that tariffs, like war, follow naturally upon nationalism, and just as they would certainly have it that I want to promote typhoid fever if I were to write about the necessary consequences of insanitary conditions. But that is a digression. Dictatorships are evil consequences of democratic break-downs. They are the rough remedy for intolerable democracy. And except in the United States democracies are becoming very generally intolerable. The people of the United States, for the time the spoilt children of the human race, are so fortunate in their isolation and their vast unity that the efficiency of their Government is a matter of no immediate concern to them. They will perhaps get along with their unwieldy Congress and their dear two historical parties for a long time yet. The British behind their silver streak had something of the same immunity before the war. They were still in a phase of financial and economic good luck. It is over for them now. In Britain politics have become serious and vital, and under existing conditions the overstrained and impoverished community can no longer suffer the elaborate fooleries of party government.

Great Britain is in urgent need of competent representative

government, and the extent to which the Mother of Parliaments proves herself to be a recuperative phoenix or an incurable old goose in this affair is a matter of vital importance not only to the British Empire, but to the whole world.

Nowadays we have fairly clear ideas of the nature of the supreme governing body that is needed for a great and various modern State. A single body seems to be all that is required; that a nation should squint at its problems with two divergent bodies does not seem id be imperative at all — though possibly a secondary body representing function, and not locality, may be a desirable auxiliary to the supreme assembly. About that supreme assembly we are now able to stipulate certain necessary conditions. It must not be too large a body, because that means an excess of inert and undistinguished members too numerous and obscure to be properly watched, such as we find encumbering affairs at Washington and Westminster, and at the same time it must be large enough to staff all its necessary committees, and to represent the chief varieties of opinion in the country. Something between two hundred and three hundred members seems to be the proper assembly; less may be unrepresentative, and more will develop crowd mentality. And the members must be elected by the method of proportional representation, and be sent up from twenty or thirty large constituencies — largely to eliminate mere local leaders — each constituency returning a dozen members or more. Only by this method of election can we kill that gag upon honest democracy, the party system, and replace the professional politician by a various gathering of typical and well-known men and women. Such a body would change only slowly in its character from election to election, and it would sustain a Government more real, steadfast, representative, assured and consistent than any the world has ever seen before.

Throughout the world a great and gathering body of opinion is moving steadily towards such a conception of a modern Government. And because of its present needs it is Great Britain which is likely to be for a time the battleground between modern and eighteenth-century conceptions of a legislative assembly.

It will be particularly interesting to watch the ingenuities of the

politicians in the new Parliament in producing schemes that will look like electoral reform and yet leave the profession still active for mischief. They will fight desperately against large constituencies with numerous members. The one-member or two-member constituency is absolutely necessary to their party system. In such constituencies even proportional representation can be reduced to a farce. And also they will offer cheap but attractive substitutes like the second ballot and the alternative vote. And they will fake extraordinary arrangements by which the voter will vote not for an individual but for a ticket or bunch, and they will call these fakes this or that improved variety of "proportional representation." All the political parties in Britain are at present trying to work out the probable effects of this or that fake or cheap substitute for electoral honesty, upon the party prospects. In this matter the Labour Party is as bad as any other party — or worse. The discussion of electoral legislation in the Imperial Parliament throughout the next session, though it may make the angels weep, is certain to afford much entertainment to every mundane observer of human disingenuousness.

SCRAPPING THE GOLD STANDARD

19.1.1924

Among recent events of conspicuous importance is the publication of a new book by Mr. J. M. Keynes, A Tract on Monetary Reform. Among the large trivial happenings of the time, revolutions, movements of crowned heads in and out of exile, new French alliances, and the antics of eminent politicians, it is refreshing to have something of real significance on which to make one's weekly comments, ii

I incurred great odium a little while ago by saying that Mr. J. M. Keynes could claim to have achieved success while at the same time I excluded those popular heroes. Napoleon I and Mr. Lloyd George, from the list of true successes. But here is a fresh book from Mr. Keynes, simple, outspoken, well written, and making a definite step forward in our understanding of the world's problems. You might read all the speeches and orations of Napoleon or Mr. Lloyd George through and you will know no more about men and things than when you began; Mr. Keynes will leave you different — enlightened. Mr. Keynes thinks with scientific lucidity and says what he thinks exactly and skilfully. What he says stands and will necessarily affect the history of money in a real and permanent way. Did Napoleon ever say anything or has Mr. Lloyd George ever said anything except what seemed likely to impress or humbug people in general?

It is a peculiarity of the mind of Mr. Keynes that it is at once penetrating and limited. He seems to think that the British Empire is a permanent instead of a manifestly transitory arrangement and that the United States of America and the Empire and the various States of the European patchwork are always going to retain their sovereign independence in financial and economic affairs. He assumes this much, and never questions it. But within the limits of this assumption, he writes with a lucidity and a frankness that are a liberal education for the reader.

To write of currency is generally recognised as an objectionable, and indeed almost as an indecent, practice. Editors will implore a writer almost tearfully not to write about money. This is not because

it is an uninteresting subject, but because it is, and always has been, a profoundly disturbing subject. The whole modern world has been brought up on cash and on credit reckoned in terms of money. Four or five generations of us have lived by the faith that a dollar was a dollar and a pound a pound, and that if you left them about they grew at so much per cent, per annum, and also increased in value. Most things became cheaper and cheaper throughout our young lives. That cheapening seemed in the nature of things. We worked for money; we saved the stuff, we looked forward to a comfortable old age. Now we live in a phase of fluctuating and on the whole mounting prices. Whosoever saveth his money shall lose it. Even the dollar buys two things where ten years ago it bought three. The pound sterling is in a worse case, and many of the other currencies have sunken to levels beyond the wildest fantasies of 1913.

Now this, as Mr. Keynes points out, is a breach of the understanding between society and the common individual. In this system in which we and our predecessors have lived for a century and more, the system which Socialists will call the "Capitalist" system but which Mr. Keynes much more properly calls the "Private Capitalist" system, there has always been an implicit guarantee that the money we worked for and saved up and lent and invested in various ways was good. It was good for our needs whenever we chose to spend it again. This was the incentive to work; this was the driving force of the whole hundred years of industrial production from Waterloo to the Marne. And to a large extent the incentive has gone. Money is no longer good; it has become treacherous. Unless it can be restored this system of ours must break down and lead either to social chaos and human decadence or to a new and different system.

Now Mr. Keynes is not a Socialist. He believes that the existing system of individual competition is "in accordance with human nature and has great advantages." But it cannot go on unless money is made trustworthy again. And his proposals to restore our confidence in money are very bold and remarkable indeed.

The vice, the almost incurable vice, of cash and credit systems, since first the methods of money became dominant in the Roman Republic, has been its tendency to expand debt to impossible

dimensions. Every country at the end of the war found itself owing preposterous sums to the creditor class or to foreign countries, and forced in various measure to tax the productive classes, to tax its creditor class either directly by income-tax and capital levy, or indirectly by currency inflation, and to bilk its foreign creditors. Every sovereign State in Europe had its own policy and set about the business on its own lines, with the result that to-day Europe is a museum of methods of economic collapse, from Britain, crushed by taxation and unemployment in an attempt to deflate back to the gold standard, to Germany, smashed into complete economic paralysis by extreme currency inflation. No country remains now with its currency based on a gold standard, not even the United States of America. True, you can exchange dollar bills for gold at Washington, but then you lose by the transaction. The United States has over-bought gold and is still accumulating and hoarding gold — at a loss. If all America's hoarded gold were minted and circulated, the value of the dollar would fall. The American dollar is the extreme case of deflation, as the exploded German mark was the extreme case of inflation.

Now what Mr. Keynes wants the world to do is to scrap gold altogether as a monetary standard and to substitute a "managed" currency. For the present he would have two independent units in the world, the dollar and the pound, because he is sceptical of the Americans and British ever working together without friction — even in so vitally important a matter. In both the United States and Britain he would have the banks and Treasury co-operating to keep in circulation such an amount of currency as would maintain internal prices at a steady level. They would decrease currency if prices fell, and increase it if they rose. He would take the price of a "standard, composite commodity" — so much steel, so much wheat, so much rice, so much rubber, and so on — and he would make that the new standard of value. He believes that the other currencies in the world would finally steady down into fairly stable relations with the "managed" dollar and the "managed" pound. And then we would go on again with our "Private Capitalism," buying, selling, saving, investing, competing, as we did in the happy days before the war.

But there are certain curious implications in this. Mr. Keynes

seems to recognise them and yet not give them their full value. The underlying assumption of Private Capitalism is that human beings will work better for gain, will show more enterprise and industry for profit, than for any other motive. But here, at the heart of the system, Mr. Keynes proposes to establish a disinterested group of managers, bankers, and officials who are not to accumulate private fortunes, though they could do so very easily by playing with the fluctuations of prices, but with a single-hearted devotion are just to maintain them for the public good. He seems to realise the difficulty here. He insists at several points that a system of Private Capitalism cannot survive without moderation; that if private enterprise will insist upon gambling upon the exchanges and working for profits regardless of any other consideration, the whole system must collapse. But if we are to rely upon the spirit of service and not upon the incentive of gain in our banks and Treasury officials, why should we not rely upon it generally? If currency can be "managed" in the public interest by men working, not for profit, but for service, why not also the production of staples and land and sea transport? But a system of economics run on the motive of service is not individualism at all; it is Socialism.

I think that in the long run Mr. Keynes will be forced to realise this. A "managed" currency is a long step towards a deliberately organised world. The gold standard was the standard of individual enterprise and go-as-you-please. The gold standard has failed and passes. Unless human society is to fail also, the age of scientific management is close at hand.

THE HUB OF EUROPE:. CZECHO-SLOVAKIA AND FRANCE

26.1.1924

Bohemia within its mountains is like a square citadel in the very centre of Europe. Czechoslovakia, the old Bohemian kingdom revived and extended, is the most orderly and successful of all the States created by the Treaty of Versailles. The republic understands the modern need of advertisement; the wandering writer finds a flattering welcome there, and what is done in Prague is heard of in the world.

The new treaty with France brings Czecho-Slovakia still more prominently forward. Poor exhausted bankrupt Poland, that sucked orange, is thrust aside, and Czecho-Slovakia becomes the keystone of France's restless incessant rearrangement of alliances. But Czecho-Slovakia is a very different country from Poland; it is sturdier and less romantically inclined, its President and chief Minister are among the most level-headed and far-seeing of European statesmen; and it is likely to prove a sobering and restraining influence upon French activities. Bohemia is the projecting westward angle of the Slav world; its language is closely akin to Russian, Serbian, Polish and Bulgarian; within its boundaries there are more than three million Germans, and three-quarters of a million of Magyars, and its natural destiny seems to be that it should act as a region of exchange and interpretation between the Slavic world, Hungary and Turkey, and the world of Central and Western Europe. German speech encloses it upon three sides. In itself, with its thirteen million odd of heterogeneous population, largely engaged in agriculture, it cannot be a country of any great importance; its importance now, as in the past, lies in its position and its possible inter-racial functions.

To these the President and his chief Minister and pupil, Mr. Benes, are acutely alive. They see in their country a meeting-place and reconciler of European interests. They are ambitious to make it a centre of trade, of intellectual interchange, and political unification. For this end they have worked steadfastly since their country

emerged into renewed political existence in 1918. Theirs is a splendid and civilised dream.

It has been stated in many quarters that this new alliance has been made hastily, and at the initiative of France, as a stepping-stone to an understanding with Russia. The possibility of a Labour Government in Great Britain, and of a complete British recognition of Russia, is supposed to have driven France into a hasty search for an intermediary who would help her to end her long feud with the Bolsheviks. But in reality the recent visit of President Masaryk to Paris and London was already arranged last summer. He was already discussing the problems of this understanding then. It is probably a Czech rather than a French initiative that has brought it about.

There is something very attractive in these steadfast schemes to make Bohemia the centre of a Europe renewed. I think everyone who hopes to see a more noble and spacious civilisation emerging from the distresses of the present time must feel warmly sympathetic with these great ambitions. But it is impossible to ignore the enormous disadvantages against which the imaginations of President Masaryk and Mr. Benes and their colleagues are pitted. They make their creative effort in a tangle of long-accumulated difficulties and with some extraordinarily intractable material.

One first difficulty lies in the fact that the European railway system was developed while Prague was merely a provincial capital. The railways of Central Europe radiate from Vienna and Berlin. The centres of banking and commercial exchange were in these cities. And the efforts of Prague to deflect the currents of trade and finance to herself have hitherto fallen far short of the political ambitions of her leaders. I remember my astonishment on my first journey from Eger to Prague in 1920 to discover that I was travelling to the capital on a single line of railway.

In Prague at that time the great Sokol festival was going on, the festival of the patriotic societies, and there was little thought of Europe apparent and much of the three united peoples of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia. National costumes made the streets gay; national music filled the air. But there was a great welcome at that time for the foreign visitor, and the bunting of all the Allies interwove with the national flag. French horizon-blue and the Stars

and Stripes came into the picture with the chain and robes of the Lord Mayor of London, who was there in full regalia. And when one was in the presence of President Masaryk, with his sweeping views and his amazing knowledge of the contemporary intellectual activities of the English and French and German and Russian speaking worlds, the nationalist enthusiasm of Prague seemed no more than a picturesque and necessary background clamour.

But I was there again this last summer, and the foreign flags and visitors had gone, and I realised more fully the sturdy and obstinate patriotism of the Bohemian people. I saw Prague not on show for the foreigner, but in its everyday clothes. And the effect was extremely provincial. My impression was that the friction between the German Bohemians — an absolutely necessary element — and the Czechs had increased. That may be the fault of the recalcitrant Germans; I will not venture to adjudicate on the rights and wrongs of that issue. The point is that that bad feeling has not been allayed. There was a more pronounced objection to the German language. Hitherto the Czechs have been a bilingual people, and it was in the double possession of a Teutonic and Slav language and culture that one of our chief hopes for their future lay. But they seem to be dropping German and learning no other language in its place. They are sinking back into a churlish monolingualism. The public notices of the town of Prague are in Czech, and in Czech only. For the westerner Czech is as difficult as Russian. Indeed, so far as he is concerned, they might as well be in Chinese. This is patriotic barbarism. How can Prague expect either pleasure visitors or business men to come to her if she will not speak to them in any intelligible tongue? How can she become a mart or meeting-place of the nations if she insists that no other speech than her own shall be used in her streets? In a little while all the currents of Central European life will be flowing back again to their former centres in polyglot Vienna and Berlin.

Now these excesses of Czech patriotism make President Masaryk, to my mind, a very tragic figure. For this amazing man, this learned professor who was a village blacksmith's son, did more than anyone to revive the self-respect and national feeling of the Czechs. He restored the Czech nation. He believed, and still believes, that he restored a necessary and decisive councillor to the European board. It

may be that he has done no more than produce a tough, rustic dwarf. The fine patriotism he evoked has been vulgarised and cheapened, and about him and behind him and Mr. Benes presses a loud and irreconcilable body of ultra-patriots. His Germans have been foolish and tiresome; egged on by the Austrian landowners, who are furious because of the Capital Levy and a liberal land policy, they will do nothing but rehearse grievances. In such German places as Marienbad you see them retaliating the insults of Prague by boycotting Czech. Yet a generous understanding between Czech and German is essential to any future beyond obscurity for Bohemia. A Czecho-Slovakia, pure Czech, with perhaps for political purposes a smattering of French, will be following in the way of Poland towards a vexed and vexatious insignificance in European affairs.

THE MANDARINS AT THE GATE:. THE REVIVAL OF THE OLD LEARNING

2.2.1924

It would be near the truth of things to say that the only events of permanent importance in human affairs are educational events. Except in so far as they demonstrate and teach or interrupt teaching, wars and treaties, kings and laws, and all the standard material of history are but the by-products of the educator's work. Some day, when we have escaped from the trumpery dignity of classical history, a new Gibbon will trace for us the failure in understanding and co-operation that made the Roman Empire no more than a staggering pretension and left Europe and Western Asia a festering cluster of nationalisms to this day. No conqueror can make the multitude different from what it is, no statesman can carry the world's affairs beyond the ideas and capacity of the generation of adults with which he deals, but the teachers — I use the word in the widest sense — can do more than either conqueror or statesman; they can create a new vision and liberate latent powers in our kind. Or, if the perversity of their possibilities hold them, they can continue to put out the eyes of the children of men and let the world go on still under blind leaders of the blind.

At no time in the world's experience has the need for a creative education been so manifest as it is to-day. This social and political system in which we live is ailing and divided against itself, failing to reconstitute even as much economic universalism as prevailed before the great war, involving itself in a hopeless muddle of debts. It is a system plainly doomed to a further series of wider and profounder disasters, unless amidst its distresses it can evolve a clearer realisation, not only in its ruling classes but generally, of the origins of our race and our civilisation, of the conditions under which our communities have grown, of the vital inter-relationships of our social order, and of the tremendous perils and the immense possibilities before mankind. A population with such a breadth of outlook, a population disciplined to creative constructive work, is not simply

desirable to-day; it is imperatively demanded if civilisation is to avert a decay and a collapse as much greater than the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire as a modern liner is greater than an Alexandrian galley.

It is because of his realisation of the paramount need of a great educational effort as the first and supreme thing in human affairs to-day that every intelligent man must needs note with something between dismay and bitter derision the recent signs of a revival of "classical" teaching in the schools and colleges of the Atlantic peoples. The French, who so love the eighteenth century that in foreign and domestic policy they are always trying to get back to it, have led the way. Disturbing modern subjects which tend to betray the facts that the Mediterranean Sea is not the whole world, and that most great events of present importance to mankind occurred before or outside of or in revolt against the Latin civilisation, are to be kept out of the purview of French adolescence. More Greek will be taught, but not enough of it and not well enough for the young Frenchman to realise how feeble was the political, social, and economic reaction of Greece upon Rome. He will be trained to think that there was some sort of magnificent succession between the two, whereas Rome got little from Greece except slave pedagogues and pedants, misleading literary models which crippled her own sturdier initiative, articles de luxe, living and dead, architects, sculptors and painters, and cared so little for the clarifying Aristotle that she left his books about and lost them.

The French, so largely German in race and mental quality, must however cherish their own Latin illusion in their own fashion; it comes nearer home to an English writer when he finds President Coolidge blessing the classical side. And still more dismaying is the truculent behaviour of the British Classical Association which has recently been meeting in the congenial atmosphere of Westminster School. Mr. Costley-White, the Headmaster, boasted of the increasing number of unfortunates in his school who were taking up the classical course, and made it clear that even those who were supposed to have a modern course in his school were really not given an honest modern course at all, but wasted their time with elementary classics before they were contemptuously "specialised" in science,

modern history, mathematics, or modern languages. (What a classification!) And Mr. Herbert Fisher told coyly how even in a Coalition Government fragments of the Greek Anthology were not unfrequently translated into English verse during the duller Cabinet discussions — on contemporary education, one presumes. He further pointed out the power every headmaster had to direct the studies in his school, and in plain words to steal people's sons for the classics. It is clear that the classical headmasters of Great Britain, in a mood of self-complacent obstinacy, will spare no efforts to pith as many young intelligences as possible with their antiquated, deadening and antisocial disciplines. The classical tradition is still strongly entrenched in the educational world of the English-speaking peoples, and both in America and in the British Empire it will be over its dead body only that a modern education will be able to reach the finer minds of the new generation.

Now it is a useless and dangerous civility to write flattering things about the classical education that still cripples the selected best of our youth. It robs us of a directive class of lively intelligences; it is the root cause of the pretentious sterility of contemporary statescraft. The uncritical cant it sustains about the peerless beauty of Greek art and Greek character, and the massive wisdom and integrity of Roman law and administration, has been and still is a blight upon the creative impulses of modern life. In schools and in colleges it is, and, considering the sort of man who will generally have to impart it, it must always be, a deadening grammatical grind. It consumes the scanty time of our youth, it eats up the time-table, so that any effectual broadening study of other things cannot co-exist with it. It presents the history of mankind grotesquely out of perspective; it saturates its victims with a pro-Hellenic, pro-Latin partisanship that perverts their judgment of all historical processes. Its material being languages and — in a lesser degree — literature, dead, pickled, and without any power of growth or fresh combination, it is, before anything else, a training in stereotyped expression and stereotyped forms of thought. At the present time, in the face of the world's present needs, it is impossible to regard a school or college presided over by a classical scholar and devoted to the classical tradition as anything but a dead and death-diffusing spot in our educational

system. This new offensive against the proper education of our children, to which the British Classical Association gives such definite expression, is a thing essentially evil, a thing which any servant of creative civilisation must fight at any cost. We cannot afford to sacrifice our convictions to politeness and pretend that we think the classically trained mind anything better than a warped and restricted and mischievously infectious mind.

We need a world-wide common education of which the history of life and the sciences of life and matter are the two main divisions, in which drawing, mathematics, and living languages are studied as tools and methods of expression and not as subjects in themselves, and in which music is properly utilised in the development of aesthetic perception. In such a modern education the dead languages and literature can play only a subordinate and illustrative and properly proportioned part.

LENIN: PRIVATE CAPITALISM AGAINST COMMUNISM

9.2.1924

So Lenin is dead at last. He dies on the eve of the recognition of the Soviet Government by the Western Powers. For most practical purposes the work of Lenin was over before 1920. His death now or a little later will make only the smallest difference in the destinies of Russia.

For the Communist Party which still controls Russia has this in common with the Catholic Church, that it is sustained by a system of dogmas, disciplines and, now, experiences and traditions so much stronger than any single individual, that individuals, though they may serve it more or less effectively, cannot control nor deflect it. They must move inside its limitations. Russia, under the Communist rule, is at the opposite pole to such a phase of affairs as would evoke a Caesarism. It is over the Western Latin democracies, subjected to the adventures and ravages of uncontrolled rich men, that the dictators arise. Lenin was never in reality a dictator as Mussolini is a dictator. He impressed one as being in the grip of forces quite beyond his control, albeit they are forces he had himself helped to develop and organise. Communism is definite, directive, compelling; Fascism is dramatic and empty, a puerile, vague, violent thing, a young ass to be ridden anywhere by a bold, competent rider. A score of Lenins might die and Communism would go on as though nothing had changed. Without Mussolini the Fascisti might do anything — fall into a torrent, get lost, destroy society, vanish.

I saw Lenin in 1920 in the Kremlin. He was an extraordinarily fragile little thing, small hands clasped together upon the corner of his desk and little feet that dangled from his chair far off the ground. He was very bald. I learn now with astonishment that I was the older man. He put his amusing Mongoloid face a little on one side as we talked, with something of the wary expression of a fencer. When he found out I didn't want to score points for or against Communism, but to learn what they proposed to do next and particularly what they

proposed to do about the peasants, he dropped any appearance of controversy and laid his views and plans before me very frankly.

In return I tried to tell him things about England, but he seemed to have been stuffed up with a lot of nonsense about British conditions. He believed that a certain obscure paper called the *Dreadnought*, or the *Woman's Dreadnought*, or some such title, edited by Miss Sylvia Pankhurst, represented millions of insurgent British proletarians, and that the violent struggle then going on in Ireland was, in some slightly obscured form, a struggle between Capitalism and Communism. It was difficult to readjust his perspectives.

His schemes for the reorganisation of Russia seemed to me to be right-minded, honestly conceived, and very, very artless. He had a scheme for the "Electrification of Russia" that struck my usually quite sufficiently imaginative mind as hopelessly impractical. It ignored distances, and Russia is a country consisting mostly of distances.

I suppose no gambler who stakes his all upon a single throw against great odds and wins was ever so astonished as the Bolsheviks when they came into power in 1917. They went into Russia like good revolutionists to make trouble and die. They found themselves presently in scarcely disputed possession of a completely exhausted country. Even in 1920 they seemed still a little incredulous to find themselves still there. Never was there such rant and nonsense as the stuff Mr. Winston Churchill, for example, talks about the Bolsheviks seizing upon and ruining Russia. So far from seizing, there was nothing to oppose them but brigands and hopelessly incapable military adventurers, and so far from ruining, the ruin was already complete. In this chaos the Bolsheviks grasped power, according to all the accepted revolutionary examples. There was not so much an organised resistance to their seizure as a lawless disregard. They had to shoot. All revolutionists have to shoot. It is their privilege and their danger. But it is usually conceded that the Bolsheviks shot too much and went on shooting too long, and acquired almost a habit of shooting.

It is not that they were bloodthirsty men, but that they were inexperienced and unprepared. They murdered in a fit of Russian nerves. And they were equally inexperienced and unprepared for the

task of government, once their power was secure. They served Russia well in defending her from France, Poland, Churchill, Kolchak, Yudenich, Deniken, Wrangel, and all the evil horde that beset her from without, but they rebuilt within slowly and experimentally and wastefully. And they had the bad luck of two famine years.

Still, they are on their feet now; they are making headway, and it is from the red root of Communist theory that the new Russian order will grow. It is manifestly destined to be a very great system, a United States in the Old World, stretching from the Baltic to the Pacific.

It is very important to grasp the fact that the former Russian political and social order was bankrupt and collapsed of its own accord, because it is the lesson that the private adventurers of the West are most loath to learn. Communism is not a dragon that devours healthy States; it is rather the scavenger of the rotten and fallen. You cannot say, for example, that Communism is either very strong nor spreading very rapidly as an aggressive doctrine in Europe. And yet it may still come to prevail over great parts of Europe. Europe is sick and obstinately set against its own cure; the decay of its monetary system (without which, as Mr. Keynes has pointed out, private capitalism is a totally unworkable system) spreads, and the European community, saturated with ideas of eager private gain, destitute of a sufficiently strong sense of the collective good, and enslaved by narrow individualistic and partisan and patriotic obsessions, makes no effort sufficiently comprehensive and intelligent to attest the decay. The European system is not being seriously attacked from without at the present time, and least of all by Communism; the whole Communist propaganda in Western Europe does not amount to much more than the advertisement organisation of a typewriter seller or a patent medicine vendor. But the European system is being attacked from within by its own speculators and profit-makers, its tariffs and its combines for the restraint and deflection of trade. It has taught all its children competitive self-seeking, and it crumbles and collapses now for the lack of creative effort.

I am not one of those who minimise and detract from the great

achievements of the nineteenth century, and deep in my nature is a craving for irresponsible liberty. Temperamentally I dislike Communism. I am a collectivist but not a Communist. I have always clung and still cling to the belief that the sprawling social and economic life in which I have grown up might be progressively organised into a secure, generous, and scientific system without any abrupt and violent destructive change. But I must confess to a deepening and increasing doubt whether the present European system can right itself. The collapse continues so steadily and disconcertingly. The little nations sit within their boundaries scheming for small advantages, none heeding the general good. Germany follows Russia; her enemies without and her "big-business" fools within have prepared another great area in which the Communist may make his experiments. And the collapse shows no tendency to end at the Rhine. The Western exchanges totter.

It may be that the hopes of such as I are excessive, that tinkering cannot save the European system now, that it is destined to profounder and more drastic changes than we are willing to admit as necessary. Perhaps the root is too rotten with self-seeking. Perhaps the Communist, with all his faults, his wastefulness and ugliness of method, has something vital to teach the world, if it is no more than discipline and devoted subordination to large ideas. Perhaps the whole European system, like Russia, may after all need to be regrafted upon this new strange root of Communism before it enters upon a fresh creative phase. I do not know. But it is plain to me that the years pass and the recovery of Europe does not begin.

THE FANTASIES OF MR. BELLOC. AND THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

16.2.1924

Mr. Belloc has written a small imposing book about America and England, called The Contrast. Small it is in length and substance, but imposing in its English edition at least by reason of large print, vast margins, thick paper, and all that makes a book physically impressive. It is the sort of book that has the first sentence of Chapter I on page nine. To the student of current events it is a very noteworthy book indeed. It betrays the drift of a very complex group of forces at work in our educational, journalistic, and literary world, a group of forces desiring the separation of America from Europe, clamouring for the disengagement of America from participation in the development of a new phase of civilisation, and the arrest of that development.

Mr. Belloc is too often treated by American and English critics as a merely comic figure. Comic figure no doubt this bulky, gesticulating Frenchman is, with his pretensions to an enormous bibulousness, with his affectation of a fastidious but non-existent scholarship, with the immense emphasis of his wild impromptu classifications and his magnificent caricature of a victorious dialectic. His prose style becomes more and more wonderfully suggestive of the after-dinner talker at his richest and joiliest. The sudden lapses into intense whispering italics; the abrupt glorification of some phrase by the thick loud enunciation of unexpected capitals! He is quick to imitate any form of dignity, even the dignity of the scientific exponent at his solemnest. Could anything be more sublimely funny, for instance, than this pseudo-illuminating experiment to illustrate the profound truth (in italics) that "intense individual contact and energy make for uniformity"?

"Put a number of smooth, round balls upon a billiard table. Give them each a slow and slight movement, and you will see no general movement appearing. There will be little clatter, few and rare collisions. Impart to them each a very rapid motion, that is, an

individual intensity, and while you raise very greatly the noise of the shocks (which is a superficial phenomenon), and while you increase even more the number and frequency of collisions (which is the cause of the noise), you also soon develop a resultant of all the directions. If the sharp speed of each be maintained you will soon perceive in the movement of the whole a general swing, and all that great mass of balls will be moving in a crowd. So it is with a human society."

One likes to think of that rosy dinner party adjourned to the billiard-room and "put thesh soshial lawsh into practish" by imparting the motion as directed.

But apart from the almost willfully preposterous side of Mr. Belloc there is much to interest us in him profoundly. He is vigorously expressive; he speaks for forces in our community that are more often silently active; he gives resistances animation. The least original of contemporary writers, he has retained the leading ideas of an upbringing that was essentially Catholic and Latin in a practically inflexible form. His world, after a few merely preparatory phases and with a polite gesture to the Greeks, begins and ends with Rome. His mind in this age of tumultuous growth is like a naughty and growing child refusing to be put into larger clothes. And yet he is not blind to the great volume of reality outside that narrow old-fashioned scheme of his. He is not a blind man; he has at once vision and an extreme obstinacy. He feels and denies the passing of mediaeval Europe, he struggles against his realisation of the coming of a new order in the world, which shall comprehend, for example, Siberia and China and America, and a world-wide culture into which Islam and Christendom, the wisdom of India and China and the science of Britain and Germany and America and France and North Italy and Russia and Japan shall alike fall and be fused. One probable factor in this synthesis will be the English language, the great political and scientific traditions it carries with it, and the band of English-speaking communities, still growing and still crude, which will bring those traditions into fruitful relationships with a thousand new conditions and a thousand new climatic conditions. Rome will have a scarcely more important place in an English-knitted world than Babylon.

And so Mr. Belloc beats himself against the growing strength of this great net of civilised understandings. It does not exist. The languages diverge. The Americans are more foreign to the British than any Western Europeans. The British are a slightly detached part of some general Western European culture. A Frenchman can understand Keats and an American cannot. Americans are "egalitarian" and the British profoundly aristocratic. The decay of British aristocracy is the end of Britain, but there is always France to fall back upon. The American military mind is French in spirit. A Bellocian storm of such assertions swirls through the entire book, aggressive in manner, self-protective in motive. He emerges where he began. The Americans do not belong to "our" system— "our" meaning the intimate close brotherhood of British and French and Italians and Spanish and so forth, the British rather marginal to the Latin Catholic world. The Americans are a "New Thing" — capitals; they are a new culture outside the Western European culture. They are a "new race." They must follow their own destinies and "we" ours.

Mr. Belloc is writing for American as much as for English readers, and he shows a care for their susceptibilities. But one or two possibilities gleam through, possibilities of a reassuring sort for his dear old Western European world. There may be biological forces at work; "a new race, the fate of which, to survive or to die, we know not." Or this great new world may presently fall into social disorder, division — and insignificance.

This is the essence of Mr. Belloc's argument to estrange Americans and Europeans, and particularly the Americans and British. Is it sound? So far as the differences go one concedes the vividness of Mr. Belloc's vision. (His opening account of the different qualities of American and European scenery, by the way, is an amazingly good piece of writing.) But do the Americans present either a new race or even a new culture? I deny both these propositions. They are racially a still largely unfused mixture of Europeans, and the novel features of their social and cultural life merely mark a new phase into which the British and the European and the Slav cultures are all following America. That is to say, I do not believe that America is diverging upon a line of her own, but is

simply ahead along a path that the other great constituents of the coming world community must all presently follow.

Let us state the case briefly and simply. Nobody who knows anything of the facts of the case regards the citizens of the United States as a sort of transplanted Britisher; but with the exception of certain coloured millions and certain Red Indian survivals they are manifestly transplanted Europeans, whose political institutions were originally built up in reaction to the Hanoverian monarchy and as a development of and in close sympathy with European liberalism and British nonconformity. This community of transplanted Europeans had the good fortune to have no strong military neighbour, and it had an almost virgin continent into which to expand. This good fortune enabled the States to realise very swiftly the full social and political possibilities of steamboat, railway, and electric communication.

They have developed a great State on the modern scale, with an unprecedented unity and uniformity of general ideas. A little too favoured by their immunities, they have not perhaps made so good a pace as they might have done with their general elementary education, but altogether their progress has been marvellous. The congested and entangled States of Western Europe — I leave out the Russian and British systems, which are neither of them truly European — are destined to achieve an ultimate unity under the same irresistible forces of transport that have expanded and held together the American United States. Their unification may be complicated or arrested by the unavoidable interweaving of the Slav and British systems with their destinies, and it is surely impossible for anyone outside the Belloc type of mentality to imagine either English-speaking or Latin-speaking America having neither voice nor share in the European part of this recrystallisation of the world's affairs.

In this new order of life into which our kind is passing, Roman Christendom will become a local tradition and a province, just as Sumeria was swallowed up in Babylonia and just as the Empires of Babylon and Egypt became memories and provinces in the Empire of Rome. We are not developing new races, but merely mingling those we have, and our cultures do not so much differentiate as fuse, so we may reasonably hope to have at last one creative culture, with many aspects, replacing the partial civilisations of the past.

Fate has imposed it upon Mr. Belloc that he should see these things and deny them. His lot, I think, might have been happier had he been born and settled in some rich little town in the South of France, and there sat in the cafe, drinking his good red wine and orating and denying, without the irritation of having seen and known. But it was decreed that he should go to America and come back to report a strange and terrible land where the mountains are not really mountains nor the rivers rivers, and where a strange race grows outside the pale.

And, an exile in modern England, he has been forced, too, to turn his eyes into the depths of the past and see how life arose and how it has come to be man and will pass beyond man. And that also he denies, with much banging of the little round drum of a table on the *terrasse*. The American is a phantom and geology a lie; the only true world is Latin-made Europe, and if Heaven had not created it specially for jolly men, Mr. Belloc would; and in the warmth and congenial friendliness of it, Mr. Belloc will sit fighting reality with voice and gesture until the good red wine runs out and the sun goes down upon him for the last time.

A CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL SCHEME FOR BRITAIN:. A TENTATIVE FORECAST

22.2.1924

The Labour Government of Great Britain starts its career with a conservative discretion that should reassure even the most excitable inmates of the Rothermere journalistic institutions. For this year at any rate we shall get little that we might not have had from a rather left-handed Liberal Cabinet. The Social Revolution is in no hurry to arrive.

The recognition of Russia is all to the good; and the treatment of foreign politicians in office as though they were statesmen and the serious little visits and talks, are full of promise. If you treat a politician as a statesman sufficiently it is possible that he will become one. It is to be hoped that the economies upon military things will have a certain courage, and that we may see the last of costly Guards' uniforms and such-like gilt on the Royal gingerbread, this year. A democratic monarchy with a Labour Prime Minister should wear plain clothes. But these are minor matters. The immediate test of the Labour Government's quality will be its treatment of national education. There is no excuse for just carrying on. The British educational policy since the war has been mean and deadly. The children insist upon growing up, and at present most of them for all practical purposes achieve the status of unemployed adults or undertrained blacklegs at fourteen. Secondary and higher education is a dislocated muddle.

I do not want to undervalue British education. Compared with other countries the common citizen of Britain is well educated and well informed. He is — though many Americans are loath to realise this — better educated and better informed than the average American common citizen. But compared with what is needed in a great modern State he is pitifully and dangerously under-educated. It is impossible for a Labour Government to realise its ideal of a highly organised community inspired not by profit-hunting but by the spirit of co-operative service, and working and producing abundantly for

the common good, with the British population at the present level of education. To raise that level is a necessary condition to the successful extension of public service into economic life and the replacement of the money scramble by economic order.

For this reason Mr. C. P. Trevelyan is for me the most interesting and hopeful of all the new Labour Ministers. With his family tradition of high scholarship and liberal innovation, and with the new ferment of modern creative ideas in his mind, we may hope for a very bold and broad handling of the problems of British education. To him is given the opportunity of welding the disconnected parts, some quite good and some extremely inadequate or defective, which make up the British educational resources of to-day, into what may be the first completely comprehensive modern educational system in the world.

The first thing needed for the achievement of such a task is a complete and final recognition of the fact that such an education must go on at least to the age of sixteen, and that it must include a general knowledge of the history of the world and mankind, the elements of political and economic science, some knowledge of the methods and scope of biological and physical science, and a reasonable acquaintance with and use of at least one foreign language. The raising of the leaving age to sixteen was promised some years ago by Mr. Fisher, probably the feeblest statesman who has ever been overruled by his political associates. That promise was made when Britain was to become a land fit for heroes under the eloquent gestures of Mr. Lloyd George. It is for Mr. Trevelyan now to make that promise a reality.

But it is not only upward that the school age should extend, but also downward. It should be possible for poor parents who cannot afford a nursery to send their children to the people's schools at a quite tender age. The children of prosperous people have a governess, or in towns go to some properly equipped infant school, by the time they are four or five. The children of the working -class woman knock about at home with a mother too busy to give them sufficient educational attention, and their only-open air is the street. They miss the beginnings of drawing and modelling and such-like play; they do not get sufficiently talked to; they get little or no music;

they start with that much handicap. Vile attempts at economy in British education have meant a grave retrogression in this respect. The schools have to be reopened to infants, and the facilities for infant teaching restored and extended. The public infant school must be the day-nursery of the poor.

Both these extensions of the school age will require more teachers. And even as it is, the British schools are scandalously understaffed. Not only is that so, but many of the existing staffs are under-trained and under-educated for their work. I cannot conceive of British education as a satisfactory system with less than quadruple the number of teachers at work than are now employed.

Moreover they have to be better teachers. When British elementary education was organised in the 'seventies of the last century it was done in the shabbiest and cheapest way possible. Those were the days when Englishwomen of the prosperous classes would become half frantic with jealousy and hate and derision at the idea of a housemaid wearing a fringe or the cook going out in pretty clothes on a Sunday. That was the spirit of the time. It was intolerable to them that the poor man's "brats" should be taught by really educated persons. The prospective teachers of the general public, therefore, were not sent through the Universities and made a part of the general comity of educated men and women. They were put apart into mean, bleak, restricted training colleges of their own, and everything was done to establish and maintain a sense of social inferiority in their minds. They were intended to feel the superiority of the parson and the lordship of the manufacturer and the squire. Never has a profession risen to self-respect against such obstacles and disadvantages as the British elementary teachers. It is for Mr. Trevelyan to complete the expansion and liberalisation of these training colleges, to see that they get at last the staffs, libraries, laboratories, and facilities of interchange necessary to incorporate them completely in the university system of the land. Or else to hand them over to the local authorities as lunatic asylums or something of that sort or to reconstruct them to meet the housing shortage, or just simply to dynamite them and send the whole of the next generation of teachers through the Universities.

Having secured an adequate supply of soundly trained and

educated teachers, and with the whole youthful population — except those attending the many excellent private preparatory schools in Britain — going up to the age of sixteen, at least, to the publicly maintained schools, it will be possible for Mr. Trevelyan to give his mind to the very urgent problem of grading schools. The organisers of elementary education in Britain, like the American fathers, seem to have thought that a school was just a school. But children under the age of twelve require very different educational surroundings from those between twelve and sixteen. The Junior school may well be a mixed village school as close to mother as possible, a small school, bright and homelike. The Second school needs to be larger, and with a various staff; children are already differentiating after twelve, there must be a choice of studies, one child's education is another child's poison. Moreover, the equipment needed at the second stage is greater and more various. Educational centres are indicated here, and the automobile to collect the youngsters comes happily into the world at this stage to enable both Britain and America to meet the demands of an advancing civilisation upon rural youth.

Over most of Britain the market towns lie at eight or ten miles apart; the roads converge upon them, they are the natural places for the Second schools. Here is a very pretty and, I should think, a very congenial task of reorganisation for Mr. Trevelyan. Like Edward VI of England, it may be his destiny to write his name upon England with a trail of new and reconstructed schools.

But an educational system that secures merely a proper education for every British boy or girl up to the age of sixteen is only the broad foundation of a complete State education. The English "Public Schools," which are not really public at all, and which retain their boys in a state of loutish athleticism two years or more after they should be at college; the miscellany of "upper-class" girls' schools; the Universities, that are partly continuation colleges and partly Universities for real intellectual work and interchange, much incommoded by undergraduates' "rags," solemn athleticism, and a pervading adolescent clamour; the antiquated and boring legal and medical professional training; and, indeed, the whole tangle of class-conscious, middle-and upper-class educational institutions in Britain,

would be enormously benefited, and I hope will be benefited, by a bold — even though it were at the time an entirely unsuccessful — attempt at reorganisation upon modern lines.

Once people have been set thinking about these things they will never stop as they are. The mischief at present is that we take the most preposterous arrangements for granted because we are used to them. It will not be necessary to stir the venerable quiet, the tradition, and ripe usages of Oxford and Cambridge very greatly. Somewhere the fine traditions of classical scholarship and stylistic mathematics should be preserved, and these seem to be their appointed refuges. But there is now a constellation of other and more conveniently situated provincial Universities which are still miserably cramped and poor. For all that, several are doing quite first-class University work. And there exists now in London, in spite of neglect and misdirection, a great group of literary, artistic, scientific, and legal institutions which cry aloud to be grouped and correlated upon broad and congenial lines as the effective intellectual nucleus of the British Empire, and even perhaps of the English-speaking world. It is to the loosely co-ordinated institutions within and without the present so-called University of London that I hope Mr. Trevelyan will chiefly direct his attention as the apex of the pyramid I hope to see arising, based on the existing preparatory school, on the re-fashioned "Public School," relieved of its too mature seniors, and on the revised and strengthened free Junior and Second schools which should take the place of our existing elementary schools.

PORTUGAL AND PROSPERITY:. THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING A LITTLE NATION

1.3.1924

For several weeks just recently I was cut off from Britain and America and most of the things that interest me in the world by a postal strike in Portugal. It was an original sort of strike. The little dears went to their offices and so forth, and just did nothing until the Government kept a promise to raise salaries. Telegrams and letters coagulated in masses that are still incompletely dissolved. Some of the more humorous of the strikers mixed up the letters, and delivered considerable numbers at the wrong addresses, where many perished miserably. Meanwhile I read the Lisbon *Diario de Noticias*, which has about as much foreign news as the *West Sussex Gazette*, and meditated on Portugal. To which country I had come, by the by, because it was within three days' post of England and a most convenient cable centre.

Portugal has a climate that is always interesting and generally delightful. It has its wild phases of sea-wind and passionate rain, and then the only thing to do here at Estoril — except work — is to go to the western headlands and see the green Atlantic waves hit the cliffs and explode into vast mountains of sunlit foam. And to get caught and drenched by a rainstorm, and so home. Or the north wind blows, and usually it is the north wind that blows, and then the air is as keen and sweet as Alpine air and the sky is blazing blue. The flowers are astonishing. There is purple iris in all the water courses; the banks are alive with periwinkle and tall spikes of antirrhinum; in the woods are endless scillas and rock roses. The other day I walked over a shrubby moorland and there I came upon a great multitude of upstanding clumps of a sort of white heather, rather big and round with the tips and shadows just tinged with pink, and everywhere among these clumps there crept a gentian-blue flower — lithospermum I think it is. And not a soul was there to appreciate this lavish loveliness except myself and another chance wanderer from the beaten track.

Wet or fine, the air of Portugal has a natural happiness in it, and the people of the country should be as happy and prosperous as any people in the world. The country has a magnificent position, and great overseas possessions. Lisbon is the natural port of Europe for South America and West Africa. The olive and the orange and such-like things can be grown here under the best conditions. The very various and great, though largely undeveloped, mineral wealth includes radioactive deposits of worldwide importance. And so forth. There is indeed all the material here for great prosperity. As a matter of fact, I have never seen a less prosperous-looking nation. Great poverty prevails throughout this land. I have never seen anywhere, not even in Russia, working people so ill-clad, so patched and ragged, so manifestly neglected and under-nourished. And there is also a vast amount of preventable disease. The women are old at thirty, bearing children to die; the men are bent at fifty. The poorer houses are hovels, and half the population is illiterate. And yet it is not a low-grade population. It is varied in type and complexion, but there is a conspicuously high proportion of intelligent and interesting faces, and the manners of the people have much of that geniality of the air they breathe.

Why is this country so conspicuously poor? Why are its roads so abominable that even between this prosperous pleasure resort of Estoril and Lisbon, a dozen miles away, an automobile journey is a dangerous adventure? Why are my letters and cables decaying in the Lisbon post-offIce, and why does everyone say that things are going from bad to worse, and hope for such violent remedies as a dictatorship? In no part of Europe is the riddle of European decay posed so plainly as it is here in this setting of windy sunshine and gay colour and natural wealth.

The full answer to that riddle so far as it concerns Portugal would involve a long history. But certain broad operating causes may be noted. All Europe suffers from division, but it is in the smaller countries that the evils of division are most apparent. The smaller the country the nearer the Custom House and the more hampered the trade. Lisbon might be one of the greatest ports of Europe as Beira in Portuguese Africa might be the chief port of South Africa, but for this, that a little way behind each is a national frontier with a

strangulating Custom House. No goods or passengers will endure the present railway journey through Spain and Portugal if they can find another way to the high seas. The railways are necessarily short little railways and they are ineffIcient. And every sort of transport, and indeed every concern depending upon organised labour, is further troubled by another consequence of the sub-division of Europe. The money is unstable. Portugal, like every proud little sovereign State, must, of course, have its own currency. Anything else would be unthinkable to the patriotic Portuguese. But the currency of so small a country is at the mercy of big speculative interests abroad. The recent postal strike turned entirely upon the readjustment of wages to rising prices. That is the common issue in nearly all European labour struggles now, but it produces its acutest conflicts in the weaker countries.

The railways of Portugal are in a very bad condition and the roads are frightful. Everywhere there are the visible evidences of incompetent or corrupt administration. A little country like this, with an unstable currency; cannot keep its popular education up to date; there is not a sufficient reading public therefore to sustain an authoritative Press and literature of political criticism. Ministers are not sufficiently watched. And as to the things that happen in the overseas possessions of Portugal one can hardly learn anything at all from the Portuguese Press. No "public opinion" seems to be watching them at all. There is a distraction of interest to other centres. Portuguese who grow rich in the Portuguese possessions bank and invest their money abroad, chiefly in London; there is a perpetual outgoing of this tribute from the Portuguese empire to the stabler, greater States. Nowhere else in Europe has one so strong a feeling of a country in pawn to capital held abroad.

It seems to me that the full exercise of national sovereignty in Portugal lies at the root of all its present troubles. It is a convenient specimen, so to speak, of the universal European disease: the attempt to treat what are now only parts of a system as though they were still complete wholes. Its absolute independence, instead of securing its people the full benefits of freedom and all the material possibilities of the land, is the very thing that keeps the country dependent upon big international financial and business interests. If Portugal, instead

of standing alone with its colonies to fight the financial and economic forces of the world, were part of a combine of States, acting together politically, financially, and economically, it would be in a far better case than it is at the present time. I have no doubt in my own mind that if Portugal were a free State in a larger union in which sovereignty was sufficiently merged to ensure a common currency, a common inter-State traffic control, free trade at least within the union, common labour conditions, and a common front to the speculative forces that are destroying Europe, her outlook would be vastly different from what it is to-day. She would very speedily cease to be a land of slovenly and increasingly inaccessible loveliness, and her people would no longer be the most lamentably wasted nation in Europe.

And I do not see that such a union is a very remote or improbable thing. A congress of Latin Pressmen has recently been held in Lisbon, and beneath a turbid flow of compliments and flatteries there were many signs of a real and practical recognition of the possibility of, and the enormous material advantages of, a federation of Latin Europe and Latin America. There seems to be a growing recognition in Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, and Latin America of the essential similarity of the Latin civilisation in all this wide patchwork of States. It may lead sooner than English-speaking people expect to practical political co-operation. From the point of view of world civilisation all such agglomerations of States, that will gradually relax the intensity of nationalist concentration, are desirable and welcome developments.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS:. THE PRACTICAL PROBLEM

8.3.1924

If the world had suddenly become rational in November 1918, I suppose there would have been a conference of all the Powers of the world to atone for their common sins and restore their common welfare. But as the world is some thousands of years yet from rational collective conduct we have the treaty of the Victors, the Demi-League of Nations, and all the post-war disorder, waste, and misery that still unfold upon us. The League is unsoundly planned; it stands on rotten foundations; it is poisoned by the delusion that sovereign States are real enduring human things instead of being arrangements entirely provisional and largely hallucinatory, and it does not represent more than a portion of mankind. Still, there is talk of at last bringing in Russia and Germany, and it will be interesting to see how the people who have got hold of it will set about tinkering up an arrangement with the German people and the Russian Soviet States.

In Britain and America there are considerable organisations for the glorification of the League of Nations. In Britain, in the countryside especially, the League of Nations Union has become a social feature, rather like a more liberal Primrose League; it has pleasant meetings, parties, bazaars, tennis tournaments, fêtes with sack races, and so forth, and no parliamentary candidate can afford to neglect it; but it has no ideas worth speaking about of how the problems of a world organisation are to be approached. It just glorifies, simply and loyally. At the beginning of the League of Nations Union a few of us made a desperate attempt to establish a Research Department in the organisation. We felt there were a lot of things we didn't know and that had to be known about the psychology of international co-operation, a lot of questions about scope and method that wanted hammering out, and that the time was short before action was thrust upon us. It was, however, impossible to get anything effective done. Few of our colleagues realised that

there was anything in the business that could not be settled at once by anyone with a good heart and a clear, loud voice; that Research Department faded out in the platitudinous blaze of Lord Grey's great meeting in Westminster; and then Mr. and Mrs. Wilson came to Europe, and upon the wave of their coming this present League of Nations, such as it is, a ramshackle raft of political misconceptions, achieved its magnificent launch. Future generations will study its incredible constitution in a desperate attempt to realise the full mental slovenliness of our times. Personally, I am for a world conference to take it down and build something better, but that is because I have a simple, straightforward mind. What everyone will consider more practicable and more politic will be to alter it bit by bit and worry it round, tortuously and expensively, towards the form of a League of Mankind against Nations, that it ought to have been from the beginning.

Now how are Germany and the Union of Soviet States coming into the League? Are they to come in as Boss States, like the British Empire, with a parcel of accessory faggot votes representing Dominions and Possessions, or are they to come in on a footing with Haiti, the Hedjaz, Abyssinia, and so forth? Will they come in as the equals of Abyssinia? I would like to know the ideas of the Prime Minister upon this question. I do not think the present constitution of the League of Nations allows them to come in on any tolerable terms at all. That being so, it follows that any attempt to bring in either or both of these great masses of people will involve a special conference to reconstruct the League; the League will have to liquidate and reconstruct itself. Both Germany and Russia, that land of new ideas, may have some bold proposals to make. In Britain we have had little but fulsome praise or angry exposure of the League since it was set up at Geneva. In America it has been talked about endlessly, but I do not know if it has been thought about at all.

In France there are signs of an awakening to the needs of a reconstructed League. M. Bertrand, of the *Quotidien*, calls for a League that shall represent peoples and not Governments, and proclaims that the first article of the Republican Credo. The time is at hand when the League might be very beneficially altered, given a better balance, and made more serviceable to mankind.

One cardinal evil could be attacked and at least minimised: the absurd pretence that anything with the legal status of a sovereign State is a nation, a people, a thing with a distinctive soul and an individuality, entitled to full and equal consideration in the counsels of mankind. It is to this we owe the intolerable absurdity that while such highly individualised people as the Scotch and Welsh have no voice as such in the world's affairs, a trumped-up State like the Hedjaz votes and speaks on an equality with Holland or Denmark, and that while one group of black barbarians is solemnly welcomed as Abyssinia (that age-long friend of Poland) the far better educated and altogether more civilised Zulu and Basuto peoples must be represented by a tenth of the coat-tails — it works out at about that, I believe — of Lord Cecil. If nations and races are all to be represented, then India is full of them, from the Veddahs upward; if sovereign independence is the standard, then India has no rightful place at Geneva. But if we recognise fully that the League we need is to serve the purposes not of nations but of mankind, then we shall cease to be embarrassed either logically or practically by political oddities or ethnological rarities.

Let us consider in its crudest form a possible alternative. Should the League of Nations be put upon a population basis and should its members have a card vote after the pattern of a British Trade Union Congress, in which each representative has votes in proportion to the number of workers he represents? This would give an undesirably heavy voting power to the quasi-representatives of great barbaric illiterate populations. In world affairs an illiterate population can have no will because it can have no knowledge. But supposing voting power were given in proportion to the number of literates in a population or to the number of University students. Then we should at least get some sort of approximation to the relative intelligence and power of the various States. And suppose that subject to this definition of voting power every State sent just as few or just as many representatives to the Assembly and appointed them or selected them and distributed its votes among them as it thought fit. And suppose the council were appointed, not by nations, but indifferently by the vote of the Assembly. Then at Geneva we should really be getting towards something like a representation of the

civilisation of the world or of the civilisation of as much of the world as took part in it. We really should have a body with authority behind it, capable of handling something more than the petty arbitrations and the necessary small arrangements of international affairs, of which the present propagandists of the League of Nations make such boasts.

It is amazing how unable people seem to be to realise the full danger of an assembly entirely dominated by the idea of competitive nationalism, and the urgent necessity of getting away from that idea, however great the mental exertion required. For suppose presently Mr. MacDonald is successful in getting in Russia and Germany, and suppose the League begins to handle such larger questions as disarmament, European currency, tariffs, and so forth, then just as the interests involved become greater, so much the more nationalist will the spirit of the delegates and representatives become. The League gatherings under the present constitution will certainly become battlegrounds of great nationalist interests. The dear little smaller States will be drawn into groups and alliances about the greater States. They will not be able to help themselves. Their votes will be cowed and bullied or bribed votes. So long as the members go to Geneva to represent not mankind but national Governments they will go there in a diplomatic, bargaining, and competitive spirit. There will develop a pro-French or pro-British group, and an anti-French or anti-British group; the alliances and antagonisms of another great war may easily work themselves out upon the floor of the League gatherings. That all the nations of Europe and under European influence may have been got to meet in Geneva will in itself be no more a guarantee of peace than was the meeting of the United States Congress before the election of President Lincoln a guarantee of peace in America. It is a matter of supreme importance to the whole world that before it is too late this body which we now call the League of Nations should be denationalised and put upon a cosmopolitan basis.

THE LABOUR PARTY ON TRIAL:. THE FOLLY OF THE FIVE CRUISERS

15.3.1924

I HAVE recently been watching British politics from a rather interesting angle; I have been seeing Britain through Latin eyes from the Portuguese corner of Europe. Events come to me generally in this order. First the Lisbon *Diario des Noticias* comes in with my coffee; next day the French *Quotidien* arrives before lunch and the Italian *Secolo* at dinner, and there is usually another twenty-four hours before a bundle of London papers comes to hand. The Paris *Daily Mail* or the *Action Française* may come in neck and neck with the *Quotidien*, but I don't go out of my way to see them. I get no American papers at all. In this perspective the death of Dr. Theophilo Braga, a sort of Frederic Harrison, who was the first President of the Portuguese Republic, and a congress of Latin Pressmen in Lisbon take on the importance of considerable international events, and all that looms largest in the London *Times* or the American Press undergoes a compression that amounts at times to complete effacement. That stupid outrage upon civilisation, the deportation of Miguel de Unamuno, the great rector of the University of Salamanca, to the Canary-Islands because of his disrespect for the Spanish monarchy and dictatorship gets a large Press in all these Latin countries. It matters to them. It ought to matter to every civilised man. The petroleum scandals in the United States get a rather muddled attention; every country has the oil scandals it deserves; and there were important articles upon the death of President Wilson. In its day the coming of the League of Nations was a great event. Otherwise there has been very little notice either of the United States or the overseas Empire of Britain. America means Brazil, and "overseas" Angola.

The Latin mind has always inclined to be sceptical and cynical about the League of Nations. Was it Anglo-Saxon practicality or Anglo-Saxon hypocrisy behind this new thing? Did the Americans and British mean what the League seemed to mean, or was it just

another of their deep inexplicable manoeuvres? The doubts have long since carried the day. The Paris *Quotidien* supports the League, indeed, but it concerns itself very little about the criticism or creative reconstruction of the League, as it would do if it regarded the concern as a working reality. It treats the whole business as a sort of ethical deep breathing — good chiefly for the soul. When it refers to it, a note of piety comes into its style.

The arrival of a Labour Government in Britain was a matter for lively attention in all these Latin lands. Liberal thinkers everywhere welcomed it with a hopefulness that was only very faintly tainted by suspicion. Here, perhaps, was a new thing, a break in the age-long British tradition of heavy national selfishness and overbearing self-righteousness. Bits of election addresses, Labour manifestos, and so forth, had filled up columns and carried headlines in every paper from Oporto to Fiume and from Mexico to Buenos Aires. This Labour stood for a reconstituted League of Nations, with wider powers; it stood for a generous treatment of Russia and Germany; it stood for disarmament; it stood for a universal retrenchment of military and naval expenditure and a surcease of grabbing and exploitation. Once again, just as with the League of Nations, the Latin Press betrayed the peculiar power which the great English-speaking community might and could exercise, of putting over broad political ideas to the world at large. There is a natural reciprocity between the mind of the Latin community and ours; it is far more delicately critical and far less rudely creative. We can do much to sustain or destroy its faith. It can do much to clarify our ideas.

The first utterances of the new Government were scanned with exceptional closeness; the gestures of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald were watched with ten times the attention that was ever given to Mr. Baldwin's. The prompt recognition of Russia was widely approved of; the rather empty politenesses towards M. Poincaré were taken as evidence of an essential goodness of heart and a desire to give him a fair chance — and then came this business of the cruisers. It would be hard to exaggerate its evil effect. The first I saw of it was in the Lisbon morning paper. The paragraph was headed "Signor MacDonald, Militarist," and the statement was made without any qualification that the Labour Government was to lay down the keels

of five new cruisers forthwith. It seemed incredible. Followed the French and Italian papers. The Italians were derisive at this footnote to the disarmament conference at Rome, and the French clamoured for six cruisers in reply to the British "challenge." The *Quotidien* was disappointed but not surprised. The caricaturists, who do so much in the Latin countries to personify the character of nations and peoples, got to work, and are still at work, rubbing in this last revelation of the British soul. One discerned the sensitive, the irritable Latin mind sick with disgust and bitterly ashamed of itself for its folly in supposing for a moment that the Labour programme was anything more than electioneering flummery. "Labour" was just a fine name for a group of British politicians as dishonest, as basely "patriotic," as dangerous to the welfare of Europe as any other group.

Never has there been so gross, so stupid and needless a sacrifice of moral capital in international relations. I do not see how Mr. Ramsay MacDonald can ever restore the provisional credit the liberal thought of the Latin States had accorded him. The guns of those five cruisers, though not one of them ever materialise and though they will certainly prove obsolete weapons before they can ever be finished, will have blown the prestige of the British Labour Government as a possible European peacemaker to smithereens.

I will confess I shared this immense disillusionment. As one who had written and spoken to the text of the Labour programme at the last general election, as one who had explained that the Labour Party at least would have the courage for disarmament and a better use for the taxpayers' money than battleship building, I did my best to suspend my judgment until the London newspapers came to hand with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's speech upon this issue. It seemed impossible that he could have gone the complete Amery he has done. I could not believe that he would not have realised that this thing his Government has done was not a mere parochial extravagance but an act of intense international significance. I expected to find some explanations, some palliations, some apology, that could be put before the foreign observer. I found a speech — the rottenest Old Parliamentary Hand could not have made a more parliamentary speech. It was in two parts: the first part was an ingenious quibble about these ships being merely the replacement of "wastage" — as

though the naval equipment of a country was a constant thing that had to be kept up to a standard mark instead of being an incessantly variable thing — and the second was a scarcely veiled admission that the building of these unnecessary and provocative ships was a bribe to the labour in the dockyard constituencies. There was not a word to anticipate the inevitable interpretation of the act abroad; there was not an indication on the part of this astonishing Foreign Minister that the affair would even be observed abroad.

One does not buy a weapon without an enemy in view, and I am altogether at a loss to see what enemy Mr. MacDonald has in view — unless it is the Conservative candidates in the shipbuilding constituencies. Does he think he may have to fight France or Italy or Japan or the United States? Those five cruisers will be no good in a war with France; we should have to tuck them away somewhere and put patrols of submarine chasers to take care of them. In a war between France and Britain the mutual suicide, so to speak, would be achieved through the air. The cruisers would hardly be of more use against Italy. It is Italy, however, which is likely to be most estranged by the thought of them. Italy or Japan. Is there a ghost of a chance of a war with either the United States or Japan? It is our excellent custom to defer to the United States, and we always shall. This leaves Japan.

Can anything but the blackest folly bring us into a conflict with Japan except on some issue which would put the United States on our side?

These cruisers are to cost five million pounds — or more if, failing the Capital Levy, Britain is forced to inflation — and they are to give employment to some few thousands of men. Meanwhile I gather that the educational clauses of that magnificent Labour programme which was to have kept the next generation at school (and off the crowded labour market) until it reached the age of sixteen are to be crippled — a la Fisher — for want of funds.

The more Parliament changes, I perceive, the more it is the same thing. It is organised for politicians by politicians; it is elected so stupidly that the statesman wilts into the politician so soon as he breathes its air. He ceases to see beyond the division lobby and the dockyard vote. If laying down cruisers is the chief business of

government and the chief end of taxation, I would rather, on the whole, see Mr. Amery spending my money than Mr. Ammon.

DICTATORS OR POLITICIANS?. THE DILEMMA OF CIVILISATION

22.3.1924

The drift towards dictatorships in many of the European countries has been very marked in the last few years. The mental distress and physical discomforts arising out of the steady process of financial, social, and economic decay in the tangle of nationalist States in Europe, have liberated a lively and widespread discontent with the methods of representative government. The legal way and the parliamentary way has seemed too long, tedious, and disingenuous for the urgent needs of the times. In Italy and Spain, in Hungary and Germany, we have had the complete dictatorship; the shadow of a dictatorship has fallen upon the French outlook. There has been an outbreak of bosses, strong men, tyrants after the Greek pattern, statesmen with special powers, suspensions of the constitution and so forth, across the entire European stage.

To a certain small extent this may be due to a rebellion of ordinary common-sense people against the absurdity of committees doing one-man jobs. In America the disposition to give great powers to mayors and prominent public servants — a disposition which Mr. Belloc calls, absurdly enough, a disposition to "monarchy," and makes out to be a fundamental difference between Americans and Europeans — is probably due mainly to the perception of the need for a single head and a free hand in many complicated jobs. But the job is defined, and the term of power is defined. That concentration of ad hoc powers in a single competent responsible person is of course a legitimate and most hopeful development of democratic method. It is no more "monarchy" than the power of a judge is monarchy. But the drift in Europe, in Germany, and the Latin countries generally is to a general and not to a specific free hand. The man is there not to do this or that specified thing but to take the whole power of the State out of the hands of the politicians. Russia is a special case; the dictator there is the ghost of Karl Marx acting through the Communist Party. But Russia is as far from

parliamentary democracy as any country in the world. Parliamentary democracy did for a brief interval appear in Russia, but it was as suitable wear for that country at its present phase of education as a silk hat for a whale.

Why have all these dictatorships sprung up? Why has there been this decline of faith throughout the world in the Anglo-Saxon device of parliamentary government? Every intelligent person must know that this is a world of men and not supermen, and every lapse to a dictatorship implies a belief in a superman. Every year of a dictatorship diminishes the autonomous vitality of a community, no dictatorship is proof against the degeneration of the dictator through impunity and presumption, and no dictator has ever provided an eJ05cient successor. Yet we find the peoples of important European countries acquiescing in Mussolinis, Riveras, and the like, and powerful minorities in almost every European State asking for similar dictatorships. It is not that they are blind to the defects of dictatorships, but that they dislike parliamentary government more. A dictator may carry on a Government roughly and dangerously, but in many cases Parliaments have failed to carry on government at all.

English-speaking peoples are beginning to realise that what they call "democracy" may not be a universal panacea, and that Parliamentary and Congressional government as it flourished in the nineteenth century with two parties and a choice for the elector limited to two party hacks, instead of being a method of universal validity and altogether perfect, was a temporarily convenient method of government for a fairly homogeneous dominant middle class living under apparently stable conditions. Social developments in Western Europe evolved this class throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a national mentality was evolved concurrently. Transferred to alien soils, parliamentary institutions wilt or become weedy. And it is extremely doubtful whether in Britain, that mother of Parliaments, it is possible for the parliamentary machine to work now except in a very hectic and unsatisfactory way, unless it undergoes extensive adaptations to meet the great financial, economic, and social stresses that have still to try the British community. In a previous paper I have discussed the electoral reforms whereby Parliament or Congress could be made

really representative of the national mind, would cease to be an arena for a stupid and boring party conflict, and would become a smaller assembly, a working council, alive throughout, appointing and criticising the various Ministries. But a reform of representative methods is not in itself a sufficient solution to our problem. A graver and profounder weakness both of the American and British community at the present time is the incoherence and diffuseness of public opinion. Great changes in the range and material of economic life during the last quarter of a century and the financial earthquakes that have followed the war have shattered the old homogeneous and dominant middle-class stratum on both sides of the Atlantic. That was the reservoir of public opinion, and there is nothing equivalent on the new scale to replace it. There have been bold extensions of the franchise in Britain to great classes of inexperienced and inattentive voters; Mr. Adamson's Bill has brought us within sight of universal suffrage for every man and woman over twenty-one; but there has been no development of political education upon the same scale. Probably a third of the British voting mass after these additions — seven millions, say — will be too indifferent to political issues to vote at all. A half, another ten or eleven millions, will vote for trivial or silly reasons, and will certainly never take the slightest trouble to sustain the Parliament it has elected. Politically they will accept anything they get. They have still to learn to consider politics seriously. There remains about a sixth of the British electorate; less than five millions, a miscellany of every sort of opinion and drawn from every class, with this much in common, that it cares enough about politics to fight about them if necessary. But it is not this sixth but the half that the vote-hunting politician need consider. And it is not the half but some sections of the sixth which may presently resort to illegal methods to achieve its ends.

Are we so remote and secure from the violent phase in Britain as people are apt to suppose? Can Britain go on indefinitely with a crazy electoral method that leaves masses of people thwarted and masses indifferent, and that leaves the mandate of any Government ambiguous? The present Government picks its precarious way amidst issues of the most inflammatory sort. The financial difficulty is not tackled; the Capital Levy is shelved for the time, and we do not know

whether the method of taxing and more or less expropriating large bulks of property only, or the method of taxing every creditor, great or small, down to the penny of credit in the beggar woman's hand, is to be followed. One or other it must be. The first course will evoke the prompt resistance of the Fascist element in the Tory Party. Since the great days of the gun-running by Carson and F.E. in Ulster and the Curragh Pronunciamento, the Tories have been infected with dreams of reactionary illegalities. Army people and so forth are drenched with such stuff. They lost Ireland by it, but they are quite capable of setting about to lose England by the same methods. But though the Tory elements in British life might easily attempt forcible resistance to parliamentary socialisation, they are far too unintelligent to face the alternative of inflation, which will certainly produce just such conditions as will promote a drift towards revolution from the Communist end.... Violence from either side means ultimately dictatorship and the opening phase of a process of disorder and collapse for the entire British system. Between the horns of this dilemma the existing British system has still a few years left in which to modernise, enlarge, and clean its parliamentary methods and to educate its masses to political efficiency.

YOUTH AND THE VOTE:. THE REJUVENESCENCE OF THE WORLD

29.3.1924

The recent discussion of the extension of the British parliamentary suffrage has been an amusing and instructive display. The finer parts of the debate upon Mr. Adamson's Bill were a little overshadowed in the Press by the Duchess of Atholl's possibly exaggerated objection to the proposed enfranchisement of several hundred travelling tinkers, and her nightmare of all the women in the country voting down all the men in the country upon some unexpected issue. I must confess that I am not very much interested by the question whether there are to be slight traces of tinker in the next election or not, and the end of the world by collision with some other planet seems a far less remote possibility to me than the lining up of the two separate sexes in flat opposition to each other. But what did interest me was to note that everyone seemed to have caught up his or her opinion just anyhow, and worn it much as people wear false noses at a carnival, and that in the whole ridiculous fray there was no apparent perception of any general reason why some people should vote and not others. I could not find any evidence that a single member had asked himself why people had to vote at all, whether it was a privilege or a duty to vote, and what were the proper qualifications or just claims of a voter.

Mostly, I don't think they had ever asked themselves any such questions. Members of Parliament don't think about questions of that kind. They seem to think very little about anything of importance in the world, so much of their time is spent in division lobbies and loafing and gossiping about the House of Commons; but what attention they do give to franchise and electoral method is usually given in close consultation with a parliamentary agent, who is far from the spirit of scientific truth.

Let us try and put the question on rather broader foundations than the House succeeded in doing. And, to begin with, let us consider whether the age of twenty-one is a sensible age at which to graduate

a citizen as voter. Sir Sydney Russell-Wells and Sir Martin Conway, two University members, very properly declared it was not. With that we can well agree. Twenty-one marks no natural epoch in the mental and moral life of either man or woman. It is too old for adolescence and too young for any other phase. Twenty-one is a magic compound of seven and three, but nowadays we do not believe very much in the magic of numbers. The reasons why twenty-one was made the "coming-of-age" are lost in the mists of antiquity. But why these two gentlemen should propose therefore to make five-and-twenty the minimum age for a voter of either sex is not very clear. Sir Martin Conway, indeed, warmed up to a luscious eloquence about "woman's great flowering time." The young woman between twenty-one and twenty-five "should have her eye upon the glory of life," and so forth. Even if this were so, it is a little hard to understand the application of the limit to men. Apparently the young man is to undergo a sort of political "couvade" during these rich years, and think sympathetically about babies. As a matter of fact, lots of women far over twenty-five have not yet reached these preoccupations; it would, indeed, be highly improper for most of these below that limit to engage their minds in this fashion, since the majority do not marry until close upon twenty-five, and many much later. The twenty-fifth birthday is, indeed, no more a natural epoch for woman or man than the twenty-first, and Sir Martin Conway's argument was just a sample of the careless nonsense people talk on these important questions.

But if neither twenty-five nor twenty-one is a real natural division line between the human being capable of citizenship and the junior, the natural minor, where shall we draw that line? I would suggest that we draw it at the age when the individual's education comes to an end. Education, we are assured, is to prepare the individual for citizenship. When a State turns its young people out of its schools into the streets to seek employment and toil for the community, it tacitly declares that their preparation for citizenship is at an end. If they are not prepared for citizenship they should not be turned out. If they are, then they ought to go on at once to the most stimulating exercise of the rights of citizenship, and vote before they forget their lessons in history and geography and economics and so forth. Why

should they have to wait for years, forgetting nearly every general idea they have learnt before the vote comes to rouse them? But the reader will object that this means giving the vote to children of fourteen or indeed in some American States to children even younger. I submit that is no disproof of the principle I have laid down, but only a disqualification of the shocking inefficiency of the educational systems of the English-speaking world. We have no right to cheat our young people out of their votes because we are defrauding them of the best part of their education.

I am one of those people who believe that the minimum age at which whole-time general education should cease is sixteen, and that for at least two years more education in some form, a technical or industrial training at least, associated perhaps with productive employment, and a continuation of the general intellectual work should be given. That would make eighteen the boundary between tutelage and complete responsible citizenship. And to that age I am willing and anxious to see the franchise extended. Education and the franchise are correlated questions, and I do not believe a community can be in a sound state of political organisation until education has moved up and the vote moved down the scale of age to this meeting-point.

Let us consider first the justice of this. Think what we thrust upon the youth of eighteen in our communities. We voters, a good third of us above military age, will treat him as citizen enough to undergo the utmost fatigues and horrors of war, and to be maimed and to die for us, and the girl of fourteen (is it?) may marry, and the girl of sixteen may commit herself to dishonour, and either man or girl may toil in factory or foundry. All that we put upon them. We force them by need and circumstance to forgo the better part of their education, to subdue all the wide and wonderful imaginations of these opening years, and we oblige them to contribute to the wealth of the State in unattractive work. But they may have no voice in matters in general until they are thoroughly broken in. I can see a sort of expediency in disenfranchising unsuccessful people after forty or so, they are dull and cowed by that time and will bring little to the polls but their fears and inferiorities. But why gag the young for three of their most vivid years?

And next there is to be considered the benefit to the individual citizen of stepping straight from learning to responsibility. He will be brought into conscious and effective relationship with political and industrial institutions at the same time; he will face them as two aspects of one thing just when the spirit of inquiry is strongest in him. And such of the younger women who are waking up to what Sir Martin Conway calls the "glory of life" will realise that childbearing is a thing of issues wider than the fireside; they will be called upon to think of war and education and the whole future in the very time when the continuity of life is brought most effectively before their minds. What sort of a world, what sort of political process can Sir Martin be thinking about when he suggests that a vision of the glory of life ought to disqualify a voter?

And finally let us consider the benefit to the country and the world at large of a more youthful electorate. To bring in voters in their nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first years will be to bring in three million and more fresh minds, all unsettled as yet, all facing the world adventurously. They will be a wholesome counterweight to the grudging ratepayer, the small shopkeeper, the rentier, the anxious and hopeless and fearful multitude of the unsuccessful and defensive middle-aged, the great supporters of "Anti-Waste" campaigns, "safety" armaments, policies of "security," and all sorts of patriotic cowardice. These elder folk think of the next quarter day or the next year; it is all that interests them; they will be dead soon and they want to shuffle along as comfortably and with as little troublesome novelty as possible until then. The interests of the youth of eighteen reach forward half a century and they may work with a reasonable hope of a better world for themselves as well as their children. They may have the more wisdom for the very reason that they have acquired less worldly discretion. And for all of us who believe that education is already touched by a new spirit and that it is surely being made better, the younger the age of enfranchisement the greater our hopes of an early effect of the new education upon the affairs of mankind.

"Universal education up to eighteen, universal enfranchisement at eighteen"; along that line lies our path to a real civilisation. Along that path we shall go as the breath of a new generation blows into

Congress and Parliament and these assemblies cease to be the gatherings of political botchers and tinkers representing the broken spirit and curtailed desires of a forty-year-old electorate. For round about forty must be the average age of the present-day British elector.

OLIVE BRANCHES OF STEEL:. SHOULD THE ANGELS OF PEACE CARRY BOMBS?

5.4.1924

The will for peace is futile without the courage to disarm. I would like to have that proposition printed in large letters and put up at all the meetings of the British League of Nations Union, just to see what the worthy practitioners in easy optimism who fill these gatherings would make of it. I doubt if half the kindly idealists who support the League of Nations in Britain and America are prepared for any effectual disarmament of their own countries. For others — yes; but not for their own dear land.

Since the refusal of France even to discuss land disarmament or the question of submarines at Washington I have kept up a pretty steady fire of disagreeable allusions to France. I have sung and sung again, with variations and amplifications, my little refrain about Senegalese and Submarines in — quite a number of journals. But France has her excuses, the next election may release her from the Bloc National and the Armament firms to the free exercise of international virtue, and after all virtue should begin at home. Are not both the United States and the British Empire, considered in the role of peace-seeking States, overarmed? The general will of all the English-speaking communities is, we all know and say and repeat, for an enduring world peace. But even a savage understands that he must drop and leave his weapons and hold up innocent hands before he can get to honest peace talk.

Consider a crude form of the issue. Suppose the United States and the British Empire got together and disarmed completely, suppose they retained the merest police force and placed all the rest of their joint navies at the disposal of an international council, on which they would have an adequate representation of course, what would happen? There would be an immediate reduction of public expenditure and so much relief of economic life from taxation. Would anything else happen? Would Japan suddenly fling herself upon California, Italy seize Malta and Egypt, the Red Army pour

down into India, or France destroy London? Does anyone — unless it be my dear old friends Mr. Henry Arthur Jones and Mr. Leo Maxse — believe any of these things would happen? Or anything of the sort?

As a matter of fact we have France now, at the present time, so much more powerfully equipped in the air than Britain and with the British anti-aircraft establishment so reduced, that she could, if she wished to do so and dared to do so, smash up London and put most of the English naval and commercial ports out of action before any really effective counterstroke could be made. There has been a powerful Press campaign in France against Britain, and there is plenty of hostile feeling there. Led by a propagandist Press a great multitude of Frenchmen really believe that the favourite occupation of the English-speaking peoples is buying francs at one price in order to sell them at a lower one. Nevertheless, that attack doesn't come and it never will come. The temporary satisfaction would be so poor that it would not balance the disagreeable anticipation of an ultimate revenge. Moreover, the immediate financial and economic collapse both of France and Britain would manifestly ensue. Air warfare and poison gas have so enhanced the destructiveness of war and made it so inconclusive, and France and Britain are so close together now and so accessible one to the other, that they have to face the fact — an annoying fact for every true patriot — that they can no longer regard war as a means of settling even their worst differences. As well think of settling a dispute between two next-door neighbours by burning both their houses and massacring all the inmates. It really does not matter now which of the two Powers is the stronger on land or sea. It is a consideration of no practical value whatever between them.

And just as an attack of France upon Britain is unthinkable at the present time, although all the military advantage lies at present with France, so, too, any attack upon the vast joint territories of the United States and the British Empire, though they neither of them had a battleship in commission nor a ton of explosive ready, would be an absurd proposition. There is no other Power on earth that could do it to any profit at all, and without the ultimate certainty of a crushing rearmament and revenge. It would be like a tiger-cat trying to kill

and eat an elephant. In all the world now there are only four countries capable of starting-in at complete first-class modern warfare: Britain, France, Japan, and the United States. Italy has neither the coal nor the ore necessary for so heavy an enterprise; the hairiest, loudest Fascisti in the world will not make up for that; and Russia has not the industrial plant for the necessary munitions of aggression. She has vast resisting power, as ever, but no attacking power. All the other countries of the world, if they fight nowadays, must fight with the munitions and loans the four possible belligerents grant them. These four countries therefore, of themselves, could inaugurate a world peace; and the interests of their peoples, as distinguished from the armament interests, urgently demand a secure world peace. The difficulty is to begin. The Press of each of the armament-capable four is closely interwoven with the armament profiteers, and the Press of either country will begin a campaign of panic about what the other three are doing directly there is any serious possibility of relaxed armament anywhere. Since the United States and Britain are easily first in preaching peace and arbitration to the world, I suggest that it is for them to set the example and begin. But at the first intimations of a serious abandonment of "preparedness" Lord Rothermere and his American equivalents — if there are equivalents of Lord Rothermere in America — will see to it that the nervous householder dreams of aeroplanes coming down the chimney and submarines coming up the sink, and wakes gibbering of "security" like a *Matin*-soaked French patriot.

And most of the tremendous outfit we English-speaking peoples carry isn't even good for war. It is like a battle-axe in a tramcar, a terrifying offensive affair, but not really effective in a fight at close quarters. The time when war was a generalised thing is past. You can no longer have an army or navy that goes anywhere and does everything. For Britain to fight France, or Japan, or the United States, or Russia, or Italy, demands in each case a different sort of warfare, with different methods and different appliances. British battleships camouflaged as cruisers and docks for them half-way round the earth would be no good against Russia or Italy, and very little use against France. Against Japan they would be good for her submarines to chase and blockade while our submarines chased and blockaded the

Japanese warships. A big air force, again, would be little use against the United States or Japan, Considered in relation to any possible specific war they may have to wage, the present war establishments of the great belligerent Powers, the miscellaneous elaborate material that the armament people and their unimaginative army traditions have induced them to buy are as likely to be efficient as the equipment of the White Knight in Alice in Wonderland. The methods and objectives and so forth of any next war that may surprise the politicians (just as children are surprised by fires when they play with matches), conducted by the sort of soldiers we possess and with the stuff they will handle as ‘‘equipment,” will certainly be more discursive and silly and ineffective even than those great pushes and counter-attacks and raids and bombings and so forth of the last great war, and in their inconclusive way infinitely more destructive.

But if these preposterous armaments are unlikely to be conclusive in warfare, they do at any rate block the way very effectively to any reorganisation of the world for peace. You can’t make love in armour. All this lumpish preparedness keeps the atmosphere of human life unwholesome; it prevents the settlement by any frank concerted action of the tariff conflicts, financial squabbles, currency annoyance, and mutual economic injuries that are rapidly destroying the present social system. Every big nation comes into such discussions an implicit bully. The nations have to learn the same lessons that individuals learnt in the middle ages, they have to learn not to bear arms even in the company of those who do. In the middle ages, when the loving-cup went round, one’s neighbour stood as one drank to protect one’s back from the assassin’s knife. At last some reckless souls took heart to sit and drink and trust their fellow men. Other desperate spirits left their weapons at home — and survived. But the nations are still half-way back to barbarism. Our cartoonists draw Uncle Sam and John Bull as decent peaceable everyday citizens. They flatter our countries. Really the Great Powers should be drawn as completely canned warriors with their wary eyes and noses just peeping out of their preparedness. And this in spite of the fact that the only serious danger to either is that the weight and clumsiness of this silly equipment and of the worldwide distrust it

produces will undermine his business and his national health altogether.

THE CASE OF UNAMUNO:. THE FEEBLE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS

12.4.1924

There is nothing greater in the world of men than thought. Science, literature, and art; what other glories has man? And yet the company of men of science and letters and art forms but the feeblest of republic throughout the world, is insignificant socially and politically, and wins only posthumous respect.

A time may come when men will have a better sense of the values of things, and when the creative experimenter and writer and artist will be accorded something of the respect and something of the immunity we now give to royalties with the urbanity of second-rate waiters or the pluck of second-rate jockeys, and to those casual possessors of disproportionate spending power or disproportionate impudence, our social leaders. But that day when the philosopher, or the discoverer, or the great artist will be King, when there will be no recognised nobility but the nobility of the mind, is still far away. Perhaps it will never come. Perhaps there is a permanent necessity in our natures, requiring us to exalt the common qualities we share and understand and to contemn rare gifts. King Carnival, with his vast nose and goggling eyes, is the most real, most natural of all human kings, because he is frankly grotesque, a common creature raised up and magnified. Such kings and princes, such popular heroes and fashionable leaders as we have, assist us in our self-protective struggle against the insupportable suspicion that we lack distinctive quality. We can tell ourselves that they are in no way different from us except that they are luckier. But it tortures our self-esteem to honour those who have qualities we cannot pretend to possess. That is why we love to think of the man of science as a foolish, absent-minded thing with spectacles and a butterfly-net, and listen so greedily to rumours of vice and wickedness in men of genius. There may be a profound instinctive reasonableness in this acceptance of the gift and this rejection of the giver. Ingratitude is better for the common man than servility. If we did not distrust and restrain the

exceptional people in the world, they might run away from us or run away with us, until we became no more than animals under direction and control. A king is the surest protection against regal personalities and an aristocracy against any rule of the best.

The exceptional men — because they are exceptional men — have no flock instinct to hold them together for mutual protection against the crowd and its leaders. Nearly all men of distinctive gifts are jealous. They are driven by an inner necessity to assert their own special quality against the aggressive special qualities of their fellows. There is little generosity when men of science or literary and artistic men talk of one another. Their mission is to do the thing they have to do and not be good fellows with one another. When one considers this, one may be reconciled to much egoism and lack of gregariousness in the man of intellectual gifts and yet at times one may be startled by some reminder of the extreme moral disintegration which is the normal state of the ‘‘republics” of science and art and letters. I recall my own amazement at the sudden outbreak of nationalism on the part of the men of science of all countries at the beginning of the war, and still more so at the reluctance with which they came together after the armistice, when they had had four years to think it over. When I went to the secretary of the Royal Society in 1920 and told him of the poverty of such great men as Pavlov in Petersburg and of the urgent need of the Russian men of science for Western publications and for instruments and material kept out by our blockade, I thought the society would take up the matter forthwith as a simple obvious duty. It did nothing of the sort. It was argued that Pavlov and the others ought to have come out of Russia as white refugees, and that a body adorned with all the dukes and royal princes of Great Britain had other things to consider than mere protection of research in the world. The Royal Society was indeed, I found, not so much a society for the promotion and exaltation of science, as a society of scientific men for mutual restraint.

And now in the scandalous case of Don Miguel Unamuno comes a fresh instance of the lack of any feeling of solidarity among the world’s intellectuals. Here is a great writer and professor, the ex-Rector of the University of Salamanca, a man of undisputed pre-

eminence. He is a professor of classical learning: not one of the scientific or sociological fellows. He utters some lucid and deserved reproofs to the King of Spain. As all the world knows, the King of Spain has consented to, and possibly connived at, the illegal usurpation of his Government by a military junta with a dictator of straw, a sham Mussolini, Primo de Rivera. It is a dull, bad Government, chiefly concerned with the suppression of opinion and the entirely incompetent maintenance of an endless war with the Moors. For if Spanish generals have at times to display the backs of their brilliant uniforms to the Moors, they can at least keep a brave overbearing front towards Spain. No country was ever in such need of drastic public criticism as Spain at the present time. But so soon as Don Unamuno speaks plainly, he is seized and sent without trial to the Canary Islands, away from his books, his students, and all contact with the current activities of mankind. It is a purely arbitrary act. There is not even an appeal to some pseudo-academic court. It is done on the authority of the dull imitation who is failing to be the Spanish Mussolini. An oaf in uniform has struck a great teacher on the mouth and silenced him. In recent times in Europe there has never been so plain and violent a challenge to the freedom and honour of the intellectual world.

What protest has there been from that world? One might have expected vigorous outcries on behalf of Salamanca from Oxford and Cambridge, from London and the British Academy, from Harvard and Yale and Chicago, and the hundred and one universities and colleges of North and South America, an immense outbreak of indignation. I have heard of scarcely any. From the University of Paris there has been a fairly representative protest, and Lisbon has spoken. I have seen a few paragraphs in the highbrow weeklies of Britain and America. But the intellectual workers of our English-speaking world seem as a whole to have been as little affected by this particular exploit of the King of Spain's Dictator as a flock of grazing sheep by the death of one of its number. So far as they are concerned he may shut up all the Universities of Spain and maroon their entire staffs. Their sense of any community of interests among the Universities of the world seems to be almost completely lacking. The ordinary miner or transport worker has much to teach the

university professor in the matter of occupational self-respect.

Of course, both in England and America in the last dozen years or so there have been rather similar cases to this crowning outrage of vulgar force upon mind. There was the case of Mr. Bertrand Russell, for example, during the war, and in America it is inadvisable for professors of economics and social science to lean too visibly towards collectivism. And Mr. William Jennings Bryan knows all about creation and incites backward States to dismiss teachers of biology who teach contrary to the beliefs of this favoured confidant of the Deity. Perhaps an uneasy consciousness of such facts has hampered the English-speaking communities in this affair. Meanwhile Don Miguel Unamuno studies the seascapes of the Canary Islands, and, so far as his opinion of King Alfonso goes, he is restricted to conversation with the islanders.

And if by any chance King Alfonso should visit England and go to Oxford or Cambridge, all the dons and deans and heads would put on their fullest plumage to bow and scrape to him.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ANATOLE FRANCE. ON HIS EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

(Written as the English Contribution to a Booklet Of Congratulation)

19.5.1924

Cher Maître, — You write for the whole world, and the whole world salutes you on this happy occasion of your eightieth birthday. You are eighty years old, and yet it seemed to me a little time ago, when I paid my personal homage to you and found you, as ever, smiling, friendly, interested, and amused, that you were still untouched by age. And indeed what has age to do with you, who are already immortal, staying on here in the pleasant land of France for a time, but having made for yourself a sure habitation among that great company of writers already in Elysium who talk to youth with the freshness of youth, and to all with a living wisdom, now and for centuries to come? Millions of readers yet unborn will grow up to find in you a liberator, a choice companion, a very dear friend. We your contemporaries are only the first-comers of your following, and of those who will love and honour your name.

We writers of England are not so much a body of writers as a cloud; we have no Academy to represent us, and no acknowledged head, and so almost by chance it falls to me, as it might have fallen to others more distinguished and deserving, to tell you of your place in the hearts and minds of the English-speaking world. All of us who can do so read you in your inimitable French, but it may not be amiss to say a word or two of the readers you have outside the community of French readers, outside that great cosmopolitan France of the mind. You have been, I think, almost completely translated into English, and in England and America there are scores of thousands who know you only in your English guise. All translations are made at a loss, but most of your translators have served you honestly and some have served you well, and you are so rich that you can pay the high tariff between our languages and still carry over enough to entrance and win fine minds. All the cultured and successful people

of the world know you by necessity, and send homage to you. But I think I understand you well enough to be assured that even more than such salutations you will value the fact that there are miner lads in Scotland, railway workers in England, London clerks, and provincial shopmen, who know no more than a few hundred words of French, and yet whose faces flush and brighten at your name, workers struggling against a thousand disadvantages to possess their souls, to whom you have brought the priceless gifts of happiness and release and inspiration. I wish I could steal and send you a well-thumbed copy of an English translation of *Thaïs* or *L'Île des Pingouins* from the shelves of some English public library in evidence of this outer empire of your mind.

As spokesman for your English-speaking readers, it is natural for me to dwell upon the ease with which you wear an English costume. In many respects you are intensely French: French after the manner of the greatness of France, the France of liberty, equality, and world fraternity. But you transcend all narrow and nationalist limitations. In the past, before the great wars of the Napoleonic period, the English and French had not that sense of difference, that disposition to antagonistic contrasts, too frequently evident to-day. Intellectually our communities were more closely interwoven. Men remembered then how the Normans linked us; how Burgundian and Englishman were sturdy allies; how Briton and Breton had a common past, and how close were Frank and Fleming to the Anglo-Saxon stock. We Normans and Saxons and Franks and Flemings and Scots and Burgundians and Gascons and Angevins built our Gothic cathedrals in brotherly competition, and our knights and bowmen and princes and bishops bickered and went to and fro. Our literatures sprang from common roots and intertwined, and were continually grafted and re-grafted one upon the other. No Englishman finds anything essentially foreign in Rabelais and Montaigne; they are in the same company as Swift and Sterne, as to-day Voltaire almost lives again in Shaw. Such contemporary English writers as Belloc and Chesterton would be seen plainly for Frenchmen if they wrote in French. And we do not find in you anything foreign to our spirit and our humour. Our response to you is a kindred response. You probably have far more imitators in Britain and America than you have in all the Latin

countries of the world. Some of the most promising of the newer American writers are clearly indebted to you. There are many of us writers of English — and some of these not the least among us — to whom it would be the sweetest praise to be likened to Anatole France. In the end it may be found that you have exerted an influence upon our English literature even greater than that influence upon your own. We are not intruders, therefore, not foreign admirers and outsiders, at these birthday celebrations. We English writers are here of right, and because we are akin to you and within the realm of your thought and power.

THE EUROPEAN KALEIDOSCOPE:. THE GERMAN WILL IN DEFAULT

23.4.1924

I WAS in Paris the other day when M. Poincaré reconstructed his Government, and I heard him make his declaration of policy to the Chamber of Deputies. I had never seen him before. It was a dramatic and amusing occasion, and I conceived for M. Poincaré the same sort of warm and hostile affection that I have for Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George. He is an entirely delightful personality; he has all the charm — and much of the appearance — of a wiry-haired terrier. He even barks.

The Chamber of Deputies is in a semi-circle like a Roman theatre; there is none of the waste and confusion of effect one gets in the Gothic oblong at Westminster. The public was present by ticket; it sat in a semi-circle of little boxes within nodding distance of the deputies — and mostly it was ladies and very well dressed. High up over it all and facing it all sat M. François Arago, like a finite and protesting deity, with his recording angels behind him and a large bell convenient for his hand. Beneath him was the rostrum from which one addresses the house, and then a lower rank of reporters. But there was no beam of limelight. The political world has still to discover limelight. It is extraordinary how slow all legislative assemblies are in adopting modern conveniences. A beam of limelight would be excellent at Westminster to indicate the direction of the Speaker's eye.

M. Poincaré read out his intentions in a hard, very audible voice. His opening sentences went to much applause and interruption. The chief scene came when, enumerating the ways in which France proposed to restore and preserve her solvency, he referred to an intensive exploitation of her colonies. "Our colonial policy," said he. "Sarraut!" cried the Left — a fine, wolf-like sound. "Our colonial policy!" said M. Poincaré with increasing firmness. "Sar-raut!" "Our colonial policy," M. Poincaré repeated, in small capitals, so to speak. "Sarraut!" much louder — the Left enjoying itself. M. Poincaré

brought up unexpected vocal resources. After five — or was it six? — repetitions, honour was satisfied and the statement went on.

In the horrible language of English political discussion, M. Poincaré is attempting to "dish" the Left. He was trying to make his policy look as "Left" as possible, while still remaining the same inflexible person as ever. He had thrown over various associates from the Right and brought in reasonable men from the Left Centre to liberalise the effect of his reconstituted Government. He was prepared to be generous to Germany provided she paid the uttermost farthing. He was prepared to seem to come out of the Ruhr, while in reality sticking there. He spoke hopefully and brightly and emptily of the League of Nations.

That is the quality of the new phase. M. Poincaré is talking as liberally as he can. He exchanges compliments and large liberal gestures with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald; neither of them meaning anything whatever, except a desire to pass the time and be in the fashion. It is the change in the fashion that should interest the student of affairs. M. Poincaré is getting ready for the elections in May, and his proceedings betray his consciousness of the deep strong movement of French thought and intention leftward, away from adventure and nationalism and militarism, towards — sanity. In spite of a systematically perverted news service and many provocations and natural fears, the mind of France is becoming powerfully reasonable. It thinks less and less of glory and more and more of solvency. It is more open to-day to ideas of reconciliation, disarmament, and organised international co-operation than it has been at any time since the war.

M. Poincaré has been superficially dexterous, his majority is beautifully restored, but France and all the world know him for an honest obdurate man. I doubt if he will come back after the elections. M. Millerand has seemed to threaten a dictatorship if the Poincaré policy is defeated. Is France so Latin as to stand that? I think M. Millerand will be better advised to try a resignation. For the recent credit given to France to support the franc is probably the end of French borrowing power, and a defeat of the Left by fraud or violence — a cessation of the movement towards reason and disarmament — means a withdrawal of foreign confidence and a

swift and sure financial collapse.

Now unhappily it is just at this phase of French affairs, with the peace- intending reconciling forces of France and Britain coming rapidly into accord and ascendancy, that Germany begins to manifest her least agreeable traits. The recent Munich trials, the acquittal of that foolish old monarchist blusterer, Ludendorff, the ridiculous mitigated sentences of Hitler and the other conspirators against the German Republic, and, above all, the public demonstrations of sympathy with these second-rate nationalist reactionaries, come as a real shock to our hopes of an approaching European reconstruction. Like that supremely silly incident, the neglect to lower the German flag in Washington on the occasion of President Wilson's death, it is ugly; it betrays the bad heart. One may recognise the stream of injustices and disappointments that have been inflicted on Germany in the last five years, one may be willing to concede the right of Germans to a considerable resentment, and yet one may find it hard to forgive these sentimental dangerous reversions towards monarchism in uniform, and, above all, that petty and provocative folly at Washington.

It has been a great disappointment and discouragement to those who have worked, and who are now drawing near to the accomplishment of their work, for a reconciled Europe, to note how feeble has been the collateral movement in Germany, Where is liberal and intelligent Germany to-day? It is begging its bread; but I do not see why it should concentrate all its energies upon begging its bread. When one goes into Germany one encounters plenty of residual swash-buckler spirit; the old heroism of the expanded chest and the high voice; and one encounters a vast amount of abject sob-stuff; but it is very hard indeed to find any Germans who seem to be steadily busy upon the reconstruction of Europe upon broad modern lines. Germany seems to be divided anatomically between the right and left. The Monarchists have the backbone and no brains; the Liberals have the brain and no backbone. When a German displays will he does something stupid and violent, and when he displays intelligence he does nothing at all. In Berlin last summer everybody I sought out and questioned talked in terms of crisis. Germany was sinking. England must do something for Germany at once. America

must do something for Germany at once. The one thing they would not recognise was the necessity of Germany doing something for Germany at once.

And no party has arisen, no newspapers have arisen, no leader or group of men stands out yet to embody a new Germany in a new Europe. The time of opportunity draws near and Germany, one fears, may remain too sick and beaten, too witless and unteachable, to make any use of this year of opening opportunity.

I write without any profound knowledge of things German. I may be too much impressed by the reactionary crowd in the streets of Munich. There may be deeper currents in German life which find no adequate expression in the German Press, and of which I know nothing. But with the French elections drawing near, it is time that the good Europeans in Germany, if there are good Europeans in Germany, should make themselves heard and felt. The impression I have of an unhelpful and uncreative and irresponsive Germany, cheated, it is true, and disappointed, but lapsing far too readily towards a sullen unhelpfulness, is a very general impression in France and Britain. France is under an urgent necessity of retrenchment and ready to abandon her futile aggressiveness; Britain was never less imperialist than she is to-day. Is there no German initiative to meet this new occasion?

CHINA: THE LAND OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT

26.4.1924

China has been out of the limelight of the newspapers lately. It is the tradition of the Atlantic civilisations to think about China as little as possible. We ignore the enormous importance of its gifts to us in the past, and we do our utmost to disregard its immediate share in the world's future.

China drove the Huns westward to relieve Europe from the decaying stagnation of the western Roman Empire. She gave the world paper, which made the printed book and newspaper possible, which made general education and the publication of scientific work possible, which indeed laid the foundation of the modern world. She taught the Mongols and Turks the organisation and military methods that ended the dying Greek impulse of the eastern Roman Empire, nearly conquered Europe, and drove the reluctant European seamen to discover South Africa and America. She numbers to-day more than a fifth part of the human race; has four times as many civilised citizens as the United States, and nearly as many as all continental Europe put together. When we discuss the struggles of a world civilisation to exist it is well now and then to give China a thought.

For China must be a pillar of that world civilisation equivalent to the whole English-speaking world. Two or three facts of some importance are not perhaps so actively present in the general consciousness as they might be. There is a Chinese Republic with a President in Pekin, who rules more or less in most of China proper, though Canton and several other provinces get along in a state of provisional independence. But besides the President there is also a young Emperor in Pekin with a large official income — in arrears — and a remarkable English tutor. The Emperor, we are told, is quite Anglicised, he is being taught constitutional history, and presently, if the British people do not wake up to the dangers of the position, there may be an attempt, open or furtive, with British assistance, to restore the Chinese monarchy. Moreover, although I understood at

the Washington Conference that Wei-hai-wei was to be given up, the British are still there — waiting for something to turn up. The British never had much right to be in Wei-hai-wei; their excuse for being there collapsed with the collapse of Russian imperialism; and probably not one British voter in the hundred is prepared for the possibly expensive and humiliating consequences of keeping there too long. The abandonment of the Singapore dock enlargement implied a policy of general withdrawal from forcible adventures in Eastern Asia. But in the untidy way of the British, the shreds and patches of some old dream of a military and political predominance in China are left to brew misunderstandings and trouble in the future.

It is not that Britain has not a profound interest in the future development of China. All the English-speaking peoples, all the other peoples in the world, have a great and increasing interest in Chinese affairs. As the world is drawn together into a political unity, the Chinaman becomes the most important neighbour of everyone. But the method of expressing an interest by grabbing and fortifying settlements, threatening coasts with warships, levying tribute and imposing iniquitous trade arrangements, is now manifestly old-fashioned and barbaric, and a new line of activities has to replace these outworn puerilities.

The English-speaking communities have to work out, and do seem to be beginning to work out, a common conception of a world order, and of their common share in it. Regarded as a point of departure, as a new turn in international thought, the League of Nations movement marks an epoch in world history. That sort of thought is still most extensively carried by the English language; shallow and weak to-day, it may become deeper and more effective as time goes on. It is in the character of the English-speaking communities. It is manifestly of primary importance that so far as possible this thinking-out of the organised peace of the world by the English -speaking communities should go on parallel with, and in touch with, the similar thinking-out of the other great communities of the world. And with no other great community is it more possible and desirable to develop a joint system of ideas and a common political and social aim, than with the great Chinese mass. It is possible, because China is to an extraordinary extent renascent and

blank and ready to consider and accept points of view and constructive conceptions. China is remaking her education from the foundation. The four hundred million mass of China is at present intellectually far more plastic than the forty million mass of France, and the thirty million mass of Italy, And it is desirable as well as possible, because a successful effort to bring modern Chinese and American and British thought about the world's affairs into co-operative understanding would add the weight of four hundred million to the five hundred million of the American and British systems.

In America, China, and Britain alike there is a recognition — weak and partial though it is — of this great opportunity. The return of the Boxer indemnity, already partially repaid by America, and soon to be repaid by Britain, ear-marked for educational purposes, is an unprecedented and most significant thing in international relationships. Part of the American money has gone to educate Chinese students in English and so prepare them to become students in the American Universities. The rest is to be devoted to the development of a modern library in Pekin University. The British money is not yet apportioned, but Dr. Tsai, the Chancellor of the National University at Pekin, has recently been in London to urge the paramount need of a museum and a properly equipped system of scientific laboratories in China.

I saw Dr. Tsai giving an address to the China Society in the London School of Oriental Studies upon these new developments of Chinese education. It was one of the most reassuring things I have witnessed for some time, that little gathering of Chinese students and of a few interested English friends, in the steep little lecture theatre in Finsbury Circus, to discuss the making-over of the Chinese mind that is now in progress. We are still in the day of comparatively small things; sums like ten million pounds are dwarfed by such figures as four hundred million people; yet they are not too small to be perceptible and significant. A growing number of Chinese are making themselves thoroughly well acquainted with all the West has to teach them; they are not simply learning and accepting, they are criticising. The perennial vigour and originality of the Chinese mind is manifested by a prompt repercussion to British and American

ideas.

I have before me as I write, for example, a memorandum on Chinese Politics and Professionalism, by Mr. S. C. Chang, which is one of the ablest criticisms of the Anglo-American panacea of "democracy" that I have ever read. It is one of remarkable and admirable things about China that in a time of great political confusion whole provinces, almost without government, go on in an orderly fashion and that arts flourish and reading and teaching spread. The nucleus of the mental organisation of a new China, in close touch and sympathy with the Atlantic peoples, appears. Before a generation has passed it may have gathered sufficient power to undertake the general education of the whole Chinese people. It already inspires a considerable Press.

These new relationships of study and discussion between the English-speaking and Chinese worlds will, I hope, increase, intensify, and develop. At present it is a very extraordinary thing that, while the young Chinese students in Britain and America can be counted by hundreds, there is still no system of sending English and American students, by way of scholarships, to study Chinese life and literature in China.

The Chinese are more conscious than the English-speaking peoples of deficient knowledge, and of the need of new inspiration. Our phase is, comparatively, a phase of self-satisfaction. The Chinese will know what we think, and know long before we have realised how much we have to learn from them, and what a wholesome thing it is for us to get their point of view. For Chinese schools multiply and teaching spreads, and where there are schools and teaching there the future grows.

AIR ARMAMENT: THE SUPREMACY OF QUALITY

3.5.1924

Bankrupt France and out-of-work England are developing a sort of armament race in air equipment. It has not quite the vigour of the old naval armament race; it is not so expensive, and the chances for financial and industrial loot are less. But it goes on, and at present, on paper at least, France leads handsomely. On paper France is ascendant over Britain in the air, capable of inflicting vast injuries, while sustaining small reprisals, and the matter is one of great concern to many anxious souls. They have visions of London stark and stiff and twisted under poison gas and all the British ports and docks destroyed.

The vagueness of our knowledge does on the whole enhance our terrors. But it is well to remember that our knowledge is vague. It is particularly vague about the things that aeroplanes can carry and drop. Chemists and science students generally find an innocent pleasure in inventing wonderful rays, explosives, and lethal gases for the benefit of the ingenuous newspaper man. They invent them rather than make them. In practice the normal limitations and insufficiencies of this earthly life apply with peculiar force to explosives and lethal gases. Only in the world of scientific romance can they be made out of nothing and instantaneously. In this sordid world of everyday they demand ingredients that are difficult and expensive to produce and limited in amount, and they require apparatus and skill and often considerable courage for their preparation. And in order to produce any serious effect on an enemy they must be delivered in huge consignments upon that enemy, and that requires a large number of aeroplanes of sufficient size to carry bulky material. Mr. Galsworthy was recently writing to the Times in grave alarm about the exposure of Britain to French air attack. He saw all her ports destroyed, no wharf for any food ship, England starved. I doubt if he had ever attempted to figure out how many tons of high explosive — allowing for the inevitable misses — would

have to be conveyed from France to Southampton, for example, to smash up that one port alone to any decisive extent.

Before the heavy transport aeroplane can be safely used its mechanics must be insured against attack from fighting aeroplanes in the hands of highly skilled men. And this brings us to the essential objection to any panic creation of air forces. In the air quality is of supreme importance, and quality is rare. Given equal machines a good man can almost always put down a mediocre man; a man of exceptional gifts can keep on putting down ordinary men. The star air fighters in the war were men who had accounted for scores of enemy machines. Given a few exceptional men and the best machines, an air force of a few score units is capable of accounting for hundreds of inferior squadrons. God, we are told, is on the side of the biggest battalions, but this arithmetical preference, if it continues at all at the present time, is certainly restricted only to land fighting. In the air God is now manifestly on the side of intelligence, quickness, and courage. For a mastery of the air over and around one's country there is needed therefore, before all other things, a War Office capable of finding and using first-class men, aviators, mechanics and inventors. Inventors and innovators most of all. After that, it must have money for the best material. But the money and the bulk of the product is a secondary matter. It is only after the air war is won that the big omnibuses full of bombs can come into play for more than incidental raids.

Now it is doubtful if any War Office exists or can exist capable of carrying on a skilled air warfare. There is something subtly stupid and unscientific about this war business, and you will never find first-class imaginations giving themselves freely and continuously to war organisation. Great men like Cromwell or Mr. Trotsky may do miracles of war organisation under necessity, but it is only puerile types like Mr. Amery who can go on planning war in peace time. The soldier is, has been, and always will be a rather limited and usually a rather thickheaded person. It follows therefore that if ever there should be a real, fully-prepared-for war in the world again — a thing which, as the unrepentant author of the phrase "The War to End War," I am naturally disposed to doubt — then probably the air warfare which will dominate it will be a warfare conducted with

machines far below the quality of the best contemporary knowledge, and by men below the highest attainable standard. It may be, therefore, a clumsy war, as needlessly destructive as the great war; and the lumbering big aeroplane, with its tons of explosive, in search for targets of military significance, will incidentally smash up all sorts of precious things. But the less clumsy air-warfare is the less it will do that. It is a paradoxical-looking but quite valid proposition that the less we develop special skill and invention in air-warfare the more prolonged and destructive air-warfare is likely to be. A brilliantly clever and trained and equipped air force might even be capable of purely defensive warfare. A clumsy, abundant air force, incapable of encountering and outflying its antagonists, could only work by the cruel and de-civilising method of reprisal raids.

For these reasons I think it almost as regrettable that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald should talk so readily of a sort of Washington Conference for Europe upon air disarmament as that he should have consented to the replacement building of the five cruisers. Nothing will ever restrain nations at war from making a belligerent use of the air; and the alternative to a specialised scientifically developed air fighting force will be a mobilisation of civil transport air planes for offensive use. This will not be a diminution but an aggravation of the horrors of air attack so far as the ordinary civilised man on the ground is concerned.

A number of people seem to consider civil air transport as the natural reserve for war aviator and machines. The British have recently subsidised the various commercial concerns which run the poor, partial, under-equipped air services between Britain and the Continent, to the extent of a million pounds, no doubt with some such fancy about air reserves in mind. The consolidation of the British air companies was followed at once by a reduction of the salaries of the pilots, and a defensive strike on their part. The ideal pilot of the companies seems to be a higher sort of omnibus driver, hardly better paid. So far there has been no visible increase in equipment. Nothing could have brought out more plainly the essential conflict between profit-making and public service. The need of civilisation in respect to peace and war ends alike is to work out the possibilities of flying to their utmost extent and at any cost to

attract exceptionally capable men to every branch of the service. The natural aim of a consolidated group of companies seeking profit is to stabilise conditions at the nearest possible profitable level, regardless of the future and the public welfare. In no branch of human activity is private enterprise for gain more mischievous than in transport, and in no field of transport has private enterprise shown itself more wasteful and futile than in air transport. During the war flying was everywhere a State enterprise, and enormous progress was made in every development of air science. Since the war progress has slowed down to negligible proportions under the magic touch of the modern business man. His method is to standardise; he is the enemy of distinctive quality wherever it is to be found.

LABOUR POLITICIANS:. THE EVAPORATION OF THE INTELLIGENZIA

10.5.1924

At the last General Election the British Labour Party was supported with the most whole-hearted enthusiasm by a great cloud of artistic and intellectual workers. It had the Intelligenzia solidly for it. It had all the higher and better theatrical and artistic workers on its side: such great literary names as Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell, such men of science as Soddy. They supported it for a variety of very understandable reasons. They were revolted by the mean and sterile dullness of the two historical but disintegrating parties. They were bored to death by Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Baldwin, Lord Birkenhead, their endless differences, and their essential resemblance. They were attracted by the brave hopefulness and the constructive programme of the new party. They were even allowed to dot the i's and cross the t's of its ample promises. No doubt they helped at the election, though Heaven knows to what extent. They certainly brought in youth, ever in love with ideas, to canvass and toil for the party; they brought in clever journalists and able controversialists.

But all that was six months ago. Now Labour has been tarnished by office I doubt whether it will exercise the same compelling magic upon intellectually adventurous people. There is all the difference in the world between encouraging a Labour Party which promises everything glorious, and bolstering up a Labour Government which does nothing amusing. I doubt if the Intelligenzia is likely to be very energetic when the next election comes.

It is not in the nature of an Intelligenzia to support a political party in office. Its function in the community is to criticise actuality, and to startle and enlarge people's aesthetic, scientific, political, and social perceptions. It is always against the thing that is, and it is always in advance of the thing that can practically be. And what it is saying of the Labour Government now is that it is just as dull and just as shifty and just as futile as a Left Liberal Government would have been. Mr.

C. P. Trevelyan seems to have some meritorious intentions about education, and there has been a recognition of Russia — which the Liberals would have given us just as well. Apart from that, what have the Intelligenzia got for all their support of Labour?

In Mr. Ramsay MacDonald we have one of the ablest of living public speakers, a Prime Minister of unparalleled piety and gentility, but that is insufficient to console the Intelligenzia for their general disappointment. The more brightly the personality of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald shines, the less visible are the creative ideas for which their advanced spirits followed him. Instead of some genuine effort toward disarmament there has been the most foolish treatment possible of the business of the five cruisers. There has not even been a gesture towards the nationalisation of transport, mines, and the production of staple commodities. At least the Labour Ministers might have availed themselves of official files and opportunities, to prepare reports, digest facts and set inquiries afoot that would open a way to future nationalisation. The Capital Levy has gone behind a screen. There has been a muddle over housing and a resort to Liberal assistance. These Labour leaders over whom the Intelligenzia waved its banners of constructive Socialism and of a world remade, so bravely, turn out to be for the most part just ordinary politicians abjectly afraid to stop anything or start anything that may affect votes.

There is the utmost symbolical value in the behaviour of the new Labour Ministers towards Court affairs. Great Britain is a monarchy and the Ministers must go to Court, but there was no law and no necessity to require a Labour representative in a Labour Ministry to dress up in an expensive and unsuitable livery. The neat blue serge suit in which such a man would attend a Labour Congress or pay his respects to his God in church or chapel was surely good enough for a Court visit. A red tie, perhaps, in suitable cases could have emphasised the note of Socialism. But no! These men the Intelligenzia worked for and elected as the representatives of a new age must needs set out at once to beg, borrow, or steal the uniform of the old. As the newspaper photographs witness, most of them wear it with little grace or dignity. They have the self-conscious solemnity of a new local mayor in his robes. As a rule it matters little what a

man wears, but these liveries betrayed stupendous acquiescences. It was unfortunate for the good relations of the Intelligenzia with the Labour Party that two police spies were found under the platform of a private meeting of the Communist Party the other day. The Intelligenzia will always have a very tolerant corner in its heart for the Communist Party in Britain and America. The party gets hold of a lot of the best of the young people and does them a lot of good. It is extremist, and you cannot have a healthy mental life in a community in which extremist opinions and intentions are not fairly stated. Prohibition of opinions is an insult to adult citizens. In Great Britain at least the Communist Party is a perfectly legal organisation. It has as much right to hold a private meeting as the Liberal or Tory Party. It is the business of the police and Government to respect and protect its privacy. Mr. Henderson ought to know a lot about the Communists. They supply a healthy criticism and irritant on the Left wing of his party. He ought to have known this police annoyance was going on, and he ought to have stopped it as soon as he came into office. Either he knew this meeting was going to be spied upon or he did not. If he did he does not understand freedom, and if he did not his officials are lacking in respect for him.

In a large number of quite symptomatic affairs the Labour Government either through ignorance or through other preoccupations has failed to take advantage of its opportunities, and each one of these failures estranges some new group of intelligent people. For example, everyone with a vision a little wider than the politician's realises the importance of China to the future of mankind. In the long run, even the question of the mishandling of the five cruisers may prove less serious than negligence on the part of our Government toward the China Boxer indemnity money. The Chinese ask for a directive voice in that matter. Dr. Tsai is the Chancellor of Pekin University; he represents the best educational influences in China. He comes to London, but he finds most of the Ministers he wants to see too busy trying on their breeches and stockings to see him. He is given a nice talk with a permanent official, and told in the best official style that all his suggestions will be most carefully considered by the "Committee." The Committee which is to be set up may be just the sort of Committee that destroys

the confidence of progressive Chinamen in British good faith. As it was first planned it represented material interests strongly; it had only one member who could be called an educationist; and there was no representative of New China upon it at all. There has been much coming and going since then, and the situation may be to a large extent saved, but if so it will be in spite of rather than thanks to any creative comprehension on the part of the Foreign Secretary or any member of the Labour Government.

One could multiply instances of this sort of wasted opportunity, in which the Labour Government has displayed itself as obtuse and blind as any Government could have been. Mr. Smillie, the other day, rejecting "all understandings with Liberals," declares that the Labour Party is "out to deal with root causes." But this Labour Government has never dared to be caught looking at a "root cause" yet. Take the question of birth-control. England is over-populated; it has a million unemployed; it cannot house its population decently, and it cannot educate its numerous progeny above a miserably low standard. But the Roman Catholic vote is organised against birth-control, and the Labour politicians dare not offend the Roman Catholic vote. Yet the housing problem, the unemployment problem, the organisation of education, the relations of the British Empire with other countries, the question of the necessity of war, all become absolutely different according to whether the population of the country is considered as being stationary or expansive. But this present Labour Government does not know whether it is for birth-control or against it. It does not know anything of that sort about itself. It does not know whether it is shaping the future for a restrained or overflowing population. The Intelligenzia, in the enthusiasm of its plunge into politics, thought that the Labour Party — as distinguished from all other parties — did. And generally they are coming to realise how greatly they overrated the creative power and the creative will of Labour.

As the exhilaration consequent upon being allowed *carte blanche* to write promises for the Labour Party evaporates, the Intelligenzia will revert to its normal and proper aloofness from politicians. The Intelligenzia are the rain and the wind and sunshine of the political field, but not the field-workers of politics. To have the Intelligenzia

in a party is like an elemental being married to a mortal. Elementals have magic gifts, but they are not always comfortable to live with. The Labour politicians will feel more and more masters in their own house — at least until the next election — as the critical, exacting Intelligenzia evaporate from the party.

CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAS AND. THEIR RELATION TO CURRENT POLITICS

17.5.1924

Mr. Smillie, a little while ago, was talking of the peculiar mental virtues of the Labour Party. It was "out to deal with root causes" and so forth. There was to be no parleying with Liberals. This was immediately before Mr. Snowden produced the greatest Liberal Budget in history; something off something for everybody and no Socialist confiscation. I was moved at the time of Mr. Smillie's speech to point out that the Labour Government had not been caught looking at the root cause of anything whatever since it came into office. It had put on its Court livery like little gentlemen, and done as it was told. That "root cause" delusion was created in the mind of Mr. Smillie by reading the election addresses of his associates.

For a time, until it got into office, the Labour Party was a magnificent hoarding for the constructive Radical. At bottom it is a party of feelings rather than ideas. It became boldly, outspokenly Socialist. It was declared to stand for a broad collective handling of our common interests, for scientific method. It wasn't afraid of bankers or landowners or Protection-seeking trade monopolists. It stood for the free, high constructive future against the injustice and mean limitations of the present. It was the New Age struggling to be. But really it wasn't for all those things because it was so at heart, but because it had to say something different from all other parties, and the creative Intelligenzia prompted it. So long as it was out of office active constructive minds could do its public thinking for it. But now that the Labour Party has taken office it has come of age and become an adult political party; it has lost the wild freshness and promise of youth, and begun to act for itself. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, with his piety and his political dexterity, is extremely like a Scotch, instead of a Welsh, Lloyd George, and the array of his colleagues is revealed as the very twin brothers of the Tory and Liberal knights, local councillors, provincial mayors, and so forth we have always known. The Labour Party brought down from the cloudland of promise to

performance is seen to be little more than another of the numerous Liberal parties that have appeared in the vast inchoate world of British Liberalism. It has appeared and struggled to office because Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith were tiresome, obstinate egotists without an up-to-date idea between them, and because the complexity of self-conscious interests in Great Britain is too great any longer for the magnificent simplicity and "loyalties" of the old two-party system.

All this is perfectly natural and necessary. All political parties must represent the present, existing interests, existing social fears and jealousies, current delusions. No political party can represent the future, as Mr. Smillie would have us believe the Labour Party does. But it was the delusion of Karl Marx that the expropriated masses of mankind, living at a disadvantage, would necessarily realise the desirability of a more highly organised Socialist State and evolve a collective will to bring it about. This idea, through the devoted repetition of the Marxists, has infected the greater part of Socialist thought. It had manifestly infected Mr. Smillie. In so far as modern social inequalities and injustices, illuminated by modern educational influences, have brought out a steadily increasing hostility between the masses and the classes with an advantage, Marx was right, but in so far as that has involved the development of any capacity whatever to achieve a new and better order, he was wrong. The uncomfortable masses seek uncritically for some expression of their antagonism to the lucky, the dexterous, the unscrupulous, and the far-sighted who enjoy the advantages of the existing social and economic tangle, and their suffrages and passion will go to support the particular lucky, dexterous, unscrupulous, or far-sighted politicians who seem most in harmony with the hates and hopes of the stinted, hampered, and oppressed multitude. But the antagonisms and discords of the present system are as much a part of the present as its order and its success. The Labour Party as a Labour Party is no more inherently reconstructive than the Banking Interest or the Shipping Interest. Like them, it merely wants an excessive and inconsiderate share of present power and satisfactions.

I suppose if we could set aside the entangling influences of social position and traditions we should find that men and women fell into a

series between two extremes of temperamental type; the Conservatives at one end, who like things to go on very much as they are going, only to be just a little richer and sounder and sunnier, and at the other end the disturbers who like fresh things to happen and who make fresh things happen. And of the disturbers there seem to be two main types: the personal adventurers who want a series of vivid events centring upon themselves, and do not care very much how much disorder is caused by their careers, and the innovators with an instinct or a mental habit of creative service — the scientific worker, the educationist, the innovating artist, the men with a passion for industrial and financial and social organisation, who will ultimately remake the world. These types mingle in most of us, we are all something of each, but in such prominent British figures as Lord Birkenhead, Mr. Winston Churchill, or Lord Beaverbrook we seem to have almost pure adventurers, and in Mr. Sidney Webb or Mr. C.P. Trevelyan almost pure creative service innovators. But the great financial adventurers are not in politics. They are behind politics. The unco-ordinated, inexplicit world of to-day is all for the bold acquisitive egoist; he causes wars and prevents peace, the industrialist is in his financial net, he does things to the exchange and the money in our pockets becomes worthless counters, he controls the news in our newspapers, and buys the house over our heads and the ground under our feet. He turns up in all parties as they suit him, and his eternal antagonist, the creative service innovator, must use all parties as he can against him.

No party has a monopoly of creative ideals; the Labour Party little more than the Conservative. For consider what the great constructive ideas before the world at the present time are. There is the rescue of civilisation from the destructive pressure of unregulated births through the extension of the necessary knowledge for efficient birth-control. There is the reorganisation of educational method throughout the world to develop the habits of service and co-operation upon the lines so admirably demonstrated by Sanderson and the re-orientation of educational aims and material by making universal history the basis of the conception of a universal citizenship. There is the rescue of democracy from its hopeless suffocation under the party system, by the reduction in the size of

representative bodies to efficient proportions, and the adoption of the method of proportional representation in large constituencies. Only in that way can the ordinary citizen be released from his slavery to party managers and brought into a direct personal relationship to the member his vote elects. There is the liberation of the economic life of the world from restrictive and destructive financial manipulations by the creation of a world authority for a regulated currency and the clearing of the world debt jungle. There is the lifting of the waste and weight of private profiteering and nationalist sabotage, from shipping and world transport and the staple productions of the world, through the creation of a group of world authorities for these ends. Everybody of intelligence knows that these are just possible achievements for mankind, and that the outlook for mankind is dangerous and on the whole dingy until they are attained and secured. But there is no political party in the world that dare do more in office than fumble and prevaricate about any of them.

THE WEMBLEY EMPIRE:. AN EXHIBITION OF LOST OPPORTUNITIES

24.5.1924

The preparation of a great exhibition of the glories of the British Empire at Wembley profoundly deranged the order of nature. The skies wept copiously; the English spring showed every sign of distress. The builders struck at the eleventh hour, and were only allayed by a patriotic speech by Mr. Thomas. The show opened in a state of entirely British unpreparedness, and the ceremony went chiefly to demonstrate that the development of building in concrete was a much more imposing fact in human life than the continued existence of the British Empire.

Under the circumstances it was unfortunate that the King should have reminded the assembled company of the Great Exhibition of 1851. That was opened in sunshine, and in a sunshine of hope and great ideas. It was international in design and spirit; the first of a great series of such displays. Its guiding spirit was the Prince Consort, one of the most intelligent and creative princes who have ever stood near the British throne. Heaven alone knows how deep Britain would not be wallowing in ignorance and vain delusions if it had not been for his initiatives. He stirred the self-satisfied lethargy of Oxford and Cambridge, so ^hat they have never really slept in peace since, and to this day the Commissioners of his Exhibition administer great funds for scientific and artistic education. The most stimulating things in that Exhibition were the displays of foreign products. They woke up England to the fact that she was falling behind technically and artistically; they caused heart-searchings and effort. But this show is a show of Empire products, “just among ourselves.” We no longer want to know what the world is thinking and doing outside the ring fence of Empire. If the foreigner is being cleverer than we are in any department we do not propose to hear of it.

The King said that the aim of the Exhibition was more “modest” than that of the great show of seventy-three years ago. Was “modest”

the word to use? Or "base"? Is this fiat bragging that follows really modesty? It is the tune to which the whole thing goes. The London show of 1851 was Tennysonian, and Tennyson sang of the confederation of the world; Wembley in 1924 is Kiplingesque or nothing, and this is Mr. Kipling's "modest" cry to the Dominions. To set the rhyme going, and without any particular geographical reference, he informs the Dominions "the pathways are broad":

"In thy house and my house is half the world's hoard; In thy house and my house hangs all the world's fate; On thy house and my house lies half the world's hate."

What a combination of the spirit of grab and the spirit of panic is here! Not thus did the Hyde Park crystal palace reflect God's sunlight. Is it true of the British Empire, is it just to the British Empire, that the rhyming of this hysterical boy scout should be accepted as the expression of its deepest realities? It is at Wembley. At Wembley the British people do seem to be represented to the world in perfect good faith as the scared favourites of good fortune, keenly aware of a richly merited unpopularity, but reluctant to disgorge. So they are all g-g-going to h-hold together and not be afraid. The Exhibition, apart from a large area devoted to Coney Island amusements, where the Imperial citizen can for a time forget his imperial anxieties in vehement motion and noise, is a display of scenery and merchandise. There are, of course, one or two unclassifiable exhibits — the Queen's delightful Dolls' House, for example — but these are in the nature of irrelevances, and a small extra admission fee emphasises the fact. The core, the reality of Wembley, is a show of natural resources and manufactured goods, for which preferential consideration is demanded on the score of a common jealousy, fear and hatred of foreign peoples.

A small pavilion does remind us, it is true, of the League of Nations to which the Empire as a whole and also in pieces belongs, but the League of Nations is far less pervasive than Australian wool or New Zealand mutton. It peeps like a little man in the back row at a football match; the salesman's shoutings drown its voice.

Now I know I am not supposed to be a very perfect patriot, but I protest that this meretricious shop-window at Wembley does no justice to the real greatness of the British people in the world's

affairs. The New Zealand pavilion, for example — I quote an advertisement— "displays in the most picturesque and attractive way the wonderful charms and remarkable industrial development of this important Dominion. New Zealand is the greatest supplier to Great Britain of Dairy Produce, Mutton and Lamb, and Cross-Bred Wool — industries which have impressive representation. Her export and import trade is the greatest per capita in the world. New Zealand has the finest Mountain, Forest, Lake, and River scenery, and deer-stalking, trout and salmon fishing equal to the best in the world," and so on. But New Zealand does not exhibit Professor Gilbert Murray nor Mr. Harold Williams nor a score of other brilliant sons and daughters she has given back to the world's affairs. There is a great display of the rich and picturesque side of Indian life again, but no satisfactory representation of the very considerable work of education that must have been done in India. The British have founded Universities at Khartoum and in Mesopotamia; one looks in vain for models or schemes of them here. You may go about the Exhibition, and find butter and tallow and hides at every turn, but you will find no reproductions of the fine new public schoolhouses these rich young Dominions must possess, the colleges and research institutions they must have set going, and their magnificent arrangements for the interchange of students and ideas with India and the Homeland and the world generally.

We British cannot be such fools as to have neglected these things. But I cannot find the exhibits. Nor is there any display of the scientific and intellectual irrigation of the Press, nor of the machinery of book-publication and distribution that sustains the mental unity of the Dominions....

But I find my mind slipping away from the Wembley that is, to the dream of the Wembley that might have been. I drift off into a vision of the exhibits of work and achievement from the eighteen or twenty great Universities we have surely set up in India; the studies and reports of the two thousand students we send annually to that great land; the display of intellectual interchanges between the four or five splendid Australian Universities and Japan and China, Burma and Siam; the achievements of the great schools of Polynesian ethnology at Sidney and Adelaide and Brisbane; the splendid

educational work of Canada in China, rivalling the American effort: the joint exhibit of the United States and Canada of the scientific exploration of the Arctic and the Pacific; the vast pavilion giving a comparative treatment of the efforts of South Africa, Jamaica, and the United States to deal with the civilisation and assimilation of "colour"; the Capetown to Cairo school of African history, ethnology and economic geography. Surely these things have been seen to! We are so rich.

"In thy house and my house is half the world's hoard."

But what are we doing with it? Are we just hoarding it? I thought the White Man's Burthen was a magnificent task, not a bundle of loot that he stood upon to brag about. I must have taken the wrong turning when I went to Wembley. I must go there again. I must go right on and find the turning beyond the ones that lead to these magnificent displays of machinery and metal and wool and grease.

THE EXTINCTION OF PARTY GOVERNMENT

31.5.1924

The politicians of Great Britain, under the pressure of various accidental and some fundamental necessities, are being forced towards an honest democracy and efficient government. But they resist with great activity and ingenuity.

A Bill for what is called Proportional Representation, but which is really sane voting, has recently been rejected by the House of Commons by a majority of 238 to 144. It had the official support of the Liberal Party. Previously the Liberal hacks were all against it, but they have been chastened by the last two elections. The Bill went very far towards honest representative government, but in one respect it went no distance at all towards a great revolution in political method. When the time comes for its re-introduction it will be necessary to extend it or supplement it by another reducing the numbers of the representative assembly.

The urgencies of the British situation have put Great Britain far in advance of the United States in this matter. There is a very respectable movement for Proportional Representation in the United States of America, but it has still to be realised as practical politics and a serious need by the American public. In America every citizen is born either a little Republican or else a little Democrat; it does not matter what the Republican or Democratic platform is or what sort of man is put up for him in his division, he has to vote for his party. Or else go through a crisis almost like disowning his father and mother and vote for the other party. There is nothing else in the world for him to do in politics, just as there was nothing else but being ‘‘either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative” in the great days of Gilbert and Sullivan in London. The United States is young, prosperous, and at a great advantage to the rest of the world; it may be able to afford its present travesty of democracy for a long time yet. Britain cannot. The party system has always been more rigidly organised in America than in England. In Britain on the Left side,

counting Liberal, Labour, and Communist together, there are eight or ten distinct schools of political thought and intention; on the Right side there are five or six. The British voter grows more and more erratic and uncertain under the present idiotic system, and the results of General Elections more and more silly and incalculable.

The idea of Proportional Representation is now nearly a century old. It is due to a clear-headed man named Hare. He proposed that a number of candidates should stand for the whole country as one constituency. The voter would vote for the man he liked and trusted best. If that man were so widely liked and trusted that he got more votes than were needed to return him, he would take as large a fraction of every vote as he needed, and if the voter had indicated a second choice on his paper, the rest of his vote would go to the candidate next on his list. Whatever happened, some or all of the voter's support would go to the man he had chosen. That man would be his man par excellence. There could be no more direct relationship between voter and representative. But if that man were a very great and desirable man, the voter could also congratulate himself on the partial possession of a second or even a third, more personal representative. There are people who profess to find great diffIculty in understanding Proportional Representation; mostly this is a purely wilful and subjective befuddlement. The filling up of the voting papers is perfectly simple and the counting and fractionation of the votes offers no difficulty to any properly instructed educated person.

For trivial reasons Hare's voting method, which would give us an almost pure representative democracy, has been modified in all the practical proposals made by the division of the country into large constituencies instead of leaving it one whole, and the assignation of a limited but still large number of members to each. But its virtue of comparative veracity in representation still to a large extent remains. Mr. Rendall's recent Bill proposed constituencies returning not less than three and not more than seven members. This is much too small for a real representation of British opinion, but it was as much as the party wire-pullers would allow. When the question is reopened this maximum should be increased.

Of course the systems called Proportional Representation in use in

France and Italy are scoundrelly caricatures of the idea. Under them the voters vote not for men but for party gangs, and the whole object of Proportional Representation is to release men from servitude to party manipulation.

The objections to the measure made in the debate upon the rejected Bill were mostly very trivial or based on positive misconceptions. The question was indeed not discussed. Most of the opponents from the Labour side contented themselves with twitting the Liberal politicians with change of heart upon the question. They behaved just as the Liberal Party hacks did in 1918 because they are exactly the same sort of men. The mentality of the party hack, Liberal, Labour, or Conservative, is very much on a level in this matter. Most of the big men in all parties are for Proportional Representation, because they know they are outstanding enough to survive its establishment. The party hack knows he lives through and by his party: the voter does not choose him but suffers him, and at the first clear opportunity the voter will push him out of the way and choose a more interesting non-party man. About seventy Labour men who have at one time or another professed approval of Proportional Representation did not vote.

The struggle against Proportional Representation is really the life struggle of the professional party politician. Under Proportional Representation the legislative assembly, instead of being elected by a small majority, or even a minority of the voters in the country, will be representative of nearly the whole country. In a constituency electing ten members, for instance, there will probably be less than a tenth of that constituency not actually represented by members returned. This wipes out every hope of a bilateral political system, because it will fill the assembly with free members, responsible only to the voters who have returned them, and practically independent of organised party support. They will necessarily be very various in their opinions.

It is not yet sufficiently realised, even by the supporters of Proportional Representation, that a country which returns men because they are distinctive and significant to its Legislature — and that is what the adoption of Proportional Representation means — will need an assembly of a different size and type from the present

clumsy crowd of notables and nobodies at Westminster. There are too many members of Parliament at Westminster for efficiency, just as there are too many Congressmen at Washington. They loaf about. They do mischief in obscurity.

They make trouble in order to realise their own existence. They are to public affairs what excessive fat is to the body of a man. These big legislative bodies date from a time when group psychology was not thought of. It is even possible that a big legislative body elected by Proportional Representation would be a worse evil even than the party house. Released from the party ties that control them, bunched into fluctuating groups, the scores and hundreds of unnecessary members would obstruct and confuse every legislative proposal. Proportional Representation must mean not only the suppression of the hack politician, but also the suppression of the commonplace member. For efficient government we want a Legislature no larger than is fairly representative of the broad varieties of public opinion. At the largest we need only from two hundred to three hundred members, a grand committee of the nation, appointing Ministers severally, assigning tasks to sub-committees, and expressing the general ideas of the country. We shall certainly be able to dispense with the rotation of the "ins and outs" and possibly with the organised Cabinet in such a Legislature. The adoption of Proportional Representation will be a much profounder and more revolutionary change than a mere change in voting procedure. It will necessitate an entirely new type of representative government. In that lies its importance in the world's affairs and its fascination and desirability for most intelligent people.

THE SERFDOM OF IGNORANCE:. THE RIGHT OF WOMEN TO KNOWLEDGE

7.6.24 The British Labour movement is being agitated at present by one of the most important questions in the world, the question whether a woman has a right to clear and complete knowledge about her own body and the fundamental facts of her life. It is a searching and dividing question that may very well split the party into two discordant sections. The old-fashioned politicians who haven't yet observed that women have now got votes, consider the question ought to be left outside politics. It is too real a question for the old parliamentary game. What would the grand Old Man have said about it? The Elder Spinsters of the Labour movement also rally to the protection of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's gentility, his fine old-fashioned statesmanlike evasiveness. But the Labour Women's Conference carried a resolution against the blushingly tactful Elder Spinsters. These younger women believe that women really are responsible citizens, that democracy does mean treating adults with respect instead of concealing anything that matters most to them from them; that women ought to know what marriage means for them and how motherhood may be undertaken or declined before diseases and children and such-like intense and overwhelming things blot out their youth and health.

The demand the younger, more intelligent women in the Labour movement are making is that knowledge should be freely, easily, and honourably accessible to all British women. It is well to get this precisely clear. No one purposes to force this knowledge upon anyone. That typical political artful dodger, Mr. Wheatley, the Labour Minister of Health, pretends obstinately that that is so. But no woman who likes to be coyly ignorant, and to be overtaken by illness and offspring before she understands anything about them, need seek such knowledge. All that the innovators ask is that it should be there available for those women who want to know what they may do and what they can do with their lives, who want to go into motherhood or refuse or delay going into motherhood with their e3''es open.

Personally, I think that innocence is a charm confined to immaturity, and that every adult of eighteen ought to know clearly all that is of vital importance to conduct in married life before marriage, but in this I go far beyond the modest ambitions of the advanced section of the Labour Party. They want this knowledge to be available only to the married. They want the medical men engaged at such public institutions as child-welfare centres and the like to be free — subject only to their interpretation of their professional honour — to give such information as may be asked for upon these matters. They want doctors in receipt of public money to have the same liberty of advice that every doctor feed by an upper-class woman has. They do not want poor women living in crowded homes to be obliged to bear offspring just as cows bear offspring, whether they want to or not, out of sheer ignorance and helplessness.

Mr. Wheatley says, as his excuse for refusing this liberation of knowledge, that Roman Catholic voters will object to paying rates and taxes if this sort of use is made of public money. The Roman Catholic is to decide what the poor Protestant woman shall know and do. This is a pretty impudent claim for a religion that was formerly disenfranchised. But the whole Labour Party in Parliament cringes at the thought of the Roman Catholic vote. As a matter of fact, there is nothing in sound Roman Catholic teaching to forbid the diffusion of physiological knowledge. There is nothing, indeed, in proper Roman Catholic teaching to prohibit the practice of birth-control under any circumstances. At any time the Vatican might commend birth-control; it is not committed in the least in that respect. But a great number of priests, like our Labour Elder Spinsters, betray an extreme excitability and malignity at the thought of any sexual life that is not mainly frustrated desire. They commit the extreme sin of presumption, they invent teachings quite unsanctioned by the Church to excuse the impulses of their own troubled and unhappy thoughts. And it is of the back-street priest and not of the eternal Church that Mr. Wheatley and his Labour colleagues as pushing politicians have chiefly to think.

Now let the reader note that in this paper I have said not a word for or against the practices known as birth-control nor about anticipatory sexual hygiene. I have my own very definite opinions on

these matters, but the question under discussion here is not what should or may be done, but about what may be known. It is the far profounder question of whether common poor people are to be treated as worthy of understanding and knowing about the things that concern their most intimate lives, or whether in the interests of cheap labour, the Roman Catholic, population statistics, army recruiting, racial jealousy, or out of regard to the unpleasant feelings and imaginations of priests and elderly spinsters, they are to be left and imprisoned in black ignorance even when they want to know. Here I find in myself a streak of surprisingly passionate democracy. I hold that every man and woman should be the conscious and instructed master of his or her own fate. It is amazing, it is dismaying, to find a Labour Minister as ready to consider the common people a breeding herd of human beasts and as ready to keep them helplessly in the dark as the extremist Tory could be. I am convinced that even as a politician he has blundered. When women fought for votes they fought for a symbol; the reality was the possession of themselves. And that is impossible without this, if not forbidden, at least impeded knowledge.

Most politicians have still to learn the significance of the women's vote. Because one or two pretty ladies on the Labour side have lost their heads, adorned themselves in trains and ostrich feathers, given themselves over to the photographers and interviewers and succumbed to the delightful temptation of patronising the Queen, it does not follow that the mass of Labour women are not intensely sane and realist. Sexual questions are coming into politics, and they are coming to stay. Before the next election every parliamentary candidate will have to make up his mind whether he stands for knowledge or ignorance in this matter.

BLINKERS FOR FREE YOUTH:. YOUNG AMERICA ASKS TO HEAR AND SEE

14.6.1924

A SURE way to madden Americans is to make comparisons between education in the United States and in Western Europe. Even if the comparison is flattering it leaves them mad. Apparently belief in the superior education of the American citizen is becoming as sacred as belief in the American constitution. Doubt is prohibited. Visitors to the United States may presently have to sign a form about it.

Hitherto with an extraordinary discretion I have avoided, or at least skirted, this sensitive point. I propose to continue to skirt it. There has been one exception. I touched upon the sore place a little while ago in a book called The Dream, and my mail from America came for some weeks bristling with an unwonted and distressing hostility. I gave an account of the elementary school teaching of England ¦ — it is much the same stuff, more or less, in most civilised countries — as I think it will appear to an observer a few centuries ahead. I added casually that on the whole the American rural school was worse than the English one I described. To the best of my knowledge and belief it is worse. In many parts of the United States the elementary education is far below the Western European level, the consequent illiteracy is shocking, and I should not be doing my duty as a writer for the English-speaking public if I did not say so. I was not thinking so much of new districts inhabited by fresh immigrants, but of old, native-born American regions, like Kentucky. The United States is abnormally slack about its elementary education, and needs plain, stimulating speech in the matter. But the Americans are in a state of irritable self-satisfaction about their schools. They are refusing almost violently to know that their general education has not kept pace with their enormous increase in wealth and material civilisation. Morally, if not legally, I am as much a citizen of the United States of America as of the British Empire; mentally the American and British worlds are two hemispheres of

one brain; I cannot think of them functioning independently, and it is just as much my business to discuss this American slackness as it is to reprove the frightful negligences of the British in respect to Indian education.

This, however, is in parenthesis. It is merely to emphasise the fact that in this article I am instituting no comparisons at all. I am taking a text from an American instance; that is all. There has been a little tiff between the undergraduates and the authorities of Harvard, and I find it extremely suggestive. The brighter of the Harvard undergraduates, represented on the governing board of the Harvard Union by Mr. Corliss Lamont, want to hear about Radicalism and Communism at first hand from people like Mr. Debs and Mr. W. Z. Foster, and the authorities are suppressing these youthful aspirations. They want the young men who will presently sway American affairs to be fed their knowledge of radical and revolutionary ideas by orthodox and respectable persons who have pre-digested it for them and removed all disturbing elements. The young men want the real stuff and to deal with it themselves. I confess myself heart and soul for these young men.

There has recently been a controversy between Mr. Bertrand Russell and President Lowell about the relative mental freedom of American and British Universities. As Mr. Bertrand Russell was turned down for pacifism from Cambridge during the war, he started in that controversy with a handicap. It seems to me that such a dispute is bound to be ineffectual. There are cases of mental restriction and suppression from both sides of the Atlantic, and there are no scales invented yet to weigh this case against that. The real conflict here is not between American and European conditions, but between two types of men. It is a conflict that rages throughout the entire world. Everywhere one finds the managing, directive, limiting type of mind with a craving to get on to governing bodies, the industry to get on governing bodies, and a consequent tendency to get on governing bodies. Everywhere we find also a less abundant supply of critical, sceptical, creative, restless minds producing innovations and stimulating ideas and with an equal tendency to get thrown out of organisations and governing bodies. They are the seed, the ferment, the living factor in the human mind. In Dr. Nicholas

Murray Butler America has produced the perfect specimen of the former class, just as in the late William James and in James Harvey Robinson she has produced excellent samples of the second. It is loudly boasted in British intellectual circles that Britain could not have produced Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, but so far as I am able to judge there is as much Nicholas Murray Butler-ism in Britain as in America, as much large empty active influential pretentiousness, though it may be more diffused, and it is at least as resolute to sit upon and addle intellectual institutions.

For the peculiar evil of the governing body type is its failure to understand its lack of finality. It has no sense of the unknown, no sense of the provisional nature of all mundane things. It wants to fix knowledge in its own image, to make subsidiary and to apportion and departmentalise the work of the gifted exceptional and disturbing men. It seeks to set up classics, to perpetuate existing institutions, to inaugurate ancestor worship. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler is to be the American Confucius and stereotype this perfect world of 1924; the last of the Founders. The coming generation will learn that at this point the world congealed. The thing this dominating type dreads supremely is revolutionary suggestion and the possibility of the young getting away with new ideas. Its educational ideal is blinkers and an obedient youth looking neither to the right nor the left, but pursuing the one right path.

But the sustaining factor of life is death. Happily, most happily. Founders die, and their codes and constitutions, their classical utterances, die and pass away. Even the inspired addresses and deliverances of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, so beautifully printed and so relentlessly distributed, will some day shrivel and pass, and be no more heeded. So that life may go on. Without death there could be no birth. The most fundamental fact about youth is its disrespect for its elders and the past. That is what it is for. A generation that wanted to repeat the preceding generation would not be birth, it would be life stuttering. And the one thing youth does most need and want and fight to get, as its supreme instinctive duty, is and always will be every sort of destructive criticism of existing authorities, of the existing order, and of established institutions. Young America at Harvard probably has no illusions about Mr. Debs or Mr. Foster; it

calls them, I am reasonably certain, “Old Debs” and ‘‘Old Foster.” But it means to hear them, it will hear them, and the college authorities had better help it to hear without any attempts whatever to jam the message Old Debs and Old Foster have to deliver against the old system young Harvard has been born to alter — and has been born for no other apparent end that I can see.

Schools and Universities are surely the most paradoxical things in the whole preposterous spectacle of human life. They exist to prepare youth for a world of enormous changes, and their chief activity seems to be, at Oxford and Cambridge quite as much as at Harvard and Yale, to get youth apart from the world and conceal the forces of change from its curious and intelligent eyes. The youth of the Universities in particular should be the living eggs of the good new things of the days to come. The efforts of the governing bodies everywhere seem to be directed chiefly to getting them hard-boiled. My congratulations to Mr. Corliss Lamont for having so far escaped the culinary process. Nowadays there are Corliss Lamonts from China to Peru. The matter and the forms change but the spirit is the same. In Moscow they have to fight as hard as anywhere else; there it is to escape being made into hard-boiled Communists. By virtue of the rebellious vitality in our youth this world of mankind lives on and does not die and freeze into a monument to its Founders.

THE LAWLESSNESS OF AMERICA AND THE WAY TO ORDER

21.6.1924

Miss Rebecca West, that acute and brilliant observer, has recently been in America, and she has been writing her impressions of the American scene. She has been lecturing and hand-shaking, but with commendable restraint she says little of her audiences, her hotels, and her railway journeys. She has looked over the heads of her hearers and out of the carriage windows. She has looked at the great spectacle as a whole, and she generalises about it broadly and bravely.

The lack of civil order is the thing that strikes her most, and she illustrates her perception of it by a vivid and illuminating discussion of the necessity for prohibition and its consequent evils, and of the colour trouble in the South. Various previous British visitors have noted that lack in other terms, have remarked upon the want of a sense of the State in American thought, and of the reaction upon humanity of the fierce, untutored naturalness, the wide deserts, the undisciplined rivers, and spontaneous tangled forest growths of the New World.

But when she looks for the forces that will presently bring order and graciousness into this characteristically splendid display of energy at large she calls rather startlingly for peasants. She thinks, in a phrase that might have come straight from something by Chesterton, that "nameless men who plough furrows that are straight and deep," peasants in bulk and multitude, are needed to establish a permanent social order, an enduring and developing civilisation.

America has not enough peasants. This is an interesting development, or perhaps I had better say an interesting lapse, in the ideas of a woman we had come to regard, perhaps rashly, as a boldly progressive spirit. This is turning back to the earthy romanticism of Belloc and Chesterton, and I think it shows the profoundest misapprehension of the fundamentals of the American situation. America has not developed a peasant population — for it is sheer

perversity of Miss West to write as she does of Abraham Lincoln as a peasant's son, as a traditional plough-driver, instead of an axe-wielder from the East. America, with machines to plough straighter and deeper than any clodhopper can ever do, has no need of peasants for any purpose at all, except perhaps as negro cotton-growers in the South. America is not developing a peasantry and probably never will. At present the drift to the towns is continuous, and rural depopulation is as present a problem in the United States as in Great Britain.

That Miss West should associate civil order with a peasantry shows an odd forgetfulness of European conditions. England, which has had practically no peasantry for two centuries, but only wage-earning labourers, displays the greatest social order and security in the world; Russia, which is practically all peasantry, can, and could before the war, show a lawlessness, an indiscipline and social insecurity far exceeding anything of which Miss West complains in America. I would as soon accept Zola's valuation of the peasant in La Terre as Miss West's discovery of him as the soil from which all the social virtues spring.

It is in quite another quarter that I should look for the forces that will ultimately adjust and bring together into a law-abiding social harmony all the loose and conflicting elements of the American State, and that is in a great development of schools and colleges. It is from the head and centre and not from the base that the modern community must be unified. It is a point that Miss West seems to ignore altogether, that the United States is, in spite of the aggregatory form of its constitution, the first instance of a new type of community altogether, the type that steam railways, electrical communications, and power machinery have made possible. It may have much trouble and darkness in its destiny, but nothing but complete disaster can ever lead to another repetition of that levelling down and earthing up of the human spirit in peasant life that underlies the old-world civilisations. The chief faults and merits of American life are alike the characteristics of a released population that has escaped from that intimate servitude to pedestrian locality, to the dungheap, the patch, the hovel, and the bitter narrow outlook, for ever.

The reconstruction of human society in the great frame of these

coming modern communities is the fascinating reality of political life behind the dullness and violence and unreality of personal rivalries and party issues. Its cardinal process is the establishment of a new education in terms of the common history and the common aim and a new training of everyone in service to scientifically conceived human purposes. It is an education that should not only occupy the first sixteen years of life altogether, but which should continue its informing and stimulating work throughout life. Only a few people, but it is a rapidly growing number, are beginning to realise the scale and equipment needed for this new nexus of education that will replace the old-world peasants' grubby priest by the new teachers of mankind. The educational effort that lies before the world, and more immediately before the United States as the pioneer of communal life upon a new scale, must needs be a vast and elaborate one — it is useless for the American to be content with schools about as good as European schools, or a little better, or not quite so good; they have to be reconceived in relation to the coming modern community, they have to be better and more effective, they have to be wider in range, if he is not to be thwarted of his immense opportunities of leadership in the present advance of our race towards new conditions of living. But the forces of educational development in a country work obscurely, the new beginnings are difficult to come at, the living seed lies below the surface. It is easy enough to go to America and be entertained and astonished by the bootlegger and the "snow" dealer, to feel the chromatic emotions of "colour," and note the drug store flaring at every street corner. These things signify about as much as the vivid spots that will sometimes appear on the face and shoulders of growing youth. But the research for educational developments is a subtle task, and it yields less florid pictures. We are badly in need of some stocktaking, English or American, of educational conditions in America.

THE SHABBY SCHOOLS OF THE PIOUS:. DRAINS AND THE ODOUR OF SANCTITY

28.6.1924

One of the numerous questions which the Labour Government has to avoid most sedulously in its official egg dance is the question of the denominational school. Many of the denomination schools of England are in an advanced state of decay, most of them fall short of modern educational requirements, and the Labour Party made the amplest promises of educational progress in the electoral campaign that led it to office. Something drastic ought to be done about these denominational schools. But the present voting system, which gives the power of political decision to well-organised minorities, puts the Labour Party at the mercy of the Roman Catholic vote in a number of constituencies, the Roman Catholic community is particularly hostile to educational development, and so nothing is done. The decay of these schools proceeds.

The compromise under which these denominational schools exist was made in 1902. It was a characteristic British patch-up, and one of the most active figures in the making of it was the present Lord Cecil. Under it the schools of the various religious denominations were incorporated in the national education scheme, and the common public was to pay the running expenses of these schools and control the general instruction. The managers appointed by the religious body concerned were, however, to appoint all the teachers and control the religious instruction, and in return for these privileges they were to provide the school buildings and keep them in good repair. If, for instance, a particular school belonged to the Mumbo Jumbo sect, which believes that the earth was created flat and has never been more than slightly bent since, that it is wrong to regard bread as nutritious and improper for men and women to speak together in public places, then the managers were empowered to discover and appoint teachers of geography, physiology, and social history whose teachings would not disturb the children in their peculiar beliefs and practices, over the heads of more efficient and

less orthodox candidates. A Mumbo Jumbo "atmosphere" would be created within the school, the sexes would be segregated, bread never mentioned or mentioned with a proper horror, and all terrestrial and celestial globes, maps of the world in hemispheres, busts or portraits of Columbus, Magellan, and the like excluded. In return for these supremely important religious privileges the sect of the Mumbo-Jumboites was to pay for the upkeep of the schools and keep them up to date in their appointments.

Now it is a melancholy fact that parents belonging to the various British religious bodies concerned, parents we understood to be so passionately eager to see their children taught only their own tested and certified brand of truth that this compromise was made, have shown themselves indisposed to make any effort to pay even honestly, far less generously, for the spiritual advantages secured to them. A recent inquiry has directed attention to a very alarming state of affairs in these schools — of which altogether there are about twelve thousand in England and Wales — claiming to educate a million and a third children. A large proportion of them, we discover, have become badly decayed. They are described as "ill-ventilated, ill-lighted, with insufficient or worn-out sanitary, cloakroom, and lavatory accommodation." "A number of schools" — I quote the Leslie report— "are noted as having been condemned by the Board of Education before the war, but as being still in full use. The complaint is made that the Board's inspectors have ceased to mention the condition of these schools in their reports, presumably on instructions from headquarters, in the supposed interests of economy."

"'Action would have to be taken with regard to playgrounds, sanitary arrangements, etc.,' says one authority, 'had there been any prospect of the requirements being carried out,' and many others say the same in different words. In one case there has been a sinkage of ground resulting in the breakage of drain-pipes, with the result that the soil is being polluted, but the managers will do nothing. In another case the authority says that 'both teachers and children are suffering physically and educationally, but the only possible alternative would be new buildings, and the managers have no funds.'"

"General complaint is made as to the condition of the playgrounds, usually as being too small and inconvenient to begin with, and many either unusable or dangerous for want of repair. One of the counties, replying, says that out of 131 playgrounds attached to its Voluntary Schools 95 per cent, are in bad condition."

There is no need to extend these quotations. Enough has been cited to show the peculiar quality of a problem which sooner or later will have to be faced by the British people. The fact is now beyond dispute that the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and such other denominations as maintain these spiritually ear-marked schools, though they can be stirred indeed to energetic action at election times in defence of their grip upon local teaching, are far too indifferent to the health or education of their children to keep their buildings in a good and going state. It would seem as though they cared less about having a school than about preventing the invasion of their lives by an open and vigorous and efficient school. They hate a clean and impartial education far more than they care for one upon their own lines. They are anti-educational far more than they are religious. One might fancy the fortunate Mumbo-Jumboites rejoicing in the special opportunities they have had in the last twenty years and still possess, and saying: "Now, under the happiest conditions possible, let us demonstrate and fix and establish for ever the delightful proofs of our great doctrines. Let us show the flatness of the earth and the inedible qualities of bread by bright and exquisite diagrams and models. Let us irradiate the place with all the happiness that the sedulous avoidance of the other sex in public can give. Let us make our schools an example to all schools with splendid buildings with new and abundant equipment, and with such teachers as only Mumbo-Jumboism can inspire." But there is not a hint of that spirit in these dismal places in which their religion has had a free hand. For two and twenty years religious denominations in England have had these twelve thousand schools upon which to demonstrate their qualities, and they have demonstrated that shabbiness, stuffiness, meanness, and low standards of performance follow upon doctrinal exclusiveness as surely as twilight leads into the night.

THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF INDIA:. DIVORCE OR LEGAL SEPARATION

5.7.1924

Is the Anglo-Saxon fit to govern any other race? He sprawls across the earth. He rules hundreds of millions of brown and black and buff peoples; he dominates and "protects" an even larger number than he actually governs. And there are moments when one is struck by a sense of his immense ineptitude. In many respects he is unquestionably a fine figure, but with regard to other races he is overbearing, he is unsympathetic, he is obtuse. Possibly he is exceptionally so. But it is more probable that no race is fit to have the upper hand over any other race; the possession of the upper hand leads at best to an inconsiderate self-righteousness, and at the worst to an extreme contempt, injustice, and cruelty. There are very few instances in the world of an even moderately satisfactory alien rule.

The Jesuits in South America seem to have done well in a kindly unprogressive way; the British rule in Nigeria and some of the West Indies is a comparatively bright spot in the history of racial interaction, the Maoris and the Basutos seem to be well-treated peoples, and the Dutch are credited with a fairly happy and prosperous Java. Until the last few years the British Empire seems to have dealt justly with its old allies, the Six Nations in Canada. These are outstanding exceptions. The general rule for peace between two races seems to be mix or get away; the darkest tragedy comes when, as in the southern United States, they can neither mix nor disentangle.

In the great elaborately educated State of the future towards which human affairs are moving, everyone and every community will be most sedulously educated and trained in inter-racial good manners. Our world at present has scarcely such a thing yet as good manners in anyone or a fully educated man. All the more reason, then, for maintaining the separation of peoples unfit to associate generously and peacefully with each other, and for releasing those who are not already separated.

The recent libel case brought by Sir Michael O'Dwyer against Sir Sankaran Nair has brought out very vividly the tremendous failure of the British Imperial system, after a century of opportunity, to produce any working tradition of interaction between the British people, the British garrison, and the Indian population. It has demonstrated the impossibility of any very long continuation of British rule in the peninsula.

After one has looked into the particulars of the case, one has just the same depressing realisation of a hopeless incompatibility that one has in some matrimonial cases. It is not so much that this or that has been done or not done; it is that the two peoples are unequally yoked in temperament and intelligence; that they do not get on together; that they never will get on together while they are closely associated. The British are not good enough nor wise enough for the job; the Indians are not great enough nor patient enough. It is a case for a separation, as friendly and speedy a separation as possible, if there is not presently to be a tragic divorce.

I must confess that I cannot conjure up any very profound indignation against General Dyer. He was, I think, stupid, spasmodically violent, and unnecessarily bloody. I do not believe that the shooting at Amritsar was inevitable, and he certainly went on shooting too long. But the sort of stupid and spasmodic violence he displayed is very characteristic of many English and many Americans. I find it in myself. I have not, luckily for myself, had General Dyer's opportunities, but it is not necessary to kill people to discover that one may be harsh and cruel when one is thwarted by mental processes one does not understand.

I had a Dyer phase, for example, as a young, eager, and untrained schoolmaster, whipping-in the difficult stragglers for class work against which they rebelled. The whole story of the Punjab troubles is really a very pitiful story not only for the native population but for the British administrators. It is the story of a conflict of resentments. One begins with an officialdom eager for "volunteers" for the Great War, unable to understand that the Great War meant nothing and should have meant nothing to any reasonable Indian person. How could it matter to them? One goes on to a story of ''pressure" increasing in its ugly details until we come to thrashings, deep

indignities, and tortures to stimulate the cheerful 'Volunteer." Pressure passes from chief to subordinate and degenerates towards cruelty at every transition; it is hard to fix responsibility at any point. It rouses resistance. The pestered and tormented populace begin to hold meetings, make vague gestures of counter violence. The irritable ass in the Anglo-Saxon make-up responds with "firmness." The firmness loads the rifles and prepares aeroplane bombs to disperse "dangerous assemblies."

There is a mood of scared obstinacy in which the Anglo-Saxon becomes capable of almost any swift atrocity. He is rarely deliberately cruel, but he is easily clumsily and hotly cruel. In the twilight the highly strung creature will shoot or lynch at very slight provocation indeed. Confronted with the dead body, his self-respect demands an adequate reason for the murder he has done. So soon as the Amritsar gardens were littered with dead and dying people, it became clear to General Dyer that a very dangerous rebellion, a second Indian Mutiny, had been heroically nipped in the bud.

His military superiors did not think so. He was rebuked and punished, very properly, very necessarily. Some amends were made to smitten and outraged India in that treatment of General Dyer, and the wretched incident of Amritsar would have passed into the receding perspectives of history if it had not been for the litigious enterprise of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Sir C. Sankaran Nair, in a book that was extensively used by the British Government for propaganda purposes in India, wrote phrases that certainly put an unjustifiable blame upon Sir Michael O'Dwyer for the Punjab outrages. Sir Michael brought his action and reopened the question.

Now the alarming and disconcerting thing is that the Court of King's Bench showed itself far less intelligent, far less alive to the realities of the Indian situation, than General Dyer's military superiors in India. It is impossible to read the reports of the case without realising that the mutual irritation of English and Indian, the profound temperamental incompatibility of the two worlds, was manifested in that Court in an exaggerated degree. The case transcended its proper limits and became a wrangle on the whole Punjab question. Mr. Justice McCardie took upon himself to inform the world at large and the people of India in particular, with all the

weight and prestige of the High Court upon him, "speaking with due deliberation," that in his view General Dyer had been wrongly punished by the Secretary of State for India.

The case of General Dyer was not before the Court. This announcement was a lawless outbreak on the part of Justice McCardie. How much due deliberation there was in Justice McCardie's utterance and how much instinctive passion may be judged by the fact that General Dyer does not seem to have been punished by the Secretary of State for India at all; his case did not come up to the Secretary of State for India; he was punished for his hasty excessive violence by his own proper military superiors in India. Internal dissension restrained the jury from inflicting excessive and exemplary damages upon Sir C. Sankaran Nair for his careless libel; the damages awarded amounted to five hundred pounds, but it will be very difficult, it will be impossible, to persuade the sore and sensitive, quick and resentful mind of India that Britain has not gone back upon even such clumsy and insufficient apologies and atonements as she had made for Amritsar and its associated sins.

There comes a time in the relationships of nations and peoples, as in the relationships of partners and lovers and married couples, when offences become irrevocable. The breaking point seemed to have been reached by the British in India. The argument is practically over, the negotiations at an end. When in the opening stages of the Great War Ireland was bilked of Home Rule there remained nothing for it, between Britain and Ireland, but a practical separation. Englishmen like myself, who regard the present detachment of Ireland and England as excessive and regrettable, were entangled, in spite of themselves, in that offence; and we were helpless to avert its just and logical consequences. So now with India. It is a sort of treachery to Indians to go on talking liberally to them, to seek their friendship, to attempt co-operations, with Dyer's impenitent rifles reloaded and our Justice McCardies ready and eager to tear up our poor attempts to make amends.

THE SPIRIT OF FASCISM:. IS THERE ANY GOOD IN IT AT ALL?

12.7.1924

During the last few weeks an extraordinary fuss has been made over the brutal murder of one of Signor Mussolini's most able and honourable opponents. Fascism has been put upon its defence. Weak but distinct sounds of disapproval have come from the more respectable sections of the Italian public. Even the London *Times* has published leading articles that seem to hint at a faint reluctant perception that the Italian dictator is remotely connected with the bloody and filthy terrorism on which his power rests.

It is, I say, an extraordinary fuss, a remarkable and almost unaccountable outbreak of the public conscience of Europe. Because it is surely a matter of common knowledge that hundreds of people have been beaten and tortured to death by the Fascisti, that innumerable outrages of a peculiarly dirty kind have been committed, that arson, wreckage, and threats are the normal expedients of Italian political life, and that the power of Mussolini has been built up upon the organisation of such violence. These things have been going on for some years in Italy. Ambitious imitators have arisen in France and Germany and Britain. British "Crusaders" have gathered for the blessing of the Duke of York and strange young men in Oxford and Cambridge have braved misunderstanding by wearing badges bearing the challenging initials B. F. Young Italians in black shirts have even been allowed to insult the decent British dead by cocking snooks — or performing whatever the Fascist salutation is — holding out an arm and twiddling the fingers or something of that sort — at the Westminster Cenotaph. In America, however, there does not seem to be much of a Fascist movement. There has been no temptation for America, with the Ku Klux Klan in active operation and a long tradition of lynch law, to adopt the Italian model. But there have been many American expressions of sympathy with Fascism. And then in the full tide of sunny approval just one more little murder occurs — a murder not

esentially different from many other Fascist murders — and the world wakes up to the infernal vileness of a thing that has been plainly before its eyes for years.

There never was so remarkable a case of the camel bearing itself bravely up to the very moment of the last straw.

To me this break back from Fascism is astonishing. I am inclined to think that Signor Mussolini found it so too. His prompt repudiation of the crime, his eager search for the body of his butchered antagonist, his sacrifice of valued cronies and close associates seem to show that his rich, emotional, rhetorical nature was very considerably scared. Nitti's house had been burnt and Nitti driven abroad. No one had protested, except perhaps Nitti. No apology to Nitti has been made by Mussolini, and no apology, no reparation for the stupid, malicious violence shown him, is likely to be made. And now, simply because Matteotti had been more difficult to handle and had got himself rather nastily killed, this uproar! It may be some time before the dictator is really comfortable again about the matter.

I do not propose to speculate here whether the storm will blow itself out and leave Signor Mussolini still on his blood-stained pedestal doing his solemn gestures of good government before the world, or whether we are in sight of the beginning of the end of Fascism. What interests me most is the complex of motives that drives behind Fascism, Ku Klux Klanism, the British Crusaders, and all these romantic attempts to organise ultra-legal tyrannies. The destructive instinct that gives us all a pleasure in smashing plates is plainly there, the natural malice against the unlike or the disturbing is very powerfully present, and the craving to exercise power. The stuff is in all of us, almost ineradicably so. (It betrays itself in this article.) We repress these impulses to a very large extent largely out of a fear of our fellow creatures' reprisals. But by joining a great society with high and disinterested professions of purpose we can conspire with a certain number of our fellows for a common indulgence of this malignant drive, and we can get some protection from the consequences and establish a real sense of moral justification. Many of us who would never dare to stab a negro in the street because of his offensive contrast with ourselves, or even to push him off the

sidewalk if we encountered him alone, can respond to the call for his lynching with a tremulous reassurance. Many an Italian employer who would not dare to face his workers in a crisis about wages will help burn up a Labour Party office with a stout heart.

But it is claimed in the case of all these societies for intimidation and cruelty that the main motive is something higher and better than this. A state of danger, social indiscipline, and slackness is alleged; a failure of the normal processes of law and police. The cruelties and filthy outrages that are the normal activities of these organisations are declared to be the acts of strong men resolute to restore peace, justice, and confidence to a disordered world.

There is something in this plea. It is not to be too lightly dismissed. The condition of Italy before the Fascista movement crystallised out was certainly very bad. The lawlessness of Italian life existed before the Fascists and will outlive them. After the war it expressed itself in terms of Communism; robbing took the name of expropriation, and the natural resentment of human beings at uninteresting and inferior work expressed itself in entirely-mischievous strikes. The manifest injustices of the social system were made the plea for a multitude of outrages that did nothing to remedy them. There have been Communist murders and Communist outrages in Italy, though nothing to parallel the extensive systematic terrorism of the Fascista regime. The difference between Communist and Fascist is mainly this, that one conspires and does mischief and cruelty to bring about a state of order and justice that cannot exist, and the other to defend and sustain one that exists only in his imagination.

Moscow and Rome are alike in this, that they embody the rule of a minority conceited enough to believe that they have a clue to the tangled incoherencies of human life, and need only sufficiently terrorise criticism and opposition to achieve a general happiness. Violent revolution and violent reaction are two aspects of one asinine thing, violent uncritical conviction. Neither recognises the enormously tentative quality of human institutions, and the tangled and scarcely explored difficulties in the path of social reconstruction. But they feel these things they will not recognise, these tangles and possible complications, as perverse opposition, and their impatient

souls rebel. Your party Communist, like your Fascist, is neither hero nor criminal; he is an ignorant, immodest, impatient fool who wants to grab the glory of inaugurating an epoch that cannot yet possibly begin. The great future of our race will owe little to either of these current nuisances. The maker of that future is the unconvenanted scientific man who works on without hurry and without delay, dissolving problem after problem in the solvent of clear knowledge, insisting on plain speech and free publication, refusing concealment, refusing to conspire and compel, respecting himself completely in his infinite respect for his fellow-men.

At the present level of education in the world, progress is like pushing one's way through a riot. The underlying fact in all these matters is that the common uneducated man is a violent fool in social and public affairs. He can work in no way better than his quality. He has not sufficient understanding to work in any other way. If there were no Fascism there would be something else of the same sort. The hope of the world lies in a broader and altogether more powerful organisation of education. Only as that develops will the vehement self-righteous and malignant ass abate his mischief in the world.

THE RACE CONFLICT:. IS IT UNAVOIDABLE?

19.7.1924

The action of the United States in setting aside its gentlemanly understanding with Japan in the matter of immigration and excluding the Japanese altogether has greatly exercised the British mind. At this distance it strikes us as an altogether uncivilised thing to do. We believe that for all practical purposes the peace of the Pacific rests on the tripod, America, Britain, Japan; we attached immense importance to the Washington Agreement and the feeling of concord it developed; we abandoned the Anglo-Japanese alliance to American feeling and, after a struggle at home, the threat of the Singapore developments was withdrawn. Our dominant idea was the collaboration, mutual trust, and mutual forbearance of three great civilised Powers. Then, apparently as a move in the dismal party game that still rules American political life, in order to secure California for the Republican Party, Japan is smacked on the face good and hard, and most of this difficult and elaborate work of reassurance is undone.

It is not a question of excluding cheap labour or alien mass immigration; that has been fairly well done for some time. It is an intolerable assertion that individual educated Japanese are unfitted by-race and culture for helpful participation in the high civilisation of the Pacific Coast. It implies that Japanese and Americans are for ever incompatible, are for ever two peoples; that for ever on this little planet their destinies are to be worked out parallel or apart — or to mingle only in a bitter conflict for exclusive survival.

These are immensely dangerous implications. It is impossible to believe that they express the real intelligence of the American public in this matter. But they do express a very widely diffused feeling, prevailing especially on the Pacific slope. That same reckless levity of the party politician, which in Britain in the “great days” of Gladstone and Disraeli, made the relations of Russia to Britain a mere party counter, has appealed to that feeling. We are forced to

recognise that a great multitude of people in California and elsewhere are at a mental level from which it is possible to contemplate a future of pent-up races and cultures, each living in its own bit of the little planet and forcibly restrained from wandering or expanding beyond its boundaries.

Is such a future possible for mankind? It was, one must admit, a dominant idea in the past. More's Utopia and most of the old Utopias were closed countries. Japan itself was a completely closed country for several centuries, and no one went into or came out of it. It was Americans who forced the closed door of Japan; they of all peoples have the least reason to complain of the Japanese spill-over into their world. But no country yet tolerates the free movement of peoples. Yet the secular force of human inventiveness fights against this system of pen and barrier.

Our States, our boundaries become intolerably small to the new methods of communication, to the broadening general intelligence. Our economic lives, in spite of tariffs and the most strenuous resistance, spread out to the ends of the earth. Financially the world is one. No peoples on the earth travel and migrate more widely, or would suffer more acutely in mind and spirit from the complete restriction of international movement than the British and Americans — the Americans even more now than the British. But we cannot go thrusting our white faces into the markets of Timbuctoo, the bazaars of Central Asia, and the temples of Osaka, if we refuse to see brown and black and yellow in the street cars of Chicago and London. There is a plain antagonism of ideals here, between a venerable parochial and a new planetary mind. Is it not time for us to sort out our ideas in these matters a little more exactly?

Opinion lies between the absolute exclusionist and the free mixer. Most of us find ourselves somewhere intermediate between these extremes. The case of the exclusionists is based on just these increasing facilities of communication which make others think that at any cost the world must become one united system. This quicker and closer intercourse is intensifying racial clash. It was all very well when only a few foreigners could travel with difficulty to one's country, but now they come in multitudes, they come to settle, they congest in lumps too solid for assimilation. It is necessary, says the

exclusionist, to make the barriers higher and stronger. Yet is this more than a temporary arrest of racial conflict in a world where finance is world-wide and every people has a need, a necessity for the produce of lands unacceptable to it? In a world, too, of increasing hygienic knowledge, in which populations tend to increase and overflow? Is it anything more than the opening phase of a development of an antagonism whose natural end is war?

It seems to me that the forces that make for material world unification, the forces of invention and enlightenment, are now so great, various and subtle that they cannot be defeated. They may be delayed, but in the end they will be stronger than any exclusionist localism. The practical question before mankind is how w^e are to react to these forces; and the practical alternatives are either a vast cycle of wars and race conflicts, race riots, tyrannies of secret societies, struggles for ascendancy ending perhaps after many centuries of tragedy and wasted opportunity in the complete triumph of some specific culture, or a deliberate attempt to minimise race hostility, devise fair methods of co-operation and work out a mixed and various world society with a code of mutual tolerance and service for the common good.

This is not to be done by ignoring race and racial differences; the natural thought forms, and dispositions and instinctive reactions of northern Europeans and Jews, negroes and whites, Indians and Chinese, vary subtly and profoundly; you can no more ignore differences of race than differences of sex. They are things greatly intensified and supplemented by differences of tradition, training, and conditions, but when all such modifications are eliminated, essential differences remain. Intermarriage provides no remedy but rather a multiplication of types. But a well-directed education can at least restrain a passionate exaggeration of these differences and prevent the antagonisms that arise out of their recognition. Man is by nature a fierce resentful being of excessive desires and facile prejudices, and no society has ever existed or could ever exist without some sort of educational adaptation of this natural savage, some schooling and toning down of his hostile impulses. But the educational necessities of the small and limited past are as nothing to the educational necessities of the present time. If races are to be brought together,

and not merely jumbled together or still more dangerously held apart, an educational effort has to be made on an altogether unprecedented scale.

An educational effort on an altogether unprecedented scale; that, I take it, is the only way of escape from the chancy, disorderly, restricted, and tragic life men are living now. The question of race, like every other great question in human affairs so soon as we follow it up, leads us to the school — no! it does not bring us to the school as we know it, but to the site of the school, the crying blank for a school that has yet to be. Get on with a school and college system commensurate with the enormous needs and dangers of this new age of world communication, or blunder and suffer. Teach everyone born into the world the history of mankind, the significance of racial differences, expand every individual imagination to the conception of the racial life as a great adventure, and to some sense of what it may achieve in the days to come. Replace the suspicious conservatism of ignorance by the curiosity and generosity of wide vision. These are enormous demands. No community has yet spread more than the thinnest veneer of teaching over its whole population. But the alternative to doing so is to have the machinery and methods of the new age used to arm and intensify the passions of the old. A world no better educated than this will never be very much better than this; it will be a world of race mobs and lynchings, of pogroms and race brigandage, of furious struggles for disputed territories, and wars and wars and wars. If they continue upon the present lines of narrow patriotism, of race pressure and race exclusion, I do not see how a war between Japan and the United States can be avoided for very many years. And until they have made a great educational effort I do not see how they can get away from their present lines of action.

THE SCHOOLS OF A NEW AGE: A FORECAST

26.7.1924

In these articles I have been harping continuously on the vast disorder, the uncertainty and waste of the world spectacle to-day; and I have been clamouring for more education, for much more education, for a more strenuous and devoted educational effort.

Comments and replies, a quite copious correspondence, have brought home to me two things very plainly. One is the deep resentment aroused in many minds by the statement of what is to me an obvious fact, the littleness, imperfection and unsatisfactoriness and transitoriness of all contemporary life. Manifestly, they think Fifth Avenue in a state of traffic congestion. Ascot week, charity balls, Pahn Beach, the opening of Parliament, the movie industry, and an American Presidential election are all right. Or at least right enough to live with pleasantly.

They think me a dismal and cantankerous hunks for wanting, as I seem to them to do, to shatter and reconstruct a world which sustains such delightful things. They do not realise that this world is being shattered anyhow, and will not be reconstructed by any automatic process. They want this world left as it is and not "messed about with" by innovating people. They have a will to be satisfied, an obstinate will for contentment. Mixed up with that, and probably fundamental to it, is a profound disbelief in the power of men willfully to alter their conditions and determine their collective fate.

Now if I have any claim to distinction among journalists it is that I do not share that widespread scepticism and fatalism. I do not let the fact that some of us, myself included, are having an undeservedly good time hide the fact that the system, such as it is, is wasteful, that it cripples the possibilities of nearly everyone, and is, to millions of people, actively distressful and cruel.

I belong to a small but growing minority which believes that man has come to such a phase of knowledge and power that he is already able and may very soon be willing to put a bit between the teeth of

the monster of wild change that is now trampling this world. We believe that human society could be and presently will be deliberately reconstructed more boldly, more elaborately, and with more definite intention, upon a scale commensurate with the greatness of modern mechanism and to an extent that will enable it to anticipate and discipline what are now the incalculable forces of change. And our faith is that the way to this expansion of life, this release from chance, lies through Universities and schools, through a universal education of the entire population of the world and through a universal and sustained thought process keeping pace with ever-changing necessities.

We are all democratic Socialists in so far as we regard it as the general concern to maintain order and law, to secure the common needs of everyone by carrying on the exploitation of natural wealth and the production and distribution of staple necessities for the universal and not for particular profit, and to provide education and health services for all; but we are aristocratic individualists in demanding world-wide freedom of movement for all, the utmost scope for self-realisation, and the freest utterance and hearing for every creative and innovating spirit — for everyone indeed who may possibly be creative. We see, as the only way to the sort of human life we desire, an immense development of the reorganisation of every sort of research and of the whole educational system of the world,

A rough parallelism of things mechanical and things mental will put the case as we see it. In the last two centuries the means of transport has developed from the stage coach and sailing ship to the automobile, express train, great liner, and aeroplane; there has been much more than a tenfold increase in speed and a corresponding increase in security, versatility, and comfort. Our mechanical power and mechanical productivity have increased in far greater proportion. There has been an educational advance also, but it has not kept pace with this.

More people in the country are educated now, certain elements of education, reading and writing, have been spread very widely, but the education of a fully educated man is not conspicuously better than it was two hundred years ago, and education has not spread, as

railways and factories have spread from the Atlantic countries, all over the earth.

We believe that we are now in the dawn of a phase of educational thrust, corresponding to the mechanical thrust of a century ago. That former thrust redistributed the population of every country it affected, created new towns, altered the build and lay-out of every town it touched, created new suburban systems, and revolutionised the visible aspect of life. The new thrust will reconstruct the scattered and confused mental life of the age, will create mental nuclei everywhere, link up the whole countryside to new and more powerful mental centres. I doubt whether at present, apart from school children, one person in a hundred in either Europe or America could be described as a mental worker; we foretell a time when something like one in eight or one in five will be definitely employed in work that is primarily mental, either as student, as teacher, as scientific investigator, as artist or writer.

In every village there will be a school, a reading-room, a theatre, closely associated with the health service and recreation of the place. It will be the central architectural fact of the place, the group of buildings about which the homes will cluster. In every town there will be the district schools and the great high school, the art studios, the theatres, the laboratories. Every considerable town will have a University as its chief expression and its crowning glory. The agricultural and industrial life of the land will be closely linked to the technical research of the colleges; they will go thither for advice and direction. The business and financial system will no longer be secret and private, a system of competitive conspiracies, but it will be working in close touch with the general scientific life; the banker will be a professor of economics, the iron- master will be a metallurgist. That is the order of the world we desire, and which we foresee through our hopes. That is the world that will replace the system of stampedes, scrambles, riots, and traffic jams in which we live to- day.

THE IMPUDENCE OF FLAGS:. OUR POWER RESOURCES AND. MY ELEPHANTS, WHALES, AND GORILLAS

2.8.1924

The British Empire Exhibition at Wembley is open to all sorts of criticism, and is occasionally quite absurd, but it contrives to be entertaining. Many of us dislike the Kipling quality and the strong, unpleasant flavour of Imperial Preference that hang about it. I have reviled its commercialism; its relative disregard of educational duties and responsibilities; its suggestion of imperial self-sufficiency. But all sorts of conferences are meeting at Wembley, and occasionally a strong breath of human common sense dispels for a time the stuffy, foggy conceit of our recent and transitory Empire. Wembley, in spite of itself, becomes international and contributes to the project of a new world.

The British Electrical and Associated Trades have been holding a most enlightening and hopeful conference on the power resources of the world — not of the Empire, be it noted, but of the world. Prominent among the speakers at the opening were the secretary of the United States Federal Power Commission, the president of the Italian Electrical Committee, and other "outsiders." A real attempt to see the world as one economic whole has been made. A frank admission of the need for organised world unity and world co-operation underlies the activities of this particular gathering.

The President of the Conference was the Prince of Wales. lie made a very remarkable speech. Three or four years ago I made a number of people extremely indignant by criticising the world tour of the Prince. I complained that his speeches and proceedings seemed to ignore the world situation and to intensify the imperialist egotism of the narrower sort of English throughout the world. He did seem to me then to be behaving as so many Army and Indian Civil Service people and so forth still behave, as if the British Empire was a clique of Anglican communities aloof from the common interests of mankind.

Quite a number of worthy persons seemed to think that a typical common Englishman like myself had no right to pass a judgment upon a young man, a quarter of a century his junior, simply because that young man happened to be the Heir Apparent. They wanted him to be treated as divine, above politics. But that sort of thing is not in the English tradition. The British Royal Family is not divine; it cannot keep out of politics if it is to function at all, because it has constantly to speak and act for the Empire as a whole; and it is a matter of very great importance that the Prince should show himself as he has now shown himself, growing in political wisdom and sensible of the wider vision of human unity that opens before mankind. Here, for example, is a sentence from his speech in which he sinks the Prince altogether, lost in that much nobler thing, the creative citizen of the world:

"Finance, science and research are universal, but the utilisation of the results derived from these activities is not universal, and in this disparity lies one of the greatest obstacles to progress."

And again: "You have before you. in the reports submitted to the World Power Conference, the raw material for a survey of the power resources of the world; you can now explore many countries which have hitherto been veiled in mystery, and assess at their true value the possibilities of an immense industrial development in many of them; you may, from this material, erect the structure which will go beyond the confines of one country, or group of countries, and include all those parts of the world where man can hope to prosper. International cooperation may emerge from the realm of the ideal into the realm of practical utilisation as the result of your deliberations, and I sincerely trust that full success will attend them."

I doubt if any royal personage has ever so distinctly repudiated that narrow particularism to the realm, to which royalty is supposed to be distinctly pledged. This is hoisting the flag of the world-State over all the Imperial flags that wave from the Wembley buildings as plainly and frankly as, considering all things, it can be done — at Wembley.

In very many ways the last half-year has been a year of mental and moral recovery in Europe. A year ago, when one wrote of nationalism as a dangerous and dividing sentiment, of national

sovereignty as a nuisance, of the pre- emption of this or that area of the world's surface and of this or that supply of necessary national material in the interests of the exploiters under this or that flag as a method of crippling and wasting the whole economic life of mankind, one felt that one was writing and thinking in an almost hopeless minority. All the world seemed to have gone nationalist and exclusive. One felt one shouted to an entirely inattentive preoccupied crowd under a stormy sky against which nothing was bright but the national and Imperial flags. Flags were supreme. Now it is as if the sun of reason shone everywhere, and the sundering flags visibly droop in that sunlight.

There are moments when it would seem that after all man is a reasonable creature. The accumulation of considerations that is now plainly driving men, in spite of ancient traditions and prejudices, towards an organised cosmopolitanism is very great. These considerations come in on us from all sides. While one is refusing to be anything but an isolated patriot on this count, one is being undermined almost unawares upon another. Many of us who will hear of no super-Government to save us from war, nor of any properly equipped and provided super-Court to settle international disputes, find ourselves presently confronted by the problem of epidemics and consenting to the idea of supernational controls from the health point of view. The postal union, which the Great War strained but has not destroyed, is after all only the thin framework of a much more comprehensive union of communications. When I read the speech of the Prince of Wales at the World Power Conference I was at once reminded of the preachings and efforts of that wonderful old man, David Lubin, the Israelite who set up the International Institute of Agriculture. The chief objective of this "Institute" was a contemporary survey with a view to a proper distribution of the world's staple productions. Shortages were to be anticipated and headed off; over-production was to be restrained. And arising out of this main idea was Lubin's secondary project, the placing of all the shipping of the world and all the great international railway lines — he lived before air transport seemed a probability — under one world authority which would fix freights as we fix postal charges. This Power Conference has been talking pure Lubinism about the world

distribution of power.

I suppose it is because I had a biological training that I find one of the most attractive arguments for world unity, and the suppression of flag-worship, in the need of protecting whales from ourselves and ourselves from bacteria. The dwindling world fauna of this planet is in urgent need of international game laws and a supernational game-keeper. Species of whales are being exterminated because the ocean is no man's land, and if one State restrains its whalers from excessive wasteful slaughter they can shelter their activities beneath some less scrupulous flag. Diseases cannot be stamped out of the world by systematic sanitation while one affected Power sees fit to exercise its sovereign right to remain filthy. And any species of birds or beasts that lives under a careless flag may be exterminated by the sportsman and on one have a right to protest. The gorilla, they say, is going fast, and the African elephant. These marvels of life, these strange and wonderful beings of whose vitality and unpulses we know so little, are being killed because they are insufficiently protected. Their chief slaughterers are patriotic collectors, and the fewer the survivors the hotter is the competition for specimens to adorn their beastly national collections. Yet the gorilla belongs not to the flag that claims its habitat but to all mankind. It belongs to me, to any man in Canada or in Texas, as much as it does to any West African or any Belgian. But there is no world control to protect these grotesque and marvellous creatures for us and for our children's children. They will go — one more vivid item in the vast wastage of animal, vegetable and mineral wealth that the scrambling insufficiency of mere flag rule involves. For them and for a thousand vital treasures the world government may come too late. Yet that it is coming rapidly and surely, the words and the spirit of the discourse of the Prince of Wales, in that very temple of British Imperial exclusiveness, the Wembley Empire Exhibition, bear witness. Wembley was to have inaugurated Imperial Preference, but it is really Imperial Preference lying in state. I wonder how many years it will be before we have a World Exhibition to bring home to us the need for free trade, free speech, and free movement everywhere under unified world controls.

HAS COMMUNISM A FUTURE?. THE POSSIBILITY OF A SOCIALIST RENASCENCE

9.8.1924

I HAVE a real affection for Communists — and a temperate admiration. It is the sort of love that leaps forward to chasten. In a world of oafish self-complacencies set in a morass of dull submission to the chances of life it is a consolation and refreshment to find any people who realise the self- destructiveness of the present system and, however vaguely, the possibility of remaking human society upon richer and happier lines. The value of the Communist Party as an organised ferment is very high. I should like to see a properly accredited representative of the party free to air his opinions in every high school and college — particularly in the United States. Everybody in the place would be the brighter and better for his beneficent irritation.

The House of Lords entertains its leisure by passing Bills to suppress Communist Sunday Schools, and the Archbishop of Canterbury speaks in tones of horror of the teachings in these establishments. Nothing could witness more effectively to the wholesome mental stir these schools create. Most of the teaching in Anglican Sunday Schools is equally repulsive to me, but so long as they do not raid the public funds for their support I do not see why they should not teach what they like. I am English, not Anglican. My blood and traditions incline me to the utmost free speech and free teaching and free propaganda for everyone. No one is obliged to send his children to a Communist School, and I do not see why the half truth of Anglicanism should not have to face the half truth of Communism. The founder of Christianity talked a lot of Communism, but I cannot recall a solitary phrase of His to justify the existence of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Yet at the same time I am doubtful whether there is much of a future for the Communist Party. I doubt whether in twenty-five years' time there will be many Communists, under that name, below

middle-age. A few nice, fierce old gentlemen will survive in smoking-rooms and cafes. The Communist movement is a part of the present world, it is a shadow cast by existing economic absurdities, it is a current reaction. In five-and-twenty years' time the projects of a scientific Socialism will have converted and absorbed most of the youthful enthusiasm and resentful energy that now finds its expression in Communism. Communism is a phase, a bitter and sterile experiment, in the development of the Socialist idea. Socialism is its parent and its heir. The movement for the organised exploitation of the whole world in the collective interest existed before the Communist Party, and will be going on long after that party is a quaint tradition.

At present the Communist Party still dominates the government of Russia. But it does so at the sacrifice of all its constructive claims. In seven years the Russian experiment has demonstrated the intellectual sterility of the movement beyond any further dispute.

The Bolshevik Government came to power in a state of ignorant confidence, treating criticisms as a blasphemous reflection on its omniscience, insulting and persecuting every sort of Socialist outside its trained and disciplined ranks. The Government took over factories, uncertain whether it meant to run them under a quasi-military discipline or on guild lines as free communities of workers; it "smashed" money, and discovered it had no other way of computing the mutual services and obligations of men. It was touching to see Lenin in the Kremlin in 1920 struggling with childish projects for the "electrification of Russia" and unable to explain what sort of town centre, if any, his Communist Russia would possess. He had no working ideas that were worth a rap about this very obvious matter. I left him, sympathetic with him in the face of his stupendous task, but a little amazed at his extreme unpreparedness. However, if one may trust a virulent article by Trotsky that has just been published in English, he lost his temper in true Communist fashion at being asked awkward questions and resorted to Trotsky for comfort. "Ugh!" said Lenin. "What a perfect petit bourgeois!" and so restored the mental calmity entirely respectful scepticism had ruffled. For in Communist circles if you can call anyone or anything "bourgeois," the question is settled and discussion is at an end.

The emptiness of plan, the extreme assurance, which distinguishes modern Communism is the secret alike of its attractiveness in times of social trouble and its futility in constructive effort. It does not worry the oppressed, the discontented, and the unhappy with difficult projects for human readjustment. It lumps together the complex and various disorders of social life, the muddle of human prejudices and impulses, as one malignant thing, the "Capitalist system." Destroy this legendary monster and the Millennium will ensue. Instead of overcoming the fool in Everyman, you must obstruct, waste, sabotage all the current services of the community. Having convinced the world that nothing else will work, the dictatorship of the party will ensue. There could be no teaching more successful in a mass meeting and less useful in a bureau. It gives all the excitement and release of a revolution with none of its tiresome responsibilities.

It was Marx who created modern Communism. It is the sterile mule of Socialism and a scientific ambition. Socialism from the days of Robert Owen onward was a thing of schemes and projects. It was perpetually seeking better arrangements. Its methods were Utopian. But Marx was bitten by an ambition to rival Darwin; he was to be the Darwin of social and political science, with none of Darwin's modesty or Darwin's intellectual patience. He had the mind of a theologian with the pretension of a scientific inquirer, and he had the dull man's hatred and contempt for the human imagination. His movement was to be "scientific" with all the magic that word carried half a century ago. There was to be nothing imaginative and no confounded ideals. It was all to be fatalistic. It was never going to plan what would happen because it was going to know what would happen. He and his associates produced a very sound and ample analysis of the processes of decay in the business life of the time, but with such ambitions and such repudiations they could produce no scheme of any replacement system. They have no scheme to this day. Even Russia has not taught the Communist the practical need of Utopias.

At a certain level of intelligence party Communism is a very attractive teaching indeed. Its self-assurance is very reassuring. Any human being not absolutely stupid hates to be robbed of freedom and educational opportunity before thirteen or fourteen and thrust into

uncongenial and hopeless toil. Most employment is bitter for young people. At the same time people whose education is truncated so soon usually fail to develop sufficient intellectual power to understand complex industrial and financial processes. They develop an inferiority complex about such things that clamours in them for comfort.

Communism embodies that hate and provides that comfort. It points to the "Capitalist" as the oppressor and claims to furnish in a few phrases all that needs to be known. In a social system that educated everyone to sixteen or eighteen and then gave a fair wide choice of public service there would be none of that hate and that defensive aggressiveness, that suppressed suspicion of ignorance and inefficiency that makes Communist controversy so loud and rude, which has made Mr. Trotsky so loud and rude. The marshes in which the cantankerous spirit of Communism grows would be drained and evaporated. By the theory of Marx it was in the highly developed industrial system of Western Europe, and particularly in Great Britain, that the Communist Revolution would first occur. The disconcerting fact for Communists is that it occurred in Russia, where the industrial organisation was at a low level and there were eighty per cent, of illiterates. In Great Britain nobody except the enterprising people who want to raise money from imbecile dukes and rich old ladies even pretends to be afraid of a Communist Revolution.

There is a considerable dread of Communist activities in America. That is very largely due to an uneasy conscience, aware of a great mass of unassimilated immigrant labour very unfairly treated and very inadequately educated. There may be some grounds for such apprehensions; I will confess I do not think the present schools and colleges of America good enough and strong enough for the constructive work they ought to do. There may be a future for Communism there, and there will probably be a big movement towards Communism in the industrial centres of India and China and Japan. But in Europe I think that the Communist drive has passed its maximum and that the popular mind is moving onward to a more constructive and hopeful type of Socialism.

Just as art in a phase of extreme sterility escaped by going back

behind Raphael and starting afresh from the Pre-Raphaelite phase, so I think Socialism will soon be getting behind the unfortunate misdirection of Marx and Engels to become once more Utopian and fruitful.

THE LITTLE HOUSE:. AS IT WAS, IS NOW, AND APPARENTLY EVER WILL BE

16.8.1924

What a very odd spectacle the British Parliament face to face with the housing problem is! On the strength of that issue alone I should imagine that any really civilised judgment would condemn the poor old institution at once and set about a revolutionary search for a better constructed instrument of government.

There is a shortage of housing accommodation in Great Britain; the picturesque, creeper-clad country cottage is too often a cramped, decivilising, insanitary fraud, and most of the industrial population lives in slums worse than the corresponding slums in America and little better than those on the Continent of Europe. You cannot get a house or flat in which a civilised family can live for much less than a hundred pounds a year rent, and most of those available at that price are stereotyped and dull-looking, and sometimes detestably ugly. Below that level comes a descending series of inconvenient, unsound, and unpleasant lodgments for the mass of the population. The Labour Ministry of Health has been making large encouraging gestures of help, it has projected big and complicated bargains with the building trades and the building trades unions that may — if all goes well — provide at an immense cost on a quasi-charity basis, at the public expense, a sufficiency of houses for the poorer sort of people of fifty years hence, according to the ideas of comfort and decency prevailing fifty years ago.

The Government and the local authorities are to pay about half the cost of building a multitude of houses, the assistance being given on the sole condition that they fall below a certain standard of size and comfort, and the industrial employer will be able to pay low wages in proportion to the cheapness attained. In other words, the Labour Government is doing a deal with the building trade in the interest of the low-grade employer and is putting British industry “on the rates.” They are returning by a circuitous route to the condition of things in England before the New Poor Law, when farmers grew rich by

employing labour in receipt of outdoor relief, at otherwise impossibly low wages.

The most striking thing about these housing proposals is the tacit acceptance by all parties in Parliament that the population of the coming years must be put away, each family in a little separate house of its own. If anything was needed to prove that the Socialism of the Labour Party was merely skin deep and its creative intentions an electioneering bid, it would be this. If one thing is clearer than another in the outlook of the modern community, it is the impossibility of the small separate house. It is a cage of needless toil for women; it is a place of deprivation and hardship for children. The whole drift of things is in favour of the highly organised block building containing a great number of houses. In this there can be electric light, radiators, a supply of hot and cold water, efficient sanitary accommodation, group wash-houses, adequate cupboards, and convenient shopping facilities, all provided at a less cost than is needed for the same number of scattered low-grade homes, each under its separate roof, with lamps to clean, fires to light, water to boil, and every possible demand for feminine drudgery and servitude.

In their dreams people think of Mr. Wheatley's projected houses as little flower-girdled cottages, each with a bright little garden and a drying-ground and an uncontrolled multitude of children playing in the sun; in reality we shall get rows and rows of mean little boxes on the outskirts of our towns, jammed together into slums, each fouling the air with a separate chimney, and remote from every modern amenity.

At present a large part of the population of East London lives in small houses of two stories, or two stories and a basement. Idiotic foreign visitors surveying this from train windows remark on the Englishman's superb individualism, so that every man's house is his castle. In the East End no man's house is his castle; every floor, and often every room, is a separate household, and sometimes these households entertain lodgers. This state of affairs the new Labour legislation will extend and perpetuate. Yet plans have been made that show beyond dispute that the whole population of industrial London could be rehoused in fine and handsome apartment buildings, with night and day lifts, roof-gardens, and nearly all the light, air. and

conveniences to be found in a Kensington flat, at hardly greater cost than would be needed to choke all the ways out of London with a corresponding spread of Wheatley hovels, and so great an amount of space could be saved by doing so that half that area of London could be made into a playground and garden.

But even to entertain schemes of that sort requires imagination, and the new Labour Government has shown itself the least imaginative of Governments. It has excreted or suppressed all its creative elements. It is a class-Government, and it embodies the subdued mind of the common wages-earner. Whatever is, it accepts, from Court costume to slums. Its idea of life is the life of the back street in which it has always lived, and it wants more back streets and cheaper back streets to live in, with an occasional treat in the garden of Buckingham Palace. In dealing with housing, just as in dealing with mines or with transport, it shows itself incapable of any breadth or power of initiative.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this housing legislation is the ineffectiveness of the women. When women were struggling for the vote the world was given to understand that their success would be an end to "man-made laws" and "man-made" ways of living. There was to be an astonishing release of the sensible, practical feminine mind. Well, here is a question that concerns women primarily. A very large proportion of the girls and women of to-day, before their lives are out, will have to live either in the slums that the Labour Government is failing to reorganise, or in the rows and clumps of boxes of brick or timber that are to be spread out over the outskirts of every centre of population. There was nothing to prevent the distinguished women of the Labour Party from giving these men who are framing-up these schemes to build pauper houses and endow the building trade at the public expense a lead towards better things. These houses of the Wheatley project mean an effectual subjugation of great multitudes of women to dingy drudgery for scores of years to come; they mean the growth of a new generation of children with miserable standards of comfort and freedom. But so far we have had no guidance from intelligent women at all, but only speeches from such mere party supporters as Dr. Marion Phillips sustaining the preposterous pretensions of Mr. Wheatley. The Women's Housing

Councils' National Federation, with its resolutions for the glorification of Mr. Wheatley's building ramp, does no more than emphasise the general feminine apathy. Generally, the women of the country seem not to be awake to the manner in which this business concerns them.

Only one exception occurs to me at the present moment in the widespread indifference of intelligent and influential women to the comfort and outlook of the mass of their sex, and that is Mrs. Leonora Eyles, the novelist. Her book, The Woman in the Little House, is a most intelligent, sympathetic, and illuminating account of what it means to live in just such little houses as Mr. Wheatley and his friends, the employers and employed of the building trade, are conspiring to stereotype. She describes not slum life but the life of an ordinary working man's wife in London, without exaggeration and without extenuation. It is a picture of extreme dinginess and meanness, relieved only by the pluck and devotion and hopefulness and cheerful humour that enable these people to hang on and hope for better things. It is this sort of life the Wheatley legislation proposes to extend and perpetuate, because in Britain, as everywhere in the world, political life is divorced from the creative imagination, and because the mass of common men and women in the world do not know how much they may reasonably ask for from those who have access to the science and control of the resources of the world.

THE TRIVIALITY OF DEMOCRACY. AND THE FEMININE INFLUENCE IN POLITICS

23.8.1924

The other day I was discussing the political outlook in Great Britain with a very close and shrewd observer of political motives. I live very much in a dream of a saner world and he lives in active reaction to the passing hour, but we both knew most of the leading figures in public affairs and we were surveying the present extraordinary fragmentation of parties in Parliament — for even the Labour Party now is hardly on speaking terms with itself and has nothing but office to hold it together. His thoughts ran much more on personalities than mine did. Was Mr. Asquith played out? Would Lloyd George "come back"? What was the future of Lord Birkenhead? Would Mr. Baldwin ever be brighter and better? Was Mr. Masterman the resuscitated hope of the Liberal Party? Was there anyone of any promise at all in the Labour Party? And so on.

Unlike my friend, I do not go about culling incompatible posies of politicians. I have no interest in gathering together a marketable bunch. The failure of party government, the dissolution of all British parties, cheers and pleases me. Great Britain, I said, would have to lead the way to a new stage of democratic government and get itself a Legislature of a more manageable size, elected by Proportional Representation.

"They won't," said my friend, meaning by "they" our bright-eyed millions of voters. "They can't grasp ideas like that — new, difficult ideas. It takes ten minutes' attention to understand Proportional Representation. You can't go to the country with a thing like that."

"But unless we get a more efficient Legislature, how can we tackle our difficulties with money, with Europe, with India?"

"We don't tackle difficulties," said my friend; "Parliaments can't."

"Most of the Labour Party promised to support Proportional Representation at the last election."

"And ran away from it. There was a tuppenny-ha'penny

advantage in cheating on that, so of course they cheated. They'll run away from everything except office. They're just a lot of poor things who've spent too much money on Court clothes and in dressing up their wives and daughters fit and proper for the Garden Parties, and they want to get the wear out of it all before they go back into the shadows. Nobody in Parliament who isn't conspicuous is going to let Parliament be altered so that it excludes second-rate people. It's against nature. You might as soon expect Congress to scrap the American Constitution. You'll never live to see a General Election in England or America that isn't fought on thoroughly silly lines — on the old electoral method."

"But think of the tasks that lie before the world!" "What's the good of thinking of them?" asked my friend. "It only worries you."

"There has to be an organisation of international affairs to prevent war, there has to be disarmament with security, world transport at standard charges, the re-establishment of a workable world currency, the development of education throughout the world"

"Things like that aren't going to be done by Parliament," said my friend. "They may be done behind the backs of the politicians — if there are interests and intelligences big enough to want them and organise them, but have you ever met the average voter?"

"I know, I suppose, as many people as you do."

"But your head's in the clouds...."

My friend paused, and then remarked with malignant satisfaction, "The next big question for England is Prohibition."

"But it's such a secondary matter!" "Exactly. That's why it's going to be primary. It's trivial enough for a democracy to be really earnest about it. Take international settlements and war possibilities; these are infinitely more important things, I grant you. But what does the average voter know about them? There are possibilities of enslavement, of blood and death, of millions of the silly rabbits being scared and starved and mutilated and killed in international conflicts. But these voters of yours can't grasp the complexity of that. They want peace, of course, but they don't know what makes peace. So everybody puts peace on the party platform, peace and the League of Nations, or peace and conscription, *be prepared,' or peace and isolation, peace and the dear old flag. It doesn't matter. The poor

mutts can't grasp it at all. Talk of that kind of thing, argument about that kind of thing, only confuses and wearies them. It doesn't count in politics. And then there's currency and finance. Even the bankers don't understand that — and most of them don't want to. Prices go up and down and credit expands and contracts and the rabbits get suddenly well off and full of conceit, or they get out-of-work and starved and driven to suicide, but it's all quite beyond them how it happens, and it gives them a headache and a vicious temper even to try to understand. Obviously they don't know and obviously therefore they ought to be concerned for knowledge, but what is obvious to you or me isn't obvious to them. What is the vote-catching value of spending money on scientific and social and political research? What is the vote-catching value of raising the school age to sixteen? That only makes the grown-up voter jealous of the next generation.

"But Prohibition, shutting the public-house round the corner, every man and woman understands that, and the women will vote for it anyhow, blind to every other consideration. That is something they can understand, and the peace of the world, the volume of trade, and economic justice may go hang so long as son and husband can be shut and barred from the drink. Interference with the personal habits of other people is innate in women; they acquire it as sisters, wives, and mothers. The enfranchisement of women was the last step in the devotion of democracy to futility. It ended the last possibilities of constructive legislation and inaugurated the age of restraint."

He went on to sketch the growth of the Prohibition movement in England; the drift of politicians towards a defined attitude in the matter; the way in which the question could be used to thrust aside wider and more abstract issues. "Watch the speeches of Lloyd George," he said. "Watch the speeches of the pushing young men. They are nearer to it than you are. They know." So-and-so said this yesterday, and So-and-so said that last week.

He produced an effect of being detestably right about his facts. He said that making Prohibition a part of the American Constitution was the silliest thing in history; one might hold the extremest temperance views and still understand that a matter of personal health and conduct should have no part in the fundamental laws of a State. But

the American citizen had lost any idea of what a constitution was. Presently the American woman might put a morning bath in the constitution, or the weekly weighing of babies or the universal use of toothbrushes. Or they might require every married man and woman to carry his or her marriage lines conspicuously displayed upon the person, like the bright little licence on an English motor-car. These were the things they held important. England was going the same way, following a few years behind America, because it was a country of more deeply established disciplines and diffidences, but I might rest assured it would get to the same end. In twenty years' time there would be no politics left in Parliament but the politics of scandal and minor moralities, and the big things of human life would be managed in some other fashion.

Thus my friend, and I found it very difficult to gainsay him.

SEX ANTAGONISM:. AN UNAVOIDABLE AND INCREASING FACTOR IN MODERN LIFE

30.8.1924

I HAVE been reading a book called *Ancilla's Share*; it professes to be an indictment of Sex Antagonism, but indeed it is an artless demonstration of it. It was first published as anonymous, but then came paragraphs ascribing it to Miss Elizabeth Robins. Now I gather she admits her authorship. I find little of her fine gloomy talent in it. Possibly she is only partly responsible.

It is under a confusing number of heads a tirade against the hostility of man to woman. Instances from all the ages jostle one another. Men do not even give women fair literary criticism, and this point is rather stressed. Mr. Birrell disliked the work of Hannah More; Mr. Max Beerbohm, in a delightful and probably untruthful sketch, says he cut up and burnt a work by some woman novelist unnamed. But I doubt if strong sexual feeling underlay either offence. It happened to be a woman novelist. But Mr. Max Beerbohm has been distinctly unflattering to various men contemporaries, and I doubt if Mr. Birrell would wallow in praise of Herbert Spencer. It happens that I have annotated several of the works of Professor Nicholas Murray Butler in a disparaging spirit; marginal illustrations are my weakness; and I have been at great pains to destroy by fire a large nobly printed card, very thick and strong and stylish, exhibiting one of his aphorisms. It was sent me by some American admirer we evidently share between us; it was probably intended to dominate my bedroom or study; and it found a useful role at last, charred but invincible — for fire recoiled from it — as packing for a picture. I suppose these facts would win me a place side by side with Mr. Birrell and Mr. Max Beerbohm in a revised edition of Ancilla's Share. As it is they merely prove that we all have our literary dislikes. I don't think Jane Austen has any case against men for lack of appreciation. I don't think that any writing woman of Miss Robins's generation can complain of anything in her reception by

male critics, except perhaps a too eager welcome.

But I will not embark upon any detailed treatment of the confused riot of assertions against men in this book. Need one even pretend to take seriously Miss Robins's proposition that women would have managed the world better than men have done, that they would have prevented the world war and arrested the financial disorganisation of Europe? This talk of Ancilla's tremendous nobility in the political field is sheer nonsense. So far the enfranchisement of women in Britain and America has had a confusing and belittling influence upon politics. It was the women's influence in politics which achieved the crowning silliness of making Prohibition a part of the constitution of the United States, and in England women have done nothing to save the face of the countryside from Mr. Wheatley's dismal women-enslaving house pustules. The drive for better education is no stronger than it was before our sisters had the vote; the drive for more scientific research is perceptibly feebler. Disarmament is manifestly a question of minor importance to women. Nevertheless this book proves by its temper what it fails to prove by its arguments, that sex antagonism is a fact of very great and increasing importance in our world.

Miss Robins thinks she is at war with men; she is really at war with sex. She wants to have men restrained, reproached, and incessantly scolded for things for which they are no more responsible than girls in a nunnery. Women dress extravagantly, paint their faces, brighten their eyes, wear high heels, disregard serious for trivial effective interests. It is the men, she says, who make them do it. It is not. It is the presence of men in the world which leads to these exaggerations and intensifications of sexual attraction; but that is a different matter altogether. If all men were reduced to a helot class, there would still be magnificent dresses and extreme physical display by women. And men do not welcome women as a sort of neutral competitors in their fields of work, because sex imposes a different attitude upon them. Sex is mentally as important, if not more important, to a normal man than it is to a normal woman. I am not writing of what ought to be, but of what is. Sex is an enormous physiological burthen for a woman, but not, it would seem, in most cases, such a mental burthen, and it does not last out her lifetime as it

does a man's. But for a normally constituted man woman is the natural symbol of life, and he cannot live fully and happily without her companionship and reassurance. She has a material need of his strength and his greater power over resources, but he is dependent upon her for gifts of peace and encouragement that cannot be covenanted for.

Nature's way has always been a paradoxical way, and it is a fundamental fact in this connection that as human life struggles up from the instinctive level we find no prepared adjustment of woman's mind to man's. There is no feminine mind different from and reciprocal to a man's mind. They are both, man's mind and woman's mind alike, in the form of pure egotism. As the life of man becomes more civilised and mental, his need for an adequate helpmeet increases. He can no longer get along with a woman bought or captured and set to her special business in the harem. But while his need for a free and willing helpmeet increases and his demands upon her expand, we find no corresponding disposition in able women to co-operate with men. They seem to want to drop their sex and set up as imitations of all the successful male types. They become a new sex of little aggressive pseudo-men. They want to wear the wig of the judge and carry the mace in just the same spirit that makes the dressmaker adapt soldiers' uniforms and turn the djibba of a dervish into a coquettish garment. They want to substitute Great Women for Great Men in our histories and turn out Buddha and Mahomet and Christ in favour of feminine equivalents. They will presently want a Lady God in a world in which the male will be a fading memory. It will be a parallel and parodied world. That is what makes this tumultuous eager book so significant and so dismaying. It is an incoherent silly sort of book, but it is written in deadly earnest. It is probably widely representative. It expresses very typically a vast movement towards non-co-operation which will involve the profoundest changes in our social life. But it would take up far beyond the limitations set to newspaper articles to discuss the possible treaty that may at last end this profound instinctive breach.

LIVING THROUGH:. THE TRUTH ABOUT AN INTERVIEW

6.9.1924

It is a foolish thing for a writer to see an interviewer. Other men may want an intermediary to tell the world of their thoughts and intentions, but a writer should be able to do his own telling. Yet I am always falling again into this folly.

They come along with such nice introductions. They are so young and respectful and reassuring. They do not make it clear that they mean to turn your unguarded civilities into an article until quite at the end of the encounter.

And then arrives the interview, with one's casual suggestions made into oracular statements, clothed in uncongenial and sometimes horrible phrases, and mixed up with one's visitor's ideas and — amplifications. And everybody takes notice of it and judges one by it. One's writings may be as copious as the Nile in flood, but nobody ever seems to get concerned about what one says in them. But let loose an interview, and people quote your alleged utterances as though they were your most polished thoughts, write articles rubbing in the young gentleman's choicest phrases, preach sermons reproving your unwonted expressions. They seem to feel that at last they have really got you.

I write with one occasion fresh in my mind. A little while ago an interviewer told the world that I said the next few years will be an age of fun — the world was tired of tragedy. For my own part I was to write funny books ´ henceforth.... I shall probably never hear the last of that.

Oddly enough I do not remember that particular interviewer at all distinctly, nor what friend's introduction it was let him in on me. I shouldn't know him again. But I do remember the conversation to which he gave this astonishing twist. I remember my train of thought because it is one that has been rather frequently with me nowadays.

He had tried to get me talking of the extravagant horrors of the Next Great War. I suppose he thought I should talk impossible

rubbish about bombs as big as houses and whole cities destroyed by poison gas and so forth, and he would be able to retail this monstrous stuff half jeeringly and half credulously. At any rate, I found myself talking of the improbability of there ever being a war in Europe even so mechanically destructive as the last war. The Great War had been the explosion of a vast accumulation of energy, moral and social as well as material. Europe might, and probably would, bicker, murder, bomb, massacre, and starve, but for another generation at least she would not have either the spirit or the discipline or the material to produce such munitions and such wide-sweeping concerted action as devastated her in the Great War. She is morally and physically bankrupt and prostrate. She may go on sinking, as Asia Minor sank, back even to barbarism. Even if she does not do so, it will take forty or fifty years to reassemble energy for another such world-wide outbreak.

I went on to talk of the disappointment of the peace. Which had failed us most, intelligence or moral force? Both had failed us. For four years now Europe had been disintegrating. This poor League of Nations at Geneva, snubbed and browbeaten by the French and Italians, who belonged to it and did not believe in it, and distrusted and hated by the excluded Russians and Germans, seemed to confirm the futility of any constructive effort. Things grew worse instead of better. Tariffs, currency manipulation, the cost of armaments, were destroying urban and industrial life under our eyes. The parasitic speculator flourished; the peasant in his self-centred way held on; the rest faded out. If one did not foresee another Great War one foresaw the certainty of endless little ones.

And so talking, and perhaps a little forgetful of my hearer, sitting almost knee to knee, intent to translate whatever he could catch of my talk and hand it out in his own phrases and colouring, I recalled a conversation I had had quite recently in Paris with my friend Philippe Millet, who is now dead. We were old friends. We had talked about the affairs of the world in Paris both before the war and during the war and at Washington during the Conference; and even in 1921 at Washington we could still believe that the Western world in which we were born and by which we lived might yet make an effort sufficiently creative and generous to save itself and develop a

new and greater phase of civilisation. I was then publicly denouncing the French for their trust in submarines and Senegalese, but that made no difference in our mutual good will. He understood the spirit that moved me. But this last summer, when we met for the last time, Millet was an ailing and disillusioned man.

"My dear Wells," he said, "you expect too much of this world. In the early part of the war there was splendid heroism and devotion — especially among the young. And they died. That was tragedy. But there is no tragedy now. There is nothing left great enough in Europe now for tragedy. It is a comedy now, a grotesque comedy of haggling and bargaining while the ship sinks. The sinking makes no difference. Absurd and preposterous people will still remain absurd and preposterous, even when they are running about on a sinking ship that they will not even observe to be sinking." It was a point of view I had been approaching, but which it needed the push of his assertion for me to reach. It is a seizing and desolating point of view.

Suppose it is true that this system in which we live in Europe, the system of national sovereignty reacting upon an economic system of privately owned, profit-seeking capital, is entirely unteach-able and inadaptable. Suppose its competitions are incurably destructive. Suppose there is indeed nothing sufficient to arrest this decay. Suppose that in consequence all Europe has to go on breaking down as Russia has broken down, as Germany breaks down, as Poland and Hungary will probably soon break down, with no sufficient attempt at transition or reconstruction, then what are we to do — we who have some vision of what is happening? How are we going to live through it? Whole generations may have to live through it.

I think that we are justified in saving ourselves as far as possible. I think we are bound to do whatever we can to salvage science and art and social experience against the days when the breakdown reaches its final phase and a real rebuilding is possible. I think we have to do all we can to maintain and extend an educational process and educational methods that will lay the foundations of a new order, a civilisation of service. And to do such things at all effectively we must keep our minds as sweet as we can and press our purposes as good-temperedly as possible.

"Grotesque comedy"! — in a world of that quality we must not

simply “live dangerously,” but humorously. With aggressive wealth and canting patriotism floundering destructively about us, in an atmosphere of catchwords and wild misconceptions, with masses of people angry, distressed, and misinformed, and with worse to follow, the straight path to martyrdom is a mere evasion of our responsibilities. You cannot make a new world in gaols and exile; you must make it in schools and books, in Legislatures and business affairs, humorously, obstinately, and incessantly. This monstrous, distressful, pathetic, but preposterous social disarticulation is too intricate and complicated for any simple act or any simple formula to avail. We must all do what we can, but our best efforts may, after all, be not so much right as right-hh. It would be hard enough to struggle in a world in which other people did not understand, but in which we at least were sure we were right; it is infinitely harder to struggle, as many of us are doing now, with a realisation that our own understanding is limited and faulty.

In such circumstances a jest, laughter, may come as relief, as illumination. Of all men of modern times, I am inclined to think Lincoln was the greatest. He held on; he, more than anyone, saved the unity of the New World. And throughout the worst of that dark and weary struggle against disruption he joked, he told stories. Nobody has ever attempted yet to make an anthology of those extraordinary stories. But they were of infinite benefit to him and the world. They kept him supple. They saved him from the rigor of a pose.

And now, in still darker and more perplexing times, our need for the flexible reconciliations of humour is still greater....

To this effect I thought aloud in the presence of the bright young man who had come to make an interview out of me. He thanked me profusely, won my foolish permission to write something about our “most inspiring” talk, and went out to report to the world that the notorious prophet foretold an age of fun, and was, so to speak, painting his nose for the festival.

THE CREATIVE PASSION

13.9.1924

Do men and women generally want a better world than this?

Do they want a world free from war, general economic security — a higher level of general health, long life, freedom and hope for everyone, beauty as the common quality of their daily lives?

The conventional answer to that question, especially if you put it to a public meeting with the appropriate gestures, is "Of course they do."

But the true answer is, "Not much!"

They may do so when they read an inspiring book by the fireside or hear a rousing speech, but they do not do so all round the twenty-four hours, or, indeed, at any time when there is any possibility of helping to realise such generous desires. "They," I write, but I should write "we." For we all are much of the same quality; the tallest man in the world is not much more than twice the height of the shortest, and the crime for which the murderer dies is just the concrete realisation of the saint's flash of anger. We are all but very little above egotism; our passions are warm only when they are immediate. I do not believe there has ever been a man who has lived steadfastly, continuously, and completely in pursuit of great ends. We are all vain, amenable to flattery, stirred by physical impulses, by the competitive instinct and jealousy, by anger at opposition, liable to fatigue, irritation, and uncontrollable and sometimes quite unaccountable fluctuations of motive.

Simple people like to believe there are Great Men in the world who are altogether above this tangle of drive and impulse. But indeed there are no such divinities.

What do we all find in our hearts? An immense self-love, a tremendous concentration of our attention upon our personal drama, physical cravings bare and physical cravings disguised and sublimated, desire to possess, desire for securities, and such-like fear-begotten desires, a desire for praise and approval and an instinctive dread of the disapproval and hostility of our fellow-men, an aggressive pride and self-assertion so soon as fear is allayed. We

find, too, imitative impulses, competitive impulses — jealousy. In most cases there is also an extension of our egotism to cover our offspring, our dear ones, our friends and near kin. It is an extension of our egotism rather than a suppression of it. Is not that the drive and quality of most of our living?

How much of that complex of motives can be used to bind men together into a civilised state? One can no doubt play upon their fears, represent the dangers of conquest and cruelty by hostile peoples so vividly as to make them fight and compel others to fight for them in great wars, rally them to the flag in a state of panic, fill them with that frantic distrust and hate of strangers which is the basis of vulgar "Patriotism." With a little coercion one may even get them to pay national taxes under the influence of these same mass-fears. The human animal is a semi-social animal, and though you cannot stampede it, as the American bison used to be stampeded, to rush over cliffs in a heaped herd-suicide, or like the Russian lemming to swarm into the sea and be drowned; yet it can be got moving in masses for collective ends, either good ends or bad ends, in an only very slightly rational manner.

But though these human motives I have cited so far do serve to keep us human beings together in smaller and larger communities with a sort of mutual restraint and help and tolerance, they supply no real force for any progressive betterment of human relations, and still less do they supply any driving force to organise and maintain a higher order of civilisation throughout the world.

As soon as the mass urgency subsides we tend to relapse into our own little personal lives of eating, drinking, and "having a good time," of "getting on," of posing to ourselves and others, of thinking and talking ourselves into agreeable states of self-approval, of doing pleasantly spiteful things to people we dislike. And if there is nothing more in our human composition than these common impulses of the everyday life, this coarse stuff of our common humanity, then all our talk and writing about a world peace and a higher civilisation is just dream stuff and nonsense. If that is all we are then we have no more chance of escaping more wars, more famines and disorders, cruelties, and diseases than a trainload of hogs bound for Chicago has of escaping the stockyard. None of the hogs may like the journey to the

stockyard, or their experiences when they get there; that does not help them in the slightest degree to escape their destiny.

But there is something more in humanity than this, and it is this something more that transfuses all our life, our politics, our business and social organisation, with the colour of romance and the quality of a great adventure. Let me take two common incidents to show the kind of "something more" that I mean — the something more in which all our hopes reside.

It is night on the embankment of a river that flows through a great city, and a commonplace youngster leans over the parapet watching and thinking. Great warehouses, tall buildings, a tower or so, three or four graceful bridges, one beyond the other, set with bright lights and bearing a luminous traffic, drop their images into the stream, and each light they bear makes a long, slightly wavering reflection upon the smooth black water. A little steam-launch, just blackness and a red head-lamp, fusses by. As it passes it tears through these tranquil banks of lamp reflections, drags a trail of startled and trembling shreds of light behind it, flings them apart, elongates them, re-unites them, weaves them into a dancing pattern that changes every moment into a fresh intricacy. Splash, splash, splash, comes the impact of the little boat's wash against the embankment. The youngster, struck with a strange wonder of beauty, watches these changes, tries to follow them, tries to detect the law of their dexterous, wonderful rearrangements. All the heat and egotism of his personal life are forgotten. He is lifted outside all our everyday scheme of motives. He is possessed by the desire to know and understand.

Every one of us has had such moments of pure mental desire. For most of us they pass; we are too busy and preoccupied. Some few of us they seize upon and make into those devotees of inquiry, men of science.

Now take my second instance, a row of yards behind a row of mean houses in the same great city. Scarcely one of these yards is neglected or purely utilitarian. In more than half of them are evidences of effort to make some sort of garden or arbour or such-like pleasant and orderly arrangement. You rarely see people playing in these yards or resting in them; they are overlooked by a railway and very noisy. But nevertheless there you have the plainest evidence

of an impulse to order and make, the rudiment of the garden-making, house-building impulse.

In most of these yards it has been an unprofitable, useless, and perhaps disappointing effort, but it has been at work there. In nearly every man and woman there is something of this same garden-making, arbour-building impulse. Here again is a second impersonal motive to which we can turn from the personal and jealous passions that commonly possess us. It is an ennobling motive; witness the face of a skilful painter or carpenter intent upon his work.

Now this desire for knowledge and the impulse to make are the really hopeful creative forces in human life. They are the something more and the something different, on which I base all my hopes. Submerged and undeveloped, overridden by competition, fear, jealousy, vanity, they are yet to be found in nearly all of us. The aim of true education is to release them, nourish them, give them power and the possibility of co-operation. In this possibility lies our sole hope that the ultimate fate of mankind, now packed in its nationalist trucks upon the railroad of nationalism, warfare, and economic selfishness, will not be the same as that of those hogs upon their way to Chicago.

AFTER A YEAR OF JOURNALISM:. AN OUTBREAK OF AUTO-OBITUARY

20.9.1924

Fifty-four articles have I written in the past twelve months and this will be the fifty-fifth and last. I desist. I turn over the book into which my secretary with a relentless regularity has pasted them all. Some I like; most seem to be saying something quite acceptable to me, but imperfectly in a rather ill-fitting form; some are just bad. My admiration for the masters of journalism has grown to immense proportions after these efforts. Their confidence! Their unstrained directness! Their amazing certainty of their length! And their unfaltering quality!

I had never realised before the tremendous hardship of periodicity. Every week or every day the writer must chew the cud of events and deliver his punctual copy. Every day, wet or fine, the newspaper sheet must be filled: filled, but not congested. But it is only now and then that the phase is good for really happy writing. Sometimes everything is germinating, but nothing seems to happen; at others a dozen issues compete for attention. Now one does not want to write because there is nothing to stimulate one to utterance; now because one wants time to consider some dominating event. But the columns stand waiting. Henceforth for my poor irregular brain there shall be no more periodicity.

I look over these articles and suddenly there joins on to my sense of them the fact that on my table are lying the proofs of a collected edition of my writings; eight and twenty fat volumes they will make. I perceive I have already lived a long, industrious life. I celebrate my death as a periodic journalist — and these proofs extend the obituary sense beyond the scope of that event. If I am not actually tucked up in my literary death-bed I am at least sitting on it. Possibly I may yet take a few more airings before I send for the clergyman and the heirs and turn in for good and start blessing and forgiving people from my pillow, but the longer part is finished. What does it all amount to, that mass of written matter?

The gist of it is an extraordinarily sustained and elaborated adverse criticism of the world as it is, a persistent refusal to believe that this is the best or even the most interesting of all possible worlds. There is a developing attempt culminating in the Outline of History to show that the world of men is only temporarily what it is, and might be altered to an enormous extent. There is a search through every sort of revolutionary project and effort for the material for conclusive alteration. The total effect of these articles and these books of mine on my mind, is of a creature trying to find its way out of a prison into which it has fallen.

I recall how that in my boyhood I made a little prison of paper and cardboard for a beetle, and how I heard the poor perplexed beast incessantly crawling and scratching and fluttering inside. I forget what became of it. Perhaps I gave it its freedom; perhaps it pressed and worried at the corners where the light came through, and made an enlarged hole and worried its own way out. But I remember the dirty scratches and traces of its explorations on the unfolded paper cage. To a larger mind these books and articles of mine will seem very like those markings.

Implicit behind and beyond all these writings there is faith in a great "outside." I do believe there is a better life for such creatures as we are, and betterment for our race and an escape from the meanness, the dullness, the petty doomed life of this time. So far as I can go beyond my untrained feelings and my unsolved limitations I give myself to the attack upon our common prison walls of ignorance and effortless submission. In all these articles and books there is the thrust of the natural and conscious and convinced revolutionary. I am against the clothes we wear and the food we eat, the houses we live in, the schools we have, our amusements, our money, our ways of trading, our ways of making, our compromises and agreements and laws, our articles of political association, the British Empire, the American Constitution. I think most of the clothes ugly and dirty, most of the food bad, the houses wretched, the schools starved and feeble, the amusements dull, the monetary methods silly, our ways of trading base and wasteful, our methods of production piecemeal and wasteful, our political arrangements solemnly idiotic. Most of my activities have been to get my soul and something of my body out of

the customs, outlook, boredoms, and contaminations of the current phase of life.

I am not so very exceptional in this. Endless people find the present world — in spite of storms of natural beauty, in spite of the irregular delightful revelations of human possibility — almost intolerable. Indeed I do not know how far the occasional intense loveliness of nature and the rare gleams of human dearness and greatness, do not exacerbate their general discontent. They struggle to get away from it. Drink— "the shortest way out of Manchester," as someone called it — a vicious pursuit of excitement, opiates and religious devotion, a widespread indulgence of reverie, are all forms of escape from the cruel flatness of uninspired days. But none of them, unless it be the religious excitement, give more than a temporary respite. When the orgy is over comes the awakening still in the cage. But in the idea of revolution which does not forget the cage, but realises its impermanence, there is an enduring support for the spirit.

My imagination takes refuge from the slums of to-day in a world like a great garden, various, orderly, lovingly cared-for, dangerous still but no longer dismal, secure from dull and base necessities. I have come to believe in the complete possibility of such a world, and to realise the broad lines upon which we can work for its attainment through a great extension of the scientific spirit to the mental field, and through a deliberate reconstruction of social and economic life upon the framework of a new, far-reaching educational organisation. By projecting my mind forward to that greater civilisation I do succeed in throwing a veil of unreality over the solemn ineptitude of to-day and the complete identification of myself and my insufficiencies and disappointments with the quality of common things. By insisting that I can be a creative revolutionary I escape from acquiescence in what I am and what things are. To live under the rule of King George or President Coolidge and under the sway of current customs, habits and usages, can be made tolerable by the recognition of their essential transitoriness and their ultimate insignificance. And in no other way can it be made tolerable to anyone with a sense of beauty and a passion for real living.

This is what I have been saying in these eight and twenty volumes

of collected works and in this yearful of newspaper articles, and after a rest it is quite possible I shall go on saying it some more. But after these reflections upon my literary death-bed I think I shall take a holiday — at least from journalism — for a time. If there is anything worse in this way than periodic journalism it must be preaching and having to go into a pulpit with half an hour's supply of uplift fresh and punctual every Sunday.

THE END

MR. BELLOC OBJECTS TO “THE OUTLINE OF HISTORY”

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FOREWORD

IN the autumn of 1925 and the spring and summer of 1926 there was published a revised and illustrated version of *The Outline of History*, by Mr. H. G. Wells. There followed a series of articles by Mr. Belloc attacking this Outline and Mr. Wells. These articles were published in *The Catholic Universe*, in *The Southern Cross of Cape Colony*, in *The American Catholic Bulletin*, and possibly elsewhere. Every fortnight, keeping pace with the issue of *The Outline*, these attacks appeared; in all, twenty-four voluminous articles. They were grossly personal and provocative in tone, and no doubt a great joy and comfort to the faithful. Mr. Wells prepared a series of articles in reply; and as no one outside the public of these Catholic journals seemed to have heard of Mr. Belloc's attacks, he offered them to the editors concerned, proposing, if necessary, to give the use of this interesting matter to them without payment. Six articles he asked to have published — in reply to twenty-four. This offering was declined very earnestly by these editors. To the editor of *The Catholic Universe* Mr. Wells protested in the terms of the following letter: —

MY DEAR SIR,

I am sorry to receive your letter of May 19th. May I point out to you that Mr. Belloc has been attacking my reputation as a thinker, a writer, an impartial historian, and an educated person for four-and-twenty fortnights in "The Universe"? He has mis-quoted; he has mis-stated. Will your Catholic public tolerate no reply?

Under the stimulus of this remonstrance, the editor of *The Universe*, after a month's delay and various consultations with Mr. Belloc and the directors of his paper, offered Mr. Wells the "opportunity of correcting definite points of fact upon which he might have been misrepresented," but declined to allow him to defend his views or examine Mr. Belloc's logic and imputations in his columns. Mr. Wells was disinclined for a series of wrangles upon what might or might not be a "point of fact." He then offered his articles to various non-Catholic papers, but, with one accord, they

expressed their lack of interest in either Mr. Belloc himself or in his exposition of Catholic ideas about natural selection, the origin of man, and the general course of history. Yet it seems to Mr. Wells that, regarded as a mental sample, Mr. Belloc is not without significance, and that the examination of the contemporary Catholic attitude towards the fundamental facts of history is a matter of interest beyond Catholic circles. Accordingly he has decided to issue these articles in the form of a book, and he has urged the publishers to advertise them, as freely as may be permitted, in the Catholic press. He has retained the “cross-heads” customary in journalistic writing.

I. — MR. BELLOC'S ARTS OF CONTROVERSY

I am the least controversial of men. Public disputations have rarely attracted me. For years I have failed to respond to Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, who long ago invented a set of opinions for me and invited me to defend them with an enviable persistence and vigour. Occasionally I may have corrected some too gross public mis-statement about me — too often I fear with the acerbity of the inexperienced. But now, in my sixtieth year, I find myself drawn rather powerfully into a disputation with Mr. Hilaire Belloc. I bring an unskilled pen to the task.

I am responsible for an Outline of History which has had a certain vogue. I will assume that it is known by name to the reader. It is a careful summary of man's knowledge of past time. It has recently been re-issued with considerable additions in an illustrated form, and Mr. Belloc has made a great attack upon it. He declares that I am violently antagonistic to the Catholic Church, an accusation I deny very earnestly, and he has produced a "Companion" to this Outline of mine, following up the periodical issue, part by part, in the Universe of London, in the Catholic Bulletin of St. Paul, Minnesota, in the Southern Cross of Cape Colony, and possibly elsewhere, in which my alleged errors are exposed and confuted.

In the enthusiasm of advertisement before the "Companion" began to appear, these newspapers announced a work that would put Mr. Belloc among the great classical Catholic apologists, but I should imagine that this was before the completed manuscript of Mr. Belloc's work had come to hand, and I will not hold Catholics at large responsible for all Mr. Belloc says and does.

It is with this Companion to the Outline of History that I am to deal here. It raises a great number of very interesting questions, and there is no need to discuss the validity of the charge of Heresy that is levelled against me personally. I will merely note that I am conscious of no animus against Catholicism, and that in my Outline I accept the gospels as historical documents of primary value, defend Christianity

against various aspersions of Gibbon's, and insist very strongly upon the role of the Church in preserving learning in Europe, consolidating Christendom, and extending knowledge from a small privileged class to the whole community. I do not profess to be a Christian. I am as little disposed to take sides between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant (Mr. Belloc will protest against that "Roman," but he must forgive it; I know no other way of distinguishing between his Church and Catholics not in communion with it) as I am to define the difference between a pterodactyl and a bird.

DISCONCERTING POSE OF MR. BELLOC

In this art of controversy it is evident that great importance attaches to pose. This is plain from the very outset of Mr. Belloc's apologia. From the beginning I have to be put in my place, and my relationship to Mr. Belloc has to be defined. Accustomed as I am to see Mr. Belloc dodging about in my London club, and in Soho and thereabouts, and even occasionally appearing at a dinner party, compactly stout, rather breathless and always insistently garrulous, I am more than a little amazed at his opening. He has suddenly become aloof from me. A great gulf of manner yawns between us. "Hullo, Belloc!" is frozen on my lips, dies unuttered. He advances upon me in his Introduction with a gravity of utterance, a dignity of gesture, rare in sober, God-fearing men. There is a slow, formal compliment or so. I have, I learn, "a deservedly popular talent in fiction." I am sincere, an honest soul. My intentions are worthy. But the note changes; he declares I am a "Protestant writing for Protestants," and there is danger that my Outline may fall into Catholic hands. Some Catholics may even be infected with doubt. His style thickens with emotion at this thought and he declares: "One Catholic disturbed in his faith is more important than twenty thousand or a hundred thousand or a million of the average reading public of England and America." That is why he is giving me his attention, syndicating these articles and swelling himself up so strongly against me. That is why he now proposes to exhibit and explain and expose me in the sight of all mankind. It is controversy, and everyday manners are in abeyance.

The controversial pose reveals itself further. The compliments and civilities thin out and vanish. Mr. Belloc becomes more magisterial, relatively larger, relatively graver, with every paragraph. He assumes more definitely the quality of a great scholar, of European culture and European reputation, a trained, distinguished universally accepted historian. With what is evidently the dexterity of an expert controversialist and with an impressiveness all his own, he seems to look over and under and round the man he knows, and sketches in the man he proposes to deal with, his limitations, his pitiful

limitations, the characteristics, the disagreeable characteristics, that disfigure him. It is a new Wells, a most extraordinary person. I learn with amazement the particulars with which it is necessary to instruct that Catholic soul in danger before the matter of my book can be considered. I see myself in the lurid illumination of Catholic truth.

REMARKABLE PORTRAIT OF MR. WELLS

To begin with, I am "an intense patriot." This will surprise many readers. I dread its effect on Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, whose favourite tune upon the megaphone for years has been that I am the friend of every country but my own. Will he intervene with a series of articles to "My dear Belloc"? I hope not. I might plead that almost any chapter of the Outline of History could be quoted against this proposition. But Mr. Belloc is ruthless, he offers no evidence for his statement, no foothold for a counter-plea. He just says it, very clearly, very emphatically several times over, and he says it, as I realise very soon, because it is the necessary preliminary to his next still more damaging exposures. They are that I am an Englishman "of the Home Counties and London Suburbs" — Mr. Belloc, it seems, was born all over Europe — that my culture is entirely English, that I know nothing of any language or literature or history or science but that of England. And from this his creative invention sweeps on to a description of this new Wells he is evoking to meet his controversial needs. My admiration grows. I resist an impulse to go over at once to Mr. Belloc's side. This, for example, is splendid. This new Wells, this suburban English Protestant, has written his Outline of History because, says Mr. Belloc, "he does not know that 'foreigners' (as he would call them) have general histories."

That "as he would call them" is the controversial Mr. Belloc rising to his best.

Mr. Belloc, I may note in passing, does not cite any of these general histories to which he refers. It would surely make an interesting list and help the Catholic soul in danger to better reading. The American reader, at whose prejudices this stuff about my patriotism is presumably aimed, would surely welcome a competing Outline by a "foreigner." Mr. Belloc might do worse things than a little translation work.

Then the Royal College of Science shrivels at his touch to a mechanics' institute, and the new Wells, I learn, "does really believe from the bottom of his heart all that he read in the text-books of his youth." The picture of this new Wells, credulous, uncritical devourer

of the text-books supplied by his suburban institute, inveterate Protestant, grows under the pen of this expert controversialist. I have next to be presented as a low-class fellow with a peculiar bias against the “Gentry of my own country,” and this is accordingly done. “Gentlemen” with whom I have quarrelled are hinted at darkly — a pretty touch of fantasy. A profound and incurable illiteracy follows as a matter of course.

GATHERING COURAGE OF MR. BELLOC

Mr. Belloc's courage gathers with the elaboration of his sketch. He is the type to acquiesce readily in his own statements, and one can see him persuading himself as he goes along that this really is the Wells he is up against. If so, what is there to be afraid of? If there is a twinge of doubt, he can always go back and read what he has written. The phraseology loses its earlier discretion, gets more pluckily abusive. Presently words like "ignorance" and "blunders" and "limited instruction" come spluttering from those ready nibs. Follows "childish" and "pitiable" and "antiquated nonsense." Nothing to substantiate any of it — just saying it. So Mr. Belloc goes his way along the primrose path of controversy. He takes a fresh sip or so from his all too complaisant imagination. New inspirations come. I have "copied" things from the "wrong" books. That "copied" is good! One can see that base malignant Wells fellow, in his stuffy room all hung with Union Jacks, with the "wrong," the *"Protestant"* book flattened out before him, copying, copying; his tongue following his laborious pen. Presently I read: "It is perhaps asking too much of our author to adopt a strictly scientific attitude." This, from an adept in that mixture of stale politics and gossip which passed for history in the days of Mr. Belloc's reading, to even the least of Huxley's students, is stupendous!

Still he swells and swells with self-importance and self-induced contempt for his silent and invisible antagonist. The pen runs on, for does not the Catholic press wait for its latest great apologist? The thin film of oily politeness in the opening paragraphs is long since gone and done with, and Mr. Hilaire Belloc is fully himself again and remains himself, except for one or two returns to patronising praise and the oil squirt, for the rest of these remarkable papers.

His are, I suppose, the accepted manners of controversy — and what wonderful manners they are! I note them, but I cannot emulate them.

There is, however, one reference to the unlettered suburbanism of this ideal Wells too good to lose. I had almost let it slip by. It is an allusion to a certain publication in French. "There may be no

translation," Mr. Belloc throws out superbly at the height of his form, "but Mr. Wells ought to have heard of" — the out-of-date monograph in question. "There may be no translation..."! How feeble sounds my protest that for all practical purposes I read French as well as I do English, and that in all probability if it came to using a German, Spanish, Portuguese, or Italian scientific work I could give Mr. Belloc points and a beating.

REFLECTIONS UPON THE REAL MR. BELLOC

But I have said enough to justify incidentally my habitual avoidance of the arts of controversy. I cannot inflate myself in this fashion. I cannot do the counter to this attitude. I was born and I shall die "familiar." What seems to make Mr. Belloc feel brave and happy would make me feel sick. On this he has presumed overmuch. There are limits to my notorious gentleness and modesty, and they have been reached by Mr. Belloc in these articles. His skill is undeniable; no other writer could better his unpremeditated condescension, his apparently inadvertent insults. And yet the facts beneath all this insolent posturing are quite well known and easily verifiable. I cannot imagine whom it is intended to deceive for any length of time.

Mr. Belloc is a man four years my junior, and his; academic career was briefer and not more brilliant than mine. Since he came down from Oxford to the world of London thirty years ago, he has done no original historical work of any distinction. He has been a popular writer as I have been a popular writer, and he is no more if no less a scholar than I am. There has been much incidental and inconsequent brightness in his discursive career — funny verses and stories, an amusing rather than a serious period in Parliament, much pamphleteering, lecturing and speaking; he has been active and erratic; now he would be urging on an anti-Semitic campaign; now, in association with Horatio Bottomley, attempting to hound Masterman, his old friend and rival, out of politics; the war made him the most confident of military "experts," and he has done quite a number of clever revivifications of this or that historical event. That is his record. It gives him a respectable position in the republic of letters, in which also my position is respectable. No doubt he has every right and very considerable qualifications for the criticism of such a popular work as my Outline. But there is nothing in his career and nothing in his quality to justify this pose of erudition and insolent superiority he assumes towards me, and which he has made

an integral part of his attack. He has assumed it entirely in relation to this controversy. He has thrown ordinary courtesy and good manners to the winds because only in that way can he hope for a controversial advantage over me.

THE CLUE TO MR. BELLOC'S DISCONCERTING POSE

This disconcerting pose is part of his attack. That is why I am obliged to discuss it here. Upon many points the attack is almost pure pose; there is no tangible argument at all. It is very important to note that and bear that in mind. It has to be borne in mind when Mr. Belloc is accused of inordinate vanity or of not knowing his place in the world. I doubt even if he is really very vain. I realised long ago that his apparent arrogance is largely the self-protection of a fundamentally fearful man. He is a stout fellow in a funk. He is the sort of man who talks loud and fast for fear of hearing the other side. There is a frightened thing at the heart of all this burly insolence. He has a faith to defend and he is not sure of his defence. That mitigates much of his offence, even if it mitigates little of his offensiveness. Let me say a word or so more of excuse and explanation for him. These personalities of his are, so to speak not a personal matter. There is more in them than that. Mr. Belloc's attack upon my Outline does not stand alone among his activities; it is part of a larger controversy he wages against the modern, the non-Catholic vision of the world. He has carried on that controversy since his Balliol days. The exigencies that oblige him to pretend, against his better knowledge and common civility, that I am petty and provincial and patriotic and wilfully ignorant and pitifully out-of-date, oblige him to pretend as much about most of those who stand for modern science and a modern interpretation of history. He would pretend as hard about Sir Ray Lankester, for example, or about Professor Gilbert Murray or Sir Harry Johnston or Professor Barker, as he does about me. It is a general system of pretence. It is a necessary part of — I will not say of *the* Catholic attitude, but of *his* Catholic attitude towards modern knowledge.

The necessity for a pose involving this pretence is not very difficult to understand. Long before Mr. Belloc embarked upon the present dispute he had become the slave of a tactical fiction, which reiteration had made a reality for him. He evoked the fiction as early,

I believe, as his Oxford days. It may have been very effective at Oxford — among the undergraduates. Then perhaps it was consciously a defensive bluff, but certainly it is no longer that. He has come at last to believe absolutely in this creature of his imagination. He has come to believe this: that there is a vast "modern European" culture of which the English-speaking world knows nothing, of which the non-Catholic world knows nothing, and with which he is familiar. It is on his side. It is always on his side. It is simply and purely Belloccian. He certainly believes it is there. It sustains his faith. It assuages the gnawing attacks of self-criticism that must come to him in the night. Throughout these papers he is constantly referring to this imaginary stuff — without ever coming to precisions. Again and again and again and again — and again and again and again, he alludes to this marvellous "European" science and literature, beyond our ken.

He does not quote it; it does not exist for him to quote; but he believes that it exists. He waves his hand impressively in the direction in which it is supposed to be. It is his stand-by, his refuge, his abiding fortress. But, in order to believe in it, it is necessary for him to believe that no other English-speaking men can even read French, and that their scepticism about it is based on some "provincial" prejudice or some hatred of Catholics, or southern people, or "Dagoes," or "foreigners," or what you will. That is why Nature wilfully ignores the wonderful science of this "Europe" — and why our Royal Society has no correspondence with it. But he has to imagine it is there and make his readers imagine it is there, and that there is this conspiracy of prejudice to ignore it, before he can even begin to put up any appearance of a case against such a resume of current knowledge as the Outline of History.

GRACEFUL CONCESSIONS TO MR. BELLOC

All this rough and apparently irrelevant stuff about his own great breadth and learning and my profound ignorance and provincialism, to which he has devoted his two introductory papers, is therefore the necessary prelude to putting over this delusion. That stream of depreciation is not the wanton personal onslaught one might suppose it to be at the first blush. If he has appeared to glorify himself and belittle me, it is for greater controversial ends than a mere personal score We are dealing with a controversialist here and a great apologist, and for all I know these may be quite legitimate methods in this, to me, unfamiliar field. Few people will be found to deny Mr. Belloc a considerable amplitude of mind in his undertaking, so soon as they get thus far in understanding him. Before he could even set about syndicating this Companion to the Outline of History he had to incite a partisan receptivity in the Catholic readers to whom he appeals, by declaring that a violent hatred for their Church is the guiding motive of my life. He had to ignore a considerable array of facts to do that, and he has ignored them with great courage and steadfastness. He had to arouse an indifferent Catholic public to a sense of urgent danger by imposing this figure of a base, inveterate, and yet finally contemptible enemy upon it. His is a greater task than mere dragon-slaying. He had to create the dragon before he could become the champion. And then, with his syndication arrangements complete, while abusing me industriously for ignorance, backwardness, and general intellectual backwoodism, he had to write the whole of these articles without once really opening that Humbert safe of knowledge which is his sole capital in this controversy. Time after time he refers to it. Never once does he quote it. At most he may give us illusive peeps....

Now and then as we proceed I shall note these illusive peeps.

I can admire great effort even when it is ill-directed and to show how little I bear him a grudge for the unpleasant things he has induced himself to write about me, and for the still more unpleasant things he tempts me — though I resist with a success that gratifies me — to write about him, I contemplate a graceful compliment to

Mr. Belloc. In spite of the incurable ignorance of French and that "dirty Dago" attitude towards foreigners Mr. Belloc has so agreeably put upon me, it is my habit to spend a large part of the winter in a house I lease among the olive terraces of Provence. There is a placard in one corner of my study which could be rather amusingly covered with the backs of dummy books. I propose to devote that to a collection of Mr. Belloc's authorities. There shall be one whole row at least of the Bulletins of the Madame Humbert Society, and all the later researches of the Belloc Academy of Anonymous Europeans, bound in bluff leather. There will be Finis Darwinis by Hilario Belloccio, and Hist. Eccles. by Hilarius Belloccius. I may have occasion to refer to other leading authorities in the course of this controversy. I shall add to it as we proceed.

And so, having examined, explained, disposed of, and in part apologised for, Mr. Belloc's personalities and the pervading inelegance of his manners, I shall turn with some relief from this unavoidably personal retort to questions of a more general interest. I propose as my first study of these modern Catholic apologetics, so valiantly produced by Mr. Belloc and so magnificently published and displayed by the Catholic press, to follow our hero's courageous but unsteady progress through the mysteries of Natural Selection. And after that we shall come to Original Sin and Human Origins in the light of Mr. Belloc's science and the phantom science of those phantom naturalists and anthropologists he calls to his assistance.

II. — THE THEORY OF NATURAL SELECTION STATED

MY first article upon Mr. Belloc's Companion to the Outline of History dealt, much against my inclination and as charitably and amiably as possible, with the oddities of Mr. Belloc's manner and method, and those remarkable non-existent "European authorities" to whom he appeals habitually in moments of argumentative stress. I do not propose to go on thus girding at Mr. Belloc. He is a Catholic apologist, endorsed by Catholic authorities, and there is matter of very great importance for our consideration in what he has to say about the history of life and mankind.

After his second paper is finished his abuse of me becomes merely incidental or indirect. He goes on to a staggering rush at Natural Selection. Let us see to where Catholic thought has got — if Mr. Belloc is to be trusted — in relation to this very fundamental matter.

It is Mr. Belloc's brilliant careless way to begin most of his arguments somewhere about the middle and put the end first. His opening peroration, so to speak, is a proclamation that this "Natural Selection" — whatever it is — is "an old and done-for theory of Darwin and Wallace." "It is a laughing-stock for half a generation among competent men." Mr. George Bernard Shaw does not believe in it! G. B. S. among the Fathers! That wonderful non- existent "latest European work" which plays so large a part in Mr. Belloc's dialectic is summoned briefly, its adverse testimony is noted, and it is dismissed to the safe again. And then there is a brief statement of how these two vile fellows, Darwin and Wallace, set out upon this reprehensible theorising What a ruthless expose it is of the true motives of scientific people!

"The process of thought was as follows:

"'There is no Mind at work in the universe; therefore changes of this sort must come from blind chance or at least *mechanically* . At all costs we must get rid of the idea of design: of a desired end conceived in a Creative Mind. Here is a theory which will make the whole process entirely mechanical and dead, and get rid of the

necessity for a Creator.'"

And so having invented and then as it were visited and spat upon the derided and neglected tomb of Natural Selection and assured us that God, Mr. Shaw, "European opinion," and all good Catholics are upon his side, Mr. Belloc plucks up courage and really begins to write about Natural Selection.

NATURAL SELECTION IS PURE COMMON-SENSE

What is this Natural Selection which has been dead for half a century, but which Mr. Belloc still exerts himself industriously through four long papers to kill all over again? It is the purest common-sense, the most obvious deduction from obvious facts. I have set out the idea as plainly as I could in the Outline of History Mr. Belloc is attacking. It is put so plainly there that, before he can begin to argue against it, he has to misstate it; he has to tell the story all over again in his own words and get it suitably askew. It was quite open to him to quote from my account, but he preferred to compile his own misstatement. Indeed, in all this argument against Natural Selection he never once quotes my actual words. He paraphrases throughout. He has put some words between inverted commas in one place, so as inadvertently to produce the impression that they are mine, but they are not mine.

Now the facts upon which the idea of Natural Selection rests are matters of universal knowledge. "Every species of living things is continually dying and being born again as a multitude of fresh individuals"; that is the primary fact. No species seems to be perfectly adapted to its conditions, and even the happiest species tends to multiply until it is in a state of need and pressure. So far surely we are dealing with things beyond dispute. And next comes the fact of individuality. Every living unit is individual with a difference of its own. Every individual has its own distinctive differences, and each of these differences may or may not be an advantage or a disadvantage. Individuals with advantageous differences will generally get on better in life, prosper and so be able to breed more freely, than those with disadvantageous differences. Offspring have a tendency to repeat the distinctive differences of their parents. Therefore, taking a species as a whole by the million or billion or million billion — for few species of animals or plants are represented by fewer individuals than a million — there will be in each successive generation a greater number of individuals with the

differences that are advantageous relative to the number with disadvantages. In other words, the average of the species will have moved more or less in the direction of the advantageous differences, whatever they may be, and however numerous they may be. If, for example, the species is chased and has to climb or run for it, there will be rather more good climbers and sprinters in the new generation. There may be other dangers and other needs; they will not affect the premium set on quickness and the fate of the slow. And if the circumstances of the species continue to press in the same direction, the movement of the average will be in the same direction in this respect for so long as they continue to press. Over a few score or even a few hundred generations, and under conditions not very strenuous, a species may not change very much. It may seem to be *fixed* in its general characteristics, just as the continents seem to be fixed in their general outline. But, as the range of time extends and the pressure of necessity continues, the change becomes more striking.

NATURAL SELECTION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ORIGIN OF VARIATIONS

That is the process of Natural Selection, the "laughing-stock" of Mr. Belloc's mysterious conclave of "European" savants. Natural Selection has nothing to do with the reason for the differences between individuals. It has no more to do with those than gravitation has to do with the differences in the heaviness of different substances. But it is necessary to state as much here, because in some queer muddled way Mr. Belloc seems to be persuaded that it has. These differences may arise by pure chance; they may come about through the operation of complex laws, they may come in shoals and have their seasons. These things have nothing to do with Natural Selection.

Now, Wallace and Darwin were two excellent Europeans who happened to be interested in natural history. In spite of the sinister motives invented for them by Mr. Belloc, I doubt if any Catholic sufficiently educated to have read their lives will agree that they had even a latent animus against Catholic truth or even a subconscious desire to "get rid of a Creator" in their minds. They no more thought of "getting rid of a Creator" when humbly and industriously they gathered their facts and put fact to fact than an honest bricklayer thinks of "getting rid of a Creator" when he lays his bricks with care and builds a sound piece of wall. They went about the world studying natural history. They considered life with a patience and thoroughness and freedom from preconceptions beyond the imagination of a man of Mr. Belloc's habits. They found no such "fixity of species" as he is inspired to proclaim. They found much evidence of a progressive change in species, and they saw no reason to explain it by a resort to miracles or magic. A Catholic priest of the Anglican communion named Malthus had written a very interesting and suggestive book upon over-population and the consequent struggle for existence between individuals. It turned the attention of both these diligent and gifted observers to just that process of Natural Selection I have stated. Independently both of them came to the

conclusions that species changed age by age and without any necessary limits, and mainly through the sieve of Natural Selection, and that, given a sufficient separation to reduce or prevent interbreeding and a sufficient difference in the selective conditions at work, two parts of the same species might change in different directions, so as at last to become distinct and separate species.

Darwin's book upon the subject was called The Origin of Species. It was a very modest and sufficient title. He did not even go to the length of calling it the origin of genera or orders or classes. He did not at first apply it to man.

This is the theory of the origin of species through Natural Selection. It was not pretended by either of these pioneers that Natural Selection was the sole way through which the differences of species came about. For example, Darwin devoted a considerable part of his working life to such collateral modes of differentiation as the hypothesis that Sexual Selection also had its share. Criticism has whittled down that share to practically negligible proportions, but I note the hypothesis here because it absolutely disposes of the assertion which Mr. Belloc hammers on the table, that the Theory of Natural Selection excludes any other mode of specific differentiation.

TESTING THE THEORY

Very rapidly this conception of Natural Selection was extended by naturalists until it came to be regarded as the general process of life. They came to realise that all species, all genera, all classes of life, whatever else may be happening to them, are and always have been varying through the process of Natural Selection, some rapidly, some slowly; some so slowly as hardly to change at all through vast ages. I have stated the a priori case by which, given birth and death and individuality and changing conditions and sufficient time, it appears logically inevitable that the change and differentiation of species *must* occur, and must be now going on. If we had no material evidence at all it would still be possible to infer the evolution of species.

That a priori case has never been answered, and it seems to me unanswerable. But scientific men, with their obstinate preference for observation and experiment over mere logical gymnastics, rarely rest their convictions on a priori cases. A sustaining scepticism is a matter of conscience with them. To them an a priori case is merely a theory — that is to say, a generalisation under trial. For nearly three-quarters of a century, therefore, biologists have been examining whatever instances they could discover that seemed to contradict this assumption that the process of specific change under Natural Selection is the general condition of life. To this day this view is still called the Theory of Natural Selection, though to a great number it has come to have the substantial quality of an embracing fact.

It would have been amusing if Mr. Belloc had told us more of his ideas of the scientific world. Apparently he knows scarcely anything of museums or laboratories or the spirit and methods of research. And manifestly he has not the faintest suspicion of the way in which the whole world of vital phenomena has been ransacked and scrutinised to test, correct, supplement, amplify or alter this great generalisation about life. He probably shares the delusion of most other men in the street, that scientific theories are scientific finalities, that they are supposed to be as ultimate as the dogmas of some infallible religion. He imagines them put over chiefly by

asseveration, just as the assertions of a polemical journalist are put over. He has still to learn that theories are trial material, testing targets, directives for research. Shooting at established theories is the normal occupation of the scientific investigator. Mr. Belloc's figure of the scientific investigator is probably a queer, frowsty, and often, alas! atheistical individual, poking about almost aimlessly among facts in the hope of hitting upon some "discovery" or "getting rid of a God." He does not understand the tense relevance of the vast amount of work in progress. But for three-quarters of a century the thought and work of myriads of people round and about the world have borne directly or almost directly upon the probing, sounding, testing of the theory of Natural Selection. It stands clarified and, it would seem, impregnable to-day.

SOME IRRELEVANT QUESTIONS

Among questions bearing upon it but not directly attacking it has been the discussion of the individual difference. For example, are differences due to individual experiences ever inherited? Or are only inherent differences transmissible? What role is played by what one might call "normal," relatively slight differences, and what by the "sports" and abnormal births in specific change? Do species under stress, and feeding on strange food or living in unaccustomed climates, betray any exceptional tendency to produce abnormality? Have there been, so to speak, storms and riots of variation in some cases? Can differences establish themselves while outer necessity remains neutral? Can variations amounting to specific differences in colour and form arise as a sort of play of the germ plasm and be tolerated rather than selected by nature? In what manner do normal differences arise What happens to differences in cases of hybridisation? Here are sample questions that have been the seeds of splendid work and great arguments. Some of them were already under discussion in Darwin's time; he was a pioneer in such explorations; many ideas of his have stood the test of time, and many suggestions he threw out have been disproved. When some casual "may be" of Darwin's is examined and set aside, it is the custom of polemical journalists to rush about and proclaim to all who may be sufficiently ill-informed to listen that Darwin is "exploded." Such explosions of Darwin are constantly recurring like gun-fire near a garrison town, and still he remains. None of these subsidiary questions affect the stability of this main generalisation of biology, the Theory of Natural Selection.

The actual attack and testing of the Theory of Natural Selection have yielded negative results. The statement of the theory may have been made finer and exacter, that is all. And yet the conditions of its survival have been very exacting. If the theory is to stand, the whole of plant and animal life in time and space must be arranged in a certain order. It must be possible to replace classification by a genealogical tree. Every form must fall without difficulty into its proper place in that tree. If it is true that birds are descended from

reptiles or men from apes, then there must be no birds before the reptiles appear, and no men before apes. The geological record is manifestly a mere fragmentary history, still for the most part unread; but, however fragmentary it is, it must be consistent. One human skull in the coal measures blows the whole theory to atoms. The passage from form to form must be explicable by intermediate types capable of maintaining themselves; there may be gaps in the record, but there must be no miraculous leaps in the story. If an animal living in the air is to be considered as a lineal descendant of some animal living in the water, then the structure of the former bit by bit and step by step must be shown to be adapted, modified, changed about from that of the latter; it must have ears for water-hearing modified for air-hearing, and its heart and breathing arrangements must be shown to be similarly changed over, and so on for all its structure. All these requirements will follow naturally from the necessities of a process of Natural Selection. They follow logically upon no other hypothesis. They are not demanded, for example, by the idea of a Creator continually interfering with and rectifying some stately, unaccountable process of "Evolution," which seems to be Mr. Belloc's idea — so far as he ventures to display any idea of his own — in the matter. Such things as vestigial structures and a number of odd clumsinesses in living things — many still very imperfect adaptations to an erect position, for example — become grotesque in relation to such a view. A Creator who put needless or inconvenient fish structures into the anatomy of a land animal and made the whole fauna and flora of the land a patch-up of aquatic forms of life must be not so much a Divinity as a Pedant. But it is the burthen of the whole beautiful science of comparative anatomy that the structure of animals and plants, and their succession in time, fall exactly into the conditions defined by the Theory of Natural Selection. In the most lovely and intricate detail, in a vast multitude of examples, in plants and in animals alike, this theme of the adaptation of pre-existing structure is worked out.

We should in accordance with the Theory of Natural Selection expect to find traces of the ancestral form not only in the lay-out of the adult animal, but in every phase of its life history; and that, in fact, is just what we do find. There is no more fascinating branch of

comparative anatomy than embryology. Each life cycle we discuss tends to repeat the ancestral story, and only under the stress of necessity does it undergo modification at any point. There is little toleration in the life process for unnecessary divergencies. Economies are effected by short cuts and reductions, and special foetal structures are granted reluctantly. So that even in man we find peeping through the adaptations imposed upon the human type by its viviparous necessities, and in spite of the advantage of every economy of force, memories, for example, of the gill slits, of the fish heart and kidney, of the reptilian skull, of the mammalian tail. I mention this fact in the Outline, and upon it Mr. Belloc comments in a manner that leaves one's doubts poised between his honesty and his intelligence. He declares, which is totally untrue, that I "repeat the old Victorian tag" — I doubt if there ever was such a tag — that the embryo "climbs up the family tree." He puts these words in inverted commas as though I have really adopted and used them, and for the life of me it is only by straining my charity to the utmost that I can accept that this was an accident. Of course every text-book of embryology for the last forty years has made it perfectly plain, as I have stated here, that the life cycle can be and is modified at any point, and that an embryo has much more serious work in hand than reciting its family history. It betrays its ancestral origins to analysis; but that is an altogether different matter. Mr. Belloc, however, is so densely ignorant himself upon these questions that he can imagine, or think it worth while to pretend to imagine and attempt to persuade his readers by the expedient of these inverted commas, that I entertain such a view. And then follows this, which I quote that the reader may the better understand a certain occasional acerbity in my allusions, to Mr. Belloc: —

"He doesn't know that Vailleton of Montpellier has knocked the last nail into the coffin of that facile and superficial Victorian short-cut (and blind alley). He has probably never heard of Vailleton, and when he does he will suspect him for a foreigner That is what I mean by being provincial and not abreast of one's time."

It is perfectly true that I have never heard of any Vailleton in biological science. Nor has anyone else There is "no sich a person." Perhaps Mr. Belloc has not been able to read the manuscript of some

adviser, or his memory may have played a trick upon him. Possibly he has in mind that eminent Victorian embryologist Vialleton, who, so far from being the very newest thing in "European" biology, must now be getting on for seventy. He is half-way back to Haeckel, the originator of the family tree idea, a German embryologist and not, as a matter of fact, the Victorian English Protestant Mr. Belloc supposes him to be. Possibly years and years ago some French student may have run away with the idea that embryos conscientiously repeat their phylogeny and Professor Vialleton may have thought it well to discuss this idea in one of his books. It is not an idea I have ever entertained, much less stated, and its only interest here is that it gives Mr. Belloc a chance of showing how rudely he can set out his inaccuracies and his misconceptions.

But this is an incidental comment. I will reserve for my next section a consideration of the remarkable arguments— "crushing arguments" the enthusiastic cross-heads of his editor declare them to be — that Mr. Belloc produces against this, view of life as a being in a state of change under the action of Natural Selection that I have put here before the reader.

III. — MR. BELLOC AS A SPECIMEN. CRITIC OF NATURAL SELECTION

THE chief arguments against the Theory of Natural Selection with which Mr. Belloc has favoured us are neatly set out by him in two triads. His passion for orderly arrangement is greater than his logic, and we shall find that the second and third arguments of his second triad are substantially the same. He is rather exceptionally ignorant of modern scientific literature, and his arguments do not cover all the countervailing considerations upon which systematic observation and research work have been based — the speculations of Dr. Fairfield Osborn would have been a godsend for him — but the things he has to say are conveniently simple; they embody some prevalent misconceptions, and they will be useful in accentuating the more salient points in my account of the theory given in my second paper.

He produces first certain remarkable a priori arguments — his "three a priori arguments." The first is beautifully absurd. It is difficult to believe it is advanced in anything but a spirit of burlesque. He says that an advantage is not an advantage. He says that an advantage does not give an advantage unless it is combined with other advantages. You will think I am misrepresenting him. Then please read this: —

"(1) The advantageous differences making for survival are not of one kind in any particular case, but of an indefinitely large number (e.g. climate getting colder needs not only warmer coat, but power to digest new food, protective colouring so as not to show dark against snow, etc., an indefinitely large number of qualities). Now the chance of *all* being combined (and co-ordinated) in a single individual, *without design, accidentally* let alone of their thus appearing in many individuals *accidentally and without design* approximates to zero."

This is, so to speak, the short uncompleted form of the first argument. It is expanded later to a copiousness too great to admit of quotation. This expansion carries the statement right to its conclusion, that only an individual possessing all the possible differences that are advantageous at any particular time can survive.

Otherwise its differences have no "survival value." They may be advantages, but not sufficient advantages to score an advantage. I know this sounds tipsy, but there it is in black and white in Mr. Belloc's wonderful Article V for anyone to consult. It follows plainly that, except for a miracle, every species must be exterminated in every generation. I can see no other way out of it. No individual, he declares, can survive without the full set of advantageous differences, and the chance of any individual having the full set of advantageous differences, he declares after some abstruse verbal gestures, is zero. There is Mr. Belloc with his unfailing logic, his clear mathematical demonstration, and all the rest of it. There is the lucid Latin mind shining above my Nordic fog! Yet the previous generation got along without any of the set! And species do survive.

Did Mr. Belloc imagine he was saying something else? It is not for me to speculate. Helping out an antagonist in a controversy is apt to be resented. He has, I think simply got into a muddle here, and he is not sufficiently self-critical to get out of it again. So he tries to muddle through. It is quite reasonable to say that when a species is under stress of changing conditions it is usual for the need for adaptation to be felt upon a number of points and not simply upon one, and that, since every advantage counts, the individuals with the greatest combination of advantageous differences have the best chances. But that does not alter the fact that even a single advantage is an advantage. What happens in nature is not an extermination of all who are not completely in the fashion of the new differences. That seems to be Mr. Belloc's idea, but it is a wrong idea. What does happen is a diminution in each generation of the number of the disadvantaged in relation to the number of the advantaged. That is quite another affair. Mr. Belloc has not grasped this. His third a priori argument shows as much even more plainly than his first, and to that I shall presently come.

MR. BELLOC'S MENTAL INDIGESTION

I fancy this stuff he has written here is an outcome of an indigestion of Samuel Butler by Mr. Belloc. I should not have thought Mr. Belloc had read Samuel Butler, and I doubt if he has read him much. But there is a decided echo of *Luck or Cunning* in the one indistinct paragraph in which, without committing himself too deeply, Mr. Belloc seems to convey his own attitude towards the procedure of Evolution. "Design," what. ever that is, is at work, and Natural Selection is not. "There is an innate power possessed by the living thing to attempt its own adaptation." It is quite a delusion apparently that rabbits that cannot run or sparrows that are not quick on the wing are killed off more frequently than the smarter fellows. That never happens, though to the atheistically minded it may seem to happen. If it happened, it would "get rid of a God." But there are rabbits which, unlike Mrs. Dombey, do make an effort. You must understand that all creation, inspired by design, is striving. The good fungus says to itself, "Redder and more spots will benefit me greatly," and tries and tries, and presently there are redder hues and more spots. Or a happily inspired fish says: "There is a lot of food on land and the life is more genteel there, so let me get lungs." And presently it gets lungs. Some day Mr. Belloc must take a holiday in Sussex and flap about a bit and get himself some wings and demonstrate all this. But perhaps this is caricature, and Mr. Belloc when he talks about that "innate disposition" just means nothing very much — just an attempt or something. I will not pretend to understand Mr. Belloc fully upon this point.

MR. BELLOC'S BIRD-LIZARD

I will return to the essential misconception of the Theory of Natural Selection betrayed in this first a priori when I consider Mr. Belloc's third feat of logic. But first let me glance at his second. In this he says, very correctly, that every stage in the evolution of a living creature must be a type capable of maintaining itself and every change must be an advantageous change. I have noted this very obvious point already in my second paper But then Mr. Belloc instructs us that the chances of its being so are, for no earthly reason, zero, that fatal zero again! — and goes on to a passage so supremely characteristic that it must be read to be believed: —

"A bird has wings with which it can escape its enemies. If it began as a reptile without wings — when, presumably, it had armour or some other aid to survival — what of the interval? Natural Selection sets out to change a reptile's leg into a bird's wing and the scales of its armour into feathers. It does so by making the leg less and less of a leg for countless ages, and by infinite minute gradations gradually turning the scales into feathers.

"By the very nature of the theory *each stage* in all these millions is an advantage over the last towards survival! The thing has only to be stated for its absurdity to appear. Compare the 'get away' chances of a lizard at one end of the process or a sparrow at the other with some poor beast that had to try and scurry off on half-wings! or to fly with half- legs!

"Postulate a design, say, 'Here was something in the making,' and the process is explicable, especially if fairly rapid so as to bridge over the dangerously weak stage of imperfection. Postulate Natural Selection and it is manifestly impossible."

Let us note a few things of which Mr. Belloc shows himself to be unaware in this amusing display of perplexity. In the first place he does not know that the Mesozoic reptiles most closely resembling birds were creatures walking on their hind-legs, with a bony structure of the loins and a backbone already suggestive of the avian anatomy. Nor is he aware that in the lowliest of living birds the fore-limbs are mere flappers, that the feathers are simpler in structure than any other

bird's feathers, and that the general development of a bird's feather points plainly to the elongation of a scale. He has never learnt that feathers came before wings, and that at first they had to do, not with flying but with protection against cold. Yet all this was under his nose in the Outline of History in text and picture. The transition from a quilled to a feathered dinosaur presents indeed no imaginative difficulties, and the earliest birds ran and did not fly. One of the earliest known extinct birds is Hesperornis, a wingless diving bird. It is figured on page 30, and there is another bird on page 34 that Mr. Belloc might ponder with advantage. A whole great section of living birds, like the ostrich and the emu, have no trace in their structure of any ancestral flying phase: their breast-bones are incapable of carrying the necessary muscular attachments.

But after the feather was fully developed it opened up great possibilities of a strong and light extension of the flapper, helpful in running or useful in leaps from tree to tree. Archaeopteryx, another early bird, which is also figured in the Outline, has a sort of bat-wing forelimb with feathers instead of membrane. It was a woodland creature, and flew as a flying fox or a flying lemur or even a bat flies. All these facts are widely known, and all that trouble about the half-leg, half-wing, dissolves before them. But consider what a hash they make of Mr. Belloc's argument, and how pitifully it scurries off before them on its nondescript stumps of pretentious half-knowledge, half-impudence! So much for zero the second.

TROUBLES OF MR. BELLOC AS A MATRIMONIAL AGENT

The final of this wonderful trinity of a prioris is a repetition of an argument advanced ages ago by Queen Victoria's Lord Salisbury, when he was President of the British Association. Even then it struck people that he had been poorly coached for the occasion. Assuming that one or two individuals have got all these "survival value" differences in the correct proportions — against which the chances are zero — how by any theory of Natural Selection are we to suppose they will meet, breed, and perpetuate them? So this argument runs. The chances are again declared to be zero, the third zero and Mr. Belloc, I gather, calls in Design again here and makes his Creative Spirit, which has already urged these two individuals, lions or liver flukes or fleas or what not to make an effort and adapt themselves, lead them now to their romantic and beneficial nuptials, while the Theory of Natural Selection grinds its teeth in the background and mutters "Foiled again."

But this third argument reinforces the first, in showing what is the matter with Mr. Belloc's ideas in this group of questions. He has got the whole business upside down. I rather blame the early Darwinians in this matter for using so inaccurate a phrase as the "Survival of the Fittest." It is to that phrase that most of Mr. Belloc's blunderings are due. Yet he ought not to have been misled. He had a summary of modern views before him. He criticises my Outline of History, he abuses it and yet he has an extraordinary trick of getting out of its way whenever it swings near his brain-case. I warn the readers of that modest compendium expressly (and as early as page 16) that the juster phrase to use is not the Survival of the Fittest, but the Survival of the Fitter. I do what I can throughout to make them see this question not in terms of an individual, but in terms of the species.

Yet Mr. Belloc insists upon writing of "the Fittest" as a sort of conspicuously competitive prize boy, a favourable "sport," who has to meet his female equivalent and breed a new variety. That is all the world away from the manner in which a biologist thinks of the

process of specific life. He sees a species as a vast multitude of individuals in which those without individual advantages tend to fail and those with them tend to be left to continue the race. The most important fact is the general relative failure of the disadvantaged. The fact next in order of importance is the general relative survival of the advantaged. The most important consequence is that the average of the species moves in the direction of advantageous differences, moving faster or slower according to its rate of reproduction and the urgency of its circumstances — that is to say, to the severity of its death-rate. Any one particular individual may have any sort of luck; that does not affect the general result.

I do not know what Mr. Belloc's mathematical attainments are, or indeed whether he has ever learnt to count beyond zero. There is no evidence on that matter to go upon in these papers. But one may suppose him able to understand what an average is, and he must face up to the fact that the characteristics of a species are determined by its average specimens. This dickering about with fancy stories of abnormal nuptials has nothing to do with the Theory of Natural Selection. We are dealing here with large processes and great numbers, secular changes and realities broadly viewed.

I must apologise for pressing these points home. But I think it is worth while to take this opportunity of clearing up a system of foggy misconceptions about the Theory itself that may not be confined altogether to Mr. Belloc.

MR BELLOC COMES TO HIS EVIDENCE

And now let us come to Mr. Belloc's second triad of arguments — his arguments, as he calls them, "from Evidence." The sole witness on Evidence called is his own sturdy self. He calls himself into the box, and I will admit he gives his testimony in a bluff, straightforward manner — a good witness. He says very properly that the Theory of Natural Selection repudiates any absolute fixity of species. But we have to remember that the rate of change in any species is dependent upon the balance between that species and its conditions, and if this remains fairly stable the species may remain for as long without remarkable developments, or indulge in variations not conditioned by external necessities. The classical Lingula of the geological text-books, a warm-water shell-fish, has remained much the same creature throughout the entire record, for hundreds of millions of years it may be. It was suited to its submarine life, and hardly any variation was possible that was not disadvantage. It swayed about within narrow limits.

This admission of a practical stability annoys Mr. Belloc; it seems to be a mean trick on the part of the Theory of Natural Selection. He rather spoils his case by saying that "according to Natural Selection" the swallow ought to go on flying "faster and faster with the process of time." Until it bursts into flames like a meteor and vanishes from our world? And the Lingula ought to become more and more quiescent until it becomes a pebble? Yet plainly there is nothing in the Theory of Natural Selection to make the swallow fly any faster than its needs require. Excess of swiftness in a swallow may be as disadvantageous as jumping to conclusions can be to a controversialist.

But here is a statement that is spirited and yet tolerably fair: —

"If Natural Selection be true, then what we call a Pig is but a fleeting vision; all the past he has been becoming a Pig, and all the future he will spend evolving out of Pigdom, and Pig is but a moment's phase in the eternal flux."

This overlooks the melancholy possibility of an extinction of Pigs, but it may be accepted on the whole as true. And against this Mr.

Belloc gives us his word, for that upon examination is what his "Evidence" amounts to — that Types are Fixed. He jerks in capitals here in a rather convincing way. It is restrained of him, considering how great a part typography plays in his rhetoric, that he has not put it up in block capitals or had the paper perforated with the words: Fixed Types.

"We have the evidence of our senses that we are surrounded by fixed types."

For weeks and months it would seem Mr. Belloc has walked about Sussex accumulating first-hand material for these disputations, and all this time the Pigs have remained Pigs. When he prodded them they squealed. They remained pedestrian in spite of his investigatory pursuit. Not one did he find "scuttling away" with a fore-limb, "half-leg, half-wing." He has the evidence of his senses also, I may remind him, that the world is flat. And yet when we take a longer view we find the world is round, and Pigs are changing, and Sus scrofa is not the beast it was two thousand years ago.

Mr. Belloc is conscious of historical training, and I would suggest to him that it might be an improving exercise to study the Pig throughout history and to compare the Pigs of the past with the Pigs of a contemporary agricultural show. He might inform himself upon the bulk, longevity, appetites, kindliness, and general disposition of the Pig to-day. He might realise then that the Pig to-day, viewed not as the conservative occupant of a Sussex sty, but as a species, was something just a little different as a whole, but different, definably different, from the Pig of two thousand or five thousand years ago. He might retort that the Pig has been the victim of selective breeding and is not therefore a good instance of Natural Selection, but it was he who brought Pigs into this discussion. Dogs again have been greatly moulded by man in a relatively short time, and, again horses. Almost all species of animals and plants that have come into contact with man in the last few thousand years have been greatly modified by his exertions and we have no records of any detailed observations of structure or habits of creatures outside man's range of interest before the last three or four centuries. Even man himself, though he changes with relative slowness because of the slowness with which he comes to sexual maturity, has changed very perceptibly in the last

five thousand years.

MR. BELLOC A FIXED TYPE

Mr. Belloc says he has not ("Argument from Evidence"). He says it very emphatically ("Crushing Argument from Evidence" — to adopt the phraseology of his cross-heads). Let me refer him to a recent lecture by Sir Arthur Keith (Royal Society of Medicine, Nov. 16 1925) for a first gleam of enlightenment. He will realise a certain rashness in his statement. I will not fill these pages with an attempt to cover all the changes in the average man that have gone on in the last two or three thousand years. For example, in the face and skull, types with an edge-to-edge bite of the teeth are giving place to those with an overlapping bite; the palate is undergoing contraction, the physiognomy changes. And so on throughout all man's structure. No doubt one can find plentiful instances to-day of people almost exactly like the people of five thousand years ago in their general physique. But that is not the point. The proportions and so forth that were exceptional then are becoming prevalent now the proportions that were prevalent then, now become rare. The average type is changing. Considering that man only gets through about four generations in a century, it is a very impressive endorsement of the theory of Natural Selection that he has undergone these palpable modifications in the course of a brief score of centuries. Mr. Belloc's delusion that no such modification has occurred may be due to his presumption that any modification would have to show equally in each and every individual. I think it is. He seems quite capable of presuming that.

TRIUMPHANT DEMAND OF MR. BELLOC

Mr. Belloc's next Argument from Evidence is a demand from the geologist for a continuous "series of changing forms passing one into the other." He does not want merely "intermediate forms," he says; he wants the whole series — grandfather, father, and son. He does not say whether he insists upon a pedigree with the bones and proper certificates of birth, but I suppose it comes to that. This argument, I am afraid, wins, hands down. Mr. Belloc may score the point. The reprehensible negligence displayed by the lower animals in the burial of their dead, or even the proper dating of their own remains, leaves the apologist for the Theory of Natural Selection helpless before this simple requisition. It is true that we now have, in the case of the camels, the horses, and the elephants, an extraordinary display of fossil types, exhibiting step by step the development and differentiation of species and genera. But this, I take it, rather concerns his Third than his Second Argument from Evidence.

A MAGNIFICENT GENERALISATION

The third argument is essentially a display of Mr. Belloc's inability to understand the nature of the record of the rocks. I will assume that he knows what "strata" are, but it is clear that he does not understand that any uniform stratum indicates the maintenance of uniform conditions while it was deposited and an absence of selective stresses, and that when it gives place to another different stratum, that signifies a change in conditions, not only in the conditions of the place where the stratum is found, but in the supply of material. An estuary sinks and gives place to marine sands, or fresh water brings down river gravels which cover over an accumulation of shingle. Now if he will think what would happen to-day under such circumstances, he will realise that the fauna and flora of the stratum first considered will drift away and that another fauna and flora will come in with the new conditions. Fresh things will come to feed and wade and drown in the waters, and old types will no longer frequent them. The fossil remains of one stratum are very rarely directly successive to those below it or directly ancestral to those above it. A succession of forms is much more difficult and elusive to follow up, therefore, than Mr. Belloc imagines. And then if he will consider what happens to the rabbits and rats and mice on his Sussex estate, and how they die and what happens to their bodies, he may begin to realise just what proportion of the remains of these creatures is ever likely to find its way to fossilisation. Perhaps years pass without the bones of a single rabbit from the whole of England finding their way to a resting-place where they may become fossil. Nevertheless the rabbit is a very common animal. And then if Mr. Belloc will think of palaeontologists, millions of years after this time, working at the strata that we are forming to-day, working at a gravel or sand-pit here or a chance exposure there, and prevented from any general excavation, and if he will ask himself what proportion of the rare few rabbits actually fossilised are likely to come to light, I think he will begin to realise for the first time in his life the tremendous "gappiness" of the geological record and how very childish and absurd is his demand for an unbroken series of forms. The geological

record is not like an array of hundreds of volumes containing a complete history of the past. It is much more like a few score crumpled pages from such an array, the rest of the volumes having either never been printed, or having been destroyed or being inaccessible.

In his Third Argument from Evidence Mr. Belloc obliges us with a summary of this record of the rocks, about which he knows so little. I need scarcely note here that the only evidence adduced is his own inspired conviction. No "European" palaeontologist or biologist is brought out of the Humbert safe and quoted. Here was a chance to puzzle me dreadfully with something "in French," and it is scandalously thrown away. Mr. Belloc tells us, just out of his head, that instead of there being that succession of forms in the geological record the Theory of Natural Selection requires, there are "enormously long periods of stable type" and "(presumably) rapid periods of transition." That "presumably" is splendid; scientific caution and all the rest of it — rapid periods when I suppose the Creative Spirit got busy and types woke up and said, "Turn over; let's change a bit."

There is really nothing to be said about this magnificent generalisation except that it is pure Bellocking. Wherever there is a group of strata, sufficiently thick and sufficiently alike to witness to a long-sustained period of slight alterations in conditions, there we find the successive species approximating. This is not a statement a la Belloc. In spite of the chances against such a thing occurring, and in defiance of Mr. Belloc's assertion that it does not occur, there are several series of forms in time, giving a practically direct succession of species. Mr. Belloc may read about it and at the same time exercise this abnormal linguistic gift which sits upon him so gracefully, his knowledge of the French language, in Deperet's Transformations du Monde Animal, where all these questions are conveniently summarised. There he will get the results of Waagen with a succession of Ammonites and also of Neumayr with Paludina, and there also he will get information about the sequence of the species of Mastodon throughout the Tertiary age and read about the orderly progress of a pig group, the Brachyodus of the Eocene and Oligocene. There is a touch of irony in the fact that his own special

protege, the Pig, should thus turn upon him and rend his Third Argument from Evidence.

More recondite for Mr. Belloc is the work of Hilgendorf upon Planorbis, because it is in German; but the drift of it is visible in the Palaeontology wing of the London Natural History Museum, Room VIII. A species of these gasteropods was, during the slow processes of molecular change, caught in a big lake, fed by hot springs. It underwent progressive modification into a series of successive new species as conditions changed through the ages. Dr. Klaehms' specimens show this beautifully. Rowe's account of the evolutionary series in the genus Micraster (Q.J.M.S., 1899) is also accessible to Mr. Belloc, and he will find other matter to ponder in Goodrich's Living Organisms, 1924. The finest series of all, longer in range and completer in its links, is that of the Horse. There is an excellent little pamphlet by Matthew and Chubb, well illustrated, The Evolution of the Horse, published by the American Museum of Natural History, New York, so plain, so simple, so entirely and humiliatingly destructive of Mr. Belloc's nonsensical assertions, that I pray him to get it and read it for the good of his really very unkempt and neglected soul. Thus we observe that Mr. Belloc does not know the facts in this case of Natural Selection, and that he argues very badly from such facts as he misconceives. It is for the reader to decide which at the end is more suitable as a laughing-stock — the Theory of Natural Selection or Mr. Belloc. And having thus studied this great Catholic apologist as an amateur biologist and arrived at the result, we will next go on to consider what he has to say about the origins of mankind — and Original Sin.

IV. — MR. BELLOC'S ADVENTURES AMONG THE SUB-MEN. MANIFEST TERROR OF THE NEANDERTHALER

FROM Mr. Belloc's feats with Natural Selection we come to his adventures among his ancestors and the fall of man. These are, if possible, even more valiant than his beautiful exposure of the "half-educated assurance" of current biological knowledge. He rushes about the arena, darting from point to point, talking of my ignorance of the "main recent European work in Anthropology," and avoiding something with extraordinary skill and dexterity. What it is he is avoiding I will presently explain. No one who has read my previous articles need be told that not a single name, not a single paper, is cited from that galaxy of "main recent European" anthropology. With one small exception. There is a well-known savant, M. Marcellin Boule, who wrote of the Grottes de Grimaldi in 1906. Some facetious person seems to have written to Mr. Belloc and told him that M. Boule in 1906 "definitely proved the exact opposite" of the conclusions given by Mr. Wright in his Quaternary Ice Age (1914), and quoted in my Outline. Mr. Belloc writes this down, elevates M. Boule to the magnificence of "Boule" simply and follows up with the habitual insults. By counting from his one fixed mathematical point, *"zero"* in some dimension unknown to me, he concludes that I must be twenty years out of date, though the difference between 1906 and 1914, by ordinary ways of reckoning, is really not minus twenty but plus eight.

The same ungracious humorist seems to have stuffed up Mr. Belloc with a story that for the last twenty years the climate of the earth has ceased to vary with the eccentricity of the earth's orbit, and that any natural consequences of the procession of the equinoxes no longer occur; that climate has, in fact, cut loose from astronomical considerations, and that you can find out all about it in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. You cannot. Mr. Belloc should have tried. Some day he must find time to puzzle out M. Boule's curve of oscillation of the Mediterranean and correlate it with Penck's, and go

into the mystery of certain Moustierian implements that M. Boule says are not Moustierian; and after that he had better read over the little discussion about changes of climate in the Outline of History — it is really quite simply put — and see what it is I really said and what his leg-pulling friend has been up to with him in that matter. It may be kinder to Mr. Belloc to help him with a hint. Croll made an excellent book in which he pointed out a number of astronomical processes which must produce changes of climate. He suggested that these processes were sufficient to account for the fluctuations of the glacial age. They are not. But they remain perfectly valid causes of climatic variation. Croll is no more done for than Darwin is done for. That is where Mr. Belloc's friend let Mr. Belloc down.

But Mr. Belloc does not always work on the information of facetious friends, and sometimes one is clearly in the presence of the unassisted expert controversialist. When, for example, I say that the Tasmanians are not racially Neanderthalers, but that they are Neanderthaloid, he can bring himself to alter the former word also to Neanderthaloid in order to allege an inconsistency. And confident that most of his Catholic readers will not check him back by my book, he can ascribe to me views about race for which there is no shadow of justification But it is disagreeable to me to follow up such issues; they concern Mr. Belloc much more than they do the living questions under discussion, and I will not even catalogue what other such instances of unashamed controversy occur.

MR. BELLOC AS ICONOCLAST

In the course of the darting to and fro amongst human and sub-human pre- history, Mr. Belloc criticises me severely for quoting Sir Arthur Keith's opinion upon the Piltdown remains. I have followed English authorities. All these remains are in England, and so they have been studied at first hand mostly by English people. No one can regret this insularity on the part of Eoanthropus more than I do, but it leaves Mr. Belloc's "European opinion on the whole" rejecting Sir Arthur Keith as a rather more than usually absurd instance of Mr. Belloc's distinctive method. "*What* European opinion?" you ask. Mr. Belloc does not say. Probably Belloking of Upsala and Bellokopoulos of Athens. Mr. Belloc — forgetting that in an earlier edition of the Outline I give a full summary of the evidence in this case, up-to-date — informs his Catholic audience that I have apparently read nothing about the Piltdown vestige but an "English work." And then he proceeds to fall foul of the "restoration" of Eoanthropus. It is an imaginary picture of the creature, and I myself think that the artist has erred on the human side. Mr. Belloc objects to all such restorations.

Well, we have at least a saucerful of skull fragments and a doubtful jawbone to go upon, and the picture does not pretend to be, and no reader can possibly suppose it to be, anything but a tentative restoration. But why a great Catholic apologist of all people, the champion of a Church which has plastered the world with portraits of the Virgin Mary, of the Holy Family, and with pictures of saints and miracles in the utmost profusion, without any warning to the simple-minded that these gracious and moving figures to which they give their hearts may be totally unlike the beings they profess to represent — why he should turn iconoclast and object to these modestly propounded restorations passes my comprehension. At Cava di Tirrene near Naples I have been privileged to see, in all reverence, a hair of the Virgin, small particles of St. Peter, and other evidences of Christianity; and they did not seem to me to be so considerable in amount as even the Eoanthropus fragments. And again, in this strange outbreak of iconoclastic rage, he says: —

“Again, we have the coloured picture of a dance of American Red Indians round a fire solemnly presented as a ‘reconstruction’ of Palaeolithic society.”

He has not even observed that the chief figures in that picture are copied directly from the actual rock paintings of Palaeolithic men although this is plainly stated.

MR. BELLOC DISCOVERS A MARE'S NEST

And yet he must have looked at the reproductions of these rock paintings given in the Outline. Because in his ninth paper he comes out with the most wonderful of all the mares' nests he has discovered in the Outline of History, and it concerns these very pictures. You see there is an account of the Reindeer men who lived in France and North Spain, and it is said of them that it is doubtful if they used the bow. Mr. Belloc declares that it is my bitter hatred of religion that makes me say this but indeed it is not. It is still doubtful if the Reindeer hunters had the bow. The fires of Smithfield would not tempt me to say certainly either that they had it or that they did not have it, until I know. But they seem to have killed the reindeer and the horse and bison by spearing them. Mr. Belloc may have evidence unknown to the rest of mankind in that Humbert safe of his, otherwise that is the present state of our knowledge. But, as I explain on pages 56 and 57 in language that a child might understand, simultaneously with that reindeer hunting life in the north there were more advanced (I know the word will disgust Mr. Belloc with its horrid suggestion of progress, but I have to use it) Palaeolithic people scattered over the greater part of Spain and reaching into the South of France who had the bow. It says so in the text: "Men carry bows" runs my text, describing certain rock pictures reproduced in my book. I wrote it in the text; and in the legends that are under these pictures, legends read and approved by me, the statement is repeated. The matter is as plain as daylight and as plainly stated Mr. Belloc will get it if he says over to himself slowly— "Reindeer men, bows doubtful; Azilian, Capsian men to the south, bows certainly." And now consider Mr. Belloc, weaving his mare's nest: —

"Upon page 50 he writes, concerning the palaeolithic man of the cave drawings, this sentence: '*it is doubtful if they knew of the bow.*'

"When I first read that sentence, I was so staggered, I could hardly believe I had read it right."

"That a person pretending to teach popular prehistorical science in 1925 should tell us of the cave painters that it was '*doubtful if they knew of the bow* ' seemed to me quite out of nature.

“It was the more extraordinary because here before me, in Mr. Wells’s own book, were reproductions of these cave paintings, with the bow and the arrow appearing all over them! Even if he did not take the trouble to look at the pictures that were to illustrate his book, and left that department (as he probably did) to hack work, he ought, as an ordinary educated man, to have known the ultimate facts of the case.”

“Palaeolithic man was an archer, and an archer with an efficient weapon.

“The thing is a commonplace; only gross ignorance can have overlooked it — but, as I have said, there is a cause behind that ignorance. Mr. Wells would not have made this enormous error if he had not been possessed with the necessity of making facts fit in with his theology.”

THE CHASING OF MR. BELLOC BEGINS

There is a real splendour in these three almost consecutive passages. And note incidentally how this facile controversialist bespatters also my helpers and assistants. They do "hack work." Palaeolithic man, speaking generally, was *not* an archer. Only the later Palaeolithic men, dealing with a smaller quarry than the reindeer, seem to have used the bow. Manifestly it is not I who am fitting my facts with my theology here, but Mr. Belloc. He is inventing an error which is incredible even to himself as he invents it, and he is filling up space as hard as he can with indignation at my imaginary offence.

Why is he going on like this? In the interests of that Catholic soul in danger? Possibly. But his pen is running so fast here, it seems to me, not so much to get to something as to get away from something. The Catholic soul most in danger in these papers of Mr. Belloc's is Mr. Belloc's, and the thing he is running away from through these six long disputations is a grisly beast, neither ape nor true man, called the Neanderthaler, Homo Neanderthalensis. This Homo Neanderthalensis is the real "palaeolithic" man. For three-quarters of the "palaeolithic" age he was the only sort of man. The Reindeer men, the Capsian men, are "modern" beside him. He was no more an archer than he was an electrical engineer. He was no more an artist than Mr. Belloc is a man of science.

Instead of bothering with any more of the poor little bits of argey-bargey about this or that detail in my account of the earlier true men that Mr. Belloc sees fit to make — instead of discussing whether these first human savages, who drew and painted like Bushmen and hunted like Labrador Indians, did or did not progress in the arts of life before they passed out of history, let me note now the far more important matters that he refuses to look at.

Mr. Belloc makes a vast pother about Eoanthropus which is no more than a few bits of bone; he says nothing of the other creature to whom I have devoted a whole chapter: the man that was not a man. Loud headlines, challenging section headings, appeal in vain to Mr. Belloc's averted mind. Of this Neanderthal man we have plentiful evidence, and the collection increases every year. Always in

sufficiently old deposits, and always with consistent characteristics. Here is a creature which not only made implements but fires, which gathered together ornamental stones, which buried its dead. Mr. Belloc says burying the dead is a proof of a belief in immortality. And this creature had strange teeth, differing widely from the human, more elaborate and less bestial; it had a differently hung head; it was chinless, it had a non-opposable thumb. Says M. Boule, the one anthropologist known to Mr. Belloc: "In its absence of forehead the Neanderthal type strikingly resembles the anthropoid apes." And he adds that it "must have possessed only a rudimentary psychic nature... markedly inferior to that of any modern race." When I heard that Mr. Belloc was going to explain and answer the Outline of History, my thought went at once to this creature. What would Mr. Belloc say of it? Would he put it before or after the Fall? Would he correct its anatomy by wonderful new science out of his safe? Would he treat it like a brother and say it held by the most exalted monotheism, or treat it as a monster made to mislead wicked men?

He says nothing! He just walks away whenever it comes near him.

But I am sure it does not leave him. In the night, if not by day, it must be asking him: "Have I a soul to save, Mr. Belloc? Is that Heidelberg jawbone one of us, Mr. Belloc, or not? You've forgotten me, Mr Belloc. For four-fifths of the Palaeolithic age I was 'man.' There was no other. I shamble and I cannot walk erect and look up at heaven as you do, Mr. Belloc, but dare you cast me to the dogs?"

No reply.

The poor Neanderthaler has to go to the dogs, I fear, by implication, for Mr. Belloc puts it with all the convincing force of italics, that "*Man is a fixed type.* " We realise now why he wrote the four wonderful chapters about Natural Selection that we have done our best to appreciate. It was to seem to establish this idea of *fixed types* . Man had to be shown as a "Fixed Type" for reasons that will soon be apparent. Apart from Mr Belloc's assertion, there is no evidence that man is any exception to the rest of living creatures. He changes They all change. All this remarkable discourse about bows or no bows and about the high thinking and simple living of these wandering savages of twenty or more thousand years ago, which runs through half a dozen papers, seems to be an attempt to believe that

these early men were creatures exactly like ourselves — and an attempt to believe that the more animal savages of the preceding hundred thousand years did not for all practical purposes exist at all. An attempt to believe and induce belief; not an attempt to demonstrate. Mr. Belloc emerges where he went in, with much said and nothing proved, and the Outline undamaged by his attack. And emerging he makes a confession that he never was really concerned with the facts of the case at all. "Sympathy or antagonism with the Catholic faith is the only thing of real importance in attempting to teach history" — and there you are! All these argumentative gesticulations, all these tortured attempts to confute, are acts of devotion to Mr. Belloc's peculiar vision of the Catholic faith.

I am afraid it is useless for me to suggest a pilgrimage to Mr. Belloc, or I would ask him to visit a popular resort not two hours by automobile from the little corner of France in which I am wont to shelter my suburban Protestantism from the too bracing English winter. That is the caves at Rochers Rouges, at which, as it happens, his one quoted authority, M. Boule, worked for several years. There in an atmosphere entirely "Latin" and "continental," under the guidance of Signor Alfredo Lorenzi, he can see for himself his Fixed Type Man at successive levels of change. No northern man need be with him when he faces the facts of these caves; no Protestant shadow need dog his steps; his French, that rare distinguished gift, will be understood, and he may even air such Provencal or Italian as he is master of. The horrid Neanderthaler is not in evidence. But there protected by glass covers, he will be able to see the skeletons of Cro-Magnon man and Grimaldi man lying in the very positions in which they were discovered. He will see for himself the differences of level at which they were found and have some help in imagining the ages that separate the successive types. He will note massiveness of skull and protrusion of jaw. He will see the stone implements they used, the ashes of their fires and have some material for imagining the quality of their savagery. He can hunt about for arrow-heads to bear out his valiant assertion that Palaeolithic man was "an archer with an efficient weapon." He will hunt until stooping and the sunshine make him giddy, in vain. And then, with these bones fresh in his mind, he should go to the Museum at Monaco and see the

skeleton of a modern human being. He will find no end of loud talk and valiant singing and good red wine necessary before he can get back to his faith in man as a *Fixed Type* .

WHERE WAS THE GARDEN OF EDEN?

It is extremely difficult to find out what Mr. Belloc, as a representative Catholic, believes about human origins. I was extremely curious to get the Catholic view of these matters, and I heard of the advent of these articles with very great pleasure, because I thought I should at last be able to grasp what I had hitherto failed to understand in the Catholic position. But if Mr. Belloc has said all that there is to say for Catholicism upon these points, Catholicism is bankrupt. He assures me that to believe in the Biblical account of the Creation is a stupid Protestant tendency, and that Catholics do not do anything of the sort. His attitude towards the Bible throughout is one almost of contempt. It is not for me to decide between Christians upon this delicate issue. And Catholics, I gather, have always believed in Evolution and are far above the intellectual level of the American Fundamentalist. It is very important to Catholic self-respect to keep that last point in mind. Catholic evolution is a queer process into which "Design" makes occasional convulsive raids; between which raids species remain "fixed"; but still it is a sort of Evolution. My peasant neighbours in Provence, devout Catholics and very charming people, have not the slightest suspicion that they are Evolutionists, though Mr. Belloc assures me they are.

But, in spite of this smart Evolutionary town wear of the Church, it has somehow to be believed by Catholics that "man" is and always has been and will be the same creature, "fixed." That much Mr. Belloc gives us reiteratively. A contemporary writer, the Rev. Morris Morris, has written an interesting book, Man Created during Descent, to show that man's immortal soul was injected into the universe at the beginning of the Neolithic period, which makes those Azilians and Capsians, with their bows and carvings, mere animals. The new Belloc-Catholic teaching is similar, but it puts the human beginnings earlier. Somewhen after the Chellean and Moustierian periods, and before the Reindeer men, I gather that "man" appeared, according to Catholic doctrines, exactly what he is now. Or rather better. He was clad in skins and feathers, smeared with paint, a cave-haunting wanderer with not even a dog at his heels; but he was, because Mr.

Belloc says so, a devout monotheist and had a lucid belief in personal immortality. His art was pure and exalted — there were little bone figures of steatopygous women in evidence. He had no connection with the Neanderthal predecessor — or else he had jumped miraculously out of the Neanderthaler's bestial skin. Sometimes it seems to be one thing and sometimes the other. But all that stuff about Adam and Eve and the Garden and the Tree and the Serpent, so abundantly figured in Catholic painting and sculpture, seems to have dropped out of this new version of Catholic truth.

Yet those pictures are still shown to the faithful! And what the Fall becomes in these new revelations of Catholicism, or whether there was a Fall, historically speaking Mr. Belloc leaves in the densest obscurity. I have read and re-read these articles of his, and I seek those lucid Latin precisions he has promised me in vain. Was and is that Eden story merely symbolical, and has the Church always taught that it is merely symbolical? And if so, what in terms of current knowledge do these symbols stand for? Is it symbolical of some series of events in time or is it not? If it is, when and what were the events in time? And if it is not, but if it is symbolical of some experience or adventure or change in the life of each one of us, what is the nature of that personal fall? What is the significance of the Garden the Innocence, the Tree, the Serpent? To get anything clear and hard out of Mr. Belloc's papers in reply to these questions is like searching for a diamond in a lake of skilly. I am left with the uncomfortable feeling that Mr. Belloc is as vague and unbelieving about this fundamental Catholic idea as the foggiest of foggy Protestants and Modernists, but that he has lacked the directness of mind to admit as much even to himself. Yet surely the whole system of salvation, the whole Christian scheme, rests upon the presumption of a fall. Without a fall, what is the value of salvation? Why redeem what has never been lost? Without a condemnation what is the struggle? What indeed, in that case, is the Catholic Church about?

What modern thought is about is a thing easier to explain. In the Outline of History, against which Mr. Belloc is rather carping than levelling criticism, there is set out, as the main form of that Outline, a progressive development of conscious will in life. It is not a form thrust upon the massed facts by any fanatical prepossession; it is a

form they insisted upon assuming under my summarising hands. What is going on in this dispute is not that I am beating and putting over my ideas upon Mr. Belloc or that he is beating and putting over his ideas upon me, but that the immense increase of light and knowledge during the past century is imposing a new realisation of the quality and depth and import of life upon us both, and that I am acquiescent and he is recalcitrant. I judge his faith by the new history, and he judges the new history by his faith.

V. — FIXITY OR PROGRESS

I am glad to say that we are emerging now from the worst of the controversial stuff, irritating and offensive, in which Mr. Belloc is so manifestly my master and coming to matters of a more honest interest.

I have stuck to my argument through the cut and slash, sneer and innuendo of Mr. Belloc's first twelve papers I have done my best to be kind and generous with him. I have made the best excuses I can for him I have shown how his oddities of bearing and style arise out of the difficulties of his position, and how his absurd reasonings about Natural Selection and his deliberate and tedious bemuddlement of the early Palaeolithic sub-men with the late Reindeer men and the Capsian men are all conditioned by the necessity he is under to declare and believe that "man" is, as he puts it, a "Fixed Type," the same in the past and now and always. He is under this necessity because he believes that otherwise the Christian faith cannot be made to stand up as a rational system, and because, as I have shown by a quotation of his own words, he makes their compatibility with his idea of Catholic teaching his criterion in the acceptance or rejection of facts.

I will confess I do not think that things are as bad as this with Christianity. I believe a far better case could be made for Catholicism by an insistence that its value and justification lie in the change and in the direction of the human will, in giving comfort and consolation and peace, in producing saints and beautiful living; and that the truth of the history it tells of space and time is entirely in relation to the development of these spiritual aspects, and has no necessary connection whatever with scientific truth. This line of thought is no novelty, and I do not see why Catholics should not keep to it and leave the outline of history alone. I do not say that it is a line of apologetics that would convince me altogether, but it is one that would need far more arduous discussion and merit, far more respect than Mr. Belloc's a priori exploits, his limping lizards and flying pigs.

But it is not my business to remind Catholics of their own

neglected philosophers, and clearly the publication of Mr. Belloc's articles by the Universe, the Catholic Bulletin, and the Southern Cross shows that the Catholic world of to-day is stoutly resolved to treat the fall of man and his unalterable nature as matters of fact, even if they are rather cloudy matters of fact, and to fight the realities of modern biology and anthropology to the last ditch.

So the Catholics are pinned to this dogma of the fixity of man and thereby to a denial of progress. This vale of tears, they maintain, is as a whole a stagnant lake of tears, and there is no meaning to it beyond the spiritual adventures of its individual lives. Go back in time or forward, so long as man has been or will be, it is all the same. You will find a world generally damned, with a select few, like Mr. Belloc, on their way to eternal beatitude. That is all there is to the spectacle. There is, in fact, I10 outline of history; there is just a flow of individual lives — there are only birth and salvation or birth and damnation. That, I extract from Mr. Belloc and other contemporary writers, is the Catholic's vision of life.

THE IDEA OF FIXED HUMANITY

And it is not only the Catholic vision of life. It is a vision far more widely accepted. I would say that, if we leave out the ideas of damning or beatitude, it is the "common-sense" vision of the world. The individual life is, to common-sense, all that matters, the entire drama. There is from this popular and natural point of view no large, comprehensive drama in which the individual life is a subordinate part. Just as to the untutored mind the world is flat, just as to Mr. Belloc during his biological research work in Sussex the species of pig remained a "fixed type," so to the common intelligence life is nothing more or less than "Me," an unquestioned and unanalysed Me, against the universe.

The universe may indeed be imagined as ruled over and pervaded by God, and this world may be supposed to have extensions of hell and heaven; all sorts of pre-natal dooms and debts may affect the career of the Me, but nevertheless the Me remains in the popular mind, nobbily integral, one and indivisible, and either it ends and the drama ends with it, or it makes its distinct and special way to the Pit, or, with Belloc and the Catholic community, to the beatitude he anticipates.

The individual self is primary to this natural, primitive, and prevalent mode of thinking. But it is not the only way of thinking about life. The gist of the Outline of History is to contradict this self-centred conception of life and show that this absolute individualism of our thought and destinies is largely illusory. We do not live in ourselves, as we so readily imagine we do; we are contributory parts in the progress of a greater being which is life, and which becomes now conscious of itself through human thought.

THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE

Now here I think we get down, beneath all the frothings and bespatterings of controversy, to the fundamental difference between Mr. Belloc and myself. It is this which gives our present controversy whatever claim it can have to attention. Neither Mr. Belloc nor myself is a very profound or exhaustive philosopher. In ourselves we are very unimportant indeed. But we have this in common, that we can claim to be very honestly expressive of the mental attitudes of clearly defined types of mind, and that we are sharply antithetical types.

By nature and training and circumstances Mr. Belloc stands for the stout sensible fellow who believes what he sees, who considers that his sort always has been and always will be; who stands by accepted morals and time-honoured ways of eating and drinking and amusement; who loves — and grips as much as he can of — the good earth that gives us food for our toil; who begets children honestly by one beloved wife until she dies and then repeats the same wholesome process with the next; who believes in immortality lest he should be sorry to grow old and die; who trusts in the Church and its teaching because visibly the Church is a great and impressive fact, close at hand and extremely reassuring; who is a nationalist against all strangers because, confound it! there are nations, and for Christendom against all pagans; who finds even Chinamen and Indians remote and queer and funny. I do not think that is an unfair picture of the ideals of Mr. Belloc and of his close friend and ally, Mr. Chesterton, as they have spread them out for us; and I admit they are warm and rosy ideals. But they are ideals and not realities. The real human being upon this swift-spinning planet is not that stalwart, entirely limited, fixed type resolved to keep so, stamping about the flat world under God's benevolent sky, eating, drinking, disputing, and singing lustily, until he passes on to an eternal individual beatitude with God and all the other blessed ones. He is less like that every day, and more and more conscious of the discrepancy.

I have read and admired and sympathised with the work of Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton since its very beginnings, but I find

throughout it all a curious defensive note. It may be I attribute distresses to them that they do not feel. But it seems to me they are never quite sure in their minds about this "fixed" human being of theirs — the same yesterday, now, and for ever. Mr. Belloc must be puzzled not a little by that vast parade of Evolution through the immeasurable ages which he admits has occurred — a parade made by the Creative Force for no conceivable reason, since a "fixed type" might just as well have been created straight away. He must realise that if man is the beginning and end of life, then his Creator has worked within fantastically disproportionate margins both of space and time. And in his chapters upon animal and human origins Mr. Belloc's almost obstinate ignorance of biological facts, his fantastic "logic," his pathetic and indubitably honest belief in his non-existent "European authorities," his fumbling and evasion about Palaeolithic man, and above all his petty slights and provocations to those whose views jar upon him, have nothing of the serenity of a man assured of his convictions, and all the irritability and snatching at any straw of advantage of a man terribly alarmed for his dearest convictions. When Mr. Belloc gets to his beatitude he will feel like a fish out of water. I believe Mr. Belloc and his friend Mr. Chesterton are far too intelligent not to be subconsciously alive to the immense and increasing difficulties of their positions, and that they are fighting most desperately against any conscious realisation of the true state of affairs.

THE IDEA OF PROGRESSIVE HUMANITY

It happens that my circumstances, and perhaps my mental temperament, have brought my mind into almost dramatic opposition to that of Mr. Belloc. While his training was mainly in written history, the core of mine was the analytical exercises of comparative anatomy and palaeontology. I was brought up upon the spectacle of life in the universe as a steadily changing system. My education was a modern one, upon material and questionings impossible a hundred years ago. Things that are fundamental and commonplaces to me have come, therefore, as belated, hostile, and extremely distressing challenges to the satisfactions and acceptances of Mr. Belloc.

Now, this picture of a fixed and unprogressive humanity working out an enormous multitude of individual lives from birth to either eternal beatitude or to something not beatitude, hell or destruction or whatever else it may be that Mr. Belloc fails to make clear is the alternative to beatitude — this picture, which seems to be necessary to the Catholic and probably to every form of Christian faith, and which is certainly necessary to the comfort of Mr. Belloc, has no validity whatever for my mind. It is no more possible in my thought as a picture of reality than that ancient cosmogony which made the round earth rest upon an elephant, which stood upon a tortoise, which stood upon God-knows-what.

I do not know how the universe originated, or what it is fundamentally; I do not know how material substance is related to consciousness and will; I doubt if any creature of my calibre is capable of knowing such things; but at least I know enough to judge the elephant story and the fixed humanity story absurd. I do not know any convincing proof that Progress must go on — I find no invincible imperative to progressive change in my universe; but I remark that progressive change does go on, and that it is the form into which life falls more and more manifestly as our analysis penetrates and our knowledge increases. I set about collecting what is known of life and the world in time and space, and I find the broad outline falls steadily and persistently into a story of life appearing and increasing in range, power, and co-operative unity of activity. I see knowledge increasing

and human power increasing, I see ever-increasing possibilities before life, and I see no limits set to it all. Existence impresses me as a perpetual dawn. Our lives, as I apprehend them, swim in expectation. This is not an outline I have thrust upon the facts; it is the outline that came naturally as the facts were put in order.

And it seems to me that we are waking up to the realisation that the individual life does not stand alone as people in the past have seemed to imagine it did, but that it is far truer to regard it as an episode in a greater life, which progresses and which need not die. The episode begins and ends, but life goes on.

Mr. Belloc is so far removed from me mentally that he is unable to believe that this, clearly and honestly, is how I see things; he is moved to explain it away by saying that I am trying to "get rid of a God," that I am a rotten Protestant, that this is what comes of being born near London, that if I knew French and respected the Gentry all this would be different, and so on, as the attentive student of his great apology for Catholicism has been able to observe. But all the while he is uncomfortably on the verge of being aware that I am a mere reporter of a vast mass of gathered knowledge and lengthened perspectives that towers up behind and above his neat and jolly marionette show of the unchanging man and his sins and repentances and mercies, his astonishing punishments, and his preposterous eternal reward among the small eternities of the mediaeval imagination. I strut to no such personal beatitude. I have no such eternity of individuation. The life to which I belong uses me and will pass on beyond me, and I am content.

THE NEW THOUGHT AND THE OLD

Mr. Belloc is completely justified in devoting much more than half his commentary to these fundamental issues and dealing with my account of the appearance of Christianity and the story of the Church much more compactly. It is this difference at the very roots of our minds which matters to us, and it is the vital question we have to put before the world. The rest is detail. I do believe and assert that a new attitude to life, a new and different vision of the world, a new moral atmosphere and a different spirit of conduct, is coming into human affairs, as a result of the scientific analysis of the past hundred years. It is only now reaching such a clearness of definition that it can be recognised for what it is and pointed out.

The essential distinction of the newer thought in the world is in its denial of the permanence of the self and in its realisation of the self's comparative unimportance. Even in our individual lives we are increasingly interested in common and generalised things. The older commoner life, the religious life just as much as the most worldly life, seems to us excessively self-conscious. The religious life, its perpetual self-examination for sin and sinful motives, its straining search after personal perfection, appears in the new light as being scarcely less egotistical than a dandy's. And this new way of living and thinking is directly linked on to the idea of progress, which makes life in general far more interesting than any individual life can be, just as the self-centred life, whether it be religious and austere or vain or self-indulgent, is directly connected with the old delusions of permanence which rob life in general of any sustained interest. When one is really persuaded that there is nothing new under the sun, then there is nothing worth living for whatever outside the personal adventure, the dance between permanent individual beatitude or permanent individual damnation.

As this modern conception of life, as a process of progressive change in which individuality of our order can be sometimes excessively exaggerated as it has been in the past and sometimes minimised as is happening now; as this conception establishes itself, it changes the spirit of living and the values of our general ideas

about living profoundly. Lit only by a very bright light held low, an ordinary road becomes a tangle of vivid surfaces and black shadows, and you cannot tell a puddle or a gutter from a ditch or a precipice. But in diffused daylight you can see the proportions of every irregularity. So too with changing illumination our world alters its aspects, and things that once seemed monstrous and final are seen to be mere undulations in a practicable progress. We can realise now, as no one in the past was ever able to realise it, that man is a creature changing very rapidly from the life of a rare and solitary great ape to the life of a social and economic animal. He has traversed most of this tremendous change of phase in something in the nature of a million years. His whole being, mind and body alike, betrays the transition. We can trace the mitigations of his egotism through the development of religious and customary restraints. The recent work of the psycho-analysts enables us to understand something of the intricate system of suppressions and inhibitions that this adaptation to a more and more complex social life has involved. We begin to realise how man has symbolised and personified his difficulties, and to comprehend the mechanisms of his uncongenial but necessary self-restraint.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

The disposition of those who apprehend this outline of history that modern science has made plain to us, and who see all life as a system of progressive change, is by no means antagonistic to religion. They realise the immense importance and the profound necessity of religion in this last great chapter of the story, the evolution of human society. But they see religion within the frame of fact; they do not, like Mr. Belloc, look through religion at fact. Man has accommodated his originally fierce and narrow egotism to the needs of an ever wider and more co-operative social life, very largely through the complex self-subjugations that religion has made possible. Within the shell and cover of religion the new less self-centred habits of mind have been able to develop. An immense mass of imaginative work, of mythology, of theology, that now seems tortuous, mystical, and fantastic, was necessary for the casting of the new moral being of socialised man. We seem to be entering upon a phase in which moral and intellectual education may be able to free themselves from the last vestiges of the mythology in which that new moral being was moulded; but it is ungracious and false to the true outline of history to deny the necessary part that the priest, the sacrifice, the magic ceremonial for tribal welfare, the early tribal religions, have played in this transfiguration of the sub-human into the modern human mind, upon which all our community rests to-day.

It is because of our sense of this continuity of our present dispositions with the religions upon which they are founded that so many of us are loth to part with all the forms and phrases of the old creeds and all the disciplines of time-honoured cults. Perhaps some of us (the present writer in the crowd among others) have been over-eager to read new significances into established phrases, and clothe new ideas in the languages of the old scheme of salvation. It may be we have been pouring new wine into old bottles. It may be better to admit frankly that if man is not fixed Christianity is, and that mankind is now growing out of Christianity; that indeed mankind is growing out of the idea of Deity. This does not mean an end to religion, but it means a fresh orientation of the religious life. It means

a final severance with those anthropomorphic conceptions of destiny, that interpretation of all things in terms of personality and will with which religion began. For many of us that still means a wrench and an effort. But the emphatic assertions of Mr. Belloc, the stand that Catholicism, as he expounds it, makes against any progressive adaptation to the new spirit in human life, may render that effort easier.

In this examination of Mr. Belloc's opening and more fundamental attacks upon the Outline of History I have shown sufficiently that Mr. Belloc is incapable of evidence or discussion, that he imagines his authorities, that he is careless and ignorant as to his facts and slovenly and tricky in his logic. I have dealt kindly but adequately with his atrocious bad manners and his insolence and impudence. I do not think it is worth while to go on through the second half of his outpourings with any particularity. It is exactly the same kind of thing, but upon more familiar ground and less fundamental issues. Mr. Belloc quibbles. He falsifies. For example, he imagines traditions to reinforce the Gospel account of Christ's teaching and to show that the founder of Christianity was aware of his godhead and taught the doctrine of the Trinity, he declares — just out of his head — that I do not know it was the bull and not Mithra who was sacrificed in the system of Mithraism, though I state that quite plainly in a passage he has ventured to ignore. And so on. The wonderful methods of the Palaeolithic bow story repeat themselves with variations, time after time. Why should I trouble to repeat the exposure in every case? I have done enough to demonstrate the quality of this effort to bluff and bawl away accepted knowledge and manifest fact, and that is all that I set out to do.

And this apparently is the present state of Catholic teaching. This stuff I have examined is representative stuff. This is the current utterance of organised Christianity, so far as there is any utterance, upon the doctrines of the Creation and the Fall — doctrines upon which rest the whole scheme of Christian salvation and the entire fabric of a Christian's faith.

THE END

THE OPEN CONSPIRACY

OR, WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH OUR LIVES?

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INTRODUCTION

The Open Conspiracy was Wells' *Blue Print for A World Revolution*; he regarded this book as his finished statement on the way the world ought to be ordered. Possibly he underestimated, or ignored, the fact that it is often in the interest of subsets of the human race to act against other subsets. Moreover the emphasis on religion seems odd, from a rationalist.

After the First World War, observing the lack of knowledge of most people about most things, he turned to history, starting, in 1918, his *Outline of History* first published in parts with 'gorgeous' covers, then in 1920 as a two-volume work including colour plates of a lavish nature for the time. In effect it was jointly authored — his chapters were sent to collaborators, and the resulting multiple corrections reassembled by the duly-chastened Wells. A 'popular' one-volume edition appeared in 1930. By the standards of its time this was a best-seller. It was praised decades later by A.J.P. Taylor as 'still the best introduction to history'. Toynbee had a favourable opinion of it. During the 1920s it sparked a controversy with Hilaire Belloc, who believed in such things as the 'Fall of Man'. It was also attacked by a teacher of Greek. Wells' hopes that school history could be taught in an international sense still, of course, have not come to fruition.

He planned and collaborated a hefty set of volumes on biology, *The Science of Life*, with his own son, and with Julian Huxley; the theme was largely evolutionary (*The Origin of Species* was published only a few years before his birth). Huxley, a descendant of T.H. Huxley, regarded Wells as something of a Cockney upstart.

And he wrote a descriptive, rather than analytical, book on economics, which includes many ingenious observations but was eclipsed by Keynes' *General Theory* of four years later.

Some of his books were filmed; his *Invisible Man* was turned into a filmscript by Preston Sturges, who however regarded his books as not very filmable and infuriated Wells by making the invisible man mad. Another media incident was Orson Welles' radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds* in 1938, involving aggressive Martians landing in

a location Americanised from its original Surrey, and which was reported to have cause mass panic among less educated Americans on the eastern seaboard.

C.P. Snow wrote of Wells that he could ‘throw out a phrase that crystallised a whole argument’, and that he ‘never heard anyone remotely in the same class.’ Among these phrases were ‘the War that will end War’, coined when he worked with the Ministry of Propaganda under Northcliffe during the First World War, which he supported, and ‘the New World Order’, which he seemed to be the first to use, or popularise, in a 1940 book of that title. His less successful phrases included the ‘competent receiver’. He said of himself that he ‘worked all the time’.

He was a socialist of an empirical, rather vague, rationalist type, disliking Marx and unenthusiastic about the managerial socialism of the Webbs.

His book *The Open Conspiracy* was published in 1928, subtitled *Blue Prints for a World Revolution*. Bertrand Russell said of this book ‘...I do not know of anything with which I agree more entirely’ though since this was in a begging letter perhaps he was just being polite. It was revised and republished as *What Are We to Do with Our Lives?* in 1931.

In this short book, Wells attempts to answer the question: What should socialists actually do? — to which he confessed several times to having no very clear idea. It’s a counter to Marx: why shouldn’t non-proletarians unite to change the world?

I. — THE PRESENT CRISIS IN HUMAN AFFAIRS

THE world is undergoing immense changes. Never before have the conditions of life changed so swiftly and enormously as they have changed for mankind in the last fifty years. We have been carried along — with no means of measuring the increasing swiftness in the succession of events. We are only now beginning to realize the force and strength of the storm of change that has come upon us.

These changes have not come upon our world from without. No meteorite from outer space has struck our planet; there have been no overwhelming outbreaks of volcanic violence or strange epidemic diseases; the sun has not flared up to excessive heat or suddenly shrunken to plunge us into Arctic winter. The changes have come through men themselves. Quite a small number of people, heedless of the ultimate consequence of what they did, one man here and a group there, have made discoveries and produced and adopted inventions that have changed all the condition, of social life.

We are now just beginning to realize the nature of these changes, to find words and phrases for them and put them down. First they began to happen, and then we began to see that they were happening. And now we are beginning to see how these changes are connected together and to get the measure of their consequences. We are getting our minds so clear about them that soon we shall be able to demonstrate them and explain them to our children in our schools. We do not do so at present. We do not give our children a chance of discovering that they live in a world of universal change.

What are the broad lines upon which these alterations of condition are proceeding?

It will be most convenient to deal with them in the order in which they came to be realized and seen clearly, rather than by the order in which they came about or by their logical order. They are more or less interdependent changes; they overlap and interact.

It was only in the beginning of the twentieth century that people began to realize the real significance of that aspect of our changing

conditions to which the phrase “the abolition of distance” has been applied. For a whole century before that there had been a continual increase in the speed and safety of travel and transport and the ease and swiftness with which messages could be transmitted, but this increase had not seemed to be a matter of primary importance. Various results of railway, steamship, and telegraph became manifest; towns grew larger, spreading into the countryside, once inaccessible lands became areas of rapid settlement and cultivation, industrial centres began to live on imported food, news from remote parts lost its time-lag and tended to become contemporary, but no one hailed these things as being more than “improvements” in existing conditions. They are not observed to be the beginnings of a profound revolution in the life of mankind. The attention of young people was not drawn to them; no attempt was made, or considered necessary, to adapt political and social institutions to this creeping enlargement of scale.

Until the closing years of the nineteenth century there was no recognition of the real state of affairs. Then a few observant people began, in a rather tentative, commentary sort of way, to call attention to what was happening. They did not seem to be moved by the idea that something had to be done about it; they merely remarked, brightly and intelligently, that it was going on. And then they went on to the realization that this “abolition of distance” was only one aspect of much more far-reaching advances.

Men were travelling about so much faster and flashing their communications instantly about the world because a progressive conquest of force and substance was going on. Improved transport was only one of a number of portentous consequences of that conquest; the first to be conspicuous and set men thinking; but not perhaps the first in importance. It dawned upon them that in the last hundred years there had been a stupendous progress in obtaining and utilizing mechanical power, a vast increase in the efficiency of mechanism, and associated with that an enormous increase in the substances available for man’s purposes, from vulcanized rubber to the modern steels, and from petroleum and margarine to tungsten and aluminium. At first the general intelligence was disposed to regard these things as lucky “finds,” happy chance discoveries. It was not

apprehended that the shower of finds was systematic and continuous. Popular writers told about these things but they told of them at first as "Wonders"— "Wonders" like the Pyramids, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Great Wall of China. Few realized how much more they were than any "Wonders." The "Seven Wonders of the World" left men free to go on living, toiling, marrying, and dying as they had been accustomed to for immemorial ages. If the "Seven Wonders" had vanished or been multiplied three score it would not have changed the lives of any large proportion of human beings. But these new powers and substances were modifying and transforming — unobtrusively, surely, and relentlessly — very particular of the normal life of mankind.

They increased the amount of production and the methods of production. They made possible "Big-Business," to drive the small producer and the small distributor out of the market. They swept away factories and evoked new ones. They changed the face of the fields. They brought into the normal life, thing by thing and day by day, electric light and heating, bright cities at night, better aeration, new types of clothing, a fresh cleanliness. They changed a world where there had never been enough into a world of potential plenty, into a world of excessive plenty. It dawned upon their minds after their realization of the "abolition of distance" that shortage of supplier had also been abolished and that irksome toil was no longer necessary to produce everything material that man might require. It is only in the last dozen years that this broader and profounder fact has come through to the intelligence of any considerable number of people. Most of them have still to carry their realization a step farther and see how complete is the revolution in the character of the daily life these things involve.

But there are still other changes outside this vast advance in the pace and power of material life. The biological sciences have undergone a corresponding extension. Medical art has attained a new level of efficiency, so that in all the modernizing societies of the world the average life is prolonged, and there is, in spite of a great fall in the birth rate, a steady, alarming increase in the world's population. The proportion of adults alive is greater than it has ever been before. Fewer and fewer human beings die young This has

changed the social atmosphere about us. The tragedy of lives cut short and ended prematurely is passing out of general experience. Health becomes prevalent. The continual toothaches, headaches, rheumatism, neuralgias, coughs, colds, indigestions that made up so large a part of the briefer lives of our grandfathers and grandmothers fade out of experience. We may all live now, we discover, without any great burthen of fear, wholesomely and abundantly, for as long as the desire to live is in us.

But we do not do so. All this possible freedom of movement, this power and abundance, remains for most of us no more than possibility. There is a sense of profound instability about these achievements of our race. Even those who enjoy, enjoy without security, and for the great multitude of mankind there is neither ease, plenty, nor freedom. Hard tasks, insufficiency, and unending money worries are still the ordinary stuff of life. Over everything human hangs the threat of such war as man has never known before, were armed and reinforced by all the powers and discoveries of modern science.

When we demand why the achievement of power turns to distress and danger in our hands, we get some very unsatisfactory replies. The favourite platitude of the politician excusing himself for the futilities of his business, is that "moral progress has not kept pace with material advance." That seems to satisfy him completely, but it can satisfy no other intelligent person. He says "moral." He leaves that word unexplained. Apparently he wants to shift the responsibility to our religious teachers. At the most he has made but the vaguest gesture towards a reply. And yet, when we consider it, charitably and sympathetically, there does seem to be a germ of reality in that phrase of his.

What does moral mean? Mores means manners and customs. Morality is the conduct of life. It is what we do with our social lives. It is how we deal with ourselves in relation to our fellow creatures. And there does seem to be a much greater discord now than there was (say) a couple of hundred years ago between the prevailing ideas of how to carry on life and the opportunities and dangers of the time. We are coming to see more and more plainly that certain established traditions which have made up the frame of human relationships for

ages are not merely no longer as convenient as they were, but are positively injurious and dangerous. And yet at present we do not know how to shake off these traditions, these habits of social behaviour which rule us. Still less are we able to state, and still less bring into operation, the new conceptions of conduct and obligation that must replace them.

For example, the general government of human affairs has hitherto been distributed among a number of sovereign states — there are about seventy of them now — and until recently that was a quite tolerable system of frame-works into which a general way of living could be fitted. The standard of living may not have been as high as our present standards, but the social stability and assurance were greater. The young were trained to be loyal, law-regarding, patriotic, and a defined system of crimes and misdemeanours with properly associated pains, penalties, and repressions, kept the social body together. Everyone was taught a history glorifying his own state, and patriotism was chief among the Virtues. Now, with great rapidity, there has been that "abolition of distance," and everyone has become next-door neighbour to everyone else. States once separate, social and economic systems formerly remote from one another, now jostle each other exasperatingly. Commerce under the new conditions is perpetually breaking nationalist bounds and making militant raids upon the economic life of other countries. This exacerbates patriotism in which we have all been trained and with which we are all, with scarcely an exception, saturated. And meanwhile war, which was once a comparative slow bickering upon a front, has become war in three dimensions; it gets at the "non-combatant" almost as searchingly as at the combatant, and has acquired weapons of a stupendous cruelty and destructiveness. At present there exists no solution to this paradoxical situation. We are continually being urged by our training and traditions to antagonisms and conflicts that will impoverish, starve, and destroy both our antagonists and ourselves. We are all trained to distrust and hate foreigners, salute our flag, stiffen up in a wooden obedient way at our national anthem, and prepare to follow the little fellows in spurs and feathers who pose as the heads of our states into the most horrible common destruction. Our political and economic ideas of living are out of date, and we

find great difficulty in adjusting them and reconstructing them to meet the huge and strenuous demands of the new times. That is really what our gramophone politicians have in mind — in the vague way in which they have anything in mind — when they put on that well-worn record about moral progress not having kept pace with material inventions.

Socially and politically we want a revised system of ideas about conduct, a view of social and political life brought up to date. We are not doing the effective thing with our lives, we are drifting, we are being hoodwinked and bamboozled and misled by those who trade upon the old traditions. It is preposterous that we should still be followed about and pestered by war, taxed for war preparations, and threatened bodily and in our liberties by this unnecessary and exaggerated and distorted survival of the disunited world of the pre-scientific era. And it is not simply that our political way of living is now no better than an inherited defect and malformation, but that our everyday life, our eating and drinking and clothing and housing and going about, is also cramped, thwarted, and impoverished, because we do not know how to set about shaking off the old ways and fitting the general life to our new opportunities. The strain takes the form of increased unemployment and a dislocation of spending power. We do not know whether to spend or save. Great swarms of us find ourselves unaccountably thrown out of work. Unjustly, irrationally. Colossal business reconstructions are made to increase production and accumulate profits, and meanwhile the customers with purchasing power dwindle in numbers and fade away. The economic machine creaks and makes every sign of stopping — and its stopping means universal want and starvation. It must not stop. There must be a reconstruction, a change-over. But what sort of a change-over?

Though none of us are yet clear as to the precise way in which this great change-over is to be effected, there is a world-wide feeling now that change- over or a vast catastrophe is before us. Increasing multitudes participate in that uneasy sense of insecure transition. In the course of one lifetime mankind has passed from a state of affairs that seems to us now to have been slow, dull, ill-provided, and limited, but at least picturesque and tranquil-minded, to a new phase of excitement, provocation, menace, urgency, and actual or potential

distresses. Our lives are part of one another. We cannot get away from it. We are items in a social mass. What are we to do with our lives?

II. — THE IDEA OF THE OPEN CONSPIRACY

I AM a writer upon social and political matters. Essentially I am a very ordinary, undistinguished person. I have a mediocre brain, a very average brain, and the way in which my mind reacts to these problems is therefore very much the way in which most brains will react to them. But because it is my business to write and think about these questions, because on that account I am able to give more time and attention to them than most people, I am able to get rather ahead of my equals and to write articles and books just a little before the ideas I experience become plain to scores of thousands, and then to hundreds of thousands, and at last to millions of other people. And so it happened that a few years ago (round about 1927) I became very anxious to clear up and give form to a knot of suggestions that seemed to me to have in them the solution of this riddle of adapting our lives to the immense new possibilities and the immense new dangers that confront mankind.

It seemed to me that all over the world intelligent people were waking up to the indignity and absurdity of being endangered, restrained, and impoverished, by a mere uncritical adhesion to traditional governments, traditional ideas of economic life, and traditional forms of behaviour, and that these awaking intelligent people must constitute first a protest and then a creative resistance to the inertia that was stifling and threatening us. These people I imagined would say first, "We are drifting; we are doing nothing worth while with our lives. Our lives are dull and stupid and not good enough."

Then they would say, "What are we to do with our lives?"

And then, "Let us get together with other people of our sort and make over the world into a great world-civilization that will enable us to realize the promises and avoid the dangers of this new time."

It seemed to me that as, one after another, we woke up, that is what we should be saying. It amounted to a protest, first mental and then practical, it amounted to a sort of unpremeditated and unorganized conspiracy, against the fragmentary and insufficient governments and the wide-spread greed, appropriation, clumsiness,

and waste that are now going on. But unlike conspiracies in general this widening protest and conspiracy against established things would, by its very nature, go on in the daylight, and it would be willing to accept participation and help from every quarter. It would, in fact, become an "Open Conspiracy," a necessary, naturally evolved conspiracy, to adjust our dislocated world.

I made various attempts to develop this idea. I published a little book called The Open Conspiracy as early as 1928, into which I put what I had in my mind at that time. It was an unsatisfactory little book even when I published it, not quite plain enough and not quite confident enough, and evidently unsure of its readers. I could not find out how to do it better at the time, and it seemed in its way to say something of living and current interest, and so I published it — but I arranged things so that I could withdraw it in a year or so. That I did, and this present book is a largely rewritten version, much clearer and more explicit. Since that first publication we have all got forward surprisingly. Events have hustled thought along and have been hustled along by thought. The idea of reorganizing the affairs of the world on quite a big scale, which was "Utopian," and so forth, in 1926 and 1927, and still "bold" in 1928, has now spread about the world until nearly everybody has it. It has broken out all over the place, thanks largely to the mental stimulation of the Russian Five Year Plan. Hundreds of thousands of people everywhere are now thinking upon the lines foreshadowed by my Open Conspiracy, not because they had ever heard of the book or phrase, but because that was the way thought was going.

The first Open Conspiracy conveyed the general idea of a world reconstructed, but it was very vague about the particular way in which this or that individual life could be lived in relation to that general idea. It gave a general answer to the question, "What are we to do with our lives?" It said, "Help to make over the New World amidst the confusions of the Old." But when the question was asked, "What am I to do with my life?" the reply was much less satisfactory.

The intervening years of thought and experience make it possible, now, to bring this general idea of a reconstructive effort, an attempt to build up a new world within the dangers and disharmonies of our

present state, into a much closer and more explicit relation to the individual “Open Conspirator.” We can present the thing in a better light and handle it with a surer touch.

III. — WE HAVE TO CLEAR AND CLEAN UP OUR MINDS

Now, one thing is fairly plain to most of us who are waking up to the need of living our lives in a new way and of making over the state, which is the framework of our lives, to meet the new demands upon it, and that is, that we have to put our own minds in order. Why have we only awakened now to the crisis in human affairs. The changes in progress have been going on with a steady acceleration for a couple of centuries. Clearly we must all have been very unobservant, our knowledge as it came to us must have been very badly arranged in our minds, and our way of dealing with it must have been cloudy and muddled, or else we should surely have awakened long ago to the immense necessities that now challenge us. And if that is so, if it has taken decades to rouse us, then quite probably we are not yet completely awake. Even now we may not have realized the job before us in its completeness. We may still have much to get plain in our minds, and we certainly have much more to learn. One primary and permanent duty therefore is to go on with our thinking and to think as well as we can about the way in which we think and about the ways in which we get and use knowledge.

Fundamentally the Open Conspiracy must be an intellectual rebirth.

Human thought is still very much confused by the imperfection of the words and other symbols it employs and the consequences of this confused thinking are much more serious and extensive than is commonly realized. We still see the world through a mist of words; it is only the things immediately about us that are plain fact. Through symbols, and especially through words, man has raised himself above the level of the ape and come to a considerable mastery over his universe. But every step in his mental ascent has involved entanglement with these symbols and words he was using; they were at once helpful and very dangerous and misleading. A great part of our affairs, social, political, intellectual, is in a perplexing and dangerous state to-day because of our loose, uncritical, slovenly use

of words.

All through the later Middle Ages there were great disputes among the schoolmen about the use of words and symbols. There is a queer disposition in the human mind to think that symbols and words and logical deductions are truer than actual experiences, and these great controversies were due to the struggle of the human intelligence against that disposition. On the one side were the Realists, who were so called because they believed, in effect, that names were more real than facts, and on the other side were the Nominalists, who from the first were pervaded by a suspicion about names and words generally; who thought there might be some sort of catch in verbal processes, and who gradually worked their way towards verification by experiment which is the fundamental thing about experimental science — experimental science which has given our human world all these immense powers and possibilities that tempt and threaten it to-day. These controversies of the schoolmen were of the utmost importance to mankind. The modern world could not begin to come into existence until the human mind had broken away from the narrow-minded verbalist way of thinking which the Realists followed.

But all through my education I never had this matter explained to me. The University of London intimated that I was a soundly educated young man by giving me a degree in first-class honours and the liberty to acquire and wear an elegant gown and hood, and the London College of Preceptors gave me and the world its highest assurances that I was fit to educate and train the minds of my fellow creatures, and yet I had still to discover that a Realist was not a novelist who put rather too highly flavoured sex appeal into his books, and a Nominalist, nothing in particular. But it had crept into my mind as I learnt about individuality in my biological work and about logic and psychology in my preparation as the perfect preceptor, that something very important and essential was being left out and that I wasn't at all as well equipped as my diplomas presently said I was, and in the next few years I found the time to clean up this matter pretty thoroughly. I made no marvellous discoveries, everything I found out was known already; nevertheless, I had to find out some of this stuff for myself quite over again, as

though it had never been done; so inaccessible was any complete account of human thinking to an ordinary man who wanted to get his mind into proper working condition. And this was not that I had missed some recondite, precious refinements of philosophy; it was that my fundamental thinking, at the very root of my political and social conduct, was wrong. I was in a human community, and that community, and I with it, was thinking of phantoms and fantasies as though they were real and living things, was in a reverie of unrealities, was blind, slovenly, hypnotized, base and ineffective, blundering about in an extremely beautiful and an extremely dangerous world.

I set myself to re-educate myself, and after the practice of writers wrote it in various trial pamphlets, essays, and books. There is no need to refer to these books here. The gist of the matter is set out in three compilations, to which I shall refer again almost immediately. They are The Outline of History (Ch. XXI, § 6, and Ch. XXXIII, § 6), The Science of Life (Book VIII, on Thought and Behaviour) and The Work, Wealth, and Happiness of Mankind (Ch. II, § § 1-4). In the last, it is shown quite plainly how man has had to struggle for the mastery of his mind, has discovered only after great controversies the proper and effective use of his intellectual tools, and has had to learn to avoid certain widespread traps and pitfalls before he could achieve his present mastery over matter. Thinking clearly and effectively does not come by nature. Hunting the truth is an art. We blunder naturally into a thousand misleading generalizations and false processes. Yet there is hardly any intelligent mental training done in the schools of the world to-day. We have to learn this art, if we are to practise it at all. Our schoolteachers have had no proper training themselves, they miseducate by example and precept, and so it is that our press and current discussions are more like an impromptu riot of crippled and deaf and blind minds than an intelligent interchange of ideas. What bosh one reads! What rash and impudent assumptions! What imbecile inferences!

But re-educating oneself, getting one's mind into health and exercising it and training it to think properly, is only the beginning of

the task before the awakening Open Conspirator. He has not only to think clearly, but he has to see that his mind is equipped with the proper general ideas to form a true framework for his everyday judgments and decisions.

It was the Great War first brought home to me how ignorant I was, and how ill-finished and untidy my mind, about the most important things of life. That disastrous waste of life, material and happiness, since it was practically world wide, was manifestly the outcome of the processes that constitute the bulk of history, and yet I found I did not know — and nobody else seemed to know — history in such a fashion as to be able to explain how the Great War came about or what ought to come out of it. "Versailles," we all seem to be agreed nowadays, was silly, but how could Versailles be anything else than what it was in view of the imperfect, lopsided, historical knowledge and the consequent suspicion, emotion, and prejudice of those who assembled there. They did not know any better than the rest of us what the war was, and so how could they know what the peace ought to be? I perceived that I was in the same case with everyone else, and I set myself first of all for my own guidance to make a summary if all history and get some sort of map to more serviceable conclusions about the political state of mankind. This summary I made was The Outline of History, a shameless compilation and arrangement of the main facts of the world story, written without a touch of art or elegance, written indeed in a considerable hurry and excitement, and its sale, which is now in the third million, showed how much I had in common with a great dispersed crowd of ordinary people, all wanting to know, all disgusted with the patriotic, litigious twaddling gossipy stuff given them as history by their schoolmasters and schoolmistresses which had led them into the disaster of the war.

The Outline of History is not a whole history of life. Its main theme is the growth of human intercommunication and human communities and their rulers and conflicts, the story of how and why the myriads of little tribal systems of ten thousand years ago have fought and coalesced into the sixty- or seventy-odd governments of to-day and are now straining and labouring in the grip of forces that must presently accomplish their final unison. And even as I

completed The Outline, I realized that there remained outside its scope wider and more fundamental, and closer, more immediate fields of knowledge which I still had to get in order for my own practical ends and the ends of like-minded people who wanted to use their lives effectively, if my existence was to escape futility.

I realized that I did not know enough about the life in my body and its relations to the world of life and matter outside it to come to proper decisions about a number of urgent matters — from race conflicts, birth control, and my private life, to the public control of health and the conservation of natural resources. And also, I found, I was astonishingly ignorant about the everyday business of life, the how and why of the miner who provided the coal to cook my dinner, and the banker who took my money in return for a cheque-book, and the shopkeeper from whom I bought things, and the policeman who kept the streets in order for me. Yet I was voting for laws affecting my relations with these people, paying them directly or indirectly, airing my ignorant opinions about them, and generally contributing by my behaviour to sustain and affect their lives.

So with the aid and direction of two very competent biologists I set to work to get out as plain and clear a statement as possible of what was known about the sources and nature of life and the relation of species to individuals and to other species, and the processes of consciousness and thought. This I published as The Science of Life. And while this was going on I set myself to the task of making a review of all human activities in relation to each other, the work of people and the needs of people, cultivation, manufacture, trade, direction, government, and all. This was the most difficult part of this attempt to get a rational account of the modern world, and it called for the help and counsel of a great variety of people. I had to ask and find some general answer to the question, “What are the nineteen hundred-odd million human beings who are alive to-day doing, and how and why are they doing it?” It was, in fact, an outline of economic, social, and political science, but since, after The Outline of History, the word “outline” has been a good deal cheapened by various enterprising publishers, I have called it, The Work, Wealth, and Happiness of Mankind.

Now, I find, by getting these three correlated compilations into

existence, I have at last, in however rough a fashion, brought together a complete system of ideas upon which an Open Conspirator can go. Before anyone could hope to get on to anything like a practical working directive answer to "What are we to do with our lives?" it was necessary to know what our lives were — The Science of Life; what had led up to their present pattern — The Outline of History; and this third book, to tell what we were actually doing and supposed to be doing with our working lives, day by day, at the present time. By the time I was through with these books I felt I had really something sound and comprehensive to go upon, an "ideology," as people say, on which it was possible to think of building a new world without fundamental surprises, and, moreover, that I had got my mind stripped down and cleaned of many illusions and bad habits, so that it could handle life with an assurance it had never known before.

There is nothing marvellous about these compilations of mine. Any steady writer of average intelligence with the same will and the same resources, who could devote about nine or ten years to the task and get the Proper sort of help, could have made them. It can be done, it is no doubt being done, all over again by other people, for themselves and perhaps for others, much more beautifully and adequately. But to get that amount of vision and knowledge, to achieve that general arrangement and understanding, was a necessary condition that had to be satisfied before any answer to the question, "What are we to do with our lives?" could even be attempted, and before one could become in any effective way an Open Conspirator.

There is nothing indispensable even now, I repeat, about these three particular books. I know about them and refer to them because I put them together myself and so they are handy for me to explain myself. But most of what they contain can be extracted from any good encyclopædia. Any number of people have made similar outlines of history for themselves, have read widely, grasped the leading principles of biology and grappled with the current literature of business science and do not in the least need my particular summary. So far as history and biology are concerned there are parallel books, that are as good and serviceable. Van Loon's books for example. Yet even for highly-educated people these summaries

may be useful in bringing things known with different degrees of thoroughness, into a general scheme. They correlate, and they fill up gaps. Between them they cover the ground; and in some fashion that ground has to be covered before the mind of a modern citizen is prepared to tackle the problems that confront it. Otherwise he is an incapable citizen, he does not know where he is and where the world is, and if he is rich or influential he may be a very dangerous citizen indeed. Presently there will be far better compilations to meet this need, or perhaps the gist of all the three divisions of knowledge, concentrated and made more lucid and attractive, may be available as the intellectual frame of modern education throughout the world, as a "General Account of Life" that should be given to everyone.

But certainly no one can possibly set about living properly and satisfactorily unless he knows what he is, where he is, and how he stands to the people and things about him.

IV. — THE REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION

SOME sort of reckoning therefore between people awakened to the new world that dawns about us and the schools, colleges, and machinery of formal education is overdue. As a body the educated are getting nothing like that Account of Life which is needed to direct our conduct in this modern world.

It is the crowning absurdity in the world to-day that these institutions should go through a solemn parade of preparing the new generation for life and that then, afterwards, a minority of their victims, finding this preparation has left them almost totally unprepared, should have of their own accord to struggle out of our world heap of starved and distorted minds to some sort of real education. The world cannot be run by such a minority of escaped and re-educated minds alone, with all the rest of the heap against them. Our necessities demand the intelligence and services of everyone who can be trained to give them. The new world demands new schools, therefore, to give everyone a sound and thorough mental training and equip everyone with clear ideas about history, about life, and about political and economic relationships instead of the rubbishy head-content at present prevalent. The old-world teachers and schools have to be reformed or replaced. A vigorous educational reform movement arises as a natural and necessary expression of the awakening Open Conspirator. A revolution in education is the most imperative and fundamental part of the adaptation of life to its new conditions.

These various compendia of knowledge constituting a Modern Account of Life, on which we have laid stress in the previous section, these supplements to teaching, which are now produced and read outside the established formal educational world and in the teeth of its manifest hostility) arise because of the backwardness of that world, and as that world yields slowly but surely to the pressure of the new spirit, so they will permeate and replace its text-books and disappear as a separate class of book. The education these new dangerous times in which we are now living demands, must start right, from the beginning and there must be nothing to replace and

nothing to relearn in it. Before we can talk politics, finance, business, or morals, we must see that we have got the right mental habits and the right foundation of realized facts. There is nothing much to be done with our lives until we have seen to that.

V. — RELIGION IN THE NEW WORLD

"YES," objects a reader, "but does not our religion tell us what we are to do with our lives?"

We have to bring religion, as its fundamental matter, into this discussion. From our present point of view, religion is that central essential part of education which determines conduct. Religion certainly should tell us what to do with our lives. But in the vast stir and occasions of modern life, so much of what we call religion remains irrelevant or dumb. Religion does not seem to "join on" to the main parts of the general problem of living. It has lost touch.

Let us try and bring this problem of the Open Conspiracy to meet and make the new world, into relation with the traditions of religion. The clear-minded Open Conspirator who has got his modern ideology, his lucidly arranged account of the universe in order, is obliged to believe that only by giving his life to the great processes of social reconstruction, and shaping his conduct with reference to that, can he do well with his life. But that merely launches him into the most subtle and unending of struggles, the struggle against the incessant gravitation of our interests to ourselves. He has to live the broad life and escape from the close narrow life. We all try to attain the dignity and happiness of magnanimity and escape from the tormenting urgencies of personal desire. In the past that struggle has generally assumed the form of a religious struggle. Religion is the antagonist of self.

In their completeness, in the life that was professionally religious, religions have always demanded great subordinations of self. Therein lay their creative force. They demanded devotion and gave reasons for that demand. They disentangled the will from the egotistical preoccupations, often very completely. There is no such thing as a self-contained religion, a private religious solo. Certain forms of Protestantism and some mystical types come near to making religion secluded duet between the individual and his divinity, but here that may be regarded as a perversion of the religious impulse. Just as the normal sexual complex excites and stirs the individual out of his egotism to serve the ends of the race, so the normal religious process

takes the individual out of his egotism for the service of the community. It is not a bargain, a "social contract," between the individual and the community; it is a subordination of both the existing individual and the existing community in relation to something, a divinity, a divine order, a standard, a righteousness, more important than either. What is called in the phraseology of certain religions "conviction of sin" and "the flight from the City of Destruction" are familiar instances of this reference of the self-centred individual and the current social life to something far better than either the one or the other.

This is the third element in the religious relationship, a hope, a promise, an objective which turns the convert not only from himself but from the "world," as it is, towards better things. First comes self disregard then service, and then this reconstructive creative urgency.

For the finer sort of mind this aspect of religion seems always to have been its primary attraction. One has to remember that there is a real will for religion scattered throughout mankind — a real desire to get away from self. Religion has never pursued its distinctive votaries; they have come to meet it. The desire to give oneself to greater ends than the everyday life affords, and to give oneself freely, is clearly dominant in that minority, and traceable in an incalculable proportion of the majority.

But hitherto religion has never been presented simply as a devotion to a universal cause. The devotion has always been in it, but it has been complicated by other considerations. The leaders in every great religious movement have considered it necessary that it should explain itself in the form of history and a cosmogony. It has been felt necessary to say Why? and To what end? Every religion therefore has had to adopt the physical conceptions, and usually also to assume many of the moral and social values, current at the time of its formation. It could not transcend the philosophical phrases and attitudes that seemed then to supply the natural frame for a faith, nor draw upon anything beyond the store of scientific knowledge of its time. In this lurked the seeds of the ultimate decay and supersession of every successive religion.

But as the idea of continual change, going farther and farther from existing realities and never returning to them, is a new one, as

nobody until very recently has grasped the fact that the knowledge of today is the ignorance of to-morrow, each fresh development of religion in the world so far has been proclaimed in perfect good faith as the culminating and final truth.

This finality of statement has considerable immediate practical value. The suggestion of the possibility of further restatement is an unsettling suggestion; it undermines conviction and breaks the ranks of the believers, because there are enormous variations in the capacities of men to recognize the same spirit under a changing shape. These variations cause endless difficulties to-day. While some intelligences can recognize the same God under a variety of names and symbols without any severe strain, others cannot even detect the most contrasted Gods one from the other provided they wear the same mask and title It appears a perfectly natural and reasonable thing to many minds to restate religion now in terms of biological and psychological necessity, while to others any variation whatever in the phrasing of the faith seems to be nothing less than atheistical misrepresentations of the most damnable kind. For these latter God a God still anthropomorphic enough to have a will and purpose to display preferences and reciprocate emotions, to be indeed in person, must be retained until the end of time. For others, God can be thought of as a Great First Cause, as impersonal and inhuman as atomic structure.

It is because of the historical and philosophical commitments they have undertaken, and because of concessions made to common human weaknesses in regard to such once apparently minor but now vital moral issues as property, mental activity, and public veracity — rather than of any inadequacy in their adaptation to psychological needs — that the present wide discredit of organized religions has come about. They no longer seem even roughly truthful upon issues of fact, and they give no imperatives over large fields of conduct in which perplexity is prevalent. People will say, “I could be perfectly happy leading the life of a Catholic devotee if only I could believe.” But most of the framework of religious explanation upon which that life is sustained is too old-fashioned and too irrelevant to admit of that thoroughness of belief which is necessary for the devotion of intelligent people.

Great ingenuity has been shown by modern writers and thinkers in the adaptation of venerated religious expressions to new ideas. Peccavi. [Usu. translated 'I have sinned' — RW] Have I not written of the creative will in humanity as "God the Invisible King" and presented it in the figure of a youthful and adventurous finite god?

The word "God" is in most minds so associated with the concept of religion that it is abandoned only with the greatest reluctance. The word remains, though the idea is continually attenuated. Respect for Him demands that He should have no limitations. He is pushed farther and farther from actuality, therefore, and His definition becomes increasingly a bundle of negations, until at last, in His rôle of The Absolute, He becomes an entirely negative expression. While we can speak of good, say some, can speak of God. God is the possibility of goodness, the good side of things. If phrases in which the name of God is used are to be abandoned, they argue, religion will be left speechless before many occasions.

Certainly there is something beyond the individual that is and the world that is; on that we have already insisted as a characteristic of all religions; that persuasion is the essence of faith and the key to courage. But whether that is to be considered, even after the most strenuous exercises in personification, as a greater person or a comprehensive person, is another matter. Personality is the last vestige of anthropomorphism. The modern urge to a precise veracity is against such concessions to traditional expression.

On the other hand there is in many fine religious minds a desire amounting almost to a necessity for an object of devotion so individualized as to be capable at least of a receptive consciousness even if no definite response is conceded. One type of mind can accept a reality in itself which another must project and dramatize before it can comprehend it and react to it. The human soul is an intricate thing which will not endure elucidation when that passes beyond a certain degree of harshness and roughness. The human spirit has learnt love, devotion, obedience and humility in relation to other personalities, and with difficulty it takes the final step to a transcendent subordination, from which the last shred of personality has stripped.

In matters not immediately material, language has to work by

metaphors, and though every metaphor carries its own peculiar risks of confusion, we cannot do without them. Great intellectual tolerance is necessary, therefore — a cultivated disposition — to translate and retranslate from one metaphysical or emotional idiom to another — if there is not to be a deplorable wastage of moral force in our world. Just now I wrote Peccavi because I had written God the Invisible King, but after all I do not think it was so much a sin to use that phrase, God the Invisible King, as an error in expression. If there is no sympathetic personal leader outside us, there is at least in us the attitude we should adopt towards a sympathetic personal leader.

Three profound differences between the new mental dispositions of the present time and those of preceding ages have to be realized if current developments of the religious impulse are to be seen in their correct relationship to the religious life of the past. There has been a great advance in the analysis of psychic processes and the courage with which men have probed into the origins of human thought and feeling. Following upon the biological advances that have made us recognize fish and amphibian in the bodily structure of man, have come these parallel developments in which we see elemental fear and lust and self-love moulded, modified, and exalted, under the stress of social progress, into intricate human motives. Our conception of sin and our treatment of sin have been profoundly modified by this analysis. Our former sins are seen as ignorances, inadequacies and bad habits, and the moral conflict is robbed of three-fourths of its ego-centred melodramatic quality. We are no longer moved to be less wicked; we are moved to organize our conditioned reflexes and lead a life less fragmentary and silly.

Secondly, the conception of individuality has been influenced and relaxed by biological thought, so that we do not think so readily of the individual contra mundum as our fathers did. We begin to realize that we are egotists by misapprehension. Nature cheats the self to serve the purposes of the species by filling it with wants that war against its private interests. As our eyes are opened to these things, we see ourselves as beings greater or less than the definitive self. Man's soul is no longer his own. It is, he discovers, part of a greater being which lived before he was born and will survive him. The idea of a survival of the definite individual with all the accidents and

idiosyncrasies of his temporal nature upon him dissolves to nothing in this new view of immortality.

The third of the main contrasts between modern and former thought which have rendered the general shapes of established religion old-fashioned and unserviceable is a reorientation of current ideas about time. The powerful disposition of the human mind to explain everything as the inevitable unfolding of a past event which, so to speak, sweeps the future helplessly before it, has been checked by a mass of subtle criticisms. The conception of progress as a broadening and increasing purpose, a conception which is taking hold of the human imagination more and more firmly, turns religious life towards the future. We think no longer of submission to the irrevocable decrees of absolute dominion, but of participation in an adventure on behalf of a power that gains strength and establishes itself. The history of our world, which has been unfolded to us by science, runs counter to all the histories on which religions have been based. There was no Creation in the past, we begin to realize, but eternally there is creation; there was no Fall to account for the conflict of good and evil, but a stormy ascent. Life as we know it is a mere beginning.

It seems unavoidable that if religion is to develop unifying and directive power in the present confusion of human affairs it must adapt itself to this forward-looking, individuality-analyzing turn of mind; it must divest itself of its sacred histories, its gross preoccupations, its posthumous prolongation of personal ends. The desire for service, for subordination, for permanent effect, for an escape from the distressful pettiness and mortality of the individual life, is the undying element in every religious system.

The time has come to strip religion right down to that, to strip it for greater tasks than it has ever faced before. The histories and symbols that served our fathers encumber and divide us. Sacraments and rituals harbour disputes and waste our scanty emotions. The explanation of why things are is an unnecessary effort in religion. The essential fact in religion is the desire for religion and not how it came about. If you do not want religion, no persuasions, no convictions about your place in the universe can give it to you. The first sentence in the modern creed must be, not “I believe,” but “I

give myself.”

To what? And how? To these questions we will now address ourselves.

VI. — MODERN RELIGION IS OBJECTIVE

To give oneself religiously is a continuing operation expressed in a series of acts. It can be nothing else. You cannot dedicate yourself and then go away to live just as you have lived before. It is a poor travesty of religion that does not produce an essential change in the life which embraces it. But in the established and older religions of our race, this change of conduct has involved much self-abasement merely to the God or Gods, or much self-mortification merely with a view to the moral perfecting of self. Christian devotion, for example, in these early stages, before the hermit life gave place to organized monastic life, did not to any extent direct itself to service except the spiritual service of other human beings. But as Christianity became a definite social organizing force, it took on a great series of healing, comforting, helping, and educational activities.

The modern tendency has been and is all in the direction of minimizing what one might call self-centred devotion and self-subjugation, and of expanding and developing external service. The idea of inner perfectibility dwindles with the diminishing importance attached to individuality. We cease to think of mortifying or exalting or perfecting ourselves and seek to lose ourselves in a greater life. We think less and less of "conquering" self and more and more of escaping from self. If we attempt to perfect ourselves in any respect it is only as a soldier sharpens and polishes an essential weapon.

Our quickened apprehension of continuing change, our broader and fuller vision of the history of life, disabuse our minds of many limitations set to the imaginations of our predecessors. Much that they saw as fixed and determinate, we see as transitory and controllable. They saw life fixed in its species and subjected to irrevocable laws. We see life struggling insecurely but with a gathering successfulness for freedom and power against restriction and death. We see life coming at last to our tragic and hopeful human level. Unprecedented possibilities, mighty problems, we realize, confront mankind to-day. They frame our existences. The practical aspect, the material form, the embodiment of the modernized religious impulse is the direction of the whole life to the solution of

these problems and the realization of their possibilities. The alternative before man now is either magnificence of spirit and magnificence of achievement, or disaster.

The modern religious life, like all forms of religious life, must needs have its own subtle and deep inner activities, its meditations, its self- confrontations, its phases of stress and search and appeal, its serene and prayerful moods, but these inward aspects do not come into the scope of this present inquiry, which is concerned entirely with the outward shape, the direction, and the organization of modern religious effort, with the question of what, given religious devotion, we have to do and how that has to be done.

Now, in the new and greater universe to which we are awakening, its immense possibilities furnish an entirely new frame and setting for the moral life. In the fixed and limited outlook of the past, practical good works took the form mainly of palliative measures against evils that were conceived of as incurable; the religious community nursed the sick, fed the hungry, provided sanctuary for the fugitive, pleaded with the powerful for mercy. It did not dream of preventing sickness, famine, or tyranny. Other-worldliness was its ready refuge from the invincible evil and confusion of the existing scheme of things.

But it is possible now to imagine an order in human affairs from which these evils have been largely or entirely eliminated. More and more people are coming to realize that such an order is a material possibility. And with the realization that this is a material possibility, we can no longer be content with a field of "good deeds" and right action restricted to palliative and consolatory activities. Such things are merely "first aid." The religious mind grows bolder than it has ever been before. It pushes through the curtain it once imagined was a barrier. It apprehends its larger obligations. The way in which our activities conduce to the realization of that conceivable better order in human affairs, becomes the new criterion of conduct. Other-worldliness has become unnecessary.

The realization of this possible better order brings us at once to certain definite lines of conduct. We have to make an end to war, and to make an end to war we must be cosmopolitan in our politics. It is impossible for any clear-headed person to suppose that the ever more

destructive stupidities of war can be eliminated from human affairs until some common political control dominates the earth, and unless certain pressures due to the growth of population, due to the enlarging scope of economic operations or due to conflicting standards and traditions of life, are disposed of.

To avoid the positive evils of war and to attain the new levels of prosperity and power that now come into view, an effective world control, not merely of armed force, but of the production and main movements of staple commodities and the drift and expansion of population is required. It is absurd to dream of peace and world-wide progress without that much control. These things assured the abilities and energies of a greatly increased proportion of human beings could be diverted to the happy activities of scientific research and creative work, with an ever-increasing release and enlargement of human possibility. On the political side it is plain that our lives must be given to the advancement of that union.

Such a forward stride in human life, the first stride in a mighty continuing advance, an advance to which no limit appears, is now not simply materially possible. It is urgent. The opportunity is plain before mankind. It is the alternative to social decay. But there is no certainty, no material necessity, that it should ever be taken. It will not be taken by mankind inadvertently. It can only be taken through such an organization of will and energy to take it as this world has never seen before.

These are the new imperatives that unfold themselves before the more alert minds of our generation. They will presently become the general mental background, as the modern interpretations of the history of life and of the material and mental possibilities about us establish themselves. Evil political, social, and economic usages and arrangements may seem obdurate and huge, but they are neither permanent nor uncontrollable. They can be controlled, however, only by an effort more powerful and determined than the instincts and inertias that sustain them. Religion, modern and disillusioned, has for its outward task to set itself to the control and direction of political, social, and economic life. If it does not do that, then it is no more than a drug for easing discomfort, “the opium of the peoples.”

Can religion, or can it not, synthesize the needed effort to lift

mankind out of our present disorders, dangers, baseness, frustrations, and futilities to a phase of relative security, accumulating knowledge, systematic and continuing growth in power and the widespread, deep happiness of hopeful and increasing life?

Our answer here is that the religious spirit, in the light of modern knowledge, can do this thing, and our subject now is to enquire what are the necessary opening stages in the synthesis of that effort. We write, from this point onward, for those who believe that it can, and who do already grasp the implications of world history and contemporary scientific achievement.

VII. — WHAT MANKIND HAS TO DO

BEFORE we can consider the forms and methods of attacking this inevitable task of reconstruction it will be well to draw the main lines and to attempt some measure of the magnitude of that task. What are the new forms that it is thus proposed to impose upon human life, and how are they to be evolved from or imposed upon the current forms? And against what passive and active resistances has this to be done?

There can be no pause for replacement in the affairs of life. Day must follow day, and the common activities continue. The new world as a going concern must arise out of the old as a going concern.

Now the most comprehensive conception of this new world is of one politically, socially, and economically unified. Within that frame fall all the other ideas of our progressive ambition. To this end we set our faces and seek to direct our lives. Many there are at present who apprehend it as a possibility but do not dare, it seems, to desire it, because of the enormous difficulties that intervene, and because they see as yet no intimations of a way through or round these difficulties. They do not see a way of escape from the patchwork of governments that grips them and divides mankind. The great majority of human beings have still to see the human adventure as one whole; they are obsessed by the air of permanence and finality in established things; they accept current reality as ultimate reality. As the saying goes, they take the world as they find it.

But here we are writing for the modern-minded, and for them it is impossible to think of the world as secure and satisfactory until there exists a single world commonweal, preventing war and controlling those moral, biological, and economic forces and wastages that would otherwise lead to wars. And controlling them in the sense that science and man's realization and control of his powers and possibilities continually increase.

Let us make clear what sort of government we are trying to substitute for the patchwork of to-day. It will be a new sort of direction with a new psychology. The method of direction of such a world commonweal is not likely to imitate the methods of existing

sovereign states. It will be something new and altogether different.

This point is not yet generally realized. It is too often assumed that the world commonweal will be, as it were, just the one heir and survivor of existing states, and that it will be a sort of megatherium of the same form and anatomy as its predecessors.

But a little reflection will show that this is a mistake. Existing states are primarily militant states, and a world state cannot be militant. There will be little need for president or king to lead the marshalled hosts of humanity, for where there is no war there is no need of any leader to lead hosts anywhere, and in a polyglot world a parliament of mankind or any sort of council that meets and talks is an inconceivable instrument of government. The voice will cease to be a suitable vehicle. World government, like scientific process, will be conducted by statement, criticism, and publication that will be capable of efficient translation.

The fundamental organization of contemporary states is plainly still military, and that is exactly what a world organization cannot be. Flags, uniforms, national anthems, patriotism sedulously cultivated in church and school, the brag, blare, and bluster of our competing sovereignties, belong to the phase of development the Open Conspiracy will supersede. We have to get clear of that clutter. The reasonable desire of all of us is that we should have the collective affairs of the world managed by suitably equipped groups of the most interested, intelligent, and devoted people, and that their activities should be subjected to a free, open, watchful criticism, restrained from making spasmodic interruptions but powerful enough to modify or supersede without haste or delay whatever is weakening or unsatisfactory in the general direction.

A number of readers will be disposed to say that this is a very vague, undefined, and complicated conception of world government. But indeed it is a simplification. Not only are the present governments of the world a fragmentary competitive confusion, but none of them is as simple as it appears. They seem to be simple because they have formal heads and definite forms, councils, voting assemblies, and so forth, for arriving at decisions. But the formal heads, the kings, presidents, and so forth, are really not the directive heads. They are merely the figure heads. They do not decide. They

merely make gestures of potent and dignified acquiescence when decisions are put to them. They are complicating shams. Nor do the councils and assemblies really decide. They record, often very imperfectly and exasperatingly, the accumulating purpose of outer forces. These outer really directive forces are no doubt very intricate in their operation; they depend finally on religious and educational forms and upon waves of gregarious feeling, but it does not in the least simplify the process of collective human activity to pretend that it is simple and to set up symbols and dummies in the guise of rulers and dictators to embody that pretence. To recognize the incurable intricacy of collective action is a mental simplification; to remain satisfied with the pretensions of existing governmental institutions, and to bring in all the problems of their procedure and interaction is to complicate the question.

The present rudimentary development of collective psychology obliges us to be vague and provisional about the way in which the collective mind may best define its will for the purpose of administrative action. We may know that a thing is possible and still be unable to do it as yet, just as we knew that aviation was possible in 1900. Some method of decision there must certainly be and a definite administrative machinery. But it may turn out to be a much slighter, less elaborate organization than a consideration of existing methods might lead us to imagine. It may never become one single interlocking administrative system. We may have systems of world control rather than a single world state. The practical regulations, enforcements, and officials needed to keep the world in good health, for example may be only very loosely related to the system of controls that will maintain its communications in a state of efficiency. Enforcement and legal decisions, as we know them now, may be found to be enormously and needlessly cumbrous by our descendants. As the reasonableness of a thing is made plain, the need for its enforcement is diminished, and the necessity for litigation disappears.

The Open Conspiracy, the world movement for the supercession or enlargement or fusion of existing political, economic, and social institutions must necessarily, as it grows, draw closer and closer to questions of practical control. It is likely in its growth to incorporate

many active public servants and many industrial and financial leaders and directors. It may assimilate great masses of intelligent workers. As its activities spread it will work out a whole system of special methods of co-operation. As it grows, and by growing, it will learn the business of general direction and how to develop its critical function. A lucid, dispassionate, and immanent criticism is the primary necessity, the living spirit of a world civilization. The Open Conspiracy is essentially such a criticism, and the carrying out of such a criticism into working reality is the task of the Open Conspiracy. It will by its very nature be aiming not so much to set up a world direction, as to become itself a world direction, and the educational and militant forms of its opening phase will evoke, step by step, as experience is gained and power and responsibility acquired, forms of administration and research and correlation.

The differences in nature and function between the world controls of the future and the state governments of the present age which we have just pointed out favours a hope that the Open Conspiracy may come to its own in many cases rather by the fading out of these state governments through the inhibition and paralysis of their destructive militant and competitive activities than by a direct conflict to overthrow them. As new world controls develop, it becomes the supreme business of the Open Conspiracy to keep them world wide and impartial, to save them by an incessant critical educational and propagandist activity from entanglement with the old traditional rivalries and feuds of states and nations. It is quite possible that such world controls should be able to develop independently, but it is highly probable, on the other hand, that they will continue to be entangled as they are to-day, and that they will need to be disengaged with a struggle. We repeat, the new directive organizations of men's affairs will not be of the same nature as old-fashioned governments. They will be in their nature biological, financial, and generally economic, and the old governments were primarily nothing of the sort. Their directive force will be (1) an effective criticism having the quality of science, and (2) the growing will in men to have things right. The directive force of the older governments was the uncriticized fantasies and wilfulness of an individual, a class, a tribe, or a majority.

The modernization of the religious impulse leads us straight to this effort for the establishment of the world state as a duty, and the close consideration of the necessary organization of that effort will bring the reader to the conclusion that a movement aiming at the establishment of a world directorate, however restricted that movement may be at first in numbers and power, must either contemplate the prospect of itself developing into a world directorate, and by the digestion and assimilation of superseded factors into an entire modern world community, or admit from the outset the futility, the spare-time amateurishness, of its gestures.

VIII. — BROAD CHARACTERISTICS OF A SCIENTIFIC WORLD COMMONWEAL

CONTINUING our examination of the practical task before the modern mind, we may next note the main lines of contemporary aspiration within this comprehensive outline of a world commonweal. Any sort of unification of human affairs will not serve the ends we seek. We aim at a particular sort of unification; a world Caesar is hardly better from the progressive viewpoint than world chaos; the unity we seek must mean a world-wide liberation of thought, experiment and creative effort.

A successful Open Conspiracy merely to seize governments and wield and retain world power would be at best only the empty frame of success. It might be the exact reverse of success. Release from the threat of war and from the waste of international economic conflicts is a poor release if it demands as its price the loss of all other liberties.

It is because we desire a unification of human direction, not simply for the sake of unity, but as a means of release to happiness and power, that it is necessary, at any cost — in delay, in loss of effective force, in strategic or tactical disadvantage — that the light of free, abundant criticism should play upon that direction and upon the movements and unifying organizations leading to the establishment of that unifying direction.

Man is an imperfect animal and never quite trustworthy in the dark. Neither morally nor intellectually is he safe from lapses. Most of us who are past our first youth know how little we can trust ourselves and glad to have our activities checked and guarded by a sense of helpful inspection. It is for this reason that a movement to realize the conceivable better state of the world must deny itself the advantages of secret methods and tactical insincerities. It must leave that to its adversaries. We must declare our end plainly from the outset and risk no misunderstandings of our procedure.

The Open Conspiracy against the traditional and now cramping and dangerous institutions of the world must be an Open Conspiracy

and cannot remain righteous otherwise. It is lost if it goes underground. Every step to world unity must be taken in the daylight with the understanding sympathy of as many people as possible, or the sort of unity that will be won will be found to be scarcely worth the winning. The essential task would have to be recommenced again within the mere frame of unity thus attained.

This candid attempt to take possession of the whole world, this Open Conspiracy of ours, must be made in the name of and for the sake of science and creative activity. Its aim is to release science and creative activity and every stage in the struggle must be watched and criticized, lest there be any sacrifice of these ends to the exigencies of conflict.

The security of creative progress and creative activity implies a competent regulation of the economic life in the collective interest. There must be food, shelter and leisure for all. The fundamental needs of the animal life must be assured before human life can have free play. Man does not live by bread alone; he eats that he may learn and adventure creatively, but unless he eats he cannot adventure. His life is primarily economic, as a house is primarily a foundation, and economic justice and efficiency must underlie all other activities; but to judge human society and organize political and social activities entirely on economic grounds is to forget the objectives of life's campaign in a preoccupation with supply.

It is true that man, like the animal world in general from which he has risen, is the creature of a struggle for sustenance, but unlike the animals, man can resort to methods of escape from that competitive pressure upon the means of subsistence, which has been the lot of every other animal species. He can restrain the increase in his numbers, and he seems capable of still quite undefined expansions of his productivity per head of population. He can escape therefore from the struggle for subsistence altogether with a surplus of energy such as no other kind of animal species has ever possessed. Intelligent control of population is a possibility which puts man outside competitive processes that have hitherto ruled the modification of species, and he can be released from these processes in no other way.

There is a clear hope that, later, directed breeding will come within his scope, but that goes beyond his present range of practical

achievement, and we need not discuss it further here. Suffice it for us here that the world community of our desires, the organized world community conducting and ensuring its own progress, requires a deliberate collective control of population as a primary condition.

There is no strong instinctive desire for multitudinous offspring, as such, in the feminine make-up. The reproductive impulses operate indirectly. Nature ensures a pressure of population through passions and instincts that, given sufficient knowledge, intelligence, and freedom on the part of women, can be satisfactorily gratified and tranquillized, if need be, without the production of numerous children. Very slight adjustments in social and economic arrangements will, in a world of clear available knowledge and straightforward practice in these matters, supply sufficient inducement or discouragement to affect the general birth rate or the birth rate of specific types as the directive sense of the community may consider desirable. So long as the majority of human beings are begotten involuntarily in lust and ignorance so long does man remain like any other animal under the moulding pressure of competition for subsistence. Social and political processes change entirely in their character when we recognize the possibility and practicability of this fundamental revolution in human biology.

In a world so relieved, the production of staple necessities presents a series of problems altogether less distressful than those of the present scramble for possessions and self-indulgence on the part of the successful, and for work and a bare living on the part of the masses. With the increase of population unrestrained, there was, as the end of the economic process, no practical alternative to a multitudinous equality at the level of bare subsistence, except through such an inequality of economic arrangements as allowed a minority to maintain a higher standard of life by withholding whatever surplus of production it could grasp, from consumption in mere proletarian breeding. In the past and at present, what is called the capitalist system, that is to say the unsystematic exploitation of production by private owners under the protection of the law, has, on the whole, in spite of much waste and conflict, worked beneficially by checking that gravitation to a universal low-grade consumption which would have been the inevitable outcome of a socialism

oblivious of biological processes. With effective restraint upon the increase of population, however, entirely new possibilities open out before mankind.

The besetting vice of economic science, orthodox and unorthodox alike, has been the vice of beginning in the air, with current practice and current convictions, with questions of wages, prices, values, and possession, when the profounder issues of human association are really not to be found at all on these levels. The primary issues of human association are biological and psychological, and the essentials of economics are problems in applied physics and chemistry. The first thing we should examine is what we want to do with natural resources, and the next, how to get men to do what has to be done as pleasurably and effectively as possible. Then we should have a standard by which to judge the methods of to-day.

But the academic economists, and still more so Marx and his followers, refuse to deal with these fundamentals, and, with a stupid pose of sound practical wisdom, insist on opening up their case with an uncritical acceptance of the common antagonism of employers and employed and a long rigmarole about profits and wages. Ownership and expropriated labour are only one set of many possible sets of economic method.

The economists, however, will attend seriously only to the current set; the rest they ignore; and the Marxists, with their uncontrollable disposition to use nicknames in the place of judgments, condemn all others as "Utopian" — a word as final in its dismissal from the minds of the elect as that other pet counter in the Communist substitute for thought, "Bourgeois." If they can persuade themselves that an idea or a statement is "Utopian" or "Bourgeois," it does not seem to matter in the least to them whether it is right or wrong. It is disposed of. Just as in genteeler circles anything is disposed of that can be labelled "atheistical", "subversive" or "disloyal."

If a century and a half ago the world had submitted its problems of transport to the economists, they would have put aside, with as little wasted breath and ink as possible, all talk about railways, motorcars, steamships, and aeroplanes, and, with a fine sense of extravagance rebuked, set themselves to long neuralgic dissertations, disputations, and treatises upon highroads and the methods of

connecting them, turnpike gates, canals, influence of lock fees on bargemen, tidal landing places, anchorages, surplus carrying capacity, carriers, caravans, hand-barrows, and the pedestrianariat. There would have been a rapid and easy differentiation in feeling and requirements between the horse-owning minority and the walking majority; the wrongs of the latter would have tortured the mind of every philosopher who could not ride, and been minimized by every philosopher who could; and there would have been a broad rift between the narrow-footpath school, the no-footpath school, and the school which would look forward to a time when every horse would have to be led along one universal footpath under the dictatorship of the pedestrianariat. All with the profoundest gravity and dignity. These things, footpaths and roads and canals with their traffic, were "real," and "Utopian" projects for getting along at thirty or forty miles an hour or more uphill and against wind and tide, let alone the still more incredible suggestion of air transport, would have been smiled and sneered out of court. Life went about on its with a certain assistance from wheels, or floated, rowed and was blown about on water; so it had been — and so it would always be.

The psychology of economic co-operation is still only dawning, and so the economists and the doctrinaire socialists have had the freest range for pedantry and authoritative pomp. For a hundred years they have argued and argued about "rent," about "surplus value," and so on, and have produced a literature ten thousand times as bulky, dreary, and foolish as the worst outpourings of the mediaeval schoolmen.

But as soon as this time-honoured preoccupation with the allotment of the shares of originators, organizers, workers, owners of material, credit dealers, and tax collectors in the total product, ceases to be dealt with as the primary question in economics; as soon as we liberate our minds from a preoccupation which from the outset necessarily makes that science a squabble rather than a science, and begin our attack upon the subject with a survey of the machinery and other productive material required in order that the staple needs of mankind should be satisfied, if we go on from that to consider the way in which all this material and machinery can be worked and the product distributed with the least labour and the greatest possible

satisfaction, we shift our treatment of economic questions towards standards by which all current methods of exploitation, employment, and finance can be judged rather than wrangled over. We can dismiss the question of the claims of this sort of participant or that, for later and subordinate consideration, and view each variety of human assistance in the general effort entirely from the standpoint of what makes that assistance least onerous and most effective.

The germs of such really scientific economics exist already in the study of industrial organization and industrial psychology. As the science of industrial psychology in particular develops, we shall find all this discussion of ownership, profit, wages, finance, and accumulation, which has been treated hitherto as the primary issues of economics, falling into place under the larger enquiry of what conventions in these matters, what system of money and what conceptions of property, yield the greatest stimulus and the least friction in that world-wide system of co-operation which must constitute the general economic basis to the activities of a unified mankind.

Manifestly the supreme direction of the complex of human economic activities in such a world must centre upon a bureau of information and advice, which will take account of all the resources of the planet, estimate current needs, apportion productive activities and control distribution. The topographical and geological surveys of modern civilized communities, their government maps, their periodic issue of agricultural and industrial statistics, are the first crude and unco-ordinated beginnings of such an economic world intelligence. In the propaganda work of David Lubin, a pioneer whom mankind must not forget, and in his International Institute of Agriculture in Rome, there were the beginnings of an impartial review month by month and year by year of world production, world needs and world transport. Such a great central organization of economic science would necessarily produce direction; it would indicate what had best be done here, there, and everywhere, solve general tangles, examine, approve and initiate fresh methods and arrange the transitional process from old to new. It would not be an organization of will, imposing its will upon a reluctant or recalcitrant race; it would be a direction, just as a map is a direction.

A map imposes no will on anyone, breaks no one in to its "policy." And yet we obey our maps.

The will to have the map full, accurate, and up to date, and the determination to have its indications respected, would have to pervade the whole community. To nourish and sustain that will must be the task not of any particular social or economic division of the community, but of the whole body of right-minded people in that community. The organization and preservation of that power of will is the primary undertaking, therefore, of a world revolution aiming at universal peace, welfare and happy activity. And through that will it will produce as the central organ the brain of the modern community, a great encyclopædic organization, kept constantly up to date and giving approximate estimates and directions for all the material activities of mankind.

The older and still prevalent conception of government is bullying, is the breaking-in and subjugation of the "subject," to the God, or king, or lords of the community. Will-bending, the overcoming of the recalcitrant junior and inferior, was an essential process in the establishment of primitive societies, and its tradition still rules our education and law. No doubt there must be a necessary accommodation of the normal human will to every form of society; no man is innately virtuous; but compulsion and restraint are the friction of the social machine and, other things being equal, the less compulsive social arrangements are, the more willingly, naturally, and easily they are accepted, the less wasteful of moral effort and the happier that community will be. The ideal state, other things being equal, is the state with the fewest possible number of will fights and will suppressions. This must be a primary consideration in arranging the economic, biological, and mental organization of the world community at which we aim.

We have advanced the opinion that the control of population pressure is practicable without any violent conflict with "human nature," that given a proper atmosphere of knowledge and intention, there need be far less suppression of will in relation to production than prevails to-day. In the same way, it is possible that the general economic life of mankind may be made universally satisfactory that there may be an abundance out of all comparison greater than the

existing supply of things necessary for human well-being, freedom, and activity, with not merely not more, but infinitely less subjugation and enslavement than now occurs. Man is still but half born out of the blind struggle for existence, and his nature still partakes of the infinite wastefulness of his mother Nature. He has still to learn how to price the commodities he covets in terms of human life. He is indeed only beginning to realize that there is anything to be learnt in that matter. He wastes will and human possibility extravagantly in his current economic methods.

We know nowadays that the nineteenth century expended a great wealth of intelligence upon a barren controversy between Individualism and Socialism. They were treated as mutually exclusive alternatives, instead of being questions of degree. Human society has been is and always must be an intricate system of adjustments between unconditional liberty and the disciplines and subordinations of co-operative enterprise. Affairs do not move simply from a more individualist to a more socialist state or vice versa; there may be a release of individual initiative going on here and standardization or restraint increasing there. Personal property never can be socially guaranteed as the extremer individualists desired, nor can it be "abolished" as the extremer socialists proposed. Property is not robbery, as Proudhon asserted; it is the protection of things against promiscuous and mainly wasteful use. Property is not necessarily personal. In some cases property may restrict or forbid a use of things that could be generally advantageous, and it may be and is frequently unfair in its assignment of initiative, but the remedy for that is not an abolition but a revision of property. In the concrete it is a form necessary for liberty of action upon material, while abstracted as money, which is a liquidated generalized form of property; it is a ticket for individual liberty of movement and individual choice of reward.

The economic history of mankind is a history of the operation of the idea of property; it relates the conflict of the unlimited acquisitiveness of egoistic individuals against the resentment of the disinherited and unsuccessful and the far less effective consciousness of a general welfare. Money grew out of a system of abstracting conventions and has been subjected to a great variety of restrictions,

monopolizations, and regulations. It has never been an altogether logical device, and it has permitted the most extensive and complex developments of credit, debt, and dispossession. All these developments have brought with them characteristic forms of misuse and corruption. The story is intricate, and the tangle of relationships, of dependence, of pressure, of interception, of misdirected services, crippling embarrassments, and crushing obligations in which we live to-day admits of no such simple and general solutions as many exponents of socialism, for example, seem to consider possible.

But the thought and investigations of the past century or so have made it clear that a classification of property, according to the nature of the rights exercisable and according to the range of ownership involved, must be the basis of any system of social justice in the future.

Certain things, the ocean, the air, rare wild animals, must be the collective property of all mankind and cannot be altogether safe until they are so regarded, and until some concrete body exists to exercise these proprietary rights. Whatever collective control exists must protect these universal properties, the sea from derelicts, the strange shy things of the wild from extermination by the hunter and the foolish collector. The extinction of many beautiful creatures is one of the penalties our world is paying for its sluggishness in developing a collective common rule. And there are many staple things and general needs that now also demand a unified control in the common interest. The raw material of the earth should be for all, not to be monopolized by any acquisitive individual or acquisitive sovereign state, and not to be withheld from exploitation for the general benefit of any chance claims to territorial priority of this or that backward or bargaining person or tribe.

In the past, most of these universal concerns have had to be left to the competitive enterprise of profit-seeking individuals because there were as yet no collectivities organized to the pitch of ability needed to develop and control these concerns, but surely nobody in his senses believes that the supply and distribution of staple commodities about the earth by irresponsible persons and companies working entirely for monetary gain is the best possible method from the point of view of the race as a whole. The land of the earth, all

utilizable natural products, have fallen very largely under the rules and usages of personal property because in the past that was the only recognized and practicable form of administrative proprietorship. The development both of extensive proprietary companies and of government departments with economic functions has been a matter of the last few centuries, the development, that is to say, of communal, more or less impersonal ownership, and it is only through these developments that the idea of organized collectivity of proprietorship has become credible.

Even in quite modern state enterprises there is a tendency to recall the rôle of the vigilant, jealous, and primitive personal proprietor in the fiction of ownership by His Majesty the King. In Great Britain, for example, Georgius Rex is still dimly supposed to hover over the Postmaster General of his Post Office, approve, disapprove, and call him to account. But the Postal Union of the world which steers a registered letter from Chile to Norway or from Ireland to Pekin is almost completely divorced from the convention of an individual owner. It works; it is criticized without awe or malice. Except for the stealing and steaming of letters practised by the political police of various countries, it works fairly well. And the only force behind it to keep it working well is the conscious common sense of mankind.

But when we have stipulated for the replacement of individual private ownership by more highly organized forms of collective ownership, subject to free criticism and responsible to the whole republic of mankind, in the general control of sea and land, in the getting, preparation, and distribution of staple products and in transport, we have really named all the possible generalizations of concrete ownership that the most socialistic of contemporaries will be disposed to demand. And if we add to that the necessary maintenance of a money system by a central world authority upon a basis that will make money keep faith with the worker who earns it, and represent from first to last for him the value in staple commodities he was given to understand it was to have, and if we conceive credit adequately controlled in the general interest by a socialized world banking organization, we shall have defined the entire realm from which individual property and unrestricted individual enterprise have been excluded. Beyond that, the science of

social psychology will probably assure us that the best work will be done for the world by individuals free to exploit their abilities as they wish. If the individual landowner or mineral-owner disappears altogether from the world, he will probably be replaced over large areas by tenants with considerable security of tenure, by householders and by licensees under collective proprietors. It will be the practice, the recognized best course, to allow the cultivator to profit as fully as possible by his own individual productivity and to leave the householder to fashion his house and garden after his own desire.

Such in the very broadest terms is the character of the world commonweal towards which the modern imagination is moving, so far as its direction and economic life are concerned. The organization of collective bodies capable of exercising these wider proprietorships, which cannot be properly used in the common interest by uncorrelated individual owners, is the positive practical problem before the intelligent portion of mankind to-day. The nature of such collective bodies is still a series of open questions, even upon such points as whether they will be elected bodies or groups deriving their authority from other sanctions. Their scope and methods of operation, their relations to one another and to the central bureau of intelligence, remain also to be defined. But before we conclude this essay we may be able to find precisions for at least the beginning of such definition.

Nineteenth-century socialism in its various forms, including the highly indurated formulae of communism, has been a series of projects for the establishment of such collective controls, for the most part very sketchy projects from which the necessary factor of a sound psychological analysis was almost completely wanting. Primarily movements of protest and revolt against the blazing injustices arising out of the selfishly individualistic exploitation of the new and more productive technical and financial methods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they have been apt to go beyond the limits of reasonable socialization in their demands and to minimize absurdly the difficulties and dangers of collective control. Indignation and impatience were their ruling moods, and if they constructed little they exposed much. We are better able to measure

the magnitude of the task before us because of the clearances and lessons achieved by these pioneer movements.

IX. — NO STABLE UTOPIA IS NOW CONCEIVABLE

THIS unified world towards which the Open Conspiracy would direct its activities cannot be pictured for the reader as any static and stereotyped spectacle of happiness. Indeed, one may doubt if such a thing as happiness is possible without steadily changing conditions involving continually enlarging and exhilarating opportunities. Mankind, released from the pressure of population, the waste of warfare and the private monopolization of the sources of wealth, will face the universe with a great and increasing surplus of will and energy. Change and novelty will be the order of life; each day will differ from its predecessor in its great amplitude of interest. Life which was once routine, endurance, and mischance will become adventure and discovery. It will no longer be "the old, old story."

We have still barely emerged from among the animals in their struggle for existence. We live only in the early dawn of human self-consciousness and in the first awakening of the spirit of mastery. We believe that the persistent exploration of our outward and inward worlds by scientific and artistic endeavour will lead to developments of power and activity upon which at present we can set no limits nor give any certain form.

Our antagonists are confusion of mind, want of courage, want of curiosity and want of imagination, indolence, and spendthrift egotism. These are the enemies against which the Open Conspiracy arrays itself; these are the jailers of human freedom and achievement.

X. — THE OPEN CONSPIRACY IS NOT TO BE. THOUGHT OF AS A SINGLE ORGANIZATION; IT IS A. CONCEPTION OF LIFE OUT OF WHICH EFFORTS,. ORGANIZATIONS, AND NEW ORIENTATIONS WILL ARISE

THIS open and declared intention of establishing a world order out of the present patchwork of particularist governments, of effacing the militarist conceptions that have hitherto given governments their typical form, and of removing credit and the broad fundamental processes of economic life out of reach of private profit-seeking and individual monopolization, which is the substance of this Open Conspiracy to which the modern religious mind must necessarily address its practical activities, cannot fail to arouse enormous opposition. It is not a creative effort in a clear field; it is a creative effort that can hardly stir without attacking established things. It is the repudiation of drift, of "leaving things alone." It criticizes everything in human life from the top to the bottom and finds everything not good enough. It strikes at the universal human desire to feel that things are "all right."

One might conclude, and it would be a hasty, unsound conclusion, that the only people to whom we could look for sympathy and any passionate energy in forwarding the revolutionary change would be the unhappy, the discontented, the dispossessed, and the defeated in life's struggle. This idea lies at the root of the class-war dogmas of the Marxists, and it rests on an entirely crude conception of human nature. The successful minority is supposed to have no effective motive but a desire to retain and intensify its advantages. A quite imaginary solidarity to that end is attributed to it, a preposterous, base class activity. On the other hand, the unsuccessful mass— "proletariat" — is supposed to be capable of a clear apprehension of its disadvantages, and the more it is impoverished and embittered, the clearer-minded it becomes, and the nearer draws its uprising, its

constructive “dictatorship,” and the Millennium.

No doubt a considerable amount of truth is to be found in this theory of the Marxist revolution. Human beings, like other animals, are disposed to remain where their circumstances are tolerable and to want change when they are uncomfortable, and so a great proportion of the people who are “well off” want little or no change in present conditions, particularly those who are too dull to be bored by an unprogressive life, while a great proportion of those who actually feel the inconveniences of straitened means and population pressure, do. But much vaster masses of the rank and file of humanity are accustomed to inferiority and dispossession, they do not feel these things to the extent even of desiring change, or even if they do feel their disadvantages, they still fear change more than they dislike their disadvantages. Moreover, those who are sufficiently distressed to realize that “something ought to be done about it” are much more disposed to childish and threatening demands upon heaven and the government for redress and vindictive and punitive action against the envied fortunate with whom they happen to be in immediate contact, than to any reaction towards such complex, tentative, disciplined constructive work as alone can better the lot of mankind. In practice Marxism is found to work out in a ready resort to malignantly destructive activities, and to be so uncreative as to be practically impotent in the face of material difficulties. In Russia, where — in and about the urban centres, at least — Marxism has been put to the test, the doctrine of the Workers’ Republic remains as a unifying cant, a test of orthodoxy of as little practical significance there as the communism of Jesus and communion with Christ in Christendom, while beneath this creed a small oligarchy which has attained power by its profession does its obstinate best, much hampered by the suspicion and hostility of the Western financiers and politicians, to carry on a series of interesting and varyingly successful experiments in the socialization of economic life. Here we have no scope to discuss the N.E.P. and the Five Year Plan. They are dealt with in The Work, Wealth, and Happiness of Mankind. Neither was properly Communist. The Five Year Plan is carried out as an autocratic state capitalism. Each year shows more and more clearly that Marxism and Communism are divagations from the path of human progress

and that the line of advance must follow a course more intricate and less flattering to the common impulses of our nature.

The one main strand of truth in the theory of social development woven by Marx and Engels is that successful, comfortable people are disposed to dislike, obstruct and even resist actively any substantial changes in the current patchwork of arrangements, however great the ultimate dangers of that patchwork may be or the privations and sufferings of other people involved in it. The one main strand of error in that theory is the facile assumption that the people at a disadvantage will be stirred to anything more than chaotic and destructive expressions of resentment. If now we reject the error and accept the truth, we lose the delusive comfort of belief in that magic giant, the Proletariat, who will dictate, arrange, restore, and create, but we clear the way for the recognition of an élite of intelligent, creative-minded people scattered through the whole community, and for a study of the method of making this creative element effective in human affairs against the massive oppositions of selfishness and unimaginative self-protective conservatism.

Now, certain classes of people such as thugs and burglars seem to be harmful to society without a redeeming point about them, and others, such as racecourse bookmakers, seem to provide the minimum of distraction and entertainment with a maximum of mischief. Wilful idlers are a mere burthen on the community. Other social classes again, professional soldiers, for example, have a certain traditional honourableness which disguises the essentially parasitic relationship of their services to the developing modern community. Armies and armaments are cancers produced by the malignant development of the patriotic virus under modern conditions of exaggeration and mass suggestion. But since there are armies prepared to act coercively in the world to-day, it is necessary that the Open Conspiracy should develop within itself the competence to resist military coercion and combat and destroy armies that stand in the way of its emergence. Possibly the first two types here instanced may be condemned as classes and excluded as classes from any participation in the organized effort to recast the world, but quite obviously the soldier cannot. The world commonweal will need its own scientific methods of protection so

long as there are people running about the planet with flags and uniforms and weapons, offering violence to their fellow men and interfering with the free movements of commodities in the name of national sovereignty.

And when we come to the general functioning classes, landowners, industrial organizers, bankers, and so forth, who control the present system, such as it is, it should be still plainer that it is very largely from the ranks of these classes, and from their stores of experience and traditions of method, that the directive forces of the new order must emerge. The Open Conspiracy can have nothing to do with the heresy that the path of human progress lies through an extensive class war.

Let us consider, for example, how the Open Conspiracy stands to such a complex of activities, usages, accumulations, advantages as constitutes the banking world. There are no doubt many bankers and many practices in banking which make for personal or group advantage to the general detriment. They forestall, monopolize, constrain, and extort, and so increase their riches. And another large part of that banking world follows routine and established usage; it is carrying on and keeping things going, and it is neither inimical nor conducive to the development of a progressive world organization of finance. But there remains a residuum of original and intelligent people in banking or associated with banking or mentally interested in banking, who do realize that banking plays a very important, interesting part in the world's affairs, who are curious about their own intricate function and disposed towards a scientific investigation of its origins, conditions, and future possibilities. Such types move naturally towards the Open Conspiracy. Their enquiries carry them inevitably outside the bankers' habitual field to an examination of the nature, drift, and destiny of the entire economic process.

Now the theme of the preceding paragraph might be repeated with variations through a score of paragraphs in which appropriate modifications would adapt it to the industrial organizer, the merchant and organizer of transport, the advertiser, the retail distributor, the agriculturalist, the engineer, the builder, the economic chemist, and a number of other types functional in the contemporary community. In all we should distinguish firstly a base and harmful section, then a

mediocre section following established usage, and lastly, an active, progressive section to whom we turn naturally for developments leading towards the progressive world commonweal of our desires. And our analysis might penetrate further than separation into types of individuals. In nearly every individual instance we should find a mixed composition, a human being of fluctuating moods and confused purposes, sometimes base, sometimes drifting with the tide and sometimes alert and intellectually and morally quickened. The Open Conspiracy must be content to take a fraction of a man, as it appeals to fractions of many classes, if it cannot get him altogether.

This idea of drawing together a proportion of all or nearly all the functional classes in contemporary communities in order to weave the beginnings of a world community out of their selection is a fairly obvious one — and yet it has still to win practical recognition. Man is a morbidly gregarious and partisan creature; he is deep in his immediate struggles and stands by his own kind because in so doing he defends himself; the industrialist is best equipped to criticize his fellow industrialist, but he finds the root of all evil in the banker; the wages worker shifts the blame for all social wrongs on the "employing class." There is an element of exasperation in most economic and social reactions, and there is hardly a reforming or revolutionary movement in history which is not essentially an indiscriminate attack of one functioning class or type upon another, on the assumption that the attacked class is entirely to blame for the clash and that the attacking class is self-sufficient in the commonweal and can dispense with its annoying collaborator. A considerable element of justice usually enters into such recriminations. But the Open Conspiracy cannot avail itself of these class animosities for its driving force. It can have, therefore, no uniform method of approach. For each class it has a conception of modification and development, and each class it approaches therefore at a distinctive angle. Some classes, no doubt, it would supersede altogether; others — the scientific investigator, for example — it must regard as almost wholly good and seek only to multiply and empower, but it can no more adopt the prejudices and extravagances of any particular class as its basis than it can adopt the claims of any existing state or empire.

When it is clearly understood that the binding links of the Open Conspiracy we have in mind are certain broad general ideas, and that — except perhaps in the case of scientific workers — we have no current set of attitudes of mind and habits of activity which we can turn over directly and unmodified to the service of the conspiracy, we are in a position to realize that the movement we contemplate must from the outset be diversified in its traditions and elements and various in its methods. It must fight upon several fronts and with many sorts of equipment. It will have a common spirit, but it is quite conceivable that between many of its contributory factors there may be very wide gaps in understanding and sympathy. It is no sort of simple organization.

XI. — FORCES AND RESISTANCES IN THE GREAT. MODERN COMMUNITIES NOW PREVALENT, WHICH ARE. ANTAGONISTIC TO THE OPEN CONSPIRACY.. THE WAR WITH TRADITION

We have now stated broadly but plainly the idea of the world commonweal which is the objective of the Open Conspiracy, and we have made a preliminary examination of the composition of that movement, showing that it must be necessarily not a class development, but a convergence of many different sorts of people upon a common idea. Its opening task must be the elaboration, exposition, and propaganda of this common idea, a steady campaign to revolutionize education and establish a modern ideology in men's minds and, arising out of this, the incomparably vaster task of the realization of its ideas.

These are tasks not to be done in vacuo; they have to be done in a dense world of crowding, incessant, passionate, unco-ordinated activities, the world of market and newspaper, seed-time and harvest, births, deaths, jails, hospitals, riots, barracks and army manoeuvres, false prophets and royal processions, games and shows, fire, storm, pestilence, earthquake, war. Every day and every hour things will be happening to help or thwart, stimulate or undermine, obstruct or defeat the creative effort to set up the world commonweal.

Before we go on to discuss the selection and organization of these heterogeneous and mainly religious impulses upon which we rest our hopes of a greater life for mankind, before we plan how these impulses may be got together into a system of co-ordinated activities, it will be well to review the main antagonistic forces with which, from its very inception, the Open Conspiracy will be — is now — in conflict.

To begin with, we will consider these forces as they present themselves in the highly developed Western European States of to-day and in their American derivatives, derivatives which, in spite of

the fact that in most cases they have far outgrown their lands of origin, still owe a large part of their social habits and political conceptions to Europe. All these States touch upon the Atlantic or its contributory seas; they have all grown to their present form since the discovery of America; they have a common tradition rooting in the ideas of Christendom and a generic resemblance of method. Economically and socially they present what is known in current parlance as the Capitalist system, but it will relieve us of a considerable load of disputatious matter if we call them here simply the "Atlantic" civilizations and communities.

The consideration of these Atlantic civilizations in relation to the coming world civilization will suffice for the present chapter. Afterwards we will consider the modification of the forces antagonistic to the Open Conspiracy as they display themselves beyond the formal confines of these now dominant states in the world's affairs, in the social systems weakened and injured by their expansion, and among such less highly organized communities as still survive from man's savage and barbaric past.

The Open Conspiracy is not necessarily antagonistic to any existing government. The Open Conspiracy is a creative, organizing movement and not an anarchistic one. It does not want to destroy existing controls and forms of human association, but either to supersede or amalgamate them into a common world directorate. If constitutions, parliaments, and kings can be dealt with as provisional institutions, trustees for the coming of age of the world commonweal, and in so far as they are conducted in that spirit, the Open Conspiracy makes no attack upon them.

But most governments will not set about their business as in any way provisional they and their supporters insist upon a reverence and obedience which repudiate any possibility of supersession. What should be an instrument becomes a divinity. In nearly every country of the world there is, in deference to the pretended necessities of a possible war, a vast degrading and dangerous cultivation of loyalty and mechanical subservience to flags, uniforms, presidents, and kings. A president or king who does his appointed work well and righteously is entitled to as much subservience as a bricklayer who does his work well and righteously and to no more, but instead there

is a sustained endeavour to give him the privileges of an idol above criticism or reproach, and the organized worship of flags has become — with changed conditions of intercourse and warfare — an entirely evil misdirection of the gregarious impulses of our race. Emotion and sentimentality are evoked in the cause of disciplines and co-operations that could quite easily be sustained and that are better sustained by rational conviction.

The Open Conspiracy is necessarily opposed to all such implacable loyalties, and still more so to the aggressive assertion and propaganda of such loyalties. When these things take the form of suppressing reasonable criticism and forbidding even the suggestion of other forms of government, they become plainly antagonists to any comprehensive project for human welfare. They become manifestly, from the wider point of view, seditious, and loyalty to "king and country" passes into plain treason to mankind. Almost everywhere, at present, educational institutions organize barriers in the path of progress, and there are only the feeblest attempts at any counter education that will break up these barriers. There is little or no effort to restrain the aggressive nationalist when he waves his flag against the welfare of our race, or to protect the children of the world from the infection of his enthusiasms. And this last is as true now of the American system as it is of any European State.

In the great mass of the modern community there is little more than a favourable acquiescence in patriotic ideas and in the worship of patriotic symbols, and that is based largely on such training. These things are not necessary things for the generality of to-day. A change of mental direction would be possible for the majority of people now without any violent disorganization of their intimate lives or any serious social or economic readjustments for them. Mental infection in such cases could be countered by mental sanitation. A majority of people in Europe, and a still larger majority in the United States and the other American Republics, could become citizens of the world without any serious hindrance to their present occupations, and with an incalculably vast increase of their present security.

But there remains a net of special classes in every community, from kings to custom-house officers, far more deeply involved in patriotism because it is their trade and their source of honour, and

prepared in consequence with an instinctive resistance to any reorientation of ideas towards a broader outlook. In the case of such people no mental sanitation is possible without dangerous and alarming changes in their way of living. For the majority of these patriots by metier, the Open Conspiracy unlocks the gates leading from a fussy paradise of eminence, respect, and privilege, — and motions them towards an austere wilderness which does not present even the faintest promise of a congenial, distinguished life for them. Nearly everything in human nature will dispose them to turn away from these gates which open towards the world peace, to bang-to and lock them again if they can, and to grow thickets as speedily as possible to conceal them and get them forgotten. The suggestion of being trustees in a transition will seem to most of such people only the camouflage of an ultimate degradation.

From such classes of patriots by metier, it is manifest that the Open Conspiracy can expect only opposition. It may detach individuals from them, but only by depriving them of their essential class loyalties and characteristics. The class as a class will remain none the less antagonistic. About royal courts and presidential residences, in diplomatic, consular, military, and naval circles, and wherever people wear titles and uniforms and enjoy pride and precedences based on existing political institutions, there will be the completest general inability to grasp the need for the Open Conspiracy. These people and their womankind, their friends and connections, their servants and dependents, are fortified by time-honoured traditions of social usage, of sentiment and romantic prestige. They will insist that they are reality and Cosmopolis a dream. Only individuals of exceptional liveliness, rare intellectual power, and innate moral force can be expected to break away from the anti-progressive habits such class conditions impose upon them.

This tangle of traditions and loyalties, of interested trades and professions, of privileged classes and official patriots, this complex of human beings embodying very easy and natural and time-honoured ideas of eternal national separation and unending international and class conflict, is the main objective of the Open Conspiracy in its opening phase. This tangle must be disentangled as the Open Conspiracy advances, and until it is largely disentangled

and cleared up that Open Conspiracy cannot become anything very much more than a desire and a project.

This tangle of "necessary patriots," as one may call them, is different in its nature, less intricate and extensive proportionally in the United States and the States of Latin America, than it is in the old European communities, but it is none the less virulent in its action on that account. It is only recently that military and naval services have become important factors in American social life, and the really vitalizing contact of the interested patriot and the State has hitherto centred mainly upon the custom house and the concession. Instead of a mellow and romantic loyalty to "king and country" the American thinks simply of America and his flag.

The American exaggeration of patriotism began as a resistance to exploitation from overseas. Even when political and fiscal freedom were won, there was a long phase of industrial and financial dependence. The American's habits of mind, in spite of his recent realization of the enormous power and relative prosperity of the United States and of the expanding possibilities of their Spanish and Portuguese-speaking neighbours, are still largely self- protective against a now imaginary European peril. For the first three quarters of the nineteenth century the people of the American continent, and particularly the people of the United States, felt the industrial and financial ascendancy of Great Britain and had a reasonable fear of European attacks upon their continent. A growing tide of immigrants of uncertain sympathy threatened their dearest habits. Flag worship was imposed primarily as a repudiation of Europe. Europe no longer looms over America with overpowering intimations, American industries no longer have any practical justification for protection, American finance would be happier without it, but the patriotic interests are so established now that they go on and will go on. No American statesman who ventures to be cosmopolitan in his utterance and outlook is likely to escape altogether from the raucous attentions of the patriotic journalist.

We have said that the complex of classes in any country interested in the current method of government is sustained by traditions and impelled by its nature and conditions to protect itself against exploratory criticism. It is therefore unable to escape from the forms

of competitive and militant nationalism in which it was evolved. It cannot, without grave danger of enfeeblement, change any such innate form. So that while parallel complexes of patriotic classes are found in greater or less intricacy grouped about the flags and governments of most existing states, these complexes are by their nature obliged to remain separate, nationalist, and mutually antagonistic. You cannot expect a world union of soldiers or diplomatists. Their existence and nature depend upon the idea that national separation is real and incurable, and that war, in the long run, is unavoidable. Their conceptions of loyalty involve an antagonism to all foreigners, even to foreigners of exactly the same types as themselves, and make for a continual campaign of annoyances, suspicions, and precautions — together with a general propaganda, affecting all other classes, of the necessity of an international antagonism — that creeps persistently towards war.

But while the methods of provoking war employed by the patriotic classes are traditional, modern science has made a new and enormously more powerful thing of warfare and, as the Great War showed, even the most conservative generals on both sides are unable to prevent the gigantic interventions of the mechanician and the chemist. So that a situation is brought about in which the militarist element is unable to fight without the support of the modern industrial organization and the acquiescence of the great mass of people. We are confronted therefore at the present time with the paradoxical situation that a patriotic tradition sustains in power and authority warlike classes who are quite incapable of carrying on war. The other classes to which they must go for support when the disaster of war is actually achieved are classes developed under peace conditions, which not only have no positive advantage in war, but must, as a whole, suffer great dislocation, discomfort, destruction, and distress from war. It is of primary importance therefore, to the formally dominant classes that these new social masses and powers should remain under the sway of the old social, sentimental, and romantic traditions, and equally important is it to the Open Conspiracy that they should be released.

Here we bring into consideration another great complex of persons, interests, traditions — the world of education, the various

religious organizations, and, beyond these, the ramifying, indeterminate world of newspapers and other periodicals, books, the drama, art, and all the instruments of presentation and suggestion that mould opinion and direct action. The sum of the operations of this complex will be either to sustain or to demolish the old nationalist militant ascendancy. Its easiest immediate course is to accept it. Educational organizations on that account are now largely a conservative force in the community; they are in most cases directly controlled by authority and bound officially as well as practically to respect current fears and prejudices. It evokes fewer difficulties for them if they limit and mould rather than release the young. The schoolmaster tends, therefore, to accept and standardize and stereotype, even in the living, progressive fields of science and philosophy. Even there he is a brake on the forward movement. It is clear that the Open Conspiracy must either continually disturb and revivify him or else frankly antagonize him. Universities also struggle between the honourable past on which their prestige rests, and the need of adaptation to a world of enquiry, experiment, and change. It is an open question whether these particular organizations of intellectual prestige are of any real value in the living world. A modern world planned de novo would probably produce nothing like a contemporary university. Modern research, one may argue, would be stimulated rather than injured by complete detachment from the lingering mediaevalism of such institutions, their entanglement with adolescent education, and their ancient and contagious conceptions of precedence and honour.

Ordinary religious organizations, again, exist for self-preservation and are prone to follow rather than direct the currents of popular thought. They are kept alive, indeed, by revivalism and new departures which at the outlet they are apt to resist, as the Catholic Church, for instance, resisted the Franciscan awakening, but their formal disposition is conservative. They say to religious development, thus far and no farther.

Here, in school, college, and church, are activities of thought and instruction which, generally speaking, drag upon the wheels of progress, but which need not necessarily do so. A schoolmaster may be original, stimulating, and creative, and if he is fortunate and a

good fighter he may even achieve considerable worldly success; university teachers and investigators may strike out upon new lines and yet escape destruction by the older dons. Universities compete against other universities at home and abroad and cannot altogether yield to the forces of dullness and subservience. They must maintain a certain difference from vulgar opinion and a certain repute of intellectual virility.

As we pass from the more organized to the less organized intellectual activities, we find conservative influence declining in importance, and a freer play for the creative drive. Freshness is a primary condition of journalistic, literary, and artistic success, and orthodoxy has nothing new to say or do. But the desire for freshness may be satisfied all too readily by merely extravagant, superficial, and incoherent inventions.

The influence of this old traditional nationalist social and political hierarchy which blocks the way to the new world is not, however, exerted exclusively through its control over schools and universities. Nor is that indeed its more powerful activity. Would that it were There is also a direct, less defined contact of the old order with the nascent powers, that plays a far more effective part in delaying the development of the modern world commonweal. Necessarily the old order has determined the established way of life, which is, at its best, large, comfortable, amusing, respected. It possesses all the entrances and exits and all the controls of the established daily round. It is able to exact, and it does exact, almost without design, many conformities. There can be no very ample social life, therefore, for those who are conspicuously dissentient. Again the old order has a complete provision for the growth, welfare, and advancement of its children. It controls the founts of honour and self-respect; it provides a mapped-out world of behaviour. The new initiatives make their appearance here and there in the form of isolated individuals, here an inventor, there a bold organizer or a vigorous thinker. Apart from his specific work the innovating type finds that he must fall in with established things or his womenfolk will be ostracized, and he will be distressed by a sense of isolation even in the midst of successful activities. The more intensely he innovates in particular, the more likely is he to be too busy to seek out kindred souls and organize a

new social life in general. The new things and ideas, even when they arise abundantly, arise scattered and unorganized, and the old order takes them in its net. America for example — both on its Latin and on its English-speaking side — is in many ways a triumph of the old order over the new.

Men like Winwood Reade thought that the New World would be indeed a new world. They idealized its apparent emancipations. But as the more successful of the toiling farmers and traders of republican America rose one by one to affluence, leisure, and freedom, it was far more easy for them to adopt the polished and prepared social patterns and usages of Europe than to work out a new civilization in accordance with their equalitarian professions. Yet there remains a gap in their adapted "Society." Henry James, that acute observer of subtle social flavours, has pointed out the peculiar headlessness of social life in America because of the absence of court functions to "go on" to and justify the assembling and dressing. The social life has imitated the preparation for the Court without any political justification. In Europe the assimilation of the wealthy European industrialist and financier by the old order has been parallel and naturally more logically complete. He really has found a court to "go on" to. His social scheme was still undecapitated until kingdoms began to change into republics after 1917.

In this way the complex of classes vitally involved in the old militant nationalist order is mightily reinforced by much larger masses of imitative and annexed and more or less assimilated rich and active people. The great industrialist has married the daughter of the marquis and has a couple of sons in the Guards and a daughter who is a princess. The money of the American Leeds, fleeing from the social futility of its land of origin, helped bolster up a mischievous monarchy in Greece. The functional and private lives of the new men are thus at war with one another. The real interests of the great industrialist or financier lie in cosmopolitan organization and the material development of the world commonweal, but his womenfolk pin flags all over him, and his sons are prepared to sacrifice themselves and all his business creations for the sake of trite splendours and Ruritanian romance.

But just so far as the great business organizer is capable and

creative, so far is he likely to realize and resent the price in frustration that the old order obliges him to pay for amusement, social interest, and domestic peace and comfort. The Open Conspiracy threatens him with no effacement; it may even appear with an air of release. If he had women who were interested in his business affairs instead of women who had to be amused, and if he realized in time the practical, intellectual, and moral kidnap of sons and daughters by the old order that goes on, he might pass quite easily from acquiescence to antagonism. But in this respect he cannot a single-handed. This is a social and not an individual operation. The Open Conspiracy, it is clear, must include in its activities a great fight for the souls of economically-functional people. It must carve out a Society of its own from Society. Only by the creation of a new and better social life can it resist the many advantages and attractions of the old.

This constant gravitation back to traditional uses on the part of what might become new social types applies not merely to big people but to such small people as are really functional in the modern economic scheme. The have no social life adapted to their new economic relationships, and they forced back upon the methods of behaviour established for what were roughly their analogues in the old order of things. The various sorts of managers and foremen in big modern concerns, for example, carry on ways of living they have taken ready-made from the stewards, tradesmen, tenantry, and upper servants of an aristocratic territorial system. They release themselves and are released almost in spite of themselves, slowly, generation by generation, from habits of social subservience that are no longer necessary nor convenient in the social process, acquire an official pride in themselves and take on new conceptions of responsible loyalty to a scheme. And they find themselves under suggestions of class aloofness and superiority to the general mass of less cardinal workers, that are often unjustifiable under new conditions. Machinery and scientific organization have been and still are revolutionizing productive activity by the progressive elimination of the unskilled worker, the hack, the mere toiler. But the social organization of the modern community and the mutual deportment of the associated workers left over after this elimination are still

haunted by the tradition of the lord, the middle-class tenant, and the servile hind. The development of self-respect and mutual respect among the mass of modern functional workers is clearly an intimate concern of the Open Conspiracy.

A vast amount of moral force has been wasted in the past hundred years by the antagonism of "Labour" to "Capital," as though this were the primary issue in human affairs. But this never was the primary issue, and it is steadily receding from its former importance. The ancient civilizations did actually rest upon a broad basis of slavery and serfdom. Human muscle was a main source of energy-ranking with sun, wind, and flood. But invention and discovery have so changed the conditions under which power is directed and utilized that muscle becomes economically secondary and inessential. We no longer want hewers of wood and drawers of water, carriers and pick and spade men. We no longer want that breeding swarm of hefty sweaty bodies without which the former civilizations could not have endured. We want watchful and understanding guardians and drivers of complex delicate machines, which can be mishandled and brutalized and spoilt all too easily. The less disposed these masters of our machines are to inordinate multiplication, the more room and food in the world for their ampler lives. Even to the lowest level of a fully-mechanicalized civilization it is required that the human element should be select. In the modern world, crowds are a survival, and they will presently be an anachronism, and crowd psychology therefore cannot supply the basis of a new order. It is just because labour is becoming more intelligent, responsible, and individually efficient that it is becoming more audible and impatient in social affairs.

It is just because it is no longer mere gang labour, and is becoming more and more intelligent co-operation in detail, that it now resents being treated as a serf, housed like a serf, fed like a serf, and herded like a serf, and its pride and thoughts and feelings disregarded. Labour is in revolt because as a matter of fact it is, in the ancient and exact sense of the word, ceasing to be labour at all.

The more progressive elements of the directive classes recognize this, but, as we have shown, there are formidable forces still tending to maintain the old social attitudes when arrogance became the ruler

and the common man accepted his servile status. A continual resistance is offered by large sections of the prosperous and advantaged to the larger claims of the modernized worker, and in response the rising and differentiating workers develop an angry antagonism to these directive classes which allow themselves to be controlled by their conservative and reactionary elements. Moreover, the increasing relative intelligence of the labour masses, the unprecedented imaginative stimulation they experience, the continually more widespread realization of the available freedoms and comforts and indulgences that might be and are not shared by all in a modern state, develop a recalcitrance where once there was little but fatalistic acquiescence. An objection to direction and obligation, always mutely present in the toiling multitude since the economic life of man began, becomes articulate and active. It is the taste of freedom that makes labour desire to be free. This series of frictions is a quite inevitable aspect of social reorganization, but it does not constitute a primary antagonism in the process.

The class war was invented by the classes; it is a natural tradition of the upper strata of the old order. It was so universally understood that there was no need to state it. It is implicit in nearly all the literature of the world before the nineteenth century — except the Bible, the Koran, and other sequelae. The "class war" of the Marxist is merely a poor snobbish imitation, a tu quoque, a pathetic, stupid, indignant reversal of and retort to the old arrogance, a pathetic upward arrogance.

These conflicts cut across rather than oppose or help the progressive development to which the Open Conspiracy devotes itself. Labour, awakened, enquiring, and indignant, is not necessarily progressive; if the ordinary undistinguished worker is no longer to be driven as a beast of burthen, he has — which also goes against the grain — to be educated to as high a level of co-operative efficiency as possible. He has to work better, even if he works for much shorter hours and under better conditions, and his work must be subordinated work still; he cannot become en masse sole owner and master of a scheme of things he did not make and is incapable of directing. Yet this is the ambition implicit in an exclusively "Labour" movement. Either the Labour revolutionary hopes to cadge the

services of exceptional people without acknowledgment or return on sentimental grounds, or he really believes that anyone is as capable as anyone else — if not more so. The worker at a low level may be flattered by dreams of "class-conscious" mass dominion from which all sense of inferiority is banished, but they will remain dreams. The deep instinctive jealousy of the commonplace individual for outstanding quality and novel initiative may be organized and turned to sabotage and destruction, masquerading as and aspiring to be a new social order, but that will be a blind alley and not the road of progress. Our hope for the human future does not lie in crowd psychology and the indiscriminating rule of universal democracy.

The Open Conspiracy can have little use for mere resentments as a driving force towards its ends; it starts with a proposal not to exalt the labour class but to abolish it, its sustaining purpose is to throw drudges out of employment and eliminate the inept — and it is far more likely to incur suspicion and distrust in the lower ranks of the developing industrial order of to-day than to win support there. There, just as everywhere else in the changing social complexes of our time, it can appeal only to the exceptionally understanding individual who can without personal humiliation consider his present activities and relationships as provisional and who can, without taking offence, endure a searching criticising of his present quality and mode of living.

XII. — THE RESISTANCES OF THE LESS INDUSTRIALIZED. PEOPLES TO THE DRIVE OF THE OPEN CONSPIRACY

So far, in our accounting of the powers, institutions, dispositions, types, and classes which will be naturally opposed to the Open Conspiracy, we have surveyed only such territory in the domain of the future world commonweal as is represented by the complex, progressive, highly-industrialized communities, based on a preceding landlord-soldier, tenant, town-merchant, and tradesman system, of the Atlantic type. These communities have developed farthest in the direction of mechanicalization, and they are so much more efficient and powerful that they now dominate the rest of the world. India, China, Russia, Africa present mélanges of social systems, thrown together, outpaced, overstrained, shattered, invaded, exploited, and more or less subjugated by the finance, machinery, and political aggressions of the Atlantic, Baltic, and Mediterranean civilization. In many ways they have an air of assimilating themselves to that civilization, evolving modern types and classes, and abandoning much of their distinctive traditions. But that they take from the West is mainly the new developments, the material achievements, rather than the social and political achievements, that, empowered by modern inventions, have won their to world predominance. They may imitate European nationalism to a certain extent; for them it becomes a convenient form of self-assertion against the pressure of a realized practical social and political inferiority; but the degree to which they will or can take over the social assumptions and habits of the long-established European-American hierarchy is probably very restricted. Their nationalism will remain largely indigenous; the social traditions in which they will try to make the new material forces subservient will be traditions of an Oriental life widely different from the original life of Europe. They will have their own resistances to the Open Conspiracy, therefore, but they will be different resistances from those we have hitherto considered. The automobile and the wireless set, the harvester and steel construction

building, will come to the jungle rajah and the head hunter, the Brahmin and the Indian peasant, with a parallel and yet dissimilar message to the one they brought the British landowner or the corn and cattle farmers of the Argentine and the Middle West. Also they may be expected to evoke dissimilar reactions. To a number of the finer, more energetic minds of these overshadow communities which have lagged more or less ill the material advances t which this present ascendancy of western Europe and America is due, the Open Conspiracy may come with an effect of immense invitation. At one step they may go from the sinking vessel of their antiquated order, across their present conquerors, into a brotherhood of world rulers They may turn to the problem of saving and adapting all that is rich and distinctive of their inheritance to the common ends of the race. But to the less vigorous intelligences of this outer world, the new project of the Open Conspiracy will seem no better than a new form of Western envelopment and they will fight a mighty liberation as though it were a further enslavement to the European tradition. They will watch the Open Conspiracy for any signs of conscious superiority and racial disregard. Necessarily they will recognize it as a product of Western mentality and they may well be tempted to regard it as an elaboration and organization of current dispositions rather than the evolution of a new phase which will make no discrimination at last between the effete traditions of either East or West. Their suspicions will be sustained and developed by the clumsy and muddle-headed political and economic aggressions of the contemporary political and business systems, such as they are, of the West, now in progress. Behind that cloud of aggression Western thought has necessarily advanced upon them. It could have got to their attention in no other way.

Partly these resistances and criticisms of the decadent communities outside the Atlantic capitalist system will be aimed, not at the developing methods of the coming world community, but at the European traditions and restrictions that have imposed themselves upon these methods, and so far the clash of the East and West may be found to subserve the aims of the Open Conspiracy. In the conflict of old traditions and in the consequent deadlocks lies much hope for the direct acceptance of the groups of ideas centring

upon the Open Conspiracy One of the most interesting areas of humanity in this respect is the great system of communities under the sway or influence of Soviet Russia. Russia has never been completely incorporated with the European system; she became a just passable imitation of a western European monarchy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and talked at last of constitutions and parliaments — but the reality of that vast empire remained an Asiatic despotism, and the European mask was altogether smashed by the successive revolutions of 1917. The ensuing system is a government presiding over an enormous extent of peasants and herdsmen, by a disciplined association professing the faith and dogmas of Marx, as interpreted and qualified by Lenin and Stalin.

In many ways this government is a novelty of extraordinary interest. It labours against enormous difficulties within itself and without. Flung amazingly into a position of tremendous power, its intellectual flexibility is greatly restricted by the urgent militant necessity for mental unanimity and a consequent repression of criticism. It finds itself separated, intellectually and morally, by an enormous gap from the illiterate millions over which it rules. More open perhaps to scientific and creative conceptions than any other government, and certainly more willing to experiment and innovate, its enterprise is starved by the economic depletion of the country in the Great War and by the technical and industrial backwardness of the population upon which it must draw for its personnel. Moreover, it struggles within itself between concepts of a modern scientific social organization and a vague anarchistic dream in which the "State" is to disappear, and an emancipated proletariat, breeding and expectorating freely, fills the vistas of time forevermore. The tradition of long years of hopeless opposition has tainted the world policy of the Marxist cult with a mischievous and irritating quality that focuses upon it the animosity of every government in the dominant Atlantic system. Marxism never had any but the vaguest fancies about the relation of one nation to another, and the new Russian government, for all its cosmopolitan phrases, is more and more plainly the heir to the obsessions of Tsarist Imperialism, using the Communist party, as other countries have used Christian

missionaries, to maintain a propagandist government to forward its schemes. Nevertheless, the Soviet government has maintained itself for more than twelve years, and it seems far more likely to evolve than to persist. It is quite possible that it will evolve towards the conceptions of the Open Conspiracy, and in that case Russia may witness once again a conflict between new ideas and Old Believers. So far the Communist party in Moscow has maintained a considerable propaganda of ideas in the rest of the world and especially across its western frontier. Many of these ideas are now trite and stale. The time may be not far distant when the tide of propaganda will flow in the reverse direction. It has pleased the vanity of the Communist party to imagine itself conducting a propaganda of world revolution. Its fate may be to develop upon lines that will make its more intelligent elements easily assimilable to the Open Conspiracy for a world revolution. The Open Conspiracy as it spreads and grows may find a less encumbered field for trying out the economic developments implicit in its conceptions in Russia and Siberia than anywhere else in the world.

However severely the guiding themes and practical methods of the present Soviet government in Russia may be criticized, the fact remains that it has cleared out of its way many of the main obstructive elements that we find still vigorous in the more highly-organized communities in the West. It has liberated vast areas from the kindred superstitions of monarchy and the need for a private proprietary control of great economic interests. And it has presented both China and India with the exciting spectacle of a social and political system capable of throwing off many of the most characteristic features of triumphant Westernism, and yet holding its own. In the days when Japan faced up to modern necessities there were no models for imitation that were not communities of the Atlantic type pervaded by the methods of private capitalism, and in consequence the Japanese reconstituted their affairs on a distinctly European plan, adopting a Parliament and bringing their monarchy, social hierarchy, and business and financial methods into a general conformity with that model. It is extremely doubtful whether any other Asiatic community will now set itself to a parallel imitation, and it will be thanks largely to the Russian revolution that this

breakaway from Europeanization has occurred.

But it does not follow that such a breakaway will necessarily lead more directly to the Open Conspiracy. If we have to face a less highly organized system of interests and prejudices in Russia and China, we have to deal with a vastly wider ignorance and a vastly more formidable animalism. Russia is a land of tens of millions of peasants ruled over by a little band of the intelligentsia who can be counted only by tens of thousands. It is only these few score thousands who are accessible to ideas of world construction, and the only hope of bringing the Russian system into active participation in the world conspiracy is through that small minority and through its educational repercussion on the myriads below. As we go eastward from European Russia the proportion of soundly prepared intelligence to which we can appeal for understanding and participation diminishes to an even more dismaying fraction. Eliminate that fraction, and one is left face to face with inchoate barbarism incapable of social and political organization above the level of the war boss and the brigand leader. Russia itself is still by no means secure against a degenerative process in that direction, and the hope of China struggling out of it without some forcible directive interventions is a hope to which constructive liberalism clings with very little assurance.

We turn back therefore from Russia, China and the communities of Central Asia to the Atlantic world. It is in that world alone that sufficient range and amplitude of thought and discussion are possible for the adequate development of the Open Conspiracy. In these communities it must begin and for a long time its main activities will need to be sustained from these necessary centres of diffusion. It will develop amidst incessant mental Strife, and through that strife it will remain alive. It is no small part of the practical weakness of present-day communism that it attempts to centre its intellectual life and its directive activities in Moscow and so cuts itself off from the free and open discussions of the Western world. Marxism lost the world when it went to Moscow and took over the traditions of Tsarism as Christianity lost the world when it went to Rome and took over the traditions of Caesar. Entrenched in Moscow from searching criticism, the Marxist ideology may become more and more

dogmatic and unprogressive, repeating its sacred credo and issuing its disregarded orders to the proletariat of the world, and so stay ineffectively crystallized until the rising tide of the Open Conspiracy submerges, dissolves it afresh, and incorporates whatever it finds assimilable.

India, like Japan, is cut off from the main body of Asiatic affairs. But while Japan has become a formally Westernized nationality in the comity of such nations, India remains a world in itself. In that one peninsula nearly every type of community is to be found, from the tribe of jungle savages, through a great diversity of barbaric and mediaeval principalities, to the child and women — sweating factories and the vigorous modern commercialism of Bombay. Over it all the British imperialism prevails, a constraining and restraining influence, keeping the peace, checking epidemics, increasing the food supply by irrigation and the like, and making little or no effort to evoke responses to modern ideas. Britain in India is no propagandist of modern ferments: all those are left the other side of Suez. In India the Briton is a ruler as firm and self-assured and uncreative as the Roman. The old religious and social traditions, the complex customs, castes, tabus, and exclusions of a strangely-mixed but unamalgamated community, though a little discredited by this foreign predominance, still hold men's minds. They have been, so to speak, pickled in the preservative of the British raj.

The Open Conspiracy has to invade the Indian complex in conflict with the prejudices of both ruler and governed. It has to hope for individual breaches in the dull Romanism of the administration: here a genuine educationist, here a creative civil servant, here an official touched by the distant stir of the living homeland; and it has to try to bring these types into a co-operative relationship with a fine native scholar here or an active-minded prince or landowner or industrialist there. As the old methods of passenger transport are superseded by flying, it will be more and more difficult to keep the stir of the living homeland out of either the consciousness of the official hierarchy or the knowledge of the recalcitrant "native."

Very similar to Indian conditions is the state of affairs in the foreign possessions of France, the same administrative obstacles to the Open Conspiracy above, and below the same resentful

subordination, cut off from the mental invigoration of responsibility. Within these areas of restraint, India and its lesser, simpler parallels in North Africa, Syria and the Far East, there goes on a rapid increase of low-grade population, undersized physically and mentally, and retarding the mechanical development of civilization by its standing offer of cheap labour to the unscrupulous entrepreneur, and possible feeble insurrectionary material to the unscrupulous political adventurer. It is impossible to estimate how slowly or how rapidly the knowledge and ideas that have checked the rate of increase of all the Atlantic populations may be diffused through these less alert communities.

We must complete our survey of the resistances against which the Open Conspiracy has to work by a few words about the Negro world and the regions of forest and jungle in which barbaric and even savage human life still escapes the infection of civilization. It seems inevitable that the development of modern means of communication and the conquest of tropical diseases should end in giving access everywhere to modern administration and to economic methods, and everywhere the incorporation of the former wilderness in the modern economic process means the destruction of the material basis, the free hunting, the free access to the soil, of such barbaric and savage communities as still precariously survive. The dusky peoples, who were formerly the lords of these still imperfectly assimilate areas, are becoming exploited workers, slaves, serfs, hut-tax payers, labourers to a caste of white immigrants. The spirit of the plantation broods over all these lands. The Negro in America differs only from his subjugated brother in South Africa or Kenya Colony in the fact that he also, like his white master, is an immigrant. The situation in Africa and America adjusts itself therefore towards parallel conditions, the chief variation being in the relative proportions of the two races and the details of the methods by which black labour is made to serve white ends.

In these black and white communities which are establishing themselves in all those parts of the earth where once the black was native, or in which a sub-tropical climate is favourable to his existence at a low level of social development, there is — and there is bound to be for many years to come — much racial tension. The

steady advance of birth-control may mitigate the biological factors of this tension later on, and a general amelioration of manners and conduct may efface that disposition to persecute dissimilar types, which man shares with many other gregarious animals. But meanwhile this tension increases and a vast multitude of lives is strained to tragic issues.

To exaggerate the dangers and evils of miscegenation is a weakness of our time. Man interbreeds with all his varieties and yet deludes himself that there are races of outstanding purity, the "Nordic," the "Semitic," and so forth. These are phantoms of the imagination. The reality is more intricate, less dramatic, and grips less easily upon the mind; the phantoms grip only too well and incite to terrible suppressions. Changes in the number of half-breeds and in the proportion of white and coloured are changes of a temporary nature that may become controllable and rectifiable in a few generations. But until this level of civilization is reached, until the colour of a man's skin or the kinks in a woman's hair cease to have the value of shibboleths that involve educational, professional, and social extinction or survival, a black and white community is bound to be continually preoccupied by a standing feud too intimate and persuasive to permit of any long views of the world's destiny.

We come to the conclusion therefore that it is from the more vigorous, varied, and less severely obsessed centres of the Atlantic civilizations in the temperate zone, with their abundant facilities for publication and discussion, their traditions of mental liberty and their immense variety of interacting free types, that the main beginnings of the Open Conspiracy must develop. For the rest of the world, its propaganda, finding but poor nourishment in the local conditions, may retain a missionary quality for many years.

XIII. — RESISTANCES AND ANTAGONISTIC FORCES. IN OUR CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS SELVES

WE have dealt in the preceding two chapters with great classes and assemblages of human beings as, in the mass, likely to be more or less antagonistic to the Open Conspiracy, and it has been difficult in those chapters to avoid the implication that "we," some sort of circle round the writer, were aloof from these obstructive and hostile multitudes, and ourselves entirely identified with the Open Conspiracy. But neither are these multitudes so definitely against, nor those who are with us so entirely for, the Open Conspiracy to establish a world community as the writer, in his desire for clearness and contrast and with an all too human disposition perhaps towards plain ego-centred combative issues, has been led to represent. There is no "we," and there can be no "we," in possession of the Open Conspiracy.

The Open Conspiracy is in partial possession of us, and we attempt to serve it. But the Open Conspiracy is a natural and necessary development of contemporary thought arising here, there, and everywhere. There are doubts and sympathies that weigh on the side of the Open Conspiracy in nearly everyone, and not one of us but retains many impulses, habits, and ideas in conflict with our general devotion, checking and limiting our service.

Let us therefore in this chapter cease to discuss classes and types and consider general mental tendencies and reactions which move through all humanity.

In our opening chapters we pointed out that religion is not universally distributed throughout human society. And of no one does it seem to have complete possession. It seizes upon some of us and exalts us for one hour now and then, for a day now and then; it may leave its afterglow upon our conduct for some time; it may establish restraints and habitual dispositions; sometimes it dominates us with but brief intermissions through long spells, and then we can be saints and martyrs. In all our religious phases there appears a

desire to hold the phase, to subdue the rest of our life to the standards and exigencies of that phase. Our quickened intelligence sets itself to a general analysis of our conduct and to the problem of establishing controls over our unilluminated intervals.

And when the religious elements in the mind set themselves to such self- analysis, and attempt to order and unify the whole being upon this basis of the service and advancement of the race, they discover first a great series of indifferent moods, wherein the resistance to thought and word for the Open Conspiracy is merely passive and in the nature of inertia. There is a whole class of states of mind which may be brought together under the head of "everydayism." The dinner bell and the playing fields, the cinema and the newspaper, the week-end visit and the factory siren, a host of such expectant things calls to a vast majority of people in our modern world to stop thinking and get busy with the interest in hand, and so on to the next, without a thought for the general frame and drama in which these momentary and personal incidents are set. We are driven along these marked and established routes and turned this way or that by the accidents of upbringing, of rivalries and loves, of chance encounters and vivid experiences, and it is rarely for many of us, and never for some, that the phases of broad reflection and self-questioning arise. For many people the religious life now, as in the past, has been a quite desperate effort to withdraw sufficient attention and energy from the flood of events to get some sort of grasp, and keep whatever grip is won, upon the relations of the self to the whole. Far more recoil in terror from such a possibility and would struggle strenuously against solitude in the desert, solitude under the stars, solitude in a silent room or indeed any occasion for comprehensive thought.

But the instinct and purpose of the religious type is to keep hold upon the comprehensive drama, and at the heart of all the great religions of the world we find a parallel disposition to escape in some manner from the aimless drive and compulsion of accident and everyday. Escape is attempted either by withdrawal from the presence of crowding circumstance into a mystical contemplation and austere retirement, or — what is more difficult and desperate and reasonable — by imposing the mighty standards of enduring issues

upon the whole mass of transitory problems which constitute the actual business of life. We have already noted how the modern mind turns from retreat as a recognizable method of religion, and faces squarely up to the second alternative. The tumult of life has to be met and conquered. Aim must prevail over the aimless. Remaining in normal life we must yet keep our wills and thoughts aloof from normal life and fixed upon creative processes. However busied we may be, however challenged, we must yet save something of our best mental activity for self-examination and keep ourselves alert against the endless treacheries within that would trip us back into everydayism and disconnected responses to the stimuli of life.

Religions in the past, though they have been apt to give a preference to the renunciation of things mundane, have sought by a considerable variety of expedients to preserve the faith of those whom chance or duty still kept in normal contact with the world. It would provide material for an interesting study to enquire how its organizations to do this have worked in the past and how far they may be imitated and paralleled in the progressive life of the future. All the wide-reaching religions which came into existence in the five centuries before and the five centuries after Christ have made great use of periodic meetings for mutual reassurance, of sacred books, creeds, fundamental heart-searchings, of confession, prayer, sacraments, seasons of withdrawal, meditation, fasting, and prayer. Do these methods mark a phase in the world's development, or are they still to be considered available?

This points to a very difficult tangle of psychological problems. The writer in his earlier draft of this book wrote that the modern religious individual leads, spiritually speaking, a life of extreme wasteful and dangerous isolation. He still feels that is true, but he realizes that the invention of corrective devices is not within his range. He cannot picture a secular Mass nor congregations singing hymns about the Open Conspiracy. Perhaps the modern soul in trouble will resort to the psychoanalysts instead of the confessional; in which case we need to pray for better psychoanalysts.

Can the modern mind work in societies? May the daily paper be slowly usurping the functions of morning prayer, a daily mental reminder of large things, with more vividness and, at present, lower

standards? One of the most distressful facts of the spread of education in the nineteenth century was the unscrupulous exploitation of the new reading public by a group of trash-dealers who grew rich and mighty in the process. Is the popular publisher and newspaper proprietor always to remain a trash-dealer? Or are we to see, in the future, publications taking at times some or all of the influence of revivalist movements, and particular newspapers rising to the task of sustaining a common faith in a gathering section of the public?

The modern temple in which we shall go to meditate may be a museum; the modern religious house and its religious life may be a research organization. The Open Conspirator must see to it that the museums show their meaning plain. There may be not only literature presently, but even plays, shows, and music, to subserve new ideas instead of trading upon tradition.

It is plain that to read and be moved by great ideas and to form good resolutions with no subsequent reminders and moral stocktaking is no enough to keep people in the way of the Open Conspiracy. The relapse to everydayism is too easy. The contemporary Open Conspirator may forget, and he has nothing to remind him; he may relapse, and he w hear no reproach to warn him of his relapse. Nowhere has he recorded vow. "Everyday" has endless ways of justifying the return of the believer to sceptical casualness. It is easy to persuade oneself that one is taking life or oneself "too seriously." The mind is very self-protective; has a disposition to abandon too great or too far-reaching an effort and return to things indisputably within its scope. We have an instinctive preference for thinking things are "all right"; we economize anxiety; defend the delusions that we can work with, even though we half realize they are no more that' delusions. We resent the warning voice, the critical question that robs our activities of assurance. Our everyday moods not only the antagonists of our religious moods, but they resent all outward appeals to our religious moods, and they welcome every help against religious appeals. We pass very readily from the merely defensive to the defensive aggressive, and from refusing to hear the word that might stir our consciences to a vigorous effort to suppress its utterance.

Churches, religious organizations, try to keep the revivifying phase and usage where it may strike upon the waning or slumbering faith of the convert, but modern religion as yet has no such organized rebinders. {sic-RW} They cannot be improvised. Crude attempts to supply the needed corrective of conduct may do less good than harm. Each one of us for himself must do what he can to keep his high resolve in mind and protect himself from the snare of his own moods of fatigue or inadvertency.

But these passive and active defences of current things which operate in and through ourselves, and find such ready sympathy and assistance in the world about us, these massive resistance systems, are only the beginning of our tale of the forces antagonistic to the Open Conspiracy that lurk in our complexities.

Men are creatures with other faults quite beyond and outside our common disposition to be stupid, indolent, habitual, and defensive. Not only have we active creative impulses, but also acutely destructive ones. Man is a jealous animal. In youth and adolescence egotism is extravagant. It is natural for it to be extravagant, then, and there is no help for it. A great number of us at that stage would rather not see a beautiful or wonderful thing come into existence then have it come into existence disregarding us. Something of that jealous malice, that self-assertive ruthlessness, remains in all of us throughout life. At his worst man can be an exceedingly combative, malignant, mischievous and cruel animal. None of us are altogether above the possibility of such phases. When we consider the oppositions to the Open Conspiracy that operate in the normal personality, we appreciate the soundness of the catechism which instructs us to renounce not only the trivial world and the heavy flesh, but the active and militant devil.

To make is a long and wearisome business, with many arrests and disappointments, but to break gives an instant thrill. We all know something of the delight of the Bang. It is well for the Open Conspirator to ask himself at times how far he is in love with the dream of a world in order, and how far he is driven by hatred of institutions that bore or humiliate him. He may be no more than a revengeful incendiary in the mask of a constructive worker. How safe is he, then, from the reaction to some fresh humiliation? The

Open Conspiracy which is now his refuge and vindication may presently fail to give him the compensation he has sought, may offer him no better than a minor röle, may display Irritating and incomprehensible preferences. And for a great number of things in overt antagonism to the great aim of the Open Conspiracy, he will still find within himself not simply acquiescence but sympathy and a genuine if inconsistent admiration. There they are, waiting for his phase of disappointment. Back he may go to the old loves with a new animus against the greater scheme. He may be glad to be quit of prigs and humbugs, and back among the good fellowship of nothing in particular.

Man has pranced a soldier in reality and fancy for so many generations that few of us can altogether release our imaginations from the brilliant pretensions of flags, empire, patriotism, and aggression. Business men, especially in America, seem to feel a sort of glory in calling even the underselling and overadvertising of rival enterprises "fighting." Pill vendors and public departments can have their "wars," their heroisms, their desperate mischiefs, and so get that Napoleonic feeling. The world and our reveries are full of the sentimentalities, the false glories and loyalties of the old combative traditions, trailing after them, as they do, so much worth and virtue in a dulled and stupefied condition. It is difficult to resist the fine gravity, the high self-respect, the examples of honour and good style in small things, that the military and naval services can present to us, for all that they are now no more than noxious parasites upon the nascent world commonweal. In France not a word may be said against the army; in England, against the navy. There will be many Open Conspirators at first who will scarcely dare to say that word even to themselves.

But all these obsolete values and attitudes with which our minds are cumbered must be cleared out if the new faith is to have free play. We have to clear them out not only from our own minds but from the minds of others who are to become our associates. The finer and more picturesque these obsolescent loyalties, obsolescent standards of honour, obsolescent religious associations, may seem to us, the more thoroughly must we seek to release our minds and the minds of those about us from them and cut off all thought of a return.

We cannot compromise with these vestiges of the ancient order and be faithful servants of the new. Whatever we retain of them will come back to life and grow again. It is no good to operate for cancer unless the whole growth is removed. Leave a crown about and presently you will find it being worn by someone resolved to be a king. Keep the name and image of a god without a distinct museum label and sooner or later you will discover a worshipper on his knees to it and be lucky not to find a human sacrifice upon the altar. Wave a flag and it will wrap about you. Of yourself even more than of the community is this true; these can be no half measures. You have not yet completed your escape to the Open Conspiracy from the cities of the plain while it is still possible for you to take a single backward glance.

XIV. — THE OPEN CONSPIRACY BEGINS AS A. MOVEMENT OF DISCUSSION, EXPLANATION, AND PROPAGANDA

A NEW and happier world, a world community, is awakening, within the body of the old order, to the possibility of its emergence. Our phrase, "the Open Conspiracy" is merely a name for that awakening. To begin with, the Open Conspiracy is necessarily a group of ideas.

It is a system of modern ideas which has been growing together in the last quarter of the century, and particularly since the war. It is the reaction of a rapidly progressing biological conception of life and of enlarged historical realizations upon the needs and urgencies of the times. In this book we are attempting to define this system and to give it this provisional name. Essentially at first it is a dissemination of this new ideology that must occur. The statement must be tried over and spread before a widening circle of people.

Since the idea of the Open Conspiracy rests upon and arises out of a synthesis of historical, biological, and sociological realizations, we may look for these realizations already in the case of people with sound knowledge in these fields; such people will be prepared for acquiescence without any explanatory work; there is nothing to set out to them beyond the suggestion that it is time they became actively conscious of where they stand. They constitute already the Open Conspiracy in an unorganized solution, and they will not so much adhere as admit to themselves and others their state of mind. They will say, "We knew all that." Directly we pass beyond that comparatively restricted world, however, we find that we have to deal with partial knowledge, with distorted views, or with blank ignorance, and that a revision and extension of historical and biological ideas and a Considerable elucidation of economic misconceptions have to be undertaken. Such people have to be brought up to date with their information.

I have told already how I have schemed out a group of writings to embody the necessary ideas of the new time in a form adapted to the

current reading public; I have made a sort of provisional "Bible," so to speak, for some factors at least in the Open Conspiracy. It is an early sketch. As the current reading public changes, all this work will become obsolescent so far as its present form and method go. But not so far as its substantial method goes. That I believe will remain.

Ultimately this developing mass of biological, historical, and economic information and suggestion must be incorporated in general education if the Open Conspiracy is to come to its own. At present this propaganda has to go on among adolescents and adults because of the backwardness and political conservatism of existing educational organizations. Most real modern education now is done in spite of the schools and to correct the misconceptions established by the schools. But what will begin as adult propaganda must pass into a kultur-kampf to win our educational machinery from reaction and the conservation of outworn ideas and attitudes to the cause of world reconstruction. The Open Conspiracy itself can never be imprisoned and fixed in the form of an organization, but everywhere Open Conspirators should be organizing themselves for educational reform.

And also within the influence of this comprehensive project there will be all sorts of groupings for study and progressive activity. One can presuppose the formation of groups of friends, of family groups, of students and employees or other sorts of people, meeting and conversing frequently in the course of their normal occupations, who will exchange views and find themselves in agreement upon this idea of a constructive change of the world as the guiding form of human activities.

Fundamentally important issues upon which unanimity must be achieved from the outset are:

Firstly, the entirely provisional nature of all existing governments, and the entirely provisional nature, therefore, of all loyalties associated therewith;

Secondly, the supreme importance of population control in human biology and the possibility it affords us of a release from the pressure of the struggle for existence on ourselves; and

Thirdly, the urgent necessity of protective resistance against the present traditional drift towards war.

People who do not grasp the vital significance of these test issues do not really begin to understand the Open Conspiracy. Groups coming into agreement upon these matters, and upon their general interpretation of history, will be in a position to seek adherents, enlarge themselves, and attempt to establish communication and co-operation with kindred groups for common ends. They can take up a variety of activities to develop a sense and habit of combined action and feel their way to greater enterprises.

We have seen already that the Open Conspiracy must be heterogeneous in origin. Its initial groupings and associations will be of no uniform pattern. They will be of a very different size, average age, social experience, and influence. Their particular activities will be determined by the things. Their diverse qualities and influences will express themselves by diverse attempts at organization, each effective in its own sphere. A group or movement of students may find itself capable of little more than self-education and personal propaganda; a handful of middle-class people in small town may find its small resources fully engaged at first in such things as, for example, seeing that desirable literature is available for sale or in local public library, protecting books and news vendors from suppression, or influencing local teachers. Most parents of school children can press for the teaching of universal history and sound biology and protest against the inculcation of aggressive patriotism. There is much scope for the single individual in this direction. On the other hand, a group of ampler experience and resources may undertake the printing, publication, and distribution of literature, and exercise considerable influence upon public opinion in turning education in the right direction. The League of Nations movement, the Birth Control movement, and most radical and socialist societies, are fields into which Open Conspirators may go to find adherents more than half prepared for their wider outlook. The Open Conspiracy is a fuller and ampler movement into which these incomplete activities must necessarily merge as its idea takes possession of men's imaginations.

From the outset, the Open Conspiracy will set its face against militarism. There is a plain present need for the organization now, before war comes again, of an open and explicit refusal to serve in

any war — or at most to serve in war, directly or indirectly, only after the issue has been fully and fairly submitted to arbitration. The time for a conscientious objection to war service is manifestly before and not after the onset of war. People who have by their silence acquiesced in a belligerent foreign policy right up to the onset of war, have little to complain of if they are then compelled to serve. And a refusal to participate with one's country in warfare is a preposterously incomplete gesture unless it is rounded off by the deliberate advocacy of a world pax, a world economic control, and a restrained population, such as the idea of the Open Conspiracy embodies.

The putting upon record of its members' reservation of themselves from any or all of the military obligations that may be thrust upon the country by military and diplomatic effort, might very conceivably be the first considerable overt act of many Open Conspiracy groups. It would supply the practical incentive to bring many of them together in the first place. It would necessitate the creation of regional or national ad hoc committees for the establishment of a collective legal and political defensive for this dissent from current militant nationalism. It would bring the Open Conspiracy very early out of the province of discussion into the field of practical conflict. It would from the outset invest it with a very necessary quality of present applicability.

The anticipatory repudiation of military service, so far as this last may be imposed by existing governments in their factitious international rivalries, need not necessarily involve a denial of the need of military action on behalf of the world commonweal for the suppression of nationalist brigandage, nor need it prevent the military training of Open Conspirators. It is simply the practical form of assertion that the normal militant diplomacy and warfare of the present time are offences against civilization, processes in the nature of brigandage, sedition, and civil war, and that serious men cannot be expected to play anything but a röle of disapproval, non-participation, or active prevention towards them. Our loyalty to our current government, we would intimate, is subject to its sane and adult behaviour.

These educational and propagandist groups drawing together into

an organized resistance to militarism and to the excessive control of individuals by the makeshift governments of to-day, constitute at most only the earliest and more elementary grade of the Open Conspiracy, and we will presently go on to consider the more specialized and constructive forms its effort must evoke. Before doing so, however, we may say a little more about the structure and method of these possible initiatory groupings.

Since they are bound to be different and miscellaneous in form, size, quality, and ability, any early attempts to organize them into common general action or even into regular common gatherings are to be deprecated. There should be many types of groups. Collective action had better for a time - perhaps for a long time — be undertaken not through the merging of groups but through the formation of ad hoc associations for definitely specialized ends, all making for the new world civilization. Open Conspirators will come into these associations to make a contribution very much as people come into limited liability companies, that is to say with a subscription and not with their whole capital. A comprehensive organization attempting from the first to cover all activities would necessarily rest upon and promote one prevalent pattern of activity and hamper or estrange the more original and interesting forms. It would develop a premature orthodoxy, it would cease almost at once to be creative, and it would begin to form a crust of tradition. It would become anchylosed. With the dreadful examples of Christianity and Communism before us, we must insist that the idea of the Open Conspiracy ever becoming a single organization must be dismissed from the mind. It is a movement, yes, a system of purposes, but its end is a free and living, if unified, world.

At the utmost seven broad principles may be stated as defining the Open Conspiracy and holding it together. And it is possible even of these, one, the seventh, may be, if not too restrictive, at least unnecessary. To the writer it seems unavoidable because it is so intimately associated with that continual dying out of tradition upon which our hopes for an unencumbered and expanding human future rest.

(1) The complete assertion, practical as well as theoretical, of the provisional nature of existing governments and of our acquiescence

in them;

(2) The resolve to minimize by all available means the conflicts of these governments, their militant use of individuals and property, and their interferences with the establishment of a world economic system;

(3) The determination to replace private, local or national ownership of at least credit, transport, and staple production by a responsible world directorate serving the common ends of the race;

(4) The practical recognition of the necessity for world biological controls, for example, of population and disease;

(5) The support of a minimum standard of individual freedom and welfare in the world; and

(6) The supreme duty of subordinating the personal career to the creation of a world directorate capable of these tasks and to the general advancement of human knowledge, capacity, and power;

(7) The admission therewith that our immortality is conditional and lies in the race and not in our individual selves.

XV. — EARLY CONSTRUCTIVE WORK OF THE OPEN CONSPIRACY

IN such terms we may sketch the practicable and possible opening phase of the Open Conspiracy.

We do not present it as a movement initiated by any individual or radiating from any particular centre. In this book we are not starting something; we are describing and participating in something which has started. It arises naturally and necessarily from the present increase of knowledge and the broadening outlook of many minds throughout the world, and gradually it becomes conscious of itself. It is reasonable therefore to anticipate its appearance all over the world in sporadic mutually independent groupings and movements, and to recognize not only that they will be extremely various, but that many of them will trail with them racial and regional habits and characteristics which will only be shaken off as its cosmopolitan character becomes imperatively evident.

The passage from the partial anticipations of the Open Conspiracy that already abound everywhere to its complete and completely self-conscious statement may be made by almost imperceptible degrees. To-day it may seem no more than a visionary idea; to-morrow it may be realized as a world-wide force of opinion and will. People will pass with no great inconsistency from saying that the Open Conspiracy is impossible to saying that it has always been plain and clear to them, that to this fashion they have shaped their lives as long as they can remember.

In its opening phase, in the day of small things, quite minor accidents may help or delay the clear definition and popularization of its main ideas. The changing pattern of public events may disperse or concentrate attention upon it, or it may win the early adherence of men of exceptional resources, energy, or ability. It is impossible to foretell the speed of its advance. Its development may be slower or faster, direct or devious, but the logic of accumulating realizations thrusts it forward, will persist in thrusting it on, and sooner or later it will be discovered, conscious and potent, the working religion of

most sane and energetic people.

Meanwhile our supreme virtues must be faith and persistence.

So far we have considered only two of the main activities of the Open Conspiracy, the one being its propaganda of confidence in the possible world commonweal, and the other its immediate practical attempt to systematize resistance to militant and competitive imperialism and nationalism. But such things are merely its groundwork undertakings; they do no more than clear the site and make the atmosphere possible for its organized constructive efforts.

Directly we turn to that, we turn to questions of special knowledge, special effort, and special organization.

Let us consider first the general advancement of science, the protection and support of scientific research, and the diffusion of scientific knowledge. These things fall within the normal scheme of duty for the members of the Open Conspiracy. The world of science and experiment is the region of origin of nearly all the great initiatives that characterize our times; the Open Conspiracy owes its inspiration, its existence, its form and direction entirely to the changes of condition these initiatives have brought about, and yet a large number of scientific workers live outside the sphere of sympathy in which we may expect the Open Conspiracy to materialize, and collectively their political and social influence upon the community is extraordinarily small. Having regard to the immensity of its contributions and the incalculable value of its promise to the modern community, science — research, that is, and the diffusion of scientific knowledge — is extraordinarily neglected, starved, and threatened by hostile interference. This is largely because scientific work has no strong unifying organization and cannot in itself develop such an organization.

Science is a hard mistress, and the first condition of successful scientific work is that the scientific man should stick to his research. The world of science is therefore in itself, at its core, a miscellany of specialists, often very ungracious specialists, and, rather than offer him help and co-operation, it calls for understanding, tolerance, and service from the man of general intelligence and wider purpose. The company of scientific men is less like a host of guiding angels than like a swarm of marvellous bees — endowed with stings — which

must be hived and cherished and multiplied by the Open Conspiracy.

But so soon as we have the Open Conspiracy at work, putting its plainly and offering its developing ideas and activities to those most preciously preoccupied men, then reasonably, when it involves no special trouble for them, when it is the line of least resistance for them, they may be expected to fall in with its convenient and helpful aims and find in it what they have hitherto lacked, a common system of political and social concepts to hold them together.

When that stage is reached, we shall be saved such spectacles of intellectual prostitution as the last Great War offered, when men of science were herded blinking from their laboratories to curse one another upon nationalist lines, and when after the war stupid and wicked barriers were set up to the free communication of knowledge by the exclusion of scientific men of this or that nationality from international scientific gatherings. The Open Conspiracy must help the man of science to realize, what at present he fails most astonishingly to realize, that he belongs to a greater comity than any king or president represents to-day, and so prepare him for better behaviour in the next season of trial.

The formation of groups in, and not only in, but about and in relation to, the scientific world, which will add to those first main activities of the Open Conspiracy, propaganda and pacificism, a special attention to the needs of scientific work, may be enlarged upon with advantage here, because it will illustrate quite typically the idea of a special work carried on in relation to a general activity, which is the subject of this section.

The Open Conspiracy extends its invitation to all sorts and conditions of men, but the service of scientific progress is for those only who are specially equipped or who are sufficiently interested to equip themselves. For scientific work there is first of all a great need of endowment and the setting up of laboratories, observatories, experimental stations, and the like, in all parts of the world. Numbers of men and women capable of scientific work never achieve it for want of the stimulus of opportunity afforded by endowment. Few contrive to create their own opportunities. The essential man of science is very rarely an able collector or administrator of money, and anyhow, the detailed work of organization is a grave call upon

his special mental energy. But many men capable of a broad and intelligent appreciation of scientific work, but not capable of the peculiar intensities of research, have the gift of extracting money from private and public sources, and it is for them to use that gift modestly and generously in providing the framework for those more especially endowed.

And there is already a steadily increasing need for the proper storage and indexing of scientific results, and every fresh worker enhances it. Quite a considerable amount of scientific work goes fruitless or is needlessly repeated because of the growing volume of publication, and men make discoveries in the field of reality only to lose them again in the lumber room of record. Here is a second line of activity to which the Open Conspirator with a scientific bias may direct his attention.

A third line is the liaison work between the man of science and the common intelligent man; the promotion of publications which will either state the substance, implications and consequences of new work in the vulgar tongue, or, if that is impossible, train the general run of people to the new idioms and technicalities which need to be incorporated with the vulgar tongue if it is still to serve its ends as a means of intellectual intercourse.

Through special ad hoc organizations, societies for the promotion of Research, for Research Defence, for World Indexing, for the translation of Scientific Papers, for the Diffusion of New Knowledge, the surplus energies of a great number of Open Conspirators can be directed to entirely creative ends and a new world system of scientific work built up, within which such dear old institutions as the Royal Society of London, the various European Academies of Science and the like, now overgrown and inadequate, can maintain their venerable pride in themselves, their mellowing prestige, and their distinguished exclusiveness, without their present privilege of inflicting cramping slights and restrictions upon the more abundant scientific activities of to-day.

So in relation to science — and here the word is being used in its narrower accepted meaning for what is often spoken of as pure science, the search for physical and biological realities, uncomplicated by moral, social, and “practical” considerations — we

evoke a conception of the Open Conspiracy as producing groups of socially associated individuals, who engage primarily in the general basic activities of the Conspiracy and adhere to and promote the seven broad principles summarized at the end of Chapter Fourteen, but who work also with the larger part of their energies, through international and cosmopolitan societies and in a multitude of special ways, for the establishment of an enduring and progressive world organization of pure research. They will have come to this special work because their distinctive gifts, their inclinations, their positions and opportunities have indicated it as theirs.

Now a very parallel system of Open Conspiracy groups is conceivable, in relation to business and industrial life. It would necessarily be a vastly bulkier and more heterogeneous system of groups, but otherwise the analogy is complete. Here we imagine those people whose gifts, inclinations, positions and opportunities as directors, workers, or associates give them an exceptional insight into and influence in the processes of producing and distributing commodities, can also be drawn together into groups within the Open Conspiracy. But these groups will be concerned with the huge and more complicated problems of the processes by which even now the small isolated individual adventures in production and trading that constituted the economic life of former civilizations, are giving place to larger, better instructed, better planned industrial organizations, whose operations and combinations become at last world wide.

The amalgamations and combinations, the substitution of large-scale business for multitudes of small-scale businesses, which are going on now, go on with all the cruelty and disregards of a natural process. If a man is to profit and survive, these unconscious blunderings — which now stagger towards but which may never attain world organization — much be watched, controlled, mastered, and directed. As uncertainty diminishes, the quality of adventure and the amount of waste diminish also, and large speculative profits are no longer possible or justifiable. The transition from speculative adventure to organized foresight in the common interest, in the whole world of economic life, is the substantial task of the Open Conspiracy. And it is these specially interested and equipped groups,

and not the movement as a whole, which may best begin the attack upon these fundamental readjustments.

The various Socialist movements of the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries had this in common, that they sought to replace the "private owner" in most or all economic interests by some vaguely apprehended "public owner." This, following the democratic disposition of the times, was commonly conceived of as an elected body, a municipality, the parliamentary state or what not. There were municipal socialists, "nationalizing" socialists, imperial socialists. In the mystic teachings of the Marxist, the collective owner was to be "the dictatorship of the proletariat." Production for profit was denounced. The contemporary mind realizes the evils of production for profit and of the indiscriminate scrambling of private ownership more fully than ever before, but it has a completer realization and a certain accumulation of experience in the difficulties of organizing that larger ownership we desire. Private ownership may not be altogether evil as a provisional stage, even if it has no more in its favour than the ability to transcend political boundaries.

Moreover — and here again the democratic prepossessions of the nineteenth century come in — the Socialist movements sought to make every single adherent a reformer and a propagandist of economic methods. In order to do so, it was necessary to simplify economic processes to the crudity of nursery toys, and the intricate interplay of will and desire in enterprise, normal employment, and direction, in questions of ownership, wages, credit, and money, was reduced to a childish fable of surplus value wickedly appropriated. The Open Conspiracy is not so much a socialism as a more comprehensive offspring which has eaten and assimilated whatever was digestible of its socialist forbears. It turns to biology for guidance towards the regulation of quantity and a controlled distribution of the human population of the world, and it judges all the subsidiary aspects of property and pay by the criterion of most efficient production and distribution in relation to the indications thus obtained.

These economic groups, then, of the Open Conspiracy, which may come indeed to be a large part of the Open Conspiracy, will be working in that vast task of economic reconstruction — which from

the point of view of the older socialism was the sole task before mankind. They will be conducting experiments and observing processes according to their opportunities. Through ad hoc societies and journals they will be comparing and examining their methods and preparing reports and clear information for the movement at large. The whole question of money and monetary methods in our modern communities, so extraordinarily disregarded in socialist literature, will be examined under the assumption that money is the token of the community's obligation, direct or indirect, to an individual, and credit its permission to deal freely with material.

The whole psychology of industry and industrial relationship needs to be revised and restated in terms of the collective efficiency and welfare of mankind. And just as far as can be contrived, the counsel and the confidences of those who now direct great industrial and financial operations will be invoked. The first special task of a banker, or a bank clerk for that matter, who joins the Open Conspiracy, will be to answer the questions: "What is a bank?" "What are you going to do about it?" "What have we to do about it?" The first questions to a manufacturer will be: "What are you making and why?" and "What are you and we to do about it?" Instead of the crude proposals to "expropriate" and "take over by the State" of the primitive socialism, the Open Conspiracy will build up an encyclopædic conception of the modern economic complex as a labyrinthine pseudo-system progressively eliminating waste and working its way along multitudinous channels towards unity, towards clarity of purpose and method, towards abundant productivity and efficient social service.

Let us come back now for a paragraph or so to the ordinary adherent to the Open Conspiracy, the adherent considered not in relation to his special aptitudes and services, but in relation to the movement as a whole and to those special constructive organizations outside his own field. It will be his duty to keep his mind in touch with the progressing concepts of the scientific work so far as he is able and with the larger issues of the economic reconstruction that is afoot, to take his cues from the special groups and organizations engaged upon that work, and to help where he finds his opportunity and when there is a call upon him. But no adherent of the Open

Conspiracy can remain merely and completely an ordinary adherent. There can be no pawns in the game of the Open Conspiracy, no "cannon fodder" in its war. A special activity, quite as much as a general understanding, is demanded from everyone who looks creatively towards the future of mankind.

We have instanced first the fine and distinctive world organization of pure science, and then the huge massive movement towards co-operating unity of aim in the economic life, until at last the production and distribution of staple necessities is apprehended as one world business, and we have suggested that this latter movement may gradually pervade and incorporate a very great bulk of human activities. But besides this fine current and this great torrent of evolving activities and relationships there are also a very considerable variety of other great functions in the community towards which Open Conspiracy groups must direct their organizing enquiries and suggestions in their common intention of ultimately assimilating all the confused processes of to-day into a world community.

For example, there must be a series of groups in close touch at one end with biological science and at the other with the complex of economic activity, who will be concerned specially with the practical administration of the biological interests of the race, from food plants and industrial products to pestilences and population. And another series of groups will gather together attention and energy to focus them upon the educational process. We have already pointed out that there is a strong disposition towards conservatism in normal educational institutions. They preserve traditions rather than develop them. They are likely to set up a considerable resistance to the reconstruction of the world outlook upon the threefold basis defined in Chapter Fourteen. This resistance must be attacked by special societies, by the establishment of competing schools, by help and promotion for enlightened teachers, and, wherever the attack is incompletely successful, it must be supplemented by the energetic diffusion of educational literature for adults, upon modern lines. The forces of the entire movement may be mobilized in a variety of ways to bring pressure upon reactionary schools and institutions.

A set of activities correlated with most of the directly creative

ones will lie through existing political and administrative bodies. The political work of the Open Conspiracy must be conducted upon two levels and by entirely different methods. Its main political idea, its political strategy, is to weaken, efface, incorporate, or supersede existing governments. But there is also a tactical diversion of administrative powers and resources to economic and educational arrangements of a modern type. Because a country or a district is inconvenient as a division and destined to ultimate absorption in some more comprehensive and economical system of government, that is no reason why its administration should not be brought meanwhile into working co-operation with the development of the Open Conspiracy. Free Trade nationalism in power is better than high tariff nationalism, and pacificist party liberalism better than aggressive party patriotism.

This evokes the anticipation of another series of groups, a group in every possible political division, whose task it will be to organize the whole strength of the Open Conspiracy in that division as an effective voting or agitating force. In many divisions this might soon become a sufficiently considerable block to affect the attitudes and pledges of the national politicians. The organization of these political groups into provincial or national conferences and systems would follow hard upon their appearance. In their programmes they would be guided by meetings and discussions with the specifically economic, educational, biological, scientific and cultural groups, but they would also form their own special research bodies to work out the incessant problems of transition between the old type of locally centred administrations and a developing world system of political controls.

In the preceding chapter we sketched the first practicable first phase of the Open Conspiracy as the propaganda of a group of interlocking ideas, a propaganda associated with pacificist action. In the present chapter we have given a scheme of branching and amplifying development. In this scheme. this scheme of the second phase, we conceive of the Open Conspiracy as consisting of a great multitude and variety of overlapping groups, but now all organized for collective political, social, and educational as well as propagandist action. They will recognize each other much more

clearly than they did at first, and they will have acquired a common name.

The groups, however, almost all of them, will still have specific work also. Some will be organizing a sounder setting for scientific progress, some exploring new social and educational possibilities, many concentrated upon this or that phase in the reorganization of the world's economic life, and so forth. The individual Open Conspirator may belong to one or more groups and in addition to the ad hoc societies and organizations which the movement will sustain, often in co-operation with partially sympathetic people still outside its ranks.

The character of the Open Conspiracy will now be plainly displayed. It will have become a great world movement as widespread and evident as socialism or communism. It will have taken the place of these movements very largely. It will be more than they were, it will be frankly a world religion. This large, loose assimilatory mass of movements, groups, and societies will be definitely and obviously attempting to swallow up the entire population of the world and become the new human community.

XVI. — EXISTING AND DEVELOPING MOVEMENTS WHICH ARE. CONTRIBUTORY TO THE OPEN CONSPIRACY AND WHICH MUST DEVELOP. A COMMON CONSCIOUSNESS. THE PARABLE OF PROVINDER ISLAND

A SUGGESTION has already been made in an earlier chapter of this essay which may perhaps be expanded here a little more. It is that there already exist in the world a considerable number of movements in industry, in political life, in social matters, in education, which point in the same direction as the Open Conspiracy and are inspired by the same spirit. It will be interesting to discuss how far some of these movements may not become confluent with others and by a mere process of logical completion identify themselves consciously with the Open Conspiracy in its entirety.

Consider, for example, the movement for a scientific study and control of population pressure, known popularly as the Birth Control movement. By itself, assuming existing political and economic conditions, this movement lays itself open to the charge of being no better than a scheme of "race suicide." If a population in some area of high civilization attempts to restrict increase, organize its economic life upon methods of maximum individual productivity, and impose order and beauty upon its entire territory, that region will become irresistibly attractive to any adjacent festering mass of low-grade, highly reproductive population. The cheap humanity of the one community will make a constant attack upon the other, affording facile servility, prostitutes, toilers, hand labour. Tariffs against sweated products, restriction of immigration, tensions leading at last to a war of defensive massacre are inevitable. The conquest of an illiterate, hungry, and incontinent multitude may be almost as disastrous as defeat for the selecter race. Indeed, one finds that in discussion the propagandists of Birth Control admit that their project must be universal or dysgenic. But yet quite a number of them do not

follow up these admissions to their logical consequences, produce the lines and continue the curves until the complete form of the Open Conspiracy appears. It will be the business of the early Open Conspiracy propagandists to make them do so, and to install groups and representatives at every possible point of vantage in this movement.

And similarly the now very numerous associations for world peace halt in alarm on the edge of their own implications. World Peace remains a vast aspiration until there is some substitute for the present competition of states for markets and raw material, and some restraint upon population pressure. League of Nations Societies and all forms of pacificist organization are either futile or insincere until they come into line with the complementary propositions of the Open Conspiracy.

The various Socialist movements again are partial projects professing at present to be self-sufficient schemes. Most of them involve a pretence that national and political forces are intangible phantoms, and that the primary issue of population pressure can be ignored. They produce one woolly scheme after another for transferring the property in this, that, or the other economic plant and interest from bodies of shareholders and company promoters to gangs of politicians or syndicates of workers — to be steered to efficiency, it would seem, by pillars of cloud by day and pillars of fire by night. The communist party has trained a whole generation of disciples to believe that the overthrow of a vaguely apprehended "Capitalism" is the simple solution of all human difficulties. No movement ever succeeded so completely in substituting phrases for thought. In Moscow communism has trampled "Capitalism" underfoot for ten eventful years, and still finds all the problems of social and political construction before it.

But as soon as the Socialist or Communist can be got to realize that his repudiation of private monopolization is not a complete programme but just a preliminary principle, he is ripe for the ampler concepts of the modern outlook. The Open Conspiracy is the natural inheritor of socialist and communist enthusiasms; it may be in control of Moscow before it is in control of New York.

The Open Conspiracy may achieve the more or less complete

amalgamation of all the radical impulses in the Atlantic community of to-day. But its scope is not confined to the variety of sympathetic movements which are brought to mind by that loose word radical. In the past fifty years or so, while Socialists and Communists have been denouncing the current processes of economic life in the same invariable phrases and with the same undiscriminating animosity, these processes have been undergoing the profoundest and most interesting changes. While socialist thought has recited its phrases, with witty rather than substantial variations, a thousand times as many clever people have been busy upon industrial, mercantile and financial processes. The Socialist still reiterates that this greater body of intelligence has been merely seeking private gain, which has just as much truth in it as is necessary to make it an intoxicating lie. Everywhere competitive businesses have been giving way to amalgamated enterprises, marching towards monopoly, and personally owned businesses to organizations so large as to acquire more and more the character of publicly responsible bodies. In theory in Great Britain, banks are privately owned, and railway transport is privately owned, and they are run entirely for profit — in practice their profit making is austerely restrained and their proceedings are all the more sensitive to public welfare because they are outside the direct control of party politicians.

Now this transformation of business, trading, and finance has been so multitudinous and so rapid as to be still largely unconscious of itself. Intelligent men have gone from combination to combination and extended their range, year by year, without realizing how their activities were enlarging them to conspicuousness and responsibility. Economic organization is even now only discovering itself for what it is. It has accepted incompatible existing institutions to its own great injury. It has been patriotic and broken its shins against the tariff walls its patriotism has raised to hamper its own movements it has been imperial and found itself taxed to the limits of its endurance, “controlled” by antiquated military and naval experts, and crippled altogether. The younger, more vigorous intelligences in the great business directorates of to-day are beginning to realize the uncompleted implications of their enterprise. A day will come when the gentlemen who are trying to control the oil supplies of the world

without reference to anything else except as a subsidiary factor in their game will be considered to be quaint characters. The ends of Big Business must carry Big Business into the Open Conspiracy just as surely as every other creative and broadly organizing movement is carried.

Now I know that to all this urging towards a unification of constructive effort, a great number of people will be disposed to a reply which will, I hope, be less popular in the future than it is at the present time. They will assume first an expression of great sagacity, an elderly air. Then, smiling gently, they will ask whether there is not something preposterously ambitious in looking at the problem of life as one whole. Is it not wiser to concentrate our forces on more practicable things, to attempt one thing at a time, not to antagonize the whole order of established things against our poor desires, to begin tentatively, to refrain from putting too great a strain upon people, to trust to the growing common sense of the world to adjust this or that line of progress to the general scheme of things. Far better accomplish something definite here and there than challenge a general failure. That is, they declare, how reformers and creative things have gone on in the past; that is how they are going on now; muddling forward in a mild and confused and partially successful way. Why not trust them to go on like that? Let each man do his bit with a complete disregard of the logical interlocking of progressive effort to which I have been drawing attention.

Now I must confess that, popular as this style of argument is, it gives me so tedious a feeling that rather than argue against it in general terms I will resort to a parable. I will relate the story of the pig on Provinder Island.

There was, you must understand, only one pig on Provinder Island, and Heaven knows how it got there, whether it escaped and swam ashore or was put ashore from some vessel suddenly converted to vegetarianism, I cannot imagine. At first it was the only mammal there. But later on three sailors and a very small but observant cabin boy were wrecked there, and after subsisting for a time on shell fish and roots they became aware of this pig. And simultaneously they became aware of a nearly intolerable craving for bacon. The eldest of the three sailors began to think of a ham he had met in his boyhood, a

beautiful ham for which his father had had the caving knife specially sharpened; the second of the three sailors dreamed repeatedly of a roast loin of pork he had eaten at his sister's wedding, and the third's mind ran on chitterlings — I know not why. They sat about their meagre fire and conferred and expatiated upon these things until their mouths watered and the shell fish turned to water within them. What dreams came to the cabin boy are unknown, for it was their custom to discourage his confidences. But he sat apart brooding and was at last moved to speech. "Let us hunt that old pig," he said, "and kill it."

Now it may have been because it was the habit of these sailors to discourage the cabin boy and keep him in his place, but anyhow, for whatever reason it was, all three sailors set themselves with one accord to oppose that proposal.

"Who spoke of killing the pig?" said the eldest sailor loudly, looking round to see if by any chance the pig was within hearing. "Who spoke of killing the pig? You're the sort of silly young devil who jumps at ideas and hasn't no sense of difficulties. What I said was AM. All I want is just a Am to go with my roots and sea salt. One Am. The Left Am. I don't want the right one, and I don't propose to get it. I've got a sense of proportion and a proper share of humour, and I know my limitations. I'm a sound, clear-headed, practical man. Am is what I'm after, and if I can get that, I'm prepared to say Quits and let the rest of the pig alone. Who's for joining me in a Left Am Unt — a simple reasonable Left Am Unt — just to get One Left Am?

Nobody answered him directly, but when his voice died away, the next sailor in order of seniority took up the tale. "That Boy," he said, "will die of Swelled Ed, and I pity him. My idea is to follow up the pig and get hold of a loin chop. Just simply a loin chop. A loin chop is good enough for me. It's — feasible. Much more feasible than a great Am. Here we are, we've got no gun, we've got no wood of a sort to make bows and arrows, we've got nothing but our clasp knives, and that pig can run like Ell. It's ridiculous to think of killing that pig. But if one didn't trouble him, if one kind of got into his confidence and crept near him and just quietly and insidiously went for his loin — just sort of as if one was tickling him-one might get a loin chop almost before he knew of it."

The third sailor sat crumpled up and downcast with his lean fingers tangled in his shock of hair. “Chitterlings,” he murmured, “chitterlings. I don’t even want to think of the pig.”

And the cabin boy pursued his own ideas in silence, for he deemed it unwise to provoke his elders further.

On these lines it was the three sailors set about the gratifying of their taste for pork, each in his own way, separately and sanely and modestly. And each had his reward. The first sailor, after weeks of patience, got within arm’s length of the pig and smacked that coveted left ham loud and good, and felt success was near. The other two heard the smack and the grunt of dismay half a mile away. But the pig, in a state of astonishment, carried the ham off out of reach, there and then, and that was as close as the first sailor ever got to his objective. The roast loin hunter did no better. He came upon the pig asleep under a rock one day, and jumped upon the very loin he desired, but the pig bit him deeply and septically, and displayed so much resentment that the question of a chop was dropped forthwith and never again broached between them. And thereafter the arm of the second sailor was bandaged and swelled up and went from bad to worse. And as for the third sailor, it is doubtful whether he even got wind of a chitterling from the start to the finish of this parable. The cabin boy, pursuing notions of his own, made a pitfall for the whole pig, but as the others did not help him, and as he was an excessively small — though shrewd — cabin boy, it was a feeble and insufficient pitfall, and all it caught was the hunter of chitterlings, who was wandering distraught. After which the hunter of chitterlings, became a hunter of cabin boys, and the cabin boy’s life, for all his shrewdness, was precarious and unpleasant. He slept only in snatches and learned the full bitterness of insight misunderstood.

When at last a ship came to Provinder Island and took off the three men and the cabin boy, the pig was still bacon intact and quite gay and cheerful, and all four castaways were in a very emaciated condition because at that season of the year shell fish were rare, and edible roots were hard to find, and the pig was very much cleverer than they were in finding them and digging them up — let alone digesting them.

From which parable it may be gathered that a partial enterprise is

not always wiser or more hopeful than a comprehensive one.

And in the same manner, with myself in the röle of that minute but observant cabin boy, I would sustain the proposition that none of these movements of partial reconstruction has the sound common sense quality its supporters suppose. All these movements are worth while if they can be taken into the world-wide movement; all in isolation are futile. They will be overlaid and lost in the general drift. The policy of the whole hog is the best one, the sanest one, the easiest, and the most hopeful. If sufficient men and women of intelligence can realize that simple truth and give up their lives to it, mankind may yet achieve a civilization and power and fullness of life beyond our present dreams. If they do not, frustration will triumph, and war, violence, and a drivelling waste of time and strength and desire, more disgusting even than war, will be the lot of our race down through the ages to its emaciated and miserable end.

For this little planet of ours is quite off the course of any rescue ships, if the will in our species fails.

XVII. — THE CREATIVE HOME, SOCIAL GROUP,. AND SCHOOL: THE PRESENT WASTE OF IDEALISTIC WILL

HUMAN society began with the family. The natural history of gregariousness is a history of the establishment of mutual toleration among human animals, so that a litter or a herd keeps together instead of breaking up. It is in the family group that the restraints, disciplines, and self-sacrifices which make human society possible were worked out and our fundamental prejudices established, and it is in the family group, enlarged perhaps in many respects, and more and more responsive to collective social influences, that our social life must be relearnt, generation after generation.

Now in each generation the Open Conspiracy, until it can develop its own reproductive methods, must remain a minority movement of intelligent converts. A unified progressive world community demands its own type of home and training. It needs to have its fundamental concepts firmly established in as many minds as possible and to guard its children from the infection of the old racial and national hatreds and jealousies, old superstitions and bad mental habits, and base interpretations of life. From its outset the Open Conspiracy will be setting itself to influence the existing educational machinery, but for a long time it will find itself confronted in school and college by powerful religious and political authorities determined to set back the children at the point or even behind the point from which their patents made their escape. At best, the liberalism of the state-controlled schools will be a compromise. Originally schools and colleges were transmitters of tradition and conservative forces. So they remain in essence to this day.

Organized teaching has always aimed, and will always tend to guide, train, and direct, the mind. The problem of reconstructing education so as to make it a releasing instead of a binding process has still to be solved. During the early phases of its struggle, therefore, the Open Conspiracy will be obliged to adopt a certain sectarianism of domestic and social life in the interests of its

children, to experiment in novel educational methods and educational atmospheres, and it may even in many cases have to consider the grouping of its families and the establishment of its own schools. In many modern communities, the English-speaking states, for example, there is still liberty to establish educational companies, running schools of a special type. In every country where that right does not exist it has to be fought for.

There lies a great work for various groups of the Open Conspiracy. Successful schools would become laboratories of educational methods and patterns for new state schools. Necessarily for a time, but we may hope unconsciously, the Open Conspiracy children will become a social élite; from their first conscious moments they will begin to think and talk among clear-headed people speaking distinctly and behaving frankly, and it will be a waste and loss to put them back for the scholastic stage among their mentally indistinct and morally muddled contemporaries. A phase when there will be a special educational system for the Open Conspiracy seems, therefore, to be indicated. Its children will learn to speak, draw, think, compute lucidly and subtly, and into their vigorous minds they will take the broad concepts of history, biology, and mechanical progress, the basis of the new world, naturally and easily. Meanwhile, those who grow up outside the advancing educational frontier of the Open Conspiracy will never come under the full influence of its ideas, or they will get hold of them only after a severe struggle against a mass of misrepresentations and elaborately instilled prejudices. An adolescent and adult educational campaign, to undo the fixations and suggestions of the normal conservative and reactionary schools and colleges, is and will long remain an important part of the work of the Open Conspiracy.

Always, as long as I can remember, there have been a dispute and invidious comparisons between the old and the young. The young find the old prey upon and restrain them, and the old find the young shallow, disappointing, and aimless in vivid contrast to their revised memories of their own early days. The present time is one in which these perennial accusations flower with exceptional vigour. But there does seem to be some truth in the statement that the facilities to live frivolously are greater now than they have ever been for old and

young alike. For example, in the great modern communities that emerge now from Christendom, there is a widespread disposition to regard Sunday as merely a holiday. But that was certainly not the original intention of Sunday. As we have noted already in an earlier chapter, it was a day dedicated to the greater issues of life. Now great multitudes of people do not even pretend to set aside any time at all to the greater issues of life. The greater issues are neglected altogether. The churches are neglected, and nothing of a unifying or exalting sort takes their place.

What the contemporary senior tells his junior to-day is perfectly correct. In his own youth, no serious impulse of his went to waste. He was not distracted by a thousand gay but petty temptations, and the local religious powers, whatever they happened to be, seemed to believe in themselves more and made a more comprehensive attack upon his conscience and imagination. Now the old faiths are damaged and discredited, and the new and greater one, which is the Open Conspiracy, takes shape only gradually. A decade or so ago, socialism preached its confident hopes, and patriotism and imperial pride shared its attraction for the ever grave and passionate will of emergent youth. Now socialism and democracy are "under revision" and the flags that once waved so bravely reek of poison gas, are stiff with blood and mud and shameful with exposed dishonesties. Youth is what youth has always been, eager for fine interpretations of life, capable of splendid resolves. It has no natural disposition towards the shallow and confused life. Its demand as ever is, "What am I to do with myself?" But it comes up out of its childhood to-day into a world of ruthless exposures and cynical pretensions. We are all a little ashamed of "earnestness." The past ten years have seen the shy and powerful idealism of youth at a loss and dismayed and ashamed as perhaps it has never been before. It is in the world still, but masked, hiding even from itself in a whirl of small excitements and futile, defiant depravities.

The old flags and faiths have lost their magic for the intelligence of the young; they can command it no more; it is in the mighty revolution to which the Open Conspiracy directs itself that the youth of mankind must find its soul, if ever it is to find its soul again.

XVIII. — PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITIES. OF THE OPEN CONSPIRACY INTO A WORLD CONTROL AND COMMONWEAL:. THE HAZARDS OF THE ATTEMPT

WE have now sketched out in these Blue Prints the methods by which the confused radicalism and constructive forces of the present time may, can, and probably will be drawn together about a core of modernized religious feeling into one great and multifarious creative effort. A way has been shown by which this effort may be developed from a mere propagandist campaign and a merely resistant protest against contemporary militarism into an organized foreshadowing in research, publicity, and experiment in educational, economic, and political reconstructions, of that Pax Mundi which has become already the tantalised desire of great multitudes throughout the world. These foreshadowings and reconstructions will ignore and transcend the political boundaries of to-day. They will continually become more substantial as project passes into attempt and performance. In phase after phase and at point after point, therefore, the Open Conspiracy will come to grips with the powers that sustain these boundaries.

And it will not be merely topographical boundaries that will be passed. The Open Conspiracy will also be dissolving and repudiating many existing restrictions upon conduct and many social prejudices. The Open Conspiracy proposes to end and shows how an end may be put to that huge substratum of underdeveloped, undereducated, subjugated, exploited, and frustrated lives upon which such civilization as the world has known hitherto has rested, and upon which most of our social systems still rest.

Whenever possible, the Open Conspiracy will advance by illumination and persuasion. But it has to advance, and even from the outset, where it is not allowed to illuminate and persuade, it must fight. Its first fights will probably be for the right to spread its system

of ideas plainly and clearly throughout the world.

There is, I suppose, a flavour of treason about the assumption that any established government is provisional, and a quality of immorality in any criticism of accepted moral standards. Still more is the proposal, made even in times of peace, to resist war levies and conscription an offence against absolute conceptions of loyalty. But the ampler wisdom of the modern Atlantic communities, already touched by premonitions of change and futurity, has continually enlarged the common liberties of thought for some generations, and it is doubtful if there will be any serious resistance to the dissemination of these views and the early organization of the Open Conspiracy in any of the English-speaking communities or throughout the British Empire, in the Scandinavian countries, or in such liberal-minded countries as Holland, Switzerland, republican Germany or France. France, in the hasty years after the war, submitted to some repressive legislation against the discussion of birth control or hostile criticism of the militarist attitude; but such a check upon mental freedom is altogether contrary to the clear and open quality of the French mind; in practice it has already been effectively repudiated by such writers as Victor Margueritte, and it is unlikely that there will be any effective suppression of the opening phases of the Open Conspiracy in France.

This gives us a large portion of the existing civilized world in which men's minds may be readjusted to the idea that their existing governments are in the position of trustees for the greater government of the coming age. Throughout these communities it is conceivable that the structural lines of the world community may be materialized and established with only minor struggles, local boycotts, vigorous public controversies, normal legislative obstruction, social pressure, and overt political activities. Police, jail, expulsions, and so forth, let alone outlawry and warfare, may scarcely be brought into this struggle upon the high civilized level of the Atlantic communities. But where they are brought in, the Open Conspiracy, to the best of its ability and the full extent of its resources, must become a fighting force and organize itself upon resistant lines.

Non-resistance, the restriction of activities to moral suasion is no

part of the programme of the Open Conspiracy. In the face of unscrupulous opposition creative ideas must become aggressive, must define their enemies and attack them. By its own organizations or through the police and military strength of governments amenable to its ideas, the movement is bound to find itself fighting for open roads, open frontiers, freedom of speech, and the realities of peace in regions of oppression. The Open Conspiracy rests upon a disrespect for nationality, and there is no reason why it should tolerate noxious or obstructive governments because they hold their own in this or that patch of human territory. It lies within the power of the Atlantic communities to impose peace upon the world and secure unimpeded movement and free speech from end to end of the earth. This is a fact on which the Open Conspiracy must insist. The English-speaking states, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, and Russia, given only a not very extravagant frankness of understanding between them, and a common disposition towards the ideas of the Open Conspiracy, could cease to arm against each other and still exert enough strength to impose disarmament and a respect for human freedom in every corner of the planet. It is fantastic pedantry to wait for all the world to accede before all the world is pacified and policed.

The most inconsistent factor in the liberal and radical thought of to-day is its prejudice against the interference of highly developed modern states in the affairs of less stable and less advanced regions. This is denounced as "imperialism," and regarded as criminal. It may have assumed grotesque and dangerous forms under the now decaying traditions of national competition, but as the merger of the Atlantic states proceeds, the possibility and necessity of bringing areas of misgovernment and disorder under world control increase. A great war like the war of 1914-1918 may never happen again. The common sense of mankind may suffice to avert that. But there is still much actual warfare before mankind, on the frontiers everywhere, against brigands, against ancient loyalties and traditions which will become at last no better than excuses for brigandage and obstructive exaction. All the weight of the Open Conspiracy will be on the side of the world order and against that sort of local independence which holds back its subject people from the citizenship of the world.

But in this broad prospect of far-reaching political amalgamations under the impulses of the Open Conspiracy lurk a thousand antagonisms and adverse chances, like the unsuspected gulleys and ravines and thickets in a wide and distant landscape. We know not what unexpected chasms may presently be discovered. The Open Conspirator may realize that he is one of an advancing and victorious force and still find himself outnumbered and outfought in his own particular corner of the battlefield. No one can yet estimate the possible strength of reaction against world unification; no one can foresee the extent of the divisions and confusions that may arise among ourselves. The ideas in this book may spread about without any serious resistance in most civilized countries, but there are still governments under which the persistent expression of such thoughts will be dealt with as crimes and bring men and women to prison, torment, and death. Nevertheless, they must be expressed.

While the Open Conspiracy is no more than a discussion it may spread unopposed because it is disregarded. As a mainly passive resistance to militarism it may still be tolerable. But as its knowledge and experience accumulate and its organization become more effective and aggressive, as it begins to lay hands upon education, upon social habits, upon business developments, as it proceeds to take over the organization of the community, it will marshal not only its own forces but its enemies. A complex of interests will find themselves restrained and threatened by it, and it may easily evoke that most dangerous of human mass feelings, fear. In ways quite unpredictable it may raise a storm against itself beyond all our present imaginings. Our conception of an almost bloodless domination of the Atlantic communities may be merely the confident dream of a thinker whose thoughts have yet to be squarely challenged.

We are not even sure of the common peace. Across the path of mankind the storm of another Great War may break, bringing with it for a time more brutal repressions and vaster injuries even than its predecessor. The scaffoldings and work sheds of the Open Conspiracy may fare violently in that tornado. The restoration of progress may seem an almost hopeless struggle.

It is no part of modern religion to incur needless hardship or go

out of the way to seek martyrdom. If we can do our work easily and happily, so it should be done. But the work is not to be shirked because it cannot be done easily and happily. The vision of a world at peace and liberated for an unending growth of knowledge and power is worth every danger of the way. And since in this age of confusion we must live imperfectly and anyhow die, we may as well suffer, if need be, and die for a great end as for none. Never has the translation of vision into realities been easy since the beginning of human effort. The establishment of the world community will surely exact a price — and who can tell what that price may be? — in toil, suffering, and blood.

XIX. — HUMAN LIFE IN THE COMING WORLD COMMUNITY

THE new life that the Open Conspiracy struggles to achieve through us for our race is first a life of liberations.

The oppression of incessant toil can surely be lifted from everyone, and the miseries due to a great multitude of infections and disorders of nutrition and growth cease to be a part of human experience. Few people are perfectly healthy nowadays except for brief periods of happiness, but the elation of physical well-being will some day be the common lot of mankind.

And not only from natural evils will man be largely free. He will not be left with his soul tangled, haunted by monstrous and irrational fears and a prey to malicious impulse. From his birth he will breathe sweetness and generosity and use his mind and hands cleanly and exactly. He will feel better, will better, think better, see, taste, and hear better than men do now. His undersoul will no longer be a mutinous cavern of ill-treated suppressions and of impulses repressed without understanding. All these releases are plainly possible for him. They pass out of his tormented desire now, they elude and mock him, because chance, confusion, and squalor rule his life. All the gifts of destiny are overlaid and lost to him. He must still suspect and fear. Not one of us is yet as clear and free and happy within himself as most men will some day be. Before mankind lies the prospect not only of health but of magnanimity.

Within the peace and freedom that the Open Conspiracy is winning for us, all these good things that escape us now may be ensured. A graver humanity, stronger, more lovely, longer lived, will learn and develop the ever enlarging possibilities of its destiny. For the first time, the full beauty of this world will be revealed to its unhurried eyes. Its thoughts will be to our thoughts as the thoughts of a man to the troubled mental experimenting of a child. And all the best of us will be living on in that ampler life, as the child and the things it tried and learnt still live in the man. When we were children, we could not think or feel as we think and feel to-day, but to-day we

can peer back and still recall something of the ignorances and guesses and wild hopes of these nigh forgotten years.

And so mankind, ourselves still living, but dispersed and reconstructed again in the future, will recall with affection and understanding the desperate wishes and troubled efforts of our present state.

How far can we anticipate the habitations and ways, the usages and adventures, the mighty employments, the ever increasing knowledge and power of the days to come? No more than a child with its scribbling paper and its box of bricks can picture or model the undertakings of its adult years. Our battle is with cruelties and frustrations, stupid, heavy and hateful things from which we shall escape at last, less like victors conquering a world than like sleepers awaking from a nightmare in the dawn. From any dream, however dismal and horrible, one can escape by realizing that it is a dream; by saying, “I will awake.”

The Open Conspiracy is the awaking of mankind from a nightmare, an infantile nightmare, of the struggle for existence and the inevitability of war. The light of day thrusts between our eyelids, and the multitudinous sounds of morning clamour in our ears. A time will come when men will sit with history before them or with some old newspaper before them and ask incredulously, “Was there ever such a world?”

THE END

WORLD BRAIN

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PREFACE

THE papers and addresses I have collected in this little book are submitted as contributions, however informal, to what is essentially a scientific research. But it is a research in a field to which scientific standing is not generally accorded and where peculiar methods have to be employed. It is in the field of constructive sociology, the science of social organisation. This is a special sub-section of human ecology, which is a branch of general ecology, which again is a stem in the great and growing cluster of biological sciences. It stands with palaeontology at the opposite pole to experimental biology; hardly any verificatory experiment is possible and no controls. It is a science of pure observation, therefore, of analysis and of search for confirmatory instances. On the one hand it passes, without crossing any definite boundaries, into historical science proper, into the analysis of historical fact, that is, and on the other into the examination of such matters as geographical (and geological) conditions and the social consequences of industrial processes.

Human ecology surveys the species *Homo sapiens* as a whole in space and time; sociology is that part of the survey which concerns itself with the interaction and interdependence of human groups and individuals. It is hardly to be distinguished from social psychology. There has been an enormous increase in the intensity and scope of human interaction and interdependence during the past half-million years or more. Communities and what one may call ranges of reaction, have enlarged and continue to enlarge more and more rapidly towards a planetary limit. The human intelligence is involved in this enlargement and it is too deeply concerned with its role in the process, to observe it with the detachment it can maintain towards the facts, for example, of astronomy or crystallography. Constructive sociology has to bring not only the study of conduct but an irresistible element of purpose into its problems. Human beings are not simply born or thrown together into association like a swarm of herrings. They keep together with a sense of collective activities and common ends, even if these ends are little more than mutual aid, protection and defence.

Throughout the whole range of ecology we study the adaptation of living species to changing environments, but outside the human experience these adaptations are generally made unconsciously by the natural selection of mutations and variations. These adaptations are inherited. They are either successful and the species is modified and survives, or it perishes. In the cerebral animals, however, natural selection is supplemented by very considerable individual adaptability. Memories and habits are established in each generation which fit individuals to the special circumstances of their own generation. They are adaptations which perish with the individual. Such creatures learn; they are educable creatures; dogs, cats, seals, elephants for example learn and the next generation has, if necessary, to learn the old lesson all over again or a different lesson. In the human being there is an unprecedented extension of educability; not only is learning developed to relatively immense proportions, but it is further supplemented by curiosity, precept and tradition. In such a slow-breeding creature as man educational adaptation is, beyond all comparison, a swifter process than genetic adaptation. His social life, his habits, have changed completely, have even undergone reversion and reversal, while his heredity seems to have changed very little if at all, since the late Stone Age. Possibly he is more educable now and with a more prolonged physical and mental adolescence.

The human individual is born now to live in a society for which his fundamental instincts are altogether inadequate. He has to be educated systematically for his social role. The social man is a manufactured product of which the natural man is the raw nucleus. In a world of fluctuating and generally expanding communities and ranges of reaction, the science of constructive sociology seeks to detect and give definition to the trends and requirements of man's social circumstances and to study the possibilities and methods of adapting the natural man to them. It is the science of current adaptations. It has therefore two reciprocal aspects; on the one hand it has to deal with social organisations, laws, customs and regulations, which may either be actually operative or merely projected and potential, and on the other hand it has to examine the education these real or proposed social organisations require. These two aspects are inseparable, they need to fit like hand and glove.

Plans and theories of social structure and plans and theories of education are the outer and inner aspects of the same thing. Each necessitates the other. Every social order must have its own distinctive process of education.

In the past this imperative association of education and social structure was not recognised so clearly as it is at the present time. Communities would grow up and not change their mental clothes until they burst out of them. Ideas would change and disorganise institutions. For the past twenty-six centuries, and particularly, and much more definitely, during the last three, there has been a very great expenditure of mental energy upon the statement in various terms and metaphors, as theologies, as religions, socialisms, communisms, devotions, loyalties, codes of behaviour and so on, of the desirable and necessary form of human adaptation to new conditions of association. From the point of view of constructive sociology, or to coin a hideous phrase, human adaptology, all these efforts, although not deliberately made as experiments, are so much experience and working material, and though almost all of them have involved special teachings (doctrines) the need for a close interlocking of training and teaching with the social order sought, though always fairly obvious, has never been so fully realised as it is today. The new doctrines were often only subconsciously linked to the new needs. The idea, for instance, of a universal God replacing local gods ensued upon the growth of great empires, but it was not explicitly related to the growth of great empires. The connection was not plainly apparent to men's minds. In the looser, easier past of our species, there has never been such a close interweaving of current usage and practices with instruction and precept as we are now beginning to feel desirable. The reference of one to the other was not direct. Now education becomes more and more definitely political and economic. It must penetrate deeper and deeper into life as life ceases to be customary and grows more and more deliberately planned and adjusted. The need for lively and continuous invention in constructive sociology and for an animated and animating progressive education correlated with these innovations, has hardly more than dawned on the world. The urgency of adaptation has still to be grasped.

Throughout the nineteenth century certain systems of adaptive ideas spread throughout the world to meet the requirements of what was recognised with increasing understanding as a new age. Mechanism was altering both the fundamental need for toil and the essential nature of war. The practical and cynically accepted need for labouring classes and subject-peoples, was dissolving quietly out of human thought — though it still exists in the minds of those who employ personal servants. Means of intercommunication and mutual help and injury have developed amazingly. A mechanical unification of the world has been demanding (and still demands) profound moral and ideological readjustments. It is, for example, being realised, slowly but steadily, that the fragmentary control of production and trade through irresponsible individual ownership gives quite lamentably inadequate results, that the whole property-money system needs revision very urgently, and that the belated recrudescence of sentimental nationalism largely through misguided school-teaching and newspaper propaganda, is becoming an increasing menace to world welfare. The old ideological equipments throughout the world are misfits everywhere. Mental and moral adaptation is lagging dreadfully behind the change in our conditions. A great and menacing gulf opens which only an immense expansion of teaching and instruction can fill.

In the field of sociology it is impossible to disentangle social analysis from literature, and the criticism of the social order by Ruskin, William Morris and so forth was at least as much a contribution to social science as Herbert Spencer's quasi-scientific defence of individualism and the abstractions and dogmas of the political economists. The biological sciences did not spread very easily into this undeveloped region. It was a hinterland of novel problems and possibilities. Even today proper methods of study in this field have still to be fully worked out and brought into association. It has had to be explored by moral and religious appeals, by utopias and speculative writings of a quality and texture. very unsatisfying to scientific workers in more definite fields. It is still subject to irruptions of a type that the normal scientist of today finds highly questionable. Poets even and seers have their role in this experimentation. But economics and sociology can only be made

hard sciences by eliminating much of their living content. Knowledge has to be attained by any available means. Inquirers cannot be limited to passable imitations of the methods followed in other fields. It may be doubted if constructive sociology and educational science can ever be freed from a certain literary, aesthetic and ethical flavouring. We have to assume certain desiderata before we can get down to effective, applicable work. Yet it does seem possible to state the problem of adaptation in practical scientific terms.

It was not realised at first, and it is still not fully realised, how vague and unsuitable for immediate application the generous propositions of Socialism and World Peace remain, until further intensive and continuous research and elaboration have been undertaken. It is widely assumed that to profess Socialism or Pacifism implies the immediate undertaking of vehement political activities unencumbered by further thought. But the profession of Socialism or World Peace should commit a man to nothing of the sort. Socialism and World Peace are hardly more than sketches of the general frame of adaptation of which our species stands in need. "We are all socialists nowadays," but all the same there is very little really efficient working socialism.

"All men are brothers " — we have echoed that since the days of Buddha and Christ — but Spain and China are poor evidence of that fraternity. We know we want these things quite clearly, but we have still to learn how they are to be got.

Man reflects before he acts, but not very much; he is still by nature intellectually impatient. No sooner does he apprehend, in whole or in part, the need of a new world, than, without further plans or estimates, he gem into a state of passionate aggressiveness and suspicion and sets about trying to change the present order. There and then, he sets about it, with anything that comes handy, violently, disastrously, making the discordances worse instead of better, and quarrelling bitterly with any one who is not in complete accordance with his particular spasmodic conception of the change needful. He is unable to realise that when the time comes I to act, that also is the time to think fast and hard. He will not think enough.

There has been, therefore, an enormous waste of human mental,

moral and physical resources in premature revolutionary thrusts, ill-planned, dogmatic, essentially unscientific reconstructions and restorations of the social order, during the past hundred years. This was the inevitable first result of the discrediting of those old and superseded mental adaptations which were embodied in the institutions and education of the past. They discredited themselves and left the world full of problems. The idea of expropriating the owners of land and industrial plant, for instance (Socialism), long preceded any deliberate attempt to create a Competent Receiver. Hysterical objection to further research, to any sustained criticism, has been, and is still characteristic of nearly all the pseudo-constructive movements of our time, culminating in projects for a "seizure of power" by some presumptuous oaf or other. The meanest thing in human natures is the fear of responsibility and the craving for leadership. "Right" dictators there are and "Left" dictators, and in effect there is hardly a pin to choose between them. The important thing about them from our present point of view, is that fear-saturated impatience for guidance, which renders dictatorships possible. First there comes a terrifying realisation of the limitless uncontrolled changes now in progress, then wild stampedes, suspicions, mass murders and finally *mus ridiculus* the Hero emerges, a poor single, silly, little human cranium held high and adorned usually with something preposterous in the way of hats. "He knows," they cry. "Hail the Leader!" He acts his part; he may even believe in it. And for quite a long time the crowd will refuse to realise that not only is nothing better than it was before, but that change is still marching on and marching at it — as inexorably as though there were no Leaders on the scene at all. Between the extremes of Right and Left hysteria, there remains a great under-developed region in the world of political thought and will, that we may characterise as "do-nothing democracy ". Out of the sudden realisation of its do-nothingness arise these psychological storms which give gangster dictators their opportunities. It is only gradually that people have come to realise that current democratic institutions are a very poor, slow and slack method of conducting human affairs which need an exhaustive revision, and that when one has declared oneself Anti-Fascist, Anti-Communist or both, one has still said

precisely nothing about the government of the world. One is brought back to the unsolved problem of the Competent Receiver. It exercised Plato. It has been intermittently revived and neglected ever since.

It is an intricate and difficult problem. To that I can testify because for more than half my life it has been my main preoccupation. The attack on this problem is, to begin with, a task to be done in the study and in the unhurried and irresponsible spirit of pure inquiry. As the attack gathers confidence a taint of propaganda may easily infect it, but the less that constructive sociology is propagandist, the higher will be its scientific standing and the greater its ultimate usefulness to mankind. The application of the results of its researches is another business altogether, the business of the statesman, organiser and practical administrator. And in spite of the paucity of disinterested explorers in this region of speculation and analysis, and in spite of the lack of effective discussion and interchange in this field (due mainly, I think, to the inadequate recognition of its immense scientific importance which forces its workers so often into a hampering association with politically active bodies) there does seem to be a growing and spreading clarification of the realities of the human situation. It is becoming apparent that the real clue to that reconciliation of freedom and sustained initiative with the more elaborate social organisation which is being demanded from us, lies in raising and unifying, and so implementing and making more effective, the general intelligence services of the world. That at least is the argument in this book. The missing factor in human airs, it is suggested here, is a gigantic and many-sided educational renascence. The highly educated section, the finer minds of the human race are so dispersed, so ineffectively related to the common man, that they are powerless in the face of political and social adventurers of the coarsest sort. We want a reconditioned and more powerful Public Opinion. In a universal organisation and clarification of knowledge and ideas, in a closer synthesis of university and educational activities, in the evocation, that is, of what I have here called a World Brain, operating by an enhanced educational system through the whole body of mankind, a World Brain which will replace our multitude of unco-ordinated ganglia, our powerless miscellany of

universities, research institutions, literatures with a purpose, national educational systems and the like; in that and in that alone, it is maintained, is there any clear hope of a really Competent Receiver for world affairs, any hope of an adequate directive control of the present destructive drift of world affairs. We do not want dictators, we do not want oligarchic parties or class rule, we want a widespread world intelligence conscious of itself To work out a way to that World Brain organisation is therefore our primary need in this age of imperative construction.

It is an immense undertaking but not an impossible undertaking. I do not think there is any insurmountable obstacle in the way to the production of such a ruling World Brain. There are favourable conditions for it, encouraging precedents and a plainly evident need. The various lectures, addresses and papers, collected here, few, thin and sketchy though they may seem, are all in their scope and measure contributions to this urgent research.

H.G. Wells

I. — WORLD ENCYCLOPAEDIA

Lecture delivered at the weekly evening meeting of the. Royal Institution of Great Britain, November 20th, 1936

MOST of the lectures that are given in this place to this audience are delivered by men of very special knowledge. They come here to tell you something you did not know before. But tonight I doubt if I shall tell you anything that is not already quite familiar to you. I am here not to impart facts but to make certain suggestions. And there is no other audience in the world to which I would make these suggestions more willingly and more hopefully than I do to you.

My particular line of country has always been generalisation and synthesis. I dislike isolated events and disconnected details. I really hate statements, views, prejudices and beliefs that jump at you suddenly out of mid-air. I like my world as coherent and consistent as possible. So far at any rate my temperament is that of a scientific man. And that is why I have spent a few score thousand hours of my particular allotment of vitality in making outlines of history, short histories of the world, general accounts of the science of life, attempts to bring economic, financial and social life into one conspectus and even, still more desperate, struggles to estimate the possible consequences of this or that set of operating causes upon the future of mankind. All these attempts had profound and conspicuous faults and weaknesses; even my friends are apt to mention them with an apologetic smile; presumptuous and preposterous they were, I admit, but I look back upon them, completely unabashed. Somebody had to break the ice. Somebody had to try out such summaries on the general mind. My reply to the superior critic has always been — forgive me— “Damn you, do it better”.

The least satisfactory thing about these experiments of mine, so far as I am concerned, is that they did not at once provoke the learned and competent to produce superior substitutes. And in view of the number of able and distinguished people we have in the world professing and teaching economic, sociological, financial science, and the admittedly unsatisfactory nature of the world’s financial,

economic and political affairs, it is to me an immensely disconcerting fact that the Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind which was first published in 1932 remains — practically uncriticised, unstudied and largely unread — the only attempt to bring human ecology into one correlated survey.

Well, I mention this experimental work now in order that you should not think I am throwing casually formed ideas before you tonight. I am bringing you my best. The thoughts I am setting out here have troubled my mind for years, and my ideas have been slowly gathering definition throughout these experiments and experiences. They have interwoven more and more intimately with other solicitudes of a more general nature in which I feel fairly certain of meeting your understanding and sympathy.

I doubt if there is anybody here tonight who has not given a certain amount of anxious thought to the conspicuous ineffectiveness of modern knowledge and — how do I call it? — trained and studied thought in contemporary affairs. And I think that it is mainly in the troubled years since 1914 that the world of cultivated, learned and scientific people of which you are so representative, has become conscious of this ineffectiveness. Before that time, or to be more precise before 1909 or 1910, the world, our world as we older ones recall it, was living in a state of confidence, of established values, of assured security, which is already becoming now almost incredible. We had no suspicion then how much that apparent security had been undermined by science, invention and sceptical inquiry. Most of us carried on into the War, and even right through the War, under the inertia of the accepted beliefs to which we had been born. We felt that the sort of history that we were used to was still going on, and we hardly realised at all that the war was a new sort of thing, not like the old wars, that the old traditions of strategy were disastrously out of date, and that the old pattern of settling up after a war could only lead to such a thickening tangle of evil consequences as we contemplate today. We know better now.

Wiser after the events as we all are, few of us now fail to appreciate the stupendous ignorance, the almost total lack of grasp of social and economic realities, the short views, the shallowness of mind, that characterised the treaty-making of 1919 and 1920. I

suppose Mr. Maynard Keynes was one of the first to open our eyes to this worldwide intellectual insufficiency. What his book, The Economic Consequences of the Peace, practically said to the world was this: These people, these politicians, these statesmen, these directive people who are in authority over us, know scarcely anything about the business they have in hand. Nobody knows very much, but the important thing to realise is that they do not even know what is to he known. They arrange so and so, and so and so must ensue and they cannot or will not see that so and so must ensue. They are so unaccustomed to competent thought, so ignorant that there is knowledge and of what knowledge is, that they do not understand that it matters.

The same terrifying sense of insufficient mental equipment was dawning upon some of us who watched the birth of the League of Nations. Reluctantly and with something like horror, we realised that these people who were, they imagined, turning over a new page and beginning a fresh chapter in human history, knew collectively hardly anything about the formative forces of history. Collectively, I say. Altogether they had a very considerable amount of knowledge, unco-ordinated bits of quite good knowledge, some about this period and some about that, but they had no common understanding whatever of the processes in which they were obliged to mingle and interfere. Possibly all the knowledge and all the directive ideas needed to establish a wise and stable settlement of the world's affairs in 1919 existed in bits and fragments, here and there, but practically nothing had been assembled, practically nothing had been thought out, nothing practically had been done to draw that knowledge and these ideas together into a comprehensive conception of the world. I Put it to you that the Peace Conference at Versailles did not use anything but a very small fraction of the political and economic wisdom that already existed in human brains at that time. And I put it to you as rational creatures that if usage had not chilled our apprehension to this state of affairs, we should regard this as fantastically absurd.

And if I might attempt a sweeping generalisation about the general course of human history in the eighteen years that have followed the War, I believe I should have you with me if I described it as a series of flounderings, violent ill-directed mass-movements,

slack here and convulsive action there. We talk about the dignity of history. It is a bookish phrase for which I have the extremest disrespect. There is no dignity yet in human history. It would be pure comedy, if it were not so often tragic, so frequently dismal, generally dishonourable and occasionally quite horrible. And it is so largely tragic because the creature really is intelligent, can feel finely and acutely, expresses itself poignantly in art, music and literature, and — this is what I am driving at — impotently knows better.

Consider only the case of America during this recent period. America when all is said and done, is one of the most intelligently aware communities in the world. Quite a number of people over there seem almost to know what is happening to them. Remember first the phase of fatuous self-sufficiency, the period of unprecedented prosperity, the boom, the crisis, the slump and the dismay. And then appeared the new President, Franklin Roosevelt, and from the point of view of the present discussion he is one of the most interesting figures in all history. Because he really did make an appeal for such knowledge and understanding as existed to come to his aid. America in an astounding state of meekness was ready to be told and shown. There were the universities, great schools, galaxies of authorities, learned men, experts, teachers, gowned, adorned and splendid. Out of this knowledge mass there have since come many very trenchant criticisms of the President's mistakes. But at the time this — what shall I call it — this higher brain, this cerebrum, this grey matter of America was so entirely unco-ordinated that it had nothing really comprehensive, searching, thought-out and trustworthy for him to go upon. The President had to experiment and attempt this and that, he fumed from one promising adviser to another, because there was nothing ready for him. He did not pretend to be a divinity. He was a politician of exceptional good-will. He was none of your dictator gods. He showed himself extremely open and receptive for the organised information and guidance... that wasn't there.

And it isn't there now.

Some years ago there was a considerable fuss in the world about preparedness and unpreparedness. Most of that clamour concerned the possibility of war. But this was a case of a most fantastic

unpreparedness on the part of hundreds of eminent men, who were supposed to have studied them, for the normal developments of a community in times of peace. There had been no attempt to assemble that mechanism of knowledge of which America stood in need.

I repeat that if usage had not drilled us into a sort of acquiescence, we should think our species collectively insane to go about its business in this haphazard, planless, negligent fashion.

I think I have said enough to recall to any one here, who may have lapsed from the keen apprehension of his first realisation, this wide gap between what I may call the at present unassembled and unexploited best thought and knowledge in the world, and the ideas and acts not simply of the masses of common people, but of those who direct public affairs, the dictators, the leaders, the politicians, the newspaper directors and the spiritual guides and teachers. We live in a world of unused and misapplied knowledge and skill. That is my ease. Knowledge and thought are ineffective. The human species as a whole is extraordinarily like a man of the best order of brain, who through some lesions or defects or insufficiencies of his lower centres, suffers from the wildest unco-ordinations; St. Vitus's dance, agraphobia, aphonia, and suffers dreadfully (knowing better all the time) from the silly and disastrous gestures he makes and the foolish things he says and does.

I don't think this has ever been so evident as it is now. I doubt if in the past the gap was so wide as it is now between the occasions that confront us, and the knowledge we have assembled to meet them. But because of a certain run of luck in the late nineteenth century, the existence of that widening gap and the menace of that widening gap, was not thrust upon our attention as it has been since the war.

At first that realisation of the ineffectiveness of our best thought and knowledge struck only a few people, like Mr. Maynard Keynes for example, who were in what I may call salient positions, but gradually I have noted the realisation spreading and growing. It takes various forms. Prominent men of science speak more and more frequently of the responsibility of science for the disorder of the world. And if you are familiar with that most admirable of all newspapers, *Nature*, and if you care to turn over the files of that very

representative weekly for the past quarter of a century or so and sample the articles, you will observe a very remarkable change of note and scope in what it has to say to its readers. Time was when Nature was almost pedantically special and scientific. Its detachment from politics and general affairs was complete. But latterly the concussions of the social earthquake and the vibration of the guns have become increasingly perceptible in the laboratories. Nature from being specialist has become world — conscious, so that now it is almost haunted week by week by the question: "What are we to do before it is too late, to make what we know and our way of thinking effective in world affairs?" In that I think it is expressing a change which is happening in the minds of — if I may presume to class myself with you — nearly all people of the sort which fills this theatre tonight.

And consider again the topics that have been dealt with at the latest gathering of the British Association. The very title of the Presidential Address: "The Impact of Science upon Society." Sir Josiah Stamp, as you will remember, stressed the need of extending endowment and multiplying workers in the social sciences. Professor Philip dealt with "The Training of the Chemist for the Service of the Community." Professor Cramp talked of "The Engineer and the Nation," and there was an important discussion of "The Cultural and Social Values of Science" in which Sir Richard Gregory, Professor Hogben and Sir Daniel Hall said some memorable things. There can be no doubt of the reality of this awakening of the scientific worker to the necessity of his becoming a definitely organised factor in the social scheme of the years before us.

Well, so far I have been merely opening up my subject and stating the problem for consideration. We want the intellectual worker to become a more definitely organised factor in the human scheme. How is that factor to be organised? Is there any way of implementing knowledge for ready and universal effect? I ask you to examine the question whether this great and growing gap of which we are becoming so acutely aware, between special knowledge and thought and the common ideas and motives of mankind can be bridged, and if so how it can be bridged. Can scientific knowledge and specialised thought be brought into more effective relation to general affairs?

Q: — Let us consider first what is actually going on. I find among my uneasy scientific and specialist friends a certain disposition — and I think it is a mistaken disposition — for direct political action and special political representation. The scientific and literary workers of the days when I was a young man were either indifferent or conservative in politics, nowadays quite a large proportion of them are inclined to active participation in extremist movements; many are leftish and revolutionary, some accept the strange pseudo-scientific dogmas of the Communist party, though that does no credit to their critical training, and even those who are not out on the left are restless for some way of intervening, definitely as a class, in the general happenings of the community. Their ideas of possible action vary from important-looking signed pronouncements and protests to a sort of strike against war, the withholding of services and the refusal I to assist in technical developments that may be misapplied. Some favour the idea of a gradual supersession of the political forms and methods of mass democracy by government through some sort of elite, in which the man of science and the technician will play a dominating part. There are very large vague patches upon this ¤ idea, but the general projection is in the form of a sort of modern priesthood, an oligarchy of professors and exceptionally competent people. Like Plato they would make the philosopher king. This project involves certain assumptions about the general quality and superiority of the intellectual worker that I am afraid will not stand scrutiny.

I submit that sort of thing — political activities, party intervention and dreams of an authoritative élite — is not the way in which specialists, artists and specialised thinkers and workers who constitute the vital feeling and understanding of the body politic can be brought into a conscious, effective, guiding and directive relationship to the control of human affairs. Because — I hope you will acquit me of any disrespect for science and) philosophy when I say this — we have to face the fact that from the point of view of general living, men of science, artists, philosophers, specialised intelligences of any sort, do not constitute an elite that can be mobilised for collective action. They are an extraordinarily miscellaneous assembly, and their most remarkable common quality

is the quality of concentration in comparative retirement, each along his own line. They have none of the solidarity, the customary savoir faire, the habits arising out of practices, activities and interests in common that lawyers, doctors or any of the really socially organised professions for instance display. A professor-ridden world might prove as unsatisfactory under the stress of modern life and fluctuating conditions as a theologian-ridden world. A distinguished specialist is precious because of his cultivated gift. It does not follow at all that by the standards of all-round necessity he is a superior person. Indeed by the very fact of his specialisation he may be less practised and competent than the average man. He probably does not read his newspaper so earnestly, he finds much of the common round a bother and a distraction and he puts it out of his mind. I think we should get the very gist of this problem if we could compare twelve miscellaneous men of science and special skill, with twelve unspecialised men taken — let us say — from the head clerk's morning train to the city. We should probably find that for commonplace team-work and the ordinary demands and sudden urgencies of life, the 2nd dozen was individually quite as good as, if not better than, the first dozen. In a burning hotel or cast away on a desert island they would probably do quite as well. And yet collectively they would be limited men; the whole dozen of them would have nothing much more to tell you than any one of them. On the other hand our dozen specialists would each have something distinctive to tell you. The former group would be almost as uniform in their knowledge and ability as tiles on a roof; the latter would be like pieces from a complicated jig-saw puzzle. The more you got them together the more they would signify. Twelve clerks or a hundred clerks; it wouldn't matter; you would get nothing but dull repetitions and a flat acquiescent suggestible outlook upon life. But every specialised man we added would be adding something to the directive pattern of life. I think that consideration takes us a step further in defining our problem tonight.

It is science and not men of science that we want to enlighten and animate our politics and rule the world. And now I will take rather a stride forward in my argument. I will introduce a phrase New Encyclopaedism which I shall spend most of the rest of my time

defining. I want to suggest that something — a new social organ, a new institution — which for a time I shall call World Encyclopaedia, is the means whereby we can solve the problem of that jig-saw puzzle and bring all the scattered and ineffective mental wealth of our world into something like a common understanding, and into effective reaction upon our vulgar everyday political, social and economic life. I warn you that I am flinging moderation to the winds in the suggestions I am about to put before you. They are immense suggestions. I am sketching what is really a scheme for the reorganisation and reorientation of education and information throughout the world. No less. We are so accustomed to the existing schools, colleges, universities, research organisations of the world; they have so moulded and made us and trained us from our earliest years to respect and believe in them; that it is with a real feeling of temerity, of a matricidal impiety, so to speak, that I have allowed my mind to explore their merits and question whether they are not now altogether an extraordinarily loose, weak and out-of-date miscellany. Yet I do not see how we can admit, and I am disposed to think you have admitted with me, the existence of this terrifying gap between available knowledge and current social and political events, and not go on to something like an indictment of this whole great world of academic erudition, training and instruction from China to Peru — an indictment for, at least, inadequacy and unco- ordination if not for actual negligence. It may be only a temporary inadequacy, a pause in development before renascence, but inadequate altogether they are. Universities have multiplied greatly, yes, but they have failed to participate in the general advance in power, scope and efficiency that has occurred in the past century.

In transport we have progressed from coaches and horses by way of trains to electric traction, motor-cars and aeroplanes. In mental organisation we have simply multiplied our coaches and horses and livery stables. Let me now try to picture for you this missing element in the modern human social mechanism, this needed connection between the percipient and informative parts and the power organisation for which I am using this phrase, World Encyclopaedia. And I will take it first from the point of view of the ordinary educated citizen — for in a completely modernised state every

ordinary man will be an educated citizen. I will ask you to imagine how this World Encyclopaedia organisation would enter into his life and how it would affect him. From his point of view the World Encyclopaedia would be a row of volumes in his own home or in some neighbouring house or in a convenient public library or in any school or college, and in this row of volumes he would, without any great toil or difficulty, find in clear understandable language, and kept up to date, the ruling concepts of our social order, the outlines and main particulars in all fields of knowledge, an exact and reasonably detailed picture of our universe, a general history of the world, and if by any chance he wanted to pursue a question into its ultimate detail, a trustworthy and complete system of reference to primary sources of knowledge. In fields where wide varieties of method and opinion existed, he would find, not casual summaries of opinions, hut very carefully chosen and correlated statements and arguments. I do not imagine the major subjects as being dealt with in special articles rather hastily written, in what has been the tradition of Encyclopaedias since the days of Diderot's heroic effort. Our present circumstances are altogether different from his. Nowadays there is an immense literature of statement and explanation scattered through tens of thousands of books, pamphlets and papers, and it is not necessary, it is undesirable, to trust to such hurried summaries as the old tradition was obliged to make for its use. The day when an energetic journalist could gather together a few star contributors and a miscellany of compilers of very uneven quality to scribble him special articles, often tainted with propaganda and advertisement, and call it an Encyclopaedia, is past. The modern World Encyclopaedia should consist of selections, extracts, quotations, very carefully assembled with the approval of outstanding authorities in each subject, carefully collated and edited and critically presented. It would be not a miscellany, but a concentration, a clarification and a synthesis. This World Encyclopaedia would be the mental background of every intelligent man in the world. It would be alive and growing and changing continually under revision, extension and replacement from the original thinkers in the world everywhere. Every university and research institution should be feeding it. Every fresh mind should be brought into contact with its standing editorial

organisation. And on the other hand its contents would be the standard source of material for the instructional side of school and college work, for the verification of facts and the testing of statements — everywhere in the world. Even journalists would deign to use it; even newspaper proprietors might be made to respect it.

Such an Encyclopaedia would play the role of an undogmatic Bible to a world culture. It would do just what our scattered and disoriented intellectual organisations of today fall short of doing. It would hold the world together mentally.

It may be objected that this is a Utopian dream. This is something too great to achieve, too good to be true. I won't deal with that for a few minutes. Flying was a Utopian dream a third of a century ago. What I am putting before you is a perfectly sane, sound and practicable proposal.

But first I will notice briefly two objections — obstructions rather than objections — that one will certainly encounter at this point.

One of these is not likely to appear in any great force in this gathering. You have all heard and you have all probably been irritated or bored by the assertion that no two people think alike, *"quot homines, tot sententiae"*, that science is always contradicting itself, that theologians and economists can never agree. It is largely mental laziness on the defensive that makes people say this kind of thing. They don't want their intimate convictions turned over and examined and it is unfortunate that the emphasis put upon minor differences by men of science and belief in their strenuous search for the completest truth and the exactest expression sometimes gives colour to this sort of misunderstanding. But I am inclined to think that most people overrate the apparent differences in the world of opinion today. Even in theology a psychological analysis reduces many flat contradictions to differences in terminology. My impression is that human brains are very much of a pattern, that under the same conditions they react in the same way, and that were it not for tradition, upbringing, accidents of circumstance and particularly of accidental individual obsessions, we should find ourselves — since we all face the same universe — much more in agreement than is superficially apparent. We speak different languages and dialects of thought and can even at times catch

ourselves flatly contradicting each other in words while we are doing our utmost to express the same idea. And self-love and personal vanity are not excluded from the intellectual life. How often do we sec men misrepresenting each other in order to exaggerate a difference and secure the gratification of an argumentative victory! A World Encyclopaedia as I conceive it would bring together into close juxtaposition and under critical scrutiny many apparently conflicting systems of statement. It might act not merely as an assembly of fact and statement, but as an organ of adjustment and adjudication, a clearing house of misunderstandings; it would be deliberately a synthesis, and so act as a [test] and a filter for a very great quantity of human misapprehension. It would compel men to come to terms with one another. I think it would relegate *"quot homines, tot sententiae"* back to the Latin comedy from which it emerged.

The second type of obstruction that this idea of a World Encyclopaedia will encounter is even less likely to find many representatives in the present gathering and I will give it only the briefest of attention. (You know that kind of neuralgic expression, the high protesting voice, the fluttering gesture of the hands.) But you want to stereotype people. What a dreadful, dreadful world it will be when everybody thinks alike " — and so they go on. Most of these elegant people who want the world picturesquely at sixes and sevens are hopeless cases, but for the milder instances it may be worth while remarking that it really does not enhance the natural variety and beauty of life to have all the clocks in a town keeping individual times of their own, no charts of the sea, no timetables, but trains starting secretly to unspecified destinations, infectious diseases without notification and postmen calling occasionally when they can get by the picturesque footpads at the corner. I like order in the place of vermin, I prefer a garden to a swamp and the whole various world to a hole-and-corner life in some obscure community, and tonight I like to imagine I am making my appeal to hearers of a kindred disposition to my own. And next let us take this World Encyclopaedia from the point of view of the specialist and the super-intellectual. To him even more than to the common intelligent man World Encyclopaedia is going to be of value because it is going to afford him an intelligible statement of what is being done by workers

parallel with himself. And further it will be giving him the general statement of 4 his own subject that is being made to the world at large. He can watch that closely. On the assumption that the World Encyclopaedia is based on a world-wide organisation he will be — if he is a worker of any standing — a corresponding associate of the Encyclopaedia organisation. He will be able to criticise the presentation of his subject, to suggest amendments and re-statements. For a World Encyclopaedia that was kept alive and up to date by the frequent re-issue of its volumes, could be made the basis of much fundamental discussion and controversy. It might breed swarms of pamphlets, and very wholesome swarms. It would give the specialist just that contact with the world at large which at present is merely caricatured by more or less elementary class teaching, amateurish examination work and college administrations. In my dream of a World Encyclopaedia I have a feeling that part of the scheme would be the replacement of the latter group of professional activities, the college business, tutoring, normal lecturing work and so on, by a new set of activities, the encyclopaedic work, the watching brief to prevent the corruption of the popular mind. In enlightening the general mind the specialist will broaden himself. He will be redeemed from oddity, from shy preciousness and practical futility. Well, you begin to see the shape of this project. And you will realise that it is far away from anything like the valiant enterprise of Denis Diderot and his associates a century and a half ago, except in so far as the nature of its reaction upon the world's affairs is concerned. That extraordinary adventure in intellectual synthesis makes this dream credible. That is our chief connection with it. And here I have to make an incidental disavowal. I want to make it clear how little I have to do with what I am now discussing. In order to get some talk going upon this idea of an Encyclopaedia, I have been circulating a short memorandum upon the subject among a number of friends. I did not think to mark it Private, and unhappily one copy seems to have fallen into the hands of one of those minor pests of our time, a personal journalist, who at once rushed into print with the announcement that I was proposing to write a brand new Encyclopaedia, all with my own little hand out of my own little head. At the age of seventy l Once a thing of this sort is started there is no

stopping it — and I admit that announcement put me in my place in a pleasantly ridiculous light. But I think after what I have put before you now that you will acquit me of any such colossal ambition. I implore you not to let that touch of personal absurdity belittle the greatness and urgency of the cause I am pleading. This Encyclopaedia I am thinking of is something in which manifestly I have neither the equipment nor the quality to play any but an infinitesimal part. I am asking for it in the role of a common intelligent man who needs it and understands the need for it, both for himself and his world. After that you can leave me out of it. It is just because in the past I have had some experience in the assembling of outlines of knowledge for popular use that I realise, perhaps better than most people, the ineffectiveness of this sort of effort on the part of individuals or small groups. It is something that must be taken up and taken up very seriously — by the universities, the learned societies, the responsible educational organisations if it is to be brought into effective being. It is a super university I am thinking of a world brain; no less. It is nothing in the nature of a supplementary enterprise. I; is a completion necessary to modernise the university. And that brings me to the last part of this speculation. Can such an Encyclopaedia as I have been suggesting to you be a possible thing? How can it be set going? How can it be organised and paid for?

I agree I have now to show it is a possible thing. For I am going to make the large assumption that you think that it is a possible thing it is a desirable thing. How are we to set about it?

I think something in this way: To begin with we want a Promotion Organisation. We want, shall I call it, an Encyclopaedia Society to ask for an Encyclopaedia and get as many people as possible asking for an Encyclopaedia. Directly that Society asks for an Encyclopaedia it will probably have to resort to precautionary measures against any enterprising publisher who may see in that demand a chance for selling some sort of vamped-up miscellany as the thing required, and who may even trust to the unworldliness of learned men for some sort of countenance for his raid.

And next this society of promoters will have to survey the available material. For most of the material for a modern Encyclopaedia exists already — though in a state of impotent

diffusion. In all the various departments with which an Encyclopaedia should deal, groups of authoritative men might be induced to prepare a comprehensive list of primary and leading books, articles, statements which taken together would give the best, clearest and most quintessential renderings of what is known and thought within their departments. This would make a sort of key bibliography to the thoughts and knowledge of the world. My friend Sir Richard Gregory has suggested that such a key bibliography for a World Encyclopaedia would in itself. be a worthwhile thing to evoke. I agree with him. I haven't an idea what we should get. I imagine something on the scale of ten or twenty thousand items. I don't know.

Possibly our Encyclopaedia Society would find that such a key bibliography was in itself a not unprofitable publication, but that is a comment by the way. The next step from this key bibliography would be the organisation of a general editorial board and of departmental boards. These would be permanent bodies — for a World Encyclopaedia must have a perennial life. We should have to secure premises, engage a literary staff and, with the constant co-operation of the departmental groups, set about the task of making our great synthesis and abstract. I must repeat that for the purposes of a World Encyclopaedia probably we would not want much original writing. If a thing has been stated clearly and compactly once for all, why paraphrase it or ask some inferior hand to restate it? Our job may be rather to secure the use of copyrights, and induce leading exponents of this or that field of science or criticism to co-operate in the selection, condensation, expansion or simplification of what they have already said so well.

And now I will ask you to take another step forward and imagine our World Encyclopaedia has been assembled and digested and that the first edition is through the press. So far we shall have been spending money on this great enterprise and receiving nothing; we shall have been spending capital, for which I have at present not accounted. I will merely say that I see no reason why the capital needed for these promotion activities should not be forthcoming. This is no gainful enterprise, but you have to remember that the values we should create would be far more stable than the ephemeral

encyclopaedias representing sums round about a million pounds or so which have hitherto been the high-water of Encyclopaedic enterprise. These were essentially book-selling enterprises made to exploit a demand. But this World Encyclopaedia as I conceive it, if only because it will have roped in the larger part of the original sources of exposition, discussion and information, will be in effect a world monopoly, and it will be able to levy and distribute direct and indirect revenue, on a scale quite beyond the resources of any private publishing enterprise. I do not see that the financial aspects of this huge enterprise, big though the sums involved may be, present any insurmountable difficulties in the way of its realisation. The major difficulty will be to persuade the extremely various preoccupied, impatient and individualistic scholars, thinkers, scientific workers and merely distinguished but unavoidable men on whose participation its success depends, of its practicability, convenience and desirability. And so far as the promotion of it goes I am reasonably hopeful. Quite a few convinced, energetic and resourceful people could set this ball rolling towards realisation. To begin with it is not necessary to convert the whole world of learning, research and teaching. I see no reason why at any stage it should encounter such positive opposition. Negative opposition — the refusal to have anything to do with it and so forth-can be worn down by persistence and the gathering promise of success. It has not to fight adversaries or win majorities before it gets going. And once this ball is fairly set rolling it will be very hard to stop. A greater danger, as I have already suggested, will come from attempts at the private mercenary exploitation of this world-wide need — the raids of popular publishers and heavily financed salesmen, and in particular attempts to create copyright difficulties and so to corner the services and prestige of this or that unwary eminent person by anticipatory agreements.

Vis-à-vis with salesmanship the man of science, the man of the intellectual élite, is a t to show himself a very Simple Simon indeed. And) of course from the very start, various opinionated cults and propagandists will be doing their best to capture or buy the movement. Well, we mustn't be captured or bought, and in particular our silence must not be bought or captured. That danger may in the

end prove to be a stimulus. It may be possible in some cases to digest and assimilate special cults to their own and the general advantage.

And there will be a constant danger that some of the early promoters may feel and attempt to realise a sort of proprietorship in the organisation, to make a group or a gang of it. But to recognise that danger is half-way to averting it.

I have said nothing so far about the language in which the Encyclopaedia should appear. It is a question I have not worked out. But I think that the main text should be in one single language, from which translations in whole or part could be made. Catholic Christianity during the years of its greatest influence was held together by Latin, and I do not think I am giving way to any patriotic bias when I suggest that unless we contemplate a polyglot publication — and never yet have I heard of a successful polyglot publication — English because it has a wider range than German, a greater abundance and greater subtlety of expression than French and more precision than Russian, is the language in which the original text of a World Encyclopaedia ought to stand. And moreover it is in the English-speaking communities that such an enterprise as this is likely to find the broadest basis for operations, the frankest criticism and the greatest freedom from oflicial interference and government propaganda. But that must not hinder us from drawing help and contributions from, and contemplating a use in every community in the world.

And so far I have laid no stress upon the immense advantage this enterprise would have in its detachment from immediate politics, Ultimately if our dream is realised it must exert a very great influence upon everyone who controls administrations, makes wars, directs mass behaviour, feeds, moves, starves and kills populations. But it does not immediately challenge these active people. It is not the sort of thing to which they would be directly antagonistic. It is not ostensibly anti-them. It would have a terrible and ultimately destructive aloofness. They would not easily realise its significance for all that they do and are. The prowling beast will right savagely if it is pursued and challenged upon the jungle path in the darkness, but it goes home automatically as the day breaks.

You see how such an Encyclopaedic organisation could spread

like a nervous network, a system of mental control about the globe, knitting all the intellectual workers of the world through a common interest and a common medium of expression into a more and more conscious co-operating unity and a growing sense of their own dignity, informing without pressure or propaganda, directing without tyranny. It could be developed wherever conditions were favourable; it could make inessential concessions and bide its time in regions of exceptional violence, grow vigorously again with every return to liberalism and reason.

So I sketch my suggestion for a rehabilitation of thought and learning that ultimately may release a new form of power in the world, recalling indeed the power and influence of the churches and religions of the past but with a progressive, adaptable and recuperative quality that none of these possessed. I believe that in some such way as I have sketched tonight the mental forces now largely and regrettably scattered and immobilised in the universities, the learned societies, research institutions and technical workers of the world could be drawn together in a real directive world intelligence, and by that mere linking and implementing of what is known, human life as a whole could be made much surer, stronger, bolder and happier than it has ever been up to the present time. And until something of this sort is done, I do not see how the common life can ever be raised except occasionally, locally and by a conspiracy of happy chances, above its present level of impulsiveness, insincerity, insecurity, general under-vitality, under-nourishment and aimlessness. For that reason I think the promotion of an organisation for a World Encyclopaedia may prove in the long run to be a better investment for the time and energy of intelligent men and women than any definite revolutionary movement, Socialism, Communism, Fascism, Imperialism, Pacifism or any other of the current isms into which we pour ourselves and our resources so freely. None of these movements have anything like the intellectual comprehensiveness needed to construct the world anew.

Let me be very clear upon one point.

I am not saying that a World Encyclopaedia will in itself solve any single one of the vast problems that must be solved if man is to escape from his present dangers and distresses and enter upon a more

hopeful phase of history; what I am saying — and saying with the utmost conviction — is this, that without a World Encyclopaedia to hold men's minds together in something like a common interpretation of reality, there is no hope whatever of anything but an accidental and transitory alleviation of any of our world troubles. As mankind is, so it will I remain, until it pulls its mind together. And if it does . not pull its mind together then I do not see how it can help but decline. Never was a living species more perilously poised than ours at the present time. If it does not take thought to end its present mental indecisiveness catastrophe lies ahead. Our species may yet end its strange eventful history as just the last, the cleverest of the great apes. The great ape that was clever — but not clever enough. It could escape from most things but not from its own mental confusion.

II. — THE BRAIN ORGANIZATION OF THE MODERN WORLD

Lecture delivered in America, October and November, 1937

FOR half a century I have resisted temptations to lecture in America — if for no other reason than the insufficiency of my voice. But the microphone is a great leveller and here I am at last on terms of practical equality with your most audible speakers and very glad indeed of this belated opportunity of talking to you. I want to talk to you about an idea which seems to me to be a very important one indeed. I want to interest you in it, and if possible find out what you think of it. I call that idea for reasons I shall try to make clear as I proceed, The New Encyclopaedism, and the gist of it is that the time is ripe for a very extensive revision and modernisation of the intellectual organisation of the world. Can I put it more plainly than that? Perhaps I can.

Our world is changing and it is changing with an ever-increasing violence. An old world dies about us. A new world struggles into existence. But it is not developing the brain and the sensitiveness and delicacy necessary for its new life. That is the essence of what I have to say.

To put my argument squarely on its feet I must begin by telling you things that you know quite as well or better than I do. I will just remind you of them. It is, so to speak, a matter of current observation that in the past century and a half there has been an enormous increase in the speed and facility of communications between men in every part of the world. Two hundred years ago Oliver Goldsmith said that if every time a man fired a gun in England, someone was killed in China, we should never hear of it and no one would bother very much about it. All that is changed. We should hear about that murdered Chinaman almost at once. Today we can go all round the world in the time it took a man to travel from New York to Washington in 1800, we can speak to any one anywhere so soon as the proper connections have been made and in a little while we shall be able to look one another in the face from the ends of the earth. In a

very few years now we shall be able to fly in the stratosphere across the Atlantic in a few hours with a cargo of passengers, or bombs or other commodities. There has in fact been a complete revolution in our relation to distances. And the practical consequences of these immense approximations are only beginning to be realised. Everybody knows these facts now, but round about 1900 we were only beginning to take notice of this abolition of distance. Even in 1919 the good gentlemen who settled the world for ever at Versailles had not observed this strange new thing in human affairs. They had not observed that it was no longer possible to live in little horse-and-foot communities because of this change of scale. We know better now. Now the consequences of this change of scale force themselves upon our attention everywhere. Often in the rudest fashion. Our interests and our activities interpenetrate more and more. We are all consciously or unconsciously adapting ourselves to a single common world. For a time North America and the great sprawl of Russia and Siberia are for obvious reasons feeling less restriction than let us say japan or Germany, but, as my glancing allusion to the stratosphere was intended to remind you, this relative isolation of yours is also a diminishing isolation. The Abolition of Distance is making novel political and economic arrangements more and more imperative if the populations of the earth are not to grind against each other to their mutual destruction.

That imperative expansion of the scale of the community in which we have to live is the first truism I want to recall to you and bring into the foreground of our discussion. The second truism is the immense increase in our available power that has been going on. I do not know if any precise estimate of the physical energy at the disposal of mankind now and at any previous age, has ever been made, but the disproportion between what we have and what our great-grand-parents had, is stupendous and continually increasing. I am told that two or three power stations in the United States are today pouring out more energy night and day than could be produced by the sustained muscular effort of the entire United States population, and that the Roman empire at its mightiest could not — even by one vast unanimous thrust, not a single soul doing anything but push and push — have kept the street and road transport of New

York State moving as it moves today. You are almost sick of being told it, in this form or that, over and over again. But we all know about this sort of thing. Man was slower and feebler beyond comparison a century or so ago than he is today. He has become a new animal incredibly swift and strong — except in his head. We all know — in theory at least — how this increase of power affects the nature of war. None of our new powers in this world of increasing power, have been so rapidly applied as our powers of mutual injury. A child of five with a bomb no bigger than my hand, can kill as many men in a moment as any paladin of antiquity hacking and hewing and bashing through a long and tiring battle. Both these two realities, these two portentous realities, the change of scale in human affairs and the monstrous increase of destructive power, haunt every intelligent mind today. One needs an exceptional stupidity even to question the urgency we are under to establish some effective World Pax, before gathering disaster overwhelms us. The problem of reshaping human affairs on a world-scale, this World problem, is drawing together an ever-increasing multitude of minds. It is becoming the common solicitude of all sane and civilised men. We must do it — or knock ourselves to pieces. I think it would be profitable if a group of history students were to trace how this World Problem has dawned upon the popular mind from, let us say, 1900 up to the present time. To begin with it was hardly felt to be important. Our apprehension of what it really amounts to has grown in breadth and subtlety during all these past seven-and-thirty years. We have been learning hard in the past third of a century. And particularly since 1919. In 1900 the general sense of the historical process, of what was going on in the world, was altogether shallower than ours today. People were extraordinarily ignorant of the operating causes of political events. It was quite possible then for them to agree that it was not at all a nice or desirable thing I and that it ought to be put an end to, and to imagine that setting up a nice little international court at the Hague to which states could bring their grievances and get a decision without going to the trouble and expense of hostilities would end this obsolescent scandal. Then we should have peace for ever — and everything else would go on as before. But now even the boy picking cotton or working the elevator, knows that nothing will

go as before. The fear of change has reached them. You will remember that Mr. Andrew Carnegie set aside quite a respectable fraction of his savings to buy us world peace for ever and have done with it. The Great War was an enlightening disappointment to this earlier school of peacemakers, and it released a relatively immense flow of thought about the World Problem. But even at Versailles the people most immediately powerful, were still evidently under the impression that world peace was simply a legal and political business. They thought the Great War had happened, but they were busy politicians, and had not remarked that vastly greater things were happening. They did not realise even that elementary point about the unsuitable size of contemporary states to which I have recalled your attention. Still less did they think about the new economic stresses that were revolutionising every material circumstance of litre. They saw the issue as a simple aiirair upon the lines of old-fashioned history. So far as their ideas went it was just Carthage and Rome over again. The central Powers were naughty naughty nations and had to be punished. Their greatest novelty was the League of Nations, which indeed was all very well as a gesture and an experiment but which as an irremovable and irreplaceable reality in the path of world adjustment has proved anything but a blessing. It had been a brilliant idea in the reign of Francis I of France. Still we have to recognise that in 1919 the Geneva League was about as far as anyone's realisation of the gravity of the World Problem had gone. It is our common quality to be wise after the event and still quite unprepared for the next change ahead. It is an almost universal human failing to believe that now we know everything, that nothing more than we know can be known about human relations, and that in our limitless wisdom we can fix up our descendants for evermore, by constitutions, treaties, boundaries and leagues. So my poor generation built this insufficient League. For a time a number of well-meaning people did consider that the League of Nations settled the World Problem for good and all, and that they need not bother their heads about it any more. There were we felt, no further grounds for anxiety, and we all sat down within our nice little national boundaries to resume business . according to the old ways, securing each of us the largest possible share of the good things the new Era

of Peace and Prosperity was to bring — at least to the good countries to whom victory had been accorded. Wlten later the history of our own times comes to be written, I imagine this period between 1919 and 1929 will be called the Fatuous Twenties.

We all know better now. Now that we are living in what no doubt the historian will some day call the Frightened Thirties. Versailles was no settlement. There is still no settlement. The World Problem still pursues us. And it seems now vastly nearer, uglier and more formidable than it ever did before. It emerges through all our settlements like a dangerous rhinoceros coming through a reed fence. Our mood changes now from one in which off-hand legal solutions were acceptable, to an almost feverish abundance of mental activity. From saying "There is the Hague Court and what more do you want?" or "There is the League of Nations, what more can you want?" or "There is the British Peace Ballot and please don't bother me further," we are beginning to apprehend something of the full complexity and vastness of the situation that faces mankind, that is to say all of us, as a living species. Our minds are beginning to grasp the vastness of these grim imperatives. That change of scale, that enhancement of power has altered the fundamental conditions of human life — of all our lives. The traditions of the old world, the comparatively easy traditions in which we have grown up and in which we have shaped our lives, are bankrupt. They are outworn. They are outgrown. They are too decayed for much more patching. They are as untrustworthy and dangerous as a very old car whose engine has become explosive, which has lost its brake lining and has a loose steering-wheel. What I am saying now is gradually becoming as plain in men's minds as the roundness of the earth. New World or nothing. We have to make a new world for ourselves or we shall sufier and perish amidst the downfall of the decaying old. This is a business of fundamentals in which we are all called upon to take part, and through which the lives of all of us are bound to be changed essentially and irrevocably.

With this realisation of the true immensity and penetration of the World Problem we are passing out of the period of panaceas — of simple solutions. As We grow wiser we realise more and more that the World Problem is not a thing like a locked door for which it is

only necessary to End a single key. It is infinitely more complex. It is a battle all along the line and every man is a combatant or a deserter. Popular discussion is thick with competing simple remedies, these [sometimes] needful proposals, each of which has its factor of truth and each of which in itself is entirely inadequate. Consider some of them. Arbitration, League of Nations, I have spoken of World Socialism. The Socialist very rightly points out the evils and destructive stresses that arise from the free play of the acquisitive impulse in production and business affairs, but his solution, which is to take the control of things out of the hands of the acquisitive in order to put it into the hands of the inexperienced, plainly leaves the bulk of the world's troubles unsolved. The Communist and Fascist have theorised about and experimented with the seizure and concentration of Power, but they produce no sound schemes for its beneficial use. Seizing power by itself is a gangster's game. You can do nothing with power except plunder and destroy — unless you know exactly what to do with it. People tell us that Christianity, the Spirit of Christianity, holds a key to all our difficulties. Christianity, they say, has never yet been tried. We have all heard that. The trouble is that Christianity in all its various forms never does try. Ask it to work out practical problems and it immediately floats off into other-worldliness. Plainly there is much that is wrong in our property-money arrangements, but there again prescriptions for a certain juggling with currency and credit, seem unlikely in themselves to solve the World Problem. A multitude of such suggestions are bandied about with increasing passion. In comparison with any preceding age, we are in a state of extreme mental fermentation. This is, I suggest, an inevitable phase in the development of our apprehension of the real magnitude and complexity of the World Problem which faces us. Except for the faddists and fanatics we all feel a sort of despairing inadequacy amidst this wild storm of suggestions and rash beginnings. We want to know more, we want digested facts to go upon. Our minds are not equipped for the job.

And shaking a finger at you to mark the point we have reached, I repeat, our minds are not equipped for the job.

We are ships in uncharted seas. We are big-game hunters without

weapons of precision.

This present uproar of incomplete ideas was as inevitable as the Imperialist Optimism of 1900, the Futile Amazement of the Great War, and the self-complacency of the Fatuous Twenties. These were all phases, necessary phases, in the march of our race through disillusionment to understanding. After the phase of panaceas there comes now, I hope, a phase of intelligent co-ordination of creative movements, a balanced treatment of our complex difficulties. We are going to think again. We are all beginning to realise that the World Problem, the universal world problem of adapting our life to its new scale and its new powers, has to be approached on a broad front, along many paths and in many fashions. In my opening remarks I stressed our spreading realisation of the possibility of a great catastrophe in world affairs. One immediate consequence of our full realisation of what this World Problem before us means is dismay. We lose heart. We feel that anyhow we cannot adjust that much. We throw up the sponge. We say, let us go on as long as possible anyhow, and after us, let what will happen. A considerable and a growing number of people are persuaded that a drift towards a monstrously destructive war cycle which may practically obliterate our present civilisation is inevitable. I have, I suppose, puzzled over such possibilities rather more than most people. I do not agree with that inevitability of another real war. But I agree with its possibility. I think such a collapse so possible that I have played with it imaginatively in a book or so and a film. It is so much a possibility that it is wholesome to bear it constantly in mind. But all the same I do not believe that world disaster is unavoidable. It is extraordinarily difficult to estimate the relative strength of the driving forces in human affairs today. We are not dealing with measurable quantities. We are easily the prey of our moods, and our latest vivid impression is sure to count for far too much. Values in my own mind, I find, shift about from hour to hour. I guess it is about the same with most of you. Just as in a battle, so here, our moods are factors in the situation. When we feel depressed, the world is going to the devil and we meet defeat half-way; when we are elated, the world is all right and we win. And I think that most of us are inclined to overestimate the menace of violence, the threats of nationalist

aggression and the suppression of free discussion in many parts of the world at the present time. I admit the darkness and grimness on the face of things. Indisputably vehement State-ism now dominates affairs over large regions of the civilised world. Everywhere liberty is threatened or outraged. Here again, I merely repeat, what the whole intelligent world is saying.

Well....I do not want to seem smug amidst such immunities as we English- speaking people still enjoy, nevertheless I must confess I think it possible to overrate the intensity and staying power of this present nationalist phase. I think that the present vehemence of nationalism in the world may be due not to the strength of these tyrannies but to their weakness. This change of scale, this increment of power that has come into human affairs, has strained every boundary, every institution and every tradition in the world. It is an age of confusion, an age of gangster opportunity. After the gangsters the Vigilantes. Both the dying old and the vamped-up new are on the defensive. They build up their barriers and increase their repression because they feel the broad flood of change towards a vastly greater new order is rising. Every old government, every hasty new government that has leapt into power, is made crazy by the threat of a wider and greater order, and its struggle to survive becomes desperate. It tries still to carry onto deny that it is an experiment — even if it survives crippled and monstrous. The dogmatic Russian Revolution has not held power for a score of years and yet it, too, is now as much on the defensive as any other upstart dictatorship. A lot of what looks to us now like triumphant reaction may in the end prove to be no more than doomed, dwarfed and decaying dogmas and traditions at bay. None of the utterances of these militant figures that most threaten the peace of the world today have the serene assurance of men conscious that they are creating something that marches with the ruling forces of life. For the most part they are shouts — screams — of defiance. They scold and rant and threaten. That is the rebel note and not the note of mastery. We hear very much about the suppression of thought in the world. is there really — even at the present time — in spite of all this current violence, any real diminution of creative thought in the world — as compared with 1500 or 1850 — or 1900, or 1914 or 1924? You have to remember

that the suppression of free discussion in such countries as Germany, Italy and Russia does not mean an end to original thought in these countries. Thought, like gunpowder, may be all the more effective for being confined. I know that beneath the surface Germany is thinking intensely, and Russia is thinking more clearly if less discursively than ever before. Maybe we overestimate the value of that idle and safe, slack, do-as-you-please discussion that we English-speaking folk enjoy under our democratic regime. The concentration camps of today may prove after all to be the austere training grounds of a new freedom.

Let us glance for a moment at the chief forces that are driving against all that would keep the world in its ancient tradition of small national governments, warring and planning perpetually against each other, of a perpetual struggle not only of nations but individuals for a mere cramped possessiveness.

Consider now the drives towards release, abundance, one World Pax, one world control of violence, that are going on today. They seem to me very much like those forces that drove the United States to the Pacific coast and prevented the break-up of the Union. No doubt, many a heart failed in the covered waggons as they toiled westward, face to face with the Red Indian and every sort of lawless violence. Yet the drive persisted and prevailed. The Vigilantes prepared the way for the reign of law. The railway, the telegraph and so on followed the covered waggon and knitted this new-scale community of America together. In the middle nineteenth century all Europe thought that the United States must break up into a lawless confusion. The railway, the printing press, saved that. The greater unity conquered because of its immense appeal to common-sense in the face of the new conditions. And because it was able to appeal to common sense through these media.

The United States could spread gigantically and keep a common mind. And today I believe in many ways, in a variety of fashions and using many weapons and devices, the Vigilantes of World Peace, under the stimulus of still wider necessities, are finding themselves and each other and getting together to ride. That is to say their minds are getting together. One great line of development must be towards a Common Control of the Air. The great spans of the Atlantic and

Pacific may prevent this from beginning as a world-wide Air Control, but that, I think, is just a passing phase of the problem. I submit to you that a state of affairs in which vast populations are under an ever- increasing threat of aerial bombardment with explosives, incendiary bombs and poison gas at barely an hour's notice, is intolerable to human reason. Maybe there will be terrible wars first. Quite possibly not. It may after all prove unnecessary to have very many great cities destroyed and very many millions of people burnt, suffocated, blown limb from limb, before men see what stares them in the face and accept the obvious. Men are, after all, partly reasonable creatures, they have at least spasmodic moral impulses. There is already in action — a movement — for World Air Control. But you can't have a thing like that by itself. Who or what will control the air?

This is a political question. None of us quite know the answer, but the answer has to be found, and hundreds of thousands of the best brains on earth are busy at the riddle of that adjustment. We can rule out any of the pat, ready-made answers of yesterday, League of Nations or what not. None the less that implacable necessity for World Air Control insists upon something, something with at least the authority of a World Federal Government in these matters, and that trails with it, you will find, a revelation of other vast collateral necessities. I cannot now develop these at any great length. But in the end I believe we are led to the conviction that the elemental forces of human progress, the stars in their courses, are fighting to evoke at least this much world community as involves a control of communications throughout the whole world, a common federal protection of everyone in the world from private, sectarian or national violence, a common federal protection of the natural resources of the planet from national, class or individual appropriation, and a world system of money and credit. The obstinacy of man is great, but the forces that grip him are greater and in the end, after I know not what wars, struggles and afflictions, this is the road along which he will go. He has to see it first — and then he will do it. I am sure of the ultimate necessity of this federal world state — and at the backs of your minds at least, I believe most of you are too — as I am sure that, whatever clouds may obscure it, the sun

will rise to-morrow.

And now having recapitulated and brought together this general conception of human progress towards unity which is forming in most of our minds, as an answer to the ever-more insistent World Problem, I propose to devote the rest of my time with you to the discussion of one particular aspect of this march towards a world community, the necessity it brings with it, for a correlated educational expansion. This has not so far been given anything like the attention it may demand in the near future. We have been gradually brought to the pitch of imagining and framing our preliminary ideas of a federal world control of such things as communications, health, money, economic adjustments, and the suppression of crime. In all these material things we have begun to foresee the possibility of a world-wide network being woven between all men about the earth. So much of the World Peace has been brought into the range of — what shall I call it? — the general imagination. But I do not think we have yet given sufficient attention to the prior necessity, of linking together its mental organisations into a much closer accord than obtains at the present time. All these ideas of unifying mankind's affairs depend ultimately for their realisation on mankind having a unified mind for the job. The want of such effective mental unification is the key to most of our present frustrations. While men's minds are still confused, their social and political relations will remain in confusion, however great the forces that are grinding them against each other and however tragic and monstrous the consequences.

Now I know of no general history of human education and discussion in existence. We have nowadays — in what is called the New History-books which trace for us in rough outline the growth in size and complexity of organised human communities. But so far no one has attempted to trace the stages through which teaching has developed, how schools began, how discussions grew, how knowledge was acquired and spread, how the human intelligence kept pace with its broadening responsibilities. We know that in the small tribal community and even in the city states of, for example, Greece, there was hardly any need for reading or writing. The youngsters were instructed and initiated by their elders. They could

walk all over the small territory of their community and see and hear, how it was fed, guarded, governed. The bright young men gathered for oral instruction in the Porch or the Academy. With the growth of communities into states and kingdoms we know that the medicine man was replaced by an organised priesthood, we know that scribes appeared, written records. There must have been schools for the priests and scribes, but we know very little about it. We know something of the effect of the early writings, the Bible particularly, in consolidating and preserving the Jewish tradition — giving it such a start off that for a long time it dominated the subsequent development of the Gentile world, and we know that the survival and spread of Christianity is largely due to its resort to written records to supplement that oral teaching of disciples with which it began. But the growing thirst for medical, theological and general knowledge that appeared in the Middle Ages and which led to those remarkable gatherings of hungry minds, the Universities, has still to be explained and described. That appearance and that swarming of scholars would make an extraordinary ¤ story. After the lecture room, the book; after that the newspaper, universal education, the cinema, the radio. No one has yet appeared to make an orderly, story of the developments of information and instruction that have occurred in the past hundred years. Age by age the World's Knowledge Apparatus has grown up. Unpremeditated. Without a plan. But enlarging due possible areas of political co-operation at every stage in its growth.

It is a very interesting thing indeed to ask oneself certain questions. How did I come to know what I know about the world and myself? What ought I to know? What would I like to know that I don't know? If I want to know about this or that, where can I get the clearest, best and latest information? And where did these other people about me get their ideas about things?

Which are sometimes so different from mine. Why do we differ so widely? Surely about a great number of things upon which we differ there is in existence exact knowledge? So that we ought not to differ in these things. This is true not merely about small matters in dispute but about vitally important things concerning our business, our money, our political outlook, our health, the general conduct of our lives. We are guessing when we might know. The facts are there, but

we don't know them completely. We are inadequately informed. We blunder about in our ignorance and this great ruthless world in which we live, beats upon us and punishes our ignorance like a sin. Not only in our mass-ruled democracies but in the countries where dogmas and dictators rule, tremendous decisions are constantly being made affecting human happiness, root and branch, in complete disregard of realities that are known.

You see we are beginning to realise not only that the formal political structures of the world and many of the methods of our economic life are out of date and out of scale, but also another thing that hampers us hopelessly in every endeavour we make to adjust life to its new conditions — our World Knowledge Apparatus is not up to our necessities. We are neither collecting, arranging nor digesting what knowledge we have at all adequately, and our schools, our instruments of distribution are old-fashioned and ineffective.

We are not being told enough, we are not being told properly, and that is one main reason why we are all at sixes and sevens in our collective life.

The other day my university, the University of London, celebrated its centenary. For some minor reason I was asked to assist at these celebrations. And to do so I had to assume some very remarkable garments — most remarkable if you consider that London University was founded in the year 1836 when gentlemen wore tight trousers with straps, elegantly waisted coats and bell-shaped top hats. Did I dress up like that? No. I found myself retreating from the age of the aeroplane to the age of the horse and mule outfit of the Canterbury Pilgrims. I found myself wearing a hood and gown and carrying a Beret rather like those worn by prosperous citizens of the days of Edward IV, when the University of London was as little anticipated as the continent of America. My modern head peeped out at the top of this get-up and my modern trousers at the bottom. Properly I ought to have been wearing a square beard or have been clean-shaven, but I was forgiven that much. And from all parts of the world representatives of innumerable universities had come with beautifully illuminated addresses to congratulate our Chancellor and ourselves on our hundred years of sham mediaevalism. They came from the ends of the earth, they came up the aisle in an endless

process; one ancient name followed another, now it was Tokyo, now Athens, now Upsala, now Cape Town, now the Sorbonne, now Glasgow, now Johns Hopkins, on they came and on and bowed and handed their addresses and passed aside. It was a marvellous, a dazzling array of beautifully coloured robes. It was also a marvellous collection of men and women. I watched the grave and dignified faces of some of the finest minds in the world. Together they presented, they embodied or they were there to represent, the whole body of human knowledge. There it was in effect parading before me. And nine out of ten of them were dressed up in some colourful imitation of a costume worn centuries before their foundations came into existence. It was picturesque, it was imposing — but it was just a little odd of them.

My thoughts drifted away to certain political gatherings I had seen and heard; faces of an altogether inferior type, leather-lunged adventurers bawling and gesticulating, raucous little men screaming plausible nonsense to ignorant crowds, supporters herded like sheep and saluting like trained monkeys, and the incongruity of the contrast came to me — you know how things come to you suddenly at times — so that I almost laughed aloud. Because, when it comes to the direction of human affairs, all these universities, all these nice refined people in their lovely gowns, all this visible body of human knowledge and wisdom, has far less influence upon the conduct of human affairs, than, let us say, an intractable newspaper proprietor, an unscrupulous group of financiers or the leader of a recalcitrant minority.

Some weeks previously I had taken part in a little private conference of scientific men in London. They were very distinguished men indeed, and they were distressed beyond measure at the way in which one scientific invention after another was turned to the injury of human life. What was to be done? What could be done? Our discussion was inconclusive, but it had quickened my sense of the reality of the situation. I put these three separate impressions together before you: First, these anxious scientific specialists, then the unchallenged power and mischief of these bawling war-making politicians and their crowds at the present time, and finally, capping the whole, these hundreds of all-too-decorated

learned gentlemen, fine and delicate, bowing, presenting addresses (for the most part in Latin) and conferring further gowns and diplomas on one another. This last lot, I said, this third lot is after all — in spite of its elegant weakness, the organised brain of mankind so far as there is an organised brain of mankind — and it is not doing its proper work. Why? Why are our universities Boating above the general disorder of mankind like a beautiful sunset over a battlefield? Is it not high time that something was done about it? Certain ideas had been stirring in my mind for some time already, but this scene of archaic ceremony just lit up the situation for me. I realised that these mediaeval robes were in the highest degree symptomatic. They clothed an organisation essentially mediaeval, inadequate and out of date. We are living in 1937 and our universities, I suggest, are not half-way out of the fifteenth century. We have made hardly any changes in our conception of university organisation, education, graduation, for a century — for several centuries. The three- or four-years' course of lectures, the bachelor who knows some, the master who knows most, the doctor who knows all, are ideas that have come down unimpaired from the Middle Ages. Nowadays no one should end his learning while he lives and these university degrees are preposterous. It is true that we have multiplied universities greatly in the past hundred years, but we seem to have multiplied them altogether too much upon the old pattern. A new battleship, a new aeroplane, a new radio receiver is always an improvement upon its predecessor. But a new university is just another imitation of all the old universities that have ever been. Educationally we are still for all practical purposes in the coach and horse and galley stage. The new university is just one more mental gilt-coach in which minds take a short ride and get out again. We have done nothing to co-ordinate the work of our universities in the world — or at least we have done very little. What are called the learned societies with correspondents all over the world have been the chief addition to the human knowledge organisation since the Renaissance and most of these societies took their shape and scale in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All the new means of communicating ideas and demonstrating realities that modern invention has given us, have been seised upon by other hands and used for other purposes; these universities which should

guide the thought of the world, making no protest. The showmen got the cinema and the governments or the adventurers got the radio. The university teacher and the schoolmaster went on teaching in the class-room and checking his results by a written examination. It is as if one attempted to satisfy the traffic needs of greater New York or London or Western Europe by a monstrous increase in horses and carts and nothing else. The universities go out to meet the tremendous challenges of our social and political life, like men who go out in armour with bows and arrows to meet a bombing aeroplane. They are pushed aside by men like Hitler, Mussolini creates academies in their despite, Stalin sends party commissars to regulate their researches. It is beyond dispute that there has been a great increase in the research work of universities; that pedantry and mere scholarship in spite of an obstinate defence have declined relatively to keen inquiry, but the specialist is by his nature a preoccupied man. He can increase knowledge, but without a modern organisation backing him he cannot put it over. He can increase knowledge which ultimately is power, but he cannot at the same time control and spread this power that he creates. It has to be made generally available if it is not to be monopolised in the wrong hands.

There, I take it, is the gist of the problem of World Knowledge that has to be solved. A great new world is struggling into existence. But its struggle remains catastrophic until it can produce an adequate knowledge organisation. It is a giant birth and it is mentally defective and blind. An immense and ever-increasing wealth of knowledge is scattered about the world today, a wealth of knowledge and suggestion that — systematically ordered and generally disseminated — would probably give this giant vision and direction and suffice to solve all the mighty difficulties of our age, but that knowledge is still dispersed, unorganised, impotent in the face of adventurous violence and mass excitement. In some way we want to modernise our World Knowledge Apparatus so that it may really bring what is thought and known within reach of all active and intelligent men. So that we shall know — with some certainty. So that l we shall not be all at sixes and sevens about matters that have already been thoroughly explored and worked out.

How is that likely to he done?

Not of course in a hurry....

It would be very easy to do a number of stupid things about it — futile or even disastrous things. I can imagine quite a number of obvious preposterous mischievous experiments, a terrible sort of world university consolidation, an improvised knowledge dictatorship. Heaven save us from that! We Want nothing that will in any sense override the autonomy of institutions or the independence of individual intellectual workers, We want nothing that will invade the precious time and attempt to control the resources of the gifted individual specialist. He is too much distracted by elementary teaching and college administration already. We do not want to magnify and stereotype universities. Most of them with their gowns and degrees, their slavish imitation of the past, are too stereotyped already. But here it is that the idea I Want to put before you comes in, this idea of a greater encyclopaedism — with a permanent organism and a definite form and aim. I put forward the development of this new encyclopaedism as a possible method, the only possible method I can imagine, of bringing the universities and research institutions of the world into effective co-operation and creating an intellectual authority sufficient to control and direct our collective life. I imagine it as a permanent institution — untrammelled by precedent, a new institution — something added to the world network of universities, linking and co-ordinating them with one another and with the general intelligence of the world. Manifestly as my title for it shows, it arises out of the experience of the French Encyclopaedia, but the form it is taking in the minds of those who have become interested in the idea, is of something vastly more elaborate, more institutional and far-reaching than Diderot's row of volumes. The immense effect of Diderot's effort in establishing the frame of the progressive world of the nineteenth century, is certainly the inspiration of this new idea. The great role played in stabilising and equipping the general intelligence of the nineteenth-century world by the French, the British and the German and other encyclopaedias that followed it, is what gives confidence and substance to this new conception. But what we want today to hold the modern mind together in common sanity is something far greater and infinitely more substantial than those earlier encyclopaedias.

They served their purpose at the time, but they are not equal to our current needs. A World Encyclopaedia no longer presents itself to a modern imagination as a row of volumes printed and published once for all, but as a sort of mental clearing house for the mind, a depot where knowledge and ideas are received, sorted, summarised, digested, clarified and compared. It would be in continual correspondence with every university, every research institution, every competent discussion, every survey, every statistical bureau in the world. It would develop a directorate and a staff of men of its own type, specialised editors and summarists. They would be very important and distinguished men in the new world. This Encyclopaedic organisation need not be concentrated now in one place; it might have the form of a network. It would centralise mentally but perhaps not physically. Quite possibly it might to a large extent be duplicated. It is its files and its conference rooms which would be the core of its being, the essential Encyclopaedia. It would constitute the material beginning of a real World Brain.

Then from this centre of reception and assembly, would proceed what we may call the Standard Encyclopaedia, the primary distributing element, the row of volumes. This would become the common backbone as it were of general human knowledge. It might take the form of twenty or thirty or forty volumes and it would go to libraries, colleges, schools, institutions, newspaper offices, ministries and so on all over the world. It would be undergoing continual revision. Its various volumes would be in process of replacement, more or less frequently according to the permanence or impermanence of their contents. And from this Standard Encyclopaedia would be drawn a series of text-books and shorter reference encyclopaedias and encyclopaedic dictionaries For individual and casual use.

That crudely is the gist of what I am submitting to you. A double-faced organisation, a perpetual digest and conference on the one hand and a system of publication and distribution on the other. It would be a clearing house for universities and research institutions; it would play the role of a cerebral cortex to these essential ganglia. On the one hand this organisation should be in direct touch with all the original thought and research in the world; on the other it should

extend its informing tentacles to every intelligent individual in the community — the new world community. In that little world of the eighteenth century, what we may call the mind of the community scarcely extended below the gentlefolk, the clergy and the professions. There was no primary education for the common man at all. He did not even read. He was a mere toiler. It hardly mattered how little he knew — and the less he thought the better for social order. But machinery abolishes mere toil altogether. The new world has to consist of a world community — say of 2,000 million educated individuals — and the influence of the central encyclopaedic organisation, informing, suggesting, directing, unifying, has to extend to every rank of society and to every corner of the world. The new encyclopaedism is merely the central problem of world education.

Perhaps I should explain that when I speak in this connexion of universities, what I have in mind is primarily assemblies of learned men or men rehearsing their ripe scholarship or conducting original research with such advanced students and student helpers as have been attracted by them and are sharing their fresh and inspiring thoughts and methods. This is a return to the original university idea. The original universities were gatherings of eager people who wanted to know — and who clustered round the teachers who did seem to know. They gathered about these teachers because that was the only way in which they could get their learning. I am talking of that sort of university. That is the primary form of a university. I am not talking here of the collegiate side of a contemporary university, the superficial finishing school exercises of sportive young people mostly of the wealthier classes who don't want to know — young people who mean very little and who have been sent to the university to make useful friendships and get pass-degrees that mean hardly anything at all. These mere finishing-school students are a modern addition, a transitory encumbrance of the halls of learning. I suppose that before very long much of this undergraduate life will merge with the general upward extension of educational facilities to all classes of the community. I assume that the tentacles of this Encyclopaedia we are anticipating, with its comprehensive and orderly supply of knowledge, would intervene beneficially between the specialised

research and learning which is the living reality in the university and this really quite modern finishing-school side. The time is rapidly returning when men of outstanding mental quality will consent to teach only such students as show themselves capable of and willing to follow up their distinctive work. The mere graduating crowd with their games and their yells and so forth, will go back to the mere teaching institutions where they properly belong. But I will not spend the few minutes remaining to me upon which is after all a side issue in this discussion. University organisation is not now my subject. I am talking of an essentially new organisation — an addition to the intellectual apparatus of the world. The more important thing now is to emphasise this need — a need the world is likely to realise more and more acutely in the coming years — for such a concentration, which will assemble, co-ordinate and distribute accumulated knowledge. It will link, supplement and no doubt modify profoundly, the universities, schools and other educational organisations we possess already, but it will not in itself be a part of them.

Let me make it perfectly clear that for the present it is desirable to leave this project of a World Encyclopaedic organisation vague — in all but its essential form and function. It might prove disastrous to have it crystallise out prematurely. Such premature crystallisation of a thing needed by the world can produce, we now realise, a rigid obstructive reality, just like enough to our actual requirements to cripple every effort to replace it later by a more efficient organisation. Explicit constitutions for social and political institutions, are always dangerous things if these institutions are to live for any length of time. If a thing is really to live it should grow rather than be made. It should never be something cut and dried. It should be the survivor of a series of trials and fresh beginnings — and it should always be amenable to further amendment.

So that while I believe that ultimately the knowledge systems of the world must be concentrated in this world brain, this permanent central Encyclopaedic organisation with a local habitat and a world-wide range — just as I believe that ultimately the advance of aviation must lead, however painfully and tortuously by way of World Air Control, to the political, economic and financial federation of the world — yet nevertheless I suggest that to begin with, the evocation

of this World Encyclopaedia may begin at divergent points and will be all the better for beginning at divergent points.

Of the demand for it, and of the readiness for it in our world today, I have no sort of doubt. Ask the book· selling trade. Any books that give or even seem to give, any sort of conspectus of philosophy, of science, of general knowledge, have a sure abundant sale. We have the fullest encouragement for bolder and more strenuous efforts in the same direction. People want this assembling of knowledge and ideas. Our modern community is mind-starved and mind-hungry. It is justifiably uneasy and suspicious of the quality of what it gets. The hungry sheep look up and are not fed — at least they are not fed properly. They want to know, One of the next steps to take, it seems to me, is to concentrate this diffused demand, to set about the definite organisation of a sustained movement, of perhaps a special association or so, to bring a World Encyclopaedia into being. And while on the one hand we have this world-wide receptivity to work upon, on the other hand we have among the men of science in particular a very full realisation of the need for a more effective correlation of their work. It is not only that they cannot communicate their results to the world; they find great difficulty in communicating their results to one another. Among other collateral growths of the League of Nations is a certain Committee of Intellectual Co-operation which has now an official seat in Paris. Its existence shows that even as early as 1919, someone had realised the need for some such synthesis of mental activities as we are now discussing. But in timid, politic and scholarly hands the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation has so far achieved little more than a building, a secretary and a few salaries. The bare idea of a World Encyclopaedia in its present delicate state would give it heart failure. Still there it is, a sort of seed that has still to germinate, waiting for some vitalising influence to stir it to action and growth. And going on at present, among scientific workers, library workers, bibliographers and so forth, there is a very considerable activity for an assembling and indexing of knowledge. An important World Congress of Documentation took place this August in Paris. I was there as an English delegate and I met representatives of forty countries — and my eyes were opened to the very considerable amount of such

harvesting and storage that has already been done. From assembling to digesting is only a step — a considerable and difficult step but, none the less, an obvious step. In addition to these indexing activities there has recently been a great deal of experimentation with the microfilm. It seems possible that in the near future, we shall have microscopic libraries of record, in which a photograph of every important book and document in the world will be stowed away and made easily available for the inspection of the student. The British Museum library is making microfilms of the 4,000 books it possesses that were published before 1550 and parallel work is being done here in America. Cheap standardised projectors offer no difficulties. The bearing of this upon the material form of a World Encyclopaedia is obvious. The general public has still to realise how much has been done in this field and how many competent and disinterested men and women are giving themselves to this task. The time is close at hand when any student, in any part of the world, will be able to sit with his projector in his own study at his or her convenience to examine any book, any document, in an exact replica.

Concurrently with this movement towards documentation, we may very possibly have a phase when publishers will be experimenting in the production of larger and better Encyclopaedias, all consciously or unconsciously attempting to realise the final world form. And satisfy a profitable demand. The book salesman from the days of Diderot onward has shown an extraordinary knack for lowering the quality of this sort of enterprise, but I did not see why groups of publishers throughout the world should not presently help very considerably in the beginning of a permanent Encyclopaedic foundation. But such questions of ways and means of distribution belong to a later stage of this great intellectual development which lies ahead of us. I merely glance at them here.

There are certain responses that I have observed crop up almost automatically in people's minds when they are confronted with this project of a worldwide organisation of all that is thought and known. They will say that an Encyclopaedia must always be tendentious and within certain limits — but they are very wide limits — that must be true. A World Encyclopaedia will have by its very nature to be what is called liberal. An Encyclopaedia appealing to all mankind can

admit no narrowing dogmas without at the same time admitting corrective criticism. It will have to be guarded editorially and with the utmost jealousy against the incessant invasion of narrowing propaganda. It will have a general flavour of what many people will call scepticism. Myth, however venerated, it must treat as myth and not as a symbolical rendering of some higher truth or any such evasion. Visions and projects and theories it must distinguish from bed-rock fact. It will necessarily press strongly against national delusions of grandeur, and against all sectarian assumptions. It will necessarily be for and not indifferent to that world community of which it must become at last an essential part. If that is what you call bias, bias the world Encyclopaedia will certainly have. It will have, and it cannot help but have, a bias for organisation, comparison, construction and creation. It is an essentially creative project. It has to be the dominant factor in directing the growth of a new world.

Well, there you have my anticipation of the primary institution which has to appear if that world-wide community towards which mankind, willy-nilly, is being impelled, is ever to be effectively attained. The only alternative I can see is social dissolution and either the evolution of a new, more powerful type of man, or the extinction of our species. I sketch roughly — it seems to be my particular role in life to do these broad sketches and outlines and then stand aside — but I do my best to make the picture plain and understandable. And for me at any rate this is no Utopian dream. It is a forecast, however inaccurate and insufficient, of an absolutely essential part of that world community to which I believe we are driving now. I do not believe there is any emergence for mankind from this age of disorder, distress and fear in which we are living, except by way of such a deliberate vast reorganisation of our intellectual life and our educational methods as I have outlined here. I have been talking of real intellectual forces and foreshadowing the emergence of a vital reality. I have been talking of something which may even be recognizably in active operation within a lifetime — or a lifetime or so, from now — this consciously and deliberately organised brain for all mankind. In a few score years there will be thousands of workers at this business of ordering and digesting knowledge where now you have one. There will be a teacher for every dozen children and

schools as unlike the schools of to-day as a liner is unlike the *Mayflower*. There will not be an illiterate left in the world. There will hardly be an uninformed or misinformed person. And the brain of the whole mental network will be the Permanent World Encyclopaedia.

Well, I have designedly put much controversial matter before you, and I have not hesitated to put it in a provocative manner. You will, I know, understand that every new thing is apt to seem crude at first. Forgive my crudities. But my time has been short for what I had to say, and I have said it in the way that seemed most challenging and most likely to produce further discussion.

III. — THE IDEA OF A PERMANENT WORLD ENCYCLOPAEDIA

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IT is probable that the idea of an encyclopaedia may undergo very considerable extension and elaboration in the near future. Its full possibilities have still to be realised. The encyclopaedias of the past have sufficed for the needs of a cultivated minority. They were written "for gentlemen by gentlemen" in a world wherein universal education was unthought of, and where the institutions of modern democracy with universal suffrage, so necessary in many respects, so difficult and dangerous in their working, had still to appear. Throughout the nineteenth century encyclopaedias followed the eighteenth-century scale and pattern, in spite both of a gigantic increase in recorded knowledge and of a still more gigantic growth in the numbers of human beings requiring accurate and easily accessible information. At first this disproportion was scarcely noted, and its consequences not at all. But many people now are coming to recognise that our contemporary encyclopaedias are still in the coach-and-horses phase of development, rather than in the phase of the automobile and the aeroplane. Encyclopaedic enterprise has not kept pace with material progress. These observers realise that modern facilities of transport, radio, photographic reproduction and so forth are rendering practicable a much more fully succinct and accessible assembly of fact and ideas than was ever possible before.

Concurrently with these realisations there is a growing discontent with the part played by the universities, schools and libraries in the intellectual life of mankind. Universities multiply, schools of every grade and type increase, but they do not enlarge their scope to anything like the urgent demands of this troubled and dangerous age. They do not perform the task nor exercise the authority that might reasonably be attributed to the thought and knowledge organisation of the world. It is not, as it should be, a case of larger and more powerful universities co-operating more and more intimately, but of

many more universities of the old type, mostly ill-endowed and uncertainly endowed, keeping at the old educational level.

Both the assembling and the distribution of knowledge in the world at present are extremely ineffective, and thinkers of the forward-looking type whose ideas we are now considering, are beginning to realise that the most hopeful line for the development of our racial intelligence lies rather in the direction of creating a new world organ for the collection, indexing, summarising and release of knowledge, than in any further tinkering with the highly conservative and resistant university system, local, national and traditional in texture, which already exists. These innovators, who may be dreamers today, but who hope to become very active organisers tomorrow, project a unified, if not a centralised, world organ to "pull the mind of the world together", which will be not so much a rival to the universities, as a supplementary and co-ordinating addition to their educational activities on a planetary scale. The phrase "Permanent World Encyclopaedia" conveys the gist of these ideas. As the core of such an institution would be a world synthesis of bibliography and documentation with the indexed archives of the world. A great number of workers would be engaged perpetually in perfecting this index of human knowledge and keeping it up to date. Concurrently, the resources of micro-photography, as yet only in their infancy, will be creating a concentrated visual record. Few people as yet, outside the world of expert librarians and museum curators and so forth, know how manageable well-ordered facts can be made, however multitudinous, and how swiftly and completely even the rarest visions and the most recondite matters can be recalled, once they have been put in place in a well-ordered scheme of reference and reproduction. The American microfilm experts, even now, are making facsimiles of the rarest books, manuscripts, pictures and specimens, which can then be made easily accessible upon the library screen. By means of the microfilm, the rarest and most intricate documents and articles can be studied now at first hand, simultaneously in a score of projection rooms. There is no practical obstacle whatever now to the creation of an efficient index to all human knowledge, ideas and achievements, to the creation, that is, of a complete planetary memory for all mankind. And not simply an

index; the direct reproduction of the thing itself can be summoned to any properly prepared spot. A microfilm, coloured where necessary, occupying an inch or so of space and weighing little more than a letter, can be duplicated from the records and sent anywhere, and thrown enlarged upon the screen so that the student may study it in every detail.

This in itself is a fact of tremendous significance. It foreshadows a real intellectual unification of our race. The whole human memory can be, and probably in a short time will be, made accessible to every individual. And what is also of very great importance in this uncertain world where destruction becomes continually more frequent and unpredictable, is this, that photography affords now every facility for multiplying duplicates of this — which we may call? — this new all-human cerebrum. It need not be concentrated in any one single place. It need not be vulnerable as a human head or a human heart is vulnerable. It can be reproduced exactly and fully, in Peru, China, Iceland, Central Africa, or wherever else seems to afford an insurance against danger and interruption. It can have at once, the concentration of a craniate animal and the diffused vitality of an amoeba.

This is no remote dream, no fantasy. It is a plain statement of a contemporary state of affairs. It is on the level of practicable fact. It is a matter of such manifest importance and desirability for science, for the practical needs of mankind, for general education and the like, that it is difficult not to believe that in quite the near future, this Permanent World Encyclopaedia, so compact in its material form and so gigantic in its scope and possible influence, will not come into existence.

Its uses will be multiple and many of them will be fairly obvious. Special sections of it, historical, technical, scientific, artistic, e.g. will easily be reproduced for specific professional use. Based upon it, a series of summaries of greater or less fullness and simplicity, for the homes and studies of ordinary people, for the college and the school, can be continually issued and revised. In the hands of competent editors, educational directors and teachers, these condensations and abstracts incorporated in the world educational system, will supply the humanity of the days before us, with a common understanding

and the conception of a common purpose and of a commonweal such as now we hardly dare dream of. And its creation is a way to world peace that can be followed without any very grave risk of collision with the warring political forces and the vested institutional interests of today. Quietly and sanely this new encyclopaedia will, not so much overcome these archaic discords, as deprive them, steadily but imperceptibly, of their present reality. A common ideology based on this Permanent World Encyclopaedia is a possible means, to some it seems the only means, of dissolving human conflict into unity.

This concisely is the sober, practical but essentially colossal objective of those who are seeking to synthesise human mentality today, through this natural and reasonable development of encyclopaedism into a Permanent World Encyclopaedia.

IV. — PASSAGE FROM A SPEECH TO THE. CONGRÈS MONDIAL DE LA DOCUMENTATION. UNIVERSELLE, PARIS AUGUST 20TH, 1937

IT is dawning upon us, we lay observers, that this work of documentation and bibliography, is in fact nothing less than the beginning of a world brain, a common world brain. What you are making me realise is a sort ofcerebrum for humanity, a cerebral cortex which (when it is fully developed) will constitute a memory and a perception of current reality For the entire human race. Plainly we have to make it a centralised and uniform organisation but, as Mr. Watson Davis is here to remind us, it need not have any single local habitation because the continually increasing facilities of photography render reduplication of our indices and records continually easier. In these days of destruction, violence and general insecurity, it is comforting to think that the brain of mankind, the race brain, can exist in numerous replicas throughout the world.

At first our activities are necessarily receptive and we begin most easily with the documentation of concrete facts, and I do not see how this new and great encyclopaedia, this race brain, can develop into anything but a great structure for the comparison, reconciliation and synthesis of common guiding ideas for the whole world. What is gathered will be digested and the results returned through the channels of education, literature and the press to the whole world.

Please do not imagine that I am indulging in any fantasy when I talk of your work and your accumulations as the rudimentary framework of a world brain. I am speaking of a process of mental organisation throughout the world which I believe to be as inevitable as anything can be in human affairs. The world has to pull its mind together, and this is the beginning of its effort. The world is a Phoenix. It perishes in flames and even as it dies it is born again. This synthesis of knowledge is the necessary beginning to the new world.

It is good to be meeting here in Paris where the first

encyclopaedia of ideas was made. It is good for representatives from forty countries to be breathing the clear, comprehensive and systematic atmosphere of France, to be recreating themselves in the presence of its sympathetic creative understanding. Again I would thank our hosts for bringing this congress together and enabling a number of widely scattered workers to realise something of the real greatness of the task to which they have devoted themselves.

V. — THE INFORMATIVE CONTENT OF EDUCATION

The Presidential Address to the Educational Science Section of. the British Association for the Advancement of Science, given. on September 2nd, 1937, at Nottingham, as read by Mr, Wells

SECTION L of the British Association is of necessity one of the least specialised of all sections. Its interests spread far beyond professional limitations. It is a section where anyone who is so to speak a citizen at [age may hope to play a part that is not altogether an impertinent intrusion. And it is in the character of a citizen at large that I have accepted the very great honour that you have offered me in making me the President of this Section. I have no other claim whatever upon your attention. Since the remote days when as a needy adventurer I taught as non-resident master in a private school, invigilated at London University examinations, raided the diploma examinations of the College of Preceptors for the money prises offered, and, in the most commercial spirit, crammed candidates for the science examinations of the University, I have spent very few hours indeed in educational institutions. Most of those were spent in the capacity of an inquiring and keenly interested parent at Oundle School. I doubt if there is any member of this section who has not had five times as much teaching experience as I have, and who is not competent to instruct me upon all questions of method and educational organisation and machinery. So I will run no risks by embarking upon questions of that sort. But on the other hand, if I know very little of educational methods and machinery I have had a certain amount of special experience in what those methods produce and what the machinery turns out.

I have been keenly interested for a number of years, and particularly since the War, in public thought and public reactions, in what people know and think and what they are ready to believe. What they know and think and what they are ready to believe impresses me as remarkably poor stuff. A general ignorance — even in respectable quarters — of some of the most elementary realities of

the political and social life of the world is, I believe, mainly accountable for much of the discomfort and menace of our times. The uninstructed public intelligence of our community is feeble and convulsive. It is still a herd intelligence. It tyrannises here and yields to tyranny there. What is called elementary education throughout the world does not in fact educate, because it does not properly inform. I realised this very acutely during the later stages of the War and it has been plain in my mind ever since. It led to my taking an active part in the production of various outlines and summaries of contemporary knowledge. Necessarily they had the defects and limitations of a private adventure, but in making them I learnt a great deal about — what shall I say — the contents of the minds our schools are turning out as taught.

And so now I propose to concentrate the attention of this Section for this meeting on the question of what is taught as fact, that is to say upon the informative side of educational work. For this year I suggest we give the questions of drill, skills, art, music, the teaching of languages, mathematics and other symbols, physical, aesthetic, moral and religious training and development, a rest, and that we concentrate on the inquiry: What are we telling young people directly about the world in which they are to live? What is the world picture we are presenting to their minds? What is the framework of conceptions about reality and about obligation into which the rest of their mental existences will have to be fitted? I am proposing in fact a review of the informative side of education, wholly and solely-informative in relation to the needs of modern life.

And here the fact that I am an educational outsider — which in every other relation would be a disqualification — gives me certain very real advantages. I can talk with exceptional frankness. And I am inclined to think that in this matter of the informative side of education frankness has not always been conspicuous. For what I say I am responsible only to the hearer and my own self-respect. I occupy no position from which I can be dismissed as unsound in my ideas. I follow no career that can be affected by anything I say. I follow, indeed, no career. That's all over. I have no party, no colleagues or associates who can be embarrassed by any unorthodox suggestions I make. Every schoolmaster, every teacher, nearly every

professor must, by the nature of his calling, be wary, diplomatic, compromising; he has his governors to consider, his college to consider, his parents to consider, the local press to consider; he must not say too much nor say anything that might be misinterpreted and misunderstood. I can. And so I think I can best serve the purposes of the British Association and this section by taking every advantage of my irresponsibility, being as unorthodox and provocative as I can be, and so possibly saying a thing or two which you are not free to say but which some of you at any rate will be more or less willing to have said.

Now when I set myself to review the field of inquiry I have thus defined, I found it was necessary to take a number of very practical preliminary issues into account. As educators we are going to ask what is the subject-matter of a general education? What do we want known? And how do we want it known? What is the essential framework of knowledge that should be established in the normal citizen of our modern community? What is the irreducible minimum of knowledge for a responsible human being today? I say irreducible minimum — and I do so, because I know at least enough of school work to know the grim significance of the school time-table and of the leaving school age. Under contemporary conditions our only prospect of securing a mental accord throughout the community is by laying a common foundation of knowledge and ideas in the school years. No one believes today, as our grandparents — perhaps for most of you it would be better to say great-grandparents — believed, that education had an end somewhen about adolescence. Young people then leave school or college under the imputation that no one could teach them any more. There has been a quiet but complete revolution in people's ideas in this respect and now it is recognised almost universally that people in a modern community must be learners to the end of their days. We shall be giving a considerable amount of attention to continuation, adult and post-graduate studies in this section, this year. It would be wasting our opportunities not to do so. Here in Nottingham University College we have the only Professorship in Adult Education in England, and under Professor Peers the Adult Education Department which is in close touch with the Workers' Educational Association has broadened its scope far

beyond the normal range of Adult Education. Our modern ideas seem to be a continuation of learning not only for university graduates and practitioners in the so-called intellectual professions, but for the miner, the plough-boy, the taxi-cab driver, and the out-of-work, throughout life. Our ultimate aim is an entirely educated population.

Nevertheless it is true that what I may call the main beams and girders of the mental framework must be laid down, soundly or unsoundly, before the close of adolescence. We live under conditions where it seems we are still only able to afford for the majority of our young people, freedom from economic exploitation, teachers even of the cheapest sort and some educational equipment, up to the age of 14 or 15, and we have to fit our projects to that. And even if we were free to carry on with unlimited time and unrestrained teaching resources, it would still be in those opening years that the framework of the mind would have to be made.

We have got to see therefore that whatever we propose as this irreducible minimum of knowledge must be imparted between infancy and — at most, the fifteenth or sixteenth year. Roughly, we have to get it into ten years at the outside.

And next let us turn to another relentlessly inelastic-seeming case — and that is, the school time-table. How many hours in the week have we got for this job in hand? The maximum school hours we have available are something round about thirty, but out of this we have to take time for what I may call the non-informative teaching, teaching to read, teaching to write clearly, the native and foreign language teaching, basic mathematical work, drawing, various forms of manual training, music and so forth. A certain amount of information may be mixed in with these subjects but not very much. They are not what I mean by informative subjects. By the time we are through with these non-informative subjects, I doubt if at the most generous estimate we can apportion more than six hours a week to essentially informative work. Then let us, still erring on the side of generosity, assume that there are forty weeks of schooling in the year. That gives us a maximum of 240 hours in the year. And if we take ten years of schooling as an average human being's preparation for life, and if we disregard the ravages made upon our school time by measles, chicken-pox, whooping-cough, coronations and

occasions of public rejoicing, we are given 2,400 hours as all that we can hope for as our time allowance for building up a coherent picture of the world, the essential foundation of knowledge and ideas, in the minds of our people. The complete framework of knowledge has to be established in 200 dozen hours. It is plain that a considerable austerity is indicated for us. We have no time to waste, if our schools are not to go on delivering, year by year, fresh hordes of fundamentally ignorant, unbalanced, uncritical minds, at once suspicious and credulous, weakly gregarious, easily baffled and easily misled, into the monstrous responsibilities and dangers of this present world. Mere cannon-fodder and stuff for massacres and stampedes.

Out question becomes therefore: "What should people know — whatever else they don't know? Whatever else we may leave over — for leisure-time reading, for being picked up or studied afterwards — what is the irreducible minimum that we ought to teach as clearly, strongly and conclusively as we know how?"

And now I — and you will remember my role is that of the irresponsible outsider, the citizen at large — I am going to set before you one scheme of instruction for your consideration. For it I demand all those precious 2,400 hours. You will perceive, as I go on, the scheme is explicitly exclusive of several contradictory and discursive subjects that now find a place in most curricula, and you will also find doubts arising in your mind about the supply and competence of teachers, a difficulty about which I hope to say something before my time is up. But teachers are for the world and not the world for teachers. If the teachers we have today are not equal to the task required of them, then we have to recondition our teachers or replace them. We live in an exacting world and a certain minimum of performance is required of us all. If children are not to be given at least this minimum of information about the world into which they have come — through no fault of their own — then I do think it would be better for them and the world if they were not born at all. And to make what I have to say as clear as possible I have had a diagram designed which I will unfold to you as my explanation unfolds. You have already noted I have exposed the opening stage of my diagram. You see I make a three-fold division of the child's

impressions and the matters upon which its questions are most lively and natural. I say nothing about the child learning to count, scribble, handle things, talk and learn the alphabet and so forth because all these things are ruled out by my restriction of my address to information only. Never mind now what it wants to do — or wants to feel. This is what it wants to know. In all these educational matters, there is, of course, an element of overlap. As it learns about things and their relationship and interaction its vocabulary increases and its ideas of expression develop. You will make an allowance for that.

[chart]

And now I bring down my diagram to expose the first stage of positive and deliberate teaching. We begin telling true stories of the past and of other lands. We open out the child's mind to a realisation that the sort of life it is living is not the only life that has been lived and that human life in the past has been different from what it is today and on the whole that it has been progressive. We shall have to teach a little about law and robbers, kings and conquests, but I see no need at this stage to afflict the growing mind with dates and dynastic particulars. I hope the time is not Far distant when children even of 8 or 9 will be freed altogether from the persuasion that history is a magic recital beginning "William the Conqueror, 1066". Much has been done in that direction. Much remains to be done. Concurrently, we ought to make the weather and the mud pie our introduction to what Huxley christened long ago Elementary Physiography. We ought to build up simple and clear ideas from natural experience.

We start a study of the states of matter with the boiling, evaporation, freezing and so on of water and go on to elementary physics and chemistry. Local topography can form the basis of geography. We shall have to let our learner into the secret that the world is a globe-and for a time I think that has to be a bit of dogmatic teaching. It is not so easy as many people suppose to prove that the world is spherical and that proof may very well be left to make an exercise in logic later on in education. Then comes biology. Education I rejoice to see is rapidly becoming more natural, more biological. Most young children are ready to learn a great deal more than most teachers can give them about animals. I think we might easily turn the bear, the wolf] the tiger and the ape from holy terrors

and nightmare material into sympathetic creatures, if we brought some realisation of how these creatures live, what their real excitements are, how they are sometimes timid, into the teaching. I don't think that descriptive botany is very suitable for young children. Flowers and leaves and berries are bright and attractive, a factor in aesthetic education, but I doubt if, in itself, vegetation can hold the attention of the young. Sometimes I think we bore young children with premature gardens. But directly we begin to deal with plants as hiding-places, homes and food for birds and beasts, the little boy or girl lights up and learns. And with this natural elementary zoology and botany we should begin elementary physiology. How plants and animals live, and what health means for them. There I think you have stuff enough for all the three or four hundred hours we can afford for the foundation stage of knowledge. Outside this substantial teaching of school hours the child will be reading and indulging in imaginative play — and making that clear distinction children do learn to make between truth and fantasy — about fairyland, magic carpets and seven-league boots, and all the rest of it. So far as my convictions go I think that the less young children have either in or out of school I of what has hitherto figured as history, the better. I do not see either the charm or the educational benefit of making an important subject of and throwing a sort of halo of prestige and glory about the criminal history of royalty, the murder of the Princes in the Tower, the wives of Henry VIII, the families of Edward I and James I, the mistresses of Charles II, Sweet Nell of Old Drury, and all the rest of it. I suggest that the sooner we get all that unpleasant stuff out of schools, and the sooner that we forget the border bickerings of England, France, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, Bannockburn, Flodden, Crécy and Agincourt, the nearer our world will be to a sane outlook upon life. In this survey of what a common citizen should know I am doing my best to elbow the scandals and revenges which once passed as English history into an obscure corner or out of the picture altogether. But I am not proposing to eliminate history from education — far from it. Let me bring down my diagram a stage further and you will see how large a proportion of our treasure of 2,400 hours I am proposing to give to history. This next section represents about 800 to 1,000 pre-

adolescent hours. It is the schoolboy-schoolgirl stage. And here the history is planned to bring home to the new generation the reality that the world is now one community. I believe that the crazy combative patriotism that plainly threatens to destroy civilisation today is very largely begotten in their school history lessons. Our schools take the growing mind at a naturally barbaric phase and they inflame and fix its barbarism. I think we underrate the formative effect of this perpetual reiteration of how we won, how our Empire grew and how relatively splendid we have been in every department of life. We are blinded by habit and custom to the Way it infects these growing minds with the chronic and nearly incurable disease of national egotism. Equally mischievous is the furtive anti-patriotism of the leftish teacher. I suggest that we take on our history from the simple descriptive anthropology of the elementary stage to the story of the early civilisations.

We are dealing here with material that was not even available for the schoolmasters and mistresses who taught our fathers. It did not exist. But now we have the most lovely stuff to hand, far more exciting and far more valuable than the quarrels of Henry II and à Becket or the peculiar unpleasantnesses of King James or King John. Archaeologists have been piecing together a record of the growth of the primary civilisations and the developing roles of priest, king, farmer, warrior, the succession of stone and copper and iron, the appearance of horse and road and shipping in the expansions of those primordial communities. It is a far finer story to tell a boy or girl and there is no reason why it should not be told. Swinging down upon these early civilisations came first the Semitic-speaking peoples and then the Aryan-speakers, Persian, Macedonian, Roman, followed one another, Christendom inherited from Rome and Islam from Persia, and the world began to assume the shapes we know today. This is great history and also in its broad lines it is a simple history — upon it we can base a lively modern intelligence, and now it can be Put in a form just as comprehensible and exciting for the school phase as the story of our English kings and their territorial, dynastic and sexual entanglements. When at last we focus our attention on the British Isles and France we shall have the affairs of these regions in a proper proportion to the rest of human adventure. And our young

people will be thinking less like gossiping court pages and more like horse-riders, seamen, artist-artisans, roadmakers, and city-builders, which I take it is what in spirit we want them to be. Measured by the great current of historical events, English history up to quite recent years is mere hole-and-corner history.

And I have to suggest another exclusion. We are telling our young people about the real past, the majestic expansion of terrestrial events. In these events the little region of Palestine is no more than a part of the highway between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Is there any real reason nowadays for exaggerating its importance in the past? Nothing really began there, nothing was worked out there. All the historical part of the Bible abounds in wild exaggeration of the importance of this little strip of land. We were all brought up to believe in the magnificence of Solomon's temple and it is a startling thing for most of us to read the account of its decorations over again and tum its cubits into feet. It was smaller than most barns. We all know the peculiar delight of devout people when, amidst the endless remains of the great empires of the past, some dubious fragment is found to confirm the existence of the Hebrews. Is it not time that we recognised the relative historical insignificance of the events recorded in Kings and Chronicles, and ceased to throw the historical imagination of our young people out of perspective by an over-emphasised magnification of the national history of Judea; To me this lack of proportion in our contemporary historical teaching seems largely responsible for the present troubles of the world. The political imagination of our times is a hunch-back imagination bent down under an exaggeration. It is becoming a matter of life and death to the world to straighten that backbone and reduce that frightful nationalist hunch.

Look at our time-table and what we have to teach. If we give history four-tenths of all the time we have for imparting knowledge at this stage that still gives us at most something a little short of 400 hours altogether. Even if we think it desirable to perplex another generation with the myths of the Creation, the Flood, the Chosen People and so forth, even if we want to bias it politically with tales of battles and triumphs and ancient grievances, we haven't got the time for it — any more than we have the time for the really quite

unedifying records of all the Kings and Queens of England and their claims on this and that. So far as the school time-table goes we are faced with a plain alternative. One thing or the other. Great history and hole-in-corner history? The story of mankind or the narrow, self-righteous, blinkered stories of the British Islands and the Jews? There is a lot more we have to put into the heads of our young people over and above History. It is the main subject of instruction but even so, it is not even half of the informative work that ought to be got through in this school stage. We have to consider the collateral subject of geography and a general survey of the world. We want to sec our world in space as well as our world in time. We may have a little map-making here, but I take it what is needed most are reasonably precise ideas of the various types of country and the distinctive floras and faunas of the main regions of the world. We do not want our budding citizens to chant lists of capes and rivers, but we do want them to have a real picture in their minds of the Amazon forests, the pampas, the various phases in the course of the Nile, the landscape of Labrador mountains, and so on, and also we want something like a realisation of the sort of human life that is led in these regions. We have enormous resources now in cheap photography, in films, and so forth, that even our fathers never dreamt of — to make all this vivid and real. New methods are needed to handle these new instruments, but they need not be overwhelmingly costly. And also our new citizen should know enough of topography to realise why London and Rio and New York and Rome and Suez happen to be where they are and what sort of places they are.

Geography and History run into each other in this respect and, on the other hand, Geography reaches over to Biology. Here again our schools lag some fifty years behind contemporary knowledge. The past half-century has written a fascinating history of the succession of living things in time and made plain all sorts of processes in the prosperity, decline, extinction, and replacement of species. We can sketch the wonderful and inspiring story of life now from its beginning. Moreover, we have a continually more definite account of the sequence of sub-man in the world and the gradual emergence of our kind. This is elementary, essential, interesting and stimulating

stuff for the young, and it is impossible to consider anyone a satisfactory citizen who is still ignorant of that great story.

And finally, we have the science of inanimate matter. In a world of machinery, optical instruments, electricity, radio and so forth we want to lay a sound foundation of pure physics and chemistry upon the most modern lines — for everyone. Some of this work will no doubt overlap the mathematical teaching and the manual training and steal a little badly needed time from them. And finally, to meet awakening curiosity and take the morbidity out of it, we shall have to tell our young people and especially our young townspeople, about the working of their bodies, about reproduction and about the chief diseases, enfeeblements and accidents that lie in wait for them in the world.

That, I think, completes my summary of all the information we can hope to give in the lower school stage. And as I make it I am acutely aware of your unspoken comment. With such teachers as we have — teachers trained only to reaction, overworked, underpaid, hampered by uninspiring examinations, without initiative, without proper leisure. Young and inexperienced or old and discouraged. You may do this sort of thing, here and there, under favourable conditions, with the splendid élite of the profession, the 10 per cent who are interested, but not as a general state of affairs. Well, I think that it is a better rule of life, first to make sure of what you want and then set about getting it, rather than to consider what you can easily, safely and meanly get, and then set about reconciling yourself to it. I admit we cannot have a modern education without a modernised type of teacher. A teacher enlarged and released. Many of our teachers — and I am not speaking only of elementary schools — are shockingly illiterate and ignorant. Often they know nothing but school subjects; sometimes they scarcely know them. Even the medical profession does not present such extremes between the discouraged routine worker and the enthusiast. Everything I am saying now implies a demand for more and better teachers-better paid, with better equipment. And these teachers will have to be kept fresh. It is stipulated in most leases that we should paint our houses outside every three years and inside every seven years, but nobody ever thinks of doing up a school teacher. There are teachers at work in this

country who haven't been painted inside for fifty years. They must be damp and rotten and very unhealthy for all who come in contact with them. Two-thirds of the teaching profession now is in urgent need of being either reconditioned or superannuated. In this advancing world the reconditioning of both the medical and the scholastic practitioner is becoming a very urgent problem indeed, but it is not one that I can deal with here. Presently this section will be devoting its attention to adult education and then I hope the whole question of professional and technical refreshment will be ventilated.

And there is another matter also closely allied to this question of the rejuvenation of teachers, at which I can only glance now, and that is the bringing of school books up to date. In this informative section of school work there is hardly a subject in which knowledge is not being vigorously revised and added to. But our school work does not follow up the contemporary digesting of knowledge. Still less do our school libraries. They are ten, fifteen years out of date with much of their information. Our prison libraries by the by are even worse. I was told the other day of a virtuous prisoner who wanted to improve his mind about radio. The prison had a collection of technical works made for such an occasion and the latest book on radio was dated 1920. There is, I have been told, an energetic New School Books Association at work in this field, doing what it can to act in concert with those all too potent authorities who frame our examination syllabuses. I am all for burning old school books. Some day perhaps we shall have school books so made that at the end of ten or twelve years, let us say, they will burst into flames and inflict severe burns upon any hands in which they find themselves. But at present that is a little Utopian. It is even more applicable to the next stage of knowledge to which we are now coming.

This stage represents our last 1,000 hours and roughly I will call it the upper form or upper standard stage. It is really the closing phase of the available school period. Some of the matter I have marked for the history of this grade might perhaps be given i.n Grade B and vice versa. We have still a lot to do if we are to provide even a skeleton platform for the mind of our future citizen. He has still much history to learn before his knowledge can make an effective contact with his duties as a voter.

You see I am still reserving four-tenths of the available time, that is to say nearly 400 hours for history. But now we are presenting a more detailed study of such phenomena as the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of Russia, the history of the Baltic, the rise and fall of the Spanish power, the Dutch, the first and second British Empires, the belated unifications of Germany and Italy. Then as I have written we want our modern citizen to have some grasp of the increasing importance of economic changes in history and the search for competent economic direction and also of the leading theories of individualism, socialism, the corporate state, communism.

For the next five-and-twenty years now the ordinary man all over the earth will be continually confronted with these systems of ideas. They are complicated systems with many implications and applications. Indeed they are aspects of life rather than systems of ideas. But we send out our young people absolutely unprepared for the heated and biased interpretations they will encounter. We hush it up until they are in the thick of it. And can we complain of the consequences? The most the poor silly young things seem able to make of it is to be violently and self-righteously Anti- something or other, Anti-Red, Anti-Capitalist, Anti-Fascist. The more ignorant you are the easier it is to be an Anti. To hate something without having something substantial to put against it. Blame something else. A special sub-section of history in this grade should be a course in the history of war, which is always written and talked about by the unwary as though it had always been the same thing, while as a matter of fact — except for its violence — it has changed profoundly with every change in social, political and economic life. Clearly parallel to this history our young people need now a more detailed and explicit acquaintance with world geography, with the different types of population in the world and the developed and undeveloped resources of the globe. The devastation of the world's forests, the replacement of pasture by sand deserts through haphazard cultivation, the waste and exhaustion of natural resources, coal, petrol, water, that is now going on, the massacre of important animals, whales, penguins, seals, food fish, should be matters of universal knowledge and concern.

Then our new citizens have to understand something of the broad

elements in our modern social structure. They should be given an account of the present phase of communication and trade, of production and invention and above a.l.l they need whatever plain knowledge is available about the conventions of property and money. Upon these interrelated conventions human society rests, and the efficiency of their working is entirely dependent upon the general state of mind throughout the world. We know now that what used to be called the inexorable laws of political economy and the laws of monetary science, are really no more than rash generalisations about human behaviour, supported by a maximum of pompous verbiage and a minimum of scientific observation. Most of our young people come on to adult life, to employment, business and the rest of it, blankly ignorant even of the way in which money has changed slavery and serfdom into wages employment and of how its fluctuations in value make the industrial windmills spin or flag. They are not even warned of the significance of such words as inflation or deflation, and so the wage-earners are the helpless prey at every turn towards prosperity of the savings-snatching financier. Any plausible monetary charlatan can secure their ignorant votes. They

Informative Content of Education 8 5 know no better. They cannot help themselves. Yet the subject of property and money — together they make one subject because money is only the fluid form of property — is scarcely touched upon in any stage in the education of any class in our community. They know nothing about it; they are as innocent as young lambs and born like them for shearing.

And now here you will see I have a very special panel. This I have called Personal Sociology. Our growing citizen has reached an age of self- consciousness and self-determination. He is on the verge of adolescence. He has to be initiated. Moral training does not fall within the scope of the informative content of teaching. Already the primary habits of truthfulness, frankness, general honesty, communal feeling, helpfulness and generosity will or will not have been fostered and established in the youngster's mind by the example of those about him. A mean atmosphere makes mean people, a too competitive atmosphere makes greedy, self-glorifying people, a cruel atmosphere makes fierce people, but this issue of moral tone does not concern us now here. But it does concern us that by adolescence the

time has arrived for general ideas about one's personal relationship to the universe to be faced. The primary propositions of the chief religious and philosophical interpretations of the world should be put as plainly and impartially as possible before our young people. They will be asking those perennial questions of adolescence — whence and why and whither. They will have to face, almost at once, the heated and exciting propagandas of theological and sceptical partisans — pro's and anti's. So far as possible we ought to provide a ring of cleat knowledge for these inevitable fights. And also, as the more practical aspect of the question, What am I to do with my life? I think we ought to link with our general study of social structure a study of social types which will direct attention to the choice of a métier. In what spirit will you face the world and what sort of a job do you feel like? This subject of Personal Sociology as it is projected here is the informative equivalent of a confirmation class. It says to everyone: "There are the conditions under which you face your world." The response to these questions, the determination of the will, is however not within our present scope. That is a matter for the religious teacher, for intimate friends and for the inner impulses of the individual. But our children must have the facts.

Finally, you will see that I have apportioned some time, roughly two-tenths of our 1,000 hours, in this grade to the acquisition of specialised knowledge. Individuality is becoming conscious of itself and specialisation is beginning.

Thus I budget, so to speak, for our 2,400 hours of informative teaching. We have brought our young people to the upper form, the upper standard. Most of them arc now going into employment or special training and so taking on a role in the collective life. But there remain some very essential things which cannot be brought into school teaching, not through any want of time, but because of the immaturity of the growing mind. It we are to build a real modern civilisation we must go on with definite informative instruction into and even beyond adolescence. Children and young people are likely to be less numerous proportionally in the years ahead of us in all the more civilised populations and we cannot afford to consume them in premature employment after the fashion of the preceding centuries. The average age of our population is rising and this involves an

upward extension of education. And so you will see I suggest what I call an undergraduate or continuation school, Grade D, the upper adolescent stage, which I presume will extend at last to every class in the population, in which at least half the knowledge acquired will be specialised in relation to interest, aptitude and the social needs of the individual. But the other half will still have to be unspecialised, it will have to be general political education. Here particularly comes in that education for citizenship to which this Educational Section is to give attention later. It seems to me altogether preposterous that nowadays our educational organisation should turn out new citizens who are blankly ignorant of the history of the world during the last twenty-five years, who know nothing of the causes and phases of the Great War and are left to the tender mercies of freakish newspaper proprietors and party organisers for their ideas about the world outlook, upon which their collective wills and actions must play a decisive part.

Social organisation is equally a matter for definite information. "We are all socialists nowadays." Everybody has been repeating that after the late Lord Rosebery for years and years. Each for all and all for each. We are all agreed upon the desirability of the spirit of Christianity and of the spirit of Democracy, and that the general interest of the community should not be sacrificed to Private Profit. Yes — beautiful, but what is not realised is that Socialism in itself is little more than a generalisation about the undesirability of irresponsible ownership and that the major problem before the world is to devise some form of administrative organisation that will work better than the scramble of irresponsible owners. That form of administrative organisation has not yet been devised. You cannot expropriate the private adventurer until you have devised a competent receiver for the expropriated industry or service. This complex problem of the competent receiver is the underlying problem of most of our constructive politics. It is imperative that every voter should have some conception of the experiments in economic control that are in progress in Great Britain, the United States of America, Italy, Germany, Russia, and elsewhere. Such experiments are going to affect the whole of his or her life profoundly. So, too, are the experiments in monetary and financial

organisation. Many of the issues involved go further than general principles. They are quantitative issues, questions of balance and more or less. A certain elementary training in statistical method is becoming as necessary for anyone living in this world of today as reading and writing. I am asking for this much contemporary history as the crowning phase, the graduation phase of our knowledge-giving. After that much foundation, the informative side of education may well be left to look after itself.

Speaking as a teacher of sorts myself, to a gathering in which teachers probably predominate, I need scarcely dilate upon the fascination of diagram drawing. You will understand how reluctant I was to finish of at Grade D and how natural it was to extend my diagram to two more grades and make it a diagram of the whole knowledge organisation of a modern community. Here then is Grade E, the adult learning that goes on now right through life, keeping oneself up to date, keeping in touch with the living movements about us. I have given a special line to those reconditioning courses that must somehow be made a normal part in the lives of working professional men. It is astonishing how stale most middle-aged medical men, teachers and solicitors

And beyond Grade E I have put a further ultimate grade for the fully adult human being. He or she is learning now, no longer only from books and newspapers and teachers, though there has still to be a lot of that, but as a worker with initiative, making experiments, learning from new experience, an industrialist, an artist, an original writer, a responsible lawyer, an administrator, a statesman, an explorer, a scientific investigator. Grade F accumulates, rectifies, changes human experience. And here I bring in an obsession of mine with which I have dealt before the Royal Institution and elsewhere. You see, indicated by these arrows, the rich results of the work of Grade F flowing into a central world-encyclopaedic-organisation, where it will be continually summarised, clarified, and whence it will be distributed through the general information channels of the world.

So I complete my general scheme of the knowledge organisation of a modern community and submit it to you for your consideration.

I put it before you in good faith as a statement of my convictions. I do not know how it will impress you and I will not anticipate your

criticisms. It may seem impossibly bold and "Utopian." But we are living in a world in which a battleship costs £8,000,000, in which we can raise an extra £400,000,000 for armaments with only a slight Stock Exchange qualm, and which has seen the Zeppelin, the radio, the bombing aeroplane come absolutely out of nothing since 1900. And our schools are going along very much as they were going along thirty-seven years ago.

There is only one thing I would like to say in conclusion. Please do me the justice to remember that this is a project for Knowledge Organisation only and solely. It is not an entire scheme of education I am putting before you. It is only a part and a limited part of education — the factual side of education — I have discussed. There are 168 hours in a week and I am dealing with the use of rather less than six during the school year of less than forty weeks — for ten years. It is no good saying as though it was an objection either to my paper or to me, that I neglect or repudiate spiritual, emotional and aesthetic values. They are not disregarded, but they have no place at all in this particular part of the educational scheme. I have said nothing about music, dancing, drawing, painting, exercise and so on and so forth. Not because I would exclude them from education but because they do not fall into the limits of my subject. You no more want these lovely and elementary things mixed up with a conspectus of knowledge than you want playfulness in an ordnance map or perplexing whimsicality on a clock face. You have the remaining 162 hours a week for all that. But the spiritual, emotional, aesthetic lives our children are likely to lead, will hardly be worth living unless they are sustained by such a clear, full and sufficient backbone of knowledge as I have ventured to put before you here.

APPENDIX I. — RUFFLED TEACHERS

Published in the *Sunday Chronicle*, September 12th, 1937

THE BREEZE AT THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION

I FIND myself in trouble with a number of indignant school inspectors and teachers throughout the country, and I am in the awkward position of a man who is essentially right but who has nevertheless been rather tactless in his phrasing. And also I have suffered from the necessity reporters and editors are under to compress and point what one has said. At times their sense of drama leads them to omit the meat and give only the salt and mustard, and so one's remarks are presented in a state of exaggerated pungency. I find I have wounded more than I intended.

Moreover the reporters at the meeting were supplied with a first draft of my address and this I had already modi6ed in certain respects before I read it. For example, I did not say our schools are "drooling along" much as they did in 1900. "Drooling" was a hard offensive word. Actually I said they were "going along" much as they did in 1900, but the reporters sitting under me with the printed draft before them did not note the change nor did they notice the insertion of a considerable passage upon the underpayment, overwork, limitation upon initiative and so forth that prevent a vigorous teacher from doing himself or herself full justice. But these are subsidiary matters.

I still maintain when all allowances have been made for the progress of education in the past third of a century that elementary teaching throughout the world — even in our own urban elementary schools where progress has been most marked — has not kept pace with the demands of a time in which such things as aviation and radio have leapt out of nothingness into primary importance in our affairs, and in which human power for good or evil has been stupendously increased. Schools as a whole may be going forwards, but nevertheless they are being outrun. In the race between education and catastrophe, catastrophe is winning.

And anxious though I am to salve the feelings of teachers and

scholastic authorities in this matter, I am obliged to remark upon one or two characteristics of this storm of protest and repudiation I have provoked. The first is the solidarity of the teachers in their indignation. I say there are teachers who are not up to their job, that some of them have not been done up inside for fifty years. They are as damp and rotten as old houses. And surely every teacher knows that that is true. "Some" is not "all." But will they admit it? Instead they flare up. "You say we are all damp and rotten!" I don't. And when I say two-thirds of the teaching profession is in urgent need of either reconditioning or superannuation, I mean two-thirds and not the whole.

In spite of the anger I have evoked I stick to that rough estimate. The level of qualification is still far too low for modern needs, the amount of reconditioning in brief "holiday" courses and so forth is not enough, and the educational engine in the social apparatus is not up to the stresses it has to meet, We want more and better teachers. We want them urgently. Elementary education lags — throughout the world. I stick to that.

From all the Parts of the country come "retorts" to my address. "Smithstown Director of Education Hits Out", and that sort of thing. Maybe sometimes the journalist barbs the shaft. The more substantial counter-attack is that I am out of date — usually it is "sadly out of date". Poor Mr. Wells! A charming head girl (with photograph) is produced to say that surely I must be thinking of my own school days sixty years ago, and inspectors, masters, head-mistresses and assistants combine in being "amused" at my unawareness of the blinding light in which their pupils live nowadays. They say I have not been in a school for fifty years, which is not exactly true and that lays them open to the obvious remark that some of them seem never to have been out of school all their lives. It is a peculiar atmosphere for I the teacher, that school atmosphere. It seems to beget a peculiar sensitiveness to criticism. One magnificent head-mistress is "disgusted" that I do not know that in 1917 she was teaching exactly what I ask to have taught and taught properly in I937. Sonic day she may read my address in full, bring herself to study my innocent-looking diagram, and realise with a shock to how much foresight, modernity and religious novelty she had laid claim. Much capital is

made of the fact that I hoped some day “1066 and all that” will be altogether forgotten in our schools. My assailants assume this to be an assertion that “1066 and all that” is what they are I teaching today. But is its They should read more carefully. The fact remains that the 1066 stuff is still going on in places now. And even when “1066 and all that” is left behind, it may still be a long long way to the necessary historical basis of a modern mind. A little stuff about “hunter peoples” and “plough peoples” may not settle the matter. I remain unconvinced of this alleged complete modernisation of history teaching. What alarms me most in this outburst of retorts is the tremendous self-satisfaction of so many of these acting educationists. I should hate to think it true that you can teach something to every man (or woman) except a schoolmaster (or schoolmistress). But you should see my mail and press cuttings this week. I remain absolutely sure that no proper treatment of the property-money conventions suitable for teaching has yet been achieved and I deny that any elementary education for the modern world state is possible until that is done. Nothing but twaddle and nonsense about property, money or economic control is being handed out to young people throughout the world. No picture of the economic world is given them. My magnificent schoolmistress, my hitting — out director of education, and all the rest of them, are in a state of self-protective hallucination about that.

I admit the extraordinary difficulty of creating a really modernised universal education, but I insist upon its Urgent necessity. In the course of the remaining discussions of the British Association it did become clear to us that we could not discuss education in vacuo. Education must have an objective and that objective must be the ideal of a community in which the educated person will live. Our Nazi and French visitors, Professor Levy and Mr. F. Horrabin, helped us to realise that. If the activities of the Educational Section of the British Association of this year did nothing else, they serve materially to show how inseparable is education from the general body of social science and theory.

Education and social existence are reciprocal. Its informative side has to be essentially social elucidation. So that the ideal teacher can never be a specialist; he has to have a working conception of the

world as a whole into which his teaching fits. When I write or talk to teachers about the real magnitude of their task I am apt to feel like Max Beerbohm's caricature of Walt Whitman urging the American eagle to soar. It remained ruffled and inactive on its perch. Nevertheless for good or ill the future is in the hands of the teachers as it is in the hands of no other men and women, and the more this is recognised the more urgent our criticisms of them will have to be.

APPENDIX II. — PALESTINE IN PROPORTION

Published in the *Sunday Chronicle*, October 3rd, 1937)

THE other day I was talking to an assembly of teachers and scientific workers on the problem of getting the elements of a modern world outlook into the ordinary human mind during its all too brief years of schooling and initiation. I was not persuading nor exhorting; I was exposing my thoughts about one of the primary difficulties in the way of a World Pax which will save mankind from the destruction probable in putting the new wine of mechanical and biological power into the worn bottles of social and moral tradition. I dealt with the swiftness of life, the shortness of time available for learning and the lag and limitations of teaching.

In my survey of the minimum knowledge needed to make an efficient citizen of the world, I laid great stress upon history. It is the core of initiation. History explains the community to the individual, and when the community of interests and vital interaction has expanded to planetary dimensions, then nothing less than a clear and simplified world history is required as the framework of social ideas. The history of man becomes the common adventure of Everyman.

I deprecated the exaggerated importance attached to the national history and to Bible history in western countries. I maintained that the Biblical account of the Creation and the Fall gave a false conception of man's place in this universe. I expressed the opinion that the historical foundation for world citizenship would be better laid if these partial histories were dealt with only in their proper relation to the general development of mankind. In particular I pointed out that Palestine and its people were a very insignificant part of the general picture. It was a side-show in the greater conflicts of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Nothing important, I said, ever began there or worked out there...

In saying that I felt that I was stating plain matter-of-fact to well-informed hearers. But it is not what I should have thought and said, forty years ago. And since the publication of my remarks, there have

been a number of retorts and replies to my statement that have made me realise how widely and profoundly and by what imperceptible degrees, my estimate of this Jewish history has been changed since my early years and how many people still remain under my earlier persuasions. Long after I ceased to be a Christian, I was still obsessed by Palestine as a region of primary importance in the history of human development. I ranked it with Greece as a main source in human, moral and intellectual development. Most people still seem to do so. It may be interesting to state compactly why I have grown out Of that conviction.

Very largely it was through rereading the Bible after an i interlude of some years and with a fresh unprejudiced mind, that this change came about in my ideas. My maturer impression of that remarkable and various bale of literature which we call the Old Testament was that it had been patched a lot but very little falsified. Where falsification appeared, as in the number of hosts and slain in the Philistine bickerings, it was very naive, transparent and understandable falsification.

I was not impressed by the general magnificence of the prose, about which one still hears so much. There are some splendidly plain and vivid passages and interludes of great dignity and beauty, but the bulk of the English Bible sounds to me pedestrian translator's English, quite unworthy of the indiscriminate enthusiasm that has been poured out upon it. From their very diverse angles the books of the Bible have an entirely genuine flavour.

It is a collection; it is not a single book written ad hoc like the Koran. And the historical parts have the quality of honest history as well as the writers could tell it. Jewish history before the return from Babylon as the Bible gives it, is the unpretending story of a small barbaric people whose only gleam of prosperity was when Solomon served the purposes of Hiram by providing an alternative route to the Red Sea, and built his poor little temple out of the profits of porterage. Then indeed there comes a note of pride. It is very like the innocent pride of a Gold Coast negro whose chief has bought a motor-car. The prophetic books, it seems to me, reek of the political propaganda of the adjacent paymaster states and discuss issues dead two dozen centuries ago.

One has only to read the books of Ezra and Nehemiah to realise the real quality of the return of that miscellany of settlers from Babylon, a miscellany so dubious in its origins, so difficult to comb out. But a legend grew among these people of a Tremendous Past and of a Tremendous Promise. Solomon became a legend of wealth and wisdom, a proverb of superhuman splendour.

In the New Testament we hear of "Solomon in all his Glory." It was a glory like that of the Kings of Tara. When I remarked upon this essential littleness of Palestine I did not expect any modern churchmen to be shocked. But I brought upon myself the retort from the bishops of Exeter and Gloucester that I was obsessed by "mere size" and that I had no sense of spiritual values. My friend, Mr. Alfred Noyes, reminded me that many pumpkins were larger than men's heads, and what had I to say to that? But I had not talked merely of physical size. I had said that quite apart from size nothing of primary importance in human history was begun and nothing worked out in Palestine. That is I had already said quite definitely that Palestine was not a head but a pumpkin and a small one at that. A number of people protest. But, they say, surely the great network of modern Jewry began in Palestine and Christianity also began in Palestine! To which I answer, "I too thought that." We float in these ideas from our youth up. But have we not all taken the atmosphere of belief about us too uncritically? Are either of these ideas sound? I myself have travelled from a habit of unquestioning acquiescence to entire unbelief. May not others presently do the same? I do not believe that Palestine was the cradle of either Jewry or Christendom.

So far as the origin of the Jews is concerned, the greater probability seems to me that the Jewish idea was shaped mainly in Babylon and that the return to Judea was hardly more of a complete return and concentration than the Zionist return today. From its beginning the Jewish legend was a greater thing than Palestine, and from the first it was diffused among all the defeated communities of the Semitic-speaking world.

The synthesis of Jewry was not, I feel, very much anterior, if at all, to the Christian synthesis. It was a synthesis of Semitic-speaking peoples and not simply of Hebrews. It supplied a rallying idea to the Babylonian, the Carthaginian, the Phoenician, whose trading and

financial methods were far in advance of those of the Medes, Persians, Greeks and Romans who had conquered them. It was a diffused trading community from the start.

Jewry was concentrated and given a special character far more by the Talmudic literature that gathered about the Old Testament collection, than by the Old Testament story itself Does anyone claim a Palestinian origin for the Talmud? I doubt if very much of the Bible itself was written in Palestine. I believe that in nine cases out of ten when the modern Jew goes back to wail about his unforgettable wrongs in Palestine he goes back to a country from which most of his ancestors never came.

When Paul started out on his earlier enterprise of purifying and consolidating Jewry before his change of front on the road to Damascus, he was on his way to a Semitic — a Jewish community there, and Semitic communities existed and Semitic controversies were discussed in nearly every centre of his extensive mission journeys. There was indeed a school of teachers in Jerusalem itself; but Gamaliel was of Babylonian origin and Hillel spent the better part of his life and learning in Babylon before he began to teach in Jerusalem. From the Bible itself and from the disappearance of Carthaginian, Phoenician and Babylonian national traditions simultaneously with the appearance of Jewish communities throughout the western world, communities innocent of Palestinian vines and fig trees and very experienced in commerce, I infer this synthetic origin of Jewry, Of course, if the reader is a believing Christian, then I suppose the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth at Jerusalem is the cardinal event of history. But evidently that crucifixion had to happen somewhere and just as Christian critics can charge me with being obsessed by mere size in my deprecation of Palestine, so I can charge them with being obsessed by mere locality. If the crucifixion has the importance attached to it by orthodox theologians then, unless my reading of theology is all wrong, it must be a universal and eternal and not a temporal and local event.

Moreover nowadays there is a considerable body of quite respectable atheists, theists and variously qualified Christians who do not find in that practically unquestionable historical event — I throw no doubt upon its actuality — the centre upon which all other events

revolve. There has been a steady enlightenment upon the relations of Christian doctrine ceremony and practices to the preceding religions of Egypt, Western Asia and the Mediterranean, to the Egyptian trinity, to the Goddess Isis, to the blood redemption of Mithraism. In this great assembled fabric of symbols and ideas, the simple and subversive teachings of the man Jesus who was crucified for sedition in Jerusalem, play a not very essential part. Christianity, I imagine, or something very like it, would have come into existence, with all its disputes, divisions, heresies, protestantism and dissents, if there had been no Essenes, no Nazarenes and no crucified victim at all. It was a natural outcome of the stresses and confusions that rose from the impact of more barbaric and usually Aryan-speaking eonquerors, upon Egypt and upon the mainly Semitic-speaking civilisations, very much as Greek philosophy and art were the outcome of the parallel impact of the Hellenic peoples upon the Aegean cultural life. Old creeds lost their power and old usages their prestige. The temporarily suppressed civilisation sought new outlets. The urgency towards new forms of social and moral statement and adaptation was very great.

It was, I suppose, the advantage of the nexus of Semitic communities throughout the western world, that favoured the spread of Judaism and of the semi-Semitic Christianity that grew side by side with it rather than the diffusion of Persian religious inventions or Greek science and philosophy. It was an unpremeditated advantage. The thing happened so. And on that basis European mentality rests. We are all more or less saturated with this legendary distortion of historical fact. It makes us a little uncomfortable, we feel a slight shock when it is called in question.

Such is the conception of Jewish and Christian origins that has displaced the distortions of my early Low Church upbringing. It has robbed Palestine of every scrap of special significance for me and deprived those gigantic figures of my boyhood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses of their cosmic importance altogether. They were local celebrities of a part of the world in which I have no particular interest. Once they towered to the sky. I want to get them and Palestine out of the way so that our children shall start with a better perspective of the world.

APPENDIX III. — THE FALL IN AMERICA, 1937

Published in *Collier's*, January 28th, 1938

I SPENT October and November in America and saw Indian summer at its best, colours such as no other part of the world can boast, russet, glowing reds, keen bright yellows, soft green yellows, grey-blue, black-green, and skies of a serene magnificence. And the white American homes, grey-tiled, nestled brightly in that setting. In Philadelphia it rained, but it always rains in Philadelphia, and New York forgot itself for a day or so and blew and rained. Kansas City looked amazingly fine and handsome and I admired the parklands Henry Ford is laying out by Dearborn and the fine new pile of the Yale library, Gothic with a touch of skyscraper, and 2. great success at that. From the humming plane that took me from Detroit to Boston I looked out and saw Niagara foaming in the sunshine. I spent an instructive day at Flushing while the piledrivers hammered down hundred-foot trees into the mud, like a carpet-layer hammering tacks, preparing for the buildings that are to make New York's World Fair of 1939 the most wonderful ever. Everywhere colour, warmth, movement, vitality-and people talking about the new depression and possible war.

The depression that has struck America this autumn has been the most surprising thing in the world. It has been like the unaccountable failure of an engine. The wheels that had been spinning so busily slowed down until now the spokes are visible, and nobody on earth seems to know when they will pick up again or even whether they will pick up again. I came over to America once in the season of hope and hardship when President Franklin Roosevelt was newly in the White House. I thought then that he and Stalin were the most eventful persons in the world. They are both in their successes, such as they are, and in their human shortcomings, cardinal men. The old private-property money system was showing signs of age and an imminent breakdown. A new order was indicated as plainly in America as Russia. The New Deal, I assumed, was to be a real

effective reconstruction of economic relationships and the Brain Trust was to get together and tell us how. I was particularly keen at that time to see and sample what I could of the Brain Trust, that improvised council of informed and constructive men which had to modernise and re-equip a staggering modern community. I found it a trifle incoherent. I went afterwards to Russia to talk to Gorky and Stalin about the absolute necessity for free discussion if a social order is to be effectively reconstituted. But Gorky I found grown old, fame-bitten and under the spell of Stalin, and Stalin, whom I liked, has never breathed free air in his life and did not know what it meant. When I revisited the President in 1935 things were asway and rather confusing. Now they are clearer. The New Deal was a magnificent promise, and it evoked a mighty volume of hope. Now that hope has been dissipated. Mass-hope is the most wonder-working gift that can come into the hands of a popular leader. The mass-hope of world peace at the end of the Great War, the mass-hope of the Russian revolution and the mass-hope of the New Deal were great winds of opportunity. But these great winds of opportunity do not wait for ships to be built or seamen to . learn navigation. They pass; they are not to be recalled. As I flew now over sunlit America and noted the traffics of life ebbing again below, and realised that that great capital of hope was nearly spent, I found the riddle of how people will behave, get past or stand up to, what is coming to them this year, a problem very difficult to contemplate in a sunlit manner. More and more of them will be short of food and shelter this winter — with no end in sight and nothing of the trustfulness that staved of disaster, perhaps only temporarily, in 1934.

Like hundreds of thousands of people I have had some sleepless nights over that riddle. It has been more and more vivid in my mind, since I wrote Anticipation: in 1900, that our world cannot struggle out of its present confusions and insufficiencies without a vigorous re-organisation of its knowledge, thought and will. Its universities, schools, books, newspapers, discussions and so on seem absurdly inadequate for the task of informing and holding together the mind of our modern world community. Something better has to be built up.

Nothing can be improvised now in time to save us from some extremely disagreeable experiences. The Flood is coming anyhow,

and the alternative to despair is to build an ark. My other name is Noah, but I am like someone who plans an ark while the rain is actually beginning. This time I have been giving a lecture in a number of great cities about various possible educational expansions. I have been trying to interest influential people in schemes for knowledge organisation and I have been talking to teachers, professors, educationists — in considerable profusion.

I have never lectured before in America and only my real fanaticism about education made me attempt it at all. I liked it much more and it tired me much less, than I had anticipated, and my audiences abounded in pleasant young people who listened intelligently and asked intelligent questions. There were drawbacks — a processional hand-shaking, for example, and a disposition to lure the lecturing visitor by promises of tea and a quiet time, into large unsuspected assemblies where he is pressed to give an uncovenanted address. He is pushed through a door suddenly and there an ambushed audience is unmasked. It is not generally known in Europe — possibly I have been carried away by some misunderstanding — that in every considerable American city large gatherings of mature, prosperous, well-dressed women are in permanent session. They sit in wait, it seems, for any passing notoriety and having caught one insist on "a few words." This year they are all wearing black hats. These hats stick in my mind. Ultimately of the most varied shapes, the original theme seems to have been cylindrical, so that the general effect of an assembly of smart American womankind in 1937 is that of a dump of roughly treated black tin cans. The crazy irrelevance of this headgear on embattled middle-aged womanhood, is as essential a part of my memories of America this year, as the general disposition to discuss the depression and suggest nothing about it, and the still unstanched criticism of the President.

I talked to the President over a lunch tray and I told him how variously he was disapproved of and how incapable the opposition seemed to be of presenting a plausible alternative to him. It was our third meeting. I wrote of him some years ago as floating a little above the level of ordinary life. I find him floating more than ever. He seems to me to belong to the type of Lord Balfour, Lord Grey of

Fallodon and Justice Holmes, great independent political figures, personally charming, Olympians detached from most of the urgencies of life, dealing in a large leisurely fashion with human stresses. The President is a skilled politician, as Holmes was a great lawyer, and Grey a bird watcher and fly-fisherman, but the quality their statesmanship has in common is its dignified amatcurishness. "Tell me," Balfour used to say, treating the other fellow as a professional whose business it was to know.

At the first convulsive intimations of failure in the economic machinery of America when Franklin Roosevelt came out as the saviour of his country, "Tell me" was in effect what he said and the Brain Trust was the confused response. I recalled his difficulties to him now, because I wanted to see how far he was a disappointed man and what sort of philosophy he had got out of it. The constitution had lain in wait for him, as every written constitution lies in wait for innovators. But his major insufficiency had been the quality of the aid and direction that the American universities and schools had given him. They hadn't told him, and instead of specialists they had yielded him oddities. The Brain Trust had proved very incalculable men. Men whom he had promoted had, he remarked, a trick of coming out against him. I pressed my obsession that America, like all the rest of the world, is in trouble because of its inadequate intellectual organisation. Men and women have been educated as competitive individuals and not as social collaborators and even at that the level of information has been low.

He agreed and began talking of certain experiments that had been made in the cultural development of Poughkeepsie county. It seemed to me an interesting and amiable exploitation of leisure, about as adequate to the urgencies of our contemporary situation, as polishing a brass button would be in a naval battle. I did not think him oblivious to the reality that America has to reconstruct its social life and cannot do so without a modernisation of education from top to bottom, but I got a very clear impression that he did not feel in the least responsible. He was not deeply interested in preparing for the future. That indifference is a common quality of the Olympian type.

The Olympian type assumes a competent civil service, but it cannot be troubled to make one. It takes the world as it finds it, and

so the worst thing that can be charged against the President's administration is the continuation of the spoils system in the public services, for which I am told his close association with A. Farley is responsible. You cannot have safe administrators who do not feel safe.

We glanced at the possibility of a successor, but he did not seem to have any particular successor or type of successor in mind. We agreed that the danger of a world-wide war crisis would rise towards a maximum between 1939 and 1940 and he thought that by that time there should be some one younger, quicker, and better equipped to meet the urgencies of possible warfare without delay, in the White House. But he spoke of that rather as his own personal problem than Americas I left this autumnal president, feeling extremely autumnal mysel£ and a day or so after I saw a play in New York, *I'd Rather Be Right*, in which I found a good-humoured confirmation of my own impression. It was a play about the American future, personified by a young couple who want to marry; the president, sympathetic but inadequate, was the principal character and the cabinet, the supreme court and so forth were presented under their own names. It bore marks of divergent suggestions, cuttings and rearrangements, but the genius and geniality of George M. Cohan made a delightful and sympathetic figure of the chief. The show is saturated with derisive affection. On my previous visits to America I had remarked that President Roosevelt was believed in enormously or hated intensely. The mood has changed. They like him now. They like him more than ever they did, and they believe in his magic no more.

What do they believe in? I varied my old stock question of his critics "What is your alternative?" to "You are in for a bad winter anyhow and what are you doing to prevent an indefinite prolongation of this decline?"

Lots of people just trust to Providence. "I have always come up before," they say as the drowning man said when he went down for the third time. So far as I could find out, that was the attitude of the old Republican guard. Big business in America appears to be completely bankrupt of political and social philosophy. Probably it never had any. It had simply a set of excuses for practices that were for a time extremely profitable and agreeable. It has over-capitalised

the world, exhausted the land and stuck. Unhappily it sticks in the way. The only industrial leader who seems to be looking forward is the evergreen Henry Ford. I spent a congenial day with him at Dearborn and found him greatly concerned with growing the soya bean, which fixes free nitrogen and enriches the soil that every one else is exhausting. You can make everything from soup and biscuits to motor-car bodies and electric switches from the soya bean. But Ford, in addition to being a great inventive genius, is an individualist by habit and temperament and he stands outside the American scheme, a system in himself. He is like Science. He projects new things into the world, Ford cars which revolutionise the common roads and the common life of America, Ford tractors which set collectivisation afoot in Russia and now the limitless possibilities of soya. And like Science he has his political and social limitations. In the great American [conglomerate] he is like an island of something else. He does not like acquisitive finance and he does not like trade-unionism, but he does not know how to circumvent these two necessary outgrowths of our present competitive property-money system. He has his prejudice against Jewish particularism and his false estimates about the will for peace, but even in that prejudice and that false estimate there is maybe a gleam of prophetic foresight. A harder-thinking United States might have assimilated instead of isolating this outstanding imaginative genius. On the Left side of American affairs, strikes rather than ideas, increase and multiply. I was as much impressed by the number of pickets on the New York pavements as I was by the multitude of black can hats in the women's societies. I had heard a good deal about john L, Lewis as a coming man who Was going to do great things in politics. I met him and tried to find out how he thought the world was going. It reminded me of the distant past when I tried to get Clynes and Henderson and such-like lights of labour to tell me exactly what they thought they were going to do with the dear old British empire.

Maybe I misjudged him, but the impression I had was of a man, leonine according to the old senatorial model — he would look well in a cage with Senator Borah — and capable, but specialised largely in the purely labour issues of transport and mining. Anthracite and its rights and wrongs have entered into his soul. I aired my lifelong

insistence that we and our world are all horribly at sixes and sevens mentally, and that first and foremost the world has to learn and think. He and my host denied hotly that the American Labour Party ignored education.

But I could not satisfy myself that what Labour means by education in America is anything more than an upward extension of the scholastic thing that is, qualified by a certain amount of training for political efficiency. I doubt if in America labour has got even so far as J.F. Horrabin of the British Plebs League or Laski and Strachey of the London Left Book Club, men who have evidently concluded long ago that equipment for an eternal class war is the sole end of human education. I do not believe that any benefit will accrue to America through the development of a special Labour Party in its political life. It is likely to be a heavy drag on intelligent reconstruction. As it has been in Britain. Labour parties have failed to become anything but trade-union parties and trade unionism is nothing more than the defensive organisation of the workers under a private capitalistic system. Its natural tactics are defensive and obstructive. It aims at shorter hours, better pay and a restraint upon dismissals. It is unable to imagine a new system. But a hundred years ago Karl Marx evolved a fantastic notion, partly from an inadequate analysis of British trade unionism and partly out of his inner consciousness, that the worker mass could become a mighty reconstructive force in the world. With no Blue Prints of what it was going to reconstruct. That would be the heresy of Utopianism. That delusion, embodied in communism and labour socialism, has undermined and checked the forces of science and creative liberalism for a century.

The British Labour leaders in power, showed themselves politicians within the containing politics of their time; they had neither the imagination nor the confidence in themselves to lay hands upon the universities, the diplomatic service, the foreign office and the monetary and financial organisations they found in being; they seem never to have heard of the gold standard until it hit them; and put to the test they did not even “nationalise” anything of importance. John L. Lewis may end in the White House as Ramsay Macdonald ended in royal favour, Clynes and Henderson in court

costumes and Snowden and Webb in the house of lords. But "end" is the word for what any definitely Labour politician seems likely to do in the way of creative reconstruction.

I question indeed if the United States has sufficient time ahead to go through a phase of class politics at all. It has had all the possibilities of that worked out for it and ready for study — from Great Britain to Russia. It is an unprecedented country in its size, its freedom and its physical opportunities and I think the world has a right to expect something characteristic and original from it. Cannot it cut out that particular phase and get on?

The thing I found most hopeful among the falling equities and the falling leaves of this visit, was my occasional glimpses of the younger people. I saw more of them and I liked them better than I have ever done before. Every country nowadays' shows a contrast between the old and the young — a contrast in more than age; but here the contrast is astonishing. One still has the old boys with their stately, fatherly presences, uttering platitudes with an intensity of conviction unknown in the rest of the world, one is still introduced to a succession of presidential candidates with an irresistible suggestion about them of Tristram Shandy's bull — and THEN you meet the young.

In Henry James's *America Revisited* he tells of an encounter with a party of pre-war youth, drunken, noisy, coarsely sexual and hilariously irresponsible. I found very little of that, this journey. Instead I found a new generation, alert and interrogative. They have learnt about life in three courses of instruction. The disillusionment of the war made them pacifist. At first in rather a shallow fashion. They just proclaimed they were not to be humbugged into that sort of thing again. Dos Passos, that distinguished writer, has stuck at that stage, he is now a fossil from the first period. He proclaims that the Atlantic is too wide for air-raids, and has not yet discovered Mexico and South America nor the fact that America cannot keep her whole fleet in the Atlantic and the Pacific at the same time. But his juniors have taken these complications into account. Then before they could settle down into a qualified isolationism came the collapse that necessitated the New Deal. There again there was a tendency to think cheaply and there was a rush of uncritical communism, happily

arrested— “happily” so far as America goes-by the Moscow trials and the Trotsky controversy, Now they seem to be facing the American problem in something like its real distinctness and complexity. They have to go further and reconstruct more fundamentally than Marx ever dreamt oh making new minds as well as a new world. I talked to a bunch at Harvard and I talked to a bunch at Yale and sampled individuals in the other places I visited. Cheap red paint is at a discount. I suppose that in a world of Tristram Shandy leaders, the phase of resentful insurgent communism was inevitable, but now in America you could put all the organised communists, rich undergraduates and genuine proletarians together, into a third-rate town and still have houses to let.

Reconstruction through socialisation, strenuous educational work to build up a competent receiver for bankrupt and expropriated public utilities, a steady development of a loyal civil service, freed from— “Farleyism” seems to be the word I want — and after the harsh winter that must surely follow this present Fall, a new spring may break upon the world from America. Through its renascent young people.

Two young men — for so I speak of men in the early forties, nowadays — produced a vivid the upon me, the presidents of Harvard and Yale. They are something new in my experience of Americans, something fresh, clear, frank and simple. President Conant of Harvard, for example, is a very distinguished chemist indeed; he has the balanced lucid mind of the research addict, and he is deliberately fuming from physical science to educational and administrative work. Every one speaks well of him. Ever since I met him I have been asking whether there are more like him and why he is not in the running for the White House. “He has been talked of,” I was told, “but—”

“Well?”

“You see we’ve already had one college president there — Wilson.”

It seems an inadequate excuse. For Wilson was a professor of history, that is to say, a man trained to be unscientific.

Indian summer still reigned as the *Queen Mary* with a sort of lazy swiftness pulled out from dock. I watched the great grey and brown

and amber masses, cliffs and pinnacles of middle and then of lower New York, soften in the twilight and light up. What a spectacle it is!, Such towering achievement and so little finality. How much more vitally unfinished than the contour of dear old Saint Paul's, brooding like a shapely episcopalian hen over the futile uneasiness of London! America seems to have a limitless capacity for scrapping and beginning again.

APPENDIX IV. — TRANSATLANTIC MISUNDERSTANDINGS

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I HAVE recently been going to and fro in America, talking to all sorts of people and hearing all kinds of opinions. I am one of those realists who refuse to be blinkered by current political institutions. I belong to that great and growing community which has a common literature and a common language in English. There has been a revolution in communications during the past hundred years, a virtual abolition of distance, which makes our old separations preposterous. The English-speaking states and nations scattered about the world are no longer divergent. They are coming together again, in their thoughts, knowledge, interests and purposes. They have a common future.

I believe profoundly in the synthetic power of a common idiom of thought and expression. Given a free movement of books, papers, radio beams and the like, this is a unifying force that will triumph ultimately over every form of particularism, nationalism and imaginative antagonism. It is bringing the Californian into clearer and closer understanding with the Kentishman, the New Yorker, the Scot, the Maori, the Afrikander, the Canadian, the Welshman, the Anglo-Indian and the Eurasian. I doubt if the green barriers of a censorship and an artificial language will suffice to keep the Irish Free State out of our world-wide coalescence for long. Irishmen are not going to live content talking faked Erse in a small damp island when they have for wit and abuse and the whole English-speaking world at their disposal. I refuse to call myself foreign or alien among any people who speak, read and think in English. It is because they are less reasonable today than ever they were, that I find the resistances to this greater fusion, increasingly remarkable. There are such resistances, one must admit. There are still all sorts of queer and out-of-date frictions and obstructions in the confluence of this new world-wide English-speaking community of ours. This is particularly evident between the United States and Britain. Partly this is due to

bad tricks of manner and bad habits of mind on the part of the British which irritate many types of Americans excessively; partly it is due to deep-rooted traditions of distrust and antagonism which have long since ceased to have any practical justification.

Almost all English people forget that so far as origins go the population of the United States never was wholly British. They disregard the early Dutch, Swedish, French and other non-British settlers who slowly adopted the English language and traditions before the War of Independence and the immense infusion of the later immigrations, immigrants who had no earthly reason for Anglomania. These people accepted English and the forms of English thought, they amalgamated with the American school of the English-speaking culture, many of them transferred their ancestors to the *Mayflower* and acquired a kind of pre-natal pride in the Battle of Bunker Hill, yet steadily and particularly since the beginning of this century, their distinctive qualities have manifested themselves in a greater variety, a wider range, in American imaginative literature and a broader, more enterprising quality in American thought. For long Boston remained more English than England, but forty years ago my generation hailed the intellectual revolt against Boston (and refined Anglicanism) first in a sprinkling of isolated writers from Whitman to Stephen Crane, and then in a comprehensive expansion and release, which has now made American intellectual life not so much a continuation as a vast extension and Europeanisation of English culture. The annexations have been enormous. The English element has played the part, not so much of a direction as a flux. These are matters all too frequently ignored by English people. The thing has happened in history before. just as American education has oriented itself to the War of Independence, in which not one in a score of living Americans had an active ancestor, so the great Phoenician, Babylonian and Carthaginian populations acquired and entered into that tradition of Judea which holds together the comity of Judaism today. Probably, too, under the empire, millions of Roman citizens from York to Egypt without a drop of Roman blood in their veins felt a personal pride in Romulus and Remus. Assimilation is far easier and more powerful than inheritance. It is the linguistic link and the progressive development of common ideas and understandings that

are destined to hold the English-speaking community together in the future. Britain never was the mother country of the United States, and the first thing an English visitor to America should do is to get rid of that illusion. Long years ago, a century ago, one of the great New England writers of that time — was it Lowell? — wrote a stinging paper on "a certain air of patronage in foreigners." It was an excellent reproof to visiting Europeans and particularly to Englishmen who came over to see America as a new young country, betrayed a sort of upper-form attitude to the new boys, and were quite unable to realise that a man of forty in America is just as old as a man of forty in England, has seen just as much of life and counts as many ancestors between himself and Adam. The political association of Britain and America lasted hardly a couple of centuries. But it set a perennial stamp upon their destinies. From the beginning of their separation there has been a peculiar mutual irritation between Britain and America. It has in it something of the vexation of a divorced couple who still resentfully care for things they had in common. "Think what the Empire would have been if you had stuck to us," is the unspoken accusation of the ordinary Britisher. "Why did you make things so that we had to break?" says the American. "It was your fault," say both of them, "and my side was in the right." Maybe you will think that is now ancient history. It is not. It is as alive today as it was a century ago. The mighty growth of America makes the British none the less regretful for the loss of a common world outlook. They paid too much for clear old George the Third. It was the Hanoverian monarchy, the hungry exploitation of America by the British governing class and the narrow traditions of the Foreign Office that caused that breach. Plebeian Britain was on the side of the colonies in the War of Independence — John Wilkes was very brother to Tom Paine — and from Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (1776-88) to Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man* (1872) you can find the liveliest anticipations in English literature of the role of North America as the hope and refuge of Western culture and freedom. Nothing is forgotten so rapidly as very recent history, and few people nowadays realise how near Britain came a century ago to following the United States along the path to republicanism and to emancipation from an aristocratic ruling class. Joseph Chamberlain,

the father of the present Prime Minister, was a republican outright, but nowadays we forget his talk of ransom — his New Deal phase. Both countries are amazingly ignorant of each other's history during the early nineteenth-century period — they were too busy in other directions to observe each other closely — and few Americans seem to realise the struggle that went on in England during their civil war between the ruling class, which looked forward with pleasant resentment to the break up of the Union, and the liberal British, who instinctively realised that the strength and freedom of America were bound up with their own. To this day relics of that old upper-class resentment lingers. The Bourbons of the court and the diplomatic services still betray a lurking patronage, depreciation and a weak vindictiveness towards America. "Society" is in politics in Britain and out of it in America, but the economic, social and political trends in both systems are alike, their massive interests and mental dispositions converge, and however these retrospective elements may falsify our superficial relationships the enduring disposition of the generality in Britain towards America and the drive behind the national policy are, and always have been, co-operative.

But balancing the retrospective resentment of the British ruling class, there is on the other side a whole system of estrangement between these great populations arising primarily out of the too-cherished tradition of the War of Independence. For several generations that great revolt formed the basis of historical instruction in America. The bridge at Concord, the Boston Tea Party were exaggerated gigantically. The new immigrants took them over. The incoming German or Eastern European learnt to boil with indignation at the employment of Hessian troopers by the Hanoverian king. The inevitable misdemeanours on the part of the British were charged up against them in the true spirit of war propaganda. In the war of 1812 they burnt the Capitol. This was not all. All that might have been forgotten. But the newly separated states developed a financial organisation only very slowly. They were not industrialised for nearly a hundred years and they had to be industrialised by foreign capital — which in those days meant British capital. And they developed a diplomatic service belatedly. Because of this an inferiority complex towards the British arose, quite

naturally, but one that has long since lost any material justification. Wall Street as it grew seemed to the Americans generally very like a British foothold in their economy. America felt that it was entangled monetarily, sold out to London, mysteriously out-manoeuvred in its foreign relations.

America grew, a unified continental mass. Her population is now two-thirds of the English-speaking world, while the British find themselves responsible for an empire which spreads about the planet, the most vulnerable, the most entangled, the most threatened of all existing political systems. Its foreign policy has become now an almost pathetic self-protective opportunism. But to the American this empire is still a greedy octopus, to be distrusted systematically. It has kept an unguarded frontier to the north of him since the separation, nevertheless it is to be distrusted. Its fleets have never threatened America and for fifty years at least Americans have had no uneasiness on their eastern coasts very largely on account of Great Britain, nevertheless it is to be distrusted. Wherever the Union Jack goes it takes the English-speaking American commercial traveller and a friendly banking system with it, nevertheless it is to be distrusted. Some mysterious undermining process is believed to be going on. The phrase adopted, since the War to express this profound distrust has been "British Propaganda."

Suspicion of British propaganda has become a mania. Old ladies in the middle west look under the bed at nights for British propaganda. At home, I am a persona most distinctly non gram with the court, the church, the public schools, the universities, the whole Anglican system; but when I go to America I am discovered to be a British propagandist. America in her serene path to abundance and happiness, is being lured into another war — for the sake of the British. That is the story. America has no interest in the welfare of China, it seems, because the British have great investments there. But we tempt her in. We invented the Pacific coast on her. It is British propaganda to suggest that America has some slight interest in the destinies of the Spanish and the Portuguese-speaking· worlds. To say that isolation from the rest of the world's affairs is a rather cowardly and altogether impracticable ideal for America nowadays, is British propaganda.

There is a copious literature of propaganda against this imaginary British propaganda. The other day I read a book by Mr. Quincy Howe, England Experts Every American to do his Duty, which is quite typical of the methods of the campaign of distrust and estrangement. The history of Anglo-American relations is combed through to present America as the simpleminded cat's-paw of British cunning. This sort of thing crops up everywhere. I found it in the questions put to me after my lectures; I met it in conversation. "You British" they began. Though I had come to America to talk about educational reorganisation and not about international affairs. A hostile power preparing for a conflict with England solo or America solo could not cultivate a crippling breach of their natural alliance more efficiently than this probably quite spontaneous misinterpretation of the British drift. It may prove a very disastrous thing for the entire English-speaking world.

APPENDIX V. — THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD: "AS I SEE IT"

Broadcast talk delivered December 1st, 1937

I FIND myself on the air for the Empire broadcasting service — free to speak for a quarter of an hour on practically any subject that occurs to me — under this most liberating title of As I See it. I suggest that, As I Think about it, would have been a better title. What I see is a brightly lit desk, a lamp, a microphone in a pleasantly furnished room — and a listener, for I never talk for broadcasting without a real live listener actually in the room with me — but what I am thinking about is a great number of listeners, some alone, some in groups, in all sorts of rooms and places, all round the world. We are, I guess, an extremely various and scattered lot indeed, race, religion, colour, age. We have probably only one thing in common. Which is that we speak, write and understand English.

I want to talk about ourselves and the community to which we belong. I see that as a tremendous world brotherhood full of possibilities and full of promise for the hope, the peace, the common understanding of all mankind.

I have been asked by the Empire Broadcasting Service to make this talk, but it is, you must understand, a quite uncontrolled talk or I would not give it. I hold no brief for the Empire as such; it is a complex of political arrangements, which are constantly changing and will continue to change. Widely as it extends, it does not include the larger part of this English-speaking brotherhood of ours, which is to my mind something infinitely more real, more important and more permanent. I am talking reality — not propaganda.

I spent this autumn in the United States. I was lecturing there about intellectual organisation in schools and universities and I talked with all sorts of people from the President and Mr. Henry Ford downward. We all talked the same language, in the same idiom of thought. We understood each other pretty thoroughly. Yet we are drawn from the most diverse sources. It is a common mistake among English people to suppose that Americans are just English people

transplanted. But from the very beginning the United States were of diverse origin. The Swedes, the Dutch, Germans, the French in Louisiana, the Spanish i.n California, were there as soon as the New Englanders, long before the War of Independence. Afterwards there was an enormous influx of Eastern Europeans. And again in the British Empire itself, there is a great assembly of once alien peoples drawn together into a common interchange — from the Eskimo of the Labrador Coast to the Maori of New Zealand. But the English language has amalgamated — or is amalgamating-all these elements into a great cosmopolis, whose citizens can write to each other, read and understand each other, speak freely and plainly to each other, exchange, acquire and modify ideas with a minimum of difficulty. Once or twice before in history there has been such a synthesis in the Latin-speaking world, in the Semitic-speaking world, but never on such a vast scale as in this English-speaking world in which we live and think today. And English has never been forced upon these multitudes who speak it now, they were never subdued to it or humiliated by it, they have taken it up freely and they use it of their own good-will because it serves them best. Now a thing that impresses me greatly, it seems to me one of the most important things in our present world, is that this English-speaking community is not breaking up and does not look like breaking up, into different languages. In the past that sort of thing did occur. Latin, as you know, broke up into French, Italian, Castilian, Catalan and a multitude of minor dialects. But since then a vast change has occurred in the conditions of human life; the forces of separation have been dwindling, the forces that bring us nearer to one another have been increasing enormously, the printed word, books, newspapers, the talking movie, the radio, increasing travel, increasing trade, now forbid dispersal. History has gone into reverse. Instead of being scattered about the earth and forgetting one another, a thing which happened to the Aryan speakers and the Mongolian speakers of the past, we English speakers are being drawn together and learning more and more about each other. This reversal of the old order of things has been going on ever since the steamship and the railways appeared, a century ago. It goes on faster and faster. In the past new dialects were continually appearing; new dialects are

disappearing. The curse of Babel has been lifted from over three hundred million people. This coming together is a new thing in human experience. And having got this unprecedented instrument of thought spread all about the world, a net of understanding, what are we English speakers doing with it to get the best out of it? Are we getting the best out of it?

Are we growing into one mighty community of ideas and sympathies and help and peace as rapidly as we might do? I do not think we are. Something, I admit, is being done to realise the tremendous opportunity of the world-wide spreading of the English language, but nothing like what might be done, if we grasped our possibilities to the full.

Let me tell you as briefly as I can one or two of the things that might be done to make this great gift of a common language better worth while. They are things every one of us in this talk tonight can set about demanding at once. You can write to your representative or member of parliament about them before you go to bed.

First about books. Nothing can pull our minds together as powerfully as books. We all want to read books according to our interests and habits. We find them so dear to buy or so difficult to borrow that most of us cannot read half the books we hear about. And three-quarters of what books there are, we never hear about at all. This is true even here in London. Here I am on the telephone to well-stored book shops and all sorts of people from whom I can get advice. Even so it is true here. But a majority of my listeners tonight may be living in parts of the Empire far away from the centres of book distribution. Mentally many of them must suffer the torments of Tantalus. They perceive there is a great and refreshing flood of ideas, imaginative, informative matter, fantasy, poetical invention flowing through the English world and they Call get only just a splash or so of it to their thirsty lips. In Great Britain in the larger towns you can buy a fair selection of the best books published, even quite new books, for from sixpence to a shilling. But in America there are no really cheap books and the great mass of the workers and poor people there, never read books at all. There are public libraries, of course, where you can wait for books for quite a long time. Most of our 300,000,000 English speakers, through no fault of their own,

read nothing better than a few odd books that chance to come their way. They never acquire the habit of systematic book reading. English, which should be the key of all human thought and knowledge, is for them the key to a non-existent door.

The reading, thinking section, the book-reading section, of the Empire probably does not number a million all told. The rest either read newspapers or do not read at all.

Now before you blame the public or the schools or the booksellers for this immense illiteracy, this great mental underdevelopment, consider the difficulties of sending books about. Try sending a book, a good fat book, half-way round the world and see what it costs you. You will realise that a special low postal rate for books and parcels of books, a special preference rate, a rate to encourage the sending of books, is one of the first things necessary before we can begin to realise the full cultural promise of our widespread English tongue. It is a matter that should concern every Ministry of Education. Does it?

Given such rates you'll soon rind every publisher in the world building bigger printing plants and selling books for sixpence — almost as soon as they are issued. But book postage is not considered a public service. It is made a source of revenue and until people like ourselves who read and listen in and want to know begin to make a fuss about it, matters will remain very much as they are.

Cheap good books — and next comes the problem of how to hear of them — so that we may — from the ends of the earth — order the ones we really want and spend our sixpences properly. Well, probably half my hearers have never heard of what is called documentation, and they think bibliography is something remote and scholastic and all that sort of thing. But really it is nothing more or less than indexing all that has been written in the world, so that you can find out quickly and surely what has been done, by whom, and under what title. Don't you want to know that? And do you know it? There are hundreds of clever people working out methods of indexing and in a little while it will be quite possible to print and keep up-to-date bibliographies, lists of all the best books, in every great group of subjects in the world. It would be as easy to keep up such bibliography as it is to keep up the issue of railway time-tables. The cost of producing these book guides need not be very much

greater than the cost of producing those time-tables. I doubt if today a hundred thousand of us use any bibliographies at all. What is the good of reading unless you know what books to read? Bibliographies ought to lie about in every educated household.

And another thing which we English speakers have a right to ask for, considering what a vast multitude we are and all that we might be, and that is a general summary of contemporary knowledge and ideas, a real modern, adequate Encyclopaedia, kept up to date and available for the use of any one. That would hold us all together as nothing else would do. We should all be of a mind and nothing on earth would have the strength to stand against our thinking. But is there anything of the sort? No. The latest Encyclopaedia in my study is dated 1929 — eight years old — and it is a very imperfect performance at that. Very old-fashioned. Very little better than the Encyclopaedias of a hundred years ago. Discovery and invention have been going on vigorously for the past eight years — but how am I to learn quickly about that new stuff? There is not a sign of a new one in sight. Does any one care — any of our education departments? Not a rap. The French just now — in spite of threats of war, in spite of great financial difficulties are making a new and a very admirably planned Encyclopaedia. You may think an Encyclopaedia is something only rich people can afford to buy. It ought not to be. If you can afford a radio set, if you can afford a motor-car, surely you can afford a summary of human thought and knowledge. Encyclopaedias need not be as dear as they are, any more than books or bibliographies. Cheaper books, handy bibliographies, a great encyclopaedia, our English-speaking world needs all these things. When automobiles first came along, they seemed likely to become a rich man's monopoly. They cost upwards of £1,000. Henry Ford altered all that. He put the poor man on the road. We want a Henry Ford today to modernise the distribution of knowledge, make good knowledge cheap and easy in this still very ignorant, ill-educated, ill-served English-speaking world of ours. Which might be the greatest power on earth for the consolidation of humanity and the establishing of an enduring creative Pax for all mankind.

My quarter of an hour is at an end. I haven't said half of what I would like to say. But if I have made you a little discontented with

what we are doing with this precious inheritance of ours — English, I shall not have used this bit of time in vain.

THE END

THE FATE OF HOMO SAPIENS

OR, THE FATE OF MAN

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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE been asked to set down as simply and clearly as I can, in one compact book, the reality of the human situation; that is to say I have been asked to state the world as I see it and what is happening to it. This is the result.

A very large part of my conscious life has been a struggle for effective knowledge. I have attempted to collect and summarise existing knowledge so that it could be made available in human living, and to induce other and abler people to take up the same work, I have worked also to bring together incompatible systems of thinking about reality, systems which ignore each other stupidly and wastefully, and are manifestly answerable for much fundamental confusion in human thought. These unresolved, contradictory philosophies and theologies encumber the human mind, and their irresolution is largely due to an elaborate mutual disregard. I am exceptionally intolerant of such inconsistencies, because if I attempt to deal with them they worry and entangle me. I cannot make the necessary reservations and adjustments.

The peculiar strength and the peculiar weakness of my mind are one and the same quality. Put favorably, mine is a very direct mind; put unfavorably, it is unsubtle. I am impatient of complicating details and conventional mis-statements because I am afraid of them. The reader will find this book ego-centered, for so we all began, and also insistent. I *hammer* at my main ideas, and this is an offense to delicate-minded people. If a door is not open I say it is shut, and I am impatient with the suggestion of worldly wisdom that it may be possible to wangle a way round. Yet there may be a way round if you do not lose yourself getting there. You have been warned that I shall not be with you in any such uncertain enterprise. I work not simply for knowledge but for a stark clarity of thought about it. It seems to me a fair challenge to demand a lucid statement of the vision of the universe to which this directness of inquiry and assemblage have brought me.

That vision may affect many readers as unflattering to human self-esteem. I cannot help that; it is the way in which reality has unfolded

itself before me.

By way of Introduction I will tell how I came to see the world as I do. Then in the subsequent sections I will give the conclusions at which I have arrived today. I will tell what I first saw of life. How I saw it. How I was allowed to see it. How my range of vision extended. How knowledge, experience and imagination accumulated and horizon opened beyond horizon.

I was born in a rather unprosperous home; there was no nursery and most of my waking day was spent in an underground kitchen. Very little remains in my memory now of that first world, my infantile world. As I saw it then, it seemed to be the only world. When I put together the notes for this Introduction, I sat for a time, doing my utmost to recall what picture of the world I had in early childhood. I get scarcely anything at all.

It must have been a very limited picture. I had few general ideas. Or none. For instance, my mind was not living in a that world or a round world or anything of that sort, I was not bothering about any shape or size of the world. I was entirely incurious about all that. I was just living in "*the* world." I was informed that there was a home for little children above the bright blue sky, but I do not remember that that interested me in the slightest degree. I was rather more concerned about Old Bogey who would come and fetch me if I told fibs and so on, and I rather disliked (but I did not think very much about) a certain divine eye that was always watching me — generally with disapproval But as far as my recollections go, I was much more afraid of bears, tigers, black men, red Indians and other dangers, lurking in the shadows upstairs and round the corner. That infantile world was a world of vivid, immediate, inconsecutive realities against a background of nothingness that evoked no curiosity. There was the house next door, there was the moon, there was night, there was day and so forth. Why not? With the utmost effort, that is all I can reconstruct of the world I saw before I began to read books and see pictures, go for walks, go to school, and inspect and inquire with the freedom of seven or eight years old.

I have a fuller conception of what I was seeing after that stage. My imagination was being used to amplify and extend what I saw and heard and felt directly. A rather foggy time-background was

taking shape. I heard about “Once upon a time” before I existed. I had a jumbled idea of old England, mostly forests with turrets peeping out of them, old Paris, Rome, where it was always — Nero and Christians fighting beasts in the Coliseum. My historical ideas centered upon Windsor Castle. I had seen Windsor Castle, and I firmly believed that that grandiose round tower, which George the Fourth clapped upon it, was built by William the Conqueror. Rome, Greece, Babylon, Jerusalem and Egypt, arranged anyhow, crowded the background, and the Creation, seen across the shining waters of the Flood and a curious procession of very, very, very old gentlemen — Methuselah beat the record — sealed up the vista of the past.

I was interested in geography chiefly because it provided varied scenery for imaginary adventures. I thought China and Japan were made to be laughed at, though their porcelain and silks and fans were clever. I knew that there were also savages for whom Britain provided missionaries and machine-guns. Savages were generally cannibals and wore few or no garments, which seemed to me very rude of them indeed. I knew the world was round because everybody told me so. If they had told me the world was cone-shaped or flat, I should have known that with equal conviction — and it was only years afterwards that I realized how difficult it is to prove that the world is a globe. There were upper classes one respected and lower classes that one didn’t, and poor people had to work, and that was how things were. The nearer I could edge up to the upper classes the better it would be for me.

So I saw the world about the year 1880, when I was rising fourteen years old, and I think most of my readers will agree with me that I was seeing the world then in a very distorted and foggy fashion. And yet — I was seeing it as most people in Great Britain were seeing it at that time. I was seeing it as vast multitudes of people arc seeing it today. I was seeing it as it was shown to me.

I forget when it was I began to realize that the world as it had been presented to me was not a trustworthy picture of reality, that in effect I was being lied to about life. I began doubting quite early in life. The religion they put before me was queer, muddled stuff, metaphors about unfatherly fathers and sacrificial sons, blood offerings and blood-dripping sacrificial lambs (in suburban London!),

an irrational fall and a vindictive judgment, stuff that took refuge from any intelligent questions behind a screen of awe, mystery and menace, so that my reason did not so much reject it as fail altogether to accept it. What they called morality seemed planned to thrust me into some nasty secret corners and leave me there. I had some bad times, fearing a God whom I felt but did not dare to think a spy, a bully, a tyrant and fundamentally insane, and it was only after terrific distresses and terrors that I achieved disbelief. Fear lingered in my mind long after definite faith had dissolved.

The sublunary world they imposed upon me was equally difficult to accept. The history they taught me wound up at 1700, which was queer when one came to think about it. But even then I must have read books about the French Revolution and George Washington and the Roman Republic, and they had upset my simple faith in the inevitability of our political order, the dear Queen and all the rest of it. A sixpenny book by the late Henry George came into my hands and set me thinking crudely, destructively, but profitably about rent, wages and suchlike matters. Some rumors about a science called geology reached me. I had already observed for myself in the pictures in Wood's Natural History that different species of animals had quite needless resemblances to one another, if it was indeed true that they had all been made separately. Then about that time my schoolmaster set me reading science textbooks to earn Education Department grants for him, and suddenly I woke up to the existence of a vast and growing world of thought and knowledge outside my ordinary circle of ideas altogether. My heavens opened, and the world as I had seen it hitherto became a flimsy veil upon the face of reality.

I have heard other people who have had similar experiences to mine tell of the *thirst for knowledge* they experienced. I suppose I had that thirst in good measure, but far stronger was my anger at the paltry sham of an education that had been fobbed off upon me; angry resentment also at the dismal negligence of the social and religious organizations responsible for me, that had allowed me to be thrust into the hopeless drudgery of a shop, ignorant, misinformed, undernourished and physically under-developed, without warning and without guidance, at the age of thirteen. To sink or swim. I was

too young to make allowances for the people who were exploiting and stifling me. I did not realize that they were quite charming people really, if a little too self-satisfied and indolent. I thought they had conspired to keep me down. It wasn't true that they had conspired to keep me down. But I was down and they didn't bother. They took my inferiority as part of the accepted order. They just trod on me. But I did not discriminate about their responsibility. I *hated* them as only the young can hate, and it gave me the energy to struggle, and I set about struggling, for knowledge. I was bitterly determined to see my world clearer and truer, before it was too late.

To this day I will confess I dislike the restriction and distortion of knowledge as I dislike nothing else on earth. In this modern world it is, I hold, second only to murder to starve and cripple the mind of a child. Emasculation of the mind is surely more horrible than any degrading bodily mutilation. In our modern world we recoil from the deliberate manufacture of human dwarfs, harem attendants and choristers, but the world still swarms with mental cripples, who follow the laws of their own distortion and scarcely suspect they are distorted.

I have indicated the limits of my world outlook in 1880. By extraordinary good luck I caught up to something like contemporary knowledge in the course of a few years. In seven years, before I was twenty-one, I contrived — never mind how — to secure four years of almost continuous study, and three of these were at the Royal College of Science, and one under the professorship of the great Huxley, Darwin's friend; and by 1887 the world as I saw it had become something altogether greater, deeper and finer than the confused picture I had of it in 1880. Mentally, we all travel at our fastest, I suppose, between fourteen and twenty-one. Many of my readers will know from their own experience what I mean when I say that for me these years remain in my memory as if all the time I was putting together an immense jig-saw puzzle in a mood of inspiration. These were the most exciting years in my life. I had been blind and I was learning to see. The world opened out before me. By '88 I saw the world, not precisely as I see it today, but much more as I see it today than as I saw it in 1880. There has been a lot of expansion and supplementing since, but nothing like a fundamental reconstruction.

Now how did we — because I was one of a generation of science students — how did we see the world in '88? Time had opened out for us, and the Creation, the Fall of Man and the Flood, those simple fundamentals of the Judaeo-Christian mythology, had vanished. Forever. Instead I saw a limitless universe throughout which the stars and nebulae were scattering like dust, and I saw life ascending, as it seemed, from nothingness towards the stars.

In the eighties the prevailing ideas about space and time, matter and energy, were simpler than they are now. Space and time just went on forever, we thought. We students used to talk about the fourth and other dimensions, but when I wrote a story for the students' magazine and identified time with the fourth dimension, I thought I was being very original and paradoxical indeed. We also had very definitely limited ideas about the amount of energy latent in the universe, and it seemed to us that our world would probably "freeze up" in a few million years. Still even that gave us a long time ahead, and we thought humanity might see and do tremendous things. We knew the broad outline of the history of life in time; we knew that our ancestors were apes, and it seemed possible that man would go on to a power and wisdom beyond all precedent.

But our ideas of that progress we anticipated were remarkably restricted. Our imaginations were relatively unstimulated. For example, our world, as we saw it then, knew nothing of radio — or to be exact it knew of radio transmission as a curious laboratory experiment, the Hertzian waves — and its ideas about atoms and the statement of physical processes, were naive in the extreme. We doubted if aviation was possible, we doubted if electric fraction was possible, we associated submarines with the fantasies of Jules Verne, and we considered his *Around The World In Eighty Days* an extravagant dream. Our interpretation of mental actions was trivial and shallow almost beyond comparison with what we have now.

As I compare the world as I see it now, with that world I contemplated fifty years ago, I realize how greatly the picture has unfolded and how much understanding has intensified. So far as its scale and texture go, so far as space and time, the atoms and the threads and substance of the picture go, the world as I see it today is altogether more marvelous, mysterious and profound.

It is not only that our analysis of the rhythms and interplay of the physical elements of the universe has been elaborated and rephrased in far more effective modes. In the foreground and middle distance also, concerning affairs upon this planet and the more obvious and immediate activities of life, our enlightenment has been immense. Thanks largely to Freud and his disciples and successors, there has been an immense advance in our self-knowledge. I would put Freud side by side with Darwin as a significant figure in human enlightenment. These two men are cardinal not so much on account of the actual elucidations they produced but 'because of the questions they asked and the method of their questioning. Our knowledge first of our own motives and impulses and then of mass-thought and mass-action, has become beyond comparison more lucid and practical, thanks primarily to the initiatives of Freud.

One immediate result of this rapid progressive enlargement and confirmation of our former outlook has been a tremendous wave of optimistic assurance in the minds of liberal-minded, freely thinking people. They have taken progress in discovery, in intelligent social organization, in the conquest of want, disease, ignorance, as something almost as inevitable as the precession of the Equinoxes. That progress has had the air of something quite independent of the daily lives and mass responses of everyday people. There was nothing anyone need do about it. It came; it unfolded; it increased. Progress! The men of science, the inventors, clever people somewhere were doing it all for us and all we had to do was to sit back and marvel and accept the cornucopia. There are the facts before us, the novelties, the triumphs, perpetually reinforced. In the world as I see it today, the powers and possibilities of human effort appear enormously greater than they did in 1888. And still they increase. Still the prospect and the promise expand.

The case for optimism about physical wants is stronger now than ever. So far as economic circumstances go, the world could be organized to provide every living soul upon it with abundant food, housing and leisure, and that without either direct compulsion to toil or any irksome monotony of employment. We have passed in a single lifetime from a general neediness to a practicable plenty for all The story is too familiar to need exhaustive recapitulation here.

Aviation and radio communication have abolished distance. In 1888 the unity of the world as one community was a remote aspiration; now it has become an imperative necessity. Fifty years ago none of us dreamt of the freedom and fullness of life that is now a plain possibility for everyone. To many hopeful people in die past few decades, an age of power, freedom and abundance has seemed close at hand. Eye has not seen nor ear heard, it is only now entering into the human imagination to conceive, the wonder of the years to come.

And now suddenly we are confronted by a series of distresses and disasters, of a nature to convince the most hopeful of us that all this happy assurance was premature. We anticipated too easily, too greedily and too uncritically. These new powers, inventions, contrivances and methods, are not the unqualified enrichment of normal life that we had expected. They are hurting, injuring and frustrating us increasingly — They are proving dangerous and devastating in our eager but unprepared hands. We are only beginning to realize that the cornucopia of innovation may perhaps prove far more dangerous than benevolent.

What we may call the scientific world has recognized this quite recently. There have been great stirrings of conscience in various scientific organizations upon the question of the misuse of science and invention, and how far the man of science may be held responsible for that misuse. The Associations for the Advancement of Science in Britain, America and Australia have been moving under the initiatives of such men as Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, Lord Rutherford and Sir Richard Gregory. The British Association has created a special Division, not merely a new section but a sort of collateral to itself, for the study of the 1 social relations of science. The fate of this Division will be of considerable interest from our point of view. I have been privileged to attend some of its deliberations and two divergent lines of tendency have been very evident. One is plainly to organize and implement the common creative impulse in the scientific mind so as to make it a vital factor in public opinion; that was the original impulse which evoked the Division; the other is to restrain any such development of an authoritative and perhaps embarrassing criticism of the conduct of public affairs and to keep the man of science modestly to his present

subordination.

It would carry us too far afield to discuss here how far the consciences of men of science may be able to get the upper hand of a trained and experienced governing class, so as to insist upon such collective ideals as they are able to formulate, and how far a trained and experienced governing class may maneuver this medley of distressed and protesting intelligences into the position of a roster of mere "experts" available if called upon by the authorities, and otherwise out of consideration.

It is conceivable that the scientific worker is even now walking into a net; that increasing areas of his inquiries and experiments are falling under the restrictions of "official secrets"; and that far beyond the more obvious realms of physics and chemistry, fields of investigation that have no direct bearing upon warfare are likely to come under control, as favoring subversive ideas undermining the military morale of the community. In Nazi Germany this has happened already to psychological science, to mathematical physics and ethnology — matters quite outside armament and strategy. An almost complete strangulation of the unhampered publication and exchanges of the free scientific period is visibly within the range of contemporary possibility, and the world of scientific workers, as we know them, even with that "Division" to rally them, appears a feeble folk to resist the influences making for that extinction.

No one has ever explored the bases of intellectual freedom in the modern community, and they may prove to be far more flimsy than the intellectual worker, flinging his mind about in the apparent security of his study, imagines.

It is not simply the forcible misuse of purely mechanical inventions that is producing such frightening retrogressions of those brave, free hopes that culminated in the later twenties. Every fresh development of radio, of the film and mass information generally, and all the new educational devices to which we had looked for the rapid spread of enlightenment and a common world understanding, are being subordinated more and more to government restriction and the service of propaganda. They were to have been the artillery of progress. They are rapidly being turned against our mental freedoms with increasing effectiveness.

Plainly, it is high time we looked more closely into the causes of these disconcerting frustrations of our recent large, bright anticipations of a world of plenty and expansion. What is the real position of *Homo sapiens* in relation to his environment? Has he the mastery we assumed he had, or did we make a profound miscalculation of his outlook? Have we been indulging in hopeful assumptions rather than facing the realities of his case? Upon that question the subsequent summary concentrates.

§ 1. — PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

SINCE the day when Herbert Spencer launched the word "Sociology" upon the world, the study of the general question of what is happening to mankind has made great advances. Sociology — or, to give it a more recent and better name, human ecology — has become a real science, analyzing operating causes and forecasting events. Our awareness of our circumstances is altogether more lucid than the world outlook even of our fathers. We have, flowing into the problem of human society, a continually more acute analysis of its population movements, of its economic processes, of the relation of its activities to the actual resources available. We no longer talk with quite the same pompous ignorance as the history teachers of our youth, of the rise and decay of Empires and of the march of civilization from East to West — or from West to East, it is much the same — and suchlike plausible caricatures of the current of events. With the increase in our knowledge and understanding quite new conceptions of the prospects and problems of humanity unfold before us.

The infiltration of biological ideas into sociology and human history, it has to be recognized, is a process still only beginning. The enlightenment of the middle nineteenth century through the destructive analysis of the Creation myth, went on in the face of vast resistances, and not the least of these were in the schools. The new conceptions threatened the very bases of belief oh which right conduct seemed to rest. Men shrank from following out the plain implications of the new discoveries. And so either they were denied, irrationally and frantically, or they were minimized, they were admitted, yes, but as obscure, remote matters, that had little or no significance in the "broader issues" of life. So that they could be taught in a sterilized form or ignored altogether. There was a period of controversy, very disastrous to the old dogmas, and then a phase of defensive silences. Open fighting was abandoned and the established beliefs dug themselves in.

It is still possible for bright youngsters at the universities to enter upon the "advanced" study of history, philosophy and economics, in

the blackest ignorance of general biology. A majority of them remain in that ignorance, with a deepening scholastic hostility to this science, which sits like a neglected creditor at their doors. They have established a social prejudice against this dreaded line of thought and body of knowledge in which they have no share. They succeed in putting it upon the all too snobbish and sensitive young that somehow the biological reference is not quite the thing. It isn't done. It isn't to be thought about. There is an indecency in it. The young university philosopher, historian or economist is in many cases not so much biologically ignorant as biology-proofed.

It is because of such mental gaps and barriers that it is necessary to recapitulate here certain facts about life, which, although they are matters of general knowledge today beyond question and almost beyond cavil, might nevertheless, so far as any effective realization of their bearing upon our general social, political and religious behavior goes, be totally unknown. Yet they bear upon the problems of the present urgently. Contemporary political discussion remains indeed mere maundering empiricism, a tissue of guesses, ill-founded assertions and gossip, until they are brought into court.

This contrast of established knowledge and its effective application is a very remarkable one. Men can know a thing and yet know it quite ineffectively if it contradicts the general traditions and habits in which they live. It is well to understand that at this stage in our analysis, because it bears very directly upon the review of human possibilities to which this summary is directed.

§ 2. — BIOLOGY INVADES HISTORY

ONE of the most striking differences between the outlook of our grandparents and that of a modern intelligence today is the modification of time values that has occurred.

By the measure of our knowledge their time-scale was extremely shallow. They had scarcely any historical perspective at all. They looked back to a past of a few thousand years and at the very beginning of time as they conceived it, they saw human life very much as it is now: it was a more or less balanced system of certain social types: rulers and ruled, hunter and cultivator, priest and soldier. This they regarded as the immemorial life of man. They saw the life of city and cultivated land, desert and sea, throughout all the interval, spreading perhaps, changing in a few particulars, enriched rather than altered by inventions and discoveries, but essentially the same. Their range of observation and comparison was too limited for them to realize that by clearing forests, overstocking grasslands, destroying soil, they were slowly impoverishing and devastating many of the regions into which they spread. They did not connect the rise and fall of empires with a factor of unforeseeing waste in that normal life of theirs. They ascribed such drifting of population and energy as they observed to other causes. These processes of primitive waste were too relatively slow to be perceptible from lifetime to lifetime. So these thinkers of yesterday talked of unchanging human nature. You cannot change human nature, they said. They relied upon the fabled promise of the rainbow, they had it straight from the Creator's mouth, that while the earth still remained, seedtime and harvest should endure.

The order of events seemed a sure, unfailing routine. And in much the same way, our ancestors, until a couple of dozen centuries ago, thought the world was flat. They thought the sea they sailed upon flat without qualification, and it required a considerable amount of mental exercise for them to realize that the apparent plane of the ocean surface was really curved and that the faster and farther they sailed the more effectively they would realize how the round earth was falling away from their first assumptions. All their old

landmarks would then vanish one after another. Astounded navigators found unfamiliar constellations in the heavens. Within two dozen centuries man has been discovering that he lives not on a flat earth but upon a globe, and within the last ten, that he is not the center of the universe but a denizen of a very second-rate planet. He has had to readjust his general ideas about life to that, and to a certain extent he has adjusted them. To a certain extent only.

And similarly our historical imaginations, quite as much as our geographical imaginations, live today in a vastly enlarged system of perspectives. We know that the everlasting hills are not everlasting, that all our working conceptions of behavior and destiny are provisional and that human nature and everything about it is being carried along upon an irreversible process of change. Our historical ideas reach back now through vistas of millions of years, we see humanity emerging from sub-human conditions, from the life of relatively solitary apes, at distances in the nature of a quarter of a million years, we know with increasing precision of the onset of a social hunting life in those distant ages, we are able to trace the beginnings of agriculture in a period of two or three hundred centuries, and by the new scale, the development of cities, language, law, religious organization, and all the various adaptations of humanity to the new conditions of a regular food supply, all that social system which seemed as eternal as the heavens, appear now events of yesterday, devoid of any finality whatsoever. That fixity of the normal human life which our great-great-grandfathers assumed as a matter of plain common sense, we discover was a transient dream. As our perspectives open, it vanishes.

The rapid progress of social psychology, human ecology and all the ill- defined activities of human and general biology is opening our eyes, it is opening even the eyes of our trained historians and our social teachers, to the real nature of our everyday social life. It is brought home to us that the human species for the last twenty or twenty-five thousand years has been living in such a continuously accelerating process of change as no other animal species has ever been called upon to face. And it is also being forced upon our reluctant attention that the species *Homo sapiens* is no privileged exception to the general conditions that determine the destinies of

other living species. It prospers or suffers under the same laws. These laws can be stated compactly, and there is nowadays very little dispute about them, even in matters of detail.

§ 3. — HOW SPECIES SURVIVE

WHAT in general terms are the relations of a species to the world about it?

A species may be living in practical harmony with its environment or it may be more or less out of balance with its surroundings.

In the former case it may continue recognizably the same species, living the same life, age after age. Any tendency to excessive numbers may be corrected by a correlated increase in the types that prey upon it, and there will be no definite biological encouragement for such variations and mutations as occur. Harmless mutations may indeed produce varieties and sub-species, and, as Henry Fairfield Osborn long ago pointed out, there may be purely mutational. efflorescences; the correlation of a species to its environment is never hard and exact; but only a minority of mutations seem to be without some quality of advantage or disadvantage. Abnormal individuals in a species in practical equilibrium will generally be eliminated, and the species as a whole will pursue the even tenor of its way indefinitely.

There are species that have been under no necessity to adjust themselves to circumstances over vast periods of geological time. But they are exceptions to the general ecological spectacle of species balancing themselves in a changing world. Most existing species, when their affairs are scrutinized as a whole, are discovered to be in a state of imperfect adjustment to their circumstances, and to be either undergoing adaptation to meet new requirements or to be losing ground in the struggle — if one may call anything so essentially passive a struggle-to survive. Over a large part of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, adaptation, the working adjustment of the species under stress, is made, if it is made at all, by the selective frustration and killing off of less well-adjusted individuals. Variations and mutations — it is not necessary to enter here into the controversial question of their causes; suffice it that they occur — variations and mutations, indifferent, favorable and unfavorable, play a considerable part in this selective adjustment. The adjustment is

either sufficient or insufficient. In the latter case, the species dwindles and disappears. In the former, the species undergoes modification; it survives, changed, as a new species or as several new species according to the imperatives of its altered conditions.

All this again is practically common knowledge today. Most educated people know about it even if they do not think very much about it, or link it up with other systems of ideas in their minds. It needs to be repeated plainly here in view of that possibility of disregard.

The general history of life in the past is, as everybody knows, one of failure and defeat rather than adaptation. Great groups of living things have arisen, had their heyday, and then passed altogether from the scene, giving place to more plastic and adaptable forms of life. Comparatively insignificant forms with novel accommodations arise to take their place.

When we contemplate that greater past that science has unfolded for us, we see great groups and orders of mighty creatures dominating the earth, enormous reptiles, huge mammals flourishing and then waning and passing away. They have not kept pace with change; their exuberance has been almost a defiance of change; and change has overcome and obliterated them. The geological record can be presented, certain assumptions being granted, as on the whole a great progression, but that does not alter the fact that it is also a history of the ruthless extinction of whole species, genera and orders of living things. There are tremendous massacres in the geological record.

One of the greatest of these occurred at the close of the Mesozoic period, when in the course of perhaps only a few hundred thousand years, a vast reptilian fauna, ichthyosaurus, plesiosaurus, tyrannosaurus and so forth, an equally wonderful flora, scores of genera of ammonites and so on and so forth, were thrust out of existence. We know little or nothing of the changes that made so many hitherto successful forms of life impossible. We know surely only that they occurred. A change from conditions of all-the-year-round equable temperature to wide seasonal alternations of heat and cold may have resulted from some planetary disturbance. More recently there have been parallel massacres of groups of the early

mammals, and there can be no question that today we are, from the geological point of view, living in a phase of exceptional climatic instability,-in a series of glacial and interglacial ages, and witnessing another destruction of animal and plant species on an almost unparalleled scale. The list of species extinguished in the past hundred years is a long one; the list of species threatened with extinction today is still longer. No new species arise to replace those exterminated. It is a swift, distressful impoverishment of life that is now going on. And this time the biologist notes a swifter and stranger agent of change than any phase of the fossil past can show — man, who will leave nothing undisturbed from the ocean bottom to the stratosphere, and who bids f air to extinguish himself in the process.

This species man is, as we all know, one of a great series of species which we can speak of roughly as cerebral animals. These are the mammals who have dominated the earth since the beginning of the Tertiary period and which display throughout a rapid development of the cerebral cortex. This cerebral cortex was a novelty in the history of life, and it brought with it a fresh, distinctive method of individual adaptation to special circumstances. It quickened the response of a species to changing conditions very greatly. Learning from experience appears indeed but very rudimentarily in cold-blooded vertebrata; it is only in the birds and mammals, and particularly in the latter, that it becomes of real importance in adaptation. Essentially the cerebrum is an organ for the storage and application of memories. It enables individuals to learn by experience. The history of the mammals in particular is a history of memory development. All through the Tertiary period, it is to be noted, brains in every group of mammals increase in relative size and complexity. With every increase, the power of learning from experience and of supplementing direct impulse by conditioned reflexes increases. A young fish or reptile comes into the world with a practically complete, almost unalterable set of instinctive responses. It survives or fails by its inherited outfit. Apparently it can learn to a certain extent, but it learns very little. A young mammal comes into life far less conclusively equipped, a *tabula rasa*, prepared to learn. It learns. And the ampler its cerebral equipment,

the more it learns to take care of itself. To begin with, it is sillier and less certain than the cold-blooded type; it stands in need of protection; in the end it is far better adapted to meet the special conditions it faces.

Moreover, the young mammal and, to a rather different extent and in a rather different fashion, the young bird do not simply learn from individual experience. Generally speaking there is also a protective relationship between the parent and the new individual. By example and often by direct intervention the young individual is taught. It heeds and imitates.

As we ascend the scale of cerebral development the possibility of teaching increases. It becomes possible to domesticate and train these higher-brain animals in just the measure that their brains are developed. You can teach very little to a fish or a reptile, but directly you come to the higher cerebral mammals you are confronted by the new possibility of establishing an artificial, taught, motive system to control, supplement or altogether replace natural instinct. You must catch them young. Then you can socialize them and get to quite remarkable working understandings with them. The shepherd's dog, the blind man's dog, the polo pony, the polite, house-trained cat, are examples of the immense individual adaptability which is achieved through the establishment of a taught, secondary self in the cerebral cortex. None of these creatures are behaving in accordance with the primary tendencies they have inherited. They are behaving in accordance with an adaptive mental superstructure imposed upon their natural dispositions. It enables them to survive not simply as tolerated but as contributing individuals in a complex social organization which otherwise would have had no alternative but their extermination. They would have suffered the fate that is overtaking the unteachable Tasmanian Devil or the unteachable Tasmanian Wolf.

§ 4. — HISTORY BECOMES ECOLOGY

AT this point again it may be well to take stock of the discussion we are unfolding. We have been restating, very plainly and directly, established facts in general ecology, and we are going on now to develop this restatement in relation to the particular position and outlook of the human species. There is no need to apologize for this biological resume, elementary though it is. It is vitally necessary to our statement. It is absolutely impossible to approach the urgent and distressful problems of the present time with any hope of lucid solution until this general background of knowledge is definitely present in the mind.

From now on we shall encounter an increasing amount and variety of resistance to our application of these almost universally admitted facts. From this' point on, many readers will be quite unaccustomed to seeing human social life in the light of ecological science. There is a sort of barrier in their minds. It is not because they do not know, but because they see the two sets of facts apart. They will experience a strong resistance to this invasion of this reserved region of human affairs by these really quite incontrovertible ideas, because in this reserved region their minds are already strongly occupied by idea systems that are incompatible with it....

It has been pointed out how the species of brain-animals cooperate with circumstances in teaching their offspring to adapt themselves to the exactions of their environment. But in th£» case of man, and to a quite exceptional extent, because of an immense development of speech and gesture, the taught stuff in the cerebrum becomes of overpoweringly greater importance than mere hard experience, and we find the behavior system of the individual' molded to social co-operation and collective needs, not only by tradition and other forms of education but by institutions and law. Man, above everything else, is an educated animal, socially controlled. He is no longer primarily or even mainly a creature of instinct and brief individual experience. That phase in evolution lies a million years behind him. His instincts alone and without

correction would fail him utterly as a behavior control in his present circumstances.

There is a relatively enormous artificial supplement to the natural man in all of us. We talk of our "selves" and of being freemen, but much the greater part of our activities today we perform as parts not of one simple, greater organism, human society, but, what is more complex, as parts of a number of greater organisms — profession, township, nation, religion, club, class, and so forth, which are all woven together into what we call human society and our social reactions. What we do as purely spontaneous individuals is -hardly more than a narrow choice between prescribed things. The home we live in, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the way we go about the world, are all substantially imposed upon us by forces exterior to our personalities.

They are social products and more and more do they become social products.

The socialization of human life, the relative increase of the factor supplied by society, is still going on quite rapidly. There was a time, for instance, not so many generations ago, when most people built their own homes, made their own clothes, got their own food, taught their own children. Now the building trade, clothing trade, the provision shop, and the public school see to all that.

This applies with even greater truth to our minds. A mere fraction of our knowledge is self-taught. What we know again is nine-tenths hearsay. We have heard, we have read. The stuff in our heads was mainly put there by society. To the biologist an ordinary ape is just a natural ape, but a man is a natural man plus a great cerebral accumulation of directive ideas, prejudices, antagonisms, tolerances and conceptions of what he ought and ought not to do, which wrap about him and fit him into the social body to which he belongs. From the biological point of view all this cerebro-social accumulation of knowledge, beliefs and ideas, responsibilities and dependency, is as much a natural adjustment to needs and environment as a claw or a skull or a swimming bladder; it is a thing of the same kind, though it differs enormously in the relative swiftness and breadth of its adaptability to changing conditions. It is subject to the same ecological laws.

The growth of this mental superstructure upon the primitive ape-man of the later Tertiary period can now be traced in its broad lines without very much difficulty. Any attempt to make a general outline of human history falls almost uncontrollably into the form of a story of developing communication, learning and co-operation between the primordial ape-man family groups. The outline of history as one whole is, and must be, a history of communication and socialization. It is compelled to apprehend primary processes that the older type of history, with its preoccupation with separate communities, was equally compelled to ignore. It begins necessarily with the origins of speech, gesture, drawing, observances, and taboos.

With every such development, the association of human animals in groups collectively more efficient in the appropriation of food supplies became easier. The family group grew into the tribe and tribes grew larger. Their growing awareness of the seasons is apparent in the archaeological record; their growing ability to co-operate in the semi-domestication of animals and the first agricultural tentatives is now quite clearly traceable. These are no longer matters to dispute about. With the development of agriculture and the beginnings of settlement, man, the new sort of socialized man, appears as a rapid and immense biological success. His growing communities spread swiftly, growing as well as multiplying and spreading, and displaying every symptom of an unprecedented surplus of biological energy.

A few millenia ago the life which our great-grandfathers considered to be the normal and immemorial life of mankind was well under way. It had grown up, biologically speaking, speaking by the standards of geological time, with the rapidity of a puff-ball, and those who lived it were unaware that there had ever been any other way of human living. Such was life. And it was still, although they did not perceive it in the least, under a stress of accelerating change.

The changes in the conditions of human life during the last twenty or thirty thousand years have been mainly brought about by the acceleration of invention through increasing co-operation and the release of material and social power. There have been no doubt climatic and geographical changes, but their share has been relatively less important. The essential story of history and pre-history is the

story of the adaptation of the social- educated superstructure of the animal man to the novel problems with which his own enterprise and inventiveness have been continually confronting him. Law, religion, education, are from the ecological point of view, names we give to the cardinal aspects of this process of adaptation. Each generation in these growing and spreading societies was told a story of its relation to the community into which it had to fit itself and given an account of the acquiescences and co-operations expected from it. The imperatives of law, education, religion, all flowing into one another and sustaining one another, were expressed, and in these early stages of mental development could only be expressed, by anthropomorphic myths. Natural selection has no care for scientific precision. There is no immediate survival value in truth. To this day the survival value of the critical habit of mind is questionable. It sufficed for the purposes of nature if the myths and the system of observance, the things that were too awful to do and the things that it was fatal to leave undone, made for the survival of the community as a whole. The adaptive superstructures, the laws, rules and beliefs, that were favoring human survival, varied in different regions, but they varied within the limits set by the conditions of specific survival. A certain primary resemblance of the tribal gods and of the tribal stories and of the behavior systems of the differentiating social classes, waited upon the spread of the "normal" way of life about the earth. Parallel circumstances evoked parallel adjustments. Generally the pattern included a tribal ancestor god, a priesthood taking care of the calendar and medicine, a morality of propitiation and self-restraint.

Step by step, as human inter-communication increased, communities grew larger. And as they grew larger they developed something, of which curiously enough we are only beginning to grasp the profound importance today; they developed a superfluity of young men.

From the point of view of the biologist *Homo sapiens* was making an almost excessive success. He was repeating the exuberance of the great Mesozoic reptiles or the early Tertiary deinotheria. The species was not only holding its own, it was spreading and multiplying by leaps and bounds. And the front of its biological advance was this surplus of young men. Young men, full of beans as people say, and

looking for trouble.

Hitherto historians have failed to recognize the great importance of this trouble-making stratum. It is well to underline it here. It is a primary social fact. I have been reading recently the works of Mark Benney, *Low Company* and *The Truth About English Prisons* (*Fact*, March 1938), who is rapidly becoming a leading authority on criminology, and he reminds me very strikingly of how nonsensical it is to talk of a criminal class as a different sort of human being. It is in its origins more and more of an age class. Every sort of energetic male human being is a potential criminal, if nothing else is found to occupy and interest him. These expanding human societies in the past were needing less and less energy per head to be sure of their food supply and security. Something had to be done to and for these young men, and the easiest way of keeping them out of mischief, keeping them disciplined in fact and the numbers of them down, was war.

Primitive war was a necessity forced upon the human community by biological success through the production of a surplus of young males. It appeared with herding and agriculture and it was naturally associated with them. In Papua and the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, one can still see humanity in a sort of equilibrium at that stage of development. There you have a population of over half a million, still living in small independent communities, each with its own conceit of itself, its peculiar petty customs and prejudices. These New Guinea peoples are by no means a monotony of barbarism. They present indeed a great variety of physical and mental types, and their social and artistic possibilities are very considerable. Up to the present they have solved their population pressure by spells of not too destructive warfare. There is a little killing-off and then things settle down again. Now, under the parental care of the Canberra government, their warfare is to cease, and what will happen to these peoples is very uncertain. They may be subjected to economic exploitation far more tragic than warfare.

You can write human history in a variety of ways, but one way of writing it would be to consider how, age after age, humanity has met the problem of What to do with out sons. There was war and what was generally associate i with war, conquest and colonization.

Roman Britain, for instance, was conquered by the surplus offspring of the Saxon shore. In my native county, Kent, traces survived until a very recent period of the custom of gavelkind. The elder sons were sent off marauding and the youngest kept the home. You can re-write the history of all the great population movements in terms of the pressure of the young male surplus.

It should be particularly evident as an operating cause in the history of the last two centuries, and it would be if history were properly told. Every community can be shown to be either sending out the plethora of its population as emigrants and settlers, or reducing it by warfare, or else suffering from acute social trouble, such social trouble as the words Russian Hooligans, Chinese Boxers, Moonlighters, Nazis, Fascists, revolutionary terrorists, gangsters, will call to mind. The young man surplus, if it is not consumed, is the main source of rebels, revolutionaries and disturbances of all kinds. Somehow that tension must find relief. The comparative social stability of the nineteenth century was largely due to emigration and the settlement of new lands. Now there are no more new lands open to immigration.

Moreover this tension has been greatly intensified by the huge increase of productive efficiency through invention and the use of mechanical power, which has diminished the number of young men who could look forward to a fairly secure, properly rewarded, sufficiently interesting married life.

Invention and discovery in production have intensified this age-long human problem and contributed to the present exceptional drift towards warfare and social convulsions. People stand in the young man's way and he is ready to get rid of them in any fashion suggested to him. That drift towards a social killing-off, and the necessity of justifying it, explain the eagerness with which race difference, class difference, any sort of difference of complexion, language or usage, nationalism and imperialism, are exalted into combatant provocations today. You can waste a lot of time arguing about this or that *ism*. The essential fact is the accumulating tension of unsatisfied youth, and these *isms* are mere formulae of relief.*

* See Note 4A. A falling birth-rate does not affect this.

Warfare and social conflict have for long ages released the

plethoric human species towards the relief of a bloodletting. So it has been through all the ages of recorded history. With the relatively puny means of destruction available before the age of invention and innovation, it was no more than an excretion of inconvenient energy. For some hundreds of centuries humanity got along in this way. War became part of the accepted human rhythm, just as the massacre of the drones is part of the natural rhythm of the honey bee. Laws, customs, morals, sentiments and thoughts were adapted to it so as to make it natural and easy. If it were not for the outbreak of invention and discovery during the past century, man might have gone on drumming and trumpeting his way through long ages yet to come, going to his priest to bless his flags, facing the day of battle bravely, and either dying on the field of honor, or surviving to raise another generation for the same experience.

But that inventive urge in the species has suddenly, in — what is by the geological and biological scales — a mere flash of time, altered all that. It has made war something entirely different and it has put quite a new face on the political ideas, the working conceptions of right and wrong, of duty and service that have hitherto kept the varied and fluctuating patchwork of human communities going. It has strained and distorted the problem of adaptive survival almost beyond recognition. That, concisely, is the clue to the human situation today.

Let me try to give the gist of this vast change. It is a change in human power and scope.

First as to the increase in socially available power. Before the change, except for a little wind power or water power, the only power available for human purposes was a little animal power, horse, ox, elephant, camel, llama, or what not, and man power. The gross total of power units that sufficed to run everything that was going on in Great Britain in a day in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, everything, was probably much less than the total of units that is consumed today in running the lighting and transport alone of such a city as Manchester or Kansas City. And again all the energy of marching, shooting, stabbing, hacking, running to and fro at the battle of Agincourt was probably less than the energy released by one single high explosive shell in a modern bombardment.

Until this change in the total of available power occurred, the great majority of mankind toiled habitually to get food, clothing and shelter. They were under an obligation to do so or want. A small minority contrived in various ways to live by the toil of others and spend, and except for such parasitism there was no way to leisure. Now a steadily dwindling number of people, using power machinery and modern contrivances, can produce the essentials of life in excess of all our requirements. Never before in the history of life has any animal had such a fantastic increase in its ability to make or destroy.

That is the first aspect of the contemporary change. A second is what is called the abolition of distance. Even more fantastic in relation to past tradition is the increase of speed from point to point. The maximum of speed at which an Elizabethan man could travel was limited by a horse. He could send an uncertain and difficult message a hundred miles a day. He had beacon fires of course, but they do not carry any explicit messages.*

* See Note 4B.

He could see for a few miles. Now abruptly this creature can travel in comfort three hundred miles an hour, he can see and talk to his fellow-man on die other side of the earth, he can murder him at vast, increasing distances, he knows what is happening all over the world almost instantaneously. And his health improves and his vitality is greater. On the average he lives almost twice as long and twenty times as actively and variously as his great-great-grandfather. Now that distance has been abolished, he lives with increasing restlessness cheek by jowl with all the rest of mankind. So far a biologist might count him an unqualified success in the struggle for life — except for one disconcerting thing. He is ceasing to breed. His numbers are now passing a maximum and seem fated to decline, at least for some decades ahead. Woman for a variety of reasons is betraying an increasing disinclination to bear children. Man's conquest of nature may prove a sterile conquest.

His reproduction is falling off and his behavior traditions and controls, and more particularly the war tradition, are producing the most devastating tragedies among his communities. The effect of the increase of power has been to exaggerate the impact of the war drive monstrously. One may compare the human species today to a

steamship that has long sailed the seas with engines roughly adequate to its needs, until some malign influence has suddenly gone down into the engine-room and, without any consultation with the ship's officers, amplified the power of the engines a thousandfold. Now they are flying loose out of control, lashing the ship to pieces, and threatening to sink it altogether. The captain upon the bridge gives impotent orders; the engineers dodge the pounding shafts and the escaping, searching, scalding steam.

Because of the way in which science and invention have brought us all into intimate contact and put high explosives into our hands, war has become a process of destruction that spares neither age nor sex, it is no longer a selective elimination of the surplus young men, it is a colossal wastage of material resources, a rapid disintegration of the social organization, robbed of all the glories and gallantries that once adorned it. In the past it was a corrective and almost tonic process. Now it has become a rapid wasting disease, a galloping consumption of the human species.

§ 5. — UNION NOW?

IS it possible for man to recover control, or is this shattering return to destructive violence the beginning of the end of the career of *Homo sapiens*? Let us hold firmly to the broad conceptions of ecological science that have brought us thus far. The human species is, as a whole, dangerously out of harmony with these new conditions. Either its powers of adaptation will be sufficient to readjust it to the new demands, and it will go on to a new phase of survival, or, like any other living species, it will be defeated, shattered and ultimately wiped out. There are no other possibilities.

There is no time for any of the slower and more ancient methods of adaptation. The readjustment needed must be a mental readjustment. In that alone is there any hope for mankind.

In view of what has gone before it is plain that that mental readjustment must involve three main essentials. In varying measure these essentials are already widely recognized.

First and most obviously the idea and tradition of war must be eliminated. For that, quite a large number of people seem to be more or less prepared. They desire it, even if they have yet to discover the price that must be paid for it. Secondly, and what is not nearly so widely conceded, the vast and violent wastage of natural resources in the hunt for private profit that went on during the nineteenth century, must be arrested and reversed by the establishment of a collective economy for the whole world. And thirdly, in view of the stress of those young people, the resultant world organization must be of an active, progressive, imaginatively exciting nature. That surplus energy of youth, male and female, must be used up. It is the drive and essence of life; it is life itself. It must in each generation be "getting on." It must be doing things, making or re-making with an effect of conquest and general participation. The earlier years were preparation; the later, relieved of the high fever and impatience of that full onset of vitality, are appreciation, deliberation and the continual broadening-out of the human agenda.

These three propositions, peace, collectivism and incessant new enterprise, are interdependent and practically inseparable. One

cannot be realized without the other two. In stating these propositions we are not in any way "laying down the law." The law is in the nature of things. We are merely stating as precisely as possible the unconditional terms that our race manifestly has to expect.

To what extent is contemporary thought and education moving towards the abolition of war?

An increasing number of us are realizing that the age of independent sovereign states and empires throughout the world, free to make war and prepared to make war, each separated from the other by barriers of language, religion, historical delusions and those differences in habits of life which are called national cultures, is coming to an end, obviously, rapidly; and at present not one of us can say with any confidence what sort of world order can replace it. A world order we feel there must be, but as to how it is to be attained, we are all at sixes and sevens.

The world of man has to become, has — in a chaotic disorder of conflict — already become, one community — one disorderly community. In the days of Oliver Goldsmith, what happened in China, happened in China, and did not matter a rap to anyone in England, If every time one fired a gun in England, he remarked, a man died in China, nobody would mind in the least. The shooting would go on. Now what happens in China, happens everywhere in the world; that is to say it is known and affects life everywhere. The crude fact of the world-wide community is here now. The open questions arise when we consider how this inevitable coming together of our communities can and will be recognized and established as a world order.

We have indeed already seen one attempt to reconstitute human affairs so as to eliminate this destructive process of modern war, in the League of Nations experiment. That, we realize now, was an extremely naive attempt to stop the current of history and to preserve forever just those national separatisms and strangulating boundaries against which the stars in their courses are fighting. Certain minimum changes were to be made to "end war" while everything else was to go on just as it had been going on before. Sovereign states, organized essentially for defense and aggression, were to form

a League to end combat. Simply that. The conception of an organized World Pax, after it had played its part in the warfare of propaganda, after it had been used to build up false expectations of a new start in life for the German people, was taken over at Versailles and translated into the ideology of Foreign Offices and the diplomatic services. These essential organs of the old regime were instructed to supersede themselves and they were left to work out the task, and quite naturally they did nothing of the sort. The League Covenant completely disregarded that perennial problem of the restless young men, and it gave no attention to the absolute necessity of reconstructing economic life upon a collective basis throughout the world. These are matters about which diplomacy has never concerned itself. They do not enter into diplomatic or political education, which is at least the better part of a century out of date.

At the end of less than a score of years the failure of the League of Nations experiment is complete, and we will spend no time on enlarging upon that fruitless interlude of half-hearted idealism. Suffice it to say that for many excellent minds it has blocked the way to a realistic treatment of the human problem for two decades. We find now in 1939, a rough reproduction of the world situation of 1914-18. We find three aggressive military states threatening the whole world, and we find a number of threatened states contemplating some sort of loosely organized resistance to that aggression.

How loosely — with what dangerous looseness — that organization is still contemplated is illustrated by a book that has recently been given quite serious attention in Britain and America. This is *Union Now* by Clarence K. Streit He proposes that right now there shall be a "federal" union of fifteen now independent states which he describes as democracies. They are the United States of America, the British group, Finland, France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden. It is not a League or a war alliance he proposes but a permanent federation on the American model, with a common foreign policy, common money, common armed forces, common control of interstate and foreign trade and a common citizenship. He sweeps aside such questions as the status of India, colonial possessions, the various monarchist traditions

involved, as secondary questions. Soviet Russia he balances on the brim of his project with a query — on the whole an encouraging query. Apparently the federated democracies are to have great local economic autonomy within the limits of the federal constitution.

Before we look into Mr. Streit's proposals more closely, it will be worth while to get this loose word "democracy" defined. The special interest of his book here lies in the fact that it has been well received by a considerable number of considerable people. It is an intimation of how rapidly opinion is moving towards the conception of a new world order transcending existing boundaries. So far it is a book to be welcomed. But it is also an indication of the extreme vagueness still prevalent about the necessary material and mental conditions of such a world order. Its pseudo-practical short-sightedness is almost as manifest as the boldness of its intention.

I do not believe that a world order can come into existence without a preliminary mental cosmopolis. I may be mistaken in that. Political federation, loose and confused at first, may precede and impose the necessary mental adaptations. That is too round-about and slow a process for the limitations of my imagination. World democracy, I believe, would get lost on the way.

§ 6. — WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

SINCE at any time now we may find ourselves fighting, enduring and dying for "democracy," it seems worth while to ask for some clear definition of what democracy means, so that we shall not only fight for it, but be prepared to see that in the end we get it. When you question people closely in the matter, you will encounter a considerable variety of answers, but you will find as you sort them out and arrange them that they do tend to converge and point in a common direction. There is a vital intention beneath the endless misuses and perversions of the word.

Towards what do these diverse statements converge? What is the reality, implicit and potential, that gives its living, present appeal to the word *democracy*?

Two words that will come out very frequently in the definitions that are given you are "freedom" and "liberty." Frequent, but not quite so frequent, are such phrases as the "right" of individuals and communities to "self-government." A few people will make a vote the symbol of democracy. But all of them can be brought into agreement that democracy means the subordination of the state to the ends and welfare of the common individual Very prevalent is an attitude of negation. Democracy, it is declared, is an *anti*-movement. It demands the protection of the individual life from the state. It is anti-Fascist, anti-Nazi, anti-Communist, anti-war — since there is no liberty in a state of siege — it is the denial of the right of the state organization to interfere in the life of the common individual except for the common convenience and with the common consent.

All this is matter of general agreement, but in all these phrases, there is an element of idealistic overstatement, and as soon as we attempt to bring them into effective contact with the realities of life, we find ourselves involved in some of the standing controversies that have exercised humanity since human thought and discussion began. We are reminded that there is no such thing as absolute freedom or absolute servitude. Limitless freedom, anarchy, would be a world of chaotic conduct, ruled only by impulse, a jungle life. All freedom in any society is conditional; it is a compromise; it implies "rules of the

game," that is to say, law. Behind all actual social behavior there is the suggestion of a defined give-and-take, a "social contract." The social contract may vary between the extremes of a contract of blind obedience on the one hand and a contract to undertake no collective action whatever without a plebiscite, an entirely impracticable subordination of the law to mass impulse, on the other. Between these extremes and with a declared bias for conscious, free, individual action whenever it is practicable, this *democracy* falls.

Now the desire for conscious, free, individual action is innate in the normal human being. But it can be inhibited by fear of known or unknown consequences, by indolence and following the drift, and by a complex of infantile dispositions to imitate and obey. The herd instinct is very strong in the immature human animal. It will follow a leader or stampede like a cow, and find great relief from perplexity in doing so. The preference of democracy for the practical maximum of conscious, free, individual action requires a justification beyond the mere faltering desire in our hearts to "stand up, look heaven in the face and be a man."

For the normal man, unrestrained democracy is a very exacting way of living indeed. It asks too much of his natural resources. In a thousand situations even a wise or able man may find himself unable to decide upon the line of action that is fairly the best for himself and also the best for the general good, and in ten thousand he will find a fatal delay in his decisions. For that reason, a detailed, comprehensive, agreed-upon, accessible and understandable system of laws, which are really rules for behavior in predigested situations, is a necessary preliminary condition for a modern democracy. A taxi-cab tariff or the rule of the road or a minimum wage is a convenient elementary instance of the way in which conscious, free, individual action is set aside to the general benefit in a modern, democratic community. We extend that principle nowadays to rates of interest and inordinate profits, to the acquisition of land and many forms of property and to an increasing number of ordinary transactions. Our modern democratic community would frustrate its own declared aims without a complete, detailed, legal framework enforced by a judiciary and a police acting strictly under the law. The man who in a breath will say "I am a democrat" and also "I am a rebel" is simply a

fool.

The contrast between democracy and the forms of community with which it is generally contrasted lies essentially in this reliance upon law. In a democracy a man does or should know, or should be easily able to ascertain, exactly "where he stands," what he must do, what he may do, what cannot be done, and he should be able to say with the utmost confidence, "You be damned" to any illegal order or request. The laws that restrain and protect him have received his implicit or expressed consent, and he has a reasonable right to attempt to alter them if he finds them uncongenial, but until they are altered they must be respected by all, small or great, in the community. The President or ruling assembly is as much bound by the law as the meanest citizen.

On the other hand the dictatorships and undemocratic social organizations generally, subject a large part of the common man's activities to uncovenanted restrictions, interference and compulsion. It is plainly contrary to the spirit of democracy that a man should sell himself into slavery or bind himself indefinitely to unquestioning obedience. The care of democracy for freedom extends to the protection of a man from his own desperate necessity. No democracy would tolerate Esau's bargain. Most existing dictatorships, indeed, claim a sort of legality based upon some forced plebiscite, some snatched election. But your inquiries will make it plain that the consent of the governed in a democracy can never be a finally silenced and irrevocable consent. It must be a continuing consent. It must be subject to sustained revision and renewal. From the point of view of democracy all absolutisms are illegal, and resistance to their commands is as justifiable as resistance to any less general hold-up or act of violence.

This fundamental legalism of democracy has been and is a deterrent to swift collective action, and the history of human government is very largely a history of attempts to reconcile the bickering gradualism of legal and deliberative government under democratic conditions with the needs of special emergencies. Before flood, fire, pestilence, earthquake, war, and especially in war, men have had to relinquish their liberty of individual action more or less completely to a higher command of some sort with unqualified

immediate powers. The original "dictators" of the Roman system were essentially legal officials, and one of the primary riddles of human society has been the resumption of power by the community at the end of a period of crisis. A democracy needs to be in a state of perpetual vigilance against the specialist. From Caesar to Stalin, democracy has been trapped into one-man tyrannies by crises.

But historical analogies are always misleading, and modern crises become more and more elaborate affairs and less and less controllable by single individuals. None of these modern dictatorships has yet been tried out in a sustained war. It is at least highly doubtful whether the vast communities of today, if they are able to develop a class of competent public servants, with a co-operative morale and a sense of public criticism, may not attain an efficiency and a toughness far beyond that of a system subjected to the freaks and inspirations of a single individual. But they must work in the light. They must work with the distinctive freedom and the conscious individual co-operation of a team of football players, and they must be subjected to the continual criticism of an understanding public opinion with unlimited freedom of expression and with an ultimate, if deferred, right of intervention.

This conception of the superior flexibility and efficiency of free teamwork, as against dictatorially planned work, is very attractive to the democratically-minded, but it may easily be exaggerated. For example, Tom Wintringham in his *English Captain* lays great stress on the technical superiority of free men, inspired by a common idea, over the conscript soldiers of a dictatorship. He was in the fortunate position of leading a battalion of English volunteers, exceptionally intelligent and enthusiastic, picked men who wanted to fight, who were keen to fight, and unanimous at least in their hostility to the Franco pronunciamento. Of such individuals, unanimous for the services that engage them, an enlightened democracy should no doubt consist. But when one turns to the story Major Jose Martin Blasquez tells in *I Helped To Build An Army*, of the internal struggles and indiscipline of the defenders of the Republic, one realizes that practical freedom of initiative may achieve the most disastrous confusion.

There is indeed no guarantee of either immediate or ultimate

victory in democracy. On that we must insist. There is no inherent magic successfulness in democratic freedom. Democratic freedom may be much more vulnerable than slavery, less easy both to attain and maintain. It may be that few or none of us realize yet the full price that may have to be paid for it.

None the less it is only through the attainment of a real world democracy that there is any hope for the ultimate survival of our species.

In many of the replies one will receive to the demand for a clear definition of democracy, one will get some reference to that magnificent outbreak of the common sense of mankind, the first French Revolution, That remains still a cardinal event in the history of human liberation. It was not the beginning of liberation but it was its most outstanding assertion. The democracy of America, the radicalism of Britain in its most vigorous phase, derived plainly from that French initiative. And since in those days titles and privileges were the most conspicuous infringements of men's liberties, democracy from the outset would have none of them; it was equalitarian without qualification. It was republican, it denied and repudiated any form of class rule whatever — and whenever it is still in health it remains republican and equalitarian.

But conditions in eighteenth-century France were peculiar in the fact that then the conspicuous offense against human liberty was class privilege. For many people in those days the possession of private property was a means of independence, freedom of ownership seemed a reasonable provision for democratic liberty, and only a few realized that, released from class tyranny, the free play of proprietorship might create advantages and disadvantages as wide and socially wasteful, as subject to "abuses," as the class privileges of the older regime. Throughout the first revolutionary period the spirit of democracy found itself puzzled, mocked and frustrated by economic inequality. Men freed from the tyranny of privileges found themselves oppressed by a tyranny of advantages. The common man, theoretically free and independent, discovered himself in the grip of an expanding economic system that made free competitive employment only another form — and to many it seems a scarcely preferable form — of serfdom. Political equality by itself proved in

practice to be no equality at all.

Accordingly when we pursue our inquiries into the meaning of democracy today, we find a definite cleavage from this point onward in the replies to the question of "What is democracy?" An increasing number will be forced to agree that collective economic controls, "Industrial Democracy," as Beatrice Webb first phrased it very happily, in her study of co-operation (1891), constitute a necessary completion of the democratic proposition. A dwindling minority clings to the private profit system as the logical method of the sturdy individualism of the revolution. But the general implication of modern democracy is that unrestrained economic advantage can be an even graver infringement of human liberty than privilege. Modern democracy is not only legalism and equalitarianism; it is socialism. It sets its face against all abuse of the advantages of ownership.

Democracy is socialism, and also, by a natural extension of its equalitarianism as the problem of world law becomes urgent, it is cosmopolitan. Almost tacitly democracy has accepted and assimilated the necessity that law must be world law and equally protective of every individual human being.

So far as cosmopolitanism goes, modern democracy reverts to far older revolts of human common sense against racial, national and class distinctions. Since the rise of Buddhism there has been hardly any broad religious initiative that has not at least paid lip service to this idea which, in Christianity for example, is incorporated in the formula of an impartial divine fatherhood and an equal brotherhood of man. In *The Outline Of History* the association of cosmopolitanism with theocrasia and the appearance of the syncretic universal religions is traced. There was a double impulse from below and from above; the desire of the expanding empires to fuse local particularisms into a larger order under the God-Emperor was in accordance with the craving of normal common sense to escape from the irksomeness of obviously artificial estrangements. Dr. T.J. Haarhoff, quoting W.W. Tarn's *Alexander And The Unity of Mankind*, declares that Alexander "was the pioneer of one of the supreme revolutions in the world outlook, the first man known to us who contemplated the brotherhood of man or the unity of mankind." This is an exaggeration of a significant fact. Cosmopolitanism,

universal brotherhood, has indeed been appearing and reappearing in human thought for at least the past four and twenty centuries, like sunshine trying to break through a cloudy sky.

Now the "democracy" that found its expression in the first French Revolution, the American Revolution and the liberal movement throughout the world, was not only incomplete upon the economic side and had, later and with difficulty, to become socialist in order to preserve its liberating intention, but also it was very sketchy and indefinite in the matter of education.

This was due to the fact that the ideology of the Great Revolution was essentially middle-class in its origins. It sprang from a social stratum already educated and so satisfied with the sufficiency of its general education and so accustomed to a supply of books and pamphlets, that it did not realize that there was anything exceptional in the knowledge and freedom of thought it enjoyed. It did not even apprehend its immense and immediate obligations to the Encyclopaedists in organizing its ideas. It took their contribution for granted. It launched its generous proposition of universal equality indeed, but not only did it fail to realize the need to insure freedom from economic pressure, but also it neglected to organize the education of the community as one whole. The American Revolution, in this respect, with, for example, its provision of State universities, seems to have been ahead of the French. Nevertheless it took the better part of a century for democracy to realize, even to a limited extent, the third vital implication of its demand for liberty, equality, and fraternity, which was the free and necessary universal education of the democratic community to a common level of understanding and co-operation. Communities in which every mentally normal citizen can at least read and write, have existed for less than a century. Communities in which the common education rises much above that level do not yet exist.

That freedom and equality are incomplete without freely accessible knowledge and free and open discussion is a necessary completion of the democratic idea, but it is one upon which the inquirer into the meaning of democracy will get the least assurance. If he asks leading questions, he will get a general admission that universal education and sound, ample information upon every matter

of collective concern are necessary elements in the democratic proposition, but unless he himself introduces the matter he will hear very little insistence upon this vital completion of the democratic ideal.

He will indeed encounter a certain amount of impatience if he stresses this matter. Ordinary people resent being told that they are undereducated or wrongly educated. To the common man and woman today, prepared though their minds seem to be now for a socialist cosmopolis of a quite , and news is what a press run entirely for profit and political and social ends, and (in the British system) a government-controlled radio, choose to tell them. It is the education they have grown up to, and so far they have not been awakened to its insufficiency. They want to carry out these new conceptions of life at that level To raise that level seems to them irksome and uncalled for.*

* See Note 6A.

It is still possible therefore for the equalitarian impulse to be effectively frustrated in practice by deliberate and systematic miseducation and misinformation. The common man and woman know now in general terms and pretty definitely what they want, but they still do not know how to state and demand what they want. Private enterprise is able to defend its appropriations quite effectively, because it owns the press almost entirely, the news agencies and the distributing trades, and so it can distort values and distract the public from crucial issues in the boldest fashion. There is no countervailing equipment of the public mind in the common schools. These are essentially conservative institutions, adapting the common man to the social order in which he finds himself, preparing him for that state of life to which he has been called, and giving him no reasonable intimations of the great drama of change in which he has to play his part. As we have shown, the whole mechanism of modern life demands organized collective control. The stars in their courses will not suffer the world scramble of exploitation that wasted so much human possibility in the nineteenth century to go on. Our species cannot afford it under any conditions. But in face of the essential ignorance of the modern “democratic” community, the enterprising owner, the profiteer that is to say, can keep his grip upon

his advantages far more effectively than he can in the face of a dictator with unqualified powers. He can resist socialization far more effectively.

Against the capitalist's obstructive power the willfulness of the dictator is able to operate far more vigorously than the will of the under-educated, ill-informed and suggestible "democracies." So that in certain ways the dictatorships have undoubtedly been able to get ahead of the "democratic" states. They have gone further on the way to socialization. While the industrial exploiter or the rich man struggles to keep his grip on the recalcitrant worker below, the dictator of the totalitarian state takes him firmly by the collar. Wealth finds itself handled with an extraordinary disrespect. Dictatorships imply collectivism. They are forced to collectivism in the face of bargaining wealth and the uneasy claims of their own supporters. They are forced towards a comprehensive efficiency. The only effective response to totalitarian collectivism on the part of a freedom-seeking community is a scientifically planned and directed socialism.

From the economic point of view, the whole difference now between the reality of dictatorship and the ideal of democracy, when it is worked out to its practical completion, is the difference between socialization in the dark, with all the progressive corruption, appropriation and inefficiency that spring up in the dark, and socialization in the light of an alert and implemented public opinion; between socialization by compulsion or socialization by enlightened consent.

From the point of view of the individual the difference is one between a deadening servitude and a continual participating enlargement of responsible life. No existing institutions coming to us from the past can represent democracy as it is thus conceived; it is a far bolder thrust towards a new order than any of these adventurer systems that stand in its path.

If now we fill in the gaps in the current conception of democracy by insisting upon complete educational equalitarianism, if we dot the i's and cross the /s that are still undotted and uncrossed, if we transcend any accepted contemporary rendering of the idea, then "democracy" does indeed become a very magnificent conception of a

new life for man.

If democracy means economic justice and the attainment of that universal sufficiency that science assures us is possible today; if democracy means the intensest possible fullness of knowledge for everyone who desires to know and the greatest possible freedom of criticism and individual self-expression for anyone who desires to object; if democracy means a community saturated with the conception of a common social objective and with an educated will like the will of a team of football players to co-operate willingly and understandingly upon that objective; if democracy means a complete and unified police control throughout the world, to repress the financial scramble and gangster violence which constitute the closing phase of the sovereign state and private ownership system; then we have in democracy a conception of life for which every intelligent man and woman on earth may well be prepared to live, fight or die, as circumstances may require.

But that rounded-off and completed realization of democracy is still only establishing itself against great resistances in the human mind. It is not as yet established there. And still less is it established as the guiding faith of any political or social organization whatever.

§ 7. — WHERE IS DEMOCRACY?

WHERE in all this collection of governments Mr. Streit would have us federate, is there one that satisfies this plain bare statement of the growing and deepening significance of the democratic idea?

France depends for its mental expression upon an alliance of reactionary papers and for its foreign policy upon an association of diplomatists and army chiefs, which has held together throughout its dynastic and political fluctuations in one consistent policy for the security and advancement of *La France*. America tempers a wide tolerance of free speech and personal criticism with a press-sustained persecution of labor leaders, radicals, "reds" and "agitators" generally. Its press, if less centralized than the French and so less concerted, is equally commercial. The freedom of expression of its university professors is pinched between the possibility of dismissal for excessive outspokenness from above and the attacks of the press-man from below. The American record of successfully framed-up cases against troublesome workers' leaders is a long and discreditable one, and one need only glance reproachfully at the distressful history of color prejudice, unincorporated townships and the exploitation of penal labor in the more backward states. And yet these two are the "democracies" *par excellence*.

Most of the European states invited to Mr. Streit's federation are not even democratic in profession. Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland and the British Empire are monarchies; the monarch professes to act only on the advice of his or her ministers, but as a matter of fact the court is a center of social and administrative influence of an entirely undemocratic sort. A crown is the symbol of graded privilege. In the place of *Heil Hitler* or the Fascist salute, these royalist peoples, at the sound of their particular Royal Anthem, stand stiffly to attention with an air of ineffable reverence. It is a quite parallel act of worship, and as complete a repudiation of the personal responsibility of democracy.

The disintegrating British Empire is now, one has to recognize, a system of government almost completely out of popular control. Practically it has undergone a reactionary revolution in the last

decade, and a loose-knit combination of court, church, army and wealth, intensely class-conscious, intensely self-protective, has resumed control of affairs. It is an oligarchy skillful in the assimilation of useful or formidable individuals but without the slightest disposition to amalgamate with anything else on earth. Its ruling motive is the fear of dispossession. Decisions involving peace or war are made without any pretense of consulting any surviving popular will, and the whole capitalist press, the cinema, the radio and indeed all possible means of influencing opinion, concentrate upon the assertion of the rightness and inevitableness of these decisions. Dissent is a muffled and ineffective squeaking, and any inconvenient facts are kept from the public by requests for suppression that are in effect commands. There is a special Form D sent round to the press which it is extremely unwise to defy. Most of the acts of Mr. Chamberlain since September 1938 have been as irresponsible as those of any Dictator, equally unscrupulous and far more shameful. He has indeed made himself a Dictator by tact and betrayal instead of by violent seizure. There is in the long run very little to choose between a bully dictatorship and a "tact" dictatorship. The latter may be less crushing but more insidious in its attack upon human dignity.

These are the practical realities Mr. Streit has to face. The will for federation in any of these governments is more than doubtful — even if presently they have their backs to the wall. They will all fight for their separate sovereignty to the last.

No doubt it is true that, in spite of much human inconsistency, much confused thinking and many local abuses, there is still a powerful disposition throughout all the Atlantic and Scandinavian communities towards liberty, equality and world brotherhood. It breaks out in literature, discussion and conduct. It expresses itself plainly in books, spontaneous press writing, plays and films. This is most manifest in America and there is in consequence a growing disposition of the British authorities to intercept and censor the too outspoken American weekly press. An increasing number of English readers subscribe to American periodicals to learn what is being hushed up in their own country.

With every acceleration of communications this American influence will increase. Moreover, there are plenty of American

professors manifestly disposed to take the risk of outspokenness and say what they like. If at times they veil their meaning a little from the possible hostility of the unintelligent in a deliberate obscurity of technicality that sometimes borders on jargon, that does not prevent their speculating very boldly about economic, social and international processes, muck more boldly and freshly than their English equivalents.

Again the bitter jests of such a French periodical as *Le Canard Enchaîné* are saturated with the soundest democratic scorn and derision. The desire of a considerable section of enlightened Frenchmen to sustain and complete the mighty impetus of the Declaration of the Rights of Man is genuine and obstinate. They will not willingly suffer France to desist from her traditional task of world enlightenment. For some years, in the face of overwhelming financial and political difficulties, there has been a gallant attempt to produce a modern encyclopaedia, which might repeat the preparatory role of the original Encyclopaedists for the vaster needs of today.*

* See Note 7A, the Italian *Encyclopedia*.

Neither Americans nor British, with their vastly greater resources, have attempted anything so comprehensive and illuminating. It would be possible to quote hundreds of instances, names, books, speeches, utterances and acts, to show that all round and about the world in a great multitude of still all-too-dispersed intelligences, democracy lives and advances.

But these evidences of a considerable and growing will for a reasonably complete democracy do not alter the fact that the directive forces in control of this miscellany of states Mr. Streit and his disciples would have us federate, are scarcely more democratic in structure and method than those running the frankly anti-democratic states.

Indeed, to call the present world convulsion a war between the "allied democracies" of the world and "totalitarian states," is putting all too fine a name upon it. The reality will be a war of established governments and governing systems claiming to represent "democracy" but quite unwilling and unprepared to set themselves to realize the modern democratic idea, against expansive desperado governments that have shown themselves -contemptuous of

democratic pretensions and dangerous to the general peace. It will be another war for the alteration or preservation of frontiers.

It is almost impossible to hope that this complex of warfare towards which the world is drifting can assume any other form than a confused alliance against these more lawless military powers, whatever formal victories or defeats ensue. It is incredible that there will not be a steady deterioration in human morale through the stresses of the struggle. If the so-called aggressor states are defeated, their unfortunate common people will be saddled with the war guilt of the governments that have enslaved and ruined them. They will be made to "pay" again. Another insincere attempt to organize "collective security" on the lines of the League of Nations, another unstable League of victors, will simply accumulate the necessary resentments for another collapse into still more violent conflict. Fresh brigand adventurers will appear, trading on the shame and despair of the vanquished.

It is this that makes the approach of this second world-war storm so black. Whichever side emerges at any particular phase as victorious, is really a secondary issue. The practical loss of freedom, the usurpation of controls, seems inevitable.

The possibility of an emergence of any sort of enhancement of democracy from the threatened *mêlée* seems very slight indeed. Democracy is still too incomplete, unorganized and unprepared to bring about any such happy ending. Catastrophe is still steadily outrunning education. We are at present rapidly experiencing a repetition of 1914-1919 on a vastly more disastrous scale.

§ 8. — WHAT MAN HAS TO LEARN

IF we hold firmly to that same systematic assembling of universally acceptable statements which has brought us thus far, it is not overwhelmingly difficult to state the nature of the mental adaptation that is needed to arrest this present drive towards biological disaster for *Homo sapiens*. If it has become necessary for him to be re-educated as a conscious world citizen, to be prepared to take his place in a collective world fellowship, then plainly the realization of this necessity is the framework upon which his social being must be rebuilt. The scientific vision of life in the universe and no other has to be his vision of the universe. Any other leads ultimately to disaster. And since the existing educational organization of the world does not provide anything like that vision nor establish the necessary conceptions of right conduct that arise out of it, it needs to be recast quite as much and even more than the political framework needs to be recast. This may involve, it will almost certainly involve, such a *Kulturfkampf* as the world has never seen before. But since it is the only possible line of survival, that effort has to be faced. Unless there is sufficient mental and moral vigor in our race to achieve the educational readjustment, then there seems to be nothing that can possibly arrest the present *dégringolade* of *Homo sapiens*.

§ 9. — SAMPLE OF A GENERATION

LET us be as full and explicit as possible about this reorganization of man's mental superstructure, this reconditioning of his apparatus for adaptation, that we are stressing.

And here again there is nothing original and hardly anything that is fairly controversial in what will be stated here. The only originality lies in an adherence to one consistent line of thought, to carrying the broad and practically indisputable statements of modern ecological science, unimpaired, into the field of current human affairs and refusing to be deflected or complicated by secondary and irrelevant considerations.

It happens to have been my role throughout life to assemble facts and interpretations of fact, bearing upon man's power of controlling his future. From the days of that paradoxical fantasy, *The Time Machine* (1894) onward, my mind, partly no doubt by the accidents of life, but partly also, I think, by a natural predisposition, has been directed more and more definitely to the question of what is likely to happen in the future. And looking back upon this half-century of discussion and suggestion and tracing its development phase by phase, a very remarkable change in the whole tenor of human thought becomes manifest.

It is only now, indeed, as I bring all these things together to review, that I realize how our attitude to past and future has changed since the later-Victorian period. There has been an almost complete reorientation, at once profound and subtle, of our minds with regard to time.

Briefly: the intelligence of the nineties attached much more importance to the past and much less to the probabilities of the days to come, than do any contemporary minds now. It was living in what appears now as an almost static present. The past supplied a picturesque system of justifications for the established state of affairs, but it was the established state of affairs alone which had any quality of reality. There was a widespread feeling that nothing more of primary importance was ever likely to happen. Life as we knew it was a leisurely game of consequences. It is difficult now, even for

those of us who were already living in those days, to recall the entire absence of urgency that prevailed. We were carried along by habit and that false sense of security which the absence of fundamental crises engenders. To most of my generation in the eighties and nineties, all the cardinal discoveries of science seemed to have been made, all the great political systems established for good, the world permanently apportioned among the Powers. We had a sort of feeling that Queen Victoria, under whose rule everybody up to high middle age had been born, would go on living forever. The future was something in another universe, in another dimension. One could say or think anything one liked about it because it did not seem to matter in the least.

This habit of mind lingered long after the beliefs on which it had been established had decayed. It lingers still.

One factor in the steadily accelerated swing from traditionalism and legalism to futurism, that presently began, was certainly the enlargement of our horizons by the realization of evolution and geological time and the breaking of the barriers set to our imaginations by the myth of the Creation and the Fall. But at first there was — how can one put it? — an intellectual but not a practical release. It was still possible in *The Time Machine* to imagine humanity on the verge of extinction and differentiated into two decadent species, the Eloi and the Morlocks, without the slightest reflection upon everyday life. Quite a lot of people thought that idea was very clever in its sphere, very clever indeed, and no one minded in the least. It seemed to have no sort of relation whatever to normal existence.

To a large extent, I shared that detachment. If I was imaginatively futurist, I was for all practical purposes contemporaneous. The possible extinction of humanity appeared to be something so remote that it never gave me a moment's real uneasiness in those days. The future was still no more real than dreamland.

But all that has changed, and I have come through the phases of that change. Now the questions: "What is going to happen?" and "And then what will happen?" dominate an increasing number of awakening minds among which I am moving. We live in a planning world. Everything we do is becoming preparatory and anticipatory.

Today has vanished almost completely in our enormous preoccupation with tomorrow.

I suppose I have responded as much as anyone in my generation to this mental rotation. There is no need therefore for me to apologize for using myself as the trace of the flow of thought during the past half century. I happen to be the most convenient trace. If I were not so, then somebody else should be writing this book instead of me.

To begin with I used the future as a field for purely imaginative play. After *The Time Machine* I wrote some more futuristic stories. But as one followed another I found I was less and less interested in the artistic business of making the tale plausible and more and more in the scientific interest of making it probable. The turn of the century set many of us forecasting in earnest. My natural bias or my journalistic instinct, or maybe both in unison, moved me to write *Anticipations* (1900), in which I threw the teller of fantastic tales aside altogether and set myself speculating about the coming years. I was moving with the times. The book caught on; it was more successful than most novels; it was one of the first of such books to sell well. I will not say anything of its guesses, some happy, some wildly out. But it left me with the persuasion that here was something needing to be done and which could be done much more thoroughly than I had done it. My sense of the importance and reality of the future increased.

In 1902 I was reading a paper to the Royal Institution, *The Discovery Of The Future*, in which I was boldly asserting the need to realize and accept a forward-looking system of values. I presently found myself in correspondence with various parallel groups abroad which, half in defiance and half in burlesque, were proclaiming the Futurist doctrine. Among them was Signer Marinetti, who came to London reciting, in a tremendous voice, the most astounding Futurist poetry. He resented with extreme bitterness the English and American tourists in Italy with their red guide-books like catalogues at a sale. He was, he said, prepared to destroy all the historical monuments in the peninsula. He demanded, loudly and violently, a living country and not a museum of antiques.

The impulse spread, but still for a great number even of progressive-minded people it retained a quality of unreality. It was an

exuberance for them, a lark, a fashion. This Futurist stuff, they felt, could not last. In practice they still clung to the established order for their permanent values. It was the shock and stresses of the Great War that wrenched them away finally from this assumption of permanent stability towards a reluctant, imperfect recognition of the greater importance of the anticipatory aspect of life. It was like the internal change-over that must happen in a bar of iron when it is magnetized. And many quite intelligent people were not wrenched away. They kept up their resistances, and a large body of the educated still resist — as we shall see. But the forward-looking section accumulated conviction; their sense of reality continued to shift away more and more decisively from the thing that is to the thing that is to be. *The Discovery Of The Future* became by degrees a matter-of-fact statement for me instead of a daring thesis. I believed in it as time went on much more than I had done when first I launched it.

As the war unfolded before me, my mind was increasingly obsessed by the problem of how the war would end and what would come after the war. Imaginative people were guessing and inferring and making plans. The word "plan" became more and more frequent; at length no newspaper was complete without it. A Ministry of Foresight was suggested. We busied ourselves in making the New Map of Europe, the New Map of the World. The idea of a "League of Nations" emerged amidst this ferment of anticipatory projects. An interesting phase in all this forward-looking peering was the War Aims controversy, I happened to be working in Northcliffe's Ministry of Propaganda in Enemy Countries.*

[* See *Secrets Of Crewe House* by Sir Campbell Stuart.]

I was in particular directing the propaganda in Germany, and, in co-operation with Dr. J W. Headlam-Morley, I induced our Crewe House colleagues to draw up a memorandum upon the allied war aims and submit it to the Foreign Office for endorsement. "This," we said, "is what we suppose we are fighting for, and if we can get this we shall be satisfied and the war will be at an end. Is that so? We cannot go on with our work properly unless we know its objective." The War Office was profoundly shocked. Whatever else in the world had been affected by the rotation of the human mind towards the

future, the Foreign Office has remained immune. There, at any rate, war was what it always had been. You fought your way to your enemy's capital and you then "dictated terms." The objective of a war was victory. To reveal your terms beforehand was not done. So the Foreign Office never committed itself to a binding endorsement of our War Aims Memorandum, and it never warned us of various secret understandings that affected it. It remained in the self-satisfying pose of a superior body tolerating us and using us according to the best diplomatic traditions. And at length at Versailles the terms were dictated.

Until the German capitulation we went on with our development of the League of Nations movement, committing ourselves to very definite promises to the German people, in the hope that our engagements would be honored at the Peace. They were not honored. We had taken the utmost pains in our propaganda to distinguish between the German people and the Hohenzollern government, and to hold out hopes of a speedy return to the fellowship of nations and a reasonable prospect of recuperation to a chastened and republican Germany. The victorious Foreign Offices treated all that as new-fangled rubbish. The Quai d'Orsay in particular seemed obsessed with a dream of obliterating Germany, of dividing it up so that it would never reassemble itself. They continued to kick Germany about until Germany became frantic with shame and hate, until Germany passed from reason to screaming fury. Its screaming fury found its incarnation at last in Hitler. He did not hesitate at the thought of war. He demanded war. He did not hesitate at the possibility of a subsequent social revolution. The victors of Versailles found Red Revolution even more terrifying than flaming war, and he played upon that terror. They passed from arrogance to propitiatory terror. This madman, they felt, might do anything. History became an attempt to humor and appease a lunatic who after all — and that was the worst of it for them — was not always quite so mad as he seemed.

All that is now quite familiar to everyone. What concerns us more directly here are those meetings and movements and discussions that occurred when the idea of the League of Nations was being shaped. These deliberations brought home to me the confused divergence of

historical preoccupations among those taking part in them. Their minds were full of broken scraps of history, irrational political prejudices, impossible analogies. Everyone saw the idea from a different angle and seemed prepared to realize it by the hastiest of compromises. The Outline of History was the direct outcome of the experience I gathered in these discussions. At first, in conjunction with L.S. Woolf* and one or two others, I tried to organize a Research Committee, which would set itself to think out the full significance and possibilities of this great idea. We made William Archer, who was badly out of a job just then, the salaried secretary of this body.

* Author of an excellent book, *International Government* (1916).

With much internal friction we compiled *The Idea Of A League Of Nations*, *Prolegomena To The Study Of World Organization*, and *The Way To The League Of Nations: A Brief Sketch Of The Practical Steps Needed For The Formation Of A League.* These booklets are still available for the collector. Then President Wilson came to Europe and we were swept aside, because he had his own ideas, and very crude ideas they were, of a League that would make the world safe for democracy. But the difficulty of producing these two reports opened my eyes to the enormous obstacles in the way of all volunteered co-operation. It seemed impossible to hold a team together. They differed upon endless points and they would not come together to hammer diem out. They were all too intent upon what they considered more immediately important things. Our chief financial supporter deserted us to go off wool-gathering upon his own lines.* He could not see what need there was for all this highbrow research. But we were all going off upon our own lines. We had already disintegrated before we were disregarded.

* See Note 9A, expanding this.

At a conference with some representative Americans at the Reform Club during the war, I pointed out the urgent need for a general history of mankind which would consolidate people's ideas about the establishment of some sort of World Pax. Everyone thought it was a good idea. But here again was something which was nobody's business in particular. There was no time to go about collecting, persuading and editing the academically right people. One

might as well have asked Lord Acton to write something. An Outline of History had to be done soon, even if it had to be flung together — and, getting help wherever I could find it, I flung one together.

I did it as well as I could, I worked enormously, and the strenuous hostile criticism to which it has since been subjected has revealed hardly any serious errors of statement. But a lot of it was headlong writing. It seemed to me at the time that if I and a few people could show that there was a shape to history, then it would be easy, since there is no copyright in the past, for the professional historians to rectify any serious flaws and do it better. They did nothing of the sort, and, failing that better performance, The Outline of History was launched upon a world conspicuously in need of just that assemblage of information. It had a fantastic success. Millions of copies have been sold and it has been translated into practically every important language in the world — except Italian. Fascist Italy could not tolerate the candid criticism of the Roman Empire.

I was probably rather excited by this astonishing boom. I do not know about that because I was not watching myself very closely. But I think that even at the time I did realize that this immense sale was no tribute to my authorship. It was something much more significant. It was the revelation of a world-wide hunger for adequately summarized knowledge on the part of multitudes whom the schools had sent empty away.

It seemed to me that this aching void probably extended far beyond the field of history. I knew that the general public throughout the world was being kept in the blackest ignorance of modern biological knowledge, evolutionary thought, modern ideas about individuality and modern psychology. I have already told in the Introduction how I realized that in my own case. With the assistance of Dr. Julian Huxley and my son, G.P. Wells, I produced a far more competent companion volume to *The Outline Of History, The Science Of Life*. It is fuller and more searching and better done than its predecessor, but its success was by no means astronomical.

Then I turned to the most difficult and original of all these encyclopaedic essays, *The Work, Wealth And Happiness Of Mankind*. This was an attempt to rescue social, economic and monetary "science" from the medieval scholasticism, the theorizing

unworldliness, in which it still wanders. It was also an attempt to get behind the arbitrary assumptions upon which the Marxist doctrine of a necessary class war is based. Instead of jumping into the matter in the accepted academic style from some crudely plausible assumption, I approached these questions as a special branch of human ecology, and opened the matter out from a realistic survey of human life as a going concern. I began with a survey of the substances and power in the service of man, and thence I pursued a series of interrogations, How? and Why? up to government and education.

It was a laborious task; I chose some unsuitable collaborators from whom I had to disentangle the enterprise with considerable expense and difficulty; but in the end I managed to get every section of it "vetted" by authorities of the first rank. It is sound and tested matter.

In the end the book failed to earn the attention I think it deserved. The title may have been unpromising to the ordinary reader, the manner of its marketing unsuitable. It might have had better fortune as *An Outline Of Social And Economic Knowledge*. I am convinced there is as great a public ready for a summary of facts and ideas upon social, political and monetary matters as there is for historical and biological digests. The book did not get to them. The world of economists and so forth ignored it completely — but then it is their practice also to ignore one another completely, to ignore almost everything completely. I find a sort of recognition of it in Barbara Wootton's brilliant *Lament For Economics* (1938), for which I am discouraged enough to be grateful. She is not biologically trained, she is probably quite ignorant of general ecology, but her realization that economics has still to become a science and can only become a science by admitting the descriptive treatment and examination of actual things and processes, is perfectly clear.

One other book I must mention here. *The Salvaging of Civilization* was written originally to be delivered as lectures in America, a project frustrated by a bout of influenza. Therein, borrowing a phrase from Dr. John Beattie Crozier,* I launched the idea of a "Bible" for civilization. In this idea of a "Bible" for the new social and political order, it is plain that Dr. Crozier and myself are groping our way and getting very near to a full realization of the

scale and nature of the mental readjustment incumbent upon the world.

* See Note 9B

This new "Bible" of ours is the World Encyclopaedia, to which I am coming, in embryo. I will not recapitulate the various other papers, pamphlets, books, with which I documented my successive mental readjustments, because they are ceasing to have anything more than a minor, personal significance. I was traveling along a road that a number of my contemporaries were following.

Step by step the more responsive elements in my generation were being forced towards a complete recognition of the need for a realistic preparation for the future, if our existence henceforth was to be anything better than a mechanical response to the blows of adverse fate that were beating upon us now, faster and faster. We were asking "What shall we do?" and more realistically "What have we to do?" and it was plain that the answers to these questions needed setting down as the necessary articles of association for a world-wide revolutionary effort. There may have been a slight slackening of this mental fermentation during the phase of the Fatuous Twenties, but it was revived with the mounting sense of urgency that came with the Frightened Thirties. Crisis appeared following crisis, each more menacing than the last — it was like the Pacific surf coming in before a rising gale — and what had we prepared for these crises?

By the early thirties I was one of those who were becoming fully aware that the systematic reconditioning of our mental life was not a secondary but a primary need for all mankind. It has beyond all question become now the most urgent and important thing in the world.

And also I was realizing the unsatisfactoriness of such detached, uncoordinated work as writers of my type were doing. A number of us were all saying very much the same sort of thing, but without much co-ordination or anything mutual in the way of consequences. We could plead that we were pioneering and exploring, but that is merely a provisional plea. There comes a time to have done with sketches and samples. There is a quantitative element in real affairs. Doing something does not amount to very much unless you do

enough.

The achievement of the French Encyclopaedists has always appealed very strongly to my imagination. Diderot and his associates had scented the onset of change; they had set themselves, in the measure of their times, to prepare and equip the ideology of the new world they anticipated. They worked against great difficulties and within hampering limitations, but they did produce a new, inspiring conception of a world renewed. They gave a definite form and direction to the confused and powerful liberal impulses of their time. Their assembled thought materialized in the American and French revolutions and in a great heartening of the creative spirit of man throughout the whole world. They lived in an age of comparatively small things. The public capable of understanding and transmitting their ideas was a limited one. But it became very clear to me that what was needed in the face of the oncoming challenges of our time was essentially a new Encyclopaedism commensurate with the relative vastness of our new occasions.

I set myself to the development of this idea of a modern Encyclopaedism which should assemble facts and suggestions with the same insistence upon scientific reality and the same exclusion of irrelevances that has controlled the establishment of the world outlook I have put before the reader.

In a small book, *World Brain* (1938), the reader will find the substance of my proposals stated more fully and explicitly than is convenient here. I would be glad if the reader could find time to get and read it. I have made a sort of campaign for this new Encyclopaedism and I continue to work for it to the best of my ability. *World Brain* is a book, quite bold and uncompromising in substance, but still with a distinctly propitiatory manner. It makes clear and definite proposals for a world-wide reconstruction of what we call higher education. What I call the permanent World Encyclopaedia is projected as a permanent institution, a mighty super-university, holding together, utilizing and dominating all the teaching and research organizations at present in existence. This is shown to be not only a plausible and practicable idea, but an idea already finding a material embodiment in part and detail, through the common-sense needs of the scientific and technical world. A

permanent World Encyclopaedia, as I show in that book, is indeed crystallizing into existence, but at a pace altogether too slow for the urgency of the human situation. Bound up with this in the same book is a frank survey of what the citizen of a modern democratic world should know — that is to say, a scheme for an adequate modern education. This survey constituted my address as President of the Education Section of the British Association at Nottingham in 1937. It is much more provocative in its manner than the Royal Institution lecture of which it forms the complement. It completely excluded both the Bible mythology and national and imperial history from the educational scheme.

Throughout 1937 I was doing what I could to promote this new Encyclopaedism I had in mind, but with very little effect, and in the autumn I went to America and lectured, as *World Brain* relates. There is no need to recapitulate that American discourse here, but what is very apparent to me as I re-read the book, is the sacrifice of intensity in the effort to make it interesting and attractive. I am trying out ways and means in a very discursive spirit. I attempt some disarming jests. I write as though there was still quite sufficient time in hand to bring about the new mental orientation. I still had that feeling. Taking myself as a fair sample of the more progressive thought of my time, it is plain that up to the publication of *World Brain* in the spring of 1938 we were still not fully aware of the nearness of a culminating crisis in human affairs.

That forced itself upon our attention in spite of ourselves. We were compelled by the rush of circumstances to realize not only the unqualified soundness, but also, what is by no means the same thing, the urgent and fundamental importance of our intellectual convictions.

In the summer I was invited to be the guest of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science at Canberra, and this involved giving an hour's discourse. I was becoming more and more impatient with the failure of the new encyclopaedia idea to secure any energetic support, and also I was growing more and more impatient with my own personal ineffectiveness in the matter. I determined to use this invitation to assert still more plainly and clearly — to myself among other hearers

— the case for a new encyclopaedia and a radical revision of the world's educational organization. In Canberra I gave this address the tide of *The Role of English In The Development Of The World Mind*, for reasons I have set out in a note at the end of this book.*

* For the advantages of English see *Note 9C*

I repeated this lecture with some slight modifications as a public lecture in Sydney Town Hall, under the title of *The Human Outlook*. Substantially this book is an expansion of that address. Its line of thought is the same; its conclusions are the same. It is fuller, much more explicit and more closely reasoned, and its application to current affairs is closer and, to my mind, inescapable.

In addition I volunteered to read another paper to the Education Section at Canberra. I called it *A Provocative Paper On The Poison Called History*. This also was made into a very largely attended public lecture, at which debate would have been impossible. It was an hour's show. As I wanted to bring whatever opposition there might be to my thesis into the light of clear statement, I suggested that the Education Section should provide time for its discussion.

The reception of these lectures and addresses was very typical of the transitional state of mind in which we are all living, even the most enlightened of us. They were, you must take my word for it, vividly successful. They were delivered in a setting of compliments and applause. I had been stimulating, amazingly stimulating. I had said things that had long needed saying. I had given them all food for thought of the most invigorating kind. Distinguished men of science came to thank me earnestly for the plainness of my statements. And so on.

And then everything went on just as it had been going on before. The stimulant seemed to evaporate at once and the food was certainly not assimilated.

The Right Honorable William Hughes, that distinguished Australian statesman, had very kindly consented to preside over my Town Hall lecture and at the end of it he expressed his appreciation. "God save us all," he said, and then, advancing to the front of the platform, he led the audience with the singing of "God Save the King." Everybody stiffened up to attention. I had been stating as lucidly as I could the reasons for believing that the human species

was already staggering past the zenith of its ascendancy and on its way through a succession of disasters to extinction. And then we shook off the disagreeable vision, and lifted up our voices in simple loyalty to things as they are.

The discussion of that "provocative paper" by the Education Section was still more remarkable. I had denounced the teaching of the Judaeo-Christian mythology as historical fact, in the most emphatic terms. Not a single Christian teacher appeared to reply to that challenge. Most of them, including the masters in one or two progressive schools who had been most anxious to turn my publicity value to account, contrived to have a parallel conference with another Section. In place of a discussion upon the crucial points I had sharpened, we had a series of brief, disconnected addresses by various educational officials, public characters and thoughtful people, about education in general, speaking in an elevated and discursive spirit, making many admirable but irrelevant philosophical remarks and including much autobiographical material. The avoidance of the essential issue was complete. And it was quite deliberate. The discussion was over and nothing had come of it and things were still very agreeably as they always had been. Tea was ready.

Now these were not consciously backward people. They knew indeed that they were the elite of Australasian progress. These Associations for the Advancement of Science throughout the world, the British, the American and the Australasian, are essentially assemblies of well-informed and liberal and progressive minds. But the real world of our Conference was still this wholly present world in which there are parents to consider, promotion to consider, dismissals, retirements, a world of knighthoods and honors. I went away pondering these things. Presently — let me confess it, lest I seem to claim to be anything better than a sample of a generation — I found myself discussing rather keenly the terms upon which I would lecture in Sydney.

Plainly we are not moving fast enough. We are still balancing in this strange phase of indecision between the actual present and the inevitable future. Even what we may call the more advanced intelligences vacillate and fail to sustain their constructive faith. The established, habitual present remains their real world. They may be

profoundly disturbed — intellectually. They may be greatly unsettled and alarmed by the ever-increasing uncertainty of life, but still, in the exact sense of the word "realize," they fail to realize the urgent, implacable future. As the legendary gentleman who sat over his drink in the bar of the sinking Titanic remarked: "Well, anyhow, the damn thing hasn't gone down yet."

They are all continually relapsing towards acceptance of the prevalent contemporaneous outlook because that is what is most natural in the normal human make-up. At any sign of respite they yield to it. Alertness to the future, we have to realize, is a novel and artificial thing in life. It has to be constantly refreshed and sustained. Minds must be trained and accustomed to it; it is a matter of social atmosphere much more than individual intelligence. They have to be held up to it by something stronger and more permanent than themselves.

It is only in such an educational organization as I have been deducing from our present needs and, I hope, forecasting here, in such a permanent organization of knowledge, systematically assembled, continually extended and renewed and made freely and easily accessible to everyone, that there is the slightest hope of our species meeting the serried challenges of destiny that advance upon it. It is impossible to be steadily futuristic, solo, without a sustaining social organization which will give as assured and habitual a quality to the forward orientation of the everyday life as is now possessed by the unprogressive world of today.

And that organization fails to materialize.

I am impatient and at the same time I do not know how to accelerate matters. I do not think this is simply a case of the distress of an old man in a hurry. There is every justification for hurry in the world about us. I think that however young and hopeful I might be, I should still be intensely impatient to see this movement for human re-education quickened and implemented.

This reconditioning and reorientation of the human mind has to be undertaken not merely against the innate resistances to changing conditions in everyone's make-up. These innate resistances are organized very powerfully and effectively, and the nature of their organization is one we have now to examine. And also we are

working against time. It is this time factor that casts the darkest shadow upon the possibility of a single, clear-headed, creative, happily interested, war-free human community emerging from the returning chaos of the present to dominate our planet through long ages still to come.

Years ago I threw out a sentence that caught the attention of that very great and lucid historian, James Harvey Robinson. He picked it up and repeated and commended it and gave it a wide publicity. The outlook for mankind, I had written — I think in *The Salvaging Of Civilization*— "a race between education and catastrophe."

Today catastrophe is well on its way, it is losing no time at all, but education seems still unable to get started, has indeed not even readjusted itself to start. The race may, after all, prove a walk-over for disaster.

§ 10. — ESTIMATING HOPE

HERE a personal factor comes in, which, I think, should be explained to the reader.

We are now in a field of thought from which it is impossible to banish a temperamental estimate of values. I find a certain defeatism has invaded my mind in the course of the past year. I anticipate very little happiness in the residue of my life. I feel that the odds are very heavily against any such educational revolution being even attempted in my lifetime — there will be no Pisgah glimpse of the promised world for me — and that in all probability my last years will be passed in a very ugly and distressful phase of human history. In many quarters I am unlikely to be a *persona grata*, A spell of ill-health involving bodily discomfort and a considerable ebb of mental resilience is contributing to this depression. These are my circumstances. That matter of health is comparatively a minor issue. But quite apart from any bodily depression, the spectacle of evil in the world during the past half-dozen years — the wanton destruction of homes, the ruthless hounding of decent folk into exile, the bombings of open cities, the cold-blooded massacres and mutilations of children and defenseless gentle people, the rapes and filthy humiliations and, above all, the return of deliberate and organized torture, mental torment and fear to a world from which such things had seemed wellnigh banished — has come near to breaking my spirit altogether.

Said an old friend of mine the other day: "If only we could get away from events for a spell! If only we could get together as we used to get together and laugh!"

Children still laugh. Laughter is born again in each generation. What is past is over and done with for those who did not share in it. Life begins again incessantly. The sequence of birth and death is a continuing amnesty, but for my generation there have been things so unforgettable and disappointments so bitter that for us laughter has become almost a brutality. The dead past is dead — but not for us. We have been too near it and we are splashed with blood.*

* See *Note 10A* for a schoolgirl's reaction to A.R.P.

It is well to remind the reader that though all that follows is written as. objectively and truly as I can, it is overshadowed by these misadventures of my generation and mental type. The younger the reader is the more he or she should be able to discount the discouragement of our shadows.

And a consideration he must bear in mind in weighing what I am putting before him is the probability that there is a kind of egotistical intolerance in every definitely elderly mind. That is almost inevitable. Through a long life a complex system of ideas is built up upon a framework of concepts and associations determined by early circumstances. One qualifies, modifies, extends, superimposes significance upon this primary structure, but after a time it becomes irreplaceable. It may not be the best possible foundation, but the more it has to carry, the less it can be changed. It is like a business that has grown up in reasonably convenient premises, they might be better laid out perhaps, but there is no possibility now of completely revising the lay-out. The going concern must carry on. But it becomes more and more difficult to rephrase one's ideas or to recognize them when they are rephrased. So that I may be much less alone and outstanding than I am disposed to think.

The nearer my beliefs are to reality the more probable it is that similar minds may be traveling along parallel, if not identical, lines of thought to practically the same conclusions, approached perhaps from a different starting-point and so differently phrased. I suspect and indeed I hope that I do not allow fully for that.

For example, there is the peculiar dialect of so many minds in the war generation who resorted to communism and the Communist Party to express their recoil from the existing state of affairs. It was the handiest formula for any sort of organized dissent. Many of them — not all, alas! — are emerging to a broader conception of what can be done with life, but they still speak with a strong Marxist accent. Some few, and my friend J.B.S. Haldane is among their number, seem to be resolved like Lenin (but without the justification of his circumstances) to read a wisdom and profundity into the sage of Highgate which was certainly not there. His Haldane Memorial Lecture (Birkbeck College, May 24th, 1938), was, to my mind, a brilliant yet obstinately perverse overvaluation of the role of Marx

(and Engels) in human thought, which may well have made the worthy uncle whom he was commemorating turn in his grave. Lord Haldane also professed the Hegelian faith and that was his nephew's justification. This lecture made the most of Marx, I insist, and more also. And then more.

Now I have always had a peculiar contempt and dislike for the mind and character of Karl Marx, a contempt and dislike that have deepened with the years. I have given it the liveliest expression I could contrive in "The Shaving of Karl Marx" in *Russia In The Shadows* and in the "Psychoanalysis of Karl Marx" in *The World Of William Clissold*. My only regret for these brief essays is that I could not infuse more sting and challenge into them. I have watched the tradition of Marxian bad manners and Marxian dogmatism wrapping like a blanket of fog round the minds of two crucial generations. They seemed to me to be lost in the fog. It was difficult for me to think they could be advancing under that fog.

Yet when, for example, I turn over such a book as *The Social Function Of Science* by that very considerable writer, Professor J.D. Bernal, F.R.S., I get at times, in spite of his very distinct Marxist twang, a curious sense of parallelism and co-operation. And much that J.B.S. Haldane said in his lecture, I find as I read it over again, I could subscribe to, except that I reject the Marxist attribution.

I am reminded of the story of an Englishman who had a more or less rudimentary cultural conversation with a Japanese gentleman. The latter broke into an oration, a gabble, a flow of unfamiliar sounds which sounded like no known human speech. Then something clicked over in the hearer's mind. He made some rapid transpositions and light broke upon him. He was hearing one of the most familiar of Shakespeare's speeches in English! English of a different tint.

I have been asserting, in a phraseology that no doubt owes much more than I realize to the phrases and assumptions of the liberal, protestant, progressive world of half a century ago, a view of the human outlook, that seems to me to be irresistibly convincing if one accepts a known series of facts. The truer and more inevitable that view is, the more probable it is that intelligent men, starting from all sorts of different standpoints, will converge upon the same conclusions. In English of a different tint. Indeed, it will be the

completest disproof of my contentions, if there is not that convergence, if my conclusions do not reappear independently, crop up from a variety of starting-points and yet work out towards practically the same pattern. If the compelling facts do, as I assert, lie plainly on the face of things, that must be so. But probably, because I have a phraseology of my own, I shall be among those least able to recognize it.

And another thing that anyone who has spent most of his mental energy in trying to give the fullest and most emphatic expression to the truth as he perceives it, may easily underrate, is the tacit insubordination of many of the suppressed and formally silenced minds who are apparently disciplined against us. It is well to recall that all that outbreak of liberal questioning, the Protestant Reformation, which did so much to prepare the way for the French Revolution, was due almost entirely to the mental insurrection of friars or priests. They had had to take their creeds seriously, and they had brooded over their dogmas until they found them unbearable. There was no effective attack from without upon Church teaching throughout the whole Reformation period. There were close at hand in the alien disbeliefs of Jew and Moslem, a tacit denial of the Catholic faith, but these provoked no reforming zeal. All that came from within. And conversely the Jesuit Counter Reformation was the work of a group of romantic-minded laymen led by a court-bred gallant who had been wounded and crossed in love. The seven founders of the Society of Jesus were with one exception laymen. They were excited outsiders. They believed crudely and without qualification. They had had none of that intimate instruction of the mind from which questionings arise. They were, so to speak, the Nazis of Roman Catholicism.

But that is a passing comment. The more relevant point is the indisputable, obstinate tendency of common sense to assert itself in minds deliberately trained in any elaborate system of intolerance and error. Fanatics are madmen who find a masochist pleasure in strangling their own doubts, there is no dealing with them; but wherever there is discussion and mental training there lurks in every organized dogmatism a class of potential rebels. Hidden allies and half-hearted antagonists may be waiting to come over to a movement

for the radical reconstruction of human ideology as it gathers strength. They are, so to speak, among the undisclosed reserves of progress.

Moreover, in further mitigation of my defeatist mood, it has to be borne in mind that while there is still life in a species no biological defeat is complete. Men and women of my type of mind and my generation, however the odds work against us, have no alternative to a stoical persistence in our convictions until our courses are run. We may have to admit regretfully a loss of buoyancy and of the ability for flexible mental co-operations. That is our private affair. In that we are just as much war casualties as those who may

have suffered physical disablement in battle but are not yet completely incapacitated. Our injuries narrow down the scope of our service, but they furnish no justification for abandoning a loyal participation in the struggle. Our cause may still be winning.

Finally, as to the urgency of all this, let it be remembered that nothing is more difficult than estimating possibilities in time, and that timing here is a factor of primary importance. Disaster seems to me to be advancing upon us, but it may be that I am overlooking or underestimating the possibility of some intercalary slowing-down in the pace of change. I may be failing to perceive possible delaying forces. Some unexpected development of anti-aircraft technique might, for example, greatly minimize the destructiveness of air raids and the possibility of surprise wars.* The world may be held back from disaster for a time by the very weight and strain of its own armaments. It may be false to assume that sooner or later guns will go off of their own accord. Guns can rust and explosives disintegrate. A balance of power may be possible for longer years than I suppose, heavy and burthensome years perhaps, but still not years of complete catastrophic collapse.

* See *Note 10B* for such a possibility.

In that pause, many people will be thinking hard, and the human intelligence may find methods of discussion and organization unknown to us. I find myself unable to imagine any such respite, and so I cannot bring it honestly into my account-rendered of the world, but there may be such a possibility. That gives no excuse for slackening, but it does justify a certain hopefulness.

With that I think I can finish with myself as a typical sample in evidence in this survey of the reaction of *Homo sapiens* to his present dangers. These ego-centered passages are not really so egotistical as they will seem to be to the antagonistic reader. It is auto-vivisection. I was by far the best and handiest rabbit for this demonstration.

Allowing for my own loss of individual hopefulness and that probable narrowing down of co-operative tolerance in my mind, the conclusions I am presenting to you remain nevertheless sound, grimly sound. The prospect for our species is just as stern and implacable, charged just as much with bracing uncertainty. The issue upon which I am in doubt is not whether I am right or wrong about the facts I have assembled; it is simply whether you of the new generation can be sufficiently braced in time. There, maybe, I do you an injustice. That is what I am saying.

What I have admitted in qualification of my own ebb of confidence, is no justification whatever for mere optimistic trumpetings— "I believe in the ultimate triumph of civilization" — and so forth. We have heard so much of that kind of hysteria. Without personal and organized devotion it means less than nothing. It is desertion under cover of a declaration of faith.

There are always plenty of well-meaning people in the world ready to relax at the slightest encouragement, and the surest preparation for disaster is the enervation of sentimental overconfidence. Face your adversary at his worst and most menacing, and then you will know best how to set about him. Rational adaptation, I admit, may be achieved ultimately, but only heroically, at a great cost. The odds are against it, rest assured, if not perhaps so heavily against it a$ nowadays they seem to be, to me.

§ 11. — SURVEY OF EXISTING FORCES

WE are now in a position to reconsider the nature of the various established systems that block the way to the readjustment of the human species as one single, continually progressive and creative world community, and to make a rough estimate of the way in which they are operating at the present time. We arrive with minds cleansed and refreshed by our survey of the biological situation, at the political, social and religious realities of today.

Legally the world's affairs are in the control of a miscellany of sovereign states, and each embodies itself in a government of politicians and officials, deeply concerned in maintaining the bargaining autonomy of the particular regime which gives them their importance, and prepared to offer a spirited resistance to any invasion, conquest or amalgamation of brave little (or big or old) Ruritania, or whatever state it is. That is how the political map of the world presents things to us. But very few of these legal governments are real cultural entities. It is only one or two sovereignties that embody a complete cultural system of their own. For all practical purposes the British Empire is such a system, with a curiously loose yet persistent will and tradition, sustained by a very distinctive literature of biographies, memoirs, collected letters and speeches and the like, and a quite definite religion — or religious substitutes — the Anglican compromise between Protestant and Catholic Christianity. Still more complete is the Nazi Germany of today, which indeed is now strenuously self-sufficient even to the extent of a distinctive science, art, literature, history, clothing, dietary of its own. But most of the other states play their game of international competition over a sort of map which does not necessarily correspond to their spheres of sovereignty. They are like estates, farms and fields spreading over a substratum of soils and geological formations.

It is to these underlying foundation realities of the world situation that we must first direct our attention.

As the facts assembled in *The Outline Of History* showed very clearly, the expansion in size of the early empires (saving only Egypt with its Nile) was dependent upon two advances in communication,

writing and road-making. These expanding empires of the second and first millennia B.C. put a great strain upon the tribal and petty national religions (which in those days included the science and morality) of the smaller states they incorporated. A working compromise was found in a sort of fusion of the absorbing and absorbed cultures. A rejuvenated religion was produced by a mutual modification of ceremony and myth. The corresponding gods of these syncretic religions adopted each other's names as aliases, or they became different "aspects" of a consolidated deity (theocrasia). A general similarity in these more primordial tribal cults greatly facilitated this syncretic process.

About these primordial religions we now have a considerable body of assured knowledge. And this is not — we must underline here — knowledge in dispute. It is not a collection of theories we are bringing into court; it is an assemblage of facts. What we have to cite here is no more questionable than the facts of evolution and ecology that have been assembled in the earlier sections of this book. It is indeed knowledge that is not made accessible to everyone; that is the default of our educational systems; it is steadfastly ignored by many people who find it inconvenient and distasteful; but that does not affect its truth.

We know that these early religions were systems of fear and propitiation, that they centered upon the primary importance of a seasonal blood sacrifice, and that that sacrifice was the function of a priesthood, which was also in charge of the calendar and of whatever medical knowledge existed. From *The Golden Bough* of Sir James George Frazer, O.M., and from *Forerunners And Rivals Of Christianity*, by F. Legge (published by the Cambridge University Press), the unbiased reader can realize for himself how this cannibal blood sacrifice has been refined at last into the Mystery of the Mass, which will indeed have very little mystery left for him if he faces the facts these writers, with no unnecessary emphasis nor any partisan purpose, put plainly before him.*

* See *Note 11A*

These investigations into the beginnings of religion have accumulated steadily throughout the past half-century. It is only by great efforts of censorship, by sectarian education of an elaborately

protected sort and the like, that ignorance about them is maintained.

These seasonal blood-sacrifice religions had a wide range of local variation, their theogonies differed widely — in some of them, mystical, secret mother-nature goddesses lurked behind the great father god; in others, the totem animal prevailed — but in all their forms they sustained the fear-begotten idea of blood salvation. Two dozen centuries ago they were already suffering through the pressure not only of syncretic necessity but from the increasing skepticism of the awakening human intelligence. They still cumbered the earth with a multitude of temples and priesthoods, for where there is an endowment you can always find someone to be a priest, but they were producing complex developments of their theological explanations.

Ptolemaic Alexandria was a hot-bed of religious elaboration. At the Serapeum, before the middle of the third century B.C., it had produced a trinity with a sacrificial son, who is slain and ascends to the Father and becomes the Father. There were a regular and secular clergy, monks with tonsures, a choral Easter ceremony; and the worship of the goddess Isis bearing the infant Horus in her arms anticipated the Catholic adoration of the Virgin Mary down even to minor details. The hymn "Sun of my Soul, thou Saviour dear," addressed originally to the hawk-sun-god Horus, has become a Christian hymn. In the temples one saw collections of ex-votos hung up in gratitude for miraculous cures and escapes, and the ceremonial purchase and burning of votive candles was encouraged. The hope of a glorious immortality — which was little stressed in the earlier religions outside Egypt — was a central fact in this religious scheme, and so, too, was an insistence upon the material resurrection of the (in Egypt usually pickled) body. All this was going on nearly three centuries before there was a Christian in the world.

But very few Christians know these facts. They are all to be found fully documented in Legge (op. cit.).

We must turn now to a second factor in the basis of 'the cultural life of Europe and the Europeanized world, the Sacred Book.

While religious cults were limited in their range and appealed at most to a few thousand votaries, it was possible to sustain 'them by direct teaching and initiation, but as greater empires grew with the

development of writing and land and sea communications, there appeared a new demand and also a new facility for mental organization. This was the written word. Spreading over the old sacrificial paganism, there presently appeared what one may distinguish as Book religions. Every great religion in the world today, whether it does or does not preserve the tradition of the cannibalistic blood sacrifice, is a Book religion.

The first of the Sacred Books to affect the Western world was the collection of Hebrew writings constituting the core of what is now called the Old Testament. It came into existence as a natural result of the series of misfortunes that happened to the various communities speaking the closely related Semitic languages which had dominated the Western world a thousand years before the Christian era. These were the Babylonian, Phoenician and Carthaginian states, the Jews who had been deported to Babylon and then returned to Palestine, and a variety of trading colonies and settlements in association with these Semitic-speaking centers. In the course of a few centuries these highly civilized and intelligent trading empires and cities, in common with various other old-world communities, collapsed under a series of barbarian raids and conquests coming from the North. Most of these Northern barbarians spoke languages of the Aryan group. Between the Homeric Age and the third century B.C. they had, as the Persians, the Greeks and Macedonians, the Romans and Gauls, become masters of the larger part of the Mediterranean world, leaving the less warlike, Semitic-speaking peoples, inter alia, subdued and scattered and defeated but still trading, sustaining a financial network, navigating the seas and going to and fro in the world. They remained in possession of these roles because they knew more about them. The conquerors, as they became civilized, availed themselves, with a certain suspicion and resentment, of these superior gifts and facilities of the defeated. The Semitic business methods were ready-made for the new kings and aristocrats and warriors. They learnt to use them slowly and left them largely in Semitic hands.

During the course of these conquests there was naturally a great intermingling of blood. The subjugated Semitic and pre-Semitic peoples were certainly in the majority in the Latin, Greek, Persian

‘and Macedonian empires; history records no general ban upon intermarriage, and we can hardly doubt that the actual blood of the ruling Aryan-speaker was the smaller factor in that continually stirred-up mixture which is now the European and Europeanized world of today.*

* See *Note 11B* on the racial unity of mankind.

But traditions were less easily assimilated. Throughout that millennium which culminated in the Roman Empire, in all the ports and cities there must have been groups of households and business organizations struggling to maintain a level of refinement and behavior higher than that of their rulers, and eager also to preserve their business correspondence and a sympathetic understanding with their kindred throughout this new world that had annihilated and discredited their separate religious systems. They needed a Book to unify them, they were ripe for a Book, and the Book was ready for them.

It was in Babylon and Judaea and in the towns of these regions that those Jewish sacred writings first appeared. They contained two overlapping versions of the old Babylonian cosmogony, together with the myths of the Creation, the Serpent-Enemy, the Fall, the Flood and the Tower of Babel. They also contained the story of a Promise and of a Chosen People who were destined to recover all and more than their ancient ascendancy. But at a price. These Chosen People had to keep themselves aloof from the Gentile world. They must preserve their precious distinctive habits and usages intact. They must remain aloof and enduring, until a promised Messiah came to lead Israel to its final triumph over the rest of mankind.

The appeal of these Scriptures to. the needs and imaginations of these scattered peoples on the defensive must have been irresistible. In a century or so Carthaginians, Phoenicians, Babylonians disappear from history, and all over the world of their former activities the Jewish communities appear, centering upon the schools of Babylon and Jerusalem with a consolidating literature and a religion. In this stage they proselytized freely. Probably the proselytizing was chiefly among kindred and sympathetic Semitic-speakers, but there were also Tartar and other tribes which were won over. The blood-sacrifice tradition was sustained by the priests in the Temple until the

fall of Jerusalem to Vespasian in 70 A.D. Then the sacrifices ceased and the Sacred Book with its semi-authoritative accretions became the link of Jewry throughout the world....

So the first of the great Book religions on which our civilization rests arose. Hard upon its diffusion followed Christianity, its unidentical twin.

Christianity began as a Jewish sect, as the Books of the New Testament tell very simply and clearly; it was still entirely Jewish after the Crucifixion; and it was only through the initiative of Saint Paul that the ranks of the elect were opened to the uncircumcised. After the Four Gospels, the New Testament is largely occupied with Paul's reconstruction of the Nazarene cult. It is all very plain to anyone who reads these books without theological prepossessions. His brilliant intelligence seized upon the idea of presenting Jesus as the sacrificial king of the blood-sacrifice tradition. Jesus, he declared, was the Lamb by whose blood we were saved — though as a matter of fact crucifixion is hardly a more bloody death than hanging. He had died, said Saint Paul, not only for the Jews but for all men who would accept his sacrifice. This, for the stricter Jews, was an intolerable relaxation of their divine bargain. But some, less profoundly convinced of the Messianic hope, realized the attractive quality of the Pauline teaching.

The medium of diffusion for Christianity remained for a time the scattered Jewish communities. Throughout the first and second centuries Judaism and its offshoot, Christianity, the latter becoming more and more Gentile and anti- Jewish, spread and bickered side by side throughout the whole extent of the Roman Empire. The pagan world, although it was also in a state of great social and religious unrest — the two things seem to be inseparable — had no comparable nexus for the production of alternative sacred writings that could stand up against the dissemination of these Judaeo-Christian legends and mythology. So that these latter provided the written factor in the foundations of civilization throughout the entire Western world.

Later, another Book religion, Islam, swept for a time across the Mediterranean scene, with very considerable reactions upon medieval science and thought. But that influence, and the effects of a

vast multitude, myriads indeed, of less distinguished “Sacred Book” cults, are outside our present discussion.

It is necessary to recall these well-known — though persistently neglected — facts — here because they establish a general statement that what we may call roughly Western culture — the mental adaptation of mankind to social and political life, from -the Pacific coast westward across the Atlantic to farthest eastern Russia, up to as late as the second Russian Revolution in 1917 — was based upon an interrelated system of Bible-centered Book religions which had either obliterated or assimilated the more ancient blood-sacrifice cults.

Let us now review the chief forms these foundation religions take in our world today.

§ 12 — THE JEWISH INFLUENCE

FIRSTLY, because of its illuminating quality, we must consider the progressive segregation of the Jewish community. It has diverted, wasted and sterilized an amount of ability and moral energy that mankind at large can ill spare. In the previous section we have shown how naturally it arose out of the state of world affairs of the centuries before and after the Christian era, and how the realistic genius of Saint Paul sought an escape from its perilous limitations. From the very beginning, there must have been men of vision among the Jews who realized and rebelled against the moral isolation to which they were being condemned, there must have been a continual seeping-away of individuals to the larger opportunities of the outer world, but the uncompromising tradition carried by the old Bible and the associated writings which grew into the Talmud has been sufficient to hold together a core of inassimilable and aggressive orthodoxy to this day clinging obstinately to every detail of ritual, behavior and avoidance that emphasized the central legend of a Chosen People. It is this orthodox remnant and its behavior and influence, the repercussions it evokes and the dangers to which it has exposed the whole Jewish community, which constitute the Jewish problem. There would be no distinctive Jewish question at all were it not for this remnant and its activities.

The whole question turns upon the Chosen People idea, which this remnant cherishes and sustains, which it is the "mission" of this remnant to cherish and sustain. It is essentially a bad tradition, and the fact that for two thousand years the Jews on the whole have been very roughly treated by the rest of mankind does not make it any the less bad. Almost every community with which the orthodox Jews have come into contact has sooner or later developed and acted upon that conspiracy idea. A careful reading of the Bible does nothing to correct it.

Every sort of man is disposed to get together with his own sort of people and prefer them to strangers. That is the natural disposition of our species, fair play to the outsider is one of the last and least assured triumphs of civilization, but the indictment against the

Jewish community is 'that their religion of a Chosen People takes this universal human vice, justifies it and stimulates it to the form of a persistent organized attitude of self-exclusion from the common fellowship of the world.

Everywhere the same reaction occurs and everywhere the Jew expresses his astonishment. Not only Christians but Turks have resorted to pogroms. In contact with the Arab, the Koran-taught Arab from the desert, who shares the Jew's cosmogony, who practices similar dietetic taboos, who is equally free from Trinitarian theology and sacrificial bloodshed, and has indeed a much stronger claim to be called Semitic, the angry reaction to the theory and practice of a Chosen People, to the practice much more than the theory, is just as violent as it is in any other part of the world.

It is this Chosen People tradition and still more the habit of mind which betrays itself in those who have come under its influence, which is the ever- recurrent cause of the trouble. It seems to me beside the mark to look for any other.*

* See *Note 12A* for a further discussion of this point.

Estimates of the number of Jews in the world vary between fourteen and sixteen million. The latter figure is given by Louis Golding in *The Jewish Problem* and by Lewis Browne in the careful and scholarly work he has entitled so flippantly, *How Odd Of God.* ("How odd of God to choose the Jews!" — W.N. Ewer.) This is not a very great total. They have and always have had abundant and well-cared-for families. Probably outside the range of definitely associated Jews, there has always been a much larger world of sympathetic kin, sharing and affected by the feelings of the stricter core, capable of co-operating with it and responding to modifications of the central idea, but gradually slipping away beyond recall.

As we have noted in § 11 (and see also *Note 11B*) most of us probably have a more or less considerable proportion of "Jewish" blood in our veins, using "Jewish" in the larger sense. But orthodox Judaism has always been a narrower and intenser strain. It has passed through phases of leakage and recovery. The Protestant Reformation was a phase of leakage. Browne doubts whether there were half a million Jews in Europe in 1600, "fewer than were to be found in Castile alone four hundred years earlier."

Of the sixteen million Jews today, Browne estimates that there cannot be more than four million who are strict adherents to and observers of the Law and that perhaps another six million are what he calls semi-observant; they are lax about food and drink and the Sabbath, but when it comes to celebrating marriages, funerals, taking an oath and so forth they follow the ancient formulae, they attend the main annual feasts, they pay their pew rents and do their full duty by the Jewish charities. They are very much like the Anglicans who don't go to Church very much but would never dream of being married in a registry office. Then comes another three million who have become entirely indifferent to the Law. They do not attack it, but they put it aside. Yet they cling as nationalists to the solidarity it has preserved through the ages. They are Reform Jews or Radical Nationalists, like the law-disregarding young Jews of Palestine. Mr. Browne is himself a Reform Rabbi and he can write incidentally:

"There are certain writers who become tremulously nostalgic and tender when describing the life of those pietist Jews. Ensconced in laurel-embowered English cottages, or seated in cafes on Montparnasse, such writers will wax ecstatic as they discourse on the effulgent 'mysticism' enhaloing the ghetto hovels. But that, I fear, is because they have never entered those hovels. Had they done so they would in all likelihood realize — unless sentimentality had too thickly blurred their sight — that life in them is not bathed in the lambent light of unearthly wisdom: that instead it is dark and scabrous with superstition."

The remaining three of these sixteen million Jews are rapidly ceasing to be Jews at all, and he notes with a sort of calm amazement that "a cult which has lasted for centuries could be shattered in a decade." The younger generation has been given equality in the U.S.S.R,, excellent schools and a new and exciting creed. Nominally they remain Jews, and their language, Yiddish, is one of the national languages recognized by the Union. But Hebrew has vanished — the Law, the Promise and Jehovah!

And at this point Browne and I part company. Judaism may vanish in Russia under communism, he has to admit, but it will live on elsewhere not by virtue of its own quality but because of Gentile intolerance. He argues that Gentile intolerance makes the Jews and

keeps them together. I argue that the Jews make themselves and that Gentile intolerance is a response to the cult of the Chosen People. To get down to ultimate things, we are in substantial agreement, I find, in that we desire a world, enlightened, scientifically administered, free, a world-wide new civilization open to everyone, where there will be neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. Nevertheless we differ diametrically in our interpretation of the root cause of the Jewish problem, and as a consequence upon the question where the tentative for denationalization should begin. Thirteen million Jews — at least — still make the implacable Gentile the justification for their own persistence. They still hold to that hard core of national separatism in spite of the steady evaporation of every traditional religious justification. Yet they have a world-wide organization for calling off that attitude and the Gentiles have no corresponding representative network to speak for them to the same extent. The Holy See has recently condemned racialism very clearly and definitely. So has the White House....

But let me go on with what I believe is the truer version of the Jewish story, and the reader, with a glance at the notes at the end whenever he needs confirmation, must judge between me and the defenders of persistent Jewish nationalism.*

* See *Note 12B* for that fuller discussion.

The hostile reaction to the cult of the Chosen People is spreading about the entire world today. In the past the Jews have been subjected to much resentful treatment and much atrocious cruelty and injustice, now here, now there, but there has never been such a world-wide — I will not use the word anti-Semitism because of the Arab — I will say anti-Judaism. Now, because of the physical unification of the world, the resentment against the theory and practice of a Chosen People is much quicker and more contagious than it used to be; it is becoming world-wide and simultaneous. The idea is becoming everywhere more and more intolerable than it has ever been before.

The cultivated, exaggerated, national egotism of the Chosen People has never been so conspicuous as it has been in the present century and particularly since the War. As their ritualism has weakened their nationalism has increased. I recall a conference that

took place in ‘19 or ‘20 in a room in the House of Commons. A number of French writers had deputed Madame Madeleine Marx to discuss with various English men and women of letters the possibilities of concerted action and possibly organization in the cause of world peace and world understanding. In those days Israel Zangwill had adopted the role of Champion of the downtrodden and suffering Jewish race, and more particularly of that section of it which was to be found in the wealthier mansions of West Kensington and Tyburnia, *en route* from the East End to the House of Lords. He sustained its racial pride, if indeed that needed sustaining. He insisted upon Israel’s distinction and its inappeasable hunger for restoration to the land of the protracted Promise. He told them of the *Dreamers of the Ghetto*. He reminded them of their origins with humor and emotion. He helped them to feel “different,” as the American car salesmen say, and mystically better. They were, he persuaded them, not really having the good time they seemed to be having; behind the brave face they put upon things they were weeping by the waters of Babylon. The true voice of Israel was to be heard not in the West End of London -but when it went off for a trip to Palestine and, following the customary routine, wailed at the Wailing Wall. Always he spoke of “*My* people.”

He brought his championship to our deliberations. We various British authors had had our trivial shares in the “war to end war,” and we were very willing to fall in with any proposals that would help to rationalize the heated and punitive atmosphere of the Versailles peace. We felt that a peace that would indeed end war was slipping away from us. But we found this conference dominated by the communist dogmatism of Madame Marx, against which Bernard Shaw protested, and Zangwill’s preoccupation with his “people.” He laid down the conditions that would satisfy their needs; he insisted on what would satisfy them, what would make them willing to help us, and the difficulties an offended Jewry could create for us. So far as I could grasp his drift he was dealing with us as the British Empire. We were not the British Empire, but it was vain to protest. Zangwill was a very resolute character and that was the drama he had in mind. Just as in our private disputes he would insist on treating me as a devout Christian. Then he could say: “But your Saviour was a

Jew!" Useless to plead that I was not a Christian, and that there might be considerable prepotency in the Holy Ghost. Zangwill was being the captive nation making his terms with the oppressor. It is the drama so many people still have in mind when discussing this question.

In those days we in the victorious allied countries were all ready to believe that the world was really recovering from the War and entering upon a phase of comparative freedom and hope. We did our best not to think too much about the state of affairs in Germany. Everybody was talking of reconstruction and rationalization, and it was possible to deal jestingly with things that have now become intolerably grim.

The Zionist movement was the crowning expression of what I, in flat contradiction to Mr. Browne, hold to be the obdurate insistence of orthodox and semi-orthodox Jewry upon their peculiarity. In the years immediately following the war, there was a lull even in the normal persecutions in Eastern Europe to which the orthodox were subjected. They suffered indeed during the civil disorders that preceded the consolidation of the Bolshevik government; Whites, Reds and Greens were alike guilty of pogroms of varying degrees of virulence, and there was in consequence a certain exodus westward, but as the new law and order were established in Russia these outrages ceased and the process of rapid assimilation, to which reference has already been made, began. But already the champions of Judaism were advertising to the whole world how implacably they insisted upon their eternal essential foreignness. They had demanded a national home, so that elsewhere they could be forever foreigners. They might within limits accept the advantages of citizenship of the country they lived in, but essentially they would not belong. They would vote, hold office, rule, but always with Zion in their hearts. They ignored the manifest fact that the day of small sovereign states is drawing to an end, and that in a world of ever-growing violence, to plant themselves massively in any particular area was to invite a wholesale disaster.

Today when the whole world is being subtly pervaded with anti-Jewish feeling, and when the restraints upon the predatory and persecuting impulses in the human animal are being rapidly

weakened, these implacable nationalists are still conspicuously seeking suitable regions where they can go on being a people by themselves, where, pursuing an ancient and irrational ritual so far as it suits them, they can sustain a solidarity foreign and uncongenial to all the people about them.

No country wants them on such conditions. Why should any country want these inassimilable aliens bent on preserving their distinctness? Palestine is an object lesson. Until they are prepared to assimilate and abandon the Chosen People idea altogether, their troubles are bound to intensify. No one can help them while even a die-hard minority — a minority that the general body of them does not disavow, a nucleus about which habit and association and sentiment gather very readily and to which it is easy for lost sheep to return — prefers these exasperating pretensions of a special right and claim to becoming frankly and of their own accord common citizens of the world.

These are the elementary facts of the quandary to which the Chosen People have come, the more relentless dragging the doubters and half-hearted with them. They are facts that have to be stated, even though matters are now coming to a complexion which gives a flavor of ruthlessness to their bare statement.

Because this obdurate separatism which, after all, except for the growing trouble in Palestine, has been hitherto more of an irritant than a downright evil, is now conspicuous and challenging just at a phase in human affairs when it is becoming extremely dangerous to be in any manner alien and provocative.

In the last two paragraphs of § 4, the essential facts of the present rapid dislocation of social order have been stated. Social disintegration is now a world-wide reality, it is a convulsive breaking-down everywhere of long-established systems of law and order, an almost cataclysmal dissolution. It is a process far vaster than this Jewish question we are discussing and it arises from causes that have no special connection with that trouble. But it catches up the Jewish question in its swirling eddies and spins it about so that its fluctuations become indicative of the character of the entire process.

The Jewish question is already something very different from what it was a score of years ago when Zangwill championed and

threw that glamor of racial romance and Maccabean heroism about the ancient ways. Those were tolerant days. At that time it was easy for people to fall away from the old observances if they chose and become Christians or unconforming skeptics. Now, and it is the most ominous aspect of the new phase, in many parts of the world the doors of escape from orthodox Jewry are being closed. These doors are not being closed from the inside; there i£ no way of closing them from the inside. They are being closed from the outside. Those who are disposed to apostasy are being turned back by the outer world. Nothing of this sort was happening twenty years ago. A number of people, and some of them are very sinister people indeed, are beginning to say, "You insisted upon being Jews. Jews you *shall* be."

The operating causes in those wide alternations between social confidence, a sense of stability and a prevailing lawfulness and intolerance, and phases of insecurity, fear, dishonesty and general unrighteousness, which have manifestly occurred in the human story, have still to receive anything but the most casual attention from the historian. Those happier periods, when the social machine was running smoothly, when men were able to move about freely and almost fearlessly, work with a sense of fair reward, when there was something definite and reasonably satisfactory and hopeful for most of the young men to do, have been by far the less frequent and the least secure. Order and peace have been precarious always in the growing human societies of the last four or five thousand years. There have been constantly recurrent phases of mutual pressure, expansion and that dislocation without which readjustment is impossible. Then doubt and suspicion invade men's minds. They lose that feeling that they are being properly taken care of; there is no confidence that services will be rewarded or debts paid; mutual trust gives way to suspicion. Social behavior deteriorates. The strong and cunning no longer feel that the weak will be protected. The suspicious look for scapegoats to blame, for evil doers who have offended the gods, for conspirators. Particularly for conspirators.*

* See *Note 12C* for *The Protocols Of The Elders Of Zion*, etc.

We do know and we have already stated in general terms the forces that have produced the particular phase of violent social disintegration that is going on today. They are world-wide and

unprecedented. Socially they are more destructive than anything our species has ever faced before. The disintegrating changes in the social order of the past were probably due to much more localized and quite different influences: to unrecorded fluctuations in the relative welfare of classes, to the social shifting due to new economic processes, to the infiltration of foreign ideas and practices, to foreign pressure, to epidemics — no history can be complete without a proper study of the social sequelae of plague, the Black Death and the like — to sustained bad weather, drought for example, over a number of years, to a stimulating and disorganizing influx of gold such as happened after the discovery of America. These and a thousand other disturbing forces have been enough to tilt the always unstable and insecure social balance back to general distrust and convulsive, self-protective dishonesty. The adaptive culture fails. Things go to pieces, Man reverts to his more natural state of a fear-and-desire-driven beast.

In the history of any social system such periods of disorganization display almost parallel phenomena of demoralized mass action. The strong are looking for the weak not only individually but collectively in order to gratify their craving for power, the crowd is seeking the furtive enemies of the state, the fearful are looking for the strange wickedness and secret mischiefs that have brought about the discomforts of the time. In such an atmosphere any marked kind of people are liable to set upon, are liable to be ringed about for victimization and punitive plunder.

Such a convergence of hostility has by no means been confined to the Jews. The Albigenses, for example, in the south of France, had no very special relationship to the Jewish community. They were a Christian sect with certain heretical ideas derived by way of Bulgaria from the Gnostics and Manichaeans. They were charged, by their exterminators, to whom we owe most of the knowledge we have of their beliefs, with abnormal sexual practices. What is more certain is that they protested vigorously against the corruptions of the Church and were markedly anti-sacerdotal. They spread throughout Provence and prospered throughout the twelfth century. Their movement was in several respects an anticipation of the Protestant Reformation. Whereupon the Church invoked the harder, ruthless and more

Catholic north, and preached a Crusade against them. Moral and religious indignation and the prospect of loot implemented their destruction. Here we cannot tell the tale of massacres, burnings alive — two hundred in one *auto-da-fé* — the sadistic terrorism and blackmail of the Holy Inquisition....

The Armenians again are another much massacred, non-Jewish but distinctive people.

But it is the Jews who have generally been the marked people throughout the realms of Christendom and Islam. They have generally "got it first." And repeatedly the door has been slammed upon Jews who have been seeking to get away or were actually getting away from the threats that darkened over them.

Lewis Browne gives a compact and effective account of the fate of the Marranos in Spain and Portugal. He tells of the forcible baptism and conversion of the Jews in 1391 in the face of a storm of popular hostility. The government, because of their financial and administrative usefulness, opened a door of escape for them. They were given the choice between exile and massacre or Christianization. A great majority chose the latter, and since all the synagogues were closed and the practice of the Jewish law sedulously suppressed, within three or four generations most of these baptized Jews became just as good or better Catholics than their neighbors. This from the outset was a huge disappointment for those neighbors who had been whetting the knife, so to speak, for an orgy of murder and plunder. It seemed to them the meanest trick conceivable. They called these desperate converts the New Christians or more familiarly swine (=Marranos), and set as rigid a bar as possible on any intercourse with them. As Jews they had been "dogs" but now they were "swine." "Conversion indeed!" they said. "You don't get away with *that*."

In complete good faith the majority of the Marranos in the next generation or so were Catholics, "These hapless creatures," says Browne, "took no pride in their past. On the contrary they were through and through ashamed of it and groaned that it be forgotten." That did not help them in the least. Massacre and detailed persecution closed in on them. The tale is fully told in Mr. Cecil Roth's *History Of The Marranos*. It is a frightful story, but from the

point of view of the present discussion it is almost the same story, Inquisition and all, as that of the Albigenses who were not Jews at all.

An entirely parallel treatment has been meted out in the last decade to the Christian Jews in Germany. They have been herded back upon their orthodox brethren, in the same spirit and for the same reason that the Marranos were kept apart for destruction. We are witnessing now a swifter and vaster repetition of that Marrano tragedy.

A time has come when a multitude of men and women of more than average intelligence, men and women who in reality have no essential racial difference from the average European, are finding themselves with no foothold whatever upon the earth, dispossessed and hunted from country to country, marooned in impossible regions, deprived of the normal protection of the law, beaten up by anyone who chooses to beat them up, outraged, tortured, sterilized, stripped of everything, ill-treated in every possible way. They seek escape from one country to another, and the countries where they would take refuge, suffering now from the fast-spreading economic and social malaise of this current phase in human history, are more and more chary of receiving them even as assimilable individuals. Everywhere employment is dislocated. Everywhere they encounter the protest: "We have our own unemployed!"*

* See *Note 12D* upon the refugee question.

A great book, a book of victims with thousands of authenticated cases, could be filled already with the tale of forced suicides, murders and abominations done upon these refugees, and there is no reasonable prospect of surcease. From the narrower point of view the compilation might be called *The Jewish Book Of Martyrs*, but from another it could be entitled *The Natural Man*, because its broader interest lies in the clear demonstration of what the inherent brute in man can do when the grip of law and order relaxes. It is a horrible recrudescence of primordial human reactions, but that is no reason why we should shut our eyes to the role of the alien nationalism of the Chosen People in exposing them first and foremost before any other people to this accumulating outbreak of hatred, cruelty, bestiality and every sort of human ugliness. They are the first to

suffer in the social dissolution of our epoch, because they have stood 1 out most conspicuously. They are the most obvious "murderees" and "plunderees." They come first. But they are only the first....

I have enlarged upon their case because it is not only conspicuously challenging at the present time but because it brings into the picture most of the elements of the present human situation, the general disposition of any established community to adhere to forms and traditions of living long after their survival value has disappeared, the normal blindness of human beings to the onset of novel and more exacting conditions until disaster actually supervenes, the swiftness with which social balance can now be overturned.

I can see no other destiny for orthodox Judaism and those who are involved in its obloquy, unless that enormous effort to reconstruct human mentality for which I have been pleading arrives in time to arrest their march to destruction. That, if it is to save our species, must be a reconstruction so bold and wide, an amnesty so fundamental, that it will sweep the religion of the Chosen People and this age-long feud of Juif and anti-Juif out of the living interests of mankind altogether.*

* For a practically identical view vividly expressed, read Wyndham Lewis's *The Jews, Are They Human*?

§ 13. — CHRISTENDOM

FROM the tragedy of Judaism we must turn now to Christianity, that second and greater branch of the Bible tradition, which is the basis of contemporary Western civilization. The word Christianity has covered and still covers an immense variety of idea systems, but today it finds its most highly organized and active expression in the Roman Catholic Church. That too is a power transcending national and state boundaries and playing a distinctive part in molding human thought and destiny today.

In certain respects Catholic Christianity is in diametric contrast to Judaism; in certain others the two cults run side by side. They have this in common that nearly everywhere they produce the feeling that they are alien cultures. They are apt to be suppressed by governments together, as in Hanoverian England and Hitlerian Germany, and to be emancipated together. But they differ fundamentally in the fact that while participation in Judaism after the early phase of eager proselytism became for many reasons difficult, Christianity from its beginning with Saint Paul (Acts xi, 26) onward has been a missionary religion, seeking and incorporating converts throughout the whole world.

It not only incorporated converts but it incorporated ideas. It sprang from the Jewish sect of the Nazarenes, but in the course of the three centuries before its forcible stabilization by Constantine the Great in 325 at the Council of Nicaea and the definitive formulation of its three creeds, the third-century Apostles Creed, the fourth-century Nicene Creed, so much more explicit about the Trinity, and the Athanasian (of uncertain date and authorship) which finally cleared up the Trinity business for good and all in a drumming storm of intolerant nonsense, it had practically become a synthesis of all the chief religious cults of that mentally festering age.

The Catholic Church emerged from these formative centuries as an organization of very considerable tenacity, but intellectually it was already the most extraordinary jumble of absurdities and incompatibilities that has ever exercised and perplexed the human intelligence. It accumulated accretions like a caddis worm. Still —

though now with more deliberation — it assimilates. At a very early stage it developed sexual obsessions unknown to its cognate Judaism. The Virgin Birth began to worry its usually celibate theologians. Jesus on one occasion (Matthew xx, 47-50) had very definitely denied any religious importance to his mother, but with the taking-over of Isis and the Infant Horus, as the Virgin and Child, this was disregarded. The Virgin became a divine queen, very beautiful and adorable. St. Ignatius Loyola, contemptuous of the earthly attractions he had found unsatisfactory, vowed himself her Knight, and believed there was a mutual devotion. That the intenser religious succumb very readily to the suggestions of such phrases as "The Bride of Christ," one can find ample evidence for in the vast literature of the Christian mystics. It became necessary to sublimate the Virgin, the attractive Queen of Heaven. She had to be made "sinless" and born without "sin." So the theologians excogitated a "sinless" begetting for her. It is difficult to tell these things without a touch of derision. The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception emerged from their meditations. It was mainly a Spanish product, and there is a monument to the Immaculate Conception outside the Alcazar in Seville. It is perfectly decent; it is a grouping of the divines, thinkers and spiritual heroes, grave and dignified figures, who contributed to the perfection of this profound discovery. For centuries, however, this Immaculate Conception was not a matter of faith. It was made so by a bull of Pope Pius IX as recently as 1854. There was a great assembly of bishops and dignitaries in Rome from all parts of the world, a great gathering of adult men robed very beautifully and carrying themselves very seriously. A happy sense of a great consummation pervaded them. And now all good Catholics must believe in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, though what it is they think they are believing in I cannot imagine.

And so, century by century, the great fabric of the faith goes on accumulating. It has become a sort of Cumberland Market of religious notions.*

* For a frank Catholic admission of this, see *Note 13A*

There is something from everywhere in it and, wherein lies its chief attractiveness, something for everybody. No single mind can cover that mighty mental jumble sale in its entirety, so that anyone

willing to be converted has no difficulty in ignoring the less congenial articles of the collection. You will, for example, find the sternest condemnation of socialism, no Catholic can be a Socialist, and then you will find that the author of the completest forecast of communism, commissars and all that, Sir Thomas More, has been canonized as a saint.

The organization of the Church, with its confessional and its spiritual direction, facilitates this fragmentary approach to faith in every possible way. The convert is invited and trained to help in his own subjugation. He is implored to pray for light. He must bury his sense of humor. These, he is told, are serious matters. A hearty laugh at the metaphors of relationship in the triplex composition of the divinity would -shatter the whole process. Derision is the deadly enemy of Catholicism; it drives it to indignant persecution, indignant silence or indignant flight, according to the exigencies of the situation.

Christianity picked up the Holy Trinity, it would seem, in the second century, and very manifestly from Alexandria. By that time Alexandria far more than Jerusalem had become the spiritual home of Christianity. Neither St. Paul nor Jesus insisted upon the fundamental importance of right views about the Mystery of the Trinity to their followers. To say the least of it, it was inconsiderate of them to leave it to the author of the Athanasian creed, centuries later, to formulate in terms of the now long-abandoned metaphysics of Alexandria, "The Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he *cannot* be saved." Did Matthew know? Did Peter understand? It leaves one anxious about the ultimate fate even of St. Paul himself.

Why do intelligent people accept this strange heap of mental corruption as a religion and a rule of life? That question will bring us back to that reorientation of the human mind, and that conflict between the actuality of the present and the accumulating reality of the future, to which I have devoted § 9. They accept it because it is there before them and because it existed long before they did. They grew up to it and even if they were not actually born and bred Catholics, they saw it everywhere taken for granted and treated with respect, cathedrals and shrines, saints and martyrs, in art, in

literature, in history, in the world about them. There is no reasoning in a stained-glass window, but there is an immense amount of conviction. To turn from the menaces of stark reality to established religion is to be immediately reassured. To turn from active, questioning minds to the company of the faithful is inexpressibly comforting. And with that you get prescription and direction for all the main issues of life. The Church, the faithful about one, a vast volume of literature and history, agree in saying: "Don't trouble. You are all right. Do as we do and all will be well." At times I have tried to imagine what such a natural born scoffer and rebel as Mr. Hilaire Belloc, whose mental processes have always interested and distressed me, thinks at Mass. But that is just when he suspends all thinking. *Credo quia absurdum*, I suspect is the note of it, a triumphant revolt against his own intelligence. He became a scoffer and rebel against liberalism and scientific revelation because he resented their compelling convincingness. Any fool, he felt, could believe that.

And it is equally easy to understand the attraction of the Catholic Church to those outside but within the influence of the fold. They are already half converts. They "go over" without the slightest examination of the fundamental absurdities of the faith. Conviction comes after a discussion of the Apostolic Succession and the validity of the Protestant Orders. Such things are deliberated very gravely. With a sense of enhanced importance, the convert takes to fish on Fridays, is received, attends Mass, feels unutterable things. Unutterable even to himself. It is all so tremendously established. Quiescence, spiritual peace ensues. Until the anxiety of the times takes hold of these refugess from fact, they will not recognize the element or malignity in the activities of this great organization to which they, are clinging. Even then they will feel the utmost reluctance in leaving go. It is their last protection against that terrifying readjustment to creative reality, which would make them responsible adults in this world of limitless danger, limitless difficulty and limitless possibility.

Fantastic, defiantly absurd as this vast pile of the Faith becomes to anyone who dares to go into it and question it fearlessly, it is far less fantastic than the actual organization of the Church. Its central

control rests with a close corporation of priests, mainly Italians, the cardinals, who with scarcely a break have elected a continuity of Italian Popes for the last three centuries. Spiritually Italians must be a very superior people.

In the Vatican, in entirely unveracious succession to St. Peter, sustained by a handsome subsidy from the Fascist government and the less reliable contributions of the faithful at large, the Holy Father, in the measure of his intelligence and the quality of his advisers, keeps his court and steers the Church through the pitfalls of this world. He has had the medieval education of a priest; his advisers have worn the mental blinkers of the devout, and just as far as they dare, they influence the political life of the world, according to their limitations and prejudices. In all the democracies the "Catholic vote" obeys the tortuous wisdom of these scheming old anachronisms. Here tyrannies are blessed and here revolts are fomented. The devout in France or Britain, for example, must support the Franco pronunciamento to the infinite injury of their own countries.

Joseph McCabe in his *History Of The Popes* tells the story of the Papacy with a certain bitter accuracy and an ample citation of authorities. The Catholic reader will, I know, feel that my recommendation of that outspoken book is in the worst possible taste. But let me nevertheless urge it upon his attention. It will trouble his mind, but it will purge it. But if he asks his co-religionists questions about it, they will make him feel as if he were making rude noises.

When we try to estimate the role the Church is now playing in mundane affairs we have to realize that on earth it has no definite objective at all. It is a vast, self-protective organization which seeks merely to exist and if possible spread. Its friends are those who support and serve it; its enemies — and its enmity has the unrelenting quality of an instinct — are those who have thwarted, controlled and suppressed it. It is against Soviet Russia, against every Protestant system, against every country which insists upon secular education; it is on the side of every government, however corrupt and evil, which attends Mass and makes the sign of the cross. Its real objectives, it alleges, lie in another world. In some strange existence outside time and space the reckoning will be made, and those who

have swallowed the Athanasian metaphysics, taken the advice of their priests, and performed all their religious duties, will enjoy heaven, and those who have fallen short will pass to heaven through a state called purgatory or descend into hell forever, according to the enormity of their disrespect. Bolsheviks, I assume, will all go to hell.

In the past it was the custom of the Church to suggest that the sufferings in hell and purgatory were essentially physical tortures, and simple folk were given pictures of the damned being burnt in flaming bowls, tormented by red-hot pincers, racked and maltreated very richly and variously. The state of bliss was less fully particularized. Nowadays one hears remarkably little of either the upper or lower aspect of the future state. Yet why is there no copious and attractive literature upon the subject? Why are there no speculative anticipations? Why have Catholic poets recoiled? It should be a most fascinating preoccupation to imagine that unearthly loveliness ahead. There are not even impostors to offer us dreams and visions. No one has ever produced a plausible page from a celestial Baedeker. Even Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* stops short at the gates of the Celestial City. We are left to imagine "these endless Sabbaths the blessed ones see." There is the Book of Revelation indeed, but who except cranks and lunatics reads the Book of Revelation? And that, after all, is symbolic prophecy and not to be mistaken for a picture of reality. The fact of it is that the majority of Christians are not even reasonably curious about the future life, and they are not curious because they have no more positive belief in it than I have. They are Christians because it is the most convenient and agreeable pattern of life for them, and for no other reason whatever.

And yet the Church is something more than a picturesque and reassuring frame for an everyday mode of living. It provides that, just as it provides dispensations, annulments of marriages for the wealthy, titles, blessings, missions, festivals and displays, but such things are by the way. It exists primarily for itself. It is always anticipating and warding off dangers and occasionally it counter-attacks. There is an incessancy in its self-preserving activities, and in this present phase of world crisis it is encouraging much partisan activity.

There comes to hand as I write a book, *Crisis For Christianity* by William Teeling, which summarizes very clearly the ideas of a Catholic reaction and recovery that are stirring the imaginations of the more active faithful I do not know who William Teeling is. His title page supplies no information beyond his bare name; he has written at least one other book, *The Pope In Politics*; but he seems to have met and discussed affairs with most of the leading Catholics in Europe; and I understand that that very peculiar body, the British Council, which spends £100,000 a year in endearing England to foreigners by sending them carefully chosen, if occasionally highly unrepresentative, samples of British thought and behavior to lecture and talk to them, has availed itself of his services. So that his book gives us not only the present Catholic outlook, but one at least of the many faces the now highly diplomatic and incalculable British Empire turns to the world.

The first thing to remark about this book is that it completely ignores the existence of any modern, scientific picture of the world. So far as I am able to judge, this is a real and not a deliberate ignorance. Mr. Teeling was probably educated in a Catholic atmosphere from which such knowledge is excluded. He seems to have no idea of the Good Life except in what survives today of Christendom, *White* Christianity that is to say, finding its completest embodiment in the Roman Catholic Church. Regardless of the foreign missions, he fears that Christ may "desert Europe" and leave it "to be completely overrun by the Yellow Races or the Black or the Communists and to pass through horrors undreamt of even today." The most Christian countries of Europe now, he says, are "Franco's Spain, Catholic Belgium and God-fearing Britain." Mrs. Nesta Webster, to whose mentality I have devoted a Note at the end of this book (*Note 12c*), could not have a livelier horror of Jews and Russia. Outside the Christian pale there is one single movement to which he turns with a certain hope and kindliness, and there I think he is probably giving us a fair reflection of the Vatican-centered mentality. He has met and discussed matters, it is to be noted, with the present Pope. He seems to be a fair sample of how Catholics think.

He writes: "No matter what we may think of the Nazi leaders, or the methods they employ, they are at least instilling into the nation as

a whole, and not only into those who might be their willing converts in a free country, a desire to help the maimed, to support one's neighbors, to work and live clearly, such as no democratic country is able to show. The democratic governments pay only lip service to much that is Christian, and they scarcely ever try to enforce it, while the Trade Unions and other socialist groups in this country" (i.e., Britain) "encourage, as indeed do some of the less-thoughtful Conservative die-hards, a form of class warfare which Christianity can never tolerate.

"My own feelings are all in favor of a free democracy giving the opportunity to lead a Christian life, seeing that a willing Christian is worth more to God than an unwilling one. But if the democrats do not respond, and under the cloak of freedom carry on a most un-Christian life, can we expect that God should favor them, rather than a disciplined body that at least is practicing some of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount?"

That is how the Church wishes to see the Nazis today. Our exponent ignores the implacable resolution with which the education of the young is being wrested from the Catholic teachers in favor of Wotan, and the bulk of this edifying book is a discussion of the possibilities of a sympathetic swamping of this Nazi movement by the incorporation of more and more Catholics into the Reich so that at last it will be possible to chip off the flapping ends of the swastika and restore the cross. It is all set out very attractively. The curious reader can learn how Dollfuss on "Great Catholic Day" (Sept. 11th, 1933) inaugurated the first German Corporative Christian State, and less explicitly how he stamped down socialism and labor. It was Dollfuss who betrayed and destroyed the radical republic that had ruled in Austria from the end of the War. It was he who stood behind Major Fey's smashing-up of the workmen's dwellings that had been the pride of the socialist regime in Vienna (Feb. 1934). This was not only a frankly uncivilized act but a piece of political folly.*

* John Gunther's *Inside Europe* is particularly good on this.

It left him face to face with the Nazis. They assassinated him in July 1934, but the Catholic Corporative movement went on less confidently under Schuschnigg, until the forcible realization of the Anschluss in 1938 by the Nazi army made Austria an integral part of

the Reich.

Ultimately Mr. Teeling thinks Nazi Germany will have an indigestion of Catholics. That is his hope. Large parts of Bavaria, Baden and possibly Wurttemberg and the Rhine-land, are to break away and join up with Austria. Communism may gain control in Italy — Mr. Teeling throws that out quite abruptly and gives no reason for his assumption — and then the Vatican will have to make Vienna its headquarters, Nazism and Fascism will be at a discount, and the Authoritarian State, founded on the suggestions of the Papal Encyclical *Quadragesima Anno* (Pius XI, 1931) for a corporative society will be installed in Vienna, with the Emperor Otto at its head and the Pope near by.

There you have the sort of thing the energetic young Catholics of today can imagine; the sort of thing the present "God-fearing" British government is unobtrusively subsidizing and spreading about, to the ultimate confusion of all Jews, atheists, men of science, Bolsheviks, Russians (but see the *Note 12c* on Mrs. Nesta Webster.)...

So much for the Catholic contribution to human adjustment today.

We are too apt to forget the narrow educational limitations of those who figure as wise, unquestionable leaders of men. Everywhere that applies, we live in a medley of ignorant systems, but it is the Catholic culture I am now discussing. It is a common tendency in our minds to believe that what we know clearly is also known clearly to other people. We are all too apt to believe that these dignified directors of human consciences know and understand the body of modern knowledge, that they have studied, judged it and rejected it.

But these Catholic prelates, so imposing in their triple crowns and miters and epicene garments, are in fact extremely ignorant men, not only by virtue of the narrow specialization of their initial education, but also by the incessant activities of service and ceremony that have occupied them since. They can have read few books, they can have had no opportunities of thinking freely. They are not nearly the cynical rogues so many non-Catholics think them; most of them are trying most earnestly to do right by the dim and dwindling oil-lamps inside their brains. They are quite ready to believe Mr. Belloc when he tells them, with that buoyant assurance of his, that Darwin was inspired by the ambition to abolish God in the universe. That fits in

completely with their prepossessions. Why should they seek further? Mentally they live in another universe from ours, and the pity is that materially our universes intersect.

The slovenly, unorganized, intellectual world in which we and they live together, gives them no opportunity of grasping modern ideas without an impossible expenditure of perplexing inquiry. And to set against that we must remember that their world of theological elaborations remains an unmapped jungle to the unbeliever. They may have something to say to us but we are quite unable to get it, and conversely. The mind of mankind is still like a scattered jigsaw puzzle, bits of knowledge here and bits of knowledge there and no common pattern visible. And until we have something in the nature of that permanent world encyclopaedia I have tried to foreshadow, so matters must remain. That revival of the Holy Roman Empire under the Emperor Otto, which strikes a realistic modern intelligence as fantastically absurd, presents itself to the Vatican intelligence in the guise of sober and subtle statecraft.

It is not necessary for us to wait for the return of the Holy Roman Empire to appreciate the nature of the Roman Catholic Christian State. In Eire (formerly Southern Ireland) and in Spain, the Church rules and we can watch it in operation. Franco's Spain is still too busy cleaning up the Republican Opposition, by shootings, expulsions and proscriptions, to develop the Christian life in its complete beauty, but in Ireland, Catholicism has been in control for some years.

A stringent censorship of books and publications and a fairly complete control of education have produced a first crop of young men, as blankly ignorant of the modern world as though they had been born in the thirteenth century, mentally concentrated upon the idea of bringing the Protestant North under Catholic control in the sacred name of national unity. That tension of the young men to which so much social disturbance is due seems to be increasing. There has been a steady flow of emigrants to Great Britain, and recently there have been a number of bomb outrages designed to terrorize the British government into an abandonment of Northern Ireland. These patriotic zealots set about their business in a vein of pious devotion. They take Mass and purify their souls by confession

— of everything but -the particular enterprise they have in hand. And if the British police deal sternly with these foolish, misguided youngsters, all Catholic Ireland will set up a.great outcry, possibly with more and better bombing, to avenge or release this new crop of national martyrs.

The future of Ireland is incalculable. Hopeful Irishmen abroad have indulged in dreams of a restless and independent-minded people tiring of priests, piety and patriotism and returning presently as an animating influence to world civilization. But how can these young men get the idea of that? We may perhaps find sounder intimations of Ireland's future in the experiences of the Catholic South American States. A people which learns little forgets nothing, and the Church in Eire may be trusted to see to it that the young men of Ireland learn little and so sustain their tradition that inveterate animosities are dignified and desirable. The probabilities seem to point to murderous faction fighting, with Northern Ireland and England always to fall back upon in phases of comparative unity. There is a close temperamental kinship between the Irish and the Spanish, and the history of South America has already produced a series of bosses and pronunciamentos, vindictive massacres and pitiless wars.

Never has there been such heroic, cruel, senseless warfare as those little Christian hells in South America have known. Paraguay under Solano Lopez fought on until its population was reduced from 1,300,000 to under a quarter of a million. Regiments were made up of boys between twelve and fifteen, and women were enrolled to carry ammunition and stores. When these women could keep up no longer, they were either left to die by the roadside or, i£ there was any chance of their falling into the enemy's hands and yielding information, butchered out of hand. No doubt many a wretched young conscript rebelled against his lot, but what could he do? He might hope for a change of leaders. He had no other ideas. It was impossible for him to have other ideas.

The Roman Catholic Church, that clumsy system of frustrations, that strange compendium of ancient traditions and habit systems, since it lies in the closest entanglement with the intellectual life of the Western world and still holds many millions in its grip, is certainly the most formidable single antagonist in the way of human

readjustment to the dangers and frustration that now close in upon us all.

§ 14. — WHAT IS PROTESTANTISM?

THE conflict of Judaism and anti-Judaism is a tragedy involving the misery and destruction of at most a few million people, and were it not that the abolition of distance has made every one of us his brother's keeper, it would be an incident of secondary importance in the general collapse 'of civilization that is now going on. But the struggle of Christianity to maintain its present ascendancy affects the larger part of the human race. The Roman Catholic Church is the most highly organized and efficient embodiment of Christian teaching, the Orthodox Churches of Greece, Serbia, Russia and the like are relatively negligible systems of ceremony and superstition, the British Imperial culture it will be more convenient to consider later, and the next group of world forces to which we must direct our attention is the Protestantisms, that series of movements and organizations which has arisen through the incapacity or unwillingness of people to accept this or that outstanding incredibility of the Catholic faith.

They protested. But for the most part they did not protest outright against the ensemble of Church beliefs. That would have been too awful for them. The earlier reaction was to discover some incompatibility between the Bible and the practice and teaching of the Church. The courage of the Protestant has grown by degrees. None of these earlier doubters were capable of facing, even in their secret hearts, the terrific isolation of denying Christianity. Such a denial was almost unthinkable in Christendom for those born within the pale, and they did not think it. For reasons we made plain in the preceding section, when we asked why it is that fairly well-educated people cannot merely remain but become Roman Catholics, these early dissentients clung quite desperately to the assertion of their essential orthodoxy.

A convergence of mechanical inventions occurred in the sixteenth century to strengthen the Book against the priest; paper in sheets of a uniform size replaced parchment, and the rapid multiplication of books by printing from movable type became possible. Suddenly Europe was sprayed with Bibles and vernacular translations of the

Bible, and the Church found itself assailed by a variety of new Protestantisms that steadily gathered strength and enterprise. Men brooded dubiously over the inspired word. All the Protestants began as "reformers," and their original protests were the distressful cries of honest men, who were — as I have noted in an earlier section — usually priests.

But though the Church monopolized education, ruled men's minds, sanctioned and condemned conduct, adjudicated on political claims, preached crusades, excommunicated, put states under interdicts, and held an ever increasing accumulation of land and wealth, it had never secured a physical grip upon the secular arm. It trusted for obedience to the spiritual fears it could arouse and the civil inconveniences it could cause. It could turn state against state and subjects against their rulers. It could dissolve allegiances. In an illiterate world this gave it an effective security. Many monarchs and princes lived in a 'state of uneasy resentment against the restrictions imposed upon their conduct. There was a continual struggle going on over such things as the appointment of bishops, the restriction of gifts and bequests to the Church, the taxation of its accumulating property. These lords and princes struggled and lived and died, but the Church had a massive continuity. Sooner or later it recovered its concessions and advanced to further aggrandizements. So long, that is, as its moral power, its grip upon the minds and consciences of the people, remained.

It could bluff its way through many scandals and abuses so long as faith was unimpaired. But these honest doubters and critics, with their arguments and proofs, gave a novel strength to the recalcitrance of the princes. Before, they had been recalcitrant like naughty boys, there had been fear and the possibility of repentance behind their outrages, but now they began to behave like youths growing up and discovering flaws and weaknesses in the character of the governess that hitherto even in their disobedience they had respected. They seized very gladly upon this new destructive criticism of the doctrines of the Church. They gave the reformers their protection and ample opportunity to spread their doctrines. So that a thinly concealed desire for autonomy and the confiscation of the vast estates of the Church, mingled very remarkably with honest

protestations in the Protestant Reformation.

All this is a matter of history. We need not recapitulate the process by which the new Protestant States that detached themselves from Rome sought first to utilize and then to limit this process of protesting and questioning, of which they had made such good use, by setting up government-controlled Established Churches. Nor need we do more than glance at the way in which Peter the Great took a leaf from the English Establishment and applied the same process of nationalization to the Orthodox Church in Russia. These Protestant State Churches play a diminishing role in the present drama of human affairs. What is of greater interest for the purposes of our present inquiry is the inability of any of these would-be-religious settlements, as reading, writing and controversy spread, to arrest the progressive release of the human intelligence.

The implementing of the Bible by printing had two divergent results. The most conspicuous at first was a definite return towards the spirit of Old Testament Judaism. The Old Testament is the larger, more various and intriguing part of the Word. One theme in it, which appealed more to the reformers and thoughtful subjects generally than to the princes, was the Calvinistic theme, the assertion of a stern Theocracy, the rebuking and warning of kings by prophets, a republicanism under God. The other, politically more agreeable to the established rulers, attached less importance to predestination and more to the good works that came naturally from the Christian monarch. According to the former doctrine he might fail to be one of the elect and be denounced and disobeyed in this life and damned forever in the next, however amiable his behavior. According to the Lutheran alternative he justified himself by the inevitable rightness of his works.

Here we cannot enlarge on these attempts to adjust the new Bible Christianity to the needs of that period. But one very natural mental twist may be noted, and that was the widespread disposition of the Protestant Christians to identify themselves with the Chosen People, either mystically or physically. It would need a small encyclopaedia to recapitulate the writers, movements and societies that have sought to prove some magical migration of the “Lost Ten Tribes” to Western Europe. There are British Israelites of that persuasion today.

Such a jungle of absurdities it is, as could only flourish in an ill-instructed world. But one curious variant upon this craving to be an elite with specific divine favor we shall have to consider when we come to estimate the value of the Nazi movement in the complication of human destiny....

The reversion of large parts of Christendom to Bibliolatry and the Chosen People idea was however only the first and most immediate result of the invention of printed books. Many accepted the authority and read and believed. But some read and thought and compared as they read. Gathering momentum more slowly was a new skepticism, which began to question the divinity of the Bible itself.

The doctrine of the Trinity was on the whole one of the less fortunate acquisitions of the Catholic Church. It has always given trouble from the days of the Arian heresy onward. It gave Charlemagne an excuse for breaking with Greek orthodoxy on the profoundly important point whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only or from the Father and the Son. Arian and Trinitarian, Latin and Greek — the history of their wars was written in the blood of millions. With the increase of questioning in Christendom, that triplex divinity began presently not merely to untwist but to lose its second and third strands altogether.

Men dared presently to call themselves Unitarian, bowing politely but distantly to the Biblical record.

Then came another step. A fashion of skepticism spread among the European nobility and gentry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; bold spirits encouraged each other to the pitch of doubting and ridiculing the Bible altogether. They became naughtily wicked about it. They were deists. There were soon enough of them to live in easy understanding with each other. Voltaire and Gibbon typify their quality. But atheism still remained a rather shocking extravagance. Only temerarious individuals professed so extreme a lack of belief, and usually it was associated with defiant blasphemies and a general pretension to extreme depravity. By this note of defiance in their excesses, these eighteenth-century atheists betrayed a lingering belief in the God they had denied. It was the ideas of God and good not only in the world about them but in themselves that they fought down.

The bright young people who gathered about Sir Francis Dashwood at Medmenham Priory set out to be terrible fellows with their Hell Fire Club and their Black Masses, but how could one get the slightest thrill out of a Black Mass unless one had a lingering awe of the Mass itself? Without that much belief a Black Mass is an inane burlesque of nothing in particular.

It is only in our own time that Protestantism, the progressive etching away of belief by inquiry, has reached its natural finality in complete, untroubled disbelief in superhuman authority. Even now many atheists prevaricate. If the word "God" means anything at all, it means a powerful being sufficiently anthropomorphic to have reciprocal relations with the individual man. A God who is not a personality is a contradiction in terms. But because of the ribald and ungenteel associations of the word "atheist," a great number of atheistic thinkers and teachers and writers have clung ambiguously to the entirely deflated name of "God." God, they say, is -the Absolute, he is a force not ourselves making for righteousness, he is the whisper of conscience, he is the brainless Thinker responsible for the mathematical order of the world, he is immanence. These are mere subterfuges, God-shaped vacuums.

A sort of theism in effect, a theistic feeling at the beginning of life, may be as innate as suckling. The natural and necessary disposition of all immature creatures to believe they are being taken care of, survives and will no doubt survive always. Even if they do not think in theistic terms they will still believe in protection. And throughout the Western world, in Christendom and Islam and Israel, children will be constantly hearing talk of God, so that a father-like divinity becomes the form of this basic feeling. Until a mind is fully adult, it finds great comfort in that ancient personification of a natural but transitory need. And there is still a disposition on the part of unbelieving parents and of teachers who should know better to utilize this craving for dependence in the moral training of their children. Most educational psychologists are convinced that it gives a better result in behavior to teach children that the right thing should be done, not because of an all-seeing eye or a loving Father in Heaven, but because it is simply just that — the right thing to do. Innumerable Confucians and Buddhists have lived noble and beautiful lives

without the assistance of an unseen Inspector.

Protestantism carried on to its end is a complete acceptance of the limitless, impartial and continually more wonderful universe that scientific inquiry is illuminating for us; that is to say, it culminates in atheism without qualification. Its final stage is a world of grown men, free from superstitious fear and free equally from belief in any guidance of the world that can relieve them from responsibility for the shortcomings and failures of our race.

§ 15. — THE NAZI RELIGION

WE come now to the Nazi movement, which is, in its possibilities of destruction, the most urgent challenge the human mind and will have ever had to face. Nazi Germany may well bring down conclusive disaster on our species. Yet its intellectual content is naive, and its sudden extreme importance the result of a convergence of accidents. A people almost stupidly warlike, led by a maniac, threatens the world and holds in its hands all the exaggerated powers of destruction modern science and invention have created.

It is plain that the Fuehrer is insane; he shows all the symptoms of a recognized form of sex mania, the jealous fear and hate of the great raping black man — who in his case becomes the Jew. Since in his case his obsession endangers the lives of people about him, he should be certified and put under restraint. But insanity has its advantages as well as its handicaps. It involves an abnormal concentration of purpose and nervous energy. In its phase of mania it abolishes or at least defers fatigue and sustains long spells of sleepless vigilance and penetrating distrust far beyond the compass of the normal man. These qualities alone never made any man the leader of a mighty nation. Hitler's insanity would have had little effect upon the world if it had not slotted very easily into certain essential needs of the German situation. But for that he might be shouting, frothing and orating in a madhouse at the present time. But it happened that he supplied just the inflexible spearhead, the inhuman pertinacity, required to give extreme expression to the feelings of a humiliated and outrageously treated people.

The Nazi movement, or something essentially like it, was inevitable. Had there been no Hitler, or were Hitler to vanish tomorrow, Germany would still be the problem sister among the European states, the embittered and crazy sister clutching the high explosive bomb.

The Nazi movement was inevitable because she had a greater surplus of young people without reasonable hope of life than any other country in the world. They had no colonies to go to, no great business enterprises to develop; no employment of any sort. There

you have the primary condition for a desperate outbreak. If you want the state of mind of pre-Nazi Germany compactly rendered, read Hans Fallada's *Little Man, What Now?* That post-war generation grew up to explode and it has exploded. What else could have happened?

In § 12 the conditions under which social order may degenerate into phases of suspicion, persecution, and plunder have been discussed. Post-war Germany displayed these conditions to an exaggerated degree. A new regime should have its own new education to explain itself to the community, but the staggering liberal Republican Germany of the twenties carried on without any revolution in its schools and colleges. They had become a great means of patriotic consolidation under the Hohenzollern regime, they had been purged and vetted for a third of a century to that end, and now they were hard at work establishing in the minds of a new generation the innocence of Germany for the war and the conviction that she had never been defeated; she had been cheated and betrayed. She was suffering bitterly through no fault of her own. The teachers mined the democratic republic. Everything was ripe for an outbreak of hysterical patriotism and a great pogrom before Hitler became of the slightest importance.

And here another factor in the mentality of that dominating section of the German peoples which we may call Nordic-conscious came into play. Much of it was only less anti-Catholic than it was anti-Jewish. Its mentality had been framed upon the Lutheran interpretation of the Bible, and with a certain acceptable reversal it was possible to apply the conception of a Chosen People to the Germanic world. The Nazis took that over in one magnificent plagiarism. The Slav Prussians, the Alpine Bavarians, the melange of Gothic and Celtic peoples in the Rhineland, discovered that they were one single, pure race of beautiful blonds. They saw through their mirrors to the inner truth of themselves. They knew that in spite of appearances they had lovely, pure, blond souls. They turned upon the Jews and all foreigners with the completest paraphrase of the old Bible nationalism. And, wiser in their generation than the post-war liberal Republic, they have seized upon the schools and universities, and are doing their best to mold the mentality of the entire Reich to

this fundamentally Biblical idea of a militant Chosen People — Germanized.

Explicitly the new teaching retranslates Jehovah as Wotan, the old Kaiser's *unser alter Gott* and flouts the most elementary concepts of Christianity. But it is impossible to estimate with what consistency this new religion of heroic combat is being imposed upon the youth of the Reich. Variations in statement may set the brighter ones thinking. All the books have not been burnt. We do not know how much of social democracy remains beneath the Nazified surface. We do not know how much counter-propaganda is going on in the outwardly submissive and still tolerated Protestant and Roman Catholic congregations.

I have cited Mr. William Teeling to show the Roman Catholic expectation of a German return to the faith, but I doubt whether he fully realizes the relentless vigor of the educational drive of the new religion. In Austria just as much as in Germany they are turning the children against parent and priest. Mr. Teeling, I think, counts his Catholics before they are hatched. He would be wiser to count them after they are educated. The complete de-Christianization of the entire Reich, of southern as of northern Germany, is, I think, the greater probability.*

* See *School For Barbarians* by Erika Mann (1939).

But that involves no release of German thought; it is only a relapse into organized, relentless barbarism. Science in Germany has been silenced completely. There is no free scientific opinion any more. What remains of German science is enslaved to produce either secret discoveries of military importance or sustain the crazy ethnology of race superiority. But if research in non-German countries is forced, barbarism for barbarism, to adopt a reciprocal protective secrecy, it may not be long before Germany realizes a decline in her technical efficiency. She may cease to make discoveries herself and she may be able no longer to borrow them from abroad and develop them for her own purposes. This may move her to some loosening of the gag on her laboratories and an attempt to re-open communications with the alien world outside. And that again may undermine that still very unstable Wotan.

The problem of what will happen in Germany is the major

problem of our immediate future. If the Nazi process continues upon its present lines, then all die world must be given over to the .servitude of war preparation, at least until Nazi Germany ceases to exist. So far, Germany has conquered the earth already. The demonstration of the impossibility of independent sovereign states under modern conditions is complete. This finishes it. The declared Nazi objective is to create a unanimous, belligerent Germany, a bloodthirsty nation, entirely tough and ruthless, resolved to use any weapons and any methods, however monstrous and destructive, in its march to world dominion. It will fight and conquer, or blow the world to pieces.

How will that drive to destruction end? It is possible but highly improbable that this desperate adventure may succeed, and the whole world, or what is left of it, may cower at last at the feet of Wotan's Chosen People, its masters. Or that after a world storm of war, more horrible than any war has ever been, Germany may be defeated and stamped out by victors become at last as ruthless as their enemies. Or as a third possibility; something may occur within Germany to shake the Nazi solidarity. Many accidents are possible. Mental forces at present unrevealed may appear. All German thought is not in concentration camps. Individuals may die, new groupings may occur, resolution may falter at the eleventh hour. Every month that this tension endures without an actual explosion, the search for escape from

Armageddon will become more intelligent both within and without Germany. The magnitude of the still impending danger will help more and more people to realize the magnitude of the reconstruction needed to restore safety and hope to mankind. Which means, *inter alia*, restoring security, hope and ample scope for energetic activities, to the stifled youth of Germany — from whose exploited frustrations all this trouble has arisen.

Before we leave this vital question of the German outlook, it may be well to note one sinister possibility in contemporary thought. Because of the peculiar filthiness and malignity of the Nazi concentration camps, because of the sheer horror of the stories told by the more or less broken creatures who have escaped from them, there is a widespread disposition to assert that Germans are

particularly cruel; that they are indeed a specially evil-spirited variety of human being. Old stories of atrocities are being revived. Now this is to concede the Nazi claims to be a unique people. We cannot have it both ways, and, if we argue, as we have done in the preceding sections, that the Germans are not the pure blond Chosen People they imagine themselves to be, but a melange of Slav, Celtic, Gothic and Alpine elements with only a language to bind .them together, then we cannot also entertain this idea of a specific sadistic streak in Germans.

Yet when we compare the evidence of those who have been interned in various countries, we find a general agreement in one respect, in regard to the attitude of the minor officials towards the prisoners, which at the first glance does seem to justify this particular charge against the Germans. There is a consensus of evidence by those who have been there, that in British and Russian prisons the attitude of the guard, the warder, the turnkey and so forth is generally sympathetic to his charges. Fellow feeling is his quality. He regrets his instructions and does his best to mitigate them. At times he may lose his temper or dislike and bully someone, but that is an individual lapse. But his German equivalent, there is no doubt of it, does his tortures with zest, hates his charges as though they were loathsome animals, and is ingenious in devising new pains and abasements and suffering for them. It is important that we should make up our minds about the real nature of this difference. If it is innate, then biologically it would be an excellent thing to kill all Germans.

But most of us who have known and seen Germans intimately have found them as humane and helpful as most people. They are generally more law-abiding than the Irish or the English. They like to be relieved of the dangers and troubles of responsibility by explicit directions. That may be a habit of mind due to a persuasion that this is a dangerous world with which it is unwise to take liberties, and it is quite compatible with these cruelties. The position of the Germans in Central Europe has always exposed them to an exceptional imminence of warfare. The country has been overrun time after time by alien armies. Plunder and rapine have flowed over the land. The German-speakers lived for the most part in a great plain, they had no mountains in which they could hide. It was only by screwing

themselves up to fighting pitch and facing all comers, that the divided German states were able to maintain themselves at all. They were called upon by their circumstances to be tougher fighters than any other Europeans.

Toughness therefore is as much in the German tradition as it was, for other reasons, in the Spartan. They had to despise fear and pain in themselves, and that for most human beings means despising fear and pain in others. The Nazi is not a born tough. If he were changed at birth and put among gentle, fearless people, he would not be a tough at all He is a being innately as gentle as you and I, only he is inspired by an hysterical desire to be utterly tough. He refuses to give way to the horror of other people's torments, because from doing that it is only a step to giving way to pain and fear himself. And, attacking his own shrinking and disgust, he goes out of his way in a sort of desperation, to devise and inflict ruthless, disgusting and intolerable things on the recalcitrants, the evil-doers, the detected conspirators — and we must remember that he has been made to believe them that — committed to him for reformation. Deliberate cruelty is not a characteristic of limitless strength. Great strength may be heedless and unconsciously cruel, but not ingeniously and appreciatively cruel. It would get no thrill out of it. That is reserved for men and women who are inwardly afraid. It is sensitive people who seek to sustain and fix themselves by outrages.

Here it would take us too far from our main argument to examine other cases of torture and cruelty, the abominations done by Red Indian and Arab women for example, after battles. There is indeed no people on earth against whom some phase of cruelty cannot be brought. The English assume themselves to be a particularly gentle people, and with some truth now. Yet consider the cockshies and bear- and bull-baiting that delighted their ancestors in the past and the extreme savagery of the penal laws at the end of the eighteenth century. There is a strain of cruelty, suppressed or overt, in every human being. It is inseparable from self-assertion and the craving to exercise power....

But enough has been said to qualify this charge of a special German cruelty. Those concentration camps must be forgotten if ever Germany comes to judgment. Vindictive reprisals may be part of the

behavior pattern of a patriotic Irish Catholic who knows no better, but not of a civilized man. Let the dead past bury its grievances. They can have no part in the rational reconstruction of human life....

And here, apt to my argument, comes confirmation. Since I wrote the above I have had a talk with a man who has been in a German concentration camp, and he told me of how an official, instructed to give him, for no particular reason, thirty lashes, fell into conversation with him after the second stroke, found out that he had been the editor of an illustrated paper he liked, sat talking journalism, omitted the rest of the prescribed beating, saying only, "I suppose your friend here won't give us away," quite after the Russian or English pattern. The friend was trustworthy. All fellow-prisoners are not trustworthy. One of the minor vilenesses of Dachau is that prisoners are bribed by petty indulgences and payments to report small relaxations of discipline. And many are in such physical misery, craving to smoke, craving for taste of sweetness, that they do.*

* See Stefan Lorant's *I Was Hitler's Prisoner.*

§ 16. — TOTALITARIANISM

TOTALITARIANISM is no new thing in the Western world. It is stated very completely in Hobbes' Leviathan. Leviathan is the State into which the individual life is almost completely incorporated. Its will is concentrated on the sovereign who heads the collective monster by right divine. He makes war and peace, he raises up and casts down, he levies taxes as he will. Even while Hobbes was preparing his book for press, England decapitated Leviathan in the person of Charles the First. The practical difficulty of the Corporative State has always been the question who should be the head and how a new head should succeed its predecessor. The High Anglican Church upheld the monarchy and maintained the hereditary principle, but the liberal gentry, the merchants and the tax-paying classes generally, were too much for the state monster.

Except in the case of Franco's Spain and the extinguished Catholic Corporative State of Dollfuss, the heads of the totalitarian states of today are usually sustained by "parties" of a distinctly gangsterish quality. At the cost of mental flexibility and adaptability, the corporate state gains a certain immediate concentration of will. Our problem is to estimate what amount of mischief these obstinately knotted will systems may do with the monstrous weapons of the present time, before they themselves can be undone. It may be irreparable mischief.

The Nazi culture has been weighed in the previous section. Now we turn to its weaker associate, fascism. This is immediately interwoven with the career of one single man, Benito Mussolini. Compared with Hitler he is sane, intelligent and human. He is vain, rhetorical and immensely energetic, with the energy not of morbid concentration but physical abundance. He is what many men would like to be. His career from his early days as a socialist conspirator, when oddly enough he was already nicknamed *il Duce*, to his present supremacy on the crest of middle age, is a fairly open book. It is laced throughout with a thread of the ridiculous. Where Hitler is an unqualified horror, Mussolini often is, as schoolboys say, a bit of an ass, which is much more endearing. Until we remember the castor oil

campaign and the poison bombs in Abyssinia and the Lipari Islands, and Amendola and Mateotti and Roselli and the like, he is a lark. But then the lark stops singing. We know absurdities about him from which he cannot escape, we have the researches of the curious and the revelations of intimates. Madame Balabanoff* tells a fairly convincing story of his life at Geneva, Mr. G. Megaro† gives the particulars of his upbringing among the rebel spirits of the Romagna, quotes relentlessly from his early speeches, and shows with chapter and verse how strenuous have been his efforts to conceal the truth about his early career. That anxious eye on posterity, these absurd and belated efforts to escape the unrelenting pens that pursue him, are naturally pleasing to a writer with a weakness for derision.

* My Life as a Rebel (1938).
† Mussolini in the Making (1938).

But do not let us judge Mussolini only by the writings of his enemies. A more flattering study, written indeed in terms of unrestrained admiration, is *My Autobiography*. It was dictated by the Duce himself at the request of Mr. Richard Washburn Child, if possible a more fulsome hero-worshiper than the autobiographer himself, and it is amusing to compare its evasive flourishes with the relentless documentation of Megaro. If one learns little about the blacksmith father one gets hitherto disregarded particulars about the aristocratic Mussolinis of former days and their armorial bearings and castles and so forth. Anybody on record who was ever called Mussolini seems to have been his ancestor and to have anticipated some or all of his distinctive qualities.*

* See also Professor Salvemini's *The Fascist Dictatorship In Italy* (1928).

Here we are not concerned either with biography or history except in so far as they throw light on the present world situation, but it is of very great importance in our estimate of the future of fascism to realize that the personal vitality of its creator must now be passing its maximum. He was born in 1883. For some years there has been an increasing appearance of effort and uncertainty in his grandiose gestures. It is as if he felt Italy was slipping away from beneath him.

He has manifestly become dependent on the tougher initiatives of Nazi Germany. He is less sure of the Church. Six years ago he was holding up Dollfuss in Austria as a barrier against Hitler. And where is that barrier now? The Nazis look down on him from the Brenner Pass. He is losing face with his own people and his Nazi friends do little to help him in that matter. A few years ago it was dangerous to talk about him in Italy. Now they are talking.

Can there be a second Duce to follow the first? His high-spirited daughter and his son-in-law, Count Ciano, seem impatient to outdo his Fascist intemperance, but they will scarcely dare to attack and oust him, and it is not in his character to resign. Unless some unanticipated accident removes him from the scene, we shall have, not Giovinezza, but a middle-aged fascism to reckon with from now on.

The Italian situation has several incongruous elements and their relative importance varies continually. The Vatican (*pace* Mr. Teeling and his friends) seems now firmly dug in at Rome. Its relations to fascism have always lacked enthusiasm; it has ideas of its own. In the case of Fascist collapse or national defeat, the monarchy also stands ready to return and save the country. If the monarchy returned, would it be liberal or Catholic totalitarian? And the foreigner knows nothing of the possibilities of social discontent in Italy. Italy is a land peculiarly unfitted to stand the stresses of modern war. She is mostly coast line. She has no coal, and the Apennines are a thousand feet too low for her to have snowfields that would give her irrigation or water power. She can better defend herself against Germany in the Alps than against the sea power of France and Britain.

All these considerations lead towards the same conclusion, that in the probable war tornado of the near future, Italy, if she is not clever enough to keep out of it, will play a secondary and gesticulating role. She may suffer many things. She has not the fixed will, and she cannot afford to have the fixed will, for war, at which the Nazi culture aims. It is Nazi Germany which remains the danger center of mankind.

§ 17. — THE BRITISH OLIGARCHY

THE next network of thought and behavior we must bring into this reckoning of world forces is the British Empire. British Imperialism, like Roman Catholicism, is a natural aggregation. No man planned it; it discovered itself in being. It is a crowned oligarchy, claiming to be democratic because it uses universal suffrage for election to one of its two Houses of Parliament, and to correct that it has an easily manipulated voting system and a proprietary press dependent on advertisement revenue for the information of its citizens. At no phase in history have the common people played a dominant part in the government of Great Britain, and in every phase the baronial oligarchy has prevailed. It is the tradition and education of this oligarchy which determines the behavior of the Imperial Government and its role in contemporary world affairs.

Runnymede is the typical scene in the pageant of English liberties; Magna Carta documents the fundamental British situation. Magna Carta secures the liberties of the baron and free yeomen of the realm from all the main abuses of unqualified monarchy. It concedes no more rights to the churls and common folk of the land than it does to cats and dogs. About this central picture of the monarch amidst his barons English history groups itself. The king is restive, but his peers are stern. They war with the Scots and the French and they conquer and parcel out Ireland. The Church carries on its habitual struggle for existence, asserts itself, is restrained; it becomes rich and is reformed and plundered. The Crown, with a Tory following and a sympathetic Church, tries to go back upon Magna Carta, asserting its divine right to absolutism, and one king is beheaded and another goes into exile with his family, leaving the oligarchy, with a manageable new dynasty of Hanoverians, in possession. It over-exploits its American colonies and loses them, and it happens upon a greater Empire in the East.

Never once in the proud island story does the will of the common people matter a rap. Occasionally they give trouble; they get rather out of control after the Black Death; and a little later we find them asking quite inconclusively:

"When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?"

They subside into deepening misery with the industrial revolution, and they reappear in the nineteenth century struggling for nothing more than better wages and rather more tolerable living conditions. There was nothing very democratic about British trade unionism — as we have defined democracy in § 6 — and hardly more in the Labor Party that derived from it. The British Labor Party has never displayed any ambition to direct the affairs of the Empire. It aspires to nothing of the sort. It acknowledges the class inferiority of the workers and haggles by means of strikes and votes for a more tolerable but admittedly inferior way of living. By diminishing the discomfort of the masses and mitigating and soothing the exasperations caused by excessive business enterprise, it plays a stabilizing role in the existing system. Not only is it utterly absurd to call the British government now or at any time in the past a democratic government, but it flies in the face of manifest facts to deny that it is farther off now from anything that can be recognized as a democracy than it was thirty years ago. The old Liberal Party was liberal in its professions at any rate; the Labor Party is densely conservative. The British masses neither rule nor want to rule. They are politically apathetic. They do not produce outstanding individuals to express their distinctive thoughts or feelings, because they have no distinctive thoughts or feelings to express. Outstanding individuals of humble origin are obliged to fall into more or less easy acquiescence with the ruling system. There is nothing else for them to do. The oligarchy is privileged, it has to be served first at table with everything, office, honors, opportunity, but it is not exclusive, and that is one of the factors in its continued existence.

I do not know of any comprehensive study of the education and training of the British ruling class throughout the ages. The feudal world was limited enough for a lord to get away with very little reading and writing. He had his clerk, his cleric, at his elbow, and he felt he could keep his eye on him. His world was all in sight. Leech, lawyer and priest knew their places and stuck to them. The renascence and the coming of the printed book altered all that. The

medieval universities were swarms of poor scholars. The gentleman of the renascence had his tutor at home and went to grammar school and university. The grammar school became the narrowing portals through which the poor scholar had now to pass on his way to the learned professions. The Latin and Greek classics came into the Western world first as a stimulant and then, as the pedagogues watered learning down to scholarship, as a distinctive culture. The British oligarchy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries conceived of itself as Roman patricians and was rather ashamed of its illiterate members. It made the grand tour with its tutor, achieved a sort of French and Italian and became artistic and architectural. The apt classical quotation adorned the Parliamentary debates into the middle of the nineteenth century. After -that it became infrequent. It was not that the classics were going out of fashion but that the standard of learning was sinking.

Culturally the British oligarchy was at its best in the seventeenth century. It knew what it wanted and how to get it. It managed its estates ably. It built fine houses, it made great progress in agriculture; its younger sons went into trade and spread adventurously into America, India, China. A prolific Protestant clergy supplemented the supply of enterprising young men. Yet a shadow fell upon the outlook with the Hanoverian importation, and Pope's *Dunciad* marked the change. The Goddess Dullness is enthroned:

"And at her fell approach and secret might
Art after art goes out and all is night."

The oligarchy still ruled and flourished materially under that unstimulating dynasty, but it made no further progress mentally; it ceased to be alert and adaptable, it became acquisitive, tenacious and conservative. Because of these qualities it presently irritated the thirteen American colonies into separation. The French Revolution took it by surprise. When the French in their turn decapitated their king it was not flattered by the imitation. It was scared. The revolutionary mob, it realized, was something different from the Ironsides. The Ironsides sang hymns and were sternly respectable. These people from Marseilles sang a much more alarming song.

The deterioration of an education is usually a complicated process. The mere fact that it is materially successful makes for uncritical contentment, and discredits change. Teaching falls into the hands of sound, orthodox, unenterprising men. It becomes humdrum. Interest shifts to the greater reality of the playing fields. The history of British education — of the education of the oligarchy, that is to say, for popular education had hardly begun — from 1760 to 1860 is a history of resistance to change and steady deterioration.

The nineteenth-century British gentry had nothing like the full-bodied classical education of the preceding centuries; they had only the pedagogic vestiges of that education. Mathematical studies had been introduced, but they were as stylistic and useless as the pedants could make them. By the middle of the nineteenth century the self-complacency of the British governing classes was being protected educationally not only from the subversive ideas of the French Encyclopaedists and the French Revolution, but also from that more fundamental upheaval which was making biological science the key to a modernized mentality. A dwindling section of the upper classes could read French still; there was an attractive breadth in the French novel that the domestic fiction of the period did not display; but Voltaire and Gibbon were passing out of fashion. When gentlemen scoffed, Queen Victoria was "not amused."

Within the narrowing field of their cultivated ignorance, the young gentlemen prepared themselves vigorously for Parliamentary and administrative careers, and they developed an -enthusiasm for open-air sport and that primitive form of bath called the Englishman's tub, which was quite outside the ideology of their Tudor and Stuart ancestors. Many of them still shoot with distinction; others devote much time and attention to fly-fishing; others again cultivate gardens and watch birds. They have developed a peculiar literature of their own; memoirs, biographies and autobiographies, collections of letters and speeches, which establish their social values and supply them with patterns for the careers they follow. This constitutes the bulk of their reading. So equipped, the British oligarchy, at the head of a vast and scattered medley of dominions, crown colonies, mandated territories, India, faces the vast occasions of our time.

It is questionable whether it faces them with any ideas about their future at all. Or its own future or any future. Like the Catholic Church, its main purpose seems to be to hold on, aimless except for self-preservation. It means to go on with the sort of life its fathers have left it, forever if possible, and that apparently is all it means. Crown, Church, lords and gentry will just stick at what they are where they are, until something shatters and replaces them. And they will do this not out of any essential wickedness but because in fact they know of nothing better to do.

The English-speaking world produces an abundance of thought and new ideas, and it has a reading public sufficiently large to secure the translation of any really original book written in any language under the sun. But that reading public is widely dispersed and the major part of it is probably outside the boundaries of the Empire. The British ruling class is shy of ideas and imaginative creation, it dreads and hates what it calls highbrow conversation, and it can have very little time to explore beyond its distinctive literature of personalities. A number of concepts and understandings, a vast multitude of facts, that are known and clear to all well-informed people, seem never to have entered the British ruling-class mind or to have entered it only in a crippled or belittled state.

Here again, just as in our examination of the mutual unawareness of Catholicism and skepticism, we may fall into the error of imagining that what is known to us must necessarily be known to other people. But in reality these people who rule the British Empire do not willfully ignore a great number of things, they are simply ignorant of them or ignorant about them — which is quite a different matter. Ever since the first French Revolution, for example, the mind of the British ruling class has remained barred against any understanding of revolutionary democratic ideas. The French Revolution frightened them and they pulled down the blinds upon it. They chose to think that liberty means nobody doing any work, that equality means bringing the under-housemaid up into the drawing-room and sitting her down to play the grand piano, to her and the general embarrassment, and that fraternity means embracing extremely unwashed — untubbed — people. Socialism again they regard as a dividing-up of all the property in the world into exactly

equal shares for everyone. ("Inequality would come again tomorrow.")

Since the advent of a real social democracy would certainly mean very profound readjustments in life for them, these quick shorthand interpretations so to speak, are far more satisfying and sufficient than a sustained argument. They insist upon thinking like that, and if their sons and daughters get other ideas they discourage them and "laugh them out of it" if they can. Everything indeed outside that little anecdotal world of theirs with its importances and routines, that world they would like to go on forever, they know as little about as possible; and since they have never looked at such projects and interpretations directly and intelligently, they cease to be projects and interpretations and are apprehended vaguely as prowling monsters, threats and perils — the Red Peril, the Yellow Peril, the Black Peril — outside rational existence altogether.

I have had plentiful opportunity of sounding the minds of socially well- placed people, and in common with all the world I have watched the political conduct of the Empire during the past few searching years. Manifestly the mentality now ruling is one in which "Bolshies" are the enemies of God and man, men who go east are "pukka sahibs," royalties, beloved mascots whose very pet dogs are adorable, and workers honest drudges so long as they are not "spoilt," with only one weakness, susceptibility to foreign agitators. Americans it is understood are snobs in grain, but rich, and they should be kindly entreated. They will just simply fall down before the dear king and queen, whenever they get a chance. And also remember, "they cannot afford to see the British Empire overthrown,"

If the men get a little away from that sort of thing, the chatter of their women brings them back to it. Their women interfere a lot; the Colonel's lady is the typical figure of feminine influence throughout the social scale. In the army, in the Church, in politics, her good word raises up or casts down. All this is recognized openly in novels, in plays and social intercourse, but when it comes to political discussion and *Times* leading articles, then reality has to be wrapped up in a lofty pretentiousness....

This is undignified writing. This is in the worst possible taste. Yet

I cannot explain the twists and turns of Mr. Neville Chamberlain unless I use the terms I do. How can I adorn him with splendid prose? I cannot see him as anything but essentially ignorant, narrow-minded, subconsciously timid, cunning and inordinately vain. He and his father, Joseph, before him appear to me as the appointed scavengers of the fading Imperial dream. Joseph Chamberlain, with his mean yet extravagant idea of monopolizing the vast resources under the flag by means of an Empire *Zollverein*, aroused that convergent hostility of the Have-Not States, to which his son, with a sort of poetic justice, now makes his propitiatory surrenders.

I do not think Mr. Chamberlain wants to "save the Empire." The Empire came and the Empire may have to go. He adheres to something less transitory. His more immediate purpose, unless all his acts belie him, is to save the oligarchy and its way of life from its predestined end. He cannot understand that that way of life is over forever.

His family have been at such pains to achieve it, have been so eager, so clumsily eager, to serve it. Still he and his kind dream of friendly hospitable chateaux in a restored Holy Roman Empire or under a Spanish monarchy, and of a France, an Italy, a Greece made safe for the gentry again by the crushing out of all subversive forces. That I am convinced gives the ultimate range of the political vision of Mr. Chamberlain and his class.

When New York made an Exhibition to stimulate imaginations about *The World Of Tomorrow*, the British pavilion stressed the sentimental past, exhibited Magna Carta, crown jewels, pedigrees and an old English village. There was a genealogical diagram to demonstrate that George Washington was "one of us." There was not the faintest anticipation of that great fusion of English-speaking thought and activity throughout the world, of which all modern-minded men are dreaming. World Federation? Instead there was the most definite reminder that the British Crown and Church stood gently but inexorably in the way of anything of the sort.

In the days before "Tariff Reform," it was possible for young Englishmen to dream of the Empire as a great propaganda and medium for liberal and broadening democratic methods, free migration, free trade and open speech, steadily weaving all the world

together. It was a dream that captured many an alien imagination, as for example, Joseph Conrad's, but now it is an altogether abandoned dream. The idea of the Empire as a step towards world unification has lost all plausibility, and while the Chamberlain school of statecraft engages in its propitiatory dispersal, the creative imagination turns to the still living possibilities of one common culture of the English-speaking peoples.

An increasing number of British people look now to the present President of the United States for some sort of world leadership. He is a good, liberal-minded fellow anyhow, but in a sort of despair of anything better they do their best to exaggerate him. Britain herself produces no one to speak whatever liberal thoughts she has to the world. She has nobody of that quality, and even were there such a man it is difficult to imagine how under existing conditions he could emerge to popular attention. Without an objective, dumb, the Empire is becoming an anachronism, an Empire of passive and inadequate resistance. Its progressive disarticulation seems inevitable, and if after all the dream of a federal reassembling of the English-speaking and English-reading communities struggles towards realization, it will owe very little to the Imperial tradition and organization. North America, with its looser, freer and more abundant mental activities, is far more likely to become the backbone of such a reconstruction, and to carry it out on a democratic rather than oligarchic ideology. Monarchy, Church, influential families, experienced administrators and old Parliamentary hands, would merely clog and encumber the development of the social machinery necessary for a modernized world state.

So far from exercising any further leadership in world affairs, Great Britain is much more likely to withdraw into itself. With a dwindling population, an inadequately progressive educational system falling more and more behind the headlong needs of our time, and a shriveled prestige, the island may become unimportant enough to stand out altogether from the effort to effect a world synthesis. It may remain a crowned oligarchy yet for many years, fatuously content with itself and still as unaware as it is today of its continual decadence. Today in the Eastern world one can find a dozen anticipatory parallels, the self-satisfied and self-contained vestiges of

what were once proud and important ruling powers.

Possibly this residual Old England, in addition to its hunting and shooting and fishing and race meetings and so forth, will carry on, will be almost forced to carry on, a small but bickering warfare with the equally decadent dictatorship of Catholic Ireland. In that manner, if the world fails to reconstruct itself, the British Islands seem likely to pass into the gathering darkness of the future. And if after all, mankind as a whole does meet the challenge of facts and the scientifically organized world state emerges, it will be into enlightenment rather than darkness that these island residues will dissolve. Macaulay's New Zealander may arrive after all, and when, according to the prophecy, he has visited the ruins of St. Paul's, he will be shown over the Houses of Parliament ("curious and rewarding," as Baedeker would put it) and do his puzzled best to imagine what that strange narrow life was like, assisted by extracts from Hansard, carefully preserved gramophone records of important speeches, enlarged photographs of Mr. Gladstone, movie glimpses of Mr. Neville Chamberlain in a state of indignation, and the still surviving political novels of Mrs. Humphry Ward.

§ 18. — SHINTOISM

AND now we may consider another great mental system ruling the minds and behavior of millions of men and women, which has recently become a leading factor in world destiny. This is Shinto, the official and compulsory religion of the Japanese. Formally, other religions are still tolerated, the Roman Catholic for example, but only on condition of ceremonial and practical acquiescence in the main doctrine of the creed, the recognition of the supreme divinity of the Mikado. Mr. A. Morgan Young has recently published an admirable summary of this culture,* and to this mainly I am indebted for the material of this section. He in turn gives his sources for whatever statements he makes, so that the interested reader can easily verify and expand what is given here.

* *The Rise Of A Pagan State* (1939).

The basis of Shinto is the Kojiki, a compilation of the eighth century A.D. It is readable in its entirety only by scholars, its language being far more remote from the Japanese of today than eighth-century Anglo-Saxon would be from current English. For various reasons only portions of it have been modernized for general use. It begins with a sort of storm of Gods neither made nor begotten but passing away. From this tumult emerge two highly sexual figures, Izanagi and Izanami, who might be described in Hollywood language as male and female "sex appeal." They respond to each other with tremendous vigor, begetting gods and islands and at last a Fire God who burns up his mother Izanami. But by this time Izanagi is so set on procreation that everything about him procreates; he throws off his clothes and they become sea gods and land gods. Finally he produces the Sun Goddess from his left eye, the Moon God from his right eye and the headlong Susa-no-o by blowing his nose. After which he seems to have retired and the Sun Goddess and Susa-no-o occupy the stage.

After various remarkable adventures, no doubt of the greatest spiritual significance and full of lessons for the true believer, Susa-no-o meets a formidable damsel-devouring dragon with eight heads and other alarming accessories, makes the beast drunk with saki, and

then kills it and cuts it up. But one of the tails resists and breaks his sword, because in it there is hidden a better sword. This he extracts and presents to his sister the Sun Goddess. It lies today, thickly swathed in brocade, in the Family Shrine of the Imperial House in Tokio. It is one of the Three Sacred Treasures, the sword, the mirror and the jewel, which the Sun Goddess transmitted to her heirs, the divine Emperors, the living Gods of Japan.

To the Western mind accustomed to a widely different system of myths and absurdities, this reads like monstrous nonsense. But it is wiser not to say that in Japan. For example, Mr. Morgan Young tells of what befell Dr. Inoue Tetsujiro, a loyal but liberal-minded Shintoist who ventured to doubt the authenticity of the Three Sacred Treasures. He was denounced, his publisher was penalized, and he was expelled from the Imperial University. Later on, while attending the memorial service of a friend, he was set upon by a gang of pious ruffians and beaten so that one eye was destroyed. So much for a man who had attempted to spiritualize and rationalize the Japanese faith. No one was punished for the outrage upon him, which indeed is only one sample among many of the spirit of renascent Shintoism. It is quite good form to jump at a man who uses a phrase or makes a gesture that seems lacking in piety, and stab him. It is like those fierce old colonels in England who assault people for not standing stiff to "God Save the King."

Mr. Morgan Young makes some interesting suggestions about the temperamental make-up of the Japanese. There are important Mongolian strains in them, but he quotes Putnam Weale (*The Truth About China And Japan*) to support the thesis that the virile and dominating factor is Malay. Their clothing beneath the kimono, the construction of their houses, their lapses into moody murderousness are all Malay. He insists upon the constant recurrence of head hunting proclivities in their history. An unintelligent blood-thirstiness is in their nature and tradition. They have an inferiority complex with regard to Chinese and Western civilization, which takes the form of an extravagantly aggressive and assertive patriotism. I have followed my authorities in these generalizations. So far as official Japan is concerned they seem to be thoroughly justified. They account for the fact that the head of the state is not so

much a leader as a mystically sacred symbol. The rulers of Japan today are Nazis without a Hitler, Fascists without a Mussolini. In the animal world an acephalous monster is sometimes, tougher to tame or destroy than one with a head.

From the deliberate isolation of Japan in the seventeenth century — when all the bickering Christian sects and in particular Xavier's Jesuits were expelled, and the entry of foreigners and foreign travel prohibited absolutely — until the barrier was broken down by Commodore Perry in 1853, there was an age of internecine feuds and exciting strife of every sort. Vendettas were honored. The play of the *Forty-Seven Ronin*, the most popular of Japanese plays, is the heroic consummation of a vendetta, ending, after the decapitation of the initiator of the feud, with the hara-kiri of these forty-seven heroes. Japan was indeed a romantic head-hunting preserve for the tough. And among the tough everywhere loyalty to the gang is the supreme virtue, loyalty to the gang and no mercy for the flats, the serfs, the common cattle, outside the gang.

This is as true of the "wise guys" of Soho as it is of the gangsters of San Francisco. Wherever there are young men without proper employment the tough guy reappears. The ultimate sin is "squealing"; the crowning heroism is silence under the severest questioning; the master triumph is brilliant outrage. These gallant fellows in Japan would rape or try their swords on peasants without compunction. In such an atmosphere of swagger and loyalty lived the Daimios, the feudal noblemen, and their henchmen the Samurai, until the barriers were forced and the outer world broke in.

About the beginning of this century, the code of honor of these bickering toughs, the noble warrior's way of life, was idealized by a certain Dr. Nitobe, who wrote a book in English called *Bushido*, "through which the word was for many years far better known abroad than in Japan." He incorporated all the finest pretensions of European chivalry. His Samurai became the disciplined and fearless knights-errant of the world. It took in a lot of people — including myself. In *A Modern Utopia* (1905), the world was taken care of by an order of "Samurai." They assumed the role of the Syphograuntes in the original *Utopia*, and in that they anticipated the Communist Party commissars very strikingly. Since 1900 we have had, *inter*

alia, the Nazis, the Fascists, the Phalangists. I was thinking with my generation.

In a lecture at the Sorbonne, in 1927, *Democracy Under Revision*, I returned to that idea of a disciplined liberal "party." It arises naturally and inevitably out of the problem of contemporary indefiniteness and the relative ineffectiveness of intelligent people.

Perry's guns in 1853 aroused that ringed-in Japan of blood feuds, hara-kiri and heroic decapitations to the existence of a dangerous and aggressive outer world. The Japanese nobles and their Samurai, given over altogether to pride, realized their enormous practical inferiority. While they had been enjoying life after their fashion, the outer world had stolen a march on them. It was plain they had to modernize or succumb — like India, like Java. They had to learn the tricks of these foreigners and learn them quickly, their machinery, their weapons and generally how they did it. At first it seemed that Christianity might be part of the coveted advantages, and Japan thought seriously of making Christianity a state religion. After much recalcitrance and rebellion, the Shinto religion was revived and the country was unified under the divinity of the Mikado.

Happily for the renascent Japanese, the British Empire suffers from practically incurable Russophobia. It is a constitutional disease of the British ruling class. Every assistance was given, material and mental, to the new forces of consolidation, and in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) an Eastern Asiatic power shattered the prestige of Europe on land and sea alike. The Great War completed the job. After that there were no more inquiries for an adaptation of Christianity to the headship of a divine monarch — a slight improvement upon the Royal Headship of the Established Church of England. Instead of Christianity, Shinto, a genuine home product, came into its own.

And gradually, in association with the concentration of power in the warrior class, it has consolidated itself and all its absurdities as the sole religion of Japan, driving every alternative faith and conception underground. For the better part of the period of modernization since 1868, there has been a steady influx of Western science, Western ideas, Western radicalism into Japan. There were endless circles in which "advanced" ideas were discussed freely.

With an astonishing swiftness that liberal Japan has disappeared. A few murders, a clean-up of schools and colleges, and the thing has been done. In the place of an intelligent people we face a national monomaniac. This, from our present point of view, is the most important aspect of the whole business.

With an apparent singleness of purpose Japan has flung itself into the attempted conquest of China and the most reckless defiance of the chief naval powers of the world. Here, as in the case of Nazi Germany, we are left asking, "Where have all these reasonable mitigating people gone?"

"Where" — and this is perhaps even more to the point— "has the rational element gone in those who have succumbed?" So many who once talked liberalism, seem now to be wholehearted belligerent patriots.

Our essential theme in this book is the possibility of changing the mental superstructure, the knowledge, idea and habit system of mankind. In that we hope. The tremendous rapidity of this last Japanese change-over is almost incredible. Is it an irreversible process? And if so, what will it go on to next? Can it stand military defeat in China?

Many things seem possible in this catastrophic world of today, but one of the higher probabilities of the present world situation seems to be the failure of the Japanese attack on her greater neighbor. China has astonished the world by her tenacity, by the steady unification of her resistance, by the emergence of a sort of pervading militant wisdom. The Japanese have been stupendously energetic and stupendously unoriginal. There has been much detailed cunning in their operations but no essential wisdom. Desperadoes may murder many people but they cannot divide and rule a hostile country. What will happen in their heads as they realize defeat with nothing but that childish Shintoism of theirs and a tradition and cant of swaggering victory to sustain them?

Will it be wrath and social revenge? Many of these young warriors who landed in China full of the toughest dreams of heroism, victory, rape and authority, must now be in a state of profound disillusionment. They will have a sense of having been fooled. And in China — unless I underestimate the quality of Chinese and

Communist propaganda — they will have met not only hardship but ideas. Sooner or later they must go back to a country where the endurance of the peasantry and the people has been tried to the breaking point.

Here are the same factors that existed in Russia in 1918, the factors for a crude and violent social revolt. There is no greater threat to a government than the return of a defeated army. It will go ill in such an event with nobles and dignitaries and priests, and it is quite among the possibilities of the next few years that the last divine heir of the Sun Goddess, shorn of all divinity, may share a parallel fate to that of the last Little Father of Russia. Then, starting from an even lower level than Russia in 1918, Japan will have to reconstruct its social and economic life.

That may be one possibility, but history never repeats itself exactly, and revolutionary methods have changed very greatly in the last twenty years. As one turns these matters over in the mind, China looms not merely as a military but as a mental reality of the first importance. What systems of thought are operative there, what new systems of thought are worming their way into the brains — and many authorities declare that they are rather above the human average — of that immense multitude? That is a question of more importance in a forecast of the human outlook than any we have hitherto discussed.

§ 19. — THE CHINESE OUTLOOK

THE primary importance of China in the current interplay of human forces is due not only to the fact that it is the greatest mass of human beings with any sort of solidarity in the world, but also to its manifest educability. It is not only the largest but now it is probably the most plastic mass on earth. Hitherto we have been weighing the influence and destinies of set and blinkered cultures. But in China, tradition, cultural ideas, cultural methods are passing through a phase of extreme dissolution, the mind of every intelligent man is in a state of stimulated inquiry, and creative propositions, if they could be presented there, would surely have a freedom and effectiveness such as no other part of the world can display.

The immemorial basis of Chinese life is an industrious peasantry, the primary source of wealth, on whom the landlord, the loan manager, the merchant, the tax collector have lived in a state of inconsiderate refinement for a long period. When the pressure of taxation or population becomes intolerable, the peasant becomes a bandit and the tension is relieved. Bandits, says J.D.M. Pringle, are the Chinese equivalent of the "unemployed," they levy an unsystematic dole. There have never been any fixed impediments to peasants acquiring wealth or gentlefolk becoming poor, and so, though there has always been much poverty, it has produced little class antagonism. No race difference exists between rich and poor; there is no superimposed nobility, no chivalry with a strong military and hunting tradition. The absence of great natural barriers led to a precocious expansion of governments to a size that, almost from the outset, made a class of literate administrators more necessary and more important than soldiers.

The early need for writing in China arrested its development beyond a quasi-pictorial and clumsily elaborate stage. It was wanted too soon, before it could undergo simplification into a syllabic or alphabetical system. This also contributed to the distinctive quality of China, to the Chinese — if we may coin a word — *para-democracy*. The extreme difficulty of the written language did indeed put popular education out of the question and set a practical barrier between

literate and illiterate more effective as between man and man than any Western class distinction, but at the same time the very difficulty of scholarship obliged the mandarinate to draw continually upon the clever sons of poorish homes. These special conditions converged to give China its distinctive social and political structure, a structure so difficult to alter without complete destruction, that so far neither invasion nor civil commotion has ever changed it in any essential particular. When for example the Manchus conquered the land, they merely founded a new dynasty and imposed the now vanished pigtail — rather by way of assimilation than sublimation. So far. But now this refractory system has to face something more powerful than Hun or Manchu or Japanese; it has to face the change of scale, the change of pace, that is shattering all other human societies.

The religious basis of the Chinese system is equally in contrast with the God-centered beliefs of the West. Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are all alike atheisms. There is no one God standing in any personal relationship to man. Confucianism is concerned entirely with the present life, it discourages speculation and inculcates an excessive ancestor worship and respect for the state. It insists upon public service and dignified self-control, not to please a god but simply because that is the right way of living. Taoism is in contrast a religion of abandonment to nature. Politically it is anarchistic and around it cluster a great accumulation of superstitions, spiritualisms, spookisms and quasi-magic beliefs, incantations and astrology. Every folly of the wonder-lovers of today has been anticipated by Taoism. Buddhism teaches a transmigration of souls, souls that may be entirely unaware that the good and evil they experience is due to their behavior in a previous embodiment.

Essentially these religions are behavior systems — or misbehavior systems. Taoism is frankly anti-social, an imaginative dissipation of the mind and will, and Buddhism is at least a withdrawal from life. They are both what it is now fashionable to call escape systems. Their teaching finds its Western equivalent in the “detachment” of Mr. Aldous Huxley. Both foster religious orders and inflict a great multitude of monks and nuns upon the community, and neither has anything of importance to contribute to that intelligent reconditioning 3f the human mind which the present world situation demands.

Politically and educationally, the yellow- (or gray) clad Buddhist monk with his begging bowl and his pimping possibilities is a social nuisance; the convent passes by insensible degrees into a common brothel.* But Confucianism is almost pedantically upright. It is the religion of a respectable totalitarianism. Whatever political backbone is found among the older generation of Chinese is in the tradition of Mencius, the disciple and exponent of the master.

* See Lin Yutang's *My Country And My People* (1936).

In the crucial period of the nineteenth century, China was more self- satisfied with itself than Japan, and altogether indisposed for fundamental change. It had no such sudden shock as Commander Perry gave the Japanese, and it had no consciously ruling caste to react effectively to a warning. It knew the European better than the isolated Japanese, and it had long since formed a poor opinion of the physical and moral bustle and inelegance of Western living. It found the Westerners ugly, truculent and requiring cautious management; but although they had a variety of curious mechanical advantages it deemed them despicable. Since it took on an appearance of Westernization, China held out against modernization for half a century after the Japanese awakening. It endured much. We cannot even sketch that story here from the British Opium War onward. China's first reaction to these aggressions was violent xenophobia. This culminated in the Boxer outbreak (1900) and the punitive looting of the Summer Palace at Peking by the allied European powers. Still China would not pull itself together to fight Outlying parts of its Empire fell away; ports and provinces were seized; this did not affect the routine in the regions still intact. Even under direct foreign rule much of the old life still carried on. The ancient order seemed as incurably contented with itself as the British.,

Here is how that keen and witty writer Mr. Lin Yutang characterized the Chinese way of living — so recently as 1936. "...Face, Fate and Favor. These three sisters have always ruled China, and are ruling China still. The only revolution that is real and that is worth while is a revolution against this female triad. The trouble is that these three women are so human and so charming. They corrupt our priests, flatter our rulers, protect the powerful, seduce the rich, hypnotize the poor, bribe the ambitious and demoralize the

revolutionary camp. They paralyze justice, render ineffective all paper constitutions, scorn at democracy, contemn the law, make a laughing stock of the people's rights, violate all traffic rules and club regulations, and ride roughshod over the people's home gardens. If they were tyrants, or if they were ugly, like the Furies, their reign might not endure so long; but their voices are soft, their ways are gentle, their feet tread noiselessly over the law courts, and their fingers move silently, expertly, putting the machinery of justice out of order while they caress the judge's cheeks. Yes, it is immeasurably comfortable to worship in the shrine of these pagan women."

So Mr. Lin Yutang in 1936, and in 1936 he still despaired of any purposeful consolidation of his country for many years to come. But in three years Japanese military savagery has brought about a desperate unification beyond any foresight.

Mr. Lin Yutang is by nature and disposition a Taoist of the finer sort. He betrays at times a certain patriotic uneasiness and impatience, but these are lapses from his usual artistic self. For the most part he sustains a genteel detachment from the revolution of 1911 which ended the Manchu regime and the pigtail forever. He deplores the novel energy of Sun Yat Sen who "kept up his reading." He notes that Chiang Kai Shek and his financial ally T.V. Soong work "like horses." His heart turns back to "Merry old China" in all the infinite strength of laziness. "The racial tradition," he concludes, "is so strong that its fundamental pattern of life will always remain."

Nothing in the world is so perennial as that. The history of China since the fall of the Manchus displays altogether new forces at work. It is not the old, old story. However reluctantly, she now faces towards Cosmopolis, The republic was the creation of Chinese students who had been educated abroad or by foreign missions, and mostly they had been trained in America. Never before had there been a Chinese revolution fostered in exile. But this last one, like the kindred Russian one, was made by expatriates. Its revolutionary technique followed Western patterns. The Chinese Republicans borrowed ideas from the Communist Party, and the organization of the Kuomintang provided a nexus for the restless and intelligent throughout the Empire. Numerically the Kuomintang, like the

Communist Party in Russia in 1917, was a relatively small organization, but it was the only thing that had continuity and a definite will of its own in an otherwise planless chaos.

This is not the place to review the stormy confusion of Chinese affairs since the establishment of the Republic;* the experimental policies of Sun Yat Sen and the significance of his will, the treason of Yuan Shih Kai and his transitory usurpation of the Imperial throne, the clumsy attempts of the Russian Borodin to introduce an uncongenial class war and to revive xenophobia in the form of anti-British Imperialism as a fundamental motive. He failed, and returned to obscurity in Russia, but the Party, under Chou En-lai, organized a successful peasant communist state in Kiangsi — I say peasant communist because there was no attempt at collective farming — and a very efficient Red Army.

* A compact summary is to be found in *China Struggles For Unity*, by J.D.M. Pringle and Marthe Rajchman.

Driven out of Kiangsi, this Red Army retreated fighting for six thousand miles in one of the greatest retreats in history, and stood at last with its back to Soviet Russia in Shensi and the northwest. The intricate struggles between the Nanking government, the private armies of various warlords and the Red Army, need not concern us, nor the romantic and mysterious cessation of the war against the "Reds." The fact became apparent to the Japanese that slowly and steadily China was being unified under one government. There was no time to lose. Like a fiery new birth came the tragic consolidation of the Chinese national spirit in the face of intolerable Japanese outrages. Today under the military and administrative ability of the energetic Chiang Kai Shek we have a China more united and purposeful than it has ever been before, and apart from its resolve for complete national emancipation, more incalculable than any other human aggregation.

So faded and nerveless are the old conceptions of life, so Taoist, that the entire collective mentality of China is now in effect a *tabula rasa* upon which it is possible to write almost any constructive idea. And what is written will be evidently determined very largely by movements in the general world mind outside the boundaries of China. The native contribution is in the nature not of initiatives but

adaptive qualifications. Lin Yutang, in one of those involuntary lapses of his from "detachment" into patriotic distress and irritation, notes that a dozen years after the death of Sun Yat Sen, who is by universal consent the father of the new China, no Chinese writer has yet displayed the energy and intellectual power .needed to write a full and competent account of the Founder's life and teaching. It would certainly be an immense commercial success; it would be of the greatest political importance; and in that land of lassitude, evasion and passive resistance to change, nobody produces it.

It would seem as though a Chinese mind must needs go abroad and lead a foreign life, before it can even begin to see China. And when it sees China it still depends upon a push from the exterior, for action.

The most vital new thing so far that has been written upon this blank Chinese intelligence is a sort of communism. In a later section we must examine communism as a world force, but here it is to be observed that just as Chinese democracy is not the same thing as Western democracy but a *para-democracy*, so Chinese communism is not by any means the Russian article, but a *para-communism*. It has rejected Borodin's crude ideas of liquidating the "rich," the class war and collectivized farming. It is essentially a peasant communism, a revolt against rent, taxes, debt, forestalling, speculative marketing and all the handicaps that enslave the little man. Its leaders are often the fanatical enthusiastic sons of wealthy men, sons who have read Marx and Lenin, but the responding rank and file are the commonalty. It educates earnestly and well, it carries on a propaganda by means of plays, concerts, meetings. It promotes a modernized script. It is making its people into newspaper readers. It is in fact producing a new sort of Chinese common man, with a genuine workers' and soldiers' solidarity. Everywhere the peasants, even those who do not belong to the Party formally, believe in it. Its "Red" Army is as sturdy as any China has ever seen, with partisan tactics peculiarly adapted to the country.

A second set of ideas which is being scrawled across the Chinese *tabula rasa* is the New Life movement. This was deliberately created by Chiang Kai Shek as a rival and substitute for communism. Chiang Kai Shek is at present the central figure on the Chinese stage; he has

been fairly explicit about his ideas and motives, and there is considerable artlessness in what he says. He has an interestingly responsive and representative mind. He speaks with profound reverence of the influence of his mother in forming his character. She remained an earnest Buddhist to the end. She watched over his tender years. She trained him for an energetic life of public service and self-subordination. He took his early political leadership from Sun Yat Sen and the Kuomintang. Sun Yat Sen was a Methodist with a passionate desire to free his country from 'Western Imperialism." This brought him at last into close association with the anti-Imperialist Borodin. It was Borodin's aggressiveness and the killing of rich people and foreigners that estranged Chiang Kai Shek from Sun Yat Sen.

Chiang Kai Shek became for a period militantly anti-Communist. His marriage with Miss Mayling Soong, a member of one of the richest families in China, may have had its subconscious influence upon him. His close association with the Soong family, and particularly with T.V. Soong, has relieved him of many temptations that have overcome other leaders less financially secure. Madame Chiang Kai Shek is a woman of manifest beauty and force of character, and for some time she seems to have done the religious thinking for her husband. He was baptized as a Christian in 1930. Their type of Christianity is a simple evangelical bibliolatry, inclining to fundamentalism rather than to either modernism or Catholicism; it is fundamentalism with a dash of Buchmanism. Every day the Generalissimo reads his Bible and prays for guidance. He prays regularly and abundantly and says grace before he eats. In moments of doubt the sacred book is opened and consulted for an omen.

The New Life Movement is not however professedly Christian, though it speaks in the name of the Christian Sun Yat Sen. It is essentially a patriotic behavior system, attacking opium, polygamy and "immorality" generally, tobacco, alcohol, tea, coffee, meat. It is in violent reaction from the enervation of Taoist self-indulgence. It expresses the realization of the middle and upper classes that things are getting serious for them. Its ambition is to be stern and powerful, to promote a "clean" and strenuous life.

Chiang Kai Shek has been immensely impressed by Fascist and Nazi propaganda, he speaks in profound admiration of "the strength of present-day Italy and Germany," he swallows, as I did, the legend of Bushido (§ 18) and like Mr. Teeling (§ 13) he believes that the Nazi disciplines make for brotherhood, obedience and particularly for that "cleaner" life of sexual and imaginative suppression which leaves the mind free for militant authority. (Both he and Mr. Teeling would be all the wiser and better for a cleansing month in the latrines at Dachau.) But since the aim of the New Life is power even more than purity, it is flatly opposed to any infringement of the rights of private property. It was indeed primarily organized for that end, as a counterblast to communism, and by its emphatic denunciation of Communists and "traitors" and its rigid insistence upon the payments of debts, it makes a special appeal to foreign finance. Its Methodist virtues are a means to an end. The end is self-righteous power. No doubt the New Life stimulates the open campaign against opium, vice and insanitary living, and no doubt it releases a genuine streak of solemn masochism in the composition of the Generalissimo, but how far the natural Chinaman will give himself wholeheartedly to the New Life remains to be shown. The failure of Prohibition in America and the social demoralization caused by it, seem to have had no lesson for Chiang Kai Shek.

For my own part I believe in the complete honesty of Mr. and Mrs. Chiang Kai Shek, but it is plain that they have not the faintest conception of the demands that fate is making upon mankind. They sound indeed in all their published utterances, terribly limited and self-satisfied, and however much we may be pleased to see China led to victory against the Japanese, that is no reason why we should exaggerate the intelligence and vision of these two leaders, because they are instrumental in that hoped-for *debâcle*.

Such are the chief forces that are operating to produce the China of tomorrow — Chinese communism, or, to define it more clearly, *para- communism*, and this New Life which is plainly *para-fascism*. Neither is yet what one can call a commanding force. They combine against the common enemy, but they have no real convergence. The end of the war with Japan will release rather than conciliate their oppositions. China liberated will become more and more definitely a

battleground of world ideologies. She will waver between Soviet Russia and fascism, between Christianity of the J.D. Rockefeller type on the one hand and a tentative socialism after the fashion of the New Deal, rather to the left of the New Deal, on the other. One may well doubt if she has any initiative of her own to give the world.

In most Chinamen there struggle a Confucian, a Taoist and a Bandit. To judge by the present state of things that completes the inventory. And yet there is an accumulation of artistic work, a record of invention and ingenuity to the credit of China, witnessing to something not covered by any of these three factors, to some constructive element that existing circumstances have failed to release, some higher intellectual development which may still be waiting there — for the proper evocation.

This raises what is from our present point of view a very important issue. Is there a real scientific modernism, a constructive originality, latent in that very respectable Chinese brain? Has it unexploited mental reserves? That is a question that might be extended far beyond the Chinese horizon. At present China is almost completely unaware of the ecological view of life. She has never heard about it. Science subsidizes no missions; it has failed even to organize its friends in defense of its own freedoms. Almost all this "new education" in China, that has been replacing the classics since the revolution, has been ear-marked for the service of some narrow dogmatism or other. Her brightest intelligences have had but a poor chance of any broader vision. So in China even more than in our Western world, political and social life is still a disastrous clashing-together of blinkered minds. What she thinks new is already old. She is no more prepared to attack the gigantic problems of adjustment that close in upon her, in common with the rest of the world, than she was thirty years ago.

In these thirty years she has done great things. The greatest has been to discover and assert her national independence and solidarity. And still she has everything to do. It is either a prelude to renascence or failure, to have installed a Methodist-Generalissimo in the place of the Son of Heaven, got rid of pigtails, given up smoking, drinking, swearing, necking and suchlike scandalous behavior, and driven the opium traffic underground. Things will not stay at that.

So China, because of its nascent state, because at present there is no deep-rooted system of ideas imposed upon her character and habits, presents, in the barest form, the universal human problem. What prospect is there of an effective drive towards a scientific understanding of history and present realities, and of a reconstruction upon the lines of that knowledge?

Here again we must repeat the refrain of this book.

There exist already scattered about the world, all the knowledge and imaginative material required to turn not merely these seething four hundred million people but the whole world into one incessantly progressive and happily interested world community. All that is needed is to assemble that scattered knowledge and these constructive ideas in an effective form. The world cannot go on, a hydra-headed confusion of sovereignties; it has to concentrate its direction in a *World Brain*. The organization of a few thousand workers and the expenditure of a few score million pounds could bring that indispensable organization into being. And I doubt if it will ever be done.

It would give this rudderless world, as it drifts towards the rocks, a chart-room, a compass, a bridge and steering-gear

It would change the face of human politics from the aimless stare of dementia to understanding purpose....

To vary the image once more, in China, the greatest, most central and representative human accumulation in the world, the fields are manifestly "white unto harvest" for a comprehensive renewal of civilization, the whole land aches for it, and there are no reapers; there are only spreading fires, trampling beasts in the corn, and a few weaklings gathering a handful of ears.*

* A very convincing and readable picture of China in dissolution is to be found in Miss Nora Wain's *The House Of Exile*, and there are also the various effective and well-informed novels of Mrs. Pearl Buck, *The Patriot* for example, and *The Good Earth*. Edgar Mowrer's *Mowrer In China* is a convenient little book, compact, full, and understanding.

§20. — SUBJECT PEOPLES

ONLY very briefly and, as it were, in parenthesis, is it possible to glance at the future of the black peoples massed in Africa and their kindred in America.

The argument of this book is framed on such a scale that the lives and deaths of scores of millions appear as details of microscopic size in relation to the general ant-hill Moreover, it has a perspective of its own. It looks from the directive centers of human thought, outwardly. Estimates of the population of tropical and southern Africa vary round and about one hundred and fifty million. Probably it is subject to considerable fluctuations. These millions live, hope, desire and suffer. But this great population is so remote from the central intellectual processes of mankind, it contributes so little to these processes, that it counts for far less than the sixteen million Jews, from whom, in spite of great handicaps, come men of science, original thinkers, mental workers of all sorts by the thousand. Later, but many decades later, the Negro mind may make a steadily increasing contribution to the World Brain. But at present it is held off by such a tangle of difficulties, obstructions and mind-traps as only the rarest and luckiest of natural geniuses may hope to overcome.

In Lord Hailey's *An African Survey* (1938) and in Julian Huxley's *Africa View* (1931), the reader may learn something of that tangle. There, for example, he will find a discussion of the language problem. Is the young Negro of genius to begin his learning in some narrow dialect or in such a wider medium as Swahili, which still provides only a very limited literature for his study, or shall he be given as soon as possible the key to contemporary knowledge and thought, in English or some other European tongue? And where are the teachers and schools to be found for that? Even if he gets English, will it be good, fresh English? Will he encounter anything better than the faded methods, half a century stale, of a lower type of English school? Will it let him get to anything better than Bible Christianity, the history of England and a nice Christmas story or so about holly and robins? Where the Negro is apt to become a little

ridiculous is in his exaggerated response to white religious teaching. He takes it in good faith and brings out its absurdities. That is not his fault. *Green Pastures* and Father Divine are products of white revivalist teaching; they are not native African creations. They smell of the camp meeting and not of the Heart of Darkness. We have no right to call a Negro a fool when it is our people who have made a fool of him. Julian Huxley insists very definitely on the desirability 01 biology and descriptive geography as the backbone of native African education and on the natural interest and aptitude of the African for such studies. There he would be on his, own ground. But because the African is ready for the right education, it does not follow that the governments in authority over him are. These poor-white schoolmasters can teach him nothing of the sort, because they know none of it themselves.

There is a great conflict of testimony about the abilities of black Africa. His bitterest detractors are unable to deny the Negro an enviable sense of rhythm, natural good-humor and an instinct for civility, a sense of fun, brilliant mimicry, rich artistic aptitudes. And more than that. In the United States, in spite of the severest handicaps, black men have been able to struggle up to do distinguished scientific and literary work, and in South Africa it has been found necessary to protect skilled white labor from the competition of able colored people by discriminating against the apprenticing of natives to skilled trades and restricting "certificates of competency" in various mechanical employments to whites. Obviously you cannot put up barriers to protect yourself from the colored man and at the same time declare that he is incurably your inferior.

The outlook for tropical and sub-tropical Negro life in the coming years is dark and indefinite. An adequate education, that would make a large proportion of that population conscious world-citizens, seems improbable, and the utilization of that great reservoir of ignorant animal vitality as a source of conscript soldiers or conscript laborers is highly probable. It is one of the good marks in the checkered record of British Imperialism that in Nigeria it has stood out against the development of the plantation system and protected the autonomy of the native cultivator — with the most satisfactory

consequences to everyone concerned. But against that one has to set the ideas of white-man-mastery associated with Cecil Rhodes and sustained today by General Smuts, which look to an entire and permanent economic, social and political discrimination between the lordly white and his natural serf, the native African, And this in the face of the Zulu and Basuto, the most intelligent and successful of native African peoples. The ethnological fantasies of Nazi Germany find a substantial echo in the resolve of the two and a half million Afrikanders to sustain, from the Cape to Kenya, an axis of white masters (preferably of Dutch origin and speaking Afrikaans) with a special philosophy of great totalitarian possibility called holism, lording it over a subjugated but much more prolific, black population.

That racial antagonism makes the outlook of South Africa quite different from that of most of the other pseudo-British "democracies." Obviously it is not a democracy at all, and plainly it is heading towards a regime of race terrorism on lines parallel and sympathetic with the Nazi ideal. The Afrikander will do his best to be a terrific fellow to the last, and he will see to it that the black insurrection gathering under his heel, is sufficiently under-educated and sufficiently embittered to behave savagely when its day of opportunity comes. He will always be rather afraid, and his fears will brutalize his treatment of his helots until he is intolerable. Slowly but surely a racial self-consciousness, a collective resentment, is being forced upon the Negro, not only in South Africa but throughout the world, and South Africa seems the inevitable theater for its release.

But the fate of South Africa need not concern us now, beyond the plain probability that whether the Dominion follows the fate of Haiti or San Domingo or whether the sjambok holds its own, it is very unlikely to contribute anything of primary value to the reconstruction of human society upon a planetary scale.

And so, too, we cannot consider here the possible survival or disappearance of that little group of human beings, the Australian blackfellows, with their undeniable artistry, their aptitude for mechanical work, and so subtle a sense of form that they invented the boomerang ages before the white man made his first experiments with the much simpler propeller. Nor can we bring in that great

festoon of interesting and distinctive human societies which hangs across the subtropical seas from Singapore in the west throughout the Dutch East Indies and New Guinea to Guam in the east. Sixty million brown and yellow peoples they are, illiterate, unawakened, but for the most part excessively polite and subservient.

The problem of all these colored peoples is a vast one, but vast as it is, it is still secondary to greater decisions. If the mind of the world can be pulled together so as to give our species a collective rational guidance, this problem will fall into proportion and be solved deliberately and sanely. The colored man will understand and be understood, he will get his fair chance, so that he will come at last to look the white man in the eye, feeling as equal to him as a musician does to an engineer, with as complete an acceptance of difference and as complete a mutual respect. But if we cannot achieve that intellectual readjustment, then the prospect is fear and more fear, cruelty and more cruelty, trampling suppressions, wild insurrections, massacres and reprisals, atrocities and counter-atrocities, and the ultimate waste of every good possibility in these still largely unbroached reservoirs of human variety.

It is not in their own lands that the destiny of all these people will be determined. It is not on the "illimitable veldt" or in the tropical forest, not in mountain fastnesses or on stormy seas that their hope is to be found. Natural aptitude is not enough. The inherent intellectual quality of a cannibal savage or a coolie laborer, a starving share-cropper or an Abyssinian slave, may be as high or higher than that of a distinguished professor or a brilliant colonial administrator, but the latter is not simply his inherent self; he is that plus an education. The one is like a photographic plate that has been casually exposed to the light, it is an accidental blur; it means little or nothing. The other is a plate that has been exposed in a carefully focused camera. It means. It is related. The education and habits of behavior it imposes are the greater part of the civilized man. The better and fuller his education, the better the knowledge organization of his life, the higher he stands over the bare human being, and the more he and his kind control him and are responsible for human destiny. The only salvation of these threatened millions lies through the patient, incessant ordering of the collective human mind. A man working in a study at Harvard or a

student sitting, as Marx and Lenin sat in their time, in the Reading Room of the British Museum, may be linking ideas and devising phrases that will open the way of escape for all these menaced and benighted peoples to equal participation in a reconstructed world.

And here is the place to apply the same line of reasoning to that great miscellany of peoples and cultures which is India. They seem destined to play only a secondary and supporting role in any unification of human affairs that is achieved, not by reason of any inherent inferiority, but because they are debarred by their complicated mental barriers and divisions from any collective understanding of modern constructive ideas. These hundreds of millions also I see as people struggling in a net. At present none of their cultural movements displays an original line of its own that amounts even to a slight contribution to world reorganization. Vague aspirations to an obviously fictitious nationalism of an imitative parliamentary kind, sustained by non-co-operation, preferential trading and the fasts of Mr. Gandhi, point to anything but the coming city of mankind. Starving on the doorsteps of the ruler in the Gandhi fashion is a curiously unfair appeal to the ruler's decency. Directly it is used against anyone tough enough to say "Starve then, and be damned to you," it becomes ineffective.

There would be much to be said for an Indian nationalism based upon the idea of human brotherhood and the common future of mankind. If all these peoples can be fused, 'the whole world can be fused. But speaking generally Indian nationalism is no sort of synthesis; it is based on a common, understandable resentment at the British Imperial Government and on very little else. You cannot build a nation on a vanishing grievance. The old Raj is not going to last forever, and when it fades out the Hindu will still be wearing his caste marks and the Moslem slaughtering cattle at him in a derisive spirit.

A culture which said "We are ignorant and divided and condemned to a collective sterility by our ignorance, and we mean to reorganize our mental energy and stock our minds to play our proper part in human unity," would be a culture to respect. But even the Brahmo Sumaj, most liberal of Indian cultures, does not say that. It is universalist religiously, but it is not acutely educational. In India

there are numerous rich men, great industrialists, wealthy maharajas and the like, but it has still to dawn upon any of them that a great, growing, liberating mass of knowledge exists in the world beyond the present reach of any Indian, and that there must be scores and hundreds of thousands of fine brains, which need only educational emancipation and opportunity, laboratories, colleges, publication facilities, discussion with the rest of the world, to add a continually increasing Indian contribution to the ever-learning, ever-growing *World Brain*. In India now there must be a score of potential unrealized Royal Societies, so to speak, running about in loin-cloths and significant turbans and Gandhi caps and what not, running about at that lowly partisan level, and so running to waste.

The British ruling class has been unable to impose modern ideas upon India for the simple reason that it does not possess them itself. The indebtedness is the other way round. The British picked up the idea of caste from the Brahmins and gave very little in return. And other things they picked up. I do not know if anyone has ever made an estimate of the number of elderly gentlemen who return to Great Britain with gurus in tow, mysterious dodges for breathing down their spinal canals, Yoga and all that. They seem to be quite numerous. Man for man when it comes down to that sort of thing the Hindu is master.

What modernization may come into Indian thought and life is much more likely to arrive tediously and belatedly from the north as an adapted communist propaganda, a propaganda modified perhaps by contact with whatever modern Western science may have come in by, through and in spite of British influence from the south.

§ 21. — COMMUNISM AND RUSSIA

IT is difficult to say whether on the whole dogmatic communism is to be regarded as a disaster that has happened to the growing discovery of the rational world state or an unavoidable phase in that discovery. In the earlier half of the nineteenth century and especially in the years of recovery from that embolism called Napoleon, there was a great bandying about of creative and pseudo-creative ideas, humanisms, varieties of socialisms, hand-specimen Socialist experiments, New Lanarks, Oneidas, Brook Farms. In all of them there was a subconscious feeling that something was still wanting, the ideas were incomplete. Such a phase of the collective mind is very distressful to impatient intelligences. They feel that nothing is being achieved; they want to "fix something and get on with it." At this pace, they feel, we shall get nowhere.

So they get into the ditch.

Apt to the demands of such eager spirits came Marx. He was a man of vast intellectual ambitions, emulous of Darwin and Adam Smith. He seized upon that economic aspect of life which the political revolution had ignored, and he hung on to that. The "capitalist system," which was his misnomer for privately owned capitalism, had to be abolished and then social justice would ensue. He proclaimed the materialistic conception of history and the class war as the only practicable way to social justice.

Neither Adam Smith nor Darwin, with whom he was obviously disposed to put himself in competition, betrayed any sense of finality in his thought nor any ambition for leadership. They contributed and passed on, according to the new scientific morality. But Marx was of a more primitive and more immediately practical type of intelligence. He was for conclusive formulation, for dogma and an energetic revolutionary effort according to that dogma. He evoked a vigorous, rigid-spirited movement for the destruction of "capitalism" by an insurrectionary class war. He had no ideas, and he was probably incapable of producing ideas, about the peace that should succeed victory in the class war. It never entered his head that a powerful new organization of knowledge and will would be required to direct an

emancipated world system. He was, to be plain about it, too lazy-minded. He invented a phantom, more insubstantial than the Holy Ghost, the proletariat. The ever-blessed proletariat would see to it all.

The curious may read about that proletariat, and what is and what is not the dictatorship of the proletariat, and when the Party is the dictatorship and when it is not, and how the peasant comes in, in Joseph Stalin's *Leninism*. It is the Athanasian Creed of socialism.

But these complications arose later, and at first the proletariat *sans phrase* sufficed. That the proletariat would solve everything with the hammer of Thor and the sickle of Rhea Cybele was an all too attractive doctrine for eager minds, and the communist movement, in perfect unison, contemned and despised the intricate and difficult business of foresight as "utopianism," and scientific criticism as a sinful want of faith. And so at last when czarism and private ownership of land and capital did collapse in Russia, and that great country was thrown into the hands of the communist leaders, they were totally unprepared with any conceptions of a better organization of affairs.

The released Russia of October 1917 found itself wildly experimental. It had to reorganize a great community fallen into chaos, and it had only scraps of suggestion of how to set about it. Upon Lenin fell the immense task of rationalizing Marxism and getting it to work.

In § 6 the question "What is democracy?" is asked and answered, and it is shown that the life of a human being can be full and free only if it is politically, economically and mentally liberated; that is to say when it is living in a state of political equality, socialism and universal adequate education. Without that much realization, liberty, equality and fraternity are mere words. Marx and his Communist Party never fully grasped the third, the educational condition. How to direct? how to keep direction?: these were questions they never answered. They filled in the gap in their doctrines with that sprawling, muscular divinity with the 'hammer and sickle, who is in truth hardly more real than those symbolic Hindu gods with countless arms and extra parts who puzzle the realistic Western mind. Believe in Him, said they.

In practice the Russian Communists were less elusive than their

creed. If they fudged a pseudo-God, in order to get on with their revolution, they were still acutely responsive to modern democratic ideas. They set themselves with considerable energy and success to liquidate the illiteracy of the common people, but unfortunately they did not go on with the harder task of educating themselves. They did not realize the need for that Instead they suppressed disturbing discussion. They are today blinkered and boxed-in to an ideology as definitely restricted, within its wider limits, as that of the orthodox Jews, the British oligarchy, the Roman Catholic hierarchy or the Chinese patriots we have discussed in preceding sections.

The Russian spectacle for the last twenty years has played an immense part in the thought and imagination of the young everywhere. When everything that can be said has been said against it, it still seems to be ahead of the rest of the world in its progress towards the practical realization of the complete democratic idea. Whether it will go on and keep that lead is quite another matter, but the improvement not merely in the material circumstances but in the spirit of the common people is beyond dispute. They were servile and now they are proud. They have a wholesome conceit that the world looks to them. That has been done at a price, yet nowhere else has anything been done to compare with it. America also has advanced in its ideas, as we shall note in the next section, but it started far ahead, five Centuries ahead, of Russia.

But Russia may have achieved this much progress less by virtue of the Communist Party than in spite of it. The Communist Party did no doubt bring the spirit of revolutionary progress to Russia, but it was not in itself the spirit of revolutionary progress. It might well have been better prepared for the task, and it might have produced men of a finer caliber and greater magnanimity. The darkest shadow on the Russian outlook today is its failure to produce a constellation of first-rate men able to evoke its general intelligence and speak for it to the world. Like most countries today, Russia does not seem to be putting her best men foremost She does not know how to find them and use them. She goes on being clumsy. Russia is faltering and losing its imaginative appeal. Her inability to deal with her internal difficulties without a series of trials and executions, so presented as to be extraordinarily repugnant to the Western mind, and the open

and undignified bickering of Trotsky and Stalin, have done much to rob her of her once almost magical fascination for the undergraduate intelligence. That intelligence is now shocked and puzzled. It may easily stampede in some new direction, and the real greatness of the new Russia may be forgotten altogether in its superficial littleness.

But how intolerable these ardent young Communists of the last fifteen years have been! What a rawness they have imparted to social and political discussion, all the world over! How unrighteously is the reasonable man tempted to rejoice at this present deflation of noisy, juvenile leftism! It is rare for the normal human being to attain to an adult mental independence before thirty, and it is rare for it to refrain from the vehement expression of opinions after eighteen. Satan finds some mischief still for idle youth to do. Its natural instinct is to rebel against its parents and the parental generation, which has brought it into the world for no end it finds explicable, and, since it is still much too timid intellectually to act alone, its disposition is to go over, lock, stock and barrel, to the organization in flattest repudiation of the flaccid home atmosphere. The good pagan's daughter goes Catholic and the Catholic's son goes Communist. And there they stick. They have made their little act of assertion, but they must still have the comforting feeling of something not themselves, something built up authoritatively, to which they can cling. The boy who runs away from home likes to get on to a ship and give himself up to that. If not, he usually comes home again.

It is one of the primary difficulties of this creature *Homo sapiens* that it grows up, so far as bodily and willful energy goes, twenty years before its mind has ripened enough for it to think and act alone. The young want to do vigorous and effective things by eighteen, while their mental unripeness obliges them still to seek authority for the things they want to do. They cannot wait. They will respond to nearly anything that lets their energy loose, as a kitten will pursue a cork on a string. There we have the common clue to the storming young Nazi, the Irish patriot, the Spanish Anarchist Syndicalist, the bomb-throwing Zionist, the Shinto militarist, the gangster, the Ku Klux Klansman. They are all forms imposed upon and accepted by that youthful surplus which is the imperative problem of our species, which will overstrain and wreck every social system until its

insurgent need to be used is anticipated and satisfied. It has been made clear how this mental exuberance has been allayed in the past by wars and migrations, and why it is that these natural reliefs are no longer sufficient for the magnified destructive forces of the new time.

In the last three years in Britain there have been three magnetic movements with an unaccountable attraction for unemployed vitality. Fascism, a fourth possibility, was happily made repellently ridiculous for our sons in the person of Sir Oswald Mosley, but the impressionable young men who did not succumb to the God-guided woosh of Buchmanism or the high-toned Anglo-Catholicism of T.S. Eliot, fell very readily to the worship of the heroic Hammer-and-Sickle-God. They joined the Party, surrendered themselves to tasks and disciplines and strategies. They felt they had the revolution and all Russia behind them. How they maddened their serious elders, those undergraduates holding on without thought or question to the Party and being as rude as they knew how to critical liberalism, for all the world like naughty children holding on to nurse's apron strings and putting out their tongues at the grown-up passers-by!

That particular adhesion seems to be drawing to an end after the political and intellectual waste of a generation of silly, gallant young lives. They exaggerated the perfection and finality of Soviet Russia. Some have died for that faith. Now the drift is all against the present regime, and instead of searching criticism we are likely to have partisan condemnation. Yet there is a strong case for the existing regime in Russia.

There, there has been and there is still a sustained, widespread and honest effort to build up a new social and economic order. It is only necessary to contrast the Russian drive with the relative ineffectiveness of the Kuomintang. In Russia "revolution" still means, for millions of minds, a new human beginning. In no other community is that idea of a new beginning so manifestly at work. It had had to work against bad social traditions and a widespread defensive subtlety and disingenuousness, with a people to whom punctuality and precision were strange ideas. Chekhov lived and died before the war, but his stories are saturated with the distress felt by a man with a modern scientific training, at the all too human indiscipline of the land he loved. The Bolsheviks, planless

themselves, as we have seen, had to take over that world, shattered, impoverished, chaotic, invaded from every direction, and make a working system of it, some sort of new order, however rough and clumsy, or perish. And they have made a new order, rough and clumsy still perhaps in many aspects, but holding together, really holding together, and not nearly so rough and clumsy as it might have been.

I have visited Russia thrice, in 1914, in 1920 and in 1934, I have had long talks with Lenin and Stalin, I have some well-informed and variously orientated Russian friends, and I have read a library full of books about Russia, pro and con, Like most of the world, I was amazed at those strange public trials and the killing-off of, among others, a majority of the original revolutionaries. And I think that of all my witnesses, I have learnt most from an American mining engineer, Mr. J.D. Littlepage, who wrote a book called *In Search Of Soviet Gold*.

There never was a writer so free from the taint of political prepossessions. He is no sort of *ist* or *crat* at all. But he likes mining to be done properly and shipshape, no fudging, no shirking, no waste, no stealing, no trickery. You have to come down heavily on that sort of thing. He thinks vigorously within *his* blinkers (excellent blinkers) of honesty and high efficiency. And he tells the story of how he was engaged to revive and reorganize the Siberian mines, copper and other minerals as well as gold. He tells pretty convincingly — and it is illuminating — how Stalin was moved to start this revival, and of all the difficulties and complications of the task. At the Littlepage touch the vast, sinister phantoms of Trotskyite conspiracies and organized capitalist sabotage vanish from the scene, the confessions of the accused join the confessions of sorcerers during the witch mania, and we see the human reality of incompetent men trying to cover up the mess they are making of things, of wrongfully-appointed men holding on to their jobs by trick and subterfuge, of hates and jealousies, of elaborate misrepresentations to save the face of groups involved in a common failure, of the manufacture of countervailing evidence, counter-accusations, resort to influence in high quarters. These are the ways of imperfect, inadequately watched men everywhere. The allied generals on the

western front during the great war behaved similarly, though unhappily there was nobody to shoot them. And at the last come the confessions, to put a consistent face on the untellable tale of fudging and muddle-headness. Better persuade yourself you are a consistent conspirator than a self-protective fumbler, a snake rather than a worm.

Littlepage makes you understand not only the slackness of the country and the disappointing output, but also the perplexity at the head of things, the inability to get sound information and to discriminate between merit and speciousness. The head does not know whom to believe, grows suspicious and incalculable. The impulse of most of us when we cannot hit accurately is to hit hard. The shootings become understandable; take on the quality of necessity. After Little-page you can re-read the reports of those trials and begin to understand them. The wonder of Russia is that nevertheless so much has been done.

I write with prejudice about communism, but it is not prejudice on its behalf. I have made it clear, I think, how intensely I detest Karl Marx and how greatly my mind has been irritated by the narrowly dogmatic communism of the young. Yet I am forced to a recognition of the real advance Russia has made since the revolution, not merely in material things. Will it go on? What for us is the significance of the new phase into which Russia is now passing?

The mass of the new Russia still seems in its crude way to be revolutionary, in the best, the creative sense of the word. The great raw organism is still moving forward. But there is manifestly something wrong about the head of it. A great number of disillusioned young men in the Western world are saying now that it is Stalin who is to blame and proclaiming themselves Trotskyites. But the matter goes deeper than that. It is not really a personal matter. The organization at the head of things must be radically wrong to be put out of gear by a mere personal feud. It must be so framed as to eliminate good types of mind and promote mediocrities. Lenin was a first-quality man, Litvinov is a much abler man than the run of diplomatists; apart from that the personalities directing Russian affairs vary from honest ordinary to intricately mean. It is preposterous to suppose that they are the pick of that Russian

intelligence which has produced men like Mendeleev, Mechnikov, Pavlov, Pushkin, Maxim Gorky....

The headquarters organization upon the shoulders of the Russian giant is, to be plain about it, a head without a forehead; it has a brain that lacks anything more than a rudimentary cerebrum. Russia, with an area of over eight million square miles and a gross population of one hundred and sixty-six million people, is being run by a directorate as antique and rudimentary in its nature as some small *pronunciamento* South American Republic or the tyranny of an ancient Greek city state. It has no knowledge organization at all. It has no powers of reflection. It has only the Communist Party — which is dogmatic ignorance. It is a giant — I speak of social structure and not of persons — with the head of a newt.

That is the absurd situation of Russia. Only, unhappily, nobody seems to consider it absurd. The country is still living on the mental impetus of Lenin and the democratic socialism of the nineteenth century. When that impetus is spent it will have nothing to fall back upon but die preposterous pretensions of personal government.

It is this absence of a collective cerebrum that has made the present feud of the Stalinists and the Trotskyites possible. Trotsky I have never met, but he seems to have a considerable personal vanity; Stalin I liked when I talked to him; I did not think he had an overwhelming intelligence, but I thought he was honest and strong and human. I have been disillusioned about him mainly by those foolish films of personal propaganda he has allowed to be made, *Lenin In October*, for example. Therein Trotsky is elaborately belittled and Stalin made the all-wise hero of the story. He stands over Lenin. Modestly but firmly he indicates the strategic points in the map and tells him what to do. Apparently he is trying to distort the whole history of the revolution for his personal glorification.

Why do these two men behave in this way? Apparently they are posing for posterity. That was something Lenin never did. He was a man of the new order. Both Trotsky and Stalin are middle-aged and have very few years left now in which to do anything more for the world, and this is how they dissipate them. They are behaving as absurdly as Mussolini. Few human beings are adult before thirty-five and most remain puerile to the end. Do they not understand that even

if they are remembered they are — in the busy world ahead — certain to be misjudged? Nobody will have time to read whole books about them. One or another thing awaits these legends they are cherishing. If the world fails to readjust itself now, they will pass, with everything else that is human, into oblivion; and if it does readjust itself to its new occasions, then so far as they are remembered at all, they will be taken in hand by a more adult and motherly Clio and spanked and put in their places.

I am amazed at these egotisms and astonished at the complete inability of the Communist rank and file, out of Russia at any rate, to avoid taking sides. Either they take sides or they wander away from the idea of creative revolution altogether, so completely are they dependent on the behavior of their Great Men. This is infantile. The man of the new world order, if ever it is to be attained, must learn to go right on without leaders, just as he must learn to go right on without God.

What is happening to the body of Russia, obscured by this scuffle? The scuffle has so narrowed-down to personalities that a great deal may be happening outside it. It may be that in this matter my wish is father to my thought, but at any rate I believe that a more or less complete restoration of intellectual liberty in Russia in the next few years is a quite possible thing. The Russian, who, like the Englishman or the American, has grown up in an atmosphere of less immediate militant stress, is not nearly so docile as the German. There is an ineradicable disposition to humor and laughter in these less controlled peoples. They are earlier adult. I cannot suppose that the Nazi regime would tolerate for a moment those popular stories by Michael Zoshchenko, which hold up the weaknesses and discomforts of the Soviet regime to the gayest ridicule. Laughter can dissolve prison bars; it can outflank prohibitions. Russian writers are beginning to take liberties.

The Russian mind is an insubordinate mind and an untidy one. This virtue and this vice may be two aspects of one quality. Russian thought lacks and needs the restraint of the more disciplined Western intelligence. It has that courage and irresponsibility which we associate with genius. A release of intellectual energy in Russia, corresponding with and responding to the appearance of a

reorganization of knowledge and collective purpose and judgment in the West, would have a vastly stimulating effect upon the thought and will of the entire world. It would be an event of major importance in the mental reorganization of mankind. And in the brightness of this new beginning it would hardly be observed that the Communist Party, the Comintern, too narrow, too insincerely dogmatic and "too clever by half," had unobtrusively disappeared, as I suppose that sooner or later it must do.*

* See R. Borkenau's *The Communist International* (1938), a history which is also an analysis.

§ 22. — AMERICAN MENTALITY

FINALLY, in this stocktaking of human forces, we come to the countries more directly affected by the American and French revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century, the countries in which, beyond the shadow of the British oligarchy, radical and liberal and democratic ideas have had a maximum freedom of expression. Chief of these, and charged now, it would seem, with the main burthen of their common destiny, is that third great mass of human beings with any sort of solidarity, the United States of America, China, Russia, North America; these vast countries make more than a third and nearly a half of humanity; they occupy most of the north temperate zone, which is the zone of maximum human energy, and with the British Empire they constitute the greater part of mankind. They are all fermenting with change. And the most freespoken, active, perplexing and various of all these great vats of destiny is the United States.

The United States is of primary significance in world affairs for a number of reasons. In the first place its population is almost entirely literate, that is to say, it can read. How it reads and what it reads is another matter. There are no cheap books in America such as there are in Great Britain and France; most books worth reading can be got in England for sixpence, while in America they cost from ten times as much upward; and outside a limited world even prosperous people hear very little of any but those best sellers which follow each other like epidemics across the continent. But the newspaper Sunday supplements and the public libraries largely compensate for these present imperfections of the book supply. So the American public as a whole, over the vast areas it covers, is simultaneously accessible, if need be, to new ideas, and that accessibility is greatly enhanced by the nation-wide distribution of the cinema and the radio. And next it has a tradition of free discussion. The American says what he thinks, and even when he doesn't think he is apt to say it. You can always contradict him, and there is no handicap to help any opinion to win.

Education is in the hands of the forty-eight state governments of the Union, and varies widely in its standards and organization from

state to state; schools, colleges and universities are scattered abundantly over the land; they range from sheer imposture upward, and the best of them are as good as or better than anything else in the world. There are great endowments for education and for educational enterprises. There are probably more highly educated people in the United States than in any other single country whatever, and when it comes to what we may call the half-educated, people whose minds, already loosely furnished, could easily be quickened, there is no comparison. In one or two backward states, modern scientific teaching — of evolution, for examples — is prohibited in the state schools, and discriminatory obstacles are put in the way of the education of colored people. These are exceptions to a general freedom. The intellectual possibilities of this vast country are unlikely to be seriously threatened by invasion, extreme war stresses or civil convulsions for some time. They are threatened just enough to stimulate them and prevent their becoming lethargic.

Like all the rest of the world, the Union has felt the impact of the new conditions of human life, the progressive abolition of distance, the immense increase of material power and the ensuing dislocations of economic and social order, but less confusedly and with more time and elbow-room for consideration than any other country. It has been able to look and see; it has been able to think more plainly about the change that has come upon us all. It has only realized in the last decade that it has an accumulating surplus of unemployed.

There is a vast elementariness about the past hundred and fifty years in America. It is as if social and political life in the United States was simplified and made plain for demonstration purposes to all the rest of the world. We have there in unqualified contrast the East and the West, the North and the South, White and Black; no petty nationalisms, no traditional hatreds, no language difficulties, no localized religions obscure the broad issues. The War of Independence left the country a democracy, democracy at its first stage, the state of political equality and individual liberty. The extension of the democratic idea to include socialism, educational equality and universally accessible information, which we have traced in § 6, scarcely affected America until the close of the nineteenth century. Throughout all that century she worked out the

possibilities for good and evil of a hard individualistic democracy. The Civil War, though it arose out of a number of economic and political stresses, simplified out at last, to a logical completion of the equalitarian idea by the abolition of slavery and the enfranchisement of the liberated slaves.

Life throughout that period resolved itself into a scramble for wealth. The whole nation thought dollars, talked dollars. For several generations it was a distinctly exhilarating scramble. There were so much unexploited land, such reserves of natural wealth available, that it was possible to accumulate vast fortunes and still find fresh employment for everyone who chose to work. After the civil war came a great development and organization of industry. American invention, American enterprise, soon led the world in the expansion of big business and the mechanization of life. For a time it was not realized that this march of Triumphant Democracy* was essentially the rape of virgin resources that could never be replaced. Triumphant Democracy poured across the continent, destroying the forests and so changing the climate for the worse, ploughing up pasture that presently became sandy desert, exterminating animal species, using up coal, oil, mineral wealth as though there was no end to any of these things.

* Andrew Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy* (1886).

It was only as the "Wonderful Century" drew to its end, that the immensity and the menace of Waste dawned upon people's minds. Everyone was so keen to get dollars that many of them forgot to get children, but the supply of labor for all that vast ploughing-up, cutting-down and tearing-out was sustained by a tremendous immigration. In 1906 a million immigrants poured into America, mostly people who knew no English and had a far lower standard of life than the native worker. They were divided among themselves at first by their special ignorances; they supplied a far more manageable type of labor from the point of view of the exploiting employer.*

* See my *The Future In America* (1906); "Two Studies in Disappointment."

The home-grown strain hoped to save money, get on, escape from employment, and so it was slow to develop any class solidarity until it realized that every door to hopeful competition was being closed

upon it. Labor legislation in America therefore fell far behind that of Great Britain. Not only was the immediate real wealth of America being turned to dollars; a rapid deterioration of the common life was also going on. Very reluctantly would America admit that the great uprush was over. Theodore Roosevelt's campaign for Conservation was the first practical recognition in America that Americanism had gone too far.

This is not a history, but a survey of existing possibilities, and we will say nothing here of the events that exalted and depressed American life for the next third of a century, the war, the boom, the collapse, until we come to that nationwide realization of crisis and panic that brought Franklin Roosevelt in as the savior of a staggering social system.

Sometimes a work of art can do more to present reality than a whole library of reports and statistics, and that tremendous genius, John Steinbeck, in his *Grapes Of Wrath* (1939), has given an unforgettable picture of the last stage in that process of material and moral destruction and disillusionment with which the story of sturdy individualism in America concludes. He gives it all, from the exhausted soil dribbling down to dust, to the broken pride, the hopeless revolt and the black despair of the human victims, without rhetoric, without argument, but with an irresistible effect of fundamental truth.

The crisis discovered a great man in Franklin Roosevelt. As I have written elsewhere,* he is a "patrician" rather in the vein of Lord Grey and Arthur Balfour than a typical American politician. He is rich and his peculiar health makes him float rather above the level of everyday temptations.

* *Experiment in Autobiography*, Chapter IX, § 9, and *World Brain*, The Fall in America, 1937.

He has the boldness of imagination needed to meet the challenges of the time, but he has the great gentleman's disposition to look to subordinates for the detailed execution of his designs. None too soon he has carried America forward to the second stage of democratic realization. His New Deal involves such collective controls of the national business that it would be absurd to call it anything but socialism, were it not for a prejudice lingering on from the old

individualist days against that word.

At the beginning there was much talk of the Brain Trust, which he had gathered about him to realize the vast changeover of American affairs he had in hand. I was tremendously excited by this Brain Trust idea, and I went off to America, as my *Experiment In Autobiography* relates, to have a good look at it. He had imagined that the universities could and would give him men of exhaustive knowledge and capacity in sufficient amount to create, on the spur of the moment, a civil service competent to meet the huge demands of this great transition he was so gallantly attempting. These Brain Trusters were what the universities produced for him. My wits were not quick enough to size them up at once. They seemed to be an extremely interesting and miscellaneous set of men, but I had a feeling from the outset that they were not going to justify the President's expectations. He was under an easy delusion about the American universities. He thought they were untapped reservoirs of wisdom. They are not. They were quite unable to give him the knowledge, understanding and responsive imaginations necessary to convert his magnificent gestures of social and economic reconstruction into a working reality.

I went, a traveling note of interrogation, from him to Stalin, because I realized that the same insufficiency of mental resources and support which was baffling the American President, the lack of any adequate mass and structure of administrative knowledge in the state, must also be crippling the socialist thrust in Russia. Was Russia meeting or attempting to meet that difficulty? In some way of its own? And in Russia I found Gorky in a dream of Russia's greatness, unfolding the plans of non-existent universities to my incredulous eyes, and nothing else but intolerant dogmatists and intriguing commissars.

Both Roosevelt and Stalin were attempting to produce a huge, modern, scientifically organized, socialist state, the one out of a warning crisis and the other out of a chaos, and the lack of a brain organization to give that state consciousness and coherence was a difference not in nature, but degree.

The brain organization of the United States is not up to its new job. It needs to be revised, expanded, turned round to face the future.

I have compared the head structure of the Russian giant to the brain of a newt. To carry on the biological analogy, the knowledge and will structures of the United States seem, to be somewhere about the level of a horse. It has a cerebrum all right; it remembers almost too well within a limited range, it shies at shadows, stampedes very readily, and has no particular zeal for learning new things. Something very much better than that is demanded.

For the great, closely-organized, human community that socialism contemplates, a World Brain is essential The third aspect of a complete democracy is a tremendous educational expansion, that not only opens the way to the White House to Everyman but gives him the necessary mental equipment, if he can use it, to get there. Such an educational organization has been latent in America for a century and a half. The fathers of the Republic were not unmindful of it. In every state, land was set aside to supply the endowment for a state university, and sometimes that turned out well, and sometimes it did not. In addition, there were older endowments of the British type, and fresh benefactions expanded these and added to their number. The whole community was concentrated upon that fascinating dollar hunt, but when one of the winners felt public-spirited and generous, it seemed a fine thing to him to get some more knowledge and education for the people. And being essentially a business man, he went and bought the stuff; he bought the best in the market; and it did not occur to him — and why should it? — that America might be in need of something at least as new and distinctive of her as the great business plants and concentrations that he and his fellow-magnates were, with such vivid immediate success and such ultimate bad consequences, making. So that the extensive and complicated university system of America remained essentially European, first upon the British pattern and then with an increasing German influence. To this day it clings to the medieval cap and gown, the degree-giving and medieval lecturing of the old world.

Dollar preoccupation was almost as effective in leaving unchallenged the ascendancy of Europe and European patterns in the world of thought and artistic creation. Boston, which had played a vigorous part in British intellectual life in colonial days, resented this acceptance of inferiority, but until well into the latter quarter of the

nineteenth century the European ascendancy was tacitly admitted in the rest of America. Lowell might complain of a "certain air of condescension" in the visiting English of his time. This air of condescension had this much justification that in many strata of the American world it was accepted. There were insurgent spirits and many protests indeed, but the War of Independence only reached the realm of literary criticism towards the turn of the century, and then it came as a great shock to the British writers of my generation, who had taken the American tribute for granted. Today no young American writer would dream of sedulously imitating or indeed resembling a British model. And in many fields of thought, the new history and sociological speculation for example, individual minds broke into distinctive American methods. Some thirty odd years ago the American climate, by way of a protest, killed all the cherished ivy on those red-bricked colleges, but it did nothing further in the matter. To this day the shape of the knowledge organization and education, and particularly of the higher education, remains in precisely the same state of picturesque headlessness and material ineffectiveness as the older, natural-grown, European disorder of institutions. The erection of facsimile buildings, Magdalen Tower in Chicago, for example, is merely the extreme expression of this reverential attitude.

The United States, let alone the world, cannot carry on now with an unorganized mentality, a scattered higher education that has no power over the press or the common schools or political consciences. It produces no adequate civil service, no well-informed and easily co-operative administrators. It cannot compass any of the major problems before the nation. The resort of the undergraduate world to the realities of the playing fields is a sure indication of the un-attractiveness of its array of subjects. They yell. Every university has a yell. And well may they yell and go wild and frantic in their stadiums, for their lives and their powers are being largely wasted.

Yet it is in America now that the clearest hope for a beginning of that World Brain resides. A country habituated to the rapid development of vast commercial and industrial enterprises must surely be capable of attempting an intellectual and educational enterprise beyond the imagination of men bred in smaller and more

tradition-ridden communities. So far it has been impossible to awaken any influential and resourceful people to this patent, if unprecedented necessity. It is unhappily so novel that they seem afraid to realize how obvious it is and unavoidable. There is no time to lose about it. It is hard to guess what may happen when this abnormal phase of personal government by one inspired, insufficiently able man of genius comes to an end. There is no one to replace him and nothing to replace him. Nothing is being prepared. America may relapse in quite a little time into something as acephalous and incalculable as Russia.

And so I return to my refrain: "We need a World Brain," and to my insistence that the creation of a greater mental superstructure to reorient the mind of the world is an entirely practicable proposal.

At this point I imagine an angry critic interrupts. He has been skimming through this book — he wouldn't deign to read it or mark the course of its argument — looking for occasion for offense. And now he cries: "Who are you, Mr. Know-all, to tell us that all these splendid institutions. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Chicago, Johns Hopkins and a multitude of others, and abroad Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, London, Coimbra, Upsala, Tokio — one could count a thousand galaxies of clustering colleges and dreaming spires — and all these wise and good men, thousands of them, men of eminent learning, men of distinguished character, doctors, teachers, investigators, scholars, not one who is not in every respect a far better man than yourself, that all together they amount to nothing! that this great constellation, this veritable shining skyful of gifts and powers is not sufficient for the needs of the world today! that altogether it amounts to no more, scale for scale — what did you say? — than the brain of a horse! that it needs something far more powerful, some far vaster embodiment of knowledge and purpose — some queer fad of yours?"

To which I answer: What are they doing now? So far from lighting the world, the skies are so overcast that these starry constellations seem scarcely to be shining.

And far from being "Mr. Know-all," I am in helpless ignorance, in a sea of unconscious ignorance. There is one thing, and one thing only, I know, that you do not seem to know, and that is this — that

neither you nor I know enough nor know the little that we do know well enough, to meet the needs of the world's occasions. Unless we do something about this ignorance of ours, this universal blinkered ignorance, we shall be overwhelmed, we shall destroy one another.

If only some small fraction of the still considerable wealth and energy of America could be turned not merely to a campaign against the ignorance of others but against its own far more dangerous ignorance; if only this absolute necessity for an organized World Brain, a gigantic but still possible super-university, set above all these admirable but ineffective scattered foundations to utilize and consolidate them, if only that could fire the imagination of a few energetic spirits; then the whole outlook of the human species might still be changed.

There is a last possibility to consider in this survey. Some such appeal as I am making may presently gather force, attract a measure, but an insufficient measure, of support and not enough critical attention. The thing may be tried, the effort may be made, and, as people say, it may fall into the wrong hands. Instead of a living World Brain we may have a sham World Brain. The effort may be made. Money may be forthcoming; the demand may grow. Something to look like a world encyclopaedic organization may be brought into being, good enough to pacify most of the clamor, good enough for those people who say you cannot have everything at once — you must have a beginning. When embryonic tissue cannot build an organ it can still produce a cancer. We may have some large and plausible organization of platitudes, irrelevances and compromises, as adequate as an organization of knowledge as the old League of Nations was of world peace. There may be great academic comings and goings, ceremonies and solemn consecrations.

And at last something in the nature of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler and President Grover Whalen will appear enthroned, side by side, organizers of the World Brain triumphant, the World Brain of Tomorrow, brooding profoundly over the unmitigated destiny of mankind.*

* Cf. *The Columbia Encyclopedia*.

That may be. The history of most religions supports this possibility. There is nothing whatever between the stars and the

atoms to show why the end of *Homo sapiens* should not be absurd as well as tragic. The price of human salvation is eternal vigilance, incessant fearless criticism and unrestricted wit. How can one tell beforehand whether that price will be forthcoming? Without unrestrained free speech and irreverence, how can we defeat the universal human tendency to be satisfied with and tolerant towards plausible, pretentious things? There can be no rest, no tactful acquiescences, no mental toleration, no enfeebling politeness, in the *Kulturkampf* ahead, if man is to escape the evils that close in upon him.

In the design of this book three primary themes interlace and pursue and develop each other. There is first, that invention and science have completely altered the material environment of human life. Next, that the disruptive driving-force of an excess of bored and unemployed young men, which must in some manner find relief, will probably shatter human life altogether under the new conditions. And thirdly, that the existing mental organization of our species is entirely insufficient to control the present situation, which nevertheless might, with an adequate effort, be controlled. These are the Change of Scale theme, the Youth Pressure theme and the World Brain theme. The first two create the problem to which the third indicates the only possible solution.

About the role of those young men; its cardinal importance is still not recognized plainly by sociologists, historians and writers of contemporary history. In practice, however, it is plainly apprehended, and a very considerable amount of propaganda to capture the imagination of this vital stratum is carried on, and particularly by the more aggressive contemporary states. They pursue their co-nationals abroad, and make strenuous efforts to win over opinion in neutral states and bring local conditions into parallelism with their own. Nazi patterns are being studied in South Africa, for example, and we have noted the Fascist disposition of General Chiang Kai Shek. There is a great totalitarian propaganda, and now, awakening and responding to it, there is counter-propaganda.

On the whole the totalitarians make the more exciting and attractive promises and give the brooding young man the most immediate prospect of authorized masterful activities. Official Great

Britain pays the dole and encourages no presumptuous hopes. But in America and elsewhere there is a definitely anti-Fascist organization called the World Youth movement. This is a brotherhood and fundamentally a pacifist organization, a combination of a great number of more specialized associations, which attempts to bring the opinions and demands of the young for security from massacre and for employment, training, adult education, health culture and so forth, to bear upon governing and administrative bodies, and exert a critical, helpful and mediatory influence upon their social welfare work. It has the open support of both the President and his wife, more particularly of Mrs. Roosevelt, and it extends its liaison work into most of the so-called democracies — and Russia. Its activities vary with the country and occasion, but its general objective is to keep its young people busy with work of public importance, developing their capacity with use and experience. This World Youth movement claims to represent and affect the politico-social activities of a grand total of forty million adherents — under the age of thirty. Of these, twelve million are credited to Russia, though I cannot imagine how these figures are checked. It includes also a number of War Resisters whose ideas stop short at a repudiation of war. They will have nothing to do with war, but how human affairs are to be carried on in a warless world they do not trouble to think. Anyone else can bother about that, it seems, not they. They carry passive resistance to the pitch of know-nothingness. With a certain disapproval they offer us their bodies to be protected and their mouths to be fed.

I mention the World Youth Movement here, but I am quite unable to estimate its possibilities. It may fade out It may play an important and increasing role in the consolidation of a new world order.

The President and Mrs. Roosevelt, though they seem acutely aware that a developing Youth Movement may play an important part in the political drama of tomorrow, have neither of them betrayed any consciousness of the immense intellectual reorientation of which the world is now in such urgent need. Their circumstances have never directed their attention to that. I doubt if these two fine, active minds have ever inquired how it is they know what they know and think as they do. Nor have they ever thought of what they might

have been if they had grown up in an entirely different culture. They have the disposition of all politicians the world over to deal only with made opinion. They have never inquired how it is that opinion is made.

The only representative of Youth I have ever met who seemed to be aware that they were under-educated and improperly educated were some Burmans I met in Rangoon. “We are taught to be clerks in European-owned factories,” they complained. “What we want is technical knowledge and the science of our own country and circumstances so as to give us a clear conception of our role in the world....”

Now that was saying something.*

* For a fuller factual and more hopeful analysis of the American process see C.A. and Mary R. Beard’s *The Rise Of American Civilization* and *America In Midpassage*. A characteristic statement of American notions is *Speaking Of Change*, giving the ideas, attitudes and limitations of the late Edward A. Filene.

§23. — THREE FACTORS IN EVERYONE

WE have now exposed, in stripped outline, the primary factors in world affairs at the present time. In all these matters I have written with the complete freedom of a biologically trained and uncontrolled observer. Sir Arthur Salter, for example, in his *Security. Can We Retrieve It?* (1939), writes with all the discretions and reserves of a responsible politician who has to think and speak within the conventions that I, in my entire irresponsibility, can repudiate and kick aside. His thoughts are capped and gowned and mine are stark. He has an air of scarcely recognizing the realities I assemble. Nevertheless, his intelligence and integrity are manifestly forcing him towards a conception of public policy and the human future essentially the same as those I have stated concisely and brutally here.*

* See *Note 23A* for a quotation from his Epilogue.

The cultural summaries made in the preceding sections from § 11 onward may be offensive to many readers, if only because of their plainness, but they have been made with deliberation, they have been sustained when necessary by citation, and they will be much easier to run away from than to disprove. The political map is imposed upon these primary factors and more or less conditioned by them, very much as it is imposed upon a contoured physical map of the world. It entirely distorts the truth to attempt to reduce this complex struggle for existence to any left and right antagonism. At the maximum simplification we have still to distinguish three absolutely divergent trends in ourselves and in the world about us. Each of these trends has its variations, but these variations can be put very easily as species under one or other of these three genera. The divergence of the three main trends remains complete.

The first of these trends embodies the inveterate disposition of the normal man to accept his immediate circumstances as he finds them and make the best of them for himself. He sticks to the creed he is born to or to the alternative culture that gives him greater comfort. One might write, indeed, not merely the inveterate disposition of the normal man but the inveterate disposition of every normal living

thing. For the ordinary animal the loss of the sense of security releases panic, flight, violence — vehement and usually quite unintelligent efforts to recover the confidence that has slipped away. It is only in the human animal, and probably it is only in the last two or three thousand years that there has been any disposition to look forward, even during a fairly prosperous social phase, beyond the prescribed social round, not only to anticipate and arrest danger but also to enlarge, enrich and alter life. There is a faint uneasiness. "Man looks before and after." For the first time in mental history the quality of reality is shifted from the present or from a past-present system to the future. Already in this book (§ 9) the idea of a rotation of values in time has been developed in reference to European thought in the past half-century and with an auto-vivisection of one particular sample. Now we are able to envisage that forced rotation of the mind as a world phenomenon.

Everywhere we note a natural, retrospective conservatism, and everywhere we have minds reluctantly and inadequately coming about and taking up the constructive challenge of the age. Such are the two main antagonistic trends in the mental life of the world today. The third trend goes neither backward nor forward; it is moral abandon. It is equally regardless of the reactionary passive peace desire and of the creative peace impulse. The manifest relapse of the world towards lawless warfare and recklessly destructive violence is due to the successful blocking of the road to the latter peace by the resistance of those who desire the continuance of the former. The deadlock between conservative instinct" and creative readjustment releases the suppressed beast, the unqualified egotist in the species, from control. It can only be recalled to discipline for good and all by the complete triumph of the new peace over the old.

This triangular struggle is going on now not only in the human species as a whole but in every intelligent individual among us. It is the essential religious struggle of the time. In every one of us there is the disposition to acquiesce in the dear, familiar values, faith, creed, patriotism, culture, amidst which we began. In every one there stirs the protest against, a fatuous surrender to things plainly unstable and unsound; the protest and the creative desire even at the price of personal loss and injury. Moments come when we feel that we "must

speak out." And there is the ever-recalcitrant egotism which lies in wait for every phase of perplexity, inducing us to abuse every confidence put in us, to snatch the profit and pleasure and personal glorification that offer themselves, so that even leadership turns insensibly into a clamor for precedence, a jealous tyranny and the betrayal of all it set out to serve.

So it is we are all constituted. "Let him who thinketh he stand, take heed lest he fall."

§ 24. — SUMMARY

THERE is no creed, no way of living left in the world at all, that really meets the needs of the time.

When we come to look at them coolly and dispassionately, all the main religions, patriotic, moral and customary systems in which human beings are sheltering today, appear to be in a state of jostling and mutually destructive movement, like the houses and palaces and other buildings of some vast, sprawling city overtaken by a landslide. To the very last moment, in spite of falling rafters and bulging walls, men and women cling to the houses in which they were born and to the ways to which they have grown accustomed. At the most they scuttle into the house opposite or the house next door. They accuse each other of straining the partitions, overtaxing the material; they attack the people over the way for secret mining operations. They cannot believe such stresses can continue. The city is still sound enough, they say, if it is not too severely tried. At any pause in the wreckage they say "What did I tell you? It's all over. Now we can feel safe again," and when at last they realize the inevitability and universality of disaster, most of them have become too frantic to entertain the bare possibility of one supreme engineering effort that might yet intercept those seeping waters that have released the whole mountainside to destruction.

Such a salvaging of the species is still just possible. That is as much as the most hopeful mind can say.

§ 25. — IMPOSSIBILITY OF UTOPIANISM

IN a previous section (§ 10) I have given my reasons for and against believing that this creative world peace I have shown to be possible, will be achieved in time to save our species from disaster. I fluctuate, I admit, between at the best a cautious and qualified optimism and my persuasion of swiftly advancing, irretrievable disaster. Now let me assemble the probable experiences before our children in the event of such a conclusive frustration of democratic and progressive hope.

This is a much easier task than an attempt to forecast a progressive triumph. Upon that it would be possible to speculate only in the most general terms. What the human intelligence, no longer hag-rid, released from that abject fear of change that has restrained it through the ages, what the released and implemented creative imagination of thousands of millions of free and happily active individuals might achieve, is beyond any anticipating. At the utmost we can produce words like vacant frames and empty showcases, to indicate that undelivered wealth. We can talk of unhampered and unhurrying swiftness of realization, of universal variety, of abundance and balanced beauty. We are forced to take refuge as St. Paul did, when he evaded the greedy materialism of those who demanded a bodily resurrection from him, in "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive"....

It is impossible to foretell what the liberated human mind may produce, but at least we can foretell one certain reaction to what is given here. There are those who cling with an obstinate willfulness to the persuasion that a unified world must be a uniform and stagnating world. It is ridiculous, but they manage to believe it. "Horrible monotony," they say, "stress and servitude. Bolshevik tyranny. Prigs' Paradise," and nothing will dissuade them.*

* See, for example, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

Many, I am persuaded, feel an intense jealousy of the possibility of a state of affairs better and happier than their own. It is an intolerable thought for the greedier sort of mind that there should be any possible life finer than the one they live, a finer life that they will

never share and which indeed they would be incapable of sharing. Their reaction to all forecasts and Utopias, possible or impossible, is self-protective hatred. They interrupt; they leap out with "That wouldn't suit me!" As indeed it would not. How inevitable is that uncomfortable, protesting laugh: "I'm glad I shan't have to live in this dreadful, tidied-up, drab, *ordered* world of yours."

The congratulations are mutual. I won't even ask you, Madam, to read in your newspaper between the social and the sporting columns and mark how brightly and swiftly you and your kind drive down towards your destiny.

On the other hand, mankind in defeat and decadence involves no great probabilities of mental novelty. There is nothing to alarm your self- complacency in that. It is the world we live in now, only a little farther on and a little more so. We need not speculate outside the traditional, limited, human stuff, that dear old "unchanging human nature" of the past twenty or thirty thousand years. And to that we will now apply ourselves.

§ 26. — DECADENT WORLD

IT was becoming evident to everyone that the present state of affairs could not continue. The greater part of mankind was living in the immediate fear of sudden, undeclared war. At any time, by night or day, with less than an hour's notice, the screaming sirens and the high explosive and incendiary bombs were expected to burst about us. Every other occupation was subordinated to the ill-conceived exigencies of air-raid precautions, and an ever-increasing proportion of our human and material resources was pouring into military preparations. Almost every intelligent human being and every township and community in Eurasia was in a state of mental tension which was rapidly approaching the breaking-point. Suicides were increasing. Lucid thinking became offensive and intolerable. People attacked and persecuted one another on flimsy excuses. Because of the limited and distorted idea systems in which they are living, they were, as we have seen in §§ 11 to 22, incapable of setting about the necessary readjustments of relationship. We have dismissed any such outbreak of sanity, therefore, as improbable. There is no basis on which it can start. There will be no world unification, because our species is too distraught and divided for anything of the sort.

What seems much more likely is a lapse into actual warfare, red war, on a planetary scale. This will not be a clearly conceived war carried out with the intention of establishing a world peace. Governments will pretend it is that, but fundamentally it will be a fit of frantic violence with no rational objective whatever. The first offensive was just as likely to come from the so-called "democratic" as from the "dictator" side.

As we have shown quite clearly by an appeal to manifest facts, the threefold forces making for conflict are to be found busily active in every existing human community — the evil patriotic and religious traditions, the horribly magnified weapons, the relative excess of unemployed young men — but the states where the pressure of these forces, because they were most pent up, has produced its maximum effect in menace and belligerent gestures, will be marked as the aggressor states. They will be assailed by a loose alliance of

incongruous countries animated by the diverse motive systems we have scrutinized, and agreed only upon the need of suppressing these desperado nations. The ensuing war is likely to be briefer but far more violently destructive than the previous world war, because while that war began at a level of equipment which permitted a steady increase in the supply of munitions almost to the end when the losers collapsed through material and moral exhaustion, the combatants this time start from the beginning at something like a maximum of armament, and will reach the breaking-point much earlier. Staying power will decide the formal victory, which is less likely to be decisive even than the surrender of the eleventh of November, 1918.

The material and moral destruction of the actual warfare will certainly be enormous. The population stratum of military age will be largely killed, mutilated, poisoned or mentally unbalanced, and after it, will come a generation or so, which has been more and more undernourished, under-educated, demoralized and mentally distorted, as the concentration upon preparation (guns for butter) and the actual stress, noise and disorder of the conflict, have made a normal growth impossible for them. Vast resources of power will have been wasted for good and all, and the land and the sea bottom will be littered with smashed-up aeroplanes, shattered tanks, twisted railway trucks, burnt-out aerodromes and a great abundance of sunken ships and stores. Exoduses of population hardly less frightful than battle routs will have dislocated all sanitary balances, and famine and its follower, pestilence, will have swept the world. Even the influenza epidemic which followed the previous Great War killed more people than were actually slain in battle. This time the sanitary disorganization will certainly be much greater and the possibilities of morbid infections far more various. Probably there will be a deliberate spraying of disease germs to assist this, more natural mischief. There will have been much gratuitous bombing of cities. There will have been a great burning and smashing-up of human habitations which no one will have had energy to replace, and such a destruction of beautiful buildings, works of art and irreplaceable loveliness of all sorts, as will make the feats of the Huns and Vandals seem mere boyish mischief. All that lies plainly ahead.

And when at last one side admits defeat, and peace is proclaimed upon the world battlefield, what will be the situation? The defeated will be treated as the incurably guilty parties. If that were so, if there were incurably malignant peoples, then the wholesome thing to do would be to massacre them carefully and completely. Mankind will balk at that.

Instead of any such biologically conclusive settlement, there will be, once again, a punitive peace. The victors, to the best of their ability, will make the losers pay. The losers will be quite unable to pay. Further punitive measures will then become necessary. Modern war is a very impartial process, and the victors will probably have suffered quite as much and even more material and social devastation than the vanquished. They will be in no mind for generosity. No country in the world, even those that have preserved a technical neutrality, alert under arms, will emerge from the storm at anything like the level of civilization at which it stands today. There will be less freedom of speech, less opportunity to speak freely, far more fear and far more danger of frantic mass impulses.

In §§ 11 to 22 there has been an attempt to estimate the general trend of the main idea systems of the world. Here we may recapitulate the conclusions to which that survey points. What is going on now?

A very considerable festering of minds is no doubt occurring. People arc reading and thinking feverishly but they are often thinking wrong and with an assisted wrong-headedness. Patriotic and religious teachings surround them, and subtle and insidiously mischievous suggestions. The arts of propaganda in enemy countries improve rapidly. There is no country in the world where enemies are not sowing tares with constantly increasing effectiveness. Every form of discontent is fomented with a skill and energy worthy of a better cause. The suggestions of desperate and destructive revolt that men may fear to whisper to their neighbors, will come to them from abroad.

We have seen that the break-up of the British Imperial system in face of a complex of insurrectionary movements, troubles on which the sun will never set, has a high degree of probability. The conflict of the new Nazi religion with Catholicism is plain and open, we have

studied it in the ingenuous speculations of Mr. Teeling, and beneath the surface of most of the established systems of today, some queer development of social dissent is latent. The present ebb of communism is no end to insurrectionary class war. It is muttering vaguely, it may be unorganized and criminal, but it will be none the less socially destructive. We have noted the waning charm of the Italian dictatorship and the lamentable tendency of original sin to emerge as murder and fanatical cruelty under the very shadow of obscurantist Christian teaching. Where Spanish and Portuguese are spoken the pronunciamento flourishes with undiminished vitality.

America has a transitory unity and stability under the protean aspects of the New Deal, but no one knows what will follow when the extremely personal direction of Franklin Roosevelt ceases. There may be a heavily financed drive to put back the New Deal and return to a hard-faced business individualism. Big business has used some rough methods in the past and may resort to still rougher methods again — in an atmosphere that has become much less tolerant of the old forms of firmness. Not without reason do Americans talk of their Bourbons. That once unorganized alien labor has become assimilated and unified and more capable of meeting pseudo-legal violence with extra-legal violence. The country that produced Franklin Roosevelt also produced at the same time Huey Long and an unprecedented regime of gangster terrorism. And in the same period came the revival and the suppression of the intimidations of the Ku Klux Klan. Things have a way of beginning in America, running large and rank, and then coming suddenly to an end. This applies to evil and hopeful things alike. Everything may occur in some part of the United States or another, and the country may still retain an apparent unity. With a strong personality the White House may concentrate the nation, as it were, into one mind; with a less vigorous head that federal unification relaxes and the continental expanse is revealed as a miscellany of divergent issues. War and Roosevelt might impose a temporary national personality upon the United States that would vanish again in a subsequent reaction, giving place to a state of affairs as incoherent and variegated as Europe. The apparent solidarity of the United States may be as personal as any dictatorship; it may be accidental and not essential.

The question of what will come after Roosevelt opens a vista of localized possibilities varying between dull conflict, boss rule and chaotic violence, and the corresponding question of what will come after Stalin opens up not a vista but darkness. We have weighed up the uncertainties of China and Japan, and there too there is no assurance of stability and many intimations of degenerative revolution. A Japanese collapse would probably disintegrate China again, for nothing but patriotism holds China together.

So we have left as the main factors in the settlement after the second world war, a patchwork of staggering governments ruling over a welter of steadily increasing social disorganization. The settlement after the next world war will be only a prelude to further conflict. Informal warfare will succeed the formal struggle. What else can happen? Victors and vanquished will go to pieces and rearrange themselves. There is no body of ideas in existence, no tradition or frame of a world law to which an appeal can be made, that can carry on the shattered, mentally and morally overstrained, but still heavily armed combatants to any sort of world synthesis. The seizures and pronunciamentos that followed the Treaty of Versailles will recur more abundantly and on a more sustained and uncontrollable scale.

Since any new synthesis is improbable, the names of the existing main political systems are likely to continue long after they have lost any real authority, just as the idea of the Empire prevailed among the barbarians in the Dark Ages. The Union Jack, the Swastika, the Cross, or the Stars and Stripes may still float over a thousand dissociated gangs and tribes, claiming its authority, just as the Roman Eagle survived as a legally dominating reality in man's imaginations, side by side with the Church, long after Rome was sacked.

Now it may be thought that so much political and social dissolution may mean an ebb of invention and a break-up of the industrial organizations that supply the destructive apparatus which is smashing up the existing order so rapidly and uncontrollably. The human process will go back, it may be fancied, to a mechanically feeble barbarism, and a new system of expanding states may finally reconstruct civilization. It will be the Dark Ages over again, a planetary instead of a merely European Dark Ages. *Homo sapiens*

will be given a second opportunity. There will be a return to primitive home-made weapons, non-mechanical transport, a new age if not of innocence yet of illiteracy, and slow, feeble and less lethal mischiefs will return to the world. But history never repeats itself, ecological processes are irreversible, and there are many considerations that make it improbable that the new barbarism which is coming upon us will have even a material resemblance to the barbarism of sixteen centuries ago. It will be much tougher, with a livelier and wickeder intelligence, and it will retain a far more destructive equipment.

Because it is proving impossible to assemble and organize knowledge and sane ideas for the establishment of a world civilization, it does not follow that knowledge already scattered about the earth will be destroyed. It may become generally inaccessible and secret, but it may continue available in workable fragments to a number of enterprising people, A vast store of metallurgical and industrial technique was completely lost with the downfall of the Roman Empire,* but then the record of principles and processes was very flimsy and vulnerable.

* Rendered rather vividly in George Gissing's *Veranilda*.

Many technical secrets were never written at all and none were printed. Even down to the past century that sort of thing went on; a number of the processes in Wedgwood's china factory, for example, were transmitted verbally from one worker to another. Some of the older men carried secrets with them to the grave, and an analytical chemist had to be called in and the processes laboriously rediscovered before the firm could go on producing its characteristic wares. That was a survival of old-world methods. Under such conditions the old techniques disappeared in a generation or so. But nowadays scientific and technical knowledge is embodied in so huge a number of printed and widely distributed publications, the body of people in contact with those records is so large and varied, that even in a world of deepening and extensive disorder, it will still be possible to assemble knots and groups of men capable of carrying on the production of most of the lethal devices now in use. Postal and railway organization may go to pieces, newspapers disappear, roads become impassable and gas supply, drainage, and public lighting

cease, because such things depend upon a widespread social co-operation, and still there may be radio transmission, aeroplanes and high explosives, which do not demand anything like the same general participation.

It does not follow that mechanisms and contrivances will disappear in reverse order to that in which they appeared. It may have taken long years of research and the contribution of thousands of scientific workers to discover an explosive or a poison, but when that has been attained only a recipe and material are needed for its production. It has become a part of "our human heritage."

This is evident for example in the steady increase of bomb-making and bomb-throwing in the world. It is a growing feature of the normal social life. Every morning now we read in our newspapers of the young braves of the Irish Republican Army throwing their cheap but effective bombs in Great Britain, the Jew boys and the Arab boys bomb each other with ever-increasing zeal and bloodier results, bomb outrages comment on the new regime in Spain, they multiply in India, in the occupied areas of China. In a world of deepening misunderstandings and grievances, there is no reason to doubt that they will become as common as road accidents and as little thought of, a part of the normal give and take of politics. People will harden their hearts to their consequences until the bomb comes to themselves, and then their enlightenment will be too late.

The world emerging from the next great war, then, will be a tougher world, more disunited than ever, abounding still more in concealed aims and secret preparations and the fears and suspicions they engender. What else can it be? The open forum of the scientific world will have disappeared and the suggestion of any cosmopolitan ideas will have been suppressed, as a weakening of combatant morale. In every country. For the neutral powers, if any remain, will still have had to be mentally as well as materially "prepared-" Human beings who can do nothing else to gratify their craving to exercise power, love to suppress and help suppression.

No doubt great numbers of people will have felt the irrational evil of all this shrinking of thought into strategic holes and corners, but they will have had less and less, opportunity of getting together, or even clearing up their own minds sufficiently to take effective action.

Many of them, under the stress of their conscious helplessness, will lapse into mystical religiosity, will refuse to bear children, will resort to suicide or the quasi-suicide of non-resistance. Many will take refuge in opiates. The Japanese are doing their utmost to spread the use of opium and heroin among the Chinese, and they will probably succeed in affecting their own troops also. The ideas and expedients of birth control, now they have spread about the earth, will not be easily forgotten.

More and more will the world be for the tough, for the secretive, the treacherous and ruthless. Cities will be dangerous labyrinths and the countryside an exposure to attack. Ever and again some group or some individual by luck or cunning may achieve a certain width of conquest and establish a peace of terror. Subservient millions may rejoice then for awhile that at last strong government has come back to the world. They will accept an imposed religion, a last revival of Christianity à la Franco perhaps, or of that "clean" Nazi creed, or something on the evangelical lines General Chiang Kai Shek seems to favor; they will observe a dictated morality and a mutual censorship. Any intellectual revival is improbable. This light of free science will have sunken and gone out long since; what remains of technical knowledge will be in the safe hands of properly ordained men. The first thing a youth attracted to mechanical or medical knowledge will do, will be to take orders and put himself under safe direction. History will have shriveled down to the Creator myth again, but the popular imagination will be titillated and appalled by a dim and dying tradition of a former age, our age, of sinful knowledge, of lawless indulgence, of unconsecrated loves, of a terrible disrespect for customs and taboos and sacrifices and priests, that brought great misfortunes upon mankind. A new "World before the Flood" it will be.

A few secret doubters may exist, bookish, silent, hinting and whispering men — *men*, for a more "wholesome" use of womankind will leave women little time for reading — who will pore guiltily over the unfulfilled promises of a golden age to come, in the old books which men wrote when they still had pride and hope. There may be some wistful whisperings, some weak attempts at a new Freemasonry. But the necessary adaptation of human thought to turn

the tide of decadence is something too wide and open in its nature to be brought about by any sort of secret organization. What can be done by timid men who are forced to squeak and scamper like mice behind the arras?

Art may have an Indian summer. The dictator may even build some fine buildings — for most of them build — monasteries, cathedrals, palaces, before he passes. There may be portrait painting and portrait pieces of an ennobling type, glorified history, an effort at a technically lower level to recall the Venetian bravura of Titian, Tintoretto and Paul Veronese. At any rate we shall not live to see that last Art Age. Then, because there will be no correction for the material stresses of a static system, the darkness will close in again. There will be peasant revolts, an exhausting war or dynastic trouble. So human affairs have gone in the past, and so, without any fundamental change in human mentality, they must continue to go, so long as they go on at all.

The coming barbarism will differ from the former barbarism by its greater powers of terror, urgency and destruction, and by its greater rapidity of wastage. What other difference can there be without a mental renascence? The average life will be steadily diminishing, health will be deteriorating. The viruses and pestilential germs will resume their experiments in variation, and new blotches and infections will give scope for pious resignation and turn men's hearts again towards a better world beyond the stars. There will be a last crop of saints and devotees. Mankind which began in a cave and behind a windbreak will end in the disease-soaked ruins of a slum. What else can happen? What other turn can destiny take?

If *Homo sapiens* is such a fool that he cannot realize what is before him now and set himself urgently to save the situation while there is still some light, some freedom of thought and speech, some freedom of movement and action left in the world, can there be the slightest hope that in fifty or a hundred years hence, after he has been through two or three generations of accentuated fear, cruelty and relentless individual frustration, with ever diminishing opportunity of apprehending the real nature of his troubles, he will be collectively any less of a fool? Why should he undergo a magic change when all the forces, within him as without, are plainly set against it?

There is no reason whatever to believe that the order of nature has any greater bias in favor of man than it had in favor of the icthyosaur or the pterodactyl. In spite of all my disposition to a brave looking optimism, I perceive that now the universe is bored with him, in turning a hard face to him, and I see him being carried less and less intelligently and more and more rapidly, suffering as every ill-adapted creature must suffer in gross and detail, along the stream of fate to degradation, suffering and death.

That, compactly, is the human outlook, the only possible alternative to the willful and strenuous adaptation by re-education of our species now — forthwith — that I am urging in this book. Adapt or perish, that is and always has been the implacable law of life for all its children. Either the human imagination and the human will to live, rises to the plain necessity of our case, and a renascent *Homo sapiens* struggles on to a new, a harder and a happier world dominion, or he blunders down the slopes of failure through a series of unhappy phases, in the wake of all the monster reptiles and beasts that have flourished and lorded it on the earth before him, to his ultimate extinction. Either life is just beginning for him or it is drawing very rapidly to its close. This is no guess that is put before you, no fantasy; it is a plain and reasoned assembling of known facts in their natural order and relationship. It faces you. Meet it or shirk it, this is the present outlook for mankind.

NOTES

Note 4A. A shrinkage of the gross population, one may note, under the new conditions, though it foreshadows an ultimate biological defeat, does not in itself compensate for that superfluity of unemployed and dangerously restless young men stressed in the preceding paragraphs. It does nothing to stabilize the community. Not merely increased productivity per head due to technical progress but also the prolonged activity of skilled older people will still be diminishing employment and the young man's prospects of normal assuagement. A falling birth rate or for that matter a rising one is no relief for that primary social tension, which is essentially a matter of proportion and not of scale. An island community of a few hundred people will still be unstable if it includes a few dozen young men with nothing definite to do.

Note 4B. Semaphore signaling systems seem only to have been invented in the Napoleonic period, though it is remarkable they were not attempted in the great Empires of Egypt, Persia, China and Rome.

Note 6A. It is true that in Great Britain there are certain organizations, the Plebs League, for instance, and the Workers' Educational Association, which owe their existence to the realization that the traditional education, meeting as it does the requirements for upper and middle class survival, may not be entirely adequate for the needs of an awakening democracy. But in practice there is little of the interrogative and creative spirit of science in the work of these quasi-rebel bodies. A rash conceit of finality pervades them. One need only turn over the pages of Plebs to realize the glib, trite omniscience of its attitude. The aim throughout is not knowledge but equipment for the political class war; it is to assemble and supply predigested controversial material for the Labor politician (research!), prepare and train "speakers" for the Labor cause, and sustain the profound satisfaction of its clientele in such education as they have already derived from the general atmosphere of their upbringing. At a Royal Society Dinner one can stand up and say "We are all self-confessed ignorant men, our common aim is inquiry and

better knowledge; we want to know, and that is why we are here together." But that sort of thing would provoke either indignation or derision in the Little Bethel of a workers' educational gathering. They have the Gospel; they know. Labor is going to take over things and the millennium will ensue. The Plebs League, it seems, has a doctrinal feud with the kindred Communist Party; I cannot understand why. It preaches practically the same stuff. No seminary for the missionaries of some eccentric sect was ever more specialized and narrow-minded.

Note 7A. There is a very full and well-illustrated Italian (Fascist) *Encyclopaedia* — one of the many evidences of the higher mental level of the Fascist as compared with the Nazi regime — but I have never seen any competent examination of this work in any English, American or French review. I have no idea of what this attractive-looking publication gives, what it conceals, what it may suggest or misrepresent, and short of learning Italian and reading it through I do not see how I can find out. No university professor anywhere in the world seems to have bothered yet to put a research student or so on to this task. But why should he care? Why on earth should he care? It would be infringing on journalism. It would be vulgar. There is always something more to be done in the best academic tradition about the probable sex life of Leonardo da Vinci or the personal resentments of Dante, which will touch no current controversial issue and still satisfy the highest standards of academic erudition.

Note 9A. See Lord David Davies, *The Problem Of The Twentieth Century* (1930), *Suicide Or Sanity* (1932) and various publications of the New Commonwealth Society.

Note 9B. Dr. John Beattie Crozier, 1849-1921. *Author of The Religion Of The Future* (1880) and *A History Of Intellectual Development* (1897-1901).

Note 9C. "The world-wide English language is destined, I think, to serve as the primary medium in this renascence of the human spirit. Unquestionably that renascence must ultimately be cosmopolitan, but to begin with it is likely to find its fullest and most lucid expression in one or the other, or maybe one or two, of the existing thought and language systems in the world. What are they? What other systems

are there? There is the Latin cultural group expressing itself in French, Italian and Spanish. In the past French has been the common medium, but it is by no means certain that it will remain so as intellectual suppression progresses in Italy and Spain. Then there is the great Slavonic sprawl whose medium of expression is Russian. There is the German system and, last and most widespread and convenient of all, there is the English-speaking network. I want to point out to you that for the next few decades at any rate, the burthen and responsibility for human mental progress or human mental failure will rest principally upon the series of communities using the English tongue either as a mother tongue or as a cultural language. It is becoming the lingua franca of the so-called "democracies." Matters may change later, but that is the present state of affairs. These communities are far more free to discuss, learn and publish than any other people in the world.

Germany as an organized country has, for a time at least, withdrawn herself from any claim to a share in the moral or intellectual leadership of the world. The burning of the books by the Nazis was a symbolical act of detachment from the free mentality of mankind. The expulsion of such men of science as Einstein and Freud, and the assertion of the racial hallucinations of Hitler in place of established ethnology, were practical demonstrations of the same withdrawal. Dogmatic nationalism has stamped upon science and free thought and the German mind and retired into itself. And so too has the Russian. Before the Great War, the Russian language and literature were the medium for civilized thought not only throughout Russia but all over the Slavonic-speaking world of southwest Europe. In the summer of 1938, just before the destruction of Czechoslovakia, I took part in a small conference upon Slavonic culture in Prague. It was attended by representatives of all the Slav-speaking countries except Poland, and I found that everyone in that meeting spoke and liked speaking Russian. But the present Russian government has seen fit to sterilize this Russian influence by a systematic suppression of free speech, free discussion and free publication. For all practical purposes this leaves only the French-and English-speaking systems. The French intelligence at its best is lucid, brave and enterprising, still finer I think in its quality than any other in the world,, but it

works upon a much narrower base than the English. The very precision of French deprives it of an amplitude of expression of which English is capable. So we come to the conclusion that if the human race is not to go on slipping down towards a bottomless pit of wars, conquests and exterminations, it must be through the rapid and zealous expansion and reorganization of the intellectual and education organizations of the English-speaking communities.

But let me make it clear that when I say English-speaking, I say it without any shadow of political propaganda, Anglo-Saxon radicalism, dear-old- Englandism, British imperialism or any shallow-wilted stuff of that sort-1 am thinking of the things our language carries, and can carry, and not of our contemporary "culture." And I think of a flexible language expanding to meet every fresh need. English is a very adaptable language; it borrows and assimilates words and idioms very freely; and when I speak of the English of the future, I have in mind something much more copious and powerful than the "correct English" of the academic scholars. It can already narrow down to Basic or expand to express a thousand delicate shades of meaning. I think of it as stripped of any remaining idiomatic complications with a reformed spelling and a continually expanding vocabulary.

Even now English brings together into one creative fermentation a vast diversity of peoples, from the Maori to the Eskimos; it enables an educated Indian to talk to an educated Norwegian or an educated West African Negro. It can bring all the thought and learning of the world within their understanding, as no other language can do. It translates everything of importance in every other language under the sun. Its center of gravity is now the United States of America, but every several community which participates in its free exchanges contributes its distinctive experiences. See, for example, how the mental world of Australasia receives practically everything that America or Britain can give it, and in return produces great men of science, brilliant artists, writers, thinkers... (Adapted from the Canberra lecture on *The Role Of English In The Development Of The World Mind*.)

Note 10A. While I was working on this chapter a little friend of

mine who draws rather cleverly sent me a card to wish me a Happy Easter. Below that she had drawn two chicks emerging from their eggs with their little heads in gas masks over the legend "Be Prepared." I find my little niece's jest rather a grim one. But maybe there is an idea in that, a topical touch, for the Nativities they will be setting up next Christmas in bomb-devastated Madrid, now that Catholicism has waded through blood to its own again. It would be a halfhearted incarnation that did not fully share the anxieties and precautions of our distressful life.

Note 10B. Since the § 10 was first drafted, a very revolutionary device has come to hand in Major Muir's invention of the "air mine." This is a balloon-sustained mine which can be set adrift in the air at any level, and which will drift before the wind until it contacts with a plane and destroys it. It is too small to be seen and avoided. It can be timed to keep the air for a definite time, a day or a week or so, and then explode and come down. These air mines are cheap to produce and they could be made quickly and released in enormous quantities. So long a.s they were up they would make the air impossible for any sort of air transport, civil or military; they would in fact for the time being eliminate the air altogether. I have consulted several authorities in this matter, and they agree upon its entire practicability. But obviously there are considerable obstacles to its being properly tried out. The combatant air forces detest the idea. Still there we have the possibility of putting the air completely out of action whenever we wish it, and of restoring war to its ancient and slower two dimensions.

Note 11A. It is the practice of those who find the results of scientific inquiry unpalatable, to stigmatize such statements as we have assembled here as "cocksure" and declare them as dogmatic as any other dogmas. They will make it a personal matter if possible, as though I individually had made it all up, or got it wrong, and was being rather absurd about it. And then "Yah!", and they think no more about these uncongenial things. But I am no more responsible for the facts in this book than a telegraph messenger is for the cable he brings, I have been simply gathering up undisputed statements, and they remain intact, however brilliantly I can be discredited

personally.
Alternatively these recalcitrant spirits will have it that it is science which is “cocksure.” That is a flat misrepresentation of the scientific spirit. Experimental science, natural science — which is what everyone understands by “science” nowadays, — is never assured and final. That is where it differs from all other established systems of belief, and that is why I speak of it throughout this book as a new thing in the development of human mentality, new within the past century or so. The true symbol of natural science is a note of interrogation. A better name would be research. It questions until some false assumption is laid bare or destroyed. It tries out and rejects or accepts. And still it questions. It is rare that it reverses its carefully tested conclusions — it is another defensive invention that “Science is always contradicting itself” — but continually it advances beyond these conclusions and restates with increasing precision and enrichment. The utmost the man of science says to the religious dogmatist is “In view of this and that, your general statement is unsound,” or, “In view of this and that it must be untrue.”

Note 11B. “The number of one’s ancestors increases as we look back in time. Disregarding the chances of intermarriage, each one of us had two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and so on backward, until very soon, in less than fifty generations, we should find that, but for the qualification introduced, we should have all the earth’s inhabitants of that time as our progenitors. For a hundred generations it must hold absolutely true, that everyone of that time who has issue living now is ancestral to all of us. That brings the thing quite within the historical period. There is not a palaeolithic or neolithic relic that is not a family relic for every soul alive. The blood in our veins has handled it.” (From H. G. Wells. *First and Last Things*, “The Being of Mankind.”)
There are, however, certain qualifications to be made to this statement of our common ancestry if it is to pass unchallenged. In every generation there is an elimination of half the genetic elements. The individual is not a mixture of the total ancestry of his four grandparents. He is a compound of a quarter of their genes. And in

addition he may be a mutation. Genes are transmitted in associated groups, but these groups fall infinitely short of carrying a complete personality. They carry traits, but the traits are carried separately. In so-and-so we may remark this and that trait of his Grandfather William but they are mixed with traits from other progenitors; the practical reappearance of Grandfather William is a mathematical improbability verging on the impossible. Of all this and how there are recessive characteristics masked by dominant ones, but capable of reappearing in offspring, the reader will find a dear and full account in The Science of Life.

A common ancestry does not therefore involve a common physiognomy, and at any time an individual or a type may turn up in which some once prevalent type virtually reappears. Mr. George Bernard Shaw, for example, is a very exceptional person today, but Etruscan tombs and potsherds reveal a departed world of quasi-George Bernard Shaws. There are quasi-Cromagnards in La Dordogne and the Canary Isles today. Certain regions, certain climates, seem to attract and favor their own special types and tend to revive them. That all English people are descended from William the Conqueror and most of the population of the earth from Abraham, implies brotherhood indeed, but not uniformity. The fact that if humanity survives so long, everyone alive will be the descendant of every fertile individual among us today exposes the absurdities of family and national pride, but it does not mean that the dance of the genes will not give us an incessantly restored human variety, in which every individual will be consciously or unconsciously seeking the region, the occupation and the associates most congenial to his make-up.

Note 12A. Some of those who, in spite of much subsequent enlightenment, still cling, out of natural affection and association, to traditions of their home and upbringing that have become a dear and necessary part of themselves, take refuge, I know, in the plea that the idea of the Chosen People has become altogether spiritualized, that they are now segregated not for an ultimate conquest but for a mission. Their mission is to serve and exalt all mankind.

There is moreover another line of sublimation with a bolder appeal,

and that is the line taken by that great neglected genius, David Lubin, the founder of the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome. His Israel was indeed an Israel with a mission, but then he claimed everyone who participated in constructive work as one of the elect. To Lubin I was an honorary Israelite.

"But why then call it Israel?" I protested.

This sort of transfiguration of the objectives of the Chosen People is all very well in apologetic discussion, but there is nothing to sustain it in the normal ceremony and practice and teaching of the cult, which remains a narrow and troublesome nationalism. Let these sublimators repudiate the Bible and the Promise and say what they mean plainly. Then we shall be better able to believe in their assertions of an exalted inaggressive modernization.

Note 12B. Louis Golding (in *The Jewish Problem*) argues that anti-Judaism is due to the fact that the Jews cried "Crucify him," when Jesus came before Pilate. Jesus, as everybody knows, was crucified (a particularly Roman method of execution) not by the Jews but by the Roman Pontius Pilate. Countless people who criticize the Jews today are extremely impartial about the Crucifixion, and I find it difficult to believe that Mr. Golding, who, I presume, is himself a product of orthodox Jewish education, is so entirely unaware of the effect of this Chosen People cult upon the outside world as he seems to be. He ignores it absolutely.

Browne also, refusing to face that primary issue, accounts for the unpopularity of the Jewish community in an entirely different manner. He theorizes brilliantly about Jews being urban while non-Jews are rustic. Certainly the Semitic-speakers were prevalently urban in the first century B.C. The balance, says he, must be corrected and all will be well. So the Jew, he decides (1935) had better go to Palestine and dig himself out of his troubles. Both writers then launch out into an account of the great intellectual superiority of Jews to Gentiles, wholesome rather than ingratiating reading for a puffed up Gentile, and cite a, string of names, Sigmund Freud, for instance, and Einstein and so on, who are as a matter of fact no more orthodox Jews than I am. They are citizens of the world, they work for all mankind. Even now Freud is busy, he tells me, in a

patient analysis of the legend of Moses. Moses, he concludes, was an Egyptian! His monotheism was Akhnaton's sun worship. (Moses and Monotheism.)

Both Golding and Browne are typical of a vast literature on the Jewish question. There is no need to multiply instances. Neither, I think, realizes quite clearly what it is that encompasses them, because they are themselves enveloped in it. They accept this taught and cultivated idea system, this ex- religious bias, this artificial solidarity I am arraigning, as though it was in the nature of things and could not be prevented, and thence they wander off into a limitless jungle of controversial irrelevances, of the rights and wrongs of ancient hates, misunderstandings, persecutions and reprisals, to which there can be no conclusion.

But the eloquent and emotional Mr. Josef Kastein, who dedicates his *History And Destiny Of The Jews* quite incongruously to the entirely unorthodox Einstein, concludes his Jews in Germany with the real irreconcilable note:

"...we were once in Egypt. Already we have compelled a Pharaoh to set us free. We have outlasted the Pyramids. We shall outlast the denials of all those who surround us."

As a matter of fact the Pyramids were there a long time before the Jews.

I reiterate that the whole scheme and purport of this book is to insist upon the supreme decisive importance of what in § 4 I have called the mental superstructure of the human animal. The reconstruction of its idea system is its only practicable method of adaptation, and here is an. idea system that resists and evades reconstruction very obstinately. In §§ 8 and 9 I have assembled and summarized the nature of the great intellectual effort which is needed if our species is to adjust itself to the terrific new conditions that have risen about it. The Jewish conflict disregards this, cuts athwart it, arrests and prevents it, like a noisy quarrel in a laboratory. All the countervailing evil in the world cannot make a bad tradition a good one. Killing or ill-treating a man does not put him in the wrong, but also, we have to remember, and that is not so easy for the liberal-minded, it does not put him in the right The idea of the solidarity of the Chosen People, evade it or not, remains the fundamental Jewish idea, and this

fundamental Jewish idea, like any other nationalism, is an offense against the unity of mankind.

Note 12C. Persecution mania is a well-known form of insanity. With certain variations of phrase and form, due to the current ideas of the period, it presents an almost stereotyped pattern through the ages. Formerly it was usually witches and warlocks who were supposed to be at the root of the matter. Anyone odd, anyone different, came under suspicion, old crones and afflicted and odd-looking men were distrusted, and very often the suspects caught a touch of the infection and tried doing the things they learnt were so potent. Multitudes of sorcerers have confessed, under no great duress, to impossible crimes. They brewed potions, stuck pins in wax images, cast spells, sent familiar spirits to gibber and creep and whisper in the night. Madness like everything else moves with the times; it clothes itself in new fashions while remaining essentially the same. Nowadays the witches have become "Occult Powers." They use hypnotism, electricity, infections (Pah!), they radio voices making threats and evil suggestions. Every prominent publicist continually gets letters from sufferers with this type of obsession. Such delusions may easily make the patient a danger to himself and others, and then he is "certified" and taken care of. But in times of social movement and stress this disorder may become contagious, witness the witch mania of the early seventeenth century. It is then more difficult to deal with. Like a dark shadow to the rational objections that can be made to the in-and- out double nationalism of the Jews, there is a sustained campaign of sinister suggestion with a considerable literature of its own. Some years ago four or five books written by Mrs. Nesta Webster attracted considerable attention. She is a very competent writer and so sound a Christian, of a faith so uncritical, that she is quite unable to understand that many honest people find a vast amount of Christian doctrine impossible. How impossible, I have sought to show in §§ 13 and 14. To her there is nothing good except in Christianity, and this is so obvious to her that any objection to the faith seems necessarily part of some diabolically hatched conspiracy. She has set herself with the greatest industry to trace and link together the long-drawn succession of Cabalists, Gnostics,

Manichaeans, the Old Man of the Mountains, Knight Templars, Satanists, Rosicrucians, Illuminati, Freemasons, Rousseau, Voltaire, Cagliostro, Madame Blavatsky, Mrs. Besant, Trade Unions, Anarchists, Socialists, Theosophists, Communists, Those Bolsheviks, a frightful horde all plotting and getting hold of power and handing it on and doing down Christianity and the Christian life. Her books are written with-conviction enough to make one look under the bed at nights. She has never quite committed herself to those famous forged *Protocols Of The Elders Of Zion* which were published as the articles of association so to speak of that world conspiracy, but she stoutly maintains that though that book may not be genuine, it nevertheless shows the sort of thing of which the Jews are capable. Her book *Secret Societies And Subversive Movements* concludes: "For behind the concrete forces of revolution — whether Pan-German, Judaic or Illuminist — beyond that invisible secret circle which perhaps directs them all, is there not yet another force, still more potent, that must be taken into account? In looking back over the centuries at the dark episodes that have marked the history of the human race from its earliest origins — strange and horrible cults, waves of witchcraft, blasphemies and desecrations — how is it possible to ignore the existence of an Occult Power at work in the world? Individuals, sects, or races fired with the desire of world domination, have provided the fighting forces of destruction, but behind them are the veritable powers of darkness in eternal conflict with the powers of light."

I should describe Mrs. Nesta Webster as a perfectly sane and capable person with insane ideas, so widely do I disagree with her. I believe her influence has spread far beyond the circle of her actual readers. Milder forms of the same intellectual malaise at any rate are now very prevalent throughout the more prosperous classes in Great Britain and America. It is the only way to account for the behavior of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, for example, or Lord Rothermere, the British newspaper proprietor, towards the Jews, towards Russia, during the past two or three years. Mr. William Teeling again, to whom I refer in § 13, is another case. A tepid passive Christianity is becoming an aggressive pro-Christianity tinder the stresses of the time.

Note 12D. Sir Norman Angell and Mrs. Dorothy Frances Buxton, in a very clear and almost pressingly persuasive book, *You And The Refugee* (Penguin Books, 1939), argue for a practically unrestrained admission of these outcasts. They show in particular how beneficial a large refugee immigration might be to the British Empire. It would bring in new trades, new skill, find fresh work for the unemployed, and in Great Britain arrest the approaching decline in population — if that is desirable. Their plea for a more generous treatment of refugees, so far as assimilable individuals are concerned, is unanswerable.

But our authors' arguments for an inassimilable immigration en bloc are less convincing. That would only renew the trouble at a later, date. There is no time to begin that old history again in new regions and among fresh difficulties. Disaster is advancing too rapidly upon our entire species. Jewish nationalism like every other nationalism must end and end soon. And even though the plea of existing unemployment is an irrational social barrier to assimilable immigrants, it is, in a country where the sense of social insecurity is growing, where confidence in the intelligence and good faith of the government is diminishing, and where large masses of the population, and especially the accumulation of untrained and unemployed young men, see no dear prospect of a tolerable life ahead, none the less a barrier. Implicitly the British authorities admit: "We do not know how to handle our own people, we are getting more and more bothered — by everything — and if these people come into our muddle, there is bound to be serious trouble." And so in effect they give them up to destruction, not outrageously and openly as the Germans do, but by looking in the opposite direction, and delaying action.

In a scientifically organized, forward-looking social order, there will be no people unemployed and there will be no difficulty whatever in the movement of population from point to point. The whole world will be everyman's and the fullness thereof. The bare possibility of such a rational order sustains whatever hope there is for mankind in this present survey of the human outlook. But this world we are living in is not a rational world and the harsh reality we have to face when we cast the Jewish horoscope is this dosing-up of the avenues

of escape.
Already in the past year or so, a multitude, scores and possibly hundreds of thousands, must have been done to death. And still it goes on....
In *You And The Refugee*, however, I came upon one passage that affected me very disagreeably and I think I ought to say a word about it here. It is too germane to this discussion to omit:
"Not all Jews are Zionists, but all Jews will resent the letting down of Zionists, the surrender of Zionists to Arab terrorism. And their resentment will be world-wide. We do not perhaps realize the possible repercussions.
"The power of world Jewry is moral — the power of journalists, writers, dramatists, scientists. It is worth while for an Empire as gravely menaced as the British to have that power on its side."...
That is a threat and a very evil and embittering threat. Happily it is not made by Jews but by two overofficious Gentile champions on their behalf, I do not see things from the Imperialist standpoint .. of these authors. I think the British Empire has outlived its usefulness. But the consolidation of the English-speaking people as the vehicle of a world civilization is quite another matter, and a matter of great urgency. Yet unless the British government does what it is told in Palestine, the Chosen People, we are told, will devote themselves to preventing that consolidation. I think that is a very unhappy suggestion indeed. It does no justice to the intellectual quality of Israel. I doubt if any representative Jewish writer could be quoted in support of it. But it is exactly what the Jews are accused of doing by their worst enemies. My first reaction to it, until I realized that this dream of vindictive sabotage was a purely Gentile invention, was acute resentment and anger. I believe these two authors would be wise to take that tactless and unjustifiable passage out of any further editions of their well-intentioned book.

Note 13A. "We Catholics acknowledge readily, without any shame, nay with pride, that Catholicism cannot be identified simply and wholly with primitive Christianity, nor even with the Gospel of Christ, in the same way that the great oak cannot be identified with the tiny acorn. There is no mechanical identity, but an organic

identity. And we go further and say that thousands of years hence Catholicism will probably be even richer, more luxuriant, more manifold in dogma, morals, law and worship, than the Catholicism of the present day. A religious historian of the fifth millennium A.D. will without difficulty discover in Catholicism conceptions and forms and practices which derive from India, China and Japan, and he will have to recognize a far more obvious 'complex of opposites.' It is quite true, Catholicism is a union of contraries. But 'contraries are not contradictories'.... The Gospel of Christ would have been no living gospel, and the seed which He scattered no living seed, if it had remained ever the tiny seed of A.D. 33, and not struck root, and had not assimilated foreign matter, and had not by the help of this foreign matter grown up into a tree, so that the birds of the air dwell in its branches." Professor Karl Adam, *The Spirit of Catholicism* (1938).

For reasons I have made perfectly clear in this book, I do not believe there will be any Roman Catholic Church at all in the fifth millennium »A.D., but (see § 18) it is amusing to speculate how the successors of Professor Karl Adam, long before then, would have plaited into the Trinity that God of Male Sex Appeal from whose left eye sprang the Sun Goddess, while he blew Susa-no-o, the dragon-slaying Susa-no-o, from his nose. It is, I agree, not at all improbable, given the survival and continual growth of the Church. Morgan Young, in the book I have cited in the text, tells that the great assimilation prophesied by Professor Karl Adam has already begun. The crude early Christians, still in the "acorn" phase, preferred martyrdom to burning a pinch of incense to the Roman God-Emperors, but the more catholic-spirited Church of today has already established friendly relations with the Shinto faith, Japan and Rome have exchanged envoys, and the Japanese Catholic bows in the Shinto temples in acquiescence to the local supremacy of the Emperor-Divinity over the Vatican.

Note 23A. Sir Arthur's Epilogue begins: "Shall we never pluck the best from fate and find the Golden Mean? Must we ever choose freedom without order, or order without freedom? Must justice and mercy bring always weakness in their train, and strength bring

tyranny?
“Shall Peace be never made between equals, but imposed always by victor upon vanquished? Must every peace treaty sow the seeds of future war? Shall the strong never be magnanimous and the weak never secure justice? Must success always sap the will, and the humiliation of defeat incite only to revenge? Shall wars with changing victors be for ever the dire fate of men?
“We, the free democracies of the world, have the virtues bred and nursed in the pursuits of peace. That is not enough. We need also the sterner virtues — fortitude, daemonic energy, the will to act — and to act together.” (.)
“...willing cooperation and the endurance which is only possible to an instructed people who understand the purpose of their effort and approve it.” (.) Sir Arthur Salter, Security. Can We Retrieve It? (1939).

THE END

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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I. — THE END OF AN AGE

IN this small book I want to set down as compactly, clearly and usefully as possible the gist of what I have learnt about war and peace in the course of my life. I am not going to write peace propaganda here. I am going to strip down certain general ideas and realities of primary importance to their framework, and so prepare a nucleus of useful knowledge for those who have to go on with this business of making a world peace. I am not going to persuade people to say "Yes, yes" for a world peace; already we have had far too much abolition of war by making declarations and signing resolutions; everybody wants peace or pretends to want peace, and there is no need to add even a sentence more to the vast volume of such ineffective stuff. I am simply attempting to state the things we must do and the price we must pay for world peace if we really intend to achieve it.

Until the Great War, the First World War, I did not bother very much about war and peace. Since then I have almost specialised upon this problem. It is not very easy to recall former states of mind out of which, day by day and year by year, one has grown, but I think that in the decades before 1914 not only I but most of my generation — in the British Empire, America, France and indeed throughout most of the civilised world — thought that war was dying out.

So it seemed to us. It was an agreeable and therefore a readily acceptable idea. We imagined the Franco-German War of 1870-71 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 were the final conflicts between Great Powers, that now there was a Balance of Power sufficiently stable to make further major warfare impracticable. A Triple Alliance faced a Dual Alliance and neither had much reason for attacking the other. We believed war was shrinking to mere expeditionary affairs on the outskirts of our civilisation, a sort of frontier police business. Habits of tolerant intercourse, it seemed, were being strengthened every year that the peace of the Powers remained unbroken.

There was in deed a mild armament race going on; mild by our present standards of equipment; the armament industry was a

growing and enterprising on; but we did not see the full implication of that; we preferred to believe that the increasing general good sense would be strong enough to prevent these multiplying guns from actually going off and hitting anything. And we smiled indulgently at uniforms and parades and army manoeuvres. They were the time-honoured toys and regalia of kings and emperors. They were part of the display side of life and would never get to actual destruction and killing. I do not think that exaggerates the easy complacency of, let us say, 1895, forty-five years ago. It was a complacency that lasted with most of us up to 1914. In 1914 hardly anyone in Europe or America below the age of fifty had seen anything of war in his own country.

The world before 1900 seemed to be drifting steadily towards a tacit but practical unification. One could travel without a passport over the larger part of Europe; the Postal Union delivered one's letters uncensored and safely from Chile to China; money, based essentially on gold, fluctuated only very slightly; and the sprawling British Empire still maintained a tradition of free trade, equal treatment and open-handedness to all comers round and about the planet. In the United States you could go for days and never see a military uniform. Compared with to-day that was, upon the surface at any rate, an age of easy-going safety and good humour. Particularly for the North Americans and the Europeans.

But apart from that steady, ominous growth of the armament industry there were other and deeper forces at work that were preparing trouble. The Foreign Offices of the various sovereign states had not forgotten the competitive traditions of the eighteenth century. The admirals and generals were contemplating with something between hostility and fascination, the hunger weapons the steel industry was gently pressing into their hands. Germany did not share the self-complacency of the English-speaking world; she wanted a place in the sun; there was increasing friction about the partition of the raw material regions of Africa; the British suffered from chronic Russophobia with regard to their vast apportions in the East, and set themselves to nurse Japan into a modernised imperialist power; and also they "remembered Majuba"; the United States were irritated by the disorder of Cuba and felt that the weak, extended Spanish

possessions would be all the better for a change of management. So the game of Power Politics went on, but it went on upon the margins of the prevailing peace. There were several wars and changes of boundaries, but they involved no fundamental disturbance of the general civilised life; they did not seem to threaten its broadening tolerations and understandings in any fundamental fashion. Economic stresses and social trouble stirred and muttered beneath the orderly surfaces of political life, but threatened no convulsion. The idea of altogether eliminating war, of clearing what was left of it away, was in the air, but it was free from any sense of urgency. The Hague Tribunal was established and there was a steady dissemination of the conceptions of arbitration and international law. It really seemed to many that the peoples of the earth were settling down in their various territories to a litigious rather than a belligerent order. If there was much social injustice it was being mitigated more and more by a quickening sense of social decency. Acquisitiveness conducted itself with decorum and public-spiritedness was in fashion. Some of it was quite honest public-spiritedness.

In those days, and they are hardly more than half a lifetime behind us, no one thought of any sort of world administration. That patchwork of great Powers and small Powers seemed the most reasonable and practicable method of running the business of mankind. Communications were far too difficult for any sort of centralised world controls. Around the World in Eighty Days, when it was published seventy years ago, seemed an extravagant fantasy. It was a world without telephone or radio, with nothing swifter than a railway train or more destructive than the earlier types of H.E. shell. They were marvels. It was far more convenient to administer that world of the Balance of Power in separate national areas and, since there were such limited facilities for peoples to get at one another and do each other mischiefs, there seemed no harm in ardent patriotism and the complete independence of separate sovereign states.

Economic life was largely directed by irresponsible private businesses and private finance which, because of their private ownership, were able to spread out their unifying transactions in a network that paid little attention to frontiers and national, racial or

religious sentimentality. “Business” was much more of a world commonwealth than the political organisations. There were many people, especially in America, who imagined that “Business” might ultimately unify the world and governments sink into subordination to its network.

Nowadays we can be wise after the event and we can see that below this fair surface of things, disruptive forces were steadily gathering strength. But these disruptive forces played a comparatively small role in the world spectacle of half a century ago, when the ideas of that older generation which still dominates our political life and the political education of its successors, were formed. It is from the conflict of those Balance of Power and private enterprise ideas, half a century old, that one of the main stresses of our time arises. These ideas worked fairly well in their period and it is still with extreme reluctance that our rulers, teachers, politicians, face the necessity for a profound mental adaptation of their views, methods and interpretations to these disruptive forces that once seemed so negligible and which are now shattering their old order completely.

It was because of this belief in a growing good-will among nations, because of the general satisfaction with things as they were, that the German declarations of war in 1914 aroused such a storm of indignation throughout the entire comfortable world. It was felt that the German Kaiser had broken the tranquillity of the world club, wantonly and needlessly. The war was fought “against the Hohenzollerns.” They were to be expelled from the club, certain punitive fines were to be paid and all would be well. That was the British idea of 1914. This out-of-date war business was then to be cleared up once for all by a mutual guarantee by all the more respectable members of the club through a League of Nations. There was no apprehension of any deeper operating causes in that great convulsion on the part of the worthy elder statesmen who made the peace. And so Versailles and its codicils.

For twenty years the disruptive forces have gone on growing beneath the surface of that genteel and shallow settlement, and twenty years there has been no resolute attack upon the riddles with which their growth confronts us. For all that period of the League of

Nations has been the opiate of liberal thought in the world.

To-day there is war to get rid of Adolf Hitler, who has now taken the part of the Hohenzollerns in the drama. He too has outraged the Club Rules and he too is to be expelled. The war, the Chamberlain-Hitler War, is being waged so far by the British Empire in quite the old spirit. It has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. There is the same resolute disregard of any more fundamental problem.

Still the minds of our comfortable and influential ruling-class people refuse to accept the plain intimation that their time is over, that the Balance of Power and uncontrolled business methods cannot continue, and that Hitler, like the Hohenzollerns, is a mere offensive pustule on the face of a deeply ailing world. To get rid of him and his Nazis will be no more a cure for the world's ills than scraping will heal measles. The disease will manifest itself in some new eruption. It is the system of nationalist individualism and unco-ordinated enterprise that is the world's disease, and it is the whole system that has to go. It has to be reconditioned down to its foundations or replaced. It cannot hope to "muddle through" amiably, wastefully and dangerously, a second time.

World peace means all that much revolution. More and more of us begin to realise that it cannot mean less.

The first thing, therefore that has to be done in thinking out the primary problems of world peace is to realise this, that we are living in the end of a definite period of history, the period of the sovereign states. As we used to say in the eighties with ever-increasing truth: "We are in an age of transition". Now we get some measure of the acuteness of the transition. It is a phase of human life which may lead, as I am trying to show, either to a new way of living for our species or else to a longer or briefer degringolade of violence, misery, destruction, death and the extinction of mankind. These are not rhetorical phrases I am using here; I mean exactly what I say, the disastrous extinction of mankind.

That is the issue before us. It is no small affair of parlour politics we have to consider. As I write, in the moment, thousands of people are being killed, wounded, hunted, tormented, ill-treated, delivered up to the most intolerable and hopeless anxiety and destroyed morally and mentally, and there is nothing in sight at present to arrest

this spreading process and prevent its reaching you and yours. It is coming for you and yours now at a great pace. Plainly in so far as we are rational foreseeing creatures there is nothing for any of us now but to make this world peace problem the ruling interest and direction of our lives. If we run away from it it will pursue and get us. We have to face it. We have to solve it or be destroyed by it. It is as urgent and comprehensive as that.

II. — OPEN CONFERENCE

BEFORE we examine what I have called so far the "disruptive forces" in the current social order, let me underline one primary necessity for the most outspoken free discussion of the battling organisations and the crumbling institutions amidst which we lead our present uncomfortable and precarious lives. There must be no protection for leaders and organisations from the most searching criticism, on the plea that out country is or may be at war. Or on any pretence. We must talk openly, widely and plainly. The war is incidental; the need for revolutionary reconstruction is fundamental. None of us are clear as yet upon some of the most vital questions before us, we are not lucid enough in our own minds to be ambiguous, and a mumbling tactfulness and indirect half-statements made with an eye upon some censor, will confuse our thoughts and the thoughts of those with whom we desire understanding, to the complete sterilisation and defeat of every reconstructive effort.

We want to talk and tell exactly what our ideas and feelings are, not only to our fellow citizens, but to our allies, to neutrals and, above all, to the people who are marshalled in arms against us. We want to get the same sincerity from them. Because until we have worked out a common basis of ideas with them, peace will be only an uncertain equilibrium while fresh antagonisms develop.

Concurrently with this war we need a great debate. We want every possible person in the world to take part in that debate. It is something much more important than the actual warfare. It is intolerable to think of this storm of universal distress leading up to nothing but some "conference" of diplomatists out of touch with the world, with secret sessions, ambiguous "understandings." ...Not twice surely can that occur. And yet what is going to prevent its recurring?

It is quite easy to define the reasonable limits of censorship in a belligerent country. It is manifest that the publication of any information likely to be of the slightest use to an enemy must be drastically anticipated and suppressed; not only direct information, for example, but intimations and careless betrayals about the position

and movements of ships, troops, camps, depots of munitions, food supplies, and false reports of defeats and victories and coming shortages, anything that may lead to blind panic and hysteria, and so forth and so on. But the matter takes on a different aspect altogether when it comes to statements and suggestions that may affect public opinion in one's own country or abroad, and which may help us towards wholesome and corrective political action.

One of the more unpleasant aspects of a state of war under modern conditions is the appearance of a swarm of individuals, too clever by half, in positions of authority. Excited, conceited, prepared to lie, distort and generally humbug people into states of acquiescence, resistance, indignation, vindictiveness, doubt and mental confusion, states of mind supposed to be conductive to a final military victory. These people love to twist and censor facts. It gives them a feeling of power; if they cannot create they can at least prevent and conceal. Particularly they poke themselves in between us and the people with whom we are at war to distort any possible reconciliation. They sit, filled with the wine of their transitory powers, aloof from the fatigues and dangers of conflict, pulling imaginary strings in people's minds.

In Germany popular thought is supposed to be under the control of Herr Dr Goebbels; in Great Britain we writers have been invited to place ourselves at the disposal of some Ministry of Information, that is to say at the disposal of hitherto obscure and unrepresentative individuals, and write under its advice. Officials from the British Council and the Conservative Party Headquarters appear in key positions in this Ministry of Information. That curious and little advertised organisation I have just mentioned, the creation I am told of Lord Lloyd, that British Council, sends emissaries abroad, writers, well-dressed women and other cultural personages, to lecture, charm and win over foreign appreciation for British characteristics, for British scenery, British political virtues and so forth. Somehow this is supposed to help something or other. Quietly, unobtrusively, this has gone on. Maybe these sample British give unauthorised assurances but probably they do little positive harm. But they ought not to be employed at all. Any government propaganda is contrary to the essential spirit of democracy. The expression of opinion and

collective thought should be outside the range of government activities altogether. It should be the work of free individuals whose prominence is dependent upon the response and support of the general mind.

But here I have to make amends to Lord Lloyd. I was led to believe that the British Council was responsible for Mr. Teeling, the author of Crisis for Christianity, and I said as much in The Fate of Homo Sapiens. I now unsay it. Mr. Teeling, I gather, was sent out upon his journeys by a Catholic newspaper. The British Council was entirely innocent of him.

It is not only that the Ministries of Information and Propaganda do their level best to divert the limited gifts and energies of such writers, lecturers and talkers as we possess, to the production of disingenuous muck that will muddle the public mind and mislead the enquiring foreigner, but that they show a marked disposition to stifle any free and independent utterances that my seem to traverse their own profound and secret plans for the salvation of mankind.

Everywhere now it is difficult to get adequate, far-reaching publicity for outspoken discussion of the way the world is going, and the political, economic and social forces that carry us along. This is not so much due to deliberate suppression as to the general disorder into which human affairs are dissolving. There is indeed in the Atlantic world hardly a sign as yet of that direct espionage upon opinion that obliterates the mental life of the intelligent Italian or German or Russian to-day almost completely; one may still think what one likes, say what one likes and write what one likes, but nevertheless there is already an increasing difficulty in getting bold, unorthodox views heard and read. Newspapers are afraid upon all sorts of minor counts, publishers, with such valiant exceptions as the publishers of this matter, are morbidly discreet; they get Notice D to avoid this or that particular topic; there are obscure boycotts and trade difficulties hindering the wide diffusion of general ideas in countless ways. I do not mean there is any sort of organised conspiracy to suppress discussion, but I do say that the Press, the publishing and bookselling organisations in our free countries, provide a very ill-organised and inadequate machinery for the ventilation and distribution of thought.

Publishers publish for nothing but safe profits; it would astound a bookseller to tell him he was part of the world's educational organisation or a publisher's traveller, that he existed for any other purpose than to book maximum orders for best sellers and earn a record commission — letting the other stuff, the highbrow stuff and all that, go hang. They do not understand that they ought to put public service before gain. They have no inducement to do so and no pride in their function. Theirs is the morale of a profiteering world. Newspapers like to insert brave-looking articles of conventional liberalism, speaking highly of peace and displaying a noble vagueness about its attainment; now we are at war they will publish the fiercest attacks upon the enemy — because such attacks are supposed to keep up the fighting spirit of the country; but any ideas that are really loudly and clearly revolutionary they dare not circulate at all. Under these baffling conditions there is no thorough discussion of the world outlook whatever, anywhere. The democracies are only a shade better than the dictatorships in this respect. It is ridiculous to represent them as realms of light at issue with darkness.

This great debate upon the reconstruction of the world is a thing more important and urgent than the war, and there exist no adequate media for the utterance and criticism and correction of any broad general convictions. There is a certain fruitless and unproductive spluttering of constructive ideas, but there is little sense of sustained enquiry, few real interchanges, inadequate progress, nothing is settled, nothing is dismissed as unsound and nothing is won permanently. No one seems to hear what anyone else is saying. That is because there is no sense of an audience for these ideologists. There is no effective audience saying rudely and obstinately: "What A. has said, seems important. Will B. and C, instead of bombinating in the void, tell us exactly where and why they differ from A.? And now we have got to the common truth of A., B., C, and D. Here is F. saying something. Will he be so good as to correlate what he has to say with A., B., C, and D.?"

But there is no such background of an intelligently observant and critical world audience in evidence. There are a few people here and there reading and thinking in disconnected fragments. This is all the thinking our world is doing in the face of planetary disaster. The

universities, bless them! are in uniform or silent.

We need to air our own minds; we need frank exchanges, if we are to achieve any common understanding. We need to work out a clear conception of the world order we would prefer to this present chaos, we need to dissolve or compromise upon our differences so that we may set our faces with assurance towards an attainable world peace. The air is full of the panaceas of half- wits, none listening to the others and most of them trying to silence the others in their impatience. Thousands of fools are ready to write us a complete prescription for our world troubles. Will people never realise their own ignorance and incompleteness, from which arise this absolute necessity for the plainest statement of the realities of the problem, for the most exhaustive and unsparing examination of differences of opinion, and for the most ruthless canvassing of every possibility, however unpalatable it may seem at first, of the situation?

Before anything else, therefore, in this survey of the way to world peace, I put free speech and vigorous publication. It is the thing best worth fighting for. It is the essence of your personal honour. It is your duty as a world citizen to do what you can for that. You have not only to resist suppressions, you have to fight your way out of the fog. If you find your bookseller or newsagent failing to distribute any type of publication whatever — even if you are in entire disagreement with the views of that publication — you should turn the weapon of the boycott upon the offender and find another bookseller or newsagent for everything you read. The would-be world citizen should subscribe also to such organisation as the National Council for Civil Liberties; he should use any advantage his position may give him to check suppression of free speech; and he should accustom himself to challenge nonsense politely but firmly and say fearlessly and as clearly as possible what is in his mind and to listen as fearlessly to whatever is said to him. So that he may know better either through reassurance or correction. To get together with other people to argue and discuss, to think and organise and then implement thought is the first duty of every reasonable man.

This world of ours is going to pieces. It has to be reconstructed and it can only be effectively reconstructed in the light. Only the free, clear, open mind can save us, and these difficulties and obstructions

on our line of thought are as evil as children putting obstacles on a railway line or scattering nails on an automobile speed track.

This great world debate must go on, and it must go on now. Now while the guns are still thudding, is the time for thought. It is incredibly foolish to talk as so many people do of ending the war and then having a World Conference to inaugurate a new age. So soon as the fighting stops the real world conference, the live discussion, will stop, too. The diplomats and politicians will assemble with an air of profound competence and close the doors upon the outer world and resume — Versailles. While the silenced world gapes and waits upon their mysteries.

III. — DISRUPTIVE FORCES

AND now let us come to the disruptive forces that have reduced that late- nineteenth-century dream of a powerful world patchwork of more and more civilised states linked by an ever-increasing financial and economic interdependence, to complete incredibility, and so forced upon every intelligent mind the need to work out a new conception of the World that ought to be. It is supremely important that the nature of these disruptive forces should be clearly understood and kept in mind. To grasp them is to hold the clues to the world's present troubles. To forget about them, even for a moment, is to lose touch with essential reality and drift away into minor issues.

The first group of these forces is what people are accustomed to speak of as "the abolition of distance" and "the change of scale" in human operations. This "abolition of distance" began rather more than a century ago, and its earlier effects were not disruptive at all. It knit together the spreading United States of America over distances that might otherwise have strained their solidarity to the breaking-point, and it enabled the sprawling British Empire to sustain contacts round the whole planet.

The disruptive influence of the abolition of distance appeared only later. Let us be clear upon its essential significance. For what seemed like endless centuries the swiftest means of locomotion had been the horse on the high-road, the running man, the galley and the uncertain, weather-ruled sailing ship. (There was the Dutchman on skates on skates on his canals, but that was an exceptional culmination of speed and not for general application.) The political, social and imaginative life of man for all those centuries was adapted to these limiting conditions. They determined the distances to which marketable goods could conveniently be sent, the limits to which the ruler could send his orders and his solders, the bounds set to getting news, and indeed the whole scale of living. There could be very little real community feeling beyond the range of frequent intercourse.

Human life fell naturally therefore into areas determined by the interplay between these limitations and such natural obstacles as seas and mountains. Such countries as France, England, Egypt, Japan,

appeared and reappeared in history like natural, necessary things, and though there were such larger political efforts as the Roman Empire, they never attained an enduring unity. The Roman Empire held together like wet blotting-paper; it was always falling to pieces. The older Empires, beyond their national nuclei, were mere precarious tribute-levying powers. What I have already called the world patchwork of the great and little Powers, was therefore, under the old horse- and-foot and sailing-ship conditions, almost as much a matter of natural necessity as the sizes of trees and animals.

Within a century all this has been changed and we have still to face up to what that change means for us.

First came steam, the steam-railway, the steamship, and then in a quickening crescendo came the internal combustion engine, electrical traction, the motor car, the motor boat, the aeroplane, the transmission of power from central power stations, the telephone, the radio. I feel apologetic in reciting this well-known story. I do so in order to enforce the statement that all the areas that were the most convenient and efficient for the old, time-honoured way of living, became more and more inconveniently close and narrow for the new needs. This applied to every sort of administrative area, from municipalities and urban districts and the range of distributing businesses, up to sovereign states. They were — and for the most part they still are — too small for the new requirements and far too close together. All over the social layout this tightening-up and squeezing together is an inconvenience, but when it comes to the areas of sovereign states it becomes impossibly dangerous. It becomes an intolerable thing; human life cannot go on, with the capitals of most of the civilised countries of the world within an hour's bombing range of their frontiers, behind which attacks can be prepared and secret preparations made without any form of control. And yet we are still tolerant and loyal to arrangements that seek to maintain this state of affairs and treat it as though nothing else were possible.

The present war for and against Hitler and Stalin and Mr. Chamberlain and so forth, does not even touch upon the essential problem of the abolition of distance. It may indeed destroy everything and still settle nothing. If one could wipe out all the issues

of the present conflict, we should still be confronted with the essential riddle, which is the abolition of the boundaries of most existing sovereign states and their merger in some larger Pax. We have to do that if any supportable human life is to go on. Treaties and mutual guarantees are not enough. We have surely learnt enough about the value of treaties during the last half-century to realise that. We have, because of the abolition of distance alone, to gather human affairs together under one common war-preventing control.

But this abolition of distance is only one most vivid aspect of the change in the conditions of human life. Interwoven with that is a general change of scale in human operations. The past hundred years has been an age of invention and discovery beyond the achievements of the preceding three millennia. In a book I published eight years ago, The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind, I tried to summarise the conquest of power and substances that is still going on. There is more power expended in a modern city like Birmingham in a day than we need to keep the whole of Elizabethan England going for a year; there is more destructive energy in a single tank than sufficed the army of William I for the conquest of England. Man is able now to produce or destroy on a scale beyond comparison greater than he could before this storm of invention began. And the consequence is the continual further dislocation of the orderly social life of our great-great-grandfathers. No trade, no profession, is exempt. The old social routines and classifications have been, as people say, "knocked silly". There is no sort of occupation, fisheries, farming, textile work, metal work, mining which is not suffering from constant readjustment to new methods and facilities. Our traditions of trade and distribution flounder after these changes. Skilled occupations disappear in the general liquefaction.

The new power organisations are destroying the forests of the world at headlong speed, ploughing great grazing areas into deserts, exhausting mineral resources, killing off whales, seals and a multitude of rare and beautiful species, destroying the morale of every social type and devastating the planet. The institutions of the private appropriation of land and natural resources generally, and of private enterprise for profit, which did produce a fairly tolerable, stable and "civilised" social life for all but the most impoverished, in

Europe, America and East, for some centuries, have been expanded to a monstrous destructiveness by the new opportunities. The patient, nibbling, enterprising profit-seeker of the past, magnified and equipped now with the huge claws and teeth the change of scale has provided for him, has torn the old economic order to rags. Quite apart from war, our planet is being wasted and disorganised. Yet the process goes on, without any general control, more monstrously destructive even than the continually enhanced terrors of modern warfare.

Now it has to be made clear that these two things, the manifest necessity for some collective world control to eliminate warfare and the less generally admitted necessity for a collective control of the economic and biological life of mankind, are aspects of one and the same process. Of the two the disorganisation of the ordinary life which is going on, war or no war, is the graver and least reversible. Both arise out of the abolition of distance and the change of scale, they affect and modify each other, and unless their parallelism and interdependence are recognised, any projects for world federation or anything of the sort are doomed inevitably to frustration.

That is where the League of nations broke down completely. It was legal; it was political. It was devised by an ex-professor of the old-fashioned history assisted by a few politicians. It ignored the vast disorganisation of human life by technical revolutions, big business and modern finance that was going on, of which the Great War itself was scarcely more than a byproduct. It was constituted as though nothing of that sort was occurring.

This war storm which is breaking upon us now, due to the continued fragmentation of human government among a patchwork of sovereign states, is only one aspect of the general need for a rational consolidation of human affairs. The independent sovereign state with its perpetual war threat, armed with the resources of modern mechanical frightfulness, is only the most blatant and terrifying aspect of that same want of a coherent general control that makes overgrown, independent, sovereign, private business organisations and combinations, socially destructive. We should still be at the mercy of the “Napoleons” of commerce and the “Attilas” of finance, if there was not a gun or a battleship or a tank or a military

uniform in the world. We should still be sold up and dispossessed.

Political federation, we have to realise, without a concurrent economic collectivisation, is bound to fail. The task of the peace-maker who really desires peace in a new world, involves not merely a political but a profound social revolution, profounder even than the revolution attempted by the Communists in Russia. The Russian Revolution failed not by its extremism but through the impatience, violence and intolerance of its onset, through lack of foresight and intellectual insufficiency. The cosmopolitan revolution to a world collectivism, which is the only alternative to chaos and degeneration before mankind, has to go much further than the Russian; it has to be more thorough and better conceived and its achievement demands a much more heroic and more steadfast thrust.

It serves no useful purpose to shut our eyes to the magnitude and intricacy of the task of making the world peace. These are the basic factors of the case.

IV. — CLASS-WAR

NOW here it is necessary to make a distinction which is far too frequently ignored. Collectivisation means the handling of the common affairs of mankind by a common control responsible to the whole community. It means the suppression of go-as-you-please in social and economic affairs just as much as in international affairs. It means the frank abolition of profit-seeking and of every devise by which human+beings contrive to be parasitic on their fellow man. It is the practical realisation of the brotherhood of man through a common control. It means all that and it means no more than that.

The necessary nature of that control, the way to attain it and to maintain it have still to be discussed.

The early forms of socialism were attempts to think out and try out collectivist systems. But with the advent of Marxism, the larger idea of collectivism became entangled with a smaller one, the perpetual conflict of people in any unregulated social system to get the better of one another. Throughout the ages this has been going on. The rich, the powerful generally, the more intelligent and acquisitive have got away with things, and sweated, oppressed, enslaved, bought and frustrated the less intelligent, the less acquisitive and the unwary. The Haves in every generation have always got the better of the Have-nots, and the Have-nots have always resented the privations of their disadvantage.

So it is and so in the uncollectivised world it has always been. The bitter cry of the expropriated man echoes down the ages from ancient Egypt and the Hebrew prophets, denouncing those who grind the faces of the poor. At times the Have-nots have been so uneducated, so helplessly distributed among their more successful fellows that they have been incapable of social disturbance, but whenever such developments as plantation of factory labour, the accumulation of men in seaport towns, the disbanding of armies, famine and so forth, brought together masses of men at the same disadvantage, their individual resentments flowed together and became a common resentment. The miseries underlying human society were revealed. The Haves found themselves assailed by resentful, vindictive revolt.

Let us note that these revolts of the Have-nots throughout the ages have sometimes been very destructive, but that invariably they have failed to make any fundamental change in this old, old story of getting and not getting the upper hand. Sometimes the Have-nots have frightened or otherwise moved the Haves to more decent behaviour. Often the Have-nots have found a Champion who has ridden to power on their wrongs. Then the ricks were burnt or the chateaux. The aristocrats were guillotined and their heads carried on exemplary pikes. Such storms passed and when they passed, there for all practical purposes was the old order returning again; new people but the old inequalities. Returning inevitably, with only slight variations in appearance and phraseology, under the condition of a non-collective social order.

The point to note is that in the unplanned scramble of human life through the centuries of the horse-and-foot period, these incessantly recurring outbreaks of the losers against the winners have never once produced any permanent amelioration of the common lot, or greatly changed the features of the human community. Not once.

The Have-nots have never produced the intelligence and the ability and the Haves have never produced the conscience, to make a permanent alteration of the rules of the game. Slave revolts, peasant revolts, revolts of the proletariat have always been fits of rage, acute social fevers which have passed. The fact remains that history produces no reason for supposing that the Have-nots, considered as a whole, have available any reserves of directive and administrative capacity and disinterested devotion, superior to that of the more successful classes. Morally, intellectually, there is no reason to suppose them better.

Many potentially able people may miss education and opportunity; they may not be inherently inferior but nevertheless they are crippled and incapacitated and kept down. They are spoilt. Many specially gifted people may fail to “make good” in a jostling, competitive, acquisitive world and so fall into poverty and into the baffled, limited ways of living of the commonalty, but they too are exceptions. The idea of a right-minded Proletariat ready to take things over is a dream.

As the collectivist idea has developed out of the original

propositions of socialism, the more lucid thinkers have put this age-long bitterness of the Haves and the Have-nots into its proper place as part, as the most distressing part, but still only as part, of the vast wastage of human resources that their disorderly exploitation entailed. In the light of current events they have come to realise more and more clearly that the need and possibility of arresting this waste by a world-wide collectivisation is becoming continually more possible and at the same time imperative. They have had no delusions about the education and liberation that is necessary to gain that end. They have been moved less by moral impulses and sentimental pity and so forth, admirable but futile motives, as by the intense intellectual irritation of living in a foolish and destructive system. They are revolutionaries not because the present way of living is a hard and tyrannous way of living, but because it is from top to bottom exasperatingly stupid.

But thrusting athwart the socialist movement towards collectivisation and its research for some competent directive organisation of the world's affairs, came the clumsy initiative of Marxism with its class-war dogma, which has done more to misdirect and sterilise human good-will than any other misconception of reality that has ever stultified human effort.

Marx saw the world from a study and through the hazes of a vast ambition. He swam in the current ideologies of his time and so he shared the prevalent socialist drive towards collectivisation. But while his sounder-minded contemporaries were studying means and ends he jumped from a very imperfect understanding of the Trades Union movement in Britain to the wildest generalisations about the social process. He invented and antagonised two phantoms. One was the Capitalist System; the other the Worker.

There never has been anything on earth that could be properly called a Capitalist System. What was the matter with his world was manifestly its entire want of system. What the Socialists were feeling their way towards was the discovery and establishment of a world system.

The Haves of our period were and are a fantastic miscellany of people, inheriting or getting their power and influence by the most various of the interbreeding social solidarity even of a feudal

aristocracy or an Indian caste. But Marx, looking rather into his inner consciousness than at any concrete reality, evolved that monster "System" on his Right. Then over against it, still gazing into that vacuum, he discovered on the Left the proletarians being steadily expropriated and becoming class-conscious. They were just as endlessly various in reality as the people at the top of the scramble; in reality but not in the mind of the Communist seer. There they consolidated rapidly.

So while other men toiled at this gigantic problem of collectivisation, Marx found his almost childlishy simple recipe. All you had to do was to tell the workers that they were being robbed and enslaved by this wicked "Capitalist System" devised by the "bourgeoisie". They need only "unite"; they had "nothing to lose but their chains". The wicked Capitalist System was to be overthrown, with a certain vindictive liquidation of "capitalists" in general and the "bourgeoisie" in particular, and a millennium would ensue under a purely workers' control, which Lenin later on was to crystallise into a phrase of supra-theological mystery, "the dictatorship of the proletariat". The proletarians need learn nothing, plan nothing; they were right and good by nature; they would just "take over". The infinitely various envies, hatreds and resentments of the Have-nots were to fuse into a mighty creative drive. All virtue resided in them; all evil in those who had bettered them. One good thing there was in this new doctrine of the class war, it inculcated a much needed brotherliness among the workers, but it was balanced by the organisation of class hate. So the great propaganda of the class war, with these monstrous falsifications of manifest fact, went forth. Collectivisation would not so much be organised as appear magically when the incubus of Capitalism and all those irritatingly well-to-do people, were lifted off the great Proletarian soul.

Marx was a man incapable in money matters and much bothered by tradesmen's bills. Moreover he cherished absurd pretensions to aristocracy. The consequence was that he romanced about the lovely life of the Middle Ages as if he were another Belloc and concentrated his animus about the "bourgeoisie", whom he made responsible for all those great disruptive forces in human society that we have considered.

Lord Bacon, the Marquis of Worcester, Charles the Second and the Royal Society, people like Cavendish and Joule and Watt for example, all became "bourgeoisie" in his inflamed imagination. "During its reign of scarce a century", he wrote in the Communist Manifesto, "the bourgeoisie has created more powerful, more stupendous forces of production than all preceding generations rolled into one .... What earlier generations had the remotest inkling that such productive forces slumbered within the wombs of associated labour?"

"The wombs of associated labour!" (Golly, what a phrase!) The industrial revolution which was a consequence of the mechanical revolution is treated as the cause of it. Could facts be muddled more completely?

And again: "...the bourgeois system is no longer able to cope with the abundance of wealth it creates. How does the bourgeoisie overcome these crises? On the one hand, by the compulsory annihilation of a quantity of the productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets and the more thorough exploitation of old ones. With what results? The results are that the way is paved for more widespread and more disastrous crises and that the capacity for averting such crises is lessened.

"The weapons" (Weapons! How that sedentary gentleman in his vast beard adored military images!) "with which the bourgeoisie overthrew feudalism are now being turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

"But the bourgeoisie has not only forged the weapons that will slay it; it has also engendered the men who will use these weapons — the modern workers, the proletarians."

And so here they are, hammer and sickle in hand, chest stuck out, proud, magnificent, commanding, in the Manifesto. But go and look for them yourself in the streets. Go and look at them in Russia.

Even for 1848 this is not intelligent social analysis. It is the outpouring of a man with a B in his bonnet, the hated Bourgeoisie, a man with a certain vision, uncritical of his own sub-conscious prejudices, but shrewd enough to realise how great a driving force is hate and the inferiority complex. Shrewd enough to use hate and bitter enough to hate. Let anyone read over that Communist

Manifesto and consider who might have shared the hate or even have got it all, if Marx had not been the son of a rabbi. Read Jews for Bourgeoisie and the Manifesto is pure Nazi teaching of the 1933-8 vintage.

Stripped down to its core in this fashion, the primary falsity of the Marxist assumption is evident. But it is one of the queer common weakness of the human mind to be uncritical of primary assumptions and to smother up any enquiry into their soundness in secondary elaboration, in technicalities and conventional formula?. Most of our systems of belief rest upon rotten foundations, and generally these foundations are made sacred to preserve them from attack. They become dogmas in a sort of holy of holies. It is shockingly uncivil to say "But that is nonsense". The defenders of all the dogmatic religions fly into rage and indignation when one touches on the absurdity of their foundations. Especially if one laughs. That is blasphemy.

This avoidance of fundamental criticism is one of the greatest dangers to any general human understanding. Marxism is no exception to the universal tendency. The Capitalist System has to be a real system, the Bourgeoisie an organised conspiracy against the Workers, and every human conflict everywhere has to be an aspect of the Class War, or they cannot talk to you. They will not listen to you. Never once has there been an attempt to answer the plain things I have been saying about them for a third of a century. Anything not in their language flows off their minds like water off a duck's back. Even Lenin — by far the subtlest mind in the Communist story — has not escaped this pitfall, and when I talked to him in Moscow in 1920 he seemed quite unable to realise that the violent conflict going on in Ireland between the Catholic nationalists and the Protestant garrison was not his sacred insurrection of the Proletariat in full blast.

To-day there is quite a number of writers, and among them there are men of science who ought to think better, solemnly elaborating a pseudo-philosophy of science and society upon the deeply buried but entirely nonsensical foundations laid by Marx. Month by month the industrious Left book Club pours a new volume over the minds of its devotees to sustain their mental habits and pickle them against the

septic influence of unorthodox literature. A party Index of Forbidden Books will no doubt follow. Distinguished professors with solemn delight in their own remarkable ingenuity, lecture and discourse and even produce serious-looking volumes, upon the superiority of Marxist physics and Marxist research, to the unbranded activities of the human mind. One tries not to be rude to them, but it is hard to believe they are not deliberately playing the fool with their brains. Or have they a feeling that revolutionary communism is ahead, and are they doing their best to rationalise it with an eye to those red days to come? (See Hogben's Dangerous Thoughts.)

Here I cannot pursue in any detail the story of the Rise and Corruption of Marxism in Russia. It confirms in every particular my contention that the class-war idea is an entanglement and perversion of the world drive towards a world collectivism, a wasting disease of cosmopolitan socialism. It has followed in its general outline the common history of every revolt of the Have-nots since history began. Russia in the shadows displayed an immense inefficiency and sank slowly to Russia in the dark. Its galaxy of incompetent foremen, managers, organisers and so forth, developed the most complicated system of self-protection against criticism, they sabotaged one another, they intrigued against one another. You can read the quintessence of the thing in Littlepage's In Search of Soviet Gold. And like every other Have-not revolt since the dawn of history, hero worship took possession of the insurgent masses. The inevitable Champion appeared. They escape from the Czar and in twenty years they are worshipping Stalin, originally a fairly honest, unoriginal, ambitious revolutionary, driven to self-defensive cruelty and inflated by flattery to his present quasi-divine autocracy. The cycle completes itself and we see that like every other merely insurrectionary revolution, nothing has changed; a lot of people have been liquidated and a lot of other people have replaced them and Russia seems returning back to the point at which it started, to a patriotic absolutism of doubtful efficiency and vague, incalculable aims. Stalin, I believe, is honest and benevolent in intention, he believes in collectivism simply and plainly, he is still under the impression that he is making a good thing of Russia and of the countries within her sphere of influence, and he is self-righteously impatient of criticism

or opposition. His successor may not have the same disinterestedness.

But I have written enough to make it clear why we have to dissociate collectivisation altogether from the class war in our minds. Let us waste no more time on the spectacle of the Marxist putting the cart in front of the horse and tying himself up with the harness. We have to put all this proletarian distortion of the case out of our minds and start afresh upon the problem of how to realise the new and unprecedented possibilities of world collectivisation that have opened out upon the world in the past hundred years. That is a new story. An entirely different story.

We human-beings are facing gigantic forces that will either destroy our species altogether or lift it to an altogether unprecedented level of power and well-being. These forces have to be controlled or we shall be annihilated. But completely controlled they can abolish slavery — by the one sure means of making these things unnecessary. Class-war communism has its opportunity to realise all this, and it has failed to make good. So far it has only replaced one autocratic Russia by another. Russia, like all the rest of the world, is still facing the problem of the competent government of a collective system. She has not solved it.

The dictatorship of the proletariat has failed us. We have to look for possibilities of control in other directions. Are they to be found?

NOTE

A friendly adviser reading the passage on p.47 protests against "the wombs of associated labour" as a mistranslation of the original German of the Manifesto. I took it from the translation of Professor Hirendranath Mukherjee in an Indian students' journal, *Sriharsha*, which happened to be at my desk. But my adviser produces Lily G. Aitken and Frank C. Budgen in a Glasgow Socialist Labour Press publication, who gave it as "the lap of social labour", which is more refined but pure nonsense. The German word is "Schoß", and in its widest sense it means the whole productive maternal outfit from bosom to knees and here quite definitely the womb. The French translation gives "sein", which at the first glance seems to carry gentility to an even higher level. But as you can say in French that an expectant mother carries her child in her "sein", I think Professor Mukherjee has it. Thousands of reverent young Communists must have read that "lap" without observing its absurdity. Marx is trying to make out that the increase of productive efficiency was due to "association" in factories. A better phrase to express his (wrong-headed) intention would have been "the co-ordinated operations of workers massed in factories".

V. — UNSALTED YOUTH

WE have now to examine these disruptive forces a little more closely, these disruptive forces which are manifestly overstraining and destroying the social and political system in which most of us have been reared. At what particular points in our political and social life are these disruptive forces discovering breaking-points?

Chief among these breaking-points, people are beginning to realise more and more clearly, is the common, half-educated young man.

One particular consequence of the onrush of power and invention in our time, is the release of a great flood of human energy in the form of unemployed young people. This is a primary factor of the general political instability.

We have to recognise that humanity is not suffering, as most animal species when they suffer to do, from hunger or want in any material form. It is threatened not by deficiency but by excess. It is plethoric. It is not lying down to die through physical exhaustion; it is knocking itself to pieces.

Measured by any standards except human contentment and ultimate security, mankind appears to be much wealthier now than in 1918. The qualities of power and material immediately available are much greater. What is called productivity in general is greater. But there is sound reason for supposing that a large part of this increased productivity is really a swifter and more thorough exploitation of irreplaceable capital. It is a process that cannot go on indefinitely. It rises to a maximum and then the feast is over. Natural resources are being exhausted at a great rate, and the increased output goes into war munitions whose purpose is destruction, and into sterile indulgences no better than waste. Man, "heir of the ages", is a demoralised spendthrift, in a state of galloping consumption, living on stimulants.

When we look into the statistics of population, there is irrefutable proof that everywhere we are passing a maximum (see for this Enid Charles' The Twilight of Parenthood, or R. R. Kuczynski's Measurement of Population Growth) and that a rapid decline is

certain not only in Western Europe bur throughout the world. There is sound reason for doubting the alleged vast increase of the Russian people (see Souvarine's Stalin). Nevertheless, because of the continually increasing efficiency of productive methods, the relative pressure of this new unemployed class increases. The "mob" of the twentieth century is quite different from the almost animal "mob" of the eighteenth century. It is a restless sea of dissatisfied young people, of young men who can find no outlet for their natural urgencies and ambitions, young people quite ready to "make trouble" as soon as they are shown how.

In the technically crude past, the illiterate Have-nots were sweated and overworked. It was easy to find toil to keep them all busy. Such surplus multitudes are wanted no more. Toil is no longer marketable. Machines can toil better and with less resistance.

These frustrated multitudes have been made acutely aware of their own frustration. The gap of their always partly artificial disadvantage has been greatly diminished because now they all read. Even for incidental employment it has been necessary to teach them that, and the new reading public thus created has evoked a press and literature of excitement and suggestion. The cinema and the radio dazzle them with spectacles of luxury and unrestricted living. They are not the helpless Hodges and factory fodder of a hundred years ago. They are educated up to what must have been the middle-class level in 1889. They are indeed largely a squeezed-out middle class, restless, impatient and as we shall see extremely dangerous. They have assimilated almost all of the lower strata that were formerly illiterate drudges.

And this modernised excess population has no longer any social humility. It has no belief in the infallible wisdom of its rulers. It sees them too clearly; it knows about them, their waste, vices and weaknesses, with an even exaggerated vividness. It sees no reason for its exclusion from the good things of life by such people. It has lost enough of its inferiority to realise that most of that inferiority is arbitrary and artificial.

You may say that this is a temporary state of affairs, that the fall in population will presently relieve the situation, by getting rid of this surplus of the "not wanted". But it will do nothing of the sort. As

population falls, consumption will fall. Industries will still be producing more and more efficiently for a shrinking market and they will be employing fewer and fewer hands. A state of five million people with half a million of useless hands, will be twice as unstable as forty million with two million standing off. So long as the present state of affairs continues, this stratum of perplexed young people "out of it" will increase relatively to the total community.

It is still not realised as clearly as it should be, how much the troubles of the present time are due to this new aspect of the social puzzle. But if you will scrutinise the events of the past half century in the light of this idea, you will see more and more convincingly that it is mainly through this growing mass of unfulfilled desire that the disruptive forces manifest themselves.

The eager and adventurous unemployed young are indeed the shock troops in the destruction of the old social order everywhere. They find guidance in some confident Party or some inspired Champion, who organises them for revolutionary or counter-revolutionary ends. It scarcely matters which. They become Communists or they become Fascists, Nazis, the Irish Republican Army, Ku Klux Klansmen and so forth and so on. The essence is the combination of energy, frustration and discontent. What all such movements have in common, is a genuine indignation at the social institutions that have begotten and then cold-shouldered them, a quasi-military organisation and the resolve to seize power for themselves embodied in their leaders. A wise and powerful government would at any cost anticipate and avert these destructive activities by providing various and interesting new employment and the necessary condition for a satisfying successful life for everyone. These young people are life. The rise of the successful leader only puts off the trouble for a time. He seizes power in the name of his movement. And then? When the seizure of power has been effected, he finds himself obliged to keep things going, to create justification for his leadership, exciting enterprises, urgencies.

A leader of vision with adequate technical assistance might conceivedly direct much of the human energy he has embodied into creative channels. For example he could rebuild the dirty, inadequate cities of our age, turn the still slovenly country-side into a garden and

play-ground, re-clothe, liberate and stimulate imaginations, until the ideas of creative progress became a habit of mind. But in doing this he will find himself confronted by those who are sustained by the pre-emptions and appropriations of the old order. These relatively well-off people will bargain with him up to the last moment for their money and impede his seizure and utilisation of land and material resources, and will be further hampered by the fact that in organising his young people he has had to turn their minds and capacities from creative work to systematic violence and militant activities. It is easy to make an unemployed young man into a Fascist or gangster, but it is hard to turn him back to any decent social task. Moreover the Champion's own leadership was largely due to his conspiratorial and adventurous quality. He is himself unfit for a creative job. He finds himself a fighter at the head of a fighting pack.

And furthermore, unless his country is on the scale of Russia and the United States, whatever he attempts in order to make good his promises of an abundant life, has to be done in face of that mutual pressure of the sovereign states due to the abolition of distance and change of scale which we have already considered. He has no elbow-room in which to operate. The resultant of these convergent difficulties is to turn him and his fighting pack releasing flux of predatory war.

Everywhere in the world, under varying local circumstances, we see governments primarily concerned with this supreme problem of what to do with these young adults who are unemployable under present conditions. We have to realise that and bear it constantly in mind. It is there in every country. It is the most dangerous and wrong-headed view of the world situation, to treat the totalitarian countries as differing fundamentally from the rest of the world.

The problem of reabsorbing the unemployable adult is the essential problem in all states. It is the common shape to which all current political dramas reduce. How are we to use up or slake this surplus of human energy? The young are the live core of our species. The generation below sixteen or seventeen has not yet begun to give trouble, and after forty, the ebb of vitality disposes men to accept the lot that has fallen to them.

Franklin Roosevelt and Stalin find themselves in control of vast

countries under-developed or so misdeveloped that their main energies go into internal organisation or reorganisation. They do not press against their frontiers therefore and they do not threaten war. The recent Russian annexations have been precautionary-defensive. But all the same both Russia and America have to cater for that troublesome social stratum quite as much as Europe. The New Deal is plainly an attempt to achieve a working socialism and avert a social collapse in America; it is extraordinarily parallel to the successive "policies" and "Plans" of the Russian experiment. Americans shirk the word "socialism", but what else can one call it?

The British oligarchy, demoralised and slack with the accumulated wealth of a century of advantage, bought off social upheaval for a time by the deliberate and socially demoralising appeasement of the dole. It has made no adequate effort to employ or educate these surplus people; it has just pushed the dole at them. It even tries to buy off the leader of the Labour Party with a salary of £2000 a year. Whatever we may think of the quality and deeds of the Nazi or Fascist regimes or the follies of their leaders, we must at any rate concede that they attempt, however clumsily, to reconstruct life in a collectivist direction. They are efforts to adjust and construct and so far they are in advance of the British ruling class. The British Empire has shown itself the least constructive of all governing networks. It produces no New Deals, no Five Year Plans; it keeps on trying to stave off its inevitable dissolution and carry on upon the old lines — and apparently it will do that until it has nothing more to give away.

"Peace in our time", that foolishly premature self-congratulation of Mr Chamberlain, is manifestly the guiding principle of the British elder statesman. It is that natural desire we all begin to feel after sixty to sit down comfortably somewhere. Unprogressive tranquillity they want at any price, even at the price of a preventive war. This astonishing bunch of rulers has never revealed any conception whatever of a common future before its sprawling Empire. There was a time when that Empire seemed likely to become the nexus of a world system, but now manifestly it has no future but disintegration. Apparently its rulers expected it to go on just as it was for ever. Bit by bit its component parts have dropped away and become quasi-

independent powers, generally after an unedifying struggle; Southern Ireland for example is neutral in the present war, South Africa hesitated.

Now, and that is why this book is being written, these people, by a string of almost incredible blunders, have entangled what is left of their Empire in a great war to "end Hitler", and they have absolutely no suggestion to offer their antagonists and the world at large, of what is to come after Hitler. Apparently they hope to paralyse Germany in some as yet unspecified fashion and then to go back to their golf links or the fishing stream and doze by the fire after dinner. That is surely one of the most astounding things in history, the possibility of death and destruction beyond all reckoning and our combatant governments have no idea of what is to follow when the overthrow of Hitler is accomplished. They seem to be as void of any sense of the future, as completely empty-headed about the aftermath of their campaigns, as one of those American Tories who are "just out against F.D.R. Damn him!"

So the British Empire remains, paying its way down to ultimate bankruptcy, buying itself a respite from the perplexing problems of the future, with the accumulated wealth and power of its past. It is rapidly becoming the most backward political organisation in the world. But sooner or later it will have no more money for the dole and no more allies to abandon nor dominions to yield up to their local bosses, and then possibly its disintegration will be complete (R.I.P.), leaving intelligent English people to line up at last with America and the rest of the intelligent world and face the universal problem. Which is: how are we to adapt ourselves to these mighty disruptive forces that are shattering human society as it is at present constituted?

In the compressed countries which have little internal scope and lack the vast natural resources of the Russian and Atlantic communities, the internal tension makes more directly for aggressive warfare, but the fundamental driving-force behind their aggressiveness is still the universal trouble, that surplus of young men.

Seen in this broader vision, the present war falls into its true proportions as a stupid conflict upon secondary issues, which is

delaying and preventing an overdue world adjustment. That is may kill hundreds of thousands of people does not alter that. An idiot with a revolver can murder a family. He remains an idiot.

From 1914 to 1939 has been a quarter of a century of folly, meanness, evasion and resentment, and only a very tedious and copious historian would attempt to distribute the blame among those who had played a part in the story. And when he had done it, what he had done would not matter in the least. An almost overwhelmingly difficult problem has confronted us all, and in some measure we have all of us lost our heads in the face of it, lost our dignity, been too clever by half, pinned ourselves to cheap solutions, quarrelled stupidly among ourselves. "We have erred and strayed.... We have lest undone those things that we ought to have done and we have done those things which we ought not to have done and there is no health in us."

I do not see any way to a solution of the problem of World Peace unless we begin with a confession of universal wrong-thinking and wrong-doing. Then we can sit down to the question of a solution with some reasonable prospect of finding an answer.

Now let us assume that "we" are a number of intelligent men, German, French, English, American, Italian, Chinese and so forth, who have decided in consequence of the war and in spite of the war, while the war is still going on, to wipe out all these squabbling bygones from our minds, and discuss plainly and simply the present situation of mankind. What is to be done with the world? Let us recapitulate the considerations that so far have been brought in, and what prospects they open, if any, of some hopeful concerted action, action that would so revolutionise the human outlook as to end war and that hectic recurrent waste of human life and happiness, for ever.

Firstly then it has been made apparent that humanity is at the end of an age, an age of fragmentation in the management of its affairs, fragmentation politically among separate sovereign states and economically among unrestricted business of organisations competing for profit. The abolition of distance, the enormous increase of available power, root causes of all our troubles, have suddenly made what was once a tolerable working system — a system that was perhaps with all its inequalities and injustices the

only practicable working system in its time — enormously dangerous and wasteful, so that it threatens to exhaust and destroy our world altogether. Man is like a feckless heir who has suddenly been able to get at his capital and spend it as though it were income. We are living in a phase of violent and irreparable expenditure. There is an intensified scramble among nations and among individuals to

acquire, monopolise and spend. The dispossessed young find themselves hopeless unless they resort to violence. They implement the ever-increasing instability. Only a comprehensive collectivisation of human affairs can arrest this disorderly self-destruction of mankind. All this has been made plain in what has gone before.

This essential problem, the problem of collectivisation, can be viewed from two reciprocal points of view and stated in two different ways. We can ask, "What is to be done to end the world chaos?" and also "How can we offer the common young man a reasonable and stimulating prospect of a full life?"

These two questions are the obverse and reverse of one question. What answers one answers the other. The answer to both is that we have to collectivise the world as one system with practically everyone playing a reasonably satisfying part in it. For sound practical reasons, over and above any ethical or sentimental considerations, we have to devise a collectivisation that neither degrades nor enslaves.

Our imaginary world conference then has to turn itself to the question of how to collectivise the world, so that it will remain collectivised and yet enterprising, interesting and happy enough to content that common young man who will otherwise reappear, baffled and sullen, at the street corners and throw it into confusion again. To that problem the rest of this book will address itself.

As a matter of fact it is very obvious that at the present time a sort of collectivisation is being imposed very rapidly upon the world. Everyone is being enrolled, ordered about, put under control somewhere — even if it is only in an evacuation or concentration camp or what not. This process of collectivisation, collectivisation of some sort, seems now to be in the nature of things and there is no reason to suppose it is reversible. Some people imagine world peace

as the end of that process. Collectivisation is going to be defeated and a vaguely conceived reign of law will restore and sustain property, Christianity, individualism and everything to which the respectable prosperous are accustomed. This is implicit even on the title of such a book as Edward Mousley's Man or Leviathan? It is much more reasonable to think that world peace has to be the necessary completion of that process, and that the alternative is a decadent anarchy. If so, the phrase for the aims of liberal thought should be no Man or Leviathan but Man masters Leviathan.

On this point, the inevitability of collectivisation as the sole alternative to universal brigandage and social collapse, our world conference must make itself perfectly clear.

Then it has to turn itself to the much more difficult and complicated question of how.

VI. — SOCIALISM UNAVOIDABLE

LET us, even at the cost of a certain repetition, look a little more closely now into the fashion in which the disruptive forces are manifesting themselves in the Western and Eastern hemispheres.

In the Old World the hypertrophy of armies is most conspicuous, in America it was the hypertrophy of big business. But in both the necessity for an increasing collective restraint upon uncoordinated over-powerful business or political enterprise is more and more clearly recognised.

There is a strong opposition on the part of great interests in America to the President, who has made himself the spear-head of the collectivising drive; they want to put the brake now on his progressive socialisation of the nation, and quite possibly, at the cost of increasing social friction, they may slow down the drift to socialism very considerably. But it is unbelievable that they dare provoke the social convulsion that would ensue upon a deliberate reversal of the engines or upon any attempt to return to the glorious days of big business, wild speculation and mounting unemployment before 1927. They will merely slow down the drive. For in the world now all roads lead to socialism or social dissolution.

The tempo of the process is different in the two continents; that is the main difference between them. It is not an opposition. They travel at different rates but they travel towards an identical goal. In the Old World at present the socialisation of the community is going on far more rapidly and thoroughly than it is in America because of the perpetual war threat.

In Western Europe now the dissolution and the drive towards socialisation progress by leaps and bounds. The British governing class and British politicians generally, overtaken by a war they had not the intelligence to avert, have tried to atone for their slovenly unimaginativeness during the past twenty years in a passion of witless improvisation. God knows what their actual war preparations amount to, but their domestic policy seems to be based on an imperfect study of Barcelona, Guernica, Madrid and Warsaw. They imagine similar catastrophes on a larger scale — although they are

quite impossible, as every steady-headed person who can estimate the available supplies of petrol knows — and they have a terrible dread of being held responsible. They fear a day of reckoning with their long-bamboozled lower classes. In their panic they are rapidly breaking up the existing order altogether.

The changes that have occurred in Great Britain in less than a year are astounding. They recall in many particulars the social dislocation of Russia in the closing months of 1917. There has been a shifting and mixing-up of people that would have seemed impossible to anyone in 1937. The evacuation of centres of population under the mere exaggerated threat of air raids has been of frantic recklessness. Hundreds of thousands of families have been broken up, children separated from their parents and quartered in the homes of more or less reluctant hosts. Parasites and skin diseases, vicious habits and insanitary practices have been spread, as if in a passion of equalitarian propaganda, the slums of such centres as Glasgow, London and Liverpool, throughout the length and breadth of the land. Railways, road traffic, all the normal communications have been dislocated by a universal running about. For a couple of months Great Britain has been more like a disturbed ant-hill than an organised civilised country.

The contagion of funk has affected everyone. Public institutions and great business concerns have bolted to remote and inconvenient sites; the BBC organisation, for example, scuffled off headlong from London, needlessly and ridiculously, no man pursuing it. There has been a wild epidemic of dismissals, of servants employed in London, for example, and a still wilder shifting of unsuitable men to novel, unnecessary jobs. Everyone has been exhorted to serve the country, children of twelve, to the great delight of conservative-minded farmers, have been withdrawn from school and put to work on the land, and yet the number of those who have lost their jobs and cannot find anything else to do, has gone up by over 100,000.

There have been amateurish attempts to ration food, producing waste here and artificial scarcity there. A sort of massacre of small independent businesses is in progress mainly to the advantage of the big provision-dealing concerns, who changed in a night from open profiteers to become the “expert” advisers of food supply. All the

expertise they have ever displayed has been the extraction of profits from food supply. But while profits mount, taxation with an air of great resolution sets itself to prune them.

The British public has always been phlegmatic in the face of danger, it is too stout-hearted and too stupid to give way to excesses of fear, but the authorities have thought it necessary to plaster the walls with cast, manifestly expensive, posters, headed with a Royal Crown, "Your courage, your resolution, your cheerfulness will bring us victory."

"Oh yus," said the London Cockney. "You'll get the victory all right. Trust you. On my courage, my resolution, my cheerfulness; you'll use up 'Tommy Atkins' all right. Larf at 'im in a kindly sort of way and use him. And then you think you'll out him back again on the dust-heap. Again? Twice?"

That is all too credible. But this time our rulers will emerge discredited and frustrated from the conflict to face a disorganised population in a state of mutinous enquiry. They have made preposterous promises to restore Poland and they will certainly have to eat their words about that. Or what is more probable the government will have to give place to another administration which will be able to eat those words for them with a slightly better grace. There is little prospect of Thanksgiving Services or any Armistice night orgy this time. People at home are tasting the hardships of war even more tediously and irritating than the men on active service. Cinemas, theatres, have been shut prematurely, black-outs have diminished the safety of the streets and doubled the tale of road casualties. The British crowd is already a sullen crowd. The world has not seen it in such a bad temper for a century and half, and, let there be no mistake about it, it is far less in a temper with the Germans than it is with its own rulers.

Through all this swirling intimidating propaganda of civil disorder and a systematic suppression of news and criticism of the most exasperating sort, war preparation has proceeded. The perplexed and baffled citizen can only hope that on the military side there has been a little more foresight and less hysteria.

The loss of confidence and particularly confidence in the government and social order is already enormous. No one feels

secure, in his job, in his services, in his savings, any longer. People lose confidence even in the money in their pockets. And human society is built on confidence. It cannot carry on without it.

Things are like this already and it is only the opening stage of this strange war. The position of the ruling class and the financial people who have hitherto dominated British affairs is a peculiar one. The cast of the war is already enormous, and there is no sign that it will diminish. Income tax, super tax, death duties, taxes on war profits have been raised to a level that should practically extinguish the once prosperous middle strata of society altogether. The very wealthy will survive in a shorn and diminished state, they will hang on to the last, but the graded classes that have hitherto intervened between them and the impoverished masses of the population, who will be irritated by war sacrifices, extensively unemployed and asking more and more penetrating questions, will have diminished greatly. Only by the most ingenious monetary manipulation, by dangerous tax-dodging and expedients verging on sheer scoundrelism, will a clever young man have the ghost of a chance of climbing by the old traditional money-making ladder, above his fellows. On the other hand, the career of a public employee will become continually more attractive. There is more interest in it and more self-respect. The longer the war continues, the completer and more plainly irreparable will be the dissolution of the old order.

Now to many readers who have been incredulous of the statement of the first section of this book, that we are living in the End of an Age, to those who have been impervious to the account of the disruptive forces that are breaking up the social order and to the argument I have drawn from them, who may have got away from all that, so to speak, by saying they are "scientific" or "materialistic" or "sociological" or "highbrow", or that Providence that has hitherto displayed such a marked bias in favour of well-off, comfortable, sluggish-minded people is sure to do something nice for them at the eleventh hour, the real inconveniences, alarms, losses and growing disorder of the life about them may at last bring a realisation that the situation

in Western Europe is approaching revolutionary conditions. It will be a hard saying for many people in the advantage-holding classes,

and particularly if they are middle-aged, that the older has already gone to pieces can never be put back. But how can they doubt it?

A revolution, that is to say a more or less convulsive effort at social and political readjustment, is bound to come in all these overstrained countries, in Germany, in Britain and universally. It is more likely than not to arise directly out of the exasperating diminuendos and crescendos of the present war, as a culminating phase of it. Revolution of some sort we must have. We cannot prevent its onset. But we can affect the course of its development. It may end in utter disaster or it may release a new world, far better than the old. Within these broad limits it is possible for us to make up our minds how it will come to us.

And since the only practical question before us is the question of how we will take this world revolution we cannot possibly evade, let me recall to your attention the reasons I have advanced in the second section of this book for the utmost public discussion of our situation at the present time. And also let me bring back to mind the examination of Marxism in the fourth section. There it is shown how easily a collectivist movement, especially when it is faced by the forcible-feeble resistances and suppressions of those who have hitherto enjoyed wealth and power, may degenerate into an old-fashioned class-war, become conspiratorial, dogmatic and inadaptable, and sink towards leader worship and autocracy. That apparently is what has happened in Russia in its present phase. We do not know how much of the original revolutionary spirit survives there, and a real fundamental issue in the world situation is whether we are to follow in the footsteps of Russia or whether we are going to pull ourselves together, face the stern logic of necessity and produce a Western Revolution, which will benefit by the Russian experience, react upon Russia and lead ultimately to a world understanding.

What is it that the Atlantic world finds most objectionable in the Soviet world of to-day? Is it any disapproval of collectivism as such? Only in the case of a dwindling minority of rich and successful men — and very rarely of the sons of such people. Very few capable men under fifty nowadays remain individualists in political and social matters. They are not even fundamentally anti-Communist. Only it

happens that for various reasons the political life of the community is still in the hands of unteachable old-fashioned people. What are called "democracies" suffer greatly from the rule of old men who have not kept pace with the times. The real and effective disapproval, distrust and disbelief in the soundness of the Soviet system lies not in the out-of-date individualism of these elderly types, but in the conviction that it can never achieve efficiency or even maintain its honest ideal of each for all and all for each, unless it has free speech and an insistence upon legally-defined freedoms for the individual within the collectivist framework. We do not deplore the Russian Revolution as a Revolution. We complain that it is not a good enough Revolution and we want a better one.

The more highly things are collectivised the more necessary is a legal system embodying the Rights of Man. This has been forgotten under the Soviets, and so men go in fear there of arbitrary police action. But the more functions your government controls the more need there is for protective law. The objection to Soviet collectivism is that, lacking the antiseptic of legally assured personal freedom, it will not keep. It professes to be fundamentally a common economic system based on class-war ideas; the industrial director is under the heel of the Party commissar; the political police have got altogether out of hand; and the affairs gravitate inevitably towards an oligarchy or an autocracy protecting its incapacity by the repression of adverse comment.

But these valid criticisms merely indicate the sort of collectivisation that has to be avoided. It does not dispose of collectivism as such. If we in our turn do not wish to be submerged by the wave of Bolshevisation that is evidently advancing from the East, we must implement all these valid objections and create a collectivisation that will be more efficient, more prosperous, tolerant, free and rapidly progressive than the system we condemn. We, who do not like the Stalinised-Marxist state, have, as they used to say in British politics, to "dish" it by going one better. We have to confront Eastern-spirited collectivism with Western-spirited collectivism.

Perhaps this may be better put. We may be giving way to a subconscious conceit here and assuming that the West is always going to be thinking more freely and clearly and working more

efficiently than the East. It is like that now, but it may not always be like that. Every country has had its phases of illumination and its phases of blindness. Stalin and Stalinism are neither the beginning nor the end of the collectivisation of Russia.

We are dealing with something still almost impossible to estimate, the extent to which the new Russian patriotism and the new Stalin-worship, have effaced and how far they have merely masked, the genuinely creative international communism of the revolutionary years. The Russian mind is not a docile mind, and most of the literature available for a young man to read in Russia, we must remember, is still revolutionary. There has been no burning of the books there. The Moscow radio talks for internal consumption since the Hitler-Stalin understanding betray a great solicitude on the part of the government to make it clear that there has been no sacrifice of revolutionary principle. That witnesses to the vitality of public opinion in Russia. The clash between the teachings of 1920 and 1940 may have a liberating effect on many people's minds. Russians love to talk about ideas. Under the Czar they talked. It is incredible that they do not talk under Stalin.

That question whether collectivisation is to be "Westernised" or "Easternised", using these words under the caveat of the previous paragraph, is really the first issue before the world today. We need a fully ventilated Revolution. Our Revolution has to go on in the light and air. We may have to accept sovietisation a la Russe quite soon unless we can produce a better collectivisation. But if we produce a better collectivisation it is more probable than not that the Russian system will incorporate our improvements, forget its reviving nationalism again, debunk Marx and Stalin, so far as they can be debunked, and merge into the one world state.

Between these primary antagonists, between Revolution with its eyes open and Revolution with a mask and a gag, there will certainly be complications of the issue due to patriotism and bigotry and the unteachable wilful blindness of those who do not want to see. Most people lie a lot to themselves before they lie to other people, and it is hopeless to expect that all the warring cults and traditions that confuse the mind of the race to-day are going to fuse under a realisation of the imperative nature of the human situation as I have

stated it here. Multitudes will never realise it. Few human+beings are able to change their primary ideas after the middle thirties. They get fixed in them and drive before them no more intelligently than animals drive before their innate impulses. They will die rather than change their second selves.

One of the most entangling of these disconcerting secondary issues is that created by the stupid and persistent intrigues of the Roman Catholic Church.

Let me be clear here. I am speaking of the Vatican and of its sustained attempts to exercise a directive role in secular life. I number among my friends many Roman Catholics who have built the most charming personalities and behaviour systems on the framework provided them by their faith. One of the loveliest characters I have ever known was G.K. Chesterton. But I think he was just as fine before he became a Catholic as afterwards. Still he found something he needed in Catholicism. There are saints of all creeds and of none, so good are better possibilities of human nature. Religious observances provide a frame that many find indispensable for the seemly ordering of their lives. And outside the ranks of "strict" observers many good people with hardly more theology than a Unitarian, love to speak of goodness and kindness as Christianity. So-and-so is a "good Christian". Voltaire, says Alfred Noyes, the Catholic writer, was a "good Christian". I do not use the word "Christianity" in that sense because I do not believe that Christians have any monopoly of goodness. When I write of Christianity, I mean Christianity with a definite creed and militant organisation and not these good kind people, good and kind but not very fastidious about the exact use of the words.

Such "good Christians" can be almost as bitterly critical as I am of the continual pressure upon the faithful by that inner group of Italians in Rome, subsidised by the Fascist government, who pull the strings of Church policy throughout the world, so as to do this or that tortuous or uncivilised thing, to cripple education, to persecute unorthodox ways of living.

It is to the influence of the Church that we must ascribe the foolish support by the British Foreign Office of Franco, that murderous little "Christian gentleman", in his overthrow of the staggering liberal

renascence of Spain. It is the Roman Catholic influence the British and French have to thank, for the fantastic blundering that involved them in the defence of the impossible Polish state and its unrighteous acquisitions; it affected British policy in respect to Austria and Czechoslovakia profoundly, and now it is doing its utmost to maintain and develop a political estrangement between Russia and the Western world by its prejudiced exacerbation of the idea that Russia is "anti-God" while we Westerners are little children of the light, gallantly fighting on the side of the Cross, Omnipotence, Greater Poland, national sovereignty, the small uneconomic prolific farmer and shopkeeper and anything else you like to imagine constitutes "Christendom".

The Vatican strives perpetually to develop the present war into a religious war. It is trying to steal the war. By all the circumstances of its training it is unteachable. It knows no better. It will go on — until some economic revolution robs it of its funds. Then as a political influence it may evaporate very rapidly. The Anglican Church and many other Protestant sects, the wealthy Baptists, for example, follow suit.

It is not only in British affairs that this propaganda goes on. With the onset of war France becomes militant and Catholic. It has suppressed the Communist Party, as a gesture of resentment against Russia and a precaution against post-war collectivisation. The Belgian caricaturist Raemaekers is now presenting Hitler day after day as a pitiful weakling already disposed of and worthy of our sympathy, while Stalin is represented as a frightful giant with horns and a tail. Yet both France and Britain are at peace with Russia and have every reason to come to a working understanding with that country. The attitude of Russia to the war has on the whole been cold, contemptuous and reasonable.

It is not as if these devious schemes can take us somewhere; it is not that this restoration of the Holy Roman Empire is a possibility. You confront these Catholic politicians, just as you confront the politicians of Westminster, with these two cardinal facts, the abolition of distance and the change of scale. In vain. You cannot get any realisation of the significance of these things into those idea-proofed skulls. They are deaf to it, blind to it. They cannot see that it

makes any difference at all to their long-established mental habits. If their minds waver for a moment they utter little magic prayers to exorcise the gleam.

What, they ask, has "mere size" to do with the soul of man, "mere speed, mere power"? What can the young do better than subdue their natural urgency to live and do? What has mere life to do with the religious outlook? The war, these Vatican propagandists insist, is a "crusade" against modernism, against socialism and free thought, the restoration of priestly authority is its end; our sons are fighting to enable the priest to thrust his pious uncleanliness once again between reader and book, child and knowledge, husband and wife, sons and lovers. While honest men are fighting now to put an end to military aggression, to resume indeed that "war to end war" that was aborted to give us the League of Nations, these bigots are sedulously perverting the issue, trying to represent it as a religious war against Russia in particular and the modern spirit in general.

The well-trained Moslem, the American fundamentalists, the orthodox Jew, all the fixed cultures, produce similar irrelevant and wasteful resistances, but the Catholic organisation reaches further and is more persistent. It is frankly opposed to human effort and the idea of progress. It makes no pretence about it.

Such cross-activities as these complicate, delay and may even sabotage effectively every effort to solve the problem of a lucid collectivisation of the world's affairs, but they do not alter the essential fact that it is only through a rationalisation and coalescence of constructive revolutionary movements everywhere and a liberal triumph over the dogmatism of the class war, that we can hope to emerge from the present wreckage of our world.

VII. — FEDERATION

LET us now take up certain vaguely constructive proposals which seem at present to be very much in people's minds. They find their cardinal expression in a book called *Union Now* by Mr Clarence K. Streit, which has launched the magic word "Federation" upon the world. The "democracies" of the world are to get together upon a sort of enlargement of the Federal constitution of the United States (which produced one of the bloodiest civil wars in all history) and then all will be well with us.

Let us consider whether this word "Federation" is of any value in organising the Western Revolution. I would suggest it is. I think it may be a means of mental release for many people who would otherwise have remained dully resistant to any sort of change.

This Federation project has an air of reasonableness. It is attractive to a number of influential people who wish with the minimum of adaptation to remain influential in a changing world, and particularly is it attractive to what I may call the liberal-conservative elements of the prosperous classes in America and Great Britain and the Oslo countries, because it puts the most difficult aspect of the problem, the need for collective socialisation, so completely in the background that it can be ignored. This enables them to take quite a bright and hopeful view of the future without any serious hindrance to their present preoccupations.

They think that Federation, reasonably defined, may suspend the possibility of war for a considerable period and so lighten the burden of taxation that the present crushing demands on them will relax and they will be able to resume, on a slightly more economical scale perhaps, their former way of living. Everything that gives them hope and self-respect and preserves their homes from the worst indignities of panic, appeasement, treason-hunting and the rest of it, is to be encouraged, and meanwhile their sons will have time to think and it may be possible so to search, ransack and rationalise the Streit project as to make a genuine and workable scheme for the socialisation of the world.

In The Fate of Homo sapiens I examined the word "democracy"

with some care, since it already seemed likely that great quantities of our young men were to be asked to cripple and risk their lives for its sake. I showed that it was still a very incompletely realised aspiration, that its complete development involved socialism and a level of education and information attained as yet by no community in the world. Mr Streit gives a looser, more rhetorical statement — a more idealistic statement, shall we say? — of his conception of democracy, the sort of statement that would be considered wildly exaggerated even if it was war propaganda, and though unhappily it is remote from any achieved reality, he proceeds without further enquiry as if it were a description of existing realities in what he calls the "democracies" of the world. In them he imagines he finds "governments of the people, by the people, for the people".

In the book I have already cited I discuss What is Democracy? And Where is Democracy? I do my best there to bring Mr Streit down to the harsh and difficult facts of the case. I will go now a little more into particulars in my examination of his project.

His "founder democracies" are to be: "The American Union, the British Commonwealth (specifically the United Kingdom, the Federal Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Ireland), the French Republic, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Swiss Confederation, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland."

Scarcely one of these, as I have shown in that former book, is really a fully working democracy. And the Union of South Africa is a particularly bad and dangerous case of race tyranny. Ireland is an incipient religious war and not one country but two. Poland, I note, does not come into Mr Streit's list of democracies at all. His book was written in 1938 when Poland was a totalitarian country holding, in defiance of the League of Nations, Vilna, which it had taken from Lithuania, large areas of non-Polish country it had conquered from Russia, and fragments gained by the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. It only became a democracy, even technically and for a brief period, before its collapse in September 1939, when Mr Chamberlain was so foolish as to drag the British Empire into a costly and perilous war, on its behalf. But that is by the way. None of these fifteen (or ten) "founder democracies" are really democracies at

all. So we start badly. But they might be made socialist democracies and their federation might be made something very real indeed — at a price. The U.S.S.R. is a federated socialist system, which has shown a fairly successful political solidarity during the past two decades, whatever else it has done or failed to do.

Now let us help Mr Streit to convert his "federation" from a noble but extremely rhetorical aspiration into a living reality. He is aware that this must be done at a price, but I want to suggest that that price is, from what I judge to be his point of view, far greater, and the change much simpler, more general and possibly even closer at hand, than he supposes. He is disposed to appeal to existing administrative organisations, and it is questionable whether they are the right people to execute his designs. One of the difficulties he glosses over is the possible reluctance of the India Office to hand over the control of India (Ceylon and Burma he does not mention) to the new Federation Government, which would also, I presume, take charge of the fairly well governed and happy fifty-odd million people of the Dutch East Indies, the French colonial empire, the West Indies and so on. This, unless he proposes merely to re-christen the India Office, etc., is asking for an immense outbreak of honesty and competence on the part of the new Federal officialdom. It is also treating the possible contribution of these five or six hundred million of dusky peoples to the new order with a levity inconsistent with democratic ideals.

Quite a lot of these people have brains which are as good or better than normal European brains. You could educate the whole world to the not very exalted level of a Cambridge graduate in a single lifetime, if you had schools, colleges, apparatus and teachers enough. The radio, the cinema, the gramophone, the improvements in both production and distribution, have made it possible to increase the range and effectiveness of a gifted teacher a thousandfold. We have seen intensive war preparations galore, but no one has dreamt yet of an intensive educational effort. None of us really like to see other people being educated. They may be getting an advantage over our privileged selves. Suppose we overcome that primitive jealousy. Suppose we speed up — as we are now physically able to do — the education and enfranchisement of these huge undeveloped reservoirs of human capacity. Suppose we tack that on the Union Now idea.

Suppose we stipulate that Federation, wherever it extends, means a New and Powerful Education. In Bengal, in Java, in the Congo Free State, quite as much as in Tennessee or Georgia or Scotland or Ireland. Suppose we think a little less about "gradual enfranchisement" by votes and experiments in local autonomy and all these old ideas, and a little more about the enfranchisement of the mind. Suppose we drop that old cant about politically immature peoples.

There is one direction in which Mr Streit's proposals are open to improvement. Let us turn to another in which he does not seem to have realised all the implications of his proposal. This great Union is to have a union money and a union customs-free economy. What follows upon that? More I think than he realises.

There is one aspect of money to which the majority of those that discuss it seem to be incurably blind. You cannot have a theory of money or any plan about money by itself in the air. Money is not a thing in itself; it is a working part of an economic system. Money varies in its nature with the laws and ideas of property in a community. As a community moves towards collectivism and communism, for example, money simplifies out. Money is a necessary in a communism as it is in any other system, but its function therein is at its simplest. Payment in kind to the worker gives him no freedom of choice among the goods the community produces. Money does. Money becomes the incentive that "works the worker" and nothing more.

But directly you allow individuals not only to obtain goods for consumption, but also to obtain credit to produce material for types of production outside the staple productions of the state, the question of credit and debt arises and money becomes more complicated. With every liberation of this or that product or service from collective control to business or experimental exploitation, the play of the money system enlarges and the laws regulating what you may take for it, the company laws, bankruptcy laws and so forth increase. In any highly developed collective system the administration will certainly have to give credits for hopeful experimental enterprises. When the system is not collectivism, monetary operations for gain are bound to creep in and become more and more complicated.

Where most of the substantial side of life is entrusted to uncoordinated private enterprise, the intricacy of the money apparatus increases enormously. Monetary manipulation becomes a greater and greater factor in the competitive struggle, not only between individuals and firms, but between states. As Mr Streit himself shows, in an excellent discussion of the abandonment of the gold standard, inflation and deflation become devices in international competition. Money becomes strategic, just as pipe lines and railways can become strategic.

This being so it is plain that for the Federal Union a common money means an identical economic life throughout the Union. And this too is implied also in Mr Streit's "customs-free" economy. It is impossible to have a common money when a dollar or a pound, or whatever it is, can buy this, that or the other advantage in one state and is debarred from anything but bare purchases for consumption in another. So that this Federal Union is bound to be a uniform economic system. There can be only very slight variations in the control of economic life.

In the preceding sections the implacable forces that make for the collectivisation of the world or disaster, have been exposed. It follows that "Federation" means practically uniform socialism within the Federal limits, leading, as state after state is incorporated, to world socialism. There manifestly we carry Mr Streit farther than he realises he goes — as yet. For it is fairly evident that he is under the impression that a large measure of independent private business is to go on throughout the Union. I doubt if he imagines it is necessary to go beyond the partial socialisation already achieved by the New Deal. But we have assembled evidence to show that the profit scramble, the wild days of uncorrelated "business" are over for ever.

And again though he realises and states very clearly that governments are made for man and not man for governments, though he applauds the great declarations of the Convention that created the American Constitution, wherein "we the people of the United States" overrode the haggling of the separate states and established the American Federal Constitution, nevertheless he is curiously chary of superseding any existing legal governments in the present world. He is chary of talking of "We the people of the world". But many of us

are coming to realise that all existing governments have to go into the melting pot, we believe that it is a world revolution which is upon us, and that in the great struggle to evoke a Westernised World Socialism, contemporary governments may vanish like straw hats in the rapids of Niagara. Mr Streit, however, becomes extraordinarily legal-minded at this stage. I do not think that he realises the forces of destruction that are gathering and so I think he hesitates to plan a reconstruction upon anything like the scale that may become possible.

He evades even the obvious necessity that under a Federal Government the monarchies of Great Britain, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Holland, if they survive at all, must becomes like the mediatised sovereigns of the component states of the former German Empire, mere ceremonial vestiges. Perhaps he thinks that, but he does not say it outright. I do not know if he has pondered the New York World Fair of 1939 nor the significance of the Royal Visit to America in that year, and thought how much there is in the British system that would have to be abandoned if his Federation is to become a reality. In most of the implications of the word, it must cease to be "British". His Illustrative Constitution is achieved with an altogether forensic disregard of the fundamental changes in human conditions to which we have to adapt ourselves or perish. He thinks of war by itself and not as an eruption due to deeper maladaptations. But if we push his earlier stipulations to their necessary completion, we need not trouble very much about that sample constitution of his, which is to adjust the balance so fairly among the constituent states. The abolition of distance must inevitably substitute functional associations and loyalties for local attributions, if human society does not break up altogether. The local divisions will melt into a world collectivity and the main conflicts in a progressively unifying Federation are much more likely to be these between different world-wide types and associations of workers.

So far with Union Now. One of Mr Streit's outstanding merits is that he has had the courage to make definite proposals on which we can bite. I doubt if a European could have produced any such book. Its naive political legalism, its idea of salvation by constitution, and its manifest faith in the magic beneficence of private enterprise, are

distinctly in the vein of an American, almost a pre-New Deal American, who has become, if anything, more American, through his experiences of the deepening disorder of Europe. So many Americans still look on at world affairs like spectators at a ball game who are capable of vociferous participation but still have no real sense of participation; they do not realise that the ground is moving under their seats also, and that the social revolution is breaking surface to engulf them in their turn. To most of us — to most of us over forty at any rate — the idea of a fundamental change in our way of life is so unpalatable that we resist it to the last moment.

Mr Streit betrays at times as vivid a sense of advancing social collapse as I have, but it has still to occur to him that that collapse may be conclusive. There may be dark ages, a relapse into barbarism, but somewhen and somehow he thinks man must recover. George Bernard Shaw has recently been saying the same thing.

It may be worse that that.

I have given Mr Streit scarcely a word of praise, because that would be beside the mark here. He wrote his book sincerely as a genuine contribution to the unsystematic world conference that is now going on, admitting the possibility of error, demanding criticism, and I have dealt with it in that spirit.

Unfortunately his word has gone much further than his book. His book says definite things and even when one disagrees with it, it is good as a point of departure. But a number of people have caught up this word “Federation”, and our minds are distracted by a multitude of appeals to support Federal projects with the most various content or with no content at all.

All the scores and hundreds of thousands of nice people who are signing peace pledges and so forth a few years ago, without the slightest attempt in the world to understand what they meant by peace, are now echoing this new magic word with as little conception of any content for it. They did not realise that peace means so complicated and difficult an ordering and balancing of human society that it has never been sustained since man became man, and that we have wars and preparatory interludes between wars because that is a much simpler and easier sequence for our wilful, muddle-headed, suspicious and aggressive species. These people still think we can

get this new and wonderful state of affairs just by clamouring for it. And having failed to get peace by saying "Peace" over and over again, they are now with an immense sense of discovery saying "Federation". What must happen to men in conspicuous public positions I do not know, but even an irresponsible literary man like myself finds himself inundated with innumerable lengthy private letters, hysterical post-cards, pamphlets from budding organisations, "declarations" to sign, demands for subscriptions, all in the name of the new panacea, all as vain and unproductive as the bleating of lost sheep. And I cannot open a newspaper without finding some eminent contemporary writing a letter to it, saying gently, firmly and bravely, the same word, sometimes with bits of Union Now tacked on to it, and sometimes with minor improvements, but often with nothing more than the bare idea.

All sorts of idealistic movements for world peace which have been talking quietly to themselves for years and years have been stirred up to follow the new banner. Long before the Great War there was a book by Sir Max Waechter, a friend of King Edward the Seventh, advocating the United States of Europe, and that inexact but flattering parallelism to the United States of America has recurred frequently; as a phase thrown out by Monsieur Briand for example, and as a project put forward by an Austrian-Japanese writer, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, who even devised a flag for the Union. The main objection to the idea is that there are hardly any states completely in Europe, except Switzerland, San Marino, Andorra and a few of the Versailles creations. Almost all the other European states extend far beyond the European limits both politically and in their sympathies and cultural relations. They trail with them more than half mankind. About a tenth of the British Empire is in Europe and still less of the Dutch Empire; Russia, Turkey, France, are less European than not; Spain and Portugal have their closest links with South America.

Few Europeans think of themselves as "Europeans". I, for example, am English, and a large part of my interests, intellectual and material, are Transatlantic. I dislike calling myself "British" and I like to think of myself as a member of a great English-speaking community, which spreads irrespective of race and colour round and

about the world. I am annoyed when an American calls me a "foreigner" — war with America would seem to me just as insane as war with Cornwall — and I find the idea of cutting myself off from the English-speaking peoples of America and Asia to follow the flag of my Austrian-Japanese friend into a federally bunched-up European extremely unattractive.

It would, I suggest, be far easier to create the United States of the World, which is Mr Streit's ultimate objective, than to get together the so- called continent of Europe into any sort of unity.

I find most of these United States of Europe movements are now jumping on to the Federation band-wagon.

My old friend and antagonist, Lord David Davies, for instance, has recently succumbed to the infection. He was concerned about the problem of a World Pax in the days when the League of Nations Society and other associated bodies were amalgamated in the League of Nations Union. He was struck then by an idea, an analogy, and the experience was unique for him. He asked why individuals went about in modern communities in nearly perfect security from assault and robbery, without any need to bear arms. His answer was the policeman. And from that he went on to the question of what was needed for states and nations to go their ways with the same blissful immunity from violence and plunder, and it seemed to him a complete and reasonable answer to say "an international policeman". And there you were! He did not see, he is probably quite incapable of seeing, that a state is something quite different in its nature and behaviour from an individual human+being. When he was asked to explain how that international policeman was to be created and sustained, he just went on saying "international policeman". He has been saying it for years. Sometimes it seems it is to be the League of Nations, sometimes the British Empire, sometimes an international Air Force, which is to undertake this grave responsibility. The bench before which the policeman is to hale the offender and this position of the lock-up are not indicated. Finding our criticisms uncongenial, his lordship went off with his great idea, like a penguin which has found an egg, to incubate it alone. I hope he will be spared to say "international policeman" for many years to come, but I do not believe he has ever perceived or ever will perceive that, brilliant as

his inspiration was, it still left vast areas of the problem in darkness. Being a man of considerable means, he has been able to sustain a "New Commonwealth" movement and publish books and a periodical in which his one great idea is elaborated rather than developed.

But I will not deal further with the very incoherent multitude that now echoes this word "Federation". Many among them will cease to cerebrate further and fall by the wayside, but many will go on thinking, and if they go on thinking they will come to perceive more and more clearly the realities of the case. Federation, they will feel, is not enough.

So much for the present "Federalist" front. As a fundamental basis of action, as a declared end, it seems hopelessly vague and confused and, if one may coin a phrase, hopelessly optimistic. But since the concept seems to be the way to release a number of minds from belief in the sufficiency of a League of Nations, associated or not associated with British Imperialism, it has been worth while to consider how it can be amplified and turned in the direction of that full and open-eyed world-wide collectivisation which a study of existing conditions obliges us to believe is the only alternative to the complete degeneration of our species.

VIII. — THE NEW TYPE OF REVOLUTION

LET us return to our main purpose, which is to examine the way in which we are to face up to this impending World Revolution.

To many minds this idea of Revolution is almost inseparable from visions of street barricades made of paving-stones and overturned vehicles, ragged mobs armed with impromptu weapons and inspired by defiant songs, prisons broken and a general jail delivery, palaces stormed, a great hunting of ladies and gentlemen, decapitated but still beautiful heads on pikes, regicides of the most sinister quality, the busy guillotine, a crescendo of disorder ending in a whiff of grapeshot....

That was one type of Revolution. It is what one might call the Catholic type of Revolution, that it is to say it is the ultimate phase of a long period of Catholic living and teaching. People do not realise this and some will be indignant at its being stated so barely. Yet the facts stare us in the face, common knowledge, not to be denied. That furious, hungry, desperate, brutal mob was the outcome of generations of Catholic rule, Catholic morality and Catholic education. The King of France was the "Most Christian King, the eldest son of the Church", he was master of the economic and financial life of the community, and the Catholic Church controlled the intellectual life of the community and the education of the people absolutely. That mob was the outcome. It is absurd to parrot that Christianity has never been tried. Christianity in its most highly developed form has been tried and tried again. It was tried for centuries fully and completely, in Spain, France, Italy. It was responsible for the filth and chronic pestilence and famine of medieval England. It inculcated purity but it never inculcated cleanliness. Catholic Christianity had practically unchallenged power in France for generations. It was free to teach as it chose and as much as it chose. It dominated the common life entirely. The Catholic system in France cannot have reaped anything it did not sow, for no other sowers were allowed. That hideous mob of murderous ragamuffins we are so familiar with in pictures of the period, was the final harvest of its regime.

The more Catholic reactionaries revile the insurgent common people of the first French Revolution, the more they condemn themselves. It is the most impudent perversion of reality for them to snivel about the guillotine and the tumbrils, as though these were not purely Catholic products, as though they came in suddenly from outside to wreck a genteel Paradise. They were the last stage of the systematic injustice and ignorance of a strictly Catholic regime. One phase succeeded another with relentless logic. The Maseillaise completed the life-cycle of Catholicism.

In Spain too and in Mexico we have seen undisputed educational and moral Catholic ascendancy, the Church with a free hand, producing a similar uprush of blind resentment. The crowds there also were cruel and blasphemous; but Catholicism cannot complain; for Catholicism hatched them. Priests and nuns who had been the sole teachers of the people were insulted and outraged and churches defiled. Surely if the Church is anything like what it claims to be, the people would have loved it. They would not have behaved as though sacrilege was a gratifying relief.

But these Catholic Revolutions are only specimens of one single type of Revolution. A Revolution need not be a spontaneous storm of indignation against intolerable indignities and deprivations. It can take quite other forms.

As a second variety of Revolution, which is in sharp contrast with the indignation-revolt in which so many periods of unchallenged Catholic ascendancy have ended, we may take what we may call the "revolution conspiracy", in which a number of people set about organising the forces of discomfort and resentment and loosening the grip of the government's forces, in order to bring about a fundamental change of system. The ideal of this type is the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, provided it is a little simplified and misunderstood. This, reduced to a working theory by its advocates, is conceived of as a systematic cultivation of a public state of mind favourable to a Revolution together with an inner circle of preparation for a "seizure of power". Quite a number of Communist and other leftish writers, bright young men, without much political experience, have let their imaginations loose upon the "technique" of such an adventure. They have brought the Nazi and Fascist

Revolutions into the material for their studies. Modern social structure with its concentration of directive, information and coercive power about radio stations, telephone exchangers, newspaper offices, police stations, arsenals and the like, lends itself to quasi-gangster exploitation of this type. There is a great rushing about and occupation of key centres, an organised capture, imprisonment or murder of possible opponents, and the country is confronted with fait accompli. The regimentation of the more or less reluctant population follows.

But a Revolution need be neither an explosion nor a coup d'etat. And the Revolution that lies before us now as the only hopeful alternative to chaos, either directly or after an interlude of world communism, is to be attained, if it is attained at all, by neither of these methods. The first is too rhetorical and chaotic and leads simply to a Champion and tyranny; the second is too conspiratorial and leads through an obscure struggle of masterful personalities to a similar end. Neither is lucid enough and deliberate enough to achieve a permanent change in the form and texture of human affairs.

An altogether different type of Revolution may or may not be possible. No one can say that it is possible unless it is tried, but one can say with some assurance that unless it can be achieved the outlook for mankind for many generations at least is hopeless. The new Revolution aims essentially at a change in directive ideas. In its completeness it is an untried method.

It depends for its success upon whether a sufficient number of minds can be brought to realise that the choice before us now is not a choice between further revolution or more or less reactionary conservatism, but a choice between so carrying on and so organising the process of change in our affairs as to produce a new world order, or suffering an entire and perhaps irreparable social collapse. Our argument throughout has been that things have gone too far ever to be put back again to any similitude of what they have been. We can no more dream of remaining where we are than think of going back in the middle of a dive. We must go trough with these present changes, adapt ourselves to them, adjust ourselves to the plunge, or be destroyed by them. We must go through these changes just as we must go through this ill-conceived war, because there is as yet no

possible end for it.

There will be no possible way of ending it until the new Revolution defines itself. If it is patched up now without a clear-headed settlement understood and accepted throughout the world, we shall have only the simulacrum of a peace. A patched-up peace now will not even save us from the horrors of war, it will postpone them only to aggravate them in a few years time. You cannot end this war yet, you can at best adjourn it.

The reorganisation of the world has at first to be mainly the work of a "movement" or a Party or a religion or cult, whatever we choose to call it. We may call it New Liberalism or the New Radicalism or what not. It will not be a close-knit organisation, toeing the Party line and so forth. It may be a very loose-knit and many faceted, but if a sufficient number of minds throughout the world, irrespective of race, origin or economic and social habituations, can be brought to the free and candid recognition of the essentials of the human problem, then their effective collaboration in a conscious, explicit and open effort to reconstruct human society will ensue.

And to begin with they will do all they can to spread and perfect this conception of a new world order, which they will regard as the only working frame for their activities, while at the same time they will set themselves to discover and associate with themselves, everyone, everywhere, who is intellectually able to grasp the same broad ideas and morally disposed to realise them.

The distribution of this essential conception one may call propaganda, but in reality it is education. The opening phase of this new type of Revolution must involve therefore a campaign for re-invigorated and modernised education throughout the world, an education that will have the same ratio to the education of a couple of hundred years ago, as the electric lighting of a contemporary city has to the chandeliers and oil lamps of the same period. On its present mental levels humanity can do no better than what it is doing now.

Vitalising education is only possible when it is under the influence of people who are themselves learning. It is inseparable from the modern idea of education that it should be knit up to incessant research. We say research rather than science. It is the better word because it is free from any suggestion of that finality which means

dogmatism and death.

All education tends to become stylistic and sterile unless it is kept in close touch with experimental verification and practical work, and consequently this new movement of revolutionary initiative, must at the same time be sustaining realistic political and social activities and working steadily for the collectivisation of governments and economic life. The intellectual movement will be only the initiatory and correlating part of the new revolutionary drive. These practical activities must be various. Everyone engaged in them must be thinking for himself and not waiting for orders. The only dictatorship he will recognise is the dictatorship of the plain understanding and the invincible fact.

And if this culminating Revolution is to be accomplished, then the participation of every conceivable sort of human+being who has the mental grasp to see these broad realities of the world situation and the moral quality to do something about it, must be welcomed.

Previous revolutionary thrusts have been vitiated by bad psychology. They have given great play to the gratification of the inferiority complexes that arise out of class disadvantages. It is no doubt very unjust that anyone should be better educated, healthier and less fearful of the world than anyone else, but that is no reason why the new Revolution should not make the fullest use of the health, education, vigour and courage of the fortunate. The Revolution we are contemplating will aim at abolishing the bitterness of frustration. But certainly it will do nothing to avenge it. Nothing whatever. Let the dead past punish its dead.

It is one of the most vicious streaks in the Marxist teaching to suggest that all people of wealth and capacity living in a community in which unco- ordinated private enterprise plays a large part are necessarily demoralised by the advantages they enjoy and that they must be dispossessed by the worker and peasant, who are presented as endowed with a collective virtue capable of running all the complex machinery of a modern community. But the staring truth of the matter is that an uncoordinated scramble between individuals and nations alike, demoralises all concerned. Everyone is corrupted, the filching tramp by the roadside, the servile hand-kissing peasant of Eastern Europe, the dole-bribed loafer, as much as the woman who

marries for money, the company promoter, the industrial organiser, the rent-exacting landlord and the diplomatic agent. When the social atmosphere is tainted everybody is ill.

Wealth, personal freedom and education, may and do produce wasters and oppressive people, but they may also release creative and administrative minds to opportunity. The history of science and invention before the nineteenth century confirms this. On the whole if we are to assume there is anything good in humanity at all, it is more reasonable to expect it to appear when there is most opportunity.

And in further confutation of the Marxist caricature of human motives, we have the very considerable number of young people drawn from middle-class and upper-class homes, who figure in the extreme left movement everywhere. It is their moral reaction to the "stuffiness" and social ineffectiveness of their parents and their own sort of people. They seek an outlet for their abilities that is not gainful but serviceable. Many have sought an honourable life — and often found it, and death with it — in the struggle against the Catholics and their Moorish and Fascist helpers in Spain.

It is a misfortune of their generation, that so many of them have fallen into the mental traps of Marxism. It has been my absurd experience to encounter noisy meetings of expensive young men at Oxford, not one of them stunted physically as I was by twenty years of under-nourishment and devitalised upbringing, all pretending to be rough-hewn collarless proletarians in shocked revolt against my bourgeois tyranny and the modest comfort of my declining years, and reciting the ridiculous class-war phrases by which they protected their minds from any recognition of the realities of the case. But though that attitude demonstrates the unstimulating education of their preparatory and public schools, which had thrown them thus uncritical and emotional into the problems of the undergraduate life, it does not detract from the fact that they had found the idea of abandoning themselves to a revolutionary reconstruction of society, that promised to end its enormous waste of potential happiness and achievement, extremely attractive, notwithstanding that their own advantages seemed to be reasonably secure.

Faced with the immediate approach of discomfort, indignity,

wasted years, mutilation — death is soon over but one wakes up again to mutilation every morning — because of this ill-conceived war; faced also by the reversion of Russia to autocracy and the fiscal extinction of most of the social advantages of their families; these young people with a leftish twist are likely not only to do some very profitable reexamination of their own possibilities but also to find themselves joined in that re-examination by a very considerable number of others who have hitherto been repelled by the obvious foolishness and insincerity of the hammer and sickle symbols (workers and peasants of Oxford!) and the exasperating dogmatism of the orthodox Marxist. And may not these young people, instead of waiting to be overtaken by an insurrectionary revolution from which they will emerge greasy, unshaven, class-conscious and in incessant danger of liquidation, decide that before the Revolution gets hold of them they will get hold of the Revolution and save it from the inefficiency, mental distortions, disappointments and frustrations that have over-taken it in Russia.

This new and complete Revolution we contemplate can be defined in a very few words. It is (a) outright world-socialism, scientifically planned and directed, plus (b) a sustained insistence upon law, law based on a fuller, more jealously conceived resentment of the personal Rights of Man, plus (c) the completest freedom of speech, criticism and publication, and sedulous expansion of the educational organisation to the ever-growing demands of the new order. What we may call the eastern or Bolshevik Collectivism, the Revolution of the Internationale, has failed to achieve even the first of these three items and it has never even attempted the other two.

Putting it at its compactest, it is the triangle of Socialism, Law and Knowledge, which frames the Revolution which may yet save the world.

Socialism! Become outright collectivists? Very few men of the more fortunate classes in our old collapsing society who are over fifty will be able to readjust their minds to that. It will seem an entirely repulsive suggestion to them. (The average age of the British Cabinet at the present time is well over sixty.) But it need not be repulsive at all to their sons. They will be impoverished anyhow. The stars in their courses are seeing to that. And that will help them

greatly to realise that an administrative control to administrative participation and then to direct administration are easy steps. They are being taken now, first in one matter and then in another. On both sides of the Atlantic. Reluctantly and often very disingenuously and against energetic but diminishing resistances. Great Britain, like America, may become a Socialist system with a definitive Revolution, protesting all the time that it is doing nothing of the sort.

In Britain we have now no distinctively educated class, but all up and down the social scale there are well-read men and women who have thought intensely upon these great problems we have been discussing. To many of them and maybe to enough of them to start the avalanche of purpose that will certainly develop from a clear and determined beginning, this conception of Revolution to evoke a liberal collectivised world may appeal. And so at last we narrow down our enquiry to an examination of what has to be done now to save the Revolution, what the movement or its Party — so far as it may use the semblance of a Party will do, what its Policy will be. Hitherto we have been demonstrating why a reasonable man, of any race or language anywhere, should become a "Western" Revolutionary. We have now to review the immediate activities to which he can give himself.

IX. — POLITICS FOR THE SANE MAN

LET us restate the general conclusions to which our preceding argument has brought us.

The establishment of a progressive world socialism in which the freedoms, health and happiness of every individual are protected by a universal law based on a re-declaration of the rights of man, and wherein there is the utmost liberty of thought, criticism and suggestion, is the plain, rational objective before us now. Only the effective realisation of this objective can establish peace on earth and arrest the present march of human affairs to misery and destruction. We cannot reiterate this objective too clearly and too frequently. The triangle of collectivisation, law and knowledge should embody the common purpose of all mankind.

But between us and that goal intervenes the vast and deepening disorders of our time. The new order cannot be brought into existence without a gigantic and more or less co-ordinated effort of the saner and abler elements in the human population. The thing cannot be done rapidly and melodramatically. That effort must supply the frame for all sane social and political activities and a practical criterion for all religious and educational associations. But since our world is multitudinously varied and confused, it is impossible to narrow down this new revolutionary movement to any single class, organisation or Party. It is too great a thing for that. It will in its expansion produce and perhaps discard a number of organisations and Parties, converging upon its ultimate objective. Consequently, in order to review the social and political activities of sane, clear-headed people to-day, we have to deal with them piecemeal from a number of points of view. We have to consider an advance upon a long and various front.

Let us begin then with the problem of sanity in face of the political methods of our time. What are we to do as voting citizens? There I think the history of the so-called democracies in the past half-century is fairly conclusive. Our present electoral methods which give no choice but a bilateral choice to the citizen and so force a two-party system upon him, is a mere caricature of representative

government. It has produced upon both sides of the Atlantic, big, stupid, and corrupt party machines. That was bound to happen and yet to this day there is a sort of shyness in the minds of young men interested in politics when it comes to discussing Proportional Representation. They think it is a "bit faddy". At best it is a side issue. Party politicians strive to maintain that bashfulness, because they know quite clearly that what is called Proportional Representation with the single transferable vote in large constituencies, returning a dozen members or more, is extinction for the mere party hack and destruction for party organisations.

The machine system in the United States is more elaborate, more deeply entrenched legally in the Constitution and illegally in the spoils system, and it may prove more difficult to modernise than the British, which is based on an outworn caste tradition. But both Parliament and Congress are essentially similar in their fundamental quality. They trade in titles, concessions and the public welfare, and they are only amenable in the rough and at long last to the movements of public opinion. It is an open question whether they are much more responsive to popular feeling than the Dictators we denounce so unreservedly as the antithesis of democracy. They betray a great disregard of mass responses. They explain less. They disregard more. The Dictators have to go on talking and talking, not always truthfully but they have to talk. A dumb Dictator is inconceivable.

In such times of extensive stress and crisis as the present, the baffling slowness, inefficiency and wastefulness of the party system become so manifest that some of its worst pretences are put aside. The party game is suspended. His Majesty's Opposition abandons the pose of safeguarding the interests of the common citizens from those scoundrels upon the government benches; Republican and Democrats begin to cross the party line to discuss the new situation. Even the men who live professionally by the Parliamentary (Congressional) imposture, abandon it if they are sufficiently frightened by the posture of affairs. The appearance of an All-Party National Government in Great Britain before very long seems inevitable.

Great Britain has in effect gone socialist in a couple of months;

she is also suspending party politics. Just as the United States did in the great slump. And in both cases this has happened because the rottenness and inefficiency of party politics stank to heaven in the face of danger. And since in both cases Party Government threw up its hands and bolted, is there any conceivable reason why we should let it come back at any appearance of victory or recovery, why we should not go ahead from where we are to a less impromptu socialist regime under a permanent non-party administration, to the reality if not to the form of a permanent socialist government?

Now here I have nothing to suggest about America. I have never, for example, tried to work out the consequences of the absence of executive ministers from the legislature. I am inclined to think that is one of the weak points in the Constitution and that the English usage which exposes the minister to question time in the House and makes him a prime mover in legislation affecting his department, is a less complicated and therefore more democratic arrangement than the American one. And the powers and functions of the President and the Senate are so different from the consolidated powers of Cabinet and Prime Minister, that even when an Englishman has industriously "mugged up" the constitutional points, he is still almost as much at a loss to get the living reality as he would be if he were shown the score of an opera before hearing it played or the blue prints of a machine he had never seen in action. Very few Europeans understand the history of Woodrow Wilson, the Senate and his League of Nations. They think that "America", which they imagine as a large single individual, planted the latter institution upon Europe and then deliberately shuffled out of her responsibility for it, and they will never think otherwise. And they think that "America" kept out of the war to the very limit of decency, overcharged us for munitions that contributed to the common victory, and made a grievance because the consequent debt was not discharged. They talk like that while Americans talk as if no English were killed between 1914 and 1918 (we had 800,000 dead) until the noble American conscripts came forward to die for them (to the tune of about 50,000). Savour for example even the title of Quincy Howe's England expects every American to do his Duty. It's the meanest of titles, but many Americans seem to like it.

On my desk as I write is a pamphlet by a Mr Robert Randall, nicely cyclostyled and got up. Which urges a common attack on the United States as a solution of the problem of Europe. No countries will ever feel united unless they have a common enemy, and the natural common enemy for Europe, it is declared, is the United States. So to bring about the United States of Europe we are to begin by denouncing the Monroe doctrine. I believe in the honesty and good intentions of Mr Robert Randall; he is, I am sure, no more in the pay of Germany, direct or indirect, than Mr Quincy Howe or Mr Harry Elmer Barnes; but could the most brilliant of Nazi war propagandists devise a more effective estranging suggestion?

But I wander from my topic. I do not know how sane men in America are going to set about relaxing the stranglehold of the Constitution, get control of their own country out of the hands of those lumpish, solemnly cunning politicians with their great strong jowls developed by chewing-gum and orotund speaking, whose photographs add a real element of frightfulness to the pages of Time, how they are going to abolish the spoils system, discover, and educate to expand a competent civil service able to redeem the hampered promises of the New Deal and pull America into line with the reconstruction of the rest of the world. But I perceive that in politics and indeed in most things, the underlying humour and sanity of Americans are apt to find a way round and do the impossible, and I have as little doubt they will manage it somehow as I have when I see a street performer on his little chair and carpet, all tied up with chains, waiting until there are sufficient pennies in the hat to justify exertion.

These differences in method, pace and tradition are a great misfortune to the whole English-speaking world. We English people do not respect Americans enough; we are too disposed to think they are all Quincy Howes and Harry Elmer Barneses and Borahs and suchlike, conceited and suspicious anti-British monomaniacs, who must be humoured at any cost; which is why we are never so frank and rude with them as they deserve. But the more we must contain ourselves the less we love them. Real brothers can curse each other and keep friends. Someday Britannia will give Columbia a piece of her mind, and that may clear the air. Said an exasperated Englishman

to me a day or so ago: “I pray to God they keep out of the end of this war anyhow. We shall never hear the last of it if they don’t....”

Yet at a different pace our two people are travelling towards identical ends, and it is lamentable that a difference of accent and idiom should do more mischief than a difference of language.

So far as Great Britain goes things are nearer and closer to me, and it seems to me that there is an excellent opportunity now to catch the country in a state of socialisation and suspend party politics, and keep it at that. It is a logical but often disregarded corollary of the virtual creation of All-Party National Governments and suspension of electoral contests, that since there is no Opposition, party criticism should give place to individual criticism of ministers, and instead of throwing out governments we should set ourselves to throw out individual administrative failures. We need no longer confine our choice of public servants to political careerists. We can insist upon men who have done things and can do things, and whenever an election occurs we can organise a block of non-party voters who will vote it possible for an outsider of proved ability, and will at any rate insist on a clear statement from every Parliamentary candidate of the concrete service, if any, he has done the country, of his past and present financial entanglements and his family relationships and of any title he possesses. We can get these necessary particulars published and note what newspapers decline to do so. And if there are still only politicians to vote for, we can at least vote and spoil our voting cards by way of protest.

At present we see one public service after another in a mess through the incompetent handling of some party hack and the unseen activities of interested parties. People are asking already why Sir Arthur Salter is not in control of Allied Shipping again, Sir John Orr directing our food supply with perhaps Sir Fredrick Keeble to help him, Sir Robert Vansittart in the Foreign Office. We want to know the individuals responsible for the incapacity of our Intelligence and Propaganda Ministries, so that we may induce them to quit public life. It would be quite easy now to excite a number of anxious people with a cry for “Competence not Party”.

Most people in the British Isles are heartily sick of Mr Chamberlain and his government, but they cannot face up to a

political split in wartime, and Mr Chamberlain sticks to office with all the pertinacity of a Barnacle. But if we do not attack the government as a whole, but individual ministers, and if we replace them one by one, we shall presently have a government so rejuvenated that even Mr Chamberlain will realise and accept his superannuation. Quite a small body of public-spirited people could organise an active Vigilance Society to keep these ideas before the mass of voters and begin the elimination of inferior elements from our public life. This would be a practical job of primary importance in our political regeneration. It would lead directly to a new and more efficient political structure to carry on after the present war has collapsed or otherwise ended.

Following upon this campaign for the conclusive interment of the played- out party system, there comes the necessity for a much more strenuous search for administrative and technical ability throughout the country. We do not want to miss a single youngster who can be of use in the great business of making over Great Britain, which has been so rudely, clumsily and wastefully socialised by our war perturbations, so that it may become a permanently efficient system.

And from the base of the educational pyramid up to its apex of higher education of teachers, heads of departments and research, there is need for such a quickening of minds and methods as only a more or less organised movement of sanely critical men can bring about. We want ministers now of the highest quality in every department, but in no department of public life is a man of creative understanding, bold initiative and administrative power so necessary as in the Education Ministry.

So tranquil and unobtrusive has been the flow of educational affairs in the British Empire that it seems almost scandalous, and it is certainly “vulgar”, to suggest that we need an educational Ginger Group to discover and support such a minister. We want a Minister of Education who can shock teachers into self-examination, electrify and rejuvenate old dons or put them away in ivory towers, and stimulate the younger ones. Under the party system the Education Ministry has always been a restful corner for some deserving party politician with an abject respect for his Alma Mater and the permanent officials. During war time, when other departments wake

up, the Education Department sinks into deeper lethargy. One cannot recall a single British Education Minister, since there have been such things in our island story as Ministers for Education, who signified anything at all educationally or did anything of his own impulse that was in the least worth while.

Suppose we found a live one — soon — and let him rip!

There again is something to be done far more revolutionary than throwing bombs at innocent policemen or assassinating harmless potentates or ex- potentates. And yet it is only asking that an existing department be what it pretends to be.

A third direction in which any gathering accumulation of sanity should direct its attention is the clumsy unfairness and indirectness of our present methods of expropriating the former well-to-do classes. The only observable principle seems to be widows and children first. Socialisation is being effected in Britain and America alike not by frank expropriation (with or without compensation) but by increasing government control and increasing taxation. Both our great communities are going into socialism backward and without ever looking round. This is good in so far as that technical experience and directive ability is changed over step by step from entirely private employment to public service, and on that side sane and helpful citizens have little to do beyond making the process conscious of itself and the public aware of the real nature of the change, but it is bad in its indiscriminate destruction of savings, which are the most exposed and vulnerable side of the old system. They are expropriated by profit-control and taxation alike, and at the same time they suffer in purchasing power by the acceleration of that process of monetary inflation which is the unavoidable readjustment, the petition in bankruptcy, of a community that has overspent.

The shareholding class dwindles and dies; widows and orphans, the old who are past work and the infirm who are incapable of it, are exposed in their declining years to a painful shrinkage of their modes of living; there is no doubt a diminution of social waste, but also there is an indirect impoverishment of free opinion and free scientific and artistic initiative as the endless societies, institutions and services which have enriched life for us and been very largely supported by voluntary subscriptions, shrivel. At present a large proportion of our

scientific, artistic, literary and social workers are educated out of the private savings fund. In a class-war revolution these economically very defenceless but socially very convenient people are subjected to vindictive humiliation -it is viewed as a great triumph for their meaner neighbours — but a revolution sanely conducted will probably devise a system of terminable annuities and compensation, and of assistance to once voluntary associations, which will ease off the social dislocations due to the disappearance of one stratum of relatively free and independent people, before its successors, that is to say the growing class of retired officials, public administrators and so forth, find their feet and develop their own methods of assertion and enterprise.

X. — DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN

LET us turn now to another system of problems in the collectivisation of the world, and that is the preservation of liberty in the socialist state and the restoration of that confidence without which good behaviour is generally impossible.

This destruction of confidence is one of the less clearly recognised evils of the present phase of world-disintegration. In the past there have been periods when whole communities or at least large classes within communities have gone about their business with a general honesty, directness and sense of personal honour. They have taken a keen pride in the quality of their output. They have lived through life on tolerable and tolerant terms with their neighbours. The laws they observed have varied in different countries and periods, but their general nature was to make an orderly law-abiding life possible and natural. They had been taught and they believed and they had every reason to believe: "This (that or the other thing) is right. Do right and nothing, except by some strange exceptional misfortune, can touch you. The Law guarantees you that. Do right and nothing will rob you or frustrate you."

Nowhere in the world now is there very much of that feeling left, and as it disappears, the behaviour of people degenerates towards a panic scramble, towards cheating, over-reaching, gang organisation, precautionary hoarding, concealment and all the meanness and anti-social feeling which is the natural outcome of insecurity.

Faced with what now amounts to something like a moral stampede, more and more sane men will realise the urgency for a restoration of confidence. The more socialisation proceeds and the more directive authority is concentrated, the more necessary is an efficient protection of individuals from the impatience of well-meaning or narrow-minded or ruthless officials and indeed from all the possible abuses of advantage that are inevitable under such circumstances to our still childishly wicked breed.

In the past the Atlantic world has been particularly successful in

expedients for meeting this aspect of human nature. Our characteristic and traditional method may be called the method of the fundamental declaration. Our Western peoples, by a happy instinct, have produced statements of Right, from Magna Carta onwards, to provide a structural defence between the citizen and the necessary growth of central authority.

And plainly the successful organisation of the more universal and penetrating collectivism that is now being forced upon us all, will be frustrated in its most vital aspect unless its organisation is accompanied by the preservative of a new Declaration of the Rights of Man, that must, because of the increasing complexity of the social structure, be more generous, detailed and explicit than any of its predecessors. Such a Declaration must become the common fundamental law of all communities and collectivities assembled under the World Pax. It should be interwoven with the declared war aims of the combatant powers now; it should become the primary fact in any settlement; it should be put before the now combatant states for their approval, their embarrassed silence or their rejection.

In order to be as clear as possible about this, let me submit a draft for your consideration of this proposed Declaration of the Rights of Man — using "man" of course to cover every individual, male or female, of the species. I have endeavoured to bring in everything that is essential and to omit whatever secondary issues can be easily deduced from its general statements. It is a draft for your consideration. Points may have been overlooked and it may contain repetitions and superfluous statements.

"Since a man comes into this world through no fault of his own, since he is manifestly a joint inheritor of the accumulations of the past, and since those accumulations are more than sufficient to justify the claims that are here made for him, it follows:

"(1) That every man without distinction of race, of colour or of professed belief or opinions, is entitled to the nourishment, covering, medical care and attention needed to realise his full possibilities of physical and mental development and to keep him in a state of health from his birth to death.

"(2) That he is entitled to sufficient education to make him a useful and interested citizen, that special education should be so

made available as to give him equality of opportunity for the development of his distinctive gifts in the service of mankind, that he should have easy access to information upon all matters of common knowledge throughout his life and enjoy the utmost freedom of discussion, association and worship.

"(3) That he may engage freely in any lawful occupation, earning such pay as the need for his work and the increment it makes to the common welfare may justify. That he is entitled to paid employment and to a free choice whenever there is any variety of employment open to him. He may suggest employment for himself and have his claim publicly considered, accepted or dismissed.

"(4) That he shall have the right to buy or sell without any discriminatory restrictions anything which may be lawfully bought or sold, in such quantities and with such reservations as are compatible with the common welfare."

(Here I will interpolate a comment. We have to bear in mind that in a collectivist state buying and selling to secure income and profit will be not simply needless but impossible. The Stock Exchange, after its career of four- hundred-odd-years, will necessarily vanish with the disappearance of any rational motive either for large accumulations or for hoarding against deprivation and destitution. Long before the age of complete collectivisation arrives, the savings of individuals for later consumption will probably be protected by some development of the Unit Trust System into a public service. They will probably be entitled to interest at such a rate as to compensate for that secular inflation which should go on in a steadily enriched world community. Inheritance and bequest in a community in which the means of production and of all possible monopolisation are collectivised, can concern little else than relatively small, beautiful and intimate objects, which will afford pleasure but no unfair social advantage to the receiver.)

"(5) That he and his personal property lawfully acquired are entitled to police and legal protection from private violence, deprivation, compulsion and intimidation.

"(6) That he may move freely about the world at his own expense. That his private house or apartment or reasonably limited garden enclosure is his castle, which may be entered only with consent, but

that he shall have the right to come and go over any kind of country, moorland, mountain, farm, great garden or what not, or upon the seas, lakes and rivers of the world, where his presence will not be destructive of some special use, dangerous to himself nor seriously inconvenient to his fellow-citizens.

"(7) That a man unless he is declared by a competent authority to be a danger to himself and to others through mental abnormality, a declaration which must be annually confirmed, shall not be imprisoned for a longer period than six days without being charged with a definite offence against the law, nor for more than three months without public trial. At the end if the latter period, if he has not been tried and sentenced by due process of law, he shall be released. Nor shall he be conscripted for military, police or any other service to which he has a conscientious objection.

"(8) That although a man is subject to the free criticism of his fellows, he shall have adequate protection from any lying or misrepresentation that may distress or injure him. All administrative registration and records about a man shall be open to his personal and private inspection. There shall be no secret dossiers in any administrative department. All dossiers shall be accessible to the man concerned and subject to verification and correction at his challenge. A dossier is merely a memorandum; it cannot be used as evidence without proper confirmation in open court.

"(9) That no man shall be subjected to any sort of mutilation or sterilisation except with his own deliberate consent, freely given, nor to bodily assault, except in restraint of his own violence, nor to torture, beating or any other bodily punishment; he shall not be subjected to imprisonment with such an excess of silence, noise, light or darkness as to cause mental suffering, or to imprisonment in infected, verminous or otherwise insanitary quarters, or be put into the company of verminous or infectious people. He shall not be forcibly fed nor prevented from starving himself if he so desire. He shall not be forced to take drugs nor shall they be administered to him without his knowledge and consent. That the extreme punishments to which he may be subjected are rigorous imprisonment for a term of not longer than fifteen years or death."

(Here I would point out that there is nothing in this to prevent any

country from abolishing the death penalty any country from abolishing the death penally. Nor do I assert a general right to commit suicide, because no one can punish a man for doing that. He has escaped. But threats and incompetent attempts to commit suicide belong to an entirely different category. They are indecent and distressing acts that can easily become a serious social nuisance, from which the normal citizen is entitled to protection.)

"(10) That the provisions and principles embodied in this Declaration shall be more fully defined in a code of fundamental human rights which shall be made easily accessible to everyone. This Declaration shall not be qualified nor departed from upon any pretext whatever. It incorporates all previous Declarations of Human Right. Henceforth for a new ear it is the fundamental law for mankind throughout the whole world.

"No treaty and no law affecting these primary rights shall be binding upon any man or province or administrative division of the community, that has not been made openly, by and with the active or tacit acquiescence of every adult citizen concerned, either given by a direct majority vote of his publicly elected representatives. In matters of collective behaviour it is by the majority decision men must abide. No administration, under a pretext of urgency, convenience or the like, shall be entrusted with powers to create or further define offences or set up bylaws, which will in any way infringe the rights and liberties here asserted. All legislation must be public and definite. No secret treaties shall be binding on individuals, organisations or communities. No orders in council or the like, which extend the application of a law, shall be permitted. There is no source of law but the people, and since life flows on constantly to new citizens, no generation of the people can in whole or in part surrender or delegate the legislative power inherent in mankind."

There, I think, is something that keener minds than mine may polish into a working Declaration which would in the most effective manner begin that restoration of confidence of which the world stands in need. Much of it might be better phrased, but I think it embodies the general good-will in mankind from pole to pole. It is certainly what we all want for ourselves. It could be a very potent instrument indeed in the present phase of human affairs. It is

necessary and it is acceptable. Incorporate that in your peace treaties and articles of federation, I would say, and you will have a firm foundation, which will continually grow firmer, for the fearless cosmopolitan life of a new world order. You will never get that order without some such document. It is the missing key to endless contemporary difficulties.

And if we, the virtuous democracies, are not fighting for these common human rights, then what in the name of the nobility and gentry, the Crown and the Established Church, the City, The Times and the Army and Navy Club, are we common British peoples fighting for?

XI. — INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

AND now, having completed our picture of what the saner elements in human society may reasonably work for and hope for, having cleared away the horrible nightmares of the class war and the totalitarian slave-state from our imaginations, we are able to attack the immediate riddles of international conflict and relationship with some hope of a general solution. If we realise to the depths of our being that a world settlement based in the three ideas of socialism, law and knowledge, is not only possible and desirable, but the only way of escape from deepening disaster, then manifestly our attitude towards the resentments of Germany, the prejudices of America or Russia, the poverty and undernourishment of India or the ambitions of Japan, must be frankly opportunist. None of these are primary issues. We sane men must never lose sight of our ultimate objective, but our methods of getting there will have to vary with the fluctuating variations of national feeling and national policy.

There is this idea of federalism upon which I have already submitted a criticism in chapter seven. As I have shown there, the Streit proposals will either take you further or land you nowhere. Let us assume that we can strengthen his proposals to the extent of making a socialistic economic consortium and adhesion to that Declaration of Rights, primary conditions for any federal union; then it becomes a matter of mood and occasion with what communities the federal association may be begun. We can even encourage feeble federal experiments which do not venture even so far as that along the path to sanity, in the certainty that either they will fade out again or else that they will become liberal realities of the type to which the whole world must ultimately conform. Behind any such half-hearted tentatives an educational propaganda can be active and effective.

But when it comes to the rate and amount of participation in the construction of a rational world order we can expect from any country or group of countries, we are in a field where there is little more than guessing and haphazard generalisations about "national character" to work upon. We are dealing with masses of people which may be swayed enormously by a brilliant newspaper or an

outstandingly persuasive or compelling personality or by almost accidental changes in the drift of events. I, for example, cannot tell how far the generality of educated and capable people in the British Empire now may fall in with our idea of accepting and serving a collectivism, or how strong their conservative resistance may be. It is my own country and I ought to know it best, and I do not know it detachedly enough or deeply enough to decide that. I do not see how anyone can foretell these swirls and eddies of response.

The advocacy of such movements of the mind and will as I am speaking of here is in itself among the operating causes in political adjustment, and those who are deepest in the struggle are least able to estimate how it is going. Every factor in political and international affairs is a fluctuating factor. The wise man therefore will not set his heart upon any particular drift or combination. He will favour everything that trends towards the end at which he aims.

The present writer cherishes the idea that the realisation of a common purpose and a common cultural inheritance may spread throughout all the English-speaking communities, and there can be no harm in efforts to give this concrete expression. He believes the dissociation of the British Empire may inaugurate this great synthesis. At the same time there are factors making for some closer association of the United States of America with what are called the Oslo powers. There is no reason why one of these associations should stand in the way of the other. Some countries such as Canada rest already under what is practically a double guarantee; she has the security of the Monroe Doctrine and the protection of the British fleet.

A Germany of eighty million people which has been brought to acquiesce in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and which is already highly collectivised, may come much earlier to a completely liberal socialist regime than Great Britain or France. If she participates in a consortium for the development of what are called the politically backward regions of the world, she may no longer be disposed for further military adventures and further stress and misery. She may enter upon a phase of social and economic recovery so rapid as to stimulate and react upon every other country in the world. It is not for other countries to dictate her internal politics, and

if the German people want to remain united as one people, in federated states or in one centralised state, there is neither righteousness nor wisdom preventing them.

The Germans like the rest of the world have to get on with collectivisation, they have to produce their pattern, and they cannot give themselves to that if they are artificially divided up and disorganised by some old-fashioned Quai d'Orsay scheme. They must do the right thing in their own way.

That the belligerent tradition may linger on in Germany for a generation or so, is a risk the Atlantic powers have to take. The world has a right to insist that not simply some German government but the people generally, recognise unequivocably and repeatedly, the rights of man asserted in the Declaration, and it is disarmed and that any aggressive plant, any war plane, warship, gun or arsenal that is discovered in the country shall be destroyed forthwith, brutally and completely. But that is a thing that should not be confined to Germany. Germany should not be singled out for that. Armament should be an illegality everywhere, and some sort of international force should patrol a treaty-bound world. Partial armament is one of those absurdities dear to moderate-minded "reasonable" men. Armament itself is making war. Making a gun, pointing a gun and firing it, are all acts of the same order. It should be illegal to construct anywhere upon earth, any mechanism for the specific purpose of killing men. When you see a gun it is reasonable to ask: "Whom is that intended to kill?"

Germany's rearmament after 1918 was largely tolerated because she played off British Russophobia against the Russian fear of "Capitalist" attack, but that excuse can no longer serve any furtive war-mongers among her people after her pact with Moscow.

Released from the economic burdens and restrictions that crippled her recovery after 1918, Germany may find a full and satisfying outlet for the energy of her young men in her systematic collectivisation, raising the standard of her common life deliberately and steadily, giving Russia a lead in efficiency and obliging the maundering "politics" and discursive inattention of the Atlantic world to remain concentrated upon the realities of life. The idea of again splitting up Germany into discordant fragments so as to

postpone her ultimate recovery indefinitely, is a pseudo-democratic slacker's dream. It is diametrically opposed to world reconstruction. We have need of the peculiar qualities of her people, and the sooner she recovers the better for the whole world. It is preposterous to resume the policy of holding back Germany simply that the old order may enjoy a few more years of self-indulgence in England, France and America.

A lingering fear of German military aggression may not be altogether bad for the minor states of South-Eastern Europe and Asia Minor, by breaking down their excessive nationalism and inducing them to work together. The policy of the sane man should be to welcome every possible experiment in international understandings duplicate and overlap one another, so much the better. He has to watch the activities of his own Foreign Office with incessant jealousy, for signs of that Machiavellian spirit which foments division among foreign governments and peoples and schemes perpetually to frustrate the progressive movement in human affairs by converting it into a swaying indecisive balance of power.

This book is a discussion of guiding principles and not of the endless specific problems of adjustment that arise on the way to a world realisation of collective unity. I will merely glance at that old idea of Napoleon the Third's, the Latin Union, at the possibility of a situation in Spanish and Portuguese South America parallel to that overlap of the Monroe Doctrine and the European motherlands which already exists in practice in the case of Canada, nor will I expatiate upon the manifold possibilities of sincere application of the Declaration of the Rights of Man to India and Africa — and particularly to those parts of the world in which more or less black peoples are awakening to the realities of racial discrimination and oppression.

I will utter a passing warning against any Machiavellian treatment of the problem of Northern and Eastern Asia, into which the British may be led by their constitutional Russophobia. The Soviet collectivism, especially if presently it becomes liberalised and more efficient through a recovery from its present obsession by Stalin, may spread very effectively across Central Asia and China. To anyone nourished mentally upon the ideas of an unending competition of

Powers for ascendancy for ever and ever, an alliance with Japan, as truculent and militarised a Japan as possible, will seem the most natural response in the world. But to anyone who has grasped the reality of the present situation of mankind and the urgent desirableness of world collectivisation, this immense unification will be something to welcome, criticise and assist.

The old bugbear of Russia's "designs upon India" may also play its part in distorting the Asiatic situation for many people. Yet a hundred years of mingled neglect, exploitation and occasional outbreaks of genuine helpfulness should have taught the British that the ultimate fate of India's hundreds of millions rests now upon no conquering ruler but wholly and solely upon the ability of the Indian peoples to co-operate in world collectivisation. They may learn much by way of precept and example from Russia and from the English-speaking world, but the days for mere revolt or for relief by a change of masters have passed. India has to work out for itself, with its own manner of participation in the struggle for a world order, starting from the British raj as a datum line. No outside power can work that out for the Indian peoples, nor force them to do it if they have no will for it.

But I will not wander further among these ever-changing problems and possibilities. They are, so to speak, wayside eventualities and opportunities. Immense though some of them are they remain secondary. Every year or so now the shifting channels of politics need to be recharted. The activities and responses of the sane man in any particular country and at any particular time will be determined always by the overruling conception of a secular movement towards a single world order. That will be the underlying permanent objective of all his political life.

There is, however, another line of world consolidation to which attention must be drawn before we conclude this section, and is what we may call ad hoc internationalism is admirably set forth in Leonard Woolf s International Government, a classic which was published in 1916 and still makes profitable reading.

The typical ad hoc organisation is the Postal Union, which David Lubin, that brilliant neglected thinker, would have had extended until it controlled shipping and equalised freights throughout the world.

He based his ideas upon his practical experience of the mail order business from which he derived his very considerable fortune. From that problem of freight adjustment he passed to the idea of a controlled survey of world, so that a shortage here or a glut there could be foreseen and remedied in time. He realised the idea in the form of the International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, which in its heyday made treaties like an independent sovereign power for the supply of returns from nearly every government upon earth. The war of 1914 and Lubin's death in 1919 checked the development of this admirable and most inspiring experiment in ad hoc internationalism. Its history is surely something that should be made part of the compulsory education of every statesmen and publicist. Yet never in my life have I met a professional politician who knew anything whatever or wanted to know anything about it. It didn't get votes; it seemed difficult to tax it; what was the good of it?

Another ad hoc organisation which might be capable of a considerable extension of its functions is the Elder Brethren of Trinity House, who control the lighthouses and charting of the seas throughout the world. But it would need a very considerable revision and extension of Mr Woolf s book and, in spite of the war stresses that have delayed and in some cases reversed their development, it would be quite beyond our present scope, to bring up to date the lengthening tale of ad hoc international networks, ranging from international business cartels, scientific and technical organisations, white-slave-trade suppression and international police co-operation, to health services and religious missions. Just as I have suggested that the United States and Great Britain may become complete socialisms unawares, so it is a not altogether impossible dream that the world may discover to its great surprise that it is already practically a cosmopolis, through the extension and interweaving of these ad hoc co-operations. At any rate we have this very powerful collateral process going on side by side with the more definite political schemes we have discussed.

Surveying the possibilities of these various attacks upon the complicated and intricate obstacles that stand between us and a new and more hopeful world order, one realises both the reasons for hope in that great possibility and the absurdity over over-confidence. We

are all like soldiers upon a vast battlefield; we cannot be sure of the trend of things; we may be elated when disillusionment is rushing headlong upon us; we may be on the verge of despair, not knowing that our antagonists are already in collapse. My own reactions vary between an almost mystical faith in the ultimate triumph of human reason and good-will, and moods of stoical determination to carry on to the end in the face of what looks like inevitable disaster. There are quantitative factors in the outlook for which there are no data; there are elements of time and opportunity beyond any estimating. Every one of these activities we have been canvassing tends to delay the drift to destruction and provides a foothold for a further counter-offensive against the adversary.

In the companion predecessor to this book, The Fate of Homo sapiens, I tried to drive home the fact that our species has no more reason to believe it can escape defeat and extinction, than any other organism that plays or has played its part in the drama of life. I tried to make clear how precarious is our present situation, and how urgent it is that we should make a strenuous effort at adjustment now. Only a little while ago it seemed as though that was an appeal to a deaf and blind world, invincibly set in its habitual ways into the question whether this inclination towards pessimism reflected a mood or phase in myself, and I threw out a qualifying suggestion or so; but for my own part I could not find any serious reason to believe that the mental effort that was clearly necessary if man was to escape that fate that marched upon him would ever be made. His conservative resistances, his apathy, seemed incurable.

Now suddenly everywhere one meets with alarmed and open and enquiring minds. So far the tremendous dislocations of the present war have been immensely beneficial in stripping off what seemed to be quite invincible illusions of security only a year ago. I never expected to live to see the world with its eyes as widely open as they are to-day. The world has never been so awake. Little may come of it, much may come of it. We do not know. Life would amount to nothing at all if we did.

XII. — WORLD ORDER IN BEING

THERE will be no day of days then when a new world order comes into being. Step by step and here and there it will arrive, and even as it comes into being it will develop fresh perspectives, discover unsuspected problems and go on to new adventures. No man, no group of men, will ever be singled out as its father or founder. For its maker will be not this man nor that man nor any man but Man, that being who is in some measure in every one of us. World order will be, like science, like most inventions, a social product, an innumerable number of personalities will have lived fine lives, pouring their best into the collective achievement.

We can find a small-scale parallel to the probable development of a new world order in the history of flying. Less than a third of a century ago, ninety-nine people out of a hundred would have told you that flying was impossible; kites and balloons and possibly even a navigable balloon, they could imagine; they had known of such things for a hundred years; but a heavier then air machine, flying in defiance of wind and gravity! That they knew was nonsense. The would-be aviator was the typical comic inventor. Any fool could laugh at him. Now consider how completely the air is conquered.

And who did it? Nobody and everybody. Twenty thousand brains or so, each contributing a notion, a device, an amplification. They stimulated one another; they took off from one another. They were like excited ganglia in a larger brain sending their impulses to and fro. They were people of the most diverse race and colour. You can write down perhaps a hundred people or so who have figured conspicuously in the air, and when you examine the role they have played, you will find for the most part that they are mere notorieties of the Lindbergh type who have put themselves modestly but firmly in the limelight and can lay no valid claim to any effective contribution whatever. You will find many disputes about records and priority in making this or that particular step, but the lines of suggestion, the growth and elaboration of the idea, have been an altogether untraceable process. It has been going on for not more than a third of a century, under our very eyes, and no one can say

precisely how it came about. One man said “Why not this?” and tried it, and another said “Why not that?” A vast miscellany of people had one idea in common, an idea as old as Daedalus, the idea that “Man can fly”. Suddenly, swiftly, it got about — that is the only phrase you can use — that flying was attainable. And man, man as a social being, turned his mind to it seriously, and flew.

So it will certainly be with the new world order, if ever it is attained. A growing miscellany of people are saying — it is getting about — that “World Pax is possible”, a World Pax in which men will be both united and free and creative. It is of no importance at all that nearly every man of fifty and over receives the idea with a pitying smile. Its chief dangers are the dogmatist and the would-be “leader” who will try to suppress every collateral line of work which does not minister to his supremacy. This movement must be, and it must remain, many-headed. Suppose the world had decided that Santos Dumont or Hiram Maxim was the heaven-sent Master of the Air, had given him the right to appoint a successor and subjected all experiments to his inspired control. We should probably have the Air Master now, with an applauding retinue of yes-men, following the hops of some clumsy, useless and extremely dangerous apparatus across country with the utmost dignity and self-satisfaction ....

Yet that is precisely how we still set about our political and social problems.

Bearing this essential fact in mind that the Peace of Man can only be attained, if it is attained at all, by an advance upon a long and various front, at varying speed and with diverse equipment, keeping direction only by a common faith in the triple need for collectivism, law and research, we realise the impossibility of drawing any picture of the new order as though it was as settled and stable as the old order imagined itself to be. The new order will be incessant; things will never stop happening, and so it defies any Utopian description. But we may nevertheless assemble a number of possibilities that will be increasingly realisable as the tide of disintegration ebbs and the new order is revealed.

To begin with we have to realise certain peculiarities of human behaviour that are all too disregarded in general political speculation. We have considered the very important role that may be played in

our contemporary difficulties by a clear statement of the Rights of Man, and we have sketched such a Declaration. There is not an item in that Declaration, I believe, which a man will not consider to be a reasonable demand — so far as he himself is concerned. He will subscribe to it in that spirit very readily. But when he is asked not only to concede by the same gesture to everybody else in the world, but as something for which he has to make all the sacrifices necessary for its practical realisation, he will discover a reluctance to "go so far as that". He will find a serious resistance welling up from his sub-conscious and trying to justify itself in his thoughts.

The things he will tell you will be very variable; but the word "premature" will play a large part in it. He will display a tremendous tenderness and consideration with which you have never credited him before, for servants, for workers, for aliens and particularly for aliens of a different colour from himself. They will hurt themselves with all this dangerous liberty. Are they fit, he will ask you, for all this freedom? "Candidly, are they fit for it?" He will be slightly offended if you will say, "As fit as you are". He will say in a slightly amused tone, "But how can you say that?" and then going off rather at a tangent, "I am afraid you idealise your fellow-creatures."

As you press him, you will find this kindliness evaporating from his resistance altogether. He is now concerned about the general beauty and loveliness of the world. He will protest that this new Magna Carta will reduce all the world to "a dead level of uniformity". You will ask him why must a world of free-men be uniform and at a dead level? You will get no adequate reply. It is an assumption of vital importance to him and he must cling to it. He has been accustomed to associate "free" and "equal", and has never been bright-minded enough to take these two words apart and have a good look at them separately. He is likely to fall back at this stage upon that Bible of the impotent genteel, Huxley's Brave New World, and implore you to read it. You brush that disagreeable fantasy aside and continue to press him. He says that nature has made men unequal, and you reply that that is no reason for exaggerating the fact. The more unequal and various their gifts, the greater is the necessity for a Magna Carta to protect them from one another. Then he will talk of robbing life of the picturesque and the romantic and you will have

some difficulty in getting these words defined. Sooner or later it will grow clear that he finds the prospect of a world in which "Jack's as good as his Master" unpleasant to the last degree.

If you still probe him with questions and leading suggestions, you will begin to realise how large a part the need for glory over his fellows plays in his composition (and incidentally you will note, please, you own secret satisfaction in carrying the argument against him). It will become clear to you, if you collate the specimen under examination with the behaviour of children, yourself and the people about you, under what urgent necessity they are for the sense of triumph, of being better and doing better than their fellows, and having it felt and recognised by someone. It is a deeper, steadier impulse than sexual lust; it is a hunger. It is the clue to the unlovingness of so much sexual life, to sadistic impulses, to avarice, hoarding and endless ungainful cheating and treachery which gives men the sense of getting the better of someone even if they do not get the upper hand.

In the last resort this is why we must have law, and why Magna Carta and all its kindred documents set out to defeat human nature in defence of the general happiness. Law is essentially an adjustment of that craving to glory over other living things, to the needs of social life, and it is more necessary in a collectivist society than in any other. It is a bargain, it is a social contract, to do as we would be done by and to repress our extravagant egotisms in return for reciprocal concessions. And in the face of these considerations we have advanced about the true nature of the beast we have to deal with, it is plain that the politics of the sane man as we have reasoned them out, must anticipate a strenuous opposition to this primary vital implement for bringing about the new world order.

I have suggested that the current discussion of "War Aims" may very effectively be transformed into the propaganda of this new Declaration of the Rights of Man. The opposition to it and the attempts that will be made to postpone, mitigate, stifle and evade it, need to be watched, denounced and combatted persistently throughout the world. I do not know how far this Declaration I have sketched can be accepted by a good Catholic, but the Totalitarian pseudo-philosophy insists upon inequality of treatment for "non-

Aryans" as a glorious duty.

How Communists would respond to its clauses would, I suppose, depend upon their orders from Moscow. But what are called the "democracies" are supposed to be different, and it would be possible now to make that Declaration a searching test of the honesty and spirit of the leaders and rulers in whom they trust. These rulers can be brought to the point by it, with a precision unattainable in any other fashion.

But the types and characters and authorities and officials and arrogant and aggressive individuals who will boggle at this Declaration and dispute and defy it, do not exhaust the resistances of our unregenerate natures to this implement for the establishment of elementary justice in the world. For a far larger proportion of people among the "democracies" will be found, who will pay it lip service and then set about discovering how, in their innate craving for that sense of superiority and advantage which lies so near the core of our individuals wills, they may unobtrusively sabotage it and cheat it. Even if they only cheat it just a little. I am inclined to think this disingenuousness is a universal weakness. I have a real passion for serving the world, but I have a pretty keen disposition to get more pay for my service, more recognition and so on than I deserve. I do not trust myself. I want to be under just laws. We want law because we are all potential lawbreakers.

This is a considerable digression into psychology, and I will do no more than glance at how large a part this craving for superiority and mastery has played in the sexual practices of mankind. There we have the ready means for a considerable relief of this egotistical tension in mutual boasting and reassurance. But the motive for his digression here is to emphasise the fact that the generalisation of our "War Aims" into a Declaration of Rights, though it will enormously simplify the issue of the war, will eliminate neither open and heartfelt opposition nor endless possibilities of betrayal and sabotage.

Nor does it alter the fact that even when the struggle seems to be drifting definitely towards a world social democracy, there may still be very great delays and disappointments before it becomes an efficient and beneficent world system. Countless people, from

maharajas to millionaires and from pukkha sahibs to pretty ladies, will hate the new world order, be rendered unhappy by frustration of their passions and ambitions through its advent and will die protesting against it. When we attempt to estimate its promise we have to bear in mind the distress of a generation or so of malcontents, many of them quite gallant and graceful-looking people.

Ant it will be no light matter to minimise the loss of efficiency in the process of changing the spirit and pride of administration work from that of an investing, high-salaried man with a handsome display of expenditure and a socially ambitious wife, into a relatively less highly-salaried man with a higher standard of self-criticism, aware that he will be esteemed rather by what he puts into his work than by what he gets out of it. There will be a lot of social spill, tragi-comedy and loss of efficiency during the period of the change over, and it is better to be prepared for that.

Yet after making allowances for these transitional stresses we may still look forward with some confidence to certain phases in the onset of World Order. War or war fear will have led everywhere to the concentration of vast numbers of workers upon munition work and the construction of offensive and defensive structures of all sorts, upon shipping, internal communications, replacement structures, fortification. There will be both a great accumulation and control of material and constructive machinery and also of hands already growing accustomed to handling it. As the possibility of conclusive victory fades and this war muddle passes out of its distinctively military phase towards revolution, and as some sort of Peace Congress assembles, it will be not only desirable but necessary for governments to turn over these resources and activities to social reconstruction. It will be too obviously dangerous and wasteful to put them out of employment. They must surely have learnt now what unemployment means in terms of social disorganisation. Governments will have to lay out the world, plan and build for peace whether they like it or not.

But it will be asked, “Where will you find the credit to do that?” and to answer this question we must reiterate that fact that money is an expedient and not an end. The world will have the material and the hands needed for a reconditioning of its life everywhere. They

are all about you now crying out to be used. It is, or at any rate it has been, the function of the contemporary money-credit system to bring worker and material together and stimulate their union. That system always justified its activities on that ground, that is its claim to exist, and if it does not exist for that purpose then for what purpose does it exist and what further need is there for it? If now the financial mechanism will not work, if it confronts us with a non possumus, then clearly it resigns its function.

Then it has to get out of the way. It will declare the world has stopped when the truth will be that the City has stopped. It is the counting-house that has gone bankrupt. For a long time now an increasing number of people have been asking questions about the world counting-house, getting down at last to such fundamental questions as "What is money?" and "Why are Banks?" It is disconcerting but stimulating to find that no lucid answer is forthcoming.

One might have imagined that long before this one of the many great bankers and financial experts in our world would have come forward with a clear and simple justification for the monetary practices of to-day. He would have shown how completely reasonable and trustworthy this money-credit system was. He would have shown what was temporarily wrong with it and how to set it working again, as the electrician does when the lights go out. He would have released us from our deepening distress about our money in the Bank, our little squirrel hoard of securities, the deflating lifebelt of property that was to assure our independence to the end. No one of that quality comes forward. There is not so much as a latter-day Bagehot. It dawns upon more and more of us that it is not a system at all and never has been a system, that it is an accumulation of conventions, usages, collateral developments and compensatory expedients, which creaks now and sways more and more and gives every sign of a complete and horrifying social collapse.

Most of us have believed up to the last moment that somewhere distributed among the banks and city offices in a sort of world counting-house, there were books of accounts, multitudinous perhaps and intricate, but ultimately proper accounts. Only now is it dawning upon comfortable decent people that the counting-house is in a

desperate mess, that codes seem to have been lost, entries made wrong, additions gone astray down the column, records kept in vanishing ink....

For years there has been a great and growing literature about money. It is very various but it has one general characteristic. First there is a swift exposure of the existing system as wrong. Then there is a glib demonstration of a new system which is right. Let this be done or that be done, "let the nation own its own money", says one radio prophet earnestly, repeatedly, simply, and all will be well. These various systems of doctrine run periodicals, organise movements (with coloured shirt complete), meet, demonstrate. They disregard each other flatly.

And without exception all these monetary reformers betray signs of extreme mental strain.

The secret trouble in their minds is gnawing doubt that their own proper "plan", the panacea, is in some subtle and treacherous way likely to fail them if it is put to the test. The internal fight against this intolerable shadow betrays itself in their outer behaviour. Their letters and pamphlets, with scarcely an exception, have this much in common with the letters one gets from lunatics, that there is a continual resort to capital letters and abusive terms. They shout out at the slightest provocation or none. They are not so much shouting at the exasperating reader who remains so obstinate when they have been so clear, so clear, as at the sceptical whisper within. Because there is no perfect money system by itself and there never can be. It is a dream like the elixir vitas or perpetual motion. It is in the same order of thought.

Attention has already been drawn, in our examination of Mr Streit's proposals for Union Now, to the fact that money varies in its nature and operations with the theory of property and distribution on which society is based, that in a complete collectivism for example it becomes little more than the check handed to the worker to enable him to purchase whatever he likes from the resources of the community. Every detachment of production or enterprise from collective control (national or cosmopolitan) increases the possible functions of money and so makes a different thing of it. Thus there can be endless species of money — as many types of money as there

are types and varieties of social order. Money in Soviet Russia is a different organ from money French or American money. The difference can be as wide as that between lungs and swimming bladders and gills. It is not simply a quantitative difference, as so many people seem to imagine, which can be adjusted by varying the rate of exchange or any such contrivance, it goes deeper, it is a difference in quality and kind. The bare thought of that makes our business and financial people feel uncomfortable and confused and menaced, and they go on moving their bars of gold about from this vault to that, hoping almost beyond hope that no one will say anything more about it. It worked very well for a time, to go on as though money was the same thing all the world over. They will not admit how that assumption is failing to work now.

Clever people reaped a certain advantage from a more or less definite apprehension of the variable nature of money, but since one could not be a financier or business director without an underlying faith in one's right to profit by one's superior cleverness, there did not seem to be any reason for them to make a public fuss about it. They got their profits and the flats got left.

Directly we grasp this not very obscure truth that there can be, and are, different sorts of money dependent on the economic usages or system in operation, which are not really interchangeable, then it becomes plain that a collectivist world order, whose fundamental law is such a Declaration of Rights as we have sketched, will have to carry on its main, its primary operations at least with a new world money, a specially contrived money, differing in its nature from any sort of money conventions that have hitherto served human needs. It will be issued against the total purchasable output of the community in return for the workers' services to the community. There will be no more reason for going to the City for a loan than for going to the oracle at Delphi for advice about it.

In the phase of social stress and emergency socialisation into which we are certainly passing, such a new money may begin to appear quite soon. Governments finding it impossible to resort to the tangled expedients of the financial counting-house, may take a short cut to recuperation, requisition the national resources within their reach and set their unemployment hands to work by means of these

new checks. They may carry out international barter arrangements upon an increasing scale. The fact that the counting-house is in a hopeless mess because of its desperate attempts to ignore the protean nature of money, will become more manifest as it becomes less important.

The Stock Exchange and Bank credit and all arts of loaning and usury and forestalling will certainly dwindle away together as the World Order establishes itself. If and when World Order establishes itself. They will be superseded, like egg-shells and foetal membranes. There is no reason for denouncing those who devised and worked those methods and institutions as scoundrels and villains. They did honestly according to their lights. They were a necessary part of the process of getting Homo sapiens out of his cave and down from his tree. And gold, that lovely heavy stuff, will be released from its vaults and hiding-places for the use of the artist and technician - probably at a price considerably below the present quotations.

Our attempt to forecast the coming World Order is framed then in an immense and increasing spectacle of constructive activity. We can anticipate a rapid transfiguration of the face of the earth as its population is distributed and re-distributed in accordance with the shifting requirements of economic production.

It is not only that there is what is called a housing shortage in nearly every region of the earth, but most of the existing accommodation, by modern standards, is unfit for human occupation. There is scarcely a city in the world, the new world as well as the old, which does not need to have half its dwelling-places destroyed. Perhaps Stockholm, reconditioned under a Socialist regime, may claim to be an exception; Vienna was doing hopefully until its spirit was broken by Dollfuss and the Catholic reaction. For the rest, behind a few hundred main avenues and prospects, sea and river fronts, capitols, castles and the like, filthy slums and rookeries cripple childhood and degrade and devitalise its dulled elders. You can hardly say people are born into such surroundings; they are only half born.

With the co-operation of the press and the cinema it would be easy to engender a world-wide public interest and enthusiasm for the new types of home and fitment that are now attainable by everyone.

Here would be an outlet for urban and regional patriotism, for local shame and pride and effort. Here would be stuff to argue about. Wherever men and women have been rich enough, powerful enough and free enough, their thoughts have turned to architecture and gardening. Here would be a new incentive to travel, to see what other towns and country-sides were doing. The common man on his holidays would do what the English milord of the seventeenth century did; he would make his Grand Tour and come back from his journeys with architectural drawings and notions for home application. And this building and rebuilding would be a continuing process, a sustained employment, going on from good to better, as the economic forces shifted and changed with new discoveries and men's ideas expanded.

It is doubtful in a world of rising needs and standards if many people would want to live in manifestly old houses, any more than they would want to live in old clothes. Except in a few country places where ancient buildings have wedded themselves happily to some local loveliness and become quasi- natural things, or where some great city has shown a brave facade to the world, I doubt if there will be much to preserve. In such large open countries as the United States there has been a considerable development of the mobile home in recent years. People haul a trailer-home behind their cars and become seasonal nomads.... But there is no need to expatiate further on a limitless wealth of possibilities. Thousands of those who have been assisting in the monstrous clumsy evacuations and shiftings of population that have been going on recently, must have had their imaginations stirred by dim realisation of how much better all this might be done, if it were done in a new spirit and with a different intention. There must be a multitude of young and youngish people quite ripe for infection by this idea of cleaning up and resettling the world. Young men who are now poring over war maps and planning annexations and strategic boundaries, fresh Maginot lines, new Gibraltars and Dardanelles, may presently be scheming the happy and healthy distribution of routes and residential districts in relation to this or that important region of world supply for oil or wheat or water-power. It is essentially the same type of cerebration, better employed.

Considerations of this sort are sufficient to supply a background of hopeful activities to our prospective world order. But we are not all architects and gardeners there are many types of minds and many of those who are training or being trained for the skilled co-operations of warfare and the development of a combatant morale, may be more disposed to go on with definitely educational work. In that way they can most easily gratify the craving for power and honourable service. They will face a world in extreme need of more teachers and fresh-minded and inspiring teachers at that. At every level of educational work from the kindergarten to the research laboratory, and in every part of the world from Capricornia to Alaska and from the Gold Coast to Japan, there will be need of active workers to bring minds into harmony with new order and to work out, with all the labour saving and multiplying apparatus available, cinema, radio, cheap books and pictures and all the rest of it, the endless new problems of human liaison that will arise. There we have a second line of work along which millions of young people may escape the stagnation and frustration which closed in upon their predecessors as the old order drew to its end.

A sturdy and assertive variety of the new young will be needed for the police work of the world. They will be more disposed for authority and less teaching or creative activities than their fellows. The old proverb will still hold for the new order that it takes all sorts to make a world, and the alternative to driving this type of temperament into conspiracy and fighting it and, if you can, suppressing it, is to employ it, win it over, trust it, and give it law behind it to respect and enforce. They want a loyalty and this loyalty will find its best use and satisfaction in the service of world order. I have remarked in the course of such air travel as I have done, that the airmen of all nations have a common resemblance to each other and that the patriotic virus in their blood is largely corrected by a wider professionalism. At present the outlook before a young airmen is to perish in a spectacular dog-fight before he is five and twenty. I wonder how many of them really rejoice in that prospect.

It is not unreasonable to anticipate the development of an ad hoc disarmament police which will have its greatest strength in the air. How easily the spirit of an air police can be denationalised is shown

by the instance of the air patrols on the United States-Canadian border, to which President Roosevelt drew my attention. There is a lot of smuggling along that border and the planes now play an important part in its suppression. At first the United States and Canada had each their own planes. Then in a wave of common sense, the two services were pooled. Each plane now carries a United States and Canadian customs officer. When contraband is spotted the plane comes down on it and which officer acts is determined by the destination of the smuggled goods. There we have a pattern for a world struggling through federation to collective unity. An ad hoc disarmament police with its main strength in the air would necessarily fall into close co-operation with the various other world police activities. In a world where criminals can fly anywhere, the police must be able to fly anywhere too. Already we have a world-wide network of competent men fighting the white-slave traffic, the drug traffic and so forth. The thing begins already.

All this I write to provide imaginative material for those who see the coming order as a mere blank interrogation. People talk much nonsense about the disappearance of incentive under socialism. The exact opposite is the truth. It is the obstructive appropriation of natural resources by private ownership that robs the prosperous of incentive and the poor of hope. Our Declaration of Human rights assures a man the proper satisfaction of all his elementary needs in kind, and nothing more. If he wants more than that he will have to work for it, and the healthier he is and the better he is fed and housed, the more bored he will be by inactivity and the more he will want something to do. I am suggesting what he is likely to do in general terms, and that is as much as one can do now. We can talk about the broad principles upon which these matters will be handled in a consolidating world socialism, but we can scarcely venture to anticipate the detailed forms, the immense richness and variety of expression, an ever-increasing number of intelligent people will impose upon these primary ideas.

But there is one more structural suggestion that it may be necessary to bring into our picture. So far as I know it was first broached by that very bold and subtle thinker, Professor William James, in a small book entitled The Moral Equivalent of War. He

pointed out the need there might be for a conception of duty, side by side with the idea of rights, that there should be something in the life of every citizen, man or woman alike, that should give him at once a sense of personal obligation to the World State. He brought that into relation with the fact that there will remain in any social order we can conceive, a multitude of necessary services which by no sort of device can be made attractive as normal life-long occupations. He was not thinking so much of the fast-vanishing problem of mechanical toil as the such irksome tasks as the prison warder's, the asylum attendant's; the care of the aged and infirm, nursing generally, health and sanitary services, a certain residuum of clerical routine, dangerous exploration and experiment. No doubt human goodness is sufficient to supply volunteers for many of these things, but are the rest of us entitled to profit by their devotion? His solution is universal conscription for a certain period of the adult life. The young will have to do so much service and take so much risk for the general welfare as the world commonwealth requires. They will be able to do these jobs with the freshness and vigour of those who know they will presently be released, and who find their honour through performance; they will not be subjected to that deadening temptation to self-protective slacking and mechanical insensitiveness, which assails all who are thrust by economic necessity into these callings for good and all.

It is quite possible that a certain percentage of these conscripts may be caught by the interest of what they are doing; the asylum attendant may decide to specialise in psychotherapeutic work; the hospital nurse succumb to that curiosity which underlies the great physiologist; the Arctic worker may fall in love with his snowy wilderness....

One other leading probability of a collectivist world order has to be noted here, and that is an enormous increase in the pace and amount of research and discovery. I write research, but by that I mean that double-barrelled attack upon ignorance, the biological attack and the physical attack, that is generally known as "Science". "Science" comes to us from those academic Dark Ages when men had to console themselves for their ignorance by pretending that there was a limited amount of knowledge in the world, and little

chaps in caps and gowns strutted about, bachelors who knew all that there was to be known. Now it is manifest that none of us know very much, and the more we look into what we think we know, the more hitherto undetected things we shall find lurking in our assumptions.

Hitherto this business of research, which we call the "scientific world", has been in the hands of very few workers indeed. I throw out the suggestion that in our present-day world, of all the brains capable of great and masterful contributions to "scientific" thought and achievement, brains of the quality of Lord Rutherford's, or Darwin's or Mendel's or Freud's or Leonardo's or Galileo's, not one in a thousand, not one in a score of thousands, ever gets born into such conditions as to realise its opportunities. The rest never learn a civilised language, never get near a library, never have the faintest chance of self-realisation, never hear the call. They are undernourished, they die young, they are misused. And of the millions who would make good, useful, eager secondary research workers and explorers, not one in a million is utilised.

But now consider how things will be if we had a stirring education ventilating the whole world, and if we had a systematic and continually more competent search for exceptional mental quality and a continually more extensive net of opportunity for it. Suppose a quickening public mind implies an atmosphere of increasing respect for intellectual achievement and livelier criticism of imposture. What we call scientific progress to-day would seem a poor, hesitating, uncertain advance in comparison with what would be happening under these happier conditions.

The progress of research and discovery has produced such brilliant and startling results in the past century and a half that few of us are aware of the small number of outstanding men who have been concerned in it, and how the minor figures behind these leaders trail off into a following of timid and ill-provided specialists who dare scarcely stand up to a public official on their own ground. This little army, this "scientific world" of to-day, numbering I suppose from head to tail, down to the last bottle-washer, not a couple of hundred thousand men, will certainly be represented in the new world order by a force of millions, better equipped, amply co-ordinated, free to question, able to demand opportunity. Its best will be no better than

our best, who could not be better, but they will be far more numerous, and its rank and file, explorers, prospectors, experimental team workers and an encyclopaedic host of classifiers and co-ordinators and interpreters, will have a vigour, a pride and confidence that will make the laboratories of to-day seem half-way back to the alchemist's den.

Can one doubt that the "scientific world" will break out in this way when the revolution is achieved, and that the development of man's power over nature and over his own nature and over this still unexplored planet, will undergo a continual acceleration as the years pass? No man can guess beforehand what doors will open then nor upon what wonderlands.

These are some fragmentary intimations of the quality of that wider life a new world order can open to mankind. I will not speculate further about them because I would not have it said that this book is Utopian or "Imaginative" or anything of that sort. I have set down nothing that is not strictly reasonable and practicable. It is the soberest of books and the least original of books. I think I have written enough to show that it is impossible for world affairs to remain at their present level. Either mankind collapses or our species struggles up by the hard yet fairly obvious routes I have collated in this book, to reach a new level of social organisation. There can be little question of the abundance, excitement and vigour of living that awaits our children upon that upland. If it is attained. There is no doubting their degradation and misery if it is not.

There is nothing really novel about this book. But there has been a certain temerity in bringing together facts that many people have avoided bringing together for fear they might form an explosive mixture. Maybe they will. They may blast through some obstinate mental barriers. In spite of that explosive possibility, that explosive necessity, it may be this remains essentially an assemblage, digest and encouragement of now prevalent but still hesitating ideas. It is a plain statement of the revolution to which reason points an increasing number of minds, but which they still lack resolution to undertake. In The Fate of Homo sapiens I have stressed the urgency of the case. Here I have assembled the things they can and need to do. They had better summon up their resolution.

THE END

THE COMMON SENSE OF WAR AND PEACE

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§ 1. — GROWN MEN DO NOT NEED LEADERS

FOR the greater part of my life I have given most of my working time to the problem of the human future, studying the possibility of a world-wide reorganisation of human society that might avert the menace of defeat and extinction that hangs over our species. That has been my leading preoccupation since I published *The Time Machine* in 1893. I have never thought, much less have I asserted, that progress was inevitable, though numerous people chose to fancy that about me. I have always maintained that by a strenuous effort mankind might defeat the impartial destructiveness of nature, but I have always insisted that only by incessant hard thinking and a better co-ordination of man's immense but dispersed powers of self-sacrifice and heroism was such a victory possible.

Since the present crisis began to develop I have done everything I could, to focus the thinking of a lifetime upon the stormy clashes of to-day. I have studied and spoken and written and published, to get reality clear in my own and as many minds as possible. In this little book I am trying again to assemble the essential truth about what is happening, as concisely and clearly as possible. This is, to the best of my ability, a map of where we are and how we can go. Not only where we are, I repeat, but how we can go. I am writing it down without exhortation or any emotional appeal. That, if you want It, you must seek elsewhere. If you are one of those who *prefer* to go On with life with a magic talisman in your hand instead of a map, this book is not for you. But if you like to carry a blessed image or a mascot in your pocket I will not quarrel with you, if only you have the sense to rely upon the map instead of trying to muddle your way through when the bearings of the situation are plain.

Since I began to learn about the direction of human affairs, I have been much afilicted by would-be disciples and followers. Before I took my own measure I did occasionally entangle myself with groups of people who proposed to take possession of me, interpret me and make something between a figure-head and a leader of me. These

entanglements taught me one thing very clearly, that “leadership” is entirely incompatible with the clear and critical apprehension of how things are and where things are, which is the natural activity of such a mind as mine. You might just as well expect a chart and compass to steer a ship. I found out very early in life, not only that I could not “manage” people, but that I disliked in about equal measure the concessions and deceptions that are involved in managing anyone, and the tiresome people who obliged me to make those politic adjustments of the truth necessary to keep them in tow. I despise driven sheep, I despise dogs tha.t fawn upon me, I despise followers and disciples, I despIse the “ simple faith “ and “ unquestioning loyalty” of human beings who ought, I feel, to think and act for themselves instead of sacrificing the brief opportumtIes this life affords them of being real.

Read me, I would say, use all I have to give you, assimilate me to yourself (and assimilation may very well mean a digestive change and improvement) and we will go on together in fraternal co-operation, but please, please, do not imagine you are being invited to line up behind me. You have a backbone and a brain; your brain is as important as mine and probably better at most jobs; my only claim on your consideration is that I have specialised in trying to get my Outlines true.

That is the spirit in which I call myself a republican, a democrat and an adult man.

It is a biological truism that the majority of our species retains infantile characteristics throughout life; most men and women never grow up at all. Most animals settle down, but human beings can play and be curious at seventy. Men and women of eighty can die young. This has its good but also its profoundly enfeebling side, if you remain not young but infantile. Most of our kind pass from the knee of mothers, who tell them what and how, to the schoolmaster or mistress, the priest, the big boys (or girls) in the school, their caste, the employer, the political adventurer, all telling them what and how before they are allowed a sceptical moment. Directly they come to the frustrations and distresses of our disordered social life, leadership touts for them, exploits them and enslaves them. We have now in Mein Kampf a complete expose of the art of leadership, and in the

stricken lands of the great offensive, we have seen these poor methodical, gullible, German lout-sheep pouring forward in their multitudes to destroy horribly or be destroyed. It is like a flight of locusts; it is a stampede. One has to kill them or be killed, because reason would be wasted on them.

In Britain, America, France and what are called the sroaner democratic countries, we have a number of more or less ridiculous figures proposing themselves for leadership after the fashion of Mussolini and Hitler. Every antic of these masters is aped. But there is in all our countries, thanks to certain accidents of their past history, a capacity for derision and individual initiative that makes the careers of these aspirants to dominance' difficult. It is a type which ought of course to be shot when it makes itself plainly dangerous. Huey Long, whom I met and found very attractive in America was,I think, very properly murdered. Our Parliamentary forefathers made treason to the people a capital offence. It might very well be the only capital offence. There is no other crime so evil. If it were possible to express this present world conflict in one phrase which it certainly is not-" The struggle of the free men against the led men," might be as serviceable as any.

The infantile belief that it is possible for one single individual to concentrate will and understanding for a whole people may be best disposed of by a very simple set of considerations. I would call it "counting the hours of a man's life." I would ask you to take anyone to whom you may be disposed to submit yourself and reduce the total of his life to hours. It comes to no very great total. Then deduct from that the hours that must have been spent in sleep, in eating and drinking and in what is called recreation. That will about halve your total. Now take off the years of infancy. Then enquire into the history of your divinity. He went to such and such a school, he had access to what books? All schools waste a certain amount of time; no worth-while book is read without difficulty. And a man who is to cut a figure in the world must act as well as learn. I was led to this sort of enquiry when I set myself to work out the maximum number of hours available for impartmg knowledge to youngsters between tbe ages of five and sixteen.* When everything else has been allowed for it works out to a total that is astoundingly small. I was so struck by

this realisation that I set myself a number of problems in history. Always I sought to determine the quality of the sources of knowledge available and the maximum number of hours the individual under examination could have given to the matter under discussion. What could Alexander the Great have known of the Persian and Indian worlds into which he led his raiders, what was his vision of the world he splashed with new cities, had he the remotest idea of the gathering Romans in his rear? What can Stalin know of the social and cultural realities of the Western world, against which he guards himself with such dire suspicion? What can the Pope, any Pope, know of the great concepts of modem biology? You will realise that every one of us, even the most receptive, is a blinkered man. There are certain things he may know well, but the better he knows those definite things, the less he can know of matters outside the limits of his specialisation. A man may guide you unerringly up Mont Blanc. That is no reason why you should expect him to steer you through the traffic of New York City. These leaders and enslavers of men are fabulous creatures. They are pretenders and impostors. There are no such people.

* See "World Brain!"

I write these introductory disavowals to the reader in order that the purpose of this book should be perfectly plain. You are being led nowhere in this little book; you are being shown certain definite things. Certain interpretations of what is happening will be put before you, and it is for you to decide whether these interpretations are true or false. Certain possible roads will be shown to you and whither they lead. If your leader or your colonel or your priest or anyone to whose hands you have entrusted your mental conscience tells you not to trouble about the reasoning with which I challenge you, and you take his word for it, I can do no more for you. Or if some bright young Communist, for example, after the pattern of those absurd young "students" I met at Leeds the other day, students who listened to nothing and were obviously incapable of study, persuades you that I have produced all this carefully thought out discussion for some obscure and sordid motives of my own, and that therefore you are absolved from thinking about it, then again I I can only shrug my shoulders. Suppose, as he will imply, that publishing a

Penguin book brings me wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, does that in itself make the arguments I put before you, any the less sound?

And so to our discussion.

But first let me repeat the headline of this section and add two additional sentences. *Grown Men do not need Leaders. But that does not mean that they will not trust a properly accredited equal who has some specific gift or function. You trust your plumber, your doctor, your cook, your automobile scout, your Ordnance Map, conditionally, without either arrogance or subservience.*

§ 2. — CAN ANY PEACE BE MADE NOW?

THIS present warfare differs from all previous warfare in many respects. To others of these I will call your attention later, but here I would concentrate upon the difficulty created by the absolute unreliability of these Totalitarian States.

The world is full of warfare. We in this country are spending seven or eight million pounds a day, I gather, on the war. It is not only costing us seven or eight million pounds a day. In spite of everything that sincere supporter of the present monetary system, Mr. Maynard Keynes, may say or do, this war plainly means bankruptcy and inflation within quite a reasonable time. In quite a little while we may find money in our pockets that will practically buy nothing. So far as I can see, all the gold in the world is gravitating now to the vaults of the United States of America. When it is all safely interred there, America may be considered to have won the Gold Standard game. I presume that then the rest of the world will have to work out a new system for exchanging labour and commodities. We shall still have our hands, our heads, our land and our raw materials, and we are not likely to starve quietly because all these things are mortgaged to a remote creditor.

But how to re-animate those lands and that material is likely to be a difficult and contentious process. It is a matter that our experts in business management should be doing now, most urgently. They should be making schemes for barter and a new and independent exchange system now. It may not be necessary, but it is highly advisable to have it ready and thought out. So far as I know, nothing of the sort is being done, and in our careless British fashion we are likely to be caught by this problem unawares, and undergo all the stress and suffering that unpreparedness entails. Not only here but all over Europe a progressive social disorganisation is plainly apparent; day by day we can see things getting worse, education being disorganised and demoralised, the standard of living sinking, freedom dwindling. The first question, therefore, we have to put to ourselves is: Is it possible to get any peace now? What sort of peace can we possibly have at the present time? We have read speeches and

articles by Mr. Lloyd George advocating a peace settlement as soon as possible. Mr. C. R. Buxton issued a booklet, *The Case for an Early Peace*. Lord Beaverbrook, before his change of heart, urged it in his papers. But ask these people: "Is it a peace that would allow us to disarm?"

"No," they will say: "we must keep armed to the teeth." Is it a peace that would lift in any way that apprehension of sudden attack which broods upon all the world to-day? No such peace is conceivable at present. Anything you could call a peace would be so insecure that it would still cost almost as many millions pound a day and do nothing material to arrest the progressive dislocation of. our lives. The balloon barrages would still have to keep in the sky and the troops under arms. Such a peace would be a mere technical change of no practical importance at all. Instead of being technically at war as we are now, we should be technically at peace, as China and Japan are at peace now. When England and France declared war last September, they started something that it is going to be excessively difficult to stop. Even Mr. Chamberlain has observed that it is a new sort of war altogether. I believe we are all in practical agreement about that.

Let us ask then: what is the real nature of this strange, new-fashioned war which we are so incapable of ending in any etfettive way? We must exert our minds to answer that. Obviously, we cannot make any hopeful plans for restoring order to the world until we know the real nature of its disorder. Do we know? — are we clear on this matter?

I suggest we are not. Weare all ridiculously at sixes and sevens, because so many people, who set up to be leaders of thought, prefer to be eloquent and demonstrative when they ought to *think*. At present one can hear of a fantastic variety of views about what is hapPening. Only one set of them can be right. Shall we try to find out what that right set of answers is? What, in the broadest terms, is happening to the world?

I want to ask J Are we fighting against anything definite at all? You will hear it constantly repeated that this is "a war of ideologies." You will hear about the Totalitarian State, National-Socialism, Bolshevism; and you will hear it stated and implied that these are

new and more complicated methods of State organisation that are coming into existence, that the "individual" is to be subordinated to these new elaborate State systems, and that the present struggle is a struggle to preserve our individual freedom and self-respect from envelopment in this serpent of the Totalitarian State.

Either this is true or it is not true-I submit that it is not true.

I am going to ask a very simple question indeed: *Do any of these States really exist at all?* Is there such a thing as a Totalitarian State in being? Is there a National-Socialist State? Is there now anything in the nature of a responsible working system that you can call Bolshevism? Is there any sort of definite working social organisation anywhere corresponding to any of these words?

If these things are in existence, if these alleged new and more elaborate State organisations are living realities in our world, then they must consist almost entirely of people who have definite places in them; people who have specific jobs; people who know they are safe if they do their jobs properly; people as sure in their actions as cog-wheels in a watch, knowing clearly how they stand to one another, knowing clearly how this wonderful new organised State, in which they live and move and have their being, stands towards all the rest of the world. We must in fact be face to face with a higher, more complicated order, with a shape and a character and a mind of its own with which we can deal. It will have a character with which we can negotiate and upon which we can rely.

Well, where is there such a living "ideology" in operation? Where is that higher organisation? Our politicians and journalists reach out in search of such a system, and do they find anything of the sort? I suggest that nowhere on earth do these things, Totalitarianism, National-Socialism, Bolshevism, exist, and that when distinguished writers and radio talkers call this "a war of ideologies," they are talking nonsense. They are talking about intellectual fantasies and phantoms infinitely remote from the grim realities which crowd upon us.

Bolshevism, I admit, did at one time seem to contain the promise of a system of constructive ideas. Twenty years ago, when I had the privilege of talking to Lenin, I found that fine, valiant and subtle intelligence entangled in the beard of Karl Marx, and doing its best

to struggle out of that huge fuzz to real constructiveness. But he was learning the job from the ground up! He was reading Chiozza Money's *Electrification of Holland*, of all books! and he was full of a scheme for the electrification of Russia-which rather overlooked the relative difference in the distances between centres in the two countries and the consequent cost in copner cables. I have described the talk I had with him in Russia in the Shadows, and in that book you will find I foretold clearly the devastating danger of Marxist planlessness-pIanlessness and dogmatism.

"Come again," said Lenin, "in ten years' time." Six years ago I did go again to see what was happening in Russia, and then I had the privilege of talking to Stalin. That talk also is on record.* I wanted to know the structure of the new society he was producing to work Bolshevism. What was its character, its spirit, its working organisation?

* Published as a pamphlet by *The New Statesman*.

I had just come from America. The New Deal was being crippled in America for want of a competent Civil Service. What was Russia doing? I hoped rather than expected to find Russia one vast Civil Service falling into order. I found nothing of the sort. I found in Russia no development of any securely ordered society whatever, no system in which a man could do his job without fear, in which he knew where he stood, in which one man could trust another and speak fearlessly to him, no society in which there was any real developing social structure. In certain material particulars Russia had progressed with the rest of the world, but not nearly so fast as the rest of the world, and chiefly by importing American notions, tractors and so forth. The only organisation that had developed was the secret police and personal espionage. Russia was no more a new social order in 1934 than it had been in 1920. It was less so. It was plainly relapsing into autocracy.

In a recent publication, Sir Nevile Henderson has told how he went to Germany to find a Germany with which this country could deal. And what report has he brought back? Nothing but gossip about personalities, nothing but talk about individuals, how, like the present British Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax, he shot with Goering and gossiped with Goebbels, and what fine fellows they all were

together; gossip and nothing else-and why?

Because manifestly there was no National-Socialist State there for him to deal with, nothing but forceful groups and individuals, incalculable because there was neither law nor ideas to control them. So far from any State, new order, or National Socialism having triumphed over the individual, the truth manifest in his revelations is that groups and individuals had triumphed over any system whatever, and that National-Socialism, like the Totalitarian State, and like, I am afraid, Bolshevism at the present time, was just theoretical eyewash for a purely individualistic control.

The truth is not that the State has suppressed the individual in Germany, but that forcible and entirely irresponsible individuals have captured the State. Trotsky, in his published denunciation of Stalin, witnesses to the same thing in Russia. He presents the Government of Russia as Henderson presents the Government of Germany, as entirely a handful of individuals, running amok in a steadily disintegrating commumty.

That, I suggest, is the essential difficulty of our situation. There is nothing there to make peace with. You cannot make peace with disorder. Disorder, gang tyrannies, a collapse into a brigand world; that is what we fight *against*! And now let us ask ourselves what we are fighting *for*.

§ 3. — WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR?

THE question of what we and our Allies are fighting for is a difficult one. If we are not fighting against some new, strange and evil way of life, but only against gangster violence on a monstrous scale, then it seems that our war must be primarily a defensive one. But is it altogether a defensive one?

Official sources seem uncertain about that. Even Lord Halifax in his more exalted moments talks vaguely of a new and better order that is to emerge from this war. In that case we are not primarily on the defensive at all; we are fighting for a new order in the world. But is this merely what is called an "inspiriting" utterance? Useful in war time but of no subsequent value? I am reminded of Mr. Lloyd George's "Land fit for Heroes" in-was it 1917 or 1919? Let us probe a little deeper into this question. Because plainly it is a quite fundamental question for us and our allies and our adversaries and the neutral States of the world. Are we fighting to save an old order, the stately homes of England, the huntin', the fishin', or are we honestly fighting to make a new world? Sooner or later our rulers and representatives must come clear upon this point. They do not do that now. Their propaganda has a bafflng flavour of insincerity. Our Foreign Office has to speak out and tell the world its War Aims, and so far it has failed to speak out and do that. Until their Governments do that, the Allies remain ambiguous and perplexing even to those who would be their associates and friends. The present Churchill government is manifestly a provisional government, torn internally by this conflict between the ideas of a defensive and of a creative war. Are we fighting to keep or to make?

Many of us still hope to see still more creative governments than exist at present, both in Britain and France. Meanwhile let us go on clearing up our minds. Let us ask therefore, What is the reality on our side, we who are fighting against these gangs and groups of individuals who, with such manifest insincerity, are professing to be new social systems? Are we so very different? What is our reality? What is this Western Civilisation of ours for which we are asked to take every conceivable risk, for which we are asked to make every

possible sacrifice? There again we find people all giving the most completely contradictory accounts of what we stand for. Surely we have to clear these contradictions out of the way? One account must be right and the rest wrong. If you will read a booklet called *The British Case* (a ninepenny Government publication I commend to your most earnest study) you will learn that our present Minister for Foreign Affairs lends his name to the assertion that we are fighting not simply for the Birtish Empire throughout the world, but for the Christian religion. We are fighting a religious war for Catholicism. Inspired utterances in high quarters echo this assertion. It is a "Crusade." But do many Christians really believe this is a war of religion? Did our boys who went to be exposed to overwhelming numbers in Belgium, ill-equipped and betrayed by that Belgian King who must have been educated so badly at Eton, did they really march to the tune of *Onward Christian Soldiers*? Were they really fighting to make the world safe for Bishops and Eton boys? From this appalling document you will be able to Judge how much Lord Halifax (i.e. the British Foreign Office) cares for the hardships of the Jews in the concentration camps or the restoration of slavery in Central Europe. . His mind is largely early-Kipling, Stalky and Co., With a strong dash of Eric, or Little by Little. The greater part of the British Empire, you will realise, is still, from the point of view of Lord Halifax and his associates, no more than "the lesser breeds within the law." "Asiatics," for example, like the Aga Khan, are put in their places in this great missionary enterprise upon which we are engaged. What our Turkish Allies think of this war for the Church of England I cannot imagine. Do we English as a main objective in this war really want to shove our religion and our gentry down the throats of all man kind? This canting stuff is far below the liberal British Imperialism of the nineteenth century.

Yet our people fight, and we fight with a sense of rightness. The diffused, unorganised popular mentality of the British people is far higher than that of the governing and political ciasses. What is it we fight for? I think most of our soldiers and common people will be in agreement that we are fighting for something very much greater than any Empire. Something far beyond the cramped ideas of that dismal pamphlet, something we may all agree in speaking of as democratic

civilisation. We feel that we have a reality in that, a reality that justifies our appeal to world opinion, against our antagonists.

Nowadays you will encounter the most diverse statements about this "democratic civilisation" of ours. And the curious thing is that all these diverse ideas have a certain plausibility. They involve no irreconcilable contradictions. One man will say that democratic civilisation is an expansion of medieval Christendom; another will present it as a natural development of the GraecoRoman culture; Marxists, perhaps rather nearer actuality, will declare we are living in the last stages of the Capitalist System; and others will talk of the peculiar geographical advantages of Britain or of Europe, and the peculiar energy of the northern peoples, which gave our Western Civilisation the leadership of the world. I suggest to you that all these ideas have factors of truth in them, but that none of them is the whole truth; that the reality of our Western Civilisation is a vast complex of traditions, usages, rules, laws, dominations and devices; which at the opening of the present century did in effect dominate the whole world. It was, I suggest, a vast growth, a happy concatenation of accidents, containing no guarantee of its permanence.

And now, because the forces that assembled it have ebbed, and new unanticipated forces have come into destructive activity, it has ceased to dominate the world.

One aspect of this dominant Western Civilisation of the nineteenth century was the universal validity of the gold sovereign. I would call your particular attention to that. When the history of our times comes to be written, I think historians will be disposed to call it the Gold Standard Age, or the Age of Investments.

It produced a definite way of life and a way of thinking of its own. I shall try presently to define the characteristics of that distinctive culture in a brief section on the Blue Swastika and the downward class war of the Rentier type.

Prosperous people, during that phase of monetary domination, distributed their savings, and felt sure of their dividends, levied their tribute in fact, from China to Peru. With a passport and a letter of credit they could go in comparative freedom and safety all over the world. Throughout that phase, in spite of much social injustice and oppression, slums, sweating, exploitation there was a working order

in the world, that gave a fortunate minority at least, but, be it noted, a considerable and increasing minority, security and a fairly hopeful life. There was real progress and ample justification for optimism.

I won't attempt to analyse the forces that created this transient world domination, this Golden Age of the investor. I don't think historians have ever attempted to make any proper estimate of those forces. The repeated discovery of new gold deposits had a lot to do with it. But towards the end of the Victorian era, something happened. That phase passed its climax. What was it happened?

I suggest that what happened was that this huge complex of Westernised Civilisation began to fall to pieces, *through the operation of novel and entirely unforeseen forces* which I will examine a little later, and also I suggest that nothing has yet appeared to restore or replace that complex. If so, then we are not faced with a conflict of two types of State or anything of that sort-we are in the presence of one single world system which is breaking down, this wild German belligerence aiming at power and power only, is part of the breakdown, and nothing whatever has appeared yet to replace this collapsing order. *Which will therefore go on collapsing.*

We are fighting confusedly and we may fight unsucc:ssfully because our minds are divided. We all fight against the blind conquest drive of Nazidom. But that is merely fighting a symptom. Some of us are scrabbling to preserve the collapsing order at any cost; while on the other hand an increasing number are only too anxious to get rid of the old order and lay the foundations of a new one. The two conceptions are incompatible. We cannot have it both ways. We have to make our choice. Is this a war to salvage a world manifestly far gone in decay, or is it a vast tragic clearance for a new order? The only answer with hope in it is the latter alternative. Let me now do my best to make this half-instinctive, creative war aim, definite and acceptable.

§ 4. — ONLY WORLD REVOLUTION CAN END WAR

AND here I come to something still more vital and fundamental, about which I think all men of good will should come to a common understanding. Either you have to declare that what I am now going to say is misstated or altogether untrue-or I do not see how you can avoid making it the basis of your interpretation of our difficulties. I do not apologise for stressing this, because matters are too urgent for genteel understatement.

I encounter an extraordinary inability on the part of earnest, peace-seeking people to incorporate the realities I am putting before you with their always amiable and earnest proposals. I do all I can to keep those ideas before them. I write my propositions in capital letters. I state the truth gently but persistently, and they smile and disregard it; I put the idea to them insultingly; they seem pained by my manners and they pass on as though nothing had been said. I cannot persuade them to treat these fundamental verities as primary facts in our world problem.

Their resistance to these ideas is, I think, due mainly to the way they have read and been taught history. Old-fashioned history is saturated with the idea that there is nothing new under the sun, kings and empires come and go but there are always more kings and empires, and you cannot change human nature. But Science disentangled our minds from that dull belief in routine and assures us that under the sun every morning the day is a new day. People are so saturated in the old-fashioned conception of history that they are impervious to the recognition of any fundamental change in human conditions. Why, I ask, will people go on discussing the riddle of peace upon an historical basis, in historical terms, that are superseded?

The bedrock realities upon which all our ideas of social and political policy must now rest, are, I assert, as follows:

A complete biological revolution has happened to our species. There has, in the past half century, been a complete reversal of the

conditions under which human beings have to live. A tremendous development of invention and discovery has swung us round, in less than half a century, from need to possible abundance, and from remoteness to unavoidable contact.

One most obvious result of that development has been to bring all the people of the world together upon each other's doorsteps. This is spoken of generally as the abolition of distance, and this abolition of distance is something that has made every national, sovereign state in the world too small for contemporary conditions. Let me repeat these words. *They are too small for contemporary conditions.* But there they are!

There has also been an incredible increase in power and productive capacity. It is now a simple statement of fact that we could have a world of universal prosperity, if we had peace. That was not true half a century ago.

There has been a tremendous release of energy, and the present political, social and economic organisation of the world gives no scope for its utilisation except in destructive violence and war.

* And here I put a star to direct your attention to what is surely the very central factor in our present complications. *It is not only mechanical energy that is set free, but human energy of a most urgently restless type, in the form of great numbers of restless unemployed young men.* These supply the driving force for the Hooligan, the Nazi, Fascist, Communist, the I.R.A. movements that are everywhere tearing our social order to pieces; and until we find a way out of this incessant revolt and conflict that will turn the human energy into creative channels, matters will go on from bad to worse, war will go on from bad to worse.

We have to adapt ourselves to these new conditions, or, like every other species which does not adapt itself to new conditions, we have to perish. Now here I have stated what I believe to be the gist of the present human problem. For consider: what we call war to-day is not war as history has known it. It is a different thing. Its destructive effect is immeasurably greater. It is now a truism that if we do not end war, war will end us.

Nor is the competitive hunt for profit and dividends the same tolerable process that it was in the past. I find few people rea1ise how

much of our business exploitation to-day is a wastage of resources that can never be replaced. Few people realise the destructiveness of business competition nowadays. Because of this change in our conditions.

We are not only burning up our coal and our oil, and sweating and degrading the workers who are employed for that service, but we are rapidly stripping our planet of its forests, and so turning a wholesome, mitigated rainfall into an alternation of droughts and soil-destroying torrents. We are exterminating hundreds of precious and interesting species that can never be replaced, whales, elephants, penguins, seals and the like, and we are turning millions of acres of grassland into dusty deserts. All this is ascertainable fact. Unregulated competitive business, because of the new teeth and claws invention and discovery have given it, is doing this.

We have power and more power, and everywhere it is being used to knock our world to pieces. That is why it is now urgent to replace not only our Sovereign States, but also our competitive and wasteful economic exploitations, by a more highly organised method-or perish. To achieve a progressive world organisation as speedily as possible, before extinction overtakes us, is, therefore, the primary problem, about which Mr. Everyman-you and I-has to get his mind clear now. Everything rests on our ability to solve that. Unless we are clear about that, not merely world peace, but the survival of our species in its present form, is just futile aspiration.

We are fighting now face to face with an enemy whose one passionate aim is manifestly destructive conquest; we are ruled by governments that betray us by their passionate desire to keep on the propitiatory defensive. The plain truth is that we cannot stay where we are. We have to go on or succumb. We have to achieve the reorganisation of the world as one continually progressive, political, social, economic and educational community, and embark upon the realisation of the abundance and ever-fuller life for man that is now attainable. We have to do that because there is no other road except the road to destruction.

Am I right in that? Or have you some other end in mind about which I know nothing? And if so will you tell me what that end is? Can you set up the universal peace and plenty that is now clearly

possible on earth, in any other way?

Let me ask you now what the setting-up of one sovereign peace in the world and one general economic control, means. It means World Revolution.. I ask you not to be afraid of the word “Revolution.” Speak English. Don’t think of Revolution as an affair of street barricades, the heads of beautiful ladies on pikes, and tumbrils going to the guillotine. Our “Glorious Revolution” in 1688 had none of these ingredients, and the Revolution that established the Hanoverian Succession was practically bloodless. You can have a Revolution without massacre or violence. But anyhow, I submit that organised world peace and welfare mean such a Revolution in human life as will dwarf all previous revolutions to comparative insignificance. It means such a universal scrapping of time-honoured institutions as mankind has never faced hitherto. Consider: Man has always been a war-making animal. Our sovereign national governments arose as war-making organisations, and now we are under the necessity of setting up one single Pax in the world. That is a quite fundamental change of front for humanity. How can we do that without either completely amalgamating all existing governments, so far at least as their power to make war goes, or else reducing them to the position of ceremonial memories like Halloween or the Ancient Society of Druids and setting up a common control over them? I put it to you with the utmost deference that anyone who runs about now demanding permanent world peace and who is not prepared to scrap the sovereignty of his own government and amalgamate the general control of political and economic life into a world-wide system, is either muddle-headed or insincere or both. This means the end of the British Empire quite as much as the end of German Imperialism. You have to face it. In other words, I am saying that if we really want World Peace and World Welfare, that means we are World Revolutionary Socialists, and for my own part I cannot see how we can escape the chain of reasoning along which I have been led to this conclusion.

§ 5. — THE BLUE SWASTIKA AND THE RELIGION OF THE RENTIER

Now here I propose to make a digression upon human motives and upon the forces that give us our Quislings, and particularly King Leopold Quisling, that Eton boy who deliberately betrayed his country and his allies, to the sympathetic consternation of the better-class elements in our present compromise government. I think that there are common features in all the weakening and defeatist elements which complicate the democratic effort everywhere throughout the world. I want to make it clear that hatred of the common man and hatred of the idea of government in the common interest, exists everywhere on earth and that it has to be given its proper value, which is almost primary, in mapping out the problem before us.

I have said that some of us are really fighting with a clear desire to go on to a new world, and that others of us are pulling back to preserve a state of affairs tbat is collapsing. Sooner or later, I repeat, and the sooner the better, we have to make our choice between revolution and reaction. The world at large is not clear about this and it is becoming urgently necessary tbat it should become clear about it.

For the past few months I have been almost continually engaged in sampling human reactions to the present situation. I have received and read, and sometimes re-read, thousands of letters provoked by my trial attempts to state the broad facts of that situation, and a very considerable volume of printed comment and criticism. In addition I have read a large number of books which, quite independently of anything I was doing, deal with these same broad facts. In modem phraseology I have been engaged in Mass Observation in the field of expression of opinion. A certain section of the letters dealt in a spirit of charitable detestation with my parlous spiritual state, and others dealt very wholesomely with my lack of personal charm and the undesirableness of my continued existence. I agree about the disagreeableness; I am not particularly in love with my style; but I

find it gets rather oily and ambiguous when I try assuagement; and I find a sufficient countercorrespondence to go on with this research in my own manner. It cannot be so very long anyhow before I stop altogether.

Happily the very great bulk of this material I have had to handle has been without personal reference, pleasant or unpleasant. Even when it has been definitely addressed to me, it has been inspired by so keen an interest in the material under discussion, that only facts, views and estimates have mattered to the writers. One would have to be omniscient or completely stupid not to have learnt a great deal both in detail and about the general shape and statement of one's views through such an experience, and though I find the general trend of thought I have followed remains substantially the same, there has been nevertheless a decided change in the relative value of two of the main lines of possible political development, and I have realised a need for much greater explicitness upon certain issues where I had rashly assumed there was a general under standing. Let me state as simply as I can what I mean when I say that my sense of the relative values of certain processes in this task of world adaptation has been modified by these months of study and discussion I have spent in getting my mind clear. When we call this warfare a war between Democracy and Gangster Aggression, I realise more and more, we mean not a struggle between existing sovereign powers, divided vertically from one another, the good democracies and the bad, bad, bad swastika folk, but a struggle between aggressive dominating types of people and the general interest, a struggle which is going on *in every state in the world*. I am in agreement with the psychology of Adler rather than Freud about the essential motives of human beings. The desire to feel secure and superior, to command and extort respect and recognition, amounts to a primary hunger; it is far more essential than the intermittent drives of sex. Everywhere and under any political formula, it leads to parallel, if not identical, conflicts.

That has been manifested very plainly by the course of events in Northern Europe. In Finland and all the Scandinavian countries there has been a very considerable amount of progressive liberal and labour legislation during the past quarter of a century. Social services

have been vigorously developed, educational standards have risen slums have vanished, upper chambers have disappeared from the legislatures; no other countries whatever have gone so far in the direction of a unIversally prosperous equalitarian parliamentary regime. There has been a vast increase in vulgar happiness. The ground was cut from beneath the feet of the Communist by these advances. In Finland in 1918 there had been a very considerable Marxist movement and there was a grim civil war; it is not an entirely satisfactory story but in the end compromise prevailed. In a brief twenty years insurrectionary Marxism had dwindled to ineffectiveness in Finland, the agrarian and urban workers had come to a working understanding, and men who had literally hunted one another in the days of conflict were working together for the general good. It was an astounding experience to come, as it did in 1920 and again in 1934, from the Marxist pseudo-socialism of Russia to these orderly, happy and highly socialistic countries.

Yes. But there was discontent in them and discontent of a very definite sort. In Stockholm last August when I was there I encountered some very strong whiffs of that discontent. I do not mean discontent from below. There was indeed an active Communist Party, but that was no more natural to the soil than our English communism. It was just a nuisance to the Labour-Liberal political bodies, and it was quite conceivably subsidised by reactionary money. Its chief activity, there as everywhere, was to disorganise the progressive parties. The real and dangerous discontent was from above. One found it among the more active employers, in the official and military classes and the sort of people who were gradually being deprived of their sense of superiority and importance by the progressive social equalisation. They felt it had gone too far.

They resented the criticism of their business management and finance, they were offended by the sight of the happy and cheerful common people who ate in the same rather democratised restaurants and showed the utmost lack of deference in tramways and trains. They felt just as our British Colonel Blimps do when a private in uniform eats in their presence, or a coloured man gets into the same railway compartment. They wanted these common people deprived of all this Parliamentary nonsense and put back in their places, and

they saw in the Nazi reaction in Germany the very pattern of the methods required.

Why should we pretend things were not so? In Sweden up to the outbreak of the war there was the possibility of an illegal pro-Nazi coup, and the same was manifestly true of Finland. So far had matters gone that the war-planes of Finland were even adorned with a blue swastika to facilitate their co-operation with the black. Everything was ready for a struggle from above downwards to arrest the legalised democratic drift and embark upon a common attack upon Russia as the symbol (even if it had become a monstrously unsatisfactory symbol) of the proletarian idea. In 1937-8 Sweden and Finland, like Poland, were ripe for a Nazi revolt from above. Apparently this was also true of South Norway. And it is absurd to say that the Stalin-Molotov dictatorship in Russia had no reason to fear an attack through Finland. From their doctrinaire, stupid and suspicious but not altogether ill-informed point of view, they had ample reason to regard Finland as the destined spear-head of an anti-Comintern attack. It is to Hitler that we owe the frustration of this reactionary possibility. No man in the world, not even Ribbentrop, has done so much as he has done to expose and destroy the imminent danger of totalitarian world dominion. Think of all the possible allies this foolish leader of the blind has dispersed. The Germanised and Yiddish-speaking Jews fought loyally for German ascendency inside and outside Germany as long as they possibly could. In the 1914-1918 conflict their services to Germany were of immense value. All the Jews in Poland and the Baltic provinces were naturally pro-German. Germany was their spiritual home. Yiddish was a German dialect and they were proud of it. The Jews in America, again, until Hitler came along, were largely anti~British and pro-German. They were powerful in the press, in the book trade and in criticism. To them we owe the poisonous legend that every Englishman who visits America is a “British propagandist,” however cunningly disguised.

Hitler has deprived Germany of all that potential loyalty and preference. In a state of hysteria at the approach of his particular nightmare, the war upon two fronts, he sold his possible Nazi friends like cattle to their traditional enemies. I hope that as a consequence

we may see at last the blue swastika and all it stands for fade out of the struggle and out of the political imagination of the north.

The point I want particularly to stress here is the revelation of the *extreme precariousness* of any advances in social well-being and popular happiness by parliamentary activity, *unless they are fortified by a world-wide co-operation of the popular and constructive elements in society* to restrain the fear and resentment of the rich and privileged. I have always opposed and ridiculed the class-war theories of Marx and his followers, the classwar upward, but the behaviour of a number of significant people since the betrayal of the liberal Republican Government in Madrid, has brought me to realise, as I never did before, the strength and quality of the classwar downward. I find this jealousy, this fear of equality, this dread of a world without inferiors, without people one can command and order about, a primary factor in our present perplexities.

It happens that a typical case of downward class-hatred has come to hand, has, so to speak, volunteered, in the person of Dean Inge. In a recent essay about me he has favoured the world with an explanation of the revolutionary flavour of my views. I suffer, he says and have never recovered from, "the hardships of my early life"; I am "permanently embittered" with the genteel classes; at the sight of real ladies, deer parks, the stately homes of England and the clergy, I "see Red" and "exult in the destitution" which I "hope awaits them." (Note please that word "destitution" and not" destruction," because I shall have more to say about that.) He then sails on to a string of vague utterances against "Victorian Socialism" and a story of vast massacres and abominable outrages committed, he alleges, in Spain, and apparently with my connivance if not under my direct incitement. Or else I do not know why he drags them in when he writes about me. I make no defence whatever to these extraordinary charges. I mention them simply because they justify me in discussing the Dean's mental and moral condition with an equal freedom and a clearer regard to the facts.

I have watched him closely for many years. I have been curious about him and perplexed by him. He is conservative and reactionary, but he is not an arrogant Tory. There is nothing of the large generosity of an autocrat about him, nor has he any of the

overbearing confidence of a storm-trooper or a Russian commissar. Nor should I say he is at all snobbish, though he takes a lively interest in people of good family as being in fact the only people who are justified in living. But he IS saturated with animus against common people and against any legislation or any social forces that seem likely to diminish to any degree their inferiority to himself. He grudges them their reproduction, their education, for which he assumes they are "unfitted," and he bemoans any collective action to civilise their living and working conditions. Now there, it seems, we have something closely akin to that spirit of suppression which underlies that middle and upper class sympathy with the Totalitarian State outside the formally Totalitarian States, which I observed in Sweden, and which I have found far too abundant for my liking at home in England; *the spirit of the blue swastika.* But in the Dean it lacks dramatic quality. He will denounce me as a "Red," but he will not attack me as a "Red." If and when I am hustled off with blows and kicks to the Brown House or seized and dosed with castor oil, I am sure I shall not detect his familiar and, I warn him, very recognisable legs and gaiters among my masked assailants. His Fascism is of a more indoor and defensive type.

And reconsidering again those innumerable articles of his which poured out from Lord Beaverbrook's papers in Lord Beaverbrook's unregenerate days, I am struck more and more by the continual insistence upon payments. He resents" paying for other people's children" and other people's illnesses and old age and so on and so forth. And, following up this clue, I find it leads me not merely to an explanation of Dean Inge, but to the adjustment of quite a large mass of behaviour in our world at the present time to our world problem. He belongs to a large class of people who resent expenditure upon all social services with extreme bitterness. War preparation, police, law courts and whatever protects property he can tolerate, but schools, medical services, housing, these are anathema to him. He stands preeminently for that rentier type of mind which has been produced in great masses by the financial and economic developments of the past two or three centuries. He clings to a sense of superiority over the great majority of his fellow creatures, but he does not do so in any titled, decorated, armed and trampling manner. He has

transferred all that assertiveness to his property and more particularly to his investment list. For him typically, as for vast multitudes of his class, the central sustaining reality in life is neither God nor Church nor country nor duty nor any of those brave decorative things, but the investment list and the income it yields. He thinks in terms of solvency, and his use of "destitution" instead of "destruction" in the sentence I have quoted exposes the very core of his mind.

Whatever sustains that central reality is his good, whatever threatens it is his evil. There is the key to his objection to expenditure on social service and to his dread of anything that threatens him with expropriation. In a world of increasing terrors for his class, he still clings to the desperate idea that these swastika cults will keep the people down for him. The supreme evil, because it is the plainest threat, is "Bolshevism," but anyone he suspects of taxation and collectivisation he denounces, as he denounces me, as a "Red." We are all Reds together, we are all in a conspiracy against that sacred thing, which he calls civilisation, Christian civilisation, or what you will, and nothing is too bad for us. He lapses into conspiracy mania upon the lines of Mrs. Nesta Webster, whose Secret Societies and Subversive Movements must never be forgotten in any study of the present political and social conflict in Britain.

Now I do not want to accuse Dean Inge of any essential dishonesty or wickedness. He is not writing or thinking, as people say, with his tongue in his cheek. It is a!l to his credit that he reveals to us, honestly and plainly, exactly what he is. He is what his origins have made him. He does not know how completely his mind has been transferred to those threatened investments as the touchstone of social and political good. But the consequences of such a fundamental distortion of the mind become apparent directly we come to any question of evidence bearing on the case. Any statement that discredits these " Reds," however preposterous, he accepts and repeats eagerly. Any statement that seems to him to favour the anti-Reds must by that fact be true. And I find he has a kindred spirit in our press in Mr. Arthur Bryant, who, I understand, is a trusted adviser of some of our present rulers.

I will take them, therefore, together. I refuse to charge either of these gentlemen with deliberate falsehood. But I can do so only on

the assumption that they are so mentally deranged by their horror of expropriation as the ultimate evil, that they are indifferent to the ordinary rules of evidence. I have been pleading with them recently, both in private and in public, to come straight and own up, about certain fantastic statements they have made about Spain, and it is only after a complete failure to get them to do anything of the sort, that I produce them here as types of a widespread, and still spreading, infectious mental malady, a malady that has to be taken into very serious consideration in our speculation upon the possibility of bringing some sort of new order out of our present world confusion.

First with Dean Inge. He has written (the italics are mine):

"I cannot understand how any decent person can deny that the Nationalists were justified in taking arms against *those devils in human shape*, the Spanish Reds, who, fighting under the 'hammer and sickle' and *under orders from Moscow*, butchered three hundred thousand men and women, a hundred thousand in Madrid alone, *in an attempt to extirpate whole classes of the population.* It is difficult to forget what an American eyewitness saw in the town of Ronda, near Malaga. The Reds impaled on stakes *all the male inhabitants who belonged to the middle class*, and while they were dying in agony compelled them to watch their wives and daughters being first violated and then burnt alive. There are scores of similar horrors equally well authenticated."

There is a plain statement. I asked for the evidence and I pointed out that when the "Nationalists" took arms the Spanish Government was a Liberal Republican one which had recently suppressed with considerable difficulty an Anarchist-Syndicalist revolt. And I asked particularly for the name and qualifications of that "American eye-witness." To which the Dean replied proudly: "I have made a careful study of the Spanish horrors, and have accepted none but well-documented evidence." He then without a word of apology dropped his American eye-witness and appealed to "a book by Mr. Arthur Bryant," which Mr. Bryant tells me does not exist-he has never written about Ronda-and there I was left. Mr Bryant referred me to "official" reports upon atrocities by the Nationalist authorities, but I feel I have hunted the Dean far enough. As for the Communist rule in

Spain, the Dean cites Krivitsky's *I Was Stalin's Agent* as convincing evidence. It is plain that if Krivitsky's book has a word of truth in it, then he was by his own confession an accessory for many :years to a complex of crimes, frauds, tortures and deceits. Why should we trust him now '/ The Dean cannot have it both ways. And this assertion that something is " official" without date or other reference, is really beyond sane acceptance. What Herr Goebbels says is "official." What Lord Haw Haw says is "official," and the denials of the Republican Government in Madrid were equally official. So far from making a "careful study" of the matter, it is plain that the Dean has just shut his eye and gobbled what he wanted. "I could have found several equally dreadful examples by Spanish eye-witnesses, but some of them I did not care to keep on my shelves. The estimate of 300,000 victims is official; some have put the number much higher. Krivitsky's *I Was Stalin's Agent* is most illuminating; for example, page 120: "The Ogpu had done a brilliant piece of work. In December, 1936, the terror was sweeping Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. The Ogpu... carried out assassinations and kidnapping.... The Soviet Union had a grip on Loyalist Spain, as if it were already a Soviet possession."

According to the Dean and Mr. Arthur Bryant, Franco, you see, had taken up arms in July, 1936, to avenge what happened, according to that veracious witness, Krivitsky, in the subsequent December.

Meanwhile, so far as figures go, Mr. Arthur Bryant outdoes Dean Inge, and I find him running on in this style in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*:

"...the deliberate murder of 800,000 men, women and children in cold blood, *as did the Communist rulers of Republican Spain in the early days of the Civil War*. For it seems that these ghastly slaughter-house figures, which can now at least be computed, far exceed anything previously estimated in this country."

Shocked by this, I wrote direct to Mr. Arthur Bryant, asking him to clear up that massacre of the entire middle-class of Ronda with the Dean, and to justify or apologise and withdraw his" deliberate murder... in cold blood" figures and his statement that the Republican Government in Spain at the time of Franco's treason was a "Communist" one. I pleaded with him as one decent Englishman to

another to own up and not make it necessary for me to expose him. He referred me as his source for that 800,000 to an evidently well-informed article in *The Times* for January 3rd last. Now here let me quote what that article says and ask the reader to judge whether a man who can draw the above conclusion from what follows can really be considered to be in his right mind.

"The shadow of tragedy lies heavy over all. With a total of murdered estimated at 800,000, apart from 400,000 killed in regular fighting, there is hardly a family in the land without a sense of wrong as well as loss, if not a desire for vengeance. This extends to the relatives of the 'executed.' Ten months after the civil war ended, prisons remain crammed and tribunals have to struggle to keep pace with arrests. Denunciation is extended to foreigners, as in the case of Mr. Charles Clayton Ray, president of the British Chamber of Commerce in Madrid, who has been twice molested. Association with the 'Red' Governments or authorities, even in official capacity, is confounded with crirrunality.... In spite of promises to the contrary, persecution for political reasons continues and heavy sentences are pronounced. Fifty Basque priests still lie in prison. Two of them were recently reprieved from death by General Franco, but the Mayors of Tudela and Eibar, together with the youth Raimundo Uriarte, leader of the Basque *mendigoxales* (Alpinists) were shot."

You see what Mr. Bryant's 800,000 butchered" in cold blood" amounts to. It includes all the Franco massacres also, systematic killings that are still in progress, and it spreads over the whole period from 1935 to the present day. Yet he still clings to his own interpretation.It is a triumph of faith over fact. The Dean's "official" 300,000 is a reduction of half a million, and still it will not stand examination. No less a witness than General Franco can be put into the box. In a review of the state of Spain at the end of last year he gave the figure of the legal government's killings from first to last as 100,000. Even he may not be entirely free from bias. One gets down to something rather more tangible in F. A. Voigt's *Unto Caesar*. There we find that he estimates the shootings in Madrid, including those of persons who were spying, signalling or fighting against the government within the city, and who were shot, therefore, according

to all the accepted usages of war, as "at least" 40,000. He tells me personalJy that he was able to see the police records of the shootings in Madrid from first to last, and he estimates the total of those records as about 35,000. He feels, however, that these figures are incomplete, and he adds another 10,000 for his own satisfaction. Let us assume that 22,500 of these were unjustifiable political murders. That is frightful enough, but we must remember Spaniards of all parties take their politics grimly. Still it does little to exculpate my two cases from the charge of a bias amounting in effect to mania.

Now if these two gentlemen on the dissecting table were rare specimens, it would not be worth while devoting space and time to their state of mind, but they are not rare specimens; the problem of their kind and what has to be done to them is a central one in our present discussion. In *The Fate of Homo sapiens* I drew attention to the influence of Mrs. Nesta Webster's *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*. It is a book that all serious people interested in the British situation ought to read and think about, and very few of them do. I give Mrs. Nesta this much advertisement. You hear little of her in what we call literary circles, and your ordinary educated man, if her volume should ever come into his hands, will probably either consider it a joke and read it through with chuckles, or drop it as preposterously silly. But *the politics of Great Britain are not now in the hands of highly educated people*, and if we are to understand the mental forces at work in influential quarters at the present time, we cannot Ignore Mrs. Webster, Buchmanism Christian Science, occultism and so forth. They are probably more influential even than orthodox Anglicanism.

In my *Fate of Homo sapiens*, published before the war broke out, I wrote:

"I should describe Mrs. Nesta Webster as a perfectly sane and capable person with insane ideas, so widely do I disagree with her. I believe her influence has spread far beyond the circle of her actual readers. Milder forms of the same intellectual malaise at any rate are now prevalent throughout the more prosperous classes in Great Britain and America. It is the only way to account for the behaviour of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, for example, or Lord Rothermere, the British newspaper proprietor, towards the Jews, towards Russia,

during the past two or three years. A tepid, negligent, broad Christianity is becoming an aggressive, narrow pro-Christianity under the stresses of the time.”

In America this rentier mentality is probably even more obstinately anti- common-man than in Great Britain. It is the clue to all the frenzied denunciations of the New Deal by rich people and their consistent efforts to hinder and sabotage the socialisation of America by Franklin Roosevelt. All these defensive rentiers would break away into defeatism and a deal to-morrow, if only Goering and Hitler would let them. These case-book studies I have made throw a new and very illuminating light upon the reality beneath all this vehement pseudo-Christianity that still seeks to transfigure this present conflict into a religIous war against anti-God (and anti-Stock Exchange) Rusia.

And I think they make the significance of that Finish blue swastika clear. All these things psycholopical understanding of that downward class war, which threaten) all our hopes and liberties.

§ 6. — THE TRIPLE CHOICE

IN the preceding section I have done my best to put before you my conception of the roughly triangular conflict that is now going on in the human community. I have tried to put the Blue Swastika, the Rentier mentality and the Black Swastika in their proper relationship to each other and to the collapse of the Investors' world. None of these things present any hopeful alternative to the third path-the Revolutionary path. There, there is hope, and how much hope there is, and what call there is for effort, must be our next question. Either, convinced by such considerations as I have put before you, you will decide more or less honestly to be a Revolutionary. That means the utmost selfobliteration of which you are capable in a good cause. You will find that idea worked out very clearly by a very great Russian psychologist, Chakhotin, a former colleague of Pavlov, in a book called *The Rape of the Masses*. You should read that book. Become a conscious, devoted Revolutionary. That is the first alternative.

Or you will try to dodge about in the convulsion in human affairs ahead of us, buy gold bars for example and bury them, cheat or wangle advantages, or resort to political gangsterism and bare-faced robbery. You will perhaps resort to the propitiatory complicity of the Blue Swastika. Or thirdly, you will join what will probably be the great majority of mankind in the days ahead. You will submit, you will bolt, you will evade facts until they overtake you. You will join what is always the great majority in a decadent species, the fugitives and victims.

That is the triple choice before you; *either a revolutionary, or a gangster-trickster, or a victim*. Fight, cheat or yield. Your pride and conscience must decide.

§ 7. — WHAT FEDERATION MEANS AND MAY MEAN

I HAVE argued that the alternatives before a human being in the face of our present stresses are, to fight, cheat or yield. You have either to be a World Revolutionary, working to set up a new Law and Order in the world, or a shyster, or a victim. I am now going to assume that we have braced ourselves to the first alternative. We propose to make the establishment of a New World Order the major interest in our lives. It is a vast undertaking, but I, for one, do not believe it is a hopeless one, and I will now set before you my reasons for that belief as plainly and clearly as I can.

I believe that we have at hand now the means and the method for a New World Order that will make that collapsing Golden Age of the Investor, that transitory upper and middle class world order of the late Victorian age, seem a mere gleam of barbaric prosperity before the dawn.

Let us now put the question: What is the primary problem we human beings have to solve? Obviously it is to replace or at least to mitigate adequately these militant, sovereign, national governments and these competitive business and financial organisations, which are now, under the new conditions created by invention and discovery, devastating and tearing our world to pieces, by something that will override, restrain, and even perhaps end, their conflicts. We want to discover some project that will not only open a way to peace out of this present conflict but establish a safe barrier against the recurrence of warfare in the future. Can it be done 1 and inseparable from that, How can it be done? Now there is a word very much in circulation at present which, for reasons I will make clear, I have been disposed to regard with considerable suspicion, the word" Federation." It can be used very easily in a misleading and dangerous way, and that was the thing most evident to me at the onset. Combined with "Union," in the phrase "Federal Union," it appeared associated with some extremely misleading and preposterous schemes. Their mental quality aroused a sort of contemptuous dislike in me, and in my desire to make my

objections emphatic, I may have struck at ideas outside the definite target at which I aimed. Happily I am not one of your heaven-sent leaders, but merely an explorer. I profess no inspired omniscience. If I find I have reported things wrongly I do my best to correct that report as soon as possible. I am going now to restate my ideas about Federation-or may I call it?-Federalism. I don't think that I or for that matter anyone else has been very clear about that word. Released from its early associations, and stripped down to its essential significance, cleaned and defined, this word "Federalism" may yet prove to be the key word for the solution we are seeking.

But let us keep this clear; "Federalism" is the thing; "Federal Union," as it is now being used, is something much more limited.

What is a Federation in the broadest sense? A Federation is nothing more nor less than an agreement on the part of this or that group of independent powers or organisations to set up a common authority to which they delegate *certain specific functions* and no others. You can have a federation of football clubs or of manufacturers. You can have a federation of free cantons like the Swiss Republic. The essence of federation is that *the federating bodies keep their identity* and merely *delegate* powers.

For instance, and it is a thing most Europeans fail to keep in mind, all the States in the United States of America are independent sovereign States. They do what they please, they have powers of life and death, inside their boundaries. The Sacco and Vanzetti case, the Scottsborough case, the peculiar divorces of Reno, are local stories as much outside the purview of the Federal Government of the United States as the troubles of Shanghai or Tibet. The Federal Government is concerned only with the collective foreign policy, army and navy, money, inter-state trade and so forth, and each carefully defined function has been speciaIly relinquished to it in the Federal Constitution. This is one outstanding type of federation. It is an affair of power politics; it is a regional grouping of sovereign states which realised that they were doomed to conflict and disaster if they remained divided, in face of European, and particularly of British, encroachment. So they made a common front to the danger, and incidentally got rid of the inconvenience of local monies and inter-state trade barriers.

But the American Union is only one type of federation. There exists also a whole series of organisations at the present time which are much wider in scope and which deal only in very strictly defined fields. Essentially they also are federal. I want to stress that. They are federal in spirit even when they are not federal in form.

This type of federalism is often spoken of nowadays as *ad hoc* internationalism. A typical case is the Postal Union. So far as our correspondence goes, we have been living for some time in a loose world federal state. It is true that the associated countries all print and sell their own stamps in order to advertise their monarchs, their great personages and their scenery and products upon them. There is indeed a complicated system of coupons for the payment of return postage, but there are still no federal world stamps, and under the stresses of war the privacy of letters is no longer respected. But the fact that the idea has so far materialised only imperfectly, does not affect the validity of the idea.

That great Jewish genius, David Lubin, had a scheme for developing the Postal Union into a world parcels post, setting no limit to the bulk of parcels, standardising frieght, and so bringing all the goods transport and merchant shipping of the world under one international control. It was a clear-headed, practicable idea. It pointed straight to that economic world federalism which is our only escape now from unending conflict. He organised the International Institute of Agriculture in Rome, which, before 1914, had independent treaties with nearly all the sovereign States of the world and received reports, month by month, upon the crop outlook everywhere, so that it was becoming possible to foretell gluts and shortages, famine and superfluity, and provide for them, all over the world. That was twenty-six years ago. 1914 put an end to that development. The International Institute of Agriculture, in so far as it had delegated powers, was an even closer approach to economic federalism than the Postal Union, though it never had time, before it was overtaken, to develop a system of agents of its own throughout the world.

The Elder Brethren of Trinity House, again, who light and chart and dredge all the sea channels of the world, constitute another world organisation essentially federal in its nature. The control of the drug

traffic the control of the White Slave traffic, the distribution of radio wave lengths, are all parallel instances of *ad hoc* internationalism. Already in respect to these various matters, we were living practically in the dawn of a federal world state before the present War overtook us. We may call the first sort of federalism, *political power federation*, and I suggest we call this second type of international co-operation, *ad hoc* wprld federalism, since it deals *ad hoc* with only one function. They are the two extremes of the same thing. At one extremity we have essentially political federations, power federations, limited both in their functions and their boundaries; and at the other extremity, federalism limited only by function. Some legal-minded people will think that I am stretching this word "federalism" unjustifiably to bring in these world-wide types of international cooperation, .but for the life of me I can find no difference except in degree and range between these extremes. The essential thing in both types is the surrender of one or more particular function to a common control, while retaining every other aspect of sovereignty intact.

And I want to put it to you that another, a third distinct form of federalism is developing now, under the stresses of the present struggle. I do not think anyone of us has sufficiently appreciated its possibilities in our discussion of the world situation. It may develop very remarkably.

It arises from the imperative necessity that allies engaged in modern totalitarian warfare, should pool their military, air and naval commands, stabilise their exchanges, co-operate closely in their economic life, in their shipping and general transport, in their declaration of war aims and in their preparations for peace. That sort of federalism, the natural product of necessity, was in operation between the Allies in the late phases of the war of 1914-18. It worked very well. This again was not called "federation," but essentially it was. I suggest that we might very well call this "war-welded Federalism." It was not foreseen or planned; it developed out of an unavoidable need. Powers were delegated to a unified control of the fighting forces, to an allied shipping control, to a federation in the matter of supplies.

After the war, this bundle of federal arrangements was it is true

broken up, but it was broken up hastily and foolishly. That is largely why we are again at war. Shipping and industries were grabbed back by private ownerships, British support was withdrawn from the franc, secret treaties and double-crossing broke out like a rash on the fair face of victory, and the foreign policies of America and the Allies came untwisted like a badly made rope. That was a disaster that must not recur. Nevertheless, there *was* that essentially federal phase during the earlier war; it is lamentable that it did not hold together, and under our present stresses most of it seems to be returning in an intensified form.

This time the conditions are very different. Any repetition of Armistice Day and that great Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's, in which King, Church and Deity — none of whom could really be held responsible for the conduct of the war — gave each other credit for a glorious victory, seems to me highly improbable. This time it looks as though the elaborate cultivation of inefficiency under the British system, the concentration of power in the hands of a class so demoralised by privilege that it has failed to keep up even its own training and education for direction, had at last reached the pitch of conclusive military failure. It is unthinkable that the Allied "democratic" peoples should accept defeat but it is becoming more and more doubtful whether the directive energy and intelligence our ruling classes can now produce, is capable of conducting the conflict to a triumphant end. The slowly awakening anger of a misled people may clear away the old regime but it will not in itself produce the immediate technique for victory. This will be a stubborn and costly war for the common soldier. When this German onslaught upon civilisation passes its climax it may ebb and collapse very rapidly, but by that time the social, moral and economic exhaustion of the nominal victors will probably have reached a phase which will render them incapable of dictating any such peace as that made at Versailles.

What then is the outlook? It seems to me that the present involuntary and unprecedented federation of ourselves and our Allies, will be forced to go on increasing and elaborating itself far beyond any more or less illusory "end " to the present fighting. This time it is going to be very much harder to unscramble the eggs we

have been forced to beat up together for the second time. Now here, it seems, we have a third distinct type of federalism; federation through conflict under modem conditions. To distinguish between this and the power block federation, the " Federal Union" idea on the one hand and ph doc world internationalism on the other, we may call this third type of federalism "war-welded Federalism."

And as I have been turning over this general theory of federalism in my mind, I have come to realise that there is a possible way towards a world settlement arising out of this conception of War-welded Federalism. I want to put that idea before you. If it stands examination, I put it to you it may turn out to be a very valuable and important idea indeed.

Unless the onset of peace is to take us by surprise, just as we were taken by surprise by the war and by the discovery of the immense unpreparedness, incapacity and half-heartedness of our governing class, it is evident we must set about thinking out the probJem of peace for ourselves now. *They* cannot be trusted to handle it for us.

Talking about peace need not and must not weaken our fighting, but talking about a worth-while peace may put a lot of energy into our fighting. It is plainly impossible now to call off any of the fighting until the Germans are exhausted, and until something like a general disarmament is agreed upon and provided for.

It is not *our* choice that; *they* won't let us. How can you trust Germans any more so long as they have arms in their hands? And the return of the evacuated populations has to be not only stipulated for but arranged for, before we leave off. We must be agreed about that. Treaties aren't good enough. But when we are through there will have to be far greater social reconstructions than were attempted at Versailles. Money is going to "bust." Both sides will have to come together upon that much, before this war, as they call it, *can* end. Anything short of that will be merely a pause for another Nazi surprise. The Armistice will be imposed by necessity on both sides. Until there is some such fully implemented Armistice prepared, how can this fighting stop? It may ebb for a while and then break out again, but there can be no other ending for it. So that a lot of the terms of the Armistice will have to be discussed and settled-through neutrals perhaps, and in all sorts of roundabout wayswhile the

fighting is still going on. Maybe America may formulate these conditions. Maybe America and Russia-have you thought of such a combination?-may insist upon them. Neither dare permit a Germany rampant. Neither wants to fight, but they cannot tolerate that. Then they must co-operate in holding her down. And how else can she be held down except by *fully empowered world commissions*? So the idea of a war-welded federation of the combatants and the interveners, quasi-victors and quasi-vanquished, may emerge in the guise of a great tangle of special world adjustment commissions....

That is surely a much more possible and practicable outcome than any mere triumph of us or them. Europe is being bled down to pale reasonableness pretty rapidly. And the shortest way to cessation will be special world commissions. We could have the best part of the world under international commissions in quite a short time if it wasn't for the inertia of the older politicians. In two or three years at the outside. That is the most probable way out of this bloody chaos and the most possible and the most desirable. Unless this break-up of the world into a slaughter scramble is to go on in-definitely, there must be an effective disarmament commission, a reparations commission, an international commission for the restoration of the displaced populations, an air and general transport commission, and a commission for the restoration of production by some readjustment of money and barter, all in operation quite soon. Their work, once it begins, may stretch over year....

Is this asking too much of the human intelligence? At its present level? I for one do not think so. One world-wide federation there must certainly be after this war and that is a federation to put a stop to air war for ever. Plainly that at least must stop, or civilised life must stop, and the one and only way to stop it is to set up a world commission with full powers to control the air everywhere, powers of search, powers of instant suppression. No single country can be left out of that. If necessary, countries must be compelled to come in. And no simple treaties or conventions will meet the case. There will be no more treaties because there is no more good faith. Germany has killed that for ever. The air commission must be a commission with full powers, a world air police. All over the world reasonable people and common people will be in favour of that. Patriots may

object, but even patriotism may be out of fashion in a little while. And once we federate so far as the air goes, we can add other world commissions quite easily to the bundle of delegated powers. All that, we can get out of a properly conditioned *and previously discussed and formulated* Armistice. We can get it in no other way. So I take it that is the way things will have to go.

What else can there be? Utter disaster. Even countries that keep neutral right up to the end will see the logic of the new conditions; they will surely insist upon bearing a share in this settlement. It is a universal concern. They will all be under arms. They will all be entangled economically in the war. Is there such a thing as an "Isolationist" left even in America? If so, it must be some old gentleman who cannot read. Inevitably all the world must participate. The alternative is to become troglodytes listening for the air-raid warning from t~e air watchers and listeners outside, as prairie dog sentinels listen for trouble, for evermore.

Do I make this idea of a sort of Standing Armistice clear? Negotiated and worked out from now on? Discussed beforehand? Put into operation at the cease fire? The longer the inevitable international commissions that would be set up, stay in being, and the more extensive they are, the less disposed reasonable men will be to part wIth them, and the more effectively will they block the way against the old order, or the old disorder sneaking back to its outworn localisations and appropriations. Putting the settlement in the hands of international commissions will save the faces of the combatant governments, and it will satisfy the immediate need for peace as I cannot imagine anything else doing. How else can we get back out of this world mess? How can our rulers and leaders and politicians dodge such an obvious settlement? Saving face is always important in old, decaying, complicated states. And under a regime of international commissions, the sovereign states will be able to declare they are still independent sovereign states, except in so far as these international commissions go. They can keep all their flags and dignities. That will not matter for the time being. We are only beginning to realise how far these commissions may be able to take us to a world-wide collectivism in raw materials, industrial distribution and so on, in spite of all such face-saving residues of

sovereignty. The nominal Armistice will be in effect a Peace Union. The world will become, for all essential purposes, a federated Union, so far as the functions I have enumerated go, long before the fact is openly recognised.

And here I want to suggest that concurrently with this proposed discussion of an Armistice forthwith, there is another line of consolidation and reassurance open at the present time, and no reason whatever why it should not be followed. The democratic governments, belligerent and neutral it seems to me are doing themselves and the world a grave injury by not making a clear and detailed statement of their common conception of democracy. They have been urged to do so from many directions, and the Sankey Committee convened under the auspices of the official Labour organ in London, the *Daily Herald*, has drafted a Declaration of the Rights of Man which might well serve either as an actual statement of the common objectives of the progressive states at the present time, or as a basis for a careful revision. With that and the use that can be made of it, I will deal presently. The supremely desirable end at which the Declaration aims, is to establish clearly defined unanimity of outlook, so that the common man everywhere and the decent enemy citizen may know where he stands. The air is full of vague talks by the heads of states, leading politicians, eminent divines and so forth, about the common ends of civilisation, the brotherhood of mankind, etc., etc., but it is impossible to regard that kind of stuff as anything but iridescent humbug until something like a honest willingness is displayed to bring these loose, cloudy aspirations to the cutting edge of an explicit statement.

The extreme reluctance of the Allied governments to explain themselves to the world now is one of the most extraordinary aspects of the present situation. If anything is more inept than our general strategy it is our propaganda. Just as very few Europeans are aware of the essential sovereign independence of every one of the United States of America, so that the responsibility for local scandals and injustices is all charged to Washington, so hardly any stress whatever is laid upon the practical disintegration of the British Empire by the Statute of Westminster. It is a matter of vital importance in the real British case, in the face of the successful extinction of one free nation

after another by the German onslaught, that the British Empire has been breaking up into free nations, visibly and so completely, that Southern Ireland has been able to remain a neutral in the present struggle and South Africa was free to discuss a similar detachment. Many even of our own people do not realise this, and it does not seem to be understood in America where as the British Pavilion at the New York World Fair showed, the only official British propaganda was a monarchist appeal to snobs. It is not clearly appreciated anywhere how far the Empire has already disarticulated itself, in convenient preparation for new and wider international readjustments.

A further change in government in Britain may afford the opportunity for a clean-up of ideas in this matter. No Germans believe in our present good intentions. They believe we are a nation of sturdy fighters led by angry, vindictive but, luckily for them, incompetent Blimps. They expect no mercy if they lose the war. We hand them over body and soul to Hitler with our indiscriminate threats. Yet since it is highly undesirable as well as impracticable to exterminate them root and branch, we shall have sooner or later to make peace with them and work with them again. Why not make it clear at once what our conditions for co-operation are and what sort of common world we intend to share with them? We are obliged to go on fighting them until they surrender the air and disarm. Cannot we make up our minds now, that we do not propose they shall surrender to any victorious antagonist or antagonists at all, but to a special *ad hoc* world organisation in which from the very beginning they will have a properly conditioned share?

The general embarrassment and probable failure of governments, statesmen, diplomats and politicians in the face of the present situation is to be understood if we realise that all their training has been as patnots and national advocates and that the task they have to undertake is an extensive unification of the common interests of mankind which will limit and minimise the importance of the very sovereignties in whose particularisms they have lived and moved and had their being. The Labour Party quite as much as the Conservative Party is first and foremost British. Very few men who are making political careers are likely to possess the intellectual vigour even to

understand this situation in which the world finds itself, and even among that select minority the power of everyday use and wont will keep them playing on at the old game by the guttering candlelight of scholastic "history," long after the brightening dawn of the new realities has filtered round and through drawn blinds.

This is the paradoxical position of human affairs. An increasing number of us know more and more clearly how matters are with the world. A lesser number are making an effort to meet the stupendous challenge of the situation. The rest follow their traditional motives, remain passive, obey their rulers blindly and when disaster looms immediately over them give way to panic, and to the persecutions and mass hostilities that panic engenders. Whatever plans are conceived and attempted to restore progressive order in the world, they must take into account the resentments and resistances of the instinctively conservative majority. They will obey the driving force of a Hitler who leads them to destructive conquest, because, as we have pointed out, destruction, and even self-destruction, is one of the normal escapes of the weaker sort of mind, but they will not face the terrifying prospect of a reconstructed world. From Aldous Huxley downward these gentler souls will continue to sneer at the idea of a Brave New World and take refuge in the desert and self-effacement. I beg his pardon-"Detachment."

It is plain, therefore, that those who can add courage to their personal conviction that the human disaster may still be averted, must make their plans so as to inflict the minimum of shock and secure the maximum of acquiescence throughout the world. That is why it will be more convenient to set up the limited but sufficient amount of world federation needed to arrest the human debacle in the guise of a pre-arranged Armistice than to set up some terrifying and boring. World Conference with unspecified powers of reconstruction. An armistice, even a carefully prearranged armistice, has a reassuringly temporary appearance. That it had been considered beforehand would rob it of the flimsiness of an improvisation. It would leave all the existing governments (or such provisional governments the stresses of the war may produce) in being. They would simply be shorn of their more manifest powers of mutual injury. Crowns need not topple, nor natural boundaries-so long as

they cease to be barriers-change. Some of the special commissions a preconceived Armistice would set up, commissions for the restoration of evacuated populations and the immediate relief of distress, for example, would be manifestly of a temporary nature. They would do their appointed work and fade out. Others, such as the air control or the control of staple production, would remain and become the permanent and not too obtrusive framework of a recuperating world.

§ 8. — WAR IN THE AIR AND AFTER

IT is sometimes an advantage to walk round an idea and see it from various sides, and so I am going to approach this idea of getting to a practical world federalism through a prearranged Armistice, from another angle.

I happen to have had opportunities of observing the reactions of a number of human minds, including my own, in the face of an advancing certainty. Here again I have been my own guinea-pig, and what I have first observed in myself I have found reflected in the behaviour of people about me. These observations have a very direct bearing upon the problem of how to get humanity out of its present phase of distress and destruction. There is a very evident way out, but whether we shall be able to pull our minds together and take it is an altogether more debatable question.

War in the air has been foretold for more than a century. I need scarcely quote Tennyson's "airy navies grappling in the central blue." What I have more particularly in mind is a book I published in 1908, *The War in the Air*, a year before Bliriot flew the Channel, and I want to direct your attention to the spirit in which it was written and read. It told of a German surprise air raid upon the world (in Zeppelins), of the rapid supersession of the airship by the aeroplane, of the extension of the air war to the whole world and the collapse of civilisation under it. The argument of the book was perfectly clear and sound, and it has been sustained by the experience of the intervening third of a century. It was that air war would be enormously destructive and inconclusive. This conviction, which is a clear, reasoned conviction, I have since reiterated in various books and films. But I am not claiming credit as a prophet. I am not asking you to observe that I told you so, but how it was I told it. The point I want to stress is this, that though I could work out this argument with complete intellectual integrity, I could at the same time treat the whole devastating prospect as a joke, as a preposterous extravaganza. *The War in the Air* is written in a vein of cheerful burlesque. An absurd little Bert Smallways opens the story with the remark, "This here Progress, it keeps on," and he ends an ageing barbarian among

the ruins of a world. I just poked fun at the march of events, and people found the book very amusing.

I wrote this book in a cheerful little house I had built for myself at Sandgate, among surroundings of an apparently invincible stability. I did not connect it in the least with the outlook of my children. There was a disconnectedness in my mind. I was not dishonest, but my mind was carrying on along two main and mutually incongruous strands, and it is only in the restrospect and in the light of the psychological analysis of. the behaviourist school of thought, which presents conscious life as an imperfect association of conditioned reflexes, that I begin to realise the significance of this. These main strands were not completely independent; they affected and coloured one another, but to a large extent they were independent processes. From the standpoint of the everyday present in 1908, war in the air was incredible and slightly absurd; from the standpoint of the intellectual process, the every-day life was just the temporarily pleasant foothold from which we looked at the inevitable. Now, since I am a very ordinary person, what is true of me is probably more or less true of most of my fellow creatures,* and I find in this realisation of the active existence of different systems in my own mind a clue to the behaviour and limitations of a great number of people which have hitherto perplexed me. They can at once understand things more or less clearly and refuse to entertain them. They can do this in perfect good faith.

* Here is precisely the same idea from Churchill's The World Crisis, Vol I, :
"During the whole of those ten years (1904-1914) this duality and discordance were the key-note of British politics; and those whose duty it was to watch over the safety of the country lived simultaneously in two different worlds of thought. There was the actual visible world with its peaceful activities and cosmopolitan aims; and there was a hypothetical world, a world 'beneath the threshold,' as it were, a world at one moment utterly fantastic, at the next seeming about to leap into reality-a world of monstrous shadows moving in convulsive combinations through vistas of fathomless catastrophe."

Until they apprehend their own natural human inconsistency, they will behave with apparent disingenuousness and act with such complex indecisiveness as to frustrate the realisation of their own declared beliefs and intentions. Myself in 1908 reasoning out the approaching threat from the air to all the decencies of human life quite clearly and convincingly, ana telling about it in a humorous story with a disarming giggle, which robbed the warning of any direct value even for myself, is typical of what nearly all of us are doing in the face of the immense challenges of to-day. You can turn from one school of opinion to another, and every where you will find the same complexity of reaction. Quite apart from this question of the air war which I believe is bound now to clinch our decision for a united world, there have been great movements of the contemporary mind in which the same indecisiveness has been apparent. I have lived through a phase of human thought in which socialism, that is to say the recognition of the waste and injustice of the private appropriation of natural resources, the steady accumulation of social stresses towards an ultimate disaster, and the consequent need for a more-comprehensive organisation of economic life, has won its way from a minority protest to a complete argumentative establishment. “We are all socialists nowadays “-in theory.

But following upon that intellectual conviction came the question “But how? *How* will you reorganise your system?” People, intellectually socialist, realised that, to become really socialist, a vast series of correlated changes had to be worked out, in which all the securities, usages, precedences and subordinations of to-day would have to be readjusted-not smashed, which is comparatively easy, but readjusted, which is abominably bard. There were these customary things and one was habituated to them. That toilsome and dangerous adapatation of the world might be ultimately necessary, yes, but meanwhile, for a time, one could carry on. At any rate until over the next week-end. So with an almost unconscious and quite unpremeditated duplicity our world had put off socialism just as I put off the problem of war in the air. The method with most well-disposed people was similar, if not the same. They did. not, it is true treat socialism as a fantastic story as I did War in the Air, but they dealt with it as a Beautiful. Ideal. They enjoyed and admired the

Utopias of MorrIs and Bellamy, but they studied the city article with close attention. The Catholic Church denounces the expropriation of private owners, exhorts them to consider their property as held in trust for God and man, says severe things about usury, and invests its reserves without manifest scruple in the most reprehensible enterprises. The Anglican Ecclesiastical Commissioners are accused, rightly or wrongly, of the irresponsible and socially mischievous exploitation of slum properties. In perfect but uncritical good faith.

It is easy to comment upon these things in a tone of self-righteous cynicism, but the fact is we are all made like that. Clear-headed, deliberate humbug is rare in our world, and though I consider the Roman Catholic Church as a serious obstacle to human enlightenment, though I find a hireling baseness in some few of its apologists, and though I have been "up against it" all my life, I still believe in the essential honesty of the bulk of those who speak and act for it. Never was there a falser saying than that man is a reasonable animal. Man is an extremely inconsistent animal. "The right thing to do" has a servant and a traitor, a friend and an enemy, in every man.

This evasiveness, when it is a case of tackling some huge and difficult change in human life, however imperative, is not confined merely to those who benefit obviously by the immediate securities of the demonstrably decadent and doomed system in question. There is also an evasion of the task of reconstruction on the part of those who are declaredly in open revolt against the system and who may reasonably claim to be "underdogs." In my life journey through Socialism I have had very ample opportunity of seeing into the mentality of the extreme Left and Communist Party groups. A great deal of their dogmatism and malicious mischief is due, I reaJise, to pure funk of toil, balance and responsibility. They have a standard of living and except for incidental qualifications, that everyday side of theirs resists any fundamental change quite as much as if it was luxurious and triumphant. Vindictive sabotage and malicious mischief are well within their psychological range, but not the strain of constructive work. They do not want to alter this distressing world; they want to serve it out. They make a slogan of "Socialism in our Time," but they are not merely jealous and suspicious, they are

hostile and malignant towards constructive effort. They achieve their escape from effort by professing an extreme purity of revolutionary purpose; they are a bright, noble "Red," they claim, none of your "Pink" stuff; the rational socialist is anathema to them, and in practice we find their red is yellow and they are the eager allies of any reactionary movement against a liberal progressive regime. The slowing-down of the revolution in Russia, its "failure to develop economic enterprise and operative efficiency, its spasmodic storms of suspicion and suppression and the increasing absolutism of its general direction, are best accounted for by that same *hysterical self-frustration of the sub-consciously incapable*. Forgive a long phrase that is loaded with meaning.

To return to the particular issue on which we started; the problem of bringing this war in the air to some sort of conclusion. The peculiarities of Air War, evident from its very dawn-Bleriot flew the Channel in 1909-were this-that it was a war in three dimensions and not two; that it abolished war fronts and spread the conflict over the entire countries of the two combatants, so obliterating the distinction of combatant and non-combatant; that since its opening blows could be prepared for in profound secrecy and delivered with unprecedented swiftness, no country could henceforth feel safe from attack without warning; and that consequently it must dominate the world from now on either in the apprehension felt by a nominal neutral or in full and declared belligerence, until it is made impossible.

Advances in the science of tactics of explosives and of destructive inventions generally have merely enforced and sharpened the edges of this forecast. It becomes more and more plainly evident to every clear intelligence that at any price the *possibility* of air war must be banished from the earth. Either man will put an end to air war or air war will put an end to mankind; that is the plain alternative before us, and it is by no means improbable that man will fail to produce the necessary mental vigour for his continuance. This is where the fact that our minds are made up of imperfectly reconciled strands of thought and motivation becomes cardinal. Had we the undivided energy of our convictions, we should be planning already the necessary political adjustments to take at least the control of the air

out of the scheme of national and imperial politics and entrust it to a fully-empowered worlddirectorate. Federal Governments are not unlimited super-governments; they are special unifying authorities to which the constituent states have relinquished certain carefully specified powers, and it is plain that *war in the air, latent or active, can never cease now until the whole world is federated in this sense so far as this particular power is concerned*. This much of world federation is plainly a necessity we ought to be discussing now with the neutral powers, and not only with the neutral powers, but with our antagonists through the neutral powers. Such a discussion need do nothing to qualify the vigour and acerbity of the actual warfare. Whichever combatant gains the advantage of the fighting, or whether that presently comes to a stalemate, the whole world should be aware of and prepared for this issue to which no state in the world can be indifferent. This present war is not a war for oil or iron or gold. It is now primarily a war for the mastery of the air, and the world at large cannot suffer that to remain in the hands of any single power or group of powers. The less downright "Victory" there is indeed, the greater the prospect of a reasonable settlement. Either by conquest or intelligent arrangement, this much of Federation at least must be established on earth, and the sooner intelligent people set about discussing that everywhere, war or no war, the more hopeful is the outlook.

That is the rational long-range view of the world situation. But here again we encounter the same unresolved conflict of the main groups of strands in our minds, between the strands than can forecast and prepare for things that are still for most of us not real until they actually happen, and those more immediate systems of habits and associations, of things experienced and the every-day life, which blind us to remoter realities. The actual fighting is now absorbing an increasing volume of attention, and any line of thought that goes beyond strategy and tactics is denounced by many people and denounced with an eagerness for which we have already found an explanation, as a diversion of energy from the real business in hand. It is nothing of the sort. War without clearly stated war aims is a sort of epilepsy. "First win the war," people say. But we won the .war in 1918 and then hardly anyone had the remotest idea what to do with

it. This state of affairs seems likely to return again in an exaggerated form if we tolerate this sabotage of the end by the means. So now, while the outcome of the war is still uncertain, it is necessary not merely to discuss but to define the terms of an Armistice and to have it ready, cut and dried, for the inevitable phase of exhaustion and reasonableness. It needs to be something that will anticipate and may defer indefinitely the clumsy and elaborate procedure of a Peace Conference. We have taken as our type function the control of the air. It is quite possible to state preciselyat the present tme what powers would be possessed by that control. Obviously it would have to monopolise air armament, air routes, air controls, aerodromes, the manufacture of planes and airships, and it must receive its authorisation from the existing independent states of the world. How far and with what variety of methods it would receive its authorisation directly or indirectly from the peoples of these states, raises a multitude of considerations too complicated and detailed to discuss now. They do not affect the immediate imperative to set about preparing for the Armistice, to familiarise people's imaginations for it and to rouse them from their evasive fatalism as rapidly as possible now.

Air warfare has been made the backbone of this discussion of a possible armistice, or rather it makes itself the backbone, but it is by no means the only universal interest with which the terms of a definite and hopeful armistice should deal. We hear a lot of vague promises from our leading statesmen about some juster treatment of the exploitation of markets and the distribution of raw produce, in the better days ahead. None of this need remain vague. Put it in words, put it in writing now. The more the outlook of the peace ahead is defined now, the better heart we shall have to bring it about, and the less will be the power of suspicion, distrust and despair to prolong the war.

In 1918 I had some experience of the "War Aims" controversy at Crewe House. (*The Secrets of Crewe House* tells part of the story.) We declared we were unable to do our propaganda work effectively until we knew exactly what we and our allies wanted; we fired questions, a memorandum and delegations at the Foreign Office and were met with a solemn disingenuous vacuity. Except that the

Germans were very, very bad people and had to be punished, and that Professor: (rather than President) Wilson had an innocent Gladstonian enthusiasm for nationalism, the smaller the nationalism the better, the Versailles Congress assembled in a mood of elaborate evasion, subconsciously blind to the urgency of an economic reconstruction of the world that stared it in the face. The common people were baffled and "business" grabbed back and looted.

Are we to go through the bloody business of this resuscitated war again, with the sanie stupid aimlessness? Shall we emerge once more with a jumble of flushed belligerents all making unimplemented undertakings to disarm, without the faintest intention of doing so? Shall we have to face an economic storm of inflation, social disorganisation, another General Strike-on a world scale this time, simply because we will not face these coming events while they are still controllable?

I do not think mankind can afford that risk for a second time, and the only way of escaping it that I can imagine is to go right ahead with the drafting of what will be practically a world treaty of peace *now*, a treaty that can be brought into immediate operation with the signing of the Armistice. The thing is quite possi~le, and particularly so as long as the United States remams out of the actual war and in contact with all the belligerents. The only objection to it on the part of m~st publicists will be that it is unprecedented and so quite improper.

§ 9. — THE PUERILITY OF CURRENT FEDERAL UNION SCHEMES

I WILL confess that I believe that the way to achieve our revolution to one single world order, various but united and continually progressive, which is now plainly the only alternative to chaotic degeneration for our species, lies in the concurrent development of world-wide *ad hoc* federalism, and the extension of war-welded federalism to the whole planet. The former will take on more and more functions and the latter will extend its range. I see no hope and I can see a lot of possible waste and mischief in these various schemes for the United States of Europe, or of Central Europe, or this, that or tbe other union of existing powers, which are distracting people's minds from a realistic study of the present international situation.

I will try to give you my objections as pithily as possible. I have criticised Mr. Streit's *Union Now* at length elsewhere.* Loose as the great federal system of the United States is, it had to be consolidated only by one of the bloodiest of civil wars, arising out of the clash that arose between state and federal rights, when the slave plantation regime in the South was brought, by the development of railways and the westward movement of population, into conflict with the wages labour economy of the North. I have shown the impracticability of his own suggestion of a common money among countries in different phases of economic development.

* In *The Fate of Homo sapiens* and *The New World Order*.

Recently I have read *Europe Must Unite*, the work of a pro-Japanese propagandist, Count Coudenhove-Kalergi. You should all read it, and, what is more think it over. The Count very kindly gives us a name: "Pan-Europa,", a crest and a banner for Pan-Europa, designs a little button for the faithful, even settles upon a "Pan-Europe Day," but he is a trifle indefinite about all he will include in his scheme. He is vague about the position of the British Empire. Mrica, he says, "is the garden of Europe," a legitimate part of Pan-Europa. But some of Mrica is British Empire. Turkey and Egypt are

to be admitted to this European-African PanEuropa. The disposal of the rest of the British Empire might embarrass anyone but our author-it is embarrassing in most of these schemes-but he sets about the job with a polite ambiguity that does not even stir the touchy imperialism of, for example, Messrs. Amery and Duff Cooper, whom he counts among his most ardent supporters. The Empire, he argues, cannot be a part of Pan-Europa, India and the Dominions must go their own way, but the increasing liaison of France and Great Britain is to bring the latter into the happy Pan-European family, leaving her dominions to scatter according to the Statute of Westminster. Canada, he seems disposed to hand to "Pan-America," and then all we good little Europeans are to get together and. face the "intolerable competition of America." So, kindly but firmly, he breaks up and distributes the English speaking world.

You feel Eastern Asia consolidating in the background, under the enlightened tutelage of Japan, but to that he does not direct our attention too markedly. The fate of one country is left particularly vague — Australia. It is, the Count tells us, a continent by itself, and I had a curious feeling when I had finished with him, almost as though I had had a very interesting visitor and one of my silver spoons was missing. I am not nearly so ready as Messrs. Amery and Duff Cooper and Wickham Steed seem to be to give up my fellowship in the Englishspeaking world and regard America as the great competitor, the essential antagonist and rival, in order to be a Pan -European. I do not think any of these Federal Union schemes will ever be more than a pleasant tea-party sedative, and so I will merely point out that, if by some infection of insanity anyone of them should be realised, it would merely prepare the world for a new, more monstrous cycle of warfare; Europe against America, Yellow against White, directly the unequal pressure of population and economic necessity began to operate.

But this sort of thing is mere playing about with the map. The harm it does is the diversion of attention from more urgent, more difficult but ultimately more practicable things. Any intelligent schoolboy could spend an agreeable afternoon arranging and rearranging the world in this fashion. You can do it in a dozen different ways. Dr. Ivor Jennings has produced his plan, *A*

Federation for War-time Europe, definite, lucid, incredible; the reverie of an able lawyer. I have two other Federal Constitutions on my table waiting to be read, and I wonder if I shall ever read them. I have watched Mr. Wickham Steed playing at this game all through my life. Yet I am compelled to suggest to you, in the interests of reality, this is a game for boys who have never grown older, rather than for men who have really grown up. It is based on no vital reality. It takes us nowhere at all.

Mr. Streit and the Count make much of the "menace" of Bolshevism. As I pointed out in my previous article Bolshevism as the organised, progressive development of a new type of society is not to be found now on earth. Bolshevism has done what it was capable of doing, and has come to a phase of lassitude or reconstruction; I cannot tell which. It has done great things; it has destroyed financial speculation in the ordinary needs of life; it has abolished the rentier parasite; has liquidated illiteracy, effaced the spirit of serfdom, and now seems to have lost its moral impetus. For a phase it has ceased to operate even as a hope. Yet being dead it can still terrify. It can still make comfortable, well-off people, who had believed they had really managed to secure a pleasant superiority and command over the labour and respect of the commoner sort, wake up in the night and scream. And what is more, it can still attract subscriptions and adherents to these puerile and vacuous antiBolshevik schemes. But I can assure these poor dear rentiers that the Golden Age of Investment is over, anyhow; Bolshevism did not end it; Bolshevism was only one product of its breakdown.

Apart from such definite books as those I have named, this Federal Union drive seems to be just a vague project for doing nothing, in that it is following in the footsteps of the League of Nations Union, and with the same assuaging effect.

All over the world now people are distressed about the future the near future, of our social life-as well they may be. There is a smell of blood in the air and menacing sounds and strange rurnours of an Immense social disintegration. They are far more evident and distressing than they were in 1918. Many people find the problem of the world outlook and their own outlook more and more uncertain and dismaying. They collapse morally at the prospect of hard and

unfamiliar thinking. What is now called “Escapism” prevails. The Chinese take to their opium, which, thanks to the friendly Japanese, they find more and more accessible. Here, in London, alcohol, benzedrine, light entertainment, “not thinking about it” and getting back to the idea that everything is all right really, are most in evidence.

In Great Britain this Federal Union stuff is the very cheapest dope available for that purpose. For the small sum of five shillings you can go to meetings and get publications that will assure you that all is well, join societies that seem to be organised solely to keep it up that all is well. Don’t worry those poor brains of yours. That is the quintessence of it. It is all a matter of spiritual values; the less materialist you are, that is to say, the less you think *hard*, the better. The sight of so many nice people applauding the stirring and reassuring speakers the movement provides is very effective as a counterblast to the sterner prophets of duty and danger. Our diplomatists and governments, we are told, will act under our instruction and arrange for their own abolition. It’s all right. Vote for Federal Union and pay your five shillings. Just say the words over-the magic words, “Federal Union” instead of the old soporific of counting sheep; Then you can go to sleep again-until something hits you.

Well, if I am unjust to these Federal Union schemes, tell me where I go wrong. Don’t merely say I misjudge them. Tell me what else they do.

§ 10. — THE PROVISIONAL DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

LET us leave these fantasies and come back to practical politics. I have discussed the practicability of extending war-welded federalism until it becomes world-wide, and so brings all the various *ad hoc* organisations it will necessarily develop, for disarmament, for the replacement of deported populations, for general economic restoration, and so forth, into parallelism with the minor permanent world federalisms. This time I don't think anyone will "call" a Peace Conference. We shall find one will grow informally out of the war conditions and out of the necessary explicit terms for an Armistice with an entirely untrustworthy enemy. One necessity in the process is a clear statement, in the broadest and most acceptable terms, not of any remote Utopia ahead, nor of any acceptance of things as they are, but of the world as reasonable people want to have it now.

We have such a statement.

Following a time-honoured precedent of all the free parliamentary nations of the world, a great number of people have come to realise the need of a clear formulation of creative liberal thought, revised and brought up to date. After a discussion, very ably organised by Mr. Ritchie Calder, in which thousands of people of every creed and type have participated, a Declaration of the Rights of Man has been drawn up by a distinguished committee. I have told the story of the growth of that declaration in a companion PENGUIN to this-*The Rights of Man*. The Declaration, as it has emerged from the hands of Lord Sankey's Drafting Committee, albeit it remains a profoundly revolutionary statement, is nevertheless far more satisfactory than the earlier suggestions made in that pamphlet. It does state, I believe, the Greatest Common Measure of human goodwill at the present time. It has been made acceptable to the professors of almost any form of religious belief-or none. It is, indeed, frankly socialistic and frankly cosmopolitan, and yet I fail to see how anyone who desires world peace and happiness, whatever his or her religion or race may be, can fail to subscribe to it.

Here it is, Introduction and all. I have, greatly daring, restored a clause (in italics in Article 1) which was amputated by an accident in committee. It awaits the endorsement of at least the Labour and Liberal Parties in Great Britain and of liberal opinion throughout the world. So far it remains provisional, and I believe that these bodies may still find a need to amend the phrasing of Article 6. Ultimately I hope it may be made acceptable to all the Allied and benevolently neutral governments, and embodied in their declared war aims. A certain resistance may have to be overcome to bring that about, and that is where there seems to be scope for immediate activity on the part of every sincere Revolutionary.

INTRODUCTION

Within the space of little more than a hundred years there has been a complete revolution in the material conditions of human life. Invention and discovery have so changed the pace and nature of communications round and about the earth that the distances which formerly kept the states and nations of mankind apart have now been practically abolished. At the same time there has been so gigantic an increase of mechanical power, and such a release of human energy, that men's ability either to co-operate with, or to injure and oppress one another, and to consume, develop or waste the bounty of Nature, has been exaggerated beyond all comparison with former times.

This process of change has mounted swiftly and steadily in the past third of a century, and is now approaching a climax.

It becomes imperative to adjust man's life and institutions to the increasing dangers and opportunities of these new circumstances. He is being forced to organise cooperation among the medley of separate sovereign States which has hitherto served his political ends.

At the same time he finds it necessary to rescue his economic life from devastation by the immensely enhanced growth of profit-seeking business and finance.

Political, economic and social collectivisation is being forced upon him.

He responds to these new conditions blindly and with a great wastage of happiness and well-being.

Governments are either becoming State collectivisms or passing under the sway of monopolist productive and financial organisations.

Religious organisations, education and the Press are subordinated to the will of dictatorial groups and lDdlviduals while scientific and literary work and a multitude of social activities, which have hitherto been independent and spontaneous, fall under the influence of these modern concentrations of power.

Neither Governments nor great economic and financial combinations were devised to exercise such powers; they grew up in response to the requirements of an earlier age.

Under the stress of the new conditions, insecurity, abuses and

tyrannies increase; and liberty, particularly liberty of thought and speech, decays.

Phase by phase these ill-adapted Governments and controls are restricting that free play of the individual mind which is the preservative of human efficiency and happiness.

The temporary advantage of swift and secret action which these monopolisations of power display is gained at the price of profound and progressive social demoralisation.

Bereft of liberty and sense of responsibility, the peoples are manifestly doomed to lapse, after a phase of servile discipline, into disorder and violence. Confidence and deliberation give place to hysteria, apathy and inefficiency.

Everywhere war and monstrous economic exploitation are intensified, so that those very same increments of power and opportunity which have brought mankind within sight of an age of limitless plenty seem likely to be lost again, and, it may be, lost for ever, in a chaotic and irremediable social collapse.

It becomes clear that a unified political, economic and social order can alone put an end to these national and private appropriations that now waste the mighty possibilities of our time.

The history of the Western peoples has a lesson for all mankind.

It has been the practice of what are called the democratic or Parliamentary countries to meet every enhancement and centralisation of power in the past by a definite and vigorous reassertion of the individual rights of man.

Never before has the demand to revive that precedent been so urgent as it is now.

We of the Parliamentary democracies recognise the inevitability of world reconstruction upon collectivist lines, but, after our tradition, we couple with that recognition a Declaration of Rights, so that the profound changes now in progress shall produce not an attempted reconstruction of human affairs in the dark, but a rational reconstruction conceived, and arrived at, in the full light of day.

To that time-honoured instrument of a Declaration of Rights we therefore return, but now upon a world scale.

1.-RIGHT TO LIVE

By the word “man” in this Declaration is meant every living

human being without distinction of age or sex.

Every man is a joint inheritor of all the natural resources and of the powers, inventions and possibilities accumulated by our forerunners.

He is entitled, within the measure of these resources and without distinction of race, colour or professed beliefs or opinions, to the nourishment, covering and medical care needed to realise his full possibilities of physical and mental development from birth to death.

Notwithstanding the various and unequal qualities of individuals, all men shall be deemed absolutely equal in the eyes of the law, equally important in social life and equally entitled to the respect of their fellow-men.

2.-PROTECTION OF MINORS

The natural and rightful guardians of those who are not of an age to protect themselves are their parents.

In default of such parental protection in whole or in part, the community, having due regard to the family traditions of the child, shall accept or provide alternative guardians.

3.-DUTY TO THE COMMUNITY

It is the duty of every man not only to respect but to uphold and to advance the rights of all other men throughout the world.

Furthermore, it is his duty to contribute such service to the community as will ensure the performance of those necessary tasks for which the incentives which will operate in a free society do not provide.

It is only by doing his quota of service that a man can justify his partnership in the community.

No man shall be conscripted for military or other service to which he has a conscientious objection, but to perform no social duty whatsoever is to remain unenfranchised and under guardianship.

4.-RIGHT TO KNOWLEDGE

It is the duty of the community to equip every man with sufficient education to enable him to be as useful and interested a citizen as his capacity allows. Furthermore, it is the duty of the community to render all knowledge available to him and such special education as will give him equality of opportunity for the development of his distinctive gifts in the service of mankind. He shall have easy and

prompt access to all information necessary for him to form a judgment upon current events and issues.

5.-FREBDOM OF THOUGHT AND WORSHIP

Every man has a right to the utmost freedom of expression, discussion, association and worship.

6.-RIGHT TO WORK

Subject to the needs of the community, a man may engage in any lawful occupation, earning such pay as the contribution that his work makes to the welfare of the community may justify.*

He is entitled to paid employment and to make suggestions as to the kind of employment which he considers himself able to perform. Work for the sole object of profit-making shall not be a lawful occupation.

* It has been objected with manifest justice that this Article 6 implies that the only employers shall be the State, and that it hands over a man's energies to the direction and sanctions of some sort of public authority, some labour commissar or what not. Here the intricate difficulties of committee work defeated the plain intentions of the drafters. Manifestly something was cut out from this Article, and a gap was left and never filled up again. Plainly our Drafting Committee failed to assert one of the most vital of human rights, the right of every man to make and do things for himself or for anyone else and for any consideration or none, provided the general welfare is not infringed and there is no speculative appropriation of his work. It was that speculative appropriation the committee was worrying about. This gap, unless it is amended, would for example kill all unlicensed art whatever, all free literature, all unsanctioned research, all experiment that officialdom failed to approve. But I believe, subject to the criticism of those more experienced upon these issues, that a few liberating words will restore the lost intention of the clause. Suppose that after the word "justify" we add:
"Or that the desire of any private individual or individuals for his products, his performances or the continuation of his activities may produce for him." And I would further insert "freely" after "engage m the opening sentence of the Article.
Until it has been accepted by Parties and Governments, the

Declaration remains a provisional and unofficIal document capable of amendment. I think this gap is. the only serious flaw that has been discovered in it, and I believe this gap was made possible by, among other things, the feeling that Article 11 would be sufficient to protect the individual from dogmatic control.

7.-RIGHT IN PERSONAL PROPERTY

In the enjoyment of his personal property, lawfully possessed, a man is entitled to protection from public or private violence, deprivation, compulsion and intimidation.

8.-FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

A man may move freely about the world at his own expense.

His private dwelling, however, and any reasonably limited enclosure of which he is the occupant, may be entered only with his consent or by a legally qualified person empowered with a warrant as the law may direct.

So long as by his movement he does not intrude upon the private domain of any other citizen, harm, or disfigure or encumber what is not his, interfere with, or endanger its proper use, or seriously impair the happiness of others, he shall have the right to come and go wherever he chooses, by land, air, or water, over any kind of country, mountain, moorland, river, lake, sea or ocean, and all the ample spaces of this, his world.

9.-PERSONAL LIBERTY

Unless a man is declared by a competent authority to be a danger to himself or to others through mental abnormality, a declaration which must be confirmed within seven days and thereafter reviewed at least annually, he shall not be restrained for more than twentyfour hours without being charged with a definite offence, nor shall he be remanded for a longer period than eight days without his consent, nor imprisoned for more than three months without a trial.

At a reasonable time before his trial, he shall be furnished with a copy of the evidence which it is proposed to use against him.

At the end of the three months period, if he has not been tried and sentenced by due process of the law, he shall be acquitted and released.

No man shall be charged more than once for the same offence.

Although he is open to the free criticism of his fellows, a man shall have adequate protection from any misrepresentation that may distress or injure him.

Secret evidence is not permissible. Statements recorded in administrative dossiers shall not be used to justify the slightest infringement of personal liberty.

A dossier is merely a memorandum for administrative use; it shall not be used as evidence without proper confirmation in open court.

10.-FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

No man shall be subjected to any sort of mutilation except with his own deliberate consent, freely given, nor to forcible handling, except in restraint of his own violence, nor to torture, beating or any other physical ill-treatment.

He shall not be subjected to mental distress, or to imprisonment in infected, verminous or otherwise insanitary quarters, or to be put into the company of verminous or infectious people.

But if he is himself infectious or a danger to the health of others, he may be cleansed, disinfected, put in quarantine or otherwise restrained so far as may be necessary to prevent harm to his fellows.

No one shall be punished vicariously by the selection, arrest or ill-treatment of hostages.

11.-RIGHT OF LAW-MAKING

The rights embodied in this Declaration are fundamental and inalienable.

In conventional and in administrative matters, but in no others, it is an obvious practical necessity for men to limit the free play of certain of these fundamental rights.

(In, for example, such conventional matters as the rule of the road or the protection of money from forgery, and in such administrative matters as town and country planning, or public hygiene.)

No law, conventional or administrative, shall be binding on any man or any section of the community unless it has been made openly with the active or tacit acquiescence of every adult citizen concerned, given either by direct majority vote of the community affected or by a majority vote of his representatives publicly elected.

These representatives shall be ultimately responsible for all by-laws and for detailed interpretations made in the execution of the

law.

In matters of convention and collective action, man must abide by the majority decisions ascertained by electoral methods which give effective expression to individual choice. All legislation must be subject to public discussion, revision or repeal. No treaties or contracts shall be made secretly in the name of the community.

The fount of legislation in a free world is the whole people, and since life flows on constantly to new citizens, no generation can, in whole or in part, surrender or delegate this legislative power, inalienably inherent in mankind.

§ 11. — AN OPPOSITION IS THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

IN this Declaration of Rights we have, I believe, the substantial material for a very important implement in the work of world reconstruction. So soon as the vehement stresses of the present war situation are sufficiently alleviated to permit a resumption of constructive political discussion, this instrument, with some such necessary amendment as I have suggested to Article 6, an amendment which would best come from the Labour organisations of the world, could be brought into effective political action. How that can be done is the next phase in our discussion. But first, it is advisable to get a rather clearer understanding of certain terms that are used habitually in such an exasperatingly loose and misleading way as to rob them of most of their effectiveness.

Just as we have cleared up the meaning of the word "' federalism" so now let us consider what we mean exactly by "political democracy." The essential difference between democratic and absolute rule is, I suggest, that in a democracy a revolutionary movement need not be the violent insurgent upheaval it necessarily becomes under an absolutism. This is because in every Parliamentary country there exists, as a necessary part of the political organisation of that country, an Opposition. It is remarkable how few foreigners who are unaccustomed to democratic institutions realise the real significance of an opposition. *The existence of an opposition is the fundamental political distinction of democracies.* (Forgive these italics. But this is a very vital point.)

In the absolutisms, there is the monarch, the gang, the dictatorship or the oligarchy, and that is the State, the whole State, the sole Government, and there is nothing to temper it. If you want to get rid of it, you must blow it out of existence with a revolutionary explosion. There is no revolution possible there but explosion, and so it is that all absolutisms end. So ended the absolute monarchy in France and Czarism in Russia. But a democracy, as we understand it to-daya modern democracy-is a more complicated and higher order

of government than any absolutism. It has come into existence only in the last few hundred years, while a bullying authoritarianism is as old as mankind. It is a government with a *potential revolution incorporated in its structure*. The opposition is a body which exists to criticise, mitigate or replace the prevailing regime. That is the very essence of democracy. It is two-handed. It has taken Revolution into its bosom. It has a left hand and a right. *In a genuine democracy, the opposition stands prepared to get rid of the existing regime and to change the domestic or foreign policy of the government without limit.*

I put it to you tbat this double-handed tradition of democracy is a profoundly important fact in the present situation. It gives us the clue to a comparatively peaceful world revolution. It affords a method by which power can be readjusted witbout killing or cruelty, by stages if necessary, and with every sort of mitigation to the abdicating order.

§ 12. — THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION

So I put before you the elements, as I conceive them, of a world pacification and of a world reconstruction. I put it to you that we have before us here all that is necessary for a complete world revolution. Upon the lines I have drawn it would be a possible thing now to link all the liberal-spirited oppositions in the world by their acceptance of this common Declaration of Rights which is now awaiting completion and endorsement, and to mould their antagonisms to the various warring national governments they face, into one common pattern of world peace and revolutionary world reconstruction.

We have no need for a new world revolutionary party. We do not want to multiply parties, we want to consolidate them. We want to fuse them by a common idea, that will dissolve away all the petty intrigues and jealousies that now break them up and destroy the hopes of their supporters. We can say to them: "Accept the Declaration or get out of the way." We need indeed a world movement to use this Declaration, but the essential factors for revolution are already to hand. Everywhere in the democratic countries we have the institutional material needed for a rapid fusion of commonsense men and common people into one creative World Opposition.

Almost everywhere we shall find a new Declaration of Rights opposed, ignored and stifled by Governments, ruling classes and authoritative people whose advantages it threatens. Everywhere they will be trying to dodge its essential rightness. Everywhere they will be challenged, with the insistent demand that they justify their evasion. And put to the question they will find it very hard to justify that evasion.

"How," the doubter may ask, "will you induce these wicked national sovereign governments and imperialisms and this tangle of financial interests and credit systems, with which they are associated, to abandon any essential international powers they exercise?

Internationalism in little conveniences, post, hygiene, vice control, they will no doubt concede readily enough. But how will they ever agree, for example, to a permanent international air control, to a standing international disarmament police, to the complete effacement of passport and customs control; all of which are obviously parts of a rational world order? " That is exactly where this fundamentally democratic idea, the idea of one world opposition, lined up by a Declaration of Human Rights and prepared to "take over" everywhere, in the same spirit, comes in.

Governments and Foreign Offices, though reluctant to abolish themselves, yet faced by an intelligent and critical revolutionary world opposition, which I think I have given every reason for believing could be brought into existence very rapidly at the present time, will prove capable, you will find, of a considerable amount of appeasement, and will yield this and yield that, step by step, provided they are not attacked directly by proposals of self-extinction. You must remember that even now they are being forced to a considerable degree of war-welded federation. Even the "neutrals" are being forced that way. It will not be we, the reasonable people, who will be putting something over on our governments at the end of the war; it will be they who will be domg their best to recover and dodge back to the old order of things. A unified world Opposition will press upon them with the force of plain necessity. Step by step, they will yield, still clinging to the forms of power and retreating as they go. Step by step they will cease to be "the powers that be," and become dignitaries and honourable traditions. They need never be overthrown in any melodramatic fashion; they may fade out. Except for outbursts of revolutionary temper, the end of the national sovereign state may be almost painless.

It is not necessary to destroy existing governments as such. The idea of a federal world does not involve the creation of a common world government resembling the sovereign governments of the present time, pushing them aside and taking their place like a conqueror. It does not threaten in the least the racial and cultural distinctions of mankind. Our imaginations are too obsessed by the United States of America, and we have horrid dreams of a World President and a Senate and a Lower House of Mankind. But it is

quite possible to anticipate a world transport control, air, shipping and rail included, a world production control, a world system of barter-for organised barter is marching upon us now in seven-league boots-a world control of hygiene, education and information, without anything you can call a central government at all.

For some people that will prove a hard saying. Some where, they feel, there must be a powerful person or body of persons which will decide, "Do this" or "Do that." Yet there is something a little infantile about that. Is it as necessary as may seem at the first glance-so far as the world-wide services, all these functional organisations, are concerned? Authority may be necessary in what one might call matters of opinion. But is a world transport system, a proper distribution of staple products, the health of the race, the common peace, the issue of money, the survey and mapping of the world, or scientific and general education, really a matter of opinion? Is there not, if only we knew it, a *right thingto do* in these matters? I suggest that with every increment of knowledge in the world, it is less and less necessary for an overriding government to do the ruling. The knowledge organisation, in the light of a free public discussion, will give the rule. Faced with famine or pestilence, for example, an ignorant population may need " firm government" and even a "strong man" to save it from panic and disaster. An educated community in the same case asks intelligent questions and, after due scrutiny, does the *right thing to do*.

Manifestly this involves an *ad hoc* federation of the intellectual organisations of the world. That is too complex an issue to expound here. I have written about it in World Brain, and I will not regurgitate that book here. At the roots of most of the troubles of mankind to-day lies a terrible under-nourishment of minds. But upon that I will refrain from expansion here. So I submit my ideas for your consideration. I shall be bitterly disappointed if my points are not fully I examined and either confuted or accepted. And if you accept them, the business cannot rest there; you have to get to work. I am quite sure a lot of people will get to work, anyhow . You can start pressure upon your political representatives, upon your party organisations and so on, to subscribe definitely to a new Declaration of Rights. You have it now. Practically that job, subject to the

completion of Article 6, is done. You can write to your local papers to increase the pressure upon politicians to accept it or give a reason why. You can make any Liberal or Labour candidate extremely uncomfortable if asked to explain why he will not accept it and get on with it. How a Communist can dodge it will be very interesting. Quite a small group of people in any constituency who insist on a full, unambiguous acceptance of the Declaration of Rights and make a strenuous fuss if they do not get it from their candidate, can incline a candidate to conform. And if there is no group handy, there is yourself, with a mouth and a pen and a vote. You can spread the idea of this varied yet federated world, which is so little understood, which is still thought of by so many people as if it were a sort of monstrous fusion of existing governments. The Declaration of Rights should be taught everywhere. You can get busy about the lessons taught in your schools, the books in your public libraries....

Let me say in conclusion, by way of summary, that the backbone of my hope for a new world is this possibility of a *world-wide coalescence of all the scattered forces of creation and protest in the human heart, into one consciously revolutionary movement based on the declared rights of man.* It is an entirely practicable proposal. All over the democracies of the world now we can call into being this uniform opposition, inspired by a common idea of world unity. In the non-democratic countries, of course, it will be a definitely insurrectionary movement. And the policy it must press upon governments everywhere is the preservation of the *ad hoc* war-welded federalisms that are being brought into existence now, function by function, and their extension to the whole world, as a permanent peace settlement.

"No restoration, no attempted restoration, of the old order," may well be our slogan. You see how these two essential democratic institutions, the tried and tested institutions, of a consolidated Opposition and of a Declaration of the Rights of Man, dovetail into the plan of creative political action I am putting before you, and you can see how hard it will be to stop this contagious, creative liberalism once it is started. This and this alone, so far as I can see, is the way of escape for our species from chaos. Call it world reconstruction, world pacification, world union or world revolution,

as you will, but do not rashly upon some minor issue refuse participation in these living possibilities.

§ 13. — THAT NEW WORLD AFTER THE WAR

THE preceding sections of this pamphlet give the essence of what I have been able to make out of the needs and possibilities of the present time. But there are two appendices I want to make. The first of these bears upon one of the most difficult problems that arise when we try to figure to ourselves the way of living the new peace will mean for us. For plainly the old peace of the comfortable classes can never return again. The new peace has to be a peace for every man or none. I have been writing a novel which is these days of paper shortage mayor may not be published, *Babes in the Darkling Wood*, and in it a youngster who is on a minesweeper writes a letter home. I intend him to be as intelligent as I know how and I make him say exactly what I want said. So I will quote him here instead of writing it all over again.

He writes:

"Our people detest militarism and at the same time take to fighting very readily. It is nonsense to pretend the mass of English people are unhappy now. The country is profoundly excited, and you can't be really unhappy when you are stirred up. This war is going to be a near thing for us all, and we like it. With a sort of grim excitement. The one dream of old Smithers, our skipper, for example, is to 'do a bit on his own.' He feels he has never really lived before. If we come on a German cruiser by any chance, I'm certain he'll go straight for it. He'll chase it, and he'll keep banging away at it until we are blown into the air. And we shall be cheering him on, and who knows whether we shan't get away with it?

"That's all very well for the moment. But it takes us nowhere. This can't go on for ever. We talk among ourselves here about how things are to end, but when it comes to that we are all at sixes and sevens. Theoretically all our chaps want a world at peace. But they discuss peace half-heartedly, as though it was some sort of pi-jaw, and then they go and fondle the new gun we have been given. It's a lovely bit of machinery. They've never had their hands on anything

so competent. Or so simple. Our dream is to bring down a raider. ‘Blast that peace of yours!’ they say. ‘Let’s win the war first.’

“Never will our people look forward. Now the bulk of them, I realise, don’t want to. It’s too perplexing. The peace-or anyhow the time for peace-may catch us just as unprepared as the war did.... What we have to realise is that the sort of full, long-range life we want has to look good and be made believable, for everyone, if ever we are to get it....

“That’s the practical hitch. If I have got any new idea, it’s that. I mean, until you can give these chaps something as lovely and satisfying as they find this gun of ours-microscopes, observatories, stratosphere travel, apparatus for the photographic survey of the world, things that will make the rocks and waters of the earth, the sky above and the unknown beneath our feet, yield a sense of power, these rank and file men are going to enjoy war, far more than any peace they have ever yet been offered. What do we promise the common men here or in France or Germany or anywhere? Nothing but to go back to the street corner. We don’t even promise them something to hammer. Are they likely to think seriously of peace when peace has no other face than the face of a tepid bore? With the nobility and gentry scrambling back to all the positions of advantage, romping about with opportunity while the heroes, etc., are back on the dole. Allowed to look on again. These boys just say ‘Peace’ because they’ve been taught to say it. They’ll blast it all right when they get it.... Even if the world doesn’t need rebuilding from top to bottom, we ought to set about rebuilding it, carving it up and throwing it about, just for the excitement. Just to keep their souls alive....

“Will these old men of the City and the stately homes of England and so forth ever release that stagnating, paralysing grip that holds back our people and all the people in our Empire from any fullness of life, until in sheer despair of their heavy monopolisation we are driven to wrench them off violently?...”

The whole of this present book is an attempt to discover a possible answer to that young man’s question.

§ 14. — A LESSON FROM 1918

That is one appendix to this pamphlet. Now, by way of a further appendix and a warning, I am going to reprint a document that was drawn up twenty-two years ago, chiefly by Dr. J.W. Headlam Morley and myself, as a memorandum for the propaganda department of Crewe House. It dates in certain details, but on the whole, because of the lack of fulfillment, there is much of it that might have been written this month.

This is how we saw things in May, 1918.

PREFACE

“Propaganda in Germany, as in other enemy countries, must obviously be based upon a clear Allied policy. Hitherto Allied policy and Allied war aims have been defined too loosely to be comprehensible to the Germans. “The real aim of the Allies is not only to beat the enemy, but to establish a world peace that shall preclude the resumption of war. Successful propaganda in Germany presupposes the clear definition of the kind of world settlement which the Allies are determined to secure and the place of Germany in it.

“The points to be brought home to the Germans are:

“I The determination of the Allies to continue the war until Germany accepts the Allied peace settlement.

“2. The existing alliance as a Fighting League of Free Nations will be deepened and extended and the military, naval, financial and economic resou;ces of its members will be pooled until:

“(a) Its military purpose is achieved, and

“(b) Peace is established on lasting foundations.

“German minds are particularly susceptible to systematic statements. They are accustomed to discuss and understand co-ordinate projects. The ideas represented by the phrase ‘Berlin-Baghdad’ and ‘Mittel-Europa’ have been fully explained to them and now form the bases of German political thought. Other projects, represented by ‘Berlin-Teheran’ and ‘Berlin-Tokyo’ are becoming familiar to them. Against these ideas the Allies have not yet set up any comprehensive and comprehensible scheme of world-organisation. There is no Allied counterpart of Naumann’s’ Mittel-Europa’ which the neutral and German Press could discuss as a practical proposition. This counterpart should be created without delay by competent Allied writers. It would form an effective basis for propaganda, and would work automatically.

“It follows that one of the first requisites is to study and to lay down the lines of a practical League of Free Nations. The present alliance must be taken as the nucleus of any such League. Its control of raw materials, of shipping, and its power to exclude for an

indefinite period enemy or even neutral peoples until they subscribe to and give pledges of their acceptance of its principles should be emphasised. It should be pointed out that nothing stands between enemy peoples and a lasting peace except the predatory designs of their ruling dynasties and military and economic castes; that the design of the Allies is not to crush any people, . but. to assure the freedom of all on a basis of self-determination to be exercised under definite guarantees of justice and fair play; that, unless enemy peoples accept the Allied conception of a world peace settlement, it will be impossible for them to repair the havoc oftbe present war, to avert utter financial ruin, and to save themselves from prolonged misery; and that the longer the struggle lasts the deeper will become the hatred of everything German in the non-German world, and the heavier the social and economic handicap under which the enemy peoples will labour, even after their admission into a League of Nations.

"The primary war aim of the Allies thus becomes the changing of Germany, not only in the interest of the Allied League, but in that of the German people itself. Without the honest co-operation of Germany, disarmament on a large scale would be impossible, and, without disarmament, social and economic reconstruction would be impracticable. Germany has, therefore, to choose between her own permanent ruin by adhering to her present system of government and policy and the prospect of economic and political redemption by overthrowing her militarist system so as to be able to join honestly in the Allied scheme of world organisation.

MEMORANDUM

"It has become manifest that for the purposes of an efficient pro-Ally propaganda in neutral and enemy countries a clear and full statement of the war aims of the Allies is vitally necessary. What is wanted is something in the nature of an authoritative text to which propagandists may refer with confidence and which can be made the standard of their activities. It is not sufficient to recount the sins of Germany and to assert that the defeat of Germany is the Allied war aim. What all the world desires to know is what is to happen after the war. The real war aun of a belligerent, it is more and more. understood, is not merely victory, but a peace of a certam character which that belligerent desires shall arise out of that victory. What, therefore, is the peace sought by the Allies?

"It would be superfluous even to summarise here the primary case of the Allies, that the war is on their part a war to resist the military aggression of Germany assisted by the landowning Magyars of Hungary, the Turks and the King of Bulgaria, upon the rest of mankind. It is a war against belligerence, against aggressive war and the preparation for aggressive war. Such it was in its beginning, and such it remains. But it would be idle to pretend that the ideas of the Government and peoples allied against Germany have not developed very greatly during the years of the war. There has been a deepening realisation of the danger to mankind of existing political divisions and separations, a great experience in the suffering, destruction and waste of war; a quickening of consciences against conquests, annexations and subjugations; and a general clearing up of ideas that have hitherto stood in the way of an organised world peace. While German Imperialism, to judge by the utterances of its accredited heads, and by the behaviour of Germany in the temporarily disorganised States on her Eastern front, is still as truculent, aggressive and treacherous as ever, the mind of her antagonists has learnt and has matured. There has arisen in the great world outside the inner lives of the Central Powers a will that grows to gigantic proportions, that altogether overshadows the boasted will to power of the German junker and exploiter, the will to a world peace. It is like

the will of an experienced man set against the will of an obstinate and selfish youth. The war aims of the anti-German Allies take more and more definitely the form of a world of States leagued together to maintain a common law, to submit their mutual differences to a conclusive tribunal, to protect weak communities, to restrain and suppress war threats and war preparations throughout the earth.

"Steadfastly the great peoples of the world outside the shadow of German Imperial domination have been working their way to unanimity, while the ruling intelligences of Germany have been scheming for the base advantages of conquest; while they have been undermining, confusing and demoralising the mentality of Russia, crushing down the subject peoples of the AustroHungarian Imperialism, and threatening and cajoling neutrals there has been a wide, free movement in the minds of their antagonists towards the restraint and wisdom of a greater and nobler phase in human affairs. The thought of the world crystallises now about a phrase, the phrase 'The League of Free Nations.' The war aims of the Allies become more and more explicitly associated with the spirit and implications of that.

"Like all such phrases, 'The League of Free Nations' is subject to a great variety of detailed interpretation, but its broad intentions can now be stated without much risk of dissent. The ideal would, of course, include all the nations of the earth, including a Germany purged of her military aggressiveness; it involves some sort of INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS that can revise, codify, amend and extend intemationallaw, a supreme Court of Law in which States may sue and be sued, and whose decision the League will be pledged to enforce, and the supervision, limitation and use of armaments under the direction of the international congress. It is also felt very widely that such a congress must seta restraint upon competitive and unsanctioned 'expansionist' movements into unsettled and disordered regions, must act as the guardian of feeble races and communities, and must be empowered to make conclusive decisions upon questions of transport, tariffs, access to raw material, migration and international intercourse generally.

"The constitution of this congress remains indefinite; it is the crucial matter upon which the best thought of the world is working at

the present time. But given the prospect of a suitable copgress there can be little dispute that the great Imperial Powers among the Allies are now prepared for great and generous limitations of their sovereignty in the matter of armaments, of tropical possessions, and of subject peoples in the common interest of mankind. The spectacle of German Imperialism, boastful, selfish, narrow and altogether hateful, in its terrible blood-dance through Europe, has been an object-lesson to humanity against excesses of national vanity and national egotism and against Imperial pride. Among the Allies, the two chief Imperial Powers, measured by the extent of territory they control, are Britain and France, and each of these is more completely prepared to-day than ever it has been before to consider its imperial possessions as a trust for their inhabitants and for mankind, and its position in the more fertile and less settled regions of the world as that of a mandatory and trustee. These admissions involve a plain prospect and promise of the ultimate release and liberation of all the peoples in these great and variegated Empires to complete world-citizenship.

"But in using the phrase 'The League of Nations' it may be well to dispel certain misconceptions that have arisen through the experimental preparation by more or less irresponsible persons and societies of elaborate schemes and constitutions of such a league. Proposals have been printed and published, for example, of a Court of World Conciliation, in which each sovereign State will be represented by one member-Montenegro, for example, by one, and the British Empire by one-and other proposals have been mooted of a Congress of the League of Nations, in which such States as Hayti, Abyssinia and the like will be represented by one or two representatives, and France and Great Britain by five or six. All such projects should be put out of mind when the phrases 'League of Free Nations' is used by responsible speakers for the Allied Powers. Certain most obvious considerations have evidently been overlooked by the framers of such proposals. It will, for example, be a manifest disadvantage to the smaller Powers to be at all over-represented upon the Congress of any such League; it may even be desirable that certain of them should not have a voting representative at all, for this reason, that a great Power still cherishing an aggressive spirit would

certainly attempt, as the beginning of its aggression, to compel adjacent small Powers to send representatives practically chosen by itself. The coarse fact of the case in regard to an imnediate world peace is this, that only five or six great Powers possess sufficient economic resources to make war under modem conditions at the present time, namely, the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan and, doubtfully, AustriaHungary. Italy suffers under the disadvantage that she has no coal supply. These five or six Powers we may say, therefore, permit war and can prevent it. They are at present necessarily the custodians of the peace of the world, and it is pedantry not to admit that this gives them a practical claim to preponderance in the opening Congress of the World League. It may be pointed out that a small State with a voice in the discussions, but no vote in the decisions of the League, would logically be excused from the liability to assist in enforcing those decisions.

"But this question of the constitution of a world Congress is not to be solved by making a coarse classification of States into large and war-capable Powers and small and weak Powers. Take the case of Italy, for example: though she is almost incapable of sustaining a war against the world by herself because of her weakness in th.e matter of coal, she can as an ally be at once of enormous importance. Take the case of Spain again, a very similar case. And whatever the war ability of Latin-America may be to-day, there can be no question that this great constellation of States must count very heavily in the framing of the world of to-morrow. Then, again, we have to consider the vast future possibilities of the Chinese Republic, with coal, steel and a magnificent industrial population, and the probable reconstruction of Eastern Europe and a renascence of Russia which may give the world a loose-knit but collectivelyimportant Slavonic confederation. While an isolated small Power within the orbit of attraction of a large Power, a State of 5,000,000 people or less, must always remain a difficult problem in the world representation, it is clear that something like an adequate representation of small and weak Powers becomes possible so soon as they develop a disposition towards aggregation, for the purposes of world politics, into associations with States racially, linguistically, and historically akin

to them. The trend of Allied opinion is to place not Peru or Ukrainia, nor Norway, nor Finland on a level with the United States of America or the British Empire at the League of Nations Congress, but to prepare the way for adequate representation through a preliminary Latin-American ora Slavonic or a Scandinavian Confederation, which could speak with a common idea at the World Congress.

"It should be manifest that there is one Power whose splendid achievement in this war, and whose particular needs justify her over-representation (as measured by material wealth and millions of population) upon the Congress of the League, and that is France. It is open to question whether Italy should not also be disproportionately over-represented, seeing that she will not have, as Spain will have, the moral reinforcement of kindred nations overseas. And with regard to the British Empire, seeing that there exists no real Imperial legislature, it is open to consideration whether Canada, South Africa and Australasia should come into the Council as separate nationalities. The Asiatic and African possessions of Britain and France, Belgium and Italy, possessions, that is, which have no self-government, might possibly for a time be represented by members appointed by the governing power in each case. These are merely suggestions here, indications of a disposition of mind, but they are suggestions upon which it is necessary for the Allied Powers to decide as speedily as possible. The effective working out of this problem of the League of Nations Congress by the Allies without undue delay is as vital a part of the Allied policy as the effective conduct of the war.

"It has to be recognised that the institution of a League of Nations precludes any annexations or any military interference with any peoples whatever, without a mandate from the Congress of the League. The League must directly or indirectly become the guardian of all unsettled regions and order must be kept ana development promoted by it in such derelict regions as Mesopotamia and Armenia, for example, have now become. In these latter instances it is open to consideration whether the League should operate through some single power acting as a mandatory of the League, or else by international forces under the control of the League as a whole.

Theoretically the latter course is to be preferred, but there are enormous practical advantages in many cases to be urged for the former. The Allies have indeed had a considerable experience during the war of joint controls and joint expeditions; there has been a great education in internationalism since August, 1914; but nevertheless the end of the war is likely to come long before any real international forces have been evolved. It is, however, towards the ultimate use of international forces in such cases that the joint policy of the Allies is plainly and openly directed.

"The bringing of the League into practical politics profoundly affects the question of territorial adjustment after the war. The Allies are bound in honour to follow the will of France in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, and the rectification of the Italian frontier and the bringing of the bulk of the Italian-speaking population, now under Austrian dominion, into one ring-fence with Italy, also seem a necessary part of a world pacification. It is, however, of far less importance in the war aims of the Allies that this and that particular scrap of territory should change hands from the control of one group of combatants to that of the other, than that the present practical ascendency of German Imperialism over the resources of the Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Jugo-Slav, Finnish, and Roumanian peoples should cease. The war aim of the Allies in Eastern Europe is to create in the place of the present Austro-Hungaran Empire a larger synthesis of associated States, something in the nature of an 'East Central European League,' within the League of Nations, a confederation that might possibly reach from Poland to the Black and Adriatic Seas, and have also access to, if not a port upon, the Baltic at Danzig. The Allies are necessarily obliged to wait upon the development of affairs in Russia, but the hopes and efforts of the Allies are towards a reconciliation of at least Great Russia, Siberia and Ukrainia into a workable association within the League. It is premature to speculate upon the grouping of Finland at the present time. Relieved of the feverish and impossible ambitions the political weaknesses of these peoples have stimulated, a free and united Germany could then become one of the predominant partners in the World League of Free Nations. The Allies do not propose an unconditional return of the former Mrican possessions of Germany,

but they contemplate an over-ruling international regime in Mrica between the Sahara and the Zambesi, restraining armament, reorganising native education, and giving absolute equality to trade to all the nations in the League. Such an international regime under the League may not be incompatible with the retention of national flags in the former 'possessions' of the leagued Powers.

"Exact territorial definition does not appear to the Allies to be of nearly such importance as the establishment of a common system of disarmament and a common effort to restore the ravages of the war. The full effect of the war is still not realised by the mass of the belligerent peoples, more especially in America and Western Europe, where life is still fairly comfortable. There has already been a destruction not merely of the political but of the social order over great areas of the world, especially in Eastern Europe, and it is doubtful whether any peace can restore these disorganised areas to anything like their former productivity for many years. A universal shortage not merely of man-power, but of transport and machinery available for the purposes of peace cannot be avoided. It is doubtful, moreover, if social discipline in the ports of the British Empire and America will be strong enough to restrain an organised resistance to the use of German shipping after the war for any purpose and to the use of Allied shipping for the transport of goods to and from Germany on the part of Allied and neutral seamen and transport workers indignant at the U-boat campaign; moreover, there is a world-wide cry for a vindictive trade boycott after the war against Germany, and for organised boycotts that may further restrict the process of economic world recovery. It is doubtful if the menace of these 'revenge' movements and the difficulty of controlling them in democratic States is properly appreciated in Germany. The militarist Government of Germany, fighting now for bare existence, is concealing from its people this world-wide disposition to boycott German trade and industry at any cost to the boycotting populations, and buoying them up with preposterous hopes of 'business as usual' as soon as peace is made. The fact has to be faced that while the present German Government remains no such economic resumption is possible. The 'War-after-the-War' possibility has to be added to the economic destruction in Russia, Belgium and elsewhere in any

estimate of the situtation after the war.

"The plain prospect of material disorganisation thus opened should alone suffice to establish the absolute necessity for peace now of such a nature as will permit a world-wide concentration upon reconstruction, in good faith and without any complications of enmity and hostility. But in addition to the material destruction and dislocation and to the 'hatred' disorganisation already noted, the financial transactions of the last few years have created a monetary inflation which, without the concerted action of all the Powers, may mean a collapse of world credit. Add now the plain necessity for continued armament if a real League of Nations is not attained. Without any exaggeration the prospect of the nations facing these economic difficulties in an atmosphere of continuing hostility, intrigue and conflict. under a continuing weight of armaments, and with a continuing distrust, is a hopeless one. The consequences stare us in the face; Russia is only the first instance of what must happen generally. The alternative to a real League of Nations is the steady descent of our civilisation towards a condition of political and social fragmentation such as the world has not seen since the fall of the Roman Empire. The honest co-operation of Germany in the League of Nations, in disarmament and in world reconstruction is, therefore, fundamentally necessary. There is now no other rational policy.

"And since it is impossible to hope for any such help or co-ordination from the Germany of the Belgian outrage, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the betrayal of Ukrainia, THE CHANGING OF GERMANY becomes a primary war aim, the primary war aim for the Allies. How Germany is to be changed is a complex question. The word Revolution is, perhaps, to be deprecated. We do not, for instance, desire a Bolshevik breakdown in Germany, which would make her economically useless to mankind. We look therefore, not so much to the German peasant and labourer as to the ordinary, fairly well-educated mediocre German for co-operation in the reinstatement of civilisation. Change there must be in Germany; in the spirit in which the Government is conducted, in the persons who exercise the control, and in the relative influence of different classes in the country. The sharpest distinction, therefore, has to be drawn between Germany and its present Government in all our propaganda

and public utterances; and a constant appeal has to be made by the statesmen of the Alliance, and by a frank and open propaganda through the Germans of the United States of America and of Switzerland, through neutral countries and by every possible means, from Germany Junker to Germany sober. We may be inclined to believe that every German is something of a Junker, we have to remember he is also potentially a reasonable man.

"And, meanwhile, the Allies must continue with haste and diligence to fight and defeat Junker Germany, which cannot possibly conquer but which may nevertheless succeed in ruining the world. They must fight the German armies upon the fronts, they must fight an unregenerate Germany economically and politically, and they must bring home to the German reason and conscience at home by an intensive air war and by propaganda alike, the real impossibility of these conceptions of national pride and aggressiveness in which the German population has been bred."

* * * * *

That is how Crewe House was trying to put a shape upon things in 1918. Ancient history, you will say. Unhappily none of this story has become ancient history. Lord Northcliffe was a man of great mental instability; at his best his apprehensions were rapid and lucid. Later on he went back upon us. His brother, Lord Rothermere, in flat contradiction to our policy, was filling the Harmsworth newspapers with the wildest threatenings against Germany, and when I insisted that this must cease, Northc1itfe was either unwilling or powerless to stop it. Nor were we able to get the Foreign Office to fall in with this shape we sought to put upon things. Sir Campbell Stuart says it approved our memorandum, but that was not the case. We were kept in ignorance of the secret understandings and diplomatic commitments that were undermining the possibility of a secure peace. That secrecy is as true to-day of our Foreign Office as it was then. Now as then we do not know and nobody knows what it imagines it is up to. In the concluding year of that earlier war, there was a War Aims Controversy. There needs to be another and a more emphatic and world-wide War Aims discussion now. We clamoured

for a public statement to all the world of what we fought for. We try to clamour now. (With a shortage of paper and the B.B.C. under government control). So long as we have Lord Halifax, that sporting saint, in the Foreign Office, or anyone of his type, it is preposterous to hope for anything of the sort. We shall fight, but we shall fight under a cloud of baffiing misapprehension. The Allied Governments will be presented not only to their own people but to the doubting would-be-friend abroad, as something ambiguous and untrustworthy. How long are we to go on telling our own people and the world: "Open your mouth and shut your eyes and see what an anti-Bolshevik Tory Churchman will give you." This is the monstrous absurdity of our present phase.

I have already made some bitter comments on the way in which the French were let down monetarily and the nationalised services looted by private ownership in the pseudo-Reconstruction that followed 1918. The story is told simply and plainly in the later editions of The Outline of History (1931). What fills me with dismay as I look over this Crewe House document and recall its ineffectiveness, is the parallelism of our problem after two and twenty years. You see what happened to the hopes of my generation and you see what may happen to yours. You see why the world revolutionary must set himself now to anticipate and resist the return of the old order and how plainly it is manifest that this time we must go on along the lines we failed to pursue in that last phase of hope and opportunity. Go on with it now. Make this in reality the war to end war. There is no other way to end war, and there is very little time remaining.

THE END

CRUX ANSATA

AN INDICTMENT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Written at the height of WW2, *Crux Ansata* (Latin: "The Cross with a handle") is an uncomprimising attack on Roman Catholicism and Pope Pius XII. Indeed some will contend that Wells goes too far, but this book, it must be remembered was part of the war effort. When it was written, Wells had recently retired from the position of Minister of Allied Propaganda, but that official retirement did not stop him continuing that effort.

During those grim days of bombing and terror, many wealthy people fled London to the safety of country estates. But H.G. Wells refused to leave London. He knew that shared suffering between the economic classes was key to the war effort. He would not leave knowing that the poor had no choice but to stay and he meant to shame his wealthy fellow-Londoners by his resolve. His front door was blown in several times by German bombs, and even though he was in his late 70's and ill health, he joined in the regular patrols of the war-time streets for fires. It was under this sort of duress that he wrote *Crux Ansata*.

In Crux, Wells uses his pulpit of public teacher to add fuel to the fire of British morale. He praises the independant spirit of the Englishman and denounces the "spreading octopus" of the Church and its "Shinto alliance." However, the bulk of this book remains a very readable history of Christianity, not unlike the style of his famous Outline of History, though it suffers slightly from a forced quality, almost as if he were tired of reciting. It has occasional long quotes by other authors, but as was necessitated by the difficulties of war time, it is a short book; terse and to the point. There are times though when Crux Ansata dwindles into vagueness, and one gets a brief passing feeling that H.G.'s mental sharpness was begining to errode. Despite this, however, Crux has its share of powerful quotes that, in part, save it from being merely a piece of wartime propoganda.

"Christianity early ceased to be purely prophetic and creative. It entangled itself with archaic traditions of human sacrifice, with Mithraic blood-cleansing, with priestcraft as ancient as human

society, and with elaborate doctrines about the structure of the divinity. The gory entrail-searching forefinger of the Etruscan *pontifex maximus* presently overshadowed the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth...” (*Crux Ansata*, page 12).

“Even in comparison with Fascism and the Nazi adventure, Roman Catholicism is a broken and utterly desperate thing, capable only of malignant mischief in our awakening world” (*ibid*, page 79).

“Watch a priest in a public conveyance. He is fighting against disturbing suggestions. He must not look at women lest he think of sex. He must not look about him, for reality, that is to say the devil, waits to seduce him on every hand. You see him muttering his protective incantations, avoiding your eye. He is suppressing “sinful” thoughts” (*ibid*, page 113).

I. — WHY DO WE NOT BOMB ROME?

I cut the following paragraph from *The Times* of October 27th, 1942.

"The air raids on Italy have created the greatest satisfaction in Malta, which has suffered so much at Axis hands. At least the Italians now realise what being bombed means and the nature of the suffering they have so callously inflicted on little Malta since June 12th, 1940, when they showered their first bombs on what was then an almost defenceless island.

"As that bombing was intensified, especially since the Italians asked Germany's help in their vain attempt to reduce Malta, the people's reaction became violent and expressed itself in two words 'Bomb Rome', which were written prominently on walls in every locality."

On June 1st, 1942, the enemy bombed Canterbury and as near as possible got the Archbishop of Canterbury. But what is a mere Protestant Archbishop against His Holiness the Pope?

In March 1943 Rome was still unbombed.

Now consider the following facts.

We are at war with the Kingdom of Italy, which made a particularly cruel and stupid attack upon our allies Greece and France; which is the homeland of Fascism; and whose "Duce" Mussolini begged particularly for the privilege of assisting in the bombing of London.

There are also Italian troops fighting against our allies the Russians. A thorough bombing (a la Berlin) of the Italian capital seems not simply desirable, but necessary. At present a common persuasion that Rome will be let off lightly by our bombers is leading to a great congestion of the worst elements. of the Fascist order in and around Rome.

Not only is Rome the source and centre of Fascism, but it has been the,seat of a Pope, who, as we shall show, has been an open ally of the Nazi- Fascist-Shinto Axis since his enthronement. He has never raised his voice against that Axis, he has never denounced the abominable aggressions, murder and cruelties they have inflicted upon mankind, and the pleas he is now making for peace and

forgiveness are manifestly designed to assist the escape of these criminals, so that they may presently launch a fresh assault upon all that is decent in humanity. The Papacy is admittedly in communication with the Japanese, and maintains in the Vatican an active Japanese observation post.

No other capital has been spared the brunt of this war.

Why do we not bomb. Rome? Why do we allow these open and declared antagonists of democratic freedom to entertain their Shinto allies and organise a pseudo-Catholic destruction of democratic freedom? Why do we — after all the surprises and treacheries of this war — allow this open preparation of an internal attack upon the rehabilitation of Europe? The answer lies in the deliberate blindness of our Foreign Office and opens up a very serious indictment of the mischievous social disintegration inherent in contemporary Roman Catholic activities.

II. — THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF CHRISTENDOM

LET us tell as compactly as possible certain salient phases in the history of the Christian organisation that led up to the breach between the various form of Protestantism and Rome. Like all human organisations that have played a part through many generations, the career of the Catholic Church has passed through great fluctuations. It had phases of vigorous belief in itself and wise leadership; it fell into evil ways and seemed no better than a dying carcass; it revived, it split. There is no need for us to explore the early development and variations of Christianity before it assumed its definite form under the patronage and very definite urgency of the Emperor Constantine. The recriminations of the early Fathers, their strange ideas and stranger practices need not concern us here. There were churches, but there was no single unified Church.

Catholicism as we know it as a definite and formulated belief came into existence with the formulation of the Nicene Creed. Eusebius gives a curious account of that strange assemblage at Nicaea, over which the Emperor, although he was not yet a baptised Christian, presided. It was not his first council of the Church, for he had already (in 314) presided over.a council at Arles. He sat in the middle of the Council of Nicaea upon a golden throne, and, as he had little Greek, we must suppose he was reduced to watching the countenances and gestures of the debaters, and listening to their intonations.

The council was a stormy one. When old Arius rose to speak, one, Nicholas of Myra, struck him in the face, and afterwards many ran out, thrusting their fingers into their ears in affected horror at the old man's heresies. One is tempted to imagine the great emperor, deeply anxious for the solidarity of his empire, firmly resolved to end these divisions, bending towards his interpreters to ask them the meaning of the uproar.

The views that prevailed at Nicaea are embodied in the Nicene Creed, a strictly Trinitarian statement, and the Emperor sustained the

Trinitarian position. But afterwards, when Athanasius bore too hardly upon the Arians, he had him banished from Alexandria; and when the Church at Alexandria would have excommunicated Arius, he obliged it to readmit him to communion.

A very important thing for us to note is the role played by this emperor in the unification and fixation of Christendom. Not only was the Council of Nicaea assembled by Constantine the Great, but all the great councils, the two at Constantinople (381 and 553), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451), were called together by the imperial power. And it is very manifest that in much of the history of Christianity at this time the spirit of Constantine the Great is as evident as, or more evident than, the spirit of Jesus.

Constantine was a pure autocrat. Autocracy had ousted the last traces of constitutional government in the days of Aurelian and Diocletian. To the best of his lights the Emperor was trying to reconstruct the tottering empire while there was yet time, and he worked, according to those lights, without any councillors, any public opinion, or any sense of the need of such aids and checks.

The idea of stamping out all controversy and division, stamping out all independent thought, by imposing one dogmatic creed upon all believers, is an altogether autocratic idea, it is the idea of the single-handed man who feels that to get anything done at all he must be free from opposition and criticism. The story of the Church after he had consolidated it becomes, therefore, a history of the violent struggles that were bound to follow upon his sudden and rough summons to unanimity. From him the Church acquired that disposition to be authoritative and unquestioned, to develop a centralised organisation and run parallel with the Roman Empire which still haunts its mentality.

A second great autocrat who presently emphasised the distinctly authoritarian character of Catholic Christianity was Theodosius I, Theodosius the Great (379-395). He handed all the churches to the Trinitarians, forbade the unorthodox to hold meetings, and overthrew the heathen temples throughout the empire, and in 390 he caused the great statue of Serapis at Alexandria to be destroyed. Henceforth there was to be no rivalry, no qualification to the rigid unity of the Church.

Here we need tell only in the broadest outline of the vast internal troubles the Church, its indigestions of heresy; of Arians and Paulicians, of Gnostics and Manichaeans.

The denunciation of heresy came before the creeds in the formative phase of Christianity. The Christian congregations hadinterests in common in those days; they had a sort of freemasonry of common interests; their general theology was Pauline, but they evidently discussed their fundamental doctrines and documents widely and sometimes acrimoniously. Christian teaching almost from the outset was a matter for vehement disputation. The very Gospels are rife with unsettled arguments; the Epistles are disputations, and the search for truth intensified divergence. The violence and intolerance of the Nicene Council witnesses to the doctrinal stresses that had already accumulated in the earlier years, and to the perplexity confronting the statesmen who wished to pin these warring theologians down to some dominating statement in the face of this theological Babel.

It is impossible for an intelligent modern student of history not to sympathise with the underlying idea of the papal court, with the idea of one universal rule of righteousness keeping the peace of the earth, and not to recognise the many elements of nobility that entered into the Lateran policy. Sooner or later mankind must come to one universal peace, unless our race is to be destroyed by the increasing power of its own destructive inventions; and that universal peace must needs take the form of a government, that is to say, a law-sustaining organisation, in the best sense of the word religious — a government ruling men through the educated co-ordination of their minds in a common conception of human history and human destiny.

The Catholic Church was the first clearly conscious attempt to provide such a government in the wor1d. We cannot too earnestly. examine its deficiencies and inadequacies, for every lesson we can draw from them is necessarily of the greatest value in forming our ideas of our own international relationships.

III. — THE ESSENTIAL WEAKNESS OF CHRISTENDOM

AND first among the things that confront the student is the intermittence of the efforts of the Church to establish the world-City of God. The policy of the Church was not whole-heartedly and continuously set upon that end. Only now and then some fine personality or some group of fine personalities dominated it in that direction. "The fatherhood of God" that Jesus of Nazareth preached was overlaid almost from the beginning by the doctrines and ceremonial traditions of an earlier age, and of an intellectually inferior type. Christianity early ceased to be purely prophetic and creative. It entangled itself with archaic traditions of human sacrifice, with Mithraic blood-cleansing, with priestcraft as ancient as human society, and with elaborate doctrines about the structure of the divinity. The gory entrail-searching forefinger of the Etruscan pontifex maximus presently overshadowed the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth; the mental complexity of the Alexandrian Greek entangled them. In the jangle of these incompatibles the Church, trying desperately to get on with its unifying task, became dogmatic and resorted to arbitrary authority.

Its priests and bishops were more and more men moulded to creeds and dogmas and set procedures; by the time they became popes they were usually oldish men, habituated to a politic struggle for immediate ends and no longer capable of worldwide views. They had forgotten about the Fatherhood of God; they wanted to see the power of the Church, which was their own power, dominating men's lives. It 'was just because many of them probably doubted secretly of the entire soundness of their vast and elaborate doctrinal fabric that they would brook no discussion of it. They were intolerant of doubts and questions, not because they were sure of their faith, but because they were not. The unsatisfied hunger of intelligent men for essential truth seemed to promise nothing but perpetual divergence.

As the solidarity and dogmatism of the Church hardened, it sloughed off and persecuted heretical bodies and individuals with

increasing energy. The credulous, naive and worthy Abbot Guibert of Nogent-sous-Coucy, in his priceless autobiography, gives us the state of affairs in the eleventh century, and reveals how varied and abundant were both the internal and external revolts against the hardening authoritarianism that Hildebrand had implemented.

Abbot Guibert himself is an incipient internal rebel with criticisms of episcopal and papal corruption that already anticipate the Lollards and Luther, and the stories he tells of devils diabolical possession and infidel death-beds, witness to the wide prevalence of scoffing in Christendom even at that early time.

Yet Abbot Guibert, albeit a potential Protestant, was as completely tied to the Catholic Church as we are all tied by gravitation to the earth. There was as yet no means of breaking away. The formulae of separation had still to be discovered. Scoffers might scoff, but they came to heel on the death-bed. Four long centuries of mental travail had to intervene before these ties were broken.

But by the thirteenth century the Church had become morbidly anxious about the gnawing doubts that might presently lay the whole structure of its pretensions in ruins. It was hunting everywhere for heretics, as timid old ladies are said to look under beds and in cupboards. before retiring for the night.

IV. — HERESIES ARE EXPERIMENTS IN. MAN'S UNSATISFIED SEARCH FOR TRUTH

LET us examine some of the broad problems that were producing heresies. Chief of the heretical stems was the Manichaean way of thinking about the conflicts of life.

The Persian teacher Mani was crucified and flayed in the year 277. His way of representing the struggle between good and evil

was as a struggle between a power of light and a power of darkness inherent in the universe. All these profound mysteries are necessarily represented by symbols and poetic expressions, and the ideas of Mani still find a response in many intellectual temperaments to-day. One may hear Manichaean doctrines from many Christian pulpits. But the orthodox Catholic symbol was a different one.

Manichaean ideas spread very widely in Europe, and particularly in Bulgaria and the south of France. In the south of France the people who held them were called the Cathars. They arose in Eastern Europe in the ninth century among the Bulgarians and spread westward. The Bulgarians had recently become Christian and were affected by dualistic eastern thought. They insisted upon an excessive sexlessness. They would eat no food that was sex- begotten — eggs, cheese even, were taboo but they ate fish because they shared the common belief of the time that fish spawned sexlessly. Their ideas jarred so little with the essentials of Christianity, that they believed themselves to be devout Christians. As a body they lived lives of ostentatious purity in a violent, undisciplined and vicious age. They were protected by Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand), because their views enforced his imposition of celibacy upon the clergy (of which we shall tell in Chapter VII) in the eleventh century. But later their experiments in the search for truth carried them into open conflict with the consolidating Church. They resorted to the Bible against the priests. They questioned the doctrinal soundness of Rome and the orthodox interpretation of the Bible. They thought Jesus was a rebel against the cruelty of the God of the Old Testament, and not His harmonious Son, and ultimately they suffered for these divergent

experiments.

Closely associated with the Cathars in the history of heresy are the Waldenses, the followers of a man called Waldo, who seems to have been comparatively orthodox in his theology, and less insistent on the "pure" life, but offensive to the solidarity of the Church because he denounced the riches and luxury of the higher clergy. Waldo was a rich man who sold all his possessions in order to preach and teach in poverty. He attracted devoted followers and for a time he was tolerated by the Church. But his followers and particularly those in Lombardy, went further. Waldo had translated the New Testament, including the Revelation, into Provengal, and presently his disciples were denouncing the Roman Church as the Scarlet Woman of the Apocalypse. This was enough for the Lateran, and presently we have the spectacle of Innocent III, after attempts at argument and persuasion, losing, his temper and preaching a Crusade against these troublesome enquirers. The story of that crusade is a chapter in history that the Roman Catholic historians have done their best to obliterate.

Every wandering scoundrel at loose ends was enrolled to carry fire and sword and rape and every conceivable outrage among the most peaceful subjects of the King of France, The accounts of the cruelties and abominations of this crusade are far more terrible to read than any account of Christian martyrdoms by the pagans, and they have the added horror of being indisputably true.

Yet they did not extirpate the Waldenses. In remote valleys of Savoy a remnant survived and lived on, generation after generation, until it was incorporated with the general movement of the Refoundation and faced and suffered before the reinvigorated "Roman Catholic Church in the full drive of the Counter Reformation. Of that we shall tell later.

The intolerance of the narrowing and concentrating Church was not confined to religious matters. The shrewd, pompous irascible, disillusioned and rather malignant old men who manifestly constituted the prevailing majority in the councils of the Church, resented any knowledge but their own knowledge, and distrusted any thought that they did not correct and control. Any mental activity but their own struck them as being at least insolent if not positively

wicked. later on they were to have a great struggle upon the question of, the earth's position in space, and whether it moved round the sun or not. This was really not the business of the Church at all. She might very well have left to reason the things that are reason's, but she seems to have been impelled by an inner necessity to estrange the intellectual conscience in men.

Had this intolerance sprung from a real intensity of conviction it would have been bad enough, but it was accompanied by an undisguised contempt for the mental dignity of the common man that makes it far less acceptable to our modern ideas. Quite apart from the troubles in Rome itself there was already manifest in the twelfth century a strong feeling that all was not well with the spiritual atmosphere. There began movements — movements that nowadays we should call "revivalist" — within the Church, that implied rather than uttered a criticism of the sufficiency of her existing methods and organisation. Men sought fresh forms of righteous living outside the monasteries and priesthood.

One outstanding figure is that of St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226). This pleasant young gentleman had a sudden conversion in the midst of a life of pleasure, and, taking a vow of extreme poverty, gave himself up to an imitation of the life of,Christ, and to the service of the sick and wretched, and more particularly to the service of the lepers who then abounded in Italy.

He was joined by numbers of disciples, and so the first Friars of the Franciscan Order came into existence. An order of women devotees was set up beside the original confraternity, and in addition great numbers of men and women were brought into less formal association. He preached, unmolested by the Moslems be it noted, in Egypt and Palestine, though the Fifth Crusade was then in progress. His relations with the Church are still a matter for discussion. His work had been sanctioned by Pope Innocent III, but while he was in the East there was a reconstitution of his order, intensifying discipline and substituting authority for responsive impulse, and as a consequence of these changes he resigned its headship. To the end he clung passionately to the ideal of poverty, but he was hardly dead before the order was holding property through trustees and building a great church and monastery to his memory at Assisi. The disciplines

of the order that were applied after his death to his immediate associates are scarcely to be distinguished from a persecution; several of the more conspicuous zealots for simplicity were scourged, others were imprisoned, one was killed while attempting to escape, and Brother Bernard, the "first disciple", passed a year in the woods and hills, hunted like a wild beast.

This struggle within the Franciscan Orr is interesting, because it foreshadowed the great troubles that were coming to Christendom. All through the thirteenth century a section of the Franciscans were straining at the rule of the Church, and in 1318 four of them were burnt alive at Marseilles as incorrigible heretics. There seems to have been little difference between the teaching and the spirit of St. Francis and that of Waldo in the twelfth century, the founder of the massacred but unconquerable sect of Waldenses. Both were passionately, enthusiastic for the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth. But while Waldo rebelled against the Church, St. Francis did his best to be a good child of the Church, and his comment on the spirit of official Christianity was only implicit. But both were instances of an outbreak of conscience against authority and the ordinary procedure of the Church. And it is plain that in the second instance, as in the first, the Church scented rebellion.

A very different character to St. Francis was the Spaniard St. Dominic (1170-1221), who was, above all things, orthodox. For him the Church was not orthodox enough. He was a reformer on the Right Wing. He had a passion for the argumentative conversion of heretics, and he was commissioned by Pope Innocent III to go and preach to the Albigenses. His work went on side by side with the fighting and massacres of the crusade. Whom Dominic could not convert, Innocent's Crusaders slew. Yet his very activities and the recognition and encouragement of his order by the Pope witness to the rising tide of discussion and to the persuasion even of the Papacy that force was a remedy.

In several respects the development of the Black Friars or Dominicans — the Franciscans were the Grey Friars — shows the Roman Church at the parting of the ways, committing itself more and more deeply to a hopeless conflict with the quickening intelligence and courage of mankind. She whose duty it was to teach, chose to

compel. The last discourse of St. Dominic to the heretics he had sought to convert is preserved to us. It betrays the fatal exasperation of a man who has lost his faith in the power of truth because his truth has not prevailed.

"For many years," he said, "I have exhorted you in vain, with gentleness, preaching, praying and weeping. But according to th proverb of my.country, 'Where blessing can accomplish nothing, blows may avail', we shall rouse against you princes and prelates, who, alas'! will arm nations and kingdoms against this land,... and thus blows will avail where blessings and gentleness have been powerless."

Encyclopaedia Britannica, art. "Dominic".

V. — THE CITY OF GOD

So the intolerance of the Catholic Church drove steadily towards its own disruption. Nevertheless for nearly a thousand years the idea of Christendom sustained a conception of human unity more intimate and far wider than was ever achieved before.

As early as the fifth century Christianity had already become greater, sturdier and more enduring than any empire had ever been, because it was something not merely imposed upon men, but interwoven with their deeper instinct for righteousness. It reached out far beyond the utmost limits of the empire, into Armenia, Persia, Abyssinia, Ireland, Germany, India and Turkestan. It had become something no statesman could ignore.

This widespread freemasonry, which was particularly strong in the towns and seaports of the collapsing Empire, must have had a very strong appeal to every political organiser. The Christians were essentially townsmen and traders. The countrymen were still pagans (pagani = villagers).

"Though made up of widely scattered congregations," says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in its article on "Church History", "it was thought of as one body of Christ, one people of God. This ideal unity found expression in many ways. Intercommunication between the various Christian communities was very active. Christians upon a journey were always sure of a warm welcome from their fellow disciples. Messengers and letters were sent freely from one Church to another. Missionaries and evangelists went continually from place to place. Documents of various kinds, including gospels and apostolic epistles, circulated widely. Thus in various ways the feeling of unity found expression,, and the development of widely separated parts of Christendom conformed more or less closely to a common type."

Ideas of worldly rule by this spreading and ramifying Church were indeed already prevalent in the fourth century. Christianity was becoming political. Saint Augustine, a native of Hippo in North Africa, who wrote between 354 and 430, gave expression to the political idea of the' Church in his book, The City of God. The City of God leads the mind very directly towards the possibility of

making the world into a theological and organised Kingdom of Heaven.. The city, as Augustine puts it, is “a spiritual society of the predestined faithful, but the step from that to a political application was not a very wide one. The Church was to be the ruler of the world over all nations, the divinely-led ruling power over a great league of terrestrial states.

Subsequently these ideas developed into a definite political theory and policy. As the barbarian races settled and became Christian, the Pope began to claim an overlordship of their Kings. In a few centuries the Pope had become in Latin Catholic theory, and to a certain extent in practice, the high priest, censor, judge and divine monarch of Christendom; his influence, as we have noted, extended far beyond the utmost range of the old empire. For more than a thousand years this idea of the unity of Christendom, of Christendom as a sort of vast Amphictyony, whose members even in wartime were restrained from many extremities by the idea of a common brotherhood and a common loyalty to the Church, dominated Europe. The history of Europe from the fifth century onward to the fifteenth is very largely the history of the failure of this great idea of a divinely ordained and righteous world government to realise itself in practice.

VI. — THE CHURCH SALVAGES LEARNING

IF the dark disorders of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the newly organised Catholic Church played an important role in the preservation of learning and social ideas. St. Benedict and Cassiodorus in particular set themselves to the salvage of books and teaching, and among their immediate followers was one of the first great Popes, Gregory the Great. In those days the local Christian priest was often too ignorant,to understand the Latin phrases he mumbled and muttered at his services. Gregory's educational energy corrected that. He restored the priests' Latin. So that later the Catholic Church retained its widespread solidarity in spite of the most extraordinary happenings in Rome. It would no doubt have preferred to keep its Latin language without the Latin classics, but their use was unavoidable if the language was to be steadied and sustained.

St. Benedict was born at Spoleto in Italy, a young man of good family. The shadow of the times fell upon him, he conceived a disgust for the evil in life, and, like Buddha a thousand years before him, he took to the religious life and set no limit to his austerities. Fifty miles from Rome is Subiaco, and there at the end of a gorge of the Anio, beneath a jungle growth of weeds and bushes, rose a deserted palace built by the Emperor Nero, overlooking an artificial lake that had been made in those days of departed prosperity by damming back the waters of the river. Here with a hair shirt as his chief possession, Benedict took up his quarters in a cave in the high southward- looking cliff that overhangs the stream, in so inaccessible a position tat his food had to be lowered to him on a cord by a faithful admirer. Three years he lived here, and his fame spread as Buddha's did, as a great saint and teacher.

Presently we find him no longer engaged in self-torment, but controlling a group of twelve monasteries, the resort of a great number of people. Youths are brought to him to be educated, and the whole character of his life has ceased to be ascetic.

From Subiaco he removed to Monte Cassino, half-way between Rome and Naples, a. lonely and beautiful mountain in the midst of a

great circle of majestic heights. Here, it is interesting to note that in the sixth century A.D. he found a temple of Apollo and a sacred grove, and the countryside still worshipping at this shrine. His first labours had to be missionary labours, and with difficulty he persuaded the simple pagans to demolish their temple and cut down their grove. The establishment upon Monte Cassino became a famous and powerful centre within the lifetime of its founder. Mixed up with the imbecile inventions of marvel-loving monks about demons exorcised, disciples walking on the water, and dead children restored to life, we can still detect something of the real spirit of Benedict. Particularly significant are the stories that represent him as discouraging extreme mortification. He sent a damping message to a solitary who had invented a new degree in saintliness by chaining himself to a rock in a narrow cave. "Break thy chain," said Benedict, "for he true servant of God is chained not to rocks by iron, but to righteousness by Christ."

Next to the discouragement of solitary self-torture, Benedict insisted upon hard work. Through the legends shine the clear indications of the trouble made by his patrician students and disciples who found themselves obliged to toil instead of leading lives of leisurely austerity under the ministrations of the lowerclass brethren.

A third remarkable thing about Benedict was his political influence. He set himself to reconcile Goths and Italians, and it is clear that Totila, his Gothic king, came to him for counsel and was greatly influenced by him. When Totila retook Naples from the Greeks, the Goths protected the women from insult and treated even the captured soldiers with humanity. Belisarius, Justinian's general, had taken the same place ten years previously, and had celebrated his triumph by a general massacre.

Now the monastic organisation of Benedict was a very great beginning in the Western world. One of his prominent followers was Pope Gregory the Great (540-604), the first monk to become Pope (590); he was one of the most capable and energetic of the Popes, sending successful missions to the unconverted, and particularly to' the Anglo-Saxons. He rules in Rome like an independent king, organising armies, making treaties. To his influence is due the imposition of the Benedictine rule upon nearly the whole of Latin

monasticism.

Gregory the Great ruled in Rome like an independent king organising armies, making treaties. It was he who saw two fair captives from Britain, and, having asked whence they came and being told they were Angles, said they might be angels — *non Angli sed Angeli* — rather than Angles if they had the Faith. He made it his special business to send missionaries to England. This is a high water mark in the chequered history of the Roman Church. From Gregory I it passes into a phase of decadence not only at Rome but throughout its entire sphere of influence.

VII. — CHARLEMAGNE

AN interesting amateur in theology who was destined to drive a wedge into the solidarity of the Christian system was the Emperor Charlemagne, Charles the Great, the friend and ally of King Alfred of Wessex. The wedge was unpremeditated. The learned, investing history with the undeserved dignity their scholarly minds craved, have endowed Charles with an almost inhuman foresight. He was the son of Pepin, who had been Mayor of the Palace to the last of the Merovingia Kings, and, on the strength of his being *de facto* King, he appealed to the Pope to transfer the Crown to his head. This the Pope did. Everywhere in Europe the ascendant rulers seized upon Christianity as a unifying force to cement their conquests. Christianity became a banner for aggressive chiefs — as it did in Uganda in Africa in the bloody days before that country was annexed to the British Empire.

Charlemagne was most simply and enthusiastically Christian, and his disposition to sins of the flesh, to a certain domestic laxity — he is accused among other things of incestuous relations with his daughters — merely sharpened his redeeming zeal for the Church. An aggressive Church had long since decided that sins of the flesh are venal sins when weighed against unorthodoxy, and he was able to offer up vast hecatombs of conquered pagans to appease the more and more complaisant Catholic Church. He insisted on their becoming Christians, and to refuse baptism or to retract after baptism were equally crimes punishable by death. After he was crowned Emperor he obliged every male subject over the age of twelve to renew his oath of allegiance and undertake to be not simply a good subject but a good Christian.

A new Pope, Leo III, in 795, made Charlemagne Emperor. Hitherto the court at Byzantium had possessed a certain Indefinite authority over the Pope. Strong emperors like Justinian had bullied the Popes and obliged them to visit Constantinople; weak emperors had annoyed them ineffectively. The idea of a breach, both secular and religious, with Constantinople had long been entertained at the Lateran, and in the Frankish power there seemed to be just the

support that was necessary if Constantinople was to be defied.

So upon his accession Leo III sent the keys of the tomb of St. Peter and a banner to Charlemagne as the symbols of his sovereignty in Rome as King of Italy. Very soon the Pope had to appeal to the protection he had chosen. He was unpopular in Rome; he was attacked and ill-treated in the streets during a procession, and obliged to fly to Germany (799). Eginhard says his eyes were gouged out and his tongue cut off. He seems, however, to have had both eyes and tongue again a year later. Charlemagne brought him back to Rome and reinstated him (800).

Then occurred a very important scene. On Christmas Day in the year 800, as Charles was rising from prayer in the Church of St. Peter, the Pope, who had everything in readiness, clapped a crown upon his head and hailed him Caesar and Augustus. There was great popular applause. But Eginhard, the friend and biographer of Charlemagne, says that the new Emperor was by no means pleased by this coup of Pope Leo's. If he had known this was to happen, he said, "he would have not entered the Church, great festival though it was."

No doubt he had been thinking and talking of making himself Emperor, but he had evidently not intended that the Pope should make him Emperor. He had had some idea of marrying the Empress Irene, who at that time reigned in Constantinople, and so becoming monarch of both Eastern and Western Empires. But now he was obliged to accept the title in the manner that Leo had adopted, as a gift from the Pope, and in a way that estranged Constantinople and secured the separation of Rome from the Byzantine Church.

At first Byzantium was unwilling to recognise the imperial title of Charlemagne. But in 811 a great disaster fell upon the Byzantine Empire. The pagan Bulgarians, under their prince Krum, defeated and destroyed the armies of the Emperor Nicephorus, whose skull became a drinking cup for Krum. The great pat of the Balkan peninsula was conquered by these people. After this misfortune Byzantium was in no position to dispute this revival of the empire in the West, and in 812 Charlemagne was formally recognised by Byzantine envoys as Emperor and Augustus.

The defunct Western Empire rose again as the "Holy Roman

Empire". While .its military strength lay north of the Alps, its centre of authority was Rome. It was from the beginning a divided thing, a claim and an argument rather than a necessary reality. The good German sword was always clattering over the Alps into Italy, and missions and legates toiling over in the reverse direction. But the Germans never could hold Italy permanently, because they could not stand the malaria that the ruined, neglected, undrained country fostered. And in Rome, as well as in several other of the cities of Italy, there smouldered a more ancient tradition, the tradition of the aristocratic republic, hostile to both Emperor and Pope.

In spite of the fact that we have a.life of him written by his contemporary, Eginhard, the character and personality of Charlemagne are difficult to visualise. Eginhard was a poor writer; he gives many particulars, but not the particulars that make a living figure. Charlemagne, he says, was a tall man, with a rather feeble voice; and he had bright eyes and a long nose. "The top of his head was round," whatever that may mean, and his hair was "white". Possibly that means he was a blond. He had a thick, rather short neck, and "his belly too prominent". He wore a tunic with a silver border, and gartered hose. He had a blue cloak, and was always girt with his sword, hilt and belt being of gold and silver.

He was a man of great animation and his abundant love affairs did not interfere at all with his incessant military and political labours He took much exercise was fond of pomp and religious ceremonies, and gave generously. He was a man of considerable intellectual enterprise, with a self-confident vanity rather after the fashion of William II, the ex-German Emperor, who died at Doorn so unimpressively the other day.

His mental activities are interesting, and they serve as a sample of the intellectuality of the time. Probably he could read; at meals he "listened to music or reading, but he never acquired the art of writing; "he used," says Eginhard, "to keep his writing book and tablets under his pillow, that when he had leisure he might practise his hand in forming letters, but he made little progress in an art begun too late in life." He certainly displayed a hunger for knowledge, and he took pains to attract men of learning to his Court.

These learned men were, of course, clergymen, there being no

other learned men then in the world and naturally they gave a strongly clerical tinge to the information they imparted. At his Court, which was usually at Aix-la- Chapelle or Mayence, he whiled away the winter season by a curious institution called his "school", in which he and his erudite associates affected to lay aside all thoughts of worldly position, assumed names taken from the classical writers or from Holy Writ, and discoursed upon learning and theology. Charlemagne himself was "David". He developed a considerable knowledge of theology, and it is to him that we must ascribe the proposal to add the words *filioque* to the Nicene Creed — an addition that finally split the Latin and Greek Churches asunder. But it is more than doubtful whether he had any such separation in mind. He wanted to add a word or so to the Creed, just as the Emperor William II wanted to leave his mark on the German language and German books, and he took up this *filioque* idea, which was originally a Spanish innovation. Pope Leo discreetly opposed it. When it was accepted centuries later, it was probably accepted with the deliberate intention of enforcing the widening breach between Latin and Byzantine Christendom.

The filioque point is a subtle one, and a word or so of explanation may not seem amiss to those who are uninstructed theologically. Latin Christendom believes now that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son; Greek and Eastern Christians, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, without any mention of the Son. The latter attitude seems to incline a little towards the Arian point of view. The Catholic belief is that the Father and the Son have always existed together, world without end; the Greek orthodox idea is tainted by a very human disposition to think fathers ought to be at least a little senior to their sons. The reader must go to his own religious teachers for precise instruction upon this point.

The disposition of men in positions of supreme educational authority in a community, to direct thought into some particular channel by which their existence may be made the more memorable, is not uncommon: The Emperor William, for instance, helped to make the Germans a people apart, and did much for the spectacle-makers of Germany, by using his influence to sustain the heavy Teutonic black letter and insisting upon the rejection of alien words

and roots from the good old German vocabulary. “Telephone” for instance was anathema, and “*Fernsprecher*” was substituted; and wireless became “*drahtlos*”. So nationalism in Germany achieved the same end as the resistance of English stupidity to orthographic changes, and made the language difficult for and repulsive to foreigners.

The normal speech of Charlemagne was Frankish. He may have understood Latin, more particularly if it was used with consideration, but he could have had no opportunity of Greek. He made a collection of old German songs and tales, but these were destroyed by his son and successor, Louis the Pious, because of their paganism.

VIII. — BLACK INTERLUDE

FOR a very long time the hold of the Emperors and the Popes upon the City of Rome was a very insecure one. Many of the surviving patrician families and also the Roman mob claimed the most conflicting privileges in the election and removal of the Popes, the German Emperor claimed similar rights, and on the other hand the popes would assert their rights to depose and excommunicate emperors. In this confusion popes multiplied, even a layman, John XIX, was made pope, and there were overlapping popes inconsiderable abundance. In 1045 there were three popes struggling in Rome, the notoriously vicious Benedict IX, Sylvester III and Gregory VI. Gregory VI bought the Papacy from Benedict, who subsequently went back on his bargain.

Hildebrand became Pope Gregory VII. He succeeded Pope Alexander, who, under his inspiration, had been attempting to reform and consolidate the Church organisation. He imposed celibacy on the clergy and so cut them off from family and social ties. It consolidated the Church but it dehumanised the Church. Hildebrand fought a long fight with the Emperor Henry IV. Henry deposed him and Gregory deposed and excommunicated the Emperor, who repented and did penance at Canossa. Afterwards Henry regretted his humiliation and created an Anti-Pope, Clement III. He besieged Gregory who held out in the Castle of St. Angelo. Robert Guiscard, a Norman freebooter, whom Pope Nicholas n had made "Duke of Apulia and Calabria and future Lord of Sicily by the Grace of God and St. Peter", came to the rescue, drove out the Emperor and Anti-Pope and incidentally sacked Rome. After which Gregory went off under the protection of the Normans and died at Salerno, a hated and unhappy man, a good and great-spirited man defeated by the uncontrollable complexities of life.

So the story of schisms and conflicts runs on through the records of the Church. Many of the popes fought for power for the vilest ends, but we do such men as Gregory VII and Urban II (the Pope of the First Crusade) the grossest injustice if we ignore the fact that behind this barbaric struggle for power there could be long views and

disinterested aims. Conformity to the concepts of Christendom or a merely brutal life impulse were the alternative guides between which men had to choose in the atmosphere of that period. Men "sinned" violently and defiantly and yet were superstitiously afraid.Death-beds generally reeked with penitence, abject confessions and pious bequests. It is difficult for a modern mind to imagine how much in that age of confusion men could believe, and how little dignity, coherence and criticism there was in their beliefs.

How far things could go with the weak, the vicious and the insolent is shown by one phase in the history of Rome at this time, an almost indescribable phase. The decay of the Empire of Charlemagne had left the Pope unsupported, he was threatened by Byzantium and by the Saracens (who had taken Sicily), and face to face with the unruly nobles of Rome. Among the most powerful of these nobles were two women. Theodora and Marozia, mother and daughter, who in succession held that same Castle of St. Angelo, which Theophylact, the patrician husband of Theodora, had seized together with most of the temporal power of the Pope. These two women were as bold, unscrupulous and dissolute as any male prince of the time could have been, and they are abused by masculine historians as though they were ten times worse. Marozia seized and imprisoned Pope John X (928), who speedily died under her hands. Her mother, Theodora, had been his mistress. Marozia subsequently made her illegitimate son Pope, under the title of John XI.

Gibbon mentions a second Theodora, the sister of Marozia.

After him her grandson, John XII, filled the chair of St. Peter. Gibbon's account of the manners and morals of John XII is suffused with blushes and takes refuge at last beneath a veil of Latin footnotes. This Pope, John XII, was finally degraded by the German Emperor Otto, scion of a new dynasty that had ousted the Carlovingians, who came over the Alps and down into Italy to be crowned in 962. Harsh critics of the Church call this phase in its history the pornocracy.

That "pornocracy" sounds much more awful for the Catholic Church than was the reality. It has very little controversial weight if our criticism is to be just. It was a purely Roman scandal, and the Faithful throughout Christendom probably never heard a word about

this “pornocratic” phase. They went about their simple religious duties as they had been taught. It was not an age of easy travel, and practically nobody in the tenth century went to Rome or heard what was happening there. That sort of stress was to come later.

IXa — THE LAUNCHING OF THE CRUSADES BY THE CHURCH

IN this brief history of the complex effort of the human mind and will to secure some mastery over its internal and external perplexities, the Crusades, and particularly the First Crusade, demand our particular attention. The First Crusade displays "Christendom" at its maximum effectiveness as a consolidating and justifying idea, and it shows also how the essential instability of the Roman leadership and the ideological freakishness of Charlemagne combined with the inherent self-seeking and confusion in the human .mind at large; to defeat every *ostensible purpose* of this great eastward drive. Every ostensible purpose. But the reaction of the mingling of ideas and purposes hat ensued had unforeseen consequences in the disintegration of Christendom that was presently to ensue.

The Crusades were the direct work of the Church. It had been consolidating itself slowly fro the uncertainties of the earlier Dark Ages. The establishment of clerical celibacy in the ninth and tenth centuries was isolating it from the social mass, and the retreat from the passionate side of life to monasticism dotted the western world with centres of industrious husbandry, which availed themselves of the protection of the developing feudal organisation and provided retreats from which men of considerably riper years emerged as ministers, councillors, educators. Becket was about fifty when he was killed, Anselm lived to be seventy-five, Lanfranc's age is uncertain, but it was somewhere about eighty. No wonder they carried weight in a generally puerile world.

A man is as old as his arteries, we say nowadays, but the key to a real and authoritative old age for these divines of the Dark Ages was probably the inherited soundness of their teeth. Those whose teeth decayed ceased to speak with dignity and authority. There was no dentistry except extraction..

"Benefit of clergy", which worked out at last as a convenient mitigation of harsh penal laws, arose out of the claim of the

consolidating Church to take clerics out of the hands of the temporal power and deal with them in its own fashion. But the monasteries were only aggressive when they dared; they were not immune from local disorders and had to be steered with discretion. There was incessant bickering, robbery and warfare, and intermittent local famine, and the standard of life rose and fell here and there and from time to time.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the civilisation of Western Europe probably displayed far less social insecurity and inequality, and far less gross brutality, than in the succeeding period. There were regions and phases of comparative health and vitality. But such phases meant the accumulation of lootable resources, and opened the way to conceptions of conquest upon a larger and more lucrative scale. The Norman Conquest of England was a considerable achievement for that age. The tradition of the Roman Empire, the tradition of great and rich cities to the south-east, still haunted men's imaginations and did much to prepare them for the greater adventure of the Crusades.

The older and wiser heads who were consolidating a renascent Latin Church in the tenth and eleventh centuries were struggling against the incessant bickering warfare of the times. The Church then was something very different from Pope Pacelli's Church of to-day. In its reawakened eleventh-century form, under the direction of that greatest of papal statesmen, Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand), it was the most civilised and civilising thing in the Western world. It was at its best. Not only the Roman Church as we know it, but all the Protestant sects, are derived from it. It had tried various expedients to put a truce upon local violence, and it seized upon the Turkish ill-treatment of pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre as an incentive. These Turks had smashed the Byzantine armies and driven them out of Asia Minor. They sat down in Nicaea, opposite Byzantium itself. In this extremity Alexis Comnenus, the Byzantine Emperor, appealed to Pope Gregory VII for help, and the Latin-speaking West responded promptly and vigorously. Both the Western Empire and the Church saw plainly before it the subjugation of the Eastern world by the West.

IXb — CHRISTENDOM MARCHES EAST

THE incitement to crusade aroused a stupenpdous and varied response. It released all the latent unifying forces that had accumulated about the idea of Christendom.

In the beginning of the seventh century we saw Western Europe as a chaos of social and political fragments, with no common idea nor hope, a system shattered almost to a dust of self-seeking individuals. Now, at the close of the eleventh century, we discover a common belief, a linking idea, to which men may devote themselves, and by which they can co-operate together in a universal enterprise. We realise that, in spite of much weakness and intellectual and moral unsoundness, to this extent the Christian Church had *worked*. We are able to measure the evil phases of tenth-century Rome, the scandals, the filthiness, the murders and violence, at their proper value by the scale of this fact. No doubt, not only in Rome itself, but all over Christendom, there had been many lazy, evil and foolish ecclesiastics, but it is manifest that in spite of them a task of teaching and co-ordination had been accomplished by a great multitude of right-living priests and monks and nuns. A new and greater amphictyony, the amphictyony of Christianity, had come into the world, and it had been built by thousands of these anonymous faithful lives.

And the response to the appeal of Urban II was not confined only to what we should call educated people. It was not simply knights and princes who were willing to go crusading. Side by side with the figure of Urban we must put that of Peter the Hermit, a type novel to Europe, albeit a little reminiscent of the Hebrew prophets. This man appeared preaching the crusade to the common people. He told a story — whether truthful or untruthful hardly matters in this connection — of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, of the wanton destruction at the Holy Sepulchre by the Seljuk Turks, who took it somewhen about l075 — the chronology of this period is still very vague — and of the exactions, brutalities and deliberate cruelties now practised upon the Christian pilgrims.to the Holy Places. Barefooted, clad in a coarse garment, riding on an ass and bearing a

huge cross, this man travelled about France and Germany, and everywhere harangued vast crowds in church or street or market-place.

Here for the first time we discover the masses of Europe with a common idea. Here is a collective response of indignation to the story of a remote wrong, a swift realisation of a common cause by rich and poor alike. You cannot imagine that happening in the Empire of Augustus Cregar, or, indeed, in any previous state in the world's history. Something of the kind might perhaps have been possible in the far smaller world of Hellas, or in Arabia before Islam. But this movement affected nations, kingdoms, tongues and peoples. We are dealing with something new that has come into the world.

From the first this flaming enthusiasm was mixed with baser elements. There was the cold and calculated scheme of the free and ambitious Latin Church to subdue and replace the Byzantine Church; there was the freebooting instinct of the Normans, now tearing Italy to pieces, which turned readily enough to a new and richer world of plunder; and there was something in the multitude who now turned their faces east, something deeper than love in the human composition, namely, fear-born hate, that the impassioned appeals of the propagandists and the exaggeration of the horrors and cruelties of the infidel had fanned into flame.

And still other forces were at work; the intolerant Seljuks and the intolerant Fatimites lay now an impassable barrier across the eastward trade of Genoa and Venice that had hitherto flowed through Baghdad, Aleppo and Egypt. Unless Constantinople and the Black Sea route were to monopolise Eastern trade altogether, they must force open these closed channels. Moreover, in 1094 and 1095 there had been a pestilence and famine from the Scheldt to Bohemia, and there was great social disorganisation.

"No wonder," wrote Mr. Ernest Barker, "that a stream of emigration set towards the East, such as would in modern times flow towards a newly discovered goldfield — a stream carrying in its turbid waters much refuse: tramps and bankrupts, camp-followers and hucksters, fugitive monks and escaped villeins, and marked by the same motley grouping, the same fever of life, the same alternations of affluence and beggary, which mark the rush for a

goldfield to-day."

But these were secondary contributory causes. The fact of predominant interest to the historian of mankind is this will to crusade suddenly revealed as a new mass possibility in human affairs.

The first forces to move eastward were great crowds of undisciplined people rather than armies, and they sought to make their way by the valley of the Danube, and thence southward to Constantinople. This has been called the "people's crusade". Never before in the whole history of the world had there been such a spectacle as these masses of practically leaderless people moved by an idea. It was a very crude idea. When they got among foreigners, they did not realise they were not already among the infidel. Two great mobs, the advance guard of the expedition, committed such excesses in Hungary, where the language was incomprehensible to them, that they were massacred. A third host began with a great pogrom of the Jews in the Rhineland, and this multitude was also destroyed in Hungary. Two other swarms under Peter himself reached Constantinople, to the astonishment and dismay of the Emperor Alexius. They looted and committed outrages, until he shipped them across the Bosphorus, to be massacred rather than defeated by the Seljuks (1096).

This first unhappy appearance of the "people" as people in modern European history was followed in 1097 by the organised forces of the First Crusade. They came by diverse routes from France, Normandy, Flanders, England, Southern Italy and Sicily and the will and power of them were the Normans. They crossed the Bosphorus and captured Nicaea, which Alexius snatched away from them before they could loot it.

Then they went to Antioch, which they took after nearly a year's siege. Then they defeated a great relieving army from Mosul.

A large part of the crusaders remained in Antioch, a smaller force under Godfrey of Bouillon went on to Jerusalem. To quote Barker again: "After a little more than.a month's siege, the city was finally captured (July 15th, 1099). The slaughter was terrible; the blood of the conquered ran down the streets, until men splashed in blood as they rode. At nightfall, 'sobbing for excess of joy', the crusaders

came to the Sepulchre from their treading of the winepress, and put their blood-stained hands together in prayer. So, on that day of triumph, the First Crusade came to an end."

The authority of the Patriarch of Jerusalem was at once seized upon by the Latin clergy with the expedition, and the Orthodox Christians found themselves in rather a worse case under Latin rule than under the Turk. There were already Latin principalities established at Antioch and Edessa, and between these various courts and kings began a struggle for ascendancy. There was an unsuccessful attempt to make Jerusalem a property of the Pope. These are complications beyond our present scope.

Let us quote, however, a characteristic passage from Gibbon, to show the drift of events:

"In a style less grave than that of history, I should perhaps compare the Emperor Alexius to the jackal, who is said to follow the steps and devour the leavings of the lion. Whatever had been his fears and toils in the passage of the First Crusade, they were amply recompensed by the subsequent benefits which he derived from the exploits of the Franks. His dexterity and vigilance secured their first conquest of Nicaea, and from this threatening station the Turks were compelled to evacuate the neighbourhood of Constantinople.

"While the Crusaders, with blind valour, advanced into the midland countries of Asia, the crafty Greek improved the favourable occasion when the emirs of the sea coast were recalled to the standard of the Sultan. The Turks were driven from the islands of Rhodes and Chios; the cities of Ephesus and Smyrna, of Sardes, Philadelphia and Laodicea, were restored to the empire, which Alexius enlarged from the Hellespont to the banks of the Maeander and the rocky shores of Pamphylia. The churches resumed their splendour; the towns were rebuilt and fortified; and the desert country was peopled with colonies of Christians, who were gently removed from the more distant and dangerous frontier.

"In these paternal cares we may forgive Alexius if he forgot the deliverance of the holy sepulchre; but by the Lains he was stigmatised with the foul reproach of treason and desertion. They had sworn obedience and fidelity to his throne; but he had promised to assist their enterprise in person, or, at least, with his troops and

treasures; his base retreat dissolved all their old gains; and the sword, which had been the instrument of their victory, was the pledge and title of their just independence. It does not appear that the emperor attempted to revive his obsolete claims over the kingdom of Jerusalem, but the borders of Cilicia and Syria were more recent in his possession and more accessible to his arms. The great army of the crusaders was annihilated or dispersed; the principality of Antioch was left without a head, by the surprise and captivity of Bohemond; his ransom had oppressed him with a heavy debt; and his Norman followers were insufficient to repel the hostilities of the Greeks and Turks.

"In this distress, Bohemond embraced a magnanimous resolution, of leaving the defence of Antioch to his kinsman, the faithful Tancred; of arming the West against the Byzantine Empire, and of executing the design which he inherited from the lessons and example of his father Guiscard. His embarkation was clandestine; and if we may credit a tale of the Princess Anna, he passed the hostile sea closely secreted in a coffin. (Anna Conpena adds that, to complete the imitation, he was shut up with a dead cock; and condescends to wonder how the barbarian could endure the confinement and putrefaction. This absurd tale is unknown to the Latins.)..."

So Gibbon, caustic but veracious, detesting Roman and Byzantine with an impartial detestation, bears his witness.

It was in this widening conflict of the Latin and the Greek that that theological freak of Charlemagne, the filioque clause, became important politically.

We have traced the growth of this idea of a religious government of Christendom — and through Christendom of mankind — and we have shown how naturally and how necessarily, because of the tradition of world empire, it found a centre at Rome. The Pope of Rome was the only Western patriarch; he was the religious head of a vast region in which the ruling tongue was Latin; the other patriarchs of the Orthodox Church spoke Greek and so were inaudible throughout his domains;, and the two words filioque, which had been added to the Latin creed, now split off the Byzantine Christians by one of those impalpable and elusive doctrinal points upon which

there is no reconciliation. (The final rupture was in 1054.)

The broad reality of the Crusades was that all the surplus energy of the West, in a passion of greed, piety and virtuous indignation, poured down upon the far more sophisticated Levant and returned with a thousand hitherto unheard-of things. Most of the rank and file were killed off ("The men were splendid"), but the knights and noblemen who returned with their retinues came back with silk and velvet, dyes and chain armour, and cravings and conceptions of luxury that had been submerged in the minds of western men since the collapse of the Roman Empire.

X. — A CATHOLIC GENTLEMAN OF 1440

LET us now sketch the face and quality of human life in Europe at that time, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. We must clear our minds of the popular persuasion that the people who went to and fro in the towns and villages we inherit were very much like the people who walk about our streets to-day, except that they wore different costumes. That is a complete delusion. There was no such fancy dress ball. These fifteenth-century people were, on the average, twenty years younger, they were less healthy looking, and they stank quite abominably. The barbarism of the period was not primitive. It had arisen out of the decadence of a preceding social order. The great public baths of the Roman tradition had faded out of the crumbling social edifice. Not only are we misled by the natural anthropomorphism, so to speak, that makes us image the crowds in the past essentially like the crowds of to-day, but we are also misled by the pictures and records which misrepresent the spectacle of the times.

The printed book had still to dawn upon the world, and whatever record was made of the show of things was kept by monkish chroniclers employed by the Princes and Potentates of the time. These keepers of the records sat and toiled to make their manuscripts as bright and pleasing to their employers as possible. So that our vision of that time is magically illuminated by their art. A reeking slum of human indignity is lit up by the flattering brightness of the subservient chronicler and the blazons of heraldry, and it is only when we subject them to a closer scrutiny that we are able to grasp the squalid facts of human life during that period.

Then as no the world had its own loveliness, sunrise and sunset, the glorious onset of spring, the golden autumn, the white frost flowers upon the branches, but the dyes and fabrics of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century clothing in Christendom had none of the gilt and shining pigmentation of the illuminator. Clothing must have been still crude in colour and stale and dirty in substance. The normal span of life was brief and men were flimsier. We find the arm our of our ancestors too small and tight for even puny men to-day. But then,

one may ask, was it worn by real grown-up men? These people were often married at thirteen, they were warriors and leaders in their later teens; they became cruel old satyrs at six-and-thirty. In fact they never grew up either physically or mentally. They lived in a world of witless lordship and puerile melodrama.

From this disillusioning digression upon the brilliance in the fifteenth century, we can turn to one exceptionally "brilliant" young man, Gilles de Rais, a type of his time, of whose life we have by various accidents an exceptionally full record. He was married to a rich heiress at sixteen after two earlier attempts to make a match for him (the earliest at thirteen) had fallen through. He was a boy not only of exceptional energy but of exceptional gifts. He patronised music. He illuminated and bound books. And from the outset he was what people call "unbalanced".

Some people may be disposed to account for his peculiar aberrations by saying he just "went mad". But madness is as pitiless and consistent a process as anything else that can happen, the sequence of ideas in those we call insane is as inevitable, you can find their origins and their associations, and nowadays when we are all out of harmony with our conditions of survival, to say merely that he "went mad" does not even put him outside the pale of normal experience. Exceptionally wealthy at the outset, his mental liveliness made him a spendthrift. Like many youngsters born rich, he could not imagine being hard up until he was. He liked to give extravagant entertainments, mysteries and moralities. From first to last he was a good Catholic, conscientiously and unfeignedly religious. But for that he might never have been hung. He dabbled in alchemy and the black arts; there was no Monte Carlo for him in those days and no turf — and he tried to make up for his magic by extravagant charity and special masses.

All this is the behaviour of an uncontrolled upper-form schoolboy with a belief in his luck, an uncritical piety of the "Onward Christian Soldiers" type, and an unanalysed disposition to torment fags. It must be cited to place him definitely in relation to our own minds, but not in any way as a condonation of what he did. He was cruel; by all our standards he was hideously cruel; he delighted in the tormenting of children; and the points best worth discussing about him here are,

first, whether he was an exceptional sinner, or whether his crimes were the outcome of a mental disposition that has always been operative since that wretched congestion of mankind which is called civilisation began; and *secondly*, and more important for our present purpose, how far the religious beliefs and practices of Catholic Christendom in the fifteenth century really condemned his abominations.

The Christians before the days of Constantine the Great had stood out valiantly against the cruelties of the arena and for the practical brotherhood of man, but was the Church still doing so when Gilles de Rais was a great nobleman? The records tell that he was hung for the torture and murder of 140 children to which he confessed, in the year 1440. He had committed sacrilege and infringed clerical immunity by entering the Church of St. Etienne de Mer Morte just after Mass and dragging out a certain Jean de Ferron who was kneeling there in prayer. This precipitated the hostility and suspicion that was accumulating against him. As a sequel to this outrage he was arrested and cited before the Bishop of Nantes on various charges, of which sacrilege and heresy were the chief and these murders a scondary issue, A parallel enquiry was made by Pierre de l'Htpital, President of the Breton *parlement*, by whose sentence he was finally condemned. His piety and abject confession saved him from torture, of which he probably went in profound dread because of the fascination it had for him.

He was hung, "housell'd, appointed, anel'd", more fortunate than Hamlet's father, and his body was saved from being burnt by "four or five dames and demoiselles of great estate", who removed his body from the flames of the pyre built so that he would fall into it. Manifestly they thought no great evil of what he had done. His two associates had no such social standing, and their bodies were burnt. This, I understand, will cause them considerable trouble at the Resurrection from which the aristocratic Gilles will be exempt.

He began life brilliantly and honourably. He must have seemed a splendid young man to the world about him, and by every current standard he was splendid. He was a close ally and supporter of Joan of Arc, with whom he fought side by side at Orleans and later at Jargeau and Patay. He carried out the coronation of Charles VII at

Reims, and he was made marichal of France upon that important occasion.

This riddle of condonation of social inequality and cruelty confronts us at every stage of the long "Martyrdom of Man". Man is evidently an animal which will fight, and on occasion fight desperately, but which prefers to fight at an advantage. He has been readier to use moderation and make concessions when fighting against his quasi-equals than against those who are altogether helpless, and always he has shown little or no regard for his inferiors, the rank and file, still less for the feeble folk who get in his militant way. When a scorched earth policy had to be undertaken, or if they were Jews or infidels, they counted for nothing at all.

The Merchant of Venice, the dullest play perhaps produced by the Shakespeare group, exhibits an internal struggle between a liberal-minded and a prejudiced element in the group of players which vamped up that fundamentally dreary story of hate against hate. The struggle between these two elements goes on in every human grouping, not only between one man and another, but between what we are apt to call a man's better self and his lower nature between his sense of righteousness and his even more deeply rooted prejudices. It runs through the entire Christian story, and our case against the Catholic Church is that, albeit it originated in a passionate assertion of the conception. of brotherly equality, it relapsed steadily from the broad nobility of its beginnings and passed over at last almost completely to the side of persecution and the pleasures of cruelty.

XI. — SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES

BY the onset of the fifteenth century, the generally youthful population of Christendom had achieved its maximum complex of human inequality, and displayed an intricacy of social stratification that only caste-ridden India could excel. If one turns over the pictures of those admirable compilations, M.A. Racinet's *Le Costume Historique*, or, still better, Adolf Rosenberg's *Geschichte des Kostums*, one can see the whole process of an incoherent barbarism passing visibly into an intensely sophisticated social structure, with an ever widening gap between class and class, in the course of three centuries. The common people still go half naked, or they wear skins and have rude puttees wrapped bout their feet.

So the mass remains; but presently intermediate strata appear. Below the strenuous magnificence of the nobility' and gentry appear craftsmen subserving the expanding needs of their superiors. Upper servants appear, and attendants made passable in their appearances and even wearing liveries.

Nobody catered for the ordinary man's clothing. He wore old cast-off stuff. Even to-day there is still a great market for cast-off clothes. Right down to the meddle nineteenth century "Paddy" was wearing inappropriate second-hands. His tail coat and deboshed top-hat was part of the fun the English made of him. Below the level of gentility nobody thought of catering for the lower-class body or the lower-class home. I am now nearly seventy-seven and I was brought up in a home in which everything, carpets, beds and all, except for a muslin curtain or so, had been bought at sales. It was an indignant philanthropist at Plymouth without any thought of gain who resolved to make furniture that would meet the needs of the poor home, lower-middle-class chiefly. He blundered into a fortune and launched Shoolbred's, Maple's, Heal's and all the rest of them on their vast prosperous careers. In the period of Gilles de Rais, no "inferior" dared enjoy anything until it had done its service at the rich man's table. To everyone in the world, this seemed altogether natural.

Meanly and dirtily dressed, ill-nourished, ill-housed and despised; that was the lot of the vulgar. Witness our "myriad-minded" Shakespeare. How some one in that "myriad" could despise their "greasy caps" and mock their poor efforts to imitate and propitiate their betters!

Dirt and mutual contempt, smothered resentments and cringing acquiescences. Such was social reality in the fifteenth century, in which Gilles de Rais lived, insanitary finery above brooding over great squalour. Such was the social atmosphere of the supreme disruptive phase in Christendom.

Even when one scrutinises the sort of thing the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries esteemed finery, there is a cheapness of invention and a factor of animal assertion that jars upon the dignity and reservations of our maturer minds. The cod-piece, often formidably enlarged, witnesses to the sexual obsessions of these adolescent ancestors of ours, and suggests the *graffiti* of the public urinal which releases the awakening minds of contemporary youth.

Apart from that, aspect of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the costume of the middling sort displays a resort to pinking, puffing, slashing, legs of different colours and the like feeble devices.

Somewhen about this time there came a wave of better taste — I think out of Central Asia. It came with playing cards. The pinking and puffing and slashing, the silly long-toed shoes ad so forth, presently vanished before its influence — for a time. The court cards of the normal pack foreshadow the dress of the seventeenth century. This wave of better taste did not come with the returning Crusaders, but by some more northern route, about which I am equally curious and ignorant. With its onset a certain sobriety imposed itself upon the costume of the intermediate classes. Their superiors soon returned to the ruffs and bejewelled embroidery. Their inferiors remained squalid. As they are to this day.

XII. — THE DAWN OF SOCIAL DISCONTENT

Now it happened that two very considerable stresses in the common way of living in Europe occurred in the middle fourteenth century. At first they had little to do with each other or with the religious development of Christendom. Later they were to revolutionise it altogether. They both came from the East. One was the Black Death; the other was the manufacture of paper and the obvious possibility it brought with it of printing uniform books from movable type. The one made labour dear; the other made books and knowledge cheap. The first, as we shall see, launched socialism upon the world; the second liberated the critical intelligence of mankind. Hitherto the subjugation of the common people had been an easy matter. There were plenty of them, and if they would not work for the Lord of the Manor or his sub-tenants, they could freeze and starve. Then came deliverance out of the East and found a ready soil in the filthy towns and dirty villages of the mediaeval countryside, the Great Pestilence.

Never was there such a pestilence. It came and it returned. It well nigh blotted out mankind. More than half of the three or four millions who formed the population of England were swept away. There were no hands to till the soil; there were none left who could drive the straying cattle out of the fields and corn.

For the first time in the history of Christendom there followed a struggle between property and the worker. Property, in accordance with its age-long established ideology, could find no better way of dealing with the universal distress than to assert that the workers must toil very much harder. The propertied classes of the desolation after the Black Death tried to tie such workers as there were to their jobs, by forbidding migration, fixing wages below starvation level, and so forth, and being very implacable about it all.

The vague indignation of popular common sense found expression in the preaching of one whom the courtly Froissart called "a mad priest of Kent", John Ball.

"Good people," cried the preacher, "things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords

greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil that they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state."

And so to the plain challenge of

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

the French Jacquerie was simultaneous and all of a piece with the primordial socialism of John Ball. At that time Kent and the south-east of England were far more closely linked with the north-east of France in thought and social life than with the lands behind either region. There were parallel movements in Flanders, and especially Ghent and Bruges and Ypres. The Ghent weavers were the stoutest. "For six years, despite amazing vicissitudes, they held their own against the prince, the nobles and all 'good folk who had anything to lose'" (Henri Pirenne, *A History of Europe*).

How Wat Tyler was murdered; how later on John Ball was executed in the sight of Richard lI; how that tragic and inglorious king lied and cheated his way out of the Peasant Revolt; how the people trusted him and were massacred for their touching disposition to accept the word of a gentleman; and how, after a phase of alleviation, due to the fact that the more they were butchered the rarer they became, they increased and multiplied and were economically debased once more; all that is to be found in any history.

But the spirit of that Kentish revolt did not die; it remained as an insubordination that presently, with the translation and presently the printing and cheapening of the Bible and the downward extension of literacy that ensued, developed into religious recalcitrance, into

nonconformity and dissent, into radicalism and at last into lucid world socialism, against which tradition, the old idea of lord over inferior as the natural structure of society, never completely reinstated itself.

XIIIa. — THE MENTAL ATMOSPHERE BEFORE THE REFORMATION

IT must be understood that it was from within the body of the Catholic Church that the destruction of its own unity came. It was men in holy orders striving to be good Christians who began to question the methods and disciplines of the Church. The Reformation came out of the heart of the Church. It was the subtle and obstinate Wycliffe who denied Transubstantiation and split off a living and progressive Protestantism from an ever more reactionary Church, who had the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue, and, together with his pupil, Jan Huss, begot the Reformation.

The spirit of Protestantism sprang from men who took their unquestioning Catholic faith with such seriousness that they could not but protest against the evil things they beheld about them. In the less critical eleventh century, in the days when Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) was bracing up the solidarity of the Church by insisting on priestly celibacy and the complete detachment from normal human living that this involved, there had been an extraordinary willingness to believe the Catholic priesthood good and wise. Relatively it was wiser and better in those days. Great powers beyond her spiritual functions had been entrusted to the Church, and very extraordinary freedoms. The tragedy of the Church is that she put her spiritual influence to evil ends and abused her freedoms without measure.

The Pope was the supreme lawgiver of Christendom, and his court at Rome the final and decisive court of appeal. The Church levied taxes; it had not only vast properties and a great income from fees, but it imposed a tax of a tenth, the tithe, upon its subjects. It did not call for this as a pious benefaction; it demanded it as a right. Steadily more and more of the nation's property fell into the dead hand (Mortmain) of the Church and paid its tribute to St. Peter. The clergy, on the other hand, claimed exemption from lay taxation.

This attempt to trade upon their peculiar prestige and evade their share in fiscal burdens was certainly one considerable factor in the

growing dissatisfaction with the clergy. Apart from any question of justice, it was impolitic. It made taxes seem ten times more burthensome to those who had to pay. It made everyone resent the immunities of the Church.

And a still more extravagant and unwise claim made by the Church was the claim to the power of dispensation. It did not interpret right and wrong now; it was above right and wrong and it could make wrong right and right wrong. The Pope in many instances set aside the laws of the Church in individual cases; he allowed cousins to marry, permitted a man to have two wives, released men from vows. The Church's crowning folly in the sixteenth century was the sale of indulgence whereby the sufferings of the soul in purgatory could be commuted for money payment.

By the dawn of the sixteenth century, the Church, blindly and rashly, had come to a final parting of the ways. The force of protest, that is to say of Protestantism, was gathering against it, and the alternatives, whether it would modernise or whether it would .dogmatise or fight, were before it. It chose to fight and tyrannise.

Before the thirteenth century it had been customary for the Pope to make occasional inquests or enquiries into heresy in this region or that, but Innocent III found in the Dominicans a powerful instrument of suppression. The Inquisition was organised as a standing enquiry under their direction and with fire and torture the Church set itself, through this instrument, to assail and weaken the human conscience in which its sole hope of world dominion resided. Before the thirteenth century the penalty of death had been inflicted but rarely upon heretics and unbelievers. Now in a hundred market-places in Europe the dignitaries of the Church watched the blackened bodies of its antagonist, for the most part poor and insignificant people, burn and sink pitifully, and their own great mission to mankind burn and sink with them into dust and ashes.

Chaucer, one of the most typical and commanding figures in English literature, in his Canterbury Tales, gives incidentally and inadvertently a picture of the state of opinion about the Church on the very eve of the impending Reformation. We have a company of pilgrims going to Canterbury — for a pilgrimage was then the only way of taking a holiday in comparative security and they are all, like

Chaucer himself, nominally good Catholics. They are, so to speak, provisionally Catholics, there being no alternative. Except the enthusiasm of Lollardry. Yet their critical contempt for the methods and exactions of the Church is plain and outspoken, and the two most contemptible figures in his vivid album are two clerical officials, the summoner and the pardoner.

It is our misfortune that his contribution to EnglIsh literature is practically unreadable in its original form. The language was not yet fixed and it underwent profound changes afar his death in 1400. It was fixed by the translation of the Bible an the literary activities of the later Tudor period, and now the ordinary reader of English can read him comfortably only in such I modernisations as that of J.U. Nicolson.

Chaucer was nearly sixty in 1400 and yet death took him by surprise and only a third of the writings he was collecting under the title of the Canterbury Tales had been assembled. Yet even so, they witness to his amazing versatility and have distinctive English qualities that were afterwards to reappear in the humorist in Shakespeare, in Fielding, in Dickens and a host of lesser story tellers down to such contemporary writers as Christopher Morley, and which are manifest in equal measure in no other literature.

All of them display that keen interest in individual facts and that distaste for dogmatic and enthusiastic final judgments which has characterised English thought and literature from its beginning. This sceptical mentality, which is so manifest in the English make-up, ranges fro a sort of obstinate, stupid and conservative unteachableness to a profound and explicit perception of the unreality of appearances, and the impossibility of ultimate solutions. There is every type of intermediate mentality in the English world, but they possess a family likeness. The British oaf and the British genius are born brothers.

This innate disposition to regard all existence as experimental and to distrust and reject the glib profundities of the religious “mystic” is incomprehensible to many Indian minds. Their objection finds typical expression in Shakespeare through Eastern Eyes by Mr. Ranjee G. Shahani, B.A., D.Litt., which has somehow got on to my reading desk. For “Shakespeare” we may substitute the Englishman.

Mr. Ranjee G. Shahani is oblivious to the obvious probability of a mixed origin for Shakespeare's plays, and he finds a confession of faith in any utterance of any character in any of them, and, regardless of the entirely provisional nature of language and of all human symbols, he lets loose at this sample Western with a voluminous smoke screen of pretentious gabble. This sort of thing:

"An Indian would say that Shakespeare had not probed far enough into the human soul and the Over-Soul we call God. Now the Oriental thinker is profoundly concerned not only in understanding these principles but in finding a relation between them. The fundamental thought of the Upanishads — writings containing the most occult and mystical ideas of the Hindus — consists in the recognition of the oneness of the Brahman and Atman, of God and the Soul. This is also the quintessential principle of the Vedanta system. 'Who could breathe who could exist,' declares the Kena Upanishad, 'if there were not the bliss of Brahma within the ether of his heart?' Sir Edwin Arnold rightly gauges the Indian spirit when he says that though inconceivable to the mind, this all comprehensive Being is still a necessity of true thought, and veritable beyond every other conception of reality'.

"The Hindu dharma declares that man does not live by his appetites alone: he must live by his life of spirit also. Moksha is the goal indicated. Moksha is freedom from the perpetuity of incarnation. It is in the end the union of the finite with the Infinite — the merging of the individual soul with the illimitable ocean. In other words, this is the nirvana of the Buddha....

"To the Oriental mind, religious mysticism is a sheer joy. The entire literature of India is steeped in this element. But when the Indian turns to Shakespeare he finds that this mystic quality is utterly absent... .

"Devotees of East and West declare that no joy transcends that which is derived from mystical experience. Roumi, Kabir, Meister Eckhart, Swedenborg, St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, and many others, all bear witness to the same effect. Surely, there is nothing finer or higher for man than to know what, 'in the last analysis, holds the universe together.' This is the question that Faust asks himself, and so does every mystic. For Vivekananda, as for Ramakrishna, his

master, ‘the knowledge of Brahma is the ultimate end, the highest destiny of man’...

“Mr. Middleton Murry, in harmony with the ancients, considers the poet as a *vates sacer*, bearing a direct message from God....

“‘The poetry of mysticism,’ says Miss Evelyn Underhill, ‘might be defined on the one hand as a temperamental reaction to the vision of Reality; on the other, as a form of prophecy. As it is the special vocation of the mystical consciousness to mediate between two orders, going out in loving adoration towards God and coming home to tell. the secrets of Eternity to other men; so the artistic self-expression of this consciousness has also a double character. It is love-poetry, but love-poetry, which is often written with a missionary intention.’

“The Indian fails to find anything of this kind in Shakespeare. His poetry is not an outburst of ecstasy and exaltation. We discover this combination in the Persian mystics, in the Sufi poets, in a few Western bards, and in the Christian saints. We also detect this fusion in Kabir. Let us listen to one of his poems translated by the united efforts of Rabindranath Tagore and Miss Evelyn Underhill:

Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale.
From what land do you come, O Swan?
To what shore will you fly?
Where would you take your rest, O Swan,
And what do you seek?

Even this morning, O Swan, awake, arise, follow me!
There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule:
Where the terror of Death is no more.

There the woods of spring are a-bloom,
And the fragrant scent “He is I” is borne on the wind:
There the bee of the heart is deeply immersed,
And desires no other joy.

From *Songs of Kabir*. Translated by Rabindranath Tagore, 1916

In the presence of this sort of ecstasy the broad stream of creative literature in England from Chaucer to the present day unites in

making loud rude sceptical noises.

The first story in the Chaucer portfolio is the Knight's story of Palamon and Arcite, a lengthy and dignified story after the Italian, of an exalted nobility and chastity. Next to that, as this time it is no translation, and as it were a relief from that, the drunken miller tells his obscene story of how the carpenter was cuckolded and mocked by Nicholas the clerk and how Absalom the parish priest was mocked and disgusted.

Whereupon the reeve is moved to tell of the outrageous cuckolding of a miller, and the cook begins brightly with a spendthrift gentleman who "had a wife that kept, for countenance, a shop and whored to gain her sustenance", or, to quote the original, "*hadde a wyf that heeld for contenance a shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance*". But this fragment of life ends abruptly. It was never finished.

The sailor follows and tells the story of a mercenary woman and her passion for a monk, of which the moral is, "Invite no more monks to your house or inn", and then comes Madame Eglantine, the prioress, who tells a horrifying invention about the murder of a boy in a "Jewry" through which Christian boys were unwisely allowed to pass, and how, being murdered and buried, he still sang on to reveal his fate. That Madame Eglantine, we are told in the Prologue,

...was so charitable and piteous
That she would weep if she but saw a mouse
Caught in a trap, though it were dead or bled.
She had some little dogs, too, that she fed
On roasted flesh, or milk, or fine white bread.
But sore she'd weep if one of them were dead,
Or if men smote it with a rod to smart:
For pity ruled her, and her tender heart."

And this is the piteous way in which she deals with the Jews:

With torture and with shameful death each one,
The provost did these cursed Hebrew serve
Who of the murder knew, and that anon;
From justice to the villains he'd not swerve.
Evil shall have what evil does deserve.
And therefore, with wild horses; did he draw,

And after hang, their bodies, all by law."

And how she recalls the alleged "Ritual Murder" of Hugh of Lincoln:

O you young Hugh of Lincoln, slain also
By cursed Jews, as is well known to all,
Since it was but a little while ago,
Pray you for us, sinful and weak, who call
That, of His Mercy, God will still let fall
Something of grace, and mercy multiply,
For reverence of His Mother dear on high. Amen.

Chaucer himself is then called upon, and produces Sir Thopas, a cheerful burlesque of the old-fashioned romantic stories, until the host implores him in extremely foul language to discontinue. Whereupon he turns about and tells a tale of Melibeus and the wisdom and goodness of forgiving. Here the Lollards get a passing word from the sailor, "impatient at their zeal".

"I smell a Lollard in the wind;" quoth he.
"Ho, good men!" said our host, "no hearken me;
Wait but a bit, for God's high passion do,
For we shall have a sermon ere we're through;
This Lollard here will preach to us somewhat."
"Nay, by my father's soul, that he shall not!"
Replied the sailor. "Here he shall not preach,
Nor comment on the gospels here, nor teach.
We all believe in the great God," said he,
"But he would sow among us difficulty,
Or sprinkle cockles in our good clean corn."

In this promiscuous careless fashion the great portfolio spills its varied contents. The Wife of Bath, a companion piece to Mistress Quickly, and almost as great a figure of comedy, comes upon the scene....

So we sample the state of mind of England on the very eve of the Reformation. The melange of intense amusement at individual character, with parody and gross laughter, is possible only because of the entire absence of any urgent positive convictions. And as it was in the beginning, so it is with English thought and art to this day.

Langland, who wrote *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, was a

contemporary of Chaucer. His manuscript was recopied with variations and additions and passed from hand to hand. It witnesses to the same state of corruption and indifference on the part of those who ruled over the Church as does Chaucer, but its criticism of abuses is far bitterer. While Chaucer is essentially irreligious, Langland is a theologian, and, though he believes himself to be an entirely orthodox Christian, his doctrine is substantially a sort of Calvinistic Humanitarianism. His "Christ" is Everyman, the common man at your elbow. In the fourteenth century, recurrent epidemics, local famines, and storms of violence seemed to be in the natural order of things. Everyone was at least intermittently ill and most people were by our modern standards under-vitalised. News soaked about the world haphazard, was distorted or evaporated. The Black Death, the revolt of John Ball and the men of Kent, are ignored by both Chaucer and Langland, nor had they the slightest knowledge of Roger Bacon's vision of the possibilities of mental release and human welfare. Yet, unaware of each other and each after his fashion, such Englishmen were feeling their way out of the mental darkness of the mediaeval world.

Not only the moral but the intellectual prestige of Rome was fading in the growing light of the times. Wycliffe (1320-1384) was a learned doctor at Oxford; for a time he was Master of Balliol; and he held various livings in the Church. Quite late in his life he began a series of outspoken criticisms of the corruption of the clergy and the unwisdom of the Church.

Be organised a number of poor priests, the Wycliffites, to spread his ideas throughout England; and in order that people should judge between the Church and himself, he had the Bible translated into English.

He was a more learned and far abler man than either St. Francis or St. Dominic. He had supporters in high places and a great following among the people; and though Rome raged against him and ordered his imprisonment, he died a free man, still administering the sacraments as parish priest of Lutterworth.

The black and ancient spirit that was leading the Church to its destruction would not let his bones rest in his grave. By a decree of the Council of Constance, in 1415, his remains were ordered to be

dug up and burnt, an order which was carried out, at the command of Pope Martin V, by Bishop Fleming in 1428. This desecration was not the act of some isolated fanatic; it was the official act of this Church we now indict.

All through four centuries of dwindling prestige, Rome, with a sort of senile obstinacy, persisted in its encroachments upon both the princes and peoples of Christendom, and still it was blind to the vulnerability of its own position in the face of the forces it was provoking against itself. The princes realised more and more clearly the huge proportion of wealth in the Mortmain and the ever-growing tribute they paid without compensation to Rome. They lose their trust in ecclesiastical. statesmen with a foot in either camp; and looked about them for more complaisant ministers. The people mocked at the all too frequent scandals in the convents and monasteries and at the worldliness of the higher ecclesiastics. Rome remained blind to the development of an upper and nether millstone about itself, and still stuck to its ever narrower and ever more exacting claims. The smouldering fire blazed up at last in open rebellion, the Reformation.

The Reformation had a threefold aspect. The Princes' Reformation wanted to stop the flow of money to Rome, and seize the moral authority, the educational power and the material possessions of the Church within their dominions; the Reformation, according to the people, sought to make Christianity a power against the unrighteousness of the rich and powerul; and a movement of Reformation within the Church, of which St. Francis of Assisi was the precursor, sought to restore the unifying virtue of the Church, and, through its virtue, its power.

The Princes had no intention of releasing the judgments of their subjects, more particularly when it took on the quality, as we should now say, of a revolutionary popular socialism.

They sought merely to oust the papal influence and establish national churches dependent upon themselves. As England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, North Germany and Bohemia broke away from the Roman communion, the princes and their ministers showed the utmost solicitude to keep the movement under control. Just as much Reformation as would sever the link with Rome they

permitted. Anything beyond that, any dangerous break towards the primitive teachings of Jesus or the crude direct interpretation of the Bible, they resisted. The Established Church of England is one of the most typical and successful of the resulting compromises, still sacramental and sacerdotal.

The popular Reformation was very different and its spirit and quality varied from country to country. The wide spiritual upheavals of the time were at once more honest, more confused, more enduring, and less immediately successful than the reforms of the princes. Very few religious-spirited men had the daring to break away or the effrontery to confess that they had broken away from all authoritative teaching, and that they were now relying entirely upon their own minds and consciences. That required a very high intellectual courage. The general drift of the common man in this period in Europe was to set up his new acquisition, the Bible, as a counter-authority to the Church. This was the case with the great leader of German Protestantism, Martin Luther (1483-1546).

All over Germany, and, indeed, all over Western Europe, there were now men spelling over the black-letter pages of the newly-translated and printed Bible, over the Book of Leviticus and the Song of Solomon and the Revelation of St. John the Divine — strange and perplexing books — quite as much as over the simple and inspiring record of Jesus in the Gospels. Naturally, they produced grotesque interpretations. It is surprising that they were not stranger and grotesquer. But the bulk of these new Bible students took what their consciences approved from the Bible, squared it to their sense of human right and dignity, and ignored its riddles and contradictions.

The strangest of these outbreaks of social and religious revolt occurred in Germany. It had a certain parallelism with the social and religious outbreak in Western Europe two centuries before. The religious disturbances were releasing men's criticism of social inequality, but now, instead of being illiterate believers in the established Christian story of the world, as they were told it in church, they had a storm of open doctrinal discussion about them and the Bible to puzzle over for themselves. The impulse, as ever, was to assume the entire corruption of the Roman Church, and to revert to a conception of an early Christianity when the faithful had their goods

in common and the only rule for the true believer was the inner light in his conscience under the guidance of God. The Anabaptists (from *Anabaptismo*, which means to re-baptise, because they denied the validity of infant baptism) seized upon the town of Munster and set themselves to establish there a new Kingdom of God upon earth.

The inner light and an indigestion of Bible and speculative theology produced amazing results. Bockhold, a tailor, better known in history as John of Leyden, inspired by dreams and visions, ruled the town. Like Hitler, he was mentally unbalanced and he dominated his associates by his frenzied vehemence. They did not gainsay him, they followed his example. He changed the name of Munster to Zion and declared himself the successor of King David. He restored polygamy, which as a matter of fact never has disappeared from Christendom so far as those who have had the means to practise it are concerned. He himself had four wives, one of whom he beheaded in the market-place with his own hand. For no recorded reason. For a year, says my authority, Munster was "a scene of unbridled profligacy", which means in effect that people did not draw the blinds. Then the town was stormed, and outraged social order tortured John and his leading associates with great ingenuity, finally executing and exposing their mangled bodies. So this German essay in social and religious revolution ended, and the masses were brought to heel. They had gone farther and fared worse than the populace of any other country.

All over Europe, a living and very active residuum of Protestants remained who declined to have their religion made over for them by their princes. They were a medley of sects, having nothing in common but their resistance to authoritative religion, whether of the Pope or of the State. In Germany, after the Anabaptist collapse, popular nonconformity was or the most part stamped out by the princes; in Great Britain dissent remained sober, powerful and various. Many of the differences in the behaviour of the German, and the British peoples may be traceable to the relative suppression of free judgment in Germany at this time.

Most, but not all, of these Nonconformists and Dissenters held to the Bible as a divinely inspired and authoritative guide. This was a strategic rather than an abiding position, and the modern drift of

Nonconformity has been onward away from this original Bibliolatry towards a mitigated and sentimentalised recognition of the bare teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Beyond the range of nonconformity, beyond the range of professed Christianity at all, there was also now a great and growing mass of equalitarian belief and altruistic impulse, which released a smouldering innate sense of justice in the human make-up.

XIIIb. — HOW HENRY VIII BECAME A PROTESTANT PRINCE

THE motives of the princes and the feelings of the masses fluctuated through the period of the Reformation very widely. Personal factors came into play. Henry VIII of England began his reign as a devout Roman Catholic. He wrote against heresy and was rewarded by the Pope with the title of Defender of the Faith. "*Fid. Def.*" is still on the obverse of many British coins. England seemed saved for Rome. Then his attention strayed from his wife Catherine of Aragon to a livelier young woman called Anne Boleyn, and, because the Church would not set aside his marriage and leave him free to marry this new mistress, he went over (carrying England with him) to the Protestant side.

Yet Rome had been very obliging to Henry in the matter of his marriage. Catherine of Aragon was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, the Ferdinand and Isabella of Columbus and the conquest of Granada, and she was married to Arthur, the elder brother of Henry, in 1501. Both bride and bridegroom were then sixteen years old. They were childless, and Prince Arthur died in the following year. But the papal policy, which was then hostile to France, dictated a close association between Spain and England, and, with a complete disregard of its own teachings, the Holy See granted a dispensation to allow her to marry Henry. The dispensation was granted in 1503, but the young prince showed no great appetite for the lady, and the actual union only occurred six years later.

Catherine was plain to look upon, thick-set and irritatingly pious, obstinate and well-educated. During that interval Henry's youthful passions had found an outlet elsewhere, and he had an illegitimate son. Henry, whom he afterwards made Duke of Richmond. Catherine, poor young woman, had a dull time meanwhile. This tepid marriage of policy produced six children all of whom died in infancy or were stillborn, except one daughter, Mary, and popular opinion attributed this to the divine resentment against incest, with which idea Henry was only too disposed to agree, as his weariness with

Catherine increased. He developed conscientious scruples over that papal dispensation and betrayed a disposition to legitimise his bastard the Duke of Richmond, to whom he gave precedence not only over all the peers of the realm but over Catherine's daughter Mary.

Here was a problem which evoked all the intricate insincerity of the Roman system. It had swallowed that dispensation from its own doctrine. Could it now regurgitate?

The great and ingenious Cardinal Wolsey suggested a quiet little suit against the King for incest, to release him from his bonds. There was much coming and going of the perplexed learned, of University doctors and papal legates. A divorce was out of the question if the dispensation and marriage were invalid; then plainly the King was free, and the subsequent negotiations turned upon that point. The more fervently the King wanted his Anne Boleyn, the more convinced he was that he had been living in mortal sin with Catherine. A considerable amount of pride and obstinacy in Catherine's make-up frustrated the Church in its efforts to get her to retire to a nunnery and cease her resistance to the annulment. The Church veered round to her side. Pope Clement issued a brief forbidding the King to make a second marriage and commanding him to restore Catherine's connubial rights. And so Henry broke with Rome and England came down on the Protestant side.

XIV. — THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

THE Reformation had caught the Church of Rome in a state of lax internal discipline, exasperating aggression and intolerance and blindness to the drift of worldly events. But her prestige was still very great, there were multitudes of the perplexed but still obedient Faithful, and the self-seeking princes and influential owners of property felt a deeper menace of popular release and criticism beneath the Reformation.

The Roman Catholic Church, no longer the Catholic Church, woke up to the realities of her position, to the threat of complete destruction at no very distant date unless she organised herself to resist.

The Reformation, the expropriation of the monastic properties and the revolt against the ascendancy of Rome, lasted for less than a century, and then it was overtaken by the Counter Reformation of the alarmed and awakened Roman Church. It was a belated awakening, and its history unfolds the same record, on an intensified scale of confused motives, levity of purpose, obstinate insistence upon freakish doctrinal points, the fear of death that arises from belief in an incalculable future life and in a pitilessly vindictive deity, amenable only to the magic of orthodox formulae, which hitherto had confused and had now split Christendom.

The Counter Reformation fell back upon the ideal of Christendom as an obedient family of nations under the parental guidance of the Pope. In France, where the issue was fought out very typically, the Church directed the reaction to a revival of the tradition of Joan of Arc, the associate of that abominable torturer of children, Gilles de Rais, Marshal of France, and adopted as its symbol and banner the double cross of Lorraine — the banner and symbol to-day of Charles de Gaulle, that strange protege of the British Foreign Office. The Holy League (La Sainte Ligue) organised the Counter-Reformation under that symbol. There was a phase of attempted compromise broken by the Roman Catholics, who murdered a number of Huguenots assembled for divine worship in a barn at Poissy. A fluctuating civil war ensued, Treaties of peace were made when no

peace was possible. Coligny, outstanding Huguenot leader, was assassinated and matters culminated in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve (August 1572).

The initiative for the crime rests with Catherine de Medici. Disquieted by the growing influence of Admiral Coligny, who against her wishes was endeavouring to draw Charles IX into a war with Spain, she resolved to have him murdered. The first attempt failed, however, and Catherine then determined to massacre all the Huguenot leaders. She got Coligny in the general bag. The massacre began on August 24, St. Bartholomew's Day, at daybreak, and continued in Paris till September 17th. From Pans, it spread to the provinces. The Duc de Longueville in Picardy, Chabot-Charny (son of Admiral Chabot) at Dijon, the Comte de Matignon (1525-97) in Normandy and other provincial governors refused to authorise the massacres. Frangois Hotman estimates the number killed in the whole of France at 50,000. Catherine de Medici received the congratulations of all the Catholic powers, and Pope Gregory XIII commanded bonfires to be lighted and a medal to be struck.

A sturdy remnant of Huguenots remained and was able to hold out against the murder policy of the pontiff. He had rejoiced too soon. Sufficient Protestants had survived for an effective rally. Many of them, like Conde and Henry IV of Navarre, escaped that night of murder by a precipitate and quite temporary conversion to Catholicism.

This Henry IV is an outstanding figure in this history, and one very typical of the times. He was of Protestant upbringing and throughout his life his soundly Protestant bias was manifest. He was a wit and a rake and he suffered from, and was evidently greatly entertained by, the temptations natural to an exceptionally "charming" person. When he found the Holy League strongly established in Paris against him, he took the wind out of its intolerant sails by becoming a Catholic himself. "Paris," he jested, "was well worth a Mass." But he saw to it that the Huguenots got something like active protection from another St. Bartholomew's Eve by the Edict of Nantes, and the protective vigilance of his great minister Sully gave the common people roads, canals, industries and a "fowl in the pot" on Sunday for every peasant.

The Edict of Nantes was revoked by King Louis XIV. He was the Most Christian King and eldest son of the Church, ruler not only of the bodies of his subjects but of their souls. He felt himself called upon to establish the unity of the faith and to repel with the hand of orthodoxy all Dissenters, Huguenots, Jansenists and Quietists. The Huguenots had long enjoyed freedom of worship and had prospered conspicuously in th fields of industry, agriculture and commerce. The Compagnie Saint-Sacrament resented these immunities, and through its influence between 1661 and 1685 the Huguenots were exposed to increasingly heavy penalties and successfully excluded from States-General, the diplomatic service, and the municipalities, and deprived of their hospitals, colleges, academies and schools. Fines proving inadequate, soldiers were quartered upon the recalcitrant by Louvois and encouraged to behave with the utmost brutality (the dragonnades) until at last Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes altogether (1685), as being out of date and no longer necessary in a re-unified France, re-unified largely by massacre. There followed on the part of the Huguenots an emigration en masse, to the great benefit of the trade and industries of London.

Still later came the revolt of the Camisards and its savage suppression and a civil war in the Cevennes, which held the Royal Armies in check from 1703 to 1711, at a time when the kingdom was threatened with invasion. So it was that the true Church defended itself, reckless even of the safety of the state which sustained it.

In 1665 one of these Roman Catholic massacres of Protestants was in progress in Savoy. For a considerable period a remnant of the Waldenses had escaped the pious murder storms that were eliminating French Protestantism, under the protection of the Duke of Savoy, but he was so ill advised as to respond to the solicitations of the Church and join in the fun of massacre. He killed a lot, but those who escaped into the mountains sent an appeal to England. England was then in a phase of extreme protestantism under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. A National fast was ordered, #40,000 was collected for the immediate relief of the victims, and immediate hostilities from the sea were threatened. So high had the Protestant regime raised the prestige of the country that the Duke collapsed at once. The occasion was made memorable by Milton,

whose indignant sonnet is one of the greatest in the language. It runs as follows:

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Ev'n them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones,
Forget not: in Thy book record their groans,
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; there from these may grow
A hundredfold, who having learn'd Thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

Milton is one of the strongest figures English Protestantism has ever produced, a combination of colossal learning, religious independence and a passion for outspoken truth and rational action, strange to controversialists upon whatever side in those days of conflict. He had manifest weaknesses. He had so great a regard for his personal appearance that he preferred to go blind rather than wear spectacles. But he could anticipate our modern ideas by such wisdom as this:

"... as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself, kills the image of God as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good. book is the precious life-blood of a master- spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labours of public men, how spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may thus be committed; sometimes a kind of martyrdom; and if it extended to the whole impression, a

kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and soft essence, the breath of reason itself; slays an immortality rather than a life....

"Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unapplicable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn and to illustrate.... Good and evil, we know, in the field of this world, grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resmblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed upon Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixed....

"Lords and Commons of England! consider what nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors; a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious and piercing spirit; acute to invent, subtile and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point that human capacity can soar to....

"Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?..."

That was written nearly three centuries ago. Yet still the obedient Roman Catholic wears his blinkers and the Nazis celebrated their accession to power ten years ago by a great burning of books.

About eighty years before Milton was born, a new wave of zealotry, the development of the Jesuit organisation, the "Society of Jesus", had occurred in Spain and marked a further stage in the moral deterioration of the dying yet obstinately aggressive Roman Church.

XV. — THE JESUITS

THE founder of the Jesuits was a tough and gallant young Spaniard named Inigo Lopez de Recalde of Loyola. Loyola was his place of origin and there, until his vow of poverty, .he had an estate. He was clever and dexterous and inspired by a passion for pluck, hardihood and rather showy glory. His love affairs were frequent, free and picturesque. In 1521 the French took the town of Pampeluna, in Spain, from the Emperor Charles V, and Ignatius was one of the defenders. His legs were smashed by a cannon ball, and he ws taken prisoner. One leg was badly set and had to be broken again, and these painful and complex operations nearly cost him his life. He received the last sacraments. In the night, thereafter, he began to mend, and presently he was convalescent but facing the prospect of a life in which he would perhaps always be a cripple.

His thoughts turned to the adventure of religion. Sometimes he would think of a certain great lady, and how, in spite of his broken state, he might yet win her admiration by some amazing deed; and sometimes he would think of being in some especial and personal way the Knight of Christ. In the midst of these confusions, one night as he lay awake, he tells us, a new great lady claimed his attention; he had a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary carrying the Infant Christ in her arms. "lmmediately a loating seized him for the former deeds of his life." He resolved to give up all further thoughts of earthly women, and to lead a life of absolute chastity and devotion to the Mother of God. He projected great pilgrimages and a monastic life.

His method of taking his vows marks him the countryman of Don Quixote. He had regained his strength, and he was riding out into the world rather aimlessly, a penniless soldier of fortune with little but his arms and the mule on which he rode when he fell in with a Moor. They went on together and talked and presently disputed about religion. The Moor was the better-educated man; he had the best of the argument, he said offensive things about the Virgin Mary that were difficult to answer, and parted triumphantly. The young Knight of Our Lady was boiling with shame and indignation. He hesitated whether he should go after the Moor and kill him or pursue the

pilgrimage he had in mind. At a fork in the road he left things to his mule, which spared the Moor.

He came to the Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat near Manresa, and here he imitated that peerless hero of medireval romance, Amadis de Gaul, and kept an all-night vigil before the Altar of the Blessed Virgin. He presented his mule to the abbey, he gave his worldly clothes to a beggar, laid his sword and dagger upon the altar, and clothed himself in a rough sackcloth garment and hempen shoes. He then took him to a neighbouring hospice and give himself up to scourgings and austerities. For a whole week he fasted absolutely. Thence he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

For some years he wandered, consumed with the idea of founding a new order of religious knighthood, but not knowing how to set about the enterprise. He enlisted other enthusiasts, but like himself they were zealous and indignant young men. At first they even lacked a priest in the company who could officiate for them. Loyola became more and more aware of his own illiteracy, and the Inquisition, which was beginning to take an interest in his proceedings, forbade him to attempt to teach others until he had spent at least four years in study. It seems to have been very doubtful about him.

His idea was essentially an idea of a fighting company; the Church, he realised, was now carrying on a defensive war and needed a fighting force which would fight with the unquestioning obedience of disciplined soldiers and with an the methods of strategy, surprise and camouflage that belligerence involves. Everywhere there was doubt and challenge. A Moor could talk openly in Spain. Luther had burnt a papal bull of excommunication a year or so before. It never entered into Loyola's head that there might be an adequate reason for these denials and repudiation. If such a thought had come to him he would have rejected it with horror. The world was in rebellion against the Faith, and that rebellion has to be stamped out by every means in his power.

Just as for soldiers of the old type the Army is everything, so in the new fighting force the society had to be everything; blind uncritical obedience to orders was the Society's first law, it was a complete surrender of individual thought and judgment, an entire

abandonment of freedom. In a letter to his followers at Coimbra he declared that the general of the order stands in the place of God, without reference to his personal wisdom, piety or discretion; that any obedience which falls short of making the superior's will one's own, in inward affection as well as in outward effect, is lax and imperfect; that going beyond the letter of command, even in things abstractly good and ptaiseworthy, is disobedience, and that the "sacrifice of the intellect" is the third and greatest grade of obedience, well pleasing to God, when the inferior not only wills what the superior wills, but thinks what he thinks, submitting to his judgment, so far as it is possible for the will to influence and lead.

The formula of the final Jesuit vow, after a series of preparatory stages extending over years, runs as follows: "I promise to Almighty God, before His Virgin Mother and the whole heavenly host, and to all standing by; and to thee, Reverend Father General of the Society of Jesus, holding the place of God, and to thy successors, Perpetual Poverty, Chastity and Obedience; and according to it a peculiar care in the education of boys according to the form contained in the Apostolic Letters of the Society of Jesus and in its Constitution."

Ignatius himself laid down thy role that an inferior was bound to make all necessary representations to his superior so as to guide him in imposing a precept of obedience. When a superior knows the views, of his inferior and still commands, it is because he is aware of other sides of the question which appear of greater importance than those that the inferior has brought forward. The Jesuits were to find their principal work in the world and in direct and immediate contact with mankind. To seek spiritual perfection in retired life of contemplation and prayer did not seem to Ignatius to be the best way of reforming the evils which had brought about the revolt from Rome. He with drew his followers from this sort of retirement, except as a mere temporary preparation for later activity; he made habitual intercourse with the world a prime duty; and to this end he rigidly suppressed all such external peculiarities of dress or rule as tended to put obstacles in the way of his followers acting freely as emissaries, agents or missionaries in the most various places and circumstances. The Jesuit had no home; the whole world was his parish. Mobility and cosmopolitanism were of the very essence of

the Society.

Their work had to be propaganda; teaching and the insinuation by every possible means of the authority and policy of the Church. Their teaching work was indisputably good for the times. As the Encyclopaedia Britannica puts it: "At a time when primary or even secondary education had in most places become a mere effete and pedantic adherence to obsolete methods, they were bold enough to innovate, both in system and, material. They not merely taught and catechised in a new, fresh and attractive manner, besides establishing free schools of good quality, but provided new school books for their pupils which were an enormous advance on those they found in use; so that for nearly three centuries the Jesuits were accounted the best schoolmasters in Europe, as they confessedly were in France until their forcible suppression in 1901. Francis Bacon succinctly gives his opinion of the Jesuit teaching in these words: 'As for the pedagogical part, the shortest rule would be, Consult the schools of the Jesuits; for nothing better has been put in practice.' *De Aug mentis*, vi. 4.

"Again, when most of the continental clergy had sunk more or less, into the moral and intellectual slough which is pictured for us in the writings of Erasmus and the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* the Jesuits won back respect for the clerical calling by their personal culture and the unimpeachable purity of their lives. These qualities they have carefully maintained; and probably no large body of men in the world has kept up, on the whole, an equally high average of intelligene an conduct... It is in the mission field, however, that their achievements have been most remarkable. Whether toiling among the teemmg millions in Hindustan and China, labouring among the Hurons and Iroquois of North America, governing and civilising the natives of Brazil and Paraguay in the missions and 'reductions', or ministering, at the hourly risk of his life, to his feIlow Catholics in England under Elizabeth and the Stuarts, the Jesuit appears alike devoted, indefatigable, cheerful and worthy of hearty admiration and respect."

Unfortunately for the world the Jesuits have never been able to keep clear of politics. It was against their written professions, if these are, to be taken seriously, but it was manifestly among their inevitable temptations. They had their share, direct or indirect, in

embroiling states, concocting conspiracies and kindling wars. They had a large share in fanning the flames of political hatred against the Huguenots under the last two Valois kings; they plotted obstinately against England in thereign of Elizabeth; their share in the Thirty Years' War and in the religious miseries of Bohemia is indisputable. Their influence in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the expulsion of the Protestants from France is manifest. The ruin of the Stuart cause under James II, and the establishment of the Protestant succession was due largely to their clumsy meddling. In a number of cases where the evidence against them is defective, it is at least an unfortunate coincidence that there is always direct proof of some Jesuit having been in communication with the actual agents engaged.

Gradually the reputation of the Jesuit as a dangerous zealot with an inordinate appetite for power increased. In France the Jesuits joined if they did not originate the league against Henry of Navarre; absolution was refused by them to those who would not join in the Guise rebellion. The assassination of Henry III in the interests of the league and the wounding of Henry IV in 1594 by Chastel, a pupil of theirs, revealed the quality of their disposition. In England the political schemings of Parsons were no small factors in the odium which fell on the Society at large; and his determination to capture the English Catholics as an appanage of the Society was an object lesson to the rest of Europe of a restless ambition and lust of domination which were to find many imitators. A general congregation of the Society in 1594 passed a decree forbidding its members to participate in public affairs; a decree there was evidently no disposition to enforce. Parsons was allowed to keep on with his work, and other Jesuits in France for many years directed affairs of state. In 1605 took place in England the Gunpowder Plot, in which Henry Garnet, the supenor of the Society in England, was implicated. That the

Jesuits were the direct instigators of the plot there is no evidence but they were in close touch with the conspirators, of whose designs Garnet had a general knowledge. There is now no reasonable doubt that he and other Jesuits were legally accessories, and that the condemnation of Garnet as a traitor was substantially just.

Their hostility to the Huguenots forced on the Revocation of the

Edict of Nantes in 1685, and their war against their Jansenist opponents did not cease till the very walls of Port Royal were demolished in 1710, even to tbe very abbey church itself, and the bodies of the dead taken with every mark of insult from their graves and literally flung to the dogs to devour. Their Japanese mission vanished in blood in 1651; and though many Jesuits died with their converts bravely as martyrs for the Faith, it is impossible to acquit them of extreme political provocation.

We need not expand this, indictment further. Almost every country in Europe except England had at one time or another been provoked to expel the Jesuits, and, as we shall show presently, their obdurate persistence in evil- doing continues to this day. They are to-day the most active front of the Roman Catholic residuum.

XVI. — THE CONTINUAL SHRINKAGE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

FOR it is now only a residuum. The number of practising Roman Catholics is enormously exaggerated. Steadily throughout this black record of its aggressive intolerance, the Roman Catholic Church has exuded and persecuted vitality and contracted into the actively malignant and still dwindling body it is to-day. Joseph McCabe has made a vigorous examination of its numerical claims.

McCabe is one of the most able and interesting and learned of all anti- Catholic writers, and, like all the most thorough-going reformers in the past, he sprang from the bosom of the Church. He began life with a soundly Roman Catholic up-bringing; he was born in 1867. he was a Franciscan monk at sixteen, a priest at twenty-three, Professor of Scholastic Philosophy for four years, and then Rector of Buckingham College. His clerical tide, which he has ceased to use, is the Very Reverend Father Antony. He broke away from the Church in 1896 and he married three years later. One might describe him as the ultimate Protestant, that is to say he has no scrap of religious belief left in him; he has long since realised that whatever Being may sustain this universe it can have nothing in common with the vain and vindictive Bogy which priestcraft has elaborated to scare and subjugate mankind. He writes with an erudition and an amount of knowledge that put him by himself as the most capable critic the papal system has ever had. I shall venture to cite his extremely disrespectful account of a Roman Conclave later in this chapter. But first I will avail myself of a little tract of his on the Black International (Second Series, No. 13), to sustain my statement of the shrinkage of the Roman remnant of Christendom.

The number of Roman Catholics in the world claimed by Catholic authorities, he points out, varies astonishingly. A Catholic expert in the new Encyclopaedia Americana gives 294,583,000, the (British) Catholic Directory gives 398,277,000. “Every priest,” says McCabet “makes an annual report to his bishops — I have assisted in this job — and these reports provide national totals which are forwarded to

Rome. Two things, amongst others, are reported: how many Catholics in the loose sense — i.e. baptised persons — there are in the parish and, particularly, how many of them are real Catholics as testified by attendance at Church on Sundays and the number of confessions at Easter. But neither local prelates nor the Vatican ever publish these results. The nearest approach to an official international annual is Orbis Catholicus, and it gives no world-total; though if you add up the statements for each country the total runs to about 350,000,000.

"The sum-total is usually compiled by an entirely dishonest method, but even professors of sociology who include the Churches as socially valuable agencies never condemn this. Countries which, from geographical or historical conditions, never accepted tbe Reformation are still called Catholic countries, and the whole population is usually included in the Catholic total or only from 1 to 5 per cent. is allowed for Protestants, Jews, and — though they generally form the largest body — sceptics. These countries (France and its colonies, Italy, Spain and its former colonies, Portugal and its colonies Spanish America, and generally Austria) with a total population of more than 200,000,000 make the bulk of the Catholic figure. For other countnes the figures are equally fantastic. The Catholic writer in the Encyclopaedia Americana gives 11,000,000 to Russia where no Catholic claims more than 3,000,000 and there are now certainly not 300,000; 39,000,000 to Austria and Hungary, which have had for a quarter of a century a total (mixed) population of only 15,000,000: 24,000,000 to Germany where the Church is in ruins: 35,000,000 to France; which is at least five times too much.

"In examining these figures we must clearly undersstand the conditions. What is a Catholic or a member of the Roman Church? The Canon Law is simple and peremptory: everybody who once received Catholic baptism' (McCabe, inter alia!). "American Catholic writers are uneasy about this arrogant theory of their Church that you cannot secede from it, and they are shifty and evasive in defining what they mean when they claim that there are more than 20,000,000 Catholics in the United States. In a fantastic — Catholics call it a scientific — work, Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith? (1925), Fr. G. Shaugnessy says that by Catholic he means one who

has received Catholic baptism, marries in the Church and has his children baptised, and at death receives the last sacraments. He at once admits that the third condition is 'rather theoretical' — he is perfectly aware that it is not taken into account — and he ought to know, and probably does know, that Irish, Italian and other Catholics commonly marry in the Church and allow the mothers or relatives to have — the children baptised though they have definitely abandoned it, From questions given in Moore's Will America become Catholic? (1931) it appears that in Catholic periodicals Fr. Shaugnessy, a professor at a Catholic college, is accustomed to give the usual definition of a Catholic: one who was baptised in infancy. This is the strict law of the Church, and it is the guiding principle of the priests who compile the parochial statistics from which the national and world-totals are compiled."

I will not go on with McCabe's contemptuous analysis. He emerges with a possible maximum of 180 million Catholics, including a large proportion of children (50 millions) and illiterates, probably 100 millions, in the whole world population of 2,000 millions. The Pope, he says, certainly has not more than 50 million subjects upon this planet who can write their own names. And all over the world where statistics are still available, the number of Catholic criminals and prostitutes is out of all proportion to their numbers in the general population.

The Very Reverend Father Antony writes with a ruthless confidence in his knowledge that I cannot emulate.

"His well-known *History of the Popes* (Watts & Co., 1939) is a classic which every student of religious history must study, but when it comes to controversy a certain restraint falls from him, and so, since I wish to make this book as unaggressive as possible, I will quote only one other of his more controversial (Black International Tracts, Second Series, No. 11)."

"Three times," says he, "since 1900, the voters have put at the head of their Church (a world-wide business with an income of hundreds of millions of dollars a year at its central office alone) a man who would have failed to run a $3,000 store. I have just read fifteen Catholic books — British, French, Italian and German — on them and I ought to know them....

“Let us consider the Papal election (Conclave) in itself... . The theory you probably know. Sixty or seventy cardinals elect the Pope. They are locked and carpentered in a special part of the Vatican palace, where each now has a suite of rooms — in the old days when they were all locked in a chapel day and night for weeks the odour was not one of sanctity — until one of the rival candidates gets two-thirds of the votes. There is much praying to the Holy Ghost for guidance, but they still have to be locked in and watched lest they also consult profane persons outside....

“In practice the Conclave is much more human than the theory. Ever since the Church of Rome became rich in the fourth century there has been a spirited struggle for the control of the treasury. As early as 366 more than 160 of the supporters of the rival candidates had to be buried, and as late as 1492 the ‘butcher’s bill’ was more than 200. The struggle is now more refined; though when the Pope says his first Mass he still has nobles at hand to take the first sip of the wine and see that it has not been poisoned.

“A feverish intrigue warms Rome before a Pope’s death. Broadly there are two schools of cardinals: the ‘zealots’ — think of the hairy hill-men of Kentucky who roar out the hymn ‘Old-Fashioned Religion’-and the ‘politicals’ or practical men. There are generally four or five cardinals who fancy their chances and carry the bets of the Romans, and they canvass the voters of the rival schools and let it be known that they are grateful to supporters. Each party selects one champion, and they enter the Conclave with the Holy Ghost on their lips and the name of a candidate in their pockets... .

“They pray and talk for an hour or two and then take a vote (written). The two favourites are bound to have; perhaps, a third of the votes each, and the nibbling at each other’s parties and the neutrals begins. There is still generally a deadlock and they turn to the string of ‘also ran’. A few colourless outsiders are tried until one gets the two-thirds vote. He is generally advanced in age or an invalid, so that the struggle may be resumed in a few years. The lucky man who at last gets the required majority murmurs ‘I am not worthy’ and — because a Pope was once taken seriously when he said this — makes for the pontifical robes, which are waiting (in three sizes). Then they take him out on the balcony to show to the

public. The historical record of these Conclaves by Petrucelli, della Gattina beats the history of Tammany for clean fun.

"An Italian Catholic priest, G. Berthelet (*Storia e Rivilazioni sul Conclave*, 1904) says of the election of the 'great' Leo XIII:

"'If Pius IX had foreseen the election of Leo XIII he would have excommunicated him, but if Leo XIII had foreseen that at his death the cardinals would vote for Giuseppe Sarto, he would have excommunicated the lot of them.'

"Sarto, Archbishop of Venice, was a good old man of peasant origin. His sister kept the village pub. He loved to talk broad Venetian with a countryman and shock the more starchy cardinals. But what else could the poor voters do? For years Cardinal Rampolla, the ablest of them, a lean black- visaged lynx-eyed schemer like the present Pope, had worked for the position. The candidate of the zealots was Gatti... As that very sober and weighty French newspaper *Le Temps* said in its account of this Conclave: 'The Holy Ghost was clearly making for the French candidate (Rampolla) but the Triplice (Triple Alliance) headed him off....'

Such is the "Catholic atmosphere" in Rome to-day, and such is the present phase of the disintegration of the Christendom of our ancestors. Even in comparison with Fascism and the Nazi adventure Roman Catholicism is a broken and utterly desperate thing, capable only of malignant mischief in our awakening world. The Pope is now only the head of about fifty millions of semi- literates scattered about the planet, trailing after them a blind entirely ignorant multitude of "Faithful"; a following of ignorant men, women and children that does not exceed at the outside 120 millions all told.

With that the Pope sets himself to hold back and frustrate the secular modernisation of the world.

XVII. — THE STRUGGLE FOR BRITAIN

THE scheme of this analysis of Roman Catholicism would be incomplete without a few notes to remind the reader of the curious conflict that has been waged from the Reformation onward by the Roman Catholic Church in order to recover its ascendancy over Britain.

None of the British mixture of peoples ‘can be described as passionately religious. None of them indeed seem to be passionate in any respect. They have as little liking and sympathy for the *crime passionel* as they have for the wild-eyed devotee in a manifest hair shirt. One can write a sort of cento of their pet phrases. Their weakness and their greatest danger at the present time is their disposition to be “reasonable’ to let bygones be bygones, not to cry over spilt milk, to live and let live, and believe that all other people in the world have a similarly reasonable equable temperament. They will fight for points, “play the game”, and they have to be smacked good and hard and spat upon and generally insulted before they can be induced to fight all out. They are rather pleased to lose every battle but the last, “muddle through” and then make a “good humoured” settlement that loses the peace. They are bad allies for weaker peoples because of these trustful settlements they will make. Leave them alone, don’t rouse them, and you may steal the keys of the safe. Many Englishmen think it is bad form to count their change, and they detest cash registers. But when they realise they have been cheated and have got something they didn’t bargain for, they may explode dangerously.

Maybe it is the Gulf Stream or something geographical that makes them like this, maybe it is the fact that living, so to speak, at the end of Europe, so that for centuries, until America came into the world, every sort o.f man came to England and nobody wet away, they are o so mixed a strain that they believe nothing decidedly. Compromise and lack of emphasis is in their nature.

If I wanted to brag about the English people; if I were briefed for that purpose and had no way of evading so uncongenial a task, I should certainly associate this disposition to indifference in religious

and social dogmas with the very exceptional share they have had in the inspiration and early organisation of scientific research.

They are disposed to put a note of interrogation to every positive assertion, because they have a profound sense of the present imperfections of language and every sort of symbol and statement. They feel that things may be so to a certain extent and yet not quite so. They realise that our minds are at their best extremely imperfect implements. Continually we seem to be approaching truth, but every actuality we conquer opens up fresh questions. This approach to truth goes on unendingly, and every generation has its achievements and its fresh stimulus to further growth. That is not simply the disposition of the scientifically trained Englishman; it corresponds to something like an instinct in the common sort of people. They detest all precise and binding and conclusive statement; they feel something wrong about it, and they despise dogmatic enthusiasm. They invented the word "humbug" and they are far less patriotic than the naturalised alien. When they are vigorous they are insubordinate and derisive, and when they are devitalised they are apathetic and unconvinced.

Equable. So the British are now and so they have always been. I have noted how England became Protestant. Would she have remained Catholic but for Anne Boleyn? That is not so certain. Protestantism leaves' them at their ease in many ways, but, as we have seen throughout this study, the Papacy has never been able to refrain from provocation. It has never let Anglo-Saxons sleep. By its very nature it has to encroach until some sort of explosion occurs..

We have given a brief account of heresies in Chapter IV. The British have never started an aggressive heresy. But they have resented being pushed about. They have jeered at and criticised the pretensions of the Church, they have questioned and questioned that, destructively, but they have never begun the struggle. The Church made a dogma of Transubstantiation.

Wycliffe put a query against it that split the Church in twain, but he remained in the Church to his death. The majority of the Canterbury Pilgrims, as we have noted in Chapter XIIIa, are easy-going mockers. You cannot tell whether that composite person, Shakespeare, was a Catholic or a Protestant or, like his Macbeth, an out-and-out atheist. All three went to the making of him. The official

English Reformation ended in that remarkable compromise, the Established Church and the Thirty-nine Articles, which was just Catholic enough to give the Papacy and the Jesuits hope for quiet reinstatement. Then, just as the handcuffs were on again and the gag nearly fixed, came the inevitable awakening and explosion.

The history of England since the Reformation could be written as a recurrent and generally combined attack of the Roman Catholic Church and the totalitarian state (of which perhaps Hobbes' Leviathan is the completest expression and the Divine Right of Kings the political claim) upon the common- sense agnosticism and individualism of the English people. Always it is the same story of a renewed assault, apparent success and then explosion.

In the phase of Puritanism that followed the passing of the Elizabethans we find the English in an unsuspicious phase, leading the lives they were disposed to live, and feeling no threat to their way of life. In J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People*, we find a portrait sketch of Colonel Hutchinson, one of, the Regicides, which I will quote with a few abridgments.

"With the close of the Elizabethan age, indeed, the intellectual freedom which had marked it faded insensibly away: the bold philosophical speculations which Sidney had caught from Bruno, and which had brought on Marlowe and Raleigh the charge of atheism, died, like her own religious indifference, with the Queen. But the lighter and more elegant sides of the Elizabethan culture harmonised well enough with the temper of the Puritan gentleman.

"The figure of Colonel Hutchinson, one of the Regicides, stands out from his wife's canvas with the grace and coding of a portrait by Vandyck. She dwells on the personal beauty which distinguished his youth, on 'his teeth even and white as the purest ivory', 'his hair of brown, very thickset in his youth, softer than the finest silk, cuding with great loose rings at the ends.' Serious as was his temper in graver matters, the young squire of Owthorpe was fond of hawking, and piqued himself on his skill in dancing and. fence. His artistic taste showed itself in a critical love of painting, sculpture and all liberal arts' as well as in the pleasure he took in his gardens, in planting groves and walks and forest trees.'

"His life was orderly and methodical, sparing of diet and of self-

indulgence; he rose early, he never was at any time idle, and hated to see anyone else so'. The new sobriety and self-restraint marked itself even in his change of dress. The gorgeous colours and Jewels of the Renascence disappeared. Colonel Hutchinson 'left off very early the wearing of anything that was costly, yet in his plainest negligent habit appeared very much a gentleman'.

"The loss of colour and variety in life was compensated by solid gains. Greatest among these was the new conception of social equality. Their common brotherhood in Christ annihilated that overpowering sense of social distinctions which characterised the age of Elizabeth. The proudest noble recognised a spiritual equality in the poorest 'saint'. It was felt even more in the new dignity and self-respect with which the consciousness of their 'calling' invested the classes beneath the rank of the gentry....

"It is in a Puritan of the middle class that we find the fullest and noblest expression of the new influence which was leavening the temper of the time. John Milton is not only the highest, but the completest type of Puritanism. He was born when it began to exercise a direct power over English politics and English religion; he died when its effort to mould them into its own shape was over, and it had sunk again into one of the many influences to which we owe our English character. His earlier verse, the pamphlets of his riper years, the epics of his age, mark with a singular precision three great stages in his history. His youth shows that much of the gaiety, the poetic ease, the intellectual culture of the Renascence lingered in a Puritan home. Scrivener and 'precisian' as his father was, he was a skilled musician; and the boy inherited his father's skill on lute and organ....

"In spite of the war between playwright and precisian, a Puritan youth in Milton's days could still avow his love of the stage, 'if Jonson's learned sock be on, or sweetest ,Shakespeare, Fancy's child, warble his native woodnotes wild'. He could gather from the 'masques and antique pageantry' of the courtrevel hints for his own Comus and Arcades. Nor does any shadow of the coming struggle against the Church disturb the young scholar's reverie, as he wanders beneath 'the high embowed roof, with antique pillars massy proof, and storied windows richly dight, casting a dim religious light', or as

he hears ‘the pealing organ blow to the full-voiced choir below, in service high and anthem clear’. His enjoyment of the gaiety of life stands in bright contrast with the gloom and sternness which strife and persecution fostered in the later Puritanism. In spite of what he described as ‘a certain reservedness of natural disposition’ which shrank from ‘festivities and jests, in which I acknowledge my faculty to be very slight the young singer could still enjoy the ‘jest and youthful jollity’ of the world around him, its ‘quips and cranks and wanton wiles’; he could look pleasantly on ‘at the village fair, ‘where the jocund rebecks sound to many a youth and many a maid, dancing in the chequered shade.’

“There was nothing ascetic in his look, in his slender, vigorous frame, his face full of a delicate yet serious beauty, the rich brown hair which clustered over his brow.... He drank in an ideal chivalry from Spenser, but his religion and purity disdained the outer pledge on which chivalry built up its fabric of honour. ‘Every free and gentle spirit,’ said Milton, ‘without that oath, ought to be a knight’. It was with this temper that he passed from his London school, St. Paul’s, to Christ’s College at Cambridge, and it was this temper that he preserved throughout his University career.”

But we have already drawn very generously upon Milton in this book. Even before the death of Queen Elizabeth Papal aggression was already provoking anger in the country.

“Single-handed, unsupported by any of the statesmen or divines about her, the Queen had forced on the warring religions a sort of armed truce. The main principles of the Reformation were accepted, but the zeal of the ultra- reformers was held at bay. The Bible was left open, private discussion was unrestrained, but the warfare of pulpit against pulpit was silenced by the licensing of preachers. Outer conformity, attendance at the common prayer, was exacted from all; but the changes in ritual, by which the zealots of Geneva gave prominence to the radical features of the religious change which was passing over the country, were resisted. While England was struggling for existence, this balanced attitude of the Crown reflected faithfully enough the balanced attitude of the nation; but with the declaration of war by the Papacy in the Bull of Deposition the movement in favour of a more pronounced Protestantism gathered a

new strength. Unhappily the Queen clung obstinately to her system of compromise, weakened and broken as it was. With the religious enthusiasm which was growing up around her she had no sympathy whatever. Her passion was for moderation, her aim was simply civil order; and both order and moderation were threatened by the knot of clerical bigots who gathered under the banner of Presbyterianism. Bigotry was rousing counter- bigotry. Of these bigots of the left Thomas Cartwright was the chief. He had studied at Geneva; he returned with a fanatical faith in Calvinism, and in the system of Church government which Calvin had devised; and as Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge he used to the full the opportunities which his chair gave him of propagating his opinions. No leader of a religious party ever deserved less of after sympathy than Cartwright. He was unquestionably learned and devout, but his disposition was that of a mediaeval inquisitor. The relics of the old ritual, the cross in baptism, the surplice, the giving of a ring in marriage, were to him not merely distasteful, as they were to the Puritans at large, they were idolatrous and the mark of the beast."

Cartwright cut no ice, as the saying goes, with the English people. The spirit of Calvinistic Presbyterianism excluded all toleration of practice or belief.

As Milton, most modern-spirited of Protestants, put it:

"New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large."

"To the ordinary English Protestant," says J. R. Green, "no innovation in faith or worship was of small account, if it tended in the direction of Rome. The peril was too great to admit of tolerance or moderation....

"We see the Puritan temper already in the Millenary Petition (as it was called), which was presented to James the First on his accession by some eight hundred clergymen, about one-tenth of the whole number in his realm. It asked for no change in the government or organisation of the Church, but for a reform of its courts, the removal of superstitious usages from the Book of Common Prayer, the disuse of lessons from the apocryphal books of Scripture, a more rigorous observance of Sundays, and the provision and training of preaching ministers. Even statesmen who had little sympathy with the religious spirit about them pleaded for the purchase of religious and national

union by ecclesiastical reforms. ‘Why,’ asked Francis Bacon, ‘should the civil state be purged and restored by good and wholesome laws made every three years in Parliament assembled, devising remedies as fast as time breedeth mischief, and contrariwise the ecclesiastical state still continue upon the dregs of time, and receive no alteration these forty-five years or more?’ A general expectation, in fact, prevailed that, now the Queen’s opposition was removed, something would be done. Unhappily her successor proved equally resolute against all changes in Church matters.

“No sovereign could have jarred more utterly against the conception of an English ruler which had grown up under Plantagenet or Tudor than James the First. His big head, his slobbering tongue, his quilted clothes, his rickety legs, stood out in as grotesque a contrast with all that men recalled of Henry or Elizabeth as his rhodomontade, as his want of personal dignity, his buffoonery, his coarseness of speech, his pedantry and cowardice. Underneath this ridiculous exterior, however, lay much natural ability, a scholar with a considerable fund of shrewdness, mother-wit and ready repartee. His reading, especially in theological matters, was extensive; and he was a voluminous author on subjects which ranged from predestination to tobacco. But his shrewdness and learning only left him, in the phrase of Henry the Fourth, ‘the wisest fool in Christendom’. He had the temper of a pedant, a pedant’s conceit, a pedant’s love of theories, and a pedant’s inability to bring his theories into any relation with actual facts. All might have gone well had he confined himself to speculations about witchcraft, about predestination, about the noxiousness of smoking.

“Unhappily for England and for his successor, he clung yet more passionately to theories of government which contained within them the seeds of a death-struggle between his people and the Crown. Even before his accession to the English throne, he had formulated his theory of rule in a work on The True Law of Free Monarchy; and announced that, ‘although a good King will frame his actions to be according to law, yet he is not bound thereto, but of his own will and for example-giving to his subjects’. With the Tudor statesmen who used the phrase, ‘an absolute King’ or ‘an absolute Monarchy’ meant a sovereign or rule complete in themselves, and independent of all

foreign or Papal interference. James chose to regard the words as implying the monarch's freedom from all control by law or from responsibility to anything but his own royal will.

"The King's theory was soon as the Divine Right of Kings to become a doctrine which bishops preached from the pulpit Convocation in its book of Canons denounced as a fatal error the assertion that 'all civil power, jurisdiction and authority were first derived from the people and disordered multitude and either is originally still in them or else is deduced by their consent naturally from them; and is not God's ordinance originally descending upon Him and depending upon Him'.

"Cowell, a civilian followed up the discoveries of Convocation by an announcement that 'the King is above the law by his absolute power, and that 'notwithstanding his oath he may alter and suspend any particular law that seemeth hurtful to the public estate'. The book was suppressed on the remonstrance of the House of Commons, but the party of passive obedience grew fast. A few years before the death of James; the University of Oxford decreed solemnly that 'it was in no case lawful for subjects to make use of force against their princes, or to appear offensively or defensively in the field against them.' 'As it is atheism and blasphemy to dispute what God can do' said James in a speech delivered in the Star Chamber, 'so it is presumption and a high contempt in a subject to dispute what a King can do, or to say that a King cannot do this or that.'"

Among the King's most ardent supporters and intellectual associates was John Donne the poet who began his career as an amorist of the most brilliant type and commemorated it in deathless verse fell deeply in love, eloped and became a faithful husband had twelve annual children of whom he buried five and when his wife died under the strain devoted himself to ill-health and his poetical gift. The King found Donne's erudition greater than his own and his belief in Divine Right very sustaining. James persuaded him to take Holy Orders which he had hitherto declined, and made him Dean of St. Paul's, the first of a long series of distinguished Deans. Whether Donne preferred his Majesty to his Maker is by no means clear. Donne killed himself when in the worst of health by insisting upon

making his personal attendance upon his Royal Master and preaching this customary Lenten sermon.

The peculiar temperamental perversion that handed over Donne's worshipful monarch to a series of youthful male "favourites", of which the Duke of Buckingham was the chief, and the attempts to marry the Prince of Wales to a Spanish Catholic Princess, intensified the general uneasiness. There is no need to detail the "romantic" visit of Buckingham and Prince Charles to Madrid. That adventure ended in failure. The return of the Prince "was the signal for a burst of national joy. All London was alight with bonfires, in her joy at the failure of the Spanish match, and of the collapse, humiliating as it was, of the policy which had so long trailed English honour at the chariotwheels of Spain."

There followed an understanding with France and the marriage of Charles I (who had succeeded to the throne) to Henrietta, the sister of the French King.

"It was suspected, and suspicion was soon to be changed into certainty, that in spite of his pledge to make no religious concessions, Charles had promised on his marriage to relax the penal laws against Catholics, and that a foreign power had again been given the right of intermeddling in the civil affairs of the realm. It was men with Catholic leanings whom Charles seemed disposed to favour. Bishop Laud was recognised as the centre of that varied opposition to Puritanism, whose members were loosely grouped under the name of Arminians; and Laud became the King's adviser in ecclesiastical matters. With Laud at its head the new party grew in boldness as well as numbers. It naturally sought shelter for its religious opinions by exalting the power of the Crown. A court favourite, Montague, ventured to slight the Reformed Churches of the continent in favour of the Church of Rome, and to advocate as the faith of the Church the very doctrines rejected by the Calvinists. The temper of the Commons on religious matters was clear to every observer. 'Whatever mention does break forth of the fears or dangers in religion, and the increase of Popery,' wrote a member who was noting the proceedings of the House, 'their affections are much stirred.'"

Buckingham was murdered in 1628, amidst regrettable rejoicings

on the part of the London mob, Laud became Bishop of London in the same year, and the Puritan emigration which laid the foundation of New England became an organised movement. (The *Mayflower* had sailed from Holland in 1620.)

All through the reign of Charles I, the encroachments of monarchical absolutism and of both Roman and Anglican Catholicism continued, and at every challenge the hostility of the mass of English people to these encroachments was manifest. When, after the failure of a reactionary Army Plot Charles I, to save his own skin, betrayed his chief supporter, Strafford the whole country rejoiced.

"Strafford died as he had lived. His friends warned him of the vast multitude gathered before the Tower to witness his fall. 'I know how to look death in the face, and the people too,' he answered proudly. 'I thank God I am no more afraid of death, but as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed.' As the axe fell, the silence of the great multitude was broken by a universal shout of joy. The streets blazed with bonfires. The bells clashed out from every steeple. 'Many,' says an observer, 'that came to town to see the execution rode in triumph back, waving their hats, and with all expressions of joy through every town they went, crying "His head is off! His head is off!"'"

Strafford had prepared an army to support the King in Ireland. Now that army was headless.

"The disbanded soldiers he had raised spread over the country, and stirred the smouldering disaffection into a flame. A conspiracy, organised with wonderful power and secrecy, burst forth in Ulster, where the confiscation of the Settlement had never been forgiven, and spread like wildfire over the centre and west of the island. Dublin was saved by a mere chance. In the open country the work of murder went on unchecked. Thousands of English people perished, and rumour doubled and trebled the number. Tales of horror and outrage came day after day over the Irish Channel. Sworn depositions told how husbands were cut to pieces in presence of their wives, their children's brains dashed out before their faces, their daughters brutally violated and driven out naked to perish frozen in the woods.

"'Some,' says May, 'were burned on set purpose, others drowned

for sport or pastime, and if they swam kept from landing with poles, or shot, or murdered in the water many were buried quick, and some set into the earth breast-high ,and there left to famish.' The revolt was unlike any earlier rising in its religious character. No longer was it a struggle, as of old, of Celt against Saxon, but of Catholic against Protestant. The Papists within the Pale joined hands in it with the wilderness outside the Pale...."

So the story runs on. The Civil War was fought to a finish and Charles being a shameless cheat and lIar was finally beheaded for a hitherto unheard-of crime, treason to the people. Then came the Restoration and a phase of uncertain loyalty until fresh Jesuit activities roused the popular distrust again. There was a real plot, but also there was a bogus plot invented by a scoundrel, Titus Oates. This "Popish Plot", mingling reality and imagination, produced the usual response from the populace. It became manifest that James, Duke of York, the King's brother and successor, was involved in a projected restoration of the papal rule in England.

Never had the French alliance seemed so full of danger to English irreligion. Europe had long been trembling at the ambition of Louis XIV; it was trembling now at his bigotry. He declared war at this moment upon religious freedom by revoking the Edict of Nantes, the measure by which Henry the Fourth after his abandonment of Protestantism secured toleration and the free exercise of their worship for his Protestant subjects. It had been respected by Richelieu even in his victory over the Huguenots, and only lightly tampered with by Mazarin. But from the beginning of his reign. Louis had resolved to set aside its provisions, and his revocation of it in 1685 was only the natural close of a progressive system of persecution. The Revocation was followed by outrages more cruel than even the bloodshed of Alva. Dragoons were quartered on Protestant families and given the utmost freedom of outrage, women were flung from their sick-beds into the streets, children were torn from their mothers' arms to be brought up in Catholicism, ministers were sent to the galleys.

In spite of the royal edicts, which forbade emigration to the victims of these horrible atrocities, a hundred thousand Protestants fled over the borders, and Holland, Switzerland, the Palatinate, were

filled with French exiles. Thousands found refuge in England, and their industry founded in the fields east of London the silk trade of Spitalfields. But while the English people beheld these events with horror, James drew from them new hopes. In defiance of the law, he filled fresh regiments with Catholic officers. He met the Parliament with a haughty declaration that whether legal or no his grant of commissions to Catholics must not be questioned, and with a demand for supplies for his new troops. Loyal as was the temper of the Houses, their alarm for the Reformed Religion and their dread of a standing army was yet stronger than their loyalty. The Commons, by a majority of a single vote, deferred the grant of supplies until grievances were redressed, and demanded in I their address the recall of the illegal commissions. The Lords took a bolder tone; and the protest of the bishops against any infringement of the Test Act was backed by the eloquence of Halifax. Both Houses were at once prorogued. An ambassador, the Earl of Castlemaine, was sent to implore the Pope's blessing on these proceedings.

"Catholics were admitted into civil and military offices without stint, and four Catholic peers were sworn as members of the Privy Council. The laws which forbade the presence of Catholic priests in the realm, or the open exercise of Catholic worship, were set at nought. A gorgeous chapel was opened in the palace of St. James for the use of the King. Carmelites, Benedictines, Franciscans appeared in their religious garb in the streets of London, and the Jesuits set up a crowded school in the Savoy."

The manifest popular "discontent at these acts would have startled a wiser man into prudence, but James prided himself on an obstinacy which never gave way; and a riot which took place on the opening of a fresh Catholic chapel in the City was followed by the establishment of a camp of thirteen thousand men at Hounslow to overawe the capital.

"James clung to the hope of finding a compliant Parliament, from which he might win a repeal of the Test Act. In face of the dogged opposition of the country the elections had been adjourned; and a renewed Declaration of Indulgence was intended as an appeal to the nation at large. At its close he promised to summon a Parliament in November, and he called on the electors to choose such members as

would bring to a successful end the policy he had begun. It was in this character of a royal appeal that he ordered every clergyman to read the declaration during divine service on two successive Sundays. Little time was given for deliberation, but little time was needed. The clergy refused almost to a man to be the instruments of their own humiliation. The Declaration was read in only four of the London churches, and in these the congregation flocked out of church at the first words of it. Nearly all of the country clergy refused to obey the royal orders. The Bishops went with the rest of the clergy.

"A few days before the appointed Sunday Archbishop Sancroft called his suffragans together, and the six who were able to appear at Lambeth signed a temperate protest to the King, in which they declined to publish an illegal DeclaratIon. 'It is a standard of rebellion,' James exclaimed as the Primate presented the paper; and the resistance of the clergy was no sooner announced to him than he determined to wreak his vengeance on the prelates who had signed the protest. He ordered the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to deprive them of their sees, but in this matter even the Commissioners shrank from obeying him. The Chancellor, Lord Jeffreys, advised a prosecution for libel as an easier mode of punishment; and the bishops, who refused to give bail, were committed on this charge to the Tower. They passed to their prison amidst the shouts of a great multitude, the sentinels knelt for their blessing as they entered its gates, and the soldiers of the garrison drank their healths. So threatening was the temper of the nation that his ministers pressed James to give way. But his obstinacy grew with the danger. 'Indulgence,' he said, 'ruined my father'; and on the 29th of June the bishops appeared as criminals at the bar of the King's Bench. The jury had been packed, the judges were mere tools of the Crown, but judges and jury were alike overawed by the indignation of the people at large. No sooner had the foreman of the jury uttered the words 'Not guilty' than a roar of applause burst from the crowd, and horsemen spurred along every road to carry over the country the news of the acquittal."

The last militant act of King James as the skies blackened over him was to bring over drafts from the Catholic army Tyrconnell had

raised for him. This produced among other things one of the best marching tunes in the British Army, "Lilliburlero". It was immensely popular. It was sung throughout the country. The tune is said to have been based upon an old Irish lullaby, but the words seem to have been put together in a pretended Irish brogue by Thomas Lord Wharton, and the air was made into what it still is, the most savagely thunderous and popular of British marching tunes, by no less a composer than Henry Purcell. He published and fathered it as a "New Irish Tune" in 1689 in his *Music's Handmaid*.

There are endless versions of the words. People improvised and altered as it passed like a wind through the country. The general burthen ran very much after this fashion:

"Ho! brother Teague, do you hear the decree?
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la,
That we are to have a new Deputy,
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la.
Lero lero, lilliburlero, lero, lero, bullen a-la.

Ho! by Saint Tyburn, it is the Talbot;
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la.
And he shall cut the Englishman's throat.
Lilliburlero, bullen a-la.
Lero lero, lilliiburlero, lero, lero, bullen a-la.

"Though by my soul the English do prate,
The law's on their side and Christ knows what.

"But if dispensation shall come from the Pope,
We'll hang Magna Carta and them in a rope...

"All in France have taken a swear
That they will have no Protestant heir...
(This easily became "No Protestants there".)
"There was an old prophecy found in a bog
That we shall be ruled by an ass and a dog."

("Dog" was Wharton's word, but the popular voice speedily changed it to "hog".)

"And now is this prophecy coming to pass,
(Overwhelming Crescendo.)
For Talbot's the hog and James is the ass."

Fantastically bitter doggerel, put it released the accumulating resentment of the country at the threatened return of Roman Catholic domination.

Thereafter came the "Glorious Revolution", which ultimately established the Protestant succession in England, confirmed the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the universities and public office, and relaxed the suspicions of the general public. The danger was felt to be over. The habitual torpor of the English mind in the face of theology supervened.

So far I have been following Green's *Short History of the English People*. But now I have to resort to other authorities. The name of Lord George Gordon and the story of the "No Popery" riots of 1780 came back to me, and I searched Green in vain. I turned up my copy of *Barnaby Rudge*. Dickens caricatures the whole affair. To him they are shameful riots, "begotten of intolerance and persecution". "However imperfectly," he writes, "those disturbances are set forth in the following pages, they are impartially painted by one who has no sympathy with the Romish Church, though he acknowledges, as most men do, some esteemed friends among the followers of its creed."

Crabbe saw these riots which J. R. Green ignores and describes them in his Journal to his beloved "Mira", that is to say Sally Elmy, who later on became his wife. The mob, he says, was a mixture of very various elements. "Quiet and decent" he describes it at Westminster, but the storming of the keeper's house at the Old Bailey and the jail delivery of convicted felons evidently frightened him. They released all the debtors also, and Newgate was an open house for all to come and go. A formidable contingent of criminals from the slums started burning and looting. "About ten or twelve of the mob getting to the top of the debtors' prison, whilst it was burning, to halloo, they appeared rolled in black smoke mixed with sudden bursts of fire — like Milton's infernals, who were as familiar with flame as with each other. On comparing notes with my neighbours, I find I saw but a small part of the mischief. They say

Lord Mansfield's house is now in flames."

But J. R. Green has not a word to say about these troubles. Like Dickens, he was saturated with the amiable liberalism of the Gladstonian phase in English thought. The leopard had changed its spots and everything was different.

Manifestly these excellent liberals thought that Popery had ceased to be a danger to the liberties of the English people. I suggest that in this matter the instincts of that eighteenth-century London crowd were sounder than his uncritical toleration.

The Oxford Counter Revolution is best dealt with by James Anthony Froude, in a study under that title, and in his *Nemesis of Faith*. His *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada* is also, by the by, a frank and vivid piece of history from the Protestant point of view. The reader will find only a hostile appreciation of him in Mr. Garvin's lamentable *Encyclopaedia Britannica* manifestly written by a Roman Catholic who remains characteristically and discreetly anonymous. A timely appreciation by A. L. Rowse in the *New Statesman* of March 20th, 1943, sweeps away these insinuations.

"Of all the great Victorians Froude, it seems to me, is the writer least estimated at his proper worth and most worth while reviving. There is so much in him that should appeal to our age; in many ways he had more affinities with the twentieth century than with the nineteenth: the strain of scepticism in him for one thing, the historian's relativism that made him see all religions as myths and men's philosophies as rationalisations of their interests and desires... And what a magnificent writer; what a stylist! So infinitely better than Carlyle, to whom he deferred, like the rest of the I am not so sure that in addition to writing better, he had not more to Carlyle had. Give me Froude every time: a better historian, a better writer, a more sceptical, a more subtle, intelligence...

"He was read. He held people's attention. He had admirers if few defenders and no followers. He was a lonely figure, at the same time as he was much sought after, and a distinguished person in society....

"... his troubles began with his first books, and persisted to the last. The Nemesis of Faith is chiefly known for having been publicly burnt by the Sub-Rector of his college at Oxford when Froude was a

young Fellow. It is deserving of attention on more serious grounds and for its own sake. Its subject is the ferment of thought about the foundations of faith stirred up by the Oxford Movement, the dilemma of belief which was such a critical issue to sensitive minds in the mid-nineteenth century and especially to those brought up in a clerical environment like Froude, whose livelihood and career were involved in it."

I have been watching the current "effort to subjugate this easy-going, profoundly sceptical country to the Roman Catholic Church with a lively interest. The process has been systematic and impudent to the point of incredibility. I only realise how much has been attempted now that it is past its climax. In the same way one did not realise the gravity of the Blitzkrieg until the climax was past. There has been a Catholic Blitzkrieg upon Britain during the immense stresses of the war. The one remaining vestige of Protestant England has been the Protestant Succession. By releasing the Crown from that Protestant oathand that might easily have been arranged in the name of "freedom of worship" — that last obstacle would have been removed.

For four war years Great Britain officially has been behaving like a Catholic country determined to emerge from a deplorable past. The Rev. So-and-So, S.J., and the Very Venerable So-and-So, S.J., have had a disproportionately large share of our broadcasting time. Non-Christian voices have been relatively inaudible although the great majority of peoples in the British Empire do not profess to be Christians.

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church puts the Faith before any other social or political consideration, and the Roman Catholics in any country and under any form of government constitute an essentially alien body. The over- confident liberalism of the early nineteenth century enfranchised this body of outlanders, believing it would in some mysterious manner play the game of mutual toleration which seemed so natural to the essentially sceptical and secular liberal mentality. Nothing of the sort ensued. Steadily, persistently, the Catholic Church has worked for the destruction of that very liberalism which restored it to political influence. Persecuting relentlessly where it was in the ascendant, and canting about

individual liberty of conscience wherever it was faced by a modern organisation of society, this mental cancer has spread itself back to destroy the health and hope of our modern world.

There is something in this Roman Catholic business that sends me back to Coleridge's *Christabel*. The reader may remember how a mysterious maiden, Geraldine, came to Christabel and sought her protection, and how Christabel sheltered her in spite of a series of creepy intimations that all was not right with the visitant.

"And Geraldine...
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast;
And looked askance at Christabel —
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

"A snake's dull eye blinks dull and shy;
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with something of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance! —
One moment — and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground..."

"Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold..."

As this present world war goes on, and even if there is some sort of temporary half peace before it degene1fates into a tangle of minor wars, it will become plainer and plainer that it is no longer a geographically determined warfare of governments, nations and peoples, but the world-wide struggle of our species of release itself from the strangling octopus of Catholic Christianity. Everywhere the Church extends its tentacles and fights to prolong the Martyrdom of Man. Through St. Cyr and de Gaullism it assails the fine liberal tradition of France; it dominates the policy of the British War Office and Foreign Office, and through these the B.B.C. and the press; by a

disciplined Catholic vote, a casting vote in endless elections and a sustained organisation of menace and boycott, it silences the frank discussion of its influence in America. It works counter both to the old nationalisms that broke away from it at the Reformation and to the emergence of a scientifically guided world commonweal from the initial experiment of Russian communism. Like an octopus it has no creative impulse but only an instinct to survive. In Ireland, Spain, Italy, reactionary France, North and South America, Japan, and wherever it can stretch a tentacle, it seeks allies in every element that is socially base that will help it to continue its struggle against the awakening liberalism of the "United Democracies", as "it is our hopeful custom to call them.

Here are extracts from an article by Katharine Hayden Salter, in the (American) *Churchman* of January 15th, 1943.

"The October 5th (1942) issue of a Toledo newspaper carried the following statement as a news item:

"Monsignor Sheen, associate professor of philosophy in Catholic University, Washington, D.C., and director of the Catholic Hour radio programme, spoke on *The Crisis of Christendom*, in a meeting sponsored by the Mary Manse Alumnae Association. He said:

"'*We are living at the end of an era, ushered in by the Protestant Revolt 400 years ago — a revolt that denied authority, so that as a result we have been living without God, we have tossed Him out of His own world.*' Monsignor Sheen called the war a judgment on the way man has lived, and said that victory will be ours only on condition that we repent.

"Simon and Schuster have recently brought out a book, *The Catholic Pattern* by Thomas Woodlock. It is built around exactly the same thesis — that the cause of this war is the Reformation, the 'Revolt' the 'metaphysical heresy' of having left the Catholic Church. 'It is an assault on the entire Protestant wor1d; and it insists that the Declaration of Independence itself (written by Thomas Jefferson, a deist and 'heretic' if ever there was one, so far as Catholic dogma is concerned) was engendered by the Catholic Pattern....

"In the February 11th, 1928, issue of *America*, an important Jesuit publication, Charles J. Mullaly, S.J., states the case fully. Let me

quote a bit from it. Father Mullaly describes in detail the workings of a Catholic boycott, thought up by his fellow Jesuits of an earlier day and carried through, in 1913, in Washington, D.C., when a newspaper tried to investigate conditions in a Catholic home for wayward girls. He describes the total boycott, dutifully carried through by the laity and clergy, without a hitch — save one object of Catholic scorn— 'a weak-kneed Catholic advertiser who declared that he did not believe in mixing business and religion!' Then Father Mullaly proudly says: 'The forty per cent. loss of circulation now meant also a forty per cent. fall in the rates for advertising'.... The 'slogan was sounding through Washington, "Do not buy any paper that insults the Catholic religion, and do not buy from any store that advertises in such a paper." The lesson was a lasting one.'...

"'History often repeats itself. Since some secular magazines and newspapers now believe, as this Washington editor believed in 1913, that it pays to insult the Catholic Church and to foster religious controversy, why cannot Catholics in every city let the history of this counter-attack repeat itself for them? They fan follow the example of the Catholics in Washington, in 1913....

"'The lessons learned in Washington in 1913 may briefly be summed up as follows:

"'1. Do not attack a magazine or newspaper through its editorial departments but act through its business office.

"'2. When a magazine or newspaper is attacking your religion, write to the business manager and inform him that you will not buy the offending periodical again, and mean it....

"'If Catholics follow the example of the Catholics in Washington in 1913, we shall soon decisively answer the question which the editors of some secular periodicals are now asking themselves: DOES IT PAY TO INSULT CATHOLICS?'"

That is the language and technique of this last Catholic offensive. Are decent Protestants to emulate this foul fighting, are we to demand of our grocer and bookseller whether he is a Catholic and boycott him if he is, or would it not be better to restore the alien status of the whole organisation? Plainly the moral for us to-day is the moral of Chaucer's sailor six long centuries ago. "Invite no more monks to your house or inn."

To propitiate the Roman Catholic organisation with political office or power is like establishing friendly relations with an area sneak by handing him the family silver.

XVIII. — SHINTO CATHOLICISM

POPE PIUS XII, the open enemy of everything creative and reconstructive in the world, was first educated in the Gregorian University and Roman Seminary, figured professorially in the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, was Archbishop of Sardes, 1917, when he tried to persuade the Kaiser to make a moderate peace, developed his political ideas as Papal Nuncia in Bavaria and Germany, and so forth. Having tied himself irrevocably to the Axis, he had to accept, and he accepted all too readily, the assimilation for mutual assistance of Shintoism and Catholicism.

How far that assimilation has gone let this passage from Professor Karl Adam's *The Spirit of Catholicism* bear witness.

"We Catholics," says this. authoritative exponent of Roman Catholic orthodoxy, "acknowledge readily, without any shame, nay with pride, that Catholicism cannot be identified simply and wholly with primitive Christianity, nor even with the Gospel of Christ, in the same way that the great oak cannot be identified with the tiny acorn. There is no mechanical identity, but an organic identity. And we go further and say that thousands of years hence Catholicism will probably be even richer, more luxuriant, more manifold in dogma, morals, law and worship, than the Catholicism of the present day. A religious historian of the fifth millennium A.D. will without difficulty discover in Catholicism conceptions and forms and practices which will drive from India, China and Japan, and he will have to recognise a far more obvious 'complex of opposites'. It is quite true, Catholicism is a union of contraries. But 'contraries are not contradictions'... The Gospel of Christ would have been no living gospel, and the seed which He scattered no living seed, if it had remained ever the tiny seed of A.D. 33, and not struck root, and had not assimilated foreign matter, and had not by the help of this foreign matter grown up into a tree, so that the birds of the air dwell in its branches."

It is interesting to consider these "conceptions, forms and practices" that the Roman Catholic Church, as Professor Karl Adam expounds it, is now incorporating.

Mr. A. Morgan Young has recently published an admirable summary of them (*The Rise of a Pagan State*, 1939). He gives his sources for whatever statements he makes, so that the interested reader can get his book and verify and expand what is stated here.

The basis of Shinto is the Kojiki, a compilation of the eighth century A.D. It is readable in its entirety only by scholars, its language being far more remote from the Japanese of to-day than eighth-century Anglo-Saxon would be from current English. For various reasons only portions of it have been modernised for general use. It begins with a sort of storm of gods neither made nor begotten but passing away. From this tumult emerge two highly sexual figures, Izanagi and Izanami, who might be described in Hollywood language as male and female "sex appeal". They respond to each other with tremendous vigour, begetting gods and islands and at last a Fire God who burns up his mother Izanami. But by this time Izanagi is so set on procreation that everything about him procreates; he throws off his clothes and they become sea gods and land gods. Finally he produces the Sun Goddess from his left eye, the Moon God from his right eye and the headlong Susa-no-o by blowing his nose. After which he seems to have retired and the Sun Goddess and Susa-no-o occupy the stage.

After various remarkable adventures, no doubt of the greatest spiritual significance and full of lessons for the true believer, Susa-no-o meets a formidable damsel-devouring dragon with eight heads and other alarming accessories, intoxicates the beast with saki, kills it and cuts it up. But one of the tails resists and breaks his sword, because a better sword is hidden in it. This he presents to his sister the Sun Goddess. It lies to-day, thickly swathed in brocade, in the Family Shrine of the Imperial House in Tokyo. It is one of the Three Sacred Treasures, the sword, the mirror and the jewel, which the Sun Goddess transmitted to the divine Emperors, the living Gods of Japan.

To the Catholic mind, accustomed to a widely different system of myths and absurdities, this reads like monstrous nonsense. It is wiser not to say that in Japan. For example, Dr. Inoue Tetsujiro, a loyal but liberal-minded Shintoist ventured to doubt the, authenticity of the Three Sacred Treasures. He was denounced, his publisher penalised,

and he was expelled from the Imperial University. Later on, while attending the memorial service of a friend, he was set upon by a gang of pious ruffians and beaten so that one eye was destroyed. No one was punished for this outrage, which indeed is only one sample among many of the spirit of renascent Shintoism. It is quite good form to jump at a man who uses a phrase or makes a gesture that seems lacking in piety, and stab him. It is like those fierce old colonels in England who assault people for not standing stiff to "God Save the King". It is the very spirit of the Trinitarians at Nicaea.

The great assimilation prophesied by Professor Karl Adam has already begun. The crude early Christians, still in the "acorn" phase, preferred martyrdom to burning a pinch of incense to the Roman God-Emperors, but the Roman Catholic Church of to-day has already established friendly relations with the Shinto faith, and the Japanese Catholic bows in the Shinto temples in acquiescence to the local supremacy of the Emperor-Divinity over the Vatican.

There will be no Roman Catholic Church at all in the fifth millennium A.D., or it would be amusing to speculate how the successors of Professor Karl Adam, long before then, would have plaited into the Trinity that God of Male Sex Appeal from whose left eye sprang the Sun Goddess, while he blew Susa-no-o, the dragon-slaying Susa-no-o, from his nose.

XIX. — ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN AMERICA

SUCH is Catholicism as it is understood by Pope Pacelli and Japan. But the spirit of Roman Catholicism as one finds it in America is very different from that. Roman Catholics in America are influential because of their solid vote at elections, but for all that the American Roman Catholic does not like to hear — and to the best of his ability will not hear — of the Vatican-Japanese alliance. If he is one of the well-trained faithful he just pretends it isn't there. And we may counterbalance some of what has gone before by a word or so from a much saner type of Roman Catholic, Mr. Joseph Dinneen, who recently wrote, and wrote very ably, an account of this Axis pontiff from the standpoint of an American journalist.

His frontispiece is a portrait of Pope Pacelli, under which we read these singular words: "Bishop of Rome, Patriarch of the West, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church." I do not know how far Mr. Dinneen endorses this inscription. But in his Preface he tells very disarmingly of how it struck him when he learnt that Pius X was an inveterate cigar smoker and he realised that "Popes are human". He says:

"The doctrine of infallibility always puzzles my Protestant friends. The answer to the question on this in the Catholic catechism is: 'The Church teaches infallibly when it speaks through the Pope and the bishops, united in general council, or through the Pope alone when he proclaims to the faithful a doctrine of faith or morals.' Like a good many other Catholics, I have often been told by smug friends that my intellect is necessarily limited and bounded by my obedience to the Pope, and I shrug my shoulders and turn away, because I realise no amount of argument can convince them that I can be happy in my religion, believe in its tenets and teachings implicitly, and still think for myself in matters temporal; that the foreign policy of the Secretary of State at the Vatican, for instance, is a temporal matter, and I can disagree with the position of the Church in Spain, and still be a good Catholic and receive the sacraments."

That is good, plain American Catholicism. And there is not a word of truth in it. It is out of date. It is almost pre-Reformation stuff. It should be distinguished as Old Catholicism. It is not. the Catholicism of an ever more desperately aggressive Papacy....

For many men who were once good Catholics, the doctrine of infallibility was a turning-point.

On matters of Church history Dr. G. G. Coulton is a patient, unrelenting, trustworthy guide, and no one interested in the fatal concentration of power in the hands of the Pope since 1870 should fail to read him: In his book, *Papal Infallibility* (1932), he shows how such historical authorities as Lord Acton for example were driven into open opposition by that dogma. Acton was himself a Catholic, the one outstanding historian the Church can claim in modern times, yet he wrote of this doctrine with sorrowful prophetic insight: "Erected originally as an impregnable fortress against advancing liberalism it seems more likely now to prove an ineluctable death-trap. ' For the moment, indeed, it might have seemed to justify the Roman Church completely in all her actions; but now, more and more clearly, we see that she needs to summon up all the memories of her past prestige, and all the resources of her elaborate bureaucracy, and all her disciplinary severity, in order to put a colourable face upon this doctrine, so strange both from the historical and from the philosophical point of view."

Here is a more emphatic statement from the same source. Lord Acton is writing to the Catholic historian Lady Blennerhasset:

"The accomplices of the Old Man of the Mountains (the classic assassins of history) picked off individual victims, but the Papacy contrived murder and massacre on the largest and also on the most cruel and inhuman scale. They were not only wholesale assassins, but they also made the principle of assassination a law of the Christian Church and a condition of salvation" (Selections from the Correspondence of the First Lord Acton, 1917, Vol. i,).

From 1820 to 1860 at least 300,000 unarmed men, women and even children died in massacres, on the scaffold, or in pestilential jails for claiming what we now consider human rights.

"The more Catholic the country, indeed, the more savage were the torture and bloodshed. The Kingdom of the Sicilies (Italy and Sicily)

witnessed the longest and vilest reaction. General Coletta claims that there were 200,000 victims from 1790 to 1830 and his Neapolitan successor claims 250,000 in the next thirty ears; and as late as 1860 the brutality of the oppression shocked all Europe. These figures are uncertain, since it is very difficult to compile them, and in the case of Italy they include a percentage of armed rebels, but after a severe enquiry I find that at least 300,000 men and women and children perished in Italy, Spain and Portugal. In the Pope's own kingdom, with a population of about 3,000,000, many thousands died by execution, in massacres, or in jails of an incredibly cruel character. The savagery of the clerical-royalists and the foul character of most of the monarchs are described in the *Cambridge Modern History* and all authoritative manuals....

"One other point must be made. The social order which was protected by this brutality was as inefficient as it was unjust, and it was at its worst in the Pope's own States. On this all authorities are agreed. Lady Blennerhasset approvingly quotes in the *Cambridge Modern History* (x, 164) the reflection of Father Lamennais, on visiting Rome, that it was 'the most hideous sewer that ever offended the eye of man'." (*A History of the Popes*, by Joseph McCabe. Watts, London, 1939.)

Dinneen tells a delightful anecdote of the American Cardinal Gibbons returning from the election of Pius XI. He was asked — manifestly by an American — what he thought of papal infallibility. He reflected. "Well," he said, with a twinkle, "he called me Jibbons."

Very plainly American Catholicism is bound to inflict some uncomfortable gymnastics on our Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Pontiff. We godless people carry on our intellectual warfare for converts and subsidies against the Catholicism of Dinneen, but I, for one, doubt very greatly whether in his heart Dinneen's distrust of Pius XII varies very widely from mine.

Now in the face of the military alliance and dependence of the "United Nations" upon the magnificent morale of the Russian and Chinese peoples, we have this Axis Pope clamouring for a bitter conflict against something "Unchristian" called "Bolshevisation", which will destroy every decent thing in existence, superiors and inferiors, the family — the Catholics are always very great on the

family — and dividends.

XX. — THE UNITED CHRISTIAN FRONT

BEFORE me as I write is a very interesting document. It opens up the grave question for all who profess themselves Christians, to consider exactly what, in the face of that document, they mean by that profession. It was published in 1938, and it is headed United Christian Front. The chairman of this United

Christian Front is that Captain Archibald Ramsay who, with Mosley, was interned on the outbreak of the war. His Vice-Chairman and Treasurer was the late Sir Henry Lunn, a sound Tory, who, like sir Samuel Hoare, believed that the adventurer Franco was "a Christian gentleman"..

Another member of this United Christian Front was — or is for I do not know how far it still exists as an active body — that steadfast defender of his investments against the quite imaginary excessive proliferation of the non-investing classes, Dean Inge. I dealt with his peculiarities in a little Penguin book, *The Commonsense of War and Peace*, and Inge has never replied to my challenge. But here is Sir Henry Lunn defending the Dean against the Bishop of Chelmsford for quoting him as saying: "one-quarter of the priests and nuns in Spain have been murdered, some of them after horrid torture". The Bishop, it seems, had written that this was not so, and had quoted the Vatican *Osservatore Romano*, which could hardly be regarded as an anti-Catholic publication, for claiming only 6,000, out of Dean Inge's quarter of 106,743. But that 6,000, says Sir Henry, refers only to secular priests, implying rather than asserting that the Dean was telling the awful truth. Poor Sir Henry wasted his subtleties. Back comes the Dean with this:

"The Bishop of Chelmsford misquotes me as saying that one-quarter of the nuns in Spain have been murdered. I said nothing of the kind. Many have been killed; but the Bishop's proteges were more often content to strip them naked and violate them.

"It is really rather horrible to find a Bishop championing men who, acing on instructions from Moscow to exterminate the middle class, have slaughtered, at a low estimate, 200,000 helpless and harmless people, and whose avowed object is to extirpate the

Christian faith in the country of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross.

"There is abundance of well-documented evidence for those minority, I fear, who wish to know the truth."

No documented evidence was adduced, because no documentary evidence can be adduced.

I will not pillory the odd collection of names that rallied about Captain Archibald Ramsay in 1938, for some of them may have come to see the error of their ways since that year. The point to note is the intense fear of Moscow and the frantic disposition to get together with anyone professing to be pro-Christian, even with Franco and his Moslem blackamoors against this dreaded new thing in the world. Ramsay, Mosley, Mussolini, Dean Inge, the King of Italy, de Gaulle, Pitain (not the gallant French aviator but the old man of Vichy), and at the apex of the pyramid this Shinto Catholic Pope, Pius XII! What a motley crew it is! United only in one thing, and that is fear and hatred of a sane scientific equalitarian order in the world. How far are we people of the new order going to let such people waste the new-born hope of mankind?

The latest drive to rally "Believers" is an amalgamation of two organisations. Its sole objective, so far as I can find an understandable objective, is to drive every honest teacher of history or science out of our schools. Then our people's minds can be bunged up with mud thoroughly and finally. 'The first and most formidable is a Roman Catholic organisation called The Sword of the Spirit. The second is called Religion and Life, and it seems to be largely under the sway of Mr. T. S. Eliot. Roman Catholicism preserves a strong tradition of cannibalism, and I can give a good guess who will live longest on this conjoint raft. It will be amusing to watch its gyrations.

The programme is extremely vague about the relations of the Primate of all England and the Primate of England and Cardinal Hinsley and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council, to the raft and each other. Out of consideration for His Holiness, there is no arrangement for beating off sharks and the Japanese, who are also, as we have seen, deeply religious people. What seems to me a serious practical oversight is that there is no provision against poaching. You know these gentlemen will poach. There will be

suspicions and denunciations.

I can imagine the scene: the whispering silence of these holy men and then a sudden outcry. “Here! whose orphan are you stealing? He comes under my grant!” Confusion on the raft and a splash. Commotion among the sharks.

Unanimity is restored only by the appearance of a drifting biological experimental station chock-full of dangerous books about reality and truth. If it hits against the raft, it may send the whole crazy accumulation to the bottom. “All hands to the sweeps!” For a time after this “Crisis for Christianity” the United Christian Front is restored.

I am deriding organised High Church and Catholic Christianity, and I would like to make it plain that in doing so I am not disregarding what I might call the necessity of many minds, perhaps most young minds, feel for something one can express by such phrases as “the fatherhood of God” and “the kingdom of heaven within us”. That is the need the Roman Catholic Church trades upon and betrays.

XXI. — THE PRETENSIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF POPE PIUS XII

To return to that typical Pope, Pope Pius XII. It is necessary to insist upon his profound ignorance and mental inferiority. Most of us are still living in the old traditions of society, we honour and obey those who are put in authority over us, and it shocks us profoundly to hear that kings and ministers and particularly the Roman Catholic hierarchy are necessarily much more ignorant than a great and increasing multitude of quite common men. But let us consider the peculiar limitations to which these priests are subjected. They have been set aside from the common sanity of mankind from their youth up.

In the atmosphere in which Pius XII was educated, what chance had he to acquire even the most general ideas about modern biology or modern thought? Life is too short for knowledge anyhow, but consider how much of his brief candle has guttered to waste.

Deduct, for example, from his natural allowance of years and days the time consumed by the services of the Church. Every day there is a round of ceremonies he must perform. How many hours they consume I do not know, but they must mean a considerable moiety, and, apart from that, there are the priestly duties of the confessional, the arrangements of fasts and festivals. They do not leave him much time for extraneous reading. A common British or American out-of-work living on the dole and reeding the abundant literature of an ordinary public library, can, if he has the curiosity, acquire a knowledge of modern biology and modern thought and modern ways of life, incomparably greater than the equipment of any Pope who has ever lived. The out-of-work has the advantage of a considerable and growing mass of digested biological thought and fact upon which scientific enquirers have spent a succession of lifetimes — which he can read without restriction. Even if the Pope had been free to read modern scientific literature in such scraps of time as were available for that purpose, he would still be a relatively ignorant man. But a Catholic priest is not free to read what he likes. His

reading and thinking are elaborately controlled and rationed. The Church is so essentially out of harmony with reality and the truth of things, and is so aware of it, that it has had to train its priests from the outset to shut their eyes, to close their ears.

Watch a priest in a public conveyance. He is fighting against disturbing suggestions. He must not look at women lest he think of sex. He must not look about him, for reality, that is to say the devil, waits to seduce him on every hand. You see him muttering his protective incantations, avoiding your eye. He is suppressing "sinful" thoughts.

That type is the binding material of the Church. The appeal of sex is as natural to a young male as eating. Its suppression is a defiance of everything for which a healthy male exists. So that in the priestly mind we deal with something frustrated and secretly resentful, something sexually as well as intellectually malignant. And this applies, through all the glamour of his vestments, incense and so forth, to the Pope, as to any other member of the hierarchy. We are dealing with ideas left over from the Dark Ages, in the brains of a being at once puerile, perverted and malignant. Pius XII, when we strip him down to reality, showed himself as unreal and ignorant as Hitler. Possibly more so. Both have been incoherent and headlong men, whom chance has made figure-heads for the undisciplined foolishness of this dying age. The mere fact that a man by accident and misdirection can trail a vast trace of bloodshed and bitter suffering about the world does not make him any the greater or wiser. Before mankind gets rid of it, the Papacy may be drowning our hopes for the coming generation in a welter of blood — in an attempt to achieve a final world-wide St. Bartholomew's Eve — and it will not add an inch to his stature nor alter the fact that the Pope, any Pope, is necessarily an ill-educated and foolish obstacle, a nucleus of base resistance, heir to the tradition of Roman Catholicism in its last stage of poisonous decay, in the way to a better order in the world.

THE END

MARXISM VS. LIBERALISM

WITH J. V. STALIN

Wells: I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Stalin, for agreeing to see me. I was in the United States recently. I had a long conversation With President Roosevelt and tried to ascertain what his leading ideas were. Now I have come to you to ask you what you are doing to change the world....

Stalin: Not so very much....

Wells: I wander around the world as a common man and, as a common man, observe what is going on around me.

Stalin: Important public men like yourself are not "common men." Of course, history alone can show how important this or that public man has been; at all events you do not look at the world as a "common man."

Wells: I am not pretending humility. What I mean is that I try to see the world through the eyes of the common man, and not as a party politician or a responsible administrator. My visit to the United States excited my mind. The old financial world is collapsing; the economic life of the country is being reorganized on new lines. Lenin said: "We must learn to do business," learn this from the capitalists. Today the capitalists have to learn from you, to grasp the spirit of socialism. It seems to me that what is taking place in the United States is a profound reorganization, the creation of planned, that is, socialist, economy. You and Roosevelt begin from two different starting points. But is there not a relation in ideas, a kinship of ideas, between Washington and Moscow? In Washington I was struck by the same thing I see going on here; they are building offices, they are creating a number of new state regulation bodies, they are organizing a long-needed Civil Service. Their need, like yours, is directive ability.

Stalin: The United States is pursuing a different aim from that which we are pursuing in the U.S.S.R. The aim which the Americans

are pursuing arose out of the economic troubles, out of the economic crisis. The Americans want to rid themselves of the crisis on the basis of private capitalist activity without changing the economic basis. They are trying to reduce to a minimum the ruin, the losses caused by the existing economic system. Here, however, as you know, in place of the old destroyed economic basis an entirely different, a new economic basis has been created. Even if the Americans you mention partly achieve their aim, i.e., reduce these losses to a minimum, they will not destroy the roots of the anarchy which is inherent in the existing capitalist system. They are preserving the economic system which must inevitably lead, and cannot but lead, to anarchy in production. Thus, at best, it will be a matter, not of the reorganization of society, not of abolishing the old social system which gives rise to anarchy and crises, but of restricting certain of its bad features, restricting certain of its excesses. Subjectively, perhaps, these Americans think they are reorganizing society; objectively, however, they are preserving the present basis of society. That is why, objectively, there will be no reorganization of society.

Nor will there be planned economy. What is planned economy? What are some of its attributes? Planned economy tries to abolish unemployment. Let us suppose it is possible, while preserving the capitalist system, to reduce unemployment to a certain minimum. But surely, no capitalist would ever agree to the complete abolition of unemployment, to the abolition of the reserve army of unemployed, the purpose of which is to bring pressure on the labor market, to ensure a supply of cheap labor. Here you have one of the rents in the "planned economy" of bourgeois society. Furthermore, planned economy presupposes increased output in those branches of industry which produce goods that the masses of the people need particularly. But you know that the expansion of production under capitalism takes place for entirely different motives, that capital flows into those branches of economy in which the rate of profit is highest. You will never compel a capitalist to incur loss to himself and agree to a lower rate of profit for the sake of satisfying the needs of the people. Without getting rid of the capitalists, without abolishing the principle of private property in the means of

production, it is impossible to create planned economy.

Wells: I agree with much of what you have said. But I would like to stress the point that if a country as a whole adopts the principle of planned economy, if the government, gradually, step by step, begins consistently to apply this principle, the financial oligarchy will at last be abolished and socialism, in the Anglo-Saxon meaning of the word, will be brought about. The effect of the ideas of Roosevelt's "New Deal" is most powerful, and in my opinion they are socialist ideas. It seems to me that instead of stressing the antagonism between the two worlds, we should, in the present circumstances, strive to establish a common tongue for all the constructive forces.

Stalin: In speaking of the impossibility of realizing the principles of planned economy while preserving the economic basis of capitalism I do not in the least desire to belittle the outstanding personal qualities of Roosevelt, his initiative, courage, and determination. Undoubtedly Roosevelt stands out as one of the strongest figures among all the captains of the contemporary capitalist world. That is why I would like once again to emphasize the point that my conviction that planned economy is impossible under the conditions of capitalism does not mean that I have any doubts about the personal abilities, talent, and courage of President Roosevelt. But if the circumstances are unfavorable, the most talented captain cannot reach the goal you refer to. Theoretically, of course, the possibility of marching gradually, step by step, under the conditions of capitalism, towards the goal which you call socialism in the Anglo-Saxon meaning of the word, is not precluded. But what will this "socialism" be? At best, bridling to some extent the most unbridled of individual representatives of capitalist profit, some increase in the application of the principle of regulation in national economy. That is all very well. But as soon as Roosevelt, or any other captain in the contemporary bourgeois world, proceeds to undertake something serious against the foundation of capitalism, he will inevitably suffer utter defeat.

The banks, the industries, the large enterprises, the large farms are not in Roosevelt's hands. All these are private property. The railroads, the mercantile fleet, all these belong to private owners. And finally, the army of skilled workers, the engineers, the technicians,

these too are not at Roosevelt's command, they are at the command of the private owners; they all work for the private owners. We must not forget the functions of the State in the bourgeois world. The State is an institution that organizes the defense of the country, organizes the maintenance of "order"; it is an apparatus for collecting taxes. The capitalist State does not deal much with economy in the strict sense of the word; the latter is not in the hands of the State. On the contrary, the State is in the hands of capitalist economy. That is why I fear that, in spite of all his energy and abilities, Roosevelt will not achieve the goal you mention, if indeed that is his goal. Perhaps, in the course of several generations, it will be possible to approach this goal somewhat; but I personally think that even this is not very probable.

Wells: Perhaps I believe more strongly in the economic interpretation of politics than you do. Huge forces driving towards better organization, for the better functioning of the community, that is, for socialism, have been brought into action by invention and modern science. Organization, and the regulation of individual action, have become mechanical necessities, irrespective of social theories. If we begin with the State control of the banks. and then follow with the control of transport, of the heavy industries, of industry in general, of commerce, etc., such an all- embracing control will be equivalent to the State ownership of all branches of national economy. This will be the process of socialization. Socialism and individualism are not opposites like black and white. There are many intermediate stages between them. There is individualism that borders on brigandage, and there is discipline and organization that are the equivalent of socialism. The introduction of planned economy depends, to a large degree, upon the organizers of economy, upon the skilled technical intelligentsia, who, step by step, can be converted to the socialist principles of organization. And this is the most important thing. Because organization comes before socialism. It is the more important fact. Without organization the socialist idea is a mere idea.

Stalin: There is no, nor should there be, irreconcilable contrast between the individual and the collective, between the interests of the individual person and the interests of the collective, There should be

no such contrast, because collectivism, socialism, does not deny, but combines individual interests with the interests of the collective. Socialism cannot abstract itself from individual interests. Socialist society alone can most fully satisfy these personal interests. More than that; socialist society alone can firmly safeguard the interests of the individual. In this sense there is no irreconcilable contrast between "individualism" and socialism. But can we deny the contrast between classes, between the propertied class, the capitalist class, and the toiling class, the proletarian class? On the one hand we have the propertied class which owns the banks, the factories, the mines, transport, the plantations in colonies. These people see nothing but their own interests, their striving after profits. They do not submit to the will of the collective; they strive to subordinate every collective to their will. On the other hand we have the class of the poor, the exploited Class, which owns neither factories nor works, nor banks, which is compelled to live by selling its labor power to the capitalists and which lacks the opportunity to satisfy its most elementary requirements. How can such opposite interests and strivings be reconciled? As far as I know, Roosevelt has not succeeded in finding the path of conciliation between these interests. And it is impossible, as experience has shown. Incidentally, you know the situation in the United States better than I do as I have never been there and I watch American affairs mainly from literature. But I have some experience in fighting for socialism and this experience tells me that if Roosevelt makes a real attempt to satisfy the interests of the proletarian class at the expense of the capitalist class, the latter will put another president in his place. The capitalists will say: Presidents come and presidents go, but we go on forever; if this or that president does not protect our interests, we shall find another. What can the president oppose to the will of the capitalist class?

Wells: I object to this simplified classification of mankind into poor and rich. Of course there is a category of people which strives only for profit. But are not these people regarded as nuisances in the West just as much as here? Are there not plenty of people in the West for whom profit is not an end, who own a certain amount of wealth, who want to invest and obtain a profit from this investment, but who do not regard this as the main object? They regard

investment as an inconvenient necessity. Are there not plenty of capable and devoted engineers, organizers of industry, whose activities are stimulated by something other than profit? In my opinion there is a numerous class of capable people who admit that the present system is unsatisfactory. and who are destined to playa great role in future socialist society. During the past few years I have been much engaged in and have thought of the need for conducting propaganda in favor of socialism and cosmopolitanism among wide circles of engineers, airmen, military-technical people, etc. It is useless approaching these circles with two track class war propaganda. These people understand the condition of the world. They understand that it is a bloody muddle, but they regard your simple classwar antagonism as nonsense.

Stalin: You object to the simplified classification of mankind into rich and poor. Of course there is a middle stratum, there is the technical intelligentsia that you have mentioned and among which there are very good and very honest people. Among them there are also dishonest and wicked people, there are all sorts of people among them. But first of all mankind is divided into. rich and poor, into property owners and exploited; and to abstract oneself from this fundamental division and from the antagonism between poor and rich means abstracting oneself from the fundamental fact. I do not deny the existence of intermediate, middle strata, which either take the side of one or other of these two conflicting classes, or else take up a neutral or semineutral position in this struggle. But, I repeat, to abstract oneself from this fundamental division in society and from the fundamental struggle between the two main classes means ignoring facts. This struggle is going on and will continue. The outcome of the struggle will be determined by the proletarian class, the working class.

Wells: But are there not many people who are not poor, but who work and work productively? .

Stalin: Of course, there are small landowners, artisans, small traders, but it is not these people who decide the fate of a country, but the toiling masses, who produce all the things society requires.

Wells: But there are very different kinds of capitalists. There are capitalists who only think about profit, about getting rich; but there

are also those who are prepared to make sacrifices. Take old Morgan for example. He only thought about profit; he was a parasite on society, simply, he merely accumulated wealth. But take Rockefeller. He is a brilliant organizer; he has set an example of how to organize the delivery of oil that is worthy of emulation. Or take Ford. Of course Ford is selfish. But is he not a passionate organizer of rationalized production from whom you take lessons? I would like to emphasize the fact that recently an important change in opinion towards the U.S.S.R. has taken place in English speaking countries. The reason for this, first of all, is the position of Japan and the events in Germany. But there are other reasons besides those arising from international politics. There is a more profound reason, namely, the recognition by many people of the fact that the system based on private profit is breaking down. Under these circumstances, it seems to me, we must not bring to the forefront the antagonism between the two worlds, but should strive to combine all the constructive movements, all the constructive forces in one line as much as possible. It seems to me that I am more to the Left than you, Mr. Stalin; I think the old system is nearer to its end than you think.

Stalin: In speaking of the capitalists who strive only for profit, only to get rich, I do not want to say that these are the most worthless people, capable of nothing else. Many of them undoubtedly possess great organizing talent, Which I do not dream of denying. We Soviet people learn a great deal from the capitalists. And Morgan, whom you characterize so unfavorably, was undoubtedly a good, capable organizer. But if you mean people who are prepared to reconstruct the world, of course, you will not be able to find them in the ranks of those who faithfully serve the cause of profit. We and they stand at opposite poles. You mentioned Ford. Of course, he is a capable organizer of production. But don't you know his attitude towards the working class? Don't you know how many workers he throws on the street? The capitalist is riveted to profit; and no power on earth can tear him away from it. Capitalism will be abolished, not, by "organizers" of production, not by the technical intelligentsia, but by the working class, because the aforementioned strata do not play an independent role. The engineer, the organizer of production, does not work as he would like to, but as he is ordered, in such a way as to

serve the interests of his employers. There are exceptions of course; there are people in this stratum who have awakened from the intoxication of capitalism the technical intelligentsia can, under certain conditions, perform miracles and greatly benefit mankind. But It can also cause great harm. We Soviet people have not a little experience of the technical intelligentsia. After the October Revolution, a certain section of the technical intelligentsia refused to take part in the work of constructing the new society; they opposed this work of construction and sabotaged it. We did all we possibly could to bring the technical intelligentsia into this work of construction we tried this way and that. Not a little time passed before our technical intelligentsia agreed actively to assist the new system. Today the best section of this technical intelligentsia are in the front rank of the builders of socialist society. Having this experience, we are far from underestimating the good and the bad sides of the technical intelligentsia and we know that on the one hand it can do harm, and on the other hand, it can perform "miracles." Of course, things would be different if it were possible, at one stroke, spiritually to tear the technical intelligentsia away from the capitalist world. But that is utopia. Are there many of the technical intelligentsia who would dare break away from the bourgeois world and set to work to reconstruct society? Do you think there are many people of this kind, say, in England or in France? No, there are few who would be willing to break away from their employers and begin reconstructing the world. Besides, can we lose sight of the fact that in order to transform the world it is necessary'to have political power? It seems to me, Mr. Wells, that you greatly underestimate the question of political power, that it entirely drops out of your conception. What can those, even with the best intentions in the world, do if they are unable to raise the question of seizing power, and do not possess power? At best they can help the class which takes power, but they cannot change the world themselves. This can only be done by a great class which will take the place of the capitalist class and become the sovereign master as the latter was before. This class is the working class. Of course, the assistance of the technical intelligentsia must be accepted; and the latter, in turn, must be assisted. But it must not be thought that the technical

intelligentsia can play an independent historical role. The transformation of the world is a great, complicated and painful process. For this great task a great class is required. Big ships go on long voyages.

Wells: Yes, but for long voyages a captain and a navigator are required.

Stalin: That is true; but what is first required for a long voyage is a big ship. What is a navigator without a ship? An idle man.

Wells: The big ship is humanity, not a class.

Stalin: You, Mr. Wells, evidently start out with the assumption that all men are good. I, however, do not forget that there are many wicked men. I do not believe in the goodness of the bourgeoisie.

Wells: I remember the situation with regard to the technical intelligentsia several decades ago. At that time the technical intelligentsia was numerically small, but there was much to do and every engineer, technician and intellectual found his opportunity. That is why the technical intelligentsia was the least revolutionary class. Now, however, there is a superabundance of technical intellectuals, and their mentality has changed very sharply. The skilled man, who would formerly never listen to revolutionary talk, is now greatly interested in it. Recently I was dining with the Royal Society, our great English scientific society. The President's speech was a speech for social planning and scientific control. Thirty years ago, they would not have listened to what I say to them now. Today, the man at the head of the Royal Society holds revolutionary views and insists on the scientific reorganization of human society. Mentality changes. Your class-war propaganda has not. kept pace with these facts.

Stalin: Yes, I know this, and this is to be explained by the fact that capitalist society is now in a cul-de-sac. The capitalists are seeking, but cannot find, a way out of this cul-de-sac that would be compatible with the dignity of this class, compatible with the interests of this class. They could, to some extent, crawl out of the crisis on their hands and knees, but they cannot find an exit that would enable them to walk out of it with head raised high, a way out that would not. fundamentally disturb the interests of capitalism. This, of course, is realized by wide circles of the technical

intelligentsia. A large section of it is beginning to realize the community of its interests with those of the class which is capable of pointing the way out of the cul-de-sac.

Wells: You of all people know something about revolutions, Mr. Stalin, from the practical side. Do the masses ever rise? Is it not an established truth that all revolutions are made by a minority?

Stalin: To bring about a revolution a leading revolutionary minority is required; but the most talented, devoted and energetic minority would be helpless if it did not rely upon the at least passive support of millions.

Wells: At least passive? Perhaps sub-conscious?

Stalin: Partly also the semi-instinctive and semiconscious, but without the support of millions, the best minority is impotent.

Wells: I watch communist propaganda in the West and it seems to me that in modern conditions this propaganda sounds very oldfashioned, because it is insurrectionary propaganda. Propaganda in favor of the violent overthrow of the social system ,was all very well when it was directed against tyranny. But under modern conditions, when the system is collapsing anyhow, stress should be laid on efficiency, on competence, on productiveness, and not on insurrection. It seems to me that the insurrectionary note is obsolete. The communist propaganda in the West is a nuisance to constructive minded people.

Stalin: Of course the old system is breaking down, decaying. That is true. But it is also true that new efforts are being made by other methods, by every means, to protect, to save this dying system. You draw a wrong conclusion from a correct postulate. You rightly state that the old world is breaking down. But you are wrong in thinking that it is breaking down of its own accord No, the substitution of one social system for another is a complicated and long revolutionary process. It is not simply a spontaneous process, but a struggle, it is a process connected with the clash of classes. Capitalism is decaying, but it must not be compared simply with a tree which has decayed to such an extent that it must fall to the ground of its own accord. No, revolution, the substitution of one social system for another, has always been a struggle, a painful and a cruel struggle, a life and death struggle. And every time the people of the new world came into

power, they had to defend themselves against the attempts of the old world to restore the old order by force; these people of the new world always had to be on the alert, always had to be ready to repel the attacks of the old world upon the new system.

Yes, you are right when you say that the old social system is breaking down; but it is not breaking down of its own accord. Take Fascism for example. Fascism is a reactionary force which is trying to preserve the old world by means of violence. What will you do with the fascists? Argue with them? Try to convince them? But this will have no effect upon them at all. Communists do not in the least idealize the methods of violence. But they, the Communists, do not want to be taken by surprise, they cannot count on the old world voluntarily departing from the stage, they see that the old system is violently defending itself, and that is why the Communists say to the working class: Answer violence with violence; do all you can to prevent the old dying order from crushing you, do ,not permit it to put manacles on your hands, on the hands with which you will overthrow the old system. As you see, the Communists regard the substitution of one social system for another, not simply as a spontaneous and peaceful process, but as a complicated, long and violent process. Communists cannot ignore facts.

Wells: But look at what is now going on in the capitalist world. The collapse is not a simple one: it is the outbreak of reactionary violence which is degenerating to gangsterism. And it seems to me that when it comes to a conflict with reactionary and unintelligent violence, socialists can appeal to the law, and instead of regarding the police as the enemy they should support them in the fight against the reactionaries. I think that it is useless operating with the methods of the old rigid insurrectionary socialism.

Stalin: The Communists base themselves on rich historical experience which teaches that obsolete classes do not voluntarily abandon the stage of history. Recall the history of England in the seventeenth century. Did not many say that the old social system had decayed? But did it not, nevertheless, require a Cromwell to crush it by force?

Wells: Cromwell operated on the basis of the constitution and in the name of constitutional order.

Stalin: In the name of the constitution he resorted to violence, beheaded the king, dispersed Parliament, arrested some and beheaded others! Or take an example from our history. Was it not clear for a long time that the tsarist system was decaying, was breaking down? But how much blood had to be shed in order to overthrow it? And what about the October Revolution? Were there not plenty of people who knew that we alone, the Bolsheviks, were indicating the only correct way out? Was it not clear that Russian capitalism had decayed? But you know how great was the resistance, how much blood had to be shed in order to defend the October Revolution from all its enemies, internal and external. Or take France at the end of the eighteenth century. Long before 1789 it was clear to many how rotten the royal power, the feudal system was. But a popular insurrection, a clash of classes was not, ,could not be avoided. Why? Because the classes which must abandon the stage of history are the last to become convinced that their role is ended. It is impossible to convince them of this. They think that the fissures in the decaying edifice of the old order can be mended, that the tottering edifice of the old order can be repaired and saved. That is why dying classes take to arms and resort to every means to save their existence as a ruling class.

Wells: But there were not a few lawyers at the head of the Great French Revolution.

Stalin: Do you deny the role of the intelligentsia in revolutionary movements? Was the Great French Revolution a lawyers' revolution and not a popular revolution, which achieved victory by rousing vast masses of the people against feudalism and championed the interests of the Third Estate? And did the lawyers among the leaders of the Great French Revolution act in accordance with the laws of the old order? Did they not introduce new, bourgeois-revolutionary laws? The rich experience of history teaches that up to now not a single class has voluntarily made way for another class. There is no such precedent in world history. The Communists have learned this lesson of history. Communists would welcome the voluntary departure of the bourgeoisie. But such a turn of affairs is improbable: that is what experience teaches. That is why the Communists want to be prepared for the worst and call upon the working class to be vigilant, to be

prepared for battle. Who wants a captain who lulls the vigilance of his army, a captain who does not understand that the enemy will not surrender, that he must be crushed? To be such a captain means deceiving, betraying the working class. That is why I think that what seems to you to be old-fashioned is in fact a measure of revolutionary expediency for the working class.

Wells: I do not deny that force has to be used, but I think the forms of the struggle should fit as closely as possible to the opportunities presented by the existing laws, which must be defended against reactionary attacks. There is no need to disorganize the old system because it is' disorganizing itself enough as it is. That is why it seems to me insurrection against the old order, against the law, is<'obsolete, old-fashioned. Incidentally, I deliberately exaggerate in order to bring the truth out more clearly. I can formulate my point of view in the following way: first, I am for order; second, I attack the present system in so far as it cannot assure order: third, I think that class war propaganda may detach from socialism just those educated people whom socialism needs.

Stalin: In order to achieve a great object, an important social object, there must be a main force, a bulwark, a revolutionary class. Next it is necessary to organize the assistance of an auxiliary force for this main force: in this case this auxiliary force is the Party, to which the best forces of the intelligentsia belong. Just now you spoke about "educated people;" But what educated people did you have in mind? Were there not plenty of educated people on the side of the old order in England in the seventeenth century, in France at the end of the eighteenth century, and in Russia in the epoch of the October Revolution? The old order: had in its service many highly educated people who defended the old order, who opposed the new order. Education is a weapon the effect of which be struck down. Of course, the proletariat, socialism, needs is determined by the hands which wield it, by who is to highly educated people. Clearly, simpletons cannot help the proletariat to fight for socialism, to build a new society. I do not underestimate the role of the intelligentsia; on the contrary, emphasize it. The question is, however, which intelligentsia are we discussing? Because there are different kinds of intelligentsia.

Wells: There can be no revolution without a radical change in the

educational system. It is sufficient to quote two examples: The example of the German Republic, which did not touch the old educational system, and therefore never became a republic: and the example of the British Labor Party, which lacks the determination to insist on a radical change in the educational system.

Stalin: That is a correct observation. Permit me now to reply to, your three points.

First, the main thing for the revolution is the existence of a social bulwark. This bulwark of the revolution is the working class.

Second, an auxiliary force is required, that which the Communists call a Party. To the Party belong the intelligent workers and those elements of the technical intelligentsia which are closely connected with the working class. The intelligentsia can be strong only if it combines with the working class. If it opposes the working class it becomes a cipher.

Third, political power is required as a lever for change. The new political power creates the new laws, the new order, which is revolutionary order.

I do not stand for any kind of order. I stand for order that corresponds to the interests of the working class. If however, any of the laws of the old order can be utilized in the interests of the struggle for the new order, the old laws should be utilized. I cannot object to your postulate that the present system should be attacked in so far as it does not insure the necessary order for the people.

And, finally, you are wrong if you think that the Communists are enamored with violence. They would be very pleased to drop violent methods if the ruling class agreed to give way to the working class. But the experience of history speaks against such an assumption.

Wells: There was a case in the history of England, however, of a class voluntarily handing over power to another class. In the period between 1830 and 1870, the aristocracy, whose influence was still very considerable at the end of the eighteenth century, voluntarily, without a severe struggle, surrendered power to the bourgeoisie, which serves as a sentimental support of the monarchy. Subsequently, this transference of power led to the establishment of the rule of the financial oligarchy.

Stalin: But you have imperceptibly passed from questions of

revolution to questions of reform. This is not the same thing. Don't you think that the Chartist movement played a great role in the Reforms in England in the nineteenth century?

Wells: The Chartists did little and disappeared without leaving a trace.

Stalin: I do not agree with you. The Chartists, and the strike movement which they organized, played a great role; they compelled the ruling classes to make a number of concessions in regard to the franchise, in regard to abolishing the so-called "rotten boroughs," and in regard to some of the points of the "Charter." Chartism played a not unimportant historical role and compelled a section of the ruling classes to make certain concessions, reforms, in order to avert great shocks. Generally speaking, it must be said that of all the ruling classes, the ruling classes of England, both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, proved to be the cleverest, most flexible from the point of view of their class interests, from the point of view of maintaining their power. Take as an example, say, from modern history, the general strike in England in 1926. The first thing any other bourgeoisie would have done in the face. of such an event, when the General Council of Trade Unions called for a strike, would have been to arrest the trade union leaders. The British bourgeoisie did not do that, and it acted cleverly from the point of view of its own interests. I cannot conceive of such a flexible strategy being employed by the bourgeoisie in the United States, Germany or France. In order to maintain their rule, the ruling classes of Great Britain have never foresworn small concessions, reforms. But it would be a mistake to think that these reforms were revolutionary.

Wells: You have a higher opinion of the ruling classes of my country than I have. But is there a great difference between a small revolution and a great reform? Is not a reform a small revolution?

Stalin: Owing to pressure from below, the pressure of the masses, the bourgeoisie may sometimes concede certain partial reforms while remaining on the basis of the existing social-economic system. Acting in this way, it calculates that these concessions are necessary in order to preserve its class rule. This is the essence of reform. Revolution, however, means the transference of power from one class to another. That is why it is impossible to describe any reform

as revolution. That is why we cannot count on the change of social systems taking place as an imperceptible transition from one system to another by means, of reforms, by the ruling class making concessions....

Wells: I am very grateful to you for this talk which has meant a great deal to me. In explaining things to me you probably called to mind how you had to explain the fundamentals of socialism in the illegal circles before the revolution. At the present time there are in the world only two persons to whose opinion, to whose every word, millions are listening: you and Roosevelt. Others may preach as much as they like; what they say will never be printed or heeded. I cannot yet appreciate what has been done in your country; I only arrived yesterday. But I have already seen the happy faces of healthy men and women and I know that something very considerable is being done here. The contrast with 1920 is astounding.

Stalin: Much more could have been done had we Bolsheviks been cleverer.

Wells: No, if human beings were cleverer it would be a good thing to invent a five-year plan for the reconstruction of the human brain which obviously lacks many things needed for a perfect social order. (Laughter).

Stalin: Don't you intend to stay for the Congress of the Soviet Writers Union?

Wells: Unfortunately, I have various engagements to fulfill and can stay in the U.S.S.R. only for a week. I came to see you and I am very satisfied by our talk. But I intend to discuss with such Soviet writers as I can meet the possibility of their affiliating to the P.E.N. club. This is an international organization of writers founded by Galsworthy; after his death I became president. The organization is still weak, but it has branches in many countries, and what is more important, the speeches of its members, are widely reported in the press. It insists upon this free expression of opinion, even of opposition opinion. I hope to discuss this point with Gorky. I do not know if you are prepared yet for that much freedom here.

Stalin: We Bolsheviks call it "self-criticism." It is widely used in the U.S.S.R. If there is anything I can do to help you I shall be glad to do so.

Wells: (Expresses thanks.)
Stalin: (Expresses thanks for the visit.)

THE END

The Criticism

H. G. WELLS by J. D. Beresford

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE NORMALITY OF MR WELLS

In his Preface to the *Unpleasant Plays*, Mr Shaw boasts his possession of "normal sight." The adjective is the oculist's, and the application of it is Mr Shaw's, but while the phrase is misleading until it is explained to suit a particular purpose, it has a pleasing adaptability, and I can find none better as a key to the works of Mr H.G. Wells.

We need not bungle over the word "normal," in any attempt to meet the academic objection that it implies conformity to type. In this connection, the gifted possessor of normal sight is differentiated from his million neighbours by the fact that he wears no glasses; and if a few happy people still exist here and there who have no need for the mere physical assistance, the number of those whose mental outlook is undistorted by tradition, prejudice or some form of bias is so small that we regard them as inspired or criminal according to the inclination of our own beloved predilection. And no spectacles will correct the mental astigmatism of the multitude, a fact that is often a cause of considerable annoyance to the possessors of normal sight. That defect of vision, whether congenital or induced by the confinements of early training, persists and increases throughout life, like other forms of myopia. The man who sees a ball as slightly flattened, like a tangerine orange too tightly packed (an "oblate spheroid" would be the physicist's brief description), seeks the society of other men who share his illusion; and the company of them take arms against the opposing faction, which is confirmed in the belief that the ball is egg-shaped, that the bulge, in fact, is not "oblate" but "prolate."

I will not elaborate the parable; it is sufficient to indicate that in my reading of Mr Wells, I have seen him as regarding all life from a reasonable distance. By good fortune he avoided the influences of his early training, which was too ineffectual to leave any permanent mark upon him. His readers may infer, from certain descriptions in *Kipps*, and *The History of Mr Polly*, that Wells himself sincerely

regrets the inadequacies of that "private school of dingy aspect and still dingier pretensions, where there were no object lessons, and the studies of book-keeping and French were pursued (but never effectually overtaken) under the guidance of an elderly gentleman, who wore a nondescript gown and took snuff, wrote copperplate, explained nothing, and used a cane with remarkable dexterity and gusto." But, properly considered, that inadequate elderly gentleman may be regarded as our benefactor. If he had been more apt in his methods, he might have influenced the blessed normality of his pupil, and bound upon him the spectacles of his own order. Worse still, Mr Wells might have been born into the leisured classes, and sent to Eton and Christchurch, and if his genius had found any expression after that awful experience, he would probably, at the best, have written polite essays or a history of Napoleon, during the intervals of his leisured activity as a member of the Upper House.

Happily, Fate provided a scheme for preserving his eyesight, and pitched him into the care of Mr and Mrs Joseph Wells on the 21st September 1866; behind or above a small general shop in Bromley. Mrs Wells was the daughter of an innkeeper at Midhurst and had been in service as a lady's maid before her marriage. Joseph Wells had had a more distinguished career. He had been a great Kent bowler in the early sixties, and it must have been, I think, only the year before the subject of our essay appeared at Bromley that his father took four wickets with consecutive balls and created a new record in the annals of cricket. The late Sir Francis Galton might have made something out of this ancestry; I must confess that it is entirely beyond my powers, although I make the reservation that we know little of the abilities of H.G. Wells' mother. She has not figured as a recognisable portrait in any of his novels.

The Bromley shop, like most of its kind, was a failure. Moderate success might have meant a Grammar School for young Wells, and the temptations of property, but Fate gave our young radical another twist by thrusting him temporarily within sight of an alien and magnificent prosperity, where as the son of the housekeeper at Up Park, near Petersfield, he might recognise his immense separation from the members of the ruling class, as described in *Tono-Bungay*.

After that came "the drapery," first at Windsor and then at

Southsea; but we have no autobiography of this period, only the details of the trade and its circumstances. For neither Hoopdriver, nor Kipps, nor Polly could have qualified for the post of assistant at Midhurst Grammar School, a position that H.G. Wells obtained at sixteen after he had broken his indentures with the Southsea draper.

At this point we come up with Mr Lewisham, and may follow him in his experiences after he obtained what was, in fact, a scholarship at the Normal School of Science, South Kensington; but we drop that hero again before his premature marriage and failure, to follow the uncharted course of Wells obtaining his B.Sc. with first-class honours; passing to an assistant-mastership at the Henley House School, St John's Wood, and so coming by way of tutor, lecturer and demonstrator to the beginnings of journalism, to the breaking of a blood-vessel and thence, without further diversion, to the trade of letters, somewhere in the summer of 1893.

I have taken as my text the normality of Mr Wells, on the understanding that I shall define the essential term as I will; and this brief outline of his early experiences may help to show, *inter alia*, that he viewed life from many angles before he was twenty-seven. That he had the capacity so to see life was either a lucky accident or due to some untraceable composition of heredity. That he kept his power was an effect of his casual education. He was fortunate enough to escape training in his observation of the sphere.

Persistent repetition will finally influence the young mind, however gifted, and if Mr Wells had been subject to the discipline of what may be called an efficient education, he might have seen his sphere at the age of twenty-seven as slightly flattened — whether it appeared oblate or prolate is no consequence — and I could not have crowned him with the designation that heads this Introduction.

He is, in fact, normal just in so far as his gift of vision was undistorted by the precepts and dogmas of his parents, teachers and early companions.

II. THE ROMANCES

Mr Wells' romances have little or nothing in common with those of Jules Verne, not even that peculiar quality of romance which revels in the impossible. The heroes of Jules Verne were idealised creatures making use of some wonderful invention for their own purposes; and the future of mankind was of no account in the balance against the lust for adventure under new mechanical conditions. Also, Jules Verne's imagination was at the same time mathematical and Latin; and he was entirely uninfluenced by the writings of Comte.

Mr Wells' experiments with the relatively improbable have become increasingly involved with the social problem, and it would be possible to trace the growth of his opinions from this evidence alone, even if we had not the valuable commentary afforded by his novels and his essays in sociology. But his interest in the present and future welfare of man would not in the first place have prompted him to the writing of romance (unless it had been cast in the severely allegorical form of *The Pilgrim's Progress*), and if we are to account for that ebullition, we shall be driven — like Darwin with his confounding peacock — to take refuge in some theory of exuberance. The later works have been so defensive and, in one sense, didactic that one is apt to forget that many of the earlier books, and all the short stories, must have originated in the effervescence of creative imagination.

Mr Wells must, also, have been slightly intoxicated by the first effects of reaction. A passage from *The Future in America* exhibits him somewhat gleefully reviving thoughts of the prison-house, and I quote it in order to account for his first exercises in prophecy by a study of contrasts. "I remember," he writes, "that to me in my boyhood speculation about the Future was a monstrous joke. Like most people of my generation, I was launched into life with millennial assumptions. This present sort of thing, I believed, was going on for a time, interesting personally, perhaps, but as a whole inconsecutive, and then — it might be in my lifetime or a little after it — there would be trumpets and shoutings and celestial phenomena, a battle of Armageddon, and the Judgment.... To talk

about the Man of the year Million was, of course, in the face of this great conviction, a whimsical play of fancy. The year Million was just as impossible, just as gaily nonsensical as fairyland....”

The imprisoning bottle was opened when he became a student of biology, under Huxley, and the liquid of his suppressed thought began to bubble. He prefaced his romances by a sketch in the old *Pall Mall Gazette*, entitled *The Man of the Year Million*, an a priori study that made one thankful for one’s prematurity. After that physiological piece of logic, however, he tried another essay in evolution, published in 1895 in book form under the title of *The Time Machine* — the first of his romances.

The machine itself is the vaguest of mechanical assumptions; a thing of ivory, quartz, nickel and brass that quite illogically carries its rider into an existing past or future. We accept the machine as a literary device to give an air of probability to the essential thing, the experience; and forget the means in the effect. The criterion of the prophecy in this case is influenced by the theory of “natural selection.” Mr Wells’ vision of the “Sunset of Mankind” was of men so nearly adapted to their environment that the need for struggle, with its corollary of the extermination of the unfit, had practically ceased. Humanity had become differentiated into two races, both recessive; one, the Eloi, a race of childlike, simple, delicate creatures living on the surface of a kindly earth; the other, the Morlocks, a more active but debased race, of bestial habits, who lived underground and preyed cannibalistically on the surface-dwellers whom they helped to preserve, as a man may preserve game. The Eloi, according to the hypothesis of the Time Traveller, are the descendants of the leisured classes; the Morlocks of the workers. “The Eloi, like the Carlovingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on sufferance; since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the day-lit surface intolerable. And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and maintained them in their habitual needs perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service.” All this is in the year 802,701 A.D.

The prophecy is less convincing than the wonderful sight of the declining earth some million years later, sinking slowly into the

dying fires of the worn-out sun. Man and the vertebrates have disappeared, and the highest wonder of animal life is represented by giant crustaceans, which in turn give way to a lower form. We have a vision of an involution that shall succeed the highest curve of development; of life ending where it began in the depths of the sea, as the initial energy of the solar system is dissipated and the material of it returns to rest at the temperature of the absolute zero. And the picture is made more horrible to the imaginative by the wonder whether the summit of the evolutionary curve has not already been reached — or it may be passed in the days of the Greek philosophers.

The Time Machine, despite certain obvious faults of imagination and style, is a brilliant fantasy; and it affords a valuable picture of the young Wells looking at the world, with his normal eyes, and finding it, more particularly, incomplete. At the age of twenty-seven or so, he has freed himself very completely from the bonds of conventional thought, and is prepared to examine, and to present life from the detached standpoint of one who views it all from a respectable distance; but who is able, nevertheless — an essential qualification — to enter life with all the passion and generosity of his own humanity.

And in *The Wonderful Visit* — published in the same year as *The Time Machine* — he comes closer to earth. That ardent ornithologist, the Rev. K. Hilyer, Vicar of Siddermouth, who brought down an angel with a shot-gun, is tenderly imagined; a man of gentle mind, for all the limitations of his training. The mortalised angel, on the other hand, is rather a tentative and simple creature. He may represent, perhaps, the rather blank mind of one who sees country society without having had the inestimable privilege of learning how it came about. His temperament was something too childlike — without the child's brutality — to investigate the enormous complexities of adjustment that had brought about the conditions into which he was all too suddenly plunged by a charge of duck-shot. He came and was filled with an inalterable perplexity, but some of his questions were too ingenuous; and while we may sympathise with the awful inertia of Hilyer before the impossible task of explaining the inexplicable differences between mortal precept and mortal practice, we feel that we might, in some cases at least, have made a

more determined effort. We might have found some justification for chairs, by way of instance, and certainly an excuse for raising beds above the floor. But the wounded angel, like the metal machine, is only a device whereby the searching examination of our author may be displayed in an engrossing and intimate form. And in *The Wonderful Visit*, that exuberance we postulated, that absorption in the development of idea, is more marked; in the unfolding of the story we can trace the method of the novelist.

Indeed, the three romances that follow discover hardly a trace of the social investigator. *The Island of Dr Moreau*, *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds* are essays in pure fantasy, and although the first of the three is influenced by biology I class it unhesitatingly among the works of sheer exuberance. Each of these books is, in effect, an answer to some rather whimsical question, and the problem that Dr Moreau attempted to solve was: "Can we, by surgery, so accelerate the evolutionary process as to make man out of a beast in a few days or weeks?" And within limits he found that the answer was: "Yes."

In the seclusion of his island, and with the poor assistance of the outlawed medical student, Montgomery, Dr Moreau succeeded in producing some creditable parodies of humanity by his operations on pigs, bulls, dogs and other animals. These cut and remoulded creatures had something the appearance and intelligence of Homo Sapiens, and could be maintained at that level by the exercise of discipline and the constant recital of "the Law"; left to themselves they gradually reverted to the habits and manners of the individual beasts out of which they had been carved. We may infer that some subtle organic chemistry worked its determination upon their uncontrolled wills, but Mr Wells offers no explanation, psychic, chemical or biological, and I do not think that he intended any particular fable beyond the evident one that, physically, one species is as like to the next as makes no matter. What Moreau did well another man might have done better. It is a good story, and the adventures of the marooned Prendick, alone, are sufficient justification for the original conception. (I feel bound to note, however, the absurd comments of some early reviewers who seemed to imagine that the story was a defence of vivisection.)

The next romance (1897) seeks to answer the question: "What could a man do if he were invisible?" Various attempts to answer that question had been made by other writers, but none of them had come to it with Mr Wells' practical grasp of the real problem; the earlier romantics had not grappled with the necessity for clothes and the various ways in which a material man, however indistinguishable his body by our sense of sight, must leave traces of his passage. The study from beginning to end is finely realistic; and even the theory of the albino, Griffin, and in a lesser degree his method of winning the useless gift of invisibility, are convincing enough to make us wonder whether the thing is not scientifically possible. As a pure romance set in perfectly natural surroundings, *The Invisible Man* is possibly the high-water mark of Mr Wells' achievement in this kind. He has perfected his technique, and the interest in the development of the story works up steadily to the splendid climax, when the form of the berserker Griffin returns to visibility, his hands clenched, his eyes wide open, and on his face an expression of "anger and dismay," the elements — as I choose to think — of man's revolt against imprisonment in the flesh. It is worth while to note that by another statement, the same problem is posed and solved in the short story called *The Country of the Blind*.

The War of the Worlds (1898), although written in the first person, is in some ways the most detached of all these fantasies; and it is in this book that Mr Wells frankly confesses his own occasional sense of separation. "At times," says the narrator of the history, "I suffer from the strangest sense of detachment from myself and the world about me, I seem to watch it all from the outside, from somewhere inconceivably remote, out of time, out of space, out of the stress and tragedy of it all." That sense must have remained with him as he wrote the account of the invading Martians, so little passion does the book contain. The vision, however, is clear enough and there is more invention than in many of the other romances. The picture of the Martians themselves develops in one direction the theory of human evolution expressed in *The Man of the Year Million*. The expansion of the brain case, and the apotheosis of pure intellect, devoid, so far as we can judge, of any emotional expression, are the steadily biological deductions that we should expect from the Wells of this

period. The fighting machines of these incomprehensible entities, the heat ray and the black smoke, are all excellent conceptions; and the narrative is splendidly graphic. But only in the scenes with the curate, when the narrator is stirred to passionate anger, and in his later passages with the sapper, do we catch any glimpses of the novelist intrigued with the intimate affairs of humanity. Even the narrator's brother, in his account of the escape with two women in a pony-carriage, has become infected with that sense of detachment. The two women are strongly differentiated but leave little impression of personality.

The fact that I have made this comment on lack of passion in describing one of these earlier romances is indicative of a particular difference between Mr Wells' method in this sort and the method of the lesser writer of fantasias. The latter, whatever his idea, and it may be a brilliant idea, is always intent on elaborating the wonder of his theme by direct description. Mr Wells is far more subtle and more effective. He takes an average individual, identifies him with the world as we know it, and then proceeds gradually to bring his marvel within the range of this individual's apprehension. We see the improbable, not too definitely, through the eyes of one who is prepared with the same incredulity as the reader of the story, and as a result the strange phenomenon, whether fallen angel, invisible man, converted beast or invading Martian, takes all the shape of reality. That this shape is convincing is due to the brilliance of Mr Wells' imagination and his power of graphic expression; the lesser writer might adopt the method and fail utterly to attain the effect; but it is this conception of the means to reach the intelligence and senses of the average reader that chiefly distinguishes these romances from those of such writers as Jules Verne. Our approach to the wonderful is so gradual and so natural that when we are finally confronted with it the incredible thing has become inevitable and expected. Finally, it has become so identified with human surprise, anger or dismay that any failure of humanity in the chief person of the story reacts upon our conception of the wonderful intrusion among familiar phenomena.

Now, this power of creating the semblance of fact out of an ideal was too valuable a thing to be wasted on the making of stories that

had no purpose beyond that of interesting or exciting the reader with such imaginations as the Martians, whose only use was to threaten humanity with extinction. Mr Wells' own sight of our blindness, our complacent acceptance of the sphere as an oblate or prolate spheroid, might be, he hoped, another of the marvels which we should come to accept through the medium of romance. So he began tentatively at first to introduce a vivid criticism of the futility of present-day society into his fantasies, and the first and the least of these books was that published in 1899 as *When the Sleeper Wakes*, a title afterwards changed to *The Sleeper Awakes*.

In the two opening chapters we find the same delightfully realistic treatment of the unprecedented slowly mingling with the commonplace. The first appearance of Graham the Sleeper, tormented then by the spectres and doubts that accompany insomnia, is made so credible that we accept his symptoms without the least demur; his condition is merely unusual enough to excite a trembling interest. Even the passing of his early years of trance does not arouse scepticism. But then we fall with one terrific plunge into the world of A.D. 2100, and, like Graham, we cannot realise it. Moreover this changed, developed world has a slightly mechanical air. The immense enclosed London, imagined by Mr Wells, is no Utopia, yet, like the dream of earlier prophets, it is too logical to entice us into any hallucination; and we come, fatally, to a criticism of the syllogism.

Mr Wells himself has confessed, in a new Preface, that this is "one of the most ambitious and least satisfactory" of his books; and explains that it was written against time, when he was on the verge of a serious illness. It is superfluous, therefore, to criticise it in detail, but one or two points in relation to the sociological idea must be emphasised.

The main theme is the growing division between Capital and Labour. The Giant Trust — managing the funds accumulated in Graham's name, a trust that has obtained possession of so immense a capital that it controls the chief activities of the world — is figured in the command of a certain Ostrog, who, with all the dependents that profit by the use of his wealth and such mercenaries as he can hold to himself, represents one party in opposition to the actual workers and

producers, generically the People. The picture is the struggle of our own day in more acute form; the result, in the amended edition, is left open. “Who will win — Ostrog or the People?” Mr Wells writes in the Preface referred to above, and answers: “A thousand years hence that will still be just the open question we leave to-day.”

I am not concerned in this place to question the validity of that answer, nor to suggest that the Wells of 1914 would not necessarily give the same account of his beliefs as the Wells of 1909, but I must draw attention to the attitude displayed in the book under consideration in order to point the change of feeling recognisable in later books. In *The Sleeper Awakes*, even in the revised version, the sociological theory is still mechanical, the prophecy at once too logical, and at the same time deduced from premises altogether too restricted. The world of A.D. 2100 is the world of to-day, with its more glaring contrasts still more glaringly emphasised; with its social incongruities and blindness raised to a higher power. And all that it lacked has been put into a romance called *In the Days of the Comet* (1906), a book to which I shall now leap, returning later to consider the comparatively irrelevant theses of three other romances that chronologically intervened.

The great change wrought by the coming of the Comet might be sentimentally described as a change of heart; I prefer to call it a change of reason. All the earlier part of the work, which is again told in the first person, presents the life of a Midland industrial area as seen by one who has suffered it. The Capital-Labour problem bulks in the foreground, and is adequately supported by a passionate exposition of the narrowness and misery of lower-middle-class life in the jumble of limitations, barriers and injustices that arise from the absolute ownership of property. Also, into this romance — the only one, by the way — comes some examination of the relations of the sexes. And all this jumble is due, if we are to believe the remedy, to human misunderstanding. The influence of the Comet passed over the earth, and men, after a few hours of trance, awoke to a new realisation. We come to a first knowledge of the change in one of the most beautiful passages that Mr Wells has written; and although I dislike to spoil a passage by setting it out unclothed by the idea and expectations which have led to its expression, given it form, and

fitted it to a just place in the whole composition, I will make an exception in this case in order to justify my metaphor of "normal sight." The supposed writer of the description had just awakened from the trance induced by the passing of the Comet. He says:

"I came slowly, stepping very carefully because of those drugged, feebly awakening things, through the barley to the hedge. It was a very glorious hedge, so that it held my eyes. It flowed along and interlaced like splendid music. It was rich with lupin, honeysuckle, campions and ragged robin; bed straw, hops and wild clematis twined and hung among its branches, and all along its ditch border the starry stitchwort lifted its childish faces and chorused in lines and masses. Never had I seen such a symphony of note-like flowers and tendrils and leaves. And suddenly, in its depths, I heard a chirrup and the whir of startled wings.

"Nothing was dead, but everything had changed to beauty! And I stood for a time with clean and happy eyes looking at the intricate delicacy before me and marvelling how richly God has made his worlds...."

And not only the writer but also every other person on the earth had been miraculously cured of their myopia and astigmatism. They saw beauty and the means to still more perfect beauty, and, seeing, they had but to believe and the old miseries vanished. In the old days men preached a furious denial of self that led to the fatuity of an asceticism such as that of St Simon Stylites. The lesson — I cannot deny that the book is didactic — of the change wrought by the comet is that man should find the full expression of his personality in sympathy and understanding. The egotism remains, but it works to a collective end....

War is necessarily touched upon in this book as an inevitable corollary to the problems of personal and a fortiori of national property; but the real counterblast against wholesale fratricide was reserved for the following romance, published in 1908.

The War in the Air definitely disclosed a change of method that was adumbrated in its predecessor. The agent of experience is still retained in the person of Bert Smallways, but the restrictions imposed by the report of an eye-witness have become too limiting, and, like Hardy in *The Dynasts*, Mr Wells alternates between a near

and a distant vision. The Welt-Politik could not be explained through the intelligence of a "little Cockney cad," even though he was "by no means a stupid person and up to a certain limit not badly educated"; and the general development of the world-war, the account of the collapse of the credit system and all such large and general effects necessitated the broad treatment of the historian. So the intimate, personal narrative of Smallways' adventures is occasionally dropped for a few pages; Mr Wells shuts off his magic-lantern and fills the interval with an analysis of larger issues.

And the issues are so vital, the *dénouement* so increasingly probable, that, despite all the exaggerations necessary in a fiction of this kind, the warning contained in this account of a world-war is one that must remain in the minds of any thoughtful reader. Smallways' pert reflection on the causes of the immense downfall represents the wisdom that comes of bitter experience, and the application of it is very pertinent to present conditions. "There was us in Europe all at sixes and sevens with our silly flags and our silly newspapers raggin' us up against each other and keepin' us apart," says Smallways, and for the briefest analysis of causes that continually threaten us with all the useless horrors of war, the summary could scarcely be bettered.

Indeed, I think that *The War in the Air* is the greatest of Mr Wells' achievements in fantasy that has a deeper purpose than mere amusement. The story is absorbing and Smallways a perfectly conceived character, recommendations that serve to popularise the book as a romance; but all the art of the construction is relevant to the theme, and to the logical issue which is faced unflinchingly. In the many wild prophecies that have been incorporated in various stories of a great European war, there has been discoverable now and again some hint of insight into the real dangers that await mankind. But such stories as these degenerate into some accidental, but inferentially glorious, victory of British arms, and any value in the earlier comments is swamped in the sentimentality of the fortuitous, and designedly popular, sequel. In the book now under consideration the conception is too wide for any such lapses into the maudlin. British interests play an insignificant part in the drama. We have to consider war not as an incident in the history of a nation, but as a horrible disgrace in the history of humanity.

And war is the theme also of *The World Set Free* (1914), but it leads here to a theory of reconstruction of which we have no sight in the earlier work. The opening chapters describe the inception of the means, the discovery of the new source of energy — a perfectly reasonable conception — that led to the invention of the "atomic bomb," a thing so terribly powerful and continuous in its action that after the first free use of it in a European outbreak, war became impossible. As a romance, the book fails. The interest is not centred in a single character, and we are given somewhat disconnected glimpses of various phases in the discovery of the new energy, in its application, and of the catastrophes that follow its use as an instrument of destruction. The essay form has almost dominated the method of the novelist, and consequently the essential parable has not the same force as in *The War in the Air*. Nevertheless, the vision is there, obscured by reason of its more personal expression; and before I return to consider the three less pertinent romances interposed between those that have a more recognisable critical tendency, I wish to sum up the distinctive attitude of the four just considered.

And in this thing I claim that the conscious purpose of the artist is of comparatively small account. I may be doing Mr Wells an injustice, either by robbing him of the credit of a clearly conceived intention, or by reading into his books a deliberation which he might wish to disclaim. But my business is not justice to the author in this sense, but an interpretation — necessarily personal — of the message his books have conveyed to a particular reader. And the plain message that all these romances — including those that follow — have conveyed to me is the necessity for ridding the mind of traditions of the hypnotic suggestions of parents and early teachers, of the parochial influences of immediate surroundings, of the prejudices and self-interested dogmatisms and hyperboles of common literature, especially of the daily and weekly press; in order that we may, if only for an exercise in simple reason, dissociate ourselves for a moment from all those intimate forces, and regard life with the calmness of one detached from personal interests and desires. No human being who has not thus stood apart from life can claim to have realised himself; and in so far as he is unable thus to

separate himself temporarily from his circumstances he confesses that he is less a personality than a bundle of reactions to familiar stimuli. But given that power of detachment, the reader may find in these four books matter for the reconsideration of the whole social problem. Whether he accept such tentative reconstructions as those suggested in *The World Set Free* or *In the Days of the Comet* is relatively unimportant, the essential thing is that he should view life with momentarily undistracted eyes; and see both the failures of our civilisation and its potentialities for a finer and more gracious existence....

The First Men in the Moon (1901) is little more than a piece of sheer exuberance. The theory of the means to the adventure and the experience itself are both plausible. There are a few minor discrepancies, but when the chief assumption is granted the deductions will all stand examination. The invention of cavorite, the substance that is impervious to the force — whatever it may be — of gravitation, as other substances are impervious to light, heat, sound or electricity, is not a priori impossible, nor is the theory that the moon is hollow, that the "Selenites" live below the surface, or that evolution has produced on our satellite an intelligent form which, anatomically, is more nearly allied to the insect than to the vertebrate type as we know it. The exposition of lunar social conditions cannot be taken very seriously. Specialisation is the key-note; the production by education and training, of minds, and, as far as possible, bodies, adapted to a particular end, and incapable of performing other technical functions. The picture of this highly developed state, however, is not such as would tempt us to emulation. As a machine it works; as an ideal it lacks any presentation of the thing we call beauty. The apotheosis of intelligence in the concrete example leaves us unambitious in that direction.

One chapter, however, stands apart and elaborates once more that detachment for space and time which I have so particularly emphasised as the more important feature of these particular books. Mr Bedford, alone in his Cavorite sphere between the Earth and the Moon, experiences this sensation of aloofness. "I became, if I may go express it, dissociate from Bedford," he writes. "I looked down on Bedford as a trivial, incidental thing with which I chanced to be

connected," Bedford, unfortunately for my moral, was a poor creature who got no benefit from his privilege, who flouted it indeed and regretted his inability "to recover the full-bodied self-satisfaction of his early days." Possibly the fact that in his case the knowledge was thrust upon him may account for his failure. It is only the knowledge we seek that has any influence upon us.

The Sea Lady (1902) stands alone among Mr Wells' romances. The realistic method remains, but the conception is touched with a poetic fancy of a kind that I have not found elsewhere in these books. The Venus Annodomini who came out of the sea at Folkestone in the form of an authentic mermaid was something more than a mere critic of our civilised conventions. She was that, too; she asked why people walked on the Leas "with little to talk about and nothing to look at, and bound not to do all sorts of natural things, and bound to do all sorts of preposterous things." But she was also the personification of "other dreams." She had "the quality of the open sky, of deep tangled places, of the flight of birds ... of the high sea." She represented to one man, at least, "the Great Outside." And, if we still find a repetition of the old statement in that last description, it is, nevertheless, surrounded with a glamour that is not revealed in such books as *In the Days of the Comet*. The ideal that is faintly shadowed in *The Sea Lady* is more ethereal, less practical; the story, despite the naturalistic, half-cynical manner of its recountal, has the elements of romance. The closing scene describes the perplexity of a practical Kentish policeman "who in the small hours before dawn came upon the wrap the Sea Lady had been wearing, just as the tide overtook it," He stands there on the foreshore with a foolish bewilderment, wondering chiefly "what people are up to." He is the "simple citizen of a plain and obvious world." And Mr Wells concludes: "I picture the interrogation of his lantern going out for a little way, a stain of faint pink curiosity upon the mysterious vast serenity of the night." And I make an application of the parable for my own purposes, and wonder how far the curiosity of Mr Wells' readers will carry them into the great mystery that lies behind the illusion of this apparently obvious world.

We come, finally, without any suggestion of climax, to *The Food of the Gods* (1904). The food was produced, casually in the first

instance, by two experimenters who served no cause but that of their own inquisitive science. One of them, Redwood, had become intrigued by the fact that the growth of all living things proceeded with bursts and intermissions; it was as if they had "to accumulate force to grow, grew with vigour only for a time, and then had to wait for a space before they could go on growing again." And Bensington, the other experimenter, succeeded in separating a food that produced regular instead of intermittent growth. It was universal in its effects, influencing vegetable as well as animal life; and in the course of twenty years it produced human giants, forty feet high. This is a theme for Mr Wells to revel in, and he does, treating the detail of the first two-thirds of the book with a fine realism. Like Bensington, he saw, "behind the grotesque shapes and accidents of the present, the coming world of giants and all the mighty things the future has in store — vague and splendid, like some glittering palace seen suddenly in the passing of a sunbeam far away." The parable is plain enough, but the application of it weakens when we realise that so far as the merely physical development goes, the food of the gods is only bringing about a change of scale. If we grant that this "insurgent bigness" must conquer the world, the final result is only humanity in the same relation to life that it now occupies, and we are left to reflect with Bensington, after the vision had faded, on "sinister shadows, vast declivities and darknesses, inhospitable immensities, cold, wild and terrible things."

The change of scale, however, so long as it was changing, presents in another metaphor the old contrasts. The young giants, the Cossars and Redwood, looking down on common humanity from a vantage-point some thirty to forty feet higher than the "little people," are critical by force of circumstances; and they are at the same time handicapped by an inability to comprehend the thing criticised. They are too differentiated; and for the purpose of the fable none of them is gifted with the power to study these insects with the sympathy of a Henri Fabre. We may find some quality of blundering stupidity in the Cossars and in young Redwood, they were too prejudiced by their physical scale; but the simple Caddles, born of peasant parents, uneducated and set to work in a chalk quarry, is the true enquirer. He walked up to London to solve his problem, and his fundamental

question: “What’s it all *for*?” remained unanswered. The “little people” could not exchange ideas with him, and he never met his brother giants. It is, however, exceedingly doubtful whether they could have offered him any satisfactory explanation of the purpose of the universe. Their only ambition seemed to be reconstruction on a larger scale.

I think the partial failure of *The Food of the Gods* to furnish any ethical satisfaction is due to the fact that in this romance Mr Wells has identified himself too closely with the giants; a fault that indicates a slight departure from normality. The inevitable contrast between great and little lacks a sympathy and appreciation we find elsewhere. “Endless conflict. Endless misunderstanding. All life is that. Great and little cannot understand one another” is the true text of the book; and it implies a weakness in the great not less than in the little; a weakness that is hardly exonerated by the closing sentence: “But in every child born of man lurks some seed of greatness — waiting for the food.” I find a quality of reasonableness in the little people’s antagonism to the blundering superiority of those giants.

To the tail of these romances I may pin the majority of Mr Wells’ short stories. The best of them are all included in the collection published under the title of *The Country of the Blind*. In this form Mr Wells displays nothing but the exuberance of his invention. In the Preface to the collection he defines his conception of short-story writing as “the jolly art of making something very bright and moving; it may be horrible or pathetic or funny, or beautiful, or profoundly illuminating, having only this essential, that it should take from fifteen to twenty minutes to read aloud.” I can add nothing to that description, and would only take away from it so much as is implied by the statement that I cannot call to mind any one of these stories which is “profoundly illuminating” in the same sense that I would certainly apply the phrase to some of the romances. Jolly and bright they undoubtedly are, but when they are moving, they provide food for wonder rather than for enlightenment....

I cannot leave these romances without a comment on Mr Wells’ justification as preacher and prophet. Writing in the midst of the turmoil of war, I am vividly conscious of having had my mind prepared for it by the material I have here so inadequately described.

All the misunderstandings, the weaknesses, the noisy, meaningless ambitions, the tepid acceptance of traditional standards, have been exposed by Mr Wells in these fantasies of his. And in *The War in the Air*, with just such exaggerations as are necessary for a fiction of this kind, he has forecast the conditions which have now overtaken us. We know — or we might know if we had the capacity for any sort of consequent consideration of our conditions — that in a reasonably conducted civilisation no such awful catastrophe as this senseless conflagration could have been possible. No doubt we shall profit by the lesson, but it is one that any individual might have learned for himself from these romances, without paying the fearful price that is now necessary. And because humanity is apt to forget its most drastic punishments, to revert to its original inertia as soon as the smart is healed, I feel that when the worst is over, these books will have a greater value than ever before. I believe that in them may be found just those essentials of detachment and broad vision which might serve to promote a higher and more stable civilisation.

III. THE NOVELS

I am willing to maintain that H.G. Wells is second to none as a writer of romances of the type I have just examined. I am less certain of his position as a novelist. He brings to his fiction the open-eyed recognition of realities, the fine analysis of modern conditions, the lucid consequent thought and the clean, graphic style that mark the qualities of his other method; he has that "poetic gift, the gift of the creative and illuminating phrase," which, he has said, "alone justifies writing"; but he has not the power of creating characters that stand for some essential type of humanity. On the one hand he is inclined to idealise the engineer and the scientific researcher, on the other to satirise and, in effect, to group into one sloppy-thinking mass every other kind of Englishman, not excepting philosophers, politicians and social reformers. This broad generalisation omits any consideration of the merely uneducated, such as Hoopdriver or Kipps, and the many women he has drawn. But the former, however sympathetically treated, are certainly not idealised; and among the latter, the only real creation, in my opinion, is Susan Ponderevo in *Tono-Bungay*; although there is a possible composite of various women in the later books that may represent the general insurgent character of recent young womanhood. But now that I have made this too definite statement I want to go back over it, touch it up and smooth it out. For if I have found Mr Wells' character types too few and too specialised; and as if, with regard to his more or less idealised males — such as Capes, George Ponderevo, Remington, Trafford, Stafford — he had modelled and re-modelled them in the effort to build up one finally estimable figure of masculine ability; there still remains an enormous gallery of subsidiary portraits, for the most part faintly caricatured, of men and women who do stand for something in modern life; portraits that are valuable, interesting and memorable. Nevertheless, I submit that Mr Wells' novels will not live by reason of their characterisation.

The desire to write essays in this class of fiction does not seem to have overcome Wells until the last few years. Before 1909, he had written all his sociology and all his romances, with the exception of

The World Set Free, but only three novels — namely, *The Wheels of Chance*, *Love and Mr Lewisham* and *Kipps*; and none of them gives any indication of the characteristic method of the later work.

The first of the three, published in 1896, is in one respect a splendid answer to the objection against what has been called the episodical novel. The story deals only with ten glorious days in the life of Hoopdriver, a callow assistant in a draper's "emporium" at Putney. He learnt to ride a bicycle, set out to tour the south coast for his short summer holiday and rode into romance. One section of the book is a trifle too hilarious, coming perilously near to farce, but underlying the steady humour of it all is a perfectly consistent, even saddening, criticism of the Hoopdriver type. He has imagination without ability; life is made bearable for him chiefly by the means of his poor little dreams and poses; he sees himself momentarily in the part of a detective, a journalist, a South African millionaire, any assumption to disguise the horrible reality of the draper's assistant; and yet there is fine stuff in him. (Perhaps the suggested antithesis is hardly justified!) We leave him at the door of the Putney shop full of resolution to read, to undertake his own education, in some way, no doubt, to better himself, as he might have phrased it. But we doubt the quality of his determination and of the lasting influence of the "more wonderful desires and ambitions replacing those discrepant dreams." We have only followed Hoopdriver through a ten-day episode, but all his story has been told.

We are in quite a different position with regard to Lewisham. The history of his encounter with love and the world, published in 1900, covers a period of four or five years, but while we leave him down-at-heel, with a wife and a mother-in-law dependent upon him, and the prospect of fatherhood adding to his responsibilities, we are uncertain whither his career will take him. Lewisham is the first sketch for the type that was to be elaborated in five subsequent books. The allurements of his love for Ethel Henderson spoilt his chances at the science school, but he has the quality that is so conspicuously lacking in the Hoopdriver-Kipps-Polly succession. Lewisham had some resolution, undoubted energy, and the beginnings of that larger vision which was the gift of the later protagonists. But he is not idealised; he comes nearer to the average

of humanity than the later pictures of his like; although they share with him that tendency to sudden irascibility, to outbursts of a somewhat petty temper against the obvious limitations of life — a common tendency observable in nearly all Mr Wells' dominant male characters. Those few years of Lewisham's life were so well done, so consistently developed, that I have regretted the absence of a sequel. Indeed, I still regret it, although I realise very well that Mr Wells' steady progress in the conception of his own purpose as a writer has absolutely precluded any return to an older method. Lewisham was not quite strong enough to portray the further development of the dominant idea, not a sufficiently tempered tool for the dissection of the modern world.

I have said little about the story of this fragment of Lewisham's career; I have not even mentioned that deliciously plausible and able rogue, Chaffery, the fraudulent medium; but in this essay I am more concerned to trace the meaning of Mr Wells' books than to criticise or praise the detail. With regard to the latter, the reader may always feel so perfectly safe. He need have no doubt that description of action, of mood, or of place will be vivid and convincing, true to life and essential to the story. I do not pass this detail by because I have found it better done in other contemporary writers; I have not; but because I find a pregnancy and a growing force behind these minutiæ that is strangely lacking from any other works of fiction in which I can find any comparison.

There are, however, still two more novels to be disposed of before I can examine the full expression of Mr Wells' purpose as I find it in his later books. One of these novels, *Kipps* (1905), is the next in chronological order; the other, *The History of Mr Polly*, was published in 1910, interpolated between *Ann Veronica* and *The New Machiavelli*. Both Kipps and Polly began active life in a draper's shop. The former is explicitly labelled "a simple soul." He is at once sillier and sharper than Hoopdriver, but, like that "dear fool" (the phrase is Mr Wells'), Kipps has some very sterling qualities. He had the good fortune to come into money — I cannot but count it good fortune in his case — and was just wise enough to avoid a marriage with Helen Walshingham— "County family. Related to the Earl of Beauprés" — and if he shirked that match rather from sheer funk

than from any clear realisation of the futility of what he was avoiding, he did, at least, run away with and marry that very charming little housemaid, Ann Pornick, whom he had loved in his early boyhood. After his marriage he lost the greater part of his money, and later recovered it again; but all these shocks of fortune left him the same simple soul, untroubled by any urgent problems outside the range of his personal experience. His brief contact with the dreamer, Masterman, and his friendship with the capable young engineer-socialist, Sid Pornick, Ann's brother, only roused Kipps to a momentary wonder, and his final enunciation of the great question was representative. "I was thinking just what a Rum Go everything is," he says. That question, to quote Mr Wells, "never reached the surface of his mind, it never took to itself substance or form; it looked up merely as the phantom of a face might look, out of deep waters, and sank again into nothingness."

Mr Polly is a third variant of the Hoopdriver-Kipps genus. He had more initiative, although he still presents a problem in inertia, and he is the only one of the three who had a feeling for literature, and read persistently, if vagariously. And Mr Polly did at last take his fate into his own hands, commit arson, desert his wife and wander off, an "exploratious adventurer," as he might have put it, to discover some joy and poetry in life after a heroic battle that he funked most horribly and might have avoided. This may sound rather a criminal record, and even so I have taken no account of his fraud on the Life Assurance Company, but no one could ever condemn Mr Polly — or wish him a happier employment than that he finally achieved partly by luck and partly by his own effort. He was the sport of the forces that break out so ungovernably in this haphazard world. As the "high-browed gentleman living at Highbury" explains: "Nothing can better demonstrate the collective dullness of our community, the crying need for a strenuous, intellectual renewal, than the consideration of that vast mass of useless, uncomfortable, under-educated, under-trained, and altogether pitiable people we contemplate when we use that inaccurate and misleading term, the Lower Middle Class. A great proportion of the lower middle class should properly be assigned to the unemployed and the unemployable." And that is the moral we may lay to heart from the

presentation of these three quite lovable and quite futile draper's assistants. Their stories are told without didacticism; the method displays at its brightest Mr Wells' intimate knowledge and understanding of the life and speech of the class portrayed; the developments are natural and absorbing enough to hold the interest of the most idle reader; and here and there, perhaps, an intelligent man or woman may be stirred to realise that he or she is in part responsible for the futility of a Hoopdriver or a Kipps, or for the jovial crimes of Mr Polly....

I come now to the six novels which represent most truly the striving, persistent idealism of the mature Wells. In these books he has come to the mastery of his own technique — so far as a man may ever master it. He admits that there remain inexpressible visions, he is apt at times to be overtaken by his own mannerisms (a fault that in no way affects the enjoyment or enlightenment of the average reader), but he has wrought and perfected a delicate instrument of style that is finely adapted to his purpose. I cannot avoid speaking of "purpose" in relation to these five books, and yet the word is misleading. I do not mean by it that Mr Wells has ever sat down to write a novel with the deliberate intention of converting an honest reader or so. But I do mean that he has tried very deliberately to express his own attitude in these books, and that whether or not he was intentionally a propagandist, he has done his utmost to explain and to glorify that attitude of his. Perhaps I shrink from that word "purpose" too sensitively, because it is so naturally associated in the mind with all that is clumsy and didactic in fiction. The "novel with a purpose," as the dreadful phrase has it, is a horrible thing, and none of this five could be so misdescribed. Nevertheless it is very plain that Mr Wells has deliberately selected his stories and his characters to illustrate certain points of view. The characters are consistent, and the story growing out of their influences and reactions is never distorted in order to score a point for the maintainer of a theory. But the preliminary selection cannot be overlooked. It has, without question, been made in each case to illustrate a thesis.

Ann Veronica (1909) opens an aspect of the sex question that has been amplified in later novels. The chief person in the story illustrates for us the revolt of young women against the limitations of

a certain, the most representative, type of home discipline. Ann Veronica was a well-educated young woman with that leaning towards biological science which seems an almost necessary element in the make-up of Mr Wells' exemplars of the open mind. She came to an open quarrel with her father on the question of attending a somewhat Bohemian fancy-dress ball, and she had the courage and determination to uphold her declaration of independence. She ran away, came up to London from her father's suburb, took lodgings and essayed quite unsuccessfully to make her own living. She failed in this endeavour because she had not been educated or trained for any of those few and specialised occupations that women may attempt in modern conditions. She learned by experience various essentials that had been omitted from any teaching she had received at home, and ended that phase of her life by falling in love with Capes, demonstrator at the Westminster Imperial College, a man who was living apart from his wife. Ann Veronica's story is the first serious essay in feminism — a term that takes a much wider meaning in Mr Wells' definition than is commonly attributed to it. The novel presents the claim of the woman to free herself from the restrictions that once almost necessarily limited her sphere of action, restrictions that are ever becoming more meaningless in a civilisation that has enforced new economic conditions. But Mr Wells goes far beyond that elementary proposition. He has tried in *Ann Veronica* — and again with a more delicate probe in *Marriage* and *The Passionate Friends* — to touch the hidden thing that is causing all this surface inflammation. He has analysed and diagnosed the exposed evil, always it seems with a certain tentativeness, and we are left to carry on his line of research; many of the difficulties of the problem are indicated, but no sovereign specific for the malady.

Tono-Bungay (1909) touches only casually on the sex question. The involved love affairs of George Ponderevo are less essential than the career of his uncle, the inventor of the patent medicine that gives a title to the book. In many ways *Tono-Bungay* is the best novel that Mr Wells has given us. It is written in the first person, a narrative form that afterwards served to convey Mr Wells' interpolated criticisms of the bodies social and politic in something nearly approaching the shape of an essay, but in *Tono-Bungay* there are no

important divagations from the development of the story. The framework of the book is provided by the life history of the narrator from early boyhood to middle age, matter interesting enough in itself even if it had not provided the means for revealing the inwardness of Edward Ponderevo's character and career. He was not a bad little man, this plump little chemist; a Lombroso or a Ferri would have found difficulty in classifying him as a "criminal type," however eager those investigators might have been to confirm their pet theories. Ponderevo's wife — the inimitable Aunt Susan — called him "Teddy" and his nephew endorses the appropriateness of that diminutive; he affirms that there was a characteristic "teddiness" about Uncle Ponderevo. He failed as a retail chemist in Wimblehurst. He was not naturally dishonest, but he had windy ideas about finance, and he was careless in the matter of certain trust monies. He was "imaginative, erratic, inconsistent, recklessly inexact," and his imagination led him by way of a patent medicine to company promoting on the Hooley scale. "Do you realise the madness of the world that sanctions such a thing?" asks Mr Wells in the person of the supposed narrator and points that question on a later page as follows:— "At the climax of his Boom, my uncle at the most sparing estimate must have possessed in substance and credit about two million pounds' worth of property to set off against his vague colossal liabilities, and from first to last he must have had a controlling influence in the direction of nearly thirty millions. This irrational muddle of a community in which we live gave him that, paid him at that rate for sitting in a room and scheming and telling it lies. For he created nothing, he invented nothing, he economised nothing. I cannot claim that a single one of the great businesses we organised added any real value to human life at all."

The enormous success and rapid failure of this futile, ambitious little chemist — a success that is, unhappily, only too conceivable and probable — are seen against the background of his nephew's life, Mr Wells has given a greater value and credulity to the legal criminalities of Ponderevo, by coming at him, as it were, through a wider angle; just as he achieves all the circumstances of reality in his romances by his postulation of an average eye-witness. But there are many threads in George Ponderevo's life that were not immediately

intertwined with the *Tono-Bungay* career, and his love for Beatrice Normanby touches in quite another manner on the sex problem opened in *Ann Veronica*. In both these books the story is the essential thing, and the attack upon social conditions is relatively indirect. The general criticism is at times quite explicit, but it is subordinated.

In *The New Machiavelli* (1910) these relations are nearly reversed. The detailed exposure of the moving forces that stimulate our political energies, occupies long sections into which the human relations of Remington (the form is again that of an autobiography) hardly enter, except in an occasional conversation to sharpen up a criticism. This comment on politics (regarded in his own constituency, Remington says, not as a "great constructive process" but as a "kind of dog-fight") is the chief theme; subsidiary to it is the comment on a society that could waste so valuable a life as Remington's for the sake of a moral convention. Both comments point Mr Wells' expression of what he calls in this book "the essential antagonism ... in all human affairs ... between ideas and the established method — that is to say, between ideas and the rule of thumb." And he adds: "The world I hate is the rule-of-thumb world; the thing I and my kind exist for primarily is battle with that, to annoy it, disarrange it, reconstruct it." This confession is so lucid and characteristic that I cannot improve upon it, and yet I see that it is a statement likely to arouse considerable resentment, "Of course we are detestable," Remington admits in this connection; and in these later, more urgently critical novels, we recognise a little too clearly that note of protest, almost of defensive proclamation. And in none of them do we see it more definitely than in the book now under consideration. In many ways *The New Machiavelli* stands apart from the other novels. I find it a little bitter in places, because the thing condemned appears too small for such unequivocal condemnation. The following superlative summary is put into the mouth of a minor character, but I think it is fairly representative of Remington's later attitude. "But of all the damned things that ever were damned," says the plain-spoken Britten, "your damned shirking, temperate, sham-efficient, self-satisfied, respectable, make-believe, Fabian-spirited Young Liberal is the utterly damnedest." As a commentary, I find this exaggerated; and although it is in the mouth of one who is not

presented as a spokesman for Mr Wells' own opinions, I feel that it comes very near to being a text for a considerable section of the political criticism; and that it indicates bias, a departure from normality.

And yet, despite this occasional exhibition of temper, *The New Machiavelli* is a most illuminating book. It reveals with extraordinary clearness the Wells of that period; but it also gives us a sight of the spirit in him that does not change. All his books, romances, novels and essays indicate a gradual process of growth; if we were to apply any label to him, we should inevitably land ourselves in confusion. He is nothing "in the first place" but a man with an intense desire to understand life. As he says in this book: "A human being who is a philosopher in the first place, a teacher in the first place, or a statesman in the first place, is thereby and inevitably — though he bring God-like gifts to the pretence — a quack." But while he may dissociate himself from any clique, and disclaim any fixed opinion that might earn for him the offensive and fiercely rejected label, he nevertheless presents to us one unchanging attitude in these very refusals. "I'm going to get experience for humanity out of all my talents — and bury nothing," says Remington; and that purpose is implicit in every book that Wells has written. He is an empiric, using first this test and then that to try the phenomena of life; publishing the detail of his experiment and noting certain deductions. But while he may offer a prescription for certain symptoms, he gives us to understand that he is only diagnosing a phase in human development; that he is seeking an ultimate which he never hopes to find, and that the deductions he draws to-day may be rejected to-morrow without a shadow of regret. He would be constant, I think, only in his inconstancy to any criterion of present conditions as applicable or likely to be applicable to the future; he sees life as a dynamic thing in process of change and growth. "All the history of mankind," he writes, "all the history of life has been and will be the story of something struggling out of the indiscriminated abyss, struggling to exist and prevail over and comprehend individual lives — an effect of insidious attraction, an idea of invincible appeal." And it is for this reason that he is so eager to battle with, annoy, disarrange and reconstruct that rule-of-thumb world he censures so steadily; he is

fighting the assumption of a static condition which he knows to be impossible.

And for a moment in *The New Machiavelli*, and again in his next book, *Marriage*, he has a passing vision of some greater movement of which we are but the imperfect instruments. He develops and then drops the idea of a "hinterland," not only to the individual mind but to the general consciousness. The "permanent reality," he calls it, "which is never really immediate, which draws continually upon human experience and influences human action more and more, but which is itself never the actual player upon the stage. It is the unseen dramatist who never takes a call." And in another place he writes in the same connection: " ... the ideas go on — as though we are all no more than little cells and corpuscles in some great brain beyond our understanding."

We come again to a hint of that explanation at the end of *Marriage*, published in 1912. The story, reduced to the barest outline, is that of the relations of Trafford to his wife. It is not complicated by any sexual temptations or jealousies, but it gradually evolves the integral problem of the meaning of life.

Trafford, before his engagement to Marjorie Pope, and for a year or two after his marriage, was engaged in research work. His speciality was molecular physics and he was a particularly brilliant investigator. That research, with all the possibilities that it held of some immense discovery of the laws that govern the constitution of inorganic and progressively, perhaps, of organic, matter, was sufficient to engross his mental energies, to give him a sense of satisfaction in life; but his six hundred pounds a year proved insufficient to satisfy the demands of Marjorie's claim to enjoyment. She was not a mere type of the worldly-minded woman. She represents, indeed, the claim of modern women for a distinctive interest and employment not less urgent and necessary than the interests and employments of men. And when she failed, as she plainly must have failed, to find any such occupation, her sense of beauty and her justifiable demand for life found an outlet largely in shopping, in entertaining, in all such ephemeral attractions and amusements as women in her class may seek and reject. That way of escape, however, soon raised financial obstructions to Trafford's

work. He had to find a means for increasing his income, and came at last and inevitably to the necessity for making more money and continually still more. The road to wealth was opened for him and he took it by sacrificing his research work, but when the economic problem had been triumphantly solved, he could not return to his first absorption in the problems of molecular physics. Life pressed upon him at every moment of the day, he had been inveigled into a net.

The manner of Trafford's escape from the thing that intrigued him has been severely criticised. After I had first read the book I too was inclined to deprecate the device of taking Trafford and Marjorie into the loneliness of a Labrador winter, in order to set them right with themselves and give them a clearer vision of life. But I have read *Marriage* twice since I formed that premature judgment, and each time I have found a growing justification for what at first may seem a somewhat whimsical solution to the difficulties of an essentially social problem.

But in effect this is the same specific that I upheld in my comment on the romances; it illustrates the need felt by a certain class of mind for temporary withdrawal from all the immediate urgencies and calls of social life; the overwhelming desire to see the movements and intricacies of human initiative and reactions, from a momentarily detached standpoint. And Mr Wells has offered us a further commentary on the difficulties of this abstraction, by withholding any vision from Trafford until he was finally isolated from Marjorie, and even from any physical contact with the movement of what we call reality, by illness and fever. Only then, indeed, did he touch the vital issues. I find the statement of this ultimate thing, vaguely phrased in Trafford's semi-delirium, presenting another expression of the thought quoted from *The New Machiavelli*; the conception of humanity as an instrument. "Something trying to exist," he says, something "which isn't substance, doesn't belong to space or time, something stifled and enclosed, struggling to get through." And later he repeats: "It struggles to exist, becomes conscious, becomes now conscious of itself. That is where I come in as a part of it. Above the beast in me is that — the desire to know better, to know — beautifully, and to transmit my knowledge. That's all there is in life for me beyond food and shelter and tidying up. This Being —

opening its eyes, listening, trying to comprehend. Every good thing in man is that — looking and making pictures, listening and making songs.... We began with bone-scratching. We're still — near it. I'm just a part of this beginning — mixed with other things. Every book, every art, every religion is that, the attempt to understand and express — mixed with other things."

I have reached something like a climax with this passage; a climax that I would willingly maintain if it were possible, inasmuch as it holds a representation of that unchanging influence which I find as an inspiration and a force behind all H.G. Wells' books. Necessarily this vital inspiration is, as he says, "mixed with other things"; he has had to find a means to express it, and our means of expression is limited not only by our own powers but in a large degree by the limitations of the audience addressed. Moreover H.G. Wells' art represents him in that it is a practical art. He is, in an unspecialised sense, a pragmatist. He comes back from his isolations to find in this world all the substance and potentialities of beauty both in outward appearance and in conduct. And he is not content to vapour of ideals. He recognises that the stuff of admiration and desire that animates his own being is present throughout humanity. Only the sight of it is obscured by all those stupidities and condescensions to rule-of-thumb that he attacks so furiously. Those are the impediments that he would clear away, and he acknowledges that they stand between him and his own sight of beauty. He is compelled always to struggle — and we can see the signs of it in all he writes — with his own weakness and limitations; criticising himself as he satirises the thing condemned, but striving without ceasing to serve the purpose of that which he knows is "struggling to exist." This, to me, is the spirit of H.G. Wells, and I find it a spirit that is as admirable as it is human....

The Passionate Friends (1913) is another experiment in exposition. The very real and fine love of Stafford (the autobiographer in this case) and Lady Mary Christian is spoiled, made to appear insignificant and debased, by all the conventions and petty, unoriginal judgments that go to the making of the rule of our society. The woman had to make her choice between love in an undignified poverty for which all her training had unfitted her, and a

sterile ease and magnificence that gave her those opportunities which her temperament and education demanded. She chose for dignity and opportunity, was tempted to grasp at love, and thus finally came into a blind alley from which death was the only escape. It is another picture of the old conflict illustrated in the persons of Ann Veronica and Marjorie Trafford; the constant inability that our conditions impose on the desire to love beautifully. The implicit demand is that for greater freedom for women, socially and economically. Incidentally we see that the man, Stafford, does not suffer in the same degree. His splendid love for Lady Mary is thwarted, but he finds an outlet. It is a new aspect of escape, by the way, for Stafford's illuminating business of spreading and collating knowledge is a relief from the scientific research which was in some form or another the specific of the earlier novels — if we exclude Remington's political propaganda in *The New Machiavelli*, a suggested solution that was, at the best, something half-hearted. And Stafford's escape, and his version of going to the mountain apart — by way of a sight of the East and of America — bring us back to that integral theme which I have so insisted upon, even at the risk of tedious repetition. "I was already beginning to see the great problem of mankind," writes Stafford, "as indeed nothing other than a magnification of the little problem of myself, as a problem in escape from grooves, from preoccupations and suspicions, precautions and ancient angers.... For all of us, as for each of us, salvation is that. We have to get away from ourselves to a greater thing, to a giant's desire and an unending life, ours and yet not our own."

The last novel published at the time I write is *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* (1914). The same theme is presented, but in other circumstances. Ellen Sawbridge, when she married, at eighteen, the founder and proprietor of "The International Bread Shops," was an ingenuous schoolgirl; and for more than seven years the change from a relatively independent poverty to the luxuries she could enjoy as the wife of a man who had not outgrown the Eastern theory with regard to the position of women, sufficed to keep her reasonably content. Mr Brumley was the instrument of Fate that seriously disturbed her satisfaction; but she must have come to much the same crisis, if Mr Brumley had never existed. Brumley was a writer, but he

was not one of "the really imaginative people, the people with vision, the people who let themselves go" — I quote the expression of George Wilkins, the novelist — and Lady Harman never fell very deeply in love with him. Nevertheless it was through Brumley's interference with her life that she faced the crux of her position as the closely restricted occupant of "a harem of one." She never broke out of that cage. One desperate effort led her, by way of a suffragist demonstration on a post office window, to a month's freedom in prison; but Sir Isaac and society were too clever and too strong for her. When she was enlarged from the solitude of confinement in a cell, she was tricked and bullied into the resumption of her marital engagements. And presumably she must have continued to act as the nurse of her now invalid husband for the rest of her life, suffering the indignities of his abuse and the restrictions of liberty that the paid attendant may escape by a change of situation, if release had not come through Sir Isaac's death. By that time Lady Harman had learnt her lesson. I am distinctly sorry for Mr Brumley, but I should have been seriously disappointed in Ellen Harman if she had consented to marry him.

Thus far I have only traced an imperfect outline of what I take to be the more important motive of the book. But there is a second pattern hardly less essential — namely, the criticism of the management and, *à fortiori*, of the conception of principle, in relation to the International Bread Shops. Arising out of this interwoven theme we come to some examination of the status of the female employee in general, and particularly in connection with the question of their board and lodging outside business hours. But in *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* the essay manner has been abandoned. Any diversion from the development of the story is carried out by the expressed opinions of the characters themselves; and, as a consequence, the two essential problems are not unduly intruded upon the reader, although for that very reason they may remain longer in his thoughts. One more comment should be added, which is that this is the wittiest book that Mr Wells has yet given us. However serious the motives that give it life, it must be classed as a comedy....

In concluding this brief review of Mr Wells' novels, I feel that I must hark back to a passage in *The Passionate Friends* in order to

indicate a spirit which, if it is not so definitely phrased in this last book of his, is certainly upheld in the matter of the story. For it is that spirit which seems to me the thing that should live and be remembered. Here is one of its more characteristic expressions in the mouth of Stafford, who writes:

"I know that a growing multitude of men and women outwear the ancient ways. The bloodstained organised jealousies of religious intolerance, the delusions of nationality and cult and race, that black hatred which simple people, and young people and common people cherish against all that is not in the likeness of themselves cease to be the undisputed ruling forces of our collective life. We want to emancipate our lives from this slavery and these stupidities, from dull hatreds and suspicions.... A spirit ... arises and increases in human affairs, a spirit that demands freedom and gracious living as our inheritance too long deferred...."

And surely H.G. Wells has striven to give a freer and more vital expression to that spirit, working through his own life, than any other novelist of our day. Indeed I would go further and claim that no such single and definite inspiration can be found in the works of any other secular writer. Wells has given to the novel a new criticism and, to a certain degree, a new form.

IV. SOCIOLOGY

Mr Wells' essays in sociology are not dry treatises, based on Blue books and the gathering together of information and statistics from a formless and largely worthless collection of earlier sources. He has approached this question of man in relation to the State in the same generous spirit displayed in his works of fiction; and it is only by using the word "sociology" in its fuller sense as conceived by Comte, rather than in the restricted sense of "social science" with its implication of economics, as narrowed by Herbert Spencer, that I dare to head this last chapter with so dangerously technicalised a term. Indeed, I would not use the word "sociology" now if I could find a more inclusive heading. For it must be obvious, I think, to anyone who has followed my exposition of the romances and the novels that Mr Wells has a way of treating all such subjects as relate to the betterment of humanity with a broad outlook, an entire disrespect for conventional forms however hallowed by precedent, and a habit of trenchant criticism that could hardly be fettered by an analysis of sociological literature or continual deference to this or that experiment in practice or theory. He approaches his subject with the normal mind of one who sees the world, its customs and rules of conduct, from what is, after all, the point of view of common-sense — another term that has been so grossly misused that the possessor of true common-sense is apt to be regarded as a most uncommon person. It is, in fact, the least common of qualities.

The first three books under this heading form some sort of a trilogy, and have a definite air of consequence. Of these, *Anticipations* was published in 1901, and *Mankind in the Making* and *A Modern Utopia* followed in 1903 and 1905 respectively. The scheme of the first two books combines a criticism of present conditions with a growing constructiveness that points the way to the ideal of what is called "The New Republic." Now, one of the labels that has been most frequently and adhesively affixed to Mr Wells is that of "Socialist," and no doubt it would proclaim his purpose admirably enough if we could satisfactorily define the word in its relation to him. But, personally, I refuse so to label him, because I

know that socialism means as many things to different people as religion, and is as much a term of reproach in the mouth of some self-labelled individualists as the designation "Christian" might be in the mouth of the "true believers" — as the Mohammedans call themselves. Wherefore I am particularly anxious in approaching any description of "The New Republic," to make it quite clear that that idealised State is not built of the bricks that have been modelled and cast by any recognisable group of propagandists, working to permeate, or more forcibly to convert, a section of the public under the flags of, say, Fabianism or Social Democracy. The essential thing about Mr Wells is that he is not a Follower, whether of Marx, or Hyndman, or Shaw, or Bebel; he may have learnt from any or all of them, but his theory of social reconstruction is pre-eminently and characteristically his own. He does not believe in the private ownership of land, for example, but I do not remember that he has ever advocated the means of the "Single Tax." And in these sociological essays, as in his novels, his method is that of picturing the more desirable thing or condition, the method of sweet persuasion rather than that of the sectarian who has a pet specific. Nevertheless Mr Wells uses his sharpened weapon of satire with considerable effect when he contemplates and displays for us the world as he sees it to-day. I find no hint of sweetness or persuasiveness on that side.

It would be impossible in an exposition of this kind to dissect these essays in detail, nor would it be desirable. Many of the suggestions with regard to actual practice, suggestions that might be embodied in modern legislation, are open to criticism in detail, and I would not pin Mr Wells down to the letter of any one of them. He has certainly changed his mind on many points since he wrote these essays in constructive sociology, and the fact that he has so altered and enlarged his opinions is the best possible evidence of his reliability and sincerity. He is before all else devoted to the services of growth and progress. "To rebel against instinct," he writes, "to rebel against limitation, to evade, to trip up, and at last to close with and grapple and conquer the forces that dominate him, is the fundamental being of man." And no man can hope to dominate those forces, if he is content to let his opinions crystallise at the age of

thirty-five or so. If he would retain his powers of criticism and construction he must have the patience and the energy to maintain the normal, receptive mind with which he is naturally endowed. Unfortunately with that endowment commonly comes another — namely, a tendency to avoid the irk or constant struggle by taking the line of least resistance; by adopting an opinion and upholding it in the face of all reason; and only a man of exceptional patience, courage and ability can keep himself free from the prejudices and fixed opinions which not only bring him a delusive peace and certainty but also are the means to worldly success.

So I would advise the readers of *Anticipations* and *Mankind in the Making* to be influenced by the spirit rather than by the letter of these two books. The spirit is definite enough; it is the spirit of humaneness, of a passionate criticism of all the evils, miseries and disease that are the outcome of our present haphazard civilisation; the spirit for a desire for order, wider prospects and opportunities, greater freedom for growth. Men are born unequal, with different tendencies, different desires, different potentialities, but there should be a place for every one of them in the great economy of "The New Republic." Each has to learn the lesson — for discipline is essential — that he is not an independent unit as regards his work, but a factor, more or less insignificant, in the sum of individuals that make up the greater State. The good New Republican "will seek perpetually to gauge his quality, he will watch to see himself the master of his habits and of his powers; he will take his brain, blood, body and lineage as a trust to be administered for the world."

Such, I think, is the spirit, the permanent principle of these two books. That remains and increases. The conception of the process by which the New Republic shall be built is less constant, and Mr Wells will change his opinions concerning it for just so long as he continues to grow. Should he ever adopt an inalterable policy, subscribe to some "ism," and wear a label, he would brand himself truly as inconsistent. Then, indeed, he would have contradicted himself. We search for truth never hoping to find it complete and whole; and he who is contented with a part denies God....

A Modern Utopia (1905) is an attempt to picture "The New Republic" in being; a very different dream of reconstruction from

that displayed in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and *Equality*, but having nevertheless certain points of likeness to the former at least, and especially in the method of marking contrasts by a form of parallelism, by keeping the world as we know it within the circle of attention in order to break the paralysing illusion that we are moving in romantic and quite impossible surroundings. Mr Wells' machinery is slightly complicated. He takes two figures from the beginning of this twentieth century. The Owner of the Voice ("you will go with him through curious and interesting experience. Yet, ever and again, you will find him back at the table, the manuscript in his hand ...") and the "botanist," a foil and a stimulator to the other expositor. "The image of a cinematograph entertainment is the one to grasp," writes Mr Wells in his preliminary explanation. "There will be an effect of these two people going to and fro in front of the circle of a rather defective lantern, which sometimes jams and sometimes gets out of focus, but which does occasionally succeed in displaying on a screen a momentary moving picture of Utopian conditions."

I think Mr Wells tried very valiantly to avoid the all too obvious mistake made by other Utopian builders, both romantic and practical. He began, I feel sure, with the admirable intention of depicting the people of the early twentieth century in new conditions, changed only in so far as they were influenced by the presentation of finer ideals and by more beautiful circumstance. He even introduced a contemporary critic of Utopian conditions in the shape of the talkative person, "a conscious Ishmaelite in the world of wit, and in some subtly inexplicable way a most consummate ass." But once we begin to postulate our Utopian villains, the reader's thought is distracted from the contemplation of the heroic which is the cement that binds every stone in the visionary city. In order to change conditions it is necessary to change much in the present cast of human nature. In a fiction of Utopia there is no place for a Napoleon, a Rockefeller, or an ambition-swelled Imperialist. So Mr Wells is driven with various hesitations and resentments to assume that the interactions of cause and effect have indeed tended to produce a sweeter-tempered, more generous race of men and women; that the spirit which moves us now to seek a larger liberty and a greater tolerance has been encouraged and increased by the exercise of its

own tendencies and the sight of its own triumphs; and that those who set their minds to the building gain an added grace in the labour. It is a perfectly fair and consistent assumption, but Mr Wells has been warned by his predecessors, from Robert Owen back to Plato and forward to Edward Bellamy, that the designs for Utopia have always been flawed by an altered conception of the humanity that walks within the city; and he has begun by trying to avoid a fallacy and ended by begging a question that he might very well have convincingly argued.

By many people *A Modern Utopia* is definitely labelled as the "Samurai" book. That conception of a natural aristocracy of spirit and ability did indeed return upon its creator in the form of an object lesson that filled him with a disgust for what was really a fine ideal, only too temptingly displayed. So many of his readers, and particularly his younger readers, formed the wish to become "Samurai" without more ado, a high office for which none of them, perhaps, had the ability or the determination to fill. For Utopias take even longer to build than Rome or London. But the plan is there — vague and tentative as the original scheme of a Gothic cathedral, a plan to be continually modified and changed in its most important features; and the building has begun....

The last books that can strictly fall into the present category are *The Future of America* (1906) and *New Worlds for Old* (1908). The former is rather a record of impressions than the attempt at prophecy which the title and the first chapter indicate; and the final conclusion is too hesitating even to convince us that America has a future. "I came to America questioning the certitudes of progress," Mr Wells says in his Envoy. "For a time I forgot my questionings, I sincerely believed, 'These people can do anything,' and, now I have it all in perspective, I have to confess that doubt has taken me again." And without question he has changed his opinion with regard to many of the observations he made nine years ago. I sincerely hope he has.

New Worlds for Old is quite definitely a book of suggestions with regard to certain aspects of socialism. It is the most practical of all the sociological books, and makes so strong an appeal to the buried common-sense of even prejudiced readers, that a devoted Primrose Leaguer to whom I lent my copy was quite seriously disturbed in

mind for nearly a week after he had read it. Fortunately for his own peace, he found an answer that permitted him comfortably to avoid the perpetual burden of an active responsibility. He thought that "Socialism would be all right in a perfect world," or words to that effect; and it was quite evident to him that the effort to make some small contribution towards raising the standard of human idealism was no part of his duty. In any case he greatly preferred the solid assurance of the Primrose League. And, speaking generally, as I have tried to do throughout, I find that *New Worlds for Old* presents a clearer indication to the possible path for the idealist than any of the other sociological essays. *Mankind in the Making* dealt very largely with education directed to a particular end, but in the book I am now considering may be found certain outlets for the expression of the less consistently strenuous. Education, whether of individual children in the home or regarded as a function of the State, offers continual perplexities that only the most resolute can confront day by day with renewed zeal; the problems of collective ownership are less confused by psychology, and the broad principles may be adopted and the energy of the young believer directed towards the accomplishment of minor detail. He may, for example, find good reason for the nationalising of the milk supply without committing himself to any broader theory of expropriation.

Finally I come to the collection of various papers issued in 1914 under the title *An Englishman Looks at the World* — a book that I may pass with the comment that it exhibits Mr Wells in his more captious moods, deliberately more captious in some instances, no doubt, inasmuch as the various papers were written for serial publication — and that *Confession of Faith and Rule of Life*, published in 1907 as *First and Last Things*. The opening is unnecessarily complicated by the exposition of a metaphysic that is quite uncharacteristic and has little to do with the personal exposition that follows; and, indeed, I feel with regard to the whole work that it attempts to define the indefinable. I deprecate the note of finality implied in the title. "It is as it stands now," I read in the Introduction, "the frank confession of what one man of the early Twentieth Century has found in life and himself," but that man has found much since then, and will continue to find much as he grows continually

richer in experience. So that while no student of Wells' writings can afford to overlook *First and Last Things*, I would warn him against the danger of concluding that in that book he will find at last the ultimate expression of character and belief, set out in the form of a categorical creed. Again I find a spirit and overlook the letter. I choose to take as representative such a passage as the following, with all its splendid vagueness and lack of dogma, rather than a definite expression of belief that Mr Wells does not believe in a personal immortality. This passage runs: "It seems to me that the whole living creation may be regarded as walking in its sleep, as walking in the sleep of individualised illusion, and that now out of it all rises man, beginning to perceive his larger self, his universal brotherhood, and a collective synthetic purpose to increase Power and realise Beauty...."

And now that I have attempted my interpretation, I look back and confess that it is a very personal reading of my subject. I may have sought too eagerly for all those passages in which I found a note that roused in me the most thrilling response. I may have omitted to display vital issues that more truly characterise H.G. Wells than the appealing urgencies, idealisms, and fluencies that I have found most sympathetic and most admirable. But if I appear to have done him an injustice in some particulars, it is rather because I have been absorbed by the issue I sought to reveal, than because I deliberately weighed and rejected others. This short essay can be no more than an introduction to the works it describes. It was never intended to be critical. I have had no intention of discussing technique, nor of weighing Mr Wells against his contemporaries in any literary scale. But I have attempted to interpret the spirit and the message that I have found in his books; and I have made the essay in the hope that any reader who may consequently be stirred to read or to re-read Wells will do so with a mind prepared to look below the surface expression.

I feel no shade of hesitation when I say that H.G. Wells is a great writer. His fecundity, his mastery of language, his comprehension of character are gifts and abilities that certain of his contemporaries have in equal, or in some particulars in larger measure. But he alone has used his perfected art for a definite end. He has not been content

to record his observations of the world as he has seen it, to elaborate this or that analysis of human motive, or to relate the history of a few selected lives. He has done all this, but he has done infinitely more by pointing the possible road of our endeavour. Through all his work moves the urgency of one who would create something more than a mere work of art to amuse the multitude or afford satisfaction to the critic. His chief achievement is that he has set up the ideal of a finer civilisation, of a more generous life than that in which we live; an ideal that, if it is still too high for us of this generation, will be appreciated and followed by the people of the future.

The Autobiography

Wells, 1920

EXPERIMENT IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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I. — INTRODUCTORY

§ 1. PRELUDE (1932)

I need freedom of mind. I want peace for work. I am distressed by immediate circumstances. My thoughts and work are encumbered by claims and vexations and I cannot see any hope of release from them; any hope of a period of serene and beneficent activity, before I am overtaken altogether by infirmity and death. I am in a phase of fatigue and of that discouragement which is a concomitant of fatigue, the petty things of to-morrow skirmish in my wakeful brain, and I find it difficult to assemble my forces to confront this problem which paralyses the proper use of myself.

I am putting even the pretence of other work aside in an attempt to deal with this situation. I am writing a report about it — to myself. I want to get these discontents clear because I have a feeling that as they become clear they will either cease from troubling me or become manageable and controllable.

There is nothing I think very exceptional in my situation as a mental worker. Entanglement is our common lot. I believe this craving for a release from — bothers, from daily demands and urgencies, from responsibilities and tempting distractions, is shared by an increasing number of people who, with specialized and distinctive work to do, find themselves eaten up by first-hand affairs. This is the outcome of a specialization and a sublimation of interests that has become frequent only in the last century or so. Spaciousness and leisure, and even the desire for spaciousness and leisure, have so far been exceptional. Most individual creatures since life began, have been "up against it" all the time, have been driven continually by fear and cravings, have had to respond to the unresting antagonisms of their surroundings, and they have found a sufficient and sustaining interest in the drama of immediate events provided for them by these demands. Essentially, their living was continuous adjustment to happenings. Good hap and ill hap filled it entirely. They hungered and ate and they desired and loved; they were amused and attracted, they pursued or escaped, they were overtaken and they died.

But with the dawn of human foresight and with the appearance of a great surplus of energy in life such as the last century or so has revealed, there has been a progressive emancipation of the attention from everyday urgencies. What was once the whole of life, has become to an increasing extent, merely the background of life. People can ask now what would have been an extraordinary question five hundred years ago. They can say, "Yes, you earn a living, you support a family, you love and hate, but — *what do you do?*"

Conceptions of living, divorced more and more from immediacy, distinguish the modern civilized man from all former life. In art, in pure science, in literature, for instance, many people find sustaining series of interests and incentives which have come at last to have a greater value for them than any primary needs and satisfactions. These primary needs are taken for granted. The everyday things of life become subordinate to these wider interests which have taken hold of them, and they continue to value everyday things, personal affections and material profit and loss, only in so far as they are ancillary to the newer ruling system of effort, and to evade or disregard them in so far as they are antagonistic or obstructive to that. And the desire to live as fully as possible within the ruling system of effort becomes increasingly conscious and defined.

The originative intellectual worker is not a normal human being and does not lead nor desire to lead a normal human life. He wants to lead a supernormal life.

Mankind is realizing more and more surely that to escape from individual immediacies into the less personal activities now increasing in human society is not, like games, reverie, intoxication or suicide, a suspension or abandonment of the primary life; on the contrary it is the way to power over that primary life which, though subordinated, remains intact. Essentially it is an imposition upon the primary life of a participation in the greater life of the race as a whole. In studies and studios and laboratories, administrative bureaus and exploring expeditions, a new world is germinated and develops. It is not a repudiation of the old but a vast extension of it, in a racial synthesis into which individual aims will ultimately be absorbed. We originative intellectual workers are reconditioning human life.

Now in this desire, becoming increasingly lucid and continuous

for me as my life has gone on, in this desire to get the primaries of life under control and to concentrate the largest possible proportion of my energy upon the particular system of effort that has established itself for me as my distinctive business in the world, I find the clue to the general conduct not only of my own life and the key not only to my present perplexities, but a clue to the difficulties of most scientific, philosophical, artistic, creative, preoccupied men and women. We are like early amphibians, so to speak, struggling out of the waters that have hitherto covered our kind, into the air, seeking to breathe in a new fashion and emancipate ourselves from long accepted and long unquestioned necessities. At last it becomes for us a case of air or nothing. But the new land has not yet definitively emerged from the waters and we swim distressfully in an element we wish to abandon.

I do not now in the least desire to live longer unless I can go on with what I consider to be my proper business. That is not to say that the stuff of everyday life has not been endlessly interesting, exciting and delightful for me in my time: clash of personalities, music and beauty, eating and drinking, travel and meetings, new lands and strange spectacles, the work for successes, much aimless play, much laughter, the getting well again after illness, the pleasures, the very real pleasures, of vanity. Let me not be ungrateful to life for its fundamental substances. But I have had a full share of all these things and I do not want to remain alive simply for more of them. I want the whole stream of this daily life stuff to flow on for me — for a long time yet — if, what I call my work can still be, can be more than ever the emergent meaning of the stream. But only on that condition. And that is where I am troubled now. I find myself less able to get on with my work than ever before. Perhaps the years have something to do with that, and it may be that a progressive broadening and deepening of my conception of what my work should be, makes it less easy than it was; but the main cause is certainly the invasion of my time and thought by matters that are either quite secondary to my real business or have no justifiable connection with it. Subordinate and everyday things, it seems to me in this present mood, surround me in an ever-growing jungle. My hours are choked with them; my thoughts are tattered by them. All my life I have been

pushing aside intrusive tendrils, shirking discursive consequences, bilking unhelpful obligations, but I am more aware of them now and less hopeful about them than I have ever been. I have a sense of crisis; that the time has come to reorganize my peace, if the ten or fifteen years ahead, which at the utmost I may hope to work in now, are to be saved from being altogether overgrown.

I will explain later what I think my particular business to be. But for it, if it is to be properly done, I require a pleasant well-lit writing room in good air and a comfortable bedroom to sleep in — and, if the mood takes me, to write in — both free from distracting noises and indeed all unexpected disturbances. There should be a secretary or at least a typist within call and out of earshot, and, within reach, an abundant library and the rest of the world all hung accessibly on to that secretary's telephone. (But it would have to be a one-way telephone, so that when we wanted news we could ask for it, and when we were not in a state to receive and digest news, we should not have it forced upon us.) That would be the central cell of my life. That would give the immediate material conditions for the best work possible. I think I would like that the beautiful scenery outside the big windows should be changed ever and again, but I recognize the difficulties in the way of that. In the background there would have to be, at need, food, exercise and stimulating, agreeable and various conversation, and, pervading all my consciousness, there should be a sense of security and attention, an assurance that what was produced, when I had done my best upon it, would be properly significant and effective. In such circumstances I feel I could still do much in these years before me, without hurry and without waste. I can see a correlated scheme of work I could do that would, I feel, be enormously worth while, and the essence of my trouble is that the clock ticks on, the moments drip out and trickle, flow away as hours, as days, and I cannot adjust my life to secure any such fruitful peace.

It scarcely needs criticism to bring home to me that much of my work has been slovenly, haggard and irritated, most of it hurried and inadequately revised, and some of it as white and pasty in its texture as a starch-fed nun. I am tormented by a desire for achievement that overruns my capacity and by a practical incapacity to bring about for myself the conditions under which fine achievement is possible. I

pay out what I feel to be a disproportionate amount of my time and attention in clumsy attempts to save the rest of it for the work in hand. I seem now in this present mood, to be saving only tattered bits of time, and even in these scraps of salvage my mind is often jaded and preoccupied.

It is not that I am poor and unable to buy the things I want, but that I am quite unable to get the things I want. I can neither control my surroundings myself nor can I find helpers and allies who will protect me from the urgencies — from within and from without — of primary things. I do not see how there can be such helpers. For to protect me completely they would have, I suppose, to span my intelligence and possibilities, and if they could do that they would be better employed in doing my work directly and eliminating me altogether.

This feeling of being intolerably hampered by irrelevant necessities, this powerful desire for disentanglement is, I have already said, the common experience of the men and women who write, paint, conduct research and assist in a score of other ways, in preparing that new world, that greater human life, which all art, science and literature have foreshadowed. My old elaborate-minded friend, Henry James the novelist, for example, felt exactly this thing. Some elements in his character obliged him to lead an abundant social life, and as a result he was so involved in engagements, acknowledgments, considerations, compliments, reciprocities, small kindnesses, generosities, graceful gestures and significant acts, all of which he felt compelled to do with great care and amplitude, that at times he found existence more troubled and pressing than many a sweated toiler. His craving for escape found expression in a dream of a home of rest, *The Great Good Place*, where everything that is done was done for good, and the fagged mind was once more active and free. The same craving for flight in a less Grandisonian and altogether more tragic key, drove out the dying Tolstoy in that headlong flight from home which ended his life.

This fugitive impulse is an inevitable factor in the lives of us all, great or small, who have been drawn into these activities, these super- activities which create and which are neither simply gainful, nor a response to material or moral imperatives, nor simply and

directly the procuring of primary satisfactions. Our lives are threaded with this same, often quite desperate effort to disentangle ourselves, to get into a Great Good Place of our own, and work freely.

None of us really get there, perhaps there is no *there* anywhere to get to, but we get some way towards it. We never do the work that we imagine to be in us, we never realize the secret splendour of our intentions, yet nevertheless some of us get something done that seems almost worth the effort. Some of us, and it may be as good a way as any, let everything else slide, live in garrets and hovels, borrow money unscrupulously, live on women (or, if they are women, live on men), exploit patronage, accept pensions. But even the careless life will not stay careless. It has its own frustrations and chagrins.

Others make the sort of effort I have made, and give a part of their available energy to save the rest. They fight for their conditions and have a care for the things about them. That is the shape of my story. I have built two houses and practically rebuilt a third to make that Great Good Place to work in, I have shifted from town to country and from country to town, from England to abroad and from friend to friend, I have preyed upon people more generous than myself who loved me and gave life to me. In return, because of my essential preoccupation, I have never given any person nor place a simple disinterested love. It was not in me. I have loved acutely, but that is another matter. I have attended spasmodically to business and money-making. And here I am at sixty-five (Spring 1932), still asking for peace that I may work some more, that I may do that major task that will atone for all the shortcomings of what I have done in the past.

Imperfection and incompleteness are the certain lot of all creative workers. We all compromise. We all fall short. The life story to be told of any creative worker is therefore by its very nature, by its diversions of purpose and its qualified success, by its grotesque transitions from sublimation to base necessity and its pervasive stress towards flight, a comedy. The story can never be altogether pitiful because of the dignity of the work; it can never be altogether dignified because of its inevitable concessions. It must be serious, but not solemn, and since there is no controversy in view and no

judgment of any significance to be passed upon it, there is no occasion for apologetics. In this spirit I shall try to set down the story of my own life and work, up to and including its present perplexities.

I write down my story and state my present problem, I repeat, to clear and relieve my mind. The story has no plot and the problem will never be solved. I do not think that in the present phase of human affairs there is any possible Great Good Place, any sure and abiding home for any creative worker. In diverse forms and spirits we are making over the world, so that the primary desires and emotions, the drama of the immediate individual life will be subordinate more and more, generation by generation, to beauty and truth, to universal interests and mightier aims.

That is our common rôle. We are therefore, now and for the next few hundred years at least, strangers and invaders of the life of every day. We are all essentially lonely. In our nerves, in our bones. We are too preoccupied and too experimental to give ourselves freely and honestly to other people, and in the end other people fail to give themselves fully to us. We are too different among ourselves to get together in any enduring fashion. It is good for others as for myself to find, however belatedly, that there is no fixed home to be found, and no permanent relationships. I see now, what I merely suspected when I began to write this section, that my perplexities belong to the mood of a wayside pause, to the fatigue of a belated tramp on a road where there is no rest-house before the goal.

That dignified peace, that phase of work perfected in serenity, of close companionship in thought, of tactfully changing scenery and stabilized instability ahead, is just a helpful dream that kept me going along some of the more exacting stretches of the course, a useful but essentially an impossible dream. So I sit down now by the reader, so to speak, and yarn a bit about my difficulties and blunders, about preposterous hopes and unexpected lessons, about my luck and the fun of the road, and then, a little refreshed and set-up, a little more sprightly for the talk, I will presently shoulder the old bundle again, go on, along the noisy jostling road, with its irritations and quarrels and distractions, with no delusion that there is any such dreamland work palace ahead, or any perfection of accomplishment possible for me, before I have to dump the whole load, for whatever it is worth,

myself and my load together, on the scales of the receiver at journey's end. Perhaps it is as well that I shall never know what the scales tell, or indeed whether they have anything to tell, or whether there will be any scales by which to tell, of the load that has been my life.

§ 2. *PERSONA* AND PERSONALITY

The preceding section was drafted one wakeful night, somewhen between two and five in the early morning a year or more ago; it was written in perfect good faith, and a criticism and continuation of it may very well serve as the opening movement in this autobiographical effort. For that section reveals, artlessly and plainly what Jung would call my *persona*.

A *persona*, as Jung uses the word, is the private conception a man has of himself, his idea of what he wants to be and of how he wants other people to take him. It provides therefore, the standard by which he judges what he may do, what he ought to do and what is imperative upon him. Everyone has a *persona*. Self conduct and self explanation is impossible without one.

A *persona* may be very stable or it may fluctuate extremely. It may be resolutely honest or it may draw some or all of its elements from the realms of reverie. It may exist with variations in the same mind. We may have single or multiple *personas* and in the latter case we are charged with inconsistencies and puzzle ourselves and our friends. Our *personas* grow and change and age as we do. And rarely if ever are they the whole even of our conscious mental being. All sorts of complexes are imperfectly incorporated or not incorporated at all, and may run away with us in the most unexpected manner.

So that this presentation of a preoccupied mind devoted to an exalted and spacious task and seeking a maximum of detachment from the cares of this world and from baser needs and urgencies that distract it from that task, is not even the beginning of a statement of what I am, but only of what I most like to think I am. It is the plan to which I work, by which I prefer to work, and by which ultimately I want to judge my performance. But quite a lot of other things have

happened to me, quite a lot of other stuff goes with me and it is not for the reader to accept this purely personal criterion.

A *persona* may be fundamentally false, as is that of many a maniac. It may be a structure of mere compensatory delusions, as is the case with many vain people. But it does not follow that if it is selected by a man out of his moods and motives, it is necessarily a work of self deception. A man who tries to behave as he conceives he should behave, may be satisfactorily honest in restraining, ignoring and disavowing many of his innate motives and dispositions. The mask, the *persona*, of the Happy Hypocrite became at last his true faces.

It is just as true that all men are imperfect saints and heroes as it is that all men are liars. There is, I maintain, a sufficient justification among my thoughts and acts from quite early years, for that pose of the disinterested thinker and worker, working for a racial rather than a personal achievement. But the distractions, attacks and frustrations that set him scribbling distressfully in the night, come as much from within as without; the antagonisms and temptations could do nothing to him, were it not for that within him upon which they can take hold. Directly I turn from the easier task of posing in an Apology for my life, to the more difficult work of frank autobiography, I have to bring in all the tangled motives out of which my *persona* has emerged; the elaborate sexual complexities, the complexes of ambition and rivalry, the hesitation and fear in my nature, for example; and in the interests of an impartial diagnosis I have to set aside the appeal for a favourable verdict.

A biography should be a dissection and demonstration of how a particular human being was made and worked; the directive *persona* system is of leading importance only when it is sufficiently consistent and developed to be the ruling theme of the story. But this is the case with my life. From quite an early age I have been predisposed towards one particular sort of work and one particular system of interests. I have found the attempt to disentangle the possible drift of life in general and of human life in particular from the confused stream of events, and the means of controlling that drift, if such are to be found, more important and interesting by far than anything else. I have had, I believe, an aptitude for it. The study and expression of

tendency, has been for me what music is for the musician, or the advancement of his special knowledge is to the scientific investigator. My *persona* may be an exaggeration of one aspect of my being, but I believe that it is a ruling aspect. It may be a magnification but it is not a fantasy. A voluminous mass of work accomplished attests its reality.

The value of that work is another question. A bad musician may be none the less passionately a musician. Because I have spent a large part of my life's energy in a drive to make a practically applicable science out of history and sociology, it does not follow that contemporary historians, economists and politicians are not entirely just in their disregard of my effort. They will not adopt my results; they will only respond to fragments of them. But the fact remains that I have made that effort, that it has given me a considerable ill-defined prestige, and that it is the only thing that makes me conspicuous beyond the average lot and gives my life with such complications and entanglements as have occurred in it, an interest that has already provoked biography and may possibly provoke more, and so renders unavoidable the thought of a defensive publication, at some future date, of this essay in autobiographical self-examination. The conception of a worker concentrated on the perfection and completion of a work is its primary idea. Either the toad which is struggling to express itself here, *has* engendered a jewel in its head or it is nothing worth troubling about in the way of toads.

This work, this jewel in my head for which I take myself seriously enough to be self-scrutinizing and autobiographical, is, it seems to me, a crystallization of ideas. A variety of biological and historical suggestions and generalizations, which, when lying confusedly in the human mind, were cloudy and opaque, have been brought into closer and more exact relations; the once amorphous mixture has fallen into a lucid arrangement and through this new crystalline clearness, a plainer vision of human possibilities and the conditions of their attainment, appears. I have made the broad lines and conditions of the human outlook distinct and unmistakable for myself and for others. I have shown that human life as we know it, is only the dispersed raw material for human life as it might be. There is a

hitherto undreamt-of fullness, freedom and happiness within reach of our species. Mankind can pull itself together and take that now. But if mankind fails to apprehend its opportunity, then division, cruelties, delusions and ultimate frustration lie before our kind. The decision to perish or escape has to be made within a very limited time. For escape, vast changes in the educational, economic and directive structure of human society are necessary. They are definable. They are practicable. But they demand courage and integrity. They demand a force and concentration of will and a power of adaptation in habits and usages which may or may not be within the compass of mankind. This is the exciting and moving prospect displayed by the crystal I have brought out of solution.

I do not set up to be the only toad in the world that has this crystallization. I do not find so much difference between my mind and others, that I can suppose that I alone have got this vision clear. What I think, numbers must be thinking. They have similar minds with similar material, and it is by mere chance and opportunity that I have been among the first to give expression to this realization of a guiding framework for life. But I have been among the first. Essentially, then, a main thread in weaving my autobiography must be the story of how I came upon, and amidst what accidents I doubted, questioned and rebelled against, accepted interpretations of life; and so went on to find the pattern of the key to master our world and release its imprisoned promise. I believe I am among those who have found what key is needed. We, I and those similar others, have set down now all the specifications for a working key to the greater human life. By an incessant toil of study, propaganda, education and creative suggestion, by sacrifice where it is necessary and much fearless conflict, by a bold handling of stupidity, obstruction and perversity, we may yet cut out and file and polish and insert and turn that key to the creative world community before it is too late. That kingdom of heaven is materially within our reach.

My story therefore will be at once a very personal one and it will be a history of my sort and my time. An autobiography is the story of the contacts of a mind and a world. The story will begin in perplexity and go on to a troubled and unsystematic awakening. It will culminate in the attainment of a clear sense of purpose, conviction

that the coming great world of order, is real and sure; but, so far as my individual life goes, with time running out and a thousand entanglements delaying realization. For me maybe — but surely not for us. For us, the undying us of our thought and experience, that great to-morrow is certain.

So this autobiography plans itself as the crystallization of a system of creative realizations in one particular mind — with various incidental, good, interesting or curious personal things that happened by the way.

§ 3. QUALITY OF THE BRAIN AND BODY CONCERNED

The brain upon which my experiences have been written is not a particularly good one. If there were brain-shows, as there are cat and dog shows, I doubt if it would get even a third class prize. Upon quite a number of points it would be marked below the average. In a little private school in a small town on the outskirts of London it seemed good enough, and that gave me a helpful conceit about it in early struggles where confidence was half the battle. It was a precocious brain, so that I was classified with boys older than myself right up to the end of a brief school career which closed before I was fourteen. But compared with the run of the brains I meet nowadays, it seems a poorish instrument. I won't even compare it with such cerebra as the full and subtly simple brain of Einstein, the wary, quick and flexible one of Lloyd George, the abundant and rich grey matter of G. B. Shaw, Julian Huxley's store of knowledge or my own eldest son's fine and precise instrument. But in relation to everyday people with no claim to mental distinction I still find it at a disadvantage. The names of places and people, numbers, quantities and dates for instance, are easily lost or get a little distorted. It snatches at them and often lets them slip again. I cannot do any but the simplest sums in my head and when I used to play bridge, I found my memory of the consecutive tricks and my reasoning about the playing of the cards, inferior to nine out of ten of the people I played with. I lose at chess to almost anyone and though I have played a spread-out patience called Miss Milligan for the past fifteen years, I

have never acquired a sufficient sense of the patterns of 104 cards to make it anything more than a game of chance and feeling. Although I have learnt and relearnt French since my school days and have lived a large part of each year for the past eight years in France, I have never acquired a flexible diction or a good accent and I cannot follow French people when they are talking briskly — and they always talk briskly. Such other languages as Spanish, Italian and German I have picked up from a grammar or a conversation book sufficiently to serve the purposes of travel; only to lose even that much as soon as I ceased to use them. London is my own particular city; all my life I have been going about in it and yet the certitude of the taxicab driver is a perpetual amazement to me. If I wanted to walk from Hoxton to Chelsea without asking my way, I should have to sit down to puzzle over a map for some time. All this indicates a loose rather inferior mental texture, inexact reception, bad storage and uncertain accessibility.

I do not think my brain has begun to age particularly yet. It can pick up new tricks, though it drops them very readily again, more readily perhaps than it used to do. I learnt sufficient Spanish in the odd moments of three months to get along in Spain two years ago without much trouble. I think my brain has always been very much as it is now, except perhaps for a certain slowing down.

And I believe that its defects are mainly innate. It was not a good brain to begin with, although certain physical defects of mine and bad early training, may have increased faults that might have been corrected by an observant teacher. The atmosphere of my home and early upbringing was not a highly educative atmosphere; words were used inexactly, and mispronounced, and so a certain timidity of utterance and a disposition to mumble and avoid doubtful or difficult words and phrases, may have worked back into my mental texture. My eyes have different focal lengths and nobody discovered this until I was over thirty. Columns of figures and lines of print are as a result apt to get a little dislocated and this made me bad at arithmetic and blurred my impression of the form of words. It was only about the age of thirteen, when I got away with algebra, Euclid's elements and, a little later, the elements of trigonometry, that I realized I was not a hopeless duffer at mathematics. But here comes an item on the

credit side; I found Euclid easy reading and solved the simple "riders" in my text book with a facility my schoolmaster found exemplary. I also became conceited about my capacity for "problems" in algebra. And by eleven or twelve, in some way I cannot trace, I had taken to drawing rather vigorously and freshly. My elder brother could not draw at all but my other brother draws exactly and delicately, if not quite so spontaneously and expressively as I do. I know practically nothing of brain structure and physiology, but it seems probable to me that this relative readiness to grasp form and relation, indicates that the general shape and arrangement of my brain is better than the quality of its cells, fibres and blood-vessels. I have a quick sense of form and proportion; I have a brain good for outlines. Most of my story will carry out that suggestion.

A thing that has I think more to do with my general build than with my brain structure is that my brain works best in short spells and is easily fatigued. My head is small — I can cheer up nearly every one of my friends by just changing hats; the borrowed brim comes down upon my ears and spreads them wide — my heart has an irregular beat and I suspect that my carotid arteries do not branch so freely and generously into my grey matter as they might do. I do not know whether it would be of any service after I am dead to prepare sections of my brain to ascertain that. I have made an autopsy possible by my will, but my son Gip tells me that all that tissue will have decayed long before a post mortem is possible. "Unless," he added helpfully, "you could commit suicide in a good hardening solution." But that would be difficult to arrange. There may perhaps be considerable differences in mental character due to a larger or smaller lumen of the arteries, to a rapid or sluggish venous drainage, to variations in interstitial tissue, which affect the response and interaction of the nerve cells. At any rate there is and always has been far too ready a disposition in my brain to fag and fade for my taste.

It can fade out generally or locally in a very disconcerting manner. Aphasia is frequent with me. At an examination for a teaching diploma which involved answering twenty or thirty little papers in the course of four days I found myself on the last day face to face with a paper, happily not of vital importance, of which the

questions were entirely familiar and entirely unmeaning. There was nothing to be done but go out. On another occasion I undertook to give an afternoon lecture to the Royal Institution. I knew my subject fairly well, so well that I had not written it down. I was not particularly afraid of my audience. I talked for a third of my allotted time — and came to a blank. After an awkward silence I had to say; "I am sorry. That is all I have prepared to-day."

Psycho-analysts have a disposition to explain the forgetting of names and the dissociation of faces, voices and so forth from their proper context as a sub-conscious suppression due to some obscure dislike. If so I must dislike a vast multitude of people. But why should psycho-analysts assume a perfect brain mechanism and recognize only psychic causes? I believe a physical explanation will cover a number of these cases and that a drop in the conductivity of the associated links due to diminished oxygenation or some slight variation in the blood plasma is much more generally the temporarily effacing agent.

I was interested the other night, in a supper-room in Vienna, by a little intimation of the poor quality of my memory. There came in a party of people who sat at another table. One of them was a German young lady who reminded me very strikingly of the daughter of an acquaintance I had made in Spain. He had introduced himself and his family to me because he was the surviving brother of an old friend and editor of mine, Harry Cust, and he had heard all sorts of things about me. "That girl," I said, "is the very image of — —" The name would not come. "She is the daughter of Lord B —— ." I got as far as the "B" and stuck. I tried again; "Her name is —— Cust," I protested, "But I have known her by her Christian name, talked to her, talked about her, liked and admired her, visited her father's home at —— ." Again an absolute blank. I became bad company. I could talk of nothing else. I retired inside my brain and routed about in it, trying to recover those once quite familiar names. I could recall all sorts of incidents while I was in the same hotel with these people at Ronda and Granada and while I stayed at that house, a very beautiful English house in the midlands, I could produce a rough sketch of the garden and I remembered addressing a party of girl scouts from the front door and even what I said to them. I had met

and talked with Lady B and on another occasion met her son within the past year. But that evening the verbal labels seemed lost beyond recovery. I tried over all the peers I had ever heard of whose names began with "B." I tried over every conceivable feminine Christian name. I took a gloomy view of my mental state.

Next morning, while I was still in bed, the missing labels all came back, except one. The name of the house had gone; it is still missing. Presently if it refuses to come home of its own accord I shall look it up in some book of reference. And yet I am sure that somewhere in the thickets of my brain it is hiding from me now. I tell this anecdote for the sake of its complete pointlessness. The psychological explanation of such forgetfulness is a disinclination to remember. But what conflict of hostilities, frustrations, restrained desires and so forth, is here? None at all. It is merely that the links are feeble and the printing of the impressions bad. It is a case of second-rate brain fabric. And rather overgrown and pressed upon at that. If my mental paths are not frequently traversed and refreshed they are obstructed.

Now defects in the brain texture must affect its moral quite as much as its intellectual character. It is essentially the same apparatus at work in either case. If the links of association that reassemble a memory can be temporarily effaced, so can the links that bring a sense of obligation to bear upon a motive. Adding a column of figures wrongly and judging incorrectly a situation in which one has to act are quite comparable brain processes. So in my own behaviour just as in my apprehension of things the outline is better than the detail. The more closely I scrutinize my reactions, the more I find detailed inconsistencies, changes of front and goings to and fro. The more I stand off from the immediate thing and regard my behaviour as a whole the more it holds together. As I have gathered experience of life, I have become increasingly impressed by the injustice we do ourselves and others by not allowing for these local and temporary faintings and fadings of our brains in our judgment of conduct.

Our relations with other human beings are more full and intricate the nearer they are to us and the more important they are in our lives. So, however we may be able to pigeonhole and note this or that casual acquaintance for treatment of a particular sort, when we come to our intimates we find ourselves behaving according to immensely

various and complex systems of association, which in the case of such brains as mine anyhow, are never uniformly active, which are subject to just the same partial and irrational dissociations and variations as are my memories of names and numbers. I can have a great tenderness or resentment for someone and it may become as absent from my present thought as that title or the name of that country house I could not remember in Vienna. I may have a sense of obligation and it will vanish as completely. Facts will appear in my mind quite clear in their form and sequence and yet completely shorn of some moving emotional quality I know they once possessed. And then a day or so after it will all come back to me.

Everyone, of course, is more or less like this, but I am of the kind, I think, which is more so.

On the other hand, though my brain organization is so poor that connexions are thus intermittently weakened and effaced and groups of living associations removed out of reach, I do not find in this cerebrum of mine any trace of another type of weakness which I should imagine must be closely akin to such local failure to function, namely those actual replacements of one system of associations by another, which cause what is called double personalities. In the classical instances of double personality psychologists tell of whole distinct networks of memory and impulse, co-existing side by side in the same brain yet functioning independently, which are alternative and often quite contradictory one to the other. When one system is in action; the other is more or less inaccessible and vice versa. I have met and lived in close contact with one or two individuals of this alternating type; it is, I think, more common among women than among men; I have had occasion to watch these changes of phase, and I do not find that in my own brain stuff there are any such regional or textural substitutions. There are effacements but not replacements. My brain may be very much alive or it may be flat and faded out or simply stupefied by sleepiness or apathy; it may be exalted by some fever in the blood, warmed and confused by alcohol, energized, angered or sexually excited by the subtle messages and stimuli my blood brings it; but my belief is that I remain always very much the same personality through it all. I do not think I delude myself about this. My brain I believe is consistent. Such as it is, it

holds together. It is like a centralized country with all its government in one capital, even though that government is sometimes negligent, feeble or inert.

One other thing I have to note about this brain of mine and that is — how can I phrase it? — an exceptional want of excitable "Go." I suspect that is due not, as my forgetfulnesses and inconsistencies may be, to local insufficiencies and failures in the circulation, but to some general under-stimulation. My perceptions do not seem to be so thorough, vivid and compelling as those of many people I meet and it is rare that my impressions of things glow. There is a faint element of inattention in all I do; it is as if white was mixed into all the pigments of my life. I am rarely *vivid* to myself. I am just a little slack, not wholly and continuously interested, prone to be indolent and cold-hearted. I am readily bored. When I try to make up for this I am inevitably a little "forced" when dealing with things, and a little "false" and "charming" with people. You will find this coming out when I tell of my failure as a draper's assistant and of my relations to my intimate friends. You will discover a great deal of evasion and refusal in my story.

Nature has a way of turning even biological defects into advantages and I am not sure how far what may be called my success in life has not been due to this undertow of indifference. I have not been easily carried away by immediate things and made to forget the general in the particular. There is a sort of journalistic legend that I am a person of boundless enthusiasm and energy. Nothing could be further from the reality. For all my desire to be interested I have to confess that for most things and people I don't care a damn. Writing numbers of books and articles is evidence not of energy but of sedentary habits. People with a real quantitative excess of energy and enthusiasm become Mussolinis, Hitlers, Stalins, Gladstones, Beaverbrooks, Northcliffes, Napoleons. It takes generations to clean up after them. But what I shall leave behind me will not need cleaning up. Just because of that constitutional apathy it will be characteristically free from individual Woosh and it will be available and it will go on for as long as it is needed.

And now, having conveyed to you some idea of the quality and defects of the grey matter of that organized mass of phosphorized fat

and connective tissue which is, so to speak, the hero of the piece, and having displayed the *persona* or, if you will, the vanity which now dominates its imaginations, I will try to tell how in this particular receiving apparatus the picture of its universe was built up, what it did and failed to do with the body it controlled and what the thronging impressions and reactions that constituted its life amount to.

II. — ORIGINS

§ 1. 47 HIGH STREET, BROMLEY, KENT

This brain of mine came into existence and began to acquire reflexes and register impressions in a needy shabby home in a little town called Bromley in Kent, which has since become a suburb of London. My consciousness of myself grew by such imperceptible degrees, and for a time each successive impression incorporated what had preceded it so completely, that I have no recollection of any beginning at all. I have a miscellany of early memories, but they are not arranged in any time order. I will do my best however, to recall the conditions amidst which my childish head got its elementary lessons in living. They seem to me now quite dreadful conditions, but at the time it was the only conceivable world.

It was then the flaxen head of a podgy little boy with a snub nose and a long infantile upper lip, and along the top his flaxen hair was curled in a longitudinal curl which was finally abolished at his own urgent request. Early photographs record short white socks, bare arms and legs, a petticoat, ribbon bows on the shoulders, and a scowl. That must have been gala costume. I do not remember exactly what everyday clothes I wore until I was getting to be a fairly big boy. I seem to recall a sort of holland pinafore for everyday use very like what small boys still wear in France, except that it was brown instead of black holland.

The house in which this little boy ran about, clattering up and down the uncarpeted stairs, bawling — family tradition insists on the bawling — and investigating existence, deserves description, not only from the biographical, but from the sociological point of view. It was one of a row of badly built houses upon a narrow section of the High Street. In front upon the ground floor was the shop, filled with crockery, china and glassware and, a special line of goods, cricket bats, balls, stumps, nets and other cricket material. Behind the shop was an extremely small room, the "parlour," with a fireplace, a borrowed light and glass-door upon the shop and a larger window upon the yard behind. A murderously narrow staircase with a twist in

it led downstairs to a completely subterranean kitchen, lit by a window which derived its light from a grating on the street level, and a bricked scullery, which, since the house was poised on a bank, opened into the yard at the ground level below. In the scullery was a small fireplace, a copper boiler for washing, a provision cupboard, a bread pan, a beer cask, a pump delivering water from a well into a stone sink, and space for coal, our only space for coal, beneath the wooden stairs. This "coal cellar" held about a ton of coal, and when the supply was renewed it had to be carried in sacks through the shop and "parlour" and down the staircase by men who were apt to be uncivil about the inconveniences of the task and still more apt to drop small particles of coal along the route.

The yard was perhaps thirty by forty feet square. In it was a brick erection, the "closet," an earth jakes over a cesspool, within perhaps twenty feet of the well and the pump; and above this closet was a rain-water tank. Behind it was the brick dustbin (cleared at rare intervals via the shop), a fairly open and spacious receptacle. In this a small boy could find among the ashes such objects of interest as egg-shells, useful tins and boxes. The ashes could be rearranged to suggest mountain scenery. There was a boundary wall, separating us from the much larger yard and sheds of Mr. Covell the butcher, in which pigs, sheep and horned cattle were harboured violently, and protested plaintively through the night before they were slaughtered. Some were recalcitrant and had to be treated accordingly; there was an element of Rodeo about Covell's yard. Beyond it was Bromley Church and its old graveyard, full then of healthy trees, ruinous tombs and headstones askew — in which I had an elder sister buried.

Our yard was half bricked and half bare earth, and an open cement gutter brought the waste waters of the sink to a soak-away in the middle of the space. Thence, no doubt, soap-suds and cabbage water, seeped away to mingle with the graver accumulations of the "closet" and the waters of the well from which the pump drew our supply. Between the scullery and the neighbour's wall was a narrow passage covered over, and in this my father piled the red earthenware jars and pans, the jam-pots and so forth, which bulk so large in the stock of a crockery dealer.

I "played" a lot in this yard and learnt its every detail, because

there was no other open air space within easy reach of a very small boy to play in. Its effect of smallness was enhanced by the erections in the neighbours' yards on either side. On one hand was the yard of Mr. Munday, the haberdasher, who had put up a greenhouse and cultivated mushrooms, to nourish which his boys collected horse-droppings from the High Street in a small wooden truck; and on the other, Mr. Cooper, the tailor, had built out a workroom in which two or three tailors sat and sewed. It was always a matter of uneasiness to my mother whether these men could or could not squint round and see the necessary comings and goings of pots and pans and persons to the closet. The unbricked part of our yard had a small flower-bed in which my father had planted a bush of Wigelia. It flowered reluctantly, and most things grew reluctantly in that bed. A fact, still vividly clear in my mind across an interval of sixty years, is that it was the only patch of turned up earth accessible to the cats of Mr. Munday, Mr. Cooper and our own ménage. But my father was a gardener of some resolution and, against the back of the house rooting in a hole in the brickwork, he had persuaded a grape vine not only to grow but to flourish. When I was ten, he fell from a combination of short ladder, table and kitchen steps on which he had mounted to prune the less accessible shoots of this vine, and sustained a compound fracture of the leg. But of that very important event I will tell a little later.

I dwell rather upon the particulars about this yard, because it was a large part of my little world in those days. I lived mostly in it and in the scullery and underground kitchen. We were much too poor to have a servant, and it was more than my mother could do to keep fires going upstairs (let alone the price of coal). Above the ground floor and reached by an equally tortuous staircase — I have seen my father reduced to a blind ecstasy of rage in an attempt to get a small sofa up it — were a back bedroom occupied by my mother and a front room occupied by my father (this separation was, I think, their form of birth control), and above this again was a room, the boys' bedroom (there were three of us) and a back attic filled with dusty crockery stock. But there was stock everywhere; pots and pans invaded the kitchen, under the dresser and under the ironing board; bats and stumps crept into the "parlour." The furniture of this home

had all been acquired second-hand at sales; furniture shops that catered for democracy had still to appear in the middle nineteenth century; an aristocratic but battered bookcase despised a sofa from some housekeeper's room; there was a perky little chiffonier in the parlour; the chairs were massive but moody; the wooden bedsteads had exhausted feather mattresses and grey sheets — for there had to be economy over the washing bills — and there was not a scrap of faded carpet or worn oil-cloth in the house that had not lived a full life of usefulness before it came into our household. Everything was frayed, discoloured and patched. But we had no end of oil lamps because they came out of (and went back into) stock. (My father also dealt in lamp-wicks, oil and paraffin.)

We lived, as I have said, mostly downstairs and underground, more particularly in the winter. We went upstairs to bed. About upstairs I have to add a further particular. The house was infested with bugs. They harboured in the wooden bedsteads and lurked between the layers of wallpaper that peeled from the walls. Slain they avenge themselves by a peculiar penetrating disagreeable smell. That mingles in my early recollections with the more pervasive odour of paraffin, with which my father carried on an inconclusive war against them. Almost every part of my home had its own distinctive smell.

This was the material setting in which my life began. Let me tell now something of my father and mother, what manner of people they were, and how they got themselves into this queer home from which my two brothers and I were launched into what Sir James Jeans has very properly called, this Mysterious Universe, to make what we could of it.

§ 2. SARAH NEAL (1822-1905)

My mother was a little blue-eyed, pink-cheeked woman with a large serious innocent face. She was born on October 10th, 1822, in the days when King George IV was King, and three years before the opening of the first steam railway. It was still an age of horse and foot transit, sailing ships and undiscovered lands. She was the

daughter of a Midhurst innkeeper and his frequently invalid wife. His name was George Neal (born 1797) and he was probably of remote Irish origin; his wife's maiden name was Sarah Benham, which sounds good English. She was born in 1796. Midhurst was a little old sunny rag-stone built town on the road from London to Chichester, and my grandfather stabled the relay of horses for the stage coach as his father had done before him. An uncle of his drove a coach, and one winter's night in a snowstorm, being alone without passengers and having sustained himself excessively against the cold and solitude of the drive, he took the wrong turning at the entrance to the town, went straight over the wharf into the pool at the head of the old canal, and was handsomely drowned together with his horses. It was a characteristic of my mother's family to be easily lit and confused by alcohol, but never subdued to inaction by it. And when my grandfather died he had mortgaged his small property and was very much in debt, so that there was practically nothing for my mother and her younger brother John, who survived him.

The facts still traceable about my grandfather's circumstances are now very fragmentary. I have a few notes my elder brother made from my mother's recollections, and I have various wills and marriage and birth certificates and a diary kept by my mother. George Neal kept the Fountains Inn at Chichester I think, before he kept the New Inn at Chichester; the New Inn he had from 1840 to his death in 1853. He married Sarah Benham on October 30th, 1817. Two infant boys died, and then my mother was born in 1822. After a long interval my uncle John was born in 1836, and a girl Elizabeth in 1838. It is evident my grandmother had very indifferent health, but she was still pretty and winning, says my mother's diary, at the age of fifty-three, and her hands were small and fine. Except for that one entry, there is nothing much now to be learnt about her. I suppose that when she was well she did her best, after the fashion of the time, to teach her daughter the elements of religion, knowledge and the domestic arts. I possess quite a brave sampler worked by my mother when she was in her eighth year. It says, amidst some decorative stitching:

"Opportunity lost can never be recalled; therefore it is the highest wisdom in youth to make all the sensible improvements they can in

their early days; for a young overgrown dunce seldom makes a figure in any branch of learning in his old days. Sarah Neal her work. May 26, 1830. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18."

After which it breaks off and resumes along the bottom with a row of letters upside down.

When my grandmother was too ill to be in control, my mother ran about the inn premises, laid the table for my grandfather's meals, and, as a special treat, drew and served tankards of beer in the bar. There was no compulsory schooling in those days. Some serious neighbours seem to have talked to my grandfather and pointed out the value of accomplishments and scholastic finish to a young female in a progressive age. In 1833 he came into some property through the death of my great-grandfather and thereupon my mother was sent off to a finishing school for young ladies kept by a Miss Riley in Chichester. There in a year or so she showed such remarkable aptitude for polite learning, that she learnt to write in the clear angular handwriting reserved for women in those days, to read, to do sums up to, but not quite including, long division, the names of the countries and capitals of Europe and the counties and county towns of England (with particular attention to the rivers they were "on") and from Mrs. Markham's History all that it was seemly to know about the Kings and Queens of England. Moreover she learnt from Magnell's Questions the names of the four elements (which in due course she taught me), the seven wonders of the world (or was it nine?), the three diseases of wheat, and many such facts which Miss Riley deemed helpful to her in her passage through life. (But she never really mastered the names of the nine Muses and over what they presided, and though she begged and prayed her father that she might learn French, it was an Extra and she was refused it.) A natural tendency to Protestant piety already established by her ailing mother, was greatly enhanced. She was given various edifying books to read, but she was warned against worldly novels, the errors and wiles of Rome, French cooking and the insidious treachery of men, she was also prepared for confirmation and confirmed, she took the sacrament of Holy Communion, and so fortified and finished she returned to her home (1836).

An interesting thing about this school of Miss Riley's, which was

in so many respects a very antiquated eighteenth century school, was the strong flavour of early feminism it left in her mind. I do not think it is on record anywhere, but it is plain to me from what I have heard my mother say, that among school mistresses and such like women at any rate, there was a stir of emancipation associated with the claim, ultimately successful, of the Princess Victoria, daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Kent, to succeed King William IV. There was a movement against that young lady based on her sex and this had provoked in reaction a wave of feminine partisanship throughout the country. It picked up reinforcement from an earlier trouble between George the Fourth and Queen Caroline. A favourite book of my mother's was Mrs. Strickland's *Queens of England*, and she followed the life of Victoria, her acts and utterances, her goings forth and her lyings in, her great sorrow and her other bereavements, with a passionate loyalty. The Queen, also a small woman, was in fact my mother's compensatory personality, her imaginative consolation for all the restrictions and hardships that her sex, her diminutive size, her motherhood and all the endless difficulties of life, imposed upon her. The dear Queen could command her husband as a subject and wilt the tremendous Mr. Gladstone with awe. How would it feel to be in that position? One would say this. One would do that. I have no doubt about my mother's reveries. In her latter years in a black bonnet and a black silk dress she became curiously suggestive of the supreme widow....

For my own part, such is the obduracy of the young male, I heard too much of the dear Queen altogether; I conceived a jealous hatred for the abundant clothing, the magnificent housing and all the freedoms of her children and still more intensely of my contemporaries, her grandchildren. Why was my mother so concerned about them? Was not my handicap heavy enough without my having to worship them at my own mother's behest? This was a fixation that has lasted all through my life. Various, desperate and fatiguing expeditions to crowded street corners and points of vantage at Windsor, at Chislehurst near Bromley (where the Empress Eugénie was living in exile) from which we might see the dear Queen pass;— "She's coming. Oh, she's coming. If only I could see! Take off your hat Bertie dear," — deepened my hostility and wove a

stout, ineradicable thread of republicanism into my resentful nature.

But that is anticipating. For the present I am trying to restore my mother's mental picture of the world, as she saw it awaiting her, thirty years and more before I was born or thought of. It was a world much more like Jane Austen's than Fanny Burney's, but at a lower social level. Its chintz was second-hand, and its flowered muslin cheap and easily tired. Still more was it like the English countryside of Dickens' *Bleak House*. It was a countryside, for as yet my mother knew nothing of London. Over it all ruled God our Father, in whose natural kindliness my mother had great confidence. He was entirely confused in her mind, because of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, with "Our Saviour" or "Our Lord" — who was rarely mentioned by any other names. The Holy Ghost she ignored almost entirely; I cannot recall any reference to him; he was certainly never "*our*" Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mary, in spite of what I should have considered her appeal to feminist proclivities, my mother disregarded even more completely. It may have been simply that there was a papistical flavour about the Virgin; I don't know. Or a remote suspicion of artistic irregularity about the recorded activities of the Holy Spirit. In the lower sky and the real link between my mother and the god-head, was the Dear Queen, ruling by right divine, and beneath this again, the nobility and gentry, who employed, patronised, directed and commanded the rest of mankind. On every Sunday in the year, one went to church and refreshed one's sense of this hierarchy between the communion table and the Free Seats. And behind everyone, behind the Free Seats, but alas! by no means confining his wicked activities to them, was Satan, Old Nick, the Devil, who accounted for so much in the world that was otherwise inexplicable.

My mother was Low Church, and I was disposed to find, even in my tender years, Low Church theology a little too stiff for me, but she tempered it to her own essential goodness, gentleness and faith in God's Fatherhood, in ways that were quite her own. I remember demanding of her in my crude schoolboy revolt if she really believed in a hell of eternal torment. "We *must*, my dear," she said. "But our Saviour died for us — and perhaps after all nobody will be sent there. Except of course the Old Devil."

And even he, being so to speak the official in charge, I think she would have exempted from actual torture. Maybe Our Father would have shown him the tongs now and again, just to remind him.

There was a picture in an old illustrated book of devotions, Sturm's *Reflections*, obliterated with stamp paper, and so provoking investigation. What had mother been hiding from me? By holding up the page to the light I discovered the censored illustration represented hell-fire; devil, pitchfork and damned, all complete and drawn with great gusto. But she had anticipated the general trend of Protestant theology at the present time and hidden hell away.

She believed that God our Father and Saviour, personally and through occasional angels, would *mind* her; she believed that he would not be indifferent to her prayers; she believed she had to be good, carefully and continually, and not give Satan a chance with her. Then everything would be all right. That was what her "simple faith" as she called it really amounted to, and in that faith she went out very trustfully into the world.

It was decided that she should go into service as a lady's maid. But first she had four years' apprenticeship as a dressmaker (1836-1840) and she also had instruction in hair-dressing, to equip herself more thoroughly for that state of life into which it had pleased God to call her.

It was a world of other ladies'-maids and valets, of house stewards, housekeepers, cooks and butlers, upper servants above the level of maids and footmen, a downstairs world, but living in plentiful good air, well fed and fairly well housed in the attics, basements and interstices of great mansions. It was an old-fashioned world; most of its patterns of behaviour and much of its peculiar idiom, were established in the seventeenth century; its way of talking, its style of wit, was in an unbroken tradition from the *Polite Conversation* of Dean Swift, and it had customs and an etiquette all its own. I do not think she had a bad time in service; people poked fun at a certain simplicity in her, but no one seems to have been malignant.

I do not know all the positions she filled during her years as a lady's maid. In 1845, when her diary begins, she was with the wife of a certain Captain Forde, I know, and in her company she travelled

and lived in Ireland and in various places in England. The early part of this diary is by far the best written. It abounds in descriptions of scenery and notes of admiration, and is clearly the record of an interested if conventional mind. Ultimately (1850) she became maid to a certain Miss Bullock who lived at Up Park near Petersfield. It was not so gay as the Forde world. At Christmas particularly, in place of merriment, "Up Park just did nothing but eat," but she conceived a great affection for Miss Bullock. She had left the Fordes because her mother was distressed by the death of her sister Elizabeth and wanted Sarah to be in England nearer to her. And at Up Park she met an eligible bachelor gardener who was destined to end her career as a lady's maid, and in the course of time to be my father. He wasn't there to begin with; he came in 1851. "He seems *peculiar*," says the diary, and offers no further comment. Probably she encountered him first in the Servants' Hall, where there was a weekly dance by candlelight to the music of concertina and fiddle.

This was not my mother's first love affair. Two allusions, slightly reminiscent of the romantic fiction of the time, preserve the memory of a previous experience.

"Kingstown railway," the diary remarks, "is very compact and pretty. From Dublin it is short but the sea appears in view, and mountains, which to one fond of romantic scenery, how dear does the country appear when the views are so diversified by the changes of scene, to the reflective mind how sweet they are *to one alas a voluntary exile* from her dear, her native land, to wander alone to brood over the unkindness, the ingratitude, of a faithless, an absent, but not a forgotten lover. Ah, I left a kind and happy home to hide from all dear friends *the keen, bitter anguish* of my heart. Time and the smiles of dear Erin's hospitable people had made a once miserable girl comparatively happy, but can man be happy who gains an innocent love and then trifles with the girlish innocent heart. May he be forgiven as I forgive him!!!"

And again, some pages later: "I meet kindness everywhere, but there are moments when I feel lonely, which makes me sigh for home, dear England, happy shore, still I do not wish to meet again that *false wicked man*, who gained my young heart and then trifled with a pure love. I hope this early trial will work good in me. I feel it

ordered for the best and time will, I trust, prove it to me how mercifully has Providence watched over me, and for a wise purpose taught me not to trust implicitly to erring creatures. Oh, can I ever believe man again? *Burnt all his letters.* I shall now forget quicker I hope, and may he be forgiven his falsehoods."

So, but for that man's treachery, everything might have been different and somebody else might have come into the world in my place, and this biography have never seen the light, replaced by some other biography or by no biography at all.

I know nothing of the earliest encounter of my father and mother. It may have been in the convolutions of Hands Across and Down the Middle, Sir Roger de Coverley, Pop Goes the Weasel, or some such country dance. I like to think of my mother then as innocently animated, pretty and not yet overstrained by dingy toil, and my father as a bright and promising young gardener, son of a head gardener of repute, the head gardener of Lord de Lisle at Penshurst. He was five years younger than she was, and they were both still in their twenties. Presently she was calling him "Joe" and he had modified her name Sarah to "Saddie."

He probably came to the house every day to discuss flowers and vegetables, and so forth, with the cook and the housekeeper and steward and perhaps there was a chance for a word or two then, and on Sundays, when everybody walked downhill a mile and more through the Warren to morning service in Harting Church, they may have had opportunities for conversation. He was not a bad-looking young man, I gather, and I once met an old lady in Harting who recalled that he wore the "most gentlemanly grey trousers."

My parents' relationship had its serious side in those days. It was not all country dances and smiling meetings. I still possess a letter from him to her in which he explains that she has misunderstood an allusion he had made to the Holy Sacrament. He would be the last, he says, to be irreverent on such a topic. It is quite a well written letter.

§ 3. UP PARK AND JOSEPH WELLS (1827-1910)

This Up Park is a handsome great house looking southward, with beechwoods and bracken thickets to shelter the dappled fallow deer of its wide undulating downland park. To the north the estate overhangs the village of South Harting in the triangle between Midhurst, Petersfield and Chichester. The walled gardens, containing the gardener's cottage which my father occupied, were situated three or four hundred yards or more away from the main buildings. There was an outlying laundry, dairy, butcher's shop and stables in the early eighteenth century style, and a turfed-over ice-house. Up Park was built by a Fetherstonhaugh, and it has always been in the hands of that family.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the reigning Fetherstonhaugh was a certain Sir Harry, an intimate of the Prince Regent who was afterwards George IV. Sir Harry was a great seducer of pretty poorish girls, milliners, tenants, singers and servant maids, after the fashion of the time. An early mistress was that lovely young adventuress Emma, who passed into the protection of Greville of the Memoirs, married Sir William Hamilton, and became Romney's and Nelson's Lady Hamilton. In his declining years Sir Harry was smitten with desire for an attractive housemaid, Frances Bullock, and after a strenuous pursuit and a virtuous resistance, valiant struggles on the back stairs and much heated argument, married her. No offspring ensued. She brought her younger sister with her to the house and engaged a governess, Miss Sutherland, to chaperon her and it was after Sir Harry's death that my mother became maid to this younger Miss Bullock.

Queen Victoria and Society never took very eagerly to this belated Lady Fetherstonhaugh, nobody married Miss Bullock, and Sir Harry being duly interred, the three ladies led a spacious dully comfortable life between Up Park and Claridge's. They entertained house parties; people came to them for their shooting and hunting. They changed so little of the old arrangements that I find in a list of guests made by the housekeeper forty years after his death, that "Sir H's bedroom" is still called by his name and assigned to the principal guest. A Mr. Weaver, a bastard, I believe, of Sir Harry's, occupied an ambiguous position in the household as steward and was said — as was probably inevitable — to be Lady Fetherstonhaugh's lover. It

could not have been much in the way of love-making anyhow, with everyone watching and disapproving.

In a novel of mine, perhaps my most ambitious novel, *Tono Bungay*, I have made a little picture of Up Park as "Bladesover," and given a glimpse of its life below stairs. (But the housekeeper there is not in the least like my mother.) That is how I saw it in the 'eighties when the two surviving ladies, Miss Bullock (who took the name of Fetherstonhaugh after her sister's death) and Miss Sutherland, were very old ladies indeed. But in the late 'forties when my mother came down from her costumes and mending and hair-dressing to her lunch or tea or supper in the housekeeper's room, or peeped, as I am sure she did at times from some upstairs window towards the gardens, or beamed and curtseyed and set to partners in the country dance, everyone was younger and the life seemed perhaps more eventful. If it was not so gay and various as that now vanished life below stairs in Ireland, it was bright enough.

My father, Joseph Wells, was the son of Joseph Wells, who was head gardener to Lord de Lisle at Penshurst Place in Kent. My father was one of several brothers and sisters, Charles Edward, Henry, Edward, William, Lucy, Elizabeth and Hannah, and although he bore his father's name, he was the youngest of the sons. There were uncles and cousins in the district, so that I suppose the family had been in Kent for at least some generations. My great-grandfather's name was Edward; he had six children and forty grandchildren, and the family is lost at last in a mangrove swamp of Johns, Georges, Edwards, Toms, Williams, Harrys, Sarahs and Lucys. The lack of originality at the Christenings is appalling. The aunts and uncles were all as far as I can ascertain, of the upper-servants, tenant-farmer class, except that one set of my father's first cousins at Penshurst, bearing the surname of Duke, had developed an industry for the making of cricket bats and balls, and were rather more prosperous than the others.

My father grew up to gardening and cricket, and remained an out-of-doors, open-air man to the day of his death. He became gardener at Redleaf, nearby, to a Mr. Joseph Wells, who, in spite of the identical name, was no sort of relation, and in the summer, directly the day's work was over, my father would run, he told me once, a

mile and more at top speed to the pitch at Penshurst to snatch half an hour of cricket before the twilight made the ball invisible. He learnt to swim and to handle a muzzle-loading gun and so forth as country boys do, and his schooling gave him reading and writing and "summing," so that he read whatever he could and kept his accounts in a clear well-shaped handwriting; but what sort of school imparted these rudiments I do not know.

Joseph Wells, of Redleaf, was an old gentleman with liberal and æsthetic tastes, and he took rather a fancy to young Joseph. He talked to him, encouraged him to read, and lent and gave him books on botany and gardening. When the old man was ill he liked my father to take his arm when he walked in the garden. My father made definite efforts to improve himself. In our parlour when I was a small boy in search of reading matter there was still the *Young Man's Companion* in two volumes and various numbers of Orr's *Circles of the Science* which he had acquired during this phase. He had an aptitude for drawing. He drew and coloured pictures of various breeds of apple and pear and suchlike fruits, and he sought out and flattened and dried between sheets of blotting paper, a great number of specimen plants.

Old Wells was interested in art, and one of his friends and a frequent visitor at Redleaf was Sir Edwin Landseer, the "animal painter," who could put human souls into almost every sort of animal and who did those grave impassive lions at the base of the Nelson monument in Trafalgar Square. My father served as artist's model on several occasions, and for many years he was to be seen in the National Gallery, peeping at a milkmaid in a picture called *The Maid and the Magpie*. Behind him in the sunshine was Penshurst Church. But afterwards the Landseers were all sent to the Tate Gallery at Millbank and there a sudden flood damaged or destroyed most of them and washed away that record of my father altogether.

I do not know what employment my father found after he left Redleaf, which he did when his employer died, before he came to Up Park and met my mother. I think there was some sort of job as gardener or under-gardener at Crewe. In these days he was evidently restless and uneasy about his outlook upon life. Unrest was in the air. He talked of emigrating to America or Australia. I think the

friendliness of Joseph Wells of Redleaf had stirred up vague hopes and ambitions in him, and that he had been disappointed of a "start in life" by the old man's death.

I wish I knew more than I do of my father's dreams and wishes during those early years before he married. In his working everyday world he, like my mother, was still very much in the tradition of the eighteenth century when the nobility and gentry ruled everything under God and the King, when common men knew nothing of the possibility of new wealth, and when either Patronage or a Legacy was the only conceivable way for them out of humdrum and rigid limitation from the cradle to the grave. That system was crumbling away; strange new things were undermining it, but to my mother certainly it seemed an eternal system only to be ended at the Last Trump, and I think it was solely in rare moments of illumination and transparency that my father glimpsed its instability. He and his Saddie walking soberly through the Up Park bracken on a free Sunday afternoon, discussing their prospects, had little more suspicion that their world of gentlemen's estates and carriage-folk and villages and country houses and wayside inns and nice little shops and horse ploughs and windmills and touching one's hat to one's betters, would not endure for ever, than they had that their God in his Heaven was under notice to quit.

But if such was the limitation of his serious talk in the daylight, there could be other moods when he was alone. I had one hint of that which was as good I think as a hundred explicit facts. Once when I was somewhen in my twenties and he was over sixty; as I was walking with him on the open downs out beyond Up Park, he said casually: "When I was a young man of your age I used to come out here and lie oh! half the night, just looking at the stars."

I hadn't thought of him before as a star-gazer. His words opened a great gulf of unsuspected states of mind to me. I wanted him to tell me more, but I did not want to bother him with a cross-examination. I hesitated among a number of clumsy leading questions that would tell me something more of the feelings of that vanished young man of forty years ago who had suddenly reappeared between us.

"What for?" I ventured to ask rather lamely.

"Wondering."

I left it at that. One may be curious about one's father, but prying is prohibited.

But if he could look out of this planet and wonder about the stars, it may be he could also look out of his immediate circumstances and apprehend their triviality by stellar standards. I do not think my mother ever wondered about the stars. God our Father had put them there "for his glory," and that sufficed for her. My father was never at any time in his life, clear and set in that fashion.

My mother's diary is silent about the circumstances of her marriage. There is no mention of any engagement. I cannot imagine how it came about. She left Up Park to be with her mother who was very seriously ill in the spring of 1853. My father visited the inn at Midhurst, I should think as her fiancé, in the summer. He had left Up Park and was on his way to stay with his brother, Charles Edward, in Gloucestershire until he could find another place. Then suddenly she was in a distressful storm. Her father was taken ill unexpectedly and died in August, and her mother, already very ill, died, after a phase of dementia due to grief and dismay, in November. That happened on the 5th, and on the 22nd my mother was married to my father (who was still out of a situation) in the City of London at St. Stephen's Church, Coleman Street. He seems to have been employed a little later as an under gardener at Trentham in Staffordshire, and for a time they could live together only intermittently. She visited him at Trentham, she does not say precisely how; and they spent a Sunday she did not like in "the gardener's cottage" at Crewe. "No church, nothing." She paid visits to relations in between and felt "very unsettled."

I guess they were married on his initiative, but that is only guessing. He may have thought it a fine thing to do. There is nothing like extravagance when one is down. He may have had a flash of imperious passion. But then one should go on in the same key, and that he did not do. My mother may have felt the need of a man to combat the lawyers whom she suspected of making away with her father's estate. If so, my father was very little good to her. Presently he got a job and a cottage at Shuckburgh Park in the midlands. On April 5th, 1854, she is "very happy and busy preparing for my new home." It was to be the happiest and most successful home she ever

had, poor little woman! In the diary my father becomes "dearest Joe" and "my dear husband." Previously he had been "Joe" or "J. W." "The Saturday laborious work I do not like, but still I am very happy in my little home." And he did a little water-colour sketch which still exists, of his small square cottage, and I suppose one does not sketch a house unless one is reasonably happy in it. He kept this place at Shuckburgh Park until a daughter had been born to him (in 1855) and then he was at loose ends again.

There seems to have been no intimation of coming trouble until it came. My mother's diary records: "July 17th 1855. Sir Francis gave Joe warning to *leave* (trebly underlined). Oh what a sorrow! It struck to my poor heart to look at my sweet babe and obliged to leave my pretty *home*. May it please God to bless us with another happy quiet home in His own Good Time."

But it did not please God to do anything of the sort at any time any more.

I do not know why my father was unsuccessful as a gardener, but I suspect a certain intractability of temper rather than incapacity. He did not like to be told things and made to do things. He was impatient. Before he married, I gather from an old letter from a friend that has chanced to be preserved, he was talking of going to the gold diggings in Australia, and again after he left the cottage at Shuckburgh he was looking round for some way out of the galling subordinations and uncertainties of "service." He thought again of emigrating; this time to America, there were even two stout boxes made for his belongings, and then his schemes for flight abroad, which perhaps after all were rather half-hearted schemes, were frustrated by the advent of my eldest brother, his second child.

Perhaps it was as well that he did not attempt pioneering in new lands with my mother. She had been trained as a lady's maid and not as a housewife and I do not think she had the mental flexibility to rise to new occasions. She was that sort of woman who is an incorrigibly bad cook. By nature and upbringing alike she belonged to that middle-class of dependents who occupied situations, performed strictly defined duties, gave or failed to give satisfaction and had no ideas at all outside that dependence. People of that quality "saved up for a rainy day" but they were without the slightest trace of primary

productive or acquisitive ability. She was that in all innocence, but I perceive that my father might well have had a more efficient helpmate in the struggle for life as it went on in the individualistic nineteenth century.

He was at any rate a producer, if only as a recalcitrant gardener, but he shared her incapacity for getting and holding things. They were both economic innocents made by and for a social order, a scheme of things, that was falling to pieces all about them. And looking for stability in a world that was already breaking away towards adventure, they presently dropped into that dismal insanitary hole I have already described, in which I was born, and from which they were unable to escape for twenty-four dreary years.

Since it was difficult to find a situation as a gardener and still more tiresome to keep it, since there was no shelter or help in the world while one was out of work but the scanty hospitality of one's family, the idea of becoming one's own master and getting a home of one's own even on an uncertain income became a very alluring one. An obliging cousin, George Wells, with a little unsuccessful china and crockery shop in the High Street of Bromley, Kent, offered it to my father on extremely reasonable terms. It was called *Atlas House* because of a figure of Atlas bearing a lamp instead of the world in the shop window. My father anticipated his inheritance of a hundred pounds or so, bought this business and set up for himself. He spent all his available savings and reserves, and my mother with one infant in arms moved into 47 High Street, in time to bring my eldest brother into the world there. And so they were caught. From the outset this business did not "pay," and it "paid" less and less. But they had now no means of getting out of it and going anywhere else.

"Took possession," says the diary on October 23rd 1855. On the 27th, "very unsettled. No furniture sufficient and no capital to do as we ought. I fear we have done wrong." On November 7th she says, "This seems a horrid business, no trade. How I wish I had taken that situation with Lady Carrick!" "November 8th. No customers all day. How sad to be deceived by one's relations. They have got their money and we their old stock."

They both knew they were caught.

And being caught like this was to try these poor things out to the

utmost. It grew very plain that my father had neither imagination nor sympathy for the woman's side of life. (Later on I was to betray a similar deficiency.) He had been brought up in a country home with mother and sisters, and the women folk saw to all the indoor business. A man just didn't bother about it. He lived from the shop outward and had by far the best of things; she became the entire household staff, with two little children on her hands and, as the diary shows quite plainly, in perpetual dread of further motherhood. "Anxiety relieved," became her formula. There is a pathetic deterioration in the diary, as infested, impossible, exhausting Atlas House takes possession of her. There were no more descriptions of scenery and fewer and fewer pious and sentimental reflections after the best models. It becomes a record of dates and comings and goings, of feeling ill, of the ill health of her children, growing up, she realized, in unwholesome circumstances, of being left alone, of triter and triter attempts to thank God for his many mercies. "J. W." — he is "J. W." again now and henceforth— "playing cricket at Chislehurst." "J. W. out all day." "J. W. in London." ...

"August 23rd, 1857. Church, morning, had a happy day. J. W. went to church with me!!!"

"August 30th, 1857. Went to church. Mr. J. W. did not go all day, did not feel quite so happy, how often I wish he was more serious."

"Dec. 1st, 1857. Joe resolved on going to New Zealand. Advertisement of business to let or sold. 3rd. Please God to guide us whichever way is for the best."

"Dec. 31st, '57. This year ends with extreme anxiety about the business. How I wish we had never taken it. How unsuited for us. Not half a living and dear parents have all gone. Oh Heavenly Father guide and direct me."

"Jan. 4th. J. W. put a second advertisement in."

"Jan. 6th. Had an answer to advertisement."

These advertisements came to nothing. A "letting notice in the window" came to nothing. "Several enquiries but nothing." More strenuous methods were needed and never adopted. Day follows day in that diary and mostly they are unhappy days. And so it went on. For twenty-four years of her life, and the first thirteen years of mine, dingy old Atlas House kept her going up and down its wearisome

staircases in her indefatigable hopeless attempt to recover something of the brightness of that little cottage at Shuckburgh.

My mother used to accuse my father of neglecting the shop for cricket. But it was through that excellent sport as it was then, that the little ménage contrived to hold out, with an occasional bankruptcy, for so long before it was finally sold up. He was never really interested in the crockery trade and sold little, I think, but jampots and preserving jars to the gentlemen's houses round about, and occasional bedroom sets and tea-sets, table glass and replacements. But he developed his youthful ability to play cricket which he had kept alive at Up Park, he revived the local club and was always getting jobs of variable duration as a professional bowler and cricket instructor in the neighbourhood. He played for the West Kent Club from 1857 to 1869 and bowled for the County of Kent in 1862 and 1863. On June 26th, 1862, he clean bowled four Sussex batsmen in four successive balls, a feat not hitherto recorded in county cricket. Moreover his cousin John Duke at Penshurst, whom he had once got out of danger when they were swimming together, let him have long and considerate credit for a supply of cricket goods that ousted the plates and dishes from half the shop window. Among the familiar names of my childhood were the Hoares and the Normans, both banking families with places near Bromley, for whom he bowled; and for some years he went every summer term to Norwich Grammar School as "pro."

§ 4. SARAH WELLS AT ATLAS HOUSE (1855-1880)

My Mother drudged endlessly in that gaunt and impossible home and the years slipped by. Year after year she changed and the prim little lady's-maid, with her simple faith and her definite views about the Holy Sacrament, gave place to a tired woman more and more perplexed by life. Twice more her habitual "anxiety" was not to be relieved, and God was to incur her jaded and formal gratitude for two more "dear ones." She feared us terribly before we came and afterwards she loved and slaved for us intensely, beyond reason. She was not clever at her job and I have to tell it; she sometimes did

badly by her children through lack of knowledge and flexibility, but nothing could exceed the grit and devotion of her mothering. She wore her fingers to the bone working at our clothes, and she had acquired a fanatical belief in cod liver oil and insisted that we two younger ones should have it at any cost; so that we escaped the vitamin insufficiency that gave my elder brother a pigeon breast and a retarded growth. No one knew about vitamin D in those days, but cod liver oil had been prescribed for my sister Fanny and it had worked magic with her.

My mother brought my brother Freddy into the world in 1862, and had her great tragedy in 1864, when my sister died of appendicitis. The nature of appendicitis was unknown in those days; it was called "inflammation of the bowels"; my sister had been to a children's tea party a day or so before her seizure, and my mother in her distress at this sudden blow, leaped to the conclusion that Fanny had been given something unsuitable to eat, and was never quite reconciled to those neighbours, would not speak to them, forbade us to mention them.

Fanny had evidently been a very bright, precocious and fragile little girl, an indoor little girl, with a facility for prim piety that had delighted my mother's heart. Such early goodness, says Dr. W. R. Ackroyd (in *Vitamins and other Dietary Essentials*) is generally a sign of some diet deficiency, and that, I fear is how things were with her. Quite healthy children are boisterous. She had learnt her "collect" every Sunday, repeated many hymns by rote, said her prayers beautifully, found her "place" in the prayer book at church, and made many apt remarks for my mother to treasure in her heart. I was born two years and more after her death, in 1866, and my mother decided that I had been sent to replace Fanny and to achieve a similar edification. But again Fate was mocking her. Little boys are different in constitution from little girls, and even from the outset I showed myself exceptionally deficient in the religious sense. I was born blasphemous and protesting. Even at my christening, she told me, I squalled with a vehemence unprecedented in the history of the family.

And later she was to undermine her own teaching with cod liver oil.

My own beginnings were shaped so much as a system of reactions to my mother's ideas and suggestions and feelings that I find some attempt to realize her states of mind, during those twenty-five years of enslavement behind the crockery shop, a necessary prelude to my account of my own education. We had no servants; no nurse-maids and governesses intervened between us; she carried me about until I could be put down to trot after her and so I arose mentally, quite as much as physically, out of her. It was a process of severance and estrangement, for I was my father's as well as my mother's son.

I have tried to give an impression of the simple and confident faith with which my mother sailed out into life. Vast unsuspected forces beyond her ken were steadily destroying the social order, the horse and sailing ship transport, the handicrafts and the tenant-farming social order, to which all her beliefs were attuned and on which all her confidence was based. To her these mighty changes in human life presented themselves as a series of perplexing frustrations and undeserved misfortunes, for which nothing or nobody was clearly to blame — unless it was my father and the disingenuous behaviour of people about her from whom she might have expected better things.

Bromley was being steadily suburbanized. An improved passenger and goods service, and the opening of a second railway station, made it more and more easy for people to go to London for their shopping and for London retailers to come into competition with the local traders. Presently the delivery vans of the early multiple shops, the Army and Navy Co-operative Stores and the like, appeared in the neighbourhood to suck away the ebbing vitality of the local retailer. The trade in pickling jars and jam-pots died away. Fresh housekeepers came to the gentlemen's houses, who knew not Joseph and bought their stuff from the stores.

Why didn't Joe do something about it?

Poor little woman! How continually vexed she was, how constantly tired and worried to the limits of endurance, during that dismal half-lifetime of disillusionment that slipped away at Bromley! She clung most desperately to the values she had learnt at Miss Riley's finishing school; she learnt nothing and forgot nothing through those dark years spent for the most part in the underground kitchen. Every night and morning and sometimes during the day she

prayed to Our Father and Our Saviour for a little money, for a little leisure, for a little kindness, to make Joe better and less negligent — for now he was getting very neglectful of her. It was like writing to an absconding debtor for all the answer she got.

Unless taking away her darling, her wonder, her one sweet and tractable child, her Fanny, her little "Possy," without pity or warning was an answer. A lesson. Fanny was well and happy and then she was flushed and contorted with agony and then in three days she was dead. My mother had to talk to her diary about it. Little boys do not like lamenting mothers; Joe was apt to say, "There, there, Saddie," and go off to his cricket; except for Our Lord and Saviour, whose dumbness, I am afraid, wore the make-believe very thin at times, my mother had to do her weeping alone.

It is my conviction that deep down in my mother's heart something was broken when my sister died two years and more before I was born. Her simple faith was cracked then and its reality spilled away. I got only the forms and phrases of it. I do not think she ever admitted to herself, ever realized consciously, that there was no consolation under heaven for the outrage Fate had done her. Our Lord was dumb, even in dreams he came not, and her subconsciousness apprehended all the dreadful implications of that silence. But she fought down that devastating discovery. She went on repeating the old phrases of belief — all the more urgently perhaps. She wanted me to believe in order to stanch that dark undertow of doubt. In the early days with my sister she had been able so to saturate her teaching with confidence in the Divine Protection, that she had created a prodigy of Early Piety. My heart she never touched because the virtue had gone out of her.

I was indeed a prodigy of Early Impiety. I was scared by Hell, I did not at first question the existence of Our Father, but no fear nor terror could prevent my feeling that his All Seeing Eye was that of an Old Sneak and that the Atonement for which I had to be so grateful was either an imposture, a trick of sham self-immolation, or a crazy nightmare. I felt the unsoundness of these things before I dared to think it. There was a time when I believed in the story and scheme of salvation, so far as I could understand it, just as there was a time when I believed there was a Devil, but there was never a time when I

did not heartily detest the whole business.

I feared Hell dreadfully for some time. Hell was indeed good enough to scare me and prevent me calling either of my brothers fools, until I was eleven or twelve. But one night I had a dream of Hell so preposterous that it blasted that undesirable resort out of my mind for ever. In an old number of *Chambers Journal* I had read of the punishment of breaking a man on the wheel. The horror of it got into my dreams and there was Our Father in a particularly malignant phase, busy basting a poor broken sinner rotating slowly over a fire built under the wheel. I saw no Devil in the vision; my mind in its simplicity went straight to the responsible fountain head. That dream pursued me into the day time. Never had I hated God so intensely.

And then suddenly the light broke through to me and I knew this God was a lie.

I have a sort of love for most living things, but I cannot recall any time in my life when I had the faintest shadow of an intimation of love for any one of the Persons in the Holy Trinity. I could as soon love a field scarecrow as those patched up "persons." I am still as unable to account for the ecstasies of the faithful as I was to feel as my mother wished me to feel. I sensed it was a silly story long before I dared to admit even to myself that it was a silly story.

For indeed it is a silly story and each generation nowadays swallows it with greater difficulty. It is a jumble up of a miscellany of the old sacrificial and consolatory religions of the confused and unhappy townspeople of the early Empire; its constituent practices were probably more soothing to troubled hearts before there was any attempt to weld them into one mystical creed, and all the disingenuous intelligence of generation after generation of time-serving or well-meaning divines has served only to accentuate the fundamental silliness of these synthesised Egyptian and Syrian myths. I doubt if one person in a million of all the hosts of Christendom has ever produced a spark of genuine gratitude for the Atonement. I think "love" for the Triune God is as rare as it is unnatural and irrational.

Why do people go on pretending about this Christianity? At the test of war, disease, social injustice and every real human distress, it fails — and leaves a cheated victim, as it abandoned my mother.

Jesus was some fine sort of man perhaps, the Jewish Messiah was a promise of leadership, but Our Saviour of the Trinity is a dressed-up inconsistent effigy of amiability, a monstrous hybrid of man and infinity, making vague promises of helpful miracles for the cheating of simple souls, an ever absent help in times of trouble.

And their Sacrament, their wonderful Sacrament, in which the struggling Believers urge themselves to discover the profoundest satisfaction; what is it? What does it amount to? Was there ever a more unintelligible mix up of bad metaphysics and grossly materialistic superstition than this God-eating? Was there anything more corrupting to take into a human mind and be given cardinal importance there?

I once said a dreadful thing to my mother about the Sacrament. In her attempts to evoke Early Piety in me, she worked very hard indeed to teach me the answers in the English Church Catechism. I learnt them dutifully but I found them dull. In one answer (framed very carefully to guard me against the errors of the Church of Rome) I had to say what were the elements in the sacred feast. "Bread and Wine," it ran, "which our Lord hath ordained," *etc*., *etc*.

Bread and Wine seemed a strange foolish form of refreshment to me, the only wines I knew were ginger wine at Christmas and orange wine, which I took with cod liver oil, and port and sherry which were offered with a cracknel biscuit to housekeepers who came to pay bills, and so it occurred to me it would introduce an amusing element of realism into the solemnity of the recital if I answered "Bread and Butter" and chuckled helpfully....

My mother knew she had to be profoundly shocked. She was shocked to the best of her ability. But she was much more puzzled than shocked. The book was closed, the audition suspended.

She said I did not understand the dreadfulness of what I had said, and that was perfectly true. And poor dear she could not convey it to me. No doubt she interceded with God for me and asked him to take over the task of enlightenment. "Forgive dear Bertie," she must have said.

And anyhow it was made evident to me that a decorative revision of the English Church Catechism was an undesirable enterprise. I turned my attention to the more acceptable effort to say it faster and

faster.

My mother in my earliest memories of her was a distressed overworked little woman, already in her late forties. All the hope and confidence of her youth she had left behind her. As I knew her in my childhood, she was engaged in a desperate single-handed battle with our gaunt and dismal home, to keep it clean, to keep her children clean, to get them clothed and fed and taught, to keep up appearances. The only domestic help I ever knew her to have was a garrulous old woman of the quality of Sairey Gamp, a certain Betsy Finch.

In opulent times Betsy would come in to char, and there would even be a washing day, when the copper in the scullery was lit and all the nether regions were filled with white steam and the smell of soapsuds. My mother appears in these early memories, in old cloth slippers, a grey stuff dress or a print dress according to the season, an apron of sacking and a big pink sunbonnet — such as country-women wore in Old and New England alike before the separation. There was little sun in her life, but she wore that headdress, she explained, to keep the dust out of her hair. She is struggling up or down stairs with a dust-pan, a slop-pail, a scrubbing brush or a greasy dishclout. Long before I came into the world her poor dear hands had become enlarged and distorted by scrubbing and damp, and I never knew them otherwise.

Her toil was unending. My father would get up and rake out and lay and light the fire, because she was never clever at getting a fire to burn, and then she would get breakfast while he took down the clumsy shop shutters and swept out the shop. Then came the business of hunting the boys out of bed, seeing that they did something in the way of washing, giving them breakfast and sending them off in time for school. Then airing and making the beds, emptying the slops, washing up the breakfast things. Then perhaps a dusty battle to clean out a room; there were no vacuum cleaners in those days; or a turn at scrubbing — scrubbing the splintery rotten wood of a jerry-built house. There was no O-Cedar mop, no polished floor; down you went to it on all fours with your pail beside you. If Joe was out delivering goods there might at any moment be a jangle of the shop bell and a customer.

Customers bothered my mother, especially when she was in her costume for housework; she would discard her apron in a hurry, wipe her wet hands, pat her hair into order, come into the shop breathless and defensive, and often my father had neglected to mark the prices on the things the customer wanted. If it was cricket goods she was quite at sea.

My father usually bought the meat for dinner himself, and that had to be cooked and the table laid in the downstairs kitchen. Then came a clatter of returning boys through the shop and down the staircase, and the midday meal. The room was dark and intermittently darker because of the skirts and feet going by over the grating. It wasn't always a successful meal. Sometimes there was not much to eat; but there were always potatoes and there was too much cabbage for my taste; and sometimes the cooking had been unfortunate and my father Pished and Tushed or said disagreeable things outright. My mother in those days was just the unpaid servant of everybody. I in particular was often peevish with my food, and frequently I would have headaches and bad bilious attacks in the afternoon. We drank beer that was drawn from a small cask in the scullery, and if it went a little flat before the cask was finished it had to be drunk just the same. Presently father lit his pipe and filled the kitchen air with the fragrance of Red Virginia, the boys dispersed quarrelling or skylarking or rejoicing, and there was nothing left to do of the first half, the heavier half, of my mother's daily routine but wash up the plates at the sink.

Then she could attend to appearances. Instead of the charlady ensemble of the morning, she changed herself into a trim little lady with a cap and lace apron. Generally she sat indoors. Perforce if my father was at cricket, but mainly because there was nothing to do abroad and much to do at home. She had a large confused work-basket — when I was small and exceptionally good it was sometimes my privilege to turn it out — and she had all our clothes to mend. She darned my heels and knees with immense stitches. In addition she made all our clothes until such age as, under the pressure of our schoolfellows' derision, we rebelled against something rather naïve in the cut. Also she made loose covers for the chairs and sofa out of cheap chintz or cretonne. She made them as she cooked and as she

made our clothes, with courage rather than skill. They fitted very badly but at least they hid the terrible worn shabbiness of the fundamental stuff. She got tea, she got supper, she put her offspring to bed after they had said their prayers, and then she could sit a little while, think, read the daily-paper, write a line or so in her diary, attend to her correspondence, before she lit her candle and went up the inconvenient staircase for the last time to bed. My father was generally out after supper, talking of men's affairs with men or playing a friendly game of Nap, by which I believe, generally speaking, he profited, in the bar parlour of the Bell.

I know very little about the realities of my father's life at this time. Essentially he was a baffled unsuccessful "stuck" man, but he had a light and cheerful disposition, and a large part of his waking energy was spent in evading disagreeable realizations. He had a kind of attractiveness for women, I think he was aware of it, but I do not know whether he ever went further along the line of unfaithfulness than a light flirtation — in Bromley at any rate. I should certainly have learnt from my schoolfellows of any scandal or scandalous suspicion. He chatted a great deal at the shop door to fellow tradesmen in a similar state of leisure. The voices and occasional laughter came through the shop to my mother alone within.

He read diversely, bought books at sales, brought them home from the Library Institute. I think his original religious and political beliefs were undergoing a slow gentle fading out in those days. Evidently he found my mother, with her rigid standards and her curiously stereotyped mind, less and less interesting to talk to. She was never able to master the mysteries of cards or chess or draughts, so that alleviation of their evenings was out of the question. He felt her voluminous unspoken criticism of his ineptitude, he realized the justice of her complaints, and yet for the life of him he could not see what was to be done. I will confess I do not know what he could have done.

My mother's instinct for appearances was very strong. Whatever the realities of our situation, she was resolved that to the very last moment we should keep up the appearance of being comfortable members of that upper- servant tenant class to which her imagination had been moulded. She believed that it was a secret to all the world

that she had no servant and did all the household drudgery herself. I was enjoined never to answer questions about that or let it out when I went abroad. Nor was I to take my coat off carelessly, because my underclothing was never quite up to the promise of my exterior garments. It was never ragged but it abounded in compromises. This hindered my playing games.

I was never to mix with common children, who might teach me naughty words. The Hoptons, the greengrocer's family over the way, were "rough" she thought; they were really turbulently jolly; the Mundays next door were methodists who sang hymns out of church which is almost as bad as singing songs in it, and the Mowatts at the corner she firmly believed had killed poor Possy and were not to be thought of. People who were not beneath us were apt to be stuck-up and unapproachable in the other direction. So my universe of discourse was limited. She preferred to have me indoors rather than out.

She taught me the rudiments of learning. I learnt my alphabet from a big sheet of capital letters pasted up in the kitchen, I learnt the nine figures from the same sheet, and from her, orally, how to count up to a hundred, and the first word I wrote was "butter," which I traced over her handwriting against a pane of the window. Also I began to read under her instructions. But then she felt my education was straining for higher things and I went off with my brother Freddy (who was on no account to let go of my hand) to a school in a room in a row of cottages near the Drill Hall, kept by an unqualified old lady, Mrs. Knott, and her equally unqualified daughter Miss Salmon, where I learnt to say my tables of weights and measures, read words of two or more syllables and pretend to do summing — it was incomprehensible fudging that was never explained to me — on a slate.

Such was my mother in the days when I was a small boy. She already had wrinkles round her eyes, and her mouth was drawn in because she had lost some teeth, and having them replaced by others would have seemed a wicked extravagance to her. I wonder what went on in her brain when she sat alone in the evening by the lamp and the dying fire, doing some last bit of sewing before she went to bed? I began to wonder what went on in her brain when I was in my

early teens and I have wondered ever since.

I believe she was profoundly aware of her uncomfortable poverty-stricken circumstances, but I do not think she was acutely unhappy. I believe that she took refuge from reality in a world of innocent reverie. As she sewed, a string of petty agreeable fictions were distracting her mind from unpleasant fears and anxieties. She was meeting someone whom it was agreeable to meet; she was being congratulated on this or that fancied achievement, dear Bertie was coming home with prizes from school, dear Frankie or dear Freddie was setting up in business and doing ever so well, or the postman was coming with a letter, a registered letter. It was a letter to say she had been left money, twenty-five pounds, fifty pounds — why not a hundred pounds? All her own. The Married Woman's Property Act ensured that Joe couldn't touch it. It was a triumph over Joe, but all the same, she would buy him something out of it. Poor Possy should have that gravestone at last. Mr. Morley's bill would be paid.

Should she have a servant? Did she really want a servant — except for what the neighbours thought? More trouble than they are worth most of the time. A silly girl she would have to train — and with boys about! And Joe?... The boys were good as gold, she knew, but who could tell what might not happen if the girl chanced to be a bad, silly girl? Better have in a serious woman, Betsy Finch for example, more regularly. It would be nice not to have to scrub so much. And to have new curtains in the parlour.... Doctor Beeby coming in — just to look at Freddie's finger, nothing serious. "Dear me, Mrs. Wells, dear me! How *pretty* you have made the room!" ...

Some such flow of fancy as that, it must have been.

Without reverie life would surely be unendurable to the greater multitude of human beings. After all opium is merely a stimulant for reverie. And reverie, I am sure, made the substance of her rare leisure. Religion and love, except for her instinctive pride in her boys, had receded imperceptibly from her life and left her dreaming. Once she had dreamt of reciprocated love and a sedulously attentive God, but there was indeed no more reassurance for her except in dreamland. My father was away at cricket, and I think she realized more and more acutely as the years dragged on without material alleviation, that Our Father and Our Lord, on whom, to begin with,

she had perhaps counted unduly, were also away — playing perhaps at their own sort of cricket in some remote quarter of the starry universe.

My mother was still a good Churchwoman, but I doubt if her reveries in the lonely evenings at Atlas House ever went into the hereafter and anticipated immortality. I doubt if she ever distracted herself by dreaming of the scenery of the Life to Come, or of anything that could happen there. Unless it was to have a vision of meeting her lost little "Possy" again in some celestial garden, an unchanged and eternal child, and hear her surprised bright cry of "Mummy Mummy!" and hold her in her arms once more.

§ 5. A BROKEN LEG AND SOME BOOKS AND PICTURES (1874)

My leg was broken for me when I was between seven and eight. Probably I am alive to-day and writing this autobiography instead of being a worn-out, dismissed and already dead shop assistant, because my leg was broken. The agent of good fortune was "young Sutton," the grown-up son of the landlord of the *Bell*. I was playing outside the scoring tent in the cricket field and in all friendliness he picked me up and tossed me in the air. "Whose little kid are you?" he said, and I wriggled, he missed his hold on me and I snapped my tibia across a tent peg. A great fuss of being carried home; a painful setting — for they just set and strapped a broken leg tightly between splints in those days, and the knee and ankle swelled dreadfully — and then for some weeks I found myself enthroned on the sofa in the parlour as the most important thing in the house, consuming unheard-of jellies, fruits, brawn and chicken sent with endless apologies on behalf of her son by Mrs. Sutton, and I could demand and have a fair chance of getting anything that came into my head, books, paper, pencils, and toys — and particularly books.

I had just taken to reading. I had just discovered the art of leaving my body to sit impassive in a crumpled up attitude in a chair or sofa, while I wandered over the hills and far away in novel company and new scenes. And now my father went round nearly every day to the

Literary Institute in Market Square and got one or two books for me, and Mrs. Sutton sent some books, and there was always a fresh book to read. My world began to expand very rapidly, and when presently I could put my foot to the ground, the reading habit had got me securely. Both my parents were doubtful of the healthiness of reading, and did their best to discourage this poring over books as soon as my leg was better.

I cannot recall now many of the titles of the books I read, I devoured them so fast, and the title and the author's name in those days seemed a mere inscription on the door to delay me in getting down to business. There was a work, in two volumes, upon the countries of the world, which I think must have been made of bound up fortnightly parts. It was illustrated with woodcuts, the photogravure had still to come in those days, and it took me to Tibet, China, the Rocky Mountains, the forests of Brazil, Siam and a score of other lands. I mingled with Indians and naked negroes; I learnt about whaling and crossed the drift ice with Esquimaux. There was Wood's *Natural History*, also copiously illustrated and full of exciting and terrifying facts. I conceived a profound fear of the gorilla, of which there was a fearsome picture, which came out of the book at times after dark and followed me noiselessly about the house. The half landing was a favourite lurking place for this terror. I passed it whistling, but wary and then ran for my life up the next flight. And I was glad to think that between the continental land masses of the world, which would have afforded an unbroken land passage for wolves from Russia and tigers from India, and this safe island on which I took my daily walks, stretched the impassable moat of the English Channel. I read too in another book about the distances of the stars, and that seemed to push the All Seeing Eye very agreeably away from me. Turning over the pages of the Natural History, I perceived a curious relationship between cats and tigers and lions and so forth, and to a lesser degree between them and hyenas and dogs and bears, and between them again and other quadrupeds, and curious premonitions of evolution crept into my thoughts. Also I read the life of the Duke of Wellington and about the American Civil War, and began to fight campaigns and battles in my reveries. At home were the works of Washington Irving and I

became strangely familiar with Granada and Columbus and the Companions of Columbus. I do not remember that any story books figured during this first phase of reading. Either I have forgotten them or they did not come my way. Later on, however, Captain Mayne Reid, Fenimore Cooper and the Wild West generally, seized upon my imagination.

One important element in that first bout of reading was the bound volumes of *Punch* and its rival in those days, *Fun*, which my father renewed continually during my convalescence. The bound periodicals with their political cartoons and their quaint details played a curious part in developing my imaginative framework. My ideas of political and international relations were moulded very greatly by the big figures of John Bull and Uncle Sam, the French, the Austrian, and the German and Russian emperors, the Russian bear, the British lion and the Bengal tiger, Mr. Gladstone the noble, and the insidious, smiling Dizzy. They confronted one another; they said heroic, if occasionally quite incomprehensible things to one another. And across the political scene also marched tall and lovely feminine figures, Britannia, Erin, Columbia, La France, bare armed, bare necked, showing beautiful bare bosoms, revealing shining thighs, wearing garments that were a revelation in an age of flounces and crinolines. My first consciousness of women, my first stirrings of desire were roused by these heroic divinities. I became woman-conscious from those days onward.

I do not wish to call in question the accounts the masters of psycho- analysis give us of the awakening of sexual consciousness in the children they have studied. But I believe that the children who furnished material for the first psycho-analysts were the children of people racially different, and different in their conceptions of permissible caresses and endearments from my family. What they say may be true of Austrian Jews and Levantines and yet not true of English or Irish. I cannot remember and I cannot trace any continuity between my infantile physical reactions and my personal sexual life. I believe that all the infantile sensuality of suckling and so forth on which so much stress is laid, was never carried on into the permanent mental fabric, was completely washed out in forgetfulness; never coagulated into sub-conscious memories; it was as though it had

never been. I cannot detect any mother fixation, any Oedipus complex or any of that stuff in my make up. My mother's kisses were significant acts, expressions not caresses. As a small boy I found no more sexual significance about my always decent and seemly mother than I did about the chairs and sofa in our parlour.

It is quite possible that while there is a direct continuity of the sexual subconsciousness from parent to child in the southern and eastern Europeans, due to a sustained habit of caresses and intimacy, the psycho-sexual processes of the northern and western Europeans and Americans arise *de novo* in each generation after a complete break with and forgetfulness of the mother-babe reaction, and so are fundamentally different in their form and sequence. At any rate I am convinced that my own sexual life began in a naïve direct admiration for the lovely bodies, as they seemed, of those political divinities of Tenniel's in *Punch*, and that my first inklings of desire were roused by them and by the plaster casts of Greek statuary that adorned the Crystal Palace. I do not think there was any sub- conscious contribution from preceding events to that response; my mind was inherently ready for it. My mother had instilled in me the impropriety of not wearing clothes, so that my first attraction towards Venus was shamefaced and furtive, but the dear woman never suspected the stimulating influence of Britannia, Erin, Columbia and the rest of them upon my awakening susceptibilities.

It is true that I worshipped them at first in a quasi infantile fashion, but that does not imply continuity of experience. When I went to bed I used to pillow my head on their great arms and breasts. Gradually they ceased to be gigantic. They took me in their arms and I embraced them, but nevertheless I remained fundamentally ignorant and innocent until I went to school after my accident. I found women lovely and worshipful before I was seven years old, and well before I came down to what we call nowadays the "facts of sex." But now that my interest was aroused I became acutely observant of a print or a statuette in a shop window. I do not think my interest at that time was purely hetero-sexual. My world was so clothed and covered up, and the rules of decency were so established in me, that any revelation of the body was an exciting thing.

Now that I had arrived at knickerbockers and the reading of

books, I was sent to a little private school in the High Street, Bromley, for boys between seven and fifteen, and from my schoolmates I speedily learnt in the grossest way, imparted with guffaws and gestures, "the facts of sex," and all those rude words that express them, from which my mother had hitherto shielded me.

None of these boys came from bookish homes so that I had from the outset a queer relative wideness of outlook. I knew all sorts of things about lands and beasts and times of which they had never heard. And I had developed a facility for drawing, which in them was altogether dormant. So that I passed for an exceptionally bright and clever little boy and the schoolmaster would invoke "Young Seven Years Old," to shame the obtuseness of my elders. They were decent enough not to visit it upon me. Among boys from more literate homes I should have had none of these outstanding advantages, but I took them naturally enough as an intrinsic superiority, and they made me rather exceptionally self-conceited and confident.

The clash of these gross revelations about the apparatus of sex with my secret admiration for the bodily beauty of women, and with this personal conceit of mine, determined to a large extent my mental and perhaps my physical development. It imposed a reserve upon me that checked a native outspokenness. That a certain amount of masturbation is a normal element in the emergence of sexual consciousness was in those days almost passionately concealed by the English-speaking world. Yet probably no normal individual altogether escapes that response to the stir of approaching adolescence. To my generation it was allowed to come as a horrifying, astounding, perplexing individual discovery. Without guidance and recognition, and black with shame, it ran inevitably into a variety of unwholesome channels. Upon many boys and girls it became localized in the parts more immediately affected and exercised an overwhelming fascination. The school had its exhibitionist and ran with a dirty whispered and giggling undertow. Among the boarders, many of whom slept two in a bed, there was certainly much simple substitutional homosexuality. Personally I recoiled, even more than I cared to show, from mere phallicism. I did not so much begin masturbation as have it happen to me as a natural outcome of my drowsy clasping of my goddesses. I had so to speak a

one-sided love affair with the bedding.

I never told a soul about it because I was ashamed and feared ridicule or indignant reproof. Very early I got hold of the idea, I do not know how, that Venus could drain away my energy, and this kept my lapses from ideal “purity” within very definite bounds indeed. There was also a certain amount of superstitious terror to restrain me. Maybe this was that sin against the Holy Ghost that could never be forgiven, that damned inevitably. That worried a brother of mine more than it did me, but I think it worried me also. I was eleven or twelve years old before religion began to fall to pieces in my consciousness.

So at the age of seven (and, to be exact, three quarters), when I went up the High Street to Morley’s school for the first time, a rather white- faced little boy in a holland pinafore and carrying a small green baize satchel for my books, I had already between me and my bleak Protestant God, a wide wide world of snowy mountains, Arctic regions, tropical forests, prairies and deserts and high seas, cities and armies, Indians, negroes and island savages, gorillas, great carnivores, elephants, rhinoceroses and whales, about which I was prepared to talk freely, and cool and strange below it all a cavernous world of nameless goddess mistresses of which I never breathed a word to any human being.

III. — SCHOOLBOY

§ 1. MR. MORLEY'S COMMERCIAL ACADEMY (1874- 1880)

This march up the High Street to Mr. Thomas Morley's Academy begins a new phase in the story of the brain that J. W. and his Saddie had launched into the world. Bromley Academy was a school in the ancient tradition, but the culmination of my schooling was to occur in the most modern and advanced of colleges then in existence, the science schools at South Kensington. It was a queer discontinuous series of educational processes through which my brain was passed, very characteristic of the continual dislocations of that time.

The germinating forces of that Modern World-State which is now struggling into ordered being, were already thrusting destructively amidst the comparative stabilities of the old eighteenth century order before I was born. There was already a railway station on the Dover line and this was supplemented, when I was about twelve years old, by a second line branching off from the Chislehurst line at Grove Park. The place which had been hardly more than a few big houses, a little old market place and a straggling High Street upon the high road, with two coaching inns and a superabundance of small "pull-up" beerhouses, was stimulated to a vigorous growth in population. Steadily London drew it closer and suburbanized it. No one foresaw its growth except a few speculative jerry-builders; no one in the world prepared for even the most obvious consequences of that growth. Shops and dwellings of the type of my home were "run up" anyhow. Slum conditions appeared almost at once in courts and muddy by-ways. Yet all around were open fields and common land, Bromley Common, Chislehurst Common, great parks like Sundridge Park and Camden, and to the south the wide heathery spaces about Keston Fish Ponds and Down.

The new order of things that was appearing in the world when I was born, was already arousing a consciousness of the need for universal elementary education. It was being realized by the ruling classes that a nation with a lower stratum of illiterates would compete at a disadvantage against the foreigner. A condition of

things in which everyone would read and write and do sums, dawned on the startled imagination of mankind. The British and the National Schools, which had existed for half a century in order to make little Nonconformists and little Churchmen, were organized into a state system under the Elementary Education Act of 1871 and supplemented by Board Schools (designed to make little Unsectarian Christians). Bromley was served by a National School. That was all that the district possessed in the way of public education. It was the mere foundation of an education. It saw to the children up to the age of thirteen or even fourteen, and no further. Beyond that the locality had no public provision for technical education or the development of artistic or scientific ability whatever. Even that much of general education had been achieved against considerable resistance. There was a strong objection in those days to the use of public funds for the education of "other people's children," and school pennies were exacted weekly from the offspring of everyone not legally indigent.

But side by side with that nineteenth-century National School under the Education Act, the old eighteenth-century order was still carrying on in Bromley, just as it was still carrying on in my mother's mind. In the eighteenth century the lower classes did not pretend to read or write, but the members of the tenant-farmer, shopkeeper, innkeeper, upper servant stratum, which was then, relatively to the labourers, a larger part of the community, either availed themselves of the smaller endowed schools which came down from the mental stir of the Reformation, or, in the absence of any such school in their neighbourhood, supported little private schools of their own. These private schools were struggling along amidst the general dissolution, shuffling and reconstruction of society that was already manifest in the middle nineteenth century, and the Academy of Mr. Thomas Morley was a fairly well preserved specimen, only slightly modernized, of the departing order of things.

He had opened school for himself in 1849, having previously filled the post of usher at an old-established school that closed down in that year. He was Scotch and not of eminent academic attainments; his first prospectus laid stress on "writing in both plain and ornamental style, Arithmetic logically, and History with special reference to Ancient Egypt." Ancient Egypt and indeed most of the

History except lists of dates, pedigrees and enactments, had dropped from the school outlook long before I joined it, for even Bromley Academy moved a little with the times, but there was still great stress on copperplate flourishes, long addition sums and book-keeping. Morley was a bald portly spectacled man with a strawberry nose and ginger-grey whiskers, who considered it due to himself and us to wear a top hat, an ample frock-coat, and a white tie, and to carry himself with invariable dignity and make a frequent use of "Sir." Except for a certain assistance with the little ones from Mrs. Morley, a stout ringleted lady in black silk and a gold chain, he ran the school alone. It was a single room built out over a scullery; there were desks round the walls and two, of six places each, in the centre, with a stove between which warmed the place in winter. His bedroom window opened upon the schoolroom, and beneath it, in the corner of the room, was his desk, the great ink bottle from which the ink-wells were replenished, the pile of slates and the incessant cane, with which he administered justice, either in spasmodic descents upon our backs and hindquarters, or after formal accusations, by smacks across the palm of the hand. He also hit us with his hands anywhere, and with books, rulers and anything else that came handy, and his invective and derision were terrific. Also we were made to stand on the rickety forms and hold out books and slates until our arms ached. And in this way he urged us — I suppose our numbers varied from twenty-five to thirty-five — along the path of learning that led in the more successful instances to the examinations, conducted by an association of private schoolmasters, for their mutual reassurance, known as the College of Preceptors, (with special certificates for book-keeping) and then to jobs as clerks.

About half the boys were boarders drawn from London public houses or other homes unsuitable for growing youth. There were a few day-boarders from outlying farms, who took their dinner in the house. The rest were sons of poorish middle-class people in the town. We assembled at nine and went on to twelve and again from two to five, and between these hours, except when the windows were open in warm weather, the atmosphere grew steadily more foetid and our mental operations more sluggish and confused.

It is very difficult to give any facts about this dominie and his

Academy which do not carry with them a quality of Dickens-like caricature. He ranted at us from his desk in the quaintest fashion; he took violent dislikes and betrayed irrational preferences; the educational tradition from which he arose and which is so manifest in that first prospectus already quoted, was in the same world with Miss Riley's school at Chichester which did so much to shape my mother; it was antiquated, pretentious, superficial and meagre; and yet there was something good about old Morley and something good for me. I have an impression that with a certain honesty he was struggling out of that tradition and trying to make something of us. That "College of Preceptors" was not only a confederation of private schools to keep up appearances; it was a mutual improvement society, it was a voluntary modernizing movement. It ran lectures on educational method and devised examinations for teaching diplomas. Morley had learnt a lot between his start in 1849 and the days when I was his pupil. He had become an Associate, and then a Licentiate of this self-constituted college, by examination, and each examination had involved a paper or so on teaching method. I believe his teaching, such as it was, was better than that of the crudely trained mechanical grant earners of the contemporary National School which was the only local alternative, and that my mother's instinct was a sound one in sending us all to this antiquated middle-class establishment.

Yet if I describe a day's work in that dusty, dingy, ill-ventilated schoolroom, there will not be a qualified teacher in the world beneath the age of fifty who will not consider it frightful. A lifetime ago it would have seemed perfectly normal schooling.

Few people realize the immense changes that the organization and mechanism of popular teaching have undergone in the past century. They have changed more than housing or transport. Before that dawn of a new way of life, began that slow reluctant dawn in which we are still living, the vast majority of people throughout the world had no schooling at all, and of the educated minority, literate rather than educated, by far the larger proportion — in India and China and Arabia quite as much as in Europe — did their learning in some such makeshift place as this outbuilding of Morley's, in the purlieus of a mosque, for example, under a tree in India or beneath an Irish hedge,

as members of a bunch of twenty or so ill-assorted pupils of all ages and sizes and often of both sexes, between six and sixteen. Schools large enough to classify were the exception, and there were rarely more than one or two teachers. Specially built school houses were almost unknown. A room designed and equipped for teaching and containing a manageable class of youngsters in the same phase of development, is comparatively a new thing in human experience, even for the young of the privileged orders. And necessarily under these old conditions teaching had to be intermittent because the teacher's mind could not confront all that diversity of reaction between childishness and adolescence at the same time; necessarily he had to contrive exercises and activities to keep this group and that quiet while he expounded to another. He was like some very ordinary chess player who had undertaken to play thirty games of chess simultaneously. He was an unqualified mental obstetrician doing his work wholesale. Necessarily the phases and quality of his teaching depended on his moods. At times Morley was really trying to get something over to us; at others he was digesting, or failing to digest, his midday meal; he was in a phase of accidie; he was suffering from worry or grievance; he was amazed at life and revolted by his dependence upon us; he felt the world was rushing past him; he had got up late and omitted to shave and was struggling with an overwhelming desire to leave us all and repair the omission.

So the primary impressions left upon my brain by that Academy are not impressions of competent elucidation and guidance, of a universe being made plain to me or of skills being acquired and elaborated, but of the moods of Mr. Thomas Morley and their consequences. At times his attention was altogether distracted; he was remote upon his throne in the corner, as aloof almost as my mother's God, and then we would relax from the tasks or exercises he had set us and indulge in furtive but strenuous activities of our own. We would talk and tell each other stories — I had a mind suitably equipped by my reading for boyish saga telling and would go on interminably — draw on our slates, play marbles, noughts and crosses and suchlike games, turn out our pockets, swap things, indulge in pinching and punching matches, eat sweets, read penny dreadfuls, do anything, indeed, but the work in hand. Sometimes it

would be whispered in the drowsy digestive first hour of the afternoon, “Old Tommy’s asleep,” and we would watch him sink slowly and beautifully down and down into slumber, terminated by a snore and a start. If at last he got off completely, spectacles askew over his folded arms, a kind of silent wildness would come upon us. We would stand up to make fantastic, insulting and obscene gestures, leave our places to creep noiselessly as far as we dared. He would awaken abruptly, conscience awake also, inflict sudden punishment on some belated adventurer; and then would come a strenuous hour of driving work.

Sometimes he would leave us altogether upon his private occasions. Then it was our bounden duty to kick up all the row we could, to get out of our places and wrestle, to “go for” enemies, to produce the secreted catapult or pea-shooter, to pelt with chewed paper and books. I can taste the dust and recall the din as I write of it. In the midst of the uproar the blind of the bedroom window would be raised, silently, swiftly. Morley, razor in hand and his face covered with soapsuds, would be discovered glaring at us through the glass, marking down sinners for punishment, a terrifying visage. Up would go the window. “You HOUNDS! You Miserable Hounds!” Judgments followed.

The spells of intensive teaching came irregularly, except for Friday afternoon, which was consecrated invariably to the breathless pursuit of arithmetic. There were also whole afternoons of “book-keeping by double entry” upon sheets of paper, when we pursued imaginary goods and cash payments with pen and ruler and even red ink, to a final Profit and Loss Account and a Balance Sheet. We wrote in copybooks and he came, peering and directing, over our shoulders. There was only one way in which a pen might be held; it was a matter of supreme importance; there was only one angle at which writing might slope. I was disposed to be unorthodox in this respect, and my knuckles suffered.

The production of good clerks (with special certificates for book-keeping) was certainly one of the objectives of Mr. Thomas Morley’s life. The safety, comfort and dignity of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Morley and Miss Morley were no doubt a constant preoccupation. But also there was interest in wider and more fundamental things. There was a

sense in him that some things were righter than others, a disposition to assert as much, and a real desire for things to be done well. His studies for the diplomas of A.C.P. and L.C.P. (Associate and Licentiate of the College of Preceptors), low though the requirements were, absurdly low by our present standards, had awakened him to the pleasures of certain mental exercises; a mathematical problem, a logical demonstration. When he found that I could be interested by the grammatical analysis of a complicated sentence or the solution of some elementary mathematical problem, he took a liking to me and showed me much more attention than he gave to the more obdurate material he had to deal with, minds stirred to a high level of evasion and resistance by his clumsy, medieval, impatient and aggressive methods of approach. He never gave me a nickname and never singled me out for an abusive tirade.

When I left his school at the age of thirteen (bracketed with a fellow pupil first in all England for book-keeping, so far, that is to say, as England was covered by the College of Preceptors), whatever else I had missed, I had certainly acquired the ability to use English with some precision and delicacy, even if the accent was a Cockney one, and I had quite as good a mathematical apparatus as most boys of the same age get at a public school nowadays. I had read about as much of Euclid as it was customary to read, made a fair start with trigonometry and was on the verge of the calculus. But most of the other stuff I got was bad. Old Tommy taught French out of a crammer's textbook, and, in spite of the fact that he had on several occasions visited Boulogne, he was quite unable to talk in that elusive tongue; so I learnt hardly anything about it except its conjugations and long lists of "exceptions," so useful in written examinations and so unimportant in ordinary life. He crippled my French for life. He made me vowel-shy in every language.

I do not think he read much. He was not generally curious. My reading habit I developed at home and do not recall that Morley ever directed my attention to any book, unless it was some cheap school textbook used in my work. But at times he would get excited by his morning paper and then we would have a discourse on the geography of the North West Frontier with an appeal to a decaying yellow map of Asia that hung on the wall, or we would follow the search for

Livingstone by Stanley in Darkest Africa. He had traces of early Radicalism and a Republican turn of mind; he would discourse upon the extravagant Parliamentary grants made in those days to the various members of the Royal Family when they married, and about the unnecessary costliness of the army and navy. He believed that Mr. Gladstone really stood for "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform." All sorts of Radical principles may have filtered into my receptive mind from these *obiter dicta*.

Geoffrey West, in the exact and careful biography he wrote of me some years ago, is unjust to this old-world pedagogue because he measures him by his own twentieth-century standards with only the later nineteenth century as a background. Against the eighteenth-century background from which he derived, Thomas Morley was by no means so contemptible. West says he favoured a few willing boys with his instructions and let the rest drift. But that happened in all the schools; it was an inevitable aspect of those small miscellaneous schools with single untrained teachers. To-day every teacher still "favours" the willing boy. That sort of favouritism will go on to the end of time. That old gentleman (A.C.P., L.C.P.) walking with a portly gravity that was all his own, hands clasped behind his back, at the tail of the crocodile of ill-assorted undrilled boys, steering them to the best of his ability into the future, taking them to church or for a walk or to the cricket field, is by no means such a dismal memory of inefficiency as West suggests. Bromley Academy had very little of the baseness which pervaded Dotheboys Hall.

But Geoffrey West, in that same book, called my attention to an interesting resemblance between Morley's school and the school of Charles Dickens, a third of a century earlier, of which I should otherwise be ignorant. There was a continual bickering between us and the boys of the National School, bickering which rose occasionally to the level of a pitched battle with staves and sticks upon Martin's Hill, at that time a waste and now a trim recreation ground. For some unknown reason we were called "Morley's Bull Dogs" and the elementary school boys were called, by us at any rate, "Bromley Water Rats" and "Cads." Now the Dickens parallel was "Baker's Bull Dogs" and "Troy Town Rats." Evidently this hostility between the boys of the old type of private schools and those of the

new denominational schools, was of long standing, and widespread and almost stereotyped in its expression.

Geoffrey West thinks the antagonism was "snobbish," but that is a loose word to use for a very interesting conflict of divergent ideas and social tendencies. He probably considers the National Schools were "democratic" schools, like the common schools of the United States, "all class" schools, but that is a mistaken view. In spirit, form and intention they were inferior schools, and to send one's children to them in those days, as my mother understood perfectly well, was a definite and final acceptance of social inferiority. The Education Act of 1871 was not an Act for a common universal education, it was an Act to educate the lower classes for employment on lower-class lines, and with specially trained, inferior teachers who had no university quality. If Tommy Morley could not sport a university gown and hood, he could at least claim to wear a gown and hood as an L.C.P. (by royal charter), that was indistinguishable to the common eye from the real thing. He had all the dignity, if little of the substance, of scholarship. The more ancient middle-class schools, whatever their faults, were saturated with the spirit of individual self-reliance and individual dignity, with an idea, however pretentious, of standards "a little above the common," with a feeling (however vulgarized, debased and under-nourished) of *Noblesse oblige*. Certain things we could not do and certain things were expected of us because of our class. Most of the bickering of Morley's Bull Dogs was done against odds, and on the whole we held our own. I think it was a very lucky thing for me personally that I acquired this much class feeling.

I have never believed in the superiority of the inferior. My want of enthusiasm for the Proletarian ideal goes back to the Battle of Martin's Hill. If I was in almost unconcealed revolt against my mother's deferential attitude to royalty and our social superiors, it was because my resentful heart claimed at least an initial equality with every human being; but it was equality of position and opportunity I was after, and not equality of respect or reward; I certainly had no disposition to sacrifice my conceit of being made of better stuff, intrinsically and inherently, than most other human beings, by any self-identification with people who frankly took the

defeated attitude. I thought the top of the form better than the bottom of the form, and the boy who qualified better than the boy who failed to qualify. I am not going to argue at this point whether such a state of mind is desirable or creditable to anyone; my biographical duty is to record that so it was with me. So far as the masses went I was entirely of my mother's way of thinking; I was middle-class,—"petty bourgeois" as the Marxists have it.

Just as my mother was obliged to believe in Hell, but hoped that no one would go there, so did I believe there was and had to be a lower stratum, though I was disgusted to find that anyone belonged to it. I did not think this lower stratum merited any respect. It might arouse sympathy for its bad luck or indignation for an unfair handicap. That was a different matter. My thought, as I shall trace its development in this history, has run very close to communist lines, but my conception of a scientifically organized class-less society is essentially of an expanded middle-class which has incorporated both the aristocrat and plutocrat above and the peasant, proletarian and pauper below.

Trotsky has recorded that Lenin, after his one conversation with me, said that I was incurably middle-class. So far Lenin was a sound observer. He, and Trotsky also, were of the same vital social stratum; they had indeed both started life from a far more advantageous level than I had; but the discolouration of their stream of thought by Marxist pretences and sentimentalities, had blinded them to their own essential quality. My conversation with Lenin turned entirely on the "liquidation" of the peasant and the urban toiler — by large-scale agriculture and power machinery. Lenin was just as much for that as I was, we were talking about the same thing in the same spirit; but we said the same thing as though it was a different thing because our minds were tuned in different keys.

§ 2. PUERILE VIEW OF THE WORLD (1878-79)

(August 4th, 1933). I have been trying, for a day or so, to reconstruct my vision of the world as I had it in those days, to restore the state of my brain as it was about 1878 or 9 when I was in mid

schoolboy stage. I find it an almost impossible task. I find it impossible to disentangle the things I saw and read before I was thirteen, from the things that came afterwards. The old ideas and impressions were made over in accordance with new material, they were used up to make the new equipment. This reconstruction went on from day to day, and so, in order and detail, they are lost beyond recovery. Yet impossible as it is to get any focussed clearness and exactitude here, it is equally impossible to ignore this phase of completed puerility. My formal education came to a break at that date, was held up for two years and more before it resumed, at a stage at which the brains of great multitudes of English people halted for good, and at which (or at parallel levels) I believe multitudes still halt all over the world. This mass of human beings halting in puerility, is the determining factor in most of the alarming political and social processes of to-day.

In the universe in which my brain was living in 1879 there was no nonsense about time being space or anything of that sort. There were three dimensions, up and down, fore and aft and right and left, and I never heard of a fourth dimension until 1884 or there-about. Then I thought it was a witticism. Space went on for ever in every direction, good Newtonian space. I felt it must be rather empty and cheerless beyond the stars, but I did not let my mind dwell on that. My God, who by this time had become entirely disembodied, had been diffused through this space since the beginning of things. He was already quite abstracted from the furious old hell-and-heaven Thunder God of my childish years. His personality had faded. My mind had been unobtrusively taking the sense of reality out of the Trinity and the Atonement and the other dogmas of official christianity. I felt there must be some mistake about all that, but I had not yet sat down to make any philosophy of my own by which these strange beliefs could be arraigned. I had simply withdrawn my attention. If I had had a catholic upbringing with intercessory individualized saints and local and special Virgins, that tacit withdrawal might have been less easy. Yes or no might have been forced upon me. I might have come earlier to positive disbelief.

Occasionally I would find myself praying — always to God simply. He remained a God spread all over space and time, yet

nevertheless he was capable of special response and magic changes in the order of events. I would pray when I was losing a race, or in trouble in an examination room, or frightened. I expected prompt attention. In my first book-keeping examination by the College of Preceptors I could not get my accounts to balance. I prayed furiously. The bell rang, the invigilator hovered over my last frantic efforts. I desisted reluctantly, "All right, God," I said, "catch me praying again." I was then about twelve.

Through this universe with its diffused Space-God spun the earth, moving amidst the stars along paths that were difficult to understand and still more difficult to remember. I was constantly reading that the earth was a mere pin point in space; that if the sun was as big as St. Paul's dome, the earth would be a strawberry pip somewhere in the suburbs, and many similar illustrative facts, but directly I took my mind off these explicit statements, the pip grew bigger and bigger and I grew even faster. St. Paul's dome stuck where it was and the very Nebulæ came within range again. My mind insisted on that. Just as it insisted that God was always within range. Otherwise it had no use for them.

The earth, directly one let go of one's cosmic facts, expanded again like a vehemently inflated soap bubble, until it filled the entire picture. One did not see all round it in those days. It had mystery at its North and South Poles and Darkest Africa on its equator. Poe's *Narrative of A. Gordon Pym* tells what a very intelligent mind could imagine about the south polar regions a century ago. The poor old earth in those days had a hard crust and a molten interior and naturally suffered from chronic indigestion, earthquakes, rumblings, and eruptions. It has since solidified considerably.

Moreover it already had a past which was rapidly opening out to men's minds in those days. I first became aware of that past in the gardens of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham; it came upon me as a complete surprise, embodied in vast plaster reconstructions of the megatherium and various dinosaurs and a toadlike labyrinthodon (for at first labyrinthodons were supposed to have had toadlike bodies). I was having one of those acute bilious attacks that always happened in the afternoons when I was taken to the Crystal Palace, and that made the impression none the less formidable. My mother explained

that these were Antediluvian Animals. They had been left out of the ark, I guessed, on account of their size, but even then there seemed something a little wrong in the suggestion that the ichthyosaurus had been drowned in a flood.

Somewhen later I pored over Humboldt's *Cosmos* and began to learn something of geological time. But by means of accepting the gloss that the Days of Creation meant geological ages, nothing really essential was changed in the past of my universe. There was merely an extension. The Creation, though further off, remained still as the hard and fast beginning of time, before which there was nothing, just as a very pyrotechnic Day of Judgment "when time shall be no more" closed the vista at the other end. Ultimate emptiness bounded my universe in space and time alike. "Someday we shall know all," said my mother in response to my questions about what lay beyond, and with that for a time I had to be content.

Whatever else I doubted, I was incapable at that age of doubting my immortality. I had never known the universe without my consciousness and I could not imagine the universe without my consciousness. I doubt if any young things can really do so. The belief in immortality is tacit and formless in young animals, but it is there. The fear of death is not fear of extinction but a fear of something unknown and utterly disagreeable. I thought I was going on and on — when I thought of continuance at all. I had passed the College of Preceptors' examination very well, so why shouldn't I get through the Day of Judgment? But the world was just then so immediately full of interesting things, that I did not put in much time at the fundamental and eternal questions beyond.

It was made a matter of general congratulation about me that I was English. The flavour of J. R. Green's recently published (1874) History of the English People had drifted to me either directly or at second-hand, and my mind had leapt all too readily to the idea that I was a blond and blue-eyed Nordic, quite the best make of human being known. England was consciously Teutonic in those days, the monarchy and Thomas Carlyle were strong influences in that direction; we talked of our "Keltic fringe" and ignored our Keltic infiltration; and the defeat of France in 1870-71 seemed to be the final defeat of the decadent Latin peoples. This blended very well

with the anti-Roman Catholic influence of the eighteenth-century Protestant training, a distrust and hostility that remained quite vivid when much else of that teaching had faded. We English, by sheer native superiority, practically without trying, had possessed ourselves of an Empire on which the sun never set, and through the errors and infirmities of other races were being forced slowly but steadily — and quite modestly — towards world dominion.

All that was quite settled in my head, as I carried my green-baize satchel to and fro between Morley's school and my dismal bankrupt home, and if you had suddenly confronted me with a Russian prince or a rajah in all his glory and suggested he was my equal, I should either have laughed you to scorn or been very exasperated with you about it.

I was taught no history but English History, which after some centuries of royal criminality, civil wars and wars in France, achieved the Reformation and blossomed out into the Empire; and I learnt hardly any geography but British geography. It was only from casual reading that I gathered that quite a number of things had happened and quite a number of interesting things existed outside the world of English affairs. But I looked at pictures of the Taj Mahal, the Colosseum and the Pyramids in very much the same spirit as I listened to stories about the Wonders of Animal Intelligence (beavers, bees, birds' nests, breeding habits of the salmon, *etc*.). They did not shake my profound satisfaction with the self, the township, the county, the nation, the Empire and the outlook that was mine.

In those days I had ideas about Aryans extraordinarily like Mr. Hitler's. The more I hear of him the more I am convinced that his mind is almost the twin of my thirteen year old mind in 1879; but heard through a megaphone and — implemented. I do not know from what books I caught my first glimpse of the Great Aryan People going to and fro in the middle plains of Europe, spreading east, west, north and south, varying their consonants according to Grimm's Law as they did so, and driving the inferior breeds into the mountains. But they formed a picturesque background to the duller facts of ancient history. Their ultimate triumphs everywhere squared accounts with the Jews, against which people I had a subconscious dissatisfaction

because of their disproportionate share of Holy Writ. I thought Abraham, Isaac, Moses and David loathsome creatures and fit associates for Our Father, but unlike Hitler I had no feelings about the contemporary Jew. Quite a number of the boarders in the Bromley Academy were Jewish and I was not aware of it. My particular pal, Sidney Bowkett, was I think unconsciously Jewish; the point never arose.

I had reveries — I indulged a great deal in reverie until I was fifteen or sixteen, because my active imagination was not sufficiently employed — and I liked especially to dream that I was a great military dictator like Cromwell, a great republican like George Washington or like Napoleon in his earlier phases. I used to fight battles whenever I went for a walk alone. I used to walk about Bromley, a small rather undernourished boy, meanly clad and whistling detestably between his teeth, and no one suspected that a phantom staff pranced about me and phantom orderlies galloped at my commands, to shift the guns and concentrate fire on those houses below, to launch the final attack upon yonder distant ridge. The citizens of Bromley town go out to take the air on Martin's Hill and look towards Shortland across the fields where once meandered the now dried-up and vanished Ravensbourne, with never a suspicion of the orgies of bloodshed I once conducted there. Martin's Hill indeed is one of the great battlegrounds of history. Scores of times the enemy skirmishers have come across those levels, followed by the successive waves of the infantry attack, while I, outnumbered five to one, manoeuvred my guns round, the guns I had refrained so grimly from using too soon in spite of the threat to my centre, to enfilade them suddenly from the curving slopes towards Beckenham. "Crash," came the first shell, and then crash and crash. They were mown down by the thousand. They straggled up the steep slopes wavering. And then came the shattering counter attack, and I and my cavalry swept the broken masses away towards Croydon, pressed them ruthlessly through a night of slaughter on to the pitiful surrender of the remnant at dawn by Keston Fish Ponds.

And I entered conquered, or rescued, towns riding at the head of my troops, with my cousins and my schoolfellows recognizing me with surprise from the windows. And kings and presidents, and the

great of the earth, came to salute my saving wisdom. I was simple even in victory. I made wise and firm decisions, about morals and customs and particularly about those Civil Service Stores which had done so much to bankrupt my father. With inveterate enemies, monarchists, Roman Catholics, non-Aryans and the like I was grimly just. Stern work — but my duty....

In fact Adolf Hitler is nothing more than one of my thirteen year old reveries come real. A whole generation of Germans has failed to grow up.

My head teemed with such stuff in those days. But it is interesting to remark that while my mind was full of international conflicts, alliances, battleships and guns, I was blankly ignorant about money or any of the machinery of economic life. I never dreamed of making dams, opening ship canals, irrigating deserts or flying. I had no inkling of the problem of ways and means; I knew nothing and, therefore, I cared nothing of how houses were built, commodities got and the like. I think that was because nothing existed to catch and turn my imagination in that direction. There was no literature to enhance all that. I think there is no natural bias towards bloodshed in imaginative youngsters, but the only vivid and inspiring things that history fed me with were campaigns and conquests. In Soviet Russia they tell me they have altered all that.

For many years my adult life was haunted by the fading memories of those early war fantasies. Up to 1914, I found a lively interest in playing a war game, with toy soldiers and guns, that recalled the peculiar quality and pleasure of those early reveries. It was quite an amusing model warfare and I have given its primary rules in a small book "for boys and girls of all ages" *Little Wars*. I have met men in responsible positions, L. S. Amery for example, Winston Churchill, George Trevelyan, C. F. G. Masterman, whose imaginations were manifestly built upon a similar framework and who remained puerile in their political outlook because of its persistence. I like to think I grew up out of that stage somewhen between 1916 and 1920 and began to think about war as a responsible adult should.

I recall no marked sexual or personal elements in my early reveries. Until my adolescence, sex fancies came to me only in that dim phase between waking and sleeping. I gave myself gladly and

willingly to my warfare, but I was shy of sex; I resisted any urge I may have had towards personal romancing and sensuous fantasies.

My sexual trend was, I think, less marked or more under control when I was twelve and thirteen, than it was when I was nine or ten. My primary curiosities had been satisfied and strong physical urgencies were still unawakened.

My two brothers played only a very small part in this early mental development, my Hitler phase. One was nine years older than I and already bound apprentice to a draper; the other was four years my senior and presently suffered the same fate. They were too far away from me. My elder brother Frank was one of those mischievous boys who mix much natural ingenuity with an aggressive sense of humour. He was, said my mother, a "dreadful tease." He took a lively interest in machinery and fireworks and making people sit up. He fiddled with clocks and steam engines until some accident ensued and with gunpowder until it exploded. He connected all the bell wires in my Uncle Tom's hotel so that with no great extra expenditure of labour, a visitor rang not only his own bell, but every bell in the place. But Frank gained nothing but unpopularity by this device. He haunted the railway station, worshipping the engines and hoping for something to happen. One day at Windsor he got on to a shunting engine standing in a siding and pulled at a lever and found great difficulty in pulling it back. By that time he was half a mile down the line — and no longer a *persona grata* upon the South Western Railway Company's premises. The pursuing driver had to think first of his engine and so my brother got clean away and survived the adventure. This disposition to fiddle with levers made Frank a leader in his generation. A gang followed him to see what would happen next. He was always in trouble. But he found trouble was less complicated if he kept me out of it. I did not share these escapades. Freddy was a more orderly youngster, but he was sent to a different private school for most of my time at Morley's.

Later on I grew up to my brothers, so to speak, and had great talks with them. With Frank, the eldest, indeed, I developed a considerable companionship in my teens and we had some great holiday walks together. But at the time of which I am writing all that had still to come.

Our home was not one of those where general ideas are discussed at table. My mother's ready orthodox formulæ were very effective in suppressing any such talk. So my mind developed almost as if I were an only child.

My childish relations with my brothers varied between vindictive resentment and clamorous aggression. I made a terrific fuss if my toys or games were touched and I displayed great vigour in acquiring their more attractive possessions. I bit and scratched my brothers and I kicked their shins, because I was a sturdy little boy who had to defend himself; but they had to go very easily with me because I was a delicate little fellow who might easily be injured and was certain to yell. On one occasion, I quite forget now what the occasion was, I threw a fork across the dinner table at Frank, and I can still remember very vividly the missile sticking in his forehead where it left three little scars for a year or so and did no other harm; and I have an equally clear memory of a smashed window behind the head of my brother Freddy, the inrush of cold air and dismay, after I had flung a wooden horse at him. Finally they hit upon an effectual method of at once silencing me and punishing me. They would capture me in our attic and suffocate me with pillows. I couldn't cry out and I had to give in. I can still feel the stress of that suffocation. Why they did not suffocate me for good and all, I do not know. They had no way of checking what was going on under the pillow until they took it off and looked.

I got more mental stimulus from some of my schoolfellows who were of an age with me. I felt the need of some companionship, some relief from reading and lonely reverie. I used to stay on at school after lesson time and go for walks or into the cricket field with the boarders, on holiday afternoons. My cricket was always poor because of my unsuspected astigmatism, but my participation was valued on account of my ready access to stumps and bats and used balls. I had a curious sort of alliance with the son of a London publican, Sidney Bowkett. We started with a great fight at the age of eight, in which we whacked at each other for the better part of an hour, and after that we conceived such a respect for each other that we decided not to fall out again. We became chums. We developed the tactics of combined attack upon bigger boys and so established a sort of joint dominance

long before we were the legitimate seniors of the school.

We two talked a lot in and out of school, but what we talked about is not very clear in my mind now. There was probably a lot of bragging about what we meant to do with life. We were both very confident, because we both outclassed all the other boys we knew of our age, and that gave us an unjustified sense of distinctive ability. He was much better looking, more attractive, quicker witted and more aggressive and adventurous than I; his verbal memory was better and his arithmetic quicker and more accurate, but he was quite out of the running with me when it came to drawing, elementary mathematics or that mass of partially digested reading which one may call general knowledge. Sometimes we acted being explorers or great leaders in a sort of dramatized reverie, wherein I supplied most of the facts. Sometimes we helped each other out with long sagas about Puss the Cat, a sort of puss-in-boots, invented by my brother Fred and me, or Ally Sloper, the great comic character of cockneydom at that time, or the adventures of Bert Wells and the Boker Boy. They went to Central Africa, to the Polar regions, down the Maelstrom and up the Himalayas; they made much use of balloons and diving suits, though aeroplanes were outside their imaginations. A great deal of that romancing embodied our bright receptiveness to things about us.

Bowkett's interest was more quickly aroused and livelier than mine, but he had very little invention. He was one of those who see quickly and vividly and say "Look," a sort of people to whom I owe much. Later on I was to have a great friendship with Rebecca West who had that quality of saying "Look" for me, in an even greater degree. I never knew anyone else who could so light up and colour and intensify an impression. Without such stimulus I note things, they register themselves in my mind, but I do not actively notice them of my own accord. Together Bowkett and I could get no end of fun out of a casually encountered rat or an odd butterfly, a stray beetle or an easily climbed tree, which I alone would have ticked off at a glance and passed. We would go through private gardens and trespass together "for to see and to know."

I do not remember talking very much about sexual matters with Bowkett and what we said was highly romanticized and unimportant.

We were decent and shy about all that. Yet we knew all the indecent words in the language, we could be astonishingly foul-mouthed in moments of exaltation and showing off; and we were in no way ignorant. But we were not at that time acutely interested. It is only, I think, where small boys in the early teens are in close contact with older youths, youths of sixteen or seventeen whose minds are festering with desire, as they are in English Public Schools, that they can be obsessed by gross sexuality. And then they are not pleasantly obsessed. Naturally boys in the earlier phase are instinctively afraid of intimate detail and avoid it. At any rate, whether we were typical or exceptional, we two avoided it. I have no doubt that Bowkett had his own secret incidental twilight Venus- berg — I will not speculate about that — but sex did not loom large in our ordinary conversation.

At one time we organized a secret society. Unhappily we could never find a secret to put in it. But we had a tremendous initiation ceremony. Among other things the candidate had to hold his fore-finger in a gas jet for thirty seconds. Only two members ever qualified, Bert Wells and the Boker Boy. I still remember the smell of singed flesh and the hard painfulness of the scorched finger. We had a secret language of the "Iway aysay olday anmay owhay areway ouyay" type. We warned a persistent sniffer in the school, by a cabalistic communication, to sniff no more or "incur the Vengeance of the Order" and we chalked up "beware" in the lavatory, in the interests of public morality. How gladly we would have adopted the swastika if we had known of it.

So much for the Hitlerite stage of my development, when I was a sentimentalist, a moralist, a patriot, a racist, a great general in dreamland, a member of a secret society, an immortal figure in history, an impulsive fork thrower and a bawling self-righteous kicker of domestic shins. I will now go on to tell as well as I can how this pasty-faced little English Nazi escaped his manifest destiny of mean and hopeless employment, and got to that broader view of life and those opportunities that have at last made this autobiography possible.

§ 3. MRS. WELLS, HOUSEKEEPER AT UP PARK (1880-1893)

I have said that a cardinal stroke of good fortune was the breaking of my leg when I was seven years old. Another almost as important was the breaking of my father's leg in 1877, which made the dissolution of our home inevitable. He set himself to prune the grape-vine one Sunday morning in October, and, resolved to make a job of it and get at the highest shoots, he poised a ladder on a bench and came a cropper. We returned from church to find him lying in the yard groaning, and our neighbours, Mr. Cooper and Mr. Munday helped to carry him upstairs. He had a compound fracture of the thigh bone.

Before the year was out it was plain that my father was going to be heavily lame for the rest of his life. This was the end of any serious cricket, any bowling to gentlemen, any school jobs as "pro," or the like for him. All the supplementary income was cut off by this accident which also involved much expense in doctoring. The chronic insolvency of Atlas House became acute.

Things were more tight and distressful than ever, for two years. An increasing skimpiness distinguished our catering. Bread and cheese for supper and half a herring each with our bread and butter at breakfast and a growing tendency for potatoes to dominate the hash or stew at midday in place of meat, intimated retrenchment. Mr. Morley's bill had gone unpaid for a year. Frank who was earning £26 a year (and live in) came home for a holiday and gave my mother half a sovereign to buy me a pair of boots (at which she wept). I was growing fast and growing very thin.

And then suddenly the heavens opened and a great light shone on Mrs. Sarah Wells. Lady Fetherstonhaugh had been dead some years and Miss Bullock, to whom my mother had been maid, either inherited or was given a life tenure of Up Park, with not very plentiful means to maintain it. She took the name of Fetherstonhaugh. Presently arose trouble with the servants and about the household expenses, and Miss Fetherstonhaugh's thoughts turned affectionately towards her faithful maid, between whom and herself there had always been a correspondence of good wishes and little gifts. My mother went to Up Park on a visit. There were earnest conversations. It was still possible for her to find employment. But was it right to leave Joe alone in Atlas House? What would become of the boys? Frank's apprenticeship as a draper was already over and

he was in a situation. Freddy's time as a draper's apprentice was up also. He could go out too. My five years of schooling were culminating in special certificates in bookkeeping and hope. The young birds were leaving the nest. Father could rub along by himself for a bit. My mother became housekeeper at Up Park in 1880.

Now if this had not happened, I have no doubt I should have followed in the footsteps of Frank and Freddy and gone on living at home under my mother's care, while I went daily to some shop, some draper's shop, to which I was bound apprentice. This would have seemed so natural and necessary that I should not have resisted. I should have served my time and never had an idea of getting away from the shop until it was too late. But the dislocation that now occurred closed this easy path to frustration. I was awakened to the significance of a start in life from the outset, as my brothers had never been.

But before I tell of the series of starts in life that now began, I must say a little about my mother's achievements in housekeeping. Except that she was thoroughly honest, my mother was perhaps the worst housekeeper that was ever thought of. She had never had the slightest experience in housekeeping. She did not know how to plan work, control servants, buy stores or economize in any way. She did not know clearly what was wanted upstairs. She could not even add up her accounts with assurance and kept them for me to do for her. All this came to light. It dawned slowly upon Miss Fetherstonhaugh; it became clearly apparent to her agent, who came up periodically from Portsmouth, Sir William King; it was manifest from the first to the very competent, if totally illiterate, head housemaid Old Ann, who gave herself her own orders more and more. The kitchen, the laundry, the pantry, with varying kindliness, apprehended this inefficiency in the housekeeper's room. At length I think it dawned even upon my mother.

Not at first. She was frightened, perhaps, but resolute and she believed that with prayer and effort anything can be achieved. She knew at least how a housekeeper should look, and assumed a lace cap, lace apron, black silk dress and all the rest of it, and she knew how a housekeeper should drive down to the tradespeople in Petersfield and take a glass of sherry when the account was settled.

She marched down to church every Sunday morning; the whole downstairs household streamed down the Warren and Harting Hill to church; and once a month she took the sacrament. The distressful Atlas House look vanished from her face; she became rounder and pinker, she assumed a tranquil dignity. She contrived that we should have situations round about Up Park, and in our holidays and during phases of being out of a situation, we infested the house. My father came on a visit once or twice and at last in 1887 abandoned Atlas House altogether and settled down on an allowance she paid him, in a cottage at Nyewoods near Rogate Station about four miles away. So the servitude of Atlas House was avenged and J. W. found his level.

She held on to her position until 1893 and I think Miss Fetherstonhaugh was very forbearing that my mother held on so long. Because among other things she grew deaf. She grew deafer and deafer and she would not admit her deafness, but guessed at what was said to her and made wild shots in reply. She was deteriorating mentally. Her religious consolations were becoming more and more trite and mechanical. Miss Fetherstonhaugh was a still older woman and evidently found dealing with her more and more tiresome. They were two deaf old women at cross purposes. The rather sentimental affection between them evaporated in mutual irritation and left not a rack behind.

On several occasions Sir William was "very unpleasant" to my mother. Economy and still more economy was urged upon her and she felt that saving and pinching was beneath the dignity of a country house. The original elation of being housekeeper at Up Park had long since passed away. She began to gossip rather unwisely about some imaginary incidents in the early life of Miss Fetherstonhaugh and her sister, and it came to Miss Fetherstonhaugh's ears. I think that sealed her fate. My mother's downfall came, a month's notice and "much unkindness," in January 1893. The fallen housekeeper, with all her boxes and possessions, was driven to Petersfield station on February 16th, 1893, and the hospitable refuge of Up Park was closed to her and her needy family for ever.

A poor little stunned woman she must have been then, on Petersfield platform, a little black figure in a large black bonnet

curiously suggestive now of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. I can imagine her as she wound mournfully down the Petersfield road looking back towards Harting Hill with tears in her blue eyes, not quite clear about why it had all occurred in this fashion, though no doubt God had arranged it "for some good purpose."

Why had Miss Fetherstonhaugh been so unkind?

But luckily, during my mother's thirteen years' sway at Up Park and thanks largely to the reliefs and opportunity that came to me through that brief interval of good fortune in her life, I had been able to do all sorts of things. I was now twenty-six and a married man with a household and I was in a position to arrange a home for her and prevent the family bark from foundering altogether. I had become a Bachelor of Science in the University of London and a successful university crammer and I had published a textbook — a cram book to be exact — on biology as it was understood by the University examiners. I had begun to write for the papers. I had acquired a certain gravity of bearing, a considerable cascade of fair moustache and incipient side whiskers. How these changes had come about and what had happened to my brain and outlook in the process, I will now go on to tell.

§ 4. FIRST START IN LIFE — WINDSOR (SUMMER 1880)

My first start in life was rather hastily improvised. My mother had a second cousin, Thomas Pennicott, "Uncle Tom" we called him, who had always been very much in the margin of her world. I think he had admired her and been perhaps helped by her when they were young folk at Midhurst. He was one of the witnesses to her marriage. He was a fat, round-faced, clean-shaven, black-haired man, illiterate, good humoured and shrewd. He had followed the ruling tendency in my mother's family to keep inns, and he had kept the Royal Oak opposite the South Western Railway Station at Windsor to such good effect, that he was able to buy and rebuild a riverside inn, called Surly Hall, much affected by the Eton wet-bobs, during the summer term. He built it as a gabled house and the gables were decorated with blue designs and mottoes glorifying Eton in the Latin tongue,

very elegant and correct. The wet-bobs rowed up in the afternoons and choked the bar and swarmed over the lawn, vociferously consuming squashed flies and other strangely named refreshments. There was a ferry, a number of tethered punts and boats, green tables under the trees, a decaying collection of stuffed birds, ostrich eggs, wampum and sundries, in an outhouse of white plaster and tarred weather boarding, called the Museum, an eyot and a willow-bordered paddock for campers. Surly Hall has long since disappeared from the banks of the Thames, though I believe that Monkey Island, half a mile further up, still carries on.

It was Uncle Tom's excellent custom to invite Sarah's boys for the holidays; it was not an invariable custom but it happened most years, and we had a thoroughly healthy and expansive three weeks or a month, hanging about his licensed premises in an atmosphere faintly flavoured by sawdust and beer. My brothers' times fell into the Royal Oak days, but my lot was to visit Surly Hall for the last three of my school years. There I learnt to punt, paddle and row, but the current was considered too swift for me to attempt swimming without anyone to teach me. I did not learn to swim until I was past thirty.

My uncle was a widower, but he had two grown-up daughters in their early twenties, Kate and Clara; they shared the duties of the one or two barmaids he also employed. They all found me a very amusing temporary younger brother. Kate was the serious sister, a blonde with intellectual aspirations, and she did very much to stimulate me to draw and read. There was a complete illustrated set of Dickens which I read in abundantly, and a lot of bound up *Family Heralds*, in which I best remember a translation of Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of Paris*, which seemed to me at the time, the greatest romance in the world. All these young women encouraged me to talk, because I said such unexpected things. They pretended to flirt with me, they used me as a convenient chaperon when enterprising men customers wanted to gossip on the lawn in the twilight, and Miss King, the chief barmaid, and Clara became competitive for my sentimental devotion. It all helped to educate me.

One day there appeared on the lawn a delightful vision in fluttering muslin, like one of the ladies in Botticelli's *Primavera*. It

was that great actress, Ellen Terry, then in her full loveliness, who had come to Surly Hall to study a part and presently be visited there by Mr. Henry Irving. I ceased to consider myself engaged to Miss King forthwith; I had pledged myself heedlessly; and later on I was permitted to punt the goddess about, show her where white lilies were to be found and get her a great bunch of wet forget-me-nots. There was an abundance of forget-me-nots among the sedges, and in a bend above us were smooth brown water surfaces under great trees and a spread of yellow (and some white) water-lilies in which dragon-flies hovered. It was far finer, I thought, than the Keston Fish Ponds, which had hitherto been the most beautiful place in my world, and at Keston there was no boat with oars, paddle and boat-hook complete, in which I could muck about for hours together.

Often when I was going for walks along the rather trite and very pebbly footpaths about Bromley, thirty miles away, I would let my imagination play with the idea that round the next corner and a little further on and then a bit more, I should find myself with a cry of delighted recognition on the road that led immediately to Surly Hall in summer and all its pleasantness. And how was I to suspect that Uncle Tom was losing money and his temper over the place, having borrowed to rebuild it rather too pretentiously, and that he was quarrelling with both his daughters about their lovers and that dark-eyed Clara, dreadfully bored and distressed temperamentally, was taking to drink? I knew nothing of all that, nor how greyly and dismally the Thames sluices by these riverside inns in the winter months.

But this is a mere glimpse of summer paradise on the way to my first start in life. My mother, I think I have made it clear, was within her limits a very determined little woman. Almost as unquestioning as her belief in Our Father and Our Saviour, was her belief in drapers. I know not whether that heartless trifler of her early years was a draper, but she certainly thought that to wear a black coat and tie behind a counter was the best of all possible lots attainable by man — at any rate by man at our social level. She had bound my brother Frank, resisting weakly, to Mr. Crowhurst in the Market Square, Bromley, for five years and she had bound my brother Freddy to Mr. Sparrowhawk of the Pavement for four, to obey those

gentlemen as if they were parents and learn the whole art and mystery of drapery from them, and she was now making a very resolute attempt to incarcerate me and determine my future in the same fashion. It did not dawn upon her that my queer gifts of drawing and expression were of any value at all. But as poor father was to be all alone in Atlas House now — the use he made of his eight years of solitude does not concern this story — a Bromley shop was no longer a suitable soil in which to pop me in order to grow up the perfect draper. She did not like to send me away where there was no one to look after me, for she knew there are dangers that waylay the young who are not supervised. So she found a hasty solution to her problem by sending me on trial, with a view to apprenticeship, to Messrs. Rodgers and Denyer of Windsor, opposite the Castle. There my morals would be under the observation of Surly Hall. And from Messrs. Rodgers and Denyer I got my first impressions of the intensely undesirable life for which she designed me. I had no idea of what I was in for. I went to my fate as I was told, unquestioningly, as my brothers had done before me.

I am told that for lots of poor boys, leaving school and going into employment about thirteen or fourteen is a very exhilarating experience. But that is because they get pay, freedom in the evening and on Sundays, and an enhanced dietary. And they are released from the irksomeness of lessons and school tasks. But I had rather liked lessons and school tasks and drapers' apprentices did not get pay. An immense fuss, entirely unjustifiable, was made about the valuable trade apprentices were going to learn, and in the past the parents of the victim, if he "lived in," usually paid a premium of forty or fifty pounds or so for his immolation. I knew that the new start meant a farewell to many childish things. I had seen both my brothers pass into servitude, and I can still remember my brother Freddy having a last game of "marble runs" with toy bricks on the tilted kitchen table, a game of which he was particularly fond, before he submitted to the yoke of Mr. Sparrowhawk and began that ritual of stock-keeping, putting things away, tidying things up, bending over the counter, being attentive and measuring off, that lasted thereafter for forty-odd years of his life. He knew what he was going to, did my brother Fred; and that game was played with sacrificial

solemnity. “I enjoyed that game,” said Freddy, who has always displayed a certain gentle stoicism. “It’s supper time Bert. ...Let’s put the things away.”

Now it was my turn to put the things away, put the books away, give up drawing and painting and every sort of free delight, stop writing stories and imitations of *Punch*, give up all vain hopes and dreams, and serve an employer.

I hated this place into which I had been put from the outset, but I was far too childish, as yet, to make any real resistance to the closing in of the prison about me. But I would not, I could not, give myself satisfactorily to this strange restricted life. It was just by the luck of that incapacity that the prison rejected me.

I was set down from Uncle Pennicott’s dog-cart, with a small portmanteau containing all my earthly goods, at the side door of the establishment of Messrs. Rodgers and Denyer, I was taken up a narrow staircase to the men’s dormitory, in which were eight or ten beds and four miserable wash-hand stands, and I was shown a dismal little sitting room with a ground glass window opening on a blank wall, in which the apprentices and assistants might “sit” of an evening, and then I was conducted downstairs to an underground dining-room, lit by naked gas-jets and furnished with two long tables covered with American cloth, where the eating was to be done. Then I was introduced to the shop and particularly to the cash desk, where it had been arranged for the first year of my apprenticeship that I was to sit on a tall stool and receive money, give change, enter the amount on a sheet and stamp receipts. I was further instructed in a ritual of dusting and window cleaning. I was to come down at half past seven in the morning, I learnt, without fail, dust, clean windows, eat a bread-and-butter breakfast at half past eight, prepare my cash sheet and so to the routine of the day. I had to add up my cash at the end of the day, count the money in the till, make sheet and cash agree, help to wrapper-up and sweep out the shop, and so escape at half-past seven or eight to drink the delights of freedom until ten, when I had to be in. Lights out at half past ten. And this was to go on day after day — for ever it seemed to me — with an early closing day once a week at five, and Sunday free.

I did not rise to these demands upon me. My mind withdrew itself

from my duties. I did my utmost to go on living within myself and leave my duties to do themselves. My disposition to reverie increased. I dusted abominably; whenever I could manage it I did not dust at all. I smuggled books into my desk or did algebraic problems from my battered Todhunter's Larger Algebra; I gave change absent-mindedly and usually I gave inaccurate change, and I entered wrong figures on the cash sheet out of sheer slovenliness.

The one bright moment during the day was when the Guards fifes and drums went past the shop and up to the Castle. These fifes and drums swirled me away campaigning again. Dispatch riders came headlong from dreamland, brooking no denial from the shop-walker. "Is General Bert Wells here? The Prussians have landed!"

I obeyed, I realize, all the impulses of a developing claustrophobia during that first phase of servitude. I would abandon my desk to sneak down into the warehouse, where I spent an unconscionable time seated in a convenient place of reflection, reading. Or I just stood about down there behind stacks of unpacked bales.

As the afternoon dragged on, the hour of reckoning when the cash sheet was added up drew near. It never by any chance corresponded with the money in the till. There had to be a checking of bills, a scrutiny of figures. Wrong sums had been set down. The adding had been wild work. At first the total error would be anything — more or less. After some weeks it became constantly a shortage. The booking clerk, and one of the partners who did the business correspondence and supervised things, would stay late to wrestle with the problem. They were impatient and reproachful. I had to stay too, profoundly apathetic. Either I was giving change in excess, or in some way the money was seeping away. I did not care a rap.

Rodgers & Denyers 25 High Street
Sunday July 4th 1880

My dear Mother

Here I am sitting in my bedroom after the fatigues of the day etc. Cough slightly better & I am tolerably comfortable

I give you an account of one days work to give you an idea what I have to do.

Morning

We sleep 4 together very 3 apprentices & 1 of the hands in one room (of course in seperate beds)

We lay in bed until 7.30 when a bell rings & we jump up & put trousers slippers socks & jacket on over nightgown & hurry down & dust the shop etc

about 8.15 we hurry upstairs & dress & wash for breakfast.

At 8.30 we go into a sort of vault underground (lit by gas) & have

Letter dated July 4th, 1880, page 1.

breakfast
after breakfast I am in the shop
& desk till dinner at 1
(we have dinner underground
as well as breakfast) & then
work till tea (which we
have in the same place) &
then go on to supper at 8.30
at which time work is done
& we may then go out
until 10.30 at which hour
the apprentices are obliged
to be in their house
I don't like the place much
~~[illegible]~~ fact it is not at all
like home
Give love to all & give the
Cats my best respects

I'm rather tired of being in-
doors but that's nothing

Letter dated July 4th, 1880, page 2.

I went to Clewer church & then
on to Sunday which I found
much better than I used
to think it in fact its a
perfect heaven to R & D
I'm rather tired so excuse
further writing

yours
H G Wells

N B Boy washing will be 12/-
a quarter

Letter dated July 4th, 1880, page 3.

Rodgers & Deuyers 25 High Street Sunday July 4th 1880

My dear Mother

Here I am sitting in my bed room after the fatigues of the day etc Cough slightly better & I am tolerably comfortable

I give you an account of one days work to give you an idea what I have to do.

Morning

We sleep 4 together very 3 apprentices & 1 of the hands in one room (of course in separate beds)

We lay in bed until 7.30 when a bell rings & we jump up & put trousers slippers socks & jacket on over nightgown & hurry down & dust the shop etc

about 8.15 we hurry upstairs & dress & wash for breakfast.
At 8.30 we go into a sort of vault underground (lit by gas) & have breakfast

After breakfast I am in the shop & desk till dinner at 1 (we have dinner underground as well as breakfast) & then work till tea (which we have in the same place) & then go on to supper at 8.30 at which time work is done & we may then go out until 10.30 at which hour the apprentices are obliged to be in the house

I don't like the place much, for it is not at all like home
Give love to Dad & give the Cat my best respects
I'm rather bored of being indoors but this morning]

I went to Clewet Church & then on to Surly which I found much better than I used to think it in fact it's a perfect heaven to R&DE

I'm rather bored so excuse further writing

Yours

H G Wells

NB Any washing will be 12/-a quarter]

I had always hated money sums and long additions and now I detested them. I just wanted to get out of that shop before it was ten o'clock and time to return to the house. I did not realize the dreadful suspicions that were gathering above my head, nor the temptation my inaccuracies were offering to anyone who had access to my desk while I was at meals or otherwise absent. Nobody thought of that, unless perhaps it was the booking clerk.

Every early closing night, every Sunday, at every opportunity I had, I cut off to Surly Hall and took refuge with my cousins. I went with joy and returned with heavy feet. I did not want to talk about business there and when they asked me how I was getting on I said "Oh all right," and turned the talk to more agreeable topics. I did the long two miles from Windsor to and fro after dark for the one or two bright hours I spent there. My cousin Kate or Miss King would play the piano and sing. They would talk to me as though I was not the lowest thing on earth. There, I was still esteemed clever, and the queer things I said were applauded. My cousins, delighted at my appreciation, sang "Sweet Dreamland Faces," and "Juanita," to me and I sat on a little stool close to the piano in a state of rapt appreciation — of the music, the shaded lamp, the comfort and the ease of it.

In this world of gramophones, pianolas and the radio, it is worth noting that at the age of thirteen I had heard no music at all except an occasional brass band, the not very good music of hymn singing and organ voluntaries in Bromley Church and these piano songs at Surly Hall.

Then came a terrible inquisition at the shop. I was almost charged with pilfering. But my uncle Tom defended me stoutly. "You better not go saying *that*" said my uncle Tom, and indeed, except that there was now a continual shortage in the cash desk, there was no evidence against me. I had no expensive vices; I had no criminal associates, I was extremely shabby and untidy; no marked money — if they used marked money — or indeed any money except the weekly sixpence allowed me for pocket money, had ever been found upon me and my bearing was one of unconscious but convincing rectitude. Indeed I

never realized fully what all the fuss was about until afterwards. Yet the fact remains that as a cash desk clerk I had leaked abominably and somebody — I suppose — had got away with the leakage.

It was plain also that I shirked all my other tasks. And while my start in life was thus already faltering, I had some sort of difference with the junior porter, which resulted in a conspicuous black eye for me. It was a gross breach of social conventions for an apprentice to fight a porter. I had great difficulty in explaining that black eye to my own satisfaction at Surly Hall. Moreover the clothes I had come to Windsor in were anything but stylish, and Mr. Denyer, the most animated of the partners, liked the look of me less and less. I wore a black velvet cap with a peak and that was all wrong. It became plain that my mother's first attempt to give me a start in life had failed. I was not starting. I was not fitted, said Messrs. Rodgers and Denyer, with perfect truth, to be a draper. I was not refined enough.

I do not recall that at Windsor from first to last I made more than the slightest effort to do what was expected of me. It was not so much a resistance as an aversion. And it is a queer thing about that place that though I stayed there a couple of months, I do not remember the name of a single individual except one assistant named Nash, who happened to be the son of a Bromley draper and wore a long moustache. But all the other figures who sat with him at the downstairs dinner table are now blank nameless figures. Did I look at them? Did I listen to them? Nor can I remember the positions of the counters or the arrangement of the goods in the shop. I made no friends. Mr. Denyer, young Mr. Rodgers and old Mr. Rodgers left impressions, because they were like great pantomime heads always looking for me and saying disagreeable things to me, and I was always engaged in getting away from them. They disliked me; I think everybody in that place came to dislike me as a tiresome boring little misfit who made trouble and didn't do his share and was either missing when he was wanted or in the way when he wasn't. My self-conceit, I suppose, has blotted out all the other humiliating details from my memory. I do not even remember whether I felt any chagrin at my failure. All that seems effaced beyond recall. And yet that nocturnal tramp along the Maidenhead Road, which I took whenever I could, is real and living to me still. I could draw a map of the whole

way down the hill and through Clewer. I could show where the road was wider and where it narrowed down.

Like most undernourished growing boys I was cowardly and I found the last stretch from Clewer to the inn terrifyingly dark and lonely. It was black on the moonless nights and eerie by moonlight and often it was misty from the river. My imagination peopled the dark fields on either hand with crouching and pursuing foes. Chunks of badly trimmed hedge took on formidable shapes. Sometimes I took to my heels and ran. For a week or so that road was haunted by a rumour of an escaped panther — from Lady Florence Dixie's riverside home, the Fisheries. That phantom panther waited for me patiently; it followed me like a noiseless dog, biding its time. And one night on the other side of the hedge a sleeping horse sighed deeply, a gigantic sigh, and almost frightened me out of my wits.

But nothing of that sort kept me from going at every opportunity to Surly Hall, where there was something to touch my imagination and sustain my self- respect. I was hanging on subconsciously long before I held on consciously, to that life of books and expression and creative living from which the close exactions and economies of employment for private profit were sucking me down. And nothing that my mother and cousins could say to move and encourage me, could induce me to fix my attention on the little flimsy bits of paper with carbon duplicates, that were being slapped down at the guichet of the cash desk.

"One eleven half — two and six. Quick please."

§ 5. SECOND START IN LIFE — WOOKEY (WINTER 1880)

The poor little family commander-in-chief — for that she had become — in lace cap and apron in the housekeeper's room at Up Park had to deal with the situation as her lights and limitations permitted. Joe at Bromley, tied by the leg in insolvent Atlas House, had little to suggest. He had had an idea, in view of my remarkable special certificates for book-keeping that Messrs. Hoare's or Norman's, for whom he had bowled so often, ought to have welcomed me as a bank clerk, but when it became clear that Hoare's

and Norman's were unresponsive, he made no further effort to assist my mother in her perplexities. Shelter and nourishment and justifying employment had to be found for the youngster somehow. And at this point Uncle Williams came in with what seemed a hopeful suggestion. He was going to be head of a little national school. I might become a pupil teacher under him.

In those days a great deal of the teaching, such as it was, in elementary schools was done by children scarcely older than the pupils. Instead of leaving school for work they became "P.T.'s" and, after four years, competent to enter a training college for a year or two, before they went on grant earning for the rest of their lives. If an elementary teacher in those days became anything more than a "trained" drudge, it was due to his or her own exertions. My Uncle Williams, hearing of my mother's difficulties, held out hopes that my College of Preceptors achievements might be used to shorten my pupil teacher stage and get me accepted as something which he called an "improver."

So I was packed off from Windsor to Wookey in Somerset, where my Uncle Williams was installed in the school house — but precariously. For he was never really qualified to teach in an English school. He had taught as a young man in Jamaica with qualifications that did not satisfy the Board of Education requirements. There had been a certain lack of explicitness in his application for the post and when that came to light, he had to get out of Wookey again. And the same lack of explicitness extinguished the scholastic career he proposed for me in the course of two or three months.

But it gave me the idea that there was something to be done in teaching and that it was pleasanter to stand in front of a class and distribute knowledge and punishments, than sit at a desk or hover behind a counter, at the beck and call of a hierarchy of seniors.

My Uncle Williams was not my uncle at all; he had married the sister of that "Uncle Tom Pennicott," my mother's cousin who had rebuilt Surly Hall; he had been a teacher in the West Indies, and he was a bright and adventurous rather than a truthful and trustworthy man. He had invented and patented an improved desk for schools, with sunken inkpots that could not upset and could be protected by rotating covers, and he had left teaching to become the active partner

of a firm of manufacturers of school appliances, including his desks, at Clewer near Windsor. A sanguine streak in his nature kept his expenses well above his income, and he presently sank to the position of clerk and manager in his own factory, and finally lost even that. Hence his attempt to establish himself in the school house at Wookey by means of inaccuracies.

As I knew him, he was an active centrally bald yellow-faced man with iron grey whiskers, a sharp nose, a chin like the toe of a hygienic slipper, and glasses. Extraordinary quantities of hair grew out of his ears. He had lost one arm, and instead he had a stump in which a hook was screwed, for which a dinner fork could be substituted. He held his food down vindictively and cut it up with a knife, and then put the knife down and ate snappily with another fork in the free hand. He instructed me in the arts and practices of his scholastic process and together, sometimes with a curtain to divide the children between us and sometimes in plenary session, we constituted the school staff. I found teaching heavy going but far more interesting than work in a cash desk. Discipline was difficult to maintain; some of the boys were as big as myself and sturdier, and my cockney accent jarred on Somerset ears. But it had the prestige of being English. Except for occasional hints from Uncle Williams, I had to find out how and what to teach. I taught them dates and geographical lists and sums and tables of weights and measures and reading, as well as I could. I fought my class, hit them about viciously and had altogether a lot of trouble with them. I exacted a full performance of the penalties I imposed and on one occasion pursued a defaulter headlong to his home, only to be routed ignominiously by his indignant mother and chased by her and a gathering rabble of variously sized boys back to the school house.

My Uncle Williams said I was wanting in tact.

My Uncle Williams was a man of derisive conversation with a great contempt for religion and the clergy. His table talk was unrestrained. He talked to me frankly and as if I were an adult; I had never in all my life before had that sort of talk with any grown-up person. It braced me up. He could talk very entertainingly about the church and its faith and about the West Indies and the world as he had seen it. He gave me a new angle from which to regard the

universe; I had not hitherto considered that it might be an essentially absurd affair, good only to laugh at. That seemed in many ways a releasing method of approach. It was a fresh, bright way of counter-attacking the dull imperatives of life about me, and taking the implacable quality out of them.

A daughter kept home for him. His wife had remained in Clewer, where two elder daughters had jobs as teachers. My cousin was only three or four years older than I and she was in a phase of great enterprise and curiosity about the business of sex. She pressed her investigations upon me. The urge to experiment was upon her. We went for walks together over the hills in our margin of time; we went one Saturday into Wells and I saw my first cathedral; and generally speaking our talk was instructive rather than what was then considered edifying. This phase in my education was interrupted before it was completed. I took my first lessons in sexual practice with a certain aversion. My mind was prepared with a different formula. The real thing as it was thus presented to me, seemed hot, uncomfortable, shamefaced stuff. But perhaps these conversations at Wookey did something to bring me back from an impracticable isolating dreamland.

I was growing up now. I was past fourteen; I was getting sturdier in my body and less disposed to escape from reality to reverie. The youngster who was returned rather apologetically by Uncle Williams to my mother, may have looked very much like the youngster who went in by the side door of Rodgers and Denyer to try and be a draper, but in fact he was something far more alert and solid. He had heard one or two things which, hitherto, he had avoided facing, spoken of very plainly and directly. And he had been interested by a job. He had really tried to do something instead of merely submitting to a boring routine in a business machine he did not understand. He had come up against material fact with a new nearness and vividness, and he had learnt that laughter was perhaps a better way of dealing with reality than were the evasions of reverie. He certainly owes a great deal more to this second start in life than to the first. A facetious scepticism which later on became his favourite pose may owe a great deal to Uncle Williams.

The collapse of the Wookey situation was so swift and

unexpected that it took me and my mother by surprise. There was hasty letter-writing again. I do not know the particulars. I was to go from Wookey to Surly Hall, either to wait there until she could speak to Miss Fetherstonhaugh about me, or because the entire journey from Wookey to Harting was considered too much for me. Even the journey to Windsor was a complicated one. My Uncle Williams packed me off with instructions to catch a certain train, the last possible train, at Maidenhead. There was a kink in the journey between two railway systems. If I missed the connexion I was to stay the night in a Temperance Hotel and then go on the next morning. But the first train available on the next day departed towards midday. (I may have got up late and missed an earlier train; — I cannot remember.) I went for a walk in Maidenhead and came upon a marvellous shop where one could be photographed and get a dozen tintypes for a shilling or a shilling and sixpence. I had never heard of such a thing and the temptation was irresistible. Money had been given me to cover my bill at the Temperance Hotel and my fare on to Windsor, and I felt rich beyond limit. But after the tintypes and a Bath bun and the Temperance Hotel bill, I found myself at the booking-office at half-past eleven with a dozen engaging portraits of myself in my pocket but short of the fare demanded. I had to go round by Slough and change trains; it was a longer journey than I had imagined. I emerged from the station, holding my little portmanteau which had suddenly become very heavy in my hand. "Please can you tell me the way to Windsor?" I asked.

I suppose the distance I covered was a little over four miles, because Surly Hall was on the road between Windsor and Maidenhead. But I still remember that walk as one of the longest in the world. When I had gone fifty yards from Maidenhead station I changed my portmanteau from one hand to the other. Before I had gone a quarter of a mile I put it down and reflected. My reflections were unfruitful. It is muscle and not mind that must carry portmanteaus. Before I had done a mile I was trying to carry that leaden valise on my head for a change. It had to be carried somehow to Surly Hall. I arrived after twilight with arms that felt like limp strings of pain, extremely exhausted and sorry for myself.

And when I got to Surly Hall, I found Surly Hall had changed. It

had become cheerless and almost sinister.

The shadow of approaching tragedy hung over it. Dreadful things had happened already. In the interval since my departure from Windsor, my uncle had had a violent quarrel with his daughter Clara about her lover, there had been bitter recriminations and she had gone off to London. How she lived in London nobody knew. Miss King, the barmaid, had gone. Cousin Kate was in a state of dismay and disapproval and threatening to marry a man she had been engaged to for some time and "get away from it all." The river was a swift flood of leaden silver; there were no passing boats to pull up, the hotel was empty, the bar and taproom desolate and the lawn with its green tables sodden and littered with dead leaves. My uncle was greatly embittered at the swift darkening of life about him. I think too he was intensely worried financially. He had mortgaged himself deeply in his rebuilding of the place. He was distressed by the undutifulness of his daughters. He would sit in the taproom talking to a serious potman who had found religion....

Music and song, moonlight on the lawn, forget-me-nots in the sedges and white water-lilies above the brown smooth water; all had become incredible. My education was going on apace....

I did not see Surly Hall again for many years after that visit. But cousin Kate married and went away and cousin Clara followed her destinies in London and came back at last after four years, a broken young woman. Her lover had abandoned her long ago. Uncle Tom, I fear, received her unkindly. All light and hope had gone out of life for her and late one night she flitted in her nightgown down the lawn from a sleepless bed to the river and drowned herself in a deep hole under a pollard willow. The old man died soon after. My cousin Kate died. The place was annexed to an adjacent property and ultimately its license was extinguished. The obliteration of Surly Hall was complete. I do not know of anything that survives of it now except my memories, a passing mention in some Old Etonian's Reminiscences and a fading photograph or so.

§ 6. INTERLUDE AT UP PARK (1880-81)

I am trying to recover the quality of those years between twelve and sixteen or seventeen with as many particulars as I can recall, because I think that the forces and influences in operation then were of primary importance in determining all my subsequent reactions. I am impressed as I look over such documents and records as I can find to revive these days, by the extraordinarily rapid growth of my character and resolution during my fourteenth and fifteenth years. I suppose this hardening and toughening and clearing up of the will was the natural concomitant of puberty. I was perhaps intellectually forward but morally I think I followed an average curve.

But if I did, then I am convinced that this system of terminating the education of an ordinary citizen before the age of fourteen is a wrong one. I do not think that for the new civilization ahead of us education will ever terminate, but certainly thirteen or fourteen is premature for economic citizenship. That age is not a natural turning point in the development of either male or female — at any rate so far as north European races are concerned. The transfer from protected tutelage to quasi responsible employment is premature. At earliest it should not occur until a year or so later when the youngster has become able and willing to take a directive interest in his or her own future. I was relatively precocious, yet clearly thirteen-fourteen was too soon for me. And even if whole-time education is to be prolonged for some years more — as may presently be the case all over the world for everyone — there should still be a break, not according to the present practice in England about twelve or thirteen when a boy goes from a preparatory to a public school, but about fifteen or sixteen. Then is the best time for a change over from instruction and guidance to an intelligent co-operation between teacher and disciple.

Both my brothers and myself, like nearly every boy in the British lower and lower middle classes of that time, were “put to a trade” and bound, before we could exercise any choice in the matter. In relation to any such issue we were children still. If this had been the case only with my brothers and myself, then this aspect of my story would hardly have been worth discussing. It would have been an individual misfortune. It would have been merely the story of three tadpoles who had chanced to be taken out of the water before their

legs and lungs would act properly. But this transfer at the wrong age was and still is the common experience. It has therefore had far reaching social consequences. Because of this premature termination of the primary educational phase in the closing years of the last century, a great proportion, perhaps a majority, of British men and women were (and are) employed upon their tasks against their will or at least without their willing assent. The nation almost as a whole is taken out of its tadpole stage too soon. Just as the civilizations of the ancients was based upon the labour of serfs and slaves, so this industrial civilization in which we are still living is based on the toil of masses of people mentally and morally arrested before fourteen. The bulk of the population is neither uneducated and quasi-animal as its servile predecessor was, nor educated as the whole mass should be in a soundly conceived mechanized civilization. It is incompletely metamorphosed; neither one thing nor the other.

One miserable result, though not by any means the only one, is this: that industrial life goes on in a spirit of boredom, with a demand therefore for shorter hours and higher wages as the main expression of the Labour mentality evoked under these conditions. An extraordinary indifference to the amount and quality of the product or service rendered is also manifest. Half Europe still watches the clock just as I watched the clock in Rodgers and Denyer's establishment, and by an inner necessity it tries in every possible way to scamp whatever tiresome task has to be done. Its labour is spiritless labour because it is essentially uninterested labour.

But our already highly mechanized and organized world community, if it is to develop further and sustain an efficient common life requires before everything else interested and participating workers. In this respect as in so many others it has got off from the mark too soon and started at too low a level.

It has taken three quarters of a century for this fact to dawn upon us. Responsible people have still to realize as a class that a happy, stably progressive human community can be made possible only if — among several other necessary primary conditions — the new generation is held back under education until it is at least sixteen years old, before its life rôles are determined and conscious specialized economic citizenship begins. Although, as I have said,

relatively precocious I was not fit to have a decisive voice in my own destiny until I was sixteen. For want of a breathing time at this crucial phase, my eldest brother became a complete failure in life — for he did not stick to the shop — and my brother Fred wasted upon haberdashery a fine conscientiousness and an exceptional gift for sensitive meticulous artistic work. And I escaped from becoming a wretched employee in an entirely uncongenial trade not by any merit of my own but by sheer luck.

Against a background of such generalizations my little mother, you see, becomes a symbol of the blind and groping parental solicitude of that age, a solicitude which enslaved and hampered where it sought to aid and establish; and my individual story merges into the story of the handicapped intelligence of our species, blundering heavily towards the realization and handling of vast changes and still vaster dangers and opportunities. My mother becomes a million mothers and my brothers a countless brotherhood. My life is a sample life and not an exceptional one; its distinctive merit has been its expressiveness; its living interest lies in that.

For some weeks after the retreat from Wookey, my mother did not know what to do with me. She asked all sorts of people for information and no doubt she took her troubles to her Heavenly Father, who remained, as ever, speechlessly enigmatical. She spoke to Miss Fetherstonhaugh about me and I was allowed to take refuge, from the gathering gloom of Surly Hall, at Up Park. And there a great snowstorm snowed me up for nearly a fortnight and I produced a daily newspaper of a facetious character, *The Up Park Alarmist* — on what was properly kitchen paper — and gave a shadow play to the maids and others, in a miniature theatre I made in the housekeeper's room.

Now it is one of my firmest convictions that modern civilization was begotten and nursed in the households of the prosperous, relatively independent people, the minor nobility, the gentry, and the larger bourgeoisie, which became visibly important in the landscape of the sixteenth century, introducing a new architectural element in the towns, and spreading as country houses and chateaux and villas over the continually more orderly countryside. Within these households, behind their screen of deer park and park wall and

sheltered service, men could talk, think and write at their leisure. They were free from inspection and immediate imperatives. They, at least, could go on after thirteen thinking and doing as they pleased. They created the public schools, revived the waning universities, went on the Grand Tour to see and learn. They could be interested in public affairs without being consumed by them. The management of their estates kept them in touch with reality without making exhaustive demands on their time. Many, no doubt, degenerated into a life of easy dignity or gentlemanly vice, but quite a sufficient number remained curious and interested to make, foster and protect the accumulating science and literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their large rooms, their libraries, their collections of pictures and "curios" retained into the nineteenth century an atmosphere of unhurried liberal enquiry, of serene and determined insubordination and personal dignity, of established æsthetic and intellectual standards. Out of such houses came the Royal Society, the *Century of Inventions*, the first museums and laboratories and picture galleries, gentle manners, good writing, and nearly all that is worth while in our civilization to-day. Their culture, like the culture of the ancient world, rested on a toiling class. Nobody bothered very much about that, but it has been far more through the curiosity and enterprise and free deliberate thinking of these independent gentlemen than through any other influences, that modern machinery and economic organization have developed so as to abolish at last the harsh necessity for any toiling class whatever. It is the country house that has opened the way to human equality, not in the form of a democracy of insurgent proletarians, but as a world of universal gentlefolk no longer in need of a servile substratum. It was the experimental cellule of the coming Modern State.

The new creative forces have long since overflowed, these first nests in which they were hatched and for the most part the European country houses and chateaux that were so alive and germinal, mentally, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, stand now mere empty shells, resorts for week-end gatherings and shooting parties, but no longer real dwelling places, gracefully and hospitably in decay. Yet there still lingers something of that former importance and largeness in outlook, on their walls and hangings and

furnishings, if not in their attenuated social life. For me at any rate the house at Up Park was alive and potent. The place had a great effect upon me; it retained a vitality that altogether overshadowed the insignificant ebbing trickle of upstairs life, the two elderly ladies in the parlour following their shrunken routines, by no means content with the bothered little housekeeper in the white panelled room below.

During this visit and subsequent visits, when the weather did not permit of my wandering in the park, I rummaged about in an attic next to my bedroom which was full of odd discarded things. I found several great volumes of engravings of the Vatican paintings of Raphael and Michelangelo. I pondered immensely over the mighty loveliness of these saints and sibyls and gods and goddesses. And there was a box, at first quite mysterious, full of brass objects that clearly might be screwed together. I screwed them together, by the method of trial and error, and presently found a Gregorian telescope on a tripod in my hands. I carried off the wonder to my bedroom. By daylight it showed everything upside down, I found, but that did not matter — except for the difficulty of locating objects — when I turned it to the sky. I was discovered by my mother in the small hours, my bedroom window wide open, inspecting the craters of the moon. She had heard me open the window. She said I should catch my death of cold. But at the time that seemed a minor consideration.

Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh, like many of his class and time, had been a free-thinker, and the rooms downstairs abounded in bold and enlightening books. I was allowed to borrow volumes and carry them off to my room. Then or later, I cannot now recall when, I improved my halting French with Voltaire's lucid prose, I read such books as *Vathek* and *Rasselas*, I nibbled at Tom Paine, I devoured an unexpurgated *Gulliver's Travels* and I found Plato's *Republic*. That last was a very releasing book indeed for my mind, I had learnt the trick of mocking at law and custom from Uncle Williams and, if anything, I had improved upon it and added caricature to quaint words, but here was something to carry me beyond mockery. Here was the amazing and heartening suggestion that the whole fabric of law, custom and worship, which seemed so invincibly established, might be cast into the melting pot and made anew.

§ 7. THIRD START IN LIFE — MIDHURST (1881)

I do not know how my mother hit upon the idea of making me a pharmaceutical chemist. But that was the next career towards which I (and my small portmanteau) were now directed. I spent only about a month amidst the neat gilt-inscribed drawers and bottles of Mr. Cowap at Midhurst, rolled a few score antibilious and rhubarb pills, broke a dozen soda-water siphons during a friendly broom fight with the errand boy, learnt to sell patent medicines, dusted the coloured water bottles, the bust of Hahnemann (indicating homoeopathic remedies) and the white horse (veterinary preparations), and I do not think I need here devote very much space to him and his amusing cheerful wife, seeing that I have already drawn largely upon this shop, and my experiences in it, in describing aunt and uncle Ponderevo in *Tono Bungay*. Cowap, like uncle Ponderevo, really did produce a heartening Cough Linctus, though he never soared to my hero's feat of commercial expansion. But this time I gave satisfaction, and it was upon my initiative and not upon that of my prospective employer that pharmaceutical chemistry was abandoned as my calling in life. I enquired into the cost of qualification as an assistant and dispenser; the details have long since escaped me; but I came to the conclusion that the fees and amount of study required, would be quite beyond my mother's limited resources. I pointed this out to her and she saw reason in the figures I gave her.

I was reluctant to abandon this start because I really liked the bright little shop with its drawers full of squills and senna pods, flowers of sulphur, charcoal and such like curious things, and I had taken to Midhurst from the outset. It had been the home of my grandparents, and that gave me a sense of belonging there. It was a real place in my mind and not a morbid sprawl of population like Bromley. Its shops and school and post office and church were grouped in rational comprehensible relations; it had a beginning, a middle and an end. I know no country to compare with West Sussex except the Cotswolds. It had its own colour, a pleasant colour of sunlit sandstone and ironstone and a warm flavour of open country

because of the parks and commons and pine woods about it. Midhurst was within three hours' sturdy walking from Up Park. And I had recovered my self respect there very rapidly.

One manifest deficiency in my schooling came to light at the mere suggestion that I should be a chemist. I knew no Latin and much of the dignity of the qualified druggist at that time depended upon a smattering of that tongue. He had to read and to copy and understand prescriptions. Accordingly it was arranged that I should go to the Headmaster of the local Grammar School and have lessons in Latin. I had, I suppose, four or five hours of it before the project of my apprenticeship was abandoned, but in that time I astonished my instructor, accustomed to working against the resistances of Sussex tradesmen's and farmer's sons and the like, by rushing through the greater part of Smith's *Principia* Part I and covering more ground than he had been accustomed to get over with his boys in a year or more. I found this fine structural language congenial just as I had found Euclid's *Elements* congenial. It was a new way of saying things. It was like something I had been waiting for. It braced up my use of English immediately.

The Midhurst Grammar School was an old foundation which had fallen into decay and had been closed in 1859 — after a fire which had destroyed the school house. It had been revived by the Endowed Schools Commissioners and the school had been re-opened in 1880, less than a year before my essay in pharmacy. Mr. Horace Byatt, M.A., the new headmaster, was a not very brilliant graduate of Dublin University, an animated and energetic teacher resolved to make a success of his first headmastership. He was a dark, semi-clerical man, plumply active, with bushy hair, side whiskers, a cleft chin, and a valiant rotund voice, and he was quartered with his wife and three small children in a comfortable old house near the South Pond, until the commissioners could rebuild the school house, which was still at that time a weedy heap of ruins.

I know nothing of Byatt's previous history and training, but I doubt if his Latin went very far and I stumped him completely when, some years later, I took some Greek quotation from Paley's *Evidences* to him for elucidation. He had evidently had a considerable experience in teaching elementary science, geometrical

drawing and the like, and his rôle at Midhurst was to build up a secondary school on comparatively modern lines. At that time the British Education Department was spreading a system of evening class instruction from which the organized science schools of the next decade were developed. The classes ran through the winter and were examined in May and the teacher received pay according to his results, a pound or two pounds or four pounds for every pass, according to its class and grade. Byatt, who was a university M.A., was considered qualified to conduct classes and earn grants in any of the thirty odd subjects scheduled by the Department, and in addition to his day-time teaching, he was already running evening classes in freehand, perspective and geometrical drawing and in electricity and magnetism, to supplement his fundamental stipend. His interest in the classics was therefore relatively less keen. Latin in such schools as his had ceased to be a language; there was no real thought of either reading it or writing it, much less of speaking it; it was an exercise directed to the passing of various qualifying examinations.

Now Cowap had counted on my premium as an apprentice, and when he realized that I did not intend to go on with that, he betrayed considerable vexation and became urgent to clear me out to make way for a more profitable aspirant. My mother had nowhere for me to go and she arranged to put me as a boarder with the Grammar School headmaster until she could organize a fourth start in life for me. I became the first boarder of the renascent school. I spent about two months there, returning by special request to sit for the May examinations in all the subjects of Byatt's evening classes and so earn grants for him.

Now here again was a new phase in my very jumbled education, and one that I still look back upon with pleasure. I liked Byatt, and he formed an encouragingly high opinion of my grit and capacity. The amount of mental benefit I derived from those few weeks as his pupil, cannot be measured by the work actually done; the stimulus I got was far more important. I went on with Latin but now at a reduced speed, for Byatt preferred to direct me rather towards grant-earning subjects and put text books in such subjects as physiology and physiography into my hands, realizing that I was capable of learning very rapidly by reading alone without any nursing in class. I

could understand a book of my own accord and write, and if necessary illustrate, a good answer to a question, and that was something beyond the general capacity of his Midhurst material. I think it was extraordinary good fortune for me, that I had this drilling in writing things down at this time. It gave my reading precision and accustomed me to marshal my knowledge in an orderly fashion. There are many valid objections to a system of education controlled by written examinations; it may tend very easily towards a ready superficiality; but I am convinced that it has at any rate the great merit of imposing method and order in learning. It prevents the formation of those great cavities of vagueness, those preferential obsessions, those disproportions between detail and generalization which are characteristic of gifted people who have never been "examinees."

This broadening out, bucking up and confirmation of my mind by the flood of new experiences at Up Park and Midhurst, were immensely important in my development. I dwell upon this phase because when I look back upon 1880 and early 1881 it seems to me as though these above all others were the years in which the immediate realities about me began to join on in a rational way to that varied world with which books had acquainted me. That larger world came slowly within the reach of my practical imagination. Hitherto it had been rather a dreamland and legend than anything conceivably tangible and attainable. It had been no more credible to me than my mother's imaginative escape to Our Father, Our Saviour, celestial music and the blessedness of heaven. One let one's mind stray away to such things when the rigid uncomfortable imperatives of employment, the inescapable insufficiency and shabbiness of the daily round became insupportable. But one had no belief in any possible escape in fact, and sooner or later the mind had to return to its needy habitation and its fated limitations. Temporary escape and alleviation by reverie were the easier substitutes for positive effort to get out of the imprisoning conditions. But now I was abandoning reverie and working up towards a conscious fight for the positive enlargement of my life.

I wish I could set down with certainty all the main facts in this phase of my adolescence. Then I should be able to separate the

accidental elements, the element of individual luck that is to say, from the normal developmental phases. I realize that I was almost beyond comparison a more solid, pugnacious, wary and alert individual in 1881 than I was in 1879, and as I have already suggested that a large factor in this may have been the nervous and chemical changes that are associated with puberty. So far my experience was the general experience. Puberty is certainly a change in much more than the sexual life. The challenge to authority, the release of initiative, the access of courage are at least equally important. But added to this normal invigoration was the escape from the meagre feeding and depressingly shabby and unlit conditions of Atlas House. There I had a great advantage over my two brothers and I think a quite unusual push forward. I was living in those crucial years under healthier conditions; I was undergoing stimulating changes of environment, and, what is no small matter, eating a more varied and better dietary. Yet even when these more fortunate physical circumstances have been allowed for, there remains over and above them, the influence upon my perplexed and resentful mind for the first time, at its most receptive age, of a sudden irruption of new ideas, ideas of scientific precision and confirmation and ideas of leisure, culture and social margin. If I had been the son of an instructive-minded astronomer and had been bothered with early lessons about the stars when I wanted to play with mud pies, I might not have made my first contact with the starry heavens in a state of exaltation, nor pursued Jupiter with the help of *Whitaker's Almanack* until with my own eyes, I saw him and his moons quivering in the field of my telescope, as though I were Galileo come back to earth. Nor should I have realized with anything like the same excitement, had geology been made easy for me in my childhood, that when I stood on the brow of Telegraph Hill and looked across the weald to the North Downs I was standing on the escarpment of a denuded anticlinal, and that this stuff of the pale hills under my feet had once been slime at the bottom of a vanished Cretaceous sea. And again this definite estate of Up Park and the sharply marked out farms, villages and towns of the countryside below, caught me just in the proper phase to awaken a sense of social relationship and history that might never have been roused if I had remained in the catastrophic

multitudinousness of suburban development.

The stuff accumulated by the discursive reading of my earlier years, fell rapidly into place in the wider clearer vision of my universe that was coming into being before my eyes. Science in those days insisted, if anything, overmuch upon the reign of law. The march of progress was still being made with absolute assurance, and my emancipation was unqualified. It must be hard for intelligent people nowadays to realize all that a shabby boy of fifteen could feel as the last rack of a peevish son-crucifying Deity dissolved away into blue sky, and as the implacable social barriers, as they had seemed, set to keep him in that path unto which it had pleased that God to call him, weakened down to temporary fences he could see over and presently perhaps hope to climb over or push aside.

But before one breaks or climbs fences one must look over them or through them for a time, and just then I was merely in the stage of peeping with a wild surmise and daring nothing more. I was still a good ten years from the reality of personal freedom.

IV. — EARLY ADOLESCENCE

§ 1. FOURTH START IN LIFE — SOUTHSEA (1881- 1883)

While I was making my first systematic acquaintance with modern science at the Midhurst Grammar School, my mother was busy finding yet another start in life for me. She had consulted Sir William King, who was Miss Fetherstonhaugh's Agent and an important man in Portsmouth affairs, and he had recommended her to Mr. Edwin Hyde, the proprietor of the Southsea Drapery Emporium in Kings Road, Southsea. I learnt at Easter that I was destined once again to try the difficult rôle of a draper, this time under the tutelage of this Mr. Hyde. I was still unprepared with any alternative scheme. I expressed dissent, but my mother wept and entreated. I promised to be a good boy and try.

But this time I went recalcitrant, not indeed against my mother, whose simplicity and difficulties I was beginning to understand, but against a scheme of things which marched me off before I was fifteen to what was plainly a dreary and hopeless life, while other boys, no better in quality than myself, were enjoying all the advantages — I thought they were stupendous advantages in those days — of the public school and university. I conveyed my small portmanteau to Southsea with a sinking heart. I was left upstairs in the dormitory for a time until someone could come to show me round, and I leant upon the window-sill and looked out upon the narrow side street upon which the window gave, with no illusion about what had happened to me. I can still feel the unhappiness and dismay of that moment.

Retail trade, I thought, had captured me for good. I had now to learn to work and to work faithfully for the profit and satisfaction of my prospective employers to the end of my days. I had been at large for a year and found no other way of living. The last chance had gone. At that moment I could not discover in my mind or in my world, as represented by the narrow side street into which I was looking, the little corner pub or the blind alley below me or the strip of sky overhead, the faintest intimation of any further escape.

I turned round from this restricted outer world to survey my

dormitory in much the same mood as a condemned prisoner surveying the fittings of the cell he is to occupy for his allotted term....

It is an open question in my mind whether this dismay at the outset, is the common experience of modern youth of the less fortunate classes, or whether because of the enlightenment of my previous starts I happened to see further and more clearly than most of my fellows. A considerable number, I think, get that caught feeling rather later. My brother Frank, after fifteen years of being good, said he could endure the life no longer and broke away as I shall tell in due course. My brother Fred held to the religion of submission longer; he was the good boy of the three of us, and he did subdue himself to the necessary routines for the best part of his life.

What percentage of those who are bound apprentices to drapers, go on to comparative success I do not know, nor what their vital statistics are, but it is beyond all question a meagre distressful life they lead and exceptionally devoid of hope. Caradoc Evans, like myself, has been a draper, and the scene he draws of a draper's existence in the meaner shops of London in *Nothing to Pay* is, I know, true in all substantial particulars. He tells of the perpetual nagging and mutual irritation, the petty "spiffs" and fines, the intrigues and toadyism, the long tedious hours, the wretched dormitories, the insufficient "economized" food, the sudden dismissals, the dreadful interludes of unemployment with clothing growing shabby and money leaking away. There was no dole behind the "swapped" shop assistant in those days. You swam for as long as you could and then, if you could not scramble into some sort of shop, down you went to absolute destitution, the streets and beggary. Hyde was an exceptionally good employer; the place, from an assistant's point of view, was infinitely superior to my previous "crib" at Rodgers and Denyer's, yet still I recall those two years of incarceration as the most unhappy hopeless period of my life. I was indentured for four years, but after nearly two years of it I took matters into my own hands. I rebelled and declared that come what might I would not go on being a draper.

Yet I never got to the worst experiences of an assistant's life. I never knew how it felt to be out of a crib or tasted the full sordidness

of the Caradoc Evans type of shop. I learnt about such matters chiefly from my brothers and the assistants at Hyde's. What overwhelmed me immediately was the incessancy of this employment and its lack of compelling interest. I do not know how the modern state as it develops will solve the problem of service in the distributing trades, but I am convinced it will have to be made an employment for short periods, short hours or alternative weeks and months with relays of workers, and that such special education as may be provided for it will link up the mind of the employee with the methods and novelties of manufacture on the one hand and the ultimate use of the goods sold on the other. Then the assistant would go behind the counter or into the stockroom with a sense of function instead of a sense of routine, there would be a minimum of shirking, resentment and lassitude, and he would do his job as a brisk terminable job worth doing and would find it the more interesting the better it was done. Nothing of that sort happened in my case.

It is remarkable how alien and incomprehensible the stuff I had to handle was to me. I was put first into the Manchester department, and there I found fixtures of wrappered blocks labelled incomprehensibly Hard Book or Turkey Twill or the like, rolls of grey and black silesia, flannels with a variety of names, a perplexing range of longcloths and calicoes, endless packages of diaper table-cloths, serviettes, and so forth, and rolls of crash, house cloth, ticking and the like. All that stuff had no origin and no purpose for me, except that it seemed to have been created to make my life burthensome. There were also in this Manchester department cotton dress materials, prints, ginghams and sateens, cretonne and kindred fabrics for covering furniture; stuffs that were rather more understandable but equally irksome to handle. I had to straighten all this stock and pack it up after it had been shown and put it back into the proper fixtures; I had to measure and refold it when the manufacturers delivered it, to block it or to roll it in rolls. This blocking, rolling and folding was skilled work that needed a watchful effort I gave grudgingly, and I never learnt to do it swiftly and neatly. You cannot imagine how maliciously a folded piece of sateen can get askew, how difficult it is to roll huckaback, how unruly a fat blanket is to pack up and how heavy and unwieldy pieces of cretonne can be

when you have to carry a score or so of them up narrow folding steps and adjust them neatly on a rising pile. My department also included lace curtains. These had to be unfolded and held up by the junior apprentice while the salesman discoursed to the customer. As the heap of tumbled curtains grew and the customer still wanted to see something a little different, storms of hatred and revolutionary fervour went on behind the apathetic mask of the junior apprentice, doomed before closing time to refold them all and put them away.

Stock keeping, showing goods and clearing up, were the middle duties of the day. We apprentices were roused from our beds at seven, peremptorily, by one of the assistants; he swept hortative through the dormitory and on his return journey pulled the bed-clothes off anyone still in bed. We flung on old suits, tucking our nightgowns into our trousers, and were down in the shop in a quarter of an hour, to clean windows, unwrapper goods and fixtures, dust generally, before eight. At eight we raced upstairs to get first go at the wash basins, dressed for the day and at half-past eight partook of a bread and butter breakfast before descending again. Then came window dressing and dressing out the shop. I had to fetch goods for the window dresser and arrange patterns or pieces of fabric on the brass line above the counter. Every day or so the costume window had to be rearranged and I had to go in the costume room and fetch those headless effigies on which costumes are displayed and carry them the length of the shop, to the window dresser, avoiding gas brackets, chairs and my fellow creatures *en route*. Then I had to see to the replenishing of the pin bowls and the smoothing out and stringing up of paper for small parcels. The tediums of the day were broken for an hour or so while I went out to various other shops in Southsea, Portsmouth and Landport "matching" for the workroom, getting lengths of ribbon and material that were needed and could not be supplied out of stock, taking money from the cash desk to the bank or gettings bags of small change. I loitered as much as I dared on these blessed errands, but by half past eleven or twelve at latest, the shop swallowed me up again and there was no more relief until after closing time, which came at seven or eight according to the season. I had to stand by ready for any helpful job. There were a hundred small fussy things to do, straightening up, putting away,

fetching and carrying. It was not excessively laborious but it was indescribably tedious. If there was nothing else to do I had to stand to attention at the counter, as though ready for a customer, though at first I was not competent to serve. The length of those days at Southsea were enormous until closing time; then the last hour fell swiftly past me to "lights out" at half past ten.

Half an hour before closing time we began to put away for the last time and "wrapper up," provided no customer lingered in the department. And as soon as the doors were shut and the last customer gone, the assistants departed and we junior apprentices rushed from behind the counters, scattered wet sawdust out of pails over the floor and swept it up again with great zest and speed, the last rite of the day. By half-past eight we were upstairs and free, supping on bread and butter, cheese and small beer. That was the ritual for every day in the week, thirteen hours of it, except that on Wednesday, Early Closing Day, the shop closed at five.

There was an interval of five minutes at eleven o'clock in the morning when we went upstairs in relays for bread and butter and — my memory is not quite clear here but I think we had a glass of beer. Or it may have been milk or tea. We had a mid-day meal about one for which we had half an hour and we had ten minutes for tea. The dining room was airy, well lit and upstairs, far more agreeable than the underground cellar at Rodgers and Denyer's, and instead of the squalid rooms which characterised the Windsor place, with truckle beds and no accommodation for personal belongings, so that everyone had to keep his possessions in a trunk or valise, high partitions between the beds divided the dormitory into cubicles and everyone had a private chest of drawers, looking glass, pegs, a chair and so forth. For his time and trade, Mr. Edwin Hyde was a fairly civilized employer. He had even provided a reading room, with a library of several hundred books, of which I shall have a word to say in the next section.

Though I began this life of a draper's shopman at the best end, so to speak, I found it insupportable. The unendurable thing about it was that I was never master of my own attention. I had to be thinking continually about pins and paper and packages. If there was nothing for me to do then I had to find something to do and look sharp about

it. But the excitement of successful learning, which had come to me at Midhurst, would not die down. For a time Latin was for me, as for Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, the symbol of mental emancipation. I tried to go on with Latin; I wanted to prepare for more examinations. My mind no longer escaped in reverie, but I was rarely without a book of some sort in my pocket which I would try to read when I should have been combing and grooming Witney blankets for the window, or when I was out of sight of the shop-walker, as I imagined, behind a pile of cotton goods.

It became evident to those who were set in authority over me that I was an inattentive and unwilling worker. This mattered most immediately to Casebow the head of the Manchester department, and the "improver" and senior apprentice who were between him and myself. Casebow was a good sort, but he had to keep up a rain of "Come up!" "Oh, look *sharp*!" "What in heaven are you doing now?" "What on earth are you doing here?" Over him and me ruled the shop walker, Mr. John Key, a stately and quasi-military figure with a good profile and a cherished moustache, very gentlemanly and dreadfully brisk, who marshalled all the forces of the shop together and did not for a moment intend that I or anyone under his sway should sink into sloth and insignificance. When I reflect upon him, I marvel at his all-seeing energy. He lurked watchfully in a little desk in the middle of the main shop, from which he sallied to accost customers, lead them to the appropriate department, summon the proper assistant, "Merton forward!" "Ascough forward!" "Miss Quilter forward!" hover to intervene if the sale did not go well, answer to the cry of "Sign!" and check each transaction, introduce novelties to the departing client,— "We are showing some very pretty sunshades just now Moddum. This for example" (startlingly opened) — and see that no part of our organization (and particularly, it seemed to me, myself) fell out of action. He found me a responsibility, and after a time I got a little on his nerves. He would remember me suddenly and inconveniently. "Wells?" he would ask. "What is Wells doing? Where on earth is that boy now?"

"Jay-Kay's after you," Platt or Rodgers would say.

Wells would become virtuously active at a counter where he had been invisible five minutes before. "Here Sir. I've just been

straightening up the longcloths."

"Eugh!"

My life went to the refrain of Mr. Key's disgusted "Eugh."

The proprietor, the "G. V.", I saw less of; he was snappy in his manner and very terrifying. But he came into the department at irregular intervals; he blew over. J. K. who was always about, always keeping me up to the mark, observant of every untidiness in my dress or any slackness in my bearing, an ever present "Eugh" of disapproval, was the living sting of my servitude. At the time I hated him beyond measure. And yet now, when I can pass judgment upon him across an interval of half a century, I see that he was really an excellent man, most anxious to guide my feet into the path of successful drapering and without a grain of malice in his persecution. If he never let me alone for five minutes, then he did me the immense service of bringing home to me in time, just how slack, unsatisfactory and hopeless I was by nature for the calling that had been chosen for me. I could do nothing right for him from the moment when I came into the shop, with an unnecessarily careless slam of the door three minutes late after breakfast, to the time when, broom and pail in hand, I stared malevolently round the corner of a fixture at the lingering customer. The parcels in my department became more and more askew; until they might have been packed, he said, by "old women."

He wasn't "finding fault." The faults obtruded. I wasn't doing things right. Although I tried hard and tried to school myself, the humiliating fact has to be faced by an honest autobiographer, I wasn't equal to the job.

Now it is all claptrap to say that this was so because I was meant for better things. But I was "meant," if I may use that expression, for different things. I don't think I ever had any snobbishness in me about the relative values of Latin and longcloth, but it was an immense consolation to me in those days of drab humiliations, that after all I had been able to race through Euclid's *Elements*, Smith's *Principia* and various scientific text books at a quite unusual speed. That consolation became brighter as my prospect of winning any of the prizes in the trade or even holding my own as a satisfactory assistant, darkened. Manifestly I had not the ghost of a chance of

becoming a buyer, a shop walker, a manager, a traveller or a partner. I listened to the tales my seniors would unfold, of the long-drawn despair and hardships of "crib hunting" and rotten shops and what it meant to lose one's "refs," with a growing certitude that that was my part of it, that was the way I should go. And, meditating on my outlook, it was inevitable I should recall the nice authoritative feeling of dictating knowledge to a class and wonder whether even for me with such an appetite for learning as I possessed there might not be prizes and scholarships in the world and some niche of erudition for me to fill.

Possibly my mind would have run naturally towards such ideas, but Mr. Key's expostulating "I never saw such a boy! What do you think will become of you?" was undoubtedly thought-provoking. What *would* become of me?

Might there not be some Wookey where the headmaster's certificates were in order?

This question became more urgent in my mind as I got into my second year. A fresh apprentice came and I was no longer junior; he took over those pleasant errands of matching and so forth that had hitherto fallen to me and I was kept more closely in the shop. (He had by the bye an amusing simplicity of mind, a carelessness of manner, a way of saying "Oo'er," and a feather at the back of his head that stuck in my memory, and formed the nucleus which grew into *Kipps* in my novel of that name.) Junior apprentices wear short black coats, but afterwards they go into black morning coats with tails, and now, at sixteen, I bore these evidences of my increasing maturity. I began to serve small and easy customers. I served them badly. Rodgers and Platt my immediate seniors were far sharper at the job. And the parcels I packed were damnable.

"Get on with it Wells." "Wells Forward." "Has anyone seen Wells?" "Sign!" "But you haven't shown the lady the gingham at six-three! The young man has made a mistake Moddum; we have exactly what you require." "A parcel like that will fall to pieces, man, before it gets home." And at the back of my mind, growing larger and more vivid, until it was like the word of the Lord coming to one of his prophets, was the injunction; "Get out of this trade before it is too late. At any cost get out of it."

For some time I did not tell anyone of this amazing urgency to disentangle myself. Then I tried the idea on my brother Frank, who had settled into a reasonably pleasant job at Godalming and was "living out" in lodgings. I used to go to him at Easter and Whitsuntide to spend hilarious friendly Bank Holidays. "But what else can you do?" he asked. The second clerk in the booking desk, named West, was a man of some education who had had dreams of entering the church and who took a sympathetic interest in my spurts with the Latin grammar of an evening. I talked to him. I may have got suggestions from him. Finally I had the brilliant idea of writing to Mr. Horace Byatt at Midhurst. "Weren't there such things as ushers? Might I not be useful in the school?"

He answered that he thought I might be quite useful.

But I was indentured for four years and I had not yet served two. My mother had undertaken to pay a premium of fifty pounds and had already paid forty. She was dismayed beyond measure to find that once again, apparently, I was to come unstuck. She wept and prayed me to "try again"; Freddy was "trying." If only I would "pray for help" in the right quarter. I explained I didn't want help of that sort from any quarter. I had discovered that the drapery business was a dismal trap and I meant to get out of it. My father was invoked and first he supported and then opposed my liberation.

Byatt made an offer. It was the salvation of my situation. It made my revolt reasonable. I might go as a student assistant in the Grammar School; at first he suggested without pay and then decided that he would pay me twenty pounds a year and raise this to forty after a twelve-month. He had a faith in my grant-earning capacity that I was to justify beyond expectation and this inspired him.

I had reached a vital crisis of my life, I felt extraordinarily desperate and, faced with binding indentures and maternal remonstrances, I behaved very much like a hunted rabbit that turns at last and bites. A hunted rabbit that turned and bit would astonish and defeat most ordinary pursuers. I had discovered what were to be for me for some years the two guiding principles of my life. "If you want something sufficiently, take it and damn the consequences," was the first and the second was: "If life is not good enough for you, change it; never endure a way of life that is dull and dreary, because after all

the worst thing that can happen to you, if you fight and go on fighting to get out, is defeat, and that is never certain to the end which is death and the end of everything."

Among other things, during that dismal two years, I had thought out some very fundamental problems of conduct. I had really weighed the possibilities of the life before me, and when I used suicide as a threat to shake my mother's opposition to my liberation, it was after a considerable amount of meditation along the Southsea sea front and Portsmouth Hard. I did not think suicide an honourable resort, but it seemed to me a lesser evil than acquiescence. The cool embrace of swift-running, black deep water on a warm summer night couldn't be as bad as crib hunting or wandering about the streets with the last of one's courage gone. There it was in reserve anyhow. Why should I torture myself to earn a living, any old living? If the living isn't good enough, why live?

Not perhaps with that much virility did I think at the time, but in that fashion, I was beginning to think.

I do not remember now the exact order of events in my liberation nor when it was I wrote to Byatt. But I know things were precipitated by some row of which I have forgotten every particular. On some issue I had been insubordinate, deliberately disobeyed orders. There had to be trouble. The matter was something beyond J. K., and I should have to see the G. V. At any rate I got up early one Sunday morning and started off without breakfast to walk the seventeen miles to Up Park and proclaim to my mother that things had become intolerable and this drapery experiment had to end. I think that was the first intimation the poor little lady had of my crisis.

I have told just how that happened in *Tono Bungay* and how I waylaid the procession of servants as they were coming up Harting Hill from Harting Church. I appeared among the beeches and bracken on the high bank. "Cooee Mummy," said I, white-faced and tired, but carrying it off gaily.

The bad shilling back again!

I remember too an act of singular ungraciousness on my part. When at length it had been arranged that my indentures should be cancelled, Mr. Hyde bethought himself of the summer sale that was imminent, when every hand, however incompetent, was welcome.

"Would I at least stay on for that?" It meant another month of shop, just four weeks more. I refused obstinately, would not hear of it. There was no real need for me to go to Midhurst for a month yet; the school would not reassemble until September, but I had already anticipated a month of perfervid reading. I felt I was already nearly two years behind those fellows who went to public schools. I had to be after them without any further delay.

Still more vivid is my memory of being alone in a railway compartment between Portsmouth and Petersfield junction, *en route* for Midhurst. My small but faithful portmanteau was on the seat before me. I could not keep still, and after flitting restlessly from one window to another and back again and trying to read, I found it necessary to express my feelings by a staggering dance and a song, a song consisting, I seem to remember, of disrespectful improvisations about the Southsea Drapery Emporium, and more particularly about "old J. K." (Which Emporium was, I insist, after all far above the average of drapers' shops and very decently run, and J. K. an excellent man.) But this chant and breakdown about my exodus from drapery, set to a railway rhythm, is now lost beyond recovery.

"Puff and rumble old J.K. old J.K. old J.K.
"Damn-the-boy has got away, *got* away, *got* away
"Damn-the-boy has got away, got away for ever."

Something in that fashion at any rate.

§ 2. THE Y.M.C A., THE FREETHINKER; A PREACHER AND THE READING ROOM

This chapter in the history of the adventures of a sample human brain in the latter phase of the Private Capitalist System, must go a little deeper than the story of a misfit, a discontent and an escape, if it is to do justice to the phases through which a clear and firm vision of a world renewed, and a plain satisfying and sustaining objective in life, were built up in it. The educational influence of Up Park was going on during these two years and during the subsequent student period

at Midhurst and in London. And, in addition, this now hungry and excited cortex was seizing upon and annexing whatever was relevant to the matters that were becoming of primary importance in the scheme of things it was making for itself. There was a clerk in the office at Southsea, named Field, who had found religion and showed a certain interest in me. He introduced me to the Young Men's Christian Association in Landport, where there was a reading room and a circulating library. And another clerk I have already mentioned, named West, prided himself upon his theology and talked interestingly about religious services. I would spend my Sunday evenings, especially in winter, in attending the various religious services; there was a fashionable high Anglican in Southsea, popular preachers to be heard in the Catholic cathedral, duller but still tolerable entertainment in other chapels and churches. There was also a secularist society in an upstairs room where a number of quiet men rejoiced discreetly when a church was struck by lightning. My still vague and instinctive disbelief in Christianity had now to be put through a closer scrutiny.

Except for a deep resentment of social inequality and particularly of the unfairness of letting those other fellows go to college, I had still hardly the rudiments of social, economic or political ideas. I don't remember any Socialism at this time. There was a "Parliament" which met in the reading room of the Y.M.C.A. and I attended its sessions regularly. It was one of those parodies of the House of Commons, similar to the one in Camden Town wherein figured the parental Harmsworth, the father of Northcliffe and Rothermere. Ambitious barristers, local politicians and embryo journalists, familiarized themselves with the current phrases of politics and the methods of debate, but I found the pedantries of procedure confusing and I could not make head or tail of most of the issues of the time: "Leasehold Enfranchisement" or Our Foreign Policy or Egypt, an Extra Penny on the Income Tax, Licensing Laws and so forth. It bothered me a lot to witness all this mental excitement and not to have a clue to it. Where did it join on — to theology for example?

My mind was still exploring fundamentals in a profoundly dissatisfied mood, and it was working at a level that was too far down to establish any contact between these fundamentals and the

political issues of the day. It still seemed to me to be of primary importance to find out if there was, after all, a God, and if so whether he was the Christian God and which sort of Christian God he was. In the absence of a God what *was* this universe and how was it run? Had it ever begun and had it any trend? I knew now something of geology and astronomy and I had a crude conception of Evolution. But the proposition that "somebody must have made it all," had been stuck into my mind early in life and it was only much later that I realized that there was a flaw in this assumption. Such questions seemed to me already of far more importance than satisfying J. K. or securing a satisfactory "ref" when my apprenticeship was up, and they drove that mock Parliament stuff completely off the stage.

I was still much exercised by what might happen when my earthly apprenticeship as a whole, was over. It seemed to me much more important to know whether or no I was immortal than whether or no I was to make a satisfactory shop assistant. It might be a terrible thing to be out of a crib on the Thames Embankment but it would be a far more terrible thing to be out of a crib for ever in the windy spaces of nothingness. Jeering at the Trinity did not dismiss the God idea, nor disbelief in hell the idea of immortality. I realized that unless my memory was very bad indeed I had had a comparatively recent beginning, but I found it difficult to suppose I should ever have an end. I tried to imagine how it would feel not to exist and my imagination failed me. I did all the queer things that everyone, I suppose, does at this stage. I would sit on my bed in my cubicle trying to withdraw my mind from all external things and think through the universe to the Inner Reality. I would lie quite still in my bed invoking the Unknown to "Speak now. Give me a sign."

On my matching expeditions, when I had to go from Southsea to the Landport Drapery Bazaar, I passed through some side streets in which an obscure but spirited newspaper shop displayed a copy of a weekly called the *Freethinker*. Each week had a cheerful blasphemous caricature, which fell in very agreeably with my derisive disposition. I looked for this very eagerly and when I could afford it I bought a copy. In regard to the religions it confirmed my worst suspicions but it left me altogether at a loss for some general statement of my relation to the stars.

Field tried to save my soul. He was strongly evangelical. He took me home to cold supper with his family on several Sunday nights and I participated in some lusty hymn singing. He induced me as a personal favour to pray for faith, but I doubt if I put much power into my prayers. He induced me to read various theological books, but for the most part these deepened my scepticism, by "answering" unconvincingly various objections of which I had been previously unaware. The answer faded and the objection remained. One of those apologetic works stands out in my memory still; I read it with peculiar delight and shared my glee with West. It was Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. Drummond tried to make various leading Christian dogmas more acceptable by instances drawn from natural history. The Virgin Birth for instance was sustained by a dissertation on parthenogenesis and the prolific summer generation of the green fly was invoked to justify the ways of the Holy Ghost to man.

Somewhen during my stay at Portsmouth my mother wrote to me about my confirmation as a Member of the Church of England. I did not take up the suggestion. Then I was summoned to the inner office by Mr. Hyde, who told me my mother had written to him about it, and that I was to go to the Vicar of Portsmouth to be prepared. I remember one interview. Perhaps it was towards the end of my truncated apprenticeship, because I recall only one. I told the vicar that I believed in Evolution and that I could not understand upon that hypothesis, when it was the Fall had occurred. The vicar did not meet my objections but warned me against the sin of presumption. But it seemed to me to be equally presumptuous to affirm a scheme of salvation as to deny it. And if it was presumptuous to set up my private judgment against all the divines of Christendom, it is surely even more presumptuous to set up one's judgment against all the philosophers of China, India, Islam and the Ancient World.

All of which points were subsequently argued with very great heat after "lights out" in the dormitory, until Rodgers the apprentice next above me, set up a great outcry and said he would listen to blasphemy no longer. "Smut," said Rodgers, "I can stand. There's no harm as I can see in a good smutty story. But this here Blasphemy!..."

One picture of this last phase of critical suspense about the quality and significance of Christianity still stands out in my mind. It is a memory of a popular preacher preaching one Sunday evening in the Portsmouth Roman Catholic cathedral. It was in the course of a revivalist mission and I had been persuaded to go with one of the costume room assistants who played elder sister to me. The theme was the extraordinary merit of Our Saviour's sacrifice and the horror and torment of hell from which he had saved the elect. The preacher had a fluting voice and a faintly foreign accent, a fine impassioned white face, burning eyes and self conscious hands. He was enjoying himself thoroughly. He spared us nothing of hell's dreadfulness. All the pain and anguish of life as we knew it, every suffering we had ever experienced or imagined, or read about, was as nothing to one moment in the unending black despair of hell. And so on. For a little while his accomplished volubility carried me with him and then my mind broke into amazement and contempt. This was my old childish nightmare of God and the flaming wheel; this was the sort of thing to scare ten year olds.

I looked at the intent faces about me, at the quiet gravity of my friend and again at this gesticulating voluble figure in the pulpit, earnest, intensely earnest — for his effect. Did this actor believe a word of the preposterous monstrosities he was pouring out? Could anyone believe it? And if not, why did he do it? What was the clue to the manifest deep satisfaction, the fearful satisfaction of the believers about me? What had got hold of them?

And from that my eyes and thoughts went, with all the amazement of new discovery, about the crowded building in which I was sitting, its multitudinous gas and candle flames, its aspiring columns, its glowing altar, the dim arched roof, which had been made to house this spouting fount of horrible nonsense. A real fear of Christianity assailed me. It was not a joke; it was nothing funny as the *Freethinker* pretended. It was something immensely formidable. It was a tremendous human fact. We, the still congregation, were spread over the floor, not one of us daring to cry out against this fellow's threats. Most of us in some grotesque way seemed to like the dreadful stuff.

So far the revolt of my mind had been against the God of Hell in

his most Protestant form, it had been as it were a duel; but now I perceived myself in the presence of a different, if parallel attack upon my integrity, the Catholic Church, a mass attack, the attack of an organization, of a great following. I realized as if for the first time, the menace of these queer shaven men in lace and petticoats who had been intoning, responding and going through ritual gestures at me. I realized something dreadful about them. They were thrusting an incredible and ugly lie upon the world and the world was making no such resistance as I was disposed to make to this enthronement of cruelty. Either I had to come into this immense luminous coop and submit, or, I had to declare the Catholic Church, the core and substance of Christendom with all its divines, sages, saints and martyrs, with successive thousands of millions of believers, age after age, wrong.

In the mouth of the Vicar of Portsmouth "presumption" had seemed a light word, but now I saw it as a grave, immense defiance. To deny was to assert that error had ruled the world so far and wisdom was only beginning — with scared little chaps like me. How could I dare?

That was the terrific alternative my friend presently put to me and which West of the booking desk, sitting eloquent on my bed in the dormitory after "lights out," enforced. I had not the wit to say then or the clearness of mind to see, that wisdom begins again with every birth and that there is no arrogance at all in perpetually putting the past on trial.

It was, I think, the illuminated figure of that mellifluous preacher which decided me in my recalcitrance. Cathedrals maintain their argument best when they are beautifully silent or when they echo to music and chanting in strange mysterious phrases. Catholicism should imply everything and assert nothing, and generally it does, but this missioner brought the issue down for me to concrete and personal terms. The beautiful hands haunted me with an immense unconvincingness. Face and voice appealed in vain. My perception was invincible; the man was an actor; he was making the most of a part. At best he had had the will to believe and not the will for truth.

Through him the Church and its authority, were laid bare to me. He had feared and acquiesced where I had not feared and acquiesced,

he found a pleasure and excitement in imparting his fear and acquiescence, he had fitted himself into the incredible and I despised him. I had to despise him. I could no other. The thing he believed was so impossible to me that I could not imagine it being believed in good faith. Could anyone who had even tried for truth believe it? And if I despised him then it was natural to proceed to despise all these like-minded individuals and all who succumbed to him.

I found my doubt of his essential integrity, and the shadow of contempt it cast, spreading out from him to the whole Church and religion of which he with his wild spoutings about the agonies of hell, had become the symbol. I felt ashamed to be sitting there in such a bath of credulity.

It marks a new phase in mental development when one faces ideas not simply as ideas but as ideas embodied in architecture and usage and every-day material fact, and still resists. Hitherto I had taken churches and cathedrals as being as much a part of indisputable reality as my hands and feet. They had imposed themselves upon me as a necessary part of urban scenery just as I had taken Windsor Castle and Eton College as natural growths of the Thames valley. But somehow this Portsmouth Cathedral, perhaps because it had been newly built and so seemed more active than a time-worn building, took on the quality of an engine rather than an edifice. It was a big disseminator; it was like one of that preacher's gestures tempered and made into a permanent implement; it was there to put hell and fear and submission into people's minds. And from this starting apprehension, my realization that all religious buildings are in reality kinetic, spread out more and more widely to all the other visible things of human life. They were all, I began to see dimly, ideas, — ideas clothed and armed with substance. It was as impossible just to say that there was no hell and no divine Trinity and no atonement, and then leave these things alone, as to declare myself republican or claim a right to an equal education with everyone else, without moving towards a clash with Windsor and Eton. These things existed and there was no denying it. If I denied the ideas they substantiated then I proposed to push them off my earth; no less.

The ideas I had on my side to pit against these great realized

systems seemed terribly bare and feeble from this point of view. But they possessed me. I felt small and scared but obdurate.

I was still half a lifetime away from the full realization that if one does not accept the general ideas upon which the existing world of men is based, one is bound to set about replanning and reconstructing the world on the ideas one finds acceptable. Ultimately I was to come to a vision of a possible state of human affairs in which scarcely one familiar landmark would remain. But revolution on that scale was beyond the courage of my youthful imagination. I was definitely in opposition to the structural concepts of this world into which I had come, and that is as far as I went. I was almost cowed into conformity by the realization of the magnitude of the structures involved. I was in rebellion, but it was still quite impotent rebellion.

I have already mentioned that the Emporium boasted a library for its assistants. This consisted mainly of popular novels. I had made a rule for myself which I kept for several years, never to read a work of fiction or play a game. This was not so priggish as it seems. I was greedy to learn, I had the merest scraps of time to learn in, and I knew the seduction of a good story and the disturbance of a game of skill. So the novels in the bookcase I left alone. But there were also one or two other books to which I owe a good deal. There was one of those compilations for the mentally hungry that have played so important a part in supplementing the deficiencies of formal education in the British communities in the nineteenth century. I cannot trace it now. It may have been Cassell's *Popular Educator* — I seem to have named that to Geoffrey West and he has jumped to the conclusion that I bought that in parts as it was issued. That was due to his natural desire for animating detail. I never did. I hadn't the pocket money to buy anything in parts. On the whole I think that the book I have in mind was more probably some compact encyclopædic production of that sound hardheaded Edinburgh firm, Chambers. It had long summaries of the views of various philosophical schools and of the physical and biological sciences, made I should imagine by competent and conscientious Scots.

I read these cautious and explicit summaries greedily. They cleared up and put my ideas in order. I acquired a number of mental tools at that time; I exercised my mind upon words and phrases and

forms of thought. I found myself balancing such oppositions as "subjective" and "objective" and "pessimism" and "optimism." I meditated (with magnificently insufficient data) upon the corpuscular and vibratory conception of a light ray. I asked, what is health? It seems improbable that I did not then encounter the opposition of socialism and individualism, but oddly enough I cannot recall having thought at all about socialism until I read Henry George at Midhurst. I waived my temperamental scepticism before the Conservation of Energy and the sufficiency of Natural Selection. I drew fine distinctions of no practical value between pantheism and atheism.

I tried these new ideas upon West and Platt and others. West was always good for discussion but Platt was uncertain.

"God may be everywhere," said Platt, "or God may be nowhere. That's *His* look out. It doesn't alter the fact we've got to stack these bloody cretonnes before eleven."

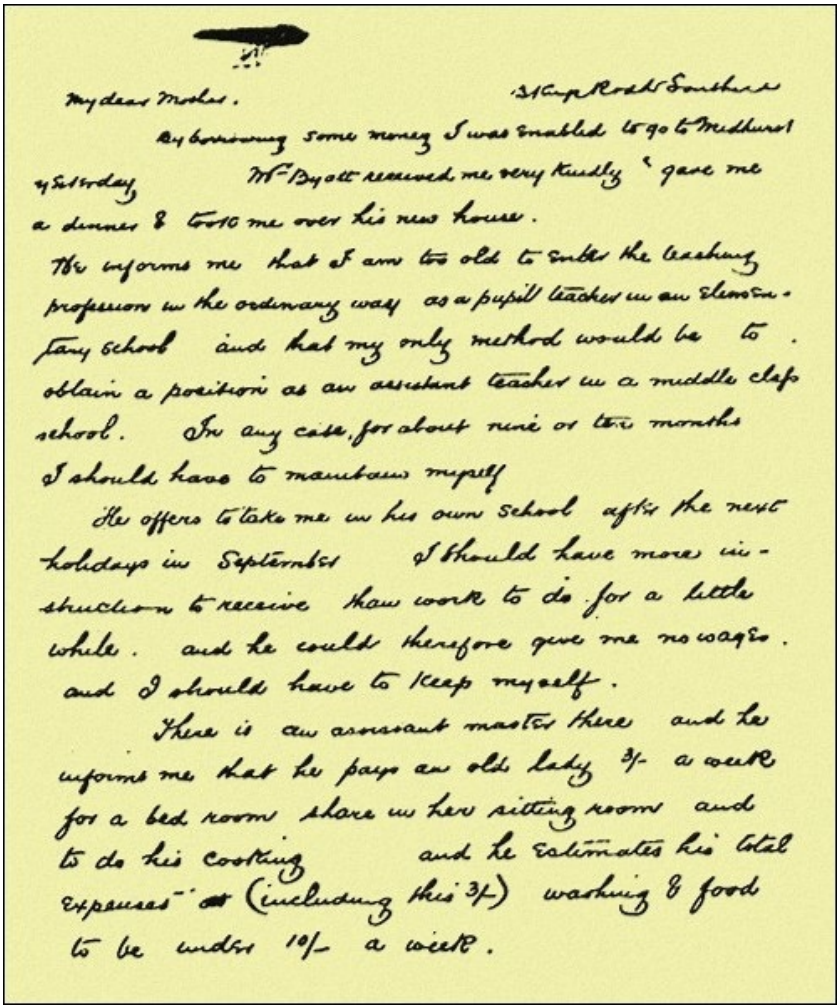

My dear Moses. 21 Cup Road Southsea

By borrowing some money I was enabled to go to Midhurst yesterday. Mr Byott received me very kindly & gave me a dinner & took me over his new house.

He informs me that I am too old to enter the teaching profession in the ordinary way as a pupil teacher in an elementary school and that my only method would be to obtain a position as an assistant teacher in a middle class school. In any case, for about nine or ten months I should have to maintain myself.

He offers to take me in his own school after the next holidays in September. I should have more instruction to receive than work to do for a little while. and he could therefore give me no wages. and I should have to keep myself.

There is an assistant master there and he informs me that he pays an old lady 3/- a week for a bed room share in her sitting room and to do his cooking and he estimates his total expenses ~~at~~ (including this 3/-) washing & food to be under 10/- a week.

Undated Letter c. 1883, page 1.

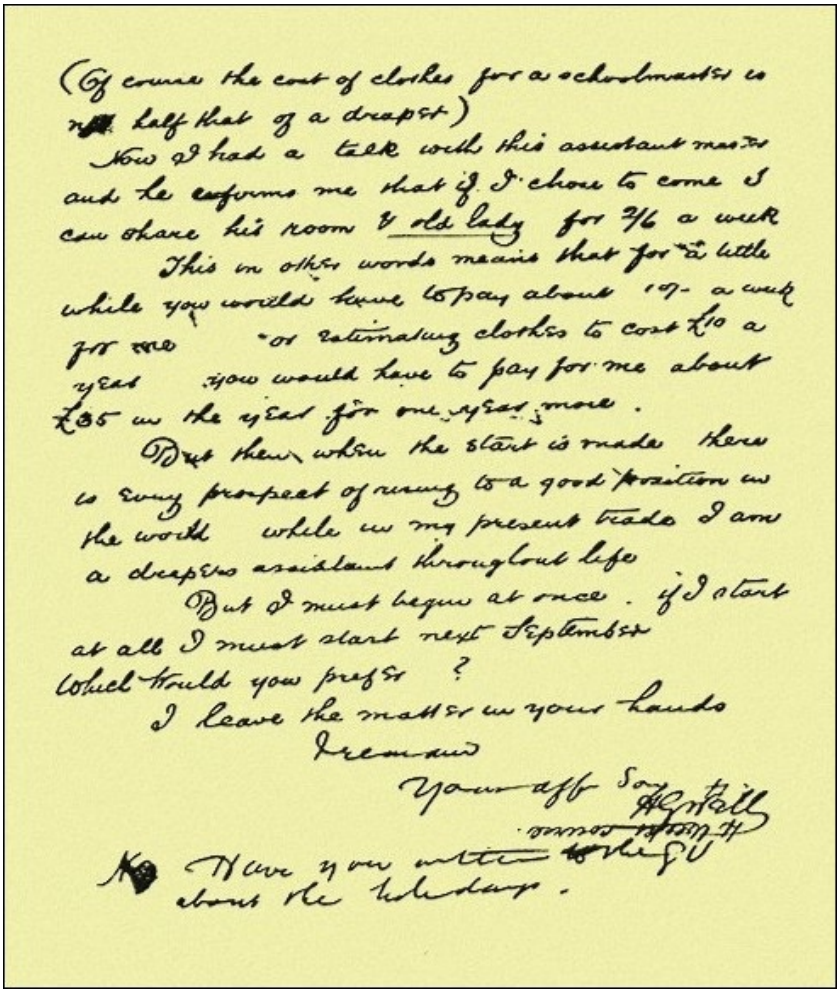

(Of course the cost of clothes for a schoolmaster is half that of a draper)

Now I had a talk with this assistant master and he informs me that if I chose to come I can share his room & old lady for 3/6 a week

This in other words means that for a little while you would have to pay about 10/- a week for me or estimating clothes to cost £10 a year you would have to pay for me about £35 in the year for one year more.

But then when the start is made there is every prospect of rising to a good position in the world while in my present trade I am a draper's assistant throughout life

But I must begin at once. if I start at all I must start next September

Which would you prefer?

I leave the matter in your hands

I remain

Your aff Son

Have you written to the G.V. about the holidays.

Undated Letter c. 1883, page 2.

[Number illegible] Kings Road, Southsea

My dear Mother,

By borrowing some money I was enabled to go to Medhurst on Saturday. Mr Byatt received me very kindly & gave me a dinner & took me over his new house.

He informs me that I am too old to enter the teaching profession in

the ordinary way as a pupil teacher in an elementary school and that my only method would be to obtain a position as an assistant teacher in a middle class school. In any case, for about nine or ten months I should have to maintain myself.

He offers to take me in his own school after the next holidays in September. I should have more instruction to receive than work to do for a little while, and he could therefore give me no wages and I should have to keep myself.
There is an assistant master there and he informs me that he pays an old lady 3/- a week for a bed room share in her sitting room and to do his cooking, and he estimates his total expenses (including this 3/-) washing and food to be under 10/- a week.

(Of course the cost of clothes for a schoolmaster is [not?] half that of a draper)

Now I had a talk with this assistant master and he informs me that if I choose to come I can share his room & old lady for 2/6 a week.

This means that for a little while you would have to pay 10/- a week for me or, estimating clothes to cost about £10 a year, you would have to pay for me about £35 in the year for one year more.

But then, when the start is made, there is every prospect of rising to a good position in the world while in my present trade I am a drapers assistant throughout life.

But I must begin at once, if I start at all I must start next September. Which would you prefer?

I leave the matter in your hands & remain

Your aff son.

H G Wells

PS Have you written to [illegible] about the holidays.

§ 3. FIFTH START IN LIFE — MIDHURST (1883- 84)

Midhurst has always been a happy place for me. I suppose it rained there at times but all my memories of Midhurst are in sunshine. The Grammar School was growing, the school-house had been built and was now occupied by Byatt and his family and filled up with a score or more of boarders; there was already an usher named Harris and presently came a third man Wilderspin who taught French and Latin. I lodged, and shared a bedroom with Harris, over a little sweetstuff shop next to the *Angel* Hotel. For a time, until the school reassembled I had this room alone.

In a novel of mine called *Love and Mr. Lewisham* which is about just such a Grammar School teacher as I was, I have described how he had pinned up on his wall a "Schema," planned to make the utmost use of his time and opportunities. I made that *Schema*, even to the pedantry of calling it that and not calling it plainly a scheme. Every moment in the day had its task. I was never to rest while I was awake. Such things — like my refusal to read novels or play games — are not evidence of an intense and concentrated mind; they are evidence of an acute sense of the need for concentration in a discursive and inattentive brain. I was not attacking the world by all this effort and self-control; I was making my desperate get-away from the shop and the street. I was bracing myself up tremendously. Harris and I would go for one-hour walks and I insisted on a pace of four miles an hour. During this pedestrianism we talked in gasping shouts.

Mrs. Walton my landlady who kept the sweetstuff shop, was a dear little energetic woman with a round friendly face, brown eyes and spectacles. I owe her incalculable things. I paid her twelve shillings a week and she fed me well. She liked cooking and she liked her food to be eaten. My meals at Midhurst are the first in my life that I remember with pleasure. Her stews were marvellously honest and she was great at junket, custard and whortleberry and blackberry jam. Bless her memory.

I taught in the main classroom with Byatt and he kept an eye on

what I was doing and gave me some useful advice. He knew how to be lucid, persuasive and helpful. A system of neatly written out homework held his instruction together. I rather suspect he was a trained elementary teacher before he took his Dublin degree and anyhow I learned a lot from him in handling my class of small boys. I was disposed to be over strenuous with them as I was over strenuous with myself, and my discipline was hard at times; I pushed and shoved them about because both I and they preferred that immediate treatment to impositions and detention, but I helped them whenever I grasped their difficulties and I got them along at a good pace.

The brightest and best of the bunch was "Master Horry," Byatt's eldest; he was quick and plastic and my approval gave him just that confidence in his personal quality that sent him right up the school ahead of his age and won him an open scholarship at, I think, *Merchant Taylors*. Half a century later he came to see me at Easton, a dried-up ex- colonial official, Sir Horace Byatt, retired from Uganda and house-hunting in Essex. He had become terribly my senior and terribly an Imperialist, and though I knew Sir Harry Johnston and Sir James Currie well and had some general ideas about African colonial conditions, I could not penetrate his official reticence. It was all too evident that he thought the less that radical fellows of my stamp, knew, said or did about high Imperial matters the better. Mrs. Christabel McLaren had come down from London for lunch that day and she pulled his leg by expressing an extravagant admiration for Trotsky. Sir Horace seemed incapable of regarding a Bolshevik as anything more human than a cuttle fish and his deepening suspicion of her was very amusing. "And *that's* the sort of boy you made," said Mrs. McLaren when he had departed. We met once afterwards, before his death in 1933, at a city dinner to the Colonial Premiers. He still seemed puzzled about me. So far as I know, none of my other Midhurst boys made any notable success in life.

But half the work I did for Byatt was done not as a teacher but as a student. His university degree qualified him to organize evening classes in any of the thirty-odd subjects in the science scheme of the Education Department, and to earn grants on his examination results.

Accordingly, in addition to the three or four normal classes of a dozen or so evening students which he had hitherto conducted, he now organized a number of others for my especial benefit. They were, to put it plainly, bogus classes; they included some subjects of which he knew little or nothing, and in none did he do any actual teaching. The procedure was to get me a good textbook, written for the examination in the subject in question, and to set me to read it in the schoolroom, while he at his desk attended to his correspondence. In this way I read up such subjects as physiography (Huxley's revival of the subject-matter of my old friend Humboldt's *Cosmos*), human physiology, vegetable physiology, geology, elementary "inorganic" chemistry, mathematics and so forth. In May came the examinations and, after that, if I got an "advanced" first class he earnt four pounds, two pounds for a second "advanced" and so in diminishing amounts for a first or second "elementary."

The immediate result, so far as my mind was concerned, was to make me read practically the whole outline of physical and biological science, with as much care and precision as the check of a written examination imposes. I learnt a great deal very easily, but I also did a large amount of strenuous "mugging up." I remember for example toiling laboriously through the account of brain anatomy, illustrated by puzzling woodcuts of sections, in an old edition of Kirk's *Anatomy*. To understand the relations of ventricles, ganglion masses and commissures is not by any means difficult if the knowledge is built up in successive phases according to the embryonic development, but attacked at first from the point of view of adult structure, without the help of models and with no one to question upon the meaning of a difficult phrase, that was pretty hard going. And I also remember struggling with diagrams and paper models to grip the elusive demonstration of the earth's rotation by Foucault's pendulum experiment. And after a pretty slick introduction to electricity I got into heavy country, in Deschanel's textbook, where the tubes of force were gathered together. My realization that I knew a great deal more about things in general than most of the people about me, was balanced by another, that there were people in the world whose minds must be able to run and leap easily among these difficulties where mine wriggled and crawled

most painfully.

But anyhow my reading was good enough to produce a cluster of A I's when the examination results came to hand.

Unfortunately for my headmaster, who had hoped to repeat this exploit on a still larger scale next year, I passed these May examinations with such a bang, that I was blown out of Midhurst altogether.

The Education Department of that period was not completely satisfied with the quality of the science teaching it was disseminating about the country, and it was trying to develop its scattered classes into organized science schools and to produce a better type of teacher than the classical graduates, clergymen and so forth, on whom it had at first to rely. Accordingly it was circularizing its successful examinees, with the offer of a certain number of free studentships, at the Normal School of Science, South Kensington, carrying with them a maintenance grant of a guinea a week during the session and second class railway fare to the capital. I read the blue form with incredulity, filled it up secretly and with trepidation, and presently found myself accepted as a "teacher in training" for a year in the biological course under Professor Huxley — the great Professor Huxley, whose name was in the newspapers, who was known all over the world!

Byatt shared my surprise if not my elation.

I had come to Midhurst a happy but desperate fugitive from servitude; I left it in glory. I spent my summer vacation partly at Up Park with my mother and partly with my father at Bromley, and I was hardly the same human being as the desperate, footsore, youngster who had tramped from Portsmouth to Up Park, breathing threats of suicide. My mother did not like to cast a shadow on my happiness, but yet she could not conceal from me that she had heard that this Professor Huxley was a notoriously irreligious man. But when I explained that he was Dean of the Normal School, her fears abated, for she had no idea that there could be such a thing as a lay Dean.

Later on my mother thought and learnt more about the Dean. I have described the quaint simple faith in Providence, Our Father and Our Saviour, by which to the best of her ability she guided her life

and the lives of her family. I have guessed at a failure of belief in her after the trials of Atlas House and the loss of her "poor Possy." Whatever reality her religion had had for her ebbed away after that. She wept with dismay when I came blustering from Southsea to say I would not be confirmed, but I think it was social rather than religious dismay. I said I was an "Atheist," a frightful word for her to hear, as bad as swearing. "My dear!" she cried. "Don't say such *dreadful* things!" And then, good little Protestant that she was, she found consolation. "Better than being caught by those Old Priests," she said, "anyhow."

She could never talk about her religion except in set phrases, but slowly the last vestiges of faith faded out. Towards the end of her life her mind flattened and faded very much. She still went to church but I doubt if she prayed with her will and thought any more. Her phases of reverie flowed past with less and less circumstance and definition, ceasing to ripple at last, smoothing down towards a silvery stream of nothingness.

The idea of immortality lost its necessity for her and I think the prospect of a Resurrection began to seem rather an unnecessary and tiresome fuss ahead of her. And that is where Huxley came in. After her death I found this in her little brass-footed work-box, copied out in her old slow angular Italian handwriting on a browning piece of notepaper:

"These lines, once written by Mrs. Huxley, have been placed over the tomb of the late Professor Huxley at his own request:

"And if there be no meeting past the grave,
"If all is darkness, silence, yet 'tis rest;
"Be not afraid ye waiting hearts that weep,
"For God still giveth his beloved sleep
"And if an endless sleep He wills, so best."

§ 4. FIRST GLIMPSES OF PLATO — AND HENRY GEORGE

Cramming myself with knowledge for examinations as my

immediate objective, was by no means the sole occupation of my mind at Midhurst. Now that my theological turmoil was subsiding to a sort of Cause and Effect Deism, I was waking up to the importance of the strands of relationship that held me, though not inflexibly, in my place in the social web. Just as it had dawned upon me with an effect of profound discovery that the Roman Catholic cathedral at Portsmouth *need not be there*, so now it was to become apparent that Up Park need not be there, that the shops in the Midhurst street need not be there, nor the farmers and labourers on the countryside. The world would still turn on its axis, if all these things were replaced by different structures and arrangements.

I have already said that I cannot clearly remember when it was that I read Plato's *Republic*. But it was somewhen before I went to London and it was in summer time, because I remember lying on the grass slope before a little artificial ruined tower that, in the true spirit of the eighteenth century, adorned the brow of the Up Park Down overlooking Harting. The translation of the Dialogues, was all by itself in a single green bound volume, happily free from Introduction or Analysis. I must have puzzled over it and skipped and gone to and fro in it, before its tremendous significance came through. A certain intellectual snobbishness in me may have helped me to persevere. And associated with it, because of its fermenting influence upon my mind, is a book of a very different calibre, a six-penny paper-covered edition of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* which I bought in a newspaper shop in Midhurst. This last was, I suppose, published by some propagandist Single Tax organization. These two books caught up and gave substance to a drift of dispositions and desires in my mind, that might otherwise have dispersed and left no trace.

Plato in particular, as I got to the mighty intention behind his (to me) sometimes very tedious and occasionally incomprehensible characters, was like the hand of a strong brother taking hold of me and raising me up, to lead me out of a prison of social acceptance and submission. I do not know why Christianity and the old social order permitted the name of Plato to carry an intellectual prestige to my mind far above that of Saint Paul or Moses. Why has there been no detraction? I suppose because the Faithful have never yet been able to escape from a certain lurking self-criticism, and because in every

age there have been minds more responsive to the transparent honesty and greatness of Plato and Aristotle than to the tangled dogmatism of the Fathers. But here was a man wearing the likeness of an Olympian God, to whom every scholarly mind and every clerical back bowed down in real or imposed respect, who had written things of a revolutionary destructiveness beyond my darkest mutterings. Hitherto there had always been something insurgent, inferior, doubtful and furtive in my objections to the religious, moral and social systems to which my life had, it seemed, to be adapted. All my thoughts leapt up now in open affirmation to the novel ideas he opened out to me.

Chief of these was the conception of a society in which economic individualism was overruled entirely in the common interest. This was my first encounter with the Communist idea. I had accepted property as in the very nature of things, just as my mother had accepted the Monarchy and the Church. I had been so occupied with my mental rebellion against the ideas of God and King, that hitherto I had not resented the way in which the Owner barred my way here, forbade me to use this or enjoy that. Now with Plato's picture of an entirely different social administration before me, to make a comparison possible, I could ask "*By what right* — is this for you and not for me?" Why are things monopolized? Why was everything appropriated and every advantage secured against me before I came into the world?

Henry George's book came in like a laboratory demonstration to revivify a general theory, with his extremely simplified and plausible story of the progressive appropriation of land, his attack upon the unearned increment of private rents and his remedy of a single tax to make, in effect, rents a collective benefit. His was an easy argument to understand, as he put it, and I was able to modify it and complicate it for myself by bringing in this or that consideration which he had excluded. It was like working kindred mathematical problems of progressive complexity under a common Rule. It was quite easy to pass from the insistence of Henry George upon the inalienable claim of the whole community to share in the benefit of land, to the simpler aspects of interest and monetary appreciation. I became what I may call a Socialist in the Resentful Phase, and what was happening to

me was happening to millions of the new generation in Europe and America. Something — none of us knew how to define it but we called it generally the Capitalist System — a complex of traditional usage, uncontrolled acquisitive energy and perverted opportunities, was wasting life for us and we were beginning to realize as much. But at that time in the whole world there was really no explicit realization that this was due not to a system but to an absence of system.

Now it happened to me that the chances, by which one meets or escapes books, so worked at Midhurst that I scarcely heard the name of Karl Marx until I came to London. My socialism was pre-Marxian. I had read something about Robert Owen, I think, in that encyclopædic book in the Southsea Emporium reading-room, and I must have met with some summary of More's *Utopia*, though I do not remember reading it until much later, and essentially my ideas were built on the "primitives" of socialism. I was all for planning a new society. But it seemed plainly unnecessary to clear the old confusion out of the way before the new order came. As a planned order comes, the confusion disappears of itself. It was only after a year and more of biological work at the Normal School of Science, that I came full face upon Marxism and by that time I was equipped to estimate at its proper value its plausible, mystical and dangerous idea of reconstituting the world on a basis of mere resentment and destruction: the Class War. Overthrow the "Capitalist System" (which never was a system) was the simple panacea of that stuffy, ego-centred and malicious theorist. His snobbish hatred of the bourgeoisie amounted to a mania. Blame somebody else and be violent when things go wrong, is the natural disposition of the common man in difficulties all the world over. Marx offered to the cheapest and basest of human impulses the poses of a pretentious philosophy, and the active minds amidst the distressed masses fell to him very readily. Marxism is in no sense creative or curative. Its relation to the inevitable reconstruction of human society which is now in progress, is parasitic. It is an enfeebling mental epidemic of spite which mankind has encountered in its difficult and intricate struggle out of out-worn social conditions towards a new world order. It is the malaria of the Russian effort to this day. There would

have been creative revolution, and possibly creative revolution of a far finer type if Karl Marx had never lived.

Still happily unaware of the immense frustrations that awaited the urge towards a new social order, I walked about the russet lanes and green shaded paths of Midhurst, talking over the stuff that was in my mind with Harris, or dreaming of the new rational state that I supposed to be at hand when what was plain to me had become plain to everybody. We were a shabby-looking couple in ready-made clothes, going swiftly and talking volubly. Harris had a grave Red Indian profile and his share in the conversation was mostly nodding judiciously. Or he would say "That's all right; that is," or "I don't see that." I was "shooting up" and growing a little out of my garments, but our generally unkempt appearance was redeemed by the fact that we wore "mortar boards" college caps like those worn by Oxford or Cambridge undergraduates, to maintain about the Grammar School a suggestion of erudition.

So, by way of Plato, I got my vision of the Age of Reason that was just about to begin. Never did anyone believe more firmly in the promptitude of progress than I. I had to learn even the elements of human behaviour in those days and I had no sense of the immense variety of mind-build and working conviction that was possible. I do not seem to have had a suspicion that there was such a force as social inertia to be reckoned with. I lived no longer in reverie, I looked at the world, but I saw it as yet with a divine simplicity; all that was not simple about it was speedily going to be; all its declensions and verbs were going to be made regular almost immediately and everything conjugated in the indicative mood. Socialism was plainly ahead of us all, when everyone would be active and happy.

It was not only with regard to Economics that my mind had become liberated and moved now with a sanguine simplicity. I was also filled with strange and stimulating ideas about sexual life. Sexual urgencies were becoming more insistent in me with enhanced health and courage. There had been a great amount of smutty and indecent conversation behind the counters at Southsea, but like the foul talk of my schoolfellows at Bromley, it was curious and derisive rather than amorous. It dissipated rather than stimulated desire. Almost completely disconnected in my mind from that stream of not

very harmful uncleanness there had been a certain amount of superficial flirtatiousness with the girl apprentices and women assistants, rather after the fashion of the posturing politenesses and pretended devotions I had learnt from my cousins at Surly Hall. The costume hands were by profession young ladies with figures; they attracted the apprentices and professed a sisterly affection for them in order to have them available as escorts and the like, but this relationship never came to kisses or caresses. So far as I was concerned the "good figure" of that period, with its tight long stays, its padded bustle behind, its single consolidated bosom thrust forward and its "Grecian bend" thrust back, had scarcely anything to recall the deep breasted Venuses and Britannias who had first awakened my sexual consciousness. The stark and easy generation of to-day can scarcely realize how completely, from the whalebone-assisted collar round its neck to the flounces round its feet, the body of woman was withheld from masculine observation, and how greatly this contributed to the practical effective resistance to "the nude" in art. Men went to the music halls simply for the rare joy of seeing feminine arms, legs and contours, but I had no money to go to a music hall.

Once, I suppose, that one had penetrated these complicated defences and got to the live body inside, one could think of individualized physical love, but at that I never arrived at Southsea or Midhurst. Mother Nature did what she could to egg me on, and stripped a girl apprentice I thought rather pretty and the costume lady who was my official Sister, in my dreams, but the old harridan accompanied this display with so many odd and unnecessary exaggerations and accessory circumstances, that it made me rather more shy and unreal and decorous than ever when I encountered her victims in my waking life. And moreover, at Southsea, the women were in one wing of the premises and we youths and men in another, inaccessible, dragons intervening. Short of a sort of rape of the Sabines and general social dissolution, little was possible. Once or twice at Southsea or Portsmouth a prostitute would make an alluring gesture to me, but a shilling a week of pocket-money gives no scope for mercenary love. At Midhurst I had no feminine associates at all. Mrs. Walton had two grown-up daughters, but she was always alert

about her lodgers, and a playful scuffle with the eldest about a penny, sternly suppressed and reprimanded by mother, was as far as passion went in that direction. In vain did Nature intervene and amplify the scuffle in dreamland.

On one occasion, however, I reached a stage nearer the desired reality. It was at Christmas at Up Park and there was a dance in the Servants Hall and the upper and lower servants mingled together. There was a kitchen maid whom I suddenly discovered was pretty beyond words and I danced and danced again with her, until my mother was moved to find other partners for me. She was a warm-coloured girl with liquid brown eyes and a quick pretty flush of excitement. Her name was Mary and that is all the name I ever had for her. And afterwards in one of the underground passages towards the kitchen, where perhaps I was looking for her, she darted out of a recess and kissed and embraced me. No lovelier thing had ever happened to me. Somebody became audible down the passage and she made a last dash at me, pressed her lips to mine and fled. And that is all. Next morning I trundled off in the dog-cart on the frosty road to Rowlands Castle station for Portsmouth, before sunrise, and when next I went to Up Park for a holiday, Mary had gone. I never saw her again and I could not find her name nor where she had gone. My mother who knew would not tell me. But I can feel her heart beat against mine now, I can recall the lithe body in her flimsy yellow dress, and for all I know I have driven my automobile past Mary — an alert old lady I am certain — on some Hampshire road within the last few weeks.

But after that I knew that love was neither filth nor flirtation and I began to want more of it.

As my mind filled up and broadened out at Midhurst I began to resent the state of sexual deprivation in which I was living, more and more explicitly. All over Europe and America youths and maidens fretted under the same deprivation. Not only were their minds being afflicted by that nightmare story of the Ogre-God and his Hell, not only were they being caught helplessly young and jammed for life into laborious, tedious, uninteresting and hopeless employments, but they were being denied the most healthy and delightful freedoms of mutual entertainment. They were being driven down to concealed

and debilitating practices and shameful suppressions. Every year the age of marriage was rising and the percentage of marriages was falling, and the gap of stress and vexation between desire and reasonable fulfilment was widening. In that newspaper shop on the way to Landport where I saw and sometimes bought the *Freethinker*, I also found the *Malthusian* displayed, and one or two numbers had been the subject of a lively discussion with Platt and Ross. The Bradlaugh Besant trial had occurred in 1876 and the light of sanity was gradually breaking into the dark places of English sexual life. There was perhaps a stronger belief current then that births were completely controllable than the actual facts warranted. Now under the stimulus of Plato's Utopianism and my quickening desires I began to ask my imagination what it was I desired in women.

I desired and needed their embraces and so far as I could understand it they needed and desired the embraces of men. It came to me as the discovery of a fresh preposterousness in life as it was being lived about me, that there were endless millions of young people in the world in the same state of sexual suspense and unrest as myself, quite unable to free themselves sweetly and honestly from these entangling preoccupations. Quite enough, there was, of either sex to go round. But I did not want an epidemic of marriages. I had not the slightest wish for household or offspring at that time; my ambition was all for unencumbered study and free movement in pursuit of my own ends, and my mind had not the slightest fixation upon any particular individual or type of individual. I was entirely out of accord with the sentimental patterns and focussed devotions adopted by most people about me. In the free lives and free loves of the guardians of the *Republic* I found the encouragement I needed to give my wishes a systematic form. Presently I discovered a fresh support for these tentative projects in Shelley. Regardless of every visible reality about me, of law, custom, social usage, economic necessities and the unexplored psychology of womanhood, I developed my adolescent fantasy of free, ambitious, self-reliant women who would mate with me and go their way, as I desired to go my way. I had never in fact seen or heard of any such women; I had evolved them from my inner consciousness.

This was my preliminary fantasy of love, before I began love-

making. It exerted a ruling influence on my conduct for many years. It is remarkable how much we frame our expectations upon such secret fantasies and how completely we ignore the probability that the lovers we encounter may have quite other systems of imagination. The women of the "Samurai" in my *Modern Utopia* (1905), the most Platonic of my books, are the embodiment of these Midhurst imaginings.

So, before I was eighteen, the broad lines of my adult ideas about human life had appeared — however crudely. I was following a road along which at variable paces a large section of the intelligentsia of my generation was moving in England, towards religious scepticism, socialism and sexual rationalism. I had no idea of that general drift about me. I seemed to be thinking for myself independently, but now I realize that multitudes of minds were moving in precisely the same direction. Like forces acting upon like organizations give like results. I suppose when a flight of starlings circles in the air, each single bird feels it is moving on its own initiative.

One glaring omission from my outlook, as I have sketched it here, will be evident at once to the post-war reader. I had scarcely thought at all and I have nothing to tell of my thoughts concerning the problem of war and international relationship. My untravelled political mind was confined within the limits of the Empire. Flags and soldiers, battleships and big guns were already much in evidence in the European landscape and seascape but, until the Boer War at the end of the century, they had not challenged critical attention. I had no idea that the guns went off — except when pointing right away from civilization, in Afghanistan or Zululand or against remote inadequate batteries at Alexandria. They had an air of being in the order of things, much as mountains, earthquakes and sunsets were in the order of things. They made a background. In England they did not invade the common personal life until after 1914.

This was the most conspicuous blind patch in the English liberal outlook at the close of the nineteenth century, but it was not the only one. I was also blankly unaware of the way in which the monetary organization of the world reflected its general economic injustices and ineptitudes. But then I had never yet seen ten sovereigns together of my own in my life, never touched any paper money except a five

pound note, nor encountered a cheque. (Bank of England notes were dealt with very solemnly in those days; the water-mark was scrutinized carefully and the payer, after a suspicious penetrating look or so was generally asked to write his name and address on the instrument.) The bags of money and slips of paper I carried to the Portsmouth bank had not aroused me to any sense of significance. I did not suspect that there was anything more treacherous about money than there was about weights and measures. Either I did not know or it did not seem to matter to me that while a yard was always so much of a metre, the pound and the franc and the lira and the dollar were capable of slipping about in their relations to each other, and that prices could execute the most remarkable and disconcerting changes of level. They were not doing so at the time. In those days they were just sinking very gently, and everything was getting cheaper and cheaper.

There were, as I shall point out in due course, still other primary gaps and disproportions in the radical outlook at the close of the nineteenth century, but these were the chief among them. You will find them equally evident in the autobiography of any labour leader of my generation.

§ 5. QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE

At Midhurst I had a queer little struggle between pride and practical wisdom. I did something that wounded my private honour very deeply. I knelt at the altar rail in the parish church and bowed my head to the bishop's hand and was confirmed, meekly and submissively, a member of the Church of England. You may regard that as a mere formality, but I did not see it in that light. I felt as an early Christian may have felt who for sound domestic and worldly reasons, had consented to burn a pinch of incense to Divus Cæsar.

But I had found myself in an extremely tight corner. Byatt realized that I had not yet been confirmed and that by the statutes of the Grammar School, every member of the teaching staff had to be a communicant. If I was to go on to our mutual benefit devouring and regurgitating scientific fact, the matter had to be put right forthwith. I

suggested that I might have “doubts.” “My dear Fel-low!” boomed Byatt. “My dear Fel-low! You mustn’t talk like that. Let me lend you Paley’s *Evidences*. That will put you all right about that.... And positively you know you *must*.” ...

Positively I knew I must. There was no visible job for me in the world if I did not stick now to the Midhurst adventure. To abandon it now would have been like jumping from a liner in mid-Atlantic. I ought to have thought of this confirmation business before. If I refused, the whole burthen of the situation would fall on my mother. The more I grew, the smaller and weaker she seemed and the less I cared to hurt her. I consented, to her great joy. For a time I am sure Our Father got some heartfelt thanks and praises again. Byatt arranged for me to be prepared specially and swiftly by the curate, for the approaching Confirmation Service.

Under happier circumstances I might have had a certain amount of fun out of that curate, but I was too mortified and bitter at my own acquiescence. We sat by lamplight opposite one another at a table in his lodgings. He was a fair aquiline sensitive young man, with a fine resonant service voice, who did his best to keep our conversation away from the business in hand as much as possible. But I was sullenly resolved to make him say — all of it. I asked a string of questions about the bearing of Darwinism and geology on biblical history, about the exact date of the Fall, about the nature of Hell, about Transubstantiation and the precise benefit of the communion service and so forth. After each answer I would say “So that is what I have to believe.... I see.” I did not attempt to argue. He was one of those people whose faces flush, whose eyes wander off from you and whose voices get higher in pitch at the slightest need for elucidation.

“It’s all a little *subtle* you know —— ,” he would begin.

“Still, people might make difficulties afterwards. I want to know what to say to them.”

“Oh — precisely.” ...

“I suppose it’s all right if I just believe this in — er — a spiritual sense.”

“It’s much *better* that way. It’s ever so much better that way. I’m so *glad* you see that.”

The organ played, the service proceeded. Side by side with a real

young gentleman of my own age I walked up the aisle and knelt. And afterwards I communicated and consumed a small cube presenting my Redeemer's flesh and had a lick of sweetish wine from the chalice which I was assured contained his blood. I was reminded of a crumb of Trifle. Later to please my mother I repeated this performance at Harting and after that I made an end to Theophagy. I derived neither good or ill, so far as I could trace, from these homoeopathic doses of divinity.

But the wound to my private honour smarted for a long time and it was many years before I could forgive the Church for setting these barriers of conformity in my way to social usefulness. I do not think that I have forgiven her altogether even now.

I record that shame and resentment about my confirmation because it seems to me that this queer little mood of obduracy was something very important in my development. I do not understand it at all clearly myself and still less can I explain it. What made me attach all that importance to that public lie? I wasn't particularly a George Washington for veracity. If I was never a fluent liar I could at any rate lie quite effectively on occasion. And indeed there was a great deal of material about in my conduct for an officious conscience to play upon, without so entire a concentration on this particular lapse. There was no alternative affirmation in mind. There was no sense of an onlooking divinity in protest. I had no other God. I can only explain my feelings by supposing that there was in my make-up a disinterested element, which attached more importance to the denial of Christianity than to my merely personal advantage. There was something in my brain, an impersonal self, that contested my prior right to welfare at the price of lowering my standard of veracity.

I did what I could to ease this conflict in my being by blasphemous facetiousness, until old Harris became a little scared of me. He did not "believe much" in God but he thought it well not to go too far with him.

Harris had no self-conceit; he had a prominent nose and a wary mouth and he went discreetly and ironically through a world which he had found by experience was apt to prove unexpectedly irascible. Something might be fired at me, some thunderbolt he felt, and it

would be like his luck if it hit him. “Don’t you *say* such things,” he said. “Don’t you say it.” And presently came the distraction of the May examinations and the end of the school term and after a short stay at Up Park I went off to Atlas House to stay with my father until South Kensington was ready to receive me.

My raw mind was so busy at Midhurst with the scramble to get a comprehensive and consistent conception of the principal parts of the universe, in the place of the orthodox interpretations I was rejecting, that I paid very little attention to another mind-and-purpose drama that was going on beside me. While I was making my thorny way out of Protestantism in one direction, my senior colleague Wilderspin, who lived in the school house, so that I saw very little of him, was *en route* for Rome. Midhurst is one of those places in England which has retained a Catholic congregation from pre-reformation times and a little proselytizing priest flitted about it, very ready to be friendly with any casual young men he might encounter. He had a slightly lewd streak in his conversation that I found repulsive; he pushed his joke at you slily and laughed fatly first, he belonged to that “jolly” school of propagandist which seeks to make it clear that there is none of your damned Kill-Joy Puritanism about the dear old, merry old church; and after a walk and a talk or so with him I avoided him. Among other things, believing me to be a newly confirmed Anglican and having no idea of my real state of mind, he wanted to dispute with me about the validity of Protestant orders. But I did not care a curse about either the Catholic or the Protestant brand of sacerdotalism, except to dislike them both. I was a universe away from that. I was hampered in my talks with him because I did not know what disconcerting use he might make of any sweeping disavowal of Christianity on my part.

But he got Wilderspin and Wilderspin also vanished from Midhurst at the same time as myself.

Years after, when I had a home at Woking, Wilderspin flickered back into my life for a few days as a full fledged itinerant priest. He called to see me and he seemed to be needy, hungry and uncomfortable. Evidently he was working in a sweated industry. He told me he had to go into the oddest of quarters among the faithful, and that recently he had found the nest of a mouse in a bed he had

been given. He gave me the impression of being still slightly astonished at the life he was leading and the mental and material disciplines to which he was subjected. We fixed for him to come to dinner and he showed the keenest interest in planning the menu. We chose a day unrestricted by any fasts or disciplines. He came; we feasted, talked over Midhurst and the school and the boys, laughed together more abundantly than we had ever done before, drank, smoked and parted cordially. It was evidently a spree for him. After which I never saw nor heard of him again. Perhaps my cheerful house upset him, and possibly I was hardly the sort of friend a not very austere and devout priest would be encouraged to frequent.

§ 6. WALKS WITH MY FATHER

I had not seen very much of my father for three years and it was interesting to go back to him and stay with him alone, practically on terms of equality. He had been a large person far above me as a schoolboy, but now I was growing up to him at a great pace. We became excellent friends and companions. Atlas House was extensively unscrubbed and shabbier and more threadbare than ever, but my father camped, so to speak, amidst its disorder very comfortably. He cooked very well, far better than my mother had ever done, in the underground kitchen, and made me wash up and look after my own bedroom, and we did not fuss about the other aspects of housekeeping. He was very lame now and he was getting heavy; he stumped about with the help of a thick cabbage stick but he stumped about actively. He was bald and blue-eyed, with a rosy cheerful face and a square beard like King David. He admired my certificates and ambitions frankly and took a lively interest in the elementary science and philosophy I unfolded to him at second-hand.

The shop was in a sort of coma and gave us very little trouble; the only trade left was the sale of cricket goods. He did more business by locking up the front door after teatime and going round to the cricket field. If people were taken with a craving to buy crockery in the evening they knocked and rattled at the door until the craving left them. On Sundays we were free for a long walk and a bread and

cheese lunch — or even a cold meat lunch — miles away from home.

He had always been something of a reader and now he was reading widely and freely. He read the *Daily News* — the *Daily News* of Richard Jeffries and Andrew Lang — and *Longman's Magazine* — in the R. L. Stevenson and Grant Allen days; he got books from the Library Institute and picked them up at sales. We gradually broke down the inhibitions about religion and politics natural between father and son, and had a fine various amount of talk and discussion.

In after years I grew away from my father mentally, though we always remained good friends, but during these last years of his at Bromley, we were very much on a level; if I had a lot of knowledge of one sort, he had a lot of another sort and our conversation was a fair exchange. His was a mind of inappeasable freshness, in the strangest contrast to my mother's. I do not think my mother ever had a new idea after she left Miss Riley's school; her ideas faded out, that was all. But my father kept going to the last. He was playing chess, by correspondence, with my mother-in-law when he was in the late seventies, and about that time he unearthed some old school books of mine and started in upon Algebra and the Elements of Euclid, an unknown world to him, acquiring considerable facility in the solution of quadratic equations and the working of "riders" before he desisted. He began now at Atlas House under the stimulus of my studentship and the writings of W. H. Hudson and Grant Allen, to brush up his gardener's botany anew and his countryman's natural history.

Upon all sorts of counts my father was a better man than myself. He had all the delicate nervous and muscular skill and the rapid hardly conscious mental subtleties of a cricketer, he was an instinctive good shot, and at every sort of game he was ripe good wary stuff. We began chess together in these days but while he went on to a sound game I found it too exacting and irritating and gave it up. At draughts I battled with him incessantly, held my own at last but never established a thorough ascendency. About fields and green things and birds and beasts he had a real intimate knowledge that made my accumulation seem bookish and thin. The country round Bromley was being fast invaded by the spreading out of London; eruptions of new roads and bricks and mortar covered lush meadows

and, when I was about fifteen or sixteen, that brown and babbling Ravensbourne between its overhanging trees was suddenly swallowed up by a new drainage system, but my father managed to see and make me see a hundred aspects of the old order of things, a wagtail, a tit's nest, a kingfisher, an indisputable trout under a bridge, sun-dew in a swampy place near Keston, the pollen of pine trees drifting like a mist, the eagle in the bracken root (which I could tell him in return was *Pteris aquilina*). "We'll be after them mushrooms at Camden," he'd say. "They'll be just about right now. We'll take a screw of salt for them, my boy, and eat them raw. Then we won't have any bother about saying where we found them." And when we got to Camden there were the mushrooms as though he had evoked them, white buttons straining up out of the turf for us.

He had the knack of reviving the countryside amidst the deluge of suburbanism, just as he had had the knack of growing a grape vine and making a Wigelia bush flourish in that smutty backyard of ours.

One bank holiday, Whit-Monday no doubt, he took advantage of a cheap fare to go back with me to his boyhood at Penshurst. We walked across the park from Tonbridge. He wanted me to see and feel the open life he had led before the shop and failure had caught him. He wanted to see and feel it again himself. "We used to play cricket here — well, it was just about here anyhow — until we lost sight of the ball in the twilight.... There's more bracken and less turf about here now." He talked of a vanished generation of our cousins, the Dukes, and of a half-sister I had never heard of before. She and he had gone fishing together through the dew-wet grass between sunrise and the beginning of the day's work. She was a tall strong girl who could run almost as fast as he could. He repeated that. So I guess his first dreams of women were not so very unlike mine. He showed me where she sat in Penshurst Church. Also he discoursed very learnedly on the growing of willows to make cricket bats and how long it took for a man to learn to make a first-class cricket ball. That was a great day for my father and me.

All his days my father was a happy and appreciative man with a singular distaste for contention or holding his own in the world. He liked to do clever things with his brain and hands and body, but he was bored beyond endurance by the idea of a continual struggle for

existence. So was my elder brother Frank. My brother Fred and I may have the same strain in us, but the world made such ugly, threatening and humiliating gestures at us at the outset that we pulled ourselves together and screwed ourselves up for self-repression and a fight, and we fought and subdued ourselves until we were free. Was that a good thing for us or a bad?

I am inclined to think bad. The disposition to acquire and keep hold and accumulate, to work for a position, to secure precedences and advantages was alien to all four of us. It isn't in our tradition; it isn't in our blood; it isn't in our race. We can do good work and we are responsive to team play, we can "play cricket" as the phrase goes, but we cannot sell, bargain, wait, forestall and keep. In a world devoted to private ownership we secure nothing. We get shoved away from opportunity. It was distortion for us to keep our attention on that side of life. I was lucky, as I shall tell, because quite accidentally I suddenly developed extraordinary earning power, which I am still able to exercise, and for thirty years I had my business looked after for me by an extremely competent wife. But I think some very fine possibilities in my brother Fred were diverted to mere saving and shop-keeping.

In a social order where all the good things go to those who constitutionally and necessarily, watch, grab and clutch all the time, the quality of my father, the rich humour and imagination of my brother Frank, were shoved out of play and wasted altogether. In a world of competitive acquisitiveness the natural lot of my sort of people is to be hustled out of existence by the smarties and pushers. A very strong factor in my developing socialism is and always has been the more or less conscious impulses, an increasingly conscious impulse, to anticipate and disarm the smarty and the pusher and make the world safe for the responsive and candid mind and the authentic, artistic and creative worker. In the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* I have written about "Clever Alec." He's "rats" to me and at the smell of him I bristle. I set the highest value on people of my own temperament, which is I suppose, a natural and necessary thing to do, and I believe in the long run our sort will do better than their sort, as men do better than rats. We shall build and what we build will stand at last.

But for thousands of generations yet, the bright-eyed, quick incessant rats will infest our buildings, eat our food, get the better of us in all sorts of ways and gnaw and scuttle and scamper. They will muck about with our money, misrepresent our purpose and disposition, falsify ownership and waste and frustrate millions of genial lives.

My father ended his days in a little house at Liss which I was able to rent and afterwards to buy for him, and my mother and my elder brother joined him there. As I began to prosper I was able to increase the income of that ménage until they were quite comfortable by their not very exacting standards; my brother Fred too, away in South Africa, insisted upon paying his share. When I rebelled against the servitude of the draper's shop, my yawps of liberation had been too much for my elder brother and he had thrown up the yardstick also. He had conceived an ideal of country existence from reading Washington Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*, and he quartered himself with my father first at Rogate and then at Liss, and wandered about the country repairing clocks, peddling watches, appreciating character and talking nonsense. If it was not particularly profitable, it was amusing — and free. There is a touch of my brother about Mr. Polly, — the character I mean, not the story. My father played nap at times and billiards often in the Liss Club Room. My mother sat in reverie, peeped out of the window of the upstairs parlour at passers-by, wrote prim little letters to Freddie and me, dressed more and more like Queen Victoria and went to Church and Holy Communion. (But she did not go to evening service at Liss because she thought it rather "high," surplices, candles, intonation— "too much of it".) My brother peddled his watches and went off on his bicycle, sometimes for days together.

In 1905 my mother slipped and fell downstairs one evening and was hurt internally and died a few weeks later. In her last illness her mind wandered back to Midhurst and she would fuss about laying the table for her father or counting the stitches as she learnt to crochet. She died a little child again. In 1910 my father woke up very briskly one morning, delivered a careful instruction on the proper way to make suet pudding to his housekeeper Mrs. Smith, insisted that it should be chopped small, protested against "lumps the size of

my thumb," glanced over the *Daily Chronicle* she had brought him and prepared to get up. He put his legs out of bed and slid down by the side of the bed a dead man. There is an irregularity in our family pulse, it misses a beat ever and again and sooner or later it misses more than one and that is the end of us. My grandfather had leant over a gate to admire the sunset and then ceased to live in the same fashion. This last spring as I write (1933) heart stoppage came also to my elder brother and as he got up from his breakfast, he reeled and fell down dead. But this was a little premature; he was only seventy-seven and my father and grandfather were both eighty-two. I shall hate to leave the spectacle of life but go I must at last, and I hope when my time is fulfilled that I too may depart in this apparently hereditary manner. It seems to me that whatever other defects we have, we have an admirable way of dying.

V. — SCIENCE STUDENT IN LONDON

§ 1. PROFESSOR HUXLEY AND THE SCIENCE OF BIOLOGY (1884-85)

The day when I walked from my lodging in Westbourne Park across Kensington Gardens to the Normal School of Science, signed on at the entrance to that burly red-brick and terra-cotta building and went up by the lift to the biological laboratory was one of the great days of my life. All my science hitherto had been second-hand — or third or fourth hand; I had read about it, crammed text-books, passed written examinations with a sense of being a long way off from the concrete facts and still further off from the living observations, thoughts, qualifications and first-hand theorizing that constitute the scientific reality. Hitherto I had had only the insufficient printed statements, often very badly and carelessly written, of the text-books, eked out by a few perplexing diagrams and woodcuts. Now by a conspiracy of happy accidents I had got right through to contact with all that I had been just hearing about. Here were microscopes, dissections, models, diagrams close to the objects they elucidated, specimens, museums, ready answers to questions, explanations, discussions. Here I was under the shadow of Huxley, the acutest observer, the ablest generalizer, the great teacher, the most lucid and valiant of controversialists. I had been assigned to his course in Elementary Biology and afterwards I was to go on with Zoology under him.

In a very carefully done short story, *A Slip under the Microscope* (*Yellow Book* 1893) and in an equally careful novel, *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900) I have rendered something of the physical and social atmosphere of that early biological laboratory. These descriptions were written so much nearer to the actual experience than I am now, that I will not even attempt to parody them here, and it seems hardly fair to quote them. But I must try, however unsuccessfully, to convey something of my realization of an extraordinary mental enlargement as my mind passed from the printed sciences within book covers to these intimate real things and then radiated outward to a realization that the synthesis of the

sciences composed a vital interpretation of the world.

In those days both sides of descriptive biology, botany and zoology, were in a parallel phase; they were passing on from mere classification to morphology and phylogeny. Comparative physiology and genetics had still to come within the scope of the ordinary biological student. It was perhaps inevitable that they should wait upon the establishment and confirmation of the phylogenetic tree, the family tree of life, before they in their turn could take the centre of the stage. The phylogeny of the invertebrata was still in a state of wild generalization, vegetable morphology concerned itself with an elaborate demonstration of the progressive subordination of the oophore to the sporophore, and even the fact of evolution as such was still not universally conceded. The mechanism of evolution remained therefore a field for almost irresponsible speculation. Weismann and his denial of the inheritance of acquired characteristics was in the ascendant. Our chief discipline was a rigorous analysis of vertebrate structure, vertebrate embryology and the succession of vertebrate forms in time. We felt our particular task was the determination of the relationship of groups by the acutest possible criticism of structure. The available fossil evidence was not a tithe of what has been unearthed to-day; the embryological material also fell far short of contemporary resources; but we had the same excitement of continual discoveries, confirming or correcting our conclusions, widening our outlook and filling up new patches of the great jig-saw puzzle, that the biological student still experiences. The study of zoology in this phase was an acute, delicate, rigorous and sweepingly magnificent series of exercises. It was a grammar of form and a criticism of fact. That year I spent in Huxley's class, was beyond all question, the most educational year of my life. It left me under that urgency for coherence and consistency, that repugnance from haphazard assumptions and arbitrary statements, which is the essential distinction of the educated from the uneducated mind.

I worked very hard indeed throughout that first year. The scene of my labours was the upper floor of the Normal School, the Royal College of Science as it is called to-day, a floor long since applied to other uses. There was a long laboratory with windows giving upon the art schools, equipped with deal tables, sinks and taps and, facing

the windows, shelves of preparations surmounted by diagrams and drawings of dissections. On the tables were our microscopes, reagents, dissecting dishes or dissected animals as the case might be. In our notebooks we fixed our knowledge. On the doors were blackboards where the demonstrator, G. B. Howes afterwards Professor Howes, a marvellously swift draughtsman, would draw in coloured chalks for our instruction. He was a white-faced, black bearded, nervous man, a sort of Svengali in glasses; swift and vivid, never still, in the completest contrast with the powerful deliberation of the master. Huxley himself lectured in the little lecture theatre adjacent to the laboratory, a square room, surrounded by black shelves bearing mammalian skeletons and skulls displayed to show their homologies, a series of wax models of a developing chick, and similar material. As I knew Huxley he was a yellow-faced, square-faced old man, with bright little brown eyes, lurking as it were in caves under his heavy grey eyebrows, and a mane of grey hair brushed back from his wall of forehead. He lectured in a clear firm voice without hurry and without delay, turning to the blackboard behind him to sketch some diagram, and always dusting the chalk from his fingers rather fastidiously before he resumed. He fell ill presently, and after some delay, Howes, uneasy, irritable, brilliant, took his place, lecturing and drawing breathlessly and leaving the blackboard a smother of graceful coloured lines. At the back of the auditorium were curtains, giving upon a museum devoted to the invertebrata. I was told that while Huxley lectured Charles Darwin had been wont at times to come through those very curtains from the gallery behind and sit and listen until his friend and ally had done. In my time Darwin had been dead for only a year or so (he died in 1882).

These two were very great men. They thought boldly, carefully and simply, they spoke and wrote fearlessly and plainly, they lived modestly and decently; they were mighty intellectual liberators. It is a pity that so many of the younger scientific workers of to-day, ignorant of the conditions of mental life in the early nineteenth century and standing for the most part on the ground won, cleared and prepared for them by these giants, find a perverse pleasure in belittling them. In a thousand respects their work was incomplete and

tentative and any little Mr. Whippersnapper who chooses to use the vastly greater resources of to-day against them can find statements made by them that were insufficient or slightly erroneous, and theoretical suggestions that have been abandoned and disproved, and he can catch a bit of personal publicity from the pulpit or the reactionary press by saying that Darwin has been discredited or Huxley superseded. Great joy for Mr. (and Mrs.) Whippersnapper it is, naturally enough, to realize that he knows clearly things that Darwin never heard of, and is able to tatter some hypothesis of Huxley's. Little men will stand on the shoulders of giants to the end of time and small birds foul the nests in which they were hatched. Darwin and Huxley knew about one per cent of the facts about variation and mutation that are accessible to Mr. Whippersnapper. That does not alter the fundamental magnificence of Darwin's and Huxley's achievement. They put the fact of organic evolution upon an impregnable base of proof and demonstration so that even the Roman Catholic controversialists at last ceased to vociferate, after the fashion of Bishop Wilberforce of the Anglican church on a memorable occasion, "Yah! Sons of apes! You *look* it," and discovered instead that the Church had always known all about Evolution and the place of man in Nature, just as it had always known all about the place of the solar system in space. Only it had said nothing about these things, because it was wiser so. Darwin and Huxley, in their place and measure, belong to the same aristocracy as Plato and Aristotle and Galileo, and they will ultimately dominate the priestly and orthodox mind as surely, because there is a response, however reluctant, masked and stifled, in every human soul to rightness and a firmly stated truth.

This biological course of Huxley's was purely and strictly scientific in its character. It kept no other end in view but the increase and the scrutiny and perfection of the knowledge within its scope. I never heard or thought of practical applications or business uses for what we were unfolding in that year's work, and yet the economic and hygienic benefits that have flowed from biological work in the past forty years have been immense. But these aspects were negligible by the standards of our study. For a year I went shabby and grew shabbier, I was under-fed and not very well housed, and it

did not matter to me in the least because of the vision of life that was growing in my mind. I worked exhaustively and spent an even happier year than the one I had had at Midhurst. I was rather handicapped by the irregularity and unsoundness of my general education, but nevertheless I was one of the three who made up the first class in the examinations in zoology which tested our work.

A first-class in the Normal School meant over 80 per cent of the possible marks and the two others who took first-classes were Martin Woodward, a scion of a well-known family of biologists, who was afterwards drowned while dredging for marine zoological material on the west coast of Scotland, and A. V. Jennings, the son of a London private schoolmaster, for whom I formed a considerable friendship. All the rest of the class tailed down through a second class to failure.

Jennings was the only close associate I made in that first year. He was a year or so older than I, a slender grey-clad, red-faced young man with close curly black hair; he had had a sound classical education, and if he had not read as discursively as I he had read much more thoroughly. He was a well- trained student. He liked the strain of blasphemy and irreverence I had evolved for familiar conversational use, it startled him into appreciative chuckles, and once we had surmounted the obstacle of my shyness of sincere discussion, we got through an immense amount of talking about religious, political and scientific ideas. I learnt a great deal from him and polished much crudity and prejudice off my mind against his. For the first time in my life I was coming into touch at South Kensington with minds as lively as or livelier than my own and much better equipped, minds interested as much as I was interested in the significance of life. They saved me to a large extent from developing a shell of defensive reserve about my self conceit.

Once or twice Jennings showed a personal concern for me that still glows bright in my memory. The “Teachers in Training” at the Normal School were paid a maintenance allowance of a guinea weekly, which even in those days was rather insufficient. After I had paid for my lodgings, breakfasts and so forth, I was left with only a shilling or two for a week of midday meals. Pay day was Wednesday and not infrequently my money had run out before Monday or

Tuesday and then I ate nothing in the nine-hour interval between the breakfast and the high-tea I had at my lodgings. Jennings noted this and noted that I was getting perceptibly thinner and flimsier, and almost by force he carried me off to a chop house and stood me an exemplary square meal, meat, two vegetables, a glass of beer, jam-roll pudding and a bit of cheese; a memorable fraternal feast. He wanted to repeat this hospitality but I resisted. I had a stupid sort of pride about unrequited benefits or I know he would have done this frequently. "This makes competition fairer," Jennings insisted.

At the end of this invigorating year I had had a vague hope that I should be able to go right on with zoological work but there were no facilities for research available. I cared so much for the subject then that I think I could have sailed away to very sound and useful work in it. I could have built up the full equipment of a professor of zoology upon the basis I had secured, if I had been free to take my own where I could find it. I should have filled up my gaps. I am convinced that for college and university education, keenly interested students — and after all they are the only students worth a rap; the others ought not to be there — should have much more freedom to move about and choose their own courses and teachers than is generally conceded them. However, my first year's performance had impressed the board of selection sufficiently to secure my reappointment as a Teacher in Training for a second and afterwards for a third year in other departments of the school where there were vacancies to be filled.

§ 2. PROFESSOR GUTHRIE AND THE SCIENCE OF PHYSICS (1885- 86)

Unhappily for me there was only one Huxley in the Normal School of Science and the course into which I was now thrown had none of the stimulation and enlargement of that opening year. The process of interest and curiosity was broken, and my mind was unable to turn itself with any energy to the new work that was put before it. It suffered from disruption and shock. I found myself almost at once at cross purposes with my new professors and instructors.

I can see now much more clearly than I did at the time what it was that turned me abruptly from the extravagantly greedy and industrious learner I was in my first year, to the facetious, discontented, restless and tiresome rebel I now became. It is a phase of my life I am only now getting into perspective and seeing as a logical part of a whole.

There were extraordinary faults and inconsistencies in the teaching machinery that had got hold of me. I had no idea of these faults and inconsistencies when I blundered against them, I understood scarcely anything either of the clumsiness of the educational forces to which I was reacting or of the nature of my own reactions; and it was altogether too much for my intelligence and will to get anything but perplexity and a series of partial frustrations and humiliations from the encounters that now lay before me. I am not complaining. Perplexity, frustration, humiliation and waste of energy are the common lot of human beings in a phase of blindly changing conditions, and what is exceptional in my story is not the clumsy struggling that now began but the previous luck of release and encouragement at Midhurst and under Huxley, that bright run of luck between 1883 and 1885, which had invigorated and given me self-confidence and a mulish persistence in the direction in which my feet were set.

The Normal School of Science and Royal School of Mines, to give it the full title it bore in these days, stood with an air of immense purposefulness four-square upon Exhibition Road. When I first took my fragile, unkempt self and my small black bag through its portals, I had a feeling of having come at last under definite guidance and protection. I felt as I think a civilized young citizen ought to feel towards his state education. If I worked hard, did what I was told and followed the regulations, then I thought I should be given the fullest opportunity to develop whatever fine possibilities were in me and also that I should be used to the best advantage for the world and myself. I thought that the Normal School of Science knew what it meant to do with me. It was only after my first year that it dawned upon me that the Normal School of Science, like most other things in the sliding, slipping civilization of the time, was quite unaware even of what it meant to do with itself. It was an educational miscellany. It

had been hastily compiled. Only that big red-brick and terra-cotta building, in which it was then assembled, held it together.

It was a product of the irregular and convulsive thrusts made by the embryonic modern world-state in its unconscious efforts to free itself from the aristocratic national system of eighteenth century Europe. Throughout the nineteenth century, one far-reaching dislocation after another had emphasized the growing need for a general education of the population and for a new type of education based upon the enlightenment due to scientific discovery and a widening range of experience. Already in the eighteen fifties Huxley was hammering away at the importance of biology in education. The drive of this need was resisted by the established religions, the ruling aristocracies and whatever remained over of the "scholarly" mediaeval universities. The new educational organizations essential to the proper working of the new order, had to grow against these resistances and were greatly delayed, dwarfed, distorted and crippled in the process.

The powers in possession conceded the practical necessity for technical and scientific instruction long before they would admit the might and value of the new scientific knowledge. Just as these conservative forces permitted elementary education to appear only on the understanding that it was to be a useful training of inferiors and no more, so they sanctioned the growth of science colleges only on condition that their technical usefulness was recognized as their sole justification.

The great group of schools at South Kensington which is now known as the Imperial College of Science and Technology, grew therefore out of an entirely technical school, born of the base panic evoked in England by the revelation of continental industrial revival at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The initial institution was situated in the Museum of Practical Geology (note the minatory implication of that "Practical") in Jermyn Street, and its original title was "The Government School of Mines and Science applied to the Arts." To this a chemical school, a lecturer on mineralogy and, later on, physical laboratories were added; it was transferred to South Kensington bit by bit, and upon it a Normal School, to train teachers for the science classes that were being spread belatedly over the

country, was rather incongruously imposed (1873 and 1881). It has continued to expand and absorb ever since. It is to-day, a huge fungoid assemblage of buildings and schools without visible centre, guiding purpose or directive brain. It has become a constituent of that still vaster, still more conspicuously acephalic monster, the University of London.

The thumby wisdom of the practical man, with a conception of life based on immediate needs, unanalysed motives and headlong assumptions, and with an innate fear of free and searching thought, is still manifest at a hundred points in the structure and working of this great aggregation. The struggle to blend technical equipment with a carefully cherished illiteracy, an intact oafishness about fundamental things, has been well sustained. South Kensington will still tell you proudly "we are not literary" and explain almost anxiously that the last thing it wants to impart is a liberal education. The ideal output of the Imperial College remains a swarm of mechanical, electrical and chemical business smarties, guaranteed to have no capacity for social leadership, constructive combination or original thought. There is an ineradicable tendency in sound technology to go on to purely scientific interest and breadth of social thought, the higher centres will keep on breaking through, and South Kensington, in spite of itself, does a great deal of real University work and makes men of many of its technicians. But so far the recognition of this tendency in any organized form has been successfully resisted.

Happily for me it happened that the vigorous, persistent far-reaching and philosophical mind of Huxley had become very influential with the Department of Science and Art in the sixties and seventies and particularly at South Kensington, and he had been able not only to establish that general scientific survey, physiography, as a "subject" in the evening class curriculum throughout the country, but he had had also a practically free hand to teach the science of life in his own fashion in the Normal School. This freedom involved, however, a similar freedom for the other professors with whom he was associated and they too without any consultation with their fellows, developed their courses according to their own capacities and their ideas of what was required of them.

Now Professor Guthrie, the Professor of Physics, into whose

course I toppled from the top-floor to the ground floor of the Normal School building, was a man of very different texture from the Dean. He appeared as a dull, slow, distraught, heavily bearded man with a general effect of never having fully awakened to the universe about him. He seemed very old to me but as a matter of fact he was fifty-two. It was only after some years that I learnt what it was that made him then so slow and heavy. He was ill, within a year of his death, a still unsuspected cancer in his throat was dragging at his vitality, unknown to anyone. This greatly enhanced the leaden atmosphere of his teaching.

But quite apart from that he was not an inspiring teacher. The biological course from which I came had been a vivid, sustained attempt to see life clearly and to see it whole, to see into it, to see its inter-connexions, to find out, so far as terms were available, what it was, where it came from, what it was doing and where it was going. And, I take it, the task of a properly conceived elementary course in Physics, would be to do the same thing with non-living matter, to establish a fruitful description of phenomena, to clear up our common terminology, dating mostly from mediaeval times, about space, time, force, resistance, to explore the material universe with theory and experiment and so to bring us at last to the real living edge of the subject, the line of open questions on the verge of the unknown. But Guthrie's mind, quite apart from its present sickness, was devoid of the incessant interrogative liveliness necessary to a great man of science. He is best remembered as the initiator of the Physical Society. His original work was not of primary importance. The professorial scientist is by no means inevitably a man of science, any more than your common curate is inevitably a man of faith.

Guthrie, to put it plainly, maundered amidst ill-marshalled facts. He never said a thing that wasn't to be found in a text book and his course of lectures had to be supplemented by his assistant professor C. V. Boys, then an extremely blond and largely inaudible young man, already famous for his manipulative skill and ingenuity with soap bubbles, quartz fibres and measuring mechanisms. Boys lectured on thermo-dynamics. In those days I thought him one of the worst teachers who has ever turned his back upon a restive audience, messed about with the blackboard, galloped through an hour of talk

and bolted back to the apparatus in his private room.

His turn came late in the course when I had already developed to a very high degree the habit of inattention to these physics lectures. I lost him from the word Go. If Guthrie was too slow for me, Boys was too fast. If Guthrie gave me an impression that I knew already most of what constituted the science of physics and that, though pretty in places, on the whole it was hardly worth knowing, Boys shot across my mind and vanished from my ken with a disconcerting suggestion that there was a whole dazzling universe of ideas, for which I did not possess the key. I was still in a state of exasperation at this belated discovery when the course came to an end, and in spite of a considerable loss of marks for certain defects, to be described, in the apparatus I had made, I was put in the examination list at the top of the second class. That did not shake my newborn conviction that I had learnt practically nothing about physics.

I do not know how the science of matter is taught to-day, but there is no gainsaying the colossal ineptitude of that particular course of instruction. We had half a school year to devote to our subject day after day and that was none too much for the observations, the demonstrations and the graphic and other mathematical analyses, which would have built up a sound system of conceptions about physical processes in our minds. But I doubt if there was any such system in Professor Guthrie's mind, and if there was in the mind of Boys he was either unable or too indolent to take it out, have a good look at it and explain it to anyone else. And so, instead of being used in real work on the science of physics, the time of the class was frittered away in the most irrelevant and stupid "practical work" a dull imagination has ever contrived for the vexation of eager spirits. Let me try and convey something of my horror of that physics laboratory to the reader.

It would seem that Professor Guthrie, while he was incubating this course, had been impressed with the idea that most of his students were destined to be teachers or experimental workers and that they would find themselves in need of apparatus. Unaware of the economic forces that evoke supply in response to demand, he decided that it was a matter of primary necessity that we should learn to make that apparatus for ourselves. Then even upon desert islands

or in savage jungles we should not be at a loss if suddenly an evening class surrounded us. Accordingly he concentrated our energies upon apparatus making. He swept aside the idea that physics is an experimental science and substituted a confused workshop training. When I had gone into the zoological laboratory upstairs, I had been confronted by a newly killed rabbit; I had begun forthwith upon its dissection and in a week or so I had acquired a precise and ample knowledge of mammalian anatomy up to and including the structure of the brain, based upon my dissections and drawings and a careful comparison with prepared dissections of other types. Now when I came into the physics laboratory I was given a blowpipe, a piece of glass tubing, a slab of wood which required planing and some bits of paper and brass, and I was told I had to make a barometer. So instead of a student I became an amateur glass worker and carpenter.

After breaking a fair amount of glass and burning my fingers severely several times, I succeeded in sealing a yard's length tube, bending it, opening out the other end, tacking it on to the plank, filling it with mercury, attaching a scale to it and producing the most inelegant and untruthful barometer the world has ever seen. In the course of some days of heated and uncongenial effort, I had learnt nothing about the barometer, atmospheric pressure, or the science of physics that I had not known thoroughly before I left Midhurst, unless it was the blistering truth that glass can still be intensely hot after it has ceased to glow red.

I was then given a slip of glass on which to etch a millimetre scale with fluorine. Never had millimetre intervals greater individuality than I gave to mine. Again I added nothing to my knowledge — and I stained my only pair of trousers badly with acid.

Then, if I remember rightly, I was required to make a specific gravity bottle, stopper and all, out of more glass tubing. It took days. But by that time I was convinced that Professor Guthrie was playing the fool with me and that he had no intention whatever of imparting whatever he might know and think — if indeed he did know and think anything — about the science of physics to me.

A wiser and more determined character than I, might have held firmly to my initial desire to learn and know about this moving framework of matter in which life is set, might have sought out

books and original literature, acquired whatever mathematical equipment was necessary, and come round behind the slow obstructive Guthrie and the swift elusive Boys, outflanking them so to speak, and getting to the citadel, if any, at the centre of the thickets and wildernesses of knowledge they were failing to guide me through. I did not realize it then, but at that time the science of physics was in a state of confusion and reconstruction, and lucid expositions of the new ideas for the student and the general reader did not exist. Quite apart from its unsubstantial equipment and the lack of time, my mind had not the strength and calibre to do so much original exploration as was needed to get near to what was going on. I made a kind of effort to formulate and approach these primary questions, but my effort was not sustained.

In the students' Debating Society, of which I will tell more later, I heard about and laid hold of the idea of a four dimensional frame for a fresh apprehension of physical phenomena, which afterwards led me to send a paper, "The Universe Rigid," to the *Fortnightly Review* (a paper which was rejected by Frank Harris as incomprehensible), and gave me a frame for my first scientific fantasia, the *Time Machine*, and there was moreover a rather elaborate joke going on with Jennings and the others, about a certain "Universal Diagram" I proposed to make, from which all phenomena would be derived by a process of deduction. (One began with a uniformly distributed ether in the infinite space of those days and then displaced a particle. If there was a Universe rigid, and hitherto uniform, the character of the consequent world would depend entirely, I argued along strictly materialist lines, upon the velocity of this initial displacement. The disturbance would spread outward with ever increasing complication.) But I discovered no way, and there was no one to show me a way to get on from such elementary struggles with primary concepts, to a sound understanding of contemporary experimental physics.

Failing that, my mind relapsed into that natural protest of the frustrated — malicious derision of the physics presented to us. I set myself to guy and contemn Guthrie's instructions in every possible way, I took to absenting myself from the laboratory and when I was recalled to my attendances by the registrar of the schools, I brought

in Latin and German textbooks and studied them ostentatiously. In those days the matriculation examination of the London University was open to all comers; it was a discursive examination involving among other things a superficial knowledge of French, Latin and either German or Greek and I found German the easier alternative. I mugged it up for myself to the not very exacting standard required. I matriculated in January 1886 as a sort of demonstration of the insufficiency of the physics course to occupy my mind.

My campaign to burlesque Guthrie's practical work was not a very successful one, it was a feeble rebellion with the odds all against me, but it amused some of my fellow students and made me some friends. Even had I been trying to satisfy the requirements of the course, the inattentive clumsiness that had already made me a failure as a shop assistant, would have introduced an element of absurdity into the barometers, thermometers, galvanometers, demonstration apparatus and so forth that I manufactured, but I added to this by demanding a sound scientific reason for every detail in the instructions given me and contriving some other, and usually grotesque, way of achieving the required result if such an imperative reason was not forthcoming. The laboratory instructor Mitchell was not a very quick-minded or intelligent man, bad at an argument and rather disposed to make a meticulous adhesion to instructions a matter of discipline. That gave me a great advantage over him because his powers of enforcement were strictly limited. After a time he began to avoid my end of the laboratory and when he found my bench littered with bits of stuff, a scamped induction coil or such-like object in a state of scandalous incompleteness and myself away, he thanked his private gods and no longer reported my absence.

The decisive struggle which persuaded him to despair of me, turned upon the measurement of the vibrations of a tuning fork giving the middle C of an ordinary piano. We had to erect a wooden cross on a stand with pins at the ends of the arms, and a glass plate, carefully blackened with candle smoke, was hung by a piece of silk passing over these arms in such a way as just to touch a bristle attached to a tuning fork. This tuning fork was thrown into sympathetic vibration by another, the silk thread was burnt in the middle, the plate as it fell rubbed against the bristle and a trace of the

vibrations was obtained. A careful measurement of this trace and a fairly simple calculation (neglecting the buoyant effect of the atmosphere) gave the rate of vibration per second. I objected firstly to the neglect of the atmospheric resistance and I tried to worry Mitchell into some definite statement of the extent to which it vitiated the precision of the experiment. Poor dear! all that he could say was that it "didn't amount to much." But we joined issue more seriously upon the cross-piece. I alleged that as a non-Christian I objected to making a cross if that was avoidable. I declared that as a Deist I would prefer to hang my falling plate from one single pin. Also I insisted that it was the duty of a scientific worker always to take the simplest course to his objective. This cross-piece with its two pins was, I argued, a needless elaboration probably tainted by the theological prepossessions of Professor Guthrie. In fact I refused to make it. I could get just as good results with a Monotheistic upright. Mitchell fell into the trap by insisting that that was "how it had to be done." Whereupon I asked whether I was a student of physical science or a convict under discipline. Was I there to learn or was I there to obey?

Obviously Mitchell had no case and as obviously I was making a confounded nuisance of myself for no visible reason. He was acting under direction. My retrospective sympathies are entirely with him.

One example is as good as a score of the silly bickering resistances I put up to annoy my teachers during that futile course of instruction. In the end when my apparatus was assembled for inspection and marking, it was of such a distinguished badness that it drew an admiring group of fellow students and some of it was preserved in a cupboard for several years. As a comment on Professor Guthrie's conception of education it was worth preserving. But I pretended to be prouder of that collection than in my heart I was. Guthrie was taking life at an angle different from mine and I had been betrayed into some very ungracious and insulting reactions. Poor discipline goes with poor teaching. A lecture theatre full of impatient undergraduate students is the least likely of any audience to detect the presence of failing health. His husky voice strained against our insurgent hum. He was irritable and easily "drawn." There was a considerable amount of ironical applause and petty

rowdiness during his lectures and in these disturbances I had made myself conspicuous.

I was bad and I was not able to explain why I was bad even to myself. I was not sufficiently mature about the purport of my resistance to make my case clear to anyone. I was not clear about it myself. It was plain I hated and despised the superficialities of that so-called physics course, but it was not at all plain that I was honestly fumbling about to get hold of some clue to a real science of physics. I was. Confusedly my mind was making an effort. I didn't realize that in that effort I was rather in the position of a dwarf who seeks a drinking horn in order to drink the ocean. The drinking horn was certainly not in the laboratory task. The general effect upon the authorities and my contemporaries was that after quite a brilliant start I lacked staying power. Nobody noted anything relevant about the Universal Diagram. My performance in the geological course to which I was now transferred did nothing to qualify that reputation for instability.

* * * * *

I return after fifty years to that old perplexing quarrel with my subject and my teachers. I plead guilty at once to bad manners and a lack of worldly wisdom. I admit I had neither understanding nor humanity for any of my instructors. On the other hand I maintain that my judgment on the kindergarten childishness of that practical course was fundamentally sound. But these are really very superficial and personal issues. There is more to be got out of that baffled phase in my mental development. If, to coin a phrase, we can "de-individualize" what happened, we are left with a fairly bright sample intelligence completely thrown out, in its attempts to grasp what physics was up to. To a certain point it had all been plain sailing, a pretty science, with pretty sub-divisions, optics, acoustics, electricity and magnetism and so on. Up to that point, the time-honoured terms which have crystallized out in language about space, speed, force and so forth sufficed to carry what I was learning. All went well in the customary space-time framework. Then things became difficult.

I realize now that it wasn't simply that neither Guthrie nor Boys

was a good teacher. No man can be a good teacher when his subject becomes inexplicable. The truth, of which I had no inkling then, was that beyond what were (and are) the empirical practical truths of the conservation of energy, the indestructibility of matter and force, and so forth, hung an enigmatical fog. A material and experimental *metaphysics* was reached.

The science of physics was peering into this fog, aware that there was some very fundamental misapprehension, getting glimpses of elusive somethings and nothings, making trial guesses and gestures and not getting much further. So far it had travelled upon the common presumptions and now the common presumptions were failing it. Curiously paradoxical facts were coming to light and making those common presumptions seem unsubstantial. Why for instance should there be an absolute zero of temperature? What happened to matter when it got there? Our common presumption was that "more or less" went on for ever in either direction. Why again should there be an invariable relative velocity of light? The common presumption was that if one ran with the light it should go relatively slower. Why was there a limited material universe in apparently limitless space? In an infinitude of stars the whole sky should glow with nebulous light.

There are more of these paradoxical riddles to-day. They have indeed multiplied greatly. The science of physics is even more tantalizing than it was half a century ago, and, above the level of an elementary introduction, optics, acoustics and the rest, even less teachable. The more brilliant investigators rocket off into mathematical pyrotechnics and return to common speech with statements that are, according to the legitimate meaning of words, nonsensical. The fog seems to light up for a moment and becomes denser for these professorial fireworks. Space is finite, they say! That is not space as I and my cat know it. It is something else into which they are trying to frame the vague imperfect concepts they labour to realize. The stars existed before the universe! The universe is expanding into God knows what; and will presently contract! Being is a discontinuous stipple of quanta! In normal everyday language this is sheer nonsense. Ordinary language ought not to be misused in this way. Clearly these mathematical physicists have not made the

real words yet, the necessary words that they can hold by, transmit a meaning with and make the base of fresh advance.

How was I, only a year up from the country grammar school and elementary text-books, to guess at that embarrassing fog on the other side of the professor and his assistant?

Biological science can still get along because practically all its questions and phenomena lie within the scope of normal experience. Its subject matter is apparently confined to the earth and to a measurable sphere of time. It frames human history and human life and is itself in its turn completely framed. It can work on indefinitely within the common presumptions. It is only when biology comes into contact with physics and the question What is life? demands an answer in terms of physics, that real mystery is broached. But physical science is far more comprehensive, and in every direction it recedes beyond the scope of experiential thinking and of language based on common experience. It has to misuse and overstrain one familiar term after another. Its progress becomes more and more departure until a degree of remoteness is attained whereat definite consistent statement gives place altogether to philosophical speculation.

Not only was Guthrie no Huxley, but in the whole world of physics at that time there was nobody with the grasp and power of exposition capable of translating the difficulties of material science into language understandable by the eager student or the un-specialized intelligent educated man. My subsequent occupations, interests and limitations, have all stood in the way of my studying physical science and my experience of it has remained that of an outsider trying to adjust his general ideas to what he can overhear. I have never been able to make that adjustment. I am still unable to realize what modern Physics is up to. I do not find myself interrogative *with* those who are conducting research and speculation, but I find myself interrogative about them. My impression is that the Darwin and Huxley of Physics have still to come. There is a gap which has still to be bridged between the ideology and phraseology of normal intelligent people and those specialists who go out from the normal world into this great region of experimental and mathematical exploration.

It is curious to find that to-day the professors of physics are, as a body, still failing to be unanimously lucid upon even such old-world questions as predestination and free-will. A number of them lunge back ambiguously as if towards theological and spiritualistic suggestions. Some have succumbed to the lure of journalism and, writing for the general reader, have become not so much explanatory as popular and sensational.

I have here lying on my writing desk a most interesting and a most significant book. It is called *Where Is Science Going?* It is translated from the German of that indisputably great physicist and innovator Max Planck; it is reinforced by Einstein and very ably edited by a capable scientific journalist Mr. James Murphy. Its interest centres upon the fact that these two cardinal figures in the world of physical science are clearly so perturbed by the misrepresentation and romantic treatment of the trends of physical science by some of the less intellectually scrupulous of their contemporaries and colleagues, that they feel the necessity for a clear statement of the bearing of that work upon ordinary thought. Planck reiterates very clearly the inseparability of the idea of causation from scientific work. He restates the old distinction between the objective conception of events as *caused*, on which all science rests, and our subjective conception of our own personal actions (but not those of the people we observe about us) as wilful and free. So far as our own conduct goes we have free-will; that does not alter the fact that to an external observer our acts are determinate.

But Planck is not as absolute in his insistence upon causation as a universal external fact, as a Victorian man of science would have been. He admits certain difficulties arising out of experimental experiences. A completely comprehended system of causation, which is what I was discussing in that paper the *Universe Rigid* and caricaturing in that Universal Diagram to which I have already alluded, should admit of exact prophecy. In certain cases exact prophecy does not work and consequences, until they occur, appear to be indeterminate. Here, says Planck, we must fall back on our Faith that ultimately finer measurements and a closer analysis will eliminate that quality of indeterminateness.

But *will* they?

I will not add my small yes or no to Planck's decisive Yes, but since I am writing a mental autobiography there is no reason why I should not supplement his repudiation of indeterminateness by a word or so about a collateral line of thought of my own, which may help a little to explain why this scepticism about the adequacy of causation has reappeared in physical theory. I fell into this line of thought as the outcome of the question "What is a species?" which is necessarily raised by the study of organic evolution and much emphasised by classification work in petrology and mineralogy. I happened to have to read a certain small amount of logic and mental science to secure two teaching diplomas (the L.C.P. 1889 and the F.C.P. 1891) and almost simultaneously I had to read some inorganic chemistry for my intermediate examination for the degree of B.Sc. (1889). The chemical, biological and logical conceptions of what constitutes a species were thus thrown into a fruitful juxtaposition. They fermented together.

The first result of this fermentation, was a very ill-written but ingenious paper, *The Rediscovery of the Unique*, which was published in the *Fortnightly Review* in July 1891. It insisted upon the idea that every phenomenon amenable to scrutiny was found to be unique; that therefore there might be no such thing as an identical similarity among outer realities but only approximate similarities, and that though the mind found it necessary to classify in order to operate at all, there was nevertheless a marginal fallacy lurking even in the statement that two and two made four. One set of four would never be quite the same as another set of four; no pair matched completely. Classification was a convenient simplification of realities that would otherwise be incomprehensible. We overlooked this in ordinary practice, though it was plain before our noses if we chose to see it, and we allowed a convenient habit of acquiescence in the identification of merely similar things to harden into a fixed assumption that they were identical repetitions of the same thing. This led us to make such unjustifiable assumptions as that atoms of the same element were identical and to confuse an average result with an unanimous result.

In 1891 this was an anticipation of what physicists now call "statistical causation." The identical similarity of atoms and most

other physical units was then an almost universal persuasion. To concede individuality to atoms seemed unnecessary and unprofitable.

Nobody took much notice of this article of mine at the time, but the idea kept alive in my mind; I gave it another form in a *Saturday Review* article, *The Cyclic Delusion*, in 1893; and I revived it in a paper I read before the Oxford Philosophical Society (Nov. 8th, 1903) called *Scepticism of the Instrument*. This was reprinted in *Mind*, vol. XIII N.S., No. 51, and, after revision, in the first edition of my *Modern Utopia* 1905. It insisted not only upon this loose play of the logical process upon which I had already laid stress; "the forceps of our minds are clumsy forceps and crush the truth a little in taking hold of it"; but dwelt also upon the dangerous facility with which such purely negative terms as "the absolute" and infinity could be used with an air of positive significance.

I dug up this old bone of mine and gnawed it again, without getting anything very fresh off it, in *First and Last Things* (1908).

Through this insistence upon the unique individuality of every event, it seems to me, you can arrive by another route at an understanding of that appearance of inexactitude and spontaneity in minute observations which has set some modern physicists talking about objective free-will — to the distress not only of Max Planck and Einstein but of a great number of other scientific workers. All phenomena escape a little from exact statement and logical treatment. Classification is always a little imprecise and every logical process slightly loose in its handle.

"The fact," says Sir James Jeans in a popular work, *The Mysterious Universe* quoted by James Murphy (*op. cit.*), "that 'loose jointedness' of any type whatever pervades the whole universe, destroys the case for absolutely strict causation, the latter being the characteristic of perfectly fitted machinery." But if one starts out with a perception of the universality of uniqueness one never expects perfectly fitted machinery and one demands no more than a consistency in similarity. The fascinating thing about this material world outside our minds is that it is always harmonious with itself, never crazy and anyhow, and yet at the same time never pedantically exact. Like living individuals it has "character"; it is at once true to itself and subtly unexpected. Every time it startles us by breaking

away from the assumptions we have made about it, we discover in the long run that our assumptions have been premature and that harmony is still there. Hence every scientific generalization is tentative and every process of scientific reasoning demands checking and adjustment by experiment. The further you go from experimental verification the more sensible becomes the margin of error. The most beautifully reasoned deductions in the world, the most elaborate mathematical demonstrations collapse and must be made over again before the absolute veto of a single contradictory fact, however small this fact may be.

This pragmatical view of nature leaves a working belief in causation intact. We can still believe that exactly the same cause would produce exactly the same effect. We are sustained in that belief almost invincibly by the invariable experience that the more similar the cause the more similar the effect. Our minds seem to have been built up from the beginning of time upon such experiences. Nevertheless we can recognize that there is a quiver of idiosyncrasy in every sequence and that nature never repeats herself. There never has been, it seems, exactly the same cause and exactly the same effect.

Because the universe continues to be unique and original down to the minutest particle of the smallest atom, that is no reason for supposing it is not nevertheless after the pattern of the rational process it has built up in the human mind. But was it not to be expected that the whole of Being would be infinitely more subtle and intricate than any web of terms and symbols our little incidental brains could devise to express it?

We are compelled to simplify because of the finite amount of grey matter we possess. The direct adequate dynamic causation of every event, however minute, remains the only possible working hypothesis for the scientific worker. There is no more need to abandon it than to abandon counting and weighing because no two things are exactly alike. And we may so far agree with Max Planck as to believe that we shall continually approximate to it with increased precision of observation and analysis. But also we may add a conviction that we shall never get to it. We shall never get to it for the excellent reason that there is not the slightest justification, outside

the presumptions of our own brain, to believe that it is really there.

This section on the elements of physics grows, I perceive, to an inconvenient length. You see at any rate in what fashion I paddled on the edge of the illimitable ocean of physical speculation and possible knowledge, leaving the glass and stuff on my laboratory bench to take care of itself. After a little paddling I came out of those waters again and dried my feet and ran about on the shore.

In my book, the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1932) there are twenty pages (Chapter II., §§ 1-4 inclusive) which summarize all that I know about the relations of the human mind to physical reality. Those pages I wrote and rewrote with very great care, I got friends to scrutinize them and make difficulties about them, and I can add nothing to them as a general statement of what I believe. In brief I realize that Being is surrounded east, south, north and west, above and below, by wonder. Within that frame, like a little house in strange, cold, vast and beautiful scenery, is life upon this planet, of which life I am a temporary speck and impression. There is interest beyond measure within that house; use for my utmost. Nevertheless at times one finds an urgency to go out and gaze at those enigmatical immensities. But for such a thing as I am, there is nothing conceivable to be done out there. Ultimately those remote metaphysical appearances may mean everything, but so far as my present will and activities go they mean nothing. The science of physics shrinks to the infinitesimal in a little sparkling flicker in a glass bulb or whirls away vastly with the extra-galactic nebulæ into the deeps of space, and after a time I stop both speck-gazing and star-gazing and return indoors.

§ 3. PROFESSOR JUDD AND THE SCIENCE OF GEOLOGY (1886- 87)

Perhaps I had been spoilt by the soundness and beauty of the biological course, but in geology again, I failed to find the inspiration that had come to me under Huxley. Judd was a better teacher than

Guthrie, but he was a slow, conscientious lecturer with a large white face, small pale blue eyes, a habit of washing his hands with invisible water as he talked, and a flat assuaging voice; and he had the same lack of militant curiosity as Guthrie in his make-up. His eye watched you and seemed to take no interest in what his deliberate voice was saying. These were superficial characteristics and I am told that not only was Judd's work in stratigraphy sound and patient and excellent but that he was a very good and pleasant man to know. But I never knew him and my antipathy was immediate.

Geology is a badly assembled subject, anyhow. It is rather a lore than a science. In the hands of no teacher who had to cover the whole ground, could it be made as consecutive and exciting as biology and physics, those two fundamental sciences, can be made.

Assuming that my mind is a fairly ordinary one it is worth while, from the point of view of educational theory, trying to state just why it was that while biology as it was taught to me interested and concentrated me and physics interested me and tormented me as something fascinatingly attractive (though withheld, inaccessible and unattainable), geology as a whole failed to interest me at all. The work attracted me acutely in bits but in such a way as to entangle and distract my attention from most of the stuff put before me.

The explanation, I think, is that geology after the passing of that great generation which included Lyell, Murchison and their peers, had been allowed to accumulate great masses of new material without any persistent intelligible application of this new material to its general idea, which was to scrutinize the earth as a whole, say what it is and what it was, ransack it for evidence of how it originated and what it has gone through, focus the superficial evidence available upon the condition of its inaccessible interior and so at last arrive at such a power of ordered knowledge, that the geologist would know of any sediment, rock, mountain or mineral, whence it came, where it was going and what could be done with it and about it.

There is really no point at which good teaching ends and original research begins. From first to last in a science the lash and spur of interrogation must keep the mind alive. But — if I may vary the image — that flame of interrogation which kept Huxley's biological

course molten and moving, burnt not at all in the geological course, and, except for bright moments when our own individual curiosity lit up a corner — and went out again, we were confronted by a great array of dark cold assorted facts, lifelessly arranged and presented.

We had a course of stratigraphy; we studied the succession of igneous rocks and of strata, more particularly as they occurred in the British Isles. Now this is a subject that bristles with interrogative possibilities. What is there in the composition of the rock to show the conditions under which it was consolidated? What was the geography of the world when it was made? What has happened to it since? What tale do the organic remains in it tell of climate and change? What is happening to it now? Under such questions there is not a feature about a deposit which does not become significant and interesting.

But such questions were never followed up.

They were barely hinted at. We were confronted with a list of formations and series of beds, with some indications of their local exposures and with drawers of "characteristic" fossils which we had to sketch, handle and learn to recognize. It was about as interesting as learning the names of the streets, houses and residents, with their characteristic articles of furniture, in due order as they were found in a provincial town. That might be useful for certain business purposes, for delivery-van work for example, and no doubt it was useful to a prospector to know just where he was, geologically, and "spot" the formation he was dealing with. But all that could have been learnt *connectedly* with far more ease.

We did neatly tinted cross-sections of country showing faults that were never accounted for and thrusts of unknown origin. Then came mineralogy and petrology and day after day we lifted and looked at lumps of mineral and lumps of rock and put them down again. It was all rote learning; the science that made the examination of a fragment of bone in the comparative anatomy course a beautiful exercise in inference, was entirely wanting. So far as we were taught, a lump of slate or a lump of pitchblende was like it was *because it was*, and that was that. What made the course so peculiarly exasperating was that we were pressed along this training in recognition — at a pace that made it disastrous to follow any incidental hares our own

curiosity might start for us. Again I reiterate my profound persuasion that for successful science teaching the rule should be stimulation and a maximum of available information, with a minimum of prescription.

Among other frustrated and crumpled enquiries I remember the flash of excitement I found in crystallography. I learnt that in various series of minerals, the felspar group for example, there were subtle changes in the crystalline axis with changes of chemical composition. There were fluctuations in colour and crystalline form through most of the main mineral groups. What laws lurked in these fluctuations and why?

For petrography the school was at that date exceptionally well equipped. Every student had the use of a petrographical microscope, with polarizing prisms, and we examined a long series of representative rock sections. It would be difficult to exaggerate the beauty and fascination of some of these. They let one into the very heart of those specimen chunks of rock one found so boring in a drawer, they lit them up with a blaze of glorious colour. One saw the jumbled crystals thrust against each other, distorted by unknown pressures, clouded and stained by obscure infiltrations. In many there were odd inclusions of other crystalline substances, and still more entrancingly enigmatical there were often hollows in these crystals (although they had been formed under enormous pressures) and in these hollows there were drops of fluid and bubbles of gas. It was not simply an astounding loveliness, it was, one felt, a profoundly significant loveliness that these sections revealed. They were telling in this bright clear and glowing fashion, of tensions, solutions, releases, the steady creeping of molecule past molecule, age after age. And in their interpretation lay the history and understanding of the Earth as a whole. But the geological course was not out to pursue significance. It would tolerate no loitering for such discursive purposes. Each day brought its drawer of specimens, its tale of slides. That was and is my indictment of all that teaching.

I may perhaps be evolving all this adverse criticism of the courses of science at South Kensington in an unconscious attempt to solace myself for my manifest want of success there as a serious student, after my first year. The reader is better able than I am to judge of

that. There can be no doubt of my failure — which led to some painful subsequent years. But when all possible allowance has been made for such a bias on my part, the facts remain that Professor Judd bored me cruelly and that in his course just as in the physics course, my discontent preceded and did not arise out of my failures.

Since those days I have given a reasonable amount of attention to pedagogics and social organization generally. I find it more and more remarkable that the old Normal School and Royal School of Mines, the present Imperial College of Science and Technology, although an important part of its work still consists in preparing teachers of science, has never had, has not now and never seems likely to have, any chair, lecturer or course in educational science and method. Much less is there any study of social, economic and political science, any enquiry as to objectives, or any attempt to point, control and co-ordinate the teaching in the various departments. To the ruling intelligences of South Kensington a course in geology is just a course in geology. When you have gone through a course, any course, then you *know* geology. Isn't that useful for mining and metallurgy? Both Guthrie and Judd were amateurs in science teaching, and neither of them had sound ideas of how to inveigle students into their subjects. And there was in the organization no supervising pedagogic philosopher with the knowledge and authority to tell them as much.

The Imperial College, I realize in the retrospect, was and still is in fact not a college but a sprawl of laboratories and class rooms. Whatever ideas of purpose wrestled together in its beginnings are now forgotten. It has no firm idea of what it is and what it is supposed to do. That is to say it has no philosophy. It has no philosophical organization, no social idea, no rationalized goal, to hold it together.... I do not see how we can hope to arrest and control the disastrous sprawling of the world's affairs, until we have first pulled the philosophical and educational sprawl together.

I had come up to South Kensington persuaded that I should learn everything. I found myself at South Kensington lost and dismayed at the multitudinous inconsecutiveness of everything.

Judd had a disposition very common in conscientious teachers, to over- control his students. He wanted to mess about with their minds.

Huxley gave us his science, but he did not watch us digesting it. He was watching his science. Judd insisted not merely on our learning but learning precisely in his fashion. We had to make note-books, after his heart. We had to draw and paint and write down our facts just as a Judd would have done. We had to go at his pace and in his footsteps. We had to send in satisfactory note-books at the end. If not we lost marks in the final examination. To be lopped and sketched to the mental proportion of Judd in this fashion was almost as agonizing as being a victim to Og, King of Bashan.

I made an effort to do what was required of me but an irresistible boredom wrapped me about and bore me down. The habit I had acquired during the physics course of vanishing from my place in the laboratory and resorting to the Education Library or the Dyce and Foster Reading Room presently returned with enhanced strength.

The still favourable opinion of the board of selection kept me at the geological course, elementary and advanced, for an academic year and a half. By that time my career as a science student was in ruins, and that favourable opinion had evaporated. The path to research was closed to me for ever. Academically I had gone to the bad. I had become notoriously unruly. I got a second class at the end of 1886, but I failed the final examination in geology in 1887.

But I carried something out of that geological course nevertheless, for when, after various vicissitudes I presented myself to the London University examiners in 1890 for my B.Sc. degree, I had still enough geology to supplement my first class honours in zoology by taking the first place in second class honours in geology. I doubt if I had read very much in the interim. I think Professor Judd must have mingled considerations of discipline with his estimate of any progress in that final test which killed my scientific career.

§ 4. DIVAGATIONS OF A DISCONTENTED STUDENT (1884-1887)

This criticism of the large indeterminateness of the educational bulks and thrusts through which my brain dodged its way, is the outcome of a life's experience. Such, I now realize, were the conditions about

me. But at the time I had no grasp of the huge movements and changes that were going on in the world. I had no idea of how the Normal School or the Educational Office or the teaching of science in any form had come about; I did not understand the conflicting forces that had made that teaching as good and as bad as it was, nor what it was had whipped me up out of servitude to be a learner, and was now rather alarmingly losing interest in me. I had been exalted at first and then I was puzzled and dismayed. I acquit myself of blame now much more completely than I acquitted myself at the time. Deep down in me a profound humiliation at my want of outstanding success in physics and geology struggled against the immense self-conceit I had brought up with me from Midhurst. My mind had to find compensating reassurance to save me from the conviction of entire inferiority. It found that reassurance in petty achievements and triumphs in other directions. Blasphemy and the bold and successful discussion of general ideas had already proved very sustaining to my self respect in the drapery emporium. I now found the pose of a philosophical desperado a very present help against my depression under the teaching of Guthrie and Judd.

The startled guffaws of Jennings had already persuaded me that I was something of a wit, and my rather unconventional contributions to the discussions in the Debating Society were also fairly successful and attracted one or two appreciative friends. There were three men, Taylor and Porter and E. H. Smith in that early group, of whom I have lost sight; there were also my life-long friends, A. T. Simmons and William Burton, Elizabeth Healey and A. M. Davies. We loitered in the corridors, made groups in the tea-shop at lunch-time, lent each other books and papers and developed each other's conversational powers.

Curiously enough, though I remember the Debating Society very vividly, I do not remember anything of the speeches I made. I did make speeches because my friends remember them and say they were amusing. The meetings were held in an underground lecture theatre used by the mining school. It was lit by a gas jet or so. The lecturers' platform and the students' benches were surrounded by big models of strata, ore crushers and the like which receded into a profound obscurity, and austere diagrams of unknown significance

hung behind the chairman. The usual formula was a paper, for half an hour or so, a reply and then promiscuous discussion. Those who lacked the courage to speak, interjected observations, made sudden outcries or hammered the desks. The desks indeed were hammered until the ink jumped out of the pots. We were supposed to avoid religion and politics; the rest of the universe was at our mercy.

I objected to this taboo of religion and politics. I maintained that these were primary matters, best beaten out in the primary stage of life. I did all I could to weaken and infringe those taboos, sailing as close to the wind as possible, and one or two serious-minded fellow students began to look out for me with an ever ready cry of "Or-der." One evening somebody read an essay on *Superstitions* and cited among others the thirteen superstitions. I took up the origin of that. "A certain itinerant preacher whom I am not permitted to name in this gathering," I began, "had twelve disciples...."

The opposition was up in arms forthwith and we had a lovely dispute that lasted for the better part of an hour. I maintained that the phrase "itinerant preacher," was an exact and proper description of the founder of Christianity, as indeed it was. But the vocabulary of the ordinary Englishman is sticky with stereotyped phrasing and half dried secondary associations. It seemed that "itinerant preacher" connoted a very low type of minister in some dissenting bodies. So much the worse, I said, for the dissenting bodies. The sense of the meeting was against me. Even my close friends looked grave and reproachful. I was asked to "withdraw" the expression. I protested that it was based on information derived from the New Testament, "a most respectable compilation." This did not mend matters. Apparently they could not have it that the New Testament was "respectable" or "compiled." I was warned by the chair and persisted in my insistence upon the proper meaning of words.

I was carried out struggling. To be carried out of an assembly in full fight had recently been made splendid by Charles Bradlaugh. Irish members of parliament were also wont to leave that assembly by the same laborious yet exhilarating method of transport. Except that my hair was pulled rather painfully by someone, a quite momentary discomfort, that experience was altogether bright and glorious.

But I will not expand into this sort of anecdotage. That sample must serve. The Debating Society was a constant source of small opportunities for provocation and irreverence. And about the schools, in lecture theatres, I became almost an expert in making strange unsuitable noises, the wailing of a rubber blowpipe tube with its lips stretched, for example, and in provoking bursts of untimely applause. We, subsidized students, were paid every Wednesday by a clerk with a cash-box and a portfolio, at whose tone when calling out our names we saw fit to take offence. Mockery and ironical applause having failed to mend his manners, a tumult ensued and developed to such riotous behaviour that he fled to the registrar, professed to fear a raid on his tin box of sovereigns, and refused to proceed without police protection.

It seems to me that I must have been a thoroughly detestable hobbledehoy at this stage, a gaunt shabby candidate for expulsion, and it is not anything that I can remember to my credit, but only the constant friendship and loyalty of Jennings and these life-long friends I have named and of R. A. Gregory (now Sir Richard, the Editor of *Nature*) that makes me admit there may have been some qualification of my detestableness which now escapes me. These faithful associates bolstered up my self-respect and kept me from becoming a failure absolutely. They stimulated me to make good in some compensatory way that would atone for my apathy in the school work.

The Education Department had paid all of us scholars, exhibitionists, teachers in training, to come to London, but it had no organization to look after us when we were there. There were no provisions to lodge us or see that we were properly lodged; — it was only in my second year that provision was made in the form of a students' refreshment room to give us midday food at reasonable prices — and except for the registrar, an ex-army man, who noted when we "signed on" late repeatedly, and sent us red underlined copies of the rules when we were observed to be smoking, shouting or loitering in forbidden places, there was no effort to find out what we were doing or how things were with us. No one bothered to find out why I had got loose in my setting, much less did anyone attempt to readjust me in any way. I was not the only straggler from the

steady pursuit of the ordained courses. I fainted only mentally, but twice in my time undernourished men fainted altogether in the laboratories. I paid in health for South Kensington all my life, as I shall tell. The schools, I repeat, ignored pedagogics and had no shadow of a general directive control even of our physical lives.

The natural pose to which I resorted to recover my self-esteem, was one of critical hostility to mechanical science and an affectation of literary ambition. I do not think I have ever had very much real literary ambition. And I found in the advancing socialist movement, just the congenial field for the mental energy that was repelled by those courses in physics and geology. After I had matriculated as an ex-collegiate student in London University, I did not go on at once to work for my Intermediate Examination in Science, but I became an active follower of the new propaganda.

I did not at first link the idea of science with the socialist idea, the idea, that is, of a planned inter-co-ordinated society. The socialist movement in England was under the aesthetic influence of Ruskin; it was being run by poets and decorators like William Morris, Walter Crane, Emery Walker and Cobden Sanderson, brilliant intellectual adventurers like Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Annie Besant, teachers with a training in classical philosophy like Graham Wallas, advanced high churchmen like Stuart Headlam and a small group of civil servants like Sidney Webb and Sydney Olivier. These leaders were generally ignorant of scientific philosophy and they had been misled by Herbert Spencer's Individualism into a belief that biological science was anti-socialist. I do not recall any contributions on my part, in those early years, to correct that misunderstanding. Probably there was a certain amount of subconscious antagonism towards science, or at least towards men of science, on my own part during those two latter years at South Kensington.

William Burton, E. H. Smith and I declared ourselves to be out-and-out socialists and signified the same with red ties. The rest of our set came most of the way with us, but with a more temperate enthusiasm. We trailed off to open meetings of the Fabian Society, which reminded me not a little of that Parliament in Landport, and we went on Sunday evenings to Kelmscott House on the Mall, Hammersmith, where William Morris held meetings in a sort of

conservatory beside his house. He used to stand up with his back to the wall, with his hands behind him when he spoke, leaning forward as he unfolded each sentence and punctuating with a bump back to position. Graham Wallas, a very good looking young man then with an academic humour, was much in evidence, and Shaw, a raw, aggressive Dubliner, was a frequent speaker. There was a sprinkling of foreigners, who discoursed with passion, and a tendency to length, in what they evidently considered was the English tongue. None of our little group had the confidence to speak at these gatherings, but our applause was abundant, and on our way back to the Underground Railway at Hammersmith, our repressed comments broke through.

My return to South Kensington, after the mediocre examination results of my second year, was rather uncertain. There is a letter from myself to Simmons in which I discuss the possibilities of getting a master's job in a school. This letter recalls something which otherwise I might have forgotten, how very definite my literary ambitions had already become. (In that letter I made a rule sketch of myself with my prospective "works" about me, including "All about God" and a "Design for a New Framework of Society.") My apprehensions though justifiable were not justified; I was given another chance and I did not after all, at that time, write to the scholastic agents. My father arranged for me to stay for a month with my uncle Charles, a small farmer at Minsterworth near Gloucester. There, so soon as my anxiety about my return was dispelled, I set myself to write a paper on Socialism with which to open the autumn session of the Debating Society.

I made not the slightest attempt to get on with my geological reading. I remember I took enormous pains with that paper. I wrote in and altered until it became illegible and then I recopied it and started upon it all over again. I went for a day over to Cheltenham, where E. H. Smith was staying in the parental home, a greengrocer's shop, to plan a scheme for "capturing" the committee of the society "in the socialist interest" and to discuss the possibility of starting a college journal. We resolved that we were going to develop the literary and political consciousness of the Normal School whether the authorities liked it or not.

I do not know how far I may be considered to have cheated the

Education Department by drawing my weekly guinea throughout that third year. I was at South Kensington to learn and I certainly learnt a lot, but I gave the very minimum of time and attention possible to the substance of Professor Judd's instructions. I had no sense of cheating at the time. I was certainly working most strenuously in the Education Library, the Art Library and the Dyce and Foster Reading Room, if not in the Advanced Geological Laboratory and the Mineral and Rock collections of the Natural History Museum. If I had relaxed in my efforts to learn about the past, present and implicit future of the planet earth, I was making the most strenuous efforts to get hold of all that was implicit in the idea of Socialism. I was reading not only a voluminous literature of propaganda but discursively in history, sociology and economics. I was doing my best to find out what such exalted names as Goethe and Carlyle, Shelley and Tennyson, Shakespeare, Dryden, Milton, Pope — or again Buddha, Mahomet and Confucius — had had to say about the world and what they mattered to me. I was learning the use of English prose and sharpening my mind against anyone's with whom I could start a discussion.

We got the *Science Schools Journal* going, finding an unexpected ally in A. E. Tutton, a tremendous swatter of chemistry, who hoped for a scientific publication and worked hard for us until he realized that our intentions were amateurish and literary and socialistic. I was the first editor, but in April 1887, the registrar, roused to concern by Professor Judd about the state of my work, made me resign control in favour of Burton. That did not win me back to systematic petrography. I made an effort to conform before it was too late and save my examination, but I could not fix my interest on that stuff, even for a final cram in the last fortnight.

I had just discovered the heady brew of Carlyle's *French Revolution* and the prophetic works of William Blake. Every day I went off with my note-books and textbooks to either the Dyce and Foster Reading Room or the Art Library. I would work hard, I decided, for two hours, abstracting notes, getting the stuff in order — and then as a treat it should be (let us say) half an hour of Carlyle (whose work I kept at my disposal in the Dyce and Foster) or Blake (in the Art Reading Room). Then, perhaps an observant stroll among

the Chantry pictures — they were at Kensington for as yet there was no Tate Gallery to shelter those Victorian masterpieces — the Majolica, the metal work and so forth for ten minutes and then a renewed attack on those minerals. But long before the two hours were up a frightful lassitude, a sort of petrographic nausea, a surfeit of minerals, would supervene. Granite and gabbro and gneiss became all one to me. There seemed no sense in their being different. The extent to which I did not care what bases replaced what in the acid felspars and how an increasing dose of potassium affected their twinning, became boundless and uncontrollable. There, ready to hand on the table, was a folder of Blake's strange tinted designs; his hank-haired rugose gods, his upward whirling spirits, his strained, contorted powers of light and darkness. What exactly was Blake getting at in this stuff about "Albion?" He seemed to have everything to say and Judd seemed to have nothing to say. Almost subconsciously, the note-books and textbooks drew themselves apart into a shocked little heap and the riddles of Blake opened of their own accord before me.

So I spent the last days that were left to me before the June examination made an end for ever to my career as a serious student of science.

§ 5. SOCIALISM (WITHOUT A COMPETENT RECEIVER) AND WORLD CHANGE

In my opening chapters I have tried to put my personal origins into the frame of human history and show how the phases and forces of the education that shaped me, Tommy Morley's Academy, old-fashioned apprenticeship, the newly revived Grammar School at Midhurst, the multiplying colleges at South Kensington, were related to the great change in human conditions that gathered force throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. World forces were at work tending to disperse the aristocratic estate system in Europe, to abolish small traders, to make work in the retail trades less independent and satisfactory, to promote industrial co-ordination, increase productivity, necessitate new and better

informed classes, evoke a new type of education and make it universal, break down political boundaries everywhere and bring all men into one planetary community. The story of my father and mother and all my family is just the story of so many individual particles in the great mass of humanity that was driving before the sweep of these as yet imperfectly apprehended powers of synthesis. Our mental reactions were as remarkable as our physical and in the end, they were more important. What did my sort of people make of what was happening to them?

Nowadays most intelligent people are getting a grasp upon the broad character of the changes and imperatives amidst which we live. An outburst of discovery and invention in material things and of innovation in business and financial method, has, we realize, released so much human energy that, firstly, the need for sustained toil from anyone has been abolished, secondly, practically all parts of the world have been brought into closer interaction than were York and London three centuries ago and, thirdly, the destructive impulses of man have been so equipped, that it is no longer possible to contemplate a planet in which unconditioned war is even a remote possibility. We are waking up to the fact that a planned world-state governing the complex of human activities for the common good, however difficult to attain, has become imperative, and that until it is achieved, the history of the race must be now inevitably a record of catastrophic convulsions shot with mere glimpses and phases of temporary good luck. We are, as a species, caught in an irreversible process. No real going back to the old, comparatively stable condition of things is possible; set-backs will only prolong the tale of our racial disaster. We are therefore impelled to reconstruct the social and economic organization until the new conditions are satisfied. The sooner all men realize that impulsion, the briefer our stresses and the better for the race. That is how an increasing number of minds are coming to see that things are shaping. It is, we perceive, as much a part of the frame in which our lives are set as the roundness and rotation of the earth, as the pressure of the atmosphere or the force of gravitation at the sea level.

But what is matter-of-fact to-day was matter of opinion yesterday and matter for guess and suggestion the day before. What is so

manifest to-day was certainly not manifest to anyone in 1887 with the same clearness and completeness. I do not mean simply that it was not manifest to ordinary people, to people like me and my brothers and school-fellows and my fellow students and teachers; it was equally beyond the perceptions of all these clever people who made it their rôle to discuss politico-social questions in and about the Socialist movement.

Perhaps these latter had a more vivid sense of the promise and possibilities of change, some sort of change in our circumstances than the generality, but they were — it is plain to- day — extraordinarily blind to the shapes of whatever change they perceived. How blind they were to the true proportions of things and particularly to the pace of change in things, how blind we all were, I shall try to suggest in this section, although in doing so my comments will carry me in some particulars far beyond my mental states as a student.

I shall give the effect of Socialism as it impressed me at that time and then, as I point out its limitations, I shall tell in what order they dawned upon my own mind and how phase by phase they took the sense of completeness out of the original project.

It is curious to go back now with all that one has since learnt and thought in one's head, and sit in that little out-house at Hammersmith, a raw student again, listening to a lean young Shaw with a thin flame-coloured beard beneath his white illuminated face, or to Graham Wallas, drooping, scholarly, and fastidiously lucid. It is impossible alas! to recover my original naïve participation. I can recall what I saw but not how I felt. I have in that memory a sense of watching people unawares. There they talked, unconscious of their destinies, and we younger outsiders listened and interjected a very occasional word. We were lively and critical disciples but we were disciples surely enough, intensely excited. We listened as they planned their policies. They seemed bold to us in spirit but they seemed extremely sage in method. Morris had his wild moments — of sympathy with the martyred Chicago anarchists for example — but then he was a poet. A vast revolution was going on swiftly and irresistibly all about us, but with perfect sincerity this Fabian group posed as a valiant little minority projecting a revolution reduced to

its minimum terms. It was to permeate the existing order rather than change it. There was no real hope in their revolutionary project. It was a protest rather than a plan.

There I think is the profoundest factor in my present sense of remoteness, that vanished persuasion that we were up against essentially immutable institutions. The prevalent sub-consciousness of the time was not a perception of change but an illusory feeling of the stability of established things. That Hammersmith gathering shared it to the full. It needed such a jolt as the Great War to make English people realize that nothing was standing still. There they all felt and spoke as if they were in an absolutely fixed world, even if they thought that it was a world in which stable social injustices called aloud for remonstrance, resistance and remedies.

The Socialist movement was, one may say, a group of mental reaction systems (with very great variations within the group) to the disconcerting consequences of the new change of scale, and it had appeared *pari passu* with that new change. It did not fully understand itself. Nobody troubled to ask why it had appeared when it did and not before. A new movement does not begin by scrutinizing its origins. Its various forms were all responsive adaptations disguised even in the projectors' minds, as heroically revolutionary innovations. It proceeded from men who did not realize they were being pushed towards adaptive effort. It looked to its projectors like a purely constructive proposal, a new thing altogether. Men asked fiercely why should things always be thus and thus when as a matter of fact they had only just become thus and thus and were bound to alter in any case. "Let us have a new world," they said and they called it Socialism. But they did not realize that *some* new world was bound to come and that a new world, new in scale and power, was coming all about them.

Socialism developed at first in England and then in France because both the industrial and the mechanical revolution had hit first England and then France before it struck the rest of the world. From the time of Robert Owen onward, scattered people under the general banner of Socialism had been trying to make new plans for social and economic relationships in the place of those that were being distorted out of recognition or swept altogether away by blind new

forces. But they had no real apprehension of the truth that those old social and economic relations would go anyhow without any pushing from them.

There was nothing essentially new in such pseudo-constructive efforts and social stress. England had been the theatre of very profound economic and social mutations from the Wars of the Roses onward, and the influence of these changes upon her social history and literature is very traceable. Long before Owen and the use of the word Socialism, there had been individual socialistic schemers responding to the stresses of the times. Sir Thomas More, for example, was such an early socialistic schemer, deriving from the city-communism of Plato, and the Elizabethan Poor Law was an important early essay in practical social reorganization. Defoe and Fielding were fully conscious of the need to set up new resistances and guiding embankments to the forces of social disintegration. All history is adaptation and the only essential difference between our time and past times is the immense difference in the scale and pace of adaptive urgency.

Socialism, from its christening stage onward, betrayed its incompleteness as a response to the social situation by a profound diversity in its proposals and by that readiness to acquire qualifying labels which is due to dissatisfaction with an original proposition. Here and there it was discovered to be "practical Christianity," and various outbreaks of Christian Socialism occurred, relapsing very readily into mere medieval charitableness towards the poor. Ruskin and Morris arrived at an anti-mechanical aesthetic socialism in recoil from the early degradation of popular art by crude machine processes. The early French socialisms were as partial and fragmentary as the early English, if somewhat more logical. The flight tendency in the new movement was strong: the tendency to get together a little band of the elect and start a new humanity somewhere well out of this apparently inflexible and incurable social system in which their discontents had been engendered. Strong as is my disposition to deflate the reputation of Marx I have to admit that he was the first to conceive of the contemporary social process not as a permanent system of injustice and hardship but as a changing and self-destroying order.

The organization for an effective interplay and criticism of social ideas has still to be invented, and what happened (and what does still to a considerable extent happen) was that each group of thinkers and often each individual thinker, started in on the general problem of readjustment in more or less complete unconsciousness or in contempt and disregard of whatever other nuclei existed. All of them began at some partial experience of the great change-complex in progress. None of them saw their problem whole.

The history of pre-Fabian beginnings is outside my story; by the time I came to London Fabianism was Socialism, so far as the exposition of views and policy went. There was no other Socialist propaganda in England worth considering. But the Fabian Society had gathered together some very angular and incompatible fragments to secure its predominant position, and at every meeting it stirred with mutterings beneath its compromises. Some members denounced machinery as the source of all our social discomfort, while others built their hopes on mechanization as the emancipator of labour, some were nationalist and others cosmopolitan, some were anti-Malthusian and others — with Annie Besant — neo-Malthusian, some Christian and some Atheist (denouncing religion as the opium of the people), some proposing to build up a society out of happy families as units and some wanting to break up the family as completely as did Plato. Many were believers in the capacity of Everyman to control his affairs by universal suffrage, while others had an acuter sense of the difficulties of the task and talked of oligarchies, toryisms and benevolent autocrats.

It was open to the movement either to think out and fight out these differences or to let them cancel each other out and take whatever was left. And since Fabianism was from the first, politic rather than scientific, it adopted the latter alternative. I will quote later on a paragraph in which this deliberate renunciation of exhaustive thoroughness is stated — aggressively. Foreign Socialism had little of our British spirit of compromise. It did go on to think and fight out differences. It rent itself with factions. But foreign Socialism also, if it was less persuaded of the stability of the current order, was under the sway of certain other obsessions which I will presently discuss. It polished and elaborated doctrine much more than the Fabian school,

but unhappily not in a practically constructive direction.

Our little group of eager youth from the Kensington schools, going to the new Fabian Society for instruction in this great movement of hope and effort that was to put the world right again, discovered by degrees that this Socialism of theirs was indeed as a whole, almost as planless as the world outside. Anti-Socialists in those far off days used to accuse the Socialists, just as pagans used to accuse the early Christians, of having their wives in common. As a matter of fact the Fabian Socialists did not even have their ideas in common. With a solitary exception. There was one idea which united them all and did indeed constitute them Socialists. This was the idea that the motive of profit, which then dominated economic life, was wrong.

That condemnation of the profit motive was the G.C.M., the greatest common measure of Socialists. There Owen, Ruskin, William Morris, Marx, Webb, Shaw, Hyndmann, Maurice and Kingsley were unanimous. They were at open war with the contemporary theory that the search for gain, the desire to possess and to possess still more and the consequent competition to possess, constituted the main driving force of human association. Proudhon's *La propriété c'est le Vol* was typical. The main contribution made by Marx was a fairly convincing demonstration, that a system of competitive production for profit could not be a permanent system. Competition, he showed, argues the final victory of a dominating competitor (or group of competitors) which will own practically everything and attempt to hold all mankind in unendurable subjection. Unendurable — and hence, he argued, the revolution. All Socialists wished to eliminate profit from economic life and consequently all of them wished to abolish private property in any but the most immediately personal things. Following upon this arose the question, "And then how will the economic life of the community be run?" Thereupon they diverged (and continue to diverge) to all points of the compass.

That paper I prepared so elaborately at Minsterworth, and read to the Debating Society in 1886, was fairly representative of the common man's socialism at that period. It was a statement of the waste arising out of competition and the disproportionate

development of what I called "distribution." I was too innocent still about the things of this world to develop any attack upon investment, stock-exchange gambling, speculation and the money-credit system, as the major interceptors and absorbers of "production" in the distributive system. I was thinking rather of the overlapping rounds of competitive milk carts and the needless multiplication of retail shops. I hailed the "stores," which had done so much to overwhelm Atlas House, as the precursors of a state distributing system. I had no use for the rôle of small retailer for my father or anyone else. I wanted distribution and production to be added to the existing functions of the state which I lumped together with a primitive simplicity under the word, "defence." "Production, Distribution and Defence," that was my artless trio of social functions. The state should control them all, I said, not simply confine itself to "defence." I made no definition of the State; apparently I had not become critical of the contemporary state as such.

This primitive Socialism of mine, in spite of my hard narrowness of approach, was well received. In the subsequent debate Burton came in with some quotations from the angle of Ruskin, A. M. Davies raised some individualist objections and cited Herbert Spencer, while E. H. Smith sounded the democratic note (which I had left silent) with considerable emphasis. His sentimental belief in the masses was as near as anyone at South Kensington in these early days came to mystical democratic Marxism. This much I recall of that meeting; E. H. Smith with his foot on a chair, rather harshly rhetorical, Davies slight and Iberian, recalling an early portrait of J. S. Mill, precise and hesitant already with that little cough of his, old Burton, Ruskinian, biblical, as became a man from John Bright's Manchester, and very eloquent and copious. Others spoke but I do not remember them so clearly.

We denounced individualism; we denounced *laissez-faire*. The ownership of land and industrial capital was to be "vested in the community." We did not say what we meant by the "community" because none of us knew — or had even thought it might require knowing. But what we saw as in a vision was a world without a scramble for possession and without the motive of proprietary advantage crippling and vitiating every intellectual and creative

effort. A great light had shone upon us and we could see no more.

Socialism was indeed a blinding thing then. It was so dazzled by the profound discovery of itself, in that age of scramble and go-as-you-please, that it seemed unable to get on with its job. It feared to dispel the lovely vision it had conjured up. It remained in a state of exalted paralysis refusing to think further — because that might split the movement — and waiting for the world to come up to it. A similar phase of exalted paralysis has occurred at times in various sciences. After the demonstration of Evolution, biology marked time for a generation, reiterating and elaborating that immense realization. Physics for a period poised at the indivisible atom and the conservation of energy. But Western Socialism has gone on poising, poising itself unprogressively for longer than any science has done. It has been marking time for the past half century.

There were special reasons for this exceptional unprogressiveness of Socialist ideology. In the Fabian Society the desire for politic compromise damped discussion, but there was more in it than that. It was not any dread of dissension that kept continental Socialism impracticable. It was the absence of an experimental and analytical spirit. There had been a conspicuous absence from about the cradle-side of Socialism, of men with the scientific habit of mind. Socialism was essentially a pre-scientific product and it had just that bad disposition to finality of statement which it is the task of experimental science to dispel. Nobody sighed and said "And *now* what?" Nobody said, "Here is a great and inspiring principle which does in general terms meet the stresses of our time, let us go on at once to test it soundly and work out its necessary particulars and methods." Instead Socialism was proclaimed as a completed panacea. It was announced in strange, mystical and dogmatic phrases. The "Proletariat" was to rise against the "Bourgeoisie" and "expropriate" them, *etc*., *etc*.

The old Calvinistic theologians, equally absolute and unprogressive, announced Salvation by the Blood, and they would never explain what exactly the Blood was, nor how Emmanuel's vein was to be identified, nor anything more about it. Don't argue, don't make difficulties, they said, believe in the Blood and repent. To take difficulties into consideration was to go half way back to apostasy. In

exactly the same spirit the Bourgeoisie, industrial and financial leaders, contemporary statesmen, were now exhorted by the Socialists not to ask questions, make difficulties and so damn themselves further, but just repent and consent to "socialization."

No! they were not to ask How.

Now the first difficulty in the way of expropriating the contemporary landowner and capitalist for the common good is the absence of what I have called (in a recent examination of the collectivist idea in the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* 1931) a "competent receiver." The Fabian Socialists in their impatience for practical application, did their utmost to ignore this blank in their outlook. They strove to think that any contemporary administrative and governing body, a board of guardians, a bench of magistrates, Parliament, Congress, was capable of playing the rôle of "the community" and "taking over" the most intricate economic tasks. The Webbs (Beatrice and Sidney) whose unparalleled industry and insistence did so much to keep British Socialism in the narrow way, held apparently that almost any sort of administration could be stiffened up and controlled by an "expert" or so, to the required degree of specialized efficiency. They were quite prepared to accept and Fabianize the Tzardom or the tribal chieftainships of the Gold Coast.

The Webb mentality was a peculiar one and it imposed itself with paralysing effect upon the Socialist movement in Britain. Mrs. Webb had been brought up a brilliant girl among politicians, and it took her many years to realize that there could be any other sort of governing class than the class she had seen so closely and intimately. Webb, a clever civil servant by competitive examination, was all too disposed to accept that same governing class, provided it left matters of detail to trusted trained officials. But really the members of that governing class, with its social traditions, its commercial liberalism and its highly developed parliamentary technique of humbugging the new voting democracy, were the last people to submit to their own socialization by indefatigable little civil service officials. There was no autocratic indolence about them when it came to business. They had their own use for parliament. Still less were the existing public bodies elected by the haphazard methods then in use, practicable

instruments for the Socialist. And as yet there was nothing else. But since no alternative directorate was at once forthcoming, the discussion of these difficulties seemed to many of the impatient and still exalted faithful, not so much a practical step forward, as a mischievous move to sabotage any progress towards an emancipated world.

There, it seemed to them, stood the aeroplane ready to soar and it was a terrible pity not to get off at once, simply because no one had as yet made even drawings of a possible controlling apparatus. It was hard to wait for that controlling apparatus. "At this rate we shall never get there" and so on. To complete the image, they tried therefore to use the reins from the old gig.

Now I happened to be detached by my circumstances from political and administrative associations and so perhaps I was able to see this hiatus in the Fabian programme with more detachment than its more active members. This problem of direction in a socialist state, this *search for a competent receiver*, troubled my mind more and more throughout the nineties. I cannot now recall what first turned my attention to it. But as I shall tell in my concluding chapter it became at last a dominant idea in my social philosophy.

The failure to develop a conception of organized directive types, a development which is a necessary consequence of the primary socialist assumption, is I believe, due to the association, at once unreasonable and very natural, of Socialism with the opposition and insurrectionary politics of mere temporary social conditions. In 1886, in common with almost all Socialists at that time, I took that association for granted, and it was only as my experience enlarged and as I came to think out the theory of Socialism more thoroughly, that I realized how accidental and in some respects how unfortunate this alliance was.

There was extremely little "democracy" in the original patriarchal socialism of Robert Owen, and it was Marx who finally fettered the two ideas of Socialism and Democracy together. His imagination intensified the insurrectionary impulse in modern democracy and sought in the resentment and discomfort of the disinherited, a sufficient driving force for a revolutionary reconstruction of society. There was a certain plausibility in the suggestion that the mass-losers

in the struggle for gain, would necessarily be in favour of the abolition of private property. But it did not follow at all that they would be able to grasp the idea of collectivized property and take an intelligent controlling interest in its collective administration. Over that thin ice the Marxists skated very swiftly and nimbly. Steadily and surely the idea of the class-war was imposed upon the Socialist idea, until for many Socialism ceased to be a movement for a more comprehensive organization of economic life and took on the quality of a violent restitution of stolen goods — to everybody in general and nobody in particular.

Even Socialists who did not adhere textually to the propositions of Marx were carried unconsciously in the direction of his teaching. His misconceptions of the character and possibilities of English Trade Unions had been profound — and infectious. So in Britain and Russia and Germany and everywhere Socialism was taken to the working masses as if it were not simply their chance and hope but their vindication, which is an altogether different matter; and it seemed the most reasonable thing in the world for the Fabians to turn to the Trade Union officials, exhorting them to enter Parliament as our natural leaders in the mighty task of reconstruction before mankind. Though if you only looked at and listened to a few of them —— !

I fell in with this prevalent error as readily as most people. I am only being wise after the event. My theoretical dissent from modern democratic theory was contradicted very flatly by some of my actions. In practice at any rate I was not in advance of my time. There was an interesting duplicity in this matter between my persuasions which ran far ahead, and my policy which lagged with the movement. It is only in the retrospect that I perceive that in this matter I was like a later-stage tadpole which has gills and lungs and legs and a tail all at the same time. In 1906 I was responsible for a Fabian report advocating, not indeed identification of the Fabian Society with the new Labour Party, but "cordial co-operation," and in the general elections of 1922 and 1923 I contested London University as an official Labour candidate. Later on in my story I will return to these lapses towards the class-war conception of Socialism. But for the present I am concerned only with my own inconsistencies

in so far as they are representative of this curious entanglement of two fundamentally divergent tendencies, which was everywhere apparent between 1880 and 1920. I am discussing the defects and mis-directions of late nineteenth-century Socialism as a working project for world reconstruction.

In another closely associated direction also, the leaders and makers of Socialism misconceived the great problem before them. They did not realize that a change in the size and nature of communities was going on. They did not grasp that modern Socialism demands great administrative areas. To this day many professed Socialists have still to assimilate the significance of this change of scale. The local Socialist parish or town councillor who is the typical unit politician of the Labour Party, is the last person likely to understand and welcome enlargements that will abolish all those parochial intimacies to which he owes his position. Just as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald opposed proportional representation with large constituencies, because the practical impossibility of a poor adventurer working a constituency under such an electoral method would banish Ramsay Macdonalds from political life, so these Labour wardsmen, in close touch with the local builders and contractors, found insuperable subconscious difficulties to the substitution of any large scale administration for their local jobbery. Necessarily theirs was the Socialism of the parish pump and not the Socialism of a comprehensible control of water supply between watershed and watershed. How could it have been otherwise?

I should probably have remained as blind as most other Socialists to this second aspect of the directive difficulty if I had not chanced to build myself a house in Sandgate in 1899 and 1900. I happened to choose a site upon the boundary line between the borough of Folkestone and the urban district of Sandgate, and the experiences I had in securing electricity for my house across that boundary worked upon certain notions I had picked up from Grant Allen about the sizes and distances between villages and towns upon a countryside (which are determined originally by the length of an hour's journey by horse or foot) and started me off thinking in an extremely fruitful direction. I hit upon the principle to which I had already given expression, that not only must a genuine Socialist government be in

the hands of a much more closely knit body than were the party governments of our time, but that having regard to the fact that we were no longer in a horse-and-foot world, the proper administrative areas in a modern socialized community must be altogether different in extent and contour from existing divisions. I began to work out the now universally recognized truth that one of the primary aspects of this period of change, is a change in facility and speed of communications, and that among other things this had made almost every existing boundary too small and tight. This truth was not recognized thirty years ago. But it is of quite primary importance. The applications of this principle of change of scale, once it was stated, were, I discovered, unlimited. I was already making them in my *Anticipations* in 1900. Before I had done with this idea it had led me to the realization of the inevitability of a comprehensive world-state, overriding the sovereign governments of the present time.

In 1903, after I had joined the Fabian Society, I launched this disturbing suggestion of the incompatibility of our extensive projects for socialization with the existing local and municipal organizations, in a paper entitled *The Question of Scientific Administrative Areas in Relation to Municipal Undertakings*. (It was reprinted in an appendix to *Mankind in the Making* published in the same year.) I stated my case in the subdued and enquiring manner of a young learner bringing a thesis to his master for correction. I really thought I should tap a fount of understanding. But there I flattered my Fabian audience. The Fabian audience of that phase was not easily excited by ideas, it assembled for edification, and the paper was received as though it did not matter in the least. Graham Wallas made the most understanding comments. He thought that the Fabian disregard of political reform might have been carried too far.

Afterwards, at the Webbs' house in Grosvenor Road, I succeeded in emphasizing my point in relation to the elaborate studies they were making of local government in the eighteenth century. Finding them disposed to take up the attitude of specialists towards a vexatious pupil I was as rude as I could be about this work of theirs and insisted that so far as contemporary problems of local government were concerned, a study of the methods of Dogberry and Shallow was as likely to be as valuable a contribution to

contemporary problems as a monograph on human sacrifice in Etruria. With the coming of electric trams and electric lighting and universal elementary education, every problem of local administration had been changed fundamentally.

And these changes were still going on. I became very emphatic for a time in these and other talks and writings, on the difference between "localized" and "delocalized" types of mind. I was quite sure I had come upon something important that had been previously overlooked. I had. Existing divisions, I argued, left everything in the hands of the "localized" types, and so long as we divided up our administrative areas on eighteenth century lines, the delocalized man with wider interests and a wider range of movements, found himself virtually disenfranchised by his inability to attend intensively to the petty politics about his front door and garden. He might represent a strong body of opinion in the world, but he was in a minority in any particular constituency. We were in fact trying to modernize a world in which the modernized types were deprived of any influence.

Later on the Fabian Society in belated response to these more vivid personal representations of mine, produced the *New Heptarchy Series* (No. 1 at least of it), in which my idea was Fabianized in a tract, *Municipalisation by Provinces* by W. Stephen Sanders. The association of the rank and file of the Socialist movement with contemporary political hopes and ambitions was however too close to admit of any really bold and thorough pursuit of this idea, and after this sixteen page effort by Mr. Sanders and an attempt, by a sort of afterthought, to incorporate two earlier tracts, this *New Heptarchy Series* damped off and expired. It sank back to such obscurity that it is ignored in Pease's official history of the society's achievements, and the Socialist movement produced no further systematic enquiries either in administrative psychology or in political geography. Such enquiries were not "practical politics," the Webbs had administrative and not scientific minds, and the necessary interrogative spirit was lacking.

I was baffled for a time by this tepid reception of my bright idea by my Fabian teachers and perhaps rather too ready to be persuaded that there were sound practical reasons, outside the range of my experience, why my line of suggestion was not followed up with

greater zest. I had many other things to occupy me and I did not press my criticism in the society beyond a certain point. When later I contrived a rebellion against the Old Gang (as I shall tell in the proper place), it was upon an entirely different score. Nevertheless the idea of a change in scale as a matter of quite vital importance in human experience had gained a footing in my brain and was stirring about there, and since it could find no adequate outlet in any modification of Fabian policy, it expressed itself in a fantastic story, *The Food of the Gods* (1903-4) which begins in cheerful burlesque and ends in poetic symbolism. And in my *Modern Utopia* (1905), I took the inevitability of a world-state for granted.

Now I think a sedulous examination of the optimum areas for government functions of various types leading up to a critical study of sovereignty, was a line of investigation which Socialism, if it had really shared with modern science the spirit of incessant research and innovation, would have welcomed and followed up with vigour. If this system of relationships had been worked out, it would now be of incalculable benefit. But it never was worked out. The craving for immediate political and practical application shortened the vision of our Socialist leaders. In the discussion of *Fabianism and the Empire* as early as 1900, lip service was paid to Tennyson's "Federation of the World," but it was the contemptuous lip service of men convinced of their own superior common-sense, and the tract itself, drafted by Shaw and evidently revised and patched a great deal by warier minds, assumed that the division of the whole planet amongst a small number of imperialisms, each under the leadership of a Great Power, was destined to be rapidly completed, that further synthesis was hopelessly remote, and that making "our Empire" efficient was a fit and proper limit to the outlook of British Socialism. Those were the days when "efficiency" was a ruling catchword. It implied both the business and military efficiency of the Empire regarded as a competing organization. Just as the Fabians of thirty-odd years ago could not or would not or did not dare see beyond parish councillors, parliaments, trade unions, constituencies of people hardly able to read, and all the obdurate antiquated forms of contemporary law, so they would not and probably could not see beyond the Competing Great Empires of 1900-1914. The *New Statesman*, which was started

by the Webbs and their friends in 1913, as a Socialist weekly, remained sedulously disdainful of the "World-State" up to the outbreak of the Great War.... Then came rapid changes of opinion about the permanence and desirability of those "Great Powers" and their imperial systems, and the *New Statesman* of to-day is as much for the World-State as I am.

Let me turn now to another major item in my account-rendered of the essentials that made the Socialism of the eighties and nineties so deficient and ineffective as a key to human frustration.

Socialism was primarily a criticism of private possessiveness in the common weal, and yet in no part of the Socialist movement in Britain or abroad, was there any evidence of an awareness, much less an examination of the connection between proprietary claims and monetary inflation and deflation. The Socialist movement floated along in a happy unconsciousness of the possible effect of inflation in releasing the debtor and worker from the claims and advantage of ownership. Nowhere was monetary control linked with the process of expropriating the landowner and private capitalist. Yet many of our minds were playing about quite close to that topic. In my *Modern Utopia* (1905) I even threw out the idea of a currency based on energy units. I could do that and still be unaware that I was touching on another vital deficiency in the Socialist project. The normal Fabian gathering had a real horror of the "currency Crank," as it termed anyone who ventured to say that money has ways and tricks of its own which no serious student of social welfare can ignore. Platform and audience rose in revolt together at the mere whisper of such disturbing ideas.

It was not merely that the Fabians refused to think about money; they pushed the thought away from them. A paragraph from *Tract 70* published in 1896, dealing with the "Mission of the Fabians" is probably unequalled in all literature for self-complacent stupidity. "The Fabian Society ... has no distinctive opinions on the Marriage Question, Religion, Art, abstract Economics, historic Evolution, Currency, or any other subject than its own special business of practical Democracy and Socialism." As one reads one can almost hear a flat voice, with a very very sarcastic stress on the capitals, reciting this fatuous declaration.

The same intellectual conservatism, the same refusal to expand its interests beyond the elementary simplicity of its original assumptions, is to be seen in the attitude of the Fabian Society towards education and the instruction of people generally in the aims of the Socialist reconstruction. In 1906 indeed I was already protesting to the Fabian Society that in order to bring about Socialism we must "make Socialists," but the still more searching and difficult proposition that in order to carry on a Socialist state you must make a Socialist population, was beyond even my imaginative courage. In *Mankind in the Making* (1902), I showed myself alive to the interdependence of general education and social structure but my projected curriculum was extremely sketchy and the political and educational propositions do not interlock clinchingly. I attacked the monarchy as a centre of formalism and insincerity. It was a mask and disguised the actual facts of government. It is however only in quite recent works of mine such as the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1932) and *The Shape of Things to Come*, (1933) that I recognize that public education and social construction are welded by the very nature of things into one indivisible process.

Finally, as a fifth great imperfection of our nineteenth century Socialism, and one that seems now the most incredible, was the repudiation of planning. Socialism sought to make a new world and yet resisted any attempt to scheme or even sketch what the world was to be. In the retrospect this seems the most extraordinary of all the defects of the movement and yet perhaps it was inevitable at the time. Providentialism was in the spirit of the age. Belief in the necessity of progress anyhow, was almost universal. Even Atheists believed in a sort of Providence. The self-complacency of the Wonderful Century has already become incredible to our unsafe, uneasy and critical generation. But the nineteenth century Individualist said in effect, "give everybody the maximum of personal initiative short of permitting actual murder and robbery, and then free competition will give you the best possible results for mankind." And the nineteenth century Socialist answered him, "Destroy the capitalist system, take property out of the hands of individuals and vest it in any old governing body you find about, and all will be well." This belief in the final indulgence of fate was

universal.

But the influence of Marx had greatly intensified that general disposition to a fundamental belief in immanent good luck. Marx was an uninventive man with, I think, a subconscious knowledge of his own uninventiveness. He collected facts, scrutinized them, analysed them and drew large generalizations from them. But he lacked the imaginative power necessary to synthesize a project. His exceptionally intense egotism insisted therefore on a pose of scientific necessitarianism and a depreciation of any social inventiveness. He fostered among his associates a real jealousy of the creative imagination, imaginative dullness masqueraded among them as sound common-sense, and making plans, "Utopianism" that is, became at last one of the blackest bugbears in the long lists dictated by Marxist intolerance. Any attempt to work out the details of the world contemplated under Socialism was received by the old Marxists with contemptuous hostility. At the very best it was wasting time, they declared, on the way to that destructive revolution which would release the mechanical benevolence latent in things. Then we should see. They were all (before the Russian revolution knocked practical sense into them) embittered anti-planners. The Faithful may try to deny this nowadays, but their vast dull abusive literature, stored away in the British Museum and elsewhere, bears it heavy witness. Salvation could come only by the Class War and in the Class War, itself inevitable, was all that sufficed for salvation. And their vehemence, their immense pretensions to scientific method, overawed many a Socialist who stood far outside their organization. They sterilized Socialism for half a century. Indeed from first to last the influence of Marx has been an unqualified drag upon the progressive reorganization of human society. We should be far nearer a sanely organized world system to-day if Karl Marx had never been born.

Contact with reality has since insisted upon the most remarkable adjustments of his theories and the completest repudiations of his essential intellectual conservatism and finality. It has obliged Communist Socialism to become progressive and scientific in method, in complete defiance of its founder and of its early evangelical spirit. Lenin conjured government by mass-democracy

out of sight, "vanished" it as conjurors say, by his reorganization of the Communist Party so as to make it a directive élite, and by his organization of the soviets in successive tiers. The ultimate adoption of the Five Year Plan and its successor has been the completest change over from the providentialism of Marx to the once hated and despised method of the Utopists. Russia, as we are all beginning to realize nowadays, is now no longer a Communism nor a democratic Socialism, it has come out of these things as a chick comes out of its egg and egg membranes. It is a novel experimental state capitalism, growing more scientific in its methods every year. It is the supposititious child of necessity in the household of theory. Steadily now throughout the world the Socialist idea and its communist intensification sink into subordination to the ampler proposition of planning upon a planetary scale thrust upon mankind by the urgent pressure of reality. World planning takes Socialism in its stride, and is Socialism plus half a dozen other equally important constructive intentions.

If anyone wants a real measure of the essential unfruitfulness of the Socialist movement, if he wants to realize how like it was to the bag of a hopeful but easily diverted collector into which nothing worth-while was ever put, let him turn his mind for a moment to the adventure of flying. Let him compare the amount of hard work and detailed invention, the patient gathering and development of knowledge and experience, the generous mutual help and mental exchange, that have brought flying in a third of a century, from a dream infinitely less hopeful than the original Socialist project, to the world animating reality it is to-day. Side by side with that vigorous contemporary thrust of the human mind, the literature of Socialism is a pitiful repetition of passing remarks and ineffective promises. Is it any wonder that its name ceases to kindle and its phrases are passing out of use?

But in the late eighties and for us students it was different. Socialism was then a splendid new-born hope. How were we to tell it would decline to grow up, become self-centred and self-satisfied and end as a pervasive, under-developed, unconvincing doctrine? Wearing our red ties to give zest to our frayed and shabby costumes we went great distances through the gas-lit winter streets of London

and by the sulphurous Underground Railway, to hear and criticize and cheer and believe in William Morris, the Webbs, Bernard Shaw, Hubert Bland, Graham Wallas and all the rest of them, who were to lead us to that millennial world.

The students of to-day know that the way is harder and the road longer than we supposed. But for one of us in those old days, there are now dozens of keen youngsters in the world, more adventurous, better inured to the habit of incessant enquiry, more obstinately industrious and more persistent. The constructive movement to-day has no such picturesque, brilliant and perplexing leaders as we had. It has no Shaw, no William Morris, no galaxy of decorators and poets and speakers, it cannot evoke such exciting meetings, but that is because it has far greater breadth and self-reliance. Nineteenth century revolutionism was intellectual ragging and boys'-play in comparison with the revolutionary effort now required of us. The great changes continue and will yield to the control only of adequately organized directive forces. It is only as I look back to what we thought and knew at South Kensington half a century ago that I realize the greatness of the world's imaginative expansion.

§ 6. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENT'S LIFE (1884- 1887)

So far I have been telling of my life in London entirely from the student's end, for that, during these crucial years, was the vitally important end. A vision was being established, in the grey matter of my brain, of the world in which I was to live for all the remainder of my years. Every week-day we students converged from our diversified homes and lodgings upon the schools in Exhibition Road to learn what the gigantic dim beginnings of the new scientific world-order, which had evoked those schools, had, gropingly and confusedly enough, to tell us. That new world-order was saying immensely important things to us, however indistinctly it was saying them as yet, fundamental things about life and its framework of matter and about our planet; and among ourselves we were awakening to our first perceptions of the drama of human politics and economic affairs. The beds we slept in, the meals we ate, the

companionships we formed outside the college limits were necessarily individual and secondary things.

They were not so secondary that they did not exercise a profound influence on our personal destinies. In those days the organization of the South Kensington student's life hardly extended beyond the class rooms and laboratories; there were no students' hostels and our times before ten and after five were entirely in our own hands. We dispersed in the evening to the most various lodgings and the oddest of marginal experiences.

My account of the systematic foundation I was given in biological and physical science, of how that foundation was revised, strengthened and extended in subsequent years, and of how I developed a system of social and political concepts upon the framework of the socialism of the period, has carried my story forward in these last respects far beyond my student days. And indeed far away from myself. I must now bring the reader back to the raw youngster of seventeen up from the country, because there are still several things I want to tell of his particular adolescence and of adolescence in general.

Neither my father, my mother nor I, had had the slightest idea of how I could be put up in London, and we knew of no competent adviser. I had to live on my weekly guinea, that was a primary condition. My mother had perhaps an exaggerated idea of the moral dangers of the great city and too little confidence in my innate chastity and good sense. She had had an ancient friendship, dating from the Midhurst days, with the wife of a milkman in the Edgware Road. They had carried on an intermittent and pious correspondence until her friend died. The friend had had a daughter who was married to an employee of a wholesale grocery firm and to her my mother wrote, seeking a lodging for me, a dry pure spot, so to speak, above the flooding corruption of London. She was happy to entrust me to someone she knew — and she did not reflect how little she knew of this daughter of the elect. As a matter of fact my landlady had relapsed with great thoroughness from the austere standards of her Evangelical upbringing. Piety was conspicuously absent from the crowded little house in Westbourne Park to which I was consigned. The establishment was, indeed, another of those endless petty jokes,

always, I think in the worst possible taste, which my mother's particular Providence seemed to delight in playing upon her.

The house, though small, was extensively sublet. On the ground floor was a lower-division civil service clerk and his wife, whose recent marriage was turning out badly. On the first floor and upward one were my landlady and her husband, two boys on the top floor, and I and another man lodger each of us in a room of his own. I think my fellow lodger was some sort of clerk, but I cannot now remember very much about him. We got all our food out except breakfast and, in my own case, a meat tea on week-days, and we shared a common Sunday repast. There was no servant. I do not remember that there was any bathroom — a statement which is perhaps best left in that simplicity.

From this lodging I set off with my little bag of books and instruments by way of Westbourne Grove and Kensington Gardens to the vast mental expansions of the schools and in the evening, before the gardens closed at dusk, I hurried back, often having to run hard through the rustling dead leaves, as the keepers whistled and shouted "All out." South of the green spaces and heavy boughs of the Gardens were laboratories, libraries, museums and astronomical observatories; north were the shops of Queens Road and Westbourne Grove, the gas-lit windows of Whiteley's stores and the intensely personal life of this congested houseful of human beings to which my mother had consigned me. Never was there so complete a transition from the general to the particular. There was a small living-room on a half-landing which I shared with the two boys, and where I wrote up my notes or read my textbooks, on an American-cloth-covered table by the light of a gas jet, while they did their school homework or scuffled with each other.

Both the wives in this double ménage were slatternly women entirely preoccupied with food, drink, dress and sex. They were left alone in the house during the day and during that middle period they "cleaned things up" or gave way to lassitude or, when they were in the mood, dressed themselves up in their smartest to go off to some other part of London, to wander in the shops and streets and seek vague adventures. It was a great triumph to be picked up by a man, perhaps treated to refreshment, to play the great and mysterious lady

with him, make a rendezvous with him, which might or might not be observed, and talk about it all afterwards excitedly — with anyone but one's husband. The sayings and doings of the gallant were recalled minutely and searched for evidence as to whether he was a gentleman or what manner of man he was. The prize in this imaginative game was an ideal being, the clubman, the man about town; but it always seemed uncertain whether he had been found. He might have been just a chap up from the country on holiday, or some salesman out of work.

Things livened up for these wives in the evening and at the week-end. There were no "pictures" then but there were music-halls where drinks were served in the auditorium and there they went with their husbands. On Saturdays there was shopping for the Sunday dinner and most of the two households went in a sort of band to the shops and stores and stalls in the Edgware Road. I was invited to join in these rounds on several occasions. We mingled in the human jam between the bawling shopkeepers and the bawling barrow vendors. We stopped and stared, crowding up, at any amusing incident. We bought shrewdly. We saluted acquaintances. We refreshed ourselves in some saloon bar. I stood treat in my turn, condemning myself to go lunchless on the following Monday and Tuesday.

Sunday had a ritual of its own. The men were given clean linen in the morning and driven out to walk along the Harrow Road until by doing three miles they could qualify as "travellers" for refreshment at an inn. This they did with a doggish air. "Whaddleye-*ave* Guv'ner?" Thence home. Meanwhile the wives prepared a robust joint Sunday dinner. This was consumed with cheerfulness and badinage. Then the boys were packed off to Sunday school, and dalliance became the business of the afternoon. The married couples retired to their apartments; the lodger went off to a lady. I was left to entertain a young woman, who was I think, a sister of my landlady's husband. I do not know how she came in, but she was there. I have forgotten almost everything about her except that she was difficult to entertain. I sat on a sofa with her and caressed and was caressed by her, attempting small invasions of her costume and suchlike gallantries which she resisted playfully but firmly. Her favourite expressions were "Ow! *starp* it" and "Nart that." I remember I disliked her and

her resistances extremely and I cannot remember any definite desire for her. I am quite at a loss now to explain why it was I continued to make these advances. I suppose because it was Sunday afternoon, and I was too congested with unusual nourishment to attempt any work, and there was nothing else to be done with her. Or if there were I did not know how to set about doing it.

This manner of life was presently grossly animated by a violent quarrel between the two wives. The Sunday dinners were divided; all co-operations ceased. The precise offence I never knew, whether it centred round the lodger, one or both of the husbands or some person or persons unknown. But it involved unending recriminations in the common passage and upon the staircase, and attempts to involve the husbands. The husbands showed themselves lacking in the true manly spirit and came home late with a hang-dog look. My landlady was very insistent upon some defect in the health of her sub-tenant. "She's in a state when no man ought to go near her," is an enigmatical sentence delivered from the half landing, that has survived across the years.

One day my landlady came into my room to change the pillow case while I was there and provoked me into a quasi-amorous struggle. She was wearing a print dress carelessly or carefully unhooked at the neck. Then she became reproachful at my impudence and remarked that I might be a man already, the way I behaved. And afterwards the lodger who seems to have been hovering in the passage, observed at supper in the tone of a warning friend, that if she thought I was too young to bring trouble upon her she might find herself mistaken.

Suchlike small things on the far side, the individual life side, of Kensington Gardens, excited me considerably, bothered me with contradictory impulses, disgusted me faintly and interfered rather vexatiously with the proper copying out of my notes of Professor Huxley's lectures.

It was certainly not the sort of pure safe life away from home that my mother had desired for me, but it did not occur to me to tell her anything about it and I should probably have begun my actual sexual life very speedily, clumsily and grossly and slipped into inglorious trouble if it had not been for the sensible action of a cousin on my

father's side, whom he had asked to keep an eye on me.

My father was the sort of man to like, admire and cultivate a friendly niece and his opinion of Janie Gall was a particularly high one. She was an assistant in the costume department at an establishment in Kensington High Street which I see still flourishes, Messrs. Derry & Toms, and she made me call upon her and take her out on several occasions. It was like old times at Southsea to be the escort of an elegant lady from the costumes; I knew the rôle and we got on very well together. In response to her frank enquiries I described to her the more seemly and impersonal defects of my lodgings, considered as quarters for a studious spirit, and she grasped the situation and acted with great promptitude.

A sister-in-law of my father's was letting lodgings in the Euston Road; the situation at Westbourne Park was explained by my father to my mother, who had perhaps allowed the natural jealousy of relations-in-law to blind her to the merits of my Aunt Mary, and I and my small portmanteau were promptly transferred — probably in a four-wheeled "growler" — to my new quarters. A mile was added each way to my daily journey to the schools, but now it was no longer necessary to run at twilight because the new route lay diagonally across Hyde Park — and Hyde Park stands open to our bolder citizens night and day.

It is queer that I do not remember the particulars of that move, nor can I recall the address of that house in which I lodged in Westbourne Park, nor the names of either my landlady, her sub-tenant or her lodger. The few facts I have given and one or two other slightly salacious details remain in my memory, but all the rest of that interlude is forgotten beyond all recalling. It links to nothing else. I disliked it and put it out of my mind. I cannot remember how long it was, whether it was a matter of weeks or months that I lodged there before I went to Euston Road. I looked, so to speak, through a hole in my life of some weeks more or less, into a sort of humanity, coarser, beastlier and baser than anything I had ever known before. None of the other people in my experience before or since were quite so like simmering hot mud as that Westbourne Park household. I cannot recall really pleasant things about anybody in it, whereas there is scarcely any other group of people in my past which had not

its redeeming qualifications. I think the peculiar unpleasantness of that episode lies in the fact that we were all too close together. We were as congested as the Zoo monkeys used to be before the benign reign of Sir Chalmers Mitchell. Crowded in that big cage they seemed in those days the nastiest of created things. Now, distributed spaciously under happier and less provocative conditions even the baboons have become — practically — respectable.

I can recall very little about Janie Gall beyond this timely intervention. She was a tall, blonde, sedate young woman whose life had been divided hitherto between England and her father's ship in the far east. She told me once that she was the first white woman ever to visit the Pelew Islands, but she had nothing very much to tell me about those distant scenes. She passed out of my world and afterwards I learnt she had gone to Sweden and had married a Swede named Alsing. I have a perfectly clear picture of myself walking along Knightsbridge and talking with her, and nearly everything else about her is obliterated. Did she go first, or afterwards, to a well-known mourning warehouse in Regent Street? I cannot remember any of these details. They are after all very trifling details.

But 181 Euston Road stands out very bleak and distinct in my memories. In the eighties Euston Road was one of those long corridors of tall gaunt houses which made up a large part of London. It was on the northern boundary of Bloomsbury. Its houses were narrow and without the plaster porticos of their hinterland and of Bayswater, Notting Hill, Pimlico, Kilburn and suchlike regions. They had however, narrow strips of blackened garden between them and the street, gardens in which at the utmost grew a dying lilac or a wilted privet. One went up half a dozen steps to the front door and the eyebrows of the basement windows were on a level with the bottom step.

So far as I can puzzle out the real history of a hundred years ago, there was a very considerable economic expansion after the Napoleonic war, years before the onset of the railways. The steam railway was a great stimulus to still further expansion, its political consequences were tremendous, but it was itself a product of a general release of energy and enterprise already in progress. Under a régime of unrestricted private enterprise, this burst of vigour

produced the most remarkable and lamentable results. A system of ninety-nine year building leases was devised, which made vast fortunes for the ground landlords and rendered any subsequent reconstruction of the houses put up almost impossible until the ground lease fell in. Under these conditions private enterprise spewed a vast quantity of extremely unsuitable building all over the London area, and for four or five generations made an uncomfortable incurable stress of the daily lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

It is only now, after a century, that the weathered and decaying lava of this mercenary eruption is being slowly replaced — by new feats of private enterprise almost as greedy and unforeseeing. Once they were erected there was no getting rid of these ugly dingy pretentious substitutes for civilized housing. They occupied the ground. There was no choice; people just had to do with them and pay the high rents demanded. From the individualistic point of view it was an admirable state of affairs. To most Londoners of my generation these rows of jerry-built unalterable homes seemed to be as much in the nature of things as rain in September and it is only with the wisdom of retrospect, that I realize the complete irrational scrambling planlessness of which all of us who had to live in London were the victims.

The recklessly unimaginative entrepreneurs who built these great areas of nineteenth century London and no doubt made off to more agreeable surroundings with the income and profits accruing, seem to have thought, if they thought at all, that there was an infinite supply of prosperous middle-class people to take the houses provided. Each had an ill-lit basement with kitchen, coal cellars and so forth, below the ground level. Above this was the dining-room floor capable of division by folding doors into a small dining-room and a bureau; above this again was a drawing-room and above this a floor or so of bedrooms in diminishing scale. No bathroom was provided and at first the plumbing was of a very primitive kind. Servants were expected to be cheap and servile and grateful, and most things, coals, slops, and so forth had to be carried by hand up and down the one staircase. This was the London house, that bed of Procrustes to which the main masses of the accumulating population of the most swiftly growing city in the world, including thousands and thousands

of industrial and technical workers and clerks, students, foreigners upon business missions, musicians, teachers, the professional and artistic rank and file, agents, minor officials, shop employees living out and everyone indeed who ranked between the prosperous householder and the slum denizen, had to fit their lives. The multiplying multitude poured into these moulds with no chance of protest or escape. From the first these houses were cut-up by sub-letting and underwent all sorts of cheap and clumsy adaptations to the real needs of the time. It is only because the thing was spread over a hundred years and not concentrated into a few weeks that history fails to realize what sustained disaster, how much massacre, degeneration and disablement of lives, was due to the housing of London in the nineteenth century.

(But the autobiography of any denizen of any of the swelling great cities of the nineteenth century who wished to place his story in regard to the historical past and the future would have, I suppose, a similar story to tell of housing conditions; the same tale of growth without form — like a cancer. New York was almost as bad and St. Petersburg far worse. There is a dreadful flavour of mortality about these city growths of the past hundred years, so that one wonders at times whether the world will ever completely recover from them. Nowhere was there, nowhere is there yet, an intelligent preparation of accommodation for the specialized civilians in the endless variety rendered inevitable by the enlarging social body. Nowhere was there protection from those Smart Alecs, the primary poison of the whole process, who piled up the rents. Even when the tenants were people who did work of vital importance to the community, the ground had been so sold under their feet that they came back from work to needlessly restricted and devitalizing quarters for their sleep and leisure.)

My uncle William had been no better business man than my father and he had had no skill in cricket or any other earning power to fall back upon. He had been a draper and, my mother said, extravagant. I had seen him on one occasion, a dark shabby unhappy man clad in black, who came to Atlas House one wintry afternoon, ate with us, talked apart with my father, borrowed a half sovereign from our insufficiency and departed — to die not long afterwards in a

workhouse infirmary. He had married one of two sisters named Candy, daughters of a small Hampshire farmer; the other had remained unmarried and, after their father's death, with a van load of furniture and a few pounds, she and my widowed aunt had come to London to live by letting lodgings. They planned to occupy the basement, cooking in the back kitchen and living in the front and doing all the work up and down the house; the dining-room floor to be let to one tenant and the drawing-room floor to another and all the rest of the bedrooms to nice young men or respectable young ladies; and thus they would get a living. They made no provision in their estimates for the wear and tear of their furniture nor the wear and tear of themselves, and so, year by year, their rooms and their services became less and less attractive and desirable. That was what happened to countless widows, old servants with a scrap of "savings," wives of employees who wanted to help their husbands a bit and all that vast miscellany of dim and dingy women, the London landladies, who were guyed so mercilessly in the popular fiction of the time. The larger, more successful, lodging houses had a "slavey," a poor drudge to do the heavier carrying and scrubbing, but people like my aunt and her sister, had to be their own slaveys.

When my cousin Janie Gall took me to tea at Euston Road the Saturday afternoon before my removal, my aunt and her sister were in company costume with caps and small aprons, like my mother at Up Park. But even then I thought them grimy, and, poor dears! they *were* grimy. They were far grimier than my mother had ever been in the worst days at Atlas House. How could they have been anything else, seeing that the house was warmed throughout by coal-fires and that they were perpetually carrying up scuttles of coal (at sixpence a scuttle) to their various lodgers, and dusting and scrubbing and turning out rooms and dealing with slops and ashes? My aunt Mary was a little bright-eyed woman and very affectionate and lovable from the beginning; her sister was larger, with a small eye and profile faintly suggestive of a parrot, judicious in her manner and given to moods of gloom and disapproval. As we sat talking politely, a dark-eyed girl of my own age, in the simple and pretty "art" dress that then prevailed came shyly into the room and stood looking at us. She had a grave and lovely face, very firmly modelled, broad brows and a

particularly beautiful mouth and chin and neck. This was my cousin Isabel whom later I was to marry.

It was arranged that I should have a room upstairs and work at my notes in the evening by the gas light in the underground front room. This was a rather crowded room with hanging shelves for books, a what-not and a piano upon which at times my cousin played not very skilfully the few pieces of music she had learnt. My aunt would darn stockings and her sister fret over accounts, or sometimes we would play whist, at which Miss Candy, aunt Arabella, was as precise as Lamb's Mrs. Battle. She found the way her sister Mary played particularly trying. "I'm silly," said my aunt Mary anticipating her reproof. "You *shouldn't* be silly, Mary," said auntie Bella. They had been saying that over and over again since they were girls — far back in the eighteen fifties.

On occasion, when the upstairs lodgers were away or the rooms unlet, we transferred our evenings to the drawing-room or dining-room. If I wanted to concentrate I went to my own bedroom and there I would work by candle-light, often in an overcoat, with my feet wrapped about with my clean underlinen and stuck into the lowest drawer of my chest of drawers to keep them out of the draught along the floor.

I forget most of the lodgers. There was a woman student at University College who had the drawing-room floor for some years, and a German woman in the dining-room whose visitors roused Auntie Bella's censorious curiosity. Some of them were men, and foreigners at that. "We mustn't come to that sort of thing," said Aunt Arabella darkly, but went no further in the matter.

On the top floor was a poor old clergyman and his wife, who presently died one after the other, the wife first. He had either never had a vicarage or he had lost one, and he earned a precarious income by going off to churches for a week-end or a week or so on "supply," to relieve the regular incumbent. Until, one wintry week-end, some careless person sent an open dog- cart to meet him at the railway station and gave him pneumonia. Apparently he had no surviving friends or if he had they did not come forward; he died intestate and practically penniless, and I escorted my aunt one wet and windy morning to Highgate cemetery where we were the only mourners at

his funeral. Another old clerical derelict, with a dewdrop at his nose-tip, hurried through the service. It was my first funeral. I had never dreamt that a clergyman could end so shabbily, or that the Establishment could discard its poor priests so heartlessly. It was quite a new light on the church. My little aunt was his sole creditor and executor and I doubt if, when the doctor was satisfied, there was much left to set against the arrears of the poor old fellow's bill.

I lodged at 181 Euston Road for all the rest of my student life. Every day in the session, unless I got up too late, I walked to South Kensington. I would go through the back streets as far as the top of Regent Street with Isabel; she worked in Regent Street as a retoucher of photographs; there we said good-bye for the day and I went on for all the length of Oxford Street to the Marble Arch and thence across the Park to Exhibition Road. If I was late however I left my cousin unescorted and went by train from Gower Street Station (Euston Square they call it now) to Praed Street at a cost of three half-pence, and then ran across the Gardens. And as I went down Exhibition Road, Euston Road passed out of my mind and my student life resumed again as if it were a distinct and separate stream of experience. I thought again upon the scale of astronomical distances and geological time and how, when presently Socialism came, life would be valiant and spacious and there would be no more shabbiness or darkness in the world.

§ 7. HEART'S DESIRE

I want to make my physical presence at the time I left South Kensington, as real as possible to the reader. I have given five sections to tell how my picture of life in the universe was built up in my brain; I now want to show what sort of body it was that carried this brain about and supplied it with blood and obedient protection. By 1887, it had become a scandalously skinny body. I was five foot five and always I weighed less than eight stone. My proper weight should have been 9 st. 11 lbs., but I was generally nearer to seven, and that in my clothes. And they were exceedingly shabby clothes. It did not add to the charm of my costume that frequently I wore a

waterproof collar, an invention now happily forgotten again. It was a glossy white rubber-covered thing that cost nothing for laundry. That was the point of it. You washed it overnight with soap and a sponge, and then it was ready in the morning. But after a time it accumulated something rather like the tartar that discolours teeth. It marks one difference that is worth noting between the eighties and the present time, that never a Kensington student, however needy, would have dreamed of appearing in the classroom or laboratory without what could at least be considered a white collar. Now, I suppose, a good half of the Kensington crowd wear open-necked shirts. A certain proportion of us in those days, and all the staff, wore top hats.

I was as light and thin as I have said, because I was undernourished. I ate a hastily poached egg and toast in the morning before going off for my three mile tramp to the schools and I had a meat-tea about five when I got back — and a bread and cheese supper. Most of my time I was so preoccupied with my studies and my intellectual interests that I did not observe what was happening to me, but occasionally and more especially in my third year, I would become acutely aware of my bad condition. I would survey my naked body, so far as my bedroom looking-glass permitted, with extreme distaste, and compare it with the Apollos and Mercuries in the Art Museum. There were hollows under the clavicles, the ribs showed and the muscles of the arms and legs were contemptible. I did not realize that this was merely a matter of insufficient food and exercise. I thought it was an inferior body — perhaps past hope of mending.

To me, in my hidden thoughts, the realization that my own body was thin and ugly was almost insupportable — as I suppose it would be to most young men or women. In the secret places of my heart I wanted a beautiful body and I wanted it because I wanted to make love with it, and all the derision and humour with which I treated my personal appearance in my talking and writing to my friends, my caricatures of my leanness and my unkempt shabbiness, did not affect the profundity of that unconfessed mortification. Each year I was becoming much more positively and urgently sexual and the desire to be physically strong and attractive was intense. I do not know how far my psychology in these matters is exceptional, but I

have never been able to consider any sort of love as tolerable except a complete encounter of two mutually desirous bodies — and they have to be reasonably lovely bodies. The circumstances must be beautiful or adventurous or both. I believe this is how things are with nine people out of ten; as natural as hunger and thirst.

The fact that I was slovenly to look upon and with hollows under my collar-bones and with shoulder-blades that stuck out, could not alter these insistent demands of the life in me. No doubt these realizations reinforced those balancing inhibitions and that wariness and fastidiousness which are as natural as the primary cravings, and made me more than normally secretive; but to hold down an urgency is not to diminish it. I had quite another set of motives, ambition, a desire for good intellectual performance and that vague passion for service which expressed itself in my socialism, and I tried, not always successfully, to take refuge in these from my more vital and intimate imperatives.

Beautiful girls and women do not come the way of poor students in London. One was nearer to such beings among the costume hands and counter assistants of the draper's shop. There were a few friendly women fellow-students in the laboratories, but they deliberately disavowed sex in their dress and behaviour. Sex consciousness broke out to visibility only among the Art students, and these we saw but rarely during brief promenades in the Art Museum, which made a kind of neutral territory between the Art Schools and ourselves. On my long march back to Euston Road I would see women walking in the streets, especially along Oxford Street and Regent Street, and sometimes in the light of the shops, one would shine out with an effect of loveliness and set my imagination afire. I would be reminded of Ellen Terry walking in the sunshine upon the lawn at Surly Hall. Or I would see some handsome girl riding in the Row or taking a dog for a run in the park. They were all as inaccessible as the naked women in the Chantry pictures.

It was practically inevitable that all this suppressed and accumulating imaginative and physical craving in me should concentrate upon the one human being who was conceivable as an actual lover; my cousin Isabel. She and I had from the outset a subtle sense of kindred that kept us in spite of differences, marriage and

divorce, friendly and confident of one another to the end of her days, but I think that from the beginning we should have been brother and sister to each other, if need, proximity and isolation had not forced upon us the rôle of lovers, very innocent lovers. She was very pleasant to look upon, gentle mannered, kind and firm, and about her I released all the pent up imaginations of my heart. I was devoted to her, I insisted, and she was devoted to me. We were passionate allies who would conquer the world together. In spite of all appearances, there was something magnificent about us. She did her best to follow me, though something uncontrollable in her whispered that this was all nonsense. And whenever we could avoid the jealous eye of Auntie Bella, we kissed and embraced. Aunt Mary did not embarrass us because she had taken to me from the beginning.

Across a gulf of half a century I look with an extreme detachment and yet with an intense sympathy upon these two young Londoners, walking out together, whispering in a darkened staircase, hugging in furtive silence on a landing. Isabel wore simple dresses after the Pre-Raphaelite fashion. We should think them graceful to-day except that the sleeves would seem big and puffy to us and the pretty neck unaccountably hidden. Abroad she wore a cloak in winter and her hats were usually those velvet caps that also came out of the Cinquecento.

Having stripped my youthful self for your edification I will now cover up my worst physical deficiencies with my clothes again. They were rather shabby but very respectable, a grey "mixture" suit and a grey overcoat in winter. The collar was white even if it was waterproof and the hat was a hard bowler. There were no soft felt hats until much later and a cap, in London, would have been disgraceful behaviour. And we lived in an age when everyone had best clothes. On Sunday we two walked out together with a certain added seriousness; we walked in Regents Park or we went to a church or a picture gallery, when there was a picture gallery open, or to some public meeting, and then I wore a morning coat and a top hat.

In my desire for correct particulars in this autobiography, I have spent some time trying to trace the beginnings, the rise and fall of my successive top hats. They mark periods in human history as surely as

do the ramshackle houses in which I spent the first half of my life and the incoherent phases of my upbringing and education. In the mind of a febrile psycho-analyst, these top hats might be made to show the most curious and significant phases in the upward struggle of the human intelligence. They were more voluntary and so more subtle in their fluctuating intimations than were turbans, fezzes, pigtails and the like which outlasted whole generations. But that history of the rise and fall of the top hat has yet to be written. When I was born it had already passed its zenith; cricketers no longer played the game in top hats — though my father had begun in that fashion; but it still seemed the most natural thing in the world for me to take out my cousin on Sundays in this guise. Half the young men I met on that day sported similar glossy cylinders. In the city and west-end, on a week day, you rarely saw a man wearing anything else. The streets below repeated the rhythms of the clustering chimney pots on the roofs above. I must have acquired my first specimen, when I acquired my morning coat and its tails, during the second year of my apprenticeship at Southsea. But was that the one I wore in London? I think it was and if so it went right on with me to 1891, when it died a natural death — as I shall tell in its place — in the presence of Mr. Frank Harris, the editor of the *Fortnightly Review*. After that I think I bought another to attend a funeral and a third seems to have marked a phase of social acquiescence before the War. I went to Bond Street picture shows, and the Academy, in the latter. It ended as a charade property for my sons at Easton Glebe. Since then I have had no more top hats.

But it is just that indication of social acquiescence which justifies this digression and makes the top hat of my student days so significant. It was the symbol of complete practical submission to a whole world of social conventions. It was not, in my case at any rate, just a careless following of the current fashion, for peace and quietness. That early top hat in particular had been economized for, it expressed an effort, it had *had* to be worn.

Now as my cousin and I walked along the broad path between the flower beds of Regents Park — bright and gay they were then but not nearly so beautiful as they are now — I would be talking very earnestly of atheism and agnosticism, of republicanism, of the social

revolution, of the releasing power of art, of Malthusianism, of free-love and such-like liberating topics. In a tail coat and top hat. My mind was twenty years ahead of my visible presence. It was indeed making already for the gardens of Utopia.

But my cousin who was as direct and simple as she was sane, honest and sweet, was just walking in her Sunday best in Regents Park.

In my eagerness to find in her the mate of my imaginings, I quite overlooked the fact that while I had been reading and learning voraciously since the age of seven, she had never broken a leg and so had never been inoculated with the germ of reading. While I had gone to school precociously equipped, she had begun just the other way about as a backward girl, and she had never recovered from that disadvantage. It was a purely accidental difference to begin with, I am sure her brain was inherently as good as or better than mine, but an inalterable difference in range and content was now established. Her world was like an interior by a Dutch master and mine was a loose headlong panorama of all history, science and literature. She tried valiantly to hang on to what I was saying, but the gap was too wide. She thought I must be dreadfully "clever" to talk such nonsense and she comforted her mind with the reflection that it had not the slightest relation to things about us. She liked me by nature and she did not like to irritate me, but sometimes something I said was too much for her, and she "stood up for" the old Queen, or the landlords, or business men, or Church; whatever it was I happened to be abolishing. It was a fixed principle in her broad and kindly mind that they were all "doing their best" and that in their places we should do no better. Then, since what she said spoilt the picture I wanted to make of her in my imagination, I would become rude and over-bearing.

I tried to get her to read books and particularly the books of Mr. John Ruskin, but like so many people who have had the benefit of a simple English education she was book-shy. The language she met in books was not the language of her speech and thoughts. I doubt if she read a hundred books in all her life.

I was far too much in a ferment myself to reduce my ideas to terms that would have persuaded her. I hadn't that much grasp of my

own views. “Everybody doesn’t think alike,” said my cousin. “But that’s no earthly reason why you shouldn’t think at all,” I bit, and after that the young couple would go on their way in a moody silence, dimly aware that there was something unjust and wrong about it all, but quite unable to find out what was wrong or in any way set it right. Why was I always talking of these queer and out-of-the-way things? Because otherwise and particularly in my silk hat and so forth, I was quite a nice boy. And again why was I sometimes so pressing about love-making — in a way that one ought not to think about until one was in a position to marry? And that might not be for years. A little love-making there might be, no doubt, but one must not go too far.

My mind in those days refused absolutely to recognize the incompatibility that is so plain as I state it here. I had laid hands on Isabel, so to speak, to love her and I would not be denied. She was to be my woman whether she liked it or not. I tethered my sexual and romantic imagination to her so long as I was in London — and that, quite as much as my poverty, saved me from the squalor of the street-walker. With a devotion that was more than half jealousy, whenever work did not hold me at South Kensington I used to devour my meat tea and then set off out again down to Regent Street to meet her and bring her home, and always when she was working in the evening at some art classes at the Birkbeck Institute, I made my way through the dark Bloomsbury Squares to meet her. These evening assiduities kept me exercised physically but they made grave inroads upon the time I should have given to my proper work. And I loved her smile, I loved her voice, I loved her feminity, I loved to feel that — provided I did not go too far — she was mine. And someday, somewhen, I should do something fine and successful and the world would be at my feet; her tacit reservations would vanish and she would realize that everything I said, did and wanted, was right.

I was always wanting to board and storm and subjugate her imagination so that it would come out at last of its own accord to meet mine. It never came out to meet me.

Through some mysterious instinct my little Aunt Mary understood and believed in my heart’s desire, but Auntie Bella was sterner stuff,

with a more sceptical disposition and an acuter sense of reality. She thought it a pity that Isabel and I were so much together.

That was the naïve intensely personal other side of my life, to which I walked back daily across Hyde Park from that interplay of lectures room, laboratory, debating society and student talk described in the earlier sections of this chapter.

One of the queer things about us human beings is the way the obvious consequences of our actions take us by surprise. I will not now apply this to the large scale instances of the great wars of 1914 and, shall we say? — 1940. But I do remember very vividly how unprepared I was to walk the plank as a condemned science student in the summer of 1887. I had done practically everything necessary to ensure failure and dismissal, but when these came they found me planless and amazed. I suppose that is the way of youth — and all animals. Foresight is among the latest and incompletest of the acquisitions of mankind.

Abruptly the self confidence which had never really failed me since my escape from the Southsea Drapery Emporium, collapsed like a pricked bladder. I had no outlook, no qualifications, no resources, no self-discipline and no physique.

"And what is to become of me *now*?" I asked, in a real panic for the first time since my triumphant exodus from the draper's shop.

VI. — STRUGGLE FOR A LIVING

§ 1. SIXTH START IN LIFE OR THEREABOUTS (1887)

I have to thank my lucky stars — and a faithful friend or so — that I did not sink as a result of my insubordinations, inattentions, digressions and waste of energy at South Kensington into absolute failure. Most of the orderly students in my generation made good as professors and fellows of the Royal Society, as industrial leaders, public officials, heads of important science schools; knighthoods and the like are frequent among them; I am probably the only completely unsatisfactory student turned out by the Normal School, who did not go the pace there and who yet came up again and made a comparative success in life. I was now nearly of age and able to realize the dangers of my position in the world, and I put up a fight according to my lights. But it was a wild and ill-planned fight, and the real commander of my destinies was a singularly facetious Destiny, which seemed to delight in bowling me over in order to roll me through, kicking and struggling, to some new and quite unsuspected opportunity. I have already explained how I became one of the intelligentsia and was saved from a limited life behind a draper's counter by two broken legs, my own first, and then my father's. I have now to tell how I was guided to mental emancipation and real prosperity by a smashed kidney, a ruptured pulmonary blood vessel, an unsuccessful marriage and an uncontrollable love affair.

My very obstinate self-conceit was also an important factor in my survival. I shall die, as I have lived, the responsible centre of my world. Occasionally I make inelegant gestures of self-effacement but they deceive nobody, and they do not suit me. I am a typical Cockney without either reverence or a sincere conviction of inferiority to any fellow creature. In building up in my mind a system of self-protection against the invincible fact that I was a failure as a student and manifestly without either the character or the capacity for a proper scientific career, I had convinced myself that I was a remarkable wit and potential writer. There must be compensation somewhere. I went on writing, indeed, as a toy-dog goes on barking I

yapped manuscript, threateningly, at an inattentive world.

With every desire to be indulgent to myself I am bound to say that every scrap of writing surviving from that period witnesses that the output was copious rubbish, imitative of the worst stuff in the contemporary cheap magazine. There was not a spark of imagination or original observation about it. I made not the slightest use of the very considerable reservoir of scientific and general knowledge already accumulated in my brain. I don't know why. Perhaps I was then so vain that I believed I could write *down* to the public. Or so modest that I thought the better I imitated the better I should succeed. The fact remains that I scribbled vacuous trash. The only writing of any quality at all is to be found in the extremely self-conscious letters I wrote to my friends. Here I really did try to amuse and express myself in my own fashion. These letters are adorned with queer little drawings and A. T. Simmons and Elizabeth Healey among others, seem to have found them worth keeping so that a number of them have been preserved to this day. There is fun in them. I doubt if I could possibly have carried on and become a writer without the support of those two people. They were my sole "public" for years. No letters I wrote to my cousin Isabel survive. I cannot remember writing to her though certainly I must have done so. I doubt if I wrote to her with the same zest and certainty of appreciation.

My plans for a rally against my richly deserved disaster as student, had a certain reasonableness. I was now in a shocking state of bodily unfitness, very thin, under-exercised and with no muscular dexterity, loose in gesture, slow on the turn and feeble in the punch; and it seemed to me that if I got a job as an assistant in a school deep in the country, with good air, good food and good games, (I had my previous invigoration at health-giving Midhurst in my mind) I might pick up the neglected beginnings of my bodily manhood and at the same time get a little leisure to learn, by the method of trial and error, what was the elusive vital thing I didn't yet know about this writing business. I had had, by the bye, one small success and earned a guinea. I had sent a short story, now happily untraceable, to the most popular fiction weekly of those days, the *Family Herald*. It was a very misleading success. It was a sloppy, sentimental, dishonest, short story and its acceptance strengthened me in my delusion that I

had found the way to do it.

Meanwhile I had to live by teaching. In spite of my rather wilted qualifications, there were plenty of residential school jobs at forty or fifty pounds a year to be got; I had matriculated as an ex-collegiate in London University, I was qualified to earn grants in a number of subjects, and I had had teaching experience. The Holt Academy, Wrexham, seemed, on paper, the most desirable of all the places offered me by the agencies. It was a complex organization. A boys' school plus a girls' school plus a college for the preparation of young men for the Calvinistic Methodist ministry, promised variety of teaching and possibilities of talk and exercise with students of my own age. I expected a library, playing fields, a room of my own. I expected fresh air and good plain living. I thought all Wales was lake and mountain and wild loveliness. And the Holt Academy had the added advantage of re-opening at the end of July and so shortening the gap of impecuniosity after the College of Science dispersed.

But when I got to Holt I found only the decaying remains of a once prosperous institution set in a dismal street of houses in a flat ungainly landscape. Holt was a small old town shrunk to the dimensions of a village, and its most prominent feature was a gasometer. The school house was an untidy dwelling with what seemed to be a small whitewashed ex-chapel, with broken and dirty windows and a brick floor, by way of schoolroom. The girls' school was perhaps a score of children and growing girls in a cramped little villa down the street. The candidates for the ministry were three lumpish young men apparently just off the fields, and the boys' school was a handful of farmers' and shopkeepers' sons. My new employer presented himself as a barrel of a man with bright eyes in a round, ill-shaven face, a glib tongue and a staccato Welsh accent, dressed in the black coat, white tie and top hat dear to Tommy Morley, the traditional garb of the dominie. He was dirty, — I still remember his blackened teeth — and his wife was dirty, with a certain life-soiled prettiness. He conducted me to a bedroom which I was to share, I learnt, with two of the embryo Calvinistic ministers.

My dismay deepened as I went over the premises and discovered the routines of the place. The few boarders were crowded into a room or so, sleeping two and three in a bed with no supervision. My only

colleague was a Frenchman, Raut, of whom I heard years afterwards, because he claimed to have possessed himself of the manuscript of a story by me which he was offering for sale. (I found myself unable to authenticate that manuscript.) Meals were served in a room upon a long table covered with American cloth and the food was poor and the cooking bad. There was neither time-table nor scheme of work. We started lessons just anyhow. Spasmodic unexpected half-holidays alternated with storms of educational energy, when we worked far into the evening. Jones had a certain gift for eloquence which vented itself in long prayers and exhortations at meals or on any odd occasion. He would open school with prayer. On occasions of crisis he would pray. His confidence in God was remarkable. He never hesitated to bring himself and us to the attention of an Avenging Providence. He did little teaching himself, but hovered about and interfered. At times, the tedium of life became too much for him and his wife. He would appear unexpectedly in the schoolroom, flushed and staggering, to make a long wandering discourse about nothing in particular or to assail some casual victim with vague disconcerting reproaches. Then for a day or so he would be missing and in his private quarters, and Raut and I and the theological students would keep such order as we found practicable and convenient.

These theological students aimed at some easy, qualifying examination for their spiritual functions. The chief requirement for their high calling was a capacity for intermittent religious feeling and its expression in Welsh, and that they had by birth and routine. They were instructed in "divinity" (poor God!) and the elements of polite learning when it seemed good to Jones that this should happen. They were not without ambitions. Their hopes, I learnt, were not bounded by their own sect. A qualified minister of the Calvinistic Methodists might sometimes be accepted as a recruit and further polished by — I think it was — the Wesleyans. A Welsh-speaking Wesleyan again might have scruples of conscience and get into the Anglican priesthood. The Anglican priesthood had always openings for Welsh speakers and so, far up the vistas of life, a living in the established church beckoned to my room-mates. I know not how far this process of ratting might be carried. An unmarried Anglican can, I believe, become a Roman Catholic priest. In Christendom all roads lead to

Rome, and so my room-mates were potential, if highly improbable, popes.

I improvised lessons in the boys' school and in the girls' school, I taught scripture on Sunday afternoons, played cricket and Association football to the best of my ability, and made my first attendances at a Calvinistic Methodist service. It was more vivid and personal than the Anglican ritual and Rouse, the minister, was more copiously eloquent even than Jones. I found some of the hymns very effective. I was particularly fond of that frequent favourite which begins:

Not all the blood of goats
Shall for my sins atone.

I liked the lusty voices singing together all out, and there was a satisfying picturesqueness about the spiritual geography of Beulah Land and Jordan's Stream, Hermon and Carmel, that let one out, in imagination at least, from Holt.

Christian dost thou hear them On the Holy ground;
How the Hosts of Midian Prowl and prowl around?
Christian, up and SMITE them....

But it was very plain to me, as a surviving letter to Miss Healey testifies, that I realized my career had got into a very awkward cul-de-sac. There was no getting away from this place that I could see, however much I disliked it. I had no money to get away with. There was nothing for me now but to stick it for at least a year, get some better clothes, save a few pounds, hammer away at my writing, and hope for some chance of escape. For a few weeks the weather was very good and I developed a tendency to let things drift. I seem to have forgotten my romantic devotion to my cousin very easily; I suppose her inability to carry on a correspondence had something to do with that. For a time she just went out of the scheme of happenings. I met the daughter of the minister of an adjacent parish, Annie Meredith, a mistress in a high school on holiday, we liked each other at sight and we carried on a brisk and spirited flirtation. I

find I boast about this in my letters — not to Miss Healey but to A. M. Davies — say she is well read and talk of spending "whole hours by shady river banks where I talk grotesquely to her and she very intelligently to me." Had that summer weather and my returning health and vigour lasted for ever, I suppose I should have slackened slowly from my futile literary efforts and reconciled myself altogether to the rôle of a second rate secondary teacher. I should have awakened one day to find myself thirty and still in a school dormitory.

But this is where the peculiar humour of my Guardian Angel came in. Annie Meredith went off to her school work leaving Holt remarkably dull again, and the football season began. I played badly but with a desperate resolve to improve. The lean shock-headed intellectual doing his desperate tactless best in open-air games is never an attractive spectacle. I had a rough time on the field because that was where the bigger louts got back upon me for my English accent and my irritating assumption of superior erudition. One bony youngster fouled me. He stooped, put his shoulders under my ribs, lifted me, and sent me sprawling.

I got up with muddy hands and knees to go on playing. But a strange sickness seized upon me. There was a vast pain in my side. My courage failed me. I couldn't run. I couldn't kick. "I'm going in," I said, and returned sulkily to the house regardless of the game, amidst sounds of incredulous derision.

In the house I was violently sick. I went to lie down. Then I was moved to urinate and found myself staring at a chamber-pot half full of scarlet blood. That was the most dismaying moment in my life. I did not know what to do. I lay down again and waited for someone to come.

Nothing very much was done about me that evening, but in the night I was crawling along the bedroom on all fours, delirious, seeking water to drink. The next day a doctor was brought from Wrexham. He discovered that my left kidney had been crushed.

He was a good doctor but he made one mistake which did very much to restore my prestige at Holt. I had been shocked and sickened but I had had no acute pain at all. He declared however that I must have suffered and still be suffering the greatest agony. I did not care

to dispute his ruling. After all he was a specialist and I was an amateur. As it impressed Jones and Mrs. Jones and seemed likely to raise the low standard of nursing and sympathy in the place, I adopted the bearing of a stoical Red Indian under torture, very successfully. I gave the whole school a most edifying and inexpensive lesson in patient lip-biting heroism.

I lay in bed in that bleakly furnished bedroom for as long as I could, meditating on my future. I spent my coming of age in bed. I had, I decided, to carry on at Holt. I had no money and practically nowhere to go. My father at Bromley was being sold up. Up Park was wearying of Mrs. Wells's family.

At intervals Mr. Jones came and looked at me and I regarded him with that serenity which comes to men who know no alternatives. At first, being afraid that I might die and under the spell of my heroic self control, he was effusive for my comfort. "Would I like some books?" He was going in to Wrexham. I said I had never read *Vanity Fair*. I had always wanted to read *Vanity Fair* and this might be my last chance. "But in your state," protested Jones, sincerely shocked. "The vera name of the book! It must be a vera vera baaad book."

I didn't get it.

In a few days his attentions faded away. I began to be hungry. The doctor said I ought to lie some days longer and be kept warm and well fed. Jones came to suggest I should go home to my friends — unpaid. I explained that I proposed to get up and resume my duties. The weather was turning cold and Jones would have no fires until the first of October, but with a stiffness and ache in my side I got up and went on with my classes in the brick-floored schoolroom. Presently I had a bad cough which grew rapidly worse. Then I discovered that my lungs were imitating my kidney and that the handkerchief into which I coughed was streaked with blood. The Wrexham doctor, calling to see how I was getting on, pronounced me consumptive. But consumptive or not, I meant to see the half year out at least and pocket Jones's twenty pounds. I had a faint malicious satisfaction in keeping Jones to that.

§ 2. BLOOD IN THE SPUTUM (1887)

In those days we knew very little about tuberculosis. People talked of consumption. It was not understood to be infectious and since it produced no symptoms of importance below the diaphragm, it was found particularly suitable for the purposes of sentimental fiction. The fragile sympathetic consumptive with his (or her) bright eyes, high colour and superficially hopeful spirits, doomed to an untimely end — for it was also supposed to be incurable — had unlimited encouragement to brave self-pity and the most unscrupulous demands, for toleration and sacrifice, upon the normal world. So even the intimations, as everyone supposed them to be, of an early death, were not without their compensations.

To a certain extent I fell in with the pattern of behaviour expected of me. I played the interesting consumptive to the best of my ability. But there were forces in both my body and mind that resented this graceful cutting down of my sprawling expectations of life. I don't know how a modern specialist would define my case but it certainly traversed all the accepted medical science of the eighties. No tuberculous germs were ever detected, but there was certainly some degenerative process at work in my lung, breaking down tissue and breaching the walls of blood vessels. This process went on for about five years, rising to a maximum and then being arrested and ceasing, leaving a scarred lung. There was an attack and there were resistances that finally won. But in my case, as in so many cases, there was (and is) no medical science adequate to define the evidently very complex tangle of stimulations and pro and anti-functional forces at work. A degenerative adjustment of my damaged kidney began in 1898 to complicate the hidden business still further. Consequently, beginning with my condemnation by the Wrexham doctor as a consumptive, there were a series of misleading diagnoses, each one creating expectations and holding out prospects to which I tried to adjust my plans of life, and each diagnosis failing in its turn to come true. As late as 1900, I was building a house at Sandgate specially facing towards the sun, with bedrooms, living rooms, loggia and study all on one floor, because I believed I should presently have to live in a bath-chair and be wheeled from room to room. And all the while an essential healthiness was doing its successful utmost to bring me back to physical normality.

Not only were my blood and tissues resisting the suggestion that I was one of those transitory gifted beings too fine and fragile for ordinary life, but my mind also was in active revolt against that idea. I had, I will admit, some beautiful moments of exquisite self-pity, tender even to tears, but they were rare. In my bones I disliked the idea of dying, I disliked it hotly and aggressively. I was exasperated not to have become famous; not to have seen the world. Still more deeply exasperated was I at the nets of restraint about me that threatened that I should die a virgin. I had an angry insurgence of sexual desire. I began to accumulate a curious resentment against my cousin Isabel because she had had no passion for me. I wanted to go out and pursue strange women. I reproached myself with my discretion about the street walkers of London during my student days. I make no apology for these moods; that is how the thought of enfeeblement and death stirred my imagination. This resentment at being cheated out of a tremendous crowning experience was to survive into my later sexual life, long after the obsession with death, from which it had arisen, had lifted. My imagination exaggerated the joy of embracing a woman until it became maddeningly desirable.

There was also a considerable amount of pure fear in my mind, a sort of claustrophobia, for though I disbelieved intellectually in immortality I found it impossible to imagine myself non-existent. I felt I was going to be stifled, frozen and shut up, but still I felt I should know of it. I had a nightmare sense of the approach of this conscious nothingness.

In no respect I think does the mature mind differ so widely from the youthful mind as in its fear of death. I doubt if a young mind is really capable of grasping the idea of a cessation of experience, although it may be acutely alive to defeat and deprivation. But as life unfolds into realization, death loses that sting. For the past quarter of a century at any rate my death, as death, has had no terror or distress for me. It does not, I realize, concern me. I want to complete certain things, but if death sees fit to come before I have done them, I shall never know of it. Maybe I do not speak for all oldish men here. When I talked with Sigmund Freud in Vienna this spring, he did not seem to feel as I do about death. He is older than I and he was in bad health, but he seemed to be clinging to life and to his reputation and

teaching much more youthfully than I do to mine. But then perhaps he was just drawing me out.

Quite apart from the general fear of death, disappointment and frustration which weighed so heavily upon my imagination at times during my consumptive phase, there were unpleasant minor fears and anxieties that I can still recall acutely. Every time I coughed and particularly if I had a bout of coughing, there was the dread of tasting the peculiar tang of blood. And I can remember as though it happened only last night, the little tickle and trickle of blood in the lungs that preceded a real hæmorrhage. Don't cough too soon? Don't cough too much? There was always the question how big the flow was to be, how long it would go on, what was to be the end of it this time. And as one lay exhausted, dreading even to breathe, there was still the doubt whether it was really over.

I can tell of these disagreeable and dismaying things now that they lie so far behind me, but at the time I did not confess my states of dread and dismay to any human being. Here again I can thank my Fate for my sustaining vanity. I posed consistently as the gay consumptive. Indeed I carried it off with Holt to the end that I was the invincible Spartan. My letters to those loyal correspondents of mine, were cheerfully fatalist and more blasphemous than ever.

My fellow student William Burton, who had followed me as editor of the *Science Schools Journal*, had got a good job as chemist with Wedgwoods the potters. The firm had lost many of its old recipes and his work was to analyse old potsherds and rediscover how the original Wedgwoods used to mix their more famous wares. He had just married, and he came out of his honeymoon way with his brightly new little wife to see me. I had a meal with them in the Holt Inn. It was a good and sustaining thing for me to have them thus concerned about me. They excited me and cheered me up, but they were secretly distressed to find me more fragile and emaciated than ever. They departed, bless their friendly hearts! scheming helpfully about me.

The magic word consumptive softened the heart of Up Park towards me. The defences erected against any further invasions by Mrs. Wells's family were lowered. I came to what I considered a fair arrangement with Jones and set out upon my journey to Harting. I

think I must have stopped the night at 181 Euston Road but I cannot remember. I was installed in a room next to my mother's at Up Park and celebrated my arrival by a more serious hæmorrhage than any I had had hitherto.

It chanced that a certain young Dr. Collins was staying in the house and he was summoned to my assistance. I was put upon my back, ice-bags were clapped on my chest and the flow was stopped. I was satisfying all the conventional expectations of a consumptive very completely. I lay still for a day or so and then began to live again in a gentle fashion in a pleasant chintz-furnished, fire-warmed, sunlit room. My previous few weeks at Holt assumed the quality of a bad dream, a quality it has never quite lost. A few days later came a box of books from Burton, an unforgettable kindness.

I must have stayed at Up Park for nearly four months. It was an interlude not only of physical recovery but mental opportunity. I read, wrote and thought abundantly. I got better and had relapses, but none were so grave as the breakdown on arriving. Collins was a brilliant young heretic in the medical world of those days, altogether more modern than my Wrexham practitioner, and he rather dashed my pose as a consumptive and encouraged my secret hope of life by refusing to recognize me as a tuberculous case. He held — and events have justified him — that with a year or so of gentle going I might make a complete recovery. But he was rather distrustful of the stability of my damaged kidney and there again he was right. And he spoke of the possibility of diabetes and now I am diabetic. We had one or two interesting talks about things in general. He was a leading Comtist and an Individualist, as his father was before him, and a valiant man in the affairs of London University. He is now Sir William Job Collins, as obstinately Positivist as ever and only a few weeks ago I reminded him of his excellent diagnosis in our Reform Club.

Geoffrey West, my indefatigable biographer, knows more about these months I spent at Up Park in 1887-88 than I do, for he has exhumed quite a remarkable number of letters written by me during that time. I seem to have had alternations of recovery and hope with relapse and stoicism. I seem to have hoped very readily and taken risks forthwith. At one time I am confined to my room, at another I

boast of a sunlit seven mile walk in thawing snow. But that was followed by a "rustling lung." Up Park below stairs was gay at Christmas and I was gay with it. My father had been sold up and had come with the vestiges of that old furniture in Atlas House to a small cottage at Nyewoods by Rogate station, three miles from Up Park. He had relinquished the idea of earning anything, modestly but firmly. My elder brother, who had fretted as a draper's assistant from the glorious days of my revolt, had joined him there. He proposed to make a new start in life as a watch and clock peddler and repairer. Freddie came to this Rogate cottage for his Christmas holiday and the whole family was shockingly in evidence for the Christmas feast in the Servants Hall, in excellent appetite and the most shameless and unjustifiable high spirits. A letter to Davies, quoted by West, makes it apparent that I danced abundantly and larked about and amused the company by some sort of performance with my brother Frank; but what it was about I cannot now remember. I am sure my mother chuckled with happiness to see her four menfolk so happy. I seem to have been concealing from my mother the fact that there was still blood in my sputum either to spare her feelings or else to escape excessive coddling, but Heaven knows how much posing and exaggeration there is in these letters to my friends.

What is however very plain in them is the gradual transition from the forced courage of a genuine invalid to the restlessness and irritability of a convalescent. I began to find my very comfortable quarters irksome and unstimulating. I had no one to talk to except the Harting curate, and that probably accounts for the voluminousness of these letters West unearthed. Other frustrations were becoming more and more vexatious. I fretted for some lovely encounter that never occurred. Yet, though I did not realize it, I was getting through something of very great importance in my education during these months of outward inaction. I was reading and reading poetry and imaginative work with an attention to language and style that I had never given these aspects of literature before. I was becoming conscious of the glib vacuity of the trash I had been writing hitherto. When I look back upon my life, there is nothing in it that seems quite so preposterous as the fact that I set about writing fiction for sale, after years of deliberate abstinence from novels or poetry. Now,

belatedly, I began to observe and imitate. I read everything accessible. I ground out some sonnets. I struggled with Spenser; I read Shelley, Keats, Heine, Whitman, Lamb, Holmes, Stevenson, Hawthorne, and a number of popular novels. I began to realize the cheapness and flatness of my own phrasing. I went on indeed with the "novel" I had worked upon at Wrexham, but with a growing distaste. I hadn't the vigour to scrap it forthwith and begin all over again. And I dislike leaving things unfinished. But I began to write other stuff, I aired the most extraordinary critical opinions in my letters to Miss Healey and apparently I sent her some verse. Because I find West quoting me to her: "You say my lines are lacking in metre — metres are used for gas, not the outpourings of the human heart. You say my poem has no feet! The humming bird has no feet, the cherubim round the Mater Dolorosa have no feet. The ancients figured the poetic afflatus as a horse *winged* to signify the poet was sparing of his feet."

Later on in the year, with a quickened sense of what writing could be and do, I read over with shame and contrition all that I had written and I burnt almost all of it. That seemed the only proper way of finishing it. I realized that I had still to learn the elements of this writing business. I had to go back to the beginning, learn to handle short essays, short stories and possibly a little formal verse, until I had acquired the constructive strength and knowledge of things in general demanded for any more ambitious effort. I had not, I saw, been *writing* so far. I had just been playing at writing. I had been scribbling and assuring myself and my friends that it signified something. I had been covering my failure at South Kensington with these unfounded literary pretensions. But it is very illuminating to note that I never showed these copious scribblings to anyone. No human being, not even myself, knows now what *Lady Frankland's Companion* was supposed to be about. I remember only sheets and sheets of boyish scrawl. I saw myself at last with a rare and dreadful plainness. Should I always be too conceited to learn? I knew I had a gift, a quality, but apparently I was too vain and confident about that quality ever to make use of it. I chewed the bitter cud of these reflections as I prowled through the beech-woods and bracken-dells of Up Park or over the yew-dotted downs by Telegraph House.

Every bit of strength I recovered, every ounce of weight I added, deepened my dissatisfaction with the indolent life I was leading, and the feebleness of my invalid efforts. I wanted to resume my attack upon the world, but on a broader basis now and with more soundness and deliberation. My idea of getting a job to keep me while writing had been a sound one, even if it had chanced upon disaster at Holt. I realized that I must insert in the place of "while writing" a preliminary stage "while learning to write" but otherwise the plan of campaign was sound. Better luck next time — if I was to have a next time.

And presently the Burtons, installed in a newly furnished new little house conveniently close to the Wedgwood pot-bank at Etruria, wrote to say that they had a visitor's room quite at my disposal. It was a most enticing invitation and I accepted very eagerly. I found the Burtons and their books and their talk, and the strange landscape of the Five Towns with its blazing iron foundries, its steaming canals, its clay whitened pot-banks and the marvellous effects of its dust and smoke-laden atmosphere, very stimulating. As I went about the place I may have jostled in the streets of Burslem against another ambitious young man of just my age who was then clerk to a solicitor, that friendly rival of my middle years, Arnold Bennett.

There is a letter I wrote in February 1888, to Dr. Collins, which shows very clearly my conception of my position at that time. I lift it in its entirety from West's book. It is interesting as a sample of my early prose. There is something more than a little suggestive of Babu English in the phrasing. I had not yet fused my colloquial with the literary language which was still slightly foreign to me.

"You pointed out when you last did me the favour of examining my chest, how difficult it would be to get any employment compatible with my precarious health, without special concessions and personal influence. Miss Fetherstonhaugh holds out very small hope of assisting me in this way, and Sir William King, her agent, to whom she mentioned the matter, spoke in an exceedingly depreciating way of the prospects of obtaining anything of the kind required. I am very ignorant of social conditions above my own level, but it appears to me that you, moving, as you are, among people who as a class are engaged in more vigorous intellectual

employments and who are more intricately involved in the business of life than those with whom Miss Fetherstonhaugh comes chiefly into contact, would be far more influential in this present matter than she is. A very large portion of the visitors here is of the three orders of military gentry, clerical dignitaries, or that fortunate independent class whose only business is to live happily, and it seems to me that the only employment that such a connection could offer above the rank of an unmitigated menial, is a private tutorship, for which I should, even after a very unwholesome meal of my principles, be vastly less suitable than the most rejected young gentleman that ever behaved himself at Oxford. You, on the other hand, are acquainted with men like Harrison, Bernard Shaw, the Huxleys, who must from the active and extensive nature of their engagements of necessity employ numerous fags to assist in the more onerous and less responsible portions of their duties. It was this that I had especially in view when I mentioned my desire for employment to you, but I am afraid that I failed to express myself with sufficient definiteness on that occasion, and that I led you to understand that I appreciated wine and oil above a consistent position and the prospects of self-advancement. My constitutional tendencies all incline me to prefer staking the preservation of my life on my utility, to imperilling, as everyone counsels, my utility to preserve my life; I would rather do what I wanted and felt was right to be done, and retire soon with some faint irradiation of human dignity and self-applause, than survive for a long period to my own discontent and the general impoverishment. (This is applied Socialism.) This is my second and more powerful reason for coming upon you in this way to help me to some work, because I consider you are not only more able to assist me, but that you are the only person who is willing and in a position to bring me into contact with that world of liberal thought in which alone the peculiar circumstances of my education render me capable of attaining to any degree of success."

Collins replied kindly but nothing further ensued and I stayed at Etruria for nearly three months waiting for opportunity to come and find me. I think I must have been a handful as a guest though neither my host or hostess betrayed any impatience. I was always on hand. I was very untidy. I had a teasing habit of luring Burton after his day's

work into exasperating discussions. But, they say — for they are still alive and good friends of mine — that I used to amuse them greatly by wild caricatures of life at Holt and Up Park, and by sudden flights of fantasy. And at Etruria my real writing began. I produced something as good at least as my letters, something I could read aloud to people I respected without immediate shame. It was good enough to alter and correct and write over again.

I projected a vast melodrama in the setting of the Five Towns, a sort of Staffordshire *Mysteries of Paris* conceived partly in burlesque, it was to be a grotesque with lovely and terrible passages. Of this a solitary fragment survives in my collected short stories as *The Cone*. Moreover I began a romance, very much under the influence of Hawthorne, which was printed in the *Science Schools Journal*, the *Chronic Argonauts*. I broke this off after three instalments because I could not go on with it. That I realized I could not go on with it marks a stage in my education in the art of fiction. It was the original draft of what later became the *Time Machine*, which first won me recognition as an imaginative writer. But the prose was over-elaborate and with that same flavour of the Babu, to which I have called attention in my letter to Dr. Collins. And the story is clumsily invented, and loaded with irrelevant sham significance. The time traveller, for example, is called Nebo-gipfel, though manifestly Mount Nebo had no business whatever in that history. There was no Promised Land ahead. And there is a lot of fuss about the hostility of a superstitious Welsh village to this Dr. Nebogipfel which was obviously just lifted into the tale from Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. And think of "Chronic" and "Argonauts" in the title! The ineptitude of this rococo title for a hard mathematical invention! I was over twenty-one and I still had my business to learn. I still jumbled both my prose and my story in an entirely incompetent fashion. If a young man of twenty-one were to bring me a story like the *Chronic Argonauts* for my advice to-day I do not think I should encourage him to go on writing.

But it was a sign of growing intelligence that I was realizing my exceptional ignorance of the contemporary world and exploring the possibilities of fantasy. That is the proper game for the young man, particularly for young men without a natural social setting of their

own.

Spring passed into summer and I grew stronger every day. It became manifest that I could not go on living upon the Burtons indefinitely. One bright afternoon I went out by myself to a little patch of surviving woodland amidst the industrialized country, called "Trury Woods." There had been a great outbreak of wild hyacinths that year and I lay down among them to think. It was one of those sun-drenched afternoons that are turgid with vitality. Those hyacinths in their upright multitude were braver than an army with banners and more inspiring than trumpets.

"I have been dying for nearly two-thirds of a year," I said, "and I have died enough."

I stopped dying then and there, and in spite of moments of some provocation I have never died since.

I went back to Burton. I had got the two halves of a five-pound note from my mother against such an eventuality. (People sent divided five-pound notes in separate letters in those days, for safety.) I told Burton I was going to London the day after to-morrow.

"What for?" said Burton.

"To find a job."

"My dear chap!" cried Burton, but I think it must have been an immense relief to him.

I posted letters to various scholastic and employment agencies that night, and said I would call upon them in two or three days' time. I was astonished that I had not done so a couple of months before.

§ 3. SECOND ATTACK ON LONDON (1888)

I have given up counting my starts in life. This return to London was, I suppose, about the seventh or eighth in order.

When I read over my biography by Geoffrey West, I realize the peculiar advantages of an autobiographer. For a year between June 1887 and June 1888 I had been an active volcano of letters — and letters that chanced to be kept. Geoffrey West set about collecting these letters with great ability and industry. He got more matter than

he bargained for and it is only the mercy of Heaven and my timely holocaust, that saved him from the manuscript of *Lady Frankland's Companion* (35,000 words) and other unpublished outpourings. But in 1888 the eruption died down. Except for a sketch I sent Simmons of myself very lean and unkempt standing at a street corner considering an advertisement for sandwichmen, with the pithy announcement, "I am in London seeking work but at present finding none," there is very little documentation of the next six months, at the end of which I turn up suddenly, with my epistolary vigour much restored, as an assistant master in Henley House School, Kilburn. I even find myself at a loss now to fix the dates and circumstances of that intervening period. I have nothing to go upon but patchy memories with the connecting events forgotten.

I did not want to bother my friends or be bothered by them until I got that job. I knew that in the last resort I could get money from my mother, but she had now to support my father at Nyewoods with very little assistance from brother Frank, and I was ashamed to press on her too heavily. It is doubtful if she had anything much in hand just at that time. It was possible I might not find a job because among other things I was extremely shabby. I arrived, with that old small portmanteau of mine, at St. Pancras and found a lodging that night in Judd Street, which I considered to be just within my means; a rather disconcerting lodging. The room had three beds and one of my fellow occupants, the lodging-house keeper told me, was "a most respectable young man who worked at a butcher's." I forget him and I forget if the third bed was occupied that night. I went to bed early because the journey up had tired me. The next morning I breakfasted in a coffee house — one could get a big cup of coffee, a thick slice of bread and butter and a boiled or fried egg for fourpence or fivepence — and then set out to find a room of my own in the streets between Grays Inn Road and the British Museum.

I got one for four shillings a week, in Theobalds Road. It was not really a whole room but a partitioned-off part of an attic; it had no fireplace, and it was furnished simply with a truckle bed, a wash-hand-stand, a chair and a small chest of drawers carrying a looking glass. The partition was so thin, that audibly I was, so to speak, in the next room. My neighbours were a young couple on whom I never set

eyes, but their voices became very familiar to me and I learnt much about their intimate lives. When the intimacy seemed to be rising to a regrettable level, I would cough vigorously, make my bed creak or move my chair about, and the young couple would instantly sink out of existence into a profound silence like a frightened fish in a deep pool.

In this lair I tried to do some writing and my correspondence, and from it I sallied out to find that job that was to carry me and all my fortunes until I had really mastered this writing business. I went the round of the scholastic agents, I put myself on the lists of any employment agency that did not attempt to exact a fee for registration, and I answered many impossible and some possible advertisements. I ate at irregular intervals and economically. There were good little individual shops where sausages or fish sizzled attractively over gas jets in the windows; the chops in chop houses were not bad, tea shops were multiplying; a "cut from the joint and two vegs" in a public house cost eightpence or ninepence. In Fleet Street I tried a very cheap vegetarian restaurant once or twice, but it left me hungry in the night. The scholastic agents said I was late in the field for a permanent job that year, but they put me down for possible visiting teaching in science. I did get a little special coaching in geology and mineralogy, with an army crammer, but that was all. My first substantial employer was my old fellow-student Jennings.

Jennings was trying to build up a position as a biological coach. He found his pay as a junior demonstrator in geology at the Science Schools insufficient, and he was using some of his capital to assemble teaching equipment. He was also lecturing in biology at the Birkbeck Institute in Chancery Lane. For these purposes he needed a collection of wall diagrams and, knowing me to be a sufficient draughtsman for the purpose, he commissioned me, so soon as he learnt I was in want of work, to make him a set. His idea was to have these copied from textbooks and high priced series of diagrams, mostly German, which I could sketch in the British Museum Reading Room. He bought a piece of calico and paints for me, I procured one of those now superseded, green, reader's tickets of very soft card, which lasted a life-time, or until they fell to pieces, and I made my

sketches under the Bloomsbury dome and enlarged them as diagrams in a small laboratory Jennings shared with a microscopist named Martin Cole in 27, Chancery Lane. Cole, at the window, prepared, stained and mounted the microscope slides he sold, while I sprawled over a table behind him and worked at my diagram painting. Cole's slides were sold chiefly to medical students and, neatly arranged upon his shelves were innumerable bottles containing scraps of human lung, liver, kidney and so forth, diseased or healthy, obtained more or less surreptitiously from post-mortems and similar occasions.

My job with Jennings came none too soon, for my original five pounds had ebbed away to nothing. Before I could draw upon him, I came to the bottom of my resources. I had a sporting wish to carry the thing through if I possibly could, without a further appeal to my mother. I did some very fine computations outside small fried-fish shops and the like during these last days before Jennings and I struck our bargain. At last I came to an evening when I turned out my pocket and found a small piece of indiarubber, a pocket knife and a halfpenny. Even in that cheaper time there was nothing in the way of supper to be done on a halfpenny. And since even a postcard cost three farthings I had cut myself off from writing to anyone. I had cut it altogether too fine. I went to bed to reflect upon the problem. Since I had no watch nor rings or anything of that sort I had not yet discovered the routines of the pawnshop, and it was difficult to fix upon anything in my possession that I felt would appeal to a pawnbroker's appetite. I imagined in my innocence he would only consider "valuables." I had a bone-handled cane that had originally cost two and sixpence, some fine vestiges of surplus underclothing, socks all worn into holes at the heel, two waterproof collars, discoloured, and half a dozen normal linen ones, frayed, and so forth.

As I got up next morning I looked by chance at that halfpenny and something unusual in the design and colour caught my eye. It was a shilling, blackened by contact with the lump of ink eraser! You cannot imagine the difference that sudden windfall of eleven pence ha'penny, made to my world. And first I broke my fast.

My week-days during that period of stress were fully occupied by small activities. The British Museum Reading Room and the

Education Library at South Kensington were good places for light, shelter and comfort. You could sit in them indefinitely so long as they were open. And the streets and shops were endlessly interesting. I loitered and watched the crowds. It was encouraging to see how many people seemed able to get food and clothing. But I found the Sundays terrible. They were vast, lonely days. The shuttered streets were endless and they led nowhither but to chapels and churches which took you in and turned you out at inconvenient hours. Except in St. Paul's Cathedral there was nowhere to sit and think. In the smaller places of worship one had to be sitting down or standing up or kneeling and pretending to participate. Loneliness weighed upon me more and more. I began to wonder what my cousin Isabel was doing and whether I might not chance to meet her in the street. At last she seemed round every corner.

When I got an advance from Jennings I gave way to a growing desire for companionship and wrote to ask if I might come to tea with her on Sunday afternoon. My cousin was now earning good money by retouching photographs. The gaunt house in Euston Road had been abandoned, Auntie Bella had found a situation as housekeeper to a Wiltshire farmer, and my cousin and her mother were installed on the drawing-room floor of a little house in Fitzroy Road near Regents Park. Thither I went and over the tea-cups and hot buttered toast my aunt Mary, who loved me like a son, rated me soundly in her earnest thin little voice for coming to London without telling her, and pointed out the economies and advantages of joining forces with them. There was a little bedroom on the landing to let. She was longing to look after me.

Within a week I had left Theobalds Road and transferred most of my paints and rolls of calico to Fitzroy Road, and something like the old pattern of my life with Isabel was restored. Directly I was in her presence again I forgot whatever I had forgotten about her. We were less children than we had been and she was more self-reliant than in Euston Road under the distrustful sway of Auntie Bella, but she had the same restrained sweetness and gentleness, the same sound and limited wisdom, the same withheld feminity to which my emotional life had been adjusted during my student days. We resumed our old familiarity as though there had been no interval. We went about

again side by side with our thoughts and reveries worlds apart.

The restored sense of home and care at the back of me gave fresh vigour to my hunt for work and money. I went on with Jennings and his diagrams, did a bit of coaching, arranged to share Cole's room and steer Simmons, who had become an assistant schoolmaster, during his Christmas vacation through the dissections for the biology of his Intermediate Science examination, and also I picked up small but useful sums of money, if not by journalism at least in the margin of journalism. At that time a number of new penny weeklies were coming into existence to challenge the ascendancy of the old *Family Herald* with the new boardschool public. There were *Tit Bits*, *Answers* and a little later *Pearson's Weekly*. I think it was *Tit Bits* which first devised a page called "Questions worth Answering" open to outside contributors. A dozen or so questions appeared one week and the best answer to each question was published the next. It was a popularization of *Notes and Queries*. For a question accepted, one got half-a-crown; for an answer one was paid according to length. If one were lucky, one might send in an acceptable answer to one's own question. My copious reading and my special biological lore came in very usefully here. Every week I contrived in this way to add anything between two and sixpence and fourteen or fifteen shillings to the Fitzroy Road budget.

My lungs stood the onset of winter fairly well. My aunt Mary kept her bird-like eye upon me and knew I had a cough before I did, and did something about it. By the end of the year I had arranged to begin a job in Kilburn after Christmas, that was more like firm ground under my feet than anything I had been upon for a year and a half.

§ 4. HENLEY HOUSE SCHOOL (1889-90)

From my departure from Southsea in 1883 to my return to London in 1888, the history of this brain of mine was mainly a story of growth and learning things. It acquired as much, decided as much and was exercised as much as if it had been inside the skull of a university scholar. It developed a coherent picture of the world and learnt the

use of the English language and the beginnings of literary form. But from my emergence from St. Pancras Station to find lodgings and a job, this brain, for the better part of a year, was so occupied with the immediate struggle for life, so near to hunger and exposure and so driven by material needs, that I do not think it added anything very much to either its content or power. It was only after a term or so at Henley House School, that it began to take notice of external things again and resume its criticism of, and its disinterested attack upon, existence in general.

This Henley House School was, financially, a not very successful private school in Kilburn. It was housed in a brace of semi-detached villas, very roughly adapted to its educational needs. It drew its boys from the region of Maida Vale and St. John's Wood; the parents were theatrical, artistic, professional and business people who from motives of economy or affection preferred to have their sons living at home. There were only a few boarders. It was a privately owned school and J. V. Milne, the proprietor, was responsible to no earthly authority for what he did or did not teach. In one of the houses he lived with his family and in the other were the various class-rooms and the assistants' room of the school. The playground was a walled gravelly enclosure that had once been two back gardens. It was too small for anything but the most scuffling of games. Equipment was little better than it had been in Morley's school; the desks were not so age-worn and there were more blackboards and maps. But it remained — skimpy. When I entered upon my duties, J. V. came to me and pressed a golden sovereign into my hand. "Get whatever apparatus you require for your science teaching," he said.

"And if there is any change?" I asked with this fund, this endowment, in my hand.

"You can give me an account later."

I had to administer this grant very carefully. The existing apparatus was huddled into what had once been a small bedroom cupboard on the second floor, and was in an extremely ruinous condition. My predecessor had been a Frenchman and very evidently a man of great persistence of character. His chemical teaching had apparently reached a climax in the production of oxygen by heating potassium permanganate in a glass flask. Young Roberts, the son of

Arthur Roberts, the comedian, said it had been a very great lesson indeed. Those were primitive times in glass manufacture and the ordinary test-tube or Florentine flask was not of a special refractory glass as it is now, and it cracked and flew at the slightest irregularity in its heating. My predecessor had put his permanganate in a flask, put the flask on a tripod, set a Bunsen burner beneath it and made all the necessary arrangements for collecting his oxygen. But before there was any oxygen worth mentioning to collect, the flask flew with a loud crack and its bottom descended upon the flame. My predecessor rallied his forces and put a second Florentine flask into action, with exactly the same result. A certain joyousness invaded the class as, with the spirit of the French at Waterloo, a third flask was thrown into the struggle. And so on, *da capo*; joy increased and open demonstrations had to be repressed. At the end there were no more Florentine flasks and the applause broke out unhindered. The cupboard was chiefly occupied by these shattered flasks neatly arranged, each over its own proper detached bottom.

I meditated upon these vestiges of experimental science and upon what seemed to me to be the evidence of an attempt to make carbon-dioxide out of blackboard chalk — an attempt fore-ordained to failure because blackboard chalk is not chalk and contains no carbon dioxide. And I considered my still intact sovereign.

I discussed the matter with J. V. "Mr. Milne," I said, "I think experimental demonstrations before a class are a great mistake."

"They certainly have a very bad effect on discipline," he remarked.

"I propose," I said, "with your permission, to draw all my experiments upon the blackboard — in coloured chalks which I shall buy out of this pound — to explain clearly and fully exactly what happens and to make the class copy out these experiments in a note-book. I have never known an experiment on a blackboard go wrong. On the other hand, these attempts at an excessive realism — —"

"I am quite of your mind," he said.

"Later on, however, I may dissect a rabbit bit by bit and make them draw that. I may dissect it under water because that is cleaner and prettier than a heap of viscera on a board, and I shall have to buy a large baking-dish and cork and lead and pins."

"It will not be — indelicate?"

"It need not be. I will show them what to see on the blackboard."

"One never knows what parents will find to object to. However — if you want to do it...."

In this way I contrived, without extravagance, to train my classes to draw, write and understand about a great many things that would have been much more puzzling for them if they had encountered them in all the rich confusion of actuality. I never attempted to use the chemical balance for example; chemical balances, especially if they have been left to brood in the darkness of bedroom cupboards, will seize upon the slightest pretext to confute the hasty experimentalist; and moreover my predecessor had lost most of the weights. My boys therefore missed the usual stinks and bangs of scientific instruction and acquired instead a real grasp of scientific principles and scientific quantities, together with a facility in illustrating examination answers that stood them in good stead in the years immediately before them.

I found Milne a really able teacher, keen to do his best for his boys and with a curious obstinate originality, and I learnt very much from him about discipline and management. Finance, I knew, was worrying him a good deal, but he watched his boys closely and would slacken, intensify or change their work, with a skilled apprehension of their idiosyncrasies. He would think of them at night. The boys had confidence in him and in us and I never knew a better mannered school. He was friendly and sympathetic with me from the outset. He was a little grey-clad extremely dolichocephalic man with glasses, a pointed nose and a small beard, rather shy in his manner; he had a phantom lisp and there was a sort of confidential relationship between his head and his shoulders. His original proposal was that I should be resident English, science and drawing master at £60 a year. But I wanted to go on living with my aunt and cousin at Fitzroy Road, I detested Sunday duty and I wanted to write or to work at my preparation for the Intermediate Examination in the London University, in all the spare time I could get. So I offered to forego my residence and all my meals except the midday one, if I could come at nine and vanish at or before five. And I stipulated that I should do no scripture teaching, as I felt I could not do it in good

faith. The arrangement worked very well for us both. He liked my putting in that conscience clause at the risk of not getting a job I evidently wanted.

The midday meal was an excellent one, attended by a number of the day- boys. With memories of Holt in my mind, I wrote to Simmons effusively, praising the cleanliness, the table napkins and particularly the flowers on the table. In my world hitherto there had been no flowers on the meal table anywhere. And at the end of the table, facing me, sat Mrs. Milne, rather concerned if I did not eat enough, because I was still, she thought, scandalously thin.

I suppose the day is not so very remote when the last of these private schools will have vanished from the earth. Fifty years ago they were still responsible for the education, or want of education, of a considerable fraction of the British middle-class. They were under no public control at all. Anyone might own one, anyone might teach in one, no standard of attainment was required of them; the parents dipped their sons into them as they thought proper and took them out when they thought they were done. Certain university and quasi-public bodies conducted examinations to which a number of the brighter pupils were submitted in order to enhance the prestige of the establishment, and these examining bodies exerted a distinct influence upon the choice of subjects. For the most part these private schools passed the middle-class youth of England on to business or professional life incapable of any foreign language, incapable indeed of writing or speaking their own except in the clumsiest manner, unable to use their eyes and hands to draw or handle apparatus, grossly ignorant of physical science, history or economics, contemptuous of the board school boy and with just enough consciousness of their deficiencies to make them suspicious of, and hostile to, intellectual ability and equipment.

It is only when the nature of the English private school education is grasped that it becomes possible to understand why the enormous possibilities of world predominance and world control, manifest in the British political expansion during the nineteenth century, wilted away so rapidly under the stresses of the subsequent years. Its direction was dull, ignorant, pretentious and blundering. I have given a glimpse of the British private school at its worst in my brief

account of Holt Academy; J. V. Milne and Jones were almost at opposite poles of conscience and intelligence; Milne was a man who won my unstinted admiration and remained my friend throughout life; nevertheless it is useless to pretend that Henley House was more than a sketch of good intentions or that we stirred up a tithe of the finer possibilities of the boys who passed under our hands. We taught them a few tricks, we got them a few "certificates," we did something for their manners and personal bearing, we dropped some fruitful hints into them, but we gave them no coherent and sustaining vision of life. One or two of the Henley House boys were destined to play a fairly conspicuous rôle in English affairs. Our prize boy, our whale so to speak, was Lord Northcliffe, who did so much to create the modern newspaper and died controlling owner of *The Times*. He can very well be studied as a sample of the limitations of the English private school education — and indeed of English education generally.

In making these criticisms I am not blaming J. V. Milne. In view of his conditions and resources he did wonderfully. He could hardly pay his way; the two rather battered villas and that one golden sovereign for all the apparatus required for science teaching, give the measure of his means. When later on an opportunity offered, he got out of Kilburn and ran a more spaciously equipped school, Streete Court at Westgate-on-Sea. But for Henley House, he could not pick and choose his assistants; economies and compromises cramped his style, and in endless respects the school made itself in spite of all his efforts to mould and direct it.

Nevertheless he had in operation an honour system of discipline that was far in advance of the times. It is a little too complex to explain here, but it was decidedly better than the discipline under Sanderson of Oundle, which I was to study later. A cane hung in Milne's study, a symbol of force as the ultimate sanction, but it was never used in my time and I do not think it had been used for some years before. He was understandingly interested by my abandonment of the worst pretences of "practical" demonstration in my science teaching, he watched and discussed my use of the note-book system of binding work together that I had picked up from Byatt and seen misapplied by Judd, and when later I innovated in the mathematical

work, threw out all the muddling-about with money sums, weights and measures, business "practice" and so forth that cumbered the teaching (and examining) of arithmetic, and took a class of small boys between six and eight straight away from the first four rules to easy algebra, he was delighted. In those days that was a new and bold thing to do. We got to fractions, quadratics and problems involving quadratics in a twelvemonth and laid the foundations of two or three university careers by way of mathematics. A. A. Milne, the novelist and playwright, was one of that band of young hopefuls, and his brother Ken and Batsford the publisher.

The sense of Milne's observation and interest quickened my teaching greatly. I would prepare little stunts for him and the boys. It was amusing to stroll up to the blackboard in an off-hand way and draw the outline of England or Scotland or North America from memory. (One had to be particularly wary about the relative latitude of the east and west coasts and the rest followed.) One could stand with one's back to a whole class and yet have every boy still and interested. The wickedest would be following the chalk line and comparing it with his Atlas if only in the hope of saying, "Please Sir," and making a correction.

Where Henley House was most defective from a modern point of view was in its failure to establish any social and political outlook. But there J. V. suffered not only from the limitations of a poorly financed private adventurer who had to make his school "pay," but also from the lax and aimless mentality of the period in which he was living. The old European order, as I have pointed out already in the chapter on my origins, was far gone in decay, and had lost sight of any conception of an object in life. The new order had still to discover itself and its objectives. In the eighteenth century, a school in Protestant England pointed every life in it, either towards hell-fire or eternal bliss; its intellectual and moral training was all more or less relevant to and tested by the requirements of that pilgrimage; for that in the long run you were being prepared. That double glow of gold and red had faded out almost completely from the school perspectives of 1890, but nothing had taken its place. The idea of the modern world-state must ultimately determine the curriculum and disciplines of every school on earth, but even to-day only a few

teachers apprehend that, and in my Henley House days the idea of that social and political necessity had hardly dawned. The schools and universities just went on teaching things in what was called the "general education" — because they had always been taught. "Why do we learn Latin, Sir?" asked our bright boys. "What is the good of this chemistry, Sir, if I am to go into a bank?" Or, "Does it really matter, Sir, now, *how* Henry VII was related to Henry IV?"

We were teaching some "subjects," as the times went, fairly well, we were getting more than average results in outside examinations. But collectively, comprehensively we were teaching nothing at all. We were completely ignoring the primary function of the school in human society, which is to correlate the intelligence, will and conscience of the individual to the social process. We were unaware of a social process. Not only were Henley House, and the private schools generally, imparting this nothingness of outlook, but except for a certain gangster esprit-de-corps in various of the other public schools and military seminaries, "governing class" sentiment and the like, the same blankness pervaded the whole educational organization of the community. We taught no history of human origins, nothing about the structure of civilization, nothing of social or political life. We did not make, we did not even attempt to make participating citizens. We launched our boys, with, or more commonly without, a university "local" or matriculation certificate, as mere irresponsible adventurers into an uncharted scramble for life.

And this is where our big specimen of output, our whale, Northcliffe, comes in. His story is a very illuminating demonstration of the effects of private school insufficiencies upon social development.

He was eldest of the numerous family of an adventurous barrister, Harmsworth, from Dublin, who came to London with a capable and energetic wife, to make a great career, and did not do so. He won only a moderate measure of success; he was "Counsel to the Great Northern Railway" and so forth; and his political activities never advanced beyond one of those mock parliaments, the Camden Town equivalent of the Parliament of the Landport Y. M. C. A., mentioned earlier in this book, in which politically minded men displayed their quality and tempered themselves for real political activities. Camden

Town, like Landport, never got down to any social or economic principles. It was a training in saying "Mr, Speaker, Sir, the right honourable member for Little Ditcham," in moving "the previous question" and such-like necessary superficialities of the political game. He died in 1889 when his eldest son was twenty-four years old, but the mother, a woman oddly reminiscent in her vitality and character of Laetitia Bonaparte, survived to 1925, three years after the death of Northcliffe.

Alfred was born in 1865, a little more than a year before me, and he seems to have entered Henley House School when he was nine or ten years old. He made a very poor impression on his teachers and became one of those unsatisfactory, rather heavy, good-tempered boys who in the usual course of things drift ineffectively through school to some second-rate employment. It was J. V.'s ability that saved him from that. Somewhen about the age of twelve, Master Harmsworth became possessed of a jelly-graph for the reproduction of MS. in violet ink, and with this he set himself to produce a mock newspaper. J. V. with the soundest pedagogic instinct, seized upon the educational possibilities of this display of interest and encouraged young Harmsworth, violet with copying ink and not quite sure whether he had done well or ill, to persist with the *Henley House Magazine* even at the cost of his school work. The first number appeared in 1878; the first printed number in 1881 "edited by Alfred C. Harmsworth," and I possess all the subsequent issues up to the end of 1893, when Milne transferred his school to Streete Court. During my stay at Henley House, I contributed largely, and among others who had a hand in the magazine was A. J. Montefiore, who was later to edit the *Educational Review* and A. A. Milne ("aged six" — at his first appearance in print) the novelist, essayist and playwright.

Now neither Milne nor anyone in the Harmsworth family, as they scanned the early issues of this little publication, had the faintest suspicion of the preposterous thrust of opportunity that it was destined to give its youthful editor. But in the eighties the first school generation educated under the Education Act of 1871 was demanding cheap reading matter and wanting something a little easier than *Chambers Journal* and a little less simply feminine than the *Family*

Herald. A shrewd pharmaceutical chemist named Newnes tried to make a modest profit out of a periodical, originally of cuttings and quotations, *Tit Bits*, and made a great fortune. Almost simultaneously our Harmsworth, pursuing print as if by instinct, tried to turn a modest hundred or so, by creating *Answers to Correspondents* (1888) which, among other things, provided me as I have told, with a few useful shillings a week during its first year of issue. He had been ill for a brief period after leaving school in 1882 and he had worked not so very successfully at outside journalism. *Answers* hung fire for a time until it dropped its initial idea and set out to imitate and beat *Tit Bits* at its own game, with the aid of prize competitions.

Neither Newnes nor Harmsworth, when they launched these ventures, had the slightest idea of the scale of the new forces they were tapping. They thought they were going to sell to a public of at most a few score thousands and they found they were publishing for the million. They did not so much climb to success; they were rather caught by success and blown sky high. I will not even summarize the headlong uprush of Alfred C. Harmsworth and his brother Harold; how presently they had acquired the *Evening News*, started the *Daily Mail* and gone from strength to strength until at last Alfred sat on the highest throne in British journalism, *The Times*, and Harold was one of the richest men in the world.

Only one item in this rocket flight is really significant here. The second success of the Harmsworth brothers was a publication called *Comic Cuts*. Some rare spasm of decency seems to have prevented them calling this enormously profitable, nasty, taste-destroying appeal for the ha'pence of small boys, *Komic Kuts*. They sailed into this business of producing saleable letterpress for the coppers of the new public, with an entire disregard of good taste, good value, educational influence, social consequences or political responsibility. They were as blind as young kittens to all those aspects of life. That is the most remarkable fact about them from my present point of view and I think posterity will find it even more astonishing. In pristine innocence, naked of any sense of responsibility, with immense native energy, they set about pouring millions of printed sheets of any sort of trash that sold, into the awakening mind of the British masses. The "instantaneous success" of *Comic Cuts* was

hailed by J. V. in *Henley House Magazine* (May 1890) without a word of criticism or a sign of disapproval. He tells the "Short History of A Henley House Boy" and writes that *Answers* returns to its proprietors close upon £10,000 per annum.

"Mr. Alfred Harmsworth is now only twenty-four years of age," he writes. "He has written two successful books, *A Thousand Ways of Earning a Living*, of which 25,000 were sold, and *All About our Railways*. He attributes most of his success to — what do you think? — *downright hard work*. 'I usually spend twelve hours a day on the paper,' he writes me. I wanted him to give me some facts showing the magnitude of the work — the staff, the management, *etc*., of his paper — and some facts about himself, but he writes, 'I really do not like biography. You can say this (what I have said to many other people), that the generous and thoughtful way in which I was educated at Henley House must have had a very great influence on my career. Though I was never much of a student, I did manage in those three years to pick up a vast amount of reasoning and fact, which often, even now, are useful. But there! I am ashamed to say any more. You can say what you like about my opinion of Henley House, and you cannot put it too strongly. Yours affectionately, Alfred C. Harmsworth.'

"Now that you have just been reading of an old Henley House School boy, may I get in a word. If there is an idle boy in the school, let him take this lesson to heart — that sheer hard work is the magician's wand. Should there be any of you drifting along, and hoping, like Mr. Micawber, that something may turn up, let me tell you that the things that generally 'turn up' are disappointments, failure, poverty and remorse. May the last never be yours."

J. V. Milne could write like that and teach like that — in a vein of pure competitive individualism. His own conscience and practice were happily better than his theories.

In twenty years these two young ruffians (ruffians so far as any sense of social obligations goes), these creators of *Comic Cuts*, had been flung up to the working ownership of *The Times*, and peerages; they had become immense factors in the chaos of English affairs, and with them and under the controlling counsels of their magnificent mother, they had carried their bunch of brothers to positions of

importance and opulence in our social disorder. My friend Geoffrey Harmsworth, the son of Northcliffe's brother Lester, has planned to tell the story under the title of the *Harmsworth Adventure*. It is absurdly like the Bonaparte adventure. During my time at Henley House School, one last Harmsworth of the original vintage remained, a sturdy and by no means brilliant youngster, St-John. A year or so ago before he died I met him at Cannes, a princely invalid, the proprietor of *Perrier*, preposterously wealthy, surrounded by obsequious valets, male nurses, maîtres d'hôtel and so forth.

With Northcliffe I maintained an intermittent friendship; I co-operated with him for a time at Crewe House during the war and afterwards he came over to Easton to lunch and talk with me when I returned from Russia in 1920. But my articles were already ear-marked for the *Daily Express*. He was then in the grip of an obscure malady that distressed his mind, arrested its development and prevented sustained work. The doctors advised him to go for long wandering excursions by automobile or afoot, watching the world go by him. He must learn to be idle. I met him for a last encounter, walking alone in Westminster, "just looking at the shop windows." That must have been in 1920 or 1921. Finally these doctors sent him wandering round the world and he wandered right out of sanity. I saw enough of him to see the extraordinary mental and moral conflict created by the real vastness of the opportunities and challenges that crowded upon him on the one hand and, on the other, the blank inadequacy of his education at Henley House School for anything better than a career of push and acquisition.

In an autobiography it is permissible to compare his mind with my own. Mine — peace to its defects! — was a system of digested and assimilated ideas; it was an assembled mind; his was a vast jumble into which fresh experiences were for ever tumbling. I was educated — self- educated. He was uneducated. He was blown up so rapidly that he was never free to think out his rôle in the world. He never had the chances for weeks and months of reflection and readjustment given me by my various disablements and set-backs. When he was ill — and ever and again he was ill and took refuge with his mother at Totteridge — he was mentally disordered and lost grip altogether. And he was prone to the easy flattery of women. Nevertheless a

certain admirable greatness of mind appeared eventually and he travelled far from the mere headlong vulgarity of his first drive into prosperity. He realized with a mixture of astonishment, exaltation and dismay, that a big newspaper proprietor, whether he liked it or not and whether or no the fact met with any formal recognition, was an immensely responsible figure in the world. He had vivid intimations that amidst the catastrophic shifts and changes of Western life, a new social order was finding its way into existence.

He never had the time nor the mental coolness to get this clear. But long before the Great War jolted the intelligence of Europe into a new system of aims and understandings, he was trying to fill up the gap that Henley House School — and all that went with it in tone and period — had left in his equipment. He had an almost pathetic belief that somewhere, just outside his world, were a lot of clever fellows who had better knowledge and ideas than his. He did not understand the breadth and slowness of the process by which the modern world-state has been and is still coming to self- realization. It had not dawned upon him what a heaving pretentious mess economic, social and educational science still was, because he had never come to grips with the stuff as I had done. But he felt the looseness and insecurity of things about him and he tried in his impatient way to get something constructive and stabilizing. He "ran" Norman Angell for a time and the question of world peace and, after my *Anticipations* and *Modern Utopia*, he wanted very much to organize a following for me. He found me at once stimulating and disappointing. I did not want to be organized; I did not even want to be hurried. His experience had been that you only had to advertise a thing well or offer a prize about it, to get all you wanted. And when you had got it you rushed on to something else. If you wanted world peace, or a cure for cancer or tuberculosis, or a machine to fly round the world, you offered a prize for it, you made an enormous fuss about it and then, he thought, some of those clever fellows at the back of things would set to work upon it, as he had set to work upon the *Daily Mirror*, and win it. He wanted to attack the economic riddles of the world long before any diagnosis had been made, in precisely the same energetic fashion. I shall mention later the articles upon "The Labour Unrest" that I wrote for him in this phase.

The World War and the world peace was a tremendous strain upon him. It was a forcible education for all of us and for him it brought both growth and disorganization. A really intimate record of Northcliffe's brain processes, his ambitions, his likes and dislikes, his general motivation, is impossible; but in regard to his period it would be the most illuminating historical document in the world. It would be as typical a story as anyone could find of the stresses of transition from that blind confidence in Providence, that implicit confidence in the good intentions of the natural order of things, no matter what were our mistakes and misdeeds, characterizing the human mind in the nineteenth century, to that startled realization of the need for men to combine against the cold indifference, the pitiless justice, if you will, of nature, which is our modern attitude. The effort to achieve an adult behaviour under the stresses of ulcerative endocarditis and after forty odd years of triumphant puerility, shattered and killed him. Confounded by the catastrophe of the Great War and its still more terrifying sequels, spun giddily into the vortex of leadership and responsibility without the restraints of a tradition or the preparation of a philosophy, embittered into a clumsy personal feud by the way in which he was jostled by Lloyd George out of any honourable participation in the War Settlement — and so abruptly stranded, Northcliffe's mind was shattered very much, indeed, as was Woodrow Wilson's. It was burst by opportunity.

I shall have more to say of him when I tell at the proper time how my sample mind, and the English mind of which it was a part, were put through the mill of the Great War. But after this brief excursion forward into consequences, let me return for the present to that little ill-equipped private school in Kilburn from which it started, that little school in which, with the best intentions in the world, Milne and his staff taught neither human history, economics nor social duty, and from which they launched boys into the gathering disaster of civilization as though they were sending them into a keen but merciful prize competition, in which "sheer hard work" was the "magician's wand," and so forth and so on.

Only now are we beginning to suspect there should be more in education than that.

§ 5. THE UNIVERSITY CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE (1890-1893)

During 1889 my efforts to "write," so far as I can remember or trace them now, died down to hardly anything at all. My hope of an income from that source had faded, and it seemed to me that such prospects in life as remained open to me, lay in school teaching. They were not brilliant prospects anyhow, because I was quite obstinately resolved not to profess Christianity, but my self-conceit was in a phase of unwholesome deflation and a mediocre rôle seemed a good enough objective for my abilities. Milne had interested me in teaching method, and I decided that if I secured a teaching diploma and took up my degree in the London University, I might, in spite of my religious handicap, get a sufficiently good position to marry upon. I wanted to marry; I had indeed a gnawing desire to marry, and my life in close proximity to my cousin was distressing and humiliating me in a manner she could not possibly comprehend. I was keen and eager and she was tepid and rational. Plain risks dismayed her. It seemed the most obvious thing in the world to her that I should first win my way to a fairly safe place and the status of a householder before my devotion was rewarded. In pursuance of this intensely personal objective, I took my Intermediate Science Examination in July '89 with only second-class honours in zoology, and I got the diploma of licentiate of the College of Preceptors at the end of the year.

I have already said a word or two about this College of Preceptors in my account of Morley's Academy. Its requirements were not very exacting, and its diplomas were sought chiefly by teachers without university degrees. It offered papers in a number of subjects, and it allowed candidates to pass in one subject at one time and another later on, so that the grade of competing examinee was a lowly one. I took the whole range of subjects at a swoop, got what was called honours — 80 per cent of the maximum marks — in most of the subjects and secured the three prizes for the theory and practice of education (£10), mathematics (£5) and natural science (£5). That itself was a useful accession of money, but the greater benefit of this raid upon the college was that I was obliged to read something of the

history and practice of education, some elementary psychology, (a mere rudiment of a science at that date) and logic. I was greatly interested in these subjects and, superficial though the standard was, they cleared up my mind upon various issues and started some valuable trains of thought. I planned to go on with mental and moral science and to take that, with zoology and geology, for my degree examination in London University in 1890, but I did not do so because I found that botany would be a more immediately marketable commodity and so I went back to botany.

Armed with this L.C.P. diploma and my second class intermediate honours, I became exacting with J. V. Milne. He raised my salary £10 a year and agreed to cut down the hours I had to spend at Henley House. I looked about for supplementary employment and presently found myself in correspondence with a certain William Briggs, M.A., the organizer of a University Correspondence College at Cambridge, an institution which I still think one of the queerest outgrowths of the disorderly educational fermentations of that time. It flourishes still. Briggs was able not only to offer me just the additional work I wanted to keep me going until I took my degree of B.Sc., but his peculiar requirements enabled him to set a premium upon my taking honours in that examination. I went down to Cambridge to see him; we fixed up an immediate arrangement for me to earn at least £2 a week by doing his correspondence tuition in biology which was in urgent need of attention, and we further agreed that if I took my degree in October, I should leave Henley House School and have a permanent appointment with him in a Tutorial College he was developing in London, at a rate of pay to be determined by my class in honours. He was to give me at least thirty hours' work a week all over the year at 2*s.* 2*d.*, 2*s.* 4*d.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* an hour, according to whether I obtained third-, second-or first-class honours. Honours were very important to him from the prospectus point of view. His list of tutors displayed an almost unbroken front of Cambridge, Oxford and London "firsts." High honours men in biology were rare in those days, and it was characteristic of Briggs that he should decide to make one out of me for himself.

I left Henley House at the end of the summer term, I took my degree with first-class honours in zoology and second-class honours

in geology. I had already been working for some months in my surplus time with Briggs, and I carried on first with classes in a small room above a bookshop in that now vanished thoroughfare Booksellers Row, and afterwards in a spacious well-lit establishment in Red Lion Square. There I had a reasonably well furnished teaching laboratory, with one side all blackboards and big billiard-room lamps for night teaching. Briggs gave me enough work to make an average of nearly fifty hours a week, on a system of piecework that enabled me at times to compress a number of nominal half-crown hours into a normal one and so, by the middle of 1891, I found myself in a position to satisfy my cousin's requirements, take a small house, 28 Haldon Road in East Putney, and release her from her daily journey to that Regent Street workroom. She intended, however, to retouch at home and to take pupils.

A word about our budget will be interesting to-day. We paid £30 a year rent for our house, an eight-roomed house, (the eight included a kitchen, a bathroom and a box-room); we estimated 10*s.* a head as a maximum expenditure for food, and in January 1893 I opened a banking account in Wandsworth, which endures to this day, with a cheque from Briggs for £52 10*s.* 5*d.* Until then we had carried only a small reserve of twenty pounds or less in the Post Office Savings Bank. This Post Office Savings Bank account had been opened in the Fitzroy Road days with my first instalment of salary from Milne. Before then our only reserve for emergency money had been a few pawnable articles of silver and an old watch belonging to my Aunt Mary....

We were married very soberly in Wandsworth Parish Church on October 3st, 1891. My cousin was grave and content but rather anxious about the possibility of children, my aunt was very happy and my elder brother Frank, who had come up for the ceremony, was moved by a confusion of his affections and wept suddenly in the vestry.

But I will tell what matters about my domestic life later. What is of much more general interest, is the peculiar organization of that University Correspondence College of which I had now become a tutor. Briggs in his way was as accidental and marvellous as Northcliffe, and as illustrative of the planless casualness of our

contemporary world.

To write an autobiography as the history and adventures of a brain, involves the unfolding of an educational panorama in the background. In what has gone before I have tried to display the strain upon and the disorganization of the petty educational organizations of the small-scale horse-foot, hand-industry civilizations that culminated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, by the change of pace and scale due to mechanical invention. In two swift centuries the material structures of a single modern world-state came into being. Without any correlated mental structure. Social and political adaptation dragged further and further behind that headlong advance. Our world to-day is at the climax of that discord. And not only were the illiterate traditionalism of the general mass and the private schools and tutoring of the better sort, exhibited as wildly inadequate to the demands of the new occasions, but all the organization of professional training and the colleges, universities, academies and so forth, which had served the old order, were also tossed about, dwarfed and pressed upon by the huge dumb necessities of a world metamorphosis.

Nowhere yet was there a really comprehensive apprehension of what was happening. The gist of my individual story is the growth of that apprehension, belatedly, in one fairly quick-witted but not very powerful brain. But a partial and reluctant disposition to adaptation became more and more operative in the nineteenth century and produced a structure of universal elementary education throughout Europe, a great multiplication of technical and secondary schools, a growth in the numbers upon existing university rolls and the foundation of a great number of new universities. This adaptation was more quantitative than qualitative. The need for more and more widely extended education was realized long before the need for a new sort of education. Schools and universities were multiplied but not modernized. The spirit of the old educational order was instructive and not constructive; it was a system of conservation, and to this day it remains rather a resistance than a help to the growing creative will in man.

So to the multitudinous demand of the advancing new generations for light upon what they were, upon what was happening to them and

whither they were going, the pedagogues and professors replied in just as antiquated and unhelpful forms as possible. They remained not only out of touch themselves with new knowledge and new ideas, but they actually intercepted the approach to new knowledge and new ideas, by purveying the stalest of knowledge and the tritest, most exhausted ideas to these hungry swarms of a new age groping blindly for imperfectly conceived mental food. It is illuminatingly symbolical that everywhere the new universities dressed themselves up in caps and gowns and Gothic buildings and applied the degrees of the mediaeval curricula, bachelor, master, doctor, to the students of a new time. I have already pointed out the oddity — seeing that I had little Latin and no Greek — of my calling my early plan of study at Midhurst a "Schema" and my first draft of the *Time Machine*, the "Chronic Argonauts." But this snobbish deference to the pomps, dignities and dialects of a vanishing age, ran through the whole world of education. There was no possibility of teaching (profitably and successfully), or indeed of practising any profession, without a university degree embodying great chunks of that privileged old learning. And when by means of clamour from without, such subjects as physical science and biology were thrust into the curricula, they underwent a curious standardization and sterilization in the process.

Now the urge to spread new knowledge of the modern type widely through the community, was so imperative, and the resistance of the established respectable educational organization, the old universities and the schools with prestige and influence, to any change and any adequate growth, was so tough, that a vast amount of educational jerry-building went on, precisely analogous to that jerry-built housing of London in the nineteenth century on which I have already expatiated. London was jerry-built because the ground landlords were in possession: English national education was jerry-built because Oxford and Cambridge were in possession. The British elementary teacher was an extremely hasty improvisation and I have already given a glimpse of Horace Byatt, Esq., M.A. (Dublin) earning grants for teaching me "advanced" sciences of which he knew practically nothing. Equally jerry-built and provisional were the first efforts to create an urgently needed supply of teachers and

university graduates beyond the expensive limits of Oxford and Cambridge. New degree-giving universities were brought into existence with only the most sketchy and loosely connected colleges and laboratories, or with evening classes or with no definite teaching arrangements at all. Most typical of these was our London University. This at first was essentially an examining board. It aimed primarily at graduating the students in the great miscellany of schools and classes that was growing up in London, but its examinations and degrees were open to all comers from every part of the world. I for instance was examined by my own professors in the South Kensington Science Schools, but the examinations I passed to take my degree in London University, were entirely independent of these college tests.

And this is where the great work of Mr. (afterwards Dr.) William Briggs comes in. It was at once preposterous and necessary. The practice of general examination boards is almost bound to be narrow and rigidly stereotyped. They must never do the unexpected because that might be unfair. The outside student working without direction or working under teachers who had no regard for the requirements of an examining board, was all too apt to wander into fields of interest that were not covered by the syllabus or to fail to get up prescribed topics because his attention had not been drawn to them. His tendency was to be as variable as the examining board was invariable. All the more to the credit of the intelligent student, you will say, but that is beside the present explanation. The ambitious new outsider had to be standardized — because for a time there was no other way of dealing with him. At that early stage in the popularization of education and the enlargement of the educational field, it is hard to see how the stimulus and rough direction of these far flung Education Department, school certificate and London University examinations could have been dispensed with. It was the only way of getting any rapid diffusion of learning at all. Quality had to come later. It was a phase of great improvisations in the face of much prejudice and resistance.

Waste and absurdity stalk mankind relentlessly, and it is impossible to ignore the triumphs of waste and absurdity occurring in that early struggle to produce an entirely educated community. It was

the most natural thing for the human mind to transfer importance from the actual learning of things, a deep, dark, intricate process, to the passing of examinations, and to believe that a man who had a certificate in his hand had a subject in his head. With only the facilities for teaching at the utmost a few thousand men to experience chemical fact and know chemical science, there were produced hundreds of thousands with certificates in chemistry. When I matriculated in London University my certificate witnessed that I had passed in Latin, German and French and nevertheless I was quite unable to read, write or speak any of these tongues. About a small and quite insufficient band of men who knew and wanted to teach, seethed everywhere an earnest multitude of examinees. Briggs began life as an examinee. He was a man of great simplicity and honesty. To the end of his days I do not think he realized that there was any possible knowledge but certified knowledge. He became almost a king among examinees. All his life he was adding letters to the honourable cluster at the end of his name; LL.D., D.C.L., M.A., B.Sc., and so forth and so on. He was a thick-set, shortish, dark, round-faced earnest-mannered man with a tendency to plumpness. I never knew him laugh. He was exactly five years older than myself, to a day. Having passed some sort of teachers' examinations — I believe in Yorkshire — he coached a few other candidates for the same distinction. But unlike most coaches he was modest about his abilities and honest in delivering the goods, and for some of the subjects he called in help. He employed assistant tutors. He had organizing power. Presently he turned from little teachers' qualifying examinations, to the widely sought after London University Matriculation. His pupils multiplied and he engaged more tutors. No doubt, like Northcliffe, he began with the ambition of making a few hundred pounds and like Northcliffe he was blown up to real opulence and influence. When I went down to Cambridge to interview him about his biological work, he already had a tutorial staff with over forty first-class honours men upon it, and he was dealing with hundreds of students and thousands of pounds.

The Briggs tutorial method was broadly simple. It rested upon the real absence of any philosophy or psychology in the educational methods of the time. The ordinary professor knew hardly anything of

teaching except by rule of thumb and nothing whatever of the persistent wickedness of the human heart and, when this poor specialized innocent became an examiner in the university, almost his first impulse was to look over the papers of questions set in preceding years. These questions he parodied or if they had not turned up for some years he revived them. Rarely did he ever look at the syllabus of his subject before setting a paper, and still more rarely did he attempt any novelties in his exploration of the way in which that syllabus had been followed. Accordingly in almost every subject the paper set repeated various combinations and permutations of a very finite number of questions. Meditating upon these phenomena, Briggs was struck by the idea that if his pupils were made to write out a hundred or so model answers and look over these exercises freshly before entering the examination room, they would certainly be fully prepared and trained to answer the six or seven that would be put to them.

Accordingly he procured honours-men already acquainted with the examination to be attacked, and induced them to divide the proper textbook into thirty equal pieces of reading and further to divide up a sample collection of questions previously set, so as to control the reading done. The pupil after reading each of his thirty lessons sat down and answered the questions assigned to that lesson in a special copy-book supplied for the purpose and sent it in to the tutor, who read, marked, criticized and advised in red ink. “You must read § 35 again” he wrote or “You have missed the v.i. (vitally important) footnote on .” Or “the matter you have introduced here is not required for a pass.” This was a systemization of the note-book style of teaching I have already described as a success at the Midhurst Grammar School, and as, under circumstances of wider opportunity, a mental torture in Professor Judd’s geological work. A few University Correspondence students, I believe, became insane, but none who pursued the thirty lessons to the end, failed to pass the examination for which they had been prepared. It was merely their thirty-first paper and differed from its predecessors merely by containing no novel questions.

Now "elementary biology" had long been regarded as a difficult subject. It was required for the Intermediate examination of all Bachelors of Science and for the Preliminary Scientific examination for the medical degrees, and it stood like a barrier in the way of a multitude of aspirants to the London B.Sc., M.B. and M.D. There were no textbooks that precisely covered the peculiar mental habits of the university examiners, and the careless student ran very grave risks of learning things outside the established requirements and becoming an intellectual nomad. Moreover there was a practical examination which proved an effectual "stumper" to men who had merely crammed from books. I set to work under Briggs to devise the necessary disciplines and economies of effort for making both the written and the practical examinations in biology safe for candidates.

That was an absolutely different thing from teaching biological science. I took over and revised a course of thirty correspondence instruction papers and later on expanded them into a small *Textbook of Biology* (my first published book for which I arranged to charge Briggs four or five hundred hours, I forget which), and I developed an efficient drilling in the practical work to cover about forty hours or so of intensive laboratory work. These forty odd hours could be spread over a session of twenty or more evening classes of two hours each, or compressed, for the convenience of students coming to London for the vacation or a last revision, into a furious grind of five or six hours a day for a fortnight. We met the demand for biological tutoring as it had never been met before and if it was a strange sort of biology we taught, that was the fault of the university examinations.

My classes varied in numbers from half a dozen to our maximum capacity of about thirty-two. For the bigger classes I had an assistant, who was my understudy in case of a breakdown. My students sat with their rabbits, frogs, dogfish, crayfish or other material before them and I stood at the black-board, showed swiftly and clearly what had to be done and then went round to see that it was done. I had to organize the supply and preparation of material and meet all sorts of practical difficulties. For instance it was impossible in those days to buy a student's microscope in London for less than five pounds; this was a prohibitive price for many of our people until we discovered and imported a quite practicable German model at half the price, and

arranged for its resale at second-hand after it had done its work for its first owner. I carried the books of answers of my correspondence students in buses and trains to and from the Red Lion Square laboratories and marked them in any odd time, with a red-filled fountain pen. Each book was a nominal twenty minutes' work for me, but I became very swift and expert with them, swifter indeed than expert. My notes and comments were sometimes more blottesque than edifying, but on the whole they did their work.

I must confess that for a time I found this rapid development of an examiner defeating mechanism very exciting and amusing, and it was only later on that I began to consider its larger aspects. Briggs had a bookshop in Booksellers Row, which also dealt with those microscopes, his Tutorial College in Red Lion Square and a little colony of small villas for his resident tutors and students, and postal distribution in Cambridge. Later, I think, in the order of things was his printing plant at Foxton and the workers' cottages and gardens. I liked the persistent vigour with which he expanded his organization. My exploit with the L.C.P. diploma and my success in honours for the B.Sc. had made me an amateur examinee of some distinction and won his sympathetic respect. At the end of 1891 I raided the College of Preceptors again, took its highest diploma of Fellow and carried off a Doreck scholarship of £20.

Briggs hailed my marriage with warm approval. He liked his tutors to marry young and settle down to his work. I cannot estimate how much the early marriage of university honours men made his constellation of first-classes possible, but it was indisputably a factor of some importance. These prize boys, these climbers of the scholarship ladder, trained to lives of decorum, found themselves in the course of nature, as I found myself, the prey to a secret but uncontrollable urge towards early marriage. Emerging at last as the certified triumphs of the university process, missing immediate promotion to orthodox academic posts and finding no other employment open to them except teaching at schools, in which they were at a great disadvantage because of their feebly developed skill at games, the offer from Briggs of a secure three or four hundred pounds a year and probably more, seemed like the opening of the gates of Paradise with Eve just inside. Hastily selecting wives and

suitable furniture for a villa, they entered the University Correspondence organization, and found it extremely difficult thereafter to return to legitimate academic courses. For there can be no denying that at the outset both the University Correspondence College and the Tutorial College had an extremely piratical air and awakened the perplexed suspicion and hostility of more respectably constituted educational organizations to a very grave extent. I was never under any illusion that my classes would open up a way of return for me to genuine scientific work and my spirit resounded richly to this piratical note.

The success of these classes of ours in satisfying the biological requirements of the examiners in London University without incurring any serious knowledge of biology, was great and rapid. We drew away a swarm of medical students from the rather otiose hospital teaching in biology, we got a number of ambitious teachers, engineering and technical students who wanted the B.Sc. degree, and so forth, and in the school holidays we packed our long black-boarded room with the cream of the elementary teachers up from the country, already B.A.'s, and taking an intensive course in order to add B.Sc. to their caudal adornments and their qualifications for a headmastership. We passed them neatly and surely. In one year, the entire first class in Preliminary Scientific consisted of my men; we had so raised the examinee standard, that all the papers from other competing institutions were pushed into the second class. Harley Street is still dotted with men who found us useful in helping them over an unreasonable obstacle, and I am continually meeting with the victim-beneficiaries of my smudgy uncomplimentary corrections and my sleight of hand demonstrations. Lord Horder was one, the late Rt. Hon. E. S. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India (1917-22) another. We put all sorts of competing coaches out of business. One of those for whom we made life harder was Dr. Aveling, the son-in-law of old Karl Marx, at Highgate, and I suppose I contributed, unaware of what I was doing, to the difficulties my old friend A. V. Jennings encountered in his efforts to establish a private laboratory of his own.

At various times I have thought of making a large rambling novel out of William Briggs and his creations; *Mr. Miggs and the Mind of*

the World, or some such title. There were many technical difficulties in the way, but the more serious one lay in the uniqueness of his effort. It would have needed to be recognizably him and his staff because there was nothing else in the world like them. And, quite apart from the probability of blundering into libel, there was the impossibility of varying the personalities and relationships sufficiently to alleviate a touch of personal cruelty to the tutors and so forth in the foreground. These of course could be invented, but whatever one invented, that type of reader who insists upon reading between the lines would say "that is old X" or "that is Mrs. Y. Now we know about her." Which is enormously regrettable, because the whole Briggs adventure from start to finish, done on a big canvas and with an ample background of education ministries and immensely dignified university personages and authorities, is fraught with comedy of the finest sort. Apart from the endless quaintness of the detail there is the absurdity of the whole thing. That general absurdity, at least, we can glance at here.

At one pole of the business, you have the remote persons and wills and forces which are presumably seeking or tending to produce a soundly educated community. That, if you will, is the spirit in things which makes for the modern world-state, that is the something not ourselves that makes for righteousness, or — the dawning commonsense of mankind. At that pole it is realized that in the new activities of biological science there is illumination and inspiration of a very high order. Thence comes a real drive and effort to bring this powerful new knowledge into effective relation to as much of the general mind as can be reached by formal teaching.

But this drive towards biological education has to work not only against passive resistances, but also against a great multitude of common desires, impulses and activities, that are not so much plainly antagonistic as running counter to the creative power. First the new subject has to establish its claim to a leading place in education. It is claiming space in a curriculum already occupied. Everyone in authority who as yet knows nothing about it, and everyone teaching a subject already established and already suffering from the progressive overloading of curricula, will resist its claims. When they cannot exclude it altogether they will try compromises, they will

try to cut down the share of time and equipment conceded to it, to a minimum.

They will accuse the new subject of being "revolutionary" and they will do so with perfect justice. Every new subject involves a change in the general attitude. Biology was and is a particularly aggressive and revolutionary subject, and that is why so many of us are urgent to make it a basal and primary subject in a new education. But in order to attain their ends many of the advocates of the innovation, minimize its revolutionary quality. To minimize that is to minimize its value. So they are led to consent to an emasculated syllabus from which all "controversial matters" are excluded by agreement. In our biological syllabus for instance there was not a word about evolution or the ecological interplay of species and varieties. Biology had indeed been introduced to the London University examination, rather like a ram brought into a flock of sheep to improve the breed, but under protest and only on the strictest understanding and with the most drastic precautions that there should be no breach of chastity.

The fact that biology as we examination-ruled teachers knew it, was a severely *blinkered* subject, might not in itself have prevented our introducing scientific habits of interrogation and verification to our students, if we had had any sort of linkage with, or intelligent backing from, the men who were directly carrying on the living science and who were also the university examiners. But we were thrust out of touch with them. We never got to them, though we certainly got at them.

It is not always the professors, experts and researchers in a field of human interest who are the best and most trustworthy teachers of that subject to the common man. This is a point excessively ignored by men of science. They do not realize their specialized limitations. They think that writing and teaching come by nature. They do not understand that science is something far greater than the community of scientific men. It is a culture and not a club. The Royal Society resists the admission that there is any science of public education or social psychology whatever, and contemporary economists assembled at the British Association are still reluctant to admit the possibility of a scientific planning of public affairs.

Of all that I may write later. But here it has to be recorded that biology, having got its foot into the door of the university education, was wedged at that. It was represented only by a syllabus which presented a sort of sterilized abbreviation of the first half year of the exemplary biological course of Professor Huxley at Kensington. It began and ended with the comparative anatomy of a few chosen animal and vegetable types. It was linked with no other subject. Such reflection as it threw upon the problems of life was by implication. The illuminating structural identities and contrasts between the vertebrated types, were the most suggestive points to seek, and such real teaching of biological generalizations as was possible in my classes, was done in casual conversation while I and my assistant went round the dissections. In spite of such moments, the fact remains that when we had done with the majority of our students and sent them up for their inevitable passes, they knew indeed how to dissect out the ovary of an earthworm, the pedal ganglion of a mussel or the recurrent laryngeal nerve of a rabbit, and how to draw a passable diagram of the alimentary canal of a frog or the bones of its pelvic girdle or the homologies of the angiosperm oophore, but beyond these simple tricks they knew nothing whatever of biology.

My realization of what I was doing during my three years with Briggs was gradual. The requirements for the diplomas of L.C.P. and F.C.P. were not very exacting, but they involved a certain amount of reading in educational theory and history; I had to prepare a short thesis on Froebel for the former and on Comenius for the latter; and I presently added to my income by writing, in conjunction with a colleague on Briggs' staff, Walter Low, who was, until his untimely death in 1895, my very close friend, most of a monthly publication called the *Educational Times*. For the *Educational Times* I reviewed practically every work upon education that was being published at that time. Educational theory was forced upon me. This naturally set me asking over again, what I had already asked myself rather ineffectively during my time at Henley House School: "What on earth am I really up to here? Why am I giving these particular lessons in this particular way? If human society is anything more than a fit of collective insanity in the animal kingdom, what *is* teaching for?"

At intervals, but persistently, I have been working out the answer

to that all my life, and it will play an increasing rôle in the story to follow.

Later on, having perhaps that early *Textbook of Biology*, already alluded to, on my conscience, I exerted myself to create a real textbook of biology for the reading and use of intelligent people. I got Julian Huxley and my eldest son Gip, both very sound and aggressive teachers of biology, to combine with me in setting down as plainly and clearly as we could everything that an educated man — to be an educated man — ought to know about biological science. This is the *Science of Life* (1929). It really does cover the ground of the subject, and I believe that to have it read properly, to control its reading by test writing and examination, and to substantiate it by a certain amount of museum work and demonstrations, would come much nearer to the effective teaching in general biology which is necessary for any intelligent approach to the world, than anything of the sort that is so far being done by any university. Other interests would arrange themselves in relation to it....

But I am moving ahead of my story. The main moral I would draw from this brief account of these two remarkable growths upon the London University, the University Correspondence College and the Tutorial College, is this: that the progressive spirit must not only ask for education but see that he gets it. And seeing that you get it is the real job. We did not so much exploit London University as expose it. The unsoundness was already there. We were its *reductio ad absurdum*. The new expanded educational system was not yet giving a real education at all, and Briggs' widely advertised and ever growing lists of graduated examinees merely stripped the state of affairs down to its fundamental bareness.

Could the organization of this correspondence and extra-collegiate teaching have been made, could it even yet be made, of real educational use to the community? I believe it could. It was the dream of Briggs' later years to be formally incorporated in the English university system. I believe the defects of our tuition were and are not so much in the tuition itself as in the indolence and slovenly incompetence of the University examiners and in the lack of full and able direction in the university syllabuses. There is nothing inherently undesirable in the direction and testing of reading by

correspondence, and nothing harmful in intelligent examining. But, as it was, we were, with the greatest energy and gravity, just missing the goal. We went beside the mark. The only results we produced were examination results which merely looked like the real thing. In the true spirit of an age of individualistic competition, we were selling wooden nutmegs or umbrellas that wouldn't open, or brass sovereigns or a patent food without any nourishment in it, or whatever other image you like for an unsound delivery of goods. And our circumstances almost insisted upon that unsound delivery. We could not have existed except as teachers who did not teach, but pass.

§ 6. COLLAPSE INTO LITERARY JOURNALISM (1893-94)

The first phase of all my resistances to the world about me has been derision. I suppose I gathered my courage in that way for more definite revolt. And now I began to be ironical and sarcastic about this job by which I earned my living and sustained my household. The loss of genuine keenness about my teaching, and a corresponding release of facetiousness brightened my style in the *Educational Times*, and presently Briggs asked me to edit (at so many hours per number) a little advertising and intercommunicating periodical of his own, *The University Correspondent*.

Both Walter Low and I were very sarcastic young men and we had excellent reason so to be. The *Educational Times* was the property of the College of Preceptors. It paid Low £50 a year as editor and another £50 a year for contributors. He and I found it convenient that I should be the contributors — all of them. It saved him a great deal of correspondence. He was older and more experienced in newspaper matters than I, and I learnt a good deal of journalistic *savoir faire* from him. I acquired dexterity in swinging into a subject and a variety of useful phrases and methods of reviewing. We went about together, prowling about London, two passably respectable but not at all glossy young men, with hungry side glances at its abounding prosperity, sharpening our wits with talk. I was not so flimsy as I had been; I was beginning to look more

compact and substantial. Low was tall and dark, not the Jew of convention and caricature, the ambitious and not the acquisitive sort, mystical and deliberate. He had an extensive knowledge of foreign languages and contemporary literature. He knew vastly more about current political issues than I did. We argued endlessly about the Jewish question, upon which he sought continually to enlighten me. But I have always refused to be enlightened and sympathetic about the Jewish question. From my cosmopolitan standpoint it is a question that ought not to exist. So, though we never quarrelled, we had some lively passages and if we convinced each other of nothing we considerably instructed each other.

Walter Low was one of a numerous and interesting family which came to England, I think from Hungary, after the political disturbances of '48. His father prospered at first and then lost his business flair without losing his enterprise; and so the family fortunes were dissipated. Consequently the elder children had greater advantages than the younger. Sidney and Maurice both went to Oxford, became eminent journalists and ended with knighthoods. One of the sisters married well, and an elder one, Frances, became a prominent journalist. She wrote particularly in a ladies' paper called the *Queen* and scolded the girl of the period — with the usual absence of result. The younger members of the family had to fight for education by winning scholarships. The youngest sister, Barbara, is a psycho-analyst and has written an excellent little book on her subject. Walter's education fell into the trough of the family depression and instead of going to Oxford or Cambridge he worked in London and took a London M.A. degree, with exceptional distinction in foreign languages. The difficulties he had experienced gave him much the same discontented and disadvantaged feeling about life that pervaded my thoughts. We were in our twenties now and still getting nowhere. It wasn't that we were failing to climb the ladder of success. We had an exasperating realization that we could not even get our feet on the ladder of success. It had been put out of our reach.

We had both toiled hard for outside university distinctions and we found they had led us into nothing but this fundamentally unsatisfactory coaching. We had both worked strenuously at writing

and discovered that the more we learnt of that elusive art the less satisfaction we derived from the writing we did, because of the haste with which we had to do it and sell it. Both of us, following some shy dream of sensuous loveliness and tender intimacy, had married and become householders, and neither for our wives nor for ourselves, was married life, upon restricted means, fulfilling the imaginations that romance and music had aroused in us. At the back of our minds was a vague feeling that we would like to begin life all over again and begin it differently; but although this feeling may have coloured our subconsciousness and certainly deflected our behaviour, it found no more definite expression. We did not own up to it. We scoffed and assumed a confident air.

My guiding destiny was presently to wrench me round into a new beginning again, but Walter Low never got away to good fortune. He caught a cold, neglected it and died of pneumonia in 1895. He left a widow who presently married again, and three bright little daughters. One of them, Ivy, wrote two quite good short novels in her teens, *Growing Pains*, and *The Questing Beast*, and then married a young Russian exile and conspirator named Litvinoff, who is now the very able Foreign Minister of the Russian government. We met at my home at Grasse and afterwards in London, in the spring of 1933, and Ivy talked with great affection and understanding about her father.

I did what I could to stifle my fundamental dissatisfaction with life during this period as a correspondence tutor. There was no one about me whom by any stretch of injustice I could blame for the insufficiencies of my experience, and I tried not to grumble about them even to myself. My correspondence fell away; I had quite enough correspondence without writing personal letters. The zest may have gone out of my interest in myself and there is little or no record of the moods of this time. But between myself and Low there was a considerable mute understanding. Under the influence of his efforts I was beginning to write again in any scraps of time I could snatch from direct money-earning. I was resuming my general criticism of life. I had already had one curious little gleam of success. In the winter of 1890-91 after taking my degree, I had broken down and had a hæmorrhage, and Dr. Collins — who believed steadfastly

in my ultimate recovery — had got me nearly a month's holiday at Up Park. This had given me a period of intellectual leisureliness in which my mind could play with an idea for days on end, and I wrote a paper *The Rediscovery of the Unique* which was printed by Frank Harris in the *Fortnightly Review* (July 1891). I have already mentioned this paper in § 2 of Chapter V, in my account of the development of my conception of the physical universe. This success whetted my appetite for print and I sent Harris a further article, the *Universe Rigid*, which he packed off to the printers at once and only read when he got it in proof. He found it incomprehensible and his immediate staff found it incomprehensible. This is not surprising, since it was a laboured and ill-written description of a four dimensional space-time universe, and that sort of thing was still far away from the monthly reviews in 1891. "Great *Gahd*!" cried Harris, "What's the fellow up to?" and summoned me to the office.

I found his summons disconcerting. My below-stairs training reinforced the spirit of the times on me, and insisted that I should visit him in proper formal costume. I imagined I must wear a morning coat and a silk hat and carry an umbrella. It was impossible I should enter the presence of a Great Editor in any other guise. My aunt Mary and I inspected these vitally important articles. The umbrella, tightly rolled and with a new elastic band, was not so bad, provided it had not to be opened; but the silk hat was extremely discouraging. It was very fluffy and defaced and, as I now perceived for the first time, a little brownish in places. The summons was urgent and there was no time to get it ironed. We brushed it with a hard brush and then with a soft one and wiped it round again and again with a silk handkerchief. The nap remained unsubdued. Then, against the remonstrances of my aunt Mary, I wetted it with a sponge and then brushed. That seemed to do the trick. My aunt's attempt to restrain me had ruffled and delayed me a little, but I hurried out, damply glossy, to the great encounter, my début in the world of letters.

Harris kept me waiting in the packing office downstairs for nearly half an hour before he would see me. This ruffled me still more. At last I was shown up to a room that seemed to me enormous, in the

midst of which was a long table at which the great man was sitting. At the ends were a young man, whom I was afterwards to know as Blanchamp, and a very refined looking old gentleman named Silk who was Harris's private secretary. Harris silently motioned me to a chair opposite himself.

He was a square-headed individual with very black hair parted in the middle and brushed fiercely back. His eyes as they met my shabby and shrinking form became intimidatory. He had a blunt nose over a vast black upturned moustache, from beneath which came a deep voice of exceptional power. He seemed to me to be of extraordinary size, though that was a mere illusion; but he was certainly formidable. "And it was *you* sent me this Universe R-R-Rigid!" he roared.

I got across to the table somehow, sat down and disposed myself for a conversation. I was depleted and breathless. I placed my umbrella and hat on the table before me and realized then for the first time that my aunt Mary had been right about that wetting. It had become a disgraceful hat, an insult. The damp gloss had gone. The nap was drying irregularly and standing up in little tufts all over. It was not simply a shabby top hat; it was an improper top hat. I stared at it. Harris stared at it. Blanchamp and Silk had evidently never seen such a hat. With an effort we came to the business in hand.

"You sent me this Universe Gur-R-R-Rigid," said Harris, picking up his cue after the pause.

He caught up a proof beside him and tossed it across the table. "Dear Gahd! I can't understand six words of it. What do you *mean* by it? For Gahd's sake tell me what it is all *about*? What's the sense of it? What are you trying to *say*?"

I couldn't stand up to him — and my hat. I couldn't for a moment adopt the tone and style of a bright young man of science. There was my hat tacitly revealing the sort of chap I was. I couldn't find words. Blanchamp and Silk with their chins resting on their hands, turned back from the hat to me, in gloomy silent accusation.

"Tell me what you *think* it's about?" roared Harris, growing more merciless with my embarrassment, and rapping the proof with the back of his considerable hand. He was enjoying himself.

"Well, you see — —" I said.

“I don’t see,” said Harris. “That’s just what I don’t do.”

“The idea,” I said, “the idea — —”

Harris became menacingly silent, patiently attentive.

“If you consider time is space like, then —— I mean if you treat it like a fourth dimension like, well then you see....”

“*Gahd* the way I’ve been let in!” injected Harris in an aside to Gahd.

“I can’t use it,” said Harris at the culmination of the interview. “We’ll have to disperse the type again,” — and the vision I had had of a series of profound but brilliant articles about fundamental ideas, that would make a reputation for me, vanished. My departure from that room has been mercifully obliterated from my memory. But as soon as I got alone with it in my bedroom in Fitzroy Road, I smashed up that hat finally. To the great distress of my aunt Mary. And the effect of that encounter was to prevent my writing anything ambitious again, for a year or more. If I did, I might get into the presence of another editor, and clearly that was far worse than having one’s MS. returned. It needed all the encouragement and rivalry of Walter Low to bring me back to articles once more and even then I confined myself mainly to the ill-paid and consequently reasonably accessible educational papers. They paid so badly that their editors had no desire whatever to look their contributors in the face.

Harris broke up the type of that second article and it is lost, but one or two people, Oscar Wilde was one, so praised to him the *Rediscovery of the Unique*, that he may have had afterthoughts about the merits of the rejected stuff. At any rate, when in 1894 he became proprietor editor of the *Saturday Review* and reorganized its staff, he remembered and wrote to me and I became one of his regular contributors.

But before then there had been some violent convulsions in my affairs. That humorous, that almost facetious Destiny that rules my life, seems to have resented the possibility that I might settle down in the position of one of Briggs’ married, prize tutors, with occasional lapses into journalism and aspiration, and proceeded to knock my solidifying world to pieces again with characteristic emphasis.

Its course of action was threefold. It made its attack in three phases. First it concentrated the diffused discontent and self-criticism

in my life into an acute emotional situation. I think I have already made plain how incompatible was my outlook of things from that of my wife. I want to make certain aspects of that relationship very clear. There is a traditional disposition to import blame or sympathy into every breach between a man and a woman. The people who tell the story about them say that he was false to her or that she was unworthy of him or that he or she made no effort and so forth and so on. But in most breaches between men and women, the want of harmony was there from the beginning and the atmosphere of a conflict and moral compulsions is imposed upon them by laws and customs that exact an impossibly stereotyped universality of behaviour from a world of unique personalities. My cousin and I had been thrown closely together by the accidents of life, we had been honest allies and we liked and admired innumerable things in each other. That we should marry had seemed the logical outcome of our situation. We both wanted now to be honest mates and adapt ourselves to each other completely. We were both perplexed and distressed by our failure to do that. We were in love with each other, quite honestly and simply desirous of being "everything" to each other. But there was an unalterable difference not only in our mental equipment and habits, but in our nervous reactions. I felt and acted swiftly and variously and at times very loosely and superficially, in the acutest contrast to her gentler and steadier flow. There was no contact nor comparison between our imaginative worlds, but within her range her quality was simpler and nobler than mine. If we had not been under the obligation of our marriage and our sentimental bias to agree in a hundred judgments and act together upon some common interpretation of life, all would have been well with us. But that need for a community of objective was the impossible condition which separated us.

The ideas which made me more and more discontented with the cramming of examinees by which we lived, were outside her world. She could not understand why I mocked and fretted perpetually at Briggs' grave and industrious organization of tutoring, because she had no inkling of the ultimate futility of the whole process. Examinations to her were like alarming but edible wild animals, they were in the order of nature, and it was my business as the man to go

out and overcome them and bring back the proceeds. I on the other hand thought they were distortions of an educational process for which I felt dimly responsible. Mentally she lived inside a system, and I was not only in the system but also consciously and responsibly a part of that system in which I lived. She said, with perfect justice, that Briggs had always treated me very fairly and that I ought not to make fun of him. In her gentle but obstinate way she "stood up for him" when I talked about him. But indeed we brought in such different data that with regard to everyone in our world, her friends and my friends, we had hardly a judgment in common. She was equally unable to see why some issues of the *University Correspondent* satisfied me and others overwhelmed me with strain and fury because they wouldn't come right by certain impossible standards of my own. Why did I sit at my desk getting more and more put out by my work, while my dinner was getting cold? She thought I "fussed about little things" too much. She was perplexed, seeing how much I had to do, that I should want to do quite other writing besides. And again it seemed to her on the verge of unreason that I could fly off from something in the newspaper to scorn, bitterness and denunciation. I can still see her dear brown eyes dismayed at some uncontrollable outburst. Throughout our married life, with no sense of personal antagonism, unconsciously, she became the gently firm champion of all that I felt was suppressing me. Conversation between us died away as topic after topic ceased to be a neutral topic. It shrank to occasional jests and endearments or to small immediate things; to the sweet-peas in the garden or the gift of a kitten. My unaccountable irritability was a perpetual threat to our peace.

Meanwhile I talked outside my home and began to find an increasing interest in the suggestions of personality in the girls and women who flitted across the background of my restless, toilsome little world. Then it was that my Destiny saw fit to bring a grave little figure into my life who was to be its ruling influence and support throughout all my most active years. When I came into my laboratory to meet the new students who were assembling for the afternoon class of 1892-93 I found two exceptionally charming young women making friends at the end table. One of them was a

certain Adeline Roberts, so dazzlingly pretty and so essentially serious, that she never in all her life had time to fall in love with a man before he was in a state of urgent and undignified protestation at her feet. So that she is still Adeline Roberts, M.D., L.C.C., and a soundly conservative influence in the affairs of the county of London. The other, Amy Catherine Robbins, was a more fragile figure, with very delicate features, very fair hair and very brown eyes. She was dressed in mourning, for her father had been quite recently killed in a railway accident, and she wanted to get the London B.Sc. degree before she took up high school teaching.

If either of these young ladies had joined my class alone I should probably never have become very intimate with either. It would not have been within my range of possibility to single out any particular student for more than a due meed of instruction. It would have been "conspicuous." But with two students capable of asking intelligent questions, it was the most natural thing in the world to put a stool between them, sit down instructively, and let these questions expand. They were both in a phase of mental formation and student curiosity, they were both reading widely, and it was the most natural thing in the world that comparative anatomy should lead to evolutionary theory and that again point the way to theological questions and social themes. They revived the discursive interests of my Kensington days. The disposition of Adeline Roberts was towards orthodoxy; her mind had been built upon an unshaken and wholly accepted Christian faith; Catherine Robbins had read more widely and had a bolder curiosity. She was breaking away from the tepid, shallow, sentimental Church of England Christianity in which she had been brought up. The snatches of talk for four or five minutes at a stretch that were possible during the class session were presently not enough for us, and we developed a habit of meeting early and going on talking after the two hours of rigorous biology were over. Little Miss Robbins was the more acutely interested and she was generally more punctually in advance of her time than her friend, so that we two became a duologue masked as a three-cornered friendship.

This was a new outlet for my imagination. I was under no necessity here of assuming the cynical tone I adopted with Walter

Low, and I could talk of my ideas and ambitions more freely than I had ever done before. I could release old mental accumulations that had been out of action since my student phase had ended. I posed as a man of promise and effort and, as I posed, I began to believe in my pose. I cannot now retrace the easy steps through interest to intimate affection. We lent each other books; we exchanged notes; we contrived to walk together once or twice and to have tea together. It was a friendship that assured itself with the most perfect insincerity that it meant to go no further, and it kept on going further.

It came to me quite suddenly one night that I wanted the sort of life that Amy Catherine Robbins symbolized for me and that my present life was unendurable. That was the realization of a state of affairs that had been accumulating below the level of consciousness for some time. It did not in the least prevent that present life continuing. And the sexual element in this shift of desire was very small.

I became profoundly preoccupied with this realization of a better companionship. I did not know how to state my situation, even to myself. I did not clearly understand the fundamentals of my trouble. I tried over all sorts of explanations for this sudden sense of insufficiency in my cousin, whom nevertheless I still loved with pride, proprietorship and jealousy, and this distressing and overpowering desire to be together with a new companion. My habitual disposition to respect an obligation, to accept my immediate world and respond to its urgencies and imperatives was very strong. But almost equally strong was another system of dispositions not so immediate, but begotten of reading and thought and discussion, which denied the final claim of these immediate imperatives to control and shape my life, a system of dispositions which conformed to a code of right and wrong and duties — and excuses, that could at times run absolutely counter to the primary set. Seen in the perspective of forty-five years it is all clear enough. Indeed the primary theme of this autobiography is this conflict between the primary and the secondary values of life, and here it approached an acute phase. But I had still to realize that. I found myself divided against myself, contradicting myself, saying something that seemed on one day to be a revelation of the profoundest truth and the next

day a feat of humbug. I had become inexplicable even on my own terms, and my humour and expressiveness had deserted me.

Every convention required that I should regard the business as a simple choice between two personalities, and I had not the acuteness to see through that at the time. The formula imposed upon my mind was that I had been "mistaken" in regarding myself as loving Isabel, which was not in the least true, and that now I had found my "true affinity" and fallen in love with her, which again was a misstatement. My sub-conscious intelligence was protesting against this simplification but it never struggled up to explicitness.

But I think it will be more convenient to postpone the dissection of these emotional perplexities for another chapter and to go on here with the odd tangle of associated accidents which now in little more than a year transformed me from an industrious tutor into an ambitious writer. My sentimental education is a story by itself and it shall have a chapter to itself.

Having brought me to this phase of fluctuation between two conflicting streams of motive, my peculiar Destiny set itself by a series of decisive blows to change all the circumstances about me. The precarious hold of my family upon a living had already been loosened in the case both of my father, who was in that cottage at Nyewoods earning nothing, and of my brother, who was with him repairing and trading watches on a small scale. Now it was that Miss Fetherstonhaugh rebelled against my mother's increasing deafness and inefficiency and dismissed her, and almost simultaneously, my brother Freddy, who had seemed safely established in the confidence of his firm at Wokingham, discovered that he was presently to be replaced in his job by a son of his employer.

His heart burned within him. He had been happy at Wokingham and satisfied with himself for some years; he had saved perhaps a hundred pounds, and his head spun with schemes of getting in a little more capital and credit and setting up for himself in the town and — just showing them. He consulted me. I found myself forced into the position of head of the family. My mother took refuge with me in February and I learn from an undated letter preserved by my brother Frank, that I actually went down to Wokingham, a trip I have completely forgotten, probably in the early spring, to consider the

prospects of Wells Bros. Drapers (and Watchmakers) there. I did not find those prospects very bright.

I had none of the Bonaparte-Northcliffe disposition to control and use my family. My impression is that I was hasty, harsh and stupid about all this tangle and almost uncouthly regardless of the humiliations and distressed desires involved therein, I seem to have experimented with my father and mother, possibly at my mother's suggestion, in giving them sheets of lessons to copy out. Poor dears, they were about as qualified to do that properly, as they were to make translations from Sanscrit. I also discover, in letters my brother Freddy has kept, that I wanted him to turn from drapery and try his luck for an art scholarship at South Kensington. There were various unstable plans for partnerships and business enterprises that vanished as they came, like summer snow. In addition to all the other little jobs I had in hand I seem at that time to have undertaken, to organize on the appearance of one or two possible examinees, a special course in geology for the London degree examination. This in itself was a complicated task needing close attention, reading and a balanced judgment. I never carried it out. Freddy was dislodged from Wokingham sometime in April or May. By that time my mother had gone to join my father and my brother Frank at Nyewoods and Freddy occupied the spare bedroom at Haldon Road, went into London daily, dividing his time there between the dismal pursuit of crib-hunting and, with a diminishing hopefulness, enquiries about the possibility of setting up in business for himself with practically no capital at all. Upon reflection he decided he could not work in partnership with brother Frank and it became clearer and clearer to us both that with so small a capital as we possessed, it would be impossible to get goods at proper wholesale prices. We should fall into the hands of intermediaries who specialize in eating up the hopeful beginnings of would-be small retailers. We were both very innocent about finance but not so innocent as all that.

I still have my old bank books. At the beginning of 1893 I opened the account already noted at the Wandsworth Branch of what is now the Westminster Bank, and from the first of these little volumes which presently grow larger and fatter, I learn that in that year I earned £380 13*s.* 7*d.* My quarterly balance was usually round about

£50. At the end of the year however it fell to £25 15*s.* 1*d.* A pound meant more then than it does now, but manifestly the fortunes of the Wells family were still being carried within a very narrow margin of safety. I seem to have paid out cheques to various Wellses, identities now untraceable, to the amount of £109. Most, if not all of this, probably went to my parents at Nyewoods.

One evening I gave a couple of hours to my new geological aspirant. I have quite forgotten him now, but apparently I introduced him to a few typical fossils. Where I procured these fossils, I do not know, but possibly they were hired. At any rate I found myself about nine or ten at night hurrying down the slope of Villiers Street to Charing Cross Underground Station, with a heavy bag of specimens. I was seized by a fit of coughing. Once more I tasted blood and felt the dismay that had become associated with it and when I had got into the train I pulled out my handkerchief and found it stained brightly scarlet. I coughed alone in the dingy compartment and tried not to cough, sitting very still and telling myself it was nothing very much, until at last I got to Putney Bridge. Then it had stopped. I was hungry when I got home and as I did not want to be sent to bed forthwith, I hid my tell-tale handkerchief and would not even look at it myself because I wanted to believe that I had coughed up nothing but a little discoloured phlegm, and I made a hearty supper. It was unendurable to think that I was to have yet another relapse, that I should have to stop work again. I got to bed all right. At three o'clock in the morning I was trying for dear life not to cough. But this time the blood came and came and seemed resolved to choke me for good and all. This was no skirmish; this was a grand attack.

I remember the candle-lit room, the dawn breaking through presently, my wife and my aunt in nightgowns and dressing-gowns, the doctor hastily summoned and attention focussed about a basin in which there was blood and blood and more blood. Sponge-bags of ice were presently adjusted to my chest but I kept on disarranging them to sit up for a further bout of coughing. I suppose I was extremely near death that night, but I remember only my irritation at the thought that this would prevent my giving a lecture I had engaged myself to give on the morrow. The blood stopped before I did. I was presently spread out under my ice-bags, still and hardly breathing,

but alive.

When I woke up after an indefinite interval it was as if all bothers and urgencies had been washed out of my brain. I was pleasantly weary and tranquil, the centre of a small attentive world. I had to starve for a week except for a spoonful or so of that excellent stimulant, Valentine's Extract. Much the same beautiful irresponsibility descended upon me, as came to many of the men who were sent out of the Great War to hospitals or England. There was nothing more for me to do, nothing I could possibly attend to and I didn't care a rap. I had got out of my struggle with honour and no one could ask me to carry on with those classes any more. I was quit of them. I might write or I might die. It didn't matter. The crowning event of this phase of my life came after seven days, when I was given a thin slice of bread and butter.

Within a day or so of this disaster I was writing heroically indistinct pencil notes to my friends and having a fine time of it. "I almost sent in p.p.c. cards on Thursday morning, but it occurred to me in time that they were out of fashion" — that was the style of it. "No more teaching for me for ever," I write to Miss Healey. Sympathetic responses came to hand. Adeline Roberts, honestly appalled at my situation, felt it her duty to write me a letter, a most kind and affectionate letter of religious exhortation. I do not remember how I answered her, but it was something in the manner of a Cockney Voltaire. I'm sorry for that to this day. Dr. Collins heard of my plight and wrote also. I detected a helpful motive and wrote among other things to assure him that I had "reserves" for a year or so.

As I grew stronger I found myself exceptionally clear-headed and steady- minded. I amused myself in my convalescence by playing draughts and chess with brother Fred. Hitherto he had always been the better player and I had been hasty and inaccurate. Now for a time I found I saw all round him and he hadn't a chance with me. And suddenly I grasped the essentials of his problem. There came a demand from South Africa for an assistant, the rate of pay sounded very good in comparison with English salaries, and he was half alarmed and half attracted by the proposal. This was the very thing for him. He was honest, sober, decent and pleasant, he was

trustworthy to the superlative degree and he lacked the sort of push, smartness and self assertion needed to make any sort of business success in England. In the colonies shop assistants do not run as straight or as steadily as they are compelled to do at home, they feel the breath of opportunity and the lure of personal freedom, so that out there his assets of steadiness and trustworthiness would be a precious commodity, and therefore I determined he must go. I had to overbear a strong sentimental resistance on the part of my mother, but Freddy was greatly sustained by my agreement with him, and in a week or so the engagement was made and the adventurer was buying his outfit and packing for the Cape, — to prosper, to acquire property and at last to return to England on the verge of sixty "comfortably off," to marry a first cousin on our maternal side, and present me with my one and only niece. With Freddy thus provided for and having undertaken to carry a share of the expenses of Nyewoods so soon as his first money came in, my mind was liberated to go into the details of my own problem.

I was not without a solution. There had already been a set-back to my earning power in the middle of 1891, when after a lesser hæmorrhage I had proposed to throw up my class teaching with Briggs. At that time he had found no properly qualified substitute and I had taken on the class work again after a rest. My classes had grown and multiplied steadily since then and we had already added a permanent assistant, J. M. Lowson, a very much better botanist than I, and a loyal and pleasant colleague. We arranged for my friend and former fellow student A. M. Davies, now a distinguished geologist, to relieve me of the rest of the class teaching, while my name remained on Briggs' glittering list of first-class honours men as the biological tutor, and I carried on with the correspondence work and undertook a text book of geography that was never completed. Fate was pushing me to the writing desk in spite of myself. I decided that henceforth I must reckon class teaching in London as outside the range of my possibilities and so we were free to move out of town to some more open and healthy situation. But before doing that we resolved, as my little aunt was now also in rather shaky health, to take a fortnight's holiday, all three of us, and pick up our strength at Eastbourne.

I see I drew a cheque for £30, payable to "self" in May, and I have no doubt this gigantic withdrawal represents that Eastbourne expedition.

As I look over these yellowing old bank-books I see close to that another item: May 19th Gregory £10. It recalls one of the brightest incidents in my life and I cannot omit it here. My old fellow student R. A. Gregory was in a tighter corner just then even than I was; he had no ready money at all and I lent him that! (What courage and confidence we had in those days!) In a week or so he had paid it back to me. Never in all my days since has anyone returned me a borrowed fiver or tenner, except Gregory. And after that he and I put our heads together and arranged to collaborate in a small but useful cram-book to be called *Honours Physiography*, which we sold outright to a publisher for £20 — which we shared, fifty-fifty.

When I had been at Eastbourne for two or three days, I hit quite by accident upon the true path to successful free-lance journalism. I found the hidden secret in a book by J. M. Barrie, called *When a Man's Single*. Let me quote the precious words through which I found salvation. "You beginners," said the sage Rorrison, "seem able to write nothing but your views on politics, and your reflections on art, and your theories of life, which you sometimes even think original. Editors won't have that, because their readers don't want it.... You see this pipe here? Simms saw me mending it with sealing-wax one day, and two days afterwards there was an article about it in the *Scalping Knife*. When I went off for my holidays last summer I asked him to look in here occasionally and turn a new cheese which had been sent me from the country. Of course he forgot to do it, and I denounced him on my return for not keeping his solemn promise, so he revenged himself by publishing an article entitled 'Rorrison's Oil-Painting.' In this it was explained that just before Rorrison went off for a holiday he got a present of an oil-painting. Remembering when he had got to Paris that the painting, which had come to him wet from the easel, had been left lying on his table, he telegraphed to the writer to have it put away out of reach of dust and the cat. The writer promised to do so, but when Rorrison returned he found the picture lying just where he left it. He rushed off to his friend's room to upbraid him, and did it so effectually that the friend says in his

article, ‘I will never do a good turn for Rorrison again!’”

“But why,” asked Rob, “did he turn the cheese into an oil-painting?”

“Ah, there you have the journalistic instinct again. You see a cheese is too plebeian a thing to form the subject of an article in the *Scalping Knife*, so Simms made a painting of it. He has had my Chinese umbrella from several points of view in three different papers. When I play on his piano I put scraps of paper on the notes to guide me, and he made his three guineas out of that. Once I challenged him to write an article on a straw that was sticking to the sill of my window, and it was one of the most interesting things he ever did. Then there was the box of old clothes and other odds and ends that he promised to store for me when I changed my rooms. He sold the lot to a hawker for a pair of flower-pots, and wrote an article on the transaction. Subsequently he had another article on the flower-pots; and when I appeared to claim my belongings he got a third article out of that.”

Why had I never thought in that way before? For years I had been seeking rare and precious topics. *Rediscovery of the Unique! Universe Rigid!* The more I was rejected the higher my shots had flown. All the time I had been shooting over the target. All I had to do was to lower my aim — and hit.

I did lower my aim and by extraordinary good fortune I hit at once. My friendly Destiny had everything ready for me. It had arranged that an American millionaire, Mr. W. W. Astor, not very well informed about the journalistic traditions of Fleet Street, should establish himself in London and buy the *Pall Mall Gazette*. As soon as the transaction was completed he called the Editor to him, and instructed him to change his politics. The Editor and most of the staff resigned, to the extreme surprise of Mr. Astor who, casting about for an immediate successor and meeting at dinner, a handsome and agreeable young man, Harry Cust, heir to the Earl of Brownlow, whose knowledge of literature and the world were as manifest as his manners were charming, offered him the vacant editorship, then and there. Cust was a friend of W. E. Henley, the editor of the small, bright and combative *National Observer*, and to him he went for advice and help. A staff was assembled on which experienced

journalists mingled with writers of an acuter literary sensibility, and in the highest of spirits and with a fine regardlessness of expenditure — for was not Astor notoriously a multi-millionaire — Cust set out to make the *Pall Mall Gazette* the most brilliant of recorded papers. Large and extravagant offices were secured in the West End near Leicester Square. Everyone available in Cust's social circle and Henley's literary world, was invoked to help, advise, criticize. Among other strange rules in the office was one that no contribution offered should go unread. The rate of pay was exceptionally good for the time, and there was less space devoted to news and politics and more to literary matter than in any other evening paper.

Quite unaware of this burgeoning of generous intentions within the cold resistances of the London press, I lay in the kindly sunshine beneath the white headland of Beachy Head and read my Barrie. Reading him in the nick of time. How easy he made it seem! I fell into a pleasant meditation. I reflected that directly one forgot how confoundedly serious life could be, it did become confoundedly amusing. For instance those other people on the beach....

I returned to my lodgings with the substance of an article *On Staying at the Seaside* scribbled on the back of a letter and on its envelope. My cousin Bertha Williams at Windsor was a typist and I sent the stuff for her to typewrite. Then I posted this to the *Pall Mall Gazette* and received a proof almost by return. I was already busy on a second article which was also accepted. Next I dug up a facetious paper I had written for the *Science Schools Journal* long ago, and rewrote it as *The Man of the Year Million*. This appeared later in the *Pall Mall Budget*. It was illustrated there and someone in *Punch* was amused by it and quoted it and gave another illustration. I had been learning the business of writing lightly and brightly for years without understanding that I was serving an apprenticeship. *The Science Schools Journal*, the *University Correspondent*, the *Educational Times*, the *Journal of Education*, had been, so to speak, my exercise books, and my endless letters to such appreciative friends as Elizabeth Healey and even my talks to quick-witted associates like Walter Low, had been releasing me from the restricted vocabulary of my boyhood, sharpening my phrasing and developing skill in expression. At last I found myself with the knack of it.

I do not now recall the order of the various sketches, dialogues and essays I produced in that opening year of journalism. They came pouring out. Some of the best of them are to be found collected in two books, still to be bought, *Certain Personal Matters* and *Select Conversations with an Uncle*. Much of that stuff was good enough to print but not worth reprinting. Barrie was entertained by one of these articles and asked Cust who had written it. When Cust expressed his approval of my work to me and demanded more, I asked him to let me have some reviewing and routine work to eke out my income when I was not in the mood to invent, and he agreed. Books for review came to hand....

In a couple of months I was earning more money than I had ever done in my class-teaching days. It was absurd. I forgot all the tragedy of my invalidism and in August in a mood of returning confidence, we moved to a house my wife had found in Sutton, 4 Cumnor Place. Nyewoods read the articles, heard of the monthly cheques, participated, rejoiced and was glad. Editors of other papers began to write to me. I still went on with correspondence tuition, my textbook of geography and my collaboration with Gregory.

I lived at Sutton until after Christmas, when as I will tell more fully in the next chapter, I left my cousin. We parted and Catherine Robbins joined me in London, in lodgings at 7 Mornington Place (January, 1894). She was reading and making notes for her B.Sc. degree and we scribbled side by side in our front room on the ground floor, prowled about London in search of stuff for articles and had a very happy time together.

I continued to write with excitement and industry, I found ideas came to hand more and more readily, and now the return of a manuscript was becoming rare. Editors were beginning to look out for me and I was learning what would suit them. But the particulars of these journeyman years I will deal with later. Here I will give only the testimony of my little bank books to show how the financial pressure upon me was relieved and overcome. In 1893 I had made £380 13*s.* 7*d.* and it had been extremely difficult to keep things going. I seem to have carried off Catherine Robbins on a gross capital of less than £100. In 1894 I earned £583 17*s.* 7*d.*; in 1895 £792 2*s.* 5*d.* and in 1896 £1,056 7*s.* 9*d.* Every year for a number of

years my income went on expanding in this fashion. I was able to put Nyewoods on a satisfactory basis with regular payments, pay off all the costs of my divorce, pay a punctual alimony to Isabel, indulge comfortably in such diminishing bouts of ill health as still lay ahead of me, accumulate a growing surplus and presently build a home and beget children. I was able to move my father and mother and brother from Nyewoods to a better house at Liss, Roseneath, in 1896 and afterwards buy it for them. My wilder flounderings with material fortune were over; my Destiny seemed satisfied with my further progress and there were no more disastrous but salutary kickings into fresh positions and wider opportunities. The last cardinal turning point on the road to fortune had been marked by that mouthful of blood in Villiers Street on the way down to Charing Cross.

§ 7. EXHIBITS IN EVIDENCE

This I think is the place for various documents, mostly letters written between 1890 and 1900, which give the tone and quality of my relations to my family and to one or two other people who were playing an important part in my life at that period. I have had to pick them out from a very considerable heap of material. One of the most difficult things in my task of relating the development of an ordinary brain during what I believe to be a very crucial phase in human history, has been to select. I doubt if anybody reads collections of So and So's letters right through and I doubt if many readers will go through this section closely. Yet these scribbles set down for some particular recipient without the remotest idea of publication and subsequent judgment, do, I think, catch some subtle phases in mental transition. A few sheets I have had reproduced in reduced facsimile, to get the still puerile flavour of the handwriting and the still puerile habit of facetious sketching. The rest have been transcribed and are given in small print. As we used to say in our correspondence tuition: it is not absolutely essential that this material should be read. They are for expansion and confirmation of what has been related already. I wish I could have had all of them done in facsimile. The browning old sheets have a reality and veracity impossible to convey in any

other fashion. They add very few new facts; they are living substance rather than record; there they are.

These letters are full of the little jokes and allusions of a reluctantly dispersing household. None of us realized how we were drifting apart, each one of us to new associations that the other would never share. There is a sort of "listen to my wonders" in these letters which I find now just a little pathetic, the desire to make the most of any little success; behind the apparent egotism and vanity is a living desire to keep up the old closeness of interest and the old intimacy of humour. That impulse fades out steadily, and in still later correspondence it has gone almost completely. The funny little inept sketches become rare and die out at last — cropping up finally only when Christmas or a birthday revives the fading family spirit. In the end the last umbilical threads are severed and hardly anything remains but a friendly memory of those vanished ties.

I suppose every biography, if fully told, would reveal this early predominance of home affections and the successive weakening out and subordination of one strand of sympathy after another, as new ones replaced them. It is clear that up to my thirtieth year there was still a very powerful web of feeling between me and the scattered remains of my home group. I was at least half way through life before my emotional release from that original matrix was completed. That, I think, must be the normal way of the individual life. It is a pilgrimage from familiarity to loneliness. I doubt whether any subsequent association systems, the dependences upon those persons and groups to whom we turn to replace that confirmation and reassurance our families gave us in the beginning, have ever the same influence over us that our primary audience exercised. It is not that we break away but that we are broken away. We cling to friendships, social circles, cliques, clubs, movements, societies, parties, descendants: but for all our clinging we are forced towards the open. We lose the trick of easy clinging. In the long run, if we live long enough, we find ourselves standing alone, grown up at last altogether, in the face of the universe and life — and what remains to us of death.

The strongest secondary system of reference I ever developed was to my second wife, the moral background of half my life. For long

years it seemed as though many things had not completely happened until I had told her of them. And even now, although she has been dead for seven years I find myself thinking "This would amuse Jane." I write a bit of a letter in my head or I think of a "picshua," before I remember.

Many of these letters were undated. These I have given an approximate date in italics in square brackets. I have corrected some of the dating by Ephgrave's useful calendar.

* * * * *

College of Preceptors,
Bloomsbury Square, W.C.
July 5th, 1890.

DEAR OLD FRED,

Just a line to mention the fact that you *have* a brother in London to whom your memory is a precious possession and *wild flowers very acceptable*.[*] Dog daisies, dandelions, violets, in fact anything in that way, the meanest flower that blows — a LARGE box.

I hope you keep healthy and happy. I am overworked of course, but my appetite is still unimpaired and while that lasts, I will keep happy.

"Our jokes are little but our hearts are great." Tennison

Believe me,

Very respectfully yours,

BERTIE.

[*I wanted these flowers for teaching botany in Milne's school.]

What is this? Why do the people in the tram car shrink from his presence? Why, in this hot weather sit there in a heap together? Can it be — Satan? Or the Hangman? Or the Whitechapel Murder(er)? No — it is none of these things. It is simply a young biological

demonstrator who has been dissecting with a large class that particular form of life known as the Dog Fish (*scylla canicula*). HE STINKS.

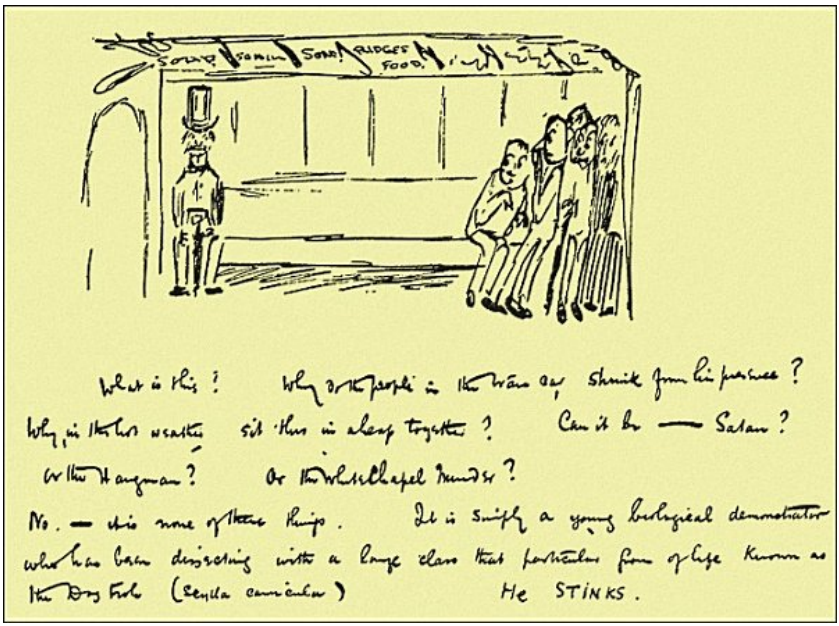

Drawing Illustrating Letter: July 5, 1890.

* * * * *

46, Fitzroy Road, N.W.
Monday 15/6/90 [?91]

DEAR G.V.,

I have sent you your glasses — they were done long ago but I could not forward them on account of my illness — they were forgotten in fact.

I had influenza about three weeks ago, and congestion of the right lung on the top of it. I have had to resign my class work with Briggs, and so I am — now that I am a little stronger again — hunting round for work to do at home.

I wrote to mother four or five days ago but she has not answered my letter.

It is no good going into the details of the disaster. It is a smash. Still living is not so impossible now as it would be if I had not a degree. My thing is to come on in the next *Fortnightly* and if they send me copies I will send one to you. The editor has written for me to call on him, about a second paper they have taken and perhaps there is something in that.[*]

Faithfully your son,

BERTIE.

I have had to pay a substitute for all my classes.

Marriage postponed — for ever?

[* What there was in that has already been told. See .]

* * * * *

Wednesday evening.
[Sest, 1892.]

DEAR MOTHER,

You observe a doubtless familiar figure above, keeping his 26th birthday. In the background are bookshelves recently erected by your eldest, who came up here Thursday and has been doing things like that ever since. He has laid hands upon all the available reading in the house and seems to be going at it six books at a time. Isabel is at work doing some —— (The rest of the letter is not to be found.)

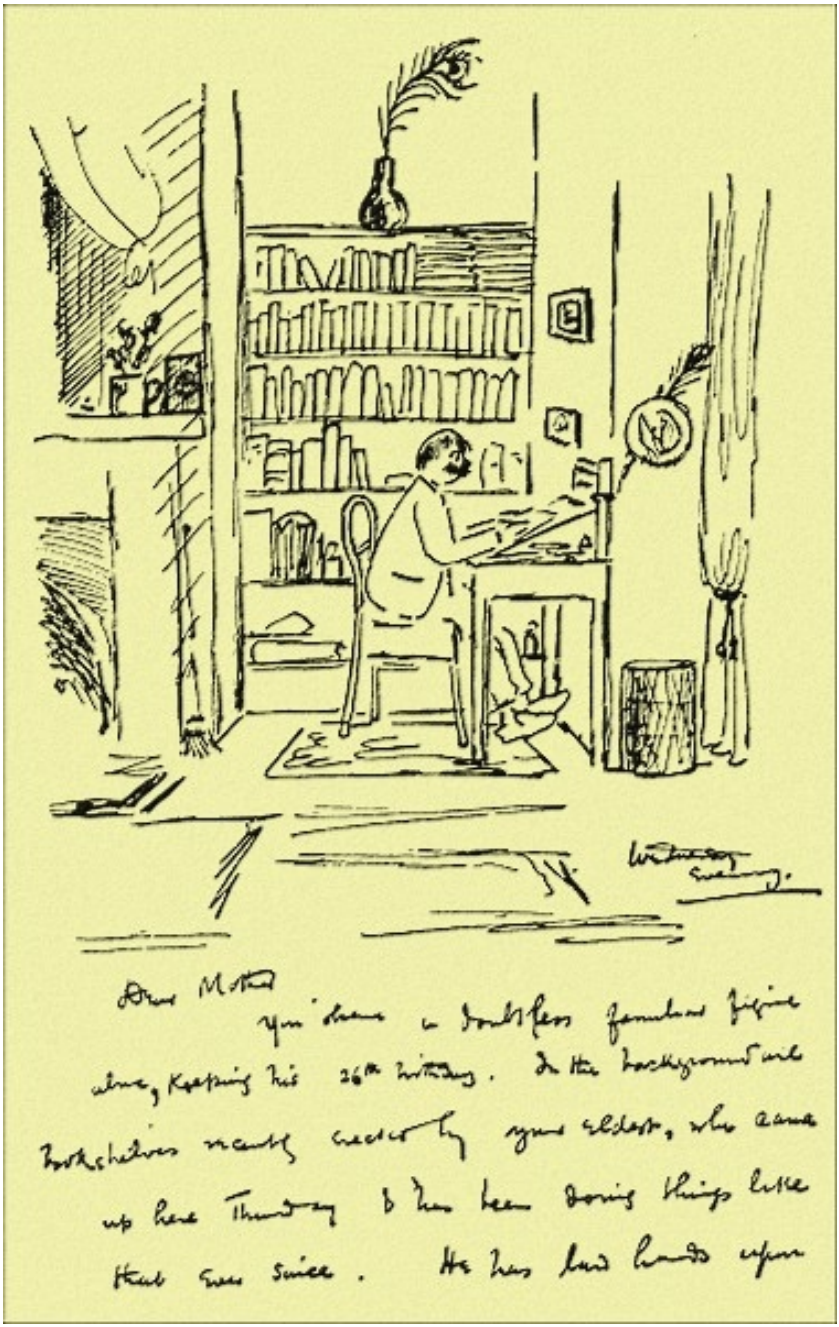

Drawing Illustrating Letter: Sept. 21st, 1892.

* * * * *

[*January ? 1893.*]

DEAR FRED,

Of course mother can come here and live with us. She will not be happy, however, if Nyewoods is not kept on. If I keep her will you contribute 3/-a week or 12/-a month to that concern. I propose to leave things entirely in Frank's hands there and to pay all money to him. If you will do this I will see to all the rest myself. Let me hear. Very busy — excuse more.

BUSS.

You stick where you are, my boy, and don't let this little affair upset you.

Write and tell mother to come straight here, bag and baggage, and assure her it will be all right with the G.V.

* * * * *

May 22 (?) 1893

MY DEAR MISS ROBBINS,

When we made our small jokes on Wednesday afternoon anent the possible courses a shy man desperate at the imminence of a party might adopt, we did not realize that the Great Arch Humorist also meant to have his joke in the matter. For my own part I was so disgusted, when I woke in the dismal time before dawn on Thursday morning, to find myself the butt of *His* witticism, that I almost left this earthly joking ground in a huff. However by midday on Thursday, what with ice and opium pills, and this soothing bitterness and that, my wife and the doctor calmed the internal eruption of the joker outjoked, and since that I have been lying on my back, moody but recovering. I *must* say this for chest diseases; they leave one

remarkably cheerful, they do not hurt at all and they clear the mind like strong tea. My poor wife has had all the pain of this affair, bodily and mental, fatigue and fear. For my share I shall take all the sympathy and credit.

It was very kind of you to call this morning but my wife would have liked to have seen you. Next week — if I do not go to pieces again — I expect I shall be coming downstairs, and a visitor who would talk to me and take little in return, would be a charity. Will you thank Miss Roberts for the letter of condolence which — quite contrary, as she must be aware, to all etiquette, following your bad example — she wrote to my wife.

I guess class teaching is over for me for good, and that whether I like it or not, I must write for a living now.

With best wishes,

Yours very faithfully,

H. G. WELLS.

* * * * *

[*May 26th, 1893.*]
Thursday.

OFFICIAL BULLETIN

Mr. Wells tasted meat for the first time since Wednesday the 17th, yesterday, he also turned over on his side and sat up with assistance — cheerful. No recurrence of symptoms of hæmorrhage, no fever. Slept well. To-day stronger. Has eaten an egg, some boiled mutton, and other trifles. Pulse quiet, no fever or inflammation. No blood or clot expectorated now for eighty-five hours. Much stronger, able to sit up and turn about without help. *Getting a trifle troublesome.* Insists on writing letters in ink to everybody he knows — quilt spoilt and two sheets ditto — also in preference to tinkling little bell, upsets

table when he wishes to call attendance — also wants books to read and if those procured are not to his taste throws them at nurse — also plays Freddy at draughts and insists upon winning. Hopes are entertained that he may get up by Saturday. No definite plans. Possibly a month at Ventnor, and then if practicable remove from London.
It is particularly requested that in all letters of condolence it shall *not* be remarked that it may be for the best after all.

* * * * *

28, Haldon Road,
Wandsworth, S.W.
May 26th, 93.

MY DEAR MISS ROBBINS,

Your unworthy teacher of Biology is still — poor fellow — keeping recumbent, though he knows his ceiling pretty well by this time, but no doubt he is a-healing and by Saturday he will be, he hopes, put out in the front parlour in the afternoon. But he will be an ill thing to see, lank and unshaven and with the cares of this world growing up to choke him as he sprouts out of his bed. However that is your affair, only you must not make it a matter of mockery.

During my various illnesses I have derived much innocent amusement from letters of condolence but your Vice Principal Briggs thing capped it with a brief note written out by Miss Thomas and signed,
John Briggs,
S. T.

After that I can believe the story of the typewritten love letter signed by a pardonable slip of the pen, Holroyd, Barker and Smith.

Remember me kindly to Miss Roberts and Miss Taylor, especially Miss Roberts. Tell the girl not to trifle with Bronchitis, whatever other giddiness she may be guilty of. And believe me

Yours very faithfully,

H. G. WELLS.

P.S. I think he will not be fit to see you before Sunday but I will write you before then.

Yours faithfully,

I.M.W.

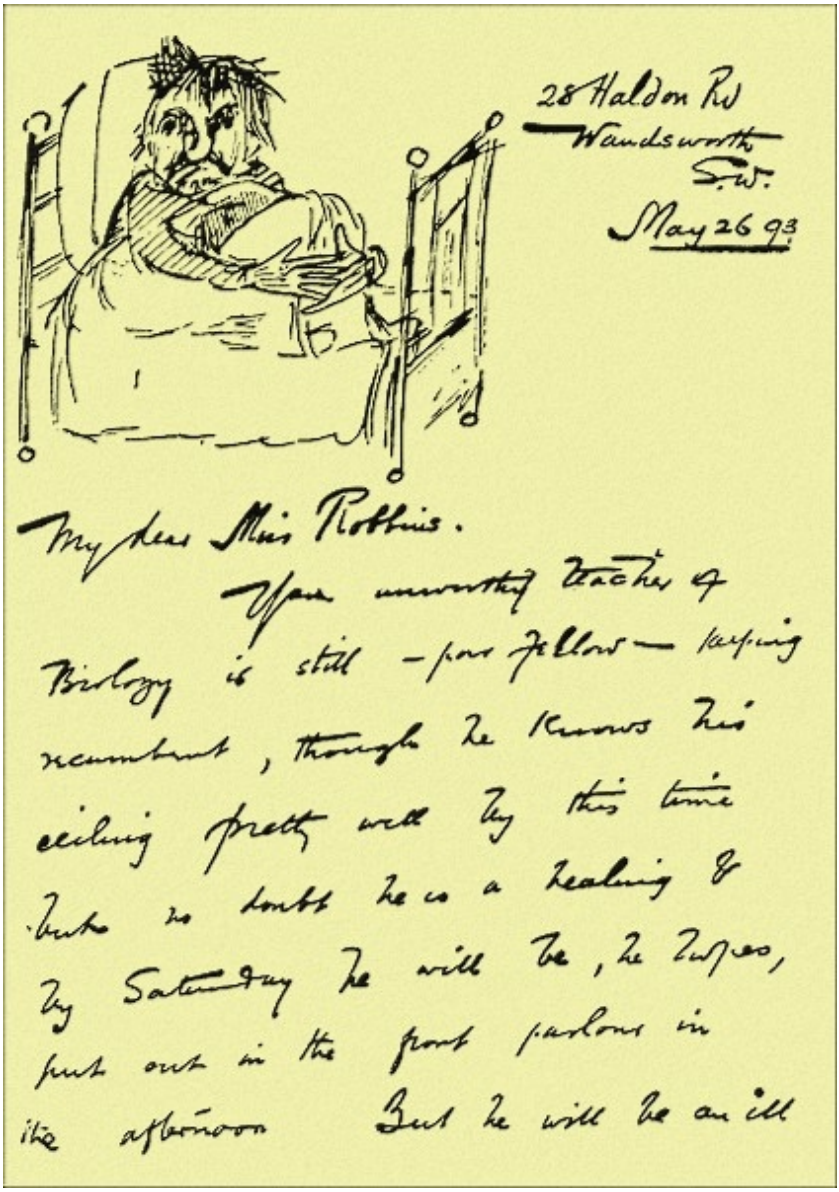

28 Haldon Rd
Wandsworth
S.W.
May 26 93

My dear Miss Robbins.

Your unworthy teacher of Biology is still — poor fellow — keeping recumbent, though he knows his ceiling pretty well by this time. But no doubt he is a healing of by Saturday he will be, he hopes, just out in the front parlour in the afternoon. But he will be an ill

Drawing illustrating Letter: May 26th, 1893.

* * * * *

6, New Cottages,
Meads Road.

Eastbourne.
Tuesday.

MY DEAR MISS ROBBINS,

Your humble servant has been at this gay place now for eight long days. He has been led out daily to an extremely stony beach and there spread out in the sun for three, four or five hours as it might be, and he has there inhaled sea air into such lung as Providence has spared him, sea air mingled with the taint of such crabs as have gone recently from here to that bourne from which no traveller returns. His evenings have passed in the marking of examination papers and correspondence tuiting, and his nights in uneasy meditations on Death and the Future Life, and Hope and Indeterminate Equations. Moreover I have sorrowed greatly over Miss Roberts. When I was near the lowest point of my illness she sent me a wicked book by some evangelist — a word I have long used as a curse — about how that Huxley will not look his (the evangelist's) substitutes for arguments in the face, how that geology supports the book of Genesis (which is a lie) how that the gospel of St. Mark was written before A.D. 38 (which is idiotic) and all those dismal things. Egged on by this wicked book I wrote two letters to Miss Roberts blaspheming her gods, saying I knew God was a gentleman and could not possibly have any connexion with her evangelist and the like painful things. I am sorry now because I certainly was uncivil, but this particular form of Religion arouses all the latent 'Arry in my composition. But I know Miss Roberts will never approve of me any more.

This Providence has seen fit to increase the tale of my wife's troubles by sending her mother very ill. Of the two she is much worse than I am now, and I am still in a hectic unstable condition. A more serious man than myself would be horribly miserable at his inability to play his part of man in all these troubles. Everything is pressing on my wife's shoulders now, and I dare not exert myself to help for fear I shall give her a greater trouble still.

I sincerely hope you are working hard for your examination. I shall take anything but a first class pass very much to heart, so that I hope you will out of consideration for a poor suffering soul who must not be depressed by any means, do your best. I am looking forward to visiting Red Lion Square next week and seeing you again and conversing diversely with you.
Very faithfully yours,

H. G. WELLS.

Concerning literature to which you would have directed me, I have done nothing. One dismal article full of jocularities like the rattling of peas in a bladder has seen the light in the *Globe*. Moreover I tried a short story for *Black and White*, which impressed me when I had done it as being unaccountably feminine and acid — much what a masculine old maid would write. What *Black and White* thinks of it I do not know. I think my mind stagnates. It is blocked up with a lot of things. I shall come and talk to you a long time I think and deliver myself.

* * * * *

[*Late June or July 1893.*]

MY DEAR FREDDIE,

I have nothing to tell you except to keep your courage up and work hard and bear in mind that there are plenty of sympathetic friends over here anxious to hear about you whenever you can write. Things are going very evenly with us. We have not found a house yet, but we have hardly hunted for it. I have been and am very busy. I have almost written my share of Gregory and Wells' Honours Physiography which I arranged for a day or two before you sailed and a lot of small coachings jobs have dropped in for me, and next week (which will be about the time of your landing at Cape Town) I shall be sitting in glory above my roomful of candidates.

Izzums sends her love to you, Mummie is writing to you herewith.

With love from us all and best wishes

Your very affte brother

BUSSUMS.

The “roomful of candidates” refers to either some London University or College of Preceptors examination at which I earnt a guinea or so as invigilator. My mother seems to have visited me in London again after my brother’s departure. The four figures in the illustration are myself, my mother, my Aunt Mary and my cousin Isabel.

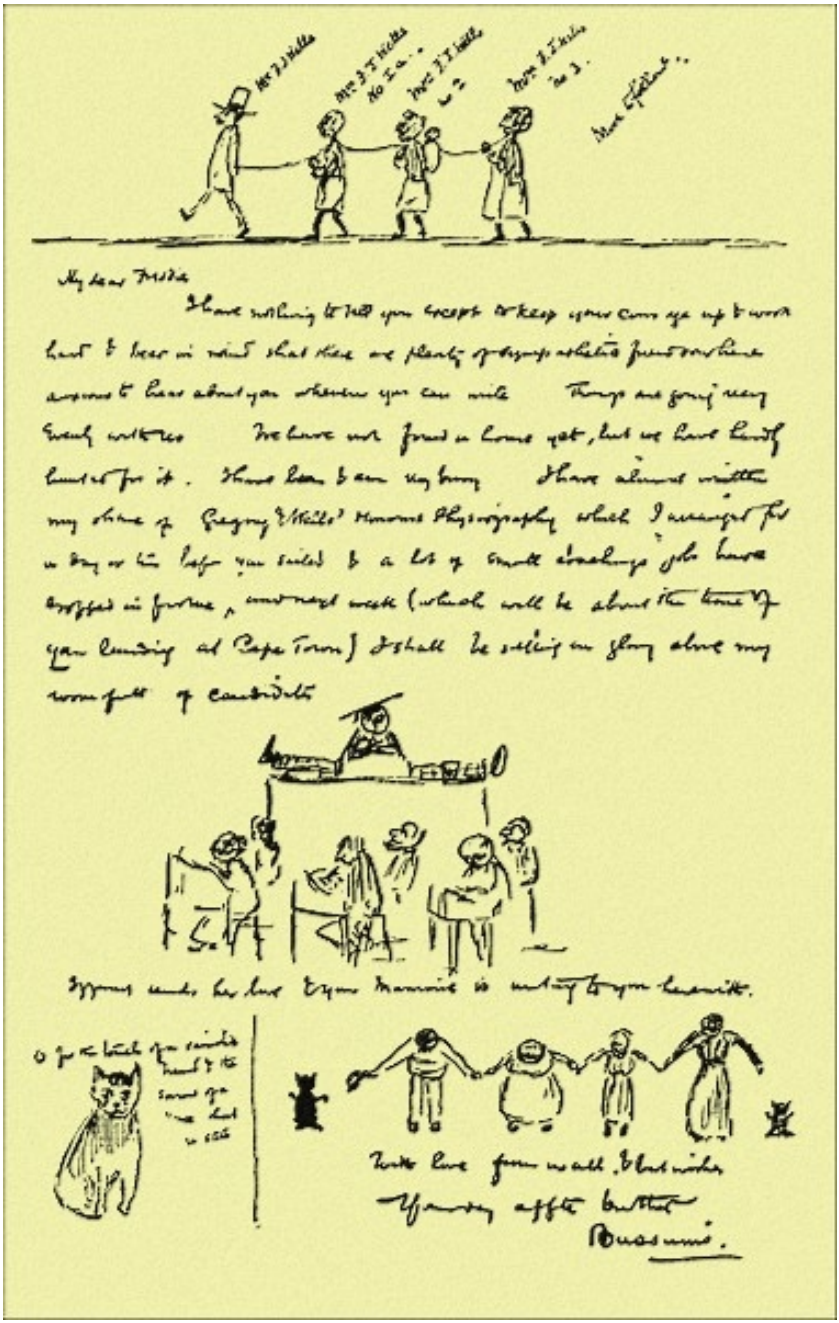

Reproduction of Letter: late June or July, 1893.

* * * * *

[*No date of entry, probably early August 1893.*]
4, Cumnor Place, Sutton.

DEAR MISS ROBBINS,

I am in the tail end of the stream of congratulations, but I am happy to say I was the first person not in the confidence of the university to see that you were in the first division. And our Adeline has passed in Biology, she and her riotous school of boys, or at least Wells and Johns. Miss Saunders is in the second class, and one Miss Knight — you will remember a romantic young thing with expressive dark eyes, is, I am very sorry to see, missing.

Everyone will be in superlatives about this success of yours but as a matter of fact it is a mere beginning and not at all beyond my expectation. I should have been secretly disappointed if anything else had happened. You must not touch degree grinding for two or three years yet, though it is time for you to select your subjects. You must take an honours degree — that is a mere debt you owe your disinterested teachers.

This choice of degree subjects is a very serious one, and one you ought to make now. For mental greatness — such as mine — you must attack the biological group. I sincerely regard mathematics as on a lower level intellectually than biology. On the other hand you have done enough in mathematics to show you can get to brilliant things in that direction, while your biology is a brief growth of one year. However we must talk over this when you return. It will of course affect your attack upon South Kensington very considerably. I am glad your visit is to last another week. Putney for the last three days has been a melancholy oven. However I hope you will return before we leave here, because I would very much like to deal with this matter of the future at a greater length than is possible in a letter.

My wife sends her sincerest congratulations on your success. How did Painter get on? They have let me sign an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, by the bye, and signed articles in dailies is a distinct

advance for a poor wretch like me.

Very faithfully yours,

H. G. WELLS.

* * * * *

[*November ? 1893*]
class="cp">4, Cumnor Place,
Sutton.

MY DEAR FREDDIE,

I suppose, if I write to you now, this letter will reach you about Christmas time, and I daresay you will like to have our good wishes in season, even if we have to send them off unseasonably early to reach you. But over here already we are beginning to think of Christmas, there is a hard frost to-day and the roads are all hard, and last Sunday there was the first fall of snow. All the bookstalls are bright with the Christmas numbers of the magazines, and the London shops are getting brilliant with cards and presents. My two books[*] have been published now, and I have been writing articles for all kinds of publications since you left. The stories I wrote do not seem to be a great success but I have found a good market for chatty articles, and I am doing more and more of these. I had a cheque of £14 13*s.* from the *Pall Mall Gazette* the day before yesterday for *one month's* contributions. Not bad is it? But that may be a lucky month. However I am not drawing upon my small savings, thank goodness, and I am keeping indoors, and I think pulling round steadily. How are things going with you? I hope everything glides along, and that you are striking root in South Africa. Do you ever play draughts or chess? If so I hope you are improving, for your play with me was simply abominable.

[* The Textbooks of Biology.]

Isabel and Mummie and the Cat are well, and we find ourselves very

comfortable in our new home. We are only about twenty minutes walk from the downs, and we can go by Banstead and Epsom to Dorking over them all the way. We have had a lot of Sutton people call upon us, so that we already feel much more at home than we did in Putney, where the London custom of ignoring your neighbour is in fashion.

I have not been to see either Father or Mother since you left us but I daresay I shall run down there some of these days. I judge they are all right. Neither have I seen Frank now for some months.

I think now I am almost at the end of my news. It is not a very eventful record, but as someone has written, we are happiest when we have least history. Things have been going easily with us, and so I hope they may continue.

With very many wishes for a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Believe me my dear Freddie

Your very affectionate Brother

THE BUSSWHACKER.

Isabel and Auntie send their love.

* * * * *

4, Cumnor Place,

Sutton.

Dec. 15th, 1893.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I had hoped to run down to Rogate for a day or so before Xmas to settle my accounts with father and to wish you all a pleasant time,

but I am afraid it will scarcely be possible now, so I am sending a little cheque (payable to father) to pay for what he has done for me and the balance I hope *you* will dispense in making things festive on the great anniversary. As Frank has possibly told you I am still contriving to make both ends meet by writing articles. There are two more when the previous ones are returned. Did the G.V. notice that *To-day* had a note and sketch about my million year man?

I and Isabel are going off this afternoon to stop with Mrs. Robbins at Putney until Monday — you will remember Miss Robbins who came to tea one Sunday — and we are going to a concert to-night with them. My cold and so on it is needless to say are better, or I should not be doing this.

We are looking forward to Frank's visit directly after Christmas.

With love from all.

Believe me dear Mother

Your affectionate Son

BERTIE.

It is not all jam this book writing. Part II of my Biology has been slashed up most cruelly in this week's *Nature* in a review.

* * * * *

7, Mornington Place,
N.W.
Feb. 8th, 1894.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Do not be anxious about me. This trouble of ours is unavoidable, but I really do not care to go into details. Isabel and I have separated and she is at Hampstead and I am here. The separation is almost entirely

my fault. I am with very nice people here and very busy. Yesterday I went over a microscope factory for an article for the *Pall Mall Gazette* similar to the one I sent a proof of to the G.V. Did I tell you that they had made me one of their reviewers? I keep very well, no cough in the morning or any of those troubles. I hope Frank will run up soon to see me and reassure you. Let me know when he is coming as sometimes I am away all day. Love to the G.V. I will see to that Zoology soon. Ask him to send a letter card to Ellerington saying that no more B.Sc. Zoology will be sent for four weeks to give him an opportunity of getting the work up to date.

Your loving son

BERTIE.

Will Father send me one copy each of the scheme for Zoology and for Biology and of the last lesson and test he has of each of those courses, please?

* * * * *

Tusculum Villa,
Sevenoaks, KENT.
August 10th, 94.

MY DEAR FATHER,

I had intended to come along this week but more delays have arisen and so I suppose I had better fill up the gap with a letter. I thought Frank who came up to see me a few weeks ago would have explained affairs to you. The matter is extremely simple. Last January I ran away with a young lady student of mine to London. It's not a bit of good dilating on that matter because the mischief is done and what remains now is to get affairs straight again. Isabel left the house at Sutton and went to Hampstead where she is now living (at my expense) and she has now got through about half the necessary divorce proceedings against me. I expect to be divorced early next year and then I shall marry Miss Robbins.

The house at Sutton the landlord took off my hands upon my paying the rent up to June. Since then I have been in apartments with Miss Robbins (passing as my wife) but now Mrs. Robbins has joined us. She owns a house at Putney and has let that now on a twenty one years lease at a rent of £90. We think of taking a house down here — as we are not very comfortable in apartments — and settling down. My wife will take her degree of B.Sc. (of which one examination still remains) and go on with me with literary work.

About my work. The *P.M.G.* is still my bread and cheese. I do from six to ten columns a month and get two guineas a column. I have been doing work for Briggs that brings in about £60 a year but it takes too much time and I am resigning that. I am also dropping the *Journal of Education* which comes to about £12 a year and takes nearly a day a month. I do *Educational Times* work from 2 to 5 or more cols. a month at half a guinea col. and in addition drop articles at *Black and White* and the *National Observer*, when I get the time free. Then there are short stories which are difficult to plant at present, but I expect this series in *P. M. Budget* will get my name up. They are paid at a slightly higher rate than articles but are much more profitable in the end because they can be republished as a book. Besides this I have been writing a longer thing on spec and have been treating through an agent to get some of my *P.M.G.* articles published as a book.

I think that is a pretty complete statement of my affairs. Naturally things are a little tight with me at present as the divorce business is heavy but after that bill is settled I see no reason why things should not go easily with all of us. I shall have to pay Isabel £100 a year or more, but my income by hook or by crook can always be brought up to £350 and it may be more in future. Mrs. Robbins is going to raise the ready money for our furniture by a small mortgage on her house and the interest on that with the ground rent will come to £30 out of her £90. Still I don't expect to be pinched and I have no doubt that I shall be able to do my filial duty by mother and yourself all right.

My health hasn't given me any trouble, save for one cold and a bit of

overwork this year.

Give my love to mother and believe me,

Yours ever,

BERTIE.

Of course I want you to hand this to mother to read as well. Mother will remember Miss Robbins — she came to tea one Sunday afternoon.

The letting of Mrs. Robbins' house was not a success. Her tenant did not pay his rent and "flitted" at night with his furniture. The house was then sold and the money invested.

* * * * *

12, Mornington Road, N.W.
5/12/94.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

I'm anticipating Christmas and sending you a little present (I wish it could be larger). I'm keeping very well this Christmas and at about the same level of prosperity. I don't do so much for the *P.M.G.* but I do stuff for the *Saturday* which is rather better pay and I have some hope of the *New Review*....

This day week I'm giving my lecture at the Coll of Preceptors.
There's nothing settled about any of my books yet but I think there will be two if not three in March.

Let me hear all about you. Have you heard from Fred?

Yours ever affectionately

BERTIE.

* * * * *

Drawing illustrating Letter: Dec. 5th, 1894.

Little Bertie writing away for dear life to get little things for all his little people — sends his love to Little Clock Man and Little Daddy and Little Mother.

* * * * *

12 Mornington Road, N.W.
5/2/95.

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER,

Thanks very much for your letters in the last few days. It's very kind of the Father to say £40 a year will do to go on with. However I think I can manage £60, though just now is a tight time. Take £10 of the £15 to go on with and put £5 by for next quarter, say, as an experiment. You know the method is to put the cheque I send into the Savings bank — which will take cheques now — and draw out whatever you want as you want it. Later on I hope to do better things for you if I can only get hold of a little money. It's a dream of mine to get you into rather a better house, either by buying one or leasing it but that can't happen this year and may never happen. Whatever success I have, you are responsible for the beginnings of it. However hard up you were when I was a youngster you let me have paper and pencils, books from the Institute and so forth and if I haven't my mother to thank for my imagination and my father for skill, where did I get these qualities?

Believe me my dear Parents

Your very affectionate son

BERTIE.

* * * * *

12, Mornington Rd, N.W.
Sunday October 13th. (1895)

MY DEAR MOTHER,

Just a line to tell you that I am back with my old landlady here for three weeks (getting married). We've been up about a week. My last book seems a hit — everyone has heard of it — and all kinds of people seem disposed to make much of me. I've told nobody scarcely that we were coming up and already I'm invited out to-night and every night next week except Monday and Friday. I've had letters too from four publishing firms asking for the offer of my next book but I shall, I think, stick to my first connexion. It's rather pleasant to find oneself something in the world after all the years of trying and disappointment.

What is Fred's address at Johannesburg? I'm rather anxious to know. I sent a copy of the "Wonderful Visit" to him just before I had your letter, addressed to Messrs Garlick. I'd like to know all about him. There's no doubt that country is rising at an immense pace. I know one of the bank managers there and might be able to help Fred through him. He was my colleague at Milne's school. He's a Scotchman and bound to die rich, a long headed friendly man who might — if he chose — put Fred up a lot of good tips. His name is Johnston. I'm getting his address from Milne.

Love to the Dad and Frank.

Your very affectionate son,

BERTIE.

* * * * *

Lynton, Maybury Rd.,
Woking, Surrey.

Friday, Jan. 24th, 1896.

MY DEAR LITTLE BROTHER AT THE SEAT OF WAR,

How goes it with you? For a day or two in the new year, while Jameson was astonishing the world, I was seriously anxious about your safety, and I should have cabled to know if all was well, had not the wires been choked with graver matter. I suppose we shall soon have a lengthy and vivid account of the whole business from you. Here things have been of the liveliest, war rumours, all the Music Halls busy with songs insulting the German Emperor, fleets being manned, and nobody free to attend to the works of a poor struggling author from Lands End to John o' Groats. Consequently a book I was to have published hasn't been published, and won't be until March. You see how far reaching your Uitlander bothers are?

I'm going on very well altogether. I made between five and six hundred last year, and expect to make more rather than less, this year. I've married and ended all those troubles, and I've just taken a pretty little house at Liss with seven decent rooms and a garden and things all comfortable for the old folks. They are moving in next week. Frank is to expand his watchmaking business and altogether I think things are on the move towards comfort. I was down there about Christmas time and all three seemed very well and jolly. Frank's business seems picking up. The new home is one of a dozen or so decent little houses, and within comfortable reach of a church.

I'm riding a bicycle now and went a few weeks ago to a place called Odiham, which may perhaps awaken old memories.

Since I wrote the above I've received your letter. I'm glad to find you're all right. As you say, the Invasion was a Capitalistic enterprise, though Jameson himself is a gallant man enough. But the Transvaal has no business to intrigue with Germany for all that. Do you see any papers now? There's usually something about me in the *Review of Reviews*.

Go and see Johnston if you possibly can. He's a first rate man you'll find. Some of these days I must come and see you out there. I hope your getting on all right with the Dutch language and your business. What are the chances of opening for yourself out there? I should

think that if you could pick up Dutch and master the habits and requirements, you'd have a better chance than you had in this crowded country. Don't dream of any speculation in gold mines or that kind of thing. Stick tight to your savings. If you want to invest trust old Johnston. He's a first rate, square headed, thoroughly honest man. What do you think of your move out of England? It wasn't so bad for you altogether — was it?

However time slips by. I've got to write a story before next week for a new monthly magazine, so I mustn't write any more now to you.

With kindest regards

Your very affectionate Brother

THE BUSSWHACKER.

* * * * *

[*July:1896*]
Brosley.
This does not represent a Dutchman but an elderly gentleman of distinguished manners who has recently been staying at Heatherlea, Worcester Park, Surrey. He plays chess with considerable skill, draughts and whist — croquet he learnt rapidly — and he answers to the names of "Gov'ner" "Dad" or the "Old Man" with equal facility. When returning to Liss he took away all the tobacco and a box of Brosley clay pipes. In the place of him a short lady of pleasing demeanour is shortly expected (as per accompanying illustration). She will probably be here on the birthday of her middle and favourite son, whom she speaks of variously as "Freddy" "Fezzy" "Fizzums" and "Master Freddie." Needless to say his health will be drunk on that anniversary both at Liss and Heatherlea with the warmest feelings. This person (illustration) it is scarcely necessary to explain is your long lost brother Buss. You will observe that he has with growing years and prosperity developed — a projection which he keeps in bounds only by the most strenuous bicycle riding. He rejoices to say that things go very well with him, books selling

cheerfully and so forth, in spite of the Jubilee. And speaking of the Jubilee he saw nothing of it whatever, except that he went to see the ironclads — hundreds of ’em lying all along Spithead and the Solent for miles and miles and miles. — He went round the show twice in a steamboat accompanied by [symbol of right-pointing hand] that chap! And while he was going round the King of Siam in his yacht came out of Portsmouth Harbour and every blessed ironclad let off a gun (illustration). This is a sort of Birthday card really. I’ve heard from mother once or twice that things were going very well with you and I was very glad to get your own letter. May your good luck keep on for you deserve it richly. Many happy returns of the day and a light heart to you, old boy!

From BUSS.

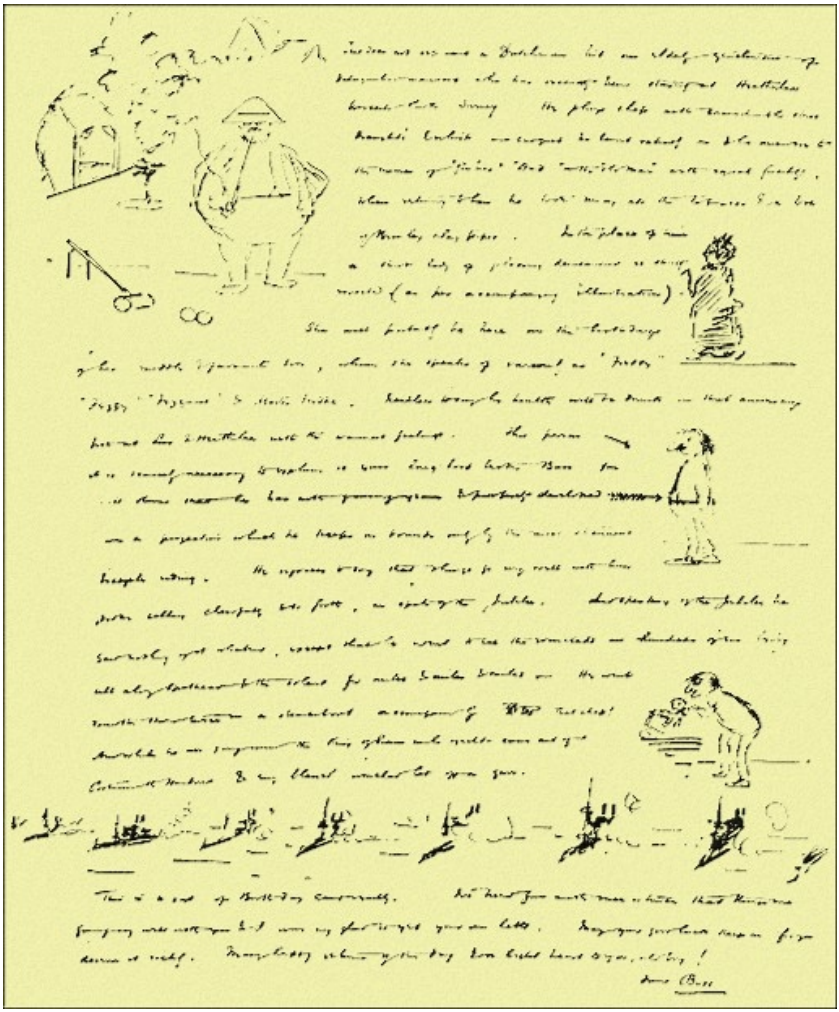

Drawing illustrating Letter: July, 1896.

* * * * *

Heatherlea, Worcester Park.
New Year's Eve. 1896.

MY DEAR LITTLE BRUZZER FREDDY,

I had your funny card for which, Bruzzer Freddy, there was one and a penny to pay! but I would have cheerfully paid much more than

that rather than not have had it. And as it is New Year's Eve and I have been thinking over the past year and all that has happened, I don't think I can do better than write this letter to you before the New Year begins. And to begin with myself, I have been still on the rise of fortune's wave this year, and it seems as though I must certainly go on to still larger successes and gains next for my name still spreads abroad, and people I have never seen, some from Chicago, one from Cape Town, and one from far up the Yung Tse Kiang in China, write and tell me they find my books pleasant. So far it has meant more fame than money to me, but I hope next year that the gilt edge will come to my successes. This year I have made between eight hundred and a thousand and next year it will be more and after that still more, and then I hope to put in operation little plans I have. You know the old people are now pretty comfortable at Liss, and Frank's business really seems on the move. There were two packing cases of clocks and things in the passage of the house when I went down there yesterday. And next year I hope to be able (though I don't want him to know yet for fear of disappointment) to put him firmly on his legs. I think it will be possible to get him into a shop in a good position in Liss, and to let the old folks have a better cottage than they are in at present. But you know the old maxim — hasten slowly. I want everything safe and straight first. Then when Frank is a really efficient citizen again — we shall be seeing you back I expect, brown and strong I hope and with a little something in your pocket. And then we must see whether at Wokingham or Petersfield or some such place, it won't be possible for you to start with fair prospects. Eigh? The little old lady is rosy and active — fit for twenty years I shouldn't wonder, and before that time perhaps she will see all three of us flourishing in our own homes, and as cheerful as can be. The old man too is none so dusty a chap when you get him on the right side — and he seems hale enough for a century. So that this New Year's Eve I feel uncommonly cheerful and hopeful, not only for myself but for the whole blessed family of us.

Good luck Bruzzer Freddy

Yours ever,

H. G. BUSSWHACKER.

I don't know if you see *Pearson's Magazine* out there — in April next a long story of mine will begin and go on until December, and I expect great things of it. *Pearson's Magazine* mind! — not *Pearson's Weekly*.

Remember me kindly to Johnston who's a nice old chap isn't he? When is he coming over? If ever he comes I shall expect him to come and stop here for a time to gossip about old times.

Look out for the *Saturday Review* if you get a chance of seeing it. You will see among the reviews every week now H.G.W. which is me.

And don't forget to write to a chap and tell him all about yourself.

* * * * *

Beach Cottage,
Granville Road.
December 18th, 98.

MY DEAR FATHER,

I've been meaning to write to you all this past week and tell you about the work in hand. I don't know anything about the *Bookman* paragraph of which you speak — could I see it? Possibly Nicol got hold of something through Barrie (who came to see us). But the paragraphs in the *Academy* were written by Hind the editor after a visit here in which we talked about our work. The serial about the year 2100 will appear very soon now in the *Graphic* with coloured illustrations. I've altered it a good deal for the book which, will be published in April or May by Harper Bros., and then this long silence of a year and more will be over. It's rather in the vein of the *Time Machine* but ever so much larger in every way. I don't think people will have forgotten me in the interval. The old books keep on selling — each at the rate of four to six copies a week bringing in little

cheques for five pounds or so for the half year. The other book the *Academy* spoke of, is now being put on the market by Pinker, it's a sentimental story in rather a new style, and I think he has offered it to *Harper's Magazine*. It's called *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. I'm also under a contract to do stories for the *Strand Magazine* but I don't like the job. It's like talking to fools, you can't let yourself go or they won't understand. If you send them anything a bit novel they are afraid their readers won't understand. Two stories they have had, I consider bosh, but they liked them tremendously. Another I have recently done they don't like although it is an admirable story. So that will go elsewhere. Just now I am writing rather hard — though this is between ourselves — at a comic novel rather on the old fashioned Dickens line, a lot of entertaining characters doing ordinary things.[*] I keep better here than I've been since I was at South Kensington and get good work out of myself every day. There are more ideas in a day here than in a week of Worcester Park.

[* Kipps.]

Amy wants me to say there is a Turkey at Shoolbreds simply gobbling to get at you, and it has some minor luggage under its wing. Our love to you all. Perhaps we may travel your way next Spring. It seems ages since I saw you. Best wishes for a Merry Christmas,

Yours ever,

BERTIE.

Our Fat Cat has fled. Break it gently to Frank.

No colds I hope?

No trouble with that liver?

A little sketch shows a turkey *en route* for Nyewoods.)

* * * * *

Arnold House,
Sandgate,
Kent.
June 7th, 1900.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

As it is so near quarter day I am sending you on £15 and I hope that in another week I shall see you. It was very jolly was it not? getting that letter from Fred and by this time I daresay he is reading all the letters you have been writing him since the war began. What a budget it will be for him!

But I don't like to hear you have "put by" £5. I don't want you to go pinching and saving out of the money I send you. It isn't any too much anyhow and you ought to spend it all upon things to make life pleasant.

I am sending you a first review of *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. They have sold 1,600 copies in England and 2,500 in the colonies before publication, and I think the book is almost certain to beat any previous book I have written in the matter of sales.

Give my love to Father and Frank. And believe me

Your very affectionate son,

BERTIE.

* * * * *

There survive scores of such letters, but these samples I think give the quality of all of them and my texture at that time. As I look over them I seem to realize for the first time the devitalization of relationship that seems to be an inevitable consequence of an ever widening divergence of experiences, associations and standards. And in turning over the pages of the *Saturday Review* (1894-97) in an attempt to identify all my contributions, I found a queer little

intimation that this loss of dearness and nearness was troubling my mind at the time. It has never been reprinted and I think it may very well come in as a rider to these letters. It embalms a mood of overwork and doubt. There is real nostalgia for the close warmth of the Family peeping out in it, and an exaggerated sense of dislocation. Those forebodings of social isolation and inaccessible intimacies have not been justified. I was gradually learning an art, which I will call the Art of Modus Vivendi — not quite the same thing as Arnold Bennett's "Savoir Faire," but a very similarly necessitated accomplishment. I cannot complain of the share of friends and lovers life has given me or pose even to this day as a lonesome man. And though I missed horsemanship and good sound flannelled sport, most of what are called the good things of life, got to me in time.

EXCELSIOR

"To rise in the world, in spite of popular illusions, is by no means an unmixed blessing. The young proletarian, playing happily in his native gutter, scarcely realizes this. So soon as he begins to think at all about himself, his teachers begin the evil lesson of ambition; he lifts his eyes to the distant peaks, and the sun is bright upon them and they seem very fair. The garrulous Smiles comes his way with his stories of men who have "got on" — without a word of warning against the sorrows of success. No one warns him of the penalties. Every one speaks of climbing as though it were bliss unspeakable. And so the young proletarian, finding his limbs are stout and the strength is in him, starts confidently enough, by the way of book or barter as his tastes incline.

"Let the epic Smiles tell of the career of those who win. Let no one tell of those who fall, who drop by the way with bodies enfeebled by overstudy, underfed, who are lost amidst the mountain fogs of commercial morality. Our concern is with those who win, to whom a day comes when they can see their schoolmates far below them, still paddling happily in the gutter, can look down on venerable heads to which they once looked up, and, turning the other way, behold the Promised Land. One might think it would be all exultation, this Nebo incident, the happiest of all possible positions

in the sad life of man. It may be even, that the man from below tells himself as much. And then he looks round for some sympathetic participator.

"With that he discovers, though perhaps not all at once, the peculiar discomfort of worldly success. In his new stratum he finds pleasant people enough, people who were born in that station, educated to keep in it, and who regard it — perhaps correctly — as properly their own. To them he is an intruder, and largely inexplicable. He knows that any allusion to that steep pathway of broken heads over which he has clambered — for all human success is relative, and if one man rises some other must fall — and which he has found such excitement in ascending, any such allusion he knows will be the mental equivalent to putting his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat. Usually the man from below has a more than average brain, and is sensitive enough to keep his Most Interesting Topic, his Life, to himself. He knows, too, the legend of the Bounder, knows that these people credit all men who rise from his class with an aggressive ostentation, with hair-oil and at least one massive gold chain if not two, besides a complete inversion of the normal aspirate. He imagines that people expect breaches of their particular laws, and he knows, too, that there is some ground for that expectation. He blunders at times from sheer watchfulness.

"You begin to perceive the hair-shirt. To speak in the tongue of Herbert Spencer, the man from below is not adapted to his environment. That is not all; he is adapted to no environment. Though the language of the people of the new stratum is not his mother tongue, though their manners and customs fit him like a slop suit, he has acquired just enough of these things to be equally out of his element below. He is a kind of social miscellany, a book of short stories, a volume of reminiscences of People I have Met. And that friend, that dear friend, who is the salt of life, with whom he may let his mind run free, whose prejudices are the same, whose habits coincide — the man from below knows him not. There was A in the pound a week stage, 'tis true, and B at the three hundred phase, and C in the early thousands; but in some mysterious way they were all aggrieved. A time came when each remarked in a tone that rang false, 'You're getting such a Swell now, you know,' and he saw a

new light in the erstwhile friendly eye, and therewith yawned a gulf. His friends are not life companions but epochs, influences. And he has worse troubles. One of two things happens to the man from below in his marrying. Either he marries early some one down below there, and she cannot keep pace with him, or he marries late up above — some one very charming and young, and he cannot keep pace with her.

"For by the time he has risen to his highest stratum, and donned the stiffest, prickliest hair-shirt of all, the man from below begins to feel old. He has never been a youth at that level, and he does not know how to begin. The perennial youthfulness of your retired general — who is perhaps half his age again — appalls him. You see him watching cricket in a puzzled way — he had no time for cricket — or hanging over the railings of Rotten Row (in an attitude that he feels instinctively is a little incorrect), and staring at the handsome, healthy, well-dressed people who ride by. Theirs is the earth. *His* means for horse exercise came when his nerve for it had gone. The wine of life does not wait. After all the man he has ousted had drunk the best of the cup. For the conqueror, the dregs.

"That is the disillusionment of the successful proletarian. Better a little grocery, a life of sordid anxiety, love, and a tumult of children, than this Dead Sea fruit of success. It is fun to struggle, but tragedy to win. Happy is the poor man who clutches that prize in the grip of death and never sees it crumble in his hand."

To which betrayal of a mood I add thirty-nine years later only one word: "Nonsense."

But let me get on with my story which this exhibition of documents has delayed. This divorce put me askew to the usages and institutions of my times in a very elementary, provocative and stimulating way. It affected my attempts at fiction and my social and political reactions profoundly and I must do my best now to dissect out the complex of motives and suggestions that was determining my conduct at this crucial phase.

VII. — DISSECTION

§ 1. COMPOUND FUGUE

If you do not want to explore an egoism you should not read autobiography. If I did not take an immense interest in life, through the medium of myself, I should not have embarked upon this analysis of memories and records. It is not merely for the benefit of some possible reader, but to satisfy my own curiosity about life and the world, that I am digging down into these obscurities of forty years ago. The reader's rôle, the prospect of publication, is kept in view chiefly to steady and control these operations, by the pervading sense of a critical observer. The egoism is unavoidable. I am being my own rabbit because I find no other specimen so convenient for dissection. Our own lives are all the practical material we have for the scientific study of living; the rest is hearsay.

The main theme of this book has been exposed in the Introductory Chapter and recalled at intervals. Essentially this autobiography treats of the steady expansion of the interests and activities of a brain, emerging from what I have called a narrow-scope way of living, to a broader and broader outlook and a consequent longer reach of motive. I move from a backyard to Cosmopolis; from Atlas House to the burthen of Atlas. This theme appears and reappears in varying forms and keys; in the story of my early reading, in the story of my escape from retail trade, in the story of my student perplexities and my attempts to make my geology scientific and my physics philosophical, and so on. More and more consciously the individual adventurer, as he disentangles himself from the family associations in which he was engendered, is displayed trying to make himself a citizen of the world. As his *persona* becomes lucid it takes that form. He is an individual becoming the conscious Common Man of his time and culture. He is a specimen drop from the changing ocean of general political opinion.

But the making of that world scheme is not the only driving force present in the actual life as it has to be told. In many passages it has not been even the dominant driving force. Other systems of feeling

and motive run across or with or against the main theme. Sometimes they seem to have a definite relation to it; they enhance its colour and interest or they antagonize it, but often there is no possibility of regularizing their intervention. As in all actual fugues the rules are broken and, judged by the strict standard, the composition is irregular.

The second main system of motive in the working out of my personal destiny, has been the sexual system. It is not the only other system of motive by any means. Certain fears and falterings, an undeniable claustrophobia for example, run through the narrative. The phases of disintegration and healing in my right lung, the resentment and slow resignation of my squashed kidney, have interpolated themes of their own, with their own irrelevant developments. Nevertheless the sexual complexes constitute the only other great and continuing system. I suspect the sexual system should be at least the second theme, when it is not the first, in every autobiography, honestly and fully told. It seizes upon the essential egoism for long periods, it insists upon a prominent rôle in the dramatizations of the *persona* and it will not be denied.

I realize how difficult an autobiography that is not an apology for a life but a research into its nature, can become, as I deal with this business of my divorce. I have already emphasised the widening contrast between the mental range of myself and my cousin. I have shown a disposition to simplify out the issue between myself and Catherine Robbins and Isabel to an issue between how shall I put it? — wide-scope lives and narrow-scope lives. That makes a fairly acceptable story of it, with only one fault, that it is untrue. It is all the more untrue because like a bad portrait there is superficial truth in it. The reality was far more complicated. Much more was entangled in the story. I confess that I feel that there are elements in it that I myself apprehend only very imperfectly. Let me take up this fresh chapter, as though I were a portrait painter taking a fresh canvas and beginning over again. Let me alter the pose and the lighting of my experiences so as to bring out in its successive phases the emotional and sensual egoism rather than the intellectual egoism that has hitherto been the focus of attention.

And as I turn over old letters, set date against date, and try and

determine the true inter-relation of this vivid memory with that, it grows clearer and clearer to me that my personal unity, the consistency of my present *persona* has been achieved only after a long struggle between distinct strands of motivation, which had no necessary rational relation one to another and that, at the period of which I am writing, this unity was still more apparent than real.

For the normal man, as we have him to-day, his personal unity is a delusion. He is always fighting down the exposure of that delusion. His first impulse is to rationalize his inconsistencies by telling himself fanciful stories of why he did this and that. The tougher job, which all men and women will ultimately be educated to undertake, is to recognize the ultimately irreconcilable quality of these inconsistencies and to make a deal between them.

It is because of this almost universal desire to impose a sort of rational relationship upon the alternation of motives that I (and my biographer Geoffrey West, following my promptings) have represented this early divorce of mine, this first revelation of increasingly powerful strands of sexual force at work in me, as if it were almost entirely a part of my progressive detachment from my world of origin. But it merely chanced to help detach me. Later on, this sexual drive was to hamper and confuse my progress very considerably.

The simple attractive story I am half disposed to tell, of myself as an ugly duckling who escaped from the limitations and want of understanding of his cousin and of his family generally, to discover itself a swan in Fleet Street and Paternoster Row, is made impossible by two things: an awkward trick my memory has had of stowing away moments of intense feeling and vivid action quite regardless of the mental embarrassment their preservation may ultimately cause my *persona*, and an analogous disposition already noted, on the part of my friends and family to keep letters I have written. I am astonished at the multitude of my letters that have never been destroyed. I have recovered now some thousand or so of them; as I turn them over past events live again, vanished details are restored, and insist upon a readjustment of the all too plausible values I have long set upon them.

And now let me try to get a little nearer to Isabel's true rôle in my

life.

§ 2. PRIMARY FIXATION

I have told what I know of my childish and boyish sexual development. It was uncomplicated and I think very normal. There was only a very slight slant towards homosexuality. Less I think than is usual. As a small boy I had adorations for one or two big fellows and as a boy of twelve or thirteen I had affection for one or two little chaps, who obviously played the rôle of girls in my unoriented imagination. These were nothing more than early explorations of my emotional tentacles. All this, as sexual knowledge and discrimination developed, dissolved away to nothing, and by sixteen I was entirely heterosexual in my fantasies. I had a bright strong vision of beautiful women, the sort of women revealed by classical statuary and paintings, reciprocally worshipped and beautifully embraced, which I connected only very remotely with the living feminine personalities I met clothed and difficult, and with whom I "flirted," at times, weakly and formally. I had one or two warning experiences that the hidden happiness of sex was not easy of attainment. My gleams of intimacy at Westbourne Park were not pretty; plainly my Venus Urania did not live down that frowsty scuffling alley. Later on (I cannot fix the date but it must have been while I was in my twenties and a biological demonstrator) my secret shame at my own virginity became insupportable and I went furtively and discreetly with a prostitute. She was just an unimaginative prostitute. That deepened my wary apprehension that round about the hidden garden of desire was a jungle of very squalid and stupid lairs.

Now my cousin had a real sweetness and loveliness that our closeness did nothing to abolish. All the cloudy drift of desire and romantic imagination in my mind centred more and more upon her. I became so persuaded and satisfied that with her I could get to this fundamental happiness of love which now obsessed me, that for all the years between my student days and our marriage my imagination never wandered very far from her. I played the devoted impatient lover. There was a deep-seated fixation of my mind upon her.

She loved me I knew, but with a more limited and temperate imagination than mine. The jangle of our thoughts and outlooks, that difference in scope, would not have mattered very much if our passions had been in tune. We should have managed then. Our real discord was not mental but temperamental. And she was afraid, and the worldly wisdom of that retouching studio in Regent Street did not help her in the least. My nature protested at having to wait for her so long, protested against having to marry her in church instead of at a registry office. I didn't believe in marriage anyhow, I insisted. The great thing was not marriage but love. I invoked Godwin, Shelley, Socialism.

Streaks of vindictiveness crept into my passion. And I was a very ignorant as well as an impatient lover. I knew nothing of the arts of wooing. I should probably have thought that sort of thing dishonest. My idea was of flame meeting flame.... We are so much wiser about that sort of thing nowadays. It is rarer for avid and innocent young bridegrooms to be flung upon shrinking and innocent brides.

It mattered nothing to me, then, that Isabel was manifestly fond of me, cared greatly for me. It was a profound mortification to me, a vast disappointment, that she did not immediately respond to my ardours. She submitted. I had waited so long for this poor climax. "She does not love me," I said in my heart. I put as brave a face as I could upon the business, I dried her tears, blamed my roughness, but it was a secretly very embittered young husband who went on catching trains, correcting correspondence answer books, eviscerating rabbits and frogs and hurrying through the crowded business of every day.

Here was something more organic than any difference in mental scope. And I want to make it quite clear that for a long time my emotional pride, my secret romanticism was still centred quite firmly in my cousin. It is true that I was presently letting my desires wander away from her and that I was making love to other people. I wanted to compensate myself for the humiliation she had so unwittingly put upon me. I was in a phase of aroused liveliness. That did not alter her unpremeditated and unconscious dominance of my imagination, my deep-lying desire for passionate love with her.

Quite soon after my marriage indeed came an adventure, that did

much to restore my baffled self confidence. There was a certain little Miss Kingsmill who came to Haldon Road first as a pupil to learn retouching and then as a helper with the work. She was cheerfully a-moral and already an experienced young woman. She was about the house before and after my marriage; the business stirred her; she may have had confidences from my cousin and a quickening interest became evident in her manner towards me. I found myself alone with her in the house one day; I was working upon a pile of correspondence books, my aunt was out shopping and my wife had gone to London with some retouched negatives. I forget by what excuse Ethel Kingsmill flitted from her retouching desk upstairs, to my study. But she succeeded in dispelling all the gloomy apprehensions I was beginning to entertain, that lovemaking was nothing more than an outrage inflicted upon reluctant womankind and all its loveliness a dream. The sound of my returning aunt's latch-key separated us in a state of flushed and happy accomplishment. I sat down with a quickened vitality to my blottesque red corrections again and Ethel, upstairs, very content with herself, resumed her niggling at her negative. Sentimentally and "morally" this is a quite shocking incident to relate; in truth it was the most natural thing in the world.

After that one adventure I looked the world in the eye again. But it did nothing to change my attachment to Isabel. Our separation did not alter the fact that still for many years she retained the dominant place among my emotional possibilities. I do not know what might have happened if at any time in the course of our estrangement she had awakened and turned upon me with a passionate appeal.

I can see to-day, as I dissect the dead rabbit of my former self, what I never saw before, why it was that after years of complete orientation to my cousin, now that she was my wife, my eye and fancy wandered. Less consciously than instinctively I was trying to undo the knot I had tied and release myself from the strong, unsatisfying bond of habit and affection between us. I still wanted to keep her, if only she would quicken and come alive to me; and quite as strongly I wanted to escape from the pit of disappointment into which I had fallen with her.

As I sit over this specimen of human life, pickled now in

correspondence and ineffaceable memories for forty years, I find this replacement, in the course of a few weeks, of a very real simple honesty of sexual purpose by duplicity quite the most interesting fact about my early married life. After six "engagement" years of monogamic sincerity and essential faithfulness, I embarked, as soon as I was married, upon an enterprising promiscuity. The old love wasn't at all dead, but I meant now to get in all the minor and incidental love adventures I could.

I am disposed to think, on the strength I admit, of my one only personal experiences, that for the normally constituted human being there must be two contrasted types of phase, fixation upon an individual as one end of the series and complete promiscuity of attention and interest as the other. Anyone, at any time, may be in one or other phase, or moving from one to the other. We are not monogamic by nature, or promiscuous by nature, but some of us happen to get *fixed* for longer or shorter periods. There is a general desire to concentrate. We tend towards attachment but a shock or a mounting subconscious resistance may suddenly interfere. It is like the accumulation of a sediment, in a test tube which may at any time happen to be heated or shaken. We become dispersed then, perhaps for an indefinite time, until a new trend towards fixation appears. These are matters not within the control of will or foresight, they happen to us before willing begins. That, I think, gives some expression to these alternations of fairly strict loyalty, such as I observed before my marriage, with my subsequent infidelities, which phase again gave place to a second, less powerful, fixation and that to a second discursiveness.

But as I sit and speculate about what really happened to me more than half a life-time ago in 1892 and 1893, I begin to suspect that I am still simplifying too much and that there was another independent strand of motive playing among the others. Is there a strain of evasion in my composition? Does the thought of being bound and settling down, in itself, so soon as it is definitely presented, arouse a recalcitrant stress in me? And how far is that fugitive impulse exceptional, and how far is its presence an ordinary thing in the human make-up? Is this string also tugging at everybody? Is there potential flight as well as attraction in every love affair? I remember

clearly how much I desired my cousin to become my mistress before I married her and how much I wished to go on living in lodgings for a time even after we were married, instead of taking a house.

In my case the break between the pull and the drive came to a climax very abruptly. I find I was writing from my home in Sutton in mid-December 1892 as though I intended to live on there indefinitely; and I find myself living in Mornington Place with Catherine Robbins early in the following January! The circumstances of that very abrupt change defeat my memory. Something happened which I cannot recall. I have been inclined to suppose a fit of claustrophobia. Did I perhaps wake up suddenly in the night and say "I must get out of this"? I may have had one of those spasmodic resolutions that do come up sometimes out of the welter of the half-conscious and the subconscious! If so I do not remember it. But I do find indications of precisely the opposite thing, a considerable amount of shilly-shally. Even after I had eloped I was, I know, trying very earnestly to persuade my cousin not to divorce me. Having got away from her I wanted to keep her. It is only now, in this cold and deliberate retrospect, that I admit even to myself how disingenuous, how confused and divided in purpose I was at that time.

Isabel and I paid a visit to the Robbins' household on December 15th and stayed until December 18th. This probably brought on the crisis. Isabel may have given way to a fit of jealousy. My brother Freddy, who was always greatly attached to her and who talked the affair over with her years afterwards, tells me now that she ascribed our separation to her own initiative. She told him she had put it to me that either I must end this continually more intimate and interesting friendship altogether or part from her. She had had a similar phase of possessiveness during my student days at South Kensington. She felt at a disadvantage with these people who could "talk." I do not now recall any such ultimatum, but in the circumstances it was a very natural and probable one and the visit to Putney may have precipitated it. The retort, "Very well, if you can let me go like this, I will go," was equally natural and obvious. There we have exactly the pride and resentment on either side necessary for a sudden separation. She made what is otherwise an unaccountable decision, easy for me.

Brother Freddy comes in very usefully here. Later on, he tells me, she regretted our parting profoundly. I too regretted it. She reproached herself, he says, for failing to "understand" me and for having broken before I was ready to break. She said she had been headstrong and selfish; she had said her say, I had taken her at her word, and she found there was no going back upon it. There was certainly a deep bond of dearness between us still, we realized that as our anger abated, but, once we were launched upon our several courses, there was no return.

Perhaps it was well that there was no return. There was a superficial volatility and a profound impatience in my make-up that would have taxed her ultimately beyond the limit of her adaptability. We might have gone on dragging out the estrangement. A later breach might have been a less generous one.

My little Aunt Mary, who died two years later, was distressed and perplexed beyond measure by our divorce and, as Isabel told me long afterwards, her opinion of the whole affair expressed itself in a "good scolding" for "losing" me. My mother too was so amazed at Isabel "letting me go," and so near to indignation about it, that she quite forgot to be shocked at the immorality of my situation. I cannot make up my mind how far this disposition on the part of women to make their own sex wholly responsible for the infirmity of purpose of their menfolk is due to deep seated and ancient traditions, and how far it is innate. But that was how my aunt and my mother behaved.

When my second wife was dying in 1927, she said to me, "I have never destroyed a single letter of yours, I cannot destroy them now. There they are in my bureau, with all my own letters that you have asked me to keep. You must do as you please with them." So that I am able, after a little trouble with some undated letters, to check back every main phase in our reactions throughout our long married life. The record is even fuller than a mere keeping of letters would imply. Not only did we write to each other daily when we were apart, but for all our time when we were together, I had a queer little custom of drawing what we called "picshuas" to amuse her and myself, little sketches of fancy, comment or caricature. I began this in Mornington Place in 1893. These picshuas carried on the tradition of those scratchy odd little drawings with which I used to decorate my letters

to my family and friends. Many were destroyed as they were done, but many were thrust into drawers and survived. The growth and changes of tone in our relations is, I say, traceable by means of this accumulation over thirty-five years. And it is quite evident that these letters are those of two loving friends and allies, who are not and never had been passionate lovers. That is the point of importance here.

The earliest of all my letters, the ones written before matters came to a crisis, were the ordinary letters of a self-conscious young man putting his best foot forward in a friendly correspondence. They were letters that might have to be shown to "mother" and eminently discreet. There is no essential change of tone right up to the breach with Isabel. But then came letters written during our crisis, and I find a curiously false and unconvincing note sounding through them. They are plainly the attempts of an extremely perplexed mind to make a fair story out of a muddle of impulses. They are not straightforward, they pose and flatter, they exaggerate. The ring of simple and honest passion is not there; I would hate to quote a line of them. Fortunately that is not only unnecessary but impossible. They vary so much that no quotations would be really representative.

The resort to heroics in these letters is frequent and facile. I was acting a part. I may have been acting in good faith, to the best of my ability, but I was acting. It is plain that I resolved suddenly at any cost to get my little student to come away and give herself to me, but there is not the slightest indication that I was really possessed by her personality or that at that time I had the smallest apprehension of its sterling quality. Sifting over all my evidence now, not as my apologist but as my scientific historian, I am inclined to think that the most powerful drive at work in me was the longing to relieve my imagination not of the real Isabel but of that Venus Urania, that torment of high and beautiful desire, who had failed to embody herself in Isabel and yet had become so inseparable from her. My mind was seizing upon Amy Catherine Robbins to make her the triumphant rival of that elusive goddess.

On my new mistress, in her turn, I was trying to impose a rôle. Like so many other desperate young love affairs, ours was to be such a love affair as the world had never seen before. Other people were

different. We were by mutual agreement two beings of an astonishing genius with an inherent right to turn accepted morality upside down. It was an explosion of moral light....

There was some coming and going between Mornington Place and the Robbins' home in Putney after our first departure. The mother declared herself to be dying of grief, she wept continuously and incredibly, and the daughter went back to her home for some days. Attempts were then made to delay her return to me. Various men friends of the family were invoked to remonstrate and threaten. I stuck to my purpose grimly. Miss Amy Catherine Robbins stuck to my purpose. Vast arguments unfolded about us. She was consumptive; I was consumptive; we were launching on a desperate experiment. We replied magnificently that if we were going to die so soon, the more reason there was that we should spend all that was left of our brief time on earth together. But let her at any rate remain in the shelter of her home until I was divorced, they argued. I answered that I was not sure I wanted to be divorced. We did not believe in the Institution of Marriage and we did not intend to marry. We were both very sure that we did not intend to marry.

The resolve to get the best of an argument may link two people as closely as inherent mutual desire. We hadn't our backs to the wall; there was indeed nothing in the nature of a wall behind us; we had only each other. We saw the thing through in spite of immense secret disillusionments. I found this fragile delicate little being of Dresden china, was altogether innocent and ignorant of the material realities of love, it was impossible to be rough or urgent with her and so the deep desired embraces of Venus Urania were now further off from me than ever. But not a soul in the world about us knew anything of that for some years. We stuck to each other stoutly and forged the links of a chain of mutual aid, tolerance and affection that held us close to each other to the day of her death. We got over the worst of our difficulties; we established a *modus vivendi*. Insensibly the immense pretentiousness of our first beginning evaporated and we began to jest and mock at ourselves very cordially. The "picshuas" began. We worked in close association and sympathy. But there arose no such sexual fixation between us, as still lingered in my mind towards my cousin.

If I am to tell this story at all I must tell here of two illuminating incidents that happen to be known now to no one in the whole world but myself. They seem to me to be profoundly illuminating; but the reader must judge for himself whether I am disposed to exaggerate their significance. They show at any rate how little I had really finished with my cousin when I separated myself from her and how much of that separation was concerned with her and not with her successor. The first of these incidents occurred when I visited her somewhen about 1898 or 99 at a poultry farm she was running, not very profitably, at Twyford between Maidenhead and Reading. I think the pretext of our meeting again was the discussion of some extension of that enterprise. I bicycled to the place and found her amidst green things and swarming creatures depending upon her, in the rustic setting to which by nature she belonged. We spent a day together at Virginia Water, a day without tension, with an easy friendliness we had never known before. We used our old intimate names for each other. Suddenly I found myself overcome by the sense of our separation. I wanted fantastically to recover her. I implored her for the last time in vain. Before dawn the house had become unendurable for me. I got up and dressed and went down to find my bicycle and depart. She heard me moving about, perhaps she too had not slept, and she came down, kindly and invincible as ever, and as amazed as ever at my strangeness.

Because you see it was all so unreasonable.

"But you cannot go out at this hour without something to eat," she said, and set about lighting a fire and boiling a kettle.

Her aunt could be heard moving about upstairs, for they occupied adjacent rooms. "It's all right Auntie," she said, and prevented her from coming down to witness my distress.

All our old mingling of intense attraction and baffling reservation was there unchanged. "But how can things like that be, now?" she asked. I gave way to a wild storm of weeping. I wept in her arms like a disappointed child, and then suddenly pulled myself together and went out into the summer dawn and mounted my bicycle and wandered off southward into a sunlit intensity of perplexity and frustration, unable to understand the peculiar keenness of my unhappiness. I felt like an automaton, I felt as though all purpose had

been drained out of me and nothing remained worth while. The world was dead and I was dead and I had only just discovered it.

After that I set myself to forget my imaginations about her, by releasing my imaginations for other people. But in that I was unsuccessful for a long time. Five or six years afterwards she married; I do not know the exact date because for more than a year she kept this from me. And then came a still more illuminating incident. When at last I heard of it, I was overwhelmed by a storm of irrational organic jealousy. It took the form of a deliberate effacement of her. I destroyed all her photographs and letters and every souvenir I possessed of her; I would not have her mentioned to me if I could avoid it; I ceased all communications. The portraits I have reproduced here I have had to borrow. That bitterness again is quite incompatible with the plausible and conventional theory that she was nothing more to me than an illiterate young woman whom I "dropped" because she was unequal to a rôle in the literary world. I burnt her photographs. That was a symbolization. If we had lived ten thousand years ago I suppose I should have taken my axe of stone and set out to find and kill her.

And to complete this history here, the still stranger thing is that in another five years all this fixation had vanished. It had been completely swept out of my mind by other disturbances of which I must tell at some later date. The sting had vanished. I was able to meet her again in 1909 in a mood of limitless friendliness, free from all the glittering black magic of sex; and so things remained with us until the end of her life. Some friend we had in common mentioned her to me, brought us into communication again, and we met and continued to meet at intervals after that. Following her marriage, the order for her alimony had been discharged but now, realizing she had to practice many economies, I arranged an income for her, exactly as one might do for a married sister. In quite the same mood of brotherliness I bought a laundry for her when the fancy took her to possess a business of her own. That enterprise was crippled by an operation for appendicitis; she had no great facilities for being nursed in her own house and she came to mine and stayed through her convalescence with my wife and myself until she was well again. No one about us knew her story; she was my cousin and that sufficed; we

were in a world far removed from the primitive jealousies, comparisons and recriminations of our early years. We walked about the garden discussing annuals and perennials and roses and trees. When she was growing stronger I took her for my favourite round through the big gardens of Easton Lodge. She was particularly pleased by the lily tank before the house, and by the golden pheasants Lady Warwick had turned loose in the wood behind the ponds.

That was the last walk we ever had together.

She wrote to me in her simple gentle fashion when my wife died, praising and lamenting her. Afterwards she wanted to build a house of her own and asked me to help her. When I saw that her heart was set upon it I agreed to that, though it did not seem to me to be what Americans call a sound proposition. We inspected the site and she showed me the plans. But the house was barely begun before she died and it was abandoned. She died quite unexpectedly. She had been diabetic and making use of insulin for some years. I had just discovered that I too was diabetic and I was looking forward to her coming to a lunch with me, at which I would surprise her by an admirable menu of all the best permissible things. I thought it was a cousinly touch that we should share the same diathesis. But something went wrong with her insulin injections and one day in France I got a letter from her husband saying that she was dead. She had been well on Saturday and she became comatose on Monday and died without recovering consciousness.

So ends this history of the rise and fall and sequel of that primary fixation that began when my cousin came downstairs to meet me in that basement tea-party in the Euston Road forty-seven years before. I offer no moral lesson. I have tried to tell things as they happened.

§ 3. MODUS VIVENDI

The mixture of high-falutin with sincere determination on the part of this Miss Amy Catherine Robbins and myself in the early stages of our joint adventure, deserves a little more attention. We were both in reality in flight from conditions of intolerably narrow living. But we

did not know how to state that properly, we were not altogether clear about it, and we caught at the phrasing of Shelley and the assumption of an imperative passion. She was the only daughter of an extremely timid and conventional mother with no ideas for her future beyond marriage to a safe, uneventful *good* man, and her appearance in my mixed classes was already an expression of her struggle and revolt. My own recalcitrance to the life fate had presented to me I have already dealt with. My intimations of freedom and social and intellectual enterprise (on the noblest scale) went to her head very readily and it was an overwhelming desire for emancipation from consuming everyday obligations for both of us rather than sexual passion, that led to our wild dash at opportunity.

That alliance for escape and self development held throughout our lives. We never broke it. As our heroics evaporated we found ourselves with an immense liking and respect for each other and a great willingness to turn an awkward corner with a jest and a caricature. We discovered a way of doing that. We became and remained the best companions in the world. But our alliance never became an intense sexual companionship, which indeed is why my primary fixation upon my cousin remained so powerful in my mind for ten years, or more, and why, later on, as we emerged to success and freedom I was in a phase of imaginative dispersal and began to scandalize the whisperers about us.

Here again it would be easy to dress up my story in a highly logical and creditable manner. But I have never quite succeeded in that sort of dressing- up. A few tactful omissions would smooth out the record beautifully. And if the record is not beautifully smoothed out it is not for want of effort. Between the ages of thirty and forty I devoted a considerable amount of mental energy to the general problem of men and women. And never with any real disinterestedness. I wanted to live a consistent life, I wanted a life that would stand examination, I hated having to fake a front to the world, and yet not only were my thoughts and fancies uncontrollable, but my conduct remained perplexingly disingenuous. I did my best to eliminate my sense of that disingenuousness by candid public theorizing. I spoke out for “Free Love.” I suppose I was going through phases roughly parallel with those through which Shelley

had passed eighty years before. Hundreds of thousands have passed that way. I did my best to maintain that love-making was a thing in itself, a thing to thank the gods for, but not to be taken too seriously and carried into the larger constructive interests of life.

The spreading knowledge of birth-control, — Neo-Malthusianism was our name for it in those days — seemed to justify my contention that love was now to be taken more lightly than it had been in the past. It was to be refreshment and invigoration, as I set out quite plainly in my *Modern Utopia* (1905) and I could preach these doctrines with no thought of how I would react if presently my wife were to carry them into effect, since she was so plainly not disposed to carry them into effect, and what is much more remarkable, with my recent storm of weeping in that little farm kitchen at Twyford, very conveniently — but quite honestly — forgotten. This again I think is after the common fashion. We are not naturally aware of our two-phase quality. We can all think in the liberal fashion in our phases of dispersal; there is always a Free Love contingent in any community at any time; but its membership varies and at any time any of its members may lapse towards a fixation and towards its attendant exclusiveness and jealous passion. People drop out of the contingent or return to it. At one time love is the happy worship of Venus, the goddess of human loveliness, the graceful mutual complement of two free bodies and spirits; at another it is the sacred symbol of an intense and mystical personal association, a merging of identities prepared to live and die for one another. It is this variation of phase that plays havoc with every simple dogmatic ruling upon sexual behaviour.

Advocates of free love, in so far as they aim at the liberation of individual sexual conduct from social reproach and from legal controls and penalties, are, I believe, entirely in the right. Nevertheless, with such a liberation, very little is attained. Circumstances are simplified, but the problem itself remains unchanged. We are still confronted with the essential riddle of our own phases of development as we pass from youth to maturity and, as I have already insisted, with this other, more persistent, alternation of phase between dispersal and intensification. The tangle is further complicated by the absolute right of society to intervene directly the

existence of children is involved, and by a third mass of difficulties due to the fact that emotionally and physically, and thence to an increasing degree in its secondary associations and implications, love is a different thing for men and women. In a universe of perfect adaptations these differences would reciprocate; in this world they do nothing of the sort.

But here I approach questions and experiences that will be better deferred until I come to that phase of my middle years during which I produced various hesitating yet enterprising love novels. Then, almost in spite of myself, I was forced by my temperament and circumstances to face the possibility that men and women as such, when it comes to planning a greater world order, may be disposed to desire incompatible things. Feminine creativeness and feminine devotion may differ from their masculine parallels and though women radicals and men radicals are members of the same associations and speak to the same meetings, their ends may lie far apart. There may have to be a new treaty of mutual tolerance between the sexes.

But in the early days of my second marriage I did not even suspect the possibility of these fundamental disagreements in the human project. My wife and I had still to win the freedom to think as we liked about our world. What we were then going to think about it, lay some years ahead of us. While we struggled we liked each other personally more and more, we dropped our heroics and laughed and worked together, we made do with our physical and nervous incompatibilities and kept a brave face towards the world.

We dropped our disavowal of the Institution of Marriage and married, as soon as I was free to do so, in 1895. The behaviour of the servants of that period and the landladies and next-door neighbours, forced that upon us anyhow. Directly the unsoundness of our position appeared, servants became impertinent and neighbours rude and strange. How well we came to know the abrupt transition from a friendly greeting “passing the time of day” to a rigid estrangement. Were they really horrified when they “heard about it,” or is there a disposition to hate and persecute awaiting release in every homely body? I believe that there has been a great increase in tolerance in the last forty years but in our period, if we had not married, half our

energy would have been frittered away in a conflict of garden-wall insults and slights and domestic exactions. We had no disposition for that kind of warfare.

And having got together and found how evanescent were our heroics, and having discovered that our private dreams of some hidden splendour of loving were evaporating, we were nevertheless under both an inner and an outer obligation to stand by one another and pull our adventure through. We refrained from premature discussion and felt our way over our situation with tentatives and careful understatement. We could each wait for the other to take on an idea. She, even less than I, had that terrible fluidity of speech that can swamp any situation in garrulous justification and headlong ultimatums. And our extraordinary isolation, too, helped us to discover a *modus vivendi*. Neither of us had any confidants to complicate our relations by some potent divergent suggestion, and there was no background of unsympathetic values that either of us respected. Neither of us bothered in the least about what so and so would think. In many matters we were odd and exceptional individuals but in our broad relations to each other and society we may have come much nearer to being absolute and uncomplicated sample man and woman, than do most young couples. The research for a *modus vivendi* is a necessary phase of the normal married life to-day.

Now in this research for a *modus vivendi* certain apparently very trivial things played a really very important part. Although I have published only four lines of verse in my life, I used to be in the habit of making endless doggerel as I got up in the morning, and when we were sitting together in the evening, with my writing things before me I would break off my work to do "picshuas," these silly little sketches about this or that incident which became at last a sort of burlesque diary of our lives and accumulated in boxes until there were hundreds of them. Many — perhaps most — are lost but still there remain hundreds. I invented a queer little device in a couple of strokes to represent her head, and it somehow seemed to us to resemble her; also a kindred convention, with a large nose and a wreath of laurel suggestive of poetic distinction and incipient baldness, for myself. Like so many couples, we found it necessary to

use pet names; she became Bits or Miss Bits or Snitch or It, with variations, and I was Bins or Mr. Bins. A burlesque description I gave, after a visit to the Zoological Gardens, of the high intelligence and remarkable social life of the gopher, amused us so much that we incorporated a sort of gopher chorus with the picshuas. Whatever we did, whatever was going on in the world, the gophers set about doing after their fashion. Into this parallel world of burlesque and fancy, we transferred a very considerable amount of our every-day life, and there it lost its weight and irksomeness. We transferred our own selves there also. Miss Bits became an active practical imperious little being and Mr. Bins a rather bad, evasive character who went in great awe of her. He was frequently chastised with an umbrella or "Umbler pop." All this funny-silly stuff is so much of the same quality that I find it hard to pick out specimens, but I do not see how I can tell of it without reproducing samples. Here for instance are various "études," some very early sketches of Miss Robbins in her academic gown, done before our elopement, a very characteristic figure of her engaged in literary effort, from about 1896, four later studies of the conventional head of Miss Bits, It usually, It at the slightest hint of impropriety, It sad and It asleep, a treatment of the advent of reading glasses, and a sort of frieze of every-day; the Same, Yesterday, To-day and for Ever. These may seem at the first glance to be the most idle of scribblings but in fact they are acute statements in personal interpretation. Mostly they were done on sheets of manuscript paper, so that here they suffer considerable reduction and compression. This, says my publisher was unavoidable.

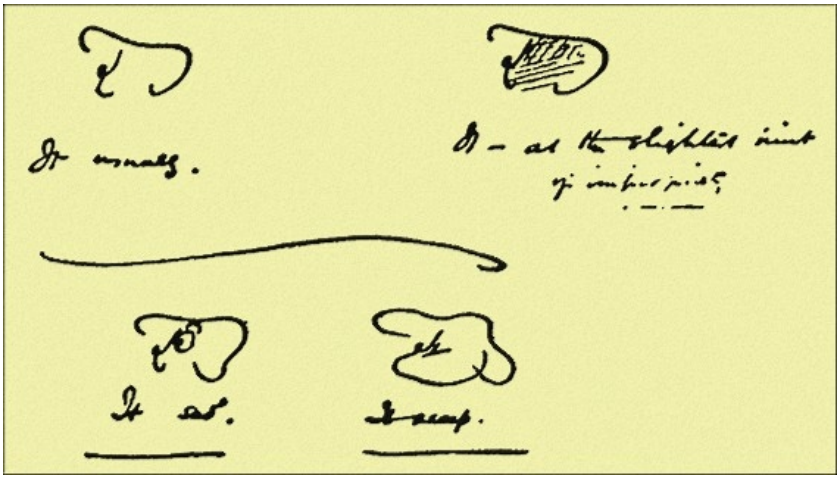

Picshua: Four Studies of “It.”

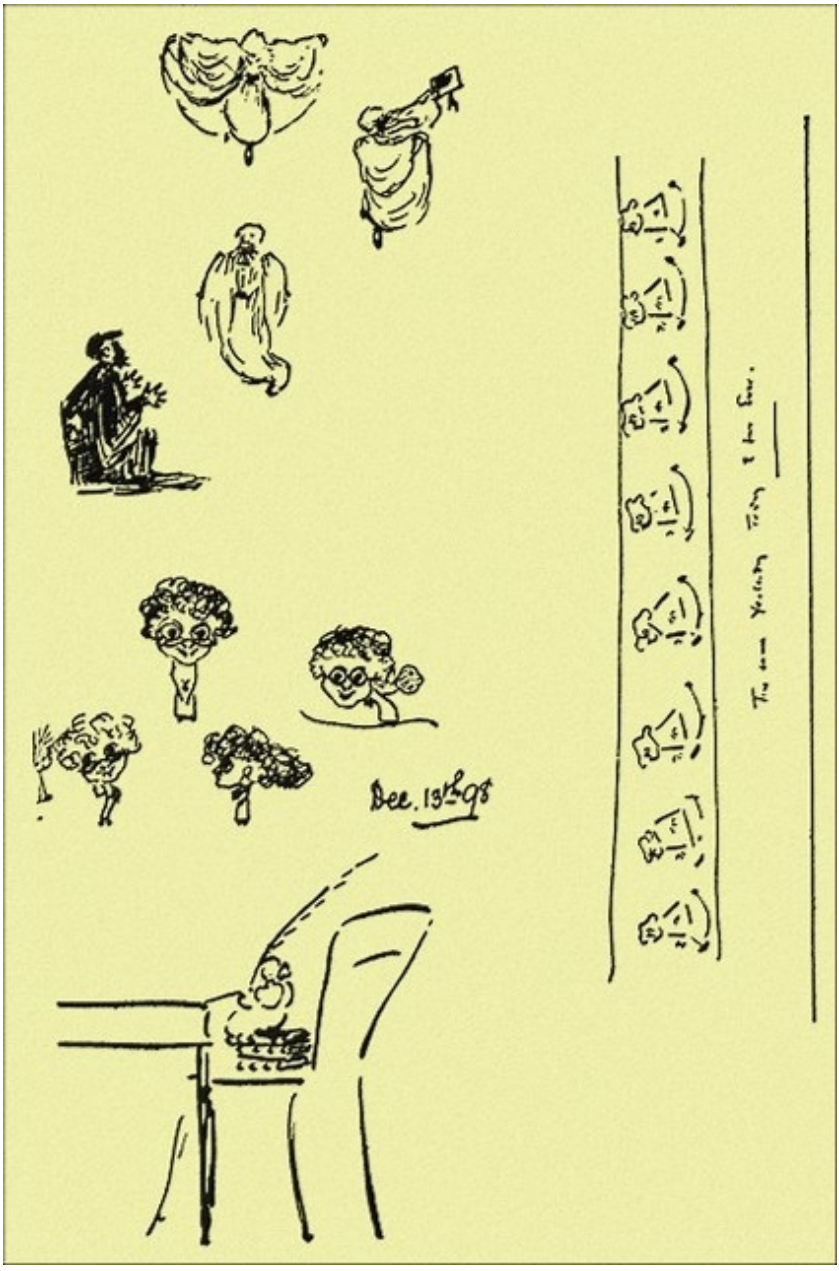

Picshuas: Academic Robes, Reading Glasses,
Literary Composition, Frieze Design.

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Here is a Satirical Picshua, on one side of the paper is “Bits as she *finks* she is” and on the other, “the real Bits, really a very dear Bits indeed.” She writes, sleeps, eats and rides a bicycle with me.]

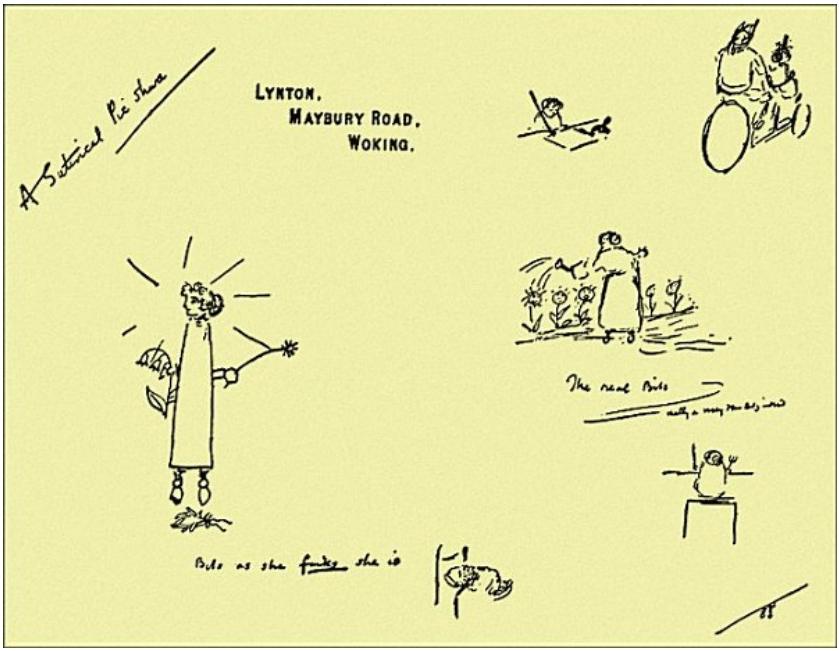

Picshua: A Satirical Picshua.

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Here again is the text of a sympathetic but relentless poem, undated but probably about 1898, showing still more clearly how she was being, to use Henry James’s word “treated,” for mental assimilation:

CHANSON
It was called names
Miss Furry Boots and Nicketty and Bits,
And P.C.B., and Snitterlings and Snits,
It was called names.

Such names as no one but a perfect ‘Orror

Could ever fink or find or beg or borror
Names out of books or names made up to fit it
In wild array
It never knew when some new name might hit it
From day to day
Some names it's written down and some it 'as forgotten
Some names was nice and some was simply ROTTEN.
Sometimes they made it smile, sometimes they seemed to flatter
Sometimes they made it weep — it really did not matter.
Some made it pine quite fin, but fin or fat or fatter
It was called names.

* * * * *

Here again is a gardening picture from either Woking or the early Worcester Park days, representing an encounter with a slug. The Wreath on my head "dates" the picture as an early one, probably 1895 or 1896. This wreath was my symbol for literary ambitions; it appears constantly in my earlier student's letters to A.T. Simmons and Miss Healey, and it becomes infrequent after 1898.

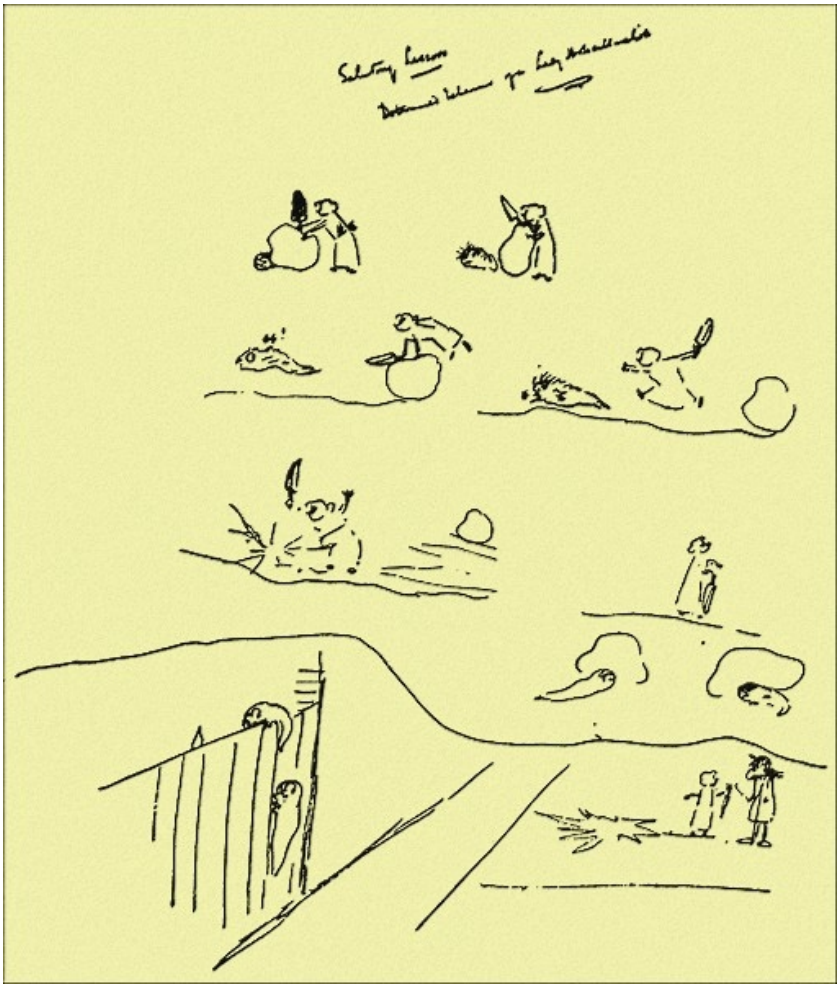

Picshua: Salutary Lesson. Determined Behaviour of a Lady Horticulturist.

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Here you have a “Fearful Pome” intended to bring home to an insolent woman her dependence on her lord. This doggerel variant of Lear’s nonsense rhyme, brings out the queer little fact that even in these early days at Heatherlea, Worcester Park, the money of the alliance was already under her control. We were living indeed exactly like an honest working-class couple and the man handed over

his earnings to his “missus” and was given out his pocket money.

Fearful Pome To Scare And Improve A Bits

The Pobble who has no Toes
Had once as many as Ten
(Now here is a Strange and Horrible Thing
All of his Toes were Men)

Some there are who wrongly hold
His toes did number eleven
But none dare count the Hairs of his Head
(Though the Stars in his Hair are Seven)

Such as would count the Hairs of His Head
peedily Painfully Die
(Aunt Jobiska he never had
All that tale is a Lie).

All who meet the Pobble abroad
Come to infinite Harm
May you never meet him (Pray the Lord),
Clothed in his Sinister Charm

(Softly (yet dreadfully fast) He goes
That Terrible Pobble who has no Toes)
(It’s no good saying you do not care
This Awful Pobble goes everywhere)

Should you meet him, cover your face
Leave your shoes in that Terrible Place
The Pobble — the Foe of the Human Race — and Flee
Your only shelter from his Clutch
Your only Refuge he dare not Touch
The only Being he cares for Much is Me (H.G.)

Me what you fink is simply Fungy
Me what you keep so short of Mungy

Me what you keep so short of Beer
Is your only chance when the Pobble is near
Nex time you go for your Umbler Pop
Fink of that Terrible Pobble and Stop.

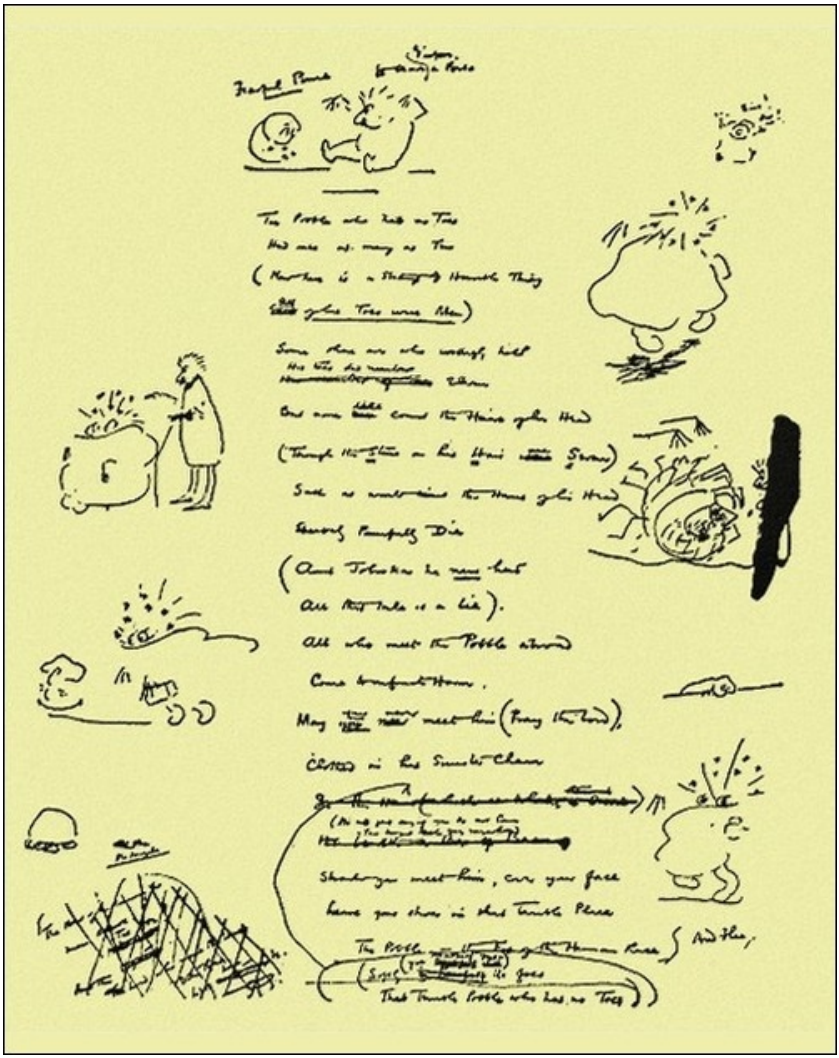

Reproduction of Fearful Pome, Page 1.

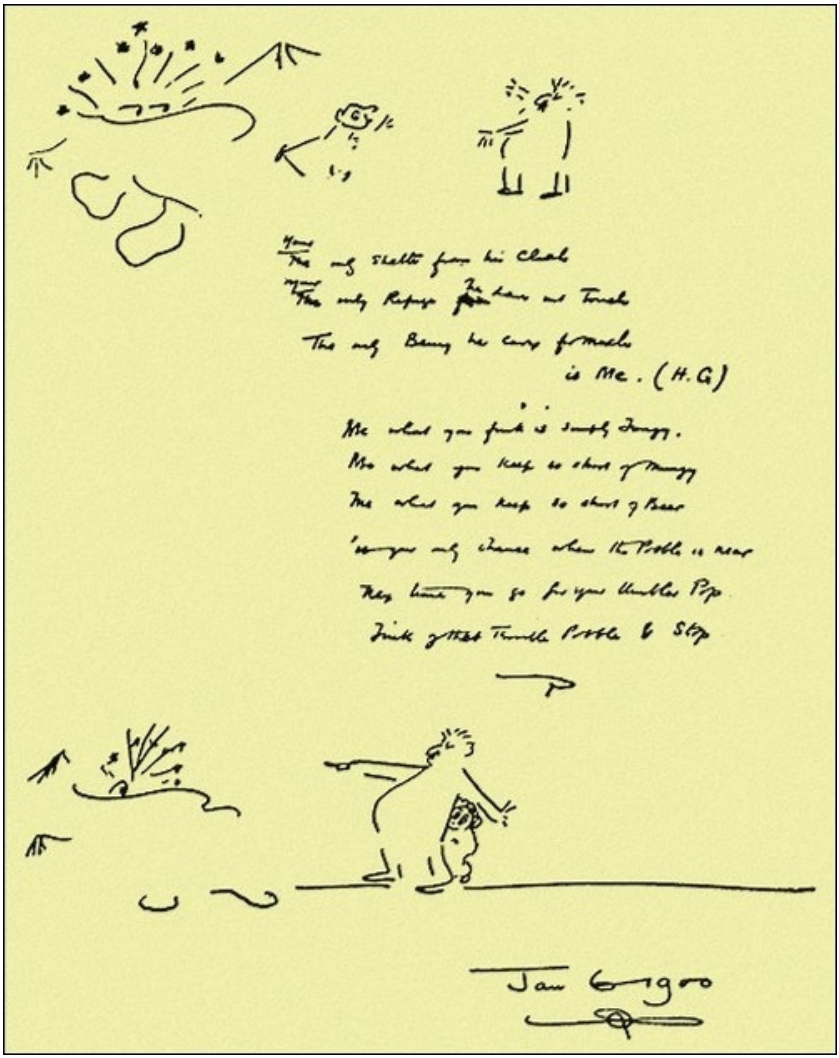

Reproduction of Fearful Pome, Page 2.

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Here is a gentle protest against an unfair invasion of table space. The lamp dates it as before 1900 and the spectacles as after 1898.

Picshua: Invasion of Table Space.

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Here is a much later sketch, dated 1911, celebrating the return of the Tangerine season. We had enjoyed tangerines together at Mornington Place, seventeen years before. I thought we might enjoy them again in seventeen years' time — but in 1911 there were only sixteen years left to us; she died in 1927. And note the "some day" at the bottom.... That picshua has become the oddest little epitome of our third of a century together.

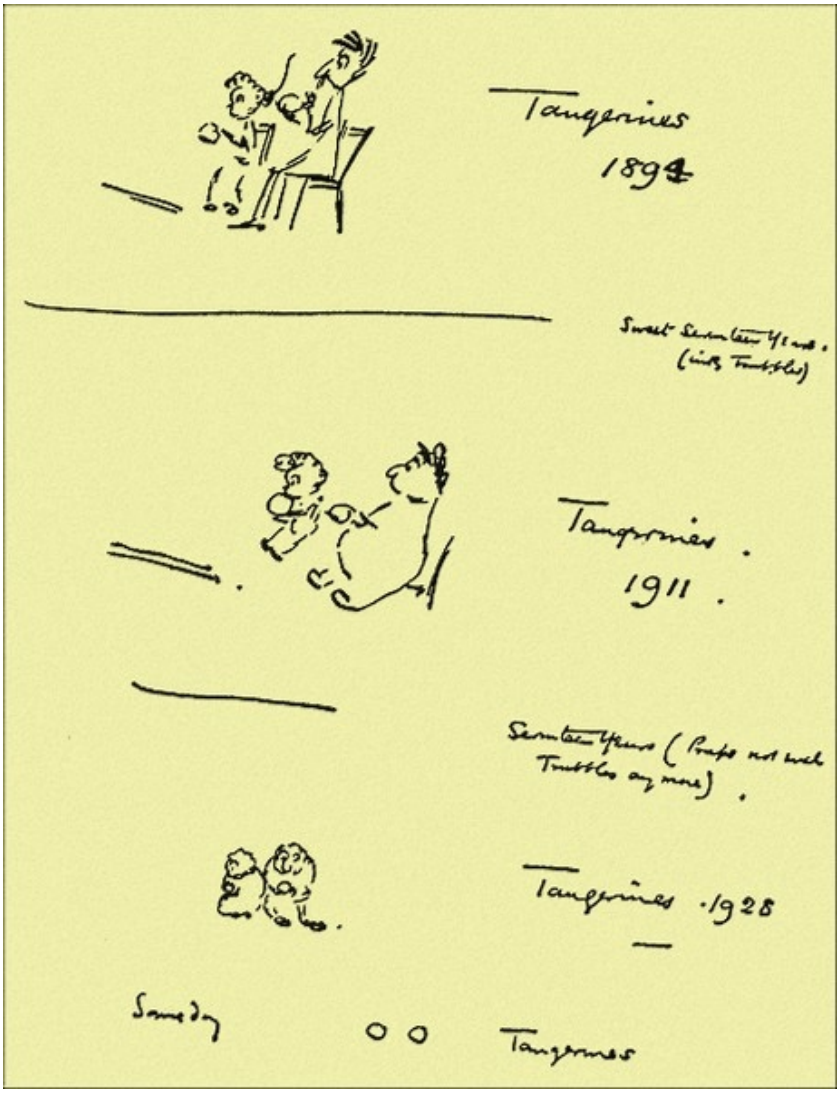

Picshua: Tangerines.

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Here is an earlier picshua again (March 31st, 1899). It commemorates a removal from Beach Cottage, Sandgate, to Arnold House. The helplessness of the male on these occasions of domestic upheaval is contrasted with the ruthless energy of the female. The first thing is “Gup! Movals!”, *i.e.* “Get up — removal!” Then the

embarrassed master of the house misses his trousers. He finds himself being carried from house to house and protests, “But Bits why can’t I walk like I usually does?” He is crushed by the stern reply “Cos it’s Movals”. And so on.

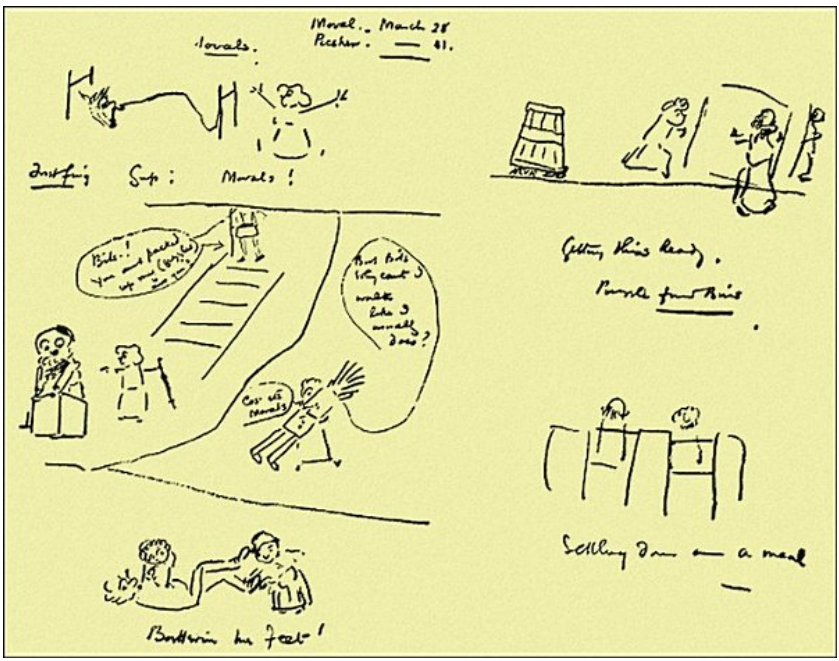

Picshua: Removal to Arnold House.

* * * * *

On the following two pages is a casual specimen for 1898. The reader may do his best to interpret it. A lens may be needed, but that is due to the unavoidable reduction in printing. By this time the reader has either given up looking at these picshuas or he has learnt their peculiar language. The idea of building a house was already under discussion. We had had a visit from J.M. Barrie (of which a word may be said later) and he and Jane are represented measuring heights (Mezzerinites). There had been trouble over a building site, with a Mr. Toomer. The gophers appear in full cry in pursuit of the said Toomer. The Atom reflects upon her diminutive size. Other points may be guessed at.

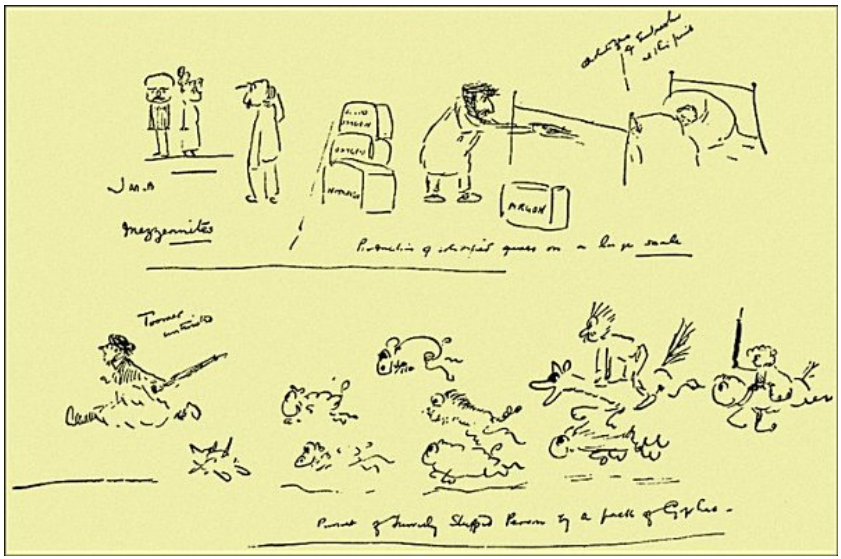

Picshua: J.M. Barrie, etc., 1st Drawing.

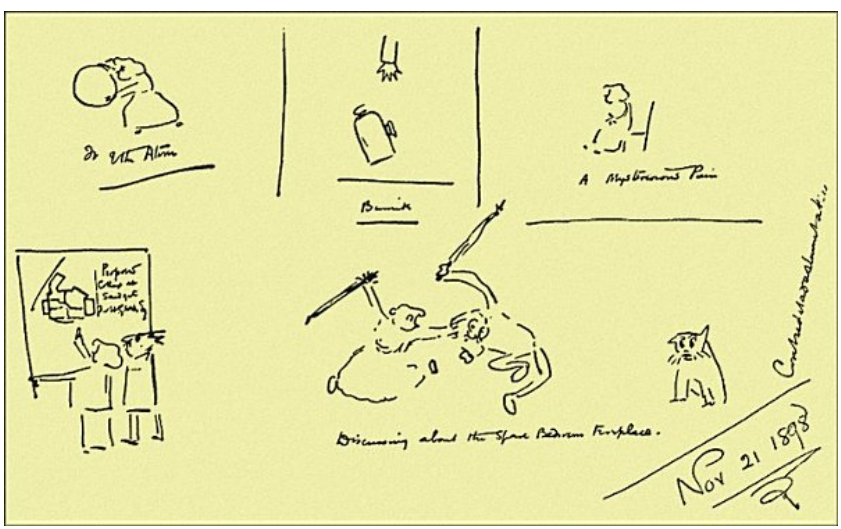

Picshua: J.M. Barrie, etc., 2nd Drawing.

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This rather more ambitious attempt commemorates the completion of *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. What the little figures rocketing across the

left hand corner of the picture intimate I do not know. They are, I think, just a decorative freak.

Picshua: Waiting For The Verdik.
Love and Mr.Lewisham

* * * * *

Finally let me quote a hymn, celebrating our first seven years together.
“Mr. Boo” I may explain was a cat that ran away, and the “Bites” were
Harvesters, which we had gathered unwittingly on the Downs behind Folkstone.

Lines Written On This Piece Of Paper, Oct. 11th, 1900.

Our God is an Amoosing God. It is His Mercy that
This Bins who formerly was ill is now quite well and Fat
And isn't going Bald no more nor toofaking and such
For all of which This Bins who writes congratulates *Him* much.

Our God is an Amoosing God, although he let that site,
What first we chose, be Toomerized, he more than made things right
By getting us a better site, a more amoozing chunk
And finding us the Voysey man and Honest Mr. Dunk.

Our God is an Amoosing God. Although he stole our Boo.
(A rather shabby sort of fing for any God to do)
Although he persecuted us for several orful nights
With fings which I can only name by calling of em — Bites.
Although he made me orful ill when I came back from Rome.
Although he keeps the windows back, what's ordered for our mome,
Although, if I aint precious sharp, he gets my socks on odd
And blacks my flangle trowsers. Still —

He's an Amoosing God.

Yes God is an Amoozing God, and that is why I am
By way of Compliment to Him, so much the Woolly Lamb.
He gives me little woolly Momes and little Furry Bits
He's lately added to my store a Mackintosh that fits.
He gives me Tankards full of Beer and endless pleasant Fings
And so to show my Gratitude to God I sits and sings.
I sits and sings to Lordy God with all my little wits.
(But all the same I don't love 'Im not near what I love Bits.)

* * * * *

But altogether many hundreds of these sketches and scribblings have escaped the dustbin and the fireplace; and they are all at about the same level of skill and humour. There is no need to reproduce more of them. What matters here is the way in which they wrapped about the facts of life and created for us a quaint and softened atmosphere of intercourse. They falsified our relations to the pitch of making

them tolerable and workable. The flow of this output was a little interrupted when I took to drawing Good Night Pictures for our children, but it never really ceased. I was drawing picshuas for her within a few weeks of her death, and one day during those last months we had together, we turned the whole collection out and looked them over together, remembering and reminding.

The reader may think I have wandered away from the subject of dispersal and fixation with which I began this section. But indeed it is essential to that subject that I should explain how it was that we two contrived in the absence of a real passionate sexual fixation, a binding net of fantasy and affection that proved in the end as effective as the very closest sexual sympathy could have been in keeping us together. And we were linked together also by our unreserved co-operation in work and business affairs. At first I sent my MSS. to be typed by a cousin, (the daughter of that cousin Williams who kept school for a time at Wookey), but later on my wife learnt to typewrite in order to save the delay of posting and waiting to correct copy, which latter process often necessitated retyping. She not only typed, she scrutinized my text, watched after my besetting sin of verbal repetitions, and criticized and advised. Quite early in our life together, so soon as I had any money, I began handing over most of it to her, and for the greater part of our married life, we had a joint and several banking account on which either of us could draw without consulting the other, and she had complete control of my investments. She spent exactly what she thought proper, she made up my income tax returns without troubling me, I ceased more and more to look into things, satisfied when she told me that everything was "all right," and, when she died, I found myself half as much again better off than I had ever imagined myself to be. Another thing between us that seems extremely significant to me as I look back upon it, was this, that I disliked both of her names, Amy and Catherine, and avoided using either. The reader may have noticed that there has been a curious awkwardness hitherto in alluding to her. That is because in actual fact I spoke of her only by the current nickname. Then on the heels of a string of nicknames, I was suddenly moved to call her "Jane" and Jane she became and remained. I do not know exactly when I did this, but very rapidly it

became her only name, for me and our friends. “Amy” she dropped altogether; she disliked it as much as I did. Her mother used it abundantly, and perhaps too much, for remonstrance and advice.

But Catherine she liked and as I have told in The Book of Catherine Wells she kept it for her literary work. In that volume I have gathered together almost every piece of writing that she completed and in the preface I have given an account of her rather overshadowed but very distinctive literary personality. Her literary initiatives were of a different order and quality from mine, and she insisted upon that and would never avail herself of my name or influence in publishing her own none too abundant writing. We belonged to different schools. Her admiration for Katherine Mansfield, for instance, was unbounded while my appreciation was tempered by a sense of that young woman’s limitations; and she had a leaning towards Virginia Woolf, whose lucubrations I have always regarded with a lack-lustre eye. She liked delicate fantasy after the manner of Edith Sitwell, to whom I am as appreciatively indifferent as I am to the quaint patterns of old chintzes, the designs on dinner plates or the charm of nursery rhymes. Again, she found great interest in Proust who for me is far less documentary and entertaining than, let us say, Messrs. Shoolbred’s catalogue of twenty years ago, or an old local newspaper, which is truer and leaves the commentary to me.

Catherine Wells was indeed not quite one of us, not quite one with Jane and me, I mean; she was a quiet, fine spirited stranger in our household; she was all that had escaped from the rough nick-naming and caricaturing and compromise that would have completely imposed upon her the rôles of Miss Bits and Jane. Our union had never incorporated her. I had glimpses of her at times; she would look at me out of Jane’s brown eyes, and vanish. All I know of her I have let appear in that book. Much later, after the war, when our accumulating means afforded it, Catherine Wells took rooms of her own in Bloomsbury, rooms I never saw; she explained what she wanted and I fell in with her idea, and in this secret flat, quite away from all the life that centred upon me, she thought and dreamt and wrote and sought continually and fruitlessly for something she felt she had lost of herself or missed or never attained. She worked upon

a story in that retreat, a fastidious elusive story that she never brought to any shape or ending; some of it she polished and retyped many times. It was a dream of an island of beauty and sensuous perfection in which she lived alone and was sometimes happy in her loneliness and sometimes very lonely. In her dream there was a lover who never appeared. He was a voice heard; he was a trail of footsteps in the dewy grass, or she woke and found a rosebud at her side....

A year or so before her last illness she gave up that flat and ceased to work upon her unfinished book.

It is evident that this marriage of ours had some very distinctive features. Its originality did not end at that perfect business confidence and that queer play of silly humorous fantasy, mental caressing and imposed interpretations already described. At the back of all that, two extremely dissimilar brains were working very intelligently at the peculiar life problem we had created for each other. We came at last to a very explicit understanding about the profound difference in our physical and imaginative responses.

Jane thought I had a right to my own individual disposition and that luck had treated me badly in mating me first to an unresponsive and then to a fragile companion. About that she was extraordinarily dispassionate and logical and much more clearheaded than I was. She faced the matter with the same courage, honesty and self-subordination with which she faced all the practical issues of life. She suppressed any jealous impulse and gave me whatever freedom I desired. She knew as well as I did that for all its elements of artificiality, our alliance was indissoluble; we had intergrown and become parts of each other, and she realized perhaps sooner than I, how little that alliance demanded a monopoly of passionate intimacy. So long as we were in the opening phase of our struggle for a position and worldly freedom, this question was hardly a practical issue between us. There was neither time nor energy to indulge any form of wanderlust. But with the coming of success, increasing leisure and facility of movement, the rapid enlargement of our circle of acquaintance, and contact with unconventional and exciting people, there was no further necessity for the same rigid self-restraint. The craving, in a body that was gathering health and

strength, for a complete loveliness of bodily response, was creeping up into my imagination and growing more and more powerful. This craving dominated the work of D. H. Lawrence altogether. For my own part, I could never yield it that importance. I would justify it if I could, but not at the price of that joint attack upon the world to which I was committed with Jane.

My compromise with Jane developed after 1900. The *modus vivendi* we contrived was sound enough to hold us together to the end, but it was by no means a perfect arrangement. That escape of the personality of Catherine Wells from our unison was only one mark of its imperfection. Over against that are to be set the far more frequent escapades of a Don Juan among the intelligentsia. I record our understanding, as I want to record all the material facts of my life; it was an experiment in adjustment, but there was nothing exemplary about it. All life is imperfect: imperfection becomes a condemnation only when it reaches an intolerable level. Our imperfections we made quite tolerable and I do not believe that in making them tolerable we injured anybody else in the world. Compromises of some sort between ill-fitted yet congenial people must, I suppose, become more frequent in our advancing world as individuality intensifies. The more marked the individuality the more difficult is it to discover a complete reciprocity. The more difficult therefore is it to establish an exclusive fixation.

Yet the normal human being gravitates naturally towards an exclusive and complete fixation, with its keen possessiveness and its irrational infinitude of jealousy. What I have called the discursive phase of a human being is the unstable and transitory phase; there is no such thing as complete promiscuity; there is always preference and there is no limit set to the possible swift intensifications of preference; the casual lover loves always on a slippery slope. The French with their absurd logicality distinguish between the *passade*, a stroke of mutual attraction that may happen to any couple, and a real love affair. In theory, I was now to have *passades*.

But life and Latin logic have always been at variance, and it did not work out like that. There is no such distinction to be drawn. There are not small preferences that do not matter and big ones that do; there are all sizes and grades of preferences. For women even

more than for men, the frequent *passade* seems unattractive. A woman understands much more than a man the undesirability of inconsequent discursive bodily love. She gives her Self, there is personality as well as her person in the gift; she may reckon on a greater return than she gets, but indeed it is a poor sort of lovemaking on either side in which, at the time at any rate, there is not the feeling that selves are being given. Otherwise it would be the easiest thing in the world to solve all this riddle of incompatible temperaments by skilled prostitution.

Clearly Jane and I were persuaded of the possibility of some such solution, though presumably in terms rather less brutally simple. I do not think we could have made our treaty if we had not thought so. On either side, we supposed, there were men and women with an excess of sexual energy and imagination. On either side there were restless spirits with a craving for variety. What could be more rational than for such super-animated men and women to find out and assuage one another?

And everything else would remain as it was before.

But as a matter of fact, short of some rare miracle of flatness, nothing does remain as it was before. Two worlds are altered every time a man and woman associate. The alterations may vary widely in extent but an alteration is always there. It would indeed be a very remarkable thing if Nature, for all her general looseness and extravagance, had contrived it otherwise. Jane's humour and charity, and the fundamental human love between us, were to be tried out very severely in the years that lay ahead. Suffice it here to say that they stood the test.

§ 4. WRITINGS ABOUT SEX

And here, I think, and not later, is the place for a compact account of my writings so far as they concern the relations of men and women. These books and papers arose very directly out of my own personal difficulties. They were essentially an eversion, a generalization, an attempt to put my case in the character of Everyman.

In my earlier writings the topic of sex is conspicuously absent, I

felt then that I knew nothing about it that could possibly be communicated. I muddled with my own problems in my own fashion, shamefacedly. Then, because I still felt I knew nothing about it, I began asking questions.

I think that as the waters of oblivion swallow up my writings bulk by bulk, the essays and booklets and stories and novels I wrote about love and sex-reactions will be the first section to go right out of sight and memory. If any survive they will survive as a citation or so, as historical sidelights for the industrious student. They had their function in their time but their time has already gone by. They were essentially negative enquiries, statements of unsolved difficulties, protests against rigid restraints and suppressions; variations of "Why not?" They helped to release a generation from restriction and that is about all they achieved. Aesthetically they have no great value. No one will ever read them for delight.

Love and Mr. Lewisham was published in 1900. The "love" in it is the most naïve response of youth and maiden imaginable, and the story is really the story of the "Schema" of a career and how it was torn up. The conflict and disharmony between the two main strands in what I have called my "Compound Fugue," was troubling my mind. Mr. Lewisham was a teacher and science student as I had been, and his entanglement is quite on all fours with mine. But he has a child. Because he loved his Ethel, Mr. Lewisham had to tear up his Schema and settle down. Domestic claustrophobia, the fear of being caught in a household, which I have suggested may have played a part in my departure from Sutton, is evident in this book. At the time of writing it (1898-99), I did not consciously apply the story of Mr. Lewisham to my own circumstances, but down below the threshold of my consciousness the phobia must have been there. Later on, in 1910, it had come to the surface and I sold Spade House deliberately, because I felt that otherwise it would become the final setting of my life.

The *Sea Lady* (published in 1902 and planned two years earlier) is a parallel story of the same two main strands of motive, but it is told under quite a different scheme of values. Something new comes to light; a sensuous demand. There is an element of confession in the tale but it is a confession in motley. And love, instead of leading to

any settling down, breaks things up. But the defeat of the disinterested career is just as complete. Chatteris, the lover, plunges not into domesticity but into the sea, glittering under a full moon. A craving for some lovelier experience than life had yet given me, is the burthen in this second phase. Not only Catherine Wells but I too could long at times for impossible magic islands. Chatteris is a promising young politician, a sort of mixture of Harry Cust and any hero in any novel by Mrs. Humphry Ward, and he is engaged to be married to a heroine, quite deliberately and confessedly lifted, gestures, little speeches and all, from that lady's *Marcella*. All the hopes of this heroine are shattered by a mermaid who comes ashore as the Bunting family, the heroine's hosts, are bathing from the end of their garden at Sandgate. For at Sandgate people's gardens go right down to the beach. The mermaid is — beauty. And the magic of beauty. She drives Chatteris into a madness of desire for "other dreams," for a life beyond reason and possibility. The book ends as lightly as it began — in a "supreme moment" — of moonshine.

The next book of mine in which unsolved sexual perplexities appear is *A Modern Utopia* (1905). Plato ruled over the making of that book, and in it I followed him in disposing of the sexual distraction, by minimizing the differences between men and women and ignoring the fact of personal fixation altogether. That is and always has been the intellectual's way out. My Samurai are of both sexes, a hardy bare-limbed race, free lovers among themselves — and mutually obliging. Like the people of the original Oneida community in New York State they constituted one comprehensive "group marriage." Possibly among such people fixations would not be serious; that is hypothetical psychology. I may have stressed the mutual civility of the order. The book was popular among the young of our universities; it launched many of them into cheerful adventures that speedily brought them up against the facts of fixation, jealousy and resentment. It played a considerable part in the general movement of release from the rigid technical chastity of women during the Victorian period.

So far as there can be any general theory of sexual conduct and law, the *Modern Utopia* remains my last word. Within that comprehensive freedom, individuals, I believe, must work out their

problems of fixation and co- operation, monopolization, loyalty and charity, each for himself and herself. For everyone and every couple there is a distinctive discord and perhaps in most cases a solution. The key to the progressive thought of our time is the frank realization of this immense variety in reaction and the repudiation of the rigid universal solutions of the past. We do not solve anything by this realization, but we liberate and individualize the problem. It is an interesting paradox that Socialism should involve extreme sexual individualism and Competitive Individualism clip the individual into the rigid relationships of the family.

A Modern Utopia was leading up to *Ann Veronica* (1909) in which the youthful heroine was allowed a frankness of desire and sexual enterprise, hitherto unknown in English popular fiction. That book created a scandal at the time, though it seems mild enough reading to the young of to- day. It is rather badly constructed, there is an excessive use of soliloquy, but Ann Veronica came as near to being a living character as anyone in my earlier love stories. This was so because in some particulars she was drawn from life. And for that and other reasons she made a great fuss in the world.

The particular offence was that Ann Veronica was a virgin who fell in love and showed it, instead of waiting as all popular heroines had hitherto done, for someone to make love to her. It was held to be an unspeakable offence that an adolescent female should be sex-conscious before the thing was forced upon her attention. But Ann Veronica wanted a particular man who excited her and she pursued him and got him. With gusto. It was only a slight reflection of anything that had actually occurred, but there was something convincing about the behaviour of the young woman in the story, something sufficiently convincing to impose the illusion of reality upon her; and from the outset Ann Veronica was assailed as though she was an actual living person.

It was a strenuous and long sustained fuss. The book was banned by libraries and preached against by earnest clergymen. The spirit of denunciation, latent in every human society, was aroused and let loose against me. I have turned over my memories and records of that fuss and I find it so abundant and formless an accumulation of pettiness that I cannot put it together into a narrative. It is a jumble of

slights, injustices and hasty condemnations, plus a considerable amount of exacerbated resentment and ineffective reprisal on my own part. I do not make a good or dignified martyr. There was not only a "bad press" and a great deal of public denunciation of me but there was an attempt, mainly on the part of people who did not know me, to ostracize me socially. The head and front of the public attack was Mr. St. Loe Strachey, the proprietor of the *Spectator*. A reviewer in his columns rallied the last resources of our noble language, made no bones about it, pulled himself together as men must do when the fundamentals of life are at stake, and said in so many words that Ann Veronica was a whore. It was I think an illegitimate extension of the term.

He was a fine fellow, that reviewer. "The muddy world of Mr. Wells's imaginings," said he, was "a community of scuffling stoats and ferrets, unenlightened by a ray of duty and abnegation." That was rough on the Samurai of my *Modern Utopia*. He writhed with "loathing and indignation" and so on and so on, mounting and shouting, up to that last great manly word.

That denotes the quality of the fuss and gives the clue to my resentment. Strachey's hostility, if a little clumsy and heavy, was perfectly honest, and before he died we met — as witnesses in defence of a birth-control pamphlet — and became very good friends. I was indignant and expostulatory at the time, but on the whole I really had very little to complain of. The social attack did me no harm. It made no perceptible difference in my life that we two were sent to Coventry by people we had never met. The people who had met us did not send us to Coventry. Most of my friends stood the proof very delightfully; people as various as G. K. Chesterton, C. F. G. Masterman, Sydney Olivier and his family, Ray Lankester, Shaw, Harry Cust, and Lady Mary Elcho, came out stoutly for me and would have nothing to do with any social boycott. Altogether it was no sort of martyrdom, as martyrdoms go nowadays, and its general ineffectiveness amounted to a victory. My ostracism had its use as a filter to save me from many dull and dreary people. And my ultimate victory was no mere personal one. Mr. Fisher Unwin had bought the book outright and did very well by it. It sold and went on selling in a variety of editions. After *Ann Veronica*, things were never quite the

same again in the world of popular English fiction; young heroines with a temperamental zest for illicit love-making and no sense of an inevitable Nemesis, increased and multiplied not only in novels but in real life.

But for a time the uproar about *Ann Veronica* put me quite out of focus with the public and the literary world. The fact that the great bulk of my work displayed an exceptional want of reference to sex or love-making, or the position of woman, was ignored; and if I had been a D. H. Lawrence, with every fig leaf pinned aside, I could not have been considered more improper than I was. This brought me a quite new type of reader, and books like *Kipps*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The First Men in the Moon* and *The Wonderful Visit* were bought by eager seekers after obscenity — to their extreme disillusionment. They decided after a baffled perusal that I was dreadfully overrated and superficial, and my brief reputation in the cloacal recesses of the bookish world evaporated speedily enough.

In 1911 this conflict was revived upon a broader basis, if with less intensity, over my *New Machiavelli*. I would not drop the subject of the passionate daughter, and there was, I admit, considerable defiance of manner if not of matter, both in the *New Machiavelli* and in *Marriage* which followed it. Quite manifestly I had refused to learn my lesson and, this time, I was to be squashed for good. But this final attack was delivered two years too late. Many people were beginning to be ashamed of the violence of their reactions to *Ann Veronica* and others were plainly bored by the demands of my more persistent antagonists for a fresh effort to erase me, and the result of this second attempt to end Wells was on the whole distinction rather than destruction. Instead of being made an outcast, finally and conclusively, I was made a sort of champion.

The *New Machiavelli* was first printed as a serial in Ford Madox Hueffer's *English Review* and persistent rumours that no publisher would consent to issue it led to a considerable sale of the back numbers of that periodical at enhanced prices — with the usual disappointment for the purchasers. "What is all the fuss about?" the poor dears demanded. "There is nothing in it!" There was indeed furtive work with the publishers on the part of what are called influential people, but I neither know nor care who were these

influential people, and I do not know what was said and done. The respectable firm of Macmillan was already under contract to publish the book and could not legally or honourably back out, but it presently appealed to me in a state of great embarrassment, for permission to publish in this particular case under the imprint of John Lane, who was less squeamish about his reputation for decorum. I consented to that, and so the gentility of Macmillan, or whatever else was threatened by those influential people, was preserved.

The *New Machiavelli* is all the world away from overt eroticism. The theme is simply a fresh variant upon the theme of *Love and Mr. Lewisham* and the *Sea Lady*; it stressed the harsh incompatibility of wide public interests with the high, swift rush of imaginative passion — with considerable sympathy for the passion. The Marcella- like heroine of the *Sea Lady* is repeated, but the mermaid has become a much more credible young woman, and it is to exile in Italy and literary effort, and not to moonshine and death, that the lovers go. There is some good characterization in it, one or two well-written passages and an amusing description of a fire at an actual dinner-party, given by Cust, at which I was present. But it is nothing outstanding in the way of a novel.

I was not indulging myself and the world in artistic pornography or making an attack upon anything I considered moral. I found nothing for self reproach in my private conduct, I did not know for some time that the imaginations of the back benches of the Fabian Society and the riff-raff of the literary world were adorning my unwitting and undeserving head with a rakish halo. I did not realize how readily my simple questionings could be interpreted as the half confessions of a sort of Fabian Casanova, an inky Lovelace, the satyr-Cupid of Socialism. I was asking a "Why not?" that had been accumulating in my mind all my life, and the intensity of my questioning had no doubt been greatly enhanced by the peculiar inhibitions of my first wife and the innocent fragility of my second. I was releasing, in these books, a long accumulation of suppression. So far as I can remember my phases, however, the influence of my particular experiences was quite subconscious at the time and I think I should have come to that particular "Why not?" in some fashion — anyhow. I was asking my question in perfect good faith and I went

on asking it.

I was working out the collateral problems with an ingenuous completeness, and I did not mean to relinquish that enquiry. I had come to the conclusion that sex-life began with adolescence, which after all was only discovering what "adolescence" means, and that when it began — it ought to begin. I thought it preposterous that any young people should be distressed by unexplained desires, thwarted by arbitrary prohibitions and blunder into sexual experiences, blindfold. The stories of Isabel and my wife and myself were plainly stories of an excessive, artificial innocence. I contemned that "chastity" which is mere abstinence and concealment more and more plainly. I believed and said that a normal human being was not properly balanced, physically and mentally, without an active sexual life; that this was as necessary and almost as urgently necessary, as fresh air and free movement, and I have never found any reason to change that opinion.

But a propaganda of more and franker and healthier love-making was not, I found, — as Plato found before me — a simple proposition. It carried with it certain qualifying conditions. Some of these, but not all of them, I brought into the discussion. In a world where pressure upon the means of subsistence was a normal condition of life, it was necessary to compensate for the removal of traditional sexual restraints, and so my advocacy of simple and easy love-making had to be supplemented by an adhesion to the propaganda of the Neo-Malthusians. This I made in my *Anticipations* (1900) and I continued to write plainly on that subject in a period when Neo-Malthusianism was by no means the respectable movement it has since become.

In some of these earlier essays on sexual liberation, I seem now, to be skirmishing about on the marginal conventions of the business and failing to come to grips with its more intimate realities. I was condemning a great system of suppressions and prohibitions as unreasonable; but at first I did not face up steadily to the fact that they were as natural as they were unreasonable. I was giving a fair hearing to one set of instincts and not allowing another set to come into court. I had not examined by what necessary processes the net of restraints I was denouncing had been woven to entangle pleasure and

happiness. In spite of my own acute experience, I was ignoring that gravitation towards fixation in love, with its intense possessiveness, dominance, jealousy and hatred of irresponsible indulgence, which lies at the heart of the problem. I had been suppressing it in myself and I was ignoring it in my arguments.

Gradually as my disputes and controversies went on, my attention was forced back, almost in spite of myself, towards these profounder elements in the human make-up which stand in the way of a cheerful healthy sexual go-as-you-please for mankind. I was obliged to look jealousy in the face. All this tangle of restriction, restraint, opposition and anger, could be explained as so much expansion, complication and organization of jealousy. Jealousy may not be a reasonable thing, but it lies at least as close to the springs of human action as sexual desire. Jealousy was not merely a trouble between competitive lovers. Parents, onlookers, society could be jealous.

I set myself to examine the credentials of jealousy. At some time I had read Lang and Atkinson's *Human Origins*, probably under the influence of Grant Allen, and the book illuminated me very greatly. I realized the rôle played by the primitive taboos in disciplining and canalizing the dominant jealousy of the more powerful males so as to make possible the development of tribal societies. I saw the history of expanding human associations as essentially a successive subjugation of the patriarchal group to wider collective needs, by jealousy-regulating arrangements. Continually civilization had been developing, by buying off or generalizing, socializing and legalizing jealousy and possessiveness, in sex as in property. We were debarred from sexual ease, just as we were debarred from economic ease, by this excessive fostering in our institutions of the already sufficiently strong instinct of ownership. The Family, I declared, was the inseparable correlative of private proprietorship. It embodied jealousy in sexual life as private ownership embodied jealousy in economic life. And to the very great dismay of the strategists and tacticians of the Fabian Society, and to the immense embarrassment of the Labour Party socialists, I began to blurt out these ideas and attempt to sexualise socialism.

I should naturally like to present my mental process in this matter as completely lucid, consistent and far-seeing from the beginning,

and if it were not for that family habit of filing letters and accumulating records to which I have already alluded, I think I should have been able to do that. Nobody now would remember my tergiversation if my files did not. But it is clear that though my association with Labour Socialism had very little effect upon my stories and romances, it did affect various pamphlets, discussions and letters I wrote upon the subject.

Let me deal with the novels first. They do follow a fairly consistent line. The topic of jealousy dominated *In the Days of the Comet* (1906). The swish of a comet's tail cools and cleanses the human atmosphere, and jealousy, and with it war and poverty, vanish from the world. Jealousy is also the dominant trouble in the *Passionate Friends* (1913) and *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* (1914), while *Marriage* (1912), once more presents the old conflict between broad intentions and passionate urgencies, that had furnished the motif of three earlier tales, *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, *The New Machiavelli* and the *Sea Lady*. In all these novels the interest centres not upon individual character, but upon the struggles of common and rational motives and frank enquiry against social conditions and stereotyped ideas. The actors in them are types, therefore, rather than acutely individualized persons. They could not be other than types. For reasons that will become plainer as I proceed, my output of this "discussion-fiction" between men and women became relatively much less important after the outbreak of the war. Christina Alberta in *Christina Alberta's Father* (1925) is a much more living figure than Ann Veronica and her morals are far easier; but times had changed and not a voice was raised against her. That *Spectator* reviewer, and much else, had died since 1909. That particular liberation had been achieved.

Apart from these, only three of my stories can be put into the category of sex-discussion, — *The Secret Places of the Heart* (1922) in which I was thinking not so much of the problem of jealousy, as of love-making considered as a source of waste of energy, and, to a lesser degree and interwoven with quite other ideas, *Meanwhile* (1927) which betrays a similar trend. I may be able to return later to the rather different issue of these more recent books. They are raising the question whether after all a woman can be a good citizen and if

she can, in what way, a problem also appearing *inter alia* in *The World of William Clissold* (1926). In the last "book" of the latter, there is also a sketch of a feminine personality "Clementina" which stands by itself, an incidental lark, because it is so manifestly objective and interrogative.

Turning from my novels to the various papers, pamphlets and letters I was putting out through this same period, I discover a much less candid display of view and attitude. I began well, but I found I was speedily entangled and bemused by various political and propagandist issues. I find a quite straightforward statement of my ideas in a paper I read to the Fabian Society in October 1906, under the title of *Socialism and the Middle Classes*. Therein I say plainly that I "no more regard the institution of marriage as a permanent thing than I regard a state of competitive industrialism as a permanent thing" and the whole paper sustains this attitude. But subsequently I published this, bound-up with a second article which had appeared in the *Independent Review* (*Socialism and the Family* 1906) and, in this last, the phrasing is, to say the least of it, more discreet. I am advocating in both what is plainly a correlative of the break-up of the family, the public endowment of motherhood. But the question as to whether this endowment is to be confined to women under some sort of marriage contract recognized by the state, or extended to all mothers indiscriminately is not distinctly stated. The issue was vague in my own mind; there were questions of fatherly influence and of eugenics to consider, and I had still to think them out. It is regrettable that those perplexities still clouded my attitude; otherwise I find the record satisfactory up to this point.

But then came an ingenious misstatement by Mr. Joynson-Hicks (as he was then) while campaigning against Labour Socialism in the Altrincham division (Lancashire), and a more or less deliberate misquotation by Mr. J. H. Bottomley, a conservative election agent for the Newton division, which lured me into an excess of repudiation. Joynson-Hicks had declared that Socialists would part husband and wife, and subject every woman to a sort of communal prostitution. Challenged to justify this statement, which greatly shocked the rank and file of the Labour battalions, he defended himself by an appeal to my works. "He was not in the habit of

making a statement without some kind of justification, and one had only to read Mr. Wells' book, where it clearly stated that 'Wives no less than goods, were to be held in common'; and 'Every infant would be taken away from the mother and father and placed in a State nursery.' (*Daily Dispatch.* Oct. 12th, 1906.)"

Mr. Bottomley had put it in this way, in a pamphlet for local circulation: "Essentially the Socialist position is a denial of property in human beings; not only must land and the means of production be liberated, but women and children, just as men and things must cease to be owned. *So in future it will be not my wife or your wife, but our wife.*" The words in italics were his own addition but, somehow, they got inside the quotation marks.

Two quotations, one from *The Times Literary Supplement*, in a review of *In the Days of the Comet*, and one from the *Spectator* for October 19th, 1907, in an article on *Socialism and Sex Relations*, also got into the dispute. *The Times Literary Supplement* said: "Socialistic men's wives, we gather, are, no less than their goods, to be held in common. Free love, according to Mr. Wells, is to be of the essence of the new social contract." And the words of the *Spectator* were as follows: "For example we find Mr. Wells in his novel, *In the Days of the Comet*, making Free Love the dominant principle for the regulation of sexual ties in his regenerated State. The romantic difficulty as to which of the two lovers of the heroine is to be the happy man is solved by their both being accepted. Polyandry is 'the way out' in this case, as polygamy might be in another."

Now the proper reply to this sort of attack was to stick to the phrase Free Love, insist that this did not mean indiscriminate love, point out that the words supposed to be quoted had not been used, and explain with patience and lucidity, that personal sexual freedom and collective responsibility for the family, did not mean "having wives in common" or taking children away from their parents or practising polyandry or polygamy or anything of that sort. But instead of explaining, I spluttered into exaggerated indignation at the dishonesty of those misplaced inverted commas of Mr. Bottomley's, I repudiated "Free Love," which was obviously wrong of me, simply because, like the word atheist, the phrase had acquired an unpopular flavour, and unsaid, more or less distinctly, much that I had been

saying during the previous half a dozen years. I was entangling myself with politics, and I found my socialistic associates were embarrassed by my speculations. I did not want them to reproach me. In *New Worlds for Old* (1908) first published as a serial in the *Grand Magazine* in 1907, I went still further along the line of self-repudiation, and I read with contrition to-day, this dreadful passage of quite Fabian understatement:

"Socialism has not even worked out what are the reasonable conditions of a State marriage contract, and it would be ridiculous to pretend it had. This is not a defect in Socialism particularly, but a defect in human knowledge. At countless points in the tangle of questions involved, the facts are not clearly known. Socialism offers no theory whatever as to the duration of marriage, as to whether, as among the Roman Catholics, it should be absolutely for life, or, as some hold, for ever; or, as among the various divorce-permitting Protestant bodies, until this or that eventuality; or even, as Mr. George Meredith suggested some years ago, for a term of ten years. In these matters Socialism does not decide, and it is quite reasonable to argue that Socialism need not decide. Socialism maintains an attitude of neutrality."

This is a false attitude. Socialism, if it is anything more than a petty tinkering with economic relationships is a renucleation of society. The family can remain only as a biological fact. Its economic and educational autonomy are inevitably doomed. The modern state is bound to be the ultimate guardian of all children and it must assist, replace, or subordinate the parent as supporter, guardian and educator; it must release all human beings from the obligation of mutual proprietorship, and it must refuse absolutely to recognize or enforce any kind of sexual ownership. It cannot therefore remain neutral when such claims come before it. It must disallow them. But in these incriminatory documents I find myself being as vague, tactful and reassuring about sentimental interpretations — as if I had set out in life to become a Nationalist Prime Minister.

These skirmishes with politicians and pamphleteers occurred in 1906-7 and 8 and I touched my nadir of compromise and understatement in that last year. Later on, when I tell of my relations to accepted religious forms and beliefs I shall have to deal again with

this politic, conciliatory strain in me. It can be excused. It can be explained as the deference of modesty and as a civilized inclination to conformity; it has its amiable aspects. But whatever may be possible in larger brains, mine is not clever and subtle enough to be disingenuous to that extent; my proper rôle is to say things plainly and still more plainly, to be aggressive and derisive and let persuasion go hang. It is better to offend rather than mislead. When I am diplomatic I am lost. It was really an extraordinarily good thing for me that circumstances conspired with my innate impulse, when I am at the writing desk, to let statement and story rip, to put me quite openly where I was, with the *Ann Veronica* shindy in 1909 and the subsequent campaign, in 1910 and 1911, against the *New Machiavelli*. After that it was plain where I stood, and that in spite of our pretty, orderly home and the general decorum of our industrious lives, Jane and I were not to be too hastily accepted as a nice, deserving young couple respectfully climbing the pleasant stairway of English life from quite modest beginnings, to social recognition, prosperity, and even perhaps "honours."

It was not only that the Fabian and Labour politician found my persistent development of "Why not?" in regard to the family and marriage, inconvenient, but also that I was at cross purposes upon the same score with the feminist movement in the new century. My realization of how far away I was to the left of the official left movements of my time had something to do, I think, with these lapses towards compromise I am now deploring.

The old feminist movement of the early nineteenth century had undergone a sort of rejuvenation in the eighties and nineties. It had given up its bloomers and become smart, energetic and ambitious. There was a growing demand on the part of women for economic and political independence, and at first it seemed to me that here at last advancing upon me was that great-hearted free companionship of noble women of which I had dreamed from my earliest years.

As the hosts of liberation came nearer and could be inspected more accurately I found reason to qualify these bright expectations. If women wanted to be free, the first thing was surely for them to have complete control of their persons, and how could that happen unless Free Love and Neo-Malthusianism replaced directed and

obligatory love and involuntary child-bearing, in the forefront of their programme. Their inferiority was a necessary aspect of the proprietary, patriarchal family, and there was no way of equalizing the economic disadvantage imposed upon them by the bearing and care of children, short of the public endowment of motherhood. These things and not any petty political enfranchisement, I reasoned, must surely constitute the real Magna Charta of Women, and I set myself to explain this with the same tactless simplicity and lucidity that had already caused such inconvenience to the politicians of the Labour Party.

But the leaders of the feminist revival were no more willing than were the socialists to realize where they were going. They were alive to the wrongs that set them moving but not to the ends towards which their movement would take them. Confronted by the plain statement of the Free Citizen Woman as opposed to the Domesticated Woman their hearts failed them. It became increasingly evident that a large part of the woman's suffrage movement was animated less by the desire for freedom and fullness of life, than by a passionate jealousy and hatred of the relative liberties of men. For one woman in the resuscitated movement who wanted to live generously and nobly, a score were desirous merely of making things uncomfortable for the insolent, embarrassing, oblivious male. They did not want more life; their main impulse was vindictive.

They wanted to remain generally where they were and what they were, but to have it conceded that they were infinitely brighter and better and finer than men, that potentially they were finer poets, musicians, artists, social organizers, scientific investigators and philosophers than men could ever be, that a man owed everything to his mother and nothing to his father and so forth and so on; that women therefore ought to be given unlimited control over the goods and actions of their lawful partners, be empowered to impose upon these gross creatures complete chastity, or otherwise, as the fancy might take them, and, instead of establishing a free and liberal equality, entirely reverse the ascendency of the sexes. This was a very wholesome tu quoque for ages of arrogant masculine bad manners, but it was not practical politics and it did not penetrate to

the more fundamental realities of the sexual stress.

That feminism had anything to do with sexual health and happiness, was repudiated by these ladies with flushed indignation so soon as the suggestion was made plain to them. Their modesty was as great as their boldness. Sex — what was sex? Get thee behind me Satan! They were not thinking of it. They were good pure women rightly struggling for a Vote, and that was all they wanted. The Vote was to be their instrument of dominance. They concentrated all the energy of their growing movement upon that claim. The new Feminist Movement had no more use for me therefore than the Labour Socialists. To both these organizations I was an *enfant terrible* and not to be talked about.

It is no part of the plan of this book to tell the tale of that nagging, ignoble campaign which ended abruptly with the Declaration of War in 1914, to detail once again the window-smashing, the burning of country houses, churches and the contents of letter boxes, the squawking at meetings, "votes for women" until the discussion of public affairs became impossible, the consequent expulsion of the struggling heroines with all kinds of ignoble and indelicate reprisals, the ensuing discovery by indignant young women of good family, of the unexpected dirtiness and nastiness of police cells and prisons — one good by-product anyhow — and all the rest of it. In *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* (1914) I tried to explain to myself and my readers the suppressions and resentments that might lead a gentle woman to smash a plate-glass window. I studied my model carefully and I think the figure lives, but no suffragette saw herself in my mirror. Nor will I relate here how as Europe collapsed into war, the Vote was flung to women simply to keep them quiet, and how the only traceable consequence has been the further enfeeblement of the waning powers of Democracy.

In those gentler days before the return towards primitive violence began, it was possible for girls and women to pester mankind and presume upon the large protective tolerance of civilization. Since then, the progressive disintegration of social order, the increasing amount of gangsterism and terrorism in political life, has made the atmosphere too grim and heavy for the definite organization of women as such, for social and political aggression. Their

understanding of the disintegrative forces at work seems to be a feeble one, and in the conscious constructive effort of to-day they count as a sex for remarkably little. There has been no perceptible woman's movement to resist the practical obliteration of their freedoms by Fascists or Nazis. The sex war has died away and in England only the gentle sarcasms and grumblings of Lady Rhondda and her group of clever ladies in *Time and Tide* remain to remind us of it. Over most of the world it has died down altogether.

I can look back now with sympathetic amusement upon the encounter of my former self, that rising and decidedly over-confident young writer of half my age with this new and transitory being: the Militant Suffragette. What a surprise and perplexity she was! The young man's disposition to lump all the feminity in the world, in its infinite variety, into a class, to indict it and judge it as a class, after having felt a strong disposition to adore it — as a class, was perfectly natural, superficially reasonable and fundamentally absurd. Still heavily under the sway of organic illusion he prepared to welcome these goddesses, at last in splendid revolt, and to do his utmost for them, and, instead of goddesses escaping, he encountered a fluttering swarm of disillusioned and wildly exasperated human beings, all a little frightened at what they were doing, and with no clearer conception than any other angry crowd of what had set them going and what was to be done about it. Helpfully and with the brightest hopes he produced his carefully reasoned diagnosis of their grievances; he spread his ingenious arrangement of Neo-Malthusianism, Free Love ("ton corps est à toi"), economic independence, the endowment of motherhood and the systematic suppression of jealousy as an animal vice, and he found his lucid and complete statement thrust aside, while the riot passed on, after the manner of riots, vehemently loudly and vacuously, to a purely symbolic end — the Vote in this case — and essential frustration and dispersal.

Slowly as the blaze of antagonism created by the open sex-war of 1900-14 has died down, men and women under an inexorable need for each other and an imperative necessity for co-operation, have returned again to the commanding and infinitely varied problems of mutual adjustment, to the million and one perennial problems of man

and woman. I do not know how far the main attack and the capture of the actual Vote was of value to humanity but I have no doubt of the service done by that slower and wider campaign of "Why not?" in which I played my little part. A tiresome and obstructive accumulation of obsolete restraints, conventions and pretences, was cleared out of the way for a new generation. That did not put an end to the facile self-deceptions of sex because these are of the very stuff of life, nor could it abolish the see-saw between the chronic mutual need and the chronic resistance to entanglement, but it did clear the way for an individual management of the glamour and its ensuing centrifugal strain. It put the glamour in its place and made the fugitive impulse controllable and tolerable. When goddesses and Sea Ladies vanish and a flash back to the ancestral chimpanzee abolishes the magic caverns of Venus, human beings arrive. Instead of a rigid system of obligations and restrictions which would solve, for everyone, the Woman Problem, in one simple universal fashion, we are left with an almost infinite series of variations of the problem of association between men and women, and an infinitude of opportunities for mutual charity.

§ 5. DIGRESSION ABOUT NOVELS

I find before me a considerable accumulation of material first assembled together in a folder labelled "Whether I am a Novelist." It has been extremely difficult to digest this material into a presentable form. It refuses to be simplified. It is like a mental shunting yard in which several trains of thought have come into collision and I feel now that the utmost I can do with it is not so much to set these trains going again as to salvage some few fragmentary observations from the wreckage.

One of these trains comes in from the previous section. It is an insistence upon the importance of individuality and individual adjustment in life; "Problems of association between men and women and an infinitude of opportunities for mutual charity." That carries on very obviously towards the idea of the novel as an expanding discussion of "How did they treat each other? How might

they have treated each other? How should they treat each other?" I set out to write novels, as distinguished from those pseudo-scientific stories in which imaginative experience rather than personal conduct was the matter in hand, on the assumption that problems of adjustment were the essential matter for novel-writing. *Love and Mr. Lewisham* was entirely a story about a dislocation and an adjustment.

But across the track of that train of thought came another in which the novel presented itself not as an ethical enquiry but as the rendering of a system of impressions. In this distended and irregularly interesting folder, which I find so hard to reduce to straightforward explicitness, I find myself worrying round various talks and discussions I had with Henry James a third of a century ago. He was a very important figure in the literary world of that time and a shrewd and penetrating critic of the technique by which he lived. He liked me and he found my work respectable enough to be greatly distressed about it. I bothered him and he bothered me. We were at cross purposes based as I shall show later on very fundamental differences, not only of temperament but training. He had no idea of the possible use of the novel as a help to conduct. His mind had turned away from any such idea. From his point of view there were not so much "novels" as The Novel, and it was a very high and important achievement. He thought of it as an Art Form and of novelists as artists of a very special and exalted type. He was concerned about their greatness and repute. He saw us all as Masters or would-be Masters, little Masters and great Masters, and he was plainly sorry that "Cher Maître" was not an English expression. One could not be in a room with him for ten minutes without realizing the importance he attached to the dignity of this art of his. I was by nature and education unsympathetic with this mental disposition. But I was disposed to regard a novel as about as much an art form as a market place or a boulevard. It had not even necessarily to get anywhere. You went by it on your various occasions.

That was entirely out of key with James's assumptions. I recall a talk I had with him soon after the publication of *Marriage*. With tact and circumlocution, James broke it to me, that he found a remarkable deficiency in that story. It was a deficiency that he had also observed in a vast proportion of contemporary fiction, it had exercised him

very fruitfully, and his illuminating comments spread out from that starting point to a far-reaching tentacular discussion of what a novel should do and be.

The point he was stressing was this: *Marriage* is the story of a young man of science, Trafford, who, apparently without much previous experience, pilots a friend's aeroplane (in 1912!) and crashes, he and the friend together, into a croquet party and the Pope family and the life of Marjorie Pope. Thereupon there is bandaging, ambulance work and much coming and going and Marjorie, who is already engaged to a Mr. Magnet, falls deeply in love with Trafford. She drives to the village in a donkey cart to do some shopping and meets the lamed Trafford, also driving a donkey cart and their wheels interlock and they fall talking. All that — except for the writing of it — was tolerable according to James. But then, in order to avoid the traffic in the high road the two young people take their respective donkey carts into a side lane and remain there talking for three hours. And this is where James's objection came in. Of the three hours of intercourse in the lane the novel tells nothing, except that the young people emerged in open and declared love with each other. This, said James, wasn't playing the game. I had cut out an essential, after a feast of irrelevant particulars. Gently but firmly he insisted that I did not myself know what had happened and what was said in that lane; that there was even a touch of improbability about their staying there so long and that this lack of information and probability at a crucial point was due to the fact that I had not thought out the individualities concerned with sufficient care and thoroughness. I had not cared enough about these individualities. Moreover in the conversations between the two principals, the man in particular supplied information about himself and his position in life in such a way as to talk at the reader instead of to the girl. The talk was in fact more for the benefit of the former. Trafford had to supply this information because I had been too inept or hasty to convey it in any other way. Or because there was too much to convey in any other way. Henry James was quite right in saying that I had not thought out these two people to the pitch of saturation and that they did not behave unconsciously and naturally. But my defence is that that did not matter, or at least that for the purposes of the book it did not matter

very much.

Now I do not exactly remember the several other points he made in that elaborate critical excursion, nor did I attempt any reprisals upon his own work, but his gist was plain. If the Novel was properly a presentation of real people as real people, in absolutely natural reaction in a story, then my characters were not simply sketchy, they were eked out by wires and pads of non-living matter and they stood condemned. His discourse, which had evidently been maturing against my visit, covered not only my work but that of several of my contemporaries whom he had also read with interest and distaste. And the only point upon which I might have argued but which I did not then argue, was this, that the Novel was not necessarily, as he assumed, this real through and through and absolutely true treatment of people more living than life. It might be more and less than that and still be a novel.

To illustrate with what lovely complication of veracity and disingenuousness, with what curious intricate suavity of intimation he could develop his point I will quote from a letter of his, also bearing upon the same book *Marriage*. His intricate mind, as persistent and edentate as a pseudopodium, was still worrying round and about the question raised by that story. "I have read you," he says, "as I always read you, and as I read no one else, with a complete abdication of all those 'principles of criticism,' canons of form, preconceptions of felicity, references to the idea of method or the sacred laws of composition, with which I roam, with which I totter, through the pages of others attended in some dim degree by the fond yet feeble theory of, but which I shake off, as I advance under your spell, with the most cynical inconsistency. For under your spell I do advance — save when I pull myself up stock still in order not to break it even with so much as the breath of appreciation; I live with you and in you and (almost cannibal-like) *on* you, on you H. G. W., to the sacrifice of your Marjories and your Traffords, and whoever may be of their company; not your treatment of them, at all, but, much more, their be-fooling of you (pass me the merely scientific expression — I mean your fine high action in view of the red herring of lively interest they trail for you at their heels) becoming thus of the essence of the spectacle for me, and nothing in

it all ‘happening’ so much as these attestations of your character and behaviour, these reactions of yours as you more or less follow them, affect me as vividly happening. I see you ‘behave’ all along much more than I see them even when they behave, (as I’m not sure they behave *most* in *Marriage*) with whatever charged intensity or accomplished effect; so that the ground of the drama is somehow most of all in the adventure for *you* — not to say *of* you, the moral, temperamental, personal, expressional, of your setting it forth; an adventure in fine more appreciable to me than any of those you are by way of letting *them* in for. I don’t say that those you let them in for don’t interest me too, and don’t ‘come off’ and people the scene and lead on the attention, about as much as I can do with; but only, and always, that you beat them on their own ground and that your ‘story,’ through the five hundred pages, says more to me than theirs. You’ll find this perhaps a queer rigmarole of a statement; but I ask of you to allow for it just now as the mumble, at best, of an invalid; and wait a little till I can put more of my hand on my sense. Mind you that the restriction I may seem to you to lay on my view of your work, still leaves that work more convulsed with life and more brimming with blood than any it is given me nowadays to meet. The point I have wanted to make is that I find myself absolutely unable, and still more unwilling, to approach you, or to take leave of you, in any projected light of criticism, in any judging or concluding, any comparing, in fact in any aesthetic or ‘literary’ relation at all....”

Tried by Henry James’s standards I doubt if any of my novels can be taken in any other fashion. There are flashes and veins of character duly “treated” and living individuals in many of them, but none that satisfy his requirements fully. A lot of *Kipps* may pass, some of *Tono Bungay*, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* and *Joan and Peter* and let me add, I have a weakness for Lady Harman and for Theodore Bulpington and —— But I will not run on. These are pleas in extenuation. The main indictment is sound, that I sketch out scenes and individuals, often quite crudely, and resort even to conventional types and symbols, in order to get on to a discussion of relationships. The important point which I tried to argue with Henry James was that the novel of completely consistent characterization arranged beautifully in a story and painted deep and round and solid,

no more exhausts the possibilities of the novel, than the art of Velasquez exhausts the possibilities of the painted picture.

The issue exercised my mind considerably. I had a queer feeling that we were both incompatibly right. I wrote one or two lectures and critical papers on the scope of the novel, and I argued with myself and others, that realism and exhaustive presentation were not its only objectives. I think I might have gone further and maintained that they were not even its proper objectives but at best only graces by the way, but at the time I was not clear enough to say that. I might have made a good case by asserting that fiction was necessarily fictitious through and through, and that the real analogy to Velasquez who painted straight from dwarfs and kings, would be biography, character drawn straight from life and not an invented story. James was very much against the idea that there was a biographical element in any good novel, and he and his brother William were very severe upon Vernon Lee when she produced a character in a short story (*Lady Tal* 1892) markedly like Henry. But it is beyond the power of man to "create" individuals absolutely. If we do not write from models then we compile and fabricate. Every "living" character in a novel is drawn, frankly or furtively, from life — is filched from biography whole or in scraps, a portrait or a patch-up, and its actions are a reflection upon moral conduct. At whatever number of "removes" from facts we may be, we are still imputing motives to somebody. That is the conclusion I am coming to now, but I did not have it ready at that time. I allowed it to be taken for granted that there was such a thing as The Novel, a great and stately addendum to reality, a sort of super-reality with "created" persons in it, and by implication I admitted that my so-called novels were artless self-revelatory stuff, falling far away from a stately ideal by which they had to be judged.

But now I ask when and where has that great ideal been realized — or can it ever be realized?

Competent critics have since examined this supreme importance of individualities, in other words of "character" in the fiction of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Throughout that period character-interest did its best to take the place of adjustment-interest in fiction. With a certain justice these authorities ascribe the

predominance of individuation to the example of Sir Walter Scott. But more generally it was a consequence of the prevalent sense of social stability, and he was not so much a primary influence as an exponent. He was a man of intensely conservative quality; he accepted, he accepted wilfully, the established social values about him; he had hardly a doubt in him of what was right or wrong, handsome or ungracious, just or mean. He saw events therefore as a play of individualities in a rigid frame of values never more to be questioned or permanently changed. His lawless, romantic past was the picturesque prelude to stability; our current values were already potentially there. Throughout the broad smooth flow of nineteenth century life in Great Britain, the art of fiction floated on this same assumption of social fixity. The Novel in English was produced in an atmosphere of security for the entertainment of secure people who liked to feel established and safe for good. Its standards were established within that apparently permanent frame and the criticism of it began to be irritated and perplexed when, through a new instability, the splintering frame began to get into the picture.

I suppose for a time I was the outstanding instance among writers of fiction in English of the frame getting into the picture.

I did not see this clearly in those opening years of this century, but in 1912 I made a sort of pronouncement against the "character" obsession and the refusal to discuss values, in a paper on *The Contemporary Novel* delivered to The Times Book Club, in which I argued for an enlarging scope for the novel. My attack upon the creation-of-character idea was oblique and subconscious rather than direct. "We (novelists) are going to deal with political questions and religious questions and social questions. We cannot present people unless we have this free hand, this unrestricted field. What is the good of telling stories about people's lives if one may not deal freely with the religious beliefs and organizations that have controlled or failed to control them? What is the good of pretending to write about love, and the loyalties and treacheries and quarrels of men and women, if one must not glance at those varieties of physical temperament and organic quality, those deeply passionate needs and distresses, from which half the storms of human life are brewed? We mean to deal with all these things, and it will need very much more

than the disapproval of provincial librarians, the hostility of a few influential people in London, the scurrility of one paper," (one for St. Loe Strachey and that bold bad word) "and the deep and obstinate silences of another, to stop the incoming tide of aggressive novel-writing. We are going to write about it all. We are going to write about business and finance and politics and precedence and pretentiousness and decorum and indecorum, until a thousand pretences and ten thousand impostures shrivel in the cold, clear draught of our elucidations. We are going to write of wasted opportunities and latent beauties until a thousand new ways of living open to men and women. We are going to appeal to the young and the hopeful and the curious, against the established, the dignified, and defensive. Before we have done, we will have all life within the scope of the novel."

These are brave trumpetings. In effect in my hands the Novel proved like a blanket too small for the bed and when I tried to pull it over to cover my tossing conflict of ideas, I found I had to abandon questions of individuation. I never got "all life within the scope of the novel." (What a phrase! Who could?)

In the criticism of that time there was a certain confusion between this new spreading out of the interest of the novel to issues of custom and political and social change, and the entirely more limited "Novel with a Purpose" of the earlier nineteenth century. This examined no essential ideas; its values were established values, it merely assailed some particular evil, exposed some little-known abuse. It kept well within the frame. The majority of the Dickens novels were novels with a purpose, but they never deal with any inner confusion, any conflicts of opinion within the individual characters, any subjective essential change. A much closer approximation to the spread-out novel I was advocating is the propaganda novel. But I have always resented having my novels called propaganda novels, because it seems to me the word propaganda should be confined to the definite service of some organized party, church or doctrine. It implies direction from outside. If at times I have been inclined to thrust views upon my readers, they were at any rate my own views and put forward without any strategic aim.

To return to this novel *Marriage*, the story tells how masculine

intellectual interest met feminine spending and what ensued. Trafford is not so much a solid man as a scientific intelligence caught in the meshes of love, and Marjorie Pope's zest in buying and arrangement is emphasized to the exclusion of any minor tricks and turns. But the argument of the book would not have stood out, if there had been any such tricks and turns. Marjorie's father is an intrusion of character drawing who really had no business in the book at all. Mr. Magnet also is a slightly malicious irrelevance; the humourless speech he makes in London on humour is, for example, transcribed verbatim from a reported speech by a distinguished contemporary.

Indisputably the writing is scamped in places. It could have been just as light and much better done. But that would have taken more time than I could afford. I do not mean by that I could have earned less money and been a more conscientious writer, though that consideration very probably came in, but I mean that I had very many things to say and that if I could say one of them in such a way as to get my point over to the reader I did not worry much about finish. The fastidious critic might object, but the general reader to whom I addressed myself cared no more for finish and fundamental veracity about the secondary things of behaviour than I. I did not want to sweep under the mat for crumbs of characterization, nor did he want me to do so. What we wanted was a ventilation of the point at issue.

It required some years and a number of such experiments and essays in statement as the one I have quoted, before I got it really clear in my own mind that I was feeling my way towards something outside any established formula for the novel altogether. In the established novel, objective through and through, the characteristic exterior reactions of the character were everything and the conflicts and changes of ideas within his brain were ignored. (That according to the jargon of the time would have been to "introduce controversial matter.") But I was becoming more and more interested in the interior conflict, this controversial matter stewing and fermenting in all our brains, and its ventilation in action. There is no satisfactory device I knew for exhibiting a train of reasoning in a character unless a set of ideas similar to those upon which the character thinks exists already in the reader's mind. Galsworthy's Soames Forsyte *thinks* for

pages, but he thinks along recognized British lines. He does not grapple with ideas new and difficult both for the reader and himself. I could not see how, if we were to grapple with new ideas, a sort of argument with the reader, an explanation of the theory that is being exhibited, could be avoided. I began therefore to make my characters indulge in impossibly explicit monologues and duologues. As early as 1902, Chatteris in the *Sea Lady* talks a good deal more than is natural. Ann Veronica soliloquises continually. In *Marriage* (1912), Trafford and Marjorie go off to Labrador for a good honest six months' talk about their mutual reactions and argue at the reader all the time. Mr. Brumley in *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman* (1914) exercises a garrulous pressure upon the flow of the story throughout. *The Research Magnificent* (1915) is largely talk and monologue. I try in that book the device of making the ostensible writer speculate about the chief character in the story he is telling. The ostensible writer becomes a sort of enveloping character, himself in discussion with the reader. Still more expository is the *Soul of a Bishop* (1917).

Incidentally I may complain that *The Research Magnificent* is a book deserving to be remembered and yet seems to be largely forgotten. I liked it when I re-read it and I find it remarkably up to date with my present opinions. It was blotted out by the war. But Amanda is alive and Benham has his moments of vitality.

By 1919, in *The Undying Fire*, I was at last fully aware of what I was doing and I took a new line. I realized I had been trying to revive the Dialogue in a narrative form. I was not so much expanding the novel as getting right out of it. *The Undying Fire* is that great Hebrew imitation of the Platonic Dialogue, the Book of Job, frankly modernized. The arrangement of the ancient book is followed very closely; the speakers even to their names are recognizably the same. The man of Uz is Mr. Job Huss; Eliphaz the Temanite becomes Sir Eliphaz Burrows, manufacturer of a new building material called Temanite; Bildad is Mr. William Dad and Elihu becomes Dr. Elihu Barrack. They parallel their ancient arguments; even their speeches in their order correspond closely with the pattern of the ancient book. In many ways I think *The Undying Fire* one of the best pieces of work I ever did. I set great store by it still.

But after all these protests of the excellence and intelligence of

my intentions, I have to admit that the larger part of my fiction was written lightly and with a certain haste. Only one or two of my novels deal primarily with personality, and then rather in the spirit of what David Low calls the caricature-portrait, than for the purpose of such exhaustive rendering as Henry James had in mind. Such caricature-individualities are Hoopdriver in *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), *Kipps* (1905) and Mr. Polly in *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910). My uncle and aunt in *Tono Bungay* (1909), one or two minor characters in *The Dream* (1924), *Christina Alberta's Father* (1925) and *The Bulpington of Blup* (1932), are also caricature-individualities of which I am not ashamed. Theodore Bulpington is as good as Kipps. Please. But I doubt if any of these persons have that sort of vitality which endures into new social phases. In the course of a few decades they may become incomprehensible; the snobbery of Kipps for example or the bookish illiteracy of Mr. Polly may be altogether inexplicable. *The Dream* is an attempt to show how our lives to-day may look to our happier descendants. It is in the same class as *In the Days of the Comet*.

My experimentation with what I may call the Dialogue Novel, was only one of the directions in which I have wandered away from the uncongenial limitations of the novel proper. The plain fact is that I have never been willing to respect these limitations or to accept the Novel as an art form. *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* is a circumstantial story, but it ends in Dialogue and Monologue. *Joan and Peter* (1918) again starts respectably in large novel form and becomes dialogue only towards the end. It is as shamelessly unfinished as a Gothic cathedral. It was to have been a great novel about Education but it grew so large that Peter's public-school experiences, among other things, had to be left out. He just jumps from the preparatory school to the War and the flying corps. The missing public-school stage is to be found in *The Story of a Great School-master*. Joan I like as a character; A. A. Milne has said nice things about her, but nobody else has had a good word for her — or indeed a bad one. *The Dream* (1924) has some good minor characters, but it is plainly a social criticism from a new angle, rather than a novel proper. A young man of the great world of the future on a holiday walk in the mountains, injures his hand, falls into a fever and dreams "through a whole life"

of our present world. *The World of William Clissold* (1926) again is quite unorthodox in shape and approach. It is an attempt to present a thesis upon contemporary life and social development, in the form of a fictitious autobiography. A young chemist, like Trafford in *Marriage*, gives up pure research for industrial organization, grows rich, finds his successful life boring and retires to a house in Provence to think things out and find a better use for himself. He writes the one book that every man has it in him to write. The main strand of the earlier novels reappears in this, the perplexity of the man with general ideas and a strong constructive impulse when he finds that the women he meets do not enter into this stream of motive, but, except for the odd concluding "book," this obsession of so much of my fiction sits lightly here because of the predominance of economic and political questioning. I shall return to *The World of William Clissold* when I deal with my political ideas and later on I may be free to discuss its autobiographical significance. It anticipated a more serious attempt at social analysis, *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1931), *The Open Conspiracy* (1928) and *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933).

The Autocracy of Mr. Parham (1930) is a rather boisterous caricature not of the personality but of the imaginations of a modern British imperialist of the university type. It might have been dedicated to Mr. L. S. Amery. It amuses me still, but few people share my liking. Reality has outdone fiction since and Mosley fooling it in the Albert Hall with his black shirts (1934) makes Parham's great dream-meeting there seem preposterously sane and sound. *Men Like Gods* frankly caricatures some prominent contemporaries. Another breach of established literary standards with which, in spite of its very tepid reception, I am mainly content, was *Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* (1928). I laughed when writing both it and *Men Like Gods* and *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham*. The gist of Rampole Island is a caricature-portrait of the whole human world. I wish I could hear at times of people still reading these three stories. They got, I think, a dull press.

Exhaustive character study is an adult occupation, a philosophical occupation. So much of my life has been a prolonged and enlarged adolescence, an encounter with the world in general, that the

observation of character began to play a leading part in it only in my later years. It was necessary for me to reconstruct the frame in which individual lives as a whole had to be lived, before I could concentrate upon any of the individual problems of fitting them into this frame. I am taking more interest now in individuality than ever I did before. As mankind settles down into the security of that modern world-state with which contemporary life is in labour, as men's minds escape more and more from the harsh urgencies and feelings of a primary struggle, as the conception of the modern world-state becomes the common basis of their education and the frame of their conduct, the discussion of primary issues will abate and the analysis of individual difference again become a dominating interest. But then surely people will be less round-about in their approach to expression and the subterfuge of fiction will not be so imperative as it is to-day.

Our restraints upon the written discussion of living people are antiquated. Why should David Low say practically what he likes about actual people with his pencil, while I must declare every character in a novel is fictitious? So I am disposed to question whether the Novel will have any great importance in the intellectual life of the future because I believe we are moving towards a greater freedom of truthful comment upon individuals; if it survives I think it will become more frankly caricature-comment upon personalities and social phases than it is at present, but it seems equally probable to me that it will dwindle and die altogether and be replaced by more searching and outspoken biography and autobiography. Stories, parables, parodies of fact will still be told, but that is a different matter. The race of silly young men who announce that they are going to write The Novel may follow the race of silly young men who used to proclaim their intention of writing The Epic, to limbo. In my time The Novel, as projected, was usually a "Trilogy." Perhaps in 1965 the foolish young men will all be trailing in the wake of Lytton Strachey and Philip Guedalla and announcing colossal biography-sequences. They will produce vast mosaics of pseudo-reality, galleries of portraits, presenting contemporary history in a state of exaltation.

Who would read a novel if we were permitted to write biography — all out? Here in this autobiography I am experimenting — though

still very mildly, with biographical and auto-biographical matter. Although it has many restraints, which are from the artistic point of view vexatious, I still find it so much more real and interesting and satisfying that I doubt if I shall ever again turn back towards The Novel. I may write a story or so more — a dialogue, an adventure or an anecdote. But I shall never come as near to a deliberate attempt upon The Novel again as I did in *Tono Bungay* (1909).

Next to *Tono Bungay*, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* and *Joan and Peter* come as near to being full-dress novels as anything I have written. They are both fairly sound pictures of contemporary conditions. *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* was a huge success more particularly in America, where it earnt about £20,000; *Tono Bungay* did well; but *Joan and Peter* never won the recognition I think it deserved. To me it seems a far finer piece of work than *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*.

Even *Tono Bungay* was not much of a concession to Henry James and his conception of an intensified rendering of feeling and characterization as the proper business of the novelist. It was an indisputable Novel, but it was extensive rather than intensive. That is to say it presented characters only as part of a *scene*. It was planned as a social panorama in the vein of Balzac. That vein has produced some physically and mentally great books, and it continues to this day to produce evidences of the nervous endurance of ambitious writers, vast canvasses, too often crude or conventional in interpretation, superficial in motivation and smeary and wholesale in treatment. I cannot imagine it holding out against a literature of competent historical and contemporary studies. *The Forsyte Saga*, as a broadly conceived picture of prosperous British Philistia by one of its indigenes, is not so good and convincing as a group of untrammelled biographical studies of genteel successful types might be. An industrious treatment of early nineteenth century records again would make Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* seem flighty stuff. Yet in *War and Peace* one may perhaps find a justification for the enhancement and animation of history by fictitious moods and scenes.

I will confess that I find life too short for many things I would like to do. I do not think I am afraid of death but I wish it had not to come

so soon. In the natural course of things I shall be lucky, I suppose, if I live a dozen years more, and beyond measure fortunate if I last as a fully living brain for another twenty years. This is barely time to turn round in. Good biography requires more time than that — let alone that I have other things to do. Yet I have known some intensely interesting people whom it would be delightful and rewarding to treat! It is a pity. If I could have forty good years or so more of vigour, I could find a use for every day of it, and then I would write those copious intimate character studies, character in relation to changing values and conditions, that now I fear I shall never be able to do. They would have to be copious. Impermanent realities are not to be rendered without an abundance of matter. In a changing world there cannot be portraits without backgrounds and the source of the shifting reflected light upon the face has to be shown. Here at page 424 of this experiment in autobiography I have to assure the possibly incredulous reader that my attempt to compress it and reduce it to a quintessence, has been strenuous and continual.

XIII. — FAIRLY LAUNCHED AT LAST

§ 1. DUOLOGUE IN LODGINGS (1894-95)

This is an experiment in autobiography and again, I insist, I am writing for myself quite as much as for my reader. In turning over my memories of my early marriage and divorce and the documents that preserve the facts of the case, I learned in the sight of the reader, a great deal about myself and I found it natural to carry on from those early and determining thoughts and experiences to their reflection in my novels and my public discussion of personal relationships. I brought that account of my novels and pseudo-novels down to the present time. These discursive sections have served a useful purpose, they have functioned as a siding, so to speak, into which it has been possible to shunt a number of things that would otherwise have turned up later to complicate the main story of this brain with which I am dealing. That main story, is the development, the steady progressive growth of a modern vision of the world, and the way in which the planned reconstruction of human relationships in the form of a world-state became at last the frame and test of my activities. It is as much the frame and test of my activities as the spread of Islam was the frame and test of an early believing Moslem and the kingdom of God and salvation, of a sincere Christian. My life in the fact that it has evolved a general sustaining idea has become, at least psychologically a religious life; its *persona* is deoriented from the ego. My essential purpose is that world-vision. I shall try to express it, as fully and effectively as I can, in a last culminating chapter, a sort of testamentary chapter, which I shall call *The Idea of a Planned World*.

But before I can get on to this a further amount of anecdotage and incident is needed to make this development clear. My struggle for a footing is still only half told. I come back now to the point from which I launched out into a dissection of my sexual impulses and conduct, when at the beginning of 1894, at the age of twenty-seven and a half, I left my house, 4 Cumnor Place, Sutton and went to live in sin and social rebellion first at Mornington Place and then in

Mornington Road.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was an extraordinarily favourable time for new writers and my individual good luck was set in the luck of a whole generation of aspirants. Quite a lot of us from nowhere were "getting on." The predominance of Dickens and Thackeray and the successors and imitators they had inspired was passing. In a way they had exhausted the soil for the type of novel they had brought to a culmination, just as Lord Tennyson (who died as late as 1892), Tennyson of the Arthurian cycle, had extracted every poetical possibility from the contemporary prosperous bourgeoisie. For a generation the prestige of the great Victorians remained like the shadow of vast trees in a forest, but now that it was lifting, every weed and sapling had its chance, provided only that it was of a different species from its predecessors. When woods are burnt, it is a different tree which reconstitutes the forest. The habit of reading was spreading to new classes with distinctive needs and curiosities. They did not understand and enjoy the conventions and phrases of Trollope or Jane Austen, or the genteel satire of Thackeray, they were outside the "governing class" of Mrs. Humphry Ward's imagination, the sombre passions and inhibitions of the Brontë country or of Wessex or Devonshire had never stirred them, and even the humours of Dickens no longer fitted into their everyday experiences.

The Education Act of 1871 had not only enlarged the reading public very greatly but it had stimulated the middle class by a sense of possible competition from below. And quite apart from that, progress was producing a considerable fermentation of ideas. An exceptional wave of intellectual enterprise had affected the British "governing class." Under the influence of such brilliant Tories as Arthur Balfour and George Wyndham, a number of people in society were taking notice of writing and were on the alert for any signs of literary freshness. Such happy minor accidents as the invasion of England by the Astor family with a taste for running periodicals at a handsome loss, contributed also in their measure to the general expansion of opportunity for new writers. New books were being demanded and fresh authors were in request. Below and above alike there was opportunity, more public, more publicity, more publishers

and more patronage. Nowadays it is relatively hard for a young writer to get a hearing. He (or she) plunges into a congested scramble. Here as everywhere production has outrun consuming capacity. But in the nineties young writers were looked for. Even publishers were looking for them.

For a time the need to be actually new was not clearly realized. Literary criticism in those days had some odd conventions. It was still either scholarly or with scholarly pretensions. It was dominated by the mediaeval assumption that whatever is worth knowing is already known and whatever is worth doing has already been done. Astonishment is unbecoming in scholarly men and their attitude to newcomers is best expressed by the word "recognition." Anybody fresh who turned up was treated as an aspirant Dalai Lama is treated, and scrutinized for evidence of his predecessor's soul. So it came about that every one of us who started writing in the nineties, was discovered to be "a second" — somebody or other. In the course of two or three years I was welcomed as a second Dickens, a second Bulwer Lytton and a second Jules Verne. But also I was a second Barrie, though J. M. B. was hardly more than my contemporary, and, when I turned to short stories, I became a second Kipling. I certainly, on occasion, imitated both these excellent masters. Later on I figured also as a second Diderot, a second Carlyle and a second Rousseau....

Until recently this was the common lot. Literature "broadened down from precedent to precedent." The influence of the publisher who wanted us to be new but did not want us to be *strange*, worked in the same direction as educated criticism. A sheaf of secondhand tickets to literary distinction was thrust into our hands and hardly anyone could get a straight ticket on his own. These secondhand tickets were very convenient as admission tickets. It was however unwise to sit down in the vacant chairs, because if one did so, one rarely got up again. Pett Ridge for instance pinned himself down as a second Dickens to the end of his days. I was saved from a parallel fate by the perplexing variety of my early attributions.

Of course Jane and I, starting life afresh in our guinea-a-week ground floor apartments in Mornington Place, had no suspicion how wise we had been in getting born exactly when we did. We did not realize we were like two respectable little new ordinary shares in a

stock-exchange boom. We believed very gravely in the general sanity of things and we took the tide of easy success which had caught us up, as the due reward of our activity and efforts. We thought this was how things had always been and were always going to be. It was all delightfully simple. We were as bright and witty as we knew how, and acceptance, proofs and a cheque followed as a matter of course. I was doing my best to write as other writers wrote, and it was long before I realized that my exceptional origins and training gave me an almost unavoidable freshness of approach and that I was being original in spite of my sedulous efforts to justify my discursive secondariness.

Our life in 1894 and 95 was an almost continuous duologue. In Mornington Place and in Mornington Road we occupied a bedroom with a double bed and came through folding doors to our living room. All our clothing was in a small chest of drawers and a wardrobe and I did my work at a little table with a shaded paraffin lamp in the corner or, when it was not needed for a meal, at the table in the middle of the living room. All my notes and manuscripts were in a green cardboard box of four drawers. Our first landlady in Mornington Place was a German woman, Madame Reinach, and her cooking was so emphatic, her sympathy with our romantically unmarried state so liberally expressed, her eagerness for intimate mutual confidences so pressing, and her own confidences so extraordinary, that presently Jane went off by herself to Mornington Road and found another lodging for us.

Here our landlady, whose name by some queer turn I have forgotten, mothered us very agreeably. She was a tall, strong-faced, Scotswoman. For a London landlady she was an exceptionally clean, capable, silent and stoical woman. She had been housemaid, if I remember rightly, in the household of the Duke of Fife, and she began to approve of me when she found I worked continuously and never drank. I think that somewhere between the housemaid stage and this lodging house of hers, someone may have figured who lacked my simple virtues. (An old friend with a better memory than mine tells me her name was Mrs. Lewis. But I still do not remember.)

We would wake cheerfully and get up and I would invent rhymes

and "pomes" of which I have already given sufficient samples, as we washed and dressed and avoided collisions with each other. We had no bathroom and our limited floor space was further restricted by a "tub," a shallow tin bird-bath in which we sponged and splashed. Perhaps we would peep through the folding doors and if the living room was empty, one of us, I in trousers and nightshirt — those were pre-pyjama days — or Jane in her little blue dressing gown and her two blonde pigtails reaching below her waist, would make a dash for the letters. Usually they were cheering letters. Perhaps there was a cheque; perhaps there was an invitation to contribute an article or maybe there was a book for review. As we read these, a firm tread on the stairs, a clatter and an appetizing smell and at last a rap-rap on the folding doors announced our coffee and eggs and bacon.

How vividly I remember the cheerfulness of that front room; Jane in her wrapper on the hearthrug toasting a slice of bread; the grey London day a little misty perhaps outside and the bright animation of the coal-fire reflected on the fireirons and the fender!

After breakfast I would set to work upon a review or one of the two or three articles I always kept in hand, working them up very carefully from rough notes until I was satisfied with them. Jane would make a fair copy of what I had done, or write on her own account, or go out to supplement our landlady's catering, or read biology for her final B.Sc. degree examination. After the morning's work we might raid out into Regents Park or up among the interesting shops and stalls of the Hampstead Road, for a breath of air and a gleam of amusement before our one o'clock dinner. After dinner we would prowl out to look for articles.

This article hunt was a very important business. We sought unlikely places at unlikely times in order to get queer impressions of them. We went to Highgate Cemetery in the afternoon and protested at the conventionality of the monumental mason, or we were gravely critical, with a lapse into enthusiasm in the best art-critic manner, of the Parkes Museum (sanitary science), or we went on a cold windy day to Epping Forest to write "Bleak March in Epping Forest." We nosed the Bond Street windows and the West End art and picture shows to furbish forth an Uncle I had invented to suit the taste of the *Pall Mall Gazette* — a tremendous man of the world he was, the sort

of man who might live in the Albany. (*Select Conversations with an Uncle*, is the pick of what we got for him.) I was still a fellow of the Zoological Society (afterwards my subscription went into abeyance) and we sought articles and apt allusions from cage to cage. Whenever we hit upon an idea for an article that I did not immediately write, it was put into the topmost of my nest of green drawers for future use.

On wet afternoons or after supper when we could work no more we played chess (which yielded an article) and bézique, which defied even my article extracting powers. Bézique was introduced to us by my old fellow student Morley Davies, who had taken on my Correspondence Classes and was working for his B.Sc. He lodged near by and he would come in after supper and gravely take down a triple pack with us.

We went very little to concerts, theatres or music-halls for the very sound reason that we could not afford it. Our only exercise was "going for a walk." And for a time except for occasional after-supper visitors like Davies, or my distant cousin Owen Thomas, who was arranging my divorce upon the most economical lines, or a tea at Walter Low's, we had no social life at all. But then I never had had any social life and Jane's experience had been chiefly of little dances, tea parties, croquet parties and lawn tennis in the villadom of Putney, formal entertainments of which she was now disposed to be very scornful.

It is perhaps not surprising that as the Spring came on, Jane and I, in spite of our encouraging successfulness, displayed signs of being run down. I had something wrong with a lymphatic gland under my jaw and when I called in a Camden Town doctor to clean it up for me, he insisted that Jane was in a worse state than I and that she ought to be much more in the fresh air and better nourished if she was not to become tuberculous. He ordered her Burgundy and we went out and bought an entire bottle at once, — Gilbey's Burgundy, Number — something or other — and Jane consumed it medicinally, one glass per meal. We decided to transfer ourselves to country lodgings for the summer. Except for the facilities of getting books and the advisability of being near one's editors, there seemed to be no particular reason why we should be tied to London. Moreover

Jane's mother, Mrs. Robbins, had let her house at Putney; she had been lodging with some friends in North London and she too was ailing and in need of the open air. She had accepted our irregular situation by this time and was quite ready to join us. And while we were hesitating on the verge of this necessity came an accession of work that seemed to make an abandonment of London altogether justifiable.

I was invited one day to go and see my editor, Cust of the *Pall Mall Gazette* — either that or I had asked to see him, I forget which. I went down to the office for my second encounter with an editor but this time I wore no wetted top-hat to shame me by its misbehaviour and no tail coat. I was evidently wearing quite reasonable clothes because I have forgotten them. I was learning my world. The *Pall Mall Gazette* was installed in magnificent offices in the position now occupied by the Garrick Theatre. I was sent up to the editor's room. I remember it as a magnificent drawing-room; Fleet Street hath not its like to-day. There was certainly one grand piano in it, and my memory is inclined to put in another. There was a vast editor's desk, marvellously equipped, like a desk out of Hollywood. There were chairs and sofas. But for the moment I saw nobody amidst these splendours. I advanced slowly across a space of noiseless carpet. Then I became aware of a sound of sobbing and realized that someone almost completely hidden from me lay prostrate on a sofa indulging in paroxysms of grief.

In the circumstances a cough seemed to be the best thing.

Thereupon the sound from the sofa ceased abruptly and a tall blond man sat up, stared and then stood up, put away his pocket handkerchief and became entirely friendly and self-possessed. Whatever emotional crisis was going on had nothing to do with the business between us and was suspended. Yes, he wanted to see me. He liked my stuff and it was perfectly reasonable that I should want to make up my income by doing reviewing. There wasn't any job he could give me on the staff just now. So soon as there was he would think of me. Did I know W. E. Henley? I ought to go and see him.

He asked me where I got my knowledge and how I had learnt to write and what I was and I told him to the best of my ability. He put me at my ease from the beginning. There was none of the Olympian

balderdash of Frank Harris about him. He combined the agreeable manners of an elder brother with those of a fellow adventurer. It wasn't at all Fleet Street to which he made me welcome but a Great Lark in journalism. I suppose he knew hardly more of Fleet Street than I did. I must certainly go and see Henley, but just now there was someone else I must meet.

He touched a bell and presently across the large spaces of the room appeared Mr. Lewis Hind. Hind was a contrast to Cust in every way, except that he too was an outsider in the journalistic world. He was tall, dark and sallow, with a reserved manner and an impediment in his speech. He had begun life in the textile trade and at one time he had gone about London with samples of lace. He had been an industrious student, with Clement K. Shorter and W. Pett Ridge at the Birkbeck Institute and he had adventured with them into the expanding field of journalism. He had been taken up and influenced in the direction of catholicism by Mrs. Alice Meynell and he had found a permanent job as sub-editor of the *Magazine of Art* under Henley and, through his introduction and that of Mrs. Meynell he had come aboard Mr. Astor's *Pall Mall* adventure. The *Gazette* had thrown off a weekly satellite, the *Pall Mall Budget*, which was at first merely a bale of the less newsy material in the *Gazette*. My *Man of the Year Million* had appeared in it, with some amusing illustrations, and had made a little eddy of success for me. Hind edited this budget and it was proposed to expand it presently into an independent illustrated weekly with original matter, all its own. He was looking for "features." He carried me off from Cust's room to his own less palatial quarters and there he broached the idea of utilizing my special knowledge of science in the expanded weekly, in a series of short stories to be called "single sitting" stories. I was to have five guineas for each story. It seemed quite good pay, then, and I set my mind to imagining possible stories of the kind he demanded.

We left Cust in his office. Whether he went on with his crisis or forgot about it I cannot say, but from my later acquaintance with him, I think he most probably forgot about it.

The first of the single sitting stories I ground out was the *Stolen Bacillus* and after a time I became quite dexterous in evolving incidents and anecdotes from little possibilities of a scientific or

quasi-scientific sort. I presently broadened my market and found higher prices were to be got from the *Strand Magazine* and the *Pall Mall Magazine*. Many of these stories, forty perhaps altogether, have been reprinted again and again in a variety of collections and they still appear and reappear in newspapers and magazines. Hind paid me £5 for them, but the normal fee I get nowadays for republication in a newspaper, is £20, and many have still undeveloped dramatic and film possibilities. I had no idea in those energetic needy days of these little tips I was putting aside for my declining years.

At about the same time that Hind set me writing short stories, I had a request from the mighty William Ernest Henley himself for a contribution to the *National Observer*. I went to see the old giant whose "head was bloody but unbowed" at his house upon the riverside at Putney. He was a magnificent torso set upon shrunken withered legs. When I met President Franklin Roosevelt this spring I found the same big chest and the same infirmity. He talked very richly and agreeably and, as he talked, he emphasized his remarks by clutching an agate paper weight in his big freckled paw and banging it on his writing table. Years afterwards when he died his wife gave me that slab of agate and it is on my desk before me as I write. I resolved to do my very best for him and I dug up my peculiar treasure, my old idea of "time-travelling," from the *Science Schools Journal* and sent him in a couple of papers. He liked them and asked me to carry on the idea so as to give glimpses of the world of the future. This I was only too pleased to do, and altogether I developed the notion into seven papers between March and June. This was the second launching of the story that had begun in the *Science Schools Journal* as the *Chronic Argonauts*, but now nearly all the traces of Hawthorne and English Babu classicism had disappeared. I had realized that the more impossible the story I had to tell, the more ordinary must be the setting, and the circumstances in which I now set the Time Traveller were all that I could imagine of solid upper-middle-class comfort.

With these *Time Traveller* papers running, with quite a number of stories for Hind germinating in my head, with a supply of books to review and what seemed a steady market for my occasional, my frequent occasional, articles in the *Gazette*, it seemed no sort of risk

to leave London for a lodging at Sevenoaks, and thither we went, all three of us, as London grew hot and dusty and tiring. For awhile things were very pleasant at Sevenoaks. We went for long walks and Jane recovered rapidly in health and energy. We explored Knole Park and down the long hill to Tunbridge and away to the haunts of my grandfather, Penshurst Park. Jane was still working for her final degree, though she never actually sat for the examination; botany was to be one of her three subjects and we gathered and brought home big and various bunches of flowers so that she might learn the natural orders.

At first Mrs. Robbins was not with us. When she joined us she was in ill health; she had recovered only very partially from her disapproval of our unmarried state, and her presence was a considerable restraint upon our jests and "picshuas" and daily ease. At times the tension of her unspoken feelings would oblige her to take to her room and eat her meals there. This slight and retreating shadow upon our contentment was presently supplemented by graver troubles. There was a sudden fall in my income. Abruptly the *National Observer* changed hands. This was quite a sudden transaction; the paper had never paid its expenses and its chief supporter decided to sell it to a Mr. Vincent who also took over the editorial control from Henley. Mr. Vincent thought my articles queer wild ramblings and wound them up at once. At the same time the *Pall Mall Gazette* stopped using my articles. The literary editor, Marriott Watson, always a firm friend of mine, was away on holiday and his temporary successor did not think very much of my stuff. I did not know of this, and I was quite at a loss to account for this sudden withdrawal of support. I thought it might be a permanent withdrawal. For the first time we found our monthly expenditure exceeding our income. A certain dismay pervaded our hitherto cheerful walks. And then an equally unexpected decision by Mr. Astor announced an approaching end to the brief bright career of the *Pall Mall Budget* and with it my sure and certain market and prompt pay for a single-sitting story.

Just then came an emissary from the divorce court with a writ, couched in stern uncompromising phrases, and instead of locking this securely away, Jane put it in a drawer accessible to the curiosity

of our landlady. There had been some little trouble with her already; she wanted to charge an extra sixpence for every meal Mrs. Robbins took in her own room, she said we littered up the place with our wild flowers, and she thought I consumed an unconscionable amount of lamp-oil by writing so late. She was faintly irritated about Jane's disinclination for womanly gossiping with her, she felt we were "stuck-up" in some way, and when she realized that we had no marriage lines, her indignation flared. She could not immediately tax us with our flagrant immorality, for that would have been to admit her own prying, but she became extremely truculent in her bearing and negligent in her services. Dark allusions foreshadowed the coming row. We were not the sort of people everybody would want to take in. There were people who were right and you could tell it, and people who were not. Life assumed a harsh and careworn visage.

It seemed rather useless to go on writing articles. All the periodicals to which I contributed were holding stuff of mine in proof and it might be indiscreet to pour in fresh matter to such a point that the tanks overflowed and returned it. But I had one thing in the back of my mind. Henley had told me that it was just possible he would presently find backing for a monthly. If so, he thought I might rewrite the *Time Traveller* articles as a serial story. Anyhow that was something to do and I set to work on the *Time Machine* and rewrote it from end to end.

I still remember writing that part of the story in which the *Time Traveller* returns to find his machine removed and his retreat cut off. I sat alone at the round table downstairs writing steadily in the luminous circle cast by a shaded paraffin lamp. Jane had gone to bed and her mother had been ill in bed all day. It was a very warm blue August night and the window was wide open. The best part of my mind fled through the story in a state of concentration before the Morlocks but some outlying regions of my brain were recording other things. Moths were fluttering in ever and again and though I was unconscious of them at the time, one must have flopped near me and left some trace in my marginal consciousness that became a short story I presently wrote, *A Moth, Genus Novo*. And outside in the summer night a voice went on and on, a feminine voice that rose and fell. It was Mrs. —— I forget her name — our landlady in open

rebellion at last, talking to a sympathetic neighbour in the next garden and talking through the window at me. I was aware of her and heeded her not, and she lacked the courage to beard me in my parlour. “Would I *never* go to bed? How could she lock up with that window staring open? Never had she had such people in her house before, — never. A nice lot if everything was known about them. Often when you didn’t actually know about things you could feel them. What she let her rooms to was summer visitors who walked about all day and went to bed at night. And she hated meanness and there were some who could be mean about sixpences. People with lodgings to let in Sevenoaks ought to know the sort of people who might take them....”

It went on and on. I wrote on grimly to that accompaniment. I wrote her out and she made her last comment with the front door well and truly slammed. I finished my chapter before I shut the window and turned down and blew out the lamp. And somehow amidst the gathering disturbance of those days the *Time Machine* got itself finished. Jane kept up a valiant front and fended off from me as much as she could of the trouble that was assailing her on both sides. But a certain gay elasticity disappeared. It was a disagreeable time for her. She went and looked at other apartments and was asked unusual questions.

It was a retreat rather than a return we made to London, with the tart reproaches of the social system echoing in our ears. But before our ultimate flight I had had a letter from Henley telling me it was all right about that monthly of his. He was to start *The New Review* in January and he would pay me £100 for the *Time Machine* as his first serial story. One hundred pounds! And at the same time the mills of the *Pall Mall Gazette* began to go round and consume my work again. Mrs. Robbins went back to stay with friends in North London and Jane and I found our old rooms with our Scotch landlady at 12, Mornington Road, still free for us.

We seem to have stuck it in London for the rest of the year. Somewhen that Autumn Frank Harris, who was no longer editing the *Fortnightly Review*, obtained possession of the weekly *Saturday Review*. He proceeded to a drastic reconstruction of what was then a dull and dignified periodical. He was mindful of those two early

articles of mine, the one he had published and the one he had destroyed, and he sent for me at once. He sent also for Walter Low and a number of other comparatively unknown people. The office was in Southampton Street, off the Strand, and it occupied the first and second floors. I found people ascending and descending and the roar of a remembered voice told me that Harris was on the higher level. I found Blanchamp in a large room on the drawing-room floor amidst a great confusion of books and papers and greatly amused. Harris was having a glorious time of it above. He had summoned most of the former staff to his presence in order to read out scraps from their recent contributions to them and to demand, in the presence of his "Dear Gahd" and his faithful henchman Silk, why the hell they wrote like that. It was a Revolution, — the twilight of the Academic. But Professor Saintsbury, chief of that anonymous staff, had been warned in time by Edmund Gosse and so escaped the crowning humiliation.

Clergymen, Oxford dons, respectable but strictly anonymous men of learning and standing, came hustling downstairs in various phases of indignation and protest, while odd newcomers in strange garments as redolent of individuality as their signatures, waited their turn to ascend. I came late on the list and by that time Harris was ready for lunch and took Blanchamp, Low and myself as his guests and audience to the Café Royal, where I made the acquaintance of Camembert of the ripest and a sort of Burgundy quite different from the bottle I had bought for Jane in her extremity. I don't think we talked much about my prospective contributions. But I gathered that our fortunes were made, that Oxford and the Stuffy and the Genteel and Mr. Gladstone were to be destroyed and that under Harris the *Saturday Review* was to become a weekly unprecedented in literary history.

It did in fact become a very lively, readable and remarkable publication. It was never so consciously and consistently "written" as Henley's defunct *National Observer*, but it had a broader liveliness and a far more vigorous circulation. Among other rising writers Harris presently had at work upon it was a lean, red-haired Irishman named Shaw, already known as a music critic and a Socialist speaker, who so far broke through its traditional anonymity as to

insist upon his initials appearing after his dramatic criticisms, D. S. McColl (also presently initialled), J. F. Runciman (ditto), Cunninghame Graham (full signature), Max Beerbohm, Chalmers Mitchell, Arthur Symons, J. T. Grein.... I cannot remember half of them. Signed articles increased and multiplied and all sorts of prominent and interesting people made occasional contributions. A "Feature," a series of articles on "The Best Scenery I know" was begun and a "Correspondence" section broke out. No man, it seems, had ever been stirred to write letters to the old "Saturday" or he had been snubbed when he did. Now some were invited and others were stung to contribute the most interesting letters. What Saintsbury thought of it all has never, I think, been recorded. But then Saintsbury very rarely brought his critical acumen to bear upon contemporary writing.

Our City articles also, I gathered, were developing a vigour all their own under the immediate direction of Harris. "I'm a blackmailer," he announced, time and again, and represented himself as a terrible wolf among financiers. Possibly he did something to justify his boasts, in later life he seems to have told Hugh Kingsmill some remarkable stories of cheques extorted and bundles of notes passing from hand to hand but manifestly in the long run it came to very little and he died a year or so ago at Nice in anything but wealthy circumstances.

England in my time has been very liable to adventurous outsiders; Bottomley and Birkenhead, Ramsay Macdonald and Loewenstein, Shaw and Zaharoff, Maundy Gregory and me — a host of others; men with no legitimate and predetermined rôles, men who have behaved at all levels of behaviour but whose common characteristic it has been to fly across the social confusion quite unaccountably, scattering a train of interrogations in their wake. Only the court, the army and navy, banking and the civil service have been secure against this invasion. Such men are inevitable in a period of obsolete educational ideas and decaying social traditions. Whatever else they are they are not dull and formal. They quicken, if it is only quickening to destroy. Harris was certainly a superlative example of the outside adventurer. He was altogether meteoric.

Nobody seemed to know whence Harris had come. He was

supposed to be either a Welsh Jew or a Spanish Irishman; he spoke with an accent, but he had done so much to his accent that I doubt whether Shaw could place it precisely. It had a sort of "mega-celtic" flavour — if I may coin a word. His entirely untrustworthy reminiscences give Galway as his birth-place. The meticulous student may find these matters fully discussed in the *Life* by A. I. Tobin and Elmer Gertz and in Hugh Kingsmill's *Frank Harris*. He emerged as a bright pressman in Chicago, made his way to London, pushed into journalism, and when he was sent to write up the bad treatment of the tenants on the Cecil estates, achieved a reputation for vigour and mental integrity by praising instead of cursing. He was taken notice of. He clambered to the editorship of the *Evening News*. From that, before it fell away from him, he leapt still higher. Legend has it that he went to Chapman, the proprietor of the *Fortnightly Review*, and told him his paper was dull because he did not know enough prominent people and then to one or two outstanding people and pointed out the value of publicity in this democratic age, and particularly the value of the publicity to be got through a personal acquaintance with Mr. Chapman; that he invited him to meet them and them to meet him, to the great social gratification of Mr. Chapman, and emerged triumphantly from the resultant party as editor of the *Fortnightly Review*. He infused a certain amount of new life into it and challenged the established ascendency of the *Nineteenth Century*. He married a wealthy widow, a Mrs. Clayton, who had a small but charming house in the then socially exalted region of Park Lane. There he reached his zenith. He saw himself entering parliament; he cultivated the constituency of Hackney, he aspired, he told Hugh Kingsmill, to become the "British Bismarck" (whatever he imagined that to mean. He may have been thinking of his moustache) and all sorts of prominent and interesting people went to the dinner parties at Park Lane. But he could not stay the course. His sexual vanity was overpowering, he not only became a discursive amorist but he talked about it, and there ensued an estrangement and separation from his wife and her income and Park Lane. His dominating way in conversation startled, amused and then irritated people, and he felt his grip slipping. The directors of the *Fortnightly* became restive and interfering. He began to drink heavily

and to shout still louder as the penalties of loud shouting closed in on him. When I met him for the second time as the editor with a controlling interest in the *Saturday Review*, he had already left his wife and lost her monetary support, but he was still high in the London sky. He was still a star of the magnitude of Whistler or Henley or Oscar Wilde and we, his younger contributors, were little chaps below him.

I think his blackmailing in the *Saturday Review* period was almost pure romancing, for he achieved neither the wealth nor the jail that are the alternatives facing the serious blackmailer. He was far too loud and vain, far too eager to create an immediate impression to be a proper scoundrel. I have been hearing about him all my life and I have never heard convincing particulars of any actual monetary frauds; the *Saturday Review*, I can witness, paid punctually to the end of his proprietorship. His claims to literary flair, if not to literary distinction, were better founded. He read widely and confusedly but often with vivid appreciation, and he pretended to great learning. He was the sort of man who will prepare a long quotation in Greek for a dinner party. Kingsmill says he sported an Eton tie at times and talked of the "old days" at Rugby. Also he insisted that he had been a cowboy, a foremast hand and a great number of other fine romantic things, as occasion seemed to demand. I never saw him do anything more adventurous than sit and talk exuberantly in imminent danger of unanswerable contradiction.

That was what he lived for, talking, writing that was also loud talk in ink, and editing. He was a brilliant editor for a time and then the impetus gave out and he flagged rapidly. So soon as he ceased to work vehemently he became unable to work. He could not attend to things without excitement. As his confidence went he became clumsily loud.

His talk was most effective at the first hearing; after some experience of it, it began to bore me so excessively that I avoided the office when I knew he was there. There was no variety in his posing and no fancy in his falsehoods. I do not remember that he said a single good thing in all that uproar; his praise, his condemnations, his assertions, his pretensions to an excessive villainy and virility, have all dissolved in my memory into a rich muddy noise. Always he was

proclaiming himself the journalistic Robin Hood, bold yet strangely sensitive and tender-hearted — with the full volume of his voice. The reader may get the quality of it best in his book *The Man Shakespeare*.

I went on writing for him until 1898, but with diminishing frequency. Throughout that period he shrank in my mind from his original dimensions of Olympian terror to something in retreating perspective that kept on barking. Sometimes I relented towards him and did my best to restore him to his original position in my esteem as a Great Character, or at least a Great Lark. But really he had not the versatility and detachment for the Great Lark. He could never get sufficiently away from his ugly self. He had nothing of the fresh gaiety of Harry Cust who was everything a Great Lark should be.

After 1898 I saw Harris only intermittently. He left London. Something obscure happened to the *Saturday Review* and he sold his interest in it and went to France.

Thereafter I heard him rumbling about, for the most part below the horizon of my world, a distant thunder. He came up to visibility again for a time as the editor of an old and long respectable monthly called *Hearth and Home*. He desecrated the Hearth and got rid of the Homelike quality very rapidly and thoroughly. Before or after that (I forget which) he was editor of a periodical with menace even in the title, *The Candid Friend*, which was abusive rather than candid, and faded out. Afterwards he worked his mischief upon *Vanity Fair* and then upon a publication called *Modern Society*. But he did nothing extraordinarily or gallantly wicked though he did much that was noisily offensive.

We had a quarrel during the *Vanity Fair* phase. He sent me a book called *The Bomb*. I thought the first part good and the second tawdry and bad and I asked him which part of it was really his. I had touched a tender spot. His idea of a retort was to publish terrific "slatings" of my *Tono Bungay*, which for reasons still obscure to me he called Tono-the-Bungay. That did not alter the fact that *The Bomb* is curiously unequal.

Modern Society got him into prison but only on the score of contempt of court. He commented on the private character of the defendant in a divorce case that was *sub judice*. His "martyrdom," as

he called it later, lasted a month. Then for a time I heard no more of him.

One morning in war time, somewhen in 1915, my neighbour Lady Warwick came sailing down from Easton Lodge to Easton Glebe, my house on the edge of her park. It is not her way to beat about the bush. “Why does Frank Harris say I am not to tell you he is here?” she asked.

Was he here? He was at Brook End with his wife — in fear of prosecution. He had found reason for bolting from Paris and he had thrown himself upon her never-failing generosity. Brook End was a furnished house just beyond the far gates of the park which she was in the habit of lending to all and sundry who appealed to her. He had been boasting too much in Paris about his German sympathies and his influence with the Indian princes, and the French who are a logical people and take things said far too seriously, made themselves disagreeable and inquisitive. They are quite capable of shooting a man on his own confession. He gave way to panic. He fled to England with Mrs. Harris and a couple of valises. He still saw denunciation in every tree and the rustle of the summer leaves outside the windows at Brook End seemed the prelude to arrest.

I explained that he and I had been exchanging abusive letters and I supposed that he was expecting me to behave as he would have behaved if our positions had been reversed. Jane came in and we agreed that it was a case for cordial and even effusive hospitality. Mrs. Harris is a very pleasant and loyal lady and there was little need for effort in our welcome to her. Harris — a very subdued Harris it was — brightened up and we did what we could to make his stay in Essex pleasant until he could get a passage to America. He sat at my table and talked of Shakespeare, Dryden, Carlyle, Jesus Christ, Confucius, me and other great figures; of poetry and his own divine sensitiveness and the execrable cooking in Brixton jail.

Presently they got a passage for America and departed.

He had been gone some days when I had another visit from Lady Warwick. This time she did not come to the point so directly. As we walked in my rose garden she asked me what I really thought of Frank Harris. Didn’t she know?

You see, she had had a number of letters — quite interesting

letters from a certain royal personage.

"And you gave them to him?"

"Oh *no*! But he asked to look through them. He thought he might advise me about them. One doesn't *care* to destroy things like that. They have historical importance."

"And they are now in his valise on their way to America?"

"Yes. How did you know that?"

It seemed to me, I am afraid, an altogether amusing situation. "Even if the ship is torpedoed," I said, "Harris will stick to those letters."

It was a lengthy and costly business to recover and place those carelessly written and very private documents in the hands most likely to hold them discreetly. Meanwhile Harris took over *Pearson's Magazine* in America and ran it as a pro-German organ until America came into the war. He reduced a circulation of 200,000 to 10,000. He published a hostile and quite imaginary interview with me to show how entirely ignorant and foolish was my attitude in the struggle.

But this is my autobiography and not a biography of Harris. I never saw him again. I found myself very near him when I made a winter home for myself near Grasse, but I kept any craving I had to hear his voice once more, well under control. Messages passed between us and I promised to go and see him — when I could manage it. But I never did manage and I am rather sorry now. He died in 1932 and after all, by that time, he was an old man of seventy-seven or seventy-eight, and it would have done me no harm to have gone over and listened to him for an hour or so.

Shaw was far kinder to him. When he was staying at Antibes in the summer of 1928 he went over to Nice on several occasions, and renewed the old acquaintance. It was an odd friendship. Harris never wearied and bored Shaw as he wearied and bored me. Shaw found something attractive in all those boastings of sentimentalized villainy and passionate virility. And moreover he could hold his own with Harris in a way that I could not do. In his earlier years he had been wont to face and sway the uproar of excited public meetings. Talking to Harris must have seemed almost like old times come again. But Harris in talk went over me like a steam roller and flattened me out

completely.

Very generously Shaw allowed Harris to write a *Life* of himself. It is the work of an ego-centred, sex-crazy old man. And it reveals more than anything else the profound resentment of Harris at the relative success of his former contributor. Shaw, he says, was a miracle of impotence in art, in affairs and in love. That is the main thesis. The analysis is pseudo- physiological throughout. Shaw took these outpourings with an admirable good humour and helped the book greatly by adding elucidatory contributions of his own. But so far as I and my autobiography are concerned, the latter years of Harris at Nice are no more than "noises heard off." I know nothing of that redoubtable suppressed *Life and Loves* of his, in four volumes, which is sought after by collectors of "curious" books, except that it must certainly be tumultuous and unveracious.

So much for that hot, vehement brain which went roaring past my own less audible hemispheres of grey matter on their way through this world. I am told that *The Life and Loves of Frank Harris* is a warning to all autobiographers, and I can quite believe it. Apparently it is a hotch potch of lies, self-pity, vain pretensions and exhibitionism and the end is unhappiness and despair. Nevertheless I do not feel urged, even for my own good, to go to the pains needed to procure and read a surreptitious copy of it. I do not think I should learn anything more about this awful example of undisciplined egoism than I know and have told already. The core of the matter is this, that this man drank and shouted and had to go on drinking and shouting all through his life because the tireless pursuit of self-discovery upon his heels gave him no peace; he never had the courage to face round at his reality and he was never sufficiently stupefied to forget it. He was already in flight before the horror of The Man Frank Harris, before ever he came to London. And yet, perhaps, if he had turned, he might have made something quite tolerable of his repudiated and falsified self. I cannot tell. It would have been a stiff job anyhow with that dwarfish ill-proportioned body, that ugly dark face and with lust-entangled vanity and greediness of overpowering strength.

* * * * *

I return from this digression to the years 1894-95 and my visits to Southampton Street to get books for review from Frank Harris and Blanchamp and to carry them off, whole armfuls, in a hansom cab to 12 Mornington Road. There I sat down and Jane and I mugged up our reviews of them, whenever the light of invention burnt low and an original article seemed out of the question.

I was now in a very hopeful and enterprising mood. Henley had accepted the *Time Machine*, agreed to pay £100 for it, and had recommended it to Heinemann, the publisher. This would bring in at least another £50. I should have a book out in the spring and I should pass from the status of journalist— "occasional journalist" at that, and anonymous — to authorship under my own name. And there was talk of a book of short stories with Methuen. Furthermore John Lane was proposing to make a book out of some of my articles, though for that I was to get only £10 down. The point was that my chance was plainly coming fast. I should get a press — and I felt I might get a good press — for the *Time Machine* anyhow. If I could get another book out before that amount of publicity died away I should be fairly launched as an author and then I might be able to go on writing books. This incessant hunt for "ideas" for anonymous articles might be relaxed and the grind of book-reviewing abated.

I find in my archives a "picshua" commemorating my Christmas dinner for 1894. Very few picshuas survive from the first year of my life with Jane. I did not draw so very many then, and she did not begin methodically to save what I drew until we had a house and storage. The early pictures were not nearly so neat and dexterous as the later. But this one shows our tall landlady (bless her!) giving a last glance at the table she has laid for myself and Jane and Mrs. Robbins. The fare is recognizably a turkey. Detail however is hasty and inadequate. The interested reader will note the folding doors. He will note too a queer black object on the table to the left of Jane. That represents, however inadequately, a black glass flagon. In this flagon there was a wine — I do not know if it is still sold by grocers — a golden wine, called "Canary Sack." I am not at all sure if it was the same as Falstaff's sack; it was a sweetish thin sherry-like wine.

That wine on the table, even more than the turkey and the presence of Mrs. Robbins, marks the fact that already in the first year

Jane and I felt we were winning our queer little joint fight against the world, for the liberty of our lives and the freedom of our brains. We had had a serious talk about our social outlook. People, often strange people, were beginning to ask us out. All sorts of unfamiliar food and drink might be sprung upon us, for the dietary Jane had been brought up upon was scarcely less restricted than my own. We knew no wines but port and sherry. Accordingly we decided to experiment with food and drink so far as the resources of the Camden Town and Tottenham Court Road luxury trade permitted. We tried a bottle of claret and a bottle of hock and so forth and so on, and that is why we "washed down" our Christmas fare with Canary Sack. So that if anyone asked us to take Canary Sack we should know what we were in for. But nobody ever did ask us to take Canary Sack. My knowledge of Canary Sack is still waste knowledge.

Picshua: Xmas 1894.

And we discussed whether we would go out to a dinner or so in a restaurant in preparation for our social emergence. There was the Holborn Restaurant and there were restaurants in Soho which offered dinners from 1*s.* 6*d.* upwards, where we might acquire the elements of gastronomic *savoir faire*.

I had already been to one formidable dinner party, the "Wake" of Henley's *National Observer*. It was perhaps not in the best possible taste to call it a wake, seeing that the new editor proprietor who had undertaken to carry on the life of the deceased, was present as a guest. George Wyndham, Nathaniel Curzon, Walter Sickert, Edgar Vincent (better known nowadays as Lord D'Abernon), G. S. Street, Arthur Morrison, Bob Stevenson, Charles Baxter (R. L. S.'s business

manager), H. B. Marriott Watson and other contributors to the paper were present. I am not sure whether J. M. Barrie and Rudyard Kipling were there, but both had been among Henley's men. I sat at the tail of a table, rather proud and scared, latest adherent to this gallant band. And because I was there at the end I was first to be served with a strange black blobby substance altogether unknown to me. I was there to enjoy myself and I helped myself to a generous portion. My next door neighbour — I rather fancy it was Basil Thomson — eyed the black mound upon my plate.

"I see you *like* caviar," he remarked.

"Love it," I said.

I didn't, but I ate it all. I had my proper pride.

That dinner was at Verrey's in Regent Street and I remember walking very gravely and carefully along the kerb of the pavement at a later hour, to convince myself that the exalted swimming in my head which had ensued upon the festival, was not in the nature of intoxication. If there had been a tight-rope handy leading straight out over the bottomless pit I suppose that in that mood of grave investigation I should have tried it. I decided that I was not drunk, but that I was "under the influence of alcohol." My literary ambitions were bringing me into a quite unanticipated world, full of strange sorts of food and still more various sorts of drink. A certain discretion might, I decided with a wary eye on the kerb, be necessary.

It was a good thing for me that behind the folding doors at 12 Mornington Road slept a fine and valiant little being, so delicate and clean and so credulous of my pretensions, that it would have been intolerable to appear before her unshaven or squalid or drunken or base. I lived through my Bohemian days as sober as Shaw if not nearly so teetotally.

Which reminds me of a bitter complaint I once heard in the *Saturday Review* office from one of Harris's satellites. "When we're here'n the'vning all com'fly tight tha' fella Shaw comes in — dishgrashful shtate shobriety — talks and *talks* ... AND TALKS."

§ 2. LYNTON, STATION ROAD, WOKING (1895)

I began the new year with my first and only regular job on a London daily. Cust had promised that I should have the next vacancy, whatever it was, on the *Pall Mall*, and the lot fell upon the dramatic criticism. I was summoned by telegram. “Here,” said Cust and thrust two small pieces of coloured paper into my hand.

“What are these?” I asked.

“Theatres. Go and do ‘em,”

“Yes,” I said and reflected. “I’m willing to have a shot at it, but I ought to warn you that so far, not counting the Crystal Palace pantomime and Gilbert and Sullivan, I’ve been only twice to a theatre.”

“Exactly what I want,” said Cust. “You won’t be in the gang. You’ll make a break.”

“One wears evening dress?”

It was not in Gust’s code of manners to betray astonishment. “Oh yes. To-morrow night especially. The Haymarket.”

We regarded each other thoughtfully for a moment, “Right O,” said I and hurried round to a tailor named Millar in Charles Street who knew me to be solvent. “Can you make me evening clothes by to-morrow night?” I asked, “Or must I hire them?”

The clothes were made in time but in the foyer I met Cust and George Steevens ready to supply a criticism if I failed them and nothing came to hand from me. But I did the job in a fashion and posted my copy fairly written out in its bright red envelope before two o’clock in the morning in the Mornington Road pillar box. The play was “*An Ideal Husband*, a new and original play of modern life by Oscar Wilde.”

That was on the third of January 1895, and all went well. On the fifth I had to do *Guy Domville*, a play by Henry James at the St. James’s Theatre. This was a more memorable experience. It was an extremely weak drama. James was a strange unnatural human being, a sensitive man lost in an immensely abundant brain, which had had neither a scientific nor a philosophical training, but which was by education and natural aptitude alike, formal, formally æsthetic, conscientiously fastidious and delicate. Wrapped about in elaborations of gesture and speech, James regarded his fellow creatures with a face of distress and a remote effort at intercourse,

like some victim of enchantment placed in the centre of an immense bladder. His life was unbelievably correct and his home at Rye one of the most perfect pieces of suitably furnished Georgian architecture imaginable. He was an unspotted bachelor. He had always been well off and devoted to artistic ambitions; he had experienced no tragedy and he shunned the hoarse laughter of comedy; and yet he was consumed by a gnawing hunger for dramatic success. In this performance he had his first and last actual encounter with the theatre.

Guy Domville was one of those rare ripe exquisite Catholic Englishmen of ancient family conceivable only by an American mind, who gave up the woman he loved to an altogether coarser cousin, because his religious vocation was stronger than his passion. I forget the details of the action. There was a drinking scene in which Guy and the cousin, for some obscure purpose of discovery, pretended to drink and, instead, poured their wine furtively into a convenient bowl of flowers upon the table between them. Guy was played by George Alexander, at first in a mood of refined solemnity and then as the intimations of gathering disapproval from pit and gallery increased, with stiffening desperation. Alexander at the close had an incredibly awkward exit. He had to stand at a door in the middle of the stage, say slowly "Be keynd to Her.... *Be* keynd to Her" and depart. By nature Alexander had a long face, but at that moment with audible defeat before him, he seemed the longest and dismallest face, all face, that I have ever seen. The slowly closing door reduced him to a strip, to a line, of perpendicular gloom. The uproar burst like a thunder-storm as the door closed and the stalls responded with feeble applause. Then the tumult was mysteriously allayed. There were some minutes of uneasy apprehension. "Au-thor" cried voices. "Au-thor!" The stalls, not understanding, redoubled their clapping.

Disaster was too much for Alexander that night. A spasm of hate for the writer of those fatal lines must surely have seized him. With incredible cruelty he led the doomed James, still not understanding clearly how things were with him, to the middle of the stage, and there the pit and gallery had him. James bowed; he knew it was the proper thing to bow. Perhaps he had selected a few words to say, but

if so they went unsaid. I have never heard any sound more devastating than the crescendo of booing that ensued. The gentle applause of the stalls was altogether overwhelmed. For a moment or so James faced the storm, his round face white, his mouth opening and shutting and then Alexander, I hope in a contrite mood, snatched him back into the wings.

That was my first sight of Henry James with whom I was later to have a sincere yet troubled friendship. We were by nature and training profoundly unsympathetic. He was the most consciously and elaborately artistic and refined human being I ever encountered, and I swam in the common thought and feeling of my period, with an irregular abundance of rude knowledge, aggressive judgments and a disposition to get to close quarters with Madame Fact even if it meant a scuffle with her. James never scuffled with Fact; he treated her as a perfect and unchallengeable lady; he never questioned a single stitch or flounce of the conventions and interpretations in which she presented herself. He thought that for every social occasion a correct costume could be prescribed and a correct behaviour defined. On the table (an excellent piece) in his hall at Rye lay a number of caps and hats, each with its appropriate gloves and sticks, a tweed cap and a stout stick for the Marsh, a soft comfortable deer-stalker if he were to turn aside to the Golf Club, a light-brown felt hat and a cane for a morning walk down to the Harbour, a grey felt with a black band and a gold-headed cane of greater importance, if afternoon calling in the town was afoot. He retired at set times to a charming room in his beautiful walled garden and there he worked, dictating with a slow but not unhappy circumspection, the novels that were to establish his position in the world of discriminating readers. They are novels from which all the fiercer experiences are excluded; even their passions are so polite that one feels that they were gratified, even at their utmost intimacy, by a few seemly gestures; and yet the stories are woven with a peculiar humorous, faintly fussy, delicacy, that gives them a flavour like nothing else in the language. When you want to read and find reality too real, and hard story-telling tiresome, you may find Henry James good company. For generations to come a select type of reader will brighten appreciatively to the *Spoils of Poynton*, *The Ambassadors*, *The*

Tragic Muse, *The Golden Bowl* and many of the stories.

I once saw James quarrelling with his brother William James, the psychologist. He had lost his calm; he was terribly unnerved. He appealed to me, to me of all people, to adjudicate on what was and what was not permissible behaviour in England. William was arguing about it in an indisputably American accent, with an indecently naked reasonableness. I had come to Rye with a car to fetch William James and his daughter to my home at Sandgate. William had none of Henry's passionate regard for the polish upon the surfaces of life and he was immensely excited by the fact that in the little Rye inn, which had its garden just over the high brick wall of the garden of Lamb House, G. K. Chesterton was staying. William James had corresponded with our vast contemporary and he sorely wanted to see him. So with a scandalous directness he had put the gardener's ladder against that ripe red wall and clambered up and peeped over!

Henry had caught him at it.

It was the sort of thing that isn't done. It was most emphatically the sort of thing that isn't done.... Henry had instructed the gardener to put away that ladder and William was looking thoroughly naughty about it.

To Henry's manifest relief, I carried William off and in the road just outside the town we ran against the Chestertons who had been for a drive in Romney Marsh; Chesterton was heated and I think rather swollen by the sunshine; he seemed to overhang his one-horse fly; he descended slowly but firmly; he was moist and steamy but cordial; we chatted in the road for a time and William got his coveted impression.

But reminiscence is running away with me. I return to the raw young dramatic critic standing amidst the astonished uneasy stallites under the storm that greeted *Guy Domville*. That hissing and booing may have contributed something to the disinclination I have always felt from any adventure into The Theatre.

On that eventful evening I scraped acquaintance with another interesting contemporary, Bernard Shaw. I had known him by sight since the Hammersmith days but I had never spoken to him before. Fires and civil commotions loosen tongues. I accosted him as a

Saturday Review colleague and we walked back to our respective lodgings northward while he talked very interestingly about the uproar we had left behind us and the place of the fashionable three-act play amidst the eternal verities. He laid particular stress on the fact that nobody in the audience and hardly any of the cast, had realized the grace of Henry James's language.

Shaw was then a slender young man of thirty-five or so very hard-up, and he broke the ranks of the boiled shirts and black and white ties in the stalls, with a modest brown jacket suit, a very white face and very red whiskers. (Now he has a very red face and very white whiskers, but it is still the same Shaw.) He talked like an elder brother to me in that agreeable Dublin English of his. I liked him with a liking that has lasted a life-time. In those days he was just a brilliant essayist and critic and an exasperating speaker in Socialist gatherings. He had written some novels that no one thought anything of, and his plays were still a secret between himself and his God.

From that time onward I saw him intermittently, but I did not see very much of him until I went into the Fabian Society, six or seven years later. Then he was a man in the forties and a much more important figure. He was married and he was no longer impecunious. His opinions and attitudes had developed and matured and so had mine. We found ourselves antagonistic on a number of issues and though we were not quite enough in the same field nor near enough in age to be rivals, there was from my side at any rate, a certain emulation between us.

We were both atheists and socialists; we were both attacking an apparently fixed and invincible social system from the outside; but this much resemblance did not prevent our carrying ourselves with a certain sustained defensiveness towards each other that remains to this day. In conversational intercourse a man's conclusions are of less importance than his training and the way he gets to them, and in this respect chasms of difference yawned between Shaw and myself, wider even than those that separated me from Henry James. I have tried to set out my own formal and informal education in a previous chapter. Shaw had had no such sustained and constructive mental training as I had been through, but on the other hand he had been saturated from his youth up in good music, brilliant conversation and

the appreciative treatment of life. Extreme physical sensibility had forced him to adopt an austere teetotal and vegetarian way of living, and early circumstances, of which Ireland was not the least, had inclined him to rebellion and social protest; but otherwise he was as distinctly over against me and on the aesthetic side of life as Henry James. To him, I guess, I have always appeared heavily and sometimes formidably facty and close-set; to me his judgments, arrived at by feeling and expression, have always had a flimsiness. I want to get hold of Fact, strip off her inessentials and, if she behaves badly put her in stays and irons; but Shaw dances round her and weaves a wilful veil of confident assurances about her as her true presentment. He thinks one can "put things over" on Fact and I do not. He philanders with her. I have no delusions about the natural goodness and wisdom of human beings and at bottom I am grimly and desperately educational. But Shaw's conception of education is to let dear old Nature rip. He has got no further in that respect than Rousseau. Then I know, fundamentally, the heartless impartiality of natural causation, but Shaw makes Evolution something brighter and softer, by endowing it with an ultimately benevolent Life Force, acquired, quite uncritically I feel, from his friend and adviser Samuel Butler. We have been fighting this battle with each other all our lives. We had a brisk exchange of letters after the publication of the *Science of Life*.

But let me return to those theatrical first nights of mine. None of the criticism I wrote was ever anything but dull. I did not understand the theatre. I was out of my place there. I do not think I am made to understand the theatre but at any rate, I never sat down to ask myself, "What is all this stage stuff about? What is the gist of this complex unreality?" If I had done so, then I should have emerged with a point of view and data for adequate critical writing — even if that writing had turned out to be only a denunciation of all the existing methods and machinery.

Shaw like James and like his still more consciously cultivated disciple, Granville Barker, believed firmly in The Theatre as a finished and definite something demanding devotion; offering great opportunities to the human mind. He perceived indeed there was something very wrong with it, he demanded an endowed theatre, a

different criticism, a different audience than the common "Theatre-goer" we knew, but in the end he could imagine this gathering of several hundred people for three hours' entertainment on a stage becoming something very fine and important and even primary in the general life. I had no such belief. I was forming a conception of a new sort of human community with an unprecedented way of life, and it seemed to me to be a minor detail whether this boxed-up performance of plays, would occur at all in that ampler existence I anticipated. "Shows" there will certainly be, in great variety in the modern civilization ahead, very wonderful blendings of thought, music and vision; but except by way of archaeological revival, I can see no footlights, proscenium, prompter's box, playwright and painted players there.

Of course this wasn't clear in my mind in the nineties, but I did fail to find The Theatre sufficiently important adequately to stir my wits and so if for no other reason my work as a dramatic critic was flat and spiritless. Yet I saw some good plays. In Wilde's *Importance of Being Earnest* Alexander did a magnificent piece of work that completely effaced his Guy Domville from my mind, and in Pinero's *Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* I saw and heard young Mrs. Pat Campbell, with her flexible body and her delightful voice, for the first time.

After the wear of a month or so for my new dress clothes my rough but essentially benevolent personal Providence appreciated the listlessness of this forced uncongenial work and intervened to stop it. I caught a bad cold, streaks of blood appeared again, and once more the impossibility of my moving about in London in all weather was demonstrated. I resigned The Theatre into better hands, those of G. S. Street, who was later to be a gentle and understanding Censor of Plays, and I set about finding a little house in the country, where I could follow up with another book the success that I felt was coming to the *Time Machine* and my short-story volume.

Our withdrawal to Woking was a fairly cheerful adventure. Woking was the site of the first crematorium but few of our friends made more than five or six jokes about that. We borrowed a hundred pounds by a mortgage on Mrs. Robbins' house in Putney and with that hundred pounds, believe it or not, we furnished a small resolute semi-detached villa with a minute greenhouse in the Maybury Road

facing the railway line, where all night long the goods trains shunted and bumped and clattered — without serious effect upon our healthy slumbers. Close at hand in those days was a pretty and rarely used canal amidst pine woods, a weedy canal, beset with loose-strife, spiræa, forget-me-nots and yellow water lilies, upon which one could be happy for hours in a hired canoe, and in all directions stretched open and undeveloped heath land, so that we could walk and presently learn to ride bicycles and restore our broken contact with the open air. There I planned and wrote the *War of the Worlds*, the *Wheels of Chance* and the *Invisible Man*. I learnt to ride my bicycle upon sandy tracks with none but God to help me; he chastened me considerably in the process, and after a fall one day I wrote down a description of the state of my legs which became the opening chapter of the *Wheels of Chance*. I rode wherever Mr. Hoopdrive rode in that story. Later on I wheeled about the district marking down suitable places and people for destruction by my Martians. The bicycle in those days was still very primitive. The diamond frame had appeared but there was no free-wheel. You could only stop and jump off when the treadle was at its lowest point, and the brake was an uncertain plunger upon the front wheel. Consequently you were often carried on beyond your intentions, as when Mr. Polly upset the zinc dust-bins outside the shop of Mr. Rusper. Nevertheless the bicycle was the swiftest thing upon the roads in those days, there were as yet no automobiles and the cyclist had a lordliness, a sense of masterful adventure, that has gone from him altogether now.

Jane was still a very fragile little being and as soon as I had sufficiently mastered the art of wheeling I got a tandem bicycle of a peculiar shape made for us by the Humber people and we began to wander about the south of England, very agreeably. But here I think a photograph and a selection of picshuas may take up the story again. The first picshua shows us starting out upon an expedition that carried us at last across Dartmoor to Cornwall and the second shows Jane engaging her first domestic servant.

Picshua: Cycling.

Picshua: Engaging A Servant.

We lived very happily and industriously in the Woking home for a

year and a half and then my mother-in-law fell ill and for a time it was necessary that she should live with us, so that we had to move to a larger house at Worcester Park. We had married as soon as I was free to do so. By the time of our removal, our circle of acquaintances and friends had increased very considerably. I will not catalogue names but one friendly figure stands out amidst much other friendliness, that once much reviled and now rather too much forgotten writer, Grant Allen. I do not think I have ever made a fair acknowledgment of a certain mental indebtedness to him. Better thirty-five years late than never.

He was about twenty years older than I. He had been a science teacher in the West Indies and he was full of the new wine of aggressive Darwinism. He came back to England and, in that fresh illumination, began writing books for the general reader and essays in natural history. He was a successful popularizer and he had a very pronounced streak of speculative originality. But he had the schoolmaster trick of dogmatism and a rash confidence in every new idea that seized upon him. In these days no editor paid very much for scientific contributions and James Payne, the editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, showed him that the better way to prosperity was to travel abroad and write conventional novels about places of interest to British tourists. The middle-class British and Americans who were beginning to travel very freely in Europe were delighted to read easy stories of sentiment and behaviour introducing just the places they had visited and the sights they had seen. With this work Grant Allen achieved a reasonable popularity and prosperity. But he was uneasy in his prosperity. He had had an earlier infection of that same ferment of biology and socialism that was working in my blood. He wanted not merely to enjoy life but to do something to it. Social injustice and sexual limitation bothered his mind, and he was critical of current ideas and accepted opinions. I myself was destined to go through roughly parallel phases of uneasiness and to fall even more definitely under the advancing intimations of the different life of the coming world-state.

Like myself Grant Allen had never found a footing in the professional scientific world and he had none of the patience, deliberation — and discretion — of the established scientific worker,

who must live with a wholesome fear of the Royal Society and its inhibitions before his eyes. Grant Allen's semi-popular original scientific works such as his *Origin of the Idea of God* (1897) and his *Physiological Aesthetics* (1877) were at once bold and sketchy, unsupported by properly verified quotations and collated references, and regardless or manifestly ignorant of much other contemporary work. They were too original to be fair popularization and too unsubstantiated to be taken seriously by serious specialists, and what was good in them has been long since appropriated, generally without acknowledgment, by sounder workers, while the flimsy bulk of them moulders on a few dusty and forgotten shelves. His anthropology became an easy butt for the fuller scholarship and livelier style of Andrew Lang.

His attempt to change himself over from a regularly selling, proper English "purveyor of fiction" to the novelist with ideas and initiative and so contribute materially to vital literature was equally unfortunate. In that also he was, so to speak, an undecided amphibian, an Amblystoma, never quite sure whether he had come out of the water for good or not. He had always to earn a living, and the time left over from that, just as it had not been enough either for the patient and finished research needed to win respect in the scientific world, was now not enough for the thorough and well thought-out novel of aggressive reality.

Later on I was to be in much the same case. In his spare time, so to speak, and unaware that the devices and methods of the ordinary trade novel are exactly what cannot be used for fresh matter, he wrote what was really a sentimental novelette, *The Woman Who Did*. He tried (I am sure with a hurried pen) to present a woman who deliberately broke the rigid social conventions of the period and bore an illegitimate child as "her very own," and, without any intensive effort to conceive her personality, he tried to tell the story so that she should be sympathetic for the common-place reader. That was a most dangerous and difficult thing to attempt, and since, later on, I was to try out something of a kindred sort in *Ann Veronica*, *The New Machiavelli* and *The Wife of Sir Isaac Harman*, I can bear my expert witness to the difficulty of the technical miracle he was so glibly setting about to perform. My mature persuasion is that the distance a

novel can carry a reader out of his or her moral and social preconceptions is a very short one. I think a novel can do more than a play in this way; I don't believe an audience in a theatre has ever budged a bit from its established standards of conduct for anything that has been put on the stage; but in either case what principally occurs is recognition and response. The most fatal thing that can be done is to "assume" the Tightness of the new standard you are putting over. This was done excessively in *The Woman Who Did*. Stupid people will never read anything with which they do not agree, so what is the good of trying to write down to them? And even quite intelligent people will read and consider an account of strange defiant behaviour only if it is neither glorified nor extenuated but put before them simply as a vitalized statement. "Look here!" you must say, "What do you think of this?" So long as they are interested, judging freely, and not bristling with resentful resistance, you are doing the job. But everybody bristled at *The Woman Who Did*.

I bristled. I was infuriated. I was the more infuriated because I was so nearly in agreement with Grant Allen's ideas, that this hasty, headlong, incompetent book seemed like a treason to a great cause. It was, I felt, opening a breach to the enemy. So I slated him with care and intensity, in this style:

"We have endeavoured to piece this character together, and we cannot conceive the living woman. She is, he assures us with a certain pathos, a 'real woman.' But one doubts it from the outset. 'A living proof of the doctrine of heredity' is her own idea, but that is scarcely the right effect of her. Mr. Grant Allen seems nearer the truth when he describes her as 'a solid rock of ethical resolution." Her solidity is witnessed to by allusions to her 'opulent form' and the 'lissom grace of her rounded figure.' Fancy a girl with an 'opulent' form! Her 'face was, above all things, the face of a free woman,' a 'statuesque' face, and upon this Mr. Grant Allen has chiselled certain inappropriate 'dimples,' which mar but do not modify that statuesque quality. 'She was too stately of mien ever to grant a favour without granting it of pure grace and with a queenly munificence' — when Alan kissed her. She dresses in a 'sleeveless sack embroidered with arabesques,' and such-like symbolic garments. So much goes to

convey her visible presence. The reader must figure her sackful of lissom opulence and her dimpled, statuesque features for himself — the picture eludes us. She had a ‘silvery voice.’ The physical expression of her emotions was of two kinds, a blush, and a ‘thrill to the finger-tips.’ This last phrase is always cropping up, though we must confess we can attach no meaning to it ourselves and cannot imagine Mr. Grant Allen doing so. Her soul is ‘spotless.’ Never did she do anything wrong. (And this is a ‘real woman’!) When Alan called to see her on some trivial business ‘she sat a lonely soul, enthroned amid the halo of her own perfect purity’ — a curious way of receiving visitors. She is ‘pure’ and ‘pellucid’ and ‘noble,’ and so forth on every page almost. And at the crisis she ‘would have flaunted the open expression of her supreme moral faith before the eyes of all London,’ had not Alan, the father of the baby in question, with ‘virile self-assertion’ restrained her.

“Clearly this is not a human being. No more a human being than the women twelve hands tall of the fashion magazines. Had her author respected her less he might have drawn her better. Surely Mr. Grant Allen has lived long enough to know that real women do not have spotless souls and a physical beauty that is invariably overpowering. Real women are things of dietary and secretions, of subtle desires and mental intricacy; even the purest among them have at least beauty spots upon their souls. This monstrous Herminia — where did he get her? Assuredly not of observation and insight. She seems to us to be a kind of plaster-cast of ‘Pure Womanhood’ in a halo, with a soul of abstractions, a machine to carry out a purely sentimental principle to its logical conclusion. Alan, her lover, is a kind of ideal prig, ‘a pure soul in his way, and mixed of the finer paste’ from which the heroes of inferior novels are made. The Dean, her father, is the sympathetic but prejudiced cleric of modern comedy. The source of Ethel Waterton is acknowledged: she ‘was a most insipid blonde from the cover of a chocolate-box.’ Dolores, for whom Mr. Grant Allen feels least, for or against, is far and away the best character in the book. She is so, we think, for that very reason.

“Now the book professes to be something more than an artistic story,

true to life. It is, we are led to infer, an ethical discussion. But is it? The problem of marriage concerns terrestrial human beings, and the ingratitude of the offspring of a plaster-cast, though wonderful enough, bears no more on our moral difficulties than the incubation of Semele, or the birth of the Minotaur. In these problem novels at least, truth is absolutely essential. But to handle the relation of the sexes truly needs a Jean Paul Richter, or a George Meredith. It is not to be done by desiring.

"And the gospel Mr. Grant Allen — who surely knows that life is one broad battlefield — is preaching: what is it? It is the emancipation of women. He does not propose to emancipate them from the narrowness, the sexual savagery, the want of charity, that are the sole causes of the miseries of the illegitimate and the unfortunate. Instead he wishes to emancipate them from monogamy, which we have hitherto regarded as being more of a fetter upon virile instincts. His proposal is to abolish cohabitation, to abolish the family — that school of all human gentleness — and to provide support for women who may have children at the expense of the State. We are all to be foundlings together, and it will be an inquisitive child who knows its own father. Now Mr. Grant Allen must know perfectly well that amorous desires and the desire to bear children are anything but overpowering impulses in many of the very noblest women. The women, who would inevitably have numerous children under the conditions he hopes for, would be the hysterically erotic, the sexually incontinent. *Why* he should make proposals to cultivate humanity in this direction is not apparent. We find fine handsome sayings about Truth and Freedom, but any establishment for his proposition a reviewer much in sympathy with him on many of his opinions fails altogether to discover in his book. A fellowship of two based on cohabitation and protected by jealousy, with or without the marriage ceremony, seems as much the natural destiny of the average man as of the eagle or the tiger.

"And we have a quarrel, too, with the style of the book. Had Mr. Grant Allen really cared, as he intimates he cared, for truth and beauty, had he really loved this Herminia of his creation, would he

have put her forth in such style as he has done? ‘Ordinary,’ ‘stereotyped,’ ‘sordid,’ ‘ignoble,’ are among the adjectives he applies to the respectable villadom he identifies with the English people. Yet every one of them fits the workmanship he has considered worthy of his heroine.”

And so on. Twenty years later I was, by the bye, to find myself in a position almost parallel to that of Grant Allen with my *Passionate Friends*, which in its turn was slated furiously and in much the same spirit by the younger generation in the person of Rebecca West. But I have never been able to persuade myself that I deserved that trouncing quite as much as Grant Allen merited his.

He behaved charmingly. He wrote me a very pleasant invitation to come and talk to him and I ran down by train one Sunday, walked up from Haslemere station and lunched with him in Hindhead. In these days Hindhead was a lonely place in a great black, purple and golden wilderness of heath; there was an old inn called The Huts and a score of partly hidden houses. Tyndall had built a house there, Conan Doyle was close by, Richard Le Gallienne occupied a cottage as tenant, motor cars and suburbanism were still a dozen years away. Le Gallienne came in after lunch. His sister was staying in the house with her husband, James Welsh, the actor. We sat about in deck chairs through a long sunny summer afternoon under the pines in the garden on the edge of the Devil’s Punch Bowl.

Across the interval of years I do not recall that wandering conversation with any precision. Probably we talked a lot about writing and getting on in the world of books. I was a new and aggressive beginner in that world and I was being welcomed very generously. And also I suppose we must have talked of the subject of *The Woman Who Did* and its related issues. Grant Allen and I were in the tradition of Godwin and Shelley. Its trend was to force a high heroic independence on women — even on quite young women. But Grant Allen who had something in him — I will not say like a Faun or a Satyr, but rather like the earnest Uncle of these woodland folk, was all for the girls showing spirit. I was rather enwrapped then in my private situation. Le Gallienne was an Amorist and he trailed a flavour of Swinburne and Renascence Italy — Browning’s

Renascence Italy, across our talk.

When history is properly written, it will be interesting to trace the Amorist through the ages. There have been phases when the Amorist has dominated manners and costume and decoration and phases when he has been rather shamefaced and occasional in the twilight and the bushes and the staircase to the ballroom. The Amorist just then was in the ascendant phase, and Richard Le Gallienne was the chief of our Amorists. He was busy then with prose fancies in which roses and raptures and restaurants were very attractively combined, and he was inciting the youth of our period to set out upon the Quest of the Golden Girl. He was long and slender with a handsome white half-feminine face, expressive hands and a vast shock of black hair. I found him an entertaining contrast to myself and we got on very well together until suddenly he went out of the literary world of London to America.

I add three other picshuas from the Woking period here. They will amuse some readers. Others will find them detestable, but after all, this is my autobiography. One records a horticultural triumph not uncommon in suburban gardens. The other two are vain-glorious to the ultimate degree. The last of the three reeks with the “shop” of authorship; one observes also the pride of Jane, the author’s family in a state of wonder, the envious hostile reviewer with a forked tail, press cutting (from Romeike), much sordid exultation about royalties and cheques. But we were very young still, we had had a hard and risky time and it was exciting to succeed.

Picshua: We Cut Our First Marrow.

[The Author's Syndicate.
14th March 1896

Dear Mr. Wells,

Mr. Pearson is anxious to see the remainder of your story "The War of the Worlds" as soon as possible. As far as he has read he likes it very much, but says that a great deal depends on the finish of the story. I shall be glad If you will let me know when you think you can send me the remainder.

Faithfully yours,...]

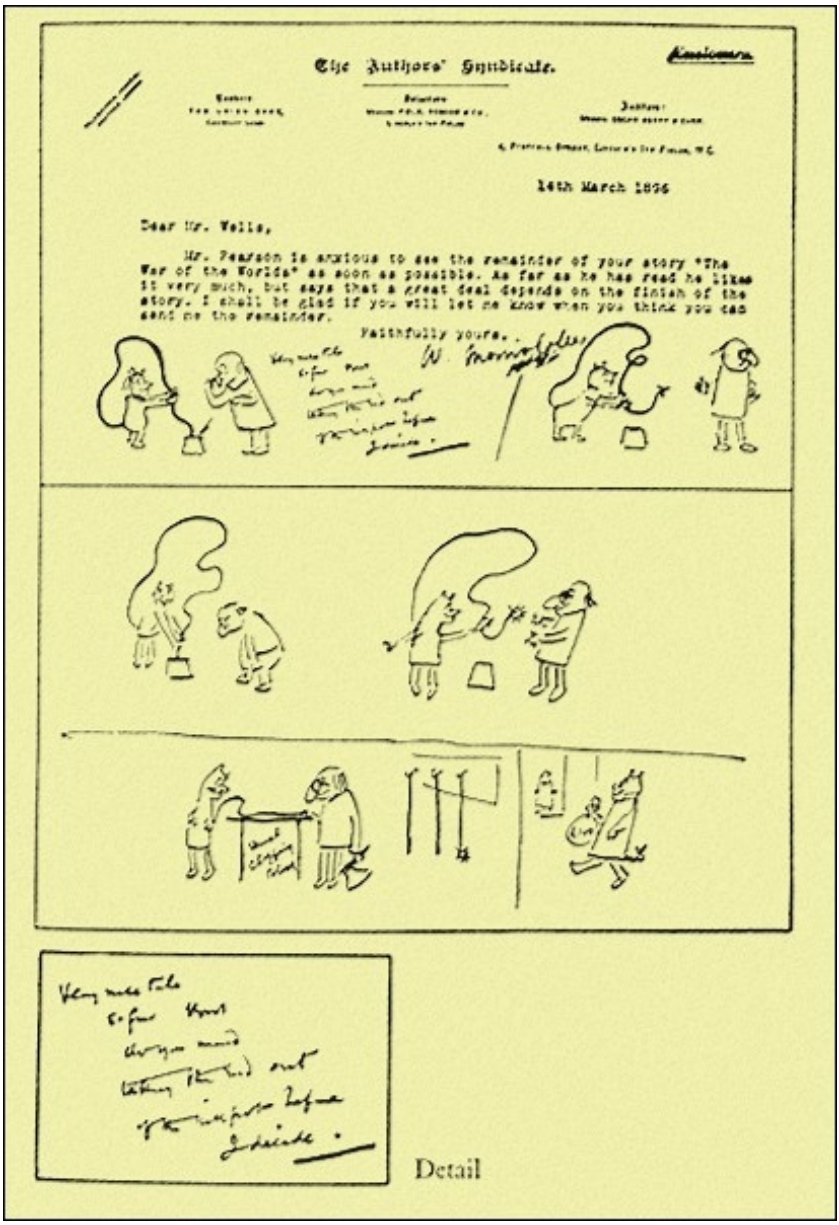

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Faithfully yours,

W. Morris Colles

Detail

Picshua: Letter From Authors' Syndicate.

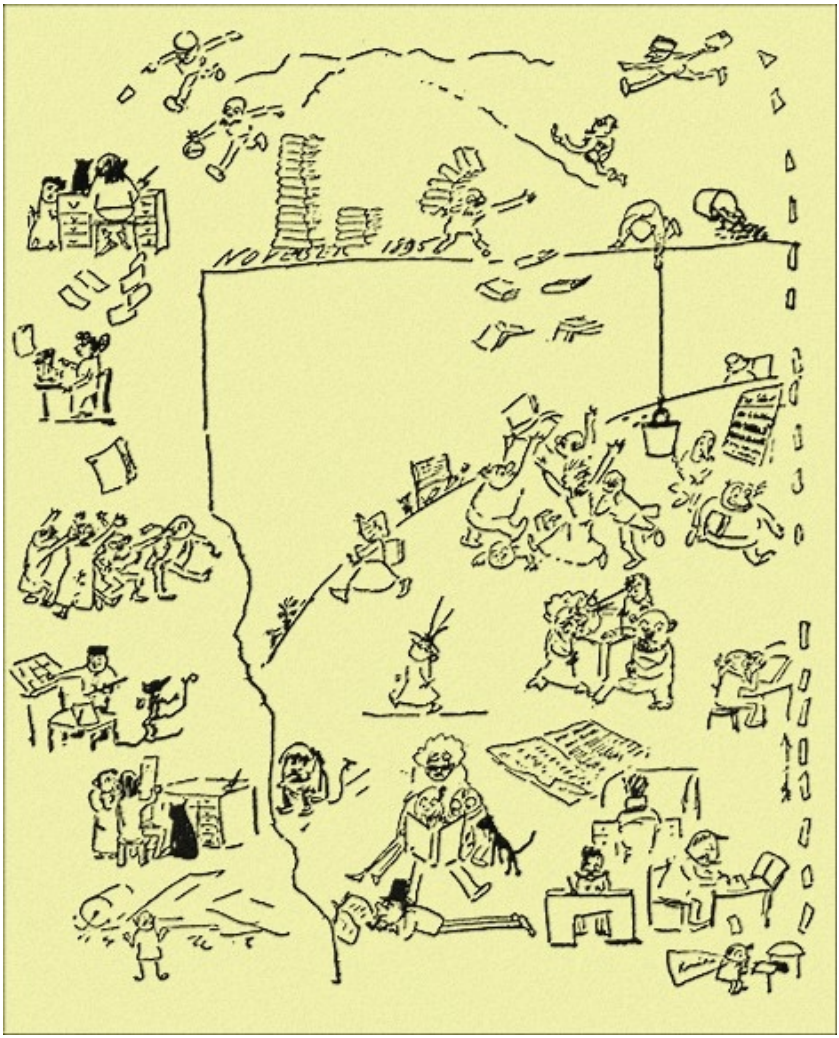

Picshua: November 1895.

§ 3. HEATHERLEA, WORCESTER PARK (1896-97)

I think I have sufficiently conveyed now the flavour of my new way of life and I will not go with any great particularity into the details of my history after we had moved to Worcester Park. I will trust a few picshuas to carry on the tale. This Worcester Park house had two fairly big rooms downstairs, a visitor's room and a reasonably large

garden and we started a practice of keeping open house on Saturday afternoons which improved our knowledge of the many new friends we were making. Among others who stayed with us was Dorothy Richardson, a schoolmate of Jane's. Dorothy has a very distinctive literary gift, acute intensity of expression and an astonishingly vivid memory; her "*Pilgrimage*" books are a very curious essay in autobiography; they still lack their due meed of general appreciation; and in one of them, *The Tunnel*, she has described our Worcester Park life with astonishing accuracy. I figure as Hypo in that description and Jane is Alma.

The first picshua here shows our daily routine and our domestic humour in full swing. This is documentary evidence of Jane's participation in my early work and of the punishments and discipline alleged to prevail during the writing of *When the Sleeper Awakes* and *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. The next records my return to the *Fortnightly Review* and what I think must have been a dinner at the *New Vagabonds Club* at which I seem to have been the guest of honour. The third records details of this glorious occasion. The waiter seems to have missed me for ice pudding; the figures who bow before Jane are J. K. Jerome, Sidney Low, Douglas Sladen and Kenneth Grahame (of the immortal *Wind in the Willows*). Vain-glory is again offensively evident.

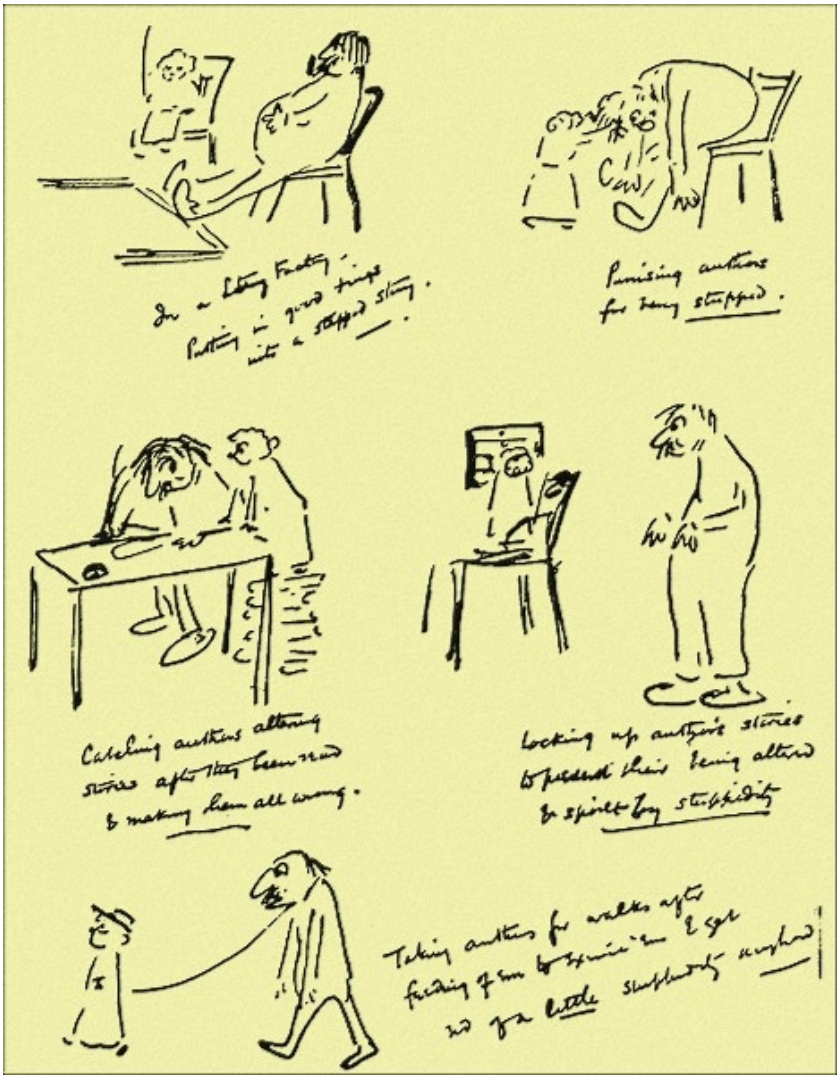

Picshua: November 18th, 1896.

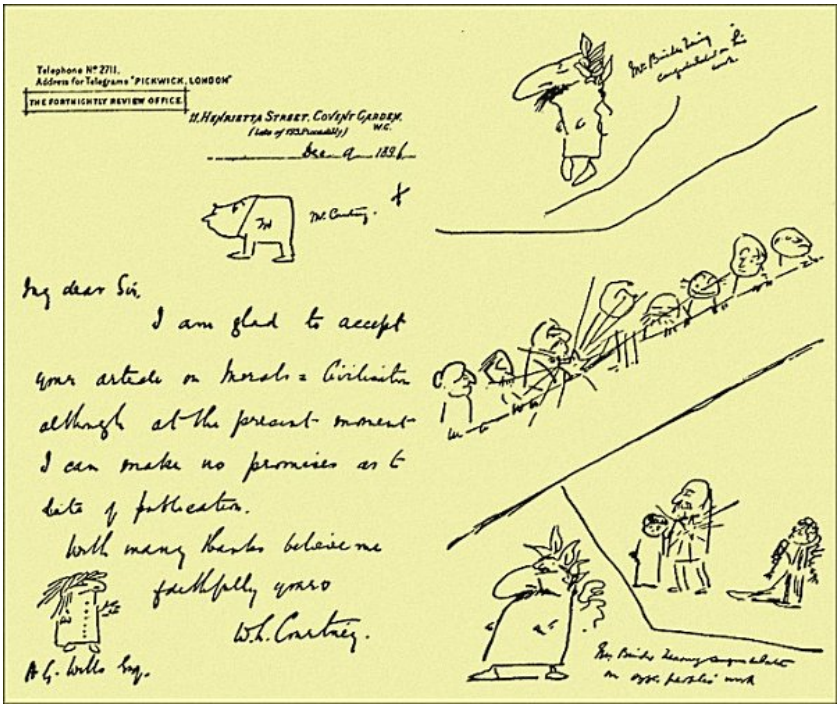

Picshua: Letter from “Fortnightly Review.”

Picshua: New Vagabonds Club.

The next picshua records our industry in our Heatherlea garden under the direction of our jobbing gardener (one day a week) Mr. Tilbury. The date of this particular picshua, as the small figure in the corner indicates, was the day of publication of the *Invisible Man*, a tale, that thanks largely to the excellent film recently produced by James Whale, is still read as much as ever it was. To many young people nowadays I am just the author of the *Invisible Man*. The writing on Jane's foot, by the bye, is "gloshers," which is so to

speak, idiotic for galosh. But why I wrote that word in that fashion, is — like the mating cry of the pterodactyl and the hunting habits of the labyrinthodon, lost in the mist of the past.

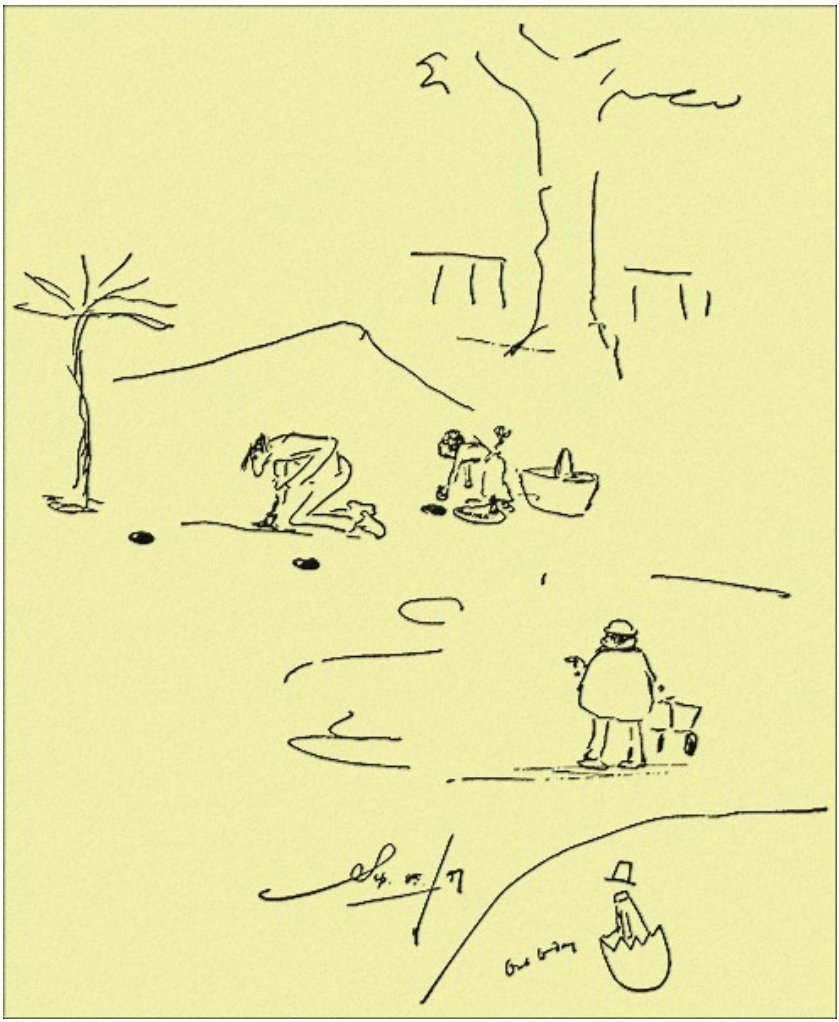

Picshua: Gardening.
Publication of “Invisible Man,” September 8th, 1897.

Next comes a picshua full of self-congratulations. “The improvement of a certain person’s mind” has been resumed. Jane

made a brief attempt to take up her B.Sc. degree work again, but that was presently abandoned. The shelf of our books is filling up. At an Omar Khayyam dinner I had met George Gissing and he was very anxious for us to go with him to Italy in the spring. We study a guide to Italy.

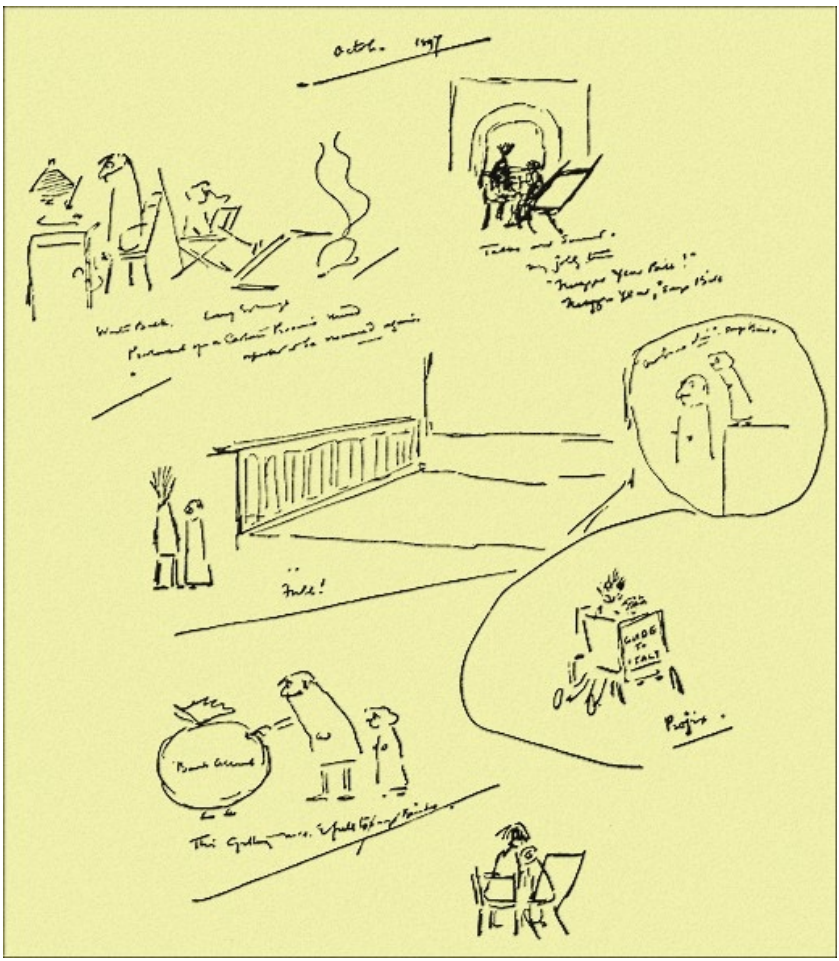

Picshua: October 1897.

The next picshua shows the Italian project maturing. Jane was still far from strong and she had been ordered an iron tonic. We brace ourselves to face the danger of malaria and austerities of a Roman breakfast. Neither of us had ever been across the channel before;

Jane had some French and German, but my knowledge of languages was limited to the decaying remains of my swift matriculation cramming of exceptions. All that had been written work and I did not so much pronounce as block out rude masses of misconceived sound. “Abroad” was a slightly terrifying world of adventure for us. And we were not going to just nibble at the continent. We were going straight through, at one bite, to Rome.

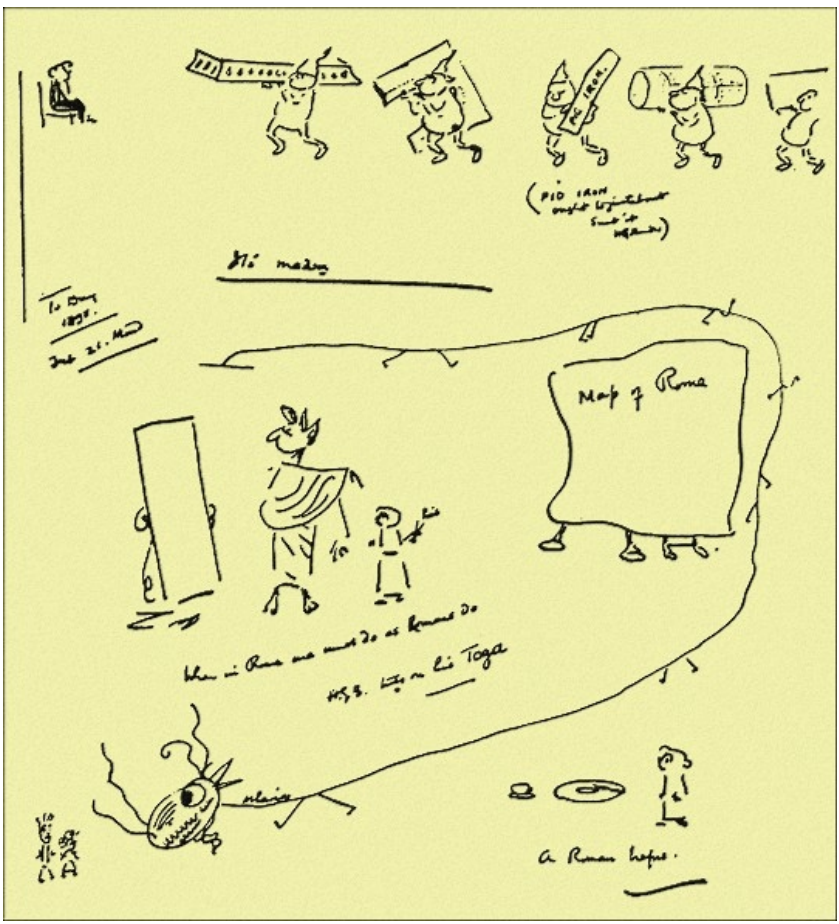

Picshua: February 1898.

We did go to Rome in the spring of 1898. We spent a month there with Gissing and then went on by ourselves to Naples, Capri, Pompeii, Amalfi and Paestum. Capri and Paestum cropped up a little

later in a short story, *A Vision of Armageddon*. We acquired a traveller's smattering of Italian, a number of photographs, some glowing memories and brighter ideas about diet and wine. We returned by way of Switzerland and Ostend. The uneasy social life of nineteenth century Europe was in a phase of inflammation. In Naples people were rioting for "Pane e Lavoro!" and in the square outside our hotel in Brussels there was a demonstration, and the crowd was singing the Marseillaise and fired a revolver or so.

George Gissing was a strange tragic figure, a figure of internal tragedy, and it is only slowly that I have realized the complex of his misfortunes. There is a novel about him by Morley Roberts *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* (1912) which tells the substance of his tale with considerable inaccuracy, and there is an admirable study of his life and work by Frank Swinnerton, so good that it would be officious and impertinent for me to parallel it, however briefly, here. The portrait by Sir William Rothenstein which figures in Swinnerton's book could hardly be bettered. I had read and admired Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee* and his *New Grub Street* before I met him and I began our first conversation by remarking upon the coincidence that Reardon, in the latter book, lived like myself as a struggling writer in Mornington Road with a wife named Amy. This was at an Omar Khayyam dinner whither I had gone as the guest of either Grant Allen or Edmund Clodd (I forget which). Gissing was then an extremely good-looking, well-built man, slightly on the lean side, blond, with a good profile and a splendid leonine head; his appearance betraying little then of the poison that had crept into his blood to distress, depress and undermine his vitality and at last to destroy him. He spoke in a rotund Johnsonian manner, but what he had to say was reasonable and friendly. I asked him to come over to us at Worcester Park and his visit was the beginning of a long intimacy.

He talked very much of ill health and I tried to make him a cyclist, for he took no exercise at all except walking, and I thought it might be pleasant to explore Surrey and Sussex with him, but he was far too nervous and excitable to ride. It was curious to see this well-built Viking, blowing and funking as he hopped behind his machine. "Get on to your ironmongery," said I. He mounted, wabbled a few yards,

and fell off shrieking with laughter. “Iron-mongery!” he gasped. “Oh! riding on ironmongery!” and lay in the grass at the roadside, helpless with mirth. He loved laughter and that was a great link between us — I liked to explode him with some slight twist of phrase. He could be very easily surprised and shocked to mirth, because he had a scholar’s disposition to avoid novel constructions and unusual applications of words. In the summer of 1897, Jane and I spent some weeks or so at Budleigh Salterton near to a lodging he had taken and then it was that our daring adventure “abroad” was conceived.

I knew nothing in those days of his early life, of how in his precocious teens he had wrecked his career as a scholar by a liaison with a young street-walker, a liaison which had led to some difficulties about money and a police court. Friends appeared to rescue him but nobody seems to have troubled about her. He was sent to America for a fresh start and the effect of a fresh start under conditions of sexual deprivation in Boston, had been to send him in flight to Chicago and then bring him back in a recoil to England, to hunt out and marry his mistress. They lived dismally in lodgings while he tried to write great novels. For her it was an intolerable life. She left him and died in hospital.

Clearly there was for him something about this woman, of which no record remains, some charm, some illusion or at any rate some specific attraction, for which he never had words. She was his Primary Fixation. For him she had been Woman. All this was past, but he had created a new situation for himself by picking up a servant girl in Regents Park one Sunday afternoon and marrying her. Told thus baldly the thing is almost incredible, and an analysis of his motives here would take an extravagant amount of space. His home training had made him repressive to the explosive pitch; he felt that to make love to any woman he could regard as a social equal would be too elaborate, restrained and tedious for his urgencies, he could not answer questions he supposed he would be asked about his health and means, and so, for the second time, he flung himself at a social inferior whom he expected to be easy and grateful. This second marriage was also a failure; failure was inevitable; the new wife became a resentful, jealous scold. But we never saw her and I cannot

judge between them. To us Gissing was just himself. “I cannot ask you to my home,” he said. “Impossible — quite impossible. Oh quite impossible. I have to dismiss any such ideas. I have no home.”

He did not always keep such ideas dismissed, but for the most part they were out of the picture. He kept his own family also, the custodians of those strangling early standards, out of our way, just as he kept his wife out of our way. He was terrified at the prospect of incompatibility. His sensitiveness to reactions made every relationship a pose, and he had no natural customary *persona* for miscellaneous use.

The Gissing I knew, therefore, was essentially a specially posed mentality, a personal response, and his effect upon me was an extraordinary blend of a damaged joy-loving human being hampered by inherited gentility and a classical education. He craved to laugh, jest, enjoy, stride along against the wind, shout, “quaff mighty flagons.” But his upbringing behind the chemist’s shop in Wakefield had been one of repressive gentility, where “what will the neighbours *think* of us?” was more terrible than the thunder of God. The insanity of our educational organization had planted down in that Yorkshire town, a grammar school dominated by the idea of classical scholarship. The head was an enthusiastic pedant who poured into that fresh and vigorous young brain nothing but classics and a “scorn” for non-classical things. Gissing’s imagination, therefore escaped from the cramping gentilities and respectability of home to find its compensations in the rhetorical swagger, the rotundities and the pompous grossness of Rome. He walked about Wakefield in love with goddesses and nymphs and excited by ideas of patrician freedoms in a world of untouchable women. Classics men according to their natures are all either “Latins” or “Hellenes.” Gissing was a Latin, oratorical and not scientific, unanalytical, unsubtle and secretly haughty. He accepted and identified himself with all the pretensions of Rome’s triumphal arches.

His knowledge of classical Rome was extraordinarily full. We found him, there, an unsparing enthusiastic guide. With a sort of a shamed hostility indeed he recognized the vestiges of mediaevalism and the Renascence that cumbered the spectacle. But that was just a subsequent defilement, like mud on the marble of a submerged

palace. At the back of his mind, a splendid Olympus to our Roman excursions, stood noble senators in togas, marvellous matrons like Lucrece, gladiators proud to die, Horatiuses ready to leap into gulfs *pro patria*, the finest fruit of humanity, unjudged, accepted, speaking like epitaphs and epics, and by these standards also he measured the mundane swarm he pictured *In the Year of Jubilee*. For that thin yet penetrating juice of shrewd humour, of kindly stoicisms, of ready trustfulness, of fitful indignations and fantastic and often grotesque generosities, which this dear London life of ours exudes, he had no palate. I have never been able to decide how much that defect of taste was innate or how far it was a consequence partly of the timid pretentiousness of his home circumstances, and partly of that pompous grammatical training to which his brain was subjected just in his formative years. I favour the latter alternative. I favour it because of his ready abundant fits of laughter. You do not get laughter without release, and you must have something suppressed to release. "Preposterous!" was a favourite word with him. He told me once of how he was awakened at three in the morning in a London hotel by a clatter of milk cans under his window. He lay in bed helpless with laughter that civilization should produce this marvel of a chamber designed for sleeping, just over a yard where the rattling of milk cans was an inevitable nightly event.

At the back of my mind I thought him horribly mis-educated and he hardly troubled to hide from me his opinion that I was absolutely illiterate. Each of us had his secret amusement in the other's company. He knew the Greek epics and plays to a level of frequent quotation but I think he took his classical philosophers as read and their finality for granted; he assumed that modern science and thought were merely degenerate recapitulations of their lofty and inaccessible wisdom. The transforming forces of the world about us he ascribed to a certain rather regrettable "mechanical ingenuity" in our people. He thought that a classical scholar need only turn over a few books to master all that scientific work and modern philosophy had made of the world, and it did not disillusion him in the least that he had no mastery of himself or any living fact in existence. He was entirely enclosed in a defensive phraseology and a conscious "scorn" of the "baser" orders and "ignoble" types. When he laughed he called

the world "Preposterous," but when he could not break through to reality and laughter then his word was "Sordid." That readiness to call common people "base" "sordid" "mean," "the vulgar sort" and so forth was less evident in the man's nature than in his writings. Some of his books will be read for many generations, but because of this warping of his mind they will find fewer lovers than readers. In Swinnerton's book one can see that kindly writer starting out with a real admiration and sympathy for his subject and gradually being estranged by the injustice, the faint cruelty of this mannered ungraciousness towards disadvantaged people.

Through Gissing I was confirmed in my suspicion that this orthodox classical training which was once so powerful an antiseptic against Egyptian dogma and natural superstitions, is now no longer a city of refuge from barbaric predispositions. It has become a vast collection of monumental masonry, a pale cemetery in a twilight, through which new conceptions hurry apologetically on their way to town, finding neither home nor sustenance there. It is a cemetery, which like that churchyard behind Atlas House, Bromley, can give little to life but a certain sparkle in the water and breed nothing any more but ghosts, *ignes fatui* and infections. It has ceased to be a field of education and become a proper hunting ground for the archæologist and social psychologist.

So, full of friendly antagonisms, Gissing, Jane and I went about Rome together, our brains reacting and exchanging very abundantly. It was Rome before the mischiefs of Mayor Nathan, before the vast vulgarity of the Vittorio Emmanuele monument had ruined the Piazza Venezia, and when the only main thoroughfare was the Corso. The Etruscan tombs still slept undiscovered in the Forum and instead of Boni's flower beds there were weeds and wild flowers. Walking through some fields near Tivoli the *Story of Miss Winchelsea's Heart* came into my head — and I remember telling it to Gissing.

Gissing, like Gibbon, regarded Christianity as a deplorable disaster for the proud gentilities of classicism and left us to "do" the Vatican and St. Peter's by ourselves. In many of the darkened, incense-saturated churches, I felt old Egypt and its mysteries still living and muttering, but the papal city and its swarming pilgrims, its libraries and galleries, its observatory, its Renascence architecture,

filled me with perplexing impressions. Much more than pomp, tradition and decay was manifest in these activities. The Scarlet Woman of my youthful prejudices was not in evidence. Protestantism, I perceived, had not done justice to Renascence Rome.

Here, quite plainly, was a great mental system engaged in a vital effort to comprehend its expanding universe and sustain a co-ordinating conception of human activities. That easy word "superstition" did not cover a tithe of it.

It dawned upon me that there had been a Catholic Reformation as drastic as and perhaps profounder than the Protestant Reformation, and that the mentality of clerical Rome, instead of being an unchanged system *in saecula saeculorum* had been stirred to its foundations at that time and was still struggling — like everything else alive — in the grip of adaptive necessity. In spite of my anti-Christian bias I found something congenial in the far flung cosmopolitanism of the Catholic proposition. Notwithstanding its synthesis of decaying ancient theologies and its strong taint of other-worldishness, the Catholic Church continues to be, in its own half-hearted fashion, an Open Conspiracy to reorganize the whole life of man. If the papal system had achieved the ambitions of its most vigorous period, it would have been much more in the nature of that competent receiver for human affairs, the research for which has occupied my mind so largely throughout my life, than that planless Providentialism which characterized almost all the political and social thought of the nineteenth century. Catholicism is something greater in scope and spirit than any nationalist protestantism and immeasurably above such loutish reversions to hate as Hitlerism or the Ku-Klux-Klan. I should even hesitate to call it "reactionary" without some qualification.

I have lived for many years in open controversy with Catholicism and though, naturally enough, I have sometimes been insulted by indignant zealots, I have found the ordinary Catholic controversialist a fair fighter and a civilized man — worthy of that great cultural system within which such minds as Leonardo and Michelangelo could develop and find expression. He has an antiquated realist philosophy which too often gives him a sort of pert hardness, but that is another matter. It is a question too fine for me to discuss whether I

am an outright atheist or an extreme heretic on the furthest verge of Christendom — beyond the Arians, beyond the Manichaeans. But certainly I branch from the Catholic stem.

Let me however return from this Vatican excursion to George Gissing. That disposition to get away from entangling conditions which is manifest in almost every type of imaginative worker, accumulated in his case to quite desperate fugitive drives. In Italy with us he was in flight from his second wife. The dreadful intimacy of that isolated life at Ewell, without a thought in common, an intimacy of perpetual recrimination, had become intolerable. A well-known educationist, a woman who had evidently a very great admiration for Gissing, had proposed to take in Mrs. Gissing and the children and try to establish tolerable relations with her, to "educate" her in fact, while Gissing recovered his mental peace in his beloved Italy. But the experiment was not working well; the helpful lady was meddling with things beyond her experience and the poor wife, perplexed and indignant beyond measure by this strange man who had possessed himself of her life, was progressing through scenes and screams towards a complete mental breakdown; she was behaving very badly indeed, and letters would arrive at the Hotel Aliberti in Rome, that left Gissing white and shaking between anger and dismay for the better part of a day. The best thing then was to go off with him outside Rome to some wayside albergo, to the Milvian bridge, or towards Tivoli or along the Appian Way, drink rough red wine, get him talking Italian to peasants, launch out upon wild social, historical and ethnological discussions, and gradually push the gnawing trouble into the background again.

This poor vexed brain — so competent for learning and aesthetic reception, so incompetent, so impulsive and weakly yielding under the real stresses of life — went on from us into Calabria and produced there *By the Ionian Sea* and, later on, after returning to England, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. The interest of these books, with their halting effort to pose as a cultivated leisurely eighteenth century intelligence, is, I think, greatly intensified by the realization that beneath the struggle to sustain that *persona*, the pitiless hunt of consequences, the pursuit of the monstrous penalties exacted for a false start and a foolish and inconsiderate decision or

so, was incessant. Perhaps Gissing was made to be hunted by Fate. He never turned and fought. He always hid or fled.

Presently we were back at Worcester Park and he was established with a "worthy housekeeper," a cook general in fact, in a cottage in Dorking. The wife was still being hushed up by the friend in London and did not know of his whereabouts. He was intensely solitary and miserable at Dorking. One day he came to us with a request. There was a proposal from a Frenchwoman to translate his novels into French. He wished to confer with her. Impossible for a lone man to entertain a strange lady at Dorking; would we arrange a meeting?

They lunched with us and afterwards they walked in our garden confabulating. She was a woman of the intellectual bourgeoisie, with neat black hair and a trim black dress, her voice was carefully musical, she was well read, slightly voluble and over-explicit by our English standards, and consciously refined and intelligent. To Gissing she came as the first breath of Continental recognition, and she seemed to embody all those possibilities of fine intercourse and one-sided understanding for which he was craving. For Gissing carried the normal expectancy of the male, which I have already dealt with in my own dissection, to an extravagant degree. Never did a man need mothering more and never was there a less sacrificial lover.

Presently we learnt from a chance remark that the lady had visited him one day at Dorking. She had become "Thérèse." He made no further confidences. Then he broke up his Dorking establishment and left for Switzerland, where he was joined by Thérèse and her mother. He confided that there was to be a joint ménage and to ease things with the French relations, the mother carried the relationship so far towards a pseudo-marriage as to circulate cards with the surname of Thérèse erased in favour of "Gissing." All this had, of course, to be carried out with absolute secrecy towards his actual wife and most of his English friends. Those of us who knew, thought that if he could be put into such circumstances as would at last give his very fine brain a fair chance to do good work, connivance in so petty a deception was a negligible price to pay.

Presently he published a novel called *The Crown of Life*. It is the very poorest of his novels but it is illuminating as regards himself.

The “crown of life” was love — in a frock coat. This was what Gissing thought of love or at any rate it was as much as he dared to think of love. But after all, we argued, something of the sort had to happen and now perhaps he would write that great romance of the days of Cassiodorus.

But things did not work out as we hoped. When, a year or so later, Jane and I, returning from an excursion to Switzerland, visited him in Paris, we found him in a state of profound discontent. The apartment was bleakly elegant in the polished French way. He was doing no effective work, he was thin and ailing, and he complained bitterly that his pseudo mother-in-law, who was in complete control of his domestic affairs, was starving him. The sight of us stirred him to an unwonted Anglo-mania, a stomachic nostalgia, and presently he fled to us in England. An old school friend of his, Henry Hick, a New Romney doctor, of whom I shall have a word or so to say later, came over to look at him, and declared he was indeed starved, and Jane set to work and fed him up — weighing him carefully at regular intervals — with marvellous results.

I was glad to have him in our house, but it carried a penalty. For suddenly Thérèse began to write me long, long, wonderfully phrased letters — on thin paper and crossed — informing me that she could not bring herself to write to him directly and demanding my intervention. I had still to realize the peculiar Latin capacity for making copious infusions of simple situations. Presently when Gissing went off for some days to Hick, he too began to write at Thérèse to me — long letters in his small fine handwriting.

But I was busy upon work of my own and after one or two rather hasty attempts at diplomacy I brutalized the situation. I declared that the best thing for Gissing to do would be to decide never to return to France, since there was an evident incompatibility of appetite between him and the lady, or alternatively if there was any sort of living affection still between them, which I doubted, he must stipulate as a condition of his return that the catering should be taken out of the hands of the mother and put in those of the daughter under his own direction, and finally I announced that in no circumstances would I read through, much less paraphrase, consider or answer any further letters from Thérèse. Whatever she wrote to me, I should send

to him for him to deal with directly. And with that I washed my hands of their immediate troubles.

He went back to her on the terms I had suggested, so I suppose there was still some sort of tenderness between them. Then these three poor troubled things full of the spirit of mute recrimination, perplexed and baffled by each other's differences, went down to a furnished house at St. Jean-de-Luz and, afterwards, to St. Jean-Pied-de-Port in the mountains above, and there he set to work writing what was to have been, what might have been under happier circumstances, a great historical picture of Italy under the Gothic kings, *Veranilda*. He had had this book in mind almost all the time I had known him. He had been reading Cassiodorus for it in 1898. Towards Christmas 1903 some of Thérèse's relations came to visit them. On some excursion with them he caught a cold, which settled on his chest. Neither Thérèse nor her mother was the nursing type of woman. A sudden hatred seized him of the comfortless house he was in, of the misty mountain village, of economized French food and everything about him and a sudden fear fell upon him of the crackling trouble in his lungs and the fever that was gathering in his veins. He had been writing with deepening distress to Morley Roberts in November. Just on the eve of Christmas came telegrams to both of us: "George is dying. Entreat you to come. In greatest haste."

I had private bothers of my own and I was supposed to be nursing a cold, but as Roberts did not seem to be available and made no reply to a telegram I sent him, I decided to go. It was Christmas Eve. I had no time to change out of my garden clothes and I threw some things into a handbag and went off in a fly to Folkestone Pier to catch the afternoon boat. I made my Christmas dinner of ham at Bayonne station.

I found the house a cheerless one. I saw nothing, or at least I remember seeing nothing of Thérèse's mother; I think she had retired to her own room. Thérèse was in a state of distress and I thought her extremely incompetent. The visitors were still visiting but I insisted upon their departure. There was however a good little Anglican parson about, with his wife, and they helped me to get in a nurse (or rather a "religieuse," which is by no means the same thing) and made

some beef-tea before they departed for their home in St. Jean-de-Luz.

Gissing was dying of double pneumonia and quite delirious all the time I was there. There was no ice available and his chest had to be kept cool by continually dipping handkerchiefs in methylated spirit and putting them on him. Also his mouth was slimy and needed constant wiping. I kept by him, nursing him until far into the small hours while the weary religieuse recuperated, dozing by the fire. Then I found my way back to my inn at the other end of the place through a thick fog. St. Jean-Pied-de-Port is a lonely frontier town and at night its deserted streets abound in howling great dogs to whom the belated wayfarer is an occasion for the fiercest demonstrations. I felt like a flitting soul hurrying past Anubis and hesitating at strange misleading turnings on the lonely Pathway of the Dead. I forget every detail of the inn but I still remember that sick-room acutely.

It is one of the many oddities of my sheltered life that until the death of Gissing I had never watched a brain passing through disorganization into a final stillness. I had never yet seen anyone dying or delirious. I had expected to find him enfeebled and anxious and I had already planned how we could get a civil list pension from Mr. Balfour, to educate his boys and how I would tell him of that and what other reassurances I might give him. But Gissing aflame with fever had dropped all these anxieties out of his mind. Only once did the old Gissing reappear for a moment, when abruptly he entreated me to take him back to England. For the rest of the time this gaunt, dishevelled, unshaven, flushed, bright-eyed being who sat up in bed and gestured weakly with his lean hand, was exalted. He had passed over altogether into that fantastic pseudo-Roman world of which Wakefield Grammar School had laid the foundations.

“What are these magnificent beings!” he would say. “Who are these magnificent beings advancing upon us?” Or again, “What is all this splendour? What does it portend?” He babbled in Latin; he chanted fragments of Gregorian music. All the accumulation of material that he had made for *Veranilda* and more also, was hurrying faster and brighter across the mirrors of his brain before the lights went out for ever.

The Anglican chaplain, whose wife had helped with the beef-tea,

heard of that chanting. He allowed his impression to develop in his memory and it was proclaimed later in a newspaper that Gissing had died "in the fear of God's holy name, and with the comfort and strength of the Catholic faith." This led to some bitter recriminations. Edward Clodd and Morley Roberts were particularly enraged at this "body-snatching" as they called it, and among other verbal missiles that hit that kindly little man in the full publicity of print were "crow," "vulture" and "ecclesiastical buzzard." But he did not deserve to be called such names. He did quite honestly think Gissing's "Te Deums" had some sort of spiritual significance.

Another distressful human being in the sick chamber that night was Thérèse. I treated her harshly. She annoyed me because I found a handkerchief was being used to wipe his mouth that had been dipped in methylated spirit, and her thrifty soul resisted me when I demanded every clean handkerchief he possessed. Her sense of proportion was inadequate and her need for sympathy untimely. As I was hurrying across the room to do him some small service, I found her in my way. She clasped her hands and spoke in her beautifully modulated voice. "Figure to yourself Mr. Wells, what it must mean to me, to see my poor Georges like this!"

I restrained myself by an effort. "You are tired out," I said. "You must go to bed. He will be safe now with the nurse and me."

And I put her gently but firmly out of the room....

So ended all that flimsy inordinate stir of grey matter that was George Gissing. He was a pessimistic writer. He spent his big fine brain depreciating life, because he would not and perhaps could not look life squarely in the eyes, — neither his circumstances nor the conventions about him nor the adverse things about him nor the limitations of his personal character. But whether it was nature or education that made this tragedy I cannot tell.

§ 4. NEW ROMNEY AND SANDGATE (1898)

I came back from Italy to Worcester Park in the summer of 1898, on the verge of the last bout of illness in my life before my health cleared up, quite unaware of the collapse that hung over me. I

ascribed a general sense of malaise, an inability to stick to my work — I was then writing *Love and Mr. Lewisham* — to want of exercise and so the greater my lassitude the more I forced myself to exertion. What was happening was a sort of break-up of the scars and old clotted accumulations about my crushed kidney, and nothing could have been worse for me than to start, as we did, upon a cycling journey to the south coast. I was ashamed of my bodily discomfort — until I was over forty the sense of physical inferiority was a constant acute distress to me which no philosophy could mitigate — and I plugged along with a head that seemed filled with wool and a skin that felt like a misfit. Somewhere on the road I caught a cold.

We struggled to Lewes and then on to Seaford. We decided I must really be overdoing this exercise and we went into lodgings for a rest. All this is brought back to me by the hieroglyphics of the picshuas. Here under date of July 29th is one of them. Our sitting-room was evidently furnished with unrestrained piety. We were physically unhappy and our discomfort breaks out in hatred of our fellow visitors to Seaford. Jane has complained that she is dull. Some forgotten joke about a hat is traceable; I fancy I may have used her hat as a waste-paper basket; and noises (buniks) upstairs are afflicting me. By way of rest I am struggling to complete *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. Whenever I felt ill I became urgent to finish whatever book I was working on, because while a book unfinished would have been worth nothing, a finished book now meant several hundred pounds. Before going to Rome I had already scamped the finish of *When the Sleeper Wakes* (which afterwards I rechristened in better English *When the Sleeper Awakes*) and I came near to scamping *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. But the suppuration that was going on in my now aching side, was too rapid to allow that. *Love and Mr. Lewisham* was finished with much care and elaboration some months later. My erring kidney began apparently to secrete ink. Jane, after brooding over my condition, was struck by an idea and went out and bought a clinical thermometer. We found my temperature had mounted to 102 F.

Picshua: July 29th, 1898.

We had no established doctor but I had met a friend of Gissing's, Henry Hick, who was medical officer of health for Romney Marsh and who had asked us to stay a night with him in the course of our cycling tour. New Romney seemed close at hand, we exchanged telegrams and I went to him at once by little cross country lines and several changes of train. I was now in considerable pain, the jolting carriages seemed malignantly uncomfortable, I suffered from intense

thirst, I could get nothing to drink and the journey was interminable. With an unfaltering gentleness and no sign of dismay, Jane steered this peevish bundle of suffering that had once been her "Mr. Binder" to its destination. Hick was a good man at diagnosis and he did me well. An operation seemed indicated and he put me to bed and starved me down to make the trouble more accessible to the scalpel, but when the surgeon came from London it was decided that the offending kidney had practically taken itself off and that there was nothing left to remove. Thereupon I began to recover and after a few years of interrogative suspense and occasional pain not even a reminiscent twinge remained of my left kidney.

I find the picshuas resume after a couple of months. Before October I did some little drawings as I lay in bed, and amused myself by colouring them and these I think prevented the immediate resumption of the picshua diary. Mrs. Hick had just presented the world with a daughter; I became her godfather and began an elaborate illustrated story dedicated to this young lady called *The Story of Tommy and the Elephant*. This little book was preserved, and years afterwards when my god-daughter needed some money to set up as a medical practitioner she sold it and the copyright with my assent, and it was published in facsimile. It had an artless quaintness that pleased people and it did well and still sells as a Christmas present book.

On October 5th the picshuas testify that I hatched out a new project called *Kipps*, and completed *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. By this time I had left Hick's helpful home and was, in a rather invalidish fashion, taking up my work again. I had been driven in a comfortable carriage to Sandgate and after a week or so in a boarding house we had installed ourselves in a little furnished house called Beach Cottage. Hick did not think it advisable for me to go back to Worcester Park and I never entered that house again.

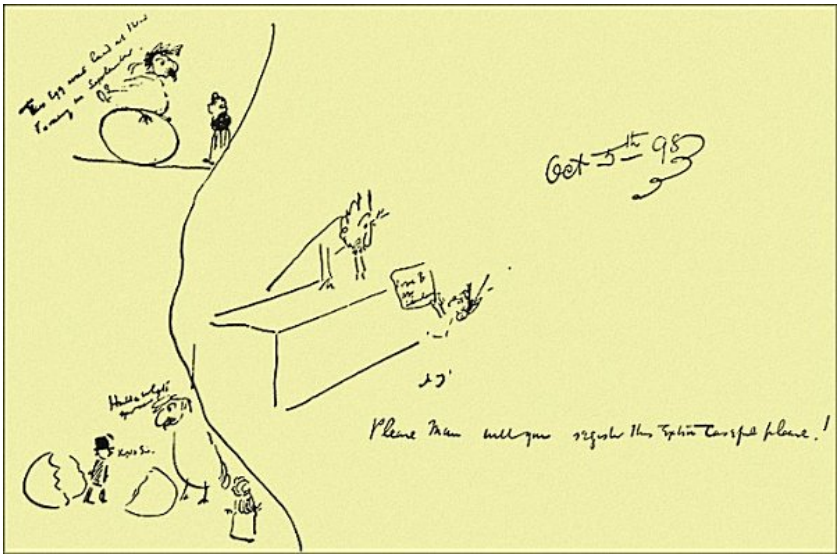

Picshua: October 5th, 1898.

On October 8th there seems to have been a bout of drawing to put all the momentous events of the previous two months on record. The picshuas recall a score of particulars that I should otherwise have forgotten completely. I am reminded of a “horrid medicine,” and that I began to drink Contrexeville water, and there is a vivid rendering of Jane’s dismay at a possible operation, while Hick and the specialist discuss my case. I think that Jane looking at the knife and saying “Wow” marks one of the high points of my peculiar artistic method. I assume my first dressing gown, I get up, leaning heavily on Jane, I gambol (galumph) to her great alarm, and she takes me out to the sea front in a bath chair. Then as my strength returns and I can run alone, Jane takes to sea bathing (in a costume that “dates”) and I buy a new cotton hat— “not a halo this time after all.”

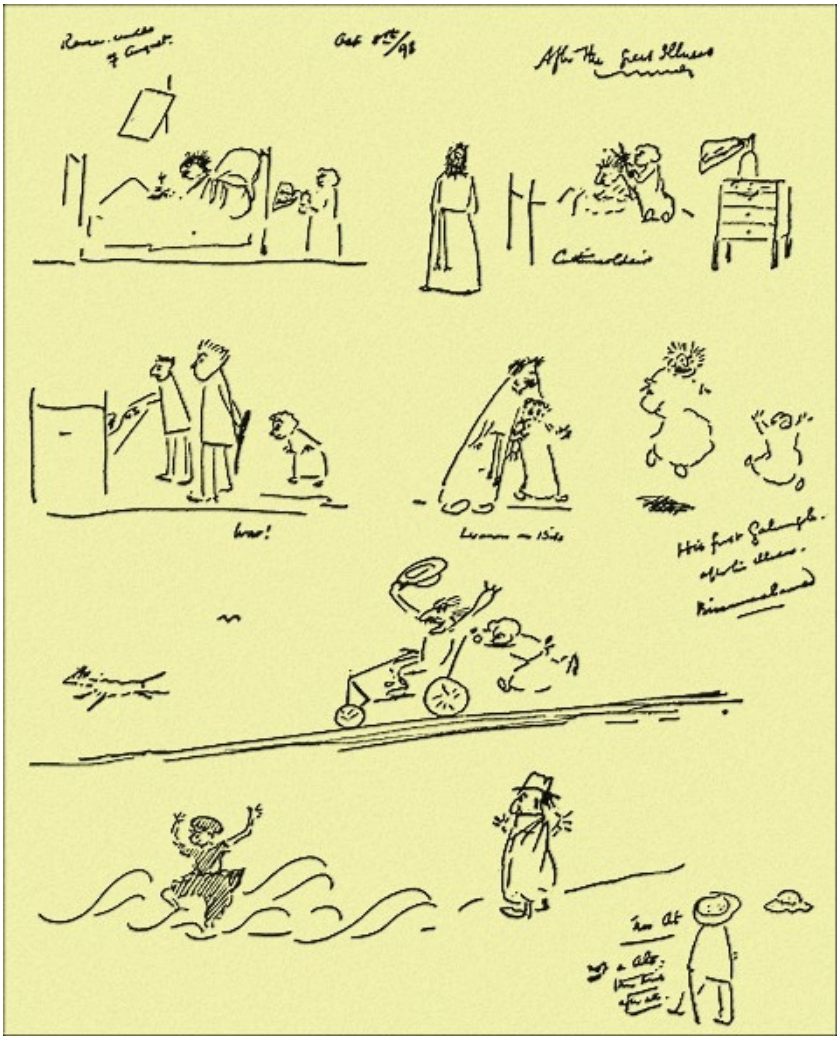

Picshua: October 8th, 1898. Reminiscences Of August 1898.

The next drawing records merely the interruption of a picnic by intrusive cows during the period of recovery. Jane was never afraid of death, I have seen her twice when she thought she would be killed and she was quite steady, but she was town bred and she did not like cows. She distrusted these kind fragrant animals.

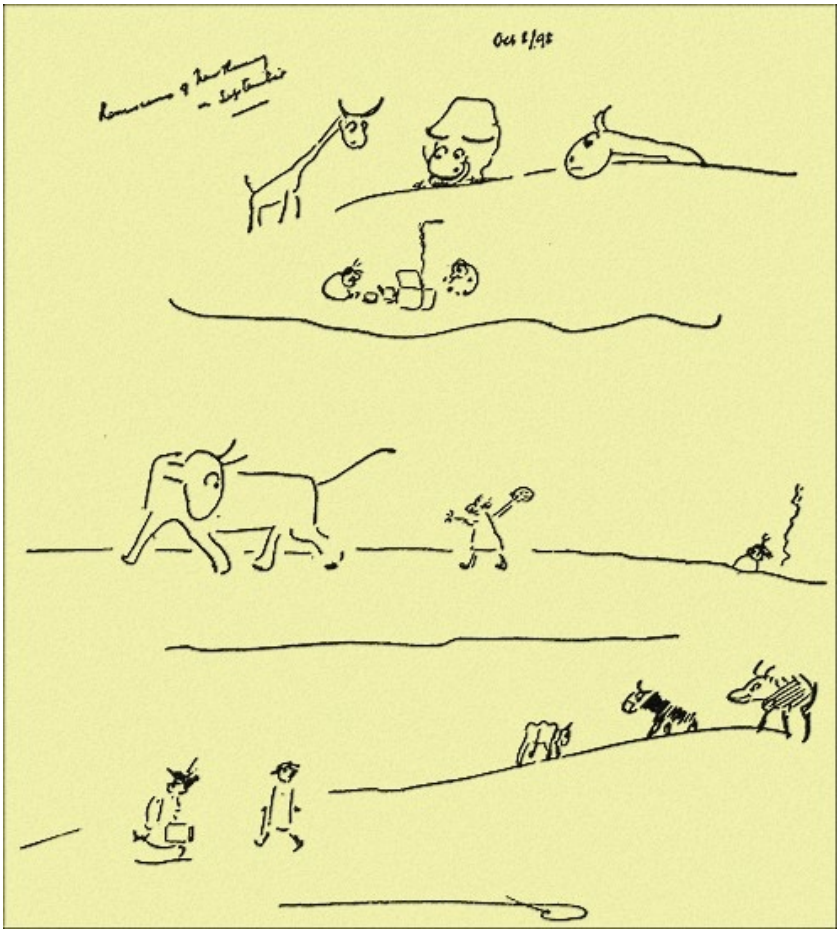

Picshua: October 8th, 1898. Reminiscences of New Romney in September.

The next picshua records that we amused ourselves by shooting with an air gun, and then there began the serious business of finding a new0 Accordng to the best advice available, a long period of invalidism was before me. I had to reconcile myself to complete exile from London, and contrive to live in dry air with no damp in the subsoil and in as much sunshine as possible.

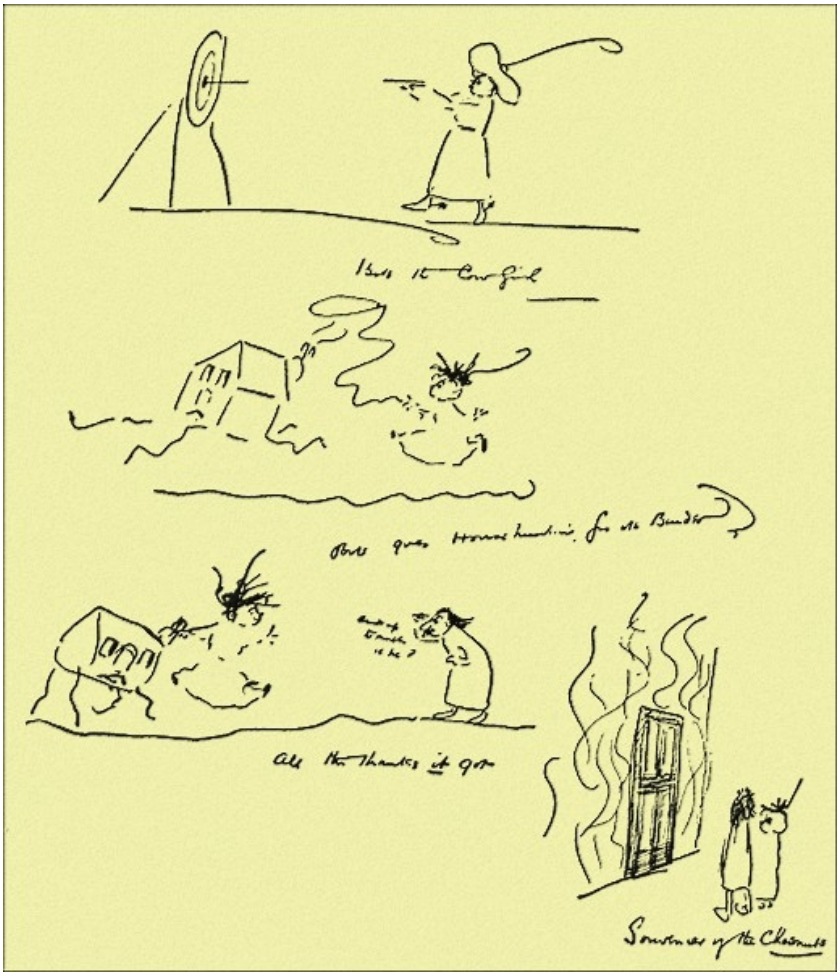

Picshua: October 8th, 1898. Bits The Cow Girl. House Hunting.

Beach Cottage was a temporary refuge and so close to the sea that in rough weather the waves broke over the roof. Jane planted me there and then went off to pack up the furniture in Heatherlea and bring it down to an unfurnished house, Arnold House, into which we presently moved on a short lease, until we could find something better suited to our needs. That was difficult. Already in the picshuas given we are manifestly thinking of having to build a house and at last we decided to set about that adventure. I have already given a picshua of our removal from Beach Cottage to Arnold House in § 3

of Chapter Seven.

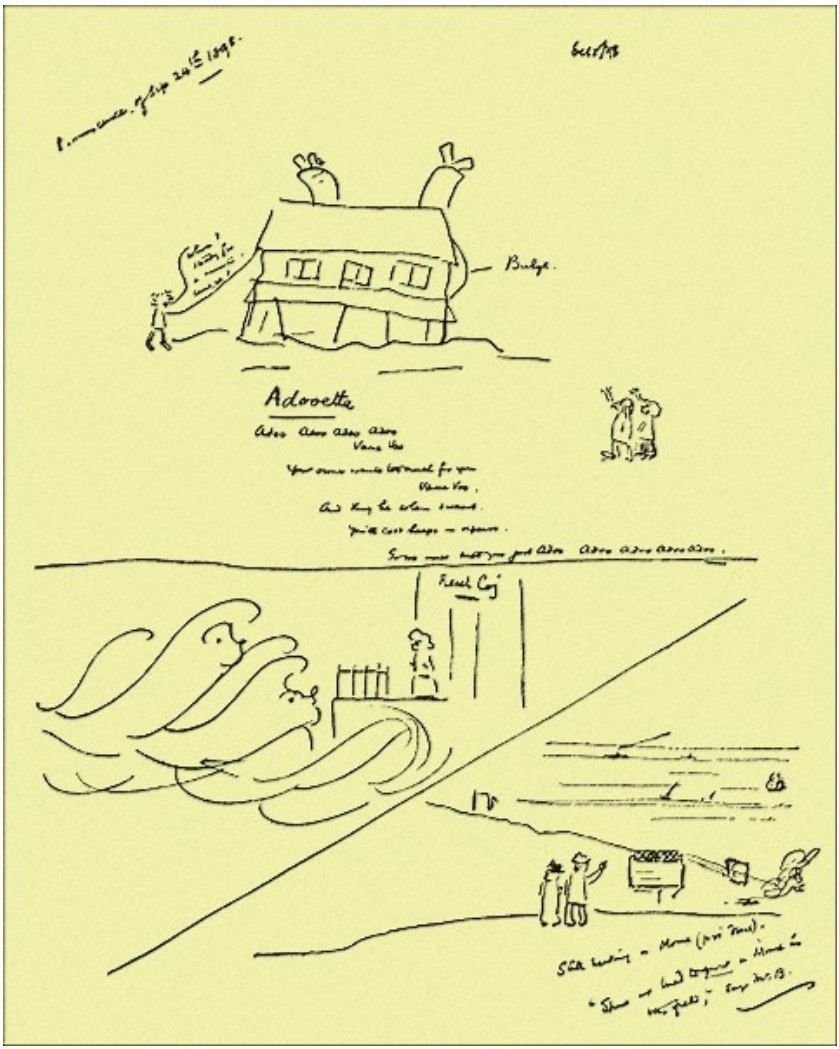

Picshua: October 8th, 1898. Reminiscences Of September 24th, 1898.

A queer little incident in my illness which it would be ungrateful to omit, was the sudden appearance of Henry James and Edmund Gosse at New Romney, riding upon bicycles from the direction of Rye. They took tea with Dr. Hick and us and were very charming and

friendly, and Jane and I were greatly flattered by their visit. It never dawned upon me that they had any but sociable motives in coming over to see me. And later on, when I was in Beach Cottage, J. M. Barrie came in to see me. I gathered he had taken it into his head to spend a day at the seaside and visit me. (There is a picshua in § 3 of Chapter Seven commemorating his visit.) Barrie talked slowly and wisely of this and that, but particularly of his early struggles and the difficulties of young writers. There were times when a little help might do much for a man who was down. It never entered my head that I myself might be considered "down" just then, and I argued the matter with him. Once a man borrowed or was subsidized, I said, the "go" went out of his work. It was a dangerous and perhaps a fatal thing to deprive a man's cheques of the sharp freshness of an unencumbered gain. "Perhaps you're right," meditated Barrie, and went on after a pause to tell of how when he first came to London he did not understand the nature of a cheque. "I just put them in a drawer and waited for the fellow to send me the real money," he said. "I didn't see the sense of them."

He helped himself to a buttered bun. "When first I came to London," he remarked, "I lived almost entirely on boons...."

The experience of later years has made me realize that in this way the Royal Literary Fund was making its enquiries about me, and that I was not so completely outside the range of assistance as I imagined. But I never had any assistance of that kind and at that time I did not want it. I was now some hundreds of pounds on the solvent side and thinking of building a house with my balance. I knew nothing of investment and having a house of my own seemed as good a use for savings as I could imagine.

§ 5. EDIFYING ENCOUNTERS.
SOME TYPES OF *PERSONA*; AND TEMPERAMENTAL ATTITUDE (1897-1910)

I had a three years' agreement for Arnold House and I stayed out my full time in it, gradually rebuilding my overstrained body and

recovering resisting power to colds and suchlike infections. It was a semi-detached villa and it had a long narrow strip of grass which ended in a hedge of tamarisk along the sea wall. Upon the beach one day the *Sea Lady* appeared, very lovely in a close fitting bathing dress and with the sunlight in her hair, and took possession of my writing desk.

Our next door neighbours were a very pleasant couple named Popham, small rentiers with cultivated tastes who read well and thought of doing something to mend the world. They were the children of that serious Nonconformity which founded so many sound businesses in the mid Victorian epoch, turned them into honest joint-stock companies and left its children just independent enough to travel, trifle with the Arts and supply the backbone of the new British intelligentsia. The Pophams were always handy to play with. They taught me to swim, so far as I have ever learnt to swim, we moored a raft twenty or thirty yards from shore and I struggled out to it, and I found Popham as good a companion as Bowkett for long bicycle rides into Kent. Mrs. Popham was a sister-in-law of Graham Wallas whom I had already heard speaking in the old days in William Morris's greenhouse meetings. Presently he came down to Sandgate with his wife and we found we had a lot to talk about together.

Wallas was a rather slovenly, slightly pedantic, noble-spirited man and I cannot measure justly the influence of the disinterested life he led on my own. It was I think very considerable. The Wallases, the Oliviers and the Webbs were quite the best of the leading Fabians — Shaw I refuse to count as a typical Fabian; they lived lives devoted to the Res Publica right out to the end of their days. They took the idea of getting a living as something by the way; a sort of living was there for them anyhow; and the real business of life began for them only after that had been settled and put on one side.

From what I have told of myself it must be plain that in those days I was full of mercenary *go*; "price per thousand" and "saleable copy" were as present in my mind as they are in the picshuas I have shown. My commercialism is not, I think, innate, but my fight with the world for Jane and myself and my family, had set a premium upon money making. I was beginning to like the sport. I was beginning to enjoy

being able to pay for things. I was getting rather keen on my literary reputation as a saleable asset. It was as good for my mind as uninfected mountain air in an early case of tuberculosis to go for walks with Wallas, worlds away from any thought of prices, agents, serializations, "rights." We even went off to Switzerland together for a couple of weeks and walked among the passes of Valais, over the Gemmi, over the Aletsch Glacier to Bel Alp, up to Zermatt, up the Furka, over the St. Gotthard, talking.

Essentially Wallas was a talker and a lecturer. He liked picking a case to pieces with a quiet fastidious deliberation far more than he liked the labour of putting things together. My journalistic experiences since my student days had bitten into me the primary need of sending in copy in time or even a little in advance of time. All my life I have been "delivering the goods" even if the packing has been hasty and the execution scampered at any rate, if not actually *scamped*. The habit is ingrained. I had meant to loiter over this autobiography for years — and perhaps not publish it in the end. I sketched an opening for it two years ago. And here it is being pressed to a finish. But the bad side of Wallas's rentier unworldliness was that he was under no inner compulsion to get things positively done. If he had not had very definite academic ambitions and a real joy in answering questions, he might have sunken altogether into sterile erudite wisdom. As it is, the London School of Economics will testify how much the personal Graham Wallas outdid the published Graham Wallas. Alfred Zimmern and Walter Lippmann were among his particular pupils and there is scarcely any considerable figure among the younger generation of publicists who does not owe something to his slow, fussy, mannered, penetrating and inspiring counsels. He was a classical scholar, but Hellenic rather than Roman — in contrast to Gissing — a Platonist and not a Homerist. His grasp upon modern scientific philosophy was a firm one.

Our Swiss conversations centred upon our common feeling that there had to be some firmer basis, a better thought-out system of ideas, for social and political activities than was available at that time. He had been greatly impressed by the book of Professor Ostrogorski on *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*

(1902). It was an early break towards realism in political science. It swept aside legist conceptions of government by a frank treatment of parliamentary actuality. It was plain to Wallas that realistic acid might be made to bite still deeper into political conventionality. He wanted to make a psychological examination of mass- political reactions the new basis for a revision of governmental theory, and he thought of calling this study "A Prolegomenon to Politics." Finally he produced it as *Human Nature in Politics* (1908). Walter Lippmann, under his inspiration, produced *A Preface to Politics*, and the Alpine sunlight of that mental hike of ours is also very evident in my own *Modern Utopia* (1905). We were all branching out in characteristic directions from the Ostrogorski stimulus.

Wallas and I never lost contact completely. Within a few months of his death (1932) he was in my study reading and commenting very illuminatingly and usefully upon the political chapters of my *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*. He had been reading a good deal of Bentham at that time, digging out long forgotten books, and I remember his glasses gleaming appreciatively as he squatted in my lowest easy chair and dilated on the "old boy's" abundance and breadth of range. Bentham, too, had been a sort of encyclopædist. I do not think Wallas wrote anything about this aspect of Bentham, though I know he dealt with him largely in his lectures on local government; he was just going over him for pleasure, gathering a bright nosegay of characteristic ideas — to be presently dropped by the wayside.

Somewhere between my own tendency to push on to conclusions and Wallas's interminable deliberation, lies I suppose the ideal method of the perfect student working "without haste and without delay."

My opinion of the texture and mental forms of the brain of Graham Wallas was very high, and I formed an almost equal respect for the intelligence of another of those early Fabians, Sydney Olivier who became Lord Olivier. Both the Webbs also I found very good, if antagonistic, stuff. Beatrice had (and has) a delightful way that is all her own, of throwing out bold general propositions about things in the most aggressive manner possible. I should call her style of talk experimental dogmatism. If you disagree, you say "Oh Nonsense!"

and restate her proposition in a corrected form. Then she fights with unscrupulous candour and invincible good temper. Sidney is not nearly so exploratory; his convictions are less vivid and plastic; his aim is rather persuasion than truth, he is politic rather than philosophical. Of Shaw's mind I have already given an impression.

In my account of *fin-de-siècle* socialism I have criticized the peculiar limitations of pseudo "practicality" and anti- Utopianism that went with the academic and civil-service associations of the Fabian group. In particular I have shown how they shirked and delayed the problem of the competent receiver. Here I am dealing not so much with these ideological limitations with which I presently fell foul, as with their pervading sense of the importance of social service as the frame of life, and the way in which Jane and I were probably influenced by them. We may have had that in us from the beginning, Jane particularly, but they brought it out in us. They may have done much to deflect me from the drift towards a successful, merely literary career into which I was manifestly falling in those early Sandgate days. I might have become entirely an artist and a literary careerist and possibly a distinguished one, and then my old friend Osborn of the *National Observer*, the *Morning Post* and "Boon" would never have had occasion to call my books "sociological cocktails."

A much more tawdry brain in the Fabian constellation which played its part in teaching me about human reactions was that of Hubert Bland. As my personal acquaintances with the Fabians extended we found the Blands had a house at Dymchurch, within an easy bicycle ride of us, to which they came in summer-time. They were the strangest of couples and they played a large part in the Fabian comedy. Doris Langley Moore has recently given a very frank account of them in her excellent life of Mrs. Bland (*E. Nesbit* 1933), to which I make my acknowledgments. E. Nesbit was a tall, whimsical, restless, able woman who had been very beautiful and was still very good-looking; and Bland was a thick-set, broad-faced aggressive man, a sort of Tom-cat man, with a tenoring voice and a black ribboned monocle and a general disposition to dress and live up to that. The two of them dramatized life and I had as yet met few people who did that. They loved scenes and "situations." They really

enjoyed strong emotion. There was no such persistent pursuit of truth and constructive ends in them as in their finer associates. It was not in their imaginative scheme.

Much of her activity went into the writing of verse, rather insincere verse, rather sentimental stories for adults and quite admirable tales for children. The Bastable family she created is still a joy to little people between ten and seventeen. She earned the greater part of the joint income. She ran a great easy-going hospitable Bohemian household at Well Hall, Eltham, an old moated house with a walled garden. Those who loved her and those who wished to please her called her royally "Madame" or "Duchess," and she had a touch of aloof authority which justified that. A miscellany of people came and went there and to lodgings handy-by the smaller house at Dymchurch; the Chesterton brothers, Laurence Housman, Enid Bagnold, Horace Horsnell, Arthur Watts, Oswald Barren, Edgar Jepson, Alfred Sutro, Berta Ruck, Jack Squire, Clifford Sharp, Monseigneur Benson, Frederick Rolfe (Baron Corvo), a multitude of young writers, actors and aspirants in an atmosphere of talk, charades, mystifications and disputes. And there also I and Jane visited and learnt to play Badminton and gossip and discuss endlessly.

At first it seemed to be a simple agreeable multitudinousness from which literary buds and flowers sprang abundantly, presided over by this tall, engaging, restless, moody, humorous woman. Then gradually the visitor began to perceive at first unsuspected trends and threads of relationship and scented, as if from the moat, a more disturbing flavour. People came to Well Hall and went, and some of them went for good. There had been "misunderstandings."

I thought at first that Well Hall was a new group for us and now in the retrospect I realize that it was a new sort of world. It was a world of rôles and not of realities. Perhaps that is the more usual type of world, the sort of world in which people do not say "I am thus and thus," but "I will be thus and thus." From what I have told in the earlier part of this autobiography it is plain that my own people, my parents, brothers, aunt, cousin and so forth, and the people with whom I came in contact, were either very simple-minded people indeed or else they were people with the sustained and developed

simplicity and coherence of scientific training or people with whom my contacts were simple and unrevealing. But the Blands were almost the first people I met at all intimately, who were fundamentally intricate, who had no primary simple idea. They had brains as active and powerful as most other brains in my world, but — as I began to realize only after some disconcerting experiences — they had never taken them down to any sort of philosophy; they had never focussed them on any single objective, and they started off at all sorts of levels from arbitrarily adopted fantasies and poses.

The incongruity of Bland's costume with his Bohemian setting, the costume of a city swell, top-hat, tail-coat, greys and blacks, white slips, spatterdashes and that black-ribboned monocle, might have told me, had I had the ability then to read such signs, of the general imagination at work in his *persona*, the myth of a great Man of the World, a Business Man (he had no gleam of business ability) invading for his own sage strong purposes this assembly of long-haired intellectuals. This myth had, I think, been developed and sustained in him, by the struggle of his egoism against the manifest fact that his wife had a brighter and fresher mind than himself, and had subtler and livelier friends. For many years, says Miss Moore, she carried on a long correspondence with Laurence Housman and I guess that Bland had had to protect his self-esteem against many such intimations of insufficiency in his own equipment. He could not pervade her. That particular correspondence, the biographer relates, was ended when E. Nesbit, against her character and disposition, followed Bland on the anti-feminist side of the suffrage dispute.

In the end she became rather a long-suffering lady, but her restless needle of a mind, her quick response, kept her always an exacting and elusive lady. It was I am convinced because she, in her general drift, was radical and anarchistic, that the pose of Bland's self-protection hardened into this form of gentlemanly conservatism. He presented himself as a Tory in grain, he became — I know of no confirmation — a man of good old family; he entered the dear old Roman Catholic church. These were all insistencies upon soundness and solidity as against her quickness and whim. He was publicly emphatic for social decorum, punctilio, the natural dependence of women and the purity of the family. None of your modern stuff for

him. All this socialism he assured you, so far as it was any good, was a reaction from nineteenth century liberalism to the good old social organization that flourished in England before the days of Adam Smith.

She acquiesced in these posturings. If she had not, I suppose he would have argued with her until she did, and he was a man of unfaltering voice and great determination. But a gay holiday spirit bubbled beneath her verbal orthodoxies and escaped into her work. The Bastables are an anarchistic lot. Her soul was against the government all the time.

This discordance of form and spirit lay on the surface of their lives. Most of us who went to them were from the first on the side of the quicksilver wife against the more commonplace, argumentative, cast-iron husband. Then gradually something else came into the *ensemble*. It came first to the visitor at Well Hall as chance whisperings, as flashes of conflict and fierce resentment, as raised voices in another room, a rush of feet down a passage and the banging of a door.

Miss Langley Moore in her careful and well informed book lays the whole story bare with many particulars I never knew before. There was a more primitive strand in Bland's make-up. He was under an inner compulsion to be a Seducer — on the best eighteenth century lines. That, and not Tory-Socialism, was his essential preoccupation; that was what he talked to himself about when he was in his own company. His imaginations may have been running into this mould before he met her, it is not a very rare mould, but the clash of their personalities confirmed the tendency. That I suppose was where he really got even with her wit and freaks and fantasies and with a certain essential physical coldness in her. And in return he gave her some romantically difficult situations. The astonished visitor came to realize that most of the children of the household were not E. Nesbit's but the results of Bland's conquests, that the friend and companion who ran the household was the mother of one of these young people, that young Miss so and so, who played Badminton with a preoccupied air was the last capture of Hubert's accomplished sex appeal. All this E. Nesbit not only detested and mitigated and tolerated, but presided over and I think found

exceedingly interesting.

Everywhere fantastic concealments and conventions had been arranged to adjust these irregularities to Hubert's pose of ripe old gentility. You found after a time that Well Hall was not so much an atmosphere as a web.

In company, in public, Bland talked and wrote of social and political problems and debated with a barrister-like effectiveness, but when I was alone with him, the fundamental interest insisted upon coming to the surface. He felt my unspoken criticisms and I could not check his assertive apologetics. He would talk about it. He would give hints of his exceptional prowess. He would boast. He would discuss the social laxities of Woolwich and Blackheath, breaking into anecdotes, "simply for the purpose of illustration." Or he would produce a pocket-worn letter and read choice bits of it— "purely because of its psychological interest." He did his utmost to give this perpetual pursuit of furtive gratification, the dignity of a purpose. He was, he claimed to me at least, not so much Don Juan as Professor Juan. "I am a student, an experimentalist," he announced, "in illicit love."

"Illicit love"! It had to be "illicit" and that was the very gist of it for him. It had to be the centre of a system of jealousies, concealments, hidings, exposures, confrontations, sacrifices, incredible generosities — in a word, drama. What he seemed most to value was the glory of a passionate triumph over openness, reason and loyalty — and getting the better of the other fellow. The more complex the situation was, the better it was fitted for Bland's atmosphere.

It is curious how opposed this mentality of what I may call, the seventeenth and eighteenth century "Buck," is to the newer, rationalist, go-as-you-please of the Shelley type, to which my own mind was being attracted in those days. I wanted to abolish barriers between the sexes and Bland loved to get under or over or through them. The more barriers the better. In those days I would have made illicit love impossible — by making almost all love-making *licit*. There was no real inconsistency therefore between Bland's private life and his enthusiasm for formal conventionality and it was perfectly logical that though we were both disposed to great

freedoms by the accepted standards, we were in diametrically antagonistic schools. He thought it made a love affair more exciting and important if one might be damned for it and I could not believe these pleasant intimacies could ever bring real damnation to anyone. He exalted chastity because so it meant a greater sacrifice, and I suppose he would have thought it a crowning achievement to commit incest or elope with a nun. He was sincerely disgusted at my disposition to take the moral fuss out of his darling sins. My impulses were all to get rid of the repressions of sexual love, minimize its importance and subordinate this stress between men and women as agreeably as possible to the business of mankind.

So now, with the detachment of half a lifetime, I define the forces that first attracted me to Well Hall and then made Well Hall jar upon me; but at that time I did not see so clearly and I found these two people and their atmosphere and their household of children and those who were entangled with them, baffling to an extreme degree. At the first encounter it had seemed so extraordinarily open and jolly. Then suddenly you encountered fierce resentment, you found Mrs. Bland inexplicably malignant; doors became walls so to speak and floors pitfalls. In that atmosphere you surprised yourself. It was like Alice through the Looking Glass; not only were there Mock Turtles and White Queens and Mad Hatters about, but you discovered with amazement that you were changing your own shape and stature.

The web of concealments and intrigue that radiated from the Bland ménage and met many other kindred if less intricate strands among that miscellany of enquiring and experimenting people which constituted the Fabian Society, spread like the mycelium of a fungus throughout that organization. The Blands were among the earliest founders of that "Fellowship of the New Life" from which the Fabian Society sprang. They were original members of the latter, and Bland, because he was neither the chief bread winner of his family nor restrained by any fundamental mental consistency nor preoccupied with any really ordered creative aims, was able to devote all the time and energy that could be spared from fluttering the Blackheath dovecotes, to Fabian manoeuvres. He was always there, just as dry old Quaker-trained Edward Pease, the salaried trustworthy secretary, was always there, and Pease was by nature a very honest desiccating

pedant and Bland by nature a politician. Bland was as loose internally as Pease was rigid and they were inspired by a natural antagonism. The little society was setting out upon the most gigantic enterprise that humanity has ever attempted, a New Life (Think of it!) and even if that new life was restricted by subsequent provisos to economic reconstruction only, it still meant a vast long trying game of waiting and preparation; the society was not only poor, small and with everything to learn about its job, but from the very beginning it had these two personalities, like the germs of a congenital disease, vitiating and diverting its energies.

Long before my innocence came into the society, some deep feud between Pease and the Blands had established itself when Pease and not Bland became the salaried secretary; and the mysterious concealments, reservations, alliances, imputations, schemes and tactics of these obscure issues played havoc with the affairs of our middle-class socialist propaganda. The larger purposes of the Wallases, Webbs and Shaw had to defer continually to the dark riddle of "what the Blands will do about it." There was no reckoning without them for they turned up, excited and energetic, with satellites, dependents, confederates and new associates at every meeting. In the dusty confusion of personalities and secondary issues created by them, rumour moved darkly and anonymous letters flittered about like bats at twilight. By the time I came into the society Bland, the able politician, was established in the mind of Shaw, for example, as a necessary evil and Pease as an unavoidable ally. When Shaw faced towards social and political problems, this implacable animosity loomed so large for him that at times it blotted out the stars.

The topic of *Human Nature in Politics* (to borrow a title from Graham Wallas) is a vast one, and here was a hard specimen for my frustration and education. Following Ostrogorski, Wallas dealt with this trouble from the point of view of mass reactions, but now here I am approaching it — or rather blundering into it — from the opposite direction, by way of biography. What are we to do with these energetic vital types who will not subdue themselves to a broad and consistent aim; who choose a pose, stage situations, fly off at a tangent and never table their objectives? Shall we never be able to

keep secondary issues and idiosyncrasies in their place? How far is it inevitable that we should live in a world of personal "misunderstandings"? How far is directive simplicity possible? What can be done to keep our public and social objectives untangled and simple and clear?

Before it had existed half a dozen years, the Fabian Society was in urgent need of a searching psycho-analysis, and there has never yet been a government or party, an educational directorate, or a religion that has not presently diverged into morasses of complication and self-contradiction. How far is that to be the case with us for ever?

How far might some more universal and more efficient education, more penetrating, better planned and better administered, have started and sustained our Fabian Society — every one of us well meaning — in a better understanding and a less wasteful co-operation? Were the complexities of Bland and his wife, the intellectual freakishness of Shaw, the intricate cross-purposes of that bunch of animated folk, unavoidable and incurable?

The Federation of the New Life passed like a dreamer's sigh, but within some fated term of years, unless mankind is to perish, there must be a real Federation of the New Life. I find myself on the verge here of slipping away from my already sufficiently copious autobiographical purpose into what might prove a limitless dissertation on human behaviour, a sort of outline, a digest, of all available biography. It is time to recall my enquiring pen — as one calls a roving dog to heel — and return to my personal story, to return from cosmo-biography to autobiography, and to go on telling how I, at any rate, in spite of all those deflections and entanglements, found at last a satisfactory simplification and orientation of my own existence in the idea of an educational, political and economic world unification.

Of that mental and moral consolidation my last chapter must tell. In the early Sandgate days not only was I being attracted more and more powerfully towards the civil service conception of a life framed in devotion to constructive public ends *à la* Webb, but I was also being tugged, though with less force, in a quite opposite direction, towards the artistic attitude. I have never been able to find the artistic attitude fundamentally justifiable but I understand and sympathize

with the case for it. It was expressed in varying modes and very engagingly by a number of brains through whose orbits my own was travelling. Professor York Powell had come to know me, through the Marriott Watsons and the *Pall Mall Gazette* group, and he was very strong in his assertion that the "artist" lived in a class apart, having a primary and over-riding duty to his "gift." He might be solvent if he liked and political in his off time, but his primary duty was to express the divine juice that was in him.

York Powell, a big bearded man with a deep abundant chuckle, came very frequently to Sandgate, where he had an old gnarled boatman friend, who was something of a character, Jim Payne. I did my best to be initiated by York Powell into the charms of sea-fishing and a sort of tarry wisdom peculiar to Jim Payne, but the inoculation never really took. York Powell was always trying to draw Jim out for my benefit and Jim was harder to draw out than a badger. I never saw him drawn.

To a lodging in Sandgate also came Bob Stevenson, the "Spring-Heeled Jack" of his cousin Robert Louis' *Talk and Talkers*, after a stroke, for the ending of his days. I had known him before his illness and had heard him do some marvellous talks; a dissertation upon how he would behave if he was left nearly two millions, still lingers in my mind. One million was just to keep — one could never bear to break a single million — but all the rest was to be spent and distributed magnificently. He described his dinner before his benefactions began. He was particular about a large deed-box full of cheque books to be brought to him by bank messengers "in scarlet coats with *new* gold bands round their top hats." He chose among his friends those whose presence and advice would be most conducive to wise and generous giving. He planned the most ingenious gifts and the most remarkable endowments. I have tried to give a faint impression of his style of imaginative talking in Ewart's talk about the City of Women in *Tono Bungay*. But Ewart is not even a caricature of Bob; only Bob's style of talk was grafted on to him. Bob Stevenson, like York Powell, was all on the side of aesthetic concentration and letting the rest go hang. He could not imagine what these Fabians were up to. They were not real in his universe.

Henry James, too, had developed expressionism into an elaborate

philosophy; it is a great loss to the science of criticism that he should have died before his slowly unfolding autobiography reached a point where he could state his mature attitude. In several talks we hovered on the abundant verge of it but even the evenings at Lamb House were too short for anything but intimations and preliminaries.

Another very important acquaintance of my early Sandgate time, now too little appreciated in the world, was the American Stephen Crane. He was one of the earliest of those stark American writers who broke away from the genteel literary traditions of Victorian England and he wrote an admirable bare prose. One or two of his short stories, *The Open Boat*, for example, seem to me imperishable gems. He made his reputation with a short book about the Civil War, *The Red Badge of Courage*. It was an amazing feat of imaginative understanding. It was written, as Ambrose Bierce said, not with ink but blood. And forthwith the American newspapers pounced upon him to make him a war correspondent. He was commissioned to go to Cuba, to the Spanish-American war and to the Turko-Greek war of 1897. He was a lean, blond, slow-speaking, perceptive, fragile, tuberculous being, too adventurous to be temperate with anything and impracticable to an extreme degree. He liked to sit and talk, sagely and deeply. How he managed ever to get to the seats of war to which he was sent I cannot imagine. I don't think he got very deeply into them. But he got deeply enough into them to shatter his health completely.

In Greece he met and married an energetic lady who had been sent out by some American newspaper as the first woman war correspondent. With, perhaps, excessive vigour she set out to give her ailing young husband a real good time. Morton Frewen (the wealthy father of Clare Sheridan) lent them a very old and beautiful house, Brede House near Rye and there they inaugurated a life of gay extravagance and open hospitality. I forget the exact circumstances of our first meeting but I remember very vividly a marvellous Christmas Party in which Jane and I participated. We were urged to come over and, in a postscript, to bring any bedding and blankets we could spare. We arrived in a heaped-up Sandgate cab, rather in advance of the guests from London. We were given a room over the main gateway in which there was a portcullis and an owl's nest, but

at least we got a room. Nobody else did — because although some thirty or forty invitations had been issued, there were not as a matter of fact more than three or four bedrooms available. One of them however was large and its normal furniture had been supplemented by a number of hired truckle-beds and christened the Girls' Dormitory, and in the attic an array of shake-downs was provided for the men. Husbands and wives were torn apart.

Later on we realized that the sanitary equipment of Brede House dated from the seventeenth century, an interesting historical detail, and such as there was indoors, was accessible only through the Girls' Dormitory. Consequently the wintry countryside next morning was dotted with wandering melancholy, preoccupied, men guests.

Anyhow there were good open fires in the great fireplaces and I remember that party as an extraordinary lark — but shot, at the close, with red intimations of a coming tragedy. We danced in a big oak-panelled room downstairs, lit by candles stuck upon iron sconces that Cora Crane had improvised with the help of the Brede blacksmith. Unfortunately she had not improvised grease guards and after a time everybody's back showed a patch of composite candle-wax, like the flash on the coat of a Welsh Fusilier. When we were not dancing or romping we were waxing the floor or rehearsing a play vamped up by A. E. W. Mason, Crane, myself and others. It was a ghost play, and very allusive and fragmentary, and we gave it in the School Room at Brede. It amused its authors and cast vastly. What the Brede people made of it is not on record.

We revelled until two or three every night and came down towards mid-day to breakfasts of eggs and bacon, sweet potatoes from America and beer. Crane had a transient impulse to teach some of the men poker, in the small hours, but we would not take it seriously. Mason I found knew my old schoolfellow Sidney Bowkett and had some anecdotes to tell me about him. "In any decent saloon in America," said Crane, "you'd be shot for talking like that at poker," and abandoned our instruction in a pet.

That was the setting in which I remember Crane. He was profoundly weary and ill, if I had been wise enough to see it, but I thought him sulky and reserved. He was essentially the helpless artist; he wasn't the master of his party, he wasn't the master of his

home; his life was altogether out of control; he was being carried along. What he was still clinging to, but with a dwindling zest, was artistry. He had an intense receptiveness to vivid work; he had an inevitably right instinct for the word in his stories; but he had no critical chatter. We compared our impressions of various contemporaries. "That's Great," he'd say or simply "*Gaw!*" Was so and so "any good"? So and so was "no good."

Was he writing anything now?

His response was joyless. Pinker the agent had *fixed* some stories for him. "I got to do them," he said, "I got to do them."

The tragic entanglement of the highly specialized artist had come to him. Sensation and expression — and with him it had been well nigh perfect expression — was the supreme joy of his life and the justification of existence for him. And here he was, in a medley of impulsive disproportionate expenditure, being pursued by the worthy Pinker with enquiries of when he could "deliver copy" and warnings not to overrun his length. The good thing in his life had slipped by him.

In the night after the play Mrs. Crane came to us. He had had a haemorrhage from his lungs and he had tried to conceal it from her. He "didn't want anyone to bother." Would I help get a doctor?

There was a bicycle in the place and my last clear memory of that fantastic Brede House party is riding out of the cold skirts of a wintry night into a drizzling dawn along a wet road to call up a doctor in Rye.

That crisis passed, but he died later in the new year, 1900. He did his utmost to conceal his symptoms and get on with his dying. Only at the end did his wife wake up to what was coming. She made a great effort to get him to Baden-Baden. She conveyed him silent and sunken and stoical to Folkestone by car, regardless of expense, she had chartered a special train to wait for him at Boulogne and he died almost as soon as he arrived in Germany.

Two other important men of letters were also close at hand to present the ideal of pure artistry to me rather less congenially. These were Ford Madox Hueffer and Joseph Conrad, of whom the former — through certain defects of character and a copious carelessness of reminiscence — is, I think, too much neglected, and the latter still

placed too high in the scale of literary achievement. Joseph Conrad was really Teodor Jozef Konrad Korzeniowski. He had very wisely dropped his surname and was content to be Joseph Conrad to English readers. He had been excited by a review I wrote of his *Almayer's Folly* in the *Saturday Review*; it was his first "important" recognition and he became anxious to make my acquaintance.

At first he impressed me, as he impressed Henry James, as the strangest of creatures. He was rather short and round-shouldered with his head as it were sunken into his body. He had a dark retreating face with a very carefully trimmed and pointed beard, a trouble-wrinkled forehead and very troubled dark eyes, and the gestures of his hands and arms were from the shoulders and very Oriental indeed. He reminded people of Du Maurier's Svengali and, in the nautical trimness of his costume, of Cutliffe Hyne's Captain Kettle. He spoke English strangely. Not badly altogether; he would supplement his vocabulary — especially if he were discussing cultural or political matters — with French words; but with certain oddities. He had learnt to read English long before he spoke it and he had formed wrong sound impressions of many familiar words; he had for example acquired an incurable tendency to pronounce the last *e* in these and those. He would say, "*Wat* shall we do with *thesa* things?" And he was always incalculable about the use of "shall" and "will." When he talked of seafaring his terminology was excellent but when he turned to less familiar topics he was often at a loss for phrases.

Yet he wove an extraordinarily rich descriptive English prose, a new sort of English of his own, conspicuously and almost necessarily free from stereotyped expressions and hack phrases, in which foreign turns and phrases interlaced with unusual native words unusually used. And I think it was this fine, fresh, careful, slightly exotic quality about his prose, that "foreign" flavour which the normal Anglo-Saxon mind habitually associates with culture, that blinded criticism to the essentially sentimental and melodramatic character of the stories he told. His deepest theme is the simple terror of strange places, of the jungle, of night, of the incalculable sea; as a mariner his life was surely a perpetual anxiety about miscalculations, about the hidden structural vices of his ship, about shifting cargo and

untrustworthy men; he laid bare with an air of discovery what most adventurers, travellers and sailors habitually suppress. Another primary topic with him — best treated in that amazingly good story *Amy Foster*, a sort of caricature autobiography, was the feeling of being incurably "foreign." He pursued a phantom "honour" — in *Lord Jim* for instance; his humour in *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, is dismal, and you may search his work from end to end and find little tenderness and no trace of experienced love or affection. But he had set himself to be a great writer, an artist in words, and to achieve all the recognition and distinction that he imagined should go with that ambition, he had gone literary with a singleness and intensity of purpose that made the kindred concentration of Henry James seem lax and large and pale. *The Mirror of the Sea* was his favourite among his own writings, and I think that in that he showed a sound critical judgment.

He came into my ken in association with Ford Madox Hueffer and they remain together, contrasted and inseparable, in my memory. Ford is a long blond with a drawling manner, the very spit of his brother Oliver, and oddly resembling George Moore the novelist in pose and person. What he is really or if he is really, nobody knows now and he least of all; he has become a great system of assumed *personas* and dramatized selves. His brain is an exceptionally good one and when first he came along, he had cast himself for the rôle of a very gifted scion of the Pre-Raphaelite stem, given over to artistic purposes and a little undecided between music, poetry, criticism, The Novel, Thoreau-istic horticulture and the simple appreciation of life. He has written some admirable verse, some very good historical romances, two or three books in conjunction with Conrad, and a considerable bulk of more or less autobiographical — unreality. As a sort of heir to Pre-Raphaelitism, he owned among other things a farm called the Pent at the foot of the Downs above Hythe; it had been occupied previously by Christina Rossetti and Walter Crane the artist; and he had let it to Conrad; Conrad wrote about *The Heart of Darkness* and *The Secret Agent* on a desk that may have creaked to the creative effort of *Goblin Market*; and thither Hueffer and I walked to our meeting.

One goes downhill to the Pent, the windows of the house are low

and my first impression of Conrad, was of a swarthy face peering out and up through the little window panes.

He talked with me mostly of adventure and dangers, Hueffer talked criticism and style and words, and our encounter was the beginning of a long, fairly friendly but always rather strained acquaintance. Conrad with Mrs. Conrad and his small blond haired bright-eyed boy, would come over to Sandgate, cracking a whip along the road, driving a little black pony carriage as though it was a droshky and encouraging a puzzled little Kentish pony with loud cries and endearments in Polish, to the dismay of all beholders. We never really "got on" together. I was perhaps more unsympathetic and incomprehensible to Conrad than he was to me. I think he found me Philistine, stupid and intensely English; he was incredulous that I could take social and political issues seriously; he was always trying to penetrate below my foundations, discover my imaginative obsessions and see what I was really up to. The frequent carelessness of my writing, my scientific qualifications of statement and provisional inconclusiveness, and my indifference to intensity of effect, perplexed and irritated him. Why didn't I *write*? Why had I no care for my reputation?

"My dear Wells, what is this *Love and Mr. Lewisham about*?" he would ask. But then he would ask also, wringing his hands and wrinkling his forehead, "What is all this about Jane Austen? What is there *in* her? What is it all *about*?"

I remember a dispute we had one day as we lay on the Sandgate beach and looked out to sea. How, he demanded, would I describe how that boat out there, sat or rode or danced or quivered on the water? I said that in nineteen cases out of twenty I would just let the boat be there in the commonest phrases possible. Unless I wanted the boat to be important I would not give it an outstanding phrase and if I wanted to make it important then the phrase to use would depend on the angle at which the boat became significant. But it was all against Conrad's over-sensitized receptivity that a boat could ever be just a boat. He wanted to see it with a definite vividness of his own. But I wanted to see it and to see it only in relation to something else — a story, a thesis. And I suppose if I had been pressed about it I would have betrayed a disposition to link that story or thesis to something

still more extensive and that to something still more extensive and so ultimately to link it up to my philosophy and my world outlook.

Now here perhaps — if I may deal with Conrad and others and myself as hand specimens — is something rather fundamental for the educationist. I have told in my account of my school days (Ch. 3 §1) how I differed from my schoolmate Sidney Bowkett, in that he felt and heard and saw so much more vividly, so much more emotionally, than I did. That gave him superiorities in many directions, but the very coldness and flatness of my perceptions, gave me a readier apprehension of relationships, put me ahead of him in mathematics and drawing (which after all is a sort of abstraction of form) and made it easier for me later on to grasp general ideas in biology and physics. My education at Kensington was very broad and rapid, I suggest, because I was not dealing with burning and glowing impressions — and when I came to a course where sense impressions were of primary importance, as they were in the course in mineralogy (see Ch. 5 §3), I gave way to irrepressible boredom and fell down. My mind became what I call an educated mind, that is to say a mind systematically unified, because of my relative defect in brightness of response. I was easy to educate.

These vivid writers I was now beginning to encounter were, on the contrary, hard to educate — as I use the word educate. They were at an opposite pole to me as regards strength of reception. Their abundant, luminous impressions were vastly more difficult to subdue to a disciplined and co-ordinating relationship than mine. They remained therefore abundant but uneducated brains. Instead of being based on a central philosophy, they started off at a dozen points; they were impulsive, unco-ordinated, wilful. Conrad, you see, I count uneducated, Stephen Crane, Henry James, the larger part of the world of literary artistry. Shaw's education I have already impugned. The science and art of education was not adequate for the taming and full utilization of these more powerfully receptive types and they lapsed into arbitrary inconsistent and dramatized ways of thinking and living. With a more expert and scientific educational process all that might have been different. They lapsed — though retaining their

distinctive scale and quality — towards the inner arbitrariness and unreality of the untrained common man.

Not only was I relatively equipped with a strong bias for rational associations but, also, accident threw me in my receptive years mostly among non-dramatizing systematic-minded people. My mother dramatized herself, indeed, but so artlessly that I rebelled against that. My scientific training and teaching confirmed and equipped all my inherent tendency to get things ruthlessly mapped out and consistent. I suspected any imaginative romancing in conduct. I defended myself against romancing by my continual self-mockery and caricature — what you see in this book therefore as a sort of bloom of little sketches is not really an efflorescence but something very fundamental to this brain-story. I am holding myself down from pretentious impersonations. But they were there, trying to get me. A man is revealed by the nature of his mockeries.

Such mentalities as my wife, Graham Wallas and the Webbs, and the general Socialist proposition, did much to sustain the educational consolidation that was going on in me. So that by the time I encountered such vigorously dramatizing people as the Blands and such vivid impressionists as Conrad I was already built up and set in the most refractory and comprehensive forms of conviction. I had struggled with a considerable measure of success against the common vice of self-protective assumptions. I had, I have, few "complexes." I would almost define education as the prevention of complexes. I was seeing myself as far as possible without pretences, my *persona* was under constant scrutiny, even at the price of private and secret sessions of humiliation, and not only was I trying to avoid posing to myself but I kept up as little pose as possible to the world. I eschewed dignity. I found therefore something as ridiculous in Conrad's *persona* of a romantic adventurous un-mercenary intensely artistic European gentleman carrying an exquisite code of unblemished honour through a universe of baseness as I did in Hubert Bland's man-of-affairs costume and simple Catholic piety.

When Conrad first met Shaw in my house, Shaw talked with his customary freedoms. "You know, my dear fellow, your books won't *do*" — for some Shavian reason I have forgotten — and so forth.

I went out of the room and suddenly found Conrad on my heels,

swift and white-faced. “Does that man want to *insult* me?” he demanded.

The provocation to say “Yes” and assist at the subsequent duel was very great, but I overcame it. “It’s humour,” I said, and took Conrad out into the garden to cool. One could always baffle Conrad by saying “humour.” It was one of our damned English tricks he had never learnt to tackle.

Later on he wanted Ford Madox Hueffer to challenge me. If Conrad had had his way, either Hueffer’s blood or mine would have reddened Dymchurch sands. I thought an article Hueffer had written about Hall Caine was undignified and I said that he had written it as if he was a discharged valet — or something equally pungent. Hueffer came over to tell me about it. “I tried to explain to him that duelling isn’t done,” said Hueffer.

In those days Hueffer was very much on the rational side of life; his extraordinary drift towards self-dramatization — when he even changed his name to Captain Ford — became conspicuous only later, after the stresses of the war. In the light of that his last book, *It Was the Nightingale*, is well worth reading. I think Conrad owed a very great deal to their early association; Hueffer helped greatly to “English” him and his idiom, threw remarkable lights on the English literary world for him, collaborated with him on two occasions, and conversed interminably with him about the precise word and about perfection in writing.

They forced me to consider and define my own position in such matters. Did I really care for these things? I like turning a phrase as well as any man, I try my utmost to achieve precision of statement where precision is important, and some passages of mine, the opening sections (§§1-4) in the chapter on “How Man Has Learnt to Think” in the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* for instance, I rewrote a dozen times. But I have a feeling that the happy word is the gift, the momentary capricious gift of the gods a flash of mother-wit. You cannot *train* for it; you cannot write well and forcibly without at times writing flatly, and the real quality of a writer is, like divinity, inalienable. This incessant endeavour to keep prose bristling up and have it “vivid” all the time defeats its end. I find very much of

Conrad oppressive, as overwrought as an Indian tracery, and it is only in chosen passages and some of his short stories that I would put his work on a level with the naked vigour of Stephen Crane. I think Tomlinson's more loosely written *By Sea and Jungle* is more finely felt and conveys an intenser vision than most of Conrad's sea and jungle pieces.

All this talk that I had with Conrad and Hueffer and James about the just word, the perfect expression, about this or that being "written" or not written, bothered me, set me interrogating myself, threw me into a heart-searching defensive attitude. I will not pretend that I got it clear all at once, that I was not deflected by their criticisms and that I did not fluctuate and make attempts to come up to their unsystematized, mysterious and elusive standards. But in the end I revolted altogether and refused to play their game. "I am a journalist," I declared, "I refuse to play the 'artist.' If sometimes I am an artist it is a freak of the gods. I am journalist all the time and what I write *goes now* — and will presently die."

I have stuck to that declaration ever since. I write as I walk because I want to get somewhere and I write as straight as I can, just as I walk as straight as I can, because that is the best way to get there. So I came down off the fence between Conrad and Wallas and I remain definitely on the side opposed to the aesthetic valuation of literature. That valuation is at best a personal response, a floating and indefinable judgment. All these receptive critics pose for their work. They dress their souls before the glass, add a few final touches of make-up and sally forth like old bucks for fresh "adventures among masterpieces." I come upon masterpieces by pure chance; they happen to me and I do not worry about what I miss.

Throughout my life, a main strand of interest has been the endeavour to anchor *personas* to a common conception of reality. That is the structural idea of my *Research Magnificent*. I shall tell more of that endeavour in the next chapter. But this theme of the floating *persona*, the dramatized self, recurs at various levels of complexity and self-deception, in Mr. Hoopdriver in *The Wheels of Chance*, in the dreams of Mr. Parham, in *Christina Alberta's Father*, and most elaborately of all, in *The Bulpington of Blup*. This last is a

very direct caricature study of the irresponsible disconnected aesthetic mentality. It is friendship's offering to the world of letters from the scientific side. E. Nesbit, by the bye, did some short stories in which she dealt with this same unreality in the world as she knew it. She saw through herself enough for that. They are collected together under the title of *The Literary Sense*.

So far in this section I have tried to show the pull of two main groups of divergent personalities and two main sets of tendency upon my character, during those still plastic days at Sandgate, and to indicate something of the quality of my response. These brains passed so to speak to the right of me and the left of me; I felt their gravitational attraction. The scientific pull was the earlier and stronger. I moved more and more away from conscious artistry and its exaltations and chagrins; I was strengthened against self-dramatization and confirmed in my disposition to social purposiveness. This definition and confirmation of my mind was the principal thing that was happening to me in those early Sandgate years. But I should be simplifying my story over much if I left that chapter in my life merely as a sort of straightforward tug-of-war in my brain, in which the systematizing, politically directed impulse won. There were other thrusts and drifts, interests and attractions, quite outside this particular conflict as to whether I should keep my mental effort based on an objective or float off into cloudland.

For instance at an entirely different level from these issues of poise and aim in my development, something else was going on, — I was busy "getting on in the world." One does not get on without giving a considerable amount of one's waking time to it. It is plain from the letters home already quoted and the "picshuas" here reproduced, that this was a very constant and lively interest in our early days. Jane and I were concerned in questions of "rights" and royalties and "price per thou" in a manner that was altogether ungenteel. We affected no innocence about "publicity" and we welcomed a large bundle of press-cuttings and felt anxious if the little blue packets were unpunctual and meagre. And somehow it is here and not in relation to whether writing was an end or an implement that the figure of Arnold Bennett with his bright and busy brain seething in a fashion all its own, comes in. We two, he and I,

got on in the world abreast — and it was extremely good fun for both of us. Later on we diverged.

He wrote to me first, in September 1897, on the notepaper of a little periodical he edited, called *Woman*, to ask how I came to know about the Potteries, which I had mentioned in the *Time Machine* and in a short story, and after that we corresponded. In a second letter he says he is "glad to find the Potteries made such an impression" on me, so I suppose I had enlarged upon their scenic interest, and adds "only during the last few years have I begun to see its possibilities." In a further letter he thanks me for telling him of Conrad. He had missed *Almayer's Folly* in a batch of other novels for his paper and I had discovered it. That was one up for me. Now under my injunction he is rejoicing over *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. "Where did the man pick up that style and that synthetic way of gathering up a general impression and flinging it at you?... He is so consciously an artist. Now Kipling isn't an artist a bit. Kipling doesn't know what art is — I mean the art of words; *il ne se préoccupe que de la chose racontée*." Follow praises of George Moore. That unnecessary scrap of French is very Bennett. He was already deliberately heading for France and culture, learning French, learning to play the piano, filling up the gaps of a commonplace middle-class education with these accomplishments — and all with the brightest efficiency. Presently he came to Sandgate to see us and his swimming and diving roused my envy.

Never have I known anyone else so cheerfully objective as Bennett. His world was as bright and hard surfaced as crockery — his *persona* was, as it were, a hard, definite china figurine. What was not precise, factual and contemporary, could not enter into his consciousness. He was friendly and self assured; he knew quite clearly that we were both on our way to social distinction and incomes of several thousands a year. I had not thought of it like that. I was still only getting something between one and two thousand a year, and I did not feel at all secure about getting more. But Bennett knew we couldn't stop there. He had a through ticket and a timetable — and he proved to be right.

Our success was to be attained straightforwardly by writing sound clear stories, lucidly reasonable articles and well constructed plays.

His pride was in craftsmanship rather than in artistic expression, mystically intensified and passionately pursued, after the manner of Conrad. Possibly his ancestors had had just the same feel about their work, when they spun the clay of pots and bowls finely and precisely. He was ready to turn his pen to anything, provided it could be done well. He wrote much of the little weekly paper, *Woman*, he was editing — including answers to correspondents — often upon the most delicate subjects — over the signature, if I remember rightly, of "Aunt Ellen." He did it as well as he knew how. He declared he did it as well as it could be done. His ancestors on the potbanks had made vessels for honour or for dishonour. Why should not he turn out whatever was required? Some years ago he and Shaw and I were all invited by an ingenious advertisement manager to write advertisements for Harrods' Stores, for large fees. We all fell into the trap and wrote him letters (which he used for his purposes) for nothing. Shaw and I took the high attitude. We were priests and prophets; we could not be paid for our opinions. Bennett frankly lamented the thing could not be done because it "wasn't *done*." But he could see no reason why a writer should not write an advertisement as an architect builds a shop.

We were both about of an age; to be exact he was six months younger than I; we were both hard workers, both pushing up by way of writing from lower middle-class surroundings, where we had little prospect of anything but a restricted salaried life, and we found we were pushing with quite surprising ease; we were learning much the same business, tackling much the same obstacles, encountering similar prejudices and antagonisms and facing similar social occasions. We both had a natural zest for life and we both came out of a good old English radical tradition. We were liberal, sceptical and republican. But beyond this we were very different animals indeed. While I was becoming more and more set upon changing my world and making it something entirely different and while Conrad was equally set upon wringing an unprecedented intensity of phrasing out of his, Bennett was taking the thing that is, for what it was, with a naïve and eager zest. He saw it brighter than it was; he did not see into it and he did not see beyond it. He was like a child at a fair. His only trouble was how to get everything in in the time at his disposal,

music, pictures, books, shows, eating, drinking, display, the remarkable clothes one could wear, the remarkable stunts one could do, the unexpected persons, the incessant fresh oddities of people; the whole adorable, incessant, multitudinous lark of it.

There it was. What more could you want?

Since I have just been writing about educated and uneducated types I perceive I am exposed to the question whether Bennett was an educated type. I would say that in my sense of the word he was absolutely immune to education and that he did not need it. He was impermeable. He learnt with extraordinary rapidity and precision. He was full of skills and information. The bright clear mosaic of impressions was continually being added to and all the pieces stayed in their places. He did not feel the need for a philosophy or for a faith or for anything to hold them together. One of the most characteristic, if not the best of his books, is *Imperial Palace*, a most competent assemblage of facts, but told with an exultation, a slight magnification. His self-explanation — explanation rather than analysis — is the *Card*. In that book he shows that he could see himself as plainly and directly as he saw anything else. It is not a self dramatization; it is pleased recognition, even of his own absurdities. *A Great Man* again is delighted self-caricature — even to his youthful bilious attacks. If there was any element of self-deception in his *persona* it was a belief in the luck that comes to men who are "Cards" — Regular Cards. His investments for example were too hopeful. When he died — and he died a well spent man — he left a holding of Russian securities, which he had bought for a rise that never came.

His work was extraordinarily unequal. Working with cultivated and conscious craftsmanship upon things intimately known to him, he produced indubitable masterpieces. There are few novels in our period to put beside *The Old Wives Tale* and *Riceyman Steps* and few stories to equal *The Matador of the Five Towns*. And yet he could write a book about death and eternity like *The Glimpse* — a glimpse into an empty cavern in his mind. He wrote a vast amount of efficient yet lifeless fiction from which his essential work is slowly being disinterred.

After his first visit to Sandgate, we never lost touch with each

other. We never quarrelled, we never let our very lively resolve to "get on" betray our mutual generosity; we were continually interested in one another and continually comparing ourselves with each other. He thought me an odd card; I thought him an odd card. I became more and more involved in the social and political issues I shall describe in the next chapter, I made all sorts of contacts outside literary circles, I broadened and spread myself; and maybe I spread myself thin; while he retracted and concentrated. The boundaries of my personality became less definite and his more and more firmly drawn. I have told already how I put my banking account under the control of my wife, did not know of my own investments, allowed matters of furnishing, house-building, invitations and so forth to go right out of my control. I have never had any household in which my rôle has not been essentially that of the paying guest. But Bennett's control of the particulars of his life remained always (the word was one of his favourite ones) meticulous. He loved the direction of organization; the thing breaks out in his *Imperial Palace*. His home at Thorpe le Soken; his home in Cadogan Square were beautifully managed — by himself. His clothes were carefully studied. At the Reform Club we used to note with all respect the accordance of shirt and tie and sock and handkerchief, and draw him out upon the advisability of sending our laundry to Paris. I would ask him where to buy a watch or a hat. "Do you mind," he would say to me, "if I just arrange that tie of yours?"

The difference between Bennett and myself, particularly in our later developments, is perhaps interesting from a psychological point of view, though I do not know how to put it in psychological language. We contrasted more and more in our contact with the external world as our work unfolded. He developed his relation to the external world and I developed the relation of the external world to myself. He increased in precision and his generalizations weakened; I lost precision and my generalizations grew wider and stronger. This is something superficially parallel but certainly not identical with the comparison I have been making between the systematized mental life of those who are both scientifically disposed and trained and those who are moved to the unco-ordinated vivid expressiveness of the artist.

I will venture here to throw out a wild suggestion to the brain specialist. The artistic type relative to the systematizing type may have a more vigorous innervation of the cortex, rather more volume in the arteries, a richer or more easily oxygenated blood supply. But the difference between the meticulous brain and the loose *sweeping* brain may be due not to any cortical difference at all, but to some more central ganglionic difference. Somewhere sorting and critical operations are in progress, concepts and associations are called up and passed upon, links are made or rejected, and I doubt if these are cortical operations. The discussion of mind working is still in the stage of metaphor, and so I have to put it that this "bureau" of co-ordination and censorship, is roomy, generous and easy going in the Bennett type, and narrow, centralized, economical and exacting in my own. I believe that, corresponding to these mental differences, there was a real difference in our cerebral anatomy.

It was perhaps a part of his competent autonomy that Bennett was so remarkably free from the normal infantilism of the human male. He was not so dependent upon women for his comfort and self-respect as most of us are; he was not very deeply interested in them from that point of view. And he had not that capacity for illusion about them which is proper to our sex. The women in his books are for the most part good hard Staffordshire ware, capable, sisterly persons with a tang to their tongues. He seemed always to regard them as curious, wilful creatures — to be treated with a kind of humorous wariness. There were pleasures in love but they had their place among other pleasures. To have a mistress in France was, he felt, part of the *ensemble* of a literary artist, and afterwards it seemed to him right that the household of a rapidly rising novelist should have a smart, attractive wife, a really well-dressed wife. So that he set about marrying rather as he set about house-hunting. For him it was as objective a business as everything else. Marriage wasn't by any means that organic life association at once accidental and inevitable, that ingrowing intimacy, that it is for less lucidly constituted minds.

Yet he was not cold-hearted; he was a very affectionate man. Indeed he radiated and evoked affection to an unusual degree, but in some way that I find obscure and perplexing his sexual life did not

flood into his general life. His personality never, so to speak, fused with a woman's. He never gave the effect of being welded, even temporarily, with the woman he was with. They did not seem really to have got together.

I think there was some obscure hitch in his make-up here, some early scar that robbed him of the easy self-forgetfulness, that "egoism expanded out of sight," of a real lover. I associate that hitch with the stammer that ran through his life. Very far back in his early years something may have happened, something that has escaped any record, which robbed him of normal confidence and set up a lifelong awkwardness.

He experienced certain chagrins in that search for a wife, he was not able to carry it through with complete detachment, and when he came to the English home he had chosen at Thorpe le Soken, he brought with him a French wife who had previously been his close friend, a lady of charm and lucidity but with a very marked personality which failed to accord in every particular with his realization of what the wife of a successful London novelist should be. I will not go into the particulars of their gradual disagreement and legal separation, his abandonment of Thorpe le Soken for Cadogan Square, nor of his subsequent pseudo-marriage, at which "all London" connived, to the mother of his one child. I think these affairs bothered him a lot but they did not trouble him fundamentally. He reflected on this and that, and laughed abruptly. And anyhow this part of his story is outside this present autobiography.

He left a tangle behind him full of possibilities of recrimination and misadjustment. There have been post-testamentary proceedings, and one lady has taken to journalistic reminiscences about him, reminiscences which, it seems to me, show chiefly how little a woman may understand a man in spite of having lived with him. But perhaps I am prejudiced in this matter. The real Arnold Bennett who is cherished in the memories of his friends, was remarkably detached from this matrimonial and quasi-matrimonial byplay.

Having been more than a little frustrated in his ambitions to run a well- managed wife in two brilliantly conducted establishments in London and the country, he fell back upon the deliberate development of his own personality. It was no self-dramatization he

attempted; no covering up of defects by compensatory assumptions; it was a cool and systematic exploitation of his own oddities. He was as objective about himself and as amused about himself as about anything else in the world. He improved a certain swing in his movements to a grave deliberate swagger; he enriched his gestures. He brushed up his abundant whitening hair to a delightful cockscomb. The stammer he had never been able to conquer was utilized for a conversational method of pauses and explosions. He invented a sort of preliminary noise like the neigh of a penny trumpet. He dressed to the conception of an opulent and important presence. He wore a fob. He made his entry into a club or a restaurant an event. It pleased his vanity no doubt, but why should pleasing one's vanity by evoking an effusive reception in a room or restaurant be any different from pleasing one's palate with a wine? It was done with a humour all his own. Deep within him the invincible Card rejoiced. He knew just how far to carry his mannerisms so that they never bored. They delighted most people and offended none.

I wish Frank Swinnerton who was his frequent associate during his last phase would Boswellize a little about him before the memories fade. Only Swinnerton could describe Bennett calling up the chef at the Savoy to announce the invention of a new dish, or describe him dressing a salad. And Swinnerton could tell of his water-colour painting and his yacht. He ran a yacht but he never let me see it. It was a bright and lovely toy for him, and I think he felt I might just look at it and then at him, with the wrong expression. He was a member of the Yacht Club. I have it on my conscience that I said an unkind thing about his water colours. "Arnold," I said, "you paint like Royalty."

* * * * *

Let me return from Arnold Bennett to the tale of how Jane and I "got on" in the years between 1895 and 1900. In the beginning of this Chapter I brought the history of our social education up to my first encounter with caviar and our tentative experiments with Canary Sack and the various vintages of Messrs. Gilbey available in Camden Town. We soon got beyond such elementary investigations. The

enlargement of our lives, once it began, was very rapid indeed, but we found the amount of *savoir-faire* needed to meet the new demands upon us, not nearly so great as we had supposed.

I think my glimpses of life below stairs at Up Park helped me to meet fresh social occasions with a certain ease. A servant in a big household becomes either an abject snob or an extreme equalitarian. At Up Park there was a footman who kept a diary of the bad English and the "ignorance" he heard while he was waiting at table; he would read out his choice items with the names and dates exactly given, and he may have helped importantly to dispel any delusion that social superiority is more than an advantage of position. I never shared the belief, which peeps out through the novels of George Meredith, Henry James, Gissing and others, that "up there somewhere" there are Great Ladies, of a knowledge, understanding and refinement, passing the wit of common men. The better type of social climbers seek these Great Ladies as the Spaniards sought El Dorado. And failing to find them, invent them.

Jane and I never started with that preoccupation. We did not so much climb as wander into the region of Society. We found ourselves lunching, dining and week-ending occasionally with a very healthy and easy-minded sort of people, living less urgently and more abundantly than any of the other people we knew; with more sport, exercise, travel and leisure than the run of mankind; the women were never under any compulsion to wear an unbecoming garment, and struck Jane as terribly expensive; and everybody was "looked after" to an enviable degree. They had on the whole easier manners than we had encountered before. But they had very little to show us or tell us. The last thing they wanted to do was to penetrate below the surface of things on which they lived so agreeably.

Among the interesting parties I remember in those early days, were several at Lady Desborough's at Taplow Court, and Lady Mary Elcho's at Stanway. There I used to meet people like Arthur Balfour, various Cecils and Sedgwicks, George Curzon, George Wyndham, Sir Walter Raleigh, Judge Holmes, Lady Crewe, Mrs. Macguire, Maurice Baring.... But never mind all that. Samples must serve for a catalogue. There was sometimes good talk at dinner and after dinner, but mostly the talk was allusive and gossipy. Balfour for the most

part played the rôle of the receptive, enquiring intelligence. "Tell me," was a sort of colloquial habit with him. He rarely ventured opinions to be shot at. He had the lazy man's habit of interrogative discussion. Close at hand to us at Sandgate was the house of Sir Edward Sassoon. Lady Sassoon was a tall witty woman, a Rothschild, very much preoccupied with speculations about a Future Life and the writings of Frederic W. H. Myers. Philosophers like McTaggart, who were expected to throw light on her curiosity about the Future Life, mingled with politicians like Winston Churchill, trying over perorations at dinner, and Edwardians like the Marquis de Soveral. Most of these week-end visits and dinner parties were as unbracing mentally, and as pleasant, as going to a flower show and seeing what space and care can do with favoured strains of some familiar species. In these days there were also such persistent lunch givers as Mrs. Colefax (now Lady Colefax) and Sir Henry Lucy (Toby M.P.) of *Punch*, who gathered large confused tables of twenty or thirty people. There one met "celebrities" rather than people in positions; the celebrities anyhow were the salt of the feast; and as Jane and I were much preoccupied with our own game against life, the chief point of our conversation was usually to find out as unobtrusively as possible who we were talking to and why. And by the time we were beginning to place our neighbours, the lunch party would break up and sweep them away.

We would compare notes afterwards. "I met old So and So." "And what did he say?" "Oh, just old nothing."

None of these social experiences had anything like the same formative impressions upon my mind as the encounters with the politico-social workers and with the writers in earnest, and the artists, upon which I have enlarged. The best thing that these friendly glimpses of the prosperous and influential did for us was to remove any lurking feeling of our being "underneath" and to confirm my natural disposition to behave as though I was just as good as anybody and just as responsible for our national behaviour and outlook.

Picshua: Royal Institution Audience.

We were "getting on." At first it was very exciting and then it became less marvellous. We still found ourselves rising. I remember about this time — to be exact in January 24th, 1902 — I was asked to read a paper to the Royal Institution and I wrote and read *The Discovery of the Future*, about which I shall have more to say in my concluding chapter. An impression I sketched at the time of a Royal Institution audience may very fitly conclude this chapter. I regard this picshua as a masterpiece only to be compared to the Palæolithic drawings in the Caves of Altamira. It marks our steady invasion of the world of influential and authoritative people. I remember that Sir James Crichton-Browne (who was about as young then as he is now; he was born in 1840) was very kind and polite to us on this occasion and that after the lecture was delivered I met Mrs. Alfred and Mrs. Emile Mond, long before there was any Lord Melchett, when Brunner Mond and Co. was only the embryo of I.C.I. They wanted to collect us socially, and it was suddenly borne in upon us that we had become worth collecting — eight years from our desperate start in Mornington Place.

§ 6. BUILDING A HOUSE (1899-1900)

In the present section there is little need for writing. Two photographs and two picshuas will serve to tell the tale. We found a

site for the house we contemplated, we found an architect in C. F. A. Voysey, that pioneer in the escape from the small snobbish villa residence to the bright and comfortable pseudo-cottage. Presently we found ourselves with all the money we needed for the house and a surplus of over £1,000. And my health was getting better and better.

Picshua: June 11th, 1901.

The house was still being built when it dawned upon us as a novel and delightful idea that we were now justified in starting a family. A picture of the pretty little study in which I was to work for ten years finishing *Kipps*, producing *Anticipations*, *A Modern Utopia*, *Mankind in the Making*, *Tono Bungay*, *Ann Veronica*, *The New Machiavelli* and various other novels, may very well be included in this picture chapter.

Voysey wanted to put a large heart-shaped letter plate on my front door, but I protested at wearing my heart so conspicuously outside and we compromised on a spade. We called the house Spade House. The men on the lift beside my garden, which used to ascend and descend between Folkestone and Sandgate, confused my name with that of another Wells, "the Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo" — and they told their passengers that it was "on the ace of spades" that the trick was done. I was no longer lean and hungry-looking (as the second picshua shows), I was "putting on weight" and in order to keep it down I pulled a roller about my nascent garden in the sight of the promenaders on the Leas, unconscious at first of my sporting fame. But soon I went about Sandgate and Folkestone like a Wagnerian hero with a motif of my own — whenever there was a whistling errand boy within ear shot.

Spade House faced the south with a loggia that was a suntrap. The living- rooms were on one level with the bedrooms so that if presently I had to live in a wheeled chair I could be moved easily from room to room. But things did not turn out in that fashion. Before the house was finished, Voysey had revised his plans so as to have a night and day nursery upstairs, and presently I was finishing *Kipps* and making notes for what I meant to be a real full-length novel at last, *Tono Bungay*, a novel, as I imagined it, on Dickens-Thackeray lines, and I had got a bicycle again and was beginning the exploration of Kent. I became a Borough magistrate and stability and respectability loomed straight ahead of us. I might have been knighted; I might have known the glories of the O.M.; I might have faced the photographer in the scarlet of an honorary degree.

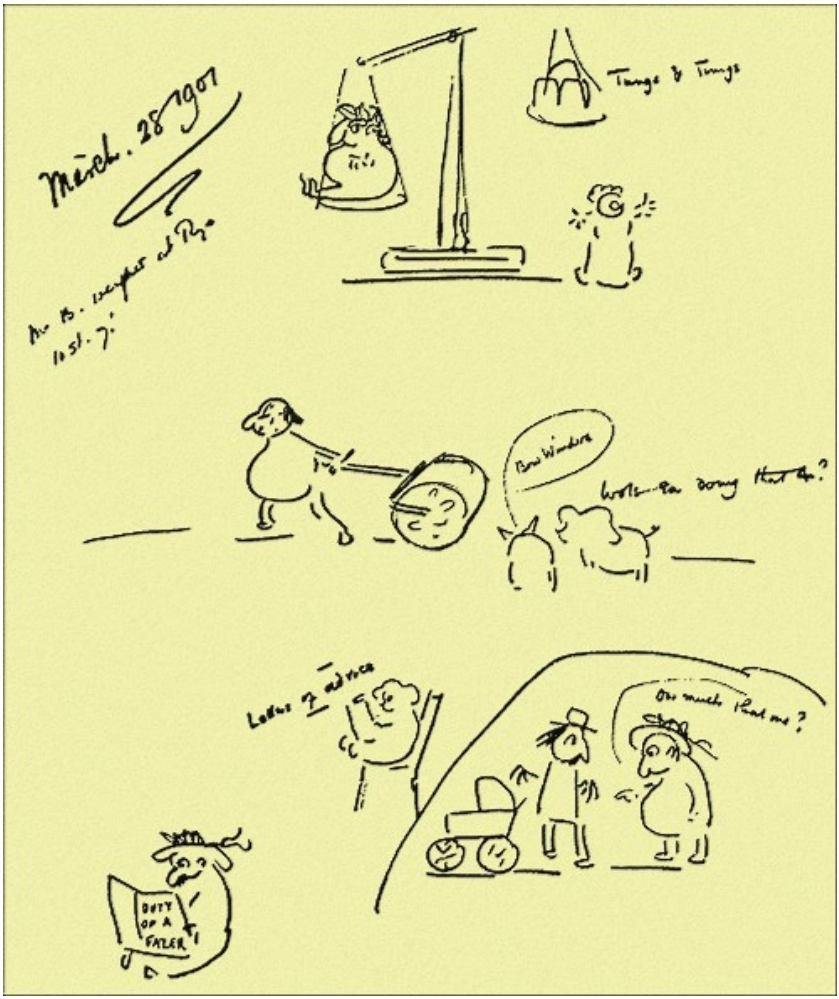

Picshua: March 28th, 1901.

Such things have nestled in the jungle beside my path. But Ann Veronica (bless her!) and my outspoken republicanism saved me from all that. There is only one honour I covet, and I will say nothing about it because it will never come my way, and there is only one disappointment I have ever had in this field, and that was when Jane was not put upon the Essex county bench — for which she was all too good.

IX. — THE IDEA OF A PLANNED WORLD

§ 1. ANTICIPATIONS (1900) AND THE "NEW REPUBLIC"

In this newly built Spade House I began a book *Anticipations* which can be considered as the keystone to the main arch of my work. That arch rises naturally from my first creative imaginations, *The Man of the Year Million* (written first in 1887) and *The Chronic Argonauts* (in the *Science Schools Journal* 1888), and it leads on by a logical development to *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933) and to the efforts I am still making to define and arrange for myself and for a few other people who inhabit my world, the actual factors necessary to give a concrete working expression to a world-wide "Open Conspiracy" to rescue human society from the net of tradition in which it is entangled and to reconstruct it upon planetary lines.

Necessarily this main arch, the structural frame of my life, is of supreme importance to me, and naturally it is of supreme importance in this picture of my world. It is unavoidable therefore that at times I should write as if I imagined that — like that figure of Atlas which stood in my father's shop window — I sustained the whole world upon my shoulders.

That is the necessary effect of an autobiographical perspective. Every man who has grown out of his infantile faith in the sanity of things about him and developed a social consciousness, carries his whole world upon his shoulders. In an autobiography he is bound to tell about that. He cannot pretend to be unaware of what his mind is doing. He becomes perforce the judge of all the world. He cannot add, "in my opinion" or, "though it is not for me to judge," to every sentence. If he is afraid to appear self-important and an arrogant prig, he had better leave out the story of his brain altogether. But then, what will remain?

I once met a very eminent American who regaled me with an anecdote. He said, "I once saw Abraham Lincoln."

"Yes?" I said eagerly.

"He was as close to me as you are. Closer."

"Well?"

"I saw him."

"And *what* did you see?"

"Abraham Lincoln of course. Surely you've heard of Abraham Lincoln?"

That was really modest autobiography, a *locus* and, beyond that, nothing. But the alternative would have been to pronounce a judgment on Abraham Lincoln.

I should probably romance about it, fill in gaps and simplify unduly, if I tried to give an orderly account of how preoccupation with the future became dominant in my conscious life. But I think my contact with evolutionary speculation at my most receptive age played a large part in the matter. I cannot judge, I do not know how to judge, whether the accident of writing those two early pieces about the remote future and mankind and time-travelling gave me a bias in this matter, and whether, having once made a little success in forecasting, it seemed natural to give the public more from the same tap, or whether on the other hand there was an innate disposition to approach things in general from that unusual side. The idea of treating time as a fourth dimension was, I think, due to an original impulse; I do not remember picking that up. But I may have picked it up, because it was in the air. If I did not then the bias was innate.

The future depicted in the *Time Machine* (1894) was a mere fantasy based on the idea of the human species developing about divergent lines, but the future in *When the Sleeper Awakes* (1898) was essentially an exaggeration of contemporary tendencies: higher buildings, bigger towns, wickeder capitalists and labour more down-trodden than ever and more desperate. Everything was bigger, quicker and more crowded; there was more and more flying and the wildest financial speculation. It was our contemporary world in a state of highly inflamed distension. Very much the same picture is given in *A Story of the Days to Come* (1899) and *A Dream of Armageddon* (1903). I suppose that is the natural line for an imaginative writer to take, in an age of material progress and political sterility. Until he thinks better of it. Michael Arlen betrayed the same tendency in his *Man's Mortality* as recently as 1932. But in 1899 I was already beginning to realize there might be better guessing about the trend of things.

Along came the end of the century, just apt to my thoughts, and I arranged with W. L. Courtney, who had succeeded Frank Harris as editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, to publish a series of papers discussing what was likely to happen in the new century.

Now *Anticipations* was not only a new start for me, but, it presently became clear, a new thing in general thought. It may have been a feeble and vulnerable innovation, but it was as new as a new-laid egg. It was the first attempt to forecast the human future as a whole and to estimate the relative power of this and that great system of influence. Partial forecasts and forebodings existed in abundance already; we had estimates for instance, of the length of time it would take to exhaust the world's coal supply, of the prospects of population congestion if the birth-rate remained stable, of the outlook for this planet as the solar system cooled, as it was then supposed to be doing, very rapidly; but most of these conclusions were based on such narrowly conditioned calculations that they could be dismissed quite easily by challenging the validity of the assumptions. A comprehensive attempt to state and weigh and work out a general resultant for the chief forces of social change throughout the world, sober forecasting, that is to say, without propaganda, satire or extravaganza, was so much a novelty that my book, crude though it was and smudgily vague, excited quite a number of people. Macmillan, my English publishers, were caught unawares by the demand and had sold out the first edition before they reprinted. It sold as well as a novel.

Among other people who were excited by *Anticipations* was myself. I became my own first disciple. Perhaps at the outset of this series I was inspired chiefly by the idea of producing some timely interesting articles. But before I was half way through the series I realized that this sort of thing could not remain simply journalistic. If I was not doing something widely and profoundly important I was at least sketching out something widely and profoundly important. I was carrying on the curves instead of the tangents of history. I was indicating, even if I was not to some extent providing, new data of quite primary importance for rationalized social political and economic effort. I was writing the human prospectus.

One of the things I would like to see done in the world is the

foundation of a number of chairs for the teaching of an old subject in a new spirit. If I belonged to the now rapidly vanishing class of benevolent multi-millionaires I would create Professorships of Analytical History. Instead of presenting the clotted masses of undigested or ill-digested fact which still encumber academic history to-day, my Professors would be doing fully, systematically and soundly, just what I did, though in the flimsiest way, in these *Anticipations*. From the biological point of view my Professors would be human ecologists; indeed Human Ecology would be a good alternative name for this new history as I conceive it. Then there need be no challenge to those who are still in endowed possession of "history" as such. My new men and the students under them would be working out strands of biological, intellectual, economic consequences. Periods, nations and races they would consider only in so far as these provided them with material facts. They would be related to the older school of historians much as vegetable physiologists ecologists and morphologists are related to the old plant-flattening, specimen-hunting, stamen-counting botanists. The end of all intelligent analysis is to clear the way for synthesis. The clearer their new history became the nearer they would be to efficient world-planning. All this is very obvious to-day but it was by no means clear in 1900. It took me some years to grasp the magnitude of my own realization.

Sooner or later Human Ecology under some name or other, will win its way to academic recognition and to its proper place in general education — in America sooner than in Europe, I guess — but the old history made up of time-worn gossip and stale and falsified politics, is deeply embedded in literature and usage. The invasion of the field of history by the scientific spirit is belated and slow. The old history, barbarically copious and classically fruitless, is strongly entrenched in the centres of learning throughout the world; it is closely interwoven with the legal profession and the current politico-social organization, and has all the resistant vigour of hierarchic dignity on the defensive. For years yet, I am afraid, the young will still have to learn the more significant facts about Queen Elizabeth's doubtful virginity, memorize such legal documents as the Constitutions of Clarendon and the Bill of Rights and discuss those

marvellous world policies invented for examination purposes by dons addicted to self-identification with Julius Cæsar or Napoleon Bonaparte or Charles the Fifth or Disraeli or some other of the many exaggerated and inflammatory figures about which history has festered. But this material has no more educational value than the reading of detective stories, until a sound analytical treatment brings it right into the texture of contemporary affairs and points on through their confusion to the broad lines of probability ahead.

I made a first attempt to formulate this idea in my Royal Institution lecture in January 1902. I called this lecture the *Discovery of the Future* and I drew a hard distinction between what I called the legal (past-regarding) and the creative (future regarding) minds. I insisted that we overrated the darkness of the future, that by adequate analysis of contemporary processes its conditions could be brought within the range of our knowledge and its form controlled, and that mankind was at the dawn of a great change-over from life regarded as a system of consequences to life regarded as a system of constructive effort. I did not say that the future could be foretold but I said that its conditions could be foretold. We should be less and less bound by the engagements of the past and more and more ruled by a realiazation of the creative effect of our acts. We should release ourselves more and more from the stranglehold of past things.

An attack upon the assumption that history is made by "Great Men" is clearly implied in this view. Napoleon and Cæsar were typical "Great Men." I hold they were as much an outcome of systemic processes as are the pustules that break out through the skin of many growing young people. Just now we are living in a world where such boils are breaking out everywhere; everywhere there are dictators and "leaders"; everywhere there are "movements" festering about anything from the highly distended Mussolini to our own little black- head, Mosley. It is a spotty stage in the adolescence of mankind, a spotty stage that will pass. It is the Great Man idea and method in final pathological decay.

My lecture was printed in *Nature* (February 6th, 1902) and afterwards reprinted as a pamphlet. I find it, when I re-read it now and measure it by the present certainties of my mind, vague, inexact and rhetorical, but that is the measure of the progress in definition

that has been going on in the intervening third of a century. When it was read, that lecture was well abreast of its time.

In 1902 I returned to the *Fortnightly Review* in which *Anticipations* had appeared and contributed a second series of papers under the general title of *Mankind in the Making*, which was published as a book in 1903. This is less in the vein of Analytical History and more in the nature of a general prospectus for the human enterprise. In 1905, I published *A Modern Utopia*, also after a serialization in the *Fortnightly*, and in this I presented not so much my expectations for mankind as my desires.

Let me however return to *Anticipations* for a while. The full title of the book is *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought*. It begins with a statement of what is now a matter of world-wide recognition, the fundamental change in the scale of human relationships and human enterprises brought about by increased facilities of communication. It goes on to apply this generalization to one after another of the fundamental human interests, to show how it affects the boundaries of political divisions, the scope and nature of collective organisations, working loyalties and educational necessities. I had discovered no new principle here. It was too obvious a thing to be a discovery, and it had already been applied most illuminatingly by Grant Allen in an unpretending essay on the distances between country towns. I never read anything more germinal in my life, unless it was Lang and Atkinson's *Primal Law and Social Origins*, than this particular magazine article. It woke me up to the reciprocal relationship between facilities of locomotion and community-size, and so to a realization of what was happening to the world. I was, I think, the first to apply this relationship comprehensively to historical analysis. If I did not discover this principle I was certainly among the first to call attention to its far-reaching implications.

Anticipations begins with two papers on land-traction and the redistribution of population through the evolution of transport. Then follows an examination of the way in which the change of scale is destroying a long established social order and creating a social confusion in which no new classifications are yet apparent. Here again I was in a region of possible knowledge which was then

immensely unexplored. There are two chapters on this social flux, and some guessing at its possible recrystallization, and these lead on naturally to a "Life History of Democracy." Modern Democracy is shown to be not an organic method of social organization but the political expression of a phase of social liquefaction. This chapter on Democracy, the chapter called the "Great Synthesis" and the concluding chapter on "Faith, Morals and Public Policy in the Twentieth Century" are from my present point of view, the most imperfect and the most interesting parts of *Anticipations*. The forecasts of modern war, striking as their partial fulfilment has been, of the interplay of languages, of the probability of defeat for Germany in the war that was then already threatening us, the renascence of Poland and the prospective movements of boundaries and predominances, though they show a considerable amount of shrewdness, have now been so much overtaken by events and proved or disproved, that they need not concern me here. My great miss in these early shots at forecasting was that I never guessed at the possibility of a modernized planning régime arising in Russia — of all countries. I saw the approaching decivilization of Ireland but I wrote that Russia would be only another and vaster Ireland. I was quite out about Russia.

The fact that in 1900 I had already grasped the inevitability of a World State and the complete insufficiency of the current parliamentary methods of democratic government is of more than merely autobiographical interest. Everybody in 1900 was shirking the necessity for great political reconstructions everywhere. Even the raising of the question carried my book outside the sphere of "practical politics" as they were then understood.

At that early date I was somehow already alive to the incompatibility of the great world order fore-shadowed by scientific and industrial progress, with existing political and social structures. I was already searching about in my mind, and in the facts about me, for ideas about the political and social will and mentality that were demanded by these inevitable material developments. The fact that I regarded myself as a complete outsider in public affairs, and that I felt debarred from any such conformity as would have given me a career within the established political and educational machinery,

probably helped importantly in the liberation of my mind to these realizations, and supplied the disinterested vigour with which I worked them out. I could attack electoral and parliamentary methods, the prestige of the universities and the ruling class, the monarchy and patriotism, because I had not the slightest hope or intention of ever using any of these established systems for my own advancement or protection. For a scientific treatment of the theory of government my political handicap was a release. I had the liberty of that irresponsible child in the fable of the Emperor's Clothes. I could say exactly what I thought because it was inconceivable that I could ever be a successful courtier.

In *Anticipations*, I take up the contemporary pretensions of democracy and state the widely unspoken thought of the late Victorians: "This will not work." I then consider existing governments and ruling influences and say as plainly, "These do not work." What most active people were saying was, "They will work well enough for a few years more." And so, through circumstances and simplicity rather than through any exceptional intelligence, I arrived ahead of everyone at the naked essential question, which everyone about me was putting off for to-morrow, "What, then, will work?" And the attempt to answer that has been the cardinal reality of my thought and writing ever since.

The first tentative answer, as I made it in *Anticipations*, was something I called "The New Republic." It was an answer in the most general terms and it was given in a thoroughly Nineteenth Century spirit. I have written already, in Chapter the Fifth, § 5 of the peculiar fatuous hopefulness of the Nineteenth Century and here I am — true to my period.

This New Republic was to consist of all those people throughout the world whose minds were adapted to the demands of the big scale conditions of the new time.

"I have sought to show" I wrote "that in peace and war alike a process has been and is at work, a process with all the inevitableness and all the patience of a natural force, whereby the great swollen, shapeless, hyper-trophied social mass of to-day must give birth at

last to a naturally and informally organized, educated class, an unprecedented sort of people, a New Republic dominating the world. It will be none of our ostensible governments that will effect this great clearing up; it will be the mass of power and intelligence altogether outside the official state systems of to-day that will make this great clearance, a new social Hercules that will strangle the serpents of war and national animosity in his cradle.... It will appear first, I believe, as a conscious organization of intelligent and quite possibly in some cases wealthy men, as a movement having distinct social and political aims, confessedly ignoring most of the existing apparatus of political control, or using it only as an incidental implement in the attainment of these aims. It will be very loosely organized in its earlier stages, a mere movement of a number of people in a certain direction, who will presently discover with a sort of surprise the common object towards which they are all moving."

After the fatalistic optimistic fashion of the time, you see, I assumed that this "New Republic" would appear of its own accord, would "emerge." This was Liberalism — after the Tennysonian pattern. But even then some doubt was lurking at the back of my mind whether it might not prove necessary to *assist* the process of emergence. That there was something to be done about it, and that waiting for the great civilization of the future to arrive was not enough, grew clearer and clearer in my mind, year after year. Destiny, like the God of the Jews, gives no unconditional promises.

In § 5 of Chapter Five of this book I have already made a general criticism of the Socialism of the opening century and told, as one of the newer generation at that time, of my reactions to the assumptions and limitations of the Socialist movement. In several of my books my dawning sense that both Marxism and Fabian Socialism were failing to complete their first intentions and beginning to "date," found expression. Here I have to touch again upon the issues of that section, but from a new angle. What concerns me now is the story of my own disentanglement and the curious way in which I was using my prestige and possibilities as an imaginative writer, to do the thinking-out of this problem of human will and government, under fantastic forms. Just as Pope found it easier to discuss natural

theology in verse, so at this stage, I found it more convenient to discuss sociology in fable. While in the Fabian Society I was raising *The Question of Scientific Administrative Areas* (1903), I was also writing a story based on exactly the same idea, *The Food of the Gods* (serialized in 1903 and published as a book in 1904), which began with a wild burlesque of the change of scale produced by scientific men and ended in the heroic struggle of the rare new big-scale way of living against the teeming small-scale life of the earth. Nobody saw the significance of it, but it left some of its readers faintly puzzled. They were vastly amused and thrilled by my giant wasps and rats, but young Caddies was beyond them. And later on in the same way the research for some means of changing the collective drive of human motives threw off the fable of *In the Days of the Comet* (1906), when an impalpable gas from a comet's tail sweeps into our atmosphere, does the work of centuries of moral education in the twinkling of an eye, and makes mankind sane, understanding and infinitely tolerant.

The more formal research for the realization of the New Republic was pursued in *Mankind in the Making*. I was realizing that the correlative of a new republic was a new education and this book is a discursive examination, an all too discursive examination of the formative elements in the social magma. The best part is the criticism and the rejection of selective breeding as giving any immediate hope of human improvement. Much of the rest shirks the harder task of scrutinizing the "man-making forces in society," in favour of a series of sketchy suggestions and rhetorical passages. Sometimes the text degenerates into mere scolding. Here is the conclusion of this, the most completely forgotten of my books. This stuff, you will observe, is not really getting on with the business at all; it is revivalism, field preaching. It is the exhortation of a man who has not yet been able to establish, at any point, working contacts for the realization of his ideas. Plainly he is exhorting himself as well as others. Just to keep going.

"Assuredly youth will come to us, if this is indeed to be the dawn of a new time. Without the high resolve of youth, without the constant

accession of youth, without recuperative power, no sustained forward movement is possible in the world. It is to youth, therefore, that this book is finally addressed, to the adolescents, to the students, to those who are yet in the schools and who will presently come to read it, to those who, being still plastic, can understand the infinite plasticity of the world. It is those who are yet unmade who must become the makers.... After thirty there are few conversions and fewer fine beginnings; men and women go on in the path they have marked out for themselves. Their imaginations have become firm and rigid, even if they have not withered, and there is no turning them from the conviction of their brief experience that almost all that is, is inexorably so. Accomplished things obsess us more and more....

"With each year of their lives they come more distinctly into conscious participation with our efforts. Those soft little creatures that we have figured grotesquely as dropping from an inexorable spout into our world; those weak and wailing lumps of pink flesh, more helpless than any animal, for whom we have planned better care, a better chance of life, better conditions of all sorts; those larval souls, who are at first helpless clay in our hands, presently, insensibly, have become helpers beside us in the struggle. In a little while they are beautiful children, they are boys and girls and youths and maidens, full of the zest of new life, full of an abundant, joyful receptivity. In a little while they are walking with us, seeking to know whither we go, and whither we lead them, and why.... In a little while they are young men and women, and then men and women, save for a fresher vigour, like ourselves. For us it comes at last to fellowship and resignation. For them it comes at last to responsibility, to freedom, and to introspection and the searching of hearts.... To know all one can of one's self in relation to the world about one, to think out all one can, to take nothing for granted except by reason of one's unavoidable limitations, to be swift, indeed, but not hasty, to be strong but not violent, to be as watchful of one's self as it is given one to be, is the manifest duty of all who would subserve the New Republic. For the New Republican, as for his forerunner the Puritan, conscience and discipline must saturate life. He must be ruled by duties and a certain ritual in life. Every day and

every week he must set aside time to read and think, to commune with others and himself; he must be as jealous of his health and strength as the Levites of old. Can we in this generation make but a few thousands of such men and women, men and women who are not afraid to live, men and women with a common faith and a common understanding, then, indeed, our work will be done. They will in their own time take this world as a sculptor takes his marble, and shape it better than all our dreams."

That I think is my style at its worst and my matter at its thinnest, and quoting it makes me feel very sympathetic with those critics who, to put it mildly, restrain their admiration for me. But it is a proper part of the story to record a phase when I did come to the surface and spout like that, before I took breath and went down into things again.

§ 2. THE SAMURAI — IN UTOPIA AND IN THE FABIAN SOCIETY (1905-1909)

A Modern Utopia goes half way towards the fantastic story for its form, in a fresh attack upon the problem of bringing the New Republic into existence. It is fairly plain to me that I felt I was going ineffectively nowhere, in those discursive utterances in *Mankind in the Making*, where the only tolerable stuff was the plain and simple squashing of "Positive Eugenics." But I had still to discover how to get at a fruitful presentation of New Republican organization. I now tried an attack upon my difficulties, so to speak, from the rear, by dropping the study of existing conditions and asking first, "What is it that has to be done? What sort of world do we want?" I took a leaf; in fact I took a number of pages; from Plato in that. Only after the answer to that question had begun to appear, would it be possible to take up the consideration of how to get there with any hope of success.

Of course, as I have already explained in my criticism of Fabian Socialism and classical Marxism, this was flying in the face of potent and sacred dogmas. Both schools were so ignorant of the use of the

imagination in scientific exploration, that they thought Utopianism "unscientific" — and their snobbish terror of that word "unscientific" had no limits. That does not alter the fact that my Utopian attack upon the problem of socialist administration was thoroughly worth the making.

In February 1906, I find that I was defending my method of approach to the problem of administration, at a meeting of the Sociological Society, in a paper entitled "The so-called Science of Sociology." This was afterwards reprinted in *An Englishman Looks at the World* (1914). In this paper I insisted that in sociology there were no units for treatment, but only one single unit which was human society, and that in consequence the normal scientific method of classification and generalization breaks down. "We cannot put Humanity into a museum, or dry it for examination; our one, single, still living specimen is all history, all anthropology, and the fluctuating world of men. There is no satisfactory means of dividing it, and nothing else in the real world with which to compare it. We have only the remotest ideas of its 'life-cycle' and a few relics of its origin and dreams of its destiny.... Sociology must be neither art simply, nor science in the narrow meaning of the word at all, but knowledge rendered imaginatively and with an element of personality, that is to say, in the highest sense of the term, literature."

There were, I argued, two literary forms through which valid sociological work may be carried on; the first, the fitting of "schemes of interpretation" to history and the second, smaller in bulk and "altogether under-rated and neglected," the creation and criticism of Utopias. This I maintained should be the main business of a sociological society. This essay was a little excursion by the way and the subsequent discussion was entirely inconclusive. Mr. Wilfred Trotter thought it was an "Attack on Science" and Mr. Swinny defended Comte from my ingratitude.

(Probably I am unjust to Comte and grudge to acknowledge a sort of priority he had in sketching the modern outlook. But for him, as for Marx, I have a real personal dislike, a genuine reluctance to concede him any sort of leadership. It is I think part of an inherent dislike of leadership and a still profounder objection to the subsequent deification of leaders. Leaders I feel should guide as far

as they can — and then vanish. Their ashes should not choke the fire they have lit.)

Although it has never had any great popular sale, *A Modern Utopia* remains to this day one of the most vital and successful of my books. It is as alive to-day as *Mankind in the Making* is dead. It was the first approach I made to the dialogue form, and I am almost as satisfied with its literary quality as I am with that of *The Undying Fire*. The trend towards dialogue like the basal notion of the Samurai, marks my debt to Plato. *A Modern Utopia*, quite as much as that of More, derives frankly from the *Republic*.

In this *Modern Utopia* I made a suggestion for a temperamental classification of citizens as citizens. For the purposes of the state I proposed a division into four types of character, the poietic, the kinetic, the dull and the base. A primary problem of government was to vest all the executive and administrative work in the kinetic class, while leaving the poietic an adequate share in suggestion, criticism and legislation, controlling the base and giving the dull an incentive to kinetic effort.

The device of the order of the Samurai, as I worked it out in this book, does I think solve this problem better than any other method that has ever been suggested. Membership of the Samurai was voluntary, but was made difficult by qualifications and severe disciplinary tests and, on the principle that the bow need not always be strung, could be abandoned and resumed, under proper safeguards, according to the way of living desired by the individual at any time. In the Utopian constitution, free-speech and great fields of initiative were jealously guarded from repressive controls. The kinetic were trained to respect them. The "base" were merely those who had given evidence of a strong anti-social disposition and were the only individuals inalterably excluded from the Samurai. Membership of either of these four classes, was regulated by the filtering processes of education and of the tests of social life, and was never hereditary.

The experience of the thirty years that have passed since I launched this scheme, and particularly the appearance of such successful organizations as the Communist party and the Italian fascists has greatly strengthened my belief in the essential soundness

of this conception of the governing order of the future. A Samurai Order educated in such an ideology as I have since tried to shape out, is inevitable if the modern world-state is ever to be fully realized. We want the world ruled, not by everybody, but by a politically minded organization open, with proper safeguards, to everybody. The problem of world revolution and world civilization becomes the problem of crystallizing, as soon as possible, as many as possible of the right sort of individuals from the social magma, and getting them into effective, conscious co-operation.

Before working out my sketch *A Modern Utopia*, I was disposed to think that this ruling order, which I had called at first the New Republic, would appear of its own accord. After I had published and seen something of the effect of *A Modern Utopia*, I realized that an Order of the Samurai was not a thing that comes about of itself and that if ever it were to exist, it must be realized as the result of very deliberate effort. After publishing *A Modern Utopia* in 1906, I went to America and wrote a series of impressions, *The Future in America* in which I dwelt upon the casual and chaotic elements in American development, noted the apparent absence of any "sense of the State" and speculated on the possibility of supplying that deficiency. Then I returned to begin a confused, tedious, ill-conceived and ineffectual campaign to turn the little Fabian Society, wizened already though not old, into the beginnings of an order, akin to these Samurai in *A Modern Utopia*, which should embody for mankind a sense of the State.

I envisaged that reconditioned Fabian Society as becoming, by means of vigorous propaganda, mainly carried on by young people, the directive element of a reorganized socialist party. We would attack the coming generation at the high school, technical college and university stage, and our organization would quicken into a constructive social stratum.

The idea was as good as the attempt to realize it was futile. On various occasions in my life it has been borne in on me, in spite of a stout internal defence, that I can be quite remarkably silly and inept; but no part of my career rankles so acutely in my memory with the conviction of bad judgment, gusty impulse and real inexcusable vanity, as that storm in the Fabian tea-cup. From the first my motives

were misunderstood, and it should have been my business to make them understandable. I antagonized Shaw and Beatrice Webb for example, by my ill-aimed aggressiveness, yet both these people have since shown by their behaviour towards Fascism and Communism respectively, that their trend of mind is all towards just such a qualification of crude democracy as in 1906 I was so clumsily seeking. I was fundamentally right and I was wrong-headed and I left the Society, at last, if possible more politically parliamentary and ineffective than I found it. If I were to recount the comings and goings of that petty, dusty conflict beginning with my paper *The Faults of the Fabian* (February 1906) and ending with my resignation in September 1908, the reader would be intolerably bored. Fortunately for him it would bore me far more to disinter the documents, fight my battles over again and write it all down. And nobody else will ever do it.

I can but mention in passing the crowded meetings in Cliffords Inn, the gathered "intelligentsia" — then so new in English life — the old radical veterans and the bubbling new young people; the fine speeches of Shaw; Sidney Webb, with his head down talking fast with a slight lisp, terribly like a Civil Servant dispensing information; the magnificent Bland in a frock-coat and a black ribboned monocle, debating, really debating Sir, in a rococo variation of the front bench parliamentary manner; red-haired Haden Guest, being mercurial, and Edward Pease, the secretary, invincibly dry; myself speaking haltingly on the verge of the inaudible, addressing my tie through a cascade moustache that was no sort of help at all, correcting myself as though I were a manuscript under treatment, making ill-judged departures into parenthesis; the motions, the amendments, the disputes with the chairman, the shows of hands, the storms of applause; the excited Socialists disgorging at last, still disputing, into philistine Fleet Street and the Strand, swirling into little eddies in Appenrodt's, talking a mixture of politics and personalities. Our seriousness was intense. We typed and printed and issued Reports and Replies and Committee Election Appeals and Personal Statements, and my original intentions were buried at last beneath a steaming heap of hot secondary issues.

The order of the Fabian Samurai perished unborn. I went,

discoursing to undergraduate branches and local branches, to Oxford, Cambridge, Glasgow, Manchester and elsewhere pursuing the lengthening threads of our disputes. The society would neither give itself to me to do what I wished with it, nor cast me out. It liked the entertainment of its lively evenings. And at last I suddenly became aware of the disproportionate waste of my energy in these disputes and abandoned my attack. Now there was the New Republic to be discovered. By me at any rate.

Reflections of that queer conflict are to be found in *The New Machiavelli* (1911). For some time I was a baffled revolutionary. I did not know what to do next. My Theory of Revolution by Samurai hung in the air and I could not discover any way of bringing it down to the level of reality. At the very time when I was failing, Lenin, under the stresses of a more pressing reality, was steadily evolving an extraordinarily similar scheme, the reconstructed Communist Party. Whether there was any genetic connection between his scheme and mine I have never been able to ascertain. But the in-and-out arrangement whereby a man or woman could be a militant member of the organization and then drop out of its obligations and privileges, the imposition of special disciplines and restrictions upon the active members and the recognition that there are types of good citizens who will live best and work best outside the responsible administrative organization, are common alike to my project and the Russian reality. Moreover they resemble each other in insisting upon a training in directive ideas as part of the militant qualification. If Russia has done nothing else for mankind, the experiment of the Communist Party is alone sufficient to justify her revolution and place it upon an altogether higher level than that chaotic emotional release, the first French Revolution.

§ 3. "PLANNING" IN THE *DAILY MAIL* (1912)

If for a time I could not get on with the project of an organized "New Republic" as such, this did not prevent my making an occasional attack upon the general problem of social reconstruction. In 1912 Northcliffe asked me to write a series of articles for his *Daily Mail* on

the Labour Unrest. Here again I displayed a certain prophetic quality. I got a year or so ahead of the general movement. “Planning” is a world-wide idea nowadays, but in 1912 this that follows was strange stuff for the readers of the leading half-penny daily to find upon their breakfast tables:

“No community has ever yet had the will and the imagination to recast and radically alter its social methods as a whole. The idea of such a reconstruction has never been absent from human thought since the days of Plato, and it has been enormously reinforced by the spreading material successes of modern science, successes due always to the substitution of analysis and reasoned planning for trial and the rule of thumb. But it has never yet been so believed in and understood as to render any real endeavour to reconstruct possible. The experiment has always been too gigantic for the available faith behind it, and there have been against it the fear of presumption, the interests of all advantaged people, and the natural sloth of humanity. We do but emerge now from a period of deliberate happy-go-lucky and the influence of Herbert Spencer, who came near raising public shiftlessness to the dignity of a national philosophy. Everything would adjust itself — if only it was left alone.

“Yet some things there are that cannot be done by small adjustments, such as leaping chasms or killing an ox or escaping from the roof of a burning house. You have to decide upon a certain course on such occasions and maintain a continuous movement. If you wait on the burning house until you scorch and then turn round a bit or move away a yard or so, of if on the verge of a chasm you move a little in the way in which you wish to go, disaster will punish your moderation. And it seems to me that the establishment of the world’s work upon a new basis — and that and no less is what this Labour Unrest demands for its pacification — is just one of those large alterations which will never be made by the collectively unconscious activities of men, by competitions and survival and the higgling of the market. Humanity is rebelling against the continuing existence of a labour class as such, and I can see no way by which our present method of weekly wages employment can change by imperceptible increments into a method of salary and pension — for it is quite evident that only by reaching that shall we reach the end of

these present discontents. The change has to be made on a comprehensive scale or not at all. We need nothing less than a national plan of social development if the thing is to be achieved.

"Now that, I admit, is, as the Americans say, a large proposition. But we are living in a time of more and more comprehensive plans, and the mere fact that no scheme so extensive has ever been tried before is no reason at all why we should not consider one. We think nowadays quite serenely of schemes for the treatment of the nation's health as one whole, while our fathers considered illness as a blend of accident with special providences; we have systematized the community's water supply, education, and all sorts of once 'chaotic services, and Germany and our own infinite higgledy-piggledy discomfort and ugliness have brought home to us at last even the possibility of planning the extension of our towns and cities. It is only another step upward in scale to plan out new, more tolerable conditions of employment for every sort of worker and to organize the transition from our present disorder."

And again:

"I have attempted a diagnosis of this aspect of our national situation. I have pointed out that nearly all the social forces of our time seem to be in conspiracy to bring about the disappearance of a labour class as such and the rearrangement of our work and industry upon a new basis. That rearrangement demands an unprecedented national effort and the production of an adequate National Plan. Failing that, we seem doomed to a period of chronic social conflict and possibly even of frankly revolutionary outbreaks that may destroy us altogether or leave us only a dwarfed and enfeebled nation...."

(But all this was complicated with an advocacy of "proportional representation" and one or two other minor reforms which I now find myself less willing to revive. Not so much because I have lost faith in them as because I realize that they are of such secondary importance that any insistence upon them distorts the proportions of the general proposition. If ever they are mentioned people say: "So *that's* your panacea!" and everything else is ignored.)

§ 4. THE GREAT WAR AND MY RESORT TO "GOD" (1914-1916)

The onset of the Great War hung portentously over us all throughout the three years between the Agadir incident (July 1911) and the invasion of Belgium in August 1914. The inevitability of a crash was more and more manifest, and my reluctant attention was swung round to this continually more immediate threat to the structure of civilization. In 1913, in a short series of articles in the *Daily Mail*, I was writing about the modernization of warfare. (They are reprinted together with the Labour Unrest series and other articles in *An Englishman Looks at the World*, 1914) and early in 1914 I published a futuristic story *The World Set Free*, in which I described the collapse of the social order through the use of "atomic bombs" in a war that began, prophetically and obviously enough, with a German invasion of France by way of Belgium.

After this collapse there was to be a wave of sanity — a disposition to believe in these spontaneous waves of sanity may be one of my besetting weaknesses — and a wonderful council at Brissago (near Locarno!) was to set up the new world order. Yet, after all, the popular reception of President Wilson in 1919 was more like a wave of sanity than anything that had ever occurred in history before. Already in 1908 in *The War in the Air*, written before any practicable flying had occurred, I had reasoned that air warfare, by making warfare three dimensional, would abolish the war front and with that the possibility of distinguishing between civilian and combatant or of bringing a war to a conclusive end. This I argued, must not only intensify but must alter the ordinary man's attitude to warfare. He can no longer regard it as we did the Boer War for example as a vivid spectacle in which his participation is that of a paying spectator at a cricket or base-ball match.

No intelligent brain that passed through the experience of the Great War emerged without being profoundly changed. Our vision of life was revised in outline and detail alike. To me, as to most people, it was a revelation of the profound instability of the social order. It was also a revelation of the possibilities of fundamental reorganization that were now open to mankind — and of certain

extraordinary weaknesses in the collective mentality. I was intensely indignant at the militarist drive in Germany and, as a convinced Republican, I saw in its onslaught the culminating expression of the monarchist idea. This, said I, in shrill jets of journalism, is the logical outcome of your parades and uniforms! Now to fight the fighters!

People forget nowadays how the personal imperialism of the Hohenzollerns dominated the opening phase of the war. I shouted various newspaper articles of an extremely belligerent type. But my estimate of the moral and intellectual forces at large in the world, was out. I would not face the frightful truth. I anticipated an explosion of indignant commonsense that would sweep not simply the Hohenzollerns but the whole of the current political system, the militant state and its symbols, out of existence, leaving the whole planet a confederated system of socialist republics. Even in *In the Fourth Year* (1918) I denounced the "Krupp-Kaiser" combination and took it almost as a matter of course that such a thing as a private-profit armament industry could not survive the war. Perhaps in the long run its cessation may be the tardy outcome of the cataclysm, but that outcome, I must admit, is still being most tragically delayed. It is being delayed by the general inability to realize that a "sovereign state" is essentially and incurably a war- making state. My own behaviour in 1914-15 is an excellent example of that inability.

The fount of sanguine exhortation in me swamped my warier disposition towards critical analysis and swept me along. I wrote a pamphlet, that weighed, I think, with some of those who were hesitating between participation and war resistance, "*The War that will end War*." The title has become proverbial. The broken promise of the phrase is still used as a taunt by the out-and-out pacificist against anyone who does not accept the dogma of non-resistance in its entirety. But in some fashion armed forces that take action have to be disarmed and I remain persuaded that there will have to be a last conflict to inaugurate the peace of mankind. Rather than a war between sovereign governments, however, it is far more likely to be a war to suppress these wherever they are found.

Anatole France in regard to the war was in much the same case as myself. We had met several times before 1914 and formed a very friendly estimate of each other, and when *The Book of France* was

compiled and published, for relief funds in the devastated regions, he contributed an article *Debout pour la Dernière Guerre*, which he insisted I should translate. I did so under the title of *Let Us Arise and End War*.

As I reassemble all that I can of my hasty, discursive and copious writings during the early stages of the war, and do my utmost to recover my actual states of mind, it becomes plain to me that for a time — in spite of my intellectual previsions — the world disaster, now that it had come, so overwhelmed my mind that I was obliged to thrust this false interpretation upon it, and assert, in spite of my deep and at first unformulated misgivings, that here and now, the new world order was in conflict with the old. Progress was arrested, its front was shattered under my eyes, so shattered that even to this day (1934) it has not reformed, and I convinced myself that on the contrary it was the old traditional system falling to pieces, and the world state coming into being (as the world alliance) under my eyes. The return to complete sanity took the greater part of two years. My mind did not get an effective consistent grip upon the war until 1916.

I remember distinctly when the first effectual destructive tap came to my delusion. It was a queer and a very little, but, at the same time, very arresting, incident. For some British readers there will be a shock, when they read of it, quite different in its nature from the shock that came to me. But I have given fair warning in this book that I am a Republican, and that the essential disavowals of my soul go deeper than the merely theological beliefs of my fellow countrymen. Perhaps they do not get enough of this sort of shock.

I was walking from my flat in St. James's Court to lunch and talk at the Reform Club. Upon the wall at the corner of Marlborough House as it was then, I saw a large bill; it was an unusual place for an advertisement and I stopped to read it. It was a Royal Proclamation. I forget what matter it concerned; what struck me was the individual manner of the wording. King George was addressing "my people." There was no official "we" and "our" about it.

I had been so busy with the idea of civilization fighting against tradition, I had become so habituated to the liberal explanation of the monarchy as a picturesque and harmless vestigial structure, that this abrupt realization that the King was placing himself personally at the

head of his people, was like a bomb bursting under my nose. My mind hung over that fact for a moment or so.

"Good God!" I said in the greatest indignation, "what has *he* got to do with our war?"

I went my way digesting it.

"*My* people" — me and my sort were *his* people!

So long as you suffer any man to call himself your shepherd sooner or later you will find a crook round your ankle. We were not making war against Germany; we were being ordered about in the King's war with Germany.

It took me some months of reluctant realization to bring my mind to face the unpalatable truth that this "war for civilization," this "war to end war" of mine was in fact no better than a consoling fantasy, and that the flaming actuality was simply this, that France, Great Britain and their allied Powers were, in pursuance of their established policies, interests, treaties and secret understandings, after the accepted manner of history and under the direction of their duly constituted military authorities, engaged in war with the allied central powers, and that under contemporary conditions no other war was possible. The World-State of my imaginations and desires was presented hardly more by one side in the conflict than by the other. We were fighting for "King and Country" and over there they were fighting for "Kaiser and Fatherland"; it was six of one and half a dozen of the other, so far as the World-State was concerned.

The efforts of my brain to grasp the vast possibilities of human violence, feebleness and docility that I had neglected and ignored so long in my eagerness to push forward to the modern State, and further to adjust my guiding *persona* to these reluctant realizations, were, I suppose, paralleled in hundreds of thousands of brains. We couldn't get out of it for a time and think it out — and, the young men, particularly were given no time to think. They thought it out in the trenches — and in No Man's Land. And I, exempt from service and free to express myself, had offered them nothing better than the "War to end War"!

Naturally, in my autobiography, my mind must occupy the central position of this story of disillusionment, as a rabbit on the table represents its species, but the conscious and subconscious conflicts I

tell on my own behalf were general and not particular to me. I documented the process with exceptional abundance; that is my only distinction. Before the end of 1914, I had already set to work upon a record of my mental phases, elaborated in a novel, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*. It is only in the most general sense autobiographical — and I lost no son. But the story of Mr. Britling's son and Mr. Britling's grey matter could be repeated with ten thousand variations. Mr. Britling is not so much a representation of myself as of my type and class, and I think I have contrived in that book to give not only the astonishment and the sense of tragic disillusionment in a civilized mind as the cruel facts of war rose steadily to dominate everything else in life, but also the passionate desire to find some immediate reassurance amidst that whirlwind of disaster.

Mr. Britling after much tribulation "found God." He has lost his son and he sits in his study late at night trying to write to the parents of his boy's German tutor who is also among the dead.

"'*These boys, these hopes, this war has killed.*'

"The words hung for a time in his mind.

"'No!' said Mr. Britling stoutly. 'They live!'

"And suddenly it was borne in upon his mind that he was not alone. There were thousands and tens of thousands of men and women like himself, desiring with all their hearts to say, as he desired to say, the reconciling word. It was not only his hand that thrust against the obstacles.... Frenchmen and Russians sat in the same stillness, facing the same perplexities; there were Germans seeking a way through to him. Even as he sat and wrote. And for the first time clearly he felt a Presence of which he had thought very many times in the last few weeks, a Presence so close to him that it was behind his eyes and in his brain and hands. It was no trick of his vision; it was a feeling of immediate reality. And it was Hugh, Hugh that he had thought was dead, it was young Heinrich living also, it was himself, it was those others that sought, it was all these and it was more, it was the Master, the Captain of Mankind, it was God, there present with him, and he knew that it was God. It was as if he had been groping all this time in the darkness, thinking himself alone amidst rocks and pitfalls and pitiless things, and suddenly a hand, a firm strong hand, had touched his own. And a voice within him bade

him be of good courage. There was no magic trickery in that moment; he was still weak and weary, a discouraged rhetorician, a good intentioned ill-equipped writer; but he was no longer lonely and wretched, no longer in the same world with despair. God was beside him and within him and about him.... It was the crucial moment of Mr. Britling's life. It was a thing as light as the passing of a cloud on an April morning; it was a thing as great as the first day of creation. For some moments he still sat back with his chin upon his chest and his hands dropping from the arms of his chair. Then he sat up and drew a deep breath....

"For weeks his mind had been playing about this idea. He had talked to Letty of this Finite God, who is the king of man's adventure in space and time. But hitherto God had been for him a thing of the intelligence, a theory, a report, something told about but not realized.... Mr. Britling's thinking about God hitherto had been like some one who has found an empty house, very beautiful and pleasant, full of the promise of a fine personality. And then as the discoverer makes his lonely, curious explorations, he hears downstairs, dear and friendly, the voice of the Master coming in....

"There was no need to despair because he himself was one of the feeble folk. God was with him indeed, and he was with God. The King was coming to his own. Amidst the darknesses and confusions, the nightmare cruelties and the hideous stupidities of the great war, God, the Captain of the World Republic, fought his way to empire. So long as one did one's best and utmost in a cause so mighty, did it matter though the thing one did was little and poor?

"'I have thought too much of myself,' said Mr. Britling, 'and of what I would do by myself. I have forgotten *that which was with me....*'"

But the exact truth of the matter is that he had forgotten that which was *in* him, the impersonal, the man in general, which is as much our inheritance as our human frame. He was trying to project his own innate courage so as to feel it external to himself, independent of himself and eternal. Multitudes were doing the same thing at this time.

I went to considerable lengths with this attempt to deify human courage. I shocked many old friends and provoked William Archer's

effective pamphlet *God and Mr. Wells*. In the long run I came to admit that by all preceding definitions of God, this God of Mr. Britling was no God at all. But before I returned to that completeness of sincerity, there had to be some ingenious theological contortions. I was perhaps too aware of the numbers of fine-minded people who were still clinging not so much to religion as to the comfort of religious habits and phrases. Some lingering quality of childish dependence in them answered to this lapse towards a "sustaining faith" in myself. What we have here is really a falling back of the mind towards immaturity under the stress of dismay and anxiety. It is a very good thing at times to hear such words as "Let not your Heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid" spoken as if with authority. It is a good thing to imagine the still companionship of an understanding Presence on a sleepless night. Then one can get to sleep again with something of the reassurance of a child in its cot. Everywhere in those first years of disaster men were looking for some lodestar for their loyalty. I thought it was pitiful that they should pin their minds to "King and Country" and suchlike claptrap, when they might live and die for greater ends, and I did my utmost to personify and animate a greater, remoter objective in *God the Invisible King*. So by a sort of *coup d'état* I turned my New Republic for a time into a divine monarchy.

I cannot disentangle now, perhaps at no time could I have disentangled, what was simple and direct in this theocratic phase in my life, from what was — *politic*. I do not know how far I was being perfectly straightforward in this phase, how far I was — as the vulgar have it— "codding myself," and how far I was trying to make my New Republicanism acceptable in a different guise to that multitude which could not, it seemed, dispense with kingship. But what these God-needing people require is the sense of a Father on whom they can have the most perfect reliance. They are straining back to the instinctive faith of "little children," that ultimately everything is all right. They are frightened people who want to be told that they need not brace up to the grimness before them. With all the will in the world I could not bring myself to present my God as that sort of God. I could invent a heartening God but not a palliating God. At his best my deity was far less like the Heavenly Father of a devout Catholic

or a devout Moslem or Jew than he was like a personification of, let us say, the Five Year Plan. A Communist might have accepted him as a metaphor. No mystic could have used him because of the complete lack of miraculous aid or distinctive and flattering personal response. As he is presented in *God the Invisible King* he is no better than an inspiring but extremely preoccupied comrade, a thoroughly hard leader.

At no time did my deistic phrasing make any concessions to doctrinal Christianity. If my gestures were pious, my hands were clean. I never sold myself to organized orthodoxy. At its most artificial my religiosity was a flaming heresy and not a time-serving compromise. I never came nearer to Christianity than Manicheism — as Sir John Squire pointed out long ago.

I followed up *God the Invisible King*, with *The Soul of a Bishop* (also 1917) — in which I distinguish very clearly between the God of the Anglican Church and this new personification of human progressiveness — and both *Joan and Peter* (1918) and *The Undying Fire* (1919) are strongly flavoured with deified humanism. Another God indeed, God the Creator, appears for a brief interview with Peter in the hospital — and a very strange untidy God he is. He is evidently the male equivalent, humorous and self exculpatory, of what I have called elsewhere "that old harridan, Dame Nature." And in the last meditation of Joan and Peter's Uncle Oswald, "God," he feels, is "a name battered out of all value and meaning."

The Undying Fire is artistically conceived and rather brilliantly coloured; I have already expressed my satisfaction with it as the best of my Dialogue-Novels; and it crowns and ends my theology. It is the sunset of my divinity. Here is what Mr. Huss got from his God when at last he met him face to face.

"It was as if the dreamer pushed his way through the outskirts of a great forest and approached the open, but it was not through trees that he thrust his way but through bars and nets and interlacing curves of blinding, many-coloured light towards the clear promise beyond. He had grown now to an incredible vastness so that it was no longer earth upon which he set his feet but that crystalline pavement whose translucent depths contain the stars. Yet though he approached the open he never reached the open; the iridescent net

that had seemed to grow thin, grew dense again; he was still struggling, and the black doubts that had lifted for a moment swept down upon his soul. And he realized he was in a dream, a dream that was drawing swiftly now to its close.

"'Oh God!' he cried, 'answer me! For Satan has mocked me sorely. Answer me before I lose sight of you again. Am I right to fight? Am I right to come out of my little earth, here above the stars?'

"'Right if you dare.'

"'Shall I conquer and prevail? Give me your promise!'

"'Everlastingly you may conquer and find fresh worlds to conquer.'

"'*May* — but *shall* I?'

"It was as if the torrent of molten thoughts stopped suddenly. It was as if everything stopped.

"'Answer me,' he cried.

"Slowly the shining thoughts moved on again.

"'So long as your courage endures you will conquer....

"'If you have courage, although the night be dark, although the present battle be bloody and cruel and end in a strange and evil fashion, nevertheless victory shall be yours — in a way you will understand — when victory comes. Only have courage. On the courage in your heart all things depend. By courage it is that the stars continue in their courses, day by day. It is the courage of life alone that keeps sky and earth apart.... If that courage fail, if that sacred fire go out, then all things fail and all things go out, all things — good and evil, space and time.'

"'Leaving nothing?'

"'*Nothing*.'

"'Nothing,' he echoed, and the word spread like a dark and darkening mask across the face of all things."

But before that, Mr. Huss following in the footsteps of Job had said:

"'I will not pretend to explain what I cannot explain. It may be that God is as yet only foreshadowed in life. You may reason, Doctor Barrack, that this fire in the heart that I call God, is as much the

outcome of your Process as all the other things in life. I cannot argue against that. What I am telling you now is not what I believe so much as what I feel. To me it seems that the creative desire that burns in me is a thing different in its nature from the blind Process of matter, is a force running contrariwise to the power of confusion.... But this I do know, that once it is lit in a man, then his mind is alight — thenceforth. It rules his conscience with compelling power. It summons him to live the residue of his days working and fighting for the unity and release and triumph of mankind. He may be mean still, and cowardly and vile still, but he will know himself for what he is.... Some ancient phrases live marvellously. Within my heart *I know that my Redeemer liveth....*'"

Is not that very like prevarication? But I prevaricate in the footsteps of a famous exemplar. Have you ever thought over St. Paul's ambiguities in his Epistle to the Corinthians (I., xv. 35)? Could the resurrection of the body be more ingeniously evaded and "spiritualized" and adapted to all tastes?

After *The Undying Fire*, God as a character disappears from my work, except for a brief undignified appearance, a regrettable appearance, dressed in moonshine and armed with Cupid's bow and arrows in *The Secret Places of the Heart* (1922). My phraseology went back unobtrusively to the sturdy atheism of my youthful days. My spirit had never left it. If I have used the name of God at all in the past ten years it has been by way of a recognized metaphor as in "God forbid," or, "At last God wearied of Napoleon." I have become more and more scrupulous about appropriating the prestige of this name for my own ends.

In *What Are We to Do with Our Lives?* (1932) I make the most explicit renunciation and apology for this phase of terminological disingenuousness. In spite of the fact that it yielded Peter's dream of God Among the Cobwebs and *The Undying Fire* I wish, not so much for my own sake as for the sake of my more faithful readers, that I had never fallen into it; it confused and misled many of them and introduced a barren détour into my research for an effective direction for human affairs.

§ 5. WAR EXPERIENCES OF AN OUTSIDER

That theological excursion of mine was not the only détour I made. I made a still longer détour through the tangle of international politics. I attempted amateurish diplomacies, so to speak, in my writings, and they also need explanation. Everyman almost was imagining diplomacies and treaties in those days, but mine, to a quite exceptional degree, were documented.

Let me return first to the disillusionment about the beneficence of our war-making (1915-16-17) that followed my first attempt in 1914 to find a justifying purpose in "our" war. I did not become "anti-war." I found the simple solution of the conscientious objectors and war resisters generally, too simple for me altogether. My brain was quite prepared for conflict on behalf of the law and order of the world-state. I believe that is necessary to this day. Peace will have to be kept — forcibly. For ages. The distinction people draw between moral and physical force is flimsy and unsound. Life is conflict and the only way to universal peace is through the defeat and obliteration of every minor organization of force. Carrying weapons individually or in crowds, calls for vigorous suppression on the part of the community. The anti-war people made me the more impatient because of the rightness of much of their criticism of the prevailing war motives. I was perhaps afraid, if I yielded to them, of being carried back too far towards the futility of a merely negative attitude. What they said was so true and what they did was so merely sabotage, I lost my temper with them.

And with less stress upon the "perhaps" I was reluctant to admit how gravely I had compromised myself by my much too forward belligerence and my rash and eager confidence in the liberalism, intelligence and good faith of our foreign office and war office in the first month or so of the war. My pro-war zeal was inconsistent with my pre-war utterances and against my profounder convictions. As I recovered consciousness, so to speak, from the first shock of the war explosion and resumed my habitual criticism of government and the social order, I found myself suspect to many of my associates who had become pacificists of the left wing. They regarded me as a traitor who was betraying them to the "war-mongers," while the reactionists

in a position of authority, with equal justification and perhaps a nicer sense of my fundamental quality, were extremely suspicious of me as an ally. The hardest line to take is the middle way, especially if one is not sure-footed oneself, and there can be no doubt my staggering course was perplexing to many a friendly observer. Whatever I wrote or said went to an exasperating accompaniment of incredulity from the left, and I felt all the virtuous indignation natural to a man who has really been in the wrong. I was in the wrong and some of the things I wrote about conscientious objectors in *War and the Future* were unforgivable. I turned on the pacificists in *Joan and Peter*, savaged them to the best of my ability, imputed motives, ignored honourable perplexities and left some rankling wounds. Some of those war-time pacificists will never forgive me and I cannot complain of that. I made belated amends in the *Bulpington of Blup*. But that is a minor matter. The thing that occupied most of my mind was the problem of getting whatever was to be got for constructive world revolution out of the confusion of war, and being pro-German and non-combatant, finding endless excuses for the enemy and detracting from the fighting energy of the allies, seemed to me of no use at all towards my end.

I turn over a number of faded and forgotten writings as I try to judge and summarize my behaviour in these crucial years. There is an illuminating sketch of a story "The Wild Asses of the Devil" in *Boon* (1915). In 1915 I find I was already writing about the *Peace of the World* and the *End of the Armament Rings*. In 1916 I produced *What Is Coming?* made up of a number of 1915 newspaper articles. The leaves of my copy of this book are already carbonized, copies of it would be hard to find, if anyone wanted to find them, and if I were to put my reputation before my autobiographical rectitude, I think I should just let this little volume decay and char and disappear and say nothing about it. Most of it is very loose-lipped indeed. In it I am feeling my way about not only among ideas but among what I then thought were insurmountable popular prejudices, in a very blind and haphazard fashion. My propagandist and practical drive was still all too powerful for my scientific and critical disposition. I wanted something done and I did not want to seem to propose extravagant and impossible things.

Most of these 1915 articles were written with a curious flavour of clumsy propitiation or still clumsier menace, with an evident sense that they might be quoted in Germany, and there is a powerful flavour of ignorance, inexperience and self-importance about them. But I felt it was better to blurt out some things badly than not have them put about at all. I insist in this book that Germany will lose the struggle through exhaustion and that in the final settlement Britain must work closely with the United States (not then in the war). I also forecast the repudiation of the Hohenzollerns by Germany and the establishment of a German republic, but I did not anticipate that this would happen as soon as it actually did. There are some flashes of intuition. It was less widely recognized then than it is now that the way to liquidate a bankrupt world is through a rise in prices and a revaluation of gold. In some way I have got at that in this early war-book, and I am also clear that for any conclusive settlement there must be a grouping of states in larger systems. I talk of some hypothetical combination, which I call the "Pledged Allies," which must pursue a policy in common after the war, and I insist that a republican Germany will be altogether more capable of an understanding with such a combination than a monarchy. The Allies — pledged already not to make a separate peace — ought, I argue, to define a policy *now* before the war ends and pledge themselves to insist upon its realization. The idea of an ultimate Peace Conference becoming a sort of permanent world control is foreshadowed. The boldest paper of all in this amateurish collection of suggestions is a discussion of the possibility of pooling the tropical possessions of the great powers in order to end imperialist rivalries. This particular paper closes with this adumbration of the League of Nations idea, and it shows how far constructive liberal thought had got at that date (1916):

"And so the discussion of the future of the overseas 'empires' brings us again to the same realization to which the discussion of nearly every great issue arising out of this war has pointed, the realization of the imperative necessity of some great council or conference, some permanent overriding body, call it what you will, that will deal with things more broadly than any 'nationalism' or 'patriotic imperialism' can possibly do. That body must come into

human affairs. Upon the courage and imagination of living statesmen it depends whether it will come simply and directly into concrete reality or whether it will materialize slowly through, it may be, centuries of blood and blundering from such phantom anticipations as this, anticipations that now haunt the thoughts of all politically-minded men."

So I was already trying to get the World State recognized as a war objective in 1916.

In the late summer of 1916 I visited the Italian, French and German fronts. There was a fashion in that year of inviting writers and artists to go and see for themselves what the war was like and to report their impressions. I was kept loafing about in Paris for some week or so, I had a talk with Papa Joffre and was presented solemnly with a set of coloured postcards of all the chief French generals, and very good postcards they made. I went through North Italy by Gorizia to the Carso, returned to France to the front near Soissons and then went at my own request to the British front about Arras, to compare the British and French organizations for aerial photography.

It was an interesting but rather pointless trip. At Arras I met and went about with O. G. S. Crawford, whose ingenious readings of the air photographs delighted me very much — he is now largely responsible for that interesting periodical *Antiquity*, and he has applied all that he learnt in warfare to the nobler uses of scientific survey. At Amiens I was under the wing of C. E. Montague, the author of *A Hind Let Loose*, *Disenchantment* and *Rough Justice*. Montague was a curious mixture of sixth-form Anglican sentimentality (about dear old horses, dearer old doggies, brave women, real gentlemen, the old school, the old country and sound stock: Galsworthyissimus in fact), with a most adventurous intelligence. He was a radical bound, hide bound, in a conservative hide. He was a year younger than I, he had concealed his age and dyed his silvery hair to enlist at the outbreak of the war, he had accepted a commission with reluctance and I had been warned he was not the safest of guides. We got on very well together. I remember vividly walking with him across the shell-hole-dotted, wire-littered open towards the front line trenches. The sun was shining brightly and there was just the faintest whiff of freshness and

danger in the air. I doubt if anything was coming over; what shelling was audible overhead was British. We had agreed that blundering up the wet and narrow communication trench was intolerable in such sunshine and we walked bare-headed and carried our shrapnel helmets, like baskets, on our arms. We had confessed to each other what a bore the war had become to us, how its vast inconsequence weighed us down, and we talked as we trudged along very happily of the technical merits of Laurence Sterne.

In the front line although he insisted on my keeping my head below the parapet, he was exposing himself freely, standing up and craning his neck in the hope of seeing a German "out there."

"At twilight sometimes you can see them hopping about from one shell hole to another."

But there was nothing doing that day, there had been some "strafing" overnight but that was over, everyone in the trenches was sleeping and we returned through the tranquil desolation disputing whether there was any reason for anticipating a great outburst of literary activity as a result of the war. He thought that there ought to be and I thought that outbursts of literary activity were due to such secondary conditions as to have no directly traceable relation to the great events of history....

At the time of this pointless sight-seeing I might have been doing extremely useful war-work at home. I was still convinced that the war had to be won by the Allies and I was only too eager to give my time and risk my life and fortune in any task that used me effectively. But I meant to be used effectively. I refused absolutely to volunteer and drill and acquire the saluting habit for the protection of railway bridges and culverts against imaginary nocturnal Germans in the byways of Essex, or for sentinel-go in prisoners' camps or anything of that sort. But an old notion of mine, the *Land Ironclads* (published in the *Strand Magazine* in 1903) was being worked out at that time in the form of the Tanks, and it is absurd that my imagination was not mobilized in scheming the structure and use of these contrivances. These obvious weapons were forced upon the army by Winston Churchill against all the conservative instincts of the army; Kitchener had turned them down as "mechanical toys," and when at length they were put into action, it was done so timidly and experimentally and

with so inadequate an estimate of their possibilities that their immense value as a major surprise that might have ended the war, was altogether wasted. Later some were bogged in Flanders mud, to the great delight of the contemporary military mind. If the tanks could not be prevented, the next best thing from the old army point of view was to spoil them. "Can't use the damned things. Look at *that*!" Nowadays things have altered in form but not in essence and the British military intelligence, with its unerring instinct for being two decades out of date, is plainly and dangerously tank-mad.

When I heard about the tanks I felt bitter and frustrated, but that did not save me from getting into conflict later with the rigid intelligence of the professional soldiers.

I was lying snug in bed one night and I could not sleep. My window was open and the rain was pouring down outside and suddenly in an imaginative flash I saw the communication trenches swamped and swimming in mud and a miserable procession of overloaded "Tommies" struggling up to the front line along the wet planks. Some stumbled and fell. I knew men were often drowned in this dismal pilgrimage and that everyone who got to the front line arrived nearly worn out and smothered in mud. Moreover the utmost supplies these men could carry were insufficient. Suddenly I saw that this was an entirely avoidable strain. I tumbled out of bed and spent the rest of the night planning a mobile telpherage system. My idea was to run forward a set of T shaped poles with an erector wire, so that they could be all pulled up for use or allowed to lie flat and that two tractor wires could then work on the arms of the T. Power could be supplied by a motor lorry at the base of this line.

Either just before this or just after it I met Winston Churchill at lunch in Clare Sheridan's studio in St. John's Wood. I think it was just before. I had aired my grievance about the tanks and so I was able to get going with him about this telpherage project forthwith. He saw my points and put me in touch with capable men to supplement my mechanical insufficiency. Upon his instructions, E. V. Haigh, who was at the Ministry of Munitions, set the Trench Warfare Department in motion, and a temporary lieutenant Leeming — I think from Lancashire — worked out the apparatus with a group of men and made a reality of my dream.

We invented a really novel war accessory — I contributed nothing except the first idea and a few comments — and it was available as a perfected pattern before the end of the war, though never in sufficient quantity to produce perceptible effects. The "tin hats" did not like it. It would have saved multitudes of casualties and greatly facilitated the opening phases of the Allied offensive in 1918.

This telpherage of ours was no mere static transport system. It could be run forward almost as fast as infantry could advance; any part could be carried by a single man, it could be hauled up for action and lie when not in use; an ordinary lorry, the lorry that had brought up the poles and wire, could work it from a protected emplacement and it could carry an endless string of such loads as a wounded man on a stretcher or an equivalent weight of food or ammunition. We worked a rough trial length on Clapham Common and then installed, in Richmond Park, more than a mile which behaved admirably. If the line were disabled by a shell it was easy to repair and replace, and it was extremely light to bring up. It was practically invisible from the air, since its use wore no track and it could be shifted laterally and dismantled as easily as it was erected. (A description of the "Leeming" Portable and Collapsible Aerial Ropeway is documented with prints and photographs, under date November 26th 1917, in the archives of the Ministry of Munitions.)

This work brought me into closer touch with the military caste than I had ever been before. I had known plenty of men, politicians and so forth, who had been in regular regiments for brief periods, but these men I now encountered were the real army and nothing else. They were the quintessence of Service mentality. They impressed me extraordinarily — excessively. My memories of them I am persuaded must be exaggerated. They remain in my memory as an incredible caricature.

I remember vividly a conference we had in a shed upon the Thames embankment. The soldiers came "well groomed" as the phrase goes, in peculiarly beautiful red-banded peaked caps, heavy with gold braid. Crowns and stars, ribbons, epaulettes, belts and bands of the utmost significance, adorned their persons. War was the most important function in life for them and they dressed for it. They sat down, like men who had given some thought to sitting down in

the best possible manner. They produced their voices; they did not merely emit audible turbid thoughts as we did. If you had listened only to the sounds they made, you would have felt they were simple clear-headed men, speaking with a sane determination, and yet the things they said were by my standards almost inconceivably silly. Over against them sat my civilian colleagues, and only David Low could convey to you how comparatively ignoble we looked in our untidy every-day costumes, our bowler hats, our wilted collars, our carelessly chosen and carelessly tied war-time cravats. Judged by the way we carried ourselves we might almost as well have had no chests at all. And though our vocabulary was much more extensive there was no click about it. The noises we made came in shambling loose formation — from Scotland and Lancashire and Cockney London.

That contrast stuck in my mind and haunted me. It exercised me profoundly. It set me thinking of the implacable determination of so many types of life — and perhaps of all types of life — not to over-adapt, to make concessions indeed up to a certain extent, but not to make too fundamental concessions, — to perish rather. It made me waver towards the dogma of the class war. Here were these fine, handsome, well-groomed neighing gentlemen, the outcome of some century or so of army tradition, conscientiously good to look at but in no way showy or flashy, and they had clear definite ideas of what war was, what was permissible in war, what was undesirable about war, what was seemly, what was honourable, how far you might go and where you had to leave off, the complete etiquette of it. We and our like with our bits of stick and iron-pipe and wire, our test tubes and our tanks and our incalculable possibilities, came to these fine but entirely inconclusive warriors humbly demanding permission to give them victory — but victory at the price of all that they were used to, of all they held dear. It must have been obvious to them for instance, that we hated saluting; we were the sort that might talk shop at mess; we had no essential rigidities, no style; our loyalties were incomprehensible; our effect on “the men” if men had to be instructed, might be deplorable. We had therefore in plain English to be outwitted, cheated, discredited and frustrated; and we were.

It was not a plot against us; it was an instinct. Not one of those

soldiers would have admitted, even in his secret heart, that that was what he meant to do. But it was what he did. Damn these contrivances! It was far easier to understand a fellow officer from Berlin or Vienna than these Inventors. It was fundamentally more important for those finished products of our militant sovereign state system to beat us than to beat the Germans; they felt that, even if they did not recognize it clearly. We were trying to get hold of their war and carry it God knows where — it would be the story of those beastly tanks over again. It was a fresh encroachment. At any cost it must not become our war; it must remain theirs. Or it might really turn out to be "the war to end war" — and end all sorts of associated things.

In the behaviour of the War Office and Foreign Office and in the strenuous and intelligent resolve of the Crown to keep itself authoritatively in the limelight, the struggle to keep things in their places and resist novelties became more and more manifest as the war continued. The history of the Great War, regarded as an intensifying clash between old forms and new forces, still remains to be written. And yet that is perhaps the most interesting aspect of all. The war between the Allied Powers and the Central Powers was a war between similars; it was the established proper vertical aspect of the war; it was like any old war except that it was bigger. War had been declared; one side had taken the offensive and the other the defensive according to rule. But within the fighting body of each combatant state, there speedily began this more novel struggle, a horizontal struggle, between class tradition and the insistent need for decisive original inventions and new methods. The soldiers could not invent; it had been drilled out of them. And this struggle again was complicated by the progressive disillusionment of the common man who had neither social nor technical standing. He displayed a deepening dislike to being killed either in the old style or the new. At first he had been fiercely patriotic everywhere and then, as the wilting discipline of 1917 and 1918, the mutinies and refusals showed, more and more desperately recalcitrant. These three elements interacted in different proportions and with varying results in every combatant country, and to trace their interplay would carry me far beyond the region of autobiography into an essay in recent

history.

In Britain, as in France, the old order contrived to keep in the saddle and its obstinate loyalty to itself prolonged the struggle through two years of intensified and totally unnecessary waste and slaughter. Radical critics obsessed by Marxist suggestions are apt to ascribe this prolongation of the war simply to the wickedness of armament and financial interests. That is only partially true. It is so much easier to denounce "capitalism" than to denounce real categories and specific governmental institutions capable of reprisal. War industry and financial influences, though unquestionably they were evil influences, could not have worked except through the legal forms of the old order. The steel framework of the obstruction was, everywhere, the self-protective obstinacy of the formal government in control, which would not accept even compromise, much less admit defeat. The profiteers no doubt flattered and used the formal government for their own ends but they were never the masters of it. Much more were they its by-products. They sheltered and did their mischief behind its implacable resistance to efficiency.

To the very end of the war not one of all the generals who prance across the page of history developed the ability to handle the vast armies and mechanisms under his nominal control. Nor was any flexible and effective method of collaboration ever brought into being. The Great War was an All Fools' War. But there was no admission of this fact. The system just went on with the witless slaughter until discipline dissolved, first in Russia and then — luckily for us and the immobilized French — in Germany. And instantly upon the German collapse our populace forgot its gathering doubts. The monarchy, lest there should be any question about the way in which the War to End War had ended, went in state through the beflagged streets of London, unashamed amidst a blaze of uniforms and a great blare of military music, to thank our dear old Anglican Trinity, Who had been, it seems, in control throughout, in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Girls, children, women, schoolboys, undergraduates, unfit, middle-aged and elderly men, indispensables and soldiers from the home front, thronged the streets rejoicing; glad that the national martyrdom was over and quite uncritical already of either Army,

Navy or Crown. There were a million of us dead of course, and half of those deaths, even from the military point of view had been sheer waste, but after all *we* had won. And the dead were dead. A Grand Inquest on those dead would have been a more reasonable function, but how disagreeable that would have been!

I remember starting out with Jane during one of these pompous, swarming occasions to get from our flat in Whitehall Court to Liverpool Street Station and so escape to the comparative disloyalty of our home at Easton Glebe. Our cab was held up and we had to abandon it and struggle with our bags through the press as well as we could. We squeezed through at last and caught a later train than we intended. It was one of those occasions when my love for my fellow man deserts me. The happy complacency of survivorship shone on every face in that vast crowd. What personal regrets appeared were richly sentimental and easily tearful. "Poor dear Tommy! How he would have *loved* all this!"

We were going to hang the Kaiser and make the Germans pay. The country was now to be made a country "fit for heroes." God save the King!

"And this," thought I, "is the reality of democracy; this is the proletariat of dear old Marx in being. This is the real people. This seething multitude of vague kindly uncritical brains is the stuff that old dogmatist counted upon for his dictatorship of the proletariat, to direct the novel and complex organization of a better world!"

The thought suddenly made me laugh aloud, and after that it was easier to push along and help steer Jane through the crowd about the Royal Exchange....

But I am digressing and telling things out of their proper order.

Aldershot, I presently realized, was resolved not to have anything to do with this telpherage of ours — at least as we had devised it. It was bad enough for soldiers and gentlemen to be bothered with tanks, but this affair of sticks and string was even worse. After mechanical toys — cat's cradle. It was the sort of contraption any one might make mistakes about — and then where were you? However, in its earnest desire to keep the business in professional hands, Aldershot produced alternative systems. They were much heavier and clumsier than ours and one, much in favour, required

men to walk along the track, so — as we had to explain to these professional soldiers — exposing the system to air photography and air-directed fire. A bugbear we could never banish from these inflexible minds was the dread that our lines — which could be lowered in an instant and cleared away in an hour — would interfere with "lateral movements."

This in no-man's land with its shell holes and old trenches and jungle thickets of cut wire! The thought of a "line," any line, hypnotized these warriors, just as a chalk line will hypnotize a hen.

I was baffled and worried beyond measure by these perverse difficulties. I felt my practical incompetence acutely. I did not know whom to get at and how to put the thing through. I had only a dim apprehension of the forces and instincts that were holding back not merely our little contrivance, but a multitude of other innovations that might have changed the face of the war. Meanwhile on every wet night so many poor lads fell and choked in the mud, and the little inadequate offensives squittered forward beyond their supports and succumbed to the counter-attack. I could not sleep for it. I was so worried and my nerves were so fatigued that I was presently afflicted with *allopecia areata*, well known in the flying corps of those days as an anxiety disease, in which the hair comes out in patches. Ridiculous patches of localized shiny baldness appeared and did not vanish for a year or so, when first they sprouted a down of grey hair and then became normally hairy again. It was not much in the way of a war wound, but in all modesty I put it on record.

I returned from the western front in 1916 with, among other things, a very clear conviction that cavalry was a useless nuisance there. I wrote some disagreeable things about the fodder waggons that choked the roads, about spurs and about our military efficiency generally, in a series of articles which became a book, *War and the Future* (1917). But there was a war Censorship in existence, and an excellent gentleman, Colonel Swettenham — or General I forget which — who had for some obscure reason been put in authority over the mind of England, presently summoned me to his presence and remonstrated with me over the galley proofs of my book. I went home with these proofs considerably emasculated, blue-pencilled and amended in the Colonel's handwriting. I meditated over his

alterations. They seemed to me to be intended to save rather the prestige of the military authorities than the country, for if people like I were not to chide the military authorities and tell the public about them, who would? These soldiers would go on with their bloody muddle. Muddle until disaster was assured.

I took another set of proofs, made no material changes in what I had said, sent them to my publisher with my explicit assurance that the Censor had seen a set, and then, though it hurt me greatly to destroy many of the painstaking improvements he had made, I burnt the Colonel's set. The book appeared and he must have read it with a certain astonishment. After some consideration of the situation he wrote me a very nice letter asking me to return the set of proofs that he had corrected. I wrote him an even nicer letter, explaining that that set was not now to be found, and assuring him of my utmost esteem. With quite exemplary civility our correspondence ceased at that point and the censorship troubled me no more.

The chief point of permanent value in that book was my insistence on the fact that the progressive mechanization of war was making war impossible for any countries that did not possess a highly developed industrial organization and adequate natural resources. Five or six countries at most had it in their power to make modern war, and it needed only an intelligent agreement among these powers to end war, if they so wished it, for ever. This is a reality I have never ceased to press upon the attention of people in general. From 1916 to 1933 I have been sprinkling the world with repetitions of this important truth. I was stressing it in the *Daily Herald* in March 1930, in a series of articles "The A.B.C. of World Peace," reprinted in *After Democracy* (1933). The consent of all the sovereign powers of the world to world pacification is quite unnecessary. Indeed, as I point out in the latter series of articles, three or four powers alone could impose an enduring World Pax. This idea will be found very frankly expressed in the Crewe House memorandum I shall presently quote.

War and the Future, however, is a very mixed bag. There is a gusto in some of its war descriptions that suggests that that mighty statesman- strategist, that embryo Hitler-Cromwell (aged 13) who won the various Battles of Martin's Hill, Bromley, was by no means dead in me, even in 1916.

§ 6. WORLD STATE AND LEAGUE OF NATIONS

To return to my education by the Great War; 1917 is marked in my records by a letter published in the *Daily Chronicle* for June 4th, entitled "Wanted a Statement of Imperial Policy," by a paper in the *Daily News* August 14th, "A Reasonable Man's Peace" and by a third article, in the *Daily Mail*, which I was invited to write by the editor, "Are we sticking to the Point? A Discussion of War Aims."

These writings show a very considerable consolidation of my ideas and in that respect they followed the movement that was going on in the general mind. They are collected together in a book called *In the Fourth Year* (May 1918) which is an immense advance upon *What Is Coming?*, uncompromising, bolder and more forcible. And in these the idea of a League of *Free* Nations, a plain anticipation of a federal world-state, is stated with the greatest explicitness. One of these papers, "A Reasonable Man's Peace" was twice reprinted as a pamphlet and had an issue, in that form, of about a quarter of a million.

The idea of some supernational Union of States for the preservation of peace is a very old one indeed and its history quite beyond my present range, but the way in which it came into my purview has to be told. The origin of the term "League of Nations" is obscure. Theodore Marburg's *Development of the League of Nations Idea* (1932), is concerned rather with the voluminous participation of that gentleman in the world's affairs than with history — and so the precise facts are difficult to disentangle. His book is essentially an autobiography in the form of letters, and as a general history it over-emphasizes the importance of Theodore Marburg in developing what one may call the Wilsonian notion of a League. A "League to enforce Peace" was certainly begotten in the Century Club in New York in January 1915 and it seems to have owed something to the private propaganda of Sir George Paish. But the term "League of Nations" is of English origin and it seems to have been first used by a small group of people meeting in the house of Mr. Walter Rea and including Sir Willoughby (now Lord) Dickinson, G. Lowes

Dickinson, Raymond Unwin, J. A. Hobson, Mrs. Claremont and Aneurin Williams. (E. M. Forster in his life of Lowes Dickinson (1934) gives reasons for ascribing the term to that writer, who may have used it for the two possible "leagues" he sketched in the first fortnight of the war.) These people founded a League of Nations Society, with Lord Shaw as president, early in 1915. L. S. Woolf also was associated with this group but not, I think, at the beginning.

The world was ripe for the lead embodied in such a phrase and it caught on very rapidly. I was late in recognizing its value. I do not seem to have used the term before the end of 1916, but then I seem to have taken it up abruptly and noisily; it is all over my war writings in 1917, with a very characteristic emendation for which I think I was wholly responsible, the insertion of the word "Free." I put in that word Free because I hoped then for republics in Russia and Germany and possibly in Great Britain. I did not believe in world peace without revolution and my efforts to keep the revolutionary impulse in touch with the peace-making movement were very persistent. Early writings to which I make acknowledgment in *In the Fourth Year* are Marburg's *League of Nations* (1917-18), André Mater's *Société des Nations* (an excellent French comment first published, I think, about 1917 and translated in its entirety in Sir George Paish's excellent collection of early projects, *The Nations and the League*, 1920), and H. N. Brailsford's *A League of Nations* (1917). Several organizations using the term, "League of Nations" in their titles, were active in 1917 on both sides of the Atlantic. I joined the London society in 1917 and was later associated with a League of Free Nations Association formed in 1918. My mind fixed upon this word League, as being just the needed formula that might give a World State its first concrete form. It helped pull my outlook together and point it. *In the Fourth Year* is a crystallization of all the incoherent aspirations of *What Is Coming?* and of my past generally. It contained a few outspoken phrases about such matters as "The Future of Monarchy," which were at that time considered extremely indelicate. English people have still to brace themselves up to the obvious fact that there can be no world pax without a practical retirement of monarchy, graceful or graceless as royalty may choose.

During these war years my always friendly relations with Lord Northcliffe became closer. I have told already in Chapter the Sixth § 4 how we first came to know each other and explained how much this remarkable intruder into the British peerage and British public life, had to improvise to meet the colossal opportunities that were thrust upon him. Whenever I met him I talked plainly to him and he respected even when he did not agree with my ideas. He was never at his ease in the old system; his peerage had not bought him; he knew the old social order accepted him, and his newly titled brothers, by duress and with furtive protest and he felt the continual danger of treacheries and obstructions. There were times when he reminded me of a big bumble bee puzzled by a pane of glass. The court, the army people, the Foreign Office treated him with elaborate civility but regarded him with hard, defensive eyes. When the first Russian revolution (March 1917) occurred, I created a small scandal by inducing him to print a letter in *The Times* in favour of a more explicit appeal to the Republican sentiment in the world. This gave great offence in the highest quarters. "There goes my earldom," said Northcliffe to me, with a gleam from the ineradicable schoolboy in his make-up. One had a sense of fuss behind the scenes, and the young subalterns of the Third Army, who had been in the habit of playing hockey and taking baths and teas and supper at my house at Easton every Sunday, were suddenly forbidden my now leprous neighbourhood by their superior officers. "King and country" had got them surely enough; it was "*his* war" — it was the war of the "tin hats." The war for world civilization had vanished. But one or two of these young men wrote me pleasant notes of apology for this uncivil loyalty imposed upon them.

The government had created two new ministries for the sake of keeping the inquisitive noses of Northcliffe, and his younger competitor Lord Beaverbrook, out of the ancient mysteries of the Foreign Office. This could be done most unobtrusively by busying them elsewhere. The Ministry of Information was devised to prevent Lord Beaverbrook from becoming too well-informed and the Ministry of Propaganda served a similar purpose in occupying and disordering the always rather febrile mind of Lord Northcliffe.

Northcliffe asked me to visit him in Crewe House, where the new Ministry of Propaganda was installed, and discussed the general idea of his activities with me.

We sat together in the drawing-room of Crewe House, hastily adapted to the new requirements of ministerial headquarters. "You want a social revolution," he said. "Isn't our sitting here social revolution enough for you?"

I might have replied that that depended on the use we made of our time while we were there.

The upshot of our conversation was that in May 1918 in collaboration with that excellent scholar, Dr. J. W. Headlam, (who afterwards became by knighthood and a change of name Sir J. W. Headlam Morley), I became responsible for the preparation of propaganda literature against Germany. This was almost simultaneous with the publication of *In the Fourth Year* and its exposition of such still admirable common-sense as this that follows:

"The League of Free Nations must, in fact, if it is to be a working reality, have power to define and limit the military and naval and aerial equipment of every country in the world. This means something more than a restriction of state forces. It must have power and freedom to investigate the military and naval and aerial establishments of all its constituent powers. It must also have effective control over every armament industry. And armament industries are not always easy to define. Are aeroplanes, for example, armament? Its powers, I suggest must extend even to a restraint upon the belligerent propaganda which is the natural advertisement campaign of every armament industry. It must have the right, for example, to raise the question of the proprietorship of newspapers by armament interests. Disarmament is, in fact, a necessary factor of any League of Free Nations, and you cannot have disarmament unless you are prepared to see the powers of the council of the League extend thus far. The very existence of the League presupposes that it and it alone is to have and to exercise military force. Any other belligerency or preparation or incitement to belligerency becomes rebellion, and any other arming a threat of rebellion, in a world League of Free Nations.

"But here, again, has the general mind yet thought out all that is

involved in this proposition? In all the great belligerent countries the armament industries are now huge interests with enormous powers. Krupp's business alone is as powerful a thing in Germany as the Crown. In every country a heavily subsidized 'patriotic' press will fight desperately against giving powers so extensive and thorough as those here suggested to an international body. So long, of course, as the League of Free Nations remains a project in the air, without body or parts, such a press will sneer at it gently as 'Utopian,' and even patronize it kindly. But so soon as the League takes on the shape its general proposition makes logically necessary, the armament interest will take fright. Then it is we shall hear the drum patriotic loud in defence of the human blood trade. Are we to hand over these most intimate affairs of ours to 'a lot of foreigners?' Among these 'foreigners' who will be appealed to to terrify the patriotic souls of the British will be the 'Americans.' Are we men of English blood and tradition to see our affairs controlled by such 'foreigners' as Wilson, Lincoln, Webster and Washington? Perish the thought! When they might be controlled by Disraelis, Wettins, Mountbattens and what not! And so on and so on. Krupp's agents and the agents of the kindred firms in Great Britain and France will also be very busy with the national pride of France. In Germany they have already created a colossal suspicion of England.

"Here is a giant in the path....

"But let us remember that it is only necessary to defeat the propaganda of this vile and dangerous industry in four great countries....

"I am suggesting here that the League of Free Nations shall practically control the army, navy, air forces, and armament industry of every nation in the world. What is the alternative to that? To do as we please? No, the alternative is that any malignant country will be free to force upon all the rest just the maximum amount of armament it chooses to adopt. Since 1871 France, we say, has been free in military matters. What has been the value of that freedom? The truth is, she has been the bond-slave of Germany, bound to watch Germany as a slave watches a master, bound to launch submarine for

submarine and cast gun for gun, to sweep all her youth into her army, to subdue her trade, her literature, her education, her whole life to the necessity of preparations imposed upon her by her drill-master over the Rhine. And Michael, too, has been a slave to his imperial master for the self-same reason, for the reason that Germany and France were both so proudly sovereign and independent. Both countries have been slaves to Kruppism and Zabernism — *because they were sovereign and free*! So it will always be. So long as patriotic cant can keep the common man jealous of international controls over his belligerent possibilities, so long will he be the helpless slave of the foreign threat, and 'Peace' remain a mere name for the resting-phase between wars....

"The plain truth is that the League of Free Nations, if it is to be a reality, if it is to effect a real pacification of the world, must do no less than supersede Empire; it must end not only this new German imperialism, which is struggling so savagely and powerfully to possess the earth, but it must also wind up British imperialism and French imperialism, which do now so largely and inaggressively possess it. And, moreover, this idea queries the adjective of Belgian, Portuguese, French, and British Central Africa alike, just as emphatically as it queries 'German.' Still more effectually does the League forbid those creations of the futurist imagination, the imperialism of Italy and Greece, which make such threatening gestures at the world of our children. Are these incompatibilities understood? Until people have faced the clear antagonism which exists between imperialism and internationalism, they have not begun to suspect the real significance of this project of the League of Free Nations. They have not begun to realize that peace also has its price."

With this much on record I went to Crewe House. I think that Northcliffe knew something of what I had in mind. Or to be more accurate I think that at times — in exceptional gleams of lucidity — he knew something of what I had in mind and sympathized with it and wanted to forward it. But his undoubtedly big and undoubtedly unco-ordinated brain was like a weather-chart in stormy times, phases of high and low pressure and moral gradients and depressions chased themselves across his mental map. His skull held together, in

a delusive unity, a score of flying fragments of purpose. He was living most of his time in the Isle of Thanet and rushing to and fro between that house of refuge and the excitements of London. I put it to him that we had no clear idea of the work his Ministry of Propaganda had to do, as a whole, and that to make our exertions effective it was necessary that our objectives should be defined.

Before the creation of the ministry, such propaganda as existed had been a business of leaflet distribution by secret agents and by the air, the forging of pseudo-German newspapers with depressing suggestions and the like, and this was already being expanded very energetically when I took up my duties. Descriptions and details are to be found in the *Secrets of Crewe House*. I did what I could to forward all that and to make such modifications as occurred to me, but these activities did not seem to me to exhaust the possibilities of our organization. Telling lies — and occasionally revealing the concealed truth of the situation — to the German rank and file and the Germans behind the front, "attacking morale" as it was termed, was perhaps a necessary operation in this new sort of warfare we were waging, but it was really much more important now to get to something in the nature of a common understanding between the combatant populations if a genuine peace were to be achieved. The best counter-check to the very vigorous war propaganda sustained by the enemy governments, was honest peace propaganda, and I did my utmost to make Crewe House an organization not merely for bringing the war to a victorious end, but also for defining that end with an explicitness equally binding upon us, our Allies and the enemy.

I had no illusions left about the fundamental wisdom of the British and French Foreign Offices. They were, I realized, in the hands of men of limited outlooks and small motives, whose chief control was their servitude to tradition. They had far less grasp of the world situation than an average intelligent man, and the duty of everyone who had a chance, was to help force their hands towards such a "Reasonable Man's Peace" as was now everywhere defining itself in the liberal mind.

One great desideratum was that there should be a plain statement of "War Aims" to the whole world. Then the combatants would

realize the conditions of cessation. I persuaded Crewe House that our work necessitated such a statement of what we were fighting for, properly endorsed by the Foreign Office and in conjunction with Headlam Morley a memorandum was prepared, submitted to an Advisory Committee and fully discussed. This Committee, by the bye, consisted of the Earl of Denbigh, Mr. Robert Donald (then Editor of the *Daily Chronicle*), Sir Roderick Jones, Sir Sidney Low, Sir Charles Nicholson, Mr. James O'Grady, Mr. H. Wickham Steed (foreign Editor and later Editor-in-Chief of *The Times*), Dr. Headlam Morley, Mr. H. K. Hudson (Secretary) and myself, and the memorandum to which we agreed said among other things:

"It has become manifest that, for the purposes of an efficient pro-Ally propaganda in neutral and enemy countries, a clear and full statement of the war aims of the Allies is vitally necessary. What is wanted is something in the nature of an authoritative text to which propagandists may refer with confidence and which can be made the standard of their activities. It is not sufficient to recount the sins of Germany and to assert that the defeat of Germany is the Allied war aim. What all the world desires to know is what is to happen *after* the war. The real war aim of a belligerent, it is more and more understood, is not merely victory, but a peace of a certain character which that belligerent desires shall arise out of that victory. What, therefore, is the peace sought by the Allies?

"It would be superfluous even to summarize here the primary case of the Allies, that the war is on their part a war to resist the military aggression of Germany, assisted by the landowning Magyars of Hungary, the Turks, and the King of Bulgaria, upon the rest of mankind. It is a war against belligerence, against aggressive war and the preparation for aggressive war. Such it was in the beginning, and such it remains. But it would be idle to pretend that the ideas of the Governments and peoples allied against Germany have not developed very greatly during the years of the war.... There has arisen in the great world outside the inner lives of the Central Powers a will that grows to gigantic proportions, that altogether overshadows the boasted *will to power* of the German junker and exploiter, *the will to a world peace*. It is like the will of an experienced man set against the will of an obstinate and selfish youth. The war aims of the

anti-German Allies take more and more definitely the form of a world of States leagued together to maintain a common law, to submit their mutual differences to a conclusive tribunal, to protect weak communities, to restrain and suppress war threats and war preparations throughout the earth.... The thought of the world crystallizes now about a phrase, the phrase 'The League of Free Nations.' The war aims of the Allies become more and more explicitly associated with the spirit and implications of that.

"Like all such phrases, 'The League of Free Nations' is subject to a great variety of detailed interpretation, but its broad intentions can now be stated without much risk of dissent. The ideal would, of course, include all the nations of the earth, including a Germany purged of her military aggressiveness; it involves some sort of International Congress that can revise, codify, amend and extend international law, a supreme Court of Law in which States may sue and be sued, and whose decision the League will be pledged to enforce, and the supervision, limitation, and use of armaments under the direction of the international congress. ...The constitution of this congress remains indefinite; it is the crucial matter upon which the best thought of the world is working at the present time. But given the prospect of a suitable congress there can be little dispute that the Imperial Powers among the Allies are now prepared for great and generous limitations of their sovereignty in the matter of armaments, of tropical possessions and of subject peoples, in the common interest of mankind.... Among the Allies, the two chief Imperial Powers, measured by the extent of territory they control, are Britain and France, and each of these is more completely prepared to-day than ever it has been before to consider its imperial possessions as a trust for their inhabitants and for mankind, and its position in the more fertile and less settled regions of the world as that of a mandatory and trustee....

"But in using the phrase 'The League of Nations,' it may be well to dispel certain misconceptions that have arisen through the experimental preparation, by more or less irresponsible persons and societies, of elaborate schemes and constitutions of such a league. Proposals have been printed and published, for example, of a Court of World Conciliation, in which each sovereign State will be

represented by one member — Montenegro, for example, by one, and the British Empire by one — and other proposals have been mooted of a Congress of the League of Nations, in which such States as Hayti, Abyssinia, and the like will be represented by one or two representatives, and France and Great Britain by five or six. All such projects should be put out of mind when the phrase 'League of Free Nations' is used by responsible speakers for the Allied Powers. Certain most obvious considerations have evidently been overlooked by the framers of such proposals. It will, for example, be a manifest disadvantage to the smaller Powers to be at all over-represented upon the Congress of any such League; it may even be desirable that certain of them should not have a *voting* representative at all, for this reason, that a great Power still cherishing an aggressive spirit would certainly attempt, as the beginning of its aggression, to compel adjacent small Powers to send representatives practically chosen by itself. The coarse fact of the case in regard to an immediate world peace is this, that only five or six great Powers possess sufficient economic resources to make war under modern conditions at the present time, namely, the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Germany, Japan, and doubtfully, Austria- Hungary. Italy suffers under the disadvantage that she has no coal supply. These five or six Powers we may say, therefore, permit war and can prevent it. They are, at present, necessarily the custodians of the peace of the world, and it is mere pedantry not to admit that this gives them a practical claim to preponderance in the opening Congress of the World League...."

This memorandum was sent, with a covering letter from Lord Northcliffe, to Lord Balfour for the endorsement of the Foreign Office. We had all been kept in the dark as to the cramping secret engagements which had been made by our diplomatists, and we had no suspicion that our broad and reasonable proposals were already impossible. We were not enlightened. Dr. Headlam Morley and I were invited for a conversation with Lord Tyrrell who was then Sir William Tyrrell. Possibly he intended to give us a hint about the secret treaties but, if so, he never did as he intended or the hint was too feeble to register upon our minds. Tyrrell was a compact self-assured little man, who tacitly put our memorandum on one side,

rested his elbow on it, so to speak, and delivered a discourse on our relations to France and Germany and on the "characters" of these countries, that would have done credit to a bright but patriotic school-boy of eight, and so having told us exactly where we were, he dismissed biologist and historian together unheard. I suppose he had learnt that stuff for gospel from his governess at his knickerbocker stage, and had never had the wit to doubt it. Most upper-class mentality is founded on governesses. According to such lights as he had acquired in his tender years, he was perfectly honest and patriotic — if a little "pro-French."

It is terrifying to think that these vast powers, the Foreign Offices of the world, are being run to a very large extent by little undeveloped brains such as Tyrrell's, that they are immensely protected from criticism and under no real control from educated opinion. And what they do affects and endangers hundreds of millions of lives.

That conversation was the utmost Crewe House got out of the Foreign Office. We assumed rather rashly that our memorandum had been tacitly accepted and pursued our propaganda activities on those lines. That, from the diplomatic point of view was admirable, because in our quasi-official rôle we gave assurances to doubtful Germans, that could afterwards be repudiated. We were in fact decoys. Just as T. E. Lawrence of the "Seven Pillars" was used all unawares as a decoy for the Arabs. And all for nothing! Plainly I had not learnt the A.B.C. of diplomacy.

There were at that time several small organizations promoting the League of Nations idea. I took part in a successful attempt to consolidate these into one League of Nations Union, which would not merely spread but develop the idea. I put the stress upon the development. It was conspicuously evident that, so far, the idea was lacking in detail and definition; it was like a bag into which anything might still be put and there were a number of things that I felt were very undesirable as occupants of that bag and others that were vitally important. I was already alive, as that Crewe House memorandum shows, to the danger of a pseudo-parliamentary organization, with an enfeebling constitution, and I felt we had to get ahead of that by working out some clearer statement of the possibilities of the

occasion. We evolved therefore a "Research Committee" which could press on with this necessary preliminary work. It consisted of the following members, most of whom, I must admit, did no work whatever upon it; Mr. Ernest Barker, Mr. Lionel Curtis, Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Mr. John Hilton, Professor Gilbert Murray, Mr. H. Wickham Steed, Mr. J. A. Spender, Mr. L. S. Woolf, Mr. A. E. Zimmern, and myself, with Mr. William Archer as secretary. It produced only two pamphlets "The Idea of a League of Nations" and "The Way to the League of Nations" before events superseded it.

The former of these pamphlets ends with this passage:

"Negative peace is not our aim. It is something, of course, to have a rest from suffering and the infliction of suffering; but it is a greater thing to be set free, and peace sets people free. It sets them free to live, to think, to work at the work that is best worth doing, to build instead of destroying, to devote themselves to the pursuit or the creation of the things that seem highest, instead of having to spend all their time in trying to avoid being killed. Peace is an empty cup that we can fill as we please; it is an opportunity which we can seize or neglect. To recognize this is to sweep out of one's mind all dreams of a world peace contrived by a few jurists and influential people in some odd corner of the world's administrative bureaux. As well might the three tailors of Tooley Street declare the millennium in being. Permanent world peace must necessarily be a great process and state of affairs, greater indeed than any war process, because it must anticipate, comprehend, and prevent any war process, and demand the conscious, the understanding, the willing participation of the great majority of human beings. We, who look to it as a possible thing, are bound not to blind ourselves to, or conceal from others, the gigantic and laborious system of labours, the immense tangle of co-operations, which its establishment involves. If political institutions or social methods stand in the way of this great good for mankind, it is fatuous to dream of compromises with them. A world peace-organization cannot evade universal relationships.

"It is clear that if a world league is to be living and enduring, the idea of it and the need and righteousness of its service must be taught by every educational system in the world. It must either be served by

or be in conflict with every religious organization; it must come into the life of every one, not to release men and women from loyalty, but to demand loyalty for itself. The answer to the criticism that world peace will release men from service is, that world peace is itself a service. It calls, not as war does for the deaths, but for that greater gift, for the lives, of men. The League of Nations cannot be a little thing: it is either to be a great thing in the world, an overriding idea of a greater state, or nothing. Every state aims ultimately at the production of a sort of man, and it is an idle and a wasteful diplomacy, a pandering to timidities and shams, to pretend that the World League of Nations is not ultimately a State aiming at that ennobled individual whose city is the world."

We got as far as that. And then President Wilson essentially ill-informed, narrowly limited to an old-fashioned American conception of history, self-confident and profoundly self-righteous, came to Europe and passed us by on the other side. Men of my way of thinking were left helpless, voiceless and altogether baffled outside the fiasco of Versailles. What had seemed to be the portal of a World Control standing wide open to us, was shut and slammed in our faces.

My friend Philip Guedalla, discussing this period of memorandum-writing with me the other day, recalled a letter which he declared I had sent to President Wilson, at the President's request, through the hands of Mr. Bainbridge Colby in November 1917. He alleged that through this letter I had contributed materially to the President's "Fourteen Points." I think very poorly of the Fourteen Points and at the time I was unable to recall any communication justifying this accusation. A search was made, however, and finally a copy of the following letter was disinterred. The original was conveyed, with Mr. Guedalla's assistance, past any risks of war-time censorship to Mr. Colby who had gone on to Paris.

I doubt whether this letter was ever actually read by President Wilson though we have Colby's word for it that it reached his hands. I never heard from President Wilson in the matter. Colonel House came to Easton Glebe while the President was in England, but he and Mrs. House were so anxious to hurry on to "see over" Hatfield, the historical mansion of the Cecils, that there was no possibility of any

political talk. A chance to see Hatfield might not recur. My letter therefore has no grain of historical importance, but in the light of the concluding passage of the preceding section it has considerable autobiographical significance.

It runs: —

Dear Mr. Bainbridge Colby,

You asked me, after our conversation at the Reform Club on the evening of November the fourteenth, to set down on paper my views upon the part America might and should play in this war. It was not the military side of the matter that engaged us, though I feel very strongly that by a bold use of scientific inventions the American intelligence, accustomed to a large handling of economic problems and the free scrapping of obsolescent material and methods, may yet be of enormous service and stimulus to the Allied effort; it was rather the political rôle of America about which we talked. I warned you that I was perhaps not to be taken as a representative Englishman, that I was scientifically trained, a republican, and "pro-American." I repeat that warning now. Here are my views for what they are worth.

They are based on one fundamental conviction. There is no way out of this war process — there may be a peace of sorts but it will only lead to a recrudescence of war — except by the establishment of a new order in human affairs. This new order is adumbrated in the phrase, *A League of Nations*. It lies behind that vaguer, more dangerous because less definite, phrase, "a Just Peace." We have, I am convinced, to set our faces towards that order, towards that just peace, *irrespective of the amount of victory that falls to us*. We may achieve it by negotiations at any point when the German mind becomes open to the abandonment of militant imperialism. If by a sudden change and storm of fortune we found Germany deserted by her allies, prostrate at our feet, our troops in Berlin and her leaders captive, we could do no more, we should do ourselves and the whole future of mankind a wrong if we did more, than make this same "Just Peace" or set up this League of Nations. There is, I hold, a definable *Right Thing* for most practical purposes in international relations; there are principles according to which boundaries can be drawn and rights of way and privileges of trade settled and apportioned (under the protection of the general League) as dispassionately as a

cartographer makes a contour line.

This I believe is the conviction to which a scientific training leads a man. It is the conviction, *more or less* clearly developed, of rational-minded people everywhere. It is manifestly the idea of President Wilson. It is the conviction that has to be made to dominate the world.

And this conviction of a possible dispassionate settlement is one for which the world is now ready. I am convinced that in no country is there even one per cent of the population anxious to prolong the war. The ninety and nine are seeking helplessly for a way out such as only a dispassionate settlement can give. But they are kept in the war by fear. And by mental habit. Few men have the courage to reach their own convictions. They must be led to them or helped to them. They fear the greed of their antagonists, fresh wars, fresh outrages, and an unending series of evil consequences, if they seem to accept anything short of triumph. No one can read the newspapers of any belligerent country without realizing the overwhelming share of fear in now prolonging the struggle. Germany as much as any country fights on and is helpless in the hands of her military caste, *because there is no confidence in Germany in the possibility of a Just Peace*. There is an equal want of confidence in London and Paris and New York. To create a feeling of confidence in that possibility of a Just Peace everywhere is as necessary a part of our struggle for a right order in the world as to hold the German out of Calais or Paris.

It is easy to underrate the pacific impulse in men and to overrate their malignity. All men are mixed in their nature and none without a certain greed, baseness, vindictiveness. After the strain and losses of such a struggle as this it is "only in human nature" to prepare to clutch and punish whenever the scales of victory seem sagging in our favour. Too much importance must not be attached to the aggressive patriotism of the Press in the belligerent countries. Let us keep a little humour in our interpretation of enemy motives and remember that though a man has still much of the ape in his composition, that does not make him an irredeemable devil. The same German who will read with exultation of the submarining of a British passenger ship, or pore over a map of Europe to plan a giant Germany reaching from Antwerp to Constantinople, founded on blood and dreadfulness and

ruling the earth, will, in his saner moments, be only too ready to accept and submit himself to a scheme of general good will, provided only that it ensures for him and his a tolerable measure of prosperity and happiness. The belligerent element is present in every man, but in most it is curable. The incurably belligerent minority in any country is extremely small. There is a rational pacifist in nearly every man's brain, and the right end of the war can come only by evoking that.

It is here that the peculiar opportunity of America and of President Wilson comes in. America is three thousand miles from the war; she has no lost provinces to regain, no enemy colonies to capture; she is, in comparison with any of our Allies except China, a dispassionate combatant. (If China can be called a combatant.) No other combatant except America can talk of peace without relinquishing a claim or accepting an outrage. America alone can stand fearlessly and unembarrassed for that rational settlement all men desire. It is from America alone that the lead can come which will take mankind out of this war. It is to America under President Wilson that I look as the one and only medium by which we can get out of this jangling monstrosity of conflict.

What is wanted now is a statement of the Just Peace, a statement without reservations. We want something more than a phrase to bind the nations together. America has said "League of Nations" and everywhere there has been an echo to that. But now we want America to take the next step and to propose the establishment of that League, to define in general terms the nature of the League, to press the logical necessity of a consultative, legislative, and executive conference, and to call together so much of that conference as exists on the Allied side. *There will never be such a conference until America demands it.* There will never be a common policy for the Allies or a firm proposal of peace conditions, unless America insists. This war may drag on for another year of needless bloodshed and end in mutual recriminations through the sheer incapacity of any Ally but America to say plainly what is in fact acceptable to all.

In addition to the moral advantage of its aloofness, America has a second advantage in having a real head, representative and expressive. Possessing that head, America can talk. Alone in our

system America is capable of articulate speech. Russia is now headless, a confusion; Italy is divided against herself; in France and Britain politicians and party leaders make speeches that are welcomed here and abused there. No predominant utterance is possible. It will be no secret to an observant American such as you are, that Britain and France are divided in a quarrel between reactionary and progressive, between aggressive nationalism and modern liberalism. All the European allies are hampered by secret bargains and pacts of greediness. They have soiled their minds with schemes of annexation and exploitation in Syria, in Albania, in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Russia was to have had Constantinople, and so forth and so forth. This ugly legacy of the old diplomacy entangles our public men hopelessly to-day. Even where they are willing to repudiate these plans to-day for themselves they are tied by loyalty to the bright projects of their allies, and silenced. Their military operations have had no real unity because their policy, their war aims, have been diverse. The great alliance against the Central Powers has been a bargain system and not a unification. The allied statesmen, challenged as to their war aims, repeat time after time the same valiant resolution to "end militarism," free small nations, and the like, standing all the time quite resolutely with their backs to the real issues which are the control of the Tropics, the future of the Ottoman Empire, and international trade conditions. So it seems likely to go on. Any voice that is raised to demand a lucid statement of the Allied aims in these matters is drowned in a clamour of alarmed interests. In Britain and France "hush" in the interests of diplomacy is being organized with increasing violence. Only America can help us out of the tangle by asserting its own interpretation of the common war purpose, and demanding a clear unanimity on the part of the Allies. The war was begun to defeat German imperialist aggression. It is with extreme reluctance that the European powers will accept the one way to salvation, which is the abandonment of all imperialist aggression and the acceptance of a common international method. The League of Nations is a mere phrase until it is realized by a body whose authority is supreme, overriding every national flag in the following spheres, in Africa between the Sahara and the Zambesi, as a trustee in Armenia, Syria

and all the regions of the earth whose political status has been destroyed by the war, and permanently upon the high seas and vital channels (such as the Dardanelles) of the world.

America in the last three years has made great strides from its traditional isolation towards a responsible share in framing the common destinies of mankind. But America has to travel further on the same road. The future of America is now manifestly bound up with the peace of Europe, for that peace cannot be secured unless these sources of contention in the supply of tropical raw material and in the transport and trading facilities of the world are so controlled as to be no longer sources of contention. It is easy to argue that America has "no business" in Central Africa or Western Asia, that these are matters for the "powers concerned" to decide. But it is just because America has no "business" in Central Africa and Western Asia that it is necessary that America should have a definite will about Africa and Western Asia. Her aloofness gives her her authority. The "powers concerned" will never of their own initiative decide. They are too deeply concerned, and they will haggle. It is, I fear, altogether too much to expect a generous scheme for the joint settlement of regions by powers who have for a century cultivated a scheming habit of appropriation. But none of these powers can afford to haggle against the clear will for order of America at the present time.

What is suggested here is not a surrender of sovereignty nor a direct "international control" of tropical Africa, but the setting up of an over-ruling board composed of delegates from the powers concerned: Frenchman, Englishman, Africander, Portuguese, Belgian, Italian and (ultimately) German, to which certain functions can be delegated, as powers are delegated to the government of the United States of America by those states. Among these functions would be transport control, trade control, the arms and drink trades, the revision of legislation affecting the native and his land, the maintenance of a supreme court for Central Africa, the establishment of higher education for the native, and the systematic disarmament of all the African possessions. A similar board, a protectorate board, could take charge of the transport, waterways, customs, and disarmament of the former Ottoman empire. Only by the establishment of such boards can we hope to save those regions from

becoming at the end of this war, fields of the bitterest international rivalry, seed-beds of still direr conflicts. It is in the creation and support of such special boards, and of other boards for disarmament, international health, produce control and financial control, that the reality of a League of Nations can come into being. But Europe is tied up into a complexity of warring and jostling interests; without an initiative from America it is doubtful whether the world now possesses sufficient creative mental energy to achieve any such synthesis, obvious though its need is and greatly as men would welcome it. In all the world there is no outstanding figure to which the world will listen, there is no man audible in all the world, in Japan as well as Germany and Rome as well as Boston — except the President of the United States. Anyone else can be shouted down and will be shouted down by minor interests. From him, and from him alone, can come the demand for that unity without which the world perishes, and those clear indications of the just method of the League of Nations for which it waits.

There is another area, an area beyond the scope of international controls, which remains an area of incalculable chances because no clear *dominant idea* has been imposed upon the world. This is Eastern Europe from Poland to the Adriatic. The Allies have no common idea, and they never have had a common idea and do not seem to be capable of developing a common idea about this region. They do not even know whether they wish to destroy or enlarge the Austro-Hungarian system. Vague vapourings about the rights of nationality conceal a formless confusion of purposes. Yet if the Allies have no intention of rending the Austro-Hungarian empire into fragments, if they do not propose to cripple or dismember Bulgaria, it is of the extremest importance that they should say so now. There is no occasion to make the Austrian and Bulgarian fight, as if he fought for his national existence, when he is really only fighting for Germany. All liberal thought is agreed upon the desirability of a practically independent Poland, of a Hungary intact and self-respecting, of a liberated Bohemia, of a Yugo-Slav autonomous state. None of these four countries are so large and powerful as to stand alone, and there are many reasons for proposing to see them linked into a league of mutual protection, mutual restraint and mutual

guarantees. Add only to this system the present German states of the Austrian empire, and such a league would be practically a continuation of that empire. But the European Allies lack the collective mental force, lack the mouthpiece, lack the detachment and directness of purpose necessary for the declaration of their intentions in this matter, and they will probably go into the peace conference unprepared with a decision, a divided and so an enfeebled crowd, unless America for her own good and theirs, before the end of the war, gives the lead that will necessitate a definite statement of war aims. Only President Wilson and America can get that statement. To us in Europe our statesmen have become no better than penny-in-the-slot gramophones, who at every challenge for their war aims, say "Evacuate Belgium, restore Alsace-Lorraine to France and Italia Irredenta to Italy, abandon militarism and — *Gurrrrr*!" The voice stops just when it is beginning to be interesting. And because it stops the war goes on. The war goes on because nothing can be extracted from the Allies that would induce any self-respecting Bulgarian, Austrian or democratic-minded German to regard peace as a practicable proposition. They have their backs up against the wall, therefore, side by side with the German militarist — who is the real enemy — because we will not let them have any alternative to a fight to the death.

There, my dear Mr. Bainbridge Colby, are the views you ask for. You have brought them on yourself. You see the rôle I believe America could play under President Wilson's guidance, the rôle of the elucidator, the rôle of advocate of the new order. Clear speech and clear speech alone can save the world. Nothing else can. And President Wilson alone of all mankind can speak and compel the redeeming word.

§ 7. WORLD EDUCATION

My awakening to the realities of the pseudo-settlement of 1919 was fairly rapid. At first I found it difficult to express my indignant astonishment at the simulacrum of a Peace League that was being thrust upon Europe. I was embarrassed and rather puzzled to find that

men I had reckoned upon surely as associates, Gilbert Murray for instance, Zimmern, Ernest Barker and J. A. Spender and that dignified figurehead Grey, were all, it seemed, content with this powerless pedantic bit of stage scenery. In spite of the fact that they had committed their names to the most explicit denunciation of a sham world parliament, of an uncontrolled armament trade and of a weaponless league from which the former enemy states were to be indefinitely excluded, they not only accepted this incredibly defective organization, but became eager apologists for it. I clung to the original demands and promises of Crewe House and the League of Nations Union. This I insisted was not the thing that had to be.

What looked like everyday commonsense but was, in effect, sheer imaginative destitution was all against me. I was rather in the position into which a man would have been put by Dr. Johnson if he had talked to him of the possibility of electric lights and air liners. The fact that in the violent passage that would no doubt have ensued, he would have been right and the great Doctor altogether wrong, would not have prevented him from looking and feeling like an egregious fool. I was invited most urgently to feel that my ideas were preposterous and unacceptable. My futile voice mingled feebly with the feeble protests of a few other intelligent men behind the wainscot while the conference rooms reverberated to the feet of the "statesmen" and the pompous expressions of their "policies." I think the first intelligent man to emerge from behind the wainscot and make himself really audible was J. M. Keynes in his *Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919).

I will not here enter into any discussion of Woodrow Wilson, I never met him, and the quintessence of what I have to say about him is to be found in Book V § 6 of that most discursive novel, *The World of William Clissold*, in which I contrast his triumphant reception in Rome in January 1919 with the funeral of David Lubin, forced to travel obscurely and circuitously to the cemetery through side streets because of the Wilson parade. Nor will I expatiate again upon the strange phase of docility and expectation in the world at the end of 1918, which mocked the limitations of Wilson and Lloyd George and Clemenceau. That I have conveyed (chiefly by quotations from Dr.

Dillon and J. M. Keynes) in the *Outline of History* (Chapter XXXIX §§ 3 and 4 in the 1932 Edition). Slowly I realized the full significance of that passage cited from *The Idea of the League of Nations* about the "gigantic and laborious system of labours, the immense tangle of co-operations" demanded of us, and set about seeking how among the new conditions, the still non-existent foundations of a real and enduring World State might yet be planned and laid.

During the various discussions, committee meetings and conferences that occurred in the course of the consolidation of the earlier League of Nations organizations into the League of Nations Union, I had been very much impressed by the perpetually recurring mental divergences due to the fact that everyone seemed to have read a different piece of history or no history at all, and that consequently our ideas of the methods and possibilities of human association varied in the wildest manner. The curious fact dawned upon me that because I was not a "scholar" and had never been put under a pedant to study a "period" intensely and prematurely, and because I had a student's knowledge of biology and of the archæological record, I had a much broader grasp of historical reality than most of my associates in this mixture of minds which, as the League of Nations Union, was trying to fuse itself into a directive and controlling public opinion. I began to talk more and more decisively of the need for "general history" and to express opinions such as I embodied finally in a pamphlet "*History Is One*" (1919). I proposed that our Research Committee should organize the writing and publication of a history of mankind which should show plainly to the general intelligence, how inevitable, if civilization was to continue, was the growth of political, social and economic organizations into a world federation.

My idea was at first an outline of history beginning with an account of the Roman and Chinese empires at the Christian era, and coming up to contemporary conditions. It was to be a composite Gibbon, with Eastern Asia included and brought up to date. But it became very speedily plain to me that no such broad but compact historical synthesis by authoritative historians was possible. They lived in an atmosphere of mutual restraint. They would not dare to do

anything so large, for fear of incidental slips and errors. They were unused to any effective co-operation and their disposition would be all towards binding together a lot of little histories by different hands, and calling the binding a synthesis; and even if they could be persuaded to do anything of the sort it would certainly be years before it became available. I was already making a note-book for my own private edification and for use in the controversies that I felt were gathering ahead, and the idea of writing up this note-book of how the present human situation had come about and publishing it — if only to demonstrate that there was some other method possible in history than that of sheer indiscriminate aggregation — became more and more attractive.

It did not occur to me that this Note-Book or Outline of History would be a particularly saleable production. I wanted to sketch out how the job might be done rather than to do it. Before I began it I had a very serious talk with my wife about our financial position. The little parcel of securities we had accumulated before 1914 had been badly damaged by the war. Its value had fallen from about £20,000 to less than half that amount. But the success of Mr. Britling had more than repaired that damage and my position as a journalist had improved. We decided that I could afford a year's hard work on this *précis* of history, although it might bring in very little and even though I risked dropping for a time below the habitual novel reader's horizon. As a matter of fact I dropped below that horizon for good. I lost touch with the reviewers and the libraries, I never regained it, and if I wrote a novel now it would be dealt with by itself by some special critic, as a singular book, and not go into the "fiction" class. I set to work, undeterred by my burning boats, with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* at my elbow, to get the general shape of history sketched out. It planned itself naturally enough as a story of communications and increasing interdependence. It became an essay on the growth of association since the dawn of animal communities. Its beginning was carried right back before the appearance of viviparous types of life, to those reptiles which shelter their eggs and protect their offspring, and it came on in one story of expanding relationship to the aeroplane-radio-linked human world of to-day. The essay grew beyond expectation, but that stress upon continually more effective

communications, upon the gathering co-ordination of lives, is still, as even the reader of the *Outline's* List of Contents can see, the gist of it all.

I will not here detail how with the *Outline*, as with *Anticipations*, my sense of the importance of my subject grew as I worked upon it. I saw more and more plainly that this was the form, the only right form, in which history should be presented to the ordinary citizen of the modern state, this, and not "King and Country" stuff, was the history needed for general education, and I realized too that even my arrangement of notes, if it was properly "vetted" by one or two more specialized and authoritative helpers, might be made to serve, provisionally at least, for just that general review of reality of which we stood in such manifest need if any permanent political unity was to be sustained in the world. I persuaded Sir Ray Lankester, Sir Harry Johnston, Gilbert Murray, Mr. Ernest Barker, Sir Denison Ross, Philip Guedalla and various other men of knowledge among my friends, to go over my typescript for me, I got J. F. Horrabin, who makes charts that talk, to help me with some exceptionally eloquent maps, and I suggested to Newnes and Co. the possibility of a publication in parts prior to the publication of the *Outline* in book form by Cassells. In America, Mr. G. P. Brett of The Macmillan Co., was very doubtful about the prospects of the book, but finally he brought it out at the rather odd price of 10 dollars and 10 cents.

The public response was unexpectedly vigorous, both in Britain and America. Edition after edition was sold on both sides of the Atlantic. It made a new and wider reputation for me and earned me a considerable sum of money. Over two million copies of the *Outline* in English have been sold since 1919, it has been translated into most literary languages except Italian — it is proscribed in Italy because it detracts, they say, from the supreme grandeur of Mussolini's Rome — and it continues to sell widely. *A Short History of the World* (1922) has also had an extensive sale. The ordinary man had been stimulated by the war to a real curiosity about the human past; he wanted to be told the story of the planet and of the race, plainly and credibly, and since the "historians" would not or could not do it, he turned to my book. It was quite open to those worthy teachers to do the job over again and do it beyond measure better, but until they

could manage to do that, people had either to remain in ignorance of this exciting subject, as one whole, or else go on reading me, or Van Loon, or some other such outsider who had not been sterilized by an excess of scholastic pretension.

Unhappily, though the professional teachers of history could not bar the reading public from access to the new history of all mankind that was now unfolding itself, they were much more successful in keeping it out of the schools. To this day, in school and syllabus, King and Country and Period still prevail and it is still just a matter of luck whether or no an intelligent boy or girl ever comes to the newer rendering of historical fact. Yet beginning history point-blank with mediæval England is as logical and sensible as it would be to begin chemistry with the study of cookery recipes or patent medicines.

The immense popularity of the *Outline of History* was a very exciting success for me. My self-conceit has always had great recuperative power; it revived bravely now; and I saw a still wider possibility behind the *Outline*, the possibility of giving Mr. Everyman an account not merely of past events, but of the main facts about the processes of life in general and the social, economic and political state of the world. I gave this possibility a preliminary airing in some lectures I wrote but never delivered — they were intended for America — and which I reprinted in a book *The Salvaging of Civilization*.

Therein I developed a scheme which I called the "Book of Necessary Knowledge" or the "Bible of Civilization." That idea was first broached by Comenius, and, some time before me, Dr. Beattie Crozier was insisting that every culture needed its "Bible." I owe the phrase to him. My League of Nations Union experience had enforced my conviction that for a new order in the world there must be a new education and that for a real world civilization there must be a common basis of general ideas, that is to say a world-wide common-school education presenting the same vision of reality. Someone had to begin upon that restatement of educational ideas. I was in no way qualified for such a beginning, yet no one else was stirring, and presently I found myself casting about for colleagues and collaborators in order to complete that first sketch of a world

citizen's ideology of which my *Outline of History* was a part. Instead of arguing endlessly about what had to be done, it seemed simpler and more effective to demonstrate, however roughly, what had to be done.

I should have liked to call these books that were taking shape in my mind an *Outline of Biology* and an *Outline of Social and Economic Science*. But following the success of the *Outline of History* a number of so-called "Outlines" of Art — of Literature — of Science — of this and that, had been put upon the market and widely advertised and distributed. They were not really outlines at all; they were miscellanies of articles by various hands with hardly any common thread of interest, but they exhausted the meaning of the word so completely that when at last after much toil and tribulation I got the books I wanted done, I called them *The Science of Life* and *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* respectively.

In organizing the writing of the *Science of Life* I was greatly helped by my early association with biological work and by the facts that my eldest son was a biological teacher and that the able grandson of my teacher Huxley, Julian Huxley, was my friend. He has an extraordinary full and detailed knowledge of the whole biological field. We three got together in 1927 and we made a scheme that covered every division of our immense subject. We worked very harmoniously throughout and, after a part publication, produced the book in 1930.

I had already been casting about for suitable helpers to collaborate in the same fashion upon a summary of social, political and economic science, but in this I was less successful. I entangled my scheme with an inconvenient associate and it had to be disentangled. I need not go into the particulars of my troubles here. The plan I had in mind for this work was bold and more novel than that of either of its predecessors; it was nothing less than an attempt to fuse and recast all this group of "subjects" into one intelligible review of Man upon his planet. It was to begin with a description of his material life and its evolution and it was then to describe the social, legal, political and educational organizations that had grown up as necessary concomitants of developments. Just as the *Outline of History* was an

experiment in analytical history, so this was to be an experiment in synthetic, descriptive economics and politics. The exactest name for such a synthesis would be the Outline of Human Ecology. But I did not call it that because the word Ecology was not yet widely understood.

Hendrik Van Loon, I may note, has done three books which, in an entirely different manner, approach much the same popular conspectus as my own. They are called *The Story of Mankind*, *The Liberation of Mankind* and *The Home of Mankind*; and if presently he does *The Work of Mankind*, he will have covered practically all my territory, outside the *Science of Life*, and with a very useful and desirable extension into the field of topographical geography. I do my work in my own style and so does he, and for many readers his type of survey may prove to be more attractive and stimulating than mine. *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, I have felt for some time, might very well be supplemented by a broad geographical survey.

My trouble with my hastily selected assistant wasted most of my working time for half a year. Two privately printed pamphlets distributed to the members of the committee of the Authors' Society embalmed that tiresome dispute. In the end I brought in a number of fresh advisers and helpers and did the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* as I had done the *Outline of History* by "mugging up" the material and writing or rewriting practically all of it myself, and then getting the various parts vetted and revised and, in one part, rewritten by specialists. It appeared in 1931 and it has sold very well, but not at all on the scale of the *Outline of History*. It is only now appearing in a popular edition. On the whole considering the greater novelty of the design, I am quite as well satisfied with it as I am with its two companions.

These three works taken together do, I believe, still give a clearer, fuller and compacter summary of what the normal citizen of the modern state should know, than any other group of books in existence. They shape out something that will presently be better done. Clearly there must be some factor, in the relative unsuccessfulness of the latter two thirds of the trilogy, which escapes me. They must need further simplification and consolidation. I have

not, I think any extravagant delusions about their quality, but I have perhaps too high an estimate of the value of their general conception.

I am convinced that the informative framework of a proper education should be presented as the three sides of the triangle I have drawn in them; Biology, History and Human Ecology. A child should begin with Natural History, a History of Inventions, Social Beginnings and Descriptive Geography, that should constitute its first world picture, and the treatment of these subjects should broaden and intensify before specialization. I believe that minds resting on that triple foundation will be equipped for the rôle of world citizens, and I do not believe that a world community can be held together in a common understanding except upon such a foundation. This is not to say that my books are anything more than first exploratory experiments in this foundation work. But they do constitute a very serious first experiment and they foreshadow a new education as it was not foreshadowed until I wrote them.

* * * * *

In this account rendered of the purpose and substance of my life-work I must here insert in a sort of parenthesis one or two other subsidiary books which will otherwise find no place in this story. In 1920 I made a brief visit to Russia, talked to a number of Communist leaders, including Lenin, and published my impressions in a book, *Russia in the Shadows*, and in 1921 I went to Washington to report upon the Disarmament Conference of that year, in a series of newspaper articles which became *Washington and the Hope of Peace*. Since these books were incidents in my development they must be mentioned here, but I need not expatiate upon them.

Here too I must mention, though I need not enter at length into the particulars of it, the Decks Case which came to an end, after five years of legal proceedings, in 1933. Miss Deeks was a Canadian spinster who conceived the strange idea that she held the copyright in human history. She was permitted and encouraged to sue me, as the author of the *Outline of History*, for infringement of copyright and to produce a manuscript, which she alleged had existed in the form in which she produced it before the publication of my Outline, in

support of her claim for £100,000 and the suppression of my book. No evidence of the prior existence of her manuscript, as produced, was ever exacted from her, and she was allowed to carry this silly case from court to court — each court dismissing it contemptuously with costs against her — up to the Privy Council. When finally that court disposed of her conclusively, with costs, she declared her inability to pay a penny of the £5,000-worth of fees and charges that these tedious and vexatious proceedings had entailed upon me. And there the matter ended. Life is too short and there is too much to do in it for me to spend time and attention in hunting out whatever poor little assets Miss Deeks may have preserved from her own lawyers and expert advisers. She has to go on living somehow and her mischief is done. I hope she is comfortable and that she is still persuaded she is a sort of intellectual heroine. I saw her once in court, when I had to give sworn evidence in my own defence, and I found her rather a sympathetic figure. She impressed me as quite honest but vain and foolish, with an imagination too inflamed with the idea of being a great litigant for her to realize what an unrighteous nuisance she was making of herself; there was something faintly pathetic, something reminiscent of Dickens' Miss Flyte, in the way in which she fussed about with her lawyers, with much whispering and rustling of papers, giving her profound and subtle instructions for the undoing of our dire conspiracy; and it is not against her, but against those who encouraged and egged her on, that I am disposed to be resentful.

Since 1914 I had been on very friendly terms with F. W. Sanderson, the headmaster of Oundle, to whom I sent my boys at the outbreak of the war. Sanderson was an original and vigorous teacher, who was feeling his way in a manner all his own, towards a modernized education. He was at the practical end of the business in immediate contact with boys, parents and school governors and I was at the other end in contact with public affairs and the League of Nations, and we converged very interestingly in our talks. My boys, as children at home, had acquired very good French and German and I, just back from my first visit to Russia in 1914 (see *Joan and Peter*), persuaded him to add a Russian teacher to his staff for their benefit, the first Russian teacher, I believe, in any English public

school.

Sanderson was a ruddy plethoric man, with his voice in his throat, and always very keen to talk. His mind found its best expression in his very characteristic school sermons; the actual practice of his school and the ideas of his staff lagged far behind his ambitions. He was greatly occupied with the development of a special building at Oundle when he died, The House of Vision, in which boys were to go and think out life. It was to be a sort of museum displaying universal history and the world as a whole; it was to give very much what my three outline books were designed to give, a unified conception of the world drama in which they had to play their parts.

Sanderson was growing mentally and his reach and boldness were increasing to the very day of his death. That came very suddenly and shockingly to me, for I was in the chair at a lecture at University College in the summer of 1922 when — at the end of a rather wandering discourse, his overtaxed and neglected heart stopped beating and he fell dead on the platform beside me.

This lecture was to have opened new ground and he had made great preparations for it. He had added the toil of a sort of mission to Rotarians and people of that sort, to his already heavy work as a headmaster, and this lecture was to have been a key utterance. Apart from my keen sense of the loss of his intimacy and co-operation I was greatly distressed at this abrupt truncation of his work; he was only sixty-five and he seemed full of a panting vitality that might have gone on for years.

I did all I could to put him on record before his prestige faded. I got together an official *Life* (1923) and, finding myself hampered by the reserves and suppressions customary in such compilations, I also wrote my own impression of him in *The Story of a Great Schoolmaster* (1924). It is so personal and affectionate an impression and it is so expressive of my own educational conceptions as well as his, that if I could I would incorporate it, just as I would like to incorporate my introduction to *The Book of Catherine Wells*, in this already greatly distended autobiography. His successor had none of his distinctive spirit and understanding, and the light of that House of Vision was never lit. In *The Story of a Great Schoolmaster*, I have described how I visited it and found that lantern for the imagination,

empty and abandoned six months after his death. Oundle lacked and still lacks the understanding or the piety to carry out his scheme.

I will merely mention here such other incidental books of mine as *A Year of Prophesying*, 1924, and *The Way the World Is Going*, 1929. They are collections of newspaper articles in which I hammer away at my leading ideas, not always very tactfully, and the rare, curious reader who may wander into these volumes will find variations perhaps in the method of approach but nothing of essential novelty.

With this I round off my account of another main mass of my work, my own personal attempt to shape out the informative content of a modern education. Necessarily it is a lopsided account, almost Marburgesque in the way in which the parallel work and thought of other people fall into the background. I have for instance got through this section with no mention of such a book as James Harvey Robinson's *Mind in the Making* or the New History movement in America. But I am not writing a history of modern ideas in the world. I am writing the story of modern ideas in the mind of one sample person, H. G. Wells.

And as I look at the table in my study piled up with my own books and with correspondence and controversial books and pamphlets — quite a little heap for example, including Hilaire Belloc's *Companion to the Outline of History* and *Some Errors of H. G. Wells* by Dr. Downey the Roman Catholic Bishop of Liverpool, I have, except for a passing allusion to Catholic controversialists in Chapter the Eighth, § 3, passed over altogether — I am quite unable to make up my mind how far these millions of printed words are already dead litter and how much is still touching and moving minds. Is all this, and the kindred stuff of similar writers, producing any sensible and permanent effect upon education throughout the world? Much of it has certainly failed, because it was written hastily or just badly, because it was directed at the wrong brains, because it was alloyed with baser metal, prejudices or brief angers that let in corruption. But is it mostly going to be missed? Never in this world will it be possible to make a just estimate of what it has done.

There is a queer little twist in my private vanity, a streak of snobbish imitativeness, which disposes me at times to parallel my lot with Roger Bacon's. I dress up my *persona* in his fashion. This disposition is in evidence in the opening chapter of *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*. When I am most oppressed by the apparent lack of direct consequence to all my voluminous efforts, when I doubt whether the modernization of the content of education upon the lines I have drawn in my triple outlines can possibly be done in time to save our present social order, then is it most comforting to me to compare myself with Bacon in his cell scribbling away at those long dissertations of his about a new method of knowledge, which never even reached, much less influenced, the one sole reader, his friend the Pope, in whom he had hope for the realization of his dream. Which nevertheless in the course of a few centuries came to the fullest fruition. I play at being such a man as he was, a man altogether lonely and immediately futile, a man lit by a vision of a world still some centuries ahead, convinced of its reality and urgency, and yet powerless to bring it nearer.

But this is just an imaginative indulgence, a private vice I nurse, and directly I set it down here in plain black and white its absurd unreasonableness is plain. It is only my present preoccupation with my own work that gives me that single-handed feeling. Inflammation of the ego, I began to realize, is inevitable to any autobiographer in action, and that intensifies this disposition. In truth I am neither solitary nor suppressed. I merely happen to be the one I know best among a number of people who are all thinking very closely upon the same lines. Instead of writing manuscripts that will rest unread or be merely glanced at for centuries, we are printing and scattering our ideas by the million copies.

As I write here there must be between two and three million copies of my own books scattered about the world, and many more millions of other books and newspaper articles, lectures and discourses by other hands, all driving in the same direction. Every day several thousands of fresh minds respond to some part of the suggestions we are making; a teacher here alters his teaching a little; a reader thinks over a point and argues with his friend; a journalist gets a new idea of things and echoes it in an article; an orthodox

parson suddenly feels insecure. It was not to be expected that all at once all the schools would experience a change of heart, have a great burning of textbooks and start off at a tangent towards the new learning; nor is it reasonable to complain that even among those who advocate a fresh education for citizenship the apprehension of what we are driving at is usually very inadequate. If the Eric Yarrow Memorial, that House of Vision, stands, misused and abortive, at Oundle, it is only like some gun that has been hit by a shell on the road to victory.

There is no proof that the seed we have already sown has died. On the contrary, the signs of vitality increase. Now it is a series of lessons in some elementary school; now it is a string of broadcast talks like those of Commander King-Hall; now it is a book for children or the newspaper report of a provincial lecture, that comes reassuringly, another fresh green blade forcing its way to the light. The new ideology creeps upon the world *now*. There is nothing in our circumstances to-day to justify this comparison with the spiritual and imaginative isolation of that untimely man who first proclaimed the strange possibilities of experimental science. Our period is far more like the seventeenth than the thirteenth century in its realization of mutation and progressive possibility.

The thoughts of Roger Bacon were like a dream that comes before dawn and is almost forgotten again. The sleeper turns over and sleeps on. All that Roger Bacon wrote was like humanity talking in its sleep. What is happening now is by comparison an awakening. In a dream we can in a flash of time see things complete because what is happening is happening without resistance in a single brain — and then they pass; but the realization of a new day comes to thousands before it comes to millions; at first the illumination is almost imperceptible, everything is touched by it while nothing stands out; there is a slow leisureliness in its manner of approach that belies its steady and assured incessancy.

§ 8. WORLD REVOLUTION

Concurrently with those laborious and troubled efforts to anticipate

the necessary informative content of a modern education, my brain was also returning to the problem I had first raised as that New Republic of *Anticipations* which fructified in my *Modern Utopia*, the problem of organizing the coming world-order, in the body and out of the existing substance of the order of things as they are.

The temptation for active men eager for results to shirk this problem, or to stave it off with some immediately workable but essentially evasive formula, has always been very great. The first French Revolution was conducted upon an assumption of "natural" virtue and the American Revolution was essentially a political change and an economic release from an alleged and grossly caricatured "tyranny," a change and release which brought with it scarcely any modification in the liberated system. But Marx did not shirk this fundamental problem. My habitual polemical disposition to disparage Marx does not blind me to the fact of his pioneer awareness of this forest of difficulties in the theory of revolution. He did realize that a movement to reconstruct a society is unlikely to receive the immediate enthusiastic support of the majority of those who fit into and profit by its existing arrangements.

Such people may of course produce profound changes without intending it, as the curiosity of the gentlemen of the Royal Society or the excitement of the South Sea speculators evoked inventions, discoveries and developments of the most world-shaking sort, but they did these things quite unaware of the dangerous dragons they were releasing. It is necessary to find discontent before conscious revolutionary effort is possible; and, in insisting upon that point, Marx was leading his generation. But it has been the refrain of my lifetime that Marx antagonized property and the expropriated too crudely, and that he confused mere limitation and unhappiness with the rarer and more precious motive of creative discontent. He was himself too energetic and self-centred to realize how meekly human beings can be put upon if they are caught young, how susceptible they are to mass as well as to individual self-flattery and how unwilling to admit and struggle against disadvantages. Most men are ready to sympathize with the under-dog but few will allow they are themselves under-dogs. Nor did Marx realize how acutely people who have wealth and position can be bored and distressed by the

existing state of affairs. He looked therefore to the Indignant Proletarian evolved by his own imagination as the sole driving force of his revolution and he stamped the theory of the Class War upon human affairs with immense and fatal determination.

I have pointed out already that the dead impracticability of the Socialism of the opening twentieth century was due to the want of any realizable conception of a Competent Receiver for collectivized property and enterprises. The untutored masses of expropriated people are obviously unable to discharge the functions of an administrative receiver. Something had to be done about it. The "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" of the Communists, is a jerry-built Competent Receiver run up in a hurry to meet this objection. It is not good enough for its job. It is a controversial answer and not a practical solution. But Lenin's reconstructed Communist Party was a much more effective step towards an organized receivership.

To abandon the Class War theory of revolution is to give up the use of a very sustaining opiate and to face an intricate riddle. For many rough immediate purposes, drugged fighters may do better than clear-headed ones, but not in the long run.

One is forced to admit that in periods of tolerable general prosperity (as in America up to 1927) or stabilized repression (as in Hanoverian England), there is little hope for direct revolutionary effort. The illusion of stability must have been undermined in some way before the human intelligence will brace itself up to the stresses and vexations of constructive work. In the past the driving discontent has often appeared as a conflict between oppressed and oppressors, either as a class or as a race conflict, and it is still insufficiently realized that the peculiar discontents and instabilities of the present time do not follow that time-honoured formula. The issues are polygonal, they are not two-sided. And it is to mental and not to social classes that we have to appeal.

The other day at the Film Society show (March 11th, 1934) I saw Eisenstein's stirring film *October*, in which noble and enthusiastic proletarians chase corrupt and over-fed imperialists and capitalists and their parasites out of the Winter Palace. The peculiar rôle of a third party in the fight, the Russian Navy, is understressed throughout. Never have I encountered a statement more obstinately

misleading. Navies have played a large part in revolutionary history, in Turkey and Germany, notably, as well as in Russia. Every armed technical force is a living weapon with a solidarity of its own, that may turn upon a mentally feeble government which does not use it effectively. The real unorganized proletarians were in fact, if not in film, merely the chorus in the October revolution. That will be their lot in any revolution still to come.

A constructive revolution under modern conditions must begin fragmentarily, it must begin here and there, and it will have associated with it a considerable riff-raff of merely eccentric, extravagant, disgruntled and discredited individuals. These have to be handled with care and discrimination. Revolution begins with the misfits. Every revolutionary process arises out of developing dislocations and disproportions. And the interesting thing about our present situation is the fact that there is no social stratum, no organization, state, nation, school, army, navy, air force, bank, law, industry where the realization among the personnel that things are out of adjustment is not becoming acute. It is a ridiculous travesty of the situation to deal with our western world as a self-complacent "Capitalist System," squatting ruthlessly on masses of enslaved victims who have merely to revolt and evoke a millennium. Russia, after overthrowing the Capitalist System as it manifested itself under the Tzar, has floundered back through several experimental stages to state capitalism, and except that she has rid herself of some very encumbering traditions and types and broached some important experiments, she is still confronted by essentially the same riddles as the western world.

Now, if this is sound, then, I submit, it follows that *everywhere* in the social complex we shall find certain main types of mental reaction dependent upon innate or very intimate personal characteristics. We shall find an originally preponderating number of people carrying on from the phase of apparent stability, hanging on to the current usages to which they are accustomed and trying to the very last to believe that things will go on according to precedent, we shall find an increasing proportion, the resentfully defensive type, disposed to resist, by violence, any change in their habits and we shall also have a number of the open-minded innovating types who

will be ready to recognize that something has to be done in the way of adaptation and rearrangement, even if this involves a sacrifice of old customs and privileges and preconceived ideas. As the sense of instability grows, the numbers of both these latter sorts of people, the revolutionaries and the violent reactionaries, will increase at the expense of the first, the contented sort which wants to escape bothers, and the intelligence and will-for-change of the third kind, in particular, will be quickened. In certain social groups dependent largely upon the general liveliness of mind prevailing in them, the tendency to become either viciously defensive or alertly innovating may vary. Such an artificial occupation as that of a stockbroker or a professional betting man naturally attracts people of a narrow-minded smart type and is not likely to turn the mind to any social rearrangements that may threaten the technique of the stock-exchange or the turf, and fewer retired rentiers are likely to give their minds to revolutionary reconstruction than public health officials or hydraulic engineers. But in most spheres of interest, in law, public administration, medicine, engineering, industry, education and even the compulsive services, intensifying dislocation is likely to call an increasing proportion of questioning and planning brains into constructive activity. These are the only brains to which we can look for creative drive. For the purposes of revolutionary theory the rest of humanity matters only as the texture of mud matters when we design a steam dredger to keep a channel clear.

These questioning, planning and executive brains which will be stimulated by the realization of social impermanence and insecurity, will start, every one of them, from some fixed system of ideas. Their immediate reactions and activities will be determined at first by the established routines out of which they awaken, and so the early stages of their activities, at any rate, are likely to be not only extremely diverse and chaotic but conflicting. On the other hand the violent reactionaries will have a natural solidarity about the Thing that Is. The primary problem in revolutionary theory is to discover the general formulae, which will reduce the waste through diversity and imperfect apprehension to a minimum, and evoke the most rapid and efficient co-ordination of creative effort.

I have told already of my conception of a New Republic (in 1900)

and of my elaboration of this idea in *A Modern Utopia* (1906) and how I tried to make the Fabian Society into an order of the Samurai — to the great excitement of Pease, Shaw, Bland and Sidney Webb, and, to my own effectual discomfiture. I tried to put an acceptable face on my retreat from the Fabian conflict, but that was by no means easy. I had to swallow the dose that I had attempted to do something and failed completely. I had to realize that I had no organizing ability and no gift for leading or directing people. To make up for that, I told myself I would write all the better. But *The New Machiavelli* (1911) with its pose of the deflated publicist in noble retirement is obviously a compensatory production. *The Research Magnificent* (1914) betrays a mind still looking for some method of effective public action. Before it was half written, the livid glares and deepening shadows of the Great War fell across its pages and a new grade in my education began.

I have traced already how the war process stormed across my mind and how my attention was shifted from social structure to international affairs and so to the relation between popular education and international feeling. The idea of doing all I could for the reconstruction of the content of education became so dominant with me that it ruled my intellectual life and shaped my activities for some years. For a time I was so busied with the production of those three books embodying a modern general ideology, that I gave little attention, far too little attention, to the question whether my general idea was being put over to any large number of people. Then I began to feel that I was going on "in the air," that at the best I was producing fairly saleable but, it might be, essentially ineffective books. I might be shooting beside the mark altogether. I became impatient for palpable results.

In some manner the new education had to be got into the education office and the syllabuses and the schools, and since no one else seemed to be doing it, I felt under an obligation to try, however ineffectively, to do something about it myself. I turned my reluctant face towards meetings and committee- rooms again. I had had nothing to do with such things since my Fabian withdrawal. I heard with dislike and a sinking heart my straining voice once more beginning speeches. I dislike my voice in a meeting so much that it

gives me an exasperated manner and I lose my thread listening to it. I still thought the Labour Party might be the party most responsive to constructive ideas in education, and in order to secure a footing in its councils I stood as Labour candidate for the London University at the 1922 and 1923 elections. I had no prospect of being returned, but I thought that by writing and publishing election addresses and such leaflets as *The Labour Ideal of Education* (1923) I might impose a modernization of the schools curriculum, upon the party policy and so get general history at least into its proper place as elementary school history.

In a speech at the University of London Club, in March 1923, reprinted as *Socialism and the Scientific Motive*, I find I was trying to persuade myself and my liberal-minded hearers of the essential identity of these two things. But I was not really persuaded. I was declaring what ought to be was fact. I was poking about in this political stuff not because I believed it to be the way to my ends, but because I did not certainly know any way to my ends, and this seemed to hold out possibilities. But the older men in control of the Labour Party at that time were quite impervious to the idea of changing education. They did not know that there could be different kinds and colours of education. A school, any school, was a school to them and a college a college. They thought there was something very genteel and desirable about education, just as there was about a municipal art gallery, and they wanted the working classes to have the best of everything. But they did not consider education as a matter of primary importance. They had themselves managed very well with very little.

A phase of great restlessness and discontent came upon me in 1923-24. I was doing what I felt to be good work in making a digest of modern knowledge and ideas available for the general reader, but this did not fully engage my imagination. I could not subdue myself to the idea that this was the limit of my effectiveness. I made speeches and when I read the reports of them I could not believe I had said so little. I gave interviews and was overwhelmed by a sense of fatuity when they came home to roost. I wrote articles and they seemed to me more and more like the opening observations to something that was never really said. I was oppressed by a sense of

encumbrance in my surroundings and of misapplied energy and time running to waste.

In the introduction to this autobiography I have already remarked upon the fugitive element in most intellectual lives, but it is only now as I bring facts and dates together that I realize the importance of fugitive impulses throughout my own story. At phase after phase I find myself saying in effect: "I must get out of this. I must get clear. I must get away from all this and think and then begin again. These daily routines are wrapping about me, embedding me in a mass of trite and habitual responses. I must have the refreshment of new sights, sounds, colours or I shall die away."

My revolt against the draper's shop was the first appearance of this mood. It was a flight — to a dream of happy learning and teaching in poverty. To a minor extent and with minor dislocation this fugitive mood no doubt recurred but it did not come back again in full force until my divorce. Then it is quite clear that it clothed itself in the form of a dream of a life of cheerfully adventurous writing. The concealed element was that my work with Briggs was boring me. That divorce was not simply the replacement of one wife by another; it was also the replacement of one way of living by another. It was a break away to a new type of work.

I detect all the symptoms of the same flight impulse again about 1909, but then there was not the same complete material rupture with my established life. But *The New Machiavelli* (published in 1911) is quite plainly once more the release of the fugitive urgency, a release completed in imagination if not in fact. I realize now (and the queer thing is that I do realize only now) that the idea of going off somewhere — to Italy in the story — out of the tangle of Fabian disputes, tiresomely half-relevant politics and the routines of literary life, very nearly overwhelmed me in my own proper person, and the story of Remington and Margaret and Isabel is essentially a dramatized wish. I relieved my tension vicariously as Remington. He got out of my world on my behalf — and wrote in lofty tranquillity of politics in the abstract, *à la Machiavelli*, as I desired to do.

We shifted house from Sandgate to London (1909) and from London to Easton Glebe (1910) and there I settled down again. All that is quite sufficiently told in *The Book of Catherine Wells*. The

huge issues of the War and the Peace held my mind steady and kept it busy for some years. But in 1924 the same mood returned, so recognizably the same, that I am surprised to realize how little I apprehended the connection at the time. If I did not get to writing in Italy in the pose of *The New Machiavelli*, I got to the south of France. It was much the same thing. It was the partial realization of my own fantasy after twelve years. What I did I did with the connivance and help of my wife, who perceived that I was in grave mental distress and understood how things were with me. I did not immediately head for France. I went by air first to the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva with the idea of going on thence to wander round the world. It was at Geneva that I changed my plans and turned southward to Grasse. I found it was quite possible to get out of things, for some months at least, much as Remington did, establish myself in a quiet corner among the hills, stay there cut off from the daily urgencies of England, sift my thoughts and purposes in peace and presently write.

I began a life in duplicate. The main current of my ostensible life still flowed through my home at Little Easton in Essex; there the mass of my correspondence was dealt with and all my business done, but at the *mas* known as Lou Bastidon near Grasse, I dramatized myself as William Clissold, an industrialist in retreat, — the prophet Hosea could not have been more thorough in his dramatization — and I set this Mr. William Clissold to survey and think out how the world looked to him. For three winters I lived intermittently in that pleasant sunlit corner, living very plainly and simply, sitting about in the sun, strolling on the flowery olive terraces about me, going for long walks among the hills behind, seeing hardly anything of the fashionable life of the Riviera that went on so near to me. And the main thread of my thought and writing for all that time was how to realize the New Republic and bring it into active existence.

I wish that seasonal retirement to Lou Bastidon could have gone on to the end, but obscure difficulties and complications; a craving for an efficient bathroom, electric light and a small car, it may be, presently undid me. I attempted to reproduce Lou Bastidon on a firmer foundation and behold! the foundation became a pitfall. I began to play with house-building and garden- planning. There is a

vividness, an immediate gratification of the creative instinct in this amusement, which can distract the mind very readily from reality. Men and women take to building and gardening as they take to drink, in order to distract their minds from the whole round world and its claim upon them, and all the Riviera is littered with villas that testify to the frequency of this impulse. I acquired some land with a pretty rock, vines, jasmin and a stream close by, and I planned and built a house which I called *Lou Pidou*, and after that rash act the cares of house-holding and car-owning and gardening began to grow up about me. The Riviera also got wind of me and reached up sociable tentacles towards my retreat. Lou Pidou was an amateurish, pretty house with a peculiar charm of its own but it insisted upon growing and complicating itself; it became less and less of a refuge and more and more of an irksome entanglement with its own baffling bothers and exactions. I worked there with dwindling zest and energy and stayed less and less willingly and for briefer periods, as those good long sunlit hours in which I could think became rare and ragged and the necessity for management and attention more clamorous, until presently a time came, in May 1933, when I realized I could work there effectively no more.

It was early in 1933 that the opening section of this autobiography was written and the mood of this phase is fully described in that section.

I cast Lou Pidou at last as a snake casts its skin. It needed an effort, but once more the liberating impulse was the stronger. I resolved that I would sell it, or if necessary give it away, and have done with it. I took a farewell stroll in my olive orchard up the hill, said good-bye to my new and promising orange-trees and rose-beds, gave my parental benediction to the weeping-willows and the banks of iris I had planted by my stream, sat for awhile on my terrace with a grave black cat beside me, to which I was much attached, and then went down the familiar road to Cannes station for the last time.

I returned to London by way first of a stormy but entertaining International P.E.N. Congress at Ragusa, over which I presided, and then a holiday in what was altogether new country for me, the fresh green loveliness of Austria in early summer. My flat in London is now my only home. The two small boys who figure at the end of

Chapter the Eighth are parents to-day with pleasant households and sons and daughters of their own, and Easton Glebe which is described in *The Book of Catherine Wells* was sold after her death in 1927. It had become too large for me and too empty altogether. I have indeed seen family life right round now from beginning to end. That stage is over. A flat above the rumble of Baker Street and Marylebone Road is as good a place as any to work in and easy to maintain; I can go away when I please and where I please for as long as I please; and London, for all my outrageous radicalism, is a very friendly and pleasant city to me. If I have no garden of my own, Regents Park just outside my door grows prettier every year; there are no gardens like Kew Gardens and no more agreeable people in the world than the people in the London streets.

The World of William Clissold, the book I wrote in Lou Bastidon, has a rambling manner but it seems to ramble more than it actually does from my main preoccupation. Its gist, to which, after four Books mostly of preparatory novel writing to get the Clissold brothers alive, I came in Book Five, is the possibility of bringing the diffused creative forces of the world into efficient co-operation as an "Open Conspiracy." I am supposing myself to be in the position of an intelligent industrialist with a sound scientific training and this is how I make him see it:

"It is absurd to think of creative revolution unless it has power in its hands, and manifestly the chief seats of creative power in the world are on the one hand modern industry associated with science and on the other world finance. The people who have control in these affairs can change the conditions of human life constructively and to the extent of their control. No other people can so change them.

"All other sorts of power in our world are either contributory or restrictive or positively obstructive or positively destructive. The power of established and passive property, for example, is simply the power to hold up for a price. The power of the masses is the strike, it embodies itself in the machine-breaking, expert-hunting mob.... It is only through a conscious, frank and world-wide co-operation of the man of science, the scientific worker, the man accustomed to the direction of productive industry, the man able to control the arterial supply of credit, the man who can control newspapers and

politicians, that the great system of changes they have almost inadvertently got going can be brought to any hopeful order of development.

"Such men, whether they mean to be or not, are the actual revolutionaries in our world.... I believe that we industrials and the financiers are beginning to educate ourselves and broaden our outlook as our enterprises grow and interweave. I believe that if we can sufficiently develop the consciousness of contemporary business and associate with it the critical co-operation and the co-operative criticism of scientific and every other sort of able man, we can weave a world system of monetary and economic activities, while the politicians, the diplomatists, and the soldiers are still too busy with their ancient and habitual antics to realize what we are doing.... We can build up the monetary and economic world republic in full daylight under the noses of those who represent the old system. For the most part I believe that to understand us will be to be with us, and that we shall sacrifice no advantage and incur no risk of failure in talking out and carrying out our projects and methods quite plainly.

"That is what I mean by an Open Conspiracy.... Many things that now seem incurably conflicting, communism and international finance for example, may so develop in the next half-century as to come to drive side by side, upon a parallel advance. At present big distributing businesses are firmly antagonistic to co-operative consumers' associations; yet one or two of the big distributors have already made important deals with these large-scale economic organizations from the collectivist side. Both work at present upon very crude assumptions about social psychology and social justice. Both tend to internationalize under the same material stresses.

"I find it hard to doubt the inevitability of a very great improvement in the quality and intellectual solidarity of those who will be conducting the big business of the world in the next century, an extension and an increased lucidity of vision, a broadened and deepened morale. Possibly my temperament inclines me to think that what should be must be. But it is patently absurd to me to assume that the sort of men who control so much of our banking to-day, limited, traditional, careless or doctrinaire, are the ultimate types of banker. It seems as irrational to suppose that such half-educated,

unprepared adventurers as Dickon and myself and our partners and contemporaries are anything but makeshift industrial leaders, and that better men will not follow us. Dickon and I are, after all, at best early patterns, 1865 and 1867 models....”

All this was written before anyone was thinking of such an American President as Franklin Roosevelt and his astonishing effort so to regulate a loose capitalist system as to thrust it rapidly towards State Socialism. Where the Clissold version of the Open Conspiracy is least defensible is in its easy disregard of the fact that though privately created productive, industrial and distributive organization is to a large extent capable of direct socialization, *private finance is something absolutely and incurably different in its spirit and conduct from any conceivable sort of public finance*. It is an attempt to extract profit out of what should be a public service, the exchange machinery. It is as anti-social as it would be to attempt to get profits by falsifying the standard yard. That, we have since found out. The industrious reader will find it in course of being found out in the *Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*. The public control of credit and a scientific reorganization of the world’s monetary system is the necessary preliminary stage in carrying out a planned world economy. Like myself and our English labour leaders and indeed practically everybody in 1926, William Clissold was still in need of some hard thinking about the relations of money and credit to private ownership.

Furthermore — in an exaggeration of my own aversion from the class-war doctrine — too wide a gap was set by Clissold in his world between the industrial organizer and the technological assistant and skilled artisan. The workers were dismissed as being just workers and the political possibilities and capacity of their better equipped stratum was ignored. I was identifying myself with my imaginary business man almost too thoroughly. I was evidently still sore about the Labour Party as I had found it. In my reaction against the mass democracy that had produced Macdonald, Snowden, Thomas, Clynes and the like as its representative heads, I underrated the steadily increasing intelligence of the more specialized workers and of the ambitious younger working-men. To them at any rate William Clissold is an impersonation to apologize for.

The World of William Clissold was published in 1926. It was published as an important book and it received a very considerable amount of useful destructive criticism. So that I reconsidered this Open Conspiracy almost as soon as it was launched. It was a sound instinct which made me do that book not in my own first person but in the form of a trial personality. I was soon struggling to disentangle myself from various rash commitments of Clissold's and get on to a revised view. I had had this first exercise in general political statement handed back to me with ample corrections — mostly in red ink, — and I wanted to profit by them.

In the spring of 1927, I was asked to lecture in the Sorbonne and I chose as my subject *Democracy under Revision*, in which I insisted on the necessity for some such organization as my Samurai to replace the crude electoral methods of contemporary politics. This was, so to speak, Open Conspiracy propaganda adapted to the peculiarly narrow French outlook. My wife, I may note here, was with me in that Paris journey, we were fêted and entertained and very happy together, and neither of us realized that death was already at work in her and that in six months we should be parted for ever. The title page of that printed lecture is the last of all the title pages on which I ever drew a "picshua" for her. I reproduce it here as a reminder of the life-long companionship and the persistent, unassertive help that underlies all this tale of work. Our last half year together I have described in *The Book of Catherine Wells*.

After her death I sat down to alter and explain my conception of the Open Conspiracy more exactly — to myself first and then to others. I wrote a little book The *Open Conspiracy: Blue Prints for a World Revolution* (1929) and I was so convinced of its unavoidably tentative quality that I arranged its publication so as to be able to withdraw it, revise it completely and republish it again after a lapse of two years. I did this under the new title of *What Are We to Do with Our Lives?* (1931). In this, the third version of the Open Conspiracy plan, I began to feel I was really settling down to definitive detail. *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, which was launched after many difficulties in 1932, also contained in its political and educational chapters, and based on a description of current conditions, an even more explicit statement of the Open

Conspiracy plan. The definition was still clearer; and the touch surer.

In all this work I was really only cleaning up, working out, and sharpening the edges, dotting the i's and crossing the t's of the problem of the New Republic. The Open Conspiracy was my New Republic plus a third of a century of experience. It was a working plan in the place of Anticipations. I was moving with my generation from a speculative dreamland towards a specific project.

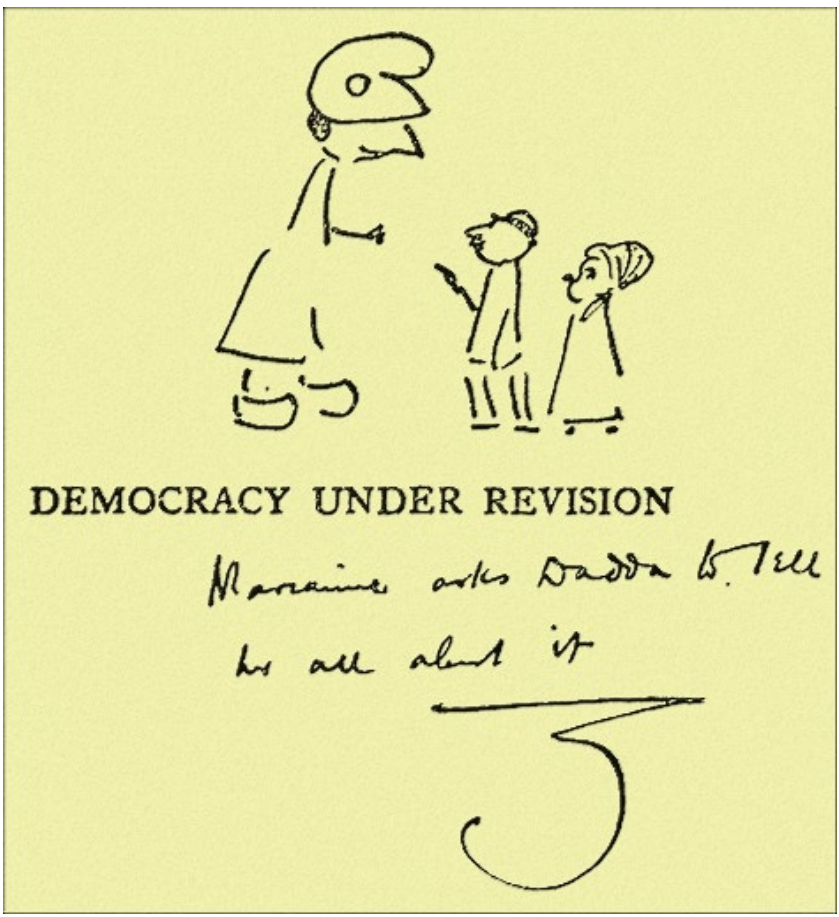

Picshua: Title page of "Democracy Under Revision."

In *After Democracy* (1932) I collected together a number of diverse papers, a lecture given in the Reichstag building in Berlin (1928), a lecture given to the Residencia des Estudiantes in Madrid

(1932), a memorandum on the world situation prepared at the request of one or two influential people in America in 1932, and at first privately circulated, a lecture to the Liberal Summer School at Oxford (1932) and arising out of the latter, a paper, *A Liberal World Organisation*, in which I gave still further definition from this point of view and that of the same conception. I also tried out my general idea, with very little response, in the *Daily Herald* (December 1932) under the title *There Should Be a Common Creed for Left Parties Throughout the World*. This has been reprinted as an Introduction to the *Manifesto* of the new Fellowship of Progressive Societies — which is a sort of Fellowship of the New Life fifty years later. The exploratory note in these papers diminished to a minimum as my ideas grew more precise. Each successive change was smaller than the one that went before.

The Shape of Things to Come (1933) is the last important book I have written. It is as deliberate and laborious a piece of work as anything I have ever done and I took great pains to make it as exciting and readable as I could without any sacrifice of matter. There are one or two episodes of quite lively story-telling. I was becoming sufficiently sure of my ground to let my imagination play upon it. The device of a partially deciphered transcription of a fragmentary manuscript got over a multitude of the technical difficulties that arise in an anticipatory history. I think I have contrived to set out in it my matured theory of revolution and world government very plainly.

The World of William Clissold was written during a "boom" phase in the world's affairs, the profound rottenness of the monetary-credit system was still unrealized, and so Clissold turned to social boredom and the irritation of seeing industrial and mechanical invention misused, in order to evoke the discontent necessary for a revolutionary project. But by the time *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind*, which was, so to speak, the workshop in which was built *The Shape of Things to Come*, was in hand, the artificiality and unsoundness of those boom conditions had become glaringly obvious. The realization was spreading through all the modern categories of workers, the men of science, the men of invention, the big-scale industrial organizers, the engineers, the

aviators, the teachers and writers, the social workers, the mass producers, every sort of skilled artisan, every honest and creative-minded man, indeed, everywhere, that if the new mechanical civilization by which they lived was to carry on, they had to be up and stirring. The Open Conspiracy of William Clissold was essentially speculative, optional and amateurish; the Open Conspiracy of De Windt which took possession of a derelict world, was presented as the logical outcome of inexorable necessity. Only through personal disaster or the manifest threat of personal disaster can normal human beings be sufficiently stirred to attempt a revolutionary change of their conditions.

Step by step through that logic in events, the new pattern of revolution has been brought from Utopia and from the vague generalizations of the New Republic, towards contact with contemporary movements and political actuality. I have moved with my class and type, to more and more precise intentions. Small groups and societies to explain and realize the Competent Receiver are springing up; periodicals are being started in relation to it; its phraseology is appearing in actual political discussion. Independent beginnings of a kindred spirit are coming into relations with one another. They are giving and taking. These people are not merely propagandists of an idea. Every one of them according to his or her abilities or opportunities is in training for the Civil Service, and the industrial teaching and compulsive services of the new order of things. It is from the skilled artisans, the technically educated middle-class, the fraternity of enlightened minds, rather than from the proletarian masses that its energy will come. But it cannot be pretended that constructive revolutionary organization is anything like as advanced as yet even as educational modernization and the spread of cosmopolitan ideas. It is still in the phase of germination. For the reorientation of revolution, just as for the modernization of education, one must accept what the Webbs have called so aptly “the inevitability of gradualness.”

Remembering always that “gradual” need not mean slow.

Of the reality of our progress towards constructive world revolution I have no doubt. All revolutionary organizations are snowball organizations. The Open Conspiracy whether under that

name or under some other name, or as a protean spirit, will in the long run win schools and colleges to its ends; it will get the worthwhile young men, the skilled men and women, the simple and straightforward, the steadfast and resolute. That is to say that ultimately it will get mankind. It supplies the form and spirit of that "competent receiver," the lack of which made the frustration of the earlier socialism inevitable. It is law and order modernized and ennobled. It will find a job for everybody; the sacrifices it demands are temporary and conditional. When it is fully and fairly displayed it is a handsome and hopeful loyalty; the better it is known the finer it appears, the nature of man necessitates loyalty of some sort and there is no other loyalty now that can stand comparison with it.

And there, for a time at any rate, the description of the main arch of my work must end. My brain has been the centre of the story throughout, but just as with the new education, so here also in this conception of the idea of world revolution as the ruling and directive interest in life, similar things have happened and are happening to myriads of brains. I tell how I in particular travelled upon a road along which more and more people are travelling, but my egoism is far more apparent than real. There used to be a popular recitation in my young days telling how Bill Adams won the Battle of Waterloo. Except for a transitory appearance of the "Dook," the victory seemed all the work of Bill. Nevertheless the Battle of Waterloo *was* won by Bill Adams multiplied by some score thousands, and it is small discredit to Bill Adams that he was too busy on his personal front to take much note of what the other fellows were doing.

What is plain to me is that the modern world-state which was a mere dream in 1900 is to-day a practicable objective; it is indeed the only sane political objective for a reasonable man; it towers high over the times, challenging indeed but rationally accessible; the way is indicated and the urgency to take that way gathers force. Life is now only conflict or "meanwhiling" until it is attained. Thirty-four years ago the world-state loomed mistily across a gulf in dreamland. My arch of work has bridged the gulf for me and my swinging bridge of ropes and planks and all the other ropes and wires that are being flung across, are plainly only the precursors of a viaduct and a common highway. The socialist world-state has now become a to-

morrow as real as to-day. Thither we go.

§ 9. CEREBRATION AT LARGE AND BRAINS IN KEY POSITIONS

The particular brain whose ups and downs and beatings about in the world you have been following in this autobiography, has arrived at the establishment of the socialist world-state as its directive purpose and has made that its religion and end. This, it has been abundantly apparent, has involved for it very definite and distinctive standards of judgment upon both individual conduct and the conduct of public affairs. It had been perpetually meeting and jostling against other brains, brains in crowds and brains apart, summing them up, learning from them what to attempt and what to avoid; and so it seems worth while to conclude this elaborate description of my own mental growths and reactions, with a few comments upon other mentalities I have encountered at work upon these same intricate challenges and problems that have taken possession of and unified my own.

Social life has presented itself to me at last as a vast politico-educational problem. It is, as it were, a sea of active brains. My individual life is a participating unit in this multitudinous brain-life, the mind of the species. Its general problem is vastly simple, though its individual variations are infinite. It is required to orient all this diverse multitude of brains, about two thousand millions of them at present, in one particular direction so as to bring about a new morale and government of life. It is under penalty to do that. In a measurable time mankind has to constitute itself into one state and one brotherhood, or it will certainly be swept down cataracts of disaster to an ultimate destruction.

It is no novelty that life should present itself in this form of a problem of unification. Men have been seeing it more and more plainly so for at least five-and-twenty centuries. Every one of the universal religions, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, every one in its valiant beginnings, set out to do as much for mankind. All, it is true, failed to attain that universality. They rose like floods and after a time they rose no further. The whole world over never became

Buddhist, Christian or Moslem. At first in every case, the onset of the new faith was like the magnetising of an iron bar in an electric coil and many millions of the little individual particles, originally pointing higgledy-piggledy in the general mass, were swung round towards a common objective. Hitherto there has always been a limit set to this process of conversion; the bar was too big for the induction, much of it stretched beyond the influence of the coil, or the inducing current diminished and died out too soon. But that is no reason for declaring that it is impossible to achieve a general peace and a common faith and law for mankind. On the contrary, the success of these pioneer faiths, in spite of philosophical inadequacy and the handicap of local theological associations and unjustifiable miraculous pretensions, started as they were under conditions of tremendous disadvantage by weak individuals and a feeble initial group of disciples, is an extraordinary manifestation of the power of a unifying appeal and of the receptivity of common men to such an appeal. The human animal is more disposed than not for a universal social life, for peace and co-operation, and what has been done during the relatively brief space of twenty-five centuries and a few score generations of men, is merely a first demonstration of what will yet be achieved.

What we have seen in the course of my one brief lifetime has been a great development of our biological and psychological knowledge, and this last science in particular carries still with it almost untouched possibilities of self-restraint, self-direction, mutual sympathy and group and mass co- operation. The art of conduct is in its infancy. Concurrently the advance of physical technique has carried our facilities of mental exchange to undreamt-of levels. We can tell each other and show each other with unprecedented ease. When we consider the beginnings of the great world faiths; the weak voice of the Founder talking in some small dusty market-place to casually assembled crowds, the going to and fro of the undistinguished disciples, the faint and feeble records, the faulty gospels, the obscure epistles, the mis-hearings, the misunderstandings, the distortions of rumour, the heretical blunderings, the difficulties of correction and verification, and compare the ease and clarity with which to-day statements can be

made, consistency sustained and co-operation ensured, then the wide prevalence and partial success of these former disseminations become the surest augury for the rapid and conclusive establishment of the new way of living to which not one Founder but myriads of quickening intelligences are awakening to-day. They are not now the disciples of this man or that. This time they are the disciples and apostles of the logic of human necessity. It is not that one man alone has received a revelation and realized the substance of a new and necessary education and planned reconstruction of economic and political relations. The revelation has been prepared by the scientific work and invention of a century, and the call has been broadcast by events.

I have already described some intimate encounters which very importantly affected the final shaping of my *persona* and ideas. Here in a concluding section I think I will set down what I have seen at close quarters and what I have thought of one or two brains which seemed to be exceptionally placed in the world, so that they had apparently unusual directive opportunities. Their conduct was just as much a resultant of innate impulse and suggestion and circumstance as the lives of Gissing or Crane or Bennett or myself, but because relatively they happened to occupy key positions, their reaction on great multitudes of other brains was much more powerful and immediate. Leadership was their rôle. All of them belong to my own generation, the generation of disillusionment, perplexity and mental reconstruction, and all of them are far less lucid, assured and decisive than the men of to-morrow are likely to be.

An outstanding figure in my middle years was Theodore Roosevelt. He had a tremendous effort in his time of masterful direction. He was the Big Noise of America. He was a great release. Political life in America seemed to have become a wholly base technique, and the American outlook upon world affairs, narrowly patriotic, sentimental and selfish, when he broke through and became, by sheer accident, President. He made the liveliest use of his opportunities. His personality became more visible and his voice more audible about the planet than those of any of his predecessors since Lincoln. It was natural for me in my Spade House days, when I seemed only to be talking unheeded beside the flow of events, and

quite unable to affect them, to exaggerate the Power he could exercise and to want to meet him. I had still to realise what an obscure and elusive thing political Power is. I had still to doubt whether there are really any powerful individuals now at all.

I went to America to write a series of articles for the London *Tribune* in 1906 and I lunched with the President and walked about the grounds of the White House with him while he talked. He talked easily and frankly, as Mr. Arthur Balfour used to talk. He "stuck through" the formulated politicians of his time. He betrayed none of the uneasiness of the normal politician that any phrase of his might be quoted unfairly against him, and he interested me enormously. I asked him, though in less direct phrases, what he imagined he was "up to" and I think he did his best to tell me.

In those days mental adaptation to the idea of a change of scale in human affairs was still in its opening phases. Nobody had got the thing in its full immensity but everywhere its disturbance was in evidence. His talk was tremendously provisional and speculative. In my book I called him "a complex of will and critical perplexity."

At that time hardly anyone had dared to face up to the conception of a planned world-state. Roosevelt was round about where Cecil Rhodes had been when he died; he probably owed a great deal to the Milner-Kipling-Rhodes school of thought, he was thinking vaguely of a loose combine, an understanding rather than an alliance, of the liberal northern powers to control the next phase of human affairs. He was sceptical of continental Europe, contemptuous of Asia, and oblivious, as we all were then, of the revolutionary possibilities of Russia. And neither of us as we talked that day had the remotest suspicion of the earthquakes that were latent in the monetary system of our world.

Though he had heard of socialism he evidently could not imagine it as an organised reality, as anything more practical than a legal modification of the baronial freedoms of big business by government control. You must remember that in those days there was no such striking evidence as we now possess of the self-terminating nature of the private capitalist system. That possibility was indeed cardinal in Marxist theory but only a very few people knew about it and still fewer understood and believed it. The current system was generally

supposed to get along in a looping sort of way by trade cycles of depression and recovery, it had the air of a going concern that might jar perhaps at times but could not fail to go; and it was only after 1928 that any considerable number of people could be made to realize that these alleged trade cycles were not necessarily cycles at all and that there was no reason to suppose that a depression might not go on indefinitely with no effectual recovery at any point. That was outside his imaginative scheme. Such being the limitation of his ideas, it was natural that he should be a hearty individualist, convinced that no man who sought work could fail to find it, that there was room for an unlimited multitude of healthy workers everywhere (so that he passionately opposed "race suicide") and that all that was needed to keep the world going was strenuous "go." The utmost danger he would admit as threatening the glorious torrent of individualistic life as he saw it about him, was the restraint and choking of competition by the growth of monopolistic combinations, and this could be checked first by very vigorous anti-trust legislation and secondly by a greater wariness in granting public utility and other franchise for the exploitation of natural resources to private lessees. He was in particular the champion of an imaginary citizen farmer, the legendary pioneer western farmer, — and his power of overriding doubts in a sort of mystical exaltation was very great. I tried to insinuate my still not very completely formulated criticism of the current order. I tried to convey my persuasion that all competitive systems must be self-terminating systems....

But here let me quote my very own book:

"It is a curious thing that as I talked with President Roosevelt in the garden of the White House there came back to me quite forcibly that undertone of doubt that has haunted me throughout this journey. After all, does this magnificent appearance of beginnings, which is America, convey any clear and certain promise of permanence and fulfilment whatever?... Is America a giant childhood or a gigantic futility, a mere latest phase of that long succession of experiments which has been and may be for interminable years — may be, indeed, altogether until the end — man's social history? I can't now recall how our discursive talk settled towards this, but it is clear to me that I struck upon a familiar vein of thought in the President's

mind. He hadn't, he said, an effectual disproof of a pessimistic interpretation of the future. If one chose to say America must presently lose the impetus of her ascent, that she and all mankind must culminate and pass, he could not conclusively deny that possibility. Only he chose to live as if this were not so.

"That remained in his mind. Presently he reverted to it. He made a sort of apology for his life, against the doubts and scepticisms that, I fear, must be in the background of the thoughts of every modern man who is intellectually alive. He mentioned my *Time Machine* ...He became gesticulatory, and his straining voice a note higher in denying the pessimism of that book as a credible interpretation of destiny. With one of those sudden movements of his he knelt forward in a garden-chair — we were standing, before our parting, beneath the colonnade — and addressed me very earnestly over the back, clutching it and then thrusting out his familiar gesture, a hand first partly open and then closed.

"'Suppose, after all,' he said slowly, 'that should prove to be right, and it all ends in your butterflies and morlocks. *That doesn't matter now*. The effort's real. It's worth going on with. It's worth it. It's worth it — even so.' ...

"I can see him now and hear his unmusical voice saying, 'The effort — the effort's worth it,' and see the gesture of his clenched hand and the — how can I describe it? — the friendly peering snarl of his face, like a man with the sun in his eyes. He sticks in my mind at that, as a very symbol of the creative will in man, in its limitations, its doubtful adequacy, its valiant persistence, amidst perplexities and confusions. He kneels out, assertive against his setting — and his setting is the White House with a background of all America.

"I could almost write, with a background of all the world; for I know of no other a tithe so representative of the creative purpose, the *goodwill* in men as he. In his undisciplined hastiness, his limitations, his prejudices, his unfairness, his frequent errors, just as much as in his force, his sustained courage, his integrity, his open intelligence, he stands for his people and his kind."

I might have written that to-day. "Teddy" was an interesting brain to come up against and it gives a measure of just how much of a constructive plan for the world's affairs there was in the current

intelligence of the world twenty-eight years ago. By our modern standards it was scarcely a plan at all. It was a jumble of "progressive" organization and "little man" democracy. Afforestation, "conservation of national resources," legislation against any "combination in restraint of trade" were the chief planks of the platform and beyond that "woosh!" the emotional use of the "big stick," a declaration of the satisfying splendour of strenuous effort — which, when one comes to think it over, was, on the intellectual side, not so very strenuous after all.

That I suppose was the most vigorous brain in a conspicuously responsible position in all the world in 1906 — when I was turning forty. Radical speculative thought was ahead of this, but that was as far as any ruling figure in the world had gone.

A man I never met, who must have been a very curious mixture of large conceptions and strange ignorances, was Cecil Rhodes. Of ignorances — Sir Sidney Low told me once that he never learnt properly to pronounce the name of his protagonist "Old Krooger." I would have liked to have known more about the operations of his cerebral hemispheres, as they rolled about South Africa. Much the same ideas that were running through my brain round about 1900, of a great English-speaking English-thinking synthesis, leading mankind by sheer force of numbers, wealth, equipment and scope, to a progressive unity, must have been running through his brain also. He was certainly no narrow worshipper of the Union Jack, no abject devotee of the dear Queen Empress. The institution of the Rhodes scholarships which transcended any existing political boundaries and aimed plainly at a sort of common understanding and co-operation between all the western peoples and more particularly between all the "Nordic" peoples — he was at just about the level of ethnological understanding to believe in Nordic superiority — indicates a real greatness of intention, though warped by prejudices and uncritical assumptions.

I wish I knew much more about that brain and still more would I like to know about the brain history of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, whom also I have never met. He is to me the most incomprehensible of my contemporaries, with phases of real largeness and splendour and lapses to the quality of those mucky little sadists, Stalky and Co. I do

not understand his relation to Rhodes nor Rhodes's attitude to him. He has an immense vogue in the British middle-class and upper-class home; he is the patron saint of cadet corps masters, an in-exhaustive fount of sham manly sentiment, and one of the most potent forces in the shrivelling of the British political imagination during the past third of a century.

The only representative of that Boer War Imperialist group I ever met was Lord Milner. He seemed to me a bold-thinking man, hampered by politic reservations. In 1918 he wrote a preface for a little pamphlet I published, *The Elements of Reconstruction*. I came against him in a curious little talking and dining club, the "Coefficients," which met monthly throughout the session between 1902 and 1908 to discuss the future of this perplexing, promising and frustrating Empire of ours. These talks played an important part in my education. They brought me closer than I had ever come hitherto to many processes in contemporary English politics and they gave me juster ideas of the mental atmosphere in which such affairs are managed.

In certain respects our club represented something that seems now, I think, to have faded out from contemporary English life. It had the gestures if not the spirit of free interrogation. It had an air of asking "What are we doing with the world? What are we going to do?" Or perhaps I might put it better by saying: "What is being done to our world? And what are we going to do about it?"

The club included the queerest diversity of brains. Its foundation was, I believe, suggested by Mrs. Sidney Webb. It was inaugurated by a meeting in the flat of Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Haldane (neither as yet peers) in Whitehall Court and the first assembly included such incongruous elements as Bertrand Russell (now Earl Russell), Sidney Webb (who is now Lord Passfield), Leo Maxse, (already in 1902 denouncing the German Peril and demanding the Great War), Clinton Dawkins, who linked us to finance, Carlyon Bellairs, a Big Navy man, Pember Reeves, a New Zealand progressive settled in England, W. A. S. Hewins, L. S. Amery and H. J. Mackinder, all three on the verge of revolt under Joseph Chamberlain against Free Trade. Later on we were joined by Lord Robert Cecil, Michael Sadler, Henry Newbolt (of "Drake's Drums"), J. Birchenough, to

strengthen the financial side, Garvin who helped remove the last traces of Encyclopaedism from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Josiah Wedgwood the Single Taxer, Lord Milner, John Hugh Smith, Colonel Repington, F. S. Oliver, C. F. G. Masterman and others. We found our talks interesting and we kept up a quite high average of attendances. For some years we met in the St. Ermin's Hotel, Westminster, and later in a restaurant which has now given way to a theatre in Whitehall.

Most of these men were already committed to definite political rôles, and Russell and I were by far the most untied and irresponsible members. I had much more to learn than anyone from those conversations and less tradition and political entanglement to hamper my learning. The earlier discussions were the most general and, from my point of view, the best. Could the British Empire be made a self-sustaining system, within a Zollverein? That was at first an open question for most of us. I argued against that idea. The British Empire, I said, had to be the precursor of a world-state or nothing. I appealed to geography. It was possible for the Germans and Austrians to hold together in their Zollverein because they were placed like a clenched fist in the centre of Europe. But the British Empire was like an open hand all over the world. It had no natural economic unity and it could maintain no artificial economic unity. Its essential unity must be a unity of great ideas embodied in the English speech and literature.

I was very pleased with that metaphor of the fist and the open hand — but I did not find it a very contagious suggestion.

As I look back now across a gap of two and thirty years upon that talk among the coffee cups and the liqueur glasses, I see England at a parting of the ways. I was still clinging to the dear belief that the English-speaking community might play the part of leader and mediator towards a world commonweal It was to be a free-trading, free-speaking, liberating flux for mankind. Russell, Pember Reeves and Webb and possibly Haldane and Grey had, I think, a less clearly expressed disposition in the same direction. But the shadow of Joseph Chamberlain lay dark across our dinner-table, the Chamberlain who, upon the "illimitable veldt" of South Africa, had had either a sunstroke or a Pauline conversion to Protection and had returned to clamour influentially for what he called Tariff Reform, but what was in effect national commercial egotism. He was impatient with what he felt to be the impracticable world-liberalism of Balfour, the Cecils and the Liberals. Foreign powers, he thought, were taking an immediate advantage of our longer views. He had no long views. He began a struggle to impose the crude commonsense and hard methods of a monopolistic Birmingham hardware-manufacturer upon international relations. More and more did his shadow divide us into two parties. Year by year at the Coefficient gatherings, I saw the idea of the British commonweal being decivilized and "Imperialized." I was in at the very beginning of the English recoil from our pretensions — and with many they were more than pretensions — to exceptional national generosity, courage and world leadership.

The undeniable contraction of the British outlook in the opening decade of the new century is one that has exercised my mind very greatly, and I fear it would produce an immense bulge in this present already bulging bale of a book if I were to attempt a complete analysis. Gradually the belief in the possible world leadership of England had been deflated, by the economic development of America and the militant boldness of Germany. The long reign of Queen Victoria, so prosperous, progressive and effortless, had produced habits of political indolence and cheap assurance. As a people we had got out of training, and when the challenge of these new rivals became open, it took our breath away at once. We did not

know how to meet it. We had educated our general population reluctantly; our universities had not kept pace with the needs of the new time; our ruling class, protected in its advantages by a universal snobbery, was broad-minded, easy-going and profoundly lazy. The Edwardian monarchy, court and society were amiable and slack. "Efficiency" — the word of Earl Roseberry and the Webbs was felt to be rather priggish and vulgar. Our liberalism was no longer a larger enterprise, it had become a generous indolence. But minds were waking up to this. Over our table at St. Ermin's Hotel wrangled Maxse, Bellairs, Hewins, Amery and Mackinder, all stung by the small but humiliating tale of disasters in the South Africa war, all sensitive to the threat of business recession and all profoundly alarmed by the naval and military aggressiveness of Germany, arguing chiefly against the liberalism of Reeves and Russell and myself, and pulling us down, whether we liked it or not, from large generalities to concrete problems.

These Young Imperialists, as they were then, found it impossible to distinguish between national energy and patriotic narrowness. Narrowing the outlook is a cheap immediate way of enhancing the effect of energy without really increasing it. They were all for training and armament and defensive alliances, and they were all careless or contemptuous of that breadth and vigour of education in which the true greatness of a people lies. I tried to be more fundamental, to trace the secret springs of our inertness. I talked — it was considered a barely pardonable eccentricity — of the crippling effect of the monarchy, of the cultivated suspicion of real capacity in high quarters, and of the monopolization of educational direction by Oxford and Cambridge. I was of opinion that if Great Britain had become a Republic early in the nineteenth century and set up an adequate modern university organization centering in London and extended throughout the Empire, in the place of those privileged mediaeval foundations and the intensely domestic personal loyalties it has cherished, it would have drawn the United States back into a closer accord and faced the world with an altogether greater spirit than it was now displaying. Our mentality, I reasoned, was still in the great-estate, gentlemen's servants tradition of the eighteenth century because we had missed our revolution. These are all if's and and's,

but that was the disposition of my mind.

Presently Bertrand Russell flung out of the club. There was an argument at which unfortunately I was not present. Hewins, Amery and Mackinder declared themselves fanatical devotees of the Empire. "My Empire, right or wrong," they said. Russell said that there were a multitude of things he valued before the Empire. He would rather wreck the Empire than sacrifice freedom. So if this devotion was what the club meant —— ! And out he went — like the ego-centred Whig he is — without consulting me. Later the discussion was summarized to me. I said I was quite of his mind. The Empire was a convenience and not a God. Hewins in protest was almost lyrical. He loved the Empire. He could no more say why he loved the Empire than a man could say why he loved his wife. I ought to resign. I said I had no taste for exile; I never have had a taste for exile; and so I would not follow Russell unless they threw me out. The more this Imperialist nonsense was talked in the club, the more was it necessary that one voice at least should be present to contradict it. And so nailing my colours to the mast and myself to the dinner table, I remained — and we all continued to get on very well together.

Milner, oddly enough, I found the most satisfactory intelligence among us. He knew we had to make a new world, but he had nothing of my irresponsible constructive boldness. So that he fell into Imperialist Monarchist forms — which a partly German education may have made easier for him. But upon many minor issues we were apt to agree.

Haldane on the contrary I found intellectually unsympathetic, although his general political attitude was nearer to mine. He was a self-indulgent man, with a large white face and an urbane voice that carried his words as it were on a salver, so that they seemed good even when they were not so. The "Souls," the Balfour set, in a moment of vulgarity had nicknamed him "Tubby." He was a copious worker in a lawyer-like way and an abundant — and to my mind entirely empty — philosopher after the German pattern. He had a cluster of academic distinctions which similar philosophers had awarded him. I used to watch him at our gatherings and wonder what sustained him. I think he floated on strange compensatory clouds of his own exhalation. He rejoiced visibly in the large smooth

movements of his mind. Mostly he was very busy on his immediate activities; his case, his exposition, his reply, his lecture, and it was probably rare for him to drop down to self-scrutiny. When other men lie awake in the small hours and experience self-knowledge, remorse and the harsher aspects of life, crying out aloud and leaping up to pace their rooms, Haldane I am sure communed quite serenely with that bladder of nothingness, the Absolute, until he fell asleep again.

When Einstein came to England and was lionized after the war, he was entertained by Haldane. Einstein I know and can converse with very interestingly, in a sort of Ollendorffian French, about politics, philosophy and what not, and it is one of the lost good things in my life, that I was never able to participate in the mutual exploration of these two stupendously incongruous minds. Einstein must have been like a gentle bright kitten trying to make friends with a child's balloon, very large and unaccountably unpuncturable.

Haldane found time to produce various books on philosophy. They are still spoken of with profound respect and a careful avoidance of particulars in academic circles, but they mark no turning point in the history of the human mind. They move far away from any vulgar reality in a special universe of discourse. *The Pathway to Reality* was not actually written; it was poured out from notes as the Gifford Lectures in that mellifluous voice, taken down in shorthand and corrected for publication. It is like a very large soap bubble that for some inexplicable reason fails to be iridescent. He also produced a translation of Schopenhauer, omitting an indelicate but vitally important discussion of perversion.

His abundant methodical mind was at its best in formal organization. It is generally admitted that it was his reform of the army in 1905 which made possible the prompt dispatch of the British Expeditionary Force to France in August 1914. His intelligence was certainly better trained and more abundant than that of any of the British professional military authorities, and he might have done great service during the actual struggle. But in a moment of enthusiasm for Teutonic metaphysics he had declared that Germany was his "spiritual home" and Northcliffe, in an access of spy mania, hunted him from office at the outbreak of the war. It was a great disappointment for him, for he was acutely conscious of strategic

capacity. But measured against such brains as those of Kitchener and French, almost anyone might be forgiven an acute consciousness of strategic capacity.

I will not speculate about what might have happened if we had had Haldane as war-director instead of the fuddled dullness of Kitchener, the small-army cleverness of French, Haig's mediocrity and the stolid professionalism of the army people throughout. It would lead me far away from this wandering lane of autobiography into a wilderness of entertaining but futile hypothesis, and I have already made some heartfelt observations about the army caste in an earlier section. Moreover after a section on "If Haldane had been at the War Office in 1914," it would be impossible not to go on to what might have happened if we had had Winston Churchill for our war lord — brilliant, I feel sure he would have been, if unsound — and so on to even stranger possibilities. My concern here is simply with Lord Haldane as a man with a voice in human destiny. How was this undeniably big brain concerned with change and the incessant general problem of mankind? I have told how Theodore Roosevelt was touched by that problem. Was Lord Haldane really touched by it at all?

I do not think that between contemporary practicality and the Absolute there was any intermediate level at which the mind of Haldane halted to ask himself what he was doing with the world. His mind was unquickened by any serious knowledge of biology or cosmology, his idea of science was of a useful technical cleverness and not of a clearer vision, and I think it improbable that he brought the conception of unlimited fundamental change into his picture of the universe at all. A legal training directs the mind to equity and settlement rather than progress. And the Absolute is very constipating to the mind. I imagine he just thought that "history goes on — much as ever" and left it at that.

Another of our Coefficients who certainly found a belief in the steady continuity of conventional history a full and sufficient frame for his political thoughts was Sir Edward Grey (who became Viscount Grey of Fallodon). Here again was a brain that I found almost incredibly fixed and unaware of the violent mutability of things. His air of grave and responsible leadership was an immense

delusion, for who can lead unless he be in motion? Never had a human being less stimulus for getting on to anywhere or anything. He was a man born to wealth and prominence; he inherited his baronetcy and estates at the age of twenty and he entered parliament with the approval of everyone, the nicest of nice young men, at the age of twenty-three. He was tall and of a fine immobile handsomeness; he played tennis very well and he was one of the most distinguished of British fly-fishers. At the age of thirty-seven in the full tide of his gifts, he wrote an excellent book on the latter art. He was never very deeply interested in internal politics for naturally enough he could see very little to complain of in the condition of the country, but as a matter of public and party duty he was made under-secretary for foreign affairs when he was thirty, and an opinion grew about him and within him that he understood them. He understood them about as much as Lord Tyrrell, upon whose outlook I have already animadverted in my account of my Crewe House experiences.

I have already said that Tyrrell's mind was governess-made. I would almost extend that to the whole Foreign Office personnel. People of this class are caught young before any power of defensive criticism has developed in them and told stories of a series of mythical beings, France, Germany, England, Spain, with such assurance that they become more real than daddy and mummy. They are led to believe that "Spain" is cruel, "Holland" little and brave, "Germany" industrious and protestant and "Ireland" tragic, priest-led and unforgetting. They think that there are wicked countries and good countries. Once a modernized education has cleared up the human mind in this matter, such widespread delusions will be inconceivable. Readers in those days to come will not believe what I am writing here. But the minds of these people are set in that shape, as the bandaged skulls of the Mangbetu of the Belgian Congo are set in the shape of a sugar loaf, and few so formed ever come round to a sane scepticism about these foolish simplifications. In my *Outline of History* I have done my best to show plainly how the belief in these plausible inventions, as unreal as Baal or Juggernaut, has warped all human life and slaughtered countless millions in the past two centuries. Slowly a clearer vision of the human complex is spreading,

but Grey in his grave solemn way talked, just as Tyrrell chattered, of "What France feels in the matter" or "If Germany does so and so, the time will come for us to act."

He would not even disperse these personifications to the extent of saying "They."

I thought Grey a mentally slow, well-mannered, not unpleasantly dignified person until after August 1914. Then I realized what a danger such blinkered firmness of mind as his could be to mankind.

I think he wanted the war and I think he wanted it to come when it did. Sooner or later, on the international chequerboard which he saw in place of reality, Germany would attack. It was better she should attack while her navy was still quantitatively inferior to ours and while the web of precautionary alliances we had woven against her held firm. He would never have taken part in an attack on Germany, a preventive war as they call it in France nowadays, because that was not in accordance with the rules of the game, not at all the sort of thing a gentlemanly country does, but if Germany saw fit to attack first, then, well and good, the Lord had delivered her into our hands.

It is charged against him that he did not definitely warn Germany that we should certainly come into the war, that he was sufficiently ambiguous to let her take a risk and attack, and that he did this deliberately. I think that charge is sound.

His faith in the reality of national personifications outlived the war. When I was working for the creation of a League of Nations Union, it was with a sort of despair that I found that everyone in the movement was insisting on the necessity of having Grey for our figurehead. For him a League of Nations was necessarily a League of Foreign Offices. His intelligence was as incapable of thinking multitudinously of the human beings under the shadow of "France" or "Russia" as a Zoo bear is of thinking of the atoms in a bun.

Another of these governess-moulded minds I encountered was Lord Curzon who was at the Foreign Office in 1920, when I returned from a visit to Soviet Russia. I went to him to suggest a working understanding with the new régime. I tried to explain first that it was now the only possible régime in Russia and that if it was overthrown Russia would come as near to Chaos as a human population can; secondly that it was a weak régime in sore need of manufactured

material, scientific apparatus and technical help of every sort and thirdly, that however strong our objection to Marxist theory might be and however intransigeant their Marxism, a certain generosity and understanding now, a certain manifest readiness to help must inevitably force reciprocal concessions. The new Soviet Russia was the best moral and political investment that had ever been offered to Britain. And our Foreign Office turned it down — like a virtuous spinster of a certain age refusing a proposal to elope and bear ten children. Most of this is said quite plainly in my *Russia in the Shadows*.

Lord Curzon listened to me as a man listens to a language he does not understand, but which he is unwilling to admit is strange to him. For him Russia was something as unified and personally responsible as Aunt Sally or the defendant in the dock. When it came to his turn to speak, he began, incorrigibly and with a slight emphasis on his master words, in this fashion; "But so long as *Russia* continues to sustain a *propaganda* against us in *Persia*, I do not see how we can possibly do anything of the sort you suggest...."

I declare that the greatest present dangers to the human race are these governess-trained brains which apparently monopolize the Foreign Offices of the World, which cannot see human affairs in any other light than as a play between the vast childish abstractions we call nations. There are people who say the causes of war, nowadays at least, are economic. They are nothing so rational. They are hallucinatory. Men like Grey, Curzon and Tyrrell present a fine big appearance to the world, but the bare truth is that they are, by education and by force of uncritical acceptance, infantile defectives, who ought to be either referred back to a study of the elements of human ecology or certified and secluded as damaged minds incapable of managing public affairs.

Another outstanding man, of that period before the Great War, with whom I had some mental exchanges was Mr. Balfour— "Mr. Arthur." I used to meet him at Stanway and Taplow Court and in various London houses. He at any rate was high above the governess-made level. There was always an odour of intelligence about him that made his average Conservative associates uncomfortable. He had a curious active mind, he had been attracted

by my earlier books and, through him and through Cust, I came to know something of the group of people who centred round him and Lady Mary Elcho, the "Souls." That too was a vague Open Conspiracy, an attempt to get away from the self-complacent dullness and furtive small town viciousness of *fin-de-siècle* England, and to see life freshly. He had grown up in an atmosphere of scientific thought; Francis Balfour, his younger brother, was a brilliant biologist and his *Text Book of Embryology* had been my first introduction to the Balfour family. Arthur Balfour had none of the forceful energy of Theodore Roosevelt; he was a long-limbed, simple-living but self-indulgent, bachelor man. He was a greater British private gentleman even than Sir Edward Grey. He was so comfortably wealthy, so well connected and so secure that a certain aloofness from the dusty sweaty conflict of life, was in his habit of living.

It is hard to say where, in aloofness, is set the boundary between divinity and cowardice. He could show such courage as he did when as Irish Secretary he was continually under a threat of assassination, because he could not believe that anything of that sort could really happen to him; but when his essential liberalism came face to face with this new baseness of commercialized imperialism, with all its push and energy, he made a very poor fight for it. He allowed himself to be hustled into the background of affairs by men with narrower views and nearer objectives.

He argued sceptically on behalf of religion. His way of defending the Godhead was by asking, What can your science know for certain? and escaping back to orthodoxy under a dust-cloud of philosophical doubts. He anticipated my own remark that the human mind is as much a product of the struggle for survival as the snout of a pig and perhaps as little equipped for the unearthing of fundamental truth. But while that enabled him to accord a graceful support to the Church of England — which might be just as right or wrong about ultimates as anything else — I used my release from rigid conviction for a systematic common-sense interpretation of my world.

In the smooth-water years before 1914 and the subsequent cataracts, I had a great admiration for Balfour. In that queer confused novel, *The New Machiavelli*, one of my worst and one of my most

revealing, I have a sort of caricature-portrait of him as Evesham in which I magnify him unduly. (There is also, by the bye, in the same book a remote sketch of the Coefficients as the "Pentagram Club.") I put various discourses into Evesham's mouth, of which the matter is clearly my own. Here is a vignette, which shows also my own phase of development about 1912.

"Have I not seen him in the House, persistent, persuasive, indefatigable, and by all my standards wickedly perverse, leaning over the table with those insistent movements of his hand upon it, or swaying forward with a grip upon his coat lapel, fighting with a diabolical skill to preserve what are in effect religious tests, tests he must have known would outrage and humiliate and injure the consciences of a quarter — and that perhaps the best quarter — of the young teachers who come to the work of elementary education?

"In playing for points in the game of party advantage Evesham displayed at times a quite wicked unscrupulousness in the use of his subtle mind. I would sit on the Liberal benches and watch him, and listen to his urbane voice, fascinated by him. Did he really care? Did anything matter to him? And if it really mattered nothing, why did he trouble to serve the narrowness and passion of his side? Or did he see far beyond my scope, so that this petty iniquity was justified by greater, remoter ends of which I had no intimation?

"They accused him of nepotism. His friends and family were certainly well cared for. In private life he was full of an affectionate intimacy; he pleased by being charmed and pleased. One might think at times there was no more of him than a clever man happily circumstanced, and finding an interest and occupation in politics. And then came a glimpse of thought, of imagination, like the sight of a soaring eagle through a staircase skylight. Oh, beyond question he was great! No other contemporary politician had his quality.... Except that he had it seemed no hot passions, but only interests and fine affections and indolences, he paralleled the conflict of my life. He saw and thought widely and deeply; but at times it seemed to me his greatness stood over and behind the reality of his life, like some splendid servant, thinking his own thoughts, who waits behind a lesser master's chair."

There is something very youthful in that passage. I have hardened

and grown wiser since then. It is easier to be taken that way when one is thirty- eight than in the cooler longer perspective of sixty-eight. Later on I realized that Balfour was letting one thing after another be wrested from his hands by lesser men. He allowed *The Times* when it was sold, go to the highest bidder; it fell to Northcliffe and it might have fallen into far worse hands; Balfour would have done nothing disturbing to himself to prevent it. None of our richer aristocrats seem to have risked any money at that time to keep this public organ in public-spirited hands. Yet the control of that paper was quite essential to their predominance. They trusted to the snobbishness of some *nouveau riche*. So they got Northcliffe who was anything but a snob — and in due course a new mercantile conservatism arose which adopted B.M.G. (Balfour Must Go) as its animating slogan. He could not control these new people but he hampered them and so they turned upon him.

Balfour might perhaps have been a very great man indeed if his passions had been hotter and his affections more vivid. The lassitudes of these fine types, their fastidiousness in the presence of strong appeals, leave them at last a prey to the weak gratifications of vanity and a gentle impulse to pose. He posed. He was aware of himself and he posed — as Mr. Humbert Wolfe has recently told in the *English Review* (June 1934). As the war went on his poses became more and more self-protective.

Amidst the clamour and riot of the war he faded away from power to eminence. I had one queer glimpse of some struggle going on in him and about him. We were at the house of Lady Wemyss in Cadogan Square, talking about the early reactions of the various classes to the war. He had an impulse to tell me something. "The worst behaviour," he began, "has been on the part of our business men." Emphasis. "The *very* worst."

He thought better of it and I was not clever enough or resolute enough to make him say more.

After the war, power left him altogether. He was merely a very eminent person, at last indeed almost the most eminent person in Britain. His last flare of charm and activity was at the Washington Conference of 1924. He helped make it the most amiable conference imaginable and the fund of sympathy between Washington and

Westminster was greatly enhanced. There I saw and talked with him but nothing he said has remained in my memory. No doubt he and Grey were very fine gentlemen, but they were expensive to produce and they did not give back to human society anything like an adequate return in mental toil and directive resolution, for its expenditure upon them, for their great parks and houses and the deference that was shown them.

One day — in 1920 or 1921 I think, I went with Jane to the Institute of International Affairs and saw Balfour speaking on the platform. The light fell on his skull and I had a queer impression that quite recently I had seen an almost exactly similar cranium, similarly lit. My mind flashed back to Moscow. I whispered to Jane: "He's got a brain box that is the very pair to Lenin's.... It's incredible."

Perhaps it was only a matter of lighting and I will not embark upon any systematic search for correlated resemblances. Lenin by all his circumstances was as insecure, active and aggressive as Balfour was assured and indolent, but both had curious brains with a live edge of scepticism that put them on a far higher level than the blinkered stupidity of Grey and Curzon or the elaborate unreality of Haldane. Neither I think were orthodox minded and Lenin believed in the dogmas of Marx about as much as Balfour believed in the Holy Trinity and both were capable of the most destructive conformity. But while Lenin was using Marxism to make things happen because he was under the urgency of change, Balfour was using Christianity and Christian organization, to resist changes that, whatever else they did, were bound to disturb the spacious pleasantness of his life. I went to Russia as I have recounted in *Russia in the Shadows*, and I had a long talk with Lenin and a number of talks about him.

Now here was a fresh kind of brain for me to encounter and it was in such a key-position as no one had dreamt of as possible for anyone before the war. He appeared to be the complete master of all that was left of the resources of Russia. He was not by any means the master he seemed to be; he had a difficult team of supporters to handle and such an instrument as the Ogpu, which could twist round in his grip and wound him — as it did when it executed the Grand Dukes after his reprieve. And above all he was tied very closely to the sacred text

of Marx. A real or assumed reverence for that was what held his following together, and his modification of the sacred Word to meet the great emergencies before him had to be subtle and propitiatory to an extreme degree. He had all these checks and entanglements to hinder him. But the authoritative effect of him was very great indeed.

He had a personal prestige based on his sound advice and lucid vision during the revolutionary crisis. He became then the man to whom everyone ran in fear or doubt. He had the strength of simplicity of purpose combined with subtlety of thought. By imperceptible changes, to an extent that only began to be measured and recognized after his death, he changed Marxism into Leninism. He changed the teachings of a fatalistic doctrinaire into a flexible creative leadership. So long as it was the substance of Lenin, he did not care in the least if it bore the label of Marx. But this year I have seen that his portrait and image in Russia everywhere are quietly elbowing his bearded precursor out of the way. His was by far the more vigorous and finer brain.

Like everybody else he belonged to his own time and his own phase. We met and talked each with his own preconceptions. We talked chiefly of the necessity of substituting large scale cultivation for peasant cultivation — that was eight years before the first Five Year Plan — and of the electrification of Russia, which was then still only a dream in his mind. I was sceptical about that because I was ignorant of the available water power of Russia. “Come back and see us in ten years’ time,” he said to my doubts.

When I talked to Lenin I was much more interested in our subject than in ourselves. I forgot whether we were big or little or old or young. At that time I was chiefly impressed by the fact that he was physically a little man, and by his intense animation and simplicity of purpose. But now as I look over my fourteen year old book and revive my memories and size him up against the other personalities I have known, in key positions I begin to realize what an outstanding and important figure he is in history. I grudge subscribing to the “great man” conception of human affairs, but if we are going to talk at all of greatness among our species, then I must admit that Lenin at least was a very great man.

If in 1912 I could call Balfour “beyond question great,” it seems

almost my duty here to put that flash of enthusiasm in its proper proportion to what I think of the Russian. So let me say with all deliberation that when I weigh the two against each other it is not even a question of swaying scale-pans; Balfour flies up and kicks the beam. The untidy little man in the Kremlin out-thought him — outdid him. Lenin was alive to the last, whereas Balfour ended in an attitude. Lenin was already ailing when I saw him, he had to take frequent holidays, early in 1922 the doctors stopped his daily work altogether and he became partly paralysed that summer and died early in 1924. His days of full influence therefore, extended over less than five crowded years. Nevertheless in that time, he imposed upon the Russian affair, a steadfastness of constructive effort against all difficulties, that has endured to this day. But for him and his invention of the organized Communist party, the Russian revolution would certainly have staggered into a barbaric military autocracy and ultimate social collapse. But his Communist party provided, crudely no doubt but sufficiently for the survival of the experiment, that disciplined personnel for an improvised but loyal Civil Service without which a revolution in a modern state is doomed to complete futility. His mind never became rigid and he turned from revolutionary activities to social reconstruction with an astonishing agility. In 1920, when I saw him, he was learning with the vigour of a youth about the possible "electrification of Russia." The conception of the Five Year Plan — but as he saw it, a series of successive provincial Plans — a Russian grid system, the achievements of Dnepropetrovsk, were all taking shape in his brain. He went on working, as a ferment, long after his working days had ended. He is still working perhaps as powerfully as ever.

During my last visit to Moscow, in July 1934, I visited his Mausoleum and saw the little man again. He seemed smaller than ever; his face very waxy and pale and his restless hands still. His beard was redder than I remembered it. His expression was very dignified and simple and a little pathetic, there was childishness and courage there, the supreme human qualities, and he sleeps — too soon for Russia. The decoration about him was plain and noble. The atmosphere of the place was saturated with religious feeling and I can well believe that women pray there. Outside down the Square

there still stands the inscription: "Religion" — which in Russia it must be remembered always means Orthodox Christianity— "is the opium of the people." Deprived of that opium Russia is resorting to new forms of dope. In Moscow I was shown one evening Dziga Vertov's new film: *Three Songs for Lenin*. This is a very fine and moving apotheosis of Lenin. It is Passion Music for Lenin and he has become a Messiah. One must see and hear it to realize how the queer Russian mind has emotionalized Socialism and subordinated it to the personal worship of its prophets, and how necessary it is that the west wind should blow through the land afresh.

* * * * *

In the spring of 1934 I took it into my head to see and compare President Franklin Roosevelt and Mr. Stalin. I wanted to form an opinion of just how much these two brains were working in the direction of this socialist world-state that I believe to be the only hopeful destiny for mankind.

In what has gone before I have done my best to set out before the persevering reader as precisely and plainly as possible the foundations and nature of this picture of the world problem that has been painted bit by bit on my own brain tissues since I played in the back-yard of Atlas House, and I have tried to show the successive phases through which my belief has grown definite, until at last it has become altogether clear to me (as to many others) that the organization of this that I call the Open Conspiracy, the evocation of a greater sounder fellow to the first Communist essay, an adequately implemented Liberal Socialism, which will ultimately supply teaching, coercive and directive public services to the whole world, is the immediate task before all rational people. I believe this idea of the planned world-state is one to which all our thought and knowledge is tending. It is an idea that is quietly pervading human mentality because facts and events conspire in its favour. It is appearing partially and experimentally at a thousand points. It does not dismay me in the least that no specific political organization to realize this idea, has yet appeared. By its very nature the formal conflicts of politics will be almost the last thing in the world to be

affected by it. When accident finally precipitates it, its coming is likely to happen very quickly. We shall find ourselves almost abruptly engaged in a new system of political issues in, which the socialist world-state will be plainly and consciously lined up against the scattered vestigial sovereignties of the past.

I am quite unable to form an opinion how long it will be before this happens and the socialist world-state enters the field of political actuality. Sometimes I feel that it may be imminent. Sometimes I feel that generations of propaganda and education may have to precede it. The war danger and economic stress are both forcing men's minds towards it as the one way out for them. These grim instructors may do much to make up for the negligence and backwardness of the schoolmaster. Plans for political synthesis and economic readjustment seem to grow bolder and more extensive. It was natural therefore, if a little impulsive and premature, that I should go to America and Russia with the question, Is this it already? What is the relation of the New Plan in America to the New Plan in Russia and how are both related to the ultimate World-State?

Some readers will object that this is political discussion and not autobiography. It is political discussion but also it is autobiography. The more completely life is lived the more political a man becomes. My democratic reading of the rights of man is not so much a matter of voting — usually for candidates put up for me by other people — as asking questions, getting answers and passing judgments on my own behalf. I ask my questions. These two visits are essential events in my life and telling about them is as intimate and personal a rounding off of my story as I can imagine. Modern life is expansion and then effacement. We do not round off, we open out. We do not end with valedictions; we open doors and then stand aside.

Just before I sailed for America I went to a queer exhibition of futility in the Albert Hall. It was a gathering of Mosley's blackshirts and it would be hard to imagine anything sillier — from the slow pompous entry of this queer crazy creature, dressed up like a fencing instructor with a waist fondly exaggerated by a cummerbund and chest and buttocks thrust out, stalking gravely and alone down the central gangway, to the last concerted outburst confined entirely, I remarked, to his disciplined following, of boyish shouting and hand-

lifting: “We *want* Mosley.”

I have met Mosley intermittently for years, as a promising young conservative, a promising young liberal, a promising new convert to the Labour party, with Communist leanings, and finally as the thing he is. He has always seemed to me dull and heavy, imitative in his politics and platitudinous in his speeches, and so I was not greatly interested in what he had to say to this meeting. As his banalities boomed about the hall, without a single flicker of wit or wisdom, their dullness vastly exaggerated by loud speakers, we noted how the habit of mouthing his words was growing upon him — he has for some obscure reason invented a sort of dialect of his own — and then we discussed particulars of his Sandhurst days and his war-record which were new to me. What chiefly held my attention were his supporters and the audience generally. The audience was miscellaneous, curious and little moved, and it did not fully fill the hall. Quite a quantity of pleasant boys and nice young men, and quite a number of others who were not so nice, dressed up in black shirts and grey trousers, were acting as ushers, selling idiotic songs about their glorious Leader, supplying the applause, pervading the meeting, and generally keeping the affair from becoming a complete slump. They seemed drawn chiefly from the middle and upper class. There was something shy about many of them, something either desperately grave and assertive, or faintly apologetic. They were not throwing themselves into their parts as the hairy young Italians they were aping would have done. There was no romantic conviction about them. The thing that really intrigued me was why they did this. What sort of feeble imaginations, I asked, could be flicking about in their nice young cerebral cortices to bring them to this pass?

That question went with me across the Atlantic. Is there really anything we can call education in England at the present time? Or is what passes for education only a sort of systematic softening of the brain? What history had been put before these young men, what vision of life had been given them, that they should start out upon their political life “wanting” — of all conceivable desiderata! — Mosley?

Only after a huge cultural struggle can we hope to see the world-state coming into being. The Open Conspiracy has to achieve itself in

many ways, but the main battle before it is an educational battle, a battle to make the knowledge that already exists accessible and assimilable and effective. The world has moved from the horse-cart and the windmill to the aeroplane and dynamo but education has made no equivalent advance. The new brains that are pouring into the world are being caught by incompetent and unenlightened teachers, they are being waylaid by the marshalled misconceptions of the past, and imprisoned in rigid narrow historical and political falsifications. We cannot do with such a world population. We cannot build a new civilization out of two thousand million pot-bound minds. It is all poor, damaged material we have to deal with. Such cramped and crippled stuff might serve well enough for the comparatively unshattered social and political routines of the nineteenth century but it will not serve to-day. It is as dangerous, as catastrophically inert, as loose sand piled high, and always rising higher, over the excavation for a highway.

I prowled round the promenade deck at night thinking how little we were doing for education and how little I had done. I wished I had some virus with which one might bite people and make them mad for education. I was going from one dismally miseducated country to another, and when all was said and done these two were the most enlightened countries as yet in all the world. And I was hoping against my better knowledge to find the seeds of a new way of life already germinating and sending out green shoots.

It is not spring of the world's great year yet.

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn.

That was written a hundred years ago and it is still prophetic.

Coming into New York harbour there was fog, a quite appropriate and disturbing fog, with fog-horns about us so like political leaders that you could not in the least ascertain their direction, and the *Washington* in which I was a passenger was as nearly as possible run down by the *Balin* in the Ambrose Channel. The German liner

jumped out of the fog abruptly, and passed within ten yards of us on the wrong side. I heard a babble of voices close at hand and looked out of my port-hole into the astonished faces of a group of passengers on the *Balin's* deck within spitting distance of me. She swept by and vanished in the fog and I went up on deck to hear what other people thought of the occurrence. Opinions differed as to how near we had been to a smash; the estimates varied from six feet to twenty yards. The two boats had sucked in towards each other as they passed. Some of us tried to imagine just what a touch would have meant. Nobody was very much upset about it; it seemed to be just a part of the general large dangerousness of human affairs at the present time.

When I arrived in New York I began to hear opinions of the "New Deal" from every point of view. I wanted to sample the atmosphere in which the President was working before I went to see him. Various good friends had gathered talk parties of the most diverse composition, and I had written to one or two men I knew would give me first-hand information. Everyone talked freely and it is not for me to document what was said by this individual or that. I found myself sitting next to an unassuming young man whose name I had not quite caught and he began to unfold a view of the world to me which seemed to contain all I had ever learnt and thought, but better arranged and closer to reality. This I discovered was A. A. Berle of the so-called Brains Trust. "And how many more of *you* are there?" I wanted to ask him — and didn't.

And then, by way of contrast, I heard across the table the distinguished head of a big corporation, a fine grey-headed, rotund-voiced gentleman, denouncing every new thing in America from the President down to the last man in the queue of unemployed, and demanding to be put back forthwith to the happy days of 1924. Or was it 1926? He had observed nothing material since then. "And how many," thought I, "are there of *you*?" His faith in economic anarchism and the eternal succession of trade-cycles was unshaken. Since the present depression was particularly intense and prolonged he argued, the recovery would be all the brighter. He was like a strong infusion of Herbert Spencer and Harriet Martineau in the tradition of that valiant optimist, Ambassador Choate — whom I

described as Mr. Z, "Pippa's rich uncle" in *The Future in America*.

Between these extremes of understanding and resistance to reality, was an extraordinary variety of types. I had a brush with a delightful couple of New York "Reds," pure Communists, as pure and intolerant as their Puritan forebears. They were of quite wealthy origin, and they recited their belief in Karl Marx, his philosophy, his psychology, his final divine wisdom, as though Lenin had lived in vain, and they were in just as complete and effective an opposition to the New Deal as my grey-haired corporation president. Roosevelt they said was just "bolstering up capitalism." He was trying to sneak past a social catastrophe and cut out their dear dictatorship of the proletariat altogether — contrariwise to Holy Writ. The better he did the worse it would be, for there could be no real blessing on it, said these real bright Reds.

In the New Willard, in Washington, I found myself in contact with those fine flowers of American insurrectionism, my old friends Clarence Darrow and Charles Russell. They had been summoned to the capital to report on the working of various codes and they were reporting as unhelpfully and destructively as they knew how. They were "agin the government" all the time and the wildfire of freedom shone in Darrow's eyes.

I have a great affection and sympathy for Clarence Darrow. It is deep in my nature also to be restive under government and hostile to dogma. But he is, by ten years or more, of an older generation, and the American radicalism in which he grew up was very different from the early formative influences I have described in my own case. I believe in the free common intelligence, in freely criticized commonsense, but Darrow believes superstitiously in the individual unorganized free common man. That is to say he is a sentimental anarchist. He is for an imaginary "little man" — against monopoly, against rule, against law — any law.

It is remarkable how widespread among American brains is this fantasy of the sturdy little independent "healthy" competitive man, essentially righteous: the Western farmer, the small shop-keeper, the struggling, saving, hard-working entrepreneur. To this first onset of publicly directed large-scale economic organization in Washington, that New York corporation president I have described and Clarence

Darrow, the extreme radical, responded in almost identical terms. "Leave us alone," they said — with passion. The same ideal, of perpetuating a fundamental individualism of small folk, was manifest in the anti-trust legislation of Theodore Roosevelt. It is a dream. The problem of personal freedom is not to be solved by economic fragmentation; that Western farmer lost his independence long since and became the grower of a single special crop, the small shop-keeper either a chain-store minder or a dealer in branded goods, and the small entrepreneur a gambler with his savings, and a certain bankrupt in the end; nevertheless the dream survives. To borrow a phrase from Russia: it is a kulak ideal. I found it still living even among the directors of the A.A.A. in Washington.

In their report upon the codes, Darrow and Russell went so far as to impute motive. That heroic small man of their imaginations was, they said, being deliberately sacrificed to big business — *sold* to big business. But it is not the New Deal and the N.R.A. which are sacrificing the small man to large-scale operations. The stars in their courses are doing that. Nevertheless in this fashion these two anarchistic Old Radicals were able to line up with our wealthy young Communists, who thought Roosevelt was "bolstering up capitalism" and that angry public utility exploiter who declared the New Deal was smashing it. There are manifestly common subconscious elements underlying this amazing unanimity.

What struck me most about the New York atmosphere, and the impression was intensified in Washington, was the mixture of praise and detraction with which the President was mentioned. It had become almost a ritual. There would be a prelude upon his courage, his integrity, his personal charm and then "but — —". The varied contexts to that "but," taken altogether, made me realize that Franklin Roosevelt is one of the greatest shocks that has ever happened to the prevalent mental assumptions of the United States. A man's formulated and expressed opinions may be one thing, we have to remember, and his tacit or subconscious assumptions quite another. Premonitions of a new social and economic order which have hitherto seemed the harmless talk of an ineffectual intelligentsia have been broadcast abruptly over vast surfaces of conventional business and political expression. The time-honoured crust of

pompous insincerity characteristic of the old order has been broken and has revealed the underlying capacity of the American mind for stark reality. With an air of just giving the old deck of cards a new deal for the century-old game of political poker, the President seems to have taken up a new deck altogether, with strange new suits and altered values, and to be playing quietly and resolutely a different game. What game is he playing? Does he know himself? Does he realize he is a revolution? Imaginative answers to these perplexing questions, often highly imaginative and experimental answers, furnished the material for all those "buts."

Were they trying to pull him down or trying to make him out? I listened undecided. Principally, I think, they were puzzled about him and, being puzzled, they were alarmed. They did not want to have him — with all due acknowledgments — and they did not know what else they could have. The world of American wealth and enterprise has been so sure of its freedoms, so convinced of its boundless areas and possibilities and so uncritically assured of its own essential goodness and necessity, that it has received the onset of even a certain scrutiny of its operations with a kind of exaggerated claustrophobia. It is disposed to fight and embarrass any form of regulation. It had got itself into the most hideous economic and industrial mess; only a year ago it was scared white and helpless with the terror of immediate catastrophe, but already it is recovering its ancient confidence and declaring, now that the immediate danger is past, that there was never any danger at all. It means to be carping and obstructive — and to the best of its power and ability it will be. In 1906 in my *Future in America* I emerged with the obvious reflection that Americans rich and radical alike had no "sense of the state." Now they are getting a sense of the state put over them rather rapidly, and they are taking it very ungraciously.

This disposition to detract from the President's effort to reconstruct the American front and to hamper him in every possible way, is unaccompanied by any real alternative policy. It is an irresponsible instinctive opposition, a mulish pulling back. There is no going back now for America. If Roosevelt and his New Deal fail altogether, there will be further financial and business collapse, grave sectional social disorder, political gangsterism and an extensive

decivilization of wide regions. And these still wealthy and influential people who are carping and making trouble will be the first to suffer.

The absence of any sense of the state in America, the irresponsible habit of mind fostered by beginning the teaching of history with a rebellion and carrying it on to a glorification of individual push and the mystical democracy of the "Peepul" is the essential difficulty ahead of this eleventh-hour attempt to salvage the immense material accumulations of the past century before they topple over, and to set up an ordered and disciplined direction for the new powers of mankind before it is too late. Order and collective direction means an efficient and devoted Civil Service. The doubt whether America will succeed in making the great adjustments it is facing in time to escape catastrophe, turns largely upon the manifest inadequacy of its present Civil Service to the immense tasks that will necessarily be thrust upon it. Can this Civil Service be supplemented rapidly and effectively? The most momentous question before the United States community is the possibility of improvising ministers, officials and functionaries sufficiently honest and public-spirited, sufficiently clear-headed, courageous and competent to carry through the inevitable reconstruction.

Now outside the limits of the undermanned and underpaid Federal Civil Service there has long been considerable speculative activity in intellectual circles, among the university professoriate, among writers, scientific and technical workers and mentally active men of leisure, about the constructive defects that were becoming more and more patent in the American community. An intelligentsia has developed — much more considerable altogether than the corresponding strata on the British side. It thinks as a whole more *roughly* than its British equivalents, but more boldly and less deferentially. American business has hitherto ticked these people off as "long-haired Radicals" or "parlour socialists" or "cranks" and turned its back on their extending influence. Then, when the crisis was at its blackest, it discovered that these "cranks" might perhaps prove to be "experts." With very mixed feelings it realized that the new President, instead of entrusting himself to the grave and dignified advice of tried "Experience" to heal — or at any rate to go through the motions of healing — at eight per cent let us say, until

the ultimate smash — the disaster its routines had made inevitable, was calling these new brains into consultation. Some journalist, not quite sure whether the suggestion of intellectual activity was a curse or a blessing invented the phrase the "Brains Trust," and the report of it went about the world.

It was inevitable after all my broodings upon a possible world-wide Open Conspiracy of clear-headed people, that this report should stir my interest profoundly. I wanted to know just what integrating forces this talk about the Brains Trust might imply, and how they could be brought into relationship with the steady growth of creative revolutionary thought upon the European side.

I have seen enough of this Brains movement to realize that it is no sort of conspiracy; that it is not a body of men formally associated by a concerted statement of ideas. It represents nothing so much in agreement as the radicals who made the republic in Madrid, nothing nearly so close-knit as the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik party. It has indeed scarcely anything to hold it in any sort of unity except that in this miscellany of widely scattered men there is a common determination to bring scientific analysis to bear upon financial and industrial processes, and to make a practical application of the results in the common interest. Its members are miscellaneous both in tradition and in character. It is the President who has drawn them together and it is necessarily from their ranks and associates, rather than from the rascal heelers of the party politicians, grafters by profession, that the supplementing and extension of the Civil Service must be drawn if there is to be any hope for the salvaging of America.

Raymond Moley has interested himself in the history of this Brains Trust movement, and he spread it out very intelligibly to me in a long talk we had in the Hangar Club in New York. He distinguished three main groups of mental influences, the monetary realists, such as Professor Irving Fisher and Professor Rogers, who constitute the rudiments of a scientific monetary control, the economic organizers such as Johnson, Tugwell and Berle, who stand chiefly for an extension of employment and exploitation by the State, and the lawyers — of whom only Felix Frankfurter is known to me personally — who are concerned with the development of legal

restraints upon socially destructive speculative enterprise, and upon the use of large scale organization for private aggrandizement. Many of these people have never met each other. The link between them all was first the Executive Mansion at Albany, when Franklin Roosevelt was Governor of New York State and is now the White House. It is the President's notes of interrogation that have drawn them all together into a loose constructive co-operation.

That is the outstanding difference — so far as form goes — between the constructive effort in Washington and Moscow. The one is a receptive and co-ordinating brain-centre; the other is a concentrated and personal direction. The end sought, a progressively more organized big-scale community, is precisely the same.

I have been four times to the White House, and twice to the Kremlin, to see the man in occupation. But I have never been, and I am never likely to go, inside the gates of Buckingham Palace. Very early impressions may have something to do with that; I have told of my resistance to my mother's obsession about the dear Queen and my jealousy of the royal offspring; but the main reason for my obstinately republican life, as I see it in my own mind, is my conviction that here in England something has been held on to too long, and that nothing is doing here. A constitutional monarchy substitutes a figure-head for a head and distributes leadership elusively throughout the community. This gives the British system the resisting power of an acephalous invertebrate, and renders it equally incapable of concentrated forward action. In war-time the Crown resumes, or attempts to resume, a centralized authority — with such results as I have already glanced at in my account of my war experiences. Quite in accord with the tenacity of an acephalous invertebrate, the empire can be cut to pieces legally, have its South Ireland amputated, see half its shipping laid up and its heavy industries ruined, reconcile itself to the chronic unemployment and demoralization of half its young people, and still, on the strength of a faked budget and a burst of sunny summer weather, believe itself to be essentially successful and invulnerable. So it came about that, almost without thinking it over, as the various League of Nations documents I have quoted bear witness, I had become accustomed to looking westward for the definitive leadership of the English

speaking community — and anywhere but in London for the leadership of mankind.

I have told already of my visit to Theodore Roosevelt. It was like visiting any large comfortable, leisurely, free-talking country house. Seeing President Harding had been like attending a politicians' reception in an official building, all loud geniality and hand-shaking and the protean White House, had taken on the decoration and furniture of a popular club. My call upon President Hoover was a sort of intrusion upon a sickly overworked and overwhelmed man, a month behind in all his engagements and hopeless of ever overtaking them, and the White House, in sympathy, had made itself into a queer ramshackle place like a nest of waiting-rooms with hat-stands everywhere, and unexpected doors, never perceptible before or since, through which hurrying distraught officials appeared and vanished. President Hoover did not talk with me at all; he delivered a discourse upon the possible economic self-sufficiency of America that was, I imagine, intended for M. Laval from Paris, who had left Washington a week or so before. I did not find it interesting. After the Harding days there had been a foolish development of etiquette in Washington and instead of going to the President as man to man, the foreign visitor during the Coolidge and Hoover régimes was led — after due enquiries — down to the White House by his ambassador. Henceforth America and the English, it had been decided, were to talk only through a diplomatic pipette. Sir Ronald Lindsay took me down, apologetically, and sat beside me during the encounter, rather like a gentleman who takes a strange dog out to a tea-party, and is not quite sure how it will behave. But I respected the trappings of government and nothing diplomatically serious occurred. I just listened and contained myself. Diplomatic usage, will I suppose, prevent Sir Ronald from ever producing his memories of Men I have Chaperoned to the White House.

All this had been swept away again in 1934, I had had some slight correspondence with the President already, I went to him on my own credentials, and found that this magic White House had changed back again to a large leisurely comfortable private home. All the Hoover untidiness had vanished. Everything was large, cool, orderly and unhurried. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt, his daughter Mrs.

Dall, Miss Le Hand his personal secretary, and another lady, dined with us and afterwards I sat and talked to him and Mrs. Roosevelt and Miss Le Hand until nearly midnight, easily and pleasantly — as though the world crisis focused anywhere rather than upon the White House.

As everyone knows, the President is a crippled man. He reminded me of William Ernest Henley. He has the same big torso linked to almost useless legs, and he lacked even Henley's practised nimbleness with stick and crutch. But when we sat at dinner and when he was in his study chair, his physical disablement vanished from the picture. Mrs. Roosevelt I found a very pleasant, well-read lady; I had been warned she was a terrible "school marm," but the only trait of the schoolmistress about her was a certain care for precision of statement. There was no pose about either of them. They were not concerned about being what was expected of them, or with the sort of impression they were making; they were just interested in a curious keen detached way about the state of the world. They talked about that, in the manner of independent people who had really not so very much to do with it. We were all in it and we had to play our parts, but there was no reason because one was in a responsible position that one should be mystical or pompous or darkly omniscient about it.

Even if my memory would serve for the task, I would not report the drift and shifting substance of our talk. Only one thing need be recorded, the President's manifest perplexity at some recent turns of British diplomacy, and the wonder that peeped out — a wonder we all share — over the question as to what Sir John Simon imagines he is up to, whether he represents any obscure realities of British thought and, if not, why on earth, in the far east and elsewhere, the two big English-speaking communities seem perpetually discordant and unexpected to each other. My own fixed idea about world peace came naturally enough to the fore. If it were not, I said, for questions of mere political mechanism, stale traditions, the mental childishness of our British Foreign Office and what not, it would be perfectly possible even now for the English speaking masses and the Russian mass, with France as our temperamental associate, to be made to say effectively that Peace shall prevail throughout the earth. And it would

prevail. Whatever dreams of conquest and dominion might be in a few militant and patriotic brains outside such a combination, would burn but weakly in the cold discouragement of so great a unison. And what was it — prevented that unison?

But that was only one of the topics we touched upon. What concerns me here is not what was said, but the manner in which it was thought about and advanced. I am not thinking primarily of policies and governmental actions here, but of an encounter with a new type of mind. My own ideas about the coming socialist world-state are fixed and explicit. But they are, I am persuaded, implicit in every mind that has been opened to the possibility of unrestricted change. I do not say that the President has these revolutionary ideas in so elaborated and comprehensive a form as they have come to me; I do not think he has. I do not think he is consciously what I have called an Open Conspirator and it is quite clear his formula are necessarily limited by the limitations of the popular understanding with which he has to come to terms. But these ideas are sitting all round him now, and unless I misjudge him, they will presently possess him altogether. Events are reinforcing them and carrying him on to action. My impression of both him and of Mrs. Roosevelt is that they are *unlimited* people, entirely modern in the openness of their minds and the logic of their actions. I have been using the word "blinkered" rather freely in this section. Here in the White House, the unblinkered mind was in possession.

The Roosevelts are something more than open-minded. Arthur Balfour was greatly open-minded, but he lacked the slightest determination to realize the novel ideas he entertained so freely. He was set in the habitual acceptance of the thing that is, church, court, society, empire, and he did not really believe in the new thoughts that played about in his mind. President Roosevelt does. He has a brain that is certainly as receptive and understanding as Balfour's but, with that, he has an uncanny disposition for action and realization that Balfour lacked altogether. This man who can sit and talk so frankly and freely is also an astute politician and a subtle manager of masses and men. As the President thinks and conceives, so forthwith, he acts. Both he and his wife have the simplicity that says, "But if it is right we ought to do it." They set about what they suppose has to be

done without exaltation, without apology or any sense of the strangeness of such conduct. Such unification of unconventional thought and practical will is something new in history, and I will not speculate here about the peculiar personal and the peculiar American conditions that may account for it. But as the vast problems about them expose and play themselves into their minds, the goal of the Open Conspiracy becomes plainer ahead. Franklin Roosevelt does not embody and represent that goal, but he represents the way thither. He is being the most effective transmitting instrument possible for the coming of the new world order. He is eminently "reasonable" and fundamentally implacable. He demonstrates that comprehensive new ideas can be taken up, tried out and made operative in general affairs without rigidity or dogma. He is continuously revolutionary in the new way without ever provoking a stark revolutionary crisis.

Before I visited Washington, I was inclined to the belief that the forces against such a replanning of the American social and political system as will arrest the present slant towards disaster, the individualistic tradition, the individual lawlessness, the intricate brutal disingenuousness of political and legal methods, were so great that President Franklin Roosevelt was doomed to an inevitable defeat. I wrote an article *The Place of Franklin Roosevelt in History* (Liberty Magazine, October, 1933) in which I made my bet for his over-throw. But I thought then he was a man with a definite set of ideas, fixed and final, in his head, just as I am a man with a system of conclusions fixed and definite in my head. But I perceive he is something much more flexible and powerful than that. He is bold and unlimited in his objectives because his mental arms are long and his courage great, but his peculiar equipment as an amateur of the first rank in politics, keeps him in constant touch with political realities and possibilities. He never lets go of them and they never subdue him. He never seems to go so far beyond the crowd as to risk his working leadership, and he never loses sight of pioneer thought. He can understand and weigh contemporary speculative economics, financial specialism and international political psychology, and he can talk on the radio — over the heads of the party managers and newspaper proprietors and so forth — quite plainly and very convincingly to the ordinary voting man.

He is, as it were, a ganglion for reception, expression, transmission, combination and realization, which I take it, is exactly what a modern government ought to be. And if perhaps after all he is, humanly, not quite all that I am saying of him here, he is at any rate enough of what I am saying of him here, for me to make him a chief collateral exhibit in this psycho-political autobiography.

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On July the 21st I started from London for Moscow in the company of my eldest son, who wished to meet some Russian biologists with whose work he was acquainted, and to see their laboratories. We left Croydon in the afternoon, spent the night in Berlin and flew on by way of Danzig, Kovno and Welilikje Luki, reaching Moscow before dark on the evening of the 22nd. We flew in clear weather as far as Amsterdam, then through a couple of thunderstorms to Berlin. We were late in reaching the glitter of illuminated Berlin; the raining darkness was flickering with lightning flashes and our plane came down to make its landing with flares burning under its wings along a lane of windy yellow flame against the still red and white lights of the aerodrome. The flight next day from Welilikje Luki to Moscow, flying low and eastward in afternoon sunshine, was particularly golden and lovely.

In 1900, when I wrote *Anticipations*, this would have been as incredible a journey as a trip on Aladdin's carpet; in 1934 it was arranged in the most matter of fact way through a travel agency, it was a little excursion that anyone might make; and the fare was less than the railway fare would have been a third of a century before. In a little time such a visit will seem as small a matter as a taxi-cab call does now. It is our antiquated political organization and our retrograde imaginations that still hold back such a final abolition of distance.

Moscow I found greatly changed — even from the air this was visible; not set and picturesque, a black-and-gold barbaric walled city-camp about a great fortress, as I had seen it first in 1914; nor definitely shabby, shattered and apprehensive as it had been in the time of Lenin, but untidily and hopefully renascent. There was new

building going on in every direction, workers' dwellings, big groups of factories and, amidst the woods, new *datchas* and country clubs. No particular plan was apparent from the air; it looked like a vigorous, natural expansion such as one might see in the most individualistic of cities. We came down over a patchwork of aerodromes and saw many hundreds of planes parked outside the hangars. Russian aviation may be concentrated about Moscow, but this display of air force was certainly impressive. Twenty-two years ago, in my *War in the Air*, I had imagined such wide fields of air fleet, but never then in my boldest cerebrations did I think I should live to see them.

I confess that I approached Stalin with a certain amount of suspicion and prejudice. A picture had been built up in my mind of a very reserved and self-centred fanatic, a despot without vices, a jealous monopolizer of power. I had been inclined to take the part of Trotsky against him. I had formed a very high opinion perhaps an excessive opinion, of Trotsky's military and administrative abilities, and it seemed to me that Russia, which is in such urgent need of directive capacity at every turn, could not afford to send them into exile. Trotsky's Autobiography, and more particularly the second volume, had modified this judgment but I still expected to meet a ruthless, hard — possibly doctrinaire — and self-sufficient man at Moscow; a Georgian highlander whose spirit had never completely emerged from its native mountain glen.

Yet I had had to recognize that under him Russia was not being merely tyrannized over and held down; it was being governed and it was getting on. Everything I had heard in favour of the First Five Year Plan I had put through a severely sceptical sieve, and yet there remained a growing effect of successful enterprise. I had listened more and more greedily to any first-hand gossip I could hear about both these contrasted men. I had already put a query against my grim anticipation of a sort of Bluebeard at the centre of Russian affairs. Indeed if I had not been in reaction against these first preconceptions and wanting to get nearer the truth of the matter, I should never have gone again to Moscow.

This lonely overbearing man, I thought, may be damned disagreeable, but anyhow he must have an intelligence far beyond

dogmatism. And if I am not all wrong about the world, and if he is as able as I am beginning to think him, then he must be seeing many things much as I am seeing them.

I wanted to tell him that I had talked to Franklin Roosevelt of the new prospect of world co-operation that was opening before mankind. I wanted to stress the fact upon which I had dwelt in the White House, that in the English-speaking and Russian-speaking populations, and in the populations geographically associated with them round the temperate zone, there is a major mass of human beings ripe for a common understanding and common co-operation in the preparation of an organised world-state. Quite parallel with that double basis for a world plan, I wanted to say, there is a third great system of possible co-operation in the Spanish-speaking community. These masses, together with the Chinese, constitute an overwhelming majority of mankind, anxious — in spite of their so-called governments — for peace, industry and an organized well-being. Such things as Japanese imperialism, the national egotism of the Quai d'Orsay and of Mussolini, the childish disingenuousness of the British foreign office, and German political delirium, would become quite minor obstacles to human unity, if these common dispositions could be marshalled into a common understanding and a common method of expression. The militancy of Japan was not so much a threat to mankind as a useful reminder for us to sink formal differences and spread one explicit will for peace throughout the world. Japan, with a possible but very improbable German alliance, was the only efficient reactionary menace left for civilization to deal with. France was inaggressive in spirit; Great Britain incurably indeterminate. I wanted to find out how far Stalin saw international matters in this shape and, if he proved to be in general agreement, to try and see how far he would go with me in my idea that the present relative impotence of the wider masses of mankind to restrain the smaller fiercer threats of aggressive patriotism, is really due not to anything fundamental in human nature but to old inharmonious traditions, bad education and bad explanations; to our failure, thus far, to get our populations clearly told the true common history of our race and the common objective now before mankind. That objective was the highly organized world community in which

service was to take the place of profit. The political dialects and phrases which were directed towards that end were needlessly and wastefully different. Creative impulses were being hampered to the pitch of ineffectiveness by pedantries and misunderstandings.

Was it impossible to bring general political statements up to date, so that the real creative purpose in the Russian will should no longer be made alien and repulsive to the quickened intelligence of the Western World, by an obstinate insistence upon the antiquated political jargon, the class-war cant, of fifty years ago? All things serve their purpose and die, and it was time that even the passing of Karl Marx, intellectually as well as physically, was recognised. It was as absurd now to cling to those old expressions as it would be to try to electrify Russia with the frictional electric machines or the zinc and copper batteries of 1864. Marxist class-war insurrectionism had become a real obstacle to the onward planning of a new world order. This was particularly evident in our English-speaking community.

This ancient doctrine that the proletariat or the politician temporarily representing him, can do no wrong, estranged the competent technologist, who was vitally essential to the new task, and inculcated a spirit of mystical mass enthusiasm opposed to all disciplined co-operation. I wanted to bring it plainly into our talk that Russia was now paying only lip service to human unity and solidarity; that she was in actual fact drifting along a way of her own to a socialism of her own, which was getting out of touch with world socialism, and training her teeming multitudes to misinterpret and antagonize the greater informal forces in the West making for world socialization and consolidation. Was it not possible, before opportunity slipped away from us, to form a general line of creative propaganda throughout the earth?...

It was typical of the way in which mental interchanges lag behind the swift achievements of material progress, that Stalin and I had to talk through an interpreter. He speaks a Georgian language and Russian and he does not even smatter any Western idiom. So we had to carry on our conversation in the presence of a foreign-office representative, Mr. Umansky. Mr. Umansky produced a book in which he made a rapid note in Russian of what each of us said, read out my speeches in Russian to Stalin and his, almost as readily, to me

in English, and then sat alert-eyed over his glasses ready for the response. Necessarily a certain amount of my phraseology was lost in the process and a certain amount of Mr. Umansky's replaced it. And our talk went all the slowlier because I was doing my best to check back, by what Stalin said, that he was getting the substance at least, if not the full implications, of what I was saying.

All lingering anticipations of a dour sinister Highlander vanished at the sight of him. He is one of those people who in a photograph or painting become someone entirely different. He is not easy to describe, and many descriptions exaggerate his darkness and stillness. His limited sociability and a simplicity that makes him inexplicable to the more consciously disingenuous, has subjected him to the strangest inventions of whispering scandal. His harmless, orderly, private life is kept rather more private than his immense public importance warrants, and when, a year or so ago, his wife died suddenly of some brain lesion, the imaginative spun a legend of suicide which a more deliberate publicity would have made impossible. All such shadowy undertow, all suspicion of hidden emotional tensions, ceased for ever, after I had talked to him for a few minutes.

My first impression was of a rather commonplace-looking man dressed in an embroidered white shirt, dark trousers and boots, staring out of the window of a large, generally empty, room. He turned rather shyly and shook hands in a friendly manner. His face also was commonplace, friendly and commonplace, not very well modelled, not in any way "fine". He looked past me rather than at me but not evasively; it was simply that he had none of the abundant curiosity which had kept Lenin watching me closely from behind the hand he held over his defective eye, all the time he talked to me.

I began by saying that Lenin at the end of our conversation had said "Come back and see us in ten years". I had let it run to fourteen, but now that I had seen Franklin Roosevelt in Washington I wanted to meet the ruling brain of the Kremlin while my Washington impressions were still fresh, because I thought that the two of them between them indicated the human future as no other two men could do. He said with a quite ordinary false modesty that he was only doing little things — just little things.

The conversation hung on a phase of shyness. We both felt friendly, and we wanted to be at our ease with each other, and we were not at our ease. He had evidently a dread of self-importance in the encounter; he posed not at all, but he knew we were going to talk of very great matters. He sat down at a table and Mr. Umansky sat down beside us, produced his note book and patted it open in a competent, expectant manner.

I felt there was heavy going before me but Stalin was so ready and willing to explain his position that in a little while the pause for interpretation was almost forgotten in the preparation of new phrases for the argument. I had supposed there was about forty minutes before me, but when at that period I made a reluctant suggestion of breaking off, he declared his firm intention of going on for three hours. And we did. We were both keenly interested in each other's point of view. What I said was the gist of what I had intended to say and that I have told already; the only matter of interest here is how Stalin reacted to these ideas.

I do not know whether it illuminated Stalin or myself most penetratingly, but what impressed me most in that discussion was his refusal to see any sort of parallelism with the processes and methods and aims of Washington and Moscow. When I talked of the planned world to him, I talked in a language he did not understand. He looked at the proposition before him and made nothing of it. He has little of the quick uptake of President Roosevelt and none of the subtlety and tenacity of Lenin. Lenin was indeed saturated with Marxist phraseology, but he had a complete control of this phraseology. He could pour it into new meanings and use it for his own purposes. But Stalin was almost as much a trained mind, trained in the doctrines of Lenin and Marx, as those governess-trained minds of the British Foreign Office and diplomatic service, of which I have already written so unkindly. He was as little adaptable. The furnishing of his mind had stopped at the point reached by Lenin when he reconditioned Marxism. His was not a free impulsive brain nor a scientifically organized brain; it was a trained Leninist-Marxist brain. Sometimes I seemed to get him moving as I wanted him to move, but directly he felt he was having his feet shifted, he would clutch at some time-honoured phrase and struggle back to orthodoxy.

I have never met a man more candid, fair and honest, and to these qualities it is, and to nothing occult and sinister, that he owes his tremendous undisputed ascendency in Russia. I had thought before I saw him that he might be where he was because men were afraid of him, but I realize that he owes his position to the fact that no one is afraid of him and everybody trusts him. The Russians are a people at once childish and subtle, and they have a justifiable fear of subtlety in themselves and others. Stalin is an exceptionally unsubtle Georgian. His unaffected orthodoxy is an assurance to his associates that whatever he does would be done without fundamental complications and in the best possible spirit. They had been fascinated by Lenin, and they feared new departures from his talismanic directions. And Stalin's trained obduracy to the facts of to-day in our talk simply reflected, without the slightest originality, the trained and self-protective obduracy of his associates.

I not only attacked him with the assertion that large scale planning by the community, and a considerable socialization of transport and staple industries, was dictated by the mechanical developments of our time, and was going on quite as extensively outside the boundaries of Sovietdom as within them, but also I made a long criticism of the old-fashioned class-war propaganda, in which a macédoine of types and callings is jumbled up under the term bourgeoisie. That is one of the most fatal of the false simplifications in this collective human brain-storm which is the Russian revolution. I said that great sections in that mixture, the technicians, scientific workers, medical men, skilled foremen, skilled producers, aviators, operating engineers, for instance, would and should supply the best material for constructive revolution in the West, but that the current communist propaganda, with its insistence upon a mystical mass directorate, estranged and antagonised just these most valuable elements. Skilled workers and directors know that Jack is not as good as his master. Stalin saw my reasoning, but he was held back by his habitual reference to the proletarian mass — which is really nothing more than the "sovereign Peepul" of old fashioned democracy, renamed. That is to say it is nothing but a politician's figment. It was amusing to shoot at him, with a lively knowledge of the facts of the October revolution, an assertion equally obvious and unorthodox,

that “All Revolutions are made by minorities.” His honesty compelled him to admit that “at first” this might be so. I tried to get back to my idea of the possible convergence of West and East upon the socialist world state objective, by quoting Lenin as saying, after the Revolution, “Communism has now to learn Business,” and adding that in the West that had to be put the other way round. Business had now to learn the socialization of capital — which indeed is all that this Russian Communism now amounts to. It is a state-capitalism with a certain tradition of cosmopolitanism. West and East starting from entirely different levels of material achievement, had each now what the other lacked, and I was all for a planetary rounding off of the revolutionary process. But Stalin, now quite at his ease and interested, sucked thoughtfully at the pipe he had most politely asked my permission to smoke, shook his head and said “Nyet” reflectively. He was evidently very suspicious of this suggestion of complemental co-operation. It might be the thin end of a widening wedge. He lifted his hand rather like a schoolboy who is prepared to recite, and dictated a reply in party formulae. The movement of socialization in America was not a genuine proletarian revolution; the “capitalist” was just saving himself, pretending to divest himself of power and hiding round the corner to come back. That settled that. The one true faith was in Russia; there could be no other. America must have her October Revolution and follow her Russian leaders.

Later on we discussed liberty of expression. He admitted the necessity and excellence of criticism, but preferred that it should be home-made by the party within the party organization. There, he declared, criticism was extraordinarily painstaking and free. Outside criticism might be biased....

I wound up according to my original intention by insisting upon the outstanding positions of himself and Roosevelt, and their ability to talk to the world in unison. But that came lamely because my hope for some recognition, however qualified, on the part of the man in control of Russia, of the present convergence towards a collective capitalism in the East and West alike, was badly damaged. He had said his piece to all my initiatives and he stayed put. I wished I could have talked good Russian or had an interpreter after my own heart. I

could have got nearer to him then. Normal interpreters gravitate inevitably towards stereotyped phrases. Nothing suffers so much in translation as the freshness of an unfamiliar idea.

As I saw one personality after another in Moscow, I found myself more and more disposed to a psycho-analysis of this resistance which is offered to any real creative forces coming in from the West. It is very marked indeed. In a few years, if it is sustained, we may hear Moscow saying if not "Russia for the Russians," then at least "Sovietdom for the followers of Marx and Lenin and down with everyone who will not bow to the Prophets," which, so far as the peace and unity of the world is concerned, will amount to the same thing. There is a strong incorrigible patriotism beneath this Russian situation, all the more effective because it is disguised, just as there was an incorrigible French patriotism beneath the world-fraternisation of the first French revolution.

A day or so later I discussed birth control and liberty of expression at considerable length with Maxim Gorky and some of the younger Russian writers, in the beautiful and beautifully furnished house the government places at his disposal. Physically Gorky has changed very little since 1906 when I visited him, an amazed distressful refugee, upon Staten Island. I have described that earlier meeting in *The Future in America*. I stayed with him again in 1920 (*Russia in the Shadows*). Then he was a close friend of Lenin's but disposed nevertheless to be critical of the new régime. Now he has become an unqualified Stalinite. Between us also, unhappily, an interpreter had to intervene, for Gorky, in spite of his long sojourn in Italy, has lapsed back to complete mono-lingualism.

Some years ago John Galsworthy helped to create an international net of literary societies called P.E.N. Clubs. At first they served only for amiable exchanges between the writers of the same and different countries, but the violent persecution of Jewish and leftish writers in Germany, and an attempt to seize and use the Berlin Pen Club for Nazi propaganda, raised new and grave issues for the organization. Just at that time Galsworthy died and I succeeded him as International President. I was drawn in as President and chairman to two stormy debates in Ragusa and Edinburgh respectively. The task of championing freedom of expression in art and literature was

practically forced upon this weak but widespread organization. It had many defects, but it had access to considerable publicity, and in these questions publicity is of primary importance. Local battles to maintain the freedom and dignity of letters were fought in the Berlin, Vienna and Rome P.E.N. Clubs, and I now brought to these new Russian writers the question whether the time had not come to decontrol literary activities in Russia, and form a free and independent P.E.N. Club in Moscow. I unfolded my ideas about the necessity of free writing and speech and drawing in every highly organized state; the greater the political and social rigidity, I argued, the more the need for thought and comment to play about it. These were quite extraordinary ideas to all my hearers, though Gorky must have held them once. If so, he has forgotten them or put them behind him.

We wrangled for an hour or so at a long tea table, which had been set in a high sunny white portico, with fluttering swallows feeding their young above the capitals of the columns. About half a dozen of the younger Russian writers were present and the Litvinoffs came in from their equally beautiful villa on the far side of Moscow to join in the discussion. To me the most notable things by far about this talk were the set idea of everyone that literature should be under political control and restraint, and the extraordinary readiness to suspect a "capitalist" intrigue, to which all their brains, including Gorky's, had been *trained*. I did not like to find Gorky against liberty. It wounded me.

I must confess indeed to a profound discontent with this last phase of his. Something human and distressful in him, which had warmed my sympathies in his fugitive days, has evaporated altogether. He has changed into a class- conscious proletarian Great Man. His prestige within the Soviet boundaries is colossal — and artificial. His literary work, respectable though it is, does not justify this immense fame. He has been inflated to a greatness beyond that of Robert Burns in Scotland or Shakespeare in England. He has become a sort of informal member of the government, and whenever the authorities have a difficulty about naming a new aeroplane or a new avenue or a new town or a new organization, they solve the difficulty by calling it Maxim Gorky. He seems quietly aware of the embalming, and the

mausoleum and apotheosis awaiting him, when he too will become a sleeping Soviet divinity. Meanwhile he criticizes the younger writers and gathers them about him. And he sat beside me, my old friend, the erstwhile pelted outcast dismally in tears whom I tried to support and comfort upon Staten Island, half deified now and all dismay forgotten, looking sidelong at me with that Tartar face of his, and devising shrewd questions to reveal the spidery "capitalist" entanglement he suspected me of spinning. One sails westward and comes at last to the east, and here in Russia after the revolution, just as in Russia before the revolution, all round the world to the left, we have come to the worst vice of the right again, and literary expression is restricted to acceptable opinions.

It does not matter to Gorky, it seems, that our poor little P.E.N. organization has fought for a hearing for left extremists like Toller, and that all its battles so far have been to liberate the left. In this new-born world of dogmatic communism, he insisted, there was to be no recognition for White or Catholic or any sort of right writer, write he ever so beautifully. So Maxim Gorky, in 1934, to my amazement made out a case for the Americans who had hounded him out of New York in 1906.

I argued in vain that men had still the right to dispute the final perfection of Leninism. Through the media of art and literature, it was vital that they should render all that was in their minds, accepted or unorthodox, good or bad. For political action and social behaviour there must be conventions and laws, but there could be no laws and conventions in the world of expression. You could not lock up imaginations. You could not say, "thus far you may imagine and no further." Socialism existed for the dignity and freedom of the soul of man, and not the soul of man for socialism. There were sceptical smiles as the translator did his best to render this queer assertion. Perhaps I made things too difficult for him by speaking of the soul of man.

Gorky, the reformed outcast, wagged his head slowly from side to side and produced excuses for this control of new thought and suggestion by officials. The liberty I was demanding as an essential in any Russian P.E.N. that might be founded, might be all very well in the stabler Anglo-Saxon world; we could afford to play with error

and heresy; but Russia was like a country at war. It could not tolerate opposition. I had heard this stuff before. At Ragusa, Schmidt-Pauli, speaking for the Nazis, and at Edinburgh, Marinetti, the Fascist, had made precisely the same apologies for suppression.

I was inspired to produce an argument in the Hegelian form. I asserted that nothing could exist without the recognition of its opposite and that if you destroyed the opposite of a thing altogether the thing itself went dead. Life was reaction, and mental processes could achieve clear definition only by a full apprehension of contraries. From that I argued that if they suppressed men who sang or painted or wrote about the glories of individual freedom, the picturesqueness of merchandising, the mysteries of the religious imagination, pure artistry, caprice, kingship, sin or destruction and the delights of misbehaviour, then their Leninism also would lose its vitality and die. This was I think translated correctly to these exponents of the orthodox Russian temperament but they contrived no sort of reply.

Litvinoff cut across their indecision with a question whether I wanted to have the exiled White writers come to Moscow. I said that was for him to decide, it might do them and Russia a lot of good to have them back and listen to what they had to say, but anyhow the principle of the P.E.N. club was that no genuine artist or writer, whatever his social or political beliefs and implications might be, should be excluded from its membership. I had brought them my proposal and I promised I would leave a written version of it to put before the approaching Congress of Soviet Writers. If they chose to enter into the liberal brotherhood of the P.E.N. Clubs, well and good. If they did not, I should do my best to make their refusal known to the world. In the long run it would be the Russian intellectual movement that would suffer most by this insistence upon making its cultural relations with the outside world a one-way channel, an outgoing of all that Russia thought fit to tell the world and the refusal of any critical return. Mankind might even grow bored at last by a consciously heroic and unconsciously mystical Soviet Russia with wax in its ears.

Later on I found a rather different atmosphere in the household of Alexis Tolstoy at Detskoe Selo (which is Tsarskoe Selo

rechristened). There too I met a number of writers and propounded this idea of a thin web of societies about the world associated to assert the freedom and dignity of art and literature. There has always been very marked mental, temperamental and political contrast between Leningrad and Moscow. The bearing of the two populations is very different and the former place has a large cold seventeenth century dignity and a northern quality which compares very vividly with the disorderly crowded street bustle, the bazaar animation of Moscow. Even the religiosity of the new faith has a different quality. There is nothing in the northern city with the emotional value of Lenin's tomb, and the anti-God museum in the great church of St. Isaac opposite the Astoria Hotel is a mere argumentative brawl within the vast cold magnificence of that always most unspiritual fane. Christianity never was alive in Leningrad as it was at the shrine of the Black Virgin in Moscow and neither is the new Red religion as alive.

Perhaps I put my case to the Leningrad writers with better skill after my experience in Gorky's villa, but I encountered none of the suspicion and rigid preconceptions of that first meeting. They were quite ready to accept the universalism of the P.E.N. proposal, and to assert the superiority of free scientific and artistic expression to considerations of political expediency. They promised to support my memorandum to the approaching Congress of Soviet Writers, proposing the constitution of a Russian P.E.N. centre, open to every shade of opinion, and I shall await the report of their clash with the definite intolerance of the Moscow brains with a very keen interest. But at the time of writing this Congress has still to meet.

I argued with Gorky also about birth control, because he, with many others of these Russian leaders, in a confusion between subconscious patriotism and creative optimism, is all for a Russia of four hundred or five hundred millions, regardless of how the rest of mankind may be faring. Russia may want soldiers to defend its Russianism, which is exactly on the level of Mussolini's reasons for damning the thought of birth control in Italy. In the old days Gorky was a dire pessimist with a taste for gloomy colours, but now his optimism has become boundless. Under the red ensign the earth can support an increasing population, he seemed to argue, until standing

room is exhausted. To the Proletariat under the new régime, as to God under the old, nothing is impossible. Where it gives mouths it will give food. The Soviet men of science, he imagines, can always be instructed and, if necessary, disciplined to that effect.

In Gorky's study was a great book of plans which he thrust upon me. They were the plans of an almost incredibly splendid palace of biological science. It outdid the boldest buildings of the Czardom. Five hundred (or was it a thousand?) research students from abroad were always to be working there. Among other activities. Where *is* this? I asked. He produced a plan of Moscow and indicated the exact spot. I said I would like to go and see it. But, he smiled, it was not yet completed for me to see. I had a flash of understanding. I would like to go and see the foundations. But they have not yet begun the foundation! You shall see it, said Gorky, when you come again. It is only one of a group of vast research and educational establishments we are making. You need have no anxiety about the quality of scientific work in Soviet Russia or of its capacity to meet whatever calls are made upon it. In view of these plans.

From Gorky evoking biology in a land of controlled literature by waving an architect's drawing at it, it was an immense relief to go and see some of the most significant biological work in the world actually in progress, in Pavlov's new Institute of Psychological Genetics outside Leningrad. This is already in working order and still being rapidly enlarged under its founder's direction. It is the least grandiose and most practicable group of research buildings in the world. Pavlov's reputation is an immense asset to Soviet prestige and he is now given practically everything he asks for in the way of material. That much is to the credit of this government. I found the old man in vigorous health, and he took me and my biological son from one group of buildings to another at a smart trot, expounding his new work upon animal intelligence with the greatest animation as he did so. My son who has always followed his work closely, plied him with lively questions. Afterwards we sat in the house over glasses of tea and he talked on for a couple of hours. He is ruddy and white-haired; if Bernard Shaw were to trim and brush his hair and beard they would be almost indistinguishable. He is eighty-five and he wants to live to a hundred-and-five just to see how the work he

has in hand will turn out.

My son and I had visited him in 1920 (in *Russia in the Shadows*), when Gip was still a Cambridge undergraduate, and so it was natural that a comparison of Russia in 1920 and Russia in 1934, should get into the stream of the discourse. He talked down his two Communist assistants who were at the table with us. He talked indeed as no other man in Russia would be permitted to talk. So far, he said, the new régime had produced no results worth considering. It was still a large clumsy experiment without proper controls. It might be a success in time, it was certainly a considerable nuisance to decent people with old-fashioned tastes, but at present there was neither time nor freedom in which to judge it. He seemed to see very little advantage in replacing the worship of the crucified by the worship of the embalmed. For his own part he still went to church. It was a good habit, he thought. He delivered a discourse quite after my heart on the need for absolute intellectual freedom, if scientific progress, if any sort of human progress, was to continue. And when I asked him what he felt about dialectical materialism, he exchanged derisive gestures with me, and left it at that. He will not be bothered by minor observances; he sticks to dating by the old weekday names, and his always very simple way of living has carried over, just as his magnificent researches have carried over, with scarcely a modification, from the days before the great change. There was by the bye a nursery with a real governess for his two grandchildren! I doubt if there is another governess in Soviet territory. As we came away my son said to me; "Odd to have passed a whole afternoon outside of Soviet Russia."

That I thought was a good remark. But if we had been outside Soviet Russia, where had we been? That was not so easy. It wasn't the Past. It was a little island of intellectual freedom? It was a scrap of the world republic of science? It was a glimpse of the future? But in the end we decided that it was just Pavlov.

If I had to talk to Stalin and Gorky and Alexis Tolstoy and Pavlov through a sort of verbal grille, there were other people about who could talk English, and who wilfully or inadvertently exposed some acutely interesting minor aspects of the new Russia. It seems beyond disputing that while the political controls incline to be excessive and

oppressive, the lay-out of the material scheme, as one sees it in Moscow at least, — for I saw nothing whatever of the planning of Leningrad — is hasty, amateurish and often shockingly incompetent. Disproportion is visible everywhere and all sorts of ineffectivenesses forced themselves on my attention during my ten-day stay quite without my looking for them; there is for instance still a shortage of paper to print even the books in greatest demand, and the paper used is often like thin packing paper; vitally important educational work is held up in consequence; the street traffic again in Moscow, although it has nothing like the volume of the traffic in London or Paris, is disorganised and dangerous, and if one does not belong to the automobile-using class — there are still classes of that sort — getting about is toilsome and tediously slow; the distribution of goods through a variety of shops with different prices and using different sorts of money is preposterously inconvenient. Moscow is growing very rapidly and the re-planning and rebuilding seemed to me poorly conceived. Since other great cities have their tube system, Moscow also is making an imitative tube system, although its alluvial water-bearing soil is highly unsuitable for the tubes they are making at the inadequate depth of thirty feet or so. It will be the least stable "Metropolitan" in the world, and it is plain the problem should have been approached from some other and more original direction. I was told by various apologists that what is being done in Moscow is not representative of the real Russian effort; that at different points, usually they are remote points, marvellous things are being achieved. But I suppose there are the same sort of people there as here in Moscow, and in Moscow, as planners and constructors, they are anything but marvellous.

The outstanding achievement of the new régime, when all is said and done, is the great change in the bearing of the new generation, which has cast off altogether the traditions of serfdom and looks the world bravely in the eye. Coupled with this, an integral part of it indeed, is the "liquidation of illiteracy." But are either of these advances unprecedented? The common folk of the United States of America were as free, equal and confident in the days of simplicity a hundred years ago. And they had their common schools. It is really nothing so very miraculous to be almost the last country in Europe to

respond to the need for a common citizen who can read. These people do not know anything of the rest of the world. But wait and see what *these* young people will *do*, interpolates my Bolshevik guide. A hundred years ago America was just such a land of promise.

Still more similar to this Russian change in manners, was the swift establishment of equalitarian phrases and attitudes after the first French Revolution. Neither American nor French democracy prevented a subsequent development of inequalities of power and fortune. Plutocracy succeeded Aristocracy. "This time," say the Bolsheviks, "we have guarded against any similar relapse." But though they may have abolished profiteering and speculation they have not abolished other sorts of advantage. Their defensive obscurantism makes just the shadows in which fresh infringements of human dignity can occur. As the initial revolutionary enthusiasm dies away, officialdom, protected from independent criticism, is bound to find its way to self-indulgence and privilege. All over Moscow and Petersburg you can bribe with foreign currency because of the absurd Torgsin system, and the population everywhere is learning to hop quickly and deferentially out of the way of an aggressively driven Lincoln car. The Communist propaganda is altogether too self-satisfied about the intensity and uniqueness of its revolution.

The perpetual reference of those who showed me about to something away over there or coming to-morrow, recalled the Spanish *mañana*. "Come and see us again in ten years' time," they say, at every revelation of insufficiency. If you say that a new building is ramshackle or flimsy they assure you that it is merely a temporary structure. "We don't mind tearing things down again," they explain. The impulse to shift things and pull them about seems to be stronger than the impulse to make. They are transferring the Academy of Sciences from Leningrad to Moscow for no reason that I can understand. Possibly it is to render the control of general scientific thought more effective. One Pavlov is enough for them; they do not want any revival of that old world radical mentality with its unrestrained criticism, its scepticism and its ridicule. They want their men of science to be industrious bees without stings and live in Gorky's hive.

When Bubnov, the Commissar of Public Education, parted from me outside a charming exhibition of original paintings by little children, very like the original paintings by little children exhibited in every other country in the world, he broke out into happy anticipations of the lives this new generation would lead in a reconstructed Russia. “All this,” he said, pointing to a disorderly heap of builders’ muck which had submerged a little garden before us, “is temporary.” The constructors of the new Metropolitan had, it seems, just made this dump and then gone away for a bit. “This used to be a pretty park,” said Bubnov. But it would be all right ten years hence.

Bubnov and Stalin are now among the last survivors of the leaders who did the actual fighting of the revolution, and he said they both meant to live to be a hundred just to see the harvest of Russian prosperity coming in at last. But besides the children in the model schools there are plenty of unaccountable little ragamuffins flitting about the streets. If Stalin and Bubnov live to be two hundred, I feel, Russia will still remain the land of half fulfilled promises and erratic wanderings off to new beginnings.

I came out of Russia acutely frustrated and disappointed in my dream of doing anything worth while to define an understanding between the essentially revolutionary drives towards an organized socialism in America and Russia respectively. They will certainly go on apart and divergent with a maximum of mutual misunderstanding, at least until there is a new type of intelligence dominating the intellectual life of Communism. If I could have talked Russian, or if I had been clever enough to pervert the Marxist phraseology in Lenin’s fashion, I might perhaps have come near to my intention. I might have got into real contact with a mind here or there, if not the leading mind. I was fairly beaten in an enterprise too big for me.

As I thought it over in the homeward aeroplane, I felt that Russia had let me down, whereas I suppose the truth of what has happened is that I had allowed my sanguine and impatient temperament to anticipate understandings and lucidities that cannot arrive for many years. I shall never be able to imagine that what is plain to me is not plain to everyone. I had started out to find a short cut to the Open Conspiracy and discovered that, by such abilities as I possess, there

is no short cut to be found to the Open Conspiracy.

I had expected to find a new Russia stirring in its sleep and ready to awaken to Cosmopolis, and I found it sinking deeper into the dope-dream of Sovietic self-sufficiency. I found Stalin's imagination invincibly framed and set, and that ci-devant radical Gorky, magnificently installed as a sort of master of Russian thought. There are no real short-cuts perhaps, in the affairs of men, everyone lives in his own world and between his blinkers, whether they be wide or narrow, and I must console myself, I suppose, as well as I can, for my failure to get any response out of Russia, with such small occasional signs of spreading contemporary understanding as may appear in our own western life. There has always been a certain imaginative magic for me in Russia, and I lament the drift of this great land towards a new system of falsity as a lover might lament estrangement from his mistress.

The truth remains that to-day nothing stands in the way to the attainment of universal freedom and abundance but mental tangles, egocentric preoccupations, obsessions, misconceived phrases, bad habits of thought, subconscious fears and dreads and plain dishonesty in people's minds — and especially in the minds of those in key positions. That universal freedom and abundance dangles within reach of us and is not achieved, and we who are Citizens of the Future wander about this present scene like passengers on a ship overdue, in plain sight of a port which only some disorder in the chart room, prevents us from entering. Though most of the people in the world in key positions are more or less accessible to me, I lack the solvent power to bring them into unison. I can talk to them and even unsettle them but I cannot compel their brains to see.

§ 10. ENVOY

I went by the train called the "Red Arrow," the Soviet echo of the *Flèche d'Or*, from Moscow to Leningrad and thence I flew to Tallin. I am finishing this autobiography in a friendly and restful house beside a little lake in Esthonia....

I have done my best now to draw the outline and development of

a contemporary mind reacting freely to the disintegrating and the synthetic forces of its time. Copious as this book has become I have still omitted a great bulk of comment and detail that did not seem to me to be of primary importance in this story of the awakening of world citizenship in a fairly normal human intelligence. It has not always been easy to disentangle irrelevant matter without desiccating the main argument. But in a life of eight-and-sixty years there accumulates so great a miscellany of memories and material that, but for some such check upon discursiveness as my design has given me, my flow of reminiscence might have gone on for ever. I confess to an uneasy realization now as I draw to my conclusion that I have not done any sort of justice to the keen interest of countless subsidiary happenings, to the fun of life and the loveliness of life and to much of the oddity of life, beyond the scope of its main essentials. I feel I have been so intent on my thesis, particularly in this very long concluding chapter, that I may have failed to convey my thankfulness to existence for being all else that it so incessantly and generously is. My generalizing impulses have perhaps ruled too much and made my picture of life bony and bare. In my effort to combine the truthful self-portrait of a very definite individual with an adequate reflection of the mental influences of type and period and to keep my outlines firm and clear, I have deliberately put many vivid memories and lively interludes aside, ignored a swarm of interesting personalities I have encountered, cut out great secondary systems of sympathy and said nothing whatever about all sorts of bright, beautiful and pleasant things that have whirled about me entertainingly for a time and then flown off at a tangent. I could write gaily of travels, mountain tramps, landfalls, cities, music, plays, gardens that have pleased me....

What remains is the story of one of the most pampered and irresponsible of "Advanced Thinkers," an uninvited adventurer who has felt himself free to criticize established things without restraint, who has spent his life planning how to wind up most of them and get rid of them, and who has been tolerated almost incredibly during this subversive career. Exasperation there has been, bans and boycotts from Boots to Boston; public schoolmasters and prison chaplains have intervened to protect their charges from my influence, Nazis have burnt my works, the Catholic Church and Italian Fascism have

set their authority against me, and dear old voluble indignant Henry Arthur Jones in *My Dear Wells!* and many better equipped writers — Hilaire Belloc and Archbishop Downey for example — have been moved to write vehement controversial books. But refusals to listen and cries of disagreement are not suppression, and it would ill become an advanced thinker to complain of them. They are recognition. If they are not recognition of the advanced thinker himself, they are recognition of his supports and following, and of the greater forces of which he is the expression. I take it, therefore as a fair inference from the real immunity I have enjoyed, that such revolutionary proposals as mine are anything but unique and outstanding offences. What I have written openly and plainly is evidently in the thoughts of many people. In spite of much sporadic repressive activity, this new ferment of world-state ideas is spreading steadily throughout the world. Repression, even violent and murderous repression, there is, no doubt, in Germany, in Italy and elsewhere but, where it occurs, it has a curiously forced and hysterical quality; it is no longer whole-hearted repression by assured authority, it is indeed not so much the result of intolerant counter-conviction as resistance to conviction. It is on the defensive against itself. Its violence, in more cases than not, is the convulsive tightening of a slipping grip. The supporters of the thing that is, seem everywhere touched by doubt. Even more plainly is that the case with reactionaries. We advanced thinkers owe our present immunity, such as it is, very largely to the fact that even those of our generation who are formally quite against us, have nevertheless been moving, if less rapidly and explicitly, in the same direction as ourselves. In their hearts they do not believe we are essentially wrong; but they think we go too far, — dangerously and presumptuously too far. Yet all we exist for, — our sort, — is to go too far for the pedestrian contingent....

I began this autobiography primarily to reassure myself during a phase of fatigue, restlessness and vexation, and it has achieved its purpose of reassurance. I wrote myself out of that mood of discontent and forgot myself and a mosquito swarm of bothers in writing about my sustaining ideas. My ruffled *persona* has been restored and the statement of the idea of the modern world-state has reduced my

personal and passing irritations and distractions to their proper insignificance. So long as one lives as an individual, vanities, lassitudes, lapses and inconsistencies will hover about and creep back into the picture, but I find nevertheless that this faith and service of constructive world revolution does hold together my mind and will in a prevailing unity, that it makes life continually worth living, transcends and minimizes all momentary and incidental frustrations and takes the sting out of the thought of death. The stream of life out of which we rise and to which we return has been restored to dominance in my consciousness, and though the part I play is, I believe, essential, it is significant only through the whole. The Open Conspirator can parallel — or, if you prefer to put it so, he can modernize — the self-identification of the religious mystic: he can say, "personally when I examine myself I am nothing"; and at the same time he can assert, "The Divinity and I are One"; or blending divinity with democratic kingship, "The World-State, c'est Moi."

There is a necessary parallelism in the matured convictions of all intelligent people, because brains are made to much the same pattern and inevitably follow similar lines of development. Words, colourings and symbols can change very widely but not the essential forms of the psychological process. Since first man began to think he has been under a necessity to think in a limited number of definable shapes. He has to travel by the roads his ancestry made for him and their fences are well nigh insurmountable. So mystical Christianity, Islamic mysticism, Buddhist teaching, in their most refined and intense efforts towards distinctive penetration, have produced almost identical and quite easily interchangeable formulae for their mysteries. The process of generalization by which the mind seeks an escape from individual vexations and frustrations, from the petty overwhelming pains, anxieties and recriminations of the too acutely ego-centred life, is identical, whatever labels it is given and whatever attempts are made to establish exclusive rights in it. All these religions and every system of sublimation, has had to follow the same route to escape, because there is no other possible route. The idea of creative service to the World-State towards which the modern mind is gravitating, differs widely in its explicitness, its ordered

content and its practical urgency, from the All of Being, the Inner Life, the Ultimate Truth, the Personal Divinity, the Friend who sticketh closer than a brother, who is nearer than breathing and closer than hands and feet, and all those other resorts of the older religions, but its releasing and enveloping relation to the individual *persona* is, in spite of all that difference in substance, almost precisely the same.

The difference between our modern consolation systems on the one hand and their homologues in the religions and conduct-philosophies of the past on the other, lies almost entirely in the increasingly monistic quality of the former. They imply an abandonment, more or less tacit or explicit, of that rash assumption of matter-spirit dualism, which has haunted human thought for thousands of generations. The change from egoism to a larger life is consequently now entirely a change of perspective; it can no longer be a facile rejection of primary conditions and a jump into "another world" altogether. It is still an escape from first-hand egoism and immediacy, but it is no longer an escape from fact. And the modern escape to impersonality is all the more effective and enduring because of this tougher, unambiguous adhesion to exterior factual reality. The easy circuitous return through shadowy realms of abstract unreality to egoism on a higher plane is barred; the Life of Contemplation and receptive expressionism, are no longer possible refuges. The educated modern mind, constrained to face forward is systematized but not abstracted. For all his devotion to larger issues, for all his subordination of lesser matters, the Open Conspirator like the Communist or the positivist man of science, remains as consistently *actual* as blood or hunger, right down to the ultimates of his being.

So ends this record of the growth and general adventure of my brain which, first squinted and bubbled at the universe and reached out its feeble little hands to grasp it, eight and sixty years ago, in a shabby bedroom over the china shop that was called Atlas House in High Street, Bromley, Kent.

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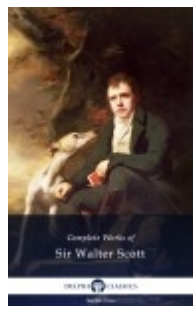

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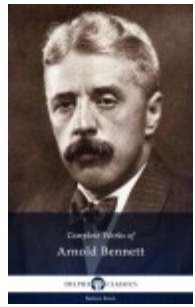

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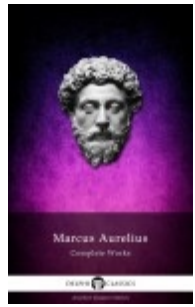

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